



OFO News

NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

Crested Caracara in Wawa

How to relocate a tropical bird at the edge of the Boreal zone

By Jeremy Bensette and Josh Vandermeulen

IF YOU TOLD US HALF A YEAR AGO that we would be given the opportunity to add Crested Caracara to our Ontario lists, we probably would not have believed you. It is a species that for many years few Ontario birders seriously expected to ever come across, and the number of birders who had seen one in the province could probably be counted on one hand.

The journey

It all began with a fellow named Chris Eagles at his work site, an MTO aggregate pit, near Wawa on the northeast shore of Lake Superior. He photographed an odd hawk-like bird picking through fish scraps on 28 November 2016 and posted it to his Facebook page. Joanne Redwood came across Chris's photo on 29 November and immediately reposted it. Why? It was a wild Crested Caracara in Ontario!

Jeremy Bensette was quick to notice Joanne's reposting and he shared the sighting with the Ontbirds listserv. Immediately, both he and Josh Vandermeulen began planning a route to Wawa – this was not an opportunity to pass up. Jeremy met up with Steve Charbonneau in Chatham-Kent in the evening, stopping to pick up Josh in Guelph and Henrique Pacheco in Toronto on the way. To get to the Wawa area in about 13 hours they drove continuously, only stopping for food and fuel, all the while keeping in touch with Barb Charlton, Tyler Hoar and David Pryor, who were also en route. Both cars were near the outskirts of Wawa by sunrise on 30 November.

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Ontario Field Ornithologists

Box 116 Station F, Toronto ON M4Y 2L4 OFO Website: www.ofo.ca Email: ofo@ofo.ca



Crested Caracara,
Michipicoten Algoma District.
Photo by Jeremy Bensette

The search

A quick search of the places that the Crested Caracara had been seen in previous days proved futile. Josh, being familiar with the Wawa area, suggested searching the nearby First Nations village of Michipicoten. Since Crested Caracara is an open country species, it seemed logical that this individual would likely eschew the surrounding forest, preferring open areas where it would feel more at home and where foraging would be more successful. The lawns and other open spaces in Michipicoten provided the best approximation of caracara habitat for miles, so this is where we began our search.

A few hundred metres into town, Josh—seemingly awestruck—casually exclaimed "There it is!" The group was so fatigued and expecting a lengthy search that it took the others a few seconds to realize what was going on. The car erupted with sounds of excitement, inappropriate language, and many very slow camera shutters due to the dim morning light.



Barb, Tyler, and David rolled up shortly after and the two groups celebrated this special sighting. The Crested Caracara pulled a few worms from the soil and ate some food scraps on a lawn before flying into a spruce tree. Knowing how much this species loves eating roadkill and garbage, Tyler tried to coax it out of the tree by tossing on the ground first his orange hat, then his own body, and finally a road-killed Eastern Gray Squirrel found nearby. Even birds with the filthiest of diets have standards, so obviously it did not go for Tyler's bait. It eventually flew down to a nearby driveway and allowed a close approach by car, much closer than if we had stayed on foot. After filling our memory cards and studying the bird for another hour, we tore ourselves away from the Crested Caracara to begin the long, thirteen hour trek home.

More on Crested Caracara vagrancy

Some readers may wonder why we have assumed that this individual is naturally wild and not either a released falconry bird or somehow otherwise transported here by humans. Like many out of range Crested Caracaras, this bird was first spotted in July

Crested Caracara is a species of open terrain so it made sense to start our search on the lawns of Michipicoten. Photo by Chris Eagles

of this year. It was discovered in the town of Munising, Michigan, a mere 220 km from Wawa, and remained there until mid-November. The feather wear on the wing coverts of the Wawa bird appears identical to that of the Munising bird, leaving us to believe they are the same individual.

This is not a desirable species to falconers, and long distance vagrancy in Crested Caracara is not without precedence. There are three prior records in Ontario, while as many as 15 total occurrences across Canada (depending on which separate records involve the same bird). Eleven of these records have occurred within the last six years. In addition to the Canadian records, many US states have added Crested Caracara to their respective lists in recent years, some of which include New Jersey (2012), Delaware (2013), Maine (2014), West Virginia (2014) and Georgia (2016). As there are a handful of records even more northerly than this bird, it is clear that Crested Caracara has a pattern of far northbound vagrancy, especially in recent years. Unfortunately none of the prior Ontario occurrences was chaseable. The first was a dead bird found by a lighthouse keeper at Thunder Bay on 18 July 1892 (George Cosgrove); the second was only seen by a lucky few on Pelee Island on 6 July 1994 (David Kraus, Gerald Waldron, J. Peter Chapman); and the third was a bird that was observed in the remote First Nations community of Fort Albany from 16 to 26 July 2002 (Ivan Edwards).

This Crested Caracara was undoubtedly one of the most exciting bird sightings in Ontario to date for either of us, especially after teasing us for months. From what we gather, this was also the first time a Crested Caracara has ever been photographed in Ontario. Fortunately for many other southern Ontario birders the Crested Caracara remained a regular in Michipicoten for several days afterwards, becoming a local celebrity of sorts among those living in the community. The Crested Caracara was last reported during the evening of Tuesday, 6 December 2016.

Crested Caracara.
Photo by Josh Vandermeulen



Huron Fringe Birding Festival passes historic milestone

By Norah Toth and Lynne Richardson

When you consider that the Huron Fringe Birding Festival will be celebrating 20 years in 2017 you just have to know what a great success it has been.



Gathering outside the MacGregor Point Visitor Centre. Photo by Jim Punnett

THE FESTIVAL IS BASED OUT OF MacGregor Point Provincial Park on Lake Huron south of Port Elgin. With its north-south orientation, the shoreline provides a natural migratory flyway. This Huron fringe of land funnels birds along the lake as they continue their journey north. If you missed some of your favorite spring migrants at Point Pelee, chances are good you'll see them here. In fact, this area is affectionately referred to as "Pelee North" by local birders.

Along with being on a great migratory route, the park's forests, fields, fens, swamps, and old fields are home to many resident breeders. The breeding season is getting underway at the time of the Festival and the park is alive with birds in full song, establishing their nesting territories. Warblers are surprisingly abundant. In fact, the American Redstart should be called the MacGregor Point Redstart — not only is it prolific in the park, it is also our mascot for the Festival.

Although the park's habitats provide an exciting range of birding opportunities, we don't restrict ourselves to MacGregor Point. Of the 80 festival events offered, many head out of the park to explore hotspots the full length and breadth of Bruce County, including the beautiful and species-rich Bruce Peninsula. As a festival participant, you have an opportunity to enjoy all that's offered.

