



COMING EVENTS

- Thursday, February 24:** Owling at Wolf Island. Meet at the Hwy. 45/401 commuter parking lot at 7:15 a.m. It is important to be on time leaving Cobourg in order to make the ferry connection to Wolf Island. For more information, contact Russell Lake at 372-3636.
- Friday, February 25, 2000, 7:30 p.m.,** Cobourg Library: Audrey Wilson will present “Patagonia - Gone With The Wind.” Following much of the route made famous by Charles Darwin’s 1830 epic voyage of the Beagle, we will view wildlife from Santiago, Argentina to the most southerly tip of South America and return northward to the east side of the Andes, through Chile to Buenos Aires. Observe Andian Condors, Darwin Rheas, Alpine Lady Slippers, Suanaco herds, and thousands of Magellanic penguins. Visitors welcome.
- Friday, March 31, 7:30 p.m.,** Health Unit, Rose Glen Rd., Port Hope. John Ben-Oliel will speak about the Frogs of Southern Ontario.

THE WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS

Past Pres.	Terry Stopps, 1092 Ontario St., Cobourg	K9A 3C7	372-1028
President	Bob Short, R.R.#4, 7106 Telephone Rd., Cobourg	K9A 4J7	885-1420
1st Vice-pres.	Rod Lee, 79 Pine St.S., Port Hope.....	L1A 3G2	885-1161
2nd Vice-pres.	Carole Payne, 80 Brown St., Port Hope	L1A 3E3	885-6235
Secretary	Mary Lou Adams, 262 Sinclair St., Cobourg	K9A 2Y4.....	373-6083
Treasurer	Janette Johnston, 329 Ball St., Cobourg	K9A 3J1	373-1432
FON Rep.	Joan Norris, R.R. #5, Cobourg	K9A 4J8.....	372-9957
Curlew Ed.	Norma Wallace, 64 Young St., Port Hope.....	L1A 1M6	885-5552
	Elizabeth Kellogg, 14 Durham St., Port Hope.....	L1A 1G7	885-9615

The editor is most grateful to those who have contributed to this issue of the Curlew. Copy for the March issue should be received by February 29, 2000. Rare or interesting sightings should be reported to Ted McDonald (885-4764) or Norma Wallace (885-5552). Correspondence for WBFN should be addressed to: "The Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON L1A 3W4."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OUTINGS: WBFN has a new Outings Coordinator, Alison Elliott, an outdoor education teacher at the Ganaraska Forest Centre. If you have any suggestions of locations or themes for outings in the upcoming year, or are interested in leading an outing, please contact Alison at R.R. #1, Campbellcroft, ON L0A 1B0, (905) 797-1123, gfc@eagle.ca

REVISED CONSTITUTION: At the Annual General Meeting on January 28, 2000, it was announced that a committee headed by Audrey Stacey has prepared a revised version of WBFN's Constitution. Copies were available at this meeting and it will be put to the membership for approval at the February 25 meeting. Members who have not yet had an opportunity to examine this document can obtain a copy by contacting a member of the executive (see list on cover page).

YOUNG ORNITHOLOGISTS WORKSHOP: Bird Studies Canada is again inviting applications for the Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop. The Workshop will be held this year from Friday, July 28 to Friday, August 4 at Long Point Bird Observatory on Lake Erie. It is open to keen birders from ages 13-18 and provides "hands-on" training in field ornithology. Only 6 participants are selected each year. Once participants arrive at Long Point, all costs are covered. For information or an application form, contact: Jul Wojnowski, Bird Studies Canada, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, ON N0E 1M0, (519)586-3531, Fax: (519) 586-3532, lpbo@bsc-eoc.org, Web Page: <http://www.bsc-eoc.org>

Comments on the 29th Port Hope-Cobourg Christmas Bird Count *by Dennis Garratt*

In the January 2000 issue of the Curlew, a comment was made that a rather low total of 65 species was found during the 29th Port Hope-Cobourg CBC. It should be noted, however, that this was actually the 6th highest record since the local count was initiated in 1971. The mean number of species found per year since 1971 is only 60.97. During the last 19 years, the mean increased to 63.4 and only 3 times in our history has it been 70 or greater.

