

# DW<sup>The</sup> Wood Duck

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One of the great things about birding is that anything can show up at any time. Unexpected rarities are always a thrill and the Bird of the Year 2009, Long-billed Curlew, was no exception. Get the full story on page 178.

*Photo: Long-billed Curlew  
by Mike Baird*

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905 902-9451 [wood\\_duck@bell.net](mailto:wood_duck@bell.net)

### Coordinators

**Website Coordinator:**  
Stephanie Cumerlato [webmaster@hamiltonnature.org](mailto:webmaster@hamiltonnature.org)  
905-529-4327  
**Bird Study Group Leader:** George Holland  
905-945-3962 [geholland@cogeco.net](mailto:geholland@cogeco.net)  
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905 616-6391 [heather.andrachuk@gmail.com](mailto:heather.andrachuk@gmail.com)  
**Mailing Coordinator:** Jean Stollard  
905 634-3538 [jjstollard@sympatico.ca](mailto:jjstollard@sympatico.ca)  
**Land Trust Program Coordinator:** Jen Baker  
905-524-3339 [land@hamiltonnature.org](mailto:land@hamiltonnature.org)  
**Birding Hotline:** 905 381-0329

### Send Noteworthy Bird Records to:

Rob Dobos, 21 Sunrise Cres., Dundas. L9H 3S1  
[rdobos@cogeco.ca](mailto:rdobos@cogeco.ca)

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# The Wood Duck

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web: <http://www.hamiltonnature.org>

email: [info@hamiltonnature.org](mailto:info@hamiltonnature.org)

# Bird Study Group Meeting Summary

## February 2010

Bird Research in Canada's Arctic with Rick Ludkin  
by Michael Rowlands



The February 15th meeting of the Bird Study Group, held on Family Day with an audience of about 55 people in attendance, was chaired by George Holland, who started the meeting with the usual announcements of upcoming events.

Our guest speaker was Rick Ludkin, known by many HNC members as the Master Bander at Ruthven Historic Park, where he has worked since 1995, and president of the Haldimand Bird Observatory. A few moments into his presentation, Rick asked anyone interested in volunteering to help at Ruthven with the daily bird census, which takes about an hour each morning at 7:30 a.m., to contact Ruthven staff.

Rick's experience with birding in the Arctic comes from six years of trips with research projects for the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) at Devon Island and Southampton Island, primarily concerned with population declines of Snow Buntings, Northern Fulmars and Common Eiders.

At Cape Vera on Devon Island, the topography is breathtaking – cliffs 300 metres in height with steep scree fields at their base and a shelf along the seashore half a kilometre wide and full of ponds. The encampments were surrounded by a fence to alert the researchers of bears and a loaded shotgun was kept in the tent! Nine to ten thousand pairs of Northern Fulmars, tubenoses related to albatrosses, nest on the cliffs there but in numbers greatly reduced from past years. The researchers counted and tagged birds at various sites and those qualified as rock

climbers collected eggs from cliffside nests. Rick explained they wore water-proof suits because fulmars have a nasty habit of sometimes projectile vomiting a musky stomach oil, affectionately known as “gack”, on the researchers. This is a clever defence mechanism they have to strip the oil from a predator's fur. Some of the fulmars were fitted with satellite transmitters so their winter movements over the north Atlantic Ocean could be tracked.

A sad revelation was a picture of the stomach contents of a dead fulmar – there were dozens of pieces of ingested plastics that the birds had mistaken for food, all taken in what we would have thought was pristine Arctic Ocean water. Rick also said that the ponds on the flats are extremely toxic, with very high PCB and cadmium concentrations. These contaminants are delivered by the seabirds themselves, who feed on toxic zooplankton, squid, fish and carrion in the ocean; their digestive systems then concentrate the toxins, which are excreted into the ponds.

At Cape Vera, Dr. Oliver Love from the University of Windsor studied Snow Buntings and how they have such a high survival rate – seven of eight eggs survive in a clutch – despite breeding under very high winds and freezing temperatures. Other birds seen there were Ross's Gull, Ivory Gull and Thayer's Gull.

On another trip, flying in a Twin Otter equipped to land on snow or hard ground, the researchers went to Southampton Island's southeast corner

and East Bay Island to study the northern subspecies of Common Eider, whose population is declining. The snow melts on this island before it does on the mainland and it's even visited by species such as Tree, Barn and Bank Swallows. A permanent cabin is located there that sleeps eight people and tents are erected for dining, general and food storage, and as a laboratory. In cramped quarters, everyone must get along with everyone else! Fortunately, the food provided by researcher and chef Dr. Grant Gilchrist is good and there is plenty of it, Rick said. They are also careful to recycle all wet garbage into the ocean and to burn dry garbage and haul out the ashes. In one slide we saw that the open-air latrine at the camp offered a wonderful view across the water, especially of the sunsets!

The team set up salmon fishing nets between poles eight metres high in an L-shaped configuration to trap the ducks as they flew into the island to check out the water situation and nesting sites. The nets hung on metal cables by plastic shower curtain rings that acted as shock absorbers when the large birds hit the nets; even so, some males broke through the mesh.

Dr. Oliver Love took blood samples within two minutes of the capture to measure corticosterone levels, an indication of the stress level of individual female birds that may be related to reproductive outcomes. Swabs to check for the presence of avian cholera and influenza were also taken. The birds were then banded with colourfast leg

bands of a UV-resistant plastic called Darvic® that could be read from 150-200 metres away with a good scope. Coloured geometrically shaped tags were also fastened to the ducks' nostrils that were easier to read when the birds started incubating their eggs. These nasal tags were secured by UV-sensitive threads that broke down after 28 days and were collected by the researchers at the end of the season from the nests. Once identified, the eiders were observed in their every move from several different bird blinds accessed through long canvas tunnels erected before the birds had arrived so the researchers could remain unseen and not disturb the nesting birds.

When the chicks were born, helper females called "aunties" would gather around the mother and newborns to provide protection from predators. Young birds were also captured in funnel nets and banded and released into the water at the same time as the adults so they could continue to be protected from Herring Gulls and jaegers. An avian cholera epidemic that began in 2005 has reduced the eider flock from approximately 9,000 to 2,500 breeders in recent years, likely as a product of global warming in which the disease has moved northward. At the same time, the Herring Gull population has increased, as they thrive on the weakened and dying eiders.

Snow Buntings were also studied as they were easily captured in traps and banded for observations. The birds return year after year to this same island and likely spend their winters in Saskatchewan. Transmitters attached to Herring Gulls from the island indicate they winter in Texas and Louisiana.

To close the presentation, we were shown pictures of Caribou, Arctic Fox, Purple Sandpiper, King Eider, Black Guillemot, Sabine's Gull, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Red Phalarope,

Red-throated Loon, White-rumped Sandpiper, Arctic Tern, Parasitic Jaeger, Semipalmated Plover and a Polar Bear who stole some socks off the camp clothesline!

George Holland thanked Rick for sharing his interesting Arctic birding experiences with us. It's a little more dangerous than banding songbirds at Ruthven but the research should help determine why certain bird populations are dropping so we can find ways to reverse the trends.

After a refreshment and conversation break, Cheryl Edgecombe reminded people to think about making short presentations of their birding adventures at the April "Members' Night" meeting. Contact George Holland or a committee member if you're interested.

The evening concluded with Frank Morley leading the sightings report and it sounds as if many birds have decided it's going to be an early spring. Red-winged Blackbirds have been seen at Long Point already and Turkey Vultures have been seen over Brantford Hospital (though they may never have gone south). It's been an interesting "winter" in the Hamilton Study Area!



*Photo: Snow Bunting by John Haslam*

## Walk for Nature

**Saturday, May 8, 2010**

Mark your calendars!

On Saturday, May 8, celebrate Mothers Day by participating in the 2010 Walk for Nature at the RBG Arboretum, and help protect nature in the Hamilton area.

Choose a 5 or 10 km walk beginning at the RBG Arboretum and Nature Centre on Old Guelph Road.

Practise your sleuthing skills in Hamilton's first "Nature Quest" adventure. Afterwards there will be special activities for children and free refreshments for walkers. Family fun will include interactive displays from local environmental groups, including the always popular opportunity to see live birds of prey such as hawks and owls.

Can't make the walk? Consider sponsoring the HNC's Walk for Nature Ambassador Brian McHattie, HNC Past President and Hamilton Councillor.

For more information please contact Jen Baker at [land@hamiltonnature.org](mailto:land@hamiltonnature.org).

# Dynamics of Bird Colonies in Lake Winnipeg, Manitoba

By George Holland



During the summer months of the early 90's, I worked for the Department of Conservation (Natural Resources), Manitoba, carrying out bird surveys one year in the south basin of Lake Winnipeg. The following year, I had the opportunity to survey the north basin. The first year we contracted a fishing vessel from Matheson Island on the east side of the lake; the second was on the provincial government marine vessel which was principally used to monitor fishing. Lake Winnipeg is rather shallow, having an average depth of only four metres, and 20 metres at its deepest.

In both basins there are innumerable islands including some large groups which can only be found on topographical maps; some of the more prominent islands may be located on highway maps. Many of the bird colonies on these islands hold tremendous numbers of Common and Caspian Terns, Double-crested Cormorants, American White Pelicans, Ring-billed and to a lesser extent, Herring Gulls as well as many species of ducks. These islands are mostly quite remote from human habitation.

The purpose of our surveys was to estimate the number of aquatic species and their colonies on the lake during June and early July. This turned out to be delicate work because we did not wish to disturb the birds unnecessarily. Often, we remained off-shore in our small boat estimating numbers. We found many birds, particularly Terns, would fly out to unwelcome our intrusion even as we prepared ourselves to embark in the zodiac from our "mother

ship". Actually this made counting easier as usually both adults of the latter species would swarm around overhead. However, we also knew from experience that Common Terns are intolerant of their neighbours. These Terns nest in close proximity: not much more than an adult Tern's length from its neighbours: there is scarcely any no-man's land between them.

Interestingly, we observed some species shared an island but generally bred in discrete colonies. For example, one island may have Cormorants and Pelicans in closely packed congregations but separated by an imaginary line that only they recognized!

Ring-billed Gulls nested in vast, compact colonies with little attention given to building nests, more or less consisting of usually three eggs on bare ground. Herring Gulls built much more elaborate nests also of two-to-three eggs, sporadically located throughout Cormorant and Ring-billed colonies.

On a large island we estimated 4600 Caspian Tern nests. Conservation Manitoba considered this colony the largest known for this species in the world!

While Bald Eagles were seen to feed on Cormorant nestlings, they kept a healthy distance from the Common Tern colonies. One Eagle ventured too close to the latter's colony only to be seen harassed, in hornet fashion, for some distance by multitudes of Terns dive-bombing this large marauder.

When approaching a colony of Pelicans

we remained well off shore because the disturbed young have the habit of escaping into the water where they are highly susceptible to pneumonia when the water temperature of the lake is still cool.

Many commercial fishermen in Manitoba's great lakes tend to blame Cormorants for the depletion of fishing stocks. After several exhaustive scientific studies, this belief is without foundation. We encountered several large commercial nets without tags indicating unlawful usage: The authorities have only one patrol vessel on Lake Winnipeg and it is very difficult to control illegal practices.

During one June, there were numbers of breeding Pelicans on the Red and Assiniboine rivers and retention ponds within the City of Winnipeg. The weather had been fair lately so there was a suspicion that something else caused these birds to leave their nesting areas. On investigation, it was determined that some people, suspected fishermen, had ruined a large colony in the south basin of Lake Winnipeg. The Dept of Conservation now has an ongoing education program which hopefully, will make a difference.

We were grateful that our skipper was a first class cook as our 14-hour days were rewarded with his culinary skills. We often ate on deck in a quiet cove to enjoy our dinner, watching the setting sun in nature's peace and tranquility that few in this world will ever experience!

# The Sky This May

By Mario Carr

As our earth makes its journey around the sun, new constellations appear in the spring night sky.

From our perspective, it looks as though the sun is moving in relation to the stars. The apparent path of the sun is called the ecliptic and coincidentally it is also the same path that the moon and planets follow. The ecliptic also crosses the zodiac constellations. Virgo, Leo, Cancer and Gemini are spring zodiac constellations that can be seen in May.

Finding them is easy. If you're outside during a clear night in the early evening this month, face south and look overhead to find the Big Dipper. Arc an imaginary line down to the horizon from the Big Dipper's handle until you hit the brightest star in the spring sky, Arcturus. The star is 37 light years away and is in the constellation Bootes, the herdsman.

In space, distances are measured in light years. What I find really fascinating about astronomy are the incredible distances. Everything is measured in light years. That's because nothing is faster than light. In one year, light travels about 9.46 trillion kilometers. That's like going around the earth 240 million times.

