

Connecting with Nature by Cycling

Whether you're out for a quiet peddle or faster ride, below are a few suggestions for how to enhance your connection with nature, and your happiness!

While on the bike

- Pedal slowly to give yourself more time to observe the habitat you're passing through and to be able to listen
- Use scatter vision: look skyward, to the side, check the road surface, look far ahead
- Check out common animal hotspots: wires, telephone poles, fence poles, high branches of dead trees, meadows (e.g., deer in early morning); road surface (caterpillars, dead butterflies, frogs, snakes, etc.)
- listen to how the calls change over the course of the first couple of hours of early morning and how each habitat type is different
- get out early in the morning and, in spring and early summer, do an evening twilight ride
- look for quieter locations
- try to visit different habitat types
- use your phone to take pictures, make voice recordings of your sightings, etc.

Things to pay attention to

- roadside wildflower parade and how they change from June through late October
- progression of leaf-out, colour change, leaf-fall in a given tree or landscape over the course of a week or season
- roadside animals: turtles in June, Woolly Bears in fall, etc.
- How the smells change along a trail - also, each month has its signature smell (balsam poplar, hay, milkweed, rank vegetation, fallen leaves...)
- How the temperatures change between sun and shade, high and low elevation, etc.
- the soundscape (e.g., frogs and birds of spring & early summer; insect chorus of August and early fall; cardinals and chickadees starting in mid-February)
- soaring birds (Turkey Vultures, hawks, gulls, etc.)
- roadside geology (e.g., erratics, limestone south of shield, granite of Canadian Shield - Buckhorn village good for all three)
- different types of clouds; recognize threatening cloud formations

A few itineraries

- **Trans-Canada Trail** from Jackson Park, through Lily Lake Wetland and on to tressle bridge past Orange Corners Road (turtles, marsh birds, beavers, otters on occasion, orchids, gentians, shrubs, etc.)
- **Trans-Canada Trail** from Lang to Hastings (woodlots, butterfly habitat, birding, deer, coyotes)
- **Rotary Greenway Trail** to Cty Rd 33 and Lakefield Sewage Lagoons, back-track and continue up to Lakefield and west to D'eyncourt Street to Lakefield Marsh (Promise Rock Nature Area at Trent, ducks on Otonabee River, at Sewage Lagoons and at Lakefield Marsh)

- **Herkimer Point Road** east of Cty Rd 31 at Hiawatha First Nation (forest, marsh, excellent birding)
- **Little Lake Loop** Little Lake Cemetery to Millenium Park to Beavermead Park to Ecology Park (ducks in spring on Little Lake, diverse trees at cemetery, migrant songbirds, etc.)
- **Bridgenorth Trail** from Hilliard Street North to Selwyn 7th Line to Cty Rd 24 to Selwyn 5th Line (fields, wetlands, woodlots, Miller Creek Conservation Area)
- **River Road** east of 2cd Line of Asphodel and south of Cty Rd 2 (swamp, mature forest, wildflowers, great birding)
- **Parkway Corridor** from Jackson Park to Cumberland (field, diverse trees, migrants in spring and fall)
- **Sandy Lake Road**, east of Cty Rd 46, north of Havelock (butterflies, reptiles, Jack Pine, sedge meadows)
- **Carden Alvar** northeast of Beaverton (one of top 10 birding destinations in Ontario, diverse butterflies, Prairie Smoke wildflowers, etc.)

Presqu'ile Provincial Park at Brighton on Lake Ontario (rare plant communities, great birding, marshes, beaches, bird sightings board, etc.)

When you get home

- Share your sightings with friends, family, community groups, or through Twitter, Instagram, Facebook
- Submit a bird checklist through eBird.org
- Submit your sightings to a Citizen Science project such as PlantWatch, Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas, Christmas Bird Count, etc. (some suggestions are below)

Some Citizen Science Websites/apps - Opportunities to Connect with Nature

Bee-friend your Garden: <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/bee-friend-your-garden/id652577482?mt=8>

eBird: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about/>

Global Bird Collision study: <http://www.flap.org>

Great Backyard Bird Count: <http://gbbc.birdcount.org>

iNaturalist: <http://www.inaturalist.org>

Marine Debris Tracker: <http://www.marinedebris.engr.uga.edu>

Project Noah (Networked Organisms And Habitats): <http://www.scientificamerican.com/citizen-science/project-noah/>

Roadkill Survey project on the Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation page:

<http://www.adventurescience.org/roadkill.html>

SciStarter's List of 600 active citizen science projects: <http://scistarter.com/index.html>

University of Florida's Dr. Emilio Bruna's list of apps for ecologists: <http://brunalab.org/apps/>

Whale Song Project: <http://whale.scientificamerican.com>

What's Invasive: <http://www.whatsinvasive.org/index.cfm>

Zooniverse's collection of nature-specific citizen science websites: <https://www.zooniverse.org/-nature>