

ONTARIO BIRDS



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Articles

Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 2001

Kayo J. Roy

Introduction

The Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) evaluates documentation of any record of an OBRC Review List species. This 20th Annual Report deals with the adjudication of 133 records reviewed by the OBRC during the year 2001, of which 80% were accepted. A total of 171 observers submitted documentation for review by the 2001 Committee. Generally well written and thorough accounts were submitted by a wide range of birders from expert to novice that often included photographs, field notes, sketches and the occasional videotape.

The members of the 2001 Committee were Margaret Bain, David Beadle, Peter Burke (Chair), Robert Dobos, Nick Escott, Kevin McLaughlin, Kayo Roy (non-voting Secretary) and Alan Wormington. Mark Peck served as the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) liaison (non-voting) to the OBRC in 2001.

The official Ontario Bird Checklist is now at 474 species with the addition of Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*), Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) and Lesser

Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) are presently on the Ontario checklist based on their inclusion by James et al (1976) and Wormington and James (1984), but the first reports for these species have now been reviewed and accepted by the OBRC. Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*) is a new addition for northern Ontario.

All records received by the OBRC are archived at the ROM in Toronto. Researchers and other interested individuals are welcome to examine any of the filed reports, by appointment only. Please write Mark Peck, Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C6, e-mail: markp@rom.on.ca or telephone 416-586-5523.

Listing of Records

The format of this report follows that used in last year's annual report (Roy 2001) with one exception. In all previous reports since 1989, a series of numbers appeared following the species' names which indicated the number of accepted reports for that species. While the format of

this numbering changed several times, the binomial system most recently used indicated the total number of accepted records (by the OBRC) prior to 1 January 1982 (the formation date of the OBRC), and the total number of accepted records from 1982 to 2000. The current Committee felt that the use of trinomials and binomials did not serve any meaningful purpose, and decided, effective with the Report for 2001, that a single number be used to indicate the total number of accepted records of a review species. 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 its 42nd supplement (AOU 2000). Date(s) of occurrence, number of birds, sex, plumage, and location(s) are provided when known. Counties, districts, and regional municipalities are shown in italics. The plumage terminology used here follows the Humphrey and Parkes (1959) system. For a detailed explanation of plumage and molt terminology, see Pittaway (2000). The names of all contributors of documentation are listed. Those contributors who were known to be the finders of the bird are underlined. Others present when the bird was found, but who did not submit a report, are listed when known.

The Committee makes every effort to verify documented information prior to accepting and pub-

lishing a record. It is, however, still possible that some inaccuracies occur. We welcome written communication to the Secretary from anyone with pertinent information that would correct or strengthen any record. There may be occasions where dates or other listed details in a record differ from those quoted in other published sources. We have used the most accurate information that was available to us.

All records that were not accepted because of uncertain identification or origin are listed separately. Contributors of all "not accepted" reports receive a letter from the Chair explaining the reasons for the decision, along with copies of the comments of the voting members. These reports are also kept on permanent file at the ROM. A "not accepted" report can be reconsidered by the OBRC if new evidence is submitted to the Committee for review.

Changes to the Review List

At the OBRC Annual Meeting in March 2002, the Committee agreed, effective 1 January 2002, to add Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) to the northern Ontario Review List, and to review records of Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) in southern Ontario for all years.

Acknowledgements

The OBRC would like to extend its appreciation to the many observers who took the time to submit docu-

mentation, photographs, sketches, and videos of their observations of rare birds in 2001. We thank the following people who assisted in many ways to provide the Committee with additional data and other material evidence: Jody Allair, Bob Andrie, Sam Barone, Allen Chartier, Barry Cheriére, Bob Curry, Willie D'Anna, Bruce Di Labio, Rob Dobos, Nick Escott, Jim Flynn, Michel Gosselin, Phill Holder, Jean Iron, Christina Lewis, Jon McCracken, Mark Peck, Ron Pittaway, Sarah Rupert, Roy Smith, Ron Tozer, Ron Weir, and Alan Wormington.

We are very grateful to Mark

Cranford for allowing us access to ONTBIRDS (the listserv sponsored by the Ontario Field Ornithologists) on matters dealing with the OBRC. This electronic form of transmitting data, especially dates and places, has been invaluable in maintaining accurate records, and many rare bird reports have been submitted to the OBRC because of direct appeals through ONTBIRDS.

I am indebted to the 1999, 2000, and 2001 OBRC members for their very considerable help and assistance over the years. Your confidence and support were very much appreciated.

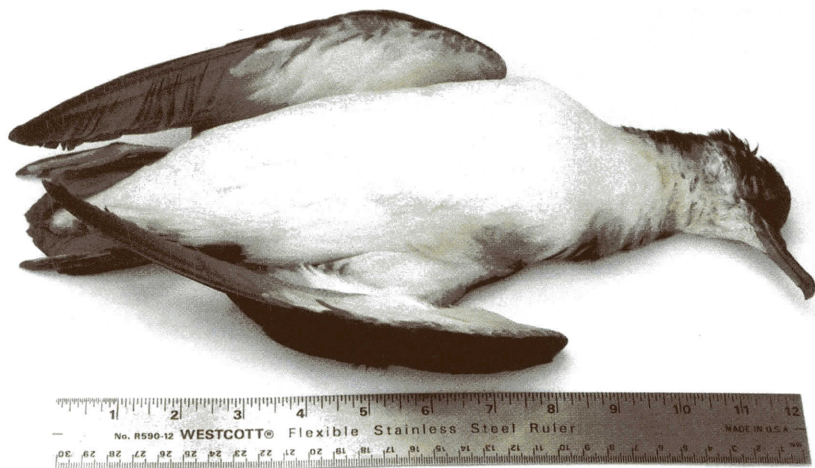


Figure 1: A first record for Ontario, this female Manx Shearwater was found dead, floating in the waters of Lake Deschenes, Ottawa River, Ottawa, on 9 September 2002. Photo by Bruce Di Labio.



Figure 2: First alternate Tricolored Heron, found at Port Weller, *Niagara*, on 30 May 2001. Photo by *Kayo J. Roy*.



Figure 3: Two of three juvenal Wood Storks observed at Pelee Island, *Essex*, from 9 August to 22 September 2001. Photo by *Kayo J. Roy*.



Figure 4: First basic, female Common Eider (*S. m. dresseri*) at Burlington, *Halton*, on 17 January 2001. Photo by *Kayo J. Roy*.



Figure 5: Definitive alternate Snowy Plover located at Presqu'île Provincial Park, *Northumberland*, 27 May 2001. Photo by *Harold E. Stiver*.



Figure 6: This definitive basic, female Black-necked Stilt, a very late lingering fall vagrant, was observed from 27 December 2001 to 2 January 2002 at Port Lambton, *Lambton*. Photo by *Harold E. Stiver*.



Figure 7: Ivory Gull, juvenal/first basic, at Humber Bay Park, *Toronto*, on 23 December 2000. Photo by *Sam Barone*.



Figure 8: Ivory Gull, juvenal/first basic, at Amherst Island, *Lennox and Addington*, on 9 January 2001. Photo by *James M. Richards*.



Figure 9: This basic, female Chuck-will's-widow, was located at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*, on 13 May 2001. Photo by *James N. Flynn*.



Figure 10: Townsend's Solitaire, observed at Copetown, *Hamilton*, 11 November 2001. Photo by *Barry S. Cherriere*.



Figure 11: This first basic, male Virginia's Warbler was captured and banded at Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay*, on 29 August 2001. Photo by *Bruce Rodrigues*.



Figure 12: For the period 24 November to 22 December 2001, this basic Lark Sparrow was observed at Newburgh, *Lennox and Addington*. Photo by *Harold E. Stiver*.



Figure 13: This first alternate, male Blue Grosbeak was captured and banded at Walsingham, *Norfolk*, on 15 May 2001. Photo by *Jody R. Allair*.



Figure 14: A remarkable find, the only record for Ontario and Canada, is this basic, female Lesser Nighthawk, photographed at Point Pelee National Park, Essex, on 29 April 1974. Photo by *Alan Wormington*.



Figure 15: Ontario Bird Records Committee members for 2001. Front row, left to right: Peter Burke, Alan Wormington, Margaret Bain, Nick Escott. Back row: Rob Dobos, Kevin McLaughlin, David Beadle, Kayo Roy, Mark Peck. Photo by *Bill Crins*.

Accepted Records

Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica* South Only (21)

- 2001 - one, alternate, 20 May, Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (Ronald D. Weir, also found by Martin H. Edwards, Robert B. Stewart, Jane Scovell).
 - one, definitive basic, 16 October, Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (Joel H. Ellis, also found by Bud Rowe).

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* North Only (7)

- 2001 - two, definitive alternate, 31 May - 10 June, Emo (Sewage Ponds), *Rainy River* (David H. Elder, also found by Brian Ratcliff).
 - four, definitive alternate, 1 June, Rainy River (Sewage Ponds), *Rainy River* (David H. Elder).
 - one, first basic, 19-22 September, Wawa (Sewage Ponds), *Algoma* (Robert Z. Dobos).

The observation in Wawa represents the first known record of this species for Algoma District. The pair of birds at Emo had built a well hidden nest in the cattails of the east pond. The nest was a floating mass of vegetation that was held in place by nearby cattail stems. This third known nesting attempt at this location failed due to lowered water levels in the pond.

Western Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis* (15)

- 2001 - one, 3-21 November, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Kevin A. McLaughlin, Jonathan M. Simms, found by Paul D. Pratt).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* (1)

- 2001 - one, female, 26 August, Ottawa (Lake Deschenes, Ottawa River), *Ottawa* (Bruce Squirrel, Bruce M. Di Labio, Ian P. Clark) - specimen (skin) in the Canadian Museum of Nature (CMNAV 77920) - photos on file.

A remarkable discovery and a first record of this species for Ontario. The bird was found dead, floating in the water. The excellent photographs by Di Labio and Clark show every feature possible to confirm the identification.

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* (26)

- 2001 - one, juvenal, 6-7 October; 6 October, Fifty Point Conservation Area, *Hamilton/Niagara*; 7 October, Ashbridges Bay, *Toronto* (Stuart Mackenzie, Thomas Flinn).
 - one, juvenal, 8 October, Britannia Conservation Area, *Ottawa* (Robert A. Bracken, Christina Lewis, also found by Bernie Ladouceur, Jan Slumkoski, J. Michael Tate).
 - one, juvenal, 24 November, Stoney Creek and Hamilton (Confederation Park), *Hamilton* (Brandon R. Holden, Eric W. Holden, Barry S. Cheriére) – photo on file.
 2000 - one, juvenal, 21 October - 1 December; 21 and 28 October, 5 November, 1 December, Hamilton (Van Wagners Beach) and Stoney Creek, *Hamilton*; 29 October and 12 November, Bronte Harbour, *Halton*; 12 and 19-20 November, Leslie Street Spit, *Toronto* (Gavin Edmondstone, Roy H. B. Smith, found by Luc Fazio).

