



# OFO News

NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

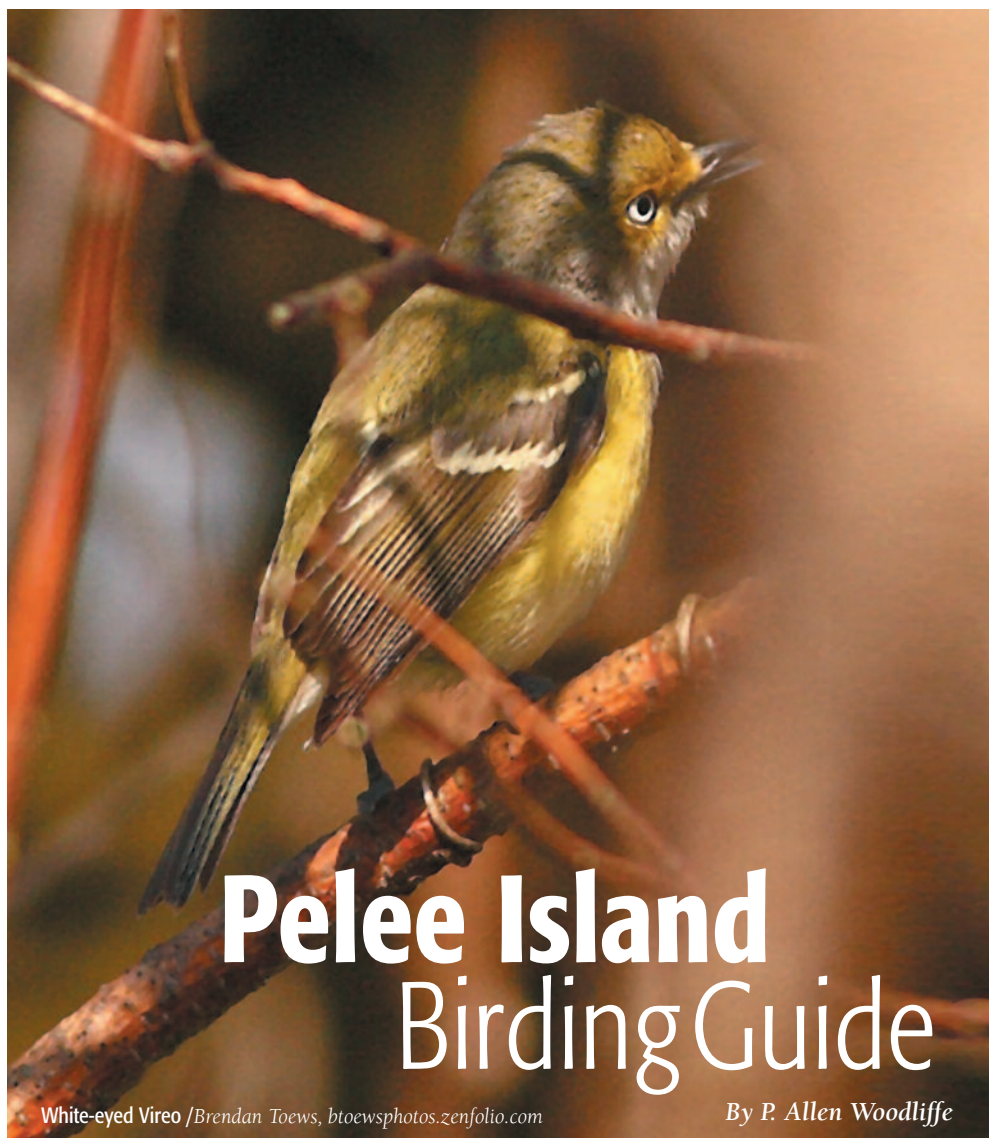
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## Pelee Island Birding Guide

White-eyed Vireo /Brendan Toews, btoewspotos.zenfolio.com

*By P. Allen Woodliffe*

**M**ost Ontario birders have been to the tip of Point Pelee, gazed southwards through the haze that often accompanies Lake Erie, and contemplated exploring the little known oasis in the distance called Pelee Island. But fewer have actually been there, and getting there takes some effort; one can't just drive to it as the notion strikes.

Pelee Island is by far the largest island in Lake Erie. It is the most southerly inhabited

part of Canada, and is completely south of the northern boundary of California. Being approximately 4000 hectares in size, its diversity of habitat and general location provides some of the finest birding opportunities in Ontario. It is about 16 km north to south, and 7 km east to west. Located more or less midway between the Ontario and Ohio mainland, it provides an important resting and feeding site for migrating birds.

The current list of birds recorded for Pelee Island stands at just under 300 species, and includes some mega rarities such as Virginia's Warbler, Crested Caracara, Burrowing Owl, Wood Stork, Swallow-tailed Kite, Western Tanager and Sage Thrasher. Of course there are the more 'regular' rarities such as Yellow-throated Warbler, Bewick's Wren, Piping Plover, Dickcissel, Blue Grosbeak and Purple Sandpiper. Regular southern migrants or breeders include Yellow-breasted Chat, White-eyed Vireo, King Rail, Prothonotary Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, Orchard Oriole and Tufted Titmouse.

Historically Pelee Island was predominantly a large marsh interspersed with a complex of more or less five rocky limestone outcrops, depending on lake levels, each of which supported varying types of forest. It was first settled in the early 1800s, and by the 1880s, a serious effort was being made to dig a drainage canal around the entire island, with pumping stations on each of its four sides to keep the interior dry as it is typically lower than the surrounding lake level. The now drained wetland

soils were rich, and farming became profitable. Yet over the last forty years, more and more of the island has been acquired for its natural history values so that today, almost 17% of it is owned by conservation minded agencies or individuals.

Perhaps the best known sites and the ones with the easiest access and are the most popular for birders are the two provincial nature reserves: Lighthouse Point at the northeastern tip and Fish Point at the southwestern tip. Certainly no less significant in its own right is Stone Road Alvar (SRA) along the south-east part of the island, owned by organizations including Essex Region Conservation Authority, Ontario Nature and Nature Conservancy of Canada. Significant parts of SRA are also privately owned.

### Before you go

The road network as well as the flat landscape makes Pelee Island ideal for exploring by bicycle. In fact the Pelee Island Heritage Centre, in conjunction with the municipality, is in the process of developing a trail system throughout the island, using a combination of existing roads and newly established cyclist/pedestrian trails, to minimize the impacts of vehicular traffic, as well as making travelling by bicycle or on foot more enjoyable.

Staying over night is highly recommended, otherwise the ferry schedule does not leave a lot of time for a single day trip. Fortunately there are various accommodation options, including motel, B&B and cottage rentals as well as basic camping. Since most birders will likely choose to go during spring or

fall migration, there will be at least one or two restaurant/dining options to choose from. However there is no grocery store, no Tim Hortons, no bank and no Instant Teller, so come prepared. There is one gas station, but not surprisingly, prices are considerably higher than on the mainland, so if you are bringing a vehicle it is wise to make sure you have a full tank of gas before you board the ferry. Cell phone reception varies, and often roams to towers across the border. An essential source of information on the island's facilities, etc. is: <http://www.pelee.org/>.