Each day you can choose from a variety of morning, afternoon, or full-day outings. Whether you want to go for a leisurely beginner birder-type walk or "bird till you drop" with the serious birders, we have an event for you. To round out your festival experience, presentations featuring local and global birding topics are held each evening. Daily barbecue lunches in the park and weekend banquet and dinner events top off our festival package.

With the park as a base and Bruce County as a backdrop there is no shortage of birding destinations available. You can pick events that focus on grassland species, forest or wetland birds, or even the endangered and charismatic Piping Plover. Alternatively, you can pretty much cover all the above in one long "big day." You can go offshore to islands to view the specialized habitats they provide for colonial nesters. One tour goes to Chantry Island, an Important Bird Area (IBA) and offers a great eye-to-bird's-eye view of tree-nesting herons and egrets from atop the island's lighthouse.



Another outing will take you on a pontoon boat tour through the Fishing Islands archipelago off the Bruce Peninsula. These remote and rugged islands are screaming with colonies of gulls, herons, cormorants and an active Bald Eagle's nest.

If backcountry birding is your thing, you can visit the area around Bruce Peninsula National Park and a second IBA area at Cabot Head, home to the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory and research station. There you'll meet their research scientist and head bander. The land base at Cabot Head is spectacular and boasts escarpment outliers, alvar, fens and a perfect harbour complete with a visible shipwreck.

With all this to offer, the festival has been attracting top birding leaders from across Ontario, and we continue to bring back our own terrific local leaders with their intimate knowledge of the park and the local countryside with all its hidden bird treasures. A welcoming team of experienced festival volunteers and event coordinators keep things running smoothly for the entire eight days (over two weekends) of the festival.

The festival program is posted at huronfringebirdingfestival.ca. Early registration is recommended since many events fill quickly. We hope to see you at the Fringe.

Intent on the goal: Birding hike at Malcolm Bluffs Shore Nature Reserve. Photo by Liz Addison



Common Loon.

Photo by Eleanor Kee Wellman ©

Algonquin Park

Earlier and Later

By Ron Tozer

MY 474-PAGE BOOK TITLED *Birds of Algonquin Park* was published in 2012 by The Friends of Algonquin Park utilizing a generous grant from the Gordon and Lorraine Gibson Family Foundation. The main part of the book consists of detailed accounts for each of the 278 species then confirmed to have been reliably observed in Algonquin Park. Sections in a typical species account include the following: Spring, Breeding, Fall, Winter, Historical Status, and Population Trend.

Migration data in the book were derived from fifty years of Algonquin Park bird records (1961 to 2010) housed in the Algonquin Park Visitor Centre files. Average spring arrival and fall departure dates of common and uncommon migrants are presented for two 25-year periods (1961 to 1985 and 1986 to 2010). For each migrant species with sufficient years of data available, a simple test was applied to assess the statistical significance of differences in the averages for the two time periods (Appendix 2, pp. 399-402). Fully 74% of the spring migrants analyzed (83 of 112 species) showed a significantly earlier average first-observed spring arrival date in the 1986 to 2010 period compared to the 1961 to 1985

Table 1: New Earliest Spring Arrivals

Species	Date	No.	Location	Observer(s)
Wood Duck	18 March 2016	3	Upper Head Lake	Alison Lake
	20 March 2012	1	Davies Bog, near Mew Lake	Rory Eckenswiler
Mallard	17 March 2016	2	Smoke Creek bridge	David LeGros
Blue-winged Teal	22 March 2012	1	Park Lake	Ron Tozer
Ring-necked Duck	21 March 2012	2	West Smith Lake Pond	Ron Tozer
Bufflehead	21 March 2012	1	Old Airfield Marsh	Justin Peter
Common Loon	1 April 2012	1	Lake of Two Rivers	Christine Luckasavitch
Great Blue Heron	20 March 2012	2	Hwy 60 (km 52.1) heronry	Ron Tozer
Turkey Vulture	13 March 2012	1	Leaf Lake Ski Trail	Luke Hillyer
Northern Harrier	19 March 2012	1	Old Airfield	Justin Peter
Cooper's Hawk	2 April 2015	1	Smoke Lake	Ron Tozer
Broad-winged Hawk	7 April 2012	1	West of Mew Lake	Lev Frid
Sandhill Crane	21 March 2012	1+	Pioneer Logging Exhibit Pond	Glenn Forward
Long-eared Owl	23 March 2012	1	Old Airfield border	Justin Peter and others
Chimney Swift	25 April 2012	1	Tea Lake	Jan Richmond
Belted Kingfisher	21 March 2012	1	Smoke Creek	Laura Tozer
Peregrine Falcon	1 April 2015	2	Barron Canyon Trail	Christine Luckasavitch
	12 April 2014	1	Centennial Ridges Trail	Ethan Huner
Alder Flycatcher	15 May 2012	1	Madawaska River at Airfield	Emily McKinnon
Eastern Phoebe	20 March 2012	1	East Gate	Jason Lorbetskie
Eastern Kingbird	3 May 2013	1	Spruce Bog Boardwalk	Rick Stronks
Winter Wren	18 March 2012	1	Big Pines Trail	Deanna Hergert
Hermit Thrush	7 April 2014	1	Opeongo Road	Grace Pitman
Cedar Waxwing	6 May 2013	1	Found Lake	Lev Frid
Common Yellowthroat	3 May 2013	1	Visitor Centre	Gordon Atkins
	3 May 2015	1	Costello Creek	Eleanor Kee Wellman
Chestnut-sided Warbler	1 May 2013	1	Crotch Lake	Chris Boettger
Blackpoll Warbler	8 May 2013	1	Canoe Lake	Jan Richmond
Pine Warbler	14 April 2012	1	West Rose Lake	Lev Frid
	14 April 2012	1	Barron Canyon	Michael Runtz
Lark Sparrow	22 May 2014	1	Brent on Cedar Lake	Jeremy Inglis
Grasshopper Sparrow	17 April 2012	1	Old Airfield	Justin Peter
	23 May 2014	1	Odenback on Radiant Lake	Frank Pinilla, Jeff Skevington
Le Conte's Sparrow	18 April 2012	1	Old Airfield	m. obs.
Fox Sparrow	22 March 2012	1	Lake of Two Rivers	Michael Runtz
Lincoln's Sparrow	30 April 2012	1	Canoe Lake	Jan Richmond
Eastern Meadowlark	20 March 2012	2	Old Airfield	Justin Peter
Brown-headed Cowbird	10 March 2016	1	Visitor Centre feeder	Lev Frid, Ron Tozer

