

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!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Wishing you all the best for 2021, may it be filled with kindness, family, friends, and nature!

DID YOU KNOW?

January 4 is **National Bird Day**. This observance is meant to draw attention to our feathered friends - their splendor, ways we can help conserve their habitat, and other citizen science initiatives to help protect them. Here are some quick facts to share with family & friends call about birds in Ontario!

- Ontario's provincial bird is the Common Loon, official as of 1994.
- Canada's official bird is the Grey Jay also known as the Canada Jay or Whiskey Jack.
- There are just over 500 species of birds which can be found in Ontario. 291 of these were recorded to breed in the province.
- With a wingspan of 7.5 cm, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird is the smallest bird in Ontario.
- With a wingspan of 100cm, the Golden Eagle is the largest and most powerful Raptor (Bird of Prey) in Ontario.
- With a wingspan of 150cm, the Trumpeter Swan is the largest bird in Ontario.



Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre, including the trail system, Visitor Centre, and Birds of Prey Field remain **temporarily closed** to aid in stopping the spread of COVID-19. We are hopeful to reopen at the end of January.

Please stay tuned for further updates.

For more information and updates to Wye Marsh's re-opening plans, [please click here](#).



ON THE WILD SIDE:

The Science Behind Snowshoes

Snowshoeing is a beloved winter activity of many Canadians. It allows us to explore those areas less travelled without ending up knee-deep in snow! Snowshoes work on the basic principle of weight distribution. The more surface area you can spread your weight out on the less force it has, which means the less you will sink into the snow.

Snowshoe Hares are named for their hind feet, which are much longer and wider like snowshoes than other rabbits or hares. This winter adaptation allows them to have better weight distribution and stay atop the snow. Snowshoe Hares are native to every province and territory in Canada. They can advance up to 3 metres in one bound and travel as fast as 45 km an hour!



There are different types of snowshoes: modern and traditional. Traditional snowshoes have a wooden frame with woven webbing, while modern snowshoes have a lightweight metal frame with plastic to distribute the weight. Both work well, it really comes down to preference. If you are snowshoeing in icy terrain, metal



snowshoes often have picks on the bottom to help give you some extra grip.

We hope you will get the chance to explore nature and discover snowshoeing!



As the waters in our area begin to freeze, Trumpeter Swans and other waterfowl start to look for sections of open water to be found on quick moving rivers, near dams, or at Wye Marsh where a section is kept open for them at Swan Landing. Trumpeter Swans are beginning to appear in larger numbers once again which is always a very exciting part of winter.

Throughout the marsh there are animal tracks crossing the trails, showing us who we are sharing the woodlands with - including squirrels and other small mammals.

Don't forget that there is still time to sight, count, and record for Christmas Bird Count Data. While Christmas is passed, the count is ongoing until January 5, 2021. More information about the Christmas Bird Count can be found [BirdsCanada.org](https://birdsCanada.org).



A male Evening Grosbeak.

Backyard Birder's Checklist:

- Northern Cardinal
- Red-Bellied Woodpecker
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Dark-Eyed Junco
- Evening Grosbeak
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Blue Jay
- Downy Woodpecker
- House Sparrow
- Mourning Dove
- Purple Finch
- Common Grackle



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

The New Year is generally a time to reflect on the past 12 months and make plans for the future. I understand that 2020 may make us pause before we do either – we don't want to think about the past 9 months and 2021 may be best approached with caution. I would ask that everyone take some time to think about the random acts of kindness that so many of us have experienced since the start of COVID and how they helped us maintain our overall sense of goodness in the world. And even with the uncertainty of 2021 please know that we are working on plans for Wye Marsh to try and make your experience here even more enjoyable, informative, and entertaining, because we know that we will be seeing everyone very soon.

The decision to close the trails and the gates was not made lightly and of course the closure of the Centre was mandated by the Code Grey Lockdown. We hope our Members and Volunteers understand that managing Wye Marsh and ensuring everyone is safe and healthy are always a prime consideration. In the meantime if you have any questions or concerns please send them to info@wyemarsh.com, we always appreciate hearing from everyone.

- Mary Ann Milne, Executive Director



Becker the Great Horned Owl is enjoying her new home at Wye Marsh.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

I hope you were all able to have an enjoyable Christmas holiday under our current circumstances. I know a lot of folks got very creative. Of course being under lockdown again is not what we wanted but I would say we are much better prepared than we were in March and we are very confident in our ability to weather the storm. Staff are working hard at taking care of the essentials and also working on projects for the future. We hope the lockdown will have the desired affect of lowering community COVID numbers so we can reopen on January 24, 2021.

I am pleased to announce that 4 new members were appointed to the Board at our December 14th meeting. They bring a wide range of backgrounds and experience to the board. The new members are Rebecca Cowie, Susan Molenda, Alasdair MacLean and Tim Martin. One additional member will join us at our January meeting and we are still in discussions with two more prospective candidates.

Please take care of yourselves and be safe. I am looking forward to seeing you at the Marsh after the lockdown.

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

LOOKING BACK AT A YEAR OF WYE MARSH:

2020 was a year full of challenges, but also a year for accomplishments and recognizing what we have to be grateful for in each of our lives. Here are some of the milestones and accomplishments of Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre for 2020.

- **February 2020** - Wye Marsh hosted Family Day with over 400 visitors exploring the trails hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing.
- **March 2020** - Wye Marsh welcomed in Willow the Broad-Winged Hawk.
- **April 2020** - Following the closure of the Wye Marsh trails system, Wye Marsh hosted our first virtual tour in celebration of the 50th Earth Day.
- **May 2020** - Continuing to connect our followers to nature digitally and safely, Wye Marsh hosted a virtual Migratory Bird Day event including Naturalist talk and birding tips.
- **July 2020** - Wye Marsh Camp @ Home Kits were launched, bringing the fun and discovery of camp to campers' backyards, including sponsored kits to ensure that as many campers as possible were able to participate.
- **August 2020** - Successfully received grant funding from TD FEF and later from the Rotary Club of Midland for the Swan Landing Revitalization Project, This project will see improvements made to the current Waterfowl Monitoring Station, turning it into an interactive educational hub showcasing the story of Trumpeter Swans.
- **September 2020** - Staff began work for large scale phragmites (an invasive tall grass species) from Wye Marsh under a grant from EGBI.
- **October 2020** - Wye Marsh hosted our first ever online fundraiser, Connecting for Conservation, which exceeded our fundraising goals. Thank you !
- **November 2020** - Wye Marsh welcomed in Becker the Great Horned Owl, and Scarlett the Red-Tailed Hawk.



What is a Swan's favourite instrument?
A TRUMPET!