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Send submissions to the Editor by the first of the month of the publication date (March, June, September, December) to the address above, by fax to (613) 545-2499 to the attention of Sharon David, Dept. Psychology, Queen's University, or by e-mail to davids@pavlov.psyc.queensu.ca. The editor uses WordPerfect 7, but submissions are accepted in most formats from most programs, IBM or MacIntosh. Please include a printed copy in case of disk error. Photographs, articles, and drawings can be scanned by the editor.

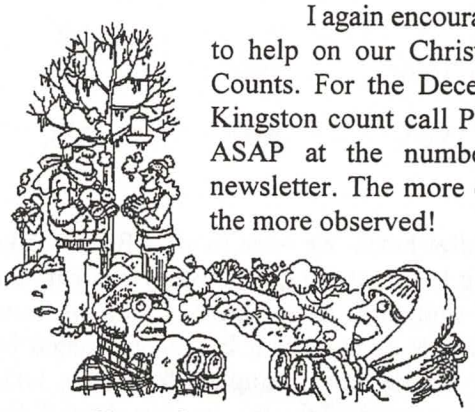
The Blue Bill
Volume 45, No. 4
December 1998

The President's Page

Paul Mackenzie

For this first issue of Bluebill in 1999 let me begin by a reference to our 50th KFN Anniversary.

We will celebrate by hosting the FON conference in May, and with a special KFN birthday party in September. Your ideas for this celebration are welcomed by the executive.



I again encourage you all to help on our Christmas Bird Counts. For the December 20th Kingston count call Peter Good ASAP at the number in the newsletter. The more observers, the more observed!

How often we are reminded that nature is awesome. We experience a sense of awe in contemplating the size of the universe, the power of a storm, the complexity of a virus, the colours of autumn, the adaptations of the beaks of birds to suit their food sources and so forth.

We humans, an increasingly dominant part of nature on this planet, are awesome in our diversity and adaptability. Imagine what specialized knowledge and skills a newborn baby can now acquire during a lifetime. Our ability to adapt to cultural change is amazing. But change is now so rapid it threatens our ability to cope. Part of the coping involves understanding what is changing and why.

One change has been the growing economic disparity between rich and poor, both between countries and within countries. At the same time, spending on health, education and welfare have been cut to pay government debts. Increasing poverty leads to more illness and crime and also aggravates environmental problems such as loss of habitat and extinction of species. As environmental issues assume critical importance, "Green" parties have been formed in some jurisdictions. But unless the distribution of wealth is addressed, our problems will be difficult to solve. Within a democracy voices can be raised, so there is hope we can adapt.

Another change is the increase in population. It was quite easy a century ago to go out and cut down a tree, or catch a fish. Today one can do this only in approved places, and with a permit. There are less trees and fish per capita. So our government has taken on a regulatory role. This role ought to be one of stewardship: protecting some areas completely, and allowing renewable resources in other areas to be exploited at sustainable levels. But too often non-sustainable practices are allowed, even in parks. These are issues in Ontario's "Lands for Life" process. For areas such as tree plantations perhaps private ownership encourages better stewardship. But can we privatize the oceans or the air ? We must find better ways to protect our natural heritage. Many societies are now controlling population voluntarily. The next step is more voices raised to develop the policies required for proper conservation.

A Happy New Year and 50th Anniversary to you all!

Teen Group Trip to the Queen's Biological Station

Daniel Schwartz-Narbonne

It was warm and sunny, that February 7th at 9 am, as the 12 teens prepared to set out for property of the Queens Biological Station. Their 7 hour mission: to seek out new life and new civilizations, to explore strange new worlds, to boldly cross-country ski where (relatively) few had skied before ....

After a 30 minute drive, we arrived at the Queens Biological station property, north of Lake Opinicon Road. Following a short period involving some ski waxing and some horseplay, we were off. It started out slowly, with the extremely poor condition of the trails (thanks to the ice-storm) and the poor quality of the snow compounding the difficulties caused by inexperience – for many of us, this was our first time out this year. However we persevered, and were soon cruising along Warner Lake. The first "nature" thing that we observed was the incredible devastation caused by the ice storm, but on closer observation we noticed that the damage was greater on one shore of the lake than the other. The reason, the east side had cedar trees, which withstood the storm better than the maples on the opposite shore.

While the rest of us were just rushing along, Rose -Marie Burke, one of the leaders, would always be going off in some weird direction to check out something that looked interesting. This paid off when one of her trips revealed frozen bird intestines, perhaps left over by a no longer hungry predator. While this may sound kind of gross, it actually turne out to be quite interesting. After skiing through some more fallen trees we reached Poole Lake, where we saw deer tracks and bird takeoff and landing tracks. The deer tracks were interesting in that they showed how the deer would place its foot in the deep snow, drag it forward and out, and then put its foot down again. After even more trees, we reached Lindsay Lake, where we stopped for lunch, and the opportunity to climb and then slide down what amounted to a snow and tree covered cliff.

After lunch, we went to view Round Lake which is a lake that Queen's Biology students are presently studying. As a matter of fact, we were able to follow a track that had been created by scientists taking core samples from the lake. During this portion of the trip, we heard but didn't see, a raven and a chickadee. At Round Lake we turned around, and set out back to the cars. The only major mishap happened at this point – my ski binding broke. Luckily, I discovered that it is possible to ski without a binding, provided that you have a flat, straight path to follow – just like we had on the lakes. All in all, the trip turned out wonderfully, and we offer our thanks to Anne Robertson, Fiona Poland, and Rose-Marie Burke.

Correction to the Article on Rainy River Trip, *Blue Bill* (1998) 45(3):84 by Bob Sachs.

Three other KFN members who travelled by other routes at other times also took part in the Rainy River birding. They were Barbara and Bob Frewin and Shirley Peruniak. The author regrets that their names were omitted from the original article.

Natural Wonders: Quebec City to the Gaspé Peninsula

Gerald & Shirley Paul

Like many Canadians, with this summer's decline of the loonie, we decided to vacation in our own country. We tinkered with going west but since we had already driven to B. C. four times and were not up to a 10,000 km drive, we decided to go east instead. Our preliminary itinerary included doing the entire Maritimes. But as we studied the material on Quebec, impressed by its natural wonders, we narrowed our plans. Instead of seeing superficially a lot of eastern Canada, we'd confine ourselves to an in-depth experience of nature promised by a two-week study of the tidal waters stretching from Quebec City to the Gaspésie.

Tides

Birding east of Quebec City along coastal Highway 132, we soon realized the importance of the tides. During high tide, in beach areas the water would be right up to the edge of the road. Common Eiders and Scoters would come close to shore but shorebirds would be elsewhere. At such times, we would see occasional flocks flying at a distance, but none close enough to scope. We fashioned a general rule: "No shore, no shore birds." Where sea cliffs predominated, at high tide the water was too deep for non-diving ducks, but Mergansers, Canvasbacks, Scoters and other divers often fished in the cliff-lined coves. As the tide ebbed, birds appeared out of nowhere. Yellowlegs waded, Pectorals probed, Plovers trotted, Sanderlings zig-zagged, Peeps scurried like mice along the mudflats. Black-backed, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls picnicked on the lunch counters of the beaches. On long stretches of shore, the birds were scattered so that we often had to walk a kilometre or more to see them all. Where the cove was very shallow, at low tide the birds would often be too far out on the flats for us to identify even with a scope. In such places, our long-held rule "the best time for shore birds is at low tide" began to require exceptions. Where the flooded cove had a few raised "islands" during high tide, the birds would congregate there in concentrated numbers that made birding pleasant and convenient. The complexity of the relation between shore birds and the tides meant that having read the tide tables and headed for a prime birding location at low tide, without previous knowledge of the topographical layout of the targeted cove, we were often disappointed. For example, at *Parc du Bic* just west of Rimouski, we got up early enough to arrive at low tide only to find that the entire cove was devoid of water and only gulls could be seen. Although we walked along the edge of the flats for a few kilometres, no shore birds appeared. Unable to wait for a higher tide and the return of the birds, we had to content ourselves with a few distant sea-sightings of ducks and seals, and land-sightings of finches and sparrows. A memorable tide-inspired image was ignited at the *Site Ornithologique du Marais de Gros-Cacouna* just east of Rivière-du-Loup. We arrived at mid-tide and spotted Teal, Pintail, Eider, Merganser, American Bittern, and a few land-birds. In a small dry area were 13 Pectoral Sandpipers. The water was still high when shore birds began to fly in. What a picture to see Yellow-legs, Least and Spotted Sandpipers poised on water-washed rocks waiting for the tide to go out. Bird brains may be small but apparently big enough to learn from past experience and anticipate the regular rhythm of the tides.

Wind

In *Forillon National Park* at the north-western tip of the Gaspé Peninsula, tenting at *Cap-Bon-Ami* we marvelled at the way Black-legged Kittiwakes, both Cormorants and a variety of Gulls manoeuvred in the strong winds that frothed the sea, bent the trees and shook the tents. Our own aging small tent equipped with fly and held up by stakes, ropes and poles caused us some concern when the west wind blew – often for the entire night in gusts. The tent sides alternately pushed in and pulled out like the heavy breathing of a whale. The poles danced the jitterbug. Guy ropes slapped against the tent creating an image of a bass

fiddler gone mad. The wind blowing through the tunnel between tent and fly sent the fly up and down with a rhythmic CRACK!-lull- CRACK! The wind-force loosened the knots we'd tied on the ropes and allowed the fly to flap like a sail on a ship in a gale. In the morning, crawling out of the tent, thankful that it had withstood the power of the winds of Forillon, we pounded in loosened stakes, tightened loosened ropes and, after making our breakfast, headed for the wind-free valley, *L'Anse-au-Griffon* to look for land-birds.

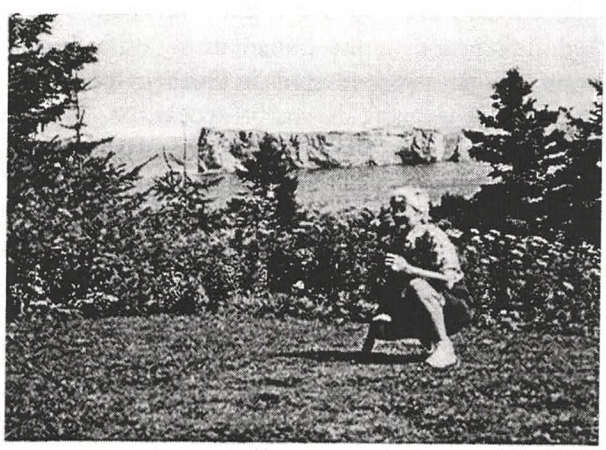
Deep Sea

While tenting at *Cap-Bon-Ami*, having booked a whale watching cruise with Croisieres Baie de Gaspé Inc., we boarded the Narval at Grande-Greve with about 30 other passengers. Warned to dress warmly, we had three layers plus bright yellow rain wear supplied by the company. The captain and the man at the wheel scrutinized the sea as the boat ripped through the waves and winds of Bay and Gulf. When a high geyser-like spout of water was sighted the chase was on. Revving up the engine, we sped through whitecaps. Salt water spray splashed our hoods, raincoats, glasses. We had trouble keeping our binoculars dry. Arriving near the spot where the geyser had been seen, we waited for the next surfacing which the captain informed us would be about every 7-10 minutes. Thirty pairs of eyes scanned the seas. Excitement was at a fever pitch. Fifteen minutes passed with no reappearance. "The whale has moved on," said the captain, "and so will we." As we rock-and-rolled through the waves, the crew studied the echo sounding and communicated with other whalers. Sightings were exchanged and we were off on another chase. All of us had a clear view of a geyser this time and I was tempted to issue the whaler's cry of old "There she blows!" By the time we reached the spot where the whale had come up for air, our quarry was nowhere to be seen. Drifting around the area, suddenly a huge whale surfaced no more than 75 metres from us. Identified as a Fin Whale, according to Erich Hoyt (*The Whales of Canada*) it measures up to 88 feet but most males and females are 60-70 feet long and weigh about 50 tons. Calves at birth are about 20 feet and weigh 2 tons. It looked a lot like the shape of Bonaventure Island seen from our hotel window and was certainly the largest living creature we had ever laid eyes on. Exclamations of awe and wonder resounded through the Narval as we watched the whale take in air and gracefully submerge. We also glimpsed another Fin Whale, a much smaller Minke Whale as well as a number of additional spouts. All in three hours at $20 a person. On the trip the captain told us a few of his secrets. Fin Whales feed not only on krill (euphausiids) but also on a variety of fish including capelin, a favourite of gannets. As soon as he saw a group of gannets diving for fish, he'd speed to the spot since "whales like the same fare." He also pointed out the asymmetry of the Fin Whale: the lower right side of the head is white while the left side is dark grey. Since asymmetry in nature is rare, it's easy to recognize the Fin Whale. In answering a passenger's question, "How can whales stay under water for ten minutes or more?" he informed us that whales have more blood for their size than other mammals and have special reservoirs of oxygen that increase the duration of submergence.

