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SUMMER 2020

# LANDSCRIPT

PROTECTING the WILDERNESS of our UNIQUE ARCHIPELAGO

## *Butterflies* of Georgian Bay



What makes Georgian  
Bay's habitat unique?



How to help  
an injured turtle



Nature activities  
for kids

Photo: K. Hunter



# Jewels on the Wind:

## *The Butterflies of Georgian Bay*

by Donald M. Fraser, Retired Ecological Consultant and Go Home Bay cottager and Donald A. Sutherland, Zoologist and former Georgian Bay cottager



*Tiger Swallowtails congregate to feed on minerals in the soil. Photo by Donald Sutherland*

It's Labour Day weekend. You're sitting on your cottage deck basking in the bittersweet memories of another glorious Georgian Bay summer that is rapidly coming to a close. Bittersweet because next week it's back to work, back to school—back to reality. Suddenly your thoughts are interrupted by the appearance of a Monarch butterfly, slowly drifting by on the late summer breeze, pausing to rest and feed on some nearby wildflowers before resuming its southward migration. And as you contemplate the long, arduous trip home that is awaiting you, take a few moments to consider how much farther this meandering Monarch must still travel. Assuming it survives a tortuous 4,000 km journey, this individual will spend the winter in one of several remote mountain valleys in central Mexico—along with millions of other Monarchs originating from eastern North America.

Although the Monarch is undoubtedly the most recognizable butterfly inhabiting the shores of Georgian Bay, it is far from the only one. In fact, of the 167 species of butterflies known to occur in Ontario, almost half (79 or 47.3%) have been recorded along the coast between the French River and Port Severn! This high diversity in a relatively small area of the province is attributable to the wide variety of habitats present, ranging from extensive pine-oak forests to rock barrens, coastal marshes, and myriad inland lakes, swamps and bogs. As is the case with other groups of flora and fauna,

the southern edge of the Canadian Shield supports a mixture of both southern and northern butterfly species, adding to its rich biodiversity.

This article is intended to introduce the *LandScript* reader to some of the butterflies of eastern Georgian Bay. See pages 8 and 9 for brief profiles of 12 of the more familiar and representative species, just a small sample of these varied and multi-coloured insects.

Summer is the best time for observing adult butterflies, with the greatest number of species flying from late June to mid-July. Because they are cold-blooded organisms, they are most active on warm, sunny days, when they can be seen basking with their wings spread to capture direct sunlight. As a result of this thermo-regulation, many of the northern species inhabiting our area are dark in colour, an adaptation designed to attract more solar radiation. A good example of this is the Mourning Cloak, typically the first Ontario butterfly to emerge from hibernation each spring (usually in March when temperatures reach +10°C) and familiar to many by its velvet-purple wings bordered with yellow.

Butterflies have four life stages: egg, larva (caterpillar), chrysalis (pupa), and adult. Thousands of eggs are laid each year, although it is estimated that only 1% will survive to adulthood. In Ontario, many species produce multiple

generations each summer, thereby increasing their chances of survival. In the case of the Mourning Cloak, the early spring individuals that we see have overwintered as adults. The “new” generation doesn’t appear until later in the summer.

Caterpillars feed on plants and are often restricted to a very few species or family. Adult butterflies, however, exhibit much more diverse feeding strategies and are most easily observed (and photographed!) when engaged in this activity. They variously feed on nectar produced by wildflowers (referred to as “nectaring”), sap, rotting fruit, carrion, and even dung. After rainstorms, some butterflies, particularly Tiger Swallowtails and members of the Sulphur family, congregate at drying mud puddles, extracting important minerals from the wet soil.

Like bees, butterflies are extremely important plant pollinators, typically visiting multiple plants of many different species in a single day.

Despite the severity of Ontario winters, many of our resident butterflies survive through what is known as diapause, reverting to a state of dormancy during which they temporarily cease development. Overwintering can occur in any of the four life stages. Many of the hairstreaks and coppers survive in the egg stage, sulphurs and skippers as caterpillars, swallowtails as chrysalises, anglewings and the Mourning Cloak as adults.

For others, most notably the Monarch, Red Admirals, and Painted Ladies, the survival strategy is to migrate to warmer, southern locales after breeding here. Neither the adults nor their offspring spend the winter in Ontario.

As is the case with many of our native fauna, there is strong and incontrovertible evidence that some Ontario butterflies are experiencing range contractions and coincident population declines, principally due to habitat destruction. Three species have become extirpated in Ontario as a result of the loss of suitable habitat. Fortunately, the Georgian Bay area is not subject to large-scale and widespread development, allowing local butterfly populations to remain relatively stable. The warming climate, however, is also allowing for the documented expansion of some species’ ranges.

Notwithstanding this, there is growing concern that the effects of climate change are exerting real negative pressures on the Monarch. The eastern North American population has been exhibiting a long-term decline, believed to be a combined result of a decline in milkweed (its larval foodplant and an important nectar source for adult Monarchs) in portions of the United States, and most critically forest loss in its Mexican wintering grounds. Recent studies, however, have pointed to increasing spring and summer temperatures as a factor that may negatively disrupt the timing of breeding and delay southward migration, thereby contributing to the Monarch’s overall decline. In 2008 the Monarch was formally designated as a species of Special Concern under the provincial *Endangered Species Act*, in recognition of the possibility that the Monarch could become either threatened or endangered if current trends persist. At the federal level (under the *Species At*



*Mourning Cloak by Patti Haskins*

*Risk Act*), the status of the eastern North American population of Monarch was reassessed in 2016. Given that this population had experienced a decline of more than 50% over the preceding decade it was designated nationally Endangered.

We live in an information age and as such, are fortunate that our knowledge of Ontario’s butterfly fauna is growing by leaps and bounds. And much of the data that professional ecologists are using to track the status of these fragile animals and develop appropriate conservation policies has been generated by amateur naturalists. These “citizen scientists”, many of whom document their sightings with diagnostic photographs and upload these observations to one of several on-line databases, provide an invaluable and ever-increasing resource. Fortunately, we have moved far beyond the era when butterfly occurrences were almost exclusively documented through the capture and killing of specimens to be catalogued and housed in museum collections.

