

What's Alive in Hamilton

*A Guide to the
Green Spaces of
the City of Hamilton and Area*



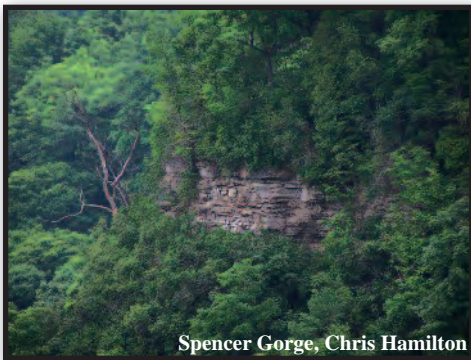
Sharp-lobed Hepatica,
by Graham Wright



Nature In Hamilton: Our Home, Our Future

Hamiltonians and our neighbours have enjoyed the rich diversity of plants, animals and natural areas around the city for generations. Situated in and around the Niagara Escarpment, the City of Hamilton has much to offer its residents and visitors. We live at the head of Lake Ontario, the last link in the chain of Great Lakes. This unique spot supports many different types of habitats including fens, swamps, bogs, Carolinian forests, tallgrass prairies, meadows, thickets, creek valleys, and the rocky profile of the Niagara Escarpment.

These habitats and the diversity of this landscape have been shaped



by both human and natural history. The City of Hamilton has the signature of glaciers written on its landscape, from the Lake Iroquois' gravel bars at Burlington Heights and the Hamilton Beach Strip, to the high drumlin fields amid the wetlands of Flamborough. The Red Hill Valley in east Hamilton contains traces of the first human inhabitants from over 11,000 years ago. In the days before European settlement, the Timber Rattlesnake, Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle, Black Bear, Elk, Pine Marten, and hundreds of thousands of Passenger Pigeons shared this land.

There have been many changes in our landscape over the past centuries. Urban and industrial development in the City of Hamilton has removed and fragmented the wetlands, forests, and prairies which were present before settlement. Other pressures on natural ecosystems include invasive species, climate change, and pollution. Over time we have recognized the importance of



natural areas and biodiversity to our quality of life.

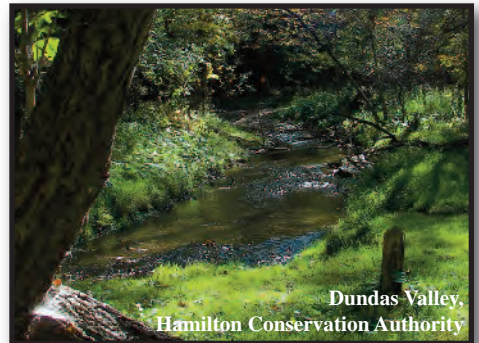
However, many agencies, organizations and landowners have been working diligently to restore, protect and promote the rehabilitation and restoration of our natural environment. The next time you visit Hamilton Harbour, Cootes Paradise, the Dundas Valley, or Red Hill Valley, take a close look at the vegetation and you may see newly planted seedlings or vegetated buffers alongside the creeks. Don't forget to read the interpretive signage that illustrates what projects that have been completed in that area.

When choosing a natural area to visit it is best to use the seasons as your cue for seeing particular wildlife. In March and April, head to the Hamilton Escarpment above the Red Hill Creek to see the annual raptor migration of soaring Bald Eagles, Broad-winged Hawks, Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, and many other raptors. Early April rainy nights are the best time to hear male frogs calling the females at ponds, swamps, and marshes. Songbirds sing through May and June at the peak of their breeding season. Butterflies make their mark in the summer with dragonflies and damselflies, who

are busy breeding and hunting in wetlands. Asters, goldenrods, and prairie wildflowers are ablaze with dazzling violets, scarlet, ginger, and yellows in the fall. Equip yourself with snow boots, a toque and parka for the annual Christmas Bird Count – a tradition that has been observed for over 100 years!

In producing this field booklet, the intent is to share the natural beauty and uniqueness of Hamilton with fellow citizens and people from around the world. We hope you enjoy this publication and visit many of the sites described here. Having shared with you the wonder of Hamilton's natural areas, we invite you to join us in our efforts to protect these natural spaces for present and future generations.

Enjoy your visit!



What's Alive in Hamilton?

In the City of Hamilton there are:*

- 1000+ species of native plants
- 171 breeding species of birds
- 8 species of snakes
- 7 species of turtles
- 17 species of frogs, toads and salamanders
- 43 species of mammals
- 100 species of butterflies
- 98 species of dragonflies and damselflies
- 87 species of fishes

Surprised? Many people do not realize how naturally diverse the City is. The City of Hamilton is uniquely situated at the extreme end of Lake Ontario and at a bend in the Niagara Escarpment. Such a geographically diverse location allows residents and visitors alike to see many interesting plant and wildlife species. The City of Hamilton is at the northern tip of a small ecological zone in Canada known as “Carolinian Canada” which encompasses the southernmost portion of Ontario and occurs nowhere else in this country.

Many species of plants and animals occur here because the summer climate approaches that of North and South Carolina in the

United States. Trees such as Sassafras, Tulip Tree and Eastern Flowering Dogwood, and wildflowers such as Tall Bellflower, Horsebalm, and Yellow Giant Hyssop are Carolinian species which occur in the Hamilton area. The Giant Swallowtail Butterfly and the Virginia Opossum are also species which live here in Hamilton but are more commonly associated with the Carolinas.

