



Vol LIV No. 6

September 2009

## COMING EVENTS

● **Friday, September 25, 2009, 7:30 p.m. - General Meeting, Cobourg Public Library**

Speaker: **Sheila Colla**. Topic: **Conservation of bumble bees in Canada**. As assistant to Dr Laurence Packer and Ph.D. Candidate in Biology at York University, Toronto, Sheila will speak about the general ecology of bumble bees, their importance, what is known about the decline of species in North America and possible threats, and what people can do to help. (Website: [www.savethebumblebees.com](http://www.savethebumblebees.com))

● **Saturday, October 17, 2009, (CHANGE OF DATE) Outing to Presqu'ile Provincial Park. Destination meeting time: 9:00 a.m. Carpool location: Cobourg - 401 and Burnham St. carpool lot (Burnham St. north of 401). Carpool meeting time: 8:10 a.m. Secondary carpool location: Brighton (County Rd. 30) carpool lot (south of 401 on Telephone Rd.) Secondary carpool meeting time: 8:40 a.m. Directions:** To get to Presqu'ile Provincial Park, exit Hwy. 401 on County Rd. 30/George St. Follow George St. south and turn right (west) onto Main St. Follow Main St. west and turn south onto Ontario St. Ontario St. will head south, then curve west at Lake Ontario. Follow to Lake St. and turn left on Lake St. which will bring you into the park. We will meet at the gate and go from there. There will be an entrance fee for each car so, if carpooling, bring money to chip in on the car cost. If not carpooling, expect park entrance fee.

**Details:** We will see what can be found on the Lake, on the beaches and in the woods in the Park on this fall outing. We will also visit the Brighton constructed wetlands and, if entry can be arranged, see what can be found in the compound.

● **Friday, October 30, 2009m 7:30 p.m. - General Meeting, Cobourg Public Library**

Speaker: **Jeff Hathaway from Scienstional Sssnakes!** Topic: **The “Reptiles at Risk on the Road” project**. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about Ontario's reptiles and to see many of our native species up close and personal. Bring the children.

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●Saturday, November 14, 2009 - Closing of Peter’s Woods

●Friday, November 27, 2009, 7:30 p.m. - General Meeting, Ruth Clarke Centre, 81 Mill St., Port Hope Speaker: **Hugh Currie**. Topic: **Peru**. Hugh will do a slide presentation on its flora and fauna.

●Saturday, December 19, 2009 - Annual Christmas Bird Count

●Friday, January 29, 2010, 7:30 p.m. - General Meeting, Cobourg Public Library Speaker: **Elisabeth LaFontaine**. Topic: **Preserving Northumberland County - one acre at a time!** Elisabeth La Fontaine, Executive Director of the Northumberland Land Trust will talk about the importance of land preservation and the options available to land-owners. She will show the DVD made by Dr. Brenda Beck , *Footsteps of Northumberland County*, about its geography and the role of its people both past and present.

●Friday, February 26, 2010, 7:00 p.m. - Annual General Meeting, Cobourg Public Library Speaker: Pam Lancaster. Topic: **Ganaraska Watershed**

●Friday, March 26th, 2010, 7:30 p.m., General Meeting, Cobourg Public Library Speaker: **Dr. Bridget Stutchbury**, PhD, Canadian Research Chair in Ecology and Conservation Biology at York University in Toronto will be discussing her recent book, *Silence of the Songbirds: How We Are Losing the World's Songbirds and What We Can Do To Save Them*

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**THE WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS**

Past Pres.	Simone Mérey.....	905-885-8347 .....	smerey@nhb.com
President	Michael Biggar .....	905-372-7407 .....	mbiggar.wbfn@gmail.com
1st Vice-pres.	Louise Schmidt .....	905-797-1059 .....	wingbeat@xplornet.com
2nd Vice-pres.	Ben Walters.....	905-885-8586 .....	benwalters@sympatico.ca
Secretary	Karen Drew.....	905-342-2904 .....	drew@eagle.ca
Treasurer	Rae Waring .....	905-372-9350 .....	waringrm@sympatica.ca
FON Rep.	Carole Payne.....	05-885-6135 .....	bookbind@cogeco.ca
Curlew Ed.	Elizabeth Kellogg .....	905-885-9615 .....	ekrf@eagle.ca
	Norma Wallace .....	905-885-5552 .....	

*The editor is most grateful to those who have contributed to this issue of the Curlew. Copy for the October 2009 issue should be received by September 30, 2009. Rare or interesting sightings should be reported to Elizabeth Kellogg and Roger Frost at 905-885-9615, ekrf@eagle.ca, or Norma Wallace (885-5552) for the October Curlew. Correspondence for WBFN should be addressed to: "The Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON L1A 3Z3."*

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- **Saturday, April 25, 2010 - Opening of Peter's Woods**
- **Friday, April 30, 2010, 7:30 p.m. - Cobourg Public Library - to be announced**
- **Friday, May 28, 2010 - President's Walk**
- **Saturday, June 12 and Sunday, June 13, 2010 - Northumberland Summer Bird Count**

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

John & Patsy Beson, Port Hope  
Kellie and Kent McDonell, Newcastle

## NEWS FROM LONE PINE MARSH

In June, the Board of Lone Pine Marsh learned that they had been successful in obtaining a tax exemption for all their land holdings.

