



OFO NEWSLETTER NUMBER 26

FEBRUARY 1992

Before I begin this first Newsletter of 1992, I should like to offer my apologies to those members who were apparently offended by my opening remarks in the November Newsletter. You may recall that I said that "Neither rain nor wives nor ...". This offended at least two members who took the time to write. For this I am sorry, but this was merely an attempt at humour, not a derogatory statement against women or their rights. Enough said!

Editorial:

It seems that every winter [in particular] we hear stories about birders who put their personal goals and desires before the well being of wildlife. This year, two such incidents came to my attention, both involved OFO members and both occurred in the Peterborough area.

As most of you know, Peterborough is well known for its wintering eagles. You further are aware that the "Nephton Ridge" [now owned by Unimin Corp.] is a great spot to view the eagles. However, the property is privately owned, and the owners have made it clear that they don't want people trespassing without advance permission. The property is clearly posted, such that one is reminded, in writing, that one must have permission to use the roads. This year, new management is once again in place, and they required written submissions from OFO to allow us to run our February trip to the ridge, which I did on behalf of the club. Two of our members [both avid and long time birders] visited the ridge the week before our outing and entered the property without permission, to view the eagles. Albeit they attempted to find the security guard to gain access, but failing to find him, they entered anyways. I don't understand why they felt they had the right to not only break the law [the property is posted], but also to jeopardize access to the property by others who are trying to abide by the rules. If we continue to ignore the rights of property owners, how can we be upset when the properties are closed to use? Surely, the convenience of these two is not worth the consequences for other birders.

Peterborough was fortunate to have three Great Grey Owls visit in early February. One of these birds spent about a week in Smith Township, north of the city. On February 1 [the day before our Petroglyphs outing] two members were seen observing the birds in the fields west of the roadway. One of them had brought mice to attract the bird within camera range. However, the bird was not interested in the mice, and continually flew a few metres each time the "birders" approached. The observers

were seen to put the bird to flight at least five times, and it is known that they flushed the bird several more times as the evening progressed. No attempt was made to photograph the birds during the first five pursuits, despite the claim that this was the purpose of the expedition. Although many people searched for the bird the next day, it was not seen again and has not been seen since. Coincidence? It seems to me that the individuals were more interested in seeing how close they could get to the owl than its well being. Incidentally, one of the observers was part of the two-some who trespassed on the "Nephton Ridge" as detailed above.

I would hope that somehow we could all be more professional, use better judgement and curb our desire to think only of ourselves in situations such as these.

Okay, I've said my peace, and so on with the business at hand. I would like to thank those members who took the time to write or phone and pass on their thoughts with respect to improving and revitalizing OFO. We'll be discussing their ideas at forthcoming Board meetings with the intent of implementing viable proposals.

1992 Board of Directors and Officers:

Board: Geoff Carpentier (President), Jim Coey, Bill Crins, Alec Dobson, John McCauley, Claudia Schaefer, Ron Scovell, Terrie Smith and Gerry Shemilt. Officers: Valerie Brown, Bill Crins, Ron Pittaway, Ron Tozer, Sheldon McGregor, Sid Hadlington, Russel Munro, Bill Walker, Claudia Schaefer and Geoff Carpentier.

In the News/Calls for Information:

- 1) The 1992 Long Point Bird Observatory has announced the kick off of this year's Bird-a-thon. OFO will once again be fielding participants for this worthwhile fund-raiser. If you would like to participate as a birder or sponsor, contact Sid Hadlington, our Bird-a-thon Co-ordinator at: 1 Harbour Street, Brighton, Ontario, K0K 1H0 (613-475-0160). Incidentally, the "OFO Oldsquaws", OFO's official team, won the Battered Bins Award again last year for seeing the highest percentage of area birds (159 species for 48.9% of the local list).
- 2) The City of Windsor, the Walpole First Nation - the Council of Three Fires, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the University of Windsor are sponsoring the 13th North American Prairie Conference, August 6-9, 1992 in Windsor. For more information contact: City of Windsor, Department of Parks and Rec., 2450 McDougall, Windsor, Ont., N8X 3N6. 519-255-6270.

