

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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International Biodiversity Day in Brockville

Brockville, Ontario, 8 May 2009: The Bishops Mills Natural History Centre, Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area, and the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority will mark International Biodiversity Day (IBD), May 22nd, with an informative and exploratory event for all ages. Come out to survey for invasive Garlic Mustard and Rusty Crayfish around Brockville and Lyn Creek. We will also be on the lookout for populations of the European snail, *Cepaea nemoralis*.

Join Fred Schueler, at 09h30 am, Friday, 22 May, at the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area to learn more about Garlic Mustard, an invasive herb choking out forest floor species across southern and eastern Ontario. From there we will carpool up for a swing around Brockville looking for Garlic Mustard (10h30-12h00), then supplement our lunches with whatever Garlic Mustard has been harvested.

After lunch (13h30), participants will drive to Lyn Valley Conservation Area to search the creeks for Rusty Crayfish (14h00-16h30), an aggressive species that is expanding its range in Ontario streams and rivers. "It often eliminates habitat for fish and other native species, and often grows too large to be eaten by fish that prey on native crayfish." reports Fred Schueler, research curator at the Bishops Mills Natural History Centre.

The Mac Johnson Wildlife Area is north of the City of Brockville, Ontario in the township of Elizabethtown-Kitley. Take Hwy 29 to Debruge Road/Tincap Restaurant. Turn east and the MJWA main entrance will be 2 km down on the right. ([View Google map](#))

Throughout the day, by both searching and inquiry, participants will seek the brilliant and striped European snail, *Cepaea nemoralis*, which is widespread in southern Ontario, but is sparse in eastern Ontario. The species is known from Brockville on the basis of a few shells washed down Buell's Creek. At the **Brockville bioblitz** (June 5/6), anyone who brings living local *Cepaea* snails to the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area, will win a copy of Aleta Karstad's illustrated book of exploration: ***A Place to Walk: a naturalist's journal of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail.***

Friday, May 22nd, one month after "Earth Day," is designated "International Biodiversity Day." "Biodiversity" represents all the kinds of differences among living organisms, from

within-population genetic variability, to the grandest branches of the tree of life. It can be variously quantified at different levels, but is usually used to mean “native species, living in relatively undisturbed habitats.” One of the main threats to native biodiversity is human-introduced alien species which invade relatively undisturbed habitats to attack or crowd out natives. This year the theme of IBD is Invasive Species, and the effects they have on native biota.

Ontario's Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network (BEAN) is promoting IBD as a day of local action around invasive species. These actions include the removal of Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) and monitoring the presence of Rusty Crayfish (*Orconectes rusticus*) in Ontario streams and rivers. For photos and more information on Garlic Mustard and Rusty Crayfish visit the BEAN website at <http://www.biodiversityeducation.ca/>.

The BMNHC is a small independent research institute, run by Fred Schueler and Aleta Karstad. Garlic Mustard has been one of their *bêtes noires* since they found it widespread all through Toronto in 1994 during their *A Place to Walk* survey, and they've been fussing about the threat posed by *Orconectes rusticus* since they discovered it in the pages of Crocker & Barr's *Crayfish of Ontario* in 1972. Their website is <http://pinicola.ca>