Spike your imaginary line even further down to the next bright star, Spica in Virgo the virgin. Spica is about 260 light years away. But if you believe in horoscopes, which have nothing to do with astronomy, you might say wait a second, I was born in September why is my sign Virgo if it is spring constellation? Well, in September, Virgo is behind the sun and that is how your sign is determined.

If you look closely above Virgo with a small telescope, you will see a patch of sky that is home to more than 1,300 galaxies called the Virgo Cluster. M64, the Black Eye Galaxy and spiral galaxy M100 are just some galaxies that reside in the Virgo Cluster. M100 is about 150 million light years away with more than 100 billion stars.

The Virgo Cluster is extremely massive and its gravitational attraction actually slows down nearby galaxies. Its mass was determined from its motion which moves at an astonishing rate of 1,600 kilometers per second.

Most of these galaxies were discovered in the 1770s. Slightly below Virgo is the famous Sombrero Galaxy. It is about 40 million light years away and is an edge-on spiral galaxy with a dark dust line running across its centre to give an impression of a Sombrero.

Spica lies close to the ecliptic. If you follow the ecliptic to the right you will find the star Regulus in the constellation Leo. Saturn lies in Leo. Follow the ecliptic further and you will find Cancer and Gemini.

Here are a few dates to keep in mind.

May 14 – New Moon and Hamilton Amateur Astronomers meeting at 7:30 pm, Hamilton Spectator Building, 44 Frid St.

May 16 – Venus is close to the moon. Venus appears in the western sky after dusk throughout the month.

May 26 – Mercury is at its greatest elon-

gation and can be seen during the morning throughout the month.

May 27 – Full moon.

For more information please see the Hamilton Amateur Astronomer's web site at [www.amateurastronomy.org](http://www.amateurastronomy.org) or call (905) 627-4323.

Mario Carr is the director of public education, Hamilton Amateur Astronomers. He is also a member of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and can be reached at [mariocarr@cogeco.ca](mailto:mariocarr@cogeco.ca).



Photo: Spiral Galaxy M100



Photo: Sombrero Galaxy

# Bird of the Year - Long-billed Curlew

By Cheryl Edgecombe



Photo: Long billed Curlew by Barry Cherie

One of the great things about birding is that anything can show up at any time. Unexpected rarities are always a thrill and the Bird of the Year 2009, Long-billed Curlew, was no exception.

On August 23 rd, 2009, I wandered down to the beach where a number of the local birders including Rob Dobos were lake watching. We were hoping to catch a view of the first migrating specialties that we are so fortunate to have at this end of the lake in late summer and fall, Sabine's Gulls, Jaegers and Kittiwakes. Although early for these species, a steady light east wind was blowing after a cold front the night before setting up the right conditions for this type of birding. I stood with Rob watching the lake as the other birders were finishing up their stint. They had been there since early morning with little success. As we stood, Rob gave a call to Barb Charlton and asked if she wanted to join us at the beach for a lake watch. It was raining up in her area in Flamborough and it was hard to convince her that the sun was actually shining down here at the Lakeland Tower but she agreed, thank goodness!

Barb joined us after about half an hour and we watched the lake for a while with no results and decided to go for lunch at the café at the Lakeland Tower. We sat in the back corner with scopes tucked in and decided to celebrate the start of the lake watching season with a fortified beverage. Margarita, Bellini and Daiquiri were the beverages of choice.

At approximately 1:20 p.m., after our

food was ordered, a large shorebird flew over our heads at a distance of about 20 meters. Rob Dobos was the first to get on this bird and without directly quoting what he said, he brought our attention to this large curlew going over. We all were in awe over the size of this bird. Rob was able to grab my scope and get the bird in a better view noting plumage details beyond its obvious cinnamon buffy colour and exceptionally large decurved bill. Having seen this species outside of Ontario we all immediately knew that we had a Long-billed Curlew, only the second documented record for the province and a bird that only had been documented in historical records dating back to the late 1800's in Hamilton. We were elated and were high fiving and celebrating. Even the waitress got into the enthusiasm as we exclaimed what a rare find this was. The other patrons in the restaurant wondered what was wrong with us.

Barb immediately ordered the food to go and the bill. I grabbed my scope and went down to the shoreline in hopes of finding the bird along its flight line. I was thrilled to scan and refind this bird sitting on the beach about a kilometer down at Confederation Park going down to the water and scooping its bill into the lake for a drink. The bird was then flushed by a Herring Gull and I watched as it flew down the beach and out of sight.

Cell phones were going crazy. We put in an immediate post to Ontbirds and enjoyed a very quick downing of our cocktails! We hit the road running

going into Confederation Park and various spots east looking along the western end of the lake to see if the bird had landed again. There are few places to get good views of the shoreline along this stretch so our task was daunting. We ended up at Fifty Point Conservation Area where the view was more extensive but alas could not turn up this bird again.

The bird of the year this year was a difficult choice since there were many great birds in the Hamilton Study Area in 2009. The choice is made by a committee using criteria of Provincial Rarity, Hamilton Area Rarity and the number of observers seen (enjoyment factor). Other candidates considered this year were Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Painted Bunting and Lark Sparrow.

Being at the right place at the right time sums it up. It was difficult to call the birders who had put in their time down at the beach and left a half hour before this bird came over. I would not have been a happy camper if the tables were turned. It is always better when many are able to share in the experience. It truly was a lucky day.



Photo: Rob Dobos, Barbara Charlton, Cheryl Edgecombe

# Ross Thompson Trophy for 2009

By Cheryl Edgecombe



It is with great pleasure that I announce the winner of the Ross Thompson Trophy for 2009 Ezra Campanelli.

The Ross Thompson Trophy is awarded annually by the Hamilton Naturalists Club to a young enthusiastic birder under the age of 18 who has seen the most species in the Hamilton Study Area.

Ezra finished with a total of 172 species for the year. His brother Giovanni received the trophy two years ago and Ezra is pleased to have his name on the trophy along with his brother. The trophy this year was presented by our youngest winner of the award Owen Novoselac who won the award at the age of 7 in 2006. Other entrants in this year's competition were Giovanni Campanelli, Zakhar Husak and Lukian Husak.

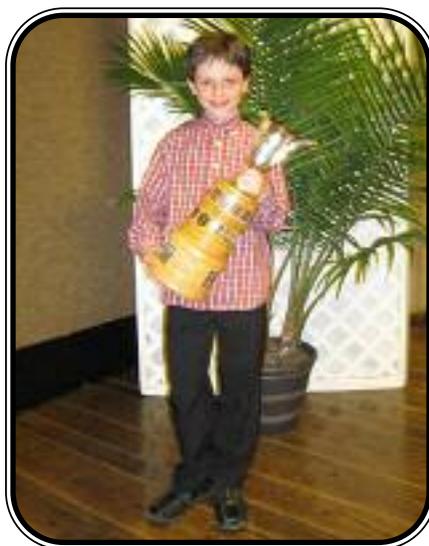
The year was filled with many highlights for Ezra. Among his favourites was the Lark Sparrow seen near Caledonia and American White Pelicans seen at Cootes Paradise (after many tries!). He enjoyed birding at many of the Hamilton Study areas hotspots including Shell Park where fellow birder Andrew Don pointed out a Gray-cheeked Thrush, a lifer for Ezra.

Both the Campanelli boys are highly involved with the Bird Studies Group where they produced last year's Christmas Quiz and will be doing a presentation on swallows at our member's night. They participate in the HNC Walk for Nature and the Baillie

Birdathon for the Club. The 2009 Baillie Birdathon that Ezra and his family did was environmentally friendly highlighted by a long bike ride from Hamilton to Sherwood Forest Park in Burlington. Ezra is also involved in the banding program at Ruthven.

We look forward to seeing more reports from all of our young birders. We have a great future of birding in Hamilton with a lot of talent coming up.

Congratulations again to Ezra on an excellent year.



## Duck Soup

by Zakhar Husak and Lukian Husak

**Duck Soup** *Slang. n.* something that is easily done; a cinch: This puzzle will be duck soup to us.

Choose the word from the list which is an accepted description of the indicated birds.

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ of birds
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ of cardinals
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ of swallows
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ of bobolinks
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ of flamingoes
6. A \_\_\_\_\_ of widgeons
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ of vultures
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ of buffleheads
9. A \_\_\_\_\_ of flycatchers
10. A \_\_\_\_\_ of siskins

smidgen      skiver  
zipper        vortex  
vatican        dufflebag  
ebert          stand  
gulp            chain

*Answers can be found on page 214*

# Long Point Bus Trip

By Bill Lamond



The first day of spring was an ideal day for an outing to Long Point, as what better way to welcome spring than a journey to one of the best birding areas in Ontario. Sanctuary Director Elaine Serena asked whether I would be interested in leading another bus trip to see the waterfowl of Long Point. I said yes almost immediately as these trips have always been well attended and enjoyed. I was subsequently able to enlist the expert bird finding and ID skills of Kevin McLaughlin and Rob Dobos to assist me on this venture so I was satisfied that all would go well.

We departed the Aldershot GO train parking lot at about 7:20am with 38 participants. Unfortunately we never go in style on these bus trips. We always rent a school bus as a coach bus is just too expensive. The coach would be a far nicer way to travel as it is roomier, has an onboard washroom and has a much smoother ride. However, if nothing else, the school bus takes us back to our childhood memories, especially for those at the back of the bus who get a bonus “carnival ride” whenever the road gets bumpy!

We started the morning at Turkey Point at the marina. Often there are many ducks flying about Long Point Bay at this location, but only Common and Red-breasted Mergansers were here in any number. We did see eight adult Little Gulls, six in one tight flock, which was a treat for all. As usual at this location, we picked out an adult Bald Eagle sitting in a distant tree. Eventually we did see some Tundra

Swans, as a group of about 40 birds flew in from the lake and gradually got closer to us. I’m always impressed by the sight of a line of these graceful giants. Eventually they got close enough that we could hear the wonderful calls that they have. However, the highlight of this stop occurred when almost everyone was back on the bus. A pair of Sandhill Cranes flew in from the Turkey Point Marsh right in front of the bus and landed on the beach. They flew so low that everyone on the bus got a good look and I could tell that for most people, this made the stop worthwhile.

Next stop was the Turkey Point Marsh lookout along Front Road. We were delighted to find nine Sandhill Cranes foraging in the corn-stubble field right behind us at this overlook. It was neat to see them eventually fly off on their own accord, in pairs, after they had their fill of corn. The marsh itself had few ducks, some Gadwall and American Wigeon and some distant swans. However, the stubble field didn’t disappoint. Not one of us had any idea there were ducks foraging in this field. Suddenly a large group exploded out of the field and into the marsh. You had to be quick, but in this group of mostly Mallards, some participants saw the lone Black Duck and a pair of Northern Pintails. A few minutes later, another large group of puddle ducks exited the field. This group had a few Green-winged Teal, some American Wigeon and one male Northern Shoveler. Before we left this location another batch of puddle ducks exited the field, containing several Green-winged Teal. Also of

note at this location were a pile of migrant blackbirds, a male Northern Harrier and some Turkey Vultures.

We headed to the HQ of Bird Studies Canada to check the ponds for waterfowl. This was fruitless but we did see two Tree Swallows which was new for everyone’s year list. Also here was a high flying Bald Eagle. The next stop was Lee Brown’s Waterfowl Refuge along Front Road. This can sometimes be a great area to view lots of waterfowl. Not on this day however. There were about eight Ring-necked Ducks, a half dozen American Wigeon and several Green-winged Teal. The highlight here were the four Bald Eagles (two adults, two immatures) that were seen high in the sky. A lucky few birders managed to identify at least one Rough-legged Hawk with the eagles. After a time, the immature eagles got much lower and closer and really put on a display. They were chasing each other and attempting to lock talons at times. I am tempted to say that they were playing and just enjoying themselves. The strict biologist would say that is nonsense and the behaviour was just practice to increase survival as the eagles matured. I like my explanation better.

It was now time for lunch at the Florence Winery. This was a most welcome spot for lunch. This is a new winery in Norfolk County. It was the classical win-win as several bottles of wine were purchased. Quite recommended.

After lunch we actually did not have too much time for birding. We decided

that our best bet was to go to the Long Point causeway for our last stop as this is often a great spot for ducks. We stopped at the Big Creek Marsh National Wildlife Area. There is a viewing platform tower here but most of the ducks that we could see were distant. Ducks here were mostly Ring-necked Ducks. A few Mute Swans were noted here as well, as were a Great Blue Heron and a Muskrat. Just before getting back on the bus we saw a moderate-sized flock of Northern Pintails fly over. This is how we wanted to see waterfowl! We then drove down to the eastern end of the causeway for the last stop of the day. There is a small viewing platform here as well, and it gives a great view of the inner Long Point Bay. There were a lot of ducks here but unfortunately the great bulk of them were very distant; essentially specks even in telescopes. There were a few close-in ducks however. We had a good look at Lesser Scaup and the familiar refrain was heard of how to differentiate the two Scaup species. Further out, a lone Glaucous Gull was observed as well as a male Canvasback.