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (8)

2001 - one, alternate, 19 May, Amherst Island, *Lennox and Addington* (Ronald D. Weir).

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* (47)

- 2001 - one, definitive alternate, 22 April, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
 - one, first alternate, 15 May, Sturgeon Creek, *Essex* (David C. R. Wagener, also found by Carle Belanger).
 - one, alternate/basic, 7 September - 14 October, Kingston (Little Cataraqui Creek), *Frontenac* (Jessie Deslauriers, Denise Murphy) - photo on file.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* (31)

- 2001 - one, 10 May, Long Point (Courtright Ridge), *Norfolk* (Stephane Menu).
 - one, definitive alternate, 11-12 May, Ottawa (Shirley's Bay), *Ottawa* (Marcel A. Gahbauer, also found by Judith Kennedy, Todd Hunter).
 - one, first alternate, 27 May - 2 June, Port Weller (Welland Canal), *Niagara* (Kayo J. Roy, Maggie Smiley, Burke Korol, Peter S. Burke, also found by Alan J. Smith) - photos on file.
 1977 - one, definitive alternate, 11-18 May, Port Colborne (Cement Plant Road Pond), *Niagara* (Harold H. Axtell, Robert F. Andrie, Walter Klabunde, Mary Louise Emerson, found by Blayne E. Farnan).
 1971 - one, first alternate, 23-24 May, Port Colborne (Cement Plant Road Pond), *Niagara* (Richard Brownstein, Edward L. Seeber, found by Harold L. Lancaster, Alan J. Smith, Randy Waters).

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (37)

- 2001 - one, definitive alternate, 19-23 April, Bloomfield, *Prince Edward* (Donald C. Craighead, Burke Korol) - photo on file.
 - one, definitive alternate, 27 April - 8 May, Tecumseh, *Essex* (Glenn Gervais, found by Michael Bickley).
 - two, definitive alternate, 11 May, Aylmer (Sewage Ponds), *Elgin* (David A. Martin, also found by Linda Wladarski).
 - three, definitive alternate, 21-28 May (one, 21-24 May, three, 25-28 May), Southampton (Horseshoe Bay), *Bruce* (Cindy Cartwright, Grant Ferris) - photo on file.
 - one, definitive alternate, 31 May, Whitby (Cranberry Marsh), *Durham* (Margaret J. C. Bain, found by Harry Kerr).

This was without question an exceptional year for this species in Ontario.

Ibis species *Plegadis* sp. (34)

- 2001 - one, 15-19 April, Laggan, *Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry* (Peggi Calder, Christine Brunet, found by William Franklin) - photo (video) on file.
 - fifteen, 9 May, London, *Middlesex* (Andrew Ross).
 - four, 4 August, Long Point (Big Creek National Wildlife Area), *Norfolk* (Stuart Mackenzie).

Wood Stork *Mycteria americana* (9)

- 2001 - three, juvenal, 9 August - 22 September, Pelee Island (Lake Henry), *Essex* (Deborah D. Jacobs, Alan Wormington, Kayo J. Roy, Burke Korol, Paul D. Pratt, Michael J. Oldham) - photos on file.

- 1984 - one, 29 October, Holiday Beach Conservation Area, *Essex* (Michael A. Kielb).
- 1972 - one, 11-17 May, Thorndale to Plover Mills, *Middlesex* (William W. Judd, found by Dr. and Mrs. Allan Day).
- 1971 - one, juvenal, August (exact date unknown), Madawaska, *Nipissing* (Louis C. Hunt, Les Watts) – photos on file.
- 1970 - one, late September, Cranberry Lake, *Frontenac* (Milly A. Mott, Philip H. Mott).
- 1965 - one, juvenal, found dead (fresh), 4 August, Dorcas Bay, *Bruce* (Keith Quirk) - specimen (wing feathers and skeleton) at ROM (#95204).
- 1954 - one, 1-12 September, Cataraqui, *Frontenac* (Helen R. Quilliam, Robert B. Stewart, found by John R. Cartwright, W. H. Moulton).
- 1948 - one, alternate/basic, 2 August, Green Valley, *Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry* (Alex Strang, E. W. Munro, found by Alex McKinnon) - specimen (wing feathers and skeleton) at ROM (#76069) – photo on file.
- 1892 - one, juvenal, November (exact date unknown), Simcoe, *Norfolk* (A. R. Colman).

A phenomenal influx of juvenile Wood Storks found their way in late summer 2001 to several areas of the midwest and northeast United States and Canada. Of significance were the 16 birds found in upstate New York at Clyde (Sherony 2001), but the three birds at Pelee Island represent the first occasion of multiple individuals in Ontario. For more information on the status of this species in Ontario, and a complete account of the birds at Pelee Island in 2001, see Wormington (2001). See also James et al. (1976) and Godfrey (1986). Note that the 1971 record was near Madawaska, not in Algonquin Provincial Park as indicated by James et al. 1976, Godfrey 1986, and James 1991. The Committee has now reviewed all documentation available for known records of this species in Ontario, which had been included in the original OBRC checklist for Ontario (Wormington and James 1984).

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* (40)

- 2001 - one, 25 March, Kanata, *Ottawa* (Thomas A. Hanrahan, William R. Clark).
- one, 29 March, Melbourne, *Middlesex* (Betty Essey, Jack Essey).
- one, 27-29 April, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (David C. Boyce, Burke Korol, Alan Wormington, James N. Flynn, also found by Kathi Boyce) – photos on file.
- one, 28 April, Kanata, *Ottawa* (Eve D. Ticknor, also found by David Britton, Lise Dube, Richard Lavoie, William Murphy, William Petrie, Jack Romanow).
- one, 30 April - 1 May, Eatonville (Sinclair's Bush), *Chatham-Kent* (George D. Bryant).
- one, 8-10 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Ron Tozer, Alan Wormington, R. Doug McRae) – photo on file.
- one, 12-13 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Dale Jensen).

It is becoming apparent that this species is clearly expanding its range. The 19 birds reported over the past three years (Roy 2000, 2001, 2002) represent one half of the entire total of accepted records for the province.

Ross's Goose *Chen rossii* South Only (34)

- 2001/02 - two, definitive basic, white morph, 19 October - 15 December, and 1 January; one, 19-22 October, two, 23 October - 15 December, Kingsville (Jack Miners Bird Sanctuary), *Essex*; one, 28 October and 1 January, Point Pelee National Park *Essex*, (Dean J. Ware, Alan Wormington).

- 2001 - one, definitive basic, white morph, 8 April, Russell, *Prescott and Russell* (Roger Clark).
- five (four, definitive basic; 1, first basic), white morph, 15-16 April, Riceville, *Prescott and Russell* (Christina Lewis, Robert A. Bracken, found by Mark Gawn).
- one, definitive basic, white morph, 8-15 December, Whitby (Cranberry Marsh), *Durham* (Curtis A. Marantz, found by Harry Kerr).
- one, definitive basic, white morph, 15 December, Long Point (Big Creek Marsh), *Norfolk* (Kevin A. McLaughlin, also found by George M. Naylor, Bruce Kellett).

Here is another example of a species being observed more frequently in southern Ontario. A second bird accompanying the Whitby bird was considered to be a hybrid between Ross's Goose and Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*).

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima* South Only (17)

- 2001 - one, female, 27 May - 30 June, Amherst Island, *Lennox and Addington* (R. Kenneth F. Edwards, found by Mark Allaire, Nis Moller).
- 2000/01 - one, first basic, female, *S. m. dresseri*, 18 November - 12 April; 18 November - 2 January, Hamilton (Confederation Park), and Stoney Creek, *Hamilton*, 3 January - 12 April, Burlington, *Halton* (Kevin A. McLaughlin, Ron Pittaway, Kayo J. Roy, Burke Korol) - photos on file.

Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus* North Only (17)

- 2001 - one, female, 2 October, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Miguel Demeulemeester).

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus* (13)

- 2001 - one, 11-13 September, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Carl E. Weber, James A. N. Dowall, Robert Cermak, Dorothy Smith, Irene Woods, also found by Alfred Starling).

Mississippi Kite *Ictinia mississippiensis* (28)

- 2001 - one, first basic, 10 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Diane Haselmayer, Jerry Ball, April Grunspan, Lance Allin, also found by David Skinner, Paul Carter).
- one, definitive basic, 11-12 May, Walsingham (Rowanwood Sanctuary and Wilson Tract), *Norfolk* (Roger Leblanc, Denis Lepage, also found by Alair Clavette, Valmond Bourque).
- one, first basic, 18 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (J. Michael Tate, also found by Diane Henderson, Shelly Michel).
- 2000 - one, first basic, 8 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Donald Ford, Sarah E. Rupert, Burke Korol).

Snowy Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* (3)

- 2001 - one, definitive alternate, 24-31 May, Presqu'île Provincial Park (Owen Point), *Northumberland* (Fred M. Helleiner, Donald Shanahan, Ian Shanahan, Burke Korol, Ron Tozer, R. Doug McRae, Harold E. Stiver) - photo on file.

Excellent documentation that included a photograph and numerous black and white drawings was submitted on this third record for Ontario. The two previous records were both at Long Point Flats, *Norfolk*, on 4-9 May 1987 (Coady 1988) and 9 May 1990 (Curry 1991).

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* South Only (43)

- 2001 - one, definitive alternate, 11 May, Presqu'ile Provincial Park, *Northumberland* (Tony Snider, William Gilmour, also found by Leslie Snider).
 - one, definitive alternate, 2 June, Presqu'ile Provincial Park, *Northumberland* (Donald Shanahan, Ian Shanahan, found by Robert B. Stewart, John Thompson).

The band of the 2 June bird at Presqu'ile identified its origin as Lake Diefenbaker in Saskatchewan, where it was banded in June 2000 (Rosemary Vanderlee, pers. comm.). This individual was noted to have a sore right leg and may well have visited Long Point briefly a few days earlier (Debbie Badzinski, pers. comm.), where a banded Piping Plover was observed with exactly the same ailment.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* (11)

- 2001/02 - one, definitive basic, female, 27 December - 2 January, Port Lambton (Snye River), *Lambton* (Larry Cornelis, Blake A. Mann, Harold E. Stiver, Allen T. Chartier) – photos on file.

