

OFO



ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

OFO NEWSLETTER NUMBER 25

NOVEMBER 1991

I know that you've been sitting by your mailbox awaiting this latest of the OFO Newsletters. Well, obviously your patience has been rewarded - for here it is. Neither rain nor wives nor the dark of Postal Strikes can stop us! So sit back and relax and read on.

For me this has been a year of challenge and endurance. As many of you know I went to work in Toronto for **two weeks** in October of 1989, and I'm still there. Must be metric weeks! The Board of Directors of OFO has been struggling to right the problems that have grown faster than our membership. Thanks to the efforts of many members, it looks like we're heading in the right direction finally. Ontario Birds is at last on time - yes this isn't a misprint - and we intend to keep it so. The format of Ontario Birds has changed dramatically in the last few months to better offer you, our members, the kind of information we hope and believe you want to read. The Executive is working hard to solve other concerns: declining memberships, costs, and the perception of our goals and philosophies, etc. We intend to keep at it until we're as perfect as we can be!

As I will be the President of OFO effective January 1, 1992, unless I'm impeached in the interim, I personally can assure that I will work hard to meet these challenges. However, despite all of our efforts, they will be for naught if our membership base doesn't improve soon. That's where you guys/gals come in. We've asked you before to help by soliciting members on behalf of OFO. This time we mean it - **PLEASE MAKE THE EFFORT AND FIND ONE OR TWO OR ... NEW MEMBERS NOW**. It doesn't involve a big effort on anyone's individual part, but together the effort expended will ultimately save us from an ugly death at the hands of Mister Financial Ruin. [Ed. that's sort of like Mister Rogers, only less friendly]. We're trying hard to improve and save OFO because we believe it's worth saving ... and we hope you think it's worth saving too. Won't you make a small effort as well to help? Additionally, if you would like to volunteer for committees, the Board, or have other ideas that will make us better, bring a beer and come see me or telephone, but mail the beer first, and we'll talk. Well, enough doom and gloom, and so on to the news of the day.

In the News:

- 1) The Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) has recently agreed to amend the legislation known as the Migratory Birds Convention, made between the United States and Canada to protect migratory North American birds. They will develop a strategy in the near future and will begin negotiations with the U.S. in the fall of 1992.

- 2) The Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) has announced the availability of applications for its 1992 grants for bird projects. Two types of grants are available: (a) Project Grants for support of research, conservation or educational projects on Canadian birds, and (b) Travel Grants for participants in high priority fieldwork for breeding bird atlas projects. Grants are available for either Ontario residents or for non-residents, working in Canada or on the wintering grounds or migratory routes travelled by Canadian birds. Information may be obtained from the LPBO at P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont., NOE 1M0 (tel: 519-586-3531). Some of the grants awarded in 1991 include: \$2000 to OFO for a publication on ornithology in Ontario, \$1500 to the Ontario Rare Breeding Bird Program, and \$600 to the South Lake Simcoe Naturalists to coordinate a survey of significant riparian wetlands.
- 3) In 1923, the Canadian chapter of the International Council for Bird Preservation was founded. They have been active since to help protect Canadian birds. They currently are working on a status review of all birds of regular occurrence in Canada.
- 4) The World Wildlife Fund has recently released an attractive and informative eight page brochure on Canadian Endangered Species (1991), filled with facts and lists of and about the subject species. For information on obtaining copies of the brochure or for supporting the WWF's goals, such as the Save the Rainforests project, contact them at 90 Eglinton Ave., East, Suite 504, Toronto, Ontario, M4P 2Z7.
- 5) Toronto birders are pleased to announce the establishment of a new Birders' Information line for push button phones only. Call them at 416-350-3000 ext. 2293.
- 6) Mike Cadman advises that the field work for the Ontario Rare Breeding Bird Program is now complete. He sends his sincere thanks to all who participated. Complete details of the results should be available for the May issue of the ORBBP Newsletter.
- 7) The editors of Canadian Birding (the child of Gerry Bennett's Birdfinding in Canada) have announced that they will offer special rates to OFO members who subscribe to their magazine: One yr. - \$15, Two yrs. - \$29, payable in Canadian \$\$ in Canada, and US \$\$ elsewhere. Their address is Canadian Birding, Site 14A, Box 43, RR#4, Armdale, Nova Scotia, B3L 4J4.
- 8) And welcome to Birders Journal, Ontario's newest birding publication. For information contact: Circulation Manager, Birders Journal, 8 Midtown Dr., Suite 289, Oshawa, Ontario, L1J 8L2.

