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Ronald Scovell 1991



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Editorial Policy

Ontario Birds is the journal of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Its aim is to provide a vehicle for the documentation of the birds of Ontario. We encourage the submission of full length articles or short notes on the status of bird species in Ontario, significant provincial or county distributional records, tips on bird identification, behavioural observations of birds in Ontario, location guides to significant birdwatching areas in Ontario, book reviews, and similar

material of interest on Ontario birds. We do not accept submissions dealing with "listing" and we discourage Seasonal Reports of bird sightings as these are covered by *Bird Finding in Canada* and *American Birds*, respectively. Distributional records of species for which the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) requires documentation must be accepted by them before they can be published in *Ontario Birds*.

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Note from the Editor

This issue of *Ontario Birds* contains the first OFO Bird Finding Guide, *Birding in the Hamilton Area*. This is the first of a series of site guides that will be published from time to time, either as an insert to *Ontario Birds* or separately.

Birding in the Hamilton Area has been designed to be pulled out and kept in a separate box or binder. Because *Birding in the Hamilton Area* is in the middle, *Ontario Birds* has fewer pages this issue: 24 instead of the usual 40. You may also notice that the page numbering of the journal seems to end rather abruptly at the beginning of the bird finding guide, and continues after the end.

If you have detailed information about the birds of a particular area, we'd like to encourage you to consider preparing a bird finding

guide yourself. Please write OFO President Ron Scovell at the address shown on the inside back cover of this issue to discuss possible arrangements.

This is my last issue as editor of *Ontario Birds*. During my brief sojourn, I discovered (like others before me) that the editorship of this journal involves a major time commitment which, unfortunately, proved too difficult for me to handle. However I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have submitted articles, photographs, and drawings to the journal: without this invaluable support, *Ontario Birds* could not survive. I would also like to urge the membership to continue to support the journal in this way in future.

Al Sandilands, Editor

Letter to the Editor

Burke artwork praised

The cover illustration of the most recent *Ontario Birds* (8:2) was simply superb. While the journal's covers have been graced over the years with some very fine artwork, Peter Burke's Spruce Grouse ranks, in my opinion, as the most beautiful *Ontario Birds* cover ever. We are indeed fortunate to have as fine an artist as he in our midst.

Mark A. Kubisz
Rexdale, Ontario

Wilson's Plover at Windermere Basin

by

Kevin McLaughlin

At about 1025h on Saturday 26 May 1990 I had the good fortune of discovering a female-type Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) in the extreme southeast corner of Windermere Basin at the east end of Hamilton Harbour. The bird lingered for about one week, usually being seen on the same drying mudflat enclosure where I found it. It was seen by scores of birders from throughout the province, but frustrated others who travelled to see it, as it would vanish for hours before reappearing briefly.

Circumstances

I was observing various shorebirds, gulls, and terns from Eastport Drive, the service road which parallels the QEW. Having seen a first-summer Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) among 20-odd Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*) on the far side of the newly-created cell, I decided to go over to the south side for a closer view. Upon arriving there, I scanned the flats with my 22x Bushnell Spacemaster, looking on both sides of the Red Hill Creek channel. Among the birds feeding and resting were two Semipalmated

Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*), many Killdeer (*C. vociferus*), four Ruddy Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*), 30 Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), one White-rumped Sandpiper (*C. fuscicollis*), 30 Semipalmated Sandpipers (*C. pusilla*), and an adult Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*) with mixed Common (*S. hirundo*) and Caspian terns (*C. caspia*).

Suddenly as I was taking a second sweep with the scope across the smaller, partly-dried muddy cell, this veritable caricature of a plover sprang into view. With excellent mid-morning lighting in my favour, the sun being behind me, and having the bird only about 250 feet away, identification was instantaneous. Though in the state of shock and near panic typical of a lone birder chancing upon a megarrarity, I was able to assimilate all of the key features of the standing bird before driving the short distance home to make a few phone calls.

Description

The distinctive "jizz" was most evident, a relatively long-legged plover having a rather short body and wings, with a big head and

Kevin McLaughlin, 30 Bingham Road, Hamilton, Ontario L8H 1N4

long, thick bill. A top-heavy look was created by the bird's square-headed appearance, having a steep forehead and a rather flat crown. Accentuating this was the disproportionately long, thick black bill, seemingly three-quarters of the length of the head. At one point, a Killdeer was standing in front of the Wilson's, allowing the structural difference of the bill to be studied. It was at least the same length or slightly longer than the Killdeer's bill and literally twice as thick. Thus the mien presented was striking, to say the least. The blackness of the bill also contrasted vividly with the plumage tone.

The eye was dark, fairly large, and stood out quite well, being obviously darker than the surrounding dark areas on the head.

The crown, nape, auricular, and loreal areas were medium pale brown, with a broad white area above the bill which narrowed to a thin eyebrow, terminating just behind the eye.

The entire underparts, consisting of the mantle, scapulars, coverts, and tertials, were identical to the dark areas on the head, a dull pale brown, not as warmly coloured as a Killdeer.

The underparts were white from the chin to the undertail coverts, except for the single breastband. This band was the same colour as the upperparts, although a bit darker brown along the top edge at the side. The band was thin at the base, thickening at the side of the

breast, then becoming thin across the centre. The white of the throat extended as a thin collar, going around the back of the neck, creating a white division between the head and the back.

The legs were thin and relatively long compared to the short body. Their colour was difficult to discern at first, but eventually appeared to be a dull grayish-flesh.

In flight, a dark tail with a thin white outer border was noted, as well as a thin white wing stripe.

The body size compared to nearby waders was slightly larger than Semipalmated Sandpiper, a bit smaller than Dunlin, and perhaps closest to Semipalmated Plover.

The plover fed in typical fashion, running forwards quickly, then stopping abruptly to pick at a food item or to look about. It was seen to occasionally bob its body up and down. It was also observed sleeping periodically, with its head tucked into the right scapulars.

Breeding range and extralimital status

Wilson's Plover breeds on the Pacific coast from Baja California to Peru, and along the Atlantic and Caribbean coasts from Maryland to Guyana (Farrand 1983). In winter it is rarely found north of Florida. A number of strays have occurred in southern California and in the Maritimes.

The species is a very rare vagrant inland. I have been able to locate only six prior records in the Great Lakes region. Three records are

listed for Gull Point, Presque Isle State Park, Pennsylvania: 4 May 1968, 29 May 1971, and 10 September 1976 (Stull *et al.* 1985). One was at Duluth, Minnesota, on 4 July 1981 (Tessen 1981). Amazingly, another individual, or possibly the same bird, appeared at Duluth from 15-20 May 1982 (Eckert 1982).

In Ontario, the only definite occurrence was of one which remained from 17-20 May 1966 at the Burlington Beach Canal (R. Curry, pers. comm.). It was discovered by the late George W. North, and was also seen by a number of local observers. Regrettably, documentation for this highly reliable sighting, which included a sketch, went missing years ago. Thus the record has never been reviewed by the Ontario Bird Records Committee, making the Windermere bird the first

documented record for the province of Ontario.

(Note: This report has been submitted to the Ontario Bird Records Committee and has been accepted.)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Robert Curry for providing details on the 1966 Hamilton sighting, and Doug McRae for information on the Pennsylvania records.

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Palm Warblers Use Upland Cutovers as Nesting Habitat in Northwestern Ontario

by
Allan Harris

Introduction

The Palm Warbler (*Dendroica palmarum*) nests across much the boreal forest of Canada. The western race (*D.p. palmarum*) ranges from Alberta to eastern

Ontario, and the eastern race (*D.p. hypochrysea*) is found from eastern Ontario to the maritimes and Newfoundland (Godfrey 1986).

In Ontario, this species is widespread in the northern part of

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the province, but occurs at low density except in parts of the Hudson Bay Lowland (Welsh 1987). Typical nesting habitat consists of open sphagnum bogs with scattered black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and tamarack (*Larix laricina*) (Peck and James 1987, Welsh 1987).

In 1989, I found evidence of Palm Warblers nesting in upland cutovers regenerating with jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*), a habitat not previously described for this species in Ontario.

Methods

In late May and early June 1989 several singing Palm Warblers were found in Langworthy and Hogarth Townships (latitude 49°5' N, longitude 90°20' W), north of Upsala, Ontario. The birds were found in cutover areas with jack

pine regeneration. All were of the western race, distinguished by the grayish, rather than yellow belly (National Geographical Society 1983).

Five of these sites were revisited on 16 July 1989 when several adult birds carrying food were seen, suggesting that they were nesting in the area. The vegetation within a 10m radius of each singing bird was described and other species of singing birds noted.

Results

Timber in this area was cut in and around 1980. Cutover size often exceeds 100 ha, interspersed with stands of 60- and 80-year old jack pines (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Forest Resource Inventory maps). Regeneration of the cutover areas has been almost

Figure 1: Cutover area with jack pine regeneration in northwestern Ontario.
Photo by Gerry Racey.



pure jack pine on the fine sandy soil.

Trees surrounding the territorial birds averaged approximately 3m in height, but ranged from 2 to 5m. At most locations, they were spaced far enough apart to walk between them without touching the branches, but were occasionally found in denser patches. The ground cover consisted of mosses (*Pleurozium schreberi* and *Polytrichum* sp.) and reindeer lichens (*Cladina* spp.) with frequent patches of bare sandy soil. Logging slash was present at most sites.

The most abundant herb species included bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*), bristly sarsaparilla (*Aralia hispida*), and blue-joint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*). Shrubs were mainly ericaceous species: Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*) and blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium* and *V. myrtilloides*), but willow (*Salix bebbiana*), pin cherry (*Prunus pennsylvanica*), and wild rose (*Rosa acicularis*) were also present.

Other bird species in the vicinity of the territorial Palm Warblers included Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*), Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*), White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) (each at 3 of 5 sites); Boreal Chickadee (*Parus hudsonicus*) (2 of 5 sites); Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*), Nashville Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla*), Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*), Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*), and Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella*

passerina) (each at 1 of 5 sites).

Discussion

While *D. p. hypochrysea* appears to prefer open peatland habitat, use of dry upland habitat may be frequent in *D. p. palmarum*. Griscom (1957) reported a Palm Warbler nest in northern Michigan in "...a dry sandy Jack Pine plain in the heart of Kirtland's Warbler country...". Harrison (1984) described typical nesting habitat of the western race as "...dry plains of pines with clearings of low ground cover of blueberry, sweet fern, and similar plants...".