Today, butterfly sightings can be submitted to e-Butterfly ([e-butterfly.org](http://e-butterfly.org)), iNaturalist Canada ([inaturalist.ca](http://inaturalist.ca)), or through the Ontario Butterfly Atlas, accessed at ([ontarioinsects.org/atlas](http://ontarioinsects.org/atlas)). Multiple submissions are unnecessary since each of these programs mines the data of the others. With over 365,000 records, including historical records dating back to 1879, the OBA has the distinction of being the longest-running citizen scientist butterfly data collection effort in North America. By consulting these invaluable sources one can ascertain the different butterfly species one might encounter in a given area and at a specific time of year. With the exception of site-specific locality data for highly sensitive species and species-at-risk, this information is freely shared among the scientific and amateur naturalist communities. Indeed, much of the information referenced in the preparation of this article was derived from these sources. Georgian Bay cottagers and visitors to the area are encouraged to submit butterfly records to one of these online databases, ideally accompanied with photographs that aid in confirming the identification. An excellent recent (2014) photographic guide to the province’s butterfly fauna is *The ROM Field Guide to Butterflies of Ontario* authored by Peter Hall *et al.* Published by the Royal Ontario Museum, it is widely available through online bookstores.



# My Love Affair with the Bay

by Tom Scoon



My love affair with Georgian Bay started in the 1950s when I was a boy. My father, Jack Scoon, had been in the Navy in WW2 and loved boating. Our family “cottage” was a boat which was kept in Lake Simcoe. Every summer we would boat from Lake Simcoe through the two locks and over two marine railways of the Severn River system into Georgian Bay. We then cruised to my Grandparents’ island, Wigwas, which is in the Big Sound of Parry Sound near Killbear Park.

My love affair with the Bay continued as a boy and young man at Camp Hurontario in Twelve Mile Bay (just south of Sans Souci and north of Wah Wah Taysee) where I was a camper and then a Counselor. I have great friendships from my Hurontario days to this day, including my wife Pamela who I met at Hurontario! When I finally left Camp, I promised myself that I would some day, somehow, return and spend my summers on the Bay. Mission accomplished. Pamela and I summer in Pointe au Baril and have raised two boys there, and now their spouses and our grandchildren also enjoy the magic of the Bay.

My memory of Georgian Bay stretches back more than 60 years. I have seen relentless expansion of development on its shores. This observation led me to think that development

pressures will continue and that we should try to protect this incredible natural paradise. This led me to the Georgian Bay Land Trust. I put my hand up and got involved. I have been Stewardship Chair, Land Protection Chair, President and now Advisor.

Pamela and I were very pleased to donate a property in the Pointe au Baril area to the GBLT. We were one of three families (the MacKenzies, Edels and Scoons) who donated approximately 12 acres and 1,000 feet of shoreline/wetland. Subsequently, the Havens family gave around 50 acres of adjacent property which now makes up the Laura Bay Reserve. I think I can say on behalf of all of the donors that we all feel really good about what we have done, having preserved one more piece of paradise in perpetuity.

Just as we teamed up as neighbours and partners, so too has GBLT teamed up with other like-minded organizations. The major acquisitions of Sandy Island, Little McCoy, Steamboat Channel and the magnificent Tadenac are all examples of shared visions with other organizations. The Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada among others have all been “Partners” with GBLT. We could not have accomplished what we have accomplished without them, nor could they have without GBLT. What a great team.

I have been asked more than once, “what did you get in return for your time and support of GBLT?” Well, my answer is that I have made a slew of wonderful new friends and I have learned first hand how generous, kind and good people can be. What a gift to me. I recommend volunteering for this organization; apart from participating in Georgian Bay’s environmental protection, it may renew and rejuvenate you.

I was asked to write about my favorite place in Georgian Bay and about my favorite thing to do. I can’t answer the first, I can think of at least a dozen special places that are favourites. When I was younger I longed to be in the open on a “Bay Day”, blowing and crystal clear, leaning into the northwest wind. My favourite thing to do now is to canoe or kayak into a wetland area and just sit and watch... under the water at minnows and plants and all the activities above the surface... the birds, turtles, frogs, dragonflies... what I call the ENCHANTMENT. May it ever be thus.

*Tom Scoon has been a core volunteer with the Georgian Bay Land Trust for many years. He has led our Land Protection and Stewardship committees, served as Board Chair, and is now a trusted advisor and property steward.*

# ? Georgian Bay QUERY:

## *Is Eastern Georgian Bay really one of a kind? What makes it such a special home for biodiversity?*

Answered by Bill Lougheed, Executive Director, Georgian Bay Land Trust



### **Living on the Edge**

90% of life forms live near the boundary where land and water meet. This 1-2 km wide shoreline zone is home to much of the biodiversity on our small planet. We can think of these places where land meets a stream, an inland wetland, a river, a lake, a great lake or an ocean as *ribbons of life*. These edge areas are crucial incubators of species diversity, as important as tropical rain forests or coral reefs.

So let's first talk about islands. Did you know that freshwater islands are globally rare? Outside Canada, the two largest freshwater island complexes are on Africa's Lake Victoria (3,000 islands) followed by Amazon's Anavilhanas 400 island archipelago. But eastern Georgian Bay far surpasses those with 30,000 islands (of 32,000 in total on the Great Lakes). These islands provide an amazing 5,580 km of land water interface.

What about lands bordering inland wetlands? The shoreline length of our ecodistrict's upland wetlands is a staggering 16,481 km.

What would you guess about land perimeters on lakes, streams and rivers within our ecodistrict? That length is 22,520 km.

So what's the total *ribbon of life* shoreline length in our ecodistrict? It's a whopping 44,570 km. For perspective, that's 10 times the distance from Halifax to Vancouver.

This *ribbon of life* that would stretch 10 times across Canada is the reason eastern Georgian Bay is home to the richest biodiversity of reptiles and amphibians in all of Canada, and a refuge where 50 species at risk maintain a viable foothold.

