

# KENNEBEC LAKE ASSOCIATION

Spring Newsletter

May 2008

## *A Word from the President...*

The winter that just wouldn't end has had Ontario residents yearning for the chance to resume outdoor endeavours in the sunshine once again. As the weather gets warmer, the decks and patios are being swept, the lawn furniture is appearing, and lawns and gardens everywhere are being raked and prepped. It is cottage and outdoor season. The snowbirds have all made it back from southern locations, and seasonal cottagers are opening up and cleaning out. Those of us who reside full-time at Kennebec are delighted to welcome everyone back.

After a winter like the "ones we used to know," it can be tempting to reject all those warnings about global warming and climate change. Scientists, however, remind us that one extreme winter does not change the reality that average annual temperatures are indeed still rising dramatically. We appreciate a nice long, hot summer, but we would like to be reassured that future weather patterns will support the lake lifestyles we value so much.

It will be increasingly important for each of us to look for ways to do our part to preserve our natural environment and help to ensure that our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy Kennebec Lake as we do today.

Happy Spring, everyone!

*Terry Kennedy*

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS 2008**  
(see page 3 for details)

**Fishing for Facts, not Fiction 7 June**  
**Flowers that Bloom in the Spring 14 June**  
**KLA Annual General Meeting 16 August**  
\*\*\*NOTE NEW DATE\*\*\*

## **GIVE TURTLES A BRAKE!**

**In spring our native turtles look for warm sand or gravel to lay their eggs -- often near roads. Please watch for turtles on roads and SLOW DOWN. Our wetlands would be poorer without turtles.**

## **How Shoreline Buffers Work**

*Shoreline buffer strips, often called "ribbons of life," are no-cost safeguards for the quality of the lake. They safeguard water quality, which we all value highly, and they safeguard habitat for many species that enrich both the lake and our lives. Frogs, herons, turtles, mink and young fish depend on shoreline habitats.*

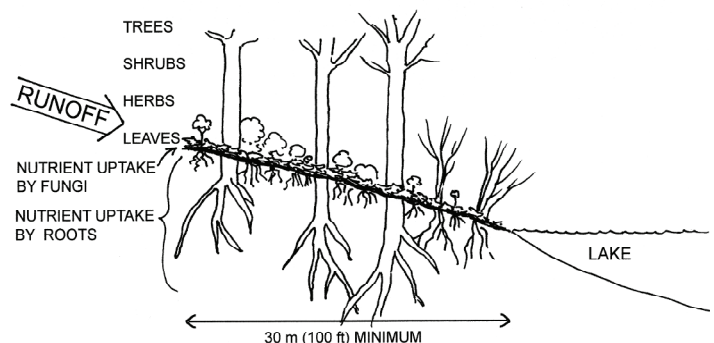
This diagram shows the structure of a normal shoreline. A house or cottage, a little yard or garden area, some low shrubs, some trees with shrubs or wildflowers underneath, some wetland shrubs along the water, some aquatic plants that emerge above the water such as bulrushes, some floating aquatics such as lilies, and some underwater aquatics such as pondweeds.



These plant types are all to be expected along normal shorelines, as are some algae and duckweed.

The diagram below shows how a shoreline buffer protects water quality. If we allow about 30 metres of completely natural vegetation between our buildings or yards and the water, that shoreline strip will intercept runoff from the rocks above or our roofs or driveways before it enters the lake. The stems of the trees, shrubs and wildflowers and their dead leaves and twigs on the ground provide mechanical barriers to stop the flow of runoff into the lake. The litter of dead leaves soaks up some runoff and the nutrients dissolved in it or in particles of dirt or organic matter. In addition, and perhaps even more important, is the mat of fungus that grows in the layers of dead leaves, decomposing them. You probably have seen the white woolly mat of fungi if you lift up the layers of dead leaves on the forest floor. Those fungi absorb even more of the nutrients contained in runoff and are possibly the most important part of a shoreline buffer strip. Raking or burning prevents the leaves and their fungi from protecting the lake.

