THE BLUE BILL

Quarterly Journal of the Kingston Field Naturalists

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Contents

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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**. Please include contact phone number.

Submissions should be in MS Word format or in "plain text" format (PC or MacIntosh) or in the body of an e-mail.

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President's Page

Erwin Batalla

At the annual business meeting, the membership endorsed the new Executive submitted by the nominating committee. Some of the new members of the Executive, such as Hugh Evans (Vice-President), Mike Evans (Nature Reserves), Kurt Hennige (Field Trips) and Fiona Poland (Education), are long-time members who have helped the Club in other capacities. Others such as Elaine Farragher (Conservation) are new members of the Kingston community and recently joined the KFN but have been long-time naturalists at other clubs.

At the meeting, we also thanked the members leaving the Executive for the work they have done.

Sharon Critchley has been a member of the Conservation Committee since 2000 and has chaired it since 2003. During that time, numerous issues have been dealt with, including Mellon Lake Conservation Reserve, Llynlea Trailhead Development and Big Sandy Bay. Sharon always sought to base our arguments on facts and researched the issues thoroughly. She also has the ability to summarize our position clearly in letters to the planners or the ministries involved. In the past year, the report entitled "Report on Little Cataraqui Creek Wetland, West Side, Front Road to Bath Road" was completed. She was the driving force behind this project and, with an advisory team, she hired a biologist, found contributors willing to write parts of the report, wrote a section herself, oversaw the project right to printing, and, finally, delivered copies of the report to the institutions of concern. In recognition of this and all her conservation work, she was awarded the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation's 2005 Conservation Award.

Liz Evans was our Vice-President from May 2004 to April 2005. In that capacity, she was responsible for the excellent speakers we have had this past year. We have been treated to a great variety of topics, from the effect of climate change on the fisheries in Lake Ontario and on the reproductive success of penguins in the Antarctic to talks about dragonflies and damselflies and the migration of butterflies.

Shirley French chaired the Education Committee for only one year, but in that short time, she reorganized the Club's bird skins collection, coordinated the awarding of the KFN prize at the regional Science Fair and organized a very successful workshop on invertebrates to further the skills of participants in the BioBlitz. She has also been instrumental in our efforts to institute a university scholarship for fourth-year biology students. We hope that we will be able to tap into her talents after her brief stay away from Kingston.

Jay McMahan chaired the Nature Reserves Committee from May 2002 to April 2005. Jay did a colossal amount of work during that time. He helped to maintain the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary at Otter Lake and to make significant upgrades to our property on Amherst Island. The two-year project to keep the cows that graze this land from having access to Lake Ontario meant that Jay spent a lot of time on the Island. He was involved in surveying the best route for an electric fence, building fences, digging rocks and mud, moving buckets of fish from the ponds to the lake and performing numerous tasks beyond the call of duty. Jay even left one of his boots deep in the mud of the ponds as a token of his dedication!

George Vance helped in several of the tasks that were necessary to complete the fencing project on Amherst. George has had a long interest in this property and he has helped construct several of the structures on it. George has been a naturalist dedicated to education of youths and adults and to conservation and acquisition of land for as long as I can remember. For that contribution, he was awarded Ontario Nature's W.W.H. Gunn Conservation Award in June of this year.

Bruce Ripley has organized field trips for the KFN for the past five years. Bruce has introduced many novel field trips while

continuing to organize visits to the favourite birding sites of the KFN on the islands and at Prince Edward Point. He arranged visits to Ottawa where we were guided by members of the local club, and this year we also hosted a visit from their members. He also added trips to Presqu'ile Provincial Park and Algonquin Park. Bruce also broadened our interests by leading butterfly and dragonfly trips and arranging outings for geology, fall colours, frogs and mudpuppies. Bruce has shown a great professionalism and we will miss his handouts (paper as well as energy bars) on field trips.

Our Club is blessed to have so many talented members who are willing to help. On behalf of the KFN, I thank them for their contribution. I wish you an excellent summer and hope to see you at one of our activities in the fall.

Erwin Batalla

Kingston Field Naturalists Annual Report 2004-2005

Conservation Committee *Sharon Critchley*

Committee members this year included Sharon Critchley (Chair), Arlene Aish who monitored local media for environmental issues, Carolyn Bonta who was representative to Kingston Wetlands Working Group, Shirley French who monitored Pesticide Reduction Kingston, and Elaine Farragher, Conservation Chair Elect. Erwin Batalla, President, reviewed all letters sent on behalf of Kingston Field Naturalists. Jackie Bartnik and Chris Grooms served as representative and alternate, respectively, on a Public Advisory Committee in place of the Conservation Chair. Many members assisted by writing letters in response to Action Alert requests. Only issues on which action was taken during 2004-2005 are reported here.

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. An EcoAction grant is currently funding an Urban Streams Buffer project until Spring 2006 with KWWG and The Biosphere Network as partners. KWWG is still looking for Kingston and area residents who would be interested in participating in this project. The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority sought support from selected KWWG partners for their grant application to fund half of the cost of acquiring land at Parrot's Bay Area. Carolyn drafted the letter sent by the KFN President in support of this grant application. A wetland enhancement project is planned for the Cataraqui Industrial Estates 401 Wetland, which is located south of Highway 401 between Sydenham and Gardiners Roads on a mix of City and private lands. This wetland was mapped with GPS (Carolyn Bonta assisted), and CRCA continues discussion with City planners to secure this wetland (and its adjacent lands) as greenspace, in order to proceed with enhancement. The KWWG continues to encourage all partners to look for projects to restore wetlands and streams that could be funded by available grants.

Pesticide Reduction in Kingston

Shirley French maintained the liaison with Pesticide Reduction Kingston, a loosely-organized group promoting a Pesticide Reduction Draft Bylaw (see the website www.prkingston.org). Kingston City Council eliminated the Ad Hoc Pesticide Reduction Committee of City Council in May 2004. Sharon Critchley spoke to their final meeting, presenting comments based on the KFN's letter sent in January 2004. Efforts are underway to re-activate the Pesticide Reduction Kingston group.

Local Planning Issues

Homestead Holdings requested a down-zoning for the Cataraqui Mills Subdivision on Little Cataraqui Creek north of John Counter Boulevard. At a Planning Committee meeting, Sharon Critchley spoke to the issue of fencing and a Landowner Information package and sent a letter to the Planner.

Kingston's Urban Growth Strategy was submitted to the public for comment. Arlene Aish assisted in the review of these documents and comments were sent on behalf of the KFN.

The Chair commented by letter and a Planning Committee presentation on a proposed Official Plan amendment for the Cataraqui West Subdivision adjacent to the Collins Creek wetland north of Princess Street. Erwin Batalla, President, assisted with reviewing background documents.

The Chair commented by letter and spoke to the Planning Committee regarding a proposed Tree Conservation Bylaw in Kingston. The KFN's emphasis was on retaining linking corridors for wildlife in the development process. An Action Alert was sent to KFN members on this issue.

Federal Issues

The KFN supported the Canadian Nature Federation's position that species listed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) should be placed on the Species at Risk list without political interference.

The Minister of the Environment then refused to list two endangered salmon populations recommended by COSEWIC. A letter was sent over the signature of KFN President Erwin Batalla, and an Action Alert was sent by the Conservation Chair.

Provincial Issues

A Provincial Planning Reform workshop (attended by Sharon Critchley) looked at proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statement. In response to posting on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry, an Action Alert was sent out asking members to support some changes and encourage further changes. The new Provincial Policy Statement was approved by the legislature in 2005. The Committee has two copies.

The Government of Ontario reviewed Ontario's Protected Areas (Parks) Legislation during the autumn of 2004. A letter was sent over the President's signature urging the government to move ahead with new legislation to replace the Provincial Parks Act which dates from 1954.

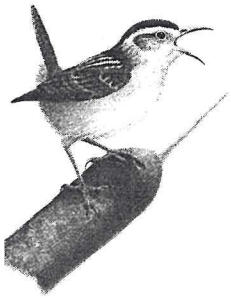
Road/Bridge/Gas Line Projects

Counter Street Improvements: KFN attended the final Open House by the consultant National Capital Engineering and, after reviewing the Environmental Screening Report, sent a letter supporting the preferred option for the Counter Street/Portsmouth re-design which also appears to be the best option for Little Cataraqui Creek.

Utilities Kingston contracted SENES Consultants Ltd. to conduct a Natural Gas Main Environmental Assessment Study for an extension from Glenburnie to Queen's University. The KFN commented on possible impacts to Little Cataraqui Creek.

Highway 401 widening also includes interchange work at Division Street, Montreal Street and bridges over the CN rail line and the Cataraqui River. A letter with questions about culverts and mitigation measures to protect the East Branch of Little Cataraqui Creek received a detailed response from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

Elaine Farragher and Carolyn Bonta attended an open house on the replacement of the bridge over Mitchell Creek at Snug Harbour. Comments in support of South Frontenac Township's preferred option for replacement (i.e., keeping the height low) were sent to the consultant McCormick Rankin Corporation.



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

Please see The Bluebill Vol. 52, No. 1 (March 2005) for an account of the completion of this report and recommendations made to Kingston planning staff. Copies were donated to Kingston Frontenac Public Library and Queen's University Library. Copies may be purchased ($20 for a printed copy and $5 for a PDF file on CD) — call 634-5475 for information. The report may also be reviewed on the KFN website.

Central Cataraqui Region Natural Heritage Study

This project for Kingston and Loyalist Township will map forest/woodlands, wetlands, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs) and significant species. Jackie Bartnik reported on highlights and questions to the Conservation Chair, which were acted on or relayed to the KFN Executive as appropriate.

Wind Power Projects

Erwin Batalla, President, assumed responsibility for this file. He attended the open house for the development of wind power on the Dupont site and the open house held by consultants for Canadian Renewable Energy Corporation (CREC) regarding the expansion of their Wolfe Island project to 80 turbines from 13. CREC has been taken over by Canadian Hydro Developers. Erwin also attended a round-table meeting concerning the appropriate zoning for wind turbines on Wolfe Island, and sent a letter to the consultant for the Township of Frontenac Islands expressing concern about the proximity of some proposed turbines to wetlands and the appropriate zoning. The KFN continues to be concerned about shut-down protocol in the event of bird and bat mortality.

Field Trip Committee *Bruce Ripley*

During 2004–2005, a total of 19 field trips were conducted, as well as May bird walks, spring and fall round-ups and the Christmas Bird Counts.

April 17—Prince Edward Point

Bruce Ripley took 18 KFN members to search for spring migrating birds. A good migration day with sightings including one Brown Thrasher, one Blue-headed Vireo, Pine and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Surf and White-winged Scoters, Horned Grebes, Cliff Swallows and a Brown Creeper which crept up one member's leg.

April 25—Amherst Island

Paul Mackenzie took members for a spring walk through the Owl Woods and the KFN property to look for migrating birds.

May Bird Walks

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

May 16—Prince Edward Point

Bud Rowe took Club members to one of Ontario's premier birding destinations at the height of spring migration, where up to twenty species of colourful warblers and many other migrants can be seen.

May 30—Napanee Important Bird Area

Trip leader Kurt Hennige took members to look for marsh and grassland birds, including the endangered Loggerhead Shrike, in the Napanee Plain area. Members learned about the efforts involved with protecting this seldom-seen species. Two Loggerhead Shrikes, one Northern Mockingbird, many Vesper, Grasshopper and Clay-coloured Sparrows, Upland Sandpipers, butterflies and Prairie Smoke plants were seen.