Palm Warblers in northwestern Ontario appear to select nesting habitat on the basis of vegetation structure, rather than species composition. Welsh (1987) stated that the important components of Palm Warbler habitat include scattered trees for song posts and open areas where the birds catch insects from the ground or from low shrubs. Young jack pine stands are structurally similar in many respects to open bogs since both habitats offer small conifers and open area with ericaceous shrub cover. It is worth noting that several other bird species found at the Palm Warbler sites, including Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Dark-eyed Junco, are also common in open peatlands in this area.

The western race of Palm Warbler probably has traditionally nested in young jack pines that regenerate following fire in

northwestern Ontario. Logging creates similar habitat that the birds are also able to exploit. The effect on Palm Warbler populations could be significant as older stands continue to be cut and forestry activities push farther north in the boreal forest.

Acknowledgements

Part of the field work was completed through a Forest Bird Monitoring Programme study conducted by the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Northwestern Ontario Forest Technology Development Unit. I thank Gerry Racey (MNR) and Dan Welsh (CWS) for their support.

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Additions to the Bird List of Wellington County

by
A. D. Brewer

Introduction

Wellington County, which is about 2500km² in size, is situated about 100km northwest of Toronto, almost mid-way between lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron, and Georgian Bay. It lies almost entirely within the watershed of the Grand River, with only two small sections outside of the Lake Erie watershed. There are a number of important

wetlands in, or partially in, the county: Luther Marsh and Pike's Lake in the north, Conestoga Lake in the west, Belwood and Guelph lakes in the centre, and Puslinch Lake and Mountsberg in the south. The majority of these are the result of artificial water impoundments. Aside from actual lakes, habitats in Wellington are very varied, with several large urban areas, much

David Brewer, R. R. #1, Puslinch, Ontario N0B 2J0

farmland of various types, and extensive areas of woodland, coniferous and deciduous, on both wet and dry areas.

A useful, if laconic, paper on the birds of Wellington County was published in 1906 by Professor A. B. Klugh (1906). A second study in 1923 covered Wellington and Waterloo counties (Soper 1923). A more detailed treatment was produced in 1977 (Brewer 1977). Klugh's paper listed 199 species (in fact exactly 200; he fastidiously excluded the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), by then a resident of some 20 years' standing, perhaps in the futile hope that if ignored it would go away). By 1977, this had grown to 278 species (but see below). The purpose of the present paper is to document the addition of a further 19 species; this list is, to our knowledge, current as of 31 December 1990.

Not all of the additions are of birds which occurred for the first time between 1977 and the present; in several cases, earlier records have only recently come to light. Before entering into the systematic list, I would like to digress briefly on the subject of Mr. William Holliday. Mr. Holliday was a master brewer, who at the end of the last century ran an operation in Guelph, near the site of the present Holliday Street. He was also a master taxidermist and bird collector, and many of his records are referred to in Klugh (1906). So far as we can judge, Mr. Holliday collected between about 1890 and the beginning of the

Great War. It should be noted that, prior to 1917, there were no laws protecting non-game birds in Canada; however, after that date Mr. Holliday's collection, while acquired perfectly legally, became illegal. We know, from the recollections of Mr. William Steele of Guelph (who knew Mr. Holliday very well) that the old collector was frequently harassed about his specimens. One day, some time in the middle 1930s (one assumes after a particularly bothersome altercation with Authority), Mr. Holliday took his entire collection down to the basement and threw it into the furnace. Since no catalogue was ever published, were it not for the retentive memory of Mr. Steele who, in his youth, was frequently shown the specimens, all knowledge of Mr. Holliday's collection would have been lost. A few examples of Mr. Holliday's work do still survive, for example, an immature Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*) for Puslinch Township about 1894 — the second Ontario and fifth Canadian record (Godfrey 1986) — which is presently in the Royal Ontario Museum (no. 67562). Several specimens taken by Mr. Holliday were the first for the county, and one, Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*), remains unique.

Species accounts

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) —
One in winter plumage trapped and banded at Mountsberg, 15

September 1983 (M. Wernaart, D. Brewer). One in breeding plumage, right on the county line in Luther Marsh (obligingly swimming into both Wellington and Dufferin counties), 16 June 1990 (M. Cadman *et al.*).

Yellow-crowned Night Heron

(*Nyctanassa violacea*) — One in adult plumage, Luther Marsh, 17-19 May 1988 (also seen in Dufferin County) (E. Yerex).

Greater White-fronted Goose

(*Anser albifrons*) — One of the Arctic race (*A. a. frontalis*), mid-December 1985 to 8 March 1986, Guelph (R. Vantwest *et al.*).

Smew (*Mergus albellus*) — An adult male, Mountsberg, 15 April 1982 (M. Wernaart).

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) —

An immature was shot about 1912 near Marden by Bob Blyth and Jack Bedford; the mounted specimen was kept for many years in the Bedford house, but now appears to be lost (*vide* W. Steele). Puslinch Township, one flying southwest on 13 December 1981 (D. Brewer). Aberfoyle, two separate immatures, 5 November 1989 (M. Cadman *et al.*).

Sharp-tailed Grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*), **Wild Turkey**

(*Meleagris gallopavo*) — Historical evidence was presented (Brewer 1986) that both these species were present in Puslinch Township at the time of European settlement — about

1830 — the grouse apparently being “rather numerous”. They were doubtless extirpated shortly afterwards. Recently there have been several sightings of Wild Turkeys in southern Wellington, presumably originating from Ministry re-introduction programs.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius*

longicaudus) — A partially-decomposed corpse found on the campus of the University of Guelph, 15 September 1981 (E. Crieff, D. Brewer). The specimen is now in the Royal Ontario Museum.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus*

fuscus) — An adult of the grey-backed race, *L. f. graellsii* (breeding in Britain, Faroe, and Iceland), at the Guelph City dump, 11 December 1983 (L. Hubble).

Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*) — A

first-year bird at the Guelph dump, 31 December 1985 (R. Vantwest *et al.*). About half a dozen records since, all immature except an adult on the Speed River on 8 October 1990 (J. Poklen). Latest record, 5 April 1986.

Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax*

virescens). The first record was of a singing male near Aberfoyle on 31 May 1982 (M. Cadman). Since then a further 18 have been banded, 17 at Mountsberg (M. Wernaart *et al.*) and one at Arkell (D. Lambie). Banding dates have varied from 23 May to

6 September, with the majority in late July and early August, mostly hatching-year birds. A male in breeding condition trapped on 31 May 1986, and a female with a brood-patch the following day, along with a number of young birds banded from mid-July onward in several years strongly suggests that this species nests not too far away.

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) — 7 October 1979, one flying westwards over Eramosa Township near Speedside (J. O. L. Roberts); 8 December 1984, one at Puslinch Lake (B. Wyatt, S. Kozak); 30 March 1986, one near Puslinch (*vide* S. Kozak); 10 September 1989, one south of Damascus (R. Vantwest).

Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) — One banded at Mountsberg, 31 July 1980 (N. Bredin). Singles at: Luther Marsh, 29 October 1988 (M. Cadman, J. Poklen, B. Wyatt); Belwood, 21 December 1988; Puslinch Lake, 27 October 1990 (M. Cadman, J. Poklen, B. Wyatt); Guelph, at a feeder from 5 February to 3 March 1989, and again 18 December 1989 to 23 February 1990 (A. L. A. Middleton).

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) — Corwhin, one from 26 December 1983 to 11 March 1984 (D. Brewer *et al.*); south of Guelph Lake, one from 24 January to 17 February 1985 (C. Potter *et al.*); Guelph, one from

22 November to 1 December 1990 (E. Ormrod *et al.*).

Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) — One collected at an unknown location, presumably near Guelph, by Mr. W. Holliday. Since this record is not mentioned in Klugh (1906), collection probably took place between this date and the time when Mr. Holliday ceased active collecting, about the beginning of the First World War. One more recent record, a male singing at the Fish Hatchery Swamp, Puslinch Township, 12 May 1981 (L. Hubble).

Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) — One taken by Mr. Holliday at Cooling's Swale, which was on the eastern edge of Guelph on the present Highway 24. Since this record is not mentioned in Klugh, the same presumptions can probably be made as to the date of collection as for the previous species.

Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*) — Chapman's *The Warblers of North America*, written about 1907, gives a record from Mount Forest on 13 May 1905. Klugh was not aware of the record, either in 1906 or in 1910 when he published a short note on "The present status of the Prairie Warbler in Canada". At that time the disjunct breeding population around Georgian Bay had not been discovered, though Klugh perceptively

speculated that the species did nest at some unknown Ontario location. One recent record, one at Luther Marsh on 7 May 1989 (M. Cadman).

Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*)

— A male singing south of Teviotdale, 25 May 1985 (P. Weller).

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes*

grammacus) — One near Damascus 30 and 31 May 1988 (P. Taylor *et al.*).

Deletions

Two species given by Brewer (1977) should be deleted: **Snowy Egret** (*Egretta thula*), Luther Marsh, 30 April to 5 May 1976; and **Western Tanager** (*Piranga ludoviciana*), Mountsberg, 23 May 1971. Both, it transpires, were on the "wrong" side of the line, the records referring to Dufferin and Wentworth counties respectively.

The present bird list of Wellington County, up to 31 December 1990, therefore stands at 295 species.

Note

Although, strictly speaking, it lies without the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that in 1977 there was only one record of the House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) in Wellington, a female seen in 1975. In April 1990, the Guelph Field Naturalists' House Finch survey found almost 900 singing males in the City of Guelph alone, with substantial populations in other

urban areas such as Fergus and Arthur, and smaller numbers around settlement in some rural parts.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all the observers mentioned above, and especially to R. Vantwest and B. Wyatt for collating some recent records. I am also appreciative of the help of W. Steele with regard to Mr. W. Holliday and his collection.

