



# OFO NEWS

Newsletter of the Ontario Field Ornithologists

Volume 25 Number 3

October 2007

OFO's 25th Anniversary  
1982 to 2007

## Paparazzi Birders

Ron Pittaway and Jean Iron

Some birders and photographers pursue birds so closely that the name *Paparazzi Birders* has come into recent use. Paparazzo is singular. To some extent we are all paparazzi birders because many birding and human activities disturb birds. But are you a *minor* or *major* paparazzo birder? Do you strive to lower your impacts, and those of your peers, on birds and their habitats?

You are a *minor* paparazzo birder if you wear a bright white hat or bright reflective colours that alarm birds. Many birders now wear somber colours and benefit by seeing more birds better. Slamming car doors, moving quickly and suddenly, shouting and talking loudly scare birds and disturb others who are listening and watching. Often when a celebrity bird pops into view, the loud rapid camera clicking frightens birds and annoys birders.

You are a *major* paparazzo birder if you chase birds so closely to see or photograph them that they flee. Other major annoyances are excessive pishing and playing recordings too often, trampling habitat, straying from designated trails in small parks and nature reserves, trespassing, and flushing shy birds repeatedly for better views or photographs.

Many readers will remember the Swainson's Warbler at Long Point in May 1991. In the enthusiastic rush to see the warbler, a Killdeer's nest and eggs were trampled.

We are all *Paparazzi Birders* from a bird's point of view. We must minimize disturbance of birds and their diminishing habitats.

## OFO News Editors Retiring

When putting together the first issue of *OFO News* in 1994, we had no idea that our final issue would be in 2007. Fourteen years and 42 issues are a long time. We owe our success to surrounding ourselves with the best bird writers, bird artists, bird photographers, and ornithology consultants in Ontario.

We thank the following authors who did four or more full articles: Ken Abraham, Margaret Bain, Mike Cadman, Geoff Carpentier, Bob Curry, George Fairfield, Randy Horvath, Ross James, Stan Long, the late John Miles, Mark Peck, Jim Rising, Ron Tozer, Alan Wormington and many other contributors. A complete list of authors, artists, map makers and photographers is on the OFO website under Publications.

We thank the following artists: David Beadle, Peter Burke, Brenda Carter, Ross James, Christine Kerrigan, Michael King, Andrea Kingsley, Christina Lewis, Peter Lorimer, Barry MacKay, Betsy Potter, Ron Scovell, Elizabeth Turner, Ron Ridout, Ian Shanahan and others.

We thank the following photographers: Brandon Holden, Sam Barone, Barry Cheriére, George Peck, Mark Peck, Janice Haines, Alan Wormington and others.

We thank the following map makers: Andrew Jano, Michael King and Norm Murr.

We are proud to have encouraged many young authors: Hillary Dextrase, Brandon Holden, Andrew Keavey, Chris Kimber, Anthony Miller and Ian Shanahan.

Finally, the following deserve special recognition for helping us make *OFO News* the best birding newsletter in Canada: The late W. Earl Godfrey (Curator Emeritus) and Michel Gosselin of the Canadian Museum of Nature, Ross James (retired) and Mark Peck of the Royal Ontario Museum and particularly Ron Tozer who gave us countless ideas and feedback.

**Jean Iron and Ron Pittaway**  
OFO News Editors 1994 - 2007

# Eastern Loggerhead Shrike 2007 Season Update

Jessica Steiner and Elaine Williams

Wildlife Preservation Canada

## Wild Population

Seven wild Loggerhead Shrike pairs were found in Napanee this year, six of these fledged at least 27 young, and the seventh pair was unsuccessful. Two of these pairs initiated second clutches, and one of these successfully fledged four young. This is the lowest number of pairs recorded in Napanee since recovery work began. However, productivity and breeding success were high in comparison to previous seasons. In addition, one pair with at least two fledglings was confirmed in the Pembroke area. In total, eight pairs fledged a minimum of 33 young this year in Napanee and Pembroke.

Twelve pairs were found on the Carden Alvar this year, up from seven pairs in 2006. All 12 pairs successfully bred, producing a minimum of 48 fledglings. Three pairs initiated second clutches, and two of these successfully fledged at least three more young. In total, 12 pairs fledged a minimum of 51 young in Carden this year. This is much better productivity than had been seen in the area for the last couple of years. In 2006, seven pairs fledged 24 young, and in 2005, 14 pairs fledged only 33 young.

On 12 September 2007, we had a reliable report of three shrikes spotted near Crane Lake in Dyer's Bay. One silver banded adult and one juvenile were confirmed. This is exciting news, as there has not been a confirmed case of breeding in Grey-Bruce counties since 2002.

With the release of 111 captive-hatched Loggerhead Shrikes in 2006, more than all previous years combined, staff anxiously awaited the results of their efforts this year and they were not disappointed. Six shrikes released in 2006 were spotted along migration routes and on breeding grounds this year—a huge milestone for the program.

In late March 2007, a green-banded bird was seen eating a lizard in Ohio. This was the first band recovery outside Canada since banding began in 1999, with over 1000 wild and released shrikes banded. The bird remained in the area about two weeks. On the Carden breeding grounds in 2007, three of the 2006 released birds were spotted. Two were males that successfully bred with wild females, producing at least seven fledglings. The third was a single bird, also likely a male, observed eating a songbird and it only briefly lingered in the area. A fourth shrike released in 2006 was seen around the field breeding enclosures at Dyer's Bay a few times in early May 2007. We cannot confirm whether this is the same bird seen with a juvenile near Crane Lake later in the season. The return of four released birds to the breeding grounds represents a 3.6% return rate for year old birds, which is comparable to that in other small migratory songbirds.

## Field Breeding and Release

The captive population was also productive this year. Field staff cared for 23 pairs at our Carden and Dyer's Bay field breeding sites. In Carden, nine of 13 pairs successfully bred and in Dyer's Bay, all 10 pairs were successful. This year, one pair kept back at our Ingersoll facility fledged young, and these were taken to Carden in August to be grouped with other young in preparation for release. Six young were considered high priority and retained for the captive population. In total 94 young were released in Ontario this year during July and August (53 in Dyer's Bay and 41 in Carden), which is slightly down from 2006. Due to funding constraints, we were unfortunately forced to limit breeding to some extent this year, something we were loathe to do as it is contrary to the goals of the program.

This season saw the first captive juveniles released with live radio transmitters as part of a radio telemetry study. Trials with harness design over the winter ensured that birds were able to wear the harness for prolonged periods with no ill-effects. Nineteen juvenile shrikes were released with live transmitters from our Carden field site this summer, and they will continue to be tracked into the fall in the hopes that they will provide clues to migration routes and wintering grounds, which remain a large knowledge gap for the species. Radio-telemetry staff will also be collecting data on post-release survival, dispersal and habitat use, which will provide useful information for the ongoing management of the program.

## Program Funding Update

As you may have heard on the CBC on 20 September 2007, the federal government imposed severe budget cuts on Environment Canada (EC) including a recent freeze to wildlife programs that impacted funding for the shrike recovery program. In 2007, the cuts forced a reduction in the breeding and release activities, though Wildlife Preservation Canada (WPC) was able to successfully release 94 juveniles, down from the 111 released last year.

