

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?

February 2 is **World Wetlands Day**, and even though they are frozen this time of year, wetlands are still pretty incredible!

There are different types of wetlands, and each is a unique and important habitat. There are 4 types of wetlands in Ontario: marshes, swamps, fens, and bogs.

Wetlands all share characteristics that set them apart from other wet habitats (like rivers, ponds, or lakes). The main defining characteristic is being an area with waterlogged soils that are at least periodically covered in shallow water.

Wetlands can be wet for a variety of reasons:

- being located in a low laying area, where rain run off will saturate the soils and pool
- being located near a river or other body of water that regularly overflow their boundary to saturate nearby areas
- being located in an area where the ground water is at or very near the surface, meaning they are 'fed' from below
- beavers are very important wetland architects; their dams redirect water flow to flood new areas and create wetlands

Wetlands are crucial. They act as flood barriers, water purifiers, storm breakers, and recreation areas in benefit to humans. To wildlife, they provide vital habitat, hunting grounds, migration waypoints, and nesting grounds to countless species. Wetlands are vibrant, complex centers of life and biodiversity.



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

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

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAILS:
GROOMED & OPEN!



ON THE WILD SIDE:

While we may be chilly out on the trails, our Canadian wildlife have adapted for the cold in many ways and are able to withstand some incredible temperatures. Waterfowl, like the ducks or Trumpeter Swans you may see at Swan Landing have thick layers of down feathers to keep them warm, and the ability to regular their blood circulation in their feet. Mammals, like foxes or squirrels have thick fluffy tails to help them curl up for warmth. Plus, of course everyone is great at finding a burrow, nook, or den to curl up during the particularly frigid days!

February 18—21, 2022 marks the 25th Great Backyard Bird Count - a citizen science initiative from Birds Canada, the National Audubon Society, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Grab your binoculars and head outside to spot some species and participate! [Click here to learn more.](#)

Tracks on the Trails

Here are some common animal tracks you may see this winter on the trails at Wye Marsh, or in your own yard!

Cottontail Rabbit



White-tailed Deer



Coyote



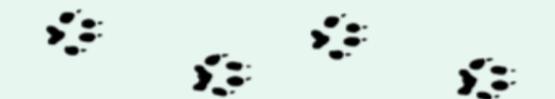
Gray Squirrel



Raccoon



Fox



A Winter Rescue

Wye Marsh staff Kim Hacker and Jennifer Pelletier were pleased to be able to help a Trumpeter Swan in need this month.

The Trumpeter Swan was displaying erratic behaviour which is symptomatic of early lead poisoning, including lethargy and isolation. The swan was captured by staff to be transported to Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge for veterinary care.



At Shades of Hope the swan tested high for amounts of lead in the stomach. Veterinary staff have flushed the stomach and given the swan a positive prognosis.

Lead poisoning occurs when waterfowl accidentally consume lead shot that has sunk to the bottom of wetlands where they feed on roots and other vegetation. It is one of the biggest threats to Trumpeter Swan populations. Please, do not use lead shot when hunting, and be sure to retrieve all lead sinkers when fishing. While partial bans on lead shot are in effect, lead remains in ecosystems for decades.



Once recovered, this Trumpeter Swan will be released to the wild to continue a wild life. Thank you all involved in this rescue!



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE MARSH?

Please note that workshops will resume at the end of February based on public health recommendations. Stay tuned on the website and social media for announcements.

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](#).

March 19 & 20

March 26 & 27

April 2 & 3

Sweetwater Harvest Weekends

Save the dates! Sweetwater Harvest Festival is looking a little bit different this year, and there will be more information to come. The event will take place over three weekends instead of one this year, and the event program will be modified based on public health recommendations. Stay tuned for all the **sweet** fun!



April 9

Friends of Wye Marsh Annual General Meeting

The Friends of Wye Marsh Annual General meeting will be hosted virtually on April 9, 2022. Any interested parties are welcome to view the meeting. Valid Annual Membership holders are able to vote. Further information to follow.



OPERATIONS UPDATE:

Wye Marsh is excited to announce the following updates as of January 31 in light of easing public health measures.

- The Birds of Prey Field has re-opened
- The Visitor Centre has re-opened
- Snowshoe rentals are now available
- Bunkie rentals have resumed for Scouts & Guides

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

Thank you to all of our visitors for your patience and understanding - we look forward to seeing you out on the trails!

