

# THE BLUE BILL

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Send submissions to the Editor by the 15th of the month prior to the publication date (March, June, September, December) to the address above, or to the editor via e-mail to: [srance@kingston.net](mailto:srance@kingston.net). Please include contact phone number.

Submissions should be in MS Word format or in "plain text" format (PC or Macintosh). Please include a printed copy in case of disc error.

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## President's Page

### *Erwin Batalla*

As I write this in late May, rapid changes are occurring all around us. Not long ago, we rejoiced at the arrival of the first migrating robins. Now, the first fledglings are leaving the nest and noisily demanding to be fed by their attentive parents. The trees and shrubs have become impenetrable, and the warblers flitting through them are becoming difficult to find.

As nature-watchers, we are particularly attuned to these changes. From year to year, we record the dates of arrival of various birds or the blooming of the first trillium or the call of the first spring peeper and marvel at the constancy of nature. Often, these events occur on the same date from year to year.

Changes that occur over decades or even centuries are less noticeable.

Processes such as global warming or urban growth or the extinction of species are slow and occur over a background of large natural variation. To monitor these changes, we must rely on carefully recorded observations over a long time period.

It is in this spirit that the current Ontario breeding bird survey is being carried out to distinguish trends in bird population 20 years after the first atlas was produced. Similarly, the KFN's report on the Little Cataraqui Marsh aims to characterize the state of this wetland so that future observation

or discussion can take place from a rational/scientific perspective. The BioBlitz at Mitchell Creek will attempt to inventory the entire biota at this site on a given day.

By participating in these activities, we also indulge our love of Nature so that all observations are not rational but can elicit an emotional response, like the joy brought by the sight of a Blackburnian warbler or a Canada plum covered in blooms. Seasonal change is the source of this wonderment.

I wish you all a pleasant summer and many observations of the changes in Nature.

*Erwin Batalla*



## *Sid Andrews*

### *Past President*

I have a funny story to tell. It is about a well-to-do young Londoner who is travelling through the Welsh countryside between business appointments. As he whips down one little road, he passes a small barn with an orchard beside it. He can't believe what he has just seen: a farmer holding a pig up to eat the apples in the tree. He slams on the brakes, throws the car into reverse and backs up until he is beside the farmer. He climbs out and walks up to the fence. He decides to be tactful even though he wants to shout at the farmer, "What in the name of heaven are you

doing, man?" After a few pleasantries with the farmer, who is slow to respond and who is paying quite a bit of attention to the apples and the pig in his arms, the young man can contain himself no longer and blurts out, "Good God, man, how can you waste your time feeding a bloody pig that way?" With a moment's silence in which he continues to move amongst the trees with the pig, the farmer contemplates this question thoughtfully. Finally he responds, "Wot's time t'a pig, mister?"

Oh, how I wish I'd remembered that when the first few months of my term as your president had barely gone by! "Resistance is futile," said some sage of the world. Well, it took me a long time to stop resisting. I finally relaxed and felt I was reaching my stride only this April, when Sharon Critchley, our Conservation Committee Chair, arrived at Bellevue House with letters for my signature. Only after I had shaken Sharon's hand as she congratulated me for surviving the term did I remember that message.

My frequent axiom "I'd rather be birding!" will soon be replaced with "I *am* birding!" And, as through last year, I am again grateful for the efforts, advice, and counsel of a frank and dedicated executive.

Our bank account is healthy again this year and, as you will see when George presents the Treasurer's Report in September, our budget reflects expenses towards protection of our properties and investment in a new project:

- Reinvestment in our Amherst Island property: \$12,000 (+ \$6,500 returned in grants).
- The KFN Report on Little Catarqui Creek Wetland: \$5,000 invested in this biophysical inventory.
- Possible expenses around our defence of the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary.

I had a hand in a number of special projects in the past year. Last June I attended the "Smart Growth" seminar on sustainable communities presented by Ontario Nature's Linda Pim and Gregor Beck. In December, a few of the executive got together to brainstorm future projects, including our own conference! I attended the AGM of the Biosphere Reserve in January, and I was on hand for The Wildlands League's Evan Ferrari's talk on the need for a new Parks Act in Ontario, an event organized by Ontario Nature and sponsored by the KFN and the Society for Conservation Biology.

I am delighted with the results of two projects in particular, although they deserve no more or less recognition than any others underway this year:

- An IBA Management Plan for the Napanee Limestone Plain, the results of which should be available to us soon.
- The Napanee Limestone Plain Important Bird Area (IBA) interpretive sign, supported by the Canadian Nature Federation's IBA Community Action Fund and the Lennox & Addington Stewardship Council.

Our membership is robust with 17 life members, 317 adults, 70 juniors, and five teens. Thanks again to John Critchley for keeping our membership on track.

The Juniors programme flourishes because Anne Robertson and Diane Lawrence inspired and motivated the children and eight terrific leaders and two part-time helpers in meetings and field trips in the past year. Our Teen Naturalists attended meetings and field trips and took part in a number of projects. At least eight members volunteered to help out to make the Teen programme this year memorable.

There were over 20 field trips and special trips offered in the past year. KFN members also participated in six regional Christmas Counts, the Spring & Fall Round-ups, and the Winter Waterfowl survey. Bruce Ripley and a large number of volunteers were responsible for making these happen. And this was our 16<sup>th</sup> year of rambles! Twenty-two rambles were held this year. Thanks to Anne Robertson for organizing them.

Our Conservation Committee has had another demanding year, dealing with numerous issues and concerns, from the Mellon Lake Conservation Reserve to the Counter Street Improvements Environmental Assessment, as well as a great deal of work devoted to attending and advising on our behalf on the Kingston Wetlands Working Group. And the Little Catarqui Creek Wetland Inventory project has been and continues to be a major investment of time, which I have no doubt will bear fruit for us in the future. I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Arlene Aish, Carolyn Bonta, Shirley French, and Sharon Critchley.

Our Nature Reserves Committee faced a new challenge last August when we were called on to respond to the Ministry of the Environment's concerns about cattle access to the shoreline on our Amherst Island property. As you know, we

are investing up to \$12,000 to install fencing, water troughs, a well and a solar- and wind-powered pump to serve the cattle which are essential to maintaining the grassland habitat. The Healthy Watershed Program, which was administered by the CRCA, provided \$5000 to help offset the expenses of our reinvestment in the property. Thanks to Jay McMahan, Chris Grooms, George Vance, Gerry Grooms and Bud Rowe for tackling this project head-on. There has been a spin-off benefit: Jay and Chris attended a seminar on our behalf which allowed us to develop an Environmental Farm Plan for the property and gave us access to \$1500 more towards the project.

Publicity Chair John Diemer has been the patient overseer of the Newsletter (juicy they've been this year!) and he continues our tradition of getting the word about us out in local news media and flyers. *The Blue Bill's* new editor has done a great job—well done, Susie! We mustn't forget that we promised to create an editorial committee to ease the load. As immediate Past President, I hope to help organize it.

The spirit of volunteerism in this Club is enormously present and greatly valued, but we need more of you to volunteer! It doesn't have to be a big commitment. Help is needed with committee work as well as with keeping up and monitoring our properties. (For example, Owen Weir and Howard Bridger have kindly offered to repair the martin houses on our Amherst Island property—no doubt they could use some help.)

When we sat down to brainstorm future projects back in December, our goal was clear! We wanted to find a project that would get everyone in the Club excited and as many as possible involved in it. When Bud Rowe suggested our own conference, did we ever sit up and listen! I hope to get a steering committee, if not a KFN gathering, off the ground before the end of my term as Past President.

One last note: The Helen Quilliam Sanctuary is one of our important legacies. As you know, there have been trespasses against its ecological integrity and its boundaries. It is important that we be vigilant and that we offer support to the Nature Reserves Committee, which has taken on the lion's share of overseeing this treasure. Visit the Sanctuary this summer. Take photos, draw pictures, make notes of the things you see (and if you want, share them at Members' Night in December!) and talk to one another about it. (Please share your information with Jay as well.)

On a happy note, I am pleased that we have been able to accommodate a section of the Rideau Trail through the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary, and that we helped the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation acquire the Parrot's Bay property!

Here's to a good year—good birding, good botanizing and good naturalizing to you all! I have been privileged to serve you.

*Sid Andrews*



## Kingston Field Naturalists Annual Report 2003-2004

### **Conservation Committee** *Sharon Critchley*

Committee members this year included Sharon Critchley (Chair), Arlene Aish who monitors local media for environmental issues and provides support, Carolyn Bonta, representative to Kingston Wetland Working Group, and Shirley French who monitors the Ad Hoc Pesticide Reduction Committee of Kingston City Council. Adele Crowder also assisted the Committee by reviewing technical documents. Only issues on which action was taken during 2003-2004 are reported here.

### **Mellon Lake Conservation Reserve**

At time of writing, no decision had been made by the Minister of Natural Resources regarding the third application by Palu Corbelli Corporation to operate a quarry at Mellon Lake. A letter and a comprehensive package were sent to the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources after the new government took office. The KFN remains opposed to a quarry at this site because of the loss of significant and rare species and the fragmentation of a sensitive protected area.

### **Kingston Wetlands Working Group**

Carolyn Bonta continues to attend these meetings regularly and reports to the Conservation Committee. Relevant items are reported to the KFN Executive. The KWWG wrapped up the long-running Little Cataraqui Creek Buffer Project. In planning for the future, the KWWG completed their 2003-2005 Strategic Plan in January 2003. In an attempt to initiate new projects, a Spring 2003 application for an EcoAction grant to fund an Urban Streams Buffer proposal, with KFN as the charitable organization partner, was submitted. This proposal was not successful, but a re-application was made in early 2004, in cooperation with a new partner, and the KWWG is pleased to say that the second application was successful. At a recent meeting, Carolyn led the KWWG in looking back to 2003 and the group's effectiveness at meeting the Strategic Plan's goals. The KWWG also looked

forward to decide on and commit to important future projects. To inform KFN members about the KWWG and its activities, Carolyn wrote an article for the September 2003 issue of *The Blue Bill* and also set up the KWWG display for the December 2003 KFN general meeting. The KWWG encourages all partners to look for projects to restore wetlands and streams that could be funded by available grants.

### **Proposed Wind Power Project on Wolfe Island**

The KFN commented during the Environmental Assessment process regarding Canadian Renewable Energy Corporation's proposal to erect 18 wind turbines on Wolfe Island. Issues of concern were two turbines located close to wetlands and to a bay where waterfowl congregate, the potential for bird and bat mortality during migration, and the possibility of bird mortality during breeding or overwintering.

### **Local Planning Issues**

The Committee commented in writing on the following issues. A proposed rezoning of publicly owned land at the Airport to recreation would lead to further unnecessary forest fragmentation adjacent to Lemoine Point Conservation Area. Comments made at an earlier stage on The Urban Growth Strategy were raised again regarding the Natural Heritage Strategy study, rural severances and strip development and our support for acquisition of natural environment lands for protection. The Cycling and Pathways Study caused concern about the widening of paths through some natural areas, thus creating a physical barrier for some species.

### **Community Foundation of Greater Kingston**

CFGK now has a section with a commitment to providing grants for environmental initiatives. In May 2003, Sharon Critchley and Arlene Aish attended a CFGK Environmental Roundtable where groups were able to network and make a case for the range of projects the grants might cover. The first grants were awarded in autumn 2003.

