



## COMING EVENTS

● **Saturday, April 24, 2010 - Outing - Place:** Field under Cobourg water tower across from hospital (parking available at end of dead-end road beside Parts Source or across the road in the Wal-Mart lot).

**Destination meeting time:** 9:00am-11am

**Directions/Details:** Please arrive between 9am and 11am. Follow Elgin St. to Strathy Rd. (across from Northumberland Mall). Follow Strathy Rd. north. We will be cleaning up the area east of the road, south of the hospital.

● **Saturday, April 24, 2010 - Opening of Peter's Woods.** If you would like to help, contact Chris Drew, 905-342-2904, [drew@eagle.ca](mailto:drew@eagle.ca) or Petra Hartwig, 905-372-4301, [phartwig@cobourg.ca](mailto:phartwig@cobourg.ca)

● **Friday, April 30, 2010 - General Meeting** at Cobourg Library, 7:30 p.m.

Speaker: **Gavin Trevelyan**, Eastern Regional Coordinator of Tallgrass Ontario. Gavin will be talking about tallgrass prairies and savannas in the Rice Lake Plains. Topics covered in the presentation will include an overview of the unique ecology of tallgrass habitats, where some sites are in Northumberland County, what is being done to protect and improve them, and what bigger issues surround tallgrass habitat conservation across the province.

● **Thursday, May 6, 2010 - Outing - Place:** Grasslands north of Kendall.

**Destination meeting time:** 6:30 pm

**Directions:** Follow Highway 28 to County Rd. 9 (Ganaraska Rd.). Turn left (west) at Cty. Rd. 9 and follow to Mercer Rd. just before the town of Kendall. Turn right (North) on Mercer Rd. to Thertell Rd. Park at this intersection and walk from here.

**Details:** This will be a short 1.5hr evening outing in a grassland area that tends to be great for grassland birds such as upland sandpiper.

● **Thursday, May 13, 2010 - Outing - Place:** Presqu'ile Provincial Park

**Destination meeting time:** 6:30pm – 38 Bayshore Rd (Wilson cottage).

**Directions:** To get to Presqu'ile Provincial Park, exit Highway 401 on County Rd. 30/George St., follow south and turn right (west) on Main St. Follow Main St. west and turn south on Ontario St. Ontario St.

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

will head south then curve west at Lake Ontario. Follow to Lake St. and turn left on Lake St./Bayshore Rd.. Follow Bayshore past the gate (let attendant know you are going to a cottage if they stop you) and follow Bayshore Rd., keeping left past Paxton Dr. We will carpool from the cottage back into the park which will save some entrance fees. We will also return to the cottage for hot drinks and socializing afterwards. Please bring some money to chip in for park entrance fees (or a yearly permit if you have one).

**Details:** This outing will last approximately 1.5 hr. and will be either in the beach areas or on the boardwalk depending on what the group wants.

● **Thursday, May 20, 2010 - Outing - Place:** Port Hope west beach

**Destination meeting time:** 6:30pm

**Directions:** Turn south on John St. off Walton St. in downtown Port Hope. Follow John St. until it ends at Hayward and turn right (west) on Hayward. Follow Hayward past the Via rail station until it ends at Marsh St. Turn right (west) on Marsh St. and follow until parking lot at playground equipment.

**Details:** We will park at the playground and see if there are any shorebirds along the lakeshore and walk west along the beach looking for migrants and locally breeding birds for approximately 1.5hr.

● **Friday, May 28, 2010 – President’s Walk**

**Place:** Peter’s Woods Provincial Park

**Destination meeting time:** 7:00pm (NOTE TIME)

**Directions:** Follow County Road 45 north to County Rd. 29. Turn right (east) on Cty. Rd. 29 and follow to McDonald Rd. Follow McDonald Rd. south and turn left into the parking lot at the signed entrance to the Park.

**Details:** We will explore the woods along the trail on this ~1.5hr walk.

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40790538  
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSED TO  
BOX 421  
PORT HOPE, ON L1A 3Z3

**THE WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS**

<http://www.willowbeachfieldnaturalists.org>

Past Pres.	Michael Biggar .....	905-372-7407 .....	mbiggar.wbfn@gmail.com
President	Louise Schmidt .....	905-797-1059 .....	wingbeat@xplornet.com
1st Vice-pres.	Ben Walters .....	905-797-3351 .....	.benjaminwalters@trentu.ca
2nd Vice-pres.	Vacant		
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 May 2010 issue should be received by April 30, 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 May Curlew. Correspondence for WBFN should be addressed to: "The Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON L1A 3Z3."*

## TOO MANY GEESE?

by Clive E. Goodwin

As I am writing, the first large flights of migrant Canada Geese are arriving. The birds first appear out over Lake Ontario, their distant clamour from over the water announcing their approach long before they come into view. As they near land they often hesitate; the neat V's and long straggling lines reduced to motley tangles, until they either turn to follow the shoreline eastwards, or re-form to continue their resolute progress northwards.

