



UNDERSTANDING OUR ENDANGERED PLANTS

Ginseng and Orchid Monitoring

Ginseng is an endangered species that is highly sensitive to any changes in the environment and has important cultural value for Indigenous communities. Since settlement, ginseng has been rare. We are planning to study the effects of various threats on this species to determine how we can effectively conserve this species at risk plant. Our orchid surveys will be conducted during different time periods throughout the field season to capture a variety of orchid species present at our Petrel Point Nature Reserve. Another highlight of this season will be monitoring endangered species, including the butternut tree, and continuing the restoration of former agricultural fields to tallgrass prairie habitat at our Sydenham River Nature Reserve.

— **SMERA SUKUMAR,**
Nature Reserves Manager

Your gift today provides crucial support for these and other conservation projects to monitor and save endangered and at-risk species. Please, give as generously as you can. Thank you!

Here are a few notes, plans and stories from our conservation staff getting down to work for the 2020 field season. Here's how your gift will be put into action right now and all year long!



WETLAND MONITORING

Frogs, Turtles and Snakes

Despite the delayed start to our season, we are still planning to conduct Ecological Land Classifications at Gananoque Nature Reserves where we assess different habitats and identify biodiversity we might expect to find once we get on the ground. Wetlands at both Lost Bay and Gananoque Lake Nature Reserves are massive—lakes, rivers, swamps—and we know there are many different turtle species here. Do our members know that every species of turtle in Ontario are now at risk? This work is urgently important. This season I'll also be looking at frogs including northern leopard. And I hope to catch a glimpse of my favourite snake, the ratsnake, who can grow up to 6 feet long and climb trees!

— **RYAN WOLFE,**
Conservation Technician





BIRDS IN THE BOREAL REGION

Report from Northern Ontario

Our boreal program staff are looking forward to the time when we can once again get outside to share our love of nature with others. As soon as it's safer to do so, we hope to actively engage our community with hands-on bird identification and conservation activities. Through our school programs, hikes and family-based activities we will promote a greater understanding and awareness of how birds can help us monitor the health of our environment—they are like the canaries in the coalmines. This work is so important to me as we've witnessed steep declines of many bird species across North America, in what some scientists are now call a "bird emergency". Much of these declines are due to human activities which lead to pollution, climate change and habitat loss. That means we can do something about it!

— JULEE BOAN, *Boreal Program Manager*



BUTTERFLIES AND THE BURN

Monitoring Post Prescribed Burn

While we would prefer to already be out in the field monitoring the impact of the prescribed burn at our Stone Road Alvar Nature Reserve on Pelee Island, we will still be able to see the impact of habitat restoration later this year and beyond. As I say to my colleagues and our volunteers, the wildlife will still be there—they aren't waiting for us! One of the impacts of this COVID-19 crisis, I hope, is that we will continue on a trend of leaving room for the natural world, considering nature as part of our everyday actions. Last year, one of my personal highlights was seeing an American snout (butterfly) which is a rare migrant to Pelee Island. And this year, I'm looking forward to walking the meadows with the monarch butterflies that inhabit this grassland alvar.

— BRITTNEY VEZINA, *Conservation Projects Coordinator*