Table 2: New Latest Fall Departures

Species	Date	No.	Location	Observer(s)
Canada Goose	16 December 2015	2+	Lake Travers	Jeff Skevington
Tundra Swan	20 November 2012	1	Galeairy Lake	John McRae, Mark Webber
Surf Scoter	6 November 2015	1	Lake Travers	Michael Runtz
Bufflehead	16 December 2015	1	Lake Travers	Jeff Skevington, Gordon Vogg
American Bittern	14 October 2013	1	Lake Travers Marsh	Mark Patry
Osprey	21 October 2012	1	Broadwing Lake	Rory Eckenswiller
Virginia Rail	7 October 2013	1	Lake Travers Marsh	Lev Frid
Greater Yellowlegs	6 November 2015	1	Lake Travers Marsh	Michael Runtz
Whimbrel	27 August 2012	1	Radiant Lake	Michael Runtz
Dunlin	12 November 2015	1	Lake Travers Marsh	Jeff Skevington
Long-eared Owl	20 October 2013	1	Old Airfield Woods	Lev Frid, David LeGros
Short-eared Owl	4 December 2016	1	Old Airfield	Art Ross
Olive-sided Flycatcher	10 September 2015	1	Old Airfield	Jan Richmond
	12 September 2014	1	Old Airfield	Chris Leys
Horned Lark	27 November 2012	1	Smoke Lake	Ian Cannell, Norm Murr
Eastern Bluebird	27 October 2013	1	Old Airfield	Bruce Di Labio
Wood Thrush	20 September 2013	1	Opeongo Road	Michael Runtz
American Pipit	18 November 2012	1	Old Airfield	Michael Runtz
	18 November 2013	2	Opeongo Road	Don Docherty, Ann Hide
Northern Parula	23 September 2013	1	near West Rose Lake	Blake Mann
	25 September 2015	3	Two Rivers Trail	Chris Street
Blackburnian Warbler	1 October 2013	1	Highway 60	Kathleen Blair, Jan Richmond
Yellow Warbler	14 September 2013	1	Canoe Lake	Jan Richmond
Blackpoll Warbler	7 October 2012	1	Highway 60 (km 50)	Lev Frid
Vesper Sparrow	21 October 2015	1	Old Airfield	Lev Frid
Nelson's Sparrow	16 October 2014	3	Lake Travers Marsh	Lev Frid, Dawn Sherman
	17 October 2013	1	Lake Travers Marsh	Michael Runtz
White-throated Sparrow	25 November 2015	1	Visitor Centre feeder	Dawn Sherman
Dark-eyed Junco	25 November 2015	2	Visitor Centre feeder	Dawn Sherman
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	23 September 2015	1	Mizzy Lake Trail	Jan Richmond
Bobolink	4 October 2014	1	Lake Travers Marsh	Lev Frid, Mark Patry

period. In addition, 31% of the fall migrants analyzed (33 of 108 species) showed a significantly later average fall departure date in the 1986 to 2010 period compared to the 1961 to 1985 period. The apparent trend toward earlier spring arrivals and later fall departures in many species has continued since the publication of my book. New earliest spring arrival dates have been set for 33 species (Table 1) and new latest fall departure dates for 27 species (Table 2). Why are many birds being reported earlier in spring and later in fall?

The number of birders, their identification skills and the reporting of observations have all increased over time. In recent years, the submission of records on eBird alone has resulted in a considerable

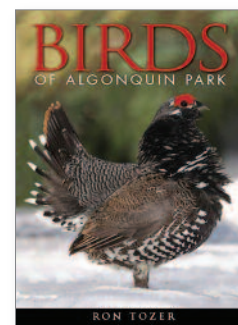
increase in the number of observations received by the Algonquin Visitor Centre. Perhaps the new earliest spring and latest fall records are showing up because we are more likely to hear about them now through eBird compared to earlier years when many of them might have gone unreported. However, none of the records for the 33 species with “earliest in spring” dates (Table 1) and only one of the observations of the 27 species with “latest in fall” dates (Table 2) came to the attention of the Algonquin Park Visitor Centre via eBird only. With the exception of that single fall occurrence, all those records were obtained through naturalist staff sightings, entries in the bird sightings book at the Visitor Centre, observations sent to the Park, word-of-mouth information, and

The Common Loon is a good example to show the influence of climate warming.

other means — all of which existed as methods of bird reporting in Algonquin Park long before eBird.

I think there is convincing evidence to suggest that more and better birders plus increased reporting (especially with the widespread use of eBird in Ontario) are contributing, but are of lesser importance than climate warming in explaining the spring arrival and fall departure changes recorded in Algonquin. The Common Loon is a good example to show the influence of climate warming. Loons do not arrive in the Park in spring until there is sufficient open water for them to land. Park records since the 1960s show that the disappearance of ice in lakes has gradually gotten earlier. The average spring arrival date of the Common Loon was 22 April from 1961 to 1985 and 14 April from 1986 to 2010, and the difference is statistically significant. Climate warming appears to be more important than more birders and increased reporting in explaining this change.

The observation of migrants arriving earlier in spring and departing later in fall is expected to continue in Algonquin Park. Some years will show this dramatically. For instance, the very early onset of warm temperatures in the spring of 2012 resulted in new earliest records for 22 species (see Table 1).



Birds of Algonquin Park is available at the Algonquin Visitor Centre and Logging Museum bookstores, and online (www.algonquinpark.on.ca) for \$49.95

The Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop

By Hayden Bildy

Applications for the 2017 program are due on 30 April.

Visit the Bird Studies Canada website for details.

www.birdscanada.org/lpbo,

or contact lpbo@birdscanada.org.



Photos are courtesy of Liza Barney and Bird Studies Canada.

LAST SUMMER, I WAS FORTUNATE enough to be one of six teenagers from across Canada chosen to participate in the Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop at Long Point Bird Observatory. This is a program to help advanced teenaged birders get involved with banding and significantly improve their identification skills in the field.

In the mornings, we woke up before dawn and went out to set up the mist nets, so named because they are hardly visible. Then, some of us would check the nets every 10 to 20 minutes while the others banded the birds. Two of us would then do a census, which was a walk around the

property where we would count the birds seen. During our time in the banding station, we were taught how to hold a bird using the bander's grip, learned many distinguishing features of sex and age in a bird that aren't visible in the field, and got experience banding the birds ourselves. Some of the highlights of birds we handled were a Black-billed Cuckoo, Canada Warbler, and an Acadian Flycatcher.

It was also a great experience to stay in a house with other scientists from different areas of biology, such as lepidopterists (butterflies), or odonatologists (dragonflies) who shared lots of interesting information about their fields.