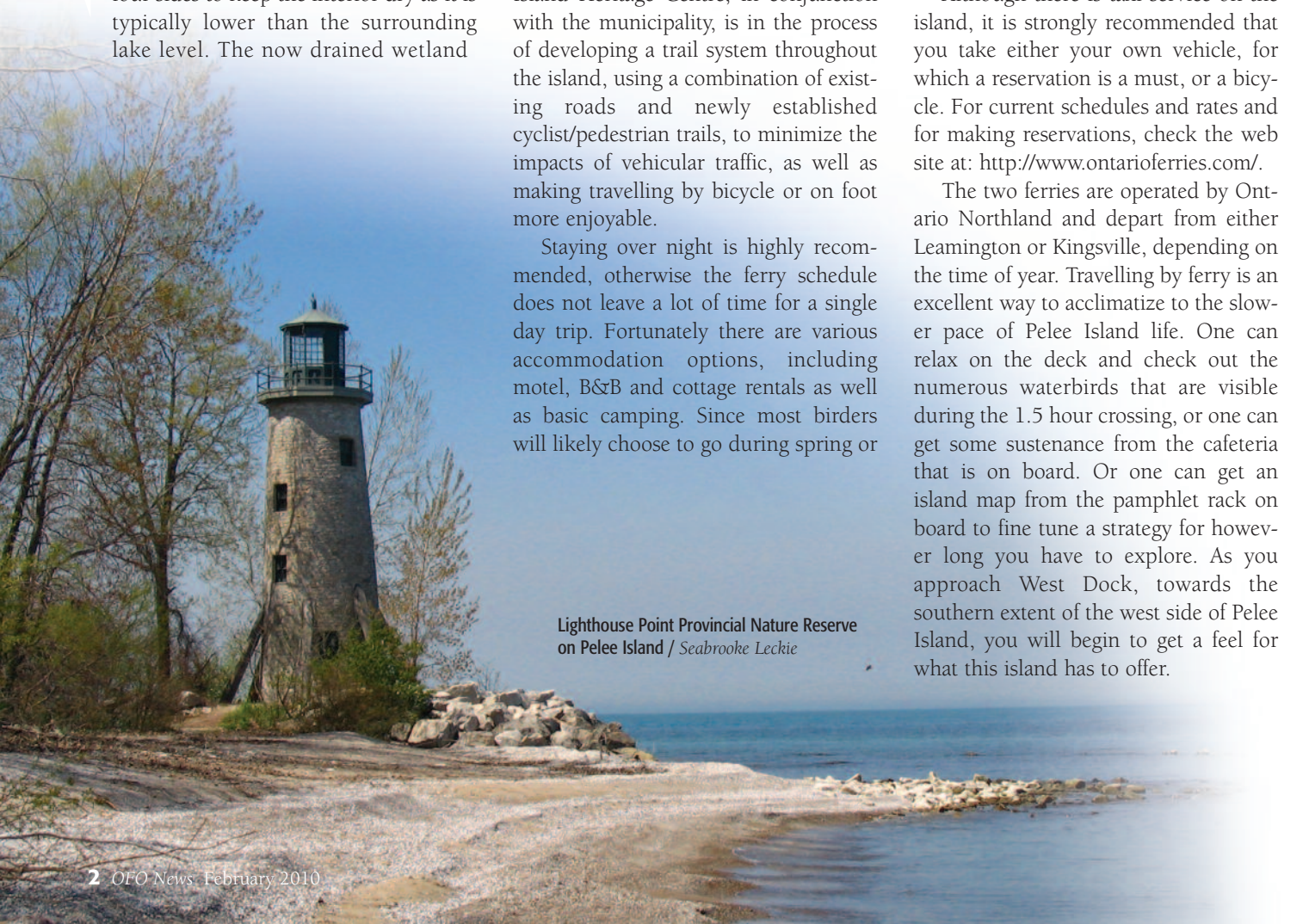
### Getting there

Getting to Pelee Island is part of the fun. There are two ferries that service the island, from about the beginning of April to mid December. The *M.V. Jimaan* is the larger and newer of the two and can carry up to 40 vehicles and 400 passengers. The *M. V. Pelee Islander* is much smaller, with a capacity of about 10 vehicles and 100 passengers.

Although there is taxi service on the island, it is strongly recommended that you take either your own vehicle, for which a reservation is a must, or a bicycle. For current schedules and rates and for making reservations, check the web site at: <http://www.ontarioferries.com/>.

The two ferries are operated by Ontario Northland and depart from either Leamington or Kingsville, depending on the time of year. Travelling by ferry is an excellent way to acclimatize to the slower pace of Pelee Island life. One can relax on the deck and check out the numerous waterbirds that are visible during the 1.5 hour crossing, or one can get some sustenance from the cafeteria that is on board. Or one can get an island map from the pamphlet rack on board to fine tune a strategy for however long you have to explore. As you approach West Dock, towards the southern extent of the west side of Pelee Island, you will begin to get a feel for what this island has to offer.

Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve  
on Pelee Island / Seabrooke Leckie





Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve  
Kentucky Warbler banded at Pelee Island Bird  
Observatory in spring 2006 / *Seabrooke Leckie*

Once you disembark from the ferry, the Pelee Island Heritage Centre should be one of your first stops. It is located immediately across the street from your arrival point. Not only will it give you an excellent overview of the human and natural history of the island, it also has a bird record book available so one can find out the latest observations. A small fee is required to explore the centre and is well worth it.

### Natural areas to visit

The following areas are all highly significant. Trails will take you to the most likely areas for birding. Areas adjacent to the trails are very sensitive, so please ensure you stay on the trails.

**Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve** is located at the southwestern tip of the island, about three km south of West Dock. It is about 110 ha in size and resembles a miniature Point Pelee. A small parking lot is located at the head of the trail. The trail begins through a forest of predominantly sugar and black

maple, and the lushness of the spring flora is astounding. A short way along is an observation deck looking out over Fox Pond where various waterfowl, herons and sometimes egrets can be seen. The trail continues along the pond until it emerges at the lakeshore on the east side of the point. By this time the forest has shifted to one of predominantly common hackberry. Since hackberry is later to leaf out, it is here where passerine spring migrants are easily observed. The trail continues along the shoreline, then, towards the narrowest part of the point, takes an abrupt turn

west, emerging on the sandy west shore. From here one can walk south along the vegetation to access the sand spit itself. The sand spit, depending on lake levels, typically extends more than one kilometre beyond the forest vegetation. It is a great opportunity to check out the many gulls, cormorants, herons and shorebirds resting there. Some impressive bird migration events can be viewed here, including the reverse migration of hundreds of passerines on some early spring mornings.

While it may be tempting to walk to the very tip, a note of caution is in order: Sometimes the spit is very narrow and even has waves crashing over it. The unstable sand can be extremely dangerous, and undertows here can be very powerful. Do not attempt to cross it under these conditions!

After checking out the spit, you can return to the parking lot via the trail you already came along, or you can walk along the west beach heading north until you get to the small opening that returns to the parking lot. This west

beach can be particularly good for birds later in the day, especially if there is a cool east wind. The sheltered west side is great for insects, especially during the late day sunlight, which means it can be great for numerous passerines.

#### **Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve:**

The reserve is approximately 96 hectares in size, and is located at the north-east tip of the island. The main access is at the north end of East Shore Road, where a small parking lot occurs about 150 metres south of the trail entrance. As you approach the parking lot, you will note a wetland / lake area on the west side of the road. This is locally called Lake Henry, part of the nature reserve, and is an excellent place to observe gulls, terns, herons, waterfowl, cormorants, and depending on water levels, shorebirds.

The trail is the most productive part of this nature reserve for birders. It is narrow, with various shrubs close on either side, which can provide excellent close views of many warblers. Make sure you have close focusing binoculars! The shallow wetland areas on either side of the trail can give excellent views of turtles as well as birds. After a short way, the trail turns to the right, crosses a

small bridge and ends up along the east beach. The vegetation along this section is typical of the extremely rare Eastern Cottonwood Savanna type, located in only three or four other locations in Canada. The east side of the vegetation is perfect for early morning birding, as the prevailing westerly winds have much less effect here, and the morning sun warms this open area making it conducive for insect and bird activity. One can travel north along this sandy beach, eventually arriving at the lighthouse, constructed in 1833, for which the nature reserve is named. While here, don't forget to gaze northeast and imagine the hordes of birders crowding the tip of Point Pelee who are looking your way and wishing they were here! Just to the west of the lighthouse, a bit of a trail network goes to the upper part of some well vegetated dunes. The trees here are mostly common hackberry, and leaf out later than many other tree species. The benefit of checking this area out is that because with the bit of elevation, viewing birds at the canopy level becomes a little easier.

