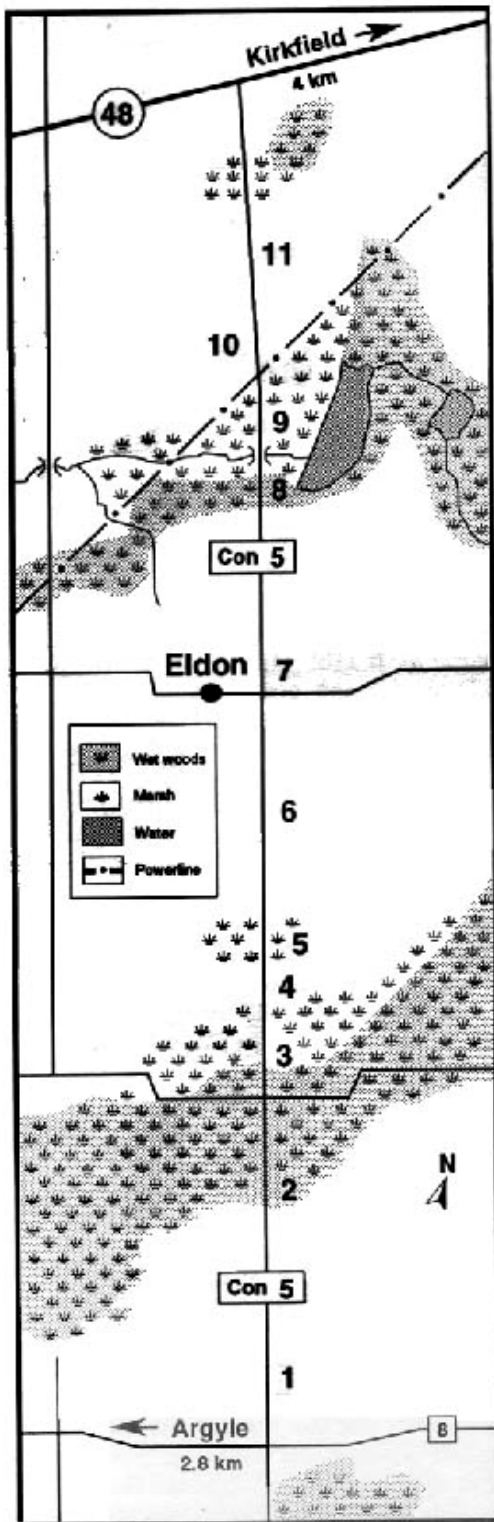


# Eldon 5 in Victoria County

## Favourite Birding Hotspots

by Eleanor Beagan and Jean Iron



Map by Michael King

**General Description.** Eldon 5 is an 11 km stretch of road near Kirkfield in Victoria County. It passes through open fields, scrub and bushy areas, mixed woodlots, and several significant marshes and swamps. A trip to the Carden Alvar can comfortably begin or end with a drive along Eldon 5 which should add several species not seen in Carden. From Highway 404 and 401 in Toronto, it will take about one hour and twenty minutes to reach the Argyle Bakery at the intersection of Highway 46 and Victoria County Road 8. To reach the bakery, take 404 north to Davis Drive, go east to Highway 48, turn left (north) and continue to Durham Road 15 (near Beaverton) and turn right (east). Travel for 8.8 km to the intersection of Victoria County Road 8 and Highway 46, where the bakery is on the southwest corner. Durham Road 15 becomes Victoria County Road 8 at the Victoria/Durham boundary. Continue east from the bakery along County Road 8 for 2.8 km and turn left (north) at the second road onto Eldon 5. The sign says Con 5 Eldon. Now set your odometer to 0 km. See map.

**Time of Year.** The best times are from late April to mid-July for migrating and breeding species. The most productive times of day are from dawn to mid-morning and from late afternoon to evening.

### The Birds.

1. From the corner of County Road 8 and Eldon 5 as you travel north, right away look all along the road in open areas for Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Snipe, Upland Sandpiper, Eastern Kingbird, Bobolink, American Kestrel and for many species of swallows and sparrows. Check the fence posts for perched Common Snipe and Upland Sandpiper. If you stay in your car you will be able to approach these birds very closely.
2. At 2.4 km, during migration, the wet woods of aspen, maple and evergreens produce an excellent variety of warblers, vireos, thrushes, flycatchers and other songbirds. The early morning chorus is enchanting.
3. At 3.5 km, the woods give way to a swamp of low alders and willows. Look on the right, though both sides can be good, for Willow Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Common Moorhen, Blue-winged Teal, Yellow Warbler and Common Yellowthroat.
4. Continuing north, the road has open fields on both sides where Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow and Upland Sandpiper can be found.
5. The willows at 4.2 km provide more chances for songbirds.
6. At 5.2 km Grasshopper and Clay-colored Sparrows are often found in a small pine plantation on the right. (In spring 1996, the pines were about 2 metres tall).
7. Short-eared Owls have been seen at dusk sitting on the fence posts and flying low over the fields in the area north of the intersection of Eldon 5 and Eldon Station Road.
8. A little further at 8.3 km is a treed area on both sides of the road where Ruffed Grouse may be heard drumming and sometimes are seen.
9. The best spot on the road is at 8.5 km where the road crosses a creek running from the marsh on your right. Stop here to view this extensive sedge and cattail marsh. Regretably, the summer storms of 1995 destroyed most of the herons' nests. Listen for Sedge and Marsh Wrens and you may be lucky enough to see them. Regular in spring and summer are Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Moorhen, Swamp Sparrow, Pied-billed Grebe, Least and American Bitterns, Belted Kingfisher, Green Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Mallard, Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Black Tern, and an abundance of Red-winged Blackbirds. What marsh would be complete without them! In May 1994 and 1995 Yellow Rails (on migration in mid May) were heard here. The best time for hearing them is at dusk



