The Blue Bill

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1 President's Page

by Anthony Kaduck

Anthony in Costa Rica (Lynn Kerr)

I'm just starting to recover after seven weeks of very intensive birding across the length and breadth of our province. As a newly-retired person it was my first chance to put in a really good effort during the spring migration and fill in some big gaps in my Ontario list. In the process I visited a number of great sites from Point Pelee, Rondeau and Long Point, over to the Carden Alvar and Algonquin Park and up to the far Northwest in the Rainy River District. We are fortunate indeed to have such a range of great migration stopovers in our home province.

An expedition to visit these hotspots involves a fair amount of advance planning and many hours of driving. In order to get the most out of the experience it is also really helpful to have multiple sets of eyes looking and ears listening. I was fortunate to have two friends visiting from the UK, but for future years I wonder whether there might be interest in running some KFN multi-day field trips. The successful field trip that Gaye Beckwith led to the Oshawa area and on to Presqu'ile suggests that there might well be an audience for some longer range expeditions next year, say to Southwestern Ontario (Pelee and area), or even up to Rainy River.

Gaye Beckwith has agreed to stay on as our trusty Field Trips Coordinator for another year, so I will discuss this further with him, but if you have some ideas for multi-day trips or if you want to indicate interest in attending please contact me or Gaye over the summer. And the ideas don't need to be limited to birding. How about a trip to the butterfly hotspots of Ontario?

Speaking of club appointments, I would like to thank the members who have stepped up to take on new positions in the club executive and committees. Ken Edwards is your new Vice-President. He is a long-time member who brings a wealth of experience to the job. Peter Waycik has kindly agreed to be the Editor of the Blue Bill, a job which among other responsibilities involves some gentle cajoling to get certain delinquents to turn in their contributions. (Sorry Peter. I will endeavour to do better next time!).

Mark Read has taken over as Chair of the Bird Records Committee. If you have had the pleasure of birding with Mark you will know he is eminently qualified for this post. He has passed on his responsibilities as Education Committee Chair to Shirley French, who is returning to the position after a short absence. And last but not least, John Donihee will continue on as Member at Large but has also taken on the task of representing us at Ontario Nature.

Alexandra Simmons has handed the responsibilities of the Club Presidency to me. I would particularly like to thank her not just for her fine leadership of the Club over the past two years, but also for the time and effort she spent mentoring me to take over as President. Sandra will remain on the Executive as Past President, where she will continue to offer her sound counsel.

And finally I think we all owe our thanks to Kurt Hennige, a 17-year member of the KFN Executive and a Past President. I doubt that anyone is unaware of the enormous contributions that Kurt has made to the Club and to the service of nature conservation across the Frontenac, Lennox and Addington area. As Chair of the Nominating Committee he was a bit too successful: he managed to find a volunteer for every position, includ-

ing his own! For the long-serving members of the Executive it will be a strange experience when we hold our first meeting without Kurt, but I am sure that he will continue to be a wise and knowledgeable presence within the Club for many years to come.

The remainder of the Executive and Committee posts remain unchanged, and you can be fully confident that Larry McCurdy, Janis Grant, and John Critchley on the Executive; Anne Robinson, Chris Hargreaves, Gaye Beckwith, Erwin Batalla, Janet Elliott, Lesley Rudy, Polly Aiken and Jackie Bartnick as Committee Chairs; and Peter McIntyre as Archivist will continue to give the stalwart service we have become accustomed to. They are a dedicated group and a pleasure to work with.

Yellow-headed Blackbird – Rainy River (Anthony Kaduck)

Sharp-tailed Grouse – Rainy River (Anthony Kaduck)

American White Pelican – Point Pelee (Anthony Kaduck)

Yellow-throated Vireo – Rondeau Provincial Park (Anthony Kaduck)

Sedge Wren – Rainy River (Anthony Kaduck)

Connecticut Warbler – Rainy River (Anthony Kaduck)

2 Spring Round-Up 2018

by Erwin Batalla

The format for the 61st KFN Spring Round-up was revamped. The focus was shifted to obtaining a better picture of the birds in the whole study area in migration. Instead of teams competing to find the most species, small groups and individuals went to a variety of locations to determine the number of birds of different species that were passing through our area this spring. Birds were recorded between noon Friday May 18 and noon Sunday May 20.

A few loosely formed groups birded together during the weekend. The largest group consisted of Gaye and Betsy Beckwith with Richard Brault and Dianne Croteau, Erwin Batalla and Alexandra Simmons, Mike Evans and Jane Revell. Paul Mackenzie was with Janis Grant, Kathy Innes, John Cartwright and Lynn Bell while Kurt Hennige did some birding with Gary Ure and Steve Coates. Some families birded together: Peter Good and his brother went out with neighbor, David McAvoy in the Napanee Plain IBA. In the Frontenac Forests IBA, Carolyn Bonta and Michael Johnson bicycled with Peter Blancher along the Cataraqui Trail while Lynn Nuttall birded with Mark Chojnacki near Bedford Mills and Stephanie Davison and Chris Heffernan were near Chaffey's Lock. Father and son teams of Ken and Andrew Edwards and Gregg and Nathan Miler had some great finds. Closer to Kingston, Kathy Webb and William Depew birded near Gananoque while Sharon David and Peter Waycik visited Howe Island. Contributions also came from smaller parties including: Benjamin Atkins, Bonnie Bailey, Jim Barry, John Blaney, Kyle Blaney, Kevin Bleeks, Camille Bock, Mario Botros, Sheila Craig, Jeff Daley, James Darling, Janet Drew, Peter Fuller, Chris Grooms, Sherri Jensen, Noah Johnson, Lana Marion, Thomas Merkling, Carl McCrosky, Todd Norris, Mark Patry, Darren Rayner, Sharon Reid, Raleigh Robertson, Paul Schoening, Jamie Spence, Gerald Whittaker and John Wigglesworth. Jon Ruddy led a tour of nine birders during the weekend.

On Saturday morning, the count began with a bang when a Black Vulture was observed perched near the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory. It was seen and photographed by several birders. Other birds of note were: 123 Brants (sev. obs.), 8 Trumpeter Swans (PG), 1 Northern Pintail (SJ), 1 Ring-necked Pheasant (CM), 1 Least Bittern (KH, GU, SC), 1 Rough-legged Hawk (RB, DC), 1 Sandhill Crane (sev. obs.), 1 Black-bellied Plover (NM, GM), 1 Eastern Screech-owl (PM), 1 Snowy Owl (NM, GM), 1 common Nighthawk (DR), 1 Red-headed Woodpecker (AE, KE), 1 Olive-sided flycatcher (JR et al), 1 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (KH), 1 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (JW), 1 Gray-cheeked Thrush (PM et al), 2 Dark-eyed Juncos (SD, PW) and 1 Lincoln Sparrow (PB). Twenty-seven species of warblers and five species of vireos were detected. An unusually large number of Tennessee Warblers (more than 60) were observed in the Kingston area. Northern Mockingbirds, Orchard Orioles and Pine Siskins were reported by several observers. On the American side of the circle, eight Prairie Warblers (not shown in the table) were located in the Chaumont Barrens and one Tufted Titmouse (not shown in table) at the El Dorado Beach Preserve.

Over 70 participants took part and a total of 191 species were observed, just below the average of 199. Black Vulture was added to the cumulative list. Table 1 shows the highest number of each species reported in a single checklist (eBird) for the four counties: Leeds and Grenville (L&G, 37 checklists), Frontenac (120 checklists), Lennox and Addington (L&A, 27 checklists), Prince Edward (PE, 11 checklists). The tallies of the highest count for the Napanee Plain IBA (Nap. IBA) and the Frontenac Forests IBA (Fr. IBA) are also shown.

