



# The Blue Bill

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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

*Gaye Beckwith*

President Mark Conboy has moved from Kingston to take a new job in Alberta. He is using his biological expertise in the oilfields to protect wildlife. Our loss, their gain. I am interim president until our AGM in April and have the privilege to write another President's Page.

Good Heavens, now they're allowing hunters to shoot Mourning Doves. Not since the 1950s when I had my blue and white Daisy BB gun have Ontarians been allowed to shoot these birds some call the peace dove and known for their soothing coo, coo, cooing.



This year's hunt lasted from early September to mid-November, during which hunters were permitted to shoot up to 15 doves a day. Most urban centres have by-laws restricting shooting in cities, but in rural areas the dove is fair game. The announcement came unexpectedly and without public

consultation, upsetting Caroline Schultz, executive director at Nature Ontario, which represents 150 nature and conservation groups across the province. Ms. Schultz feels that most non-hunting nature lovers don't understand why anyone would want to shoot a beautiful and non-destructive bird, and that debate should have been allowed. She does acknowledge that the mourning dove population is large enough to sustain the hunt.

Under the international Migratory Birds Convention, the mourning dove is considered a game bird but has only been hunted once in Ontario, in 1955. Over the past decade interest has rekindled to hunt the dove and the Canadian Wildlife Services produced a 45-page assessment concluding that because the fall population of doves has tripled since the 1960s, the hunt is justifiable considering that it would harvest about 1% of the dove population. It noted that "some segments of society regard this species as a beautiful songbird or a symbol of peace that should not be hunted."

From a taxonomic perspective the mourning dove is not a songbird, a term which usually refers to species in the order *Passeriformes* containing about half of all bird species; doves belong to the order *Columbiformes*. Members of the family *Columbidae*, they have different foot structure, fewer tail feathers, and differences in the spermatozoa. Mourning Doves are about 30cms in

length, half of which is tail feathers and an average adult weighs 125gms with its edible breast weighing around 30gms.

For some hunters the mourning dove is a delicacy. In many parts of Europe the consumption of any bird is a long-standing tradition and illegal hunting is out of control. A recent National Geographic Article (*July 2013*) detailed the destruction that this hunting does to migrating birds. Birds moving through countries, especially around the Mediterranean Sea, are subjected to guns, nets, and glue on branches in an effort to capture this food source for personal consumption or for sale to others. Hundreds of millions are birds are indiscriminately killed for food, sport, entertainment, and profit. Larger species such as storks, cranes, and raptors are included in the carnage. Bird populations are plummeting in all parts of Europe.

In the USA where mourning doves nest in all 48 of the lower states, hunters shoot more than 20 million doves each year in the 42 states that license the hunt. That's more than any other animal in the country. They are also considered 'cheap skeet' because they are a challenge to hit and very plentiful. It is estimated that one third of these birds are not harvested, leading many to speculate that the 'sport' of shooting them overrides the sustenance motive.

Julie Zickefoose, a bird watcher from Ohio, recently tried to stop the reinstatement of the mourning dove hunt in Ohio where it has been banned for all but two of the past 80 years. She

argued that not only does the bird offer very little meat, they help farmers by eating vast quantities of seeds from unwanted plants. One dove's stomach, according to Julie's blog, contained 7,500 yellow wood sorrel seeds while another had 6,400 foxtail grass seeds.

Protected birds become collateral damage while the dove hunt takes place. Kestrels, Sharp-shinned Hawks, American Robins, Blue Jays are among the species hunters mistake for doves. Doves nest during the fall and the hunt leaves orphaned birds to die unprotected by their parent.

As with many issues in life there will be pros and cons to argue. As a bird lover it's difficult to see the mourning dove added to the list of hunted species. Some will argue that it's just another opportunity for hunters to use their toys and large numbers of doves will simply become target practice. On the other hand the Ontario mourning dove population is strong (between 2.8 and 3.7 million) and the hunt will not adversely affect the overall population numbers. Hunters will argue that conservation efforts from monies obtained through licensing and taxes go a long way to protect wildlife.

For the most part regulations here in North America keep hunting under control unlike the European situation and we should be thankful as keen naturalists that we are not fighting that battle here, perhaps leaving more time to focus on controlling the behaviour of our cats.

## Kingston Region Birds for Autumn: August 1 – November 30, 2013

*Mark D. Read*

The Kingston reporting area is centred on MacDonald Park, Kingston and extends for a radial distance of 50km. Please contact me if errors are noted or significant observations omitted. We encourage you to submit all future sightings, so that a better understanding of our region's birdlife can be achieved. Members already using eBird can easily share their sightings with 'Kingston FN'. Alternatively, please e-mail, phone or post records directly to me (contact details are found inside the front cover).

In total, 230 species of bird were recorded in our region during the reporting period. We received sightings from 48 observers directly or *via* eBird. Here are the highlights of Autumn 2013.

**Snow Goose:** The first migrant was 1 at Marshlands CA, Kingston on 24Sept (MDR), with an unknown number at Cedar Point SP (US) on 27Sept (GKH), and 4 east of Kingston on 30Sept (MVAB). Up to 8 individuals (including 3 blue phase) present on Hwy. 8 near Napanee from 20-26Nov (PM *et al.*).

**Ross's Goose:** A single bird reported on Lake Ontario, just east of Lennox Generating Station on 12Nov (PM, MDR) is most likely the same individual seen on Hwy. 8 near Napanee from 20Nov onwards (PM *et al.*)

**Brant:** A summering bird seen on several dates at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island in August (KFN) appeared to be in good health.

The largest migrating flock was 500 at Camden East, 20Oct (PG) and a lone bird was seen on Hwy. 8 near Napanee from 22-25Nov (KH *et al.*)

**Cackling Goose:** A single bird was seen in flight at Baggs Corner (US) on 29Sept (AS) and another popped into Amherstview Sewage Lagoons for less than half an hour on 1Oct (MDR). Three birds were reported at Bath Heritage Park on 4Nov (KH), with presumably the same three seen just east of Lennox Generating Station on 5Nov (MDR).

**Mute Swan:** Reported throughout the region, the largest concentrations were 25 at Prince Edward Point 19-20Sept (MDR) and 49 on the Napanee River on 18Nov (AR, PM, MDR).

**Trumpeter Swan:** Other than 8 birds seen flying overhead at Sydenham on 16Nov (GBB) and up to 8 at Charleston Lake PP 26-29Nov (CR), the only other records were of 2 on Amherst Island on 22Nov (GBB), 1 at Cataraqi Bay, Kingston, 26Nov (MAC) and 1 at Chaffey's Locks 28Nov (MAC).

**Tundra Swan:** The first returning birds were 46 on Wolfe Island 3Nov (CG, KH). The largest reported flock was 200 on the Napanee River on 23Nov (SED).

**Wood Duck:** Confirmed breeding at Amherstview Sewage Lagoons, with 5 young observed on 7Aug (PM, MDR). The highest count was 47 at Odessa Lake on 24Aug (PB).

**Gadwall:** An increasing and widespread species. Marshlands CA, Kingston held good numbers during October with a maximum of 700 on 25<sup>th</sup> (MDR).

