



Vol XLV No. 5

May 2000

COMING EVENTS

- May 25, 7-8:30 p.m.:** - Cobourg Harbour - Birds & Botany Outing, led by Clive Goodwin. Meet at Cobourg Yacht Club.
- Friday, May 26, 6:30 p.m.:** Annual Willow Beach Outing. Follow Lakeshore Rd. west from Port Hope to Willow Beach Rd. Turn south on Willow Beach Rd. and meet near the barn. Phone Alison Elliott (905) 797-1123 for more information or to arrange car pooling.
- Saturday, May 27 Mt. Ararat** - A Natural History Tour of Former Catherine Parr Trail Land, 1 - 4 p.m. Now Owned by WBFN Members Sharon Keogh & David Acoma. Meet at Highway 45/401 commuter parking lot at 12:30 or call Alison Elliott (905)797-1123 for information.
- Saturday, June 10 Algonquin Park** - If Not January, Why Not June? 6 a.m. - ? A second shot at Algonquin during 2000, this time in search of breeding birds and hopefully not too many blackflies. Meet at Highway 28/401 commuter parking lot (across from Arby's) at 6 a.m. or call

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THE WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS

Past Pres.	Terry Stopps.....	372-1028	stopps@eagle.ca
President	Bob Short.....	885-1420	.....	mb.short@sympatico.ca
1st Vice-pres.	Rod Lee.....	885-1161	.....	simkev@nhb.com
2nd Vice-pres.	Carole Payne.....	885-6135		
Secretary	Mary Lou Adams.....	373-6083	.....	adamsm1@eagle.ca
Treasurer	Janette Johnston.....	373-1432	.....	jjohn@eagle.ca
FON Rep.	Joan Norris.....	372-9957	.....	d.j.norris@sympatico.ca
Curlew Ed.	Norma Wallace.....	885-5552		
	Elizabeth Kellogg.....	885-9615	.....	ekrf@eagle.ca

*The editor is most grateful to those who have contributed to this issue of the Curlew. Copy for the **September** issue should be received by **August 31, 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."*

Coming Events -

Alison Elliott (905)797-1123 for information.

•**Monday, June 12, 6:30 p.m.:** Annual Bluebird and Whip-poor-will walk with Hazel Bird. Meet at Hwy. 45/401 commuter parking lot at 6:15 p.m. to car pool or at Harwood Rd. and Beaver Meadow Rd. at 6:30 p.m.

•**June 17 and 18:** Northumberland Summer Bird Count 2000. In 1999, 122 species were recorded in the count circle. Contact Roger Frost, 885-9615, ekrf@eagle.ca for more information.

TALL GRASS PRAIRIE OUTINGS

During the summer, there will be two outings to visit the local tall grass prairie - the remnant prairie at Red Cloud Cemetery and the prairie restoration at Rainbow Cottages near the mouth of the Otonabee River. Dates are Saturday, July 15 and Friday, August 18, with visits to Red Cloud in the morning and Rainbow Cottages in the afternoon. WBFN has supported the Rainbow Cottages' restoration project with both funds and assistance in the planting. These outings are arranged by the Peterborough Stewardship Council. Contact Russ Lake, 372-3636 or Bob Short, 885-1420 for exact times and directions.

MASTER BUILDERS - 2000

by Norma E. Wallace

They're back!! A pair of Blue Jays have once again set up housekeeping atop the back door light fixture of the Laidlaw home on Hope St.N. in Port Hope. This location has been in use by Blue Jays since 1992. Last year's nestlings were predated by crows. Watch for a further report in the September *Curlew* for the 2000 outcome.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

J.B. Benson , Port Hope

FON YOUNG NATURALISTS CAMPS 2000

by Audrey Wilson

WBFN extends congratulations to our 2000 winners:

Junior Camp - **Grace Andrews**, Dr. Powers Public School

Senior Camp - **Matt Heron**, Northumberland Christian School

Thanks to our selection committee judges:

Ms. Barbara Edwards-Evans

Mrs. Joan Evans

President, Bob Short

We look forward to Grace and Matt's reports in the fall *Curlew* and at the fall meeting when they return from representing WBFN at the Federation of Ontario Naturalists Young Naturalists Camps.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

•Congratulations to WBFN member **Paul Appleman**, a first time participant in the 104th Boston Marathon on April 17, 2000. Paul's time was 3 hours, 32 minutes. He was presented with a medal and a certificate and because of his time, qualifies for next year's Boston Marathon. Paul is quoted as saying the marathon was "an experience of a lifetime." To keep fit and trim, Paul is to take part in the Ottawa Marathon on May 15.

