



# The Woodland Ob-

Nipissing Naturalists Club

December 2014

Enjoy Nature!

Affiliated with



President: Fred Pinto — fredpinto1@gmail.com — 705-476-9006

## Backpacking through Asia: Khao Sok National Park, from Disaster to Success

By: Corinne Arthur (with James Hallworth)

Khao Sok National Park, located in Southern Thailand, is a remnant of a 160-million-year-old forest ecosystem that is much older and richer than the forests of the Amazon and those of Africa. When you are there, you can definitely tell! There are enormous-butressed trees interspersed with ancient looking bamboo clumps that criss-cross above the trail, creating a tunnel to walk through beneath the canopy. The only downfall to this spectacularly lush forest is that it makes spotting wildlife in the dense foliage nearly impossible. We did manage to spot some interesting species though, including:

- Asian fairy bluebird
- moustached barbet
- blue-naped monarch
- mountain hawk eagle
- banded pitta
- stump-tailed macaque
- orange-breasted trogon



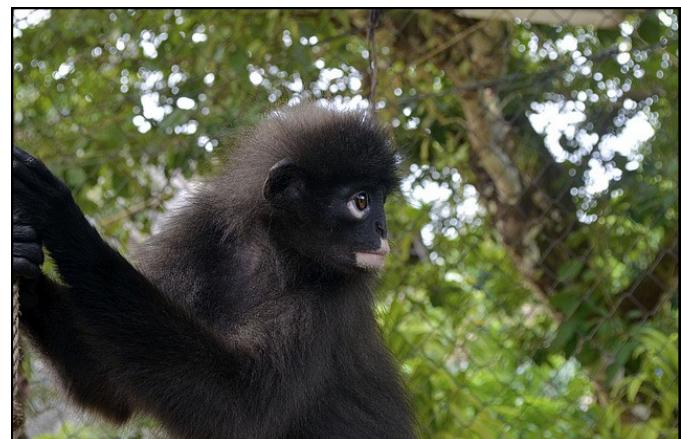
### Night 1: Our Tent, The Puddle

James and I hitch-hiked our way from Phuket to Khao Sok Park, arriving in the gloom of a looming thunderstorm with the hopes of renting a waterproof tent, only to find out that they did not have tents or any other camping equipment available. So we set up our make-shift tent on a bed of leaves, laid out our beach towels to act as bedding and hoped for the best. Sure enough we awoke at 1am to the sound of rain pitter-pattering on the tent. It soon grew into torrential rain and began to first drip on us and then pour on us through the mesh front door and the messily sewn tent stiches. Not a good start. James left, taking his bags of electronics with him to the safety of a

nearby awning to wait out the rain. I managed to fall back asleep in the puddle that was once our tent. In the morning we got a room in the nearby 'Tree Tops River Huts' with a nice view of a river and a bathroom window without a pane. Geckos and insects of all shapes and sizes entered and exited our bathroom, often leaving little surprises for us on the floor and in the sink. But it felt like luxury to us.

### Leech Attack

At 9am the rain finally stopped so we headed for the Sip-et-Chun Waterfall Trail. We soon noticed little slug-like creatures that were latching onto our boots and were trying to crawl up. LEECH-ES!!!! They were all over the trail with their suckers reaching into the air ready to grasp onto anything that walked by. They could crawl and attach themselves to our skin and begin sucking blood in an instant. They could even fit through the holes in my running shoes and attach themselves to my feet through my socks. Once we picked them off, the open wound they left behind would bleed for ages. *To be cont'd on pg.2...*



Spectacled langur monkey

### **Khao Sok cont'd...Ton Kloi Waterfall**

We started bright and early the following day for the 7km hike to the series of waterfalls culminating in Ton Kloi Waterfall. The trail began wide and easy, but soon became steep and narrow as we climbed up and down through valleys and twisted through hills. The scenery was spectacular! Surrounded by the ancient rainforest and with giant karst hills looming in the distance, we managed to hike for 4.5 hours without seeing another soul. The waterfall at the end was small but pretty, the tropical rainforest around it serene and peaceful with the only sound the calling of gibbons in the trees high above us. At the waterfall we had a picnic lunch before heading back. All-in-all a lovely day!

### **Taking it Easy**

On our final day in Khao Sok we hiked to Wing Hin Waterfall once again for some early morning birding. At the waterfall we hung out at the picnic tables watching lizards scurry up and down the trees until the macaques noticed us. Many people here feed the macaques, snapping photos while doing so, unfortunately training them to expect food from humans. I found a tour brochure with a photo of someone feeding a macaque, promoting 'feeding the monkeys' as a part of the eco-tourism day they were offering. Because of all this, the monkeys are now so brave that they kept sneaking up to our bags, unzipping them and searching inside for a snack. If we went near them to shoo them away they'd bare their teeth and angrily retreat. Khao Sok started out a little rocky but ended up being a lovely experience!

