

Lake Erie North Shore Inventory Of Vascular Plants

For a third year, the Bert Miller Nature Club continued inventories along the north shore of Lake Erie with support from the Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, the Niagara Falls Nature Club, the Peninsula Field Naturalists, and the Niagara Frontier Botanical Society.

Once again the protocol was similar to previous years covering namely the shoreline, pavement or sand, adjacent sand dunes and the immediate swampy areas behind the dunes.

As in previous years much of interest was observed. Two of the volunteers took special pains to identify a Serviceberry at Morgan's Point by covering the unripened fruit in cheesecloth to protect it until it ripened thus enabling them to accurately identify the bush. It turned out to be *Amelanchier humilis*.

The concentration this year has been westerly toward the mouth of the Grand River and beyond although visits were made to the Sugarloaf Hill area, Pt. Abino area and the Colonies in the Thunder Bay area.

At the Colonies we found a fine group of Southern Pond Lily (*Nuphar advena*) plus a Cactus in the *Opuntia* genus. There were also many examples of sedges such as Lake Sedge (*Carex lacustris*) and Rosy Sedge (*Carex rosea*).

On the east shore of Pt. Abino there was American Germander (*Teucrium canadense*) and Hard-stemmed Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus acutus*) along with River Bulrush (*Bolboschoenus fluviatilis*).

At the Sugarloaf Hill area, a single colony of Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) was observed.

Gravelly Bay in Port Colborne was also visited where Beach Pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*) was observed in bloom.

Low's Point at the James N. Allan Provincial Park proved to be an extremely interesting area. Here Wavy-leaved Ladies' Tresses [*Spiranthes lucida*] were found in the spring.

Two other interesting observations were made at Low's Point namely Cooper's Milkvetch [*Astragalus neglectus*] and Canada Milkvetch [*Asstragalus Canadensis*]. Another interesting find was Hairy Beardstongue [*Penstemon hirsuta*].

A special outing to the Windmill Point area open to all club members was held in mid July. Some of the highlights here were Prairie Loosestrife (*Lysimachia quadriflora*), Limestone Calamint (*Clinopodium arkansanum*) and Kalm's St Johnswort (*Hypericum kalmianum*).

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West of the village of Port Maitland the beach along Splatt Bay proved interesting. Here the beach harbored many grasses such as Amer. Beach Grass (*Ammophilla brevilgulata*), Canada Wild Rye (*Elymus canadensis*), Purple Sand Grass (*Triplasis purpurea*) and Sand Dropseed (*Sporobulus cryptandrus*). Among the other vascular plants were American Germander (*Teucrium canadense*), Trailing Wild Bean (*Strophostyles hevola*), Sea Rocket (*Cakile edentula*) and Seaside Spurge (*Chamaesyce poltgonofolia*).



American Germander



Cooper's Milkvetch

Further west the beaches toward Grant's Point were visited. The beach and dunes here are relatively undisturbed allowing for a plethora of native plants.

Among the woody species were four different Willows namely Sandbar Willow (*Salix interior*), Peach-leaved Willow (*S. amygdaloides*), Heart-leaved Willow (*S. eriocephala*) plus an alien willow—Rusty Willow (*S. atrocinerea*) and a very old and large White Oak (*Quercus alba*).

There were many rush species seen at this location such as Torrey's Rush (*Juncus torreyi*), Dudley's Rush (*Juncus dudleyii*), Joint-leaf Rush (*Juncus articulatus*) and Three Square (*Schoeoplectus pungens*).

Switch Grass (*Panicum virgatum*) was abundant here as it was in other locations. Fine examples of Big Bluestem Grass (*Andropogon gerardii*) were also noted.

Spreading Fleabane (*Erigeron strigosus*), Prairie Loosestrife (*Lysimachia quadriflora*), White Vervain (*Verbena urticifolia*), Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*) and Clammy Ground Cherry (*Physalis heterophylla*) were among many of the other interesting plants plus Hedge Bindweed (*Convolvulus sepium*) and American Germander again.

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Clammy Ground Cherry



Hedge Bindweed