Excellent documentation and diagnostic photographic evidence was submitted on this lingering fall vagrant in Ontario that remained in the Snye River for a full week.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* (22)

- 2001 - one, definitive alternate, 6-7 May, Blenheim (Sewage Ponds), *Chatham-Kent* (James E. Heslop, Ron Tozer, also found by David H. Elder, Barry D. Jones, Richard G. Snider).
 1971 - one, definitive alternate, 18-20 July, Fort Erie (Waverley Beach), *Niagara* (Robert F. Andrie, found by John E. Black, Paul M. Benham, Daniel Salisbury) – photo on file.

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus* North Only After 1993 (31)

- 2001 - one, juvenal, 9 October, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, Miguel Demeulemeester).

This is only the second accepted record for northern Ontario.

Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus* South Only (29)

- 2001 - one, juvenal, dark/intermediate, 24 August, Hamilton (Van Wagners Beach), *Hamilton* (Robert Z. Dobos).
 - one, juvenal, (found dead, badly decomposed), 27 September, Hamilton (Van Wagners Beach), *Hamilton* (Robert Curry, Glenda J. Slessor) – photos on file.
 2000 - one, 28 August, Hamilton (Van Wagners Beach), *Hamilton* (Robert Curry, also found by Glenda J. Slessor).

California Gull *Larus californicus* (34)

- 2001 - one, definitive basic, 5 January, Blenheim (Ridge Landfill), *Chatham-Kent* (Keith J. Burk).
 - one, definitive basic, 25 October, Presqu'ile Provincial Park, *Northumberland* (R. Doug McRae, also found by Maureen Riggs).
 - one, definitive basic, 1-2 December, Niagara Falls (Adam Beck overlook), *Niagara* (Willie D'Anna, Burke Korol, found by Dean DiTommaso).

1998 - one, first basic, 18-19 November, London (Fanshawe Lake), *Middlesex* (William G. Lindley, also found by Peter Read).

Unfortunately, there have been several errors in the running totals for California Gull published by the OBRC back to the 1990 Report. However, as of this year's Report, 34 records have been evaluated. While there is no way to be sure, it is presumed that certain individuals have made return visits to sites such as the Niagara River over a number of years, so that the actual number of different gulls would probably be lower than this total.

Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea* (26)

2001 - one, juvenal/first basic, 1-4 January; 1 January, Stoney Creek (Lawrence P. Sayer Park), *Hamilton*; 1-4 January, Hamilton (Harbour), *Hamilton* (Glenn Coady, Denys R. Gardiner, found by William F. Smith) – specimen (skin) at ROM (#67590).

- one, juvenal/first basic, 3-17 January, Amherst Island and Millhaven, *Lennox and Addington* (Robert M. Sachs, Bruce M. Di Labio, Bud Rowe, James M. Richards, Burke Korol, Glenn Coady, found by Donald Craighead) – photos on file.

2000 - one, juvenal/first basic, 17 and 23-25 December, Toronto (Humber Bay Park), *Toronto* (Janet Robinson, Glenn Coady, Jean Niskanen, Ron Pittaway, Sam Barone, Alfred Raab, found by Leon Schlichter) – photos on file.

Remarkable, exceptional and impressive were three adjectives used to describe the presence of these three different individuals observed in Hamilton Bay and along the north shore of Lake Ontario. Unfortunately, the Hamilton bird died after colliding with a hydro wire, and the Amherst Island bird likely succumbed as well, as it was noted to be in a very weakened condition during the last few days it was observed.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* South Only After 1990 (5)

2001 - four, definitive alternate, 16 June, Ottawa (Deschenes Rapids, Ottawa River), *Ottawa* (Robert A. Bracken, Christina Lewis).

- five, definitive alternate, 16 June, Ottawa, (Deschenes Rapids, Ottawa River), *Ottawa* (Robert A. Bracken, Christina Lewis).

Two separate small flocks of birds were observed at this location on the same date.

Band-tailed Pigeon *Columba fasciata* (9)

2001 - one, basic, 13-16 September, Algonquin Provincial Park (Rock Lake Campground), *Haliburton* (Bert Walsh, found by Eric Moss, Linda Moss) - photo on file.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (4)

2001 - one, basic, 28-29 April and 5-10 May; 28-29 April, Hillman Marsh, *Essex*; 5-10 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Paul D. Pratt, Alan Wormington, Donald E. Perks, Greg Vaughn) – photo on file.

The documentation of this fourth Ontario record was well scrutinized by the Committee members to ensure that the evidence clearly ruled out any hybridization between Eurasian Collared-Dove and Ringed Turtle-Dove.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* (8)

- 2001 - one, 27 June - 1 July, Lappe, *Thunder Bay* (David Christianson, Nicholas G. Escott, also found by Ann Christianson) – photos on file.
 2000 - one, basic, 29 August, Scarborough (Guildwood), *Toronto* (Glenn Coady, also found by Robert Coady).

Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis* (1)

- 1974 - one, basic, female, 29 April, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

This occurrence remains today as the only record of Lesser Nighthawk for Ontario and Canada, and the entire Great Lakes Region (Wormington 2002), and was included in the original OBRC checklist for Ontario (Wormington and James 1984). See also James et al. (1976) and Godfrey (1986). Weather conditions and a strong migration surge surely played a role in bringing this remarkable bird to southwestern Ontario.

Chuck-will's-widow *Caprimulgus carolinensis* (13)

- 2001 - one, basic, female, 13 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Ron Tozer, James N. Flynn) - photo on file.

Lewis's Woodpecker *Melanerpes lewis* (6)

- 2001 - one, definitive basic, 22-30 October, Chelmsford (Whitewater Lake), *Sudbury* (Denise Durette, Gerry Durette, Charles J. Whitelaw) - photos on file.

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus* North Only (8)

- 1999 - one, first basic, female, 28 October, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Hilbran Verstraete).

Gray Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis* (6)

- 2001 - one, 4 August, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Donald E. Perks, Jerry H. Guild, Mac P. McAlpine).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus* (41)

- 2001 - one, definitive alternate, 25 July, Embrun, *Ottawa* (Robert A. Bracken, C. Robert Gorman, found by Jan Slumkoski) – photo on file.

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus* North Only (8)

- 2001 - one, alternate, 21-22 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Bruce J. Rodrigues, also found by Samantha Nelson, Darlena D. Tousignant) – photo on file.

Plumbeous Vireo *Vireo plumbeus* (2)

- 2001 - one, basic/alternate, 10 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Donald Shanahan, also found by Albert Boisvert, Kenneth Kingdon).

The documentation clearly ruled out Blue-headed Vireo (*V. solitarius*) and Cassin's Vireo (*V. cassinii*) on this second record for Ontario. The first occurred on 3 June 1997 at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Dobos 1998). For full details of the first Ontario record, see Wormington (1997).

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* (26)

- 2001 - one, basic, female, 7 June, Long Point (Hastings Drive), *Norfolk* (Ian S. Cook, Alex M. Mills, also found by Robert Copeland, Donald Scanlan).
- 1949 - one, 24 September, Ridgeway, *Niagara* (Albert J. Wright, also found by Bernard Nathan).

For additional information on the 24 September 1949 observation, see Wright (1950), and Beardslee and Mitchell (1965).

Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi* South Only After 2000 (48)

- 2001/02 - one, basic, 8 December - 13 January, Mississauga, *Peel* (Mark Chojnacki, Burke Korol, Harold E. Stiver, also found by Linda J. Nuttall) – photos on file.
- 2001 - one, basic, 7 February, Waterloo, *Waterloo* (Blaine Prentice).
- one, 5 May, Ganaraska Forest Centre, *Northumberland* (Elizabeth Kellogg, also found by Alison Elliott).
- one, definitive basic, 27-30 October, Presqu'île Provincial Park, *Northumberland* (R. Doug McRae, Margaret J. C. Bain, Bruce M. Di Labio, Ian P. Clark, Curtis A. Marantz, found by Fred M. Helleiner, James Wood) – photos on file.
- one, basic, 4-11 November, Copetown, *Hamilton* (Sheldon E. McGregor, Curtis A. Marantz, Barry S. Cherriere) – photo on file.
- one, basic, 9 November, Peterborough, *Peterborough* (Peter J. Beales, Patricia A. Beales).
- one, basic, 18-23 November, Long Point Provincial Park, *Norfolk* (Donald S. Graham).
- 2000 - one, basic, 30 November - 15 December, Dryden (Cooper's Park), *Kenora* (Carolle Eady, Robin Dawes, Lisa Harvey) – photos on file.

For the second consecutive year, unprecedented numbers of this species from the west were observed in the province. Perhaps they experienced a good breeding year and many first basic birds dispersed east.

Sprague's Pipit *Anthus spragueii* (4)

- 2001 - one, alternate, male, 15-19 July, Burnt Point Creek, *Kenora* (Donald A. Sutherland, William J. Crins, also found by Martyn E. Obbard, Michael J. Oldham, Pamela O).

Virginia's Warbler *Vermivora virginiae* (4)

- 2001 - one, first basic, male, 29 August, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Bruce J. Rodrigues, Gabriel David, also found by Becky L. Stewart) – photos on file.

The bird was captured and banded by the Thunder Cape Bird Observatory and is the first record for northern Ontario.

Field Sparrow *Spizella pusilla* North Only (14)

- 2001 - one, 5 October, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Miguel Demeulemeester, also found by Allan G. Harris).

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus* (62)

- 2001 - one, 8-17 May, Minnitaki, *Kenora*, (Carolle Eady).
- one, definitive alternate, male, 8-9 June, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Bruce J. Rodrigues, also found by Darlena D. Tousignant, Jana Fenske) - photo on file.

- one, basic, 24 November - 22 December, Newburgh, *Lennox and Addington* (Curtis A. Marantz, Harold E. Stiver, Burke Korol, found by Peter Good) – photo on file.
 - 1978 - one, first basic, 2 October, Moose Factory, *Cochrane* (Alan Wormington) – photos on file.
- Observations of this species continue to mount. For additional details about the bird at Moose Factory, see Ridout (1978).

Blue Grosbeak *Guiraca caerulea* (52)

- 2001 - one, definitive alternate, male, 5-10 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Terry Osborne, William R. Maddeford, Alan Wormington, Ron Tozer, also found by Donald E. Perks, Gerry Shemilt).
- one, first alternate, male, 15 May, Walsingham, *Norfolk* (Charles M. Francis, Jody R. Allair) - photos on file.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* (12)

- 2001 - one, female/first basic male, 4 May, Erie Beach, *Chatham-Kent* (Keith J. Burk, Ron Tozer, J. Michael Tate, found by E. Jane Burk) - photos on file.

