

MFNC May 2018 Bulletin

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Promoting the appreciation, understanding, and preservation of nature in the Ottawa Valley

Welcome, <<First Name>>

MEETING

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Life on the edge: what we have learned from the Gray Jays of Algonquin Park

Alex Sutton



Pelted and whipped by mid-April's icy snow and high winds, scientist Alex Sutton was nonetheless having a great day with the discovery of "five charcoal-coloured fluffs" during a search and check of Gray Jay nests.

As he celebrated on Twitter, "For only the second time in over 50 years of study in Algonquin Provincial Park, a female #CanadaJay has 5 young in a single nest! Lots of mouths to feed now."

The discovery brought some needed good news about a bird whose numbers have been slowly sinking; an Algonquin study—the longest of its kind in the world—shows a 50-per-cent decline in the Gray Jay population since 1977. Only 13 Gray Jays (also known as Canada Jay/Whiskey Jack), the lowest in 44 years, were counted during the park's 2017 Christmas Bird Count.



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Special Committee

Sutton, a PhD candidate at the University of Guelph “engaged by all things Gray Jay,” is especially interested in what is driving the population dynamics. The guest speaker at our May 1 meeting, he will provide an overview of what we have learned studying Gray Jays living on the edge.

[Read more](#) about our Gray Jays here.

FIELD TRIP

Spring ephemerals

Saturday, May 5, 1–3 p.m. Kinburn

Leader: Mary Marsh

Host: Linda Sewell

We will have a leisurely walk through the beautiful trails of Linda's property. Here we should find a great variety of the ephemeral flowers of spring, before they disappear in early summer when the tree leaves shade the forest floor. Bring a hand lens and wildflower guide if you



have them. Binoculars would also come in handy since there should be time to listen and look for birds. Be prepared for biting insects with appropriate clothing. The walking is fairly easy but wear sturdy shoes. Specific details for meeting and parking will be given to registrants. Register at events@mfnc.ca
Photo: Bloodroot, Sanguinaria canadensis. Karen Runtz

What we saw : diving into Spring with the Young Macs

Members

Brian Voss (Membership)

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Angela Skevington (Young Macs)

angela_skevington@yahoo.ca

Macnamara Trail

Extension

Janet Mason

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Meetings:

First Tuesday of the month
at 7:30 p.m.

Arnprior Curling Club

15 Galvin Street

Annual Memberships:

Family \$30, Individual \$25

Guests welcome:

\$5 per meeting

Students Free!



Macnamara Field Naturalists' Club



likes

Following in the footsteps of naturalist and photographer Charles Macnamara, the Macnamara Club has explored, documented and enjoyed the rich natural history of the Lower Ottawa Valley since the club's founding in 1984. Members meet the first Tuesday of every month except July and August at the Arnprior Curling Club, 15 Galvin Street, in Arnprior. Expert speakers share their knowledge and take members in easy steps into their special worlds. Field trips throughout the year investigate everything from geology, to birds in migration, to rare orchids.

[connect with me!](#)

Latest Posts

- Pelted and whipped by mid-April's icy snow and high winds, scientist Alex Sutton (the guest speaker at tomorrow's meeting) was nonetheless having a great day with the discovery of “five charcoal-coloured fluffs” during a search and check of Gray Jay nests. As he celebrated on Twitter, “For only the second time in over 50 years of study in Algonquin Provincial Park, a female #CanadaJay has 5 young in a single nest! Lots of mouths to feed now.” Sutton, a PhD candidate at the University of Guelph “engaged by all things Gray Jay,” is especially interested in what is driving the population



The discovery of a diving water bug — aka toe-biter—stepped up the excitement on a recent family outing led by the Skevingtons and aligned with finally-melting local ponds. Woodcocks and owls were heard on Jeff’s walk, which was followed by a hunt and collection led by Angela at the ponds after dark.

April brought us seed

As those of us with bird feeders know, Nyjer seed is a magnet for finches.

Macnamara member Keith Maclean contacted us to say he had extra Nyjer seed he wanted to donate to the club and could we use it. The executive thought it would be a choice item for our mid-meeting “raffle” and judging from the enthusiasm at our April meeting, our members agreed. One, our winner of the 20+ lb bounty, was especially happy. The \$108 we raised from the draw will go to club operating expenses.



Support from local businesses is always much appreciated.

Thanks to John Herrick of Kinburn Farm Supply for his recent donation of seed — some 100 pounds of Sunflower and 50 pounds of Nyjer — to fill up our birdfeeders on the Macnamara Trail.

Garage sale also “seeded”

Keith Maclean also seeded the idea of using a garage sale as a fundraiser and we’re looking into joining a local community event held in June. Keep an eye out for items you would like to donate to the club. We’ll have more news about how you can donate for the garage sale soon.

dynamics. At our May 1 meeting, he will provide an overview of what we have learned studying Gray Jays living on the edge. Guests always welcome. See details in article linked below.

<https://www.insideottawavalley.com/news-story/8563494-living-on-the-edge-learning-from-the-grey-jays-of-algonquin-park/> 4/30/18 8:49AM

- So you think it's a mallard? <http://www.10000birds.com/hybrid-mallards.htm> 4/29/18 9:38AM
- Citizen science! Volunteers are especially needed to count swifts at roost chimneys on designated 2018 National Roost Monitoring dates: May 17 (optional), May 23, May 27, May 31, and June 4. <https://www.birdscanada.org/news/volunteers-needed-for-chimney-swift-surveys-2> 4/28/18 9:05AM
- Bird Nerd's Guide to spring arrivals in Eastern Ontario. 4/26/18 9:12AM
- REPOSTING with new photo: Nature's Way/Michael Runtz. The hole-y #birds are back. Why birds come back early. Photo: This female American Kestrel is doubly lucky; she caught a Short-tailed Shrew and found a dead tree that might provide a nest site. <https://www.insideottawavalley.com/opinion-story/8559905-the-hole-y-birds-are-back/> 4/25/18 12:33PM



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Latest Tweets

- Environmental group says garden plants purchased in #Ottawa at Canadian Tire, Rona & Home Depot in 2017 have traces... <https://t.co/RaedlqgrzC> 5:38PM
- <https://t.co/Qzm8vMPTxl> 12:12PM
- <https://t.co/ZiBpVKN4WG> 8:04PM
- RT @otrriverkeeper: BREAKING NEWS: 82 municipalities in the Greater #Montreal region



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Facebook Group

are opposed to the #nuclearwaste site at Chalk River.... 10:52PM

- Nature's Way /Michael Runtz. #Ottawa The hole-y #birds are back. Why birds come back early. Photo:This female Ameri... <https://t.co/1SZIQeTUWI> 12:28PM



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