**Blue-winged Teal:** Maximum count of 60 at Amherstview Sewage Lagoons on 3Sept (MDR) with last birds (3) seen there on 21Oct (PM, MDR).

**Canvasback:** Two reports – a single bird at Queen’s University Biological Station (Opinicon Lake) on 22Oct (MAC) was unusual; 3 birds at Hay Bay on 18Nov (AR, PM, MDR) were more typical.

**Redhead:** Confirmed breeding at Amherstview Sewage Lagoons, with a female and 10 recently hatched ducklings seen on 5Aug (MDR).

**Black Scoter:** Least common of three scoter species in the region, a male seen at Prince Edward Pt. 21Oct (PM, MDR), a female west of Bath on 5Nov (MDR).

**Red-throated Loon:** A bird transitioning into winter plumage was observed on Lake Ontario at the Lafarge Cement Works 3-5Nov (SC *et al.*)

**Red-necked Grebe:** Two birds at Howe Island on 5Oct (SED) and a single at the winter ferry dock on Wolfe Island on 15Oct (NLB). Other birds included 1 at Prince Edward Point on 9Nov (QFN), 1 at Doug Fluher Park, Kingston on 18Nov (PM, MDR) and another at Hay Bay, 18-24Nov (JG, PM, AR, MDR *et al.*)

**American White Pelican:** First reported on 21Sept (*via* TS), this bird was finally

pinned down in November on the Napanee River (FP *et al.*)

**Golden Eagle:** A juvenile bird at Prince Edward Point on 18Oct (JW); another flying over Roblin on 13Nov (AS).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** The first arrival was on Amherst Island 20Oct (KFN).

**Sandhill Crane:** An impressive count of 49 circling overhead at Lake-on-the-Mountain 19Nov (JG, PM, AR, MDR). There was 1 at Camden East on 4Nov (PG) and 2 on Wolfe Island 19Nov (GC).

**American Golden Plover:** A single bird on Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 10Sept (KFN), another at the same location on 1Oct (MDR) are the only records.

**Whimbrel:** One bird seen at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 25Sept (NLB).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** A bird seen at Pillar Point (U.S.) on 30Oct (RB) is a notable record for our region.

**Red Knot:** Just one report of a single bird at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 6Sept (PM, MDR).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** All records, with a high count of 2, came from Amherstview Sewage Lagoons between 18Aug (PM) and 4Sept (MVAB).

**Sanderling:** One bird observed at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 30Aug (KFN) and two were noted there 10Sept (PM, MDR).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Two birds seen at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 7Aug (PM, MDR), with 2 reported at the same location 25Aug (MAC) and 26Aug (EB, MDR).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** Two birds at Amherstview Sewage Lagoons on 1Sept (MAC, RW); a single stayed a few days at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island from 29Sept (PM, AR, MR *et al.*)

**Little Gull:** A juvenile bird found at Amherstview Sewage Lagoons on 26Aug (EB, AR, MDR) last seen on 31Aug (MAC).

**Iceland Gull:** One at Lemoine Point CA on 24Nov (MAC, SL) is the only record.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** A 1<sup>st</sup> winter bird seen at Catarauqui Bay on 26Nov (MAC) moved across the road to Marshlands CA on 27Nov (MDR).

**Glaucous Gull:** A 1<sup>st</sup> winter bird was seen on 29Nov (KH) and 30Nov (BR) at Heritage Point, Bath.

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Two records; 1 on CR 27 near Camden Lake on 18Aug (JW) and 1 (adult) at Gananoque Golf Club from 10Oct (MDR) that remained throughout the period was reported by many observers.

**Gyr Falcon:** A grey phase adult bird was seen at Eden Grove Road near Marble Rock, Gananoque on 27Oct (KH).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Four reports; 2 on Cottage Rd (near Westport) 18Aug (PB), 1 at Parrott's Bay CA 18Aug (TM),

1 at Marshlands CA, Kingston 22Aug (MDR) and 1 at Collins Lake, Inverary 28Aug (YS).

**Tufted Titmouse:** A single bird seen regularly at feeders on Howe Island since 14Oct (SED *et al.*) Single birds at Wellesley Island SP (U.S.) on 26Sept (GKH) and Cedar Point SP (U.S.) on 27Sept (GKH).

**Carolina Wren:** A bird at Gananoque Golf Club on 19(MDR) and 20Nov (PM).

**Northern Mockingbird:** All records came from the US with sightings at Ashland WMA on 18Aug (AS), Perch River WMA on 24Aug (RB) and Bailey Settlement Road on 13Oct (ML).

**Connecticut Warbler:** One bird banded at Prince Edward Point on 1Sept (TW)

**Clay-coloured Sparrow:** Just one record, at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 25Aug (MAC).

**Vesper Sparrow:** The only records were 1 on Amherst Island on 25Aug (MAC) and 2 on Wolfe Island on 21Oct (JT).

**Nelson's Sparrow:** Three birds were located on Wolfe Island on 12Sept (TLH), with a single bird seen at Martin Edwards Reserve between 29Sept (PM, AR, MR) and 10Oct (MAC).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** An Oregon form first reported on 19Nov at Camden East (WB) continued until the end of the month at least.

**Other species observed during the reporting period:** Canada Goose, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Dunlin, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock, Wilson's Phalarope, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great-Black-backed Gull, Caspian Tern, Black Tern, Common Tern, Feral Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Snowy Owl, Barred Owl, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Common Nighthawk, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Red-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied

Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Northern Shrike, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Horned Lark, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Grey-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Grey Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, American Pipit, Bohemian Waxwing, Cedar Waxwing, Snow Bunting, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Golden-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Cape May Warbler, Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, Pine Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Canada Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Eastern Towhee, American Tree Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field

Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, House Finch, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

**Observers:** B. F. Aikins (BFA), Erwin Batalla (EB), Gaye & Betsy Beckwith (GBB), Peter Blancher (PB), John Bleackley (JB), Kevin Bleeks (KB), Mike V. A. Burrell (MVAB), William Bradford (WB), Richard Brouse (RB), Greg Caldwell (GC), Steve Coates (SC), Mark A. Conboy (MAC), John Cooper (JC),

Sharon E. David (SED), Eric Davis (ED), Peter Good (PG), Janis Grant (JG), Chris Grooms (CG), Gary & Kathy Harris (GKH), Peggy Hauschildt (PH), Kurt Hennige (KH), Tyler L. Hoar (TLH), Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN), Sarah Larocque (SL), Monica LeClerc (ML), Paul Mackenzie (PM), Travers McCord (TM), North Leeds Birders (NLB), Frank Penner (FP), Richard Poffley (RP), Quinte Field Naturalists (QFN), Darren Rayner (DR), Mark D. Read (MDR), Bruce Ripley (BR), Chris Robinson (CR), Arthur Rowe (AR), Michael Runtz (MR), Alex. Scott (AS), Yves Scholten (YS), Antony Shrimpton, (AS), Terry Sprague (TS), James Thompson (JT), Justin Walker (JW), Ron Weir (RW), Tom Wheatley (TW), Jon Willans (JW), Stu Williams (SW), Iain Wilkes (IW).

