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LANDSCRIPT

PROTECTING the WILDERNESS of our UNIQUE ARCHIPELAGO

The Bird Issue



A Georgian Bay
Bird Primer



Gardening for Birds
and Pollinators



Species Spotlight:
Mudpuppy

photo credit: Donald Sutherland

Getting to know

the birds of Georgian Bay

by Brooks Greer, Land Protection Program Manager, and Sarah Koetsier, Communications Director, GBLT

It's hard to imagine Georgian Bay without its birds. They are ancient and integral inhabitants of our coastal ecosystem, and an indispensable part of the human experience of the Bay. Songbirds let us know when it's time to wake up in the morning, and the calls of loons and whip-poor-wills remind us to relax and breathe on a quiet night. Solitary herons guide our canoes, and ducks and geese entertain us with their fluffy young families. But there is also much more to the bird world than these daily interactions, and a whole host of species that make their homes and carry out their lives in Georgian Bay's natural areas.

The widely varying landforms and diversity of vegetation communities on the Georgian Bay coast provide nesting or foraging opportunities every year for up to 300 bird species, of which 170 actually breed in the area. Each spring ushers in huge bird activity and movement as the migrants return, making it the ideal time for birdwatching. By the middle of June, all the further-northbound birds have flown over and we are left with our actual local nesting species, carrying out the work of raising their young.

The variety of bird families and bird "guilds" supported by Georgian Bay is very broad. The open lake itself is the main summer home for our loons, gulls, and mergansers. The many coastal wetlands provide cover, feeding and nesting grounds for the herons, rails, egrets, and bitterns. The pine and mixed forests are the domain of the many songbird species, the flycatchers, the nightjars, thrushes and sparrows. Rock barrens and junipers are favoured by the specialist Prairie Warbler, cliffs and crevices are home to Ravens and several birds of prey.

Like so many migratory birds, a number of Georgian Bay's species are experiencing alarming population declines. The reasons are complex and vary by species, but they include

habitat loss, fragmentation, and pollution; collisions with human-made structures; and decreased availability of insects and other food sources due to pesticide use and climate change. Climate change is also responsible for increasing lethal extreme weather events during migration. There are many steps that we must take to protect these birds, and one positive thing that the Georgian Bay Land Trust can do is to protect land that will provide birds with undisturbed nesting grounds, and also provide places where they can stop and refuel during their monumental annual journeys. The importance of high-quality, interconnected habitat for the survival of our breeding birds cannot be overstated. To help prioritize our conservation efforts, the GBLT is participating in the Motus wildlife tracking program and supporting related scientific studies aimed at better understanding the migratory patterns and specific habitat requirements of our Georgian Bay bird species.

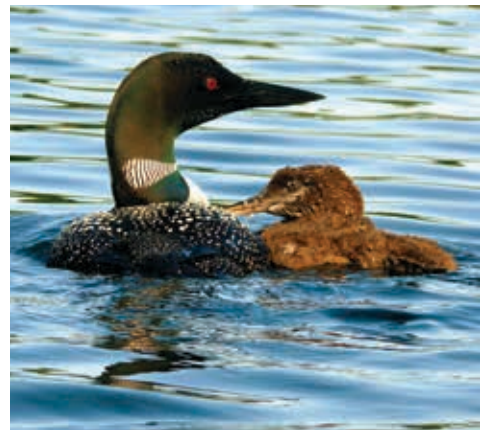
This issue of the LandScript is intended to familiarize the reader with some of Georgian Bay's birds, and explore the ways we can interact with and support them. Turn to pages 8 and 9 for an introduction to 20 characteristic Georgian Bay species, and an opportunity to put your ID skills to the test on Victoria Day weekend. Accomplished birder Peter Wood has given us a closer look at the wood warbler family on page 12, and nursery owner Kate Harries provides some tips for native gardening to support birds and pollinators on page 7. For more information about migratory bird tracking and the GBLT's participation in the Motus wildlife tracking program, please consult the Winter 2018 LandScript, available at gblt.org. Stay tuned to future LandScripts for updates on the research this program supports, including a study of the breeding success of Eastern Whip-poor-wills and Common Nighthawks in the Georgian Bay area beginning this summer.



Blackburnian Warbler by Tim Stewart



Juvenile Broadwinged Hawk by Cecile Gambin



Loons by Peter McPhedran

Good news for Georgian Bay

Significant commitment to conservation in Budget 2018



Georgian Bay coast by Nate Stapulionis

The Government of Canada made a significant commitment to conservation in the 2018 federal budget, and Georgian Bay's natural areas will benefit from it. The \$1.3 billion invested over 5 years in nature conservation will include matching funds towards the costs of establishing new protected areas, allowing land trusts across the country to scale up their efforts to protect environmentally significant lands.

The GBLT's Executive Director Bill Lougheed was part of a coalition of conservation organizations that met with government representatives in Ottawa, including Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna, to advocate for the importance of funding land conservation. As a result of the combined effort of many, our government will contribute \$500 million towards a new \$1 billion Nature Fund to "secure private land, support provincial and territorial species protection efforts, and help build Indigenous capacity to conserve land and species, for our benefit and the benefit of future generations" (Canadian Federal Budget Plan 2018, p. 150).

Here's what Bill has to say about the investment: "This is a pivotal moment for conservation in Canada. The Georgian Bay Land Trust loudly applauds the Government of Canada's commitment to nature and biodiversity conservation in Budget 2018. Through community-based private land conservation, land trusts are uniquely positioned to leverage

the government's investment to help slow or reverse species declines, protect watersheds, and mitigate the effects of climate change. This budget provides the resources to protect additional portions of Georgian Bay's wilderness so future generations of every species may continue to benefit from the ecological rewards and services that intact nature provides."

This funding enables conservation organizations across the country to assist the Canadian government in achieving its target to protect 17 percent of Canada's terrestrial areas by the year 2020, part of its commitment to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. Eastern Georgian Bay is a critical place to protect as part of this initiative. Our biosphere is recognized by UNESCO for its remarkable biodiversity, and is home to the largest diversity of reptile and amphibian species in Canada. This natural jewel is a refuge for 65 nationally or provincially rare species and its wild habitats protect 45 provincially and federally listed at-risk species. As climate change combines with human pressures on the region, this funding comes at just the right time to protect critical habitats in this ecologically exceptional area.