The goose flight has always been one of the surest signs that spring has finally arrived, and always eagerly awaited. It seems to coincide with temperatures becoming finally established above freezing. And it's conspicuous. Not a lonely robin hopping around someone's lawn [one that likely wintered in some sheltered area nearby], but migrants in their hundreds and thousands, heading north to their distant breeding grounds in the boreal forests and on the tundra.

But not any more. Not that the flights fail to occur – if anything, there are more birds than ever – but the magic is gone, as the spring movement has become little more than a kind of postscript to the constant comings and goings of throngs of local birds. For geese seem to be everywhere. In late February we drove around the snowy fields of Hope and Hamilton Townships, areas that on that date were still in the grip of winter with a few patches of open water here and there, patches that should have been occupied by at the most an occasional Common Merganser or goldeneye, perhaps with a few ubiquitous Mallards in more recent years. Instead there were geese, and not just a few geese, but hundreds of geese, wherever some areas of open water could be found. The climax came in Cobourg Harbour, with geese lining the west shoreline, feeding on the lawns, and swimming everywhere in small groups and large

flotillas. There must have been well over a thousand, but by then we were too tired of geese to even bother trying to count them.

Historically Canada Geese were not residents of southern Ontario: indeed, Macoun, writing in 1909, doubted if they nested in Ontario at all; but by 1922 Taverner says that they breed across eastern Canada from the tree line south to 'the borders of settlement'. He also has an amusing forecast. After discussing the exceptional wariness of Canadas and their remote breeding grounds, he says "However .... [it] will probably decrease in proportion to the rate at which its breeding grounds are opened up". I'm not sure how he would regard our present situation!

So what happened? As usual, mankind tinkered with nature. I cannot find the precise details of this story anywhere so my rather hazy recollections will have to do. For many years the *maxima* race of Canada Goose [the 'Giant Canada Goose'], which once bred on the Great Plains, was thought to have been extirpated in the early 1900s. Then, in 1962, it was rediscovered. It was rediscovered in the strangest way, not as a few survivors hanging on in some remote wetland, but as a common bird in one of the cities in region! It turned out that the birds were residents, so they had escaped the usual waterfowl counts that occur on wintering grounds across the continent, and resident urban birds don't usually interest waterfowl biologists, so no one had realized that they were a wholly different population.

The non-migratory trait captured the interest of a number of people, including an individual in Toronto, who felt that a resident population of geese would be an excellent focus of interest for the city. I used to meet him occasionally on duck counts, and I can

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

recall thinking, naively, that it maybe was not a bad idea. That was probably the general sentiment, because in 1964 we had 64 newly transplanted Canada Geese on the January duck count - the first since its start in 1947. At first, very gradually, they increased; but ten years later there were 1788, and they had expanded east of Toronto, with 31 at Whitby. By 1984 just how bad an idea it really had been was clear: there were 4391, including 942 on the Whitby to Wesleyville route, which I had added in 1979 [I coordinated the effort in those days] to make the count more comprehensive.

The story now turns to Northumberland itself, as the goose juggernaut rolled inexorably eastwards. Our first large group here [excluding, of course, birds seen during migration periods] was of 600 birds at Garden Hill in December 1977. The recitation of ever-increasing numbers soon grows tiresome, but our CBC first totaled over 1000 in 1998, and by 2002 we were over 2000. Meanwhile the composite annual totals, rarely in double digits prior to 1978, have never been below 1000 since 1990, exceeded 17,000 in 2000, and reached over 27,000 in 2008, with last year's final figures not yet entered. Probably much of this would never have happened but for that fateful 64 in 1964.

I say 'probably' and 'much of this' because the numbers of goose species are now exploding everywhere, with the expanding colonies of Snow Geese, for example, destroying the tundra by overgrazing. The local Canadas do seem a mixed bunch, not the uniformly large, rather pale birds that - supposedly - characterize the *maxima* race. Perhaps some migrants have been attracted to the local hordes, and joined them to over winter, but we would hardly have today's numbers if the introduction had never occurred.

All this expansion seems to be due to the enormous increases continent-wide in corn acreages, to the detriment of pasture and

other land uses. Then, as Alan Wormington points out in a recent seasonal summary in *North American Birds*, today's 'no till' agriculture results in copious amounts of waste grain remaining on the fields over winter. So the geese, together with the local Mallard flocks, are exploiting this new source of winter food. They hardly need 'help'.

But help of a kind is exactly what they are getting locally, and because of it, Cobourg harbour has become the capital for the local goose flocks. This is not to say that the harbour didn't have its share of the expanding numbers all along. Numbers increased steadily to a high of 850 in 1999, with 900 the next year, and then from 2003 to 2009 top numbers ranged between 1000 and 1100, with this high count typically in early January, except in 2006, when the peak came in early February. Our peak count last winter was 1200, not much higher, but with such numbers the totals are rough estimates at best, and the difference was that we had four other counts of at least 1000, all between the beginning of January and the middle of February, when birds began to disperse inland to nest. The birds were spending much more time in the harbour than in former years.