Table 1: Spring Round-Up 2018 Species Counts

Species	L&G	Frontenac	L&A	PE	Nap. IBA	Fr. IBA
Brant		123				123
Canada Goose	20	10	90	30	25	3
Mute Swan	2	4	4	2	2	
Trumpeter Swan		2	8		8	2
Wood Duck	4	8				2
Blue-winged Teal		1	2			
Northern Shoveler			4			
Gadwall		2	4	2	2	
Mallard	3	6	25	5	2	5
American Black Duck		6	2			
Northern Pintail			1			
Ring-necked Duck	2	3				
Lesser Scaup	1	16				
Surf Scoter				2		
White-winged Scoter				29		
Long-tailed Duck		4	4	36		
Common Goldeneye			2			
Hooded Merganser	2	1				
Common Merganser	4	5	5	3	5	
Red-breasted Merganser		50	35	42		
Ring-necked Pheasant			2			
Ruffed Grouse	1	6	2	2	2	6
Wild Turkey	1	5	10	1	4	2
Common Loon	4	3	6		6	2
Pied-billed Grebe	1	2	2		2	
Double-crested Cormorant	8	110	120	40	1	2
American Bittern	1	1	4	1	1	
Least Bittern		1				
Great Blue Heron	2	9	2		2	1
Great Egret	1			1		
Green Heron	2	2	1		1	
Black-crowned Night-heron		1				
Black Vulture				1		

Table 1: Spring Round-Up 2018 Species Counts (continued)

Species	L&G	Frontenac	L&A	PE	Nap. IBA	Fr. IBA
Turkey Vulture	10	17	8	25	3	1
Osprey	3	1	2		2	
Northern Harrier	1	1	4			
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1		1		1
Cooper's Hawk	1	1	1		1	
Bald Eagle	1	1	1			1
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	1				1
Broad-winged Hawk		1				1
Red-tailed Hawk	2	2	2		2	2
Rough-legged Hawk		1	1			
Virginia Rail	1	1	2		1	
Sora		1	1		1	1
Common Gallinule		2	2		1	
Sandhill Crane		1				1
Black-bellied Plover			1			
Semipalmated Plover		1				
Killdeer	1	2	12	1	2	
Upland Sandpiper		1	3			
Dunlin			4			
Least Sandpiper	1	1	25			
Semipalmated Sandpiper		4	1			
Short-billed Dowitcher			7			
American Woodcock		2				2
Wilson's Snipe	1	5	2		2	
Wilson's Phalarope			6			
Spotted Sandpiper	1	3	6	1		
Lesser Yellowlegs	1		3			
Ring-billed Gull	28	6	32	8	32	
Herring Gull	13	2	18	3	17	1
Caspian Tern	4	1	1		1	
Black Tern	2		34		34	
Common Tern	2		1		1	
Rock Pigeon	2	102	2			2

Table 1: Spring Round-Up 2018 Species Counts (continued)

Species	L&G	Frontenac	L&A	PE	Nap. IBA	Fr. IBA
Mourning Dove	4	2	12	5	10	2
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		1				1
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	1				1
Eastern Screech-Owl		1				
Snowy Owl			1			
Barred Owl	1	3				1
Common Nighthawk		1				1
Eastern Whip-poor-will		8				2
Chimney Swift	8	2	3			
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1	3	1	2	1	3
Belted Kingfisher	1	1	5		1	1
Red-headed Woodpecker		1				
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	2	2			1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	4	1			1
Downy Woodpecker	2	3	8	3		2
Hairy Woodpecker	1	1	1	1	1	1
Northern Flicker	3	2	10	4	1	2
Pileated Woodpecker	1	5	1		1	2
American Kestrel	1	1	1		1	1
Merlin	1	1		1		
Peregrine Falcon		1				
Olive-sided Flycatcher		1				1
Eastern Wood-Pewee	1	5	2			4
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1					
Alder Flycatcher		2				1
Willow Flycatcher		1	1		1	
Least Flycatcher	1	8	6	3		3
Eastern Phoebe	6	2	3	2	2	2
Great Crested Flycatcher	5	12	5	2	3	8
Eastern Kingbird	6	11	30	4	5	1
Loggerhead Shrike			2		2	
Yellow-throated Vireo	5	8				8
Blue-headed Vireo				1		

Table 1: Spring Round-Up 2018 Species Counts (continued)

Species	L&G	Frontenac	L&A	PE	Nap. IBA	Fr. IBA
Philadelphia Vireo	1	1	2	10	1	1
Warbling Vireo	8	20	15	3	3	8
Red-eyed Vireo	13	81	12	7	2	40
Blue Jay	7	12	8	3	6	6
American Crow	3	7	8	3	6	2
Common Raven	1	1	2	1	1	1
Northern Rough-winged Swallow		2	2	2		
Purple Martin	5	2	60			
Tree Swallow	10	10	300	20	10	5
Bank Swallow	3	12	2			
Barn Swallow	14	6	100	30	2	1
Cliff Swallow			31	40		
Black-capped Chickadee	24	18	12	12	3	6
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	10				1
White-breasted Nuthatch	2	2	2		2	2
Brown Creeper	2	1				
House Wren	6	8	20	4	3	5
Winter Wren	1					
Marsh Wren	2	4	5		5	
Carolina wren		1				
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher				1		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			2	2		
Eastern Bluebird	1	6	6	1	6	1
Veery	1	6	3			1
Gray-cheeked Thrush		1				
Swainson's Thrush	1	1	4	2		
Hermit Thrush	1	2	1		1	
Wood Thrush	4	6	2	1	2	3
American Robin	8	35	45	13	24	8
Gray Catbird	8	8	25	5	2	4
Brown Thrasher	1	1	4	3	2	1
Northern Mockingbird			1	1		
European Starling	8	25	10	16	10	4

Table 1: Spring Round-Up 2018 Species Counts (continued)

Species	L&G	Frontenac	L&A	PE	Nap. IBA	Fr. IBA
Cedar Waxwing	1	12	2	60		12
Ovenbird	2	22	3		3	22
Louisiana Waterthrush		1				1
Northern Waterthrush	1	2	1	1		2
Golden-winged Warbler	4	6				3
Blue-winged Warbler		2				2
Black-and-white Warbler	2	14		1		14
Tennessee Warbler	1	20	25	12		20
Orange-crowned Warbler		1				
Nashville Warbler		4	2	4		4
Mourning Warbler	1	1				
Common Yellowthroat	19	30	15	2	9	8
American Redstart	1	20	10	7	2	20
Cape May Warbler		1	2	12	2	
Cerulean Warbler		5		1		5
Northern Parula	1	2		1		2
Magnolia Warbler		6	30	5		1
Bay-breasted Warbler		5	1	10		3
Blackburnian Warbler	1	6	1	10		6
Yellow Warbler	8	50	60	44	13	13
Chestnut-sided Warbler	2	18	8	15		4
Blackpoll Warbler	1	1	4	2	1	1
Black-throated Blue Warbler		3		2		1
Pine Warbler	1	8				1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	3	12	5	16	4	3
Black-throated Green Warbler	6	8	1	4		8
Canada Warbler		1		1		1
Wilson's Warbler		2	1	1		
Grasshopper Sparrow		1	1		1	
Chipping Sparrow	3	13	3	3	3	3
Clay-colored Sparrow	1	1				1
Field Sparrow	1	5	4		4	2
Dark-eyed Junco		2				

Table 1: Spring Round-Up 2018 Species Counts (continued)

Species	L&G	Frontenac	L&A	PE	Nap. IBA	Fr. IBA
White-crowned Sparrow		1	1	3		1
White-throated Sparrow		1				1
Vesper Sparrow			1		1	
Savannah Sparrow	1	7	12		7	
Song Sparrow	9	30	40	8	10	6
Lincoln's Sparrow		1				
Swamp Sparrow	10	30	6		5	4
Eastern Towhee	2	12	3	6	1	2
Scarlet Tanager	5	12	1	3	1	6
Northern Cardinal	3	9	1	3	2	1
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	4	19	30	8	2	13
Indigo Bunting	5	15	1	1	1	15
Bobolink	15	24	15	6	9	1
Eastern Meadowlark	1	9	25	2	4	1
Orchard Oriole		2	4	1		
Baltimore Oriole	5	17	50	11	3	13
Red-winged Blackbird	30	51	82	53	82	51
Brown-headed Cowbird	6	1	25	9	4	1
Common Grackle		30	100	23	20	17
House Finch	1	5	1			
Purple Finch	1	1				1
Pine Siskin	2	8				8
American Goldfinch	8	20	16	8	16	7
House Sparrow		2	16	1	2	
Region total	**121**	**164**	**135**	**92**	**86**	**108**

3 KFN Annual Reports

3.1 Membership

John Critchley

At the end of the membership year we have 356 paid adult memberships including 13 Life members and 2 Young Adult members. The adult membership is split between individual and family memberships which increases the actual membership to 540 voting members.

