



# The Pitch Pine Post

## ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

MALLORYTOWN  
LANDING, ONTARIO

SPRING 2009

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## 6,682 dead animals found on Parkway last summer Road mortality study highlights roadkill hotspots

Marianne Kelly, St. Lawrence Islands National Park's road mortality specialist, found 6,682 dead animals on the 1000 Islands Parkway during her 80 days of cycling last summer. That averages out to more than 75 dead animals per day along the 39-kilometre road between Brockville and Gananoque.

"The total kill estimate for April to October is 25,000," says Ewen Eberhardt, the researcher coordinating the study in partnership with Carleton University. The estimate is likely conservative and will be refined when the data is studied further.

The numbers show the sobering reality of the danger the 1000 Islands Parkway poses to wildlife. Researchers know that road mortality plays a big role in the depletion of populations of some reptiles and amphibians (see table on page 4).

Initial observations seem to show that the "hotspots" for road mortality along the parkway are



Photo: Parks Canada

Marianne Kelly, St. Lawrence Islands National Park's road mortality specialist, found 6,682 dead animals on the 1000 Islands Parkway during her 80 days of cycling last summer.

where the road cuts through or passes close to large wetlands. Eberhardt has produced maps that highlight the most dangerous areas of the parkway for different

See 63 SPECIES on page 4

## Fires will help species at risk

It's a clear, calm day on Georgina Island. A man is walking among the pines with a canister in hand, dripping fiery liquid onto the dry pine needles on the forest floor. A line of flame comes to life and slowly creeps through the undergrowth, burning its way through the carpet of needles, low plants and downed tree limbs.

Is this a disaster in the making? Quite the opposite – it's a new beginning for the forest. This fire, carefully planned and managed by ecosystem scientists and firefighters from St. Lawrence Islands National Park, will bring

See PRESCRIBED FIRES on page 5

## Treehouse and climbing rock in new Mallorytown Landing playground

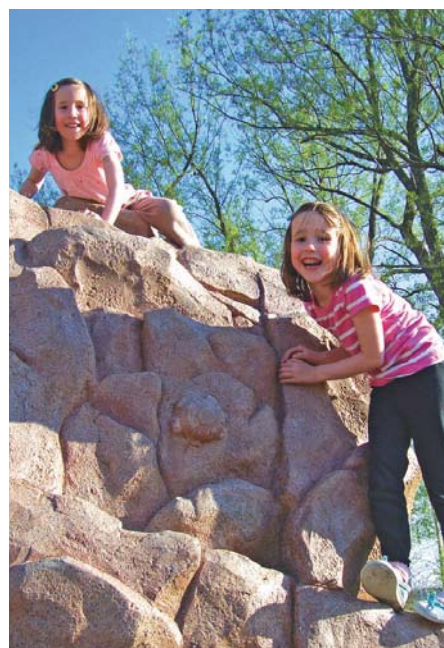


Photo: Kim Robinson

Fiona and Ella Conlin, 6, of Mallorytown explore the new granite-coloured climbing rock installed in the new playground area next to St. Lawrence Islands National Park's Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre.

Some colourful new features will be sprouting up on the landscape at the park's Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre this season.

As in past years, native wildflowers will be planted and cultivated at the site, but additions on a much grander scale are planned for the Landing. Ground has been broken for a new playground with features that highlight some of the most interesting elements of life in the 1000 Islands.

The centerpiece of the playground will be a treehouse right out of any child's dreams. As well, kids can slither and slide through a climbing structure resembling a snake hibernaculum, scale a climbing rock, or climb aboard an aluminum boat. These elements will share playground space with a large basket

See MALLORYTOWN on page 2



Photo: Lisa Werden

The pitch pine stand on Georgina Island is scheduled for a low-intensity burn this summer to improve habitat for pitch pine seedlings.

## The Superintendent Says...

By Jeff Leggo, St. Lawrence Islands National Park Acting Superintendent

The spring of 2009 begins with the fifth issue of the Pitch Pine Post as St. Lawrence Islands National Park begins the season. The successes of 2008, such as details of the park management plan, natural resource management activities, and the Island Quest student program, are among the many interesting articles that are presented. As with other years, your input into the operation of the park is important to us, and your comments are always welcome. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer.

### Correction:

The crashed plane published in 2008's "Looking Back" feature was incorrectly identified as a Harvard Trainer aircraft. The plane is a North American O-47A (serial 37-310) observation airplane. The plane's paint colours and design could mean that the photo was taken during the winter of 1941-42. The few O-47s that have survived in one piece are displayed at museums in the United States. Thank you to our readers and the Canadian Aviation Museum for the correct information.



Photo: Parks Canada

# Park management plan submitted for approval

St. Lawrence Islands National Park's management plan, the document that will guide activities in the national park for the next five to ten years, is now in the approval stage.

The plan was written after extensive public consultation through meetings, surveys, and focus groups. Management plans are required by law and act as the main accountability document for each national park.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park's management plan is based on a vision that looks 15 years into the future. The key strategies and objectives to reach that vision include:

**Key strategy 1** – Strength through regional connection: ecological and cultural integrity and authentic experiences.

*Objectives:*

- Develop a landscape-level protected area strategy to ensure that the park's ecological integrity will persist.
- Build a culture of environmental stewardship within the community.
- Increase the understanding of the Parks Canada Agency mandate.

## Mallorytown Landing revitalization

Continued from page 1

swing.

When those wildflowers begin to fade this fall, new life and colour will be added to the Landing in the form of a dynamic new mural and metal sculptures of osprey in flight. As well, signs recognizing local Leaders of the

- Demonstrate and communicate a commitment to environmental sustainability in park operational activities.

**Key strategy 2** – An expanded sense of place: new landscape, new markets, and new opportunities.

*Objectives:*

- Better understand our current and potential audiences.
- Strategically focus on our priority markets.
- Establish a relevant national park presence on the mainland and islands.
- Integrate and work with a sustainable regional tourism strategy.

**Key strategy 3** – Bones of the Mother: Aboriginal inclusion. Working with the Aboriginal community in a meaningful way using Mohawk principles of respect, equity, and empowerment.

*Objectives:*

- Establish mutually rewarding relationships.
- Raise public awareness of the traditions and history of Aboriginal Peoples in the region.

- Share knowledge between the park and Akwesasne that leads to the integration of naturalized knowledge systems.
- Work closely with Akwesasne to ensure our friendship contributes economic and social value to both communities.

The plan also highlights specific objectives for different locations within the park:

**Mainland** – Integrate the park's mainland offer at Landon Bay, Mallorytown Landing, Jones Creek and the 1000 Islands Parkway.

**Islands** – Develop a visitor-use approach for the islands that considers the integrity of natural and cultural resources, the capacity of the park, educational opportunities, and the enjoyment and benefit of the boating visitor.

**Outlying properties** – Perform a caretaker role for Main Duck and Yorkshire Islands and the Skoryna Nature Reserve that maintains the integrity of these properties and reflects their role as special places in the spirit of the Canada National Parks Act (2000).

Once approved by the Minister, the management plan will be tabled in Parliament. When approved by Parliament, the plan will be available to the public online at [www.pc.gc.ca/sli](http://www.pc.gc.ca/sli) or by calling 613-923-5261.

Landscape will be set in place at the Landing.

Over the winter, the park held a contest in which people were asked to nominate individuals who have made significant efforts in the area of land stewardship, environmental education, and citizenship. The park will be holding

a community event in September to recognize the Leaders of the Landscape and celebrate all the changes and improvements to the visitor centre over the summer.

## Looking Back...



Photo: Parks Canada

### 60 years ago

Local residents cut and gathered ice from the St. Lawrence River for generations. From horse-drawn wagons to pick-up trucks, the tradition of hauling and storing ice for use in the summer months lasted into the 1960s. An old icehouse still stands on the park's East Grenadier property.



Photo: Parks Canada

### 100 years ago

The historic picnic shelter at Mallorytown Landing was only a few years old when this photo was taken in 1910. The surrounding landscape changed dramatically over the years, from the rich wetland ecosystem pictured above to an area of high visitor use and artificial shoreline. Mallorytown Landing is now being restored to a state more like its original condition with naturalized shoreline and native plants, accommodating visitor use and wildlife observation.

