



COMING EVENTS

● **Friday, February 26, 2010, 7:00 p.m. - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** - Cobourg Public Library
Speaker: **Pam Lancaster**. Topic: **Ganaraska Watershed**

Pam Lancaster, Stewardship Technician at the Ganaraska Region Conservation authority will make a presentation on its origin, history and programming. For over 60 years, the GRCA has implemented many projects and programs to conserve, enhance and manage local watersheds. Currently, a large watershed planning initiative is occurring to forward watershed conservation into the future.

WBFN AGM SILENT AUCTION FUNDRAISER FOR THE WBFN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

All proceeds from the sales will go towards our new **Willow Beach Field Naturalists Scholarship fund (\$1000.00)**. Even in a small way, supporting the post-secondary education of a student who has shown leadership and interest in preserving the natural world is an important step in ensuring that we have strong advocates for nature in the next generation. So let's open our hearts and our wallets to support this worthy WBFN endeavour.

A list of items up for auction is on page 7 of this issue. We suggest that members unable to attend the meeting can perhaps get a friend or another member to bid and pay on their behalf. Since they have a listing ahead of time they can pick out what they want and their spending limit. Bring your cheque books! If you wish to help on auction night, please contact Barry Walker at 905-885-8250 or Louise Schmidt at 905-797-1059.

● **Friday, March, 26, 2010 - General Meeting** at Cobourg Public Library, 7:30 p.m.
Speaker: **Dr. Bridget Stutchbury**, 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*.

Wanted - Volunteer for the delivery of "The Curlew".

Many of the Willow Beach members who live in Cobourg or Port Hope will have noticed that, penciled into the right hand corner of the address label are some initials. These are the initials of the member who hand delivers each issue of The Curlew to your door and just over 60% of our Cobourg and Port Hope members receive their issues by this method.

As occasionally happens, one of our volunteers has recently decided that he is finding it increasingly difficult to continue to make these deliveries. Andy McLauchlan and his wife Anita have walked a delivery route in Port Hope for at least ten years and their contribution, and that of the other delivery persons, is much appreciated by the Willow Beach Field Naturalists.

We are obviously therefore looking for an individual to take over some deliveries in the Port Hope area particularly in the south-west corner of the town. However, other routes can be rearranged if the volunteer does not live close to this area.

If interested in helping please contact Barry Robinson (jbarryrob@cogeco.ca; 905-373-9262) or Michael Biggar (mbiggar.wbfn@gmail.com; 905-372-7407) at your earliest convenience.

Correction: In last November's *Curlew*, Audrey Wilson's name was omitted from the list of observers under the sightings. The list should have included AEW=Audrey Wilson. Sorry Audrey.

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THE WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS

<http://www.willowbeachfieldnaturalists.org>

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1st Vice-pres.	Louise Schmidt	905-797-1059	wingbeat@xplornet.com
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Secretary	Karen Drew	905-342-2904	drew@eagle.ca
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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 March 2010 issue should be received by February 28, 2010. 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 March Curlew. Correspondence for WBFN should be addressed to: "The Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON L1A 3Z3."

President's Report

This past year the executive has continued to focus its efforts primarily on environmental, and educational issues. My "job" as president has been made much easier by a committed group of volunteers and dedicated executive members.

Ben Walters is our environmental Monitor, and was our representative on the Forest Advisory Committee. Ben attended meetings on behalf of the membership supplying significant professional input into the Northumberland County Forest Management Plan. Ben was also our representative at Alnwick/Hamilton council meetings with regards to prescribed burns in the area as well as Hamilton township meetings to express our concerns regarding proposed rezoning of Carr's Marsh. In addition Ben is our outings coordinator, and organized the Earth Day cleanup in Port Hope at A.K. Sculthorpe Marsh.

Carole Payne is our Ontario Nature representative, and along with Louise Schmidt represented the membership at the ON Lake Ontario North Fall Regional Meeting. The meeting agenda focused on Caring For the Moraine Project, organized by the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation. Carole also attended the Moraine for Life Well Being Symposium 2009 organized by The Save the Oak Ridges Moraine (STORM) Coalition exploring innovations in stewardship, livelihoods, and learning. Carole was also the WBFN representative on the Ganaraska River Watershed Community Advisory Committee.

Petra Hartwig and Chris Drew continue to oversee the stewardship of Peter's Woods. Duties include organizing the volunteer schedule, maintenance of the walkways, and ongoing communication with the Ministry of Natural Resources. Weather permitting we should have improved walkways in the low lying areas for 2010.

The club is very fortunate to have Karen Drew continue as our secretary. Karen is very committed to her role, and attends virtually every executive, and general meeting to arrange the agenda, record the minutes, and keep everyone informed.

Barry and Margaret Robinson have accepted the arduous task of maintaining the membership file as well as organizing the distribution of the Curlew. This task requires a significant

time commitment, and I want to thank them, and acknowledge their contributions.

