

F I E E D

Field Research in Ecology and Evolution Diversified

ALGONQUIN

2023



For our third event of the year, FREED returned to the Algonquin Wildlife Research Station in August 2023, where we welcomed 13 new undergraduate students from the University of Toronto. Spanning all three campuses and multiple disciplines, the FREED participants (or FREEDlings as we know them) were united by their eagerness to learn!

On day one, we had a chance to get to know each other over a warm campfire under the clear starry night sky. Come morning, FREED hit the water in a Learn to Canoe workshop by **Kevin Clute and Linda 'Lecko' Leckie** who demonstrated key paddling strokes and portaging techniques before leading us on a picturesque canoe trip. These canoeing skills came in handy later in the week during **Reta Meng's** turtle workshop, where we went canoeing to look for turtles, explored bog mats, and practiced telemetry.

This was not our last foray into the aquatic habitat! **Demiesha Dennis** and **Arlo Pescatore-Tardioli** taught us how to fly fish and **Rachel Giles** led an aquatic ecology workshop to learn more about how to study the magnificent small critters in lakes and rivers. The importance of invertebrates was reinforced in **Maria Tocora's** entomology workshop where the FREEDlings tested insect sampling methods and applied their new knowledge to invent and draw their own insect! It was incredible to witness these creative and artistic skills in action, especially during **Viviana Astudillo-Clavijo's** science illustration workshop. Students also learned how to effectively communicate their unique experiences through different mediums, with an emphasis on storytelling in the science communication workshop led by **Cylita Guy**.

Our evenings were filled with activity too, as we caught moths and listened for bats in a workshop co-led by **Alexandra Israel and Brendan Boyd**. They both also led the early morning bird workshop where we got a chance to mist net and process birds. FREED wasn't just animal fun, as FREEDlings got to experience the wonderful world of plants too! In a forestry workshop, **Vanessa Nhan** led a mindful tree hike that covered identification and forestry management. **Jaime Grimm** continued this conversation in her workshop about invasive plants where she guided us through eye-opening discussion on invasive species and a demo of the Seek app.

Throughout the week, themes of connection to the land were continually integrated spurred by teachings from **Christine Luckasavitch** who talked about the Indigenous history of the land and the importance of developing a reciprocal relationship with our more-than-human kin. After a meaningful group reflection during our camping night led by **Maribel Terebiznik** and **Aranya Iyer**, FREEDlings individually expressed their thoughts through the writing prompt: 'Write a thank you letter to the land.' The responses were rich with experience and filled with insights, often citing experiences and connections we had all made throughout the week. We celebrated our last night of FREED with a scavenger hunt and an art gallery to showcase the work of the students. What a fun, full and fulfilling week!

Thank You



Whether it was donating field gear, finding storage space, in-kind contributions of labour or materials, each and every contribution helped to make FREED a success. Direct funding helped to support pay for our participants, instructors, and executive team; donations of field gear/materials facilitated the wonderful workshops led by our outstanding instructors, and other in-kind donations enabled us to accommodate students with different needs. Your support is felt in many ways and we appreciate you so much!

- Rodd family
- Emmett Snyder
- Anonymous individuals
- Jackson lab
- Cyr lab



Established 1921



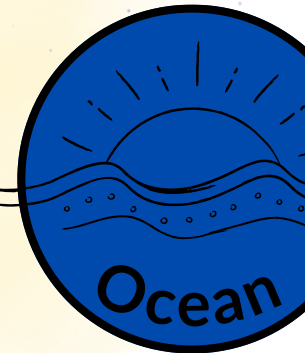
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SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!