It was now time to head back. Of course we had to make another pit-stop at Tim Hortons in Simcoe. On the way back a few on the bus were able to see a flock of Wild Turkeys in a corn-stubble field with a couple of the males in full breeding display.

Overall I found the day disappointing from a birding perspective. The unseasonably warm weather for most of March had already pushed through most of the Tundra Swans. A lot of ducks had already departed too it seemed.

Nonetheless, there always seem to be birds in the Long Point area and most people went home happy.



Photo: Great Blue Heron by Christian Mehlführer



Photo: Northern Pintail



Photo: Tundra Swan

## Bird Banding at Haldimand Bird Observatory – Ruthven Park – Spring 2010

During Spring migration the banding lab is open daily, unless it's very wet weather, from dawn until around noon, from the beginning of April to the end of May. Master Bander, Rick Ludkin, welcomes you to visit and learn about the detailed records that are kept on each bird that is caught in the mist nets, then banded, weighed and measured before being released. It's a marvellous opportunity to see birds up close and appreciate the delicate beauty of their plumage and to learn about the different species from these very experienced and dedicated naturalists. A great variety of warblers and other birds are likely to be seen.

Bring your binoculars, rubber boots, a snack and warm drink, it's cold in the early morning and the trails are wet and muddy.

Park at the end of the driveway by the washrooms. The banding station is the small building on your right as you walk towards the mansion.

Rick would very much appreciate the help of experienced birders to help with the census each morning.

- Please contact him by e-mail: [rludkin@hotmail.com](mailto:rludkin@hotmail.com); or phone (905) 765 4963 if you could help with this at all.

Ruthven Park is located between York and Cayuga on Hwy # 54, along the Grand River. Check the website at [www.ruthvenpark.ca](http://www.ruthvenpark.ca)



# A Peregrine in Distress...

A note from the HNC Webmaster and life-long Naturalists' Club Member, Stephanie Lechniak-Cumerlato



Photo: Peregrine Falcon by Kevin Law

Ever since I can remember, I've been an avid naturalist. My idol growing up was Kay McKeever and in 2007 I was privileged and honoured to meet her at a Hamilton Naturalists' Club meeting. Her devotion to injured and rehabilitated owls, (including Minerva who was my favourite) sparked my passion for these beautiful creatures big and small. From a young age, my brother Michael and I thought we looked so cool with the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America in hand and a pair of Bushnell binoculars around our necks. We rarely missed a Junior Naturalists' meeting, but when we did, it was probably because we were away with our parents on a birding excursion to Amherst Island, Long Point, or Presqu'île Provincial Park.

My family would make our favourite trip to Point Pelee National Park for spring migration every year and Michael and I were excited to put our young birding knowledge to good use! Our goal was to see every single warbler that had migrated to the park that spring. We dropped our \$1.00 in the box in the Visitor's Centre to purchase our own Species Checklist and we were ready to go! One thing that has never changed is our passion for the birds.

You can only imagine my concern when my family and I stumbled upon a helpless and trapped bird this past March inside the Book Depot on Welland Avenue in St. Catharines. There were close to perhaps 200 people in the building at the time because the store was having a big box sale that weekend.

At first I thought it was a sparrow that quickly flew by my peripheral vision. I pointed out to my dad that the bird was awfully large to be just a sparrow, so upon closer inspection we realized it was in fact a Peregrine Falcon that was trapped inside the building! The poor thing was frantic, flying from beam to beam, showing obvious signs of distress. There were no windows and the only way in or out was through the small entrance we had entered through.

We were very concerned for the welfare of the Peregrine, especially since they are a threatened species in Ontario and still at risk. Between my parents and I, we divvied up our cell phones and started making phone calls. Although sympathetic, the folks that we did get hold of weren't too sure how to help because it was moving into a weekend and many of the organizations that might be able to help were closed for the weekend.

After 6 hours we had no choice but to leave for an event that I was hosting that evening.

Upon leaving, the manager told us that sadly, the Peregrine had been trapped in the warehouse for 4 days! We didn't even want to imagine how hungry the bird must have been, let alone how scared it was. I left the manager with phone numbers including the Humane Wildlife Control in Beamsville. The manager was very co-operative and he promised to address the situation immediately, even if it meant paying for the rescue himself. He told us he too was becoming concerned because the Peregrine was showing signs of irrita-

tion. Over those few days, it began swooping lower and closer to the customers shopping in the warehouse.

Audrey Gamble called me that evening and stressed that she would follow-up with the store to help the poor bird. Unfortunately, by the time the right people came to help rescue the bird, it was nowhere to be found. Whether or not the Peregrine made it out alive is a mystery and we may never know what happened. I hold high the thought that the Falcon is now soaring somewhere above the escarpment and feasting on a big juicy mouse! One can only hope.

This brings me to a final note, one that I am saddened to type. After serving as the HNC Webmaster for the past 2 years, I have had to come to the hard decision to step down from the volunteer position. My full-time web design business has been quite successful and I must devote more time to making the web a beautiful place to visit!

If you are curious about Hamilton's history and it's more dark and mysterious past, please join me on a Haunted Hamilton Ghost Walk, a business that for the past 10 years I have run alongside my husband Daniel. ([www.hauntedhamilton.com](http://www.hauntedhamilton.com)) I wish everyone at the Hamilton Naturalists' Club all the best and I can't wait to attend some of the field events this summer!

I'll still do my best to get back to Point Pelee when I can, and I do look forward to going this spring again, checklist in hand. Perhaps I'll see you there!

# Bird Study Group Meeting Summary – March 2010

## Awards Night and Ontario Forestry Practices and Bird Conservation

By Michael Rowlands

The March meeting of the Bird Study Group is always an exciting one for it's traditionally when we present awards to the junior birder who counted the most number of bird species in the Hamilton Study Area (HSA) in the previous calendar year and to the person(s) who sighted the "Bird of the Year."

First of all, Cheryl Edgecombe presented the Ross Thompson trophy for 2009 to Ezra Campanelli, who reported seeing 172 bird species in the HSA last year. In his confidently delivered acceptance speech, Ezra talked about his determination to find some White Pelicans that had been spotted at Cootes Paradise in the spring of 2009 – after a long bicycle ride and a fruitless initial attempt to find the large white birds, he returned another day and finally ended up seeing all five! His favourite bird of 2009 was the Lark Sparrow, a rarity that was in the running for Bird of the Year. Going forward his wish is to see a jaeger or perhaps even discover the Bird of the Year for 2010! Given this young man's strong sense of self-assurance and his obvious ability to turn up lots of birds, we wish him well in doing both! Congratulations, Ezra!

Bob Curry then gave a quick background on the Bird of the Year Award and said it's usually fairly easy to identify the bird with the highest rarity status in the province or the HSA and the one seen by the most people. This year though there were several potential candidates including a Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (that died after hitting a window in the Glen Abbey area), a Painted Bunting (seen only by one family at a feeder in Brantford), and a Lark Sparrow (seen at

Tyneside and Haldimand Road 66). The adjudication committee decided that a fourth candidate, a Long-billed Curlew seen at Van Wagner's Beach on August 23 by Rob Dobos, Barb Charlton and Cheryl Edgecombe was the one most prize worthy.

Rob explained that the three birders had been at Van Wagner's Beach looking for rarities over the lake and decided to take a lunch break on the patio of the local bistro. Barb had been reluctant in the first place to join Rob and Cheryl as it was raining at her place when they called to invite her to join the lake watch. She thought they were kidding when they said it was sunny at the beach, but she had reluctantly agreed to join them. As the story goes, they had all ordered their lunches and were enjoying some uncharacteristic cocktails on the patio when the bird flew right over their heads! They ran out of the restaurant to get better looks, to the surprise of the other patrons, and confirmed that it was indeed a Long-billed Curlew. Is the lesson here that birders should drink more cocktails or just that they should keep their eyes open no matter where they are for a rare bird? Whatever the message, congratulations to our trio for their amazing find!

Our speaker for the evening was Chris Street, a member of the BSG, who has been both a forestry and a fisheries technician at various sites in Ontario. The forestry industry has received a bad rap in the last 10 years for being accused of not considering the habitats of wildlife when it goes into an area to cut trees, he explained in introducing his talk, so he set out to educate us on Ontario forestry

practices and bird conservation.

Chris first explained that Ontario has four distinct forest regions. Starting in the north, the Hudson's Bay Lowlands region contains the largest wetland in the country and is an extremely sensitive area. Tree species include Black and White Spruce, Tamarack and Willow but most trees there are too small to forest. The Boreal region is the largest forest area in Ontario and Canada and very important to birds! Tree species include Black and White Spruce, Jack Pine, Tamarack, Eastern White Cedar, Balsam Fir, Poplar and White Birch. The Great Lakes/St. Lawrence region is a transitional zone between the coniferous forests of the north and the deciduous forests of eastern North America. Trees include Sugar Maple, American Beech, Red Oak, Basswood, Yellow Birch, Black Cherry, Eastern White Pine, Eastern Hemlock, Eastern White Cedar and Red Pine as well as boreal species. Finally, the Carolinian region covers less than 1% of Canada's land mass but is home to 25% of the country's population. It contains Ontario's rarest tree species such as Red Mulberry, Tulip Tree, Black Gum, Sassafras, Butternut, Black Walnut and many types of Oak and Hickory trees. Most of the land here is also privately owned.

Three different logging systems are used to manage Ontario's forests. Selection cutting is the thinning of uneven-aged trees to improve timber stands of shade-tolerant hardwood species such as Sugar Maple and American Beech. While trees with the lowest vigour are removed, approximately 90% of the shade cover is

is maintained to allow for the right conditions for future regeneration. Uniform shelterwood cutting is used on partially shade-tolerant species such as White and Red Pine. Trees are removed in a series of cuttings that maintain approximately 50% shade cover from dominant and co-dominant trees so new seedlings can grow from the seed of older trees, which produces an even-aged forest. Clearcutting is the controversial practice of cutting down most or all trees in a harvest area, which detractors feel destroys natural habitats of birds and other animals. It's an even-aged system for shade-intolerant species such as Jack Pine and Black Spruce. Usually a few residual seed trees or groups of seed trees will be left to naturally regenerate.

Loggers don't indiscriminately chop down anything they don't like. Trained tree markers go into a stand before it is harvested and mark which trees are to remain, following strict regulations contained within the Ontario Tree Marking Guide. Trees are selected based on vigour, species, risk, quality and – this is where birds come into consideration – wildlife value. There are five wildlife criteria that incorporate bird habitat conservation.

1. Cavity tree retention: Tree markers are required to leave six cavity trees per hectare for cavity nesters like Pileated, Downy, Hairy and Black-backed Woodpeckers, Northern Saw-whet Owls, Screech Owls, Eastern Bluebirds, Buffleheads, and Wood Ducks. In order of decreasing priority, they will save Pileated Woodpecker roosting cavities, Pileated Woodpecker nesting cavities, other woodpecker nesting cavities or natural cavities, escape cavities, woodpecker feeding cavities, and trees (such as beech) with a high potential to develop cavities.

2. Crop tree retention – A minimum of eight mast trees (trees that produce edi-

ble seed or fruit) must be retained per hectare. In order of importance to wildlife, especially to some species of birds, these are: Oak, American Beech, Black Cherry, Hickory, Basswood, Walnut, and Ironwood. (For example, Wood Ducks like Oak, Hickory and Beech; Ruffed Grouse like Oak, Beech and Cherry; Wild Turkeys and Blue Jays like Oak, Beech, Cherry and Hickory; Downy Woodpeckers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks enjoy Ironwood; Cedar Waxwings like Cherry; White-breasted Nuthatches eat Oak, Beech and Hickory.)

3. Stick nest protection – Trees identified by persons with appropriate knowledge as having active stick nests are protected from cutting. Each species of stick nesting bird has its own area of concern (AOC) – a circle of a particular radius around the nest tree that might be impacted by forest operations – so a certain amount of space (a “reserve”) must be left totally undisturbed for the nesting birds and an additional space (“modified reserve”) may be designated only for forestry activities with minimal disturbance such as hauling. For instance, an Osprey nest active within the past 5 years is given a 150 m reserve and 150 m of modified reserve. Peregrine Falcons are given a 3 km reserve. Bald Eagles have a 100 m reserve and 200-600 m of modified reserve. Active Sharp-shinned, Red-tailed, Broad-winged Hawk or Merlin nests have a 150 m modified reserve but their inactive nests have no reserve. Instead the nest tree and adjacent touching trees are saved in case other birds decide to occupy the nests.

4. Solitary conifer retention - At least 10 large conifers (larger than 40 cm in diameter) are to be retained per hectare of hardwood forests for nesting by species such as Black-throated Green and Blackburnian Warblers and roosting by Barred and Great Horned Owls during the day.

