



The Blue Bill

Quarterly Journal of the Kingston Field Naturalists

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Celebrating our 60th Anniversary in 2009

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Send submissions to the Editor by the 15th of the month prior to the month of publication (i.e. by the 15th of February/May/August/November) to the address above, or to the editor via e-mail to: **alerwin@kos.net**. Please include contact phone number.

Submissions should be in MS Word format or in "plain text" format (PC or Macintosh) or unformatted in the body of an e-mail.

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President's Page

Chris Grooms

This is the second issue of the Blue Bill to be posted online on the KFN website. If you are reading this in hardcopy, I encourage you to start reading the Blue Bill electronically. Printing and mailing the Blue Bill is the Club's largest expense. The average annual volume consumes 34,000 sheets of paper. By going electronic, you will save the Club this cost and reduce environmental impact. Another benefit of switching is that you will be able to view the Blue Bill in colour. Please visit our website and try it out now: www.kingstonfieldnaturalists.org/bluebill.html.

If you choose the electronic-only option, each time a new issue is posted you will be sent an e-mail with a link that downloads the latest Blue Bill. To choose the electronic option, please send an e-mail requesting the electronic option Blue Bill to Membership Secretary John Critchley at sharjohn.critchley@sympatico.ca.

Sixty years ago, our naturalists' club was involved in chimney swift banding at Fleming Hall, Queen's University. The study helped us understand swift migration patterns and define the wintering range. A band put on a bird at Fleming Hall was recovered in the Peruvian Amazon (Weir, R.D.W.: *Birds of the Kingston Region* 2008, p. 235). Since then, swift numbers in Ontario have declined by 95% and it is now listed as a

species threatened with extinction. The Fleming chimney that once held up to 4,000 roosting birds had been screened off and many other nesting chimneys within the swift's breeding range were closed or lined with steel.

Last fall our Club began a swift conservation and research project. With funds from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, we built artificial nesting chimneys and fitted them with video cameras and recorders, temperature data loggers, swift call playback systems and carved model swifts to attract the attention of the birds. We partnered with Queen's University and placed four of the chimneys on the Craine and Fleming buildings. We convinced Queen's to remove the screening from the historic Fleming chimney roost. Our cameras recorded one swift spending one night in an artificial chimney and 100 swifts began to roost in the Fleming Chimney on May 31. Let's keep our fingers crossed and hope for a nesting pair this year.

Perhaps because of declining viewing opportunities, few naturalists now seem aware of the wonderful natural spectacle chimney swifts put on after sundown every evening. At a large roost, a flock will gather slowly, circling widely and noisily, over the course of nearly an hour. As darkness falls, a few individuals begin to make abortive

dives at the chimney, pulling out at the last second as if not wanting to be the first to bed. As soon as the first few birds finally take the plunge, the gyre suddenly begins to spiral down into the roost en masse like a giant snake down a drain or in pulses like puffs of smoke going back into the chimney. This

phenomenon can still be witnessed in Kingston at the chimney of the old Wilmot's Dairy, 28 Bath Road (now a cooking school and flea market). The best viewing spot is the parking lot just behind it, off Westdale Avenue. I highly recommend you visit just before sundown some evening this summer.

Spring Season March 1 - May 31 2009

Ron D. Weir

The timing of the waterfowl passage conformed to the 50-year average for the area as ice disappeared during March. The main movement of Canada Geese headed north to arctic regions on schedule in March, with a second wave in late April. The Brant flight was strong. By mid-April, the passage of passerine migrants seemed on track. During the second half of May, very heavy movement and groundings were obvious for flycatchers, vireos and warblers. Several species overshot their more southerly nesting ranges to end up in the Kingston area. A massive movement of shorebirds passed through during May 23-29 when large flocks of plovers, Whimbrel, dowitchers, Dunlin, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers appeared. A few Sanderlings, White-rumped Sandpipers and Ruddy Turnstones also moved through.

A comparison of arrival dates by family against the 50-60 year average dates for the species within a family for the Kingston area provides some interesting quantitative data. For the 8 regular species of flycatchers, arrival was 8 days early; the 6 vireo species were 6 days

early and the 31 warbler species were 4 days early. The passage of most songbirds occurred earlier than the 50-60 year average dates.

Rarities during the period included Western Grebe (2nd ever), Black Vulture, Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Great Egret, Little Blue Heron (4th ever in spring), Gyrfalcon, Sandhill Crane, Marbled Godwit, Lesser Black-backed Gull, White-eyed Vireo, Tufted Titmouse, Varied Thrush, Yellow-throated Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Lark Sparrow (5th ever in spring), Lark Bunting (3rd ever).

Record Early Arrivals

Alder Flycatcher: 03 May(1) P.E.Pt., KFN; was 04 May 01

Great-crested Flycatcher: 27 Apr (1) Kingston, KFN; was 28 Apr 90

Cape May Warbler: 29 Apr (1) P.E.Pt., DO; was 29 Apr 87

Black-throated Blue Warbler: 25 Apr (1) P.E.Pt., DO; was 26 Apr 90

American Redstart 29 Apr (1) Charleston L.P.P., NLB; was 29 Apr 90

Worm-eating Warbler: 25 Apr (1) Kingston, EB, AS ; was 06 May 81

Species Account

Red-throated Loon: 26 Apr (1) P.E.Pt, JHE, RDW.

Horned Grebe: 3 to 17 May Kingston, KFN. Scarce.

Red-necked Grebe: 17(1) & 27(1) Apr P.E.Pt., KFN. Only records.

Western Grebe: 23 May (1) P.E.Pt., DO, EM, MJB.

Great Egret: 31 Mar (1) Kingston, N. Snider; 9 May (1) & 26 May (2) Amherst I., CG, PJG; 16 May (1) Camden L., KFN.

Little Blue Heron: 13 May (1 imm) Kingston, EF. Photo.

Black Vulture: 23 Mar (1) Kingston, VPM, photo.

Greater White-fronted Goose: 17 Mar to 15 Apr (up to 5 at once) Kaiser X Road, Prince Edward, *fide* RTS.

Snow Goose: 8 Mar to 5 Apr, peaks 28 Mar (50) Kaiser X Road Prince Edward, KFN.

Cackling Goose: 28 Mar (1), 11 May (2) Kaiser X Road Prince Edward, *fide* RTS.

Brant 12 -31 May, peaks 24 May (1600), 12 May (1800) Kingston, JHE, BRowe.

Wood Duck: 26 May (1 female + 11 chicks) P.E.Pt. harbour, DO.

Northern Pintail: peaks 5 Apr (550), 8 Apr (500) P.E.Pt., KFN.

Green-winged Teal: peak 30 Apr (132) Kaiser X Road, RTS.

Ring-necked Duck: peaks 8 Mar (150), 5 to 9 Apr (160) P.E.Pt., KFN.

Greater Scaup: peak 8 Mar (18,000) P.E.Pt., JHE, RDW.

Harlequin Duck: 29 Apr (4) P.E.Pt., MB, DO., 3 males, 1 female.

White-winged Scoter: peak 20 Apr (500) P.E.Pt., RTS.

Long-tailed Duck: peak 29 Apr (10,000) P.E.Pt., RTS.

Osprey: 27 Mar onwards, 1st known hatch among 9 nests is 25 May 09.

Rough-legged Hawk peaks 12 Apr (80) Amherst I., MB, DO; 20 Apr (60) Amherst I., B Ripley.

Golden Eagle: 25 Apr (1) P.E.Pt., *fide* RTS.

Merlin: 7 Mar to 31 May (14 in all) Kingston, KFN.

Gyrfalcon: 7 to 14 Mar (1 white) Wolfe I., B Ewald *et al.*

Peregrine Falcon: 12 March to 31 May (11 in all) Kingston, KFN.

Sandhill Crane: 14 Mar to 3 May (15 in all) Kingston area, KFN.

Semipalmated Plover: peak 23 May (150) P.E.Pt., DO *et al.*

Whimbrel: peaks 24 May (60) Kingston DVW; 24 May (132) P.E.Pt., DO *et al.*

Marbled Godwit: 16 to 29 May (1), Amherst I., KFN, photo.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: peak 24 May (150) Kaiser X Road, JHE, RDW.

Dunlin: peak 24 May (2100) Kaiser X Road, JHE, RDW; 24 May (235) P.E.Pt., JHE, RDW.

Short-billed Dowitcher: peak 24 May (25) Amherst I., MS, AA.

Little Gull: 22 Apr (2) and 30 Apr (10) Kaiser X Road, RTS; 26 Apr (3 ad) P.E.Pt., JHE, RDW.

Bonaparte's Gull: peak 28 Apr (5000+) P.E.Pt., RTS.

Iceland Gull: 1 Mar (1) Amherst I., B. Ewald; 18 Apr (1) P.E.Pt., RTS.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 20 Apr (1) Kingston, DVW, DA.

Black-billed Cuckoo: from 15 May P.E.Pt, KFN.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: from 18 May (1) Opinicon, MC.

Snowy Owl: peak 13 Apr (21) Amherst I., DO, MB; last 26 May (1) Amherst I., PJG.

Boreal Owl: last wintering bird 1 Mar (1) Amherst I., BY *et al.*

Northern Saw-whet Owl: last wintering bird 20 Apr (1) Amherst I., B. Ripley.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 15 May (1) Howe I., SD; 16-31 May (2) P.E.Pt, KFN, RTS.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: 10 to 29 May (4 in all) P.E.Pt, KFN.

Loggerhead Shrike: 27 Mar onwards, 5 pairs on territory, Newburgh, KH.

Northern Shrike: last one 9 Apr (1) Kingston, KH.

White-eyed Vireo: 27 Apr (1), 10 (1), 12 (1), 22 May (1) P.E.Pt, DO.

Tufted Titmouse: 20 May (1) Opinicon road, J&BM.

Carolina Wren: 18 Mar (2) Kingston City, LM, MC; 5 Apr (1) Kingston east, VPM; 16-17 May (2) + nest with feathered young, Kingston, M. Benson.

Varied Thrush: 1-15 Mar (1 male) Napanee, S. Pitt.

Bohemian Waxwing regular in Kingston area to 8 Apr (200) Westport, NLB; 450+ birds through the season.

Cedar Waxwing large numbers throughout the period and widespread, peaks 8 Mar (350) & 21 May (500) Kingston, KFN.

Blue-winged Warbler: 3 to 31 May (10 in all) Kingston area, KFN.

Brewster's Warbler hybrid: 8 May onwards (7 in all), Kingston, KFN.

Yellow-throated Warbler: 4 May (1) Round L. near Kingston, *fide* MC.