Cliffs

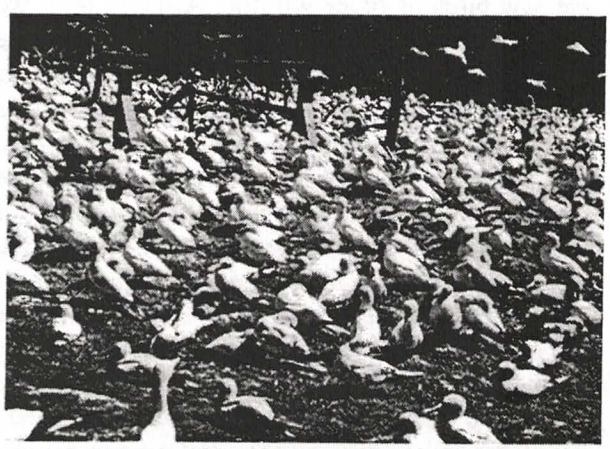
Leaving Rimouski and headed east, after viewing the *Gardens at Grand Métis*, and shorebirding along the tidal river through Matane, Cap-Chat, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, we pulled in for the night at motel Au Delice, Mont St-Pierre. Here we ate poached sole and raspberry pie while enjoying the view of the sea only two hundred metres in front and the awesome cliffs behind us. We witnessed the truth of the tour book's description of the town: "This small village appears suddenly after a bend in the road. The valley, the plateau, the mountain and the sea exist in perfect harmony." Birding along the seafront, we saw multi-coloured hang-gliders drift and circle from mountain top to the valley below. Known as the hang-gliding capital of Eastern Canada, in front of the outfitting office stands a large metal sculpture of the archaeopteryx – the largest bird we saw on this trip! At the edge of town is 411 metre Mont St.

Pierre reached by a nearby road to the summit where a herd of caribou can be encountered in the tundra. The cliffs at Forillon's Cap-Bon-Ami are almost perpendicular and provide a safe haven for colonies of nesting Kittiwake, Guillemot, Razorbill and Cormorant. Partly submerged boulders in the sea below provide slippery resting spots for Harbour and Grey Seals. Black-backed Gulls are also present and Common Terns often fly past. At the lookout near our campsite, we observed the numerous moods of the sea, dazzling sunrises and the ever-changing patterns of light and shadow on the expressive faces of the cliffs. Here we watched Cormorants spreading their wings like dark angels, solitary Black-backed Gulls resting on rocks lapped by the sea and Black Guillemots wheeling upward from the sea to disappear in the tiny crevices of the crags. At Percé, we stayed at Hotel Normandie with a clear and close-up view of Percé's famous Rock – "Rocher-Percé" – measuring 433 metres long by 88 metres high, situated just off-shore and surrounded by water. On the wharf, Gerald fished for mackerel while Shirley scanned the Rock for birds. But, alas,



Shirley in front of Rocher-Percé

though but the 20th of August, the Murres and Razorbills had already raised their young and gone out to sea. We did see Common Eider, Common Tern, the ever-present Cormorants, and a single Dovekie bobbing in the waves. For $12 each we took a cruise on a Captain Duval boat. After passing close to *Rocher-Percé*, we slowly circled *Bonaventure Island*. Black Guillemots, gulls and Kittiwakes flirted with the cliffs. On the east and south-east cliffs Northern Gannets were everywhere – in the sapphire sky, on every ledge, in every niche, diving from great height for capelin, resting on the water, taking off to bring food to the young in a colony containing 70,000 birds. Docked on the north-west side of the Island, we climbed steeply along the 2.5 kilometre Sentier des Colonies trail. As we hiked we saw Gray Jay, Raven, both Chickadees. We smelled the Gannet colony, then heard them and, finally, arriving at the brink of a cliff, saw them. And what a sight it was: birds in every conceivable pose stretched for over 1,000 metres along the edges of the cliff. There were fluffy chicks, partly-fledged awkward young, some trying their developing wings. The adults were on the move: in and out, and round about catching fish and regurgitating for their chicks. The noise was at first a cacophony. But I managed to identify percussion instruments – bills clicking like swords in countless territorial duels; wind instruments – the whir and whisper of thousands of wings; stringed instruments – strange guttural sounds from the syringes of countless colonial birds. We walked the full length of the colony stopping to take photos and absorb this scene repeated for storied centuries.



The Gannet Colony

Skirting the cliffs, travelling counter-clockwise on the 4.9 kilometre Sentier Chemin-du-Roy we kept seeing Gannets in flight every step of our way. Far below we counted some 35 seals (mostly Harbour and a Grey) loafing on the sea-swept rocks far below – a picture of relaxation that A-type personalities would do well to cherish. Having

packed a lunch we took our time to enjoy the cliff and meadow walk. Beneath spruce and balsam we found mushrooms – Amanita, Agaricus and Russula. On rocks and trees grew mosses and lichens. Butterflies – Whites and Sulphurs – fluttered about fireweed, tansy, lupin, pearly everlasting and wild roses painting the open fields. The sky was a blue sea with white clouds puffed like sails in a gentle breeze. Even the weathered wooden buildings with roofs of cedar shingles seemed to belong to nature's tides, winds, storms and sunshine. Rounding a corner, the Rock came into view with a field of flowers and the sea in the foreground, the town of Percé behind, and more cliffs beyond. Soon, we were back at the hotel eating Atlantic Salmon and peering out the restaurant window at where we had spent the day.

Mountains

After a night at Hotel Frances, in New Richmond on the Bay of Chaleur, we drove north through the huge *Réserve Faunique de la Rivière-Cascapedia*. Following the lonesome river valley we saw more trucks carrying pulpwood than we saw birds or other wildlife. After an hour we caught sight of 1154 metre Mont Albert, part of the Chic-Chocs range located in the *Parc de la Gaspésie*. As a sometime rockhound, Gerald was tempted to take a sidetrip to the *Réserve Faunique des Chic-Chocs* to collect geodes and druses but the washboarded gravel road was too forbidding. After viewing exhibits and an excellent slide show at the Centre d'Interprétation, in the rain, with raincoats and compact umbrellas we set off on the La Rivière hiking trail. We met many hikers from France, Quebec and Italy who were headed for Mont Albert. While we seldom saw anyone with binoculars anywhere on our trip, on this trail we saw no one carrying the birder's badge. We did enjoy hearing then seeing a waterfall, the various colours and textures of mosses and lichen and the silence of the forest experienced as we rested on a weathered log. Back at the car, we went on to the Gite du Mont-Albert noted for its fine cuisine. With window seats we ate turbot wrapped around a mound of shrimp, salads with raspberries, blackberries and blueberries adorning the greens. Shirley tried an appetizer containing a blend of venison, bison, caribou and wild boar. After lunch we started up a 20 kilometre gravel road for Lac Cascapedia. Growing weary, we turned around and headed north to St. Anne-des-Monts where we checked in at Chez Marthe-Angele Bed and Breakfast.

Salt Marshes

The most interesting feature of Eastern Quebec for visitors from the Kingston Region where fresh water marshes make the best birding, are the salt flats related to the St. Lawrence River, the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of Chaleur. For hundreds of miles, the road runs parallel and alongside the River which provides the fruit of the sea through the tides and thus attracts numerous shorebirds, ducks, gulls, terns and some predators. While we covered most of the salt marshes, we found the following sites and regions provided superior birding: *Réserve nationale de la faune de Pointe-au-Pere* under the protection and administration of the Canadian Wildlife Service, one of eight nature reserves in Quebec, located just east of Rimouski, is easily accessible. We saw Yellowlegs, Sanderlings, Turnstones, Black-bellied Plovers and peeps and over 1,000 Common Eider in various colorations. We spotted fishing birds with different styles: Great Blue Herons playing the waiting game; Kingfishers fishing from a perch; Gannets scanning the waters from on high and high-diving for their prey. Here we met the only birder of our entire stay. He showed us a few good places for shorebirds and in spite of the language problem we celebrated birding together. Matane to Saint-Anne-des-Monts a distance of about 100 kilometres a long stretch of salt marsh and coves provided superior birding. So entranced were we with the birds that we took most of the day birding along this stretch. Landbirds were scarce. We saw more the first day back in Kingston than we'd seen in Quebec during our 16-day trip. But seabirds and shorebirds were everywhere. Besides the ever-present Eider, there were Scoters, Tern, Gulls, Mergansers, Plovers, Sandpipers, with Great Blue

Herons guarding the perimeters. During a steady rain, walking along the marsh edges umbrella in one hand, binoculars in the other and scope on shoulder, in the dim light we saw a hunched heron, on a pier, slow-marching toward the sea looking all the world like a thief in the night. It was our only sighting of a Black-crowned Night Heron. On a rock almost covered by sea water we saw another enticing bird silhouette. With the scope dripping rain we saw one of the five or six sightings we had of a Peregrine Falcon watching the shorebirds. As we trekked back to the car through the wet salt marsh grasses Sharp-tailed Sparrows shuttled in front of us like fugitives. We agreed that we'd spent a memorable day in this long and rich section of Highway 132 and its fabulous salt marshes. Forillon to Percé around the Bay of Gaspé and Les Trois Soeurs a distance of 130 kilometres has countless coves, shores and harbours alongside Highway 132. At Penouille, a sand point reminiscent of Point Pelee, but with a combination of Taiga Forest and salt marsh makes it a special place for migratory birds. We spotted all three species of Scoter, numerous Black Ducks, Canada Geese, Mergansers, Canvasbacks and Scaup. Driving on, we studied thousands of shorebirds at Sandy Beach Point, the causeway over the Saint-Jean river near Haldimand, Saint-Pierre Point and Barachois, before reaching Percé. Percé to New Richmond covers 150 kilometres along a bit of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and most of the Bay of Chaleur. The water is somewhat warmer in the Bay than in the Gulf, so we saw large numbers of shorebirds and 11 varieties. We birded over causeways, bridges, on railway tracks, highways and dirt roads at such places as the Bay of the Petit-Pabos river and Chandler Marsh where we spotted: Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Goldeneye, a company of Great Blue Heron, and a platoon of Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers. As Church bells rang over the salt marsh we identified 13 Hudsonian Godwit. Overhead, the sound of gulls – Black-backed, Ring-billed, Herring and Bonaparte's – added their choral cries. Port Daniel Bay, Pasebiac, Bonaventure, Saint-Simeon all have easily-accessible shores and marshes. Arriving at New Richmond, we checked in at Hotel Frances. Since we planned to go north away from the sea the next morning, with minds filled with images of salt marsh flora and fauna we turned in, tired but riding high.

Concluding Thoughts

No matter when you go, you'll miss some birds, events and experiences while getting others. We missed the Murres and Razorbills and some of the local festivals but we did get to see shorebirds, whales and seals. The trip was exciting: every day fresh scenes and sightings and always the sea, tides, cliffs, mountains, salt marshes and the uniqueness of the Quebec province, its culture and its people. Some indication of the intensity of the experience of natural wonders in Eastern Quebec is that Gerald brought Gabrielle Roy's Autobiography with him but was so captivated by the mix of nature, culture and history that in 16 days he managed to read but 60 pages! Deeply moved by our journey from Quebec City to the Gaspésie, we've vowed to return – hopefully in the spring of 2000.

Resource Material

1. Tourist Guides published by the regions and available free from Tourism Quebec are in handy booklet form, each with a map of the particular region, information on towns, villages, lodging, restaurants, birding hot spots, cultural events and more. These four covered our Quebec route and were invaluable: Greater Quebec Area, Chaudiere-Appalaches, Bas-St. Laurent, Gaspésie.
2. Atlas: Chaudiere-Appalaches, Bas-St-Laurent, Gaspésie and Îles-de-la Madeleine published by Cartotek Geo and available by calling 1-800-563-0031. Excellent wire-bound easy to read detailed maps.
3. *Birdwatching Itinerary of the Gaspé Peninsula* by Sylvie Girard of The Club des Ornithologues de la Gaspésie. 36 Birding Sites are described with accompanying maps, directions and bird list. Covers the four sectors of Gaspésie: North Shore, Gaspé Peninsula, Percé and Bay of Chaleur. Available through the Club and the

American Birding Association.
4. Atlantic Provinces and Quebec Tour Book CAA with accompanying Quebec maps including a Triptik.
5. The *Whales of Canada* by Erich Hoyt published by Camden House, Camden East.
6. The *Mammals of Canada* by A.W.F. Banfield published by University of Toronto Press: useful for checking out seals and whales, as well as other mammals.
7. *Birds of Forillon* by Club des Ornithologues de la Gaspesie P.O. Box 245, Percé, Quebec G0C 2L0 includes a good introduction to the park's birds, maps, as well as checklist with codes indicating frequency in each season. Checklist of the Birds of Percé also available from the Centre d'Histoire Naturelle de Percé. A complete list of La Faune de Forillon (French) is available at the park's Interpretation Centre.
8. *Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies* by Roger Tory Peterson is a primary bird book for Quebec birding. We also carried *All the Birds of North America* by the American Bird Conservancy and Golden books on Butterflies, Insects, Seashores, Non-Flowering Plants, Wildflowers.

Notes on Natural History, No. 113, December 18, 1961

Helen Quilliam

One of the things that adds spice to winter bird-watching is the winter finches. We give this name winter finch to those birds of the large family Fringillidae which visit us in the winter, whether it be as regular visitors or as infrequent ones.

Some of them have most irregular habits and it is a rare winter when we see all of them – Crossbills, Pine Grosbeaks, Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks and Snow Buntings.

Other members of this tribe can be included in the broad meaning of the term winter finch – the Tree Sparrow, Purple Finch, Cardinal and even the Lapland Longspur.