Migrating birds follow the shores of Lake Superior and Georgian Bay and then fly overland to Lake Ontario on their way south in the fall. They follow this route back to their nesting sites in the spring when they return from the U.S., and Central and South America. At the head of Lake Ontario, Hamilton is a stop-over or “staging” area for migrating birds. We can see many ducks, shorebirds, raptors, and song birds such as colourful warblers during their migration to and from the south. In the winter, Hamilton Harbour and the shores of Lake Ontario are also home to many waterfowl.

*Source: Hamilton Natural Heritage Database 2013
Source: Fisheries Management Database 2007
Source: Hamilton Naturalists' Club

These birds choose not to fly farther south because they can still find food such as fish, aquatic insects, and molluscs right here in Ontario.

Natural areas are identified as Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) in the City of Hamilton's Official Plan when they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- ◆ they provide an important ecological function, such as corridors for wildlife movement;
- ◆ they provide an important hydrological function, such as ground water recharge or headwater source for streams;
- ◆ they have a high diversity of species of plants or animals;
- ◆ they contain significant earth science features of geological interest;
- ◆ they contain significant vegetation communities, for example tall grass prairie or oak savannah habitat;
- ◆ they support significant species of plants or animals, ranging from nationally Endangered to locally Rare species; or
- ◆ they have an educational, scientific, aesthetic or historical value to humans.



Bloodroot, Chris Hamilton



Barred Owl, Hamilton Conservation Authority



Dundurn Staircase,
Rick Cordeiro

BIODIVERSITY

Biological diversity is the total variety of life on Earth. It includes the total number of every individual plant and animal, and the degree of difference between them. The concept reflects the interrelationships of genes, species and ecosystems. Because genes are the components of species, and species are the components of ecosystems, altering the make up of any level of this web can change the others. (Reid and Miller, 1989)

No one knows, even to the nearest order of magnitude, how many life forms humanity shares the planet with: roughly 1.4 million species have been identified, but scientists now believe the total number is between 10 million and 80 million. (Ryan, 1992)

Humans have historically been most concerned with those species that are commercially valuable to them. Many organisms contribute to the ecosystem, allowing for the survival of those species which are commercially important to humans. For example, the roots of many wild plants secure streambeds and absorb snowmelt, guarding against flooding and erosion.

This function enhances and helps to maintain the spawning habitat

of fish in streams. Shrubs and trees provide windbreaks which reduce loss of topsoil and improve commercial agricultural yields.

Fundamentally, all green plants release oxygen which animals require for life! There may also be many species of bacteria, fungi, and plants in our region and across the planet which we do not yet recognize as directly important to our health and well being. For this reason we must work to prevent the loss of species from our environment.

Species in communities have unique ways of avoiding predators, locating food and capturing and handling prey. As a result of these traits, inter-dependent relationships among species are common. The consequences of an extinction or loss of natural areas are unknown. For human survival and for the sake of the species with whom we share our planet, we should respect and preserve all parts of biological communities.

A **GENE** is a unit of hereditary information (DNA). Genes are very stable units which are passed from parent to young and they profoundly influence every aspect of an organism.

A **SPECIES** is a group of individuals who are able to mate and produce fertile offspring among themselves, but are not able to do so with other groups.

An **ECOSYSTEM** is a community of organisms interacting with one another and the environment in which they live. A pond, a forest, a prairie or desert and the organisms that inhabit each are examples of ecosystems.

Sources

Reid, W.V. and Miller, K.R. 1989. Keeping Options Alive: The Scientific Basis for Conserving Biodiversity. World Resources Institute. Washington, D.C.

Ryan, J.C. 1992. Conserving Biological Diversity. In State of the World 1992. Brown, L.R. (Ed.) Worldwatch Institute. Washington. D.C.



Black-Eyed Susan, Chris Hamilton



Great Blue Heron, Conservation Ontario



Snapping Turtle, Bob Curry



Northern Cardinal, Conservation Ontario

“mating wheel” when they mate?

Wildlife In Hamilton

Birds

The Hamilton area is especially rich with bird species. A diversity of habitat in the region supports 386 bird species, one of the highest numbers for a local checklist in all of Ontario. The highest numbers of individuals and species can be seen during April and May (spring migration) and late August and September (fall migration). However, you can listen and look for breeding birds in their peak nesting season in May and June. Binoculars are a must for birding,



Wood Duck, Hamilton Naturalists Club

and a spotting scope is recommended - especially for watching waterbirds. The best birding is in the morning although birds may be seen throughout the day and early evening especially during migration periods.

Visit www.hamiltonnature.org for more information on where to see interesting birds.

Butterflies

Butterflies are rewarding to study because they are easy to see close-up. They are numerous in many of southern Ontario's natural areas, especially in open fields containing blooming wildflowers. They are pleasant to pursue because the best times to see them are also among the most pleasant times to be out of doors. Most species are active between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on warm sunny days.

The emergence of most adult butterflies in Hamilton peaks in July though each month from spring to fall brings its own suite of species. When we see butterflies on flowers they are sipping nectar as their food.

Each butterfly lays its eggs on specific plants which will become the food for the caterpillar when it hatches from the egg.



Question Mark Butterfly, Bob Curry

Did you know that the bald eagle has a

Butterflies have very specialized diets. You can narrow your search for a specific species by knowing where to find its preferred food.

Once the caterpillar has grown large enough, it will produce a hard shell known as a chrysalis, and will live and develop there into an adult butterfly.

It will emerge from the chrysalis and search out a mate. In some cases, butterflies live only a few days during which they mate and lay eggs.