# Students find their way to fun in St. Lawrence Islands National Park's Island Quest

Getting stranded on an island with your students may sound like a field trip nightmare for most teachers, but in the park's new program Island Quest, that scenario spells fun.

Offered by the park in partnership with the Gananoque Boat Line, this hike program takes school groups by boat to Georgina Island in the heart of the 1000 Islands region.

Parks Canada visitor services coordinator Paul Bruneau designed the program for Grade 7 and 9 students, linking it to the Ontario Geography curriculum

for both grades. While the natural and cultural history of the island form the content of the program, Bruneau kept fun foremost in mind when creating Island Quest.

"I wanted the students to spend some time outside, learning and doing something that challenged them, but it had to be packaged in an engaging and entertaining activity," says Bruneau.

Upon arrival, students are divided into teams and assigned bright bandanas, Survivor-style.

They are then given instructions to solve a series of rhymed riddles using clues hidden on the island. The riddles offer up content on the sensitive Thousand Islands ecosystem represented in St. Lawrence Islands National Park, as well as information on the role of national parks across the country.

With the aid of a map, a compass and binoculars they set out on their quest. If the riddles are answered correctly, they'll

find their tickets back to the mainland.



Photo: Parks Canada

Grade 7 students from St. Paschal Baylon Catholic School of North York work together to solve riddles during St. Lawrence Islands National Park's Island Quest program on Georgina Island. During May and June, hundreds of urban youth are taking part in the interactive hike program, run in partnership with Gananoque Boat Line.

Students and teachers have responded to the island challenge with enthusiasm,

"The students really enjoyed it. The whole concept of going over in the boat and having to find the clues was very fun for them," says Maxine Cole, a teacher at the Akwesasne Freedom School of Hogansburg, New York.

Cole says the quest was well suited to the students' learning level – challenging but something they could work through with a sense of satisfaction. Also, she notes that this hands-on style of learning was very engaging.

"They were outside, they were

physically moving and they had to observe their environment."

Cole says that out on the island, without other distractions, students had an opportunity to practise an important skill: paying close attention to the world around them.

"The island is like your own little ecosystem or environment," says Cole. "Out there they could focus on the trees."

For more information about Island Quest, call 613-923-5261. To book an Island Quest school excursion, contact Gananoque Boat Line at 1-888-717-4837.



## Art in the Park show and contest draws 600

More than 600 visitors enjoyed the annual Art in the Park exhibition put on by the Thousand Islands Fine Arts Association (TIFAA) at the St. Lawrence Islands National Park Visitor Centre last September.

TIFAA's annual fall show exhibits new work by artists in the TIFAA organization, which includes artists from the 1000 Islands region between Brockville and Kingston. An art contest was added to the exhibition in 2007 and is open to all local artists, not just TIFAA members.

"The competition in 2008 was themed to promote the park's new land acquisitions," says Layne Larsen, chair of TIFAA's annual show. Entries received from both TIFAA and community members highlighted people experiencing the national park at Jones Creek and Landon Bay.

"Our partnership with St. Lawrence Islands National Park is win-win," says Belia Brandow, TIFAA president. "We love the venue and the show and art competition help to promote the park."

St. Lawrence Islands National Park purchases the winning paintings to be added to the park's art collection, which is on exhibit in park buildings.

"We want to encourage the appreciation of the park from an artists' point of view and to challenge others to see the park in different ways," says Sophie Borcoman, communications manager at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. "The contest, while supporting local artists, helps to facilitate sharing their perspectives with the community and park visitors."

This year's contest will accept art in any of the following four categories: Exploring Jones Creek, Outdoor recreation, Nature close-up, and Shorelines. Entries must be received at the park office by 4 p.m. on September 11, 2009. Any medium is accepted. The purchase price of the work should not exceed \$500.00.

The show will be open to the public September 18-20 and 26-27. For more information, please call 613-923-5261.

## 1000 Islands Up Close

This fall, visitors to the region will have a new opportunity to get out on the river and take in an authentic island experience with the program 1000 Islands Up Close.

Building on the success of the Island Quest student program, St. Lawrence Islands National Park is developing a Georgina Island hike for adults. It will be piloted with a number of tour bus operators this autumn. As with Island Quest, the park is working in partnership with Gananoque Boat Line. This pairing sets the stage for a program in which visitors tour the scenic landscape that they would typically only see by boat.

"The great benefit of the program is that they get to experience the island instead of just seeing it," says Kathy MacRae of Gananoque Boat Line.

While on the island, visitors will learn about it up close and in depth from an insider viewpoint, from the stories and legends of the island and its surrounding waters, to up-to-the-minute research and resource

management related to the rare species found there. The program will include hands-on, behind-the-scenes stops, where participants can see how firefighting equipment works and test out the devices used to track turtle species.

"We want visitors to leave with a sense of having seen the "real" 1000 Islands, and in one excursion we've included a broad range of activities that bring them close to the beautiful natural features and fascinating human history that make these islands special," says product development officer Kim Robinson.

For more information, please call 613-923-5261.



# 63 species identified in roadkill study

Continued from page 1  
groups of animals.

With this information, scientists will look at ways to reduce the roadkill problem. Studies this summer will focus on mitigation and may include using fencing and existing culverts in the hotspots to redirect animals under the parkway. The study hopes to address some of the concerns raised by local residents about road mortality along the scenic route.

Marianne Kelly biked the entire length of the parkway four to five times per week from April to October to record the location of each dead animal. Kelly acknowledges that the project was

at times both depressing and desensitizing.

"Seeing the full extent of the problem of road mortality was the worst part of the project," she says. "However, I'd like to think that the summer of 2008 heightened people's awareness of the problem."

Local residents often stopped to point out roadkill they'd spotted along the road, and to ask questions about the project and what had been found so far. Kelly's most interesting finds were secretive species such as bats, salamanders, star-nosed moles, and mink, and unexpected species such as pike and bullhead (likely dropped by osprey).

"My favourite parts of the project were the rare opportunities I got to save a turtle, snake, or frog," says Kelly, "It was really lovely to watch (from a safe and respectful distance) mother turtles laying their eggs. The project was also a chance to experience the region's immense biodiversity, albeit dead."

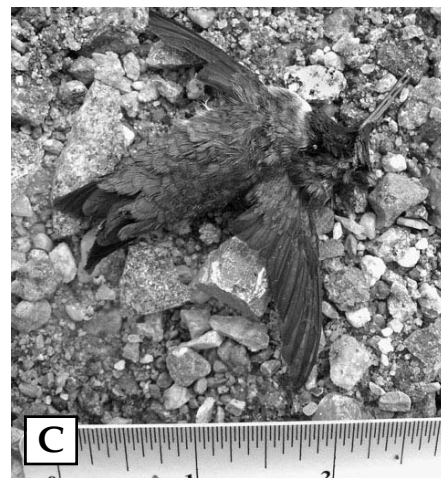
Check out the photos below to test your roadkill identification skills with pictures of rescued would-be roadkill and unfortunate victims along the parkway last summer.

For more information about the road mortality project, please call 613-923-5261.

## Roadkill tally

Frogs were the biggest losers in the road mortality study, making up 87 per cent of the roadkill recorded. Weather seemed to play a role, with warm, wet nights bringing out frogs in full force.

Animal	Number
Frogs	5,416 (87%)
Snakes	244 (4%)
Birds	212 (3%)
Small mammals	165 (3%)
Turtles	128 (2%)
Toads	52 (< 1%)
Large mammals	27 (< 1%)
Salamanders	11 (< 1%)



More than 6,000 animals of 63 different species, including five species at risk, were found dead along the 1000 Islands Parkway during a road mortality study last summer. Can you identify the rescued animals and victims photographed above? Answers on page 7.

Photos: Marianne Kelly



Photo: Parks Canada

Cecelia Mitchell, an Akwesasne elder, shares traditional knowledge about local plant species with students from the Akwesasne Freedom School during a camp at St. Lawrence Islands National Park designed to help Akwesasne youth reconnect to land that was traditionally part of the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations-Iroquois Confederacy) territory.

# Youth explore traditional Haudenosaunee territory

Seventeen youth from the community of Akwesasne spent three days last August exploring the land traditionally used by their ancestors. The youth, representing all districts of Akwesasne, were given the opportunity to reconnect with the 1000 Islands National Park through a three-day camping experience based at the Landon Bay Centre.