5. Supercanopy/veteran tree retention - At least one supercanopy tree (larger than 60 cm in diameter) is to be retained per every four hectares as a potential nest or perching site for Ospreys and Bald Eagles.

This concluded the formal presentation that Chris had prepared and was followed by several questions from the floor, which he handled forthrightly. Zakhar Husak, one of our junior members, officially thanked our speaker and Chris was given a warm round of applause from the appreciative audience for his informative talk. It's good to know that forest management in Ontario does take the value of birds into account.

The meeting concluded with a sightings session led by Frank Morley. It was very apparent by the reports of Killdeer, Grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds, Song Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks and American Woodcocks that spring migration has begun. In parting, everyone was encouraged to get out and enjoy the warmer weather and look for new arrivals!



Photo: Eastern Meadowlark by Alastair Rae

# 2010 Hamilton Naturalists' Club Summer Field Events



PULL OUT THIS SUMMER EVENTS GUIDE AND NEVER FORGET AN OUTING!

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ALL EVENTS

All of our leaders are volunteers who give their time and expertise freely. All participants are encouraged to share their knowledge and enthusiasm. Remember to bring along any items you think you might need such as water, field guides, binoculars, insect repellent, etc. Some walks may be more rigorous than others, so please assess your ability to participate. If you're unsure of what to expect, check with the contact person listed. No dogs please, as they startle wildlife, damage nests and interfere with the enjoyment of other participants.

Hikes are sometimes cancelled or rescheduled. You are advised to check the HNC website before setting out to ensure that the hike has not been rescheduled.

The Hamilton Naturalists' Club assumes no responsibility for injuries of any kind sustained by anyone as a result of participating in any of these activities.

### Sunday May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9am Short Hills Sanctuary Work Day.

Join us for a day in our Carolinian Forest Sanctuary, hiking, clearing and marking the trails, removing garlic mustard and garbage, and enjoying the early spring flowers, birds and the old growth Carolinian trees. Bring a picnic and enjoy the camaraderie. Meet at 9am in the parking lot of Battlefield Square Plaza on Queenston Rd. (Hwy #8), just east of Centennial parkway, for car-pooling. Contacts: Sanctuary Director Michael Fischer (905) 526 0325 or Warren Beacham (905) 627 3323

### 6 pm Wed. May 5<sup>th</sup> Mosses and Forest Plants in the Spencer Gorge - Dundas

Follow the Bruce Trail along the Spencer Gorge to Webster's Falls looking for mosses and spring wild flowers with Terry Carleton our HNC Conservation Director. Bring a hand lens to examine the plants and a camera for macro photos. Sturdy waterproof footwear with a good grip is essential. The trail is rough in places and may be wet. There is one tricky spot requiring a rope handhold, so this hike is NOT suitable for disabled walkers. Distance is approximately 4 km and may be extended by climbing up the steep steps by the waterfall. (you may wish to leave one car in the parking lot here, if car-pooling, to avoid retracing steps back. Rain or shine, dress warmly. This is an ecologically sensitive area, no specimen collecting. Meet just off King St. W. along Woodley Lane, (the road to the Dundas Golf and Curling Club), on the left immediately before the railway bridge as you go up the hill out of Dundas towards Greenville. Park along the side of the road. Leader: Terry Carleton: (905) 515 4101

### 8am - 12 noon Sat. May 8<sup>th</sup> Walk for Nature at RBG Nature Centre and Arboretum

Bring the whole family to the annual Walk for Nature in support of local environmental groups. Choose a 5 or 10 km walk beginning at the RBG Nature Centre and Arboretum on Old Guelph Rd. Practice your sleuthing skills in the new Nature Quest. Afterwards there will be special activities for children and free refreshments for walkers.

Consider getting sponsors for your walk or supporting Brian McHattie, HNC past president and Hamilton City Councillor, our ambassador for the Walk for Nature this year.

Contact Jennifer Baker our HNC Land Trust Coordinator for more details [land@hamiltonnature.org](mailto:land@hamiltonnature.org); or call 905 524 3339 to make a donation.

### 1.30pm Sunday May 9<sup>th</sup> Early Spring Wild Flowers Walk

This is an exciting time of the year as spring flowers start to appear. Join botanists Dean Gugler and Fleure-Ange Lamothe for a walk in the Hendrie Valley. Meet at Cherry Hill Gate in the parking lot on Plains Rd. across from the RBG. at 1.30pm. There is a small charge for parking if you are not an RBG member. Call Dean at (519) 647 2371 for more details

### 6pm Wed. May 12<sup>th</sup> - Birding Hike in Hamilton - Urban Migration

Late spring migration features the brightly coloured warblers amongst the many birds moving north. When the weather cooperates the numbers can be impressive!

We will meet at the Chedoke Golf Course parking area at the end of Beddoe Drive and hike along a segment of the historic Radial trail.

Leader: Sheldon Mc Gregor. (905) 304 8282 (or e-mail [SMcgrego@SCJ.com](mailto:SMcgrego@SCJ.com))

### Sat. May 15<sup>th</sup> 8 - 11am - Rick Ludkin - Bird Banding demonstration at Ruthven Park

It's the peak time for bird migration in the middle of May and an ideal opportunity to watch the banding team identify each

bird that is caught in the mist nets. A great variety of warblers and other birds are likely to be seen during the morning. You will learn about the birds and their migration from these expert, dedicated birders, who operate the banding lab every day in April and May, from dawn till noon.

Bring your binoculars, rubber boots, a snack and warm drink. It is cold in the early morning and the trails are often wet and muddy.

Park at the end of the driveway by the washrooms. The banding lab. is the small building on your right as you walk towards the mansion.

Ruthven Park is located on Hwy # 54 between York and Cayuga along the Grand River. Check their website at [www.ruthvenpark.ca](http://www.ruthvenpark.ca);

Call Rick Ludkin (905) 765 4963

(If it's very wet on Saturday, this will be postponed till Sunday May 16<sup>th</sup>.)

#### 6pm Wed. May 19<sup>th</sup> - Birds and flowers along the McCormick Trail - Dundas Valley

Walk the rolling hills of the Dundas valley north of Governor's Rd., looking for blue-birds, bobolinks and other spring migrants and flowers. There may also be some deer in the early evening.

Park carefully along Governor's Rd, west of the road to Dundas Valley CA. Trail Centre. Please don't block the entrance to the farm. Waterproof footwear is recommended if the weather has been wet.

Please note there is a \$3 charge for non members of the DVCA.

Leader; Joyce Litster (905) 627 1203

#### 6.30pm Wed May 26<sup>th</sup> Wild Flowers of 16 Mile Creek

Explore this wooded river valley in Oakville which is noted for its great variety of spring wild flowers. The Sixteen Mile Creek in its southern portion consists of a spectacular gorge 30 metres deep with shale bluffs up to 15 metres high. There are steps and steep trails, so come prepared with good hiking footwear and

maybe a walking stick.

For further information and directions to the meeting place, please contact Leader: Diane Green, (905) 827 4662

#### Sat. May 29<sup>th</sup> 10am – Wood Ducks Nest-box excursion

Alfie Stanevicius will take you to see some of the 200 Wood Duck nest boxes that he monitors. Come and meet the handsome ducks that are featured on our HNC logo.

Bring binoculars and your camera, as we expect to see some other interesting birds along the way. Expect to get muddy and have some fun! Rubber boots or hip waders are essential for this outing.

Meet in Copetown at the school parking lot by the Community Centre (on Hwy # 99- just east of the traffic light at Hwy # 52 ). We will carpool from there.

Duration approx. 2 hours. This may be extended if the weather is good and people are interested in going further.

Contact Alfie at (905) 331 0303

#### 6.30pm Wed. 2<sup>nd</sup> June – Birding the Dofasco Trail – Stoney Creek

Dennis and Gwen Lewington will treat us to another of their annual Wednesday evening strolls along a couple of sections of this trail. A great variety of birds may be found here during the different seasons, up on the escarpment, not far from the city.

Meeting point: 10<sup>th</sup> Rd East at the railway line, south of Ridge Rd. in Stoney Creek.

Contact Dennis (905) 662 7952

#### 8.30am Sat. June 5<sup>th</sup> – Bluebirds at Cedarbrook Farm

Join Dan Welsh for a walk at Cedarbrook Farm, bird-watching and discussing blue-birds, tree swallows, house wrens and other birds. Duration 1 – 2 hours.

Location ; # 812 8<sup>th</sup> Concession Rd. West RR # 3 Puslinch

Contact Dan at (905) 659 4957

e-mail: [bluebird6@sympatico.ca](mailto:bluebird6@sympatico.ca)

#### 6.30pm Wed. 9<sup>th</sup> June hike the La Farge Trail

This section of the trail passes over a drumlin and through part of the Beverly swamp, where many of the plants and breeding birds are more typical of northern Ontario. Meet at the end of Middletown Line at the intersection of Reg. Rd. # 97 ( previously Hwy 97), west of Hwy #6 north. The trail is steep, and usually dry, but bring bug repellent.

Leader : Paul Smith (905) 659 1482

#### 9am Sunday June 13<sup>th</sup> Flora and Fauna of Beverley swamp

The Beverly Swamp sits just within the northern boundary of the "Carolinian zone", but has much flora and fauna more typical of the boreal forests of the north. Star flower, Labrador Tea, White throated sparrow and Yellow warbler, to name a few of these, but the swamp has more than one face. The outing will be a half day introduction to this gem of a natural area.

Meet at the corner of Westover Rd. and 8<sup>th</sup> Concession Rd. west at 9am. Bring rubber boots and bug repellent.

Leader; Paul Smith (905) 659 1482

#### 6.30pm Wed. June 16<sup>th</sup> HNC Falconwatch

Come and watch as the young peregrine falcons take their first flights from their nest ontop of the Sheraton Hotel in the centre of Hamilton's busy downtown area. Meet at the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board parking lot at Bay and King Streets. Mike Street and Audrey Gamble will tell you about the falcons, who have been nesting here, monitored and protected by the HNC team, for more than 10 years .

Contact Mike (905) 648 3737 or Audrey (905) 522 8447

#### Saturday June 19<sup>th</sup> BioBlitz Fun Day at Hilton Falls CA. 9am – 4pm

In celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity, Conservation Halton is holding a BioBlitz fun day at Hilton Falls. Come out and enjoy the themed hikes, guest speakers, birds of prey demonstrations, family activities, aBBQ lunch and much more.

Check the website for more details, available soon: [www.conservationhalton.on.ca/boiblitz](http://www.conservationhalton.on.ca/boiblitz)

Contact : Liz Wren (905) 3360 1158 (ext 284 ) or e-mail [ewren@hrca.on.ca](mailto:ewren@hrca.on.ca)

#### June 19 / 20 Bioblitz Naturalists' Challenge

Join in and compete in Halton CA's first Bioblitz! Put together a team or sign up individually and identify all you can over the 2 days. Prizes for the biggest species list, rarest bird and more! Specialised hikes and demonstrations on dragonflies and damselflies, butterflies, bat mist netting and others. (see below)

Sign up at the following website: [conservationhalton.on.ca/bioblitz](http://conservationhalton.on.ca/bioblitz)

Contact Nigel Finney at (905) 3360 1158 ( ext 305) or e-mail: [nfinney@hrca.on.ca](mailto:nfinney@hrca.on.ca)

#### 10 am Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June Odonates workshop / field trip at Hilton Falls BioBlitz with Brenda Van Ryswyk :

Brenda will start the day by giving an introduction to Dragonflies and Damselflies and give you some handouts about them. Then outdoors to explore the property and watch Brenda demonstrate the basics of catching odonata. She will identify each one and show you their particular characteristics. Be prepared to be outdoors most of the day and dress appropriately, including hat and sunscreen. Hiking boots are recommended. Bring lots of water, lunch and snacks. Also, if you have them, binoculars, insect net, hand lens, field guide to odonates. Meet in the parking lot at Hilton Falls. Entrance fee: \$5.50, or free to BTA members, (bring your card), and those with season pass to Halton CA.

If it rains, just the workshop will take place indoors.

Leader: [brendavanryswyk@gmail.com](mailto:brendavanryswyk@gmail.com)

#### 6.30pm Wed June 23<sup>rd</sup> Sheldon Mc Gregor's Birding hike #2

Summer solstice gives us close to the longest day of birding for the year! The Dundas Valley is host to many breeding birds, including blue – winged and hooded warblers.

Meet at the turn-around at the bottom of Martin's Lane. ( off Jerseyville Rd. West in Ancaster).

Leader : Sheldon McGregor (905) 304 8282

#### 6.30pm Wed. 30<sup>th</sup> June West Harbour trail featuring BARC

Enjoy a guided walk along the West Harbour trail with John Hall, Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan coordinator. Try to locate a 50,000 cubic metre sewage holding tank, a sewer diversion, a former toxic landfill, a fishy trail, some of the harbour's original oaks, a replica barge on its way to old Dundas, a fishway unique in the world, a floating roadway, a species at risk hotspot and much more, hiding right along the West Harbour trail! Meet at Bayfront parking area and hike towards the fish barrier.

