

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!



## DID YOU KNOW?

**January 5 was National Bird Day**, a day to celebrate and learn more about birds, to learn more about their habitats, and to engage with citizen science initiatives.

The Wye Marsh has been designated as an Important Bird Area, also known as Important Biodiversity Area (IBA). Wye Marsh provides habitat for a number of species including common species like Cardinals and Black-capped Chickadees, along with significant species like provincially Threatened Least Bitterns, Species of Special Concern Black Terns, and the famous Trumpeter Swans (with the Wye Marsh population representing approximately 10% of the Trumpeter Swan population in the province).

### Who designates an IBA?

IBAs are identified by BirdLife International. There are over 12,000 IBAs worldwide.

### What are the criteria?

- Places of international significance for the conservation of birds and other biodiversity
- Recognised world-wide as practical tools for conservation
- Distinct areas amenable to practical conservation action
- Identified using robust, standardised criteria
- Sites that together form part of a wider integrated approach to the conservation and sustainable use of the natural environment



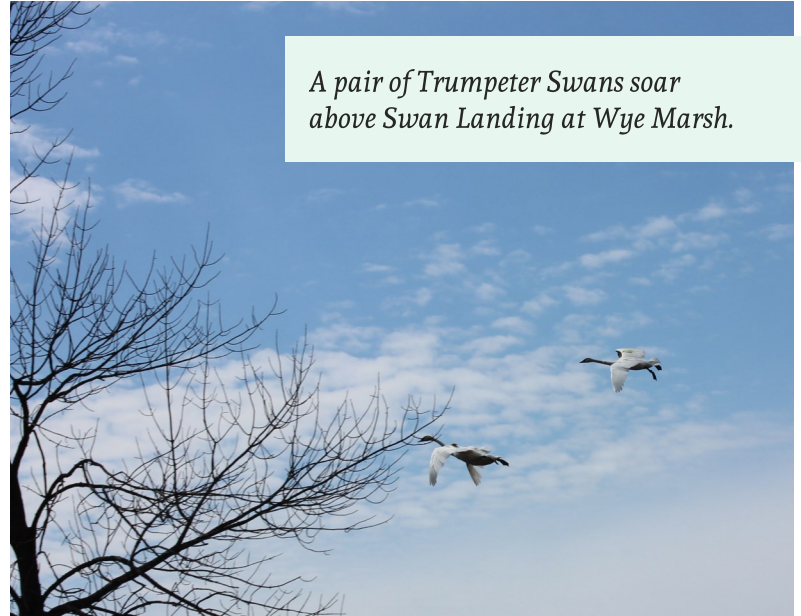
Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre is **open daily**, from **9:00am-4:00pm**.

Updated safety precautions are in place. For more information, [please click here](#).

# ON THE WILD SIDE:

First and foremost, let's be grateful for the increasing daylight, an extra 2 minutes and 7 seconds each day! The increase in daylight started on December 21, the Winter Solstice, and will continue until the Summer Solstice on June 21.

As the water freezes over in Simcoe County waterfowl who have not migrated will be in search of open water. Waterfowl like Trumpeter Swans, ducks, and geese are known to group in flocks of 70 to over 100 birds at these open water sites, like Wye Marsh, once ice forms elsewhere. These make for amazing birding opportunities!



*A pair of Trumpeter Swans soar above Swan Landing at Wye Marsh.*

## WELCOME KENNY!

Kenny is a male American Kestrel who has joined Wye Marsh's family of Educational Animal Ambassadors.

Kenny came to Wye Marsh from a rehabilitation centre. It was apparent from his time in the rehabilitation centre that he was a human imprint - meaning he was likely someone's pet at sometime. He had no fear of humans and exhibited other traits of domestication, which unfortunately means he is not a candidate for a safe release to the wild.

Kenny is a very social little bird, who loves to flutter around his enclosure and explore new things in his environment. American Kestrels are North America's smallest falcon, comparable in size to a Blue Jay. Don't let the size fool you - American Kestrels are swift and agile hunters!

You can adopt Kenny to help aid in his care [by clicking here](#).



