



# OFO

## ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

Number 10. November 1986.

### OFO NEWSLETTER

With the coming of fall, and ultimately winter, a birder's thoughts turn to heat. But don't despair, for with the cold comes some truly exciting birding. Many northern birds will appear to ease the strain of the long wait until spring. And... with a little work, one should be able to find some of those tough little dudes that linger long after their expected departure dates. Shorebirds and gulls, in particular can add spice to otherwise dreary days. So don't hang up your binos yet - get out there and good birding.

As a great many of you know, OFO held its Annual General Meeting in Scarborough on October 25-26 this year. It was without a doubt the best meeting we've had to date if attendance is any indication. Fully 165 people registered for the meeting enjoying the talks by Mary Gartshore, Ron Ridout, Dr. Morrison and Mike Cadman. The sale of T-Shirts, calendars and diaries generated over four hundred dollars. And in particular the first OFO used book sale was obviously a success. Approximately \$1300 was raised, with \$356 going to OFO. Thank-you to all who participated in the sales, raffles and book purchases, not to mention those who attended the program. Mary Gartshore has asked me to pass on a forgotten thank-you and acknowledgment to the following persons who provided her with slides for her talk on Carolinian birds - Mark Peck, George Peck, Bob Graham and the Friends of Point Pelee, Al Woodliffe, George Wallace and Mike Furber. In addition, I would like to thank Reid Wilson for the incredible efforts he put forth to ensure the success of the meeting, Ron Scovell for the logistic and organizational schemes he incorporated in the running of the book sale, and Victoria and John Carley for the designing of the announcement of the AGM that appeared in the last Newsletter.

The time has arrived to renew your memberships if you have not already done so. At the end of this Newsletter you will find a handy tear-off renewal slip for your convenience. It is with great regret that financial constraints make it necessary for us to raise our 1987 dues to \$17.00 (Canadian). The printing costs for Ontario Birds always account for our greatest expenditure, and with the rapid and regular increases imposed by the printing houses we have found it unavoidable to raise the rates to our members just to keep pace. But never fear for the Board of Directors are pursuing various avenues to reduce expenditures over the long run. More information on these efforts will be forthcoming as results (or lack of results) are known. In the meantime, I hope you will not find this rate out of line, for it is totally justifiable, and will continue your support of OFO through your memberships.

Members are reminded that OFO has on a continuing basis the following items for sale: OFO Window Stickers @ \$2.00

T-shirts in S M L & XL for \$10.00 (Blue or Gray)

1987 Canadian Birds Engagement Diaries for \$10.95

1987 Canadian Nature Calendar for \$8.95

Birds of the World: Birds of Prey for \$29.95 ( a book by JPS MacKenzie)

Back Issues of Ontario Birds

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

In the News: Al Oberholser (no, he's not related to the famous American ornithologist) reports an unusual incident that's worth passing on. He rents a small farm north of Peterborough with a pond on it. On October 8th this year he observed a Northern Harrier hunting in the adjacent fields. This in itself is nothing to write to Mom about ... however, the prey is of interest. Al saw the bird (a juvenile) over a period of days, until on the 8th he found it sitting at the edge of the pond with prey in hand (or talons!). Clutched firmly so it couldn't escape was a rubber inflatable duck decoy (female scaup) torn to shreds. A second 'carcass' lay nearby. Why the bird attacked these decoys remains a mystery, but presumably the inexperience of the hunter must have come into play. Realizing that harriers don't normally take ducks (even real ones) I interrogated Al to the point where he won't even talk to me now and am satisfied that his identification is correct.

Larry McKeever of the Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation just forwarded the October Newsletter for the ORRF. He starts off saying "This has been another up and down year at the Owl Foundation ... It has been a quiet year for admissions, few calamities for the owls, some disappointments and several happy surprises". Although the Great Gray Owl "Woo" layed her usual four eggs this spring none hatched. Kay naturally suspects that the male was to blame for the failure of the eggs. "Lulu" a Snowy Owl layed 6 infertile eggs and incubated them for five weeks before resigning the task. The Saw-whet pair never bred this year, nor did the "mob" of seven Pygmy Owls. On the positive side three pairs of Screech Owls bred, and even the Western Screech Owl pair laid eggs, but they were infertile. The Burrowing Owls, Barn Owls, Boreal Owls, Hawk Owls and Flammulated Screech Owls (the last two laid infertile eggs) all bred as well. And finally the McKeever's have obtained a Spotted Owl from California that was hit by a car. Has anyone out there got a female to amuse this would-be breeder? As many of you know Kay was awarded the Order of Canada this year. Congratulations, Kay! One last note before I leave this subject - the McKeever's are pleased to announce the publication of their latest book "A Dowry of Owls" written by Larry, which should be in the book stores now for \$19.95.

Past Field Trips; Glen Coady, one of our intrepid trip leaders and a member of the Trip Committee has forwarded summaries of some of the trips held recently. The trips held at Presqu'ile and Prince Edward Point in conjunction with our fall outings attracted 70 participants and 125 species of birds including Brant, Ring-necked Pheasant, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, 2 Mockingbirds, Grasshopper Sparrow and Henslow's Sparrow. Last April's trip to Algonquin Park led by Ron Tozer yielded two Spruce Grouse, nests of Gray Jay and Raven, Boreal Chickadees and unfortunately Starlings. John Tregurtha led a trip to Mio, Mich. in search of Kirtland's Warbler. Eleven members attended this arduous trip that ended in success - all observers saw 2 males and one female. In addition, amongst the 50 species observed were Bald Eagle, Clay-coloured Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow and Brewer's Blackbird. And finally, Glen and Chip and Linda Weseloh led a beginners trip to the Toronto Islands in September. Fifteen participants saw 49 species that included Black-crowned Night-Heron, Northern Goshawk and Philadelphia Vireo. I hope that any of you that have not as yet participated in one of our outings will soon make the effort to do so. The arrangements for further trips are well advanced and will be announced soon.