May—Spring Round-up

This was the annual spring ritual, a 24-hour birding competition in which teams competed to find as many species of birds as possible. Scores were tallied at the potluck supper at the residence of Marian and Joel Ellis.

June 11—Moth Identification and Animals of the Night

Leader Gary Ure took members to look for some of the large silkworm moths (Luna, Cecropia, Polyphemus) as well as other species for the BioBlitz. Gary was able to hear and find Barred Owl, Whip-poor-wills, Common Nighthawk, frogs and other animal life.

June 12—Butterfly Identification and Bird Life

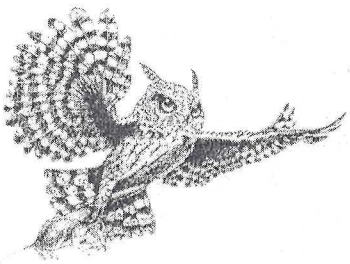
Trip leader Bruce Ripley took members to search for and identify butterflies of the Mitchell Creek area as part of the BioBlitz. Butterfly checklists were provided. Fourteen species of butterflies were observed including Arctic Skipper, Harris' Checkerspot, Indian Skipper, Silvery Blue and Baltimore. There were many good photo opportunities for members with digital cameras. This area has one of the highest numbers of breeding bird species in the province.

September 6—Shorebirds and Butterflies of Amherst Island

Trip leader Bruce Ripley took 22 members for a hike to the gravel bar and through the Owl Woods. Emphasis was placed on tough shorebird identification. Although conditions were very windy, we still managed to find 13 species of shorebirds, including three Stilt Sandpipers, two Pectoral Sandpipers, three Baird's Sandpipers and one Ruddy Turnstone.

September 19—Shorebirds and Other Migrants of Amherst Island

Trip leader Erwin Batalla took 28 members to observe shorebirds and other fall migrants. Many of the usual migrant warblers, including Northern Parula and Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Palm and Black-throated Warblers, were seen. A good selection of shorebirds were also seen, including White-rumped Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover and Dunlin, as well as a few raptors and butterflies.



October 11—Prince Edward Point

Trip leader Bruce Ripley went to look for fall migrating birds at this local "hot spot." He tried for 60 species and saw 63. Highlights included two Horned Grebes, one Black Scoter, two Northern Saw-whet Owls, one Eastern Screech Owl (responding to a tape at 12:00 noon), one Blue-headed Vireo and one Fox Sparrow.

October 17—Autumn Colours Tour

Trip leader Jackie Bartnik took members to visit the scenic lookouts at Foley Mountain in Westport and the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary to see the autumn colours and flora and fauna.

November—Fall Round-up

This 24-hour birding competition brought together teams in a race to find as many species of birds as possible. Lists were compared at the potluck dinner hosted by Marian and Joel Ellis.

November 21—Wolfe Island

Members looked for waterfowl, raptors and late migrants with trip leader Jay McMahan.

November 28—Amherst Island

KFN members looked for owls and hawks with trip leader Bud Rowe.

December 5—Prince Edward Point

Members looked for wintering waterfowl and other birds at Prince Edward Point with trip leader Owen Weir. Highlights included a quality look at a Red-throated Loon. Also seen were six Horned Grebes, two Winter Wrens, two Northern Shrikes and many Pine Siskins. At East Lake were twelve Little Gulls, and at the end of the day there was a Gyrfalcon at the Dupont Plant.

Christmas Bird Count Dates

Saturday, 18 December: Prince Edward Point, Joel Ellis

Sunday, 19 December: Kingston, Ron Weir

Monday, 20 December: Amherst Island, Janet Scott

Monday, 27 December: Napanee, Ann Brown and Joe Percy

Monday, 27 December: Thousand Islands, Ken Robinson

Tuesday, 28 December: Rideau Ferry/Smith Falls, Jean Griffin

January 9/05—Waterfowl and 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 22—OFNC/KFN Birding Exchange

This trip was to highlight birding "hot spots" of Ottawa with Chris Traynor of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. The KFN was to join the OFNC to see the local specialty birds of Ottawa. It was a great opportunity to see new places and good birds and to meet new people. Barrow's Goldeneye, Gray Partridge and winter gulls were the target species. Unfortunately, due to bad weather, the trip had to be postponed to a later date.

February 6—OFNC/KFN Birding Exchange

Owls, hawks and eagles of Amherst Island were sought with the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club with trip leader Bruce Ripley. It was a chance to see some good birds while socializing with birders from the OFNC. A combined 48 birders turned out to get quality looks at Boreal and Great Gray Owls. A Great Horned Owl sitting a kilometre off shore on the ice and ten Short-eared Owls flying together were spectacular sights for most. A stop at Jones Falls produced three Bald Eagles and four Trumpeter Swans for the OFNC on their way home. Good birds and fun times.

February 11—Mudpuppies at Oxford Mills

Trip leaders Bruce Ripley and Anne Roberston were at the best place in the world to see mudpuppy activity and courtship in shallow, accessible water. After the observation period, we spent time at the Brigadoon Restaurant over hot chocolate and desserts. Many thanks are due to Fred Schueler and Aleta Karstad for their expertise.

March 6—Ottawa

Trip leader Bruce Ripley took 11 members to see Barrow's Goldeneye, Gray Partridge and other local specialty birds of Ottawa (re-scheduled from January 22). Birds seen included twelve Gray Partridges, two Barrow's Goldeneyes, one Northern Hawk Owl, two Great Gray Owls and one Peregrine Falcon. Many thanks to OFNC members Bernie Ladouceur and Chris Traynor for helping make this a successful KFN outing.

March 13—Waterfowl Festival at Presqu'ile Provincial Park

Trip leader Owen Weir took members to view waterfowl at the Waterfowl Festival at Presqu'ile Provincial Park in Brighton, where up to 25 species of waterfowl can be observed. Canvasbacks, Redheads, Snowy Owls and a Tufted Titmouse made for an enjoyable trip.

Education *Shirley French*

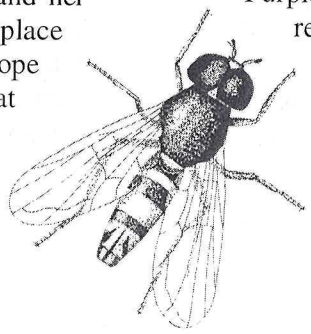
The KFN is presently pursuing funding for a *Scholarship in Conservation Biology* to be offered to a fourth-year student doing field research at Queen's University Biological Station (QUBS). We hope to secure some funds through a corporation or foundation as our first step.

Ongoing KFN support for the Draft Bylaw proposed by Pesticide Reduction Kingston has not made any headway with City Council. The Ad Hoc Committee was scheduled to resume January 2005 but unfortunately has not been reinstated. The Conservation Committee Chair will continue to voice our concerns about the use of pesticides and their potential effects on wildlife.

The organization and labelling of KFN's bird specimens is not yet complete, but over 50 species have been examined and labelled. Anne Robertson and Diane Lawrence use these specimens throughout the year for the education of Junior Naturalists and educators in training and for other educational purposes within our community.

This year at the Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Science Fair (FLASF), KFN members Diane Lawrence, Erwin Batalla, Eleanor Porteous, Fiona Poland and Shirley French judged the natural history projects. Five students at the primary and junior level were awarded first and second place prizes. The Stirrett Prizes consisted of gift certificates for a book.

A workshop on the identification of Crustacea and Dipterans, given by Dr. Shelley Arnott and her graduate student Jessica Forrest, took place mid-May. With our new knowledge, we hope to be able to identify even more species at the June 2005 BioBlitz.



Nature Reserves *Jay McMahan*

Amherst Island

This past year saw the completion of the work on the KFN property on Amherst Island mandated by the Ministry of the Environment. The cattle that are pastured on the property from May 10th to Oct 31st have been fenced off from the lake by page wire and electric fencing. Water is provided for the cattle by means of a shore well and a pump powered by electricity from solar panels and a wind turbine. This work was carried out by Chris Grooms and Jay McMahan and assisted by George Vance and Gerry Grooms. The old corral was dismantled and a substantial new one was built by Laurie Simpson, the drover who pastures cattle on the property. Four Stewardship Rangers (grade eleven students) spent a day at the property in July and helped clean up garbage and wire fencing from the shoreline

A Stewardship Plan for the property was prepared by Dave Bland, a biological consultant from Peterborough, Ontario. This plan sets out short- and long-term objectives that meet the environmental concerns of the KFN.

In the fall, with consultation from Ducks Unlimited, the ponds on the east end of the property were drained in an attempt to rid the ponds of fish. This was done to enhance the habitat of the ponds for water and shore birds. Since the ponds could not be completely emptied, a large population of fish remains and continues to be a problem.

In the fall, a committee was formed to discuss methods of enhancing the habitat as suggested in the Stewardship Plan. These recommendations were discussed and it was decided to proceed slowly and observe the natural succession of growth, with the exception of some tree planting in the area of the old corral.

Owen Weir initiated a move to replace the old Purple Martin houses since they were beyond repair. Lyn Bell constructed two new, beautifully-made 24-unit martin houses, and they have been erected in the vicinity of the old houses.

Helen Quilliam Sanctuary

A proposal was made by Wayne Gay, the lawyer for Mr. Noerenberg, to compensate the KFN for the buildings located on lot 7, Concession 12 in the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary. A decision on this proposal has been delayed pending on Mr. Noerenberg settling his differences with South Frontenac Township.

Sale of a parcel of land adjacent to the southern portion of the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary affected the Rideau Trail that crossed this area. The Rideau Trail Association petitioned the KFN to reroute their trail through the Sanctuary to the township road. This was granted and a trail that conformed to a new survey of this area was laid out.

Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program: This Ontario Government program was applied for on behalf of the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary. If approved, this plan should provide tax relief for this area.

Conservation Areas

Roziland Island in Eagle Lake was monitored in July and Evans Woods (Hummel property) was visited in October. These properties are monitored in a conservation agreement with the Nature Conservancy.

Greenwood Sanctuary

This 100-acre parcel west of the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary was donated to the Ontario Heritage Foundation in memory of John Edward ("Ted") Greenwood. The OHF asked the Kingston Field Naturalists to be custodians of this area. After ensuring that certain criteria were met, the KFN agreed to do so.

Ad Hoc Committee *Erwin Batalla*

An ad hoc committee of the Executive was formed in January 2005 to explore several avenues of action to influence the federal government with the findings of the "Report on Little Cataraqui Creek Wetland, West Side, Front Road to Bath Road." The committee consisting of Erwin Batalla (chair), Bob Stewart, Liz Evans and Sharon Critchley met three times. We began by exploring designations of the study area that would ensure greater protection of this coastal wetland. After the second meeting, we concluded that the current ownership of the land by Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) provided the best safeguard if the memorandum of agreement between CSC and the Ministry of the Environment remained in effect. Letters were sent to the two ministers responsible for those departments, reminding them of our concern, with copies to our local MP, Peter Milliken.

Publicity and 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 were 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 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 Leisure Showcase to publicize our Club and activities.

Membership *John Critchley*

KFN's current adult membership has 17 Life members and approximately 305 adult memberships, which are half individual and half family memberships. There are also 63 junior and 6 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, and receive their Membership Cards with the May newsletter. For those who haven't renewed in time, a second renewal reminder (yellow) is included in the May newsletter. 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.