There are also 34 junior and 4 teen memberships.

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 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.

John Critchley, as Membership Secretary, manages the membership database, sends membership renewal reminders, 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*.

3.2 Birds

Mark Read

Wrote 35 weekly reports for Ontbirds, 4 quarterly reports for Blue Bill (+4 reports for North American Birds), 1 annual report for Blue Bill, organised and reported on the Kingston CBC, and organised and reported on the Mid-winter Waterfowl Inventory.

3.3 Education

Mark Read

KFN was represented at 5 different external events over the last year.

Winter Light Festival at the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum (450 visitors). Mark Read

Owl presentation at Little Cataraqui CA (30 registered). Mark Read

Article about Snowy Owls for Kingston Life magazine. Mark Read.

Radio interview about owls for 96.3FM. Mark Read.

47th Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Science Fair Queen's University (241 projects/285 students). KFN prize for "best project related to observations or experimentation of natural history phenomena" awarded to Ella Hickey for her project, "Could climate change worsen the effects of human pollution on local fish habitat?" Other prizes awarded to Luca Menard for his project, "Wonderfully-Wave-Resistant Shorelines" and to Willy Macpherson for his project, "Tick Talk". Shirley French, Diane Lawrence, and Mark Read judged the projects.

3.4 Conservation Committee

Chris Hargreaves

The Conservation Committee has represented the KFN and provided a "voice for nature" at many meetings of the City of Kingston Planning Committee, and at public meetings on topics such as the City of Kingston Tree Bylaw.

We also represented the KFN during the formation of the "South Shore Joint Initiative" - a partnership of several environmental groups that is trying to get increased government protection of the South Shore of Prince Edward County. (See https://ssji.ca/ for more information.)

In February we helped arrange the talk by Hélène Gaulin at the KFN General Meeting, to commem-

orate the 100th Anniversary of the Canada - U.S.A. Migratory Birds Convention.

Throughout the year we chivvied the Airport and City of Kingston to support the construction of an alternative nesting structure at Lemoine Point for the Barn Swallows which were being shutout of the hangers on the airport. We are very pleased with the structure that the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority has built, and have organized a semi-formal monitoring of the structure to see how the Barn Swallows take to it.

Barn Swallow nesting structure (Chris Hargreaves)

In December 2018 we will be representing the KFN at the Ontario Municipal Board Hearings on Kingston's Official Plan. - Five developers have appealed to the OMB about various aspects of the City's new Official Plan, including the amount of environmental protection it provides. The KFN has received standing as a Participant in the OMB hearing, which will allow us to make one "speech" in support of the current level of environmental protection.

Many thanks to everybody who has helped with Conservation Committee activities over the past year, particularly Alexandra Simmons, David McMurray, Erwin Batalla, John Donihee, Ken Edwards, Kurt Hennige, Lesley Rudy, Paul Mackenzie, Phillida Hargreaves and Steve Coates.

3.5 Rambles

Anne Robertson

Thirty years of Rambles! Blue Bill December 1988 reads: "A new series of strolls on weekday mornings was instigated this fall. The aim is to share our knowledge of nature in very local spots for 1-2 hours on a regular (bimonthly) basis throughout the year". Well we are still going and doing more or less what we set out to do. This year 16 rambles were held. Four were cancelled due to poor weather. The number of participants has varied through the years. This year 34 members participated in at least one ramble and an average of eight people took part. (max 13 and min 3). The enthusiasm of the participants is amazing!

We travelled near and far. From Collins Creek to Marble Rock and from Cataraqui Cemetery to Mitchell Creek and to Sandbanks PP. We visited our own properties MER (Martin Edwards Reserve) and HQS (Helen Quilliam Sanctuary) and the Land Conservancy property: DCNR (Depot Creek Nature Reserve) We also visited Camden East Alvar and Thousand Islands National Park Jones Creek trails. For a change we had a Rock Hounding trip in the Verona area.

This year several rambles were led by different members and we thank those people. Erwin and Alexandra led a ramble on the K and P trail and another near Battersea along the Milburn Creek Trail. Gaye led a ramble on the Cataraqui Trail near Sydenham. Nancy Spencer led to Lemoine Point. Janis led a ramble from McIvor Road on the K and P trail and along the waterfront from the Olympic Harbour. Janis faithfully entered our bird list for each ramble on eBird.

Exploring various habitats and sharing our interests and knowledge is a wonderful way to spend time in nature, socialise, get a little exercise and learn something new!

3.6 Field Trips

Gaye Beckwith

3.6.1 Field Trips

Since last May we have offered 13 field trips to the following locations. Most trips were well attended with usually 10 to 15 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.

May 14	Prince Edward Point, James Barber
May 28	H.R. Frink Center, Bonnie Bailey
June 25	Milburn Creek, Battersea, Erwin Batalla
July 15	Echo Lake Road, John Poland and Carol Seymour
August 13	Amherst Island (Martin Edwards Reserve), Peter Good
September 10	Presqu'ile Provincial Park, Paul Mackenzie
September 24	Kingston Region, Anthony Kaduck
October 15	Cataraqui River and Kingston Inner Harbour, Ken Robinson
November 26	Napanee River Tour, Gaye Beckwith
January 20	Helen Quillian Sanctuary, Kip Parker
March 3	Amherst Island, Janet Scott and Bonnie Livingstone
March 25	Cataraqui River and Kingston Inner Harbour, Ken Robinson
April 22	Lennox Generation Station, Mike Farrell and Kurt Hennige

3.6.2 Round-ups

The annual Spring (May 20 and 21) and Fall (November 3,4 and 5) Round-ups were also organized this year. Groups of members spend 24 hours or in the case of the fall round-up's new format, 48 hours searching for bird species in the Kingston Region. This year's events were coordinated by Peter Good and Kurt Hennige with Janis and Alan Grant graciously hosting the follow-up pot lucks.

3.6.3 Bird Walks at Lemoine Point

Our annual traditions continued with ten May Bird Walks which were open to the public.

May 2	6:30 am	Ken Edwards Gaye Beckwith
	6:30 pm	Kevin Bleeks Darren Rayner
May 9	6:30 am	Sharon David Ken Edwards
	6:30 pm	Darren Rayner Steve Coates
May 16	6:30 am	Paul Mackenzie Richard Brault
	6:30 pm	Steve Coates Sharon David
May 23	6:30 am	Paul Mackenzie Diane Croteau
	6:30 pm	Ken Edwards Anthony Kaduck
May 30	6:30 am	Erwin Batalla Alexandra Simmons
	6:30 pm	Janis Grant Nancy Spencer

3.6.4 Special Events

On February 19 (Family Day Event) Gaye Beckwith led a group of over 60 participants to Wolfe Island where Mark Read met us and showed us several Snowy Owls which he had located.

3.6.5 Christmas Bird Counts 2017 Kingston Area

Many of our members coordinated and participated in 10 Christmas Bird Counts in our region.

December 14	Westport, Wendy Briggs-Jude
December 16	Frontenac, Michael Johnson & Carolyn Bonta
December 16	Prince Edward Point, Pamela Stagg
December 17	Kingston, Mark Read
December 19	Thousand Islands, Josh Van Wieren
December 20	Delta, Jim Thompson
December 22	Gananoque, Kurt Hennige
December 23	Napanee, Bonnie Bailey
December 29	Amherst Island, Janet Scott
December 30	Moscow, Bonnie Bailey

3.7 Youth Report

Anne Robertson

The Youth program year is from September to May. This annual report is from September 2017 to May 2018 for Junior and Teen programs. This year Diane Lawrence took much of the responsibility for the Youth Programs and I am most grateful to her for organising meetings and field trips, both Junior and Teen, in my many absences. Diane always comes up with good ideas and is the inspiration for many of the program activities. In particular she also organises the Junior T shirt sales and the very popular card swap activity- this year highlighting local caterpillars. Nine Junior and Teen events were fully coordinated by Diane this year in addition to her unfailing support at all meetings and trips.