Roger Frost continues to contribute to club activities through the organization of the Christmas Bird Count, The Northumberland Summer Bird Count, and the Mid-winter Waterfowl Survey. In addition Roger and Elizabeth continue their banding activities with songbirds.

Rae Waring, our treasurer has done an excellent job of managing the club's finances. Financial assistance was extended to the following organizations in 2009: Lone Pine Marsh Sanctuary; Living Green Fair; Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory; The Fatal Light Awareness Program; GRCA-Outdoor Education Centre; Nature Conservancy Canada- Little Bluestem Alvar property; Northumberland Land Trust; The Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre; Toronto Wildlife Centre; The Owl Foundation; Alderville Black Oak Savanna.

Gina Brouwer along with Tim and Jane Tottenham continue to keep the media informed regarding club activities, outings, and meetings. Gina was also our representative on the GRCA Cobourg Creek Watershed Plan.

Deborah Panko our program coordinator continues her tireless efforts to attract quality speakers. Deborah has organized speakers with varied backgrounds in an effort to maintain interest from all members. I would like to acknowledge Bill Crowley for his assistance with organizing speakers.

Clive Goodwin is our representative on The Waterfront Trail Committee, and contributes articles to the Curlew on a regular basis. Clive also contributed to submissions on behalf of WBFN to the Management Projects at Presquile Provincial Park regarding the deer and cormorant culls as well as the mute swan population concerns. In view of Clive's contributions to the club it was gratifying for me that our nomination of Clive for the Doris Huestis Speirs Award was successful. The award is presented by The Society of Canadian Ornithologists to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to Canadian ornithology. I want to thank Margaret Bain and Audrey Wilson for their input into the application

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process.

Educational grants were awarded to three schools in 2009. The successful candidates were Plainville Public School; Camborne Public School; and Notre Dame Elementary School. The executive have also voted to establish the Willow Beach Field Naturalists Scholarship Fund. The scholarship, valued at \$1000.00, will be awarded initially in 2010 supporting a post-secondary student who has shown leadership, and interest in preserving the natural world.

Bruce Parker continues as our educational co-ordinator, and our web master. One of the highlights for the club this year was the launch of the WBFN website. Bruce has spent untold hours in researching, establishing, and maintaining the site and I want to thank him for his time and efforts. I would encourage members to visit the site and contribute to it.

The club donated two stone trail markers at the Laurie Lawson Outdoor Education Centre in memory of long time member Hazel Bird. Thanks to Audrey Wilson for organizing this project on behalf of WBFN.

John Gael continues to keep the membership well informed via email notifications, remains as a director, and has been elected to the Northumberland Land Trust Board of Directors. Thank you John for your contributions to club activities.

As I have stated previously, I cannot express enough gratitude to Elizabeth Kellogg, our

Curlew editor. Elizabeth spends a significant amount of time organizing, and producing the newsletter. I also want to thank Norma Wallace for proof reading the Curlew, as well as for her input regarding club activities.

Marguerite and Bob Short - Thank you for the hours spent on arranging the meeting raffles and storing the donated items. Simone Mérey, our past president, has always been available to help out with meetings and give me sound advice and guidance.

Louise Schmidt, our president elect, thank you for all of your support the past year including chairing meetings, organizing the silent auction and leading last year's President's walk.

To the club directors - Bill Newell, Audrey Wilson, Barry Robinson, John Geale, Petra Hartwig and Gina Brouwer - a sincere thank you for your input on club policies.

I would encourage all club members to become involved with club activities in some way. This involvement could be as simple as making a suggestion regarding a speaker, writing an article for the Curlew, or leading an outing.

Finally I would like to say that it has been a very gratifying experience representing WBFN as president. I have enjoyed my time representing the club, made many new friends, and gained significant knowledge.

Respectfully submitted
Michael Biggar

Willow Beach Field Naturalists 2010 Nominating Committee Report

WBFN's Constitution provides that a Nominating Committee shall bring forward a slate of candidates for election at the Annual General Meeting. Further nominations from the floor shall be accepted, with the nominees' prior consent, provided that they are proposed and seconded.

This year's Nominating Committee consists of President Michael Biggar, members Louise Schmidt, Bruce Parker, Ben Walters and myself, Chair and Past President Simone Mérey.

During the February 2008 AGM John Geale and Barry Robinson were elected as Directors for a two year term. Michael Biggar began his term as President, Louise Schmidt her term as 1st Vice President and Ben Walters his term as 2nd Vice President. These terms expire February 2010.

All members have been contacted and we are pleased to report that John Geale has agreed to let his name stand for election for another term. Louise and Ben have agreed to let their

names stand for election as President and 1st Vice President respectively. The Nominating Committee presents the following slate of candidates for election at the 2010 Annual General Meeting, each serving a two year term.

President: Louise Schmidt

1st Vice President: Ben Walters

Directors: John Geale and Bruce Parker

We are still looking for a 2nd Vice President.