## HELP NEEDED

The club is still looking for a new **press secretary**. Press Secretary duties primarily involve posting coming events such as meetings and outings in local newspapers and free event listings. This is done primarily for the monthly club meetings with guest speakers from September to April. Additional duties involve drumming up press for various special events, fundraising, donations, awards, etc. throughout the year. There is a resource document to pass on with all the press contacts that we have collected including contact information and deadlines for submission. Gina would be happy to assist the new press secretary in any way she can. Having reliable internet access is advantageous. If you are interested in helping out with this position, please contact our President, Michael Biggar at [mbiggar.wbfn@gmail.com](mailto:mbiggar.wbfn@gmail.com)

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

- Condolences to the Tate family on the death, in June, of Ian. Ian Tate was an active member of WBFN since moving to Port Hope in 1989. He regularly contributed articles to the Curlew. *(Editor's note: A more detailed tribute to Ian is planned for a future issue.)*
- Congratulations to Deborah Panko who has had several of her poems included in a published anthology titled *Not A Muse*. The book was launched in early July at an event at Cervefaria Restaurant in Toronto. Deb was invited to read three of her poems at this event. Ask for it at your local book store.
- At the end of July, Paul Appleman learned that he had won a spot to "Carry the Torch", the Olympic Torch that is, in the relay which will take it across Canada for the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver. Although details have not been announced, he hopes that his leg will be run in mid-December and not too far from Port Hope. Watch the local press for the final schedule and come out to cheer him on.
- Congratulations to Russell and Janet Lake who recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They have been active members of the club for many years and Russell is a Past President.
- Congratulations to Andy and Anita McLaughlan on the arrival of their first great-grandchild.

## Gleanings from the Northumberland Bird Database

### SUMMER SHOREBIRDS

by Clive E. Goodwin

On June 25 last two Ruddy Turnstones turned up in Cobourg harbour. Apparently they were in high breeding plumage [technically, the 'alternate' plumage], and it seems a debate ensued as to whether they were heading north or south. It's not unusual for shorebirds to appear in the period between late June and late July, and it's always a matter of speculation as to where they are going, and indeed as to whether they are really going anywhere at all. In this case the database seemed to suggest that the birds were probably still northbound, but I thought it might be interesting to look at shorebird migration records as a whole, and see whether there was any pattern to these movements.

Why do shorebirds move so late? As a group they have one of the latest migration periods, with birds still moving in numbers in early June, and yet their return flight starts as early as late July. Most of the shorebirds moving in late May are high arctic breeders, and the late spring movement simply reflects the severity of the arctic climate. Certainly in former years their breeding grounds could still be snowbound in late May, so the species' strategy would be to migrate rapidly and arrive in the north as winter finally released its hold. Recent shorebird tracking shows that these birds are capable of long sustained flights over relatively short time periods.

Once in the north the breeding season is very short, so usually the birds will lay only a single brood, rather infrequently attempting re-nesting in the event of failure. Last year on Akimiski Island in James Bay, well south of the destination of most of the latest migrants, it was reported that Ken Abraham's research team found Semipalmated Plovers re-nesting after their first nests had been lost to a high tide on June 8. The first young hatched on June 24, but the high arctic migrants had been

still moving through there in mid-month. This gives a sense of the tight schedules these birds are forced to maintain, and it means that if a nest fails its owner may start its return journey at once - appearing in the south in July.

Another factor in shorebird movements is the non-breeders, usually first or second year birds, that make part or all of the journey to the nesting grounds, but which do not nest. Some first-years spend our summer on the wintering grounds, but some do move north, although research has shown that not all make the full journey.

Even those birds that do nest successfully can leave quite soon after the eggs hatch - shorebird incubation can take about three weeks, and the downy young can often fend for themselves in two weeks or so, and so a nest initiated in early June could have independent young by mid-July. This should mean that we see our shorebirds in two 'waves', the adults first, followed some time later by the young - and this, of course, is exactly what we do see. Fortunately [or perhaps not, for those trying to sort out one species of shorebird from another], the alternate plumages are often quite different from those the birds develop over the rest of the year [called the 'basic plumage'], and the young usually have different plumages again, with those first- and second-years often being intermediate in their appearance. Shorebird identification has its challenges!

So what about these late June-early July birds? What the database can tell us is how often birds are seen in this interval, and just how much time is involved. I simply looked at the commonest migrants: these were birds for which we had essentially daily records through May and July, and in each case I

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looked for the 'gap' between the spring and fall records to see where it occurred, how

long it was, and how many birds were seen in this interval. Consequently not all the species listed below are high arctic breeders:

Species	Almost daily to:	Intervening records	Almost daily from:	Total recs.
Black-bellied Plover	6/30	7/3, 7/21, 7/25	7/28	1868
Semipalmated P.	7/2	7/4 [2], 7/5, 7/8, 7/9	7/12	1932
Lesser Yellowlegs	6/5	None	6/17	1072
Greater Yellowlegs	6/6	None	6/29	825
Ruddy Turnstone	6/22	6/25, 6/29, 7/1[2], 7/4, 7/8	7/12	1112
Sanderling	6/15	6/22[2], 6/29, 7/1, 7/2, 7/8	7/11	1758
Least Sandpiper	6/6	6/7[2], 6/9, 6/13, 6/15, 6/22	6/25	1674
Semipalmated S.	6/26	6/30, 7/1, 7/3, 7/4	7/6	1721
Dunlin	7/22	7/27, 8/8	8/12	1892
Short-billed Dowitcher	6/9	6/19, 6/20, 6/30	7/3	673