### ***Proposed Draft By-law for Pesticide Reduction in Kingston***

The KFN agreed to support the Draft By-law proposed by the group Pesticide Reduction Kingston. This support is noted on the website [www.prkingston.org](http://www.prkingston.org). Members can read the Draft By-law on this website. Considerable background information was obtained on the effects of pesticides on local waterways and wetlands and their flora and fauna from an expert at Health Canada. Using this information, a letter was drafted by Committee members for the President's signature. The letter was sent to the Ad Hoc Pesticide Reduction Committee of Kingston City Council, following municipal elections. Shirley French monitors these meetings and a summary of her report is passed to the KFN Executive from the Conservation Committee.

### ***Report on Little Cataraqui Creek Wetland, West Side, Front Road to Bath Road***

The federal government and Correctional Service of Canada have said there are no plans to sell the farm land at the Frontenac Institution/Collins Bay site, but this could change. The Official Plan of the former Kingston Township, which remains in effect, shows a proposed road extension on these federally owned lands which would affect the west side of the provincially significant Little Cataraqui Creek Wetland, constricting it and cutting through the wetland at the southern termination point. A detailed report on the flora and fauna of this part of the Little Cataraqui Creek Wetland could be used to advocate for a more benign route for the proposed road and any associated development. An advisory team of KFN members met in September 2003, and planning began for an inventory type of report on the Little Cataraqui Creek Wetland, west side, from Front Road to Bath Road. It is expected to cover geomorphology, hydrology, land history, policy and planning and biota (invertebrates, herptiles, fish, vegetation, birds and mammals). KFN is funding the work of a contracted consultant for the botanical survey, while KFN volunteers are covering the other sections of the report. Following the completion of field work in the spring and summer, publication is expected in the autumn of 2004.

### ***Counter Street Improvements Environmental Assessment***

The Committee commented on the scheduling of natural habitat inventory work for this project, outside of the breeding season for birds, anurans and turtles. The Little Cataraqui Creek Wetland will be affected by whatever route is selected. Because some alternative routes would affect a part of the wetland where a BioBlitz was conducted in 1998-99, these records were mailed to the consultant. A second Open House will be held when more detailed information will be available on the preferred route(s).

### ***Provincial Issues: Algonquin Wolves and Species at Risk in Ontario***

The Ministry of Natural Resources posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) Registry a proposed ban on hunting of wolves and coyotes in the townships surrounding Algonquin Park. A letter supporting this proposed ban was sent over the signature of KFN President Sid Andrews. In addition, an e-mail Action Alert was sent requesting KFN members to write letters before the deadline. MNR also posted on the EBR Registry a proposed re-naming of the Species at Risk in Ontario list, updates to recognize changes in terminology and the addition of species to three status categories. A letter of support was sent over the KFN President's signature.

### ***Nature Reserves***

***Jay McMahan***

#### ***Amherst Island***

In June of 2003, the Kingston Field Naturalists received a phone call and letters from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment concerning complaints of cattle on the KFN Amherst Island property accessing the lake. We were encouraged to deal with this problem expeditiously. Different methods of accomplishing this requirement were explored and the Ministry provided the names of several agencies that would help with funding.

The KFN membership allocated funds for us to commence the program. Chris Grooms and Jay McMahan took a course on developing an Environmental Farm Plan which allowed us to be eligible for funding from the CRCA-administered Healthy Watershed Program. We received further funds from the Environmental Farm Plan Incentive Program.

The decision was made to deal with the problem in two phases. The first involved fencing the west field of the property and providing water for cattle from a shore well powered by a wind turbine and solar panels. Some materials and equipment were donated by the Lennox & Addington Stewardship Council. This project, which involved a great deal of time and effort, was headed up by Chris Grooms and Jay McMahan with the assistance of George Vance and Gerry Grooms. The second phase will involve fencing a large portion of the east side of the property with an electric fence which will be powered by the wind turbine and solar panels.

### ***Helen Quilliam Sanctuary***

There has been a proposal, from the lawyer of the individual who was discovered to have buildings on KFN property in the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary, that this individual would make an initial donation and yearly payment and would absorb any increase in taxes and insurance. This proposal hinges on the Township of South Frontenac accepting the location of buildings on his own property. It appears that it is going to take some time to settle this matter.

The Rideau Trail Association has rerouted a portion of its trail to utilize a trail of ours in the area of Gould Lake. This occurred as a result of a land purchase in this area and the RTA being asked to find an alternative route for their trail. A look at a survey of our lot line in this affected area shows what we feel are some discrepancies; this is being investigated by Barry Robertson and surveyor Dan Cormier.

The Sanctuary cleanup occurred on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Eleven member volunteers replaced signs and cleaned five of the trails, and a group of Juniors led by Anne Robertson and Diane Lawrence picked up refuse from the township road.

### **Education Committee      *Diane Lawrence***

Many thanks to Club members for their time and energy—and willingness to share their expertise and interest in natural history with others! Members continued to volunteer as speakers, hike leaders and presenters at education-related events over the past year. Boy Scouts troops, Girl Guide groups, school classes, CRCA public programs, and horticultural events among others have benefited from KFN participation, with most activities being undertaken through individual member initiative.

KFN members Liz and Mike Evans, Eleanor Porteous and Diane Lawrence judged natural history projects at the Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Regional Science Fair, held in April 2003, and presented the Stirrett Prize (book prizes) to four participants.

A series of three natural history workshops were held in April and May 2003 for adult KFN members and interested community members. Rhonda Donley of Bird Studies Canada presented a workshop on the Marsh Monitoring Program which resulted in new local participants in this nation project; KFN member Sharon David led an Introduction to Birding workshop, and local illustrator Marta Scythes gave a workshop on Field Sketching. It is anticipated that such workshops will continue in the future on a biannual basis.

### **Membership**

***John Critchley***

KFN's current adult membership has 17 life members and approximately 317 adult memberships, of which half are individual and half are family memberships. There are also 70 junior and five teen memberships. Members will notice that their mailing label indicates the type of membership and the expiry date.

The system of sending out personalized renewal notices is working very well. The majority of members are renewing their membership before the end of the fiscal/membership year. These renewal notices form part of the hard copy audit trail necessary for tracking payment of membership fees so it is important to return them.

John Critchley also prepares all mailing labels and thanks the volunteers Jean Hopkins and Fiona Poland who fold and mail the newsletter and Norma Graham who mails *The Blue Bill* and on occasion does double duty for the combined mailing of *The Blue Bill* and the newsletter.

### **Publicity & Newsletter**

***John Diemer***

Members received a monthly newsletter that informed them of Club activities and interests, including monthly meetings, field trips, special activities, and conservation matters.

To inform the public about the Club and its activities, the monthly meetings are advertised in the Kingston Whig-Standard and in Kingston This Week. The only special activities advertised as open to the public were the special bird walks held Wednesdays throughout the month of May.

Our ad was placed in the Kingston Whig's Spring and Fall Activity Guides and in the City of Kingston's Spring and Fall Leisure Magazines, and we also had a booth at the City's Spring and Fall Leisure Showcases to publicize our Club and activities.

### Guest Speakers

*Erwin Batalla*

**September:** Norm Ruttan spoke about the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. He described the efforts to include a large portion of the Frontenac axis under this internationally recognized designation.

**October:** Rick Knapton spoke about the reforestation activities of the CRCA. He indicated that over a million trees have been planted over the past few years.

**November:** Margaret Morris described her Masters thesis work in which she determined the concentration of various metals in the eggs and feathers of black terns at several locations around Kingston.

**December:** Several members of the KFN gave illustrated presentations on subjects from insects to mammals at the annual Members' Night.

**January:** Ron Weir described early results from the Breeding Bird Survey. He highlighted species on the increase (Raven and others) as well as species declining (Loggerhead Shrike and others).

**February:** Martin Edwards described his travels during the year 1990 during which he visited several countries and saw over a thousand bird species.

**March:** Elaine Williams talked about the organization that is attempting to save the Loggerhead Shrike in Ontario. She illustrated the success of her group in reintroducing other species in Africa.

### Field Trip Committee

*Bruce Ripley*

During 2003-2004, a total of 20 field trips were conducted, as well as May bird walks, spring and fall round-ups and the Christmas Bird Counts.

#### **April 21: Flora and Fauna of Amherst Island**

Bruce Ripley led a trip to find and identify spring migrating birds, plants and animals.

#### **April 27: Prince Edward Point**

Peter Good took KFN members to search for spring migrating birds.

#### **May Bird Walks**

Eight walks were conducted by KFN experts along the Little Cataraqui Valley Lands Trail on each Wednesday in May, at 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. These walks were open to the public.

#### **May 4: Prince Edward Point**

Ron Weir led KFN members to look for warblers and other birds at the height of spring migration.

#### **May 11: Opinicon Road**

Bud Rowe led a trip to scenic Canadian Shield country to look for breeding birds, including Cerulean and Golden-Winged Warblers.

#### **May 24 & 25: Spring Round-up**

In this annual 24-hour birding competition, teams try to find as many species of birds as possible. Scores were tallied at the potluck supper held afterwards at the home of Marian and Joel Ellis.

#### **June 8: Introduction To Dragonfly Identification**

Trip leader David Bree took KFN members to the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary to identify the dragonflies and damselflies of the area. David also spoke extensively about the topography of odonates as well as their life cycle. Many handouts were provided to the group.

#### **June 22: Introduction To Butterfly Identification**

Checklists and identification sheets were supplied to members for the Butterfly Identification Workshop conducted by Bruce Ripley at the Queen's University property on Opinicon Road.

#### **August 10: Shorebirds of Amherst Island**

Bud Rowe led members to search for migrating shorebirds, raptors and passerines at this superb shorebird area on the KFN property.

#### **September 1: Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies of Amherst Island**

Bruce Ripley led a slow walk on the KFN property to look for birds, butterflies and dragonflies. Checklists were provided and all species were tallied at the end of the trip.

***September 14: Bird Migration at Presqu'île Provincial Park***

Erwin Batalla took Club members to this famous shorebird migration site.

***October 5: Wolfe Island***

Trip leader Bob Sachs took members to look for fall migrants.

***October 13: Main Duck Island***

Terry Sprague led a pelagic trip to Main Duck Island. As well as observing the bird life, the group discussed the history of Main Duck Island on this informative and adventurous trip.

***November 1 & 2: Fall Round-up***

The format of this event was the same as for the Spring Round-up.

***November 9: Owls of Amherst Island***

Peter Good showed KFN members the Saw-whet and Long-eared Owls in the Owl Woods during their peak migration period.

***November 23: Waterfowl and Other Waterbirds of Prince Edward Point***

Bud Rowe led members to look for waterfowl, loons, grebes and other birds at this local "hot spot."

***December 7: Purple Sandpipers of Presqu'île***

Bruce Ripley took members to Gull Island at Presqu'île Provincial Park to look for the hard-to-find Purple Sandpiper.

***Christmas Bird Count Dates***

Sun. Dec. 14: Kingston, Ron Weir  
 Sat. Dec. 20: Prince Edward Point, Joel Ellis  
 Sun. Dec. 21: Amherst Island, Janet Scott  
 Sat. Dec. 27: Napanee, Ann Brown and Joe Percy  
 Sat. Dec. 27: Thousand Islands, Ken Robinson  
 Mon. Dec. 29: Rideau Ferry/Smith Falls, Jean Griffin

***January 11: Waterfowl/Eagle Census at Ivy Lea***

Members participated with trip leader Bob Sachs to help locate and count waterfowl and Bald Eagles around the Ivy Lea area.

***January 25: Winter Birds of Amherst Island***

Trip leader Alex Scott led members around one of the best winter birding areas in Canada.

