

Monarch Butterfly larva– photo courtesy Marianne Haist



**2020
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Want to get involved?
There are Board positions available .

Although you may not see us in the woods during this time of social distancing, please know that the directors are all working in the woods and continue to meet regularly on Zoom. We review plans for boardwalk repair and construction while helping to keep the woods in good condition.

Working in small groups or individually, we conduct trail repair, clearing brush and dead trees along the pathways. We are responsible for marking boundaries, working with community groups to support their events and routinely remove garbage during assigned clean up details. We participate in fund raising, festival planning and generally promote the woods for public enjoyment.

Thank you to all users of the woods for respecting social distancing and helping keep the woods clean. Also, thanks to the staff of the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority for brushing the trails, maintaining the boardwalks and responding to calls for concerns when needed.

We could not hold our annual general meeting this spring, but we are accepting memberships. A single membership is \$20, and a family membership is \$30. We use these funds for purchasing materials for trail maintenance and carrying on with projects that enhance public access and awareness of this wetland park.

This bulletin is dedicated to some of the wonderful creatures that inhabit the woods and appear in the pictures here.



(soggy beaver courtesy of Kaye Edmonds).



Hognose Snake Unfortunately, some people dislike snakes and so miss out on an interesting and harmless connection with them. Laurier Woods is home to several different species of snake, including the hog nosed snake. One look at this fellow and you can readily see where he gets his name, his upturned nose. Aside from the jaunty air it affects, this distinctive feature is useful when digging a bed to lay eggs. Coloring can range from a drab beige/brown to a combination of black and brown blotches. When threatened they respond by curling up and flattening and raising the head imitating a cobra. If this ruse fails a hognose will sometimes collapse and play dead. They mainly eat toads and seek out a dry forest environment, like we offer in Laurier Woods. There are several rocky areas in the woods where snakes winter over and can sometimes be seen coming out of their hibernation. Sightings are rare since they prefer to avoid human contact. The hognose is threatened in Ontario due to loss of habitat and ensuing road deaths, dwindling toad populations, and human cruelty. These gentle animals are also at risk from dogs, another reason we require leashes while in the woods. The fact that the hog nosed snake is listed means it must be protected and supported or they will become endangered and possibly extinct. Keep an eye out and an open mind and you will surely find it worthwhile to watch them. If you are fortunate enough to come across one of these snakes, try to take a photograph without disturbing it, enjoy the rare opportunity to get a good look, report the sighting to the NBMCA or www.ontarionature.org/herpetofaunal.atlas.



Turtle Talk: Turtles are among the oldest and most primitive groups of reptiles, having evolved millions of years ago. There are 320 species worldwide. Wetlands are an ideal habitat for turtles, who spend most of their lives in water. Laurier Woods boasts 3 of the 8 turtles found in Ontario. The *Midland Painted Turtle* is the one you are most likely to see basking on logs. The shell is green and bright yellow below with patterns of red and black along the margin. The head is green with yellow spots and stripes which turn to red on the legs. The *Snapping Turtle* is the largest freshwater turtle native to Ontario. It has a round flat shell with serrated edges at the rear. The legs are massive ending in webbed feet with long claws. The tail long tail has "spikes" on the top, adding to its overall prehistoric look. Lastly, the *Blanding's Turtle* is a medium sized turtle with an oval shaped, domed shell that is usually dark brown with a light speckling of spots in a variable pattern. The head is smallish and black on top while the neck is quite long with a bright yellow throat. All 3 turtles have been classified under the Canadian Species at Risk act. For this reason, wetland conservation is critical, and we must all do our part to ensure that these fragile habitats are left undisturbed by human interference. Look for these inhabitants when you visit the woods and see if you can identify the different species.