Once the runoff is slowed or absorbed by the litter, much of that runoff will penetrate the soil (if you have some) and then can be absorbed by the plant roots and trapped in the plant's tissues rather than going into the lake's water.



If all the nutrients in runoff enter the lake, that enriched water will fertilize excess growth of algae. If we have more summers with higher than normal temperatures, the warmer surface water, full of nutrients, could cause an outbreak of blue-green algae. Some of these are toxic and unwanted but are occurring along shorelines of other lakes around Ontario.

*by Gray Merriam*

### **Public Library Hours**

Most of our readers use the Arden or the Mountain Grove Branches of the Kingston Frontenac Public Library. Cards are free from the librarians.

If you are a seasonal resident, simply show the librarian a copy of your property tax bill to confirm your resident status.

Once you have your card, you can borrow books from any branch and can order books via the Internet to be delivered to your preferred branch.

#### **Arden Branch (613) 335-2570 Community Centre, 5998 Arden Road**

Tuesday 2 - 6 p.m.  
Thursday 5 - 8 p.m.  
Friday\* 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
\*from July 4 to August 29  
Saturday 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

#### **Mountain Grove Branch (613) 335-5360 Old School, 1455 Mountain Grove Road**

Tuesday 2 - 5 p.m.  
Wednesday 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
Friday\* 2 - 5 p.m.  
\*except from July 4 to August 29  
Saturday 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

### **WELL AWARE**

*by Angela Gulley-Northfield*

If you get your drinking water from a private well, you alone are responsible for assuring that it is safe for you and your family. Even if your water looks, smells and tastes good, it might not be safe. A test is required to detect bacteria. Some types of bacteria and other pathogens associated with them can make you sick, and some can be fatal.

Bacteria and other microorganisms that live in soil and surface water get washed into the ground by heavy rain and surface runoff. As the water migrates downward toward the groundwater table, the soil acts as a filter, ensuring that deeper groundwater sources are bacteria- and pathogen-free. If bacteria are found in your well, surface water is finding a shortcut to your deeper groundwater supply without being filtered by the soil. That shortcut could be your well.

A poorly constructed or neglected well can provide a direct path for surface water and bacteria into your water supply: inadequate casing length, cracked casing or a poorly sealed annular space between the soil and the casing, buried wellheads or loose-fitting caps. These problems can be amplified if your well is poorly located, such as down gradient from a barnyard or an overtaxed septic system. Some areas in our region have very shallow soil, putting vulnerable wells at even greater risk.

Test your well water at least three times a year, preferably in early spring or after heavy rainfall.

For more information or a home visit, contact the Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL) at 613-283-9500, or visit [www.REALaction.ca](http://www.REALaction.ca).

Angela has a master's degree in hydrogeology and is a Certified Water Guide for REAL's Well Aware Program.

Adapted from *The Record News EMC*, September 22, 2007

### **KLA Executive 2008**

President: Terry Kennedy.....335-3606  
Past President: Bill Van Vugt.....335-2082  
1st Vice-President: John DuChene.....335-3567  
2nd Vice-President: Judy Kennedy.....335-3606  
Secretary: Gloria Smiley.....335-2188  
Treasurer: Mike Wise.....335-2409  
Lake Steward: Aileen Merriam.....335-3589

#### **Members-At-Large:**

Rochelle Cahoon, Noreen Dertinger, Keith Feasey, Greg Morris, Jack Patterson, Peter Smiley, Ed Swain, Terry Trojek

#### **Your Newsletter Team:**

Editor/Design/Input: Aileen Merriam  
Text Editors: Charlotte DuChene, Judy Kennedy  
Reproduction: Judy and Terry Kennedy  
*Thanks to our many contributors of articles and illustrations and to those who collate and distribute the newsletter.*