Campers toured the national park, participated in the student Island Quest program, learned about turtle research, and went on a guided medicine walk with an Akwesasne elder, in addition to camp activities such as swimming, volleyball, and lacrosse.

Wenhnitron Seymour, a Mohawk language teacher at the Akwesasne Freedom School who accompanied some of her students to the camp, appreciated the opportunity for students to get together in an outdoor environment.

"We are happy to see our children interacting positively even though they attend different schools and may not know each other," said Seymour. "It was also surprising to us to hear Parks Canada recognizing this area as traditional Haudenosaunee territory."

Parks Canada hosted the culturally relevant youth camp to strengthen relationships with the Akwesasne community and to expose the youth to a Canadian national park.

"Many of the people we spoke to at public outreach venues such as the Akwesasne Powwow were very satisfied with this opportunity for our Mohawk youth to

reconnect with the natural world, preserved here at St. Lawrence Islands National Park," says Curtis Lazore, a patrol person at St. Lawrence Islands National Park and a liaison with the community of Akwesasne.

This year the park is considering offering a week-long cultural camp to Akwesasne youth and encouraging more parents, grandparents and community groups to help provide culturally sensitive programming for the camp.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is working in close cooperation with the Mohawks of Akwesasne, a community of approximately 21,000 that straddles the international boundary between Canada and the United States south of Cornwall. The park recognizes the strong ties that the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations-Iroquois Confederacy) and the community of Akwesasne have to the natural world and the St. Lawrence River.



Photo: Parks Canada

Cole Adams of Akwesasne holds a tiny garter snake found during the three-day cultural youth camp held at the Landon Bay Centre last August.

## Creating drama with Stepping Stones

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is teaming up with the Fulford Place Mansion in Brockville and the Arthur Child Heritage Museum in Gananoque to create a little drama this summer.

Stepping Stones, an engaging series of vignettes that tell the story of the park, will be presented as an opener to Fulford Place's

popular Brockville Ghost Walk program. The Parks Canada Players performed Stepping Stones at one of the ghost walks last summer and this year will have a steady run of performances prior to the Friday walks from July 10 to August 7. Performances start at 7:50 p.m., with the ghost walk to follow at 8:30 p.m.

In addition to the Fulford Place presentations, Stepping Stones will be performed at Blockhouse Island in Brockville as part of Riverfest on Thursday, July 2. Showtime is 1:30 p.m. Later in the summer, the production will be offered as a 2:30 matinee at the Arthur Child Heritage Museum on Thursdays from

August 13 to 27.

Please contact the park at 613-923-5261 for more details about the theatre program. To learn more about the Brockville Ghost Walk program or to book tickets for the walk, contact Fulford Place at 613-498-3003.

# Scientists try to understand spread of Lyme disease in eastern Ontario

Mice, voles, and chipmunks may help scientists understand the movement of Lyme disease in the 1000 Islands region.

Researchers from the University of Guelph, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and St. Lawrence Islands National Park

will work together to gather ticks from small mammals at several locations within the park and test the ticks to see if they carry *Borrelia*, the bacteria that cause Lyme disease in humans.

Small mammals act as "reservoirs" for the Lyme disease bacteria, which can be transferred to

humans through the bite of a blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*).

Besides gathering information about the risk of exposure to Lyme disease in the 1000 Islands region, the study will look at transmission dynamics, information that may be useful to reduce the risk of contracting Lyme disease in this area.

"We will be looking at how the Lyme disease bacteria is moving around, which animals are most likely responsible for new invasions, and which places are likely to be the next sites of invasion," says Emily Gonzales, ecosystem scientist at St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

The work planned for summer 2009 follows up on preliminary studies done in 2007 and 2008 that confirmed blacklegged ticks are established in eastern Ontario.

"We now want to get a good idea of the tick density and habitats," explains Dr. Robbin Lindsay, research scientist with the Public Health Agency of Canada.

"Then we would like to link this to public utilization of the park and see if the management programs already in place at the park might help to reduce tick numbers. We want to alleviate fears and increase user confidence so that the risk of someone coming in contact with one of these ticks is as small as can be."

"It's very interesting that Lyme disease has been in New York State for so long and did not cross the border until relatively recently," Gonzales adds. "So another question that we will explore is what does it take for this disease to really establish in a new location?"

At the same time, the project will gather information about small mammal population dynamics to learn more about the numbers and distribution of squirrels, chipmunks, voles, shrews and mice in the national park.

For more information about this research, please call 613-923-5261. For more information about ticks and Lyme disease, contact your local health unit.

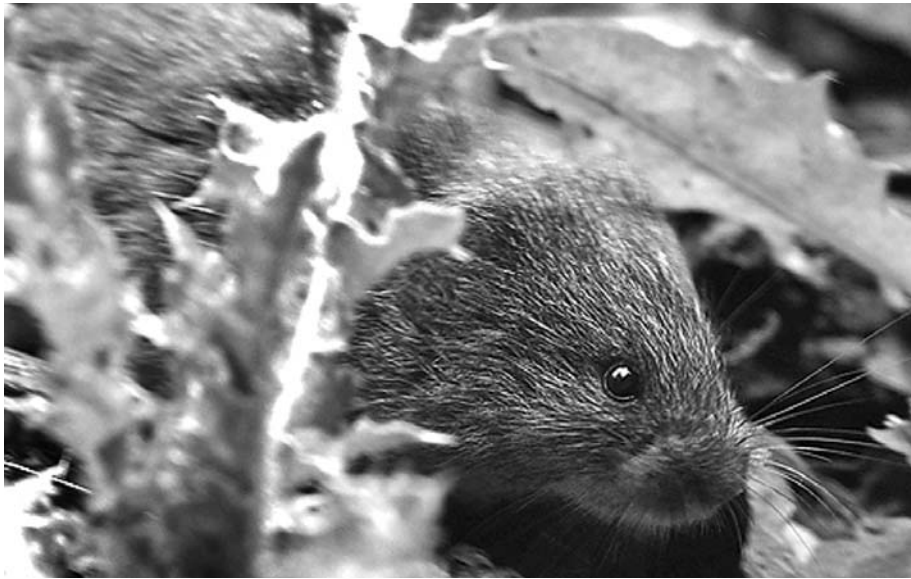


Photo: Tom Lusk

Meadow voles (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*), like this one spotted on Camelot Island, are among several small mammal species that will be trapped and checked for ticks this summer in an effort to gather more information about the density and movement of blacklegged ticks and Lyme disease in the 1000 Islands region.

## Prescribed fires planned for Georgina Island and Mallorytown Landing

Continued from page 1

new growth to the forest and help Georgina's pitch pine stand survive into the next generation.

For many years fire management in national parks has centred on fire suppression, yet many ecosystems such as the one on Georgina Island are fire adapted, meaning they depend on fire for natural processes of renewal. Fire has always been a part of these ecosystems and helps them function properly. In the case of pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*), periodic low-intensity fires clear the way for new seedlings and provide a nutrient-rich seedbed.

Though fire is a disruptive and, in a very few cases, deadly force with regard to wildlife, the improvement of habitat has an overall positive effect for all life in a fire adapted ecosystem.

"The primary goal of the operation is to create a suitable seedbed for pitch pine germination," says ecosystem scientist Josh Van Wieren. "The desired fire behaviour is a surface fire that removes the shrub, herb, and part of the duff layer."

The park's controlled burns have the added safety benefit of reducing the leaf litter and other dead plant material that could fuel a wildfire.

While the fires managed by the park are meant to mimic the naturally random process of wildfires, nothing is left to chance in these burns. The park works closely with specialized fire technicians who have worked on similar prescribed burns at national parks across the country. Great care is taken to ensure that the fire is controlled and contained. Where natural features such as cliffs and riverbanks do not provide a barrier to the fire, well-equipped fire-fighting teams are in place. These fires, known as "prescribed burns," are conducted when conditions are safest and are most beneficial to forest regeneration. The burn will not go ahead until the conditions and procedures set out in the "prescription" are met.

"This operation is expected to only last a few hours," says public safety specialist Katie Ellsworth. "After that, any areas with the potential for fire to spread outside the burn area unit or breach the containment boundary will be fully suppressed."

