



The Blue Bill

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Send submissions to the Editor by the 15th of the month prior to the month of publication (i.e. by the 15th of February/May/August/November) to the address above, or to the editor via e-mail to: **alerwin@kos.net**. Please include contact phone number.

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

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President's Page

Chris Grooms

A naturalists' club plays an important role in the community: it keeps people in touch with nature. Naturalists' clubs strive to satisfy their members' interest in nature, and to stimulate this interest in others by creating opportunities to learn about the natural world through events such as presentations, field trips, youth programs and public advocacy. A naturalists' club also works to put people in touch with nature by helping to preserve nature for them to experience. This is achieved through conservation projects like habitat stewardship, restoration, or enhancement, protection of land in nature reserves and conducting censuses, surveys and inventories. As a naturalists' club, the Kingston Field Naturalists is active on all these fronts. Here are a few of the recently-completed, ongoing and future ways the KFN is putting people in touch with nature.

The Club has just published its fifth major publication, *Birds of the Kingston Region—second edition*. Thanks are owed to the author, Dr. Ron Weir, for his hard work and sacrifice over many decades collecting and compiling data and researching the natural history that went into the writing of this book. Thanks also to the KFN members that spent so much time observing birds, recording and reporting the data found in this fine document. The book will not only be an enjoyable supplement to bird

watching in this region, but will also inspire interest in nature and be an important resource for bird conservation and research.

The KFN has undertaken a conservation, education and research project on the Chimney Swift, a species recently listed as threatened due to a steep decline in numbers. Working with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Queen's University, the KFN is constructing artificial nesting and roosting structures and restoring access for swifts to the Fleming Hall chimney, a historically important roost site on Queen's campus which is currently screened off to exclude birds. Queen's has agreed to remove the screen. We hope to attract swifts back, monitor the success of our new and restored structures and promote appreciation for the species through publicly-accessible web cameras. There is a long history of swift research at Fleming Hall. Apparently never used for smoke, the chimney protected swifts during cold weather in flocks of up to 4000 roosting birds. Swifts were banded at Fleming from the 1920s to the 1950s. Banding records contributed to an understanding of swift migration and wintering ground location. This history is documented in the journals of two naturalist clubs: *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*, Vol. 66, No. 6 (1952), and *The Blue Bill*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1954).

Public education and publicity for our club have been greatly advanced thanks to the efforts of Murray Seymour who recently designed a new KFN display. We now have both a modern traveling display to take to events and a display in a showcase in the Queen's Biosciences Atrium.

The executive is busy planning events such as the Annual BioBlitz and May Bird Walks. In addition, it is looking for ways to celebrate the Club's 60th anniversary in 2009. And plans are afoot to organize an art show to celebrate nature. Watch your Newsletter for details of these projects and events.

Kingston Teen Naturalists Field Trip September–November 2008

Phoebe Tietzen-Braun, Alison Zilstra, Heather Zilstra

Teen Canoe Trip

Phoebe Tietzen-Braun

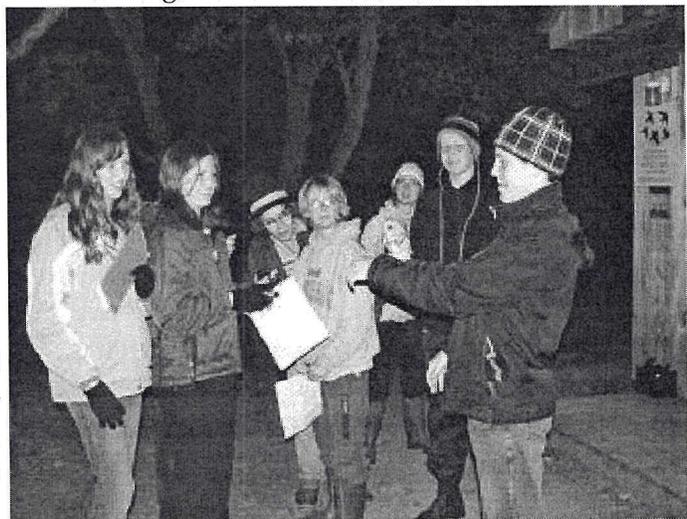
On Saturday September 13th 2008, Kingston Teen Naturalists left from Camp Oconto by canoe to Roziland Island in Eagle Lake. We were there to monitor for the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). It was a warm but cloudy day, and luckily the rain held off for us. On the island we talked about mushrooms, plants, trees, and loads of other stuff! We also learned about the problem of "deer browse" on yew trees. On the way back, we stopped and had a very fun and refreshing swim, then headed back to the cars. All in all a very rewarding and fun day!

Teen Owl-Banding Trip

Alison Zilstra

On October 10th 2008, the Kingston Teen Naturalists participated in an owl-banding trip at Prince Edward Point. Twelve teens attended and we had three drivers, including Anne. The night was very clear and bright, due to the near-full moon. It was approximately 10°C

with a slight west wind. We arrived at the point at 6:40 p. m., too early for owl banding, so we went on a short hike to the lighthouse nearby. On the hike we discussed how crickets make noises, what poikilothermic means, and about the invasive species zebra mussels. After the stars came out, we found the Big Dipper and learned how to find the North Star. Out by the lighthouse we found a cormorant skeleton and the head of a carp. On the way back to the owl-banding station, we heard coyotes calling.



*Teen Naturalists with Saw-whet Owl
Photo by John Poland*

When we arrived at the banding station, Audrey had a one-year-old owl (which is unusual as this was not a good breeding season) that she used to show us the main features of an owl. We went out at 8, 9 and 10 o'clock to check the nets that are used to catch the owls. We caught 8 Northern Saw-Whet Owls: 1 on the first round, 4 on the second round and 3 on the final round. When we found an owl in the net, Audrey carefully removed it and we took it back to the station. Once there, we hung up the owl bags and took one owl out for measurements and banding. After the band was on, the owl's age was calculated, the wing measured, the weight taken (which helped to determine its sex), and its fat measured. Most of the owls were second year and female. Their wing lengths were 130 to 145 mm and they weighed from 80 to 100 g. After the measurements were completed, the owl was released. After the last owl was released, we thanked Audrey and were on our way back home.