Binoculars are useful for studying butterflies without disturbing them. Handling butterflies with your hands can cause injury to them because the wings and body are fragile.

Dragonflies and Damselflies

Dragonflies and damselflies are brightly coloured insects which require aquatic and terrestrial habitats to fulfill their life cycle. Keep a close eye on river banks, wet meadows, and ponds across the City of Hamilton for these insects. In the field you can easily spot



White-Faced Meadowhawk, Chris Hamilton

differences between these two groups: Dragonfly wings sit flat when perched and have a strong sustained flight; damselfly wings are held over their backs (except spreadwings) and have a weak and fluttery flight.

Amphibians and Reptiles

In contrast to birds and butterflies, amphibians are best seen at night. Amphibians prefer to breed under the cover of darkness to avoid predators. Peak times to hear frogs and toads calling for mates in wetlands are on warm, humid nights from April through to the end of June. Calls can often be heard for a long distance.



Eastern Spotted Newt, Red Eft stage
Hamilton Naturalists' Club

Salamanders and newts may be found breeding in ponds at night during the early spring (April) or by turning over logs in moist woods at other times of year. Always be sure to replace any flipped logs so that the habitat will remain. Frogs, toads and salamanders may be seen crossing roads in great numbers on warm rainy nights.

Reptiles, which include snakes and turtles, are often seen basking in warm weather at midday. Also, don't be surprised if you see turtles crossing roads or digging holes and laying eggs beside the road or in sandy banks near water in early June. They like to lay eggs where it is warm and sunny so that the eggs will develop quickly. Be sure to keep an eye out for them while you are driving so that you do not run them over.



Painted Turtle,
Hamilton Conservation Authority

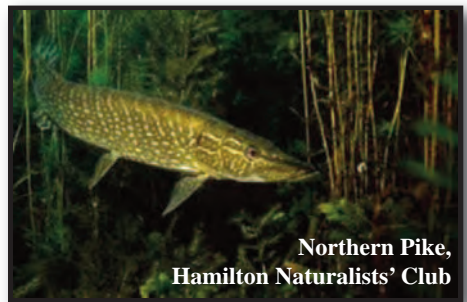
Fish

Migratory “runs” of fish in the rivers and streams which flow into Hamilton Harbour provide excellent seasonal viewing opportunities. Rainbow Trout and White Suckers can be observed during the spring months while Chinook Salmon and Brown Trout are commonly seen during the fall. Northern Pike, Bowfin, White and Yellow Perch and Brown and Rainbow Trout frequent the area below the Cootes Paradise fishway in late spring. These highly visible movements of fish are associated with spawning activity.

Most species move into the watercourses from Hamilton Harbour to spawn in suitable habitats and then return to the harbour. However, Chinook Salmon, a stocked species native to Canada's Pacific Coast, die after spawning.

Fish can be readily observed by walking along streambank trails when the flows are low and clear. During high water, fish are often actively moving and are best seen where they must leap to overcome obstacles which block their passage.

Lower Spencer Creek in Dundas is a popular viewing site where trout and salmon make the journey to their upstream spawning grounds in Spencer Creek. Other sites include Red Hill Creek at Queenston Road and King Street where Rainbow Trout and White Suckers can be viewed in the spring, and Chinook Salmon in the fall.



Northern Pike,
Hamilton Naturalists' Club

Did you know that there is a butterfly

Hamilton Naturalists' Club

The Hamilton Naturalists' Club was founded in 1919, as the Hamilton Bird Protection Society. Now 94 years old and with 600 members, it continues to foster public interest in the study of nature and to work for environmental protection and the conservation of natural resources. The Club was instrumental in having the Cootes Paradise wetland designated a sanctuary in 1927. Today the club is also a land trust and continues to protect significant Carolinian habitats by acquiring and caring for land. The Club currently owns and manages five nature sanctuaries.

The club hosts monthly meetings that offer a variety of speakers on natural history. They are open to the public from September to May. Organized walks are held throughout the year. The club, working with the Royal Botanical Gardens, also has a Junior Naturalists' Club for children ages 7 to 12. For more information about the Hamilton Naturalists' Club, please visit www.hamiltonnature.org



City of Hamilton

Through its Official Plan policies, strategies, and programs, the City of Hamilton is responsible for protecting, enhancing, and monitoring Hamilton's natural areas and their ecological functions. Since 1980, the City of Hamilton (former Region of Hamilton-Wentworth) has identified and protected Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) in its Official Plan. More recently, the City of Hamilton has identified a Natural Heritage System and developed policies to protect and enhance it in its Official Plan. The City also protects natural areas through watershed studies, Secondary Plans, tree cutting and fill and grading by-laws, and various programs such as the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund and the Nature Counts biological inventory.

The City of Hamilton maintains an extensive network of trails and parks throughout the City which connect and enhance Hamilton's Natural Heritage System and provide opportunities for recreation and physical activity. For more information on the City's programs and policies, please visit www.hamilton.ca



Hamilton Conservation Authority

The Hamilton Conservation Authority works to ensure streams and communities are healthy, and in balance with the needs of the natural environment now and in the future.

Founded over 50 years ago, the Hamilton Conservation Authority has grown from a watershed management agency to include activities such as flood forecasting, land acquisition, watershed stewardship, land planning, ecological monitoring, and conservation.

The Dundas Valley, one of the region's most outstanding examples of the biological zone known as Carolinian Canada (see biodiversity), is home to over 1000 species of flora and fauna.

Natural lands, like the Christie Lake and Valens Lake Conservation Areas, are developed around water management reservoirs, and combine recreational activities with habitat preservation. For more information call (905) 525-2181 or visit www.conservationhamilton.ca.