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The Early Movement of Starlings into Ontario

by
John Cranmer-Byng

The first arrival of European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) in various communities in southern Ontario had a greater impact on ornithologists than the expansion of other species, such as the Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) and the House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*). The main feature of the starling arrival was the relative speed at which they dispersed and the relative growth of numbers once they had gotten a toe-hold. The first records in Ontario were from St. Catharines where a small flock was observed during the winter 1919-20 (Taverner 1920), and from Hamilton in 1920 when R. Owen Merriman wrote to Taverner about some strange birds. (Snyder (1951) stated in his book Ontario Birds that "The first observation of it in Ontario now on record concerned a flock of four or five birds seen at Niagara Falls in the autumn of 1914," but without giving evidence to corroborate this statement.)

Taverner's reply (5 February 1921) is worth quoting in part because it shows how some ornithologists in Ontario were beginning to react to the starling arrival now that unfamiliar birds

had been sighted. He began by thanking him for his notes about the strange birds. "They certainly sound like Starlings." He mentioned the small flock seen at St. Catharines the previous year, as well as a bird seen by J. H. Fleming in his garden at Toronto. "It certainly looks as if Starlings were headed our way." It would hardly extend beyond southern Ontario along the shores of lakes Ontario and Erie, Taverner guessed, "but its preference for highly cultivated localities may be severely felt there. We hope the comparative severity of winters will discourage it even there."

In the same letter Taverner then called on all bird and nature organizations to use their strongest influence to prevent importations of foreign species in the future. He hoped that Merriman would keep an eye open for starlings, and would not lose an opportunity to procure specimens. Taverner also drew his attention to a recently published work on "The Economic Value of the Starling in the United States" (Kalmbach and Gabrielson 1921).

Further records were reported. Fleming saw a flock flying over his

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garden in the centre of the city in August 1920 (Fleming 1921). E. M. Dale reported starlings from London in 1920 (Dale 1921). The first specimen taken was in 1921 at Wolf Island near Kingston.

Taverner, in his position as senior ornithologist at the National Museum, kept some of his friends and fellow ornithologists across Canada informed on the progress of the starling invasion as it developed. He told William Rowan (15 May 1922) that it had reached Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, and Chatham among other places. A breeding record, also for 1922, came from Burlington and a probable one from Fort Erie.

Rather than use short, unconnected notes written by various people at that time I propose to give a broad account of how the starling became established in southern Ontario in the years from early 1920 to late 1926. To do this successfully, I intend to use the only extensive account of the starling incursion into Ontario in those years. This was the paper written for his Master's degree at the University of Toronto in 1926 by H. F. Lewis, at that time Chief Migratory Bird Officer for Ontario and Quebec (Lewis 1926).

By the year 1922 Lewis noticed two developments in the starlings' entry into Ontario. In this year nesting was first reported; also this can be seen as the year when the dissemination of starlings was beginning. During 1923 starlings expanded into eight communities

including Kingston, Hamilton, Kitchener, and London. By late in that year starlings were present on the outskirts of Toronto in considerable numbers. In the next year starlings were recorded from 23 communities, including for the first time in Port Hope, Agincourt, Milton, Guelph, Simcoe, and Chatham, linking up and consolidating positions already occupied by earlier arrivals. Also in this year there was a considerable extension of range eastward from Toronto and area. It was probably in this year that starlings entered Ontario through the Ottawa Valley and joined those that had entered Ontario by way of the shorelines of lakes Ontario and Erie, in the area of Brockville and Kingston. From then onwards the expansion of starlings was rapid. In 1925, 24 communities reported starlings for the first time. Some of these were: Algonquin, Picton, Cobourg, Orillia, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Goderich, Blenheim, Ojibway. Starlings moving eastwards along Lake Ontario met others moving westwards from Kingston. As a result, the range of starlings across southern Ontario was now continuous.

The earliest record of a nest discovered by Lewis was at Burlington, Halton County, in May 1922. This nest was built in a hollow, horizontal arm of a hydro tower. In 1924, there were reports of nesting in eight places, and in 1925 from 11 places. Lewis gave a summary of distribution and

abundance as of 31 May 1926 (pp. 13-16 with map on p. 14 showing known distribution in the province, May 1926). He wrote: "The total number of places in Ontario from which records of the starling have been received is 75, in the 32 counties named below. Counties in which starlings have been found breeding are marked with an asterisk" (Lewis 1926, 1927).

Lewis devoted three pages to the "Manner of Dissemination". In Ontario, starlings continued to show a definite preference for low-lying, cultivated land. They avoided the rough, higher land between the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers and north of Lake Ontario, and congregated in low-lying ground where there was an abundance of close-cropped grassland. One factor in their dissemination may be credited to two lines of steel towers of the Hydro Power Commission of Ontario. Each tower had a horizontal, hollow tube of four inches diameter, open at both ends, supporting a row of four heavy insulators. Each tube was 19 feet long. The starlings soon found that the inside of these hollow tubes was useful for nesting purposes in spring and summer and for roosting all year. As a nesting site it was inaccessible to predators, and provided a safe and sufficiently sheltered place. No mammals, raptors, or human beings could get at them in these hollow safe places. When starlings first reached Niagara they found this double line

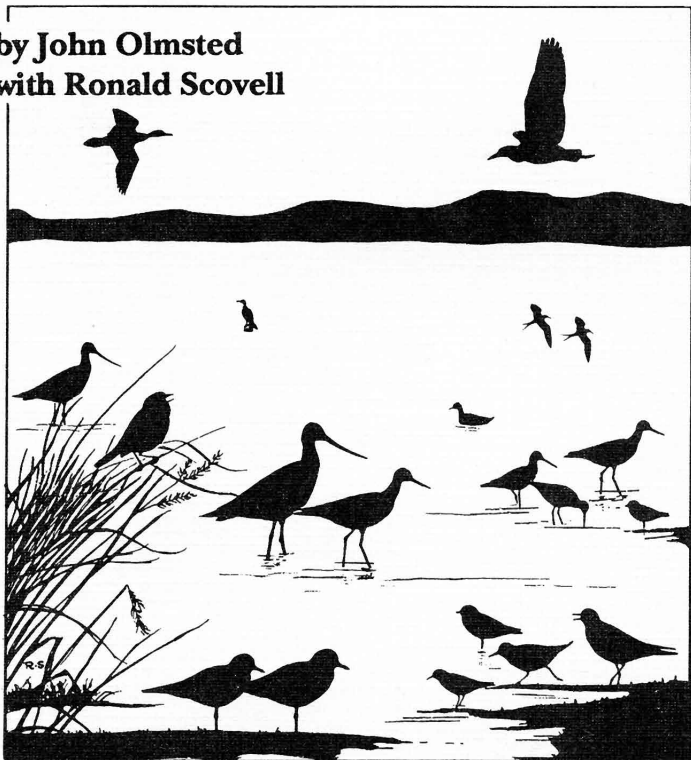
of secure shelters stretching 80 miles or more through fertile habitat into Toronto. As Lewis commented, with a touch of irony, "they could not have had a kinder welcome, and that they took full advantage of it is shown both by their early appearance in Toronto and by their present abundance along the lines of towers."

Regarding the future prospects of the starling Lewis noted that it was not attracted to forest and tundra, but seemed to like human neighbourhoods, and preferred to feed on land that had been prepared for agriculture. Starlings, he predicted, would probably spread as far as James Bay. The extent to which starling numbers would grow in Ontario would depend, Lewis wrote in 1926, largely on whether or not they learned to migrate. In Europe starlings migrated to a limited extent, while in the United States they appeared to be partly migratory. In Canada it was too soon to tell. But during March and April 1926 there appeared to be a pronounced increase in numbers between Toronto and Hamilton, and in the vicinity of Beamsville, near St. Catharines, as though a spring migration northwards were bringing additional birds to the flocks of starlings that had wintered in those parts. In contrast, although starlings had been nesting in the vicinity of Guelph since 1924, and were seen there in the fall of 1925 in flocks of 50 or more, none were seen to have overwintered there.

Ontario Field Ornithologists
BIRD FINDING GUIDE #1

BIRDING IN THE HAMILTON AREA

by John Olmsted
with Ronald Scovell



4. TOWNSEND SEWAGE LAGOONS

- From the centre of Jarvis, at the junction of Hwy. 3 and 6, proceed west on Hwy. 3 for 2.5km to Regional Road 69.
- Turn right and go 1.5km north.
- Just past the CNR tracks, turn left (west) onto a gravel road.
- After 1km, the entrance to the lagoons is on your right (north). The Ministry of the Environment has provided a parking lot.
- Walk north to view 4 large lagoons, for ducks, shorebirds and marsh birds in the northeast lagoon, which has a number of reed beds.

HAMILTON AREA BIRDING HOTLINE IS (416) 648-9537

It is updated Thursday evenings.

BEVERLY SWAMP LOOP (HALF-DAY) (SEE MAP INSERT)

1. CONCESSION 8

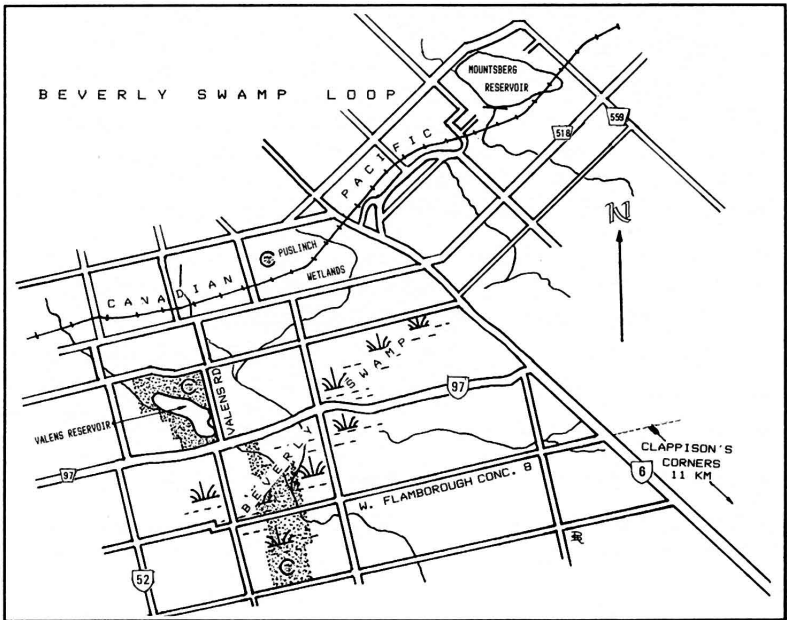
- From Clappison Corners, which is the junction of Hwys. 5 and 6, proceed north on 6 for 11km to West Flamborough Concession 8.
- Turn left and continue west 6.4 km to the heart of the swamp.