### **Shorelines are High Biodiversity, Productive Habitats**

The above *life on the edge* habitats are natural Travel and Dispersion Corridors for vertebrates large and small. They are feeding, breeding, and nursery habitat for reptiles, and with rock barrens, are basking areas critical for thermo-regulation of

all six of eastern Georgian Bay's at-risk turtles, for the Five-lined Skink and all of our other reptiles and amphibians. They are critical habitat for many mammals, including the River Otter, Mink, and Beaver, and a host of wetland birds such as King Rail, Great Blue Heron, Greater Yellow Legs, and Belted Kingfisher. These edges provide necessary shading and cooling, reduction in overland water flows, erosion control, and flood control.

Our coastal shoreline is defined as critical habitat for the Eastern Foxsnake which exists on only one other shoreline in the world. Bear, deer, fox, rabbit and moose seasonally use this zone. This wet/moist water-edge provides for a rich diversity of plant species including rare and important Atlantic-disjunct species.

What about this ribbon of life and climate change? Our shoreline zones are inherently more resilient to temperature extremes and extremes of climate-induced drought. These lands on the edge of water will provide temperature and moisture resilience in times to come for many of our coast's species (as compared to zones far inland). The 16,000 inland wetlands are a carbon sink for increased CO<sub>2</sub> levels.

### **Where did this special landscape come from?**

Eastern Georgian Bay and its near watershed derives much of its ecological significance from its geological underpinnings. Our coast was originally part of the Grenville Mountains towering higher than Everest which were eroded over some 500,000 years to a flat gently sloping plain. After being temporarily covered by an inland sea and softer sedimentary rocks, glaciers scraped the surface clean, leaving bare the old, hard shield rocks of our shores.

This flat, hard crystalline Canadian Shield rock landscape is quite water impervious, allowing thousands of "pocks" containing water to form 16,000 inland wetlands and 3,900 inland lakes. Glaciation has sand-blasted and gouged this flat plain of hard gneiss and granite to form a coast with millions of small directional coastal and inland channels where water moves by stream, river, or seiche providing nutrients and edge habitats. Its gentle slope ensures a slowly draining watershed providing a long season of water and nutrient supply from April through July every year. As shown on the accompanying photo it is this geology that has gifted us all the longest *ribbon of life* in our world.

Our Georgian Bay is truly life on the edge where land meets water. It should command in all our minds the highest priority in conservation planning. We surely must take care of this gift of which the world has only one.

# Prairie Warbler: The Bird of the Barrens

by Mark Conboy, Long Point Bird Observatory



*Prairie Warbler by JS Lees*

For ruggedness, you can't beat Georgian Bay's east coast. Bare rock twisted and folded in an ancient cataclysm, pines wind-sculpted into natural bonsai, and a host of rare and wonderful plants and animals, including a tiny yellow bird named the Prairie Warbler. The Prairie is a petite warbler weighing less than a couple of toonies. They have a bright yellow belly, characteristic black eye-line and facial patterns which extend into stripes on their flanks. They have an olive-green head, back and tail. They may be difficult to spot, but their loud characteristic buzzy staccato call is instantly recognizable.

Georgian Bay's wild coast is anything but a prairie—it's certainly a far cry from the luscious seas of waving grass, growing out of deep rich soil that we associate with our western provinces. It begs the question: what are Prairie Warblers doing *there*?

Well, the fact is that "prairie" is a pretty inappropriate appellation for this warbler. It's not really a bird of the true prairie, like say the Chestnut-collared Longspur. True, Prairie Warblers are birds of open country, but not grasslands, rather they seem to prefer a mixture of grass, shrubs and small trees with a very open canopy structure. They also don't mind a bit of open ground in the form of sand or rock barrens. Sounds like a perfect description of the Georgian Bay coast!

So, how did this bird come to such a mystifying moniker? It looks like we owe the early naturalists at least as far back John James Audubon and Alexander Wilson for this seemingly inappropriate name; they both used Prairie Warbler in their respective writings—but perhaps not in error. French speakers will know that prairie *en français* means meadow, and that's probably what Audubon, Wilson and the other pioneering ornithologists meant when they used the name Prairie Warbler.

If Prairie Warblers had first been described from Ontario they may have been named "Barrens Warbler" because there are few if any other birds in southern Ontario that are so specifically tied to rock barrens. Aside from a small population

in the coastal dunes of Pinery Provincial Park, Prairie Warblers nest pretty much exclusively in rock barren habitats, although colonies have popped up from time to time in other locations such as now extinct patches of sandy open forest in Norfolk County, and open meadow forests in the Carden Alvar.

Check the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario and you'll see that Prairie Warblers inhabit a narrow band across the province from Georgian Bay to the Frontenac Arch, where I grew up and first encountered breeding Prairie Warblers. The Frontenac Arch has been the scene of several catastrophic fires over the past 150 years, resulting in heavy soil erosion and exposure of the rugged bedrock. It looks very much like the Georgian Bay coast, with its granitic rocks, low-stature trees, and sparse ground cover. It's no wonder Prairie Warblers breed there too.

Fire has probably always provided Prairie Warblers with a place to live. Like the Chestnut-sided Warbler and a number of other species that prefer early successional habitats, Prairie Warblers were by all accounts fairly rare in Audubon's and Wilson's time. There simply wasn't nearly as much open country as there is today. In pre-colonial times, Prairie Warblers would have relied on wildfires and fires set by First Nations people as part of their land management practices. When Europeans arrived, the old growth forests of the eastern United States and southern Ontario fell to the axe and yet more anthropogenic fire scorched the landscape. Prairie Warblers were suddenly provided with a surfeit of new habitat. Today, fire still plays a role in keeping rock barrens across the province from growing into forest—this combined with the fact that succession is naturally slow on barrens thanks to thin, often acidic and nutrient poor soils.

Prairie Warblers have always been among Ontario's more uncommon warblers, with perhaps as few as 320 breeding pairs. Despite their relative scarcity, Prairie Warblers seem to be hanging on here at the northern limit of their range. They were once listed (provincially and federally) as a species of Special Concern, but in 1999 that status was changed to Not at Risk, because of their relatively stable population (though some colonies have come and gone over the years) and because of the large amount of potentially suitable early successional habitat available in Ontario. Information collected in the next Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (slated to begin 2021) will be essential in determining the Prairie's current status in the province. With any luck, Prairie Warblers will continue to fill our rock barrens with song and colour for decades to come.



