

Young Wildlife Biologist Workshop



Coordinated by:



Long Point Waterfowl & Wetlands Research Fund

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Introduction

Opportunities to develop and explore interests in wildlife-related activities are often limited for high school age youth. Very few high schools offer natural science courses (or extra-curricular programs) that provide students with opportunities to learn about natural resources (including wildlife and their habitats) outside of a traditional classroom setting. This is exacerbated by the fact that there has been a substantial decline in youth participating in wildlife-related activities (e.g. hunting, fishing, viewing, etc.), with a corresponding increase in time that adolescents spend pursuing “indoor” activities (e.g., television, video games, and computers). It is believed that this change among adolescents likely has contributed to declining participation in wildlife-related activities and has caused a reduced appreciation and understanding of the natural world around them. Providing young students with memorable outdoor experiences and opportunities for unique and fun hands-on educational activities showcasing wildlife may be important for instilling life-long interest, or for potentially providing impetus to pursue a career, in natural sciences or resource management/conservation.

Youth environmental education programs often provide a unique educational atmosphere and offer experiences and opportunities that allow youngsters to more readily learn essential education and life skills. For example, studies show that youth involved in environmental education programs learn certain analytical and social skills better than those taught in a traditional “classroom” setting; students participating in such programs have shown increased capacities for reading, mathematics, science, and social skills (California Department of Education). Further, studies suggest that skills acquired through environmental education often are carried over to social and community situations (California Department of Education). Thus, environmental education programs not only help develop better students in the classroom, but they also provide the increased awareness and education to enable them to understand and contribute to

wildlife conservation and management outside of the classroom and continue to do so into the future.

Several wetland conservation organizations have responded to the decline of youth interest and participation in outdoor activities by implementing programs that encourage young people to take an active role in wildlife biology, conservation, and management. Many of these programs also educate youth about our hunting heritage and its role in wildlife conservation. The Long Point Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Fund (LPWWRF), considers youth mentorship and education very important to the future development of wildlife biologists and appreciation of our hunting heritage. Thus, through coordination of the Young Wildlife Biologist Workshop (YWBW), LPWWRF desires to instill in youth a keen interest in wildlife ecology and resource conservation/management, as well as in our hunting and outdoor heritage.

Program Objectives:

The program objectives are to provide youth with:

- 1) knowledge about the historical and contemporary importance of wildlife management and conservation;
- 2) basic knowledge about ecological processes, wildlife ecology, and wildlife habitats;
- 3) opportunities to participate in hands-on activities related to wildlife and habitat monitoring or management;
- 4) a greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of Canada's hunting heritage and the role of hunting in wildlife management;
- 5) an understanding of the educational requirements associated with careers in wildlife research and management and an appreciation of associated employment opportunities;
- 6) future opportunities for mentorship toward a career in the field of wildlife biology.

YWBW participants & fees:

The first YWBW will be offered August 20-24, 2007 to high school aged (14-16 year old) youth from the Norfolk County region; enrollment will be open to 5-10 individuals. It is anticipated that the program will be expanded in subsequent years to include additional programs, more age groups, and students from outside the Norfolk County region. Potential participants are asked to fill out a questionnaire about their interests in wildlife management and conservation (see below). Workshop participants will be selected based on their response to these questionnaires. YWBW will be offered at an affordable rate and will largely be subsidized by local interest groups. The total cost to participants will not exceed \$250. This includes all food, accommodation at the Potters Creek Youth Camp and field supplies.

Workshop structure and activities:

YWBW's activity structure will follow an outside classroom approach. Participants of YWBW will be taught by mentors during hands-on outdoor activities that highlight the interesting and exciting aspects of being a wildlife biologist. Daily activities will focus on aspects of wildlife biology that YWBW participants can take home and share with other individuals in their family and throughout the community. The following is a list of the types of activities and demonstrations that students will be participating in throughout the week:

- Duck and passerine handling and banding
- Wildlife identification
- Dip netting for aquatic macro invertebrates
- Boat tour of some of Long Point's coastal marshes
- Retriever training
- Field demonstrations on wetland and waterbird conservation and management
- Field presentations on being a waterfowl/wildlife biologist
- Presentations on being a Conservation Officer
- Being a marsh manager and the importance of hunting for conservation
- Wood duck box construction, placement, management, and monitoring

- Taxidermy demonstrations
- Hunting demonstrations (duck/goose calling, decoy placement, meat preparation, cooking etc)
- Decoy carving demonstration
- Tree identification
- Canoeing

Young Wildlife Biologist Workshop

Application Form

Closing date: 15 July 2007

Please return this completed application form and all accompanying documents to:

Ted Barney, Biologist
Long Point Waterfowl & Wetlands Research Fund
P.O. Box 160, 115 Front Road
Port Rowan, Ontario, N0E 1M0

Candidates chosen will be notified by mail within two weeks of the closing date (1 August 2007). At that time, a more detailed list of activities and additional information / forms will be sent for completion by candidates and parents/guardians. All course participants will be required to fill out a detailed Emergency Information Form and an Assumption of Risk Form. Course fees of \$250.00 (cheque payable to LPWWRF) and completed Emergency Information and Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk Forms should be mailed to LPWWRF at the above address.