After March 2008, the future of the captive population and recovery activities (wild population monitoring, habitat stewardship/restoration activities, public outreach and research) is in jeopardy. EC indicated that it cannot continue to fund the maintenance of the captive population beyond this fiscal year and Species at Risk program staff are developing contingency plans on how to divest themselves of the 120 captive shrikes.

In late August WPC learned that EC could provide only \$100,000 from their Operations and Management



Figure 1. Two juvenile Loggerhead Shrikes at Cameron Ranch on the Carden Alvar on 24 July 2007. Photo by *Larry Kirtley*.

stream of funding and an additional \$50,000 through their Grants and Contributions stream of funding of the \$172,000 required to complete a pared down season. At the time they felt confident they could find the additional \$22,000 required to maintain the captive population over winter to 30 March 2008. The latest freeze makes it unlikely that they will be successful. Fortunately, WPC was successful in its application to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' Species At Risk Stewardship Fund in securing the \$22,000 for maintaining the captive birds.

These budget cuts have come on top of previous cuts to the Canadian Wildlife Service. Not only is the future of the shrike recovery program at risk but the future of the over 500 species at risk of extinction in Canada is also looking very grim.

## Earthworms Threaten Forest Birds

**Ron Pittaway**

Earthworms are likely contributing to declines of some forest birds. Earthworms such as the big night crawler are not native to North America. Introduced worms are threatening healthy forests and biodiversity in Ontario.

In forests without worms, fallen leaves form a thick moist duff layer full of invertebrates, which feed ground birds. This thick duff layer supports abundant spring wildflowers and a green ground cover in summer. Forest trees depend on the duff layer to store and slowly release nutrients. If worms are introduced, they eat the duff layer and rain washes away nutrients. As the forest dries out, it loses most of its ground flora and fauna. The ground is bare in many southern Ontario woodlands affected by earthworms, particularly in urban areas. Toronto's famous ravines are relatively birdless. Fortunately, earthworms spread slowly.

## Welcome John Stirrat

We are pleased to welcome John Stirrat of Toronto to the OFO Board of Directors. John has been an OFO member since 1999. He is a keen birder who retired a year ago and now spends much time birding.

## Carol Horner Retires

After three years on the OFO Board as Secretary, Carol Horner has retired. She will continue to coordinate the OFO Website Photo Page. We thank Carol for her hard work and we wish her success in her new endeavours.

## Jean Iron Retires

After 15 years on the OFO Board, most recently as Past President, Jean Iron has retired. Jean will continue as OFO representative on the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas Management Board. She and Eleanor Began will coordinate OFO mailings and she will still handle back issues of *Ontario Birds* and *OFO News*.

## Chris Escott Steps Down

Chris Escott stepped down as OFO President after three years. He remains on the OFO Board as Past President.

## OFO 25th Anniversary Letters of Congratulations

### OFO received congratulations from:

- Michaëlle Jean*, Governor General of Canada
- Stephen Harper*, Prime Minister of Canada
- David C. Onley*, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
- David Ramsay*, Minister of Natural Resources, Ontario
- Rosemary Speirs*, President, Ontario Nature
- Wade Luzny*, Executive Vice President, Canadian Wildlife Federation
- George Finney*, President, Bird Studies Canada
- Betty Learmouth*, Secretary, Essex County Field Naturalists
- Anne Ondrovicik*, Executive Secretary, Friends of Rondeau
- Hugh Evans*, President, Kingston Field Naturalists
- Lee Pauzé*, General Manager, Friends of Algonquin Park
- Marian Stranak*, Superintendent, Point Pelee National Park
- Michael Ross-Murphy*, President, Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
- David Miller*, Mayor, Toronto
- George Bryant*, Toronto Field Naturalists

# The OFO Checklist

Michel Gosselin

Canadian Museum of Nature

The OFO Bird Checklist is a well-known, essential implement of field ornithologists. It enumerates all of the Ontario bird species. But it is more than a mere directory; it conceals a number of not-too-obvious facts about our bird fauna.

## Families

A first glimpse at the Checklist shows that related bird species are grouped into Families. The only way of knowing the relationships between species is to compare their physical and biochemical traits: in general, the more numerous the similarities the closer the relationship. This approach is based on the assumption that minor differences between individuals and, eventually, between populations, randomly appear over time, so that the number of differences between two populations or between two species is generally correlated with the length of time they have been isolated from each other.

The Family category is only one of many levels of classification (Order, Suborder, Superfamily, Subfamily, Tribe, Genus, etc.), each expressing a different degree of relatedness. In itself, the Family level is not any more significant than the others, but because of its position halfway between wide-encompassing categories (such as Orders) and restricted ones (such as Genera), the Family has come to occupy an important place in the classification of animals.

Present-day bird species are classified in about 200 families, sixty-one of which are on the OFO Checklist. This is an important proportion: almost one-third of the bird families of the world occur in Ontario.

## Sequence

Compilers of species inventories have always been faced with the problem of presenting the many life forms in a meaningful way. What sequence should they be organized in? Linnaeus, the father of modern scientific nomenclature, lived in an age when the concept of evolution had not yet been formulated. He nevertheless had the intuition of presenting his inventory of the living world (his *Systema Naturae*, 1758) according to a sequence that went from "higher" beings to simpler ones. For Linnaeus, *Homo sapiens* was the most perfect creature, and was to appear first in his work. He thus created the Order Primates: the Firsts.

A century later, with the advent of Darwin's concept of evolution, the sequence came to be reversed. The most primitive organisms (i.e. those that underwent fewer modifications as compared to their ancestral state) are

now at the beginning of the sequence.

What does that mean in the case of birds? It means that the Ratites (ostriches, emus, kiwis, etc.) are placed at the beginning of the list. It is not their inability to fly, but rather the unique features of their skull that justify this position.

Two Orders then follow, and both are present in Ontario: the Anseriformes (waterfowl) and the Galliformes (landfowl)—two Orders that DNA studies have shown to be related to each other and distinct from the rest of the birds. Just like Ratites, they feed in good part on vegetal matter, and their chicks are very independent at hatching. Some tropical Galliformes, the megapodes, bury their eggs underground as reptiles do.

The exact relations between the various groups of waterbirds and large waders that are found next on the Checklist are still hotly debated. For example, the nearest relatives to the grebes and to the diurnal raptors are still uncertain. On the other hand, the Gruiformes (rails and cranes) and the Charadriiformes (plovers, oystercatchers, stilts, sandpipers, gulls and auks) are two rather well-circumscribed groups of waterbirds.

Then comes a series of specialized landbirds (pigeons, cuckoos, owls, goatsuckers, swifts, hummingbirds, kingfishers, and woodpeckers), which are the precursors of the crowd of passerines (Passeriformes) that fills the second half of the Checklist. These specialized landbirds are representatives of the types of birds that occupied the terrestrial environments before the impressive advent of the passerines (the perching birds).