## Observing Reptiles

### *Bruce Ripley (text and photos)*

As a young boy, my first love of wildlife was reptiles. Like many young people I would enjoy catching turtles and snakes, sometimes keeping them as pets. Much to my mother's displeasure, this sometimes included large water snakes. I remember her shock one morning when she discovered a water snake curled up in the laundry basket.

With Ontario having only 48 species of reptiles and amphibians (herptiles), you don't hear much about people actively searching for them. However in the U.S., especially in the southwest, it is a common hobby for nature enthusiasts. Birding has been popular for decades and butterfly and dragonfly observing

are now common; herping in some regions is just as popular.



*Herp Enthusiasts examine a Yellowbelly Water Snake at Snake Rd in southern Illinois.*

One difference between herping and the others is that birders often divulge information on where to find birds.

Butterfly and dragonfly observers also share locations, sometimes not as freely, as some worry about irresponsible collectors. Herpers, on the other hand, are usually tight-lipped about giving out locations. Collecting both legally and illegally does occur. In many regions where herps are common, law enforcement officials regularly check for offenders, including vehicle searches. Fines or jail time can be the result for those caught poaching wildlife.

Information on herptiles is obtainable on the internet or in field guides. Limited resources and the fact that many herps are secretive makes locating them a real challenge. After doing your homework, it's gratifying when you locate a beautiful snake, turtle or lizard on your own.



*Gila Monster, the only venomous lizard in the United States.*

Looking for herps requires four elements: environmental conditions, timing, location and lots of luck. If you're missing one of these, you reduce the odds of finding your quarry. You have to put in time and effort, often venturing to remote places. As with all wildlife observing, there is an ethical practice to be learned before searching for herps. Personal safety precautions,

in remote regions with venomous snakes, should also be learned.

Popular destinations in North America for finding herps are southern Arizona, Florida and the infamous (to herpers) Snake Rd. in southern Illinois. Snake Rd. is closed to traffic every Spring and Fall to allow herps to migrate back and forth between the wetlands on one side and hibernation dens in the limestone cliffs on the other side. Snake Rd. is the only area I know of that encourages people to visit to observe and photograph herps.



*Florida Softshell Turtle*

*Reptiles are often on the move after a downpour of rain. "Road cruising" just after a rainfall through proper habitat can be very productive.*

Herping is a fun and exhilarating way to see some fascinating animals. Observing herps could be a great learning tool to use with the younger generation, to inspire and develop awareness of the importance of nature. There's no need to travel far to see herps as there are many interesting species in our own province. Frontenac County, Norfolk County and Georgian Bay Islands National Park are excellent places to explore. Aside from their beauty and fascination, herptiles are an important part of our environment as well as our natural heritage.

The Ontario Nature website is one of the best sources of information on our province's herps.

[http://www.ontarionature.org/protect/species/reptiles\\_and\\_amphibians/index.php](http://www.ontarionature.org/protect/species/reptiles_and_amphibians/index.php)

This site includes the fast and simple procedure of submitting observations using your mobile device.



*Western Diamondback Rattlesnake*  
The loud rattle and defensive posture of a large rattler will make you more mentally alert than any caffeine drink.



*Western Cottonmouth*  
Water Snakes usually flee at the slightest sign of danger. The similar looking and venomous Cottonmouth often stands its ground.



*Smooth Green Snake*  
Although it's almost impossible to convince an ophidiophobe to appreciate snakes, you can't deny the beauty of the patterns and the colours of some herps.

## Kingston Butterfly Summary for 2013

### John Poland

As I write this, I am thinking there is little to say about butterfly sightings for 2013 in the Kingston area; it was a rather poor year by all accounts. However, as I examine the statistics, I find that we saw 79 species in 2013, the same as in 2012, and in the normal annual range of 75-79. 2012 was a great year for migrants, but a poor year for our local butterflies. 2013

was a poor year for migrants but the number of species was high because of the species counts rather than the total number of butterflies present; sixteen sightings were of a single butterfly or a single sighting.

The highlights for the year were an American Snout and three Two-Spotted

Skippers. The Snout is a new butterfly for the Kingston region – an accidental - seen in a city garden. The Two Spotted Skippers were found beside the Cataragui Trail near the McGillivray road intersection, the first sighting since 1984. It was a relatively good year for

Hairstreaks as all those normally found in our area were sighted, except the very rare Early Hairstreak. Great Spangled Fritillaries were found in higher than normal numbers whereas Monarch numbers were very low.

### Reported Butterfly Sightings for 2013

Butterfly	First Date	Last Date	Number of Broods
Black Swallowtail	17 May	18 Sep	2-3
Giant Swallowtail	18 May	12 Oct	2-3
Canadian Tiger Swallowtail	21 May	15 Jun	1
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	4 Jul	5 Aug	2
Mustard White	30 Jun	18 Jul	2
West Virginia White	18 May	18 May	1
Cabbage White	28 Apr	25 Oct	3+
Olympia Marble	7 May	7 May	1
Clouded Sulphur	30 May	28 Oct	3+
Orange Sulphur	18 Jul	12 Oct	3+
Harvester	14 Aug	14 Aug	2
American Copper	10 Jun	24 Jul	2-3
Bronze Copper	15 Jun	30 Sep	2
Bog Copper	4 Jul	4 Jul	1
Coral Hairstreak	6 Jul	22 Jul	1
Acadian Hairstreak	18 Jul	18 Jul	1
Banded Hairstreak	7 Jul	15 Aug	1
Hickory Hairstreak	30 Jun	21 Jul	1
Striped Hairstreak	29 Jul	29 Jul	1
Henry's Elfin	2 May	7 May	1
Eastern Pine Elfin	3 May	30 May	1

Butterfly	First Date	Last Date	Number of Broods
Juniper Hairstreak	20 May	5 Aug	1
Gray Hairstreak	18 May	11 Sep	2
Eastern Tailed Blue	19 May	9 Oct	3+
Spring Azure	2 May	1 Jun	1
Summer Azure	30 Jun	25 Sep	2
Silvery Blue	20 May	26 Jun	1
American Snout	23 Jul	23 Jul	1
Great Spangled Fritillary	30 Jun	27 Sep	1
Aphrodite Fritillary	21 Jul	20 Aug	1
Silvery Bordered Fritillary	14 Jun	14 Jun	1
Meadow Fritillary	4 Jul	18 Sep	2
Harris Checkerspot	21 Jun	21 Jun	1
Northern Crescent	1 Jun	10 Oct	1
Pearl Crescent	4 Jun	12 Oct	2-3
Baltimore Checkerspot	15 Jun	9 Jul	1
Question Mark	2 Jun	26 Sep	2
Eastern Comma	23 Apr	9 Oct	2
Gray Comma	23 Apr	9 Oct	2
Compton's Tortoiseshell	25 Apr	25-Apr	1
Mourning Cloak	30 Mar	14 Oct	1
Milbert's Tortoiseshell	30 Apr	30 Apr	2
American Lady	31 May	8 Oct	3+
Painted Lady	10 Oct	10 Oct	1
Common Buckeye	18 Sep	18 Sep	2
Red Admiral	1 Jun	25 Oct	2
White Admiral	12 Jun	1 Sep	2
Viceroy	4 Jun	18 Sep	2

