

White-tailed deer



BEHIND THE LENS

DARREN MURPHY

It occurred to me recently that I've never done an article featuring one of our most common wildlife neighbors, the white-tailed deer. I thought there was an incredible amount in Lac Brome when I lived there, but here in Georgeville they are literally everywhere! A quick run down to the general store, which is two minutes from my house, I'll see on average about three to five on any given day. A drive to the depanneur in Fitch Bay I can see anywhere from one to twenty both ways. As I am sitting writing this in my office at home, which is directly across from the golf course, I am looking at four out in the open field. Every day around sunset, a few will make their way to my bird feeders which are around twenty

feet from my front door. I've watched as they consume all the seeds on the ground under the feeders, the smarter ones will nudge the hanging feeders and collect the fallen seeds. Quite opportunistic!

These are impressive looking mammals. They can reach 6-7.75 feet and weigh in at between 100-300 lbs. They are actually the smallest of the North American deer family and are found from Southern Canada all the way to South America. The white-tailed deer gets its name from the long white hair on the underside of tail and rump. It is a specialist at exploiting disrupted forest ecosystems but a poor competitor when up against other species. Their mating season is in November and December and the gestation period is roughly two hundred and two days.



During this time the females are very territorial. Twins are often born, and the mother sometimes raises the daughters into adulthood. They will then eventually leave, giving the territory to their offspring. During the summer months, these deer may sometimes live apart from others but will return during the winter months to form big herds. They are herbivores, and their diet consists of grass, twigs, fruits, nuts as well as different types of fungi. Early in the twentieth century the overall numbers of these deer were decimated by uncontrolled hunting. By the mid twentieth century the numbers rebounded to the point where many areas of the country are overwhelmed by their presence. This has led to severe forest and agricultural devastation. Locals who plant their bushes and gardens are far too often disappointed to find deer have helped themselves to an easy meal. The fence I've put around our garden seemed to work this year, however we lost several plants and bushes on other areas of the property.

One of the more devastating effects is the increase in animal-vehicle collisions. Years ago, I hit one on Autoroute 10 around Bromont. In most cases the driver is not at fault as they come from out of nowhere. When you're travelling at 100 clicks an hour there's not much you can do

to avoid the collision. Luckily, I was ok with only some front-end damage, miraculously the deer got up from the impact and somehow disappeared into the darkness. Some other drivers are not so fortunate. It's a huge problem that must be regulated if only for public safety. I have several ideas that I'll probably discuss in a future article.

This is one reason why coyotes and wolves are so important in our ecosystem. These predators do their part to keep the numbers of deer and others in check. I find coyotes (especially) always get a bad rap. While I don't like the idea of them hanging out in neighborhoods, their presence is vitally important here in the Townships. By keeping your pets inside or being with them when they're out will decrease the chances of a coyote attack. They are simply looking for an easy meal. Keep in mind they are in fact wild animals and are doing what comes natural to survive. I find on Knowlton.com there are far too many lost pets wandering around Lac Brome and Knowlton. This is like ringing the dinner bell to predators in the area. As a photographer white tailed deer have given me many great photo opportunities. Watching a mother and her baby fawn is truly beautiful to behold and reminds me of how lucky we are to live where we do!

Pastel workshops in Potton

The Scoop
By Mable Hastings

Potton is abundant in talent. From art to music and a variety of unique artistic expressions in between, creative people have long found Potton the perfect place to put down their roots and let the artistic juices flow.

Meet Potton resident and figurative artist, Sylvie Geneau. Sylvie is a member of the Pastel Society of Eastern Canada. Inspired by the ever-changing seasons, shapes, lights and adapting atmospheres, her inspiration comes mainly from nature and country roads. Sylvie formerly specialized in Management of Creativity and Leadership Development working 10 years at Cirque du Soleil and then founded Créno-Innovation where she designed and delivered workshops.

In September 2022 Sylvie offered a

charcoal drawing workshop through the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre, CABMN and following it several participants expressed interest in partaking in another workshop. Starting on March 15, The Municipality of Potton is proud to announce that Sylvie will offer a series of four Wednesday afternoon workshops through to April 5 in the basement of the Mansonville Catholic Church which is now being used as a Municipal space. The weekly session is free for Potton residents and each session runs from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can reserve your space by registering with Sylvie at: sylviegeneau61@gmail.com or by calling the Potton library at 450-292-3948.

"Participants do not need prior drawing experience," explained Geneau. "They will learn the basics of dry pastel and they will then get creative. The workshop held last



COURTESY

Figurative artist, Sylvie Geneau to offer workshops in Potton

September revealed a lot of local talent in Potton," she said.

March can sometimes be a grey time of year. Sylvie offers 16-18 participants the opportunity to bring some colour into their Wednesday afternoons with this series of workshops. Spaces are limited so early registration is wise.

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