The night before the burning period, island attendants will inform all visitors of the need to evacuate the island and will sweep the trail system for visitors who have been missed. Prior to ignition the island will be checked again.

While every effort is made to ensure the smoke vents upward and away from neighbouring properties, changes in wind direction can affect smoke dispersal. Though the health risk posed by short periods of exposure to smoke are low, children and the elderly are more susceptible to the negative effects of smoke, and care should be taken to limit exposure. People with heart or lung

disease are at a higher risk. The park will post notices to visitors and advise nearby residents prior to any prescribed burn.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is planning prescribed fires for sections of Georgina Island and small plots at Mallorytown Landing. To learn more about the park's fire management program, please call 613-923-5261.

### Ecological recovery begins quickly after fire Australian bushfires an example of quick natural recovery

Natalie Brida noticed new plant growth and signs of animal activity at Kinglake National Park in Australia just ten days after bushfires swept through the state of Victoria in February.

The high-intensity fires, which were not part of a prescribed burn, had the devastating effects reported in the news and cleared the landscape, but natural recovery began quickly and the growth of new vegetation is widespread.

"I've got to know the Kinglake landscape in a different way," says Brida. "The best healing for me was going back ten days after, and going for a walk by myself, down to Masons Falls ...and going there and seeing life again, the scratching, a bit of fungus, the sedge, the

grass growing back, seeing a tinge of green."



Photo: Parks Canada

Natalie Brida, who came to the 1000 Islands region in 2008 through an exchange program between Parks Canada and Parks Victoria, is a ranger and part of the fire crew at Kinglake National Park, just north of Melbourne, Australia, in the area hardest hit by the bushfires earlier this year.

## Controlling overpopulation of deer on Hill Island

The Hill Island white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) population has devastated the island's plant community, which includes 17 regionally and nationally threatened species. The deer population, estimated at approximately 15 deer/km<sup>2</sup> before management efforts, was significantly larger than the recommended 4 deer/km<sup>2</sup>.

"The island is not the same as it used to be," notes Don Ross, a local resident and biologist. "Native botanicals are being replaced by European and invasive species. Pools with salamanders are gone, snake species are declining, and the cottontail rabbit and squirrel populations have decreased. Anything under two meters in the forest has been affected."

A lack of spring wildflowers, no young trees, and a distinct browse line were the most obvious effects of over-browsing. The dramatic changes in the plant community are visible in the difference between 20 fenced plots protected from browsing deer and other sections of the island that are accessible to deer. These changes led to the creation of a deer management plan that was implemented in the

winter and fall of 2008 in cooperation with the community of Akwesasne.

Gus Pyke, a member of the Akwesasne community and a participant in the herd reduction in 2008, describes several benefits of the program.

"The herd reduction provides the Akwesasne community with meat for ceremonies and allows medicinal plants to grow."

The ceremonies are important events for passing on cultural traditions. The herd reduction is also an opportunity to teach and practise traditional skills with young community members. Chief Joe Lazore encouraged community members to bring youth, as it is an excellent opportunity to develop hunting and outdoor skills in a safe environment.

Restoring the natural balance of the ecosystem will be a multi-year process that will require continued monitoring and management efforts. The program will adapt and change as the vegetation on the island begins to recover.

For more information, please call 613-923-5261.

## Regional land management project will consider residents' priorities and the real economic value of natural areas

What do you want this landscape to look like in the future? That's the question asked by the Integrated Land Management Project, a new initiative from St. Lawrence Islands National Park and its partners in sustainability planning.

The question poses a challenge – it can be difficult to envision how things might be – but at the same time offers an opportunity to shape the region in ways that reflect local values. The goal of the project is to develop information and mapping tools to help the public and land use planners in the Township of South Frontenac and the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville incorporate values of sustainability in planning.

The project is not intended as a set of regulations, but as a set of practices and tools to point municipalities, conservation authorities, government agencies and non-government organizations in the direction of land planning that reflects the natural, cultural, economic, and social interests of the community.

The Integrated Land Management Project's approach to planning incorporates the idea of ecosystem services, where the real economic value of the natural features of the region are factored into land use planning. For example, wetlands serve not only as habitat for local species, but also

as a factor in flood prevention, as nursery habitat for sport fish, as natural water filtration systems, and in a host of other functions. There would be a large cost associated with the creation of infrastructure that would process and purify water the way wetlands do. Similarly, cultural features of the landscape are taken into consideration, whether they are historic buildings, places with tourism potential, or places local people value for recreation, such as favourite fishing and swimming spots.

The first step in the project is to gather information on regional residents' views of what they value most about the local landscape. So far the project has drawn from the results of a number of surveys and focus groups, among them a regional residents survey conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of the park. In this manner, the project is based in the attitudes and behaviours of the people who live in the region.

In the coming months, the park will refine this information with further research in the form of surveys and meetings to reach as broad a base of regional residents as possible. Park outreach coordinator Chris Bellemore says the real benefit of the project lies in this consultation process, and he encourages the public's input.

"This will be a reflection of



Photo: Parks Canada

Trail stewards Bev Elliott, Ken Robinson, and Ray Wilson are local residents who are volunteering their time to hike St. Lawrence Islands National Park's trails at Mallo-rytown Landing and Jones Creek to greet visitors and note areas that require maintenance. The trail stewards bring to their role a wealth of knowledge of local trails and natural history.

## Trail volunteers help provide memorable hiking experience

St. Lawrence Islands National Park's new Jones Creek trail system will officially open this summer, and it already has some dedicated supporters.

A trail steward program began earlier this year, modelled on the park's very successful island steward program. The trail steward volunteers will have a presence on the park's mainland trails at Mallo-rytown Landing and Jones

Creek, helping to spot and improve areas that require maintenance. They will also talk to visitors about trail rules and the interesting natural features to be found along the way.

Park interpreter Marianne Kelly, who brought together the first meeting of trail stewards earlier this year, says that while each steward performs the same general tasks, the program is very participant-directed.

"Different people bring different skills to the program, and we work with those strengths," says Kelly.

She says these volunteers bring to their role an exceptional knowledge of local natural history, the park and other trail systems.

One such trail steward is Ken Robinson, who worked for many years in interpretation at the park and over the years has volunteered his time to other trail systems such as the Triangle Ski Club's cross-country trails and the Rideau Trail.

When asked what motivates him to help out, Robinson says, "I like to make it possible for people to get out into nature."

It's this desire to help people enjoy the trails that makes the stewards such valuable assistants in the park's efforts to provide a memorable hiking experience.

Kelly also sees the benefit of getting a fresh perspective on what works and what doesn't work on the trails. She says trail stewards are a valuable source of interesting ideas and solutions.

"After being on these properties many times and seeing them through planning and development, you no longer see them as a new visitor would," says Kelly. "It's been very helpful to get out on the trail with stewards and see it through their eyes."

For more information about how residents can contribute to the project, please call 613-923-5261.

# Turtles ignore park boundaries

When it was time to nest last spring, female 11 traveled more than a kilometre from a quiet, uninhabited marsh on Grenadier Island to a small point of land covered by private cottages. She wasn't the only Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) to ignore the 300 hectares (740 acres) of protected park property on Grenadier Island and lay her eggs on private land.

Female 11 was one of 22 turtles fitted with a radio transmitter and tracked by researchers from Ottawa University as part of St. Lawrence Islands National Park's turtle population study last summer. The study, which began in 2005, looks at northern map (*Graptemys geographica*) and stinkpot turtles (*Sternotherus odoratus*)



Photo: Parks Canada

Studies have shown that the Blanding's turtles on Grenadier Island will cross park boundaries and nest on private property. Shorelines and yards left in a natural state may help populations of species at risk, such as Blanding's turtles.

on the Canadian side of the St. Lawrence River between Rockport and Mallorytown, and at Blanding's turtles in the Grenadier Island wetland complex.

The Blanding's turtles were tracked by radio telemetry to identify the turtles' home ranges and nesting sites, similar to work done on northern map and stinkpot turtles in 2005-2007. Although the Blanding's turtles generally stayed within the wetland complex, several females left to find nest sites, crossing park boundaries on the way. One female covered a distance of more

than 1.6 kilometres in five days.