**Stone Road Alvar:** This area is quite different from the previous two. It is located on both sides of Stone Road, at the

southeast corner of the island. An alvar is where the soil over the limestone bedrock is very shallow or non-existent, and is subject to either very saturated or extreme drought conditions. There has been quite a bit of disturbance over the decades, as landowners attempted to farm it or graze it with livestock. However it has not been profitable, so in recent decades it has been abandoned for the most part. The vegetation is internationally significant...the alvars such as these found on Pelee Island do not occur anywhere else in the world. Access is not as well developed here, but there is a short trail that goes into one of the more open areas of alvar vegetation. The trail is marked by a sign on the west side of the road. There isn't any parking lot, so be careful to pull well off the road, as farm machinery sometimes uses this road. The vegetation type along the beginning of the trail is a Chinquapin Oak/Blue Ash savanna. It is moderately open but with a shrubby undergrowth. The trail eventually emerges into a much more open section, dominated by herbaceous and shrubby vegetation, before turning back towards the road. Birds here are often quite different here than at the previously mentioned sites. This area is excellent for Field Sparrow, Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Yellow-breasted Chat and White-eyed Vireo, among others.

**Brown's Road Savanna:** This recently acquired property is owned and managed by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and is located on both sides of Brown's Road. Parts of it have been heavily impacted by attempts at agriculture, but in its abandoned condition have become very shrubby. An eco-trail, open for both cyclists and pedestrians only, has recently been established in conjunction with the township. The trail connects Brown's Road to areas farther north, travelling through the old farmstead and savanna area, across a drainage canal, and north along another old field area to Harris-Garno Road. From this point the trail goes east to East Shore Road and then north to Lighthouse Point.

## **Other sites to visit on Pelee Island**

**Pelee Island Winery:** This is probably a high priority for many birders, and not because of its birds. It is located a short distance south of the village of West Dock. A bonus, in conjunction with the winery outlet, is a trail system through part of a site known as the Red Cedar Savanna, and is well worth the walk, especially during times of a migration fallout.

**Fields:** There is not a lot of shorebird habitat on Pelee Island. Water levels in Lake Henry can, on occasion, be productive. However after heavy rains in spring, inland fields can be surprisingly worthwhile checking, at least for a few days. And many fields are periodically used by loafing gulls. Since Pelee Island is surrounded by water, the lake effect delays

spring farming activity, so be sure to check the fields on your way to and from the natural areas.

**Pelee Island Bird Observatory:** The PIBO has been in operation since 2005. The banding station is located at Fish Point under agreement with Ontario Parks, and is open to the public by appointment. For further information, check their link on the main Pelee Island web site at <http://www.pelee.org/>.

May you enjoy the relative solitude that Pelee Island has to offer, and the great diversity of birds and other natural heritage features. And don't forget to let staff at the Heritage Centre know of your bird observations.

# Birdathons Around Ontario

Pelee Island is a great place to visit if you're already in or willing to make the trip to southwestern Ontario. But what about other regions of our large province? Our editors offer here short guides to some of their favourite but lesser-known regional birding destinations, perfect for a day out to do your Birdathon in May – or a visit at any other time of year.

## Niagara Region

Steve Gillis

**Short Hills Provincial Park** is a 735 hectare park located on top of the Niagara Escarpment on the southwest edge of St. Catharines and is part of the Twelve Mile Creek Headwaters Important Bird Area.

Short Hills offers a wide variety of habitats and birding opportunities as a result of the historical carving out of glacial debris along Twelve Mile Creek to create a complex series of upland ridges, low valley slopes and rich bottomlands.

Many of the trails are multi-use and can be used by hikers, bikers and horses, and there is also a wheelchair accessible trail. All seven trails are accessible from parking lots off Pelham (north and west), Wiley (east) and Roland (south) roads as well as by foot off of First Street Louth. There is no fee for using the park. Seven trails covering over 23 kilometres take you through lush Carolinian forest that covers half of the park, while remaining vegetation has come in after previous farming and reforestation activities.

The lower slopes of the park are dominated by Sugar Maple and mixed forests of Eastern Hemlock and American Beech, with scattered Tulip Trees and Sweet Chestnut. It is here that you'll find breeding Carolinian speciality species like Scarlet Tanagers and Indigo Buntings. The rich bottomlands are made up of forests of Black Walnut, Red Maple and White Pine with thickets of Spicebush and Alder and understory species including trillium, trout lilies and skunk cabbage. On the upper ridges you'll find open shrubby habitat, where there are breeding Blue-winged Warblers, Eastern Towhees, Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Carolina Wrens. Other species reliably found within the park are Wood Thrush, Veery, Ovenbird, Eastern Bluebird, Belted Kingfisher and possibly breeding Hooded Warblers, as well as thousands of migrants in the spring. On a normal day in Short Hills you could probably expect a count anywhere from 50 to 100 species, depending on how many habitats you visit.

### Short Hills Provincial Park

Seabrooke Leckie



Whimbrel migration, Colonel Sam Smith Park  
Jean Iron

## Toronto Region

Christian Friis

Despite the veritable concrete jungle that is the Greater Toronto Area, there are a number of great locales worth birding in the City of Toronto, most of which are accessible by public transit. Chief among them are **Colonel Sam Smith Park**, Humber Bay Park, High Park and Grenadier Pond, the Leslie St. Spit/Tommy Thompson Park, and Ashbridges Bay. Past issues of *OFO News* have highlighted a few of these locations in the Favourite Birding Hotspots features.

One location that has become better birded since I started keeping tabs on locations around Toronto is Colonel Samuel Smith Park. Located in the west end of the city at the end of Kipling Ave., just south of Lakeshore Blvd. W., the roughly 78.75 ha park hosts a range of habitats known to produce a good variety of species. A visit here in mid-May is sure to boost your Birdathon's species list. Parking is available at the end of Kipling. There is no fee for entering the park, and main trails are paved.

Carolinian tree and shrub plantings and the creation of a 3.6 ha wetland have made this a great place to find birds throughout the year, and a must-visit location on your Birdathon around Toronto. The wetland habitat offers an opportunity to find some of the elusive marsh birds; the trees and shrubs offer spots for flycatchers, warblers, and other passerines to fatten up; while the waterfront trail provides grasses for migrant sparrows and a great view of the lake to scope out some waterfowl and waterbirds. Red-necked Grebe has nested by the park – a good pick-up for your Birdathon list. The Toronto Ornithological Club conducts a spring count of migrant Whimbrel, as the park boasts excellent viewing for this species' annual passage north.

## Central Ontario

Mike Burrell

**Achray Campground** is a hidden gem tucked away on the east side of Algonquin Park, and is a great birding location at many times of the year. Unlike the primary Highway 60 corridor, Achray is under-visited by both campers and especially birders. The forest is much different from that of Highway 60; expansive Jack Pine forest and much Red and White Pine is present, a result of the ancient outwash plain that sits under your feet.

Achray is located on Grand Lake on the north-east side of the park, and is accessed from Highway 17 at Pembroke. Take Barron Canyon Road west to the Sand Lake Gate, and follow the appropriate signage. There are 45 campsites and a yurt available, and the campground has running water and a store on site. Birders should visit multiple locations along Sand Lake Road from the park gate to Lake Travers. Other key spots to stop and check are (from west to east, starting at Lake Travers) the hydro cut, Grand Lake marsh (if you have access to a canoe), Berm Lake Trail, and the Barron Canyon trail.

A birdathon in May in the Achray area should be able to yield at least one hundred species, but with some luck and effort an observant birder could potentially get close to 130. Red Crossbill and other conifer specialists are virtually always present, at least in low numbers, feeding on the cones of Red and White Pine. Kirtland's Warbler may be an eventuality somewhere in the vast Jack Pine forests as they have recently bred very close by. Barred Owls and Whip-poor-wills may greet campers at dawn. Other area specialties include Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Gray Jay, Evening Grosbeak, and as many as 20 species of warblers.

## Lake Huron and Bruce Peninsula

Cindy Cartwright

Since my first Baillie Birdathon, I have completed my big day in Bruce County, choosing a local organization to receive the portion of birdathon funds that I can designate, and encouraging other birders in the area to do the same. Now every year more than a dozen birders accomplish this same goal, each picking different routes throughout the county in their quest for high species counts. The best location that everyone visits, usually begin-

prefer to walk the berm listening for more quietly calling species. Traveling west, the road passes through a mixed age, mixed species woodland to Lake Huron where the lake can be scanned with a scope for many waterfowl species. Continuing east from the pond leads through old agricultural fields that are regenerating with hawthorns, cedar and other scrub, then up over the old lake ridge into open pastureland.