•Congratulations to **Alexander Sculthorpe** who, on April 8, was runner-up in the District Public Speaking Competition, in Campbellford. Alexander won 3 local competitions to qualify

UPLAND SANDPIPERS IN BLUEBIRD COUNTRY

by Hazel Bird

Monitoring a bluebird trail gives opportunity to observe many other species of birds. The old, unworked grassy farms on the moraine had provided habitat acceptable to the Horned Lark, Meadowlark, several sparrow species and especially the Upland Sandpiper. This larger relative of the Killdeer had flourished for decades here, returning each year to play a vocal and visible role in the annual welcome to spring on the moraine, as the birds went about the business of nesting and raising their young. Not soon forgotten will be the eerie, mournful cry (reminiscent of the loon) and the pause in flight as, with wings raised high, the bird would descend in its parachute drop to alight deftly on the top of a roadside fence post – to stand like a statue for all to see. Later in the season, two, three and occasionally four might be seen in a row unmindful of passing traffic – much to the delight of birders needing this species for their checklists – but all of this is history now.

In recent years sweeping changes in landuse practices claimed these old farms – and soon high-powered machines and chemicals ruled – tools of gravelling and intensive soybean operations. Thereafter, the Upland Sandpiper population declined noticeably until in 1996 not one was to be found. Then, after a year of total absence, one nesting pair was seen on an outlying farm and a brood was fledged. More good news came in 1998: from that small beginning the comeback gained momentum as two pairs nested successfully in the Bluebird Walk farm – each with four eggs. In 1999 the results were duplicated and family groups were much in evidence. All nests to date (5) have been successful and each positive nesting will add to the possibility of a future Upland Sandpiper population increase in the bluebird area.

All nests, too, had been discovered by chance (one remained hidden until the adult shot up from the path like a rocket – just two

WHITE-TAILED CHICKADEE

by Mary Elliott

About February 8, 2000 a handful of small, grey, downy feathers appeared on the doormat at my front door. Later I spotted a chickadee without a tail coming to my feeders and guessed the downy feathers were his (or hers). I found no tail feathers. I was told that it might have been a hawk (possibly a sharp-shinned) that had attacked the chickadee, and that the little bird would probably grow another tail. Within 10 to 15 days, short tufts of feathers appeared where the tail had been; but they were white, not grey as I would have expected. Over the next few weeks the white feathers grew. At first they were broad and rounded, but by mid-March the two, or possibly four, feathers were about 1 ½ inches long, slim, stiff – and brilliant white.

RECOVERIES OF TAGGED MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

by Don Davis

January 2000 was an exceptional month for tagged monarch butterfly recaptures at the overwintering sites in Mexico. This year, the guides at the sites were offered a 50 peso reward (\$5.00 US or half a day's pay) for handing in monarch butterfly tags that they found. To date, over 400 tags have been reported, and that figure is expected to rise to about 700. To date, 4 tagged monarchs, released at Presqu'île in September 1999, have been

At the time of her death, Louise Steele, one of the founders of the Willow Beach Field Naturalists, had completed a history of the club up to 1971. Following is the beginning of this history which will be published in the Curlew in installments, as space permits.

WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS HISTORY

by Louise Steele

In the late summer of 1953 a little group of naturalists who often happened to meet while strolling along the railway embankment that runs beside the marsh at Willow Beach conferred together along the pathway and decided there were enough interested people to warrant forming a naturalist club. The little group included Dr. and Mrs. C.B. Kelly, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Reeve, Peter Landry, Ted McDonald, Stella Bennett, Louise Steele.