Michael Biggar becomes Immediate Past President.

Please let us know in advance if additional candidates will be nominated during the AGM.

Simone Mérey: Chair, February 2010

Willow Beach Field Naturalists Annual General Meeting Minutes Ruth Clarke Centre – February 27, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Michael Biggar called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm. He welcomed everyone. 47 people were present.

Approval of Last AGM Minutes: Motion by Bill Crowley that the AGM Minutes of Feb. 29, 2008 be adopted. Seconded by Jack Goering. Carried.

Reports:

President's Report: Michael Biggar reminded everyone that the 2008/9 President's report was printed in the February Curlew. **Motion** by Russell Lake to confirm actions of the Executive Board since the last AGM (per Report). Seconded by Elizabeth Kellogg. Carried.

Financial Report: Michael Biggar reviewed the report in the February Curlew, in Rae Waring's absence, and fielded any questions. **Motion** by Bill Wensley that the Financial Report be adopted. Seconded by Carole Payne. Carried.

Nomination Committee / Election of Board Members: Russell Lake presented the nomination committee report. The following names for two year terms were put forth (see also February Curlew):

Directors – Bill Newell, Audrey Wilson, John Geale

Secretary – Karen Drew

Press Coordinator – Gina McFarlane

Peter's Woods Coordinator – Petra Hartwig

Further nominations were called from the floor and none were forthcoming. **Motion** by Bill Wensley that those nominated be adopted. Seconded by Carole Payne. Carried. **Motion** by Jack Goering that the nominations be closed. Seconded by John Geale. Carried.

Sightings: Elizabeth Kellogg solicited bird sightings from the members present.

Presentation: Rory Quigley, Arborist for the Town of Cobourg, gave an interesting presentation on The Urban Forest.

The silent auction winners were announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

PROPERTY ACCOUNT	<u>Year 2009</u>	OPERATING ACCOUNT	<u>Year 2009</u>
Opening Assets	<u>\$15,644.34</u>	Opening Assets	<u>\$ 12,403</u>
Consisting of :		Consisting of:	
Bank Balance	\$ 3,525.51	Bank Balance	\$ 3,364
GIC's	\$12,118.83	GIC's	\$ 9,000
		Petty Cash	\$ 38
Income		Income	
Loan from Operating Acct	1,608	Memberships	3,590
GIC Interest	242	Donations**	3,894
Donations**	230	Silent Auction	717
		Raffle	250
		GIC Redemptions	5,000
		GIC/Bank Interest	306
Total Income	2,080	Total Income	13,757
Expenses		Expenses	
Bank Charge	1	Donations***	5,492
Donation Northumberland Land Trust***	5,508	Curlew/postage	2,052
		Computer supplies/web site/Stationary	1,190
		Meetings	814
		Insurance	685
		GIC Purchase	4,000
		Loan to Property Acct.	1,608
		GST/PST	345
		Petty Cash Increase(Reduction)	-28
Total bank Expense	5,509	Total Bank Expense	16,158
Net Income	- 3,429	Net Income	<u>-2,401</u>
Closing Bank Balance	<u>\$ 97</u>	Closing Bank Balance	<u>\$ 963</u>
Charge to Accts payable	1,608	GIC Additions/(Reductions)	-1,000
		Accounts Receivable Increase/(Reductions)	1,608
Assets End of Period	<u>\$ 10,608</u>	End period assets	<u>\$ 10,581</u>
Consisting of:		Consisting of:	
*2yr Royal Bank Cashable	\$ 12,119	GICs at purchase price	\$ 8,000
Bank Balance	\$ 97	Bank Balance	\$ 963
Accounts Payable to Operating Acc't.	-\$ 1,608	Petty Cash	\$ 10
Total		Accounts Receivable	\$ 1,608

**WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS
DONATED ITEMS - FEBRUARY 26, 2010
CATALOGUE OF PRIZES**

PKG. No.	ITEM	DONATED BY	EST. VALUE
1	Autographed Book - <i>The Reluctant Twitcher</i>	Richard Pope	\$35
2	2 Tickets - Friends of Music concert - Sunday, March 28,2010 Augustin Hadelich and Ian Parker	Friends of Music	\$78
3	<i>Pamper Yourself Package:</i> 2 gift certificates for 30 min. therapeutic massage 1 Cut & Style with Jade; 1 Manicure with Julie	Sports Injury & Foot Health Centre, Tor. Road Nirvana Hair Studio and Spa	\$150
4	<i>Night on the Town Package: \$25 Gift Certificate</i> Theatre tickets - Capitol Theatre - 2 tickets for preview night for any summer play	Railside Restaurant Capitol Theatre	\$75
5	2 Duck Decoys (green wing teal) by Larry Fell	Michael Biggar	\$200 Reserve
6	Bird seed Nuthatch house	Michael Biggar Barry Walker	\$130
7	Annual vehicle permit for any Provincial Park from April 1/10 to March 31/11 Red sports bag	Presqu'ile Park Sup. Tom Mates and Park Staff Bob Reid	\$160 \$75 Reserve
8	Framed painting "Paradise" - original acrylic on canvas, 18" x 23" - by Lin Reynolds	Karen Drew	\$250 \$125 Reserve
9	Gallileoscope 50 mm 2" Refractor telescope kit, sample issue of Sky News magazine, 1 yr. subscr. to Sky News	Louise Schmidt	\$50
10	The Audubon Folio, text by George Dock Jr., Library of Con- gress Cat.Card No.64-11580 Copyright 1964 (2 plates missing)	Not known	\$40
11	Framed Photo - <i>Bridal Veil Falls, Manitoulin Island,</i> frame 19" x 16"	Bill Crowley	\$150
12	GRCA Membership, water bottle, Ganaraska Forest maps	GRCA	\$150
13	Hand Made Basket; Garden ornament; Wooden pen & case	Carol Knapper	\$100
14	Framed photo - <i>Prairie Buttercup, frame 15" x 12"</i>	Bill Crowley	\$150
15	Framed photo - <i>Blue Heron, frame 17" x 14 1/2"</i>	Bill Crowley	\$150
16	Marie Dressler Society Vintage Film Festival 2 passes for the entire event	Marie Dressler Society Vin- tage Film Festival	\$120 \$50 Reserve
17	Framed photo - <i>Tournesol</i>	Micheline Beevis	\$100
18	Quilted wall hanging - <i>Heart of the Home, 27" x 28"</i> and hanger	Quilt - Marguerite Short Hanger - Bob Short	\$50 \$25 Reserve
19	3 Tavenor books: Birds of Canada/Eastern Canada/Western Canada: Birds of Canada - Pearson	Not known Peter Greathead	\$125
20	Four Pimpernel place mats and 6 matching coasters	Bob Reid	\$55

**Please don't forget to acknowledge your thanks to the donors of the prizes when you get
the chance!**

Gleanings from the Northumberland Bird Database

THE 2009 BIRD YEAR IN REVIEW

by Clive E. Goodwin

The winter of 2008-9 started with two quite exceptional events. Both were flights of winter finches, and both were among the largest ever recorded, not only in Northumberland, but in the Province as a whole; and indeed were noteworthy on a continental scale, with *North American Birds* proclaiming one as the 'greatest' flight ever recorded, and the second as 'maybe having outdone every previous flight on record'.

Readers with exceptional memories may recall that the 2008 account ended with flocks of White-winged Crossbills flying past the window as the article was being written. It turned out that movement was among the last in a major flight that really peaked before 2008 ended. But I also found that we had one isolated earlier event that reported even higher numbers than last winter's flight. In 1985 a huge movement was seen at Presqu'île, where on February 27 'about 100 flocks of approximately 25-100 birds each [were seen] moving north from the fingers over a period of 90 minutes'. Huge movements are difficult for record keepers to deal with, simply because they're rarely seen and are usually described by words like 'about' and 'approximately'; but it seems clear that by any measure this was a substantial movement. Probably there are events like this in any major incursion, but only rarely is anyone around to see them. In fact, the 1985-89 period seems the only one that was comparable to last winter in terms of the extent of the White-winged Crossbill invasion, not only here, but over a wide area of eastern North America.

This is true also of Pine Siskins, the second finch that moved in huge numbers last year. This time the flight really was last year, as there were only a few suggestions of exceptional numbers in December. Siskins are

much commoner than crossbills and a few turn up in most winters, but on the 2008 C.B.C. only 97 were seen in all. By January the birds were hard to miss, and unlike the crossbills there were siskins around well into June. By then they had generated an exceptional 117 records, a remarkable total for one species in one year. I suspect nesting was widespread, but unfortunately we have only one report of young birds.

Apart from the finch movements 2009 was a rather uneventful year. There was an average movement of redpolls, but other finches were scarce; however, a small flight of Bohemian Waxwings was reported. Meanwhile at Presqu'île the wintering Mute Swan flocks continued their seemingly inexorable increase, to a new high of 552 birds.

Another winter bird that appeared in numbers was Snowy Owl. Snowies supposedly move at four-year intervals, but in fact matters are usually not so clear-cut, and a few birds are reported in most years. It's some time since our last big invasions, in both 1991-2 and 1992-3, although there was a fair flight in 2004-5. In the intervening winters the birds were rather scarce. But there were lots around last winter, although as usual the flight started in the preceding fall, in 2008. Sometimes it's the accessibility of an individual bird that helps fix the image of a movement in people's minds, and last year the memorable bird was a Snowy that took to sitting atop a power post along Cty. Rd. 2 opposite Theatre Rd., between Port Hope and Cobourg, to be seen by many!

