



OFO News

NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS



Red Knots / Mark Peck

By Christine Vance

On 25 March 2008 the governor of New Jersey, Jon S. Corzine, signed legislation imposing a moratorium on harvesting horseshoe crabs in New Jersey. Eggs from the crabs are a critically important food source for the Red Knot on its 16,000 km annual migration. The horseshoe crab harvest has been banned in New Jersey until both the crab and Red Knot populations have returned to sustainable levels, as determined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The horseshoe crab has been overharvested since the early 1990s. Fishermen use the crustaceans as bait. Although New Jersey's fishing community has voluntarily refrained from harvesting horseshoe crabs for the



past two years, the new law ensures continued protection of this vital food source until such a time when populations are sustainable as determined by scientists independent of the influences of the fishing industry.

The *rufa* subspecies of Red Knot stops on the New Jersey and Delaware beaches of the Delaware Bay each spring on its migration from the southern tip of South America to breeding grounds in Arctic Canada. This is one of the longest migrations in the avian world. The Delaware Bay is a key feeding area for the Red Knot because it is the centre of the Western Hemisphere's only population of horseshoe crabs.

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Horseshoe crab eggs provide the critical food source during the stopover of the Red Knot in New Jersey and Delaware during migration. These eggs, unlike any other food resource, are quickly metabolized into fat, which allows Red Knots to double their body weight in about two to three weeks. Consumption of these eggs is needed for the birds to store sufficient fat to continue their migration north. This weight gain is critical for survival because Delaware Bay is the last stop before Red Knots reach their still-frozen Arctic breeding grounds, where it takes one to three weeks for insect food to become available. The fat reserves put on during their stopover in Delaware Bay allow Red Knots to survive and continue courtship, mating

and egg production until food becomes available. Without a sufficient fat reserve, the consequence is loss of reproduction, or worse, mortality.

The subspecies has plummeted to a global population of about 15,000 individuals, well below the level of about 100,000 believed necessary for the species to sustain itself. A paucity of food on migration routes is believed to be one of the primary causes of the decline. Some believe the law is the most important step yet to protect the bird, although it is still vulnerable to other factors, such as extreme weather events in its Arctic breeding grounds. Fines for the continued harvesting of horseshoe crabs are \$10,000 US for the first offence and \$25,000 for each subsequent offence.

Harry Lumsden Distinguished Ornithologist

By *Ron Tozer, Ron Pittaway and Bill Crins*



"The Distinguished Ornithologist Award is granted to individuals who have made outstanding and authoritative contributions to the scientific 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." Our committee proposes a nominee each year for the Distinguished Ornithologist Award. The award is presented at the OFO Annual Convention in the fall.

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Harry Lumsden will be the 2008 and eleventh recipient of OFO's Distinguished Ornithologist Award. Harry has been active for almost 60 years in the study and conservation of Ontario's birds. He is respected worldwide as an authority on waterfowl and gallinaceous birds.

Harry Lumsden was one of the pioneers of ornithological research in northern Ontario. His research made very important additions to our knowledge on birds in that part of the province, as reflected in his numerous publications.

As a biologist and research scientist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Harry conducted field work and made important contributions to the birdlife of Ontario. For example, he studied Sharp-tailed Grouse and Greater Prairie-Chickens on Manitoulin Island. He retired in 1988, but continued research projects such as his work on Trumpeter Swans.

Harry has been a member of OFO since 1983. He is a long time supporter of the organization, and has always responded enthusiastically to OFO members and editors seeking his advice. Harry has contributed articles to *Ontario Birds*, and for OFO's special publication, *Ornithology in Ontario*.

Harry Lumsden was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada on 27 January 2004 in recognition of his outstanding contributions to wildlife management and conservation.

Ken Abraham, who was mentored by Harry Lumsden at MNR, will present the Distinguished Ornithologist Award to Harry at the OFO Annual Convention Banquet in Hamilton on Saturday, 4 October 2008.

Photo of Harry Lumsden by Jean Iron

OFO Annual Convention 2008

By Chris Escott

The Hamilton area is a great place to go birding in the fall, with a variety of habitats attracting a truly amazing assortment of bird species.

Once again, OFO will be holding its Annual Convention here, and you should plan to join us because it's going to be exciting.



Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Barry Cherriere

The program covers the weekend of 4–5 October 2008 and will include a series of field trips as well as a Saturday evening banquet at Chandelier Place in Stoney Creek that will end with a door prize draw with lots of great merchandise.

Saturday evening will begin with displays by various birding organizations, vendors of birding equipment, and OFO committees such as OFO Sales and OFO Memberships. It will also give our members a chance to have a drink and talk about the day's events as they renew acquaintances with fellow members. A delicious banquet has been planned with salad and penne pasta, chicken and veal, potatoes and veggies, all topped off with dessert and ice cream. Special meals are available too. After that we'll do a round-

up of the day's species count, and a quick bit of OFO business. Harry Lumsden will then be presented with the Distinguished Ornithologist Award in recognition of his lifetime contribution to birding in Ontario and especially for his work in re-establishing the Trumpeter Swan in Ontario.

Our guest speaker will follow, and this will be a real treat. Donald Kroodsma, professor emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, has studied birdsong for more than thirty years and will be telling us all about his fascination with bird vocalizations. He was recognized as the "reigning authority on avian vocal behavior" in the citation



Donald Kroodsma

for his 2003 Elliott Coues Award from the American Ornithologists' Union. He has edited three scholarly volumes on the field of acoustic communication among birds, and authored more than one hundred articles in both scholarly journals and popular magazines such as *Auk*, *Condor*, *Birder's World*, *Living Bird*, and *Natural History*. Don-

ald majored in chemistry in college and discovered birds in a local Michigan marsh during his last semester. That summer he went to the University of Michigan field station in Pellston, taking beginning and advanced ornithology courses simultaneously. From there he



Parasitic Jaeger / Barry Chieriere

traveled cross-country to Oregon State University for graduate school, where a singing wren in his backyard got him started on a lifelong passion for listening to birds.

The field trips, some lasting a few hours and others the better part of the day, have been chosen to highlight the Hamilton area's rich diversity of habitats, and to search out any rarities that might be in the area. There will be trips to Woodland Cemetery and the Hendrie Valley, Fifty Point and the Grimsby Sewage Lagoons, the Dundas Hydro ponds, Shell Park, Van Wagners Beach and Windermere Basin. We're expecting lots of migrant passerines and shorebirds, perhaps some early winter gulls and ducks, some migrating hawks if the winds are right, and maybe even a few hard to find or vagrant species such as Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Pomarine Jaeger or Northern Gannet. In addition, Donald Kroodsma will be putting on a Sunday morning workshop on bird song, using a computer and Raven software.