A number of interesting points arise. All species showed a separation of 10 days to a month between the periods when birds were fairly consistently present. One or two showed smaller gaps as well; the most pronounced being with Black-bellied Plover, where there was one of 2 days between June 17 and 20, and of 3 between June 21 and 25, suggesting movement was tapering off in that period. The pattern was not confined to high arctic nesters: more southerly breeders, like the two yellowlegs and dowitcher, showed similar, but earlier, patterns. Dunlin, the only migrant species in our area that molts before migrating, is much later than the rest.

The 'gaps' for all species include very few records each: they range from none at all to 6, and at most represent under a half percent of the total records in the database for any species. So sightings of birds in these periods are very rare. Does it follow that on a species by species basis, most birds can be assigned a flight direction if they occur outside the short periods when we lack daily records? Perhaps so, but it will always be an

informed guess, based to a large extent on the plumage of the individual bird.

Our data on Dunlin suggest a different interpretation, at least for this one species. Spring Dunlin movement follows the typical high-arctic spring migration pattern, but unlike the other species there is a long period before the fall movement seems to begin. In late May and early June large numbers of birds pour through, all in their very distinctive breeding plumage. By June 5 it is all over: we only have 4 records of flocks of more than 10 birds after that time, yet we have reports of singles daily to July 22. Unfortunately we only have plumage data on a very small number of records for any shorebird, but for Dunlin we can say with some confidence that few if any of those singles were in high breeding plumage. In fact, I cannot remember ever seeing any such birds after about mid-June. Those later birds were almost certainly non-breeders, doubtless with plumages to match. And they could just as well be wandering about the Great Lakes as heading fur-

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ther north.

Which brings us back to our turnstones. They were in a 'gap', but their plumage implied breeding, and we can probably feel fairly confident they were still headed north. As for other species, some will also appear to be in breeding plumage, either fresh or worn. But some birds will appear with more ambiguous plumages, and it could well be that some at least of these will be like the later June Dunlin, younger birds, and headed nowhere in particular.

P.S. After I had written this article, on July 21, Ken Niles found another turnstone in Cobourg harbour. This one is 9 days into the fall period. And its plumage? Ken described it as "the battered remains of breeding plumage" the latter still visible, but "seriously tattered and worn". Which is exactly what we might expect.

[The second instalment of the global warming article will now appear – I hope - in October]

### **Clive Goodwin Awarded the Doris Huestis Speirs Award**

The Doris Huestis Speirs Award is the most prestigious award given by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists. The award is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding lifetime contributions in Canadian ornithology through contributions to conservation efforts, ornithological fieldwork and literature, and public education. Past awardees include professionals who work at museums, government agencies, private companies and universities, as well as amateur ornithologists and people who have contributed to ornithological infrastructure of Canada.

This year local naturalist Clive Goodwin was the recipient of this coveted award. Clive was nominated by the Willow Beach Field Naturalists because of his outstanding contribution to Canadian ornithology. In 1949, Clive emigrated from England to Canada at age 20. From 1965 to 1977 Clive was the Executive Director of the Conservation Council of Ontario. Since then, Clive has been involved in many conservation efforts in Ontario including major contributions to Birdlife International's Presqu'ile Important Bird Area project, the Presqu'ile Provincial Park Management Plan, the Presqu'ile Beach Management Plan, the Cobourg Harbour Development and Recreational Master Plans and the Management Plan for Lone Pine Marsh in Northumberland. Over the years Clive has been a regular contributor of numerous articles and papers on birds, nature and environmental matters.

Since moving to Cobourg from Toronto, Clive has been the environmental advisor to the Cobourg Town Council and produced the Cobourg Nature Calendar (1995) and Bird Finding in Cobourg, a booklet for the Chamber of Commerce (1995). He recently composed the informative text for the display boards along the boardwalk on the Cobourg west beach, which has been kept in its natural state, pointing out valuable ecosystems and the birds to be seen in passage year round.

*Gina Brouwer*

*Reprinted from OntarioNature Network News, July 15, 2009*

## Tiritiri Matangi - an Open Sanctuary

by Barry and Margaret Robinson

The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand, although containing a large number of pelagic and vagrant species also contains a number of unusual, endemic, and/or flightless endangered birds. Thus, in addition to the flightless kiwi (3 species) and several penguin species there is the kakapo (a rare flightless parrot) and the takahe, (a large flightless version of the pukeko or purple swamphen).

In an attempt to protect many of these birds, the Department of Conservation has established colonies of several of these species upon largely uninhabited islands off the coast of New Zealand and the island of Tiritiri Matangi, 18km north of Auckland, is one such island sanctuary.

We first heard of Tiritiri Matangi on a visit to New Zealand ten years ago but were unable to fit a visit to the sanctuary into our schedule. Thus, in planning a more recent visit to the country the island sanctuary was a priority in our schedule.