Teen Bird Identification Workshop *Heather Zilstra*

On Saturday, November 8th 2008, the Teen Naturalists, led by Anne, Diane, Mark and Philina, began the task of identifying the birds Anne has accumulated in her freezer. The members who attended were: Phoenix, Aaron, Adrian, Linden, Heather, Amy, Phoebe, Alison, Matt and Cerridwyn. After carrying all the partly frozen birds up to Diane's classroom, we started the process of thawing, tagging, and taping

the birds. The tagging was done based on a four letter naming system for all birds. We taped the bird's head and feet so that when they are freeze dried, they come out in a more natural position. Only small birds are able to be freeze dried, and any larger ones we talked about as a group. During a quick break before lunch, we headed outside for a few deep breaths of fresh air to connect with nature.



During lunch, Anne produced an odd bone, which most of us thought was the skull of a reptile. It turned out to be the pelvic girdle of a Great Blue Heron or Cormorant, which was very interesting. One of the difficult species of bird to identify were the thrushes, which Mark and Philina helped the teens identify. Some interesting birds that were in Anne's freezer were: a few Northern Flickers (one which had its tongue sticking out, with hooks on the surface that were visible), a Kestrel (a small falcon), a Sharp-shinned Hawk, Golden-Crowned Kinglets, and a very well-preserved Bohemian Waxwing. Our next trip is a hike to Rock Dunder!

KFN Fall Round-up November 1-2 2008

Ron D. Weir

The 43rd KFN Fall Round-up took place from 1500h Saturday Nov. 1 to 1500h Sunday Nov. 2 2008. Participants numbered 25. On Saturday, sun and scattered cloud made the birding pleasant with fairly strong winds and a temperature about 8°C. The clear night saw N-NE winds diminish, but they strengthened again Sunday morning with temperature from -1 to 6°C.

A total of 124 species was realized, above the 38-year 1970-2007 average of 120. The cumulative total increased to 239 with the finding of the Western Grebe and the Blackburnian Warbler. Other noteworthy finds include Pacific Loon-8th record; Eurasian Wigeon-2nd; Hudsonian Godwit-7th; Iceland Gull-6th; Lesser Black-backed Gull-5th; Glaucous Gull-9th; Blue-headed Vireo-9th; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher-3rd; Palm Warbler-3rd; Common Yellowthroat-9th; White-winged Crossbill-8th. Record-high counts of individual species included Canada Goose (20,000), Short-eared Owl (26), White-winged Crossbill (258), Pine Siskin (1430), and American Goldfinch (2230). The Snowy Owl on the KFN property on Amherst Island was the first on the Fall Roundup since 1993. Species unique to parties were:

Party # 1: Bald Eagle, Killdeer.

Party # 2: Blue-winged Teal, Northern Goshawk, Sanderling.

Party # 3: Turkey Vulture, Blue gray Gnatcatcher, Blackburnian Warbler.

Party # 4: Western Grebe, Red-shouldered Hawk, Merlin, Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull, Blue-headed Vireo, Eastern Bluebird.

Party # 5: Wilson's Snipe.

Party # 6: Great-horned Owl with party #1, Dunlin Long-eared Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl with Party #8.

Party # 7: Barred Owl (Howe Island), Red-bellied Woodpecker with Party #1.

Party # 8: Lesser Black-backed Gull, Short-eared Owl, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Meadowlark.

The totals in the following table have had known duplications removed; total individuals for a species will often not equal the sum of the contributions from each party. The results provide a reasonable estimate of the numbers of birds found. The composition of the parties and the sites visited are listed before the summary table. Following the 24-hour count, birders met at the home of Marian and Joel Ellis for a potluck supper. Marian and Joel were again great hosts and a warm thank-you is extended for their continued hospitality. The assembly of the species list after dinner was greeted with enthusiasm.

Party #1: Faith Avis, Marg Benson, Bea and Jay McMahon (Kingston area

<u>Species</u>	<u>Party</u>									TOT
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	
N Shoveler	9	8	x	20	25	8	-	-	-	50
N Pintail	80	16	x	90	41	100	-	2	x	210
Gr-wng Teal	50	20	x	31	2	100	-	-	x	150
Redhead	400	25	x	35	200	-	-	9	-	460
Rng-nck Duck	300	35	x	350	4000	40	-	4	x	4,650
Gr Scaup	12,000	15	x	11,000	5500	500	-	2200	x	26,000
L Scaup	2	9000	x	800	5500	300	-	38	-	10,100
Srf Scoter	-	5	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	17
W-w Scoter	-	800	x	60	-	-	-	-	-	860
Bl Scoter	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	5
Lng-tld Duck	1	10	x	550	-	-	-	2	-	560
Bufflehead	108	450	x	240	210	100	39	75	x	482
C Goldeneye	-	20	x	105	-	100	160	40	-	1,220
Hood Merg	70	180	x	57	30	12	3	2	x	260
Com Merg	20	50	x	35	1030	50	72	6	x	1,150
Red-br Merg	18	500	x	1265	2	100	-	1350	-	3,100
Ruddy Duck	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
Am Coot	43	10	x	75	22	10	-	-	x	130
Bald Eagle	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
N Harrier	4	3	x	1	4	5	-	36	-	45
Shp-shn Hawk-		1	x	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
N Goshawk	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rd-shld Hawk-		-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rd-tld Hawk	9	3	x	10	5	6	-	16	x	50
R-iggd Hawk	4	2	-	5	1	1	1	21	-	35
Am Kestrel	1	1	-	1	3	-	-	3	-	9
Merlin	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
R Grouse	-	1	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	6
W Turkey	7	-	-	-	33	-	1	-	-	41
Bl-bel Plover	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	5
Killdeer	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Gr Yellowlegs	1	2	1	2	-	-	-	2	-	8
Hud Godwit	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sanderling	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
Dunlin	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	-	6
Wil Snipe	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Bonap Gull	8	50	500	105	26	1500	-	30	x	2,100
Rng-bl Gull	102	700	x	75	110	2000	44	72	x	2,800
Hrrng Gull	8	100	-	46	10	20	18	42	-	210
Ice Gull	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
L Blk-bck Gull-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