This whole great family is primarily seed-eaters and characterized by special bills for eating seeds, from the rather small but strong bills of the Tree Sparrow to the large thick heavy bills of the Evening Grosbeaks and the very specialized bills of the Crossbills.

Crossbill beak

The fascinating thing about some of these winter finches is that we never know just which ones are going to visit us in a particular winter.

Last winter was an excellent one for Red and White-winged Crossbills and if you knew of a good hemlock wood you could almost certainly see a flock working away at the small hemlock cones. And if you stood very quietly and listened you could even hear the rustle of the dry scales of the cones as they extracted the tiny hemlock seeds. They also like spruce cones.

Red Crossbill

All over this section of the northeast they were a very common bird last winter, for the cone crop was excellent, but the chances of seeing them this year are slim for there are not many cones.

These birds go about in flocks and seem to have an uncanny ability of finding the places where they were last year.

If we do not have Crossbills this winter, perhaps there will be something else to take their place, and this year it may be more Pine Grosbeaks. We had almost none last winter. They too, like pines cones but are not entirely dependent on them as are the Crossbills.

A small flock has already been discovered this season and they are eating berries – the red berries of deciduous holly. The berries inside are yellow and the yellow juices fairly dribble down

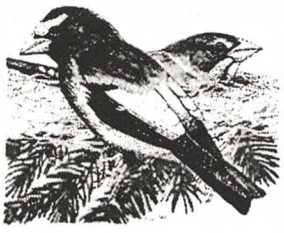
their chins as they crush them with their powerful bills.

Pine Grosbeak

Pine Grosbeaks are large, the size of Evening Grosbeaks. The male is a most beautiful raspberry red, particularly about the head and rump. It looks like a rather large edition of the Purple Finch. The female, however, is so different that it could easily be mistaken for another species. She is predominantly grey but has a soft yellow head and rump – most subdued colors but sleek and beautiful nevertheless. We hope that we see more of them this winter.

Evening Grosbeaks are becoming one of our commonest winter finches. Last winter however, they were rather scarce but indications are that we will have plenty this winter.

They came early in October, sampled a few feeders for a day or so, and then moved back out into the country where there was a plentiful supply of Manitoba Maples.



Evening Grosbeak

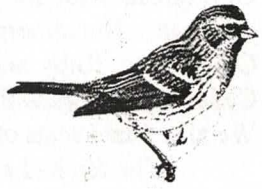
When those maples are stripped of their keys – we saw a flock the other day which was making a good job of cleaning out several trees – they will be back and every feeding station should have some. Some feeding stations outside the city are already getting a number of these attractive yellow, white and black birds.

They are particularly fond of sunflower seeds and the shells present no difficulties to their thick bills. They sit placidly crushing one seed after the other, letting the empty husks drop where they will and neatly extracting the kernel with their tongues.

They seem to do a great deal of scrapping among themselves but this is because they do not like to be very close to each other. Although they travel in flocks, there must be a certain amount of room between them when they feed.

This characteristic makes them seem to us to be very bad-mannered. If they come to your feeding station spread out your seeds as much as you can in order to give plenty of room for them.

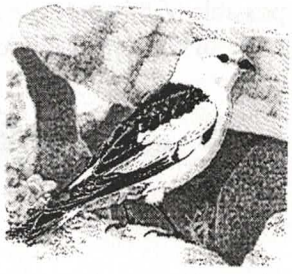
A few Redpolls have been reported which is encouraging after practically none last year. They remind one of Goldfinches for they are about the same size and their manner of flight is somewhat similar. But instead of the yellow of the Goldfinch they have a delicate pink wash down the slightly striped breast.



Common Redpoll

They, too, are erratic in their visits. This is somehow harder to understand, for weeds seeds, their favorite food, are always with us. We get a very good year for them only in every three or four.

Even the Snow Buntings vary from year to year in their numbers. In late October and early November there were thousands on Wolfe Island where they were to be found on plowed fields and near the shores.



As snow begins to cover the fields they are to be found along the highways where they find seeds and the very necessary gravel to grind those seeds.

All these winter finches are colorful and add much to the winter scene.

Bog Trip – October 4, 1998

Anne Robertson

Sunday, 4th October 1998, dawned clear and cold. With frost pockets, low sun, glorious fall colours and mist rising off some water bodies the early drive to Sharbot Lake was spectacular. Here about 20 KFN members met Mark Saunders to visit a fen and a bog in the area.

The bush-whacking walk into the fen was rewarded with a number of species both plant and animal. Plants included the Saphrophytic Indian Pipe, Fly Honeysuckle (with ciliate leaf margins), Goldthread with its bright golden roots and the 4-leaved Bunchberry. Birds seen included Chickadees, Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Cedar Waxwings, a Phoebe and several Blue Jays. We also found scats of deer, porcupine and grouse.

The fen had a terrific population of Pitcher Plants, all pitchers were filled with ice! Other typical plants of this habitat that were seen included Bog Rosemary, Labrador Tea, Leatherleaf, Small Cranberry and Sphagnum as well as a number of sedges. Care was taken to trample as little as possible of this delicate habitat. From the edge of the fen 7 Turkey Vultures were observed. We took a detour on the route out and had a wonderful view of the wetland which becomes Bolton Creek eventually draining into Sharbot Lake. A few more birds were spotted including about 10 Yellow-rumped Warblers, more of both Kinglets and a flock of 60 Canada Geese that flew over.

Pitcher Plant

We then headed off to the bog on Mark's property. The approach this time through a foot of water between masses of Leatherleaf, always with the possibility of stepping in a deeper hole, made this into quite an adventure. Bright red Canada Holly (Winterberry) berries decorated the bog and a little Cottongrass, Marsh St. Johnswort and Marsh Cinquefoil were seen. Here we were able to spot a couple of playful Ravens, a Crow and a Red-tailed Hawk.

The habitat surrounding this bog supports Gray Jays, Black-backed Woodpeckers and Crossbills, though none were observed.

After a lazy lunch in a sun drenched hay field the group dispersed. We thank Mark Saunders for his leadership and hospitality.

Ontario Birding by E-Mail

Are you interested in finding out what rare birds are kicking around Ontario and you are on the Internet? If so, consider subscribing to **ONTBIRDS**, organized by the Ontario Field Ornithologists (OFO). ONTBIRDS is an electronic mailing list which notifies birders of new Ontario bird sightings of interest.

All Ontario birding hotlines, major birding hotspots and hawk watches have been invited to post their regular updates and especially, rare bird reports, to ONTBIRDS. Any subscriber can also post a notice about Ontario bird sightings (subject to list rules).

To subscribe, send an e-mail (using lower case letters) to <**majordomo@hwcn.org**>. Leave the subject or title of the e-mail blank. In the body of the e-mail type: *subscribe ontbirds*
and on the next line type: *end*
Send the e-mail and in a short while you will receive a message asking you to authenticate your subscription. Follow the instructions. Then you will receive all the rules and instructions for reporting and unsubscribing.

[Reprinted from *The Orchid* (1998) 44(9):4]

The Great Diamond Hunt

Paul Moyes

On Saturday, October 17th the Kingston Teen Naturalists went to "Ace of Diamonds", a Herkimer Diamond mine in Middleville, New York. Fourteen teens left from the Kingston Centre at 8 am. It was a 3½ hour drive to Middleville, south east of Syracuse. We arrived at 11:30 am for lunch. At noon we went to the "Ace of Diamonds" – it is an open pit quarry.

After getting our safety goggles, chisels, and picks we went down to the quarry to look for a grey Swiss-cheese like rock, which hopefully contained a Herkimer diamond. The pit was about the size of half a football field and about 10 feet deep. After a while at chipping at rocks we learned a new method of searching for diamonds. Anne showed us how to sift the dirt by putting shovel fulls on to a screen and shaking it. I found 3 this way. Next Anne showed us another method. She told us to look in the vugs at the bottom of the cliff. Vugs are little holes at the bottom of the cliff full of water. You reach in with your hand and pull out a hand full of mud, and sift it through your fingers. After an hour we went to a second site which we had better luck at. We found a lot of little broken diamonds. Some teens went to a third site, and didn't have any luck at all. Everyone found diamonds, some were as big as an inch and a half, and some were very small and broken.

We left at 3:30 pm heading home. We stopped in Watertown and had pizza for supper. We arrived back in Kingston about 8:30 pm. It was a very good trip, we all had a lot of fun looking for diamonds.

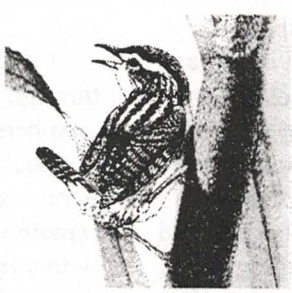
Thanks to our drivers Stacey Cirtwill, Leslie Fitch, and Ken Green. Special thanks to the Kingston Field Naturalists who sponsored our trip.

Canoe Field Trip - 20th September 1998

Larry McCurdy

Sunday, September 20th was an overcast, drizzly day, with little wind. Not perfect for a canoe field trip, but we soon forgot the weather, as we got down to the serious business of nature study. The group was made up of 6 people in 3 boats, which is a small field trip by KFN standards. Anne Robertson led the trip, and the small size of the group allowed us to get maximum benefit from her superb natural history interpretive skills. We launched our canoes at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary, and followed the creek west through Rothwell Lake, and on to Holleford Lake. We then turned north and paddled up to Desert Lake, where we had lunch, before retracing our path back to the starting point. Progress was leisurely, with frequent stops to observe nature (and to climb over beaver dams – some of which are remarkably ambitious projects).

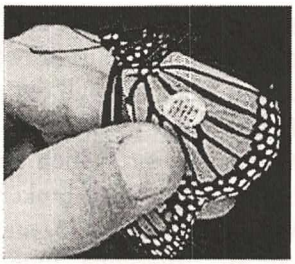
One of the highlights of the trip was the chance to closely examine marsh and aquatic life under Anne's expert guidance. A dead deer, in the water, at the foot of a steep rock face on the north shore of Rothwell Lake provided some mystery, and a face-to-face encounter with a Marsh Wren in the cattails in Holleford Lake provided some amusement. A good look at the nest burrows of a colony of Bank Swallows, and a great display by a pair of Red-Shouldered Hawks, soaring and calling high above the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary, rounded out the trip.



Marsh Wren

Teen Trip to Presqu'ile Provincial Park

Heather Green



Twelve teens went down to Presqu'ile Provincial Park on September 12th, 1998. We went to the nature center and met Don Davis. He demonstrated the tagging of Monarch Butterflies and he explained to us about their natural history and their migration. The sticky label was placed on the rear left wing of the butterfly for identification, so that when they arrived in Mexico we would know that they are the butterflies that we tagged at Presqu'ile Park.

He also had two other species of butterflies to show us: The Red Admiral, and the Comma. He kept the Monarchs in envelopes in his fridge for a few days after catching and before releasing them and sending them off to Mexico. Everyone had a chance to release two butterflies. Following this we went into the Nature Center to look at the exhibits. While there we had the opportunity to feed the fish and a turtle which was in one of the aquariums.

After that we went to the beach by the lighthouse for lunch. When everyone had finished eating we wrote letters to the Ministry of Natural Resources and the local MPP to encourage the release of the Presqu'ile Provincial Park Management Plan. Then we went in to the lighthouse to see the owl display. After that we went to the Bird Sightings Board to see what birds had been sighted in the park that day and added ours to the list.

Next we went to Beach 4 to look for shore birds. We saw Sanderlings running along the beach as well as other species of shore birds. Then we drove to a spot along the side of the road to look at some interesting plants. The plants we saw were: Purple Gerardia, Obedient Plant, Closed Gentian, Spiranthes Orchid, and Grass of Parnassus.

On the way home we stopped for apples. I would like to thank Anne, Diane and Don Davis for a fun, interesting, and educational day. I would also like to thank our drivers, John and Fiona Poland. It was a great day!

Bayview Bog Field Trip, March 1, 1998

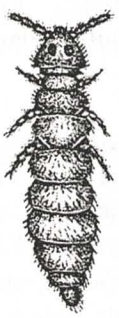
Sharon Critchley

The temperature was just above freezing and the rain had stopped when 7 KFN members set out over ice and water to visit Bayview Bog, located on private property off Taylor Kidd Boulevard. On the outer area of this wetland, we found Evergreen Goldthread, with its bright gold rootstocks; 2 trees characteristic of bogs, Tamarack and Black Spruce; and evidence of porcupine and deer. Bordering the ice-covered centre of the bog, we observed 3 evergreen shrubs, Bog-rosemary, Leatherleaf and Labrador Tea; a prostrate, evergreen, trailing shrub, Snowberry; and a creeping evergreen vine, Soapberry. In addition to the "evergreen" shrubs and vines with their grey-green and brown-green leaves, we also saw Pitcher-plant, Little Cranberry, Sphagnum or Peat Moss, and microscopic Snow Fleas.

When my husband accidentally broke through the ice at the edge of the bog, other members rushed to the rescue with dry wind pants, dry socks and plastic bags to make the wet rubber boots wearable. As new members, we will always remember these kind people and a great field trip! Safety tip: Use a ski pole or stick to check wet areas for depth and carry emergency dry clothes and plastic bags.