<b>Butterfly</b>	<b>First Date</b>	<b>Last Date</b>	<b>Number of Broods</b>
Monarch	31 May	19 Oct	2-3
Northern Pearly Eye	29 Jun	12 Jul	1
Eyed Brown	30 Jun	27 Jul	1
Appalachian Brown	29 Jul	30 Jul	1
Little Wood Satyr	31 May	3 Jul	1
Common Ringlet	31 May	24 Sep	2
Common Wood Nymph	6 Jul	20 Aug	1
Silver Spotted Skipper	6 Jun	17 Aug	2
Northern Cloudywing	2 Jun	22 Jul	1
Dreamy Duskywing	10 Jun	10 Jun	1
Juvenal's Duskywing	7 May	15 Jun	1
Columbine Duskywing	7 May	1 Sep	2
Wild Indigo Duskywing	30 Jul	19 Aug	3
Arctic Skipper	4 Jun	15 Jun	1
Least Skipper	12 Jun	10 Oct	2
European Skipper	21 Jun	13 Jul	1
Leonard's Skipper	15 Aug	25 Oct	1
Indian Skipper	5 Jun	15 Jun	1
Peck's Skipper	14 Jun	3 Oct	2
Tawny Edged Skipper	1 Jun	18 Sep	1-2
Crossline Skipper	30 Jun	22 Jul	1
Long Dash	8 Jun	9 Jul	1
Northern Broken Dash	18 Jul	22 Jul	1
Little Glassywing	30 Jun	22 Jul	2
Delaware Skipper	11 Jul	22 Jul	1
Hobomok Skipper	31 May	6 Jul	1
Broad Winged Skipper	18 Jul	10 Aug	1

Butterfly	First Date	Last Date	Number of Broods
Dion Skipper	18 Jul	18 Jul	
Two Spotted Skipper	30 Jun	30 Jun	1
Dun Skipper	4 Jul	20 Aug	1
Common Roadside Skipper	5 Jun	14 Jun	2



*American Snout by John Poland*



*Two Spotted Skipper by Bruce Ripley*

## Hunkering Down for the Winter

*Terry Sprague*

It is always a crisp November day after a good freeze when I fire up the recycling mower and mulch the leaves on our lawn. That is when they pulverize the best, with one pass of the mower reducing the thick accumulation to a fine, powdery dust. Only then do I winterize the lawn mower, change the oil, sharpen the blade and give the mower a good cleaning with the air compressor before putting it to bed for the winter. Once the two mowers and the rotary brush mower have been cleaned and sharpened, and the travel trailer is winterized, and the snow blower is mounted, we tackle the gigantic pile of pruned tree branches

and put them through the wood chipper. Winterization of our lawn and garden equipment signals the completion of fall tasks. We are ready. Bring on the cold weather and snow!

Preparing for winter is something my father was very organized at, and he put our farm machinery to bed with the same love and care as I give my lawn mowers. Nothing, not even drag harrows, was permitted to remain outside in the winter. Machinery was stored in the shed with those devoted to harvesting at the back, and spring tillage equipment close to the door. This exercise was so routine every year, it

was as if my father had been programmed to do this instinctively, once there was a chill in the air.

It is genetic programming or “instinct” that causes mammals to prepare for winter in much the same way. I haven’t seen our chipmunks for several days; I guess they have hunkered down in the remains of an old barn foundation, which I saw them come out of several times this summer. The chipmunk is often cited as an example of a hibernator, but how many animals truly hibernate? Not many, and certainly not the chipmunk, if we want to get technical about it. True hibernators enter a prolonged state of torpor, when metabolism slows down; very few mammals do that non-stop through the entire winter. It’s too dangerous to sleep your life away in winter when reserves are low, with no replenishment. Even the groundhog may come out of its burrow to look around.

However, the chipmunk does go under a remarkable transformation at this time of the year during its time underground. This perky little mammal whose heart races at 350 beats per minute, drops into a whisper mode, its heart beating at a modest four beats per minute, barely enough for us to claim it is alive. The body temperature drops from 36°C to just 3°C. But every two weeks or so, it wakes up to have a snack of its cached food supply. It will also take advantage of the opportunity to urinate in a special chamber reserved for that purpose. Some of us would be happy if we could manage an entire night without getting up to urinate, never mind two weeks!

Come April, it springs to life with renewed vigour. Friends John and Janet Foster of the Tweed area, when not filming whales in the Arctic or wolves in Algonquin, feed up to a half dozen chipmunks at their back door. During a barbeque at their home a few years ago, there were three at one time, perched on their haunches on the picnic table, not more than a few inches from my elbow. It was fall and we spent much of the day providing them with peanuts to cache in their burrows for winter.



*Chipmunk by Sydney Smith*

Mammals don’t have to check the calendar to prepare for winter; it is second nature to them. It’s triggered by the photoperiod, when days become shorter and there are signs of fall. Survival kicks in, and each species is different in how it prepares for winter. Some, we might think, are doomed when you look at the wood frog who dawdles until it freezes solid. Its liver produces glucose which is circulated through the body like antifreeze, protecting the vital organs. It allows itself to freeze completely through, thawing in the spring and continuing on its way as though nothing happened.

Others, like my late father, are more organized. They put on layers of fat, and work non-stop salting away food, and seeking out shelter where they can be spared from the cutting winter wind. Come spring, their efforts have paid off in handsome dividends, for they are alive. As animals that live day to day taking what Nature dishes out, they haven't a clue as to why their system is suddenly kicking into this preparation mode, for they can't reason that winter

is coming. On the farm, we knew that winter was on its way and that preparations had to be made to survive it, and prepare for spring. For animals, they don't question their instinct – they just go ahead and do it, as their ancestors before them have done for thousands of years.

*Terry Sprague is a professional naturalist, free-lance writer and KFN member who lives in Prince Edward County.*

## Fall Round-up 2013 Nov 02-03

### *Ron D. Weir*

The 48<sup>th</sup> KFN Fall Round-up took place from 3p.m. Saturday November 2 to 3p.m. Sunday November 3. Participants numbered 22+. The weather was the worst in many years. On Saturday, driving rain, strong north winds and temperature of 4°C hampered the birders. Overnight, skies cleared, strong north winds continued all day, and a low temperature -3°C and high of +5°C continued to make the birding difficult. Whitecaps and large waves along Lake Ontario made the detection of loons and diving ducks challenging.

The total was 111 species, below the 43-year (1970-2012) average of 120. The cumulative total remains at 242 species. Among noteworthy finds were Cackling Goose, Golden Eagle, Red-headed Woodpecker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, and Brown Thrasher.

The totals in the table below have had known duplications removed; the total individuals for a species may not equal the sum of the contributions from each

party. Where there is uncertainty in the total number, the symbol ~ to represent 'approximately' is used.

Following the count, the birders met at the home of Marian and Joel Ellis for the potluck supper. Marian and Joel were excellent hosts and a warm thank you is extended for their continued hospitality.