Last year self-appointed 'guardians' appeared who were putting out buckets-full of cracked corn in order to 'help' the birds; claiming their legitimacy, I understand, under a program of 'Wildlife Guardians' run by one of the national conservation groups. I tried to find details of this program but failed: the nearest thing seemed to be an effort to encourage persons to make their gardens bird-friendly, and indeed it's hard to imagine a national organization proposing anything so ecologically unsound as random feeding of geese, or suggesting that wild birds need humans to 'help' them to survive! But the feeding is still continuing, even though most of the geese and Mallards have now dispersed to their nesting areas. Ironically, of all the birds

(Continued on page 5)

*(Continued from page 4)*

that occur in the County, these species are probably least in need of help of any kind.

But not everyone shares my jaundiced view of the local geese, and this localized feeding is unlikely to do much to goose numbers generally, so what's the harm if someone wants to feed them? Unfortunately, and unlike the bird feeding one might do in one's garden, or indeed the rather erratic small-scale feeding that has always occurred in the harbour, feeding on this scale can have many potentially unpleasant aspects.

For example, the droppings from such large numbers of birds, present for long periods of time, get into the waters of the harbour

and pollute them. This will in time change their chemical balance, which in turn will impact on the aquatic ecosystem. The resulting conditions can make it impossible for some aquatic species to survive there, and make it more difficult for the truly wild waterfowl that occur here normally in winter to survive. The feeding is not even good for the geese themselves, as it creates a semi-domesticated population that has largely lost its fear of man, and becomes dependent on handouts to survive, exacerbating the problem already occurring on the corn fields.

In fact, this whole sorry story illustrates well the need to avoid ill-considered tampering with wildlife.

### **Disease a Threat to Ontario Bats**

A lethal fungus that decimated the bat population in the Northeastern U.S. was discovered in Ontario last month. Brock Fenton, a biology professor at the University of Western Ontario and Canada's leading bat expert notes that there is currently no way of stopping this disease, which disturbs the bat's hibernation patterns. The bats awaken before the insects upon which they feed are available. The bats then starve to death. A widespread die-off of bats in the province is possible.

Source: Toronto Star, April 9/10 See: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/article/792484--bat-killer-moves-into-ontario>

*submitted by Don Davis*

### **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

Norma Broadbent, Belleville  
Richard Kettle, Port Hope  
Marlynne Warling, Cobourg  
Eric and Dorothy Winter, Cobourg  
Trish Whitney, Cobourg

## Fishers in Northumberland

by Ann Brightman

You've probably heard that fishers have been making a comeback in this area over the last several years. There have been a few sightings in Baltimore, for example, just a couple of miles north of where we live. We'd never seen a fisher ourselves, and didn't really expect to, but early one morning at the end of February, one turned up in our backyard. He (or she?) was after our suet cages and had taken up a comfy position in the fork of our silver maple tree, where he could easily reach the fat. He was dark, almost black, and very large with a long tail. We haven't seen him since, but considering we have a wooded valley behind our house, he probably isn't far away.

Fishers are carnivorous mammals and members of the weasel family. They can be found in mature coniferous forests across most of Canada and the northern US. They range in color from brown to nearly black and may be over a metre long from head to tail. They eat a variety of small mammals, including rabbits and squirrels. Despite their name, they don't eat fish; according to Environment Yukon, it's thought that "fisher" came from the word "fitch", which is Dutch for polecat.

Fishers are one of the few animals that

will kill and eat porcupines. They stalk these prickly animals in trees, sneaking down on them from above and going for the face, which is the only spot on a porcupine that has no quills. Fishers are also known to attack and kill domestic cats – another good reason for people to keep their kitties indoors.

Coveted for their sleek and beautiful pelts, fishers were severely decimated by over-trapping during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their populations were also negatively impacted by logging and habitat destruction. Thanks to more recent forest conservation and a reduction in trapping, the fisher has been making a comeback and is now ranked as secure (G5) by NatureServe.

When my parents first bought our house over 50 years ago, the surrounding landscape looked like a prairie. It had been used for grazing and was devoid of trees. Even the woods were still young and immature, except for a few small stands of old pines and maples that had escaped being cut. Since then, the woods have grown and filled out, even into the formerly bare fields across the valley, and trees cover our own property and those of our neighbors. So perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that we were visited by a fisher!

*Advance Notice:*

### **Northumberland Summer Bird Count Saturday, June 12 and Sunday, June 13, 2010**

Contact Roger Frost, 905-885-9615 or [ekrf@eagle.ca](mailto:ekrf@eagle.ca)  
for more information.

