



OFO News

NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

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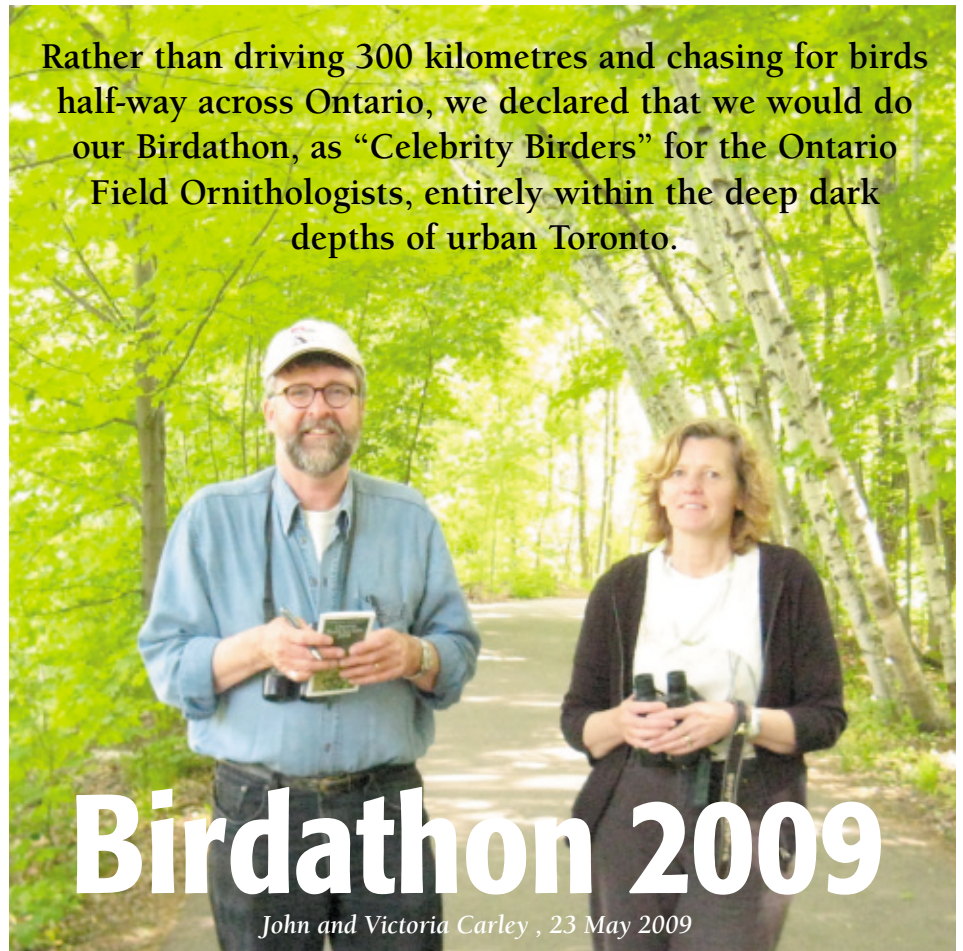
Ontario Field Ornithologists

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Rather than driving 300 kilometres and chasing for birds half-way across Ontario, we declared that we would do our Birdathon, as "Celebrity Birders" for the Ontario Field Ornithologists, entirely within the deep dark depths of urban Toronto.



This year's OFO Celebrity Birders, John and Victoria Carley (OFO members since 1983), are well-known within the birding and environmental protection advocacy communities. Victoria has served on the OFO board, and John leads regular OFO walks to the Leslie Street Spit on the Toronto shoreline. *Photo by Garth Riley*

When we assessed the territory and planned our route, we told prospective sponsors that we would see between 100 and 130 species. In the end, our total number of species seen was 102. That final tally may seem low, but let us give it context: Every bird we saw, from the humble House Sparrow to the mighty Peregrine Falcon to the diminutive Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, was seen in a public urban space.

We know, as do many of you, that the geography and vegetation of Toronto makes

for a surprisingly rich variety of avifauna. Of course the Birdathon is timed to take advantage of both migration and breeding season and maximize our chances of seeing many species of birds.

So where did we go to see these birds? We saw an American Robin, Chimney Swift, European Starling and Northern Cardinal as we drove down our street at 6:45 a.m. on our way to the Leslie Street Spit, also known as Tommy Thompson Park, where we put in quite a few hours of serious birding. The wet woods of the "Baselands"

(which are jeopardized by the planned Lake Ontario Park transect and “improvements”) were full of birds and bird watchers. Gnatcatchers nest there, so we heard the constant buzzing of their call as we looked and listened for warblers and thrushes. Farther out along the spit, in the bays and ponds, we saw fewer ducks than expected but did find several shorebirds as well as herons, terns, gulls, sandpipers and of course, Double-crested Cormorants. When we felt we had seen about as much as we could see and were just getting back to the car, a mature male Eastern Bluebird perched on a post with the sun lighting up his delightful sky blue back and red breast. We lingered to enjoy the sight, even as we knew we were wasting valuable time.

From the Spit we went to the west side of the city and walked along the Humber River and into James Gardens and Lambton Woods. As we had expected, we saw Cliff Swallows but no amount of walking in circles produced either of our other “target species” for the woods, Pileated Woodpecker and Black-capped Chickadee. Slightly downhearted and stressed, we went to the corner of Bloor and Islington and had a nice look at the Peregrine Falcons. We could have done this “naked eye” but did put up the scope for a close look. Again, just wasting time enjoying the beauty of the birds.

From there it was down to the western waterfront, with a short deviation to find a mockingbird in the industrial area beside Highway 427. Colonel Sam Smith Park produced the elusive chickadee and a Cooper’s Hawk, as well as a flock of Brant and long lines of White-winged Scoters skimming the surface of Lake Ontario.

It was now getting towards dusk and we had to decide between the Humber River at Old Mill for the Red-tailed Hawk nest or Humber Bay Park for ducks. We had recorded Great Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron and Belted Kingfisher, so the river was probably only a one species stop. The vote went for the waterfront again. We were desperate: we actually had not yet reached 100 species. Our performance was not going to impress anyone in a positive way. Fortunately,



*Black-crowned Night-Herons /
Seabrooke Leckie*

Humber Bay produced! A Trumpeter Swan got us to 99. Two Hooded Mergansers brought us to 100 and a Greater Scaup was 101. It was good to have one extra in case we had miscounted.

But we were not done yet. Our party, Garth Riley and Nancy McPherson, who provided stalwart help and companionship all day, and Raunie Ratcliffe, who had kindly taken over the driving as we started to flag, returned to The Spit. We stood at the side of grotty Unwin Avenue, with industrial land behind us and a chain link fence and the occasional dubious-looking car between us and the Basements. As we peered into the desolate darkness, straining our ears, we heard it: beep...beep...beep...beep. Woodcocks were calling and displaying.

And so we made it to 102. We are honoured to have been the OFO Celebrity Birders for 2009. Thanks to all of our sponsors.

Although now finished, you can still support John and Victoria’s birdathon through the end of July. To make a pledge online, visit: <http://www.bsceoc.org/support/birdathon/index.jsp?targetpg=donate&lang=EN&number=96835>

Or send your cheque, made out to **Bird Studies Canada**, to:
Rob Maciver, OFO Birdathon Coordinator
134 Cove Road, Bowmanville ON L1C 3K3

Or you can email your pledge to Rob at ofobirdathon@gmail.com



Tommy Thompson Park, also known as the Leslie Street Spit, is Toronto's largest greenspace on the Lake Ontario waterfront.