### **Recreation Activities around Arden Arden Community Centre:**

#### **Arden Seniors "Happy Gang"**

1st Tuesday each month, 11 a.m.  
contact Jack Patterson, 335-3469

**Glee Club:** Tuesday afternoons, 1 p.m.  
contact Helen Praskey, 335-2486

**Line Dancing:** Monday mornings, 9:30 a.m.  
contact Rosemary Wadham, 335-2893

**Dancercise:** Tuesday mornings, 9 a.m.  
contact Gloria Smiley, 335-2188

**Tai Chi:** Wednesday mornings  
Beginners 9:15 a.m. Veterans 10 a.m.  
contact Helen Praskey, 335-2486

**T.O.P.S.:** Wednesday evenings, 6:30 p.m.  
contact Carol Patterson, 335-3469

#### **Sharbot Lake High School:**

**Volleyball:** Monday evenings, 7 p.m.  
contact Rick Greenstreet, 279-1962

### **Drinking Water Testing**

The Ontario Ministry of Health provides free testing of drinking water. In this area, testing is done by the Kingston Regional Health Laboratory. Sample bottles are available from your local Health Unit. Samples are accepted at the following times:

**Sharbot Lake:** 279-2151  
Tuesday only 8:30 - 11:50 a.m.

**Cloyne:** 336-8989  
Wednesday only 8:30 - 11:00 a.m.

**Kingston:** 549-1232  
Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Friday 8:30 a.m. - noon

# Mark your calendars...

## Fishing for Facts, not Fiction...

*What questions do YOU have about fish and fishing in Kennebec Lake?*

Cam McCauley from the Ministry of Natural Resources will tell us what studies have been done on Kennebec Lake. Find out what fish were here historically and found here recently, how fish reproduce here, and how we can preserve key habitat. Who is taking what kind of fish? Are there actions we can take to improve fishing in our lake?

**When: Saturday 7 June 2008 10 am**

**Where: Kennebec Recreation Hall**

**Information: Aileen Merriam, 613 335-3589**

## Flowers that Bloom in the Spring...

*Come out and see what spring beauties appear in mid-June in the woods near you.* Native woodland wildflowers bloom briefly while the sun reaches the forest floor, then they disappear for another year.

Wear comfortable clothes and mosquito protection. Bring your wildflower guide if you have one. Children welcome if accompanied by an adult.

**When: Saturday 14 June 2008 2 pm**

**Where: Merriams, 1309 Blue Heron Ridge**

**Information: Aileen Merriam, 613 335-3589**

## KLA Annual General Meeting... \*Note new date\*

*Bring your family and friends to the Kennebec Lake Association AGM.*

Learn what's been happening over the past year. Elect next year's Executive; tell them what your priorities are for 2008/2009. View exhibits from various local organizations related to you and your lake. Visit with your Kennebec neighbours. Share your visual impressions (photographs, artwork, etc.) of what you appreciate about our lake. (See "What YOU See", below).

**When: Saturday 16 August 2008 10 am**

**Where: Kennebec Recreation Hall**

## Strawberry, Orange and Asparagus Salad

### Vinaigrette:

1/4 cup **cider vinegar** (60 mL)

2 Tbsp liquid **honey** (30 mL)

1 tsp grainy **Dijon mustard** (5 mL)

1/2 tsp **salt** (2.5 mL)

1/2 tsp dried **tarragon** (2.5 mL)

Freshly ground **black pepper**

3/4 cup **vegetable oil** (180 mL)

*Put vinegar, honey, mustard, salt, tarragon and pepper in a jar. Screw on lid and shake well. Add oil and shake again. Refrigerate until ready to use.*

### Salad:

1/2 lb fresh **asparagus** (220 g)

4 cups fresh assorted **lettuces** and **arugula** (1 L)

2 medium **oranges**, peeled and sliced lengthwise

2 **avocados**, peeled, pitted and sliced lengthwise

1 cup fresh **strawberries**, washed, hulled and cut in half (240 mL)