Snow Insects

Many animals, or signs of animal life, remain hidden or go unnoticed until the ground is covered with snow. Among the most surprising to appear against its whiteness is a miscellaneous hodgepodge of insects. For a few of these, especially Snow Fleas, our northern winters are their regular season of activity. Other kinds are found alive and more or less active on the snow – some occasionally, some rarely, and some accidentally. A sunny day in February is a good time to look for them.



Snow Flea

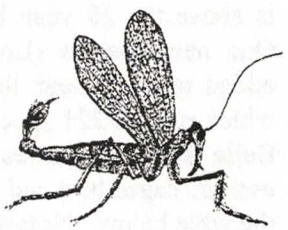
Snow Fleas usually catch our eye as dark specks hopping about on a melting snow bank. On bright days their bodies absorb enough heat from the sun to keep them active. At night they lie frozen in the snow until the next day.

The Snow Fleas come nearer to making the whole world their home than any other insect. They are native to every continent as well as the far Arctic and Antarctic, where they are the only insects excepting a few bird parasites. On Alaskan glaciers, a half-mile from the edge of the ice, they have been found feeding on the pollen of trees and the spores of ferns which had blown onto the snow.

Snow Fleas jump but they are not true fleas. They belong to a primitive group of inconspicuous, grotesque, wingless insects called Springtails – so-named because of a spring-like device on the tip of the abdomen which can be bent under the body and snapped downward to hurl the animal in the air – sometimes several inches or a foot away. Most kinds are less than one-sixteenth of an inch long. Springtails often outnumber all other animal life in damp soils and the leaf mold of woodlands.

Sometimes multitudes of them can be seen skipping on the surface of stagnant water. Others may become nuisances in damp basements, in mushroom beds, or in the buckets used to collect sap for making maple syrup.

On bright winter days, Stoneflies are frequently seen crawling about on snow, tree trunks, rocks and bridges along Illinois streams. Their underwater young, called nymphs, develop for almost a year beneath rocks in the rapids and riffles of our cleaner rivers and creeks. Several kinds of them emerge as half-inch long, dark-colored, slender adults – even while the shores are still edged with ice. They have two pairs of wings but they seldom fly. During the coldest part of the year when other insects are inactive, they feed, mate, and the females lay their eggs in water.



Scorpion Fly

An oddity of the insect world – a wingless Scorpion Fly – creeps about on snow in winter and early spring. It has long slender legs and resembles a young grasshopper. They are rare in this region but are occasionally found in great numbers on snow in eastern United States.

The Snow Fly has a body shape and long, hairy legs which make it look like a six-legged spider. Actually, it is a wingless relative of the crane flies – those long-legged, two-winged insects often mistaken for giant mosquitoes and seen about streams, meadows and at lighted windows. The adults crawl out onto snow in bright sunlight even when the temperature is down near zero. After mating the female works her way down into the snow close to a tree trunk and deposits her eggs. Like other true flies, these hatch, pass through a larva and a pupa stage before the next generation of adults emerge.

The first insect sign of spring is most likely to be a Mourning Cloak Butterfly flitting among the trees. For a few hours on balmy February days they rouse from their winter sleep in tree holes and under loose bark, then go back in hiding with the chill of evening. Honeybees, too, come out on sunny days and sip the sap oozing from broken maple twigs.

[Reprinted from the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (Illinois) Nature Bulletin No. 665-A]

Fall Round-up, 7 - 8 November 1998

Ron D. Weir

The 33rd KFN Fall Round-up took place between 1500h Saturday 1998 November 7 and 1500h Sunday November 8. Participants numbered 53. During Saturday, cloud with sunny breaks, light N-NW winds and temperatures around 5°C prevailed and continued through Sunday with more sunshine when temperatures varied from 2°C in the early morning to 8°C during the afternoon.

A total of 125 species was realized, which is above the 28 year 1970-1997 average of 119. One new species (Long-billed Dowitcher) was added to the Count list, the cumulative total of which rises to 221 species. The Cockatiel seen on Belle Island by parties #2 and #11 was surely an escaped caged bird and is therefore not included in the table below. Noteworthy finds included the 6 Trumpeter Swans, 2nd record, by Party #5; 1 Osprey, 5th record, by Party #3; 1 Solitary Sandpiper, 2nd record, by Party #11; 1 Red-necked Phalarope, 3rd record, by Party #10; 1 Red Phalarope, 3rd ever, by Party #11; Black-headed Gull, 2nd record by Party #11; Iceland Gull, 3rd record, by Party #11.

The following species were found by one or two parties only:

Party # 1: Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Party # 2: Tundra Swan with party #6, Turkey Vulture with party #1, Ring-necked Pheasant with party #7, Common Raven with party #5.

Party # 3: Osprey, Merlin, Little Gull, American Golden Plover with party #10, Lapland Longspur with party #7.

Party # 4: Northern Mockingbird with party #6.

Party # 5: Trumpeter Swan, Mute Swan, Wild Turkey, Red-bellied Woodpecker.

Party # 6: Broad-winged Hawk, Cooper's Hawk with party #11, American Pipit with party #10.

Party # 7: Sanderling, Saw-whet Owl, White-crowned Sparrow.

Party # 8: Belted Kingfisher and Winter Wren with party #10.

Party #10: Golden Eagle, White-rumped Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Screech Owl, Brown Creeper, Chipping Sparrow.

Party #11: Red-throated Loon, Canvasback, Surf Scoter, Solitary Sandpiper, Red Phalarope, Black-headed Gull, Iceland Gull.

Record high numbers were tallied for seven species that include 19 Red-necked Grebes, 219 Green-winged Teal, 200 Northern Pintails, 160 Northern Shovelers, 25,000 Oldsquaw, 4050 Common Mergansers, and 3500 Cedar Waxwings.

The totals in the following table have had known duplications removed so that the total individuals for a species may not equal the sum of the contributions from each party. The results provide a reasonable estimate of the numbers of birds found. The composition of the parties and the sites visited are given. Following the 24-hour count, birders met at the home of Marian and Joel Ellis for the pot-luck supper. Marian and Joel were again great hosts and a warm thank you is extended for their continued hospitality.

The assembly of the species list after dinner was greeted with much fanfare and fun. The Art Bell Trophy, inaugurated in November 1992 for the party with highest species total on a Spring and Fall Round-up, was awarded to Party #10 which tallied 89 species. The runner-up, Party #11 at 83 species, was awarded the coveted Purple Vulture, which is a paper maché model of a species unrecognizable among the avifauna on the earth today.

Party #1 Josette Arassus, Faith Avis, Lynn Bell, Floyd Connors, Allan Keast, Bob Stewart, Laurie Wright (Belle Island, Dupont, Cataraqui River Conservation Area Division Street, Elevator Bay, Prince Edward Point).

Party #2 Mary & Ed Taugher, Shirley & Al Treganza, Pauline & Walter Wong (Kingston waterfront, Belle Island, Sydenham area, Cataraqui River Conservation Area Division Street, Wolfe Island).

Party #3 Joel Ellis, Peter Good, Kathy Innis (Belle Island, Elevator Bay, Hillview marsh, Amherstview Sewage Lagoon, Amherst Island, Prince Edward Point, Hay Bay).

Party #4 Erwin Batalla, Alexandra Simmons (Glenburnie area, Belle Island, Elevator Bay, Kingston waterfront).

Party #5 Pauline Hockey, Juliun Joe, Annette Mess, Lena Morrison, Elizabeth Smith, Winnie Smith, Dave & Lillian Willison (Perch River, N.Y., Lyndhurst, Seeley's Bay, Gananoque, Lansdowne, Charleston Lake Provincial Park).

Party #6 Barb & Rob Frewin, Gerald & Shirley Paul (Prince Edward Point, Amherst Island, Elevator Bay, Belle Island, Wolfe Island).

Party #7 Basia Lodzinski, Michael Palmer, Alex and Janet Scott (Amherst Island, Nicholson's Point).

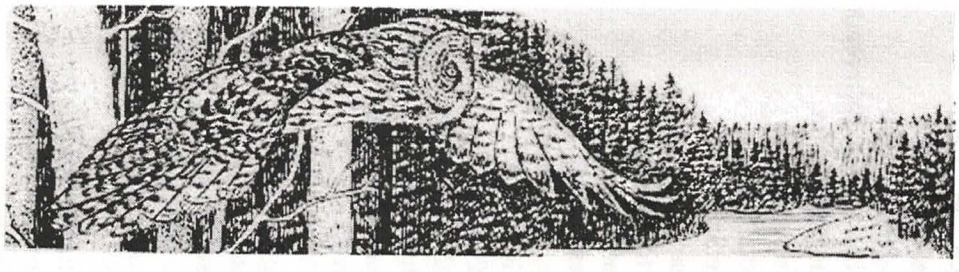
Party #8 Ken Kingdon (Amherst Island, Prince Edward Point, Belle Island, Elevator Bay).

Party #9 Ken Edwards (Amherstview Sewage Lagoon, Elevator Bay, Little Cataraqui Conservation Area, Prince Edward Point).

Party #10 Patrick Groenwegen, Chris Grooms, Lee-Ann Hamilton, Kurt Hennige, Jean Jeffrey, Jay McMahon, Bud Rowe, Bob Sachs, Karen Stinson (Amherst Island, Elevator Bay, Little Cataraqui Creek, Prince Edward Point, Amherstview Sewage Lagoons).

Party #11 Martin Edwards, Philena English, Hugh Evans, Susan & Yves Perreault, Ron Weir (Belle Island, Elevator Bay, Dupont, Lemoine Point, Prince Edward Point, Hay Bay, Sillsville, Wilton Creek).

Party #12 Miscellaneous: Sharon David, Bill Martin (Howe Island, Grass Creek).



SPECIES	PARTY NUMBERS												
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	TOTAL
Red-throated Loon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Common Loon	40	37	15	-	3	4	29	3	4	40	16	205	350
Pied-billed Grebe	-	-	4	2	4	3	1	-	-	4	3	-	15
Horned Grebe	6	-	10	-	-	30	18	-	-	40	30	-	134
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	16	-	19
Double-crested Cormorant	3	-	3	-	5	21	-	1	1	10	50	-	92
Great Blue Heron	1	5	10	-	3	4	9	-	-	6	12	-	50
Trumpeter Swan	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Tundra Swan	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Mute Swan	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Brant	-	1	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	1	-	10
Canada Goose	60	2564	500	100	120	1500	1200	x	x	500	700	-	7000
Wood Duck	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Green-winged Teal	7	10	30	12	4	22	4	-	-	30	100	-	219
American Black Duck	6	50	30	12	3	26	30	x	-	300	175	7	500
Mallard	300	664	1000	200	110	145	200	x	x	2000	4500	150	8000
Northern Pintail	8	51	30	50	3	15	10	x	-	80	120	-	200
Northern Shoveler	16	24	40	12	14	3	6	-	-	40	80	-	160
Gadwall	12	280	15	12	2	2	20	x	-	25	190	-	500
American Wigeon	60	700	600	1000	300	400	10	-	-	1500	800	-	2600
Canvasback	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	10
Redhead	-	-	3	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	16	-	22
Ring-necked Duck	500	2000	1	-	6	-	-	-	-	200	210	-	2500
Greater Scaup	3000	-	750	-	100	700	170	5000	x	7000	10000	-	20000
Lesser Scaup	6	1500	30	1000	2	100	330	-	x	520	40	-	3000
Oldsquaw	8	-	10000	-	-	11	3	30	x	5000	22000	-	25000
Black Scoter	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	1	4	-	10
Surf Scoter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3
White-winged Scoter	4	-	500	-	-	25	11	-	x	800	3000	-	4000
Common Goldeneye	-	4	100	2	-	300	100	26	-	60	100	-	650
Bufflehead	9	37	400	12	14	200	400	x	-	400	410	-	1000
Hooded Merganser	1	27	5	6	105	6	15	-	-	8	12	-	170
Common Merganser	1	1	2	-	10	3	18	5	-	16	4000	-	4050
Red-breasted Merganser	-	2	1	-	-	1	5	-	x	7	8	-	25

SPECIES	PARTY NUMBERS												
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	TOTAL
Ruddy Duck	-	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	6
Turkey Vulture	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Osprey	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Northern Harrier	3	2	2	-	4	9	4	2	-	5	2	-	39
Sharp-shinned Hawk	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	4
Cooper's Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Northern Goshawk	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	3
Broad-winged Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Red-tailed Hawk	7	14	20	3	12	4	12	2	2	20	20	-	100
Rough-legged Hawk	4	5	6	1	2	20	50	-	1	40	3	-	80
Golden Eagle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
American Kestrel	1	1	1	1	1	3	10	-	-	5	2	-	25
Merlin	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Ruffed Grouse	-	3	1	2	3	1	-	-	-	1	5	-	14
Wild Turkey	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
American Coot	-	230	30	50	6	1	-	-	-	150	260	-	600
Black-bellied Plover	4	12	6	3	-	-	30	3	-	8	6	-	72
American Golden Plover	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3
Killdeer	3	-	1	6	7	1	10	1	-	8	1	-	38
Greater Yellowlegs	2	2	2	1	-	3	10	3	-	2	1	1	27
Lesser Yellowlegs	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	7
Solitary Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Sanderling	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
White-rumped Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	-	1	1	-	-	1	6	-	-	1	-	-	10
Dunlin	-	79	150	50	-	60	500	25	-	200	25	-	750
Short-billed Dowitcher	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	9
Long-billed Dowitcher	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	5
Common Snipe	18	12	10	-	31	9	6	1	1	20	11	-	70
Red-necked Phalarope	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Red Phalarope	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Little Gull	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Black-headed Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