Junior Naturalists *Anne Robertson*

Seventy enthusiastic registrants aged 6 to 12 met through the year for 15 meetings and four field trips. By the end of the year, the numbers at any one meeting were around 40 members.

Diane Lawrence continues to be a valuable source of inspiration and leadership. We are also most grateful to our other ten leaders, Ariella Altman, Kristin Bowden, Anna Desellas, Julie Kee (2 years), Polly Lam, Brenna Latimore (2 years), Melissa Moos, Alyson Paul, Sarah Pedley (2 years) and Alice Winchester, who are mostly Queen's Biology students. The time and effort put into this programme is considerable and we thank these dedicated volunteers.

Topics this year included Creepy Crawlies, Magnificent Mini Plants, Fantastic Fungi, Cone Bearers, Insectivora, Noses, Fish Habitat, Scats, Thrushes, Herptiles and Nature Journaling. In addition, we have had the regular Orientation, Seasonal Crafts, May Bird Walk and Wild Food Picnic.

All regular meetings continue to have nature notes (of topical interest), trivia on the subject, challenges for the season and the most popular "mystery guess."

Our first field trip in October took us to Sandbanks Provincial Park where, with the guidance of Yvette Bree, we planted Marram Grass to stabilize the dunes and explored the ecology. Our November trip was cancelled due to lack of interest. In January, we explored the woods on the properties of the Gazendam family and Liz and Mike Evans on North Otter Lake. In February, a small group explored the new Parrot Bay lands. The popular annual roadside cleanup and spring wildflower walk at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary took place in April.

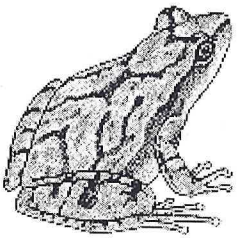
Roland Beschel prizes for summer projects were awarded to Heather Evans and Chrissie Schreiner for a joint project on pesticides and to Phoebe Tietzen-Braun for a project on ponds. Our Christmas collection this year raised $21.20 which went to support the Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary Foundation.

This was full and sometimes challenging year in which we have all learned a great deal!

Teen Naturalists *Anne Robertson*

This 13- to 16-year-old age bracket numbered only 6 this year. The assistance from KFN members as role models is much appreciated.

In September, a small group explored the Depot Lakes Bog. This was a wet but exciting trip (see *The Blue Bill* Vol. 51, No. 4). In October, several members helped with habitat improvement on Amherst Island under the guidance of Chris Grooms (see *The Blue Bill* Vol. 51, No. 4). In November, we GPS'd a new trail in the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary at Otter Lake with the help of Floyd Connor (see *The Blue Bill* Vol. 51, No. 4), and in December, we had a bird identification workshop. In January, we went mudpuppy watching at Oxford Mills and in February, we looked for Bald Eagles in the area of the Thousand Islands (see *The Blue Bill* Vol. 52, No. 1). In April, we went on a night hike and heard Chorus Frogs and Spring Peepers. Some Teens attended the Invertebrate workshop in May and plan to attend the BioBlitz at Lost Bay in June. Our final meeting will be a canoe trip at Charleston Lake.



Rambles *Anne Robertson*

A diverse group of naturalists ramble twice a month throughout the year and learn from each other while exploring a variety of habitats in all kinds of weather. Twenty-one Rambles were held from April 2004 to March 2005. A total of 49 people participated with numbers varying from four to 16 and an average of ten. These numbers are lower than usual but the dedicated core of long-time ramblers continues to be augmented by newcomers.

Destinations this year included the Cataraqui Trail, Parrott Bay, Lemoine Point, Cataraqui Conservation Area, the Frink Centre, Camden Lake, Massassauga Conservation Area, Big Sandy Bay, Collins Creek, Belle Isle, the Dupont shoreline, Cataraqui Cemetery, Sibbett Road, Cartwright Point, Jacksons Mill, Butternut Creek Road and various private properties.

Many thanks are due to the members who took on leading the rambles in my absence, including Jacqueline Bartnik, June Fitchett, Barry Hanna and Karen Stinson.

Guest Speakers *Liz Evans*

September: Dr. Vicki Friesen: "Gene flow and the Marbled Murrelet"

October: Eric Machell: "Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory"

November: Colin Jones: "Dragonflies and Damselflies"

December: Members' night: Member slides

January: Dr. Barrie Frost: "Navigation of Monarch Butterflies"

February: Dr. Dolf Harmsen: "Antarctica and Siberia and their Ecology in Relation to Global Warming"

March: Rachael Fraser: "Golden-winged Warblers"

April: Jim Bayly: "Birding in the Kingston Area"

May: Dr. John Casselman: "Climate, Climate Change and Fish and Fisheries in the Great Lakes Basin"

Telephone Information Line & E-mail Service *Bob Sachs*

The phone line continues to receive many "hits" which are recorded when a call is received by the answering machine. Hits for the 2005 business year were 402, seven percent above the previous year's hits.

Messages received for 2005 were 51, which was 18 percent above the previous year.

Our e-mail distribution service forwards sightings reports and other Club information to members who wish to receive relevant messages by e-mail.

Ontario Nature Representative *Jacqueline Bartnik*

As the Club representative, my duties involved receiving communications from and relaying messages to Ontario Nature. Several times this year, I attended the Ontario East regional meeting, at which each representative updated Ontario Nature on our activities and our concerns in this region of Ontario. Ontario Nature also updated us on its activities and concerns. I received several communications from Ontario Nature's Nature Network and items of concern were forwarded to our Executive. Action alerts were sent to members of Ontario Nature and were placed on the website. We received several printed information packages which were made available to KFN members at our monthly meetings.

The Blue Bill *Susie Rance*

Through the past year, The Blue Bill has continued to offer the contributions of Club members, including Juniors and Teens, and others, to provide members with varied perspectives on issues of local concern, reports of Club projects and activities, important data, accounts of travels and fascinating and thought-provoking observations of nature. The editor invites all Club members to submit their contributions in the year to come—they are always welcome. Thanks to Norma Graham for her tireless efforts in making sure *The Blue Bill* reaches you in the mail.

New English Names for Dragonflies

David Bree

If you are old enough to remember Myrtle Warblers, Whistling Swans and Solitary Vireos, you should know that "official" English names of birds do change from time to time. Therefore, it should come as no surprise to learn that English names of dragonflies can also change. English common names for North American dragonflies and damselflies were invented by the Common Names Committee of the Dragonfly Society of the Americas in about 1986. Since this predated every common field guide to dragonflies published, there has been a consistent use of English names in the many regional guides that have appeared in the past 15 years, until now. In September of 2004, the Committee made some changes. Those changes that effect the names of Odonates found in the Kingston area are outlined below. While the dragonfly checklist on the KFN website is up-to-date, with these changes you might want to use this list to amend your personal Field Guides.

Species: *Lestes disjunctus*

Old name: Common Spreadwing

New name: Northern Spreadwing

Reason: This species has been split into a northern and southern form. The one found in Ontario is the northern form and gets the appropriate common name. The scientific name remains the same for our species. The southern species will be known as *Lestes australis*.

Subspecies: *Argia fumipennis violacea*

Old name: Variable Dancer

New name: Violet Dancer

Reason: This is one of few North American odonates that has distinct and easily recognizable subspecies. In this case, the species name is unchanged but the sub-species found in Ontario, which really is very purple in the male, gets a well-deserved English name.

Species: *Stylogomphus albistylus*

Old name: Least Clubtail

New name: Eastern Least Clubtail

Reason: The old species was split. The old species name remains for the insect found in Ontario.

Species: *Macromia illinoiensis*

Old name: Illinois River Cruiser

New name: Swift River Cruiser

Reason: It was felt that a specific location was inappropriate in the common name of a wide-ranging species.

Species: *Erythemis simplicicollis*

Old name: Eastern Pondhawk

New name: Common Pondhawk

Reason: It seems the jury is still out on this one, but there is some evidence that the Eastern and Western Pondhawks are one species. If they are combined, the new English name will kick in. I am not sure which scientific name will get priority but I suspect ours will not change.

Species: *Leucorrhinia proxima*

Old name: Red-waisted Whiteface

New name: Belted Whiteface

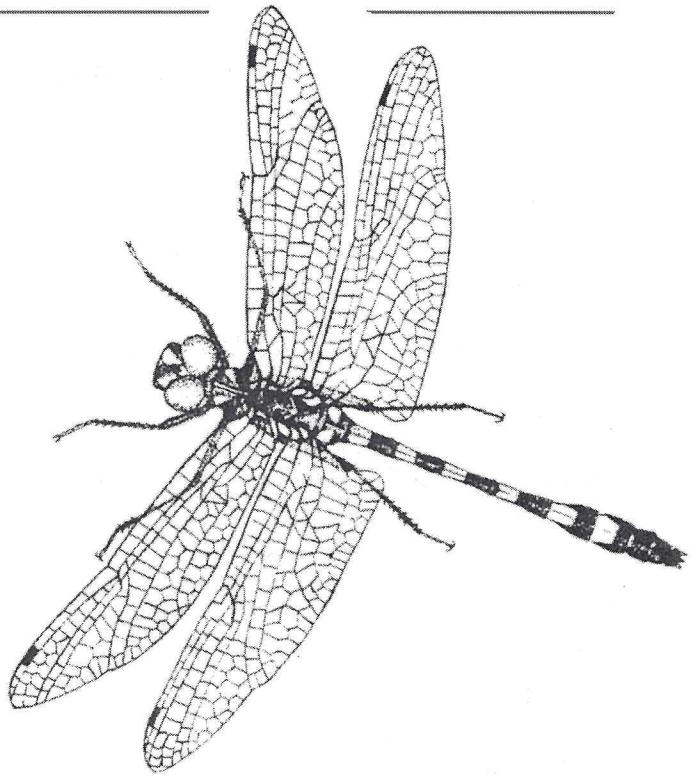
Reason: In the eastern part of its range (including Ontario), this species has a yellow waist that is quickly covered by a white pruinosity (hairy down). The new name is colour-neutral and adequately describes both eastern and western populations. I personally like this change. I was always getting the names "Red-waisted Whiteface" and "Crimson-ringed Whiteface" mixed up.

Species: *Sympetrum vicinum*

Old name: Yellow-legged Meadowhawk

New name: Autumn Meadowhawk

Reason: The legs of this species go from yellow in young adults to brown as they mature and it was felt that this caused too much confusion for those encountering the species for the first time. Since this is the species that inevitably flies the longest into the autumn, this name was chosen. Personally, this is the name that I will miss the most. Even mature bugs have lighter-coloured legs than all the rest of the Meadowhawks and it remains a good distinguishing feature for this species and I think the old name quite adequate.



Ontario Odonate Range Maps Online

As of April 2005, you can check out where different species of dragonflies and damselflies have been seen in the province. This information is now online at **http://nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/**

Spring Round-up 2005

Ron D. Weir

The KFN's 48th Spring Round-up took place from 1500h Saturday 21 May to 1500h Sunday 22 May. The weekend weather was overcast with heavy showers during the evening Saturday. The winds were calm to light northeast overnight, shifting from the north and strengthening to north 20 km per hour Sunday. Temperatures fell from 17°C Saturday afternoon to 10°C during the evening showers and remained there throughout Sunday.