Species	Party									TOT
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	
Gr Bl-bck Gull-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	9	-	13
Glaucous Gull-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rock Pigeon	134	60	x	21	50	12	-	-	x	275
Mourn Dove	40	40	x	12	25	50	57	30	x	250
E Scr-Owl	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Grt Hrn Owl	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Snowy Owl	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
Barred Owl	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	1	-	3
Lng-eard Owl	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1
Shr-eard Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	-	26
Sw-wht Owl	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	5	-	8
Bel Kingfisher	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
R-bel Wdpckr	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
Dwn Wdpckr	5	6	-	1	1	3	2	2	1	21
Hry Wdpckr	2	10	x	2	1	1	1	-	-	18
N Flicker	1	3	1	1	-	-	2	1	-	9
Pil Wdpckr	-	3	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	8
N Shrike	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	3
Bl-hd Vireo	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Blue Jay	45	25	x	37	12	100	43	23	x	280
Am Crow	34	25	x	24	15	20	24	4	x	145
Cm Raven	6	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	9
Hrnd Lark	1	10	x	-	50	-	-	-	-	62
Bl-cp Chick	32	50	x	40	10	100	31	28	x	290
Rd-br Nhtch	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	1	-	6
Wh-br Nhtch	3	10	x	3	-	6	4	5	x	33
Br Creeper	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	5
G-crnd Knglt	-	10	x	32	-	3	16	16	-	78
R-crnd Knglt	1	2	x	2	-	-	-	1	-	7
Bl-gr Gnttchr	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
E Bluebird	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Her Thrush	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	3
Am Robin	32	39	x	2580	15	30	15	59	x	2,770
Eur Starling	250	380	x	110	265	500	420	450	x	2,200
Am Pipit	4	-	-	1	1	-	-	4	-	10
B Waxwing	-	-	3	1	-	15	-	-	-	19
Cr Waxwing	30	25	x	115	25	1	5	50	-	151
Y-rmpWrblr	-	20	x	17	-	1	1	2	-	42
Blckbrn Wrblr	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Palm Wrblr	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
C Yellowthroat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

<u>Species</u>	<u>Party</u>									TOT
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	
Am Tr Sprrw -		5	x	6	5	1	2	29	x	50
Ch Sparrow -		1	x	2	-	-	-	-	-	4
Sav Sparrow -		3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	4
Fox Sparrow -		1	x	3	3	6	1	5	-	20
Song Sparrow 2		30	x	5	5	1	2	5	-	51
Wh-thr Sprrw 2		20	x	3	10	1	-	5	-	42
Drk-eyd Junco16		250	x	40	12	30	29	52	x	430
Snw Bunting -		20	-	32	-	50	-	-	-	102
N Cardinal 4		-	-	1	-	-	1	3	-	9
R-w Blckbrd 110		450	x	72	10	20	24	74	x	760
E Meadwlrk -		-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Rsty Blckbrd -		35	-	35	1	-	6	3	-	80
C Grackle -		-	x	6	-	1	-	1	-	10
Br-hd Cwbrd -		-	-	8	200	-	-	-	-	208
Pn Grosbeak -		-	-	5	-	-	-	1	-	6
Prpl Finch 14		4	x	45	-	1	-	43	-	109
Hse Finch x		1	x	22	-	6	4	8	-	46
W-wCrossbill -		-	x	157	-	24	-	76	-	<u>258</u>
C Redpoll -		-	x	15	-	6	-	6	-	28
Pn Siskin 80		1	x	1250	-	3	16	80	-	<u>1,430</u>
Am Gldfnch 48		30	x	1825	15	20	12	280	x	<u>2,230</u>
Hs Sparrow 24		30	x	10	60	50	6	29	-	210
Species	64	80	76	94	55	64	44	77	30	124
Particip	4	3	1	7	4	2	1	1	1	25

Treading Softly in Nature

Terry Sprague

For the past few Septembers, I have had the pleasure of staffing a Stewardship Council booth at Picton Fair. Not since selling Rawleigh Products at fall fairs more than 20 years ago have I attempted to stand in one spot, without moving, from 9:30 in the morning until 9:00 at night! The experience has reinforced in me the escalating interest that people today have in the outdoors. And it isn't just the pretty pictures on our display

boards or the samples of local mammals at our booth. Visitors to our booth are drawn in by Nature, and have questions and a natural curiosity about those things we have on display, from the aerial shots of Prince Edward Point and birding opportunities there, and the efforts to acquire McMahan's Bluff at Black River as a natural area, to the arrival of fishers in the County and the decline of significant species.

As someone directly involved in offering a variety of outdoor experiences, I have witnessed the growing interest that people today have in wanting to join this growing trend of reconnecting with Nature. On our twice-weekly evening hikes from May through August, and interpretive day paddles on the Rideau Canal, those who join us want to proceed beyond just the satisfaction of the walk or the paddle. They now have a need to identify the things they see, and understand how the natural and human history of the area connect and fit into the natural scheme of things, in order to make their outdoor experience complete.

Kaladar is only a 4-km. hike, but the trip is full every year, simply due to the challenge of the rocky terrain. We have also seen this on day-long hikes at Frontenac Provincial Park. Throw in an hour's paddle by canoe before you even get to the spot where the full-day hike begins, and you are almost guaranteed a capacity event. An interpretive canoe paddle that I offer each year on the Salmon River, from Roblin to Croydon, is always full, despite the challenges of navigating around rocks and fallen trees. A kayak trip on the Rideau a few years ago, from Kingston to Ottawa, was made more exciting because it was a challenge - to cover 200 km, then stand



Terry Sprague leads a group of 47 nature enthusiasts on an evening hike. While such high numbers are encouraging, in our quest for nature, are we doing more harm than good? Photo by Henri Garand

For others, it is the challenge of the event. Sheffield Conservation Area at

in the shadows of Parliament Hill 10 days later and proudly say, "We did it!" Even more impressive is the list of over

350 participants who have completed the "Frontenac Challenge," a gruelling chore of hiking the 160 km. of trails in Frontenac Provincial Park during a two-month period every fall, some doing it every year. Many have completed the Challenge every year for more than a decade.

We seem to be living at a time when awareness of the outdoors has never been greater. On two separate occasions, I have been commissioned to lead hikers from Germany on treks in Algonquin Provincial Park, as well as locally. With this growing interest in enjoying Nature's offerings comes the danger of overrunning the very thing we are trying to enjoy through sheer numbers of avid watchers and hikers. How many of us in provincial parks or conservation areas have seen wildflowers trampled and habitat altered due to uncontrolled heavy traffic of outdoor enthusiasts in an area that has been set aside to preserve these very things? We are seeing this now too with wildlife as eager photographers seek out rare birds to photograph. In the October issue of the OFO News, author Christina Lewis makes a thought provoking statement: "we should ask ourselves if we can put down our cameras and our Blackberrys, our binoculars and our lifelists, and find some perspective and humility. We should consider what our environment, the birds and other creatures, including people, really mean to us."

