



## WRIG 2015 FIELD CREW

We are pleased to have two returning field crew members working with WRIG this summer! Brittany MacLean has returned as our Field Crew Supervisor and Jerrica Cormier is back as WRIG’s Field Crew Technician. Both hard workers, Brittany and Jerrica are knowledgeable and are excellent additions to our WRIG staff.

Brittany recently received her Wildlife Conservation diploma from Holland College and plans to attend the University of New Brunswick in the fall to complete a B.Sc. in Environment and Natural Resources. She enjoys recreational hunting and fishing and has won awards for her skills. Jerrica will be starting her second year at UPEI in the fall where she is focusing on Biology and the environment. As a black belt, she excels at karate and is an occasional instructor.

Brittany and Jerrica have started their field work and are looking forward to a great summer!



WRIG 2015 Field Crew Supervisor Brittany MacLean (left), and Crew Technician Jerrica Cormier (right). Contact WRIG if you’re interested in having stream restoration work done on your property or if you’d like to be on the list for tree planting next year.

## 2015 Celebrate our River and Duck Race!

Our annual Celebrate Our River event is coming up! Get ready to come out to Rackham’s Pond for a fun-filled afternoon on Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup>. We will be having a BBQ and everyone is welcome! Bring your friends and family for free hot dogs and fun for all ages. We will be hosting the popular Duck Race at this event, so make sure to buy your duck ticket. Duck tickets will be available at Gallant’s Clover Farm and at the WRIG office in the Cymbria Lions Club. With the purchase of a duck ticket, you will be assigned a racing duck to enter in the race from Rackham’s Pond down to the Wheatley River Bridge. This is always great fun for everyone and we offer prizes for the first three people whose ducks make it to the finish line. Come join in the fun—enjoy our beautiful river, learn more about the watershed, and take part in family friendly games and outdoor activities. Keep an eye out for our posters around the community, on our Facebook page, and on our website ([www.wheatleyriver.ca](http://www.wheatleyriver.ca)) for additional details!



## WRIG Welcomes New Watershed Manager

WRIG welcomed a new Watershed Manager, Kayla Nieuwhof, at the beginning of the summer. Kayla grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado before moving to Iowa for university where she received her B.A. in Environmental Studies and a minor in Biology. She moved here in January with her husband, Pete, and now lives in Anglo Rustico. She has had the privilege of working with several environmental groups in a variety of places ranging from Iowa to Ontario to New Zealand. Kayla volunteered with the Cornwall and Area Watershed Group and is now enjoying working in our watershed as well. She is looking forward to partnering with this community to protect and preserve this beautiful place we call home and is excited to work to make a difference in our natural spaces for our enjoyment and for the enjoyment of future generations.



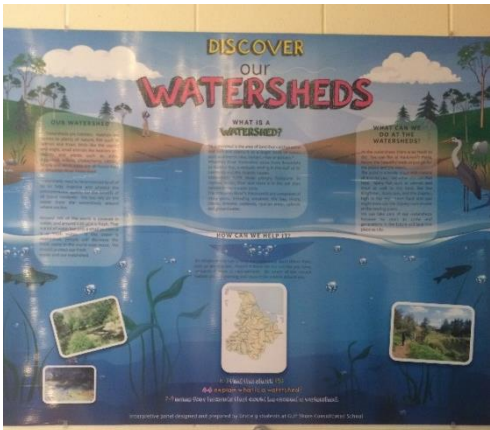


# JACK HANLEY MEMORIAL BENCH



Many of our community members will recall the late Jack Hanley, the quiet and kindly American who spent much of his life visiting and living on the Island. He served as a director for several years and actively supported WRIG’s work for many more. One of Jack’s favourite places was Rackham’s Pond, where he faithfully mowed the grass and generally looked after the park so that all visitors might enjoy its beauty and peace. It therefore seems appropriate that this should be the site of a modest memorial to him; a bench and oak tree, which we hope will be enjoyed by many in the years to come. *The board acknowledges with thanks the financial contributions of Jack's many friends to this memorial and Jeff Arsenault's craftsmanship in constructing the bench. (Submitted by S. Lowe)*

## Thank You to the 2014 & 2015 Grade 9 classes of Gulf Shore Consolidated School!



Interpretive display panel designed by Gulf Shore Students.