Worm-eating Warbler: 25 Apr (1) Kingston, EB, AS; 29 Apr (1) P.E.Pt, DO, MB.

Connecticut Warbler: 24 May P.E.Pt., JHE, RDW.

Hooded Warbler: 17 to 21 May (3 in all) PEpt, KFN.

Yellow-breasted Chat 21 May (1) P.E.Pt., DO; 23 May (1) Chaffey's Lock, MC.

Summer Tanager: 10 May (1) P.E.Pt, DO.

Lark Sparrow: 25 Apr (1) P.E.Pt., DO, 5th spring ever.

Lark Bunting 27 May (1 male) Amherst I., BMD, photo, 3rd ever for all seasons.

Purple Finch: Moderate return flight with peak 30 Apr (75) P.E.Pt., DO.

White-winged Crossbill: 1 Mar (3) Wolfe I., J&BM; 15 Mar (13) Bedford Mills; 27 Apr (1) Kingston, KFN.

Common Redpoll: to 21 Apr (2) Bedford Mills, LN *et al.*

Hoary Redpoll: to 13 Mar (1) Kingston, MC.

Pine Siskin: 1 Mar to 23 May (1000s in all), abundant at feeders, Kingston area, KFN. Evidence of migrants arriving from the south during late Apr and early May.

Evening Grosbeak: 16 Apr (1) Bedford Mills, LN *et al.*, the lone sighting.

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Ospreys on Colonel By Lake ***Henk Wevers***

In early 2002, Jack Golden, our neighbour, erects a tall pole with a large wooden platform on top for ospreys to nest. It has a commanding view of Colonel By Lake and is surrounded by open space with tall willow trees nearby. The trees provide plenty of overhanging branches for the birds to perch. Jack has chosen the nesting site well: not long thereafter we see ospreys, also known as fish hawks, circle the platform. They take their time inspecting it, and a few days later sit contemplatively on the edge and in neighbouring trees. However, the birds move on, and the nest remains empty.

In early April 2003, a mound of large dry sticks piles up on the platform. The pieces are woven into a deep circular nest. Thinner twigs and branches line the nest and extend well over the edge. One day, not long after the building of the nest, Jack likes to see what is going on and inspects the nest using a ladder. He leaves the ladder leaning against the pole overnight, and a raccoon or other predator uses the opportunity to have dinner. The birds leave and may have moved elsewhere, or will remain single for the rest of the season.

After this failure there is no more human interference, and to make sure that predators cannot climb up the pole, Jack covers it with a large sheet of metal two metres from the ground. We hope the birds might give the site another

chance. But we have to wait until the next season; will they come back?

Late March 2004, the ice on the lake has melted, the shrubs and trees along the shore are a haze of light yellow-green, early migratory birds are back, hundreds of geese and ducks are feeding in the shallow waters of the bays and using the centre of the lake as a rest-stop on their way to more northerly breeding grounds. With the snow gone on the road, we can ride our bicycles again.

Early April, we notice two ospreys circling the nesting site; the birds are easily recognizable by their large wingspan, streamlined bodies and elegant flight. They soar high in the sky, contrasting sharply against the white clouds and blue background; their arrival buoys our spirits. The birds settle in and soon one of them sits patiently in her nest, her head barely noticeable at times. Her mate hunts or perches on a branch nearby.



The nest is about fifty metres from the road and we can easily observe the ospreys when we are out bicycling. We can also see them, with the aid of a telescope, four hundred metres across the bay, from our house. In early June one osprey is no longer in the nest but perches on the edge while her partner sits on a branch of the nearest tree. Have the eggs hatched? The incubation time is about 28 days. There might be chicks by now, but the nest is deep and it will take a while for any signs of little ones.

In early July three chicks frequently pop up above the rim of the nest. They are less than half the size of the adults. Sometimes they sit side by side on the edge of the nest. On a clear day their orange-brown plumage and white chest, white face and dark brown cheek patches stand out in the bright light. "Three chicks is a very good brood," says our friend, a field naturalist. "The lake must be healthy to support this large family."

Colonel By Lake, north of Kingston, is about two kilometres wide and six kilometres long; part of the Rideau Canal between Kingston and Ottawa. It was formed in 1832 at the completion of the canal project when the Cataraqui Creek, flowing through low-lying forests and farmland, drowned under the rising water held back by the dykes and locks at Kingston Mills. Before then, the creek rushed through a natural cut in the granite bedrock at Kingston Mills into the Cataraqui River, which flows into Lake Ontario at the confluence with the St. Lawrence River.

In spring, the falls are powerful, boiling with excess runoff that by-passes the locks. In summer and fall, water trickles over the smooth granite. The bulk of the water is then channelled through the four lock chambers, lowering boats 14 metres to the level of Lake Ontario in the direction of Kingston.

Where the creek runs below the lake surface, the water is six metres deep; near the shore it is shallow. Several swampy bays, rich in wildlife, surround Colonel By Lake. They are nurseries and hiding places for many species: turtles, frogs and fish. They are hunting grounds for predators such as heron, otter, raccoon, fisher and bald eagle. The Lake is low in contaminants and has a healthy population of large-mouth bass, pike, and perch and sunfish. North of Aragon Road, which runs parallel with the shore of the lake, are agricultural fields on rich glacial till; between the road and the lake are wetlands, forest, and shrub-land teeming with terrestrial wildlife and birds. The biological richness of the lake and its littoral are the reason the ospreys have chosen to breed there.

Over several years of observation, the habits of "our" ospreys become better-known. They need a large body of water, well stocked with fish, as part of their habitat. The parents are hunting constantly to feed the hungry brood and themselves. They frequently fly with a fish aligned with their body to lighten the drag. They glide in, and at the last moment elegantly swoop up to well above the nest when, with wings spread high above their body, they stall in mid-

air, then land effortlessly on the edge of the nest. While one partner eats the catch and feeds the young, the other rests on a tree branch. A little later, the hunt starts again. The bird flies south in the direction of the Cataraqui River, below the locks, where the river is broad and rimmed with marshes. We also see the birds flying northwest towards Collins Lake, east to the River Styx and to smaller, secluded, bays in Colonel By Lake. They may fly five to eight kilometres to their fishing grounds.

Osprey chicks hatch a week or so apart. Later on, the size difference is noticeable. The larger chick eats first, followed by the middle one and then the smallest. At first, the parent offers bits of fish to the barely recognizable chick whose head bobs up over the edge of the nest. It takes the morsels from the parent bird. The parent tears a large strip of flesh off the prey and eats it herself. After a few quick hungry bites, the large powerful bird changes its posture and becomes gentler, patiently feeding her chick.

When the chicks are growing rapidly, from mid-June to the mid-July, they eat about three to four kilograms of fish every day, according to the literature. After digestion, secretion is rather spectacular: the chick wiggles and manoeuvres its rear end over the edge of the nest, its head and body dipping, before ejecting a large plume of white liquid at a 45-degree angle, several metres into the air.

While the chicks grow, the nest needs maintenance. One day, an adult bird is

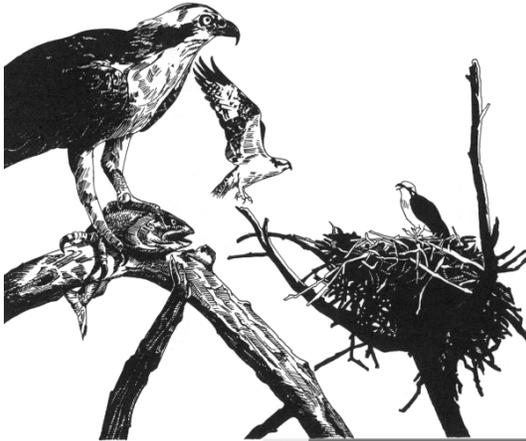
busy reinforcing the nest. It flies in with a large branch held in its beak. The branch is longer than its wingspan, perhaps two metres long. Its mate is eating a fish, seemingly oblivious to the hard work. The bird thrusts the stick at a slant in the side of the nest and re-arranges it several times until it is an integral part of the enlarged nest.

The chicks are only occasionally in view, often they stay low in the nest. Sometimes a grey-brown mottled wing appears from the centre of the nest, slanting up in the air. At the same time, a little head bobs up in another location. They seem to be fed all day and share whatever the parents are able to catch. Both adults hunt throughout the day, but early morning and late afternoon seem to be the busiest. At these peak feeding times the nesting site resembles a fish processing plant: fish arrives, is filleted on the spot, some is eaten by the adults, most goes to the hungry chicks, the digested fish goes overboard, a fresh catch arrives.

Later the feeding pattern changes: a parent ignores the hungry chick, instead encouraging it to pick at the prey. The chick mimics the thrusting of the head while pecking the fish; soon the chick is rewarded with a piece fed by the parent. Not long after, the chick tears off pieces by itself. While this evolves, the younger chick is still in the baby-feeding mode.

Several days later, an osprey flies in with a fish. While it lands on the nest, its mate flies off. Instead of eating the fish at the nest and sharing it with the chick, the adult flies to a nearby tree and eats

its prey. The fish hangs limp on the tree branch while the bird rips it apart. The chick seems disappointed and confused. Maybe it is time to figure out how to get food by itself?



In early July, the three young start spreading their wings, first hesitantly then more confidently. Later, during these exercises, the oldest chick becomes airborne for a second, vertically taking off from one side of the nest, and landing, somewhat unsure of itself, on the other side. A few days later, the juvenile flaps its wings and rises one... two... metres straight up; it hovers over the nest for several seconds, flapping its large wings energetically. During the following days, the oldest chick flies around and starts perching in the trees near the nest. Over the next week, the younger siblings take turns practising flight, and in mid-July all are able to fly.

In August, the five ospreys: mother, father, and three youngsters, are almost the same size. When one or more are on the nest, the brownish-black plumage of the young distinguishes them from the parents, but when they are flying or perching they look full-grown. The ospreys now often leave the nest from morning to late afternoon. In the

evening one or two birds occupy the nest, the others resting in nearby trees, a healthy looking family of five.

In early September, only one bird sits occasionally on the nest, mostly in the evening before sunset. Then, towards the middle of the month we no longer see them in our neighbourhood. The sun sets much earlier. At night, the temperature drops to the single digits. Trees change colour. While nature's clues are subtle, the finely-tuned senses of the ospreys give the signal to start exploring areas towards the south.

We miss the fish hawks, especially during the long winter when Colonel By Lake is covered by ice and snow. We imagine them hunting near the Atlantic coast, in the Carolinas or Florida; maybe "our" ospreys winter nearer, wherever there is open water and fish to catch.