*On March 12, Mary Anne Cooper sent me an e-mail to report a few sightings. When asked whether it might appear in the Curlew, she expanded on the sightings to make it a the story of natural things around her property during the winter. The farm is on the 6th Line of Hamilton Township.*

## Winter at Coopercroft, 2009-2010

We had our first grackle and red-winged blackbird at the feeders yesterday, March 11. The fox sparrow is still here, as it has been since count week. The male red-bellied woodpecker remains a daily visitor, although I question that it is the same one that we have had in previous years: this one is dining on black oiled sunflower seeds, whereas in prior years the lad restricted his caloric intake to whole corn kernels which he picked off of the cob. We have had a huge number of goldfinches here since early January, approximately 200 at the feeders at one time. They are still steady visitors, but their numbers are thinning out. There are vast numbers of blue jays and mourning doves; probably where most of the food goes. Each day we have three cardinals, but on some days we see five. There have been lots of juncos, but far fewer than in previous years. Other daily visitors are numerous downy and hairy woodpeckers, along with white-breasted nuthatches. We have never had starlings in the winter before, but a few toughed it out this year. Most days we see or hear at least one pileated woodpecker. That boy can make quite a mess of a suet feeder. Starting February 24, we have heard a great horned owl calling in our woods most nights. I have noted a definite decline in the number of English/house sparrows. In addition to breeding in the barn in numbers in excess of a hundred, they take over all of the bird houses. With the lesser number of sparrows, last spring we had bluebirds and tree swallows in two of the boxes for the first time in years. The geese from the neighbouring pond returned yesterday. As to pigeons (any self respecting rural person leaves the word

"rock" from their title outside of count day), the number living in our barn is drastically down.

The honey bees are very active, as are other insects during the day and moths at night. Lots of cluster flies in the windows -- a sure sign of spring. We saw a butterfly or moth yesterday, but it flitted by so quickly I can only say it was very dark in colour. I noted that the cracked corn feeder was completely covered in foraging bees, presumably trying to get corn sugar, which means they need to be manually fed with pollen. Another sure sign of spring: skunk road kill, being dined on by a crow.

Ever since we adopted our eldest dog, now in her seventeenth year, from a shelter nine years ago, even the bravest squirrel avoided our feeders and stuck to the woods. Although Melody still cavorts like a pup, she has become bored by squirrels. Hence, we have had three visiting us from time to time this winter -- one grey and two black versions of the species. Alas, in our 25 years here, we have never seen red squirrels.

We have 36 feeders, which need servicing every second day. We mostly feed black oiled sunflower seed, with a few feeders of white millet or mixed seed, two with whole kernel corn, one with cracked corn. We actually have more feeders than that, but some are up by the vegetable garden and we don't use them in winter as we want to be able to see the birds from the windows. In addition to those 36, we have three suet feeders and two peanut. Suet consumption is way down this year. We order plain suet from Grafton

*(Continued on page 8)*

*(Continued from page 7)*

Co-Op by the case, and we still have one case left, which is odd. The peanut feeders are never very popular, but we keep them for those few who have discerning tastes. We buy approximately 40 / 25kg sacs of sun-flower seed from Grafton Co-Op yearly when it is on sale. Good thing we have a pick-up truck. We also have ten spikes in posts or dead trees on which we impale dry corn cobs. These are a favourite and have to be replaced daily.

Although we use other types, we find open, fly through feeders to be the best. They are easy to fill while wearing thick mitts, the birds seem to prefer them, and they dry out quickly if they get wet, making summer feed safely mould free. We discovered metal ones

at Co-Op which seem indestructible. Summer feeding is a joy as Ma and/or Pa bring the fledglings to the feeders to teach them how to feed. The woodpecker families are a special treat to watch taking a course on feeders 101.

The snow is melting quickly. While the south creek has been open for a long time, the north creek is still frozen over, but the water is raging under the ice. We noted higher than normal evidence of deer browse on small trees. I am guessing that was probably as we had snow in early December which turned to heavy rain making for deep slush which froze solid. I have been using spikes all winter to get to the barn and hence, sadly, have done very little hiking on the farm until recently --

## **Wallace Birdathon**

After a one year hiatus, the Wallace Birdathon is being revived.

What is a Birdathon? It is an event staged as a fundraiser by many naturalist organizations. In this case, someone is selected or volunteers to bird for 24 hours during the month of May. Pledges are collected at either a flat rate or an amount per bird species found. Roger Frost has offered to be the official birder. He will do his Birdathon in late May within Northumberland County. Pledges will be collected by John Geale, 905-342-3851, johngeale@yahoo.com. Charitable donation receipts will be issued for all donations.

Roger will send a report and species list to all donors. He typically finds about 140 species.

Norma and Charlie Wallace started the Wallace Birdathon about 25 years ago to support the WBFN wetland fund. This fund later became the Property Account. Over the years, the Wallace Birdathon has raised over \$20,000.

For the first time in 2010, funds raised by the Wallace Birdathon will go directly to the Northumberland Land Trust. Since the formation of Northumberland Land Trust, the WBFN property account has gradually been transferred to NLT as matching grants.

John Geale will be at the March and April meeting to accept pledges.

