



COMING EVENTS

- Friday, November 24, 2000, 7:30 p.m.** – General Meeting. **Steve Pitt** presents *Tree Identification 101*, a hands-on identification course. Participants will learn ways to better identify trees in the field. Cobourg Public Library.
- Saturday, December 16, 2000** - *Annual Christmas Bird Count*. **Please note** that WBFN is trying a Saturday this year (instead of Sunday) to avoid conflict with neighbouring counts. Contact Roger Frost, 885-9615, ekrf@eagle.ca for more information.
- Friday, January 26, 2001, 7:30 p.m.** - General Meeting. **James Duncan** - *Options for Conserving Canada's Biodiversity* - an illustration presentation re: protecting properties of ecological interest throughout Canada. Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit, Rose Glen Rd., Port Hope.
- Friday, February, 23, 2001, 7:30 p.m.** - Annual General Meeting.

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	885-5483	simkev@nhb.com
2nd Vice-pres.	Carole Payne.....	885-6135	
Secretary	Mary Lou Adams.....	373-6083	adamsml@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 January 2001 issue should be received by December 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."

A WORD ABOUT THE RAFFLE AT MEETINGS

At our monthly meetings, you will have noticed that Sharon Dey-Pickering, often assisted by her son, Coady, is usually found at a table near the door selling raffle tickets. Sale of these tickets helps to defray the cost of rooms for the meetings and anything additional is added to the club funds.

The raffle prizes are all donated by members. Please remember WBFN if you decide to thin out your library of natural history books, if you have too many bedding plants in the spring, or excess garden produce in the fall, if you could spare a small jar of pickles – let your imagination run. Sharon would be pleased to hear from you if you have a donation. Please call her at 885-8982 or bring your contribution to any meeting.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

•Congratulations to WBFN member **Kurt Appleman** for being presented the Cobourg Area Environmental Association Award for a Port Hope High School graduating student continuing education in Environmental Studies or related field. Kurt also made the Principal's Honour Roll and the award was presented by another of our members, Jack Goering.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Ed Heuvel, Stirling
Fran and Leslie Jack, Grafton
Douglas and Marie Watkins, Campbellcroft

LOONY LAW: A statute still on the books in Bibbenden, in the English county of Kent, declares that birds "wishing to sing or crow at sunrise must be 200 yards from human habitation."

Toronto Star, July 2000



2000 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The annual **Port Hope-Cobourg Christmas Bird Count** will be held this year on **Saturday, December 16**. Please note the change of day of the count from Sunday to Saturday. Two neighbouring counts are held on the Sunday, so this change will allow those enthusiastic birders who wish to, to take part in more than one count. This is the 101st Audubon Christmas Bird Count. WBFN has contributed data to this continent wide count since 1972, although the club has conducted its own Christmas Bird Census since 1954.

This is a strenuous day of birding, starting at dawn (or earlier) and continuing through most of the daylight hours. It is not necessary to be an expert birder to participate. Extra eyes for spotting are always welcome. Less experienced birders will be teamed with more experienced.

Feeder watchers are also welcome. Count the maximum number of birds of any one species seen during the day and telephone you totals to Norman Wallace (885-5552) at the end of the day.

If you would like to participate, contact Roger Frost at 905-885-9615, ekrf@eagle.ca.

The count will be followed by a pot luck supper at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, King St., Cobourg at 5:30 p.m. Members who cannot participate in the count are welcome to join the counters for supper and to hear about the day's adventures.

KEEP IT CLEAN!

by Elizabeth Kellogg

With "bird feeder season" now underway, it is important to keep your feeders and feeding area clean to reduce the possibility of spreading avian diseases. Two bacterial diseases have been noted in Ontario in recent recent years, conjunctivitis and salmonellosis. Conjunctivitis is a disease of the eyes and was first noticed in House Finches in eastern North American in 1994. Since then, there have also been some records of the disease in other finch species. Salmonellosis is spread by fecal contamination, often of food or water, but may be spread directly from bird to bird. Birds with this disease appear listless, puffed up and may suffer convulsions before they die.

Before you place the feeder for the season, brush out any debris (cobwebs, old seed and hulls, dust) and wash the feeder in a solution of 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water. Allow the feeder to dry thoroughly before filling it with seed and putting it in place. It is a good idea to clean all feeders in this manner several times during the season. In addition, regularly sweep up the debris left around the feeders.

