



Vol LX No. 1

January 2015

## COMING EVENTS

● **Friday, January 30, 2015, 7:30 p.m.** - Cobourg Public Library, 200 Ontario St., Cobourg

Speaker: **Don McLeod**; Topic: **Mammal Tracks and Signs**, an illustrated presentation. Northumberland Wild animals in Ontario are rarely seen aside from a few notable exceptions – many mammals are active at night and frequently leave clues such as tracks, scat, kill sites and feeding evidence. Don will present a slide show with a focus on mammal species.



● **Sunday, February 14, 2015, 1:30 p.m.** – Cobourg Harbour Gull/Waterfowl Outing, Leader: **Richard Pope**. Meet at the Hibernia St. parking area at the west side of Cobourg Harbour. We will be looking for Arctic gulls, waterfowl and Snowy Owls. Dress warmly.

● **Friday, February 27, 2015, 7:00 p.m.** - Annual General Meeting

Speaker: **Caroline Schultz**, Executive Director of Ontario Nature; Topic: **From Our Backyards To the Boreal Forest and Beyond**. There will be a silent auction in support of WBFN education initiatives and refreshments before the meeting.

● **March 8, 2015 – Algonquin Park Outing**, Leader: **Katsu Sukuma**

Meet at 7 a.m. at carpool lot at Phillips Rd. & Hwy. 28 in Port Hope for a full day outing.

*More details of talks and outings will be in future issues of the Curlew and on the web site.,  
[www.willowbeachfieldnaturalists.org](http://www.willowbeachfieldnaturalists.org) and on Facebook*

## Welcome to New Members

Robert Fishlock. Port Hope  
Erkki and Margarete Korpijaakko,  
Cobourg

## Membership News

● WBFN extends condolences to the family of Shirley Bird, who died on December 11, 2014. Although she has not been an active member for some time, she was WBFN Secretary when Geoff Dale was President. She did a great deal of work, assisting Geoff with the application for Charitable status with Revenue Canada.

## Membership Renewals

This is a reminder that WBFN memberships are due annually on a calendar year basis. There is a membership renewal form included in this issue for your convenience. The renewal form is also available on the WBFN web site.

This year, there is a new option for dues payment. See Brian Maxwell's article on page 4 for instructions on how to make payments online with CanadaHelps.

*Vince Urbanski saw a wing-tagged Trumpeter Swan on Christmas Day at Bronte Harbour. Below is the information received about this bird.*

The Swan A25 is a male, hatched in 2007, banded at La Salle Park on 6 Jan 2008.

He was in Sturgeon Bay in Nov-Dec 2009; in 2010 in March he was at Bala; then he was not reported until 2013 when he was at Washago; in April 2014 he was at Mississauga.

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## THE WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS

<http://www.willowbeachfieldnaturalists.org>

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*The editor is most grateful to those who have contributed to this issue of the Curlew. Copy for the February 2015 issue should be received by February 1, 2015. Rare or interesting sightings should be reported to Elizabeth Kellogg and Roger Frost at 905-885-9615, [ekrf@eagle.ca](mailto:ekrf@eagle.ca), or Norma Wallace at 905-885-5552 for the February Curlew. Correspondence for WBFN should be addressed to: "The Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON L1A 3Z3."*

## WBFN President's Message

### January 2015

Welcome to 2015 – a year of change for the Willow Beach Field Naturalists' Club. There will be a change in Presidency in February at the AGM, and a few new faces. An introduction to CanadaHelps will be presented to make paying membership dues easier. The Advisory Committee for Natural Spaces, as an interested stakeholder, has been asked by the Town of Cobourg's Planning Department to comment and participate in the Tremaine Street Open Space Lands - Landscape Master Plan, and the New Year will begin with input into the marina development. As a birding club we are concerned in keeping the natural environment in our community for generations of migrating and local birds, not only for their survival but for our viewing pleasure. So, for you who are interested in adding your voice, please contact Glenn McGlashon at the Town of Cobourg Planning office ([gmcglashon@cobourg.ca](mailto:gmcglashon@cobourg.ca)).