***February 8: Day Trip to Algonquin Park***

Bruce Ripley led this trip to Algonquin Park to search for northern birds not often seen in the

Kingston area, as well as to enjoy the scenic countryside and the impressive Visitor Centre.

***February 22: Day Trip to Ottawa and Surrounding Area***

Tour leader Bruce DiLabio led KFN members around the Ottawa area to find northerly species of birds which are not commonly seen in the Kingston region.

***March 7: Wolfe Island***

Erwin Batalla showed members the owls, hawks, waterfowl and early spring migrants of Wolfe Island.

***March 21: Waterfowl Weekend at Presqu'île Provincial Park***

Trip leader Owen Weir led KFN members to this annual "spring spectacle" at Presqu'île Provincial Park, where thousands of waterfowl of up to twenty species can be observed in one day.

**Rambles**

***Anne Robertson***

This is the 16<sup>th</sup> year since Rambles were inaugurated and we continue to enjoy our slow walks to notice nature in a variety of nearby and not-so-early habitats.

In 2003-2004, a total of 22 Rambles were held. The participation varied from five to 24 with an average of ten and a total number of 46 people attending at least one ramble. The lowest numbers appear in June, December and January while peak times are in April/May and September/October (apart from an exceptional turnout to the Bath Woods in February). On the whole, the total numbers were lower this year. New local locations seem to appeal. I am most grateful to members who led rambles during my many absences and sustained the regular outings. We continue to learn more about our local flora and fauna as well as enjoying the variety of habitats and each other's company.

**Junior Naturalists**

***Anne Robertson***

Seventy enthusiastic Junior Naturalists joined up in September and 55 of these still attend meetings regularly. This is a good record and reflects on the excellent job done by our faithful volunteer leaders. This year, Diane Lawrence was responsible for the Junior meetings in October and November during my absence. We couldn't manage without her resourcefulness and her good

ideas. Thanks, Diane! We also thank eight regular leaders and two part-time helpers: Emily Choy, Jaqueline Danis (2 years), Lisa Gordon, Kerri Harvey (3 years), Julie Kee, Breanna Lattimore, Kristin Neudorf (2 years), Bernardine Russell and Jen Mulligan and Sarah Pedley. These are mostly Queen's students contacted through the Society for Conservation Biology. They have all put in many hours in preparation as well as being at meetings and we are most grateful to them.

We will have had 13 meetings and eight field trips by the end of this membership year. Topics covered include: Beetles and True Bugs, Leaves, Diurnal Raptors, Adaptations, Teeth, Skunks and their Kin, Amazing Size Facts, Unseen World, Turtles, Flowers and their Friends, and a trip to the special Ecology display at the Marine Museum on Earth Day. Field trips went to Landon Bay, Robertson Cottage, Hewlett Packard property, Presqu'ile Park (thanks, Andrew Cirtwill, for guiding us in waterfowl identification in such a fun way!) and the annual spring cleanup and wildflower walk at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary (always a popular one). In May, our annual bird walk and 20th (!) annual wild food picnic were held. The Stirrett Scholarship was awarded to Savannah and Rylee Raeburn Gibson who attended the joint camp of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and Camp Kawartha in August. Roland Beschel Prizes were awarded for summer projects to David Evans, Heather Evans, Natalie Graham and Amy Hanes. All in all, it was another rewarding year. Your support and encouragement are much appreciated.

### **Teen Naturalists**

*Anne Roberston*

With a very small enrolment of only five Teens this year, we had several meetings attended by only two or three Teens. They were, however, memorable. We had a total of 10 meetings during this membership year.

For the first time this year we participated in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup and spent the day pulling interesting debris from the water at Douglas R. Fluhrer Park in Kingston. In October, a geology trip was led by Al Gorman to look at some local sites. This trip will be remembered for Al's good sense of humour and fascinating knowledge of the subject. In November, the Teens built and installed Bluebird boxes on Sydenham Road and at the Scheck site of the Nature Conservancy of Canada in the Napanee Important

Bird Area. Thank you, Mike Evans and Chris Grooms, for assistance with this meeting. In December, a bird identification workshop was held and in February a cross-country ski trip was enjoyed. In April, a birding trip to Prince Edward Point, with adult members and help from Bruce Ripley, left at 6:00 a.m.—a novel experience! Two trips were planned for May: tree planting in the Owl Woods and trail rerouting in the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary. In June, members were involved with the BioBlitz at Mitchell Creek and participated in our annual canoe trip.

Huge thanks are due to Diane Lawrence who took on the responsibility and running of the October and November meetings. We thank all of you for your interest and support.

### **Telephone Line/E-mail Service *Bob Sachs***

#### *Phone Line*

For the KFN fiscal year, from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004, the incoming calls or "hits" totalled 374, 26% fewer than the previous year. The number of messages recorded were 43, 40% fewer than the previous year. KFN phone line costs were \$514.05, 5% above the previous year. Many miscellaneous telephone requests are answered directly, or are relayed to other KFN members.

#### *KFN E-mail Message Services:*

Current number of e-mail subscribers in the distribution group is 65. Coming Events and Regional Sightings Reports and Rare Bird reports totalled about 40. We need more e-mailed sightings reports from members following their field trips.

This year we received many information requests by e-mail, from birders in Ontario, Quebec and the USA, who want to visit Amherst Island. The number of such requests exploded this year as Amherst Island is now on a USA list of the top 100 birding sites in North America. We have a package that has been sent by e-mail to over 25 persons.

### **The Blue Bill**

*Susie Rance*

Thanks to the contributions of Club members and others who have shared their accounts of trips, discussions of issues of local concern, observations, records, book reviews, reports on projects and activities, and more over the past year to make *The Blue Bill* interesting and timely. Thanks also to Norma Graham for her continued efforts in making sure *The Blue Bill* reaches you.

## Helping Rare Species and their Habitat . . . One Sighting at a Time

### *Carolyn Bonta*

There is nothing more exciting for a field naturalist than to discover a rare species during a casual outdoor ramble. To chance upon a patch of wild ginseng in the forest, to catch a glimpse of a Spotted Turtle in a bog, or to watch a Loggerhead Shrike forage among the grassland—these events create memories that last in our minds. But, can these events be something more?

We know that these species are rare. We don't see wild ginseng, Spotted Turtles, or Loggerhead Shrikes very often. Fellow naturalists, government agencies, and conservation organizations tell us that these species are at risk. We are told that these species need our help. What can we do?

The most important way that we can help conserve and protect provincially rare species and communities is to report our sightings to the government agencies that collect and monitor this information. Naturalists and outdoor enthusiasts like us provide valuable "eyes" in the field and on private lands. Thus, we have the potential to contribute significantly to the understanding and protection of significant species and critical habitat. The information that we provide helps to monitor population status and rare species distribution, to better understand and protect significant habitat, and to guide Species At Risk recovery efforts.

The Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC), a branch of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, collects and manages information on significant natural areas and critical flora, fauna, and vegetation communities in Ontario. The most direct and effective way to report a rare species sighting is to contact the NHIC. Their website, [www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/), is an excellent resource for natural heritage information in Ontario, and includes a current list of provincially rare species and communities. The website also provides a form that can be used to submit sightings to the NHIC database, or you can phone in your sighting by calling **1-800-667-1940**

(MNR's toll-free number) and asking to speak with a Biologist with the NHIC at the Peterborough Office.

The Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) also has a toll-free number for reporting Species At Risk: call **1-866-833-8888**, and leave a message with your name, telephone number, and as much detail about your sighting as possible. Provide information on location, number of individuals, activities or behaviours observed, etc. The CWS—Ontario Region's website for Species at Risk is [www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/sar/sar-e.html](http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/sar/sar-e.html).

Rare species are not the only ones that benefit from being reported. The NHIC also coordinates the Ontario Herpetofaunal Atlas (or Summary; OHS) that seeks to accurately define and identify the distribution range of all of Ontario's reptiles and amphibians. The OHS welcomes all herpetile sightings, including historic ones, but are especially interested in reports of rare species. Go to [www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/herps/about.html](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/herps/about.html) for more information on reporting herpetiles.



One word of caution: although reporting rare species to the proper authorities can benefit that species and aid in its protection and understanding, be careful not to publicize your observation too strongly. Drawing unnecessary attention to the rare species or community may increase the risk of negative effects such as disturbance to the species or

its habitat, trespassing on private land, or other undesirable effects that hinder rather than help the conservation cause.

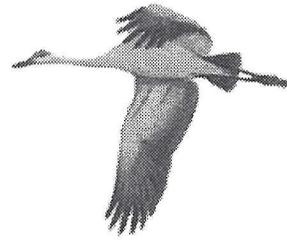
So . . . go out and explore, have fun, and learn. But also take the time to document and report any rarities that you come across. With your help, those species won't just be memories of a time now gone—they will be there for future generations to admire and appreciate.

## Spring Season, 1 March to 31 May 2004

### Ron D. Weir

For the second consecutive year, spring in the Kingston area saw a lingering winter with colder temperatures than the past several years and a late break-up of ice. A gradual warming encouraged the migrants to arrive slowly, thereby avoiding the heavy mortality of Spring 2003. Warm conditions punctuated the cool April and brought new waves of migrants, but this push was short-lived as cold settled in again for an extended period. Migration ran late by up to ten days during April and May, but by month's end, the timing was about on track.

Rarities during the period included Great Cormorant, Snowy Egret, Black Vulture, King Eider, Sandhill Crane, Lesser Black-backed Gull, White-eyed Vireo, Tufted Titmouse, Yellow-throated Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Summer Tanager, Painted Bunting.



#### *Species Account:*

**Horned Grebe**—peak Apr 12 (12) PEPT, KFN.

**Red-necked Grebe**—Mar 30 to May 4 (12), 16 in all, Kingston, KFN.

**Great Cormorant**—May 20(1) PEPT, DO.

**Double-crested Cormorant**—peak May 21-22 (10,000) Kingston, KFN.

**Snowy Egret**—May 24 (1) Amherst I., KH, B Ripley.

**Black Vulture**—May 29 (1) PEPT, EM.

**Snow Goose**—peaks Mar 10 (60) Wolfe I., CM; 24 (200) Howe I., MR, 28 (40w) Wolfe I., DG.

**King Eider**—Mar 10 (1) PEPT, JHE, PJG, VPM.

**White-winged Scoter**—peak Apr 20 (1295) PEPT, RTS.

**Long-tailed Duck**—peak Mar 10 (50,000) PEPT, KFN.

**Bald Eagle**—Mar (20 records), Apr (3), May (0) Kingston, KFN.

**Red-shouldered Hawk**—Apr 17 (29) & Apr 29 (18) Kingston, JHE, BAW, RDW. Two of the breeding survey routes.

**Golden Eagle**—Apr 7 (1) Howe I., M&JJ, 26 (1) PEPT, DO; May 1 (1) Chaffey's Lock, JS.

**Peregrine Falcon**—May 4 (1), 24 (1) Amherst I., KFN.

**Sandhill Crane**—Mar 28 to May 20 (2) Odessa Lake area, CG.

**Whimbrel**—peak May 21 (100) PEPT, *fide* RTS.

**Dunlin**—peaks May 23 (700) PEPT, *fide* RTS; May 22 (1000) Kingston, KH *et al.*

**Little Gull**—peak Apr 27 (44) PEPT, DO.

**Bonaparte's Gull**—peak Apr 20 (1280) PEPT, *fide* RTS.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**—Apr 27 (1) PEPT, DO.