On one of the mornings, we did a big day around the Long Point area. We did manage to find some good species for the area and time, such as a Golden-crowned Kinglet. We also found some other animals, such as a young Eastern Hog-nosed Snake. On another of the days, we had the opportunity to watch hummingbird banding which requires a special license and a delicate touch.

Near the end of the workshop, we also took a boat ride out to the Tip of Long Point, where we spent a couple of days exploring the area, birding, and catching dragonflies. There was no shortage of good birds there. Some of the best were a Prothonotary Warbler and a Yellow-throated Warbler.

The Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop is an amazing opportunity and a great stepping stone to a career in ornithology or biology generally.

OFO member Hayden Bildy (above right) is a high school student in London, Ontario and was a participant in the 2016 Young Ornithologists' Workshop, a program of Bird Studies Canada.

Carden Alvar Important Bird Area

By Ron Pittaway and Jean Iron

Birders and other naturalists will be pleased to see the new welcome sign to the Carden Alvar Important Bird Area reflecting the global importance of the alvar. The sign is located near the corner of McNamee and Wylie Roads. It was erected in September 2016 by The Couchiching Conservancy thanks to Ron Reid, and Ginny Moore helped put up the sign. Arni Stinissen, David Homer and Jean Iron contributed photos of Carden's specialty birds.

Photo by Ron Pittaway



Young Birders Field Trips 2017

With trips planned from Essex County to Ottawa, the OFO hopes to foster a sense of community among young birders

One of the objectives of the Ontario Field Ornithologists is to engage in outreach activities that encourage young birders.

The Board has developed a remarkable province-wide slate of Young Birders Field Trips for every season of 2017.

Partnering with local clubs, more than a dozen field trips and workshops for birders aged 9 to 19 are already confirmed and posted. These events do not conflict with the regular OFO events.

President Lynne Freeman is enthusiastic about this initiative. With trips planned from Essex County to Ottawa, OFO hopes to foster a sense of community among young birders. She also wants to tap into local expertise. OFO is very interested in partnering with local clubs.

It is expected that most participants will be young birders who have already formed an interest and some expertise in birding, however enthusiasm and curiosity about birds are the only prerequisites. Parents or guardians are encouraged to attend except where otherwise indicated. As with other field trips, these Young Birders Field Trips will operate rain or shine.

Upcoming OFO Young Birders Field Trips

March 25: Early Spring at Presqu'île Provincial Park

April 23: Raptor and Songbird Migration at Beamer Hawk Watch

April 29: Spring Migration at Rondeau Provincial Park

May 7: Visit to the Innis Point Bird Observatory

May 20: Explore Skunk's Misery, Newport Forest

For details, visit the 2017 Young Birders Field Trips page of the OFO web site.



Short-billed Dowitcher at Hillman Marsh. Photo by Jean Iron

Point Pelee Area Shorebirds 2017 OFO Shorebird Viewing Celebration at Hillman Marsh

Join OFO experts at the Shorebird Cell to watch shorebirds migrating to Arctic breeding grounds.

Dates: May 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22.

Dates coordinate with the Point Pelee Festival of Birds, 1 to 22 May 2017.

Time: 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Admission: Daily entry fee or Conservation Authority staff at gate from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. will sell annual passes and the Hillman Spring Birding passes.

Buy your pass online ahead of the 2017 shorebird season: <http://erca.org/conservation-areas-events/annual-passes/>

Northbound Shorebirds Workshops

Lunch-and-Learn Sessions with Jean Iron at Point Pelee National Park Visitor Centre.

Dates: May 8 at 12 noon
May 14 at 11:30 a.m.

The workshop focus will be Point Pelee area spring migrant and breeding shorebirds. In the afternoon, we will visit Hillman Marsh Shorebird Cell for the Shorebird Viewing Celebration. (Admission; day, birding or annual pass)

OFO partners: Essex Region Conservation Authority, Point Pelee National Park, and Pelee Wings Nature Store

CORRECTION: The Leslie Street Spit field trip that will be led by John Carley in the spring will occur on Saturday, 27 May 2017. The May 20 date published in the OFO 2017 Field Trip summary is incorrect. Prior to any field trip, please visit the OFO website, www.ofo.ca, to confirm details.

Thirty years of birding at Presqu'île

By David Bree, Park Naturalist,
Presqu'île Provincial Park

During my three-decade association with this park, there are three annual world-class migration events I never miss:

SPRING WATERFOWL

The first is the waterfowl migration in mid-March. Presqu'île Bay is a major staging area for waterfowl and thousands of up to 20 species can be seen in a single day. March 1985 was my first experience with Presqu'île, and the rafts of scaup, Red-heads, Canvasbacks, Ring-necked Ducks and American Wigeon (to name a few) bobbing in the bright sun at the edge of the melting bay ice were a beautiful sight that will be etched in my memory forever. I've not missed a March trip since. Beginners to duck ID can drop by during Presqu'île's annual Waterfowl Weekend (25-26 March in 2017) when volunteers with scopes are stationed at the best hot-spots to point out the many species.

PASSERINES: NORTHBOUND and SOUTHBOUND

Mid to late May is great for all the typical passerines, and 20-warbler days (species-wise) are common. Being near the lake-shore, leaf-out comes late, allowing much easier viewing than inland. There are always rarer species showing up, and I've seen many of my more uncommon Ontario lifers here. Connecticut and Hooded Warblers, and a mega-rare Blue Grosbeak come to mind. Overall though, it's just the numbers of more common warblers and other songbirds that are such a delight to see every spring. Fall passerine migration starts in mid-August and goes

Below: Congregation of waterfowl at Presqu'île Bay.
Photo by David Bree

Snowy Owl. Photo by Ann Brokelman

into October. Again, 20 warblers are possible in a single day, and the unusual almost always occurs. On 28 August 2012, Canada's third record of Thick-billed Kingbird showed up and stayed for three days.

SHOREBIRDS: NORTHBOUND and SOUTHBOUND

The great thing about Presqu'île is that the mixed flocks of shorebirds are often quite close, allowing the beginner (and not so beginner) a leisurely, close look to sort out all those peeps! I have a picture that shows Least, Semipalmated, Baird's and White-rumped Sandpipers side-by-side—a common occurrence each fall. Presqu'île's shorebird variety is astounding, with 25-30 species seen annually, and 41 seen through



the years. Late May and into June can see large numbers of shorebirds setting down — sometimes several thousand during inclement weather (primarily Dunlin in most cases). But it is the autumn shorebird migration for which Presqu'île may be best known. Southbound birds move through from mid-August into November, with early September usually being the best time. More charismatic shorebirds such as Whimbrel, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot and Purple Sandpiper are also annual.



