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## The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

May 2017



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## April at the Coastal Centre



April was another busy month for LHCCC staff, gearing up for the action-packed summer ahead. Just like many of you, we are loving the warmer spring weather and soaking up some sun during our lunch hour walks along the Goderich Beach.

We kicked April off on the 1<sup>st</sup>, with a fool-proof **shoreline cleanup** event. Over 100 volunteers came out to keep the trash out of the water, removing garbage from both sides of the Maitland River banks and along the Goderich beach. Over **800 pounds of trash** was collected, sorted, and recycled. Big thanks to all our partners, our volunteers, and Zehrs for keeping everyone well fed and hydrated!

**Share Our New Video to Help Save Turtles and Wetlands!**



The Coastal Centre is proud to announce the official launch of our new video about Lake Huron's coastal wetlands and turtles. View the video at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FhL2gyHLu8>

**Outstanding Support for Geoff**

Staff also attended the **Huron-Perth Water and Agriculture Festival**, followed by a week of **Eco-Mentors** for Bruce Power's 'Earth Week'. It's always refreshing to engage with younger generations and get them thinking about their role in Lake Huron's coast.

We also hosted our **stakeholder workshop** for the Coastal Action Plan for the Southeastern Shoreline of Lake Huron later in the month, to continue our process of gathering input and data to improve the health of our coast. Although the Action Plan stretches over a large coastal area (Sarnia to Tobermory) the general consensus throughout the day was that grassroots and individual **citizen action is the cornerstone to coastal conservation!**

We wrapped up April by trading our field clothes for fancy gowns and attended the **Maitland Valley Conservation Dinner** on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Thanks again to Bruce Power for inviting us!

*Our volunteer Coast Watchers have started their seasonal monitoring, collecting regular data for us on lake levels and weather patterns. If you are interested in joining the team of Coast Watchers, please get in touch!*

## Do You Brake for Turtles?

You should ...and here is why:  
They are a protected species and their numbers are decreasing,  
They travel up to 6 km to find suitable nesting sites  
They are slow (but then you likely knew that already).



Rhiannon Moore, Coastal Outreach Specialist, demonstrating how to safely move a snapping turtle across the road.

There are 8 turtle species in Ontario, most of which can be found along Lake Huron. Seven of these are currently considered Species at Risk, which have been identified as being of Special Concern, Threatened, or Endangered, and are protected by federal and provincial laws.

## Peach Coastal Scholarship Fund!



The Coastal Centre has raised over \$13,000 for the Coastal Scholarship Fund, dedicated to our amazing and witty late friend, Geoff Peach. The money raised for this fund will be allocated directly to students pursuing coastal research on the Great Lakes. **Thank you to everyone who has supported this fund!**



The Coastal Centre is turning 20 years old. To help celebrate this, we are expanding our 10<sup>th</sup> biennial conference into a 2 day event on May 10 and 11, 2018 at beautiful Oakwood Inn in Grand Bend on the shores of Lake Huron. The event will provide a forum for environmental professionals and the general public to learn about issues affecting Lake Huron's coastal environment. Experts from the Great Lakes region will speak about coastal topics, local actions and solutions to environmental challenges. Plan to experience Lake Huron in the spring of 2018 at this two-day conference, and to help celebrate the LHCCC's 20th anniversary at our fundraising banquet! Registration is now open at [www.lakehuron.ca/conference](http://www.lakehuron.ca/conference).

Turtles are important components of ecosystems as they scavenge on dead fish, consume large amounts of aquatic vegetation reducing plant biomass, and create channels through dense vegetation that fish and amphibians also use. Turtles play an important role in the transfer of nutrients from water to land, or from aquatic to terrestrial habitats. Their eggs and hatchlings are important sources of food for mammals such as Raccoons, Skunks, Foxes, Coyotes and Virginia Opossums.

Turtles are long-lived and slow to reach reproductive maturity, with a low reproductive success rate. It is estimated that only 0.1% of hatchlings will survive to reach maturity. Adults have few predators but can be impacted by threats which include habitat loss, illegal poaching, invasive species, environmental contaminants, and being injured and killed by vehicles.

Some of our turtle species, such as the Blanding's Turtle, may travel up to 6 kilometres in search of suitable nesting habitat. In southern Ontario, one cannot travel more than 1.5 kilometres without crossing a road, and consequently turtles may have to cross several roads to reach their nesting site. Research has shown that it takes some species of turtles an average of 9 minutes to cross a road, making them particularly vulnerable to road mortality during nesting season, from May to July.



*Erinn Lawrie, Coastal Stewardship Coordinator, holding a Northern Map Turtle.*

## Top 5 Ways You Can Help Turtles

1. Watch for reptiles and amphibians especially when driving between May and September. Help turtles to cross the road, in the direction they are moving, when safe to do so.
2. If you come across an injured turtle, contact the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre at 705-741-5000.
3. Report turtle sightings to the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas. Even if the turtle is injured or dead, this is critical information. Visit [https://www.ontariornature.org/protect/species/herpetofaunal\\_atlas.php](https://www.ontariornature.org/protect/species/herpetofaunal_atlas.php) for more information.
4. Remember that most Ontario turtles are protected species. It is illegal to kill, harm, harass, possess, buy, sell or trade them. Report poaching to

- the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry at 1-877-TIPSMNR (847-7667).
5. Encourage your municipal council to install turtle crossing signs, eco passages under roads, and exclusion fencing.

**For the sake of the lake...**

Your donations to the Coastal Centre help us teach others about turtles, and what they can do to protect Lake Huron! Dollars are spent on educational workshops, fact sheets, videos, shoreline cleanups, and restoration projects. We also accept gift donations in the form of strong coffee.

***Help us help the lake by [giving today!](#)***

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