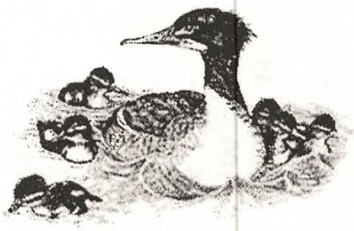
SPECIES	PARTY NUMBERS												
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	TOTAL
Bonaparte's Gull	-	10	20	8	175	15	20	-	1	40	65	-	344
Ring-billed Gull	50	470	300	50	300	150	200	x	x	100	3000	-	4000
Herring Gull	6	2	20	12	2	18	70	x	x	60	180	-	370
Iceland Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Great Black-backed Gull	12	6	30	1	4	29	9	x	x	20	200	-	300
Rock Dove	25	75	30	25	92	25	25	x	x	x	70	-	317
Mourning Dove	12	23	50	20	8	18	50	x	x	30	45	-	256
Eastern Screech Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Great Horned Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	1	8	-	13
Long-eared Owl	-	-	1	-	-	1	6	-	-	1	-	-	9
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Belted Kingfisher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Downy Woodpecker	4	7	4	2	4	1	12	1	-	8	2	-	45
Hairy Woodpecker	-	2	1	-	1	-	4	-	-	5	-	-	13
Northern Flicker	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5
Pileated Woodpecker	-	3	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	6
Horned Lark	-	1	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	1	-	-	9
Blue Jay	8	43	50	50	30	7	50	x	x	50	40	-	328
American Crow	20	36	450	29	11	34	20	x	x	100	25	-	725
Common Raven	-	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Black-capped Chickadee	30	6	40	50	50	2	100	x	x	50	30	-	358
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	3
White-breasted Nuthatch	6	9	8	2	6	1	4	-	-	8	6	-	50
Brown Creeper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Carolina Wren	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
Winter Wren	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	4
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	-	10	-	4	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	17
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Eastern Bluebird	1	7	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	17
American Robin	x	26	200	12	12	25	5	100	2	20	500	-	900
Northern Mockingbird	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
American Pipit	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Bohemian Waxwing	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	6

SPECIES	PARTY NUMBERS												
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	TOTAL
Cedar Waxwing	x	-	1000	-	225	195	50	270	x	1000	1500	-	3500
Northern Shrike	-	3	1	1	1	1	2	-	-	3	1	-	13
European Starling	x	1132	1500	24	2100	250	500	x	-	x	5000	-	10000
Yellow-rumped Warbler	50	-	100	-	-	-	-	150	2	3	30	-	175
Northern Cardinal	-	2	4	2	1	-	1	-	-	3	2	-	15
American Tree Sparrow	3	24	10	6	14	25	300	x	-	200	50	-	632
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Song Sparrow	-	-	-	3	1	1	3	-	-	6	1	-	15
Swamp Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	-	-	1	-	-	9
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	3
White-crowned Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Dark-eyed Junco	5	28	150	6	4	7	4	20	x	22	50	-	296
Lapland Longspur	-	-	10	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	12
Snow Bunting	-	125	50	-	-	46	500	105	-	500	150	45	1525
Red-winged Blackbird	3000	20	100	6	107	12	40	20	-	60	100	-	3400
Eastern Meadowlark	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	5
Rusty Blackbird	-	30	-	-	2	-	12	-	-	1	60	-	105
Common Grackle	2	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	2	4	-	12
Brown-headed Cowbird	-	6	-	-	-	2	-	10	-	5	50	-	73
Purple Finch	-	30	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	37
House Finch	5	46	5	6	25	-	20	-	x	55	24	-	186
American Goldfinch	-	24	20	3	9	3	20	-	-	20	20	-	119
House Sparrow	10	70	50	3	25	400	100	x	x	80	70	-	808
TOTAL SPECIES	54	64	71	47	65	69	70	41	30	89	83	x	125
PARTICIPANTS	7	6	3	2	8	4	4	1	1	9	6	2	53

$1.1 Million to Ducks Unlimited in Wetlands Joint Venture

MNR Press Release

October 19, 1998: Natural Resources Minister John Snobelen today announced MNR will provide funding of $1,100,000 over three years to Ducks Unlimited Canada to reclaim wetlands in southern Ontario and increase the waterfowl population.



Common Merganser

"This initiative is an example of the excellent relationship that MNR and Ducks Unlimited Canada have developed over the years in working for the protection and enhancement of waterfowl and their habitat in Ontario," Mr. Snobelen said.

MNR will contribute $400,000 in 1998/99, and $350,000 a year in each of the following two years as part of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV), in which MNR and Ducks Unlimited are partners. Ducks Unlimited Canada will use the MNR funds to leverage additional support from the federal government, U.S. agencies and the public to raise an anticipated total of $10.28 million for the project.

Under the EHJV, Ducks Unlimited will purchase wetlands and associated waterfowl habitat for reclamation largely in the coastal areas of Lake St. Clair/Detroit River, Long Point/Turkey Point and the northern shoreline of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River from approximately Trenton to Cornwall. All three areas have been internationally recognized for their importance in maintaining biological diversity. They are also under extreme pressure from urban and agricultural development.

"This funding announcement represents a culmination of the solid working relationship and shared conservation vision between Ducks Unlimited and the Ministry of Natural Resources," said Ted Gadawski, Director of Regional Operations for Ducks Unlimited. "The initiative clearly demonstrates how, through partnerships and the pooling of resources, we can work together to make a significant difference to offset historical losses of vital wetland areas. Since 1975, the support of MNR has enabled Ducks Unlimited to conserve over 700,000 acres of critically important wetland habitat throughout the province."

This project will not only result in significant progress toward the protection of Ontario's wetlands, it will also create a wide range of outdoor-related recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, nature appreciation, bird watching, canoeing and hiking.

The Eastern Habitat Joint Venture was formed in 1989 as a partnership of government and non-profit organizations to address important issues affecting waterfowl populations and habitat in eastern Canada. Mr. Snobelen also presented Ducks Unlimited with a plaque honoring the work of the organization and its thousands of volunteers in preserving and enhancing the natural world.

"I am particularly pleased to recognize the exemplary work of Ducks Unlimited this year," said Mr. Snobelen. "1998 marks their 60th year of conservation work in Canada and 23rd year in Ontario."

Ontario's wetlands are critical to the survival of nearly 600 species of birds, fish, mammals and other animals and plants. Losses of wetlands in settled areas of Ontario are among the highest on the continent.

<u>For More Information</u>:
Joy Williams, Minister's Office
TORONTO (416) 314-1100

Kevin Loftus, Fish and Wildlife Branch
PETERBOROUGH (705) 755-1711

Jane Holland, Ducks Unlimited
TORONTO (416) 968-3845

Teen Field Trip to Helen Quilliam Sanctuary

Ian Bickis

On November 14th, the Kingston Teen Naturalists took a trip to the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary to help make a new, more accurate map of the Sanctuary, using a very hi-tech global positioning system (GPS). Floyd Connor brought the backpack mounted system, and gave a very interesting explanation of how it worked.

We used the Forest Bird Monitoring observation points located all over the property as position recording areas, and recorded 5 different locations. It was interesting to see the variation between the old map and the new coordinates.

We saw many plants and animals, and evidence of animals on our walk throughout the day. There was bear scat from last year, Pileated Woodpecker – with many trees showing evidence of its presence – at least one deer was spotted, and on the way to the sanctuary we saw a very big Red-tailed Hawk, sitting on a tree near the road. We had our eye out for a deer skeleton that was somewhere on the trail, and Floyd's sharp eyes found it. We numbered the vertebrae, then put it in a bag for the Kingston Junior Naturalists.

We had a nice walk and great weather, we even got a chance to pick up some garbage around the sanctuary. Is was quite an enjoyable day.

Shrike News

Kit Chubb

For a brief period I joined the efforts of the Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Team and played a small but exciting part. One summer day, Chris Grooms, hard-working field biologist with the Shrike Recovery Program / Bird Studies Canada, asked me to examine a very sick baby in a nest where one sibling had just died. Robin and I grabbed some dead mice and other first-aid supplies and hurried off to the site. As Chris and I touched the branch and nest, we were both inundated with a wave of small blood-sucking mites running up our arms. So we removed the three babies, powdered them and their nest thoroughly with non-toxic diatomaceous earth preparation (Fossil Flower) replacing the two sturdier ones. The third, however was cold, weak and barely conscious, so I took him home, warming and feeding him slivers of mouse liver as Robin drove. I set him up on our kitchen counter and there, for the next 24 hours I did private-duty nursing every hour until he began to revive and I began to collapse.

Some workers raising shrikes in captivity suggested mealworms (a tasty, wiggly beetle larva – we grow our own) and I found that mealworms, lightly marinated with vitamin juice, were easier to tuck that bits of mouse. Over the next few days the little shrike gained from 34 grams to 46 grams and clearly felt a lot better about life.

Meantime, another of the nestlings had died and the last one was getting flitsy, so after 72 hours, Chris returned our patient so that it would still be attended by the parents. His timing was just right, and Chris (who seemed to live on his shrike patch) watched both parents feed the two young during the next two days, but sadly, on the third day there was no sign of either of the little shrikes, so it was apparent they had been predated upon, most likely by a wandering cat sighted in the area.

The number of Loggerhead pairs recorded in Ontario (again, mostly form Chris's patient watching) this year was 30, with single birds 7 or 8. Though this is better than last year's report, it still leaves the Loggerhead Shrike alarmingly close to extinction in Ontario.

[Reprinted from *Notes and Anecdotes* (1998) fall-winter: 5]

Autumn Season, 1 August - 30 November 1998

Ron D. Weir

For the third consecutive autumn, there were relatively few occasions when cold fronts with rain grounded large numbers of migrants. Such good-flying conditions of course are better for the birds than for the birders. However, the period was characterised by above average temperatures to the end of November, extremely low water levels in Lake Ontario, and a number of excellent days for raptor movement when weather conditions were just right. These respective effects on the migration led to several latest ever departure dates, a good wader passage with record numbers of Long-billed Dowitchers, and also record numbers of Golden Eagles. Waterfowl numbers were again strong and the areas around Belle Island, the Little Cataraqui Creek at Elevator Bay, and Prince Edward Point hosted many thousands. Songbird passage during August, September and October was steady with numerous heavy night flights over Kingston, but relatively few were grounded the following morning. Winter finches and birds of the boreal forest did not appear in our area.

Rarities include Eared Grebe, Great Egret, Sandhill Crane, Purple Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Red Phalarope, Franklin's Gull, Little Gull, Common Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Sabine's Gull, Summer Tanager, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Latest Ever Departures

American Golden Plover	October 15 (1)	Prince Edward Point	KFN	1983 November 27
Semipalmated Plover	November 28 (1)	Amherst Island	BMD	1983 November 15
Greater Yellowlegs	November 28 (1)	Kingston	JHE	1988 November 26
Ruddy Turnstone	November 28 (1)	Kingston	KFN	1970 November 8

Species Accounts:

Red-throated Loon - September 12 (1) PEPt, November 7 (1), 24 (1) Kingston, KFN

Common Loon - peak Nov. 8 (350) PEPt, KFN.

Horned Grebe - peak Nov. 8 (134) PEPt, KFN.

Red-necked Grebe - August 26 to November 15 (49), peak November 8 (19) PEPt, KFN.

Eared Grebe - September 12 (1) PEPt, KFN.

Great Egret - October 30 - November 6 (1) Sillsville, KH *et al.*

Tundra Swan - peak November 14 (102), Wolfe Island, KFN.

Snow Goose - October 10 - November 21 (75) Wolfe Island, KFN.

Canada Goose - peak October 10 (10,000) Wolfe Island, KFN.

American Wigeon - peak November 8 (2600) Kingston, KFN.

Ring-necked Duck - peak November 8 (2500) Kingston, KFN.

Oldsquaw - peaks October 31 and November 8 (25,000) Prince Edward Point, KFN, early for the high numbers.

Black Scoter - October 3 - November 22 (21 in all) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Surf Scoter - October 3 - November 22 (21 in all) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

White-winged Scoter - peaks October 31 (5000), November 22 (5000) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Bufflehead - peak Nov. 8 (2000) Kingston, KFN.

Hooded Merganser - peak November 2 (350) Kingston, KFN.

Ruddy Duck - August 8 to November 14 (33), Kingston, KFN.

Turkey Vulture - peak October 11 (500) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Bald Eagle - August 23 to October 31 (9), migrants at Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Northern Harrier - peak October 11 (150) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Cooper's Hawk - peak October 11 (50) Prince Edward Point migrants, KFN

Northern Goshawk - Septmebr 2 to November 15 (9 in all) Prince Edward Point, KFN; numbers typical of a non-irruptive year.

Red-shouldered Hawk - peak October 11 (300), Prince Edward Point, KFN

Red-tailed Hawk - peaks October 11 (1000), 29 (500) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Rough-legged Hawk - peaks November 8 (80) Amherst Island / Wolfe Island, KFN.

Golden Eagle - October 1 to November 3 (17 in all), peak October 29 (11 immature) Prince Edward Point, KFN, record high numbers.

Merlin - August 16 to November 8 (16 in all), Kingston, KFN.

Peregrine Falcon - September 2 (1 immature), October 1 (1), 3 (1) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Sandhill Crane - November 14 (1) Wolfe I., KFN.

