

A photograph of a forest path. The path is covered in brown leaves and moss, leading into a dense forest of tall, thin trees. Sunlight filters through the green canopy, creating a bright spot in the distance.

# Welcome to SCB!

Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016



# Today's Meeting Outline

- **Creature Feature**
- **Issue of the Week**
- **Committee Updates**
- **Membership Fee Information**
- **Winter Action Plans**
- **External Initiatives**



# Creature Feature!

- Golden Eagle
- Scientific name: *Aquila chrysaetos*
- Named for the golden-brown feathers on the back of its neck
- One of Ontario's largest bird of prey
- Young birds have lots of white coloration on the base of the tail and interior of the wing (disappears after their fifth year)
- Looks similar to juvenile Bald Eagles – BUT the legs of the Golden Eagle are completely feathered, whereas the Bald Eagle has no feathers above its feet
- Nest in remote, undisturbed areas on ledges of cliffs or river banks, but will use large trees
  - Known to reuse nest sites; the time between nest reuse ranges up to 40 years





# Creature Feature!

- Widespread throughout Canada, but endangered in ON
  - Currently 10-20 breeding pairs in the province (rough estimate since numbers were taken by aerial survey); although, unknown if it was ever common.
  - Threatened by nest disturbances, human persecution, electrocution on power lines, rare cases of collisions with wind turbines, biomagnification and direct ingestion of toxins
- In ON: Frontenac Axis, Hudson Bay Lowlands, Severn River Drainage (Kenora)
- During migration, commonly encountered in November along L. Ontario and L. Erie; will winter in Ontario around large deer wintering areas, where carcasses may be found



# Creature Feature!

## Recovery Strategy:

- Released in 2015
- Objectives are to increase biological knowledge of the species (distribution, life history, habitat needs, etc.)
- Identify and include both currently occupied or previously occupied habitats
- Find the full document at:  
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/golden-eagle-recovery-strategy>



# Creature Feature!

## What Can I Do?

- Report a sighting to MNR (best way is through the Natural Heritage webpage at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/natural-heritage-information-centre>)
- Volunteer with Bird Studies Canada ([www.bsc-eoc.org](http://www.bsc-eoc.org))
- Be a good steward
- Visit eBird (Cornell Lab of Ornithology) at <http://ebird.org/content/ebird> to track migration of many birds, educate yourself and report a sighting!





# Conservation significance of alternative nests of golden eagles

*B. Millsap, T. Grubb, R. Murphy, T. Swem, J. Watson*

Published January 2015 in *Global Ecology and Conservation* (3):234-241

## Abstract

Golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) are long-lived raptors that maintain nesting territories that may be occupied for a century or longer. Within occupied nesting territories there is one nest in which eagles lay their eggs in a given year (i.e., the used nest), but there are usually other nests (i.e., alternative nests). Conservation plans often protect used nests, but not alternative nests or nesting territories that appear vacant. Our objective is to review literature on golden eagle use of alternative nests and occupancy of nesting territories to determine if alternative nests are biologically significant and warrant greater conservation consideration. Our review shows that: (1) alternative nests or their associated habitat are most often in core areas of golden eagle nesting territories; (2) alternative nests likely will become used in the future; (3) probability of an alternative nest becoming used is greatest where prey availability is high and alternative nest sites are limited; (4) likelihood of annual occupancy or reoccupancy of golden eagle nesting territories is high; and (5) prey availability is the most important determinant of nesting territory occupancy and breeding activity. We recommend alternative nests be treated with the same deference as used nests in land use planning.



# Issue of the Week

- The Blanding's Turtle
- Preferred habitat is wetland
- Less than 10 000 mature Blanding's turtles left living → listed as threatened species by COSEWIC
- Why is this species threatened?
  - Habitat fragmentation due to development (buildings and roads)
  - Illegal pet trade
  - Habitat loss due to draining of wetland
  - Road mortality





# Issue of the Week

- Locally the greatest cause for concern is road mortality
- Females like to nest on the gravel shoulders of roads
- Often must cross roads to reach nesting sites
- Greater mortality of females and young resulting in skewed sex ratio
- Death of even a few individuals can have a drastic effect on the population due to unfavourable life history traits (delayed sexual maturity and long life)
- What is being done?
  - Road signs
  - Barrier fences + road underpasses
  - Artificial nesting sites
  - Turtle rehabilitation





# Issue of the Week



## What Can You Do?

- Help turtles cross the road
- Get injured turtles to a trauma centre
- Report turtle sightings - Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas Program
- Educate yourself and test your knowledge



# Committee Updates

- **Do we have any updates from..**
  - **Advertising/Social?**
  - **Education?**
  - **Photo Contest?**
  - **Sustainability/Issues?**
    - **February 3<sup>rd</sup> – Bake Sale and Invites**
    - **February 4<sup>th</sup> – “This Changes Everything” Screening**
    - **March 2<sup>nd</sup> – “Eat Less Meat” Campaign**





# Membership Fee Information

- **We ask that you pay a \$5 membership fee to be a part of SCB**
- **We will be passing around a box next week to put your \$5 in**
- **If you don't have the means, don't worry about paying!**





# **“Action Plan” Generation**

- **We will be making up our action plans today!**
- **What is an action plan?**
  - **A list of the tasks you are going to accomplish every week that you can report back to the Society**
  - **Includes the name of the task and the person accomplishing**
- **This is also the time to pitch new ideas, if you have any!**
- **If you want to be on multiple committees, we ask that you bounce back and forth so you can pick up tasks for both!**



# External Initiatives

- EEB Seminar: Research in Support of the Conservation and Management of Murres in the Northwest Atlantic on January 21<sup>st</sup> (Tomorrow!)
  - <https://eebseminar.wordpress.com/>
- Cross-Country Skiing Lessons with the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority on January 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - <http://www.queensevents.ca/event/cross-country-skiing-lessons-3/>
- Moonlight Snowshoeing with Trailhead Kingston on January 26th
  - <http://www.queensevents.ca/event/moonlight-snowshoe/>