**Snowy Owl**—Apr 11 (1) Amherst I., BMD, last one.

**Red-headed Woodpecker**—May 13 (1) Kingston, JHE, May 16-20 (6) PEPT, KFN.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker**—March (4 reported), Apr (4), May (3) Kingston, KFN.

**White-eyed Vireo**—May 1(1) PEPT, PJG, 4 (1) PEPT, KFN.

**Tufted Titmouse**—Mar 29-30 (1) Kingston, BR, FA, R Sachs, Apr 4-5 (1) Howe I., SD.

**Carolina Wren**—Mar 1-31 (2) Kingston, R Sachs *et al.*; May 22 (1) Kingston, KFN.

**Bohemian Waxwing**—peak Mar 21 (250) PEpt, *fide* RTS; to Apr 8 (15) Camden East, PJG.

**Blue-winged Warbler**—Apr 22 to May 22 (6 in all) Kingston area, KFN.

**Yellow-throated Warbler**—Apr 19 – 22 (1) PEpt, EB, VPM.

**Worm-eating Warbler**—May 17 (1) PEpt, EB, VPM.

**Hooded Warbler**—May 15 (1) PEpt, *fide* RTS.

**Summer Tanager**—May 16 (1) PEpt, KFN, 31 (1) PEpt, MR.

**Painted Bunting**—May 12 (1) Cherry Valley Prince Edward, *fide* RTS.

**Orchard Oriole**—Apr 30 onwards (11 in all), PEpt, KFN; also nesting at PEpt.

**European Goldfinch**—May 19 (2) PEpt, *fide* RTS. (Probable escape.)

**Evening Grosbeak**—May 4 (2) PEpt, B Ripley *et al.*, 5 (1) Kingston, KAC.

### Contributors:

F. Avis	E. Batalla	K.A. Creber	S. David
B.M. DiLabio	J.H. Ellis	P.J. Good	C. Grooms
P.J. Good	D. Grow	K. Hennige	Kingston Field Naturalists (3+)
E. Machell	V.P. Mackenzie	D. Okines	M. Runtz
J. Skevington	R.T. Sprague	B.A. Weir	R.D. Weir

### Attention, Urban Landowners!

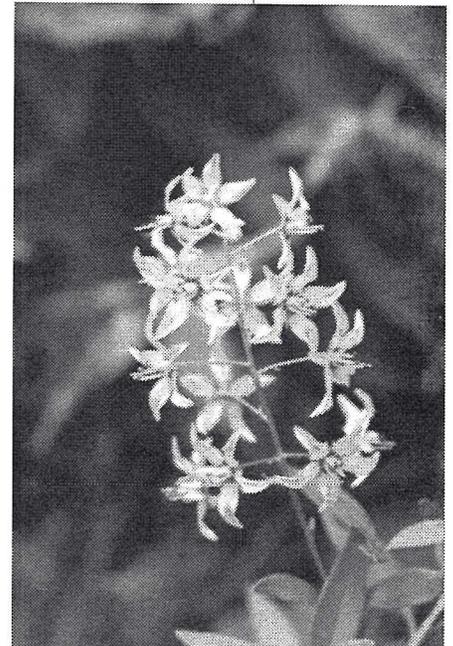
- 3 Do you live in an urban area between Loyalist Township and Brockville?
- 3 Do you have a watercourse (stream, creek, river—anything that has flowing water at some time of the year) on or adjacent to your property?
- 3 Are you interested in planting a buffer of native vegetation along the watercourse?

If *Yes!*, the Kingston Wetlands Working Group's *Urban Streams Buffer Project* needs you! We are looking for urban watercourses—both on public and on private lands—that could benefit from a natural vegetation buffer. Buffers protect the health of our waterways by breaking down pollutants, cooling water temperature, and providing cover for wildlife. Beginning this fall and running until Spring 2006, we will provide plant material and technical advice to help you to naturalize your local watercourse.

**We are especially interested in creating buffers along waterways on private land, particularly within the City of Kingston. Please contact us if your site fits this description and you are interested in planting.**

For more information on the *Urban Streams Buffer Project*, please contact:

Carolyn Bonta	or	Tom Beaubiah
KFN Representative to the KWWG		KWWG Coordinator
Home phone: 531-4578		Work: 548-4226 ext. 240



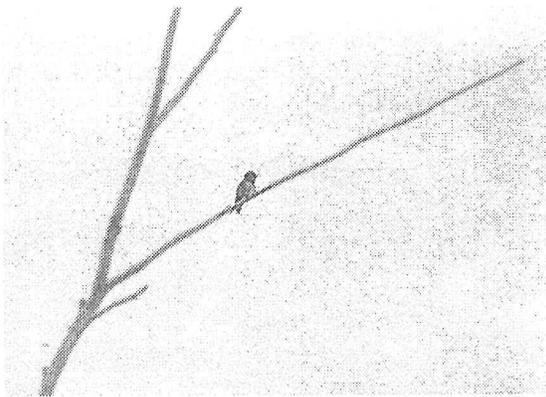
## Hummingbird Stories

*Kit Chubb*

Reprinted from "Notes & Anecdotes" Spring 2004

### Hummingbird Hunters

Though the nectar of deep-throated flowers and the Pink Drink provide hummingbirds with fluid and glucose-based energy, their real source of food—the protein and nutrients—comes from small insects and spiders that they find inside the blooms, on plants and in the air. Occasionally when caring for one I have had to go to a lab and ask for fruit-flies, and have watched a hummer zip around our sunroom snapping up dozens of them, later defecating the indigestible exoskeletons.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird at his hunting look-out  
Photo courtesy of Mary Adams

One summer on a nearby ramble, I made an unexpected discovery. A male Ruby-throat was perched on the tip of a small dead elm beside the railroad track overlooking a marsh. Perched, but never still. Fidget, fidget, twist about, look up and down, fan tail, wriggle, stretch. Suddenly he catapulted off, described a swift loop and resettled on the tip of the same delicately curving twig, evoking a charming Oriental brush-stroke. Faint breezes swayed his twig but most of the shaking was of his own making (a typical Type "A" approach to life.) In a minute he again shot away, vanishing from the binocular's circle; disappointed, I lowered them and glanced back at the tree—there he was as if he had never left. Amazement flooded me as I realized that he was chasing insects. He was *hunting!*

Having the highest metabolic rate of all birds, the tiny hummingbird requires very high-octane fuel, and small fauna essential to their diet are gleaned

from the deep throats of their favourite flora. But perching on tree-tops to snatch them falcon-fashion in mid-air is seldom-reported behaviour.

There was no shortage of wild flowers thereabouts: mallow roses and anemones sprinkled among the buttercups, wild iris and bottle gentian in the marsh, and later devil's bugloss (which he visited once), milkweed, dogbane, St. John's Wort, bladder campion, and evening primrose.

On repeated rambles down the tracks during the summer, I observed this same tree "manned" each time. Some of the flycatching manoeuvres were short spirals out and back, or even around the tree, but others included vigorous doubling-back twists or swan dives, and once he executed an alarming jack-knife straight down into the bushes, disappearing for a whole two minutes...that one had me worried; no stuntman, no net for those three grams of fearlessness.

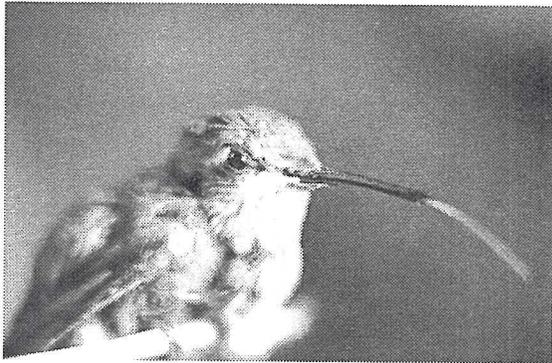
A little later, I took some friends to share this sight. We were well rewarded that day, because we found *four* little hunters. All male, well spaced apart. Why no females? They surely couldn't be occupied with nesting right up till the end of August.

Oddly enough, I have not seen any hummingbirds hunting since, and sadly, in the last few years the tracks were removed and the corridor became a No Trespassing area. A shame, because the quiet trail was enjoyed by locals exercising after heart surgery, walking their dogs, cycling and cross-country skiing. It was also a safe way for adults and children to get to and from the village from the outlying homes; it parallels Highway 38, which has no sidewalks there.

### Hummingbird Hazards

Luckily the lady inspected her favourite flowers closely one August morning, for she found an unexpected victim there, bound and gagged with spidercord. No blame was attached to the spider, you understand; it looked accidental. Likely he had hit the window, fallen into the spider's web and struggled. But he was alive, though weak, and we brought him round by coaxing him to suck up

little sips of sugar-water 1:4. Perhaps he had concussion too, though being so tiny, who could diagnose it?



**Long sticky tongue shoots out to grab an insect**  
Photo courtesy of Mary Adams

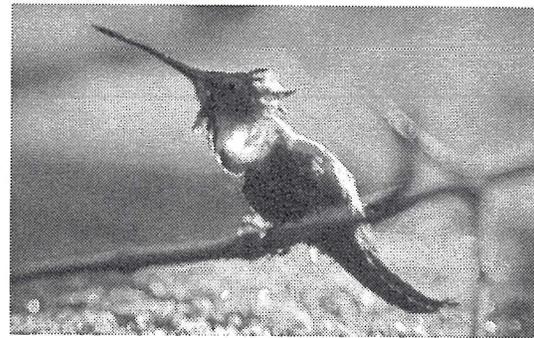
My first look into his cage next morning gave me a shock, for he lay sprawled on his back on the floor, apparently dead. His eyes were closed and there was no breathing to count, but when I scooped him into the warmth of my palm he gave a tiny squirm. Ah! He had gone into a torporous state in self-protection: slowed respirations, lowered body temperature, reduced heartrate. I set about beguiling him out of it, drop by drop of sugar-water by tucking his beak-tip into the eyedropper with great care so as not to spill any on his plumage, which could be as hazardous to him as a small oil spill. Ten minutes later he was wriggling irritably, still with his eyes screwed shut, and beginning to wail, an incredible thin plaintive descending cry from a wide-open beak. It made my feel very guilty. If fish cried out like that, no one would go fishing!

Hummingbirds are so tiny that strange pitfalls await them. Burrs can grip them fast, fish have been known to leap out and snap them up, and a lady reported that when a hummingbird concussed itself on her front door, a chipmunk ran up, seized it and raced off before she could do anything.

For the next hour I hovered over him, watching his revival with concern and wonderment. As he woke up and stopped crying, he rubbed his eye with a small black fist like a tired child. Close-up, his eyelashes could be seen, arranged in pale clumps. Gradually he regained his strength and allowed me to transfer him to an old tried-and-true hummingbird perch—a Q-tip taped to the top of a large spool of thread. Growing ever more vigorous, respirations now visible and

approaching the usual 140/minute, he began to set his plumage in order, beginning with his sticky beak. This he stropped along the applicator with knife-sharpening movements—eleven strokes (rest) seven strokes (rest) seventeen strokes (rest). Then he tested its cleanliness by grabbing it in his foot to give it a final polish. Apparently it passed, for he then began on his body plumage, surprisingly long-necked stabbing motions—hummingbird hara-kiri? And finally shook himself and defecated with an explosive pop. This mighty motion has to be seen to be believed—the powerful cloacal muscle shoots a tiny yellow curd up to a metre away!

Later he made a few experimental buzzes with his wings, which brought me running. Testing, testing...it was a loud bumblebee-like hum, but he was only practicing on the spot. Would he fly if I took him outside? Both cage and house were fraught with dangers for him.