1/2 cup lightly toasted **pecans** (120 mL)

*Place asparagus in salted boiling water for 4 minutes. Drain and plunge into cold water. When completely cooled, drain and refrigerate. Arrange the lettuce and arugula on 6 to 8 individual salad plates. Over the greens, place asparagus spears, orange sections, avocado pieces and strawberries. Sprinkle with pecans, and drizzle with vinaigrette.*

## What YOU See

*by John DuChene*

The ever-changing sensory experiences that Kennebec Lake provides — the sights, sounds and smells that vary with the seasons and time of day — as well as the numerous activities the lake makes possible are what I value most about the area. I suspect that is the case for the majority of you.

***The KLA executive invites you to bring to this year's AGM your photos, drawings and paintings that illustrate the visual elements which best define our lake and its watershed.***

Submissions might capture wildlife seen through an early-morning mist, a bold shoreline set against a nearing sunset, a small sailboat leaning into the wind as it tacks across the lake or a child fishing off grandpa's dock as a kayak quietly glides by.

These images contribute to what this lake is all about. And yes, nature will undoubtedly dominate most examples, because it is the natural interface between the land, water and sky that creates the environments we all too often take for granted. It will be seeing the trees for the forest that will assist your association in developing appropriate strategies to protect these important experiences for us today and our children tomorrow.

## Arden Artisans Open House and Garden Party!

**5 July 2008 10 am to 6 pm**

*See the work of several artists and artisans. Enjoy light refreshments.*

**Information: 335-2763, 335-2073, 335-2032**

## Gypsy Moth Traps

Traps that attract male gypsy moths are available through the **Nicolsons** at **335-2845**. Purchase by June 15 to be effective. These traps are useful to indicate areas of high gypsy moth populations; they are not designed to control moth populations over large areas. Ask about their effective range.



## Should Your Government Look into Your Septic Tank?

We have often looked at how we, as individuals, can best manage our critical sewage treatment systems. Governments have flirted with taking a role in this important area for some time. The aim is to protect our surface and sub-surface water supplies from contamination and hence from spreading infectious diseases.

If all systems were in excellent condition and all persons observed sound disposal techniques, the "capacity" of lakes to accept increased development may well need to be assessed in different ways. Currently, the capacity is based on estimated flows of excess nutrients (mainly phosphorus) from developments into the lake waters. Calculation of capacity is more complicated, but it is basically about the loading of nutrients that the lakes can absorb and still maintain healthy populations of fish and the habitat that supports them.

### Municipal Responsibility

New and existing septic systems are regulated by the Ontario Building Code Act. The Code sets the design and installation criteria and establishes responsibility for management. Municipalities are responsible for initiating programs to re-inspect existing septic systems and may use building inspectors or local health units to enforce the Act. Tracking and inspections of existing septic systems are first steps some municipalities are taking. The Province provides a guide for municipalities to set up Septic System Re-Inspections. (See the Ontario Government website: [www.gov.on.ca](http://www.gov.on.ca).)

Septic system regulation by the municipality would be good for the overall health of our lakes and for us, in particular, on Kennebec Lake. If the quality of the water in our lake goes down, so will the value of our investment and, more important, the long-term enjoyment of our homes and recreational properties. KLA has long advocated that members encourage our municipality to start a procedure for inspecting septic systems on a regular, organized basis and enforce regulations where systems are not operating safely. Inspections, together with regular pump-outs, are an important part of lake management planning, as are such factors as development and capacity.

### Recent Initiatives

North Frontenac Township, in conjunction with the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, has undertaken the responsibility of doing septic system re-inspections. In 2007, 99 properties on the Kashawakamak, Big Gull, Shabomeka, Marble and Mazinaw Lakes received complete inspections. Property owners currently must give permission for the inspectors to enter their property, and all 99 did so last year. The program is touted as being an excellent educational exercise. If instituted by bylaw, it would be a useful tool for monitoring shoreline development as well as protection.