- 3) The Royal Ontario Museum has just announced that on April 15, 1992 the Outdoor Canada/The Sportsmen's Shows Gallery of Birds Birdsong Workstation will open to the public. Use of computers will allow you to participate hands-on in this birding adventure. Call 416-586-5549 for more information.
- 4) Mark Kubisz (104 Hadrian Dr., Rexdale, Ont., M9W 1V4) is looking for information on Brewer's Blackbirds and their changing status in Ontario.
- 5) Fuji Fujinon has announced the 1992 National Birder Photography Competition. An exciting prize list should make this of interest to budding and established photographers. Write to: Fuji Fujinon, National Birder Photography Competition, c/o BWCK, 510 King Street East, Suite 200, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1M1 for rules and particulars.
- 6) The LPBO is co-sponsoring a Symposium on "Bring Back the Birds" - a Public Awareness Event on Migratory Songbird Conservation. It will be held at The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto on March 28, 1992 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. You may call 416-366-6100 for more details.
- 7) The University of Toronto is holding a one-day Nature Photography Seminar on March 29, 1992. Call 416-978-3901.
- 8) The Ministry of Natural Resources is hosting a "Carolinian Canada Information Day" to explain and kick-off the Carolinian Canada Program on March 5, 1992 at 659 Exeter Road, London.
- 9) Algonquin Region of the Ministry of Natural Resources is looking for seasonal employees to work at Algonquin Provincial Park this summer. A Park Naturalist and Museum Technician are needed. Write to Park Naturalist, MNR, Box 219, Whitney, Ontario, K0J 2M0 or phone 705-633-5592 for more details.
- 10) TVOntario will be broadcasting a special program on Birds of the Backyard on March 14th and April 29th, to help people learn more about the common birds they might see in their own back yards.
- 11) The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has announced the formation of a Management Plan Review for Polar Bear Provincial Park. Interested parties are encouraged to write them at MNR, P.O. Box 190, Moosonee, Ont., P0L 1Y0.

Short and Tweet:

Peter Taylor of Pinawa, Manitoba wrote to tell me about an Osprey that, on May 3, 1986, he observed catch and carry off a small muskrat at Heart Lake in SE Manitoba. Peter went on

to ask if anyone has any information on Bald Eagles stealing fish from River Otters. What about eagles stealing other food from predators? If anyone has any information let me know.

Peter published a paper in Raptor Research in 1986 that describes how, while in Florida, he observed an Osprey catch and apparently kill an Eastern Grey Squirrel (Raptor Research Vol. 20, No. 2, 1986, Page 76).

Longevity:

I thought I'd take this opportunity to publish some longevity records of which I am aware. If you have any documented records of a similar nature, let me know and I'll print them.

- 1) A male Barrow's Golden-eye has wintered on the Otonabee River for the last five winters.
- 2) A female Redhead wintered on Little Lake in Peterborough from December 1983 when she first appeared in adult plumage to February 1991. This year she didn't come back!
- 3) An American Robin has nested in my yard since 1986. Each year she builds in the same spot on an eavestrough by the garage. Based on the dates of construction, it appears that she nests here only for her second brood each year.
- 4) A Common Grackle has nested in my yard since 1989, using the same nest each time. I have never seen it upgrade or rebuild the nest, which is located in a dense Mount Batten Juniper.

The OFO Field Trip to Petroglyphs Park on Feb. 2nd was a huge success. Over 90 members birded the area. They saw thirty nine species. The composite bird list included Barrow's Golden-eye, at least five Bald Eagles, two Black-backed Woodpeckers, White-winged Crossbills, Bohemian Waxwings, Pine Grosbeaks, Boreal, Barred and Great Gray Owls, and Red-shouldered Hawk.

The Algonquin trip is slated for April 25th. See you there.

The FON is sponsoring a five day trip to Rainy River on the first weekend in June. Several members asked me about this last fall, but I lost their names addresses in the interim. Contact the FON for more details.

Well, that's it for now. Remember please support OFO when you can and see if you can help increase our membership through harassment of your friends and relatives.