Not Accepted Records

Identification Uncertain

The documentation submitted for the following reports was for the most part found to be inadequate to unequivocally identify the species claimed. There were very few reports that the Committee felt were clearly erroneous. Any of these reports may be re-submitted, should additional documentation become available.

- 2001 - Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*), one, 18 December, Wyevale (Bluewater Beach), *Simcoe*.
- Little Blue Heron, one, 9 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex*.
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*), one, 2 September, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Glossy Ibis, one, 13 May, Pelee Island, *Essex*.
- Glossy Ibis, one, 31 May, Spanish Lake, *Sudbury*.
- Mississippi Kite, one, 18 May, Long Point (Courtright Ridge), *Norfolk*.
- Mississippi Kite, one, 9 September, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), one, 7 April, Dundalk, *Grey*.
- Swainson's Hawk, one, 30 September, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Piping Plover, one, 3 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex*.
- Black-necked Stilt, one, 12 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex*.
- Mew Gull (*Larus canus*), one, 10 November, Southampton, *Bruce*.
- Arctic Tern, one, 7 July, Kingsville (Lakeside Park), *Essex*.
- Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*), one, 23 May, Owen Sound (Kelso Beach), *Grey*.
- Dovekie (*Alle alle*), one, 24 October, Toronto (Sunnyside Beach), *Toronto*.
- Eurasian Collared-Dove, one, 11 May, Oshawa (Pumphouse Marsh), *Durham*.
- Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), one, 2 May, Pelee Island, *Essex* – photos on file.
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, one, 15 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*), one, 13 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.

- Kirtland's Warbler, one, 2 September, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Blue Grosbeak, one, 11 May, Wheatley Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent*.
- Blue Grosbeak, one, 12 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Blue Grosbeak, one, 12-13 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent*.
- Blue Grosbeak, one, 20 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Blue Grosbeak, one, 25 July, La Salle (Ojibway Nature Centre), *Essex*.
- Blue Grosbeak, one, 3 August, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- 2000 - Mississippi Kite, one, 12 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Mississippi Kite, one, 13 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- 1997 - White-winged Dove, one, 4 June, Hamilton, *Hamilton*.
- 1987 - Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*), one, 1 September, Eagle Lake, *Haliburton*.
- 1980 - Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), 25 March - 15 April, Port Stanley, *Elgin* – photos on file.

Corrections/Updates To Previous OBRC Reports

2000 Report (Ontario Birds 19: 45-64)

- under Pacific Loon, add "South Only" after *Gavia pacifica*.
- under Northern Fulmar, 5 January, change "1999" to "2000".
- under Smew, in the commentary, change "Roche (1960a, 1960b)" to "Rosche (1960a, 1960b)".
- under Piping Plover, 2 June - 15 July 2000, change "Stuart McKenzie" to "Stuart Mackenzie".
- under Long-tailed Jaeger, change "1999" to "2000".

1989 Report (Ontario Birds 17: 62-83)

- under Virginia's Warbler, change bracketed numbering to "(1/2)".

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An Influx of the Northern Hawk Owl in Thunder Bay District

Nicholas G. Escott

During the past 25 years, I have travelled extensively throughout Thunder Bay District in search of birds, and, although references (Godfrey 1986, Duncan and Duncan 1998) indicate that this entire area is within the breeding range of the Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*), I have rarely encountered this species during the breeding season.

This situation changed, however, about six years ago, with two back-to-back invasions of this species, and during the spring and summer of 2001, we had an unprecedented number of breeding season reports. In this article, I describe eight nests that I found from 1998 to 2001, with some observations on the habitat and behaviour of the Northern Hawk Owl, and brief comments on the 2002 breeding season.

Historical Perspective

The only information available from prior to the 1980s comes from anecdotal reports in the newsletter of the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists (TBFN) and related publications by TBFN members. In the early 1900s, the Northern Hawk Owl was frequently seen in fall migration (Dear 1940), but it would appear that this species then became quite uncommon. In the two decades from 1939

to 1958, this owl was listed in the TBFN News Letter in only nine years, with no more than one or two reports per year.

There was a hawk owl "invasion" into the southern parts of northwestern Ontario in the winter of 1958-59 (Allin 1959), and birds were frequently seen thereafter through 1963. Reports then dropped off again, with no sightings reported in 11 of the next 24 years. Reports picked up a bit from 1988 to 1992, all in the migration and winter seasons. There were only two reports from 1993 to 1995.

Nesting records are few. Lionel S. Dear, on the basis of 30 years' observations in the first half of the twentieth century, considered the Northern Hawk Owl a "very rare summer resident" in the vicinity of the Lakehead (Dear 1940). There are only four previous breeding records in Thunder Bay District: one in O'Connor Township, west of Thunder Bay, in 1926 (Dear 1940); one from Auden, east of Lake Nipigon, in 1957 (Allin 1959); one at Hemlo near Marathon in 1958 or 1959 (P. van Kerkoerle, pers. comm.); and one about 8 km north of Geraldton in 1972 (D. Elder, pers. comm.).

Dave Elder (pers. comm.) found the latter nest, north of Geraldton, on 21 May 1972, in an

area that had been burned a couple of years before (i.e., the Greta Lake Fire). The burn was still fairly open, with early successional grasses, shrubs and raspberries (*Rubus* sp.) as ground cover. The nest was in a hollow in the top of a fire-killed birch (*Betula* sp.) about 6 m tall. Elder saw one adult fly to the nest stub, and then another adult emerged from the nest.

There were no breeding records of the Northern Hawk Owl in Thunder Bay District during Ontario's first breeding bird atlas, which spanned the 5-year period 1981-85 (Weir 1987).

The Current Influx

The first sign that this species might be increasing in numbers in our area came when one was seen at the Thunder Cape Bird Observatory on 13 September 1996, only the second for Thunder Cape in its six year history. There were frequent sightings from various locations that fall, and two were tallied on the Thunder Bay Christmas Bird Count, 26 December, only the seventh time the species had been recorded in 56 years of CBCs.

The next summer, 1997, Brian Moore spotted a hawk owl in June near Black Sturgeon Lake, and a subsequent visit yielded a group of recently fledged young in addition to one parent (Figure 1).

The next spring, 1998, I found two nests in the same area, 3.5 km apart. One of them was only 2.5 km

from the previous year's breeding site. One (#1998-1; see Table 1) was on the top of a broken-off birch (*B. papyrifera*) stub (Figures 2 and 3); the other (#1998-2) was in a burned-out cavity in the side of a Balsam Poplar (*Populus balsamifera*) (Figures 4 and 5). Hawk owls were scarce for the next two years, but during the fall and winter of 2000-2001, there were numerous sightings of hawk owls in the vicinity of Thunder Bay, and birds on territory were seen starting in late winter. I concentrated my search for breeding pairs in two areas where birds seemed to be the most dependable: the area near Black Sturgeon Lake where the 1998 nests had been found; and logging clear-cuts north and west of Raith, about an hour's drive northwest of Thunder Bay. In the Black Sturgeon area, I found two nests (#2001-3 and #2001-5), only 2 km apart (Figures 6 to 9). They were at the same place as the 1998 nests, but in different trees. One of the nests (#2001-5) was in clear view of a 1998 nest tree (#1998-2). In the Raith area, I found three nests, two of them (#2001-1 and #2001-2) only 4.5 km apart (Figures 10 to 13), with the other (#2001-4) 13 km to the west, on the south shore of Muskeg Lake (Figures 14 and 15).

In addition, I checked out a tip from a Nipigon MNR employee who had seen a hawk owl in a clear cut at Shook Lake, south of Black Sturgeon Lake, and I found a nest (#2001-6) there also.



Figure 1: Two juvenile Northern Hawk Owls, family #1997-1, panting in the mid-day heat, Black Sturgeon area, 29 June 1997. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 2: Nest tree for Northern Hawk Owl nest #1998-1, Black Sturgeon area, 3 May 1998. The nest is in the top of the tall stub in the centre background. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.

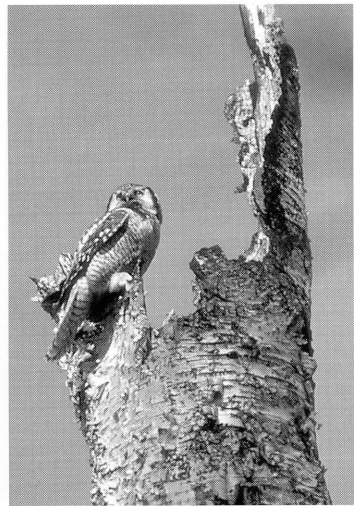


Figure 3: Male at nest #1998-1, 3 May 1998. It has just given a prey item to the female, which is hidden in the top of the stub. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 4: Nest tree for Northern Hawk Owl nest #1998-2, Black Sturgeon area, 3 May 1998. The nest cavity is halfway up the right hand tree of the twin trees in the centre of the picture. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 5: Pair at nest #1998-2, 3 May 1998. The male has brought food to the female, which is sitting in the shadows, probably on recently hatched young. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 6: Nest tree for Northern Hawk Owl #2001-3, Black Sturgeon area, 18 June 2001. The nest cavity is in the side of the tree, just above the horizon in the background. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 7: Juvenile Northern Hawk Owl in nest cavity #2001-3, 18 June 2001. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 8: Nest tree for Northern Hawk Owl nest #2001-5, Black Sturgeon area, 18 June 2001. The nest cavity is half way up the trunk, where a large branch had previously broken off. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 9: Male at nest #2001-5, 18 June 2001. Several juveniles had already left the nest; any remaining were hidden from view in the cavity. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 10: Nest tree for Northern Hawk Owl nest #2001-1, near Raith, 27 April 2001. The nest cavity is an enlarged old woodpecker hole, near the top of the stub. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.

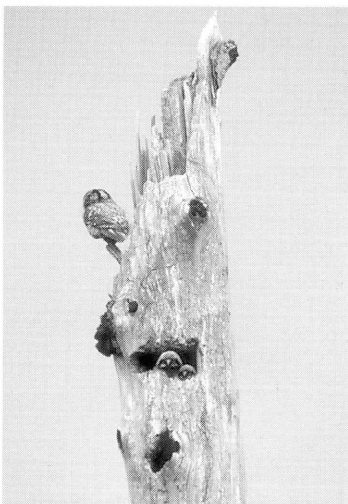


Figure 11: Female and juvenile at nest #2001-1, 19 June 2001. At least one juvenile had already left the nest. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 12: Nest tree for Northern Hawk Owl nest #2001-2, near Raith, 28 April 2001. The nest is in the top of the broken-off birch tree in the centre of the picture. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 13: Female on nest #2001-2, 28 April 2001. Only her tail can be seen sticking out from the top of the tree trunk. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.