Purple Sandpiper, Gull Island. Photo by Jean Iron

Not just a migrant trap

The two offshore islands, High Bluff and Gull (a tombolo at the time of publication due to its attachment to the mainland at Owen Point), host the most diverse waterbird colony on the Great Lakes with eight species and 250,000 individuals (including young) present each spring. 126 total species have been recorded breeding in Presqu'île through the years, with breeding Orchard Orioles and Yellow-rumped Warblers exemplifying the unique mix of north and south.

Winter

Winter is good for over-wintering ducks. Long-tailed Ducks are particularly numerous, and Barrow's Goldeneye has been seen almost annually in recent years. A selection of gulls, Bald Eagles, and over-wintering Snowy and Barred Owls are also usually present.

Easy access

Because it is so small, getting around Presqu'île is easy, whether by car, bike or foot. It was once a flat limestone island that has long since become attached to the mainland by a large sandbar, making

Habitat diversity at Presqu'île

The 126 species that have bred in Presqu'île do so in just 950 hectares (c. 9 km²) of land. This is possible largely due to the Park's mosaic of a remarkable seven distinct habitat types. Some prominent breeding birds for each habitat are listed with the descriptions below.

Marsh

The largest protected coastal marsh on Lake Ontario's north shore is cattail-dominated and interspersed with small sand-based peninsulas, thus making it particularly diverse in plant and bird life. *Prominent breeding birds:* Marsh Wren, American Bittern, Pied-billed Grebe, Common Yellowthroat, Sora, Swamp Sparrow, Virginia Rail

Deciduous forest

Younger stands of ash and older mixed forest dominate. There is also a small section of Old Growth dotted with massive beeches and Sugar Maples. *Prominent breeding birds:* Pileated Woodpecker, Barred Owl, Red-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush, Veery, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Ruffed Grouse, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Winter Wren, Great Crested Flycatcher

Coniferous forest

Along with pine and spruce plantations, there is a naturally occurring coniferous forest covering the larger sand-based peninsulas ("fingers") that protrude eastward into Presqu'île Bay. Its northern feel with some Boreal influence make it one of the most interesting places in the Park. *Prominent breeding birds:* Yellow-rumped Warbler, Pine Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Brown Creeper

Shoreline (sand and cobblestone beaches)

Fossil-filled stones line the shores of the limestone-based southern part of the Park; the sand-based northern section has an expansive sand beach along its western edge, and bordered by willow scrub. *Prominent breeding birds:* Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler

Meadow (old field)

Homesteading at Presqu'île ended in the mid-1950s, leaving behind large swaths of open field. Sites of former farms are now an intriguing mix of meadow, savannah and shrub thickets. *Prominent breeding birds:* Orchard Oriole, Field Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Eastern Kingbird, Indigo Bunting

Interdunal slacks ("pannes")

Between the two sets of dunes is the Park's rarest habitat. Meltwater floods this low-lying area in the spring; by mid-summer, it is completely dry in parts. *Prominent breeding birds:* Brown Thrasher, Gray Catbird, Wilson's Snipe

Sand dunes

Two sets of sand dunes run north-south on either side of the main entrance road in the Park's northern section. Eastern Cottonwoods tower over dogwood and juniper thickets in some sections. *Prominent breeding birds:* Baltimore Oriole, Warbling Vireo, Tree Swallow

it the largest freshwater tombolo in the world. No place is more than a one kilometre walk from a paved road; many birding locations are much closer. Most spring passerine birding is done from paved parking lots, roadways, and small foot paths. Spring waterfowl can be seen from the road and wheelchair accessible blinds. Shorebird locations require some walking, with the best spot requiring a 600-metre walk.

Visiting Presqu'île

As a natural migration trap, Presqu'île is best birded during migration, but its habitat variety means it has something to offer in any season. The Park has a bird list of 337 species, with about 230 seen annually. Please feel free to contact me any time at david.bree@ontario.ca or 613 475-4324 at ext. 225 for the latest information or to submit sightings.

President's Message

I am very proud of the number of field trips OFO offers. This year we have expanded both the number and types of trips for OFO members and their guests.

Our trips are run by experts who volunteer their time to share the joys of birding with others. Dave Milsom has worked tirelessly over many years to build this program.

This year we are branching out into different kinds of experiences. We have a photography workshop, trips to the north of the province and nest searching trips. In addition we have an expanded roster of trips and events for young birders aged 9 to 19.

We understand that some people are concerned about the effect of nest searching on birds. We share this concern and guarantee that all of our trips will adhere to Bird Studies Canada's Project Nest Watch protocol which have been designed to protect breeding birds while allowing the collection of vitally important scientific data.

Nest searching allows birders to appreciate an often overlooked part of a bird's life cycle while the protocol ensures that the breeding success of individual birds will not be affected. For example, observations must be done quickly and with minimal disturbance and approaching nests must be done in a way that minimizes the chance of alerting predators to the nest's presence.

Feedback is welcomed. Please write to me at president@ofoc.ca. Additionally, please let me know if you have any ideas for field trips or workshops you would like to see. We will try to make them happen.

Get out and go birding!

Lynne Freeman, OFO President
president@ofoc.ca



Don Barnett coordinating the count at the Whimbrel Watch in Toronto on 23 May 2011. Photo by Jean Iron

In Memoriam Don Barnett

By Jean Iron

IT IS WITH GREAT SADNESS that we inform OFO members of the passing of Don Barnett on 31 December, 2016. Don was an OFO Director from 2002 to 2004. He coordinated OFO Field Trips and Advertising. In reflecting on Don's legacy to birds and birding, here are some of his achievements:

Don was passionate about preserving habitat for grassland birds on the Carden Alvar. When Cameron Ranch came up for sale in 2001, he organized a meeting with The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to fundraise over one million dollars for its purchase. On a team with the NCC and Couchiching Conservancy, Don represented the Toronto Ornithological Club (TOC) and I, the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Donations poured in from birders, naturalists, foundations, organizations and federal and provincial governments. Cameron Ranch was acquired in 2003 and Windmill Ranch in 2005, with the vision that these properties would become a provincial park. Don then became the OFO rep on the Carden Alvar Advisory Committee and organized point counts to

determine breeding bird populations. He strongly supported the name Carden Alvar because it conveys the global importance of this rare landform and its special birds and plants. To Don's delight, Carden Alvar Provincial Park was established in 2014.

Don will be remembered for the Whimbrel Watch at Colonel Sam Smith Park in Toronto and the High Park Hawkwatch, both of which he coordinated for the TOC. Through a commitment to being on site daily and his careful recording procedures, the spectacular migration of Whimbrels from the east coast of the United States to their breeding grounds in the Canadian Arctic became well known. Similarly, the High Park Hawkwatch benefited from Don's personal touch as he followed the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) protocols and welcomed everyone.