The weather in Northumberland this fall and winter has already been challenging with high winds and fluctuating temperatures, varying from relatively warm to below freezing within days of each other. That must be hard on the birds in this area. I quite often will read articles in the Kingston Field Naturalists and right now they have an excellent article on attracting winter birds and bird feeding (by Sharon David and John McLaughlin). What is so poignant about this article is that it addresses the presence of artificial feeding stations and whether this disrupts the migratory urge of some birds leaving them victims of the cold weather they cannot handle. If you read this article you will learn that this is not the case. I encourage you to go online at: [www.kingstonfieldnaturalists.org/bluebill/](http://www.kingstonfieldnaturalists.org/bluebill/)

[feedingbirds](#) to read this article. It is very informative, with everything you need to know about building a shelter or feeders, providing water in the winter, and what seeds attract what birds – even baffles to discourage raccoons and squirrels.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the AGM coming up February 27<sup>th</sup>. This is our opportunity to build the education budget for both the environmental educational awards and the scholarship award. The money we take in from the Silent Auction gives us the opportunity to offer these awards. Won't you please consider making a donation in either an article for the Silent Auction or a donation designated to the education fund?

And, speaking about donations, the Board of Northumberland Stewardship selected the WBFN Club to receive a portion of their assets after dissolving their operations at the end of 2014. A cheque for \$5750 as a one-time contribution was received from the Board Chair, Bryan Baxter, with the stipulation we use the money for our programming. The budget for our guest speakers for the 2015-2016 year is in a healthy state thanks to the kind and generous offer from the Northumberland Stewardship. We are sorry, however, that the Stewardship program has dissolved.

On behalf of the Executive Board, we wish you a healthy and prosperous 2015, and look forward to offering you great content in our *Curlew*, and representation in our communities.

*Petra Hartwig, President*

## Notes from the Vice-President

In early December, several interested club members met with John Draper, of Cobourg Internet, and our webmaster, Bruce Parker, to get an overview of our new “Content Managed Site”. We’re very pleased to announce that the new website is up and running, and designed to function well on multiple device types (e.g. phones, tablets, etc.). Have a look, and let us know what you think. As Bruce steps back from his duties, there will be opportunities for club members to get more involved in its upkeep; let us know if you’d be interested in working on the web site.

Have you looked at our Facebook page yet? The title is “Willow Beach Field Naturalists”, and there is a link from our web site. Please have a peek – it’s up and running, and we slowly are gaining more members (21 as of tonight). We’d like to invite all WBFN Facebook users to request to become members of this group. I’m hoping that this will turn out to be a great way to share pictures of outings, recent sightings, and events of common interest. And, if we show enough interesting and current posts, this should help us recruit some new members.

We are pleased to announce that WBFN is now set up with Canada Helps, a non-profit which provides online fundraising tools to other charities. So, if you wish to make an online donation to the club, you now can - simply go to [www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org), enter *Willow Beach* in the charity search box, and follow the prompts. Payment can be made with credit or debit cards; at this point we do not accept Paypal. A charitable donation receipt will be emailed to you on completion of

the transaction.

Should you wish to pay your membership dues in this matter, click on the arrow to the right of “01 General Donation”, and you will see a menu which includes Single and Family memberships; simply select the one which you wish, and proceed. You will still need to submit a membership form to complete your membership renewal; this can be obtained from the website, and brought to the meeting.

In the near future, we will add a “Donate Now” box to our web site, and possibly to our Facebook page; this will utilize CanadaHelps software to process the payments, and should be more convenient than going to their web site.

Being January, some of us will have been making various resolutions at New Year’s. Your club’s Nominations Committee is hoping that doing a wee bit of volunteer work might be one of yours.

At our upcoming AGM on February 27th, we have several positions that will need to be filled in order to maintain our board and executive at the required levels. So far, we have had very limited positive response to our requests. If you think you could derive some personal satisfaction from getting more involved, please let us know. We’re all pretty busy, but with a good team a lot can be accomplished.

*Brian Maxwell  
Vice-President*

Reserve February 13-16, 2015 for the Great Backyard Bird Count. Additional information can be found at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>

# Christmas Bird Count Summaries

## Presqu'ile Christmas Bird Count

The 50th Presqu'ile Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 14 on a cloudy, mild day with above average temperatures. North end of the circle had about 3" of snow but the remainder was snow free. 29 participants located 13,557 birds, slightly below the 20 year average of 16,000 mainly due to lower waterfowl numbers. However, 79 (plus 5 count week) species was higher than 20 year average of 75. A new bird for the count was a Lesser Black-backed Gull (the only other record was a count week bird in 1998) and a new bird seen in count week- a Turkey Vulture.