## Passerines

In theory, bird Families represent comparable levels of evolution; however, they show great disparities in the number of species they encompass—and the same thing is true of Orders, and all other groupings. The multiplication of species does not follow a perfect geometrical mode. Instead, it is in great part left to the vagaries of evolution and environment. Certain groups of birds, such as the passerines, thrive and flourish, while others, such as the cranes, are the pale survivors of a more glorious past.

About half the species of birds on the OFO Checklist are passerines. This fact is not too surprising considering there is a similar proportion on a worldwide basis. Why are there so many passerines? One explanation, among many theories, is that this great number of species may be due to the pliability of their vocal apparatus, which makes for effective individual recognition, faster adaptation to

different soundscapes, and easier isolation of species in formation.

### **Non-singing Passerines**

In a group as large as the passerines, there exist a number of sub-groups. The first sub-group encompasses the “non-singing” passerines (the Suboscines). Contrary to the songbirds (the Oscines), Suboscines have simple, innate, and mostly immutable songs. Their songs are simple patterns, from which the names of the birds have sometimes been derived, as in pewee and phoebe. This group evolved mainly in South America, at the time when the continent was an island isolated from other land masses. The tyrant flycatchers and other families of Suboscines contain more than 1,000 species which, in South America, play many of the same ecological roles held by songbirds on other continents. With the connection of North and South America, about three million years ago, some Suboscines (primarily the tyrant flycatchers) colonized North America—while, conversely, South America was invaded by a multitude of songbirds from the Northern Hemisphere.

### **Songbirds**

Other than the tyrant flycatchers, all of our passerines are songbirds (Oscines). They form a vast array of mainly insectivorous and frugivorous passerines that originated in the Old World and moved to North America in successive waves during the last 25 million years. Some of the earliest of these colonizers developed into distinct families in the New World (vireos, wrens, mockingbirds). Others, however, have not yet reached the level of distinct families, but only the level of genera distinct from those of the Old World (e.g., American jays, martins, titmice and bluebirds), or the level of distinct species (kinglets, creeper and nuthatches). Finally, some colonizers such as the Common Raven, the Northern Shrike and the Horned Lark, arrived so recently in the New World that they are little or even un-differentiated from their congeners of the Old World.

### **Nine-primaried Oscines**

A major set of songbirds, however, consists of a group of closely-related families that are named the Nine-primaried Oscines, so-called because they show an extreme reduction of the tenth (outermost) primary flight feather. These include the wood-warblers, tanagers, emberizids, cardinals, blackbirds and finches. More than half of the passerines on the OFO Checklist are part of this group.

One of the reasons the Nine-primaried Oscines are such an important group in Ontario is that its development occurred essentially in the New World. Ninety percent of its ±1,000 species live in the New World. The wood-warblers and the emberizids, the two largest passerine families in Ontario (with 44 and 33 species, respec-

tively), appear to have had their origin in North America, whereas tanager, cardinal and blackbird species diversified mainly in tropical America.

The large number of Nine-primaried Oscine species in existence is a direct consequence of the variety of ecological roles they are able to play. This diversification stems in good part from their ability to adopt a granivorous diet. Five of the six families of Nine-primaried Oscines have seed-eating species in their ranks (and members of the sixth family, the wood-warblers, occasionally feed on seeds too). Along with other related birds, such as the Old World sparrows, the Nine-primaried Oscines are a group of passerines that has developed a capacity to break and digest seeds, and differ thus from the mass of insectivorous birds. Their astonishing diversity as well as their abundance makes it reasonable to place them at the top of the family tree of birds.

### **Future**

Given the number of studies that are currently looking at the genetics of bird species, new discoveries about their relationships are expected. These discoveries will undoubtedly translate into reshuffles of species and families within the OFO Checklist, and some existing species and families will undoubtedly be lumped or split into new entities in the years to come.

## **Carden Bluebirds**

### **Herb Furniss**

Eastern Bluebirds on the Carden Alvar in 2007 had their best breeding success in our 21 years.

Our 75 boxes had an average occupancy of 37% and produced 255 juveniles. This is an increase of 75 young bluebirds over last year. One contributing factor was a lack of freezing weather in May compared to 2006, when it snowed on the 24 May weekend and remained cold for five days resulting in the loss of 35 young in the first brood.

Spring and summer 2007 weather was perfect for bluebirds with warm temperatures and adequate rainfall producing abundant insects. The increase in breeding pairs over the last three years indicates a greater survival rate, giving everyone with a bluebird trail great satisfaction.

**Editors Note:** Herb Furniss’s bluebird fledgling success has also improved in recent years because he switched to the newer Coker horizontal nest box.

Herb maintains bluebird boxes along Wylie Road, including the bluebird box 10, which is the best known nest box in Ontario, because Loggerhead Shrikes nest in the hawthorn pasture west of box 10 on the Windmill Ranch. Herb’s Carden Bluebirds team also clears garbage dumped along Wylie Road.

# Marbled Godwits On The GO

Ken Abraham

You may have read about the incredible migrations of the Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) between Alaska and New Zealand, including a non-stop 9 day fall migration that covered 12,000 km (7200 mi). However, in our own backyard another fascinating tale of godwit migration is unfolding, that of the Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) of James Bay. In a cooperative project among the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, satellite transmitters were placed on Marbled Godwits on Akimiski Island, Nunavut. One of them left James Bay in August and gave us a real surprise. See more below.

The Marbled Godwit is listed in the Canadian and U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plans as a "species of high concern". It has a global/continental population of about 140,000-200,000 and may be declining (Birds of North America No. 492. Gratto-Trevor 2000). There are 3 discrete breeding areas: about 170,000 birds breed in the northern prairies, with a few in extreme western Ontario, about 2000 birds breed on the Alaska Peninsula, and about 1500 birds breed along the shores of James Bay in Ontario, Nunavut and Quebec. About 60% of the total population nests in Canada and most winter along the Pacific coast and Gulf of California from central California to central Sinaloa, Mexico. Others winter on the Gulf of Mexico coast and the southeast Atlantic coast.

Migration routes and wintering areas of individual populations are poorly known. The Alaskan birds are thought to follow trans-oceanic or coastal routes to Pacific coast wintering sites. The northern prairie birds are thought to winter on the Pacific coast of California and Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico, following relatively direct routes from breeding areas through the interior of the continent. The wintering areas and migration routes of the James Bay breeding birds are unknown, as no marking has been done on either the breeding area or the wintering area until now. The wintering areas are thought to include the southeast Atlantic coast and possibly the Gulf of Mexico.

The Conservation Plan for the Marbled Godwit (Melcher et al. 2000, see website at end) identified the lack of knowledge about the degree of interconnectivity and genetic relatedness among the three breeding groups as key problems for conservation planning. Are they all part of one global population or is there geographic, behavioural and genetic discreteness among them? Do they share migration stopover areas and where are the most important sites? Thus, a program of marking godwits with

satellite or radio transmitters and colour bands, and a program of collecting tissues for genetic or stable isotope analyses was recommended to answer questions about site and habitat use, dispersal and migratory connectivity.