## Check out some of these FREE nature apps to compliment your next hike with the help of your smart phone!

These apps are used by Wye Marsh staff and volunteers, and are recommended by the Wye Marsh Trail Ambassadors. Download one (or all) to your phone or tablet from [play.google.com](https://play.google.com) or [apps.apple.com](https://apps.apple.com).



### iNaturalist

Birds, animals, insects, plants, trees ID and data pool



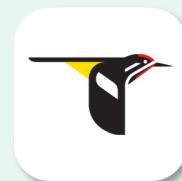
### SEEK by iNaturalist

Animal and plant photo ID



### Plant Snap

Photo IDs 600,000 types of plants



### Merlin Bird ID by Cornell Lab

Bird descriptions, range map and caller ID feature



# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE MARSH?

**January 8**

## Christmas Bird Count for Kids

The Christmas Bird Count for Kids is a fun, global, winter birdwatching event for kids and families. Join us online to learn about birds and become a Citizen Scientist! There are many ways to participate. To learn more, [please click here](#).

**January  
22, 23, 29, & 30  
February 5 & 6**

## Snowshoe EcoTours

Experience areas of the Wye Marsh that are otherwise not open to the general visiting public on this snowshoe tour guided by an Outdoor Naturalist! \$65pp. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, [please click here](#).

**February  
4, 11, 12, 18 & 19**

## Marsh by Moonlight - Snowshoe Series

Experience the sights and sounds that snowshoeing along our moonlit trails provides! After learning about the Marsh at night through hoots, chatter, coos, yips and howls relax by the fire and enjoy a roasted snack and a warm drink. \$50pp. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, [please click here](#).



## PHASE 2 UPDATE:

In light of the restrictions announced this week, there are a few temporary changes to your next visit to Wye Marsh.

Trails will remain open from 9:00am - 4:00pm daily with the following measures in place:

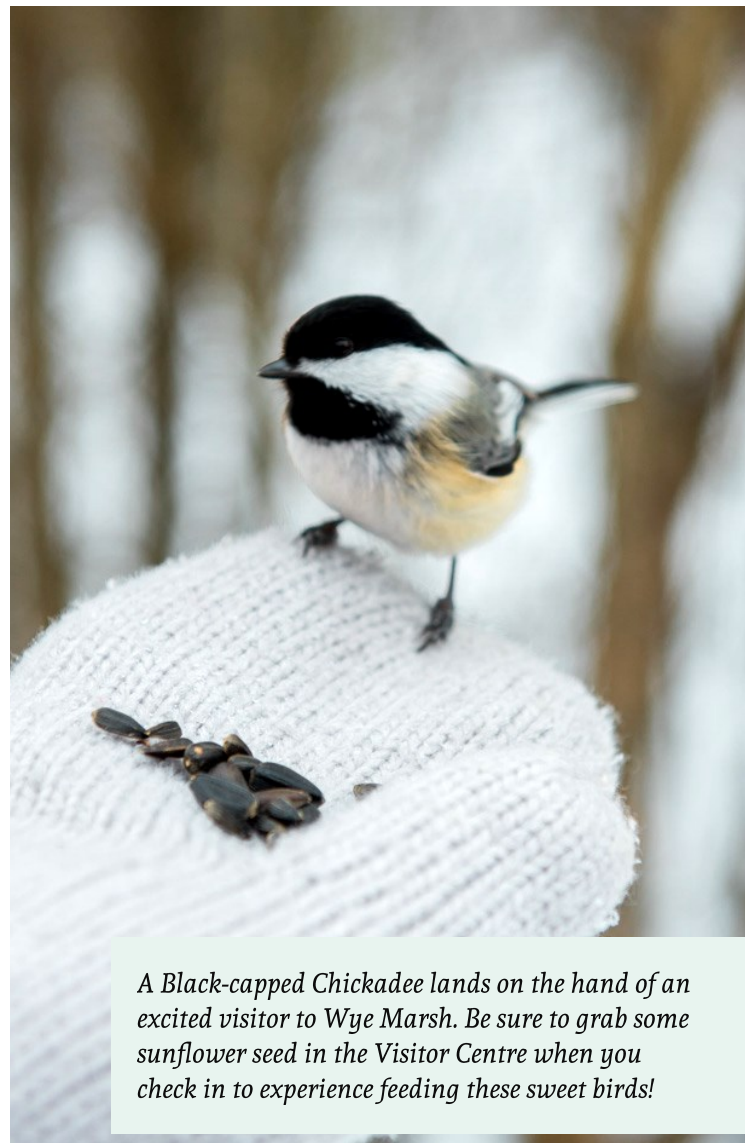
- Birds of Prey Field is temporarily closed
- Workshops, kid's programming, group visits, and special events are suspended for January and February
- Cross-country ski and snowshoe rentals are suspended
- Only 1 family at a time is permitted in the Visitor Centre
- The Display Hall is currently closed