Figure 14: Nest tree for Northern Hawk Owl nest #2001-4, near Raith at Muskeg Lake, 16 May 2001. The nest cavity is in the tall stub just right of centre, on the back side near the top where the remaining large branch originates. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott*.

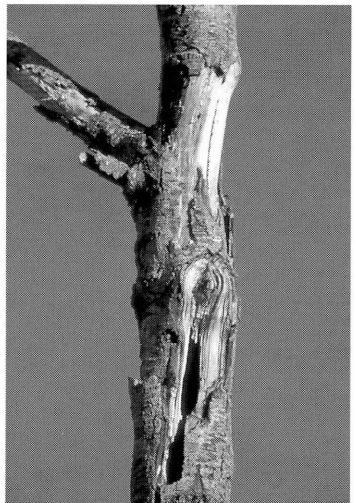


Figure 15: Nest cavity for #2001-4, where a large branch had broken off. The female entered and exited through the upper part of the hole, with some difficulty. Photo by *David Welbourne*.

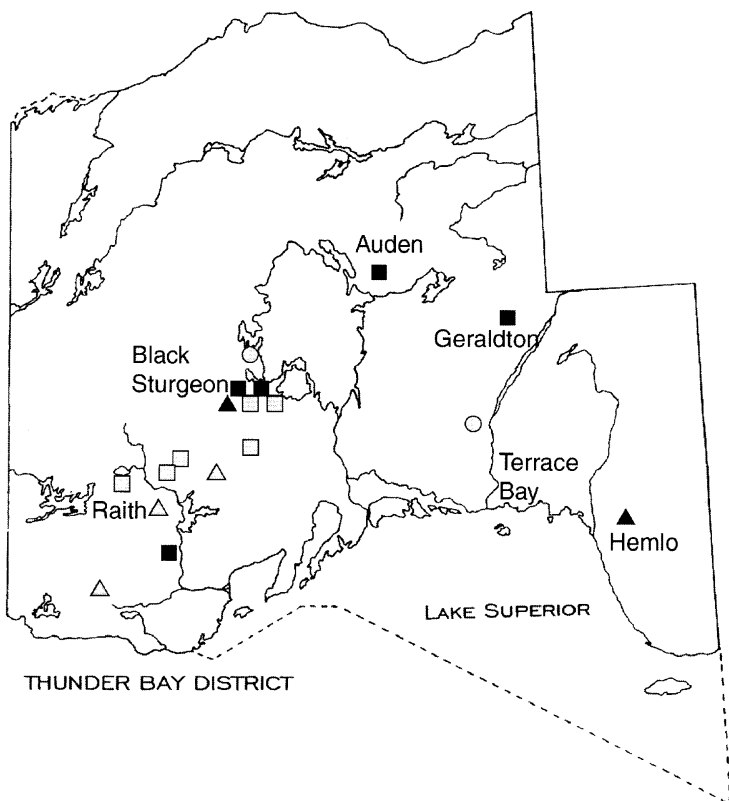


Figure 16: Map of Thunder Bay District showing locations of 2001 (grey symbols) and pre-2001 (black symbols) breeding records for the Northern Hawk Owl. Squares are nests, triangles are family groups, and circles are single birds seen during the breeding season. See text for details.

Following is a chronology of the visits to each nest site:

Family 1997-1, Black Sturgeon

June 29 one adult hunting; 3 juveniles calling, barely able to fly

Nest # 1998-1, Black Sturgeon

April 10 female on nest calling (heard only); male hunting, brought vole

April 19 female seen on nest; male heard ululating nearby

May 3 female on nest; male hunting, brought vole; both called

May 18 4 juveniles in nest; no adults seen (1700h)

Nest #1998-2, Black Sturgeon

April 19 male ululating

May 3 female on nest; male ululated, brought prey; both called

May 18 3 juveniles in nest, 2 on the ground; male brought food to female

Nest #2001-1, Raith

April 1 pair seen: male hunting, female sedentary in top of birch tree

April 13 male hunting

April 15 male hunting

April 25 male hunting; female left nest to receive food item

April 27 male and female seen

May 17 female left nest to receive food from male, who ululated once

June 5 male hunting; female brought cached food item and fed young in nest

June 19 2 juveniles in nest, one on the ground; female loafing, hunting

Nest #2001-2, Raith

April 27 male seen, hunting

April 28 male ululated once; female sitting on nest, left once to receive food

May 17 female seen on nest

June 4 no birds seen

June 19 no birds seen

Nest #2001-3, Black Sturgeon

May 10 female on nest; male brought food item

June 6 male hunting; female left nest to bring food item back

June 18 1 juvenile in nest; adult nearby

Nest #2001-4, Muskeg Lake, near Raith

May 16 male hunting and loafing; female left nest once to stretch and defecate

May 17 no birds seen

June 4 female seen and calling near nest; 2 juveniles seen in nest (probably more)

June 19 no birds seen

Nest #2001-5, Black Sturgeon

June 6 male brought food to perched female; she called and took food to nest

June 18 at least 3 juveniles on ground, 1 could barely fly; female feeding them and visiting nest with food; male brought food items to female

Nest #2001-6, Shook Lake

June 9 female calling, feeding juveniles on ground and in nest; male brought food

Table 1: Comparison of nest site locations for the eight Northern Hawk Owl nests.

Nest #	Date found	Height (m)	Type of tree	Location in tree	Outcome
1998-1	10 April 1998	13	White Birch stub	Burned-out top	4+ young
1998-2	3 May 1998	10	Balsam Poplar	Hole burned in side	5 young
2001-1	25 April 2001	10	Trembling Aspen (<i>P. tremuloides</i>)	Old woodpecker hole	3+ young
2001-2	28 April 2001	18	White Birch stub	Broken-off top	failed
2001-3	10 May 2001	5	Balsam Poplar	Hole burned in side	1+ young
2001-4	16 May 2001	25	Trembling Aspen	Hole in side	2+ young
2001-5	6 June 2001	10	Trembling Aspen	Hole burned in side	3+ young
2001-6	9 June 2001	10	poplar/aspen	Old woodpecker hole	2+ young

In addition to the nests described above, Northern Hawk Owls were seen by several observers in other locations during the 2001 breeding season (Figure 16). In July, family groups of fledged young were found 75 km up Highway 527; near Marks Lake west of Thunder Bay; and southeast of Raith in Abitibi block 3. Also, individual birds were seen during the breeding season at Gull Bay on Lake Nipigon, and north of Terrace Bay.

Observations on Behaviour

The males did most or all of the hunting, particularly once the female was sitting on eggs. While incubating the eggs, the female would usually leave the nest to receive a food item from the male at a nearby tree or stub, and return to the nest several minutes later. After the young had hatched, the male usually brought the food to the nest. Nearly all the prey items I observed were voles, probably meadow voles (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*). Juveniles would start leaving the nest one

by one before they could fly, and were usually sitting on the ground, or had climbed up a short stick or branch, where they would wait for the female to feed them. Often, the male would bring a food item and cache it on a stub or near the top of a live conifer. The female would go and retrieve it later.

Vocalizations

The most common call was a raspy *burr-r-r-r-WHEEP*, the first part lower-pitched and drawn out, the second part short, emphatic, and higher pitched. Both adults gave this call, apparently as a means of communication. The male would often announce his presence with this call when he returned with food. The young gave the same call, but higher pitched, in and out of the nest, calling back and forth with the female, probably for food. This call is so characteristic that I was able to locate a new pair by hearing the sound before I saw any birds. I believe this is the alarm or screeching call described as *screeeee-yip*

(Duncan and Duncan 1998), but the birds did not seem to be alarmed by my presence and carried on their usual activities while giving this call.

Sometimes the male would give a clear tremulous low-pitched whistle reminiscent of the hoot of the Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*). This was the "ululation", or display call, of the male. Males were usually loafing on a high exposed perch close to the nest when they ululated, and seemed oblivious to my presence. One male sang with a vole in his mouth.

Females uttered a definite alarm call when I unwittingly came too close to a juvenile on the ground. This was a series of staccato single notes *quik quik quik*. One bird gave this call when a Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) flew over. Another female, who was perched near the nest, gave the alarm call when she saw two male Northern Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*) circling above. Suddenly, the male appeared and circled up, butefashion, to meet the hawks, whereupon he started diving at them until they had drifted away from the area.

Two other types of calls were heard once only. The first was a series of one-syllable squeaks uttered by one member of a pair, probably the male, with his mouth wide open. He was hunting some distance from his nest, when he came in sight of the female of the neighbouring pair, which was

perched near her nest and giving the screeching call. He left without a confrontation. The most peculiar vocalization was a twittering, reminiscent of the Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*), given by a female while hunting near the nest; at least one juvenile was on the ground at the time, while the others were still in the nest.

The Habitat

Several features seem to be common to all nest sites. First, the situation of the nest was in a large standing dead tree with a suitable cavity. The cavities were of various types, and at variable heights (Table 1), but all were in fairly large dead trees.

Second, the nests were located in open areas with a graminoid ground cover that supported a large vole population. In this part of northern Ontario, such open areas are the result of logging operations. But tree harvesting alone is not sufficient to produce appropriate habitat, since "weed" tree and shrub species regenerate quickly. An additional insult is required: either fire or herbicide. Herbicide is used by the forest industry on tree-planted areas because it kills fast-growing broadleaf species, thus releasing the planted conifers from competition. In addition, it allows grasses and sedges to grow. Fire has a similar effect on regenerating vegetation, but, unfortunately for the foresters, it kills the planted trees also. The area west of Black Sturgeon Lake, which produced at

least five hawk owl nests over the 1997-2001 period, was logged in 1990-91 and re-planted, but then was burned by a wild fire in 1996. It was planted again and parts were sprayed with herbicide in 1996-97. The Shook Lake hawk owl nest was in an area that was harvested in 1989-90, and was hit by a wild fire in 1996. It was subsequently re-planted and herbicided. The nests in the Raith area were in sites that had been logged and herbicided, but not burned.

Third, all nests were in quiet undisturbed areas with little human activity. The nest that failed was near a logging road that was quiet until May when a new tree harvesting operation started just up the road. I do not know why the birds deserted this site, but the constant noise and dust made by the machines and pulp trucks may have been a factor.

Prior to forest harvesting operations in Thunder Bay District, what was the natural habitat of the Northern Hawk Owl? Graminoid fens are the only natural grassy areas here, but I have never seen a hawk owl in the summer in such habitat. Perhaps the rodent population is too low, and/or there are no suitable nest sites. Or perhaps these areas are too wet, although one of the birds seen in the summer of 2001 was hunting in a wet marshy area.