The final tally of species was 200, which lies close to the 32-year (1973–2004) average of 199. 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; Bedford Road and surrounding areas; Collins Bay and its watershed; Desert Lake; Kingston City areas to include Dupont Lagoons, Cartwright's Point, Lemoine Point and Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Areas; Newburgh; Prince Edward Point; Waupoos Peninsula; Wilton Creek, Morven; Sydenham area; and the Hay Bay area.

One new species, namely Common Eider, was added to the cumulative total that now stands at 286 species. For a complete tally of the Spring Round-ups from 1960 to 1991, see *The Blue Bill* 39 28-36 (1992). For 1992 to 2004, see *The 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), and 51 47-52 (2004) respectively.

Unique species added by each party are the following: Greater Scaup by Party #1; American Black Duck, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Pectoral

Sandpiper by Party #2; Glaucous Gull and Hermit Thrush by Party #3; Bufflehead, Great Horned Owl, Dark-eyed Junco and Pine Siskin by Party #4; American Pipit by Party #5; and Horned Grebe, Green-winged Teal, Common Eider, Rough-legged Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Palm Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Evening Grosbeak by Party #6.

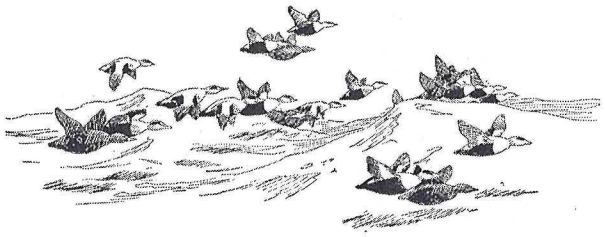
Noteworthy finds are the 3rd-ever male Eurasian Wigeon, which was found at the Amherstview Sewage lagoons, the 1st-ever Common Eider, found offshore from KFN lands on Amherst Island, 2nd-ever Long-billed Dowitcher (last Spring Round-up: 1968), 4th Lesser Black-backed Gull, an adult and immature on KFN lands on Amherst Island, and a hybrid Brewster's Warbler found by Party #3.

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.

The *Art Bell Trophy* was won by Party #4 for the highest species total of 169. 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*, the unflattering papier mâché model possibly representing some underworld creature, was won by the runner-up party #6 with 165 species.

The totals in the following table have had known duplications removed so that the total individuals for a species may not equal the sum of the contributions from each party. An underlined total count denotes a record high tally.

Party #1	Erwin Batalla, Al Treganza, Shirley Treganza
Party #2	Alex Scott, Karen Scott
Party #3	Joel Ellis, Peter Good, Kathy Innes, Paul Mackenzie, Bud Rowe
Party #4	Lyn Bell, Chris Grooms, Kurt Hennige, Bruce Ripley, Mike Runtz
Party #5	Faith Avis, Bea McMahan, Jay McMahan
Party #6	Martin Edwards, Hugh Evans, Gerald Paul, Shirley Paul, Jane Revell, Bob Stewart, George Vance, Ron Weir
Party #7	Others: Nittaya Mackenzie, David Okines, Terry Sprague



Species	Party Numbers							Total
	# 1	# 2	# 3	# 4	# 5	# 6	# 7	
Common Loon	4	4	15	10	2	11	-	46
Pied-billed Grebe	-	2	1	3	1	1	-	8
Horned Grebe	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Double-crested Cormorant	37	1000	1500	4000	2000	1550	x	6000
American Bittern	-	1	4	4	-	12	-	21
Least Bittern	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
Great Blue Heron	10	9	10	10	4	9	x	52

Species	Party Numbers							Total
	# 1	# 2	# 3	# 4	# 5	# 6	# 7	
Green Heron	2	-	-	1	1	1	-	5
Black-crowned Night Heron	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Turkey Vulture	8	1	1	2	15	5	x	32
Canada Goose	75	2000	800	150	500	400	x	3000
Brant	-	2	16	30	-	2	-	35
Mute Swan	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	3
Wood Duck	4	-	6	3	4	4	-	21
Gadwall	9	30	10	27	50	60	-	75
Eurasian Wigeon	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	1
American Wigeon	1	1	4	12	6	12	-	15
American Black Duck	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Mallard	68	100	50	200	30	70	x	350
Blue-winged Teal	4	1	6	1	-	8	-	20
Northern Shoveler	2	1	5	2	5	6	-	15
Northern Pintail	1	15	4	3	6	6	-	25
Green-winged Teal	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Ring-necked Duck	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
Greater Scaup	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lesser Scaup	10	-	2	2	2	2	-	12
Common Eider	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
White-winged Scoter	-	-	1	17	-	3	-	21
Long-tailed Duck	2	3	75	175	-	11	-	266
Bufflehead	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Common Goldeneye	3	-	5	35	35	-	-	43
Hooded Merganser	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Common Merganser	8	4	2	25	40	8	-	87
Red-breasted Merganser	7	20	80	400	70	100	x	677
Ruddy Duck	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	1
Osprey	2	4	4	8	3	8	-	20
Northern Harrier	3	-	3	4	-	2	-	12
Sharp-shinned Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	3	-	1	6	-	-	-	10
Broad-winged Hawk	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	2
Red-tailed Hawk	2	2	-	4	1	3	x	12
Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
American Kestrel	-	-	2	2	1	1	-	6
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	-	1	2	-	2	-	5
Ruffed Grouse	-	2	1	10	-	6	-	19
Wild Turkey	8	-	4	14	-	2	-	28
Virginia Rail	2	1	5	3	-	4	-	15
Sora	4	1	1	2	-	1	-	9

Species	Party Numbers							Total
	# 1	# 2	# 3	# 4	# 5	# 6	# 7	
Common Moorhen	1	-	2	5	-	1	-	9
Black-bellied Plover	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Semipalmated Plover	5	20	8	1	12	15	-	61
Killdeer	6	20	6	30	20	40	x	122
Greater Yellowlegs	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	1
Lesser Yellowlegs	3	5	1	1	5	4	-	10
Solitary Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Spotted Sandpiper	6	15	15	40	1	38	-	50
Upland Sandpiper	-	-	1	6	1	1	-	9
Ruddy Turnstone	-	1	3	4	2	1	-	10
Semipalmated Sandpiper	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	50
Least Sandpiper	103	100	100	60	80	145	-	350
White-rumped Sandpiper	1	-	-	1	-	6	-	6
Pectoral Sandpiper	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Dunlin	1	20	5	20	5	26	-	77
Short-billed Dowitcher	1	5	-	4	-	1	-	6
Long-billed Dowitcher	-	-	3	-	-	4	-	4
Wilson's Snipe	1	20	10	15	-	19	-	65
American Woodcock	10	-	2	50	-	2	-	64
Wilson's Phalarope	-	8	5	10	4	12	-	12
Ring-billed Gull	92	500	100	80	100	800	x	1200
Herring Gull	2	300	30	120	40	150	x	400
Lesser Black-backed Gull	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
Glaucous Gull	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Great Black-backed Gull	2	5	15	30	2	12	x	50
Caspian Tern	2	40	15	80	24	70	x	120
Common Tern	2	1	-	14	-	-	-	17
Black Tern	224	20	40	10	25	40	x	350
Rock Pigeon	2	6	30	10	30	7	x	85
Mourning Dove	10	50	25	100	35	35	x	255
Black-billed Cuckoo	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Eastern Screech-Owl	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	4
Great Horned Owl	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Barred Owl	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	3
Long-eared Owl	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Common Nighthawk	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
Whip-poor-will	10	-	-	50	2	1	-	63
Chimney Swift	12	6	15	15	-	25	-	73
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2	2	2	5	1	1	x	13
Belted Kingfisher	-	-	2	3	-	1	-	6

Species	Party Numbers							Total
	# 1	# 2	# 3	# 4	# 5	# 6	# 7	
Red-headed Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	-	-	3	-	1	-	4
Downy Woodpecker	2	3	2	4	2	2	x	15
Hairy Woodpecker	2	1	4	5	1	2	x	15
Northern Flicker	1	10	6	20	2	4	x	43
Pileated Woodpecker	1	-	3	2	1	-	-	7
Olive-sided Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3
Eastern Wood-Pewee	3	1	6	5	1	-	x	16
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Alder Flycatcher	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Willow Flycatcher	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	3
Least Flycatcher	1	1	10	17	3	11	-	43
Eastern Phoebe	2	3	1	8	-	10	x	24
Great Crested Flycatcher	8	2	8	14	10	6	-	48
Eastern Kingbird	4	50	17	25	30	50	x	186
Loggerhead Shrike	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
Yellow-throated Vireo	1	-	1	8	-	1	-	11
Blue-headed Vireo	-	-	1	3	-	1	-	5
Warbling Vireo	7	10	8	60	3	19	x	107
Philadelphia Vireo	-	1	2	12	-	-	-	15
Red-eyed Vireo	6	4	10	100	30	10	x	160
Blue Jay	21	100	10	25	12	10	x	178
American Crow	68	100	20	125	25	16	x	354
Common Raven	23	-	2	1	1	2	-	29
Horned Lark	1	-	-	2	2	2	-	7
Purple Martin	14	20	30	50	6	45	-	165
Tree Swallow	210	200	20	800	100	130	x	1460
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	8	30	15	30	60	70	x	213
Bank Swallow	-	-	8	30	-	25	-	63
Cliff Swallow	1	20	25	120	-	450	x	666
Barn Swallow	210	50	25	50	-	410	x	745
Black-capped Chickadee	31	10	10	45	6	15	x	117
Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	3
White-breasted Nuthatch	5	1	1	7	2	-	-	16
Brown Creeper	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Carolina Wren	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
House Wren	2	10	4	10	-	24	x	50
Winter Wren	-	-	2	5	-	1	-	8

Species	Party Numbers							Total
	# 1	# 2	# 3	# 4	# 5	# 6	# 7	
Marsh Wren	23	-	8	30	1	15	-	77
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	-	4	3	14	-	12	-	33
Eastern Bluebird	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	3
Veery	4	-	-	25	-	4	-	33
Gray-cheeked Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Swainson's Thrush	-	-	3	15	1	-	-	19
Hermit Thrush	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Wood Thrush	8	10	10	6	2	16	x	52
American Robin	660	200	100	150	100	250	x	1460
Gray Catbird	5	20	15	45	3	75	x	163
Brown Thrasher	2	6	5	20	1	11	x	45
European Starling	16	1000	50	120	200	200	x	1586
American Pipit	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Cedar Waxwing	-	-	20	25	-	40	x	85
Golden-winged Warbler	5	2	4	5	1	-	-	17
Tennessee Warbler	-	-	2	20	2	6	8	38
Orange-crowned Warbler	-	-	1	3	-	1	1	6
Nashville Warbler	1	-	4	16	-	15	-	36
Northern Parula	-	-	3	4	-	1	3	11
Yellow Warbler	10	200	100	400	100	225	x	1035
Chestnut-sided Warbler	1	10	50	20	1	12	x	94
Magnolia Warbler	-	4	5	30	-	16	x	55
Cape May Warbler	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	4
Black-throated Blue Warbler	-	-	6	2	-	10	-	18
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	20	10	240	2	19	-	291
Black-throated Green Warbler	5	6	4	20	-	20	-	55
Blackburnian Warbler	-	4	4	10	-	10	1	29
Pine Warbler	4	-	3	14	2	1	1	25
Palm Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Bay-breasted Warbler	-	-	4	4	-	7	-	15
Blackpoll Warbler	3	-	4	30	-	20	-	57
Cerulean Warbler	3	-	1	5	1	1	-	11
Black-and-white Warbler	6	2	3	25	6	15	-	57
American Redstart	3	10	8	30	1	31	-	83
Ovenbird	10	1	10	15	12	1	-	49
Northern Waterthrush	6	-	4	20	1	1	-	32
Louisiana Waterthrush	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	4
Mourning Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Common Yellowthroat	5	20	10	30	20	17	-	102
Hooded Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2