Record high birds (old record and year in brackets) were:

- Dark-eyed Junco - 659 (649 - 2013)
- White-breasted Nuthatch - 125 (105 - 1999)
- Pileated Woodpecker - 20 (14 - 2010) - Is this increase a result of Emerald Ash Borer that has recently been detected within the circle?
- Glaucous Gull - 8 (7 - 2008)
- Common Raven - 11 (7 - 2009 (this count

aided by a deer(?) carcass that attracted half the birds counted

- Snowy Owl (11 (10 - 2013) the second year in a row a big irruption is occurring

Other unusual birds for us:

- Lapland Longspur (1 count week) - 3rd record in last 20 years
- Fox Sparrow (1) - 3rd record in last 20 years
- Hermit Thrush (1) - 3rd record in last 20 years
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2) - 3rd record in last 20 years
- White-crowned Sparrow (1) - 4th record in last 20 years

Low Counts:

- European Starlings (328) lowest since 1996 (is anyone disappointed?)
- Wild Turkeys (5) lowest since 2000
- Common Redpolls (26) in the years they show up they have only once had a count under 60.

*David Bree - compiler  
Maureen Riggs*

## 2014 Port Hope-Cobourg Christmas Bird Count

The 2014 Port Hope-Cobourg Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 20. Forty-seven observers counted 19,581 birds of 77 species. Weather on count day was ideal, with bright sunny skies and light winds.

Ten species tied or exceeded their previous high counts:

- Red-throated Loon - 1
- Trumpeter Swan - 2
- Northern Pintail - 6
- Bald Eagle - 5
- Red-tailed Hawk - 74

- Snowy Owl - 4
- Common Raven - 10
- Carolina Wren - 2
- Winter Wren - 2
- American Goldfinch - 1,005

Three species were found in record low numbers:

- American Black Duck - 28
- American Crow - 650
- European Starling - 1,018

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

Other highlights included:

- Thayer’s Gull – 1
- Short-eared Owl – 1
- Hermit Thrush – 1
- Northern Mockingbird – 1
- American Pipit – 1
- Savannah Sparrow – 2

Other than Common Redpolls, winter finches were scarce.

- Pine Grosbeak – 1
- Purple Finch – 4
- Common Redpoll – 518
- Pine Siskin – 60
- Evening Grosbeak – 1

Two other species were recorded on count week only. These were Oregon Junco and Brown-headed Cowbird.

*Roger Frost, Compiler*

### Rice Lake Plains Christmas Bird Count, January 1, 2015

The second annual Rice Lake Plains Christmas Bird Count took place on Thursday, January 1, 2015. The temperature was steady at about -5°C all day, but complete overcast skies and winds up to 60 kph made bird finding very difficult.

Twenty-three observers and 8 feeder watchers counted 4,572 birds of 51 species. One other species, Eastern Screech Owl, was seen in count week. Most land bird species totals were one half to one third of last year’s count. Exceptions were Black-capped Chickadee (781), White-breasted Nuthatch (74) and Slate-colored Junco (741), which were all higher than last year’s counts. Unusually low counts were tallied of American Robin (1), Northern Shrike (1) and European Starling (84). Most parties did not see a single starling!

Other highlights of the count were:

- Turkey Vulture - 2 – seen by 2 separate parties
- Bald Eagle – 1
- Northern Harrier – 3
- Lesser Black-backed Gull – 1
- Glaucous Gull – 2
- Long-eared Owl – 1
- Winter Wren – 2
- Hermit Thrush – 1
- Common Grackle – 1
- Evening Grosbeak – 29

Finches were generally scarce with:

- Common Redpoll – 112
- Pine Siskin – 1
- American Goldfinch – 154

*Roger Frost  
Compiler*



Northumberland Land Trust

### Northumberland Land Trust Lecture Series #3

**Thursday, February 12, 2015**, Cobourg Community Centre, 750 D’Arcy St., Cobourg. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. for refreshments and the lecture starts at 7:30 p.m. No charge.

Speaker: **Susan Chan**; Topic: **Pollinators in Northumberland.**

Susan will introduce some of the native bees of Ontario through photographs and describe their fascinating behaviours and importance. She will describe how to create habitat for these bees in a variety of contexts and will discuss the role of neonicotinoid pesticides in the decline of bees and other pollinators.