Explore the areas of wet woodlands both to the north and south of the road for nesting species such as Barred Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; Acadian, Willow and Alder Flycatchers; Winter Wren, Yellow-throated Vireo and White-throated Sparrow.

2. VALENS RESERVOIR

- Go west on Concession 8 to the first intersection, Valens Rd., and turn right. Drive north to the next crossroads, Hwy. 97.
- Turn left and drive west 1km to the Valens Conservation Area.

Roads within the conservation area give access to vantage points on the west side of the lake, which may have 20 species of waterfowl in the spring. Walk through the campground area at the northwest corner of the lake for passerines.



- Return to the entrance of the Conservation Area, turn left on 97 and drive back (east) to Valens Rd.
- Turn left (north) for 1 km, and check the reservoir on the left and the marsh on your right.

3. PUSLINCH WETLANDS RESERVE

- Continue north on Valens Rd. to the second crossroad.
- Turn right (east) and after 1km turn left (north again).
- Drive .3km to the CPR rail line.

Park and walk along the tracks both east and west through the sedge and marsh area. Good area for rails; some years there are Sedge Wrens.

4. MOUNTSBERG RESERVOIR

- Return south .3km, then turn left and travel east 3.5km to Hwy. 6.
- Cross the Highway and continue east on Regional Road 518 for 5km, to Regional Road 559.
- Turn left (north) onto 559 and continue past (at 1.5km) the entrance to the Conservation Area.
- At the north end of 559, you are forced to turn left onto a gravel road that parallels Hwy. 401. After 1.5km, there is a lookout tower on your left at Blue Heron Marsh.

This is a good vantage point for viewing the north end of the lake, excellent for waterfowl spring and fall. If water levels are low, this area can be excellent for shorebirds from July through September. As well, you can bird the marshes on either side of the road for the next kilometre, until the road comes to a creek.

- .5km past the creek, turn left and drive south on a winding road until you see a sign for the dam. Turn left for 1.5km to the dam, a good lookout for the southern part of the lake.
- Retrace your route to the last left turn; at that junction turn left (south), and cross the CPR tracks at the next intersection.
- Turn left and drive 1.5km to Regional Road 518.
- Turn right (west) and drive 2.5km to Hwy. 6.
- Turn left and drive south 16km to junction of Hwys. 5 and 6 to complete the loop.

ANCASTER LOOP (4 HOURS)

1. SULPHUR SPRINGS

- Take the Mohawk Rd. exit west from Hwy. 403. Drive west along Mohawk until it ends at Hwy. 2 (Wilson St.). Turn left and drive 1.5km south to the first stoplight at Sulphur Springs Road.
- Turn right and follow Church St. west 2km, until it dead ends. Turn right again and follow the twisty road down into the valley.
- Where the first stream crosses the road, turn right into a parking area provided by the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority. Follow the Valley Trail out of the lot to the Hermitage, a large stone ruin, then down into the Sulphur Springs Creek Valley.
- From the Valley Trail, take the Monarch Trail that climbs out of the valley into an apple orchard. Switch to the Orchard Trail, passing the Merrick field house with its many feeders, circling back to the parking lot.

Good in spring for migrants, and in summer for breeding birds, in winter this is Hamilton's best spot for winter finches.

2. MINERAL SPRINGS AND MARTIN'S LANE

- Leave the parking lot and turn right (west) along Sulphur Springs Rd., which turns right after .3km. Do not take the turn, continue straight ahead (west). You will pass the headquarters of the Hamilton Conservation Authority before reaching the hamlet of Mineral Springs, at 3km.

Park on or near the bridge to check the many feeders in the area. Walk Martin's Lane to the south. The road is not open to vehicles. After a walk of 2km you will reach a very sheltered area on your left, good in winter. A further 2km walk will bring you to a more open area, just before the road becomes suitable for vehicles from the south. This is an excellent area for Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers. In 1979 a Lawrence's Warbler was reported from this location. In 1979 a resident singing male Hooded Warbler was found where the road begins its climb to the south.

JERSEYVILLE AREA (GRAY PARTRIDGE)

The area east of Hamilton and above the escarpment has long been the best area in southern Ontario to see Gray Partridge. Unfortunately the exact location changes every few years. Currently the area which presents the best chance to see these elusive birds is the area immediately around Jerseyville.

- Take Hwy. 403 west from Hamilton towards Brantford.
- Exit north (right) on Copetown Road and go 2km to Jerseyville Rd.
- Turn left for 4.6km to Field St.
- Turn right onto Field St.

The area to look for the partridge is a square bounded on the east by Field St., the north by Towerline, the west by Lyndon and the south by Jerseyville. Look in fields with corn stubble, creek beds, near barns, apple orchards and in the vicinity of the cemetery on Jerseyville Rd. They often sit motionless in small flocks, resembling a clump of rocks.

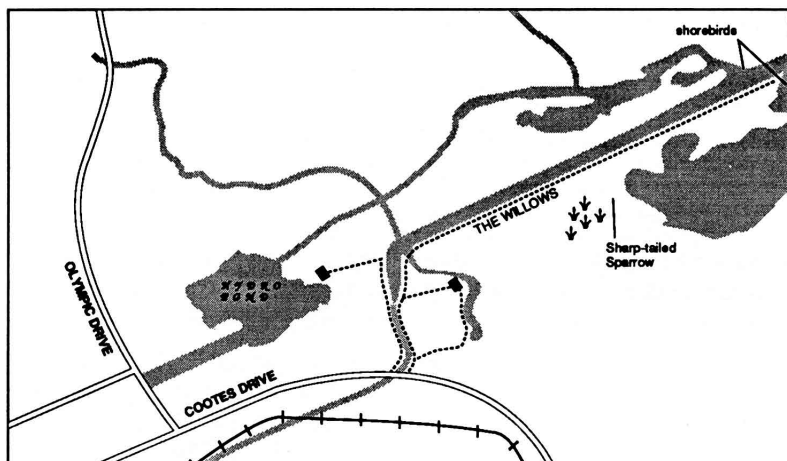
On your return, you could stay on Jerseyville Rd. right into Ancaster and pick up Hwy. 403 at Mohawk Rd. in Ancaster. On this route look for orchards. They will attract Robins and Waxwings, and some winters Pine Grosbeaks. Farmers often spread strips of manure on their fields in late winter. These strips attract Horned Larks, Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs.

DUNDAS MARSH (FULL DAY) (SEE MAP INSERT)

1. SOUTH SHORE: PRINCESS POINT TO UNIVERSITY LANDING

- Exit Hwy. 403 at York Blvd.
- At the first traffic light turn right on Dundurn St., travelling south.
- At the next light, turn right onto King St., and travel west, soon to cross a large bridge.
- At the next street, Macklin, turn right and go north for 2km. Macklin ends at the Princess Point parking lot. Park.

Check the mudflat and the Point itself. Look west up the marsh for waterfowl. You are able to follow trails along the south side of the Dundas Marsh all the way to McMaster University. Check out Caleb's Walk, Kingfisher Point and University Landing. Kingfisher Point provides a good look at the southern portion of the marsh.



2. SPENCER'S CREEK, DUNDAS HYDRO POND, THE WILLOWS

- Return on Macklin to King St. Turn right and head for 1 block.
- Turn left and go north on Paradise for 2 blocks.
- Turn right and go west on Main St. (Hwy. 8) for 3km, past McMaster University.
- After 3km, turn right at the traffic lights onto Cootes Dr.
- After crossing Spencer's Creek at 2km, park on the shoulder of the road.

Walk north on the west side of the creek; in 1km you'll come to the hydro pond on your left. A bridge crosses the creek to the east bank. From here it is a short walk to Paradise tower and a longer walk along the creek to the east, out to the centre of the marsh. At the end of "The Willows" (with low water) is a mudflat that attracts ducks, gulls, terns and shorebirds.* A gap at the halfway point out to The Willows is just past an area of cattail marsh (on the south side) that is visited in early October by Sharp-tailed Sparrows. It is the last area of cattail before the water. Walk the area between the small open pond and the water's edge, and watch for small 'short-tailed' sparrows to flush ahead of you.

Most Falls provide excellent opportunities for godwits, phalaropes, Golden Plover, L-b. Dowitcher, White-rumped and Western Sandpipers, and occasionally Willet and Avocet.

3. THE ARBORETUM AND THE NORTH SHORE

- Continue west on Cootes Dr. 1km to the first stoplight, Olympic Dr. Turn right and go north for 3km to York Rd.
- Turn right again and travel east 2km to Old Guelph Rd.
- Turn right again (south) for 2km, just past the railway bridge, and drive to the Arboretum on your right.
- Turn right again (west now); the road dead-ends in a circular parking lot just past the Nature Interpretive Centre of the Royal Botanical Gardens.

In winter, the numerous fruiting trees are good for Cedar Waxwings, and Robins. From the parking lot, take the trail to Bull's Point to view the north shore of the Dundas Marsh. A dirt road running north from the circular parking lot leads to an area of several fruiting trees. Bohemian Waxwings and Pine Grosbeaks have been seen there occasionally.

HAMILTON HARBOUR

1. WEST END (LAX LANDFILL, VALLEY INN, THE CEMETERIES, LA SALLE PARK)

- For birding the west end of Hamilton Harbour, it's convenient to start at the Lax Landfill. To reach the Landfill, exit Hwy. 403 at York Blvd. Continue on York to Bay St., roughly 4km.
- Turn left (north) and drive 2km.
- Cross over the major rail lines, then turn left and travel west to the first street, Strachan.

The landfill is on your right just before reaching the CNR rail lines and the shore. The large gates are not locked. This is a migrant trap and a good viewing spot for the southwest end of the harbour.

- From the Lax Landfill, birding continues at Valley Inn. to get there, return to the High Level Bridge via York Blvd.
- Cross the bridge, and take the second right, Valley Inn Road.
- Cross the bridge at the bottom of the hill and turn left.
- Cross a second, smaller bridge and park 100m ahead on the right.