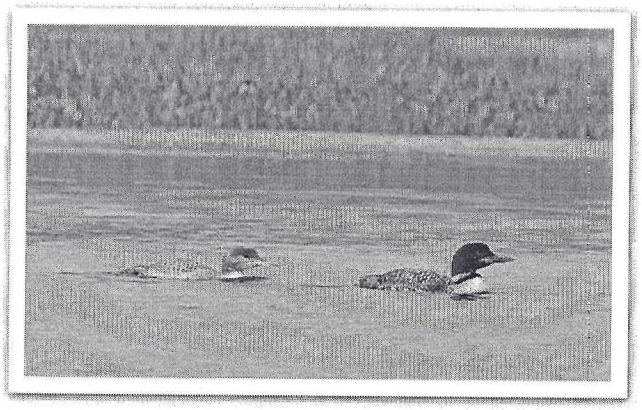
Species	Party Numbers							Total
	# 1	# 2	# 3	# 4	# 5	# 6	# 7	
Wilson's Warbler	-	-	1	5	-	2	3	11
Canada Warbler	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	2
Yellow-breasted Chat	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Scarlet Tanager	1	-	3	25	-	1	-	30
Eastern Towhee	5	6	15	60	2	35	-	123
Chipping Sparrow	20	100	25	10	25	29	x	209
Clay-colored Sparrow	2	10	2	4	-	6	x	24
Field Sparrow	x	6	6	20	-	40	x	72
Vesper Sparrow	-	-	1	2	-	6	-	9
Savannah Sparrow	6	20	10	60	15	28	x	139
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	-	2	1	-	3	x	7
Song Sparrow	18	100	6	150	15	66	x	355
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	6
Swamp Sparrow	9	2	4	60	-	12	-	87
White-throated Sparrow	1	1	8	50	-	30	x	90
White-crowned Sparrow	13	4	3	25	1	16	x	62
Dark-eyed Junco	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Northern Cardinal	2	2	4	2	2	4	-	16
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2	20	8	25	2	32	x	89
Indigo Bunting	4	-	4	6	-	1	-	15
Bobolink	110	1000	30	150	50	65	x	1405
Red-winged Blackbird	1210	950	90	300	100	700	x	3350
Eastern Meadowlark	5	20	6	45	30	45	x	151
Common Grackle	710	1000	40	200	50	250	x	2350
Brown-headed Cowbird	4	100	30	150	5	36	x	325
Orchard Oriole	-	-	2	3	-	2	-	7
Baltimore Oriole	14	20	15	120	25	31	x	225
Purple Finch	2	-	-	1	-	2	-	5
House Finch	-	20	10	4	2	10	-	46
Pine Siskin	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
American Goldfinch	16	100	20	110	1	40	x	287
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
House Sparrow	26	20	10	60	15	40	-	171
Party Total	**119**	**107**	**151**	**169**	**97**	**165**	**-**	**200**
Participants	**3**	**2**	**5**	**5**	**3**	**8**	**3**	**29**

For the Love of a Loon

Terry Sprague

Every now and again, among stories of injured ducks being stoned and dogs being towed behind cars, our faith in humanity is restored by hearing about someone who has gone out of their way to save an animal from certain death. It becomes an example of someone caring enough to extend a helping hand to a creature in need. It exemplifies compassion and tenderness, and embraces a respect for life—that every living creature has worth.

Dan and Heather Kailburn, newcomers to the shores of Big Mellon Lake, south of Kaladar, are two people who didn't question whether it was right or wrong to get involved—they just went ahead and did it. Big Mellon Lake lies on the east side of County Road 41, across from the Sheffield Conservation Area, a half-hour north of Napanee. It is long and narrow and stretches in an easterly direction for some distance. Largely uninhabited, except for a few permanent homes and seasonal cottages, the lake with its typical Canadian Shield backdrop and tiny islets is a natural place to find loons.



Loon photo courtesy of Russ Kitchen

As the loons migrate in the fall, they gather on Big Mellon Lake, exploiting its waters for fish as they increase their fat content for the journey south. By late November, the loons that have gathered upon the lake have disappeared as signs of winter approaches. As the Kailburns watched their lake freeze over on December 15th last year, a small patch of open water was seen remaining less than a kilometre from their shoreline. In it was a loon who continued to remain in the shrinking space, kept open by the actions of the bird. The Kailburns made several trips out on the questionable ice to rescue the loon, realizing that even if it was capable of flying, it would be unable to do so as loons require a long stretch of open water to get airborne. Loons, with their feet placed far back on their body, are experts at diving, but quite useless on land.

After several phone calls for advice, they were put in touch with Sue Meech of the Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre near Napanee, who advised the Kailburns to bring the bird to her for examination if they happened to be successful in rescuing it. Five days later, the lake had completely frozen over and the loon was now sprawled on the ice. Early that morning, they inched their way out on the thin ice, sliding a boat beside them for safety as they made their way to the stranded loon. After two attempts at throwing a blanket over the bird, the loon was captured and gently taken to Napanee where the bird was examined. A phonecall was made to the Kortright Earth Rangers Centre in Woodbridge, where an appointment was made for their expertise in the plight of the loon whose wing appeared frozen, resulting from either an old injury or a birth defect.

The Kailburns drove the bird to the recently-opened facility in Woodbridge where staff attempted physical therapy on its wing with a hopeful release in the spring once their bird was able to fly. There was no question that the Kailburns would return to pick up their bird for the release, once it was strong enough to fly, and staff kept them updated on the loon's progress. By late December, Earth Ranger Rehabilitation advised the Kailburns that physical therapy did not appear to be working, and that the bird would be driven to the Ontario Veterinary College in Guelph. Here, veterinarians examined the loon's wing and determined that it was fused and not repairable, and the bird was subsequently euthanized.

Earth Rangers called one more time to explain that the problem was in its joint, and unlike human joints which can be replaced, this is not the

case with birds. Had it been broken beyond the joint, surgery would have been attempted. It was uncertain if the injury was due to a birth defect, or whether the bird was injured while learning to fly.

So, despite several weeks of consultation and efforts to get the best possible help for the loon, the story, unfortunately, did not have a happy ending. The Kailburns, however, while heartbroken, appear very philosophical about the outcome. "Our only gratification is that his suffering is over and his death was much more peaceful than either dying on the ice from exposure, or being eaten alive by a hungry animal."

In a world that seems to have little time or patience for injured animals, or even a desire to care, it is refreshing to see this combined effort between the Kailburns, Sue Meech of the Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre in Napanee, the Earth Ranger Rehabilitation Centre in Woodbridge and the Veterinary College in Guelph to save a loon that could just as easily have been ignored and allowed to freeze to death. It is an inspiration to us all, and a ray of sunshine in this bustling world that seems to have limited time to get involved in the plight of animals. The loon did not survive, but perhaps other injured animals that come along later will fare better.

Certainly, with dedicated people and facilities, injured birds now have a better shot at survival, and a chance to live beyond their injuries.

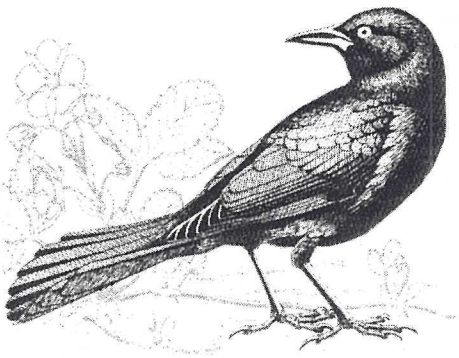
Terry Sprague is a naturalist, freelance writer and KFN member who lives in Prince Edward County.

Reverse Migration of Birds at Point Pelee

Robert B. Stewart

On May 10th, 2004, my sixth day of birding Point Pelee and surrounding areas, I was at the tip of the point a little after 0700 hours to find a relatively small number of birders calling off bird species as they were heading south, the wrong way, over Lake Erie.

The night before and in the early hours of the morning, there had been fairly intense thunderstorms, but by an hour or so before dawn the skies cleared with a light south wind which increased in intensity to about 20 km per hour. It was not a north wind which one might have expected to push birds southerly. Among the experts identifying the southerly-flying species on both east and west sides of the tip were Alan Wormington, Bob Curry and Bob Taylor who had worked with Dr. William Gunn as he was researching the phenomenon of reverse migration for his doctoral thesis. Among the species flying south were Blue Jays, a Mockingbird, a Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanagers, Scarlet Tanagers, a Clay-colored Sparrow, Indigo Buntings, Bobolinks, Common Grackles, Orchard Orioles and Baltimore Orioles. These with the exception of the Clay-colored Sparrow are readily identifiable in the air. There were probably a good number of other species but they went by as lbj's (little brown jobs). I wondered whether the birds were really going south or whether, once a distance over the lake, they might disperse and return over a broad front. As a small test, I followed a flock of about a dozen grackles, large, dark and easily followed, out of binocular range (10x). They did not swing back while in view and the visibility was sufficiently good that Pelee Island could be clearly identified to the south west of the tip. It was also interesting to me that the species flying south were not fully representative of the species in the Park, i.e., no robins, Yellow Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers or White-crowned Sparrows which would have been identifiable and which were in the Park in good numbers.



This reverse migration started to dwindle by mid-morning

and was over by 1100 hours. It is apparently a not-uncommon phenomenon but has specific weather requirements, most importantly a due-south wind. Several of those at the tip, commenting on reverse migration, indicated they had their own theories; they were not, however, forthcoming. My own thought was that the birds flying south were new arrivals whose built-in migration map had them in the right direction but the wrong place, hence the need for reorientation. I was later told by someone who had been on Pelee Island on May 9th that birds were moving north from Fish Point by the "thousands," presumably toward Lighthouse Point and thence to the mainland. Perhaps some of these had overshot their computer-projected target.

Gunn reported (Gunn, W.W.H. 1948. Reverse Migration over Lake Erie. Wilson Bull. 60: 67) that Harrison F. Lewis noted the birds in the spring of 1937 leaving the Point for the south. Lewis (later to become the Director of the newly-formed Canadian Wildlife Service in 1946) was at that time the Federal Migratory Bird Officer for Quebec and Ontario (Cranmer-Byng, J. L. 1996. The Canadian Field-Naturalist. 110; 1-254). Gunn's doctoral thesis (Gunn, W.W.H. 1951. Reverse Migration of Birds in the Pelee Region in Relation to Weather. University of Toronto), while not published as a full paper, examined a phenomenon that continues to intrigue and defy a clear scientific explanation.

