

THE WAKE-ROBIN

Newsletter of the Sault Ste. Marie Naturalists of Ontario and Michigan.

Vol. 52, No. 3. December 2006

Mailing address: The Sault Naturalists Northern Postal Outlet, P.O. 21035 Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 6H3

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Ontario Nature rep.: Tony Walker Web masters: Vivian and Don Hall www3.sympatico.ca/donandvivhall/index.html

Publication Deadlines for the Wake Robin and

Annual Report

Publication target Last Date for Submission

September Meeting August 15
December Meeting November 15
February AGM January 15
May meeting April 15

Trip reports, photos and any other relevant submissions are welcome. Please submit short precise info to Wake Robin editor, Gail Giuliani, birchpt@sympatico.ca

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Lake Huron Labour Day canoeing/camping outing led by Val Walker. *Photo of Val by G. Giuliani*

OUTING REPORTS

Ten Things I Learned on the Raber Outing -by Betty Bennett

- 1.Rich Benson lives in a paradise in Michigan but not in Paradise, Michigan.
- 2. My back pack isn't waterproof.
- 3. The Raber area of Michigan is underlain by Silurian age limestone, a "little" younger than the Ordovician limestone of St. Joseph Island. The fossils we found at Raber are different from those on most of St. Joseph Island. Instead of the assortment of brachiopods, cephalopods, bryozoa and trilobites we saw at St. Joe, we saw lots of fossil corals (rugose, honeycomb and chain types). According to Gerry, geologists now recognize that this difference in fossil assemblages is a result of a major worldwide extinction event at the end of the Ordovician.
- 4. My jeans aren't waterproof either.
- 5. The round stem galls we saw on goldenrods serve to identify that goldenrod as Solidago canadensis, the Canada goldenrod, as these galls do not occur on other species of goldenrod in our area, according to Dave Euler. How the gall forms: The gall fly, Eurosta solidaginis, lays several eggs on the end bud of the golden rod but only one larva and one gall develops per plant. The larva eats down into the stem which then develops a round, thickwalled gall, providing food and protection for the growing larva. It is thought the saliva of the chewing larva mimics plant growth hormones that stimulate the plant tissues to form a gall. By late summer the larva, now fully grown, chews an exit tunnel to the edge of the outside wall. The larva over winters in the gall, and pupates in the spring. After a few weeks, the adult fly emerges through the exit tunnel and the cycle begins again.

- 6. My hiking boots leak.
- 7. How to distinguish mountain maple (*Acer spicatum*) from *striped maple*, also called (*Acer pensylvanicum*). While the bark of mountain maple is dull reddish brown, that of striped maple is smooth and greenish brown and when young, has conspicuous white vertical stripes.
- 8. You can fool a few of the naturalists some of the time and all of the naturalists none of the time, especially when it comes to canned bird-calls.
- 9. Successful wine and cheese parties do not depend on the weather.
- 10. **Elena Wentz**, for whom **Rich Benson** held the wine and cheese farewell, has moved to Traverse City. She was a member of the Sault Naturalists for twenty years. We wish Elena all the best in her new home.



Elena and Rich at the Raber outing. Photo: Curt Bosket

Goodbye, Elena

Longstanding member Elena Wentz has sold her home in Sault, MI to move closer to her daughter Diane's family in the Traverse City area. She is a retired professor of nursing instruction at LSSU. Elena, please keep in touch! *Carl Linhart.*

Outing Reports 2006 (cont'd)

Labour Day canoe/camping trip on Lake Huron led by Val Walker and Ron Prickett.

The scenery was spectacular, the weather was windy (tale end of hurricane from south) and the company companionable. We paddled, and Jim kayaked along the Hennepin Islands leeward shore and saw black bear, mink and mergansers. The shore were full of *nodding ladies tresses*. Two brave men went swimming in the cold cold water. We ate well, sang lustily and told tall tales around the campfire. A good time was had by all. -ed



Lunch stop on Lake Huron canoeing outing, GG

Desbarats Bat Cave Outing led by Val Walker

A small group hiked up to the spectacular Desbarats Bat Cave on a glorious Oct. day. Ron counted about 40 bats. Val also led us into a forest ablaze with autumn colour to find salamanders. A red bellied snake slid by on the walk home. -ed



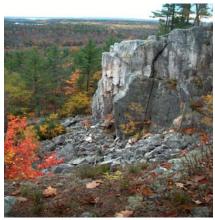
This photo of a red bellied snake was taken at St. Joe by Betty Bennett on the wildflower trip led by Carl. We met this kind of snake on the Desbarats outing too.