**Stuck-up hummingbird. Backlighting shows full crop.**  
Photo courtesy of Mary Adams

So with my little patient still on his Q-tip, I took him for a stroll around the garden, holding him up to the cedars, which have many miniature spiders suspended watchfully in the aromatic greenery. Whenever he saw one, his long tongue would flash out and whip in the little bit of protein. The first time I saw this, it seemed that his beak not only opened wide but the upper half even curved upwards--it all happened in a blur—but fast photography later proved it was so.

Suddenly, he had had enough. His rev-up vibrated buzzily on my finger till the timing was right and off he soared high over the house, a diminishing metallic dot in the rays of the afternoon sun.

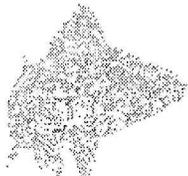
### The Pink Drink Vs. Migration

Every fall, we receive a flurry of anxious calls about hummingbird “feeders”: should they be taken down before September lest the hummers are tempted to put off their migration?

Horsefeathers, I say. The migratory urge, compelled by shortening daylight, is far too instinctive to be affected by such a triviality. The “feeder” is really only a “drinker,” refreshing without supplying needed protein and nutrients. Leave the feeders up as late as you like; the calories may be welcome to late travellers from further north.

I exchanged hummingbird correspondence with the late Professor Richard S. Miller of Yale U., and quote from one of his letters: “... there is no likelihood that leaving feeders up late will defer fall migration. The birds will move, usually ahead of a cold front from the north, when the appropriate time and conditions prevail, regardless of how much food is still available. We and several others have observed this repeatedly, and it is quite well shown right down the flyway.”

*Kit Chubb, Avian Care and Research Foundation*  
 Website: [www.kitchubb.ca](http://www.kitchubb.ca)  
 E-mail: [kitchubb@kos.net](mailto:kitchubb@kos.net)



## Speak Up and Help Protect Great Lakes Water Resources

### Ontario Nature

*Reprinted from Ontario Nature Network News—Summer 2004*

Water may very well be the new oil. Supplies are dwindling across North America and around the globe. The world is now turning its attention to the Great Lakes basin, which holds 20% of the world's fresh water. The demands on this water supply are high and many: wildlife, commercial fisheries, navigation and shipping, cultural heritage and drinking water, just to start. Eight states and two provinces share the Great Lakes basin, but Ontario contains more basin area than any of the other jurisdictions.

In February 1985 the governors and premiers of the Great Lakes watershed released The Great Lakes Charter: Principles for the Management of Great Lakes Water Resources. The Charter contained five principles for conserving the levels and flows of the Great Lakes and their tributaries, and gave a high priority to natural heritage. The Charter was followed up in 2001 with The Great Lakes Charter Annex, which consisted of six directives for cooperatively managing the Great Lakes watershed. While not itself legally binding, the annex was essentially a “promise” to create a binding agreement within three years.

On June 19 or 20, the Council of Great Lakes Governors is expected to release a draft agreement. This follow-up to the 2001 annex will

set out binding rules and decision-making standards by which the Great Lakes states and provinces will assess proposals to withdraw, divert or export water from the Great Lakes basin.

The Great Lakes governors and premiers have each committed to conducting public consultation on the draft agreement. We are expecting that Ontarians will have between 60 and 90 days to comment on the document, although the exact forum for that input is not yet known. We encourage you to participate in the public consultation, so keep an eye on our website [[www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org)] for further bulletins or contact your Regional Coordinator for updates.

For more information on the agreement and its implications, visit the Great Lakes United webpage: [www.glu.org](http://www.glu.org) and click on the “Annex 2001” main page link.

*Ed.: As of time of publication of The Blue Bill, the Council of Great Lakes Governors' draft Annex 2001 Implementing Agreements had not yet been released. The CGLG website indicates that they will be available for public review and comment by “summer 2004”—they will be posted at <http://www.cglg.org/projects/water/Annex2001Implementing.asp>.*

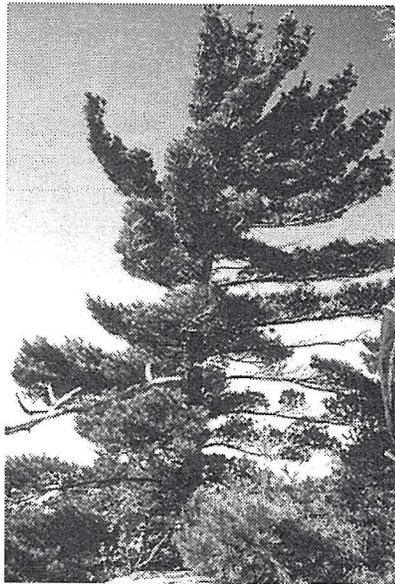
## High Altitude Hiking

### *Terry Sprague*

It was early May, and at times a rigorous paddle from the Buck Lake boat launch north of Perth Road Village to Campsite #1 in Frontenac Provincial Park. It took us over an hour and crosswinds threatened to snatch our kayaks and determine our direction. We hugged the shoreline and basked in the history of the area while being serenaded by the calls of Nashville Warblers, kinglets and passing ospreys.

Some flowers were already out when we commenced our 13-kilometre hike in the Slide Lake area, although this section of the park isn't particularly noteworthy for its spring array of blooms. Still, we came upon spring beauties, just beginning to burst through the leaf litter of last fall, accented by the delicate blooms of the occasional hepatica. Some early saxifrage, their tiny rosettes and similarly delicate white flowers peeking out from behind the granite rocks, added variety to the extremely rugged terrain which was to be our home for the next seven hours. And following an absence of any flowers for more than five hours, suddenly we came upon a small pocket of gorgeous red trilliums, just starting to unfold.

It was a weekend that arrived by special delivery, sunny and warm, but cool enough to make hiking comfortable. It was a day when black flies were present but had not worked themselves up to a biting frenzy. Others too took advantage of the weekend, several large groups of hikers challenging the longer 20-km portions of the trail. A group of young Boy Scouts filed by, their backpacks so huge as to appear from behind like so many rectangular upright blue beetles waddling up the steep inclines on a mission. Other hikers were in pairs, and some in groups of 10 or more. It was certainly an unexpected sight given the remoteness of this eastern section of the park, and the walking distance from the Trail Centre on the west side of the park. Crossing the high ridge overlooking



Buck Lake, Pine Warblers trilled from the conifers like Chipping Sparrows not quite warmed up yet from the early spring temperatures. One appeared briefly, flaunting its lemon yellow throat and underparts, then melted into the pine needles higher up to resume its territorial calling. A Black-and-white Warbler see-sawed its way through its thin notes, barely audible above the distant waterfall that fell from Slide Lake to Buck Lake below us.

As noon drew even closer, some of the tall granite rocks high above Slide Lake were draped in layers of rock tripe. One member of our group claimed it was edible and although we were hungry, none of us volunteered to break for a snack. Whether it was because of its name, suggesting the stomach tissue of ruminants, or whether it was its dusty black, potato chip appearance, no one would say. More appetizing items were in our backpacks.

The high granite rocks, seemingly hundreds of feet above Slide Lake, offered panoramic views of the park. It was difficult to imagine that deer would choose such a rigorous climb and such a high altitude, but their copious droppings left no doubt as to their presence.

The last few kilometres took us over gentler terrain as we made our way back toward the campsite. Open fields with remnants of split rail fences provided stark evidence to the hardships of early pioneers who attempted to farm these lowlands. Building foundations and decaying boards and hand-hewn beams protruded above the grasses, and the trail, for a short distance, followed the wagon trail still visible among the saplings and aging trees. Enormous white birch, missed by the early natives who would use these older trees to construct their canoes, towered above the ironwoods and other deciduous trees along the trail. There were surprising finds too—the sprinkling of redcedar, something one wouldn't expect to see in Canadian Shield country, but the pines and white cedars reinforcing again where we were.

It is refreshing to find a park where canoes and kayaks seldom need to be chained to a tree, and a wilderness hiker's creed of improving rather than destroying is routine. We have the Friends of Frontenac to thank to a large degree in keeping this park a hiking and interior camping paradise. Their website at [www.frontenacpark.ca](http://www.frontenacpark.ca) provides

lots of opportunity to explore the park. Have a look and plan to experience, as we did, that glorious feeling of entering a world that cares.

*Terry Sprague is a naturalist, freelance writer and KFN member who lives in Prince Edward County.*

## Spring Round-up – 22-23 May 2004

*Ron D. Weir & V. Paul Mackenzie*

The KFN's 47<sup>th</sup> Spring Round-up took place from 1500h Saturday 22 May to 1500h Sunday 23 May 2004. The weekend remained cloudy and misty with heavy rain during the evening Saturday. The winds were light NE and the temperatures varied from about 8°C to 18°C.

The final tally of species was 189, which lies below the 31-year (1973-03) average of 200. Areas visited included the following: Wolfe Island; Amherst Island; Amherstview Sewage Lagoons; Bath area; Camden East; Canoe Lake Road and surrounding areas; Opinicon Road and surrounding areas; Collins Bay and its watershed; Desert Lake; Kingston City areas to include Dupont Lagoons, Cartwright's Point, Lemoine Point, Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Areas; Newburgh; Prince Edward Point; Wilton Creek, Morven; Sydenham area and the Ratti Road.

No new species was added to the cumulative total which remains at 285 species. For a complete tally of the Spring Round-ups from 1960-91, see Blue Bill [39](#) 28-36 (1992). For 1992 to 2003, see Blue Bill [39](#) 44-49 (1992), [40](#) 125-131 (1993), [41](#) 48-53 (1994), [42](#) 63-70 (1995), [43](#) 70-74 (1996), [44](#) 60-66 (1997), [45](#) 49-54 (1998), [46](#) 81-89 (1999), [47](#) 58-63 (2000), [48](#) 52-59 (2001), [49](#) 90-96 (2002), [50](#) 40-44 (2003) respectively.

The 25 participants were invited to the home of Marian and Joel Ellis for the potluck supper and the species tabulation. Thanks are due to Marian and Joel for being such kind hosts.

- Party #1 Hugh Evans
- Party #2 Al Treganza, [Shirley Treganza](#)
- Party #3 [Alex Scott](#), Karen Scott
- Party #4 [Joel Ellis](#), Peter Good, Kathy Innes, Bud Rowe
- Party #5 [Kurt Hennige](#), Bruce Ripley, Mike Runtz, Bob Sachs, Gary Ure
- Party #6 Josette Arassus, Faith Avis, Bea McMahan, [Jay McMahan](#), Laurie Wright
- Party #7 Lynn Bell, Kenneth Edwards, Martin Edwards, Paul Mackenzie, Jane Revell, [Bob Stewart](#)

The *Art Bell Trophy*, awarded for the highest species total, was won by Party #7 with a total of 167. This award was inaugurated in 1992 to commemorate the memory of Art Bell, who was a life-long member of the KFN and a keen participant in the Spring and Fall Round-ups since their inception. The *Purple Vulture Award*, which is the unflattering papier maché model, possibly representing some underworld creature, was won by the runner-up party #5 with 160 species.



