

OFO



ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

OFO NEWSLETTER NUMBER 16. DECEMBER 1988.

1988 is fast drawing to a close. Many of you may now be looking back on the year and evaluating it in your own terms. But more importantly, you can look forward to 1989, which surely will have its own brand of excitement and special-to-you projects. Whatever your goals, may 1989 be productive and successful.

The 1988 AGM, held in Scarborough this year, was once again a successful undertaking. Approximately 120 attendees enjoyed a wide and varied program of games, fun and invited lectures. The book sale has proven once again to be extremely successful, with over \$2300.00 in sales. OFO retains \$462.20 of this thanks to donations by M. Bain, Book Bros., G. Carpentier, D. Gunn, Kershaw Maps & Prints, R. Mason and SPNC. Draw prizes, door prizes and the ever popular raffle sent many home with loot in hand. Darlene Dalke of Oshawa won the Long-eared Owl print kindly donated by Barry Ranford. Many members worked hard to make this an enjoyable outing for our members. Our hats go off to all of them for their ongoing efforts.

OFO once again sponsored the OFO Trophy to participants in the 1988 J.L. Baillie Memorial Bird-a-thon. This year's winners were Arthur Langford who raised an incredible \$11,000.00 and Tom Hince who observed 173 species of birds. All told, approximately \$80,000.00 was raised. Gail Mason co-ordinated OFO's efforts this year, and expectedly did a superb job. Approximately \$4600.00 was raised in support of OFO this year. Half of this will be available to us for ongoing programs. The OFO trophy winners were announced both at the OFO AGM and at the LPBO AGM held on October 28th. LPBO also announced the winners of other prizes as follows: Donor prizes (Michael Dumas artist proofs) - Greta Duncan, Leslie Bain, and Alfa Barlow; Participant prizes - Ted Cheskey (CNF Gift Certificate towards a CNF tour), Geoff Carpentier (a complete Tilley suit compliments of Tilley Endurables), Monica Neim (a trip to Cuba compliments of Great Auk/Magna Holidays) and Nancy Barrett (a pair of Leitz Trinovid binoculars compliments of Leica Canada). Congratulations to all the winners, and to Doug McRae for doing a great organizational job this year.

LPBO also awarded the "Battered Bins Award" to the team of birders that (1) raised the most amount of money and (2) to the team that saw the highest percentage of birds possible within their birding area. The OFO Oldsquaws took both halves of the Trophy with over \$2400.00 raised and 50% of species (168/336). The team consisted of G. Carpentier, T. Bigg, C. Vardy, R. Smith, P. Hogenbirk and D. Monkman. The Guelph Teen-agers, who originated the idea, were a close second with 146 of 295 species (49.5%).

Remember your membership dues are now payable (if you haven't already done so). We've managed to hold the line, and there will not be an increase this year. A renewal form is enclosed for your convenience. Bill Walker has taken over the function of Membership Co-ordinator from Reid Wilson. Bill advises that he will be away for most of February and March and would appreciate early replies. Our sincerest thanks go out to Reid for the huge amounts of time he spent while in office.

OFO Questionnaire: Reid also worked extensively on a questionnaire to research the needs of the membership. The questionnaire was distributed to those present at the AGM. The results of this will be tabulated in the new year and programs developed subsequently. For any members who were not able to attend the AGM, we still have copies available, so your views can be heard. If you would like a copy sent to you for completion, please write to me as soon as possible, and I'll send you one. Also if anyone would like a copy of the minutes of the AGM, I would be happy to send those out.

1988 Board of Directors: The new board was elected at the AGM. The members now include Margaret Bain, Victoria Carley, Geoff Carpentier, Glenn Coady, Don Fraser, Trevor Levere, John McCauley, Gail Mason, Ron Scovell, Gerry Schemilt, and Mitchell Tempkin. Our thanks go out to retiring members Hugh Currie, Bob Curry, Chip Weseloh and Reid Wilson, for services and support. Specific offices and functions for the Board will be announced in the near future.

Tryon Mint has kindly donated four wildlife prints (Blue-winged Warbler, Key West Quail-Dove, Sandhill Crane and Great Egret) valued at \$2600.00. These will be raffled off to members over the next four years to help in our ongoing fund-raising endeavours. Tryon's generosity is greatly appreciated!

Falconry: Victoria Carley advises that Vince Kerrio, Minister of Logs and Frogs (oops, Natural Resources) has refused unilaterally to sign the Falconry Bill, even though everyone, including his own staff, has agreed that falcons should not be taken from the wild. We will keep you advised of how you can help and what OFO is doing. Incidentally, Bob Curry's name was mistakenly omitted in the last Newsletter when I listed the membership of the OFO Falconry Committee. Bob worked hard on the Committee and I apologize for the oversight.

Regional Review: To better involve the membership, I should like to introduce another regular feature to the Newsletter. This new column entitled "Regional Review" is designed to allow you to tell the membership what is going on in your area. The content can be variable, but should be concise and informative. Members who want to write a report should contact me as soon as possible and I will advise you when your turn comes up. Only one report will be included in each Newsletter. Arbitrary reporting areas have been developed as follows - Pelee, Rondeau, Long Point, Sarnia, London, Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph, Barrie-Lake Simcoe, Niagara, Hamilton, Toronto, Oshawa-Whitby, Port Hope-Cobourg, Peterborough, Kingston, Presqu'ile, Cornwall, Ottawa, North Bay, Gravenhurst, Algonquin, Moosonee, Sudbury, Sault-Ste-Marie, Thunder Bay, and Rainy River-Kenora. Of course, I probably have omitted your favorite area, so feel free to chastise me and I'll amend the list. Please let me know which area you'll be willing to cover. This will of course take some time to complete, but it should give us a better understanding of what our membership is up to. A sample report follows.

