

It's Time to Renew Your Membership.

See Diane Peter at the September Meeting or call her at 905-725-0982. Complete Form on page 10

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Shaggy Hickory by John Muzik

THE NATURALIST

DURHAM REGION FIELD NATURALISTS
CONSERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION
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President's Message

A new season for DRFN! Welcome back as we start our 2019/20 season. We return with the same executive members as last season. The club would not exist without the hard work of our executive. We all have worked hard to bring to you, our members, the kind of naturalist club we think you want, providing you with excellent speakers, interesting outings and informative and entertaining newsletters. Remember we are always looking for new folks to fill these positions. And if you are interested but a little shy and unsure please join us in one of our upcoming executive meetings. We just had one the beginning of September but the next one is Nov. 4. Just let me know ahead of time. The next one after that will be the first Mon. of January, 2020.



There are a lot of issues that concern us as naturalists. Many are disturbing. Many are downright disheartening and seemingly hopeless. Take climate change for instance. Are we doomed? Is it too late? Should we just continue as is and do nothing? Because it looks like whatever we do, there are groups of people that do not even believe climate change is happening and are bent on sabotaging any efforts to mitigate it. And worldwide there are governments that are unwilling to lead us out of or through this mess. So, should we give up hope? This question was posed by 11 year old Tai Poole, of the CBC radio programme *Tai Asks Why*, to Dr. Anthony Del Genio, researcher with the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/taiaskwhy/how-will-we-fix-climate-change-1.4908790>. It is certainly sad that this is something that our children have to worry about. They realize already that their future is at stake. Anyway, Dr. Del Genio told Tai that we should not give up hope because to do so would mean that we do nothing and there are still lots of things we can do. He said that we can't afford to be pessimistic and that remaining optimistic will help in finding solutions. Tai also talked to Catherine Abreu, executive director of Climate Action Network Canada. This network is a coalition of more than 100 organizations across the country. Nature Canada is a member. According to their website <https://climateactionnetwork.ca/> "CAN-Rac Canada is the only national body that brings climate, energy, and environmental organizations together with the many communities of interest that are affected by climate impacts, and can have a hand in building climate solutions." In Tai's interview Catherine explains that her organization works with local and national politicians and

Upcoming Meetings

Meetings: last Monday of each month except June-August and December

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Civic Rec Complex, Bobby Orr Room, 99 Thornton S., Oshawa.

Come a little early to enjoy conversation and refreshments ('lug-a-mug')

September 30, 2019

James Kamstra

"A Biodiversity Primer"

October 28, 2019

Dr. Andrew Peregrine

"Lyme Disease What is Happening in Ontario"

November 25, 2019

Dr. Janice Gilbert

"Invasive Phragmites, What Is it and Can be done to control it"

Newsletter

Submissions

Please submit your pictures and articles for the November newsletter no later than November 15, 2019.

Email all submissions to Nancy Muzik at
john_nancy_m@rogers.com

governments to come up with ways to solve climate change problems. So, Tai came away more hopeful than at the start of his programme. And I think I did too. So, should we all. Because to lose hope is to give up! We cannot give up.

I heard a term this summer that may be useful. It was "good enough". As in, do I need a new pair of shoes? Or is this pair good enough. Do I need a new sofa? Or is this one good enough? Something to think about!

Lois Gillette

Future Outings

Saturday, October 26 at 10 AM

Cranberry Marsh – From Different Perspectives

Leader: Don Docherty

Difficulty: Light walking.

Meet at the entrance to the south trail off Hall's Road in Whitby. (Take Victoria Street in Whitby to get to Hall's Road.)

We'll start by visiting the Cranberry Marsh Hawk Watch. It captures valuable information about hawk migration through south Whitby. It's also a pleasant place to see a good variety of wildlife and learn identification skills from expert hawk watchers. If the weather accommodates, we should see a good variety of ducks. We'll check the 3 viewing platforms and a view from the other side of the cattails in search of hidden surprises. Rain or shine the Chickadees and some other birds want to be your friend. All it takes is some sunflower seed or peanuts.

Check the weather forecast and dress accordingly.

Saturday, November 30 at 8 AM

Niagara Gulls

Leader: Rayfield Pye

Difficulty: Casual walking on sidewalks will be required.