The island of Tiritiri Matangi was farmed initially, by Maori inhabitants and later by European settlers but the last settlers left the island in 1970. At that time, the vegetation consisted mainly of grass and scrub with a small portion of the original forest remaining. It was in 1979 that two scientists from the University of Auckland, Drs John Craig and Neil Mitchell, proposed that active planting of native flora be commenced to establish an environment appropriate for the introduction of native fauna. This proposal was accepted and the work initiated using volunteer labour. (Over a ten year period, 250,000 trees were planted). To date, twelve endangered bird species (along with an endangered mammal - a bat, and reptile species - the tuatara) have joined the common native species on an island free from predators.

The ferry service to the island is limited

to one run in each direction on five days each week. Our first proposed visit to Tiritiri was cancelled due to extremely rough sailing conditions and we were extremely lucky to gain a place on the ferry on the last day of our visit to New Zealand. On arrival at the island, the park authorities will not allow visitors to move away from the dock without first having been appraised of the strict regulations on the island (carry out all garbage, no dirt on boots and no seeds in rucksacks etc - these regulations are to prevent foreign species invading the island). Visitors are also met by volunteer guides who conduct guided walks over various segments of the island. Unfortunately, our guide had chosen to visit some of the more open areas of the island on this particularly blustery day such that at the end of the tour we had managed to see only Little Blue Penguin (1), Saddleback (1) Bellbird (20) and Tui (15) and at the end of the walk at the lighthouse the flightless Takahe.

The ferry back to the mainland was due to leave at 3.30pm and, after lunch, while we were somewhat disappointed with our mornings bad luck in viewing the rarer birds, we set off at a leisurely pace down the Wattle Track towards the ferry dock. This proved to be a trail down through a ravine with thick vegetation but well sheltered from the strong winds that day. On the way down the trail something happened that made up for the morning's disappointments. Part way down the trail we came across two men deep in conversation while resting on a seat. They caught up with us a little further down the track and asked how successful we had been in seeing the various birds. They introduced themselves to us as John Craig and Neil Mitchell, the original proponents of the reforestation of Tiritiri etc. They were very

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pleased to share their knowledge, point out the best places on this track to stop and sit, and with them we saw the majority of the species for which the island is renowned (North Island Robin, Saddleback, Red Crowned Parakeet, Stitchbird, Whitehead, Brown Quail, Kokako and Brown Teal). Only the Little Spotted Kiwi had eluded us this day but then very few “Kiwis” have seen their nocturnal National bird.

The trip back to the mainland was an experience. The wind was now close to gale force and the ferry boat climbed the waves

and then dropped back into the trough with a real bang. Exciting for some but not for those unfortunates prone to sea-sickness.

Obviously our visit to Tiritiri Matangi was enjoyable and enhanced by meeting up with John and Neil. For anyone contemplating a visit to the Auckland area and interested in conservation and birding it’s a must. However, because of the fickle weather in the Hauraki Gulf and the popularity of the trip, some advance planning is required. For further information, see the following:-  
[www.360discovery.co.nz](http://www.360discovery.co.nz) and  
[www.massey.ac.nz/~darmstro/tiri.htm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/~darmstro/tiri.htm)

### **Hazel Bird - 1920-2009**

Hazel was a well respected and loved volunteer, then a staff naturalist at the Laurie Lawson Outdoor Education Centre in the 1970s and 1980s.

At her death, in memoriam funds were directed to the Willow Beach Field Naturalists. The Executive decided to create a simple, rustic, but functional tribute at LLOEC to honour this life-member. Thus two colour-coded directional rock indicators for LLOEC have been placed at key trial junctions. These will assist some 3,500 students and staff that attend outdoor education classes annually as well as family groups tapping into the Northumberland Land Trust website.

Beige-pink granite barn foundation rocks were donated. Subsequently, these were delivered by bobcat to the LLOEC parking lot. Then, Joe Orma of “Carved in Stone” sand-blasted three key trail names, hand painting them to match the appropriate trail markers.

The biggest challenge was to move these rocks into location. Two Percheron horses, each dragging a stone-boat with a rock strapped to it were up to the difficult task and now the rocks are firmly in place at LLOEC.

*Audrey E. Wilson*

*For some photos of this event, go to [www.northumberlandlandtrust.ca](http://www.northumberlandlandtrust.ca) and look at the Summer 2009 Newsletter.*



*For several years, Ian Tate has coordinated a team of birders to participate in the Baillie Birdathon. In May 2009, Ian's health did not permit him to participate, so Sheilagh Fletcher took up the challenge. Below is her report.*

## **Baillie Birdathon 2009**

The Baillie Bird count: what a brilliant excuse to get out birding!

The annual Baillie Birdathon, taking place in any 24-hour period in May, anywhere in the world is Bird Studies Canada's primary fundraiser. Birders get sponsored to raise money to support bird research and conservation, but, of course, everyone knows this.

However, you may not know that the Baillie Fund provides regular grants for the Breeding Bird Atlas and many local volunteer organizations, student grants and programs. ProjectFeederwatch is one of my favourites.

This year it was all different in our little team of keeners. My usual stellar playmates, Ian Tate, Jack Goering and Bob Sculthorpe were not available - fairly daunting. Seasoned birder, Gary Little, Michael Wallace and I took up the challenge and set forth at a drizzling 7:00 a.m., ready to pretend it was just a practice run if the weather was really too awful.