## A Brief History of the Wallace Birdathon

Let me introduce myself. I am Norma Wallace, the proofreader of the Willow Beach Field Naturalists' *The Curlew*. (The Curlew, unlike other major publications still has a proofreader.)

Now that the rush and excitement of Christmas 2014 is behind us, I must tell you about an exciting long distance phone call I received on the day of the Port Hope-Cobourg Christmas Bird Count. The incoming voice said, "Hello, Norma. This is Brian Olsen."

The sound of this voice astounded me. As far as I knew, Brian was still living in Cairns, Australia and this is where he was calling from.

Brian used to live in Port Hope and then in Cobourg. He spent two terms as WBFN President, 1983-84 and 1987-88.

Each May, for years, he would be a participant in the Baillie Birdathon which raised money for Long Point Bird Observatory. 25% of funds raised would be returned to WBFN.

When Brian and family returned to Australia, he asked my husband and me if we

would take his place in the Baillie Birdathon the following year. This we did and enjoyed ourselves very much. We decided to keep doing the challenge, but with a slight change. This is when the Wallace Birdathon came into existence.

By this time, WBFN had a CRA Charitable Registration Number, which allowed the club to issue charitable donation receipts. Now, 100% of funds raised could be kept by WBFN. These funds were held in the Property Account.

When WBFN founded the Northumberland Land Trust, the funds were gradually transferred to NLT. Northumberland Land Trust, with my permission, adopted the Wallace Birdathon. Since I am unable to do a Birdathon any more, Roger Frost does the birding and I work the phones to raise donations.

Wallace Birdathon continues to raise funds for NLT, which they use to protect natural areas.

*Norma Wallace*

## The Very Hungry Caterpillar

A U of T prof is part of an international team of researchers fighting an invasive plant species known to Ontarians as dog-strangling vine. The rapidly spreading weed is typically controlled by uprooting it with machines or using chemical herbicides—"ineffective and costly" methods, says forestry professor Sandy Smith.

Smith and her team have spent years testing a natural control method: the *Hypena* caterpillar. Native to Ukraine, the *Hypena* eats dog-strangling vine and won't feed on native plants, which means its population rises and falls with the availability of the host plant.

The researchers recently oversaw the first field releases of *Hypena* caterpillars at several Ontario sites. Smith says that once established at the initial sites, *Hypena* moths will disperse to find new patches of the weed.

*This item originally appeared in U of T Magazine. It was condensed from a longer article published by U of T News and available at <http://news.utoronto.ca/hungry-caterpillar-u-t-researchers-enlist-tiny-ally-fight-against-invasive-plant-species>. Used by permission.*



## Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative Late Autumn Edition

The Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative (RLPJI) has been working together for 10 years on habitat conservation in Canada's easternmost prairie. The initiative is a multi-partner conservation and stewardship project of 10 partners: Alderville Black Oak Savanna, Gararaska Conservation, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Lone Pine Marsh Sanctuary, Lower Trent Conservation, Northumberland County, Northumberland Land Trust, Ontario Parks, Tallgrass Ontario, and the Willow Beach Field Naturalists. Their work is exemplified in their conservation and restoration projects, research, environmental education and outreach, and protection of the threatened tallgrass prairies and savannas ecosystems. From our partners:

The Alderville Black Oak Savanna (ABOS) represents the largest and most significant remnant of this rare ecological community in the Rice Lake Plains. To benefit species at-risk on the Rice Lake Plains, for ABOS there is an integration of ecological knowledge, geography, habitat improvement work, and social and cultural understandings. <http://www.alderillesavanna.ca/>.

Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), a private land conservation organization, focuses on land securement and long-term stewardship as direct protection of among the most significant ecological communities in North America. The Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> trail opening at Hazel Bird Nature Reserve was celebrated by RLPJI partners and community members. The nature reserve hosts a rich mix of forest, savannah, and grasslands that provides crucial habitat for grassland birds such as whip-poor-will, and for reptiles, including threatened eastern hog-nosed snake (NCC 2012). <http://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/>

Tallgrass Ontario coordinates work and resources by groups that wish to undertake conservation programs that would implement the Recovery Plan for Grassland Communities. The Recovery Plan (conserving and restoring this rare ecological community) lists hundreds of tallgrass and savanna species, many of which are identified as threatened, endangered or extirpated. <http://www.tallgrassontario.org/>