The habitat variation in such a short distance makes this location one of the best birding locations in the area. Least Bittern, Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warbler, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Cliff Swallow, and Field Sparrow are among the species targeted along this road. It would be reasonable to count 80+ species on a spring morning if you begin with the dawn chorus.



Barron Canyon / Peter Ferguson

## Eastern Ontario

Seabrooke Leckie

### Frontenac Provincial Park

is a near-wilderness park that sits on the Frontenac Axis, where the rocky Shield habitat meets the southern deciduous forest. Both habitats and their representative species can be found in the park, offering a fabulous array of species to those who don't mind a little hiking.

To access the park, visitors should take Sydenham Road north from Kingston, and follow the signs for the park through the small town of Sydenham. The park is approximately twenty minutes north of town along Bedford Road. Turn east on Big Salmon Lake Road and follow this to the park entrance, where you will need to buy a day pass from the park office for your vehicle (walk-ins are free).

Birders can park at the office, or at one of a couple of parking lots farther along the road. There are some 150 kilometres of trails through the park, and backcountry campsites for overnight visitors. There is also a boat launch for canoes or small boats on Big Salmon Lake at the end of the road. Smaller craft can be portaged to the park's many other lakes.

ning with the dawn chorus, is the Bruce-Saugeen Townline, the road that forms the south boundary of **MacGregor Point Provincial Park**.

**The Ducks Unlimited Pond** is a large wetland area created by a man-made berm on the north side of the road. There is an observation tower on the west side of the pond but most



MacGregor Point Provincial Park  
Cindy Cartwright

The park's western side is primarily mature deciduous forest. Cerulean Warblers occur here in one of the highest densities within Ontario. Stream corridors are home to Louisiana Waterthrush. Yellow-throated Vireos and Red-shouldered Hawks are also common. The southeastern section is rock barrens. While it is a longer hike to reach, this habitat supports small colonies of Prairie Warbler, as well as Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, and Common Nighthawk. Evergreens are more abundant in the northeastern portion of the Park, and White-throated Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Winter Wren and Hermit Thrush occur here.

Two additional informal access points exist on the north side of the park for walk-ins (ask at the park office). Many of the birds found in the park can sometimes be encountered by driving the roads surrounding the park, east to Chaffey's Locks, as well.

## Northern Ontario

*Darlene Salter*

**Eagle Lake** is located south of the Trans Canada Highway (Highway 17) between Dryden and Vermilion Bay. Though primarily known for the many fishing resorts that dot its shoreline, the lake and surrounding area can also be a great birding destination.

Since Eagle Lake has a 653 kilometre shoreline, with many rural access roads and several public boat launches, there are many possible combinations of water and land birding routes.

A boat excursion on **Eagle River** is a great way to start the morning. To access Eagle River and Eagle Lake go south on Hwy 594 from Hwy 17 (watch for Sharp-tailed Grouse and other grassland species) to the Machin public boat launch or pay a fee to use the facilities at one of the fishing lodges. Red-necked Grebes are common and a variety of boreal birds can be heard calling from the forested shore. At the mouth of Eagle River on Eagle Lake, Outlet Bay is a good place to see American White Pelicans and a Common Tern colony. Continuing west around Farabout Peninsula, birders will see Bald Eagle nests, Osprey, and Pied-billed Grebes. The varied habitat of the peninsula provides nesting for many boreal birds including Great Gray Owl, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee and Canada Warbler.

In the afternoon, drive down Detour Point Road through the **Detour Point Peninsula**,



American White Pelicans on Eagle Lake / *Darlene Salter*

where opportunities to see and hear more boreal forest and wetland species abound. Weather permitting, portage a canoe 500 metres down a trail from Detour Point Road to Portage Bay. From there, Bottle Bay Marsh and Bottle Creek are a short paddle around the northeastern shoreline. The marsh provides nesting habitat for Black Terns, Virginia Rails, several species of ducks, Northern Harriers, Common Loons and possibly Short-eared Owls. More riparian species including Sedge Wren, Wilson's Warbler, Alder Flycatcher and Lincoln's Sparrow can be recorded in the fen that borders both shores of Bottle Creek.

# Cameron Ranch Point Counts

*On 29 May and 12 June, 2010, the Ontario Field Ornithologists, Toronto Ornithological Club and Couchiching Conservancy will be conducting the 6th Annual Point Counts of the Cameron and Windmill Ranches on the Carden Alvar.*

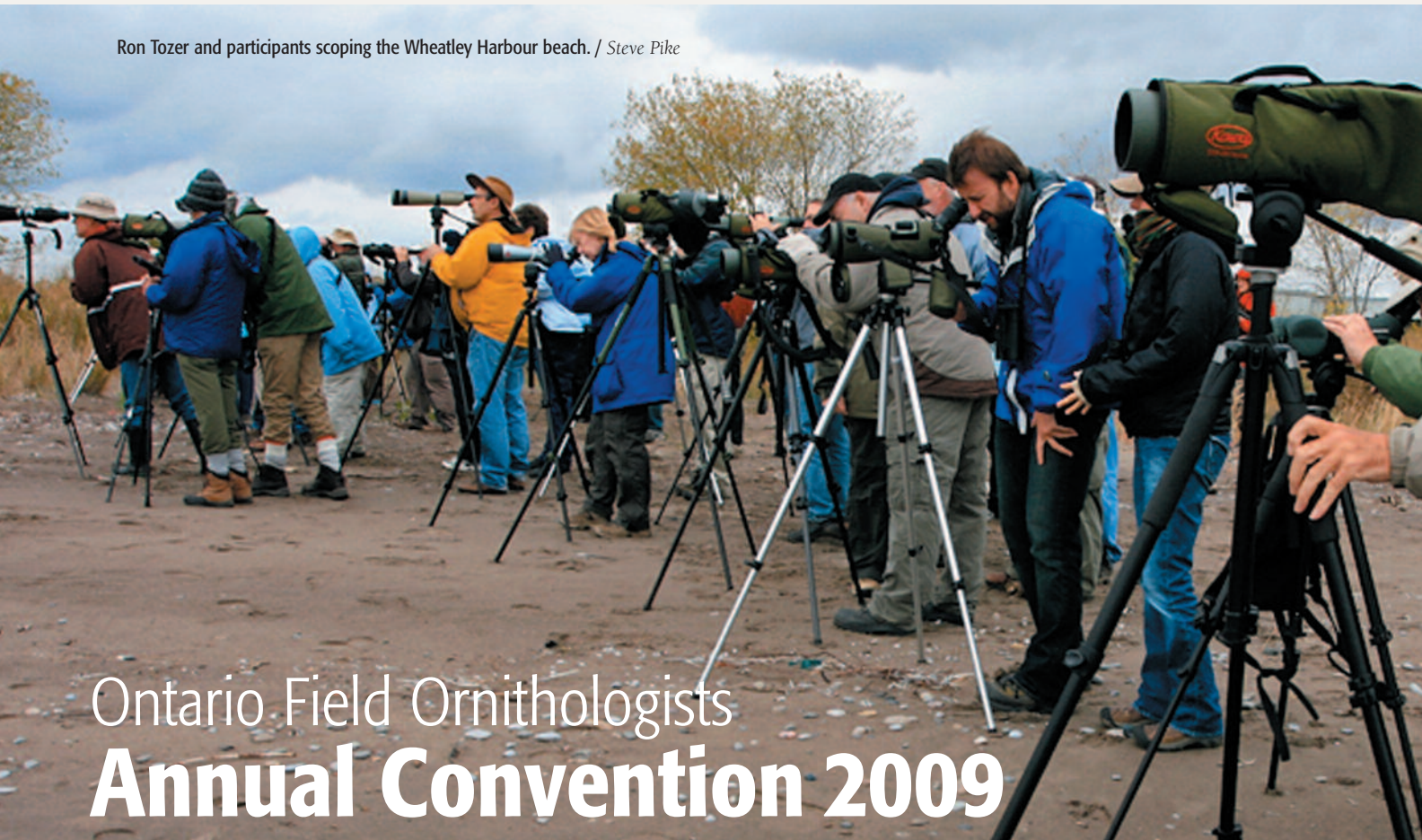
Birders have a rare opportunity to visit unique, prime alvar grassland habitat usually closed to the public. These point counts offer an opportunity to see many provincially rare species; the alvar is home to a population of Loggerhead Shrikes, and last year we recorded a Henslow's Sparrow.

Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. Point counts are conducted in parties of three or four, mixing experienced point counters with those who want to learn.

**For more information** about Cameron Ranch visit: <http://www.couchconservancy.ca/cameronranch.htm>. For details and to sign-up please contact Dan Bone at [dan.bone@explornet.com](mailto:dan.bone@explornet.com) or (705) 887-4691.



Henslow's Sparrow / *Jean Iron*



# Ontario Field Ornithologists Annual Convention 2009

**T**he 2009 Annual Convention was held at Point Pelee on the weekend of 3-4 October 2009. An excellent turnout of OFO members was treated to a talk by keynote speaker Jim Duncan, Manager of Biodiversity Conservation for the Manitoba Department of Conservation, and a world expert on the Great Gray Owl. OFO President John Black welcomed everyone to the Annual Convention and Margaret Bain presented the OFO Distinguished Ornithologist Award to longtime OFO member and deserving recipient Ron Tozer. Birders enjoyed the opportunity to participate on field trips to some of Point Pelee's best birding spots led by some of Ontario's best birders, having a good time despite the windy weather. We've shared here some of the moments from the 2009 convention.

Much thanks is extended to the OFO Convention Organizing Committee for an excellent and well-run weekend event.

The 2010 Annual Convention will be held at the Port Dover Convention Centre in the Long Point area on 25-26 September 2010.



Steve Pike leading a field trip to the Pelee marshes and onion fields.



Pat Tozer and Janice Haines show their OFO spirit.  
*Eleanor Beagan*





# Baillie Birdathon

The contributions have been tallied and 2009 was another record setting year for the Baillie Birdathon

A total of \$240,238.67 was raised by Bird Studies Canada which surpassed the previous record of \$227,365.58. Through pledges made to last year's OFO Celebrity Birdathon team of John and Victoria Carley, together with funds raised by Maris Apse, Geoff Carpentier, Ronald Valentine and Chip Weseloh, OFO contributed an amazing \$13,719.09 to that total. \$5,859.55 of these funds have been redirected to OFO for our activities and the balance goes to support bird research and conservation through Bird Studies Canada grants and programs.

With plans for Birdathon 2010 already underway, we are pleased to announce that this year's OFO Celebrity Birder will be Margaret Bain, a longtime OFO member. Margaret has an abundance of birding experience, and she is planning to conduct her Birdathon in her home county of Northumberland.

Circulated with this issue of *OFO News* you will find a pledge form for this year's Birdathon. As in previous years, pledges can be made according to the number of species observed, or any flat rate that you wish to choose. You can also donate online by visiting [www.bsc-eoc.org/bat/donate.jsp](http://www.bsc-eoc.org/bat/donate.jsp) and entering participant ID #96835.

We would be pleased to receive your pledge, and the dollars that we raise provide much needed support for both the birds, and our organization. We need and appreciate your support.

*Rob Maciver*  
OFO Birdathon Co-ordinator

**Many thanks to our generous donors who contributed door prizes for the 2009 Annual Convention**

- Art and Janice Haines
- Bill Read's Books
- Bird Studies Canada
- Bushnell Corporation of Canada
- Eileen Beagan
- Flora & Fauna Tours (Dave Milsom)
- Friends of Algonquin Park
- Friends of Point Pelee
- Gary Horton
- Gasperau Press
- Jim Duncan
- John Black and Kayo Roy
- Kowa Sporting Optics, Canada
- Ontario Nature
- Pelee Wings
- Quest Nature Tours
- Rob Tymstra
- Vortex Canada

*Top to bottom:*

**Richard Pope, Margaret Bain, Steve Pike and Hugh Currie at Wheatley Harbour.** / David Beadle

**Kayo and Diane Roy visit David Beadle to browse his display of beautiful artwork.** / Janice Haines

**Richard Pope signs a copy of his recently-published book, *The Reluctant Twitcher*, for Art Haines.** / Janice Haines

**Ron Tozer accepting the 2009 Distinguished Ornithologist Award alongside his family.** / Eleanor Beagan



# The Secret Lives of Birds

**How often have you watched a bird and wondered how old it was, or where it had been? Most of the time this information is unknowable. However, marking programs such as leg-banding or wing-tagging allow us a means to track individuals, and thus offer us an insight into the mystery of the bird's life. Here are two recently observed birds and their stories.**

*By Seabrooke Leckie*

Trumpeter Swan / Margaret Heslin

## Trumpeter Swan

On 6 December 2009, Chip Weseloh observed a wing-tagged Trumpeter Swan at Humber Bay Park in Toronto. The bird was numbered E21, and was with an untagged swan. Chip reported the information to Beverly Kingdon, a bander with the Trumpeter Swan Society who tags and monitors the overwintering population in Burlington. Beverly was able to check their records for the bird's history.

Swan E21 is a female, hatched at Wye Marsh in the summer of 1999, and banded there on 16 October of that fall. She departed with the rest of the flock that winter, and for six years she continued to return to Wye Marsh in the summer. Then, in May of 2006, she switched locations, summering at Aurora. In December of 2007 she was seen in Barrie. She spent 2008 at Humber Bay in Toronto. In January 2009 she was spotted further west, at Mimico Creek, before being reported back at Humber Bay in March 2009, which is where Chip also found her in December.

Beverly noted that E21 lost her mate during 2008, and was single for a while. She hypothesizes that the untagged swan observed with E21 might have either been the bird's new mate, or perhaps one of her cygnets from that summer. Since there were no reports for her during the summer of 2009, it is not known whether she might have found a mate and bred successfully.

## Great Egret

A banded Great Egret bearing the number 60X was observed and photographed on 2 November 2009 by Charley Faulkenberry in Fort Mill, South Carolina. The band number was reported to the Bird Banding Laboratory, a US organization that tracks and manages banding data from the country, and also reported to a few birding and banding listservs. Chip Weseloh recognized the band as one of his own, and responded.

The bird was originally banded as a nestling on 15 June 2009, as part of an ongoing program by the Canadian Wildlife Service to monitor colonial birds on the Great Lakes. Egret 60X was hatched on Chantry Island in Lake Huron, which is near the south end of the Bruce Peninsula. Coincidentally, this chick was banded by *OFO News* editor Cindy Cartwright, whose home is on the mainland just across from the island.

At the end of the summer, 60X and the other nestlings banded that day departed from the area; none of them were recorded again in Ontario at known feeding or roosting stations. The bird was not seen again until, nearly five months later, it turned up in South Carolina. The approximately 885 kilometre straight-line flight of this bird isn't the longest recorded by an Ontario egret, however—some have been reported from places as far away as Cuba!

## Recent Updates

# The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World

By Rob Maciver

**T**he *Clements Checklist of Birds of the World* is a comprehensive taxonomic checklist of the birds of the world. Created by ornithologist Jim Clements in the 1970s, the checklist is now in its sixth edition. Following the author's death in 2005, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology assumed responsibility for publishing and updating the checklist.

The sixth edition of the Clements Checklist (2007) recognizes approximately 10,000 species of birds worldwide together with all subspecies, and is deemed by the American Birding Association to be the authority for birds in regions of the world outside the ABA and the AOU checklist areas. The Clements Checklist is also considered to be authoritative when it comes to the worldwide distribution of bird species and subspecies.

The information in the checklist is provided in taxonomic sequence, and includes both the scientific and English name for each species as well as a description of the worldwide distribution for each species and subspecies.

Bird taxonomy is constantly changing. What is recognized today as a species may be "split" into multiple species tomorrow. The reverse also sometimes occurs; different varieties may be "lumped" together into one species where two or more species were previously recognized. Naturally, there is some controversy in the naming and categorization of birds. It is for these reasons that the maintenance of an accurate world checklist is both difficult and endless. Despite this, the Clements Checklist is widely considered to be the most accurate and up-to-date compendium of avian taxonomic information.