To help answer these important questions, Adrian Farmer, a research scientist with the USGS in Colorado, and Bridget Olson, a refuge biologist with the USFWS at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in Utah, placed lightweight, solar-powered transmitters on Marbled Godwits that they captured on staging areas at Bear River and on wintering areas in Mexico (see website at end). In May and June 2007, they joined me on Akimiski Island to expand the scope of the study. Over the course of 3 weeks we went out daily to attempt to capture godwits. Unsuccessful at first with net-firing capture guns, we moved on to try noose-mats, catching one bird, and mist-nets catching a second bird (Figure 1). Frustratingly, numerous birds exceeded our grasp by only a feather's width.

The results so far are more than worth the effort. We got locations of both birds for several weeks during the breeding season and learned that while using coastal marsh for feeding and pair activities early on, they both spent the majority of the summer inland in freshwater sedge fens. One bird left James Bay in the late afternoon of 17 August and proceeded south, crossing Lake Superior just 8 hours later. It was in South Dakota from 20 to 25 August and in New Mexico by 29 August, but there the signal was unfortunately lost. In 12 days, it travelled over 3500 km. The projected route suggests it was heading for the Pacific coast of Mexico, perhaps to Sinaloa or Baja (Figure 2). This surprised us all. It is only one bird and too early to draw conclusions. The transmitter on the second bird is still sending a signal, but it is stationary on the island near the activity area from the breeding season. It has either fallen off the bird, or the bird is dead. There is no way to know for sure until we return and look for it next spring. With more transmitters and a greater degree of both knowledge in capture methods and confidence in ourselves, we can hardly wait for 2008 to learn more about the migration of the James Bay Marbled Godwit.

Melcher et al. 2000 Conservation Plan website:

[www.nbii.gov/images/uploaded/8496\\_1156424362432\\_Marbled\\_Godwit\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.nbii.gov/images/uploaded/8496_1156424362432_Marbled_Godwit_Plan.pdf)

US Fish and Wildlife Service Marbled Godwits website:

[www.fort.usgs.gov/Resources/GoGodwits/](http://www.fort.usgs.gov/Resources/GoGodwits/)

*Continued on next page*

## Acknowledgements

I thank Bridget Olson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Adrian Farmer of the U.S. Geological Survey and Rod Brook of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.



Figure 1. A 326 gram male Marbled Godwit being fitted with solar-powered transmitter on Akimiski Island on 6 June 2007. Photo by *Ken Abraham*.



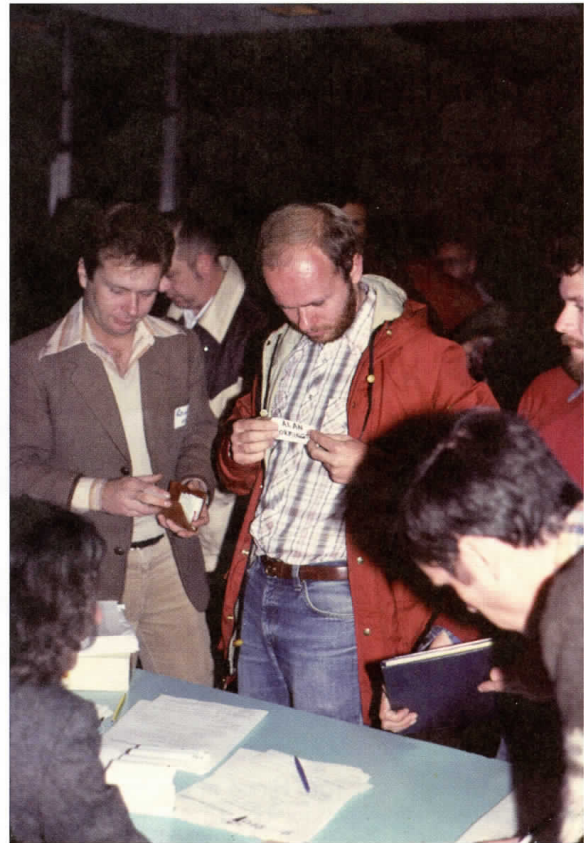
Figure 2. Route of one Marbled Godwit from Akimiski Island to New Mexico, where the signal was lost. *Bridget Olson* provided the map.

## OFO 25th Anniversary 1982 - 2007



Fred Bodsworth celebrated his 89th birthday with Dorothy Andrews at the OFO 25th Anniversary Convention on 13 October 2007 at Point Pelee. Photo by *Janice Haines*.

Right photo: Reid Wilson (left) and Alan Wormington at the inaugural OFO Annual Meeting on 13 November 1982 at Aldershot High School in Burlington. Photo by *Ron Ridout*.



In 1982 there were 36 Life Members and 31 Annual. In October 2007 there are 124 Life and 942 Annual for a total of 1066.



# OFO 25th Anniversary 1982 - 2007

We celebrated OFO's 25th Anniversary at the Annual Convention at Point Pelee with 11 special exhibits, photo albums and scrapbooks, a digital photo show of OFO members on field trips and at annual conventions and other events. Fifteen OFO photographers presented a digital show of Ontario birds on the front screen during the reception and banquet.

## 25th Anniversary Exhibits

1. OFO Archives
2. OFO Membership and Geographic Distribution
3. OFO Editors
4. OFO Artists
5. OFO Board of Directors and Committees
6. OFO Distinguished Ornithologists
7. OFO Field Trips
8. OFO Certificates of Appreciation
9. OFO Annual Conventions
10. Ontario Bird Records Committee - OBRC
11. Time Capsule of members' letters and predictions, and 2007 events to be opened at the 50th Anniversary in 2032

Exhibits: Diane Henderson created the Archives, Margaret Bain the OBRC, Eleanor Beagan and Jean Iron the others.

25th Anniversary Committee: Eleanor Beagan, Diane Henderson, Wendy Hunter, Jean Iron, Valerie Jacobs.



Don Sutherland, Mike Oldham and Tom Hince at the first OFO Annual Meeting at Aldershot High School on 13 November 1982. Photo by Ron Ridout.



The late John Miles (left) and the late George North at the first OFO annual meeting at Aldershot High School on 13 November 1982. Photo by Ron Ridout.