Prepared with information in Birdscope, Winter 1998, Vol. 12, No. 1; Spring 1998, Vol. 12, No. 2; Winter 1999, Vol. 13, No. 1; and BirdWatch Canada, Spring 1999, No. 10

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 third installment of this history.

WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS HISTORY

by Louise Steele

•1959

Topics at club meetings in 1959 included: Plants of Great Britain, by T.A. Wilson; Frogs and Toads, by Peter Schultz; Wildlife Management, by Leslie Burness; Mineralogy, by John Mitchell; and slides and talks by other members.

An open meeting was held in Dr. Powers School, Port Hope, in April 1959, Mr. Eric Bastin showing pictures of Algonquin Park. Late in the year Mrs. Wallis was our entertainer again, this time at the Cobourg High School auditorium, and again filled the hall with a delighted audience.

Outings were to Presqu'île, to Clearstone Lodge, to Willow Beach after the annual bird count May 17, and with the FON Regional Gathering May 24th; to Cavan Bog in June, to the Victor Wilson farm in August for botany, and to Willow Beach in September for birds and botany. In September, some members participated in the FON Regional outing on geology under Dr. Walter Tovell, the group starting from Peterborough and covering an area north and east, including the Warsaw Caves.

The butterfly banding project continued, done by Ted McDonald and Audrey Wilson.

Lazlo Udvarhelyi had made a record with photographs of nesting birds in the locality. Peter Landry's records concerning birds had also been turned over to Ted McDonald, and these records were continued.

In response to a request from the Department of Lands and Forests, a list was sent to them of five properties in the general

area of Port Hope and Cobourg that might be considered for acquisition by the Department. (Nothing ensued from this). Properties mentioned: Carr's Marsh, McDonald Woods, Willow Beach, Kay Stickney's pond and marsh in Haldimand Township, Carr's Woods, adjoining Highway 401 west of Port Hope.

A committee, headed by Harold Reeve, compiled data concerning this locality, to be included in "A Naturalist's Guide to Ontario".

A Club Constitution, drawn up by Peter Schultz and Roy Burness, was adopted in April 1959.

•1960

WBFN officers for 1960 were:
Honorary Presidents – Mr. and Mrs. H. Reeve
Past President – Louise Steele
President – Dr. C.B. Kelly
Secretary – Muriel Staples
Treasurer – Norah Harris
Programme Committee Chairman – R.C. Burness
Outing Committee Chairman – Audrey Wilson
Conservation Committee Chairman – A.B. Schultz
Educational Committee Chairman – Stella Bennett
Librarian – A.J. Mitchell
Special Committee Chairman – Mrs. W.N. Moore
Telephone Convenors – Mrs. W.H. Trott, Miss Norah Harris

Curlew Editor – Mrs. C.B. Kelly

Indoor meetings in 1960 were held at the Kelly's and at the C.G.E. Plant in Cobourg, but most of them were in the Red Cross rooms at the Port Hope Town Hall. Subjects of talks, all of them illustrated, were: Mushrooms, by Mrs. Tom Lawson; Bees, by Hector Inch; Ducks, by C.F. Haultain; The Migration of Birds, by Gerry Bennett; and Man in His World, by Professor T.F. McIlraith. This year the Club joined the Port Hope Film Council, and a number of Council films were shown. There was also a programme of members' slides.

In addition to the usual outings at Presqu'île and at Willow Beach, the club spent an afternoon at Victor Wilson's farm under the leadership of Jim Simon, a September afternoon at Ralph Carman's tree farm, a late September mushroom and botany outing led by Ted McDonald and Mrs. Pat Lawson, and a visit to Whitby Harbour.

At the FON Regional Gathering held at Willow Beach on May 22nd, Dr. C.D. Fowles conducted a workshop to study earth layers, marine, insect and plant life at the edge of the lake and of the pond.

•1961

Meetings were now changed to Friday rather than Saturday evenings, and were held in the Town Hall, Port Hope and the C.G.E. Auditorium, Cobourg. Membership fees were raised to \$2.00 single, \$2.50 family, \$.50 student.

The Federation of Ontario Naturalists held its Annual meeting in Port Hope High School, February 25th, 1961, and of course WBFN members spent much time in preparation as well as active participation in

this event. Dr. Kelly, as host, welcomed the FON, other WBFN members took part in the programme, and almost all of the members assisted to some extent.