## Willow Beach Field Naturalists' Board & Appointments 2010

### Executive Board Officers

Past President .....	Michael Biggar .....	905-372-7407	mbiggar.wbfn@gmail.com
President .....	Louise Schmidt .....	905-797-1059	wingbeat@xplornet.com
1st Vice President .....	Ben Walters .....	905-797-3351	benjaminwalters@trentu.ca
2nd Vice President .....	vacant		
Secretary .....	Karen Drew .....	904-342-2904	drew@eagle.ca
Treasurer .....	Rae Waring .....	905-372-9350	waringrm@sympatico.ca
Directors .....	Audrey Wilson .....	905-372-3937	
.....	Bill Newell .....	905-352-3051	homework@eagle.ca
.....	John Geale .....	905-342-3851	johngeale@yahoo.com
.....	Petra Hartwig .....	905-372-4301	phartwig@cobourg.ca
.....	Gina Brouwer .....	905-373-5015	WBFN_gina@live.ca
.....	Bruce Parker .....	905-372-4911	buice@sympatico.ca

### Activity Coordinators

Bird Counts .....	Roger Frost .....	905-885-9615	ekrf@eagle.ca
Education .....	Bruce Parker .....	905-372-4911	buice@sympatico.ca
Meeting Coordinator .....	Deborah Panko .....	905-372-1974	bluebird@teksavvy.com
Outings .....	Ben Walters .....	905-797-3351	benjaminwalters@trentu.ca
Press .....	Tim & Jane Tottenham .....	905-885-2337	tottenham@vianet.ca
Ontario Nature Rep. ....	Carole Payne .....	905-885-6135	bookbind@cogeco.ca

### Committees and Appointments

Auditor .....	John Lillico .....	905-372-7099	
Cobourg Land Use .....	Clive Goodwin .....	905-372-1065	clivegoodwin@sympatico.ca
.....	Russell Lake .....	905-372-3636	russelllake@sympatico.ca
.....	Terry Stopps .....	905-372-1028	stopps@eagle.ca
Curlew Circulation .....	Barry Robinson .....	905-373-9262	jbarryrob@cogeco.ca
Membership List .....	Barry Robinson .....	905-373-9262	jbarryrob@cogeco.ca
.....	Margaret Robinson .....	905-373-9262	jbarryrob@cogeco.ca
Curlew Publication .....	Elizabeth Kellogg .....	905-885-9615	ekrf@eagle.ca
.....	Norma Wallace .....	905-885-5552	
Environmental Monitor .....	Ben Walters .....	905-797-3351	benjaminwalters@trentu.ca
Kawartha Highlands .....	Bob Short .....	905-885-1420	mb.short@sympatico.ca
Lone Pine Marsh .....	Marilyn Harris .....	905-349-3554	
.....	Bob Harris .....	905-349-3554	
Name Tag Committee .....	John Geale .....	905-342-3851	johngeale@yahoo.com
Peter's Woods .....	Chris Drew .....	905-342-2904	drew@eagle.ca
.....	Petra Hartwig .....	905-372-4301	phartwig@cobourg.ca
Meeting Raffle .....	Marguerite Short .....	905-885-1420	mb.short@sympatico.ca
Waterfront Trail .....	Margaret Bain .....	905-373-1202	mjcbain@sympatico.ca

**Northumberland Land Trust News - April 11, 2010**



*The Willow Beach Field Naturalists conceived the idea to form a land trust in 2004, and in 2005 The Northumberland Land Trust was founded as a not for profit charity working to preserve the natural, historical and cultural heritage of Northumberland County. Since then, the NLT is becoming a prominent land trusts in Ontario. The trust now holds four properties totaling 430 acres of select wetland, woodlot and farmland through conservation easement or fee simple ownership.*

*NLT appreciates the ongoing support of the WBFN for their generosity in helping the Northumberland Land Trust to establish itself over the last six years.*

*To continue this work the NLT is undertaking a membership drive for the month of April. All new memberships received will be entered into a draw with several draw prizes donated by the community. The draw will be held May 8<sup>th</sup>.*

*If you or anyone you know would like to become a member of the Northumberland Land Trust please complete the following application and forward it to the Northumberland Land Trust at Box 1153, Cobourg, ON, K9A 5A4 or phone 705-202-1273 or email [operations@northumberlandlandtrust.ca](mailto:operations@northumberlandlandtrust.ca).*

### ***Membership and Donor Application***

*The Northumberland Land Trust is a not for profit charity organization. We depend on the generosity of members and supporters to carry out our mission. We welcome new members and are grateful for donations of any amount. Individual memberships are only \$25.00 and \$40.00 for a family. Members are informed of hikes and current events. We issue tax receipts for all membership dues and donations. Please also indicate if you want to volunteer or you are considering a bequest, a donation of stock to avoid capital gains tax, or a land donation and we will meet with you to discuss.*

- |                                                              |                                                          |                                               |                                                               |                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25.00<br>Individual<br>Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40.00<br>Family<br>Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Donation<br>\$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact me<br>regarding<br>a bequest | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact me<br>regarding a<br>stock donation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer on a committee            | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer for land stewardship  | <input type="checkbox"/> Donate Land          |                                                               |                                                                      |

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

*Make cheques payable to the Northumberland Land Trust, Box 1153, Cobourg, ON, K9A5A4*

## Two More Notes from Northumberland Land Trust

●A Migratory Bird Work Shop and guided Migratory Bird Hike will be held on May 8<sup>th</sup>. For more information please contact Ashley Wilson at 613-570-0741 or email [operations@northumberlandlandtrust.ca](mailto:operations@northumberlandlandtrust.ca).

