

## What is the fencing for along Highway 60?



Anyone driving along the Park's Highway 60 corridor will notice the black drift-fencing that has been temporarily installed in various places by both Park staff and construction contractors working on the highway. It is intended to keep Snapping and Painted Turtles off of the roadway in an attempt to reduce their mortality. These turtles prefer soft ditches and banks of roads for nesting.



Painted Turtle: Note the brilliant colours!



Snapping Turtle: Be careful to avoid its jaws as it will feel threatened and may snap!



Scan for more information about Ontario Turtles at Risk in Algonquin Park



**Help Protect Us!**  
If you see a turtle on the road, slow down.  
If possible, you may want to try to assist the turtle by moving it in the direction it was heading.

Be careful with Snapping Turtles — you should not try to pick one up! Avoid its jaws as it will feel threatened and may snap! And, always remember, watch out for other traffic!

COME JOIN US IN...

# A Celebration of BIRDS OF ALGONQUIN PARK

## Featuring

- Ron Tozer's Birds of Algonquin Park exhibit
- Illustrations by Dawn Sherman
- Illustrations by Christine Kerrigan
- Wool Felting by Andrea Kingsley
- Wood Carvings by Ernie Martelle
- Wood Carvings by Dave Standfield
- Photography by Peter Ferguson
- Photography by Michael Runtz



Algonquin Park Visitor Centre (km 43)

## THE ALGONQUIN ROOM

November 2, 2013 to July 30, 2014

Presented by The Friends of Algonquin Park. Proceeds to The Friends of Algonquin Park.



The Visitor Centre offers **FREE WiFi** internet access ...and while there, don't forget to check out The Friends of Algonquin Park Bookstore and Nature Shop, or the Sunday Creek Café.

[algonquinpark.on.ca](http://algonquinpark.on.ca)

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Algonquin

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# The Raven

A Natural and Cultural History Digest

## Once in a lifetime?

by David LeGros

Algonquin has been referred to as a massive outdoor science laboratory. For many years scientists and biologists have been surveying, measuring and analyzing the flora, fauna and land forms of Algonquin, and as a consequence, it is now one of the best studied landscapes in Canada. When you consider the decades of research that have been conducted here, the hundreds of students and graduate students scurrying about, and the generations of naturalists and observant campers visiting the area, you may suppose there might not be too much left to discover here, but there is! When it comes to biodiversity and wild places, we soon realize that there are usually more questions than answers, which, for curious naturalists, is good news.

There are a few mysteries involving Algonquin Park fauna that have always piqued the curiosity of naturalists. The occurrences of rare birds will always get their attention, especially the "once in a lifetime" species - Cave Swallow, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Cattle Egret among them. Wayward migrant birds are special; they may be blown in by strong weather or fly in under their own power, and Algonquin is big, so it's like finding a flying needle in a 7,630 km<sup>2</sup> haystack. While birding has been very popular for nearly a century and continues

to gain in popularity, other groups of wildlife have been more or less neglected.

Reptiles and amphibians, for so long thought to be foul, loathsome, slimy and gross, are now being recognized as fascinating, beautiful, and integral to the landscape, but unfortunately, declining. The stories of a few of Algonquin's amphibians are truly remarkable, and some are "once in a lifetime" calibre. To explore these, we need to look into the past.

The first mysterious report involves the Western Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris triseriata triseriata*). This tiny treefrog is pale brown, with dark brown stripes. They are difficult to find at the best of times, but early in the spring, the breeding calls of males betray their location. This call, which sounds like a thumb-nail being run over the teeth of a comb (go ahead, try it!), is how an observer identified an individual calling at the Achray campground on April 28, 1985. Currently, the range of the Western Chorus Frog does not include Algonquin, although they have been recorded from nearby Renfrew, Northumberland, Haliburton and Muskoka counties. Suitable habitats, such as wet meadows and shrubby forests, do exist in Algonquin, and the species may occur here, but the difficulty in accessing some of these habitats in April and



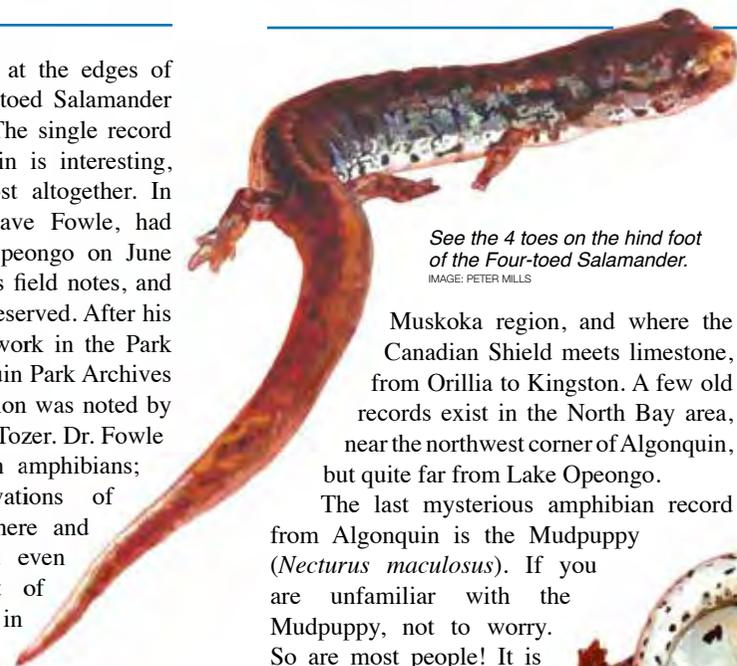
early May when these frogs are calling may preclude observers from locating them. In addition, the call of the male Spring Peeper (*Pseudacris crucifera*) is a simple whistle, but on occasion, such as territorial or release calls (when an overzealous male tries to hop on another male) they produce a trilly-whistle, similar to the Chorus Frog and it is difficult to distinguish - we have been nearly fooled several occasions, and still second guess ourselves. If you are out in the Park in spring, perhaps on a fishing trip, please be on the alert for amorous Chorus Frogs!