We are also grateful to our Junior leaders without whom the program would not be possible. We are most fortunate to have so many enthusiastic leaders so the adult /junior ratio is really high. (Total 9 leaders and 31 Juniors). Sarah Wallace has been with us for 5 years and assisted Diane with field trips this year. Paisley Thomson came back for a 5th year. The new leaders were Catherine Dale, Leslie Holmes, Barbara Jancour, Anna McKinney and Paul Stafford. Also for shorter periods, Ying Chen, Danae Damianou and Mike Lavender.

Our Junior meeting topics covered a very popular Snails and their Kin meeting followed by Fancy Ferns and Fantastic Fossils. We then had a meeting on Pin(e)s and Needles and the traditional Seasonal Crafts in December. In the New Year we looked at Ponds, Ungulates, Wildlife Relationships and Misunderstood Nature. Meetings on Wind and Nature and Food Ins and Outs took place in March. And finally in April we had meetings on Migration (Should I come or should I not?) and our advocacy meeting when we sent MP Mark Gerretsen some puzzle pieces we made with notes thanking the government for $1.3 billion for land protection and asking for 17% protected lands by 2020. These puzzle pieces were in the window of the MP's office during May. Megan Snetsinger gave a short presentation introducing the importance of land protection. We finished the Junior program with our Bird Walk at Lemoine Point and the traditional Wild Food Picnic, this year at the Outdoor Centre of the Conservation Authority.

Junior Field trips went to Thousand Islands National Park Jones Creek Trails in October. In November we went Fossil Hunting. The January trip went to ELEEC (Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre) and in February a Conifer Caper to Parrott Bay ending with a pizza box of specimens (collected elsewhere). In March the Nan Yeomans Fund paid for a trip to the Aquatarium in Brockville. Our annual roadside cleanup and wildflower hike took place at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary in April.

Summer project prizes were awarded to three Juniors. The Roland Beschel Prizes went to Paige Bailey and Hazel Taylor Quick and a photo competition prize to Jasmine Handforth. A Stirrett scholarship to nature camp at the Conservation Authority was awarded to Raiden Hughes.

This year we chose to support habitat protection and our coin collection went to NCC (Nature Conservancy Canada) to protect property on the Napanee Plain specifically the Camden East alvar. We hope to have a field trip there next fall.

We had six enthusiastic Teen members this year. Teens meet once a month usually out of doors. Field notebooks for each trip are kept and one member writes a report each outing which may be found in Blue Bill. Teens are invited to participate in other youth programs put on by Bird Studies Canada and Ontario Nature.

In September we met for a canoe trip to Big Salmon Lake in Frontenac Park with Carolyn Bonta (Blue Bill, March 2018). Our October trip was an exploration around a Beaver pond which the Teens did on their own carefully watched from afar. In November, as usual, we had our Bird identification workshop. This traditional meeting focusses on the KFN Bird collections' new specimens which are labelled, freeze dried and stored in bins for use in education programs and displays. We now have 531 birds of 129 species- and growing. The KFN Bird Collection was delighted to accept the skin of a Trumpeter Swan this year (these are very big

birds!).

The Teens joined the Friends of Frontenac Park for the very successful December Christmas Bird Count run by Carolyn Bonta. They also helped with the presentation to the younger participants at this event.

January and April were cancelled due to weather. The February trip joined the Family Day Wolfe Island outing to see Snowy owls (and practice using scopes). In March the trip was to Sandy Pines (Blue Bill March 2018). Both these trips with Diane.

In May we had a very successful evening and night hike. We learned about trail cams, setting one up at HQS and seeing the very successful recordings collected previously on other cameras. Thank you Shirley French. We then walked the Greenwood Track with Gary Ure and were lucky enough to experience the Woodcock display, hear snipe and five Whip-Poor-Wills!! We also heard a Barred Owl and various frog calls.

Despite decreasing numbers the programs are running well. We are still learning all the time and having fun. We thank our many helpers and supporters.

3.8 Nature Reserves

Erwin Batalla

3.8.1 Helen Quilliam Sanctuary

At last year's cleanup, seventeen KFN members inspected our trail system, removing some debris and adding markers when necessary.

During this past winter, Dianne Croteau, Richard Brault, Kip Parker and Erwin Batalla inspected the portion of the Porcupine Trail connecting the Boundary trail to the Roland Beschel trail. Several markers were added.

There was a visit of the Greenwood property with Jamie Joudrey and her intern from the Ontario Heritage Trust.

3.8.2 Martin Edwards Reserve

In the spring, Dianne, Richard and Erwin cleaned all the metal Purple Martin boxes. Kurt Hennige arranged for four new wooden boxes to be installed. These boxes are attracting many Martins so our colony is very healthy.

The trough system was cleaned in May by Richard, Erwin and Mike Evans. It is functioning and the drover continues to keep about 50 heads of cattle on the property during the summer. This ensures that the property remains a valuable habitat of grassland species.

The biggest news was the acquisition of the Sylvester property. It is an 80 acre lot adjacent to the MER. A separate article describing this property will appear in the Blue Bill soon.

3.8.3 Monitoring

The KFN entered into an agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to continue to monitor the Lost Bay property. It is located north of Gananoque. Erwin and Paul Mackenzie completed our annual visit of the property in the Fall.

Janet Elliott, Janis Grant , Maureen Addis and Erwin visited Evan's Woods in May. We met with Monte Hummel and walked through the property. A report was submitted to the NCC.

3.9 Vice-President's Report

Anthony Kaduck

As KFN Vice-president, I sat on the Executive, replaced the President when she was unable to attend Executive or General Meetings, and was responsible for finding and hosting speakers for General Meetings. The past year's speakers and topics are listed below. I would like to thank everyone who helped to host, introduce or thank the speakers.

21 September 2017
Tom Mason
Retired Curator of Invertebrates for the Toronto Zoo
Spiders of Ontario

19 October 2017
Robert Alvo
Conservation Biologist
Being a Bird in North America

16 November 2017
Lt Col (Ret'd) Anthony Kaduck
KFN Vice-President
Exercise Booby Tern XXI - Ornithological Fieldwork with the British Army on Ascension Island

21 December 2017
Members' Night

18 January 2018
Peter Mills
Graduate Student, Trent University
Metamorphosis: Changing the way we look at Amphibians

15 February 2018
Oliver K. Reichl
Arborsphere Arboriculture & Urban Forestry Consulting
What is Happening with Our Trees?

15 March 2018
Hélène Gaulin
Canadian Wildlife Service
Bird Conservation

19 April 2018
Janis Grant
KFN Recording Secretary
April on the Louisiana and Texas Gulf Coast
and
Anne Robertson
KFN Youth and Teens Chair
Impressions of Spring in South Africa

17 May 2018 (May Dinner)
Steve Burrows
Mystery writer, Journalist
From Birder to Birder Murder Mystery

The Blue Bill needs you!

This area could contain your
article, anecdote, fantastic photo, nature sketch,
report, puzzle, quiz, conundrum,
cartoon, or other contribution.

Email The Blue Bill (editor@thebluebill.ca) for more information.

4 Kingston Region Birds – Spring 2018 (March 1 to May 31)

by Mark D. 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. Due to a technical issue with the downloaded dataset, this report will be less thorough than usual. However, if errors are noted or significant observations omitted, please contact me and I will update accordingly. We also encourage you to submit ***all*** 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 the username 'Kingston FN'. Alternatively, please email, phone or post records directly to me (contact details are found inside the front cover).