**Tickets are going fast, so don't delay
– send in your registration now!
Details can be found on the OFO
website at <www.ofo.ca> including a
downloadable registration form.
See you there!**

OBRC Notes June 2008

By Jean Iron, Chair

The Ontario Bird Records Committee held its Annual Meeting on 12 April 2008 at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. The purpose of the meeting was to finalize voting on the reports for 2007 and elect new members for the 2008 Committee. Decisions on reports will be published in the *OBRC Annual Report for 2007* in the August 2008 issue of *Ontario Birds*. In 2007, the Committee reviewed 161 rare bird reports. Ian Richards in his first year as OBRC Secretary did a superb job of circulating the reports and tabulating the votes. The seven voting members of the Committee review the rare bird reports and photos online at a secure OBRC website, and then email their votes to the Secretary. This eliminates mailing costs and speeds up the review process. Ian is now preparing the 2007 Annual Report for Ontario Birds.

Also at the Annual Meeting, we elected three new members for three year terms from 2008 to 2010: Blake Mann, first time on the OBRC, and veterans Ron Tozer and Alan Wormington. They replace Margaret Bain, Glenn Coady and Colin Jones who retired at the end of their three-year terms. We thank Margaret, Chair for the past three years, Glenn and Colin for their dedication to OBRC and OFO. The 2008 Committee comprises Bill Crins, Rob Dobos, Jean Iron (Chair), Blake Mann, Mark Peck (Royal Ontario Museum Liaison), Ian Richards (Non-voting Secretary), Ron Tozer, and Alan Wormington (Assistant Secretary).

Advances in DNA technology are now being used by the OBRC in the identification of difficult species such as *Selasphorus* hummingbirds. The Royal Ontario Museum's Molecular Laboratory and The Barcode of Life project will give identifications from feather, blood or tissue samples to the OBRC. CO1 sequences from mitochondrial DNA will provide a 600 base pair, maternally inherited sequence that will confirm the identity of most samples with the possible exception of some very closely related species such as gulls. Most Ontario bird observatories are now permitted to take a feather sample for DNA analysis. The OBRC looks forward to incorporating these advances into its decisions.

The 1982 to 2005 OBRC Annual Reports are now online at the OFO website at <http://www.ofo.ca/obrc/obrc.php> and available to all interested parties. Elisa Cheng, a Co-op student working for Mark Peck at the Royal Ontario Museum, scanned all the reports and converted them to PDFs.

Uses of OBRC data: As a committee of OFO, the OBRC oversees the official *Ontario Bird Checklist*. In February, OFO published the *2008 Ontario Bird Checklist*. Eleanor Beagan coordinated this project and Jean Iron, Michel Gosselin, Ron Pittaway and Ron Tozer assisted with proofreading. The new checklist is available from OFO Sales.

Information published in OBRC reports is used by bird researchers, and authors of continental bird guides and regional bird books such as the recently published *Birds of Hamilton and Surrounding Areas*. The American Ornithologists' Union consults OBRC records when updating the *Check-list of North American Birds*. The OBRC also documents some endangered species such as the Barn Owl and Henslow's Sparrow.

What to report? Reportable species for the North and South are indicated on the 2008 Ontario Bird Checklist. Also, on the OFO website you will find the Review Lists of Species for both the North and South sections of the province, and the Review List of Recognizable Forms. They are kept up-to-date. Please document any species that is not on the checklist, new species to the North or South, new subspecies, and new breeding species for the province. The above are reviewed by the OBRC.

The OBRC is planning a policy meeting in the fall. If you have questions or comments about the OBRC, please contact me at jeaniron@sympatico.ca or 416-445-9297.

**Please document rare birds by completing the form on the OFO website
<http://www.ofo.ca/obrc/reportform.php> and mail or email photos to:**

Ian Richards, OBRC Secretary
Apt 501, 1305 Ontario St
Burlington ON L7S 1Y1
905-631-0740
Email: ianrichards@cogeco.ca

Where have all the Migrants Gone?

By Seabrooke Leckie

Birders who have the opportunity to get out on a regular basis probably noticed that this spring migration just wasn't what it usually is.

On a normal season there will be an ebb and flow of migrants moving through, some "fallout" events as birds are grounded by poor weather and other stretches of good weather when the birds just keep on going. This spring the movement has been more uniform, with not many strong peaks in numbers, and a generally depressed abundance of birds.

Many creatures go through regular, periodic cycles of population booms and busts, as animals respond to increasing food supply, and populations subsequently crash as their size outstrips the capacity of the ecosystem to support them. Some cycles can be dramatic, such as that seen with rodents and owls, particularly in the north. However, usually these cycles are generally contained to just a few species within a food web, and are not applicable on a broad scale.

Migration monitoring stations throughout southern Ontario have recorded extremely low numbers of birds this spring — record or near-record low capture rates. For example, to 30 May, Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) had banded just 8,859 birds across its three stations, compared to 14,751 by this point last year. In Toronto, the Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station (TTPBRS) had captured just 1,679 birds up to May 26, compared to 2,294 for the same period last year. This represents a drop of over 25% for TTPBRS, and nearly 40% for LPBO, from last year's totals. The absence of birds this spring isn't just your imagination!

What could cause such a wholesale drop in numbers? One possibility is the weather patterns this spring. The numbers recorded by migration stations are very dependent on weather conditions creating "fallout" events that bolster tallies as you get the oft-described "birds practically dripping from the trees". As well, winds favourable to migration are extremely important — south winds in the spring, north winds in the fall. Migrants are less likely to travel if they'd be flying into a headwind. Both

south winds and "fallout weather" have been scarce this spring, and could adversely affect migration. Of course, the birds aren't going to just stay south for the summer, so we'd expect to see good pushes eventually. It's possible that when the winds finally turned south, the birds departed in large numbers and just pushed through, not stopping in southern Ontario.

Another clue to the reason comes from one of the measurements taken by banders at migration monitoring stations: the ages of the birds. In an ordinary year, younger birds (labeled hatch-year in the fall and second-year in the spring, according to the calendar year they're in) will outnumber older birds (after-hatch-year or after-second-year, in fall and spring respectively) by approximately 9:1. In the fall of 2006 at TTPBRS, after-hatch-year birds made up about 10% of birds successfully aged. Conversely, in fall 2007, adult birds numbered nearly twice as many, at about 19%. Some species showed even higher proportions of after-hatch-years, such as Gray-cheeked Thrush or White-crowned Sparrow, at over a third of birds captured. This shift in population demographics suggests that the summer of 2007 was a poor breeding year for birds in general.