●The Northumberland Land Trust requires assistance in the areas of governance, marketing, fundraising, and stewardship. A Secretary to record minutes at monthly board meetings is also needed. Please contact President George Gordon at 705-202-1273 or [operations@northumberlandlandtrust.ca](mailto:operations@northumberlandlandtrust.ca) to volunteer or provide a referral.

## Upcoming Events of our Neighbours

●*Presqu'ile Provincial Park:*

May 22 and 23- Warblers and Whimbrels weekend

View the elusive Whimbrels and colourful warblers as they migrate to their northern nesting grounds. Enjoy guided nature walks, bird banding and evening programs.

June 5-27 - Spring Interpretive Programs

●*Ganaraska Conservation*

May 9 - Mothers Day Wildflower Walk

Take in the fresh spring air and enjoy the spring flowers on a guided walk through the Ganaraska Forest. Afterwards, join us for hot tea. Don't forget your wildflower guides for this event which runs from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required at 905-797-2721.

Fees: \$10/family, \$5/adult, \$3/child, student or senior.

## Some Northumberland Blue Bird Nesting Box Results for 2009

Long time member **Maureen Riggs** reports fledging 43 bluebirds from her 40 box trail located in Northumberland County near the town of Brighton. Ants and cooler than normal weather were the two problems that she faced over the nesting season.

Another long time member **Elwood M Jones** fledged 27 bluebirds from his 65 boxes in Northumberland County. House Wrens and weather were listed as the presumed cause of nest failure. Elwood said it was the worst year for dead young in the boxes. This was probably the result of the colder weather we had which impacted some trails harder than others, especially in Eastern Ontario. He also had some bear problems. His bluebird totals have been much higher in other years.

*Source: Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society - 2010 Spring Newsletter: <http://oebs.ca/newsletters/2010spring.html>*

*(Submitted by Don Davis in memory of Hazel Bird)*

## **Where Fires Dance**

Story by Alison Clark and Eric Howe

Illustrations by Kiyo Mander

The Alderville First Nation Black Oak Savanna has published a beautifully illustrated children's book which tells the story of savanna.

Where Fires Dance places the readers in the centre of a black oak savanna grove in Ontario, where they travel from glacial time to early inhabitation of this land by humans and eventually to the present day. The reader comes to know of the unfortunate degradation and subsequent restoration of this globally imperiled ecosystem and its wild inhabitants. Through the eyes of Edward the Hairstreak butterfly and the rare and unique animal species he encounters, the beauty and interactions of the prairie and savanna grassland are revealed. This story serves as a reconnect with nature for children of all ages and cultures.

Proceeds from sales of this book are directed toward habitat improvement for species at risk at the Alderville First Nation Black Oak savanna. A copy of the book has been distributed to all of the elementary schools in the area. Copies can be ordered from [savannatours@eagle.ca](mailto:savannatours@eagle.ca). Cost is \$15.00

Publication of the book was made possible by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund.

## **Researcher Requests Current and Historic Red-Headed Woodpecker Sightings in Northumberland County**

Starting this spring and continuing for the next 3 years, I will be studying Red-headed Woodpeckers in the Northumberland and Peterborough Counties of central Ontario. And I can use all the help I can get to locate these beautiful and swiftly declining birds. If you have any sightings this year or know of areas with past sightings or are a landowner/know a landowner with appropriate habitat (old woodlots, fencerows, etc.) I would love to hear from you!

This study is part of my Ph.D. research and the findings will be shared directly with Nature Conservancy Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to push for conservation and recovery actions for this species in Ontario.

Help me discover why this bird is disappearing from Ontario and across its entire range!

If you have any sightings, landowner contacts or questions please contact me at:  
[barbara.frei@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:barbara.frei@mail.mcgill.ca)

Barbara Frei, M.Sc.  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Natural Resource Sciences  
McGill University"