Contact John Hall: e-mail:

[john.hall@ec.gc.ca](mailto:john.hall@ec.gc.ca)

#### 9am Saturday July 3<sup>rd</sup> Hamilton Odonate Count

Bring lots of enthusiasm, sunshine, a lunch, lots of water, sunscreen, shoes that you don't mind getting wet, and any of the following that you may own: net, field guides, hand lens, envelopes for hard to ID guys, digital camera. All welcome. Meet at the corner of Kirkwall Rd. and Con. #8 in the church parking lot.

Leader: Brenda Van Ryswyk (e-mail [brendavanryswyk@gmail.com](mailto:brendavanryswyk@gmail.com))

#### 9am July 4<sup>th</sup> Hamilton Butterfly Count

Bring a net, field guides, sunscreen, lunch, plenty of water, etc. as above. This count is not for complete beginners, but those

who can identify most of our local butterfly species and also those who have been on the count before with moderate butterfly ID skills.

Meet at the church right on the corner of Kirkwall Rd. and Con.#8

Leader: Bill Lamond (519) 756 9546

#### 6.30pm Wed. July 7<sup>th</sup> Plants, Birds and Geology along the Bruce Trail in Grimsby

This hike up the escarpment to Beamer CA follows a rather uneven trail that is steep in places. There are many steps to climb near the top, so please be prepared for this. It is a delightful area to explore and George is a very experienced botanist and birder, so you can expect an interesting and informative outing. Bring binoculars and field guides and sturdy footwear with a good grip.

Directions: take QEW to Grimsby, exiting at Christie St. Turn right, travelling towards the escarpment along Christie St. Turn right at Elm St., then immediately left onto Gibson. At the end of this short street is the access to the Bruce Trail. Street parking is limited here, so you may need to park on Elm St.

Leader : George Holland (905) 945 3962

#### 6.30pm Wed. July 14<sup>th</sup> A Summer Evening Nature Hike by the Waterfalls of Dundas

Join Brian Wylie, former HNC President, for an evening walk to Webster's and Tew's Falls and on to the Dundas Peak, if time permits. Enjoy the views of the Dundas Valley. You never know what may turn up, as he's not only a great birder, but also a snake expert and knows the local butterflies and dragonflies.

Meet at the Optimists' Park at Hwy #8 and Brock Rd.

Leader: Brian Wylie (905) 627 4601  
e-mail: [bwylie3@cogeco.ca](mailto:bwylie3@cogeco.ca)

#### 6.30pm Wed, July 21<sup>st</sup> Shorebirds, Dragonflies and Damselflies at 50 Point with Bob Curry

Explore this Conservation area on the shores of Lake Ontario with Bob Curry, HNC Past President and author of *Birds of Hamilton and Surrounding Areas*. Bob is an outstanding naturalist and teacher. The main focus of the evening will be shore-birds and odonates, but no doubt other interesting things will be spotted along the way. Bring your binoculars and maybe a hand lens. Meet at the entrance of 50 point CA (Exit QEW at 50 Rd and follow the signs to the park, turning quickly off the N. Service Rd. onto Base Line Rd. The park entrance is a short distance along this road. Leader: Bob Curry (905) 637 2022

6.30pm Wed. July 28<sup>th</sup> Botany hike at RBG with Dr. Jim Pringle

Join a brilliant botanist for this special evening looking for summer flowers and plants along the RBG trails and marsh boardwalk. Bring your binoculars, as Jim may point out some birds as well. His hikes are always fascinating and very popular. Leader; Jim Pringle; (905) 527 1158

6.30pm Wed August 4<sup>th</sup> Exploring Cartwright – our Nature Sanctuary in the City

This HNC nature sanctuary is part of a wild life corridor from the escarpment to Coote's Paradise and abuts RBG and conservation lands. There are old orchards and woodlands and a distant view of the city of Hamilton. Warren Beacham will lead the hike and tell you about the flora and fauna and the natural features of our sanctuary. Approx. 2 km walk with some hilly sections.

Meet at the Borer's Falls parking lot on the west side of York Rd. between the railway bridge and Valley Rd. We will carpool to Patterson Rd. as there is very little parking available there.  
Leader; Warren Beacham (905) 627 3343

Wed August 11<sup>th</sup> Persied Meteor Shower

Join the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers' Club at their observing site at Binbrook Conservation Area for one of the most exciting astronomical events of the year.

Just bring a blanket or lounge chair to watch the show. Time and meeting place to be determined. The club's website is [www.hamiltonastronomy.org](http://www.hamiltonastronomy.org)  
For more details, nearer the date, contact Mario Carr (905) 333 1365 / e-mail; [mario-carr@cogeco.ca](mailto:mario-carr@cogeco.ca)

11am Sat August 14<sup>th</sup> App's Mill Brantford - Medicinal and Edible Plants ( Rain date Sat. Aug. 21<sup>st</sup>)

We are delighted that Shawn is able to offer his hike again this summer. It will be a late morning walk, looking for edible and medicinal plants in a lovely conservation area.

Exit Hwy #403 at Restacres Rd. S. to Robinson Rd. Turn right and continue to Apps Mill CA. After crossing the creek bridge you will pass the Interpretive Centre on your left. Continue to the next parking lot, on the right, which will be the meeting place.

Leader: Shawn Held (519) 753 4092  
e-mail: [shawn.held@rogers.com](mailto:shawn.held@rogers.com)

6pm August 18<sup>th</sup> - a Summer evening walk at Van Wagner's Beach and Confederation Park

Meet Angie and Gord McNulty at Hutch's Restaurant, then walk in an easterly direction along the Waterfront Trail to the end of Confederation Park. We will enjoy a leisurely evening stroll, taking in the scenic views of the beach, lakeshore, green-spaces and wetlands.

Leaders: Gord and Angie McNulty (905) 525 9927 / [gmcnulty7@gmail.com](mailto:gmcnulty7@gmail.com)

6pm Wed. August 25<sup>th</sup> Botany hike at Smokey Hollow Falls

This will be mostly a trees and plants tour and will include a discussion of plant types, how to identify characteristic traits in plant families, botanical etymology, ( how plants get their interesting names), edible and medicinal uses for plants, phytochemicals, plant- animal interactions, ethnobotany, (or how certain plants have shaped our culture) and a host of other things. Ionatan likes his tours to be interesting,

dynamic and interactive. Check out his blog at  
<http://kaleidoscopeflux.blogspot.com>

Meet at the Smokey Hollow Falls parking lot on Waterdown Rd (278 Mill St. Flamborough) Leader: Ionatan Weisgluss (416) 707 9342  
or e-mail – [kaleidoscopeflux@hotmail.com](mailto:kaleidoscopeflux@hotmail.com)

Monday August 30<sup>th</sup> Hike at Shorthills Nature Sanctuary, lunch and wine tasting at Featherstone Winery and visit to the Centennial Forest

Meet at Tim Horton's parking lot in Beamsville at the Ontario St. / QEW intersection. We will continue to our beautiful old growth Carolinian forest nature sanctuary near N. Pelham for a nature walk. The trails are hilly. Bring a light snack and water. We plan to arrive at the winery around noon for our tasting, tour and lunch. Those who are interested may continue to the Centennial Forest, which is very close, at the end of Victoria Avenue by Lake Ontario.

NB We will need to know numbers for the luncheon, please e-mail or phone Elaine 2 weeks before this outing to confirm your attendance.

Leader; Frank Morley (905) 575 0668 ( or contact Elaine Serena (905) 639 2702 / e-mail: [eserena@cogeco.ca](mailto:eserena@cogeco.ca) for more details)

6pm Wed. Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> Nature Hike in the Dundas Valley at Martin's Rd. in Ancaster

Frank Morley will lead one of his popular nature walks, looking for mushrooms, flowers, and migrating birds in this lovely part of the Dundas Valley. This area is very hilly, so please be prepared.  
Meet at the Robert E. Wade Community Park., 385 Jerseyville Rd. W. Ancaster. Park by the last baseball diamond on Martin Rd. ( map 13 in the phone book).

Leader; Frank Morley (905) 575 0668

# Noteworthy Bird Records - January - February 2010

by Rob Dobos



Total number of species recorded in the HSA during 2010 to February 28: 121. Underlined species or dates require documentation by the Hamilton Bird Records Committee. Capitalized species require documentation by the Ontario Bird Records Committee. For species marked with “#”, all reported records are listed. For all other species, only highlights are listed. Note that the species order follows the most recent American Ornithologists’ Union checklist and supplements.

**Observers:** Jim Anderson (JA), Gregor Beck (GBE), Barrie Boatman (BB), Laurel Boatman (LB), Dave Brewer (DBr), Jacob Bruxer (JBr), Ken Burrell (KBu), Chris Burris (CBu), Geoff Carpentier (GCa), Jerry Chapple (JCh), Nina Chapple (NCh), Barb Charlton (BC), Barry Cheriére (BCh), David Creed (DCr), Hugh Currie (HC), Robert Curry (RC), Martin Daly (MD), Sandy Darling (SD), Rob Dobos (RD), Dave R. Don (DD), Dave K. Donn (DKD), Chris Dunn (CDu), Cheryl Edgecombe (CE), Gavin Edmondstone (GE), Margaret Ann Fecteau (MAF), Julie Freedman (JFr), Brett Fried (BFr), Garth Gourlay (GG), Dean Gugler (DGu), Frank Harrison (FH), Jim Heslop (JH), Fran Hicks (FHi), Tyler Hoar (TH), George Holland (GH), Jean Iron (JI), Mark Jennings (MJ), Jean Johnson (JJ), Kevin Kerr (KKe), Tim King (TK), Bill Lamond (BL), Robin Lawson (RLa), David Leslie (DLs), Dennis Lewington (DL), Gwen Lewington (GL), Rick Ludkin (RL), Bruce Mackenzie (BM), Kevin McLaughlin (KM), Dave Milsom (DMi), Jennifer Minogue (JMi), Joe Minor (JMr), George Naylor (GN), Dan Olech (DO), Karen Olech (KO), Terry Osborne (TO), Daphne Payne (DPa), Don Perks (DP), Jon Pleizier (JPI), George Pond (GP), George Prieksaitis (GPr), Kris Robinson (KRo), Greg Salter (GSa), Eva Schorer (ESc), Elaine Serena (ES), George Sims (GSi), Glenda Slessor (GS), Bill Smith (BS), Nancy Smith (NS), Paul Smith (PS), Terrie Smith (TS), Robert Stamp (RS), John Stirrat (JSt), Chris Street (CS), Mike Street (MS), Tom Thomas (TT), Marian Thorpe (MT), Herman van Barneveld (HvB), Josh Vandermeulen (JV), Ethan Vanderwoude (EV), Liz Vanderwoude (LV), Phil Waggett (PWg), Rob Waldhuber (RW), Jim Watt (JWa), Katie West (KWe), Iain Wilkes (IW), Angie Williams (AWi), Ken Williams (KWi), Alan Wormington (AW), Brian Wylie (BW), Dan Wylie (DW), many observers (m.obs.).

## Legend:

\* - first occurrence for the year  
F - first occurrence for the migration  
L - last occurrence for the migration  
HSA - Hamilton Study Area  
terr. - territorial bird  
SM - singing male

## Plumages, etc.:

m. - male  
f. - female  
ad. - adult  
ba. - basic  
alt. - alternate  
imm. - immature  
juv. - juvenile  
1st yr. - first year

## Counties/Regions/Cities:

Brant [BR]  
Haldimand [HD]  
Halton [HL]  
Hamilton [HM]  
Niagara [NG]  
Peel [PL]  
Waterloo [WT]  
Wellington [WL]

**Brant#:** Two at Spencer Smith Park [HL] Jan 1-3L (m.obs.).

**BARNACLE GOOSE#:** One ad. of unknown origin at 40 Mile Creek, Grimsby [NG] Jan 1-17 (m.obs.).

**Cackling Goose#:** One at Spencer Smith Park Jan 7 \* (*fide* CE); one at West End of Hamilton Harbour [HM] Jan 10 (KM,GN,RW); one at Dundas Hydro Pond [HM] Jan 16 (CDu).

**Trumpeter Swan:** 241 counted at Hamilton Harbour [HM] Jan 10 (RC,GS) provided a record high count for the HSA.

**Tundra Swan:** Five at N Shore of Hamilton Harbour [HM] Jan 1 (RD *et al.*); one on Hamilton Harbour off LaSalle Marina [HM] Jan 19-Feb 21 (KM; m.obs.).

**Wood Duck:** One m.,one f. at Mouth of Red Hill Creek [HM] Jan 4-Feb 5 (RD; mobs.); one m. off LaSalle Marina Jan 18 (DPa,FHi).

