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Fall, 2004

President's Message

The Friends of Gatineau Park is in its fourth year of existence. We need your support to continue our work on behalf of the interpretation program of Gatineau Park.

During the year we have been organizing some interesting workshops that can enhance visitor appreciation of nature in the park. In May, Josée Soucie, a broadcaster, teacher and illustrator of bird guides conducted a workshop on bird migration in spring. In June, Justin Peter, another gifted naturalist, dealt with birds in the Lac Phillip area, a workshop in which he stressed the importance of learning to identify birds by their calls. On September 11 he conducted a session on tree identification that includes an afternoon walk identifying trees in the park. Another Friends project is a new guide for the Lauriault Trail that we hope to publish this fall.

If you haven't renewed your membership this year, or would like to make a donation, I am enclosing a form for your convenience. You can also help us by encouraging others who enjoy the park to consider membership.

I look forward to meeting you at the annual general meeting,

André Carrier

AGM November 5 includes wolf presentation

The annual general meeting of Friends of Gatineau Park will be held on Friday, November 5, at the park visitor centre in Chelsea. The meeting begins at 6.00 p.m. and will be followed at 7.00 p.m. by a presentation on the wolf by Rhonda O'Grady. Refreshments will be provided. Rhonda's talk will be followed by a bus trip to a suitable location to call wolves. Cost is \$15 members; \$25 non-members. For more information and reservations call (819) 827 2020 after September 30. Also check our website <http://www.rezoe.com/amicigatineau/>

Let Yours Ears Lead, and the Rest Will Follow

By Justin Peter, Interpretive Naturalist

If there's one thing that could be said about Gatineau Park, it is that its songbirds can really put on a musical show! This is the impression we got on the morning of June 12, as participants assembled at the Breton Beach parking lot for the Friends' Birds of Philippe Lake bird walk. Intent as we were in beginning our walk, we really could have stood in the parking lot all morning, just listening to the myriad sounds around us.

What sense could we make of this sonic bonanza? With the advent of our short summer,

most birds were busy making nests, feeding young, and - especially if one were a male bird - constantly defending its territory against the intrusions of other males.

All songbird species use a number of distinct vocalizations that communicate different moods to each other, from songs of territoriality (not always musical!) to feverish cries of alarm. Active songbirds therefore equal lots of vocalizations. We should be thankful, , because bird calls inadvertently assist us in finding the callers, which are often. in dense vegetation, whether in shrubbery or high in the forest canopy. . By quietly approaching the source of a sound and waiting, we may catch a glimpse of the bird that made it.

This approach certainly worked for us on June 12th! Patience yields results; and birds such as the Blackburnian Warbler and Indigo Bunting rewarded us with a good long look, plus lively song. Such situations should, however, never be taken for granted. Seeing a bird while it is calling presents a unique opportunity; by concentrating on the quality of the call while watching the bird , we can permanently associate the sound with the bird's image.

With some practice, recognition of birds by their calls alone becomes second nature. You can eventually find yourself interpreting the state of domestic affairs among birds! If this sounds intimidating, try this exercise: starting next spring, see how many different calls you can attribute to the American Robins that live near you. As you proceed, see if you can associate specific calls with different observed behaviours or moods. Above all, trust yourself. You will be surprised at how this little exercise increases your enjoyment of all birds and your memory too!

The Veery, a haunting song

New e-bulletin

To serve members

An e-mail news bulletin, developed by Graeme Roderick, our treasurer, has been first used to inform 180 members, new and old, about our tree identification workshop on September 11. Embedded in the e-mail was a link to our flyer posted on our website, <http://www.rezoe.com/amicigatineau>. This poster could be downloaded and shared with others.

You would have received the e-mail as blind copy addressed to Graeme. This was done to maintain confidentiality of your e-address and the integrity of our e-list. If you did not receive this notice, (some of our e-addresses proved not current) please consider sending us your e-address at amicigatineau@myexcel.ca . If you do not wish to receive further mailings of news, please let us know.

UK naturalists visit park

On Saturday, August 21, the Friends of Gatineau Park played host to a group of naturalists from the United Kingdom. The group was on a two-week whirlwind tour arranged by Wildwings® a UK-based international outdoor excursion company. They observed upwards of 60 species of bird in the park. The group was also interested in most other wildlife! A Northern Water Snake shedding its skin was just one of several highlights. The visitors were astonished by the diversity and size of the Park, given its proximity to an urban area. In the end, all concluded that the visit was too short but certainly worthwhile.

Mysteries of Migration!



By Andrea H. Eberhardt-Gage

Hey JUNIOR FRIENDS, do you ever feel like going south? Well, there are a few birds living in Gatineau Park that leave our cold winters behind and make a yearly trip south down one of North America's flyways. Each fall we say goodbye to Canada Geese, loons, many songbirds, ducks and most hawks. Many of the 'whys' and 'hows' of migration are still a mystery to scientists, and the great distance traveled by some of our avian friends is incredible! Some of the reasons why birds migrate may be to find food, warmth and suitable habitat. How birds travel these incredible distances and return to the same locations year after year is also a puzzle. Scientists suggest day fliers use landmarks, memory maps and the sun : and they think that night fliers, like American Robins, Mallard ducks and many small songbirds recognize the constellations! Scientists also believe some birds use the earth's magnetic field to guide them. Before any trip, preparations need to be made. Like packing your suitcase, birds pack on the pounds. Some birds double their weight before the trip!

SEE IT FOR YOURSELF!! Here are some ways you can experience the fall migration.

Å In Gatineau Park, try visiting the Eardley Escarpment with your family. On a warm, sunny day you may see a broad-winged or sharp-shinned hawk riding the warm air currents!

Å Lots of small birds travel in a group and sometimes you will see a large flock at a feeding stop. You may also hear migrants from home if you go outside at night and listen.

Å A full moon in the fall, may give you the opportunity to actually see some night fliers! Set up a telescope if you have one or try looking at the moon with binoculars. You may see some birds as they fly in front of the moon!

Å Everywhere you should watch for the familiar 'V' formation of Canada Geese and ducks.

TRY TO FIGURE OUT THE MISSING MIGRATION WORDS in each sentence! (Some aren't easy so you may need help from a good bird book or a good friend!)

1. Flying in a 'V' saves _____.
2. One reason night is good for flying is because the temperature is _____.
3. In fall, the shortening _____ may signal the time for migration.
4. There are four North American _____ which are like bird highways.
5. Birds use fat as _____ for their flight.

Answers : 1. energy 2. cooler 3. day 4. flyways 5. fuel



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