Niagara Falls is a common destination for gulls in late fall and winter. A variety of interesting birds have been seen in the past including Lesser Black-backed, Slaty-backed, and California Gulls; Black-legged Kittiwake; and other ducks and shore birds. Niagara is also home to Tufted Titmice so a handful of seed may get you a lifer.

Meet to car pool at the southwest corner of the Pickering GO station. The drive to Niagara Falls should take approximately 2 hours.

It can be very cold, wet and/or snowy beside the Niagara River. (It can also be warm and dry) Dress to stay warm and dry. Wear layers of clothing for flexibility.

Bring water and a lunch or prepare to dine at Tim's in Chippawa.

Saturday, December 21

Durham Christmas Bird Count

Leader: Contact Rayfield Pye to participate @ 905-436-7998 or raypye@interlinks.net.
A sign-up sheet will be available at the November meeting.
Check for weather forecast and dress accordingly.

Don Docherty

Past Outings

DRFN Annual Spring Weekend Outing, June 7-9, 2019

June weekend: A delight as always!

Oh, it was hot! hot! hot! But we were SO COOL! We were a bunch of birding buddies having a good time in Sandbanks Provincial Park, thanks to Lois – our always unruffled organizing Queen – who put it all together. Here is the view from a very appreciative fringe member.....



Silvery Blue submitted by Maria Prisciak



Orchard Oriole submitted by Maria Prisciak

After a picnic lunch on Friday across from the amazing sand dunes, some of us walked part of the Woodlands trail. Our best moments were watching a Northern Harrier soaring above us, and observing a handsome sun-blasted Brown Thrasher as it pecked at leisure in front of us, and then another in a tree. We also learned about the different types of maple, and how the indigenous people had discovered maple syrup (possibly from watching a squirrel drinking pooled sap under a tree!). Apparently, these people also cut down boiling time by leaving trays of the sap out to freeze, and then simply discarding the top ice. We saw some pretty blue butterflies, silvery or azures, and a couple of monarchs. We also listened for other birds, (well, those of us who can hear, listened!) while simultaneously dodging the Turkey Vulture who seemed to be eying us!

Then after connecting with other members of the group we headed to our cottage on East Lake, observing on the way, a handsome Osprey sitting calm and regal at the top of a dead tree. We also had Swans, a family of Grackles and children successfully fishing bass and sunfish off the dock.

On Saturday morning, we visited the sand-dunes as

far as we could get due to the flooding, but thoroughly enjoying the scenic views and plant-life. Naturally we totally lost sight of Maria, as always happens when we are ready to move on, and some of us assumed she had either swum or waded over to the main dunes. But no, she was happily communing with plant-life in the wooded area and was only lost in thought (and photography!) We then walked more of the Woodlands trail among the Mayapples in flower, some fading Trillium, and some (always impressive) Jack-in-the-pulpits. The highlights for me were the clear, close-up viewings of Redstarts, often in the open, with the sun on their beautiful red-and-black colouring; the sweet Yellow Warblers; the showy Orchard and Baltimore Orioles; and the Common Yellowthroat (renamed by one of us (?) the “not-so-common, yellow-throated,



Submitted by John Muzik

lemon-bellied, black-masked bandit warbler” singing its heart out. Later we came across a Downy Woodpecker, and then admired the display of two Red-tailed Hawks as they swooped and swerved, the sun highlighting and dancing off their gorgeous orange-red tails. At our stop at the Old Lodge we watched the –no, not Bank Swallows (no visible breast-band) but Northern Rough-winged Swallows swooping and devouring insects above the serene and majestic loon. Time for a welcome ice-cream stop and short visit to the beach area before heading to the cottage for our traditional barbecue with all the gourmet salads and sides (and some sipping and story-telling.)



Submitted by John Muzik

On Sunday morning, we headed to Beaver Meadows for its particular rewards. After observing the beautiful Black Terns swooping over the water, the Mute Swans mentoring and coddling their four fluffy cygnets, and attempting to answer and call out a Virginia Rail, we flushed out both a muskrat (!) and the showy little Common Gallinules, (or Moorhens.) All this was so exciting we decided to trek over to another lookout for an even better view of the Black Terns. Well part of this trail was flooded, but not to be daunted, we crossed the water by means of some slippery stepping-stones and a strong stick, as well as some helping hands (some of whom got soaking wet feet in the process!) Then, meeting up with another flooded area, we followed our intrepid pioneer Nancy as she led us on a bush-whacking detour to the lookout. A Pileated

Woodpecker had flown in ahead of us, and we did indeed have great close-up views of both the Black Terns and the Common Gallinules. What a fun morning!