The Clements Checklist relies on a number of regional authorities for its taxonomic information. For example, information with respect to South American birds is updated in accordance with the decisions of the South American Classification Committee of the American Ornithologists' Union. To cite another example, for the birds of New Zealand and associated islands, it follows the Checklist Committee of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. The great value in the Clements checklist is that all of this information is compiled into a single volume.

There are competitors to the Clements Checklist, notably the International Ornithological Congress's *Birds of the World: Recommended English Names, Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World* by Charles Sibley and Burt Monroe, and *The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World*. However as I previously stated, the Clements Checklist is widely considered to be the most authoritative.

The most recent updates to the Clements Checklist were published on 18 December, 2009. Much of the present reorganization occurs at the level of the family, particularly among the oscines within the order Passeriformes. As the result of DNA sequencing, six families have been lost, 18 new families have been added and a number of genera have been relocated from one family to another. The present number of bird families recognized is now 221.

Also as the result of recent DNA sequencing experiments, the arrangement of families within the Clements Checklist has also been thoroughly rearranged to reflect the best available information concerning their evolutionary affinity.

As well, the concept of bird "groups" has been expanded upon to assist with the identification of field-recognizable subspecies or sets of subspecies. For example, the 19 subspecies of Fox Sparrow have been divided into a number of groups in an attempt to anticipate an upcoming split of that species into three or four new species. Though groups are not formal taxonomic units, the use of groups will assist with the amendment of bird records and personal bird lists whenever and if ever an anticipated species split is realized.

With the recent changes, the exact number of species recognized by the Clements Checklist is 9,995, and the tally of subspecies recognized is 21,107.

For an electronic version of the entire Clements checklist, including the recent changes discussed above, you may visit the Cornell Lab or Ornithology website at the following URL: [www.birds.cornell.edu/clementschecklist](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/clementschecklist)

### Test Your Birder's Vocabulary

By Cindy Cartwright



**Quiz word:** extant

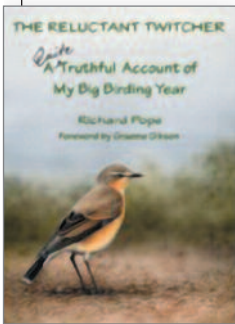
**Clue:** includes many bird species in the Columbidae family but **not** Passenger Pigeon or Carolina Parakeet. *Answer on page 16*

Passenger Pigeons / John James Audubon

# Book Reviews

## The Reluctant Twitcher: A Quite Truthful Account of My Big Birding Year

2009. Richard Pope. Natural Heritage Books:  
A Member of the Dundurn Group, Toronto.  
hardcover, 216 pages, ISBN: 9781554884582



Ever thought of taking the challenge of a 24-hour birdathon a step further, or more precisely, 365 steps further? This book is an account of Richard Pope's big birding year where he, with the help of some close friends,

embarks on a journey to list at least 300 birds in a year in Ontario. Unlike a birdathon however, Pope self-imposes stringent rules for his big year by only allowing birds to be added to his list when he's gotten a visual.

Pope has a likeable writing and birding quality as he steers clear of anything resembling arrogance by using self-deprecating humour that is usually complimented by English jargon. He often describes moments of self-doubt and disappointing misses, giving the reader a genuine account of what pursuing a big birding year is all about.

For Ontario birders, this book is full of familiar names and places that can be easily visualized, and descriptions of experiences that many can relate. Colour photographs of some birds highlighted in the text are included throughout the book.

Although Pope expresses reluctance at times for having made the commitment to pursue a big year (hence the title), I wouldn't be surprised if after reading this book a few readers are spurred to start a big year of their own. If you're a 'twitcher', have no idea what that means, or are somewhere in between, this book will be an amusing, informative read.

Also worthy of mention, a portion of the revenues from sales of this book will go towards Toronto Ornithological Club, the Pelee Island Bird Observatory, and the Ontario Field Ornithologists.

Christine Vance

## Curse of the Labrador Duck

2009. Glen Chilton. HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., Toronto. hardcover, 288 pages, ISBN: 1554683629

Dr. Glen Chilton first became seriously entangled with the Labrador Duck when he agreed to write the account on the species for the *Birds of North America* series. In his introduction, Chilton explains that he anticipated an account on an extinct species about which little is known shouldn't take too much time or effort to write. However, owing to his self-admitted obsessive character, Chilton's writing assignment led to a quest, a quest to track down and examine every known specimen of the extinct Labrador Duck still in existence. Additionally, Chilton secured genetic matter from purported Labrador Duck eggs for DNA analysis, and visited locations associated with sightings of the duck. In fulfilling his quest, Chilton traveled some 72,018 miles on airplanes, 5,461 miles on trains, 1,545 miles in private cars.

Much of Chilton's quest leads him on a far-flung tour to many of the world's most prestigious museums, with a few stops at little-known institutions for good measure. His very first Labrador Duck specimen was a Canadian resident, now living a quiet life at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. For this and each of the subsequent 54 ducks that Chilton examined, he provides a description of the condition of the duck and outlines what is known about the history of the specimen. Other Labrador ducks to be found in Canada reside at the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa, and the Redpath Museum in Montreal. From here, it's off to Great Britain for ducks four to nine, to Paris for

duck 10, and so on through Germany, Holland, Austria, Russia, the United States and other destinations.

Most Labrador Ducks are not on public display. Given their value as irreplaceable artefacts, most are kept under lock and key. Chilton's tour thus offers readers a behind-the-scenes look at museums. Most museums have only a small fraction of their collection on display at any given time and the remainder is housed in a curatorial research facility. Chilton also offers a brief overview of the display open to the public at many of the institutions he visits. Additionally, Chilton offers a bit of travelogue and history for many of the towns and cities he visits, although visiting tourist sites is incidental to the purpose of his quest.

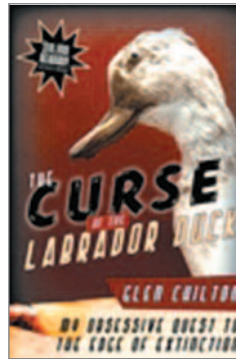
Apart from some wearisome whining about a lack of funds as he jets around the world, Chilton is a congenial host. Some of his humour felt a bit forced, particularly in the earlier chapters of the book. However, he soon hits his stride and for the most

part, Chilton makes a pleasant guide. His eclectic assortment of information and observations includes some revealing facts. I wasn't aware, for example, that the Halifax harbour explosion of 1917 was the largest human-created explosion before the nuclear age.

Although *The Curse of the Labrador Duck* is about a quest for an extinct bird, it's not really a dedicated bird book. Chilton doesn't offer a lot of information about the natural history of the species. Although it is about an extinct bird, he also doesn't address the broader topic of extinction. Although much of the book revolves around travel, its focus is not tourism. Yet somehow Chilton has been able to offer readers a companionable and memorable read.

P.S. If you know of someone with a stuffed Labrador Duck in their attic, you might want to drop Chilton a line and claim his \$10,000 reward for information leading to the discovery of unrecorded specimens.

Sheridan Leckie



# Birding Festivals Around Ontario

By Cindy Cartwright

**From dawn to dusk and beyond, festivals have something to offer birders of all abilities – early morning birding hikes, workshops, target species, evening presentations, guest speakers, prowls for owls and other night species.**

**F**estivals across Ontario vary from month-long migration celebrations to one day specialties. Multi-day festivals offer more flexibility for choosing the date to attend while single day festivals are often more focused. Some are specific to birding while others include all aspects of nature.

Birders who travel to Canada's southernmost areas, greeting warblers as they arrive in spring, can follow many species to their breeding grounds on the Bruce Peninsula or the Carden Alvar later in May and June. Spring and fall migration are most exciting at a hawkwatch when thousands of raptors soar past.

Attending a festival is a good way to visit new birding areas with a local guide, pick up tips from experienced birders, and have the opportunity to see species that may be uncommon in other parts of the province. Many eyes searching are usually more successful in locating hard to find birds, not to mention the fun of mingling with hundreds of other like-minded people.