The exact reason for this is more difficult to determine; however, it is possible to hazard a guess. In his *Winter Finch Forecast for 2007-2008*, Ron Pittaway indicated that the 2007 fruit, seed and cone crop through much of northern Ontario was very poor due to late spring frosts and snow that killed many flowers and buds before they could develop. Ron's forecast concentrated on the effect that this would have on finch populations that rely on these crops for food in the winter. However, food for summer breeders would also be lower for the same reason. In addition to affecting plant development, late spring colds would have an adverse effect on early insect populations, both directly by killing insects that can't withstand

freezing and indirectly by killing the flowers or plants the insects rely on. The end result would be less food for hungry mouths, and therefore fewer fledglings and successful nests.

Further evidence that this may have been the cause comes from the Midwest. Birds follow general "flyways" during migration, and most of the birds that breed in northern Ontario and northwestern Quebec pass through southern Ontario. Birds breeding in northwestern Ontario and Manitoba, areas that didn't experience the same spring weather conditions, will follow a different route, through the Midwestern states. Migration monitoring stations such as Thunder Cape Bird Observatory, which samples this Midwestern flyway, showed high bird abundance last fall, with TCBO recording their second-highest fall banding total that season. Additionally, radar images, which can be used for observing night-time bird migration, showed dense migration activity through the Midwest, while radar images for southern Ontario were weak at best.

With increasing pressures on migratory birds during their long treks, a lower percentage will survive the winter and make it back up to the summer grounds to breed. Once there, they will be at the whim of the weather, and as climate change progresses, weather events such as killing spring frosts or summer droughts will likely become more common. It is likely that populations will rebound from last year's poor breeding season, but over the long-term climate change will become one more challenge on a long list of challenges already facing our birds.

Hermit Thrush
Seabrooke Leckie



Atlas Launch

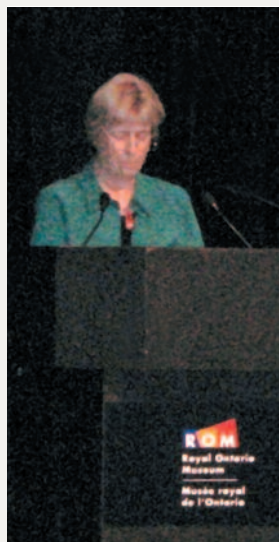
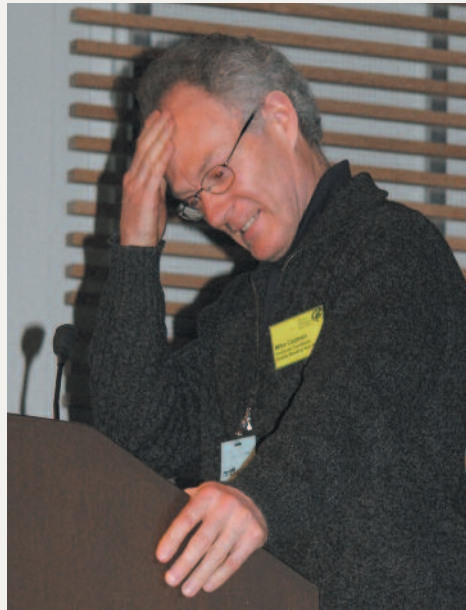
By Mike Cadman

The Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005 was officially launched at two celebrations, one in Ottawa on 30 January and the other in Toronto on 12 February 2008. The occasions gave atlasers the opportunity to see the book for the first time, socialize and celebrate their accomplishments. Both events were well attended and enjoyed by all.

The Ottawa meeting was held at the Museum of Nature, and was attended by about 125 people mostly from eastern Ontario. Speakers from each of the five sponsoring organizations (OFO, OMNR, CWS, BSC and Ontario Nature), including Virginia Potter, Director General of the Canadian Wildlife Service, expressed their appreciation to all atlasers for their exceptional effort on behalf of Ontario's birds.

The Toronto assembly took place at the Royal Ontario Museum, and about 400 people took part, with an overflow crowd watching events on video outside the auditorium. Among speakers from the five sponsors, Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, Donna Cansfield, thanked atlas participants and project organizers for providing invaluable information that will aid considerably in the conservation of our birds.

Thanks to Jean Iron, Susan Hall, Diane Lepage and Jim Heslop for providing the photos.



Atlas in Action

By Mike Cadman

The *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario* is already being widely used to inform people about the distribution, relative abundance and status of the birds of the province. But the value of the atlas project goes far beyond the book itself. Now that the book is complete, those involved in bird research and conservation and environmental assessment are expanding their use of the project's database, which contains over 1.2 million records.

There are numerous ways to use the data. One interesting example involves this newsletter, prior to the publication of the atlas. Janet Grand of Orillia was concerned about a large Chimney Swift roost in the Opera House in downtown Orillia. When Janet heard that the chimney was going to undergo repairs, she took in a copy of *OFO News* 2006 Volume 24(3), which included a draft map showing the evident decline in Chimney Swift distribution and status, to city planners. The planners then worked with the company doing the repairs to ensure that the chimney was not capped or otherwise modified in a manner that would make it unsuitable for the birds. Janet also got a chance to visit the top of the 50' chimney, using the construction scaffolding, and was impressed with the size of the opening (about 4x4') and the substantial thickness of the chimney walls (about one foot). The story has a happy ending. Janet and I were treated to the amazing sight of 262 chattering Chimney Swifts swirling overhead and finally spiraling down to roost in the refurbished Opera House Chimney on May 28, 2008.

The following are some of the requests for data that have been fulfilled since publication of the book itself.

Species-specific applications:

- Golden-winged Warbler and Blue-winged Warbler research and conservation in central Ontario;
- Barred Owl Habitat Suitability Modeling;
- A check on a Red-shouldered Hawk breeding site;
- Research on Species at Risk by an OMNR scientist;

- A study of changes in Loggerhead Shrike distribution in relation to habitat change;
- Colonial bird nesting site data to enhance future field surveys;
- Mapping of Trumpeter Swan nest sites;
- Comparative analysis of Bank Swallow colonies for a project being conducted under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

Applications pertinent to broader planning issues:

- A forest company requested information on the past and present distribution of birds in several of its land holdings;
- Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements for proposed developments and wind farms;
- Development of a Natural Heritage Strategy by a Conservation Authority;
- Biodiversity assessment of a watershed (eventually to help develop a Nature Trail);
- A study of Areas of Concern in Niagara and Haldimand;
- A biodiversity assessment for an Ontario mining site;
- Reviewing of planning and development proposals by Conservation Authorities on behalf of its member municipalities;
- State of the Lake reports for various lakes;
- Identification of Candidate Significant Wildlife Habitat for a Regional Municipality.
- Support the creation of protected areas network in forest management units, a requirement of Forest Stewardship Council certification.

Requests involving Species at Risk data are screened through the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' Natural Heritage Information Centre, to ensure the protection of these birds.