All-in-all the weekend was a true delight. Thank you, Lois and Derek, for organizing and leading, Otto for cooking, Diane and Nancy for recording, and to all you lovely people who share your enthusiasm and knowledge with all of us present.

All in all, we saw 64 species of birds, 9 species of butterflies, many wild flowers and a large number of rare Shag Bark Hickory trees.

Mary Assaf

Carden Plain Outing June 12, 2019



Submitted by Kristen Osborne

The weather was perfect as usual, the participants had fun and most of the usual birds showed up. That about sums up our Carden Alvar Field trip. Eleven of us gathered at Wylie Road and McNamee Road where for some reason the birds decided to hide from us. Saw our first Great Blue Heron with a flyover and then heard a Meadow Lark and Bobolink but they were both far off. Of course, in the distance many other bird songs were beckoning us to move along. Very soon after leaving there we came across a Wilson’s Snipe on a fence post very appropriately. All totalled the group saw or heard 41 species of birds a few less than normal plus as usual the hundreds of the dreaded mosquitoes. It was unusual that the ranch was not as

“birdy” as usual and was quiet. The usual Gray Tree Frogs were as raucous as in other years. A slow many stops drive offered us Eastern Kingbirds, Upland Sandpiper for some and Blue Birds. We arrived at Blue Box 10 where we looked for the Loggerhead Shrike. After a quick search to the west I finally found one sitting on a fence way to the east on the other side of the road He/she flew from point to point for a long time allowing great looks through the scopes for everyone. Then it disappeared to never reappear. The Barn Swallows in the hide swooped around us as we tried to find the other Shrike on the west side. After driving through some pretty big puddles we wound our way to the Sedge Marsh. Before we went to the bridge, we took the west trail since we were told that there was a Blue Winged Warbler hanging about. Heard one but did not get a visual but did hear and see an Eastern Towhee there. Mosquitoes were brutal on this trail. The area around the bridge was

quieter than usual but we did hear and then see a Sedge Wren a target bird for some of us. An American Bittern started its galunking just before the Night Hawks started their soaring. Then as we approached our cars a Whip-poor-will started to call, a perfect ending to our evening. If you have never been on an outing to the Carden Alvar put it on your bucket list, you will not be disappointed.

Otto Peter

Butterfly Walk at Heber Down Conservation Area, July 06, 2019



American Lady submitted by Lois Gillette

As in many days this summer July 6th turned out to be hot, very hot! So, who would want to venture out at 1:00 in the afternoon to look for butterflies? This outing was led by Rayfield Pye. And as it turned out there were three DRFN members who chose not to let him down. We donned light apparel, sun hats and sun screen and met him at the north east parking lot of Heber Down Conservation Area. I hadn't been to that end of the park for a while so was surprised to see what was once corn fields is now wildflowers and walking paths. Off we went following close to Rayfield as he pointed out various butterflies, explained their identification markings and filled us in on their natural history. We wandered the path that led into the wooded area. I noted the lovely magenta pink Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium*) that was in full bloom.

As for the butterflies we saw Little Wood-Satyr (*Megisto cymela*); Pearl Crescent (*Phyciodes tharos*); Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*); White Admiral (*Limenitis arthemis*) and its subspecies the Red-spotted Purple (*Limenitis rubrofasciata*) and American Lady

(*Vanessa virginiensis*)..And I just discovered that there is a Government of Canada website called Canadian Biodiversity Information Facility which has great information and pictures on the Butterflies of Canada

<https://www.cbif.gc.ca/eng/species-bank/butterflies-of-canada/?id=1370403265518>

