

OFO



ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

OFO NEWSLETTER NUMBER 17. MARCH 1989.

With this Newsletter, the observant amongst you, will notice that we have a new Logo. Although it's difficult to part with our old Little Gull, we felt it was time for a change. Hope you like it. And as our Little Gull changes from winter plumage to breeding plumage, so too do we anticipate the impending spring season. I trust this will be a productive and rewarding season for you all.

Periodically, we find that members move without telling us. At the present time seven members are AWOL. Does anyone know where Sandra Hannah, John Struger, Anne Pennington, Mark Gawn, Elizabeth Garwood, Rev. Andreas Kaellgren or Ruthann Gairdner are presently living? Please let us know, so that we can forward their journals and Newsletters.

At this time, we would also like to welcome the following new members to our ranks in 1988-89: Richard Arthur, Maurice Belanger, Raymond Beskau, Wolfgang Bessel, Helen Bradshaw, Gail Bruneau, Victoria Carley, Ramon Carreno, Joseph Connop, Grace Dick, Karen Hill, Brian Hobbs, Suzanne House, Al Jaramillo, Jan Murray, George Naylor, Brian & Karalee Patel, Wayne Perry, Stan Phippen, Barry Ranford, Josef Serensits, Michael Street, Derick Sweeting, Shirley Tregenza, Eric Tull, Robert Tymstra, Susan van Arkel, and Patricia Whitney.

And finally, on the subject of membership, those members who have not renewed for 1989, regrettably will be stricken from our lists and mailings, unless they forward their cheques almost immediately! This will be the last mailing to those individuals.

Field Trips Future:

(1) LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY: Date: Sat., May 6, 1989 (7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). George Wallace has arranged to rent a boat to take 14 OFO members across the Bay to the LPBO for the day. Participants will be under the leadership of an LPBO staff member on a tour of the facilities. It will be migration time, and who knows what you might see. To be fair to all members, a draw of applicants will be made to determine the 14 participants for the day. To enter the draw, send your name, address, phone number and cheque payable to the LPBO for \$45.00 (\$30.00 boat fee and \$15.00 LPBO donation) to: Ron Scovell, LPBO Field Trip, 3 Sims Cr., Etobicoke, Ont., M9V 2S9. The draw will be made two weeks after the mailing date of this Newsletter. Winners will be notified, and cheques for non-winners will be destroyed.

(2) PERU: Only a few spaces remain for this exciting adventure into one of the world's thrilling birding areas. Main Tour: September 16-30, 1989. Extension: September 30-October 7, 1989. Price: Two Week Tour - \$2450.00 (couples \$2400.00 each); Extension: \$700.00. All prices are all inclusive and in Canadian funds. Write to: Turaco Nature Service, RR#2, Camlachie, Ont., N0N 1E0. Telephone 519-336-5745 for further information.

P.O. BOX 1204, STATION B, BURLINGTON, ONTARIO L7P 3S9

(3) OFO PELAGIC: Tickets are still available for the 1989 Pelagic out of Hamilton in September. Please forward your cheque for \$45.00 as soon as possible to ensure your spot on this great adventure. We are currently anticipating arranging a shore barbecue or some such social affair. Let us know if you like the idea. Last year when the boat docked, everyone just went home. I could have used a beer!

(4) SPRING MEETING: Plans are coming together for our spring meeting in the Bruce. More details will be forthcoming, but if you have ideas or suggestions, contact us right away, and we'll see if they can be accommodated.

(5) RAINY RIVER: On June 3, 1989, OFO is sponsoring another trip to Rainy River, led by Dave Elder. All travel, accommodation and other arrangements are the responsibility of the participants. The FON is running a co-incident trip to Rainy River June 2-5, 1989. For this one, all travel, accommodation and some meal expenses will be taken care of by the FON. Last year's Rainy River trip was an incredible success! Contact Martin and Kathy Parker at FON, Trip Program P.O. Box 1647, Port Elgin, Ont., NOH 2C0 for costs and details. At some point on June 3, the two groups will get together to compare notes and share a Wood Tick.

Field Trips Past:

(1) AMHERST ISLAND: Those hardy participants who visited the island in January, under the tutelage of Ron Weir, were not treated to very many birds, but most went away pleased, at the opportunity of travelling this mysterious place and spending a day with friends of common interest.

(2) PETROGLYPHS PROVINCIAL PARK: Sixty-eight birders joined our February trip to the Park! The day was quite successful with several Bald Eagles, many Ravens, and some Gray Jays, a White-winged Crossbill and a few other "Dickie-ducks" seen. A small number had a fleeting glimpse of the elusive Hawk-owl as well. To top it off, the weather was superb.

Questionnaires: We still have copies of the OFO Questionnaire available, if anyone hasn't filled one out. The suggestions and results will be tabulated in late April or early May, and improvements to our programs, etc. developed shortly thereafter. Now is your chance to help in the development and improvement of our Club.

