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ARTICLES

Cover Illustration: Roseate Spoonbill *by Barry Kent MacKay*

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Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 2009

Mark H. Cranford

Introduction

The Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) evaluates documentation it receives of any record of a species or recognizable form that is on the Review List for Ontario (see www.ofo.ca). In addition, it reviews documentation relating to new species, new subspecies, and new breeding species for the province. This 28th annual report details the results of the adjudication of 152 records by the OBRC during 2009, of which 135 (89%) were accepted.

A total of 152 observers submitted documentation for review by the 2009 Committee. Written reports were often accompanied by photographs (mostly digital images, but also a few prints), as well as field notes and sketches. As noted in recent years, the trend toward submission of photographic evidence only, with little or no supporting written evidence, is an ongoing problem. This makes it much more difficult for the Committee to compile dates of occurrence and other requested information. In addition, many details and circumstances associated with an observation, such as behaviour, comparisons to nearby birds and vocalizations, cannot be determined from photographic evidence alone. As such, we urge observers to submit written reports with their images submitted to OBRC. For those submitting photos to the Ontario Field Ornithologists' (OFO) website, please send the same photos, along with written documentation, directly to the OBRC Secretary. That being said, the OBRC reserves the right to use, as evidence, photographs that have been posted on the OFO website. Guidance regarding the documentation of rare birds can be found on the OBRC page of the OFO website (www.ofo.ca).

The members of the 2009 Committee were: Glenn Coady (Chairperson), Mark H. Cranford (non-voting Secretary), William J. Crins, Robert Z. Dobos, Ross D. James, Blake A. Mann, Ronald G. Tozer, and Alan Wormington (also serving as Assistant to the Secretary) (Figure 1). Mark K. Peck acted as Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) liaison for the OBRC.

Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) and Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*) were added to the Ontario list, and MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*) was deleted, bringing the total to 483 species. In addition, southern Ontario had its first accepted record of Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*), while northern Ontario had its first accepted records of Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus)*, Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) and Henslow's Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii).*

Figure 1: Ontario Bird Records Committee for 2009. Left to right: Alan Wormington, Blake Mann, Ross James, Glenn Coady, Ron Tozer, Bill Crins, Mark Cranford, Rob Dobos. *Photo: Mark K. Peck.*

Listing of Records

In the following species accounts the total number of accepted records to date is indicated by a single number in parentheses. Accepted records are arranged taxonomically by their English and scientific names following the Seventh Edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (AOU 1998) and subsequent supplements (42nd to 50th; see www.aou.org/checklist/index.php3). Date(s) of occurrence, number of birds, sex, plumage, and location are provided when known. Place names in italics refer to a county, regional municipality or district in Ontario; they also appear in colour. The plumage terminology used here follows that of Humphrey and Parkes (1959). For a detailed explanation of plumage and moult terminology, see Pittaway (2000). The names of all contributors providing documentation are listed, while those contributors who are known to be the discoverers of the bird are also underlined. Additional discoverers of the bird are also listed (if known), even if

they did not submit documentation. The OBRC file number is shown in parentheses at the end of each record.

The Committee attempts to verify documented information prior to the acceptance and publication of a record, but occasionally inaccuracies will occur. Anyone with pertinent information that would correct or strengthen a published record, such as date(s) of occurrence, number of birds, plumages, location, discoverers, etc., is urged to communicate this to the Secretary. In addition, there may be dates quoted in other sources that differ from those listed by the OBRC – these discrepancies are corrected whenever possible.

All records that were not accepted because of uncertain identification or questionable origin are listed separately. Contributors of all "not accepted" reports receive a letter from the Chairperson explaining the reasons for the decision, along with copies of the comments written by voting members. A "not accepted" report can be reconsidered by the OBRC if new evidence, in the form of additional documentation, is submitted to the Committee for review.

All reports submitted to the OBRC are kept on permanent file at the ROM. Researchers and other interested individuals are welcome to examine any of the filed reports at the ROM, by appointment only.
Please contact Mark K. Peck, Department of Natural History, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C6 (e-mail: markp@rom.on.ca or telephone 416-586-5523).

Changes to the Review List

Roseate Spoonbill, Black-tailed Gull and Black-throated Sparrow are added to the review list for southern Ontario and MacGillivray's Warbler is deleted. Snowy Plover, Curlew Sandpiper and Henslow's Sparrow are added to the review list for northern Ontario.

Acknowledgements

The OBRC appreciates the efforts of the numerous observers who took the time to submit documentation of their observations of rare birds for consideration by the 2009 Committee. We also thank the following people who assisted the Committee in acquiring additional data and other material evidence that supplemented the information submitted directly by observers and Committee members, or by providing expert opinions on evidence submitted to the Committee: Robert F. Andrle, Margaret J.C. Bain, Mike V.A. Burrell, Allen T. Chartier, David H. Elder, Nicholas G. Escott, Jean Griffin, Jean Iron, Mary Little, Stuart A. Mackenzie, James M. Pawlicki, Ronald J. Pittaway, Brian D. Ratcliff, Kayo J. Roy, Roy B.H. Smith, Kim Toews, Angus Wilson, John M. Woodcock, and Doug Woods.

OntBirds continues to be a useful source of information pertaining to rare birds that appear in the province; this listserve of the Ontario Field Ornithologists is moderated by Mark H. Cranford. In addition, the photographic pages on the OFO website, maintained in 2009 by Frank and Sandra Horvath, provide an excellent source of documentation for rarities. These sources of information make the Secretary's job of securing documentation much more efficient. During 2009, Alan Wormington, in his role as Assistant to the Secretary, provided valuable assistance in tracking down documentation for reports. I also wish to thank all members of the 2009 Committee for their support and assistance during the year.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

Tufted Duck ***Aythya fuligula*** **(29)**

2009 – one, definitive alternate, male, 18 November, Wolfe Island (Bayfield Bay), *Frontenac* (Brandon R. Holden, Jonathan S. Pleizier; 2009-122).

Pacific Loon ***Gavia pacifica*** **South Only (39)**

2007 – one, definitive alternate, 19-21 May, Long Point (Courtright Ridge) (19 May) and 10 km west of Long Point Tip (21 May), *Norfolk* (Edvin Hanson, also found by Julie Webber, Hilde Johansen; 2009-150) – photo on file.

Yellow-billed Loon ***Gavia adamsii*** **(4)**

2009/10 – one, juvenal, 31 December – 2 January, Sault Ste. Marie, *Algoma* (Donald W. Martin, Paul J. Cypher, Skye Haas; 2009-127) – photos on file.

On all three days this bird was also present on the Michigan side of the international boundary, providing the state with its first record of the species (Allen T. Chartier, pers. comm.).

Eared Grebe ***Podiceps nigricollis*** **North Only (18)**

2009 – one, definitive alternate, 28 May, Emo, *Rainy Rive*r (John E. Van den Broeck; 2009-068).

This species has been recorded as nesting periodically as Emo since 1996 (Coady et al. 2002).

Figure 2: Juvenal Yellow-billed Loon Sault Ste. Marie, ***Algoma,*** **from 31 December 2009 to 2 January 2010.** *Photo: Donald W. Martin.*

Western Grebe ***Aechmophorus occidentalis*** **(27)**

2009 – one, basic, 13 February – 28 March, Scarborough, *Toronto* (Edward W. O'Connor, Winnie Poon, A. Geoffrey Carpentier, Jean Iron, Mike V.A. Burrell; 2009-022) – photos on file.
– one, alternate, 17-24 April, Etobicoke, *Toronto* (Mike V.A. Burrell, John Nishikawa; 2009-023) – photos on file.
– one, alternate, 23 May, Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (Margaret J.C. Bain, also found by David Okines, Andrew Cadman and Eric A. Machell; 2009-024).

2007 – one, basic, 1-9 November, Long Point (Tip), *Norfolk* (Matt K. Slaymaker, Stuart A. Mackenzie; 2009-151) – photos on file.

There is no evidence of overlap between the two Toronto birds; however, evidence was insufficient to consider the two records as a single occurrence.

Northern Gannet ***Morus bassanus*** **(42)**

2007 – three, juvenal, 10 November – 15 December, Fifty Point Conservation Area, *Hamilton/Niagara*, Van Wagners Beach, *Hamilton*, Burlington, *Halton*, Oakville, *Halton,* Clarkson, *Peel*, Port Credit, *Peel* (Rick Lauzon, Barry S. Cherriere, found by Robert Z. Dobos; 2009-007) – photos on file.
– two, juvenal, 16-22 November, Cobourg, *Northumberland* (Jody Melanson, Margaret J.C. Bain, Art McLeod; 2009-008) – photos on file.
– two, juvenal, 22-24 November, Oshawa, *Durham* (Hans Holbrook; 2009-009).

In addition to those listed above, there were numerous reports of multiple birds from Lake Ontario during the fall of 2007; it is probable that these reports involve some of the same individuals.

American White Pelican ***Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*** **South Only Prior to 1994 (36)**

1957 – one, 28-29 September, Port Colborne, *Niagara* (Dick Hoffman; 2009-053) – photo on file.

A photograph and brief article on this bird was published at the time in a local newspaper (see Anonymous 1957).

Brown Pelican ***Pelecanus occidentalis*** **(8)**

2009 – one, first alternate, 27 June, Point Edward, *Lambton* (Daniel E. Miller, also found by Sara J. Miller; 2009-077).

1971 – one, adult, 25 September, Fort Erie to Waverly Beach, *Niagara* (Paul M. Benham, Richard Brownstein, also found by Mary Benham, William Kraetz, Mary Kraetz; 2009-054) – photos on file.

Snowy Egret ***Egretta thula***
South Only Prior to 1998 (32)

1991 – one, definitive alternate, 1-5 May, Muskrat Lake, *Renfrew* (Manson Fleguel, Christopher R. Michener; 2009-056).

Little Blue Heron ***Egretta caerulea*** **(69)**

2009 – one, first alternate, 13 May, Kingston, *Frontenac* (Edward L. Fletcher; 2009-121) – photos on file.

2008 – one, definitive alternate, 17-19 June, Rainy Lake (Millers Bay), *Rainy River* (John L. Busch; 2009-080) – photo on file.

Figure 3: Little Blue Heron at Kingston, *Frontenac,* on 13 May 2009. *Photo: Edward L. Fletcher.*

Cattle Egret ***Bubulcus ibis*** North Only (22)

2009 – one, definitive alternate, 11 May, Red Rock, *Thunder Bay* (Leslie A. Swanson, also found by Vern E. Swanson; 2009-015) – photos on file.

White Ibis ***Eudocimus albus*** (4)

2009 – one, juvenal, 3 and 6 October, Whitby, *Durham* (3 October) and Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (6 October) (Harvey Gold, Joseph F. Noordman, Bruce E. Ripley, also found by Dan Kaczynski, Karl Jennewein; 2009-097) – photos on file.

A long-staying individual at Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area in western New York was not seen during the period when the current White Ibis appeared in Ontario, indicating the same bird was probably involved. A complete account of this occurrence, including details of the bird's stay in New York, has been published by Poon (2009).

Ibis species ***Plegadis*** sp. (47)

2009 – one, 8 October, Deerbrook, *Essex* (Alan Wormington; 2009-099).
– one, 11 October, Blenheim, *Chatham-Kent* (James T. Burk; 2009-101) – photos on file.

