



The Blue Bill

Quarterly Journal of the Kingston Field Naturalists

ISSN 0382-5655

Volume 62, No. 2

June 2015

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The Blue Bill is the quarterly journal (published March, June, September and December) of the **Kingston Field Naturalists**, P.O. Box 831, Kingston, ON (Canada), K7L 4X6.

Website: <http://www.kingstonfieldnaturalists.org>

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:

jamesrdbarber@gmail.com. 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

Kurt Hennige

With my first term as President of the Kingston Field Naturalists completed and the new Executive elected, I would like to welcome to the executive: Ken Edwards as new chair of the Bird Record Committee and returning executive member Jackie Bartnik who is taking on publicity. Jackie was our representative with Ontario Nature from 2004 to 2012. Thank you to all of my fellow executives for continuing with their excellent work. I would also like to thank Janet Revell and Kevin Bleeks for accepting their appointments as new auditors for the Kingston Field Naturalists for 2014/15.

These last appointments were necessary since our long time auditors, Joan and Bud Rowe are moving to Vancouver soon. We certainly will miss them, and it will be very difficult to replace Bud, since he has always been willing and very capable of taking on any volunteer work we asked of him. All the best to Joan and Bud in Vancouver.

After his recent retirement from RMC, our Honorary President, Ron Weir is moving to London, Ontario. After his arrival in Kingston in the early 1970s, the accomplishments he achieved for the KFN are incredible: from being the author of the two recent Books on the Birds in Kingston to co-authoring with Terry Sprague on the *Birds of Prince Edward County* to chairing the KFN "Rare Bird Committee" and being a driving force to get the KFN "Martin Edwards Reserve" established, and there are many more.

It will take many of us to continue his work, such as co-ordinating the Kingston CBC and the Mid-winter Waterfowl count, and running his very

successful CWS Breeding Bird Surveys, which he has done for over 40 years and hopefully will continue. This year's is the 50th year of the CWS Breeding Bird Survey in Ontario. Ron, I wish you all the best in London and hopefully we will see you back in Kingston for some birding.

Kingston birders have been very lucky now for several years to be able to see the fastest flying bird in the world regularly, since a pair of Peregrine Falcons chose to take up residence in downtown Kingston. Unfortunately, the site they chose has many challenges for them. Since the private Princess Tower building has several antennas on top close to where the pair is nesting and maintenance staff is often seen up there, disturbance to the pair has been regularly reported by the public. It's not clear, but it is suspected that these disturbances have been the reason for nest failure in the past. Reports from the last few weeks suggest that the disturbances reported earlier this spring might indicate nest failure and possible renesting.

Sue Meech has recently reported that Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre is still receiving several poisoned Rock Pigeons from the Kingston downtown area every year.

To gain a better understanding of the effects on our pair of Peregrine Falcons, I would like to suggest to our members, especially members who are regularly near the Princess Tower building, that they spend time there with their binoculars to observe this pair's behaviour and any disturbances. Please report your sighting either to Ebird using the established Hotspot (Princess Tower, Kingston) or email markdread@gmail.com.

Spring Round-up 2015

Erwin Batalla

The KFN's 58th Spring Roundup took place from 1500h Saturday May 16 to 1500h Sunday May 17. The weather on Saturday and Sunday was sunny with low winds. The conditions were ideal for bird watching.

The final tally of species was 192, which is below the average of 199. Areas visited included Amherst Island, Amherstview Sewage Lagoons, Bath, Canoe Lake Road, Moscow marsh, Opinicon Road, Kingston City, Perch River WMA in New York, Prince Edward Point, Wilton Creek at Morven, Waupoos peninsula.

Noteworthy finds are two Snow Geese, two Northern Pintails, a Rough-legged Hawk, a Ruddy Turnstone, an Olive-sided Flycatcher, a Northern Mockingbird, a Hooded Warbler, a Lincoln's Sparrow and several Orchard Orioles.

Participants were invited to the home of Marian and Joel Ellis for the potluck supper and the species tabulation. Thanks to Marian and Joel.

Five teams took part in the Roundup with a total of 21 participants. They were:

Party #1 Erwin Batalla, Gaye and Betsy Beckwith, Hugh Evans, Jane Revell and Alexandra Simmons

Party #2 Lynn Bell, John Cartwright, Peter Good, Kathy Innes, Paul Mackenzie and Bud Rowe

Party #3 Kyle Blaney, Mike Burrell, David Okines and Mark Read

Party #4 Chris Grooms, Kurt Hennige and Gary Ure

Party #5 Alex and Karen Scott

Sightings obtained from ebird and from Private Communications are shown in the last two columns in the table below. Contributors from eBird are: JB, James Barber; PB, Peter Blancher; JC, Joel Coutu; SC, Steve Coates; MF, Martin Forget; PF, Peter Fuller; KH, Kevin Hannah; PH, Peter Hogenbirk; TN, Todd Norris; DS, Derek Stoner. The Private Communications are from JB, Jeff Bolsinger and JC, John Cartwright.

Species	Party 1	Party 2	Party 3	Party 4	Party 5	eBird	Priv. Comm.
Brant				3			
Snow Goose		2			2		
Canada Goose	50	60	78	47	x		
Mute Swan		4	2	2	2		
Trumpeter Swan	3						
Wood Duck	6	1	3	3	1		
Gadwall	2	4	16	6	2		
American Wigeon				2			
American Black Duck		1	2	3	3		
Mallard	10	30	36	28	x		
Blue-winged Teal	2	5	1	1			

	Party 1	Party 2	Party 3	Party 4	Party 5	eBird	Priv. Comm.
Northern Shoveler	6	1	6		2		
Northern Pintail					2		
Green-winged Teal	2		2				
Redhead		1					
Greater scaup		6			x		
Lesser Scaup	2	2	2		2		
Surf Scoter						SC, PH	
White-winged Scoter		10	12				
Long-tailed Duck		20	85	68	2		
Bufflehead	2	4	8	12	5		
Common Goldeneye					1		
Hooded Merganser	2						
Common Merganser		5	3	3	6		
Red-breasted Merganser		20	22	18	2		
Ring-necked Pheasant				2			
Ruffed Grouse		2	6		1		
Wild Turkey	1	1	1		1		
Common Loon	1	3	5	3	3		
Pied-billed Grebe	1						
Double-crested Cormorant	20	50	131	65	x		
American Bittern	3		1	2	x		
Great Blue Heron	5	3	5	5	5		
Great Egret	2				1		
Green Heron	6		2				
Black-crowned Night-heron							JB
Turkey Vulture	10	8	22	1	7		
Osprey	6	2	4	3	4		
Northern Harrier	6	2	6	6	2		
Sharp-shinned Hawk						JC, SC	
Cooper's Hawk		1		1			
Bald Eagle							JB
Red-shouldered Hawk			1				
Broad-winged Hawk		1	1				
Red-tailed Hawk	2	1	1	2	1		
Rough-legged Hawk			1	1			
Virginia Rail	1	1	1		1		
Sora					1		
Common Gallinule	10		4				
Black-bellied Plover			1				
Semipalmated Plover		2	80	9	1		
Killdeer	4	2	30	6	x		
Spotted Sandpiper	3	4	20	12	3		
Upland Sandpiper		2		1			
Solitary Sandpiper			2				

	Party 1	Party 2	Party 3	Party 4	Party 5	eBird	Priv. Comm.
Greater Yellowlegs	2	1	5				
Lesser Yellowlegs	8	4	13		1		
Ruddy Turnstone			1				
Dunlin			27	1			
Semipalmated Sandpiper							
Least Sandpiper	30	30	180	85	22		
White-rumped Sandpiper			2				
Short-billed Dowitcher	5	5	24				
Wilson's Snipe	2	2	5	4	x		
American Woodcock		3	1	1			
Wilson's Phalarope		6	23	7			
Ring-billed Gull	100	50	18	12	x		
Herring Gull		50	35	23	x		
Caspian Tern	1	2		2	2		
Black Tern	5	2	7		6		
Common Tern						PB	
Rock Pigeon	20	6	2	4	x		
Mourning Dove	10	12	13	7	x		
						MF, TN, KH, JB	
Black-billed Cuckoo							
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		1	1				
Eastern Screech-owl		1					
Great Horned Owl				2			
Barred Owl		1	3				
Short-eared Owl				1			
Common Nighthawk		2	1	1			
Eastern Whip-poor-will	1	1	1	1			
Chimney Swift	5		1	4			
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2	3	7	4	1		
Belted Kingfisher	1	2	3		2		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	2	2	6			
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		2	1	1			
Downy Woodpecker	1	2	2	4	6		
Hairy Woodpecker	1	1	2	1	3		
Northern Flicker	3	3	2	3	x		
Pileated Woodpecker		2	2				
American Kestrel	2		2	1			
Merlin			3				
Olive-sided Flycatcher			1				
Eastern Wood-Pewee		2	3	3	1		
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher						SC, MF	
Alder Flycatcher			2				
Willow Flycatcher		1	5	8			

	Party 1	Party 2	Party 3	Party 4	Party 5	eBird	Priv. Comm.
Least Flycatcher		4	6	5			
Eastern Phoebe	5	12	4	1	3		
Great Crested Flycatcher	5	6	7	6	6		
Eastern Kingbird	10	14	14	20	x		
Yellow-throated Vireo	1	2	2				
Blue-headed Vireo		2	3	1			
Warbling Vireo	8	16	14	6	x		
Philadelphia Vireo		3	5	1			
Red-eyed Vireo	8	20	29	7	x		
Blue Jay	10	10	11	10	x		
American Crow	2	8	10	5	x		
Common Raven	2	1	2	4	8		
Northern Rough-winged Swallow		6	22	13	6		
Purple Martin	2	6	24	16	4		
Tree Swallow	20	50	23	12	1		
Barn Swallow	6	12	26	14	6		
Bank Swallow		16					
Cliff Swallow		10	14	3			
Black-capped Chickadee	4	8	16	7	x		
Red-breasted Nuthatch						KH, TN	
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	3	2	1	x		
Brown Creeper						TN	
Carolina Wren							JC
House Wren	3	12	9	9	1		
Marsh Wren	8	5	1		2		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher						SC, MF, PF	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		1	1	1	1		
Eastern Bluebird	2		1	1			
Veery	1	2	2		1		
Swainson's Thrush		3	5	2			
Hermit Thrush		1	1				
Wood Thrush	8	6	11	7	6		
American Robin	12	40	41	15	x		
Gray Catbird	10	6	15	10	x		
Northern Mockingbird					1		
Brown Thrasher	6	4	4	10	x		
European Starling	10	30	12	6	x		
Cedar Waxwing	1	3	14		1		
Ovenbird	2	8	6	2	5		
Northern Waterthrush		3	4	1			
Blue-winged Warbler						DS	
Golden-winged Warbler	1		2				
Black-and-white Warbler	5	6	5	3	2		
Tennessee Warbler		10	22	11	1		