Boreal Owls have never appeared in 'numbers' as far as we know - which isn't very much; our 15 records are scattered over 19 decades! But last year we had an 'invasion' of sorts - two! We've only had two

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in a year once before, and in both years one of the birds was found dead, not unusual for this elusive little owl.

King Eiders are usually late fall visitors, and mainly at Presqu'ile. However, Cobourg harbour runs a close second, so a bird first seen off Coverdale Park on January 11 was maybe not too surprising in terms of location, but the date was noteworthy: one of only three or four January records. The species is a rarity, and increasingly so since the zebra mussel invasion, as fewer birds are reported from Presqu'ile now than formerly, probably because the birds' feeding patterns have changed.

Winter has taken a lot of space, which maybe is appropriate for the long, severe season we experienced! Spring finally arrived with the usual waterfowl concentrations appearing at Presqu'ile, and also as usual [the species is now almost annual] a Eurasian Wigeon joined the flocks in March, with it – or a second – appearing again on April 27. But it was the other end of the County that yielded perhaps the most interesting water-bird sightings, as Lake Ontario off Candlewick Woods hosted a flock of Red-necked Grebes from March 31 on that finally grew to 620 birds on April 10. There is only one higher spring total [in 1996], and Candlewick is close to Willow Beach, where we had reports of 1500 to 3000 birds staging in the 1920's to 1940's. But these concentrations were always in fall, not spring, and in those days there was only one spring record in total!

May is the month for peak spring migration, and in 2009, for the second year in a row, it was the shorebird flight at month-end that caused the most excitement. May 22 yielded some 6000 Dunlin at Presqu'ile, while Cobourg harbour had 1000; only to be followed two days later with 10,000 and 4000 respectively! With them were smaller numbers of Semipalmated Sandpipers and the

other commoner shorebirds. As usual in big flights some rarer species appeared as well: a Marbled Godwit and some 60 Whimbrel at Presqu'ile on the 24th, and in a smaller flight on the 28-29 Presqu'ile had 91 Red Knots while Cobourg had 60, plus a rare spring Purple Sandpiper and a Laughing Gull! Spring rarities not associated with these groundings were a Hudsonian Godwit on May 16 and Prothonotary Warblers on April 27 and May 19, all at Presqu'ile.

The summer started with a fairly equitable June, followed by a cold and wet July, but as usual summer is also the period with the smallest number of reports. Since 1997 the perennial bright spot in this period has been the Summer Bird Count, which is becoming one of the most important initiatives in local birding, giving as it does a picture of breeding numbers and distribution across a broad section of the County. This year's count seemed exceptionally productive, with over 14 species in record-high numbers and a good cross-section of more unusual species. Roger Frost gave an excellent summary of the count in the September 2009 *Curlew*, so I'll simply note that three species – nighthawk, Whip-poor-will, and martin – continued earlier declines, and while other swallow species showed some recovery aerial feeding birds continue to be in trouble.

Later there was perhaps a glimmer of hope for nighthawks at Cobourg, when at least 36 passed over on August 23, followed by smaller numbers on subsequent days, with 15 as late as September 23. But it's still a far cry from the 400 seen there on August 28, 1964! Fall brought a small mix of less common birds, mainly 'one-day wonders' that were seen by few before vanishing. There was a Yellow-headed Blackbird at Brighton on September 7, then a Hudsonian Godwit at Presqu'ile on the 20th, followed by another at Cobourg a month later. October also yielded a Prairie Warbler at Presqu'ile on the 6th and a

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Ross's Goose appeared near Codrington on the 20th, followed by 2 Greater White-fronted Geese in the same location on the 27th, with the Ross's again on November 21. Finally the Harlequin Duck appeared in Cobourg harbour on November 26 and did stay around, but still missed by many.

One species found in record numbers on the S.B.C. and actually common at Presqu'ile through fall was Barred Owl, and

the species continues to dominate the early winter reports with an astonishing 11 on the Presqu'ile C.B.C. Mockingbirds were features of the Cobourg C.B.C, together with a count-week flock of Sandhill Cranes, our first ever winter records of this expanding species. Finally, on December 28 a Peregrine Falcon was seen, our 26th of the year and a new record-high count for a bird that once seemed almost gone. Conservation efforts really can work!

Presqu'ile Provincial Park

March 20-21: Waterfowl Festival, 10am to 4pm

Celebrate the return of spring! Volunteer naturalists will help you view and identify over 25 different species of ducks, geese and swans. Lighthouse Interpretive Centre and Friends Gift store open. Also check out the children's activities in the Lighthouse Centre.

For more information on events, visit the Friends of Presqu'ile website www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca or contact Presqu'ile Provincial Park at 613-475-4324 ext 225.