Many OFO members reminisce fondly about the annual trips Don organized to Manitoulin Island to see Sharp-tailed Grouse dancing on the lek. He loved everyone's camaraderie and enthusiasm for birding and seeing our hosts on Manitoulin.

Don was a quiet, unassuming person, who worked tirelessly on many birding projects. His strength and support will be missed.

John A. Crosby

An appreciation of a great Canadian bird illustrator

By Bruce Di Labio



AN ERA ENDED WITH THE PASSING of John A. Crosby on 3 October 2016 at age 91. John was the last surviving member of three men who produced the 1966 edition of *The Birds of Canada* and its revision in 1986. Along with author W.E. Godfrey and Stewart MacDonald, who contributed the black and white line drawings, Crosby produced Canada's best reference book on birds. Known then to Canadian birders as "the bible" it continues to hold its ground particularly due to the excellent artwork of John Crosby.

During the preparation of the colour plates for this book, John visited many parts of Canada and logged many hours of field observations. Prior to *The Birds of Canada*, John's artwork was published in provincial and state bird books including *The Birds of Nova Scotia* by Robie W. Tufts (1962) and the monumental *Birds of Colorado* by Bailey and Niedrach (1965). He also illustrated a number of books and publications on mammals, mollusks and other organisms.

John will also be remembered for his illustrations on our Canadian currency. Though many will not have seen the two Pine Grosbeaks on our \$1,000 bills, many Canadians will remember the American Robin, Belted Kingfisher, Osprey, and the Common Loon on the \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20 banknotes respectively. John's artwork also appeared on Canadian stamps including a Polar Bear in 1953 and a Narwhal in 1968.

As a teenager in the Toronto region, John would frequent the Royal Ontario Museum and became good friends with ornithologist Jim Baillie and bird artist Terry Shortt. With encouragement from the zoology staff at the ROM, he started painting birds. In 1951 John joined the staff of the National Museum of Canada which gave him access to research collections and an ornithological library. During museum field trips, he would become familiar with Canadian birds from coast to coast.

I was very fortunate to work at the museum during the late 1970s and mid-1980s when the second edition of *The Birds of Canada* was being written. While John was working on the final stages of updating the artwork for the second edition of *The Birds of Canada* he let me view the shorebird plates and make any comments on his work. Since shorebirds were my favorite family I suggested a few additions to the plates including juvenile plumages of Wilson's Phalarope, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher and Long-billed Dowitcher. It was an amazing time and John was very appreciative and let me review and comment on a number of the plates. He was a quiet and unassuming mentor who graciously shared his vast knowledge.



Colour plates by John Crosby from *The Birds of Canada*, 1966.



Book Reviews

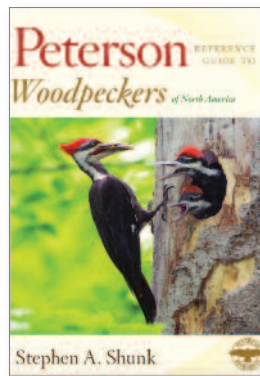
Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America

2016. Stephen Shunk. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Hardcover 320 pages. \$35.00 (ISBN: 9780618739950)

ONTARIO BIRDERS CAN HARDLY go into the field without coming across woodpeckers. They may act as a conduit for becoming an active field birder who evolved from being a casual feeder observer, owing to a woodpecker's bold patterns, easy approach and everyday relationships with people. We see some species with great regularity and others we have to specifically work hard to find. Woodpeckers are one of the first harbingers of spring and most people recognize their distinctive shapes and behaviours.

Steve Shunk, an Oregon based biologist/birder with a passion for the Picinae (the subfamily of Typical Woodpeckers), recently contributed to the Peterson Guide series by authoring the *Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America*. Shunk has a style that is easy to read, and he packs the guide with innumerable facts on woodpecker natural history, ecology and conservation that keep his audience eager for more. The book boasts over 250 superb photographs, is a very comfortable size (10¼" x 7¼" x 1") and wears a durable dust jacket. The inside front and back covers provide the reader with a detailed pair of illustrations depicting woodpecker anatomy for reference. Structurally, the book is divided into the Contents, Preface, Introduction, Species Accounts, Acknowledgements, Appendices, Glossary, Bibliography, and Index.

The 68-page Introduction is perhaps the best part of the book. Here Shunk provides some fascinating physiological adaptations that woodpeckers have to deal with their specialized lifestyles. With the aid of digitally reconstructed photos and line drawings, we are shown the multitude of adaptations woodpeckers possess, not just at the family level, but also down to differences in species tongue shapes and cranial



processes to help explain each unique ecological role. Ontario birders will extract some great information about our woodpecker communities here. He covers many adaptations that are part of the woodpecker's arsenal, from the specialized eye sockets to the feather adaptations (e.g. woodpeckers lack down for the most part). The Introduction proceeds to discuss Behavior, Ecology and Conservation, followed by a synopsis of how to use the book, pertaining to the Species Accounts. All are well done and illustrated with many delightful photographs, including an American Three-toed Woodpecker photographed near Timmins, often depicting what is being written.

Towards the end of the book, the Appendices describe in tabular form, the following: Measurements, Nest Site Data and Parenting Data. These make for quick reference for the researcher/field observer. I found the Nest Site and Parenting Data particularly detailed and thorough, making it a very helpful tool during the breeding season. The last two appendices deal with Woodpecker Taxonomy and Woodpecker Conflicts with Humans. Note that the taxonomy presented here doesn't follow the AOU North American Classification Committee, 2015 (although the Species Accounts do).

The 23 regularly occurring species of the United States and Canada make up the Species Accounts. For each species there are seven sections. This structure makes for enjoyable casual reading and much is to be learned with Shunk's wide breadth of knowledge on the family. A renewed interest and understanding of our woodpecker species will come to the observer from these accounts.

Shunk's perspective, while encompassing the continent north of Mexico for the most part, is somewhat biased to the western half. This is reflected in the deep understanding he has for those species surrounding his home in the state of Oregon.

However, his perspective in the east is at times weakened. For example, research in Algonquin Park by Doug Tozer *et al.* (2011) has shown that the keystone species, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) reproduces at the highest densities in mature hardwood/mixed forest. This is probably true throughout north-eastern North America, replacing the "medium-aged" deciduous woods, dominated by Aspen and Birch described as the mainstay by Shunk and based on Kilham (1983). The most current *List of Wildlife Species at Risk in Canada* indicates that the Red-headed Woodpecker is listed as *Threatened* in Canada (COSEWIC 2016), not just a "high conservation priority" in three provinces. Advice for finding American Three-toed Woodpeckers and Black-backed Woodpecker in the east would have been strengthened by referencing work such as that done by Thunder Bay's Nick Escott.