To the right (east) starts the Toll Gate Trail. Below the beginning of the trail there is usually a large mudflat where there are often shorebirds in migration.

Look for the short side path on the right which leads down to a convenient viewing platform. Further along the trail, under the large bridge and continuing up the valley, is a good spot for late fall migrants.

- When you leave the Toll Gate Trail area, drive over the small bridge, take Valley Inn Rd. up the hill on your left to Woodlawn Cemetery.

*There are several areas in the cemetery which provide viewing sites over Hamilton Bay. Good in migration for **Tundra Swans, loons, grebes (including Western), geese, and divers.** The tall trees attract **Bald Eagles and Ospreys** as well as large flocks of **warblers, sparrows and other passerines.***

- From the Roman Catholic Cemetery to the east of Woodlawn, drive northeast along Plains Rd., 2.5km to La Salle Park Rd.
- Turn right and follow the road south to its end at the La Salle Park dock. This is a good viewing point for waterfowl.
- Return to North Shore Blvd., and turn right, through the park.

*In the northeastern portion of the park, across North Shore Blvd., there is a mature woodlot that has had interesting species such as **Tufted Titmouse, Varied Thrush, Black Vulture and Carolina Wren.***

2. EAST END (HYDRO ISLANDS, HYDRO PONDS AND WINDERMERE BASIN)

- Coming along the QEW from the direction of Toronto, take the exit for Eastport Dr., which is after the Hwy. 403 interchange and just before the Skyway Bridge.

The harbour is on your right. When you first come to it, look for the Hydro islands, 3 small islands that once bore hydro towers. Check for **gulls, terns, ducks and shorebirds.** Take care parking and viewing from the roadside along this route.

- After scanning the islands continue straight along the road and you will pass the Centre for Inland Waters.
- Cross the lift bridge over the canal.

*Three kilometres further east, on your right, are ponds separated from the main harbour by low dikes. These are the Toll Gate Ponds. Adjacent to them is a landfill site. At the western end of the western pond is a group of trees that host **Double-crested Cormorant and Black-crowned Night Heron** colonies. Both ponds are favourites for ducks. The east end of the east pond often has mudflats, good for shorebirds. The landfill area has large gull and tern colonies. This is the site of Ontario's first **Snowy Egret** nesting.*

- Continuing about 2km from the Toll Gate Ponds you will come to Windermere Basin, in the south east corner of the harbour.

This is a favourite spot for large flocks of wintering ducks. Presently, it is being drastically modified by man, but it is always worth a look. At the east end of the basin, Red Hill Creek empties into the harbour. In winter, this is a good spot for ducks and herons — both Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons are possible here.

LAKE ONTARIO SHORELINE: OAKVILLE TO HAMILTON

1. BRONTE HARBOUR (MOUTH OF BRONTE CREEK)

- Take Bronte Rd. south off of the QEW down to the lake in the centre of Bronte.

Check the lake on both sides of the pier. The harbour is good for wintering gulls and ducks.

2. THE SHELL PIER

- Leaving Bronte Harbour, turn west on Hwy. 2 for 2 km until you come to the pier of the Shell Refinery. There is parking here on the lake side of the highway.

The Shell Pier is another spot to look for gulls and ducks. On the north side of the highway, Shell Park can be good for landbirds during spring migration.

3. PIG AND WHISTLE TAVERN

- .5km from the Shell Pier parking lot, there is a good viewing point for ducks and swans across from the Tavern.

4. APPLEBY LINE

- The shoreline can be reached by turning left off of Hwy. 2 and proceeding to the end of the road. Appleby Line is 1.5km west of Shell Park.

5. SHOREACRES CREEK

If you feel like a short walk to break the monotony, there is a stretch of “undeveloped parkland” exactly halfway between Appleby and Walker’s Lines. You can walk from Hwy. 2 along the Creek right to the Lake. The mouth of the Creek attracts many dabblers.

6. WALKER'S LINE

- The shoreline can be reached by turning left off of Hwy. 2 and proceeding to the end of the road. Walker's Line is 2km west of Appleby Line.

7. SIOUX LOOKOUT PARK

1.1km from Walker's Line, there is a parking lot on the south side which affords an excellent viewing area for ducks.

8. GUELPH LINE

- The shoreline can be reached by turning left off of Hwy. 2 and proceeding to the end of the road. Guelph Line is .9km west of Sioux Lookout Park.

Appleby, Walker's and Guelph Lines are good lookout points for the the Lake. In April, Appleby and Walker's are especially good for Red Necked Grebes.

9. VENTURE INN AND SPENCER SMITH PARK (FOOT OF BRANT STREET)

- About 2km west of the Guelph Line, turn left off Hwy. 2 to the parking lot.

These are two more locations for checking Lake Ontario. They are good for ducks and for gulls if there are strong northeast winds in the fall.

10. BURLINGTON CANAL

- At the west end of Spencer Smith Park, turn left along Beach Blvd. and drive about 2km until you reach the shipping canal. Park in the dead end area just west of the canal, or on the property of the Inland Waters Centre.

Walk along the pier out into Lake Ontario. Check the small woodlot on the Burlington (east) side of the canal for spring or fall migrants. The beach on this side is often good for shorebirds. Check the rock piles in late fall for Purple Sandpipers.

11. VAN WAGNER'S BEACH

- Proceed east along Beach Blvd. and Van Wagner's Beach Rd. at the traffic lights for 5km to the 'Lakeside Rentals' building used by sail board enthusiasts. This is the most popular viewing site.
- Van Wagner's can also be reached directly from the QEW. Exit at Woodward Ave. and exit immediately to the Beach Blvd. turnoff.

- Go under the QEW and turn right at the traffic lights. Drive 1.1km to the parking lot where the 'Lakeside Rentals' building is on your left.

Best time of year is in September and October, when there are east or northeast winds. At this time Black-legged Kittiwake and Sabines Gulls, and all 3 species of both Scoters and Jaegers are possible.

12. VAN WAGNER'S BEACH PONDS

Opposite the beach lookout are 2 ponds dissected by an old railway bed. Check ponds for shorebirds, ducks and herons. The areas around the ponds are often good for passerine migrants in the fall. There is a good birding walk between the ponds along an old rail line. It can be reached by walking east around the near pond and proceeding around an old residence at the east end of the pond.

13. FRUITLAND ROAD

- Exit the east end of Van Wagner's Beach area via Hwy. 20 to QEW, heading east toward Niagara Falls.
- After 5.2km, take Fruitland Rd. to the Lake.

A new housing development here has built a pier into the lake which serves as a good lookout. Check the undeveloped fields for small pools. They attract shorebirds in spring and fall.

14. FIFTY POINT CONSERVATION AREA

- Head east on the QEW 6.1km to 50 Point Rd.
- Take this road north to the North Service Rd.
- Then drive east to the entrance of the Conservation Area.

Check out the marina area for ducks in winter. Wonderful vantage point to east of the mouth of the harbour for spring and fall water birds. Woodlot east of the marina is good for passerines in the spring and fall. Tell the attendant at the toll booth that you are going in to look for birds. They will probably not charge admittance.

HAWK WATCHING IN THE HAMILTON AREA

1. GRIMSBY PARK

- Located 9.2km east of Hamilton via the QEW. Take Christie Rd. exit south through town and up the escarpment.
- Turn right at the top of the hill and drive west 1.6 km to the Conservation Area.
- Turn right to parking lot area. This is the location of the well-known Grimsby Hawk Watch.

Best months are March, April and May.

2. WOODLAWN CEMETERY

Best viewing is at the eastern end with open fields along the bluff. See West End Hamilton Harbour for location

3. MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT PARKING LOT

- From Hwy. 403, exit onto Hwy. 6 heading north toward Guelph.
- At traffic light 400m up, turn right and drive east 100m; park in adjacent lot on right.

4. TOP OF CLAPPISON CUT

- From the parking lot, turn right onto Hwy. 6 and head north 1.9km to the top of the escarpment.
- Turn right (east) at the Town of Flamborough sign, onto a gravel road that then turns south to the edge of the escarpment. Park just past the long white commercial building on your left (east).

5. HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE

- Exit from Hwy. 403 at York Blvd.
- Once on York Blvd., cross the bridge and pull off to park in the lot on the right (west) side. Park in the adjacent cemetery if it is no longer possible to park in this lot. Areas on the other side of the bridge are also good.

September and October are the best months of the year for these last four locations.

OTHER NEARBY BIRDING SPOTS

1. SMITHVILLE SEWAGE LAGOONS

- From the centre of Town, i.e. Hwy. 20 and Regional Road 14, drive east 2km on Hwy. 20 to the first road on the right (south).
- Proceed 500m to the bridge over the creek. Park 200m past the bridge.
- Walk in the lane on the left (east) side of the road 1km, to the 3 lagoons.

Good for ducks in the spring, and may be good for shorebirds in spring and fall if there are low water levels.

2. TAQUANYAH CONSERVATION AREA

- Cayuga is at the junction of Hwys. 54 and 3. Drive 5.3km west on Hwy. 3; turn right (north) almost immediately and cross the CNR tracks.
- After 1km, reach the southwest corner of the Conservation Area.

A spring-fed creek flows in from the west. In winter Common Snipe and Great Blue Herons often linger here. Excellent shorebirding east of the road in the fall, when water levels are low. Area possibilities include Eastern Bluebird, Red-headed and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. Pine plantations have sheltered several species of owls.

3. JARVIS SEWAGE LAGOONS

- Continue west 18.3km on Hwy. 3 to Jarvis.
- On the left (south) side of the road there is a sign for a car wash. Drive in the gravel lane on the west side of the car wash, heading south.
- After 1km. park and walk east (on your left) to 2 lagoons, new in 1989.
- Then drive south .2km to 2 original lagoons.

Good for ducks and for shorebirds with the low levels of ponds.

ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

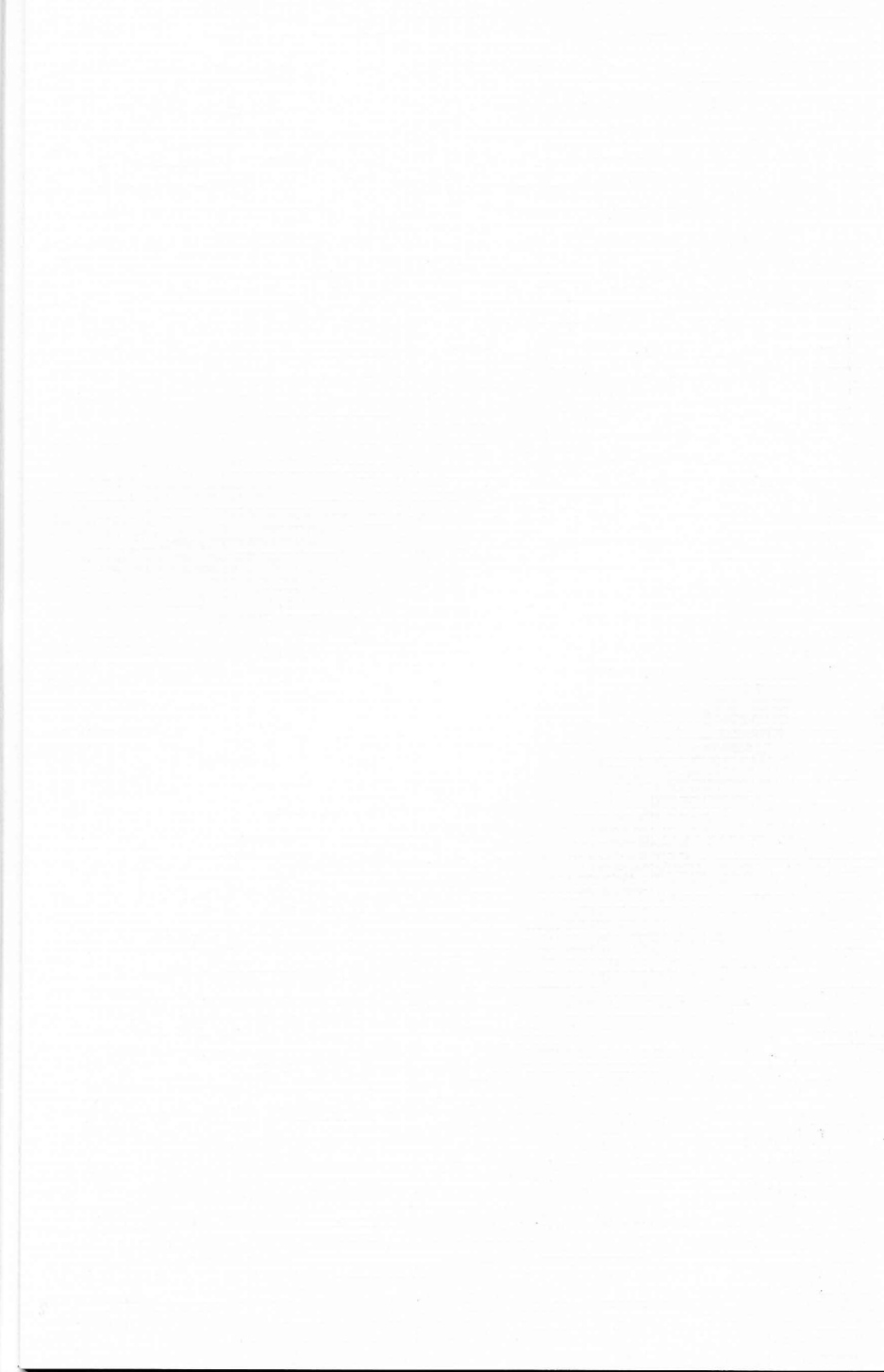
Ontario Field Ornithologists (OFO) is an organization dedicated to the study of birdlife in Ontario. It was formed to unify the ever-growing numbers of bird-watchers across the province and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among its members.

OFO publishes a newsletter and a journal (Ontario Birds), hosts field trips throughout Ontario, oversees the activities of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC), and holds a Spring Field Meeting as well as an Annual General Meeting in the autumn.

All persons interested in bird study, regardless of their level of expertise, are invited to become members of OFO. Membership dues are \$20.00 for an Annual Membership or \$400.00 for a Life Membership. Please send memberships or inquiries to: Ontario Field Ornithologists, P. O. Box 1204, Station B. Burlington, Ontario L7P 3S9.

Bird Finding Guide #1: Birding in the Hamilton Area, by John Olmsted.
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Design/Production: Franca Leeson



Presumably they migrated south that winter.

Ornithologists in North America in the early 1920s were particularly concerned about the effects of the fast-growing numbers of starlings on fruit and agricultural crops. The effect of starlings on food crops could be determined only by examining the contents of their stomachs and analysing what they ate. A major study was made by E. R. Kalmbach and I. N. Gabrielson, of the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture (1921). The authors stated: "As an effective destroyer of terrestrial insects, including such pests as cutworms, grasshoppers, and weevils, the starling has few equals among the bird population of the northeastern United States. ... The most serious objection to the starling on economic grounds arises from its destruction of cherries ..." (Lewis 1926 quoting Kalmbach and Gabrielson). (I have compressed the material, quoting part and paraphrasing part).

Lewis devoted 12 pages to an analysis of 87 starling stomachs obtained by him and J. L. Baillie, nearly all from the vicinity of Toronto. His Table 1, p. 31, gives location and date when collected — mainly 1926. The remainder of the study contains some information on some aspects of the starling's "life history".

In his conclusion Lewis pointed out that the starling in Ontario was economically very useful. Its beneficial activities, at the present,

he said, far outweighed its few damaging ones, but in countries where it had become abundant it was capable of doing serious harm. "The bird is here, uninvited, and we are unable to oust it if we would. As the bird increases in numbers, changes in its activities may be expected ... It is a wary and unobtrusive species that has no need for legal protection, as is shown by its rapid increase in numbers in Ontario in seven years." Lewis concluded that, if at some time in the future the starling's activities should become economically unfavourable, "control measures should be instituted immediately." Lewis added a bibliography of the starling, including only published records of starlings in Ontario, principal references to the economic status of the starling in foreign countries, and other publications referred to in the text.

Two accounts of records of starlings in the Toronto district in the 1920s were published by Snyder and Baillie (1925, 1930). These vividly show when and where the starlings spread. During the winter of 1923-24 members of the Brodie Club reported the starling regularly from the county west of Toronto, and flocks of 100 were seen. During the next winter a flock of 150 birds was seen regularly at a garbage dump in Cedarvale Ravine. Stuart Thompson, nephew of Ernest Thompson Seton, collected two specimens in February 1925 at Leaside in the Don Valley, first

evidence that starlings had encircled the city, and reached the easterly sections. The 1930 report traced the penetration of starlings into the central parts of the city from the suburbs. During the winter of 1927-28 local naturalists noted starlings regularly within the city centre. By the summer of 1928 pairs were found nesting in the residential sections in bird boxes, crevices in homes, and in woodpecker holes. In the fall of 1928 a large congregation of starlings nightly invaded a section of Lawrence Park to roost. In the early fall of 1929 starlings again congregated there, occupying a small woodlot together with cowbirds and grackles. Baillie visited the site and estimated there were about 5000 starlings there.

The authors of this account regarded the winter of 1929-30 as a milestone in the local increase of the starling, because pairs that had nested in central areas now, for the first time, remained behind for the winter. "They became a bird of the city's streets and back yards," the authors commented (Snyder and Baillie 1930, p. 198). By the end of the year 1930 the "starlingization" of Ontario was well advanced. Their further spread in Ontario, Canada, and North America has been more recently documented in several books and papers (Kessel 1953; Burt and Giltz 1978; AOU 1983; Speirs 1985; Godfrey 1986). (For a recent assessment of the economic value of starlings see Weatherhead *et al.* 1980.)

The release of 60 European Starlings in New York City's Central Park in 1890, and a reinforcement of another 40 there in 1891, has passed by without any anniversary celebrations to mark a Starling Centenary (Schneider 1990). What do individual ornithologists feel about this omission?

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Martin McNicholl for reading the draft of my paper and suggesting a number of improvements. Also for supplying me with several references to more recent literature on such subjects as seasonal distribution, migration, and assessments of the economic importance of starlings.

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Notes

Probable Red-tailed Hawk predation on Herring Gull

At 1515h on 3 December 1989, we observed an adult Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) with outstretched wings mantling a prey item on the snow along Barnsdale Road about 500m east of Moodie Road, Nepean, Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. The hawk took flight as we approached and an examination of the prey showed it to be a freshly-dead first-year Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*). Feathers had been stripped from the neck region, and the neck, back of the head, and upper back had been partly eaten. There was no damage to the wings or legs, no obvious signs of injury elsewhere or of emaciation, and the corpse was still limp and not frozen (the temperature in the afternoon was -20°C), indicating that it had died very recently. We left after

about five minutes, returned at 1600h, and found the hawk still feeding on the gull. The next day the carcass was frozen stiff, and there was no sign of the hawk.

A Herring Gull is an unusual prey item, even for a species such as the Red-tailed Hawk which shows such broad dietary adaptability. Red-tailed Hawks have been documented as taking a wide variety of prey (summarized in Palmer 1988), but there are no reports of Red-tails preying on any species of gull nor any other member of the order Charadriiformes. Red-tails are known to be carrion-feeders, but the gull did not appear to have died from some other cause such as being struck by a vehicle, which is highly unlikely as Barnsdale Road is a little-travelled and snow-packed

rural road. Although the actual act of predation was not witnessed, it seems highly probable that the Red-tailed Hawk had struck and killed the gull.

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The threat display of the Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*)

Black-capped Chickadees are so friendly, both to humans and to other birds, that one would expect them to lack a threat display, a supposition refuted by the following:

On 1 April 1979, a chickadee and an American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*) were both feeding at a distelfink feeder which was hanging close enough to a window

that the birds were only 2m away.

When the goldfinch moved a bit closer, the chickadee flattened its whole body and turned its head up slightly. This pose was held until the goldfinch moved away. To this observer the effect of the black-marked head was one of a mouth so widely gaping that engulfment of the goldfinch was a distinct possibility.