Composition of parties and sites visited:  
Party 1: Erwin Batalla, Alexandra Simmons, Gaye Beckwith, Hugh Evans, Rose-Marie Burke, Jane Revell; Amherstview Sewage Lagoons, Elevator Bay, Rideau River, Gananoque, Howe Island, Wolfe Island.

**Party 2:** Kurt Hennige, Chris Grooms, Don Yeomans (Amherst Island, Wolfe Island, Gananoque).

**Party 3:** Sharon David (Howe Island)

**Party 4:** Lynn Bell, John Cartwright, Paul Mackenzie, Bud Rowe (Amherst Island, Prince Edward Point, Kingston)

**Party 5:** Joel Ellis, Peter Good, Kathy Innes, Ron Weir (Prince Edward Pt., Great Cataraqui River, Elevator Bay, Kingston, Adolphustown, Sillsville, Wilton Creek at Morven, Amherstview Sewage Lagoons).

**Party 6:** Andrew Edwards, Ken Edwards (Prince Edward Pt.)

**Party 7:** Bruce Dilabio + (Amherst Island)

**Party 8:** Peter Hess (Garden Island)

**Party 9:** Miscellaneous observers

SPECIES	Party Number									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Common Loon	20	25	6	2	2	10	22	-	-	87
Pied-billed Grebe	10	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	14
Horned Grebe	-	2	-	14	4	8	3	-	-	31
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Dble-crested Cormorant	10	2	-	2	10	12	10	10	2	58
Great Blue Heron	5	1	-	3	1	-	1	-	1	12
Turkey Vulture	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	5
Cackling Goose	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	4
Canada Goose	500	2800	25	1005	2300	300	75	88	50	~6500
Brant	1	-	-	-	1	-	40	-	-	41
Mute Swan	3	-	2	20	7	1	-	-	3	36
Tundra Swan	30	46	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	82
Wood Duck	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Gadwall	60	14	-	44	1066	-	-	-	86	~1100
American Wigeon	200	16	3	112	635	-	-	-	86	~900
American Black Duck	10	88	-	7	2	-	3	-	4	114
Mallard	100	395	15	40	560	300	7	8	50	~1,300
Northern Shoveler	100	2	-	4	17	2	-	-	2	127
Northern Pintail	20	14	-	12	70	-	-	-	-	116
Green-winged Teal	20	12	-	6	25	-	-	-	14	77
Redhead	1000	158	-	3	40	-	-	3	-	1204
Ring-necked Duck	10	-	-	50	95	-	-	-	16	171
Greater Scaup	1000	1200	-	200	6650	500	3	46	65	9600
Lesser Scaup	5	5	-	6	50	-	-	-	4	70
White-winged Scoter	-	5	-	1	10	2	-	-	-	18
Long-tailed Duck	-	3	-	8	75	250	3	-	-	339
Bufflehead	10	135	-	120	283	10	65	105	-	928
Common Goldeneye	1	41	-	14	60	25	85	-	15	241

SPECIES	Party Number									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Hooded Merganser	10	8	7	6	5	-	-	-	5	41
Common Merganser	50	20	4	45	60	-	-	-	-	179
Red-breasted Merganser	10	95	-	300	80	75	7	82	2	650
Ruddy Duck	4	6	-	2	6	-	-	-	6	6
American Coot	50	-	-	5	170	-	-	-	6	231
Osprey	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bald Eagle	-	1	-	3	-	1i	-	-	-	5
Nprthern Harrier	2	4	-	3	1	1	-	-	-	11
Accipiter ( <i>sp</i> )	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Red-tailed Hawk	4	1	-	2	2	1	2	-	-	12
Rough-legged Hawk	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Golden Eagle	-	-	-	-	-	1i	-	-	-	1i
American Kestrel	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Merlin	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
Ruffed Grouse	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	3
Wild Turkey	10	5	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	25
Killdeer	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7
Greater Yellowlegs	2	4	-	8	3	-	-	-	1	1
Lesser Yellowlegs	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Pectoral Sandpiper	2	18	-	20	6	-	-	-	-	46
Dunlin	1	8	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	14
Wilson's Snipe	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Bonaparte's Gull	50	12	-	50	23	1	9	-	1	146
Ring-billed Gull	200	265	12	x	160	x	12	2	35	~800
Herring Gull	5	20	-	x	12	50	-	8	10	93
Great Black-backed Gull	-	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	2	7
Rock Pigeon	20	24	-	10	3	-	-	-	-	57
Mourning Dove	10	8	24	3	80	10	2	-	1	138
Eastern Screech Owl	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Great Horned Owl	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Long-eared Owl	-	3	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	3
Belted Kingfisher	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2	2	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	8
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1

SPECIES	Party Number									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Downy Woodpecker	3	7	5	3	1	-	1	3	-	23
Hairy Woodpecker	1	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	4
Northern Flicker	1	-	-	1	6	-	-	2	1	11
Pileated Woodpecker	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Northern Shrike	-	1	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	5
Blue Jay	20	21	18	25	165	200	6	1	2	458
American Crow	20	12	7	x	23	30	2	4	-	99
Common Raven	3	2	4	-	1	-	4	2	-	16
Horned Lark	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Black-capped Chickadee	20	22	15	29	60	50	-	6	5	~200
Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	5	7	5	3	1	-	3	-	-	24
Brown Creeper	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Winter Wren	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	1	12	-	15	25	2	5	-	60
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	10	-	14
Eastern Bluebird	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
Hermit Thrush	1	1	-	-	1	1	3	-	-	7
American Robin	20	38	7	80	231	-	12	38	4	430
Gray Catbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Brown Thrasher	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
European Starling	200	165	12	325	1300	-	8	29	-	~2000
American Pipit	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	5
Cedar Waxwing	10	14	-	10	10	25	60	11	-	140
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	-	1	8	15	-	1	-	-	25
Palm Warbler	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
American Tree Sparrow	10	-	-	12	17	-	11	1	1	52
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	3
Vesper Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Fox Sparrow	-	3	-	1	1	-	9	-	-	14
Song Sparrow	5	1	-	4	3	10	1	-	1	25
Swamp Sparrow	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4
White-throated Sparrow	15	1	4	1	2	-	-	-	-	23
White-crowned Sparrow	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Dark-eyed Junco	20	65	14	200	470	80	12	14	10	875
Snow Bunting	10	30	-	40	46	-	1	-	-	127
Northern Cardinal	3	-	2	1	2	-	2	-	2	12

SPECIES	Party Number									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Red-winged Blackbird	100	355	2	40	42	30	6	1	-	536
Rusty Blackbird	5	10	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	18
Common Grackle	3	12	6	2	5	15	1	-	-	44
Brown-headed Cowbird	5	2	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	13
Purple Finch	-	2	-	-	20	-	4	-	-	26
House Finch	2	-	7	-	-	-	8	-	-	17
American Goldfinch	20	-	7	5	30	12	-	17	1	92
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
House Sparrow	10	20	-	6	1	-	-	-	-	37
<b>TOTAL SPECIES</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1+</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22+</b>

### KFN Field Activities October and November 2013

#### KFN Teens October Trip, October 11-12 2013 - Elbow Lake

*Michael Jaansalu*

On the evening of October 11, Gabrielle, Sydney, Rowan, Ronan, and Michael joined Anne Robertson for an overnight trip to Elbow Lake. On arrival we met Carolyn Bonta and Mark Conboy, our mentors, and went for a walk to look at some bat boxes. This produced a memorable quote; not often do you hear someone ask “Could you hold my bat detector while I scoop up some scat?”