Grassland Bird Survey

If you are interested in participating in this year's Grassland Bird Survey and would like more information, please feel free to contact Katherine Robbins (Acting-Grassland Bird Survey Coordinator) at Wildlife Preservation Canada by phone at 519-836-9314 or 1-800-956-6608 (toll free) or through email at gbs@wildlifepreservation.ca. The GBS will focus on grassland habitats in the key breeding areas of the Loggerhead Shrike which include the Carden, Napanee and Smiths Falls limestone plains, the area around Pembroke/Renfrew, Grey and Bruce Counties in the Bruce Peninsula and on Manitoulin Island. Depending upon interest and skill level, participants can choose to complete a survey of ALL grassland bird species or a SUBSET of species that are of special interest to the project and readily identifiable.

Susan and Hugh Laing are Norma Wallace's daughter and son-in-law. Below is a report of a west coast trip that they took recently.

A Step Back Into Time

Hugh and Susan Laing

Everyone that I have spoken to has enjoyed an Alaskan cruise. We have to agree about the beautiful scenery along the coast. Unlike the majority, only three days of our two week journey were spent on the ship.

The first day at sea was relaxing as we sailed along the coast of British Columbia and became familiar with the ship. Trying to read the floor plans and pick the correct stairway could have proved to be an adventure but we endured.

Icebergs of varying colours and sizes greeted us as we stared in awe at glacier fed streams that tumbled down the mountains along the edge of Tracy Arm, a narrow fjord.

Eating our meals beside the picture windows allowed us to watch dolphins travel along in the ship's wave. We wondered if they were finding food or just enjoying our company. Were we watching them or were they watching us?

At Juneau, our first port, we chose a shore excursion that included a whale watching trip and a visit to Mendenhall glacier. Although I have participated in several whale watching trips on the east coast, this was most spectacular. A frisky juvenile entertained for fifteen minutes by diving and resurfacing every few minutes. Later we watched a mother and calf breach several times, but the highlight was a humpback whale that shot up like a rocket with its huge mouth wide open. The naturalist narrator was both humorous and informative. He helped us identify golden eagles, arctic terns and a noisy colony of sea lions.

At the Mendenhall glacier we enjoyed a self guided nature walk that led to the visitor center with information panels which explained the history of glaciers and then we

were able to stand in awe looking for miles along the rugged sheet of ice which was in slow but constant motion.

As the ship departed from Skagway, our second and final port, we settled into our hotel rooms to learn that within a week the staff would be departing and the hotel would be shuttered for the season. Our trip was completed during the last week of August and the first week of September and as the last group of the season most of the hotels were closing as we departed.

Skagway was one of the important starting points for the Yukon gold rush where men had to carry a ton of supplies over the crest of the mountain before the Mounties allowed them to join the race to Dawson city.

Fortunately, our trip was made on narrow gauge train cars which were replicas of the original train.

Travelling along the route of the gold rush through the Yukon and Alaska is a treat for both the naturalist and history buff. Our tour was especially interesting because it included comfortable coaches, historical trains, trains with dome cars, a six passenger airplane as well as a large catamaran and a smaller jet boat. The scenery included Mount McKinley, (Denali), the highest peak in North America, a huge rift valley created by shifting plates in the earth's surface, rugged canyons and raging rivers that challenged the gold miners, a placid ninety mile section of the Yukon River that had only one permanent resident, as well as areas of permafrost that created a "drunken forest".

Denali National Park is Alaska's Algonquin Park with limitations. To preserve the fragile ecosystems, the number of visitors

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and vehicles is strictly limited each day. We experienced a seven hour Tundra Wilderness Tour in an adapted school bus which included video screens attached to a camera with a 90X powered lens which was controlled by a knowledgeable driver/guide. As a souvenir we purchased a CD which included a 25 minute professional video about the seasons in the park and then a personalized segment of all the wildlife that we enjoyed seeing during our tour.

This tour passed through a variety of ecosystems which were home to a wide range of wild life that we had the pleasure of seeing. The list of “critters” included Arctic hares, Arctic ground squirrels, pikas, small herds of Dall Sheep which seemed to be able to stick onto the side of sheer slopes, moose on the lower areas, and caribou grazing at a slightly higher elevation. Both black and grizzly bears were sighted as they roamed about looking for berries to eat.

The feathered community was repre-

sented by both bald and golden eagles, gray jays, ptarmigan, merlins, boreal chickadees, ravens and magpies. Because of the imminent approach of winter, the leaves changed colour and began to fall in a period of five days. The guide explained that therefore many of the summer birds had already begun their migration south.

Due to the fragile nature of the vegetation, during the limited tour stops we were required to remain on the designated paths. The rule of carrying out all of our lunch wrappers and fruit peelings was strictly enforced to maintain this area as unspoiled as possible.

The park visitor center had a dramatic display of all the local birds and information panels about their migration routes.

We recommend this trip as a “must do” holiday for any active historian, naturalist or photographer because it was a step back into time where the pace of life is relaxed, every day is different and there is a huge variety of animals, birds and plants to be enjoyed.

Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop 2010

The 2010 Doug Tarry Natural History Fund's Young Ornithologists' Workshop will be held at Long Point Bird Observatory near Port Rowan, Ontario, from Friday, July 30 to Sunday, August 8. Participants will receive hands-on field ornithology training, including bird banding, censusing, field identification, birding trips, preparing museum specimens, guest lectures, and more! Six of Canada's most promising ornithologists between the ages of 13-17 will be selected to attend, and will receive the Doug Tarry Bird Study Award to cover all on-site expenses. For those travelling long distances, special grants may also be available to help offset air travel costs. Applications are due **April 30, 2010**. For more information and an application form, contact Bird Studies Canada's Landbird Programs Coordinator at lpbo@birdscanada.org, or visit the www.birdscanada.org/longpoint

Mid-winter Waterfowl Inventory, 2010

On January 10, 2010, 3 Willow Beach Field Naturalists members (John Geale, Elizabeth Kellogg and Roger Frost) participated in the annual Lake Ontario Mid-winter Waterfowl Inventory. These observers covered the Lake Ontario shoreline from Wicklow Beach to Wesleyville. In total, 5,416 birds of 13 species were counted.

Highlights were:

- 1 adult male Barrow's Goldeneye off Port Hope west beach
- 1 adult male Black Scoter off Port Hope west beach
- 1 adult male Hooded Merganser in Port Hope harbour.

- Roger Frost

Species List for WBFN section of MWWS

Canada Goose	2,231
American Black Duck	30
Black X Mallard	1
Mallard	952
Redhead	12
Greater Scaup	1,168
Black Scoter	1
Long-tailed Duck	19
Bufflehead	34
Common Goldeneye	812
Barrows's Goldeneye	1
Hooded Merganser	1
Common Merganser	32
Red-breasted Merganser	45
unidentified duck	76
unidentified merganser	1

RECENT SIGHTINGS

compiled by Roger Frost

Snow Goose	Jan. 4	1	Lakeshore Rd. nr. Clarke/Hope Boundary	PB
Redhead	Jan. 14	5	Port Hope yacht basin	EK, RF
King Eider	Jan. 31	1	Presqu'ile PP	LF, Ontbirds
Harlequin Duck	Nov. 26/09	1	Cobourg Harbour	AEW
	Jan. 14	1	Lucas Point, Cob.	SM
	Jan. 17	1	Cobourg Harbour	EK, RF
White-winged Scoter	Jan. 15	6	Cobourg Harbour	LW
Black Scoter	Jan. 25	1	Presqu'ile Bay	FH, Ontbirds
Long-tailed Duck	Jan. 4	1009	Cobourg Harbour	LW
Barrow's Goldeneye	Jan. 8-14, 26-31	1 m	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Hooded Merganser	Jan. 19	1	east beach, PH	EK
	Jan. 31	1	Molson St. @ fish ladder, PH	ERM
Common Merganser	Jan. 15	30	Cobourg Harbour	LW
Red-breasted Merganser	Jan. 11	47	Cobourg Harbour	LW
Ruddy Duck	Jan. 1	2	Presqu'ile Bay	FH, Ontbirds
	Jan. 20	1	Presqu'ile Bay	FH, Ontbirds
Wild Turkey	Jan. 8	40	Morrish Church Rd., PH Ward 2	PB
Great Blue Heron	Jan. 24	1	Lakeshore w. of Wesleyville	PB
Bald Eagle	Jan. 2	1	Lakeshore & Baulch Rd., PH Ward 2	PB
	Jan. 31	2	Roseneath Landing	DS
Northern Harrier	Dec. 8	1	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
Northern Goshawk	Jan. 10	1	Grafton area, along Hwy. 401	ERM
	Jan. 31	1	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
Red-shouldered Hawk	Jan. 7	1ad	Lakeport area	CEG
Rough-legged Hawk	Jan. 5	1	Lakeshore Rd., PH Ward 2	EK, RF
American Kestrel	Jan. 20	1	Hwy. 2 e. of Gage's Creek	NW
Merlin	Jan. 1	1	Laurie Lawson OEC, Telephone Rd., Hamilton Twp.	ERM
Killdeer	Jan. 10	1	Lucas Point, Cob.	EK
Thayer's Gull	Jan. 28	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG, RP
Iceland Gull	Jan. 14	1	west beach, PH	EK, RF
	Jan. 17	6	Cobourg Harbour	EK, RF
	Jan. 24	4	Cobourg Harbour - high count	CEG
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Jan. 10-28	1ad.	Cobourg Harbour	KN, CEG
	Jan. 13	2 ad.	Cobourg Harbour	KN, LW
	Jan. 29	1	Cobourg Harbour	RP
Glaucous Gull	Jan. 11	4	Cobourg Harbour	ERM
	Jan. 17	6	Gull Island, Presqu'ile PP	DSh
	Jan. 31	5	Cobourg Harbour - high count	CEG
Great Black-backed Gull	Jan. 23	32+	Cobourg Harbour	KN
Great Horned Owl	Dec. 24/09	1	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2, calling	LS
Snowy Owl	late Jan.	1-2	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Northern Hawk Owl	Jan. 15-31	1	Bailieboro (Peterborough County)	RP, mobs
Barred Owl	Jan. 9	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
	Jan. 10	1	Cobourg Conservation Area	KN
	Jan. 31	1	Roseneath Landing	PS
Belted Kingfisher	Jan. 21	1	Garden Hill	RG
	Jan. 23, 24	1	s. of Colborne	KB, JF
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Nov. 22/09	3	near Plainville	BB
	Jan. 1	1	Kennedy Rd., Camborne - feeder	BE-E
	Jan. 31	1	Roseneath Landing	DS
	all Jan.	1 f	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
Northern Flicker	Jan. 1	1	Kennedy Rd., Camborne - feeder	BE-E