Undoubtedly, more applications will be found, further adding to the value of the work undertaken by so many of the province's birders on behalf of the atlas project. Thanks to the many OFO members who helped make the Atlas book and database possible.



top left: Mike Cadman finds the first typo in the book while making his presentation of atlas results. Photo: Susan Hall

top right: Nicole Kopysh, Assistant Coordinator from 2001-2005, signs a book for Kathy Parker. Photo: Jean Iron.

above left: Three of the atlas editors. Right to left: Andrew Couturier, Don Sutherland and Denis Lepage. Photo: Jean Iron.

above: Gregor Beck. Chair of the Atlas Board and one of the book's editors. Photo: Diane Lepage.

left: Jean Iron. Past President of OFO and current Chair of the Ontario Bird Records Committee, adds an OFO perspective to the Toronto launch at the ROM. Photo: Jim Heslop

right: Mark Peck was Master of Ceremonies at the ROM. Mark looked at the atlas from the point of view of the leading lights of Ontario ornithology throughout the 20th century. Photo: Susan Hall.



Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005

The *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005*, of which OFO is a co-publisher, has been published and is now on sale. Reviews have been very positive to date. Here are some comments from readers.

Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson, Joint Honorary Presidents of Birdlife International's Rare Bird Club:

"The *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario (2001-2005)* is a monumental achievement. Not only is it a stirring example of co-operative research – the field work alone entailed over 150,000 hours logged by more than 3000 volunteers – but the detailed results of that research have been presented with a remarkable clarity and style.

Invaluable for the thoroughness of its science, the Atlas is also a wonderful book to simply browse. The species accounts are clean, jargon-free, and inviting; the graphics contain a wealth of visual information; and the text is profusely illustrated with photographs of the birds, and frequently their nests and/or typical habitats. This book is a must for everyone interested in birds, Ontario, and the natural world."

Robert Bateman:

"I find the new *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario* amazing and am delighted by its beauty and detail. The photographs of the birds are excellent and the graphic work is clear and absorbing. To view the book will be a joy for any birder but beyond that anyone who cares about our environment will find the data thought-provoking. The dark dots that indicate breeding in the first atlas but not breeding at present should be disturbing in many cases. What is happening to eliminate these birds from those areas? I would hope that this book was widely read beyond the birding community. It will stimulate interest in these valuable and fascinating creatures and it might help to guide environmental policies for the future."

Steven Price, Senior Director, Conservation Science, Policy & Planning World Wildlife Fund Canada:

"The *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario* is wonderful, from cover to cover. Like many atlasers, I had been eagerly anticipating it, and while I had a sense from the first atlas and the website what to expect, the final result is simply outstanding. The more I refer to it, the more engaging and useful I'm finding it."

Matt Medler, Boreal Songbird Initiative:

"After eagerly awaiting the arrival of my copy of the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario 2001-2005* for a few weeks, I was excited to find it sitting on my doorstep yesterday afternoon. From the stunning cover photograph of Prairie Warbler to the extensive content inside, the book quickly proved that it was well worth the wait. In fact, I think this new Ontario Atlas is the finest breeding bird atlas that I have ever seen."

To order the Atlas: phone 1-800-440-2366 (or 416-444-8419) or on-line at www.birdsontario.org.

The book sells for \$92.50 plus GST. It is a large format book of 9 x 12", is over 700 pages, and has over 400 photos and more than 900 maps. The atlas is printed on Forest Stewardship Council certified paper. All profits from sales of the atlas will go into bird conservation projects in Ontario.

More about the Atlas

By Robert Curry

If you don't own an Atlas you should. This is a big beautiful book.

With 706 pages glossy pages (printed on paper using responsibly harvested wood), a hard cover, and weighing in at eight pounds the Atlas is large and impressive. The cover is a soft grey with a stunning Prairie Warbler on the front, photographed by John Reaume and an equally impressive Peregrine Falcon by Brandon Holden on the back.

The promise of the cover is well met on the inside. Each species is illustrated with a colour photograph and some also have nesting habitat and nest photos. The maps, the raison d'être of an atlas after all, are printed in bright, easy-to-read colours. On the Breeding Evidence map, we no longer have the problem from the first

dots indicate Atlas provide bird population responsive other factors pointed out are anthrop through large directly th ment plans

To repeat the first At aspect of th the form of tribution a have increa

Atlas of distinguishing between shades of grey to ascertain possible, probable or confirmed breeding.

Every Breeding Evidence map depicts the story of the distribution of the species across the province. Without reading any text one can deduce where each species is concentrated and, almost as important, where it does not occur. The darkness of the map tells the reader at a glance whether the species was easy or difficult to confirm. With many species one may infer with some accuracy where concentrations occur and where numbers thin out based on the confirmed squares compared to probable and possible squares. Each species account provides a fascinating explanation of the distribution changes. It also provides information on the breeding biology, much of it obtained from the *Birds of North America* series.

But this is the second Ontario breeding bird atlas and now we may compare distributions between 2001 – 2005 and 1981 – 1985. For almost every species with sufficient number of mapped squares fascinating changes are evident. Black dots indicate where the species was found on the first Atlas but was not detected this time. In a similar fashion the patterns of yellow indicate where the species is “new”. The atlas provides a graphic demonstration that bird distributions are highly dynamic and responsive to changes in the landscape and land use. As we know, and as is constantly pointed out in the Atlas, many of the changes are anthropogenic whether it is indirectly through land use changes that alter habitats or through reintroduction and management.

What changes over the 25 years since the first atlas are, for me, the most significant changes in this second Atlas. These changes take the form of abundance changes, or shifts in distribution and density. Specifically, 74 species have increased significantly in more than one

atlas region, while 53 have decreased significantly. In the two northern regions more species have increased and in the southern-most, Carolinian, region more species have decreased. As is pointed out in the introductory chapters many if not most of these changes are the result of anthropogenic disturbances. Changes in forest management, in agricultural and land use practices, urbanization and invasive species all have affected our birds. Some changes depicted in the Atlas appear to run counter to the results of other scientific/long term studies and, indeed, to experience and intuition. That so many species have increased significantly in the Northern Shield and Hudson Bay Lowlands regions have even the change editors grasping for explanations, “Reasons for the disproportionately large number of species increasing in the two Northern regions are not known”. As they point out, data results have been corrected for the 25 percent increased effort in the atlas so this ought not to be a factor in the reasons for the increases. However, they could not correct for an improved quality of observers perhaps especially in the north. It is possible that a higher proportion of northern observers were able to detect species by song than in the first atlas.

A fascinating result of point counts is the population estimates of the commonest ten species in each of the five regions and for the province as a whole. Most birders living in southern Ontario may have an intellectual understanding that our province is mainly boreal forest. Nevertheless it is somewhat shocking that European Starling and Common Grackle do not make the top ten list for the province. The commonest species estimated at 15 million is the Nashville Warbler. In fact, with the exception of American Robin and Chipping Sparrow all other species in the top 10 are mostly found north of urbanized southern Ontario.

