

Presentations by David J. Hawke (2025)

David is a well-known naturalist who combines his writing and photography to teach others about the out-of-doors. His weekly nature column has appeared in various media for the past 35 years (currently on-line with Village Media); his book *Wetlands* has won the **Best Book Award** from the Outdoor Writers of Canada.

He has been awarded the **Richards Education Award** from Ontario Nature, the **Lorax Award** from the Ontario Woodlot Association, and the **Environmental Legacy Award** from the Severn Sound Environmental Association for his education programs.

Over the years David has worked as a naturalist and wildlife technician at the **Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre**, and the **Tiny Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area**. He has also been employed as an eco-tourism manager for **several resorts** in central Ontario; prior to 'retiring' he was with the **Couchiching Conservancy Land Trust**, as their Stewardship Manager and Ecologist, involved with 51 properties (totaling 13,500 acres) spread across the Lake Simcoe watershed.

The following 15 presentations are available to be shared with members of your club or organization. David has often been called back to do additional shows for the same group as he is an engaging and educational speaker.

All presentations are personally narrated Powerpoint shows, each being about 45 minutes. A Q&A period after the presentation is encouraged.

Speaker's fee for a Zoom presentation is \$100.00 (Zoom is hosted by Club).

Speaker's fee for an in-person presentation within Simcoe County is \$190.00
(Please note: In-person only available during non-winter months; fee may increase with further distances)



To reserve a date for your presentation contact Dave at:

david.hawke55@gmail.com

Topics have been arranged seasonally but can be substituted for whatever best suits your organization:

SPRING / SUMMER:

1. Alvars: A Globally Significant Habitat... right next door

Alvars are found only in five places on Earth, and many are scattered around the Great Lakes. The Carden Alvar is a globally renowned limestone-based area east of Orillia that supports a collection of rare and unique plants and animals.



2. Selective Flora of Simcoe County (a.k.a. Dave's Fave Wildflowers)

Simcoe County is blessed with a wide variety of natural landscapes, each hosting an array of wildflowers species. Of the thousands of plant species that grow here, this show looks at the ones that have caught my eye over the years. Presented is a bit of history and lore that goes with each one.

3. Spring Things: Signs of Seasonal Change

Natural events are always in play and as the seasons change it is not always the calendar that marks the start of a new season. The winter-to-spring shift is one of the most looked-forward-to events of the year and Dave will present signs that can be noted long before March 23.





4. Invasive Plants and What You Can Do About Them

Southern Ontario is a hotbed for invasive species (over 450 of them) and Simcoe County has become the new home for many problematic plants. This presentation covers why they are a concern, identifies the local botanical vagrants and discusses several control methods.

5. View from the Bow Seat: Nature Along our Waterways

If you prefer paddling over walking, this show is for you! A canoe will get you into several types of wet habitats, and each has its own set of animals and wildflowers. The information within this presentation will have you taking a closer look at the nature found along shorelines and portage routes.



6. Wildflowers: Legends and Lore

There are some strange names attached to our local wildflowers and this presentation looks at the history and uses of many of them. From Stinking Benjamin to Bouncing Bet to Dog-strangling Vine learn of their background and why they continue to be a fascination to botanists.

AUTUMN:



7. Fabulous Fungi: A Fun Introduction to the Mysterious World of Mycology

Mushrooms, fungi and slime molds are not only unique to look at but are quite special in their roles within ecology. While this presentation is not an 'edible wild' show, it will whet your appetite to learn more of this commonly found group of not-quite-plants.

8. Foraging the Edible Wild: Think Twice

There has been a renewed interest in foraging for wild grown edible plants and mushrooms. While this notion seems like a good idea, it is fraught with challenges: which ones are poisonous and which ones are good for you? Can you pick mushrooms in a public park? Is this a blueberry or a blue berry? This presentation also looks at toxicity and the effects on the human body.



WINTER... or ANYTIME:

9. Horse High, Pig Tight and Bull Strong: The Overlooked History of Fences in Ontario

You have seen them everywhere but do you know the interesting role that fences have played over the years? The oldest law in Ontario is the Line Fences Act and it's still in play today. Learn of fence types and how the natural landscape has had to adapt to these intrusions. This topic is more fun than your first impression, guaranteed.



10. The Social, Geological and Biological Histories of the Wye Valley

The Wye Marsh is well known for its nature education centre, and one of the reasons the Centre was built there was because of the rich history of the area. The presentation starts 12,000 years ago and looks at the evolution of plant growth and

the associated human uses that have been documented. From food gathering by the Indigenous nomads to a Jesuit stronghold to a logging company to a hunting club to a renowned tourist attraction, the Wye Valley has provided the natural resources for all of these pursuits.



11. Wetlands: Habitat in Peril

Southern Ontario has lost over 85% of the marshes and swamps that were left behind when the glaciers melted. These habitats, plus fens and bogs, are not only home to a rich array of wildlife, they ensure the water is cleansed, cooled and held available. Sadly, most have been filled in, drained or so severely

compromised that these natural services are no longer available.

12. Wild Orchids of Simcoe County

Orchids are darn difficult to grow in a greenhouse and the wild ones are just as challenging to find and protect. Due to the great range of habitats found within Simcoe County there are many associated orchids within each. From the Showy Lady's-slipper to the tiny Ram's-head (and the even smaller Southern Twayblade), this presentation will make you aware of the local diversity of wild orchids.



13. Make Peace with Winter

Do you find yourself feeling depressed at the endless weeks of cold and snow? This presentation takes a look at how wildlife survives this toughest season, and how Nature can provide us with some true spirit lifting scenes.



14. Environmental Ethics: How Can Everyone Be Right?

Using his personal experiences from time spent working for land management organizations, David will look at how personal morals, organizational ethics, and supposed common sense interact with critical decision making. There's always at

least two sides to a dilemma, and it takes an open mind to accept alternatives.

This program is a “light-weight introduction” to understanding why others do not think the same way you do!

15. Poisonous Plants and Toxic Wildflowers!

We have all heard the tales of how, if you eat certain plants, you are on one-way trip to the ‘Boot Hill Cemetery’. Growing within our local forests and wetlands are many species that can cause you great discomfort, yet there are thousands more that can be quite beneficial to you. This presentation looks at toxicity and which plants you may wish to take a pass on.