Initiatives in the provinces of Nova Scotia and Quebec (from the KCC Newsletter, June 2007, p. 27): These provinces have introduced programs for implementation by municipalities for municipally coordinated pump-out programs. An entire neighbourhood is pumped out at once on a regular rotating schedule. Several municipalities in Nova Scotia have shown interest in this idea. In the Municipality of Chelsea, Quebec, the program is already a success. Homeowners pay their municipal council for a portion of the value of the service each year along with their property tax. In return, the septic systems in their neighbourhood are pumped every three years. The regular schedule, when accompanied by inspections at the time of pump-out, ensures groundwater protection for an entire area, because all the septic systems operate more efficiently. Problems are identified before a critical failure occurs. Also, greenhouse gases and fossil fuels are reduced, because the pumper truck follows a route that minimizes backtracking and total distance travelled.

### U.S. Regulations

This article cannot give you an exhaustive list of what all governments are doing, but it is a fact that many state and county governments in the USA are regulating re-inspection and pump-out frequencies. The pump-outs are required every three to five years, depending on the jurisdiction. Re-inspections vary from requiring septic inspections on every sale of a property to mandatory inspections every three to five years. In most cases, it is the property owner's responsibility to engage a licensed inspector. The resulting inspection report is sent to the regulatory authority. Usually inspections are accompanied by a pump-out to permit interior inspection of the tank.

### ...and Here at Home

Currently, Central Frontenac Township has no plans to institute a septic system re-inspection program. Personal inspection and upkeep of your system is your best bet, both for lake health and your wallet. You can help prevent costly repairs and ensure proper operation. Go to the Government of Ontario website to obtain a copy of the publication *A Guide to Operating and Maintaining Your Septic System*. Not everyone will be as conscientious as we would like, and those systems will deteriorate. Hence it behooves all of us to support pump-out regulation and inspections under municipal bylaws to maintain our lake and environment.

*by Tony Downs, Lake Stewardship Committee*

**Bon Echo Art Exhibition and Sale July 25-27**  
**50 juried artists showcasing original work: Canadian Nature, Wildlife and Countryside.**

**Friday 11 am to 5 pm, Saturday 10-5, Sunday 11-4.**

Children's activities, live entertainment, a barbecue and lots of goodies. **Sciensational Sssnakes!!** on Saturday and Sunday at 11 a.m.

Exhibition free; park fees apply. While there, enjoy the beaches, the Cliff Top Trail, the interpretive boat tour on Mazinaw Lake and the gift and book shop.

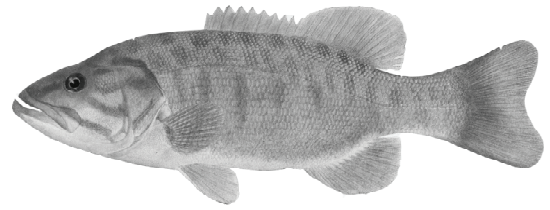
## BASS BASICS\*

by Greg Morris

**Smallmouth and largemouth bass**, the largest members of the sunfish family, are both found in Kennebec Lake. Sometimes, we confuse these fish, but the following features will help to identify them. The closed mouth of a smallmouth extends back only to the middle of the eye, while the closed mouth of a largemouth extends well beyond the eye. When a mature largemouth's mouth is open, a man's fist can fit inside. A smallmouth has 8 to 15 vertical bars along its side, while a largemouth has undefined horizontal markings.

### **Smallmouth Bass:** *Micropterus dolomieu*

You may hear a smallmouth called a "bronze-back" or a "smallie." They are found in the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes and into northern Ontario. They prefer warm-water lakes and have a liking for structures such as rocky areas, steep slopes, fallen trees and any sunken man-made items.



Males reach sexual maturity at age 4 to 5, females at age 5 to 7, and the life span is 15 years for both. A typical Ontario smallmouth would be less than 3 pounds but may grow up to 7 pounds.

