



THE WETLANDS OBSERVER

FRIENDS OF MASHKINONJE

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Summer is here!

We hope you've had the opportunity to visit the park this year, but if not, it's not too late! Since the snowmelt this spring, Mashkinonje's lush, green forest has sprung back. Songbirds abound, and wildflowers bloom while the sunlight percolates gently through the canopy onto pillowy beds of moss and undergrowth. It's the peak of summer, meaning the air is warm, and biting insects have started to ebb (although bug repellent, long-sleeved shirts, and trousers are still a wise precaution).

In short, it's a beautiful time of year to visit the park. August is an ideal time to bring a bathing suit, and hike into either Pebble or Lapin Beach for a refreshing afternoon swim.

Park Updates

Ontario Parks crews have been working hard to keep the park's trails maintained by trimming trees and cutting grass, namely on the Loudon Peatlands Trail.

There are currently trail closures on the Atakas Trail and the Samoset Trail due to beaver activity, which has flooded the bridges. Consequently, the only way to access Lapin Beach is via the Coastal Trail, coming from the north. We are actively scouting a new bridge location to restore access to Lapin Beach from the south.

We have some exciting news and updates to share to help you plan your visit!



The Samoset Trail

The Samoset Trail is a beautiful 3.4 km trail in the southern portion of the park. The trail is accessible directly from Blandings Access Point, by coming from the north via the Heron Trail, or from the west via the Lapin Beach Trail. Note that the latter access route is currently inaccessible due to flooding in the western-most portion of the Samoset Trail.



The Samoset boardwalks pass through lowland red maple, and black ash swamps, along with granite ridges. Along the trail, Samoset Creek is a great place to look for waterfowl and owls roosting in tree stumps.

Whether you hike the short Samoset Trail loop, use the trail to get to Samoset Creek to see wildlife, or pass through on your way to other trails, the sea of green offered by the Samoset Trail is one of the most beautiful areas of the park.

Plant Feature | Eastern Beaked Hazel (*Corylus Cornuta*)

Eastern Beaked Hazel is a deciduous shrubby hazel that grows between 4 to 8 meters in height, depending on the shrub's exposure to sunlight, with its stems growing up to 25 cm thick. Along with Western Beaked Hazel, it is the hardiest of all hazel species, growing in regions with temperatures as low as -50°C .

Deer, moose, and especially beavers, enjoy eating the shrub's foliage, while black bears, white-tailed deer, turkeys, blue jays, and squirrels enjoy beaked hazelnuts (pictured below). In fact, the squirrels and jays are both responsible for helping distribute the nuts by carrying them long distances, or leaving uneaten nuts in the soil, which then germinate. Ruffed grouse often consume young buds and the shrubs catkins; these birds are also known to nest in the shrubs.



Photo kindly provided by: Alexandra Methé

Historically, indigenous groups used Eastern Beaked Hazel sprouts to weave baskets and fish traps, and they ate and traded the nuts.



Photo kindly provided by: Alexandra Methé

Bird Feature | Yellow-Rumped Warbler (*Setophaga Coronata*)

Yellow-rumped warblers are common and widespread, with their population holding steady over the last 50+ years. The estimated global population is a whopping 170 million!

You can typically spot the Yellow-Rumped Warbler on the outer limbs of trees. During the summer months, Northern Ontario's mature coniferous forests and mixed coniferous-deciduous woodlands are their breeding ground.

Insects are their main summer food source. They will often perch on branches and catch insects flying by, scour tree bark in search of hidden ones, or fly in their pursuit. In the winter, when insects are no longer readily available, they will often eat berries from various shrubs. Yellow-Rumped Warblers are the only warbler that is able to digest the wax found in bayberries and wax myrtles, which means they can winter further north than any other warbler.



We'd like to hear from you!

Send us a picture, and/or a brief description of your visit to be featured in a future issue of this newsletter.

*Please email your contributions, including your name (so we can thank you!) to:
brandencosman@gmail.com.*

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Instagram at Friends of Mashkinonje, and check out our website, www.mashkinonje.ca, for up-to-date information.

Annual General Meeting

We are hosting our Annual General Meeting this month!

The meeting will be followed by a picnic, a silent auction, and a hike. The picnic will include sausages, corn, and more. Handwashing stations, tables, and chairs will be available.

Consider bringing a donation for the silent auction!

Date:
Sunday, August 21, 2022

Time:
11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Location:
Loudon Parking Lot
Highway 64, between
Lavigne and Noelville (1
km south of Musky Island
Rd.)

Picnic cost:
\$15 / person



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Become a member!

The Friends of Mashkinonje is a not-for-profit, charitable organization dedicated to:

- The environmental protection and preservation of the Park and its trails.
- Education, recreation and signage relating to the Park's natural, scientific, historic, and cultural resources.



Look for our Events calendar, and plan to participate in our seasonal hikes led by Dr. Peter Beckett and/or the Parks Ontario Superintendent.