IN MEMORIAM
HARRY WILLIAMS
died, Millbrook, Ontario
January 31, 2000

Harry Williams participation in Willow Beach Field Naturalists activities dates back to 1962 when he spoke to the club on Bryology, that branch of Botany which specializes in the study of mosses and liverworts, his special area of knowledge. In 1968, he was instrumental in starting a Wildflower Survey. In October 1974, he introduced Young Naturalists Clubs to Ontario. He led occasional tours of Cavan Bog. He was known as a naturalist who was interested in all features of the natural world.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Carol Ann Bjarnason, Port Hope
Edna McTague, Cobourg

Correction: Audrey Stacey wishes to acknowledge Janet and Courtney Lake as the real organizers of the dinner after the 1999 Christmas Bird Count. We are sure that there were more than 3 people involved, so a hearty thanks to all those who helped.

1999 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Terrance P. Stopps

On our way into the new millennium, *Willow Beach Field Naturalists* is almost 50 years old and a respected member of our communities.

This year saw growth in membership (now more than 275); a continuation of our 'usual' activities (issues of *The Curlew*, meetings, outings, etc.) and many new initiatives -- like our Young Naturalist outings program. Frankly, *Willow Beach Field Naturalists* 'usual' activities were pretty extraordinary.

- Management of Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve. Led by coordinators Russ Lake and Audrey Wilson, many volunteer-hours of work went into this labour of love, under contract with the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- Bird Counts and Marsh Monitoring. This important scientific work was continued by a team led by Elizabeth Kellogg and Roger Frost. Areas included: Willow Beach Marsh, Carr's Marsh and Port Hope shore marsh (near the mouth of Gage's Creek). Roger also led our 3rd Annual Summer and 29th Christmas Bird Counts.
- Local Habitat Projects. *WBFN* continued to support the Rice Lake Tall Grass Prairie; Lucas Point Park Naturalization (member Dennis Garratt); Hazel Bird's Blue Bird Habitat project (--this year requiring many volunteers to drive and assist Hazel's award-winning work); and restoration of the bird feeder area at Laurie Lawson Outdoor Education Centre.

Advocacy was an important emphasis for the *WBFN* this year.

- Dombind. Following action by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the Ministry of the Environment picked up on recommendations by *WBFN* (and others) to discontinue use of Dombind within the next 2 years. (Bob Short led this issue).

- Presqu'ile Provincial Park produced a draft Management Plan that considered many of the recommendations of *WBFN* and others. Unfortunately, the plan was temporarily derailed by local forces on some spurious issues. Members Bob Short and Clive Goodwin very capably represented *WBFN* on this issue.

This year in Northumberland County, the Willow Beach Field Naturalists helped win two new grants.

- The Northumberland Forest and Woodlot Survey Project is funded by the Trillium Foundation (\$14k) and is currently being conducted by *WBFN* with our managing project partner, the *Northumberland Stewardship Council*. The work is well underway and Bob Short and Terry Stopps are carrying our contribution.
- The Ganaraska Eco-Demonstration Park will provide demonstration areas for backyard habitat and other types of restoration. The park will be located on the headquarters property of *Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority*. *WBFN* member Sharon Keogh helped lead the GRCA project team for this (98k grant).

In 1999, our finances showed more revenues and more routine project expenses than ever before. We took in more funding, in part because of the generosity of members like Bill Crowley, who donated a framed photograph - The Birches - as a raffle fundraiser. We spent more money because of our own donations to causes like FON's purchase on Manitoulin Island. Both activities are typical of *WBFN*'s work reflecting an organization that is in active pursuit of its natural heritage goals.

As always, our members have been our strength. This year we were proud to see founding member and past-President, Alice

King Sculthorpe, invested as a member of the Order of Ontario. We also offer our appreciation for those who have served and are now moving on: Andy McLauchlan (Treasurer), Nancy Stopps (Secretary), and Cath Oberholtzer (FON Liaison).

Finally, our challenges for 2000 include:

- Managed Growth of *WBFN*'s membership, providing opportunities for member involvement at individual, group and leadership levels;
- An Increased Community Awareness of *WBFN*'s vision for preservation, renewal and enhancement of our natural heritage; and
- More Direct Action by *WBFN* to promote the enjoyment, development of knowledge and the documentation of natural heritage in Northumberland County and beyond.

MID-WINTER WATERFOWL INVENTORY

by Roger Frost

On January 9, 2000, Bob Short, Rod Lee, Maureen Campeau and Roger Frost covered the Lake Ontario waterfront from Wicklow Beach to Wesleyville for the annual Mid-Winter Waterfowl Census. An amazing 17 species of waterfowl were recorded! Below are the species totals for the route.