During the winter we reminisce and speculate: "will the ospreys come back next spring?" So far, they have. Late March 2009, we saw the ospreys again circling the nest. A few days later one of the birds sat on the nest, huddled low, most likely incubating a clutch of eggs.

From 2004 until 2008, "our" ospreys brought up **fourteen** offspring! In the last two years two more nests have been established around the lake: one in a high dead fir tree on a bay, and one on a stump dating back to the drowning of the land in 1832, sticking about two metres out of the water just outside the navigational area. The three nests are about a kilometre apart. Colonel By Lake is indeed a welcoming habitat.

Kingston Teen Naturalists Field Trips March-May 2009

Purple Martin House Cleanout

March 14

Adam Rossiter

Six members of the Kingston Teen Naturalists joined Anne, Erwin, Lyn and Rose-Marie on an exciting and productive trip, whose purpose was to repair/inspect seven Purple Martin houses on the KFN property on Amherst Island. We enjoyed excellent weather. We took the 9:30 a.m. ferry, from which we saw many birds: Common Mergansers, Ring-billed Gulls and Canada Geese. We then took the South Shore Road to the KFN property, while looking at flocks of ducks (Common Goldeneyes, Mallards and Long-tailed Ducks). On the way to the KFN property, some of us saw an early Killdeer.

We stopped at the gate, unloaded toolboxes and necessary materials, and hiked along the lake to the first three nest boxes. Massive chunks of ice had been pushed up onto the shore, making for a fantastic sight. Farther out, where there was open water, we saw a huge raft of ducks. We estimated there were around a thousand birds in the raft. We identified several species: Common Goldeneyes, Long-tailed Ducks, Hooded Mergansers and Mallards.

Two of the nest boxes were wooden with twenty-six holes for the Purple Martin to enter, and one was made of aluminum plates. We found that the aluminum nest box was missing a panel,

so we carefully lowered it, and replaced the panel. We found many owl pellets around the nest boxes- a Snowy Owl had probably been sitting on the nest box. We collected several owl pellets, and opened them up and found small mammal bones- jawbones, skulls and teeth, vertebrae, ribs and legs.

We continued on to two more Purple Martin nest-boxes. Along the way we saw several Rough-legged Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks and Ravens. The field was filled with Meadow Vole tunnels/holes, and we found two vole corpses in the field. Next we righted the outhouse, which had fallen over, and continued on to two more nest-boxes, which were both in good condition. We looked inside two smaller Bluebird boxes and found that Tree Swallows had used them, so we cleaned them out. We recognized their nests by the feathers they include to cover the eggs. We walked across the field and saw a Snowy Owl sitting in the field. We saw several more hawks (both Rough-legged and Red-tailed), and continued on to the two last nest boxes. We also found some cow bones and a cow jaw.

A fly-by of low flying Canadian Air force CF-18s interrupted us as we lowered the last two nest-boxes, which were both missing two panels. We saw signs of possible habitation in these boxes. After repairing these nest-boxes, we had lunch, finding that we were well-sheltered from the cold wind. We walked back along the berm, spotting more of the birds we'd seen before. We

drove back along South Shore Road, stopping at several spots. We saw many of the birds we'd seen before, as well as American Robins and Mourning Doves. We also saw a second Snowy Owl, which was quite close to us. We returned to the ferry, ending an enjoyable and productive trip.

Teen Night Hike to Frontenac Provincial Park April 14

Elise Wallis

If you have ever heard a pond-full of spring peepers, you know what I'm talking about when I say they are the loudest things on four legs I have ever heard. But peepers weren't the only frogs we heard on our night hike. There were also chorus, green, wood and leopard frogs. Anne also tried an American toad call, but none answered, which probably meant they had already moved to another pond.

It was a pretty clear night, so we could see the constellations. There were the big and little dippers, Gemini and Orion, to name a few.

For all you accident-prone people out there, just a heads-up, be prepared for mud and those treacherous tree roots I'm sure you've become pretty familiar with. Mostly roots though. Believe me, there are a lot, and being in the dark does not help the uncoordinated. Even if you don't have that unfortunate falling problem, don't wear your new white most expensive clothing to a night hike unless you're prepared to get a little dirty, even Anne fell flat on her face.

If we ever have another night hike, I encourage you to go. Especially if you like frogs (in particular noisy frogs), staying up late or looking at constellations. This trip went to Frontenac Provincial Park with Dora Hunter. Thanks for an excellent evening Dora and thanks to our drivers Hugh Evans and Allison Board.

Teen Birdathon May 8

Anne Robertson

Five Teen Naturalists participated in a short Baillie birdathon on Friday May 8 from 4 to 9 p.m. The weather was fine until the end and enthusiasm built as the birdathon progressed. Beginning behind Invista and proceeding north to the Sydenham area, then along the Opinicon Lake Road to Queen's University Biological Station, we took in a variety of habitats and locations.

With much help from our bird spotters Paul Mackenzie, Erwin Batalla, Sandra Simmons, Floyd Connor and Mark Conboy, we were able to maximize the number of species. The total number of species was 59. One participant saw or heard 58 species. A first-time participant was very happy to record 48 species. Comments that made the effort worthwhile included "you know if you actually look there are lots of birds out there!" and "I had so much fun!"

Pledges totaled over \$850.00 and will be sent to BSC (Bird Studies Canada). From there, 90% will go to Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory and 25 % of that will come back to the KFN. Thank you all for your contributions.

Spring Round-up 2009

Ron D. Weir

The KFN's 52nd Spring Round-up took place from 1500h Saturday May 16 to 1500h Sunday May 17 2009. The weather on Saturday afternoon was overcast with occasional showers. The clouds cleared away at around 2130h and the temperature fell rapidly from 18°C to 10°C and winds changed from light SW to brisk W. By dawn, the temperature had fallen to 5°C and the west wind to 50 kph created rough water and ugly whitecaps on Lake Ontario. Clear cool conditions prevailed on Sunday with the temperature reaching only 11°C.

The final species tally was 189, below the 36-year (1973-2008) average of 199. Areas visited included Amherst Island, Amherstview Sewage Lagoons, Bath area and Parrott's Bay, Camden East including Camden Lake, Canoe Lake Road and area, Opinicon Road and area, Collins Bay and its watershed, Howe Island, Kingston City including Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Areas, Newburgh, Prince Edward Point, Wilton Creek, Morven, Hay Bay area, Waupoos peninsula.

One new species (Trumpeter Swan) was added to the cumulative total that stands at 288 species. For a complete tally of the Spring Round-ups from 1960-96, see Blue Bill 39 28-36 (1992). For 1992 to 2008, see Blue Bill 39 44-49 (1992), 40 125-131 (1993), 41 48-53 (1994), 42 63-70 (1995), 43 70-74 (1996), 44 60-66 (1997), 45 49-54 (1998), 46 81-89 (1999),

47 58-63 (2000), 48 52-59 (2001), 49 90-96 (2002), 50 40-44 (2003), 51 47-52 (2004), 52 42-48 (2005), 53 77-82 (2006), 55 37-42 (2008), 55 42-47 (2008).

Noteworthy finds are Great Egret, Trumpeter Swan, Surf Scoter, Peregrine Falcon, Marbled Godwit, Snowy Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren with nest, Northern Mockingbird, Blue-winged Warbler, Brewster's Hybrid Warbler Hooded Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Clay-coloured Sparrow, and Orchard Oriole. The shortage of shorebirds is noteworthy, the result of the early dates for the Round-up, which also account for the lower number of species.

Participants were invited to the home of Marian and Joel Ellis for potluck supper and the species tabulation. We all thank Marian and Joel for being great hosts.

Party #1: Alex Scott, Karen Scott

Party #2: Lynn Bell

Party #3: Faith Avis, Marg Benson, Hugh Evans

Party #4: Shirley and Gerald Paul

Party #5: Joel Ellis, Peter Good, Kathy Innes, Bud Rowe, Catherine Teolis, Ron Weir

Party #6: Sharon David

Party #7: Mark Conboy

Party #8: Patrick Blake, Hugues Bonin, Michael Evans, Steve Lukits, David Okines, Bruce Ripley, Elizabeth Smith, Terry Sprague

Totals in the following table have had known duplications removed; total individuals for a species may not equal

the sum of the contributions from each party.

SPECIES	PARTY								Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Common Loon	2	x	-	-	7	2	1	1	14
Pied-billed Grebe	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Horned Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Dbl-crstd Cormrnt	20	x	x	x	215	15	-	-	253
American Bittern	1	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	7
Great Blue Heron	2	x	x	-	11	2	1	-	18
Great Egret	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Green Heron	-	-	x	-	1	-	-	-	2
Bl-crwnd Nt-Heron	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Turkey Vulture	15	x	x	x	24	2	1	-	45
Canada Goose	100	x	x	x	625	3	x	-	730
Brant	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Mute Swan	-	x	-	-	4	-	-	-	5
Trumpeter Swan	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3
Wood Duck	-	x	-	-	2	1	1	-	5
Gadwall	20	-	x	-	6	-	-	-	27
American Wigeon	1	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	10
Amer Black Duck	2	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	5
Mallard	x	x	x	x	40	3	x	-	48
Blue-winged Teal	1	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	5
Northrn Shoveler	1	-	x	-	2	-	-	-	4
Northern Pintail	7	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	8
Grn-winged Teal	2	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	6
Rng-necked Duck	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Greater Scaup	20	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	24
Lesser Scaup	10	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	18
Surf Scoter	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	6
Wht-wngd Scoter	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	40	41
Long-tailed Duck	-	x	x	-	24	5	-	10	41
Bufflehead	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	6
Hooded Merganser	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Common Merganser	2	x	-	-	4	4	-	-	11
Rd-brstd Merganser	6	-	x	-	160	2	-	-	169
Virginia Rail	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4
Osprey	2	x	x	-	8	-	1	-	13
Northern Harrier	1	-	x	-	-	-	1	-	3