## OFO Bird Photo Show

by

- |                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Karl & Marienna Egressy | 8. Brandon Holden |
| 2. Barry Cherriere         | 9. Carol Horner   |
| 3. Ethan Meleg             | 10. Steve Pike    |
| 4. Sam Barone              | 11. Tom Thomas    |
| 5. John Reaume             | 12. Jean Iron     |
| 6. Ken Newcombe            | 13. Janice Haines |
| 7. Mike McEvoy             | 14. Mark Peck     |

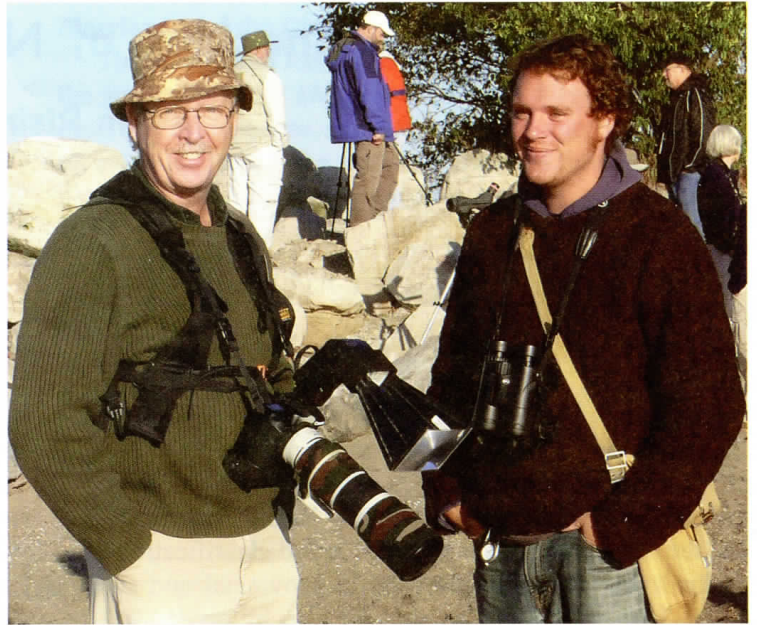




OFO's theme colours are the black, red and white of the Pileated Woodpecker, which created a festive atmosphere. Photo by *Janice Haines*.



Mike Runtz (left) and Ron Scovell at the first OFO Annual Meeting at Aldershot High School on 13 November 1982. Photo by *Ron Ridout*.



Ron Ridout (left), OFO's first president, with Jody Allair at the Tip of Point Pelee on 14 October 2007. Photo by *Jean Iron*.



Chip and Linda Weseloh, first editors of *Ontario Birds*, at the 25th Anniversary at Point Pelee on 13 October 2007. Photo by *Jean Iron*.



Ken Abraham (left), Eleanor Beagan, Ron Pittaway and Mike Cadman, OFO's 2007 Distinguished Ornithologist. Photo by *Janice Haines*.

# Changes to AOU Checklist of North American Birds 2007

Jim Rising

In the July issue of the ornithological journal *The Auk* (124:1109-1115, 2007), the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Committee of Classification and Nomenclature published the 48th Supplement to the AOU Checklist of North American birds. These supplements are published annually. This supplement is an annotated list of changes to be made to the Check-list, which generally is accepted as the "official" list of birds from the AOU area, which includes Canada, Mexico, United States (including Hawaii), the Caribbean islands, and Central America. As such, the names, sequence of species, and classification of the Check-list generally are used in provincial and state lists, and many field guides, and are also followed by the American Birding Association and the Ontario Field Ornithologists.

The Check-list Committee meets once a year to discuss changes in classification and nomenclature that have been proposed in the literature or that are necessitated by errors in previous lists. In recent years, the members of the Committee have relied more and more on communicating their views about proposed changes via email. This committee is chaired by Dr. Richard Banks of the U. S. Geological Survey and the National Museum of Natural History in Washington. Other members of the committee are: Terry Chesser (U. S. Geological Survey and the National Museum of Natural History), Carla Cicero (Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley), Jon Dunn (Bishop, California), Andrew Kratter (Florida Museum of Natural History), Irby Lovette (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology), Pamela Rasmussen (Michigan State University Museum), J. V. Remsen, Jr. (Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University), Jim Rising (University of Toronto and Royal Ontario Museum) and Douglas Stotz (Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago).

Jon Dunn is the only member of the committee who is not an avian taxonomist, although he is quite knowledgeable about many taxonomic matters. His special and very important role is to keep the committee informed about the validity of extralimital records and to help track range extensions for the next edition of the Check-list. Other members of the committee are responsible for assessing proposed changes in the taxonomy of specific groups. For example, I am responsible for making the initial assessments of proposed changes in the taxonomy of sparrows, cardinals, finches, tanagers, and blackbirds. Thus, when papers are published on the affinities of any species in these groups, I summarize information in those papers and other relevant papers for the committee, and recommend changes to the Check-list. The committee members then discuss these proposals and vote on the proposed

changes. The committee is, and probably needs to be, conservative, so unless there is near unanimous sentiment for a change, the status quo is maintained in the list. Below are some of the changes that were published in *The Auk* as the 48th Supplement.

The "Bean Goose" (*Anser fabalis*), a Eurasian species, is accidental in North America. Recently these have been split into two species, the Taiga Bean-Goose (*A. fabalis*) and the Tundra Bean-Goose (*A. serrirostris*). These two were separated on the basis of studies of size, coloration, vocalizations, and activity patterns. Banding returns reveal that they have different breeding and wintering grounds, and there is no zone of intermediates between them. Tundra Bean-Geese have rather heavy bills, and shorter necks, tarsi, and toes, whereas Taiga Bean-Geese have relatively slender bills and longer extremities. Because of the similarities in appearance of these two species, and because in the past they were considered to be subspecies of the same species, there is uncertainty about the identification of some American records. A specimen taken on St. Paul Island, Pribilof, Alaska has been identified as a Taiga Bean-Goose, and birds seen at the Iowa-Nebraska border, Cap-Tourmente, Quebec, Phelps County, Nebraska, and Hoquiam, Washington, were believed to be Taiga geese. Tundra Bean-Geese have been reported from Amchitka, Aleutian Islands, St. Paul Island, and Cap-Tourmente, and perhaps from Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada.

An Intermediate Egret (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) found dead on Buldir Island, Aleutians, on 30 May 2006 is the first certain North American record of this species. This Asiatic Egret, which primarily breeds in China, is intermediate in size between Great Egret and Snowy Egret. Its bill is thicker than that of Snowy Egret and yellow at the base, and the legs and feet are black.

In the 1998 AOU Check-List, the Cathartidae (New World Vultures) were removed from the Order Falconiformes (diurnal birds of prey) and placed in the Order Ciconiiformes, reflecting the view at that time that they were more closely related to the storks than to hawks. This view has been challenged by some recent studies, so, for the time being, the AOU Check-List Committee has moved them back to the Falconiformes, to be placed just before the Suborder Accipitres (Kites, Hawks, Eagles, and Allies), in the Suborder Cathartae. The committee does note, however, that "...their precise phylogenetic relationship to the Falconiformes is yet undetermined."

A male Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*) that was seen at Edgartown, Martha's Vinyard, Massachusetts, from 8 through 24 August 2004 was the first North

American record. This species is normally found in eastern Europe.

The Cuban Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus gundlachii*) is recognized as a species separate from the Common Black-Hawk (*B. anthracinus*). *Buteogallus gundlachii* is found in Cuba and the Isle of Pines.

The Yellow-legged Gull, which breeds along the Atlantic coasts of France, Portugal, and Morocco, and in the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Black seas, has been split into two species, *Larus cachinnans*, and *L. michahellis*. Birds from our area have been identified as belonging to the *L. michahellis* group, which retains the common name of Yellow-legged Gull. In North America these gulls, which earlier were considered to be subspecies of the Herring Gull, are accidental in Quebec, Newfoundland,

Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

The Belted and Ringed kingfishers are moved from the genus *Ceryle* to *Megaceryle*, i.e. are *Megaceryle alcyon* and *M. torquata*, respectively. This move is based on evidence from DNA and anatomy, and returns to the nomenclature used in earlier classifications, e.g. AOU 1957, and thus many older books.