The government's commitment will allow the GBLT to work with landowners to create new conservation reserves throughout the region, protecting natural spaces for communities as well as habitat for the many species that call the Bay home. We can't wait to announce the projects we'll be working on—stay tuned!

Three new easements



Grant Conservation Easement

Doug and Ruth Grant have ensured that a 13.4 acre family property in Wah Wah Taysee will be protected for nature forever. By donating a conservation easement to the Georgian Bay Land Trust, they are guaranteeing that the land will remain undeveloped in perpetuity. The Grants are contributing to an extensive network of protected land in the immediate area.

The Grant Conservation Easement is identified as a priority area for biodiversity, and provides habitat for at least five at-risk species: Snapping Turtle, Eastern Ribbonsnake, Eastern Musk Turtle, Eastern Whip-poor-will and Five-lined Skink. Its coastal and inland marshes are ideal turtle habitat, and are likely home to additional species.

This easement connects to the neighbouring GBLT Kofman Moose Bay Reserve and is just across Moose Bay from the O'Donnell Point Conservation Reserve, increasing the size of a valuable connected corridor. Such connections between protected areas greatly enhance each property's conservation value, as they allow species to move freely within the habitat ranges they depend on for survival. Thank you Doug and Ruth for your important contribution to this protected area.

Hangdog Islands Easement

Donated by Marilyn and Paul Shepherd, the Hangdog Islands Easement consists of two beautiful outer islands in Bayfield Inlet. The islands provide high quality and undisturbed habitat for numerous species at risk, and have been identified as Priority 1 for conservation in the Eastern Georgian Bay Coast Natural Area Plan.

The Hangdog easement provides habitat for confirmed Blanding's Turtle and Ontario's only lizard, the Five-lined Skink. Marilyn and Paul have also sighted Eastern Massasauga, Eastern Foxsnake, Whip-poor-will, Snapping Turtle, Northern Map Turtle, and Bald Eagle either on or near (or over) the easement islands. The shoreline shelters high quality stretches of Georgian Bay Coastal Acidic Mineral Meadow Marsh containing a large population of Carolina Yellow-eyed Grass, a provincially rare plant identified as an Atlantic Coastal Plain disjunct species and a conservation target within the Great Lakes ecoregion.

The Hangdog Islands are inside a relatively undisturbed Crown land archipelago in outer Bayfield. By donating this easement, Marilyn and Paul are ensuring that the high quality island habitat remains unfragmented and available for all local species to inhabit for the years to come. Thank you, Shepherds!

Donating a Conservation Easement

Easements are personalized legal agreements developed between a landowner and a partner conservation organization, which are designed to ensure that the land in question will remain in a natural state forever. Also called Conservation Agreements, they are a fantastic option for individuals who wish to conserve their land while retaining personal ownership.

Easements outline activities that are and aren't permitted on the land, for example: no development or buildings, but walking trails allowed. Such details vary and are decided upon in consultation with the landowner. Easement donors retain full ownership of their land, and are simply required to comply with the permitted uses. It's the GBLT's job to check up on the easement at least once per year to ensure that all requirements are being met. Eased lands are not open to the public, unless the owner desires it. Easements can be created for properties that are entirely in a natural state, or for natural areas adjacent to residences or other buildings.

Easements are designed to stay with the land title forever, so they are passed on from the current landowner to whomever else may purchase or inherit the property. Because easements represent permanent restrictions on development, the landowner is considered to have donated a significant portion of the property's value, and is therefore eligible for a charitable tax receipt based on a percentage of the Fair Market Value of the property. These tax receipts can be used to offset income taxes for up to 10 years after the donation takes place.

For more information, or to explore an easement for your property, please get in touch with GBLT Executive Director Bill Lougheed at (416) 440-1519 x101 or bill.lougheed@gblt.org.



Zimmerman Easement

The Zimmerman Easement property comprises the western portion of an island at the extreme northern end of Go Home Bay. In terms of ecological values, the Zimmerman Easement is exceptional even by Georgian Bay standards. Over its 10.2 acres,

six vegetation communities, including high quality elevated wetlands, provide habitat for five documented herpetofauna species at risk (Eastern Massasauga, Eastern Foxsnake, Five-lined Skink, Snapping Turtle and Northern Map Turtle) one insect (Monarch Butterfly) and another suspected turtle. The Zimmerman Easement also has two rare plant species: Stiff Yellow Flax and Carolina Yellow-eyed Grass. During a follow up visit to the initial Baseline Study in mid June 2017, GBLT staff sighted two Eastern Foxsnakes, a Five-lined Skink, a Monarch Butterfly and a local favourite: a rare Prairie Warbler male was singing on nesting territory during the entire three hour visit.

The Zimmerman property adds and connects to a much larger collection of protected land in the immediate area, including the massive 6,000 acre Tadenac Club lands, plus GBLT-protected Holton Reserve, Tadenac Lots, the Harris Easement, Martin Reach Reserve, and just offshore, the Southeast Wooded Pine Island. Thank you to Barbara Zimmerman for choosing to include your beautiful property in this network of protected areas.

“This land remains for nature”

Easement donor Barbara Zimmerman on island memories and her decision to create a permanent place for nature



Members of the Zimmerman family at their Go Home Bay cottage

My father and his great friend Terry Sheard together bought the 20+ acre “MacKelcan” island circa 1970—so named for its previous owners. Well before my parents even knew about the property, my great friend Barbara Clark and I used to visit. We had heard of an abandoned cottage and we set out to find it. The old cottage was hidden away out of sight at the back of the property, in the woods by a back bay rather than in plain view at the front of the property where anyone would build today. But find it we did. We would go into the cottage and look at all the old stuff in there and scare ourselves with imagined visions of MacKelcan ghosts. It seemed we had the place to ourselves, and that the owners had abandoned it unexpectedly. They had left the cottage with everything in it, apparently expecting to return the following season. The MacKels loved music it seemed, there were a lot of old 78 albums and an ancient gramophone

and a guitar. The MacKels called the island “Windsong”. We never told anyone that we were going to MacKels and into that spooky old cottage. This was back when parents had no interest in knowing what their kids were doing.