	Party 1	Party 2	Party 3	Party 4	Party 5	eBird	Priv. Comm.
Orange-crowned Warbler			1	1			
Nashville Warbler	2	8	9	3	x		
Mourning Warbler		1	1	2			
Common Yellowthroat	10	10	8	7	x		
Hooded Warbler			1				
American Redstart	5	6	15	13	1		
Cape May Warbler		5	9	1			
Cerulean Warbler		2	1				
Northern Parula		6	16	8			
Magnolia Warbler		12	22	19	1		
Bay-breasted Warbler		4	14	4			
Blackburnian Warbler		3	8	9			
Yellow Warbler	20	30	45	33	x		
Chestnut-sided Warbler	2	6	21	6			
Blackpoll Warbler		2	5				
Black-throated Blue Warbler		6	15	5	1		
Palm Warbler			1				
Pine Warbler	2	3	2				
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2	20	18	9			
Black-throated Green Warbler	2	5	15	7	2		
Canada Warbler		1	5	1			
Wilson's Warbler		3	2	1			
Eastern Towhee	8	12	8	3	x		
Chipping Sparrow	4	6	4	9	x		
Clay-colored Sparrow	1	1	3	1			
Field Sparrow	4	5	3	1	4		
Vesper Sparrow		1	1		1		
Savannah Sparrow	2	4	32	11	3		
Grasshopper Sparrow		1	2	2			
Henslow's Sparrow							JB
Song Sparrow	8	2	20	5	x		
Lincoln's Sparrow		1					
Swamp Sparrow	6	3	2	4	x		
White-throated Sparrow		2	2	3			
White-crowned Sparrow	2	8	10	10	3		
Scarlet Tanager	5	6	6	1	2		
Northern Cardinal	8	2	6	2	2		
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	10	10	28	10	x		
Indigo Bunting	8	12	3		1		
Bobolink	20	10	46	33	x		
Red-winged Blackbird	30	30	121	27	x		
Eastern Meadowlark	10	4	3	7	x		

	Party 1	Party 2	Party 3	Party 4	Party 5	eBird	Priv. Comm.
Common Grackle	6	30	30	10	x		
Brown-headed Cowbird	10	6	5	12	x		
Orchard Oriole		1	1	2	1		
Baltimore Oriole	10	10	21	12	x		
Purple Finch	1		1				
House Finch		2		1			
Pine Siskin			2	4			
American Goldfinch	8	14	29	16	x		
House Sparrow	1	12	13	11	x		
Party Total	101	142	155	124	103		

KFN Annual Reports May 2014 – April 2015

Membership *John Critchley*

At the end of the membership year we have 366 paid adult memberships including 14 Life members and 4 Young Adult members. The adult membership is almost evenly split between individual and family memberships which increases the actual membership to 546 voting members.

There are also 38 junior and 5 teen memberships.

The change we made to distribute the Newsletter by email has received widespread acceptance as we now mail only 36 Newsletters per issue.

Renewal notices and reminders are now mailed separately instead of being included with a newsletter. Membership cards are also mailed separately or included with a charitable receipt if a donation has been made with the membership renewal.

The system of sending out personalized renewal notices is

working very well. This year I changed the renewal form from a third of a page format to a full page. This change allowed me to include the list of interests that until now have only appeared on the New Member Application Form. In the past this information has not been regularly disseminated but by including it on the renewal form and therefore collecting it in my database it is regularly distributed to the executive.

The majority of members are renewing their membership before the end of the fiscal/membership year and hopefully the number of reminders along with the increased postage costs will be reduced in the future.

The renewal notices form part of the hard copy audit trail necessary for tracking payment of membership fees and donations so it is important to return them.

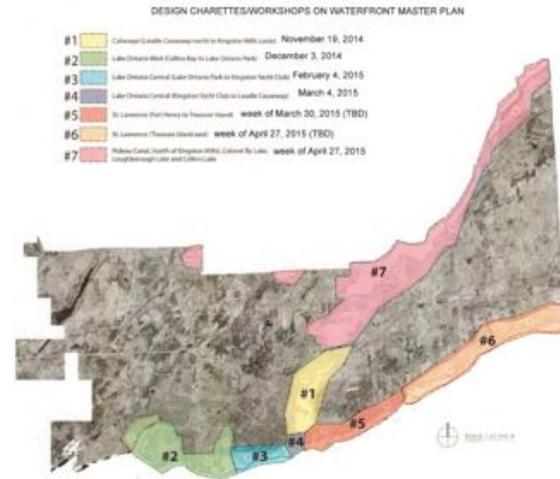
I have received a few queries from members and prospective members

about electronic payment of membership fees and donations. So far we are not able to receive payments this way but I am working with the Treasurer to see if we can accommodate this in the future. One of the issues I have as Membership Secretary is that I will still need to have the Renewal Form returned but it will be separated from the payment.

John Critchley, as Membership Secretary, manages the membership database, sends up to three membership renewal reminders, if required, prepares charitable receipts and thank you letters for the treasurer, and distributes the email notices for the e-Blue Bill and Newsletter recipients. Norma Graham supports John by mailing *The Blue Bill*.

Conservation *Chris Hargreaves*
 The Conservation Committee has been involved in a variety of activities over the past year, and is always looking for volunteers so that we can do more.

Kingston Waterfront Master Plan

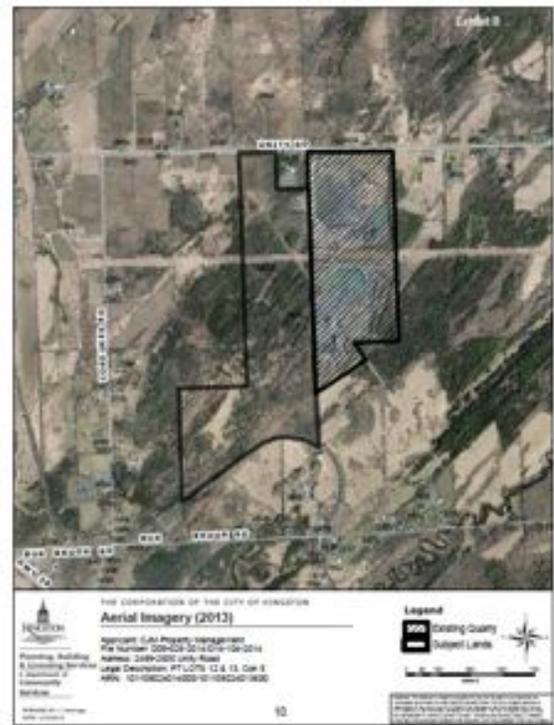


Kingston Waterfront Master Plan

The Waterfront Master Plan is intended to be a guide the renewal of public waterfront spaces, to improve access to the waterfront, and to promote a fully connected public waterfront.

A series of Focus Area meetings are being held to get public input into the Waterfront Master Plan.

Lesley Rudy has been monitoring the progress of the Waterfront Master Plan, and representing the KFN at Focus Area Meetings.



Expansion of Elginburg Quarry.

The current quarry is shown by the diagonal lines on the photograph above. The quarry owners have made a rezoning application, to allow expansion of the quarry to the west, in the area outlined above.

The “horizontal brown line” through the quarry area is a pipeline corridor, containing Enbridge Line 9, a 20 inch natural gas pipeline, and a 24 inch gas pipeline. However, the Report to Planning Committee didn't mention the pipelines: it was concerned about the impact on surface features and well water.

There is currently blasting at the quarry. The proposed expansion would lead to more blasting near the pipelines.

Paul Mackenzie has been following the debate about the reversal of flow in Line 9, the age and strength of the pipeline, and the use of Line 9 to transmit oil rather than gas.

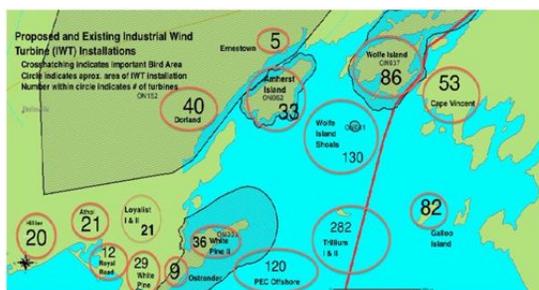
We would like to have somebody looking into the issue of blasting near the pipeline. – Who regulates it, what process will the quarry need to follow to get blasting approved, what are the minimum distances from gas pipelines, etc?

been built, some have been cancelled, some new installations have been proposed. Unfortunately there is not a more up to date record of what's happening in Eastern Ontario and New York State. We very much need a volunteer to do an internet search, and bring this map up to date.



Environmental Protection Areas

The Official Plan designates a network of EPAs: those south of the 401 are shown in bright green on the above map. Unfortunately nobody has been monitoring the quality of the environment within the EPAs, and whether it is being degraded by litter, etc.



Wind Turbines

Erwin Batalla is following the proposed development on Amherst Island, and Barrie Gilbert is monitoring the offshore moratorium. But there are a lot more turbines proposed, and there is much concern about their cumulative impact on bird migration, bat populations, etc. This map is about three years old. – Some of the installations shown have

The KFN began a survey of the EPAs on Earth Day, April 22nd, and will be encouraging the City to clean up problems that are found on publicly owned land. – Everybody is invited to participate in this survey, by checking on the condition of EPAs near where they live, and providing an anecdotal report of the conditions. A series of grid maps to locate the area surveyed are posted on the KFN website. Please send reports to Chris Hargreaves, 4060 Bath Road, Kingston, ON K7M 4Y4. (E: hargreavescp@sympatico.ca)

Many thanks to Lesley, Paul, Erwin, Barrie, and everybody who has done an EPA survey.

If anybody is interested in taking on the projects mentioned, and/or has questions about Conservation Committee activities, please contact Chris Hargreaves.

Education Mark Read

KFN was represented at 11 different external events over the last year. These included outreach events with schools, university students, and seniors.

1. Centennial Public School – Eco Fair (100 attendees)
2. Science Rendezvous – Kingston K-Rock Centre
3. Elbow Lake Education Centre – Open House
4. YMCA, Kingston – Healthy Kids Day (100 attendees)
5. Family Fridays in the Park – Doug Fluhrer Park (25 participants)
6. Rideaucrest Home (15 residents)
7. Kingston Fall Fair – Education Day (950 attendees)
8. St. Lawrence College – Nature Walk at Marshlands CA (16 participants)
9. Queen’s University Arts and Science Undergraduate Society (8 participants)
10. Lennox & Addington County Museum and Archives, Napanee: Museum Kids – Winter Birds (73 participants)
11. Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Science Fair – Queen’s University (213 projects/273 students)

Field Trips Gaye Beckwith

First I would like to thank Kurt Hennige for all his efforts with organizing KFN field trips over the past several years.

