

OFO



ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

OFO NEWSLETTER NUMBER 14. MARCH 1988.

Once again, thanks to the magic of Canada Post, you can now sit back and enjoy yet another Newsletter. I'm sure that you, as I am, are looking forward to another spring migration. For the most active amongst you, you will already have discovered that 1988 is shaping up to be a very exciting year - birdwise. To date, Ross' Goose, Black Vulture, Gyrfalcon, Boreal Owl, Hawk Owl, Great Gray Owl, Varied Thrush, Yellow-throated Warbler, Dickcissel and Eurasian Siskin have been seen in southern Ontario. Well on with the news ... so stay tuned.

The 1988 Board of Directors and Officers have now been appointed. The portfolios are as follows:

Margaret Bain - President
Reid Wilson - Vice-President & Membership & AGM Co-ordinator
Gerry Shemilt - Secretary
Hugh Currie - Treasurer
Don Fraser - Director & Editor Ontario Birds
Geoff Carpentier - Director & Editor Newsletter
Victoria Carley - Director & Special Projects (Publicity)
Ron Scovell - Director & Field Trips
Bob Curry - Director & OBRC Representative
Gail Mason - Director & Bird-a-thon Co-ordinator
Chip Weseloh - Past President
Mitchell Tempkin - Mailing Co-ordinator
Kayo Roy - FON Representative

Bird-a-thon: Gail Mason has kindly agreed to accept the responsibility of organizing the 1988 Baillie Bird-a-thon for OFO. Margaret Bain has accepted the dubious (oops, distinguished) honour of being our Celebrity Birder this year. More details will appear elsewhere in the Newsletter. OFO annually sponsors the OFO Trophy, which is awarded to two Bird-a-thon participants who excel in their efforts. Fred Helleiner won the "Highest Number of Species Seen" with 147 spp. in 1987, and George Pond raised the most amount of money - \$2734.00. Congratulations to both of them from all the members of OFO!

Book Reviews: For several years now, Bill Crins has co-ordinated the reviewing of new books by OFO members. He advises that he has a new supply of titles available for review. Interested parties are asked to contact Bill at the OFO address listed at the end of this page. Bill is looking primarily for new reviewers, but some of the old-timers can still assist if so desired. Books available include:

- "A Dowry of Owls" by Larry McKeever
- "Breeding Birds of Ontario. Nidiology and Distribution. Vol. 2: Passerines" by George Peck and Ross James
- "Field Guide to the Birds of North America" (2nd Edition) - NGS
- "Mar: A Glimpse into the Natural Life of a Bird" by L. de Kiriline Lawrence (natural history of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker)
- "Nothing Gold Can Stay: The Wildlife of Upper Canada" (a series of notes and excerpts on the early natural history of Ontario)

And speaking of books ... the Orchid Press of the Peterborough Field Naturalists is pleased to announce the publication of another book in their local natural history series. Geoff Carpentier has written The Mammals of Peterborough County (paperback, \$5.95, 125 pp.). All proceeds from the sale will be directed to local natural history projects. Order from the PFN at: P.O. Box 1532, Peterborough, Ont., K9J 7H7. And ... Kay McKeever has revised and expanded her manual The Care and Rehabilitation of Injured Owls. It is available for \$25.00 postpaid from W.F. Rannie Ltd., P.O. Box 700, Beamsville, Ont., L0R 1B0.

Potpourri: In the last Newsletter, I asked if anyone knew the name of the parking lot at the mouth of the Niagara River where OFO meets for its fall gull outings. Gord Bellerby advises that it is called Queen's Royal Park, after the Queen's Royal Hotel that used to stand at Regent and Front Streets in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Bill Walker of Deep River, who describes himself as "an old codger", but whom I fondly think of as the man responsible for kindling an interest in birds in me, that will last a lifetime, recently wrote a note that will be of interest to birders who wear reading glasses or bifocals. He reports that he has trouble focussing at close range when using his zoom binoculars. He found that if he tilts his head and looks through the reading part of his bifocals, he could focus much more closely on nearby birds. Likewise, birders who are myopic may find that if they take their glasses off, they will be able to focus more closely.

Roger Brock has kindly offered to assist OFO members birding in Britain. He reports that he birds near Fife, Oxfordshire and W. Wales. If you're planning a trip 'over 'ome' contact Roger at Mesur-Y-Dorth, Croesgoch, Haverford West, Dyfed, U.K., SA62 5JN.

Field Trips: (1) The trip to Pelee Island (Apr. 29 - May 1, 1988) is now fully booked, but a waiting list is being developed. Call Chip or Linda Weseloh at 416-485-1464.