While frogs can be difficult to find, their spring songs are a great clue to what lives in the area. In contrast, salamanders are mute, usually small, and typically well hidden. Imagine a small brown creature, the length of your finger and pencil thin, living in dense



The tiny Chorus Frog has a big voice.  
IMAGE: PETER MILLS

clumps of sphagnum moss at the edges of wetlands - this is the Four-toed Salamander (*Hemidactylum scutatum*). The single record of this species in Algonquin is interesting, and it could have been lost altogether. In 1946, a researcher, Dr. Dave Fowle, had collected one near Lake Opeongo on June 23. He made a record in his field notes, and referred to a specimen he preserved. After his death, the notes about his work in the Park were donated to the Algonquin Park Archives in 2002, where his observation was noted by retired Park Naturalist, Ron Tozer. Dr. Fowle was obviously interested in amphibians; he recorded his observations of other salamander species here and elsewhere in Canada, and even recorded the development of Spotted Salamander eggs in an aquarium. Identification of this species must be done carefully; it does bear superficial resemblance to the ubiquitous Red-backed Salamander. The most distinctive feature of the Four-toed is its belly: snow white and speckled with coal black flecks, a feature that surely would have been seen on a collected and preserved specimen. Records for this species are curious; they seem to be concentrated around the Georgian Bay and



See the 4 toes on the hind foot of the Four-toed Salamander.  
IMAGE: PETER MILLS

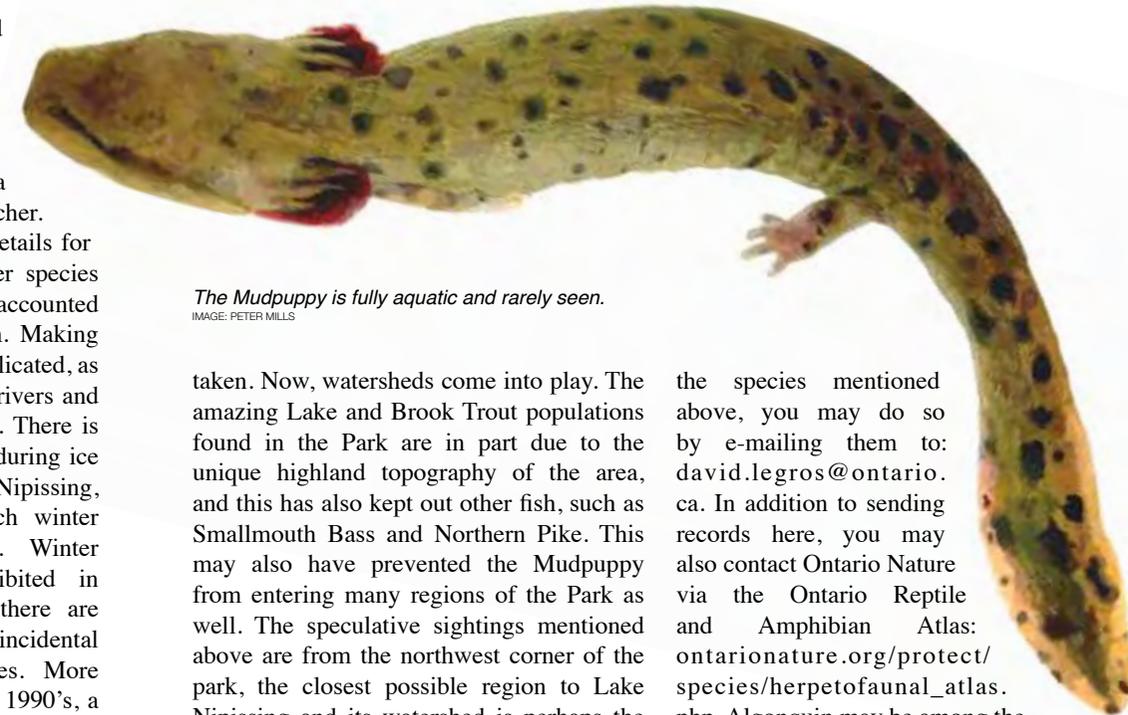
Muskoka region, and where the Canadian Shield meets limestone, from Orillia to Kingston. A few old records exist in the North Bay area, near the northwest corner of Algonquin, but quite far from Lake Opeongo.