Black-bellied Plover - August 22 to November 28 (186) Kingston, KFN.

American Golden Plover - September 13 to November 28, peak October 10 (75) Wolfe I., KFN.

Semipalmated Plover - August 8 to November 28 (136 in all), Kingston, KFN.

Solitary Sandpiper - September 1 to November 7 (7 in all) Kingston, KFN.

Whimbrel - August 16 to September 28 (24), Kingston, KFN.

Hudsonian Godwit - September 20 (1), October 14 (1), 22 (2) Kingston, KFN.

Sanderling - August 8 to November 8 (98), Kingston, KFN.

Western Sandpiper - August 22 (1), Amherstview Sewage Lagoons, JHE, RDW.

White-rumped Sandpiper - August 16 to November 8 (5 in all), Kingston, KFN, weak flight.

Baird's Sandpiper - August 16 to October 10 (12 in all), Kingston, KFN, strong flight.

Purple Sandpiper - November 25-26 (1) Amherst Island, KFN, first in several years.

Dunlin - October 3 to November 28, peak November 8 (750), Kingston, KFN.

Stilt Sandpiper - August 26 to September 1 (7 in all) Amherstview Sewage Lagoon, KFN.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper - August 16 (1 juvenile) Amherstview Sewage Lagoon, JHE, RDW *et al.*

Short-billed Dowitcher - August 8 to November 8 (32 in all), Kingston, KFN.

Long-billed Dowitcher - August 27 to November 7 (14) Kingston, KFN, record high numbers.

Red-necked Phalarope - November 8 (1) Amherst Island, KH *et al.*

Red Phalarope - November 8 (1) PEPt, RDW *et al.*

Franklin's Gull - November 14 (3, 1 adult, 2 immature) Wolfe Island, KFN, part of a displacement eastwards of large numbers into Southwestern Ontario from the prairies caused by severe storms and high winds.

Little Gull - September 6 to November 12 (5) Kingston, KFN.

Common Black-headed Gull - November 8 (1) Prince Edward Point, RDW *et al.*

Bonaparte's Gull - August 8 - November 28, peaks November 8 (344), September 6 (250), November 22 (225) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Iceland Gull - November 8 (1) PEPt, KFN, 21 (1 immature *kumlieni*), Napanee dump, VPM.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - November 21 (1 adult), Napanee dump, VPM.

Sabine's Gull - September 3 (5 immature) Kingston, off Garden Island, DVW.

Common Tern - peaks September 5 (200), 6 (150) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Red-headed Woodpecker - November 12 (1 immature) Wolfe Island, JHE.

Red-bellied Woodpecker - August 23 (1) Prince Edward Point, JHE, RDW; August 1 to November 28 (1) near Gananoque, KFN; November 29 (1) Howe Island, SD.

Olive-sided flycatcher - August 20 (2), September 8 (2) Prince Edward Point, KFN, BR; September 16 (1) Squaw Point.

Tree Swallow - peaks September 13 (20,000) Wolfe Island, JHE, RDW; September 5 (5000), Amherst Island, JHE, RDW.

Red-breasted Nuthatch - August 23 to November 8 (25), Kingston, KFN, weak flight.

Carolina Wren - September 10 to November 8 (6) Kingston and Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Golden-crowned Kinglet - peak October 3 (500) Prince Edward Point, VPM, RDW.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet - peak October 3 (500) Prince Edward Point, VPM, RDW.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - peak August 30 (29) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

American Robin - November 8 (10) Prince Edward Point, RDW *et al.*, dark northern race.

Northern Mockingbird - August 16 to November 21 (5 in all) Kingston, KFN.

Bohemian Waxwing - November 8 (6) PEPt, KFN.

Orange-crowned Warbler - September 10 (1), 27 (1) Prince Edward Point, KFN.

Yellow-rumped Warbler - peak October 3 (1000) Prince Edward Point, VPM RDW.

Connecticut Warbler - August 21 (1) Arden, J. Griffin; September 16 (1), October 4 (1) Squaw Point, RKE, RDW.

Summer Tanager - November 16-28 (1) Kingston, MK, KFN.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow - October 3 (2) Prince Edward Point, VPM, RDW.

Purple Finch - August 30 to November 22 (43 in all), light flight, Kingston, KFN.

Contributors:

S. David	B.M. Dilabio	R.K. Edwards
J.H. Ellis	K. Hennige	M.T. Ellis
Kingston Field Naturalists 3+		M. Kennedy
V.P. Mackenzie	B. Ripley	R.D. Weir

Lands for Life Update: Recommendations Fail to Meet Commitment

On October 30, 1998, Minister of Natural Resources John Snobelen released *Consolidated Recommendations of the Boreal West, Boreal East and Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Round Tables*. This report contains 242 recommendations and a detailed map outlining how our public lands and resources are to be used well into the future.

These recommendation fail to meet the commitment of the Premier (Mike Harris) to complete the protected area system. Only 1.6% of the *Lands for Life* planning area was recommended as additional protected area. This is far short of the 12% additional protected area targeted by the Partnership for Public Lands. The new protected area includes 72 new provincial parks and 199 conservation reserves, but almost all are small (some under 100 hectares) and scattered.

These Round Table recommendations would also:

- permit mining in existing conservation reserves;
- fail to complete wilderness park targets, as well as targets for natural environment parks and waterway parks;
- expand commercial and recreational activities within parks, including trapping, hunting, bait fishing, snowmobile and ATV use, etc.;
- endorse "floating reserves" (temporary parks);
- create confusing, flexible land-use designations including stewardship reserves and enhanced management areas.

The Partnership for Public Lands presented the Round Tables with three over-arching goals, none of which have been met:

1. Protect Ontario's wilderness and natural heritage by incorporating 15 to 20% of the land within the planning region into protected areas.
2. Allocate lands and resources in support of the healthy economies of local communities.
3. Ensure that public resources are managed sustainably and maintain the ecological health of the region.

The Partnership provided maps to the Round Tables outlining areas that should be protected to fulfil these goals.

The Partnership has also developed *Planning for Prosperity*, a framework for developing a land-use strategy that would complete the protected areas system in Ontario, maintain the wood flow in the forestry sector, and provide opportunities to expand other industries dependent on our natural resources such as ecotourism.

PROTECTED AREA (percentage of all lands)

	Existing	Additional Recommended	Total
Boreal West	9.8%	1.7%	11.5%
Boreal East	2.7%	0.3%	3.0%
Great Lakes - St. Lawrence	5.9%	2.9%	8.8%
Total	**6.6%**	**1.6%**	**8.2%**

You can help!

The 31-day official comment period ended November 30, 1998 but you can still let your views be known to the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Natural Resources. Tell the government that there is another way – a better way – for all Ontarians.

Please send your comments to both the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Natural Resources. To grab their attention enclose a

symbol of Ontario's wilderness (a leaf, a feather, etc.). Please quote the **Environment Bill of Rights Registry number when contacting the Minister (PB7E4001) and mark the envelope "Lands for Life."**

Hon. Michael D. Harris
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1
Fax: (416) 325-7578

Hon. John Snobelen
Minister of Natural Resources
Rm. 6301 Whitney Block
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1W3
Fax: (416) 314-2216

Please contact your local MPP to make sure they are aware of the *Lands for Life* process and the need for wilderness protection.

For more Information:

Federation of Ontario Naturalists
355 Lesmill Road
Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2W8
tel: 1-800-440-2366
http://www.ontarionature.org

[Reprinted from Partnership for Public Lands Information Sheet (WWF, FON, Wildland's League)]

Participate in the 1999 Great Backyard Bird Count

Chickadee puffed up from winter cold

Bird enthusiasts all over North America are needed for the 2nd Annual Great Backyard Bird Count, February 19-22, the first Internet-based bird census. Co-sponsored by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, supported by Wild Birds Unlimited, the Great Backyard Bird Count asks birdwatchers everywhere to count the birds they see at their feeders, local parks, or other areas.

Birders' reports are made online, through BirdSource <**http://birdsource.cornell.edu/>,** a state-of-the art website which is a joint project of Cornell and Audubon. Birders can chart local results and compare them with the finding of counters across North America.

"We need the help of people everywhere – children, parents and grandparents – who enjoy birdwatching," says Audubon Senior Vice President of Science Frank Gill. "Bird watching is the fastest-growing pastime in the country, enjoyed by over 54 million people every year. Combined with the cutting-edge Internet technology of BirdSource, this observing power will allow us to immediately begin assessing the status of North American wintering birds."

Last year's first-ever Great '98 Backyard Bird Count attracted 14,000 participants who reported more than half a million birds – in Ontario 42 species were observed – and some important El Niño-related finds. Species like the American Robin, which typically winters in southerly regions, were reported in high numbers across New England and the Canadian provinces. "This year's post-El Niño reports will be essential for comparisons," continued Gill.

Like last year, participants will be able to quickly see for themselves how their reports fit into the continent-wide perspective, as animated maps illustrate which birds are reported where in real-time. This year, however, participants will be able to ask the database their own questions, such as

which species were reported in a particular zip code, or how many of a certain species were seen. In addition, BirdSource will supply novices with help in identifying birds by sight and by their distinctive calls.

"Our most important goal right now is to get as many people as possible to participate," says John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "We're in the process of creating a vast database that will allow us to look at long-term population trends of North American birds. The more information we have, the better we'll be able to help ensure our common birds will remain common and take measures to protect species already in decline. This is why it's so important to get as many people as possible to tell us what they're seeing."

To participate, simply go to the BirdSource website at <**http://birdsource.cornell.edu**>, click on the 2nd Annual Great Backyard Bird Count button and fill in the easy-to-use form. In addition to animated maps, visitors to the site can view colorful bird images, hear examples of songs and calls, read about the conservation status of key species, compare maps with other BirdSource projects, and more.

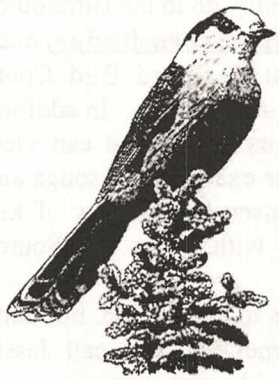
If you would like to participate, but don't have access to the Internet you can call Jessie Deslauriers at 546-4087 with your sightings.

The Great Backyard Bird Count 1998 Ontario List

Species	# Observ.	# Ind.
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	5
Cooper's Hawk	1	1
Rock Dove	44	813
Mourning Dove	155	1115
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2	6
Downy Woodpecker	110	311
Hairy Woodpecker	79	213
Northern Flicker	5	5
Pileated Woodpecker	13	17
Gray Jay	8	16
Blue Jay	142	776
Black-billed Magpie	1	2
American Crow	108	865
Common Raven	31	124
Black-capped Chickadee	186	1470
Boreal Chickadee	1	3
Tufted Titmouse	3	4
Red-breasted Nuthatch	45	120
White-breasted Nuthatch	93	250
Carolina Wren	3	6
Eastern Bluebird	1	2

Species	# Observ.	# Ind.
American Robin	5	32
Northern Mockingbird	6	7
Bohemian Waxwing	1	100
Cedar Waxwing	1	15
European Starling	103	1878
Northern Cardinal	107	313
American Tree Sparrow	22	178
Song Sparrow	8	102
White-throated Sparrow	3	15
Dark-eyed Junco	75	513
Red-winged Blackbird	3	4
Common Grackle	10	87
Brown-headed Cowbird	4	68
Pine Grosbeak	44	590
Purple Finch	33	223
House Finch	68	732
Common Redpoll	84	3151
Pine Siskin	12	94
American Goldfinch	71	496
Evening Grosbeak	34	1501
House Sparrow	114	1894

Climate Change May be Destroying Ontario Bird Habitat



Something has been going wrong with Algonquin Park's Gray Jays, one of the parks most endearing birds.

Nesting sites that had been occupied as long as anyone can remember have suddenly gone empty. In the past three years, not one Gray Jay has occupied territory in the hardwoods under study, and nesting in the conifers has been reduced. Naturalists are speculating climate change may be the reason.

"There is no question that there are many fewer occupied territories by Gray Jays than there were 20 years ago," said Dan Strickland, the park's chief naturalist. Of the usually long-lived jays, some can reach the age of 15, he said "you get to know them and expect to see them from one year to the next."

Mr. Strickland said the climate may be getting too hot for the jays, a bird with a particular affinity for cold weather. They even raise their young in March when snow is still on the ground in the park.

What is happening to the park's Gray Jay population may also happen to other plants and animals if the planet heats up due to global warming.

Algonquin Park, because of its high elevation and location, may be one of the best natural laboratories for a look at the impact of global warming.

The park is in the transition zone between the hardwood forests of south and the more northern evergreen forests. Species of both regions are present.

Park naturalists have studied many of the park's features that might indicate global warming. Including the day the autumn colour reaches its peak, the last ice day for Opeongo, minimum winter temperatures and the number of deer.

"You'd expect that species that are at the northern edge of their range here would become more common, similarly for plants and animals that are at their southern edge here may become less common," Mr. Strickland said, referring to the likely impact of global warming.

Among potential research subjects for the impact of climate change, the Gray Jay is likely to play a starring role.

The Gray Jay is one of Canada's northern birds. Their range goes all the way north to the tree line. With such a large range, the bird is in no danger of extinction, but it could be eradicated from some of its traditional habitats because of global warming.