A feral population of Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*) appears to be established, since about 1992, in Florida. Breeding has been noted in the Miami area, and recently nests were found in the Everglades. Many of these birds appear to have escaped following Hurricane Andrew. This species is thus added to the list of North American birds.

## 25th Anniversary Celebrations

### OFO Time Capsule

The Time Capsule sealed in 2007 will be opened at 50th Anniversary in 2032. It contains members' letters, predictions, photos, the bird checklist from the 25th Anniversary weekend, and mementos of 2007 events such as OFO field trips, the 2007 Celebrity Birders, Ontbirds numbers, OFO website, membership information, 2007 OFO publications and more. Many thanks to the contributors who wrote a letter and made predictions.

Geoff Carpentier, Ajax ON  
John D. Reynolds, Belcarra BC  
Robert Carswell, Toronto ON  
Ian Richards, Burlington ON  
Art & Janice Haines, Niagara Falls ON  
Michel Gosselin, Gatineau QC  
Ron & Lynda Valentine, Hamilton ON  
Barbara Mann, Shelburne ON  
Jim Coey, Barrie ON  
Wilf Podolak, Toronto ON  
John Earle Black, St. Catharines ON  
Tom Warren, Ashland MASS  
Doug Lockrey, Whitby ON  
Robert F. Andrie, Buffalo NY  
Eve D. Ticknor, Ottawa ON  
Erwin Meissner, Massey ON  
Sid & Dorothy Hadlington, Midland ON  
Stan Long, Markham ON  
John Millman, Burlington ON  
George K. Peck, Thornbury ON  
Jim Richards, Orono ON  
Jean Iron, Toronto ON  
Alvaro Jaramillo, Half Moon CA  
Winnie Poon, Richmond Hill ON  
Luc Fazio, Mississauga ON  
Robert Bracken & Christina Lewis,  
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Rob Maciver, Bowmanville ON  
Linda Wells, Toronto ON  
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Terry Sprague, Demorestville ON  
Bruce Falls, Toronto ON  
Sandra Eadie, Toronto ON  
Bob Curry, Burlington ON  
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Thomas A. Crooks, Arthur ON  
Marianne Reid, Kingsville ON  
Rob Dobos, Dundas ON  
John Carley, Toronto ON  
Chris Escott, Toronto ON  
Paul Pratt, Windsor ON  
Norm Chesterfield (letter 25 Oct 1993)  
Carolle Eady, Eagle River ON  
John Tyacke, Toronto ON  
Chip Weseloh, Toronto ON  
Eleanor Beagan, Toronto ON  
Kevin McLaughlin, Hamilton ON  
Mike Cadman, Guelph ON  
David Agro, Panama  
Margaret Bain, Cobourg ON  
Gavin Platt, Toronto ON  
Ron Tozer, Dwight ON  
Glenn Coady, Toronto ON  
Dave Milsom, Bolton ON  
Ron Ridout, St. Williams ON  
Marcie Jacklin, Fort Erie ON  
Jeremy Knapton, Fort Erie ON  
Mark Peck, Toronto ON  
Ron Pittaway, Minden & Toronto ON  
Mark Cranford, Mississauga ON  
Willie D'Anna & Betsy Potter, Burt



Alvaro Jaramillo, Keynote Speaker



Diane Henderson, OFO Archivist

# The Land Between and the Carden Alvar

A brief history of the geomorphology, effects of early peoples, birds and ecological importance

Ron Pittaway

The Carden Alvar is part of *The Land Between*. Soon we will be hearing more about this ecologically diverse area as it gains recognition. *The Land Between* is an irregular area 20 - 40 km wide stretching 240 km on both sides of the southern edge of the Canadian Shield from Georgian Bay to the Frontenac Axis (Arch) about 40 km north of Kingston. It is the contact zone where Paleozoic sedimentary limestone alvars meet Precambrian granite barrens. The hilly granite barrens are the hardrock counterpart of alvars. Granite is an igneous rock, but when used in a general sense includes other rock types such as metamorphic gneiss. This article about *The Land Between* concentrates on the Carden Alvar and adjacent granite barrens of Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands Provincial Park.

Vernon Le Crow of Norland coined the name *The Land Between* in 1967 for the title of his Centennial project book on the history of the Townships of Laxton, Digby and Longford (Le Crow 1967) in northern Victoria County, now part of the City of Kawartha Lakes. Vernon Le Crow (pers. comm.) recently signed a release giving permission to use his book's name to promote the "conservation and appreciation" of this distinctive zone.

Most of *The Land Between* was heavily forested before settlement. The first European to visit the Carden Alvar was Samuel de Champlain in September 1615. He portaged with a party of Huron warriors from Lake Simcoe to Balsam Lake to attack the Iroquois in New York State. The Hurons told Champlain that they had recently occupied the Kawartha Lakes region. Champlain saw regenerating areas where the Hurons once lived.

I was surprised to learn that four Huron villages are known from the former Carden Township (Kirkconnell 1967). These Huron villages date from the 1500s. The Hurons abandoned their villages east of Lake Simcoe by about 1590, presumably because of increasing warfare with the Iroquois Confederacy.

The Hurons used stone axes and fire to clear land for villages and farms. They also used fire to open large areas for blueberries, strawberries, raspberries and wild foods. Their activities increased the size and enhanced alvar habitats for scrubland and probably some grassland birds.

After the Hurons departed, some areas of Carden regenerated to white pine. A probable example is along Kawartha Road 35 about 1 to 2 km north of McNamee Road, where old pine stumps dot the fields. There was a Huron village on the hill just west of the road and second house north of McNamee Road. When Carden was "lumbered off" after the late 1800s, the area was frequently burned by early settlers and later became ranchland for cattle. Fires removed the duff layer. This combined with some tilling exposed the shallow soils to water

and wind erosion. Many of the alvar areas that we treasure today resulted from past and present human activities.

Modern fire protection has eliminated the positive effects of lightning-caused fires, which are important in setting back plant succession and renewing alvar habitats. The last big fire in Carden was in the late 1940s. Cattle grazing and periodic removal of woody vegetation have replaced the role of fire in setting back succession, but fire whether natural or prescribed is still needed.

Until recently *The Land Between* was a forgotten land squeezed between the popular Kawartha Lakes and cottage country of Muskoka and Haliburton Highlands. Being so close to the Greater Toronto Area, developments such as a casino, quarries, golf courses and severances for cottages and homes are accelerating. Fortunately, two large areas, an alvar and granite barrens, are protected in the Carden area. They are (1) the Cameron and Windmill Ranches recently acquired by the Nature Conservancy, which will become Carden Alvar Provincial Park, and (2) Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands Provincial Park, protecting 33,505 hectares of granite barrens, extensive mixed forests, wetlands and many deep Canadian Shield lakes.