Wye Marsh is pleased to offer a discounted adult admission rate during these partial closures.

Please continue to respect signage, social distancing, and mask wearing while indoors.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

For more details on visiting Wye Marsh during COVID-19, please [visit our website by clicking here](#).



*A Black-capped Chickadee lands on the hand of an excited visitor to Wye Marsh. Be sure to grab some sunflower seed in the Visitor Centre when you check in to experience feeding these sweet birds!*

# REFLECTING ON OUR YEAR



*A beautiful winter boardwalk stroll at Wye Marsh!*

## **As we look forward to all that we aim to accomplish in 2022, we would also like to celebrate these accomplishments at Wye Marsh from 2021!**

- 6,272 m<sup>2</sup> of invasive phragmites were removed by the Wye Marsh Stewardship Department in partnership with Severn Sound Environmental Association, allowing the native species to thrive.
- The Wye Marsh Animal Care department provided specialized care and enrichment for 15 raptors + 6 turtles + 2 snakes who cannot be released to the wild.
- Outdoor Educators delivered environmental educational programs for over 5,000 students, both in person and virtual.
- Outdoor educators delivered virtual classroom visits as far away as Alberta and Nunavut.
- Funding from Midland Rotary and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation allowed for the revitalization of Swan Landing to improve monitoring facilities and create an educational hub on the trails.
- Funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation allowed for the renovation of the Pavilion such that it can be used in colder and wetter weather as an outdoor classroom.
- Kim Hacker, our new Executive Director joined us in July.
- The valuable, protected habitat at Wye Marsh provided refuge for countless species, including Species at Risk and Endangered Species, as a home, a rest area, nesting grounds, and/ or hunting grounds.



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

Each of our volunteers is invaluable to the success of the Wye Marsh, and we appreciate every role that is taken up. This monthly volunteer spotlight is meant to highlight some of the great work done by our volunteers.

**Thank you to all!**

## SUSAN DOUGHERTY

Susan Dougherty (right) and her husband, Barry, stumbled upon the Wye Marsh while on a spontaneous weekend get away – and it turned into a life-changing experience. When it came time to retire three years ago, the two left behind their family home in Kilbride, near Burlington, for a new nest on the shores of Georgian Bay.

Working as a Librarian for 30 years, Susan is a real people person and natural networker. When she retired, she went from building community partnerships and running vibrant family programs in Halton to becoming an integral part of Waubaushene’s Talpines, the Midland Salvation Army Foodbank, and our lovely Wye Marsh!



“My job was very social”, she says, which is why volunteering on the Front Desk at Wye Marsh has been such a great fit. In addition to greeting visitors, chatting with other volunteers, and getting to know the staff, Sue loves to see kids come to the Marsh.

“I really enjoy seeing people come in, introducing little ones to a world of nature and discovery.”

That incredible sense of wonderment is something Susan shared with her own kids, when they were growing up. And now, others can do the same at Wye Marsh – only thanks to the generous volunteers and donors who help keep our doors open. Thank you!



### **Congratulations to Kathy S, winner of the 2021 Wye Marsh 50/50 draw.**

Many thanks to all of our tickets buyers, for helping us raise funds toward new environmental education displays for the Visitor Centre.

Pictured L to R: Jana Luker, Board Member and Kim Hacker, Executive Director, draw the winning ticket.