Salamander photo: D. Euler

Outing Guidelines

- -Please register for all outings by calling the trip leader or an outing committee member. Non-registrants are welcome, but risk being uniformed of the last minute outing changes.
- Dress for the weather and terrain with appropriate clothing and foot wear. Bring snack, water, binoculars, loupes, field guides, etc. For daylong excursions, bring lunch and extra water.
- -Refer all questions and requests for transportation to the trip leader or a member of the committee.
- -If carpooling, consider assisting the driver with gas costs. Suggested amounts are: US \$2.00 and CAN \$3.00, depending on the length of the trip and the dollar.
- -Inform your leader if you have to leave early, or make any changes to the plan or schedule while on the trip.



View from the top of caves. Photo: D. Euler

Tony Walker's Birding Reports

I had the honour of leading Sault
Naturalists Birding Outings on Sept 24,
2006. I had arranged to pick my friend
Jack up at 06-15 am, but as I listened
to the falling rain I gave him a call,
and he said "lets give it a go". So I
picked up Jack, and Coffee, and headed
for the border - crossing this time
without a hitch (phewww!). Close to 7 am
a lone car arrived - it was Carl
Linhart.

Jack said a poor days birding is better than a day at work, I seconded the motion, and off we went. While discussing where we should go, Carl mentioned recent sightings of jaegers at Whitefish Point. Without further discussion we headed west along Hwy 28 for a chance to see these elusive birds.

As we traveled West the weather started to improve and by the time we reached the Tahquamenon river mouth the sky started to clear

On arriving at Whitefish Point we learned that both a Parasitic and a Long-tailed Jaeger had been seen the previous day, as close as 75 feet. They had been chasing each other over open water then had flown right over the point counter who had a good view of them. A key identification for these birds is the white coverts on the Parasitic which were clearly seen by the counter and group.

By this time strong winds from the North were whipping up very high waves and it was pretty cold. First bird seen in our group was an American Kestrel flashing down the east bay shoreline. This was also a day for waterfowl migration; skeins of duck were flying by very high and fast, I managed to pick out Lesser Scaup, Golden Eye and Rednecked Grebe. A lone adult Bald Eagle was seen flying high into the north wind. Loons were truly mixed up and were flying to every point of the compass!

Small birds included flocks of both Brewers and Rusty Blackbirds, while small groups of Water Pipits were flying and running along the beach.

A sudden cry went up and I thought, "Tony the spell is broken," perhaps I would finally see the jaegers. After a lively discussion, however, the birds turned out to be Semipalmated Sandpipers, with also a fleeting glance at a possible Western Sandpiper. Later

Dunlin and Sanderling were also seen. Their plumage was changing and made for some difficult identification.

I arrived at this conclusion: watching for waterfowl is very time-consuming and you have to be dressed to see them. Red-necked Phalarope had been seen so I was watching for them, I also was using Carl's Scope and after an hour I realized why I have a heavier tripod as I was being buffeted here there and everywhere.

I headed back to the Whitefish gift shop and the bird feeding station. The sun blazed down and the wind was dead. White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows were there in good numbers, and a lone Fox Sparrow kept popping out to say hi. We had lunch and appreciated the warmth of the sun. The shop was open and Joann took Carl and me into the back to show us where an Owl had got free and had tried to attack a mounted Sharp Shinned Hawk. A spot of blood on the ceiling indicated the attack.

As we drove home I mentioned to Carl that Jack and I were going to Birch Point on 27th Sept Wed. We had a great time that day as well. The most active waterfowl being Common Merganser, and flocks of Sandhill Cranes were also seen. Cheers Tony.

P.S. I purchased a brand new book <u>The Shorebird Guide</u> by Michael O'Brien, Richard Crossley, and Kevin Karlson. I hope it will help with shore bird I.D. It has rave reviews.



Fringed gentian, St. Joe Is. Photo: Curt Bosket

A PERSONAL NOTE:

Some Sault Naturalists will remember the **Binghams** who led us on many wonderful adventures - on foot, on skis and on snowshoes. Bob and Shirley have moved and would love to hear from their naturalist friends. Gladys Wallwork has their new address. You can contact her at 705-779-3098.