Calls for Information:

Sherrene Kevan, 352 River Road, Cambridge, Ont., N3C 2B7, is seeking any information respondents may have on Sandhill Cranes in Ontario. She is primarily interested in sightings, diet or photos of nests or sites.

Field Trips:

At the AGM, members were given the new 1991 Field Trips program for the coming year. Unfortunately, there was an error on the printed copy. The Petroglyphs trip is slated for February 2, 1992, not the 4th as printed. Other forthcoming trips include a spring outing to Algonquin P.P. on April 25 and another Rainy River trip May 29th and 30th. We hope to see you there!

And an Apology:

Our sincere apology goes out to Dr. Robert Andrle, who spoke at our AGM in October. In all the promotional literature we misspelled his name. Sorry Dr. A!

The Annual General Meeting (AGM):

Well, what can I say, the AGM was a huge success once again. Over 100 people enjoyed an action packed program. Forty percent of these stayed for the evening social adventure. The book sale offered numerous literary tantalizers for some collectors, and the Photo Quiz, nostalgic and completely entertaining, was run by the incredibly humorous Gerry Bennett. Committee reports, always assumed to be boring, were surprisingly informative, albeit somewhat gloomy in content [Ed. see my opening comment in this Newsletter].

Winners of the Swish Photo Contest were:

- 1) Allan Woodliffe for his Scarlet Tanager
- 2) Bruno Kern for his Red-shouldered Hawk
- 3) Nancy Barrett for her Lesser Golden Plover

and Honourable Mentions to Bruno Kern for his Black Terns and Allan Woodliffe for his Wood Duck.

Our sincere thanks go out to Swish for their continued support of this now annual event, and of course our congratulations go out to the winners.

Dr. Andrle gave an informative illustrated talk on separating "problem" gulls in the field and Geoff Carpentier took us on a trip through Ecuador, highlighting the aspects of what it was like to bird in this Third World country.

(25)

All in all, it really was a great day. You can mark your calendar right now for the 1992 meeting. It'll be held sometime in October somewhere in Ontario! Thanks to all who spent so much time organizing the meeting, including, but not limited to, Margaret Bain and Ron Scovell.

New Members:

Welcome to Jean Iron, Larry Martyn and Kevin Shackleton.

Short and Tweet (at last you say?):

Geoff C., Clayton Vardy and Eugene Jankowski spent some time on the James Bay coast, at Longridge, this fall working on the MNR Habitat Based Wildlife Assessment Project. Some of the more interesting sightings included extra-limital Moorhen and Red-necked Grebe, a blue phase Ross' Goose and a white phase bird, plus all the usual "juicy stuff" found along the coast.

An Osprey was observed carrying a Peromyscus sp. (that's a mouse for you birders) that it had caught. It carried the animal exactly as it would a fish, head forward, tail to the rear. Has anybody else ever seen Ospreys with non-fish prey? I could find very few references to this behaviour.

A Spruce Grouse was observed in a Black Spruce bog. It sat patiently in a tree as we approached, and then launched itself forward directly at my head and appeared to try to land. Fortunately, it bluffed me and I ducked (or groused?) and it landed in a small tree beside me. Did it think I was a tree since I was wearing green overall, including my hat, or was it a guard grouse?

A family of four Sandhill Cranes were observed daily flying over the area and calling to each other or so I thought. Finally one day I was able to watch them at close range and noted that only one of the birds did all the calling (the adult male or female) to the other three. The youngsters were easily identifiable as they were visibly smaller than the adults in flight and were not seen to call at all.

Dave Johnson observed a subadult (4th year bird) Bald Eagle building a nest on November 14th on Buckhorn Lake. Will it return in the spring to occupy the site? We'll let you know!

Please note we have a new mailing address despite what it says on the title page and the envelope (we're trying to save money and use up old supplies): OFO, P.O. Box 62014, Burlington Mall Postal Outlet, Burlington, Ontario, L7R 4K2.

Geoff Carpentier, Newsletter Editor, 964 Weller Street, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 4Y2.