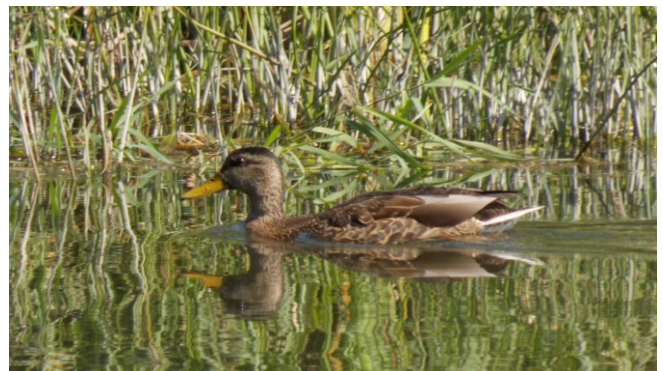
We also had an opportunity to do some bird watching. A lovely Savannah sparrow posed nicely for us on a fence post. So, despite the heat we had an exciting afternoon. Of course the butterflies probably enjoyed the sunshine and heat more than we did.

Lois Gillette

Samuel Wilmot Nature Area, August 24, 2019

On August 24, Brian Reid introduced us to this marvelous local nature area. He explained the history, guided us on the trail system and showed us some of their ongoing improvements. As we walked, we saw many butterflies including Monarchs and were reminded that the nature area does monarch banding in early September every year.

The weather was fine and the trails were easily walked. The area comprises fields, forests, marsh land and beaches so a great variety of birds can be seen throughout the seasons. During our visit we saw many birds including Cedar Waxwings, Osprey and Spotted Sandpiper. Given the dense, healthy vegetation we had to be satisfied with the calls of Catbirds, Kingfishers and Song Sparrows. Sadly we found a dead, adult Eel on the beach.



Mallard Submitted by Brian Reid

Thank you to Brian for showing us this beautiful area.

Don Docherty

Ontario Nature Report

Ontario Nature has produced a document of questions to ask candidates who come knocking on your door.

One Earth, One Vote Questions to Ask Your Candidates

1. Climate change is a major and growing threat to wild species, wild spaces and human health. Will your party commit to increasing climate emission reduction targets so that they meet Canada's obligations under the Paris Climate Agreement and are in line with preventing a global temperature rise of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius?
2. Is your party committed to protecting at least 17 percent of Canada's lands and inland waters by 2020, in accordance with our international obligations as a party to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity?
3. Next year, Canada and other parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity will be renegotiating a new global target for protected areas. Will your party champion a global target of protecting at least 30 percent of land, freshwater and ocean by 2030 and adopt these in Canada?
4. Ontario has gutted its Endangered Species Act. Will your party protect Canada's at-risk plants and animals by using the federal Species at Risk Act to step in where provinces are failing to protect species facing imminent threats?
5. Is your party committed to operating in a manner that is consistent with Canada's commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as the "calls to action" of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
6. Neonicotinoid pesticides are known to negatively impact pollinators, causing direct mortality and impairing navigation, learning, food collection, resistance to disease and reproduction. Will your party implement an immediate ban on all neonicotinoid pesticides, and support farmers to transition to safer alternatives?
7. Almost all Canadians believe that Canada should recognize the legal right to a healthy environment, as is the case in more than 150 countries worldwide. The right to a healthy environment results in stronger environmental laws, better enforcement of those laws and a greater public role in environmental decision-making. Will you introduce legislation to create a federal Environmental Bill of Rights?

Durham Region Butterfly Counts 2019

Two butterfly counts were conducted in portions of North Durham attended by members of Durham Field Naturalists and North Durham Nature as well as other lepidopterous enthusiasts. The Oshawa count extends from the north side of Oshawa to north of Port Perry, while the Sunderland count includes parts of Uxbridge and Brock townships in north Durham, and part of Georgina township in York Region. All of the butterfly individuals encountered within a 25 km² on the count day were recorded and tallied, similar to a Christmas Bird Count. This was the 25th year for the Oshawa count and the 23rd year for Sunderland.

The Sunderland count recorded 48 species which is somewhat lower than the long-term average of 54. The Oshawa count was originally scheduled for June 30 but was postponed by two weeks since I had to be away. This delay helped the species total since the unusually late spring delayed the spring emergence of many butterflies by one or two weeks. By mid July all species had emerged. Oshawa had 53 species, the second highest and well above the average of 45 species, although the number of individuals was lower than average for both counts.

