

**RIDEAU VALLEY  
FIELD NATURALISTS**

by George Carlyle  
"Dragonflies and Damselflies" was the subject of a talk and slide show presented to the Rideau Valley Field Naturalists at their November meeting. Kelvin Conrad, research biologist with Queen's University, was guest speaker and spoke of his three year study of Dragonflies and Damselflies at the University biology station located near Chaffeys Lock on Opinicon Lake. Fossils resembling these insects date back 300 million years, with some showing a wingspan of 27 inches. Today, of the 5,000 species known worldwide, the largest is a Hawaiian species with a wingspan of 8 inches. North America is home to 450 species ranging in size from the common Bluebell, with a wingspan of one and one quarter inch, up to the six and one half inch wingspan of the Dragon Hawk. Our largest locally seen species is the Green Darner, also known as the "Snake Doctor" or "Darning Needle" with a wingspan of four and one half inches.

These large, slender insects have freely moveable heads, large compound eyes and very sharp biting mouth parts. Four powerful wings move independently, enabling them to fly forward and backward. Their legs, unsuitable for walking, are used primarily to capture and hold other insects caught in flight.

Dragonflies and Damselflies are unable to fold their wings flat against the body. Dragonflies hold them horizontally to the sides while Damselflies fold them vertically to the rear. Depending upon the species, eggs are deposited in underwater vegetation or merely dropped on the surface. The nymphs emerge about one week later and remain in their aquatic environment for 1 to 2 years in moderate climates or up to 5 years in colder areas. In the nymph stage they become very active predators feeding on other aquatic insects and again, depending upon the species, may even prey upon small fish and tadpoles.

Although a female may lay 1500 eggs over a two week period, it is estimated that only one percent may emerge as adults. Nevertheless this one percent may appear as very dense populations during May and June, at which time they feed voraciously on smaller insects caught in flight. These insects are most abundant at a time when many birds are raising families. Consequently they become food for many species, especially the Eastern Phoebe which may catch up to one hundred and sixty each day. Once again we see nature's way of creating a balanced environment.

The cool clear weather of Saturday, 17 November, proved ideal for a late Fall hike through the Perth Wildlife Reserve. Carson Thompson, resident manager of the

Reserve, led twenty-five RVFN members and guests along the reserve's well defined trails.

Mr. Thompson's running commentary on the purpose and aims of the reserve, along with firsthand evidence of the various means by which wildlife habitat is maintained, contributed greatly to an enjoyable and informative outing. Numerous Canada geese were sighted overhead before landing on the Reserve's ponds where they joined several other species of waterfowl. Although no deer was sighted during our hike, ample evidence of a small resident herd was noted. Snowshoe hare, already showing the beginnings of winter coat, were also seen and, as might be expected, the usual winter resident Bluejays, Chickadees and Downy Woodpeckers were evident.

The Perth Wildlife Reserve is located a short distance from Perth, off the Rideau Ferry Road, and is accessible

the year round. Excellent parking and restroom facilities are provided. The trails are well marked and provide easy access to areas of varied terrain during all seasons.

Our next regular meeting will be held on Sunday, 2 December, 2: p.m., Perth Public Library. A short film entitled "The Rise and Fall of the Great Lakes" will be shown by a members "Show and Tell" session.

The annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count is planned for Friday, 28 December. Everyone is welcome to join in on this yearly event. You need not be a seasoned birder to participate. The less experienced observers will, if at all possible, be teamed with those considered to be "old hands." If interested, please contact Nora at 283-1173 or Heather at 283-0172.

Information on club activities may be obtained by calling 268-2052, 273-3853, or 278-2811.



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# ATTENTION TREASURE SEEKERS!

The 1000 ISLANDS TREASURE HUNT opens December 1st weekend from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and every weekend thereafter...just in time for Christmas shopping and all year 'round!

The 1000 ISLANDS TREASURE HUNT will become a new indoor and outdoor marketplace where all kinds of treasures can be found such as...

- Nostalgia Items • Antiques • Bonsais • Handcrafted Arts
- Collectibles • Craft Supplies • Woodburning Supplies • Farmers' Produce • Baked Goods • Needlepoint • Wall Clocks • Jewellery • Preserves • Chocolate • Floral Arrangements • Refinished Antiques/Furniture
- Stained Glass and other numerous artworks!

Bring a picture of a relative or friend and have an artist create a caricature while you explore the two large heated buildings for your treasures!

We have many vendors, but there's room for more — first come, first serve basis. To reserve your space for the 4 weekends before Christmas call:  
**928-3113 or 928-2846**

**NOTICE: We're looking for musicians & other entertainers to perform at this marketplace. We're also looking for a Chip Truck!**

Where? Just north of Gananoque at the Corner of County Rd. 35 (Station Rd.) and County Rd. 34 — Watch for road signs!

## The 1000 Islands Treasure Hunt

EXIT THE 401 AT HWY. 2 OR 32