

WELCOME TO THE MARSH MATTERS NEWSLETTER, A MONTHLY PUBLICATION TO KEEP OUR VALUED MEMBERS, VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS IN THE LOOP ABOUT THE HAPPENINGS OF THE WYE MARSH!

Earth Hour
March 28 | 8:30pm
Remember to
turn your lights
out for our Earth!



Due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre and the trails are **closed to the public**. This is a precautionary action with the best interests of our staff, volunteers, and patrons in mind. Staff will be at the Centre to provide animal care and building and trail maintenance only. Thank you for your understanding.

DID YOU KNOW?

April is Frog Month! Our amphibian friends are still hibernating deep beneath the frost line in Simcoe County, but they will be coming out again once overnight temperatures raise steadily above 7 °C.

There are 13 species of frogs and toads which can be found in Ontario. Though they may sound similar, each frog/ toad has its own distinctive set of calls which can help identify the frogs in your area.

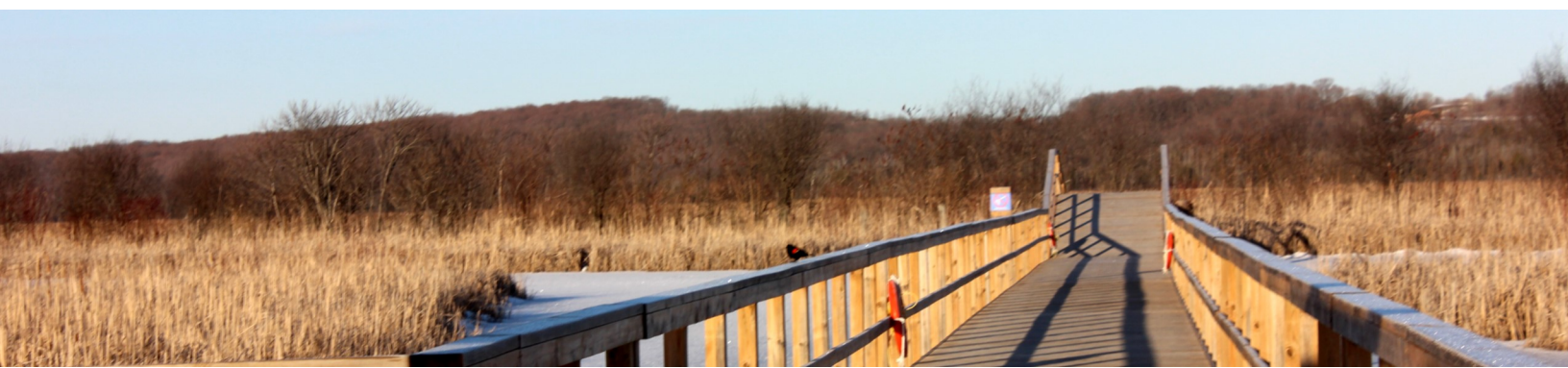
Frogs and toads are often confused, but there are a few quick ways to tell them apart. Toads have more dry and bumpy skin and live on land, as opposed to the smooth wet skin of frogs who prefer to live in the water. Frogs have longer legs than toads, and toads tend to have a more stout body than frogs. Also, most toads in our area are brown, while frogs have more colouration—normally greens like the Leopard Frog or the Green Frog. If you'd like to learn more about frogs—HOP to it!



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

To say these are trying and uncertain times is a massive understatement. The Wye Marsh Board of Directors and Staff have been as diligent as possible to keep up with very quickly changing events, and what seemed to be a manageable situation one day was totally outside the new normal the next. Lengthy discussions were had regarding keeping the Centre and trails open to the public, but at the end there was no way to do so without potentially exposing the staff to significant risks. Staff will be at the Centre to start spring trail maintenance, ensure everything in the building is functioning properly, and provide animal care, including the swan monitoring program. Some staff will be working from home to create and update summer programs and begin the hiring process for summer students. We are focusing on late spring and summer programming with the hope that things will be somewhat back to normal and we can throw open the doors and welcome everyone back. In the meantime please take care of yourselves and each other.

- Mary Ann Milne, Executive Director



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

At our recent AGM we said so long to some very dedicated and influential directors. At that same meeting we welcomed some new enthusiastic and talented directors. We were coming off a very positive year and were focused on making 2020 as equally positive. We have been presented with two major challenges. The first was the labour dispute between the government and teachers. The resulting actions resulting from that created a huge drop in revenue. While we were trying to deal with that the new and unprecedented challenge of COVID-19 descended upon us and every other Canadian like a tsunami.

As an organization we tried very hard to be proactive and stay ahead of what was happening and responding to recommendations from various health organizations. Despite our best efforts we had no choice but to make the decision to totally close down the Wye Marsh to the public. It was the only way to keep our staff, volunteers, animals and the public safe. That was and is our number one priority.

We are now in a site management mode which includes taking the best care of our animals and also ensuring that the facilities and trails are maintained. We want to be sure that when the time comes we will be prepared to open our doors once again and welcome you all back. We don't know how long it will take but rest assured we will be ready. We will keep you informed of any changes in status through our web site.

We appreciate your patience and understanding and please take every precaution to remain safe.

- Dave Robertson, Acting President of Friends of Wye Marsh Inc. Board of Directors

WHAT ARE THE ANIMALS AT WYE MARSH UP TO?