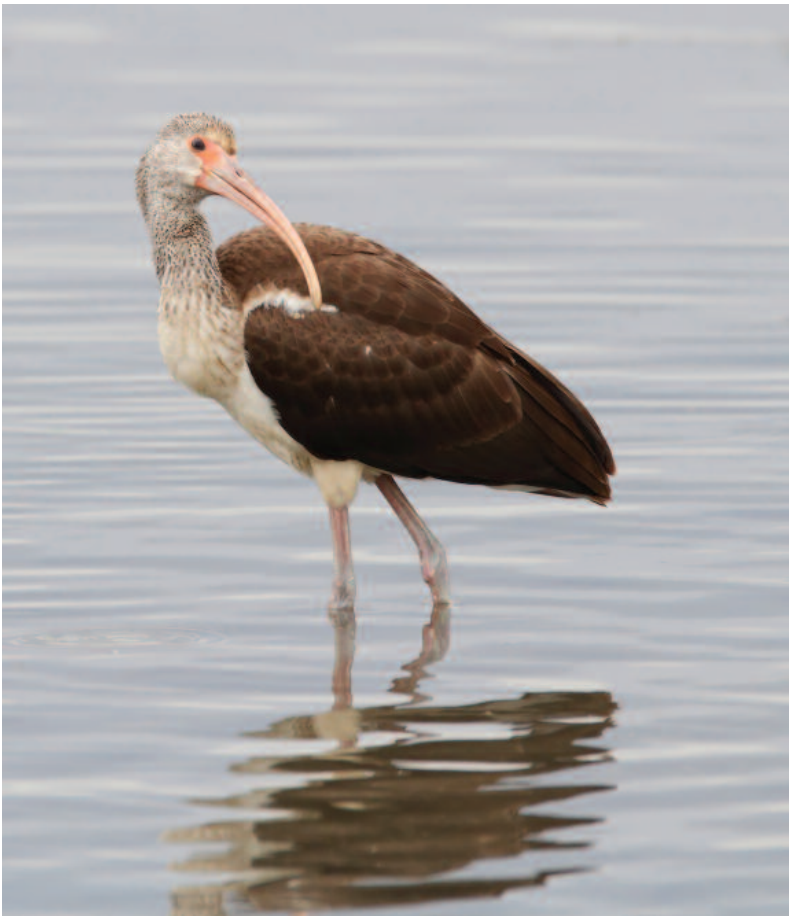

Figure 4: Juvenal White Ibis at Whitby Harbour, *Durham,* **on 3 October** *2009. Photo: Harvey Gold.*

Roseate Spoonbill ***Platalea ajaja*** **(1)**

2009 – one, juvenal/first basic, 13 June, Morton, *Leeds and Grenville* (Jeffrey J. Haffner; 2009-075). This is a provincial first and was part of a widespread incursion of the species northward during the summer of 2009, resulting in occurrences north to Illinois, Indiana, Ontario, Virginia, Delaware and New Jersey (see Brinkley 2009).

Black Vulture ***Coragyps atratus*** **(66)**

2009 – one, early March – 16 March, Rondeau Park (townsite), *Chatham-Kent* (James T. Burk; 2009-037) – photo on file.
– one, 21 March, Glen Morris, *Brant* (W. George Sims; 2009-004) – photos on file.
– one, 11 April, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Christopher E. Street, Henrietta T. O'Neill, also found by Stacey J. Carnochan; 2009-031).

– one, 27 April, New Scotland, *York* (Craig Corcoran, also found by Keegan Corcoran; 2009-027).
– one, 17 May, Ferndale, *Bruce* (Virgil E. Martin, also found by Grant Snyder, Marlin Gingerich; 2009-059) – photos on file.
– one, 3 August, Hamilton, *Hamilton* and Burlington Beach, *Halton* (Barry S. Cherriere, found by Keith Dieroff; 2009-123) – photos on file.

2007 – one, 29-30 April, Long Point (Tip) (29 April) and Long Point Provincial Park (29-30 April), *Norfolk* (Tiarella Hanna, found by Fergus I. Nicholl; 2009-147) – photo on file.

Mississippi Kite ***Ictinia mississippiensis*** (39)

2009 – one, first basic, 22 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Robert Curry, Brandon R. Holden, also found by Glenda J. Slessor; 2009-095) – photos on file.

2008 – one, juvenal, 10 September, Heber Down Conservation Area, *Durham* (Alfred L. Adamo, also found by Betsy Smith, Jane Smith, Henry Kroes; 2009-011).

The *Durham* bird is the second fall record for the province.

Swainson's Hawk ***Buteo swainsoni*** (52)

2009 – one, intermediate morph, juvenal, 28 September, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Susan J. Fagan; 2009-107) – photos on file.
– one, light morph, juvenal, 13 October, Holiday Beach Conservation Area, *Essex* (Justin Eby-Bosler; 2009-124).

Figure 5: First basic Mississippi Kite at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex,* on 22 May 2009.
Photo: Robert Curry

Figure 6: Juvenal intermediate morph Swainson's Hawk at Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay*, **on 28 September 2009.** *Photo: Susan J. Fagan*

Figure 7: Snowy Plover at Wolf River mouth, *Thunder Bay*, **22-23 May 2009.** *Photo: Susan J. Fagan.*

Purple Gallinule ***Porphyrio martinica*** (14)

2009 – one, juvenal, 14 October, Craigleith Provincial Park, *Grey* (Rob Davies; 2009-137)
– specimen (skin) at ROM: #118167.

Snowy Plover ***Charadrius alexandrinus*** (7)

2009 – one, male, 22-23 May, Wolf River (mouth), *Thunder Bay* (Susan J. Fagan; 2009-156)
– photos on file.

This is the first record for northern Ontario.

Piping Plover ***Charadrius melodus*** (72)

2009 – eight, definitive alternate, and seven, juvenal, 17 April – 8 August, Sauble Beach, *Bruce* (Carol Edwards; 2009-081) – photo on file.
– six, definitive alternate, and four, juvenal, 28 April – 31 July, Wasaga Beach, *Simcoe* (Brandon R. Holden; 2009-132) – photo on file.
– one, definitive alternate, male, 27-29 May, Darlington Provincial Park, *Durham,* (A. Geoffrey Carpentier, found by Tyler Hoar; 2009-082) – photos on file.
– two, definitive alternate, and four, juvenal, 12 July – 9 August, Carter Bay, *Manitoulin* (Marcel Beneteau, Nicole Belanger-Smith; 2009-083) – photos on file.

Recent breeding continued at Sauble Beach and Wasaga Beach. It was the first confirmed breeding on Manitoulin Island in recent history.

Long-billed Curlew ***Numenius americanus*** (2)

2009 – one, first alternate or definitive alternate, 23 August, Van Wagners Beach to Confederation Park, *Hamilton* (Robert Z. Dobos, Barbara N. Charlton, Cheryl E. Edgecombe; 2009-089) .

It is the second record for the province; the first was in 1959 at Ajax, *Durham* where it was present on 15-17 October or 16-17 October (see Wormington 1987). What was likely the same Long-billed Curlew was later seen further east along the Lake Ontario shoreline on 12 September at Hamlin Beach State Park, *New York*; here the bird was photographed, but the record has not yet been reviewed by the state records committee (Angus Wilson, pers. comm.).

Curlew Sandpiper ***Calidris ferruginea*** (28)

2009 – one, definitive alternate, male 17 July, Longridge Point, *Cochrane* (R. Douglas McRae, Mark K. Peck, also found by Amelia K. Whitear; 2009-084) .

This is the first documented record for northern Ontario. There is a previous record in the north pertaining to Reesor, *Cochrane*, where a bird was seen in 1953 in either late April or early May; this sighting is considered valid, but unfortunately documentation to support the record is apparently lacking (Wormington 2010).

Black-tailed Gull ***Larus crassirostris*** (1)

2009 – one, definitive basic, 28 September – 14 December; Port Burwell, *Elgin* (28-29 September, 15 November and 14 December); Port Stanley, *Elgin* (25-26 November); and Port Rowan, *Norfolk* (9 December) (Brandon R. Holden, Garth V. Riley, Peter Gilchrist, Josh Vandermeulen, Stuart A. Mackenzie; 2009-110) – photos on file.

This is a first record for the province.

Figure 8: Definitive basic Black-tailed Gull, 28 September 2009, Port Burwell, *Elgin*. *Photo: Brandon R. Holden.*

Figure 9: Third alternate or definitive alternate California Gull, on 9 May 2009, at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*. *Photo: James M. Pawlicki.*

Mew Gull *Larus canus* (21)

2009 – one, definitive basic, 19 November, Dracon, *Wellington* (Brandon R. Holden, also found by Jonathan S. Pleizier; 2009-130).

The documentation presented evidence that suggested this bird was a Kamchatka Gull (*L.c. kamtschatschensis*). However, the committee felt the documentation did not allow a subspecific identity to be assigned to this record with certainty. To date the only subspecies to be accepted in the province is *L. c. brachyrhynchus* of western North America.

California Gull *Larus californicus* (58)

2009/10 – one, third basic, 17 October – 2 January, Queenston, *Niagara* (Jean Iron, James M. Pawlicki, found by Jay McGowan; 2009-134) – photos on file.

2009 – one, definitive alternate, *albertaensis*, 11 February, north of Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington; 2009-005) – photos on file.

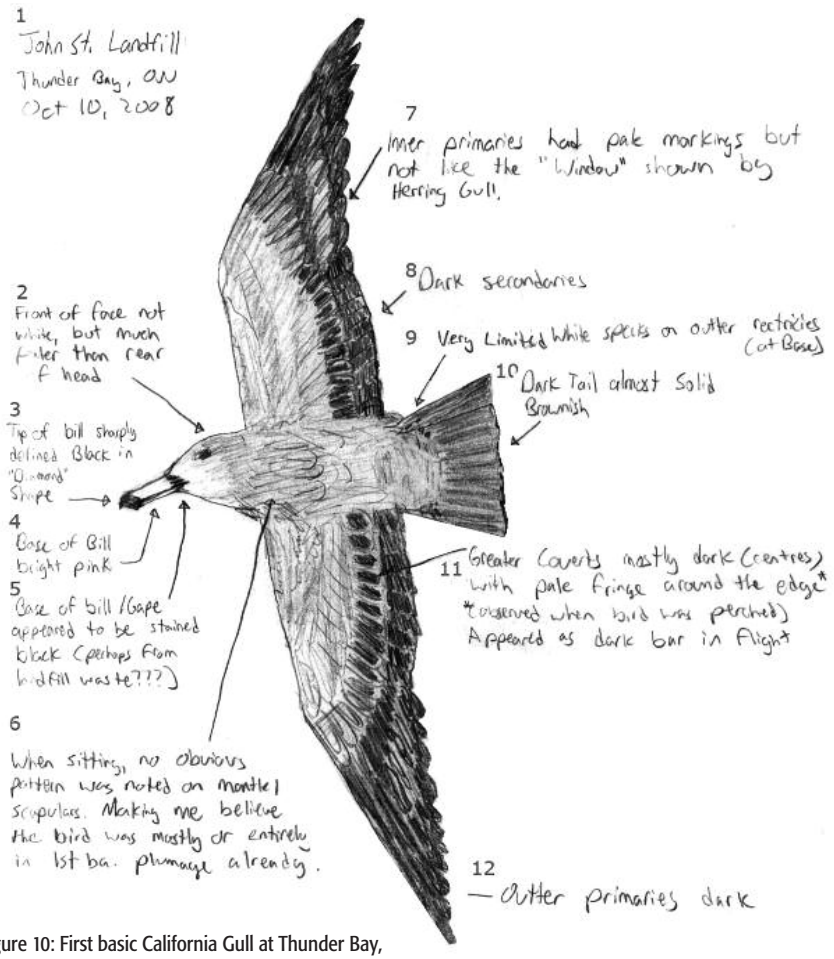

Figure 10: First basic California Gull at Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay*, on 10 October 2008. *Sketch: Brandon R. Holden.*

– one, third alternate or definitive alternate, 9 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (James M. Pawlicki, also found by David A. Gordon and Richard V.Z. Salembier; 2009-131) -photos on file.

2008 – one, first basic, 10 October, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Brandon R. Holden; 2009-079).

Lesser Black-backed Gull ***Larus fuscus*** North Only (8)

2009 – one, first basic, 7 October, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Brandon R. Holden; 2009-057) – photo on file.