Spawning occurs over a period of 6 to 10 days when water temperature reaches 15 to 20 degrees C. In Kennebec this would normally take place in early to mid-June. The males try to choose a nesting site in one metre of water with a gravel bottom. By fanning his tail, he will clean dirt and sediment from a circular area. He then entices a female into the nest. The female turns onto her side and goes into spasms, simultaneously releasing her eggs. This induces the male to release his sperm to fertilize the eggs. The female may spawn two or three times before being spent; however, the male may entice two or three females to the nest before mating is done. Once spawning has been completed, the male aggressively guards the nest from all predators, all the while aerating the eggs with a gentle back-and-forth motion of his caudal fin.

The eggs hatch 4 to 10 days later. At this stage, they are very vulnerable to predators. A week or so later, through metamorphosis, they become "fry" and can now scurry for cover from predators. As they mature and roam farther from the nest, the male can no longer guard them and he moves into deeper water for summer feeding. Crayfish make up 60 to 90 percent of the smallmouth's diet, while the remainder of its fare is fish and aquatic insects.

As summer heat intensifies, they will spend most of their time in deeper water roaming shallow areas at night, usually travelling in schools. They especially like a combination of rock and current where available. When fall comes, they become more wide-ranging and the cold of winter makes them lethargic and drives them to the warmest water in the deepest part of the lake. They feed very little at this time.

*Anyone who has ever fished for smallmouth knows that pound for pound, they are one of the hardest-fighting sport fish.*

\*Watch for Greg's article on Largemouth Bass in your Summer Newsletter

### **Bass Fishing Law:**

**Because of the protective nature of both smallmouth and largemouth bass during spawning season, they will grab anything they perceive as a threat; therefore, it is illegal to fish them from their nests.**

**Even if you are releasing a bass caught out of season, while nesting is occurring, predators will have eaten eggs or fry before you could possibly release the male. So during the month of June, it is unethical to fish other open-season species near the bass nests.**

### **TO EAT or NOT TO EAT** by Judy Kennedy

Some sport fish in Ontario contain contaminants, such as mercury, restricting the amount you should consume. These contaminants vary from one lake to another across the province.

The 24th edition of the *Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish* gives consumption advice for sport and game fish. Tables show the kind and size of fish tested, the contaminant(s) for which the fish was tested and the acceptable number of meals per month. A useful colour guide to fish identification is included.

The advisories continue to be based on health protection guidelines provided by Health Canada. Important advice for consumption by children and women of child-bearing age is also contained in this publication.

*This book or CD ROM is free. For a copy, contact the Ministry of the Environment at 416-327-6816 or 1-800-820-2716, or email sportfish.moe@ontario.ca.*

### **Wise Taxes**

by Mike Wise

With the strong support of our Kennebec representatives, council has achieved its objective of keeping the township tax increase in line with the annual rate of inflation. For 2008, the Central Frontenac tax rate increases by 2.1%. With the county tax rate decreasing by 3.7% and the education levy remaining unchanged, the combined tax rate increases by 0.5%. Unless you upgraded your property, that is how much your property taxes are increasing.

This year's and last year's increases combined raised property taxes by 1.8%, while the cost of living increased by 3.9%. So they're heading in the right direction. But for how long? MPAC reassessments resume next year. Given the increases in waterfront property values over the past few years, are we going to see a resumption of the shifting of the municipal tax burden toward the cottage owner? We should have a better idea when MPAC releases its new valuations and the province advises us how they are to be phased in.