Tommy Thompson Park: Toronto's Birding Gem

Andrea Luger, TRCA

Ontario waterfront. The park is located on a man-made peninsula, built on construction rubble from the City, and extends five kilometres into the lake from the foot of Leslie Street. Through natural

succession and habitat restoration work done by Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA), the park sustains a mosaic of habitats and provides essential resting and refueling grounds for migratory birds and a variety of other wildlife. In 2000, TTP was designated as a globally significant Important Bird Area by BirdLife International because of its importance to migratory songbirds, overwintering waterfowl, and six species of colonial waterbirds that nest at the site, including the largest colonies of Double-crested Cormorants and Black-crowned Night-Herons in the Great Lakes Region.

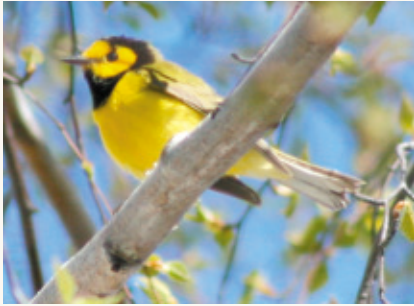
The Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station (TTPBRS) has operated at the park since 2003. The station was

established to address the need of bird conservation and awareness in the City of Toronto through scientific research, monitoring and education. The dedicated staff and volunteers at TTPBRS spend countless hours throughout the year working on important projects including spring and fall migration monitoring, avian productivity and survivorship surveys, breeding bird surveys, and nocturnal owl monitoring. The data collected from these projects help researchers assess remote environments based on the health and dominance of the migratory species. This information is used to develop conservation initiatives aimed at protecting sensitive bird populations. In addition, TTPBRS offers a curriculum based educational program for grades 4, 6 and 7 called *Winged Migration*, as well as informal educational walks and workshops to the public.

TTP is an excellent place to go birding anytime of the year. To date, a total of 316 species of birds has been recorded at the park, of which approximately 60 species are known to have successfully bred. Every year vagrant, irruptive and unusual songbirds turn up at the park, including such species as Hooded,

The City of Toronto is located on a major migratory corridor, with millions of birds passing through the city during spring and fall migration. Since the long journey across and around the lake is exhausting, birds rely on greenspaces along the shoreline of Lake Ontario as stopover locations to rest and refuel before continuing their journey north. Unfortunately, as urban centres expand, most greenspaces disappear and are replaced with housing and commercial developments. This significant loss of habitat has undoubtedly had an impact on the populations of the migratory species that depend on it.

Tommy Thompson Park (TTP), also known as the Leslie Street Spit, is Toronto's largest greenspace on the Lake



Worm-eating, Prothonotory and Yellow-throated Warblers, White-eyed Vireo, Bohemian Waxwing, Summer Tanager, Pine Grosbeak, Le Conte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows, and many others. The mudflats along the shorelines and in the shallow embayments are great places to find uncommon shorebirds like Buff-breasted and Baird's

Sandpipers, Marbled Godwit and even American Avocet.

While there is a flurry of activity at the park during spring and fall migration with the songbird and shorebird stopovers, the summer is only slightly less busy with colonial waterbirds, shorebirds, raptors and resident landbirds breeding and foraging at the site. Many species are difficult to find elsewhere in the Toronto area, including some specialties such as breeding Canvasbacks. Although the winter is quiet in comparison to the rest of the year, there are always birds around including overwintering waterfowl and landbirds. In particular, the park is a great place to search for Snowy and Northern Saw-whet Owls, and unusual waterfowl

such as King Eider, Harlequin Duck and Eurasian Wigeon are often sighted in the park's many bays and in the waters of Lake Ontario.

TTP is open to the public on weekends and holidays. A free shuttle bus runs from May through October. TTPBRS is open for migration monitoring from 1 April to 8 June and 5 August to 10 November, and visitors are encouraged to drop in anytime during morning hours for live demonstrations and a chance to see your favourite birds up close.

For more information please visit our websites: www.trca.on.ca/ttp and www.ttpbrs.ca.

Hooded Warbler / Seabrooke Leckie

Sketching a Theory of **Bird Identification**

By Rob Maciver

Those who persist with bird identification discover that there is no substitute for experience.



How can we correctly identify a bird in the field?

How do we know when we have correctly identified the bird that we are observing? How self-assured should we be of our correctness? I recall asking similar questions to more experienced birdwatchers when I was a beginner and that they went largely ignored. I remember that these questions were important to me and that nobody I spoke with was willing or able to provide an answer that didn't seem to miss the point. I assume that I am not unlike other people, and that readers may have experienced something similar to this. If you have ever wondered about these things, this is a short commentary just for you.

Yellow-throated Warbler / Seabrooke Leckie

One way to correctly identify a bird is to rely on someone else who knows better. If David Sibley, author of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, tells me that I am now observing a California Gnatcatcher and not a Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (as he did recently during the San Diego Bird Festival) I believe I can correctly identify that bird. There are several indicia of reliability that allow me to trust in Mr. Sibley's authority: his reputation, his expertise, and the consensus of other skilled local birdwatchers for example. Under some circumstances it is appropriate to trust another person to identify a bird for you. However there are widely acknowledged shortcomings to any absolute reliance on authority. For one thing, even experts can make an error. For another thing, David Sibley is not always available in person to go birdwatching with you!

I believe we are never entirely free from the fetters of authority in our bird identifications. For one thing, what we collectively acknowledge to be a species will always to some degree be a matter of convention, and the concept of a species is imprecise. Witness the problems associated with hybridization, or the perennial reorganization of bird taxonomy by the American Ornithologists' Union. In Ontario, in order for a rare bird sighting to publicly exist it must be corroborated in a way that is deemed acceptable to the Ontario Bird Records Committee. Let's face it; the birding authorities determine the birds we as individuals are permitted to observe. We can achieve some degree of independence in our bird identifications, but only after we allow the authorities to tell us what we are looking for and to ultimately confirm what we think we have seen.

Reliance on a field guide does not free us from this reliance on authority since field guides are written by people who are considered experts. Field guides uphold the rule of authority in another way by setting the limits to what we can observe. If a bird is not in the field guide, can we observe it?

Inexperienced birdwatchers often don't have the luxury of an expert com-

panion to aide their identifications. For someone in this predicament their identifications stand or fall on the comparisons they are able to make to the picture they see on a page (and perhaps a written description). This may be the most difficult stage of becoming a birdwatcher; having not yet seen enough birds to recognize them from experience without the help of others. Those striving for more independence must struggle with pictures in a field guide that are often less than completely adequate to define what they observe. It becomes easy to wonder what it is they're missing that leads to their inability to identify what they see. Some even doubt whether anyone actually has this ability or whether it is merely an act.

Those who persist with bird identification discover that there is no substitute for experience. With experience, comparisons between the bird observed and the picture in the field guide become less central to the activity of bird identification. More important is the unconscious comparisons that are made with other birds the observer has seen in the past. With experience expectations also change. Where it was once thought that positive bird identification was an all-or-nothing proposition some birdwatchers will become comfortable with conclusions determined on the basis of probability.