After buying the island, my father and Mr. Sheard had the cottage wreck torn down by a few Go Home Bay teenagers, who had one of the best summers of their lives while doing so. Bill Clark took the old boathouse, and it can be seen today at the harbour of High Rock Island.

The Zimmerman and Sheard families have enjoyed the MacKelcan island for almost 50 years. We have had countless picnics, swims, sleepovers and adventures there. I have walked the island for 50 years observing the wildlife, and I can say that MacKels’ (as it is locally known) is an outstanding refuge for nature, especially for reptiles and amphibians. There are a series of ponds that provide perfect breeding habitat for tree, green, and bull-frogs as well as American toad. The snake fauna is rich, and we have observed most species of Ontario snakes there. There is a population of skinks and different turtles in the bays. There are also lots of Massasaugas; one “slept” next to my mother on one memorable sleepover she had with my little sisters.

We are very pleased to have the opportunity to place a conservation easement on the Zimmerman portion of the MacKelcan island. We still own the property, but the easement assures that it can never be subdivided or built upon, even if one day we were to sell it. Instead, this land remains for nature with the occasional respectful human visitor. Georgian Bay has given so much to our lives that we wished to give something back to Georgian Bay.

Mudpuppy

The gentle giant of the salamander world

by Siobhan Galway, Species at Risk Technician, Blazing Star Environmental



A Surprise Catch - This mudpuppy was found hiding between rocks in the Maitland River by researchers who were looking for Queensnakes. Photo by Jory Mullen

The mudpuppy is quite an interesting creature; not only is it the largest and only fully aquatic salamander in Canada, but it is also the only Canadian salamander able to make noise. Their name is derived from these noises that are often described as a squeaky bark, and hence the name—mudpuppy.

The mudpuppy is Canada's gentle giant of the salamander world. They can grow up to almost half a metre long (48 cm) and are thought to live up to 11 years in the wild. They are easily identifiable by their frilly red gills. Mudpuppies don't have a terrestrial stage like other species of salamander, and as a result, they keep their gills for their entire lives. These gills are used to provide them with oxygen and can reflect a lot about their environment. The less oxygen content their habitat has, the longer their gills will be and vice versa.

Adults are brown to grey, often with dark blue mottled spots and a cream or white belly. They have a large head, small eyes, a flattened tail, and four toes on each of their stubby legs, which they use to walk and swim along the bottom of bodies of water. Juveniles can be anywhere from orange to black but have characteristic yellow stripes which fade as they mature. Due to their large size and unique features, mudpuppies are distinctive from other species of salamander, making them easy to identify. Even juvenile mudpuppies are usually larger than other native Ontario salamanders.

Mudpuppies can be found in much of southern Ontario; their range extends from the Manitoba and Quebec borders

northward to Ottawa. Outside of Canada, they are also found throughout the central United States. Despite their large range, encounters with this secretive and elusive salamander are rare. They spend their days on the bottom of cool murky bodies of water such as rivers, lakes, and streams where they hide under logs, rocks, or in thick vegetation. A female that has laid eggs will spend her time guarding them until they hatch. At night, these nocturnal salamanders emerge to forage for small fish, insects, and worms—mudpuppies are often a surprise catch for anglers. Although this large slippery aquatic creature can be intimidating, they are all bark and no bite. They are gentle non-venomous creatures and if found or caught, they should be returned promptly to the water.

Although not currently listed as a species at risk, mudpuppies face the same threats faced by other amphibians. Due to their permeable skin, mudpuppies are particularly sensitive to poor water quality which can degrade their habitat and cause large die off events.

To unveil the mystery of this secretive salamander, head to Oxford Mills for a Mudpuppy Night hosted every Friday during the winter. Come out to view mudpuppies in their natural habitat and enjoy food and conversation with Mudpuppy enthusiasts from around Ontario. To learn more about this unique opportunity to view mudpuppies visit: <http://pinicola.ca/mudpup1.htm>

Have you ever been lucky enough to see the elusive mudpuppy? Report your sightings of this species to help conservationists protect the mudpuppy. Report sightings of all reptiles and amphibians to the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas: www.ontarionature.org/protect/species/herpetofaunal_atlas.php. Your sightings will help track the spatial distribution of reptile and amphibian populations throughout Ontario and protect valuable habitat. Every sighting helps!



Do you have your Georgian Bay book yet?

Bringing together experts on Georgian Bay's environment, human

history, and culture, this is a must-read for anyone who loves Georgian Bay or wants to learn more about it.

Copies are available around the Bay this summer!

Visit gblt.org/book for details and locations.

? Georgian Bay QUERY:

Why is it important to garden with native species? What are some things I can plant to help out birds, butterflies, and other pollinators on Georgian Bay?

Answered by Kate Harries

I like insects. Butterflies, moths, bees, bugs, beetles, syrphid flies, mayflies, dragonflies, damselflies, and more... mosquitoes and ants maybe less so, but I view it as my responsibility to minimize the harm they can do to me, so I can minimize the harm I do to them. The same applies to wasps and hornets. I try to make space for us all.

Birds like insects too, especially those in the larval stage of their lifecycle, because these are the most nutritious and easily digestible food for chicks. Birds that are normally seed-eaters still turn to insects and their larvae in spring.

There's a story told by Doug Tallamy, entomology professor at the University of Delaware and author of *Bringing Nature Home*, a seminal book that sounded a clarion call to gardeners to step up and save the planet. Tallamy watched a pair of chickadees flying back and forth to their nest bearing, mostly, caterpillars. He counted, and calculated that they delivered 390-570 caterpillars a day, which over 16-18 days in the nest added up to 6,240-9,120 caterpillars.

One of Doug's graduate students followed up his findings by monitoring chickadee nests in city neighbourhoods. The areas that had a good proportion of native trees produced healthy fledglings. But in the neighbourhoods where non-native trees predominated, the nestlings did poorly or died. Under the dead chicks, researchers found sunflower seeds that the parents, unable to find the necessary food, had brought from feeders to offer to their young, all in vain.