But there were birds, 58 species by the time we packed it in, cold, wet, hungry and happy. One we missed yesterday, the Indigo Bunting, is merrily chowing down at the sunny feeder this morning as I type. They just know they look more theatrical in sunlight.

29 people were kind enough to sponsor me, disguised as Ian Tate, on our wet adventure into birdland for a total of \$705.00. I have sent a cheque for that amount to the Baillie Birdathon. A quarter will come back to the Willow Beach Field Naturalists.

*Sheilagh Fletcher*

## **2009 Northumberland Summer Bird Count**

The 13th annual Northumberland Summer Bird Count was held on June 13th and 14th. Twenty-eight observers covered the same 24 km diameter count circle used in previous years. The circle covers from Rice Lake and Roseneath in the north, to Hwy 401 just north of Grafton in the south, and Harwood Rd. in the west, to almost Morganston in the east. The weather cooperated with two good bird-counting days. Saturday was mostly cloudy, warm and humid, but with very light winds. Sunday was clear and less humid, also with light winds. This year, 16,200 birds of

139 species were recorded. This is the second highest individual total and the 3rd highest species total. The record highs were in 2007 when 16,623 birds of 143 species were found. No new species were seen this year, leaving the cumulative total, for the 13 years at 177 species. However, there were many exciting finds:

- Pied-billed Grebes were found in two areas, with a record high total of 7.
- Single American Bitterns were found in 3 area for a record high

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- Least Bitterns were found in 2 areas. The one in Area 6 was expected. However, one found in Rice Lake in Area 1 was not. This was a life bird for John Geale who again covered the Rice Lake shore in a canoe.
- a single American Black Duck was found in Area 1. This species is now a very rare breeder locally.
- Two Ring-necked Ducks in Area 2 continue to suggest breeding within the circle.
- A Bald Eagle well away from water was seen in Area 4.
- Are 3 produced the only Red-shouldered Hawk.
- A total of nine Broad-winged Hawks was a record high
- Ruffed Grouse had their lowest total in the past 10 years with only 9 being found.
- Three Upland Sandpipers were found in Areas 1 and 4
- Seven Wilson's Snipe were the best total since 2004.
- Rock Pigeons had their lowest count in 12 years. This is probably a true decline as many of the farms in the circle no longer have livestock. Rural Rock Pigeons are dependent on grain fed to livestock.
- Both cuckoo species posted record highs. The 31 Black-billed was three times their previous high.
- Six Barred Owls spread over 3 areas was a record high for this secretive species.
- Both Common Nighthawk and Whip-poor-will were found in lower numbers than last year, with the majority of them in Area 3 and 4.
- A single Chimney Swift in Area 2 was the first of this rare species in the count circle since 2005.
- Area 5 had a monopoly on the 3 Red-headed Woodpeckers counted.
- Three Red-bellied Woodpeckers were found in Areas 4 and 5, as this species continues to expand.
- Area 6 found the only Yellow-bellied Fly-

catcher

- Only 4 Purple Martins were found this year, the lowest total since 2000. This species in in very serious trouble locally. Other swallow species bounced back after their very low counts last year. Still, none of them approached their records highs.
- Winter Wrens were found in record high numbers with 24 birds counted, more than double their previous high.
- A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Area 5 was only the second ever recorded on the count.
- Area 5 also recorded the only Northern Mockingbird.
- Blue-winged Warblers outnumbered Golden-winged Warblers, 7 to 6.
- Area 4 recorded the only "Brewster's Warbler".
- Black-throated Green Warblers were found in all areas for an impressive record high of 62 birds.
- Mourning Warblers also were found in record high numbers with a total of 149 birds. The most puzzling thing about this is only 5 of these birds were found north of County Rd. 9 and 29. This species definitely does become much scarcer the further north and east you go in Northumberland County.
- Area 6 found the only Hooded Warbler this year.
- Area 2 found the only Wilson's Warbler, providing a good late date for this migrant.
- An impressive 60 Scarlet Tanagers was a new record high for this species.
- Only 3 Clay-colored Sparrows were found in Areas 1 and 3.
- Most sparrow species were found in record high numbers. Chipping, Field, Savannah, Grasshopper, Song, Swamp, and Slate-colored Junco all posted record highs. The juncos were an agitated pair carrying food for young in Area 4.
- 33 White-throated Sparrows were the highest total since 2003.
- Eastern Meawlark was also found in record

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high numbers with 204 counted - good news for this grassland dependent species.

●Five Orchard Orioles were found. This is more than double its previous record high of 2. This species continues to spread inland away from the Lake Ontario shoreline.

All areas of the count circle were well covered this year with every group recording well over 90 species. Three teams recorded over 100 species. However, it was Area 6's team of Margaret Bain, Richard Pope and

Rayfield Pye that claimed top honours with an amazing 114 species.

Thanks to all who participated, especially to the Area Captains who did an excellent job this year organizing their teams and completing their paperwork! It made my job much easier. Thank you also to John Geale for yet again hosting the post-count get-together. As always, it was nice to hear how everyone's weekend went and compare notes.

Next year's count will be on Saturday, June 12 and Sunday, June 13.

*Roger Frost*

### **Changes to American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds**

Reflecting on recent observations and discoveries made by researchers using mtDNA and nuclear data, the A.O.U has again revised its Check-list of North American birds.