Black oak savannas are globally imperiled

and have a G2 (very rare) ranking order; provincially they are ranked as S1 (critically imperiled). Therefore, both tallgrass prairie and black oak savanna communities are considered to be among the most significant ecological communities in North America and in fact globally rare, some say even more so than the rainforests. As a result, many of the floral and faunal species which depend on these communities for their survival are considered rare or endangered (RLPJI 2014). <http://www.ricelakeplains.ca/>

The Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative is a wonderful example of inter-agency partnerships working to maintain a sustainable community. Thanks to all partners, volunteers and staff for all of their great work!

*Becky Lyon  
Outreach Coordinator  
Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative*

### **Upcoming 2015 Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative Happenings:**

●Jan. 25, 2015-Experimenting with Native Plants workshop featuring Amanda Newell with Element Ecological [www.elementecological.com](http://www.elementecological.com)  
Explore examples and methods of introducing or increasing native plants - from grasses and flowers to shrubs - in your outdoor spaces for diversity, conservation, aesthetics, and wildlife.  
Location and Time: Alderville Black Oak Savanna, 1:00pm-3:00pm. Contact: Please call 905-352-1008 to register

●Feb. 28, 2015-Owl Prowl: Beginning with a presentation, afterwards to set out to the field to call owls. Please bring a flashlight/headlamp, hiking shoes and dress for the weather.  
Location and Time: Alderville Black Oak Savanna @ 7:30pm. Contact: Please call 905-352-1008 to register



## RECENT SIGHTINGS

*compiled by Roger Frost*

Snow Goose (blue)	Nov.4-Dec. 20	1 ad	Cobourg Harbour	m.obs.
	Nov. 14	2	Cobourg Harbour	ERM
	Dec. 1	1 ad	ponds s. of Hannah Rd.	MB
Snow Goose (white)	Nov. 3-23	1 ad	Cobourg Harbour	KN, m.obs
Brant	Nov. 6-14	1	Bewdley	JGe, AK
Cackling Goose	Nov. 11	1	Garden Hill pond	EK, RF
	Nov. 14	1	Ganaraska River @ viaduct, PH	ERM
	Dec. 2	1	Cobourg Harbour	MB
Gadwall	Nov. 10	3	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Northern Shoveler	Nov. 2	1	Lake St. marsh, PH	EK, RF
Northern Pintail	Dec. 15	6 m	Cobourg Harbour	KN
Redhead	Nov. 23	<b>1400</b>	Presqu'ile PP	RDM
Ring-necked Duck	Nov. 19	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Greater Scaup	Dec. 24	120	off Lake St., PH	ERM
Surf Scoter	Nov. 2	5	Off Lake St. marsh, PH	EK, RF
Black Scoter	Nov. 2	8	Off Lake St. marsh, PH	EK, RF
	Nov. 11	2	Chub Point	MB, CEG
Common Goldeneye	Dec. 1	265	Rice Lake off Bewdley	MB
Common Merganser	Nov. 9	30	Garden Hill pond	MB
Ruddy Duck	Nov. 7	8	Presqu'ile PP	RDM
	Nov. 22-26	1	Cobourg Harbour	KN
	Dec. 30	1imm.m.	Cobourg Harbour	RL, m.obs.
Red-throated Loon	Nov. 25	1 juv	Presqu'ile Bay	FH
Common Loon	Nov. 10	1	off Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Horned Grebe	Nov. 11	1	Chub Point	MB
Double-crested Cormorant	Nov. 28	1	Cobourg Harbour	MB
Great Blue Heron	Nov. 9	4	Garden Hill pond	MB
Turkey Vulture	Dec. 29	1	Presqu'ile, lighthouse	FH, Ontbirds
Red-shouldered Hawk	Nov. 2	8	Lake St. marsh, PH	EK, RF
Red-tailed Hawk	Nov. 2	34	Lake St. marsh, PH	EK, RF
Rough-legged Hawk	Nov. 1	2	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
	Nov. 22	3	Lakeshore west of Port Hope	SM, AT
	Jan. 2	1	King St.E./Workman Rd., Cob.	MB
Golden Eagle	Nov. 7	1ad	Lakeshore/Calnan Rd.	MB
American Kestrel	Dec. 26	1	Cty. Rd. 28 & Hannah Rd.	AEW
Peregrine Falcon	Nov. 1 & 4	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
American Coot	Nov. 10	3	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Sandhill Crane	Nov. 3	2	Lake St., Port Hope	GL
	Nov. 10	<b>34</b>	Alderville Black Oak Savanna	RB
	Nov. 23	1	Lakeshore Rd., Port Hope	EK, RF
Greater Yellowlegs	Nov. 16	2	Presqu'ile, Camp Office marsh	RDM
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<b>Nov. 6-14</b>	1	Presqu'ile PP	FH, Ontbirds
White-rumped Sandpiper	Nov. 16	1 juv	Presqu'ile, Gull Island	RDM
	Nov. 23	1 juv	Presqu'ile, Gull Island	RDM
Purple Sandpiper	Nov. 16	1 juv	Presqu'ile, Gull Island	RDM
	Nov. 23-Dec. 18	1	Presqu'ile, Gull Island	RDM
Dunlin	Nov. 11, 26	1	Cobourg Harbour	MB
Thayer's Gull	Dec. 20	1 imm	Cobourg Harbour	MB, MR
Glaucous Gull	Nov. 24	1	Cobourg Harbour	RP
	Jan. 1	1 imm	Flying north nr. Castleton	MB, MR