Since last May we have offered 20 field trips to the following locations. Most trips were well attended with

usually 8 to 12 people participating. Listed with each location is the leader of the trip who deserves a great deal of thanks for his/her efforts, expertise, and their willingness to lead members out into the region to explore nature in all kinds of weather.

June 17 Purdon Conservation Area, Ken Robinson

July 13 Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre, Carolyn Bonta

July 26 Amherst Island and Amherstview Sewage Lagoon, Paul Mackenzie

August 10 Amherst Island (Martin Edwards Reserve), Peter Good
Saturday, August 23, (Butterfly and Dragonfly), John Poland, Carol and Murray Seymour

September 13 Kingston Region, Mark D. Read

September 28 Prince Edward Point, Bud Rowe

October 19 Helen Quilliam Sanctuary, Erwin Batalla and Janis Grant

October 26 Wolfe Island, Paul Mackenzie

November 23, Kingston Region, Mark D. Read

December 7 Howe Island, Sharon David

January 25 Kingston Mills to Newboro, Mike Burrell

February 8 Thousand Islands/St. Lawrence River, Erwin Batalla

March 7 Amherst Island, Janet Scott

March 28-29 Morrisburg-Cornwall Area, Hans van der Zweep, Gaye Beckwith

April 12 Kingston, Ken Robinson

April 26, Kingston, Mark Read

May 3 Prince Edward Point, Paul Mackenzie

May 24 Opinicon Road, Erwin Batalla

June 7 Napanee Plain, Bonnie Bailey



Special Events

On February 16 (Family Day Event) Erwin Batalla led a group to Wolfe Island to look for Snowy Owls which were abundant this year.

Round-ups

The annual Fall (November 1 and 2) and Spring (May 16 and 17) Round-ups were also organized this year. Groups of members spend 24 hours searching for bird species in the Kingston Region. This year's events were coordinated by Peter Good with Joel and Marian Ellis graciously hosting the follow-up pot lucks.

Christmas Bird Counts

Many of our members coordinated and participated in 8 Christmas Bird Counts in our region.

- December 14, Kingston, Ron Weir
- December 17, Delta, Kathleen, Burtch
- December 18, Thousand Island, Brent Lewis
- December 20, Prince Edward Point, Pamela Stagg
- December 21, Napanee, Ann Brown
- December 22, Westport, Wendy Briggs-Jude
- December 31 Gananoque, Kurt Hennige
- Friday, January 2, Amherst Island, Bonnie Livingstone

Bird Walks at Lemoine Point
Our annual traditions continued with eight May Bird Walks which are open to the public

- May 6 6:30 am Darren Rayner
- 6:30 pm Gary Ure
- May 13 6:30 am Erwin Batalla
- 6:30 pm Janis Grant/Nancy Spencer
- May 20 6:30 am Mike Burrell
- 6:30 pm Darren Rayner
- May 27 6:30 am Paul McKenzie
- 6:30 pm Alexandra Simmons

Website Mike Burrell

I took over maintenance of the website from Chris Grooms starting this operating year. Most of the year has been spent getting familiar with the website and small tweaks. Beyond small changes, the main highlights from 2014-2015 year:

Changes to birding section

Several changes to birding section of the webpage included:

- Removal of birdtrax gadget (to comply with sensitive sightings policy)
- Addition of direct links to weekly birding reports
- Formatted the KFN bird checklist and posted a printer-friendly version

Sensitive sightings policy

Worked with Kurt, Erwin, Gaye, and Mark to develop a sensitive sightings policy; it is now posted on the KFN website and was circulated in the KFN Newsletter

Event/field trip/youth maintenance

This is the bulk of the regular work with the website. Field trips, public events, meetings, and youth information was regularly uploaded to the KFN website whenever it was provided.

Secure storage area on KOS server

The executive voted in favour of utilizing the secure, private storage area provided by KOS to store digital backups of important information. So far, I have placed a document with login information for the

KFN's google account, and KFN's dropbox account here.

Google Analytics

I set up a Google Analytics account and added the tracking code to the KFN website. This allows for more detailed tracking of the usage of the KFN website beyond what is provided by our ISP (KOS).

Regular usage stats

- Started providing monthly reports on usage statistics for the KFN website
 - Average of about 7000 visits to KFN webpage per month
 - Most popular pages are usually the outings, meetings, and youth

pages (which are updated regularly and members presumably visit for information), as well as the Bluebill when it is posted. Additionally, the "Wildlife in my backyard" series of posts (trees and shrubs, bird feeding, attracting birds, butterflies) are very popular as are the birding site guides.

- Additional content of this type would likely attract similar attention

Dropbox

I set up a KFN dropbox account and shared folder for executives. Over the course of this year Mark Read and I have signed executive members up for the service so we can keep our regular work in this shared, backed-up location. In 2015/2016 we will need to develop a file map and usage guidelines.

Bird Sightings Mark Read

4 Quarterly Blue Bill reports: Spring 2014, Summer 2014, Autumn 2014, Winter 2014/15

4 Quarterly North American Birds reports: As above

1 Yearly (2014) Blue Bill report

50 Weekly Ontbirds reports

Massive increase in eBird use with updating of back records taking place. ALL first sightings (plus many, many more) of the 272 species seen in 2014 are now in database. There are currently 92 species 'missing' from the KFN eBird account – 290/382.

The Blue Bill James Barber

Four issues of the Blue Bill were printed, 160 pages in total. Twenty authors of all ages contributed articles. Information about local species and abundance of birds, butterflies. Odonates, moths, mudpuppys and *Orthoptera* was presented. Articles describing KFN activities and member trips, as well as interesting local natural sites were published. New series include a how-to on eBird and Janets Jottings.

The majority of members receives the e-version of the Blue Bill, reducing the environmental impact of its publication.

Thank you to John Critchley who maintains mailing lists, prepares labels and sends e-mail notices, to Mike Burrell who posts the electronic version on the KFN website, and to Norma Graham, who mails the hardcopy version.

Rambles Anne Robertson

Twentyone Rambles were planned this year; two were cancelled due to excessively wet or cold weather. Numbers varied from 4 to 11 with an average of 7 participants. 45 people took part in at least one ramble. Compared with previous years the total number of participants is slightly down and the average number of participants is down to 7 participants from 8 last year and 10 in 2011-2012.

Many thanks to those who helped with rambles this year: Nancy Spencer, Jim Hase, Carol and Murray Seymour.

These slow walks to notice nature vary in timing and location. More people prefer shorter trips so those

trips further afield generally have fewer participants. This year our longer trips have visited Foley Mountain, Prince Edward Point, Purdon Conservation Area, Menzell Conservation Area, Jones Creek Trails (St Lawrence is National Park) and Mississauga Point Conservation Area. Closer to home we visited Depot Creek Nature Reserve, various locations on the Cataraqui Trail, Lost Lake, Lemoine Point, Kingston Mills area, Belle Isle, Butternut Creek, Lake Ontario Park, Cartwright Point and the west branch of the Cataraqui Creek.

We share our nature knowledge. Participants with expertise in a particular area of natural history are encouraged. However we often go home with unanswered questions to follow up on. Photography of interesting aspects nature is common and helpful for identification. Visiting different areas in different seasons adds to the appreciation of the nature found in the varied habitats and weather conditions we have in the Kingston area.

Rambles were started in 1988 as a "new series of strolls on weekday mornings". The aim "is to share our knowledge of nature in local spots for 1 to 2 hours on a regular (bimonthly) basis". We continue these very pleasant outings sometimes accompanied by social stops for lunch, coffee or ice cream. Thanks to all who shared these adventures!

*Youth Report Anne Robertson***a) Juniors**

40 Junior Naturalists registered for this year and were divided into three groups by age. Each group had three leaders some of whom were only

with us part of the year. We had 16 meetings and 6 field trips. The recipe for hands on activities and fun continues to work.

We are most grateful to our leaders: Erica Barkley (2 years), Lauren Grubb (2 years), Megan McMillan (2 years), Paisley Thomson (2 years), Sarah Wallace (2 years), and Dave Eising, Liz Farot, Melissa Fernandes, Stephanie Kim, Huck Nelson, Amanda Tracey and Kassandra Yun. Many of these wonderful young people will be returning to us as leaders again next year. As always Diane Lawrence has been of invaluable help with her ideas and background work to enhance the program. She has been responsible for the T shirt and sweat shirt orders, red this year, and for the card collection project on Birds of Prey. She also ran the September Junior orientation meeting and October Lepidoptera meetings in my absence and organised our January meeting when Scales Nature Park came in with a hands on meeting about reptile species at risk. Our annual coin collection went to Scales Nature Park after their presentation.

Our meetings this year covered Ferns, Caves, Animal Fur, Extreme Weather, Beavers, Wetlands of the World, the Wonder of Seeds and Fish as well as meetings mentioned elsewhere in this report, and the traditional Seasonal Crafts, Bird Walk and Wild Food Picnic. A highlight was our April advocacy meeting when Diane stitched together pictures of Invasive species coloured and annotated by Juniors making a banner, and Steph organised an invasive species song with verses made up by each group on Asian Carp, Dog Strangling Vine and Emerald Ash Borer with a catchy chorus about the government

legislation. This was videoed. The banner and video were both sent to the Invasive Species Centre in Sault Ste. Marie and may soon be seen on their web site.

Field trips went to Sandbanks Provincial Park where we planted Marram Grass and learned some dune ecology, in October. We did a Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids) in November and, in January, we visited the Depot Creek Nature Reserve of the local Land Conservancy where we focussed on animal tracks. We went to Frontenac Provincial Park in February when our new magnifying lenses were appreciated and Landon Bay in March where we learned about Pine identification and saw Bald Eagles. The traditional roadside cleanup at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary was followed by a spring wild flower walk on the Betty Hughes Trail.

Prizes were awarded for summer projects. The Roland Beschel Prizes went to Sarrahe Wendatt, Elijah Wendatt, Elijah-John Tench, Paige Bailey, Ezra Anderson and Ephraim Anderson. The Nan Yeomans prize was awarded to Amelie Robitaille and photo competition prizes went to Marisol Godbille-Cardona, Ezra Anderson Ephraim Anderson.

Two Juniors received Stirrett scholarships to attend a Nature Camp: Hamish MacGregor will go to the CRCA day camp and Marisol Godbille-Cardona to the Eco Adventure Camp at Elbow Lake.

All in all another successful year albeit with lower numbers especially on field trips.

b) Teens

Five Teen Naturalists registered for this year. Seven meetings were held and two cancelled due to bad weather or lack of participants.

Numbers varied from two to four with an average of three participants.

Meetings included a canoe trip in pouring rain on Little Long Lake in September, Owl banding at Prince Edward Point in October and the traditional Bird identification workshop in November. In December we did a Christmas Bird Count. In January we skied and snowshoed near the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary. February and March meetings were cancelled. In April we had a night hike and in May an evening City Bird count.