Others learn to acknowledge that there can never be enough evidence to be absolutely certain. The sensitive and experienced birdwatchers evaluate the characteristics of each bird observed and attempt to exercise their judgment. A decision may come quickly, it may come after long deliberation, or it may not come at all.

In spite of the tools and tricks, the gadgets and the formulas that can be a help or a hindrance, bird identification, is fundamentally a matter of judgement (either our own or that of others). As with all matters of judgment, bird identification can be conducted with modesty or arrogance, with sincerity or evasion, with prudence or carelessness.

Bird identification is about birds, but it is also about the people who classify and identify them and the people who share in this interest. It is about the questions people ask and what those questions really mean. So too, it is about why the activity of bird identification is satisfying and worthwhile, not just for the experts but for everyone involved. More than just a dispassionate reflection of nature, an act of bird identification is a subjective interaction with both the birds and the people who find a shared purpose in this undertaking. So there is a lot to consider when identifying a bird, don't you think?



Pileated Woodpecker Not Fooled

In our previous issue (Vol. 27, No. 1, page 5) we discussed efforts by

Hydro One to discourage Pileated Woodpeckers from nesting in utility poles, including the use of decoys. Brian Fetherston, an employee with Hydro One, sent this photo taken by a co-worker as a follow-up to the article. The decoy was mounted on a log near the residence's bird feeders. As Brian says, "the pictures tell the story."

Toronto's 2009 HotDocs Festival included the world premiere of Scott Crocker's thought-provoking *Ghost Bird*, a film about the 2004 report of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Arkansas.

Ghost Bird

A Cautionary Tale

By Don Johnston

In a Q&A session after one screening, Crocker said that his aim in making the film was to show the impact on the local town of Brinkley, Arkansas, and the obsessiveness of the birding community, as well as the reaction of ornithologists and environmentalists.

This excellent film presents both sides of the debate among the professionals about whether the bird seen was actually an Ivory-billed Woodpecker, but Crocker's sympathies clearly lie with the sceptics. Interlaced with the scientific arguments, the story of the town of Brinkley presents a sad picture as thousands of birders and tourists initially swarm into town pumping up the local economy, and then, with no confirmation of the bird's existence, they disappear as quickly as they arrived, leaving the town to return to its slowly decaying former self. In contrast to the townspeople are the mobs of camouflage-clad birders arriving from all over the world in search of the holy grail.

Crocker raises an important ethical question by pointing out that the result of the Ivory-billed sighting is the commitment of millions of dollars by the government for conservation and the protection of vast tracts of land, which, in the minds of some of the people Crocker interviews, is justification for the sceptical scientists having withheld or downplayed their views. Equally controversial is the realization that all of the government funding was taken from previously-announced research projects.

Whether you believe, like many of the townspeople of Brinkley, that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker still exists somewhere in the deep woods of Arkansas, or whether you are one of the sceptics, if you get a chance to see this superb documentary, don't miss it.

The Barn Owl Ontario's Ghost Bird

By Berni (Bernie) Solymár

As a member and former project coordinator of the Ontario Barn Owl Recovery Project (OBORP) I have had the rare opportunity of observing barn owls in the wild in Ontario. The

first was a call from Rick Rolland in June of 2006, a self-professed citizen scientist in Ancaster. He had got wind of sightings of a barn owl flying across a country road. He promptly started his own "investigation" which included attaining permission to visit rural properties in search of pellets. Not only did he find pellets under trees and under barn cross-beams, but by connecting the dots formed by these sightings he came up with a rough circle. In the middle of that circle was a property slated for development with a large wooden barn. Sure enough, Rick found his Barn Owl up in the rafters and immediately notified us. Rick's enthusiasm was so high that he purchased a remote camera unit to take pictures of Elvis, as he affectionately named the owl, on a regular basis. He also managed to convince the owner of the property to delay development and carefully monitored a movie crew filming a movie on the site so they didn't disturb Elvis. Regrettably, in late August Elvis disappeared after a fire, started by youths having a party, gutted the barn.

The second opportunity to view these beautiful birds came in mid-September of 2007 when I received an e-mail about a Barn Owl found on the ground in a weak-

ened state. By the time I arrived the young, not yet fully fledged owl had died. On investigating the inside of the large barn and grain elevator I found a second dead owl. At this point the landowner

described the loud "screaming" he had been hearing in the structure, which he had presumed to be squabbling raccoons. When we looked up at the rafters we were thrilled to see four pairs of eyes looking down at us. The two owls were sleepily observing us with no anxiety. I and several other members of the Recovery Team made many subsequent trips to the site to view and photograph, as it turned out, the two adult birds and two surviving young. Mhairi McFarlane,



Nest Box Installation / Berni Solymár

working with Bird Studies Canada, and I checked the dozen or so nest boxes within a 3 km radius of the site (no luck, except pigeons) and installed a dozen additional nest boxes at strategic sites with landowner permission. In late September the landowner called to say the owls were gone and we never did see them again.

The secretive and ephemeral nature of Barn Owls guarantees that not many folks in Ontario will ever see one in the wild. But for those who are lucky enough to see one on their property — or better, nesting — it is an awesome experience.

Bernie Solymár owns EarthTramper Consulting Inc., a company that provides expertise in sustainable agriculture production, land stewardship and species at risk conservation. He is a member of the Ontario Barn Owl and American Badger Recovery Teams in Ontario.

The Barn Owl is a flagship species for healthy grassland and mixed farm habitats and is considered an important ally of farmers due to its voracious appetite and almost exclusive diet of rodents.

On Canada the Barn Owl only breeds in the lower mainland valleys in British Columbia and along the north shore of Lake Erie in Ontario. Since 1999, the Eastern population has been designated as **endangered**, both in Canada by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and provincially by the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO). In the last 12 years there have been only three confirmed mated pairs in southern Ontario.

In eastern North America, the northern-most range of the cosmopolitan Barn Owl, found on every continent except Antarctica, is Southern Ontario. The species requires large, open tracts of con-

Bringing Back the Barn Owl to Ontario

By Bernt (Bernie) Solymár

tiguous grassy fields to hunt for voles and mice. Although there were scattered grasslands in southwestern Ontario prior to European settlement (tallgrass prairie represented about 9% of the landscape), it was the clearing of forests and subsequent planting of pastures and hayfields which probably first attracted Barn Owls into Ontario. The presence of livestock, corn silos and haylofts in most barns provided supplementary heat and food sources during cold, snowy Ontario win-

ters. To hear old-timers speak about Barn Owls it seems they were a not uncommon resident on farmsteads along the north shore of Lake Erie prior to the 1970s.

So why did Ontario's Barn Owl population decline so dramatically in the last 30 to 35 years? The major reason has been the decline of foraging and hunting habitat. The conversion of pastures and hay fields on diversified farms to more intensive monocultures such as soybeans, corn and horticultural crops; the disappearance of corn silos on farms, a source of mice in winter, in favour of central storage depots; and the elimination of hedgerows and fencerows have all had negative impacts on the Barn Owl in Ontario. The presence of raccoons in almost every barn in southern Ontario has probably had a significant impact on nesting opportunities, and cold winters have also contributed to a general population decline.