Environmental Education is one of the key components of WRIG’s mandate and we have seen local students go above and beyond at Gulf Shore Consolidated school as they undertook a year-long project looking at challenges and changes in their local rivers and streams as part of the RBC Evergreen Watershed Challenge. This project culminated in the design of the informational ‘Discover Our Watersheds’ panel pictured here. As a result of the students’ hard work and dedication, they won the RBC Evergreen Watershed Champions Regional Award and we are incredibly proud! This year, in addition to purchasing a microscope for the school’s science department and creating the display panel, the graduating grade 9 students presented a large portion of their prize to WRIG in order to start a fund which will help make travel to environmental events within the Wheatley River and Hunter-Clyde watersheds possible for

future students. This project was done under the guidance of the grade 9 teachers at Gulf Shore—John Stephens and Kathryn Rajamanie. We appreciate all the work this group of students dedicated to this project, thank you Gulf Shore!

## Woodland Ducks and Duck Boxes

In the past, the wood duck was a well-known, very common and thriving species in eastern North America. Eventually, however, overharvesting of these ducks resulted in their near extinction around the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 has been one of the major factors in restored wood duck populations, along with the help of man-made nesting structures.

This season, the Wheatley River Improvement Group has decided to take initiative by putting up duck boxes within the community. Wood ducks, much like many other duck and bird



species, often search for holes and cavities within trees as their preferred nesting habitat. Duck boxes are made to imitate these natural nesting areas and have been placed by Ducks Unlimited in some environments around the island, successfully resulting in duck inhabitation.

An ideal duck box is made of cedar, which is naturally resistant to insects and a variety of weather conditions; however, other

materials such as pine or plywood are sufficient. Wood ducks tend to nest in wooded wetlands or on the banks of rivers, where water is present year round, or at least seasonally. Duck boxes should be placed in similar environment conditions. These artificial structures are most efficient when they are mounted on trees or steel or wooden poles either above the water source or beside it. Predator guards are often a crucial addition to the duck box, used to prevent raccoons and other species from stealing eggs inside the box. A layer of wood shavings is also beneficial to add to the bottom of the box providing the hen with some material for nesting but which should be replenished yearly along with a regular maintenance check in advance of the nesting season.

If you would like any additional information on the wood duck species, where to pick up or make a duck box, or would like to inform us of wood duck sightings, please contact the Wheatley River Improvement Group! *(Submitted by J. Cormier)*



(Male wood duck © Christopher L. Wood)

# American Kestrel

The American kestrel is the smallest falcon in North America, it is around 22-31cm in length and weighs



only 80-165g. Males have a slate blue color on their wings and on their head, with a rusty red color on their tails and back. Females are this rusty red color all over, this contrast between sexes is called sexual dimorphism.

A kestrel’s main diet includes mostly insects and small rodents; because of their size, they have been observed eating dragonflies, spiders, voles, bats, small songbirds, small snakes, and frogs. Kestrels hunt by day, scanning for prey from the same perch. When prey is spotted the kestrel pounces on it with both feet taking it from the ground, carrying larger prey back to the perch to be consumed. You’ll find the American kestrel in grasslands, farm fields, and cities. All these places have plenty of open areas and sparse trees. This is the type of habitat these birds of prey thrive in because they can see everything around them. American kestrels are cavity nesters but lack the ability to cultivate their own so they rely on pre-existing holes to nest in. This is where

we come in. There are many Kestrel nest box programs all throughout the States and Canada where groups go out in the field and put up these boxes made specifically for kestrels. Populations here in Canada and the north are thriving but down in the southern states they are dropping dramatically. Holland College in Charlottetown started a nest box program 5 years ago in order to help the population of kestrels here before they migrate south; we have 7 of these nest boxes in our watershed. Chicks are born in the spring and are ready to be banded by mid-July before they start flying. Kestrels have 4-5 chicks a year and this year the Holland College students from the Wildlife Conservation Technology crew banded a whopping 100 chicks in July. We were privileged to help with a day of banding this year’s kestrel chicks. This year has been a very good year for kestrel numbers. This is probably because their prey, such as voles and mice, are high in number. This is ideal for when the chicks start to fly and hunt for themselves so they can prepare for the flight south in the coming months. Look out for kestrel boxes around the watershed and you might see an American kestrel nearby!  
*(Submitted by B. MacLean)*



## YOUR 2015/2016 WRIG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Treasurer, Stephen Lowe
- Secretary, Trudy MacDonald
- Director, Sidney Annema
- Director, Jeff Arsenault
- Director, Micah Gallant
- Director, Charles Lipnicki
- Director, Stewart MacRae



