

Get hooked on fishers: professor to discuss ferocious weasel

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BY NOW, PRETTY WELL EVERYONE has heard a fantastic story or two about the fisher, a member of the weasel family that's been making a comeback in eastern Ontario forests.

The ferociousness of the sleek, largely arboreal mustelid has been so generally accepted by people who have never seen one – its taste for domestic house cats given such common currency that last summer a Kingston city councillor called on animal control to deal with the city's fisher 'problem.'

Anyone who'd like the real skinny on the elusive fisher, however, should head to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area's Outdoor Centre on Sunday at 2 p.m.

Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority has invited Jeff Bowman, an adjunct professor at Trent University, to talk about the animal, its habits, and unique place in our evolving landscape.

Bowman is with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Wildlife Research and Development Section and has been involved in research on some of Canada's most emblematic species, including the lynx, flying squirrels and various members of the mustelid family – martens, mink, fishers and the formidable and rarely glimpsed denizen of the far north, the wolverine, the largest and most powerful weasel on the planet.

Bowman will discuss the fisher's return to its ancestral range in southern Ontario and how climate change, agricultural practices and the reforestation of marginal cleared land has created new habitat for the species.

He will also explain the fisher's ecological role, share recent research findings and maybe bury a few urban myths.

The conservation area is located on Division Street, about two kilometres north of Highway 401. Admission for adults and children over 12 years of age is \$4.50, to a maximum of \$11 per car.

More information on activities at the conservation area is available at www.cataraquiregion.on.ca.