The Ontario Barn Owl Recovery Project (OBORP)

In the fall of 1997, through a community effort in Haldimand and Norfolk Counties, the Ontario Barn Owl Recovery Project (OBORP) was established to take on the daunting task of recovering Ontario's endangered Barn Owl population.

The subsequent development of a formal Recovery Team and a Recovery Plan, has lent structure, targets, and credibility to the project. The goal of the OBORP is to restore levels of Barn Owls in southern Ontario to historic levels by increasing grassland habitat along the north shore of Lake Erie. Project priorities are:

1. To foster community volunteerism and partnerships by involving individuals and groups in Barn Owl nest box building, installation and monitoring programs (Note: over 300 nest boxes have been installed in or on barns from Windsor to Fort Erie);
2. To identify, enhance, and protect grassland and wetland fringe habitat along the north shore of Lake Erie through conservation agreements and creation of grassland reserves, which will also benefit other species-at-risk, such as Henslow's Sparrow, Northern Bobwhite, Short-Eared Owl and American Badger;
3. To develop public awareness, appreciation and grassroots support for Barn Owls, other grassland species, and grassland habitat through public seminars and workshops, and development and distribution of educational materials to schools, parks, conservation organizations and interested members of the public.

The Ontario Barn Owl recovery Team continues in their efforts to bring these owls back to their original numbers in Ontario.

For more information you can visit our website at <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/regional/barnowl.html>



Photo: Young Barn Owls / Ron Gould, MNR

Despite having spent the first 20 years of my life growing up in rural Ontario, it has only been this summer that I finally heard a Whip-poor-will in this province.

Whip-poor-will

Voices in Decline

By Seabrooke Leckie

Historically, they were once found throughout southern Ontario, but I am too young to have known those times. My first experience with this secretive species was while working as a field ornithologist in Ohio one summer. Our surveys took us into regenerating clearcuts in the wee hours of the morning, and, in several plots, as we walked in from where we parked the vehicles we would be accompanied by the emphatic, persistent, lilting calls, echoing from the forest's edge. For me, the song of the Whip-poor-will remains a sound I firmly associate with the Appalachian foothills.

These days, here in Ontario, they are primarily a bird of "cottage country". More often heard than seen, their distinctive voices are wedded to the image of quiet mist rising off the water's surface in the pre-dawn light. Their population strongholds are in the patchy landscape that defines the southern edge of the Canadian Shield, the Frontenac Arch, and the Bruce Peninsula. It is in these areas that the rock barrens, alvars, regenerating forests and treed savannahs are most abundant. South of the Shield appropriate habitat is sparse. If you want to find the species west of Toronto now, your best bets are to visit the patchwork of forest tracts surrounding Long Point, Rondeau, or Pinery Provincial Parks.

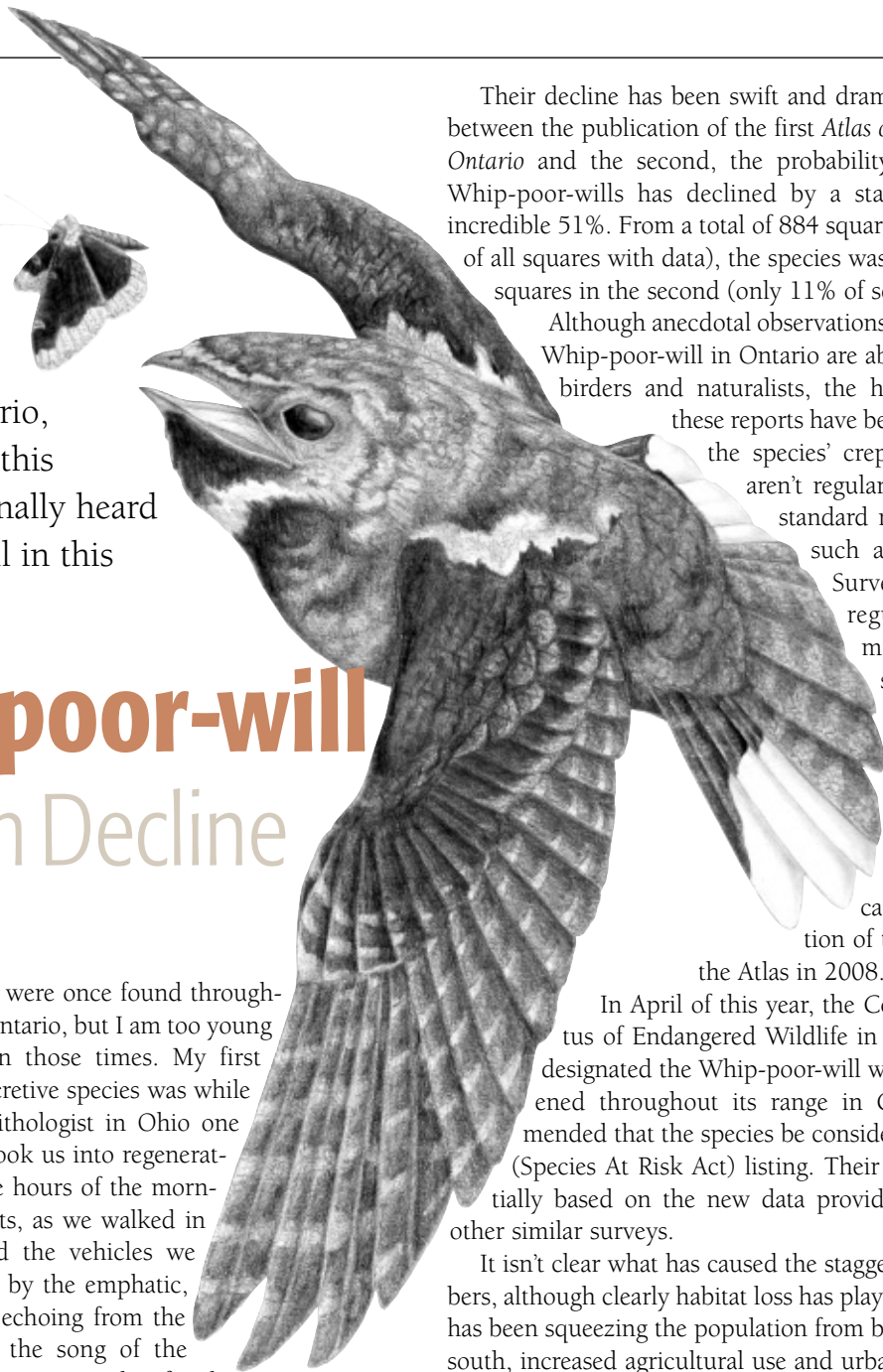
Their decline has been swift and dramatic. In the 20 years between the publication of the first *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario* and the second, the probability of observation for Whip-poor-wills has declined by a statistically significant, incredible 51%. From a total of 884 squares in the 1980s (24% of all squares with data), the species was detected in just 559 squares in the second (only 11% of squares with data).

Although anecdotal observations on the decline of the Whip-poor-will in Ontario are abundant among older birders and naturalists, the hard data to support these reports have been sparse. Because of the species' crepuscular habits, they aren't regularly picked up on the standard monitoring programs such as the Breeding Bird Survey. Neither are they regularly detected at migration monitoring stations such as Long Point Bird Observatory's long-running program. The first report providing firm numbers illustrating their decline came with the publication of the second edition of the Atlas in 2008.