Regional Report: Thomas Dyke reports on the Thunder Bay area this time: We have had an unusual fall this period, with two new birds added to our district list in the form of a Brant and a Carolina Wren, bringing us to 315 species. Dr. Escott reported a Red-shafted Flicker at his feeder on November 18th. Six Northern Cardinals were found in one month, bringing the district total to

over 20 sightings! On November 6th, an Iceland Gull was photographed in Thunder Bay, for about the sixth local record. On November 5th, a late Black-throated Blue Warbler and Scarlet Tanager were found. Throughout November a Great Gray and a Short-eared Owl were regular in the Whitefish Valley. At the time of writing [late November] there have been 3 three inch snowfalls but all were washed away by rain. [Thanks to Thomas for his report].

Short and Tweet

(1) Geoff Carpentier reports that on February 23, 1989, he watched three Cedar Waxwings feeding on Buckthorn berries in Smith Township, Peterborough County. Once satiated, they flew down to the ground and spent about 5 minutes scooping snow with their beaks and swallowing it, presumably to get a drink. Six other birds in the flock did not "drink" in this manner.

(2) Ron Scovell tells of the behaviour of a Northern Harrier. During an August 1988 field trip to Killarney P.P., he observed a female Harrier drifting over a marshy area in a large cove on Balsam Lake. When the bird reached the edge of the cove, it rose quickly to the tops of the 90 foot coniferous trees and began diving repeatedly into the upper branches, scattering warblers hiding therein. This "hawking" lasted about two minutes, but without success.

(3) Norman Murr watched a Black-crowned Night-Heron hovering over the water on the Leslie Street Spit on May 7, 1988. He wonders if it was fishing.

(4) Norman also reported that on June 6, 1988, he observed a male Scarlet Tanager, in the Kortright Conservation Area, begging food from a Robin that landed on the same branch. The Robin then flew on to its nest, ignoring the tanager's antics.

(5) William Mansell relays an interesting story of a Starling and a House Sparrow. "Some years ago: House Sparrows low in the pecking order with insufficient aggression to oust other, larger species, would grip the shelf [of my feeder in Mississauga] with their feet, using it as a fulcrum to swing up and purloin a seed. A starling, upright on the tray, saw what it might have taken as a worm, picked up the sparrow by the toe, and dangled the fluttering bird for several seconds."

(6) Beverly Delidow reports that on June 18, 1988, while birding on the Toronto Islands, she watched a flock of 20 Bank Swallows jostling each other for room on a telephone wire. While they were very aggressive to others of their own species, they ignored adjacent Tree and Barn Swallows.

(7) Beverly watched a male Northern Shoveler actively courting a "rather reluctant" female Mallard on Centre Island in Toronto on May 7, 1988.

[This now depletes my supply of anecdotal material. Surely others out there have contributory material, that they would like published. Please send it to me NOW or you'll have to read only about the exciting things that I see ...]

Announcements/Calls For Information:

(1) The Ministry of Natural Resources is looking for seasonal workers in **Algonquin Park** for 1989. Two positions (Park Naturalist and Museum Technician) are available. Write to: Park Naturalist, MNR, P.O. Box 219, Whitney, Ontario, K0J 2M0 or phone 705-633-5592.

(2) Its time to update your **Birder's Hotline** list previously published: Simcoe County 705-689-8546; Essex County 519-252-Bird; Detroit (changed to) 313-278-4288; Point Pelee 519-322-2371 and Oshawa/Whitby 416-723-2756.

(3) The itinerant collector **Dave Elder** is looking for some rarish books: "The Birds of Wood Buffalo Park and Vicinity" (J.D. Soper, 1942), "A Review of the Bird Fauna of B.C." (J.A. Munro & I. Cowan, 1947), "Fall Bird Migration on the Gaspé Peninsula" (S.C. Ball, 1952), "An Annotated List of the Avifauna of Waterton Lakes N.P." (K.E. Seel, 1969), "Catalogue of the Birds of Nova Scotia" (A. Downs, 1887), "A preliminary Catalogue of the Birds of B.C." (J. Fannin, 1889), "Prairie Birds" (B.J. Hales, 1927), "The Birds of Ontario" (T. McIlwraith, 1886) and "the New Canadian Bird Book" (W.T. MacClement, 1915). Write to Dave at P.O. Box 252, Atikokan, Ont., P0T 1C0.

(4) Steve LaForest advises that **Presqu'ile** is looking for volunteer birders for the Park for the 1989 season. Write to Steve at Presqu'ile P.P., RR#4, Brighton, Ont., K0K 1H0 (613-475-2204).

(5) Presqu'ile is also looking for help on its **Waterfowl Viewing Weekends** to be held at the end of March. Contact Steve for details.