As naturalists who lead nature tours, we have the skills to responsibly construct and utilize walking paths, and to teach people about the natural and cultural history of an area in a responsible and caring manner, with minimal impact. And as naturalists, we have a responsibility to ensure that our teachings and enjoyment of the natural world are done in a sensitive and caring manner. That we don't pick a bouquet of wildflowers, and we don't kill the snake that crosses our path, and that our footprints in the natural world are at best, softened. If the interest at our fair booth each fall is any indication, we owe it to ourselves and future generations who follow in our wake, to practice good stewardship of what we have left.

In a quote that has been around for decades, the Nature Conservancy offers these sobering words, "We are living at the time of man's overrunning of the wilderness. What we have saved, and what we will save in the next few years will be all the true nature that will remain to be passed on to future generations. There will never be another chance."

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

KFN Field Trips August to November 2008

Owen Weir, Rose-Marie Burke, Paul Mackenzie, Bud Rowe

Presqu'île Provincial Park & Brighton August 31, 2008

Owen Weir

We left The Flying "J" at 7:15 with 8 KFN members, and were later joined by 2 more at Owens' Point in the Park. The bay at the point held a great assortment of ducks and other waterfowl for this early in the season. The highlight at the point was a Whimbrel circling over us on 2-3 occasions plus several species of shorebirds directly in front of us for all to see and study for identification. We were fortunate to have a well-known local guide, Bill Gilmour, with us to verify the difficult birds.

After about 1.5 hours we proceeded to Brighton Cleansing Ponds, and were greeted by the gentleman "Tiny" (but not so tiny- actually real large) and Maureen, who arranged for us to access this jewel just south of Brighton. Everyone in our group was amazed at the good looks at the Virginia Rail, Soras, and Common Moorhens complete with young trailing mom. Wood Ducks, Blue-Winged Teal just to mention a few waterfowl, plus 5 species of Sandpiper, also Mute, and Trumpeter Swans.

We returned to Presqu'île P. P. and proceeded to the Lighthouse area, where highlights were Canada and Blackpoll warblers. Next we explored Paxton Drive to Bill Gilmour's backyard

and encountered several Cape May and Wilson's, contributing to 18 species of warblers while eating lunch and enjoying the butterflies, and hummingbirds galore, in a pristine setting. Many "thanks" from all of us "Tiny"- Moureen- and of course Bill Gilmour for a glorious day. We had a grand total of 98 species.

Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area Sept. 28, 2008

Rose-Marie Burke

It seems to be a tradition that when fungi field trips are scheduled, the weather is dreary, cloudy and wet. This did not deter 6 people from showing up for a field trip that I led to the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area on Sunday, September 28, 2008. Five of us carpoled from the Kingslake Plaza, and we were joined on the trail by a sixth participant. Since this was also a photo expedition, some of us were loaded down with camera bags and tripods, and we joked about how we looked more like we were prepared for an overnight camping trip than just a walk in the woods to look for fungi.

From the interpretive centre we headed down Trail #1 and across the floating bridge over the pond, on which mallard ducks and a great blue heron were feeding. As soon as we crossed the bridge, we started looking for mushrooms on either side of the path. I was hoping to do a comparison of

species to the field trip led 2 years before by Barry Hanna, and it was quickly apparent that the fungi were not nearly as numerous as on the earlier trek. Even so, we immediately found our first mushroom, and had a challenge of trying to identify it. I am by no means an expert on fungi, and only had with me a volume of "Mushrooms of Ontario and Eastern Canada" by George Barron as a field guide. My lament is that often specimens that you find in the field don't quite look like the pristine examples in a field guide, and this is especially true for fungi. Identification of species that look like many similar species can make it frustrating for an amateur to try to pin down the one you are examining. Trying to decide which fungus we were looking at was like trying to sort out juvenile female sparrows or fall warblers. Four of us had brought camera gear; we decided that those specimens we couldn't identify on the spot we would photograph and try to identify later. I carried a small hand mirror as Barry had recommended, so that we could examine the fungi from both above and below without damaging or disturbing them.

We would occasionally wander off the trail into the woods a short distance when we spotted fungi in open areas. Our first detour took us into pine trees where a resident flock of chickadees found us, and soon we had the small hungry birds in front of our noses, chattering and scolding, demanding handouts. Unfortunately I hadn't thought to bring with me the little ziploc bag of sunflower seeds that I usually

carry into the park, and they left disappointed. Throughout the morning we spotted other things of interest, a viceroy butterfly and some meadowhawk dragonflies, a wood frog and leopard frogs, winterberry bushes loaded with brilliant red berries, and more than one chipmunk. We heard the sounds of various creatures: peepers and treefrogs were calling, and our passage was protested by a red squirrel. Birds were not numerous but we did identify the call of a flicker, kinglets, bluejays, robins, a catbird, and Kurt Hennige and I thought that we heard the faint drumming of a grouse.

Trying to keep our focus on fungi amid other natural distractions, we managed to find a variety of species, ranging from tiny brown pine cone mushrooms that do what their name describes - grow on pine cones, to larger mushrooms, puffballs, bracket fungi, coral fungi, boletes, and bright orange jelly fungi. We searched a section of woods where *Lactarius indigo*, a lovely powder-blue mushroom, had been found earlier, but with no success. What I found glaringly absent was *Amanita muscaria*, fly agaric, which had been widespread throughout the area on the earlier trip. Not a single specimen was found. A highlight of our search however was *Pycnoporus cinnabarinus*, the cinnabar polypore, a lovely red-orange bracket fungus that stands out in its environment.

We would have missed the cinnabar polypore had it not been for an obstacle in our path caused by beavers. We had nearly completed the circle of Trail #2 when we discovered that about 5 meters

of the path ahead was covered with 20 to 30 cm deep water. Only two of us had thought to wear rubber boots. Linda had been telling us about going on a field trip to Amherst Island and getting her feet soaked, so she made sure that she was well-prepared for this excursion. The rest of us were wearing either hiking boots or running shoes, and thought that we could get around the little pond to our right and back to the main trail. As we started into the woods we spotted the polypore. We were thwarted again when we found that at the back of the pond there was a wide stream even deeper than the water on the trail. Our detour, however, gave us an interesting find. We discovered a patch of bunchberry, a small, low shrub that normally blooms in spring, and by this time of year should be sporting a bunch of red berries. Three of the stems on this September day were in full bloom. When we returned to the trail it was starting to rain, and none of us was keen to hike the mile back around the loop. Sometimes the simplest solutions work the best; we took our shoes and socks off, rolled up our pantlegs and waded barefoot across the stream.

