

Discovery: a Red-bellied Woodpecker Family's Nest

On June 28, the Gatehouse received a very exciting email from visiting bird photographer Alyssa DeRubeis. She had located the nest of a pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers in the Arboretum and taken a few photographs that captured the action of the parents bringing food to the nest and the juvenile poking its head out of the nest cavity.

For those less familiar with birds, the Red-bellied Woodpecker has only been found in Quebec in recent years. The [species distribution map](#) from "All about Birds" shows their territory only crosses the United States border in Southern Ontario, although the [distribution map](#) on eBird (a citizen science website that allows people to report sightings) shows the distribution in fact extends further north. As these birds are not migratory and keep to the same territory year-round, it is suspected that climate change has brought them further North. They were first reported in the Arboretum in 2005, and although mating calls were heard in recent years, no one had been able to identify a nest to confirm that the birds are indeed breeding here.

The photos that Alyssa DeRubeis took could very well be the first evidence of a nesting pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers in Quebec. The photos were taken on June 19, so it is likely that the young have left the nest by now. Please remember when observing birds in the Arboretum that birds see humans as predators and can become very stressed by our presence: keep a respectful distance and use a zoom lens or binoculars if you wish to have a better look.

We welcome such new families in the neighbourhood. Hats off to Alyssa for photographing and sharing these pictures with us!



The female brings an insect to the nest. The male has a band on his leg. Photo: Alyssa DeRubeis



The juvenile peeks its head from the nest cavity. Photo: Alyssa DeRubeis



A snapshot from the Rose Garden – courtesy of Pascal Marchand, [The 4K Guy](#).

Discover the Rose Garden... and A Cool Pollination Technique

Those who frequent Blossom Corner are familiar with the “schedule” of blooms that occur there – throughout the seasons the area boasts different blooms and fruit, together with a wealth of birds and their songs to enjoy. We’d like to call special attention to a currently blooming and very popular feature of the beloved Blossom Corner – the Rose beds. Along the Black Trail there is a large Mulberry tree with a bench that encircles its base. On either side of this tree are two long garden plots filled with a selection of rose bushes.

While capturing some images for our social media, Communications Assistant Hannah Legault heard a sound that she described as “a 1920’s trumpet with a tinny muffler (that’s a ‘mute’ for our musical friends).” After a brief observation, she discovered that the sound was coming from a bumblebee inside one of the open, bowl-shaped (single) roses. The bee would enter the flower and dance around the rose’s heart while making the strange sound. She showed a [video](#) of this behaviour to staff at the office. Anne Godbout did some research and remembered that the sound and behavior being displayed might be “buzz pollination” (or sonication for the scientists out there). Much research has been done on this, and we know that although honeybees do not employ this strategy, many native species of solitary bees practise it to release pollen effectively from certain flower types. Check out the links at the bottom of this article to find out more about this unique and ingenious behaviour.

Like much of the Arboretum, the Rose garden is a place to make discoveries and be enchanted by the beauty of our natural environment. We must acknowledge how fortunate we are that a dedicated team of volunteers tends the rose gardens on a regular basis. Blossom Corner would not be as stunning as it is without the hard work put in by Helen Carroll and Jenny Richardson. Three cheers for our volunteers!

Videos to watch:

[A bumblebee uses buzz pollination \(sound on!\)](#)

[Slow motion video of how vibrations release pollen](#)

Read more about Buzz Pollination:

[Article : Leonard Lab studies buzz pollination](#)

[National Geographic News : Why do bumblebees buzz?](#)



Sarah Dixon captivates her audience with forest discoveries. Photo : Hannah Legault

Event Reminder: What's in this Pond?

Saturday, July 27, 10 am - 12 pm

Approaching the mid-summer point means that the mosquito-fearing guests and members of the Arboretum can once again enjoy the trails without encountering the clouds of irritating insects that sometimes disturb our peace in the forest. It also means that there will be more events happening.

On Saturday, July 27, from 10 am - 12 pm, Sarah Dixon will be hosting a guided and informative tour about pond life. Nets will be provided and Sarah will help explain what can be found. The event is adult, child and family friendly: regardless of your age, Sarah can teach you something you did not know before, or answer your questions about your own experiences in nature. The suggested minimum age for this event is 9 years old as we will be close to the pond's edge during the event. Don't miss this opportunity to visit nature's classroom with a seasoned guide and animator!

Reservations are required for this event and there is a limited number of spaces remaining. Call the Gatehouse at 514-398-7811 to reserve your place.



An Eastern Newt on its migratory journey. Photo : Maureen Johnson (April 21, 2019)

Results of the Amphibian Research Project

In spring, the Arboretum reached out and asked for your help observing and reporting on our amphibian population. There was concern that during spring migration, frogs, salamanders and newts were facing difficulties crossing the Centre Road. Past observations of the dusk migration suggested that dusty conditions on the road could slow the animals' mobility, causing them to perish or become immobile and be struck by vehicles the following day.

With the help of a group of enthusiastic volunteers, we undertook a 3-week schedule of dawn, dusk and day observations to investigate the issue with the objective to help the amphibians in any way that we could. Volunteers walked the Centre Road from the entrance gate to the Conservation Centre in search of amphibians. If found, they would observe the animals' movements and note whether the road material appeared to be playing a factor in mobility. We also asked them to record information such as the weather, time and road conditions. Our study turned up some interesting results.

A total of 153 animals were observed over the three week period, including 5 salamanders, 19 newts, and 126 frogs. Although the data showed that the time of year is important to this migration, none of the other factors seemed to hinder migration: the amphibians migrate regardless of precipitation, temperature and road conditions. Furthermore, our volunteers didn't find that the amphibians struggled to cross the road. Of the 153 amphibians observed, 10 did not survive without apparent causes other than the colossal effort involved in walking / hopping across such an impressive distance relative to their size.

We hope to conduct this observation again in the coming years, to establish a timeline for the migration and monitor the abundance of species as they cross the road to their summer breeding habitats. The enthusiasm shown by those who came out to volunteer was heart-warming and exciting. Salamanders, frogs & newts appeal to people of all ages. The thought of seeing one in the wild was enough to encourage our volunteers to get outside, even in cold or heavy rain. Many recruited friends of theirs who were also keen to observe the trek.

To everyone who put in the effort to collect this precious data for us: THANK YOU!



Greater fritillary : Summer sippin'. Photo : Dominique St-Pierre.

Call for Arbo Photographs - 2020 Calendar

We are looking for photographs to illustrate a new edition of our calendar. If you have photos taken in the Arboretum that you would like to submit, please send them by the end of July if possible.

Looking forward to see what you will contribute towards the making of the calendar this time!



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www.morganarboretum.org