In addition, the group also saw Cooper's Hawk, Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Belted Kingfisher

Mute Swan	1
Canada Goose	2862
Mallard	1207
Black Duck	123
Northern Pintail	4
Northern Shoveler	1
Wood Duck	1
Ruddy Duck	1
Greater Scaup	43
Redhead	96
Common Goldeneye	619
Bufflehead	144
Oldsquaw	79
White-winged Scoter	9
Common Merganser	19
Red-breasted Merganser	19
Hooded Merganser	1

BLUEBIRD ALERT

by Hazel Bird

In just a few weeks, the Eastern Bluebirds should be returning to their nesting grounds in the Harwood area, home of the Willow Beach Field Naturalists' Bluebird Project, so it is not too early to begin preparations for the routine box checking for another year so that the system runs smoothly.

Last year, the support from volunteers was unbelievably positive: helpers came from Cobourg, Port Hope and surrounding areas (one even from Peterborough!) and made each field trip enjoyable. We thank them all, club members and others, for their good work and welcome any 1999 veterans, as well as newcomers, who would like to spend some time in bluebird country this year.

Depending on the weather, box-checking should begin toward the end of March and continue through July. For more information, please contact Hazel Bird at 342-5218.

BIRDING ALGONQUIN PARK IN JANUARY WELL NOT ACTUALLY... WE WERE NOT EVEN CLOSE

by Dennis Garratt

The annual WBFN outing to Algonquin Park was scheduled for January 8, 2000. It was however postponed... read cancelled, due to the lack of winter finches, etc. In its place, Bob and Marg Short, Russ Lake, Bryan Baxter, Bill Crowley, and Dennis Garratt toured the north shore of Lake Ontario in search of a few local rarities. We left Cobourg/Port Hope around 0700h. Russ's plan to search the local marsh for Virginia Rail and Sora had to be put on hold... The sun had not risen.

Our first stop was at Lynde Shores (Conservation Area) in Whitby in search of a Spotted Towhee, *Pipila maculatus*, which was found after a brief walk and excellent views of a light phase Great Horned Owl, possibly the Tundra subspecies *Bubo virginianus subarcticus*. The Spotted Towhee may not be readily identified as it was previously lumped with the Eastern Towhee as the Rufous-sided Towhee. Attempts to find a flock of Red and White-winged Crossbills nearby were, however, unsuccessful.

Our next stop was in Oakville, where we searched for and found a female Western Tanager, *Piranga ludoviciana*. While searching for another Great Horned Owl reported in the area, one of us chanced upon a Boreal Chickadee, *Poecile hudsonicus*. While certainly a species we would have hoped to find in Algonquin Park had we gone north, its presence in Oakville was a very pleasant surprise.

Leaving Oakville, we drove back east to Humber Bay in search of an Eared Grebe, *Podiceps nigricollis*. The bird was eventually found, though some debate was necessary to distinguish it from the Horned Grebe,

Podiceps auritus, which is somewhat similar in appearance when in winter plumage.

A brief stop for lunch at Toronto Harbour for the rarest find of the day gave us excellent views of a very tame 1st winter Heermann's Gull, *Larus heermanni*. While relatively common in Baja California and along the south-west coast of California, this gull is a decidedly rare visitor to the Great Lakes.

Braving a cold wind, four of us took an extended walk out the Leslie Street Spit in search of Common Redpolls, *Carduelis flamea*, a flock of which was eventually found. Also observed were three more Great Horned Owls, a Northern Saw-whet Owl, *Aegolius acadicus*, and a Glaucous Gull, *Larus hyperboreus*.

Our next stop was for coffee and donuts, after which we looked, albeit unsuccessfully, for Trumpeter Swans at Bluffer's Park in Scarborough.

Other species observed during the outing included: Mute Swan, Gadwall, Mallard, American Black Duck, Redhead, Canada Goose, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Oldsquaw (a.k.a. Long-tailed Duck), Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, American Robin, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Snow Bunting, House Finch, and the ubiquitous House Sparrow.