Waterfront Regeneration Trust

The Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail is a project of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust and stretches from Trenton in eastern Ontario to the mouth of the Niagara River. The Burlington-Hamilton component of the trail features walks along sandy beaches, through green, well-treed parks, and past historic beach-front homes.

The Waterfront Trail has been an instrumental part of the Great Lakes regeneration. Along it you will find a 1400 km. celebration of nature and culture where peaceful countryside, small towns, and big cities are linked to provide the province's residents and visitors with a rewarding experience of our Great Lakes.

The Trust has produced a book (available in local bookstores) that outlines the entire length of the trail, known as *A Guidebook to the Waterfront Trail: Explore Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow along the Shores of Lake Ontario*. For more information on the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail and other activities of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, please contact them at (416) 943-8080 or www.waterfronttrail.org.



Conservation Halton

Much of Conservation Halton's efforts are focused on protecting the natural environment. This includes water management programs, source water protection, and forest management. We focus on the health and diversity of the forest ecosystem with restoration and tree planting programs. Our engineering and planning services help ensure that environmental planning is an integral part of community development.

Watershed health is also enhanced through our participation in the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan and Burlington Bay restoration efforts.

Conservation Halton encourages private landowners to protect natural areas on their properties. This is done through the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program.

For more information on Conservation Areas and special events, please visit www.conservationhalton.ca



Royal Botanical Gardens









The Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) is the largest botanical garden in Canada, a National Historic Site, and is a registered charitable organization that brings together people, plants and nature.

In addition to its many stunning horticultural displays, the Royal Botanical Gardens manages 900 hectares of natural lands at the western end of Lake Ontario. These form a Nodal Park within the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO). With more than 750 native plant species, 227 types of migratory birds, 36 mammal species, 14 reptile species, 9 amphibians, and 68 species of Lake Ontario fish, the area is an important contributor to ecosystems that span international borders.










For more information about visiting the Royal Botanical Gardens, or any of our events, please visit our webpage at www.rbg.ca or call 905-527-1158.



Hotspot Checklist

SITE	LOCATION									
1	Valens Lake C. A.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	Beverly Swamp	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
3	Rockton and Hyde Tracts		✓	✓		✓			✓	
4	Christie Lake C.A.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
5	Spencer Gorge C.A.	✓						✓	✓	✓
6	Dundas Valley C. A.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
7	Tiffany Falls C. A.	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
8	Rock Chapel/Borer's Falls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
9	Cootes Paradise	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Sam Lawrence Park		✓					✓		✓
11	Bayfront Park & Hamilton Harbour Waterfront Trail		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
12	Burlington Heights	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
13	Grindstone Creek/Carrol's Bay/Hendrie Valley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
14	Hidden Valley Park		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
15	Smokey Hollow	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Mount Nemo C. A.	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
17	LaSalle Park		✓				✓	✓	✓	
18	Northeast Shoreline Island		✓					✓	✓	
19	Fifty Point C. A.		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Did you know that certain forest wildflowers bloom before the trees produced

SITE	LOCATION									
20	Eramosa Karst C. A.	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
21	Fletcher Creek E. P.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
22	Windermere Basin		✓	✓			✓			
23	Van Wagner's Ponds		✓		✓	✓			✓	
24	Confederation Park		✓	✓					✓	
25	King's Forest/Red Hill Valley		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
26	Albion/Buttermilk Falls					✓		✓	✓	✓
27	Felker's Falls C. A.	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓
28	Devil's Punch Bowl C. A.		✓					✓	✓	✓
29	Beamer Memorial C. A.		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
30	Binbrook Reservoir		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	



Significant Vegetation Community



Birds



Butterflies



Odonates (Dragonflies & Damselflies)



Amphibians and Reptiles



Fish (Migration runs and/or recreational fishing)



Lookout



Hiking



Bruce Trail Access

their leaves to capitalize on light availability? These are called spring ephemerals.

Best Practices: A Trail User's Code

Hike only along marked routes. Do not take short cuts.

Do not climb fences - use the ladders.

Leave trails cleaner than you found them. Carry out all litter.

Leave flowers and plants for others to enjoy.

Do not damage live trees or strip off bark.

Keep dogs on a leash and under control at all times.

Clean up after your animals.

Do not disturb wildlife.

Stay to the right and allow others to pass you on the left.

Respect neighbouring landowners and stay off private property.

Leave only your thanks and take nothing but photographs.

No open fires.

Camp only at designated camp sites.

For information relating to local hiking spots across the City of Hamilton please visit the following websites:

City of Hamilton: www.hamilton.ca

Hamilton Conservation Authority: www.conservationhamilton.ca

Conservation Halton: www.conservationhalton.on.ca

City of Burlington: www.burlington.ca

Bruce Trail Association: www.brucetrail.org

Royal Botanical Gardens: www.rbg.ca

1. Valens Lake Conservation Area



Access

Valens Road and Regional Road 97.

Time of Year

Spring/Summer/Fall late August-mid September.

Flora and Fauna

- Migrating ducks and shorebirds (Spring).
- Common Moorhen, Cliff Swallows, Least Bitterns, Leopard Frogs (Spring/Summer)
- American Wigeon, Redhead, Ring-neck Ducks; Common and Hooded Mergansers.
- Fish for Largemouth Bass and Northern Pike in the reservoir.
- The tall observation tower gives nice panoramic views of the countryside and is good for viewing raptors.