The Oshawa count highlight was a fresh Hickory Hairstreak that I observed near Utica. This was new to the count and a very rare species in Durham with few records. Others rarely encountered at Oshawa were a Compton's Tortoiseshell by Steve Laforest, Baltimore Checkerspot by Tom Mason and Dion Skipper by Susan

Blayney. The rarest find at Sunderland was an Indian Skipper found by Susan Blayney. Although it is the 3rd time on this count, it is a more northern species that is rare in Durham.

Because of the late spring, many butterfly species were emerging one to two weeks later than normal. At Sunderland late emerging species such as hairstreaks or sedge skippers were very low or absent, but early species such as Silvery Blue, Common Ringlet and Hobomok Skippers were in higher than numbers. Oshawa being a week later recorded the late fliers. Overall numbers of many species were lower than average, a disturbing trend over the past few years.

The migrant species Red Admiral and Monarchs were in good numbers, especially at the later Oshawa count. Only 2001 had more Red Admirals, and only 2007 and 2012 had more Monarchs. Question Marks, another migrant, were very low this year.

Record high species on the Sunderland count were Silvery Blue, Dreamy Duskywing and Northern Cloudywing.

The swallowtails present an ID challenge since both Canadian and Eastern Tiger Swallowtails are present in Durham. The Canadians are smaller, single-brooded and the underside of the forewing border is a yellow band, while Easterns are larger, double brooded and the underside of the forewing border is a yellow row of spots. On the counts few of the fast flying Tigers are caught or viewed closely but most are assumed to be Easterns since they appear large and freshly emerged. Several of the individuals that were observed closely however had integrate characteristics indicating that they are probably hybrids, which brings up the question whether they are valid separate species.

The results of the two counts are shown on the table below and the participants are listed below that.

BUTTERFLIES OBSERVED ON THE DURHAM COUNTS IN 2019

Species	Oshawa July 7	Sunderland July 14
Black Swallowtail	3	3
Canadian Tiger Swallow		1
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	55	65
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	5	16
tiger swallowtail sp.	106	109
Mustard White	7	11
Cabbage White		1
Common Sulfur	1	1
Alfalfa Orange	10	11
Bronze Copper	4	1
Coral Hairstreak		1
Acadian Hairstreak		3
Banded Hairstreak		1
Striped Hairstreak		3
hairstreak sp.	2	26
Eastern Tailed Blue	24	1
Summer Azure	10	26
Silvery Blue	3	
Great Spangled Fritillary	4	1
Silver-bordered Fritillary	14	4
Meadow Fritillary	579	305
Pearl Crescent	79	1
Northern Crescent	2	3
crescent sp.	10	3
Baltimore	6	9
Question Mark	2	
Eastern Comma	2	4
Gray Comma	4	
comma sp.		1
Mourning Cloak	9	14
American Lady	12	2
Red Admiral	64	166
White Admiral	40	78
Red-spotted Purple		5



Question Mark by James Kamstra

Viceroy	22	10
Northern Pearly-Eye	17	86
Eyed Brown	208	55
Appalachian Brown	4	1
Little Wood Satyr	35	20
Common Wood Nymph	4	85
Inornate Ringlet	154	2
Monarch	90	266
Silver-spotted Skipper	21	87
Northern Cloudywing	34	4
Dreamy Duskywing	4	1
Arctic Skipper	2	
Least Skipper	40	28
European Skipper	1079	181
Peck's Skipper	1	
Tawny-edged Skipper	39	12
Crossline Skipper	107	12
Long Dash Skipper	13	4
Northern Broken Dash	233	38
Little Glassywing		7
Delaware Skipper	2	
Hobomok Skipper	2	21
Broad-winged Skipper	22	8
Dion Skipper	2	2
Dun Skipper		2
TOTAL SPECIES	21	17
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	49	53
Butterflies / hour effort	3212	1825
No. of Participants	2027	1535
No. of Parties	23	14
Km. on foot	11	8
Km. by car	91	56
Hours on foot	81.5	52.5
Hours by car	3	3
Total Hours		1

Participants

Oshawa: Dennis Barry, Susan Blayney, Dan Bone, Margaret Carney, Derek Connelly, Karen DeGroot, Cathy Galberg, James & Lynda Kamstra, Steve Laforest, Tom Mason, Greg Moon, Maria Prisciak, Rayfield Pye.