A single forest fire might produce suitable habitat; two of the hawk owl sightings were in recent



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burns, but I was not able to find a nest in these areas. In these burns, most trees are still standing and the understorey usually grows back thickly within a year, but in some areas the ground cover is left more open.

The year 2002

Hawk owls remained common in the Thunder Bay area over the winter of 2001-2002, with peak numbers recorded in mid-March (e.g., 26 counted over the weekend of 16-17 March in two different areas). Numbers gradually dropped off after that, but a few individuals stayed into the breeding season.

Four nests were found in May, three additional recently fledged family groups (one with six juveniles) were found in June and July,

and adult birds were seen at several other locations. All 2002 nests were in logging cutovers, some of which had been treated with herbicide, while the others were in more recent cuts with little ground cover. Three of the nests were in the tops of broken-off birch (2) and Trembling Aspen (1) stubs, and one was in a cavity in the side of a tall dead aspen. All four nests and two of the family groups were located close to Highway 527 (the Armstrong Highway), between 25 km and 80 km north of the Trans-Canada Highway (Highway 11/17). The other family group was at the site of nest #2001-1 near Raith.

It is apparent from these observations that the Northern Hawk Owl has maintained a strong breeding presence in the southern part of Thunder Bay District in 2002.

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Acknowledgements

Brian Moore's sighting in June 1997 started me on the search for hawk owl nests, and Margaret Carruthers spotted the Shook Lake owl and provided background information on the Black Sturgeon and Shook Lake harvesting and regeneration operations, and fire history. I wish to thank them both particularly, and also Dave Elder and Peter van Kerkoerle for their breeding records, and Matt Hindle, Ryan Polson, Rob Swainson, and George Williams for their sightings during the summer of 2001. Thanks also to David Welbourne for his hawk owl sightings and photographs, and for finding one of the 2002 nests. George Holborn, Brian Moore and Barry Atkinson contributed some 2002 sightings.

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The 2000 Ontario Peregrine Falcon Survey

Brian Ratcliff and Ted Armstrong

Introduction

The American or *anatum* Peregrine Falcon was declared an endangered species in Ontario in 1977. Since that time, Ontario has worked as a member of the National Recovery Team and with a number of partners to recover the species in the province. While initial recovery efforts were focussed on the release of captive-reared young to re-establish a breeding population, population monitoring has also been a priority. The monitoring of nesting sites and population trends has become increasingly important as population recovery has proceeded.

Ontario has participated in the nation-wide Peregrine Falcon surveys conducted every five years under the National Recovery Plan since 1970 (Cade and Fyfe 1970, Fyfe et al. 1976, Murphy 1990, White et al. 1990, Holroyd and Banasch 1996, Rowell et al. *in press*, Banasch *in prep.*). Survey methods and coverage within Ontario have varied somewhat from survey to survey, but the objective has always been to obtain as complete and comprehensive a view as possible of the status of Peregrine Falcons nesting within the province. This paper reports on the results of the provincial Peregrine Falcon survey in 2000.

Background Information

Historical data on Peregrine Falcons in Ontario were used to help plan the 2000 survey (Greene 1978, Ratcliff and Armstrong *in prep.*). From an analysis of all documented historical nesting sites in Ontario (1848–1964), 40 sites were considered as confirmed nesting sites, and an additional 8 sites were considered as suspected breeding sites. Mapping of these sites generally portrays the known historical range of peregrines in Ontario (Figure 1), although it is likely that the historical range in northern Ontario is under-represented due to sporadic and incomplete investigation in the past.

Survey Methods

Volunteers, naturalist organizations and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) staff were mobilized to monitor historical nesting sites and other potential habitat, and to report possible sightings of nesting activity. The survey was profiled and participation was solicited through a variety of websites, publications and media reports, including ONTBIRDS. A variety of survey methods was used, including ground monitoring of known and potential nesting sites (both urban and cliff), boat surveys,

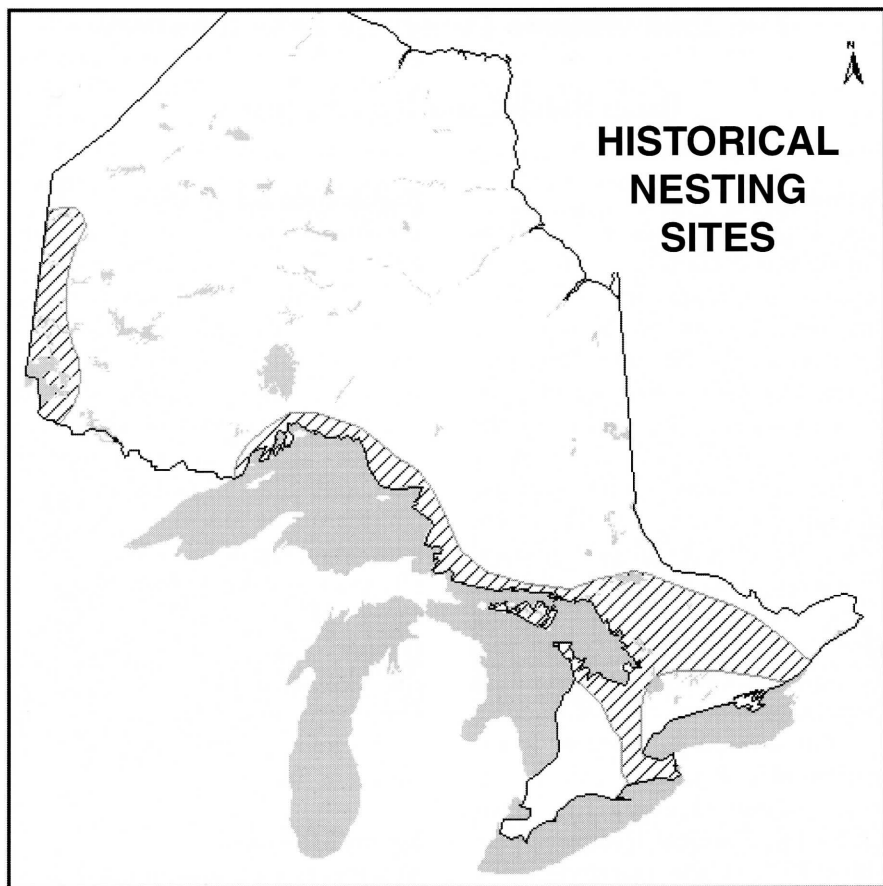


Figure 1: General range of documented historical Peregrine Falcon nesting in Ontario (1848-1964), adapted from Ratcliff and Armstrong (*in prep.*).

and helicopter surveys. Helicopters were used to survey high potential and historical nesting habitat in areas where there was poor access or a limited number of ground surveyors, based upon a technique which was pioneered in Labrador (Jackson 1990).

Identification of high priority sites to be surveyed was based on current and historical nesting sta-

tus, identification of high potential sites and reported but unconfirmed sites. In descending order of priority, the following areas were selected for surveying: known, currently active nest sites (i.e., 1995+); suspected active nest sites (i.e., 1995+), based upon recent unconfirmed but probable reports; documented historical nesting sites where re-occupancy has not been documented

since population recovery began; and sites containing habitat with high potential, but where peregrine nesting has never been reported or suspected.

Nesting was documented by the highest category of confirmed nesting activity, ranging in descending order from a confirmed nesting attempt, to a territorial pair, to an occupied territory (single adult).

Young were banded by banding teams at nest sites in urban southern Ontario (led by Pud Hunter, OMNR, Aylmer) and in the western Lake Superior basin (led by Brian Ratcliff). Attempts were made to identify the origin of nesting adult peregrines by looking for and identifying band numbers and colours. Red-banded and red/black-banded birds were released in Canada and the U.S., respectively; black-banded birds were wild-reared birds from Canada banded in the nest; and unbanded birds were considered wild-reared birds of unknown origin.

Prey remains were collected at nest sites during banding, and identified as to species.

Results

There was a total of 53 confirmed sites with reported peregrine activity in the province during the 2000 Survey, comprising 42 territorial pairs and 11 occupied territories (see Table 1 and Figure 2). There has been a dramatic increase in the number of occupied territories in Ontario over the past 30 years, with

the greatest rate of increase occurring between 1995 and 2000 (Figure 3). Occupied territories were distributed across both northern (38) and southern (15) Ontario, with 31 (59%) of these sites being located within the Lake Superior basin.

A minimum of 68 young was known to have fledged from the 53 sites. Because productivity was not determined for all territories, average productivity may be more precisely described as follows: 1.62 young fledged per territorial pair ($n=42$); 2.19 young fledged per nest attempt ($n=31$); and 2.62 young fledged per known successful nest ($n=26$).

Of the 42 territorial pairs, 32 (76%) were using cliff sites, 8 (19%) were on buildings, 1 (2%) was on a bridge and 1 (2%) was on a smoke-stack. The additional 11 occupied territories represented 7 cliff sites and 4 buildings.

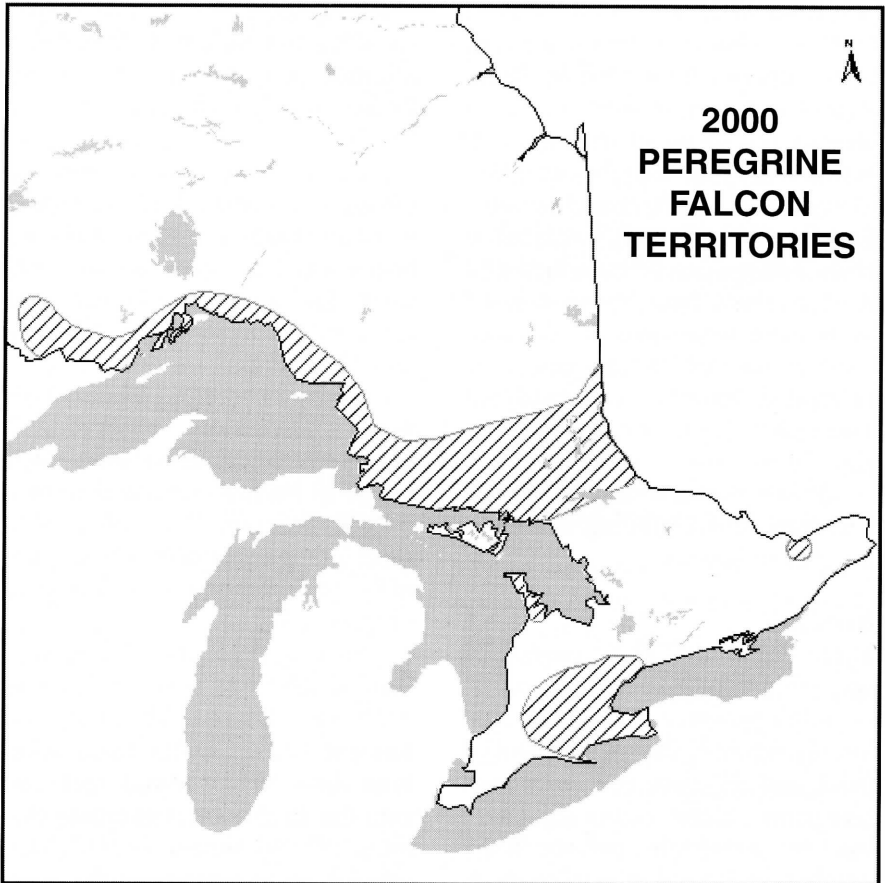
Of the 33 breeding adults which were individually observed, 8 (24%) were identified from their bands as having originated from a release program. The other 76% were either unbanded or had originally been banded as young in a natural nest.