Sightings - cont'd.

Northern Shrike	Jan. 6	1	Toronto Rd. s. of 401, PH	SW
	Jan. 7	1	Wicklow	CEG
	Jan. 20	1	Cobourg Creek @ Harden St.	OT
Blue Jay	Jan. 29	50+	Harwood Rd. nr. Turk Rd.	R&CH
American Crow	Jan. 8	100	Sylvan Glen Rd., PH Ward 2	ERM
	Jan. 16	250	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
Common Raven	Jan. 22	1	Colborne	OT
	Jan. 31	6	Roseneath Landing	DS
Horned Lark	Jan. 12	12	Lakeshore/Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	MB
Brown Creeper	Jan. 19	1	Thomas & Sherbourne St., PH	EK
Carolina Wren	Jan. 1	1	Centennial Dr., PH	ERM
Eastern Bluebird	Jan. 12	3	Alderville Black Oak Savanna	JMc
American Robin	Jan. 5	50	Kellogg Rd., PH Ward 2	EK, RF
Northern Mockingbird	all Jan.	1	Yeovil & Bramley, PH	JGo, mobs
	Jan. 8	1	Danforth Rd., Hamilton Twp.	MBi
Bohemian Waxwing	Nov. 4/09	9	Castleton	LB
	Jan. 11	22	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
	Jan. 28	22	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
	Jan. 31	111	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
	Jan. 31	100+	Roseneath Landing	DS
Eastern Towhee	Jan. 26, 27	1	Port Britain feeder	HW
Savannah Sparrow	Jan. 10	1	mouth of Gage's Creek, PH	MB, RP
Fox Sparrow	Jan. 27	1	s. of Baltimore	ABr
	all Jan.	1	6th Line, Hamilton Twp.	MAC
White-throated Sparrow	Jan. 28	2	Herbert Place, PH - feeder	JJ
White-crowned Sparrow	Jan. 5-12	1	s. of Colborne	JF, KB
Snow Bunting	Jan. 8	40	Welcome area, PH Ward 2	ERM
	Jan. 8	80-100	Hwy. 2 e. of Gage's Creek	MBi
	Jan. 10	~100	Little Rd., Hamilton Twp.	SW
	Jan. 12	30	Lakeshore/Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	MB
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Jan. 1-21	1	Presqu'île PP	FH, Ontbirds
Red-winged Blackbird	Jan. 21	4	Willow Beach Rd. s. of Railroad	RP
Rusty Blackbird	Jan. 21	14	Willow Beach Rd. s. of Railroad	RP
Purple Finch	Jan. 12	2	s. of Colborne	JF
American Goldfinch	Jan. 28	50	Durham St., PH - feeder	EK
Chipmunk	Dec. 6/09	1	Ontario St., Cob. - late date	AEW
Lamprey eel	Jan. 26	1	s. of Colborne, stranded on grass after flood	KB, AB

Observers: MB=Margaret Bain; MBi=Michael Biggar; BB=Barry Bird; LB=Larry Bird; AB=Arnaut Braat; ABr=Ann Brightman; KB=Kim Braat; PB=Paul Bridges; AB=Ann Brightman; MAC=Mary Anne Cooper; BE-E=Barbara Edwardes-Evans; JF=Jo Foster; LF=Lev Frid; RF=Roger Frost; JGe=John Geale; JGo=Jack Goering; RG=Ron Getz; CEG=Clive Goodwin; FH=Fred Helleiner; R&CH=Reese & Carol Hunt; JJ=Janette Johnston; EK=Elizabeth Kellogg; ERM=Ted McDonald; JMc=Janine McLeod; mobs=Many Observers; SM=Simone Merey; KN=Ken Niles; Ontbirds=OFO listserv; RP=Richard Pope; LS=Louise Schmidt; DSh=Don Shanahan; DS=Dave Shirley; PS=Pat Stocker; OT=Ossie Tee; HW=Harold Wakely; NEW=Norma Wallace; LW=Lori Wensley; SW=Susanne William; AEW=Audrey Wilson.

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