It added seven species - Gray-lag Goose, Brown Hawk-Owl, Sedge Warbler, Yellow-browed Bunting and three South American birds - bringing the total to 2,055.

It shortened the names of Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow to Nelson's Sparrow and Saltmarsh Sparrow.

It further shuffled the composition of several families. Among the species assuming new places on the taxonomic tree are Summer, Hepatic, Scarlet and Western Tanagers. Despite their names, they are no longer classified with Thraupidae(tanagers) but in Cardinalidae (cardinals, grosbeaks, and allies)

*SOURCE: Birder's World, October 2009  
submitted by Don Davis.*

*Buried amongst many Ontbirds posts was the following information about marked shorebirds which were observed at Presqu'ile Provincial Park this spring and summer.*

1. Red Knots observed on May 28, 2009: Some of them were tagged in the United States, but the more interesting returns were as follows: two birds banded in Tierra del Fuego, Chile in February 2003 and January 2007; one bird banded in Tierra de Fuego, Argentina in November, 2006 that was subsequently seen many times at San Antonio Oeste (not sure where that is) from February to April 21, 2009, scarcely a month before appearing at Presqu'ile.

2. An adult Sanderling with a lime green flag CP5 on the upper left leg, first reported by Margaret Bain at Presqu'ile on August 23, 2009 and seen again on August 28 by Paul O'Toole, was banded on May 31, 2008 at Mispillian Harbor, Osprey Point, Delaware, United States.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

● **September 19, 2009** - Tallgrass Ontario is pleased to present a **Seed Collection Workshop** in the Ganaraska Forest. Come and learn the techniques and the science behind the efficient and ethical collection of tallgrass prairie plant seed. Admission is free and open to the public. An in-class session begins at 8:30 a.m. in the Kendal Community Centre, 6742 Newtonville Road. In the afternoon, we will proceed to the Ganaraska Forest for a hands-on seed collection event. Contact **Gavin Trevelyan** of Tallgrass Ontario if you are interested in attending. Telephone **(705) 775 0550** or e-mail [tallgrass@nexicom.net](mailto:tallgrass@nexicom.net).

● **October 24, 2009 - Caring for the Moraine Landowner Appreciation Event** - This FREE family event is focused on **Backyard Naturalization** and will involve fun hands-on sessions for kids as well as an informative presentation on naturalizing your backyard for birds and butterflies and creating a natural design. This workshop is a fun event to thank landowners that have participated in the Caring for the Moraine Project and invite new landowners out to learn more about it. Folks from Monitoring the Moraine will be doing an afternoon tour as well. Come for one or all of the sessions. **Includes a free full lunch.** More details can be obtained from: Ashley Wilson, Landowner Contact Specialist, Caring for the Moraine Project: Rice Lake Plains Area, Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program, c/o Lower Trent Conservation, 714 Murray Street, RR#1, Trenton, ON K8V 5P4, Office: 613-394-3915 ext 225, Cell: 613-848-6269, Fax: 613-394-5226, Email: [ricelakeplains@ltc.on.ca](mailto:ricelakeplains@ltc.on.ca)

● **Saturday, October 3, 2009** - full day - **Feeding on Trees** - Trees are indeed the staff of life. Forget your vitamins, proteins and roughage! No trees, no life... And that may not be far off, at least our diversity of trees is changing. Come and see what pressures the green giants of Presqu'ile are under and meet the animals that are bringing them down. Also meet our forest regeneration program and do your bit to replant and renew. Bring your grubbies for a gentle but effective day of discovery, dirt, and diversity. Led by a noted forester with the Ontario Model Forest Project. The modest workshop fee of \$15 per person, \$35 per family, includes free Park entry! Workshops are suitable for children over 14yrs. Please confirm dates and make reservations at 613 475-1688, ext 2. More details at [www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca](http://www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca)

● **Sunday, October 18 2009 - Book Launch**

WBFN member **Richard Pope** is having a launch for his new book on birding in Ontario, *The Reluctant Twitcher: A Quite Truthful Account of my Big Birding Year*, on Sunday October 18 from 2-4 at Meet at 66 King East in Cobourg. All Willow Beach people are welcome.

● **Wednesday, November 4, 2009, 6:30 p.m. - Species at Risk Workshop** - location TBA SAR in Northumberland County and stewardship opportunities. Speaker: Melissa Laplante, SAR Biologist. For more information, contact Ashley at 613-394-3915 X255 or [ricelakeplains@ltc.on.ca](mailto:ricelakeplains@ltc.on.ca)