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. Why not celebrate by enjoying a birding or nature festival somewhere in Ontario?

## **Waterfowl Weekends**

March 21 and 22, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Presqu'ile Provincial Park  
[www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca](http://www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca)

## **Return of the Swans Festival**

March 13 to April 4  
Lambton Heritage Museum,  
Grand Bend  
[www.lclmg.org/lclmg/Default.aspx?tabid=130](http://www.lclmg.org/lclmg/Default.aspx?tabid=130)

## **Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Open House**

Beamer Conservation Area  
[www.hwcn.org/link/niaghawk](http://www.hwcn.org/link/niaghawk)

## **Festival of Birds**

Month of May  
Point Pelee National Park  
[www.friendsofpointpelee.com](http://www.friendsofpointpelee.com)

## **Spring song: a celebration of birds and birding**

May 7, 8, 9, 2010  
Pelee Island  
<http://www.pelee.org/i>

## **Prince Edward County Birding Festival**

May 8 – 16  
Prince Edward County, Kingston  
[www.peptbo.ca](http://www.peptbo.ca)

## **Shore and Songbird Celebration**

Hillman Marsh Conservation Area  
[www.hbmo.org](http://www.hbmo.org)

## **Warblers and Whimbrels Weekend**

May 16 & 17, starting 6:30 a.m.  
Presqu'ile Provincial Park  
[www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca](http://www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca)

## **Huron Fringe Birding Festival**

May 28-31 and June 3-6  
MacGregor Point Provincial Park  
[www.friendsofmacgregor.org](http://www.friendsofmacgregor.org)

## **Carden Nature Festival**

June 4-6  
Carden Alvar  
[www.cardenguide.com/Festival](http://www.cardenguide.com/Festival)

## **Ontario Hummingbird Festival**

August 21  
Wye Marsh, Midland  
[www.ontariohummingbirds.ca](http://www.ontariohummingbirds.ca)

## **Monarchs and Migrants Weekend**

September 5 and 6, starting 8 a.m.  
Presqu'ile Provincial Park  
[www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca](http://www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca)

## **Festival of Hawks**

Weekends in September  
Holiday Beach Conservation Area  
[www.hbmo.org](http://www.hbmo.org)

## **Hawk Cliff Weekends**

Weekends in September  
Hawk Cliff, Port Stanley

## Long Point Bird Observatory 50th Anniversary Celebrations

### **Long Point is the place to be the weekend of May 14-16, 2010**

All current and past supporters of Long Point Bird Observatory and Bird Studies Canada are invited to join in celebrating LPBO's accomplishments, and the people who have been part of LPBO's first 50 years.

#### **The weekend will include:**

- An evening reception on Friday, May 14 for LPBO's founders and long-time supporters, with a presentation by professional photographer and founding LPBO member Robert Taylor;
- Guided birding tours of the Long Point area on Saturday, May 15, as part of the 2010 Baillie Birdathon;
- A 50th Anniversary banquet at the Port Rowan Community Centre the evening of Saturday, May 15, featuring a keynote address by BSC honorary directory Robert Bateman; and
- Additional birding and social activities on Sunday, May 16.

**Further details**, including instructions on how to register for these exciting events, can be found online at [www.birdscanada.org/longpoint](http://www.birdscanada.org/longpoint). Tickets are available on a first come, first served basis.

**It's not too early to book your stay now.** To find accommodation options, visit [www.norfolk-tourism.ca](http://www.norfolk-tourism.ca) or [www.portrowan-longpoint.org](http://www.portrowan-longpoint.org).

**Bird Studies Canada and Long Point Bird Observatory look forward to celebrating with OFO members next spring!**

# Nikon Photo Quiz

Sponsored by Nikon Canada By Willie D'Anna

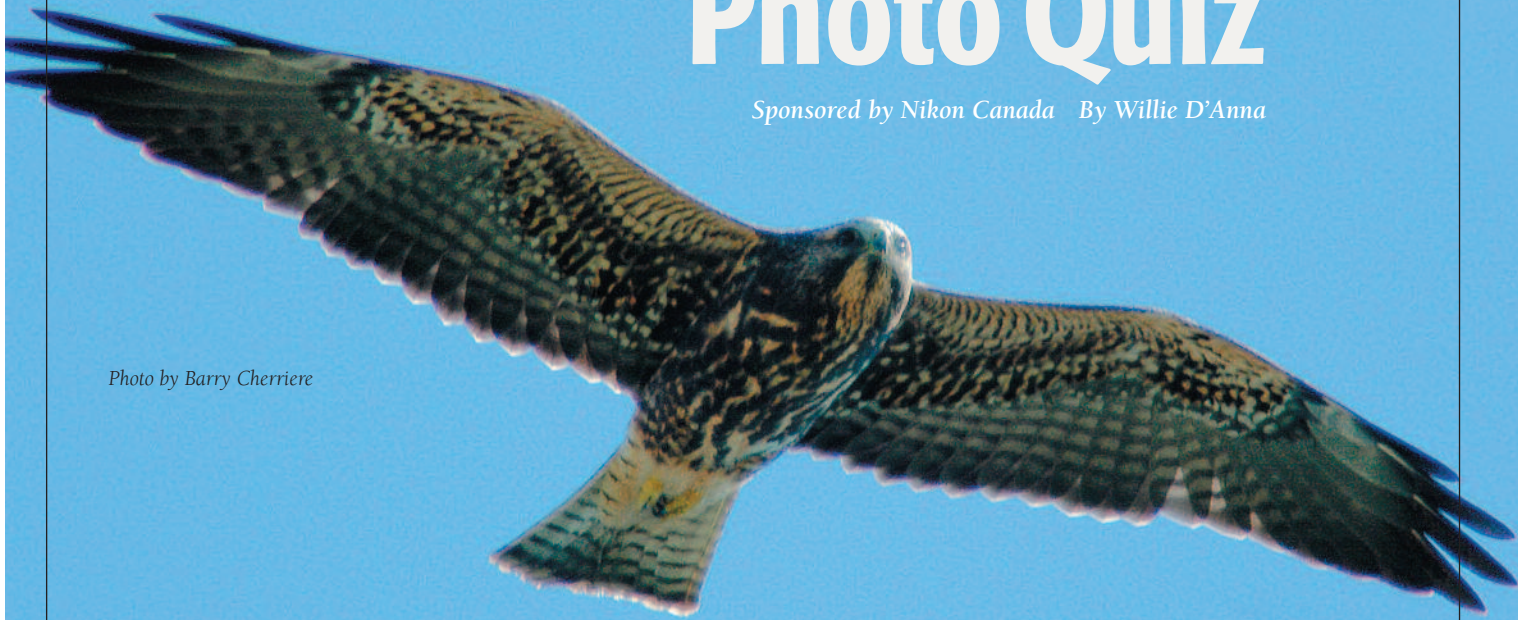


Photo by Barry Cherriere

*Figuring out a bird in a photo quiz is very different from identifying the real thing in the field.*

I would be the first to say that when dealing with perched, standing, or swimming birds, the photo quiz is usually more difficult. However, with birds in flight, photos can offer a distinct advantage over identifying the bird in life. Just think about all the difficult things you have to do to identify a bird in flight. You have to get your binoculars on a moving object and keep them on it as it flies past you. You have to focus the binoculars or scope and you may even need to refocus as it moves closer or further away. Then you have to look at all of those flying field marks, some of which are very small. If you use 8-power binoculars, as I do, then your tiny field mark is moving eight times as much as in life as you swing your bins across the sky while trying to keep them steady. Seeing field marks on flying birds is no easy

feat though many experienced birders do it all the time, with great success. Still, I feel more comfortable trying to ID a photo of a bird in flight. To be really useful, the photo needs to be sharp but the clear advantages are that you are still, the bird is still, and you have all the time in the world to look at it. If only I could count them on my various lists...if a group of birds can be said to have a season, late autumn is the season of sparrows. The meadows and marshes turn brown, grass starts going to seed. Sparrows foraging amongst the weeds, around trees, under tangles and inside brambles, they're a common birding sight at this time of year. And they're

infuriatingly good at staying out of sight, presenting just enough of themselves to conclusively say that you don't know what it is.