In total, **248 species of bird** were recorded in our region during the reporting period, three down on last year's spring total of 251. All sightings were obtained from eBird (www.ebird.ca). In total, 409 observers logged 3719 checklists, equating to 59,711 sightings. As usual, an impressive number of individual birds (580,467) were recorded, though many of these were, of course, the same birds seen on subsequent days. A huge thank you goes out to every observer, without whom our understanding of bird distribution would be far more limited. Unfortunately, only observers with sightings in the current report are noted below.

The spring of 2018 was split into early arrivals of blackbirds, followed by a cold snap and accompanying northerly winds that blocked further migration for several weeks. Many commented that we went straight from winter into summer with many migrants heading straight for breeding grounds. Mind you, migration hotspots like Prince Edward Point still produced some great records. Here are the highlights of spring 2018:

Snow Goose: A relatively good spring for this species with flights noticed on several days. A high count of 3315 was noted in Kingston on 26th March (MDR).

Greater White-fronted Goose: Just one record this spring of a single bird at Perch River WMA, NY on 23rd March (JSB).

Brant: The high count this year was made at Camden Lake on 25th May when 760 birds were counted in several small flocks (JPR).

Cackling Goose: Fifteen reports this spring with the first at New Canal Dock, Wolfe Island on 3rd March. The high count of 18 came from the same location on 20th March (MDR).

Trumpeter Swan: Regular along the Rideau Canal throughout the period but with decreasing numbers as the birds moved away to breed in April/May (KFN).

Tundra Swan: Very poor numbers this spring with a high count of just 12 at Button Bay on 29th March and the last at Reed's Bay (both Wolfe Island) on 11th April (MDR).

Blue-winged Teal: The first record for the year was of 2 birds at Perch River WMA, NY on 21st March (NiL).

Eurasian Wigeon: A male was seen at Perch River WMA, NY on 2nd March (IaD, SaD, AnS, MaS).

Canvasback: Just 2 'spring' records with 1 in Kingston on 3rd March and 3 at Gananoque on 6th March (JPR).

Redhead: The last bird of the season was seen at Prince Edward Point on 2nd May (TMW).

Harlequin Duck: Two males stayed at Prince Edward Point for about a week after first being observed on 8th May (GeP).

Black Scoter: Just 2 records, both from Prince Edward Point with 2 on 21st April (NaP) and 1 on 20th May (CJG).

Barrow's Goldeneye: A pair was seen at Point Peninsula, NY, on 5th March (NiL).

Ruddy Duck: Late this year, the first record was

23rd April when 5 birds were seen at Perch Lake, NY (BrM).

Common Loon: The first bird of the season was seen at Horne's Ferry, Wolfe Island on 27th Mar (MDR).

Red-necked Grebe: The first bird of the year was seen on 10th April at Point Peninsula, NY (RiB).

Double-crested Cormorant: The first bird of the season was seen in Kingston on 20th Mar (MDR).

American Bittern: The first bird of the year was seen near Seeley's Bay on 17th April (GaU).

Least Bittern: Seven records this spring with the first at Moscow Marsh on 12th May (TAN).

Snowy Egret: First seen on 10th May (TMW), this fantastic bird stayed until 17th (TLH).

Black Vulture: With a single bird first seen at Prince Edward Point on 7th April (NaP), it later transpired that at least 4, possibly 5 birds, were 'stuck' in the county with numerous sightings through to late May.

Osprey: The first arrival was seen at RMC, Kingston on 27th March (NiW).

Swallow-tailed Kite: An example of this striking bird was seen at Prince Edward Point on 5th May (PhM, DO).

Golden Eagle: Nine records this spring from a number of locations, the first at Burnt Hills Road (presumably wintering) on 9th March (CTH).

Northern Goshawk: An average season for this species with 4 records, 3 from the Chaffey's Lock area (CTH).

Sandhill Crane: An apparently increasing species with 42 records this spring from a variety of locations. The first of the year was at Florida Road, Murvale, on 20th March (CJG).

American Golden-Plover: An unusual spring record of 1 at Kaiser Cross Road on 16th May (MDR).

Whimbrel: Twelve birds were seen in flight off Wolfe Island on 25th May (MDR), with 15 at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 26th (NAK, VPM).

Ruddy Turnstone: A high count of 26 birds at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 26th May (NAK, VPM).

Stilt Sandpiper: A single bird was at Amherstview Sewage Lagoons on 25th May (VPM).

Sanderling: Three birding parties noted this species at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 26th May, with a high count of 10 (KFN).

White-rumped Sandpiper: The first record (and high count) was of 2 birds at Wilton Creek on 25th May (JoL).

Pectoral Sandpiper: The first of just 3 spring records was a single seen at Russel Road, Lansdowne on 28th April (JET).

Wilson's Phalarope: All but one record came from Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island, where this species breeds, with the first birds (7) noted on 6th May (MDR). The other record was of a single bird at Kaiser Cross Road on 9th May (GeP).

Little Gull: Great numbers this year, with records from Wolfe Island, Amherst Island, Point Peninsula and Kaiser Cross Road, where the first of the year (13) were seen on 19th April (MDR). A high count of 32 came from the same site on 10th May (MVAB et. al.).

Black Tern: The first bird of the spring was seen at the unusual location of Lake Ontario (Wolfe Island crossing) on 6th May (MDR).

White-winged Dove: A relatively confiding bird present for a few days from 1st May at a private feeder (DaE, JoH) at Sandhurst Shores was seen by several observers.

Snowy Owl: A great year for this species. The last bird was seen at Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island on 27th May (BrG, KaV).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: Breeding (2 pairs) was confirmed at a private location north of Kingston.

The fledglings were banded.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Four records from the known breeding location of Frontenac Provincial Park with another migrating bird seen at prince Edward Point on 13th May (TMW).

Peregrine Falcon: Records came from across the area with breeding noted in Kingston and 2 noted at the 'Quinte Skyway'.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: A good spring with 14 records, the first from Henderson Bay, NY on 12th May (MAK).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Seventeen records this spring with a high of 3 at Prince Edward Point on 17th May (RKFE et. al.).

Loggerhead Shrike: The first bird of the year was seen at Napanee Plain IBA on 2nd April (BLB).

Northern Shrike: The last bird of the season was seen at Prince Edward Point on 21st April (RKB).

White-eyed Vireo: A single bird was noted at Prince Edward Point on 21st May (DaB).

Tufted Titmouse: Just 3 records this spring, 2 from the US and 1 from the unusual location of Bedford Mills where a single bird was seen on 3rd April (MEC).

Carolina Wren: A bumper season with 19 records, from a number of locations in Kingston, as well as Prince Edward Point and the US. Two birds were noted at Cartwright Point on 20th May (VPM).

Grey-cheeked Thrush: Two spring records this year; the first near Godfrey on 20th May (VPM et.al.) and the second at Prince Edward Point on 27th May (RKB).

Northern Mockingbird: A good season with 14 records, the majority from Amherst Island.

Lapland Longspur: A good season with a remarkable 72 birds counted on Hwy 96, Wolfe Island on 29th April (GeP).

Louisiana Waterthrush: All of the 10 records came from the known location of Canoe Lake Road, with the first seen on 3rd May (TAN).

Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warbler: A bumper year for this species pair with Golden-winged Warbler more common (76) and widespread than the Blue-winged Warbler (42 reports).

Orange-crowned Warbler: The first of 14 birds was seen at Prince Edward Point on 5th May (MJP).

Mourning Warbler: A good year with 20 reports, the first of which came from Marshlands CA, Kingston on 15th May (EDB).

Hooded Warbler: A single bird was reported from Wellesley Island, NY on 27th May (MaB).

Cerulean Warbler: Several records this season, with the first bird at Frontenac Provincial Park on 9th May (DaD). Other records came from Canoe Lake Road, Opinicon Road and Prince Edward Point.

Prairie Warbler: All but 1 record came from the traditional breeding areas of Chaumont Barrens and nearby locations in NY. The Ontario bird was seen at Lemoine Point, Kingston on 17th May (TAN).

Canada Warbler: The first bird of the season was seen at Prince Edward Point on 10th May (RKFE).

Henslow's Sparrow: All 4 records came from the Perch River WMA NY area, with the first there on 17th May (JaW).