## **A SWEET Update!**

Staff are working on a tentative plan for **Sweetwater Harvest Festival**, to be hosted in March 2022. Announcements will be made about festival dates, happenings, and timing as we know more.

If you know a talented Chef, Glass Blower, or Experimental Soul, the Wye Marsh is looking for “Sugar Artists” who might like to demonstrate sugar painting, blowing, or stain glass artistry techniques using maple sugar at the Wye Marsh this year. For more information, please contact Heather at 705-526-7809 ext 217 or [hkeery@wyemarsh.com](mailto:hkeery@wyemarsh.com).

Other interested vendors should also contact Heather at 705-526-7809 ext 217 or [hkeery@wyemarsh.com](mailto:hkeery@wyemarsh.com).





## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Welcome to 2022! It's not what we hoped for, but we can still take time to be grateful for what we have – fresh air, bird songs, scenic vistas, and the company of friends and family (either virtually or face-to-face).

Speaking of gratitude, we have been so touched by the many donations we have received recently. We are deeply grateful for the support of our Members, volunteers, and all who have donated to Wye Marsh. As you know, we do not receive funding from either the Provincial or Federal government, and with the closures earlier this year, we've also not had as many visitors as previous years, so we are all the more thankful for your gifts.

We have some big plans for the year ahead! We're looking forward to revitalizing our Display Hall with new, educational and experiential exhibits; we want to undertake

even more environmental stewardship initiatives; we're working on mindfulness programming for people of all ages; and we welcome a new addition to our Birds of Prey!

There are a number of ways to contribute to these and other projects at Wye Marsh, including [symbolic adoptions](#) as well as opportunities to donate in specific areas such as our [Trail Fund](#) or [Camp Fund](#). There is also the option of making an [In Memory donation](#) to honour a loved one or donate a small percentage of your estate to the Friends of Wye Marsh Endowment Fund, held in perpetuity by Huronia Community Foundation, in the interest of keeping Wye Marsh viable for years to come. Please know that each and every donation, regardless of amount, makes a difference.

Here's to a wonderful 2022!

**- Kim Hacker, Executive Director**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Whilst it may not be ideal to enter a new year with reimposed COVID restrictions, I think that it is important to remember that we have actually come a long way in one year in our understanding and treatment of this pandemic. We may feel that our lives are constantly being buffeted by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, but there are still many ways to seize the initiative and combat the winter blahs.

One of the best ways, of course, is to get outside! We cannot guarantee that the weather will always be ideal for snowshoeing or cross-country skiing (although, as I write, the signs are looking hopeful), but our 27 kilometers of trails are always open (except in extreme weather). Be

prepared for ice underfoot, and bring lots of sunflower seeds with you!

As always, I would like to thank our dedicated staff, and volunteers, who have worked so hard to keep the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre open and functioning through these difficult times; and I would like to thank all of you who are reading this for your ongoing support which makes everything possible.

Come out and visit your Marsh!