The addition of Relative Abundance contour maps, for those species where sufficient data allowed, make it easy to determine areas of high and low density across the province. This is a brand new feature of the second Atlas and is the result of statistical analysis of point count data. These relative abundance maps are the best indication of population concentrations ever for bird species in the province. In a few cases they can be misleading. The method used to draw abundance contours, means that in some cases areas of high abundance appear to be much larger than in reality. For example, the high density categories for Rough-winged and Bank

Swallows which occur mainly on the shores of the lower Great Lakes, appear to cover large inland areas of their counties and Horned Larks do not breed inland from Cape Henrietta Maria as the contours suggest.

The chapter on changes of bird distribution between atlases is not only the most interesting but should guide management and conservation efforts in the years to come. Most birders will not be surprised by the 25 species which have increased the most or by the 25 species which have decreased the most. Birds of woods and forest have increased significantly in every region except the Carolinian. Birds of grassland agriculture and open regions decreased in all regions except the Hudson Bay Lowlands. As the Atlas points out, these changes are the direct result of human activity in the environment. Given the real concern for the loss of neo-tropical migrant species it is interesting to note that five of the 25 greatest increases are Alder Flycatcher, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Black-throated Blue Warbler. It is apparent that reforestation resulting in increased nesting habitat for these species has, at least in Ontario, overcome the effects of tropical deforestation in their wintering grounds. The plight, if not the causes of decline, in aerial foragers such as Chimney Swift, the Caprimulgids and the Hirundines, (the swallows) is reflected in nine of the 25 highest decreases. In addition the atlas puts numbers to the generally observed decline of many species of open grassland and farming areas, such as Red-headed Woodpecker, Killdeer, Vesper Sparrow, Eastern Kingbird, Upland Sandpiper, American Kestrel, and Bobolink.

The Atlas is a reference that can be dipped into when one has a question or seeks information about the breeding status of a particular bird species. However, I urge readers to do more than this. By carefully reading this Atlas, both the introductory chapters and each species account, any Ontario birder will come away with much greater knowledge and appreciation of those birds she/he encounters on field trips to the local patch. And if more information is needed the list of references runs to 30 pages that provide the reader with a built-in resource for further study.

For many of us it was great fun to participate in atlasing. In addition it can be equally interesting to read about the results of all this effort in the Atlas.

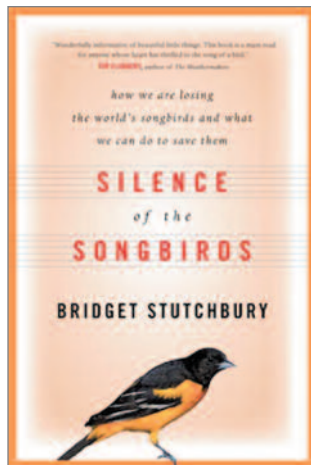
Book Reviews

Silence of the Songbirds

(2007). By Dr. Bridget Stutchbury. HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., Toronto, Canada. 223 pages. \$25.00. ISBN-13: 978-0-00-200728-3.

What have we learned since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*? Bridget Stutchbury's *Silence of the Songbirds* answers this question and highlights the latest threats to our beloved song-makers. I first heard about this book on CBC radio and went to the store immediately to buy my copy purely because all the proceeds will be donated to migratory songbird research and thought that it was an admirable gesture. I was pleasantly surprised by the book's poetic and comedic nature which overcomes any stigma of scientific writing. Over the nine chapters that focus on various aspects of the life and threats to songbirds, Stutchbury has produced a book to be enjoyed by birders and scientists alike.

This book is a great read for bird enthusiasts because, along with addressing the proximate reasons for bird behaviour, she tells us the ultimate causes. . . why birds do certain things. This may shed light on much avian behaviour that you have seen, but have not known the purpose of. I thoroughly enjoyed the comparisons of scientific principles to everyday occurrences such as relating forest edge environment to a pizza crust. Another favourite analogy is between migratory stopover sites and gas stations. Stutchbury uses a happenstance we can all relate to, travelling along the highway and seeing the gas gauge near empty. What if there were no gas stations nearby? These are the exact situations that our songbirds are encountering on migration as we destroy their stopover habitat.



Honestly, I laughed, I cried, and I gasped out loud, but I mostly shook my head and thought "What are we doing to the world?" Stutchbury focuses on the problems of pesticides and habitat destruction and how these actions are affecting our fragile ecosystems. We load

on the pesticides to control insects, but these pesticides also kill the birds which are the natural insect control mechanisms. She highlights this vicious cycle in a system that has been so distorted by our actions that a balance is difficult to find.

This book must be commended for two main reasons. First, it clearly describes how we can make bird-friendly consumer choices everyday. These alternatives are conveniently summarized at the end of the book and include buying shade-grown fairly-traded organic coffee, organically grown fruits and vegetables, buying only Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) approved wood and paper products, using only 100% post-consumer recycled disposable paper products, turning off building lights in the city at night, and keeping cats indoors. Second, and more importantly, is the way it has brought science directly to the people. Bridget Stutchbury is an Associate Professor of Biology at York University and distinguished researcher on the behavioural ecology and conservation of temperate zone and tropical songbirds. Typically, scientists publish the results of their hard work in scientific journals, which are rarely viewed by the general public. Since they are hard to access, technical and difficult to interpret, they are mostly used by other scientists. This book brings the scientific facts straight to the general public, the ones who have the most power to make decisions about the future of our planet and to amplify the voice of scientists to influence policymakers.

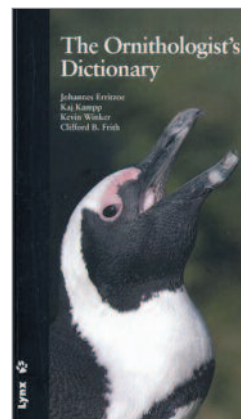
Stutchbury finishes her book with a personal account of a child holding an American Redstart in hand with awe. The lingering image she creates is a reminder that we should all draw on our experiences with these wonderful creatures and remember them every day as we make choices on how to live our lives in balance with nature.

Lyndsay Smith

The Ornithologist's Dictionary

2007. By Johannes Erritzoe, Kaj Kampp, Kevin Winkler & Clifford B. Frith. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain. E-mail: lynx@hbw.com. Softcover 290 pages. \$25.00 (ISBN 978-84-96553-43-9).

Generally, I review regional guides, technical volumes and monographs, but this one caught my eye as something a little different. This is a nice compact book that will be useful to both professional ornithologists and those who simply want to better understand terminology as it relates to birds and their behaviour. One thing that many beginning, and



some long-time birders, feel they lack is an understanding of the terminology used in chat forums and in popular and scientific journals. Well, look no further, for here it is. Simple to use and pleasing in style and format, you will instantly be able to use this book to better understand that article you're reading or to assist as you struggle to write that rare bird report and to ensure you're using the right phrases and descriptors.