Background information:

Candidate's name: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ **Province:** _____ **Postal Code:** _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Age: _____ **Grade (present / last completed):** _____

How did you find out about this workshop?

Age you first became interested in wildlife, biology, or conservation:

List your specific science and/or wildlife-related interests:

List your hobbies and/or extracurricular activities:

List any nature, conservation, or outdoor recreation organizations to which you currently (or previously) belong:

Describe any volunteer/community service work that you have been involved with:

Do you plan on attending college or university? If so, what field of study currently interests you most?

Report Card:

Please attach a photo copy of your most recent report card to this application form. This information will only be viewed by the YWBW Selection Committee and will remain confidential.

Signature of Candidate: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Parent/guardian: _____ **Date:** _____

Essays:

We require that candidates write **two separate one-page essays** to help us gain a better understanding into your level of interest and commitment to learning about wildlife biology, resource management, and conservation. These essays will be very important in allowing the YWBW Selection Committee to score and rank each candidate's application. Thus, they should be well-written and reflect your own thoughts and ideas on each of the topics listed below, which are:

1) "Why I want to participate in the Young Wildlife Biologist Workshop"

2) "Why (insert your activity here) is my favourite wildlife-related activity"

Letter of Support:

Please attach one letter of support from an adult reference (for example, a teacher, scout leader, leader of an outdoors club, etc) to this application. This letter should attest to your interests, skills, and experiences in nature, wildlife, biology, science, and/or conservation. References may be contacted for further information regarding candidates.

Reference Contact Information (return with completed application form)

Reference name: _____ Position: _____

Relationship to candidate: _____ Phone: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal code: _____

Emergency Information Form - Confidential:

Medical Insurance:

Health Card # (or equivalent): _____

Name of other insurer(s) and policy numbers:

Name of Policy Holder (if not candidate): _____

Policy holder guarantees that additional insurance is in effect for the duration of the Young Wildlife Biologist Workshop, 20 - 24 August 2007.

Signature of Policy Holder: _____ Date: _____

Health Information:

Please give any allergies, drug sensitivities, regular medications and other information that might be of significance to a physician or hospital treating you during an emergency:

Please also list any dietary needs or concerns (e.g., vegetarian, lactose intolerant, etc):

Emergency Contact:

Please give the following information for a person who can be reached in an emergency, during the workshop, 20 – 24 August 2007

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

Acknowledgement & Assumption of Risk Form

Young Wildlife Biologist Workshop - 20 – 24 August 2007

Candidate name: _____

I am aware that during field trips, exchanges or other excursions in which I am participating under the arrangements of The Long Point Waterfowl & Wetlands Research Fund / Bird Studies Canada (LPWWRF / BSC), certain risks and dangers may occur, including but not limited to the hazards of traveling, accidents or illness in remote places without medical facilities, the forces of nature and travel by air, train, automobile or other means as well as exposure to customs and practices of societies different from our own. Accordingly, I understand that despite its efforts, LPWWRF / BSC may not be able to ensure my complete safety at all times from such risks and dangers.

More particularly, I appreciate LPWWRF / BSC does not carry accident or injury insurance for my benefit and also that there may be certain matters for which I could be at fault personally if the accompanying circumstances do not relate to or arise from my education or if my activities or conduct fall short of what would be considered a reasonable standard for an individual in my position. In these cases I agree to be accountable in all respects for my own actions and not to ask the LPWWRF / BSC or its employees to accept the consequences thereof; further, I agree to be responsible for any claims made against the LPWWRF / BSC in relation to such actions.

I acknowledge that I have been advised by LPWWRF / BSC of such risks and dangers as well as the need to act in a responsible manner at all times. My signature below is given freely in order to indicate my participation in the “Young Wildlife Biologist Workshop”.

Candidate signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/guardian signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Young Wildlife Biologist Workshop Document Check-list:

Please ensure you have included the following items in your application package for the YWBW:

- Completed and signed YWBW Application Form
- Photo-copy of most recent report card – to remain confidential
- Essay on “Why I want to participate in the YWBW”
- Essay on “Why _____ is my favorite wildlife-related activity”
- Reference Contact Information
- Letter of Support

To be eligible, application must be post-marked by 15 July 2007 and sent to:

Ted Barney, Biologist
Long Point Waterfowl & Wetlands Research Fund / Bird Studies Canada
P.O. Box 160, 115 Front Road
Port Rowan, Ontario, N0E 1M0

For additional information or questions contact:

Ted Barney, LPWWRF Biologist: 519-586-3531 ext. 219; tbarney@bsc-eoc.org

or

Dr. Scott Petrie, LPWWRF Research Director, 519-586-3531 ext. 208; spetrie@bsc-eoc.org

Note: Candidates will be notified of acceptance by 1 August 2007. Additional instructions and forms / documents will accompany the Letter of Acceptance.