Butterflies and moths harvest nectar or pollen from a variety of sources, native or non-native. But when it comes to reproduction, ninety per cent of insects that eat plants can reproduce only on those with which they share an evolutionary history, known as their host plants. For example, milkweed is the host plant of the monarch butterfly.

Bees consume nectar and pollen to make food for larvae that winter in cells, and many will visit natives and non-natives alike. But many others will only collect from a flower to which they are adapted, again through an evolutionary partnership. For example, the sundrop sweat bee only collects from the sundrop.

A word about the honey bee: it is non-native. I am conscious that these European bees are actually an invasive species that can displace our native bees (400 species in Ontario). I also see beekeepers as a powerful voice against the use of insect-killing pesticides and loss of habitat that have led to a precipitous decline in all bee populations. If we all grow lots of native pollinator plants there will be enough for everyone. This

includes government (think parks, highway medians, vacant land), businesses, and institutions.

So what plants are the best for pollinators? See my Top 12 list below. Georgian Bay is magical. Absorb the aesthetic and echo it in the space where you are gardening. Try not to use plants that bring a "city" look to the Shield. Avoid bringing plants from the south; unwanted pests and diseases could hitch a ride. But also don't use plants that have been sprayed with pesticides—they will poison your pollinators and the birds and other creatures that consume them. Ask at the garden centre: have these plants been sprayed? Are they locally propagated?

Finally, be vigilant against invasive species. European Common Reed (*Phragmites australis* subsp. *australis*) is spreading through cottage country at an alarming rate. It creates tall monocultures that are no better than pavement at supporting wildlife.

Other invasives that are degrading our wild spaces include Garlic Mustard and Dog-strangling Vine. And then there are the ones people buy—Bishop's Goutweed, Creeping Bugleweed, Lily of the Valley, English Ivy and Periwinkle. The more common Georgian Bay invasive plants are Sedum, Chives, Field Bindweed and the *Phragmites* described above. Educate yourself and don't let these destructive forces gain a foothold in your little patch of paradise.



Top 12 Georgian Bay pollinator plants

1. Anise Hyssop *Agastache foeniculum*
2. Cardinal Flower *Lobelia cardinalis*
3. Butterfly Weed *Asclepias tuberosa*
4. Swamp Milkweed *Asclepias incarnata*
5. New England Aster *Symphyotrichum novae angliae*
6. Wild Bergamot *Monarda fistulosa*
7. Spotted Joe Pye Weed *Eutrochium maculatum*
8. Wild Columbine *Aquilegia canadensis*
9. White Baneberry *Actaea pachypoda*
10. White Turtlehead *Chelone glabra*
11. Wild Lupin *Lupinus perennis*
12. Purple Coneflower *Echinacea purpurea*

Kate Harries is the owner of Return of the Native plant nursery, north of Elmville. www.returnofthenative.ca.



Who's that flapping past?

A Primer of Georgian Bay birds

Below is a selection of bird species you can expect to see on (and around) the shores of Georgian Bay. Visit gblt.org/birds for more bird descriptions and links to the songs and calls for each species:

Photo: Thom Morrissey



Common Loon

The classic Georgian Bay and Ontario lake country bird, the Common Loon's haunting "wail" call is used to communicate its whereabouts to other loons.

Almost all Common Loons summer on fresh water but overwinter on salt.

Photo: A. Evans



Osprey

A population recovery success story, Osprey were on the verge of extinction until a ban was imposed on DDT and concerted human efforts were mounted to restore

their numbers. This includes the heroics of our own Georgian Bay Osprey Society (GBOS).

Photo: Tom Murray



Ovenbird

A large ground-nesting wood warbler whose nest shape gives it its name, the Ovenbird delivers a loud "teacher-teacher-teacher" song. The ground nest makes its young vulnerable to predation by

chipmunks, and it is also a target for brood parasitism from Brown-headed Cowbirds.

Photo: Sandy Sutherland



Prairie Warbler

Known by local enthusiasts as the signature Georgian Bay songbird, the rock barrens and junipers of the central Georgian Bay coast are the absolute northern extreme of this bird's range. There are only an estimated 300 breeding pairs of Prairie Warblers on Georgian Bay.

Photo: Henry T. McLin



White-throated Sparrow

Provider of another familiar and favourite cottage country birdsong, "Swee-eet Canada Canada Canada", the White-throated Sparrow has been known to interbreed successfully with the Dark-eyed

Junco, related only in that it too is a sparrow.

Photo: John Sutton

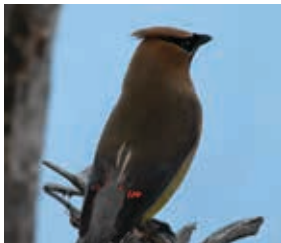


Red-eyed Vireo

This very common eastern forest bird is a formidable singer—a single male can deliver its brief song *more than 20,000 times* over the course

of a day. Much more often heard than seen, Red-eyed Vireos "glean" caterpillars and invertebrates from the forest canopy.

Photo: B. Harper



Cedar Waxwing

Arguably our most beautiful local bird, Cedar Waxwings are one of few North American birds that specialize in eating fruit. They typically forage in groups while calling back and forth in their high, thin whistle.

Photo: Brian Ralphs



Sandhill Crane

Enjoying a huge local population increase, the large size and shape of these wading birds are both striking, and unlike any other Georgian Bay bird. Their call is an unmistakable staccato "bugling" and they will often call during flight.

Photo: Flicipete



Merlin

Small and aggressive falcons, Merlins have been known to hunt in pairs; one will frighten and scatter a flock of songbirds, the other will then dive in to exploit the resulting chaos. Similar in

appearance to the smaller Kestrel, Merlins occupy old nests of other raptors and crows, preferably on islands or peninsulas providing good vantage points for intercepting winged prey.

Photo: Marilyn Kreisel



Great Blue Heron

A common sight in lake country, Great Blue Herons are colonial nesters. Despite their impressive size, individuals weigh in at a scant 5 or 6 lbs. Great Blue Herons have specially adapted neck vertebrae that allow for their lightning fast prey strike.