*Do you have a species you'd like to see spotlighted in an upcoming issue? Send us your suggestion at [info@gbt.org](mailto:info@gbt.org).*



## Two New Conservation Easements

We were delighted to welcome two new Conservation Easements to the GBLT's protected lands in late 2019. Thank you to the two generous families who have made this protection possible and chosen to conserve their properties' natural features forever.



### One Bear Island

One Bear Island is a small property in the Manitou area of Georgian Bay. In classic Georgian Bay fashion, it contains a variety of habitats—forest, rock barrens, and coastal wetlands—in close proximity, which support a variety of species. Map Turtles and Eastern Foxsnakes, both species at risk, have been documented here. It is likely that the island supports an array of other reptiles and birds as well. As the name suggests, it is also known as a stopover site for itinerant bears! We're thrilled that this island will remain in its natural state and provide habitat for these animals forever.

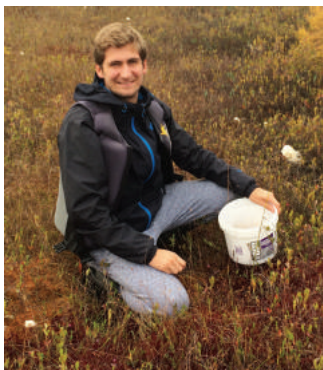


### Stronghold Reserve

The Stronghold Reserve protects significant forest and meadow habitat alongside Blackstone Lake. Home to at least three at-risk species (Eastern Wood-pewee, Monarch Butterfly, and Eastern Whip-poor-will), it is likely to support many more, including the Hog-nosed Snake. As an inland property, its soils are better developed than those of the Georgian Bay coast, meaning it can support a more diverse array of flora. Parts of this property were even once cleared for farming, and now serve as ideal meadow habitat for Monarchs and other species.

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## King Family Bursary supports waterfront revitalization planning in Parry Sound



Congratulations to Brennan Guse, winner of the 2020 King Family Bursary for his work in developing a strategy to transition Parry Sound's southern waterfront from a post-industrial site to an environmentally-responsible community space.

Brennan is a Master of Landscape Architecture

Student with an Undergraduate Degree in Geography, who is always thinking about how to plan for healthy, resilient and inclusive communities. His research focuses on creating a waterfront revitalization strategy for Parry Sound's post-industrial southern waterfront. As Parry Sound shifts from an industrial economy to a more tourist-based economy, many of the properties along the southern waterfront have become vacant industrial sites. Although the land along the southern

waterfront is now zoned as Marine and Resort Residential, there has been little investment in decades due to concerns about soil contamination and environmental degradation. Results of the research propose a landscape-based approach using a phased development strategy that will restore the site to the point that it is attractive to development and contributes to community amenity. This will help the Town conceptualize the future of the southern waterfront and bring economic investment and improved environmental quality to the Region.

*"I am honoured to be the recipient of the 2020 King Family Bursary. Parry Sound has always been a special place to me and is where I have spent most of my summers. I believe that we must find a way to live cohesively with the natural environment. Development in the region is inevitable with increasing human populations, therefore finding the appropriate balance between environmental preservation and development will be necessary. I hope my research will help the community conceptualize the future of Parry Sound's southern waterfront."* – Brennan Guse



# What was that butterfly I just saw flutter by?

## *A Primer of Georgian Bay Butterflies*

by Donald Fraser and Donald Sutherland

The following represent a selection of the many butterfly species one might encounter along the shores of Georgian Bay, as well as in interior woodland and wetland locations. Some are common and ubiquitous, while others are confined to specialized habitats and thus harder to find.

### Tiger Swallowtail

Photo: Donald Sutherland



The Tiger Swallowtail is one of the best-known butterflies in Ontario due to its large size and distinctive yellow wings with bold black stripes.

Based on recent studies of its genetic makeup and subtle morphological differences, the species was recently split into the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, both of which occur in Georgian Bay. The Tiger Swallowtail is a denizen of open woodlands and flies from mid-May to late August.

### Monarch

Photo: Sandy Sutherland



Fittingly named, the Monarch is undoubtedly the “king” of Ontario’s butterflies. Highly migratory, it typically arrives in June and leaves in September and can

be found anywhere in the Georgian Bay region. Its black and yellow striped caterpillar feeds on plants in the milkweed family. This diet accumulates toxins that are then passed on to the adults, rendering them distasteful to predators who quickly learn to avoid eating them.

### Clouded Sulphur

Photo: Donald Fraser



If you see a medium-sized, pale yellow butterfly flying swiftly and erratically, chances are it’s a Clouded Sulphur. This abundant and widespread species

frequents open areas and is often seen obtaining nectar from flowers, especially legumes (e.g., clovers and alfalfa – also the species’ larval host plants). It is commonly encountered drinking from mud puddles along dirt roads and trails, and is active from mid-June to mid-September.

### Northern Pearly-Eye

Photo: Donald Sutherland



This locally common species is one of the few butterflies that exhibits a strong preference for shady environments over sunny ones. An inhabitant of rich mixed woodlands with

a dense understorey, this butterfly typically flies from mid-June to August. It rarely visits flowers, feeding instead on sap, dung and mud. It is often observed perching on the trunks and limbs of trees.

### Chryxus Arctic

Photo: CD Jones



Uncommon and local, the Chryxus Arctic is often overlooked because it flies earlier than most other butterflies (mid-May to mid-June) and is very wary. In the Georgian Bay region

(and elsewhere in southern Ontario) it is usually found on rock barrens, where it perches near lichen patches with its wings closed. The mottled grey undersides of its wings render it very well camouflaged. When approached, it quickly flies off, returning to the same area, which it vigorously defends.

### Leonard’s Skipper

Photo: Donald Sutherland



Skippers derive their name from their characteristic rapid, darting flight and although they are indeed butterflies, they are very distinct in appearance and often mistaken for moths.

There are several dozen species of skippers that occur in the Georgian Bay area, but Leonard’s Skipper is restricted to central and eastern portions of the province. Found in areas of tall grass, this strong, fast-flying skipper is very wary and easily disturbed. It is a late summer species, most often encountered in the third week of August.