We went back to the interpretive center, stopping only to open up and scatter a bag of birdseed that had been left on a bench. Linda and Janis offered some seed to the chickadees, and soon had a couple of hungry birds landing on their fingers. We had hoped to have time to head over to another trail where I had seen some giant puffballs in years past, to see what kinds of fungi would be growing in the hardwood bush on the south side of the park, but the rain was

not letting up, and so ended our field trip as we all headed home.

Species List:

Turkey Tail *Trametes versicolor*
 White Pine Bolete *Suillus americanus*
 Pine Cone Mushroom *Baeospora myosura*
 Orange Jelly *Dacrymyces plamatus*
 Gray Bolete *Boletus griseus*
 (Bracket Fungi) *Trametes pubescens*
 (No common name) *Mycena subcaerulea*
 Cinnabar Polypore *Pycnoporus cinnabarinus*
 Pear-shaped Puffball *Lycoperdon pyriforme*

Several other mushrooms were found; however, since species identification could not be confidently confirmed, they were left off the list.

Amherst Island October 19, 2008

Paul Mackenzie

On this field trip the Kingston Field Naturalists teamed up with the Macnamara Field Naturalists to visit Amherst Island. We met for the 08:30 ferry. The day was exceptionally fine for October, with blue sunny skies and a light south wind. The popularity of the owl woods, the good weather and the two groups resulted in high participation with about 40 people in 14 vehicles after car pooling. This was thought to be too many cars to park easily near the owl woods, so we divided the group into two. Bud Rowe led one group into the owl woods while

Paul Mackenzie took the rest on the KFN property to the bar.

About 11.30 we returned to the vehicles for lunch and the groups switched sites. We were able to exchange information on what was where, and most people got to see most of the birds of interest. Of course nobody saw all species recorded. As the morning frost gave way, participants were seen chatting, shedding layers of clothes, and turning red in the sun.

In the owl woods, the highlight was a Saw-whet Owl perched rather high but in good view, and it tolerated having lots of photos taken. There were a number of passerines including Purple Finches, Hermit Thrushes, both Kinglets, Fox and White-throated Sparrows, and the Chickadees which did not mob us for handouts as the feeders had feed. Also seen were a Red-eyed Vireo, an Eastern Towhee, and Yellow-rumped Warblers.

On the KFN property there were Northern Harriers and Rough-legged Hawks, and a Cooper's Hawk chased a flock of starlings. As the first group walked along, someone remarked that Snow Buntings would be a sure sign of winter, and not long after a flock of Snow Buntings flew by. One was seen by the other group sitting on the road. Along the way we found a Marsh Wren, flushed an American Bittern, watched some American Pipits, and noted Red-breasted Mergansers offshore. The second group saw 2 Black-crowned Night Herons. At the bar a highlight was a comparison of Golden and Black-

bellied Plover in the scopes at the same time. There were Dunlin, a Greater Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpipers, and 3 Sanderlings flew by. Near a large flock of Greater Scaup, 2 Bufflehead, a Common Goldeneye, and Redhead, Black Duck, American Widgeon and Gadwall were found. One Bonaparte's Gull and two Great Black-backed Gulls were with the more common gulls.

There were enough other sightings to keep folks interested including Killdeer at the ferry dock, and Common Loons on the crossing. Some participants went on to find the Eurasian Widgeon at Elevator Bay. The total species count was about 72.

Amherst Island November 16, 2008

Bud Rowe

The weather forecast was not promising and probably resulted in a small turnout for an Owl Woods visit. Eight of us met at the Millhaven ferry dock for the 08:30 crossing and car-pooled so that only two cars were needed. It was about 0°C with light to medium winds and little precipitation, contrary to the forecast. There was no problem staying out of the cars during the crossing to watch for birds, and nine Common Loons were sighted.

We turned east from the village on the North Shore Road and drove slowly to watch for raptors. Rough-legged Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers an American Kestrel and a Merlin were sighted on the way to the KFN reserve on the south-east end of the island. We counted 24 Tundra

Swans on or near the shoal out from the gravel bar on the reserve. We searched for Snowy Owls as we drove by the reserve and were rewarded with one whose head was barely visible near the Purple Martin houses. Eager birders wanted a better look, so we parked at the entrance to the reserve and walked the short distance to the Martin houses where we all got a great view of what appeared to be an adult female or a juvenile bird.

There were few duck species sighted as we traveled along the South Shore Road toward the southern access road to the Owl Woods. These included Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Gadwall, Red-breasted Merganser and Mallard.

We expected the trails into the Owl Woods to be wet and muddy due to several days of rain and most of us came prepared with adequate footwear, except one man who wore only low shoes. He was happy to go on and we spent the next hour or so feeding the chickadees and searching for owls and other birds. The trails were muddy but not too wet until we reached the Jack Pine Plantation where there was a lot of standing water. Undaunted, we proceeded to do a search of the woods and were rewarded with four Northern Saw-whets and six Long-eared Owls. There were no Boreal Owls to be found yet, but everyone was quite pleased with what we had found. Other birds seen in the woods included White-breasted Nuthatches, American Goldfinches, House Finches, Dark-eyed Juncos, Downy and Hairy

Woodpeckers, American Robins and a Northern Flicker.



Boreal Owls were not seen on the trip to the Owl Woods on November 16, but they have since arrived.

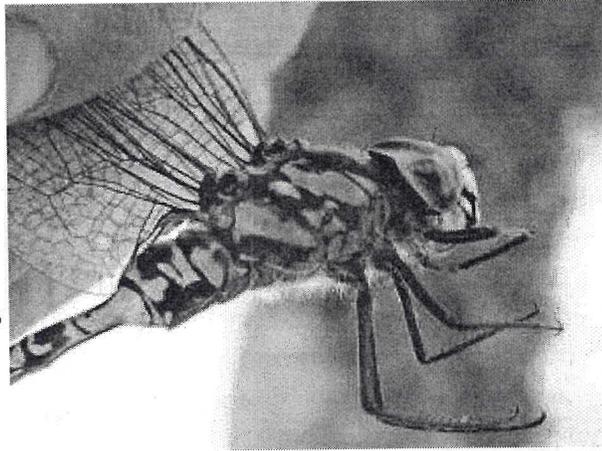
Next we travelled to the West end of the island on the South Shore Road and found another Snowy Owl near the double bend in the road on the way to the "fishing village". We covered some of the interior roads, sighting more Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks and a couple of Kestrels. The most surprising sighting as we traveled along was a lone White-winged Crossbill drinking from a puddle on the road ahead of the car – we almost didn't see it in time!