Photo: Vitalii Khustochka



Hermit Thrush

A ground-feeding bird, the Hermit Thrush has a beautiful, flute-like call. Hermit Thrushes in western North America build their nests in trees while their eastern counterparts do so on

the ground. Hermit Thrushes will sometimes shake bits of grass with their feet in order to attract insects.

Photo: Jeff Bryant



Eastern Wood Pewee

Known by its distinctive and frequent “pee-a-weeee” call, this is a member of the flycatcher family. Pewees employ the classic flycatcher hunting technique whereby they will perch on an exposed branch

and then “sally out” after flying insects.

Photo: Bryce Bradford



Caspian Tern

The larger, gull-sized tern of the Great Lakes, birders enjoy what they call its angry-sounding “go-to-hell” call. These are bold and aggressive birds who will actively defend their colonies; unwary trespassers run the risk of a pecked head.

Photo: Ashley Tubbs



Double-crested Cormorant

Considered a pest by many, the local Cormorant population has peaked and is now subsiding. Decimated in the Great Lakes by contaminated fish in the 1950s and 60s, Cormorants then more than recovered, assisted by the introduction of non-native

baitfish. Cormorants began colonizing the Great Lakes in the early 1900s.

Photo: Eric Ellingson



Common Merganser

True to its name, the Common Merganser is the most frequently sighted “fish duck”, typically a female leading a flotilla of young. Drakes are much less conspicuous once

breeding is over in late June. Like most mergansers, Common Mergansers are tree cavity nesters.

Photo: Tom Murray



Eastern Whip-poor-will

A bird whose unmistakable call is heard less and less, the Whip-poor-will is incredibly well camouflaged. Like other nightjars, it is an “aerial insectivore” that nests on the ground. Whip-poor-wills synchronize their clutch’s

hatching to coincide with a full moon; this allows all-night foraging to feed their voracious chicks.

Photo: Andy Reago



Broad-winged Hawk

A small buteo raptor favouring dense forest for nesting, Broad-wings are carnivorous generalists feeding on anything from other birds to snakes. Broad-wings

gather into huge flocks or “kettles” in the fall for their lengthy migration to South America.

Photo: Andrew Reding



Barred Owl

Probably Georgian Bay’s most common owl, along with the much smaller Northern Saw-Whet Owl. Barreds are big, handsome, and elusive birds. Barred Owls are a non-migratory species and can be attracted to nesting boxes.

Photo: Rick Alabama



Pine Warbler

The “Pine” in this bird’s name isn’t casual; Pine Warblers are seldom seen on any other vegetation. Known as the only warbler that will eat seeds, these birds will even visit backyard

feeders on their wintering grounds. The bulk of their time in this area is spent feeding high in the pines.

Photo: Amy McAndrews



Spotted Sandpiper

One of Georgian Bay’s few shorebirds, when feeding the Spotted Sandpiper can be seen moving quickly from place to place with distinctive short, stiff wingbeats. Gender roles

are reversed in this species; the female establishes and defends territory while the male tends to the eggs and chicks.

Thanks to Donald Sutherland and Donald Fraser for their expert ornithological consulting.

Look out for birds on Victoria Day weekend!

Springtime is when many migratory birds return to Georgian Bay, and when all sorts of species are actively mating and nesting. This May long weekend, keep an eye (and ear) out to see how many of these birds you encounter on Georgian Bay. Then tell us who you saw! Visit gbt.org/birds to report your sightings and be entered for a chance to win some bird-related prizes.

Congratulations to our King Family Bursary Winners

This summer, two very deserving recipients will be embarking on projects supported by the GBLT's King Family Bursary, intended to increase awareness and appreciation of the eastern Georgian Bay and North Channel environment, history, communities, and culture. Congratulations to Sean Tamblyn and Kate Marshall Flaherty!

Thank you to our generous bursary funders, Wally and Marilyn King and John Hartman, for making these projects possible. We'd also like to thank our volunteer jurors for contributing their time and insights, and all the wonderful applicants who made our choice extremely difficult.



Sean Tamblyn

Sean Tamblyn is a Toronto-based photographer with a passion for Georgian Bay. When not kayaking the coastline and barrier islands between Killarney and Port Severn, you can find him kick sledding over the ice in the depths of winter documenting the landscapes,

wildlife, and history of the Bay.

This season he'll be focused on documenting the lighthouses of the Bay for the Georgian Bay Lighthouse Survey, working to raise awareness of their plight at the hands of the ironically named Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act. To date, only the light at Snug Harbour has been granted Heritage status, and the light station on Hope Island is the first to have been demolished. Sean has remote cameras out all winter long documenting the harshest weather over the remotest lights, and will be visiting all the lights from Killarney to Doubletop Island over the course of the season.

"I'm thrilled to receive the King Family Bursary and partner with the Georgian Bay Land Trust to help raise awareness of the plight of these cultural icons that have guided mariners home for over a century. Together, we can help ensure that they're around for future generations to enjoy - the Bay would be a lesser place without them."
– Sean Tamblyn



Kate Marshall Flaherty

Kate Marshall Flaherty is an award-winning poet who has spent most of her life enjoying the stunning Georgian Bay region — cross country skiing in winter, sugaring off in spring, harvesting the garden in

fall, and delighting in the beaches and shorelines of Killbear Park, 4 km from her parents' farm, in summer. Many poems in her previous five books ponder and reflect upon the striking landscapes that the Group of Seven depicted in their art.

For her project, Kate will create three short art films, integrating her performance poetry with the original music of award-winning composer and film-maker Mark Korven. Set against the memorable backdrop of Georgian Bay landscapes, these films will highlight the jack pines and quartz rocks of the shorelines, striving to capture in word, sound, and image the unique character of this region.

"I am thrilled and honoured to be selected to create performance poetry films that evoke the spirit of the Georgian Bay region. There is such power in poetry to conjure a landscape and create an emotional setting; to add music deepens and enhances the journey; to have a backdrop of the memorable topography will hopefully make this a powerful experience for the viewer. My hope in filming the region of my childhood is that it will inspire and delight."