The jays have another attribute attractive in any study linked to climate change – they do not migrate. As a year round resident of the park, whatever is affecting them is being caused by a disturbance of some king in the local environment.

Detailed research on Algonquin's Gray Jays began in 1964, when 44 nesting territories were noted along the Hwy 60 corridor that goes through the southern portion of the park.

Every year since, the territories have been monitored, giving one of the few long term records for this species.

For the first 15 years, nothing much happened. Nearly 100% of the sites were occupied, year in and year out. Then in the early 80's, the Jays began to abandon many traditional nesting sites. Currently, none of the monitored sites in the hardwood forest are used and only 2/3 of the coniferous sites.

Moreover, the number of deer – a traditional southern animal – is up, in part because the winters have been unusually mild.

[Reprinted from *The Orchid* (1998) 44 (9):5]

Federal Environment Minister Applauds Canadian Appreciation of Nature

Environment Canada Press Release

OTTAWA – September 23, 1998 – Environment Minister Christine Stewart today welcomed initial findings in Statistics Canada's Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians. "This survey clearly shows the importance Canadians place on nature" said Minister Stewart, "and is testimony to Environment Canada's work in protecting nature while informing and involving Canadians in conserving this legacy."

The survey assessed the social and economic value of nature to Canadians, and revealed that in 1996 twenty million Canadians participated in one or more nature-related activities.

The Minister was pleased to note survey results which showed that an astonishing 760,000 Canadians were directly involved in providing food and shelter for wildlife in areas like woodlots, hedges, ponds and open fields. "I believe in the ingenuity and commitment of Canadians to take local action for the sake of a cleaner environment", stated Minister Stewart, "and I am pleased to see that this survey shows that they are doing just that".

Environment Canada's Millennium Eco-Communities Initiative was designed to draw on Canadian's demonstrated sense of personal responsibility for the environment by helping communities set local environmental goals and get to work on them.

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the Atlantic Coastal Action Plan and the St. Lawrence Action plan are continuing examples of the Federal Government working in partnership to protect wildlife.

Discussing new initiatives, the Minister stated: "I look forward to tabling new legislation to protect endangered species and I am pleased with the quality of ideas that I am receiving from Canadians on this fundamental issue".

"The findings from this survey reinforce the commitment we must all make to protect and conserve nature", concluded the Minister. "This is a commitment I will underline with provincial and territorial counterparts at the Wildlife Ministers Meeting being held on September 28 in Victoria, British Columbia."

Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians During 1996

Initial Findings

The vast majority of Canadians engage in nature-related activities. Twenty million Canadians (84.6% of the population aged 15 years and over) participated in one or more nature-related activities in 1996. More than three-quarters of the residents of each of the 10 provinces and the Yukon included in the survey took part in nature-related activities during the year.

Canada's natural areas and wildlife sustain a wide variety of nature-related activities. They provided opportunities for such activities as sightseeing (31.1%), picnicking (26%), swimming or beach activity (23.7%), camping (18.8%), and nature photography (15.9%), among others. Trails in natural areas were used for hiking or backpacking (18.5%), cycling (8.6%), off-road vehicle use (3.4%), and horseback riding (1.6%), and in winter for downhill skiing (4.7%), cross country skiing or snowshoeing (3.5%), and snowmobiling (2.5%). Boating was an important outdoor activity for Canadians, including canoeing, kayaking or sailing (9.9%), and power boating (9.3%). Canada's fish and wildlife attracted many participants. In 1996, 51.9% of Canadians directly encountered wildlife through such activities as observing or feeding wildlife around their homes (38.3%), wildlife viewing on trips away from home (18.6%), fishing for recreation (17.7%), or hunting wildlife (5.1%). Large numbers of Canadians enjoyed nature less directly through watching films

or TV programs on wildlife and natural areas (69.6%), or reading about nature (43.4%).

Canadians commit large amounts of their leisure time to nature-related activities. They took 191 million trips (an average of 16.6 trips per participant) for the main reason of participating in nature-related activities. Nearly three-quarters of these trips were taken close to home, whereas one-quarter involved overnight stays. A total of 1.5 billion days were spent taking part in nature-related activities, or an average of 101 days per participant. The greatest investments of time were spent observing and caring for wildlife around the home. Canadians also spent considerable amounts of time away from home enjoying outdoor activities such as camping or boating, or for wildlife watching, hunting and fishing.

The billions spent by Canadians on nature-related activities contribute significantly to national and provincial economies in the form of income and jobs.

Expenditures by Canadians on nature-related activities in Canada amounted to $11 billion (an average of $549 per participant). This money went for everything from campground fees to binoculars for birdwatching, and from outdoor clothing to transportation and hotels. The total represents a significant outlay which has important impacts on the Canadian economy.

Parks and other protected areas are attractive sites for nature-related activities. In 1996, 6.7 million Canadians (28.4% of the population) visited parks or other protected areas in order to take part in nature-related activities.

Core Groups of Canadians Volunteer for Nature

A dedicated core group of 1.3 million Canadians (5.4% of the population) joined or contributed to nature-related organizations such as naturalist, conservation or sportsmans' clubs. A further 4.5 million (19%) indicated interest in joining or contributing in the future. Another core group maintained, restored or purchased land for conservation (760,000 Canadians or 3.2% of the population). These Canadians provided food or shelter for fish and wildlife in areas such as woodlots, hedges, marshes, ponds, and open fields, or took steps to conserve or restore a natural setting.

[For information on the Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians in 1996 (and the full 1991 survey) visit http://www.doe.ca/nature/inifind.htm]

Art on the Wing: British, American and Canadian Illustrated Bird Books from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century

An exhibit prepared by Joan Winearls at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, 120 St. George Street. The exhibit runs from January 25th to April 9th, 1999. The Fisher Library is open from Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm. A catalogue accompanies the exhibit and costs $20.00.

This exhibition will look at the changing styles in bird art in books of the last three centuries. On display will be Gould's hummingbirds, Lear's toucans, Wolf's falcons and Audubon's warblers from the great period of hand-coloured lithographs and also twentieth century work such as Fuertes' hawks, Peterson's first field guide and Brook's and Shortt's ducks. Come and learn more about the origins of bird illustration in an exhibit which should be a delight to all bird lovers.

[Reprinted from *Toronto Field Naturalists* (1998) 480:29]

Wildlife Ministers Strengthen Protection For Endangered Species

Environment Canada Press Release

Victoria, September 28, 1998 – BC Environment Minister Cathy McGregor opened today's meeting of federal, provincial and territorial wildlife ministers by outlining the progress made since the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk which was agreed to in 1996. "Our task today – and I can tell you we have made significant progress – was to move forward with the implementation plan to achieve concrete results under this agreement", said McGregor. The Ministers also began discussions on a National Biodiversity Stewardship Action Plan to protect habitats and help wildlife populations to remain healthy.

"The recoveries made by many species in recent years, including the Peregrine Falcon, the Swift Fox, the Trumpeter Swan and the Wood Bison, prove that we have a solid framework in place to protect wildlife in Canada," said Minister Stewart. Ministers commented on the 10th Anniversary Renew report and noted the $27 million that has been invested in recovery efforts in the past 10 years, including $4 million in the past 12 months. They agreed to expand upon this through improved monitoring and recovery planning. "By systematically monitoring and evaluating the status of all species, we can be pre-emptive in our response to effectively protect wildlife, rather than having to take drastic action at the last minute to save species at risk," she said.

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers amended the Accord to place greater emphasis and recognition on stewardship which all ministers agreed is essential in preventing species from becoming at risk. They also agreed to implement a national process for regular monitoring of the status of all wild species and committed to issuing a national wildlife status report by the year 2000.

The Ministers discussed a national safety net which would provide a nation-wide standard to prohibit willful killing or harming of any endangered or threatened species in Canada, unless there is a management plan in place. "The national safety net would create a seamless web to protect species at risk," said Federal Environment Minister Christine Stewart. "Wildlife species do not recognize provincial or territorial borders, and close cooperation is essential to the conservation and protection of species at risk. Provinces, territories and the federal government, together with the active involvement of thousands of Canadian volunteers, landowners and organizations across the country will ensure that no species fall between the cracks," she said.

The Ministers approved new terms of reference for the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), which reviews scientific data on wildlife suspected of being in danger, and assesses species at risk. While COSEWIC will report directly to a newly created Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council (CESCC), including Canadian Wildlife Ministers, the independent scientific process by which species are listed by COSEWIC will continue. These changes elevate the status of COSEWIC by establishing a direct reporting relationship with Wildlife Ministers. This will improve accountability for taking action since COSEWIC will now report directly to those in a position to act when a species is listed.

Ministers agreed to require the development of recovery plans within two years following listing of a species as endangered or threatened by COSEWIC. "This provides a much needed sense of urgency once a species is listed", added Minister McGregor. "Under the new system, recovery plans for species in dire need of assistance, such as the Vancouver Island Marmot, will be developed and implemented much more quickly," McGregor said.

Governments agreed to continue extensive consultations with interested Canadians on the roles that governments, stakeholders and individuals can take to protect endangered species.

Science Gives Way to Politics in Identification of Endangered Species

Canadian Nature Federation Press Release

September 28, 1998: The nation's Wildlife Ministers, meeting in Victoria yesterday, agreed to a process that would hold science hostage to the whims of politicians in the development of the national list of species at risk of extinction. Traditionally, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), an independent scientific agency, has been responsible for assessing the status of wildlife in danger of becoming extinct. New terms of reference adopted by the Wildlife Ministers gives them the final authority to accept or reject the recommendations of COSEWIC. "It is appalling to see politicians giving themselves the authority to turn a blind eye to science. The listing of endangered species should not be subject to political wrangling." noted Marc Johnson of the Canadian Nature Federation.

Environmentalists were encouraged by the stated commitment of the ministers to develop a "national safety net" for the protection of Canada's endangered and threatened species, but are waiting to see whether these words will be translated into action. "Minister Stewart must now demonstrate her commitment to a national safety net by tabling endangered species legislation that will require the federal government to protect species in cases when the provinces fail to do so." noted Johnson.

The Ministers also made a welcomed revision to the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk to recognize the important of stewardship initiatives. Voluntary conservation efforts by landowners and the public are critical to the survival of many species; government recognition and support of these voluntary efforts is essential.

Federal Government Abandoning Responsibility for Endangered Species

Marc Johnson, Canadian Nature Federation Nature Alert

The federal government is taking a back seat in the protection and recovery of Canada's endangered species. All indications suggest that new endangered species legislation to be tabled in December will be significantly weaker than the former Bill C-65, which the federal government failed to push through second reading before an election call in April, 1997.

Bill C-65 fell far short of Canadians' expectations. It failed to provide protection for over half of Canada's species at risk, and provided almost no protection for their critical habitat. Now, the feds seem to be back-pedaling in other key areas, such as legal protection of cross-border species and provisions for citizen suits.

At a recent endangered species consultation, many provincial representatives reaffirmed their view that the federal government's role in the protection of species at risk should remain secondary to their own. The federal government, for its part, seems more intent on appeasing the provinces than protecting nationally endangered species. We at CNF remain firm in our conviction that the federal law should apply to any species at risk that is not adequately protected under provincial or territorial law.

Here's a look at a number of the key aspects of the upcoming federal endangered species legislation.

Cross-border Species

The federal government has constitutional authority over the protection of international cross-border species. This authority was recognized in Bill C-65, which regulated prohibitions against harming cross-border animal species and their

residences. However, the federal government now appears willing to hand over this authority to the provinces, many of which do not have adequate measures in place to protect species at risk. The Canadian Nature Federation maintains that legislation should apply to the full extent of federal jurisdiction, including all cross-border species and their habitats.

Citizen Suits

A key component of effective endangered species legislation is a citizen suit provision, which allows the public to go to civil courts to seek enforcement of the act in instances where the government is failing to do so. Whereas Bill C-65 provided for civil suits, the federal government is instead considering establishing alternate, non-binding measures of dispute resolution in the new legislation. These watered-down provisions would provide the public with little opportunity to make the government accountable for its actions.

Scientific Listing

One of the CNF's primary concerns is the process for listing species at risk. The determination of species status is a scientific exercise that serves as the foundation for endangered species protection. The list of species at risk should therefore be developed according to a credible, independent, science-based process, free of political discretion. The federal legislation should require the listing of species at risk by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

Habitat Protection

Habitat loss is responsible for 80 percent of species endangerment in Canada. A law that does not require habitat protection cannot protect species. Federal legislation should require the protection of endangered species habitat, particularly for international and inter-provincial cross-border species.

Please write the Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment to tell them that our nation's endangered species need strong federal legislation for their protection.

Action Alert

The federal government is currently in the process of drafting the new endangered species legislation. The contents of this legislation will ultimately decide the fate of many of our country's current, and future, species at risk.

Send your letters to:

The Right Honourable Jean Chretien
Prime Minister of Canada
Room 309-S, Centre Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0E6
email <pm@pm.gc.ca>

The Honourable Christine Stewart
Minister of the Environment
Room 658, Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0H3
email <Stewart.C@parl.gc.ca>

Please note that letters to the House of Commons do not require postage.