**- Alasdair MacLean, President of Friends of Wye Marsh Inc. Board of Directors**



# WYE MARSH WINTER TRAIL SYSTEM

16160 HIGHWAY 12 EAST, TAY, ON | (705) 526-7809

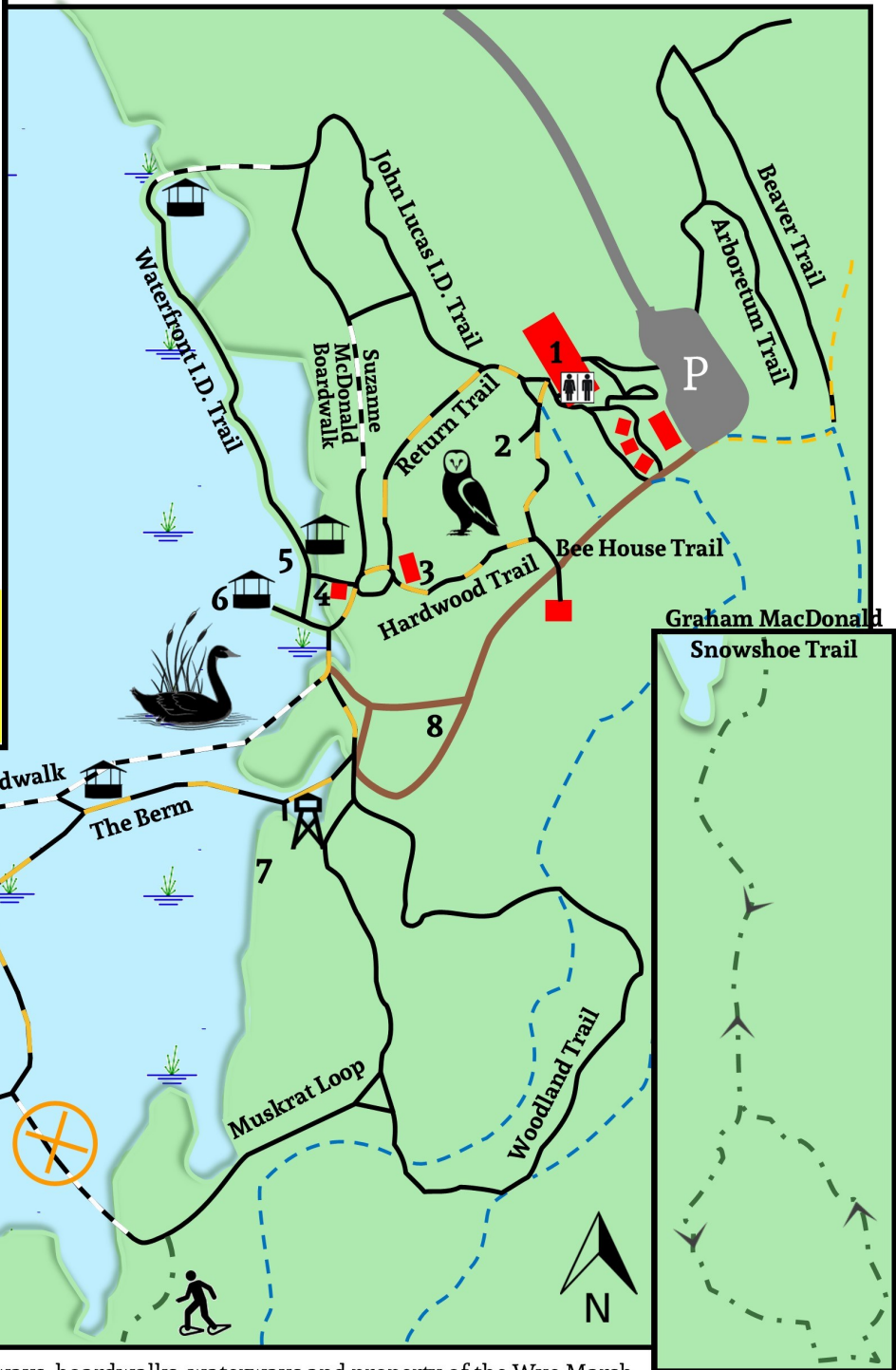
- 1 Visitor's Centre
- 2 Birds of Prey Field
- 3 Sugar Shack
- 4 Log Cabin
- 5 Canoe Dock
- 6 Swan Landing
- 7 Kayak Dock
- 8 Tenting Field

- Forest
- Wetland/ Open Water
- Building

**LEGEND**

Hiking Trails		
Boardwalk		
Marsh March		1.9km
Hardwood & Return Trail		0.4km
Muskrat Loop		1.6km
Woodland Trail		1.5km
Beaver Trail		1km
Arboretum Trail		0.6km
I.D. Trails		0.9km
Ski Trails		
Service Road		
Snowshoe Trail		2.72km
Bridge closed due to maintenance		

**TRAILS CLOSE AT 4:00PM**  
**GATES LOCK AT 5:00PM**  
**DANGER**  
**STAY OFF ALL ICE SURFACES**



Please use caution on all trails, walkways, boardwalks, waterways and property of the Wye Marsh. Appropriate outdoor wear is recommended. Slippery conditions exist when wet. Be aware that plant roots and loose rocks can create natural trip hazards when extending above paths. Immediately return to the Visitor's Centre if foul weather conditions threaten.