– Kate Marshall Flaherty

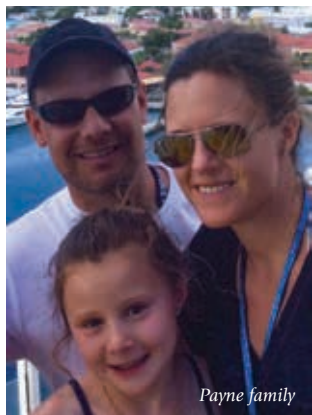


Big Water is now available!

One of the first projects the King Family Bursary supported was a Young Adult novel by Andrea Curtis, inspired by the true story of a Georgian Bay shipwreck. We're excited to announce that the novel has now been published! *Big Water* follows the only two survivors of the wreck of the S.S. Asia, teenagers Christina and Daniel, as they must confront Georgian Bay's wild nature and their own personal struggles to survive for several days in the wilderness. Georgian Bay teens (and adults too) will love reading this historical drama set in their own backyard. Copies are available at your local bookstore or online, and more information can be found at andreaclurtis.ca.

Family history on the Bay inspires Mark Payne to ensure it's accessible to others

by Emily Worts, GBLT volunteer



Payne family

Vince Payne first visited Pointe au Baril in the 1950s. Like so many who came before him, and so many since, the rugged landscape left an impression. It took less than a decade for Vince to fully commit to the area, both emotionally and financially. A watchmaker and precious gems jeweler by trade, Vince packed up his shop and his 16-year-old son, Mike, and left Toronto for the shores of Georgian Bay.

Vince invested all he had in a dilapidated property with no road access, no hydro, and no phone service. "It was technically an island," says Mark Payne, Vince's grandson, of the property where his thriving marina, Payne Marine, now sits. "They did anything they could to make money. They trapped minnows, cut ice in the winter and added more and more services until they were a full-service marina."

Mark was born in Pointe au Baril and lived there full-time until he was seven. When his parents divorced he returned to work at the marina on weekends, pumping gas, mowing the lawn and cleaning washrooms. "I always knew I was going to take over the marina," says Mark. He apprenticed to become a marine mechanic, studied Marine Management at Georgian College, and in 2001 began the process of buying out his father, becoming sole owner of Payne Marine ten years later. The marina property was home to Mark and his wife Laurie, principal of Parry Sound Public School, and their now 8-year-old daughter Haydyn. After Mark's father retired, the family

bought an island cottage near the historical Ojibway Club where three generations could continue to gather on the rocks, away from the demands of their award-winning marina.

Mark cites the relationships he has made in Pointe au Baril as one of the main reasons he's never wanted to live anywhere else. And of course, the landscape and all it has to offer has kept him on Georgian Bay. "When I was younger and hadn't travelled much I had a lot of customers who had been all over the world tell me the same thing: 'There is no better place than Pointe au Baril.'" As he got older and did some travelling of his own, Mark realized just how true this was. "Pointe au Baril has so much Crown land and I love that it is accessible to anybody," says Mark. "The guy that works in the factory in Hamilton, making \$20 an hour, can still take his kids fishing in the most beautiful place in the world. Anyone can experience those sunsets, that landscape, the water, and those rocks."

In 2006, Mark decided he wanted to help ensure these landscapes were accessible for generations to come. He became an annual sponsor of the Georgian Bay Land Trust, and five years later on the 50th anniversary of Payne Marine pledged \$50,000 to the GBLT. "I committed \$25,000 and encouraged my customers to match it." In no time, Payne Marine and its customers had reached their goal, donating over \$50,000 to help the Land Trust protect and preserve the lands of Georgian Bay for today and tomorrow.

Mark's commitment to conservation hasn't stopped there. Payne Marine remains a key annual sponsor of the Land Trust's activities—no surprise given the family's deep ties to the area. Thank you Mark for your love of Georgian Bay and your generosity in giving back!

Welcome Summer Conservation Interns



Anne Hughes is currently finishing a Psychology degree at Ryerson University in Toronto. She has spent all of her summers growing up at her family's cottage in Cognashene, and has a strong love of the outdoors and learning. Anne spent many years participating in, working at, and finally being head of, the Cognashene

Recreation Program. Anne is extremely excited to be back working with the GBLT for her second summer. She is looking forward to continuing to share her passion for Georgian Bay this summer and keep doing her part to maintain the Bay for future generations.



Sofia Vermeulen will be finishing her education at University of California, Santa Cruz with a bachelor's degree in Anthropology, and pursuing an art freelance career on the side. Sofia has spent every summer in Georgian Bay and continues to fall more and more in love with the landscape as well as the

wonderful communities in the area. Sofia is anticipating an exciting summer as a conservation intern for GBLT, and hopes to provide meaningful work that will help maintain a healthy balance between the environment and the communities within it.

The Wonder of Wood Warblers

by Peter Wood, Editor, Georgian Bay Today



Chestnut-sided Warblers by Peter Wood and Bob Wood

Spectacular migrations, bright plumage, sprightly behaviour, and the ubiquitous songs of Wood Warblers are threads of the fabric of our spring landscape around Georgian Bay. They arrive in May after abandoning their winter grounds in the tropics. It is during this migration time that we are most likely to be rewarded with a glimpse of them, in brilliant spring plumage.

Warbler migration is one of the most memorable of all bird events: a thrill to witness. These birds are highly migratory, meaning they travel great distances, their movements are massive, their routes are complex and their timing is precisely predictable. It is assumed that the migration is an evolutionary response to features in the environment and that this process is ongoing, still evolving. Warblers fly at night and face many perils along the way: predation, deadly storms, and starvation among them.

The secrets of bird navigation during migration remain a puzzle to scientists. There is evidence that birds navigate in part by the stars. They may also react to the earth's magnetic field and use their sense of smell. However they do it, upon arrival in our region they seek out habitats that provide the essentials of a food supply, nesting material and appropriate nest sites. Some species inhabit the forest canopy, some require the early successional woodland habitats, some need grasslands, others require marshes and wetlands, some even nest in cavities. They are primarily (not solely) insectivores and are found most abundantly in forests that suffer from outbreaks of spruce budworm. This insect can destroy millions of hectares of spruce, fir, and other softwood trees in a single season. The warblers are attracted to these outbreaks and help to control them.