Lead Fishing Sinkers and Jigs in Canada: Review of their use patterns and toxic impacts on wildlife (Abstract)

A.M. Scheuhammer, S.L. Money, D.A. Kirk and G. Donaldson
Environment Canada, 2003

More than 5 million Canadians take part in recreational angling each year, spending over 50 million days fishing on open water. Recreational anglers contribute to environmental lead deposition through the loss of lead fishing sinkers and jigs. Each year, lost or discarded fishing sinkers and jigs amounting to an estimated 500 tonnes of lead, and representing up to 14% of all nonrecoverable lead releases in Canada, are deposited in the Canadian environment. Wildlife, primarily piscivorous birds and other waterbirds, ingest fishing sinkers and jigs during feeding, when they either mistake the sinkers and jigs for food items or grit or consume lost bait fish with the line and weight still attached. Lead fishing weights that weigh less than 50 g and are smaller than 2 cm in any dimension are generally the size found to be ingested by wildlife. Ingestion of a single lead sinker or lead-headed jig, representing up to several grams of lead, is sufficient to expose a loon or other bird to a lethal dose of lead. Lead sinker and jig ingestion has been documented in 10 different wildlife species in Canada. In the United States, ingestion of lead sinkers and jigs by 23 species of wildlife, including loons, swans, other waterfowl, cranes, pelicans, and cormorants, has been documented. Evidence gathered to date indicates that lead sinker and jig ingestion is the only significant source of elevated lead exposure and lead toxicity for Common Loons *Gavia dimmer* and the single most important cause of death reported for adult Common Loons in eastern Canada and the United States, frequently exceeding deaths associated with entanglement in fishing gear, trauma, disease, and other causes of mortality.

Except for a few local or regional instances, available data indicate that Common Loon populations are stable or increasing through most of their Canadian range. There is currently insufficient information to answer the question of

whether mortality through lead sinker poisoning may be having population-level effects on loons anywhere in Canada or to estimate with confidence the minimum frequency of poisoning that, combined with the effects of other environmental stressors, would be required to significantly affect population dynamics. The most critical areas of new knowledge that are required to enable confident estimates of the population effects of lead sinker poisoning in loons are accurate life history data using individually marked birds to derive important population parameters for local or regional loon populations in Canada; DNA analyses to better define "populations"; a better understanding of the interactions of multiple environmental stressors that may influence population dynamics; and incorporation of these multiple stressors into a large-scale spatial analysis using geographic information systems. Such research would be expensive and time-consuming, requiring long-term monitoring of substantial numbers of banded individuals from several selected populations.

There are numerous viable alternative materials for producing fishing sinkers and jigs, including tin, steel, bismuth, tungsten, rubber, ceramic, and clay. Tin, steel, and bismuth sinkers and bismuth jigs are the most common commercially available alternatives in Canada. Many of the available alternative products are currently more expensive than lead; however, switching to these products is anticipated to increase the average angler's total yearly expenses by less than 1% (~$2.00). Nevertheless, the continued availability of (cheaper) lead products has made it difficult for the manufacture and sale of nontoxic alternatives to achieve commercial viability.

Some limited regulatory actions have been taken to reduce the use of lead sinkers and jigs both in Canada and elsewhere. In 1987, Britain banned the use of lead fishing sinkers weighing less than 28.35 g. The United States has banned the use of lead sinkers and jigs in three National Wildlife Refuges and in Yellowstone National Park and is currently considering further action. New Hampshire, Maine, and New York have ratified statewide regulations prohibiting the use of lead sinkers beginning in 2000, 2002, and 2004, respectively. Environment Canada and Parks Canada prohibited the possession of lead fishing sinkers or lead jigs weighing less than 50 g by anglers fishing in National Wildlife Areas and National Parks under the Canada Wildlife Act and the National Parks Act, respectively, in 1997. However, these latter two regulations are of limited geographic scope, covering <3% of Canada's land mass, and they affect only about 50 000 (<1%) of the estimated 5.5 million recreational anglers in Canada. Currently, the majority of recreational anglers continue to use lead sinkers and jigs.

Spring Season, 1 March to 31 May 2005

Ron D. Weir

A gradual warming during March and April seemed to pace the migrant arrivals, thereby avoiding any obvious widespread mortality. Migration ran late by up to 10 days during April and May, but again by month's end, the timing was about on track with large numbers of arrivals during the last few days of May and first few days of June.

Rarities during the period included American White Pelican, Great White-fronted Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Common Eider, Gyrfalcon, Sandhill Crane, Red-necked Phalarope, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Tufted Titmouse, Connecticut Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat and Summer Tanager.

Species Account:

American White Pelican—May 30 (1) Amherst Island, J Ripley; June 1 (2) Wolfe Island, GB.

Greater White-fronted Goose—April 5 (2) Amherst Island, FJ.

Snow Goose—peak April 3 (80) near Frontenac PP, D Bree.

Cackling Goose—April 5 (1) Amherst Island, FJ; April 9 (3) PEPt, *fide* RTS. These records were received without a detailed description. The species, only recently having been separated from the Canada Goose, has not yet been admitted to the KFN List.

Brant—strong flight May 10 to 28 with about 3000 birds. The peak occurred May 15 (1000) Landon Bay, BAW, RDW.

Eurasian Wigeon—May 22-30 (1 male), 31 to June 2 (2 males) Amherstview Sewage Lagoons, KFN.

Common Eider—May 21 (1) Amherst Island, KFN.

Ruddy Duck—May 21 (1 male) Amherstview Sewage Lagoons, KFN.

Bald Eagle—March (13 records), April (3 records), May (1 adult) Kingston, KFN.

Red-shouldered Hawk—April 16 (25) & April 17 (35) Kingston, JHE, RDW. Two of the survey routes.

Golden Eagle—March 21 (1 ad) Amherst Island, FJ, 23 (1 im) Waupoos JHE, PJG, VPM.

Gyrfalcon—migrant March 16-19 (1 white) Wolfe Island, NLB *et al.*

Sandhill Crane—late March to May 28 (1 pair) Odessa Lake area, G Hince, PJG; another pair May 28 at Morven, T Alexander, photo.

Ruddy Turnstone—peak May 31 (40) Amherst Island, GB.

Short-billed Dowitcher—peak May 24 (41) Amherst Island, KFN

Long-billed Dowitcher—peak May 24 (29) Amherst Island, RDW, close study for this unusually large number.

Red-necked Phalarope—May 24 (1) Amherstview Lagoon, RDW.

Little Gull—April 10 (1), May 10 (1) Amherstview Lagoon, AB, EB RBS; April 14 (1), 24 (1) PEPt, KFN.

Bonaparte's Gull—peak May 4 (5000) PEPt, *fide* RTS.

Iceland Gull—April 10 to May 19 (4 birds) Kingston, KFN.

Lesser Black-backed Gull—May 22 (1 ad, 1 im) KFN to May 30 Amherst Island, BR, JR.

Caspian Tern—early arrival April 7 (1) Cataraqui R., VPM.

Black Tern—peak May 7 (210) Amherstview Lagoons, VPM.

Snowy Owl—March 10 to 24 (7 in all), Wolfe and Amherst Islands, KFN; April 5 (1) Amherst Island, FJ, last one.

Great Gray Owl—lingering visitors were 15 birds until late March, KFN; last bird April 30 (1) Canoe Lake Road, RDW.

Boreal Owl—March (12 sightings) KFN, April 1 (2), 5 (1) Amherst Island, BR, FJ.

Red-headed Woodpecker—May 15 to 28 (5 in all) Kingston area, KFN.

Red-bellied Woodpecker—March (7 reported), April (1), May (5) Kingston, KFN.

Black-backed Woodpecker—March 18 (1 male) Frontenac PP, D Hunter, M. Sly; May 28 (1) Opinicon, F Phelan.

Common Raven—May 18 (nest with young) Cataraqui Golf course, JHE.

Tufted Titmouse—March 2 (1) Kingston, R Sachs; May 7(1) PEPt, KFN.

Carolina Wren—March 2 to May 31 (males at three different sites Kingston, KFN.

Gray-cheeked Thrush—heavy night flight over my home, 10 per minute from 0200h-0400h (1200 in all), Kingston, RDW.

Swainson's Thrush—heavy night flight over my home, 120 per minute from 0200h to 0400h (14400 in all), Kingston, RDW.

Blue-winged Warbler—May 8 onwards (10+ records), KFN.

Connecticut Warbler—May 29 (1) PEPt, RKE.

Hooded Warbler—May 10 to 22 (4 in all) PEPt, *fide* RTS.

Yellow-breasted Chat—May 22 (1) PEPt, RDW.

Summer Tanager—May 28 (1) Amherst Island, VPM *et al.*

Orchard Oriole—May 11 to 31 (19+) records, Kingston, KFN.

Common Redpoll—last flocks March 11 (100+) Camden East, PJG; 28 (100) PEPt, RDW.

Contributors:

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J. Ripley
R.B. Stewart
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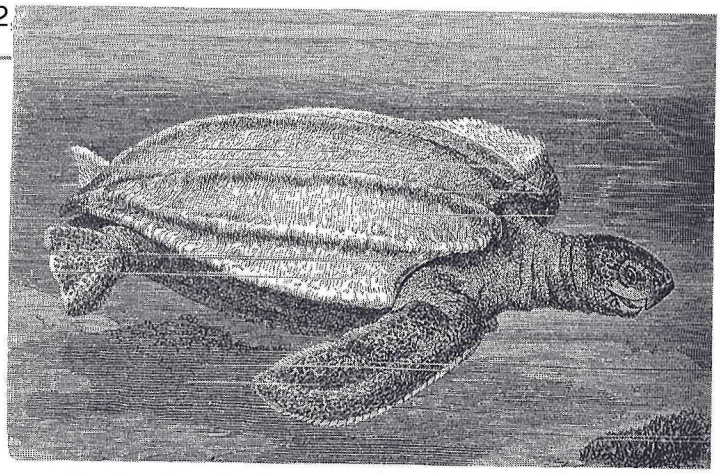
Leatherback Sea Turtles: The Largest Living Reptiles?

Kathleen Martin, Nova Scotia Leatherback Turtle Working Group

The first time I saw a live Leatherback Sea Turtle was shortly after midnight on a beach in Trinidad. The sky was clear and filled with constellations Canadians never see at home. Beyond the sand was easily 50 metres of dense, roiling white surf. We walked intently scanning the edge of the beach. Suddenly, as the waves took a breath and receded, there was a hulking dark mass slowly pulling its way up the sand. I had the feeling, as I watched the leatherback inch along the beach toward the place where her instinct said she should nest, that I was witness to something primeval.

In a sense, I was. The Leatherback Turtle (scientific name *Dermochelys coriacea*) is a species that has remained virtually unchanged since it first began swimming in the world's oceans more than 90 million— some scientists argue more than 150 million—years ago. Today



this turtle, which is so different from the six other marine turtle species that it is in a taxonomic family all its own, is critically endangered worldwide.

The Leatherback Turtle is the only sea turtle without a hard shell. Instead, its body is covered with the thin, leathery skin that gives the turtle its name. Underneath the skin is a thick layer of oil-saturated fat and connective tissue and a mosaic of tiny, closely-fit bony plates. Although they sometimes appear brown when swimming, leatherbacks are actually an inky bluish-black colour with white splotches. Each turtle has a pink spot on the top of its head. Scientists aren't quite sure what the function of the pink spot is, though some think it may help the turtle sense light or determine its location in the ocean.

The most striking thing about the Leatherback Turtle is its size. It is arguably the world's largest living reptile (though saltwater crocodile experts also claim the title for that species). Its carapace (top shell) can grow to two metres in length and the leatherbacks that we see in Canadian waters routinely weigh more than 450 kilograms. The heaviest recorded leatherback weight is more than 900 kilograms. Leatherbacks also have large, powerful front flippers that are usually at least half as long as their carapace.