Species	Party Numbers							Total
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	
Common Loon	x	2	10	1	15	8	6	42
Pied-billed Grebe	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	5
Double-crested Cormorant	x	17	200	5000	10000	50	2000	10000
American Bittern	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	3
Least Bittern	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Great Blue Heron	x	12	6	10	20	7	15	70
Green Heron	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Turkey Vulture	-	10	x	2	10	8	12	42
Canada Goose	x	22	200	30	500	200	30	900
Brant	-	-	-	-	3	7	1	11
Wood Duck	-	1	-	1	1	2	3	8
Gadwall	x	4	4	15	12	10	20	65
American Wigeon	x	-	2	6	7	3	4	22
American Black Duck	x	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Mallard	x	30	100	50	200	20	20	420
Blue-winged Teal	-	3	-	-	2	-	1	6
Northern Shoveler	x	8	3	5	10	4	5	35
Northern Pintail	x	-	-	4	-	-	1	5
Green-winged Teal	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Greater Scaup	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lesser Scaup	-	1	3	6	3	4	4	21
White-winged Scoter	-	-	-	7	3	3	-	13
Black Scoter	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Long-tailed Duck	-	-	50	100	7	-	25	182
Bufflehead	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	5
Common Goldeneye	-	-	-	4	-	-	4	8
Hooded Merganser	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
Common Merganser	x	-	-	10	20	8	16	54
Red-breasted Merganser	x	-	200	150	2000	8	1800	4000
Osprey	x	2	1	4	3	2	3	15
Northern Harrier	x	3	1	4	1	-	2	11
Sharp-shinned Hawk	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	5
Broad-winged Hawk	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	3
Red-tailed Hawk	-	2	2	3	2	-	6	15
Rough-legged Hawk	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
American Kestrel	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	3
Merlin	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	4
Ruffed Grouse	-	1	-	2	-	3	2	8
Wild Turkey	-	2	-	1	1	2	1	7
Virginia Rail	-	1	-	1	4	-	1	7
Sora	-	1	-	-	2	-	1	4
Common Moorhen	-	2	1	1	-	-	1	5
Black-bellied Plover	-	-	-	1	15	1	1	18
Semipalmated Plover	x	-	-	6	15	2	14	37

Species	Party Numbers							Total
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	
Killdeer	x	13	6	15	30	8	12	84
Greater Yellowlegs	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Lesser Yellowlegs	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	3
Solitary Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
Spotted Sandpiper	x	2	4	10	20	10	12	58
Upland Sandpiper	-	1	-	-	2	2	2	7
Whimbrel	x	-	-	1	4	2	9	16
Ruddy Turnstone	-	-	-	4	5	3	3	15
Red Knot	x	-	-	2	-	1	1	4
Sanderling	x	-	-	1	1	1	1	4
Semipalmated Sandpiper	x	3	-	15	30	2	2	52
Least Sandpiper	x	21	5	30	100	20	50	226
White-rumped Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
Dunlin	x	-	1	1000	350	50	130	1530
Short-billed Dowitcher	x	-	-	4	1	-	3	8
Wilson's Snipe	x	4	6	6	12	1	10	39
American Woodcock	-	-	-	-	2	-	4	6
Wilson's Phalarope	x	-	-	10	15	30	16	30
Bonaparte's Gull	x	-	1	3	-	-	2	6
Ring-billed Gull	x	325	300	150	500	20	1200	2495
Herring Gull	x	26	200	30	50	16	6	328
Great Black-backed Gull	x	-	1	3	30	2	5	41
Caspian Tern	x	5	x	10	20	8	4	47
Common Tern	x	23	-	1	3	1	2	30
Black Tern	-	-	x	10	35	7	150	202
Rock Pigeon	x	60	x	10	50	40	3	163
Mourning Dove	x	50	x	20	100	35	12	217
Black-billed Cuckoo	-	-	x	1	1	-	2	4
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	-	-	x	1	2	-	2	5
Eastern Screech-Owl	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	3
Great Horned Owl	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Long-eared Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Common Nighthawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Whip-poor-will	x	-	-	2	3	-	4	9
Chimney Swift	-	4	x	-	-	2	14	20
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	x	4	1	1	2	4	8	20
Belted Kingfisher	x	4	2	5	4	4	1	20
Red-bellied Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	4
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Downy Woodpecker	-	1	3	2	5	3	2	16
Hairy Woodpecker	-	2	-	1	3	-	1	7
Northern Flicker	x	3	2	4	25	1	4	39
Pileated Woodpecker	-	1	-	2	4	1	1	9
Olive-sided Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Eastern Wood-Pewee	x	1	1	5	5	3	6	21
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	4

Species	Party Numbers							Total
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	
Alder Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
Willow Flycatcher	-	-	3	-	1	1	4	9
Least Flycatcher	-	3	2	1	10	2	10	28
Eastern Phoebe	-	5	1	3	6	2	3	20
Great Crested Flycatcher	x	10	6	15	20	10	20	81
Eastern Kingbird	x	34	100	25	35	20	30	244
Loggerhead Shrike	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Blue-headed Vireo	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Yellow-throated Vireo	-	-	1	-	15	-	3	19
Warbling Vireo	x	17	6	10	30	12	20	95
Philadelphia Vireo	-	-	1	-	2	-	4	7
Red-eyed Vireo	x	13	10	50	60	14	30	17
Blue Jay	x	110	100	10	70	20	30	340
American Crow	x	20	50	20	200	22	42	354
Common Raven	-	26	-	3	7	30	-	66
Horned Lark	-	2	-	2	7	-	3	14
Purple Martin	x	40	200	20	25	20	30	535
Tree Swallow	x	130	500	100	200	50	120	1100
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	x	-	100	20	20	4	8	152
Bank Swallow	-	-	20	10	10	-	2	42
Barn Swallow	x	220	100	30	40	14	20	424
Cliff Swallow	-	20	200	50	80	-	80	430
Black-capped Chickadee	x	7	6	10	20	6	6	55
Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	-	3	1	1	3	4	4	16
Brown Creeper	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Carolina Wren	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
House Wren	x	3	15	12	8	4	12	54
Winter Wren	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	4
Marsh Wren	-	1	-	1	25	1	3	31
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	-	-	-	1	3	1	3	8
Eastern Bluebird	-	-	-	-	2	4	5	11
Veery	-	1	6	-	-	-	1	8
Gray-cheeked Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5
Swainson's Thrush	-	-	2	2	1	-	4	9
Wood Thrush	-	3	10	15	15	20	2	65
American Robin	x	540	200	75	150	100	60	1125
Gray Catbird	x	4	30	20	20	10	20	104
Northern Mockingbird	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Brown Thrasher	x	2	6	15	10	4	6	43
European Starling	x	100	500	25	175	x	80	880
American Pipit	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	12
Cedar Waxwing	-	3	100	25	100	6	30	263
Blue-winged Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Golden-winged Warbler	-	-	-	-	2	1	4	7
Tennessee Warbler	-	-	-	-	4	-	2	6

Species	Party Numbers							Total
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	
Nashville Warbler	-	-	1	3	3	-	2	9
Northern Parula	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Yellow Warbler	x	15	500	100	200	24	200	1039
Chestnut-sided Warbler	x	1	50	10	25	1	25	112
Magnolia Warbler	-	-	6	15	15	-	40	81
Cape May Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
Black-throated Blue Warbler	-	-	1	1	-	1	5	9
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	-	2	-	3	-	2	7
Black-throated Green Warbler	-	-	10	2	4	1	30	47
Blackburnian Warbler	x	2	2	-	5	-	20	29
Pine Warbler	-	5	-	2	3	2	6	18
Bay-breasted Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	10	11
Blackpoll Warbler	x	-	50	4	30	4	22	110
Cerulean Warbler	-	-	-	-	10	2	4	16
Black-and-white Warbler	-	1	1	1	6	1	2	12
American Redstart	x	-	4	6	20	-	16	46
Ovenbird	-	10	2	15	12	12	8	59
Northern Waterthrush	-	5	-	2	6	-	1	14
Louisiana Waterthrush	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Mourning Warbler	-	-	3	1	-	-	4	8
Common Yellowthroat	x	20	15	10	12	20	12	89
Wilson's Warbler	x	-	-	-	4	-	3	7
Canada Warbler	-	-	-	1	2	-	8	11
Scarlet Tanager	-	-	-	5	5	2	5	16
Eastern Towhee	-	-	10	6	10	4	8	38
Chipping Sparrow	x	10	20	10	30	10	18	98
Clay-colored Sparrow	-	-	20	1	-	-	6	27
Field Sparrow	x	1	3	3	5	2	12	26
Vesper Sparrow	-	-	1	2	2	-	1	6
Savannah Sparrow	-	3	1	4	12	2	6	28
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	-	-	1	6	-	4	11
Song Sparrow	x	20	20	15	50	20	8	143
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	3
Swamp Sparrow	-	2	1	1	20	2	2	28
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	4
White-crowned Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
Lapland Longspur	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	6
Northern Cardinal	-	3	3	1	5	2	1	15
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	x	17	15	10	20	8	14	84
Indigo Bunting	-	3	-	12	10	7	8	40
Bobolink	x	124	500	100	25	-	20	1885
Red-winged Blackbird	x	1600	250	300	200	x	130	2480
Eastern Meadowlark	x	4	50	10	10	2	6	82
Common Grackle	x	700	200	50	200	x	40	1190
Brown-headed Cowbird	x	8	50	25	40	10	12	145

Species	Party Numbers							Total
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	
Orchard Oriole	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	4
Baltimore Oriole	x	24	20	20	50	8	20	142
Purple Finch	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	5
House Finch	-	20	1	2	10	4	1	38
American Goldfinch	x	40	1	50	100	40	30	261
House Sparrow	x	170	50	10	25	6	20	281
<b>Total Species</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>Participants</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25</b>



### New Address for Kingston Field Naturalists Website

During the summer of 2004, the web address for Kingston Field Naturalists will change to:

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

The new address should be operating by August 1<sup>st</sup>. In the meantime, continue to visit the site at its current address,

**<http://pavlov.psyc.queensu.ca/~davids/kfn.html>**

Many thanks to Sharon David for designing our website and for maintaining it for the past several years, and to Brian Mondoux who will be taking over the role of Webmaster.

## Fall Round-up – 21-22 May 2004, Adelaide, Australia

*Ron D. Weir*

My work required me to be in Adelaide, Australia, during the week of the Kingston Spring Round-up, which resulted in my missing the event for the first time in about 20+ years. However, it seemed fitting that I should do my own Round-up in Australia as near to the Kingston dates as my work would allow. This turned out to be May 21-22. Together with one Australian birder, Trevor Cowie of Adelaide on May 21, and my wife Barb on May 22, our party of three set forth.

Autumn was everywhere with sunrise and sunset occurring about 0715h and 1715h respectively. Leaves on many trees were falling and the clear but breezy weather made for pleasant birding as temperatures ranged from 6°C to about 16°C. Conditions were much like October in the Kingston area. Saturday's efforts were concentrated within and around the Penrice Saltfields and Port Gawler of North Adelaide and on Sunday in the Barossa Valley northeast of Adelaide, where the extensive fields of vineyards, normally green during summer, had become golden in colour as the leaves completed their life cycle. My birding

effort was far more modest than usually expended on Kingston Round-ups, but this seemed appropriate given my lack of familiarity with the area. The area covered was much less than in Kingston.

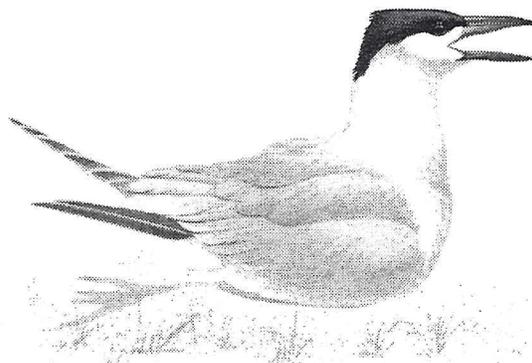
Our tally for the period was 118 species. Only four species were common on both Round-ups, namely the Caspian Tern, the ubiquitous Rock Pigeon, European Starling and House Sparrow. Given the season in South Australia, virtually all of the wintering waders had migrated to the northern hemisphere for their breeding season and the locally breeding insect-eating birds had moved into northern Australia or Papua-New Guinea for their winter season.