The Teens now have their own e bird account and lists have been submitted.

Teen write ups of most of these events were published in Blue Bill Vol. 61 No.4 and Blue Bill Vol.62 No.2.

The Teens have been working on developing their own logo, a flying Canada Goose representing the migration of the Juniors through the Teens to adult membership. It has been produced as a patch for attachment to hats, packs and jackets.



We owe thanks to several adult members who have acted as role models as well as friends who have supported these activities. Despite the small numbers this is an enthusiastic group of busy teenagers. We very much hope to see an increase in members in the coming year.

Odonata Sightings & Yearly List 2014

Carol Seymour

As with the butterflies, we Odonata enthusiasts wondered how the extreme chill of the 2013/2014 winter would affect the numbers and species in the following season. Also, spring was cool and wet, hence the late start date, May 19th. Once the warmth arrived though, dragonflies emerged fast and furious in large numbers. During the previous year, 2013, winter, spring and summer had been particularly dry, causing a decrease in numbers of adult dragonflies. Odonata nymphs have the ability to go into diapause (delaying emergence) when circumstances are unsuitable. This year many of those nymphs emerged along with the Odonata normally ready this season. This significantly increased our numbers for many of our non-migrating species.

Due to continuing climate change we had some pleasant surprises in 2014. Painted Skimmers, usually sighted only around Prince Edward Point as strays, were often observed in the Kingston area and as far north as Algonquin Park.



Painted Skimmer
(*Libellula semifasciata*)
Photo: Bruce Ripley

The same for Red and Carolina Saddlebags, both very rare in our area. What's even more exciting is that all three of these species were seen ovipositing, meaning they could possibly become permanent residents. Can't wait to see which of these species survive the winter. Unicorn Clubtails, considered locally rare around Kingston were observed in more places than previously, one pair actually breeding and ovipositing in Kingston city proper.



Unicorn Clubtail
(*Arigomphus villosipes*)
Photo: M. Seymour

All in all it was quite an exciting season for Odonata.

Contributors:

Murray & Carol Seymour, Bruce Ripley, Kurt Hennige, Paul MacKenzie.

Odonata First

Sightings 2014

Date	Species	Latin Name	Location
May 19, 2014	Taiga Bluet	Coenagrion resolutum	Hardwood Creek, Verona
May 19, 2014	Springtime Darner	Basiaeschna janata	Hardwood Creek, Verona
May 19, 2014	Common Green Darner	Anax junius	Hardwood Creek, Verona
May 19, 2014	Hudsonian Whiteface	Leucorrhinia hudsonica	K&P Trail, Verona
May 19, 2014	Chalk-fronted Corporal	Ladona julia	K&P Trail, Verona
May 22, 2014	Dot-tailed Whiteface	Leucorrhinia intacta	Rock Dunder
May 22, 2014	Spiny Baskettail	Epithea spinigera	Rock Dunder
May 22, 2014	Vernal Bluet	Agrion printanier	Rock Dunder
May 22, 2014	Dusky Clubtail	Gomphus spicatus	Rock Dunder
May 25, 2014	Four-spotted Skimmer	Libellula quadrimaculata	Lost Lake
May 25, 2014	Common Whitetail	Plathemis lydia	Lost Lake
May 26, 2014	Eastern Forktail	Ischnura verticalis	Wetland pond, Kingston
May 30, 2014	Common Baskettail	Epithea cynosura	Fred Brown Rd., Odessa
May 30, 2014	Ebony Jewelwing	Calopteryx maculata	Cataraqui Trail at Curl Rd.
May 30, 2014	Hagen's Bluet	Enallagma hageni	Amherst Sewage Lagoons
May 31, 2014	Racket-tailed Emerald	Dorocordulia libera	Portsmouth Harbour
May 31, 2014	Lilypad Clubtail	Arigomphus furcifer	Cataraqui Trail at MacGillivray Rd.
May 31, 2014	Twin-spotted Spiketail	Cordulegaster maculata	Cataraqui Trail at MacGillivray Rd.
June 1, 2014	Stream Cruiser	Didimops transversa	Second Depot Lake Rd.
June 1, 2014	Beaverpond Baskettail	Tetragoneuria canis	Second Depot Lake Rd.
June 1, 2014	Marsh Bluet	Enallagma ebrium	Depot Creek Reserve
June 7, 2014	Red Saddlebags	Tramea onusta	Wetland pond, Kingston
June 9, 2014	Prince Baskettail	Epithea princeps	Lower Rideau Trail, Marshlands
June 9, 2014	Twelve-spotted Skimmer	Libellula pulchella	Lower Rideau Trail, Marshlands
June 9, 2014	Painted Skimmer	Libellula semifasciata	Lost Lake
June 9, 2014	Arrowhead Spiketail	Cordulegaster obliqua	Pangman Trail
June 9, 2014	Swamp Darner	Epiaeschna heros	Pangman Trail
June 9, 2014	Elfin Skimmer	Nannothemis bella	Opinicon Rd.
June 10, 2014	Lancet Clubtail	Gomphus exilis	Opinicon Rd.
June 10, 2014	Canada Darner	Aeshna canadensis	Opinicon Rd.
June 10, 2014	Eastern Pondhawk	Erythemis simplicicollis	Opinicon Rd.
June 10, 2014	Blue Dasher	Pachydiplax longipennis	Opinicon Rd.
June 10, 2014	Calico Pennant	Celithemis elisa	Opinicon Rd.
June 12, 2014	Sedge Sprite	Nehalennia irene	Sandy Bay, Wolfe Island
June 15, 2014	Horned Clubtail	Arigomphus cornutus	Second Depot, Bog
June 16, 2014	Fragile Forktail	Ischnura posita	Wetland pond, Kingston
June 16, 2014	Widow Skimmer	Libellula luctuosa	Wetland pond, Kingston
June 16, 2014	Unicorn Clubtail	Arigomphus villosipes	Wetland pond, Kingston
June 19, 2014	Dragonhunter	Hagenius brevistylus	Second Depot, Bog
June 19, 2014	Frosted Whiteface	Leucorrhinia frigida	Second Depot, Bog
June 19, 2014	Halloween Pennant	Celithemis eponina	Helen Quilliam Sanctuary
June 19, 2014	Slaty Skimmer	Libellula incesta	Helen Quilliam Sanctuary
June 19, 2014	Familiar Bluet	Enallagma civile	Helen Quilliam Sanctuary
June 19, 2014	Rainbow Bluet	Enallagma antennatum	Forest Mills
June 21, 2014	Black Saddlebags	Tramea lacerata	Collins Creek south of Taylor Kidd
June 22, 2014	Swamp Spreadwing	Lestes vigilax	Wetland pond, Kingston
June 22, 2014	Eastern Amberwing	Perithemis tenera	Wetland pond, Kingston
June 23, 2014	Cyrano Darner	Nasiaeschna pentacantha	Forest Mills

June 27, 2014	Whitefaced Meadowhawk	<i>Sympetrum obtrusum</i>	K&P Trail, Verona
June 27, 2014	Vesper Bluet	<i>Enallagma vesperum</i>	Hambly Lake, Verona
June 28, 2014	Elegant Spreadwing	<i>Lestes inaequalis</i>	Hardwood Creek, Verona
June 28, 2014	Skimming Bluet	<i>Enallagma geminatum</i>	Hardwood Creek, Verona
June 28, 2014	Violet Dancer	<i>Argia fumipennis violacea</i>	Hardwood Creek, Verona
June 28, 2014	Stream Bluet	<i>Enallagma exsulans</i>	Hardwood Creek, Verona
June 28, 2014	Powdered Dancer	<i>Argia moesta</i>	Hambly Lake, Verona
June 28, 2014	Orange Bluet	<i>Enallagma signatum</i>	Hambly Lake, Verona
June 29, 2014	Rusty Snaketail	<i>Ophiogomphus rupinsulensis</i>	Kingsford Conservation Area
June 29, 2014	Eastern Least Clubtail	<i>Stylogomphus albistylus</i>	Kingsford Conservation Area
June 29, 2014	River Jewelwing	<i>Calopteryx aequabilis</i>	Kingsford Conservation Area
June 29, 2014	Black-shouldered Spinyleg	<i>Dromogomphus spinosus</i>	Second Depot, Second Lake Rd.
July 11, 2014	Autumn Meadowhawk	<i>Sympetrum vicinum</i>	Wetland pond, Kingston
July 12, 2014	Emerald Spreadwing	<i>Lestes dryas</i>	Hill Island
July 12, 2014	Cherry-faced Meadowhawk	<i>Sympetrum internum</i>	Hill Island
July 27, 2014	Lance-tipped Darner	<i>Aeshna constricta</i>	Lake Ontario Park
July 27, 2014	Black-tipped Darner	<i>Aeshna tuberculifera</i>	Lake Ontario Park
July 29, 2014	Spot-winged Glider	<i>Pantala hymenaea</i>	K&P Trail, Invista
July 29, 2014	Slender Spreadwing	<i>Lestes rectangularis</i>	K&P Trail, Invista
July 29, 2014	Sweetflag Spreadwing	<i>Lestes forcipatus</i>	K&P Trail, Invista
August 4, 2014	Bandwinged Meadowhawk	<i>Sympetrum semicinctum</i>	Second Depot, Second Lake Rd.
August 4, 2014	Spotted Spreadwing	<i>Lestes congener</i>	Bath
August 7, 2014	Lyre-tipped Spreadwing	<i>Lestes unguiculatus</i>	Babcock Mill, Odessa
August 27, 2014	Northern Spreadwing	<i>Lestes disjunctus</i>	Wetland pond, Kingston

Janet's Jottings - June

Janet Scott

A Beaver's Joyful Return to Amherst Island

We all love getting home to our Island especially while we are dealing with the small boat. I'm sure you have felt that big sigh of relief when you make it on and can now lean back and relax while the ferry crew brings you safely home. Sometimes you've been away only a few short hours or maybe you are a Snowbird and have been travelling or vacationing for several months. You arrive at the dock and spot those silos at C.J.A.I. radio station or see the star shining on the barn if your return is in winter. Home, what a blessed sound that has!

Last month Judy Bierma and I had the privilege of returning a rehabilitated Beaver to his home on the Art McGinn Road. He was nervous to leave the carrying cage as he had been away for three and one half months living at Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre. This was a very unusual season at Sandy Pines because four Beavers were admitted and cared for in Napanee last winter.

How did our Amherst Island Beaver end up in a rehab centre? How did this story of hope and healing begin? Way back in February, if you remember we had constant minus degree weather for weeks and weeks. During that time three other young beavers had been admitted to Sandy Pines and then one day I got the call from Sue Meech. Please go to 1605 Third Concession to pick up an injured beaver.