•1953

A letter to the Federation of Ontario Naturalists in early September 1953 telling them of the possibility of organizing a club in this locality was acknowledged by Marshall Bartman, secretary-treasurer. Later in the fall Dr. W.W.H. Gunn, the Executive-Director of the FON visited in Cobourg and Port Hope and interviewed persons whose names we had sent in as prospective members of the FON and of a local naturalists club.

•1954

In accordance with Dr. Gunn's recommendation, a meeting was held January 23, 1954, at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Kelly, Port Hope. Those present, besides Dr. and Mrs. Kelly, were:

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Reeve
Mr. and Mrs. Harold B. Crow
Peter Landry
Ted McDonald
Graham Stuart
Stella Bennett
Muriel Staples

Mrs. E. Trott
Foster Russell
Dr. J.F. Leeson
Louise Steele

Mr. Crow acted as chairman. It was decided to continue meeting as an informal group rather than a club, but to plan outings and projects together.

A month later, at a meeting held at the home of Foster Russell, R.R. #3, Cobourg, officers were nominated and elected, as follows:

Honorary President: Harold B. Reeve (at the next meeting Mrs. Reeve's name was added)

President:..... Dr. C.B. Kelly

Vice-President:..... Dr. J.F. Leeson

Recording Secretary:..... Ted McDonald

Secretary-Treasurer:..... Louise Steele

Records Chairman:..... Peter Landry

Programme Convenors: Harold Crow and Foster Russell

Outings:..... Dr. J.F. Leeson and Peter Landry

The name Willow Beach Field Naturalists was approved for the group. It was agreed to meet monthly, alternating between Port Hope and Cobourg.

Peter Landry outlined as a club project that a record should be kept of birds nesting in the area.

In September the club applied to the FON for affiliation, and was accepted.

During 1954, there were outings at Willow Beach, H. Reeve as leader; a study of

trees led by Peter Landry; and a Christmas bird census. Indoor programmes included slides by Lazlo Udvarhelyi, Dr. Leeson, Robert Sculthorpe, motion pictures and commentary concerning bluebird nesting by Jim Woodford, reforestation and game management by a Dept. of lands and Forests representative. Meetings were held at the homes of Harold crow, Dr. Kelly, Peter Landry and Harry Gadd (at the C.G.E. plant, Cobourg).

•1955

In January 1955, Dr. Leeson withdrew as Vice-president, and was replaced by Roy Burness. Mr. Crow was appointed assistant Recording Secretary. it was decided that the term of office for members of the Executive should be two years.

Peter Landry distributed typed lists of birds for members to use in recording arrival and departure dates. Throughout the winter Harold Reeve taught weekly classes on botany to a number of members of the club. Outings included a spring bird count, a joint outing at Willow Beach in May with the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Peterborough Nature Club, and other gatherings at Willow Beach, also, of course, the Christmas bird census.

Speakers at indoor meetings in 1955 included Malcolm Kirk, Department of Lands and Forests, on the Ganaraska Watershed; Stuart Ryan, Q.C., on geology of the local area; Philip Bishop on Meteorology; Peter Landry on the relationship of weather and air currents to bird migration; Dr. W.W.H. Gunn on the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and on the study of hawk migration. Meetings continued to be held in homes, hosts being Dr. F.P. Lloyd, Cobourg, Harold Crow, C.F. Haultain, Port Hope, Harry Gadd at the C.G.E. Plant, Cobourg, as well as Dr. Kelly.

In March the Club sponsored an

illustrated lecture open to the public, at the Cobourg High School, by Stuart L. Thompson.

The club suffered a severe loss in the death, in October 1955, of Harold B. Crow. Members contributed \$20.00 which was sent to the FON in his memory.

•1956

Mr. Roy Burness succeeded Dr. Kelly as president in January 1956. Besides the Past President and the Honorary Presidents, other members of the Executive were:

Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer:

Mrs. John Mitchell

Recording Secretary: Miss Stella Bennett

Outing and Projects Committee: Peter

Landry, Ted McDonald, Harold Reeve, Peter Schultz, Gerry Bennett and Ted Niles

Indoor Programmes: Gerry Bennett, Louise Steele, Mrs. Florence Reeve

Telephone Committee: Mrs. Marion Kelly, Muriel Staples, Louise Steele, Evelyn Floyd

Early this year the Club decided on membership fees: Single \$1.00, Family \$1.50, Student 50 cents.