**American Wigeon:** One m.,one f. at Desjardins Canal, Dundas [HM] Jan 1-24 (RD *et al.*), and one m.,two f. there Jan 4-16 (CDu); one m. at Forty Mile Creek, Grimsby Jan 3 (BW,DW).

**Northern Shoveler:** 21 at Windermere Basin [HM] Jan 10 (KM,GN,RW).

**Northern Pintail:** One m. at Shoreacres [HL] Jan 1-21 (RD *et al.*); four at Windermere Basin Jan 10 (KM,GN,RW); one f. at Bronte Harbour [HL] Feb 21 and at PetroCanada Pier, Bronte [HL] Feb 22 (MJ).

**Green-winged Teal:** Five at Mouth of Red Hill Creek Jan 4-Feb 20 (RD; m.obs.).

**Canvasback:** 550 at N Shore of Harbour Jan 10 (RC,GS), and 98 there Jan 31 (MD).

**Redhead:** 200 west of PetroCanada Pier, Bronte Jan 2 (MJ);

25 on Hamilton Harbour at CCIW [HM] Feb 8 (RD); one at Desjardins Canal, Dundas Feb 21 (DKD).

**Ring-necked Duck:** 55 at Windermere Basin /West End of Hamilton Harbour Jan 10 (KM,GN,RW).

**King Eider:** Birds off Stoney Creek Lakeshore [HM]: 5 1<sup>st</sup> yr. m. + 3f. -Jan 10 (RD,CE,DD); 2 1<sup>st</sup> yr. m. + 3f. -Jan 12 (RD,CE); 3 1<sup>st</sup> yr. m. + 1f. -Jan 17 (DMi); 2 1<sup>st</sup> yr. m. + 7f. -Feb 1 (KM); 3f. -Feb 15 (GCa,TS).

**Harlequin Duck#:** One ad. m. + 3 f. off Saddington Park, Port Credit [PL] Jan 1-Feb 28 (RD *et al.*).

**Surf Scoter:** 175 off Stoney Creek Lakeshore Jan 10 (RD,CE,DD).

**Black Scoter:** 26 off Stoney Creek Lakeshore Jan 10 (RD,CE,DD); 19 off McNeilly Rd [HM] Feb 21 (DMi).

**Barrow's Goldeneye#:** One m. off Jones Rd [HM] Jan 7 \* (*fide* CE); one m. off Fruitland Rd [HM] Jan 11 (JPI).

**Hooded Merganser:** Birds at Desjardins Canal, Dundas: 25 -Jan 4 (CDu), 32 -Jan 10 (MS,BS), 15 -Jan 23-24 (RD), 10 -Feb 20 (CS,TT); 15 at Mouth of Red Hill Creek Jan 31 (DMi *et al.*).

**Ruddy Duck:** 500 at Windermere Basin Jan 10 (KM,GN,RW).

**Ring-necked Pheasant#:** One at Nebo Rd S of Rymal Rd [HM] Feb 14 \* (KWi,AWi).

**Ruffed Grouse#:** One at Middletown Marsh [HM] Jan 1-23 (BC); up to seven at Westover Rd N of Conc 8 [HM] Jan 1-Feb 27 (PS); two at Patterson Tract [HM] Jan 16 (JA).

**Wild Turkey:** 20 at York Rd, Dundas [HM] Jan 1-31 (KR0; MD); 74 at Indiana Rd E [HD] Jan 3 (DD); 20 at 1<sup>st</sup> Rd E & Highland Rd [HM] Jan 3 (DL,GL); 10 at Hwy 407 & Dundas St [HL] Jan 13 (RD); nine at Dartnall Rd & Lincoln Alexander Expressway [HM] Feb 14 (KWi,AWi); six at Fallsview & Sydenham Rds [HM] Feb 21 (DKD).

**Red-throated Loon#:** One off LaSalle Marina Jan 7\*-10 (GPr; JWa).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Two at Desjardins Canal, Dundas Jan 1-Feb 20 (RD; m.obs.); one at Port Credit Harbour [PL] Feb 28 (JSt).

**Horned Grebe:** One at NE Shore of Harbour Jan 23\*-24 (KM; DD); one off Fifty Point C.A. [HM/NG] Feb 20 (LV,EV).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Four off LaSalle Marina Jan 5 \* (KM,JI), and one there Jan 19 (KM); one imm. at NE Shore of Harbour Jan 23 (KM).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** 25 at Windermere Basin (KM,GN,RW) and three past Van Wagners Beach [HM] (RD,CE,DD) Jan 10.

**Great Blue Heron:** One at Bronte Marsh [HL] Jan 2 (MJ); one at Windermere Basin Jan 3-10 (DD; KM,GN,RW); one at Taquanyah C.A. [HD] Feb 14 (KWi,AWi *et al.*); two at

Dundas Marsh [HM] Feb 21 (DKD).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Birds at Mouth of Red Hill Creek: 1juv. -Jan 2 (DL,GL), 1juv. -Jan 10 (KM,GN,RW), 4 -Jan 17 (DMi), 3juv. -Feb 5 (RLa,IW), 1juv. -Feb 15 (GCa,TS).

**Turkey Vulture:** One at Hwy 403, Ancaster [HM] Jan 9 (MS); two over Lynden [HM] Jan 9 (JA); birds roosting at Conc 4 W of Woodhill Rd [HM]: 7 -Jan 15-16 (DD,CE; JA; RD), 13 -Jan 17 (JA), 8 -Jan 26 (JA), 7 -Jan 31 (TO); one at University Plaza, Dundas [HM] Feb 19 (JJ); one at Cayuga [HD] Feb 20 (HvB); birds on Feb 21: 16 -Bismarck [NG] (AW), 5 -over Dundas Hydro Pond (TT), 1 -Osler Dr, Dundas [HM] (DKD); one at Hwy 403 & Garden Ave [BR] Feb 22 (GBe).

**Bald Eagle:** Up to six birds at Hamilton Harbour Jan 7-Feb 19 (RD; m.obs.); two ad.,one imm. at Grand River S of Glen Morris [BR] Jan 8-Feb 25 (GSi), and four there Jan 20 (GSi); two ad. at Grand River, Brantford [BR] Jan 9 (BL); one ad. at Oneida 4<sup>th</sup> Line E of Hwy 6 [HD] Feb 6 (RD,CE,DD); one at Westover [HM] Feb 21 (DLs); two ad. at Dundas Marsh Feb 21-22 (TT,CS).

**Northern Harrier:** Three at Haldimand Rd 20 E of Hagersville [HD] Jan 5 (PS); two at Britannia & Tremaine Rds [HL] Jan 6 and one there Feb 16 (PWg); three at Fulton [NG] Jan 31 (AW); two at Walkers Line & No. 1 Sideroad [HL] Feb 16 (PWg); four from Grassie to Abingdon [NG] Feb 21 (AW).

**Northern Goshawk#:** One at Olympic Arena, Dundas [HM] Jan 12 \* (DKD).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** One at West River Rd SE of Cayuga [HD] Feb 12 (TH).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** 64 between Grassie and Abingdon including one dark morph ad. at Grassie Feb 21 (AW).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Three at Oneida 2<sup>nd</sup> Line E of Hwy 6 [HD] Feb 14 (KWi,AWi *et al.*); six between Fulton and Abingdon Feb 21 (AW).

**American Kestrel:** 19 between Grassie to Abingdon Feb 21 (AW).

**Merlin#:** One at Bronte Jan 2-Feb 21 (MJ,DO,KO); one at Dundas [HM] Jan 5 and Feb 25 (JJ); one at Walkers Line & QEW [HL] Jan 14 (CE); one at Hamilton Beachstrip [HM] Jan 17 (DD); one at Aldershot [HL] Jan 19-Feb 20 (RD; CS); one at Cheapside Rd, Hagersville [HD] Jan 22-Feb 7 (DD; KWi,AWi); one at Bronte Creek Prov. Park [HL] Jan 31 (GPr); one at Queenston Rd & Lake Ave [HM] Feb 9 (RW); one at Walkers Line & Britannia Rd [HL] Feb 16 (PWg).

**Peregrine Falcon#:** Two at CCIW [HL] + Burlington Lift Bridge [HM/HL] Jan 1-Feb 28 (RD; m.obs.); one at Millen Rd [HW] Jan 3 (BW,DW); one at Burlington & Victoria Sts [HM] Feb 9 (RW).

**American Coot:** One at Bronte Harbour Jan 6-10 (MJ; m.obs.); 10 at West End of Hamilton Harbour Jan 10 (KM,GN,RW); four at LaSalle Marina Jan 24 (RD).

**Sandhill Crane#:** One at 10<sup>th</sup> Rd E N of Green Mt Rd [HM] Jan 10 \* (CBu).

**Ring-billed Gull:** 450 at Bronte Harbour Feb 13 F (MJ).

**Iceland Gull:** One 1<sup>st</sup> ba. at CCIW Jan 7-11 (RD), and one 1<sup>st</sup> ba. there Feb 9 (RD); three at Brantford Dump [BR] Jan 9 (BL); one ad. at N Shore of Hamilton Harbour Jan 10-17 (RC,GS; DMi), and one 2<sup>nd</sup> ba. there Jan 24 (RD); birds at Bronte Harbour: 1 ad. –Jan 9 (GE), 1 2<sup>nd</sup> ba. –Feb 13 (MJ), 1 ad. –Feb 21 (MJ).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull#:** One ad. at Brantford Dump Jan 9 \* (RD); one 3<sup>rd</sup> ba. at NE Shore of Harbour Jan 23 (KM); one ad. at CCIW Breakwall [HL] Jan 31 (CS,TT) and Feb 17-18 (RD); one ad. off LaSalle Marina Feb 20 (JV).

**Glaucous Gull:** Three at CCIW Jan 7 (RD), and three there Feb 9 (RD); 10 at Brantford Dump Jan 9 (BL); three at NE Shore of Harbour Jan 17 (DMi); five at West End of Harbour Jan 20 (KM); one 2<sup>nd</sup> ba. at Bronte Harbour Feb 21 (MJ,DO,KO).

**Glaucous x Herring Gull hybrid (“Nelson’s” Gull)#:** One juv. at West End of Harbour Jan 20 (KM).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** 57 at Brantford Dump Jan 9 (BL).

**Barred Owl#:** One at Fifth Line S of 15<sup>th</sup> Sideroad [HL] Feb 17 \* (JMi; CE).

**Long-eared Owl#:** One at Sunrise Cres, Dundas [HM] Jan 2 \* (RD); birds at Bronte Creek Prov. Park: 17 –Jan 9 (MJ), 11 –Jan 16 (DD), 20 –Jan 31 (GPr), 18 –Feb 7 (HC), 7 –Feb 15 (KWi,AWi), 8 –Feb 20 (JH,RS; JV).

**Short-eared Owl#:** Three at 10<sup>th</sup> Rd E & Dofasco Trail Jan 4 \* (CE), and one there Jan 10 (CBu); four at Haldimand Rd 20 E of Hagersville Jan 5 (PS); birds at Cheapside Rd, Hagersville: 8 –Jan 16 (TT,CS), 1 –Jan 22 (DD), 2 –Jan 23 (CE,DD), 4 –Feb 6 (DM *et al.*); six at Kemp Rd W of Woolverton Rd [NG] Feb 20 (AW); seven at Stoney Creek Rd & Haldimand Rd 66 [HD] Feb 28 (GSa).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl#:** One at Bronte Creek Prov. Park Jan 9\*-23 (MJ; m.obs.); one at Fifty Point C.A. Jan 10 (BCh); one at Taquanyah C.A. Feb 7-14 (KWi,AWi *et al.*).

**Belted Kingfisher:** One m. at Mouth of Red Hill Creek Jan 4-9 (RD; JH); three at Grand River, Brantford Jan 9 (BL); one at Bronte Creek Prov. Park Jan 10 (FH); one at Desjardins Canal, Dundas Feb 16 (JCh,NCh); one at Crooks Hollow C.A. [HM] Feb 23 (MAF).

**Red-headed Woodpecker#:** One juv. at Irish Line S of River Rd [HD] Jan 5-Feb 6 (JH; m.obs.).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** One at Forest Ave, Greensville

[HM] Jan 1-6 (BB,LB).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** One at LaSalle Park [HL] Jan 12 (JFr); one at York Rd Pond, Dundas [HM] Jan 16 (KWe); one at Sedgewick Park, Oakville [HL] Jan 20-31 (CE; DD).