Next time you visit the Carden Alvar, treat yourself to birding the nearby granite barrens. There is an excellent birding road into Queen Elizabeth Park. From Carden take Kawartha Road 6 to Sebright at the junction of Kawartha Road 45. Continue north past Sadowa to the Black River Road. Turn left (west) on Road 6 to Riley Lake to see granite barrens or turn right (east) to Ragged Rapids and Victoria Falls. See breeding birds in varied habitats typical of the southern edge of the Canadian Shield. Enjoy both sides of *The Land Between*.

**Note:** The former Carden Township was named to honour an English captain in the Peninsular War of 1808 to 1814, presumably at the suggestion of Sir John Colborne, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada from 1830 to 1836 (Kirkconnell 1967). Later Carden Township and surrounding areas became known as the Carden Plain, before the importance of alvars was described in the scientific literature. Recently the name Carden Alvar has supplanted "plain" as the preferred name. The Ontario Field Ornithologists promotes the name Carden Alvar.

#### Acknowledgements

I thank Michel Gosselin, Jean Iron, Burke Korol, Ron Tozer and Mike Turner for information and comments.

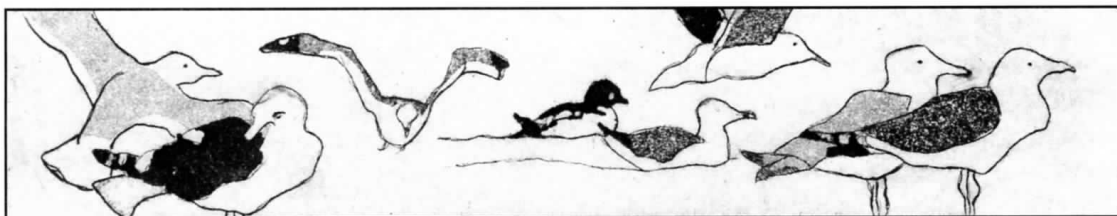
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The Land Between - An Overlooked Ecotone in Southern Ontario. Online at [www.couchconservancy.ca/thelandbetween.htm](http://www.couchconservancy.ca/thelandbetween.htm)

## Gulls At Niagara



Etching by Elizabeth Turner who loves gull watching along the Niagara River. Join the OFO Gull Trip on Sunday 2 December 2007. Meet 9:00 a.m. at Sir Adam Beck Generating Station overlook on Niagara Parkway south of Queenston–Lewiston Bridge.

# Certificates of Appreciation 2007

John Black, Coordinator

Each year the OFO Board of Directors recognizes individuals and organizations for their outstanding contribution to the birds and birding community of Ontario. Here are the recipients of Certificates in 2007.

**Gwen and Milton Mowbray** in recognition of their dedication to nature and especially for protecting wildlife at their pond.

**Mike and Nancy Furber** for welcoming birders to their property to see the Western Kingbird which was there on 26 and 27 September 2006.

**Essex Regional Conservation Authority** for recognizing the importance of habitat creation for migrating shorebirds as well as enhancing viewing opportunities for visiting birders at Hillman Marsh.

**Stan Long** for bringing Reesor Pond to the attention of the birding community in 2006.

**Ron and Lynda Valentine** for participating in ten years of birddathons for OFO.

**Township of Alfred and Plantagenet, Mayor Jean-Yves Lalonde** for promoting birding in the Alfred area through the creation of the Alfred Birding Trail and particularly the Birding Tower at the Alfred Sewage Lagoon.

**Prescott-Russel Stewardship, Suzanne Lafrance** for promoting birding in the Alfred area through the creation of the Alfred Birding Trail and particularly the Birding Tower at the Alfred Sewage Lagoon.

**Werner Schmalz, Kindermann Canada Inc.** in recognition of his long standing support of *Ontario Birds* and OFO.

**Mike Malone, Pelee Wings Nature Store** in recognition of his long standing support of *Ontario Birds* and OFO.

**Paul Grant, Vortex Canada** in recognition of his long standing support of *Ontario Birds* and OFO.

**Nikon Canada Inc.** in recognition of their long standing support of *Ontario Birds* and OFO.

**George Madsen and Mosaic Esterhazy Holdings** for providing access to their settling lagoons.

**Cheryl Edgecombe** for her weekly Hamilton Naturalists Club Birding report on *Ontbirds*.

**Phyllis E. Bray** for the many years she operated her wonderful bird feeders in Chippewa.

**Keith Lee** for his kindness in accommodating birders wishing access to the Brighton Wetland.

**Barry Cheriére** for his hard work in maintaining trails for birders in the Hamilton area.

**Kevin Shackleton** for his help in enabling us to bird the Holland Landing Lagoons.

**John Zehethofer** in recognition of his freely giving his time and expertise to redesign the OFO website look in 2007.

**Brendan and Kim Toews** in recognition of their important finding, and of their contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Cindy Cartwright** in recognition of her important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Stewart Nutt** for his important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Peter Siebbert** for his important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Kirk Silver** for his important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Bruce Birding Club** for their important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Friends of Sauble Beach** for their important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Municipality of South Bruce Peninsula** for important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Owen Sound Field Naturalists** for their important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Jeff Robinson**, Canadian Wildlife Service (Environment Canada) for his contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Barbara Slezak**, Canadian Wildlife Service (Environment Canada) for her important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Mark Shoreman**, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for his important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Madeline Austen**, Canadian wildlife Service for her important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Kevin Hawthorne**, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in for his important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Leo Heyens**, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for his important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Todd Kish**, Environment Canada for his important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

**Jack Dingleline**, United States Fish and Wildlife Service for his important contribution to the successful nesting of Piping Plovers at Sauble Beach in 2007.

# OBRC Notes

## Margaret Bain, Chair OBRC

The voting members of the 2007 Ontario Bird Records Committee are Margaret Bain (Chair), Glenn Coady, Bill Crins, Rob Dobos, Jean Iron, Colin Jones, and Mark Peck (ROM liaison). Ian Richards is the new OBRC Secretary, with Alan Wormington as the Assistant Secretary.

The fall OBRC Policy Meeting was held at the Burlington Library on Saturday, 27 October 2007. Trumpeter Swan was added to the list of established breeding species in Ontario, in accordance with the treatment of this species in the upcoming Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. There are three main populations of Trumpeter Swans in North America: the Pacific Coast, the Rocky Mountain, and the Interior populations. The swans in Ontario are part of the much larger population that surrounds the Great Lakes, and production of young by wild birds in this area now far surpasses the releases in recent years. The Ontario release program has now terminated, with the belief that the Trumpeter Swan population in Ontario is self-sustaining. Thus as of 2007, birders can count Trumpeter Swan, however sightings of reintroduced Trumpeter Swans prior to 2007 were not countable.

Discussion topics at the Policy Meeting also included re-assessment of the drop/add criteria for the Ontario Review Lists, and a review of the Recognizable Forms list. The Recognizable Forms list, carried on the OFO website, remains unchanged except for the addition of two new subspecies: "Ipswich" Savannah Sparrow and the yellow-colored *dominica* subspecies of Yellow-throated Warbler.