The study highlights the important role local residents can play in protecting turtles, who don't see park boundaries when they travel to nesting, hibernation, and basking sites.

"Habitat loss and degradation might be the largest single factor responsible for reptile loss," says Catherine Millar, the University of Ottawa graduate student who will be coordinating the field research again in 2009. Natural shorelines and yards with "wilderness" areas can be attractive habitats for many animals,

and may help populations of species at risk.

## Population estimates

The populations of all three turtle species within the study area were measured using the mark-recapture method, which estimates population size based on the number of marked individuals that are recaptured in the year they were marked or subsequent years. Each turtle captured during the study is marked with a unique combination of tiny holes drilled into the outer scutes of the turtle's shell.

The population of northern map turtles and stinkpot turtles in the St. Lawrence River between Rockport and Mallorytown Landing are estimated to be near 550 and 250 respectively. The Blanding's turtle population in the Grenadier Island wetland complex is estimated to be around 80.

Mark-recapture work will continue in 2009 for all three turtle species. Several more years of data are required for researchers to begin to see whether the populations are increasing, decreasing, or stable.

"Short-term monitoring demonstrates the size of the current population, but does not reveal any long-term trends in a population," explains Millar.

For more information about turtle research at St. Lawrence Islands National Park, please call 613-923-5261.



Photo: Parks Canada

University of Ottawa graduate student Catherine Millar tracked Blanding's turtles on Grenadier Island last summer to gather information about the turtles' home ranges and preferred habitat. Radio telemetry work will continue this summer.

## Why did the turtle cross the road?

Turtles cross the road for many reasons: to find a nesting site, to travel from one water body to another, or simply to bask on the warm pavement. For 200 million years, turtles' hard shells have been their main defence. Unfortunately, the speed and force of a car make quick work of even the hardest turtle shell. After habitat loss, road mortality is one of the biggest factors affecting turtle populations.

Please drive with care. If you see a turtle on the road and it is safe to do so, you can even help it across in the direction it's already heading. If you return it to the side it came from, it will only attempt to cross the road again.



Painted turtle killed on the 1000 Islands Parkway in 2008.

Photo: Marianne Kelly

### How to safely move a turtle:

Ensure there is no traffic and there is a safe place to pull onto the shoulder of the road.

- Grip the turtle firmly by the back of its shell and lift it across **OR**
- Prevent the turtle from snapping by encouraging it to bite onto a stick, then lift or drag the turtle across the road **OR**
- Use a shovel, or similar tool, to push or guide the turtle across the road.

**Never lift a turtle by its tail. You can do irreparable spinal damage to the turtle this way.**

## Island census finds an unusual bird



Photo: Lisa Werden

An unusual white black-capped chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) was spotted on Grenadier Island in 2008 during St. Lawrence Islands National Park's annual census of birds on the island during spring migration. The census, which has been held annually since 1987 with the help of volunteer birders, has recorded more than 165 species of birds on Grenadier Island.

The chickadee's strange coloration is likely caused by pied leucism, an unusual condition that prevents the normal deposition of melanin (dark pigment) in some of the body feathers. Less than 1,000 cases of leucism were

reported by volunteers in North America's Project FeederWatch between 2000 and 2006, a tiny fraction of the 5.5 million birds reported annually. Project FeederWatch is coordinated in Canada by Bird Studies Canada. To find out more, visit [www.bsc-eoc.org](http://www.bsc-eoc.org).

### Road mortality quiz answers

(from page 4):

- a) Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)
- b) Banana – trick question!
- c) Ruby-throated hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*)
- d) Yellow-spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*)
- e) Snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) laying eggs

# Searching for aliens

Crews at St. Lawrence Islands National Park will spend part of the summer searching for small green aliens that have invaded park property. Fortunately, with root systems and leaves, these aliens won't be able to get away and control may be possible.

Alien invasive plants, such as dog-strangling vine and garlic mustard, are not native to the local environment and can wreak havoc on local ecosystems, altering soil chemistry and choking out native plants.

This summer, park ecologists will assess invasive species in the national park to determine which species are present, where they are, and the size of the infestations. The assessment will focus on five main sections of the park: Hill Island, Grenadier Island, and the mainland properties at Jones Creek, Mallorytown Landing, and Landon Bay.

Over the next few years, the park plans to develop and implement a control plan that will help with the early detection of new invaders and the control or eradication of priority species.

However, restoration activities to reduce non-native species within the national park will be futile without the help of local residents. The park plans to work with

landowners, regional partners, and volunteers to monitor and control further invasions of alien plants.

Human activities are largely responsible for helping alien

species to spread and become established.

For more information about invasive species projects at St. Lawrence Islands National Park, please call 613-923-5261.

## Invasive Species Watch

Invasive species are those that have been introduced to regions outside of their normal range and pose a threat to the health of natural ecosystems, the economy and even humans. Invasive species are one of the top three stresses on ecological integrity at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. Be on the lookout for the following invasive species:

### Dog-strangling vine (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*)

This aggressive Russian vine with purplish flowers can grow as much as 1-2 metres in one year, generally along roads, fence lines, and hillsides. Also known as pale swallowwort, the vine threatens rare plant species and is extremely difficult to eradicate.



Photo: Walter Muma

### Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)



Photo: Elizabeth J. Czarapata

## You can help stop the invasion!

- Plant native species in your garden. Many invasives are accidentally introduced to an ecosystem when imported ornamental plants escape from gardens and into the surrounding area.
- Do not transport firewood, trees, or lumber from different regions, especially southern Ontario. Buy and burn firewood locally.
- Wash and dry your boat and fishing gear before moving between bodies of water.
- Never transport water, animals, or plants from one water body to another, and remember to empty your bait bucket on land before you leave.
- Drain water from the boat, motor and trailer on land before leaving the site.

With small white flowers and a distinctive onion- or garlic-like odour, this exotic plant is rapidly expanding in moist areas along roadways and railways, and often invades mature, undisturbed forests. Garlic mustard leaves no room for native undergrowth, kills soil fungi, and prevents the growth of young trees.

## The face of Parks Canada continues to change



Photos: Parks Canada

Sheila Birtch (top), John Chwalek (centre), and Kevin Hodge are just three of hundreds of federal public servants retiring this year. For more information about a career with Parks Canada or other government departments and agencies, visit <http://jobs-emploi.gc.ca>.

When asked what she'll miss most about her job, Sheila Birtch smiles and writes one word on the notepad in front of her. "People," is the word on the page.

"I love to see all the different faces that come through that door," says Birtch with a nod to the entrance of her office in the park's administration building.

Maybe the note taking comes from years of attending to so many behind-the-scenes details that keep the park running smoothly. Since 1974, she has been looking after those details and, first and foremost, looking after people in the park.

She started as a gate attendant and soon moved on to a position as a reception and finance clerk. Over the years, her position has come to encompass a wide range of work in both finance and human resources.

"My manager recognized that I had a willingness and eagerness to learn," explains Birtch, "It gave me the opportunity to learn about the whole organization."

Outside of this work, she has had a long and active role in the union local and in Parks Canada's Employee and Family Assistance Program, a support program that helps employees through difficult times.

Birtch notes that staying in the

same work location, in fact the very same office for 35 years is a bit unusual, but she says she's always loved the work and the people, and so had no interest in changing things.

Island attendant John Chwalek, retiring this year after 10 seasons with the park, echoes that sentiment.

"It's the best job I've ever had, bar none," says Chwalek.

Chwalek looks after facilities on park islands and, ultimately, the visitors to those islands.

At times the work can be messy and tiring, and island attendants are out doing their work even on days that would scare most tourists away, but Chwalek takes it all in stride.

"For every rainy day there are five nice ones," says Chwalek.

Being out on the river has had its appeal to Kevin Hodge. He started with the park as a construction foreman in 1988 and is now the park's maintenance supervisor, overseeing work on docks, structures, trails and many other aspects of the park's infrastructure.

"The river setting, being able to do things by boat, that's what I've liked best," says Hodge.

When Hodge retires this August, he'll still be spending most of his time in the islands, in

particular on one. Hodge lives year-round on Loon Island.

"Maybe I'll get around to doing things on my island that I've been putting off," says Hodge.

That's not to give the impression that Hodge is taking up the role of hermit when he retires. There will be plenty of trips to the mainland and contact with parks staff.

