



Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club  
Club des naturalistes d'Ottawa

2025

HONORARY MEMBER:

MICHAEL RUNTZ

*Honorary membership is conferred in recognition of outstanding contributions to Canadian natural history or to the successful operation of the Club.*

Michael Runtz is a highly respected Canadian nature photographer, naturalist and natural history author. Growing up in Arnprior, Ontario, he became hooked on birding at age five. Later he worked at Point Pelee National Park and, for 13 years, as an interpretive naturalist at Algonquin Provincial Park. He conducted biological surveys across Ontario on dragonflies and a variety of birds, including endangered species such as Peregrine Falcon and King Rail. His many talents include howling with Algonquin Park wolves, finding salamanders under rotting logs, catching dragonflies and luring rutting moose. He is frequently invited to speak to audiences ranging from radio listeners to children to professional biologists. His presentations feature stunning photography, scientific detail, clarity and humour.

At Carleton University, Associate Professor Runtz taught ornithology and natural history courses for over 30 years, retiring in 2025. His video-streamed natural history courses were immensely popular and have reached an estimated 100,000 students over the years. Carleton's faculty biography for Michael described him as "a dynamic communicator, equally at home in a TV or radio studio, lecture hall or classroom." Awarded several times for excellence in teaching, we see his enthusiastic style in his 1998 international television series, *Wild by Nature*, still available on YouTube.

Michael has published 14 natural history books on subjects including moose, beaver, wolves, birds, wildflowers and, most of all, Algonquin Park. His latest book is *Observing Nature by Canoe and Kayak* (2024). All testify to his expert knowledge, passion and outstanding photography. His award-winning photographs and natural history columns have appeared in many newspapers and magazines.

Michael's numerous awards include an Outstanding Service Award from the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, a Lifetime Achievement Award from Carleton University, and The Distinguished Public Education Award from the Canadian Council of University Biology Chairs. In 2023, he was a finalist for the Canadian Museum of Nature's Nature Inspiration Award.

A member of the OFNC since 1979, Michael received the OFNC's Anne Hanes Natural History Award for 1991 for extensive contributions to better understanding the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and beyond. He received the OFNC Conservation Award for 1997 for efforts to save Gillies Grove in Arnprior.

He co-founded the Macnamara Field Naturalists' Club of Arnprior in 1984 and is still its President, regaling members at every meeting with fascinating commentary on their recent sightings of local wildlife. It is with great pleasure that OFNC awards Michael Runtz Honorary Membership for inspiring a love of nature for untold thousands of people.

*Prepared by Bethany Armstrong and contributors*