Once on territory, they begin to sing: an exclusive and incessant male behavior during the breeding season. While the males proclaim their territory, the females select the nest site and build the nests mainly of plant down, bark, grass, and spider webs. Whether on the ground or eighty feet up, their nests are ingeniously well concealed and they have mastered uncannily evasive behaviors to avoid detection by predators.

The best approach to warbler identification is to gain a general understanding of species distribution, that is, which species is where and which is not. A second aid to identification is habitat. Each species has a specific habitat requirement—some narrower than others. After these two considerations, and only after, is it time to appeal to appearance: field marks found in bird books. Bird behavior can also be a diagnostic aid but the very best aid to identification is song. Learn the songs and you can identify bird species before you see them or even without seeing them.

Wood Warblers have suffered thirty years of steady decline. The primary reason is the loss or fragmentation of habitats, particularly of our northern forests that have fallen before the logger's saw. It takes time for these forests to regenerate and the new forests do not support the same diversity as the original. Habitat fragmentation also has its negative effects on warbler populations. Depletion of winter habitats in the tropical zone also contributes to declining numbers in warblers. There is some good news though. Species like the Chestnut-sided and Blue-winged Warblers benefit from early forest successional stage and forest edges and are actually increasing in numbers.

Parasitic Brown-headed Cowbirds are also life-threatening to warblers. These birds lay their eggs in warbler nests. When hatched, the more aggressive and larger Cowbird out-competes the young warblers for food. A single Cowbird egg is a death sentence to a warbler nest. As if that's not enough for warblers to deal with, they suffer massive mortalities by flying into skyscrapers, glass covered buildings, and other tall structures along their migratory routes.

'Georgian Bay Warblers' are nesting species: residents of our vast and diverse area. It does not include species that migrate through our area en route to more northern latitudes. These are the warblers that are with us for the spring and early summer, the ones that we hear each day at dawn. These are the birds that evoke a sense of awe at their survival strategies: the birds that amaze us with their migratory abilities. These are the birds that thrill us with the occasional glimpse of their bright plumage. These are the birds that fill us with a sense of wonder.

Resident warblers to look and listen for around Georgian Bay:
Golden-winged, Nashville, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated blue, Black-throated green, Pine, Prairie, Blackburnian, Black-and-white, Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning, Common Yellowthroat and Canada.

Congratulations to Grenville Volunteer Award winners

Jen Kernaghan and Sally Lennox



Jen Kernaghan

Jen Kernaghan was a unanimous staff pick for the Grenville Volunteer Award – someone who has helped each of us succeed as much as she has excelled in her own responsibilities.

Jen first became involved with the Land Trust in 2007, as part of the “Regenerate GBLT” group aimed at increasing engagement among 20- and 30-somethings on the Bay. Two years later, she joined the board and took on the role of Communications Chair, a position through which she has guided everything from social media to educational articles to in-person outreach. Jen has also been an incredible help with the monumental task of event organization, contributing to Winterludes and art auctions, and most recently serving as our Bayscapes chair for three years running.

Jen’s enthusiasm, creativity, and generosity make her both a highly effective volunteer and a fantastic person to work with. She is consistently full of new ideas for outreach and engagement, and is always ready to jump in and help out with all the tasks necessary to bring these ideas to life. In addition to her board and committee responsibilities, Jen has recruited volunteers and sponsors, designed and assembled Land Trust merchandise, expertly managed the chaotic art auction checkout table, fed and hosted staff and fellow volunteers, and run errands ad infinitum. She is indispensable to busy staff with her encouragement, sage advice, and willingness to help out with unglamorous behind-the-scenes jobs, and we cannot thank her enough for everything she does.

Jen’s hard work has engaged thousands of people with the GBLT’s message of conservation and appreciation for our environment, culminating in new protected areas and more environmentally responsible citizens. Thank you Jen for helping us tell Georgian Bay’s story and inspiring us all to keep exploring and protecting this incredible place.



Sally Lennox

If you’ve ever flipped through a GBLT brochure, sported our logo on your hat or coffee mug, or hung a Bay-themed poster on your wall, you’ve enjoyed the beautiful work of Sally Lennox. Sally can’t have known when she joined the GBLT’s Branding Task Force in 2006 that she was signing on for over a decade of continuous design work, but she does such a wonderful job that we haven’t been able to let her go.

Sally is an internationally-recognized Creative Director whose 30-year career in graphic design has taken her to the top of her field, and we are very lucky that she is willing to donate so much of her time to GBLT projects. Over the years, Sally has created countless brochures, ads, posters, and Annual Reports. She has designed our logo, helped refresh the LandScript, and judged photography competitions. Sally has also been generous with her talents as a photographer, supplying her beautiful images for everything from art auctions to holiday cards.

It sometimes feels like Sally should be another member of staff—she is always willing to design this, update that, and help us with one more thing—and she always gives us her very best work. Sally’s passion for design is clear in her continual excitement to imagine new layouts and better ways to share the GBLT’s work with the public.

Sally’s involvement with the GBLT doesn’t end with graphic design. She has been on hand to assist in many ways over the years, applying her artistic eye to event decor, and her mechanical know-how to uncooperative boats. She is also the #1 support to our Executive Director, co-hosting visiting speakers, partners, and research scientists over several summers. While Bill’s hard work may receive more of the spotlight, Sally will proudly tell you that she was asked to help out at the GBLT long before he was!

Thank you Sally for the tremendous work you’ve done over many years to support and promote conservation on Georgian Bay.

Georgian Bay Spirit Co. gives “Back to the Bay”



Step outside on a warm, Georgian Bay night and you can't miss the fresh and slightly earthy smell of pine in the air—aromatherapy at its finest. That's the

sensation business partners Denzil Wadds and Tim Keenleyside were going for when they created Georgian Bay Gin in 2013. Both partners have Georgian Bay roots that extend back to their grandparents' generation. In fact, years ago, Tim remembers his grandmother remarking that someone should learn to make gin with all the wild juniper growing on their island in Carling Township. Now he and his partners are doing just that.