The last mysterious amphibian record from Algonquin is the Mudpuppy (*Necturus maculosus*). If you are unfamiliar with the Mudpuppy, not to worry. So are most people! It is a very large salamander, up to 30 cm long, and is entirely aquatic. The elongated, brownish and black-spotted body has a paddle-like tail at one end and a thumb-shaped head with small eyes and red, plume-like gills at the other.



The bright white belly with black flecks of the Four-toed Salamander are unmistakable.  
IMAGE: PETER MILLS

Perhaps of all the single record amphibians from Algonquin, the Mudpuppy is the most tantalizing. The record consists of an individual, collected on June 9, 1945 in Lake of Two Rivers by Cliff Hope, a Royal Ontario Museum bird researcher. Unfortunately, there are no other details for this record. Compared to the other species mentioned here, the specimen is accounted for, at the Royal Ontario Museum. Making observations of this species is complicated, as it inhabits the depths of lakes and rivers and is well camouflaged and nocturnal. There is a time when many are observed - during ice fishing season! On Lake Nipissing, many are caught each winter on baited hooks. Winter fishing is prohibited in Algonquin, so there are no records of incidental angling captures. More recently, in the 1990's, a few records emerged of a family having caught a few Mudpuppies in a lake in the extreme northwest of the Park. These appear to be credible sightings, although no photos were



The Mudpuppy is fully aquatic and rarely seen.  
IMAGE: PETER MILLS

taken. Now, watersheds come into play. The amazing Lake and Brook Trout populations found in the Park are in part due to the unique highland topography of the area, and this has also kept out other fish, such as Smallmouth Bass and Northern Pike. This may also have prevented the Mudpuppy from entering many regions of the Park as well. The speculative sightings mentioned above are from the northwest corner of the park, the closest possible region to Lake Nipissing and its watershed is perhaps the most likely place to confirm the presence of the Mudpuppy.

If you are interested in contributing amphibian and reptile sightings to the Algonquin Park records, especially of

the species mentioned above, you may do so by e-mailing them to: david.legros@ontario.ca. In addition to sending records here, you may also contact Ontario Nature via the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas: ontarionature.org/protect/species/herpetofaunal\_atlas.php. Algonquin may be among the best studied places in Canada, but it is a big protected area with remote parts. Campers on interior canoe trips may provide key pieces of information to the distribution of cryptic species in Algonquin.

## Being Bugged?

This can be a challenging time to be outdoors with both blackflies and mosquitoes being present. Here are some tips to help you cope:

- **Wear light-coloured clothing** (white, tan, khaki, etc.)—blackflies are attracted to dark colours.
- **Cover up.** Wear long-sleeved shirts with cuffs and collars that can be buttoned tight, as well as long pants with elastic cuffs (or tuck your pants into your socks).
- **Use insect repellent** when outdoors—something with DEET works best. The concentration of DEET should be no greater than 30% for adults and no greater than 10% for children.
- If you cannot, or prefer not to, use insect repellent, try some type of netting (**a bug hat or bug jacket**), available at most outdoor stores. When camping, you can try a bug tarp shelter to avoid biting insects.



Blackfly biting (L) and mosquito feeding (R)  
Photo (blackfly): Steve Marshall

## NEW! The Fire Tower Trail



KEVIN CLUTE

A new trail, celebrating the history of Algonquin Park's Fire Towers is located at the Visitor Centre (km 43). This fully accessible trail takes visitors up a gentle slope to end at a replica Fire Tower cupola, which overlooks the Sunday Creek valley.

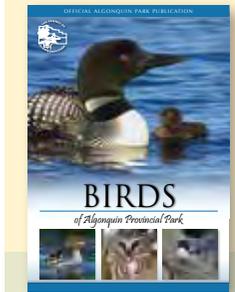
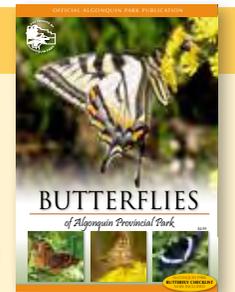
New Fire Tower Trail with view of the Sunday Creek valley.

## New Publications

### Butterflies of Algonquin Provincial Park

In Algonquin, 88 butterfly species have been identified representing most of the North American butterfly families. The new 2013 edition includes the Checklist and Seasonal Status of the Butterflies of Algonquin Provincial Park.

ONLY \$4.95



### Birds of Algonquin Provincial Park

Over 50 years of careful data-keeping on the 279 bird species that have been recorded in Algonquin has uncovered some significant ecological trends in Algonquin's bird populations, resulting in a special 5-page section in this new edition.

SHOP ONLINE:  
[algonquinpark.on.ca](http://algonquinpark.on.ca)

Available at the Algonquin Visitor Centre Bookstore, the East Gate and West Gate