### American Copper

Photo: Donald Fraser



One of the prettiest of all the Ontario butterflies, this little orange beauty can be found near the ground in meadows and open clearings such as hydro rights-of-way. They

typically produce two broods in central Ontario and fly from June to September. American Coppers are avid flower visitors and rest with their wings half-open, reflecting the sunlight with a metallic sheen. Very aggressive despite its small size, it will chase other butterflies away from its territory.

### Eastern Pine Elfin

Photo: MVA Burrell



A diminutive brown butterfly, the Eastern Pine Elfin is common and widespread throughout central Ontario, inhabiting pine-oak woodlands and rock barrens. Its enchanting name

befits its behaviour; this species avidly feeds on flowers, is a notorious mud-puddler, and can typically be found along trails through open woodland dominated by pine. It is most often seen from early May to mid-June.

### White Admiral

Photo: Donald Sutherland



The White Admiral is one of the most distinctive butterflies in our region, with rich, purplish-black wings crossed by broad white bands. It typically flies

later in the summer, with a second brood that extends into September. White Admirals are found in open clearings in woodlands and along cottage roads, where they sun themselves on the ground. They rarely visit flowers.

### Great Spangled Fritillary

Photo: Kimberly Reinhart



The largest of the four greater fritillaries that occur in Ontario, the Great Spangled has experienced recent population declines in some portions of its range but is still a common summer

resident of the Georgian Bay area. A very active butterfly, it is found in a wide variety of open habitats. It flies from June to September but is most often encountered in July.

### Coral Hairstreak

Photo: Gary Yanketech

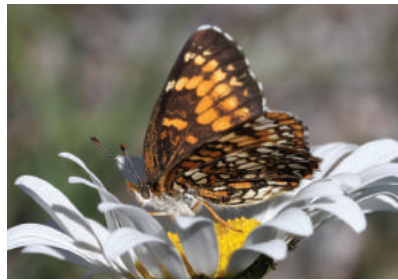


Most of the Ontario hairstreaks have hair-like tails on their hindwings, which they rub together to resemble antennae. This is a defensive behavior designed to trick a would-be

predator into attacking the butterfly's hind end, thereby reducing the extent of damage. The Coral Hairstreak, however, is unique among Ontario hairstreaks in that it lacks a tail. A voracious nectar feeder, it is found in meadows, woodland clearings and areas of second growth, from early July to mid-August.

### Harris's Checkerspot

Photo: Donald Sutherland



This attractive orange-and-black checkered butterfly is a resident of wet meadows and wetland edges where its larval foodplant, the Flat-topped White Aster, grows. Single-brooded, it flies

mainly in June. It is also very local, but where it does occur may be present in good numbers; Harris's Checkerspot is probably more common in Georgian Bay than anywhere else in the province. It is a weak flier and stays near the tops of the flowers it nectars on.

## iNaturalist & Seek

iNaturalist is a popular smartphone app that allows you to photograph, identify, and record your nature sightings while out in the field. It is used by scientists around the world to gather data on species distribution and trends, so every time you upload a sighting, you are contributing to international scientific work. iNaturalist also has a partner app called Seek, which uses your phone's camera to identify unknown species on the spot for you - very useful for tricky butterflies and much more! You can download both iNaturalist and Seek for free from the app store, or access the web version of iNaturalist at [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org).

# Remembering John Catto

by John Stark, Former President, Georgian Bay Land Trust



John Catto was a kind and generous man. Together with his wife Margaret, John was among Canada's most important naturalists and conservationists. We are very fortunate that John focused so much support on the Georgian Bay Land Trust and all of Georgian Bay.

The GBLT first came into contact with John when he and Margaret were working with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to conserve their property on Lookout Island at Pointe au Baril. Initially donated to the NCC, it was transferred to the GBLT in 2005, becoming the much-loved West Lookout Reserve.

As I recall, in a Board of Directors meeting in 2004 our then President, Nancy Christie, suggested inviting John to be a GBLT Director. His interests clearly aligned and he was already active as a volunteer steward.

As incoming President in June 2005, I had the distinct privilege of introducing John to all in attendance at our Annual General Meeting. Researching for his introduction, we learned a lot more about John beyond his being a life-long naturalist and conservationist, discovering his many years of distinguished service to Canada in the Reserves.

As a Director, John initiated a welcome pattern of providing meaningful advice and support to volunteers working with him at both Board and committee levels, always offered in a supportive and friendly manner. His dedication was simply wonderful.

John served the GBLT with distinction. From 2008 to 2010 John served as Stewardship Chair and was exceptionally dedicated to his role. In 2011, John became Treasurer and served in this role until 2013. From 2014 to 2019, continuing as Director at large, John gave the GBLT needed continuity, offering advice to new directors and staff as the organization grew to its present status as Canada's third largest regional land trust by value of its nature reserves. John assumed the role of Advisor in 2019. He was also Lead Steward for the West Lookout Reserve, a model steward.

John and Margaret also assisted the GBLT financially with continuing support for annual operating costs, stewardship funds, and purchase costs for Sandy Island, Little McCoy Island, Giant's Tomb, and Steamboat Channel Reserve, and to general land acquisition fund/costs, an incredible level of support over many years.

Wendy Cooper became the GBLT's Executive Director after her work with NCC was completed and she shares some of her memories:

*"I have lots of fond memories of John and Margaret. They were among the first to host me back when I was working with the NCC on the big natural heritage inventory of the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. It was this project that introduced me to the area, and where I first met many of the people connected to the Land Trust. Both John and Margaret were incredibly knowledgeable and took me on an amazing tour of both the West Lookout Reserve which they had recently donated to the NCC, as well as the wonderful wetland in the middle of the island. I learned so much from them, and it was the first of many visits to Leland Island where they hosted me several times during my time at GBLT."*

*Another fond memory of John was working with him while he was the treasurer. His attention to detail was incredible... maybe a little too incredible at times! He was dedicated and committed to being fully engaged and aware of the ins and outs of our financials and making sure we were financially healthy, which I so appreciated. When he signed up for a job-whether it was as a steward for West Lookout or as the treasurer or as a board member-he was all in!"*

Tom Scoon and I worked closely together on the Board of the GBLT years ago, and Tom then followed me as President. Tom shares some thoughts and memories as well:

*"John and Margaret were almost always together and operated as a team in life. John was modest and a man of nature and civilization, a gentle man and a gentleman, kind, humorous, thoughtful, always a good listener, and quietly generous to many organizations, particularly to environmental groups like GBLT."*

*The donation of West Lookout Islands by John and Margaret speaks for itself. The remarkable open facing western part of Lookout Island and several little islands includes deep bays and wetlands adjacent to provincial conservation lands, and is well loved by the Pointe au Baril community. I once asked Margaret why it was donated and she said 'it just couldn't be developed, could it?'*

*John and Margaret were avid birders and John knew birds by sight or sound; much of the Catto's travel was dedicated to bird watching, including a visit annually to the Limestone Islands, sometimes almost the moment the ice went out in spring.*

*John was a financial supporter of the acquisition of Little McCoy Island and I recall visiting the island with John and Sandy McCoy to arrange a location for the sign. Typically, John wanted it to be visible, but subtle."*

We have lost a great Canadian and wonderful friend of Georgian Bay and the natural world. John's legacy will be with us forever and we will miss him greatly.



# How to help Georgian Bay's turtles

Spring is the season when Georgian Bay's turtles become active, and we can expect to see them out and about over the next few months as they move from winter to summer habitats, find mates and nesting sites, and bask in the sunshine.

The Georgian Bay area is home to six species of turtles, all of which are at risk in Ontario. Our turtles are suffering primarily from habitat loss and road mortality, both of which are increasing throughout the province. Because turtles take a long time to reach sexual maturity, and the survival rates of eggs and hatchlings are extremely low, it is very difficult for a small number of turtles to re-establish a population that has seen many of its breeding adults killed. Maintaining healthy turtle populations depends on keeping these adults alive and breeding throughout their long lifespans. Every turtle that you can help save from dying prematurely will be an important boost to that species' overall survival.

## How can I help turtles?

*Be careful on roads:* Road mortality is a large and growing threat to turtles, and a significant problem in the Georgian Bay area. Slowing down and taking extra care

when driving can go a long way towards keeping these species safe.

*Support habitat conservation:* Loss of wetlands and other critical habitats is the second major factor in the decline of turtles and many other species. You can help by donating to conservation organizations, volunteering your time, or raising your voice. If you own property, you can also look for ways to protect or restore natural features on your land.

*Contribute to Citizen Science:* Many scientists, conservation organizations, and governments rely on data reported by citizens to gain an accurate picture of species health and make important decisions. You can report your sightings by joining iNaturalist (see information on pg 9), and then joining the "Herps of Ontario" project, which tracks sightings of all reptiles and amphibians (collectively known as herpetofauna) in Ontario.

## How to help when you see a turtle

### ALIVE

#### CROSSING ROAD

If it is safe to do so, move the turtle across the road in the direction that it was travelling (if you move it backwards, it will just try to cross again!) Most turtles can be picked up with one hand on each side like a hamburger. With Snapping Turtles, either lift the back of the turtle's shell and "wheelbarrow" it across the road on its front legs, or reach a hand under the shell from the back and lift (Snappers can't snap downwards, so your hand is safe underneath). Never pick a turtle up by its tail, as this can seriously damage the turtle's spine. Report your sighting on iNaturalist.

#### ANYWHERE ELSE

Leave the turtle where it is, and maintain a respectful distance. Consider taking a picture and reporting your sighting on iNaturalist.



### INJURED

Call the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre at 705-741-5000. They will walk you through how to help the turtle and where to take it to receive veterinary care. Turtles are tough and even badly injured ones can recover well, so helping is always a good idea! Always make a note of where you found the turtle, so it can be returned once healed.

### DEAD

Take a picture and report your sighting to the Herps of Ontario project on iNaturalist. This will help experts identify the places where turtles face the highest mortality.

## Turtles in the Georgian Bay area



Eastern Musk Turtle



Midland Painted Turtle



Northern Map Turtle



Snapping Turtle



Blanding's Turtle



Spotted Turtle



Special Concern



Threatened



Endangered

# Connecting with nature this summer – for kids (and adults!)

Summer activities look a little different this year for everyone due to COVID-19, and many of us are likely to find ourselves missing some of our usual opportunities for connection and enrichment.

Fortunately, the natural world offers us a place where we can interact with other beings and watch the dramas of life unfold outside away from human crowds. It is a place that has always welcomed self-guided exploration and quiet connection, and the more time we have to give to it, the more it shares with us.

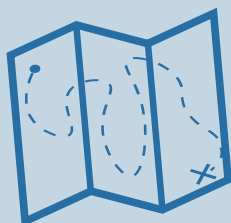
We hope you will take some time to connect with nature in a new way this summer. Below are some resources that might be helpful for kids and adults alike.



## Georgian Bay Scavenger Hunt

Go exploring outside – how many of the following can you find?

- ☐ Three different mushrooms
- ☐ An animal eating
- ☐ Animal poop
- ☐ Three different wildflowers
- ☐ Something red
- ☐ Five different bird songs
- ☐ A reptile or amphibian
- ☐ A hole or nest made by an animal
- ☐ An interaction between two different species. What are they doing?
- ☐ Five different kinds of leaves or needles
- ☐ Something that you don't know the name of
- ☐ A sparkly rock
- ☐ A good place to sit
- ☐ Five different kinds of bugs
- ☐ Something that an animal left behind. A pawprint, snakeskin, bit of fur?
- ☐ A dead tree. Is there anything growing on it or living in it?
- ☐ A mammal
- ☐ Three different types of lichen
- ☐ An ant carrying something
- ☐ A cocoon
- ☐ Three different butterflies



## Nature Journaling

Journaling has a long tradition among naturalists, and is a great way to slow down, observe, and connect more deeply with the natural world.

Try going outside for fifteen minutes in the morning, afternoon, and evening, and completing this set of activities each time. Or, come up with your own prompts!

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook. The notebook is open, and the right page has a list of prompts for nature journaling. The prompts are written in a casual, handwritten style.