2. Beverly Swamp



Access

On Safari Road, about 9 km. west of Hwy. #6. Parking spot on north side.

Time of Year

April to July; Fall

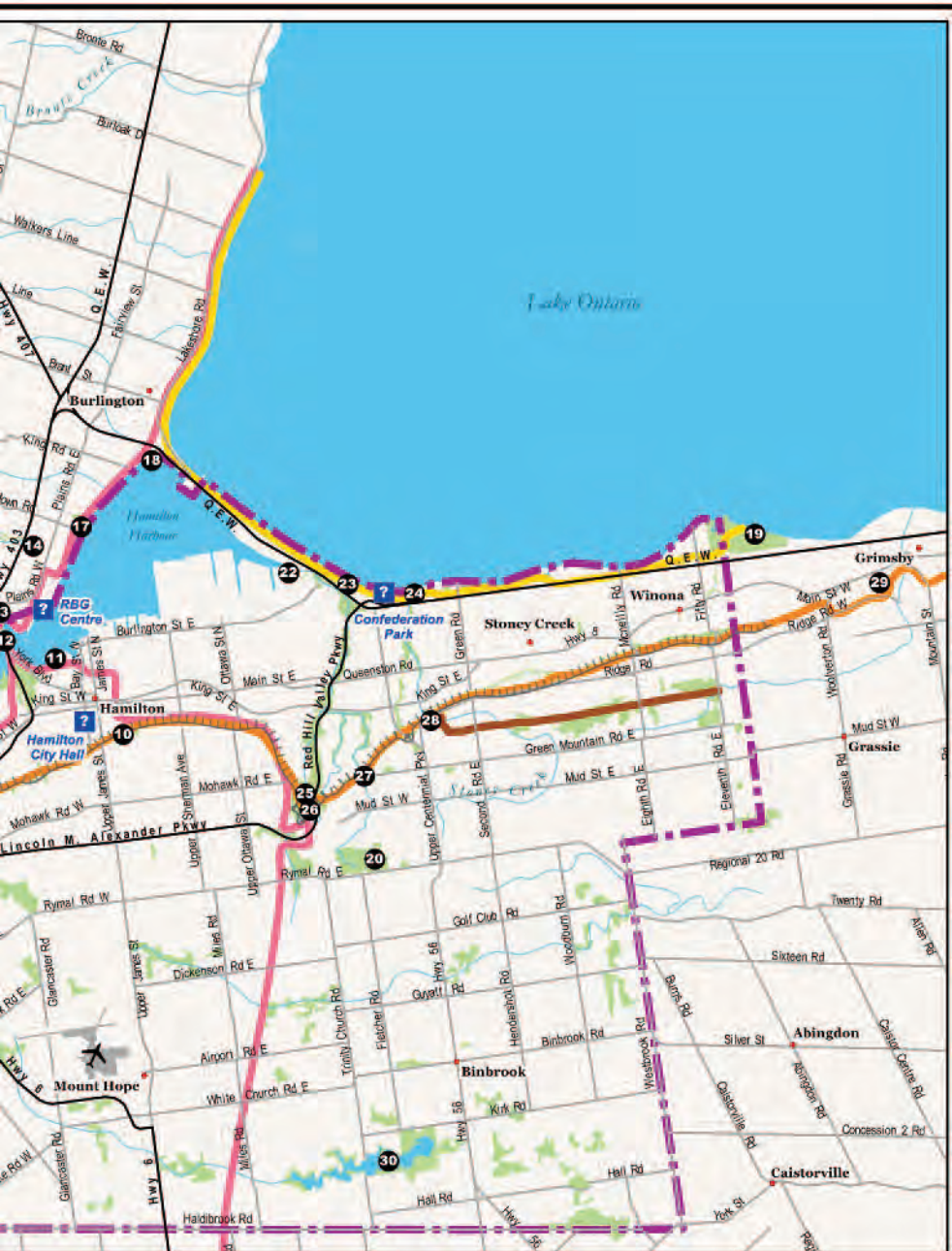
Flora and Fauna

- Breeding birds—Northern Waterthrush, White-throated Sparrow, Broad-winged Hawk, butterflies, Spring Peeper frogs.
- Red-headed, Red-bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers, Red-shouldered Hawk and Northern Goshawk
- Open grassland areas of the Beverly Swamp are good spots to see Eastern Bluebirds, Eastern Meadowlarks, and Horned Larks.
- Fall colours of the Silver Maple swamp forests.



Legend



- | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|--------------|--|--------------------|
| # | Site Location (refer to chart) | | Bruce Trail | | Highways | | Major Watercourses |
| ? | Information | | Dofasco Trail | | Major Roads | | Natural Areas |
| * | City / Town / Village | | Lafarge Trail | | Escarpment | | City |
| | | | Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail | | Watercourses | | |
| | | | Trans-Canada Trail | | | | |



Waterbodies
Natural Areas
of Hamilton



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Map created by:
John Butcher
GIS Technician
Hamilton Conservation Authority

3. Rockton and Hyde Tracks



Access

From Peter's Corners (Hwy. #5 & #8), follow Hwy. #8 past Rockton, north on Regional Road 552, 2.5 km., entrance to Agreement Forest on east side of road, park on shoulder.