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



Wye Marsh's cross-country ski trails are now groomed and open to explore!

Explore different trail lengths and difficulties suited to skiers of all abilities.

Please note rentals are unavailable at this time.

Trails are open from 9:00am—4:00pm. For trail maps, please [click here](#).

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!

KAREN REDDITT

Karen Redditt grew up in Midland, exploring the trails of the Wye Marsh with her family. Her dad took up woodcarving and entered local competitions, while her mom fed her passion for art by attending seasonal shows and exhibits. When Karen retired in 2018, she found herself back in Midland, and signed up for Project FeederWatch at the Wye Marsh.

"I have volunteered most of my life in Barrie, Oakville and Midland," she says. Now she serves as a Wye Marsh Tree Swallow Nest Box Monitor, Swan Monitor and Librarian. She also helps out with special events, serving pancakes during Sweetwater, and doing whatever else is needed.

"Most people look down when they walk around," she says. Now, because of her experience with monitoring birds at the Wye Marsh feeders through Project FeederWatch, Karen says,



"I look up. If I hear something, I'll look around and see what is making that sound. It has made me more aware."

With her heightened senses, Karen loves watching life unfold with the changing seasons. In the spring, she enjoys seeing wildflowers emerge, trees starting to bud, birds looking for nesting materials, "and the little streams starting to trickle underneath the boardwalk."

There is something beautiful about taking time to notice how the bullrushes have grown just a little bit taller... As grateful as she is to enjoy the fresh air, peace and beauty of the Wye Marsh, we are grateful to Karen for sharing her perspective and volunteering with us. **Thank you!**

Searching for Sap Suckers...

Maple Syrup activities make a significant contribution to the Wye Marsh's programs and identity. There is a group of volunteers, fondly known as the Sap Suckers, that take care of the requirements of producing maple syrup and educating the public.

The group's busy season starts in early February and concludes in May. Activities include maintaining the collection system, tapping, preparing the processing system, collecting sap and processing syrup and clean up at the end of the season. During that time they also provide many demonstrations to the public, including school groups, and at Sweetwater Harvest Festival. Feeling comfortable presenting best practises information to the public is important.

The Sap Sucker team is currently looking for new members to join. While previous maple syrup knowledge is a benefit, it is not required as training will be provided to ensure you have an enjoyable experience. Time and enthusiasm will take care of the rest.

If you are interested, contact Heather Keery, Volunteer & Event Coordinator at 705-526-7809 ext. 217 or email hkeery@wymarsh.com.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

We're excited to be picking up steam and gradually opening back up after the limited capacities of January. The ski trails are groomed and ready for those who have their own skis. We've reopened the Visitor Centre and the Birds of Prey Field, and the birds are excited to welcome people back. Darwin, our social Turkey Vulture, has been particularly missing visitors— if you're coming for a visit, please stop in and say hi to him!

We are once again renting snowshoes, so if you've never had a chance to try this Indigenous method of winter transportation, now is a great time to do so! You can try either modern or traditional snowshoes at Wye Marsh. We hope to resume ski rentals as well after February 21.

We have some exciting workshops being planned for late February and March, and look forward to a modified Sweetwater Harvest experience in March as well – stay tuned for more details! We are also excited to announce that registrations for Summer Camp will start in April.

But before I get ahead of myself, there is still lots of winter fun to be enjoyed at Wye Marsh so bundle up and come play outside with us!

- Kim Hacker, Executive Director



Darwin, the Turkey Vulture at Wye Marsh working on flight and glove training.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

This is the time of year to really appreciate the beauties of the Wye Marsh in winter. When I am walking our trails, I am always pleased to see, and meet with, other people who are using and enjoying our unique facilities.

Remember, however, that the wind chill out on the open Marsh can be brutal (slightly less so amongst the trees), so dress accordingly. I would also like to remind everyone that, despite the very cold temperatures of the last little while, there is still water running under the ice in some parts of the Marsh; when combined with the effects of the standing vegetation, this can make the ice potentially unsafe anywhere in the Marsh - please do not venture out onto it for any reason. Stick to our marked and groomed trails!

We ask for your cooperation in making sure that you are off the trail system by 4:00 pm. This is for your own safety, as it gives the staff time to make sure that nobody has been left behind when we close for the night.