(2) May 7, 1988 - for beginning birders and those who like to bird 'a little slower', Glenn Coady will lead a trip to Toronto Islands. Meet at the Toronto Islands Ferry Dock at 7:45 a.m. (416-596-8109).

(3) Sept. 10-11, 1988 - Cornwall Dam. Bruce DiLabio will lead an exciting outing to this great birding spot. Details will follow in the next Newsletter.

(4) Sept. 24, 1988 - Bob Curry will lead a pelagic trip out of Hamilton on the "M.V. Macassa Bay". Only 100 birders can be accommodated on the boat. The cost is \$40.00/person and is only open to OFO members. Bob has advised that 53 seats are already sold, so you'd better hurry!! (416-648-6895). The boat will depart from the foot of Bay St., Hamilton at 7:45 a.m.

(5) Oct. 5-8, 1988 - Al Wormington will lead a trip to Marathon area. Details will follow. (519-326-0687).

(6) November 19, 1988 - the annual gull outing will meet at Queen's Royal Park in Niagara-on-the-Lake at 8:00 a.m. Glenn Coady will be your leader.

(7) The F.O.N. has planned a special, unadvertised birding trip to Rainy River. Martin and Kathy Parker sent the following: "Birding Lake-of-the-Woods (Friday, June 3 to Monday June 6, 1988 - Cost: \$450.00). The Birding Trip of the Year. An area that holds special appeal and interest for Ontario birders is the Rainy River/Lake-of-the-Woods region. Specialties of the area include Black-billed Magpie, Sedge Wren, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, LeConte's Sparrow, Sandhill Crane, Yellow Rail, White Pelican, Piping Plover and Avocet. Other rarities will be sought as well. This special trip to sample the birds of this remote part of Ontario will be led by Geoff Carpentier (yes, you read right - Ed. note). The cost of the 'weekend' includes airfare from Toronto to Kenora, accommodation and ground transportation." Contact the Parkers at: P.O. Box 1647, Port Elgin, Ont., N0H 2C0.

Upcoming Meetings: This year's Spring Meeting will be held at the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre, June 4-5, 1988. Details will follow. Contact Chip Weseloh if urgent questions need answering in the interim.

The 1988 AGM will be held at the Scarborough Town Centre on October 15-16, 1988 and the 1989 spring meeting is tentatively slated for Ottawa. Details will follow for these meetings as well.

AGM (1987): As those of you that attended the fall meeting know, the adventure was one of the best ever hosted by OFO. One hundred and four people registered for the conference, where they listened to George Wallace speak on pelagics and penguins. Ian Jones took us on a tour of the Pribilofs and Gerry Bennett rounded out the speaker program with his usual wit and style. Doug McRae ran a provocative and difficult bird quiz, while John Carley ran another successful raffle. In this regard, many people were awarded door prizes, with John Barker winning the raffle prize of a Nigel Shaw print and Martin Taylor winning the 'early-bird prize'. In a nutshell, we made a little money on the AGM, through the various sales and promotions held. Ron Scovell ran another book sale, selling 141 books that grossed \$2304.00, of which OFO kept \$362.00. The Board wishes to express its sincerest thanks to all those individuals who helped in any way with the organization and running of the meeting. Particularly, however, Kayo Roy is to be commended for all the planning and efforts he expended to make the meeting so successful. Additionally, two field trips along the Niagara River and to the Iroquois NWR were well attended, and the leaders are thanked.

Charitable Donations: Our thanks and appreciation go out to the following members who took the time to send donations to OFO to help in its programs: Rob Dobos, Al Woodliffe, Roy Baker, John Keenleyside, Theo Hofmann, Pete Read, John Barker, Luc Fazio, Floyd Deiter, John Schmelefske, John Olmstead, John & Victoria Carley, Don Sutherland, Diana Karrandjas, Hazel Broker, Paul Smith, Verne Evans, David Hussell, J.K. Reynolds, Bill Walker, James McAllister, and Paul Webb. Together they donated \$892.00!!!

New Members: The club membership now stands at 574 (463 annual and 111 life). We would like to welcome these new members to our ranks: D.K. & Thelma Powell, Josephine Wilds, Albert E. Johnston, Donald Ford, Elizabeth Owens, William Clark, Gladys Fisher, Ethel Fogarty, John Brzustowski, Cameron Eikert, Reinder Westhoff, Dr. David Shepherd, Lloyd Paul, K.W. Reinke, John Schadt, Algonquin College, John Carson & Daina Kinsman, Andrea Beatson, Celia Harte, Tom Hayman, R.K. Hayward, Lorraine Walker, Beverly Delidow, Phillip Kotanen, Valerie Barrett, Thomas Hurst, Ladd Dunfield, Lyle Friesen, David Gravelle, Chris Escott, K.J. Richardson, Donald Clark, R.J. Barnhurst, M.W. McIntosh, Sandy Symmes, Ray P. Holland, David Thompson and Steve Pike. ... Welcome!!