RECENT OBSERVATIONS

compiled by Ted McDonald

Horned Grebe	Dec. 17	1	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Great Blue Heron	Jan. 1	2	Cavan Rd., s. of Bewdley	DSv
	Jan. 20	1	Garden Hill area	DW
Mute Swan	Jan. 10	1	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Bar-headed Goose	Dec. 18	1	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Wood Duck	Jan. 16	1	Cobourg Harbour	M.Obs.
Green-winged Teal	Jan. 8	1	Garden Hill Pond	RF
Black Duck	Jan. 8	240	Garden Hill Pond	RF
Northern Pintail	Jan. 10	5	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Gadwall	Jan. 8	1	Garden Hill Pond	RF
Canvasback	Jan. 1	5	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
	Jan. 4	4	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Redhead	Jan. 1	174	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
	Jan. 2	250	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
	Jan. 16	80	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Lesser Scaup	Feb. 1	1	PH Yacht Basin	RF
Harlequin Duck	Jan. 15	1	off Lake St., PH	RF
White-winged Scoter	Jan. 10	7	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
	Feb. 1	1	PH Yacht Basin	RF
Oldsquaw	Dec. 16	1116	passing Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Bufflehead	Jan. 14	31	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Ruddy Duck	Dec. 31-Jan. 31	1	PH Yacht Basin	RF, M.Obs.
Bald Eagle (imm)	Jan. 28	1	over Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Jan. 3	1	Durham St., PH	EK
	Jan. 6	1	Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
	Jan. 21	1	Wesleyville area	PB
	Jan. 29	1	Young St., PH	EB
Cooper's Hawk	Jan. 9-14	1	Cobourg Harbour area	CEG
	Jan. 21	1	Wesleyville area	PB
Wild Turkey	Feb. 5	3	Knoxville Rd. & 4th Line, Hope Twp.	RS, M.Obs.
Sora	Jan. 16	1	Gage's Creek Marsh, PH	RF
American Coot	Jan. 15/30	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Purple Sandpiper	Jan. 1-2	1	Cobourg western headland area	CEG
Bonaparte's Bull	Dec. 16	15	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Iceland (Kumlien's) Gull	Jan. 23/30	2	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Jan. 26/31	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Glaucous Gull	Jan. 30	5	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Eastern Screech Owl (gray)	Jan. 1-31	1	7th Line, Hope Twp.	PH
Great Horned Owl	Jan. 13	1	Ontario St.N., Cob.	NS
	Jan. 23	1	Victoria St.S., PH	
Belted Kingfisher	Jan. 8	1	Gage's Creek Trail, PH	EB
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Jan. 7/30	1	Port Britain feeder	AKS
Northern Flicker	Jan. 23-31	1	irregular, Deblaire St., PH	GMCD
Pileated Woodpecker	Jan. 21	1	Ontario St., Cob.	AEW
Northern Shrike	Feb. 1	1	Lake St., PH	ERM
Horned Lark	Jan. 21	6	Sylvan Glen Rd., Hope Twp.	ERM
	Jan. 25	17	Lakeshore Rd., PH	RL
	Feb. 5	1	Knoxville Rd., Hope Twp.	RS, M.Obs.
	Feb. 5	60	west of Welcome, Hope Twp.	RF, EK

Observations - cont'd.

Eastern Bluebird	Jan. 1	1	Bickle Hill Rd., Hamilton Twp.	BS, MS
	Jan. 1	1	over Wesleyville area	PB
	Jan. 30	1	n. of Colborne	JF
American Robin	Jan. 9	4	Gage's Creek Trail	EB
Bohemian Waxwing	Jan. 1	500	Hawkins Rd., Hope Twp.	SM
	Jan. 1	55	County Rd. 9 & 15	CJ
	Jan. 5	60	Cavan Rd., s. of Bewdley	DSv
	Jan. 10	20	Sherbourne St., PH	EK
	Jan. 25	87	Wesleyville area	RL
Cedar Waxwing	Jan. 1	25	Hawkins Rd., Hope Twp.	SM
	Jan. 9	30	Ontario St., Cob.	AEW
	Jan. 23	250	Centennial Dr., PH	ERM
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Jan. 1-25	1	Lougheed Park, Hamilton Twp.	RLo
Eastern Towhee	Nov. 17-Feb. 3	1	irregular, Wesleyville are	PB
Savannah Sparrow	Jan. 22	1	west of Welcome, Hope Twp.	RF
White-throated Sparrow	Jan. 1-31	1	Spragge St., Cob.	RLa
White-crowned Sparrow	Dec. 16-20	1	Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Harris' Sparrow	Jan. 31	1	Elizabethville area	AP
Dark-eyed Junco	Jan. 25	12	Lakeshore Rd., PH	RL
Lapland Longspur	Feb. 5	2	west of Welcome, Hope Twp.	RF, EK
Snow Bunting	Feb. 5	200	west of Welcome, Hope Twp.	RF, EK
Red-winged Blackbird	Jan. 31	1	Lake St., PH	EB
Rusty Blackbird	Jan. 9	3	Gully Rd., Grafton area	RL
Common Grackle	Jan. 19-31	1	Wesleyville area	PB
Brown-headed Cowbird	Jan. 20/24	1	Durham St., PH	EK
Common Redpoll	Jan. 13/14/17	1/2/01	Durham St., PH	EK
	Jan. 13/29	1/2	Ontario St.N., Cob.	AEW
	Jan. 30	20	Harwood area	CJ
Hoary Redpoll	Jan. 30	1	Harwood area	CJ
Pine Siskin	Jan. 1-25	20	Lougheed Park, Hamilton Twp.	RLo
	Jan. 1-31	15	Wesleyville area	PB
American Goldfinch	Jan. 18	40	Ontario St.N., Cob.	AEW
Snow Fleas	Feb. 1	hundreds	along ski trail in Northumberland Forest	AEW