Although Leatherback Turtles hatch from eggs laid on beaches in the tropics, they spend their entire lives at sea, the females returning to land only to nest. Leatherbacks travel further than any other reptile, with single turtles migrating across entire ocean basins. Leatherbacks can be found in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans and in the Mediterranean Sea. In 1965, Dr. Sherman Bleakney, a Nova Scotia scientist, suggested that Leatherback Turtles were regular visitors to Canadian waters. The scientific community at the time rejected the suggestion in favour of the commonly-held belief that leatherbacks rarely visited Canadian waters, and those that did were here by mistake.

It wasn't until 1998, when the Nova Scotia Leatherback Turtle Working Group (NSLTWG) began to investigate Bleakney's claim by working in collaboration with volunteer commercial fishers across Atlantic Canada to study the Leatherback Turtle, that the importance of Canadian waters to this remarkable animal began to emerge. In the first summer of fieldwork the NSLTWG collected 246 geo-referenced sightings of Leatherback Turtles, proving Bleakney's hypothesis and putting the leatherback firmly on the Canadian map.

There are many threats facing the Leatherback Turtle, the majority of them occurring on or in the waters adjacent their nesting beaches. Although hatchling leatherbacks make bite-size snacks for larger ocean predators, once the turtles reach maturity, they have few natural predators. The greatest predator for this turtle is humans. Because leatherbacks move very slowly on land—and are basically gentle creatures—they are not able to defend themselves from humans on nesting beaches. Both the female turtles and their eggs are vulnerable to poachers (the eggs in particular fetch a good price on the black market). Conservation groups based in nesting beach regions have implemented programs where volunteers walk the beaches at night in an effort to protect the turtles and eggs.

At sea, the turtles can become tangled in different types of fishing gear when they are accidentally caught in lines. If the turtles are not safely disentangled in time, they can receive serious injuries or can even drown as a result. Turtles have also been known to ingest harmful marine pollution, particularly plastic bags or sheets, which then block their digestive tract and cause them to starve.

Off Canada's east coast, the NSLTWG and its volunteer fishers work to help conserve the Leatherback Turtle on its annual visit to our region. More than 500 fishers volunteer with the group, calling in sightings of the turtles, carefully

disentangling them when they are accidentally caught in their fishing gear, and helping with our satellite tagging and flipper tagging programs. Teaming up with fishers has helped us contribute important and new information about the habits of the Leatherback Turtle to the global effort to conserve the animal. Not only has the NSLTWG established that leatherbacks visit Canadian waters regularly and in relatively large numbers to feed on their principal prey, jellyfish, but we have also begun to sketch out both where their travels take them through our tagging programs.

Satellite tags allow us to follow where leatherbacks go at sea—something that has largely remained a mystery to sea turtle scientists to date. It is a crucial mystery to solve, however, because it is practically impossible to conserve an animal if you don't know when and where it is at risk. The turtles tagged by the NSLTWG (which was the first group to ever tag a leatherback at sea) wear a satellite tag attached to a special backpack. When the turtle is at the surface of the water, the tag sends signals to a satellite. That data tells us the location of the transmitter, as well as other information like water temperature.

The NSLTWG also marks leatherbacks using more conventional methods—flipper tags, which are metal tags applied to the leatherback's rear flippers, and microchips called Passive Integrated Transponders ("PITs"), that are about the size of a grain of rice and are injected into the turtle's shoulder muscle (this is the same technology veterinarians use to permanently identify your family dog or cat). Conservation groups on nesting beaches also apply these tags. In this way, we are able to identify where Canadian turtles are from (if we find turtles here that have been tagged elsewhere) and nesting groups are able to tell us where Canadian turtles go (if they find our turtles). To date we have learned that Canadian turtles nest in Trinidad, Suriname, French Guiana, Costa Rica and Panama. This information helps us direct our international effort to conserve "Canadian" turtles.

In our work in Canada, we have the chance to see what our colleagues on nesting beaches never do: how magnificent—how oddly elegant—the Leatherback Turtle is as it plies the waters off our coast in search of jellyfish. I am always struck by a combination of excitement, marvel and trepidation when I see a free-swimming turtle. I never cease to be thrilled by the presence of a leatherback that I know has swum thousands of kilometres to Canada—and I never cease to worry for their safety on their continued journey.

Sometimes we hear so much about "endangered" species, that we become inured to the meaning of the term. We think immediately of comforting images of polar bears and pandas and turtles—or of the fuzzy stuffed toys that are their counterparts in kids' collections—and don't think of those images as potentially historical. We forget the animals' imminent danger. We forget that after "critically endangered" is "gone." 150 million years of evolution—gone. Just like that. The urgency of the conservation work that needs to be done for the Leatherback Turtle—and for other endangered species in Canada—is real. The hope that lies behind the word "endangered" is the work that *is* being done. The hope is the awe-inspiring trek of the Leatherback Turtle and the unmistakable beauty of a world that is bigger than human beings—a world where an animal's claim to existence is as compelling as our own.

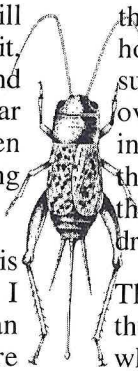
Kathleen Martin is the communications director of the Nova Scotia Leatherback Turtle Working Group. For more information about Leatherback Turtles or the Nova Scotia Leatherback Turtle Working Group, visit www.seaturtle.ca.

Swimming with Milkweed Seeds and Leaves

Terry Fuchs

I took my final swim of the season at the beginning of October. I resist the surrender of summer and try to swim at the cottage until close to the end of September. However, the weeks after Labour Day were unseasonably warm this year. Even after the weather turned cool in the last days of the month, the sun beaming all morning and afternoon into the shallow lake heated the water until it felt almost comfortable instead of its usual tingling, gasp-of-breath cold.

In its first days and weeks fall is trans-itional—touched, amid the autumn tang, with vestigial remnants of the summer just finishing. Water still holds warmth while the land and air lose it, although in the shelter of trees and rocks and around the corners of buildings the heat is familiar and summery-feeling. Paunchy, middle-aged men like this one are unwilling to give up wearing shorts and sandals for socks and long pants.



For me one of the early signs of fall's approach is crickets chirping in the middle of the afternoon. I heard my first one even before I really began taking in how dramatically the days were shortening as the sun set well to the south behind the islands instead of across the lake from my cottage. Perhaps crickets chirp in the afternoon all July and August, but if they do I am never aware of them. I hear them at night from the grass and the woods at the back of the cottage, choral crickets emitting a raspy barrage of sound, a kind of shrill sotto voce beneath the edgy, rattling calls of the loons in their cut-glass clarity, an owl's occasional moan, bullfrogs' hinged, two-part rumble booming up and down the lake, and the sizzle of a June bug's wings beating against the screen of an open window.

Out in the yard one sunny afternoon in late August, after the sultry heat that prompts the cicadas to zing in the trees has passed, I will suddenly notice the evenly pulsed chirp of a single cricket. It will be the only sound in stillness, bringing things around me into a focussed sense of summer ending. The mellow, almost amber sunshine will seem elegiac, the shadows of trees and buildings portentous. For the rest of that month and the first weeks of September an afternoon cricket will trill: wherever I walk in the country, always a lone cricket burbling away, along the cottage road or up the hill on the township road above the lake. The sunlight dapples through the canopies of leaves in the forest or layers across golden fields. Asters and gentians flower in the ditches in shades of pastel and deeper purple.

Blue Jays are here all summer, but once September arrives their cries seem louder, more raucous and jagged, their darting flights between trees and bushes more obvious even though the leaves have not yet fallen, their urgent blue bodies like plunging sparks of sky. Bees comb their legs through the tufted pink-white heads of clover, and houseflies and wasps creep sluggishly on the sunny walls of buildings. In abandoned, overgrown fields thickets of sumac are drenched in the crimson flames of their leaves. On the hill that the cottage road dustily climbs, the leaves on the tall bank of poison ivy plants have wilted to drooping bronze.

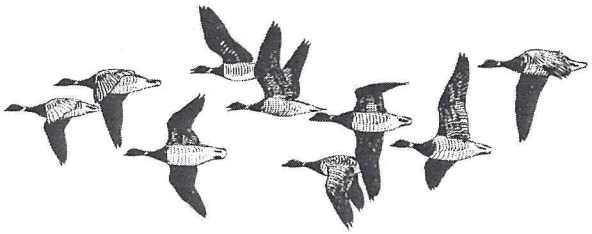
The days of opening all the cottage windows to the breeze are mostly done. Before sunset, wherever there is shade, the air has an edge. At night canoeing is warmer than walking the roads; the land chills almost instantly as the sun lowers behind the trees, while on the water I am bathed in the slow-release warmth of the heat sink beneath the fibreglass hull. When I pull the canoe up beside the dock after my afternoon paddle, rather than turn it over I will just drape my life vest across the seat if I think I might paddle later. By the time I launch the canoe again the nylon is sopping with dew and the moon is just below the tops of the trees on the hill, silhouetting them between dazzling white bars. Moonlight glistens in the beads of dew on the bow deck, except where rivulets of collected water have traced black channels.

On calm autumn nights the moon and the few stars not bleached out by its glare are mirrored in water so still that the reflections are undistorted, as precise in the blue-black depths as the originals floating in the bright, cloudless expanse overhead. The only disturbed moonlight shivers the ruffled water in the wake of my paddle. The glitter rolls under the miniature whirlpools as I swing my paddle around, before appearing to bubble up again with the next stroke.

Even the mist guttering above the water does not blur the reflected images. To make it out I have to peer closely or shine my flashlight into the lake. But in the mornings billowing fog conceals the upper halves of the trees on the opposite shore; it tears and shreds away from the pearly water, drifting down the lake as though by some internally generated momentum, because outside my windows the branches and leaves are completely motionless. The light is fresh and without highlights. The sole colour is in the swath of green truncated forest and the paint of the cottage on the point of island to the north, disembodied from the obscured land behind it. Some mornings the fog absorbs all sight, except a slick of water in the near distance.

As summer crosses the Labour Day divide my desire to swim becomes more importunate. In July or early August I will periodically skip a day, but now I know that my swimming days this year are numbered and I am obsessively determined to take advantage of them all as long as the water is even tolerable. Once lake and air unequivocally discourage swimming I will abandon my resistance to fall and put on shoes and jeans and long-sleeved shirts.

Until then I still savour autumn's humidity-free skies and dabs of change among the leaves. A few trees around the cottages have scarlet flushes bleeding downwards from branch to branch through the green. It will be almost November, a month after I have given up swimming, before the fringe of tamaracks on the marshy bench across the lake turns its radiant bronze. In sunlight the slopes of maples, oaks, and poplars above appear yet as a wall of green. Under overcast, or whenever a cloud slides across the sun, or just after it sets, splotches of orange, red, and yellow leaves come as a surprise.



The dock has been heaved ashore for the winter and I swim either from the rocks or the thumbnail of sandy common beach that is no wider than the one-lane cottage road and used mainly by cottagers whose waterfront is shallow and weedy. During the week now, only three or four of twenty cottages are ever occupied and my swims are very private. I might wave at a neighbour along the shore scrubbing and hosing off plastic lawn furniture before putting it away, or straddling the beam of his docked boat to unclamp his outboard motor.