– one, juvenal, 7-13 October, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Brandon R. Holden; 2009-041) – photo on file.

Arctic Tern ***Sterna paradisaea*** South Only (15)

2009 – one, definitive alternate, 25 May, Peterborough, *Peterborough* (Colin D. Jones, also found by Fiona McKay, Pete Sorrill, Aileen Rapson, Lucie Mussakowski, Nick Bourassa-Young; 2009-144) – photos on file.

This record fits the expected spring pattern of this species migrating through southern Ontario.

Eurasian Collared-Dove ***Streptopelia decaocto*** (11)

2009 – one, 6 September, Devon Township (Highway 593 at Arrow River East Crossing), *Thunder Bay* (Edward R. Armstrong, also found by Marion Vaillant and Ted Vaillant; 2009-126) – photos on file.

This represents the second record for northern Ontario; the first was at Squaw Bay (Pass Lake), *Thunder Bay*, on 3-9 November 2007 (Richards 2008).

White-winged Dove ***Zenaida asiatica*** (32)

2009 – one, first basic, 22-23 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, also found by Maureen E. Woodcock, Sachiko L. Schott, Alex R. Stark; 2009-017) – photo on file.

– one, 6-16 August, Peterborough, *Peterborough* (Brian E. Wales; 2009-145) – photos on file.

Barn Owl ***Tyto alba*** (7)

2009 – one, 30 June, Blenheim, *Chatham-Kent* (Brandon R. Holden, Kenneth G. Burrell; 2009-111).

– one, first basic, 8-13 November, Fifty Point Conservation Area, *Hamilton/Niagara* (Josh Vandermeulen, David M. Bell, Frank Horvath, Sandra Horvath, found by James Thomson; 2009-112) – photos on file.

2007 – one, 28 October, Long Point (Tip), *Norfolk* (Stuart A. Mackenzie, Matt K. Slaymaker; 2009-148).

The Fifty Point bird was placed in rehabilitation at the Owl Foundation in Vineland.

Black Swift ***Cypseloides niger*** (2)

2009 – one, male, 17-18 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Brandon R. Holden, also found by Eric W. Holden, Susan K. Holden, Lauren F. Rae; 2009-050) – photos on file.

This is the second record for Ontario; the first was at the Tip of Long Point, *Norfolk,* on 21 May 2006 (Mackenzie 2008, Richards 2008).

Ash-throated Flycatcher ***Myiarchus cinerascens*** (8)

2009 – one, first basic, 6 November, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Henrietta T. O'Neill, Alan Wormington, Kevin A. McLaughlin; 2009-106) – photos on file.

Figure 11: Male Black Swift at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex,* on 17-18 May 2009. *Photo: Brandon R. Holden.*

Figure 12: Ash-throated Flycatcher in first basic plumage at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex,* on 6 November 2009. *Photo: Alan Wormington.*

Figure 13: First basic Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher at Oakville, *Halton,* on 6 November 2009. *Photo: Scott Wight.*

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher ***Myiodynastes luteiventris*** **(2)**

2009 – one, first basic, 6 November, Oakville, *Halton* (Anthony Ferrante; 2009-138) – photos on file; specimen (skin) in ROM: #117860.

After colliding with a window, the bird was taken to Toronto Wildlife Centre where it subsequently died. During the occurrence period, exceptional weather conditions in late fall brought multiple southwestern species into the province.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher ***Tyrannus forficatus*** **(56)**

2009 – one, male, 30 April – 3 May, Long Sault Parkway (Heriot Island), *Stormont*, *Dundas* and *Glengarry* (Martin Bowman, Michael Jacques, found by Jennifer L. Kibbee; 2009-035) – photo on file.

– one, male, 20-22 May, Tehkummah, *Manitoulin* (Alex J. Anstice, also found by Esther Anstice; 2009-064) – photos on file.

Bell's Vireo ***Vireo bellii*** **(11)**

2009 – one, 15 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Gerard J.D. Phillips , Marcia L. Jacklin; 2009-026).

Fish Crow ***Corvus ossifragus*** **(13)**

2009 – one, 21 April, Long Point (5 km west of Tip), *Norfolk* (Stuart A. Mackenzie; 2009-152).

Excluding a single summer occurrence, all records of Fish Crow in Ontario pertain to spring migrants during the period of 21 April to 20 May inclusive.

Cave Swallow ***Petrochelidon fulva*** **(62)**

2009 – two, 17 November, Burlington Beach, *Halton* (Robert Z. Dobos; 2009-105).

Bewick's Wren ***Thryomanes bewickii*** **(17)**

1957 – one, male, 28 April, Morgan's Point, *Niagara* (Harold H. Axtell, also found by Rachel C. Axtell; 2009-051).

- one, 13 May, Erie Beach, *Niagara* (Richard Brownstein, also found by M. Schultz; 2009-052).

Northern Wheatear ***Oenanthe oenanthe*** **(35)**

2009 – one, alternate, male, 4 June, Redbridge, *Nipissing* (Craig T. Hurst, also found by Elaine M. Hurst; 2009-115) – photos on file.

– one, 16 September, Maynooth, *Hastings* (Brian Monroe; 2009-129) – photos on file.

Townsend's Solitaire ***Myadestes townsendi*** **South Only After 2000 (68)**

2009 – one, 12 January, Wolfe Island, *Frontenac* (Jonathan S. Pleizier, also found by Andrew Taylor; 2009-016) – photo on file.

2007 – one, first basic, 18-26 October, Long Point (Tip), *Norfolk* (Stuart A. Mackenzie, Zachary Kaiser; 2009-149) – photos on file.

Phainopepla ***Phainopepla nitens*** **(2)**

2009/10 – one, moulting to first basic, male, 9 November – 9 February, Brampton, *Peel* (Dian Bogie, Jean Iron, A. Geoffrey Carpentier, Michael D. Williamson, Mark K. Peck, Bruce Kennedy, Alan Wormington; 2009-140) – photos on file.

This bird likely arrived with the same weather system that brought other southwestern species into the province, namely Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher and Ash-throated Flycatcher. On the last date this bird was picked up alive and taken to Songbird Only Avian Rehabilitation in Rockwood where it subsequently died. This is the second record for Ontario; the first was at Duttona Beach, *Elgin*, on 27 December 1975 to 21 January 1976 (Crins 2006).

Black-throated Gray Warbler ***Dendroica nigrescens*** **(17)**

2009 – one, male, 10 October, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Blake A. Mann; 2009-120).
– one, male, 11-12 October, Port Ryerse, *Norfolk* (Ron Ridout, found by Chauncey Wood, Sarah Wood; 2009-153) – photo on file.

Townsend's Warbler ***Dendroica townsendi*** **(8)**

2009 – one, male, 8 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Cecilia M. Verkley, Blake A. Mann, Gary A. Houghton; found by Barry Griffith, Gail Griffith, Mike Cowlard, Sharon Grawburg; 2009-039) – photo on file.

Figure 14: Male Phainopepla moulting into first basic plumage from 9 November 2009 to 9 February 2010 at Brampton, *Peel. Photo: Dian Bogie* **(5 December 2009).**

Figure 15: Black-throated Gray Warbler at Port Ryerse, *Norfolk*, from 11-12 October 2009.
Photo: Ron Ridout.

Kirtland's Warbler ***Dendroica kirtlandii*** (42)

2009 – one, alternate, male, 9 May, Pelee Island, *Essex* (Jeff Hegmans, also found by Ashley Hegmans, Marshall Byle; 2009-040) – video on file.

Spotted Towhee ***Pipilo maculatus*** (23)

2009 – one, first basic, male, *arcticus*, 17 January – 21 February, Port Colborne, *Niagara* (William W. Watson, James M. Pawlicki, Willie D'Anna, J. Brett Fried, found by Mary McNeil; 2009-021) – photos on file.

Eastern Towhee ***Pipilo erythrophthalmus*** North Only (14)

2009/10– one, basic, male, 11 December – 27 February, Heron Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Michael T. Butler; 2009-139) – photos on file.

2009 – one, basic, male, 17-19 November, Manitouwadge, *Thunder Bay* (Tammy B. Hache, found by Maggie Schut; 2009-113) – photo on file.

Cassin's Sparrow ***Aimophila cassinii*** (8)

2007 – one, 30 May, Long Point (Tip), *Norfolk* (David J. Brown, also found by Fergus I. Nicholl; 2009-146) – photo on file.

Figure 16: Townsend's Warbler at Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent*, on 8 May 2009. *Photo: Gary A. Houghton.*

Figure 17: Cassin's Sparrow at Long Point (Tip), *Norfolk*, on 30 May 2007. *Photo: David J. Brown.*

Lark Sparrow ***Chondestes grammacus*** **(90)**

2009 – one, 25 April, Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (Kathy Felkar, Bruce D. Parker, also found by Mike Burge; 2009-030) – photos on file.
– one, definitive alternate, male, 27 April – 2 May, Caledonia, *Haldimand* (Alexander L. Darling, Jeni Darling, Barry S. Cherriere, found by Rick Ludkin; 2009-029) – photos on file.
– one, 3 May, Arnstein, *Parry Sound* (Alice Oliver; 2009-142) – photos on file.
– one, 4 May, Pelee Island, *Essex* (Adam C. Pinch; 2009-074).
– one, 29 May, Rainy River, *Rainy River* (John E. Van den Broeck; 2009-070) .
– one, first alternate, 31 May – 5 June, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, also found by Maureen E. Woodcock, Sachiko L. Schott, Alex R. Stark; 2009-001) – photo on file.
– one, 18 August, Killarney Provincial Park (Balsam Lake), *Sudbury* (Peter S. Burke, also found by Colin D. Jones, Evan Burke; 2009-088).
– one, first basic, 18-21 October, Van Wagners Beach, *Hamilton* (Robert Z. Dobos, J. Brett Fried, Barry S. Cherriere, also found by Cheryl E. Edgecombe; 2009-128) – photos on file.

Black-throated Sparrow ***Amphispiza bilineata*** **(2**

2009 – one, definitive basic, 29-31 August, Port Burwell, *Elgin* (Alan Wormington, J. Brett Fried, Jean Iron, found by Aaron B. Allensen; 2009-090) – photos on file.

This is the second record for Ontario, but the first for the south.

Henslow's Sparrow ***Ammodramus henslowii*** **(21)**

2009 – one, alternate, 25 April, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Blake A. Mann, also found by Stephen T. Pike; 2009-032) – photos on file.
– one, alternate male, 13-27 June, Carden Alvar, *Kawartha Lakes* (Bruce Wilson, also found by Jean Wilson, Tyler Hoar; 2009-073) – photos on file.
– one, alternate, male, 27-29 July, Paskwachi Point, *Cochrane* (R. Douglas McRae, Mark K. Peck, Jean Iron, also found by Amelia K. Whitear; 2009-086) – photos on file.

The singing male on territory at Paskwachi Point on James Bay is the first record for northern Ontario. It is also the most northerly record in North America.

Figure 18: Definitive basic Black-throated Sparrow from 29-31 August 2009 at Port Burwell, *Elgin.*
Photo: Alan Wormington.

Figure 19: Alternate male Henslow's Sparrow from 27-29 July 2009 at Paskwachi Point, *Cochrane. Photo: Mark K. Peck.*

"Pink-sided" Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis mearnsi* (3)

2009 – one, first basic, female, 12 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, also found by Maureen E. Woodcock, Sachiko L. Schott, Alex R. Stark, James R. Barber; 2009-018) – photo on file.

2008 – one, definitive basic, male, 26 April – 8 May, Stepstone, *Thunder Bay* (James Brewer, also found by Lorena Strbavy; 2009-006) – photos on file.

Chestnut-collared Longspur *Calcarius ornatus* (3)

2009 – one, definitive alternate male, 30 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, also found by Maureen E. Woodcock, Sachiko L. Schott, Alex R. Stark; 2009-002) – photo on file.