Every now and then, one will pop out into the open. It will stare you right in the eyes, as if challenging you to make an identification with your briefest of glimpses

Only a novice birder would have any difficulty recognizing this bird as a raptor (hawks, eagles, owls and vultures, although vultures technically are not raptors). There is nothing else that comes close. If someone is reading this that does not recognize this bird as a raptor, it probably means that you have not leafed through your field guide enough. The best way to learn birds quickly involves not only getting out into the field but also getting familiar with all of the groups of birds



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in the field guide. Anyone who has gone through the field guide a few times should recognize this bird as a raptor, and more specifically, a hawk.

Eagles, vultures, and Osprey can be easily ruled out by their relatively much broader and longer wings than on the quiz bird. Their plumages differ markedly also, although some immature Bald Eagles may appear superficially similar. Although the wingtips look somewhat pointed on this bird, falcons and kites have even more pointed wings and are readily eliminated. A possible exception to this statement is Mississippi Kite, whose shorter outermost primary imparts a similar look to the wingtips. A juvenile Mississippi Kite also has a somewhat similar plumage but would never show such narrow dark tail bands nor dark malar marks. Accipiters have relatively much shorter wings with more rounded wingtips and they lack dark malar marks. This leaves us with the Buteos, the Buteo-like hawks, and Northern Harrier.

The following species in the remaining group of hawks have been recorded in Ontario and are what we need to consider: Northern Harrier, Harris's Hawk (only escapes have been seen), Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, and Rough-legged Hawk. Harris's Hawk is ruled out by its red underwing coverts and red leg feathers. The relatively dark remiges (primaries and secondaries) on the quiz bird are only shown by one of the remaining species, Swainson's Hawk. Note that although female and juvenile Northern Harriers have dark secondaries like the quiz bird, they have pale primaries.

Could it be that easy? Well yes, it could be but let's make sure first. After all, it is often not a good idea to rely on a single field mark when identifying a bird, especially if that bird is rare. There is simply too much variation for that to be a safe practice. Here are the other features that I notice on the quiz bird: long, slender, slightly pointed wings; a dark "comma" on the wing coverts at the base of the outer primaries; white undertail

coverts; a white throat split by a dark streak; a dark malar that merges into thick breast streaking; a whitish tail with many thin dark bands and a broader subterminal band; a pale forehead; and somewhat pale eyes. All of these features are perfectly typical for a Swainson's Hawk. Importantly, while some of these features are shown by the other species under consideration, they would not all be present on any of them, even on the extremely variable Red-tailed Hawk. Swainson's Hawk is also a highly variable species, such that if you happen to see one in Ontario, chances are it will not look much like the quiz bird. While all the features of this bird that have been pointed out are useful for identifying this individual, only a few of them are consistently shown by all Swainson's Hawks. These features are the long slender slightly pointed wings, the dark remiges, the light undertail coverts, the tail pattern, and the dark malar that

merges into dark on the sides of the upper breast. Note that some birds may be so extensively dark that the dark malar does not stand out. In addition, most juveniles show a pale throat bisected by a dark streak, like the quiz bird. This is a straightforward juvenile **Swainson's Hawk**, beautifully photographed by Barry Cheriére on 21 September 2005 at the "onion fields", just north of Point Pelee National Park.

Although very rare, Swainson's Hawk is seen annually in Ontario at one or more of the hawkwatches along the Great Lakes. Typically, they are only seen flying overhead. The best way to identify one when it flies by is to be mentally prepared ahead of time. You are unlikely to see it as well as you can in this photo. So study the guide ahead of time, look for as many field marks as you can, and build a case for the identification. Oh, and if you have a camera, you may want to take a picture!

## Carden Alvar Bluebirds in 2009

*Herb Furniss*

**Don Parkes and Herb Furniss have maintained a "bluebird trail" of 75 nestboxes on the Carden Alvar since 1987. Each year brings highs and lows, disappointment and success.**



The weather was cool during most of the prime brood-rearing period. Cold weather in May resulted in the loss of 25 fledglings. June and July were also unseasonably cool and cloudy. The combined effects of the extended poor weather meant that there wasn't the abundance of insects required to feed the young, and a further 25 fledglings starved in the boxes.

But it's not all bad news: a total of 144 nestlings fledged from the 75 boxes in summer of 2009. This is down from the 190 fledged in 2008, when a warm summer allowed for a successful second brood, but is a good result nonetheless.

Eastern Bluebirds / Brendan Toews, [btoewsphotos.zenfolio.com](http://btoewsphotos.zenfolio.com)

# Ron Pittaway

## ABA Checklist Committee

### OFO member Ron Pittaway was recently elected to the American Birding Association's Checklist Committee

Nominated by Jon Dunn, Ron's four year term began 1 January 2010. He is the fourth Canadian to serve on the Committee following Alan Wormington (1985 to 1991), Stuart Tingley (1992 to 2001) and Bruce Mactavish (2002 to 2009). Alan and Bruce are also OFO members.

Formed in 1975, the ABA Checklist Committee comprises eight voting members including the Chair. It publishes and revises the ABA Checklist. The checklist includes North American breeding species, regular visitors, casuals and accidentals that are believed to have strayed here without direct human aid, and well-established introduced species.

The ABA Checklist Area is North America north of Mexico including the 49 continental United States, Canada, the French islands of St. Pierre et Miquelon, and adjacent waters to a distance of 200 miles from land or half the distance to a neighboring country, whichever is less. <http://www.aba.org/checklist/area.html>

# OBRC Update

By Glenn Coady

The Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) last reported on its activities in its report for 2008, which was published in the August 2009 issue of *Ontario Birds*. In 2008, the OBRC reviewed 113 records, of which 94% were accepted. Two new species, Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) and Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*), were added to the provincial checklist, bringing it to a total of 482 species. There were no new breeding species added to the list, leaving that total unchanged at 291 species. In addition to Barnacle Goose and Mottled Duck, Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*) was new to the list for southern Ontario, and Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) and Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*) were new for northern Ontario.

At the spring 2009 OBRC meeting, the committee voted to return Glenn Coady and Ross James for three year terms (2009-2011) as voting members, and Mark Cranford was chosen as the new Secretary. The 2009 Committee members are Glenn Coady (Chair), Mark Cranford (Secretary, non-voting), Bill Crins, Rob Dobos, Ross James, Blake Mann,

Mark Peck (ROM Liaison, non-voting), Ron Tozer and Alan Wormington (Assistant Secretary).

The work of the 2009 OBRC is proceeding well, with an anticipated 120+ records likely to be considered by the Committee. The OBRC will meet in early April 2010 to finalize voting on all records considered in 2009. The 2009 OBRC Report will be published in the August 2010 issue of *Ontario Birds*.

Observers who have seen any species on the OBRC Review Lists (posted on the OBRC section of the OFO web site at [www.ofo.ca](http://www.ofo.ca)) are encouraged to send written documentation or material evidence to OBRC Secretary Mark Cranford at 206-2437 Hurontario Street, Mississauga ON L5A 2G4 or via e-mail at [mark.cranford@rogers.com](mailto:mark.cranford@rogers.com).

As Chair, I would like to thank the many observers who have submitted documentation on Review List species to the 2009 OBRC. Thank you for your efforts to provide the Committee with the necessary documentation to evaluate the status of bird rarities in Ontario. Those interested in knowing more about the OBRC are welcome to contact me at [glenn\\_coady@hotmail.com](mailto:glenn_coady@hotmail.com).



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*Ontbirds*, with over 2000 subscribers, is OFO's successful listserv for reporting rare bird sightings. Now the largest birding listserv in North America, *Ontbirds* has become an integral part of the Ontario birding community. Follow the instructions on the OFO website to subscribe to *Ontbirds*. Email: [ontbirds@ofo.ca](mailto:ontbirds@ofo.ca)

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Publications Mail Agreement Number  
40046348

ISSN 1200-1589 © OFO News 2010

Answer to Birder's Vocabulary Quiz, page 11 : *Extant*: the opposite of extinct. This is a term commonly used to refer to living species such as Rock Pigeon or Monk Parakeet.