“Our goal is to create spirits and cocktails that evoke the Georgian Bay lifestyle,” says Keenleyside. “That means all-natural ingredients, including Georgian Bay juniper and Ontario spring water, along with an approach to business that balances growth with a healthy respect for people, community and the environment.” For this reason, Georgian Bay Spirit Co. approached the Georgian Bay Land Trust the year it launched. “We wanted to support the great work the GBLT does and to collaborate with people who share our deep connection with The Bay,” says Wadds.

Since launching Georgian Bay Gin in the summer of 2014, Georgian Bay Spirit Co. has been growing rapidly. In addition to winning major international awards for its gin and vodka, Georgian Bay Spirit Gin and Vodka Smash have quickly become top sellers at the LCBO.

In 2017, Wadds and Keenleyside were joined by a third partner, Mark Cohon, whose experience helping to build great Canadian brands like the CFL and the Juno awards has helped Georgian Bay Spirit Co. grow into one of Canada's most successful craft spirits producers. In fact, with the addition of Georgian Bay Vodka Smash to the lineup last spring, Georgian Spirit Co. sold over 5,000,000 cans of Smash last year alone. “I like to think of each of those cans as a moment of connection with our consumers,” says Cohon, whose past experience includes 7 years on the board of the World Wildlife Fund and 8 years as former Chair of the Ontario Science Centre. “It's humbling to think that we've been part of 5,000,000 different moments – weddings, reunions, camping trips, chilling on the dock with friends, you name it.”

The idea of connection runs through much of what Georgian Bay Spirit Co. does. This year, in order to further its mission, Georgian Bay Spirit Co. launched its Back to the Bay Fund. “The idea of the fund is to further share what the Bay has given us,” says Keenleyside. “That means funding organizations and programs that support and build our connection with nature while bringing people and communities together.”

As part of this initiative, Georgian Bay Spirit Co. will be funding the GBLT's **LANDMARK** speaker series this summer. Through this program, experts will give talks in Georgian Bay communities about environmental issues impacting Georgian Bay.

“The program is a perfect fit for us,” says Wadds. “It's an opportunity for people to come together, learn about issues affecting the Bay and think about ways to take collective action.” Visit the back page of the LandScript for dates and locations.

Georgian Bay Snapshot

Georgian Bay Greenery
by Roxanna Nazarowicz
(RX photography)



Some of us were lucky enough to witness the Northern Lights last summer, one of the most spectacular experiences Georgian Bay has to offer. Thank you to Roxanna Nazarowicz for expertly capturing and sharing this incredible view from Honey Harbour!

Submit your best Georgian Bay shots to info@gbt.org, or use [#GBLandTrust](https://www.instagram.com/GBLandTrust) on Instagram, for a chance to be featured in the next Georgian Bay Snapshot.





Conservation LEADERSHIP

A CONSERVATION PLAN FOR
21,000 acres

PRIORITIZED
15 key
specific habitat types



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Tribute GIFTS

Received from November 7th 2017 – April 6th 2018

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Alice G. Crooks
Geordie Dalglish,
Swith Bell, Louisa &
Marigold Dalglish

Peter Engholm
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Bubba Loughheed
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gblt.org

SUMMER 2018

SUMMEREVENTS

PROTECTING the WILDERNESS of our UNIQUE ARCHIPELAGO

Photo: Yves Aubry



LANDMARK Speaker Series

Learn from speakers on leading conservation topics in communities around Georgian Bay. Visit gblt.org/events for details about each event.

Go Home Bay (July 14th): Conservation and Climate Change with Dan Kraus

Pointe au Baril (August 11th): Migratory Bird Research with Dr. Ryan Norris

Sans Souci (date TBA): The Art and Culture of Quillwork with Boshdayosgaykwe (Tracey Pawis)



Photography Workshop – July 13th, 2-5 pm, Split Rock Island, Go Home Bay. Take your Georgian Bay photography skills to the next level with Sylvia Galbraith. Bring your kids (and their cameras) too for a photo scavenger hunt!



Art Day at Fairies Dancing – July 16th, 12-4 pm, Pointe au Baril. Bring your art supplies and join artist Gill Cameron as she hosts us for a picnic and painting afternoon on this beautiful island!

Learn to Fish – July 18th, 10 am-12 pm or 2-4 pm, Blackstone Lake Marina. Kids and beginning anglers of all ages will love this interactive lesson delivered by the MNRF.



Cocktails on the Lizard – July 20th, 3-5 pm, Cognashene. Bring your afternoon cocktails to the Lizard, and spend a few hours enjoying this beloved island with friends.

SAVE THE DATE!

Bayscapes Art Auction

Friday, November 16th, 2018
Artscape Wychwood Barns, Toronto



Yoga on the Rocks

Four dates: July 15th & 25th, August 12th & 22nd, 10-11:15 am, American Camp Island, Wah Wah Taysee. Begin your day with invigorating yoga led by Angela Granziera. No experience required. \$10 per participant.



Rock Walks – Join “rock star” geologist Dr. Nick Eyles for a fascinating tour of the geological secrets seen in the rocks beneath our feet.

The Pancakes (W. Carling): July 21st, 1 pm (rain date July 22nd)

American Camp (Wah Wah Taysee): July 27th, 1 pm (rain date July 30th)



Kids' Conservation Quest – Kids ages 8-12 will love learning about Georgian Bay flora and fauna and how to be a good steward of this precious environment. Bring a lunch and drinking water.

Honey Harbour Schoolhouse: July 24th, 11 am-1:30 pm

American Camp Island (Wah Wah Taysee): July 26th, 10 am-1 pm



Phragmites Removal – Help us remove this invasive reed from Georgian Bay's shorelines and wetlands!

Giant's Tomb: August 8th & 9th, 10 am

Sandy & Ingersoll Islands: August 10th, 10 am

Zimmerman Easement Walk & Kayak – August 17th, 2-4 pm, Go Home Bay. Join us to celebrate the newly protected Zimmerman Easement with a guided walk around the property followed by an optional kayak (bring your own).



For more information about any of these events please visit gblt.org/events.



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The Georgian Bay Land Trust acts to preserve the wilderness lands of eastern Georgian Bay and the North Channel through strategic conservation planning, land securement, stewardship, conservation research, and education.

We are a registered Canadian charity (#13195 8811 RR0001)



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