This is the second accepted record for northern Ontario; a first winter male 29 April 1991 at Sleeping Giant Provincial Park was the first (Bain 1992).

left: **Figure 20: First basic female "Pink-sided" Dark-eyed Junco at Thunder Cape,** *Thunder Bay*, **on 12 May 2009.** *Photo: John M. Woodcock.*

right: **Figure 21: Definitive alternate male Chestnut-collared Longspur at Thunder Cape,** *Thunder Bay*, **on 30 May 2009.** *Photo: John M. Woodcock.*

Figure 22: Western Tanager at Pass Lake, *Thunder Bay*, 27 April to 6 May 2008. *Photo: Brian D. Ratcliff.*

Summer Tanager ***Piranga rubra*** North Only (15)

2009 – one, first alternate, male, 8-9 May, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (Thomas J. Nash, David H. Elder; 2009-038) – photos on file.
– one, definitive basic, male, 22 October, Stratton, *Rainy River* (Lisa B. Vos, also found by Justin D. Vos; 2009-133) – photos on file.
– one, definitive basic, female, 7 November, Terrace Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Paul J. Dennis; 2009-108) – photos on file.

Western Tanager ***Piranga ludoviciana*** (35)

2009 – one, male, 11-15 May, Harris Hill, *Rainy River* (Cheryl-Ann E. Gauthier; 2009-045) – photo on file.
– one, first alternate, male, 12 May – 4 June, Kenora, *Kenora* (William R. Zroback; 2009-049) – photo on file.
– one, definitive alternate, female, 19-20 May, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (James R. Barber, found by George A. Williams; 2009-046) – photo on file.
– one, definitive, male, 11-22 November, Val Therese, *Sudbury* (Valerie M. Kirwan, Erwin J. Meissner; 2009-109) – photos on file.

2008 – one, first alternate, male, 27 April – 6 May, Pass Lake, *Thunder Bay* (Brian D. Ratcliff, found by Julie Welsh; 2009-042) – photos on file.
– one, male, 20 May, Kapuskasing, *Cochrane* (Nancy Payeur; 2009-061) – photos on file.

Figure 23: Definitive alternate male Blue Grosbeak at Long Point (Courtright Ridge), *Norfolk*, on 16 May 2008. *Photo: Eleanor Page.*

Blue Grosbeak ***Passerina caerulea*** **(80)**

2009 – one, female, 27 April, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Brandon R. Holden, also found by Lauren F. Rae; 2009-033) .
– one, first alternate, male, 6 May, Dealtown, *Chatham-Kent* (Alan Wormington; 2009-036) .
– one, definitive alternate, male, 10 May, Wyoming, *Lambton* (Della M. Fellows; 2009-043) – photos on file.
– one, first alternate, male, 14 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Mark W. Hubinger, also found by Joanne A. Hubinger; 2009-047) – photos on file.
– one, definitive alternate, female, 19-20 May, Thunder Cape, T*hunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, also found by Maureen E. Woodcock, Sachiko L. Schott, Alex R. Stark, Rachel E. Bryan; 2009-010) – photo on file.
– one, definitive alternate, male, 26 May – 7 June, Sault Ste. Marie, *Algoma* (William H. Elgie; 2009-066) – photo on file.

2008 – one, definitive alternate, male, 16 May, Long Point (Courtright Ridge), *Norfolk* (Eleanor Page; 2009-154) – photo on file.

The bird at Sault Ste. Marie until 7 June represents the latest spring migrant to be recorded in Ontario.

Lazuli Bunting ***Passerina amoena*** **(8)**

2009 – one, first alternate, male, 31 May – 3 June, Crooks, *Thunder Bay* (Sharon E. Illingworth, Robert I. Illingworth, Alan Wormington; 2009-072) – photos on file.

Painted Bunting ***Passerina ciris*** **(25)**

2009 – one, definitive alternate, male, 28-30 April, Brantford, *Brant* (Donald A. Field; 2009-034) – photos on file.
– one, definitive alternate, male, 17 May, Clarksburg, *Grey* (Peter Norwood; 2009-060) – photos on file.

Dickcissel ***Spiza americana*** **North Only (17)**

2009 – one, male, 12-13 May, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (Fred Kimberley, Joan Kimberley; 2009-014) – photo on file.

Orchard Oriole ***Icterus spurius*** **North Only (8)**

2009 – one, female, 14-15 May, Nipigon, T*hunder Bay* (Glenalda Clearwater; 2009-048) – photos on file.
– one, definitive alternate, male, 20 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, also found by Sachiko L. Schott, Maureen E. Woodcock, Alex R. Stark; 2009-063) – photo on file.
– one, first alternate, male, 21-25 May, Geraldton, *Thunder Bay* (Loraine F. Zawierucha; 2009-065) – photo on file.
– one, first alternate, male, 23 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, also found by Alex R. Stark, Maureen E. Woodcock, Sachiko L. Schott; 2009-020) – photo on file.
– one, female, 29 May, Terrace Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington; 2009-069) – photos on file.

This is an unprecedented number of records in northern Ontario for a single spring migration.

Figure 24: First alternate male Lazuli Bunting at Crooks, *Thunder Bay*, from 31 May to 3 June 2009. *Photo: Alan Wormington.*

Figure 25: Female Orchard Oriole at Terrace Bay, *Thunder Bay*, on 29 May 2009. *Photo: Alan Wormington.*

Figure 26: First alternate male Bullock's Oriole at Armstrong, *Thunder Bay,* from 1-10 June 2009. *Photo: Reynold Bartkiewicz.*

Figure 27: Basic Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (nominate *tephrocotis*) at Moonbeam, *Cochrane*, on 20 November 2009. *Photo: Kenneth G. Reed.*

Bullock's Oriole ***Icterus bullockii*** (6)

2009 – one, first alternate, male, 1-10 June, Armstrong, *Thunder Bay* (Reynold Bartkiewicz; 2009-125) – photos on file.

The facial and tail patterns of this well photographed bird clearly establish it as a Bullock's Oriole.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch ***Leucosticte tephrocotis*** (14)

2009 – one, male, nominate *tephrocotis*, 4-6 April, Kashabowie Lake, *Thunder Bay* (Mary Vasko; 2009-155) – photo on file.

– one, basic, nominate *tephrocotis*, 20 November, Moonbeam, *Cochrane* (Kenneth G. Reed, also found by Connie Deblette; 2009-114) – photos on file.

NOT ACCEPTED RECORDS

Not Accepted Records: Identification Accepted, Origin Questionable

Birds in this category are considered by the Committee to be correctly identified, but their origin is questionable. These birds may have escaped or may have been released from captivity. However, if new evidence suggesting wild origin becomes available, such reports may be reconsidered by the Committee.

2009/10 – **Barnacle Goose** (*Branta leucopsis*), one, adult, 19 December – 22 January, Grimsby, *Niagara* (Frank Horvath; Sandra Horvath, Peeter Musta; 2009-141) – photos on file.

This species has been added to the provincial list on the basis of a European banded bird that was shot in Ontario in 2005 (Richards 2009). However, the current individual is of questioned origin (as are many other reports in the province). A Barnacle Goose (possibly the same individual) has been observed in the same general area and time of year for four consecutive winters, but natural occurrence has not been definitively demonstrated.

2009 – **Harris's Hawk** (*Parabuteo unicinctus*), one, adult, 25 March, Bass Lake Provincial Park, *Simcoe* (Tom Wilson; 2009-012) – photos on file.

– **Common Chaffinch** (*Fringilla coelebs*), one, male, 4 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, James R. Barber, also found by Maureen E. Woodcock, Sachiko L. Schott; 2009-019) – photos on file.

– **European Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis)*, one, 10 March -12 April, West Lorne, *Elgin* (Patrick Mooney, Carol Mooney; 2009-013) – photos on file.

– **European Goldfinch**, one, *caniceps* group, 6 June, Englehart, *Cochrane* (Serge Gendron, also found by Dianne Gendron; 2009-116) – photos on file.

– **European Goldfinch,** one, male, 15 June, Long Point (Courtright Ridge), *Norfolk* (J. Brett Fried, also found by Brendan A. Toews; 2009-058).

– **European Goldfinch**, one, *caniceps* group, 1 July, Rossport, *Thunder Bay* (Harold G. Smith; 2009-118) – photo on file.

– **European Goldfinch,** one, *caniceps* group, 18 July, Algonquin Provincial Park (Canoe Lake Access Point), *Nipissing* (Jan Richmond; 2009-135) – photos on file.

– **European Goldfinch**, two, *caniceps* group, 11-18 November, Alvinston, *Lambton* (Al Robinson; 2009-117) – photos on file.

The sightings of Eurasian songbirds, such as European Goldfinch, continue although there is still no evidence to suggest that any are now established in the province

1890 – **MacGillivray's Warbler** (*Oporornis tolmiei)*, one, male, 20 May, Hamilton, *Hamilton* (collector unknown; 2009-136) – photos on file; specimen (skin) AMNH: #507393.

This old specimen has long been attributed to Hamilton, even though the museum labels do not indicate a collector for the bird; Baillie (1969) assumed that the specimen had been collected by K.C. McIlwraith. Recent investigation by several persons, including museum curators, reveals that the specimen labels in fact do not clearly indicate that the bird was collected at Hamilton, let alone in Ontario. The late Laurence C. Binford (in a letter to Alan Wormington dated 10 March 1992) was the first person to point out a number of inconsistencies regarding this specimen. Notably, he discovered a similar specimen supposedly from Connecticut that has since been rejected by that state's records committee. He states in part "I find it very suspicious that both the Ontario bird and the Connecticut bird were catalogued next to each other, neither had a collector, one lacked a specific date, and both were supposedly taken in May 1890. These are the kinds of strange things that one finds with mislabelled specimens." A follow-up investigation was also conducted by Robert Curry for his *Birds of Hamilton* publication, who reached the same conclusions and provided a detailed list of reasons why the species should be removed from the list of Hamilton birds (Curry 2006).
In summary, the bird is indeed a MacGillivray's Warbler, but its origin is highly questionable.

Since this specimen formed the basis for retaining MacGillivray's Warbler on the Checklist of Ontario Birds (Wormington and James 1984), and since there have not been any subsequent records accepted for the province, the species is thus deleted from the Ontario list.

Not Accepted Records: Identification Uncertain

The documentation received for the following reports generally was found not to be detailed enough to eliminate similar species unequivocally. In many cases, Committee members felt that the species being described probably was correctly identified, but that the details provided in the report, perhaps due to factors such as the conditions during the observation, were insufficient. It should be noted that any of these reports may be re-submitted if additional documentation becomes available.

2009
- **Northern Gannet**, two, 13 August, Peterborough, *Peterborough* (2009-087).
- **Magnificent Frigatebird** (*Fregata magnificens*), one, 17 August, Chemong Lake, *Peterborough* (2009-067).
- **Little Blue Heron**, one, 4-5 May, Wheatley Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (4 May) and Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (5 May) (2009-091).
- **Curlew Sandpiper**, one, 8 October, Cobourg, *Northumberland* (2009-100).
- **California Gull**, one, 14 June, Harris Hill, *Rainy River* (2009-076).
- **Bell's Vireo**, one, 9 May, Pelee Island, *Essex* (2009-025).
- **Blue-and-White Swallow** (*Notiochelidon cyanolueca*), two, 31 May, St. Thomas, *Elgin* (2009-071).
- **Cave Swallow,** one, 25 October, Toronto, *Toronto* (2009-104).
- **Bewick's Wren**, one, early February - 17 February, Milton, *Halton* (2009-003).
- **Northern Wheatear**, one, 28 April, Brampton, *Peel* (2009-028).
- **Kirtland's Warbler**, one, 20 May, Long Point (Old Cut), *Norfolk* (2009-062).
- **Lark Bunting** (*Calamospiza melanocorys*), two, 5 September, Meaford, *Grey* (2009-096).