## Sightings - cont'd.

Great Horned Owl	Nov. 25	1	Jocelyn St., PH	ERM
Snowy Owl	Nov. 23-28	1	Cobourg Harbour	m.obs.
	Nov. 29	2	Cobourg Harbour	KN
	Dec. 1	1 imm	west pier, PH	ERM
	Dec. 2	3	Cobourg Harbour - high count	KN
	Dec. 4	1	Dickinson Rd., PH Ward 2	S&HH
	Dec. 6	1	Beaver Meadow & Bowmanton Rd.	KD
Barred Owl	Dec. 6	1	6th Line, Hamilton Twp.	JG
	Dec. 11, 12	1	Lakeshore Rd., Port Hope	MW
Short-eared Owl	Dec. 21	1	Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	RF
Northern Shrike	Nov. 11	1	Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	RF
	Dec. 6	1	King St. E. & Wilmott St., Cob.	JG
Blue-headed Vireo	<b>Nov. 1</b>	1	Presqu'ile, lighthouse	FH, Ontbirds
Carolina Wren	Nov. 23	1	Durham St., PH	EK, RF
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Dec. 21	1	Presqu'ile, Owen Point	RDM
<b>Townsend's Solitaire</b>	Nov. 23-Dec. 2	1	Hannah/Evertsen Rd. (7th record for North- umberland)	IR, m.obs.
Hermit Thrush	Nov. 23	1	College St., Cob.	RP
	Dec. 15	1	Albert St., Cob. At ground birdseed	MB
Northern Mockingbird	Nov. 22	1	Willow Beach & Lakeshore Rd.	SM, AT
American Pipit	Nov. 11	30	Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	RF
Snow Bunting	Nov. 9	150	Presqu'ile PP	RDM
American Tree Sparrow	Nov. 30	100	Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	RF
Chipping Sparrow	Nov. 4	1 imm	George St., Brighton, feeder	RDM
	Nov. 28	1	College St., Cob. feeders	RP
Clay-colored Sparrow	<b>Nov. 30</b>	1	Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	RF
Savannah Sparrow	Nov. 11	2	Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	RF
Fox Sparrow	Nov. 2	2	Lake St. marsh, PH	EK, RF
	Nov. 21	1	Brown St., Port Hope	CP
	Nov. 22-24	1	College St., Cob. feeders	RP
White-crowned Sparrow	Nov. 30	2	Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	RF
<b>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</b>	<b>Nov. 5</b>	1	Deblaire St., PH	GMCD
Red-winged Blackbird	Nov 7	<b>2000+</b>	Wesleyville Rd. s. of 401	KMcH, PB
Common Grackle	Dec. 15	1	College St., Cob. feeders	RP
Brown-headed Cowbird	Dec. 18	3	Dale Rd. 2. of Cty. Rd. 18	MB
	Dec. 28	1	Danforth Rd. feeder	MBi
Purple Finch	Dec. 6	3	Danforth Rd. feeder	MBi
White-winged Crossbill	Dec. 9	1	Albert St., Cob. Feeder, black sunflower	MB
Common Redpoll	Nov. 26	40	Cobourg Harbour west headland	KN
	Dec. 15	100+	Haskill Rd., PH Ward 2	ERM
	Dec. 26	230	Cty. Rd. 28 & Hannah Rd.	AEW
Hoary Redpoll	Dec. 28	1	Alderville area	EK, RF
Pine Siskin	Nov. 2-7	50	Albert St., Cob. feeders	MB
	Nov. 7	20+	Chub Point	SMcL
	Dec. 1-5	20	Albert St., Cob. feeders, last date	MB
	Dec. 5	31	Ontario St., Cob. feeder - max.	AEW
Evening Grosbeak	Dec. 7	7 (3m, 4f)	Bowmanton Rd. feeder	KD
<b>Pine Martin</b>	Oct. 18	1	s.e. of Centreton	AEW