I knew the address and Judy and I headed there to meet Jocelyn Feran and Codey Mayman who had rescued a young beaver, last year's kit who was in a very bad way. He was muddy, emaciated, bur-covered and shivering. The beaver was sitting on the ice covered pile of rubble in the dyke area on Art McGinn Road.

When we arrived, Sue Meech informed us that Codey and Jocelyn had contacted her in the nick of time as he was in a very bad way and would have died shortly. We were allowed to watch quietly as she gently washed him over and over again with a warm spray as caked on mud washed away. When the water appeared somewhat less brown Sue put in the plug and the little fellow began to drink thirstily. Right away he had his temperature taken and received antibiotics. The bath is neat as it is a tub on a raised platform so that Sue does not bend way over when washing this little fellow. He was given a few branches and made an attempt to eat and then wrapped and dried in warm towels and placed in a darkened, quiet area. At this point we left and felt very discouraged about his chances.

I phoned to check after a few days and found out that he was bruised and had broken front teeth but that he was holding his own, although very weak. Sue wondered if he might have been dug out of his burrow and unknowingly moved by machinery because usually the beaver family winters safely

underground with sufficient food to carry them through. From their pens the other three beavers were moved to heavy plastic pools with good food and a shelter made from sticks but still our little Beaver #4 was too weak and stayed in the hospital. Sue found as the beavers improved they chewed their pools and she got metal tanks made for livestock to keep them in. Eventually our beaver recovered and one evening I got the call. Your beaver wants to go home. The very next morning, a sunny morning in May we picked up a fat, smoothly groomed beaver who grunted and showed some objections to a car ride in a large cat carrier. As Judy and I left Sandy Pines we turned to Sue and said "Does he have a name?" and she replied, "We just call him Beaver#4." We took him home to Amherst Island where he was born. They always look like they are scowling but when he got to swim down the pond, nibble some bulrushes and feel and smell home, I think he smiled and when he made a wide circle and swam back to us I like to think he came back to say THANK-YOU!



Thank-you Codey and Jocelyn for caring about wildlife. Thank-you Sue Meech and all your volunteers for running a shelter that accepts all ailing wildlife and thank-you to Jane and Russell McGinn for allowing me to enter their property to release Beaver#4 and thank-you Judy for keeping me company on my wildlife runs to Napanee.

eBird 203: Advanced data exploration

Mike Burrell

This is the last (for now!) in a series of articles to help you get the most out of eBird – it is quickly become an invaluable resource for birders locally and around the world. In previous entries to this series we have covered everything from the basics behind submitting checklists and exploring data (eBird 101; *Bluebill* 61(2): 63-73) to advanced options and tips for entering data (eBird 202; *Bluebill* 61(3): 125-129), to managing your locations (eBird 202; *Bluebill* 62(1): 23-27). In this article we'll cover off some more advanced techniques for exploring the vastness that is the eBird database.

Advanced data exploration

With millions of data points submitted every month, knowing how to explore the eBird data can be a huge learning tool. In eBird 101, we looked at some of the basics for exploring the data. Here we will expand on this to learn more about what is happening with bird distribution and abundance patterns! **Year-to-year variation using the line graph tool**

A really interesting tool to use to compare variation between years or between species is the Line Graph tool. To start, select "Line Graphs" from the "Explore Data" page. The basic line graph has one or more species and displays the frequency of checklists at one week intervals. In Figure 1, we can see the line graph for Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin for the counties within the Kingston area. Remember that you can refine the date and location for this output on top of the species.

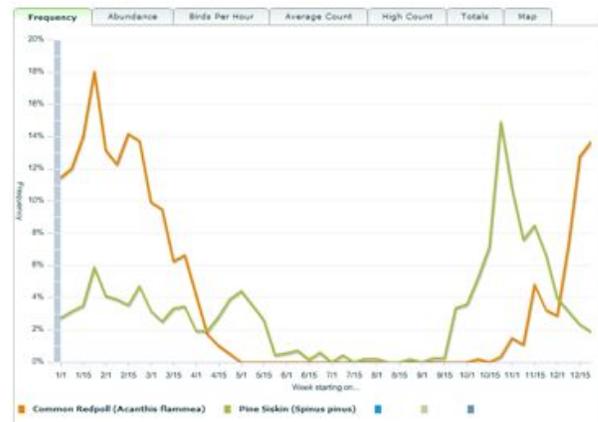


Figure 1 Line Graph for Pine Siskin and Common Redpoll within the counties of Frontenac, Leeds and Grenville, Lennox and Addington, and Prince Edward

The default is to show frequency on the graph, but there are tabs along the top of the graph to switch to other measurements (abundance, birds per hour, average count, high count, totals, and map).

What most people don't realize is that you can use the line graph to compare between different years. To do this, open up the "change date" page and select the "separate years" check box; note that you can only compare up to five different years at once. You can also refine the date range (months) further to better suit your query. In Figure 2, the options are set to compare January-February between 2010 to 2014.

Figure 2 Change date page: be sure to select the check box for "separate year" to compare results between years

Once you have made the changes to your query your line graph will display a separate line for each year (Figure 3). In the example here (Common Redpoll) you'll quickly see that some years (2010, 2012, 2014) the species was mostly absent, but in other years (2011, 2013) it was present in varying frequencies. Not only can you compare which years were "better" for a species, but you can also look at seasonal trends to see if they are consistent from year to year.



Figure 3 Line graph comparing frequency between years for Common Redpolls

Mapping like a boss

In eBird 101 you learned how to make a basic eBird map for a species, but there are some important options to help you get more out of your maps. Pay attention to the "Explore

Rich Media" and the "Show Points Sooner" checkboxes – they each make your life much easier!

Explore Rich Media: this will switch the map from the purple frequency squares to display only points for checklists with rich media (photos, video, or audio) in them. So, for instance, if you wanted to quickly find the reports for a species that contained a video, you'd click this option and then look for any points labelled with a "v". Once you find them, click it to bring up the list of checklists for that point and any that have media attached to them will be at the top of the list.

Show Points Sooner: by default, the eBird maps will display shaded squares depicting the frequency of the species you are exploring. Only when zoomed in to a scale of less than about 1:1,000,000 will the squares be replaced with actual points. This can be frustrating because often you want to see the details behind a sighting but can't until it switches to a point when you zoom right in. If you select the "show points sooner" option, then the data will display as points at any scale, so long as the view extent of your map contains less than 2000 points (otherwise your computer might explode). Use this option to get all the details you want from the eBird maps.

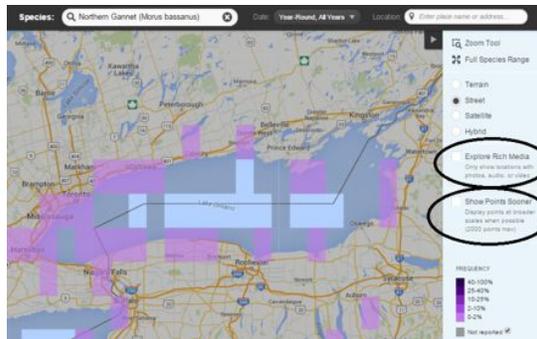


Figure 4 eBird map for Northern Gannet, showing important options in the margin

Target species

With all of this data at your fingertips you have the ability to search for specific targets no problem, but eBird has a special tool for doing this very efficiently. Open up the Target Species tool on the explore data page and fill in the following information:

-County, State/Province, or County: select the area you are interested in

-Months: the month(s) you are interested in. For example, if you are visiting Panama in February, you could select February-February. Or, if you are looking to see which species you still need for Frontenac County for the next year, you could select January-December.

-List: for instance, if you chose Frontenac, you could generate a targets list for your Frontenac County list or you could see which species in Frontenac you could add to your Ontario, Canada, or world lists.

-Life/Year list: you can choose to see targets just for this year, or for your life list for the region specified above.

Once you have chose your options, eBird will compare your eBird data with everyone else's to generate the most likely species. The output is a list, in order of likelihood, of what you are most likely to add. Each species also has a map link to see

where exactly they have been seen, plus there is a print option so you can open a printer-friendly version.

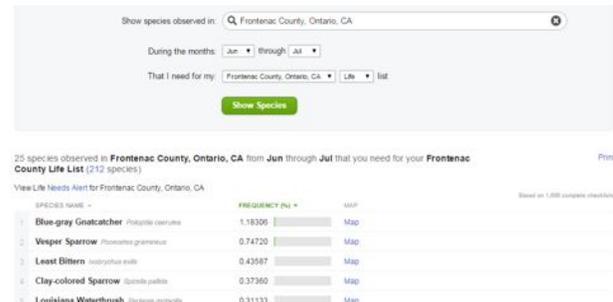


Figure 5 eBird Targets list for the author in June and July for Frontenac County life list. In this example, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Vesper Sparrow are the most likely additions.

eBird Alerts

eBird offers flexible alerts that can be customized to your interests. You can set up your alerts by going to "Alerts" on the explore data page. You can set up your alerts by clicking the "subscribe" button, or you can just view them with the "view" button. If you view them, you can bookmark the page and check it whenever you want. If you subscribe, you'll be given the option to be emailed once a day or once an hour, it just depends how fast you need to know!

The eBird alerts can be divided into two main types:

Needs Alerts: look at your eBird lists to see which species you "need". If a species that you need is reported in the area you specify then it will trigger an alert. You can also refine the needs alert to be for this year only, which will only look at your list for the current year. This is really helpful if you are trying to build your year list.

Rare Bird Alerts: look at what is being reported that is rare. The definition of rare comes from the automated filters that work behind the scenes and could mean a species that is rare for that area or a species that is rare for that date.

In both types of alerts, if a species triggers the alert you will get emailed with the details (if you are subscribed) or it will show up on your bookmarked page.

All alerts look back seven days, so if someone enters a sighting to eBird two, five or up to seven days after it happened it will still trigger the alert.

Conclusion

In this issue we've explored some of the ways to dig deeper and get more out of the amazing data exploration and visualization tools that eBird has to offer. These really are amazing for learning about patterns of distribution and abundance of our birds and will help you be a better birder. Throughout the series, we've worked our way up from the basics to the point that you should all be eBird pros now. We'll add more to this series as eBird continues to grow and new and improved features are developed! In the meantime if you have any questions about using eBird don't hesitate to contact Mike Burrell (613-442-0020, mburrell@birdscanada.org).

Kingston Region Birds for the Spring Season: 1March-31May 2015

Mark Read

The KFN reporting area is centred on MacDonald Park, Kingston and extends for a radial distance of 50km. An interactive map showing the KFN circle is available on the website. If errors are noted or significant observations omitted in the following report, please do contact me and I will update accordingly. We also 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 very easily share their sightings with 'Kingston FN'. Alternatively, please email, phone or post records directly to me (contact details are found inside the front cover).