The authors acknowledge the challenges associated with certain words being excluded of necessity or in error and encourage feedback on the quality and content of the book. Likewise, they are clear that certain words (e.g. 'sun bathing' and 'food selection'), that are well described in other books and are in broad usage, are not redefined herein.

They recognize the challenge in trying to think globally to include words used by ornithologists and bird fanciers around the world and have tried to be as inclusive as possible. There is a decided European flavour to their writing, but great effort has been made to cross-reference words used differently to those used in the Americas, such as 'ringing' versus 'banding'.

So how good is it? Well, it's quite good but not perfect. Here are a few examples that might be useful to help you decide:

Why did the authors include the definition of certain tree species (e.g. *acacia*)? If there was value in including any tree species, why were obvious ones like maple, oak, fir, spruce and pine omitted? Why are some non-ornithological definitions, such as 'plate tectonics', 'floppy disk' and 'abscissa' included? Some definitions seemed to be missing entirely, obscurely referenced or misplaced. For example, 'retrix/retrices' is buried in the definition of 'tail'. 'Wadi' is included, but the similarly defined 'arroyo' is not — why? At least one definition (i.e. Allee's principle) seems to be incorrectly placed out of alphabetical order. The definition for 'retap' is too narrow in its focus and is therefore not entirely accurate.

On the flip side, it's got some great definitions that will make you the hit of your next bird trivia party. Consider: 'Zugstimmung — behavioural changes in daily activity rhythm that a bird must undergo before it starts its migration' or 'musket — a falconry term for a male [European] Sparrowhawk'. There are many more of these, such as folivory, eyas, latebra, and quintocubital, but you'll just have to get the book to learn what these mean.

Should you buy the book? I think so... it's concise and written so the layperson can easily understand and use it. It includes almost all the words you might read about in your birding books and many more. Additionally, it's actually good reading — just to go through it for fun and see some of the great words birders use.

Geoffrey Carpentier



Erwin's Merlin

Birding by Ear and Binocular

By Erwin Meissner

It was a beautiful, bright and sunny morning. Just a perfect day for an early spring ramble along the north shore of Lake Huron, amongst the lower foothills of the Canadian Shield in mid-northern Ontario. We encountered Trailing Arbutus (*Epigaea repens*) and Early Saxifrage (*Saxifraga virginiensis*) in bloom, and Nodding Trillium (*Trillium cernuum*) shoots just emerging. We also heard and saw several songsters of early spring, migrants just back from their long journey and settling on disputed territories.

There were the clear notes and trills of the Song Sparrow with its "maids, maids, put on the tea-kettle-ettle," and then the pure, high whistle, "Oh, sweet Canada-Canada-Canada" from the White-throated Sparrow, our very own patriotic bird. Well, that is what it sounds like to us Canadians, anyway. In the U.S. they have another mnemonic for its song.

Always a pleasant surprise are the musical trills of the Dark-eyed Junco, a real go-stopper every time. Not to be overlooked are the ever-present Red-winged Blackbirds, noisy and boisterous with their loud and very imposing liquid gurgle, "Hercules!" They are so conspicuous, with their red epaulets flashing brightly from between the cattail patches. Several American Robins were also a treat to see and listen to, this early in the season. They can brighten up any forest or suburb with their clear and liquid "cheerily, cheer-up" songs. Overhead, a special treat, a Red-tailed Hawk hung effortless in the cloudless sky, sounding its rasping scream across the countryside.

After a good long, eventful hike like this, there is always the opportunity to sit down for an enjoyable picnic. There was just the perfect place for such an occasion nearby, at one of our members' farm. Soon we were settled all around in a large, loose circle on her lawn, and having a lively discussion about our various morning observations. Just then, all of a sudden, there was a very interruptive, loud and sharp "twi-twitwitititit!" A call of a Merlin, quite familiar to most of us. Several "binos" went quickly into action. Everyone keenly looked all around — but to no avail. No one could detect this most sought-after of birders' quarries. We kept hearing the repeated, rapid, accelerating calls over and over again, but with all our searching we could not locate this small "imp" of an elusive falcon.

One party member said, "All I can find is that silly old robin on top of that tall spruce over there — but that's no Merlin!" But hold on... and we all could see quite clearly now, focusing on that bird: whenever that "silly old robin" threw back its head and flexed its brightly-coloured chest, out came, not the expected clear liquid song of a thrush, but the very pronounced sharp call of that elusive Merlin. What a silly bird. Everyone was in agreement, this bird must have imprinted on the song as a hatchling in a nest in the vicinity of a Merlin's eyrie. So, we wondered, will this poor bird ever get a chance to find a mate of his own kind, with a call like this? Most likely not. It must be quite scary for any prospective female robin to even come close to a "brute" like him. If anything, the only one he will ever attract, sooner or later, will be a real Merlin, and he or she will have him for dinner. So, who is coming for dinner now?

Intelligence

... the ice was still on the lake, and I was becoming a little exasperated. What's more, big blocks of ice had piled up in front of the cabin, preventing me from taking out my dogsled. I was tired of being shut in.

When a break in the grey sky revealed a wide band of blue, and sunshine streamed to the ground, the call to assembly sounded in me. I dragged the canoe all the way to Lac Culotte, which was half-melted. When the ice gave way beneath me, all I had to do was jump into the boat and paddle over to the next ice bridge. A few small waves, pushed by an easterly wind, sang against the hull. It was pretty... until the storm came up. Of course, I had neither a coat nor a slicker with me. I returned home in the rain, jumping from one block of ice to the next. Luckily no one saw me: I must have looked crazy.

Something moved off to my right. Wiping the rain from my eyes, I recognized a herring gull eating something on the ice in front of the cabin. Suddenly a raven jumped on it. It was an unambiguous attack: the gull backed up, the raven advanced. The prey was bigger than I had first thought. The raven took several steps and tried to lift the fish, a whitefish weighing at least a kilogram.

Because fishing was not allowed in winter, I hadn't eaten fresh fish in months. I yelled, "Raven!" and raced madly over the checkerboard surface of ice and water. I was nearly at the fish when a misstep drenched me to the bone, and I realized that it was all in vain — I'd be eating another meal of lentils and bean sprouts that evening. Before we could get there, the raven and I, the gull had almost finished its meal. The fish's head was gone, and its entrails were spread over the ice. I figured that my lentils wouldn't be so bad after all. For a moment I considered gathering the entrails and giving them to my dogs but

decided not to. Somewhere not far away Mrs. Raven would be incubating her young in the rain, and her male had been searching all day for some food for all of them.

I went inside, put a log in the wood stove, and settled comfortably behind my telescope to watch the return of Father Raven. And that is how I chanced to see the most extraordinary thing...