In April of this year, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) designated the Whip-poor-will with the status Threatened throughout its range in Canada, and recommended that the species be considered for official SARA (Species At Risk Act) listing. Their assessment was partially based on the new data provided by the Atlas and other similar surveys.

It isn't clear what has caused the staggering decline in numbers, although clearly habitat loss has played a large factor. This has been squeezing the population from both directions. In the south, increased agricultural use and urbanization of the landscape have eaten away at the natural habitat the Whip-poor-will requires. In the north, marginal farmland has been allowed to lapse and regenerate, and the open habitat the birds use for foraging has gradually been filling in.

Another factor may be declines in insect populations. Very little work has been done to track insect abundance, but anecdotal evidence (such as the slimy splats on car windshields) suggests that bugs may not be as numerous as they once were even a few decades ago. This hypothesis is bolstered by the fact that some of the greatest declines in bird numbers are observed among the aerial insectivores, those that feed on the wing, including the swallows and goatsuckers. The reason for declines in insects are likewise unknown, but may be the result of habitat loss combined with increased use of pesticides.



In the United States, monitoring efforts to track populations of Whip-poor-will are being undertaken in a number of regions. One of the largest is the Northeast Nightjar Survey, originally initiated by New Hampshire Audubon in 2003 as the Whip-poor-will Project. A working group that includes the US Fish and Wildlife Service, state agencies, non-governmental conservation organizations and academic institutions, was formed in 2005 and began completing surveys outside New Hampshire as well. Its scope has continued to expand and the project now has routes from Maine to Maryland, and as far west as Wisconsin, monitoring all three nightjar species commonly found in this region.

In 2007, the Northeast Nightjar Survey partnered with Bird Studies Canada's NatureCounts website to host and manage data, and provide an online interface for participants to submit

observations. Formal surveys are not yet in place for Canadians wishing to participate. Currently, the only Whip-poor-will monitoring effort taking place in Canada is being run by Frontenac Bird Studies, a new initiative of the Migration Research Foundation intended to survey and monitor the breeding birds of the Frontenac Arch. This will be the first year of operations for their Project Whip-poor-will.

The pictures painted by these surveys aren't likely to be very rosy, but they will help in determining the source of the problem, and devising solutions. Developing a better understanding of Whip-poor-wills, their distribution, habitat requirements, and local ecology is vital to the creation of successful long-term conservation initiatives directed toward protecting the species and reversing these declining population trends.

Illustration: Whip-poor-will / Seabrooke Leckie

Ron Tozer

Distinguished Ornithologist

By Ron Pittaway and Bill Crins,
Nominating Committee



The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Ron Tozer will be the 2009 and 12th recipient of the Distinguished Ornithologist Award granted by the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Bob Curry proposed Ron Tozer as a candidate to the nominating committee. The award "is granted to individuals who have made outstanding and authoritative

contributions to the study of birds in Ontario and Canada; who have been a resource to OFO and the Ontario birding community; and whose research on birds has resulted in many publications and a significant increase in new ornithological knowledge."

Ron Tozer began serious birding and keeping field notes at age 12 in 1953 in the Oshawa area where he was first mentored by the late George Scott. While at the University of Toronto in the 1960s, Ron often checked with the late Jim Bailie at the Royal Ontario Museum about data for his upcoming Oshawa bird book. Ron's interest in birds and natural history led to summer Park Naturalist jobs in Algonquin Provincial Park from 1961 to 1972, except for 1966 while at Presqu'ile Provincial Park, and 1968 and 1969 when he was a Field Assistant to Murray Speirs doing marsh and urban bird surveys. After undertaking graduate studies and lecturing at the University of Michigan, Ron was appointed as the permanent Park Naturalist in Algonquin in 1972, a position he held until retiring in 1996. Ron supervised and mentored many young summer naturalists who now hold prominent positions in the biological sciences and conservation in Canada. He continues as a Natural and Human History Interpretation Consultant in Algonquin Park.

In 1974 Ron and co-author Jim Richards published *The Birds of the Oshawa-Lake Scugog Region*. This now hard-to-find classic is regarded as one of

the finest regional bird books in the province. Ron is currently preparing *The Birds of Algonquin Park*, which he expects to publish in 2011.

Ron Tozer is a charter member of OFO. His major contributions to OFO include the following: co-editor of *Ontario Birds* for 16 years from 1991 to 2006; a contributor and editorial assistant to the editors of *OFO News* from 1994 to 2007; Master of Ceremonies and frequent trip leader at OFO Annual Conventions from 1999 to 2008; OFO field trip leader in Algonquin Park from 1990 to 2009, and co-leader of the Carden Alvar and Niagara trips; and Ontario Bird Records Committee voting member for 13 years and chair for five years.

Ron has been sub-regional editor for observations in Algonquin Park in *North American Birds* for 35 years. He served as an atlaser and regional coordinator in the Algonquin Region during the first breeding bird atlas (1981-1985) and the second atlas (2001-2005). For the second atlas, Ron was the scientific editor of 26 species accounts. He has published numerous articles in *Ontario Birds* and *OFO News* and other publications on bird behaviour, distribution, ecology, food habits, population trends, nesting, migration, additions to the Ontario checklist, and birding site guides.

Margaret Bain, a previous OFO President, will present the Distinguished Ornithologist Award to Ron Tozer at the Annual Convention Banquet at Point Pelee on Saturday, 3 October 2009.

Ontario Field Ornithologists 2008 Financial Statement

Balance Sheet 31 December 2008

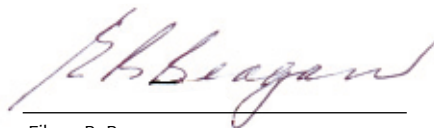
ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
	2008		2008
Cash in Bank	\$ 33,770	Prepaid Membership Dues	\$ 20,842
Ontario Savings Bonds	20,000	MEMBERS EQUITY	
Convention Deposit	450	Balance beginning of Year	56,913
Accounts Receivable	3,350	Net income for Year	<u>-15,121</u>
Accrued Interest	3,174	Balance end of Year	41,792
GST Rebate	1,890		
Total	<u>\$ 62,634</u>	Total	<u>\$ 62,634</u>

Income and Expense Statement Year Ended 31 December 2008

INCOME		EXPENSES	
	2008		2008
Membership Dues	\$ 24,560	Printing and Mailing-	
Donations	9,114	- Journal <i>Ontario Birds</i>	\$ 36,705
Baillie Birdathon	1,926	- Newsletter <i>OFO News</i>	13,207
Advertisements	10,269	Liability Insurance	2,884
Sale of Merchandise	3,633	Field Trips	929
Interest	2,682	Purchase of Merchandise	2,061
Sale of Publications	277	Administration	5,016
GST Rebate	1,654	Annual Convention (Net)	2,372
		Awards	358
		Checklists	2,263
		Stationery	2,266
		OFO Website and Ontbirds	<u>1,175</u>
		Total Expenses	\$ 69,236
		Net Income for Year	-15,121
Total	<u>\$ 54,115</u>	Total	<u>\$ 54,115</u>



John E. Black
President



Eileen B. Beagan
Treasurer

Book Reviews

A Sound Like Water Dripping: In Search of the Boreal Owl

Soren Bondrup-Nielsen
2009. Gaspereau Press Ltd, Kentville, NS.
\$24.95. ISBN 1554470749

Bondrup-Nielsen's *A Sound Like Water Dripping* is an autobiographical account of his days as a graduate student in the 1970s at the University of Toronto. His book touches on his research and findings, which include notably, the first nesting record of a Boreal Owl in Ontario. Even though it's been about 30 years since he finished his project, the book portrays events with the kind of clarity as if it had been written the day they occurred.

