



OFO

ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

NEWSLETTER

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As you sit down to read this, the memory of the Annual OFO Meeting still fresh in your minds, many of you can look back on another successful season in your pursuit and study of Ontario's birds. Over the years, Ontario ornithologists have contributed significantly to our better understanding of birds. Forums, such as Ontario Birds, provide a medium whereby this data can be presented to others with similar interests. If during your field exercises you have made interesting finds or startling discoveries, please let the Editors of the Journal or the Newsletter know, so that it can be passed on to the membership.

Do You Know Where They Are? We have lost track of a couple of our long-time members. If you know where they can be reached, please let us know immediately, so that we can forward our publications to them once again. Elizabeth Garwood and Michael Runtz - where are you? Members are reminded to let us know their new addresses when they move.

Charitable Donations: In the past, we advised members that OFO now has full charitable status, with all the rights consummate with the office. We requested all interested donors, particularly Life Members, to assist us in our financial problems. The response to date has been excellent. We should like herein to thank those individuals who have taken the time and effort to send donations to us since the last update - Margaret Bain, James Coey, Bill Crins, James A.N. Dowell, Bruce Duncan, Tom Hanrahan, J.E. 'Red' Mason, Cora McEvoy, T.R. Murray, Rob Nisbet, George Pond, JK. Reynolds, Doris Speirs, Stan Teeple, John Thomson, Adolf Vogg and Terrie Woodrow. If any others have been hedging or delaying their contribution, remember donations are tax-deductible and tax-time is near.

The Trip Committee has been diligently working over the last weeks to plan a variety of trips for OFO members. Our members cordially are invited and encouraged to participate in one or all of the following:

February 6, 1988 - For the third consecutive year we will be offering a field trip to view Eagles at Petroglyphs Provincial Park, Peterborough County. This area is recognized as one of the premiere areas to view both species of eagles. Additionally, crossbills, other winter finches, Bohemian Waxwings, "three-toed woodpeckers", Ravens and Gray Jays are likely or expected. Meet at the Park gate at 8:30 a.m. sharp. Bring warm clothing and food for the day. From Peterborough drive north on Hwy. 28, approximately 45 km. through the village of Woodview, then turn right (east) on the Northey's Bay Road following the signs for about 11 km. to the Park gate. The leader will be Geoff Carpentier (705-743-8594).

April 29 - May 1, 1988 - Pelee Island can be an exciting place to visit during spring and fall migration. Located near the American border in Lake Erie, it is the farthest south point in Canada. A maximum of 18 people can be accommodated on this outing to the Island. Reservations must be received by the leaders by April 1, 1988. Participants will stay at Mill Point Lodge, a Bed and Breakfast establishment, for a cost of \$24.00/person (double occupancy)/night. Those wishing to start their adventure on Friday night (April 29) will meet at the Ferry Dock in Kingsville at 5:30 p.m. sharp. If desired, Saturday morning departures can be organized if the leaders are so advised in advance. The return trip on Sunday (May 1) will depart the island at 2:00 p.m. Note: a charge for the Ferry Service is levied by the Dept. of Transport. The leaders, Chip and Linda Weseloh, can be contacted at 416-485-1464.

May 7, 1988 - For those beginning birders, and some of the more experienced ones that prefer to go a little slower, a trip is planned for the Toronto Islands. Meet at the Toronto Island Ferry docks at 7:45 a.m. Glenn Coady (416-596-8109) will be your leader.

September 10 - 11, 1988 - The Cornwall Dam has recently been discovered as a great place to view gulls in the fall. Many of you will remember the excitement generated by Mew Gulls, Barrow's Golden-eyes, Kittiwakes, Sabine's Gulls, etc. in recent years. OFO is planning an outing to this area in 1988. Further details will follow. Bruce DiLabio will lead the outing, that will incorporate a trip to Hoople Creek, reportedly an excellent fall shorebirding area. Contact Bruce at 613-729-6267.

September 24, 1988 - A most exciting adventure is planned for this date. Members will recall the fun and camaraderie, and even birds, that have been experienced on previous pelagic trips in Lake Ontario. We have booked the "M.V. Macassa Bay" on this date to take a maximum of 100 birders onto the lake. The boat will depart Hamilton Harbour (foot of Bay St., N.) at 7:45 a.m. Bring warm clothes and a big lunch (unless you get sea-sick, when the other passengers would appreciate it if you ate nothing!). Tickets cost \$35.00/person before December 1, 1987, and \$40.00 after that date. Book early - remember there are only 100 tickets available. The boat will return about 4:00-4:30 p.m. Bob Curry, an experienced pelagicer (?) will lead this trip (416-648-6895).

October 5 - 8, 1988 - For those with a zest for the even more exciting Al Wormington (519-326-0687) will lead an outing to Marathon. Accommodation will involve motels enroute. This is a unique opportunity to view the fall migration north of Superior. Further details will follow. A list of birding spots will be available for individuals wishing to stay in the area longer.