Time of Year

May to July

Flora and Fauna

- Breeding birds—Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Mourning and Pine warblers, Upland Sandpiper
- Sedges, wood ferns, trilliums, violets, asters and goldenrods
- Shadow Darners, Eastern Amberwing, and Eastern Forktail odonates,
- Giant Swallowtail, Silver-bordered Fritillary, Indian Skipper butterflies

4. Christie Lake Conservation Area



Access

1000 Hwy. #5 West, Dundas. 9.5 km. west of Hwy. #6.

Time of Year

All Year

Flora and Fauna

- Waterfowl and shorebirds (on mudflats) (Spring).
- Upland areas are good for Ruffed-grouse, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Chestnut-sided Warbler.
- Wilson's Snipe, Hermit Thrush, and owls (Winter)
- Fishing available here; 21 species have been recorded since 1990.
- Snapping Turtles.

5. Spencer Gorge/Tews Falls/Webster's Falls



Access

Through Dundas on Hwy. #8 (King St) right at Greensville onto Harvest Road.

Time of Year

Spring to Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Oak woodland, a rare ecosystem is located along the Bruce Trail on the way to the Dundas Peak.
- Yellow-rumped Warbler, Turkey Vultures, Eastern Wood-pewee, and Carolina Wren have been observed.
- Spring ephemerals are in bloom in the Sugar Maple forests (April/May).

6. Dundas Valley Conservation Area



Access

Governor's Road. (Hwy. #99). Follow #99 from Dundas. This Conservation Area is on the south side of the road.

Time of Year

All year

Flora and Fauna

- Wildflowers and migrant birds along all trails. Salamanders under logs and breeding in ponds (Spring).
- Nesting Carolinian birds (eg. Hooded Warbler, Orchard Oriole, Louisiana Waterthrush).
- Butterflies in old fields (Summer).
- Overwintering land birds and hawks (Winter).
- Virginia Opossum, Southern Flying Squirrel, Big Brown, Little Brown and Hoary Bats (Summer)

7. Tiffany Falls



Access

Parking lot off Hwy. #2 halfway up the escarpment between Hamilton and Ancaster. Follow the Bruce Trail towards Highway #403.

Time of Year

All year

Flora and Fauna

- Black-throated Green Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Carolina Wren, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Wood Thrush. Eastern Garter, Red-belly and Ringneck snakes (Spring).
- Wild Ginger, Blue Cohosh, White and Red Baneberry, Blood root, Zigzag and Blue-stem Goldenrod in the understory of the Sugar Maple forest (Spring/Summer).
- Look for odonates along the creeks east of Tiffany Falls.

8. Rock Chapel/Borer's Falls



Access

Paid parking for non-members of the RBG.
Rock Chapel Road from Valley Road.

Time of Year

Spring to Fall

Flora and Fauna

- A large variety of butterflies occur in open fields especially where milkweed plants grow. Notable butterfly to look for is the Giant Swallowtail.
- Bloodroot, trilliums, Sharp-lobed Hepatica, Early Saxifrage (Spring).
- Wood Thrush, Indigo Bunting, flycatchers (Spring).
- Serviceberry blooms (Spring).
- Fall colours of the Sugar Maple forest; asters and goldenrods (Fall), variety of moss species (Spring to Fall)

9. Cootes Paradise



Access

Paid parking for non-members of the RBG.

South shore of this large wildlife sanctuary can be entered from Princess Point off Longwood Road.

North Shore of Cootes Paradise Trail access:

1. York Rd
2. Arboretum off Old Guelph Rd

Time of Year

May to October

Flora and Fauna

- Migrating songbirds throughout woods (Spring).
- Migrating shorebirds on mudflats, loafing gulls (Summer/Fall)
- Migrating waterfowl (Spring/Fall).
- Black-crowned Night-heron; Green and Great Blue Herons; Double-crested Cormorants; Tree, Bank, Rough-winged and Barn Swallows feed commonly over West Pond and Cootes Paradise (Summer)
- Check logs for basking turtles (Spring/Summer).
- Bald Eagle nest off the Marsh Walk Trail
- In open fields look for butterflies.
- Look for snakes along paths near fields.
- Fishway - Many species of fish (May to August).
- Deep ravines with Carolinian forests.

10. Sam Lawrence Park



Access

Parking lot at the top of the Jolly Cut, on Concession Street between East 12th and East 13th streets.

Time of Year

Spring/Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Migratory birds in the spring and fall.
- Bruce Trail access to hike along the Niagara Escarpment.

[moves over 12,000 fish in and out every year?](#)

11. Bayfront Park & Hamilton Harbour Waterfront Trail



Access

Parking at Princess Point off Macklin Street North (RBG parking fees apply) and Bayfront Park off Harbour Front Drive.

Time of Year

All Year

Flora and Fauna

- Fish in Hamilton Harbour for catfish, bass and salmon.
- Migrating waterfowl in spring and fall.
- Beaver have been known to harvest poplars from the banks alongside the Harbour Waterfront Trail.
- Turtles bask on logs in the water in early spring.

Bayfront Park, Rick Cordeiro



12. Burlington Heights



Access

Limited roadside parking available off York Boulevard. Paid parking at the RBG Rock Garden parking lot.

Time of Year

Spring/Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Migrating waterfowl, swans, occasional Bald Eagle, Osprey.
- Migrating songbirds along treed slopes.
- Tallgrass prairie ecosystem along stretches of York Boulevard.
- Best views of Hamilton Harbour and Cootes Paradise.
- Beautiful sunsets.

13. Grindstone Creek/Carrol's Bay/Hendrie Valley



Access

Turn into the RBG's Cherry Hill Gate parking lot off Plains Road West. This is a paid parking lot for non-members of the RBG; free for RBG members.