These small detractions do not outweigh the overall function of the Introduction and Species Accounts of the book. This is a modern version of Arthur C. Bent's *Life Histories of North American Woodpeckers* (1939) with many new important discoveries and eye-catching photography. It is a non-technical guide that offers the general reader a fascinating look into the lives of our woodpeckers and highlights the importance of the role they play in our forests. The appendices make it a helpful quick resource for the researcher. I would recommend the *Peterson Reference Guide to North American Woodpeckers* to any birder that wants to raise their appreciation for one of our favourite groups of birds.

Peter Burke
savanta.ca

Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago

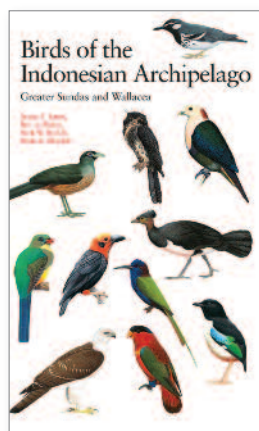
Greater Sundas and Wallacea

2016. James A. Eaton, Bas van Balen, Nick W. Brickle and Frank E. Rheindt. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain. E-mail: lynx@hbw.com. Hardcover 496 pages. \$67.97 USD. (ISBN-13: 978-84-941892-6-5)

IN RECENT YEARS, as travel becomes more affordable and destinations more accessible, access to high quality field guides is very important. One of the world leaders in producing these guides is Lynx Edicions in Spain. They have an ability to identify a need and find the right people to write the right book. This new volume may at first appear daunting if one only looks at the numerical statistics associated with it: 1,417 species, 601 endemics, 2,500 illustrations and 1,300 distribution maps in a 496 page book. But wait, it also deals with almost a hundred vagrants and 18 species that haven't even been formally described by science. How can so much be crammed into such a compact book and still be of value to the reader?

To accomplish this daunting task, one needs to choose a team of authors who have the experience, knowledge and ability to present this information accurately and informatively. Eaton, van Balen, Brickle and Rheindt have birded and studied in Indonesia variously throughout the latter quarter of the 20th century. As birders, audio experts, guides, authors, teachers and conservationists, they brought all these skills to task to produce this important work.

So what will you find in the book? The opening chapters discuss several important issues such as how geologic features created the archipelago and how that influenced species composition and diversity. Ensuing sections speak to biogeography, the major island groups (i.e. Greater and Lesser Sundas, Sulawesi and Moluccas), topography, conservation and threats, taxonomy, and a section that I found very interesting offering an overview of the ornithological history of the region.



The authors then naturally jump into the species accounts. The accounts are concise and informative, including details on identification, size, range (described in the text and illustrated on very readable maps), migratory patterns, preferred habitats and vocalizations. Each species is accompanied by an excellent painting that shows adults, immatures and some variant plumages where applicable. Each species is treated equally, whether a widespread and well-known species or a vagrant, so the user isn't left wondering about the less common species he or she might encounter. It becomes a fulsome and inclusive treatise of all the birds that might be found regardless of status.

As I've studied birds in the East, I've often had to carry several field guides, for they do exist for most of the region covered in the book, but this book consolidates all that and makes it current. While I haven't reviewed every species in the book it does appear that the authors were meticulous in researching it and incorporating the latest data. One of the authors is a phylogeneticist so has an edge in this regard as new genetic studies reveal much about the world's birds. In the preamble to the book, the authors speak of the 18 undescribed species but it's hard to find them in the book as they are incorporated with the rest of the species accounts. I would have liked them to be separated out so I could simply read that chapter if I so chose. That said, when you do find these species accounts, a significant amount of detail is provided to explain how to identify the species from more common allies. I particularly liked the discussion on the Daurian Swallow and how it relates to the Red-rumped and Striated Swallow. As you leaf through the book take the time to read some of the other analyses about possible splits and the DNA evidence they've found in support. You will find it fascinating, but you also will find some of these discussions at odds with the published literature. The science of genetics as it relates to insular species is still evolving, so read with a careful eye and watch as the experts eventually agree or disagree with the conclusions of these authors.

If you're travelling to northern Borneo (Sabah) and some of mainland Malaysia, you will find this book very helpful as most of the species you will encounter are included here. If you choose to purchase this book, you will be very pleased with your decision.

Geoffrey Carpentier
avocetnatureservices.com



Bruce Falls awarded the Order of Canada

By Jean Iron

On 30 December 2016, Dr. James Bruce Falls of Toronto became a Member of the Order of Canada for his achievements in ornithology and nature conservation. Bruce is a retired professor at the University of Toronto, known for his bird and mammal research, much of which was done in Algonquin Park. He is a member of the Ontario Field Ornithologists and recipient of its Distinguished Ornithologist Award in 2002. Bruce is an honorary life member of the Toronto Ornithological Club. He has done much for conservation through his involvement with Ontario Nature and The Nature Conservancy of Canada. The complete list of his accomplishments is long. Bruce is a keen birder who loves all birds.

Bruce Falls at Presqu'île Provincial Park on 8 December 2009.
Photo by Jean Iron



Photo Quiz

By Jon Ruddy

Photo by Michael Runtz

IN WRITING THESE PHOTO QUIZZES, I chose to present unobstructed views of photo subjects in order to stress the critical identification of challenging groups such as fall warblers, gulls and shorebirds. For this quiz in particular, I considered that come February here in Ontario, the collective birding mind is honed for gull study, so I opted for a more challenging route; I aimed to test a skill set which has been lying dormant and collecting dust: shorebird identification. Shorebirds are a very challenging group and, similar to “brown” ducks, their challenge to observers is presented right out in the open. Shorebirds simply walk along mudflats, probing here and probing there, often moving along very slowly and providing ample time for study. With what seems like the perfect opportunity for mastering their identification, many observers still find themselves happily popping a Tylenol when they get in after a morning of birding.