Mrs. Kelly had compiled a special edition of the Curlew dealing with beginnings of natural history observations and records in Durham and Northumberland Counties. For this purpose, she used the notes of Charles Fothergill, who lived near Port Hope and at Rice Lake from 1817 to 1831, also those of later naturalists and of present members of the WBFN. This edition was made available to FON members at the annual meeting.

At this meeting, Harold Reeve was made an honorary member of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, in recognition of his knowledge and leadership. For years Ontario residents had visited at Willow Beach and had looked to him, the owner, for informed guidance regarding plants and birds.

Programmes at regular club meetings included slides of Brazil, shown by Harry Gadd; a talk on Forest Succession and how it affects bird population, by Dr. N. Martin; films and slides by Norman Haultain, Kenneth Campbell, and club members. Outings included a geology trip to the Naphtheline Mines, led by C.F. Haultain; a spring flower trip led by J. Simon; and a visit to the heron colony on Sugar Island, Rice Lake. Members started to take part in the Royal Ontario Museum Nest Records Scheme.

In 1961, Mrs. John Mitchell became very ill, and since then has been unable to resume her former active club contact.

CORMORANTS...What does the future hold?

Reprinted from Ontario Birding News, Summer 2000

If you had told any Ontario birder in the 60's and early 70's that one day there would be talk of population controls for the Double-crested Cormorant, you would have been looked at with disbelief. After all, cormorants were uncommon or rare in most locales, thanks to the effects of pesticides in their food supply. At its low point, the breeding population on Lake Ontario was less than a dozen pairs and there were none on Lake Superior or Lake Michigan. Eggshells were so thin that they would break under the weight of the adults and infertility was common. Like many other fish-eating and predatory birds in that era, the future looked pretty grim.

What a difference time has made. Cormorants are again a common feature on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River and inland lakes as well. There are actually more cormorants breeding in Ontario now than at any time in their past. This dramatic change is partially due to reduced levels of toxins in fish but the population itself has changed, with introduced smelt and alewife a significant factor in their success. A third factor is that colonial sites here have been relatively undisturbed during the breeding season.

But there are increasing demands from segments of the public to begin a program of population reduction, in particular to protect game fish. Although the birds eat about 25% of their body weight in a day and collectively consume millions of pounds of fish during the 6-7 months they are on the Great Lakes, their main food supply is smelt and alewife, with shiners a favourite this year. The percentage of young game fish taken across the Great Lakes is actually relatively small, although locally, colonies may favour stocks of perch and bass. This is one of the things that has fishermen concerned and calling for the introduction of controls. Historically, people have often taken matters into their own hands. Colonies in other parts of North America have been attacked when the birds were perceived as a threat to the fishery. Such an incident occurred in recent years on Little Galloo Island in U.S. waters in eastern Lake Ontario. In the U.S., the cormorant is federally protected (the individuals involved with that incident were charged). Here, the birds are protected under the provincial Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act and fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources. Because the birds are so widespread, with over 100 colonies on the Great Lakes, attempting to control the entire population would be difficult. The birds are quite adept at moving to new locales, including many larger inland lakes, where they are now being found.

The mushrooming colony at Presqu'ile, for instance, may have benefited from disturbance to the Little Galloo site. Presqu'ile islands have since emerged as the largest cormorant colony on the Great Lakes. In 1995 there were 2,727 nests there but Canadian Wildlife Service biologists tallied 8,972 this year.

CONTROLS ... In May, MNR announced a "five-year program to examine effects of double-crested cormorants on fish and wildlife populations and sensitive vegetation". One area of particular interest are the islands of Lake Erie, because of provincially rare plants that occur there and the number of cormorant colonies currently found on certain islands. Public concern for both the islands off Presqu'ile as well as for the local fisheries occurring there and elsewhere on the Great Lakes has also been raised.

Because this is a sensitive issue for environmentalists as well as for those concerned with sport fishing, MNR will conduct the research necessary to establish a biological basis for any future management approach to cormorants.

This year, studies are being conducted to identify the extent of the problem, with an experimental control study being developed for implementation in 2001. Details of the five-year program will be available for public review and comment later this summer.

In the long-run, nature will also play a role in the cormorant's future. Declining populations of smelt and alewife, along with occasional disease outbreaks, these controls should stabilize the population. One thing is certain, the cormorant is here to stay.