*This macaque was not shy to rummage through our bag as soon as we turned our backs. At one of the campgrounds we stayed in they unzipped our tent, then my backpack and stole my toiletries bag. They dragged it into the forest and threw the contents around. I eventually chased them away and gathered up everything.*



**Have you had an adventure in nature?  
Send us your story.**

## **Through the Gloom, a Tale of Mushrooms**

*By: James Hallworth*

It was a wet, misty morning in late autumn when we decided to go for a hike in Samuel De Champlain Provincial Park. A quick look at the park map and the Nature loop trail seemed perfect; 4-5 hours of moderate hiking. The first 2 or so hours were the toughest as we navigated our way through patches of waterlogged ground and stagnant water, sometimes having to take detours off the path before trying to spot the green man (trail sign) showing us the way forward. The sky was overcast with a fine drizzle coming down, making the forest look dark and ominous. Fortunately for us, fungi don't care about the weather, and they were everywhere, we must have spotted at least 15 types!



*Lactifluus piperatus*  
(Peppery milk-cap)



*Cladonia rangiferina.* (Reindeer moss )



*Auricularia auricula-judae*  
(Wood Ear)



*Trichaptum biforme*  
(Violet-toothed polypore)

As we reached the half-way point of the trail, a bend of the mist-shrouded Mattawa River loomed into view. We glimpsed a vague outline of the river's bends though the increasing drizzle, the dark forest pressing in around it, before we headed on, the way back being quicker and easier than the hike in. Only one obstacle gave us pause, a small stream had become greatly swollen by the recent heavy rains. A few boulders sticking up out of the water gave us the only option of crossing - a raging torrent on one side of us, and a waterfall on the other! Safely on the other side we increased the pace and soon got back to the car for a late lunch of couscous and banana nutella bread.

# Calendar of Events

## Next General Meeting

Tuesday, December 9, 2014

Cassellholme Auditorium @ 7:00 pm

## Upcoming Speakers

**Date:** December 9, 2014

### **Speaker:** Larry Dyke

Larry Dyke is recently retired from the Geological Survey of Canada where much of his time was spent researching the implications of permafrost for arctic resource exploitation. Prior to that, he taught engineering geology and hydrogeology at Queens University.

**Topic:** The bedrock and glacial geology of the North Bay area

**Date:** January 13, 2015

### **Event:** Nipissing Naturalists Annual General Meeting

This will be a potluck dinner and will include a silent auction. Bring your items that you would like to donate to the event. Bring a dish to share and your own utensils and cutlery.

**Date:** February 10, 2015

### **Speaker:** David Moore

#### **Monthly Bird Bash — — December 6 and 7**

Spend some time observing our local birds and report on how many species of birds you see. Contact Dick Tafel for details [rtafel@sympatico.ca](mailto:rtafel@sympatico.ca) or 705 472-7907.

#### **Birdwing Meeting**

Fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm

Bird watching topics will be discussed. Meet at the library (auditorium). Contact Dick Tafel at 705 472-7907 or email [rtafel@sympatico.ca](mailto:rtafel@sympatico.ca)

David Moore is a trained social anthropologist, who studied in the UK and who has carried out ethnographic fieldwork in Peru (for a M.Litt. in Quechua) and Bolivia (for a D.Phil. in Social Anthropology). After leaving England in 1986, he moved to Denmark and lived 18 years in various parts of Denmark. For the last three years of his time in Denmark, with his Canadian partner, Laurel, he had a very small sheep farm on the island of Møn, on the Baltic Sea. When in 2005 he moved to Canada, David and Laurel set up and ran for five years a small alpaca farm in Tweed, Ontario. In 2011, David and Laurel moved to rural Powassan, and enjoy the sight of wolves, coyotes, deer, beaver, moose, black bears, otters, skunks, foxes, white tailed hawks, owls, and snapping turtles at various parts of the year. David continues to work in development worldwide.

**Topic:** Mining and indigenous peoples - Canadian miners operating in Peru and British Columbia compared

**Date:** March 10, 2015

### **Speaker:** Joseph Boivin, Nipissing University

**Topic:** Asleep at the switch: how seed dormancy helps some plants to survive

Find out what evolutionarily benefits some plants obtain by producing seed. Some of these seed producing plants have seed that goes dormant. How does seed dormancy occur and what benefit does it confer on a plant? Our relationship with seeds, agriculture's green revolution, and the use of genetic engineering will be presented, raising questions about how best to grow crops and feed over 7 billion people today and possibly 9 billion people in the next 40 years.