Sixteen peregrine chicks were banded at urban nests in Toronto, Etobicoke, Ottawa, Hamilton and London, and an additional 27 peregrine chicks were banded at cliff nesting sites in western Lake Superior. Since 1995, banders in Ontario have banded 64 peregrine chicks from urban nests, 117 chicks from cliff

Table 1: Summary results of the 2000 Peregrine Falcon survey in Ontario.

Breeding status	Number of sites	Nesting site type		Number of young
		Urban	Cliff	
Confirmed nesting	31	8	23	68
Territorial pairs*	11	3	8	
Occupied territories	11	4	7	
Total	53	15	38	68

*Two of the territorial pairs were recorded as territorial pairs in Ontario but were successfully nesting in New York and Michigan. Both of these pairs utilized significant portions of Ontario as their hunting territories. These birds are not included in calculations of the number of nest attempts, successful nests or young fledged.

**Figure 2: General range of confirmed Peregrine Falcon nests and territories, 2000.**

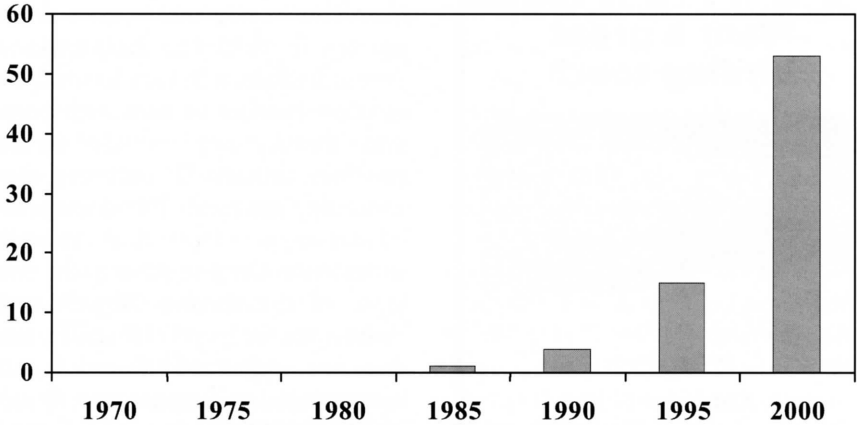


Figure 3: Trends in the number of Peregrine Falcon territories in Ontario during progressive 5-year surveys, 1970-2000.

nests, and 2 rehabilitated birds as part of the monitoring program.

The analysis of collected prey remains from 13 nests revealed a total of 21 species of birds in 2000. Rock Doves (*Columba livia*) were the most common prey items identified from 8 of the 10 cliff nests and all 3 urban sites. At the cliff sites, Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*), Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) and Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) were the next most common species identified, while at urban sites, European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) were the next most common species.

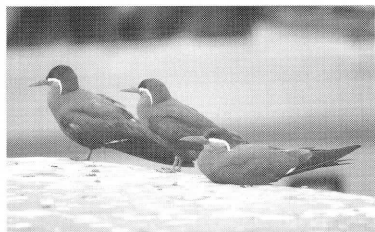
Discussion

The initial objective of the *anatum* Peregrine Falcon Recovery Plan was to establish in southern Ontario, by 1997, a minimum of 10 territorial *anatum* pairs naturally

fledging 15 or more young annually, measured in a five-year average commencing in 1993 (Erickson et al. 1988). The population objective was reached in 1997, and by 2000 the population was more than four times the 10 pair minimum and the productivity objective had also been surpassed. However, these original Recovery Plan objectives were minimum targets set at a time when there were virtually no peregrines nesting anywhere in eastern North America, and were not intended to reflect a target for population recovery.

There has clearly been a significant and progressive increase in Ontario's Peregrine Falcon population over the past 20 years, with more than a three-fold increase from the 15 sites located during the last provincial survey in 1995. The actual increase may be less than this, as some of the sites located in 2000

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may have been active but not documented in 1995. The 2000 Ontario Peregrine Falcon Survey located the greatest number of sites with peregrine activity ever recorded in the province, with the 53 confirmed sites exceeding the total of 48 documented and suspected historical sites ever recorded in Ontario prior to the collapse of the species (Ratcliff and Armstrong *in prep.*). However, this does not suggest that Ontario's current population is higher than historical levels, due to the sporadic and incomplete nature of earlier surveys of historic nesting sites.

There are two distinct populations of peregrines throughout the province: those nesting on cliff sites, primarily in northern Ontario (38); and those nesting in urban sites, solely in southern Ontario (15). The range distribution of sites across northern Ontario is very broad, with birds being located from the Atikokan area east to the Ottawa River, roughly approximating the known historical distribution. The known range in northeastern Ontario was extended northward with the location of new sites in 2000. Territories were distributed across the Great Lakes portion of the province, although a high proportion of the provincial population (31 of 53 sites) continued to be centred within the Lake Superior basin. The recolonization of the Lake Superior basin and the continued increase in the colonization of southern urban centres have been very encouraging. However, much

of the core historical range in southern and eastern Ontario, where most of the historical nest records originated, has still not been reoccupied. Only one cliff nest was located in southern Ontario (i.e., south of the French-Mattawa Rivers).

The continued increase in the number of nesting sites and territorial pairs is very positive. More breeding pairs were identified during this survey than in any previous year in Ontario, and a record number of chicks was known to have fledged in 2000. The 68 young that were known to have been produced from the 26 successful nests in 2000 exceeded the highest number of young released during the peak of the recovery program (54 in 1993) in Ontario (OMNR data). In the Midwest U.S., productivity in 2000 averaged 1.8 young fledged per territorial pair, 2.2 young/nest attempt, and 2.8 young/successful nest (Tordoff et al. 2000). This is very comparable to the 2000 observed productivity in Ontario of 1.6, 2.2 and 2.6, respectively.

An analysis of prey remains indicates that Peregrine Falcons in Ontario follow a similar pattern to peregrines elsewhere, feeding upon a wide diversity of avian species but with a few species accounting for the majority of the diet (Hunter et al. 1988). While 21 species were preyed upon, it is interesting that Rock Doves were by far the most commonly recorded prey species at both urban and cliff sites.

There has also been an immigration into Ontario of both released and wild-reared birds from outside of the province. Some of these birds have been nesting in Ontario since the mid-1990s and have contributed significantly to local populations. There was also a significant number of naturally-reared birds observed at nest sites in 2000 (76% of all known-origin adults); these birds were either unbanded or banded as young in a natural nest. These birds represent at least second-generation falcons, and provide further indication that the population is recovering and is not unduly reliant on the continued introduction of captive-reared birds.

The total number of Peregrine Falcons breeding in Ontario is still very small, but the population is clearly growing, reoccupying historical cliff range and colonizing new urban habitat. Although it remains an endangered species in Ontario, the Peregrine Falcon continues to show encouraging signs of population recovery. With continuing recruitment of breeding birds from within Ontario and elsewhere, the recovery is expected to continue.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many volunteers who donated their time to check suitable habitat for peregrines, and who reported their sightings, as well as the many OMNR staff who coordinated and reported on local monitoring activities. TransCanada Pipelines and Hydro

One Helicopter Services donated helicopter time to survey for falcons near Lake Superior. Funding for the survey was provided through the Species at Risk Program of Ontario's Living Legacy. Pud Hunter, OMNR Aylmer, coordinated banding efforts in southern Ontario. The Canadian Peregrine

Foundation provided information on the urban sites in southern Ontario through their web site. Kathleen Silen, OMNR, produced the maps. We would also like to thank the many organizations and media that promoted awareness of the survey through their publications, newsletters and websites.

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Notes

American Robin Nest Supported by Cattails

Doug Tozer

On 21 May 2001, while wading through a large cattail (*Typha* sp.) marsh (about 600 ha in area) along the Beaver River northeast of Uxbridge, Durham (44° 07' N, 79° 03' W), I happened upon an agitated male American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). I immediately sus-



Figure 1: American Robin nest in cattails, with vegetation moved for viewing, 28 May 2001. Photo by Doug Tozer.

pected that a nest might be nearby and searched likely sites, which consisted of stumps and other dead snags that would provide sturdy support for the nest structure. My search failed to reveal a nest, yet the robin continued giving agitated alarm calls. Soon after I considered abandoning my search, I observed a female robin fly from a dense clump of cattails not far from the agitated male. Examination of that clump uncovered an American Robin nest containing 3 eggs. The same nest was examined once more on 28 May 2001, when it was found to have been depredated, as indicated by egg shells and damage to the nest structure and lining (Figure 1). The identity of the nest predator was unclear.

The nest was well-concealed, 1 m above the water surface within a dense clump of cattail, 150 m from the nearest shoreline. Only seven dead snags were visible above the vegetation within a 100 m radius of the nest site. All of the snags were greater than 4 m tall and were used by the male robin as perching sites. The water depth directly below the nest was 35 cm, and four measurements taken 5 m from the nest in each of the cardinal directions


yielded a mean of 76.8 cm. The nest was of typical construction for this species, having an outer wall of dead cattail and dead grass with a bowl of mud towards the interior. The lining was made of dead grass and the base of the nest contained moss. The nest was supported entirely by surrounding cattail stalks, in a manner similar to nests of the Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) in wetlands (Beletsky 1996). The nest dimensions were: inner diameter, 10.2 cm; outer diameter, 15.1 cm; inner height, 6.9 cm; and outer height, 14.3 cm.