Bondrup-Nielsen depicts his saga through those formidable years using his personal writing style, instead of scientific, highlighting the successes of his research and describing moments of naivety, bouts of frustration, and the occasional failures throughout. In the beginning he had little support from his supervisor— both financially and on his research endeavors. Aside from support from his parents, he was primarily on his own to get his project off the ground.

As incessant as a lone male on territory in breeding season, Bondrup-Nielsen endured long days in northern Ontario beginning in late winter, often under inhospitable conditions, for extended periods. He found himself a space at a bush camp that he used as a research base and ended up working for the forestry company to pay for his room and board.

When Bondrup-Nielsen started trying to answer his initial research questions, more questions kept coming up. As a result, his work explored (and so his book describes) many aspects of the ecology of the Boreal Owl. Throughout the book he describes the

friendships he makes related to his research, his moments back at school when he was able to overcome the awkwardness he felt back in undergraduate school and develop his first serious relationship, and the support he received from his family and friends, and ultimately his supervisor, in accomplishing all he was able to.

Overall I enjoyed Bondrup-Nielsen's account of his graduate experience. Behind every researcher's work there is usually a story to tell that the peer-reviewed journals don't unveil. *A Sound like Water Dripping* is a good reflection of the human-interest side of research. Although some decades have past since his experience, there are many projects today that continue to rely on the hardness of graduate students to accomplish ecological research questions, not unlike Bondrup-Nielsen's experience. This would be an excellent book for undergraduate students contemplating graduate studies, especially if there is a field biology component; it is a real depiction of what you're in for! However, the story will also appeal to anyone with an interest in these unique little owls.

By Christine Vance

Birdwatcher: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson

by Elizabeth J. Rosenthal, 2008. The Lyons Press, Guilford, Connecticut. 464 pages, 16 x 23.5 cm, \$34.95. ISBN 1599212943

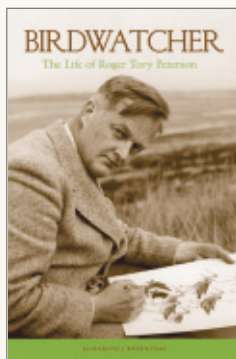
Surely there isn't a North American birder out there who is not aware of the great Roger Tory Peterson in some way or another, even if only for his field guide series. The guides that now bear his name have become the most recognized series in natural history identification. But how much do you know about the man behind their invention?



Roger's first edition of his *Guide to the Birds*, published in 1934, was just the beginning of a long and storied career in a life spanning nine decades. It is perhaps his best-known work, now in its fifth edition, but is far from his only work. He was involved in the production of many subsequent field guides, on birds as well as other groups. He became

one of the nation's premiere teachers of natural history through his position as Educational Director of the National Association of Audubon Societies. He was an active promoter of and contributor to many conservation causes. A prolific photographer, he amassed some one million images of birds, butterflies, and other wildlife over the course of his lifetime. He authored dozens of books, many bestsellers, and was generous with his time and words in writing the forewords of more than 100 books written by others. And he was the inspiration to many young, up-and-coming naturalists across the continent as well as overseas, through his books and lecture tours, as well as by acting as a mentor to many lucky enough to have the chance to be taken under his wing.

Elizabeth Rosenthal's book isn't the first biography to chronicle the life of the person affectionately and respectfully referred to by friends and colleagues as "The Great Man," but it may be the most thorough. Rosenthal carefully delves into all aspects of Roger's life, from his earliest beginnings as a youth in New York City, to his final months of life at home in Old Lyme, Connecticut. She spends time discussing Roger's influence over his "worldwide progeny", now big names in their own right within the field of natural history, including David Allen Sibley, Kenn Kaufman, Pete Dunne, Victor Emanuel, and many others. She talks about his conservation efforts and his voyages to other continents as well as within North America.



She relates how it was his trip to the Antarctic that inspired him to adopt for himself the pseudonym "King Penguin," after his favourite species of bird.

The time and effort that Rosenthal put into researching and writing the book is clear through the innumerable quotes and excerpts that she uses from friends and family, colleagues, acquaintances, and chance encounters. The commentary is seamlessly melded into the story of Roger's life, providing an intimate look at a man who most of us know only by name. The book is an interesting and enlightening read for anyone who wants to learn more about the father of the modern birding and conservation movement. For more on the book and to listen to interviews with the author, visit the official website, <http://www.petersonbird.com/>.

By Seabrooke Leckie

Handbook of the Birds of the World: Volume 13: Penduline-tits to Shrikes

2008. Edited by Ramon Mascort Brugarolas, Josep del Hoyo, Carmen Pascual, Pilar Ruiz-Olalla and Jordi Sargatal. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain. E-mail: lynx@hbw.com. Hardcover 879 pages. \$265.00 US (ISBN 978-84-96553-45-3).

I just returned from a trip to Antarctica and had the honour of birding with world-renowned artist and author, Lars Jonsson. To my surprise, Vol. 13 HBW opens with an informative 32-page article on bird migration and an accompanying painting that Lars did of King Eiders in flight. The article speaks about routine migration (diurnal and nocturnal), one-way dispersal movements, dispersive migration, irruptions and nomadism. It is interesting in light of the irruptive influx of finches, grosbeaks and crossbills that we have seen in Ontario Ontario this winter.

Continued on page 14.



Bonaparte's Gulls /
Robert Horvath



A Late Fall Bonaparte's Gull with Alternate Plumage Appearance

By Randy Horvath

On the morning of 13 November 2008, my brother, Robert Horvath, and I were birding Point Pelee National Park and its vicinity. At about 11:30 a.m., we arrived at Wheatley Harbour and were delighted to find hundreds of gulls present. A great many were loafing on the beach, while numerous others were in the channel and throughout the marina. Some of these were flying about, but most were roosting on the water or on the wooden walkways to the fishing boats. Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) was the predominant species.

We agreed that I would scope the gulls (mostly white-headed) on the beach, pier, and harbour breakwall, while Robert would focus his attention on the remainder. We separated accordingly and went to work. After about fifteen to twenty minutes, Robert approached to inform me that he had a Bonaparte's Gull in his scope with a virtually complete hood. I was eager to see it, given the lateness of the year, but when I reached his scope there was no sign of the bird. We scanned about diligently, but could not relocate it. Robert then showed me a photograph he had taken just moments before that clearly revealed a Bonaparte's Gull on the water of the marina with what looked to be a full alternate plumage.

We searched the marina thoroughly, but it seemed to have vanished. Our

efforts were hampered by the successive arrivals of two fishing boats, followed by the onset of a cold, steady rain that forced us to stay in Robert's car. Robert remarked that the gull had been very active, remaining on the water only briefly before taking to the air, something it did repeatedly (at least five times while he observed it). This partly explains why he was able to obtain only one decent photograph.