# NATURE NOTES

## BIG BIRDS in our WETLANDS

### The American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus*

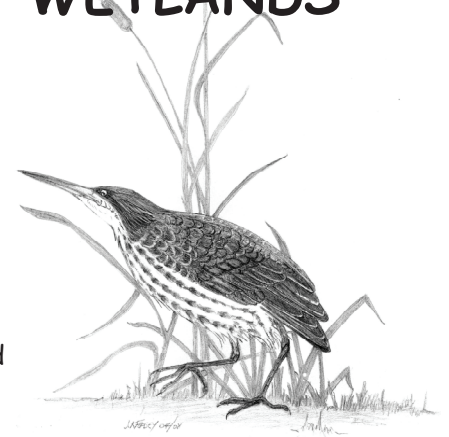
As the sun sets on a warm spring evening, a symphony of sounds crescendos from the wetlands surrounding Kennebec Lake. Among them is the distinctive "pump...er...LUNK" of the American Bittern. The sound is almost mechanical, like that of an old-fashioned pump.

These large, secretive wading birds prefer marshes, where they blend in perfectly with grass-like vegetation. When threatened, they stretch out their vertically striped necks in such a way that both the neck stripes and long beak are continuous with the vertical lines of cattails and other wetland plants. I have stood within a couple of metres of one of these herons without noticing it right away. In fact, the bird will sway gently with surrounding vegetation moving in the wind.

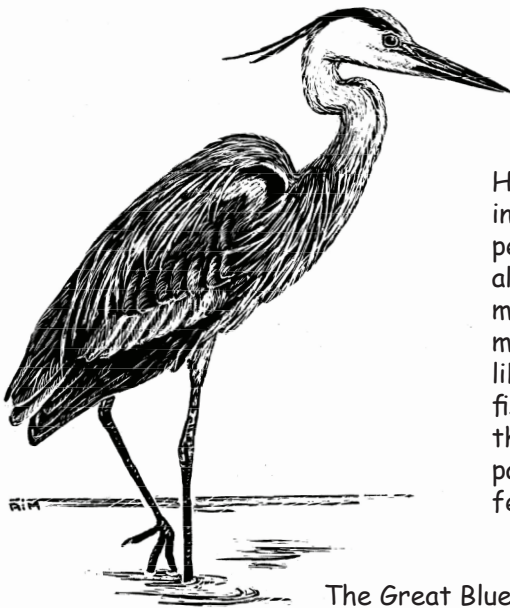
The bittern nests on a platform of cattails and other marsh plants built up to several centimetres above the water line. It hunts fish, amphibians, reptiles, insects and small mammals that live in the marsh.

This elusive inhabitant of a marsh community is one of many wetland creatures that have suffered from habitat loss. They depend on the work of beavers and on quiet pools of water along the edges of the lake and streams, as well as those nestled between the folds of bedrock. The greater the diversity of sounds that ebb from these soggy places during the height of the breeding season, the more we can feel assured that there is hope for these important communities.

by Bea Heissler



### Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*



Whether flying with its long neck folded back and long legs trailing behind, or stalking slowly through the shallows at the water's edge, it is hard to miss this large grey-blue heron. When startled, it sometimes emits a loud, harsh croak or series of squawks as it jumps up and flies off with slow, steady wingbeats.

Herons feed by standing still in water for long periods or by walking slowly along waterways or through marshy vegetation or grassy meadows. The heron's dagger-like bill darts out to spear fish or other small animals that get within range. Both parents share the job of feeding the young.

The Great Blue is the largest and the most widespread heron in North America.



Great Blue Herons are colonial nesters, making large stick nests in both live and dead trees, often where trees have been drowned in swamps. Nests are usually 10 to 30 metres above the ground. The female builds the nest with materials gathered by the male, lining it with twigs and leaves.

by Aileen Merriam

Illustrations:  
American Bittern - Keith Feasey  
Great Blue Heron - Aileen Merriam  
Herony - Gray Merriam

	American Bittern	Great Blue Heron
Height:	58 cm	100-130 cm
Wingspan:	100-125 cm	190-210 cm
Eggs:	2-7 pale brown to olive buff	2-7 light blue to pale blue-green
Incubation:	24-29 days, by female	25-30 days, both sexes
Young in nest:	14 days	65-90 days