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Possible reasoning by a Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*)

In lieu of suet, a piece of meat was hung from a branch of a small tree by a window. On 20 April 1938, a female Downy Woodpecker lit on the trunk and eyed the meat rather dubiously, as the morsel was swaying rather freely in a little better than moderate wind. Rather than move to the meat and use it as a perch while feeding, she waited

until the wind blew it close enough to her that she was able to clutch it with one foot. Then, drawing the offering to her, she fed in comfort, holding the meat with one foot while clinging to the trunk with the other.

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Approaching oblivion

Almost 60 years of studying birds has enabled me to see trends not evident to one who began his study in the 1960s. The diminution in numbers of almost all species, except Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*), has been so gradual that it is not apparent unless one resorts to graphs and mathematics, possible only when one has recourse, as have I, to years of records.

On 10 May 1989 my sightings of May migrants was so deplorable that, on my return home, I began to review my observations of that day of each year for the preceding 50; and then, because weather may have interfered with either my field work or the movement of the birds, I expanded the study period to include 9–11 May, thus bracketing the day in question. Further, the only field trips considered were those in the Toronto Ornithological Region, which is that part of Ontario lying within 30 miles of the Royal Ontario Museum building.

The absence of softbills about my home added to my depression. Where once warblers and vireos crowded around the bird bath and "year's firsts" brightened the apple tree, only the usual summer fare was making use of the former while but leaves and blossoms decorated the latter.

I am sure a similar study of my observations about my summer cottage near Huntsville, Ontario, would be just as discouraging.

Expatriate J. L. Van Camp, who has a cottage near mine and whose birding began in 1940, concurs with my conclusions. T. C. Swift, of Weston, Ontario, who began the same time as I and who is quite conversant with Toronto's birds, fully agrees with my pessimism.

Im summarizing my records, I examined all species, but the table herewith has been reduced to include only the perching birds and a few representatives of other orders. The first of the two figures given is the average number of individuals seen per hour of the total hours afield during that decade. The second number is the maximum seen in one day.

The letters after certain species refer to the following personal conclusions. Readers may form others.

- (a) Only a rare transient at Toronto until the 1940s.
- (b) Reflects decrease in black ducks and increase in Mallards.
- (c) Very rare at Toronto until the 1950s.
- (d) Reflects increased urbanization and decrease in farmland.
- (e) Reflects increase in ring-bills and decrease in herrings.
- (f) Field work carried out chiefly in a valley with gulls unseen.
- (g) Shows decrease in numbers.
- (h) Reflects water quality and absence of food.
- (i) Seen regularly in Etobicoke fields in 1960s.

Decade	1930s		1940s		1960s		1970s		1980s	
Days afield	6		7		9		5		4	
Hours afield	13		21		15		16.5		15.5	
Canada Goose (a)					0.13	2	0.48	8	2.77	13
A. Black Duck (b)			0.76	11			0.61	10		
Mallard (b)			0.19	4	0.27	3	6.91	108	2.65	10
Gadwall (c)									0.13	2
Ring-necked Pheasant (d)			0.39	3	0.13	2				
Ring-billed Gull (e)	0.54	6	4.76	50	(f)		1.45	23	20.00	200
Herring Gull (e)	0.31	1	2.71	50	(f)		1.27	20	0.13	2
Black-billed Cuckoo	0.15	1								
Whip-poor-will	0.08	1								
Chimney Swift (g)	8.38	60	2.52	255	0.73	10			0.06	1
Ruby-throated Hummingbird					0.07	1			0.06	1
Belted Kingfisher (h)	0.38	3	0.14	2			0.06	1	0.13	1
Red-headed Woodpecker			0.10	2	0.07	1				
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	0.08	1	0.10	1	0.07	1	0.06	1	0.13	1
Downy Woodpecker	0.08	1	0.14	3	0.20	2			0.06	1
Northern Flicker	1.77	5	3.05	19	0.80	4	0.30	2	0.39	1
Pileated Woodpecker							0.06	1	0.06	1
Eastern Wood-Pewee			0.05	1	0.07	1				
Willow Flycatcher									0.06	1
Least Flycatcher	0.46	5	0.10	2	0.27	3				
Eastern Phoebe			0.05	1	0.13	1				
Great Crested Flycatcher			0.19	2	0.13	1				
Eastern Kingbird			0.05	1	0.13	1	0.06	1	0.32	1
Horned Lark			0.05	1	0.20	3			0.13	1
Purple Martin	0.08	1	0.10	2	0.20	2	0.06	1	0.39	4
Tree Swallow			1.86	25			0.06	1	1.16	10
N. Rough-winged Swallow			1.33	15	0.27	4	0.12	2	0.32	4
Bank Swallow	10.69	100	1.57	25	0.47	4	0.48	6	0.90	
Barn Swallow	0.37	10	1.57	25	2.47	10	0.24	3	2.71	30
Blue Jay	0.31	2	0.10	1	1.67	10	0.48	4	0.71	4
American Crow	0.54	4	1.48	10	1.60	10	1.33	12	1.42	8
Black-capped Chickadee	0.15	2	0.05	1			0.30	2	0.26	3
Red-breasted Nuthatch					0.07	1				
White-breasted Nuthatch	0.08	1	0.05	1						
Brown Creeper			0.33	5						
House Wren	0.08	1	0.10	1	0.13	2	0.06	1		
Winter Wren			0.10	2						
Golden-crowned Kinglet			0.10	2						
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0.46	4	3.24	50	0.40	3	0.50	5	0.06	1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher			0.10	1						
Eastern Bluebird			0.10	1						
Veery	0.31	2	0.10	1	0.13	1	0.06	1		
Swainson's Thrush	0.38	3	0.10	1	0.20	2	0.55	4		
Hermit Thrush	0.08	1	0.10	1	0.20	2	0.55	4		
Wood Thrush									0.06	1
American Robin	6.62	24	7.43	75	2.00	4	2.00	14	4.19	16
Gray Catbird	0.23	1	0.14	2	0.40	2	0.12	1	0.32	2
Northern Mockingbird							0.06	1		
Brown Thrasher	0.15	1	0.38	3	0.87	4	0.18	1		
Solitary Vireo			0.10	2	0.07	1				
Warbling Vireo	0.15	2	0.05	1						

Decade	1930s		1940s		1960s		1970s		1980s	
Days afield	6		7		9		5		4	
Hours afield	13		21		15		16.5		15.5	
Golden-winged Warbler									0.06	1
Tennessee Warbler			0.05	1						
Orange-crowned Warbler	0.38	3	0.05	1						
Nashville Warbler	1.69	14	2.86	53	0.27	2	0.30	2	0.06	1
Northern Parula	0.54	6								
Yellow Warbler	0.23	2	0.29	4	0.13	2	0.12	1	0.58	6
Chestnut-sided Warbler	0.46	6	0.29	3						
Magnolia Warbler	0.23	3	0.19	2	0.20	3				
Cape May Warbler			0.33	4						
Black-throated Blue Warbler			0.14	1	0.07	1				
Yellow-rumped Warbler	0.08	1	2.86	30			0.12	2	0.13	2
Black-throated Green Warbler	0.38	2	0.67	10	0.37	1				
Blackburnian Warbler			1.33	20						
Palm Warbler			0.57	11	0.07	1			0.06	1
Bay-breasted Warbler			0.10	2						
Black-and-white Warbler	0.92	10	1.00	10	0.07	1	0.18	1	0.13	2
American Redstart					0.13	1				
Ovenbird			0.05	1	0.13	2				
Northern Waterthrush			0.05	1						
Canada Warbler			0.05	1						
Scarlet Tanager	0.15	1	0.05	1	0.20	2	0.12	1		
Northern Cardinal	0.155	1	0.14	2	0.07	1	0.06	1	0.32	3
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	0.15	2	0.19	3	0.47	3	0.36	2	0.26	2
Indigo Bunting			0.14	4	0.07	1				
Rufous-sided Towhee	0.08	1	0.05	1	0.20	2	0.06	1	0.06	1
Chipping Sparrow	0.69	6	0.71	6	0.27	2			0.32	2
Clay-colored Sparrow (i)					0.77	1				
Field Sparrow			0.14	2	0.07	1	0.12	2	0.13	2
Vesper Sparrow					0.67	6	0.06	1	0.13	2
Savannah Sparrow					0.13	2	0.12	2	0.13	1
Fox Sparrow									0.06	1
Song Sparrow	1.54	9	2.38	10	2.07	10	0.48	5	1.35	122
Lincoln's Sparrow			0.10	2	0.07	1				
White-throated Sparrow	2.00	12	0.67	6	2.33	20	1.64	14	1.55	22
White-crowned Sparrow			1.00	20	1.47	20	0.48	7	0.19	2
Dark-eyed Junco			0.10	1	0.27	4	0.12	2		
Bobolink									1.03	8
Red-winged Blackbird	0.08	1	3.05	50	20.20	125	1.94	20	10.45	50
Eastern Meadowlark			0.10	2	0.47	5	0.06	1	0.19	2
Common Grackle	0.62	4	1.52	10	1.90	20	2.18	14	11.60	50
Brown-headed Cowbird	0.23	1	0.90	10	3.80	50	0.18	2	0.32	3
Northern Oriole	0.08	1	0.33	3	0.20	2	0.48	7	0.19	2
Purple Finch					0.13	2				
House Finch									0.65	4
American Goldfinch			0.14	3	0.20	2	0.36	6	0.77	5

[Ed. Note — Scientific names of birds have been omitted; common names conform to the 6th edition of the AOU checklist.]

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Book Reviews

The Macmillan Field Guide to Bird Identification. By *Allan Harris, Laurel Tucker, and Keith Vinincombe.* The Macmillan Press Ltd., London and Basingstoke, 1989. 224 pages, 94 colour plates, 24 black-and-white drawings. \$29.95 hardcover.

The *Macmillan Field Guide to Bird Identification* is aimed primarily at British observers, but will also be of considerable interest to Canadians. The guide concentrates on the latest identification techniques for "confusion species" such as loons, waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, terns, and also includes many difficult passerines. The authors state that choosing the species to treat was a problem. In the end, "it was decided to include mainly those regularly occurring British and Irish species that present a problem for the 'average birdwatcher' and to include only those rarities that are frequently confused with something common." The guide is intended to be a companion or supplement to the standard field guides which by their concise nature cannot treat each species in detail. This guide also contains much valuable information on ageing, sexing, moults, subspecies, flight identification, calls, behaviour, habitat, hybrids, and unusual plumages. The authors draw heavily from articles originally published over the past 25 years in the monthly journal *British Birds*. For this reason alone, the book is worth having especially for those birders who do not have access to *British Birds* or other journals.