[Reprinted from *Nature Alert* (1998) 8(4)]

Mercury Found to Harm Loons

The loons on the lakes of Eastern Canada are playing the same role as the canary in the coal mine: They're warning of danger. A new study by Environment Canada scientists has found that high blood levels of the toxic metal mercury interfere with the loon's ability to successfully nest and raise young. They feed at the top of the food chain, just as we do and just as a lot of other species do, and if the loons are being so seriously affected, then that's got to raise serious concerns about human health.

[Reprinted from *Toronto Field Naturalists* (1998) 480:21]

1998 Report Card on Canadian Governments' Implementation of the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk

Canadian Nature Federation

Two years after agreeing to the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk, the provincial, territorial, and federal governments have failed to live up to their commitments to protect and recover Canada's endangered, threatened, and vulnerable species.

Promises, promises...

In October 1998, it will have been two years since Canada's 13 governments agreed to the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk and not a single government has fully met its commitment. Most have a long way to go. Canada's endangered species cannot wait any longer . They need effective legal protection across the country. Only the federal government can provide this national safety net, at least until such time as all provinces and territories fully meet their commitments under the National Accord.

The Problem

Canada's rich biological heritage is threatened as never before. Canada has already lost 22 species and populations, and a further 285 animal and plant species are in danger of a similar fate, including the Atlantic cod, grizzly bear, five lined skink, and the swift fox. The main threat is the destruction of habitat - the fields, forests, waters and wetlands where species live. Two years after agreeing to the National Accord, there are 33 more species are at risk in Canada, and endangered species in most parts of the country are still afforded little or no legal protection. Paper agreements and promises will not protect vanishing wildlife; strong legislation will. It's time to act.

This second annual Report Card evaluates Canada's 13 jurisdictions according to how their legislation meets the 14 criteria listed in the National Accord. It also evaluates the progress they have made since the first Report Card in 1997.

No News is BAD News

Since last year's Report Card, only two provinces have made significant progress in meeting their legislative commitments in the National Accord. Prince Edward Island has passed the Wildlife Conservation Act and Newfoundland has released a legislative proposal for the protection of endangered species. Most jurisdictions still have no endangered species legislation in place, and the few existing laws suffer from serious deficiencies.

Canadians look to the federal government to take a leadership role, not trail the pack ! There is still no federal endangered species legislation. Even the former bill C-65, the proposed law which failed to pass in 1997, would only have earned a D grade. The federal government will have to introduce a much stronger bill if it hopes to meet its commitments to the Accord.

Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick have legislation aimed at protecting endangered species. However all five laws require improvements to fully meet the goals of the National Accord and the needs of species at risk.

The Yukon and the Northwest Territories have long-standing commitments to introduce endangered species legislation but have not delivered. Proposed legislation in Nova Scotia died on the order paper in 1997; new legislation is expected by the current government. Alberta and B.C. have both indicated that they do not intend to pass specific legislation protecting species at risk.

A little good news since last year!

The PEI government raised its 1997 'F' grade to a 'C-' by passing legislation meeting some of its commitments in the Accord. While Newfoundland's 'F' grade has been repeated in 1998, we have graded a discussion paper which it released for public comment. If the contents of this paper are translated into an endangered species act, Newfoundland would receive a 'C+'. Mentions are also extended to Manitoba and Quebec for listing some new species under their respective laws.

The patchwork of existing laws do not

combine to give Canada's endangered species the legal protection they desperately need. Debates over which level of government has responsibility for protection of species at risk has gotten in the way of actually protecting them. The federal government has not yet taken a leadership role in establishing a legal safety net to ensure effective protection for all of Canada's endangered species and their habitats.

Supporting Stewardship!

Most of the requirements of the National Accord will be met by governments through legislation. The scope of this Report Card is limited to the legislative relief afforded to endangered species. However, legislation is not the only tool needed to save species. Voluntary conservation efforts by landowners and the public are critical to the survival of many species. Government programs should assist and support these voluntary efforts.

No species should fall into extinction as a result of inaction... A successful partnership between Canada's 13 governments should begin with the understanding that the collective protection of all of Canada's species at risk is the true objective. The current patchwork of laws fails to ensure adequate protection and recovery for the nation's endangered species. The solution? A national legislated safety net provided by the federal government, which would protect and recover species at risk where there is no equivalent provincial or territorial legislation.

Meeting our International Commitments to the Biodiversity Convention

Over half of our species at risk migrate or range across Canada's national borders. Our lack of legal protection undermines the efforts of other countries to save these "shared" species. Both the U.S. and Mexico have strong federal laws protecting all their endangered species. Federal legislation in Canada must ensure protection of these "cross-border" species and their habitat.

[For more information visit CNF's web site at http://www.cnf.ca]

1998 Report Card on Canadian Governments' Implementation of the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk - Chart of Grades

Final Grades for All Governments:

Jurisdiction	Grade
Canada	F
Canada Bill C-65	D
Alberta	D-
British Columbia	F
Manitoba	C
Newfoundland	F
Newfoundland Proposal	C+

Jurisdiction	Grade
New Brunswick	C-
Northwest Territories	F
Nova Scotia	F
Ontario	C-
Quebec	C-
Saskatchewan	D+
Yukon	F

Following Migrant Birds and Butterflies

Several years ago, scientists at the Prairie and Northern Wildlife Research Centre and National Water Research Institute in Saskatoon were seeking new ways to link the breeding and wintering areas of migrant songbirds, whose populations were declining. The ability to assess the breeding origins of wintering migrants would be a powerful tool in their protection.

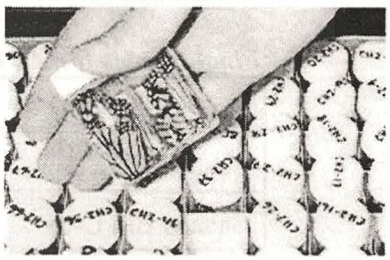
They had discovered that concentrations of stable hydrogen isotopes in animal tissues correlated with those found in rainwater. Deuterium, a stable isotope of hydrogen, occurs naturally in rainwater across North America. The deuterium content of rain shows up in the tissues of shallow-rooted plants. Animals that feed on these plants incorporate this deuterium into their bodies. It made sense that the hydrogen isotope patterns at the base of the food chain should be reflected in higher-level organisms.

In birds, the composition of isotopes in feathers reflects diet only while the feathers are growing, typically at the breeding site. The researchers found that the deuterium values of feathers were highly correlated with the deuterium expected from rainfall in areas where the birds were nesting. In other words, they had found a new way of associating birds on southern wintering grounds to breeding areas in North America. The strong deuterium concentration gradient in rainwater across the continent means the natal origins of songbirds and other migratory organisms can now be identified.

Enter the Monarch Butterfly. Previously, Monarch migration to Mexico was studied using observation or tag-recapture techniques, involving placement of small identification tags on monarchs captured and released across the breeding range. Hundreds of thousands of monarchs were tagged over the past 50 years, culminating in the discovery of the Mexican wintering colonies in 1975. Yet fewer than 125 tags have actually been recovered from Mexico. Thus, tagging and observation has not yielded quantitative information on proportions of monarchs originating from various parts of the breeding range. This knowledge was key to focusing conservation efforts in critical portions of the North American breeding range and at wintering sites in Mexico.

In the first phase of this research, published in *Oecologia*, Environment Canada scientists analyzed wing membranes of laboratory-and field-reared monarchs for stable hydrogen and carbon isotope ratios. (Carbon is also used as a marker in Monarchs because they feed on the same plant right across the breeding ground; in the case of songbirds, food sources vary.) Monarchs were reared in the laboratory on milkweeds grown with water of known deuterium concentration. Then, in the field, Monarchs were raised on milkweeds naturally watered by rainfall at sites across the entire breeding range. The results show that the stable hydrogen and carbon isotopic composition of monarchs is highly correlated with the isotopic composition of the milkweed host plants, which in turn corresponds closely with the geographic patterns of deuterium in rainfall.

This relationship is critical in understanding the role of habitat for the millions of monarchs that winter in Mexico, where deforestation and thinning of a forest near wintering colonies threaten their survival.



Monarch wing membranes ready for stable isotopic analysis

[Reprinted from http://www.ec.gc.ca/science/sandesept/bs_nature.htm]

Frogwatch Ontario

Frogwatch is a partnership among the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network, the Toronto Zoo's Adopt-A-Pond Programme, and the National Heritage Information Centre. Local volunteers identify and report on the mating calls of frogs and toads heard near their homes and cottages from March to July. Experts at the Zoo and the Information Centre check and screen the data that will be used by the Network to identify changes to Ontario ecosystems, help understand the nature of environmental responses to stress, identify new issues, and ensure the effectiveness of pollution control programs.

What is Frogwatch-Ontario?

Frogwatch-Ontario is an educational program of frog and toad observations that contribute to scientific databases in Ontario.

By listening to frog and toad mating calls, schools and communities can record and submit observations that are important in monitoring the health of Ontario's wetlands.

Frogwatch-Ontario Goals:

- encourage community members of all ages to take an interest in their local environment
- collect data on the distribution of amphibian species across the province
- provide a fun and educational opportunity to promote the importance of wetlands and wetland species

You will:

- learn to identify the calls of all Ontario's frogs and toads
- learn about the importance of wetlands and the species that depend upon them
- take action to protect wetlands in Ontario
- share results with similar programmes in Canada and around the world
- have fun with your family and friends
- receive a tape of frog calls, an Amphibians of Ontario poster and a Certificate of Appreciation for your contribution

Why Monitor Frogs?

In the same way that thermometers measure temperature, amphibians and other species of plants and animals can be used as indicators of environmental health. Amphibians are particularly vulnerable to changes in the environment. They live both in water and on land. Water must be available for reproduction. Disturbances or destruction to either habitat (land or water) can affect amphibians. Amphibian skin is sensitive to environmental contaminants. The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can damage an amphibian's delicate skin. When Amphibians start to disappear, we are warned that all is not well in the environment. Did you know that amphibians breathe and drink through their skin?

As a Frogwatch observer in Ontario, you can take action within your community to protect local wetlands. By simply listening for frog calls, we hope you will appreciate the importance of wetlands upon which many species depend. By monitoring the calls of frogs and toads throughout Ontario, valuable information about the location of frog and toad populations can be collected. Over the long-term, this data can be used to generate presence/absence information across a broad geographic range. As well, as the weather warms, we can monitor the south to north progression (phenology) of calls as amphibians wake from hibernation.

The health of frog and toad populations is a good indicator of the quality of freshwater and wetland habitats. The first amphibian calls celebrate the arrival of spring, and tell us where healthy habitats are located. There is magic when frogs sing. No one wants a silent spring!

How to Frogwatch

Male frogs and toads call to protect and define their territory and to attract females to their

location. Some species call as early as March and others as late as July (and occasionally later). Each frog and toad species has its own distinct call, making it easy to recognize Ontario's 13 species.

You can report your observations 4 ways:

1. *Mail it In!* Mail your completed monitoring form to:
Frogwatch-Ontario
c/o Adopt-A-Pond
Toronto Zoo
361 A Old Finch Ave.
Scarborough, Ontario M1B 5K7

2. *Fax it In!* Fax your completed monitoring form to: Toronto Zoo at (416) 392-4979

3. *Phone it In!* Your observations can be reported by calling the Frogwatch Hotline at: 1-888 31FROGS (313-7647). Using your touch-tone phone, you can report the date of your observation and the species observed.

4. *Web it In!* Frog observations can be reported using an electronic form found at: http://www.cciw.ca/ frogwatching/

Register First!

All ways of reporting require that you first register as a Frogwatch Observer by calling (905) 336-4477 or by visiting the Frogwatch website at http://www.cciw.ca/frogwatching/data/registration.html. The calls of Ontario's frogs and toads are provided to assist in identification and to verify your sightings.

If possible, make observations once a week from late March to the end of July (but even a single report is significant). Listen for 3 minutes each evening starting in early spring. In southern Ontario, frogs and toads begin calling in late March.

Use a separate monitoring sheet for each location and date (but you should include all frogs and toads you hear for each location and date on the same sheet). Record the date that you listened. It is important to submit weekly monitoring observations, even if you listen and do not hear calls. With your help, each season we will have 16 records from each monitoring site indicating the health of Ontario's wetlands (4 nights x 4 months=16). The data you submit will be immediately updated to provide distribution maps across Ontario. You may access these maps and see how your data has contributed to the long-term collection of amphibian presence/absence information across the province.

All data is sent to Environment Canada and the Ministry of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC). Your contribution will provide valuable data across Ontario.

Once registered as a Frogwatch Observer, you will receive a Frogwatch Observer number. This number is specific for each site you monitor and contains all specifics about your name, address and location details. You require a separate number for each site that you monitor.

Some Monitoring Tips:

- Most frog/toad calls peak at dusk, but some species will call during the day, especially after rain (e.g. green frogs, peepers).
- Remain quiet and still while monitoring a habitat; it is important not to disturb the frogs, toads and other species.
- Calls can be heard on still nights, so try to pick a day with little wind.
- Submit your data as soon as possible after your observations.

Learn Amphibian Calls

Ontario is home to 2 species of toads and 11 species of frogs - each with its own unique call. Listen to these calls to help you identify each species. These frog calls can also be heard by phoning 1-888-31FROGS and using your touch-tone phone to input the station number as 333333. A tape of the frog calls is available free of charge by writing:

Frogwatch-Ontario
c/o Adopt-A-Pond
Toronto Zoo
361 A Old Finch Ave.
Scarborough, Ontario, M1B 5K7

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The Robertson Family
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