RECENT SIGHTINGS

compiled by Ted McDonald

Red-throated Loon	Oct. 13	1	off Cobourg Harbour	CEG, MB
Horned Grebe	Oct. 18	30	off Cobourg Harbour	MB
Great Blue Heron	Oct. 11	1	Hwy. #2 e. of Port Hope	BC
Great Egret	Oct. 15	1	Willow Beach	MB

Sightings - cont'd.

Pectoral Sandpiper	Oct. 5	17	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Dunlin	Oct. 18	47	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Long-billed Dowitcher (juv)	Oct. 13	1	Cobourg Harbour	MB, CEG
Barred Owl	Oct. 19	1 banded	Candlewick Woods, Hone Twp.	RF, EK
Long-eared Owl	Oct. 28	1	Candlewick Woods, Hone Twp.	RF
Short-eared Owl	Oct. 29	1	Candlewick Woods, Hone Twp.	RF, EK
Northern Saw-whet Owl	Oct. 19	19 banded	Candlewick Woods, Hone Twp.	RF, EK
Black Tern	Oct. 14	1	Presau'ile Beach	GMCD
Yellow-throated Vireo	Oct. 23	1	Deblacquire St., PH	GMCD
Blue Jay	Oct. 2	392	over Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Northern Raven	Oct. 28	1	Durham St., PH	RF
Horned Lark	Oct. 8-12	7	Cobourg beach	MB
Winter Wren	Oct. 4-6	4	Cobourg Harbour rock area	MB
Marsh Wren	Oct. 28	1	Cobourg Harbour	MB
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Oct. 23	1	Young St., PH	NW
Eastern Bluebird	Oct. 16	4	Harwood area	MC
	Oct. 27	1	Bramlev St.S., PH	CB
	Oct. 28	8	6 th Line, Hone Twp.	BL _e
Hermit Thrush	Oct. 28	1	Candlewick Woods, Hone Twp.	RF
Northern Mockingbird	Oct. 27-31	1	Victoria St.N., PH	WO
American Pipit	Oct. 8-30	1-6	Cobourg Harbour area	MB
	Nov. 5	5	Wesleville	RF
Northern Shrike	Oct. 31	1	6th Line, Hone Twp.	BL _e
Orange-crowned Warbler	Oct. 4	1	Albert St., Cobourg	MB
	Oct. 8-9	1	Cobourg Harbour west headland	CEG
Nashville Warbler	Oct. 15	1	Willow Beach	MB
Northern Parula	Sept. 18	2	Albert St., Cobourg	MB
Palm Warbler	Sept. 29	1	Cobourg Harbour	MB
Common Yellowthroat	Oct. 13	1	Cobourg Ecology Gardens	MS
Scarlet Tanager	Sept. 25	1	Albert St., Cobourg	MB
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow	Oct. 6/10	1	Cobourg Harbour west headland	MB
Fox Sparrow	Oct. 28	1	Port Hone Harbour area	AT, SM
	Oct. 28	4	Candlewick Woods, Hone Twp.	RF
Lincoln's Sparrow	Oct. 13	1	Cobourg Ecology Gardens	MB
White-crowned Sparrow	Oct. 15	11	Cobourg Harbour area	CEG
Snow Bunting	Oct. 26-29	8	Cobourg Harbour	MB
Rustv Blackbird	Oct. 4	1	Gage's Creek Trail, PH	GMCD
	Oct. 15	100	Willow Beach	MB
Bat sp?	Oct. 26	1	King St., Cob. (in house)	AC, RC
Monarch Butterfly	Oct. 14	1	Young St., PH	NW
Mourning Cloak	Oct. 14	1	Young St., PH	NW
Spread-winged Damselfly	Oct. 19/28	2/1	Young St., PH	NW

Observers: MB=Margaret Bain; CB=Carol Ann Bjarnason; AC=Alive Chenevert; RC=René Chenevert; MC=Marjorie Comerford; BC=Bill Crowley; GMCD=Geoff Dale; RF=Roger Frost; MG=Marcel Gahbauer; CEG=Clive Goodwin; LH=L. Hoover; EK=Elizabeth Kellogg; RL=Rod Lee; BL_e=Barbara LeSueur; ERM=Ted McDonald; SM=Simone Mérey; M.Obs.=Many Observers; WO=Walter Osborn; DSv=Daphne Svenningson; AT=Anne Tesluk; NW=Norma Wallace