



Outdoors

by Bryan Berriault

Buffleheads, pintails, widgeon and merganser may be strange names to some people but, to the Tiny Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area these names are as common as Smith and Jones in a phone directory.

In fact, they are names of just a few waterfowl species calling Tiny Marsh home.

On April 20, Tiny Marsh will open the doors to the public for their seventh annual Waterfowl Viewing Day. Each year thousands of ducks return to Tiny Marsh and Marsh Manager, Andy Fletcher, plans their viewing day to coincide with their return.

During their spring migration ducks are at their most colourful

stage. With mating season underway drakes and some hens display mating colours seldom seen at other times of year. If one is lucky enough they might even see ducks performing mating rituals in the wild on this day.

But just the sight of thousands of colourful ducks in flight or on the water is enough to attract anyone's attention. Although its waterfowl viewing day many other species of wildlife make an appearance at the marsh.

A feeding muskrat gnawing on some reeds on its rat house while a marsh hawk hovers over its domain is not uncommon.

A few painted turtles will also be on hand having appeared from their winter sleep for

the occasion.

To date 72 species of birds have been counted on their return to the marsh. Nineteen species of waterfowl have landed and among them, a beautiful pair of snow geese.

There is no problem seeing waterfowl from tiny buffleheads to giant Canada geese. To get the most out of the day take in one of the dyke hikes with an expert in bird identification. Hikes are planned for 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Bring your hiking boots. With six km. of dykes to travel you'll need them. Naturalist on hand will be able to point out many interesting inhabitants or the marsh most people might otherwise miss. For decoy buffs, bring along your old or new decoys.

Experts will be on hand to evaluate your prized possessions. Just think, that old decoy you shoot up every fall could be worth a dollar or two.

Ian Crokam and Robin Craig will be on hand at 11 a.m. with a presentation entitled "Decoys-Old and New".

Robin Craig is well known for his decoy collection and carvings. Ian Crokam is famous throughout North America for his carvings. His selling price usually demands four figured digits. Both

ESPSS chess team to match Ontario champions in May

ESPSS Chess Club's A Team placed second out of seven schools, just two points behind Banting Collegiate at a recent Regional Tournament hosted by ESPSS. Kenichi Tajima and Thorsten Schiller won all three of their matches.

The "B" Team finished first in their division with a perfect score of 24 points. Donald Bullock, Kerry

Dupuis, Ron Shank and Brett Martin all scored clean sweeps of their opponents.

After a year of competition, the ESPSS teams finish in first place in the county with a solid 28 point lead of

Banting. With the new scoring system introduced this year, Mike Serafin, Thorsten Schiller and Kevin Farthing will represent ESPSS at the Ontario High School Championships to be held in May.

MSS rugger to start season

The MSS Marauders Rugby teams will suit up for contests this Friday with Barrie Eastview Collegiate as a prelude to regular season competition, after practising all week. Eastview has just returned from a 14 day, 10 game tour of Britain. On Friday, the midgets will see action beginning at 1:30 p.m., followed by Juniors, and then the seniors.

Next weekend, the second annual MSS Invitational Scrum Down will be held at MSS, with eight teams competing in the two game guaranteed, one day tournament. Barrie North, Barrie Eastview, Barrie Central, Brock from Cannington, Rousseau Lake Boys School, Danforth Tech (Toronto), Parry Sound, and MSS will all vie for the honors captured last year by Brock. MSS were last years Consolation finalists. The games get underway at the MSS Pitch at 10 a.m.

men are well versed when it comes to decoys.

While at the Interpretive Centre take in David Hawkes slide presentation on wildlife management techniques used at Tiny Marsh.

The presentation will show work done by Ducks Unlimited on habitat improvement throughout the marsh. Work done to date has cost Ducks Unlimited \$500,000. While at the centre take in nature artist Ernest Somers

watercolours.

They make Tiny Marsh come alive on canvas. And, Juliana Hawke will display her sketches on many waterfowl species.

There is something of interest for every nature lover. If you feel like being alone, take a walk by yourself or if you want to learn more about wetlands take a guided tour of Tiny Marsh.

The Interpretive Centre is located just north of Elmvale on Conc. 1 of Tiny off

county road No. 6. It will open at 9 a.m. with someone on hand throughout the day. Bring along a lunch if you plan to spend the day. And of course, a camera and binoculars to get a birds eye view of the birds at the Tiny Marsh Wildlife Area on April 20th.

Old fashion bake sale

The Midland YMCA will hold an old fashioned bake sale on April 23, between 9:30 a.m. and 12 a.m.

Why every teenager should take a driver training course.

The statistics are frightening.

Last year, over 34,000 Ontario teenage drivers were involved in car accidents.

A recent study by the Addiction, Research Foundation reveals that teenagers are involved in 25 per cent of all drinking-and-driving crashes in the province. *Drinking-and-driving crashes among young people has reached such epidemic proportions that it is now one of the major threats to the life and health of teenagers.*

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