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

*compiled by Roger Frost*

Brant	May 14	150+	Cobourg Harbour	KN
	May 14	225	Cobourg Harbour	MB
	June 1-13	1	Cobourg Harbour	KN, LW+E45
	June 14-18	3	Cobourg Harbour	KN, mobs
	June 20	1	Port Hope Harbour	EK, RF
American Wigeon	June 15	1	e. of Carr's Marsh, Hamilton Twp.	JGe
American Black Duck	Aug. 26	5	Cobourg Harbour	LW
Northern Shoveler	May 8	1m	flooded field, Dale Rd. e. of Theatre Rd.	SW
Redhead	Aug. 11-22	1f	Cobourg Harbour	MB, CEG
White-winged Scoter	May 24	40	Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 1	RF, KS
Long-tailed Duck	May 3	450	off Cobourg Harbour	LW
	May 15	2000	Lucas Point, Cob. - huge clamour!	MB
	July 3-10	1	Cobourg Harbour	LW
Red-breasted Merganser	May 4	300	off Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 2	EK, RF
Red-throated Loon	May 7	1	off Lake St. Marsh, PH	RF
	May 22	1	Port Hope west beach	EK, RF
	May 29	1	off Cobourg Harbour	MB
Common Loon	May 3/4	54/56	off Cobourg Harbour	LW
<b>American White Pelican</b>	May 15/16	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
	July 18	1	Presqu'ile PP	GP
	July 24	1	Rice Lake, Harwood area (photos)	DMcl
Double-crested Cormorant	May 1	900	off Cobourg Harbour	LW
American Bittern	June 14-18	1	over Hwy. 401 at Boyce Rd.	MB
Least Bittern	June 13	1	Lone Pine Marsh	MB
	Aug. 16	1	Constructed wetland, Brighton	ML
Black-crowned Night Heron	May 18	3	Gage's Creek, Port Hope	GMCD
Bald Eagle	June 28	1	6th Line, Hamilton Twp. (east end)	C&RH
	July 31	1	Lakeshore Rd. nr. Port Britain, PH Ward 1	ERM
Red-shouldered Hawk	Aug. 11-13	2	Baltimore	MB
Merlin	all May	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
Peregrine Falcon	June 1	1	Wesleyville	EK, BN
	Aug. 16	1	Lake St. Marsh, PH	EK
American Coot	July 28	1	Rice Lake at Harwood	EK, RF
Sandhill Crane	May 15	2	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Semipalmated Plover	May 20	21	flooded field, Dale Rd. e. of Theatre Rd.	MB
Spotted Sandpiper	May 18	10	flooded field, Dale Rd. e. of Theatre Rd.	MB
Greater Yellowlegs	May 7	18	flooded field, Dale Rd. e. of Theatre Rd. - high count	MB
Lesser Yellowlegs	May 7	40	flooded field, Dale Rd. e. of Theatre Rd.	SW
	May 8	28/40	flooded field, Dale Rd. e. of Theatre Rd. - high count	MB/SW
Upland Sandpiper	May 4	1	Mulder Rd., Hamilton Twp.	MB
	June 1	1	Wesleyville	EK, BN
	June 4	1	XIL Rd. s of 10th Concession, Trent Hille	CEG
	June 9	1	Dale Rd.s.side, e. of flooded area	MB
	Aug. 11	1	flying s. over Cobourg at night	MB
Whimbrel	May 24	30	Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 1	RF, KS
	May 24	60	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
	Aug. 25	1	Cobourg Harbour	LW
	Aug. 28	3	Presqu'ile PP	IS
	Aug. 31	1	over Cobourg Harbour	CEG
<b>Marbled Godwit</b>	May 24	1	Presqu'ile PP, Beach 4	MB
Ruddy Turnstone	June 25	2m	Cobourg Harbour breakwater	RDM, MB
	July 21	1	Cobourg west beach	KN, MB
Red Knot	May 28	91	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
	May 28	55-60	Cobourg Harbour	LW
	Aug. 25	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds

## Sightings - cont'd.

Sanderling	July 28	3	Cobourg west beach	MB
Semipalmated Sandpiper	May 24	450	Cobourg Harbour breakwater - forming pods of 50-60 birds among hundreds of Dunlin	MB
	May 24	200	Port Hope west beach	EK
Least Sandpiper	May 18	50	flooded field, Mail Rd., PH Ward 2 - high count	MB
Purple Sandpiper	May 24	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
	May 28, 29	1	Cobourg Harbour east pier	CEG, MB
Dunlin	May 22	1000	Cobourg Harbour	LW
	May 24	4000	Cobourg Harbour breakwater	MB, LW
	May 24	8000+	Presqu'ile PP	BDiL
	May 24	600	Port Hope west beach	EK
Short-billed Dowitcher	May 20	7	flooded field, Mail Rd., PH Ward 2 (1 griseus)	MB
	July 28	2	Cobourg Harbour	MB
Wilson's Phalarope	May 30	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Laughing Gull	May 28	1ad	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Franklin's Gull	May 30	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Iceland Gull	May 20-28	1 imm	Cobourg Harbour east pier - late	MB, CEG
	May 29-30	1 imm	Cobourg Harbour east pier - same bird	MB
	June 1-3	1 imm	Cobourg Harbour/west beach	MB
	June 3	1	Port Hope Harbour	RF
Lesser Black-backed Gull	May 21	1	Port Hope Harbour	RF
Glaucous Gull	May 15	1 imm	Lucas Point, Cob. - late date	MB
	May 24	1	off Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 2	RF, KS
	May 31	1	Cobourg Harbour	LW
Caspian Tern	July 18	194	Cobourg Harbour - high count	CEG
	Aug. 8/31	41/13	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Common Tern	May 28	20	Cobourg Harbour - high count	CEG
Arctic Tern	May 16	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Forster's Tern	My 14	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Black-billed Cuckoo	June 18	1	6th Line, PH Ward 2	BLeS
Eastern Screech Owl	Aug. 2	1ad, 1juv	Albert St., Cobourg backyard (red morph)	MB
Northern Saw-whet Owl	July	1juv	High Bluff Island, Presqu'ile	FH, Ontbirds
				MB, CEG, BrN, BL
Common Nighthawk	Aug. 23	123+	Cobourg waterfront	
Whip-poor-will	Aug. 27	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Chimney Swift	June 1	60	Cobourg Harbour - high count	CEG
Red-headed Woodpecker	May 6	1	Sydenham St., Cob.	MB
	Aug. 11	4	Lakeshore Rd. nr. Port Britain, PH Ward 1	J&HC
	Aug. 21	2ad, 1juv	4th Line nr. Morrish Church Rd., PH Ward 2	BMcF
Red-bellied Woodpecker	May 9	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Aug. 16	1	Presqu'ile PP, Calf Pasture	MB
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	June 1-4	1	Cobourg backyard	MB
	June 14-18	1	Telephone/Vernonville Rd.	MB
	Aug. 24	1	Cobourg Harbour west headland	MB
Acadian Flycatcher	May 24	1	Ganaraska Forest	BJW, MF
"Traill's" Flycatcher	Aug. 25	3	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Common Raven	May 28	4 or 5	Welcome	KMcH
Purple Martin	June 6	2	Cobourg Harbour	LW
Cliff Swallow	May 26		several nests, 7th & Little Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
	June 2	40+	Lorne Park Nurseries, Salem. 20+ nests under eaves of office building	MB
	Aug. 30	19	Lake St. Marsh, PH	EK, RF
Carolina Wren	July 27	1m	Brown St., PH - singing	MB
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	May 4	4	Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 1	EK, RF
Gray-cheeked Thrush	Aug. 8/31	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Hermit Thrush	May 14	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
	July 15	1	Roxburgh Glen Golf Course	ERM

