



Community Wildlife MONITORING PROGRAM



healthy environment healthy community healthy economy

Do you live near a wetland? Do you enjoy watching birds or listening for frogs? Do you live in the Bay of Quinte watershed? If the answer is, yes, then the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan and Quinte Conservation can use your help this spring in monitoring certain species of wildlife. If the answer is, yes, then the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan and Quinte Conservation can use your help this spring in monitoring certain species of wildlife. The Community Wildlife Monitoring Program offers: Marsh Monitoring Program and Frogwatch. The Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan Community Wildlife Monitoring Program was introduced in 2001 by the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan Restoration Council, as a Bay of Quinte watershed wildlife assessment initiative. A number of existing monitoring programs was examined, and the above were selected based on existing database. They have been found to be user friendly and would not intimidate new volunteers.

The programs are fun and require very little time out of the season, and volunteers can pick and choose the program of their choice. The Marsh Monitoring Program records wetland birds twice during the year for ten minutes each between May and July, and recording the amphibians present three times a year for three minutes each from April

through June. The FrogWatch program takes place between April and August and requires volunteers to detail the mating calls of these animals.

"Some of these animals are on the decline in North America and we want to know what's happening here in the Quinte area," stresses Terry Sprague, Quinte Conservation's Naturalist, who coordinates the volunteer effort. Volunteers don't need to be experts in identity as training workshops are offered along with training tapes to assist volunteers.

In 1985 the Bay of Quinte was declared a pollution hotspot. Among the problems was a dramatic loss of fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. The BQRAP Restoration Council carries out actions with local partners in its efforts to restore the Bay and its drainage area. Wildlife monitoring is part of the process as these animals are good indicators of environmental health. Although primarily intended to focus on the Bay of Quinte proper, the study welcomes volunteers to participate throughout the general watershed area. This policy will continue to be encouraged, as more monitors will ultimately lead to a better understanding of the wildlife community as a whole.

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Marsh Monitoring Program

There are two components to this program; bird monitoring and amphibian monitoring. Volunteers can participate in either, or both. Marsh bird monitoring takes place twice each year, for fifteen minutes each, anytime between May and July. The amphibian component requires volunteers to monitor calls for three minutes each between April and late June.

The Marsh Monitoring Program was initiated in 1994 by Bird Studies Canada and Environment Canada. Volunteers can set as few as one or as many as eight sample stations, each one involving a 100 metre radius semi-circle in marsh habitat. Bird monitors are supplied with a bird broadcast tape of specific species in an effort to elicit responses from those species in the marsh. At the same time, they monitor other more visible species and document their locations within the sample area.

Stations must be at least 250 metres apart. Amphibian monitors can use the same stations, but may have to choose those that are at least 500 metres apart to eliminate overlap when documenting frog calls. Call codes are used in documenting those frogs calling to categorize the intensity of calling activity. Each amphibian station is monitored three times during the spring and early summer, at least 15 days apart, and for a period of three minutes.

Contact Terry Sprague who is the MMP Coordinator for the Bay of Quinte Area of Concern (AOC). More details on the MMP can be obtained from the Bird Studies Canada website.



Frogwatch Ontario

From late April to July, this program requires people to listen to calls for three minutes, two times a week at dusk, and can be done in a volunteer's backyard or at a cottage. This is a good entry level program, and hundreds participate each year due to its simplicity.

Since the early 1900s Frogwatch Ontario has been attracting volunteers, young and old. Ideally, frogs should be monitored twice a week, for three minutes each, but even fewer reports are valuable. The crowning glory of this monitoring program is that volunteers with Internet access can submit their data right online at www.frogwatchontario.ca. This excellent website also has considerable information on frogs and monitoring and includes audios of those species that may be expected in this area.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

More information on either the Frogwatch Ontario program or the Marsh Monitoring Program may be obtained by calling Terry Sprague, Quinte Conservation's Naturalist at 613-476-5072 or by email at tsprague@quinteconservation.ca.