Time of Year

All Year

Flora and Fauna

- Trilliums, Cut-leaved Toothwort, Spring Beauty (Spring)
- Basking painted and map turtles on logs (Spring/Summer)
- Migrating waterfowl and shorebirds (Spring/Fall)
- Leopard frogs often heard calling from ponds in the valley (Summer)
- Salmon and trout migration in creek (Sept/Oct), Pike and Bowfin spawning (Spring)
- Beavers, migrating shorebirds and waterfowl (Fall)
- Black-crowned, Green and Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets (Fall)
- Woodpeckers (Winter)

14. Hidden Valley Park



Access

Howard Street north of Plains Road to Lemonville Road/Hidden Valley Road.

Time of Year

Spring/Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Rainbow Trout, White Sucker, Chinook Salmon.
- Leopard and Green Frogs (Spring/Summer)

15. Smokey Hollow



Access

Waterdown Road south of Hwy. #5.

Time of Year

Spring to Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Rainbow Trout, Chinook Salmon (Spring/Fall)
- Migrant warblers. Wildflowers (Spring/Summer)
- Eastern White Cedars and Sugar Maple forests along Grindstone Creek.

16. Mt. Nemo



Access

Off Guelph Line at Colling Road, North of Hwy. #5.

Time of Year

Spring to Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Wildflowers, Trilliums, Bloodroot, Eastern White Cedars
- Eastern Pipistrelle Bats flying over the cracks and caves in the escarpment limestone.
- Peregrine Falcons, soaring Turkey Vultures and Hooded Warblers.

17. LaSalle Park



Access

Very south end of LaSalle Park Road. Parking also available off North Shore Boulevard East.

Time of Year

All Year

Flora and Fauna

- Waterfowl; resting/feeding common terns.
- Pine warblers in pines
- Migrant warblers and other passerine birds (Spring/Fall)

18. Northeast Shoreline Island



Access

Park at Beachway Park on Lakeshore Road in Burlington.

Time of Year

Spring/Summer

Flora and Fauna

- Waterfowl (All Year)
- Common and Caspian Terns, Cormorants, gulls, waterfowl.

19. Fifty Point Conservation Area



Access

Off Baseline Road at Fifty Road and North Service Road, Winona.

Time of Year

Spring/Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Great Horned Owl, Magnolia Warbler, Orchard Oriole, Purple Martin (Spring), Barn Swallow, Bobolink, Belted Kingfisher, Green Heron, Red-headed Woodpecker (Summer), Least Sandpiper, Tennessee Warbler, Wood Duck (Fall)
- Spring Azure (Spring), Common Sootywing, Giant Swallowtail, Question Mark, Dun Skipper, American Lady, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (Summer), Monarch (Fall)
- Common Green Darner and Taiga Bluet (Spring). Eastern Amberwing, Black Saddlebags, Widow Skimmer, Blue Dasher, Calico Pennant, Stream Bluet (Summer). White-faced Meadowhawk dragonfly (Fall).

20. Eramosa Karst Conservation Area



Access

Parking available off Upper Mt. Albion Road, between Rymal Road East and Highland Road West. Parking fees apply.

Time of Year

Spring/Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Karst topography throughout – Sink holes, caves, sinking streams, soil pipes, and dry valleys.
- White and Red Baneberry, Yellow Trout-lily, Wild Geranium, Mayapple, Bloodroot, Canada, Downy Violet, Large-leaved Aster and Jack-in-the-pulpit (Spring).
- Tree Swallow, Killdeer, Northern Flicker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Song Sparrow (Spring), Savannah Sparrow, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Barn Swallow birds (Summer)
- Little Wood-Satyr and Red Admiral butterflies (Summer).
- Common Whitetail and Eastern Forktail dragonflies (Summer).
- Fall forest colours, New England Aster and goldenrods in the meadows.

21. Fletcher Creek Ecological Preserve



Access

Parking lot Off 7th Concession between Gore Road and rail line.

Time of Year

Spring/Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Rare fen wetland habitat is ideal for viewing unique wildlife and plants such as orchids, round-leaved sundew, Labrador-tea, and Pitcher-plant.
- Red-bellied, Garter, Brown, Eastern Milk, Smooth Green, Northern Water, and Ribbon Snakes; Bullfrog, Gray Treefrog, Northern Leopard, Western Chorus, Pickerel, Spring Peeper, and Green Frogs; Snapping and Painted Turtles (Spring).
- Barn Swallow, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush and Scarlet Tanager (Summer).
- Fall colours in the forests and swamps.

22. Windermere Basin



Access

Approximately 2 km. east of Toll Gate Ponds on Eastport Drive.

Time of Year

Spring/Fall/Winter

Flora and Fauna

- Common Tern colony (Spring)
- Migrating shorebirds (Fall)
- Overwintering waterfowl eg. scaup spp.; Snowy Owls (Winter)

call for only a few nights and most breeding is done in one evening.

23. Van Wagner's Ponds



Access

Van Wagner's Beach Road, opposite beach and parking lot for "Hutch's" restaurant.

Time of Year

Summer

Flora and Fauna

- Caspian, and Common Terns and Black-crowned Night-herons feed here June-August.
- Common Moorhen, gadwall, sandpipers, ducks, and Green Herons have been observed here.
- Abandoned railway embankment serves as trail; in June, turtles nest here.

24. Confederation Park



Access

Down Van Wagner's Beach Road on the east side of the Skyway Bridge. Take the pedestrian bridge from the Red Hill Valley over QEW, or drive to Van Wagner's Beach Road from Beach Boulevard. Access off QEW from Eastport Drive.

Time of Year

Spring to Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Waterfowl and passerine migration in the spring and fall.