Lost Members: Does anyone know where Gary M. Allen, Sandra Braund, Gail I. Naylor, Doug Pope and Elizabeth Garwood are? Please let us know if you have any of these addresses.

ORRF: Larry McKeever sent along the Newsletter of the Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation. As usual the content is fascinating and witty. Just a few highlights for you: Kay broke her left arm and leg, let them heal and promptly broke her leg again. Larry says she'll do anything to get out of cleaning the owl cages!. The extensive cage reconstruction is still ongoing with some new innovative ideas incorporated to permit flying by the birds. Closed-circuit T.V. will be used this year to enable Kay and Larry to study the breeding behaviour of the owls. Finally, 118 owls were received at the ORRF, 23 were hatched on-site, and a total of 75 birds were released back to the wild. Nice Work, Kay and Larry!

ACRF: Kit and Robin Chubb forwarded the Newsletter of the Avian Care and Research Foundation. The newsletter was so full of information that it is difficult to pick out excerpts, but here goes... After 11 years of assisting birds, 2650 wild birds have now been handled by the foundation. These represent 159 species. The Chubbs included many pleasing anecdotal notes on some of the 1987 adventures - my favorite is the Least Bittern hit by a car at Presqu'ile. Examination showed a brood patch. Kit arranged to inspect, treat and return it to the nest the same day. Kit reports she's working on a new book that we should soon (?) hear more about. She is also wrestling with a respiratory disease contracted from her birds. Hope she recovers well soon.

Calls for Information: (1) Al Woodliffe is currently compiling a list of the birds of Pelee Island.... He would like anyone who has records of observations to send those to him ASAP at Ministry of Natural Resources, 435 Grand Ave., W., Chatham, Ont., N7L 3Z4. He will send copies of the checklist to contributors.

(2) Fred Helleiner is looking for slides of Arctic breeding birds for use in an Arctic Breeding Bird Course at Trent. If you can loan Fred slides for duplication, contact him at: Dept. of Geography, Trent University, Peterborough, Ont., K9J 7B8.

(3) The Canadian Chapter (oops Ontario Chapter) of the Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists is soliciting new members. Contact Ken Dance at Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists, P.O. Box 962 Station F, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2N9 for details and rates.

(4) The Temagami Wilderness Society is seeking help in preserving the Temagami Wilderness tract from logging. They are organizing a membership drive and letter writing campaign to protect the area. Interested parties can contact them at: Temagami Wilderness Society, 204 Wedgewood Dr., Willowdale, Ont., M2M 2H9.

(5) Kent Prior is working on Turkey Vultures. He writes: "As part of an ongoing, long-term project on Turkey Vultures feeding ecology I would like to locate as many active vulture roosts from across Ontario as possible. All information will be kept confidential." The birds will not be collected, but rather the pellets will be examined to determine foods eaten. Contact Kent at: Dept. of Biology, Carleton Univ., Ottawa, Ont., K1S 5B6.

(6) Waterfowl Weekends at Presqu'ile. The MNR is looking for volunteers to help at the waterfowl viewing stations at the park this spring, on Mar. 26-27 and April 2-4. Contact Steve LaForest at the Park at: R.R.#4, Brighton, Ont., K0K 1H0.

(7) Friends of Presqu'ile - Steve LaForest is starting a new affiliation to promote Presqu'ile. More information can be obtained by contacting Steve at the above address.

(8) The Ontario Herpetofaunal Project is ongoing. Members interested in submitting records or assisting in other ways are encouraged to contact them at: Essex Region Conservation Authority, 360 Fairview Ave., W., Essex, Ont., N8M 1Y6.

And in Closing: On Feb. 6th, approximately 60 OFO members accompanied me to the Petroglyphs, to look for local specialties. Despite cold conditions, the day was a huge success. Four Bald Eagles, one Golden Eagle, a few White-winged Crossbills and a couple of Reds, about 60 Pine Grosbeaks, 150 Bohemian Waxwings and two or three Gray Jays certainly added spice to the outing. We can't offer the same successes every year, but who knows?

Thanks to all correspondents. Good Birding.

Geoff Carpentier, 964 Weller St., Peterborough, Ont., K9J 4Y2. (705-743-8594).