2008 – **Brown Pelican**, one, 28 June, Rosedale, *Kawartha Lakes* (2009-078).
– **Mississippi Kite**, one, 17 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (2009-094).
– **Swainson's Hawk**, one, 20 September, Kaministiquia, *Thunder Bay* (2009-119).
– **Carolina Chickadee** (*Poecile carolinensis)*, one, 18 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (2009-093).

1995 – **Slaty-backed Gull** (*Larus schistisagus)*, one, 25 November – 2 December, Sault Ste. Marie, *Algoma* (2009-143).

Corrections/Updates to Previous OBRC Reports

2008 Report (*Ontario Birds* 27: 58–79):

- under Greater White-fronted Goose (1994 at Hillman Marsh), change "found by Kevin D. Clark" to "found by Kevin D. Clark" (although this person was the finder of the bird, he did not provide any documentation to the committee; "photos on file" refer to those of the mounted bird taken by Alan Wormington).
- under Harlequin Duck (2008 at Thunder Cape), change "John M. Woodcock" to "John M. Woodcock."
- under Northern Gannet, change number of accepted records from 38 to 39.
- under Ibis species, change number of accepted records from 44 to 45.
- under Black Vulture (2008 at Point Pelee National Park), change "Donald E. Perks" to "Donald E. Perks."
- under Mississippi Kite, change number of accepted records from 34 to 37.
- under Mississippi Kite, (2008 at Port Stanley) change "David R. Brown" to "David J. Brown"
- under Piping Plover (2008 at Oliphant), change "Brendan A. Toews" to "Brendan A. Toews."
- under Piping Plover, change number of accepted records from 67 to 68.
- under Cave Swallow (2008 at Prince Edward Point), change "Bruce E. Ripley" to "Bruce E. Ripley."
- under Black-throated Gray Warbler (2008 at Rondeau Provincial Park), change "Blake A. Mann" to "Blake A. Mann."
- under Eastern Towhee, change number of accepted records from 7 to 12.
- under Western Tanager, change number of accepted records from 28 to 29.
- under Blue Grosbeak, change number of accepted records from 68 to 72.

2007 Report (*Ontario Birds* 26: 82–106):

- under Black Swift (2006 at Long Point Tip), change change "David R. Brown" to "David J. Brown".
- under Henslow's Sparrow, change number of accepted records from 17 to 18.

2006 Report (*Ontario Birds* 25: 50–68):

- under Cattle Egret, change number of accepted records from 20 to 21.
- under Hummingbird species (2006 at Thunder Bay), change the first sentence of the commentary to "The Thunder Bay bird is the second *Selasphorus* hummingbird to be found in Ontario during spring migration; the first was a Rufous Hummingbird on 7 May 1999 at Sault Ste Marie, Algoma (Roy 2000)."

2002 Report (*Ontario Birds* 21: 54–76):

- under Bewick's Wren, change number of accepted records from 14 to 13.

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Wind Turbines and Birds

Behaviour of Migrant Blue Jays in Relation to Tree Cover and Wind Turbines

Ross D. James

During the autumns of 2006 and 2007, while monitoring wind turbines at the Erie Shores Wind Farm near Port Burwell on the north shore of Lake Erie (see James (2008) for more details of the wind farm), an opportunity was provided to make observations of the behaviour of diurnal migrant birds moving along the north shore through the area of the wind farm. One of the most numerous and conspicuous species was Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*).

While many different turbines had to be visited each day, additional time was spent when possible near several turbines located closest to the lakeshore. Jays were seen throughout the wind farm to two or more kilometres inland. However, large numbers did move close to the shore, and on several days their behaviour was noted in relation to near-shore turbines. Only a small sample of the total movement of jays was noted, but presumably a similar response would have been seen with others there.

The wind farm is located in a farming region east and west of Port Burwell. The turbines are located in farm fields, which occupy most of the land. Woodlands, mostly small, are located irregularly throughout the area. Some wooded ravines snake inland from the lakeshore, often connecting wooded places. Many farms maintain treed fence rows or hedges to act as windbreaks. These are generally either parallel to or perpendicular to the lakeshore. But fields of various sizes, some quite large, interrupt the tree cover along the north shore, extending right to the high steep bluffs that front the land along Lake Erie in this area.

The observations presented here mainly concern jays that were initially seen moving along the shore between the bluffs and the near-shore turbines. These jays had to pass within a limited distance of the turbines if they wished to continue on course. These observations offer insights into the effect of tree (and shrub) cover on the behaviour of the Blue Jay migrants, and further, look at whether the presence of wind turbines might have influenced their movements.

Observation sites

Of particular interest were observations made at four turbines located within 150m of the shore bluffs, plus one about 200m and one 400m inland. At three of those turbines (all within 150m of the bluffs) there were trees along the top of the shore bluffs that the jays were following, but then there was a gap in the tree cover where fields extended to the shore bluffs. The jays had to make a decision to either fly across the gap, with no or almost no cover in which to take shelter if necessary, or to turn away from the shore and follow trees inland. Moving inland, they followed treed fence lines or a woodland edge, until they came to more trees that they could follow westward. If making the latter decision, they had to fly out of their way by several hundred metres in order to remain close to tree cover. At the other three turbines, trees and/or shrubs extended along the near shore past the turbines without interruption.

Movements in relation to tree cover

The flight path followed by the jays was not entirely predictable. Some would continue to fly across a gap seemingly without hesitation. A few would leave the end of trees and fly diagonally away from the shore across a field, going even farther than they would have had they continued west near the shore. But many clearly hesitated to fly across bare fields. Groups would suddenly drop down into the last tree or shurb cover, or mill about in the air before a gap, and then drop into cover. Groups often split, with some continuing west, and others changing flight direction to follow trees. Some even flew back to the east until they came to a treed fence line they could follow inland. Such variation was seen regardless of the time of day or the weather.

Of a sample of about 4,380 jays tallied moving west between the turbine tower and the shore bluffs, at the three near-shore turbines where a choice had to be made, fewer than half (45.8 %) continued to fly across a gap, and more (54.2 %) went out of their way to follow trees, apparently to avoid crossing a gap.

Following cover was evident at other places also, not close to any turbine, that jays were diverging from their westerly movements to stay near trees. Many were seen following treed watercourses, going northwesterly far out of their way until they came to more trees to proceed westward parallel to the Lake Erie shore. Some approached a north-south treed fence row at mid field from the east (following trees), and then either went

north or south, or split, some going both ways, to avoid crossing a field. At times a group moving northwest along a ravine would split, some crossing a field at the narrowest place to get to another hedge parallel to the shore, while some continued along the ravine farther from the shore. This zig-zag movenent of Blue Jays following trees all through the area could easily have doubled the travel distance of some jays as they migrated along the north shore of Lake Erie.

At the three other near-shore turbines, where jays were travelling westward between the turbine towers and the shore, but where there was no gap in the tree cover along the shore south of the turbines, 86.3 % (of 8,160 tallied) continued to fly westward over or close to trees and shrubs. Obviously some, for unknown reasons, moved away from the shore, following trees inland and later moving west. Other jays were often moving westward somewhat more inland of these turbines, but why the jays would leave the flock they were with near the bluffs was not apparent. But an increase of 40 % in the proportion of jays travelling steadily past turbines along the near-shore areas where tree cover was nearly continuous, plus jays following watercourses and fence rows when not near turbines, would indicate that the lack of tree cover played a large role in contributing to the movements of many of the jays.

Movements in relation to wind turbines

Considering the three near-shore turbines where jays had to make a decision to continue across a gap or to change flight direction. At the first of these, the jays reached a decision point just prior to passing the turbine tower, as they reached a crest of a hill there, and could easily see the gap ahead. A narrow strip of trees they could follow extended a short distance past the turbine right at the shore, and the gap was relatively short (about 100m). But of the jays tallied there (1,127), about 40 % turned inland to follow the well-treed fence line passing the turbine tower less than half the distance they would have passed had they continued along the shore trees. The trees in the fence row were barely 10 m beyond the extent of the turbine blades. There were even a couple smaller flocks that moved northward past the turbine and then came back south to the shore to continue west.

At the second of these turbines, the gap was a long one, (about 400m), and the fence row running inland at that point had only 2 trees over a distance of about 250m. While most jays (of 1,218) continued west where there were a few shrubs in a grassy field, and some jays, apparently to stay near cover, dropped over the shore bluffs below field level, as there were at that location some trees and shrubs on the side of the bluffs. Despite the few trees inland from the point of making a decision, nearly 10 % flew north from tree to tree, past the turbine base by about 45m, or fewer than 10m beyond the extent of the turbine blades. The rest, nearly 30%, turned back to the east, reversing their path by 250 m before flying inland among trees. This is despite the fact that the ones turning back had

already passed the turbine when they reached the gap. They flew back past the turbine, and nearly 30 % of those returning chose to fly to the north of the trees at the shore, and closer to the turbine than they could have passed had they stayed among the trees closer to the shore.

The third turbine was in a field corner where there was a woodlot to the east that continued around to the north of the turbine. The gap to the west was a very large one (600m+). More than 70 % of jays arriving between the tower and the bluffs (of 2,036) moved north away from the shore along the woodland edge. All birds, despite having a large woodland to move back into, either followed along the woodland edge or took a short cut across the field corner even closer to the turbine. Those at the woodland edge passed under the extent of the blades, and of those cutting across the field, more than half passed under the extent of the blades, many flocks flying close by on both sides of the turbine tower.

At the three other near-shore turbines where jays could have continued westward with no gap to cross, nearly 14 % did change direction, moving inland along trees that clearly brought them closer (<100m) to a turbine. At two of the three, fence rows were 45m and 50m from the base of towers, so birds were passing almost under the extent of the blades, when they did not have to do so. At one of these two turbines many jays moving west near the shore where there was shrubbery and trees, chose to fly somewhat inland over the edge of the adjacent field where the turbine was, coming 50-100m closer than they needed to (they continued west and were not considered as part of those coming much closer to a turbine). At the third of these turbines, virtually all jays turned northwest to a woodland, but only after they had passed the turbine. All could have avoided the turbine by more than 300m, but 25 % (of 2,379 tallied) chose to move inland along trees within 50m of the base of the tower, almost under the extent of the blades, and on the west side of the tower.

Discussion

Most diurnally-migrating passerines that were seen moving at the same time as the Blue Jays did not seem to hesitate to fly across bare fields, but did so in fairly tight flocks. While jays moved in flocks, they tended to be more loosely associated, often straggling through in long "strings". And, when flying over fields or higher above trees, jays usually fanned out more widely. A tightly knit flock is generally considered better anti-predator behaviour, but the jays did not seem to follow such a strategy closely.

At the same time the jays were migrating, mainly from about mid-September to mid-October, there were Sharp-shinned Hawks (*Accipiter striatus*), Cooper's Hawks (*A. cooperii*) and American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*), among others, also migrating there. The hawks often were flying low and appeared to be hunting. Several chases were observed as hawks went after jays or other birds. Although no jays were actually seen to be killed, they often

seemed to be very skittish, quickly diving into tree or shrub cover, even when no hawks were evident.

While most Sharp-shinned Hawks (for which more observations were available) simply flew westward over trees or fields, about 15% were also seen to turn and follow trees as the jays did, rather than flying across a field. It seems more likely they were hunting than concerned about flying over a field. The presence of hunting hawks is more likely a reason the jays chose to stay near cover. Cooper's Hawks could readily take jay-sized birds. Sharp-shinned Hawks are known to take prey as large as Blue Jays (Bildstein and Meyer 2000); although they may seldom be successful (Tarvin and Woolfenden, 1999), they did chase jays. American Kestrels are perhaps less likely to take anything as large as a jay (Smallwood and Bird 2002), but at least one was seen chasing jays.