Regional Review - Presqu'ile P.P. As many of our members are aware, Presqu'ile has proven to be a spectacular birding area in both the spring and fall. To date, 311 species have been recorded in this small geographical area. In 1988, birders were not disappointed with Red-throated Loon, Western Grebe, Snow Goose, King Eider, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Hudsonian Godwit, Purple Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Red Phalarope, Franklin's Gull, Thayer's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Sabine's Gull, Sandwich Tern, Carolina Wren, White-eyed Vireo, Prairie Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and Orchard Oriole included on the long list of reports. The "Friends of Presqu'ile" was created this year to allow users a better say in the running of the park. This fledgling group is already making its presence felt within the Park. Hunting continues to be an unpopular passtime (at least to birders) within the Park. As the mandate of the "Friends" does not allow them to address this issue, hopefully another group (Brighton Field Naturalists?) could take up the flag. A group of local youths took it upon themselves to enter the cormorant and gull colonies and systematically kill or injure many of the birds. Fortunately, they were caught and punished. They are being required to do volunteer work within the area. Its a shame that they undertook this destructive activity, but hopefully they will reflect on their actions as they fulfill their commitment to the community. The MNR has been more co-operative towards birders this year and has left most of Owen Point in a natural state, which is obviously advantageous to birds resting and feeding in the area.

Calls For Information: (1) The LPBO once again has grants available to individuals or groups who want to work on bird-oriented projects. Forms are available from the Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont., NOE 1M0.

(2) The Ontario Bluebird Society has published its latest Newsletter. They are requesting anyone who monitored nests in 1988 to complete a survey form available from them. New memberships are always welcome (\$5.00 individual, \$6.00 family). Write to them c/o William Read, 165 Green Valley Dr., #2, Kitchener, Ont., N2P 1K3.

(3) FeederWatch, the Newsletter of the LPBO/Cornell group responsible for the ongoing winter bird-feeding studies in North America, has just been published. As always they are looking for volunteers to assist in 1988-89. Contact them c/o the LPBO.

(4) Al Wormington has been working on a project regarding the influx of nesting Dickcissels in Ontario this year. Further information on status and sightings would be appreciated by Al at R.R.#1, Leamington, Ont., N8H 3V4.

New Members: We are pleased to welcome the following new members to our ranks - S. Johnson, P. Lehto, E. Meissner, D. Salter, Mr. & Mrs. M. Surette, M. Glebovs, J. Holdsworth, B. MacKay, K. Prior, M. Stonehouse, L. Taman, G. Ure, W. Weldon, C.

German, E. Jankowski, J. McKeeman, D. Miller, R. Romano, D. Rundle, L. Paul, F. Carnrite, S. Coulter, W. Lindley, J. Lockrey, R. Mitchell, L. Paterson, R. Crawford, J. Dawdy, L. Evans, D. Graham, T. Klonowski, A. Lang, L. Lonsdale, J. Macey, N. Mahony, P. Mansz, M. McGeachy-Currie, T. Smith, B. Yeo, T. Bigg, E. Bridgman, S. Charbonneau and K. Corcoran.

Short and Tweet: (1) Norman Murr reports that on July 13, 1985 he observed a Gray Catbird with the rear end and back legs of a live American Toad (1.5-2") protruding from its beak. This observation was made at Lynde Shores Conservation Area.

(2) Bill Walker tells of a Great Blue Heron which in August 1986 was observed to be hunting in the typical manner, with head well forward and level with the back. It slowly turned its head over its back and jabbed at a Dragonfly resting on its back, which it caught and ate. It apparently had some trouble swallowing this prey as it then took several sips of water.

More reports by Bill and Norman and Ron Scovell, Wm. Mansell, and Bev Delidow will follow in subsequent newsletters.

OFO Pelagic: The pelagic trip held on Sept. 24, 1988 was a huge success this year. One hundred members were treated to a short list of birds - but what a list! Included therein were Surf & W.W. Scoter, Ruddy Duck, Merlin, Red-necked Phalarope (1), Red Phalarope (5), Pomarine Jaeger (2), Parasitic Jaeger (7), Little Gull (1), and Sabine's Gull (12). To top it all off, the weather was great. Bob Curry did all the organizing and running of the trip. Thanks Bob for a great job. The trip will be repeated in 1989. Already several places have been reserved at a cost of \$40.00 (I think) per person. Contact Bob through the OFO address for more information.

Pelee 1989: OFO has reserved space for 15 people in the Group Campground at Pelee from May 21-24, 1989. The camping offers a togetherness experience for OFO spring birders, but is not connected with our regular spring outings. There is no water, but there is electricity and washrooms available. The cost will be \$4.00 per person per night - a bargain! Contact Hugh Currie at 29 Helena Ave., Toronto, Ont., M6G 2H3 for more information or reservations. Please make cheques payable to the Ontario Field Ornithologists.

In The News: The MNR is co-operating with the Muskoka Field Naturalists in attempting to save a Common Tern Colony on Long Island in the Muskoka District. The formerly thriving colony dwindled to one pair in 1987. A local by-law was passed to zone the area "open space" which meant it could be given sanctuary status in the future. Public co-operation is being sought to avoid the area during the critical nesting period. In 1988, some success was noted, but vandals did damage the sign requesting their co-operation. We await further news on the Sparrow Lake Colony's fate.

Well, another Newsletter can now be put to bed. Thanks to the many contributors this period. If I didn't get to your "stuff", never fear I will! Have a safe and happy Holiday Season.
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