Members of the park's maintenance crew say that no matter what's on Kevin's list of things to do, he always has time for the people who work with him.

Looking after the details and looking after people, these employees leave a legacy of caring for the park and the people who work and play here.



Photo: Parks Canada

Alyssa Coville of Mallorytown is one of ten students working at St. Lawrence Islands National Park in 2009. Student positions are available each year in administration, visitor services, education, and resource conservation.



## Akwesasne's Voice

Last summer, the Akwesasne Cultural Centre's travelling exhibit *We are from Akwesasne* was featured at the park's visitor centre. The Thanksgiving Address below, a traditional opening and closing for meetings and gatherings, is an excerpt from the exhibit. Elements of the Thanksgiving Address will be displayed outdoors at Mallorytown Landing as part of the site's revitalization next year.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is working in close cooperation with the Mohawks of Akwesasne, a community of approximately 21,000 that straddles the boundary between Canada and the United States at Cornwall. The park recognizes the strong ties that the community of Akwesasne has to the natural world.

**Mohawk culture is based on giving thanks. Our songs, games, and dances are ways of pleasing the creator, expressions of thanks for the gift of life. So, too, are the things we make. This is part of the ancient culture that continues among the Rotinonshonni [the Iroquois Confederacy].**

The Ohénton Kariwatékwen, also known as the Thanksgiving Address, is recited at the beginning and end of traditional gatherings. The version here is similar to what is recited by students in many of the schools in Akwesasne to open and close the school day or the school week.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for the people gathered here, that every-

# Ohénton Kariwatékwen Words Before All Else

one is at peace here where we live on earth...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for Mother Earth. She has given us everything we need to live in peace...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for the food plants. They help us when we're hungry...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for fruits and especially strawberry, the head of the berry family...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for the grasses. Some we use as food and some as medicine...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for water; the rivers, the lakes, the oceans, and that clean water keeps running all over the earth. It keeps our thirst quenched...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for fish. They give us strength so we don't go hungry...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for medicines, that they still help us when

we are sick...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for wild animals, that they still help us when we are cold and hungry...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for the trees, especially maple, the head of their family, that it still creates sap as the Creator made it to do...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for the birds, that we still hear the nice singing that they bring, especially the head of the bird family—the eagle is its name...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for our grandfathers the thunderers, that they make new waters...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for the four winds, that they still do what the Creator has asked them to do...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for our brother, the sun, that it is still bright and warms the earth...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for our



grandmother, the moon, that she is still in charge of when children are born...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for the stars, that they dress the sky for our grandmother, the moon...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give thanks for the four messengers; their job is to take care of the people...now our minds are one.

We bring our minds together as one and give our thanks to the Creator for everything that he has done for the people...now our minds are one.

## Did you know?

The Mohawk nation is one of six nations in the Iroquois Confederacy. A sacred Huron messenger led the nations from warring with one another to an acceptance of the responsibilities of working together in peace as a confederacy. The present six nations are Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora.

- An excerpt from the "We Are From Akwesasne" travelling exhibit

# Students celebrate Earth Day

The Gananoque area was abuzz with activity this Earth Day, with close to 200 students attending two separate environmental events.

On April 21, Grade 5 students from around the region took part in an early Earth Day celebration at the Lou Jeffries Memorial Arena in Gananoque. Organized by members of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve Environmental Education Network (FABREEN), including St. Lawrence Islands National Park, the event gave students an opportunity to learn about the biosphere as well as ways to enjoy and preserve this unique ecosystem. Earth Day sessions included presentations on the elements of the biosphere, wilderness survival, recycling, worm composting, turtle species at risk, and an "All-Natural Department Store Hike."

The very next day, high school students from across the region met at the Landon Bay Centre to compete in Envirothon. Students from Athens, Brockville, Elgin,

Gananoque, Kemptonville and Prescott learned about aquatics and wildlife in a number of sessions hosted by Parks Canada.

Parks staff led students in field study exercises related to stream ecology, reptiles, hyperabundant deer and bird identification. Following the presentations and some hands-on practice in identifying and monitoring wildlife, the students set to work on quizzes designed to test how much they had learned that day.

When the final tally was in, Team 2 from St. Michael Catholic High School in Kemptonville won the day. Over the course of the Envirothon, teams competed in sessions hosted by other community partners on the topics of forestry, soils and current environmental issues. When Envirothon wrapped up on April 29 with a final competition at Charleston Lake Provincial Park, the overall winning team was from St. Mary Catholic High School in Brockville.

The Leeds Grenville Envi-



Photo: Gananoque Reporter

Park interpreter Marianne Kelly helps a group of Grade 5 students identify local turtle species at the Earth Day Celebration in Gananoque.

rothon winners continued on to the 2009 Ontario Envirothon Championships in May at the Tim Horton Onondaga Farms in St. George, Ontario. There they com-

peted for the chance to move on to the Canon Envirothon, an event that brings together finalists from across North America.

# Habitat protection aimed at helping numerous species at risk

St. Lawrence Islands National Park works to protect species at risk in the 1000 Islands ecosystem. A number of species identified by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) are the subject of park monitoring projects and the beneficiaries of a number of habitat protection and restoration efforts. Common to all of these species is the threat of habitat loss and fragmentation, and the key to helping these animals and plants lies in the natural communities in which they thrive.

"It's the communities that support these species that we're trying to protect, rather than just a single species itself," says acting superintendent Jeff Leggo.



Photo: Parks Canada

## Deerberry

*Vaccinium stamineum*  
Status: Threatened

This low-lying shrub, closely related to blueberries and cranberries, prefers dry open woods. Its white flowers bloom in early summer. The plant bears a blue-green fruit that drops when ripe. Deerberry is known to occur in only two areas in Canada: near the Niagara River and in the 1000 Islands.



Photo: Parks Canada

## Stinkpot Turtle

*Sternotherus odoratus*  
Status: Threatened

This small turtle is also known as the "musk turtle" as it has a tendency to emit a musky fluid when it feels threatened. Stinkpots are nocturnal in nature, doing most of their foraging at night. This turtle rarely comes out of the water, preferring to nest along the shoreline and to bask below the surface of the water.



Photo: Parks Canada

## Eastern Ratsnake

*Elaphe spiloides*  
Status: Threatened

Also known as the black ratsnake, this is Canada's largest snake. The eastern ratsnake prefers edge habitat, where forests give way to the open spaces of fields and wetlands. These snakes overwinter in communal hibernacula, and they tend to return to the same hibernaculum each year.



Photo: Lloyd Spitalnik

## Cerulean warbler

*Dendroica cerulea*  
Status: Special Concern

Mature deciduous forests are home to these small blue songbirds, a habitat that is prone to settlement and development by human populations. In all of Canada there are less than 2,000 mature cerulean warblers. While this bird spends its summers nesting in Canada, it spends the winter months in the Andes Mountains of South America.

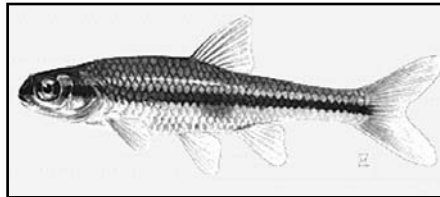


Illustration: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation\*

## Bridle Shiner

*Notropis bifrenatus*  
Status: Special Concern

This minnow may be found in the quiet, clear waters of streams and rivers where there is an abundance of vegetation. A disturbance or muddying of this water habitat makes it difficult for this small fish to find food and inhibits the growth of the submerged aquatic plants that it depends upon for nourishment and cover.



Photo: Scott Gillingwater

## Northern Map Turtle

*Graptemys geographica*  
Status: Special Concern

These very communal turtles like to bask and hibernate together in large lakes and river systems. They are named for the line patterns on their shell and skin. Female map turtles are almost twice as large as males.



Photo: Parks Canada

## Least Bittern

*Ixobrychus exilis*  
Status: Threatened

This brown bird, the smallest member of the heron and bittern family, lives among the cattails of marshes and swamps. The Canadian population of least bitterns is estimated at less than 1,000 pairs.