SPECIES	PARTY								
	1	-	x	-	1	-	2	-	5
Shrp-shinned Hawk	1	-	x	-	1	-	2	-	5
Red-shldrd Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Brd-winged Hawk	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Red-tailed Hawk	3	-	x	-	-	1	1	-	6
Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	x	-	1	-	-	-	2
American Kestrel	2	-	x	-	1	1	-	-	5
Merlin	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Peregrine Falcon	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Rng-necked Pheasnt	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4
Ruffed Grouse	1	x	-	-	4	-	1	1	8
Wild Turkey	-	x	-	-	6	1	1	-	9
Semipalm Plover	-	-	x	-	1	-	-	-	2
Killdeer	4	x	x	x	35	2	1	-	45
Lesser Yellowlegs	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Solitary Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Spotted Sandpiper	3	-	x	-	26	1	-	-	31
Upland Sandpiper	-	-	x	-	1	-	-	-	2
Marbled Godwit	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
Semipalm Sandpiper	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Least Sandpiper	2	-	x	-	69	-	-	-	72
Dunlin	2	-	x	-	29	-	-	-	32
Wilson's Snipe	1	-	-	-	12	-	1	-	14
American Woodcock	1	-	-	-	2	-	4	-	7
Wilson's Phalarope	2	-	x	-	27	-	-	-	30
Bonaparte's Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Ring-billed Gull	200	x	x	x	85	-	x	-	289
Herring Gull	6	x	-	x	16	2	-	-	26
Grt Blck-bckd Gull	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
Caspian Tern	7	x	x	-	4	-	-	-	13
Common Tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Black Tern	40	-	-	-	66	-	-	-	106
Rock Pigeon	20	x	x	x	10	-	1	-	24
Mourning Dove	100	x	x	x	16	15	1	-	135
Blck-billed Cuckoo	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
East. Screech-Owl	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Great Horned Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Snowy Owl	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
Barred Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Comm Nighthawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
Whip-poor-will	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	3
Chimney Swift	-	-	x	-	1	-	-	-	2

SPECIES	PARTY								
Ruby-thrtd Hmngbrd	-	-	x	-	-	2	1	4	8
Belted Kingfisher	3	x	x	-	-	-	1	-	6
Rd-headed Woodpckr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Red-bellied Woodpckr	-	-	x	-	-	2	1	-	4
Yellow-bellied Spckr	-	-	x	-	-	-	1	-	2
Downy Woodpecker	1	-	x	x	1	3	1	-	8
Hairy Woodpecker	1	-	x	-	3	1	1	-	7
Northern Flicker	2	x	x	x	2	1	1	-	9
Pileated Wdpckr	1	x	x	-	-	-	1	1	5
Eastrn Wood-Pewee	-	-	-	-	6	-	1	1	8
Yllw-belld Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Alder Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Least Flycatcher	1	-	x	-	15	-	1	-	18
Eastern Phoebe	2	x	x	-	1	1	1	-	7
Grt Crstd Flycatcher	10	x	x	-	16	1	1	1	31
Eastern Kingbird	15	x	x	x	32	2	1	-	53
Yellow-thrtd Vireo	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	5
Blue-headed Vireo	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3
Warbling Vireo	10	-	x	x	12	-	1	-	25
Philadelphia Vireo	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	10	13
Red-eyed Vireo	12	x	-	x	16	1	1	-	32
Blue Jay	4	x	x	x	44	20	1	-	72
American Crow	20	x	x	x	20	5	1	-	49
Common Raven	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Horned Lark	-	x	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Purple Martin	10	x	x	1	45	-	-	-	58
Tree Swallow	100	x	x	x	80	5	1	-	189
N Rgh-wngd Swallow	10	x	-	-	40	-	-	-	51
Bank Swallow	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
Cliff Swallow	10	x	x	-	75	-	-	-	87
Barn Swallow	50	x	x	x	50	12	1	-	116
Blck-cppd Chickadee	x	-	x	2	14	4	1	-	23
Red-brstd Nuthatch	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
White-brstd Nuthatch	1	-	x	-	1	2	1	-	6
Brown Creeper	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Carolina Wren	1	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	2
House Wren	1	x	x	x	55	2	1	-	62
Winter Wren	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Sedge Wren	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Marsh Wren	2	-	x	x	10	-	-	-	14
Ruby-crwnd Kinglet	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	4

SPECIES	PARTY								
Bl-gray Gnatcatcher	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	3	7
Eastern Bluebird	4	-	-	-	2	-	1	6	13
Veery	-	-	-	x	1	-	2	4	9
Gray-chkd Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Swainson's Thrush	-	-	x	x	1	-	-	1	4
Hermit Thrush	-	-		-	1	-	2	-	3
Wood Thrush	3	-	x	-	20	1	1	-	26
American Robin	100	x	x	x	400	15	1	-	519
Gray Catbird	6	x	x	x	63	-	1	-	73
Nor Mockingbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Brown Thrasher	1	x	x	x	20	2	1	-	27
European Starling	100	x	x	x	45	12	1	-	161
Cedar Waxwing	-	x	x	-	400	-	-	-	402
Bl-winged Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Gldn-wngd Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	3
(Brwstr's Warbler)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1)	-	(1)
Tennessee Warbler	1	-	x	-	5	-	-	12	19
Nashville Warbler	1	-	x	-	10	-	1	2	15
Northern Parula	-	-	-	x	2	-	1	5	9
Yellow Warbler	20	x	x	x	200	2	1	-	226
Chstnt-sded Warbler	-	-	x	-	34	-	1	-	37
Magnolia Warbler	-	-	-	-	22	-	1	-	23
Cape May Warbler	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4
Blck-thrtd Bl Warbler	-	-	-	-	6	-	1	-	7
Yellow-rmpd Warbler	6	x	x	x	16	-	1	-	26
Blk-thr Green Warbler	-	x	x	x	12	-	1	1	17
Blackburn Warbler	-	x	x	-	9	-	5	8	24
Pine Warbler	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3
Palm Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Bay-brstd Warbler	-	x	-	-	4	-	3	-	8
Blackpoll Warbler	3	-	-	-	6	-	1	2	12
Cerulean Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	8	10
Blck&wht Warbler	1	x	-	-	2	-	1	2	7
American Redstart	1	x	x	-	24	-	1	2	30
Ovenbird	5	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	11
Nor Waterthrush	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	3
Mourning Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Comm Yellowthroat	6	x	x	-	35	-	1	-	44
Hooded Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Wilson's Warbler	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4
Canada Warbler	-	x	-	-	2	-	4	-	7

SPECIES	PARTY								
Yllw-breasted Chat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Scarlet Tanager	-	-	-	x	4	-	1	-	6
Eastern Towhee	1	-	x	-	28	1	1	-	32
Chipping Sparrow	3	-	x	-	16	2	1	-	23
Clay-clrd Sparrow	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
Field Sparrow	1	-	-	-	11	-	1	-	13
Vesper Sparrow	2	-	-	x	-	-	1	-	4
Savannah Sparrow	3	-	x	-	25	1	1	-	31
Grshpr Sparrow	-	x	-	-	2	-	1	-	4
Song Sparrow	10	x	x	x	40	1	1	-	55
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Swamp Sparrow	2	-	x	2	35	-	1	-	41
Wht-thrtd Sparrow	-	-	-	-	6	-	1	-	7
Wht-crwnd Sparrow	-	-	x	x	4	1	6	-	13
Dark-eyed Junco	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Northern Cardinal	1	-	x	x	6	3	2	-	15
Rs-brstd Grosbeak	12	x	x	x	23	7	1	-	46
Indigo Bunting	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	7
Bobolink	10	-	x	x	75	4	3	-	94
Rd-wngd Blckbird	200	x	x	x	155	25	1	-	384
East Meadowlark	20	x	x	x	35	-	1	-	59
Rusty Blackbird	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Common Grackle	100	-	x	x	55	20	1	-	178
Brown-hd Cowbird	50	x	x	x	25	15	1	-	94
Orchard Oriole	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Baltimore Oriole	6	x	x	x	28	12	1	-	50
Purple Finch	-	-	x	-	-	-	2	-	3
House Finch	2	-	x	-	7	6	-	2	18
Pine Siskin	1	-	-	-	-	3	2	3	9
Amer Goldfinch	10	x	x	x	50	35	1	-	99
House Sparrow	2	-	x	x	10	4	1	-	19
Party Total	102	58	90	49	154	54	113	46	189
Participants	2	1	3	2	5	1	1	8	23



Birds also known as...

Mark Andrew Conboy

Have you seen these birds lately: Wild Irishman of Flycatchers, Mud Pumper or Pine Duck? I bet you have, whether you know it or not; these are the names of some of our more common species. They are better known as Great Crested Flycatcher, American Bittern and Pileated Woodpecker, respectively. And you thought you could name every bird! The reality of bird names is that they go beyond the ones listed in fieldguides. However, most birders faithfully adhere to the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) checklist of recommended bird names and don't realize that there is a long list of colourful names associated with our birds.

Adherence to the AOU names is strong, for good reason. Standardized names facilitate record-keeping, make it easy for birders to communicate and are important when species become enshrined in endangered species legislation. On the downside, the wealth of colloquial names once used by professional and amateur ornithologists is fading away and may soon be forgotten.

Why bother with such odd names as Winter Canary (Evening Grosbeak) and Gannet Striker (Caspian Tern)? After all, the AOU names of most species are more practical than a universe of colloquialisms that differ from region to region. Take the American Black Duck for example. In some parts of its range it has been called the Summer Black Duck,

in other parts the Winter Black Duck, depending on the time of year it is present. It is fun to learn some of the alternative bird names. Among my all-time favourites is Drill Face (Wilson's Snipe).

There are two more practical reasons to learn alternative bird names. First, when reading old ornithological literature the names one encounters can be confusing. Having knowledge of "long-lost" names will help you decipher that the species account for Red-backed Sandpiper is actually about Dunlin. Second, it is important to preserve and use old names because they reflect local experiences with birds. Birding in one form or another, from hunting to twitching, is part of human history and it is important to preserve culturally-distinct bird names just like other aspects of culture.

I have been compiling alternative and folk names of Canadian birds for several years. I have found at least one other name for every regularly-occurring Canadian bird species. For some species I've collected more than 50 different names from the literature. In this article I present a list of colloquial names for 15 common Kingston waterbird species. The lists of names for each species are (believe it or not) not exhaustive. New names invariably come to my attention on the internet, in the scientific literature or through old ornithological works

I haven't included references for each name, but have listed the references separately at the end of the article. Because I have no training in regional linguistics, I have not attempted to determine or record the place of origin of each name. The official English names I use for each species follows the most recent AOU checklist and supplements. I have not attempted to list changes in scientific names; that is the realm of systematists and outside my area of interest. Though many of our birds have names in other languages, I include only English names in my list. In future editions of the Blue Bill I will present articles on the alternative names of other groups of birds such as raptors and wood-warblers.

The bird names I have collected span the gamut from "official names" such as those previously used by the AOU (*i.e.* Short-billed Marsh Wren for Sedge Wren) to ones used by early ornithologists like Audubon (he called the Cape May Warbler the Carbonated Swamp-Warbler), to local folk names such as Tickle-Ass for Black-legged Kittiwake in Newfoundland. There are a few colloquial or alternative names that most birders seem to be familiar with such as Thunder Pumper for American Bittern, Whiskey Jack for Grey Jay, Sand Martin for Bank Swallow and Bluebill for Greater Scaup (hence the name of this journal). But some imaginative appellations are not widely known.