PROGRAM REPORTS

There have been excellent presentations at the regular naturalist Meetings (2nd Tues. of the month, except May, which is the 1st. Tue.) (see p.8 for the next program roster). We thank the speakers for sharing their expertise with us and John Lehman for booking these knowledgeable and generous people. If you have missed their presentations here are a few teasers to make you sorry that you didn't attend. – ed.

Gladys Wallwork Sept 13/06. Seasons of the Watershed: A Land-lover's Gude to Lake Superior was the title of the superb presentation on the Lake Superior watershed, its rivers, and hiking trails, its cultural and natural history was given by Gladys. Gladys illustrated her detailed presentation with her own spectacular photos of gentle ponds, glistening rivers and watersheds, graced with herons, and wildflowers, magnificent waterfalls and the enormous Superior waves, winter/ summer/ spring and fall. She accompanied these slides with details of cultural and natural history, as well as Gladys', Cliff's and Nancy's anecdotal experience as they drove, hiked and snowshoed the area. A repeat performance would be well appreciated. We can then experience those wonderful photos again.

Some of the books Gladys mentioned include: Baxter, T.S.H. <u>Quiet Coves and Rocky Highlands</u>. Exploring Lake Superior. Published by Superior Lore, (Wawa). 1985.

Chisholm, Barbara, and Andrea Gutsche. <u>Superior.</u> Under the Shadow of the Gods. Lynx. 1998.

Steer, Don. <u>Superior's East Shore, 2005. ADDENDA</u> (to Superior's East Shore).published and copyright by the author. May 2005.

Turcott, Agnes. W. <u>Land of the Big Goose</u>. A History of Wawa and the Michipicoten Area 1966 – 1982. Published by the Twshp. of Michipocoten Heritage Comm. (1962) 2004. Printed by Cliffe Printing.

Also: art history books by Peter Mellon and David Silcox of the Group of Seven's works in, and about, the Algoma area and the Superior watershed.



Marten in den. Photo and presentation by Ian Thompson. The Lifestyles of a North American Predator. (The American marten in N.ON)



Ashley Moerke: Looking upstream: Linkages between Human and Stream Ecosystems. (Specifically the St. Marys River AOC.-ed) Photo by Curt Bosket. See also March 14/07 regular meeting

Hwy 550 - Road Clean up On Oct. 17, 2006, the section of Hwy 550 which Sault Nats members have cleaned up for years was once again been de-littered thanks to Helen Hutchinson, Doreen Guerriero, Julie McFadden, Wendy Lalouette, and Gerry and Betty Bennett. The MTO in Echo Bay delivered the newly required signs in the morning and picked them up in the late afternoon. The rest of the clubs extends our thanks to you all. -ed

Interesting Things to Know

Foam packing peanuts

There is a means of **recycling** foam packing peanuts, AKA expanded polystyrene. The Pak N' Ship store in Sault, MI, 4234 I-75 Business Spur, right by the large Canadian flag at the U.S.A. gas station, will accept peanuts and plastic airbags for re-use. Other shapes of polystyrene foam (Styrofoam) are not acceptable. Just take a bag or box of peanuts in to the friendly people at Pak N' Ship. If any of you are unable to make a delivery yourself, I'll be happy to drop them off for you.

-Carl Linhart

Optics Information

A website at www.betterviewdesired.com is enthusiastically suggested to anyone wishing recommendations on the purchase of binoculars or spotting scopes. Besides ratings of various models, most useful articles on such topics as choosing binoculars or scopes, becoming a better birder, rating your own binoculars, and optics in general are provided. I've been following the authors for more than ten years and have a great deal of confidence in the information given.

-Carl Linhart

Should Brides go Birding?

In his book *Pete Dunne on Bird Watching*, the author tells of a rare bird that refused to enter its nest hole until a nearby birder removed his white shirt and white ball cap. Dunne feels that to minimize disturbance to the birds, we should be careful of the colors we choose to wear in the field.

Birds are highly visual creatures, and colors play an important part in their lives. To keep the peace, male redwing blackbirds hide their red epaulettes outside breeding season, and the black and white pattern on the face of a Black-capped Chickadee makes a perfect target for young birds begging for food.