It was raining hard enough to make the ice quiver. Big drops of rain were bouncing off the ice near the fish, now being torn apart by the raven. The bird was standing on one foot while holding the whitefish with the other, pecking with all his might with his sharp beak. This went on for a good five minutes. I found it strange that the bird pecked repeatedly at the same spot on the fish, never stopping to eat even a tiny morsel. But he finally cut the fish into two equal pieces. Then, placing one foot on each piece and using his beak to pull at the strip of skin still connecting the pieces, the bird managed to tear the fish apart.

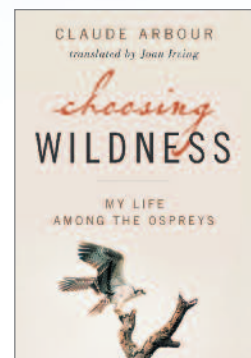
I couldn't believe my eyes. Night was falling, and it would soon be dark. There was little doubt that if the raven left his prey on the ice it would be gone by morning. However, that fish was just too big for the raven to lift. And with the rain still falling heavily, the bird's feathers were beginning to stick to its skin... Father Raven had to find a solution, and quickly. And he did: tear his prey in two and make two trips.

The bird shook himself, preened and smoothed his feathers, then went to work. Taking the smallest portion of fish in his beak, he hid it in a crack in the ice. This piece was so well camouflaged that I could no longer see it, even using the strongest setting on my telescope, despite the fact that a short time earlier I had clearly seen the scales of the fish flying right and left as the raven worked. The bird had hidden this piece for the time it would take to fly to the nest! He quickly swallowed the tidbits of flesh lying about, went over to the heaviest piece, picked it up, and propelled himself into the air with his feet. He was gone for two minutes, then reappeared, picked up the second piece, and flew off again.

I fell into an armchair, amazed by what I had seen, then scrambled over to my Larousse dictionary: I, in..., int... There, on page 529, "intelligence":

1. The ability to understand, to reason.
2. The ability to adapt to a situation, to make choices based on circumstances.

I had to conclude that this raven had just succeeded in doing all of that.



From *Choosing Wildness: My Life Among the Ospreys*, by Claude Arbour, trans. by Joan Irving. ©2008. Published by Greystone Books, a division of Douglas & McIntyre Publishing Group.

Ontario Field Ornithologists 2007 Financial Statement

BALANCE SHEET 31 December 2007

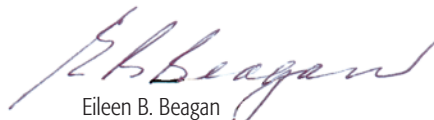
ASSETS			LIABILITIES		
	2007	2006		2007	2006
Cash in Bank	\$19,798	\$18,162	Prepaid Membership Dues	\$12,301	\$15,750
Ontario Savings Bonds	40,000	40,000	MEMBERS' EQUITY		
Convention Deposit	1,000	450	Balance beginning of Year	51,103	50,450
Accounts Receivable	0	3,725	Net Income for Year	<u>1,781</u>	653
Accrued Interest	2,737	3,059	Balance end of Year	52,884	51,103
GST Rebate	1,650	1,457			
Total	<u>\$ 65,185</u>	<u>\$ 66,853</u>	Total	<u>\$ 65,185</u>	<u>\$66,853</u>

INCOME and EXPENSE STATEMENT Year Ended 31 December 2007

INCOME			EXPENSES		
	2007	2006		2007	2006
Membership Dues	25,853	21,805	Printing and Mailing		
Donations	7,717	6,721	– Journal <i>Ontario Birds</i>	\$17,675	\$19,880
Baillie Birdathon	3,213	2,255	– Newsletter <i>OFO News</i>	12,122	9,037
Advertisements	5,865	7,725	Liability Insurance	2,879	2,203
Sale of Merchandise	2,397	1,682	Field Trips	0	852
Interest	1,716	1,400	Purchase of Merchandise	5,038	0
Sale of Publications	444	311	Administration	4,382	4,581
GST Rebate	1,650	1,457	Annual Convention (Net)	3,312	928
			Awards	308	408
			Checklists	0	1,543
			Stationery	0	1,883
			OFO Website and <i>Ontbirds</i>	1,358	888
			Windmill Ranch-Carden Alvar	<u>0</u>	500
			Total Expenses	\$ 47,074	<u>\$ 42,703</u>
			Net Income for Year	1,781	653
Total	<u>\$ 48,855</u>	<u>\$ 43,356</u>	Total	<u>\$ 48,855</u>	<u>\$ 43,356</u>



President



Eileen B. Beagan
Treasurer

I have examined the 2007 Financial Statements of Ontario Field Ornithologists and reviewed supporting documentation and information supplied by the Treasurer to the extent I deemed necessary. In my opinion, these Financial Statements accurately reflect the financial position of the organization as at December 31, 2007 and the results of its operations for the year then ended.



Donald E. Burton, Auditor

Future OFO Field Trips

Dave Milsom, Trips Coordinator, fieldtrips@ofoc.ca 905-857-2235 For full trip details: <http://www.ofoc.ca/fieldtrips/tripsupcoming.php>

August 10 (Sunday) Rock Point Provincial Park & Eastern Lake Erie Shore

Leader: Dan Salisbury

Meet: 8:00 a.m. at entrance to Rock Point Provincial Park, near entry kiosk. Park entrance fee. Directions: From the west on Hwy. 3, go into Dunnville. Where Hwy. 3 curves left, continue straight on Main Street, staying along the river. On reaching the bridge that crosses the river, do not cross the bridge but continue straight onto County Road 3 east-bound. Go via Stromness, turning right onto Rymer Road, about 8 km from the bridge in Dunnville. Take first left onto Downy Road. At next intersection, go right. Park entrance is on your left. From the east on Hwy. 3, drive into Dunnville, turn left onto Inman Road. Go right onto Mumby Road. Follow this to County Road 3, then turn left. Follow directions from bridge in Dunnville above. Shorebirds, waterbirds, early fall migrants.

August 17 (Sunday) Durham Region & Lake Ontario Marshes

Leaders: Rayfield Pye, John Stirrat

Meet: 7:30 a.m. at Lynde Shores Conservation Area parking lot on Victoria Street in Whitby. Exit Hwy. 401 at Brock Street (Exit 410). Turn left (south) onto Brock Street. Turn right (west) onto Victoria. Go 2.5 km to Lynde Shores on the south side. Visits to Cranberry Marsh, Oshawa Second Marsh, Corner Marsh and Frenchman's Bay. Early fall migrant warblers, vireos, flycatchers, shorebirds, and butterflies.

August 24 (Sunday) Palgrave, Tottenham Sod Farms, Schomberg Lagoons

Leader: Dave Milsom

Meet: 8:00 a.m. at Patterson Sideroad and Hwy. 50 in the village of Palgrave. Fall migrants: warblers, flycatchers, shorebirds. Possible plovers, Baird's Sandpipers, Buff-breasted Sandpipers.