I have removed some names from my lists that are particularly offensive. There exist colloquial monikers that are meant to be insulting to a particular

cultural or racial group. A list of such names and the reasons for their origins can be found in McAtee (1956).

Common Loon (*Gavia immer*)

ammer goose, Arran hawk, big diver, big Hell-diver, big loon, big pullet, black-billed loon, blusterer, call-up-a-storm, cobble, dipsydoodle, diver, dumpy herdman, ember goose, ember, emmer-goose, German goose, great diver, greater loon, great northern diver, greatest speckled diver, greatest speckled loon, greenhead, guinea duck, Hell-diver, imber diver, inland loon, lesser loon, loo, loom, loon, noisy talker, ocean goose, polar diver, pond loon, rainbird, Riche-poom, ring-necked loon, roarer, surfer, salt-water loon, sea hearsman, sea-diver, sheep loon, spotted loo, submarine, toadlie, Tommy loo, walloon, war-loo, war-loon, weather signaller, wheelbarrow, white-throated loo.



Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

American dabchick, Carolina grebe, chicken duck, dabchick, Devil-diver, didapper, dipper, dive-dapper, diver,

dopchick, Gehenna diver, Hades plunger, Hell-diver, mud hen, pied-billed dabchick, Sheol plunger, small Hell-diver, thick-billed grebe, water chicken, water witch.

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

black shag, bull goose, cormorant, cormoroe, crow duck, duck, fish duck, lawyer, Farallon cormorant, Florida cormorant, Irish goose, McCormack, McCormick, Mexican goose, old horse, queen bird, Republican goose, shag, shaig, shill-bird, snakebird, soldier, St. Paul goose, Tuanton turkey, white-crested cormorant, white-tufted cormorant, Yamhill goose.

American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)

barrel-maker, big water hen, bill-gudgeon, bittern, bog hen, bog-bull, bog-pumper, bog-pumping hell-driver, bog-trotter, buncom, butor, butter-bird, butterbump, caulker, corker, Devil's pump, dunk-a-do, flying fox, fly-up-the-creek, fool fowl, full-pot, grass hen, great bittern, heath hen, hen, hit-log, Indian hen, Indian pullet, Indian stake-bird, Indiana hen, Jack Grindle, look-up, marsh hen, meadow hen, mire drum, mud hen, mud pump, mud pumper, night hen, oomptah, pile-driver, pine-knot, plumgudgeon, poke, pond guinea, pump bird, pumper, pump-thunder, punkatunk, quac, Rice Lake bittern, scoggin, sedge hen, shitepoke, shitipoke, sibirton, sky-gazer, slough pump, slough punk, slug-toot, snake-eater, spotted marsh hen, stake-driver, sun-gazer, thunder pumper, thunder-pump, water-belcher, weed hen.

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)

American great white heron, ars-nicker, Benson's turkey, big cranky, blue crane, blue gaulin, blue herring, blue John, butor, California heron, Colorado turkey, common blue crane, common crane, corr, crane, couac, Espiritu Santo heron, fish crane, Florida heron, forty gallons of soup, gandersnipe, gray crane, gray gaulin, great heron blue, great white heron, grey gaulin, grue, gum coat, hern, horse gannet, jackerne, long John, long Tom, lopann, major, Morgan, mud hen, noisy heron, northwestern coast heron, po job, po Joe, poor Joe, powder touch, preacher, red-shouldered heron, San Joie, San Lucas heron, the major, Treganza's heron, Ward's heron, water crane, white crane.

Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

American night-heron, Bancroft's night-heron, big water hen, fox bird, Indian hen, Indian pullet, marsh hen, meadow hen, mud hen, murrell hen, merle, night crane, night hawk, night hen, night heron, qua-bird, quawk, quok, squawk, swamp hen.



Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Aluetian Canada goose, Atlantic Canada goose, aw-onk, bay goose, big Canada, big goose, big grey brant, big grey goose, big honker, big Mexican goose, bisk-a-sish, black Brandt, black head, black-headed goose, blackie, blackleg, black-necked goose, brant, brillard, bullneck, bustard, cackler, cackling Canada goose, cackling goose, California goose, caller, calling goose, Canada brant, Canada hooker, Canadian goose, China goose, chornie goose, common Canada goose, common wild goose, cravat goose, crow goose, crybaby, dusky Canada goose, eastern Brandt, Eskimo goose, fall goose, flight goose, French goose, giant Canada goose, goose Brandt, greaser, greaser, great basin goose, grey goose, grey mud goose, grey, grey-bellied goose, gronker, honker goose, honker, hounds, hunker, hunter, husky goose, Hutchins' goose, Kennedy, Labrador goose, lesser Canada goose, little bustard, little Canada, little grey goose, little honker, little squeaking goose, little wavey, long-necked goose, Mershon goose, Mexican goose, mud goose, northern goose, old honker, prairie goose, reef goose, Richardson's Canada goose, Richardson's goose, ring-neck goose, ring-neck, ring-necked goose, short-necked goose, small goose, southern goose, swan goose, Taverner's Canada goose, trader, tundra goose, Vancouver Canada goose, wavey, west coast goose, western Canada goose, whistler, white cheek, white-cheeked goose, white-chin, wild goose, wild wavey, winter goose, yelper.

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

acorn duck, bridal duck, Carolina duck, Carolina wood duck, nuthatch, block, squealer, summer duck, swamp duck, swamp guinea, the bride, tree duck, wood wigeon, woody.

**Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*)**

American green-winged teal, butterball, common teal, English teal, Eurasian green-winged teal, European teal, fall duck, greased lightning, green-wing, green-winged duck, mud teal, partridge duck, red-headed teal, sparrow, summer duck, teal, wigeon, winter teal.

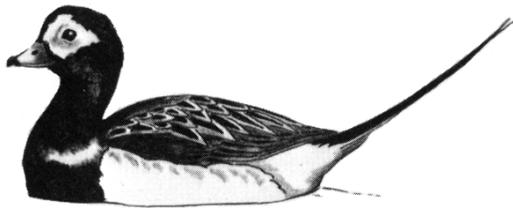
Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*)

American scaup duck, American scaup, bellarge, big bay bluebill, big blackhead, big bluebill, big fall duck, blackhead, black-neck, bluebill, bluebill duck, blue-billed wigeon, broadbill, bullhead, bullneck, butterball, butterball duck, call duck, coachin, cold-shin, coldshins, common scaup, drift fowl, dummy, fall duck, fishing duck, floating fowl, flock duck, flocking fowl, greater black-head, greater bluebill, greater broadbill, green-head, grey-back, lake bluebill, large

brownhead, muskeg duck, mussel-duck, raft duck, rook, scaup, scaup duck, shuffler, troop fowl, whistler, white-faced duck, wigeon, winter broadbill, wood duck.

Long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*)

aleck, alewife, butterfly coot, Callithumpian duck, calloo, cockawee, coween, granny, Hell's chicken, hound, Huldy, ice duck, Indian duck, jackowly, John Connolly, kla-how-ya, lightwood knot, long-tai, old Billy, old granny, old molly, old wife, oldsquaw, organ duck, pheasant-tailed duck, pigeon, pine-knot, pintail, quandy, scoldenore, scolder, scolder, singing duck, Siwash duck, Siwash, sou-easterly, southerly, south-southerly, souwester, squeaking duck, swallow-tailed duck, uncle Huldy, winter duck.



Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*)

bighead, black and white, buffalo-headed duck, buffle-headed duck, bumblebee coot, bumblebee dipper, bumblebee duck, butter duck, butter-back, butterball, butterball duck, butter-bowl, butter-box, cock dipper, dipper, dipper duck, diver, dopper, fall duck, fishing bird, hell-diver, horsefly dipper, ice duck, little black-and-white duck, little brown duck, marionette, pinto duck, pied duck, pocket dipper, robin dipper, Scotch dipper, Scotch duck, Scotch man, Scotch teal, shotbag, shoteater, skunkhead, sleepy diver,

spirit, spirit duck, spring duck, whistler, winter duck, wood duck, wool-head.

Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

American goldeneye, black duck, brass-eyed whistler, bullhead, bull-head, butterball duck, cobhead, cock dipper, conjuring duck, copper-head, cub-head, cur, diver, European goldeneye, garrot, goldeneyed duck, goldeye, golden-eye, great-head, ice duck, iron-head, jingler, pie, pie bird, pied duck, pie duck, pork duck, merry-wing, smoky pie, smoky pie-bird, spirit duck, tree duck, whiffler, whistle diver, whistle-duck, whistler, whistler duck, whistle-wing, whistle-wing duck, wigeon, winter duck, wood duck.

American Coot (*Fulica americana*)

bald-face coot, baldface, Barnegat turkey, black fish-duck, blue hen, blue hen, blue Pete, blue Peter, blue pond hen, blue pullet, Chinese mallard, common coot, coot, crow duck, crowbill duck, crowbill, crow-duck, fish duck, flusterer, fool hen, freshwater coot, grey pond hen, hell-diver, hen-bill, Indian hen, ivory-billed coot, louse bird, marsh guinea, marsh hen, meadow hen, moor hen, moor-head, mud chick, mud chicken, mud coot, mud duck, mud hen, pond crow, pond hen, poor-man's goose, prairie chicken, pull-doo, rail hen, republican, rice hen, sea hen, sea-crow, shuffler, spatterer, Tule chicken, Tule hen, water chicken, water fowl, water guinea, water hen, white bill, white-bellied mud hen, white-faced duck, white-seal coot.

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Kingston Field Naturalists Annual Report 2008-2009

Conservation *Chris Hargreaves*

The Conservation Committee has had an active year. Among our activities, we started a biological inventory of the Parrott's Bay Conservation Area; continued to monitor the environmental protection clauses that will be included in Kingston's new Official Plan; assessed the impact of the Endangered Species Act on the decision to locate a solar-powered, electricity-generating complex

north of Napanee, near a nesting area of the eastern Loggerhead Shrike; and negotiated with the developer to increase the setback of Cataraqui Mills subdivision from Little Cataraqui Creek.

Many thanks to Sharon Critchley, Elaine Farragher, Shirley French, Connie Gardiner, Chris Grooms, and Kurt Hennige, for their contributions to Conservation Committee projects over the past year.

If anybody would like to join the Conservation Committee so that we can take on more projects, please contact Chris Hargreaves.