Sunderland: Dennis Barry, Susan Blayney, Dan Bone, Derek Connelly, Paul & Debbie Harpley, Brian Henshaw, Simon Henshaw, Jim Hopkins, James & Lynda Kamstra, Steve LaForest, Craig & Kathryn Lloyd, Tom Mason, Ginny Moore, Dave Paddock, Ed Poropat, Maria Prisciak, Rayfield Pye, Kim Stephens, Bob & Karen Yukich.

James Kamstra



Hickory Hairstreak-Utica by James Kamstra

Summer Pics



Cranberry Marsh Hawk Watch is celebrating its 30th Year. Here is Rayfield Pye who is pointing out an eagle to others at the Hawk Watch. Rayfield has volunteered for 30 years at the Hawk Watch. Hawk Watch runs until the end of November.

Submitted by Carol Horner



John McFeeters submitted a picture of a Bald Northern Cardinal found in his back yard, a natural phenomenon.

Found on Feederwatch.org was this explanation, “Baldness also may result from feather mites, lice, or an environmental or nutritional factor. Often in these cases, there is evidence of growths or a scabby coating on the skin. For example, Northern Cardinals have black skin, and a different color skin on the head of a bald-headed cardinal would indicate an ailment.”



Also, from the McFeeters backyard was this Grackle with a white tail. Coincidentally friends living at Wilmot Creek also showed us a Grackle with a white tail earlier in the year. Possibly the same bird?

Thanks to John McFeeter for sharing his great pictures from his yard this summer.

Lungs of the Earth are on Fire

We're burning the Amazon rainforest. Actually, burning the lungs of the planet.

Is there anything scarier, more horrifying than the videos taken from drones, from airplanes, from satellites, showing waves of orange flames swallowing up those towering trees?

Is there anything crazier than the deliberate eradication of this ancient, pristine ecosystem filled with amazing biodiversity we haven't even begun to explore?

In fact, there is. Something scarier. Crazier. The big picture. What we're doing to the Amazon is what we've been doing to forests around the planet for centuries, and continue doing voraciously today. In Europe. Africa.

Asia. Australia and Tasmania. North, Central and South America. Right here In Ontario! Count the logging trucks roaring through the north woods, or the vast patches of clear-cuts visible from any plane. We're just as rapidly carving up and crating away our precious boreal forest here in Canada, "Earth's green halo," to make toilet paper, as Brazilian farmers are torching the rainforest to plant corn and run cattle.

"Build a road and we will come." Roads are the death of any wilderness.

I say "we" because we're all in it together, we humans. Making babies, making a living, making a profit, making "our mark" on the world. And not paying heed to what we're losing as our last great forests vanish, and along with them, the Earth's built-in climate control.

Look out your nearest window. Two hundred years ago, right here in Durham, there were likely massive virgin white pines growing in your yard, on what early settlers called the Great Pine Ridge. What's growing there today?

We're supposedly clever creatures, Homo sapiens. So, what can we do to comfort ourselves as we watch the Amazon go up in flames, mourn the destruction, grieve for the insanity rampant in the world today? Here are a few things that help me:

Make generous donations to conservation groups and land trusts dedicated to protecting forests.

Write to all levels of government, saying you want lots more than 17 per cent of what's left of Canada kept intact for future generations of songbirds, wolves and caribou, not to mention grandchildren.

Get out your shovel and plant a tree, or two, or a dozen. Or a hundred.

Margaret Carney

Membership Application Form

Please check the appropriate area to indicate membership type.

For Family membership please indicate the number of family members.

Individual (\$25) _____

Family (\$35) _____ # of People _____

Life Member (\$300) _____

Family Life Member (\$450) _____ # of people

Kindly complete all sections of this information form in order that we can update our address & telephone records.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

The membership year is September to June. Memberships not renewed by November 30th are considered lapsed. Membership fees may be paid by cash or cheque at the DRFN General Meeting, or a cheque may be mailed, payable to: Durham Region Field Naturalists, Box 54031, 8 King St. E., Oshawa ON, L1H 1A9

Do not send cash by mail.

Revenue Canada Charitable: No. 891631574RR0001