A very successful trip ended when we all took the 2:00 p.m. ferry home, spotting a few more loons on the way

Odonata Summary 2008

Kurt Hennige

Eighty-two of the 92 species on the Kingston checklist were reported this year. Five new species added to the list are Rusty Snaketail (2 records), Stygian Shadowdragon (1 record), Saffron-winged Meadowhawk (1 record), Azure Bluet (1 record), and Citrine Forktail (3 records). In just three years of searching for Odonates by a few KFN members, 23 new species have been added to the list. Other good sightings this year include three Mottled Darners (*Aeshna clepsydra*), two Spot-winged Gliders (*Pantala hymenea*).



Mottled Darner

by Chris Robinson

The recent arrival of the long-awaited Field Guide of Dragonflies & Damselflies of Algonquin Provincial Park will make identification of

Odonata easier in our area as well, since it includes almost all of the species on the KFN checklist except Citrine Forktail & Eastern Amberwing.

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Anax junius</i>	Common Green Darner
<i>Epithea spinigera</i>	Spiny Baskettail
<i>Cordulia shurtleffi</i>	American Emerald
<i>Tetragoneuria canis</i>	Beaverpond Baskettail
<i>Leucorrhinia hudsonica</i>	Hudsonian Whiteface
<i>Epithea spinigera</i>	Spiny Baskettail
<i>Ischnura verticalis</i>	Eastern Forktail
<i>Dorocordulia libera</i>	Racket-tailed Emerald
<i>Ladona julia</i>	Chalk-fronted Corporal
<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	Northern Bluet
<i>Leucorrhinia intacta</i>	Dot-tailed Whiteface
<i>Basiaeschna janata</i>	Springtime Darner
<i>Enallagma boreale</i>	Boreal Bluet
<i>Gomphus spicatus</i>	Dusky Clubtail
<i>Leucorrhinia proxima</i>	Belted Whiteface
<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	Four-spotted Skimmer

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Didymops transversa</i>	Stream Cruiser
<i>Plathemis lydia</i>	Common Whitetail
<i>Coenagrion resolutum</i>	Taiga Bluet
<i>Chromagrion conditum</i>	Aurora Damsel
<i>Leucorrhinia frigida</i>	Frosted Whiteface
<i>Enallagma hageni</i>	Hagen's Bluet
<i>Tetragoneuria cynosura</i>	Common Baskettail
<i>Ischnura posita</i>	Fragile Forktail
<i>Nehalennia irene</i>	Sedge Sprite
<i>Calopteryx maculata</i>	Ebony Jewelwing
<i>Arigomphus furcifer</i>	Lilypad Clubtail
<i>Cordulegaster maculata</i>	Twin-spotted Spiketail
<i>Epithea princeps</i>	Prince Baskettail
<i>Libellula incesta</i>	Slaty Skimmer
<i>Lestes eurinus</i>	Amber-winged Spreadwing
<i>Arigomphus cornutus</i>	Horned Clubtail
<i>Nannothemis bella</i>	Elfin Skimmer
<i>Gomphus exilis</i>	Lancet Clubtail
<i>Pachydiplax longipennis</i>	Blue Dasher
<i>Lestes vigilax</i>	Swamp Spreadwing.
<i>Libellula luctuosa</i>	Pied Skimmer
<i>Argia moesta</i>	Powdered Dancer
<i>Cordulegaster obliqua</i>	Arrowhead Spiketail
<i>Enallagma ebrium</i>	Marsh Bluet
<i>Gomphus exilis</i>	Lancet Clubtail
<i>Erythemis simplicicollis</i>	Common Pondhawk
<i>Ophiogomphus rupinsulensis</i>	Rusty Snaketail
<i>Enallagma exsulans</i>	Stream Bluet
<i>Calopteryx aequabilis</i>	River Jewelwing
<i>Stylogomphus albistylus</i>	Eastern Least Clubtail
<i>Celithemis elisa</i>	Calico Pennant
<i>Neurocordulia yamaskanensis</i>	Stygian Shadowdragon
<i>Enallagma vesperum</i>	Vesper Bluet
<i>Celithemis eponina</i>	Halloween Pennant
<i>Lestes inaequalis</i>	Elegant Spreadwing
<i>Nasiaeschna pentacantha</i>	Cyrano Darner
<i>Enallagma antennatum</i>	Rainbow Bluet
<i>Enallagma signatum</i>	Orange Bluet

Scientific Name	Common Name
Hagenius brevistylus	Dragonhunter
Lestes dryas	Emerald Spreadwing
Lestes disjunctus	Northern Spreadwing
Sympetrum obtrusum	White-face Meadowhawk
Enallagma civile	Familiar Bluet
Macromia illinoensis	Swift River Cruiser
Aeshna canadensis	Canada Darner
Lestes unguiculatus	Lyre-tipped Spreadwing
Sympetrum internum	Cherry-faced Meadowhawk
Argia fumipennis violacea	Violet Dancer
Enallagma geminatum	Skimming Bluet
Nehalennia gracillis	Sphagnum Sprite
Lestes congener	Spotted Spreadwing
Perithemis tenera	Eastern Amberwing
Sympetrum semicinctum	Band-winged Meadowhawk
Lestes forcipatus	Sweetflag Spreadwing
Tramea lacerata	Black Saddlebags
Aeshna umbrosa	Shadow Darner
Enallagma carunculatum	Tule Bluet
Sympetrum vicinum	Autumn Meadowhawk
Sympetrum costiferum	Saffron-winged Meadowhawk
Aeshna clepsydra	Mottled Darner
Aeshna constricta	Lance-tipped Darner
Pantala flavescens	Wandering Glider
Pantala hymenea	Spot-winged Glider
Ischnura hastata	Citrine Forktail
Boyeria vinosa	Fawn Darner
Enallagma carunculatum	Azure Bluet

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References

Colin D. Jones, Andrea Kingsley, Peter Burke and Matt Holder 2008 *The Dragonflies and Damselflies of Algonquin Provincial Park and the Surrounding Area*. The Friends of Algonquin Park www.algonquinpark.on.ca

Autumn Season 2008 August 1 – November 30, 2008

Ron D. Weir

In general, migration proceeded on schedule. Lake Ontario levels remained high until very late in the season, forcing migrant waders to seek suitable feeding areas elsewhere. The results were mixed with a strong showing by some shorebirds, such as Semipalmated Plover, American Golden Plover, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, and a poor showing by others, such as White-rumped Sandpiper, Dunlin, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher. Perhaps these findings are specific to our area. Waterfowl passage was strong. A limited incursion of boreal finches occurred and numbers of Snowy Owls continue to rise. A remarkable hawk flight at P. E. Pt. on Oct. 29 saw an unprecedented number of 61 Golden Eagles pass.