WHAT ARE THE LEVELS OF RISK FOR SPECIES?	NOT AT RISK	SPECIAL CONCERN	THREATENED	ENDANGERED	EXTIRPATED	EXTINCT
There are 6 levels of designation ranging from not at risk (best) to extinct (worst).	A species that has been evaluated and found not to be at risk	Species that are especially sensitive to human activities or natural events but are not endangered or threatened species.	Species that are likely to become endangered if limiting factors such as habitat destruction are not reversed.	Species facing future extirpation or extinction.	Species no longer existing in the wild in Canada but occurring elsewhere.	Species that no longer exist.



Photo: Parks Canada

## Blanding's Turtle

*Emydoidea blandingii*  
Status: Threatened

This turtle is easily recognized by the bright yellow colour of its throat and neck. Female Blanding's turtles often travel overland more than a kilometre to find a suitable nesting site, putting them at risk of road traffic mortality. In the absence of human hazards, Blanding's turtles can live a very long time – more than 75 years in some cases.



Photo: Parks Canada

## Five-lined Skink

*Eumeces fasciatus*  
Status: Endangered

This tiny reptile is the only lizard in eastern Canada. In the 1000 Islands it likes to live among rocky outcroppings in fields and forests. The largest of this species measures no more than 9 cm in body length. Young skinks sport the distinct five cream coloured lines on a greenish-black background, as well as a bright blue tail that can detach if seized by a predator. Adults are more bronze in colour.

## Monitoring species



Photo: Parks Canada

Resource conservation staff measure the height of deerberry plants annually as part of St. Lawrence Islands National Park's species at risk monitoring program. The park is responsible for reporting to Parliament on the status of federally listed species at risk that exist in the park and surrounding area.

Many of the park's research programs aim to protect the habitat of the more than 35 federal species at risk that can be found in the region.

\* Illustration was prepared by Ellen Edmonson and Hugh Chrisp as part of the 1927-1940 New York Biological Survey conducted by the Conservation Department (the predecessor of today's New York State Department of Environmental Conservation). Permission for its use is granted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

## It's never a good idea to feed wildlife. Here's why...

From the comfort of a warm home, watching deer foraging for food during extreme cold weather can tempt concerned residents to provide some extra nourishment for wild animals.

However, park ecologist Emily Gonzales, whose PhD work focused on the effects of hyperabundant deer populations, strongly discourages feeding wildlife on private land. The practice is prohibited by law within a national park.

"Feeding alters animals' natu-



Photo: Brian Morin

Raccoons are clever - beware! Keep your food in animal-proof containers and securely stored in your boat or in picnic shelter food storage boxes. Raccoons on some islands have learned to open zippers in order to reach unsecured food.

*"Feeding alters animals' natural behaviours, decreasing their fear of humans and changing daily rhythms and movements."*

ral behaviours, decreasing their fear of humans and changing daily rhythms and movements," Gonzales explains.

Animals that become accustomed to human handouts can become more aggressive or may cross roads more frequently, increasing the risk of wildlife-vehicle collisions, human injury and the transmission of diseases such as Lyme disease and rabies.

"Extreme cold may be hard on deer populations, but it is part of a natural process," says Gonzales. "For the last several decades, deer have been abundant nearly everywhere in this region. If deer were at sustainable, historical levels of 4 deer/km<sup>2</sup> and they were behaving naturally, we would only see them very rarely, perhaps every few years."

Reports of deer declined last winter, suggesting that we may be approaching a more appropriate density of deer on the landscape.

"If deer become a species at risk, which nearly happened in the 1800s when they were extirpated from some regions of the United States, perhaps interven-

tion and feeding would be a good idea," Gonzales explains. "However, because deer 'breed like bunnies,' they are able to rebound quickly after a population decline. Many places where deer were locally extinct now have hyperabundant deer problems."

Other reasons to let the deer find their own food:

1. Humans generally don't feed wildlife the correct food, which can cause nutritional problems. Even if a responsible person researches the proper feed, this encourages others to feed wildlife. Many people will not make informed choices.

2. Feeding may, ironically, cause starvation. Deer naturally alter their metabolic rates through the seasons as they shift from herbaceous plants to woody shrubs. However, people often feed deer corn, which may be difficult or even impossible for their bodies to process in winter and could lead to starvation.

3. Deer that are comfortable around humans can become nuisances, causing home and property damage. Wildlife accustomed to human handouts can also become aggressive and dangerous.

4. Winter and wolves were, historically, the natural controlling

- Install new pathways and interpretive signs at Mallorytown Landing.

### Composting toilet project nears completion

The final five composting toilets will be installed in 2009, bringing the total number of environmentally friendly outhouses in the national park to 27. The project, which began in 2003, has greatly reduced the maintenance costs and eliminated the environmental risks that were associated with the annual pumping of the old pit privies.



Photo: Parks Canada

Tim Jowett and Maryse Carriere are two of nine island attendants who maintain the composting toilets by regularly adding wood shavings, mixing the contents, and removing fully composted, clean soil from the bottom chamber.

### ATTENTION ALL SQUIRRELS WARNING!

Refuse all handouts from humans. They mean well but their food will make you slow and fat...easy hawk bait. Revert to natural foods for your own survival. Do not accept human handouts.



Photo: Larry Halverson

agents of deer populations. Wolves no longer play a role, as they no longer live in the region. Cold, hard winters have the greatest effect on sick and weak deer. As part of the great cycle of life, winter deer deaths are also an important source of food for many other animals, such as birds of prey and small carnivores that can't take down a live deer but are sustained by scavenging through the winter.

### WARNING

**Blacklegged ticks are present in this region. These ticks can transmit Lyme disease, a serious and potentially disabling infection that can affect your heart and nervous system. Check your body thoroughly for ticks after you have spent time outdoors. Ticks range in size from 1-5 mm. If you have been bitten, remove the tick immediately and see your doctor. For more information, contact the**



**park office at Mallorytown Landing (613-923-5261) or your local health unit.**

### To stay safe:

- Stay on marked trails.
- When hiking, wear insect repellent containing DEET, long sleeves, pants and hiking boots. Tuck pants into your socks. Avoid wearing sandals or bare feet.
- When you return from a day outdoors, check your body thoroughly for ticks.
- Always keep your pets on a leash and on the trails.
- Never feed wildlife.

Photo: Jim Gathany, Public Health Image Library

## Park Facilities:

### What's happening

#### Completed in 2008

- ✓ Installation of composting toilets at the Jones Creek trailhead and on Gordon, McDonald, Adelaide, East Grenadier and Camelot Islands
- ✓ Replacement of Mermaid Island dock
- ✓ On-going restoration of Mallorytown Landing with planting of native trees and shrubs
- ✓ Repair and chipping of trails on Georgina Island
- ✓ Repair of concrete slab, posts, and roof, and painting of Camelot Island picnic shelter
- ✓ Pit privies removed from McDonald, Adelaide, East Grenadier, Thwartway, and Aubrey Islands
- ✓ Removal of invasive species from Gate's House property and continued re-naturalization of the area
- ✓ Repair of damaged shelter on Gordon Island
- ✓ Painting of various picnic shelters
- ✓ Removal of hazardous trees on Gordon Island

#### 2009 Projects

- Install composting toilets at Mallorytown Landing and on McDonald, North Grenadier, Constance and Main Duck Islands
- Continue Mallorytown Landing restoration with planting of native trees and shrubs
- Continue removal of old pit privies
- Ongoing repair and chipping of island trails
- Remove storm damaged trees and repair or replace numerous ramps, stairs, and docks damaged by fall windstorms
- Install a new playground, treehouse, pathways and interpretive signs at Mallorytown Landing
- Install new signs to direct visitors to trails and visitor centre on mainland
- Paint, clean and repair Gordon Island west end picnic shelter
- Install a small dock in Landon Bay for access to Fitzsimmons Mountain hiking trail
- Complete boardwalks and install trail markers on Jones Creek and Fitzsimmons Mountain trail networks
- Refurbish East Grenadier docks
- Build a picnic gazebo at East Grenadier to replace the Hefferman restaurant, which was removed for safety reasons

# Events & Programs

For more information or to pre-register for events, call 613-923-5261 or email ont-sli@pc.gc.ca. All events take place at the Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre (1121-1000 Islands Parkway) unless otherwise noted. Parking fees (\$6.80 per vehicle) apply at Mallorytown Landing from May 16 to September 7. Additional costs are noted if applicable. Seasonal permits are available.