**Northern Shrike#:** Two at 10<sup>th</sup> Rd E & Dofasco Trail Jan 4-24 (BW,DW; m.obs.); one at Bell School Line S of Britannia Rd [HL] Jan 6 (DCr); one at Gates of Heaven Cemetery, Burlington [HL] Jan 18 (MD); one ad. at Conc 8 E of Middletown Rd [HM] Jan 31-Feb 15 (PS); one at Bronte Creek Prov. Park Feb 7-28 (MJ); one at a NE Hamilton backyard [HM] Feb 9 (TK); one at Eramosa Karst C.A. [HM] Feb 12 (JMr); one at Binbrook C.A. [HM] Feb 14 (LV); one at 1<sup>st</sup> Rd W & Green Mt Rd [HM] Feb 15 (KWi,AWi); one at Highland Rd & 11<sup>th</sup> Rd E [HM] Feb 21 (NS).

**Common Raven#:** Two at 10<sup>th</sup> Rd E & Dofasco Trail Jan 16 (KKe); one at Fletcher Creek Swamp Preserve [WL] Jan 17 (BM); one at Westover Jan 23 (BC); two at Laking Tract, Campbellville Rd [HL] Jan 23 (DD); two at Badenoch [WL] Feb 7 (MT).

**Horned Lark:** 20 at Fallsview & Sydenham Rds Jan 3-Feb 10 (SD), and 30 there Feb 28 (TO); 100 at Walpole Conc 10 E of Cheapside Rd [HD] Jan 9 (RD); 20 at Conc 4 W of Westover Rd [HM] Feb 23 (SD); 40 at 6<sup>th</sup> Line N of Lower Baseline Rd [HL] Feb 26 (CE,DD).

**Tufted Titmouse#:** Two at Brookfield Rd, Oakville [HL] Jan 1 (RD *et al.*); one at Linwood Cres, Burlington [HL] Jan 21-Feb 2 (ES *et al.*); one at Kimbo [NG] and two at Fulton Jan 31 (AW); two at West River Rd SE of Cayuga Feb 6-15 (DMi *et al.*); four at Haller C.A., Caledonia [HD] Jan 23-Feb 6 (GSa; RD,CE,DD).

**Winter Wren:** Nine at Valley Inn/Hendrie Valley [HL] Jan 9 (CS,TT).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** One at Sedgewick Park, Oakville Jan 18\*-30 (TK; CE; DD); one at N Shore of Cootes Paradise [HM] Jan 30 (DGu *et al.*).

**Eastern Bluebird:** Four at Grand River S of Glenn Morris Jan 16 (GSi); seven at King George St, Cayuga [HD] Jan 22 (DD); six at Ruthven Park, Cayuga [HD] Feb 6 (DMi *et al.*); three at Homestead & Old Guelph Rds [HM] Feb 8 (JH,RS); two at Fallsview Rd W of Sydenham Rd Feb 28 (TO).

**Hermit Thrush:** One at Centre Rd & 11<sup>th</sup> Conc [HM] Feb 28 \* (GG,DD,CE).

**Gray Catbird:** One at Valley Inn Jan 1-29 (CE *et al.*).

**Northern Mockingbird:** One at Harvard Rd, Guelph [WL] Feb 26 (DBr,ESc).

**American Pipit:** 50 at Walpole Conc 9 W of Cheapside Rd [HD] Jan 3-4 (DD,GP; TK); birds at Walpole Conc 10 & Cheapside Rd: 30 –Jan 5 (PS; JH), 7 –Jan 8 (CE), 4 –Jan 9 (RD).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** Up to nine at Port Credit Harbour Jan 1-Feb 28 (m.obs.); two at Olympic Arena, Dundas Jan 1-Feb 21 (JH *et al.*; CS,TT); one at Ruthven Park Feb 20 (RL).

**Yellow-throated Warbler#:** One *abilora* continued at Bronte Harbour Jan 1-11L (m.obs.).

**Pine Warbler:** One 1<sup>st</sup> ba. m. at Travelodge Hotel [HL] Jan 1-3L (RD *et al.*).

**Savannah Sparrow:** Two at 8<sup>th</sup> Line N of Derry Rd [HL] (DP) and one at Robinson & Green Rds, Brantford [BR] (JBr) Feb 27 \*.

**Fox Sparrow:** One at River & Tutela Heights Rds, Brantford [BR] Jan 9 \* (BL); one at Bronte Creek Prov. Park Jan 23

(RD,DD); one at Grimsby [NG] Feb 6 (GH); one at 5<sup>th</sup> Line N of Britannia Rd [HL] Feb 26 (CE,DD).

**Swamp Sparrow:** One at Bronte Marsh Jan 2 (MJ); one at QEW & Guelph Line Stormwater Pond [HL] Jan 14 (MJ).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** One at 10<sup>th</sup> Rd E S of Ridge Rd [HM] Jan 4 (BW,DW); one ad.,one imm. At Haller C.A., Caledonia Jan 24-Feb 7 (GSa).

**Lapland Longspur#:** 50 at Walpole Conc 9 & Cheapside Rd Jan 2 (MS,BS), and 30 there Jan 3 (DL,GL); four at Walpole Conc 10 & Cheapside Rd Jan 5 (PS), and 10 there Jan 9 (RD); two at Haldimand Rd. 9 E of Haldimand Rd. 20 [HD] Jan 9 (RD); four at 6<sup>th</sup> Line N of Britannia Rd [HL] Feb 26 (CE,DD); six at Fallsview Rd & Sydenham Rds and one at Woodhill Rd N of Hwy 5 [HM] Feb 28 (TO).

**Snow Bunting:** 13 over Valley Inn Jan 1 (RD *et al.*); 30 at Fallsview & Sydenham Rds Jan 3-Feb 10 (BW,DW; SD), and 200 there Feb 23-28 (SD; TO); 50 at Green Mt Rd Jan 4 (BW,BW); 800 at Walpole Conc 10 E of Cheapside Rd Jan 9 (RD); 200 at Sandusk Rd S of Hagersville [HD] early-Jan (RL); 20 at 5<sup>th</sup> Line & 15<sup>th</sup> Sideroad Feb 19 (DD,CE,BC); 75 at 6<sup>th</sup> Line N of Lower Baseline Rd Feb 26 (CE,DD).

**Red-winged Blackbird:** 11 at River & Tutela Heights Rds, Brantford Jan 9 \* (BL); one m. at 10<sup>th</sup> Rd E S of Ridge Rd [HM] Jan 17 (RD,CE,DD).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** Five at Walpole Conc 10 E of Cheapside Rd Jan 9 \* (RD); one at Saddington Park, Port Credit Jan 11 (KBu,BFr); five at Greensville Feb 5-13 (CE,DD; MAF) and 10 there Feb 25 (MAF).

**White-winged Crossbill#:** One f. at Linwood Cres, Burlington Jan 30\*-Feb 7 (BL *et al.*).

**Pine Siskin:** Two at Linwood Cres, Burlington Jan 21 \* (ES).

The following additional species were more commonly reported/encountered in the HSA during January-February 2010: Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Gadwall, American Black Duck, Mallard, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye,

Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

Please send your bird records for Mar-May 2010 by Jun 10 to: Rob Dobos, 21 Sunrise Cres., Dundas, Ont., L9H 3S1; ph: (905) 628-0297; e-mail: [rdobos@cogeco.ca](mailto:rdobos@cogeco.ca)



Photo: Yellow-rumped Warbler  
by Ingrid Taylor

# Hamilton Community Peregrine Project Update

by Audrey Gamble

Hamilton's resident Peregrines, Madame X and Surge, spent the winter in Hamilton and are currently incubating four eggs at the Sheraton nest. During my many years with Falconwatch, I have found it fascinating to watch the behaviour and interactions of the adult Peregrines at the nest as well as the young birds.

Madame X was an immature bird when she became known to us in 2001 and has since reared twenty-eight offspring with a succession of four mates. Contrary to some literature on Peregrine behaviour, MX allows (dare I say trains) her mate to spend a large share of his time incubating the eggs. When Surge first arrived in the area he mystified us by his ability to appear out of nowhere to zoom up to the nest. His haunts remain elusive even today, but he and Madame X have developed into such a highly refined team, it truly makes one wonder how they communicate. Over the past four seasons it has been interesting to watch the pair bond and trust develop between them. Even while out of view Surge remains keenly attuned to Madame X and the nest. In early June 2009 Madame X remained away from the nest for a day and when she reappeared it was clear that she was injured in some way. The meals delivered to the nest were small, typical of those delivered by the male half of the pair when feeding four exponentially growing chicks, not the big pigeon meals characteristic of Madame X. As MX gradually regained her vitality, pigeons reappeared on the menu. White pigeons. White pigeons are obvious targets against the backdrop of the urban landscape and made for easier hunting. The menu gradually expanded

to include other colours of pigeon and once Falconwatch started and we were observing the birds full time we saw something new. To compensate for MX's reduced capacity while injured, the adults were hunting in tandem, Surge joining forces with her in the air against a single prey.

Falconwatch 2009 was a busy and rewarding effort. At this time last spring we were awaiting the hatch of four eggs. As in the previous year all four eggs hatched and the chicks flourished. By banding day in early June it was obvious that we had three large females and a sprightly little male in the brood. Even by Hamilton standards the females were large, breaking our previous banding weight record. Experienced Falconwatchers know that the large female youngsters take longer and have more difficulty fledging than the small, lighter males, and we braced ourselves for some challenges.

The chicks were named Dixon and Gleig, in memory of Falconwatch pioneers, Len Dixon and Don Gleig. Durand and Strathcona were selected as historically based names of neighbourhoods adjacent to the nest area and frequented by the Peregrines. To our good fortune, Sandra Davey, an experienced raptor biologist and Falconwatch Coordinator in 2000, was engaged as our Co-ordinator. Several enthusiastic new Falconwatchers joined our experienced crew to help safeguard our friends' namesakes and their siblings. Strathcona was first out of the nest and although uninjured, needed a lift back to the hotel roof to take another go at it. As we expected, Dixon flew well and quickly progressed to leader of adventures.

Gleig, the biggest girl, was last to try her wings. She was a strong flyer, but it took us a long, tiring day to convince her that an elevation of six feet didn't count. When Gleig came to rest on the plaza behind Jackson Square she was rescued, uninjured but indignant, and returned to the rooftop. All the chicks fledged without further incident.

The family dynamics of the '09 brood reminded me of Falconwatch 2004 when we had such fun with adventurous Dundas zooming around and coaxing on his three sisters. Dundas became known for being able to survive at least two winters despite having lost a leg in the fall of his first year. In the spring of '07 he attempted to establish a nest territory at the Burlington Lift Bridge. One of his sisters, Cootes, has nested successfully in Kentucky since 2007 and one of her offspring, a male, has been reported to be breeding at a bridge nest site, also in Kentucky. Madame X fledged from a bridge nest in Pennsylvania, and Falconwatch volunteers often joke about the the 'bridge gene' being passed on. 2006 fledglings Albion and Webster, both females named for Hamilton waterfalls, have gone on to nest at bridges; Albion, in Connecticut and Webster in Rhode Island. It is always gratifying to hear of a Hamilton fledgling breeding. On a sad note, Stelco, who hatched here in 1997 has not returned to her nest site in Lansing Michigan this spring. A young female, spotted at the nest last year has taken over the territory. Stelco's early breeding years were largely unfruitful, but she had success more recently at a renovated nest box. In 2008 her brood of five successfully fledged and two offspring fledged in '09.

2010 is the sixteenth consecutive year that the Sheraton Hamilton has been an active Peregrine Falcon nest site. The Hamilton nest enjoys an enviable success rate; forty out of forty-four naturally hatched chicks have fledged as well as four out of four foster chicks introduced at the site. During this time Falconwatch has made eighteen successful rescues. While the obvious work of Falconwatch is simple and measurable, the network of support we rely on is complex and long term. I encourage HNC members and friends to support the business community that assists our project. I applaud the efforts of our many partners in the project and in the downtown business community without which we could not operate. Local building managers coordinate outdoor maintenance and repair requirements so as not to disturb the nest or interfere with the fledglings. Hamilton weather report; eight months of winter, four months of Peregrines. The Sheraton Hamilton is an unfailingly gracious host to the Peregrines and our project and perpetually faces the challenges of being home to the Peregrine nest. Required repairs to the Sheraton's landmark neon sign have been deferred until the work will not pose a threat to the nest. You may notice that the sign is not as bright it might be, but believe me, the Sheraton hospitality shines!

Falcon fans can stay up to date with the Peregrine family on the HCPP website (<http://Falcons.hamiltonnature.org/>), which you can also find from the HNC home page at [www.hamiltonnature.org](http://www.hamiltonnature.org). The Hamilton communityNet continues to host our website and webmaster Charles Gregory donates his expertise to keeping the HCPP website on the cutting edge. To follow the fun in real time, visit the HCPP public display and TV monitor, hosted courtesy of Yale Properties. Yale manages the complex comprised of the Stelco Tower, Jackson Square, the Robert Thomson Building and the Standard Life Building, and also pro-

vides our indoor watch site. Look for the HCPP display in the aisle closest to King Street, on the James St. side of the Sheraton Hotel. Easiest access to the monitor is through the mall doors at 100 King St. West.