The 2007 Committee is off to a good start, with nine packages of reports already in the review process and, we hope, many more to come. The Secretary's electronic distribution of reports to Committee members and collation of their electronic votes has speeded up the process considerably. It is hoped that no reports will have to be circulated by mail this year.

Unfortunately, several reports currently under review still consist of photographs only, with very little or no supporting written evidence. While a photograph can certainly clinch the ID of a rare bird, it is usually far from the whole story. For example, first and last dates, the circumstances of the observation, other plumage features and behaviour not shown in the photographs, and so on, all add enormously to the value of the record. So, yet another plea for photographers to add a bit of text to their submissions. We love the photos but long for more details.

Doug Woods continues to fine-tune the electronic database and deserves major plaudits for providing the OBRC with such a detailed, versatile, and user-friendly program. The database has already come in handy on a number of occasions. Ian Richards had an inquiry from

COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) regarding the past and current status of Kirtland's Warbler, requesting a summary of all the OBRC reports, accepted and non-accepted. The database did in about five minutes what would have taken many, many hours to achieve before. Similarly, the editor of *Birder's World* wanted to know how many Long-tailed Jaegers had been seen in southern Ontario, especially away from the Great Lakes, and the database allowed Ian to produce a summary quickly and easily.

The OBRC Annual Report for 2006, compiled by Bill Crins in his previous role as long-serving OBRC Secretary, was published in *Ontario Birds*, Volume 25, Number 2, August 2007 to very favourable reviews. One new subspecies, "Ipswich" Savannah Sparrow, was added to the official provincial list, this well-photographed bird most notable as the farthest inland from the Atlantic coast ever recorded (at Port Stanley, Elgin). Northern Ontario recorded its first ever Ash-throated Flycatcher and Green-tailed Towhee in 2006.

The OBRC looks forward to another successful year, and encourages birders to submit reports of all Review List species and forms observed in Ontario. The Review List of species requiring documentation, together with an online report form, is easily accessed through the OFO website at [www.ofo.ca/](http://www.ofo.ca/) The Review List is also incorporated into the pocket field checklist of Ontario birds produced by OFO Publications. Online report forms and electronic photographs should be emailed to [obrc@ofo.ca](mailto:obrc@ofo.ca). Written forms, sketches, and photographic prints or slides may be mailed to Ian Richards, OBRC Secretary, 501-1305 Ontario Street, Burlington ON L7S 1Y1.

### **Wheeler Hawk Handbook In Softcover**

**Ron Pittaway**

**Raptors of Eastern North America.** 2003. By *Brian K. Wheeler*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. Softcover, 16 x 23 cm, 439 pages, 559 colour photos, 37 maps. \$37.50 CAN. ISBN-13: 978-0-691-13476-5.

A specialized handbook for advanced hawkwatchers. Hundreds of photos with detailed captions describe juveniles, subadults, and adults. Each species, subspecies and morph has a detailed description. Text concentrates on identification, similar species, abnormal plumages, voice, behaviour, status, distribution, populations, summer and winter ranges, migration, courtship, nesting, habitat, food, mortality and conservation. I recommend this superb reference for the serious hawkwatcher, now in softcover at a lower price.

## Juvenal, Juvenile and Immature

Ron Pittaway and Jean Iron

The terms juvenal, juvenile and immature are often confused. Juvenal has a precise meaning in ornithology. The juvenal plumage is the first generation of immature feathers following the natal down. It is worn briefly in most passerines, but much longer in loons, hawks, some gulls, shorebirds and others. In most birds, the juvenal feathers are looser, woollier, differently coloured and shaped than in later plumages. Juvenal and juvenile have the same meaning. Both juvenal and juvenile can be used as nouns and adjectives. Usually juvenile refers to the bird and juvenal to the plumage, for example, a juvenile is in juvenal plumage, but using juvenile plumage is not incorrect.

Juvenal and juvenile are different than immature. Immature is a broad general term that includes juvenal or juvenile, first winter, first summer and later plumages until adult plumage is acquired. For a list of plumage, molt and age definitions, see OFO website.

### Index

Page 1	Paparazzi Birders ♦ OFO News Editors Retiring
Page 2	Eastern Loggerhead Shrike 2007 Season Update
Page 3	Earthworms Threaten Bird Habitats ♦ Changes to OFO Board ♦ Letters of Congratulations
Page 4	The OFO Checklist
Page 5	Carden Bluebirds
Page 6	Marbled Godwits On The Go
Page 7	OFO 25th Anniversary
Page 8-9	OFO 25th Anniversary Celebrations
Page 10	Changes to AOU Check-List of North American Birds 2007
Page 11	OFO 25th Anniversary
Page 12	The Land Between and the Carden Alvar
Page 13	Gulls at Niagara
Page 14	Certificates of Appreciation 2007
Page 15	OBRC Notes ♦ Wheeler Hawk Handbook In Softcover
Page 16	Juvenal, Juvenile and Immature ♦ Morph or Phase

## Morph or Phase?

Ron Pittaway and Jean Iron

Older bird books used "phase" to describe the distinct colour forms in a species. Recent books use morph. No authoritative publication since 1990 uses the outdated term phase. Morph is the preferred term because phase implies change over time as in phases of the moon.

Unlike subspecies, morphs do not have scientific names. Morphs coexist in the same interbreeding population, often in the same brood. They are not correlated with age, sex, subspecies or season. Morphs occur with a certain frequency within a population. Albinism, melanism and other random colour variations are not true morphs.

An example of morphs is the white and blue morphs of the Snow Goose (Figure 1). Morphs presumably arise as adaptations to environmental conditions and their coloration gives them a selective advantage.

*OFO News* and *Ontario Birds* use morph in keeping with its correct use. We encourage birders to do the same. For a list of morphs in Ontario, see OFO website.



Figure 1. Blue morph adult Snow Goose. The blue and white morphs were separate species until 1973. Photo by Jean Iron.

### Ontbirds

Mark Cranford - Coordinator

*Ontbirds* with over 2000 subscribers in October 2007 is OFO's successful listserv for reporting rare bird sightings.

*Ontbirds* is the largest birding listserv in the world and has revolutionized birding in Ontario.

To subscribe to *Ontbirds* see instructions on OFO website and read them very carefully.

To contact Mark Cranford email: [ontbirds@ofo.ca](mailto:ontbirds@ofo.ca)

### Museum Consultants

The editors thank Michel Gosselin of the Canadian Museum of Nature and Mark Peck of the Royal Ontario Museum for their assistance to *OFO News*.

### OFO Website

[www.ofo.ca](http://www.ofo.ca)

Email: [ofo@ofo.ca](mailto:ofo@ofo.ca)

Valerie Jacobs and Doug Woods  
Coordinators

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Return undelivered mail to:  
Ontario Field Ornithologists  
Box 455 Station R  
Toronto ON M4G 4E1

### OFO News Editors

Jean Iron and Ron Pittaway

9 Lichen Place, Toronto ON M3A 1X3  
Phone: 416-445-9297  
Email: [jeaniron@sympatico.ca](mailto:jeaniron@sympatico.ca)

Ontario Field Ornithologists  
Box 455 Station R  
Toronto ON M4G 4E1

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