(6) Once again from Presqu'ile, Doug McRae is looking for help. He writes "For over 5 years, small numbers of **Black-backed Woodpeckers** have frequented the Newcastle-Jobe's Woods region of Presqu'ile. We think they may be nesting in the area... Would you like to help find out? If so, meet Doug and Ed Poropat at the sightings board/camp office in the Park at the unusually civilized hour of 9:30 a.m., Saturday, March 18, 1989." Bring boots, lunch, and an ability to hear woodpeckers and walk about five kilometres in a straight line. Hot chocolate will be served. (Doug: 705-457-3247, Ed: 519-428-5103).

(7) Doug McRae also advises that **Bird-a-thon** kits will be going out to all participants in the next few days. If you don't get yours, or would like one contact him at the LPBO address. [OFO will once again be entering a team, championed by the Editor of the Newsletter. If you would like to bird with the guys from Peterborough on May 20, 1989, let me know.]

(8) **Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas**: "Are you planning a birding vacation to the Canadian Maritimes this summer? The Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas is looking for knowledgeable field birders and those with previous atlassing experience to help us map the distribution of the region's breeding birds. The work is of a volunteer nature, but we may be able to offer free accommodation in certain areas ... For more details ... contact Brian Dalzell, Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas, c/o Nova Scotia Museum, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, N.S., B3H 3A6. (902)429-4610.

(9) **Mailing Volunteers:** OFO needs volunteers with three free evenings per year to help out with the mailing of Ontario Birds. Location: downtown Toronto, near the subway. Advantages: You get your copy of Ontario Birds before anyone else. Disadvantages: sticky tongues. For more information call Mitchell Temkin at 416-534-2133 (home) or 416-593-7017 (work).

(10) **Assistants LPBO:** Long Point is looking for assistants to work on the Point in the spring and fall migration periods. Contact George Wallace, Operations Manager, LPBO. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont., NOE 1M0. (519-586-2909).

Bird-a-thon 1989

Do the gray days of winter start you thinking of sunny, blissful spring birding at your favourite place? The excitement of never knowing what rarity is going to appear on the spring migration. Make that fun and anticipation turn into tangible help for the LPBO and OFO by supporting the James L. Baillie Memorial Bird-a-thon. We are pleased to announce that the OFO Birding Celebrity this year is Tom Hince, who many of you will remember as the patient and helpful Park Naturalist at Pelee ... and an excellent birder! The number and quantity of prizes this year is truly outstanding - a KOWA TSN2 spotting scope for example and beautiful limited edition prints by Fenwick Lansdowne

Please take part in and support this combined fund-raising effort of the LPBO, the J.L. Baillie Memorial Fund and our own OFO. We are depending on you! Please fill in the form below and mail it today.

BIRD-A-THON SPONSOR FORM

I wish to sponsor Tom Hince for _____ cents/species

I wish to sponsor Tom Hince for a lump sum of _____ dollars

I wish to be a Bird-a-thon Participant. Please send me an information packet _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

Please mail to Ontario Field Ornithologists
c/o 211 Queen's Quay West, Suite 1107
Toronto, Ontario, M5J 2M6

Make cheques payable to: Ontario Field Ornithologists

Ontario Rare Breeding Bird Program Update

The ORBBP is sponsored by the FON and co-sponsored by the LPBO, Nature Conservancy of Canada and OFO. The program will assess the current Ontario status of those species shown to be rare by the Atlas project, and those already designated as Rare, Threatened or Endangered. The program will help conserve the natural diversity of birds in the province, and is based on the premise that a lot more can be done to help rare birds if their status is officially recognized and their breeding sites are known. Status reports and perhaps recovery plans will be formulated when data collection is complete. Full details of the program are provided in the Spring 1989 issues of Seasons and we hope to provide more information with the next Ontario Birds.

As was true of the Atlas project, birders make the ORBBP work. The first phase of the program is already well underway, and consists of a compilation of the known information on the location of breeding sites of rare species, and the known history of the usage of those sites by birds. To compile the information, the province has been divided into regions (basically counties and R.M.'s) and a Regional Committee has been formed in each. Starting early in 1989, these committees have been asking birders if they know of any breeding sites of any birds on a list of rare species, and if so, if they could complete a Site History Form on them. Information from these is being computerized and summarized.

The second phase of the program begins in the spring of 1989 and ends at the end of the 1991 breeding season. In this phase, birders visit known sites to determine if they're still occupied, and undertake surveys to find additional sites for a shorter list of 24 species. To avoid disturbance, participants are discouraged from looking for nests.

As one of the sponsors of the ORBBP, OFO will play a key role in the program. Don Fraser represents OFO on the Management Committee and is chair of the subcommittee for Data Collection and Ethics. If you would like to become involved, contact your local Naturalist Club, LPBO, or OFO. The first Newsletter goes out in March.

Geoffrey Carpentier, NEWSLETTER EDITOR
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