Lark Bunting: This surprise find was photographed at Gravelly bay Road, Prince Edward on 17th May (TiS).

Orchard Oriole: A great season with 66 records, the first of which was a male at Sandhurst Shores on 6th May (MDR).

Rusty Blackbird: The first bird of the year was at Prince Edward Point on 27th April (TMW). This year's high count came from perch River WMA, NY where 118 birds were counted on 27th April (IaD, SaD, AnS, MaS).

Red Crossbill: A single bird was noted at Lit-

tle Cataraqui Creek CA, Kingston, on 4th March (WTD, KAW).

Pine Siskin: A much better year for this species with the last birds noted on 27th May near Crosby (SLD, CTH).

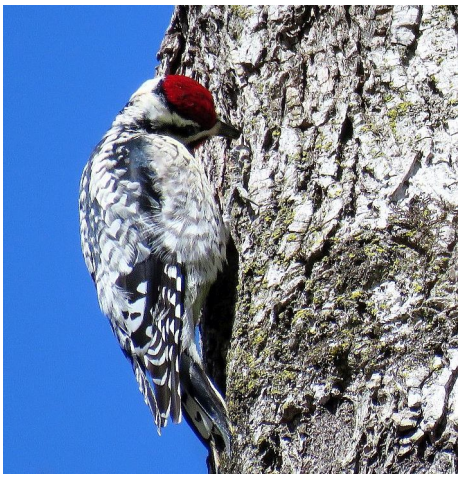
Other species observed during the reporting period: Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Upland Sandpiper, Dunlin, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, American Woodcock, Wilson's Snipe, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Common Nighthawk, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 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, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Warbling 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, Grasshopper Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-coloured Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, House Finch, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

Observers: Bonnie L. Bailey (BLB), Erwin D. Batalla (EDB), R. Kyle Blaney (RKB), Jeffrey S. Bolsinger (JSB), Mary Bowman (MaB), David Bree (DaB), Richard Brouse (RiB), Mike V. A. Burrell (MVAB), Mark E. Chojnacki (MEC), Ian Davies (IaD), Stephanie L. Davison (SLD), William T. Depew (WTD), Dan Derbyshire (DaD), Sarah Dzielski (SaD), David Edwards (DaE), R. Ken F. Edwards (RKFE), Brendan Grogan (BrG), Chris J. Grooms (CJG), John Hall (JoH), Chris T. Heffernan (CTH), Tyler L. Hoar (TLH), Mary Alice Koeneke (MAK), N. Anthony Kaduck (NAK), John Licharson (JoL), Nick Leone (NiL), V. Paul Mackenzie (VPM), Phillip Mercier (PhM), Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN), Todd A. Norris (TAN), David Okines (DO), Nathalie Paquette (NaP), Mark J. Pa-

try (MJP), Gerard Phillips (GeP), Mark D. Read (MDR), Jon P. Ruddy (JPR), Tina Sawicki (TiS), Andrew Spencer (AnS), Matthew Strimas-Mackey (MaS), James E. Thompson (JET), Gary Ure (GaU), Kayla Villeda (KaV), Jacqueline Walters (JaW), Nicole Watson (NiW), Kathy A. Webb (KAW), Tom M. Wheatley (TMW).

Nature Photos

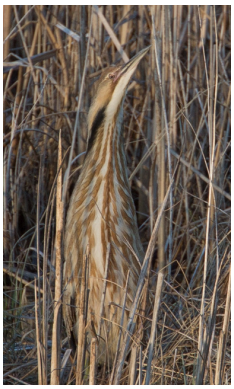
Compton's Tortoiseshell from HQS cleanup (Gaye Beckwith)



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker from HQS cleanup (Gaye Beckwith)

Immature Bald Eagle from Amherst Island field trip (Gaye Beckwith)

Tree Swallow from Thickson Woods field trip (Gaye Beckwith)



American Bittern and Cedar Waxwing from Thickson Woods field trip (Janis Grant)

Northern Parula from Thickson Woods field trip (Janis Grant)

5 Avoiding Snake Bites: A guide to co-existing with snakes!

by Matt Ellerbeck (A.K.A The Snake Man) - Snake Advocate & Conservationist

Snakes are among the world's most misunderstood and feared creatures. However, the horrible reputation that snakes have is not deserved.

Snakes will not make unprovoked attacks on people. When a person comes in contact with a snake, the animal's first instinct will be to rapidly flee the area and find shelter. If the snake doesn't do this, it may just stay perfectly still to try to blend in with the surroundings.

Even if the snake is captured, it may still not resort to biting – proof of its gentle demeanor. The snake has several harmless tactics it can resort to as an alternative to biting. The snake may hiss, make mock strikes with a closed mouth, or flail around to try and escape. This is the snake's way of saying just leave me alone!

An account of the true nature of snakes can be found in a study done by University of Georgia Professor Dr. Whit Gibbons. The following excerpt from Dr. Gibbons' study speaks for itself:

All the snake species tested have had the same initial response to human presence. If given the opportunity, they escape–down a hole, under a ledge, or in the case of cottonmouth snakes, into the water. Escape is even the standard behaviour of enormous diamondback rattlesnakes, which will immediately disappear if they have enough warning before they think a person can reach them. The snakes just want us to leave them alone.

Snake bites on humans usually only happen when someone is deliberately trying to provoke or harm a snake, and the animal bites purely in self defense. According to NC State University, almost 80% of snake bites happen when someone is trying to capture or kill the snake. All these facts show that snakes are not aggressive or evil animals. If you provoke and capture a wild animal, what can you expect but to be bitten since the animal is going to try to defend itself?

The key to being safe around snakes is to simply leave them alone. The following excerpt from the book 'Dangerous Snakes of Africa' by Branch and Spawls (1995), speaks volumes: Snakes never make unprovoked attacks.

Edward R. Ricciuti's The Snake Almanac (Lyons Press 2001), states that venomous snakes do not look for people to bite and Mark O' Shea's Venomous Snakes of the World (Princeton University Press 2005), proclaims that people must realize that snakes are not out to bite them but prefer to be left alone.

Sometimes hikers and campers will encounter a snake when the animal is out basking in the sun or forging for food. When startled, the snake may slither rapidly towards the direction of shelter (like a burrow or under a rock). When the snake darts suddenly, it may give the illusion that it is chasing after you. This is not true though. Sadly, people's anxiety in such a situation only fuels the belief that the snake was pursuing them.

It is also important to remember that most snakes are completely harmless. In fact only around 13% of all snake species are venomous. Of this small number, even less are equipped with venom that is strong enough to seriously harm a human being.

If a venomous snake does bite a person, often no venom is injected into the bite. This is called a dry bite. Snakes have venom first and foremost as a means to quickly subdue their prey. The venom also helps the snake digest its meal, as it aids in breaking down the prey internally. This is important as snakes do not chew their food but swallow it whole. As humans are too big for snakes to eat, they will not want to waste their precious venom on us.

If the snake does inject venom, proper medical treatment and anti-venom can usually save the person's life. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, only about 0.2% of people bitten by snakes in the United States actually die from the bite. According to the University of Melbourne's Snakebite Mortality In Australia (2003), death from

venomous snakebite in Australia is relatively uncommon. Ontario is home to just one species of venomous snake, the Massasauga rattlesnake. It is a shy species that prefers to avoid people. There have only been two fatalities in Ontario linked to snakebite ever, and in both cases the victims did not receive appropriate medical treatment which almost certainly would of saved their lives.

It is very easy to co-exist with snakes, especially since they do many useful things for people. First of all, snakes are great controllers of rodents like rats and mice. Without snakes, rodent populations would surge and these creatures would destroy crops, affecting our food supply. Rodents also spread harmful diseases which can seriously affect our health. Snakes are great at hunting rodents because they can crawl into small burrows and other areas that rodents use as shelters. These places are too small for other predators to get into.