Discussion

The American Robin builds its nest in a wide variety of habitats and

locations (Tyler 1949; Harrison 1975, 1979; Sallabanks and James 1999), but typically avoids dense woodlands, favouring open areas such as fields and clearings around buildings (Peck and James 1987, Baicich and Harrison 1997). Nests are most often placed in trees or shrubs and on man-made structures such as under the eaves of buildings and on horizontal beams under bridges (Peck and James 1987) where there is firm support for the nest (Sallabanks and James 1999). Robins also nest in wetlands, especially ones that contain dead tree snags or stumps which offer nest support (Peck and James 1987). Therefore, what makes the nest described in this note unusual is not that the nest was located in a large, open wetland, but that the nest was placed within and was supported entirely by cattails, with no sturdy support below such as a stump or fallen log. A search of the literature and of nest finding guides failed to show any previous records of this species where the nest was supported entirely by cattail. All previously reported wetland nests appear to have been placed on stumps, fallen logs or within cavities of dead snags or similar situations.


Given that the American Robin is a habitat generalist, feeding and nesting in a wide variety of habitats (Ehrlich et al. 1988), it is perhaps not surprising that the pair attempted to nest at the location described in this note. The water level within Reach Marsh where




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the nest was located was lower in 2001 than in most previous years (pers. obs.), which likely exposed more mud in the vicinity of the nest site than is typical. Exposed mud might have made the nesting location more attractive for robins in 2001 than in more typical years when water levels are higher (Ron Tozer, pers. comm.). Indeed, during the 2001 breeding season, I noted several open patches of mud within the marsh which might have provided suitable feeding areas, initially attracting the robins to the marsh.

This note describes an atypical nesting of the American Robin. Although this species is known to

nest within wetlands, it characteristically chooses nest sites that provide firm support from below. The nest site described here is unusual because the nest was supported entirely by cattails and no firm support was present below the nest. This note illustrates yet another example of the flexible nesting and habitat requirements of this species.

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Book Reviews

A Field Guide to the Birds of Peru. 2001. By *James F. Clements and Noam Shany*. Ibis Publishing Company, Temecula, California. Softcover, 283 pages. \$60US. ISBN 0-934797-18-8.

Finally, it's here! Prior to the publication of this new, long awaited book, if one traveled to Peru, one was forced to make do with regional guides that were in themselves excellent, but did not provide the local focus needed to ensure a complete and satisfying adventure. Too often, birders found themselves guessing at which species they might be viewing based on geographical proximity alone, rather than concise local information. And what would one do about the 118 Peruvian endemics?

As we listen to the news, almost daily it seems, another tropical forest has fallen to the chainsaw and unknown numbers of individual birds or species have died with it. The Republic of Peru has long recognized the importance of wildlife, both from an economic and scientific perspective. The President of the Council of Ministers and Foreign Minister of Peru, His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar, in a forward to this book, refers to Peru's priceless heritage and acknowledges the preservation of 32.4 million acres of lands as pro-

tected areas. He goes on to recognize the importance of this book as "filling... a long-felt need by ecotourists and ornithologists". How true his words are. Hopefully, other countries will be as insightful as Peru and take steps to ensure the preservation of tropical forests while there is still time.

At first glance, this looks like all the other new books that cover designated geographic regions of the world, with lots of pretty paintings and ample text that tells one what one needs to know and what to expect in one's travels. But that's where the comparison stops.

Economy of word and space is the key to trying to design and produce a book that will cover over 1800 species adequately in under 300 pages... not an easy task. To accomplish this, the authors have eliminated much of the introductory information that one finds in books of this type – things like prefaces, sections on morphology, and notes on the layout of the book. To me this is fine, with one key exception. I find that as I read the text, mention is understandably made to specific locations, habitat types and Life Zones that are poorly defined in the book, so I spent considerable time trying to figure out where, for example, the Cordillera Vilcanota was, or in fact what it was! I knew from past experience that cordillera

refers to certain types of mountain ranges, but many wouldn't even know that much. Eventually I found a reference on page 243 that it is at the coordinates 14 OS 71 00W – not too helpful I must admit! A few pages dedicated to defining the Life Zones better, talking about habitat types, explaining the significance of elevation to bird distribution and adding a map that shows where the non-political features of the country are would have been very helpful and would have made the book much friendlier. Perhaps all the information is there, but finding it can be a bit frustrating.

All this said, the book is still excellent. It is simple in structure – species accounts interspersed with myriad colour plates! The authors have been somewhat creative in how they share their knowledge with the reader. For example, each family section is prefaced by a short descriptor that speaks about the general attributes of the family, food preferences and foraging techniques, and in some cases (e.g., tinamous) offers tips on identifying the species. Occasionally, interesting tidbits are tossed in. Did you know that the Plantcutters are wasteful eaters? That swallows can use their bill like a trowel because of structural adaptations in the jaw? Of course, why would they want to? You'll have to read the book to find out why.

The species accounts are brief, and include notes on size, descrip-

tions of plumages and comparisons with similar species, preferred habitat types, abundance and range (including altitudinal references where important). The text includes notes on hypothetical species, where substantial information exists to presume their presence, and all threatened species (98) are flagged for the reader. Recognizing that many tropical species are more easily identified by their vocalizations, the authors have researched sources of available recordings for the reader (30 references provided) and it even tells you the catalogue order number for each one! Almost 2/3 of the species have a reference to one of these sources as part of the species account. Anyone who has ever birded the tropics will understand the significance of this feature.

The 128 colour plates depict virtually all the species known to occur in Peru. Although the artwork is simplistic, the features are there and readily discernible. I found the plates to be well organized and uncluttered. Similar species are grouped together and males and females, where sexual dimorphism exists, are depicted. Often, flying birds are shown, which of course can be helpful in identifying some species. Generally, only adults are pictured, which may be a problem in some cases, but with 1800 species covered, something has to be sacrificed. The front and back plates in the book are occu-

pied by maps of the Life Zones, major rivers, cities of Peru, major departments (similar to provinces) and all the Protected Areas.

One nicety that I like is the inclusion of Spanish names for the birds, which serves two purposes: it encourages the local Spanish speaking population to show an interest

in the birds and it allows the traveler to better communicate with the "locals" when trying to find specific birds.

All in all, the wait has been justified and the product is fantastic. I can't wait to go to Peru to try it out. The book can be ordered by e-mail at: ibispub@msn.com.

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The quiz bird for this issue is, judging by the size of the branch, a relatively small passerine. It is quite bright yellow from the face through the throat, breast and belly to the undertail coverts. The eye stands out as large and black but there is a blackish loreal line (between the eye and the bill base). The rear of the crown is black and sharply defines the face and auricular. The nape, wings and back are a soft olive green. The tail from below is quite white. The legs are bright flesh pink. The bill is narrow throughout, fine-tipped and black.

Perhaps this quiz bird might lend itself to a modified key. We have lots of small passerines with unmarked bright yellow underparts. So let's at least begin by trying to "key our bird out". A quick perusal of the 2002 Ontario Bird Checklist reveals 22 species that have, at least in some plumages, clear or almost clear yellow plumage from throat to, or nearly to, the vent.

Let's examine the bill first. Our bird has a narrow bill from the base to the finely pointed tip. Seven species: Yellow-breasted Chat; Scarlet, Summer, and Western Tanager female and basic plumaged birds; Smith's Longspur; and American and Lesser Goldfinches all have much thicker bills.

The remaining 15 are all warblers. So we've already keyed it out to one family, the Parulidae or Wood-Warblers. To be precise, the chat is also a Parulid but a rather

odd one at that. Of those remaining 15, four have wing bars: Blue-winged, Lawrence's (a hybrid), Magnolia and Pine Warblers. In addition, the latter two always have at least traces of streaking on the breast or flanks.

So now we have 11. Six more species, in those plumages that are essentially yellow, possess either an eye ring or eye spectacle. So we can now eliminate Mourning, Connecticut, MacGillivray's, Nashville, Canada and Kentucky Warblers.

At this point, I'm going to abandon the key and examine the six remaining candidates in more detail. A key would work but it becomes stilted at this juncture. Keys work less well with the subtleties of shape and posture. Moreover, most birders in the field or in perusing this article would automatically have jumped to this point.

Female and first basic Prothonotary Warblers have yellow faces and underparts. They also, however, have dark backs, slaty wings, pure white vents and white undertail coverts. Moreover, the face is very plain with no dark lores, so the eye is very bold and prominent.

The Common Yellowthroat is not so uniformly yellow below, fading to dull off-white on the belly, and it has a dull yellow vent. The tail is brown. It is olive-brown above, not moss or olive-green. The yellowthroat is somewhat more slender and not as chunky.

The aptly named Yellow

Warbler is almost as bright above as it is below. It has yellow edges to all the wing feathers and clear yellow lores. It is essentially an all yellow bird.

Strictly speaking, we eliminated Kentucky Warbler earlier but it is similar enough to be discussed again. It is quite similar to the quiz bird in overall plumage, being bright yellow below and bright olive green above. Both it and the quiz bird are most often glimpsed in undergrowth and shrubbery and present the same impression of colour and size. A clear look in the open, such as in the photo, would reveal the bright yellow spectacle on the black "sideburn" of a Kentucky. Moreover, Kentucky does not have white in the tail.

Two species of warbler that are yellow below, bright olive above, plain-faced and with varying amounts of black on the head are Hooded and Wilson's. Adult males with distinctive black head markings are unmistakable. But here we

have a bird with only a small amount of black on the head. However, Wilson's Warbler, even a plain first basic female, has a bright yellow superciliary stripe that extends to the bill base and contrasts with a duller face and crown. It has yellow lores. The tail is dark without white and not as broad as in the subject bird.

Of course, we have a **Hooded Warbler**, a southern gem whose breeding range barely extends into southern Ontario. Sightings of this bird always make an Ontario birder's day. In life, the differences from Wilson's Warbler are even more dramatic. Hooded Warblers nervously and energetically flick their tails open and closed. This photo by Jim Flynn catches it with tail spread to reveal the extensive and diagnostic white in the tail feathers. It has a bull neck and large head, whereas Wilson's has a rather petite head, small eye and a short, small, light-coloured bill creating an altogether different "look" than Hooded.

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Ontario Field Ornithologists is an organization dedicated to the study of birdlife in Ontario. It formed in 1982 to unify the ever-growing numbers of field ornithologists (birders/birdwatchers) across the province, and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among its members. The Ontario Field Ornithologists officially oversees the activities of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC), publishes a newsletter (*OFO News*) and a journal (*Ontario Birds*), operates a bird sightings listserve (ONTBIRDS, coordinated by Mark Cranford), hosts field trips throughout Ontario, and holds an Annual Convention in the autumn.

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