Dunne believes that white is the worst color choice of all, and bright yellow rain suits may be a close second. Camouflage is excellent, but if the military look isn't for you just go with cool, neutral colors like tan, brown, green and gray.

As difficult as it may be, we should be discouraging brides from active birding, at least until they have changed into their "going away" outfits. – Don Hall

What is that little brown moth flying around the woods in late autumn??

Well, Val Walker found the answer: see verso of OUTINGS insert.







Info. session re: the Prince Twp. Wind Farm with Brookfield Power's Jim Delucio-thanks to Val Walker for arranging it...Nov. 2006. l. to r: Dave, Jim, Val. *Photos by Curt Bosket*.

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Pelee Birding - 2007

Each May, club members are privileged to spend a few days tenting and birding at Point Pelee National Park, a North American birding hotspot. The wonderful thing about camping on the point is that we are surrounded by birds – 24 hours a day. The songbird migration is really incredible, and some of the birders are every bit as entertaining as the birds.

Only organized clubs are allowed to camp in the park, and only for a short time each year. There is no public "campground" of the sort that people expect to find in a national park. Camping fees are \$48/person

Making reservations is a difficult and uncertain process. It involves a "telephone marathon" on the first business day in January. For 2007, likely arrival dates are May 6 or May 13.

Assuming that we are successful with the reservations, we need to have a good idea of how many people will be in the group. If you are interested, please contact us before Christmas, we'll fill you in on all the details.

Hope to see you on the point!

Don and Vivian Hall Phone (705) 248-1834 Email donandvivhall@sympatico.ca



Pine grosbeak. Photo: D. Euler

Where we Meet

General Meetings

Time: 7:30 p.m. 2nd Tuesday of each month, except May which is on the 1st Tues.

Place:

Sault Ontario: Great Lakes Forestry Centre, 1219 Queen St. East. Sept., Oct, Nov., May, June.

Sault Michigan:

Central Methodist United Church corner of Spruce and Court St.

Dec., Jan., Feb., March and April

no meeting in July and August.

MICHIGAN OUTINGS

Meet at the Michigan Welcome Center (MWC). Follow the blue directional sign immediately south of the International Bridge toll booths

ONTARIO OUTINGS

-Market Mall. Located on Second Line West (HWY 550) at Korah RD. Meet at the NW area by the video store.

-Churchill Plaza – follow Hwy 17 E. The Mall is on the right off Trunk Rd. (Hwy17E) parking lot, by the entrance sign.

-Wellington Sq Mall – Follow Hwy 17 E to the McDonalds Restaurant, east of the Mall. Park on the west side of the parking lot, facing the mall.

-Zellers Plaza North – enter A&P /Zeller's Mall from Great Northern Rd, or Northern Ave. Park west of the Pennington's store.

DECEMBER 2006 THROUGH JUNE 2007 PROGRAMS

- John Lehman coordinator

December 12, 2006, Central United Methodist Church

Annual Holiday Get-Together: *An Evening of Natural Wonders*. Members and guests are invited to bring their own "treasures," such as collections of rocks and minerals, pressed plants, insects, art from nature, stamps depicting natural history, and any other natural objects or artistic depictions of nature that you would like to share with the membership. Tables will be set up for displays and you will be free to wander among them informally; contributors should be available to describe features of their collections and answer questions as needed. There will also be a "give-away" table for anyone who would like to donate or acquire used books on natural history, outdoor activities, environmental topics, etc. Call John Lehman (906-635-5095) or Dave Euler (705-248-1494) if you expect to bring something (other than books) to the meeting.

January 9, 2007, Central United Methodist Church

Paul DeBeer, a graduate of Sault College's Field Naturalist Program, will speak about *The Nature and Diversity of South and East Africa*, illustrating his talk with a number of photos. Paul was born and grew up in South Africa and worked as a guide throughout South and East Africa. He will describe his experiences from five years of guiding and relate his impressions of the different habitats, cultures, wildlife, and other interesting things that he came across in this travels.

Annual Dinner and General Meeting

When: Tuesday, February 13, 2007.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.; program should begin at approximately 7:45 p.m. There may be a short wait before dinner while the tables are prepared.

Where: Cafeteria, Sault College, 443 Northern Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Menu: Buffet dinner with choice of oven-roasted chicken or baked lasagna (including vegetarian option) plus salads, sides, and dessert.