The list of rarities is respectable, and includes two species new to the Kingston Region, although both were overdue to appear. Rarities include Pacific Loon, Western Grebe (1st ever), Great Cormorant, Ross's Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Fork-tailed Flycatcher (2nd ever), White-eyed Vireo, Cave Swallow (1st ever), Summer Tanager, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Latest Ever Departures

Blue-headed Vireo Nov 17 (1) P. E. Pt.
BR formerly 72 Nov 12

Species Accounts:

Red-throated Loon: Sep. 21 (1), Oct. 17 (1), 29 (3), Nov. 2 (1) P. E. Pt., KFN.

Pacific Loon: Nov. 2 (1) P. E. Pt., KFN.

Common Loon: peak Nov. 2 (104) P. E. Pt., KFN.

Horned Grebe: peaks Nov. 2 (520), 19 (95) P. E. Pt., KFN.

Red-necked Grebe: peaks Nov. 2(12), 19 (9), Oct. 18 (6) P. E. Pt., KFN.

Western Grebe: Nov. 2 (1) P. E. Pt., B. Rowe, JHE, RDW, VPM, KI, PJG (1st ever).

Great Cormorant Oct. 19 (1) Long Reach, RTS.

Great Egret: Aug. 3 to Sep. 20 (21 in all), Kingston area, KFN, peak Aug. 30 (5) Amherst I., EB.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: last ones Oct. 12 (3) Amherst I., MC.

Turkey Vulture peaks Sep. 23 (62), 24 (57), Oct. 2 (120), 16 (150) Kingston area, KFN.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Oct. 3 (1) P. E. Pt, *fide* RTS.

Ross's Goose: Nov. 30 (1) Wolfe I., KFN.

Cackling Goose: Oct. 5 to Nov. 16 (11 in all) Kingston, specifically Oct. 5 (7) Wolfe I., KFN; Oct. 31 (1) Elginburg, EB; Oct. 19 (1) & 29 (1) P. E. Pt., RTS; Nov. 16 (1) Kingston City, EB.

Brant Sep. 21 (200) P. E. Pt., JHE, RDW; Oct. (18) P. E. Pt., RTS; Oct. 15 (45) Long Reach, RTS.

Tundra Swan: Sep. 21 onwards, peak Nov. 2 (104) Wolfe I., KFN.

Eurasian Wigeon: Oct. 18 to Nov. 25 (1 male) Kingston, KFN.

American Wigeon: peak Nov. 2 (2,960) Kingston, KFN.

Ring-necked Duck peaks Oct. 25 (500) Kingston, J. & B. M., Nov. 2 (4,650) Kingston, KFN.

Surf Scoter: Oct. 16 to Nov. 2 (23 in all) Kingston, KFN.

Black Scoter: Nov. 1 to 19 (7 in all) P. E. Pt., KFN.

Red-breasted Merganser: peak Nov. 2 (3,100) Kingston, KFN.

Ruddy Duck Sep. 20 to Nov. 2 (12 in all) Kingston, KFN.

Osprey: last one Oct. 29 (1) South Bay, RTS.

Bald Eagle: Sep. 21 to Nov. 30 (40 in all), KFN.

Northern Goshawk Sep. 17 to Nov. 17 (7 in all) Kingston area, KFN.

Red-tailed Hawk peak Oct. 29 (1,250) P. E. Pt., RTS.

Rough-legged Hawk: peak Nov. 2 (35) Wolfe I., KFN.

Golden Eagle: Oct. 16 (1), 29 (61 !!!) P. E. Pt., KFN; Nov. 23 (1) Frontenac P. P., MC.

Merlin: Aug. 30 to Nov. 24 (24 in all), Kingston area, KFN.

Peregrine Falcon: Aug. 2 to Oct. 24 (9 in all) Kingston, KFN.

American Golden Plover: Sep. 14 to Oct. 19 (22 in all), KFN.

Semipalmated Plover: Aug. 10 to Oct. 19 Kingston, KFN; adult arrivals on Aug. 10; immature arrivals on Sep. 13.

Hudsonian Godwit: Nov. 1 to 4 (1) Kingston, RKE *et al.*

Red Knot: Aug. 27 to Sep. 23 (8 in all) Kingston, KFN.

White-rumped Sandpiper: Sep. 17 to 21 (3 in all) Kingston, KFN, poor flight.

Baird's Sandpiper: Aug. 10 to Oct. 5 (39 in all) Kingston, KFN, strong flight.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Aug. 24 to Oct. 19 (69 in all) Kingston, KFN, strong flight.

Dunlin: Sep. 9 to Nov. 4 (120+ in all) Kingston, KFN.

Purple Sandpiper: Nov. 19 (3) Kingston, DVW *et al.*

- Stilt Sandpiper:** Aug. 22 to Sep. 2 (6 in all) Kingston, KFN.
- Short-billed Dowitcher:** Aug. 22 (1) Kingston, VPM, only one !!!
- Long-billed Dowitcher:** Sep. 12 (1) Amherst I., KFN.
- Little Gull:** Sep. 6 (1 im.) Amherstview Sewage Lagoon, RDW; Nov 4 (1) Amherst I., BMD.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Nov. 2 (1) Amherst I., BMD.
- Snowy Owl:** Oct. 23 onwards, 15+ birds, KFN.
- Short-eared Owl:** peak Nov. 2 (26) Amherst I., BMD.
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Nov. 26-30 Kingston, VPM, JHE.
- Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Nov. 1-30 (7) Kingston, KFN.
- Eastern Phoebe:** Nov. 16 (1) Elginburg, EB, late.
- Fork-tailed Flycatcher:** Oct. 5 (1) P. E. Pt., DO *et al.* (photo), 2nd ever.
- White-eyed Vireo:** Sep. 30 (1), Oct. 15 (1) P. E. Pt., DO *et al.*
- Blue-headed Vireo:** Nov. 17 (1) P. E. Pt., BR, latest ever.
- Cave Swallow:** Nov. 10-17 (1) P. E. Pt., BR *et al.* (photo), 1st ever.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch:** moderate movement Aug. 17 to Nov. 2 (37 in all) migrant sites, KFN.
- Golden-crowned Kinglet:** peaks Oct. 6 (85), 13 (140) P. E. Pt., KFN.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** peaks Oct. 6 (125), 13 (100) P. E. Pt., KFN.
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Nov. 2 (1) P. E. Pt., KFN.
- Gray-cheeked Thrush:** night flights Sep. 15/16 (100 per hour x 5 hours), Oct. 2/3 (100 per hour x 4.5 hours) Kingston, RDW.
- Swainson's Thrush:** night flights Sep. 6/7 (200 per hour x 4 hours), 9/10 (700 per hour x 6 hours), 15/16 (1,000 per hour x 5 hours), 23/24 (300 per hour x 4.5 hours), Oct. 2/3 (1,000 per hour) Kingston, RDW.
- Hermit Thrush:** Oct. 2/3 (300 per hour x 4.5 h) Kingston, RDW.
- Bohemian Waxwing:** Nov. 2 (19) P. E. Pt., KFN.
- Blue-winged Warbler:** Sep. 11 - 21 (1) Yarker, CG.
- Summer Tanager:** Sep. 20 (1) Amherst I., B Rowe, JHE.
- Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** Sep. 22 to Oct. 13 (20 in all) Amherst I., BR *et al.*
- Brewer's Blackbird:** Oct. 23 (1) Lake-on-the-Mountain, RTS.