The following list that shows the numbers seen is provided for those interested. The sequence is the same as presented in the *Princeton Field Guide to the Birds of Australia* by Simpson and Day, where the range maps are also given.

---

Australian Pelican	20	White-faced Heron	135
Pied Cormorant	30	Great Egret	3
Little Pied Cormorant	50	Little Egret	30
Little Black Cormorant	2	Australian White Ibis	125
Hoary-headed Grebe	290	Straw-necked Ibis	3
Australian Grebe	20	Royal Spoonbill	40
Black Swan	2250	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	25
Australian Shelduck	44	Common Greenshank	10
Pacific Black Duck	150	Marsh Sandpiper	4
Grey Teal	340	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	15
Chestnut Teal	90	Red-necked Stint	300
Australian Shoveler	10	Pied Oystercatcher	1
Hardhead	15	Sooty Oystercatcher	2
Australian Wood Duck	150	Masked Lapwing	28
Blue-billed Duck	2	Red-Kneed Dotterel	50
Musk Duck	35	Double-banded Plover	1
Black-tailed Native Hen	13	Red-capped Plover	50
Dusky Moorhen	41	Black-fronted Dotterel	30
Eurasian Coot	55	Black-winged Stilt	250
White-necked Heron	3	Banded Stilt	40

Red-necked Avocet	110	Noisy Miner	70
Silver Gull	1575	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	3
Whiskered Tern	2	Singing Honeyeater	35
Caspian Tern	6	Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	1
Black-shouldered Kite	1	White-plumed Honeyeater	8
Black Kite	1	White-naped Honeyeater	1
Whistling Kite	1	New Holland Honeyeater	29
White-bellied Sea Eagle	1	Eastern Spinebill (Honeyeater)	2
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	White-fronted Chat	40
Swamp Harrier	4	Red-capped Robin	2
Australian Hobby	1	Hooded Robin	4
Nankeen Kestrel	2	Grey-shrike Thrush	5
Rock Pigeon	45	Gilbert's Whistler	1
Spotted Turtle-Dove	45	Grey Fantail	11
Peaceful Dove	2	Willy Wagtail	45
Crested Pigeon	65	Restless Flycatcher	4
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	6	Magpie-lark	100
Galah	105	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	2
Sulphur-winged Cockatoo	30	Dusky Woodswallow	4
Rainbow Lorikeet	55	Pied Butcherbird	1
Musk Lorikeet	16	Australian Magpie	115
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	16	Grey Currawong	1
Little Lorikeet	20	Australian Raven	45
Swift Parrot	2	Little Raven	80
Crimson Rosella	50	White-winged Chough	30
Eastern Rosella	5	Welcome Swallow	70
Elegant Parrot	6	Richard's Pipit	2
Barking Owl	1	Singing Bushlark	1
Laughing Kookaburra	1	Skylark	3
Sacred Kingfisher	1	House Sparrow	60
Superb Fairy-wren	45	European Greenfinch	6
White-winged Fairy-wren	4	European Goldfinch	10
Weebill	6	Diamond Firetail	3
Brown Thornbill	5	Mistletoebird	1
Inland Thornbill	6	Silvereye	35
Yellow Thornbill	20	Common Blackbird	16
Striated Thornbill	2	Common Starling	90
Buff-rumped Thornbill	6		
Red Wattlebird	15		
Brush Wattlebird	1		
Spiney-cheeked Honeyeater	1		



## The Passenger Pigeon: Comparison with the Mourning Dove, Ontario Distribution and the Extinction of the Species Eric Snyder

Reprinted from Eastern Ontario Biodiversity Museum's *The EOBM Almanack*  
Vol. 5 No. 1, Winter 2004

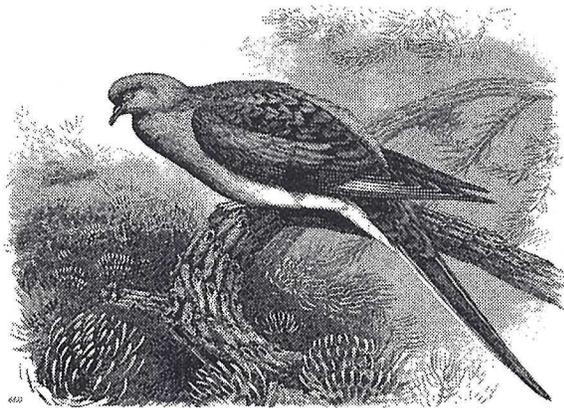
*I am convinced that few men have ever seen a wild pigeon in all its beauty, as the birds were so shy that one could not approach them closely in the daylight. Once I saw a living bird so close . . . in life it had an eye like a brilliant topaz, softened by a dark iris, and every feather glowed with color, so that the little creature, from shapely head to sweeping tail, was a living gem. It was not one color, but all colors, as if each feather were a prism, and the curve of each feather tip a tiny rainbow reflecting the rays of the morning sun.*

W. R. Manlove, formerly of Tennessee

*I have seen them move in one unbroken column for hours across the sky, like some great river, ever varying in hue; and as the mighty stream sweeping on at sixty miles an hour, reached some deep valley, it would pour its living mass headlong down hundreds of feet, sounding as though a whirlwind was abroad in the land. I have stood by the grandest waterfall of America and regarded the descending torrents in wonder and astonishment, yet never have my astonishment, wonder and admiration been so stirred as when I have witnessed these birds drop from their course like meteors from heaven.*

Simon Pokagon, Pottawattomie chief

### 1. Comparison with the Mourning Dove



Passenger Pigeon

In many ways, the Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) superficially resembled the Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*). Accordingly, it is not uncommon to find references to sightings, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, concerning which the observer could not decide whether this species or the Mourning Dove had been seen. In the twentieth century, following the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon, many "observations" of the species were later attributed to the Mourning Dove upon further investigation. Like Mourning Doves, Passenger Pigeons were possessed of a long neck, a long pointed tail and strikingly slender proportions. A comparison of the two will show, however, a

distinct difference in colouration, the Passenger Pigeon being, even in the female, more brightly and contrastingly coloured, while the pastel hues of the Mourning Dove grade imperceptibly one into the other. There was also a considerable difference in size between the two, the Passenger Pigeon measuring 38 to 45 cm, while the Mourning Dove is only 28 to 33 cm in length. The voices were also quite different. The Passenger Pigeon was noisy and its notes were loud and decisive, not soft and crooning as are the Mourning Dove's.

The taxonomic relationship between the Passenger Pigeon and Mourning Dove has been a source of controversy amongst ornithologists since the early nineteenth century. In 1758 Linnaeus placed the species, along with all other pigeons, within the genus *Columba*, naming it *Columba migratoria*. At that time, the Mourning Dove, or Carolina Turtle-dove, as it was then called, was given the scientific name *Columba carolinensis*. However, by Audubon's time, during the 1840's, both species had been classified within the genus *Ectopistes*, being named respectively *Ectopistes migratoria* and *Ectopistes carolinensis*. This distinguished the two species from other North American pigeons, the New World *Columba*, which had conspicuously shorter, more rounded tails. Later in the nineteenth century, morphological studies suggested that *Ectopistes migratoria* was more

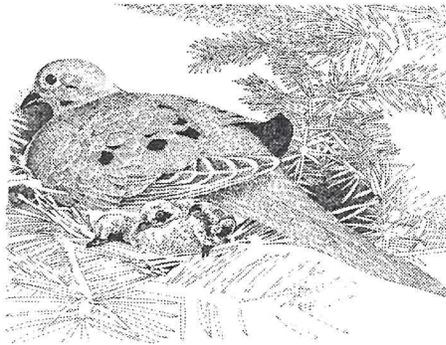
closely related to the Old World *Columba* than to the Mourning Dove, which had been, or was soon to be, renamed *Zenaidura macroura*. Nonetheless, at that time, and during the first half of the twentieth century, most ornithologists still affirmed a closer relationship between the Passenger Pigeon and the Mourning Dove. Research done in the 1980's supported this conclusion, placing *Ectopistes migratorius* closer to *Zenaida macroura*, as the Mourning Dove is now called, than to *Columba* species. However, more recent genetic analysis has led researchers to conclude that the Passenger Pigeon and Mourning Dove are not closely related. The New and Old World members of the genus *Columba* are genetically quite distinct, with the Passenger Pigeon being most closely related to the Old World members.

## 2. Former Distribution in Ontario

The Passenger Pigeon was for the most part a species of the forest, with a preference for deciduous forests. In the province of Ontario, as in the rest of its range, it was most abundant in forest communities dominated by American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), American Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*), Oak (*Quercus spp.*) and Hickory (*Carya spp.*). Forest communities of this kind were most common in southwestern Ontario prior to the twentieth century. Nonetheless, the Passenger Pigeon probably bred all over the province, relying for food upon Maples (*Acer spp.*), Elms (*Ulmus spp.*), Pines (*Pinus spp.*) and likely even Spruce (*Picea spp.*) in addition to numerous species of fruiting trees and shrubs. However, the density of the Passenger Pigeon population in Ontario varied with climate and forest regions. The species nested in huge numbers in the southwestern part of Ontario, with nesting colonies largely concentrated from the Bruce Peninsula through the Toronto region to the Niagara district. Breeding occurred less commonly and more irregularly toward the north, and irregularly to the limit of the trees in the province. Perhaps surprisingly, the species abounded at Moose Factory, and also bred there, which place is on the northern edge of the heavily forested part of Ontario, and far beyond the northern limits of Oak and Beech.

## 3. Occurrence in Eastern Ontario

In eastern Ontario, Passenger Pigeons were recorded from various counties during the nineteenth century. Nesting was known from Arnprior in Renfrew County, Frontenac County near Kingston, Glengarry County in the vicinity of Williamston, and the County of Lennox and Addington at Camden and on Amherst Island. In Lanark, near Franktown, in 1864 or 1865, there was a breeding place and roost containing millions of birds. Migration flights were known from the vicinity of Ottawa, in Carleton County, and also Renfrew, Frontenac and Lennox and Addington. Casual occurrences of Passenger Pigeons are recorded from the above localities in addition to Glengarry and Prescott Counties.



Mourning dove

## 4. Causes of Extinction

Flocks of Passenger Pigeons containing millions, even billions, of birds occurred in Ontario during the early 1860's. Nesting colonies extended over areas as large as 350 km<sup>2</sup>. However, by 1898 the last nesting of Passenger Pigeons occurred in the province, a colony of twenty birds in Frontenac County, and the last Ontario sighting of a wild pigeon was in 1902, in Simcoe County. The last known Passenger Pigeon died in 1914 in the Cincinnati Zoo.

Many explanations of the Passenger Pigeon's demise have been advanced. The most probable causes are over-hunting and habitat loss. In the late nineteenth century, with the advent of the railroad in North America, all parts of the Passenger Pigeon's range were made more readily accessible to markets, and the telegraph allowed communication about nesting colonies among the many professional pigeon hunters who made a living by taking pigeon eggs and nestlings. This devastated the largest Passenger Pigeon nesting colonies. At the same time, the clearing of forests for European settlement and agriculture was accelerating, reaching its peak in 1880, which coincides almost exactly with the sudden increased rate of decline of the Passenger Pigeon. Clearing reduced the average age of forests to fewer than forty years, resulting in younger

brushy growth in which pigeons had difficulty foraging. Reduction in food availability from forest trees might have been mitigated against somewhat by the Passenger Pigeon's adaptation to feeding on European grains. However, large tracts of forest were also necessary for communication about the location of food among birds which would use the same breeding or roosting areas. This was essential for successful foraging given the sporadic availability of Beech, Oak and Chestnut mast. Hence fragmentation of the forests led to less successful foraging. No doubt it also led to increased predation in breeding colonies situated in remnant woodlots.