The jays that moved inland closely past turbines showed no hesitation in doing so. Many moved slowly from tree to tree or stopped a while nearer a turbine. They certainly did not flee past, and did not go out of their way to fly around on the side of the trees opposite the turbine. If they were flying at treetop height, they stayed basically at that height, regardless of whether they moved through trees or cut across a field edge under the blades. No evasive flights were noted no matter how close they came to moving blades. Their behaviour near turbines was notably different than the skittish behaviour seen as they approached a field gap. And when flying across a gap, well away from a turbine, they could often be seen to suddenly drop into any shrub or tree available, as if nervous about something.

A couple of flocks of about 30 and 25 jays were seen flying across a field, directly toward a turbine at the height of the turning blades. The first group changed flight direction about 250m east and passed almost 200m away. But they chose to go inland where there were trees closer to where they would pass, than to the south over an open field. The second group approached to about 50m from the ends of the blades before easily turning away without any sudden changes or hesitation. They also chose to move north toward trees there, avoiding the gap to the south. Other groups of jays were sometimes seen moving from more inland locations south to the shore bluffs, passing turbine towers under or

almost under the extent of the blades. They seemed to have no hesitiation in approaching turbines, despite having many other places to pass farther away.

At a more inland turbine, flocks of jays following a line of trees westward, moved directly toward a turbine. These birds encountered a treed ravine east of the turbine. There, they turned north or south to follow the trees to avoid a large gap, the field in which the turbine stood. But, many flew across the ravine to the west side, within 30m of the turbine tower (under the extent of the blades) before moving north or south.

One October afternoon several small groups of Black-capped Chickadees (*Poecile atricapillus*) were also seen avoiding a gap by flying inland from tree to tree.

There is little reason to think that wind turbines had any appreciable effect on the migration of Blue Jays along the Lake Erie near-shore areas (or elsewhere). Jays were not reluctant to move closer to wind turbines. But there is considerable evidence that the farm fields provided definite barriers to the movements of jays (and at least some other species). The extra flying by many of the jays, to avoid crossing gaps, must have contributed considerable energetic cost to the migrant jays.

Acknowledgements

I am very appreciative of the willingness of private landowners to allow my incursions to monitor turbines and to watch migrant birds. Their tolerance and support was necessary and esteemed. Thanks is also extended to Erie Shores Wind Farm for the opportunity and cooperation in undertaking activities near turbines, and to the personnel of International Power Canada Inc. (formerly AIM PowerGen Corp.) for involving me in the project.

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Photo: Brian Morin

GREATER SNOW GEESE IN EASTERN ONTARIO

Brian Morin and Jack Hughes

Greater Snow Geese (*Chen caerulescens atlanticus*) have become a regular feature of spring migration in eastern Ontario.

Photo by

The first published account was by Bruce Di Labio (1987). Ron Pittaway detailed the status of the birds in 1992 (Pittaway 1992), and an update was presented by Morin in 2004 (Morin 2004).

From the first reported sighting of 580 birds at Riceville, by Bruce Di Labio in 1986, the annual flocks have grown to between 70,000 and 100,000, spread over the southeastern portion of the province. During that same period, from the mid 1980s to 2009, the Greater Snow Goose population has grown from about 300,000 to over 1.4 million (Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) Waterfowl Committee 2009). Although the number of migrant Greater Snow Geese has increased dramatically in eastern Ontario and continues to rise, there

has not been a corresponding expansion of the area in which the birds are appearing. Most sightings still occur within 70 km of the Ontario-Quebec border, with the highest concentrations usually being reported from sites northwest and northeast of Cornwall as far as the Ottawa River. Snow Geese are less commonly seen in other areas from Kingston to Ottawa, with generally only a few individuals or small flocks appearing there for a brief time each year. Most of the birds reported west of Kingston are probably Lesser Snow Geese (*C. c. caerulescens*), and their numbers are small.

In the springs of 2007-2009, sighting information was obtained from over three dozen observers. Reports on the Ontbirds listserv were also noted and personal observations were detailed. During this period, it was possible to develop a greater understanding of where the birds were concentrating, their numbers, and daily movements between roosting and foraging sites. A few additional notes have been added from the beginning of the 2010 migration season.

Migration

The timing of arrival in Ontario is fairly constant from year to year, with the first birds appearing by mid-to late March. The spring flight typically begins with small flocks appearing in open water along the St. Lawrence River west of Cornwall near Long Sault. The river runs faster here and as the ice retreats, the area along the Long Sault Parkway can host

Figure 1. Abundant fieldsof corn stubble in eastern Ontario often attract geese. *Photo: Brian Morin*

Figure 2. Flooded creeks and fields are a significant attraction for migrant geese. *Photo: Brian Morin*

several thousand geese in the early part of the season. The river to the east of Cornwall starts to open shortly after and the broad portion of the river close to the Quebec border, known as Lake St. Francis, has hosted over 15,000 birds between late March and mid-April. This portion of the river remains an attraction until the ice moves out, which can be as early as the beginning of March or as late as early April. At that point, most of these birds either head into Quebec or relocate to other areas in eastern Ontario. Once the ice is largely gone, only a shallow area east of Lancaster near Bainsville continues to attract 5-10,000 roosting geese for a few more weeks.

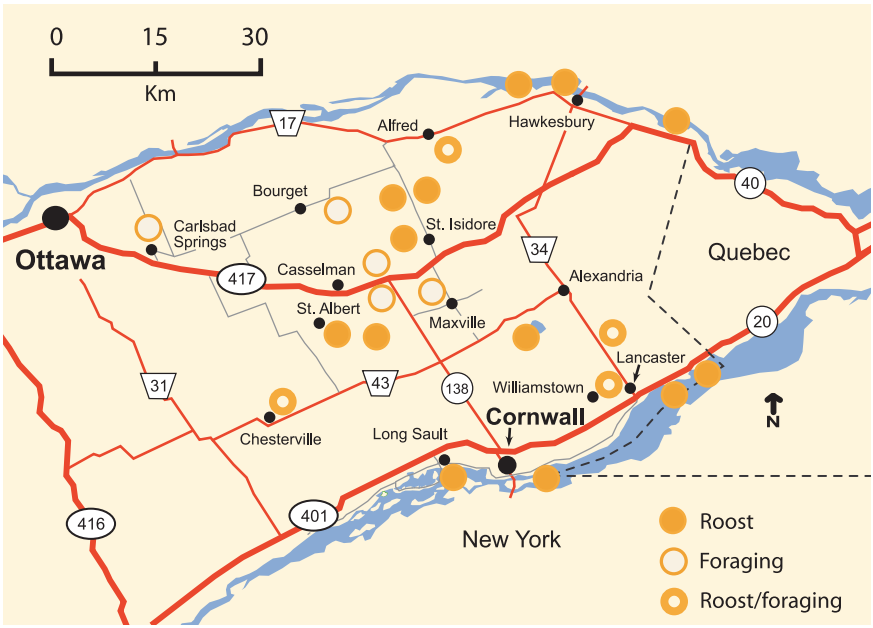
When the main flocks of Greater Snow Geese arrive, usually in late March or early April, most of the fields are free of snow. Geese disperse across the abundant fields of corn stubble in the region (Figure 1), where they feed intensively to build up fat reserves needed to continue their migration north to the breeding grounds. While the potential foraging sites are many, preferred locations tend to be those along a few flooded creeks or rivers or near sewage lagoons and agricultural ponds (Figure 2). During the peak of the season, many of the geese use these water features for roosting rather than returning to the St. Lawrence or Ottawa Rivers at dusk. The Ottawa River opens later than the St. Lawrence River so concentrations in bays east and west of Hawkesbury appear after the locations to the south. Although flocks are seen in areas other than those shown in Figure 3, these are the roosting and foraging sites used most regularly in recent years.

The use of southern sites diminishes as the season progresses, with activity at areas closer to the Ottawa River usually peaking a couple of weeks after those along the St. Lawrence River. By early May, the reports dwindle to a trickle as birders shift their focus to songbirds, but that doesn't mean the Snow Geese have left the region. The Canadian Wildlife Service conducts an annual one-day aerial survey of the population over eastern Ontario and southern Quebec in late April or early May. Results during three years show that most of the birds are still present during the time of the surveys (approximate totals: 2007 - 20,000 , 2008 -51,800, 2009 -61,500). By mid-May, however, very few geese are being reported and by the end of May, only the odd straggler is seen.

Daily Activity

The daily pattern of activity for migrating Snow Geese consists of morning and evening foraging flights, mostly to agricultural fields, and periods resting on water at mid day and overnight. On hot, sunny days, especially later in the season as fields begin to dry out, Snow Geese tend to spend less time in fields and more time at roosts between their morning and evening foraging flights. Anyone who has watched flocks of Greater Snow Geese in eastern Ontario knows that they tend to be very active, moving frequently among the locations shown in Figure 3. The exception seems to occur during inclement weather when they spend much of their time on the ground. This is quite different from Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*), which may

Figure 3: Greater Snow Goose Spring Staging Area *Brian Morin*



remain in an area for longer periods of time. Usually it is necessary to check several sites to locate flocks of 5,000 or more Snow Geese. Occasionally, Greater Snow Geese will concentrate in very large flocks of 20,000 -50,000. This was principally noticed during the spring melt when creeks, smaller rivers and adjacent fields were flooded. Such concentrations will also occur in the first few days of the migration.

Spring 2007

This was a typical spring for Greater Snow Goose migration. Several flocks of a few hundred were reported on 24 March, mainly in areas north of Hwy. 417, but also a flock of 250 observed near Kemptville, west of the normal range. The next day, 2,000 were seen at North Lancaster. Then on 6 April, CWS staff reported 4,000 along Hwy. 417 east of St. Isidore and 10,000 there on 8 April. Tens of thousands were jammed into the municipal ponds at St. Isidore on 11 April, where the birds were quite a spectacle at liftoff. Several Ross's Geese (*C. rossii)* joined the flock at Alfred between 7 and 12 May. The final report of the spring was a lingering bird at Alfred on 28 May.

Spring 2008

Eastern Ontario experienced an exceptionally heavy snowfall in the winter of 2007-08, which produced significant flooding during the melt. The appearance of the first large flocks of geese was delayed until early April because of the heavy snow cover, but once the birds arrived, concentrations were spectacular. The first major reported sighting was on 15 April, when 22,000 were seen at Green Valley (Figure 4) and 30,000+ at Fournier, on the South Nation River. The South Nation River between Fournier and Riceville continued to be a magnet for large numbers of geese for a couple of weeks, with a high of 50,000 counted on 17 April.

Seasonal flooding also occurs each spring south of Alexandria along Rivière Beaudette and east of Bourget along Cobbs Lake Creek, but was greater than usual in 2008, and large flocks were observed at both locations (Figure 5). The last report of large numbers was 5,000 on the St. Lawrence River at Bainsville on 5 May. A single bird closed out the season at Embrun on 16 May.

A unique sight occurred on 7 April on the St. Lawrence River near Gray's Creek at the eastern end of Cornwall. Close to midnight, bathed in the glow of street lights, hundreds of Greater Snow Geese could be seen floating downriver on ice flows while hundreds more rested along the ice edge. Many of the birds were vocal and a few occasionally took flight. It is not the scene one might expect from birds gone to roost.

Spring 2009

The season was characterized by a very early start to migration. The first flock of about 250 appeared on 7 March along the St. Lawrence River west of Ingleside, and the first report of 1,000 was on 12 March at Williamstown. Large numbers began to appear by mid-March, and on 17 March 22,000 were observed on the St. Lawrence River at South Lancaster.