Adult Bonaparte's Gulls typically molt quickly into definitive basic plumage, and most have completely lost their hood by the end of August (Burger and Gochfeld 2002). With second-year birds, the molt is slower and begins later, but the hood is generally gone by the end of September. From October on, the vast majority of Bonaparte's Gulls will have just two smudgy streaks transversing the crown and a dark post-ocular spot.

However, in the discussion of Bonaparte's Gull, on *The Small Gulls of North America* DVD, Jon Dunn states that some individuals are found every winter in the Great Lakes region with partial hoods, and, "even more commonly, a full solid hood" (Dunn 1999). He goes on to say that it is not certain whether the hoods of these birds were lost and reacquired, or perhaps never lost at all.

This note documents the late fall occurrence of a Bonaparte's Gull on Lake Erie.

Literature Cited

- Burger, J., and M. Gochfeld. 2002. Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 634 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Dunn, J.L. 1999. *The small gulls of North America*. Peregrine Video Productions. Niwot, CO.

Randy Horvath, 1202-30 Tuscarora Street,
Windsor, ON N9A 6Y6

OBRC Notes

June 2009 by Jean Iron, 2008 OBRC Chair

The 2008 Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) held its annual meeting at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) on Saturday, 4 April 2009. The Committee finalized voting on 115 reports that were submitted in 2008. Many reports consisted of photo documentation, which greatly assisted the deliberations of committee members.

Two new Ontario species, Barnacle Goose and Mottled Duck, were added to the Ontario Checklist bringing the provincial total to 482 species. Details of these two new species and other reports will be published in the 2008 OBRC Report in the August issue of *Ontario Birds*. The provincial checklist on the OFO website is updated to reflect these changes. <http://www.ofo.ca/checklist/checklist.php> Previous OBRC reports up to 2005 are on the OFO website: <http://www.ofo.ca/obrc/obrc.php#reports>

2008 Annual Report

Ian Richards, 2008 Secretary, with input from the 2008 Committee is preparing the 2008 Annual Report which will be published in the August issue of *Ontario Birds*.

Committee Changes

Two members of the 2008 Committee, Mark Peck and Jean Iron (Chair), completed their three-year terms. Two new voting members, Ross James and Glenn Coady, were elected for three-year terms to replace them in 2009. Retiring members must be off the Committee for one year before being eligible for re-election. Glenn Coady also accepted to serve as the new OBRC Chair for the 2009 reporting year. Ian Richards has retired as OBRC Secretary and was thanked for serving two years. The Committee is pleased to report that Mark Cranford was elected the new OBRC Secretary for

the 2009 reporting year. The seven voting members of the 2009 OBRC are: Glenn Coady, Chair, Bill Crins, Rob Dobos, Ross James, Blake Mann, Ron Tozer, and Alan Wormington, Assistant Secretary.

The two non-voting members are: Mark Peck, ROM Liaison, and Mark Cranford, Secretary.

The updated chart of OBRC members from 1982 to 2009 is on the OFO website at: <http://www.ofo.ca/obrc/obrc.php#1982>

The two new voting members, Ross James and Glenn Coady, are experienced OBRC members, having served previously. They are known to OFO members and provincially for their extensive knowledge of Ontario's birds and bird identification, and they have written many articles and reports in ornithological publications. They are also editors of *Ontario Birds*. Mark Cranford is the new Secretary, and is well known to Ontario birders as the Ontbirds Coordinator for the last nine years. Committee membership involves team work and adhering to tight deadlines so that voting is completed and the Annual Report is published on time in the August issue of *Ontario Birds*.

OBRC Records

All OBRC records are housed at the ROM, where researchers may make an appointment to see them. The OBRC holds its annual meeting at the ROM so that we may access the bird collection to help with identification issues.

Photo Documentation of Rare Birds

Other items on our agenda included discussion about photo documentation of rare birds. The increased number of observers with digital cameras means that many reports are photo submissions only, with minimal written details. How-

ever, basic information must accompany photos such as date, exact location, finder if known, person who took the photo, and any other relevant details. Also, the Committee appreciates receiving a written report to confirm details which may or may not be obvious in the photos.

OBRC Display

The OBRC is planning a display before the banquet at the OFO Annual Convention at Point Pelee on 3 October 2009. Please drop by and talk to OBRC members who will be there.

Submitting Reports

Please submit reports of Review List Species and Recognizable Forms observed in Ontario to the Secretary at his email or address:

Mark Cranford, OBRC Secretary
206 - 2437 Hurontario Street
Mississauga ON L5A 2G4
Phone: 905-279-9576
Email: mark.cranford@rogers.com

See also the OFO website for a rare bird report form:

<http://www.ofo.ca/obrc/reportform.php>

Policy Meeting

The 2009 Committee may hold a Policy Meeting in the Toronto-Hamilton area in the fall if there are items for discussion that cannot be resolved through a teleconference or email. This will save on travel by several members who drive about 350 km each way for a meeting in the Toronto-Hamilton area.

Comments Welcome

Glenn Coady, 2009 Chair, will be writing the next OBRC Notes in the October issue of OFO News. He encourages you to contact him with questions or comments about OBRC at 330 Crystal Beach Blvd., Whitby ON L1N 9Z7, phone: 905-571-5708, email: glenn.coady@hotmail.com



The 2009 OFO Annual Convention

Don't forget! The 2009 OFO Annual Convention will be held at Point Pelee the weekend of 3-4 October 2009. This is a prime time of year for visiting this fabulous birding hotspot — all of the birds, with none of the crowds.

The convention will include half- and full-day field trips to some of the area's best locales, led by knowledgeable and enthusiastic birders. This year's guest speaker is Jim Duncan, Manager of Biodiversity Conservation for the Manitoba Department of Conservation, and a world expert on the Great Gray Owl.

For more information or to register for the event, visit: <http://www.ofo.ca/convention/convention2009/>

Continued from Book Reviews, page 11.

The article helps the reader understand what is actually happening when we see these flocking finches.

As always, the articles that accompany each of the sixteen families dealt with in the book are superb. I was particularly impressed with two of these. The one on Wallcreepers was 19-pages long (somewhere around 20,000 words) — that is a wonderful treatment of a family that only has one species in it. The sunbird introduction was 47-pages long and was embellished with 80 high quality photographs. I was particularly pleased with this section as it effectively dealt with a family that I was quite familiar with, due to my travels, providing insightful observations and informative text. That said, I was disappointed to see that the Borneo Spiderhunter was not mentioned. I know that the science is emerging on this complex (Grey-breasted/Bornean) but many authors have split the species and certainly it warrants mention at least. The complex of “red” sunbirds also was confusing as the pictured Javan Sunbird looked exactly like the Scarlet Sunbird in the “Birds of Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Bali”, while Temminck's Sunbird was similar but not exact in the two books (i.e. it was lacking the yellow rump in the HBW). I liked the treatment of the shrikes, for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the discussion about Loggerheads was

accurate and timely, at least as far as its distribution and status is concerned, and secondly, the Great Grey Shrike is correctly described and its North American race is acknowledged as the Northern Shrike.