We were shown where we would sleep that night while there was still some light to see by, then we handled and identified rodent, carnivore, bat, and mole and shrew specimens. We set traps for small mammals and went on a short night hike. We saw what we believed to be Black Bear scat, then stopped and listened to what was around us, including a Barred Owl and a Porcupine. A little while later Mark

managed to call the owl in, although we never did see it.



*Teens examining coyote scat with Carolyn*

After getting the local coyotes to howl we went to bed, planning to wake up at about 7:30 for breakfast at 8:00. Apparently we woke up at 8:00. Oops! After breakfast Zoe, who was not with us the night before, arrived just in time to help assemble a deer skeleton. For those of us who were less familiar with skeletons than we might have been, this

was rather tricky. Thank goodness for numbered vertebrae! We checked the traps we set the previous night, which were empty, then looked at fur samples from numerous types of mammals.



*Assembling a deer skeleton*

After finding Carolyn and Mark, we went for a walk along the road to Elbow Lake, and Carolyn explained her work with wolves in Frontenac Park. Carolyn swabbed a scat (for DNA testing to determine the species of canine) that we found on the road. We saw a grouse, three kinds of snake, and some Woolly Bear Caterpillars. When we returned to the main area, we had just enough time to pack up and retrieve our things from the cabins, eat lunch and clean up the main building, not to mention build a leaf pile and jump in, before we had to leave to get home to Kingston. This was one of the most enjoyable trips I have been on as a Teen Naturalist, and I would do it again in a heartbeat.

#### *Species List by Rowan Sandford Ladon*

Out of the 52 mammal species of Eastern Ontario, 34 specimens were observed including

#### **Marsupials**

Opossum (fur)

#### **Moles and Shrews**

Masked Shrew

Smoky Shrew

Pygmy Shrew

Short-tailed Shrew

Hairytail Mole

Starnose Mole

#### **Bats**

Little Brown Bat

Big Brown Bat

Red Bat

#### **Carnivores**

Black Bear (scat, skull, and fur)

Raccoon (skull, fur, and feet)

Fisher (skull)

Short-tailed Weasel (fur)

Mink (fur)

Otter (fur)

Skunk (skull and fur)

Coyotes (heard and observed fur and scat)

Wolf (skull and fur)

Bobcat (fur)

#### **Rodents**

Eastern Chipmunk

Red Squirrel

Eastern Gray Squirrel (tail and feet)

Northern Flying Squirrel (baby)

Beaver (skull, fur, and feet)

Deer Mouse

Boreal Redback Vole

Meadow Vole

Muskrat (skull)

Woodland Jumping Mouse

Porcupine (heard and observed skull, fur, quills, and feet)

### Rabbits and Hares

Cottontail Rabbit (skull)  
 Hoofed Animals  
 White-tailed Deer (skeleton,  
 skull, fur, and scat)  
 Moose (scat)

A Red bellied Snake, Milk Snake, Garter Snake, and Ruffed Grouse were also spotted, and a Barred Owl was heard during a night hike. Woolly Bears, Fall Meadowhawk (dragonfly) and Sulphur Butterflies were seen as well.

### November 5 Ramble on K & P Trail Joe Benderavage

Anne Robertson led fifteen ramblers along the K&P Trail, entering from McIvor Road. A description of the Kingston City portion of the trail including map, brochure and access points can be found at <http://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/recreation/parks-trails/k-p>.

On this hike we discovered an Ash that is not an Ash, and a Reed that is not a Reed!

We began by looking at Prickly Ash; it has really sharp spines which are good for keeping livestock out; it is important as a food plant for the Giant Swallowtail butterfly. The caterpillars are found on the plant around September, and look like bird droppings: white and brown and shiny. If you pick off one of these caterpillars, they're really furry; they feel lovely. Prickly Ash is a native and has a yellow inner bark. It is in the genus *Xanthoxylum*, from the Greek *xanthos* meaning yellow and *xylon*

meaning wood. It's the only native citrus that we have, and has tiny fruit which are really sour. The Prickly Ash is not the same family as an Ash tree.

We noticed Wild Parsnip, even the leaf of which can give you a rash. It looks like Queen Anne's Lace but it's bigger and the seeds are round and flat, and the leaves not as finely divided.

We saw Cedar Waxwings feeding on Wild Grape, whose hard seed coat needs to go through the intestines of an animal to get softened before it will germinate. Common Buckthorn, an invasive exotic, is a large shrub with dark blue fruits that look similar to similar to grapes but should not be eaten. Other fruiting shrubs seen were Highbush Cranberry and Nannyberry, both *Viburnums*.

We observed Red Cedar (actually a Juniper) covered with brown galls, a fungus called cedar apple rust. In June it explodes into a wonderful orange, jelly thread structure containing spores which attack the apple.

Butternut is much like walnut, but more oval. It tends to grow on north-facing slopes. The nuts have soft, furry covers underneath the shell, are quite soft and germinate quickly. Since butternuts are being attacked by a canker, they have become an endangered species.

We learned that Cattails may be invaded by a moth whose larvae live inside the "wiener", its web holding the Cattail together. The brown part of the plant is all seed, so that is the female

part. Previously, above the seed pod was a male flower which fell off, leaving the spike. If you harvest the green immature spike in June, it can be prepared like corn on the cob. You can eat the roots too, and also the young shoots in the spring, if you peel them down to the core. Cattails are good at absorbing heavy metals, so avoid harvesting them along a busy roadside.

There are two kinds of Cattail: the Common and the Narrow-leaved; both have a female spike of flowers and a male above. The gap between the two parts is larger on the Narrow-leaved. There are also hybrid varieties. There can be 220,000 seeds in a Cattail head, but they have a restricted habitat:

if the water is too deep or too shallow they can't grow.

We observed invasive Reed Canary Grass which can be seen near the Ambassador hotel. We also saw Reedgrass. It is a grass, not a reed, which we could see by looking for the distinctive lashes ("grasses have lashes") and from the parallel veins on the leaves. The growth in a grass is different from that of other flowering plants; they grow from the base, which is why we have to keep mowing grasses, unlike trees which grow at the top. The flowering parts are also different from other flowering plants. They have neither sepals nor petals and they are usually very tiny and hard to distinguish.

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## Ospreys on Colonel By Lake: An Update

### *Henk Wevers*

In 2002, our neighbor built a platform for an osprey nest on his property bordering Colonel By Lake north of Kingston Mills. A few years later, the first osprey pair settled in. Previous articles in the *Blue Bill* (*Vol. 56 No. 2 June 2009 & Vol. 59 No. 3 September 2012*) reported on the gradual build-up of the osprey population around the lake and in the River Styx north of Colonel By Lake, both part of the Rideau Canal

This spring, the ospreys returned on March 19. They may be the couple that first nested in 2002, as ospreys can breed for a decade or more as the original couple or with a different mate after the loss of one.