OBSERVERS:

EB=Erlich Bahr; PB=Paul Bridges; GMCD=Geoff Dale; JF=Jo Foster; RF=Roger Frost; CEG=Clive Goodwin; PH=P. Hayward; CJ=Colin Jones; EK=Elizabeth Kellogg; RLa=Russell Lake; RL=Rod Lee; RLo=Rita Lortie; ERM=Ted McDonald; M.Obs.=Many Observers; SM=Simone Mérey; AKS=A.K. Sculthorpe; BS=Bob Short; MS=Marg Short; NS=Nancy Stopps; DSv=Daphne Svenningson; LW=Lori Wensley; NW=Norma Wallace; DW=D. Watkins; AEW=Audrey Wilson

WBFN YOUNG NATURALISTS REPORT - 1999

summarized from a report prepared by Lori Wensley

Over the past year, *WBFN* has encouraged young naturalist participation in all of our regular events, including our speakers-series meetings; field work and outings; as well as publication in *The Curlew*.

In addition to these regular activities, *WBFN* ran a series of special events dedicated to young people.

Stream Investigation (August 1999) with Susan Casson and A.K. Sculthorpe at the Sculthorpe home in Port Britain, reported by Helen Stopps in the November 1999 issue of *The Curlew*.

Mushrooms and Fungi (September 1999), a trek through Peter's Woods with Gordon Vogg, with *WBFN* and *WBFN* Young Naturalists, reported by Alyson Parker in the October 1999 issue of *The Curlew*.

Monarch Butterflies (Summer 1999) - Audrey Wilson demonstrated the science of butterfly tagging and provided some hands-on experience for participants.

Bird Banding (Summer/Fall 1999) with Elizabeth Kellogg and Roger Frost. During the summer, banding excursions focused on Tree Swallows and Bluebirds. In the fall, daytime banding was done at their Durham Street backyard feeder. During October, night-time banding focused on Saw-whet Owls at Candlewick Woods.

The *WBFN* is planning future events for *Young Naturalists* for the winter of 2000, including winter bird banding and star gazing, weather permitting. (*Editor's Note: At this writing, the weather has not cooperated, providing cloud for the star gazing nights and not enough snow for trapping winter birds.*) For information about these events, contact Lori Wensley, Education Coordinator, *WBFN*, 372-6001.

MEMBERSHIP FEES - 2000

The annual membership fees for the *WBFN* 2000 are now due. In order to continue receiving your newsletter, *The Curlew*, we ask our members to remit their 2000 dues as soon as possible. Please fill out the form below and return it and the appropriate remittance to the Treasurer, Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON L1A 3W4 **OR** bring it with you to the February meeting. Donations or bequests to *WBFN* are most appreciated. Receipts for Income Tax purposes will now be provided for dues as well as donations. Please make your cheque payable to "The Willow Beach Field Naturalists".

Membership fees for 2000 are as follows:

Family - \$20 Single - \$18 Sr Couple - \$18 Sr. Single - \$16

Membership

desired: _____ Amount: _____

Name: _____ Donation: _____

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Address: _____ Total

Remittance: _____