## Sightings - cont'd.

Northern Mockingbird	June 2	1	Kennedy Rd., Camborne	EK
	June 19	3	Wesleyville	EK, RF
	July 24	1	Jibb Rd. - singing male there all summer	AEW
American Pipit	Aug. 31	1	Presqu'ile PP, Beach 4	MB
Blue-winged Warbler	May 8	1m	Albert St., Cob. backyard (32nd warbler species for this backyard in last 10 years!)	MB
Golden-winged Warbler	June 5	1	Alderville Black Oak Savanna	EK, SP
	Aug. 24	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Northern Parula	May 15	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
Cape May Warbler	May 9	1	Lucas Point, Cobourg	CEG
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Aug. 24	2	Cobourg Harbour	LW
Bay-breasted Warbler	May 14	1	Cty. Rd. 18	SW
Cerulean Warbler	May 22	1	Ganaraska Forest	BJW
American Redstart	May 24	15	Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 1	RF, KS
Louisiana Waterthrush	May 24	1	Ganaraska Forest near Forest Centre	BJW, MF
Connecticut Warbler	May 24	1	Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 1	RF, KS
	May 24	1	Ganaraska Forest	BJW
	May 24	1	Brand Rd. & Lakeshore, PH Ward 1	BJW
<b>Hooded Warbler</b>	May 24	4	Ganaraska Forest	BJW, MF
	June 13	1m	Maple Grove Rd., n. of Lone Pine Marsh	MB
Canada Warbler	June 3	1m	Cobourg Harbour west headland	KN
Clay-colored Sparrow	June 19	3	Wesleyville	EK, RF
Lincoln's Sparrow	May 15	1	Cobourg backyard	MB
Orchard Oriole	May 24	1	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
	June 5	1	Alderville Black Oak Savanna	EK, SP
Pine Siskin	May 8	~20	Danforth Rd., Hamilton Twp.	MBi
Red Bat	Aug. 23	1	Cobourg Harbour west headland (photo)	KN
Mink	Aug. 28	1	Cobourg Harbour west headland (resident, seen sporadically through summer)	MB
Polyphemus Moth	July 10	1	Roxburgh Glen Golf Course	ERM
Prometheus Moth	June 20	1	Ontario St., Cob.	AEW
Monarch Butterfly	May 21	1	Presqu'ile PP - first for season	IS
Red Admiral	May 20	1	lakeshore w. of Port Hope	R&JP

**Observers:** MB=Margaret Bain; MBi=Michael Biggar; J&HC=John & Heather Cordukes; GMCD=Geoff Dale; BDiL=Bruce DiLabio; RF=Roger Frost; JGe=John Geale; CEG=Clive Goodwin; FH=Fred Helleiner; C&RH=Carol & Reese Hunt; EK=Elizabeth Kellogg; BLeS=Barbara LeSeuer; ERM=Ted McDonald; KMCh=Kathryn McHolm; BL=Bill Logan; BMcF=Blair McFadden; DMcI=Don McIlwain; RDM=Doug McRae; BN=Bill Newell; BrN=Brenda Niles; KN=Ken Niles; Ontbirds=OFO listserv; R&JP=Rod & Joan Parrott; SP=Sarah Petrusek; GP=Gerard Phillips; KS=Katsu Sakuma; LS=Louise Schmidt; IS=Ian Shanahan; BJW=Ben Walters; LW=Lori Wensley; SW=Susanne Williams; AEW=Audrey Wilson.

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Willow Beach Field Naturalists  
P.O. Box 421  
Port Hope, ON L1A 3Z3