The nest is located off Aragon Rd. about 800 meters from Battersea Rd.; a large star labeled 2002-2013 on the north shore of Colonel By Lake.

On-going construction of a house during the 2012 breeding season seemed not to affect their behavior. However, in 2013 they moved to an empty platform on a pole on the edge of a conservation area, 100 meters east of the first nest.

On March 21, one of the birds perches on the edge of the nest, and on March 30, the pair huddles side by side. On April 3, an osprey sits in the nest, a sign that incubating has

begun. A smaller bird is busy setting up home under the osprey nest, in the interwoven branches of the large overhanging nest. The occupants on top are either unaware or not bothered by the tenants downstairs.

On May 25, both parents are on the edge of the nest; we notice the first chick on May 27. From now on, both birds fly in and out to take care of the brood. One day, we notice one of the ospreys fly in with a branch almost as long as its wingspan, to reinforce the edge of the nest, thrusting it into the pile of sticks. There are two chicks. The oldest, fed first, is larger and fledges one or two weeks before the other chick.



On June 30, the older chick takes its first hop across the nest, airborne for a second. The younger bird continues hopping, wing-spreading and flapping for several days. Sometimes it rises two meters in the air above the nest, frantically flapping its huge wings, then descends in a more or less controlled manner and settles on the edge. A few days later the first fledgling

leaves the nest, circling around and far above the nesting area, afterwards perching in a tree.

An interesting change occurred in the first couple of weeks of the 2013 breeding season. At the west end of the lake the osprey pair returned to their old nest in a dead white pine, but decided to build a new nest in a more stable part of the tree, less susceptible to the prevailing southwesterly winds. It was three levels of branches lower, two meters below the one they had successfully used since 2010.

About six weeks later, before we see any chicks, the nest is abandoned.

Perhaps a predator took advantage of the easier access.

For the full story on the Ospreys of the Aragon and its 2012 update, go to this address and click the paper of interest:

<http://me.queensu.ca/People/Wevers/PapersandMonographs.html>

## **KFN's Amherst Island Reserve: A Tribute to Dr. Martin Edwards**

*Ron D. Weir*

*The following is a summary of the address given by Dr. Ron D. Weir at the dedication of the Martin Edwards Reserve on Amherst Island, delivered on site 10 Sep 2013.*

Thank you to the Edwards family for this opportunity for me to speak of Martin's legacy and provide a brief history of the acquisition of the Martin Edwards Reserve. The naming of this important staging area as the Martin Edwards Reserve is a wonderful tribute to a giant of a man and his devotion to conservation work throughout his life.

Martin devoted a significant part of his life to a wide spectrum of conservation activities. At the international level, he was Canada's representative on the International Union for Conservation of Nature; at the national level he served a term as President of the Canadian Nature Federation (now Nature Canada); at the provincial level, he was President of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (now Ontario Nature).

In the Kingston area, he was a driving force in the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority and the Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN). For decades, he served in various roles within the KFN, including that of President. At the time of his death, he was the KFN's Honourary President and a member of the Rare Birds Committee, where his enormous expertise and experience provided wise counsel for its members. There are very few individuals in the world who have

the record of seeing over 8500 species of birds in their natural habitat.

Around 730 this morning, before the start of the formal dedication, I walked alone along the south shore of the property to the end of the rocky bar to remember the many journeys Martin and I took together on this property as part of gathering documentation of nesting mammals and birds, and of migrant bird species that use the area during spring and autumn.

By 1980, the KFN had completed the work leading to the acquisition of the Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area. Attention turned to this property at the east end of Amherst Island, where our previous visits had revealed an outstanding site for staging migrant waterfowl and waders.

The Reserve consists of about 100 hectares (240 acres) labelled as lots 20, 21 and 22 with extensive shoreline, about 1750m. The area had been visited for many years by amateur ornithologists, beginning with Edwin Beaupré (1873-1930), and after his death by a small band of amateurs until about 1934. There are no further records of which we are aware until 1949 when Dr. George M. Stirrett, Dominion Wildlife Biologist, founded the 'Kingston Nature Club' (KNC), which later became the Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN).

Visits to the rocky shoal at the east end of the property by members of the KNC began during the 1950s, increasing in

frequency during spring and autumn migration. Sometimes the group visited with permission from the various owners and at other times at the water's edge along the south shore. These lots were among several Kingston areas where a wader census was conducted as part of a ten-year study 'Autumn Migration of Shorebirds in the Kingston Area of Ontario 1964-74' by Weir, Cooke and Nicholson of the KFN. The lots proved very significant in the regional context for staging waders.

These three lots were placed for sale in 1970; attempts by the KFN to purchase failed due to inadequate financial resources. In 1984, lots 20, 21, and 22 were for sale again, but as part of a six-lot sale with 17, 18, 19 to constitute a total of 250 hectares (600 acres). After discussions, the owners agreed to permit lots 20, 21, and 22 to be sold as a separate transaction for \$87,500.

Martin Edwards' extensive experience in the conservation movement provided sage advice in seeking funding support to supplement the monies of the KFN. Through Martin Edwards and Steve Curtis of the Canadian Wildlife Service, Wildlife Habitat Canada (Ottawa) was approached for financial help. I wrote the scientific application along with the supporting census information, and with the wise counsel of Martin, submitted the documentation to Wildlife Habitat Canada. The petition was successful with a commitment by WHC to provide 75% of the selling price with the KFN required to raise the remaining 25% plus legal fees. Following negotiations, a selling price of

\$60,000 was agreed upon, with WHC providing \$45,000 and the KFN \$15,000. The formal documents of sale, dated 11 October 1985 were signed by Joel Ellis (then KFN President), Kathy Innes (then KFN treasurer), the undersigned, and the solicitor for the owners.



*David Edwards and Barbara Canton attend the ceremony naming the KFN Amherst Island Reserve in honour of their father Martin Edwards.*

During summer 1985 prior to the purchase, Martin was part of the discussions regarding upgrading the property to prevent the serious drought condition each summer. Ducks Unlimited (DU) was consulted about the feasibility of making habitat changes to enlarge two of the grass marshes that dried completely by July. When the KFN took possession of the land, DU was engaged to undertake construction of the dyke in order to maintain the wetland through hot summers. DU provided the entire funds for the habitat restoration without any financial contribution required by the KFN.

Arrangements were put in place for a drover to graze cattle on the property to maintain it in a grassland state. The annual fee paid to the KFN would cover taxes on the property, the drover being responsible for maintaining the fences. At that time, cattle were allowed to walk directly into Lake Ontario to drink, a practice that has since been restricted under Provincial law. An electric fence has now been installed to restrain the cattle from reaching the shoreline.

The Martin Edwards Reserve provides nesting habitat for at least 50 bird species, including Pied-billed Grebe, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Short-eared Owls, Sora and Virginia Rails, Moorhens, Upland Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Marsh and Sedge Wrens, Eastern Meadowlarks, Bobolinks, sparrows (Grasshopper, Savannah, Vesper, Song,

and Swamp; formerly Henslow's) and at least 15 pairs of Wilson's Phalaropes.