Snakes also help stop the spread of Lyme disease. According to a study conducted through the University of Maryland, a single Timber Rattlesnake eats up to 4,500 ticks a year! Small rodents often carry the bacteria (genus Borrelia) that produces Lyme Disease. When ticks bite these rodents, they can later drop off and then spread the disease to humans or pets. Luckily, snakes prey heavily on rodents, and then in turn the ticks attached to them! Therefore, snakes are extremely useful to people, as they help stop the spread of this disease.

Furthermore, snakes are saving the lives of countless numbers of people every year. Snake venom is being used in the medical field to treat all sorts of serious ailments like heart and stroke disease, cancer, Parkinson's, blood clots, and many more.

Despite these benefits, countless numbers of snakes are killed by fearful people every year. We must look past our fear and ignorance and see snakes for what they really are - interesting creatures that play very important roles in the ecosystem. A fear of snakes can be a learned behavior, so we must learn not to pass our irrational fears onto our children, but teach them to respect wildlife.

An Eastern Milk Snake (Lampropeltis triangulum), these non-venomous snakes are often confused with rattlesnakes due to their superficial resemblance. Milk Snakes occur within the City of Kingston. Rattlesnakes do not (Matt Ellerbeck)

Massasauga Rattle Snake (Sistrurus catenatus), Ontario's only venomous snake. It is found primarily along the Georgian Bay and Bruce Peninsula (Matt Ellerbeck)

6 KFN Excursions

6.1 Amherst Island Field Trip (March 3, 2018)

by Janet I. Scott

Muddy conditions did not stop 17 birders from enjoying Amherst Island (Gaye Beckwith)

When Gaye Beckwith was kind enough to ask Bonnie Livingstone and myself to once again lead a group on Amherst Island we were happy to say yes. The day we said yes was probably dry, warm and clear. By the time March rolled around we were living in a sea of mud, the dock area was impossible to park in, let alone meet and greet the club members and many of the roads were closed off due to construction traffic. Ahead of time Bonnie and I scanned maps trying to plan a safe trip around our beloved Island to spot Snowy Owls, hoping some would be on their favourite spots for that particular Saturday. During the week before this planned outing we received the news that the ferry would be shut down between nine and twelve on the morning of March 3rd. We notified Gaye who let members know that if they came they would be a captive audience until afternoon. Mother Nature had one more whack up her sleeve. On the Friday evening after a regular Museum meeting, Bonnie and I crept home to our respective houses through an unbelievable blizzard. Faintly ahead of me I could see the flashing blue light of the snowplough forging ahead of me but the tracks were blowing in rapidly. Bonnie had an even worse trip home unable to see the Long Point Road at all. We went to bed that night not knowing what the outing would be like on the following day.

Early the next morning I attempted to replace the birdfeeder that had been blown over in the blizzard and managed to hit myself in the head but that still didn't knock any sense into me and I headed off about 8:30 to meet our group. We had suggested meeting at the school because of the construction at the dock but it was all snowed in as well. After such an auspicious start to our trip we were amazed that seventeen birders showed up for our adventure. Thank-you everyone for your love of birds. You made our day.

We had only reached the Dump Road and Front Road corner when we spotted a lovely Snowy Owl sitting on a small slanted pole only about 6 feet off the ground. It looked like he was posing for a photo op. From a group of cedars farther along the Front Road we were surprised while watching a Northern Harrier to have a Short-eared Owl fly up as if startled by the hawk. At another spot along the Front Road (this road hugs the north shore of the Island) and after crossing the Emerald Forty Foot we enjoyed a sheltered spot where we saw Downy, Hairy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers foraging as well as Robins and my first Killdeer of the year.

Crossing on the Emerald Forty-foot Road an Immature Bald Eagle was seen hunkered down on a lower branch while a local Red-tailed hawk was giving him a hard time. In total 38 species were seen in the three hours and not a single birder was lost in the mud. We stopped at our house 350 Third Concession to have lunch. Some birders hurried back on the next available ferry and some explored the Island a bit more but we think the day turned out well for such a mixed up situation.

Northern Harrier (Gaye Beckwith)

Sightings as follows:

Canada Goose	500	Rock Pigeon	2	American Robin	25
Mute Swan	5	Mourning Dove	2	European Starling	45
Mallard	2	Snowy owl	2	Snow Bunting	1
Greater Scaup	2	Short-eared Owl	1	American Tree Sparrow	1
Long-tailed Duck	2	Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	Dark-eyed Junco	1
Common Golden-eye	130	Downy Woodpecker	5	Northern Cardinal	1
Red-breasted merganser	20	Hairy Woodpecker	1	Eastern Meadowlark	7
Northern Harrier	1	Merlin	1	Red-winged Blackbird	10
Accipiter spc.	1	Blue Jay	7	Common Grackle	1
Bald Eagle	1	American Crow	5	House Finch	2
Red-tailed hawk	2	Common Raven	7	American Goldfinch	3
Rough-legged hawk	5	Black-capped Chickadee	6	Killdeer	1
Gull sp.		White-breasted Nuthatch	2		

6.2 Kingston Inner Harbour Field Trip (March 25, 2018)

by Richard Brault

Observing ducks (Gaye Beckwith)

The sun was shining brightly across a clear blue sky. Spring had entered its fifth day and the stage was set for another delightful outing. Despite a bitterly-cold northeast wind with unexpected below-freezing temperatures, sixteen spirited KFN members convened at 8:30am, and after greetings and handshakes, set off to observe the waterfowl and bird activity on the Inner Harbour.

Ken Robinson led the group on a well-planned itinerary with stops at six locations on both shorelines. We began on the east side of the harbour at McLean Park next to the library, followed by a stop at Lilla Burke Park and further south to Green Bay Park. On the west side, our small convoy followed Ken to the Woolen Mills/Rowing Club, then to the Montreal Street apartments, ending at the Elliot Ave Parkette further north. Most of the harbour was free of ice but the cold wind combined with surface chop kept much of the waterfowl in

the distance from all viewing points. Luckily several members brought their spotting scope so everyone was able to get a closer look.

In total 30 species were observed – half on water, half on land: Canada Goose (217), Greater Scaup (460) and Common Merganser (320) Redhead (54), Mallard (60), Ring-necked Duck (31), Hooded Merganser (61), Bufflehead (9), Mute Swan (7) and a few each of Gadwall, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye and Black Duck. Both Herring Gull (21), Ring-billed Gull (50) were also present. Notable sightings on land were two Bald Eagles who, according to this writer, were planning their weekly menu.

Heading to the Cataraqui River (Gaye Beckwith)

Many thanks to Ken Robinson who scouted the locations in advance and led the group with equal parts enthusiasm and expertise. Thanks also to Gaye Beckwith who kept meticulous notes in the field at the risk of frostbite, and compiled the six checklists on ebird for the benefit of all.

6.3 Helen Quilliam Sanctuary Clean-up (April 21, 2018)

by Erwin Batalla

Organizing work parties (Gaye Beckwith)

A cheery group of volunteers: Maureen and Phil Addis, Jackie Bartnik, Erwin Batalla, Betsy and Gaye Beckwith, Richard Brault, Janet and Bruce Elliott, Mike Evans, Peter Good, Anthony Kaduck, Louise, Alexandra Simmons, Peter Waycik, Jean and Eugene Zaremba, gathered at the gravel pit on the HQS at 9:30 am. The temperature was in the teens and the sun was shining. Teams of two or three proceeded to add markers and remove branches and debris from the trails they were assigned to. Also, we collected some garbage near Bedford Road including a large sleeping bag. The owner was not a Black Bear. A few trees had fallen in the open spaces at the beginning of the trails but they were expertly dealt with by the chain saw wielding members. A few birds could be heard and Gaye put together a list of observations that was uploaded to eBird. An early Broad-winged Hawk was observed migrating high above the sanctuary. As well, tracks of deer and small mammals could easily be seen in the small layer of snow still remaining on parts of the trails. Pussy Willow and a few Hepatica were the only plants in bloom. After a couple of hours of work, we gathered and had a tailgate party with coffee and muffins baked by Betsy and Alexandra. Slightly after noon, we took two containers of recycling and two bags of garbage with us and left only footprints and sawdust behind.