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

*compiled by Roger Frost*

Snow Goose	Mar. 16	40	Presqu'ile PP	BL, Ontbirds
Cackling Goose	Mar. 15	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
	Mar. 16	1	Garden Hill Pond	RF
Canada Goose	Mar. 16	<b>4000-5000</b>	Presqu'ile PP - 2.5 hour fly-past.	BL, Ontbirds
Trumpeter Swan	Mar. 8	3	Garden Hill Pond	LS
Tundra Swan	Mar. 10	20	Presqu'ile Bay	FH, Ontbirds
	Mar. 16	6	Presqu'ile Bay	FH, Ontbirds
Wood Duck	Mar. 18	2	over condo, foot of Division St., Cob.	CEG
	Mar. 27	2 m	Chemtron Pond, Lake St., PH	SW
Gadwall	Mar. 24-26	2	Cobourg Harbour, high count	CEG
<b>Eurasian Wigeon</b>	Mar. 17	1	Presqu'ile Bay	FH, Ontbirds
American Wigeon	Mar. 26-27	3	Cobourg Harbour, high count	CEG
	Mar. 27	2 (pair)	Sculthorpe Marsh, PH	SW
Northern Shoveler	Mar. 21	1	Cty Rd. 9 nr. Gore's Landing	RF
Northern Pintail	Mar. 13	5	on lake off Cobourg Harbour	CEG
	Mar. 21	40	Cty. Rd. 9 nr. Gore's Landing	RF
Canvasback	Mar. 23	1m	Cobourg Harbour	KN
Redhead	Mar. 5	5	Rice Lake off Harwood	RF
Ring-necked Duck	Mar. 14	180	Sandy Bay, Rice Lake	RF
	Mar. 21	140	Sandy Bay, Rice Lake	RF
<b>Harlequin Duck</b>	Mar. 6 & 28	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
	Mar. 19	1	Cobourg Harbour	BLo
Common Goldeneye	Mar. 3	6	Ganaraska River @ Dale Rd., PH Ward 2	SW
	Mar. 14	300	Rice Lake off Harwood	RF
	Mar. 21	160	Rice Lake off Harwood	RF
<b>Barrow's Goldeneye</b>	Mar. 2	1	Port Hope west beach	RF, mobs
	Mar. 29	3	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Common Merganser	Mar. 21	110	Rice Lake off Harwood	RF
Hooded Merganser	Mar. 18	12	Calnan Rd.	CEG
	Mar. 25	6	Grafton	CEG
Ruddy Duck	Mar. 12-16	1	Cobourg Harbour	LW, CEG
	Mar. 20	1	Cobourg Harbour	CP
Ruffed Grouse	Mar. 26	2	Port Britain, PH Ward 2	PB
Wild Turkey	Mar. 7	60+	farm n. of Brighton, males displaying	MB
Red-throated Loon	Mar. 20	1	off Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 2	RF
	Mar. 28	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Common Loon	Apr. 1	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Horned Grebe	Mar. 27	20	off Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 2	RF
Red-necked Grebe	Mar. 16	45	off Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 2	RF
	Mar. 27	20	high count off Cobourg Harbour, quite a protracted movement	CEG
	Mar. 27	90	off Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 2	RF
	Mar. 29	150	off Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 2	RF
Great Blue Heron	Mar. 11	1	Lakeport	CEG
	Mar. 20	8	Campbellford	DS
	Mar. 25	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
	Mar. 25	1	Morrish Church Rd., PH Ward 2	PB
Turkey Vulture	Mar. 18	2	Bowmanton Rd., Hamilton Twp.	KD
	Mar. 18	1	1010 Ontario St., Cob.	AEW
Bald Eagle	Mar. 28	1	Harwood	RF, WBFN outing
Northern Harrier	Mar. 11	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
Cooper's Hawk	Mar. 22	1	Cold Springs	SW
Red-shouldered Hawk	Mar. 24	1	Lakeshore & Wesleyville Rd., PH Ward 2	MB

## Sightings - cont'd.

American Kestrel	Feb. 4	1	Cty. Rd. 9 w. of Cty. Rd. 18	LS
	Mar. 29	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
	Apr. 1	1	Huff Rd.	CEG
Merlin	Mar. 3, 21, Apr. 4	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
	Mar. 12, 27, 29	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
Peregrine Falcon	Apr. 1	1	Port Britain, PH Ward 2	MB
<b>Sandhill Crane</b>	Mar. 20	1 ad	Lakeshore & Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	MB, RP
	Mar. 20	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
	Mar. 29	1	over Wesleyville	PB
Killdeer	Mar. 11	1 (first)	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
	Mar. 13	1	Bowmanton Rd., Hamilton Twp.	SW
Wilson's Snipe	Mar. 21	1	Mail Rd. & Willow Beach Rd., PH Ward 2, winnowing	MB
American Woodcock	Mar. 29	8+	Wicklow Beach area	MB
	Mar. 31	1 displaying	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
Bonaparte's Gull	Mar. 27	1	off Candlewick Woods, PH Ward 2	RF
Iceland Gull	Mar. 1	3	Cobourg Harbour, high count	CEG
	Mar. 7	12	Cobourg Harbour	RF, EK, FH
	Apr. 2	1	Cobourg Harbour, last	CEG
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Mar. 7	1	Cobourg Harbour	RF, EK, FH
Glaucous Gull	Mar. 17	1	Cobourg Harbour, last	CEG
Great Horned Owl	Mar. 5	1	Hwy. 2 nr. Gage's Creek	KMc
Snowy Owl	Mar. 19, 21, 22	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Barred Owl	Mar. 9	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
	Mar. 11	1	Bowmanton Rd., Hamilton Twp.	KD
Northern Saw-whet Owl	Mar. 7	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
	Mar. 8	1	cedars, Albert St., Cob.	MB
Belted Kingfisher	Apr. 1	2	Lakeshore E. of Arthur	CEG
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Mar. 1-7 daily	1 f	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
	Mar. 1, 3	1	Sherbourne St., PH	A&AMcL
Northern Flicker	Mar. 16	1	Wesleyville, PH Ward 2	PB
Pileated Woodpecker	Mar. 1	1	Sherbourne St., PH	A&AMcL
Eastern Phoebe	Mar. 28	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
	Mar. 29	1	Harwood & Turk Rd.	CH
<b>Loggerhead Shrike</b>	Mar. 31	1	Brighton area	MR, Ontbirds
Northern Shrike	Feb. 21	1	Racetrack Rd. @ Noble Rd., Hamilton Twp	SW
	Feb. 24	1	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
	Mar. 10-17	1	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
	Mar. 20	1	Lakeshore Rd., PH Ward 2	RF
	Mar. 25	1	Morrish Church Rd., PH Ward 2	PB
American Crow	Feb. 10	300	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
Common Raven	Mar. 10	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
Tree Swallow	Mar. 20	9	Campbellford	DS
	Mar. 31	2	38 Bayshore, Presqu'ile	AEW
Brown Creeper	Mar. 8	2	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
	Mar. 10	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
<b>House Wren</b>	<b>Apr. 2</b>	1	Cobourg backyard	MB
Winter Wren	Mar. 24	1	Cobourg Harbour west headland	CEG
Carolina Wren	Mar. 28	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
Hermit Thrush	Mar. 7	1	Wesleyville, PH Ward 2	PB
Northern Mockingbird	Mar. 3	1	Bramley & Yeovil, PH	EK
	Mar. 27	1	Lucas Point, Cobourg	AEW
Bohemian Waxwing	Feb. 2	125	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
	Feb. 17	36	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2	LS
	Mar. 20	6	Willow Beach Rd.N., PH Ward 2	MB