In total, **245 species of bird** were recorded in our region during the reporting period, one up on last year's total of 244. The vast majority of sightings were obtained from eBird – 59.4% of which were shared with the KFN account. In total, more than 250 observers logged 3049 checklists, equating to almost 45,500 sightings. Just 59 of those checklists were received via phone/email/word of mouth, again indicating the popularity of eBird. Believe it or not, exactly 400,000 individual birds were recorded, though many of these would, of course, be counted/seen again on subsequent days.

The spring of 2015 was late and brief, with another harsh winter extending

well into March/early April. Our part of Lake Ontario was virtually the last to lose its ice. However, a few rare sightings brightened up the scene; a Greater White-fronted Goose in March, an adult Lark Sparrow in April and colourful examples of Glossy Ibis and Painted Bunting in May. Here are the highlights of Spring 2015:

Greater White-fronted Goose: With few records in the Kingston area, the presence of this adult bird at Invista from 22-25 Mar was welcomed by many observers (EdP *et al.*). This record also represents the earliest date for our area (previous 25th Mar 1984 & 1987, both at Henderson, NY).

Snow Goose: The first record was of 15 birds seen at Perch River WMA, NY on 24 Mar (LeE); the last was of 2 birds that had already spent some time on CR8, Napanee on 9 May (KJH). In general, fairly good numbers were noted passing through this year; an impressive count of 20,000 was seen just outside the town of Brownville, NY on 31 Mar (RiB).

Brant: The first birds of the season were noted flying over Verona on 9 May (TAN). Several flocks, totalling 450 birds were observed flying over Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 20 May (KJH). The last observation of the season was of 7 birds west of Rockport on the 1000 Islands Parkway on 30 May (SLD, CTH).

Cackling Goose: Seven records were received this season, the first being of 5 birds at Cressy Lakeside Road (Prince Edward County) on 28 Mar (MDR). All but one of the remaining records were of singles migrating with Canada Geese. The last sighting was of another single on CR8 (Napanee) on 19 Apr (MVAB).

Trumpeter Swan: Regular along the Rideau Canal throughout the period but with decreasing numbers as the birds moved away to breed in April/May. A high count of 36 was received from Bedford Mills on 15 Mar (TLH).

Tundra Swan: Perhaps a little earlier than expected, the first birds of the season were 2 seen at Invista on 10 Mar (EmB). However, further birds (18) were noted at the upper reaches of Kingston's Inner Harbour on 13 Mar (MDR). The last record also came from that location with 12 there on 6 Apr (JRB, MDR).

Wood Duck: The pair present throughout the winter period at Springside Park, Napanee continued into the reporting period but the first genuine spring arrival was a male seen at Portsmouth Olympic Harbour on 16 Mar (TAN).

Eurasian Wigeon: A male bird made a brief stop at Invista on 1 Apr and was seen by just 2 independent observers (DGDR, MDR).

American Wigeon: The first birds of the year (4) were seen at 100 Ft Park, Kingston on 13 Mar. The maximum count was just 36 – noted at Kaiser Cross Road on 27 Apr (JET). Two birds were present at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 20 May (KJH).

Blue-winged Teal: A fairly good number of records were received this spring. The 3 birds (2 males) seen near Seeley's Bay on 11 Apr were the first of the season (MVAB).

Northern Shoveler: The first record of the year was of a single male noted at Little Cataraqui Creek CA on 22 Apr (CPR).

Northern Pintail: The first birds of the season were a pair at Invista on 10 Mar (MDR).

Green-winged Teal: Two males were seen at the upper reaches of

Kingston's Inner Harbour on 13 Mar (MDR).

Canvasback: Just 4 spring records; the first being a male at Cressy Lakeside Road (Prince Edward County) on 20 Mar (BER). Another bird was seen on two separate occasions in Kingston's Inner Harbour on 21 Mar (JJC *et al.*), and 23 Mar (CHB, MAC). The last record was of 6 birds at Prince Edward Point on 27 Mar (RBe).

Redhead: The last record was of a single at Prince Edward Point on 16 May (VPM, AKR *et al.*).

Ring-necked Duck: Numerous sightings during the entire reporting period with a maximum count of 400 on 6 Apr in Kingston's Inner Harbour (JRB, MDR).

Greater Scaup: The last record was of 4 birds on 15 May at Portsmouth Olympic harbour (JRB).

Lesser Scaup: The last record was of 2 birds seen on 17 May at Amherstview Sewage Lagoons where this species has been known to breed (KFN).

Harlequin: A pair was seen at Prince Edward Point on 22 Apr (DeS, PRF). As many as 5 birds were seen there on 24 Apr (multiple observers unknown).

Surf Scoter: All records came from Prince Edward Point with the last being 2 birds on 17 May (SJC).

White-winged Scoter: Unusual records were a male that continued at Chaffey's Locks from 25 Feb to 11 Mar (LCB), 1 at Lower Brewers Lock from 9-28 Mar (CTH *et al.*), and 1 at Charleston Lake Provincial Park on 16 May (CPR).

Hooded Merganser: The first returning bird was seen at Lower Brewers Lock on 2 Mar (MVAB).

Ruddy Duck: Just one record of a single bird at Invista on 2 Apr (CTH).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Just 8 records, 4 of which came from Amherst Island and 1 from Wolfe Island. Other sightings were made at Napanee Plain IBA on 16 May (JJC *et al.*), Chaffey's Lock Road on 17 May (KeH) and Opinicon Cemetery, also on 17 May (KeH).

Red-throated Loon: A single bird in the Wolfe Island ferry channel on 9 Mar (MDR, DiW) is the only record.

Common Loon: The first bird of the season was seen flying over Lower Brewers Lock on 3 Apr (EPB, MVAB).

Pied-billed Grebe: A fairly typical arrival date for this species, with the first bird seen at Invista on 14 Mar (DaD).

Horned Grebe: A relatively tight window for this species was noted with the first bird seen on 12 Apr at Prince Edward Point (JRB) and the last at the same site on 18 May (PRF). A high count of 13 was noted at the same location on 27 Apr (JET).

Red-necked Grebe: Just 6 spring records: 2, Howe Island, 18 Apr (SED); 1, Portsmouth Olympic Harbour, 20 Apr (JRB); 1, Prince Edward Point, 1 May (TLH); 1, Prince Edward Point, 3 May (KFN); 1 Prince Edward Point, 7 May (NLB); 1, Old Front Road, Kingston, 11 May (MDR).

Double-crested Cormorant: The first sighting was of 2 off Portsmouth Olympic Harbour on 25 Mar (JRB).

American Bittern: Despite the late spring, the first bird was already booming at Big Sandy Bay, Wolfe Island, on 12 Apr (MVAB, MDR).

Least Bittern: Just a single record of this elusive species came in, from Wiltse Creek Marsh on 20 May (JVW).

Great Blue Heron: Almost a month earlier than the American Bittern, the first sighting came in from CR6

between Yarker and Colebrook on 14 Mar (BER).

Great Egret: Plenty of records now coming in for this increasing species but the first was noted up at Bedford Mills on 9 Apr (MEC, LJN).

Glossy Ibis: A single bird was present at Ashlands Flats WMA, NY, 24-25 May (DMi *et al.*).

Turkey Vulture: Always early, the first bird was sighted at Prince Edward Point on 16 Mar (BER).

Osprey: Just a little early, a bird was noted at Invista on 1 Apr (DGDR).

Golden Eagle: Two records; an immature near Buck Lake, Perth Road, 2 Mar (MDR), and another on Amherst Island on 13 Mar (MaM).

Northern Goshawk: Four reports; an adult at Hay Bay, 3 Mar (BER), an immature at Upper Brewers Lock, 8 Mar (TLH), an adult near Crosby, 29 Apr (CTH), and 2 at a probable breeding location on the edge of Charleston Lake Provincial Park, 10 May (KJH).

Rough-legged Hawk: A good year for this species with the majority of records coming from the islands. A spectacular count of 50 birds was tallied on Amherst Island on 6 Apr; 49 were still present on 14 Apr (both PRM). The last bird of the year was seen near the Owl Woods on 17 May (KFN).

Sandhill Crane: Plenty of records this spring, from a variety of locations mainly on the Shield (many observers).

American Golden Plover: Six birds were seen at Kaiser Cross Road, Prince Edward County, on 13 May (RKB), with 8 there the next day (CMY).

Killdeer: An ambitious bird was seen on Amherst Island on the early date of 4 Mar (SaB, BJL).

Solitary Sandpiper: The first of the year was seen at a typical location, Wilton Creek, on 5 May (KRG).

Upland Sandpiper: Napanee Plain IBA, where these birds are known to breed, was where the first birds of the season were encountered on 24 Apr (CTH).

Ruddy Turnstone: Good numbers were seen this spring with a high count of 40 at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 25 May (BER). A count of 38 was noted on Salmon Island on 29 May (DVCW).

Red Knot: Just a single record of 2 birds (unfortunately in non-breeding plumage) at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 24 May (KJH).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Just 2 birds were seen, at Kaiser Cross Road, Prince Edward County, on 16 May (MDR).

Pectoral Sandpiper: Just 3 spring records this year: 1 at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island, 8 May (VPM); an unknown number at Prince Edward Point, 9 May (JoW); and 1 at Wilton Creek, 10 May (DGDR).

American Woodcock: The first bird of the year was heard at Sibbit Road, Ravensview, on 30 Mar (VPM).

Wilson's Phalarope: All records came from Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island, where this species breeds, with the first record (2) noted on 1 May (VPM).

Little Gull: Three records; the first on 16 Apr at the Glenora ferry crossing (VPM), followed by two sightings on 26 Apr – 1 at Prince Edward Point and 2 at Kaiser Cross Road (both JRB, MVAB).

Iceland Gull: Four records: 1, Amherst Island, 10 Mar (EmB); 4, Amherst Island, 12 Apr (EIK); 1, Wolfe Island ferry dock, Kingston, 18

Mar (MAC, SaL); and 1, Moscow dump, 5 Apr (BER).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: The single record of 5 adult birds near Lansdowne on 21 Apr is likely the largest count on record for our area (JET).

Black Tern: Pretty much bang on schedule, the first birds were noted at Amherstview Sewage Lagoons on 4 May (KFN).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: This is a seemingly good year for both cuckoo species with the first Yellow-billed reported on Opinicon Road, 10 May (MDR).

Black-billed cuckoo: The first bird of the year was reported on the early date of 6 May, at Queen's University Biological Station (PRM).

Eastern Screech-Owl: Just 7 records from 6 locations.

Snowy Owl: Another good year for this species though perhaps less widespread than last. High counts were 13 on Wolfe Island on 24 Mar (BLM) and an impressive 44 on Amherst Island on 6 Apr (PRM). The last bird was reported on Amherst Island on 30 Apr (BJL).