Gaye Beckwith and Erwin Batalla clearing a fallen tree (Betsy Beckwith)

6.4 KFN Overnight Trip to Thickson Woods (May 8-9, 2018)

by Gail Gault

Looking through scopes (Gaye Beckwith)

On May 7th, 2018, some KFN members went on a migrant hunt to Thickson's Woods, near Oshawa, The McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve, Presqu'ile Provincial Woods, the Brighton Cleansing Ponds and Kaiser Road in Prince Edward County. I was delighted to be able to join them because the Thickson's Woods destination has been on my to-do list for ages and I had been totally unaware of the Wildlife Reserve. The group was a rather fluid one, with generally fourteen people present, some coming for only the first day and some for only the second day. The itinerary was ably organized planned and led by Gaye Beckwith, Erwin Batalla and Alexandra Simmons. The North Leeds Birders were invited to join the group. Many of us are members of both groups. The participants were Richard Brault and Diane Crouteau, Kathleen Burtch, Gail Gault, Janis Grant, Katherine Innes, Paul and Nittie MacKenzie, Ken Robinson, Amy Sharp with Jimmy and Kasie, Barb O'Neill, Jim Thompson, John, Mark and Mike Wigglesworth.

We were particularly lucky in having good weather, not too cool, not too hot, very little wind, leaves not too far out. We were able to find 107 species on the first day and 90 on the second for a total of 134 species. Some birds of note were the Northern Mockingbird at Oshawa, the ten Trumpeter Swans at the second marsh, a Solitary Sandpiper at the cleansing ponds in Brighton, the Cape May Warbler and the Northern Parula at Presqu'ile, and many shorebirds including Dunlins at Kaiser Crossroad.

Thickson's Woods is the last remnant of old growth white pine on the north shore of Lake Ontario. The Thickson's Woods website has a detailed description of the types of trees to be found there. Locating them would be an interesting side-study, if there were no birds. There is also a marsh and 8 acres, called the Meadow which has now been planted with young trees. Thickson's Woods was easily covered in a couple of hours. We had a fairly good collection of warblers and thrushes.

Walking through Thickson Woods (Gaye Beckwith)

The McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve is 41 hectares (108 acres), wheelchair accessible and with a trail set up for partially sighted or visually impaired people. There is a network of trails which connect to Darlington Provincial Park. Access to the Reserve is behind the GM headquarters in Oshawa and is free. We had our picnic lunch there in a beautiful setting.

Then we moved on to Presqu'ile Provincial Park at Brighton to look for shorebirds. I was surprised by the amount of water on the walking trail that parallels the beach. I'm sure we had the best dinner in town at Vito's. We all opted for the same restaurant and they had no problem accommodating us. After dinner we went back to the Park and walked the boardwalk. Some marsh highlights were several American Bitterns talking, Marsh Wrens, and Virginia Rails. The next morning we toured the lighthouse area. There were Surf Scoters, the Purple Martin houses were busy, the Red-bellied Woodpeckers were singing. The little trail into the woods from Paxton Drive beyond the lighthouse was quite productive. We stopped by the Calf Pasture. We heard a Wood Thrush on the way in. After a hearty breakfast at the Harbourview Marina Café, we toured the Brighton wastewater treatment ponds. I think they were the only place we saw Green-winged Teal and Common Gallinule.

From there, we pressed on to Wellington, with a stop at the marina, a picnic lunch, and on to Kaiser Road. The fields had pretty well dried up, especially near the road, so it was hard to see the birds. There were a couple of flocks of Least Sandpipers, a few Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, a Shoveler pair, 5 Great Blue Herons, a Pintail Duck, a Killdeer and a Common Raven. Kaiser Road was the last scheduled stop. I know I am not the only one who had thoroughly good time on this field trip. Thanks to Alexandra, Erwin, and Gaye for organizing it so well.

Black-throated blue warbler (Janis Grant)

6.5 May 23rd Morning Walk at Lemoine Point

by Richard Brault

Lemoine Point bird walk May 23, 2018 (Richard Brault)

This was the 4th Wednesday morning walk during the month of May at Lemoine Point. The deciduous trees are almost in full leaf making it a bit more challenging to spot the small birds like warblers and vireos. The skies were clear, the fields were coated in dew with hundreds of spider webs sparkling in the early morning sunlight.

Nineteen enthusiastic people came out with their binoculars and cameras. Paul MacKenzie lead the group with Dianne Croteau as co-leader. In total 43 species were seen or heard. From the parking lot, a Pileated Woodpecker called loudly and clearly from a nearby tree and flew down the driveway toward the entrance before photos could be taken. Two Orchard Orioles were spotted early on, as well as Eastern Kingbirds and Song Sparrows while Barn swallows were seen near the farm. As we entered the woodland on the south edge, we could hear or see Common Yellowthoat, Yellow Warblers, American Redstarts, Tennessee

Warbler. A pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeak came down next to the group and posed patiently for the cameras, with the male landing on the path next to our feet.

There were a few Brown-headed cowbirds and Grey Catbirds, a couple of Eastern Towhees, Baltimore Orioles and a Wood Thrush calling nearby. And of course, the usual suspects were also there to be noticed: Black-capped chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue Jays, Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles and Northern Cardinals.

By 8:45 am Paul and Dianne had us all back to the parking lot. It was another lovely walk enjoyed by all, with many interesting sightings.

6.6 Teen Night Hike (May 12, 2018)

by Ronan Giguere

With the weather finally getting warmer, it was decided that a May night hike would be quite enjoyable and provide ample opportunities for learning more about night time birdcalls, as well as the calls of various frogs. Another purpose of the expedition was to check on the trail cams previously placed in places such as a known porcupine spot, as well as by a beaver dam, and put up a fourth cam along a stream, all in preparation for the approaching Bioblitz.

Austin, Mackenzie and I met Anne at the Tim Horton's at 4:30pm, then picked up Damon in Sydenham. We then drove to the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary where we met with Shirley French and set out to download the videos off the trail cams. The weather was quite nice, with temperatures staying at about 10oc, clear skies and very little wind, which would have been quite pleasant were it not for the black flies that plagued us for the first few hours. At the first cam we found a significant quantity of porcupine scat, and several of us discovered the wonderful smell of Red Trilliums (also called Stinking Benjamin). We set up a fourth cam on our way to the beaver dam where we were swarmed by black flies as Shirley franticly downloaded the videos. A good selection of spring ephemerals were seen as listed below.

We then returned to the gravel pit, where we met with Gary Ure, to eat supper, after which we set out on our night hike along the Greenwood Track. The first thing of note were the tracks of a Snapping Turtle in the mud by the first pond. The majority of the hike was spent stalking woodcocks as they performed their mating rituals, and then ending with listening to the frogs (spring peepers, tree frogs, toads, and green frogs) and birds calls including Wood Thrush, Snipe, FIVE Whip poor wills and a Barred Owl. This was surely a special evening. On our way back to the cars, I reflected to Gary and Anne that while I am not normally a big fan of being out in the dark, I absolutely love night hikes for the completely different atmosphere of a calm nature that they give.

Back at the cars, Shirley showed us a montage of previous trail cam footage from the beaver dam. This showed a beaver, a muskrat, some otters, a fisher, many chipmunks, a racoon with its kit, a porcupine, a barred owl, a blue jay, and a pine marten. We also had a good look at the planet Jupiter and moons. In Sydenham we wrote in our journals and took note of the species we had seen/heard:

Mammals: Chipmunk, Cat, Racoon, Deer tracks

Birds: Wood thrush, Woodcock, Snipe, Whip-poor-will, Female turkey, Red-winged blackbird, Grackle, Common yellowthroat, Barred Owl

Reptiles: Snapping Turtle tracks

Amphibians: Spring peeper, Tree frog, American Toad, Leopard frog, Green frog

Invertebrate animals: Damselfly

Wildflowers: Trillium (red and white), Spring beauty, Bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, Hepatica, Early saxifrage, Pussy toes, Trout Lily, Jack in the pulpit, Wayfarer's bush, Wild plum, Sweet white violet, Yellow violet, Common blue violet