- five things I can hear:
- Three things that I feel:
- something beautiful that I see:
- something I've never noticed before:
- A question that I have:
- A sketch of something I see:

### KIDS' CONSERVATION QUEST

This summer, we'll be offering our Kids' Conservation Quest program online, emailing out weekly nature and conservation-focused activities geared towards kids ages 8-12. Visit [gbt.org/cq](https://gbt.org/cq) to learn more and sign up to be a part of the program.

### RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES

Visit [gbt.org/naturefromhome](https://gbt.org/naturefromhome) for resources and ideas for self-guided nature exploration for all ages. Please also stay tuned to [gbt.org/events](https://gbt.org/events) and our social media channels for updates on virtual and (hopefully!) small in-person events this summer.



# Paddle Dream:

## An interview with Tom Smellie

Tom Smellie is a longtime Land Trust volunteer who has embarked on a sailing project to raise awareness about the Georgian Bay environment, and raise funds for the GBLT. Find out more about what inspires him below, and check out his videos on his YouTube channel “Paddle Dream”.



### Why is Georgian Bay so important to you?

I first showed up on Georgian Bay when I was two weeks old. I'm going to turn 67 this summer. There's something about Georgian Bay, it just gets under your skin and becomes part of you. It's very difficult to explain. I'm now at a point in my life where I think maybe I can do something to help it along, in an entertaining fashion.

### What inspired you to begin this project?

Somehow or other I started watching these sailing YouTubers—and I thought, you know, I can do that. Half of them have got some kind of organization that they're trying to support, and I picked the GBLT because I've known about your work for so long.

### Tell us more about your boat. Where have you travelled so far? Where will you go next?

It's a 32 foot Douglas, made in 1970—actually turning 50 this year. I brought it from Wiarton to Thunder Beach on my very first sailing trip ever by myself. I spent most of my time running around southern Georgian Bay this past summer. But this summer coming up I'm hoping to take it all around the Bay. I want to get up to the French River delta, and spend some time up in the Benjamin Islands. I got a real kick out of going out to the Western Islands. You'll find me where other boats aren't.

### What has been your favourite moment on the boat so far?

Probably bringing the boat from Wiarton to Thunder Beach in one crack. I'm pretty proud of myself for that, considering I'd never sailed before. The scariest moment so far has been hitting bottom in Indian Harbour. The wind came up from the wrong side and the boat started banging on the rocks and I had to move it all by myself.

### What are you hoping to raise awareness of with this project?

I'm going to see if I can push people to start talking about more environmental things. I'd like people to pay attention to what we're doing in regards to plastic pollution, and our responsibility to take care of this place. Not just Georgian Bay, but what people can do in their backyards everywhere. Burn less gas, etc. It's all about the positive approach, simple things. I also want to share more shipwreck stories! People have done some pretty interesting things over the years. There are some good stories.

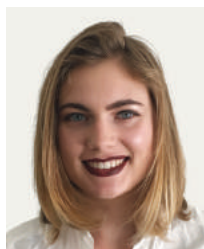
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## Summer Conservation Interns: Sarah Bowman & Sofia Vermeulen



**Sarah Bowman** is currently completing the second year of her Juris Doctor at the University of Western Ontario, with which she hopes to pursue a career in animal law or environmental law. Sarah has been a cottager her entire life, recently moving from a cottage on Lake Couchiching to the beautiful Wah Wah

Taysee area of Georgian Bay. Sarah is very excited to be working as a conservation intern for the GBLT. She is eager to learn more about the region, and to work to preserve and protect the habitat of endangered species.



**Sofia Vermeulen** graduated from University of California Santa Cruz with a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and is working on building a career of helping people and the environment. 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 the GBLT, and hopes to provide another year of meaningful work that will help maintain a healthy balance between the environment and the communities within it.

## Georgian Bay Snapshot

Hi Ho Bambi  
by Sidney Sommer



While most of us are away from Georgian Bay, the deer play! Sidney spotted this White-tailed Deer bounding across the ice this past winter near Brooks Landing. See more of his pictures on Instagram @sidneys\_nature\_pics.



## Scott Sheard: Grenville Volunteer Award Winner 2020

by Brooks Greer, Land Protection Program Manager, Georgian Bay Land Trust



This year we're delighted to recognize Scott Sheard with the GBLT's Grenville Volunteer Award.

It is probably safe to say that Scott would rather be on Georgian Bay than anywhere else on the planet, and will go to great lengths to spend time there.

Among other services he has provided, Scott was

the GBLT's tireless liaison with the Pointe au Baril Islanders' Association and their Marine Patrol over eight summers. Scott supervised the Marine Patrol's vital stewardship of the Land Trust's growing stable of Pointe au Baril properties. Every year in late June, I would join Scott and the year's Marine Patrol staff for a training day which would include dryland instruction and then an afternoon tour of selected GBLT properties. Scott was wonderful with the Marine Patrol staffers; by the day that I

arrived he had always developed a great rapport and had them performing confidently in their new roles.

Scott has always made himself available to help out GBLT staff in the perpetually busy Pointe au Baril community. At different times Scott's assistance has helped us to perform property Baseline studies, to monitor Conservation Easements, and he has ferried bodies, food and drink to our PauB events. As one extreme example, in May 2018 Scott drove all the way up from Toronto for the sole task of boating two herpetologists out to West Lookout Reserve so they could inventory for snakes and turtles. With this on top of his past volunteer work on behalf of the Pointe au Baril Islanders' Association, sometimes it seems Scott might need to return to the city to "unwind".

Scott's constant sharp wit and comic turn of phrase make him a pleasure to be around. His strong community mindedness and environmental responsibility show in everything he does and has done for Georgian Bay, for Pointe au Baril, and now in his current incarnation as Ward 3 Councillor for the Township of the Archipelago.



# Board changes: Welcome Cathy Bongard, Farewell Jim Cooper

By David Doritty, GBLT Board Chair



## Catherine Bongard

We are excited to have Cathy officially join the board at this year's GBLT AGM in June. Cathy joins the board with 30 years of diverse real estate experience in the GTA and as a member of our Land Protection Committee.

Cathy is third generation at her family cottage in Pointe au Baril. An

interesting note is she was the representative for 5 families in the donation of Rattlesnake Island to the GBLT in 2014. Cathy also was a board member of the Pointe au Baril Islanders' Association from 1990 to 1994.