I was talking to one of the authors of some of these family discussions recently, and he pointed out something of interest. With all the discussions and descriptions in the book reliance is made on numerous bibliographical references, which is good. But nowhere in the text are footnotes included so that information can be readily cross referenced back to the original source. This would certainly be a valuable inclusion in future volumes.

So who would want this book? Well, anyone who has a keen interest in birds and wants to know more about them than just where they are found. Certainly anyone who travels or intends to travel to Europe, Australasia or Africa would benefit greatly by owning this volume. As in the past, I highly recommend purchasing, not only this volume, but also the entire set. Wish you had started buying the series sooner? Visit their website (www.hbw.com) if you are interesting in purchasing back copies — they are offering an amazing deal if you buy all 13 volumes now.

Geoffrey Carpentier

155 Ravenscroft Road, Ajax, Ont. L1T 1Y3

OFO News is looking for contributing editors to join our team

Editors are required to contribute only a few hours a month (slightly more in the month before the newsletter comes out, slightly fewer immediately after).

Responsibilities include participating in discussion with other team members on content for each issue, soliciting articles of interest from potential authors, and reviewing and editing articles for grammar. Email access is a must, as all of our correspondence is done electronically, including sharing of article files.

If you think you might be interested in becoming an editor with *OFO News*, please contact Seabrooke at sanderling@symbiotic.ca.

Nikon Photo Quiz

Sponsored by Nikon Canada

By Seabrooke Leckie

It's a lovely summer day, early July, and you're strolling through a small patch of woods in an open parkland in southern Ontario. The woods themselves are moist, and have a dense understory of dogwood, patchily distributed according to where the water pools. The fragment is not large, however, perhaps an acre, perhaps two, and is surrounded by grassy meadow and scattered trees.

You pause to brush aside some mosquitoes from the back of your neck, and straighten out your hat, and as you do so you notice a small bird flit up into the trees and disappear. A moment later, it reappears from the same spot and takes off. As you move closer, you spot a nest. Aha! This must be where the bird was going.

You sit and wait for several minutes, and before too long the bird is back. It just makes a quick visit to the nest, and its back faces you. It glances over its shoulder quickly in your direction, then takes off away from you. It was just a fleeting look, but from it you were able to note a few field marks.

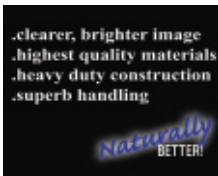
Most importantly, the bird was relatively small and greyish. It's always hard to judge the size of birds at a distance without something alongside for comparison, but it appeared about sparrow-sized, perhaps, give or take an inch or two. The wingbars were clearly defined, bold, and creamy white. You noticed that the tertials were also strongly edged. The belly was unmarked and pale, the back plain and gray.

A slew of possibilities come to mind initially. Vireo? Kinglet? Warbler? Flycatcher? You start by systematically eliminating some of the possibilities. It's probably not a kinglet. You would be able to see the facial markings of a Golden-crowned as it turned its head, and a Ruby-crowned ought not be breeding so far south. Even if it was a wayward Ruby-crowned pair, kinglets really only show one strong wingbar, not two, and their flight feathers are usually edged with noticeable yellow. Not to mention, now that you think about it, it was rather large to be a kinglet.

What about a vireo? You couldn't really see the eye to tell if it was red or not, but you'd rather expect to be able to see the dark eye stripe and white supercillium of a Red-eyed Vireo as it turned its head. Red-eyes don't have wingbars, either. Neither do Warbling or Philadelphia. Yellow-throated, Blue-headed and White-eyed all do, and in theory, though less common, could be possibilities. However, this bird clearly has a dark iris, ruling out White-eyed, the head and back are more gray-olive than yellow (and you didn't recall seeing a flash of yellow as it flew, either), which rules out White-eyed and Yellow-throated, and

Blue-headed have strong white "spectacles" that should stand out when the bird turns its head. In Blue-headed, also, you would expect more of a colour difference between the head and the back, and a stronger wash of yellow to the flanks relative to the belly and undertail coverts.

So not a vireo. Possibly a warbler of some sort? The prominent wingbars rules out the less colourful *Vermivora*, *Wilsonia* and *Oporornis* warblers. At this time of year, males will all still be in breeding plumages, so it's easy to rule out the males of most *Dendroica* and species as a result — this bird is just too drab. Even most female *Dendroica* warblers are much more colourful than this bird. The only possibilities might be a female Cape May, Cerulean, or Pine. However, neither Pine nor Cerulean warblers show such bold edging to their tertials, and Cape May females have relatively weak wingbars. Additionally, all three species have streaked flanks and we would expect at least some of that streaking to be visible from this view.



That pretty much just leaves the flycatchers. Of the flycatchers that fall into the category of drab grey and sparrow-sized, you have the various *Empidonax* flycatchers, the Eastern Phoebe, and Eastern Wood-Pewee. Olive-sided Flycatcher could be ruled out first by range, but secondly by the presence of wingbars on our individual, which Olive-sideds don't show. Similarly, phoebes lack wingbars and therefore can also be eliminated (not to mention this would be an awfully odd place for a phoebe nest, which most birders are familiar with even if you

subtle tints to body colour. In the case of Willow and Alder Flycatchers, you can't tell them apart visually at all, and must hope that the bird vocalizes while you're watching. In the case of our bird there really isn't enough visual information from this first quick glimpse to be able to nail down an identification. However, the very short wings with a fairly narrow tail might suggest Least or Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Willow, Alder, and Acadian all have longer wings and broader tails. And is that an eye-ring? But it's so hard to say definitively; best to wait for the bird to return.

Which fortunately it does, and this time it approaches the nest from the opposite direction, so you get a better view of its front. You can confirm its identity of a flycatcher by the obviously broad, flat bill. Although you can't see its wing projection from this view, you do get a better view of its very narrow tail, and it's easy to note the bold, white eye-ring. Also, it's clear this time that any yellow shading you thought might be present from the back view was simply a trick of the light filtering through the leaves. With this second look, you're able to confirm that the bird is a **Least Flycatcher**.

When you get home, and pull out your nidology guides to look up the nesting habits of *Empidonax* flycatchers, you also find that only Acadian and Least nest up in the branches of trees. Yellow-bellied are ground-nesters, and Willow and Alder both nest in small shrubs. Acadians tend to build their messy nests at the outer ends of low, drooping tree limbs, while Least Flycatchers build their tidy, compact nests in the crotches of large branches.

This nesting Least Flycatcher was photographed on the Leslie Street Spit / Tommy Thompson Park in July of 2006.



don't know the nesting habits of many of the others discussed so far). Wood-Pewees are known for their very long wings, the primaries of which project far beyond the ends of the tertials and secondaries. They also reach nearly halfway down the tail, compared to most empids whose wings end closer to the body.

Empidonax flycatchers, along with gulls, fall warblers and most sparrows, are the bane of many beginning birders. They tend to all resemble one another in their drabness, with their primary field marks being their size and shape, and

The OFO Board of Directors is seeking nominations for the position of director

Each director has an area of responsibility (e.g., advertising, convention preparation) that ensures the affairs of OFO run smoothly. The role of the director will be determined following election. The term is three years and the directors meet every two months at a home in the Toronto area.

Please send nominations to black@brocku.ca



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