Nature Reserves *Erwin Batalla*

George Vance, Peter Good, Hugh Evans and Mike Evans helped start the watering system on our Amherst Island property in April. The cattle went into the fields in early May. We benefitted from a wet season and only had to fill the well on a couple of occasions. Together with Larry McCurdy, we planted 20 willows along the bank of the berm surrounding the pond. A large proportion survived the winter. Because of the wet year, it was not possible to dry the pond effectively to generate habitat for migrating waterfowl in late summer. This spring, the Teens with Lynn Bell, Rose-Marie Burke and Anne Robertson cleaned and repaired the metal Purple Martin houses. During the winter, we negotiated a new ten-year contract with the drover. We increased the rent on our property and limited the size of the cattle herd in keeping with the capacity of the watering system.

The cleanup of the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary (HQS) took place in late April. More than a dozen volunteers cut away obstructions along the trails and replaced markers. In late June, we were informed that a minnow trap had been placed on the property resulting in the death of several turtles. Quick action by the staff at Frontenac Park allowed the local Conservation Officer to identify and lecture the culprit. No further action was taken at that time, but we are

looking at ways to protect the HQS from such activities.

This year, the following properties were monitored: Evans Wood by Anne, Erwin, Gary Bell, Brenda and Mike with Monte Hummel; The Lost Bay Nature Reserve by Bud Rowe, Cameron Smith and Brenda; Roziland Island by the Teens with Anne and Brenda; The Greenwood Wildlife Sanctuary by Barbara Heidenrich and Erwin.

Membership *John Critchley*

KFN has 382 paid adult memberships including 18 Life members and 9 Young Adult members. The adult membership is almost evenly split between individual and family memberships, increasing the actual membership to 565 voting members. There are also 53 junior and 15 teen memberships.

Each member's mailing label indicates the type of membership and the expiry date. The system of sending out personalized renewal notices is working well. Renewal notices are sent with the March Newsletter and reminders, if necessary, are sent with May and June newsletters. Most members renew their membership before the end of the fiscal/membership year and receive their Membership Cards with the May Newsletter. The renewal notices form part of the hardcopy audit trail necessary for tracking payment of membership fees and donations so it is important to return them.

John Critchley also prepares all mailing labels and thanks the volunteers Audrey

Brown and June Fitchett who fold and mail the newsletter, and Norma Graham who mails The Blue Bill and on occasion does double duty for the combined mailing of The Blue Bill and the newsletter.

The Blue Bill *Alexandra Simmons*

Blue Bill issues contained 169 pages. Communication from the Executive to the Membership consisted of the President's Page (Hugh Evans and Chris Grooms), Annual Reports and Financial Statements, a description of an Environmental Stewardship Workshop by Jackie Bartnik, and the existing Biological Inventory of Parrott's Bay CA, accompanied by a request from Chris Hargreaves for new observations. Helen Quilliam's *Notes on Natural History* continued to be reprinted in Volume 55. In celebration of the KFN's 60th Anniversary in 2009, Volume 56 contains reprints of club histories.

Local observations of birds were listed in Ron Weir's Seasonal, Roundup, Christmas Count and Mid-winter Waterfowl Survey Summaries. Kurt Hennige listed Odonate observations. Anne Roberston, Erwin Batalla, Bruce Ripley and Barry Robertson described animals and plants seen on the 2008 BioBlitz at Elbow Lake, and a comparison of observations in 10 BioBlitzes was contributed by Erwin.

We were fortunate to have Natural History articles from Terry Sprague, Mark Conboy and Matt Ellerbeck, reflecting their passion for Natural History Education, Birds and Marine

Mammals, and Snakes respectively. Crowder, Topping and Topping published an *Update to Plants of the Kingston Region* and NCCs Laura Mousseau warned us of the impact of invasive Garlic Mustard.

Field Trip reports are appreciated by members unable to attend. This year, Paul Mackenzie, Peter Good, Owen Weir, Rose-Marie Burke, Bud Rowe, Mark Conboy, Erwin Batalla and Carolyn Bonta took us to the usual hotspots of Amherst and Wolfe Islands and Presqu'île PP and to Ivy Lea for Bald Eagles, while a trip to Puzzle Lake PP and a photography trip to Little Catarqui Creek CA were new. Adam Rossiter, Phoebe Tietzen-Braun, Alison and Heather Zilstra, Andrew Sauve and Anne Robertson shared their enjoyment of Teen Naturalist trips for fossil hunting, canoeing, owl-banding, bird identification, bald eagle searching and astronomy.

Thank you to Norma Graham for handing out the Blue Bill at general Meetings and preparing and mailing the rest of them again this year.
Contributions to the Blue Bill from KFN Members are welcome.

Rambles

Anne Robertson

Rambles are slow walks to notice nature on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Times and locations vary, as does the expertise of the participants. Any natural history taxon may be observed and knowledge shared. There were twenty rambles between April 1,

2008 and March 31, 2009. Sixty-five people took part in at least one ramble.

More people participated this year: the average number was up from 11 last year to 13 this year with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 20. One ramble was cancelled due to rain, but participants turn up whatever the weather. Higher numbers attend the local and shorter (half-day) walks. Highly-attended walks were spread through the year.

This year we visited Crown land near Joyceville, parts of the Cataraqui Trail, Mile Square, Foley Mountain, Menzel Nature Reserve, Queen's University Biological Station property, the Rideau Trail, Bayview Bog, Parrott's Bay, Collins Creek, Butternut Creek, Cataraqui Cemetery, Bullen Road and some private properties.

Thanks to Erwin Batalla, and Karen Stinson who led rambles in my absence and the private property owners who welcomed us to their land. We continue to enjoy our observations, varied locations and shared knowledge.

Junior Naturalists *Anne Robertson*

The number of Junior Naturalists increased to 54 this year. We had 15 indoor meetings and 6 field trips. The number of field trip participants dropped. Plans are afoot to address this.

Topics this year included *Orthoptera*, Bird Colours and Patterns, Spore-bearing Plants, Amazing Size Facts, Wolves, Seeds above the Snow, Food Chains, Underwater Habitats, Warblers,

Animal Locomotion and Nature at Night. We had our traditional Seasonal Craft meeting, May Bird Walk and Wild Food Picnic. A special meeting topic was a booklet entitled *A Guide Book to Knowing Your Neighbours: Living in Harmony with Nature*. This booklet has been submitted to UNESCO as a Gift for Peace in the International Decade for Culture and Peace and Non-violence for Children of the World. If accepted, it could be distributed world-wide. Thanks to Diane Lawrence for enormous effort in developing this educational, fun and hands-on activity.

Field trips this year went to Parrott's Bay (in the rain), Helen Quilliam Sanctuary (Van Luven Point Trail), Bayview Bog (in the cold), Landon Bay (not enough snow to snowshoe), Camden Lake Wildlife Area and for our annual cleanup and wildflower walk to the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary.

Nine students volunteered to help with our indoor meetings. We are most grateful to them for making time in their busy schedules to plan and lead meeting activities. Without them, we would not be able to produce the program of hands-on activities. We thank Kyle Bender, Allison Board (occasional, second year), Kristin Coleman ('til Christmas), Brynlynn Gray, Suzanne Gray, Susan Ma, Allison Neill (second year), Allie Patrick, and George Stirrett-Wood. Shirley French has been involved with preparation of the displays that are an important part of every meeting. Diane Lawrence continues to be a source of inspiration and back up.

Diane was awarded the Richards Education Award from Ontario Nature. This award is presented to a volunteer who “helps people understand the natural world and is an enthusiastic supporter of conservation and environmental protection”. Diane has been part of the Junior Naturalists for 28 years and well deserves this award.

T-shirts and sweatshirts with the junior logo were sold at cost at Christmas - brown this year! Prizes for summer projects were awarded. The Roland Beschel prizes went to Michael Nicol and Amber Mouland. Nan Yeomans prizes for a Nature Journal were presented to Jacob Cifala and Theo Tietzen-Braun. The newly-established photo competition attracted several entries; prizes were given to Alanna Grogan, Sophie Grogan, Arjun Ivimey and Dashed Hutson.

We gave back to nature through our April Cleanup and our Christmas Collection supporting the CPAWS (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society) *Go Wild* Campaign “give a critter a place to roam”. Our \$80:00 donation could help support a Caribou and an Orca.

Attendance at the Leisure Show (September) and GreenUp festival (April) with activities for children attracted public attention and may have a bearing on the number of registrants. Enthusiasm for this program continues. We all learn a lot from volunteering and appreciate the opportunity.

Teen Naturalists *Anne Robertson*

Seventeen Teen Naturalists registered this year, an increase from 12 last year. We had 9 meetings/field trips and appreciate the adult role models and drivers for these trips. Diane Lawrence remains very supportive of this group.

We had our annual canoe trip in September. For this trip we monitored an island belonging to NCC (Nature Conservancy for Canada) using canoes from Camp Oconto. Nine Teens participated and learned what a monitoring trip involves. After a picnic lunch we were all able to enjoy a swim. In October we went to Prince Edward Point for owl banding. Twelve Teens participated and eight owls were banded. Ten Teens helped prepare frozen birds for freeze-drying at an indoor workshop in November. This was very much enjoyed and a repeat workshop has been requested. Our December “Hike in the Cold” trip emphasised what to wear and what to look for with six Teens. A long list of species or signs of species was made and no one was cold! We went to Otter Lake, (Robertson Cottage) and did enjoy some warmth at lunch time.

In January we went to the 1,000 Islands area with eight Teens and six adults to look for Bald Eagles. It was minus 18°C at the start but all the Teens were well dressed. We sighted only one Bald Eagle and saw and learned about the endangered Pitch Pine. We had lunch at St. Lawrence Islands National Park and then explored Hill Island locations and ended with a welcome hot chocolate

stop. In February six Teens visited the Queen's telescope for some Astronomy on a perfectly clear night, and in March six Teens helped clean and repair Purple Martin houses and did some birding on Amherst Island. In April ten Teens had an excellent night hike led by Dora Hunter in Frontenac Park. This was another good weather event with many amphibians calling and experience of walking in the woods at night.

The Baillie Birdathon was reduced to five hours on a Friday evening. Five Teens participated and our adult bird-spotters helped us to see 59 species. This was a learning experience for most Teens who had never done such intensive birding before. It was enjoyed by all and the pleasure they got from achieving so many good sightings was evident. The pledges were sent to Bird Studies Canada and from there 90% will go to Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory and 25% of this back to the KFN. This money is often used to provide the Teen participants with a new field guide, so what goes around comes around!

In the fall, Teen Naturalist Heather Zilstra accompanied Anne to a Youth Naturalist workshop in Ottawa put on by Nature Canada to discuss engaging youth in nature. We met other teens and leaders from across the country and hopefully contributed in a meaningful way to the strategic planning document produced.