Short-eared Owl: Records continued well into the spring reporting period, all but one coming from either Wolfe or Amherst Island. Nine birds were seen on Amherst Island on 6 Mar (JJC *et al.*).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: Just 3 records: 1, Camden East, 4 Mar (BLB); 2 in the 'Kingston area', 12 Mar (EdP); and 1 at Queen's University Biological Station, 12 Apr (PRM).

Red-headed Woodpecker: Just 2 records, the first of which came from the Loughborough Lake area on 25 Apr (AEK). The second record was also of a single bird, near Napanee on 29 May (BAH).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: The first returning spring migrant was seen at Marshlands CA, Kingston on 10 Apr (MDR).

Black-backed Woodpecker: An adult male was observed at Colebrook Lake, Yarker, on 19 Apr (BrF).

Peregrine Falcon: The majority of sightings came from Kingston, though it is unclear whether the birds managed to breed this year. A few reports came in from other locations but these could quite conceivably refer to sightings of the same pair.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Eleven records this spring, all but one coming through 16-18 May, the first at Prince Edward Point (TMW). The last record was of a bird at Marshlands CA, Kingston on 24 May (MDR).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: A good spring with thirteen records received. The first was of 2 birds at Prince Edward Point on 16 May (MaF). Sightings away from Prince Edward include 1 at Frontenac Provincial Park, 18 May (AnW), Moscow Marsh, 19 May (KJH), Chaffey's Locks, 22 May (DMo), Tree Frog Farm, Verona, 22&24 May (TAN), and the K&P Trail, Kingston on 26 May (SJC).

Loggerhead Shrike: The first bird arrived at Napanee Plain IBA on 14 Apr (KSB). All further sightings have also come from this known breeding location.

Northern Shrike: The last bird of the season was seen at Big Sandy Bay, Wolfe Island on 12 Apr (MVAB, MDR).

Yellow-throated Vireo: The first of the year was seen at Tree Frog Farm, Verona on 5 May (TAN).

Blue-headed Vireo: Seen just a week before its average arrival, the first

bird of the season was seen on Canoe Lake Road on 26 Apr (RDW).

Tufted Titmouse: Seven records were received from just 3 locations, all in Jefferson County, NY. Birds were seen at Canandaigua, 3 Mar (LiD); near Cape Vincent, 3,12,18 May (DMi); and Watertown International Airport, 5,6,7 May (TaS).

Sedge Wren: A single bird was reported from Queen's University Biological Station on 28 May (SMJ).

Carolina Wren: One bird, continuing from the winter, was seen on 2 dates in the general vicinity of the Tett Centre, Kingston (JCG, MDR), with other records from Cartwright's Point 19,23,30 Mar (JJC *et al.*, VPM); Beechgrove Complex, 15 Apr (TAN); Faircrest Blvd, 21,23 Apr, 5 May (JRB); downtown Kingston, 27 Apr (JRC); and Ravensview, 5 May (VPM).

Grey-cheeked Thrush: Just 3 records: 2, Prince Edward Point, 16 May (MJP, MDR); 1, Prince Edward Point, 18 May (ChF); and 2, Marshlands CA, 24 May (MDR).

Northern Mockingbird: Three separate records: 1, Verona, 18 May (DGDR); 1, Opinicon Road, 21 May (BLM); and 1, Amherst Island, 26 May (KJH).

Bohemian Waxwing: Not common, and flocks were mainly hard to pin down, but a run of sightings near Elginburg included a high count of 100 on 26 Mar (EDB).

Lapland Longspur: The last record of the season was of a single bird on Wolfe Island on 14 Mar (CTH).

Louisiana Waterthrush: Just a handful of records this year, all from the general Canoe Lake Road area but probably referring to a minimum of 3 different birds. The first birds (2) were noted on 26 Apr (RDW).

Blue-winged Warbler: The first birds of the season (4) were seen near Watertown International Airport on 6 May (TaS). In Canada, birds were seen on 5 occasions at Prince Edward Point, with others noted at Moscow Marsh, 17 May (BLB), and Opinicon Road, 18 May (GiB).

Golden-winged Warbler: Much more common and widespread than the Blue-winged Warbler with 62 reports compared to just 14. The first was seen at Prince Edward Point on 3 May (KFN). Thirteen reports of hybrids were received.

Orange-crowned Warbler: The first of the year was seen at Prince Edward Point on 5 May (SJC).

Mourning Warbler: An early male was seen at Marshlands CA, Kingston on 8 May (RKFE).

Hooded Warbler: Two records were received, both from Prince Edward Point where 1 was seen on 9 May (BrD), and a female (probably 2) was seen on 16 May (multiple observers).

Cerulean Warbler: The first of the year was at Queen's University Biological Station on 7 May (PRM).

Prairie Warbler: Just 3 records: 1, Brownville, NY, 9 May (RiB); 1, Chaumont Barrens Preserve, NY, 12 May (RaB); 1, Garter Lake, Queen's University Biological Station, 26 May (PRM).

Canada Warbler: The first of the season was seen at Charleston Lake Provincial Park on 8 May (CPR).

American Tree Sparrow: The last bird of the winter was seen at Lemoine Point CA on 1 May (DRM).

Clay-coloured Sparrow: The first bird of the year was seen at Prince Edward Point on 7 May (NLB).

Vesper Sparrow: A fairly good spring with 13 reports submitted; the first of the year at Prince Edward Point on 10 Apr (PRF).

Lark Sparrow: An adult bird was found at Lemoine Point CA on the evening of 13 Apr (MDR). It was last seen on 16 Apr (BGB). This represents the 13th record for the Kingston area and was seen by many observers.

Henslow's Sparrow: Two records both came from the known breeding location of Perch River WMA, NY. The first record was of 1 on 9 May (JSB), and the second on 23 May (MaV).

Painted Bunting: A striking male was seen coming to a feeder on Amherst Island on 11 May (JAA). Unfortunately many birders struggled to see the bird. It was last seen 13 May (KJH). If accepted (the possibility of being an escape needs to be eliminated), this will be the first record for the Kingston area.

Orchard Oriole: A good season with 40 records of this species. Most reports came from Prince Edward Point with many also from Lemoine Point CA and a few from Amherst Island. The first record came from Prince Edward Point on 8 May (NLB).

Hoary Redpoll: The last bird of the winter season was seen near Gananoque on 13 Mar (JET).

Evening Grosbeak: There was just a single record of 2 birds at a feeder near Wilton on 15 Apr (CoB).

Other species observed during the reporting period: Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Gadwall, American Black Duck, Mallard, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk,

Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Dunlin, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Common Nighthawk, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Merlin, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, 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, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Grey Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Snow Bunting, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville 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, Wilson's Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, 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, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

Observers: John & Ann Adams (JAA), Bonnie L. Bailey (BLB), James R. Barber (JRB), Erica P. Barkley (EPB), Erwin D. Batalla (EDB), R. Beaudon (RBe), Ramona Bearor (RaB), B. Gaye Beckwith (BGB), Lynda & Cliff Bennett (LCB), Emily Bird (EmB), North Leeds Birders (NLB), Connie Black (CoB), R. Kyle Blaney (RKB), Kevin Bleeks (KSB), Jeffrey S. Bolsinger (JSB), Carolyn H. Bonta (CHB), Gilles Boucher (GiB), Sally Bowen (SaB), Richard Brouse (RiB), John R. Carley (JRC), Mark E.

Chojnacki (MEC), Steve J. Coates (SJC), Mark A. Conboy (MAC), Joël J. Coutu (JJC), Sharon E. David (SED), Stephanie L. Davison (SLD), Linda Dietsche (LiD), Brian Durrell (BrD), R. Ken F. Edwards (RKFE), Lee Ellsworth (LeE), Bruce Ferry (BrF), Martin Forget (MaF), Charles Francis (ChF), Peter R. Fuller (PRF), Keith R. Gregoire (KRG), Brad A. Hamilton (BAH), Kevin Hannah (KeH), Chris T. Heffernan (CTH), Kurt J. Hennige (KJH), Tyler L. Hoar (TLH), Sean M. Jenniskens (SMJ), Andrew E. Keaveney (AEK), Elena Kreuzberg (EIK), Sarah Larocque (SaL), Bonnie Livingstone (BJL), V. Paul Mackenzie (VPM), Marieta Manolova (MaM), Paul R. Martin (PRM), Darrell R. Maw (DRM), Daniel Miller (DMi), Brian L. Morin (BLB), David Morin (DMo), Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN), Linda J. Nuttal (LJN), Mark J. Patry (MJP), Ed Poropat (EdP), Darren G. D. Rayner (DGDR), Mark D. Read (MDR), Bruce E. Ripley (BER), Chris P. Robinson (CPR), Arthur K. Rowe (AKR), Denby Sadler (DeS), Taylor Sturm (TaS), James E. Thompson (JET), Matthew Voelker (MaV), John Watson (JoW), Ron D. Weir (RDW), D. V. Chip Weseloh (DVCW), Tom M. Wheatley (TMW), Diane Whiting (DiW), Josh Van Wieren (JVW), Angie Williams (AnW), Cecile & Morris Yarrow (CMY).

Amherst Island Field Trip

Gaye Beckwith

Kingston Field Naturalist's Visit to Amherst Island on March 7th, 2015.

Leader and summary writer Janet Scott

Photos Gaye Beckwith

Nine members of the KFN visited Amherst Island on Saturday, March 7th looking for raptors and perhaps early spring migrants. They arrived in plenty of time for the 8:30 ferry, organized quickly into two cars by Gaye Beckwith and met me at the ferry dock for a trip through the ice. There was no wind and the snow was falling lightly. It was a snow on snow on snow day with sky meeting ice lightly covered in fresh white snow and the temperature at minus 5. Our first raptor was an immature Snowy Owl pointed out to us by Will Reed one of the ferry crew. The bird did not move as the ferry cut through chopped and chunky ice and turned nicely so that Bonnie Bailey was able to capture its profile from both sides almost as if it wanted to show off its better side.



We were met at the Stella Dock by 3 Red-breasted Mergansers all decked out in spring plumage who hardly moved away from the path as the

ferry approached.



Judy Bierma joined us at the Stella Dock. Earlier in the village I had spotted a Cooper's Hawk but he was rude and did not wait around for our honoured guests.

We drove south through thickening snow and stopped to observe a Snowy owl in a tree east of the Road's Garage .Thanks to Alex Simmons's scope we were also able to identify a Red-tailed Hawk close by. Turning west along the Second Concession gave us more sightings of raptors in total 4 Snowy Owls, 8 Rough-legged hawks, 5 Red-tailed hawks and thanks to Betsy Beckwith's hawk eyes a Barred owl was seen on the lower Emerald Forty-foot. Crows were calling and appeared in a group of five along the Second. The feeder areas along the Second gave us White-breasted nuthatches, Tree Sparrows, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers,

Mourning Doves including a flock of fifteen scared up by Gaye behind us while we were looking at a feeder. SURPRISE!! Ravens were feeding on a dead sheep at the Quinte pasture and Goldfinches happily twittered with Blue jays, Sparrows, Black-capped Chickadees and Woodpeckers among lilacs further west.