The combination of Cathy's background in real estate and her love of Georgian Bay makes her an ideal board member of the GBLT.



## Jim Cooper

We would like to recognize Jim Cooper's tenure on the board of the GBLT over the last ten years, and to thank him for his remarkable and generous service.

It would be hard to find a more dedicated Georgian Bayer than Jim, who is often the first out to Cognashene in the spring, making his way through icy water (and actual ice) to the old family cottage at Blarney Castle. This same dedication and love of the Bay is evident in Jim's efforts to protect the Georgian Bay environment. Jim was first involved with the GBLT as a property steward, and then moved to Lead Steward at two of our busiest properties. Jim subsequently served as a very hands-on and involved Stewardship Chair and Board member for nearly a decade. He enthusiastically mentored Summer Conservation Interns, devoted countless hours to interfacing with visitors, performed extra compliance visits and conducted maintenance at our southern visitor properties. Jim also helped guide development of our stewardship policies with thought, judgement and experience.

We will miss Jim's contributions to the Board, but know we will see him on the Bay for many years to come.

## Tribute GIFTS

*Received from November 6th 2019 – April 13th 2020*

### In Honour

Clair Balfour  
John & Jenn Bate  
Kerry & Brenda Benson  
Don & Maureen Buchanan  
Hon. William G. Davis  
Doug Ironside  
Kent C. Jewett  
Wally & Marilyn King  
Maja Lees  
Bill, Joey & Bubba Loughheed  
Stoney McCart  
Catherine Milne

LaRea Moody  
Sue & Peter Russell  
Mary Sarjeant  
Colin Shepherd  
Tim Shepherd  
Paul Swick  
Janny Vincent  
Susan Witton  
Gillian & John  
Woodrooffe

### In Memory

Ed Bartram  
John Catto  
George & Wynn Charles  
Esmonde L. Clarke  
Fred Conron  
John W. Duncanson  
Pat Dunnill  
Robert Eakin  
Stephen Elrick  
Bryan Graham  
Betty Joy Hall &  
Hugh B. Hall

John Alexander Hansuld  
Marion & Bill Holton  
Judy Deeks Hurlburt  
Heather Jarvis  
John Paul "JP" Jeffrey  
Dorothy Leonard  
Jennifer Martin  
David McCamus  
Peter & Mary McCullough  
Dr. Mark McDermott  
John McGuirk  
Douglas Ross Norris

Donald G. Plaxton  
David L. Rea  
B.N. & Audrey Simpson  
Bob Stupart  
Lynda Summerville  
Mary Jane & Melville  
Tushingham  
Cameron Wardlaw  
Jinny Weekes  
Charles Wilde

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SUMMER 2020

# SUMMEREVENTS

PROTECTING the WILDERNESS of our UNIQUE ARCHIPELAGO

## LANDMARK Speaker Series

Our speaker series goes virtual this summer! Join us online on a Saturday morning each month to learn about a different topic related to Georgian Bay, conservation, and science. Visit [gblt.org/landmark](https://gblt.org/landmark) for more details and to register for each presentation.

Country Turtle, City Turtle: Helping to keep them safe in a changing world – presented by Dr. Pat Chow-Fraser – Saturday June 27th, 10am

Conservation and Climate Change – presented by Dan Kraus – Saturday July 18th, 10am

Ecology and Behaviour of Canada Jays in Algonquin Park – presented by Dr. Ryan Norris – Saturday August 8th, 10am

.....  
Visit [gblt.org/events](https://gblt.org/events) for the latest information on all events

SPONSORED BY:



**In-person Events** – As the COVID-19 situation unfolds, our summer event plans are unfolding with it. We are not yet certain whether it will be possible to host outdoor activities including nature walks, yoga, etc. Please visit [gblt.org/events](https://gblt.org/events) for the latest information on in-person and virtual events throughout the summer.

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**Kids' Conservation Quest** – In place of in-person Conservation Quest, we will be running a virtual program for kids ages 8-12 this summer. Weekly nature-based activity sheets will be sent out by email each Monday from June 29th to August 31st, and kids will have the opportunity to complete the activities, and share their results online if they wish. Visit [gblt.org/cq](https://gblt.org/cq) to learn more and sign up for the program.

SPONSORED BY:



**Walking for Wilderness** – Save the date! Our second-annual Walking for Wilderness fundraising hike takes place on September 26th. If possible, we will gather for a group hike – if not, participants will be encouraged to go for a hike in their favourite local spot.

## COVID-19 VISITOR GUIDELINES

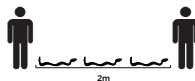
Thank you for visiting! This property is open for the enjoyment of nature. In order to keep our community safe visitors must follow all current government guidelines for responsible behaviour in light of COVID-19.

All visitors must adhere to these regulations:

- Do not visit if you are sick
- Maintain social distance (2 metres minimum) between your group and others
- Respect visitor limits and other rules enforced by Georgian Bay Land Trust staff and volunteers

For more information, visit [gblt.org/covid-19](https://gblt.org/covid-19)

How far is 2 metres?  
Imagine there are 3  
Newspapers between you and any  
other group!



## COVID-19 and Georgian Bay Land Trust Properties

At this time, public-access Georgian Bay Land Trust properties are open to visitors for the enjoyment of nature. It is very important that visitors follow all current government guidelines for COVID-19 related behaviour while they are on a Georgian Bay Land Trust property. Please also understand that we may be required to restrict the number of visitors to our properties in order to ensure that proper social distancing is maintained. Thank you for your cooperation with this! We will continue to monitor the situation as the summer unfolds, and may change our visitor policies as the situation demands. You will be able to find the latest information throughout the summer at [gblt.org/covid-19](https://gblt.org/covid-19). Thank you, and have a safe, happy, and nature-filled summer!

UPDATED VISITOR GUIDELINES WILL BE POSTED AT GEORGIAN BAY LAND TRUST PROPERTIES THIS SUMMER



Georgian Bay Land Trust  
120 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 1000  
Toronto, ON M4P 1E2  
[gblt.org](https://gblt.org) | [info@gblt.org](mailto:info@gblt.org) | 416.440.1519

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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