During winter, the land provides the larder for food for Snowy Owls, Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks. At least 238 species of migrants use the refuge annually led by large numbers of herons, egrets, waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, and terns as well as the regular passage of the Nelson's Sparrow.

The Martin Edwards Reserve provides an extensive area that is safe for the wildlife free from hunting, free from windmills, and free from harassment due to human disturbance. The sign at its entrance is a tribute to Martin for his forward thinking on conservation and for his life-long passion for teaching, generosity and public service.

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## Orthoptera Update

*Paul Mackenzie*

In the December 2012 Bluebill, I wrote a piece about Grasshoppers and Katydid and welcomed others to submit their observations, but provided no real mechanism for doing so. No reports came my way. This summer I kept noticing them when in the field for other reasons. So I cannot resist writing an update for the record. This update will focus on species seen and photos taken; nothing on sound production. There are recordings available; however, I have yet to study them. Photos of hand-held insects are used when they show features more clearly. Emphasis is on species not described last year.

On June 9 and several times later, I saw Northern Green-striped Grasshoppers (*Chortophaga viridifasciata*). They overwinter as nymphs, so adults appear early. They can be brown, but most are green. They are rather large (2.5-3.0 cm) with a ridge on the back of the *thorax* and plainly patterned without bars and speckles. The inner wings are transparent despite being in the Band-winged Grasshopper subfamily. Two other large grasshoppers were seen throughout the summer, the familiar Carolina Locust (*Dissostertia carolina*) with black and yellow wings in flight, and the Two-striped Grasshopper (*Melanoplus bivittatus*), which seems tame and is easy to see. Most of our grasshoppers are smaller than these.

*Northern Green-striped Grasshopper*  
Depot Lake Rd. 2013-06-09



*Two-striped Grasshopper*  
Abbey Dawn Rd. 2013-08-06



In early July in grassy fields I encountered nymphs of Roesel's Katydid (*Metrioptera roeselii*). Adults were found throughout the summer. This brownish insect looks at first like a strange grasshopper until you notice the very long *antennae* typical of Katydids. An introduced species from Europe, it has spread widely in the north-east since the first record in Montreal in 1953.

*Roesel's Katydid*  
In field on Sibbit Ave.



*Roesel's Katydid*  
Amherst Island 2013-06-25



Katydids seem to like lush vegetation than grasshoppers. The Short-winged Meadow Katydid was found often (*Conocephalus brevipennis*). Twice I saw the Black-sided Meadow Katydid (*Conocephalus nigropleurum*) which is small but unmistakable.

*Short-winged Meadow Katydid*  
Abbey Dawn Rd. 2012-09-03



*Black-sided Meadow Katydid*  
Emerald Rd. Amherst Island 2013-08-11



The large Bush Katydids were seen less often. The Broad-winged Bush Katydid (*Scudderia pistillata*) has wing width over 1/4 of wing length. The Curve-tailed Bush Katydid (*Scudderia curvicauda*) is named for the shape of the tip of the abdomen in the male. This requires a dorsal view (from above), not a side view as I at first supposed.

*Broad-winged Bush Katydid*  
Howe Island Ferry Rd. 2013-07-22



*Curve-tailed Bush Katydid*  
Amherst Island 2013-08-11



*Curve-tailed Bush Katydid male showing curved diverging tips*

The sharply back-slanted face allows one to recognize the Slant-faced Grasshoppers. Common in our area is the Marsh Meadow Grasshopper (*Pseudochlorippus curtipennis*) found in moist fields. (see article in December 2012 Bluebill). In the woods north of Kingston, another Slant-faced one is found, the Sprinkled Grasshopper (*Chloealtis conspersa*). They lay eggs in rotting wood and we were lucky to photograph one doing this near Desert Lake. The male shows more black on the sides of the thorax. Note the slanting face.

*Sprinkled Grasshopper Female 2013-08-04  
Ovipositing in wood near Desert Lake*



*Sprinkled Grasshopper male  
Along Salmon River 2013-08-22*



Three species of small Band-winged Grasshoppers were found which show mostly yellow in the inner wing in flight. On the spread wing there is also a black band. They are smaller and do not show the black band well in flight like the common Carolina Locust does. Mottled Sand Grasshoppers (*Spharagemon collare*) were found in sandy areas near sand pits on the limestone plain. Boll's Grasshoppers (*Spharagemon bolli*) and Crackling Forest Grasshoppers (*Trimerotropis verruculata*) were found in the Canadian Shield on dry rocky outcrops.

*Mottled Sand Grasshopper  
In a sand quarry 2013-08-30*



*Mottled Sand Grasshopper with spread wings*



*Boll's Grasshopper showing ridge on thorax  
Rock Dunder 2013-08-30*



*Boll's Grasshopper with spread wing  
Rock Dunder 2013-08-30*



*Crackling Forest Grasshopper  
Note dark body with bands on legs*



*Crackling Forest Grasshopper spread wings*



Another major grasshopper group is the Spur-throated Grasshoppers. The spur-throat is a small bump on the throat between the front legs. But their general size and shape becomes recognizable without having to see this.

*Spur-throated grasshoppers showing spur between base of front legs*



The common small grasshoppers along road edges and in grassy fields and alvars on the limestone plain are Red-Legged Grasshoppers (*Melanoplus femurrubrum*). This can only be confirmed by examining male *cerci* with a hand lens, as many similar species have red *tibia*. All the ones I checked near home were Red-Legged, with long narrow pointed furcula and blunt *cerci*.

*Red-legged Grasshopper male showing genital structures*



Part way up Rock Dunder I encountered two other species shown here.

*Pine-tree Spur-throated Grasshopper*  
*Rock Dunder 2013-08-30*



*Pine-tree Spur-throated Grasshopper*  
*Male showing wide cerci*



*Keeler's Spur-throated Grasshopper*  
*Rock Dunder 2013-08-30*



*Keeler's Spur-throated grasshopper*  
*Showing forked cerci on male*



Also on Rock Dunder I found a Spur-throated one with short wings. Short wings in *Orthoptera* may indicate a nymph, but this was an adult. As it was female, positive ID was not obtained, but BugGuide's ID request suggested Smith's Short-winged Grasshopper (*Melanoplus mancus*). . (BugGuide.com is an excellent site to search for the ID of all types of insects and spiders. They also have a place where you can post photos and ask for help with the ID.)

*Probable Smith's Short-winged Grasshopper female*  
*Rock Dunder 2013-08-30*



I was delighted to find a tiny grasshopper of the family *Tettridae*. The Black-sided Pygmy Grasshopper (*Tettigidea lateralis*) was found on edges of rocky outcrops in the shield with lichens, sedges, and dead leaves. One must be alert to small movements to find them among the small crickets.

*Black-sided Pygmy Grasshopper*  
*Helen Quilliam Sanctuary 2013-09-03*



If anyone wishes to report their findings of *Orthoptera* in the Kingston area they could send to me at [mackenzp@queensu.ca](mailto:mackenzp@queensu.ca).