

OFO



ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

OFO NEWSLETTER NUMBER 15. JUNE 1988.

The 1988 birding season is about half over, at the time of writing. As many of you are aware, it has been fairly spectacular so far, with a nice mix of locatable rarities being found. I can only hope that the pattern continues for a few more months ... or years! The most recent mega-bird is, of course, the Sandwich Tern that originally showed up in Hamilton, and has spent several days on the beaches at Presqu'ile Provincial Park. Dickcissels and Western Kingbirds are nesting in opposite ends of the province, and Cuckoos are easier to find than ever ... It all makes for a good birding experience - so enjoy.

In this Newsletter, I should like to introduce a new feature, entitled "Short and Tweet". I find that I make and hear of many observations about birds or birds' behaviour that are of interest to me and others, but that involve circumstances that do not warrant full papers or even notes, because the details are too brief. However, these observations are of some scientific value, and should not be lost to science. I would encourage the readers to send me their notes in a format similar to that following, and I will include their sightings as space allows.

Short and Tweet: On November 4, 1986, G. Carpentier observed an adult Lesser Golden Plover catching earthworms at Briar Hill Pond, Cavan Township, Peterborough County. Each time that it caught a worm, it ran to the water's edge and dipped the worm in - to wash it? It did this at least 12 times in succession.

On April 13, 1988, G. Carpentier watched an adult Little Blue Heron feeding in Pratt's Pond, Cobourg, Ontario. It was actively hunting small fish in the shallows. It caught seven fish in seven attempts in approximately three minutes.

On June 7, 1988, G. Carpentier observed nesting House Sparrows at Cresswood Secondary School, Peterborough, Ontario. Two pairs of birds were nesting in opposite ends of a hollow steel soccer goal crossbar, apparently without conflict of any kind.

There, get the picture? Please send me your observations for inclusion.

Field Trips: OFO Pelagic Trip - unbelievably, there are still a small number of tickets available for the pelagic trip on September 24, 1988. Members are hereby advised that effective immediately, the tickets (approx. 25 in number) will be made available to non-OFO persons, as we are not yet at the break-even point. So ... if you've been delaying, please act fast and guarantee yourself a spot on this exciting adventure. Contact Bob Curry at 416-648-6895 ASAP!!

Cornwall Dam - Bruce DiLabio will lead what he describes as a tour of good birding areas in the Cornwall area, and will include a trip to Hoople Creek. Bruce is reluctant to call it a birding trip, in case the birding is bad. But itinerant birders know that the birding cannot always be great. We'll take our chances. Meet at the entrance to the Cornwall Power Dam by the Security Booth - "you can't miss it!" - on Sept. 10, 1988 at 9:00 a.m. Bring identification as the group will be going to the American side for the best view. Others sites will be visited the next day.

Marathon - Ron Scovell along with several other members of the OFO executive will be leading this trip to the far north. Details will follow with the next Journal. But set aside October 5-8/88 anyways.

OFO is trying to organize a group of interested birders to travel to the Maritimes in 1988 to assist with the Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas. Details are obviously sketchy at this time, but will involve varying levels of involvement, ranging from a week-end to a week or two as desired. Interested parties should write to Ron Scovell at the OFO address.

Calls for Information: (1) Founded in 1982, the Society of Canadian Ornithologists is conducting membership drive. Its newsletter "Picoides" is published twice per year. The objectives of the SCO are to promote ornithology in Canada, whether it is enjoyed by amateurs or professionals, and to provide a common voice and information exchange for persons interested in birds. Send your remittance (\$10.00) to Philip Stepney, Provincial Museum of Alberta, 12845-102 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5N 0M6.

(2) Project Feeder Watch - the Long Point Bird Observatory is continuing in its winter bird feeder project, in conjunction with a variety of American organizations. The purpose is to establish winter distribution and feeding patterns of our feeder birds. A nine dollar (Can.) registration fee will help offset administrative costs. All participants will receive an annual newsletter, a season's end report and two issues of Birdscope, the newsletter of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology. Information is available from Erica Dunn at the LPBO, Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont., NOE 1M0.