Cost: \$21 Canadian or U.S. (cont'd: see next column)

AGM 2007 cont'd

Directions: If you're coming from the U.S., turn left onto Huron after leaving the International Bridge Plaza and immediately right on Albert. After Albert makes a sharp curve to the left and merges with Wellington, follow the signs for Highway 17 North and turn left on Church St (just beyond Pim). Continue on Highway 17 North to the traffic light at Northern Avenue, turn right, drive about 2 blocks to the Sault College campus, and turn right into the parking lot. Enter the main building, take the stairs to the ground floor, and follow the main corridor to the cafeteria, which will be on your right. Handicapped access is available.

Speaker: David Kronk, Education Specialist at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, will speak on *Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and the U.S. National Park System.*. He will provide an introduction to the park system and describe recreational opportunities at Pictured Rocks, its natural history, and plans for its future development.

Important: The deadline for ticket sales is Thursday, February 8. All tickets must be prepaid; none will be available at the door.

March 13, 2007, Central United Methodist Church

Marshall Werner, Associate Professor of Chemistry at Lake Superior State University, will be speaking about *The Biological and Chemical Health of the St. Marys River*. His presentation will include a description of LSSU's research on biological and chemical pollutants in the river and will include an update of research findings described by Ashley Moerke in the November 14 meeting..

April 10, 2007, Central United Methodist Church

Speaker and program to be announced.

May 1, 2007, Great Lakes Forestry Centre

Robert Knudsen, Species at Risk Technician for the Ministry of Natural Resources, will speak about *Wood Turtle Biology and Conservation in Algoma*. He will report on an MNR study of wood turtles, with a description of the partnerships formed and what has been accomplished over the past six years of the study. The study was initiated by Great Lakes Power to identify the effects on wood turtles of vegetation management on hydro right-of-ways.

PROJECTS: Sault Naturalist Club

1; The Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas is entering its final year in 2007. This is a cooperative effort by volunteers to record the birds that breed in Michigan over a 5 year period. We need members of the Sault Naturalist Club to help out next spring, its last year, by volunteering to census in the Chippewa County area of Michigan. More details will be available later, so for now, just mark on your mental calendars that we hope to be part of the Michigan Atlas team next May and June (2007).

-Dave Euler

2: **FORT CREEK**: Biological inventory for HUB

Sault Ste. Marie, ON City Council has approved the development of a non motorized trail to encompass our community for such activities as walking, cycling, roller blading and skiing. The trail when completed will be approximately 20 kilometres long and is known as the HUB. A portion of the HUB trail passes through the Fort Creek Conservation Area on the west side of Fort Creek. The existing trail location, well known to our members, will be used as the foundation for the HUB trail. The intent is to upgrade the existing route, improve safety and minimize some of the negative environmental conditions such as erosion which exists along the path now.

The Conservation Authority, to ensure that the environment is not negatively impacted by these changes, is requiring that an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) be completed before the engineering work can be initiated on the trail. The EIS consists of several components including a biological inventory of the location within the proximity of the trail and the area that may be impacted by the proposed engineering activities. The biological inventory should be completed by early June.

The inventory process would include:

- dividing the area into habitat units.
- developing a sampling plan for the area.
- identifying and recording species.
- preparing a report for the Conservation Authority.

The field work involved would include approximately 2 full days and several evenings. There will be a need to visit the area several times over late April to early

June 2007 to identify emerging vegetation, and to record migrating and breeding birds.

Because of the wide range of biological expertise in our club we are ideally suited to lead the biological inventory section of the EIS. The membership has indicated its enthusiastic support for completing this interesting project. Don Hall and Marjorie Hall have agreed to play a coordinating role.

The Conservation Authority will now be approached with our offer of support.

The Sault Naturalists have the potential, the enthusiasm and the commitment to make our community a more liveable space and one that respects our natural environment.

-Jim Miller, Don Hall, Marjorie Hall

Sault Naturalist Membership

Form: Mail to:

Carrie Ginou, Membership Chairperson, Sault Naturalists P.O. Box 21035, 306 Northern Ave., Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 6H3 Canada

Categories and Fees:
Please circle the appropriate categories.
Membership is from Jan. to Dec.
Renewal: New Member
Student: \$10.00 Individual: \$20.00
Family: \$25.00 Life: \$250.00
Name:
Address:
Prov/State
Postal
Code:Country:
Telephone
Email:
Send this newsletter by email: Yes No
Funds enclosed:(payment may be

submitted in either US or CAN funds)Thank you.