We are busy mapping out the phases of our full reopening over the next six weeks. Undoubtedly the provincial guidelines will change as we go along, so please stay tuned to our website and our social media posts for all the latest information. I look forward to seeing you on the trails!

- 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

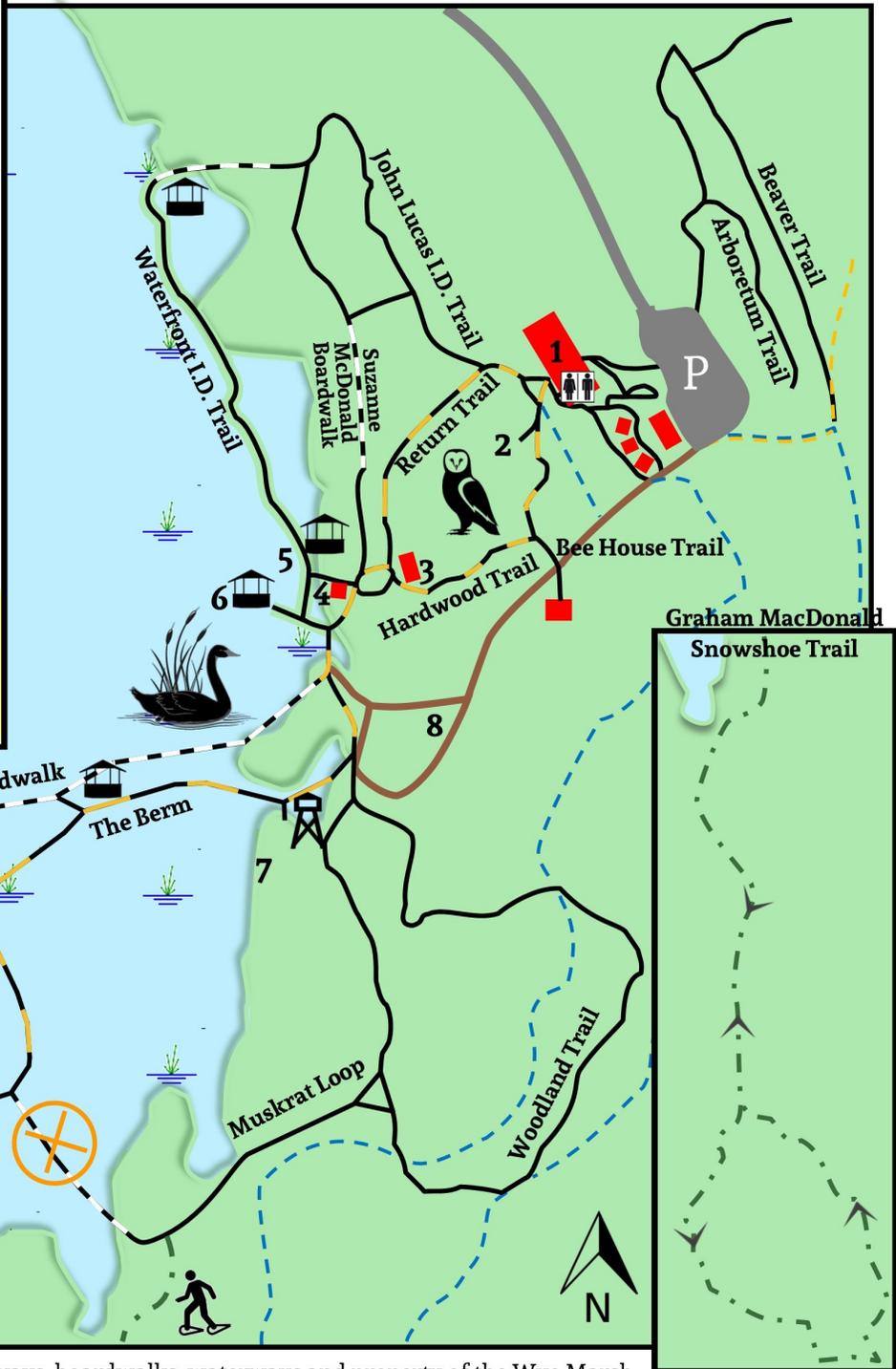
- 1 Visitor's Centre
- 2 Birds of Prey Field
- 3 Sugar Shack
- 4 Log Cabin
- 5 Canoe Dock
- 6 Swan Landing
- 7 Kayak Dock
- 8 Tenting Field

- 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.