Things are very quiet here at the Marsh but the animals and dedicated Wildlife Care Staff are making the best of the situation. Wildlife Care Staff are making sure that each resident is receiving ample attention, care, and enrichment.

While the winter raptors like Wodin, the Snowy Owl are rising in weight up for their offseason, others like Hans, the Harris Hawk and Casper, the Barn Owl (right, top) are beginning their flight training to welcome visitors back to the Marsh soon.

Ernie the Broad-Winged Hawk, Wye Marsh's newest Animal Ambassador, has Maintenance Manager Paul working hard on his new enclosure. It will be built to suit Ernie's specific needs during his stay here with us. Meanwhile indoors, the reptile ambassadors are moving through their usual spring changes in care and attitude. They do seem as little curious as to why children's faces are not appearing in their windows these days! Czar, the Gray Ratsnake has even taken up Hide and Seek to pass the time (right, bottom).



SPRING STEWARDSHIP UPDATE:

Winters are always busy and raucous with Trumpeter Swans around! With synchronized head bobbing and blustery displays you can tell they want to be with their mates at their nesting sites and are eagerly awaiting the ice to melt. This year marked an important swan survey, The North American Trumpeter Swan Survey. This survey is used to assess and track population status, evaluate restoration efforts and inform development of jurisdictional conservation and management plans for this species in North America. This survey was first conducted in 1968 and has run every 5 years since 1975 allowing for a uniquely vast data-set on this one species spanning temporal, geographic and genealogical information.

We have increased our 'wildlife support stations' and hope to have residents in our new bat maternity wards, raptor nesting boxes, Salamander boards and Trumpeter Swan nesting platform. As many of us are spending more time at home in the coming weeks we suggest practicing some stewardship in your yard. You may now have time to plan out a native plant garden, build bird boxes, remove some of the exotic plants-or build a bee hotel. Today let us suggest a group that is rarely considered: Salamanders and frogs! To help our amphibian species you can be extravagant and install ponds & water features or toad abodes; or very simple, set out some pieces of old wood in your yard, leave them there for the summer. On occasion carefully check underneath and see how many species you can identify! Just remember you should never touch frogs or salamanders, for their safety, but they always appreciate a new shelter or a native plant garden make-over!



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE MARSH?

Please note there may be additional changes to these workshops and events as our current situation unfolds. Please check our website and social media for the most up to date information. Thank you for your understanding.

POSTPONED **Photography Workshop: The Beauty of Spring**
Join Marj Dubeau as she shares her passion and knowledge for photography through a hands on workshop where she will provide tips and tricks on nature inspired photography.

POSTPONED **Spring Migratory Birding Workshop Series**
Learn about why birds migrate and some of their migration patterns in Part A as well as birding ethics, followed by in depth ID skill building in Part B.

POSTPONED **Missa Gaia Choir Performance at St. Paul's United Church**
Enjoy the musical styling of the Serentata Choir performing Paul Winter's Missa Gaia in celebration of spring! The performance will be a blending of vocal choir, animal calls, and instrumentals. All are welcome to this non-denominational performance. Proceeds to benefit Wye Marsh.

3rd Annual Earth Day Celebrations
April 26
9:00am-4:30pm
Wye Marsh celebrates Earth Day! Unearth your learning with family fun and learn about stewardship in a hands-on way, such as BioBlitzes, eco-crafts, an invasive species pull, live animal demos, and a surprise for the first 50 families to plant at home! Come out and enjoy a day in support of responsible living on our beautiful Earth! Admission by donation.

Marsh by Moonlight Spring Paddle Series
Experience a guided canoe tour through the sparkling moonlit waters of the Wye Marsh. Twinkling canoes and boardwalk, night noises, some yummy bannock and lots of laughs will make for spectacular photo-ops and an unforgettable night! \$50.00 pp.
May 16, 23, 30
June 6, 13

Marsh by Moonlight is generously sponsored by:



2020 SUMMER DAY CAMP REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Join us for exciting outdoor fun in July and August 2020! Campers aged 4-17 will take part in age specific and weekly themed programming including Survival Camp, Art Critters, and more!

Register online at www.wyemarsh.com

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

SAP SUCKER TEAM



Members of Wye Marsh Sap Sucker Team in front of the Sugar Shack, photo by Sap Sucker Member Allan Mantel (not pictured).

The Sap Sucker Team are volunteers who operate the Wye Marsh Sugar Shack—right from tapping the maple trees, all the way through collection, evaporation, to maple syrup!

Every March this group runs demonstrations for visitors of how syrup is made. These interactive demos are a hit for all ages.

This year, the team tapped the maple trees on March 6th, and while the season was cut short, they were still able to collect and boil down some syrup. The team collects sap both with buckets as well as vacuum tubing (the blue tubing you may have noticed on the Return Trail running between trees).

We are very grateful for the knowledge that this team brings, and how willing they are to share it with staff, visitors, and school groups. Running a Sugar Shack is no small task—but this team sure does a *sweet* job at it!

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

April 19-25, 2020 is National Volunteer Appreciation Week, and Wye Marsh is lucky to have a team of volunteers like **you!** Here's a look at the difference that you make at Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre—we couldn't do it without you!

6065 hours volunteered in 2019.

186 volunteers donated their time in 2019.

51 volunteers active at Wye Marsh on average per month.