#### Calls For Information:

(1) James R. Hill III is compiling information on people who have personalized automobile license plates that depict either common or scientific bird names or

terms related to birds and birding. Send information to Jim at P.O. Box 178, Edinboro, Pennsylvania, 16412.

(2) Stackpole Books is compiling information on Ruffed Grouse for a book to be published in 1988. They are attempting to obtain information from researchers who have worked extensively or observed behaviour traits of the species over a period of time. Send notes comments and photographs to Rene M. Townsley, Asst. Editor, Stackpole Books, Cameron and Kelker Streets, P.O. Box 1831, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 17105.

(3) J.W. Hardy is soliciting recordings of bird calls, for birds native to North America, north of Mexico. He is looking for tapes of alarm, contact, flight, begging, and feeding. He is particularly interested in notes produced by hand-held birds and those being removed from nets and traps. Write to him at Florida State Museum, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 32611.

(4) 122 Great Egrets have been hacked near Guntersville Reservoir in northern Alabama as part of a restoration project for the species. Each bird is marked with a two inch long red flag on its leg. Details of observations should be sent to BURLINE PULLEN, Wildlife Resources Development Program, Tennessee Valley Authority, Norris, Tennessee, 37828.

And closer to home...

Doug Sadler is compiling information on the Collared Dove (Streptopelia risoria). A popular European cage bird, it presumably originated in the Mediterranean. Escapes are frequently encountered, and have established breeding populations in Florida and California, at least. It is an uncommon to rare "vagrant" to Ontario. In particular, it recently successfully overwintered at Bridgenorth, Peterborough County and successfully bred at Young's Point in the same county. Doug would like comments on any observations known for the province and adjacent areas and in particular any breeding attempts. This information will be included in a forthcoming article on the species. Write to Doug at R.R. #4, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 6X5.

The Canadian Society of Ornithologists has arranged for the publication of a Checklist of Canadian Birds. This list prepared by Dr. R.D. James of the Royal Ontario Museum gives the scientific, French and English common names and the breeding status of all 579 species recorded in Canada up to the end of 1984. Copies of this pocket sized bound checklist are available for \$2.00 from the Ornithology Checklist, c/o Dr. Bruce McGillivray, Provincial Museum of Alberta, 12845-102 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5N 0M6.

1987 O.F.O. MEMBERSHIP  
APPLICATION / RENEWAL.

I would like to <sup>renew my membership in</sup>   
become a member of  the ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN/CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ PROVINCE/STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL/ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ ANNUAL Membership: \$17.00 ----   
LIFE Membership: \$340.00 ----

Please make cheque payable to:  
"ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS"

P.O. Box 1204, Station B, Burlington, Ontario L7P 3S9

If you have already paid your 1987 dues, PLEASE DISREGARD THIS NOTICE.

In a recent publication of this Newsletter we advised members that OFO is sponsoring a birding trip to Costa Rica from April 11 to May 2, 1987. Four or five hundred species may be found on the trip. Terry Pratt has been leading trips to Costa Rica since 1982 and led the 1986 trip that netted 541 species of birds and 37 species of mammals. There are still 7 spaces available for the adventure that will be limited to 18 participants. So, if you've always wanted to go somewhere exciting with qualified observers and guaranteed success, now's your chance. Contact Terry at 116 Oak St. E., Leamington, Ontario, N8H 2C9 or phone her at 519-326-1050, for prices, a detailed itinerary and more info.

Ted Cheskey, heavily involved in the Quebec Breeding Bird Atlas, writes inviting OFO members to participate in a Square Bashing trip to assist the people working on the Quebec Atlas. This "special trip for OFO members" is being organized for July 1987. This boreal adventure will be held in Le Parc de la Verendrye or perhaps the wild side streets of Quebec City. As this area is remote and somewhat demanding, some camping and outdoors experience is necessary. Write to Ted at 9-50 Gordon Avenue, Kitchener, Ontario, N2H 1N8, telling him of your interest, whether you have a car and/or a canoe and the dates preferred - July 5-12, July 5-19 or July 5-25. Vive l'Atlasse du Quebec!

The CWS has announced publication of the Revised Atlas of Eastern Canadian Seabirds by RGB Brown. It covers 45 species of birds that are classed as "seabirds" found in Canada. Not only does it provide information on the status of these birds through text and some maps, it interprets the reasons for the downfall or perils of the significant ones, particularly as man affects them. It is available for \$8.00 in Canada and \$9.60 elsewhere from the Canadian Government Publishing Center, 200 Dorchester Blvd. W., Room 517A, West Tower, Montreal, P.Q., H2Z 1X4. Make remittance payable to the Receiver General of Canada.

The Saskatchewan Natural History Society (J. B. Gollop, T. W. Barry and E. H. Iversen) has announced the publication of "Eskimo Curlew - a Vanishing Species?". It includes chapters on past and ancient records, current status, identification, nest searches, life history, breeding habits, migration flights, habitats, food preferences, voice and reasons for its decline. The reported detail of the book, its readability and value are highly acclaimed. Send \$9.00 to the Saskatchewan Natural History Society, P.O. Box 1121, Regina, Sask., S4P 3B4.

Well, that's it for now. Remember your membership renewal and Good Birding.

Geoffrey Carpentier, Newsletter Editor, 964 Weller St., Peterborough, Ont., K9J 4Y2.