25. King's Forest/Red Hill Valley



Access

Mud Street and Mt. Albion Road, 4 km. west of Hwy. #20. From Hamilton, follow Mohawk Road to its extreme eastern end, where it becomes Mud Street along the escarpment edge. Parking lot is on the left.

Time of Year

Winter/Summer

Flora and Fauna

- Cooper's Hawks, finches, migrating birds (Winter)
- Purple Cress, Smooth rock Cress, Dutchman's Breeches, Squirrel Corn, Broadleaf Waterleaf, Red-backed Salamanders, butterflies, Chinook salmon (Summer).

26. Albion Falls/Buttermilk Falls



Access

Mud Street and Mt. Albion Road, 4km. west of Hwy. #20. From Hamilton, follow Mohawk Road to its extreme eastern end, where it becomes Mud Street along the escarpment edge. Parking lot is on the left.

Time of Year

Spring/Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Niagara Escarpment views of the Red Hill Valley with Sugar Maple forests, meadows, and thickets.
- Turkey Vultures circling the escarpment (Spring/Fall).

27. Felker's Falls



Access

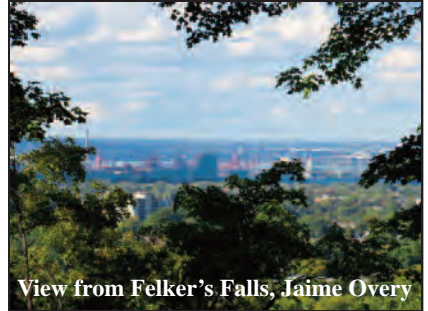
From Stoney Creek follow Mud Street west to Paramount Drive to Ackland Street. A parking lot is on the right-hand side.

Time of Year

Spring to Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Sugar Maple forests that offer views of Downtown Hamilton.
- Wild Columbine, Wild Sarsaparilla, asters, Bulblet Fern, and Purple Trilliums in the ground layer of the table land and forested talus.



View from Felker's Falls, Jaime Overy

28. Devil's Punch Bowl



Access

On Ridge Road 1km. east of Hwy. #20. Parking available on Conservation lands.

Time of Year

Spring to Fall

Flora and Fauna

- Sugar Maple, Hemlock forests (Spring to Fall)
- Bird migration (Spring/Fall)
- Wild Ginger, Spotted Jewelweed, Blue Cohosh, and Goldie's Wood Fern in the understory of the forest.
- Chimney Swifts, Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark in the fields above the escarpment.

29. Beamer Memorial Conservation Area



Access

QEW Niagara east to Christie Street exit. Follow Christie Street south through Grimsby, up the escarpment. Turn at first right (Ridge Road), and follow the signs to the Conservation Area on Quarry Road.

Time of Year

March-Early May

Flora and Fauna

- Migrating hawks, falcons, vultures, eagles. The best days to view these birds are with south-east winds and sunny between March and May.
- Trails along the escarpment.

30. Binbrook Reservoir



Access

Highway #20 in Stoney Creek south to Highway #56. Turn right onto Kirk Road. Turn left onto Harrison Road.

Time of Year

Summer to Winter.

Flora and Fauna

- Waterfowl, shorebirds, Osprey have been sighted.
- Baltimore Oriole, Orchard Oriole, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Tree Swallows have been observed. The reservoir provides excellent habitat for aquatic fauna such as frogs and turtles. Fish sanctuary - catch and release policy.
- Ice fishing available in the winter.

Observations

Take a minute to write down your observations at any of the Hamilton Hot Spots!

Local Environmental Organizations

Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program

838 Mineral Spring Rd, Ancaster, Ontario
L9G 4X1

www.hamiltonhaltonstewardship.ca

Hamilton Naturalists' Club

P. O. Box 89052, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4R5

www.hamiltonnature.org

Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC)

B130F-Life Sciences Building, McMaster University
1280 Main Street W, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4K1
905-527-7111

www.hamiltonharbour.ca

Environment Hamilton

22 Wilson Street, Suite 4, Hamilton, Ontario L8R 1C5
905-549-0900

contactus@environmenthamilton.org

McMaster Public Interest Research Group

MUSC 229, McMaster University
1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4S4
905-525-9140 ext. 27289

www.opirg.ca

Green Venture

22 Veevers Drive, Hamilton, ON L8K 5P5
Phone: 905-540-8787 Fax: 905-540-8882
Web site: www.greenventure.on.ca

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Pick-up Locations and Information

Hamilton Conservation Authority

Administration Office
838 Mineral Springs Road
Ancaster, On
905-525-2181

Dundas Valley Conservation Area

650 Governors Road
Dundas, On
905-627-1233

Valens Conservation Area

1691 Regional Road 97 (RR#6)
Flamborough, On
905-525-2183 or 519-621-6029

Confederation Park

585 Van Wagners Beach Road
Hamilton, On
905-547-6141

Christie Lake Conservation Area

1000 Highway #5 West
Dundas, Ontario
905-628-3060

Conservation Halton

Administration Office
2596 Britannia Road West
Burlington, On
905-336-1158

Mountsberg Visitor Centre

2259 Millborough Line
Campbellville, On
905-854-4358

Royal Botanical Gardens

680 Plains Road West
Burlington, On
905-527-1158

Hamilton City Hall

71 Main Street West
Hamilton, On
905-546-2424

The Bruce Trail Conservancy

Raspberry House
Arboretum Section,
Royal Botanical Gardens
Old Guelph Road
Dundas, On
905-529-6821

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