Brown-headed Cowbird: Sep. 17 (2,000)
Rockport, NLB.

Pine Grosbeak: Nov. 1-6 (7 in all),
Amherst I & P. E. Pt., BMD *et al.*

Purple Finch: present throughout the
period, very light migratory movement.

White-winged Crossbill: Oct. 23
onwards, moderate passage numbers,
but some remain in the area.

Common Redpoll: Oct. 29 onwards,
small flocks.

Pine Siskin: Oct. 1 onwards, heavy
passage through P. E. Pt. Nov 1-2, KFN.

Evening Grosbeak: Nov. 18 (20), 19 (1)
Bedford Mills, L. Nuttall, only records.

Contributors:

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Notes on Natural History No. 110, November 27, 1961
Helen R. Quilliam

All the indications are that we shall have another good winter for snowy owls. There may not be quite as many of these great white birds down from the north as there were last winter, but nevertheless there already seem to be more than in most winters when only the odd one or two turn up here.

We seem to have particularly good territory for them. In 1959 and 1960, we had the highest number of snowy owls in our Christmas count of birds of any locality on the continent.

These periodic invasions of the snowy owls keep time with the fluctuations of lemming populations in the north. Lemmings are the principal food of the snowy owls the year round. The lemming cycle of abundance is a well-

known phenomenon. In good years for lemmings the snowy owl population builds up and when the lemmings "crash," as they do periodically, not only is there little food for the owls but there are more mouths to feed. The owls then must look for other sources of food and they drift south looking for rodents and, in some cases of dire necessity, birds.

The first snowy owl this autumn was seen on Wolfe Island, Nov. 5, by James A. Warren. The first last year was seen on Nov. 13. Since then they have been reported from Amherst Island and a number of spots near Kingston.

At the present time, they show up well against the brown fields and it is always worthwhile investigating a white object

on the top of a fence post, telephone pole, tree or rock.

When we consider the habits of other owls, we are amazed at the way in which these appear to display themselves. The tundra, their natural home, is treeless. Nor does it provide places in which to hide. They habitually perch on ridges or hillocks from which they can see the surrounding countryside. Even their nests are always on the top of a little hillock or knoll.

When they come down to the south, they perch on the top of fences, on a stone pile in the middle of a field, on TV aerials, or in trees out in full sight.

Our resident owls, the great horned, the screech and the long-eared, spend their days in dense stands of trees, often choosing a perch on a limb close to the trunk of a tree, which makes them exceedingly difficult to find. The screech owl often occupies a hole in a tree in the daytime.

In the spring and summer, we find many an owl because the crows, their implacable enemies have found them first. Now, with most of the crows gone, they no longer help us in locating these resident owls, although occasionally a flock of blue jays will discover the hiding place of one and let us know about it.

It is for this reason that, although we have a good population, particularly of great horned howls, they are not seen as often as snowy owls. A snowy owl will use the same perch day after day and, it

being in the open, the owl is plainly visible.

These owls are not entirely white, but an adult male gives the impression of being totally white. There are, however, small flecks of black in the feathers. Some of these owls look quite dark. The females, which are larger, always have more dark in the feathers than do the males but the facial feathers of both sexes are all white.

It is not generally realized that snowy owls have two tufts of feathers at the top of the head for they are not often erect. These tufts are a characteristic of other owls in a more marked degree - the screech owl, the great horned owl and the long-eared owl.

The snowy owls are well adapted to withstand the rigors of the north. Their feathers are exceedingly warm and thick and extend well down the legs, leaving only the black talons uncovered. They also obscure part of the bill.

The facial feathers of owls are arranged in a manner unlike that of any other group of birds, giving the face a more or less circular appearance.

Owls, as a class, have specially adapted feathers for completely silent flight. The wing feathers are particularly wide, thus overlapping each other and preventing the passage of air. Also the tiny barbules are covered with long hair-like processes, forming a velvety surface which muffles sound.

They can swoop down on their prey without the slightest hint of noise - so very different from the loud whirring noise that a ruffed grouse makes when it takes off, or the roar of a rising flight of ducks, or even the tiny noise the wings of a chickadee makes as it flies close past you.

The snowy owls are considered diurnal owls, but nevertheless do much of their hunting in the dusk or early evening. It is then that they are to be seen quartering a field. They are not woodland hunters, for forests foreign to their environment, but frequent open fields.

They do take prey in the day-time which may stray too close to their perch and in the north will wait patiently while a curious ptarmigan comes closer and closer until finally the owl only has to reach out and take it.

In northern pools, they have been seen to fish - lying lengthwise along the edge

of a pool until an unwary fish swims by too close. The leg nearest the water reaches down with lightning speed and the talons quickly grasp the fish.

Last winter, we found one snowy owl which had been shot on Wolfe Island. It seems to take many years for word to reach everyone that all owls are now protected and that it is against the law to shoot any of them. Also it could hardly be called good sportsmanship to shoot a bird which sits out in plain view and which is no good for food.

Its economic use to the farmer has been proved over and over again in the number of voles which it catches. Last winter, I collected a number of pellets and sent them to the Royal Ontario Museum for analysis. All except one consisted of the bones of meadow mice. So pass the word along that these snowy owls or any owls, for that matter, are not to be shot.