(3) Susan Renfro of 777 Q Street, Firebaugh, California, 93622 writes to advise that their daughter Nicole (8 years old) is a Mid-brain Child. They desperately require colour pictures of birds or other types of wild-life that they can use in teaching Nicole to understand and perceive things around her. Please take the time to help Nicole!

(4) The LPBO is looking for volunteer field assistants for the period April 1 to November 15, 1988. Room and board are provided and the time commitment is variable. Contact Mary Gartshore at the above address for the LPBO.

(5) The Norfolk Field Naturalists has entered into an agreement with the Ministry of Natural Resources, The Long Point Region Conservation Authority and the Ontario Heritage Foundation to help save Backus Woods. The agreement states that the woods will be maintained as one of Canada's outstanding natural areas. The Backus Woods Trust Fund has been established with a goal of \$150,000. The NFN suggest that for every dollar you donate, you can save a tree in the woods. Two hundred dollars will protect an entire acre (0.4 hectares). Send your tax-free contributions to: The Norfolk Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 995, Simcoe, Ont., N3Y 5B3.

(6) The University of Wisconsin is seeking information on Snowy Owls to determine their population status and health. Observations of wintering birds can be sent to: Ursula Peterson, 436 Birge Hall, Dept. of Zoology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 53706. Notes should include date, time, location, observers, behaviour, prey (if any), age and sex (of the bird!)

(7) Mary Gartshore is continuing her work on Hooded Warblers in Ontario, as part of a COSEWIC Status Report. She is looking for any information on breeding or suspected breeding since 1981 at least. Send your observations on sex, date, location, observers and behaviour to her at the LPBO address above.

(8) The B.C. Veterinary Medical Assoc. has just started publishing the Wildlife Veterinary Report. This informative publication is now available by joining the group. An annual fee of \$10.00 should be sent to Dr. K. Langelier at Veterinary Wildlife Report, Site 60, C-19, R.R.#2, Lantzville, B.C., V0R 2H0.

ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

Statement of Income

Year Ended December 31, 1987

	1987	1986
Income		
Memberships - Life	\$0	\$260
- Annual	8,628	5,327
	48,628	45,587
T-shirts, decals, etc	252	1,092
Ontario Birds - back issues	277	650
Interest	35	148
Baillie Birdathon	2,002	1,956
Exchange and bank charges	77	136
Charitable donations received	1,760	439
	13,031	10,008
Expenses		
T-shirts, decals, etc	\$126	\$1,125
Ontario Birds	8,564	7,912
Newsletter	1,427	1,327
Printing, postage and stationery	895	680
Meetings	77	27
Legal (re incorporation)	386	0
Ontario Bird Records Committee	530	402
Birdathon Trophy	8	530
Miscellaneous	(60)	(40)
	12,153	11,963
Net income (Loss)	878	(2,187)
Member's equity at beginning of year	3,556	5,743
Member's equity at end of year	\$4,434	\$3,556

At the OFO Director's meeting of March 1, 1988, it was agreed that new life memberships would be placed in a new account, separate from the general accounts carried by OFO. Each year, an amount equal to the annual dues for those members will be withdrawn from the account, but interest will not be touched. It is hoped to safeguard the amounts in this way and to take advantage of higher interest rates when possible. New life members will be given a complete set of Ontario Birds back to our inception. Our two newest life members are Valerie Brown and Al Sandilands.

ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

Financial Position

December 31, 1987

(with comparative figures for 1986)

	1987	1986
Assets		
Cash on hand and in bank	\$3,909	\$2,857
Accrued interest	6	9
Term Deposits	3,000	2,000
Inventory - Ontario Birds, at cost	2,980	2,785
- T-shirts, decals, etc	468	500
	10,363	8,151
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$0	\$213
1988 boat trip deposits (net)	880	0
Accrued liability - Ontario Birds	0	2,347
Fees received in advance	4,724	1,710
Owl Project	325	325
	5,929	4,595
Member's equity	4,434	3,556
	\$10,363	\$8,151

Since the last Newsletter, charitable donations have been received from

Tom Murray, Michael Surette and Gerry Shemilt. Our thanks to them for their generosity.

Life Memberships cost \$340.00. Cheques should be made payable to the Ontario Field Ornithologists and sent to: P.O. Box 1204, Burlington, Ontario, (Station B), L7P 3S9.

Tax deductible donations should be likewise endorsed and mailed to the same address.

OFO Spring Meeting: The spring meeting held at Wye Marsh was attended by about forty people. Field Trips to Wye Marsh and Tiny Marsh and a boat trip on Georgian Bay were highly successful. Sightings included a Prairie Warbler nest at GoHome Bay and a Tri-coloured Heron at Tiny Marsh. Dave Hawke gave a great talk on the Birds of Simcoe County. Our thanks go out to Bob Whittam, Dave Hawke, Don Fraser and Ron Scovell for "running the show".

Oops: Gail Mason gave me an item for Short and Tweet which I promptly forgot about. She reports that on May 5, 1988 she watched five drake Wood Ducks courting a female in the middle of a huge open onion field with absolutely no cover evident. The sighting was made near Pelee.

Potpourri: The Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre is continuing its interpretive programs this year. Upcoming events include July and August canoe excursions to explore the marsh. Additionally, an exhibition of carved birds will be on display from July 1 to August 29; a variety of films about Ducks Unlimited will be shown in July and August; the C-I-L collection of Canadian Paintings will be on display July 13 to August 19 and the 3rd Annual Wildlife Festival of Conservation and Art will be held September 17 - 18, 1988.

The Ontario Herpetofaunal Summary has a new address: c/o Ministry of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 5463, London, Ont., N6A 4L6.

The new tour catalogue of Inclusive Tours is now available by writing to Inclusive Tours Inc., 2 Carlton St., Suite 910, Toronto, Ont., M5B 1J3.

Falconry: This past year the MNR has been working on revisions to the Fish and Game Act to include regulations for the rehabilitation of injured wildlife and falconry. There are other aspects of the legislation, but the rules regarding falconry are of most interest to OFO. The original proposal, as presented to many naturalists' groups, allowed the capture of most raptors as eyas birds to be used for falconry. The MNR said the capture and subsequent lives of these birds would be carefully monitored.

OFO joined with the FON, the Toronto Humane Society, the International Wildlife Coalition and the Toronto Ornithological Club in loudly protesting these proposals. We did not focus on the ethical question of capturing wild birds for private enjoyment, but rather discussed the problems of control of the capture and trade in wild raptors. The coalition lobbied heavily, met with the Minister of Natural Resources and held a news conference to good end.

The legislation will be tabled in the fall (probably) in a revised format. Capturing wild birds will be illegal. The only native raptors to be licensed for use in falconry will be captive bred Peregrines. MNR believes that this compromise will pass through the legislature. However, only a complete ban on falconry can protect falcons from bird dealers and nest robbers. This is a good first step.

The legislation is very strong in the areas of private zoos and rehabilitation and is expected to ban pole traps completely. Our thanks go out to all who have worked hard to this end. OFO was represented by Victoria Carley, Reid Wilson and Geoff Carpentier.

OFO Oldsquaws: The Guelph Field Naturalists challenged other naturalist organizations in the province to a Big-Day as part of the Bird-a-thon. OFO submitted a team led by me, and including Randy Smith, Clay Vardy, Peter Hogenbirk, Tony Bigg and Drew Monkman. Called the OFO Oldsquaws and birding the Peterborough and Presqu'ile areas we saw 168 species on May 21, 1988. Take that Guelph!!!

Thanks for all the news items. Good Birding.

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