On the Third Concession we spotted European Starlings and Snow Buntings and were treated to yummy muffins by Betsy.



Here a Red-tailed hawk flew over us to check assorted birders off his list. The breeze had stiffened and the large snowflakes that had fallen earlier fell softly from the branches over our heads. Some were able to catch the 12:00 ferry home and the others stopped with Judy and I to see the Raven nests at 350 Third Concession before catching the 1:00 ferry home where Bonnie was greeted by a Cooper's Hawk eyeing her feeders.

A House Finch stopped at my feeder after the others had gone. It just added a little drop of colour to a snowy landscape on a wonderful day. As well two mute swans flew over those you caught the 12:00 ferry.

For a complete list of birds seen on the trip check eBird for Gaye Beckwith's observations for the day.

Teen Trip

Zoe Coulter

On January 10th 2015, three of the Kingston Teen Naturalists – Ronan, Astrid, and Zoe – skied and snowshoed with Anne to her cottage on North Otter Lake. The day was bright, clear, and cold (about -10 degrees Celsius), and a bit windy along the lake. The day started at

9:00, when Anne picked up the teens at the Tim Hortons on Sydenham Road. On the way to Anne's cottage, we identified trees we saw, including shagbark hickory, red & white cedars, American beech, and hemlock. At 10:00 we arrived at the end of the lane leading to Anne's

cottage, and we donned our skis and snowshoes. We saw lots of squirrel tracks, a mouse track, and a mysterious track that was probably from an animal in the weasel family. We also skied past a beaver meadow and noticed the Water Willow growing in it. We arrived at the cottage at 11:00, where we filled the bird-feeder and had a snack before going out again and skiing/snowshoeing across a frozen pond called First Bog. Ronan noticed a small tree which had grown in an interesting V shape, most likely caused by an ice storm a few years ago. We continued over a small ridge and onto North Otter Lake itself, where we skied/snowshoed around a point and back into the small bay in which Anne's cottage is situated.

On the ice, we saw the tracks of a large dog, most likely domestic and belonging to the inhabitants of a neighbouring cottage. We returned to Anne's cottage at 12:00, had lunch, and looked at various turtle shells, deer antlers and vertebrae, and Gray Rat Snake skins, as well as a pair of porcupine hands. We saw a few different birds at Anne's bird-feeder, including Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Hairy Woodpecker, and Downy Woodpecker. We skied back to Anne's car across Otter Lake, which was windy but much faster than going along the lane. We arrived back at the Tim Hortons at 3:00, where the teens' parents picked them up, concluding the teen outing of the month.

KFN Ramble to Camden Lake Wildlife Area

Joe Benderavage

April 7th 2015 Ramble to Camden Lake Wildlife Area

On a chilly but bright morning, twelve ramblers -- including two visitors from a San Diego naturalist club -- explored this provincial wildlife area located just northwest of the hamlet of Moscow, off County Road 6.

The area, which consists of water, swamp, flooded timber, agricultural and private land, is a designated Goose sanctuary managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources. Established in the 1970s, it is now home to a flock of 300 Canada geese, from April to December.

We began our ramble with a view from an elevated lookout near the parking area. From there, using a scope provided by leader Anne Robertson, we could see a pair of Canada Geese resting on the ice of Camden Lake. We saw Pussy Willow in bud in the bushes below the lookout.

We proceeded along one of the area's two marked trails, to a swamp. There, we learned that 'wetland' is a generic term that includes distinct designations such as bog, fen, marsh and swamp. From one of several boardwalks we would traverse in the course of our walk (some so flooded and rotted that we had to proceed with great

caution), we overlooked a 'shrubby swamp' (characterized by trees and shrubs growing in the water). There, we saw a shrub called Button Bush that produces white flowers or "buttons". Ducks eat the fruits that form after the flowers.

In the swamp we also noticed a fungus growing on the side of a tree, with its cup opening downward, such that its spores fell directly below it.

We saw Alder, one of the earliest spring flowering shrubs; its catkins (the male part of the flower) were visible. Speckled Alder, we learned, has tiny holes in its bark (the speckles), which increase oxygen to this water tolerant plant. We saw Water Willow, which is sometimes confused with Purple Loosestrife. While Purple Loosestrife grows straight upward and has a square stem, Water Willow bends down toward the water and has a round stem. It flowers later than Purple Loosestrife and produces a pink, rather than purple, bloom.

The ramble also took us through forested areas where we examined trees, including one drilled nearly all the way through with very large holes, likely by a Pileated Woodpecker (see photo). Beneath other drilled trees we found pellets coughed up by woodpeckers containing the indigestible remains of what the birds had been eating, such as the exoskeletons of insects.

Sensitive Fern and Marginal Wood Fern had survived the winter. A few seed plants could be seen sprouting, including Herb Robert and Wild Strawberry.

Some of us nibbled on the nut-like red buds of Basswood, and admired bark, carved in beautiful patterns, by the feeding larvae of the Bark Beetle. We found the nuts of Bitternut

Hickory, which have a thinner shell than their cousin, Shagbark Hickory, which has a thick shell enclosing a tastier fruit.

Red-Berried Elder was just beginning to show its leaves. Unlike Elderberry, which has a small black, tasty fruit, Red-berried Elder doesn't grow in an umbel and is not as edible. It is not a drupe, but it does droop!

Our walk yielded various examples of bird pellets and animal scat, including that of Grouse, Porcupine and Raccoon. Grouse pellets are often found in a pile and look like small, brown macaroni. The pellet often has a white coating of urea (bird urine). Porcupine scat tends to be scattered. The Porcupine produces about 200 pellets a day; counting the number of pellets found in a lair can indicate how long the lair has been occupied.

A shortcut across a meadow revealed numerous Vole holes in long grass, well flattened by the weight of snow. The last leg of the walk was out to a point on the lakeshore where we found a scattering of bird feathers, suggesting that a duck or goose had fallen prey to a coyote. We examined the thigh bone, topped by a tiny ball joint, from a rabbit.

Bird sightings on this ramble included Canada Geese, hawks and a Heron, and some ten Killdeer near the entrance to the wildlife area.

Returning to the parking area, we enjoyed a picnic lunch under the wooden dining shelter. In spite of a cold wind, this ramble in the fresh air – pungent from nearby farms – suggested that spring may finally be on the way.



KFN Ramble to Camden Lake Wildlife Area

Joe Bendevarage

May 5, 2015 Ramble to Collins Creek
Fifteen ramblers gathered at the trail entrance off McCullough Park Drive to learn about survival strategies of early spring plants.

Bloodroot is a spring ephemeral, its white flower appearing before leaves emerge on the trees. Its leaf grows wrapped around the stem, to protect it from frost. A parabola of petals focuses sunshine toward the plant's reproductive parts. Scraping the root reveals deep red sap, a natural dye.

Early Meadow Rue's male and female flowers, on separate plants, were opening. The leaves resemble those of the elegant Columbine, another woodland species.

Yellow Trout Lily, with its mottled leaves, was flowering abundantly. It takes 22 years to flower from seed, and then appears annually. It is also called Fawn Lily, Dog-tooth Violet (for the 'tooth', an underground storage organ), and Adder's Tongue

(its red stamens resemble an adder's tongue).

Dog Strangling Vine, an invasive species from Eastern Europe, was everywhere. It is destroyed by cutting off the flowering heads. Pulling up the roots only causes it to spread by the little bulbs that fall off. Wild Parsnip was leafing, with its characteristic tuft. The plant's juice can be irritating at every stage of growth, especially so if affected skin is exposed to sunlight.

Early Flowering (Pennsylvania) Sedge has a triangular stem ("sedges have edges"). It grows in areas of low light with leaves overlapping in threes, forming a triangle. The tip was yellowish due to the pollen and tiny white curly stigmas could be seen lower on the stem.

Some of the twenty varieties of violet are stemless and have leaves and flowers on separate stalks; others, the stemmed violets, have leaves and

flowers on the same stalk. They may have a short or long spur at the back, and may be hairy or 'woolly'. Leaves are rounded, heart shaped, or triangular. We examined Common Blue Violet.

May Apple was emerging on its single stem. Its leaf forms an umbrella over the top of the plant. The bud becomes a creamy flower, then an "apple", which is poisonous until fully ripe.

We saw Wild Leek or "Ramps", a forest plant of the Lily family, with edible bulbs and leaves. It will not regrow once dug up.

Masses of Trillium – in white, yellow and occasionally red – flourished, especially on south-facing slopes. They are fertilized by Black Flies. It isn't illegal to pick Trillium, but doing so is discouraged because one can't pick the flower without taking the leaves. That prevents the plant from building up its energy reserves for the following year.

We saw Sharp-lobed Hepatica (Round-lobed has rounder leaf tips). The flowers of both varieties can be white, pink or purple. Hepatica has three hairy lobes on the underside (the sepals), to protect flowers before they emerge. The stems and young leaves are also densely covered in hairs). The flower is parabolic, to concentrate the sun's rays.

Another Lily family member, Bellwort, was out, resembling a bell dangling above ground.

Bladder Nut's papery seed case encloses round, edible seeds resembling popping corn. On the

edge of its range here, it is more common farther south.

We smelled Scented Sumac, an early spring plant with tiny yellow flowers in a cluster. Early-flowering Saxifrage was also starting to bloom. Another early wildflower, Spring Beauty resembles candy cane with pink stripes on white petals. The flower emerges between two grass-like leaves.

Other plants identified included Blue Cohosh and a vine of Poison Ivy thriving between the fissures of prehistoric rock. We also saw Wild Ginger – its low-growing reddish-brown flower has distinctive triangular petals.

The Tent Caterpillar weaves its home into tree crotches. Black dots of frass line the tents. The hairy larvae are indigestible for many birds, but not for the Cuckoo. It sheds its stomach lining (with the hairs), which allows it to thrive on these larvae, creating equilibrium between the two species; when the number of cuckoos increases, the number of tent caterpillars goes down, and vice versa

Comma Butterfly and Mourning Cloak appeared, and we examined Praying Mantis egg cases. We heard and glimpsed an Eastern Towhee.

This ramble, led by Anne Robertson, unveiled a rich variety of spring plant life. The area is notable for 500,000 year old limestone rocks bearing fossils of Cephalopods and Crinoids.

Bird Nerd Bonus
James Barber



1. What is the name of this species?
2. What type of habitat does this bird inhabit?
3. Where is a good location to try to find this bird in the Kingston area?

*1. Cerulean Warbler 2. High in the tree-tops of continuous deciduous and mixed forest
3. Trails along Opticon Road*