Hamilton Community Peregrine Project thanks our many partners and long time supporters; Sheraton Hamilton Hotel, Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, Hamilton Community Net, Philips Consumer Electronics, LodgeNet Entertainment, Bennett Signs, National Cellular, Mobile Communications Services, Hamilton Video and Sound, Jackson Square Dental Services, The Owl Foundation, Green Byte, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR). Funding for the Hamilton Community Peregrine Project is provided by the TD Friends of the Environment Fund (Hamilton Chapter), The Hamilton Community Foundation (McCallum, McBride Fund), the OMNR Community Fish and Wildlife Program, and individual donors.

This spring a persistent juvenile has been spotted around the nest several times. Interesting times ahead. We look forward to welcoming back familiar volunteers and hope to meet some new friends for Falconwatch 2010. Please get in touch with Audrey at 905-522-8447 or [john.merriman@sympatico.ca](mailto:john.merriman@sympatico.ca) if you are interested.



*Photo: Madame X*



*Photo: Albion's chicks*



*Photo: Dundas*

# What is nature telling us about climate change?

by Don Mclean

There are still a few folks who think climate change is a conspiracy of some sort. I suspect very few of them spend any time exploring nature. Indeed it's hard to believe they're even aware of the weather. I'm a bit reluctant to say the weather is unusual. It certainly seems that way to me, but that may be poor memory. At my age, I have difficulty recalling what I had for breakfast.

Changes in the natural world, on the other hand, may provide us with a better gauge of whether the weather offers evidence of real climatic shifts. If so, then HNC members are real experts and have an important role to play in the debate about greenhouse gases.

I suggest we should value our personal observations of nature and share them to help others make sense of the debate over climate change. That sharing can start among ourselves – in the pages of the Wood Duck – to see if there's evidence of a pattern. Then we might want to share the conclusions with others in our community.

In that spirit, I'll share some of the things I've noticed in my occasional walks through the Stoney Creek ravine near my home.

1) This is the first that I've seen Great Blue Herons remain active through the winter. In my experience, they are usually gone by late November. This year there were two present right through December and January, and one still present on February 13.

2)I encountered my first active Garter

Snake of the year on March 19.

3)I saw my first Cabbage White butterfly before the end of March.

4)On April 1 there were half a dozen basking painted turtles and toads were trilling three days later.

These are just some of the more striking indications of a warmer than usual winter and an earlier than usual spring. One strange year doesn't necessarily prove anything and longer term observations are much more valuable. Hopefully others have some. I'll offer just one that wasn't made by me.

Back when I was Editor of the Wood Duck, I adopted the practice of occasionally reprinting articles from earlier issues. One article stood out for me with respect to changes in bird behaviour. Back around 1950, the Club used to organize a New Year's walk around the bay. The article that year reported a Crow and deduced it was probably the same Crow that members had seen in the Christmas Bird Count. Today, of course, it's hard to imagine a Crow being an unusual winter sighting in Hamilton, but that was 1950.

I grew up in Port Elgin and recall the return of Crows as one of the significant signs of spring – usually happening, I believe, in April. Things have changed for at least this species.

What have you seen this year? What has changed over the years you've been observing nature? How about sharing it with the rest of us.

## Come and visit the Bluebirds!

Linda and Al Thrower invite you to visit their bluebird trail and also to watch the banding of young bluebirds.

They monitor 200 boxes at Ruthven Park in the early spring and through the summer and also have several other trails that they manage. These dedicated and innovative naturalists will have a multitude of wonderful stories to tell you about these birds and no doubt will have many other interesting things to show you. The banding takes place from the end of May till the middle of July.

Please contact them at (905) 774 1230 or e-mail: [giantindians@3web.net](mailto:giantindians@3web.net) to arrange a visit.



# Spring Outing to the Eramosa Karst

by Gord McNulty

More than 40 enthusiasts gained a new appreciation of the value of one of Hamilton's precious natural jewels, the Eramosa Karst Conservation Area, in an HNC outing led by geologist Marcus Buck on April 10.

Sunny skies made for ideal spring conditions as the hikers, including members of the Peninsula Field Naturalists in St. Catharines, explored the wonders of this fascinating property in upper Stoney Creek.

Marcus, a karst expert, played a key role in establishing the karst as a conservation area. He co-authored an inventory in 2003 for the Ministry of Natural Resources that established the site as a provincial Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) and led to the donation of land by the province in 2006 to the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA).

Marcus described the characteristics of the karst landscape, formed by rainwater and groundwater dissolving limestone. The terrain features sinkholes, underground caves, passages, and a network of sinking streams. The surface and groundwater drainage system that created the karst originated about 12,000 years ago. There is even a natural amphitheatre. The karst is an exceptional location for hiking, nature appreciation and education, and is made all the more inviting with its mix of open land, meadows and forests.

The group enjoyed a two-hour loop around the karst, stopping at places such

as Pottruff Spring, Pottruff Cave, Pottruff Blind Valley, and Nexus Cave. Some adventurous folks went into the caves for a first-hand look. Marcus demonstrated the use of a small amount of fluorescent dye, of very low toxicity, used to monitor the flow of water and the time that it travels through bedrock.

Birders enjoyed Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-tailed Hawk and an "official greeting party" of Black-capped Chickadees. The Mourning Cloak butterfly also made an appearance. The trees included Black Cherry, Sugar Maple, White Ash, Red Oak, Shagbark Hickory and more.

Marcus underlined the importance of preserving 80 acres of environmentally significant feeder lands on the eastern border of the conservation area, as recommended by the HNC, Friends of The Eramosa Karst, City of Hamilton, the HCA and many others.

Protection of this parcel of land, owned by the Ontario Realty Corporation, is critical to maintaining the integrity of the conservation area and also to providing additional, much-needed public open space in upper Stoney Creek. By adding the feeder lands to the conservation area, the provincial government would demonstrate far-sighted leadership and show its appreciation for this irreplaceable gem of natural and scientific interest.



Photo by Angie McNulty



Photo by Angie McNulty



Photo by Angie McNulty

# Monarchs & Milkweed Program: A Huge Success

by Jen Baker

The Monarchs & Milkweed program started earlier this month and is already a big success. It is generating more interest from teachers than anticipated, in large part due its uniqueness as it provides hands-on opportunities for students to learn about Monarchs and their dependence on milkweed. Students are taking an active role in creating Monarch habitats and observing the life cycle of Monarch Butterflies.

There are three phases to the program, providing us three opportunities to foster an interest in conservation in the next generation. The first phase involves an interactive presentation and then students from Kindergarten to Grade 4 (classes) plant milkweed seeds in their classrooms. The second phase will occur in May and June when students (they) transplant the milkweed (plants) seedlings at the Cartwright Nature Sanctuary and at the Land's Inlet Nature project site. Many of the students and teachers are already excited about the nature walk field trip. For the third phase in September, we'll bring Monarch caterpillars and milkweed plants into the classrooms so the students can watch the transformation of the caterpillars into butterflies. We'll release the butterflies in October for their migration to Mexico.

We have been fortunate to have the volunteer support of Natalia Rojas who has helped with background research and is actively helping deliver the presentations in the classrooms. We want to make the nature walk field trip a special experience for the students and teachers and

would appreciate having some volunteers to help lead the students on interpretive hikes in May and June.

The Hamilton Naturalists' Club appreciates the generous support for this project from Earth Day Canada (EDC) and Sobeys Ontario through the Earth Day Canada Community Environment Fund.

If you'd like more information about the project, or if you'd like to help with the nature walks, please contact Jen Baker at 905-524-3339 or [land@hamiltonnature.org](mailto:land@hamiltonnature.org).

## Duck Soup Answer Key

- 1.skiver
- 2.Vatican
- 3.gulp
- 4.chain
- 5.stand
- 6.smidgen
- 7.vortex
- 8.dufflebag
- 9.zipper
- 10.ebert



# Bluebirds, Sapsuckers & Palm Warblers

by June Hitchcox

With the early warm weather, it seems as if the birds are a bit ahead of schedule. Dianne and Larry Jopson emailed that their Eastern Bluebirds, that nearly always arrive on April 4, turned up on March 25, ten days early!

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers have been seen – won't be long before Ruby-throated Hummingbirds will be at the tree holes they have opened, with both species eating the sap that oozes out.

Now it is May, the big month for the warblers to return. One little (4 1/2" – 5 1/2") beauty is the Palm Warbler with its rusty cap, yellow eyebrows and yellow under parts. Its most noticeable feature is its pumping tail (up and down), as it hunts on and from the ground for seeds, berries, ants, beetles, caterpillars, gnats, mosquitoes, flies and shad flies – eating as many as 60 per minute.

No nests have been recorded in the Kawarthas (to 2005) but a few in the Bruce Peninsula and Ottawa areas in its preferred habitat of spruce bogs with brushy areas. It nests on or near the ground, the nest well-hidden, often under dense shrubs or hidden in moss – very difficult to find. It is estimated that there are about 7 million in Ontario. We saw many in Cuba and Alabama on their wintering grounds. Be on the lookout for this lovely warbler this May!

## Regular Meetings

*Monday, May 3, 7:30 p.m.*

### **“Coral Reefs”** Jeremy Woodley

Jeremy Woodley grew up in England and studied Zoology at Oxford. He left with a D Phil and a certificate in SCUBA diving. He then worked 33 years for the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, first in teaching undergraduate Zoology.

From 1975 to 1993, he ran the Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory. That Lab, on the north coast, specializes in studies on the geology and biology of coral reefs. After that, he ran the multi-disciplinary Centre for Marine Sciences back on the main campus in Kingston. His interest in coral reefs (and international symposia) took him all over the Caribbean and to Australia, Bali, Florida, Guam, Kenya, Micronesia, Panama and the Philippines. He retired in 2000 and now lives in Dundas with his Canadian/Jamaican wife, whom he met in Jamaica. He still returns there from time to time to keep up with research and go diving.

## Sanc. Land Trust Committee

Join us at an informal monthly meeting to find out about the activities of the land trust program to protect land in our area and to steward our nature sanctuaries. All are welcome! We meet the evening of the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Contact Jen Baker, land trust coordinator, for details (905) 524 3339 or [land@hamiltonnature.org](mailto:land@hamiltonnature.org).

## Bird Study Group

*See you in the Fall!*

The richness I  
achieve comes  
from Nature, the  
source of my  
inspiration.



All of our hike leaders are volunteers who give their time and expertise freely. Participants are encouraged to share their knowledge and enthusiasm. Remember to bring along items you might need such as water, field guides, binoculars, insect repellent, etc. Some walks will be more rigorous than others, so please assess your ability and check with the hike leader if unsure.

No dogs please, as they startle wildlife, damage nests and plants and interfere with the enjoyment of other participants.

The Hamilton Naturalists' Club accepts no responsibility for injuries of any kind sustained by anyone as a result of participating in any of these events.

## Upcoming Events

*Sunday May 9, 2010, 1:30 p.m.*

**EARLY SPRING FLOWERS**  
With Dean Gugler and Fleur-Ange Lamothe

This is an exciting time of the year as spring flowers start to appear in the woodlands and fields. Join botanists Dean and Fleur-Ange for a walk in the Hendre Valley. Meet at Cherry Hill Gate at 1.30pm in the parking lot on Plains Rd across from the RBG. There is a small charge for parking, unless you are an RBG member. Call Dean at (519) 647 2371 for more details

*Saturday, May 15, 2010 1:30 p.m.*

**LAND'S INLET NATURE PROJECT WORK PARTY**

We'll be mulching, planting wildflowers and installing interpretive signs. Tools, gloves and refreshments provided. The project site is located in Hamilton's North End neighbourhood on the south side of Simcoe Street East, east of Ferguson Ave. and just west of the rail line. For more information on upcoming activities or to find out how to get involved, contact Al Ernest (905) 689-9466 [a.e@cogeco.ca](mailto:a.e@cogeco.ca)

*Monday August 31, 2010, 8:00 a.m.*

**HIKE AT HNC SHORT HILLS SANCTUARY, WINE TASTING, TOUR AND LUNCH AT FEATHERSTONE WINERY**  
Meet at 9am at Tim Horton's parking lot in Beamsville. We will continue to our beautiful HNC old growth Carolinian forest nature sanctuary near North Pelham for a nature walk. Bring a light snack, if you like. We plan to arrive at Featherstone Winery by noon for our tour and wine-tasting, \$5 This will be followed by lunch on the patio. Leader: Frank Morley (905) 575 0668 Please contact Elaine Serena (905) 639 2702 or e-mail: [eserena@cogeco.ca](mailto:eserena@cogeco.ca) to register for this event by August 23

**See our 2009-2010 Field Events Flyer for more exciting hikes!**



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*Photo: Glenn Barrett*

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 The Hamilton Naturalists' Club  
 Westdale P.O. Box 89052  
 Hamilton , ON L8S 4R5