The club bulletin, *The Curlew*, started April 1956, Dr. and Mrs. Kelly agreeing to edit and mail it. A drawing of the Hudsonian Curlew, which regularly stops at Willow Beach on May 24th, ornamented the first page. In March 1957 this was replaced by one provided by Ken Campbell, showing the marsh with the curlew flying over, and this became the club's permanent symbol.

Outings included one around Carr's Marsh in April to look for ducks, a spring bird count in May in Hamilton and Hope Townships, groups meeting for picnic supper at Willow Beach, joint outings at Willow Beach with the Peterborough club

May 21st and the Toronto club May 27th. In June there was an outing to McDonald Woods – “the only remaining uncut, primeval forest in our area”. In September there was a botany and bird outing at Willow Beach, and the year ended with the Christmas bird census.

Ted McDonald banded hundreds of Monarch butterflies, and he and Audrey Wilson continued for years this valuable assistance to Dr. Urquhart’s research.

Speakers at club meetings during the year included Peter Schultz, on Conservation; Gerry Bennett, on Bird Migration; Audrey Wilson, with exhibit of moths, butterflies and beetles; Ken Strasser on plants, particularly the orchids of Cavan Bog. In 1956, and for years afterwards, the club was honored by having as guests at the April meeting some distinguished visitors: Dr. J.R. Dymond, Prof. T.F. McIlraith, Prof. A.F. Coventry, and for a few years, Mrs. Stewart, secretary, Toronto Field Naturalists. These friends usually spent a week-end at Willow Beach late in April. Club meetings were held in homes – those of the Kellys,

Robert Sculthorpe, at Port Britain, the Reeves, Mrs. Crow and John Mitchell.

An open meeting, with Jim Baillie speaking on ornithology, was held at the Orange hall, Cobourg.

A programme open to the public, with admission charge, was held in Dr. Power’s School Auditorium, Port Hope, Mr. Maloney presenting a film he had taken, on Algonquin Park, with his comments.

The club sent a letter to the Department of Lands and Forests opposing the Department’s action in having put Mourning Doves on the game list.

A conservation committee of the club, consisting of Peter Schultz, Peter Landry and Dr. Kelly, undertook to investigate the possibility of Carr’s marsh being made a Wildlife Sanctuary.

W.B.F.N. members helped the Peterborough club arrange the programme for the FON annual meeting to be held in Peterborough in 1957.

BUGGED BY BUGS

by Norma E. Wallace

Have you ever heard of a *Phymatode testareus*? Well, neither had I until, on March 12, I spotted an unusual beetle in my kitchen. Now, I respect most insects (earwigs being one exception, but that’s another story.). Despite this creature’s early hatch, I released it outdoors to take its chances.

Over the next few weeks, I found 22 more beetles, in various rooms. Each ended up in a little jar, in hopes that someone might identify the species. Inspiration finally struck (sometimes it takes me a while) and I had the fireplace wood put outside. (This had been brought in December 30, 1999 just in case of

millennium problems.) Voilà, no more beetles!

Curiosity still prevailed as to just what insects were using my indoors as a birthing room. This is when I had a second inspiration! Bug jar in hand, I called around at the home of Rodney Parrott, whose life hobby has been collecting specimens of butterflies, moths, and insects. Rodney took but one look and informed me that the unknown house guests were *Phymatodes testareus longicorn*. Prehatching time is spent in maple trees. Guess what some of the firewood was?

RECENT OBSERVATIONS
compiled by Ted McDonald

Species	Date	#	Location	Observer
Common Loon	Apr. 11	185	migrating off Cobourg	LW
Horned Grebe	Apr. 13	59	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Double-crested Cormorant	March 26	1	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Great Blue Heron	Apr. 2	9	over Cobourg Harbour	CEG

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Observations - cont'd.

Tree Swallow	Apr. 10	150	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Bank Swallow	Apr. 12	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Barn Swallow	Apr. 5	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Common Raven	May 6	1	Northumberland Forest	EK, RF
House Wren	May 7	4	Croft St., PH	ERM
Winter Wren	Apr. 10	3	west end Port Hope	EK

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