The water weeds, always straining towards sun, have achieved their maximum height. In places they brush the water's surface or even spear asparagus-tipped above it. The ropier ones bend and float on top. Water lily leaves plastering bays and the shallows around islands flip in the breeze. When I swim back towards the rocks where the dock has been hauled up, a tall underwater vine loops around my foot and then, as I draw away, uncoils, prickly but almost sensuously. Pinfeathers and spiky milkweed seeds skim the water, hardly touching it, and crisp brown or yellow birch or poplar leaves bob past, their edges curled like the sides of diminutive canoes. At night the loons' calls still ring out, but I see in the daytime that one of the birds has exchanged his black, white-spotted back for a cape of grey. His neck band has disappeared, too, replaced by a throat of broad, fluffy white.

Not only the temperature of the water is altering at this season. Ducking underwater, momentarily stung by its briskness, I submerge into an icy-green translucence shafted by gauzy, silvery columns, where only days ago the light resembled warm, liquefied sunshine. Sometimes a waterlogged leaf on its slow descent to the bottom hovers at eye level, a blurry yellow disc in the mote-speckled luminosity; if I peer down at it through the windowpane of surface water, it comes into sharp focus.

At times throughout the day I hear a familiar din overhead. Flocks of geese straggle above the far-shore trees or arrow so high that they seem on the verge of melting in the sun's milky orb. Swimming, I roll onto my back to find them. At their loftiest altitudes individual birds are no larger than splatters of ink drops from a boy's old-fashioned fountain pen snapping across the pale blue shirt of a friend. The patterns of these ink blots, however, shift in constant fluidity. Geese

slip out of formation, lag behind, catch up, shunt ahead to plug gaps. While their wings surge them onwards, they gabble and natter back and forth, their voices clamorous but distant, the audible equivalents of so many falling leaves. In my heart, as the tattered, raucous wedges stitch the sky, I feel summer receding with them.

Bat Wings and Tails

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The wings of bats are their most distinctive —and perhaps most remarkable—feature. They give the order *Chiroptera* its name (literally, "hand-wing"), and functional wings and true flight are characteristics of all bats.

The origin of bat wings is most clearly revealed by their skeleton. Every element of that skeleton is clearly homologous with structures in the forelimbs of other mammals, and there is no question that bat wings evolved as a result of modifications to the forelimbs of their ancestors. The element of the wing skeleton closest to the body is the humerus. It is long and thin compared to the humerus of other mammals, but its articular surfaces and areas for attachment of muscles are fundamentally like those of most mammals.

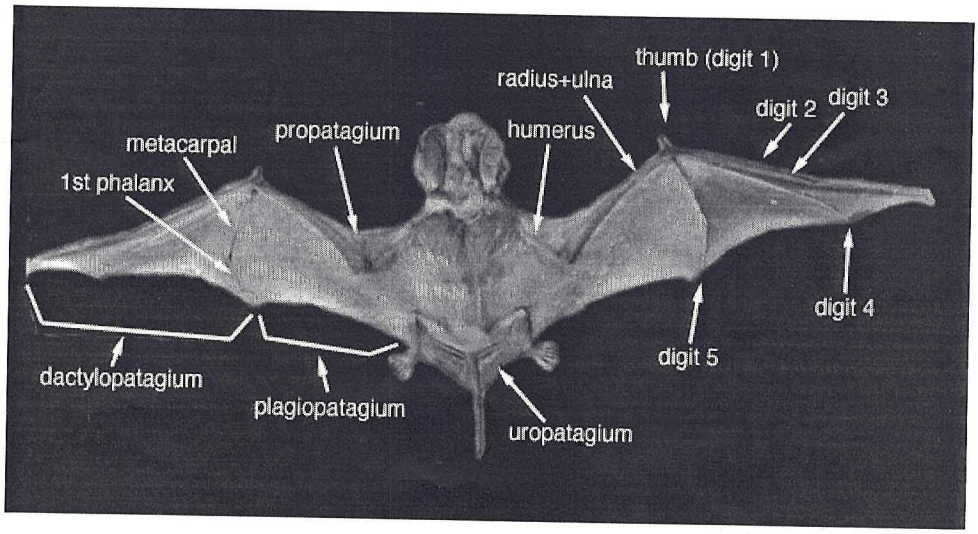
Attached to the humerus are the radius and ulna. The radius is also long and thin, but it is a strong bone that supports the wing. The ulna is much reduced in size; the olecranon process (at the articulation with the humerus) is the most substantial part of the ulna; the rest is considerably reduced and fused with the radius.

The wrist region is very similar to that of other mammals, although less flexible. It is specialized to support the particular motions associated with flying.

All bats have a thumb, which sits along the leading edge of the wing. It usually has a substantial claw, which is used for climbing, food handling, and fighting. Bat thumbs vary considerably in size; generally species whose feeding or roosting habits involve much crawling have longer and stronger thumbs.

The rest of the digits (2-5) support the wing. The skeleton of each includes a basal metacarpal, which is the largest element of the digit, and usually 1-3 phalanges. The second digit bears a claw in pteropodids, but not in any microchiropteran.

The wing membrane is an extension of the skin of the body. It is made up of external epidermis and an internal layer of dermis, which contains blood vessels (easily seen in a live bat when the wing is stretched in front of a light) and muscles. These muscles control the curvature of the wing in



flight. The membrane is both tough and flexible. If torn, it heals remarkably fast, which is perhaps not surprising considering the importance of flight to bats.

Bat wings usually run from the shoulder region to the ankle, or in some cases, to the digits themselves. The wing membrane joins the body along the sides, except in a few cases in which it arises near the middle of the back. Bat biologists use different names to refer to different parts of the membrane. The propatagium runs from the shoulder to the wrist and is the leading edge of the wing. The plagiopatagium includes the area from the body to the 5th digit. The membrane spanning digits 2-5 is called the dactylopatagium.

The hind legs of many bats are partially or completely joined by a membrane, the uropatagium, which also may enclose the bony tail. It is supported by the legs, the tail skeleton, and by the calcar, a special cartilaginous extension of the ankle. The calcar sometimes bears a distinctive projection called a keel. In some species, both the uropatagium and calcar are absent.

Wing and tail membranes appear naked in most bats, but on close examination they can be seen to be covered with minute hairs, and in some species, with distinctive tufts and fringes of hairs. The function of these hairs may be to modify the aerodynamic properties of the surface of the wings, but this is speculative. A few species have a thick layer of fur on their tail membranes and some parts of their wings; these include tree roosting species such as members of the vespertilionid genus *Lasiurus*. This fur probably serves to insulate and camouflage the bat.

Bats also differ in the structure of their tails, and tail structure provides important clues for classification. Some bats, such as vespertilionids, have large uropatagiums with tails that run to the end of the membrane or just beyond. In others, such as molossids and rhinopomatids, the tail extends considerably beyond the edge of the membrane. These species seem to use the tail for "feeling" their way as they back into crevices. In yet other groups, the tail is shorter than the membrane, and in some (e.g., emballonurids), it emerges from the membrane well before the end and rises above it. A few bats appear to lack tails altogether.

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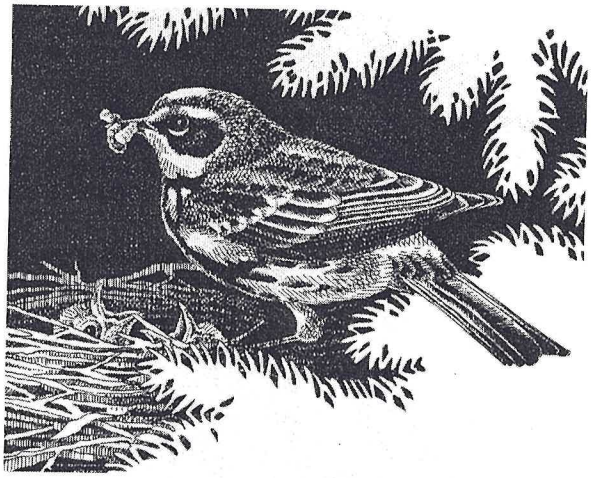
Helen R. Quilliam

By the beginning of June, all but a few shorebirds will now have made their journeys northward to their breeding grounds and, except for a few stragglers, migration is over for this season. However, only six or seven weeks will intervene until the movements of birds will once more be noticed with the early return in mid-July of some shorebirds that have already raised a family and started south. During these six or seven weeks our attention will be turned mostly to our own summer resident birds as they raise their families and get them on the wing.

Many birds already have their young out of nests. The first young bluebirds are learning to fly and with this first family out of the way many bluebirds will nest again. Bluebirds have been increasing during the past few years after their disastrous drop in numbers, so it is important that each pair be able to bring off two broods in a season to bring numbers back to what they used to be.



Young robins are also on the wing and these first-year birds are easy to recognize from the dark spots on their breasts. Once the young robins are out of the nest, it is often the male parent that continues to feed them. The young will follow him about watching as he pulls up worms for them and in time they will have learned to do it for themselves. The female, meanwhile, is beginning another clutch of eggs and things are nicely timed so that the male's duties have finished when the second brood of eggs is nearly ready to hatch and he is then ready to assist the female.

In fact, timing of events in the bird world is more precise than many of us imagine. If one has the opportunity to study the nests of a particular species this becomes very evident. Near Kingston there is plenty of good nesting habitat for Yellow Warblers. Fields that are partially grown over with lilac, honeysuckle and other shrubs, supply many good nesting sites and the occasional tree nearby provides a singing perch for the male.

By the third week in May, the warblers had their nests built and the first eggs were being laid. The first male Yellow Warblers had arrived here on May 4. The ensuing three weeks were occupied with taking up territory, acquiring a mate and nest building. Soon after the arrival of the males, the females began to appear. The males were in full song and after attracting a mate and choosing a nesting site were kept busy driving away other males. Within a short time, a certain amount of order began to prevail in a field near our house and nest-building was underway. Each nucleus of a family had a site for the nest, a singing perch for the male and a territory large enough where the adult birds could forage for insects for the young birds when the time came for them to be needed.

Of the eight nests found near our house, five were in honeysuckle bushes and three were in lilac, the lowest being about three feet from the ground and the highest nine feet. Rarely are these warbler nests found any lower or higher than these limits. My notes show the addition of one egg a day, usually laid early in the morning until the clutch of four or five is complete. Then the female begins incubating in earnest. The male spends his time foraging for food for himself and often brings some to the female on the nest, at the same time keeping a watch out for intruders.

With so many Yellow Warblers nesting in one small area, one would think that in a very short time we would be completely overrun with these little yellow birds but, as with all birds, there are

many enemies and their numbers will be drastically reduced.

Probably the most serious hazard for the Yellow Warbler is the Brown-headed Cowbird that so frequently lays its eggs in their nests. The warbler has only one effective defence mechanism against this intruder and this only operates for a limited time. If the cowbird deposits its egg in the warbler nest before the warbler has laid any of its own eggs, the warbler will build an insulating layer of material over the cowbird egg. The cowbird egg will fail to develop without the heat supplied by the body of the warbler.

Last year I examined a suspiciously deep warbler's nest after the breeding season and found three layers of nesting material with a cowbird nest in each layer. Once, however, the warbler has begun to lay its own eggs and a cowbird egg has been laid, the bird will incubate this egg along with its own and then of course the young birds when they hatch will suffer because the larger cowbird chick will receive the major portion of the food brought to the nest. It will then unfortunately not be an uncommon sight to see a pair of Yellow Warblers being harassed all day long in bringing food to the one cowbird chick that remains of their brood. This parasiticism, combined with all the other hazards to small young birds, keeps the numbers of warblers in balance.