### 5. Effects of Extinction

The effects of extinction can be widespread, depending on the ecological relationships between the extinct species and other species. Without a doubt, the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon had a great effect on the ecology of a large part of eastern North America, including southwestern and eastern Ontario. Cooper Hawks (*Accipiter cooperi*) and other species of raptor are known to have followed the flocks of Passenger Pigeons during migration and the rest of the year. Mammalian predators such as a Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*), Bobcat (*Felis rufus*) and Cougar (*Felis concolor*) took advantage of nesting colonies. But the loss of the Passenger Pigeon had consequences besides the loss of a food source for other species. Passenger Pigeons themselves fed on a wide range of native berries including Blueberries and Cranberries (*Vaccinium spp.*), Cherries (*Prunus spp.*), Currant and Gooseberries (*Ribes spp.*), Juneberries (*Amelanchier spp.*), Grapes (*Vitis spp.*), Mulberries (*Morus rubra*), Raspberries (*Rubus spp.*) and Strawberries (*Fragaria spp.*). This must have once dispersed the seeds of these species, many of which now remain on the ground under the parent plant. Without Passenger Pigeons, will the range of some of these species eventually be reduced? This appears to be the case with, for instance, the dune race of the Sand Cherry (*Prunus pumila*), which today lacks any significant dispersal agent to reintroduce it into dunes where it is decimated by dense populations of White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Passenger Pigeon nesting and roosting behaviour also affected vegetation. Disturbance from the accumulation of pigeon

dropping selected for species different from what was present in areas without large numbers of pigeons. It is known that the growth of Pigeonberry (*Phytolacca americana*) was abundant under nest sites, and some believe that this is also true of the now rare American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*).

### Conclusion

Although it ranged as far west as Alberta, and occasionally British Columbia, and as far north as the boreal forests of Ontario and Quebec, the Passenger Pigeon was primarily a species of the eastern deciduous forests of North America. It was characteristic of this habitat, and, as such, its loss symbolizes the loss of this once vast ecosystem as much as that of the taxa, both genus and species, which it uniquely represented.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Beth Shapiro in the Department of Zoology, Oxford University, for her assistance in supplying the most recent information on Passenger Pigeon phylogeny.

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## Official Hunting Ban to Protect Algonquin Wolves Applauded

*Melissa Tkachyk, Earthroots*

*Earthroots' Wolves Ontario! website <http://www.wolvesontario.org/> May 31, 2004*

Earthroots congratulates Minister of Natural Resources, David Ramsay who announced his official decision to permanently ban hunting and trapping wolves and coyotes in the 39 townships surrounding Algonquin Provincial Park.

"We are very pleased that Minister Ramsay has decided to permanently protect the wolves of Algonquin Park from hunting and trapping," said Melissa Tkachyk, Wilderness Campaigner with Earthroots. "This initiative is a bold and positive step for wolf conservation in Ontario. For years now, Ontarians have been asking for a permanent year-round ban on the killing of wolves around Algonquin Park and we are delighted that Minister Ramsay and the government have listened."

According to an Earthroots survey recently conducted by



Photo of Algonquin wolf courtesy of John and Mary Theberge who radio-collared the wolf in Park.

An analysis of the mitochondrial DNA from wolves in Algonquin and other regions of the province seemed to prove that this smaller reddish-brown coloured wolf was not a Gray wolf species as previously thought. Geneticists concluded that the park wolves were a distinct species that shared a common evolutionary history to the highly endangered Red wolves (*Canis rufus*). This species was on the very brink of extinction in the southeastern United States but after millions of dollars spent on captive-breeding programs, Red wolves are slowly making a comeback in the wild.

Scientists have proposed that the new species take the English name Eastern Canadian wolf and the Latin name *Canis lycaon*. It has been estimated that these wolves range as far North as Timmins (coinciding with the northern limits of deer) and as far south as Haliburton. They exist across Ontario within that range, with populations in Quebec and possibly Manitoba as well. The wolves are typically a gray-brown and reddish colour and noticeably smaller than Gray wolves which typically range further north. Despite the new scientific evidence, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources still manages the species as a Gray wolf subspecies, identifying it as the Eastern wolf or Algonquin wolf (*Canis lupus lycaon*). Outside the Algonquin region, these wolves can be hunted and trapped year round without quotas or bag limits to restrict the harvest level. The Eastern wolf was listed as a Species of Special Concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in 2001.

Source: Paul J. Wilson, Sonya Grewal, Ian D. Lawford, Jennifer N.M. Healy, Angela G. Granacki, David Pennock, John B. Theberge, Mary T. Theberge, Dennis Voigt, Will Waddell, Robert E. Chambers, Paul C. Paquet, Gloria Goulet, Dean Cluff, Bradley N. White. 2000. DNA profiles of the Eastern Canadian wolf and the Red wolf provide evidence of a common evolutionary history independent of the Gray wolf. *Canadian Journal of Zoology*. 78:2156-2166.

Oraclepoll Research of Sudbury, 90.4% of Ontarians support permanent protection for species at risk like the Eastern Canadian wolf (Algonquin wolf).

More than a decade of research has shown that the Algonquin wolf population has been declining, primarily due to high levels of hunting and trapping outside of the park boundaries. Prior to the implementation of the moratorium

in November 2001, approximately 35-40 park wolves were killed this way each year.

"Half of the wolf packs in the park have territories that extend beyond park boundaries, which is why the creation of this permanent buffer zone is so important to their survival," said Tkachyk.

While wolves are now protected in Ontario's oldest provincial park, Earthroots says wolf populations in other parks remain at risk. Studies

show that wolves in Pukaskwa National Park are experiencing comparable population declines and a significant proportion of wolf mortality can be attributed to human activities. Out of concern for area wolf and caribou populations, Earthroots and six other environmental organizations are trying to halt the construction of a logging road which is to run along the northern border of the National Park. The groups say the road will open up access to a previously remote wilderness area, intersecting the territories of 4 of the 7 park wolf packs and a caribou recovery zone.

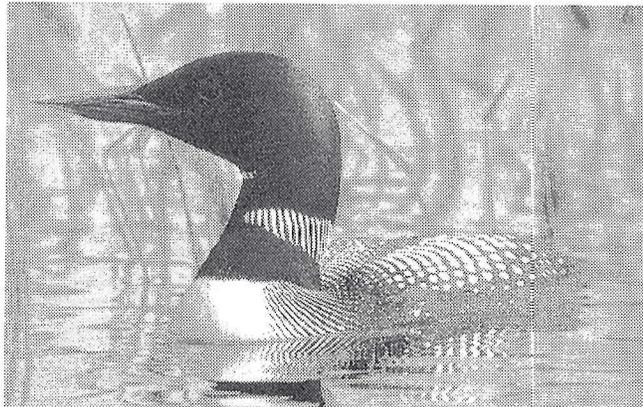
"The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources recently committed to implementing a wolf conservation plan," says Tkachyk. "It is imperative that this plan includes a commitment to protect the long-term viability of wolf populations in both Provincial and National Parks. If we can't protect wolves in our parks, where can we protect them?"

Pukaskwa is the only National Park that exists within the wolf's Ontario range and it is one of the few protected areas that is large enough to protect mammals with vast territories. Outside protected areas, it remains a year-round open season for hunting and trapping wolves with no bag limits or quota restrictions.

**Notes on Natural History**  
**No. 271, June 16, 1965**  
*Helen R. Quilliam*

Almost every one of the Rideau Lakes holds its pair or more of loons, and perhaps no bird more typifies summer to the cottager and summer visitor on the lakes. They admirably fulfill the territory requirements of Common Loons. The loons need an open expanse of water deep enough for extensive diving. It must also be large enough so that there is plenty of food and so that they have the necessary room for taking off and landing. A loon has to run along the water for some distance before it is able to become airborne. Because of its relatively small wings it cannot check its flying speed when coming in to land. It circles lower and lower, striking the water with a splash, plowing a furrow before it comes to a stop. Good nesting sites are another basic requirement and the Rideau Lakes with their many bays and islands admirably fulfill these requirements. The smaller lakes may hold only one pair of loons and the larger will have room for a number of pairs.

The rocky islands on these lakes make excellent nest sites. The nest is placed close to the water and preferably where the water is deep enough to enable the bird to leave the nest quickly by diving, making an underwater exit. A shallow depression is first scraped out and then the scanty nesting material is laid down. All during incubation the sitting bird gathers and arranges whatever grasses, rushes or twigs are within reach, so that eventually the nest becomes quite bulky. The same nest site is often used year after year, or one quite close to it. Over a period of years a cottager can be fairly sure that his pair of loons are the same that come back each year. It is believed that loons mate for life and will not desert the nest site, even though it is molested, until one or other of the birds has died.



The female lays two eggs and, strangely enough, very often one of these two eggs is unfertile and fails to hatch. The incubating female sits very low and is spread out quite flat which makes her inconspicuous. If disturbed, the female will slide off her nest into the water, swimming some distance away under water. If hatching time is nearing she is reluctant to leave the nest and crouches even lower on it. All birds seem to sit more tightly when the eggs are just ready to hatch.

A female found incubating the other day did not leave her nest, and rather than examine the eggs she was left in peace. The following week one egg remained in the nest and was quite cold. Perhaps the nest had been deserted or also possibly the one chick was already with its parents well out in the lake. The parent bird broods the young chick until

its down is dry and then the chick immediately takes to the water. If the second egg is going to hatch, the first-born is watched by the bird which is not on the nest until the second chick is dried and also ready to leave the nest. These chicks are covered

with down and able to swim and walk. In fact, they are more agile on land than their elders. They can do many things on their very first day that are quite beyond the powers of young perching birds. They begin to preen their down feathers immediately, they can swim and walk and can stretch up and flap their wings. It only takes them a day to learn to dive, although the first dives are only a few inches under water. This rapidly increases, until in about a week they can dive to ten feet, resurfacing 20 to 30 yards away. If the parents allow it the young chick or chicks ride on their parents' backs.

It is possible that what we at first thought was an abandoned nest was actually one in which the first chick had hatched but in which the second egg was addled. The little chick may have been completely invisible to us on the back of a parent that was too far away for us to see. Also, it may have been hidden in undergrowth on the island by the parents. When all danger is past the parents will then return and call the chick to come out from its hiding place.

Incubation lasts almost a month so it is quite possible that the first young loons are now taking to the water. Loons were back at this particular lake as soon as the ice left the lake by the third week in April.

The young loon is not self-supporting for a number of weeks and six-week old chicks have been seen to be still fed by the parents. It takes almost ten to eleven weeks before they are ready

to fly. This means that on our lakes here in the summer it is possible to see family groups of loons almost all summer. Many families remain together until they are ready to migrate. Although loons only raise one brood a year, if the eggs are destroyed they may lay again.

It is to be hoped that, with our lakes becoming more and more used by motorboats and cottagers, the loons will not be driven away. Many lakes in the United States no longer have any loons on them because people and loons are often not compatible. Loons need a certain amount of solitude and power boats chasing them in order to watch the loons dive or display is a reprehensible habit and one that should be discouraged whenever met with.