Thanks are due to two Teens who volunteered to do the table centre pieces for the KFN 60th Anniversary dinner

meeting. The final Teen opportunity this year was the BioBlitz in June. This rewarding group provides us all with opportunities to practice skills and learn techniques useful for life-long nature activities. It is a privilege to be involved. See also Teen trip reports in Blue Bill Vol. 55 #3 and Vol. 56 #1 & 2

Field Trips

Kurt Hennige

During 2008-2009, 19 field trips were conducted. Places visited included Prince Edward Point, Helen Quilliam Sanctuary, Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area, Amherst Island, Napanee Plain, Thousand Islands, Puzzle Lake Provincial Park and Presqu'ile Provincial Park Brighton.

I would like to thank all the members who led field trips this year. Our Leaders were Erwin Batalla, Carolyn Bonta, Mark Conboy, Rose-Marie Burke, Harold Bridger, Peter Good, Chris Grooms, Kurt Hennige, Paul Mackenzie, Bruce Ripley, Bud Rowe, Owen Weir and Ron Weir.

May Bird Walks are open to the public. Four walks were conducted by KFN members along the Little Cataraqui Creek Valley Lands on the Rideau Trail on two Wednesdays in May, at 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Four more walks were conducted at the Lemoine Point Conservation Area on two other Wednesdays in May. Leaders included Erwin Batalla, Mark Conboy, Sharon David, Hugh Evans, Mike Evans, Chris Grooms, Kurt Hennige, Gerald Paul, Shirley Paul, Bud Rowe, Paul Mackenzie, Gary Ure. Thank you all.

KFN Field Trips March-June 2009

Amherst Island. Owl Prowl Mar. 28 ***Kurt Hennige***

This Saturday afternoon field trip to Amherst Island attracted KFN members from as far as Montreal and Stouffville. After carpooling, we had 9 cars and 25 members on the ferry. This might have been partly due to the pleasant weather with a sunny sky and temperature reaching 10°C.

On the first two stops on our drive across the Island, we found the first of 5 Snowy Owls and raptor activity was high with at least 10 Rough-legged Hawks of a total of 18, 6 Red-tailed Hawks of a total of 13, and 4 Northern Harriers of a total of 9. The warm temperature certainly had something to do with us finding several Garter Snakes and our first butterfly species of the year: two Mourning Cloaks; we also heard several Chorus Frogs.

Unfortunately, it probably encouraged the last wintering Saw-whet Owls to move north and our only owl sighting in the Owl Woods was of 5 Long-eared Owls. Birds heard in the woods included 1 Ring-necked Pheasant and 5 White-winged Crossbills. Since the Long-eareds did not co-operate, we left the Owl woods and continued our search at the east end of the Island, including the KFN property. Here we found 3 more Snowy Owls, one providing a great photo opportunity. Besides several Wilson Snipes and a few Tree Swallows, we found an early

Osprey occupying the platform at the KFN reserve.

As we traveled along the South Shore Road, waterfowl species included 1 Common Loon, 24 Buffleheads, 14 Common Goldeneye, 10 Long-tailed Ducks and 6 Red-breasted Mergansers. After returning from the Island at 6 p.m., half of the group continued in search of owls north of Bath. The only owl found was a calling Great Horned Owl. This slower-paced trip provided extra time for close looks and photographing of bird species and was appreciated by many participants.

Prince Edward Point May 3 ***Ron D. Weir***

Fifteen observers participated in this traditional field to Prince Edward Point in early May. The trip started before sunrise with clear sky, 4°C and no wind. It concluded in early afternoon under bright sun, 15°C and a light SW wind.

A total of 96 bird species was tallied including a number newly-arrived from the south, a few mammals (White-tailed Deer, Red Squirrel, Muskrat), and several spring plants in bloom (Spring Beauty, Dutchman's Breeches). Highlights were: Common Loon 6, Turkey Vulture 12, White-winged Scoter 15, Long-tailed Duck 600, Bufflehead 40, Red-breasted Merganser 150, Wild Turkey 6, Bonaparte's Gull 800 in breeding plumage resting in the water near the lighthouse, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, Great-crested Flycatcher

2, Blue-headed Vireo 4, Cliff Swallow 400 (at three nesting sites along the peninsula), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 3, Cedar Waxwing 30, Magnolia Warbler 1, Cape May Warbler 3, Yellow-rumped Warbler 40, Black-throated Green Warbler 5, Blackburnian Warbler 1 male, Palm Warbler 3, Black-and-white Warbler 6, Eastern Towhee 10, White-crowned Sparrow 4, Rose-breasted Grosbeak 6. Two broods of Canada Geese were seen, one pair with two golden-coloured chicks and another with five chicks.

The exterior clothing of participants was carefully inspected after exiting the various woodlots to ensure that we did not carry away any ticks. The tick has become more common at the Point and has necessitated some care by all who bird there.

Dragonfly Walk at HQS June 28 **Carol and Murray Seymour**

Five people joined Carol and Murray at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary for a day of dragonfly hunting. It started out hot and steamy and got hotter, but the enthusiasm of this small group of naturalists remained high. Checking for dragonflies along the roadside and wetlands on our way to the Greenwood Track we saw numerous *Odonata*, including Blue Dashers in various stages of development (teneral, juvenile and mature). Once on the trail, we observed Eastern Forktails, one Lancet Clubtail, Slaty Skimmers, Dot-tailed Whitefaces, Calico Pennants, Halloween Pennants, Sedge Sprites, Eastern Pondhawks,

Widow Skimmers, Frosted Whitefaces, Marsh Bluets, Boreal Bluets and Chalk-fronted Corporals.

Upon reaching the bog, we searched for the rare Elfin Skimmer (the smallest dragonfly in North America), of which Bruce Ripley had counted at least fifty earlier in this very spot. We were not so lucky. I managed to find one black and yellow striped female Elfin Skimmer hovering in the deep grasses like the bee she so much resembled. That was enough to cause excitement amongst the group, followed by the clicking of cameras attempting to catch the perfect photo of this intriguing creature.

After lunch and a much-needed rest in the shade, we retraced our footsteps and found a teneral female Meadowhawk hanging on to a blade of grass. She had recently emerged from her larval skin and was waiting for hemolymph to harden wings and body. She would remain vulnerable to predators until this process was complete. There are a few female meadowhawks (Ruby, Cherry-faced and Whitefaced) that are difficult to identify, especially since sometimes they hybridize. These three meadowhawks have distinctly different genitals. I was able to identify it as a Whitefaced Meadowhawk by checking its genital plate with a magnifier.

Once out on the road walking towards our cars, we observed one more dragonfly, a Variable or Violet Dancer, a delicate damselfly the colour of deep purple violets. It was an impressive last find for our day of hunting dragonflies.

History of the Kingston Field Naturalists (First 25 Years)

Blue Bill (1974) Volume 21 No. 2: 26-31

Helen Quilliam

Whereas a history of a natural history club should contain a list of concrete accomplishments and their dates, the state of the treasury and of membership, these things sometimes make very dull reading. They can in the last resort be found by the eager searcher in the minutes of the club. Here we propose to deal in a more informal way with the growth and spirit of the Kingston Nature Club, now the Kingston Field Naturalists, and why we think it is a rather exceptional club.

It is a club that has grown from strength to strength. It took a number of years in the beginning for it to begin to grow but once started it went on surely and steadily. This slow start meant the establishment of a sound foundation. The original members still with us and those who have been members for 15 or 20 years look back with some nostalgia on our simple days but also with a sense of pride in the club's accomplishments.

A club in its beginning years and for a number of years thereafter has one big advantage over the long-established club. Its members are usually all in the same state of ignorance and have the chance of learning and exploring together. This was true of the Kingston Nature Club. Bird guides were sometimes brought to meetings so that they might be referred to when discussing the most recent bird observations. A large cardboard chart

was kept of first arrivals and this also was brought to meetings and filled out there. We have long outgrown the chart but this was the beginning of the good records that this club has kept for 25 years.

We were more than usually fortunate in that our founder, Dr. George M. Stirrett was a scientist and with the Canadian Wildlife Service. Although most of those gathered to start the club late in 1949 were chiefly interested in birds, they were soon becoming interested in many aspects of natural history, absorbing it from Dr. Stirrett almost without knowing it. From the beginning, because of association with him, members were participating in the gathering of scientific data. In his capacity as Dominion Wildlife Office for Ontario, Dr. Stirrett was glad of assistance from members.



The banding of Chimney Swifts at Fleming Hall, Queen's University, that

had gone on intermittently for a number of years was resumed by Dr. Stirrett with members of the newly formed club. He also was glad of the extra help in Waterfowl Counts at the beginning of January and soon also members were helping on his three or four routes of Woodcock Censuses every spring. There followed gull banding on Black Ant Island. These activities gave members at once both enjoyment and a sense of purpose. His natural history column in the Whig-Standard also gave members a reason for reporting the birds they saw and stimulated them to keep good records. When Dr. Stirrett left in 1959 to become Chief Park Naturalist for Canada, members were equipped to carry on by themselves and the many activities since have attested to the good groundwork that he laid.

Early on the desire to report well for what was then Audubon Field Notes and to keep the records that George had started was well established. Soon a few members were helping with a Co-operative Migration Study run by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and members took over the woodcock routes and ran them every spring until 1967.

The Blue Bill began publication in 1954 and now has just completed its 20th year without the loss of a single issue. Its object was to give the chance to members to grow in their writing and learning and at the same time to record the ornithological history of the region. Other fields of interest have not been neglected and articles on the botany of the region have probably been the second most numerous.

In the early days of a small club probably a relatively large number of members actively participated in the field. The Kingston Nature Club field trips were popular and well attended. Most of the members were at the same level of experience and still finding birds new to them. Only gradually were new members added and, because they appeared in small numbers, they could be absorbed easily into the existing group. The first years were years of good companionship afield, of exploration of new sites and of exciting finds of uncommon birds.

Many of the very earliest trips were very close to Kingston although there were trips as far away as Presqu'ile and the Sandbanks in the early years. It was only gradually that trips to Wolfe Island became common and that Amherst was visited more frequently and regularly. Prince Edward Point was not discovered until 1960. Most of the country north of Sydenham was unknown to the club members of the early days although every spring there were trips to Morton to check on Pine Warblers and to Green's woods on Highway 32 for Cerulean Warblers. The search for land of our own began the more extensive exploration of the country north of Sydenham. For a number of years we met to cook breakfast at Otter Lake or, after a very early morning start to hear the dawn chorus, finished with breakfast at a cottage on Dog Lake.

In 1966 there were two weekend field trips - one in the spring to Montezuma

Wildlife Refuge in N.Y. State and Sapsucker Woods at the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University and an autumn one to watch the hawk migration at Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania. A weekend trip to Point Pelee was the last of these longer trips.