The guide is richly illustrated with 94 colour plates and 24 black-and-white drawings. Three hundred paintings depict 91 species with emphasis on juvenile and nonbreeding plumages, just the plumages which most standard field guides usually cover inadequately or omit. The illustrations are generally superb. Handwritten captions beside the illustrations highlight the main points mentioned in the text. This is an innovative extension of the "Peterson System" of arrows pointing to key field marks. I have only minor quibbles with a few of the illustrations. The Black-bellied Plover on page 68 should have hind toes. The bird in adult winter plumage on page 69 does appear to have them but they are not shown clearly nor are they mentioned in the text. I have found the presence of a hind toe on the Black-bellied is sometimes useful in separating them from "Goldens" particularly when the birds are back-lighted. Observers should be aware that the "Kumlien's" subspecies of the Iceland Gull often shows much more extensive and deeper gray markings on the wingtips than the adult on page 126. The eye colour of adults ranges from yellow to dark brown as well.

The text is very detailed and quite readable. For those wanting more information, many accounts end with a list of references, mainly from *British Birds*. North Americans using this guide at home should keep in mind that the species comparisons often reflect a British perspective. For example, the Ring-billed Gull is compared to the nominate European subspecies of the Mew Gull which differs considerably from the North American subspecies. The European subspecies occurs occasionally on our east coast so in this regard the treatment is relevant.

The authors hope that their guide will appeal to the beginner as well as the seasoned observer. However, I do not recommend this guide to new birders. Most beginners would likely find it confusing and frustrating to use. I recommend the guide to experienced observers visiting Britain, Ireland, or western Europe who require an in-depth supplement to their regular field guide. Since many of the species covered also occur in Canada, this guide will appeal to keen Canadian birders, especially those in the northeast. I highly recommend this guide.

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A Birdfinding Guide to the Toronto Region. *Clive E. Goodwin*, 153 pages, revised 1988. Published by the author. \$8.95 plus \$3.05 postage & handling. Paperback.

For a serious Ontario birdwatcher, the Toronto region is an excellent area to avoid whenever possible. The burgeoning megalopolis has eliminated much natural habitat, leaving only remnants of good birdwatching sites. Despite continuing habitat destruction, this guide, an update of the author's 1979 publication, succeeds in making Toronto birding more accessible to natives as well as to visitors.

The best way to determine the merits of a guide such as this is to work from the back to the front. At the back are two maps cross-referenced to the 105 described localities. Preceding this is a good

index, a list of rarities, a current date guide (often lacking in other similar efforts), a thorough species account, tips for the newcomer, recommended publications, location accounts, the local birding calendar and, at the beginning, a comprehensive introduction. Clearly the many different chapter subjects provide a variety of perspectives to the topic. The overall impression is of a very thorough guide to birdwatching in a very urban area.

This is a good book; it has a lot of useful information and every Toronto birder must have a copy if they haven't already. Having said that, I do have some suggestions for

the next revision, which will obviously be necessary in another few years.

There seems to be an emphasis on location at the expense of birdwatching. Directions both by car and public transit along with parking instructions are provided for what seems like every park, conservation area, and ravine in the whole area. However for a visitor to Toronto with limited time there is not a lot of specific information on the best areas to find a variety of rather common species. Examples include resident warbler species, migrant shorebirds, Marsh Wren, Sora, and Virginia Rail. Only one location (Humber Arboretum) is specifically mentioned for Eastern Screech-Owl. Despite the vagaries of urbanization, I feel the species' accounts should have suggested specific locations for many of these birds.

One of the results of this democratic treatment of a multiplicity of areas has been a lack of emphasis on the few real birding hotspots. For example, Cranberry Marsh, admittedly more famous now than when this revision was drafted, is given only one paragraph. The Leslie Street Spit (Tommy Thompson Park) fares better at two pages, but is so important that it almost merits a separate chapter. Perhaps a complete list of the many bird species best seen there should have been included in this section.

A clue to the author's feelings about unusual (rare) birds may be suggested in his prefatory remarks to the species rare in the Toronto region. Here he states that "Records Committees delight in retroactive tinkering with records of this kind." Surely not all Records Committees? Notwithstanding the author's preferences, many readers would be interested in knowing where the three occurrences of California Gull took place or whether the many records of Western/Clark's Grebe or Northern Gannet (10 each) had any commonality. Rather than segregating the 62 species with 10 or fewer records, they should have been included in the species accounts with a one- or two-sentence comment. Quite a number of these "rare" species are being seen with increasing regularity (e.g., American White Pelican, Great Cormorant, Sandhill Crane, Yellow-throated Warbler) and many birdwatchers are particularly interested in the changing status of these birds.

Along with *A Bird Finding Guide to Ontario* by the same author, this book occupies a place of honour in my auto glove compartment. Nestled in with the warranty manual and various road maps it is there as a critical reference available at a moment's notice to provide directions anywhere in the Toronto Region.

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Tracks in the Sky: Wildlife and Wetlands of the Pacific Flyway. 1987. by Tupper Ansel Blake and Peter Steinhart. Chronicle Books, San Francisco, California. (Canadian distributor, Raincoast Books, Vancouver, B.C.) 166 pp. + x. CN\$50.00.

"Few humans are aware of the existence of the Pacific flyway", writes Peter Steinhart. "Few of us know where the flyway becomes actual — where those spectacular concentrations of birds drop down through the clouds, touch the earth, and mingle with less mobile creatures." This lush book aims to convey, in photographs and words, a sense of the entire span of the western continental flyway, a great chain of wetlands along which flows a great river of waterfowl and shorebirds, from the Beaufort Sea down to Costa Rica.

It was a fine idea to produce a book about an entire flyway. For one thing, it stretches the imagination of (non-migratory) human readers. For another, flyway needs to be understood as a whole in order for its birds to be protected. The book carries a strong conservation message, underlined by its sponsorship from the Audubon Society. It is aimed at a broad audience; it does not, for instance, take sides on the question of hunting, reserving its harsh words for land developers and such bureaucratic foes as California's Central Bureau of Reclamation.

The core of the book is a stunning photographic essay by Tupper Ansel Blake. There are 130

full-page photographs, the result of five years' work. Arranged through the book in approximate sequence going north to south, they show sweeping landscapes, flocks of waterfowl and shorebirds, and intimate glimpses of wildlife. The large, wide-picture format used throughout the book gives it a cinematic quality.

Blake's landscapes, from tundra pools to desert, are particularly striking, dramatically lit, and rich with the abstract design of wild nature. There are some splendid wildlife portraits, for example those of a Western Sandpiper stretching a wing, and a Bald Eagle at a Canada Goose kill. Other photographs speak subtly of an animal's link with its environment: a distant wolf emerging from an autumn forest; a silhouetted Snail Kite, intently hunting over marshland; a wary Canvasback beautifully posed by a clump of bulrushes (shades of Robert Bateman!). In other shots, Snow Geese thicken the sky over a California lake, or come in to land, wings spilling wind, feet braking, so close overhead that I began to feel that I was reading some kind of soft-porn publication for hunters!

Some of the close-ups are marred by out-of-focus vegetation, or by poor composition; this might

be due in part to the book's wide "movie format", which would make it harder to crop photographs. Overall, though, Blake has done an excellent job in bringing home the spirit of the wild wetlands.

In comparison to the gorgeous photos, the text loses out; the book's designers have crammed it into three-column-widths of small type, always opposite a full-page photograph. In his seven chapters, author Peter Steinhart sketches the geography of the flyway, and discusses the value of wetlands, our cultural attitudes toward them, and the precarious state of the flyway today as human pressures grow ever more intense. The style moves between reportage, with facts and interviews, and a more personal view, with lyrical eye-witness descriptions and musings.

The description of places on the flyway's route is disappointingly brief. More maps and diagrams would have helped to explain its course. Only one partial map of the flyway is included, and the book's designers have relegated this to the endpapers. The other key chapter (awkwardly titled "How to Strangle a Flyway") is a dismal catalogue of today's grave threats to the flyway. Although there has been severe habitat loss throughout the midsection between southern Alberta and Mexico, the worst crisis is in California, winter home of 60 per cent of the flyway's waterfowl and 20 per cent of the continent's. Here, intensive farming and a

centralized irrigation system are cramming birds into too few nature reserves, supplied with inadequate and polluted water supplies. Very powerful economic and political forces threaten the wetlands; there is a great and urgent challenge for environmentalists.

I found that the pictures and text did not work well together. The sequence of the pictures takes no regard for the text, or vice versa. The text's grim statistics of wetland drainage and pollution find no echo in the photographer's world, where nature is pristine and there seem to be no other humans but Blake and his pilot. The pictures soar; the text gets stuck in the mud.

As a picture book, *Tracks in the Sky* is outstanding. If you have a bare coffee table somewhere, this is just what you need (it actually looks like an expensive box of chocolates, with its slick design and wide red-and-gold-bordered cover). As a source of information on Pacific flyway birds, it is of limited value. However, I think it should be judged by how effectively it promotes conservation. People can be persuaded by arguments, but they will not feel any commitment to a cause unless it touches them emotionally. Tupper Blake's wide-screen photographic travelogue takes each reader on a memorable trip, and shows them, far better than words can, why they should care.

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Ontario Field Ornithologists

Ontario Field Ornithologists is an organization dedicated to the study of birdlife in Ontario. It was formed to unify the ever-growing numbers of field ornithologists (birders/birdwatchers) across the province and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among its members. The Ontario Field Ornithologists officially oversees the activities of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC), publishes a newsletter and a journal, *Ontario Birds*, hosts field trips throughout Ontario and holds a Spring Field Meeting and an Annual General Meeting in the autumn.

All persons interested in bird study, regardless of their level of expertise, are invited to become members of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Membership dues are \$20.00 Annual Member or \$400.00 Life Member. All members receive *Ontario Birds*, the official publication of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Please send memberships to: Ontario Field Ornithologists, P. O. Box 1204, Station B, Burlington, Ontario L7P 3S9.

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