Immature Parasitic Jaeger / Barry Cherriere

August 30 (Saturday) Toronto Islands

Leader: Ian Cannell

From Harbourfront in Toronto, catch 7.15 a.m. ferry to Ward's Island. You need \$6 in coins (\$3.50 seniors). Early fall migrants.

September 6 (Saturday) Ottawa [until Noon]

Leader: Jeff Skevington

Meet: 7:30 a.m. along Cassels Road, outside gate to Britannia Filtration Plant. Experience the diversity of Ottawa's avifauna during the peak of Fall migration. Expect warblers, sparrows, waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls and others. Study subtle differences between similar species as we explore the Ottawa River from different vantage points. We start at Britannia and move slowly west, visiting some of Eastern Ontario's best migratory staging areas.

September 7 (Sunday) Presqu'île Provincial Park

Leaders: Don and Ian Shanahan

Meet: 8:00 a.m. at the Lighthouse parking lot. Park entrance fee. Fall migrants, shorebirds, hawks.

September 28 (Sunday) Point Pelee National Park

Leader: Marianne Reid

Meet: 8:00 a.m. at the Visitor Centre in the Park. Park entrance fee. Birding around the Visitor Centre, at the Tip, and in the surrounding area including the onion fields. Fall migrants, raptors, seabirds, shorebirds, Monarch butterflies.

October 11 (Saturday) Hamilton, Burlington Vicinity

Leader: Tom Thomas

Meet: 8:00 a.m. in Hutch's Restaurant parking lot at Van Wagners Beach on Lake Ontario in Hamilton. From Niagara on QEW, exit at Centennial Parkway; go left onto North Service Road and follow to Van Wagners Beach Road to the restaurant. From Toronto on QEW, exit at Woodward Avenue, turn right at lights, then right at next lights, go under bridge; turn right onto Van Wagners Beach Road to the restaurant. Jaegers, gulls, shorebirds, fall migrants.

October 25 (Saturday) Hawk Cliff & Area, South-west of London

Leaders: Pete Read, Ian Plat.

Meet: 9:30 a.m. at Hawk Cliff. From Hwy. 401 Exit 177, take Hwy. 4 south through western St. Thomas until it becomes Sunset Drive. Continue about 8 km to Union. Go east on County Road 27, Sparta Line Road. Go east one road (about 3 km) to County Road 22 (Fairview Road). Head south. The 2nd road south is County Road 24 (Dexter Line) and you will meet a stop sign. Looking south, you will see the sign for Hawk Cliff. Go south on the dirt road to the lake. Park along the road allowance. Raptors, waterfowl, gulls and late migrants.

Thank You OFO Donors

OFO recognizes the following members for their generous donations which are a major source of funding for publications and events. All donations over \$10 receive a tax receipt.

Ken Abraham
Joyce Clara Allison
Gill Arden and Robert Zarnke
Edward R. Armstrong
Ted Baldwin
Judy Barr
Bryan Baxter
Gregor Beck
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Keith Sealy
Robert A. Sharp
Malcolm D. Silver
Glenda Slessor
Victor Smith
Susan and Dan Suess
David A. Sutton
Stanley M. Teeple
Marian Thorpe and Brian Rennie
Rhoda and Marinus Van Horik
Peter Webb
Glen Wood
Terry Wurdemann
Dennis Young



Mottled Duck at Hillman Marsh, Essex Region C.A. 6 May 2008.
First record for Ontario if reviewed and accepted by OBRC.
Photo by Steve Pike taken after sunset, handheld 896mm lens at ISO 1600 and 1/250 sec.

OFO Rare Birds Photo Page

By Carol Horner, OFO Photo Page Editor

Numerous rarities have been seen and photographed in Ontario this spring. Many thanks to all the generous photographers who allow the use of their photos on the OFO Rare Bird Photo Page. I would like to invite all OFO News readers to visit the page. Recently added photos include those of Snowy Plover, Mottled Duck, Tufted Duck, Little Blue Heron, Black Vulture, Laughing Gull, Burrowing Owl, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Harris's Sparrow along with some other not quite so rare species. An on-line appeal yielded photos of the Lark Bunting seen in May at Point Pelee.

The migration of photos for 2006-2007 is complete. Doug Woods and Valerie Jacobs have been working hard on the archived photos for 2001-2005. I anticipate they will be uploaded in the near future.

Send your photos of rare birds to: photos@ofo.ca
<http://ofo.ca/photoalbums/album/index.html>

Members' Poll: Electronic versus Paper Newsletters

Many organizations are turning to electronic mediums to create and distribute their newsletters. The OFO Board of Directors is considering making this move as well, and is soliciting input from you, the member, on your preferences. There are arguments for and against making this move.

Arguments in favour of switching to an electronic format include:

- This is a more environmentally friendly format for distributing newsletters.
- There may be considerable cost savings in printing and mailing.
- There is more flexibility available in the length and content of the newsletter.
- Many people prefer reading news on their computer.

Reasons against making the switch include:

- It would require maintaining an accurate and up-to-date email database, a large undertaking at 1,200 members.
- Out-of-date or over-quota email addresses will result in the member not receiving the newsletter.
- Not all members have email addresses, and a separate database would need to be maintained for mailed, printed copies.
- Some members are more comfortable reading hard-copy publications.
- Newsletter size may be limited by the file size of the PDF file to be sent.

We are asking members to reply with their vote for or against making the switch to an electronic newsletter. When sending your response, please select one of these options:

- I would prefer the current paper format.
- I would prefer an electronic format of a PDF, sent by email. The PDF should be no larger than _____ KB / MB.
- I would prefer an electronic format of a PDF, which I download from a special page on the OFO website that I log in to access. I would receive an email indicating when it is available at the website.
- I would prefer an electronic format of an email with web links that I click on to read the full article at the OFO website.

Please send your vote to Jim Heslop at heslop@cogeco.ca or by mail to:

Ontario Field Ornithologists
C/o Jim Heslop, 76 Parker Ave., Ancaster ON L9G 1A7

We appreciate your input. Hearing from our membership will help us to make the best decision.



**Ontario Field
Ornithologists**

OFO Website www.ofo.ca

Valerie Jacobs and Doug Woods,
Coordinators
Email: ofo@ofo.ca

Ontbirds

Mark Cranford – Coordinator
Ontbirds, with over 2000 subscribers, is OFO's successful listserv for reporting rare bird sightings. Now the largest listserv in North America, *Ontbirds* has become an integral part of the Ontario birding community. Carefully follow the instructions on the OFO website to subscribe to *Ontbirds*. To contact Mark Cranford email: ontbirds@ofo.ca

OFO News

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