# Reducing our ecological impact

By: Fred Pinto

The commodity that is traded the most in the world is petroleum, a product that is fundamental to our way of life. The second most commodity is.....coffee! In recent decades attempts by local farmers to increase their revenue has been to increase the production of coffee using the same inputs of land, fertilizer, etc. To do so farmers clear the farm of other plants and trees that compete with the coffee bushes for sunlight, moisture and soil nutrients. As a result the biological diversity of the area is reduced. Now imagine that this happening over tens of thousands of hectares and you understand the huge ecological impact our pick-me-up is having.

So what can we do besides not drinking coffee? Here is a link to a short video that has a solution: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/video/globe-now/video-only-drink-one-cup-of-coffee-a-day-you-may-still-be-getting-more-caffeine-than-you-think/article21689832/#video1id21694702>

In case you do not click on the link, the recommendation is to buy coffee certified by the Smithsonian Institute as bird friendly. Here is a link that explains why this is the coffee that has a low ecological impact and who sells it: <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/scbi/migratorybirds/coffee/>

The reason I got interested in coffee is my work with Forests without Borders, a charity that helps people restore and directly benefit from forests, has been developing a form of agriculture that has low ecologi-

cal impacts and requires low inputs of money, fertilizer and pesticides. This system of forest gardening was used by the Maya in the past and is still used in southern India and parts of E. Africa.



## Birds worth looking for this month

Look out for Snowy Owls. By the end of November one had been spotted at the mouth of the Chippewa River and another west of Verner on Hwy 17.

A Brambling – bird species from Europe/Asia was seen by several members during the 4<sup>th</sup> week of November at Vic Rizzo's place and the Sweetman's Garden. Those Artic vortices (may be the reason why this bird got here) are appreciated by birders!



*A brambling and two evening grosbeaks spotted in North Bay*

# OFO Gull Identification Workshop

By: Fred Pinto

Niagara Falls, Ontario holds the world record for the largest diversity of gull species. The record was 14 gull species. This year nine gull species have been seen. This plus having experts such as Ron Tozer and Jean Irons lead the workshop attracted over 140 participants.

We had an indoor session with the benefit of looking at high quality photos of single stationery gulls, arrows to point out key features and a climate controlled room. Then it was going outside and facing a swirling mass of over 10,000 gulls and trying to locate the rarities! We did get good views of an immature and an adult Little Gull, several Lesser Black Backed, Greater Black Backed, Thayer's, Glaucous and *Kumlien's* subspecies of *Iceland Gulls* amidst thousands of Bonaparte's (all juveniles), Herring and Ring Billed Gulls. Kumlien's Gulls are a subspecies of the Iceland Gull but share some characteristics of Thayer's Gulls that live in the Canadian Arctic. Iceland Gulls live mainly in Greenland and Iceland. The breeding zone of Kumlien's Gulls is between the eastern Icelandic Gulls and the western Thayer's Gulls.



*Photo: Some of the gulls seen above Horseshoe Falls. Gulls above the Falls roost in Lake Erie while those below the Falls roost on L. Ontario according to Ron Pittaway of OFO.*

## Lyme Disease: Don's Adventure in Health Care

By: Kelly Major

At October's general meeting Don Willis shared a very personal story about his experience with Lyme disease; a well-known but poorly understood affliction. As a forester with Jiffy Products, Don's job has permitted him to travel the world and, to this day, it is unknown in what country he contracted *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the primary bacterium responsible for Lyme disease. It is clear, however that the disease did not originate from the North Bay area.

Transmitted by ticks, Lyme disease is a complex disorder for several reasons. Firstly, its symptoms are many and vary from one person to the next. Symptoms tend to mimic other disorders and change over time. Moreover, *B. burgdorferi* rarely travels alone. It is often accompanied by other pathogenic bacteria, viruses and even fungi that are received from the same tick. These other bugs can also wreak havoc with the body, in tandem with Lyme disease, causing a condition referred to as Chronic Lyme Disease Complex (CLDC). Possible symptoms are numbered in the dozens and can include just about anything you can imagine; migraines, pain in joints, muscles and bone, impaired vision, impaired mental and neurological faculties and the development of strong food allergies... to name a few. Lyme disease further reduces the body's ability to flush heavy metals, causing metals to build up to toxic levels.

Before Lyme can be treated it must first be diagnosed; not an easy process. Most of the common techniques for detecting Lyme in the human body are inaccurate and prone to yielding false negatives. Instead, patients in Canada often have to participate in a long and invasive series of tests in order to rule out all other possibilities; this was Don's experience. It took extensive research, detailed medical journaling, and collaboration with his doctor to finally discover his condition and plan the route to recovery. Had he have kept the tick that bit him, it could have been reliably tested, and saved him all the trouble. ...To be cont'd in Jan.