Gradually the participation in field trips has altered. Now they are more often made up of learners with only a few of the older more experienced birdwatchers along. There has been a growing tendency for small groups to go off on their own. This has one advantage in that we get a number of bird records from several localities at the same time.

There are, however, still plenty of members interested in going out after birds. Each year numbers taking part in the Christmas Count have increased until there were a record 61 observers in 1973. The various big days when members make up their own parties are well attended. Spring Roundup began in 1960 as a result of Martin Edwards, Nora Mansfield and Mary L'Estrange finding over 100 species on a rainy wet day in May 1959. At first the goal for any one party was to find a hundred species in a 24-hour day. In 1974 over 40 participants counted a record 204 species. Fall Roundup began because there was little interest in November field trips. Beginning as principally an owl count in 1966, its aims have expanded and the number of people attending continues to rise. For many members, old and new, it seems that the challenge of a special day is what makes the field trip worthwhile.

Members have also interested themselves in a number of more serious undertakings. In 1963 Martin Edwards organised a trip to Pigeon Island in June to survey the colonies of Black-crowned Night Herons, gulls and terns there. This survey has been repeated every year until the present and its figures gave the Canadian Wildlife Service some definite base with which to compare the results of their studies undertaken to determine the effects of pesticides on colonies of breeding birds in Lake Ontario.

Ron Weir was able to organise a roster of members sufficient to have an observer every day from early April through May at Prince Edward Point during 1971 and 1972 to obtain a complete picture of spring migration there.

Members responded quickly to the call for observers for the continent-wide breeding bird surveys organised by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Canadian Wildlife Service. In fact it soon was evident that we had more people than there were routes within the area so a plan to do our own local breeding bird surveys, following the same rules, was soon in operation. The result has been seven local routes censused for six years.

When Snowy Owls were particularly plentiful weekly trips were made to Wolfe Island (1965 and 1972) in order to learn as much as possible of their habits during these peak years.

The success of a club of this nature must also be measured by the caliber of its monthly meetings and programs. Anyone who has attended the meetings of the Kingston Field Naturalists for even a few years has stored up an invaluable fund of knowledge of and feeling for the natural world. In looking over past programs, for instance, we find that Dr. Stirrett in December 1954 gave a talk defining ecology and outlining its basic principles. So we got our background in this field a good ten years before this word became a household one (still rather poorly understood by most of the public).

Many of the early programs depended on our own talents and even on documentary films. But as we grew larger we felt we could ask speakers from further afield. Subjects have been varied, in fact there is probably not a facet of natural history that has not been touched on at least once. We have been particularly fortunate in that Queen's professors and personnel have been most generous of their time and knowledge in providing us with a wealth of programs.

We outgrew the old Agricultural Hall where we had to out chairs up for every meeting and put them away again and where we boiled water for coffee in large pans and washed up afterwards and where we had our potluck suppers - real potluck with each member bringing a dish. Since 1966 we have generously been allowed to use Earl Hall at Queen's all its modern conveniences, comfortable seats and a large screen. Potluck suppers were also outgrown

and in 1961 we held the first of the annual dinner meetings at St. Mark's Church Hall. Forty-six persons attended and paid \$1.40 for their dinners. In May of 1974, 150 people came (the limit for the hall). Dinner tickers were \$3.50 for this 25th Anniversary meeting.

With more and more "No trespassing" signs going up everywhere and access to Rideau Lakes fast disappearing and with the fear that, with the passing of time, cottage development would increase, it appeared to be a good thing to try to acquire some land of our own which could be left in its natural state. Also members would be able to pursue bird and botanical studies in a place where habitats would not be changed. There followed many excellent field trips while we scoured the countryside. The exploring led us finally to the site at Otter Lake. To our great good fortune we found that the owner of the 200-acre lot, the Gananoque Power and Light Corporation, were sympathetic with our aims, had no further use for the land and so sold it to us in the summer of 1963 for a very small sum.

Acquiring this property necessitated our incorporation and that in turn a name change so that the Kingston Nature Club became the Kingston Field Naturalists. In the early days it was necessary to walk into the sanctuary because the road had been so long neglected. Soon after our acquisition of the property the township began a new road whose development we watched with mixed feelings. We would be able to spend more time right at Otter and Sucker Lakes because we could drive

directly there but so could a lot of other people. At the time of the last Federation of Ontario Naturalists' meeting in Kingston in 1965 the road was only passable from one direction and by a special effort we got our signs erected just in time for that meeting and were able to have a field trip there.

Because of being able to sell gravel for the building of the road, our treasury was enriched and we began to look for further land to add to that we already had. In 1967 we obtained a hundred acres very close to the original holding. The Roland Beschel Trail goes to this acreage most of which is still unexplored.

Policy of management has been to leave the land as nearly as possible in the same condition in which we found it. A good many miles of trails have been developed. These are single file paths only and some are furnished with botanical labels. No matter how much one thinks one knows the property something new can be found with almost every visit.

Most of the foregoing activities have been undertaken for our own enjoyment and to satisfy our own intellectual curiosity, although also contributing much useful information. But how good is our record in fulfilling all the aims of our constitution that declares that our purpose is to: "acquire, record and disseminate knowledge of natural history; to stimulate public interest in nature and in the protection and preservation of wildlife". In this matter of spreading the word our club can be

proud of its record in direct instruction and in involvement in cases affecting our environment.

The most ambitious undertaking was the night school course first organised by Fred Cooke in 1967-68 and carried on for the next two winters and again by Ron Weir for the winter of 1973. For the first three years there was an equal division of instruction between botany and birds. The classes in ornithology were divided among several members but the late Dr. Roland Beschel took over almost the entire burden of the botany instruction. The last session in 1973 was of 13 lectures only, all of them on bird identification. The courses attracted a steady membership of between 35 to 40 students and brought to the club new members.

Keeping a junior naturalists' group going has been one of the undertakings that has had its ups and downs. Many club members have given time and effort to this project beginning particularly in recent years with Mike Evans in 1969 and continuing with Anne Rimmer and Elinore Phillips. A new approach has now been tried for a year by participation in the West End Boys' and Girls' Club at the Polson Park School where Anne Robertson is running a junior naturalist section with help from club members and particularly from young Ed Fletcher. Lack of continuing attendance on the part of the young people had been one of the discouraging aspects but it is hoped that the bimonthly meetings of this newest scheme will be more successful.

Although we may not always have thought that we were entirely successful in efforts to interest the young, members have given of their time unselfishly over the years with special duck identifying days, the conducting of nature walks for school children and camp groups. Individual members have given many illustrated talks to groups of all ages. In 1961 the first early morning bird walks on Wednesdays in May were organised for the general public. For the first few years these were held at Lake Ontario Park and then later at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area with early morning walks alternating with evening walks. The response of the public to these walks has been good.

Dr. Stirrett began and maintained a natural history column for about eleven years and the writer carried on for another ten years. This column resulted in much interest from the public and for many years was our only regular means of publicity. The publication of "The History of the Birds of Kingston, Ontario" in 1965 was only possible because all members of the KFN had for years reported their records. It became a truly club project when the club published a second edition as its Kingston's Tercentenary project.

Members have expressed their concern in many environmental matters. The topics with which the club has interested itself are many and the number of briefs prepared in their defense impressive. Only a few such topics can be mentioned as examples of those causes for which the KFN have

spoken: The Little Cataraqui Creek; Winter Olympics in a Canadian National Park; Management Plan for Algonquin Park; Lumbering in Quetico Park; Acquisition of Bell's Island as a park; Wolf Bounty; Snowmobiles and All-terrain Vehicles; a Plan for Frontenac Park; Bath Road/Princess Mary Road Shopping Centre, etc.

Over the years the KFN have been particularly fortunate in the constant acquisition of new members who have contributed in an outstanding way to the club in both time and enthusiasm. Many things already mentioned have been due to this infusion of new blood and ideas.

Interest in botany took an upswing when the late Dr. Roland Beschel came to Queen's. His many contributions to the club in this field are outstanding — the hours he gave to a botany study group that he conducted for two winters from 1962 to 1964 and his large share in the teaching load in the night school course. He made Otter Lake Sanctuary more valuable to the club by labeling plants and trees and being in the forefront of those blazing new trails. He searched out the botanically unique regions in this area and wrote at length in support of their preservation.

Many of the members also have been active in the field of conservation outside the club. It was one of our members, Jim McCowan, who was responsible for the formation of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority with the subsequent saving of Little Cataraqui Creek and Squaw Point

as a conservation area. Fred Cooke was one of the prime movers in starting the Rideau Trail. Apart from a number of members who have served on the Board of Directions of the FON, Martin Edwards was President of that organisation for an unprecedented three terms.

Of recent events one of the most satisfactory has been Ron Weir's contacts with Ontario Hydro and his success in persuading them to reduce the illumination of the 650 foot chimney at the Lennox Generation Station during autumn and spring migration. With this reduction of the floodlighting of the stack, the numbers of birds killed at the tower sharply declined. His intervention has also persuaded Ontario Hydro to modify the second stack so that it will be easier to regulate the lights.

Anne Rimmer, as club archivist, has put together a veritable mountain of material gleaned from club minutes. This material is now in a readily available form and will be kept up-to-date. Much has had to be omitted in the foregoing account but for those who wish to know more of this active club, Anne's painstaking work will serve as a source of information.

The club now has 256 members at the beginning of its 26th year — a measure of its vitality and of the growing interest in the natural world and its inhabitants by an ever-increasing number of people. The only list to appear in this history is a list of the presidents. On their shoulders rested all the large and small details of the operation as well as the policies to be pursued. We are fortunate that so many of them are still in Kingston and with us.

Past-Presidents of the KFN 1949-1973

1949-51 Dr. George M. Stirrett	1960-61 Mrs. Anne Hutchison
1951-52 Mr. A.E.S. Bell	1961-62 Mr. Lewis Lowther
1952-53 Mr. A.E. Hyde	1962-64 Mrs. Helen Quilliam
1953-54 Dr. K.F. Edwards	1964-66 Dr.J.Gilbert Hill; Dr. J.D.McCowan
1954-55 Dr. R.B. Stewart	1966-67 Dr. J.D.McCowan
1955-56 Mr. Alden M.Strong	1967-69 Dr. F. Cooke
1956-58 Dr. M.H.Edwards	1969-71 Dr.R.B.Stewart
1958-59 Mr. James A. Warren	1971-73 Lt.Col. P.T.Nation
1959-60 Mr. Walter Lamb	1973 - Dr.R. D. Weir