To provide a clue right off the bat, our quiz bird was photographed at Presqu'île Provincial Park in September. We see that it's providing an excellent view of features key to shorebird ID, including the length and shape of its bill, the base colour of its upperparts, the shape and overall proportions of its body, the colour and relative length of its legs, and the length of its folded wings. We noticed that the feathers on

Shorebirds are a very challenging group and, similar to “brown” ducks, their challenge to observers is presented right out in the open.

its upperparts are fresh and pale-edged, lending to a lovely scalloped appearance. We conclude, then, that it must then be a juvenile bird. With our field guide(s) next to us, we begin to browse the shorebird section and ponder which features are best relied upon in order to make bulk eliminations, where possible. We decide to consider the length of its bill, the colour of its legs and its overall GISS (general impression of size and shape). I believe I'm correct in assuming that the bulk of the *OFO News* readership will have already successfully narrowed their options down to the sandpipers in the genus *Calidris*. For example, *Pluvialis* plovers such as Black-bellied and American Golden, *Charadrius* plovers such as Piping and Semipalmated, and *Limosa* godwits such as Hudsonian and Marbled are all quite distinct from our quiz bird. Even more strikingly different from our quiz bird are species such as Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, American Oystercatcher, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Ruff and the three species of phalaropes. I imagine readers would turn away from the possibility of our quiz bird

being that of a species of dowitcher on the basis of bill length alone. It's possible that the *Tringa* sandpipers, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs and Solitary Sandpiper may cause us to pause and consider them as possibilities, but we consider our bird's relatively short, thin bill and black legs and decide that the answer to our sandpiper's identity must indeed be found within the genus *Calidris*.

Flipping through our field guide, we consider juveniles of the *Calidris* sandpipers. First up is Dunlin and we recall that by mid-September, this species shows a mix of pale-edged juvenal and dull formative (first winter) feathers on their upperparts. Also, this species has a more rotund build and longer, decurved bill. Curlew Sandpiper is considered, but we remind ourselves that this species would be an exceedingly rare find in southern Ontario in the fall. Nevertheless, we consider it as a possibility and find that a Curlew Sandpiper has a longer, decurved bill, averages 'warmer' fringing to their upperparts, are overall more colourful as a result, and are shorter-winged. We briefly consider even rarer finds in southern Ontario, Red-necked and Little Stint. Both species of stints show upperparts that are quite contrastive and warm-toned, with both species showcasing reddish scapulars, with Little Stint showing prominent bright mantle

lines, as well. We also consider that both species are compact in build, lacking the elegantly-proportioned, attenuated features of our quiz bird. We consider Sanderling next and note that our quiz bird does not fit their distinctive 'spangled' look, attributed to the blackish chevrons with pale-tipped edges to the feathers of their upperparts. We are now on to the smallest of the North American sandpipers, the "peeps." The peeps include Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper and Least Sandpiper. We consider Semipalmated Sandpiper, especially the longer-billed female Semipalmateds hailing from the eastern arctic. In the western arctic, Semipalmated co-exist with their longer, finer-billed cousin, the Western Sandpiper. Here, there is selective pressure toward shorter bills in Semipalmateds and the result provides a good example of what is termed as "niche partitioning." In the eastern arctic, however, Semipalmateds do not receive the same selective pressure and as a result, their bills average longer, with some female Semipalmateds overlapping with male Western's in length. This phenomenon is known as "character release." We carefully observe our quiz bird's uniform brown and scaly upperparts, thin bill, slender body build, and lengthy primary projection and conclude that it does not fit the profile of an eastern Semipalmated Sandpiper. Next up, we consider Western Sandpiper. Juvenile Western Sandpipers are typically quite pale-faced and quite pale throughout the throat and breast. They have contrastive upperparts, with the upper scapulars brightly edged in rufous and the lower scapulars being gray with blackish internal 'anchor' markings. These features are not found in our quiz bird so we can safely move along to what is now a dwindling list of possibilities. Next up, we find that Least Sandpiper is quickly eliminated by the presence of

the bright reddish fringing to its upperparts and greenish legs. We decide to flip a few pages forward in our guide to see which other species we can eliminate on the basis of leg color alone: Buff-breasted (yellowish), Pectoral (yellowish), Sharp-tailed (yellowish) and Stilt (yellow-green).

This then leaves us with two possibilities: White-rumped Sandpiper or Baird's Sandpiper. White-rumped Sandpipers migrate later in the fall, and juveniles are most often encountered in southern Ontario throughout the month of October. It's conceivable that a juvenile was present at Presqu'ile Provincial Park in mid-September so we must certainly consider it as a possibility here. We consider that White-rumped are typically quite grayish throughout and are more contrastingly patterned to their upperparts. Juveniles typically showcase bright reddish-fringed upper scapulars, a feature not found on our quiz bird. Important also, given this good of a view, is the basal area of the lower mandible. With White-rumped, this area is reddish-brown and we can see on our quiz bird that its bill is entirely black. It's at this point that we conclude that our quiz bird is a juvenile **Baird's Sandpiper** and we explore its identification further. We note that its foraging posture is distinctly horizontal and after researching this further we find that this is a reliable postural clue on a distant bird. Its back is broad and flat and its shoulders are wide on the body; a head-on view reveals a uniquely oblong build. We note its beautiful, attenuated rear and long wings, with a long primary projection past its tertials. Its primaries are held in what is termed an 'open scissor' formation, in which they often criss-cross over the tail. This juvenile Baird's Sandpiper was photographed by Michael Runtz at Presqu'ile Provincial Park in Brighton, Ontario on 8 September 2016.



OFO News
ofonews@ofo.ca

Editors
Paul Nicholson
Ian Shanahan

Editorial Assistants
Geoff Carpentier, Jean Iron,
and Ron Pittaway

Layout and Design
Judie Shore judieshore@bell.net

Copy Editor
Sofia A. Shanahan

Contributing Editors
Mike Burrell
mike.burrell.on@gmail.com
Jon Ruddy, Photo Quiz
eontbird@gmail.com
Christian Friis
friis.christian@gmail.com
Allen Woodliffe
awoodliffe@hotmail.com
Cindy Cartwright
pom@bmts.com

Articles and notes are welcome.
Contributors should check the
OFO website under publications for
deadlines and submission guidelines.

OFO Website www.ofo.ca
Doug Woods, Coordinator
Email: ofo@ofo.ca

Ontbirds
Mark Cranford – Coordinator
Ontbirds, with over 3000 subscribers,
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Ontario Field Ornithologists
PO Box 116 Station F
Toronto ON M4Y 2L4

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Carden Alvar Bluebirds 2016

By Herb Furniss

2016 was not a good year for Eastern Bluebirds on the Carden Alvar because of the severe drought last summer. The heat was tremendous and there was little rain. The lack of moisture meant there were few insects of any kind and hence no food for nestlings. By mid-July many bluebirds had dispersed as the only food was in shaded areas. Despite all this, I fledged 106 bluebirds with most of them in May and June before the drought. To date I have fledged 3,556 bluebirds. Nancy Hopkins on Shrike Rd. also fledged an additional 10 young bluebirds. As the farmers always say, there is always next year.