Sightings - cont'd.

**Observers:** MB=Margaret Bain; MBi=Michael Biggar; RB=Rick Beaver; PB=Paul Bridges; GMCD=Geoff Dale; KD=Karen Drew; RF=Roger Frost; JGe=John Geale; CEG=Clive Goodwin; S&HH=Sandford & Helen Haskill; FH=Fred Helleiner; EK=Elizabeth Kellogg; AK=Andrea Kingsley; GL=Gary Little; RL=Rob Lonsberry; ERM=Ted McDonald; SMcL=Sherwood McLernon; KMcH=Kathryn McHolm; RDM=Doug McRae; SM=Simone Mery; KN=Ken Niles; Ontbirds=listserv of Ontario Field Ornithologists; CP=Carole Payne; RP=Richard Pope; IR=Iain Raynor; MR=Maureen Riggs; OT=Ossie Tee; AT=Anne Tesluk; MW=Mike Wallace; BW=Ben Walters; AEW=Audrey Wilson.

*Below is the summary of a research paper studying neonicotinoid seed treatment of soybeans. This paper was released in October 2014 by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. This paper was forwarded to the Editor by Clive Goodwin. Given that discussions about the use of this class of pesticide are underway at the provincial level, members should find this information useful.*

## **Benefits of Neonicotinoid Seed Treatments to Soybean Production**

### **SUMMARY**

The Biological and Economic Analysis Division (BEAD) analyzed the use of the nitroguanidine neonicotinoid seed treatments for insect control in United States soybean production. Imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, and clothianidin are applied to seeds at mostly downstream seed treating facilities prior to distribution to growers prior to planting. BEAD concludes that these seed treatments provide negligible overall benefits to soybean production in most situations. Published data indicate that in most cases there is no difference in soybean yield when soybean seed was treated with neonicotinoids versus not receiving any insect control treatment. Furthermore, neonicotinoid seed treatments as currently applied are only bioactive in soybean foliage for a period within the first 3-4 weeks of planting, which does not overlap with typical periods of activity for some target pests of concern. This information, along with current usage data, suggests that much of the existing usage on soybeans is prophylactic in nature. Multiple foliar insecticides are available in instances where pest pressure necessitates a pest management tactic and such foliar insecticides have been found to be as efficacious as neonicotinoid seed treatments for target pests. These alternatives to neonicotinoid seed treatments include foliar sprays of organophosphates ( acephate, chlorpyrifos ), synthetic pyrethroids (bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, gamma-cyhalothrin, lambda-cyhalothrin, deltamethrin, esfenvalerate, zetacypermethrin, permethrin), neonicotinoids (imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, clothianidin), and the recently registered sulfoxaflor, which works in a similar way to neonicotinoids. In most cases, these alternatives are comparable in cost to one another and to neonicotinoid seed treatments. The cost of application was considered in this comparison, although because these alternatives can be tank-mixed with other chemicals that are typically applied to soybeans, additional passes over a field would not be necessary. In comparison to the next best alternative pest control measures, neonicotinoid seed treatments likely provide \$0 in benefits to growers and at most \$6 per acre in benefits (i.e., a 0%-1.7% difference in net operating revenue). Some neonicotinoid seed treatment usage could provide an insurance benefit against sporadic and unpredictable pests, particularly in the southern United States. However, BEAD did not find information to support the real-world significance of this benefit, and overall evidence indicates that any such potential benefit is not likely to be large or widespread in the United States.

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