Did you know????

The domestic cat population has exploded to 400 million throughout the world, as reported in 1997. In Canada, 5 million pet cats kill about 140 million birds and small animals each year. Rural cats kill more than urban cats.

Cat overpopulation and wildlife destruction is a worldwide problem. In Britain, 5 million cats kill more than 50 million birds and wildlife, and maim another 42 million each year. In New Zealand, cats and other introduced predators have nearly destroyed their native bird species. In Australia, the problem of cat overpopulation has become a national menace. The U.S. has 66 million pet cats, more than double the number from 1970, and 40 million feral (wild) cats, all of which nationwide kill a billion small mammals and as many birds in a year.

Source:

www3.sympatico.ca/samgreen/webcats.html

- -Cats instinctually kill
- -Belled cats kill
- -Cats kill day and night (more critters to kill at night)
- -Well- fed cats kill
- -Indoor cats don't have the opportunity

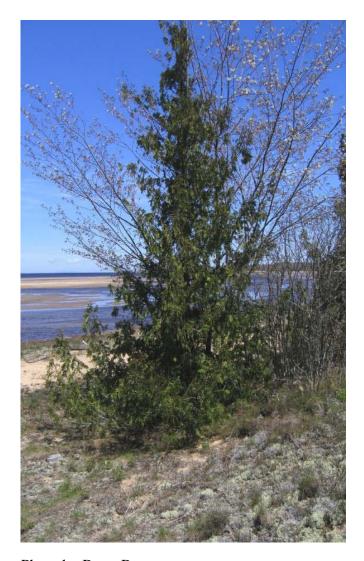


Photo by Betty Bennett

Wishing you all an active, interesting winter season. —ed

Wake Robin, newsletter of the Sault Naturalist Club of Sault Ste. Marie ON and Michigan. Dec. 2006 Vol. 52, #3 versos of OUTINGS

FALL CANKERWORMS

If you have been out and about in hardwood forests these cool days in November, you may have noticed small moths fluttering about. The forewings are a mottled brownish grey and the hindwings slightly lighter in colour. The wing expanse is about 25 mm or 1 inch. Considering the time of year, it does seem unusual for moths of any kind to be so active and so numerous.

It so happens that these are fall canker worms (*Alsophila pometaria*), a common native North American pest of deciduous forests, shade trees and orchards. It ranges over most of the Unites States and southern Canada.

Cankerworms have a 1-year life cycle. The male moths emerge from the soil in November and December. It's the male moth that we are seeing as the adult female is wingless. She will eventually emerge from the soil, climb host trees and shrubs and mate. Each female lays about 100 eggs with cap-like tops.

The eggs overwinter on the host trees and hatch into larvae in late May and they begin to feed as the new leaves unfold. The larvae are slender and move with a looping motion (they are often called loopers, inchworms, or measuring worms.) and they will hang from the branch using a silken strand in search of food or when alarmed. In June, larvae reach a length of about 25 mm long when fully mature. They then drop to the ground, spin cocoons in the soil, and pupate early in June, although they will not emerge to mate until November.

There are actually both fall and spring (*Paleacrita vernata*) cankerworms. There is a close resemblance between the two species in all stages. However, the spring cankerworms overwinter as larvae in the soil and pupate in the early spring.

The fall and spring cankerworms defoliate a variety of hardwood species in the spring. Hosts include red oak; sugar maple, red maple and Manitoba maple; elms; basswood; white ash; hickories; trembling aspen; white birch; cherry and assorted fruit trees. Is anything left? In watching the male moths this time of year, it does seem apparent that they are searching for something. There has been no mating observed as yet, so it might be concluded that the male moths are indeed searching for the females who may be exuding pheromones from the soil. Once the females emerge, look out!

Hey, did you know? – the English sparrow was originally introduced in the Unites States to combat the



spring cankerworm. Right... Let's really mess it up!

REFERENCES:

http://nofc.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/publications/leaflets/cankerworme.html

http://www.cfl.scf.rncan.gc.ca/IMFEC-IDECF/ficheinsecte_e.asp?id=8448



http://www.winnipeg.ca/cms/bugline/cankerworms/default.s tm

...with thanks to Val Walker. -ed