November 19, 1988 - The annual Niagara River Gull Outing will be held on this date. Meet at the Parking Lot at the mouth of the River in Niagara-on-the-Lake (I wish this lot had a name) at 8:00 a.m. Glenn Coady will lead us in the search for the rare and the not so rare.

Calls for Information: Requests are dropping off as the season draws to a close but . . .

- (1) Tom Reaume is writing a book on the American Crow. He is soliciting information of a scientific, artistic or poetic nature about this intelligent and intriguing bird. Reply to: Tom Reaume, 402 York Rd., Guelph, Ont., N1E 3H4
- (2) L.A. Smith has been researching Bluebirds for some time, near Brantford. He reports that 164 pairs of bluebirds nested in his boxes in July 1987. Of these, 144 were successful. He found that blowflies invaded all of the boxes, except for four. Many Tree Swallows died as a result. He found that he could reduce the deaths of the Bluebirds by applying a dessicant to the boxes, and by removing the damp grasses therein. He is thinking of putting two boxes up side-by-side. One will be for the birds, the other will be for the blowflies. In the latter a bait will be placed to lure and kill the flies. He would like to know what bait to use to effectively achieve this end. These boxes would be barricaded so that the birds cannot enter them. Any ideas? He has also noticed that in a small percentage of his nests eggs disappear. Who or what is taking them? This is not a problem specific to his nests, but apparently is widespread and widely observed. Does the female destroy the eggs herself, is a predator invading the nest, or is something else going on? Can the OFO members assist with these queries? Address correspondence to Mr. Smith at: 65 Sympatica Cr., Apt. 408, Brantford, Ont., N3P 1M7. (519-759-4852).

Update: When booking a place for the Pelagic trip - send cheque or money order now to Bob Curry at 92 Holstein Dr., Ancaster, Ont., L9G 2S7. It should be made payable to the Ontario Field Ornithologists.

OBRC: In the last Newsletter, I reported on the new Committee members for the current term. I also mentioned that Alan Wormington, Doug McRae and Dennis Rupert were retiring from the Committee. Due to space restrictions, I had to do some last minute editing. I should like, therefore, to formally thank these three gents for their ongoing support and efforts over the years to support and serve the Committee and the birding community in general.

In the News:

Sandhill Cranes - Aquaphyte (published by the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences) recently published a report on the utilization of various aquatic plants by the Florida subspecies of the Sandhill Crane. For nesting purposes, 124 of 137 nests studied used pickerelweed (Pontederia lanceolata) and maidencane (Panicum hemitomon) according to work done by Walkinshaw in 1981. Six or seven other species of plants were also used to some degree. The most common nesting areas were approximately five hectares in size, with a water depth of 0.3 to 0.45 meters. The nesting period lasted from February to May, with the egg-laying period occupying about 7 to 10 days per pair. They will reportedly will return to the same area year after year to nest if the area's drainage is not altered and land uses are not too variable. They are quite tolerant of people, and will often nest within sight of houses. Additionally, potholes with shallow weedy edges and flooded fields were attractive nesting sites used by the birds.

Wild Turkeys - This past May, a Wild Turkey hunt was held in the Northumberland and Hastings Counties areas for the first time in over eighty years. Preliminary predictions were that the 2000-3000 birds would be reduced by 1/2 to 1/3

as they were more like "chickens than turkeys". They fed at bird feeders in people's yards and in orchards adjacent to those same places. They showed little fear of man. Much to everyone's surprise, the birds proved elusive and adaptive to the new challenge. During the twelve days of the hunt, sixty-two birds were shot. Of these, twenty-three were taken on the first day and zero on the last. Additional hunts are planned for ensuing years. but it appears that the hunters are going to have to work hard to outsmart these avian gobblers.

Peregrine Falcons - The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has requested the assistance of all licensed exterminators in the Province of Ontario in using extreme caution when pesticides are employed in areas near known Peregrine Falcon nesting or roosting sites. Specifically, avicides (bird control agents used on pigeons and blackbirds) must be carefully handled. The Ontario Ministry of the Environment has agreed to co-operate in this educational program.

Loggerhead Shrikes - Peter Whelan reported in his column on August 8, 1987 that Loggerheads are greatly impacted by road vehicular traffic. Mike Cadman has been conducting ongoing research into the fate of this species. Many observations of road-killed shrikes are now documented. If you know of other observations to this end, please contact Mike at the University of Waterloo. Dates, times and places should be included with your observations.

Breeding Bird Atlas of Ontario - At long last, the Atlas is now available to the public. Spectacular and informative are amongst the superlatives used to describe this fascinating book. Most book stores, naturalists clubs, and the FON have information on cost and availability. Get yours today!!

Membership Renewal - The time is at hand to renew your membership for 1988. We have managed to hold the line on prices, so the fee for 1988 is still \$17.00 (Canadian). Please send your cheques and money orders payable to the Ontario Field Ornithologists today. Life memberships are also still \$340.00 (Canadian). Buy one for a friend, but most importantly buy one for yourself.

My thanks go out to all the correspondents over the last few months. I look forward to their and your continued input in the months to come. Good Birding!

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