**June 13-14 – Nature Art Workshop** – Join textile artist Margot Miller to create your very own nature art! Various techniques in textile art will be explored. Pre-registration required. Ages 14 and up. Fee will apply. Please contact the park for times and details.

**July & August – Nature Kids** – Young children ages 3 to 5 can explore nature, play games, and take part in interactive activities with their parent or adult supervisor. A new nature theme is explored each week. Wednesdays 10:30 - noon.

**July & August – Feeding Times** – Learn more about what the animals in our ecosystem are eating and how they find and consume their food as we feed the Visitor Centre's summer residents. Tuesdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m.

**July & August – Roving Interpretation Programs** – Is fire a friend or foe? What's happening to the turtles in the river? How does solar power work? Watch for park interpreters as they rove through the campsites and docks of national park islands to share the stories of St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

**July & August – "Stepping Stones"** – Theatre presentations in July and August. See page 4 for more information.

**July & August – Landon Bay Nature Day Camp** – In partnership with the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, St. Lawrence Islands National Park offers programming during the Landon Bay Nature Day Camp's week-long sessions. Children ages 6 to 11 will explore a new environmental theme each week through outdoor adventures, experiments, crafts and other fun activities. Please contact the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve at 613-659-4824 or visit [www.landonbay.org](http://www.landonbay.org) for program, registration and fee information.

**July 1 – Canada Day** – Celebrate Canada Day at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. Enjoy cake, games, face painting and films showcasing Ontario's national parks. Activities from 12 – 3 p.m. Vehicle parking fee does not apply on Canada Day.

**July 18 – Canada's Parks Day – Birds of Prey Flight Show** – See free-flying owls, hawks, vultures and falcons up close during flight demonstrations by Little Ray's Reptile Zoo. Celebrate Canada's Parks Day by meeting birds, reptiles, amphibians and other animals represent-

ing the diversity of life in and around St. Lawrence Islands National Park. Shows at 1:00 and 2:30 p.m.

**September 12 – Geocaching 101** – Geocaching is a fun game for the whole family. Join us for a one-hour workshop and scavenger hunt that will help you get started on this global activity. GPS units will be provided. Pre-registration required. 12 p.m. – 4 p.m.

**September 19-20 & 26-27 – Art in the Park** – The Thousand Islands Fine Arts Association (TIFAA) art exhibit and winners of the 2009 Art in the Park contest will be displayed in the Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre.

**October 3-4 & 10-12 – Autumn Leaves Studio Tour** – Local artists will have their work on display at the Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre as part of the Art Colony of the 1000 Islands' Autumn Leaves Studio Tour.

**October 3 – Hill Island Hike** – Discover how humans and the forces of nature have shaped Hill Island on this guided hike through the national park's nature preserve. Meet in the 1000 Islands SkyDeck parking lot on Hill Island. Bridge toll will be charged to access Hill Island. 1 – 3 p.m.

**October 14 – Photo Contest Entry Deadline** – Capture the beauty of St. Lawrence Islands National Park during your visits and enter your photos in our annual photo contest. Contest details and entry forms available at [www.pc.gc.ca/sli](http://www.pc.gc.ca/sli).

**October 17-18 – Nature's Patterns Floor Cloth Workshop** – Join textile artist Margot Miller to create a floor cloth using nature's motifs as inspiration. Pre-registration required. Ages 14 and up. Fee will apply. Please contact the park for times and details.

## Hands-on Nature at the Visitor Centre



Photo: Parks Canada

Visit the St. Lawrence Islands National Park Visitor Centre for a hands-on look at the natural and cultural history of the 1000 Islands region! Meet native snakes, fish and other animals and explore our new travelling exhibit "Hands On Nature" from the Royal Ontario Museum.

## Hours of Operation

### Park Administration Office

2 County Road 5, Mallorytown, ON

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, year round.

### Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre

1121-1000 Islands Parkway

May 16 to June 14

- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekends and holidays.

June 15 to September 7

- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday to Friday

- 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday

Fees are payable from May 16 to September 7 for all services, and until October 12 for vehicle and trailer parking and launching.

### Islands

Services and facilities are maintained from Victoria Day to Thanksgiving (May 16 to October 13). Fees are payable during this period. The park does not provide transportation to the islands.

## Hiking, day camp, camping at Landon Bay Centre

In partnership with St. Lawrence Islands National Park, the Landon Bay Centre offers a wide range of opportunities for environmental education with an extensive network of walking trails, a scenic lookout of the 1000 Islands, a large meeting hall, and a family campground. A Nature Day Camp for kids is offered throughout the summer with sessions on a different environmental theme each week.

The Landon Bay Centre is located on the 1000 Islands Parkway between Ivy Lea and Gananoque.

To reserve campsites or for more information on educational opportunities offered at the Landon Bay Centre, call 613-382-2719 or visit [www.landonbay.org](http://www.landonbay.org).

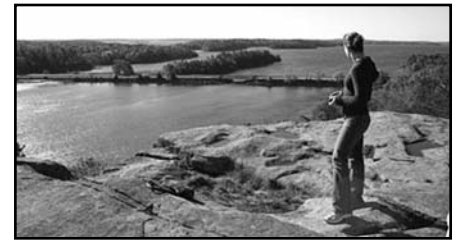


Photo: Lisa Werden

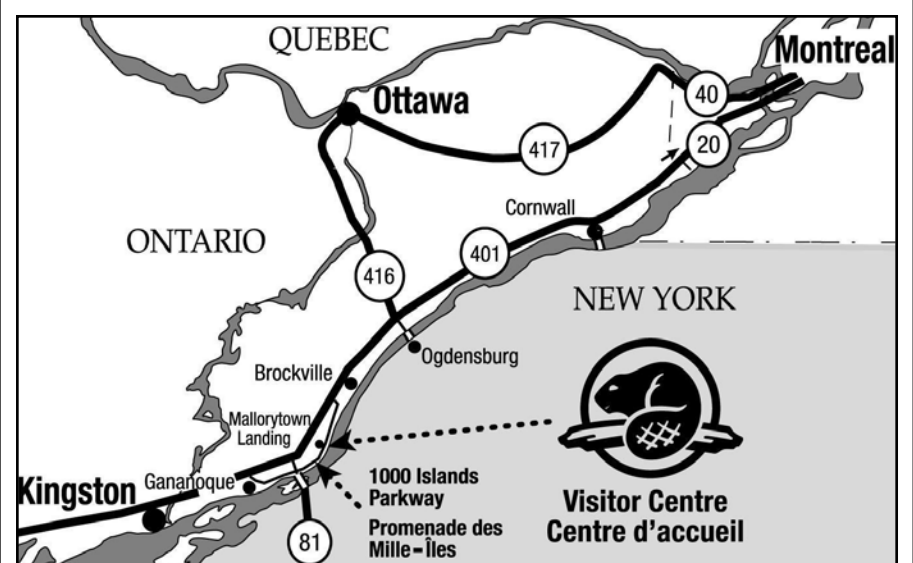
Landon Bay lookout trail.

## St. Lawrence Islands - BY LAND

St. Lawrence Islands National Park headquarters and the Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre are located on the 1000 Islands Parkway between Brockville and Gananoque, Ontario. To get onto the parkway, travellers on Highway 401 may take exit 685 if coming from Brockville or exit 647 if coming from Gananoque. Exit 675 south will take you directly

from the 401 to headquarters and the Visitor Centre. U.S. visitors need to travel north on Interstate 81 to the 1000 Islands Parkway, then turn east.

The Landon Bay Centre is located at 302-1000 Islands Parkway, approximately 6 km east of Gananoque (6 km west of the 1000 Islands Bridge).



## St. Lawrence Islands - BY WATER

There are more than 20 national park island properties in the St. Lawrence River between Kingston and Brockville.

Unless otherwise stated, park islands have docks, privies, primitive campsites and delineated walking trails; most have shelters.

Interpretive programs on a variety of natural and cultural heritage topics are offered throughout the summer at vari-

ous island locations.

The park does not provide transportation to the islands. Water is only available at Central Grenadier and at Mallorytown Landing. Please plan ahead to minimize the solid waste you leave behind in the park.

**NOTE:** Fees are payable by self-registration immediately upon arrival.