## Sightings - cont'd.

American Tree Sparrow	Mar. 19-22	2	Cobourg feeders, only ones all winter	MB
	Mar. 19	4	Lucas Point, Cob. (not there earlier)	CEG
Fox Sparrow	Mar. 12	1	6th Line, Hamilton Twp.(since Dec.)	MAC
	Apr. 1	1	Cobourg feeders, singing	MB
White-throated Sparrow	Mar. 19	1	Lucas Point, Cob.	CEG
	Apr. 1	1	1010 Ontario St., Cob.	AEW
White-crowned Sparrow	Mar. 12	1	Wesleyville, PH Ward 2	PB
	Mar. 24	1	Deblaire St., PH	GMCD
Snow Bunting	Feb. 28	~500	Deer Park Rd. & Hwy. 2, PH Ward 2	SM, AT
Red-winged Blackbird	Mar. 10	30+	mixed flock Willow Beach Rd., PH Ward 2, singing	MB
Eastern Meadowlark	Mar. 11	1	Presqu'ile PP (early)	FH, Ontbirds
	Mar. 13	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
	Mar. 19, 30, 31	1	Vimy Ridge Rd., Hamilton Twp.	JGe
<b>Brewer's Blackbird</b>	Mar. 26, 27	1	1010 Ontario St., Cob.	AEW
Purple Finch	Mar. 26	1m	Cobourg backyard, singing	MB
Pine Siskin	Mar. 6-25	2	Bowmanton Rd., Hamilton Twp.	KD
House Sparrow	Mar. 10	1	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2 (first one all winter)	LS
<b>Mammals</b>				
Groundhog	Mar. 10	1	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2 (first)	LS
Chipmunk	Mar. 6	1	s. of Colborne	JF, KB
Brush Wolf	Mar. 17	1	Harwood Rd. nr. a chicken coop	RH, CH
<b>Butterflies</b>				
Compton's Tortoiseshell	Mar. 17	1	Jamieson Rd. & 7th, PH Ward 2 (first)	LS
Milbert's Tortoiseshell	Apr. 2	3	Choate Rd. garden, PH Ward 2	SM
Mourning Cloak	Mar. 16	1	GRCA property, Hwy. 28, PH	EB
	Apr. 2	1	Choate Rd. garden, PH Ward 2	SM

**Observers:** EB=Erich Bahr; MB=Margaret Bain; KB=Kim Braat; PB=Paul Bridges; MAC=Mary Anne Cooper; RC=Ron Cooper; GMCD=Geoff Dale; KD=Karen Drew; JF=Jo Foster; RF=Roger Frost; JGe=John Geale; CEG=Clive Goodwin; FH=Fred Helleiner; CH=Carol Hunt; RH=Reese Hunt; EK=Elizabeth Kellogg; ERM=Ted McDonald; KMCH=Kathryn McHolm; A&AMcL= Anita & Andy McLaughlan; SM=Simone Mery; BL=Bill Logan; mobs=Many Observers; KN=Ken Niles; Ontbirds=OFO listserv; CP=Carole Payne; RP=Richard Pope; MR=Michael Richardson; LS=Louise Schmidt; DS=Dave Shirley; AT=Anne Tesluk; LW=Lori Wensley; SW=Susanne Williams; AEW=Audrey Wilson.

*The Curlew* is published 8 times per year, January, February, March, April, May, September, October and November by the Willow Beach Field Naturalists.

Membership in WBFN includes a subscription to *The Curlew*.

Annual membership fees are:

Family - \$25    Single - \$23

Cheques for membership should be made out to Willow Beach Field Naturalists and sent to: The Treasurer, Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON, L1A 3Z3. A receipt for Income Tax purposes will be provided for your membership fee as well as for any donation. Willow Beach Field Naturalists is a Registered Charitable organization.



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