## Special Thanks to Rackham’s Pond Landowners

- Grant, Nancy, & Steven Rackham •
  - Charles and Laura Lipnicki •
  - Melvin & Debbie Ling •
- Michael & Betty-Ann Mokler •
- Philip & Shirley Wheatherbee •



## OUR GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE:

### OUR FUNDING SOURCES:

- Province of Prince Edward Island Watershed Management Fund•
- Greening Spaces•
- Government of Canada Summer Jobs Program•
- PEI Employment Development Agency – Special Projects•
- Jobs for Youth•
- Wildlife Conservation Fund



### OUR PARTNERS:

- Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group•
- Agriculture Canada•
- PEI Department of Forestry and Agriculture•
- Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal•

## AND OF COURSE, ALL OUR INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, AND CORPORATE MEMBERS!

- BLUE BAY FARMS
- GAUDREAU FINE WOODWORKING
- LE CONSEIL ACADIEN DE RUSTICO, INC.
- SAVORY ENTERPRISES-OYSTER BED ESSO
- THE CYMBRIA LIONS CLUB
- GILLIS MUSSELS, INC.



# From The Island Nature Trust: Bobolinks and Barn Swallows



This summer the Island Nature Trust has a project aimed towards helping two farmland birds: Bobolink and Barn Swallow. They

have been asking landowners and farmers to make changes to their property in order to create the ideal habitat for these birds. Although they are both still regularly spotted on PEI, both birds have been designated as threatened. It is estimated that 88% of the bobolink population and 76% of the barn swallow population has been lost in the last 40 years in Canada. There are many factors that have contributed to their decline. Among them are changes in agriculture practices and habitat loss. Bobolinks nest on the ground in hayfields, so early harvesting often results in destruction of eggs, nests, young, and even adults. Barn Swallows construct mud nests in open barns or other out buildings and increasingly, traditional-style wooden barns are being abandoned or destroyed. If you see a Bobolink or Barn Swallow, report your sighting to Island Nature Trust (landbirds@islandnaturetrust.ca or 902-892-7513). Data collected by citizens is crucial in the understanding of local bird populations. *(Submitted by S. Wallace, Island Nature Trust)*

Photo credit: Bobolink (above) - A. Strong  
Barn swallow (right) - M. Daly.



## Questions? Comments? Just want to get in touch?

You can reach us through the WRIG website [www.wheatleyriver.ca](http://www.wheatleyriver.ca), on our Facebook page, or e-mail [Kayla@WheatleyRiver.ca](mailto:Kayla@WheatleyRiver.ca). Office hours are variable during the field season, so if you'd like to drop by for a chat, please contact us to make sure we're in, and we'll be happy to meet you at the WRIG office in the Cymbria Lions Club at 2184 Church Road!



## Coming Events

**Wheatley River Watershed Photography Contest:** Share what you see around the watershed with us by submitting your landscape or wildlife photographs for WRIG's Summer Photography Contest! We want to see what you think is beautiful or interesting. We are also looking for new pictures for our office and our website. More details are to come but start capturing the vivid colors and abundant life of summer now!  
**Celebrate Our River:** Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, at Rackham's Pond. This year's event will include a free BBQ, outdoor games for the kids, and our famous Duck Race!! Keep your eyes open for posters around the community with event details. Don't forget to get your duck tickets from Gallant's Clover Farm or the WRIG office!

## Summer Highlights

On June 12, WRIG and the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group (HCWG) held the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Environmental Fun Day for approximately 100 students from local schools at the Island Preserve Company.  
At the end of June, WRIG took part in the Aquaculture Alliance's 2015 shoreline cleanup campaign and collected garbage along the beach east of the Oyster Bed Causeway.  
On Canada Day we had a booth in North Rustico with HCWG and gave away 200 trees.  
Our field crew has planted over 550 trees, placed 4 new wood duck nesting boxes, and has started stream enhancement work for the season.

Please Consider Joining Our Membership



Individual or Family \$10.00  
Corporate or Supporting \$50.00

Simply clip this out and mail it to:

The Wheatley River Improvement Group  
2184 Church Rd, RR#3  
Hunter River, PE, COA 1N0

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email - Would you like to be notified about upcoming WRIG meetings and events? \_\_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_\_ No Thanks \_\_\_\_\_

Please visit us online at... [www.WheatleyRiver.ca](http://www.WheatleyRiver.ca)