Figure 4. Greater Snow Goose flock on the St. Lawrence River near Bainsville, 2006, as seen on the annual Canadian Widlife Service aerial survey of waterfowl in eastern Ontario and southwestern Quebec in late April or early May. *Photo: Jack Hughes*

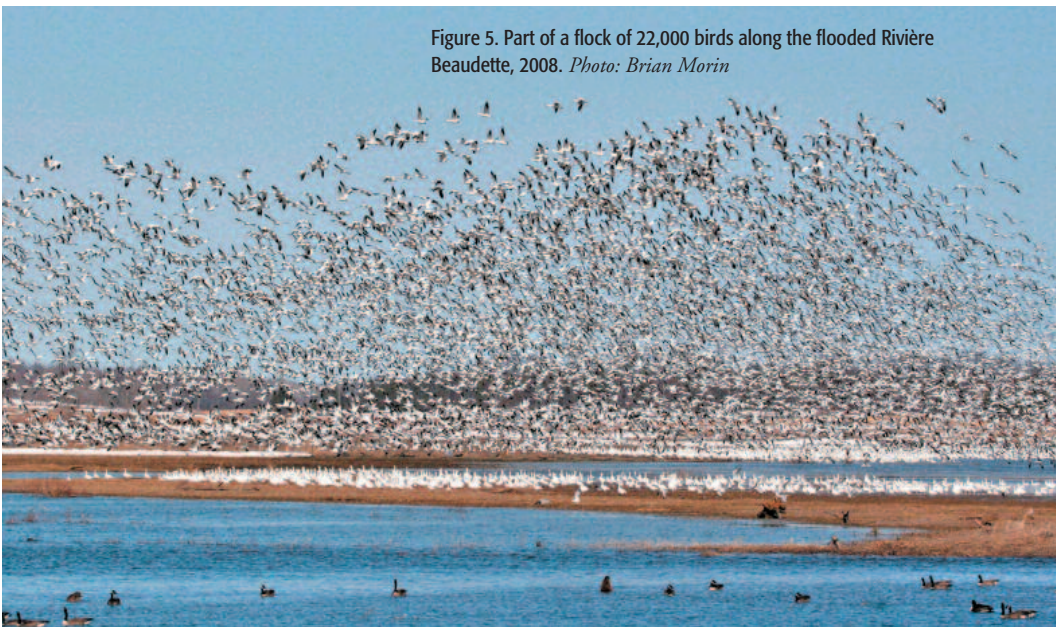


Figure 5. Part of a flock of 22,000 birds along the flooded Rivière Beaudette, 2008. *Photo: Brian Morin*

This is an early date for a flock of that size. The largest flock of the season was between 40,000-50,000 reported along Hwy. 417 near St. Bernardin on 3 April, but possibly the largest number of birds ever recorded on a single day was on 4 April. Tyler Hoar's party made a concerted effort to count as many birds as possible and hit many sites from Casselman east. They estimated 88,000 Greater Snow Geese in 39 flocks. Because they did not cover all key areas due to time constraints, and knowing later that a significant flock was present at Chesterville, outside the area of coverage, a fair assessment would be that over 100,000 birds were present in eastern Ontario that day.

The last significant report (again likely due to shifting birder interest in May) was from the CWS survey on 4 May. There were still roughly 61,500 birds present at 10 sites in eastern Ontario, with the largest concentration being 18,000 geese in two locations along the South Nation River near Chesterville. The final report of the spring was of two lone birds seen at lagoons in Alfred and Maxville on 15 June.

Spring 2010

While the study period did not cover the 2010 migration, it is interesting to note that the first flocks appeared only a few days later than in the very early 2009 season. A Pacific El Nino event led to a mild and dry second half to Ontario's winter. This contributed to a very early ice breakup in late February and an early snow melt. The birds were not influenced by ice conditions in the St. Lawrence, snow in the fields or by flooding, all factors that normally affect early movements. Greater Snow Geese arrived in Ontario in the tens of thousands on 15-16 March. Few significant sightings were reported after that, indicating that most of the flock may have moved through the region very quickly this spring.

Blue Morphs and Lesser Snow Geese

A very small percentage of the Greater Snow Goose population is blue morphs (less than 2%) compared to over 50% of Lesser Snow Geese from eastern Arctic colonies. In a flock of 10,000 Snow Geese in eastern Ontario, one might usually expect to see up to 50 or 100 blue-morph birds. While this number is showing signs of increase, it is not yet higher than expected. West of Kingston, where small numbers of Snow Geese occur during migration, a much higher percentage are blue morphs, indicating that they are Lesser Snow Geese.

Knowing this feature of each subspecies, it raises questions about what birds were observed in late April and early May 2008. On 25 April, while conducting the annual CWS aerial survey, Hughes noted a flock of about 200 geese, of which 80% were blue morphs (Figure 6), near Cobbs Lake Creek, in association with a flock of 11,000 white geese. Three days later, while leading tours east of Ottawa, Tony Beck observed hundreds of blue morphs among flocks of about 14,000 typical white morph birds at Bourget. Tony described the scene as typical of the "salt and pepper" pattern that he has observed with flocks of Lesser

Figure 6. A few of the hundreds of blue morph Lesser Snow Geese at Cobbs Lake Creek, 2008.
Photo: Susan Goods

Snow Geese on the Prairies. This is quite uncharacteristic of Snow Goose observations in eastern Ontario and was a first for him in the region. A similar experience occurred on 4 May when he counted 250 blue morphs in 5,000 birds between Navan and Sarsfield.

In 2009, on 20 April, Hughes observed a flock of about 10,000 Snow Geese on the South Nation River at County Road 9. Within that large flock was a cluster of about 2,000 geese of which roughly half were blue morphs. Then, on 26 April, Hans van der Zweep counted 600+ blue morphs among 8,000-10,000 birds near Chesterville. Observations of these birds in both years is certainly noteworthy and indicates a change in the typical pattern, but as yet it is not clear how many may be Lesser Snow Geese, which are normally uncommon in the east. Reasons for apparently increasing numbers of Lesser Snow Geese in eastern Ontario are not known but could indicate a shift in migration pattern, or perhaps more likely, growth of a formerly smaller colony of this subspecies that has been migrating through eastern Ontario for many years but has gone unnoticed because of the small numbers. This is something that observers should take note of in the coming years.

A careful examination of possibly 2/3 of the 2010 migrants revealed only a small number of blue morphs. Since observations of large numbers of blue morphs in the two previous years were only made later in the migration period, it could suggest that if these are Lesser Snow Geese, they may arrive several weeks after the Greater Snow Geese.

Banded birds

Every so often, observers are lucky enough to identify a leg band or neck collar which can then be matched to records of marked birds through the CWS. Roger Clark received acknowledgements for six birds that he reported, four from 2007 and two from 2008. Of the 2007 birds, two were banded in the north on Bylot Island and two were banded east of Quebec City at Montmagny. Both of the 2008 birds were from Bylot Island, site of the largest Greater Snow Goose colony in the Canadian Arctic where Laval University and CWS have been conducting research since the late 1980s.

Fall birds

The story of the Greater Snow Goose is dynamic. The population continues to expand thanks largely to adaptation to include agricultural food sources during migration. It is also showing signs of evolving into a dual season species of interest in eastern Ontario. Whereas in decades past it was not a significant species for birders to chase in the fall, in recent years the number appearing has rivaled some spring flocks, with exceptional sightings of 20,000-30,000 birds, from mid-November to mid-December 2008, around St. Isidore-Casselman. In the fall of 2009, up to 15,000 were present east of Casselman, from November until early December, with scattered flocks in the south. The big difference in the fall is that the birds tend to be much more restricted in their pattern of dispersion seeming to favour the central portion of the region. They typically remain until significant snow covers the ground and tend to depart en masse.

The story of the Greater Snow Goose will continue to excite birders as migration brings one of nature's most magnificent avian spectacles to our province. Unless significant declines occur in the size of the population, this phenomenon is likely to be a feature of migration in eastern Ontario for years to come.

Acknowledgements

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Photo: Tom Thomas

Trumpeter Swans in Ontario 2008-2009

Harry Lumsden

Introduction

The Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) Restoration Program, started in 1982, was completed in 2006 when the last of the captive-raised swans was released. Since then, the population has continued to increase. The 2009 breeding season was a good one and records were received of nests and broods from many places where no previous reports were available.

The public and naturalists reported 388 numbers on wing tags seen in 2008-2009. Correcting for birds missed provides an estimate of 421 marked birds in the province. Data on the composition of flocks seen was also collected, with birds classed as: carrying tags, without tags or signets. Ratios of these classes, combined with the estimate of marked swans, allows calculation of numbers in southern Ontario. As of 1 September 2009, this estimate was 1,522 swans.

As many swans as it is possible to catch are banded. In 2008-2009, the total was 129 swans, caught by Ray and Bev Kingdon, Kyna Intini, Julie Kee, Laurie Schutt, Mike Majury and Harry Lumsden.

Ontario's Trumpeter Swan records have now been transferred to computer

files at the University of Guelph. This file contains over 30,000 records of movements, survival, parentage and productivity of 1,145 colour-marked swans, with another 150 records and new banding to be entered.

Mortality

We know of six swans shot by hunters in 2009. Two were shot on the opening day of duck season (the offenders were caught). Two more kills were reported by other hunters who saw offense. A tagged male swan disappeared on migration; two of his brood were wounded but recovered and we assume he was killed. A Trumpeter Swan and a Tundra Swan (*C. columbianus*) were picked up as cripples, treated and released. Undoubtedly more swans were killed, and some wounded, but numbers cannot be estimated.

Competition

Mute Swans (*C. olor*) have not adversely affected Trumpeter Swans in Ontario. We know of only one case where a territorial male Mute Swan killed a newly-released Trumpeter Swan cygnet. Trumpeter Swans dominate Mute Swans and mature pairs have evicted Mute Swan pairs from their breeding territories. There are two cases known where Trumpeter Swans killed captive Mute Swans. Unlike Mute Swans, Trumpeter Swans are tolerant of other species of waterfowl (except Mute Swans) and will even permit Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) to loaf near the nest within two meters of an incubating female.

Potential Range

There is one early record of Trumpeter Swans breeding in the Atlantic Flyway. In 1699-1700, the trader Dièreville, from France, visited the Acadian settleres at Port Royal, Nova Scotia, in the Bay of Fundy. He wrote that the settlers "could safely collect the eggs of swans and geese" (Webster 1933). Webster identified them as Tundra Swans, but this species nests on tundra, only rarely breeding even within the tree line. They could only have been Trumpeter Swans that were present in Nova Scotia. The "many" swans that Jacque Cartier saw on the St. Lawrence River downstream from Montreal, between 19 and 28 September 1535, were probably Trumpeter Swans (date not specific, but too early for Tundra Swans). They may even have been breeders (Biggar 1924). Champlain also mentions swans he saw on the St. Lawrence in 1615, but he did not give the month. He was on his way to southern Ontario where he spent the late summer and fall (again, too early for Tundra Swans). These were almost certainly Trumpeter Swans (Biggar 1929).

Archaeological sites also record the presence of Trumpeter Swans in the northern part of the Atlantic Flyway. In northern Newfoundland, near the Strait of Belle Isle, at the Port aux Choix burial site, 4 Trumpeter Swan, 22 Tundra Swan and 6 undetermined swan bones were recovered (Tuck 1976). Two Trumpeter Swan bones were dug from the Coteau du Lac site, just upstream from Montreal, Quebec (H. Savage, pers. comm.).

These records and observations from eastern Canada suggest that Trumpeter Swans bred across the continent to the Atlantic Ocean. It is very unlikely that the Nova Scotia record represents a disjunct population isolated on the Atlantic coast. For isolation to be effective, there would have had to exist a physiographic barrier lying between Nova Scotia and Ontario potent enough to prevent this powerful flyer from crossing. No such barrier exists. We know that the habitat along the St. Lawrence River was occupied by swans in the 16th and 17th centuries. There is no reason why this range could not be occupied again by Trumpeter Swans in the 21st century.