## Notes from the OBRC by Rob Dobos

or just after sunset, but they have also been heard during the day. Use a scope to view the large dead trees to the east. Check any stick nests carefully for Great Horned Owl and Osprey nests. In 1995, the OFO field trip spotted a Pileated Woodpecker visiting a nest hole in one of the dead trees. Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel and Northern Harrier frequent the fields to the north. On the left side of the road opposite the marsh, Baltimore Oriole, Gray Catbird, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Cedar Waxwing, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, many species of flycatchers, warblers, vireos and thrushes, and Ruffed Grouse are likely. The winnowing of Common Snipe in spring cannot be missed. An evening at the marsh is delightful with all the marsh sounds interspersed with the songs of American Woodcock, Common Nighthawk, Whip-Poor-Will and maybe even a coyote.

10. At 9.1 km, on the left near the hydro lines, Grasshopper Sparrows can be found. Between here and 10 km, in the hawthorn field on the left, Loggerhead Shrike were present in 1994.

11. From here to the next small swamp on the right, suitable habitat produces a good selection of the previously mentioned landbirds, including Brown Thrasher. At 11 km, Eldon 5 joins Highway 48. Turn right for Kirkfield, 4 km away.

*All birds can be seen well from the road. Please respect private land.*

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Andrew Jano for his help obtaining map information.

For a guide to the Carden Alvar, see the December 1991 *Ontario Birds* 9(3).

### Ross James Retires

Dr. Ross D. James, associate curator of ornithology at the Royal Ontario Museum, is taking early retirement on June 30, 1996. Ross intends to maintain an association with the ROM, but will not be available at the museum on a regular basis. He will continue to be museum liaison for the OBRC.

Ross's retirement and the retirement of Jim Dick of the ornithology department last March, represent a great loss to ornithology in Ontario. We wish Ross all the best in his retirement and new endeavours.

### Algonquin Warbler Quiz by Ron Tozer

1. Which two Algonquin warblers have larger leg musculature than typical warblers, and why?
2. Which Algonquin warbler molts rapidly from basic (winter) plumage to alternate (breeding) plumage during its migration northward in the spring?
3. Which Algonquin warblers are known as "budworm warblers"?
4. Which Algonquin warblers typically breed in groves of Eastern Hemlock?
5. The young of which Algonquin warbler leave the nest only seven days after hatching, rather than the normal 12 to 14 days of other warbler species?
6. Which common Algonquin warbler was seen only once by John James Audubon?
7. Which Algonquin warbler makes its living by flycatching, and competes directly with the Least Flycatcher?

*Answers page 5*

The Ontario Bird Records Committee held its Annual Meeting on March 2, 1996, at the Royal Ontario Museum. This all day meeting was devoted largely to the review and discussion of bird reports, and no major policy decisions were made this year. About 165 rare bird reports were reviewed by the Committee in 1995. Four new species were accepted for Ontario, those being White-faced Ibis, Prairie Falcon, Black-tailed Godwit and Varied Bunting. Details of these and many other rare bird occurrences will appear in the Annual Report to be published in the August 1996 *Ontario Birds*.

I would once again like to thank the outgoing 1995 members, Bob Curry, Ross James and Dennis Rupert, for service to the Committee. The OBRC members for 1996 are Margaret Bain, David Brewer, Peter Burke, Nick Escott, Kevin McLaughlin, Don Sutherland, Alan Wormington, and I will continue as Secretary. Oddly, at the Annual Meeting, we were unable to find a willing chairperson. Therefore, it was agreed that I would also serve as Acting Chair for this term.

As a general observation, the quality of rare bird reports submitted continues to improve, and the number of contributors is also on the increase. Many major rarities are documented by good photographs and sketches, in addition to detailed notes, and this certainly makes the work of the Committee much easier. Obviously, we do not receive reports for all provincial rarities encountered, and I would encourage OFO members not to hesitate about submitting a report, even for a bird that you know was seen by many others.

The OBRC has jumped into the information superhighway, and we are now able to receive rare bird reports by electronic mail (see my e-mail address below). The OBRC also has a section on the OFO Home Page, as described on Page 1, including a rare bird report form and the Ontario Review List of Species.

Please note I have recently moved. Your rare bird reports can be sent directly to me at my new address:

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