

The Nature of Ontario

Lecturer: Michael Runtz

Ontario is as large as many countries, and harbours a diverse array of habitats, ranging from the most southern subarctic tundra in the world to the most northern section of Carolinian Forest in North America. Also included in the mix are remnant areas of tall grass prairie, rare limestone alvars, coastal sand dunes, and fire-driven Jack Pine forests. These habitats are home to an incredible diversity of plants and animals that includes prairie species such as Badgers and White-tailed Jackrabbits, southern species such as Five-lined Skinks and Prothonotary Warblers, and northern species such as Polar Bears and Arctic Foxes. When the lichens and plants (such as Prickly Pear Cactus and Arctic Willow) are added to this diversity, more than 17,000 species call Ontario home. This extravagantly illustrated series by Carleton University's celebrated naturalist Michael Runtz will explore in detail the diverse ecoregions that make Ontario a most exciting place to explore.

Schedule of topics:

Week 1:

The Far North: Hudson and James bays - the land of ice, wind, and salt

Week 2:

Muskeg and the Near North: a world between water and land

Week 3:

The Boreal Forest: much more than Black Flies and Black Spruce

Week 4:

The Far West: prairie and pelicans in Ontario?

Week 5:

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest Region: inland seas and the land of highs and lows

Week 6:

The Carolinian Forest: Tulip Trees and Opossums - Canada's deep south