Wintering

Because Trumpeter Swans were extirpated so early in the settlement process in eastern North America, we have little to guide us when thinking about where restored populations might go in winter in the Atlantic Flyway. There is one historical report of Trumpeter Swans wintering in the northern part of the Atlantic Flyway. A Jesuit priest in 1671-1672 wrote that "swans and Canada Geese are very abundant during the entire winter and in spring one sees nothing but continual clouds of all sorts of waterfowl (Thwaites 1959). The location given was Lake Toshero out of which flowed the Oshwego River. Modern maps suggest that this lake might have been Lake Onendaga or Lake Neutahivanta near Syracuse, New York (north of Tundra Swan wintering range). It is of interest that 1671 would have been about the middle of the "little ice age" when climate was much colder than it is today.

Trumpeter Swans are extremely hardy and are little influenced by cold provided they have access to open water and food. In Ontario, open shallow waters where swans can feed commonly exist where current reduces ice formation, but also where springs provide warm water, where effluent is discharged, where bubblers are used in sewage lagoons, where aerators are used in marinas to protect boats and where warm water is discharged from power plants. Swans themselves can sometimes prevent ice formation by remaining as a group in the same place overnight. They are heavy enough to break thin ice. Open water where swans winter has been provided in Ontario by all of the above factors. Food comes from aquatic vegetation, cropland and grain and bread offered by the public.

When Ontario Trumpeter Swans are frozen out of their nesting wetlands, most go only as far as they must to find open water and food. The majority winter along the north shore of Lake Ontario, where most are dependent on artificial feeding. There are, however, birds wintering on inland rivers north of Lake Ontario that depend on aquatic vegetation. There have been few long distance movements. Most of the population remains in Ontario, but some move into the U. S. There are 73 locations and 8 Atlantic Flyway states where swans from Ontario have been reported in winter. Based on ratios of tagged to untagged birds, we estimate that about 150 swans were involved over a 27 year period.

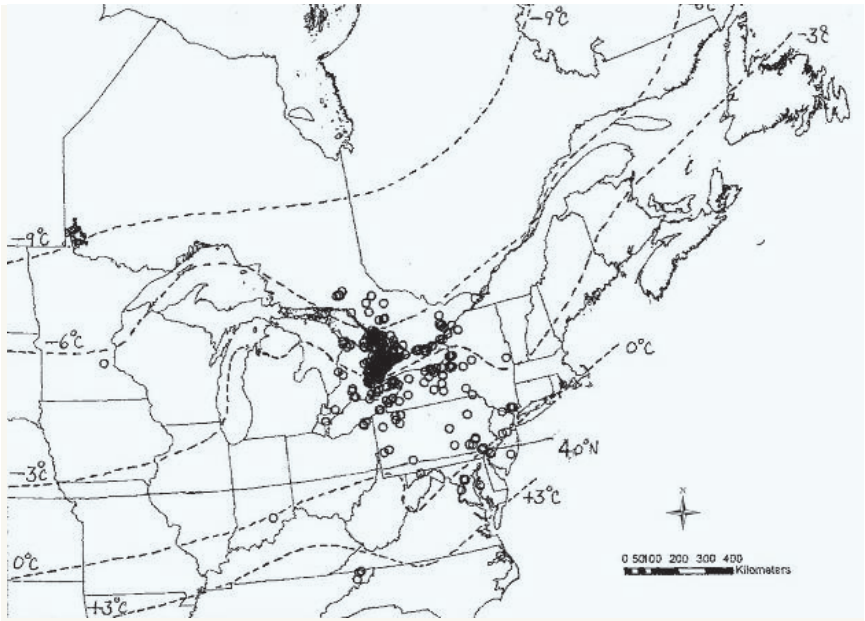

Figure 1. Mean January isotherms for eastern North America, and December, January and February distribution of Ontario Trumpeter Swans.

In Ontario, swans have shown us where they choose to winter. It may be possible to extrapolate from this distribution to other areas to determine where the potential exists for wintering additional swans. Figure 1 shows the position of the +3°C and the 0°, the -3°C, the -6°C and the -9°C mean January isotherms in eastern North America (U. of Florida, Physical Geography 2200, Lecture 12). When the December to February locations of Ontario Trumpeter Swans are superimposed, a pattern emerges. Most of the population remained in the province for the winter between the -3°C and -6°C isotherms. At some of these sites the swans remained because they were fed, at others they survived on their own.

The Trumpeter Swans that crossed the international border mainly stayed between the 0°C and the -3°C isotherms. This zone includes Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, northeastern West Virginia, northern Maryland, northern New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire, coastal Maine, southern Quebec and New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and most of Newfoundland. This zone in the U.S. includes the Atlantic states that would provide at least some habitat that could support Trumpeter Swans in winter. This zone covers a very large area with a potential for wintering many Trumpeter Swans.

Trumpeter Swans breeding in Nova Scotia would not have had to move far to winter. It is likely that any place where Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) and Black Ducks (*Anas rubripes)* can winter,

Choix in Newfoundland. Canada Geese and Black Ducks also winter on the Eel Grass beds at Port Joli in southern Nova Scotia. There are many similar inlets along the Atlantic coast which might also support Trumpeter Swans.

Movements

The Trumpeter Swans that crossed the border showed little consistency in their movements. One pair stayed in Ontario for 6 winters and spent their 7th with their cygnet at Rochester, New York. One pair spent their 1st and 3rd winters at Canandaga and Oshawana lakes, New York, and stayed in Ontario for the succeeding 5 years. Many moved south for one winter, but did not return for a second visit. Four birds moved south and stayed for the rest of their lives, one at least for 4 years. There is no case of a traditional movement of a pair with a brood returning to a wintering location for multiple years south of the border.

Six swans flew south of the 0°C isotherm. One moved to Maryland, where he stayed for 23 months, before moving to Pittsfield, Pennsylvania. Another spent February to July 2007 in New Jersey, and then was reported on 28 January 2008 in Westchester County, New York. She went back to New Jersey on 5 February and stayed until 26 March, then she was reported back in Ontario in June 2008.

Only two swans wandered south of the +3°C isotherm. A single bird went to Elizabeth City in coastal North Carolina on 20 December 2006. She was reported back in Ontario on 24 May 2008. The swan that went to Tennessee moved there in her second winter, but returned to Ontario where she remained for her next three winters. It is unlikely that many Ontario Trumpeter Swans will move as far south as these states. Judging from the Ontario experience, if Trumpeter Swans are restored to all their former range in the Atlantic Flyway, we can expect nearly all of them to winter south of the -6°C isotherm and north of the 0°C isotherm.

Acknowledgements

We are most grateful for the contribution that naturalists and the general public made by reporting so many swan wing-tag numbers, and tallying marked and unmarked swans and cygnets during fall migration. Margaret Witten fed the swans and recorded tag numbers at Wye Marsh, and transmitted many emails to us.

We thank Professor Ryan Norris, who accepted the swan file, and Gustavo Betinig, who supervised the transfer of swan data to computer at the University of Guelph. Sterling Brough entered the data, and Michael Janssan prepared maps from the computer file.

Ray and Beverley Kingdon are playing a major record keeping role, and Ray is taking charge of the banding program. He has able assistants in Kyna Intini and Julie Kee, who travel widely to band swans, and Dwight Keall has become addicted to swan catching.

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Star-nosed Mole in the diet of Northern Saw-whet Owl

D. A. Sutherland and R. Ridout

THE DIET OF THE NORTHERN Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus)* has been well documented as comprising a wide variety of prey items with some variation in prey preferences exhibited both geographically and seasonally (Rasmussen et al. 2008). Deer mice (*Peromyscus* spp.) are dominant prey species throughout much of its range at all times of year, while species of shrews (*Blarina, Sorex*) and voles (*Microtus, Myodes)* may also be important prey of the saw-whet owl, the latter particularly in more boreal regions and in winter and spring (Catling 1972, Patrikeev 2007, Rasmussen et al. 2008). In a study of wintering Northern Saw-whet Owls in southern Ontario, Catling (1972) found that Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) accounted for about 70% of all prey (84% by weight), while deer mice were second in importance at 26% (15% by weight). All other prey, primarily shrews, accounted for just over 4% of prey and only a fraction of the total prey weight. This note documents an apparently unusual and perhaps novel prey item of the Northern Saw-whet Owl.

At midday on 29 January 1984, in Lynde Shores Conservation Area, Whitby, Regional Municipality of Durham, Ontario (N43° 51' 14", W78° 58' 3") the authors discovered a Northern Saw-whet Owl perched approximately 2 m above the ground on the sheltered lowermost branches of an Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) growing at the edge of Lynde Creek. Upon closer inspection, the owl was observed to be sitting on the carcass of a Star-nosed Mole (*Condylura cristata*). At around 1230h, shortly after the initial discovery, the owl was observed hunched over the mole, tearing at the tentacled nose, and later (1320h) the owl was observed asleep on the carcass, at which time it was photographed (Figures 1 and 2). Visible in Figure 1, is the broad, flat front foot

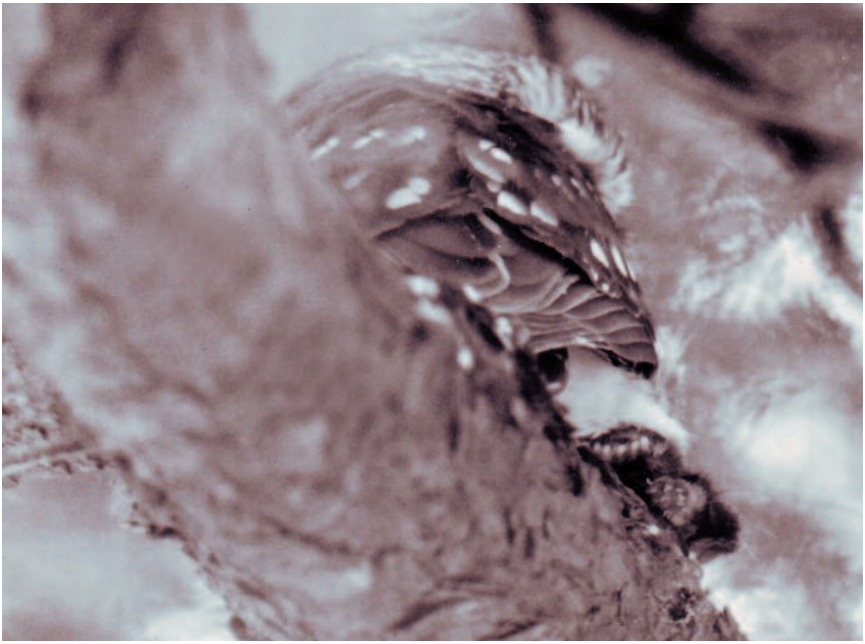

Figure 1. Northern Saw-whet Owl with Star-nosed Mole (snout and forelimb visible), 29 January 1984, Lynde Shores Conservation Area, Durham R.M. *Photo: Ron Ridout*

Figure 2. Northern Saw-whet Owl with Star-nosed Mole (large hind foot visible), 29 January 1984, Lynde Shores Conservation Area, Durham R.M. *Photo: Ron Ridout*

characteristic of moles (*Talpidae)* and the elongate snout terminating in the tentacled disc diagnostic of the genus *Condylura* (Banfield 1974).

Condylura is not among the 25 genera of small mammal prey listed for Northern Saw-whet Owl (Catling 1972, Patrikeev 2007, Rasmussen et al. 2008). It is a monotypic genus with its sole representative, the Star-nosed Mole, restricted to eastern North America where it is widespread and common, occurring throughout the eastern breeding and wintering range of the Northern Saw-whet Owl. That this mole is evidently an infrequent prey of this owl may be explained both by its larger size and fossorial habits. Its median weight (52 g; Banfield 1974) is greater than the median weights of the owl's principal prey (*Peromyscus, Microtus*) and all but a very few of the listed prey species. Its fossorial habits might tend to preclude depredation by aerial predators; however, burrows of the Star-nosed Mole are shallow and frequently terminate at creek banks, where individuals forage along wet banks, beneath ice shelves and in open water, swimming freely in search of aquatic invertebrates (Banfield 1974).

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