



# The Blue Bill

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## Contents

1	President's Preliminaries / <i>Ken Edwards</i>	47
2	KFN Annual Reports	47
3	Kingston Region Birds—Winter 2020/21 (Dec. 1 to Feb. 28) / <i>Mark D. Read</i>	55
4	Annual Bird Report 2020 / <i>Mark D. Read</i>	60
5	Spring Round-up 2021 / <i>Erwin Batalla</i>	70
6	Articles	81
6.1	2020 Eastern Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Program Summary Report / <i>Hazel Wheeler and Jane Hudecki</i>	81
6.2	Wildlife Photography Tips #8—Depth of Field / <i>Anthony Kaduck</i>	88
6.3	Exploring the Backyard: Reminiscing on Backyards Past / <i>Carolyn Bonta</i>	94
7	KFN Outings	95
7.1	Car Birding Kingston's West End Waterfront (March 14, 2021) / <i>Jenny Newton</i>	95
7.2	Ramble to Butternut Creek (March 16, 2021) / <i>Anne Robertson</i>	97
7.3	Ramble to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area (April 6, 2021) / <i>Janis Grant</i>	98
8	Clipped Classics	99

## 2021/2022 Executive

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Member at large .....	Jane Revell

To contact any member of the executive or for general inquiries about the Kingston Field Naturalists, please send an email to [info@kingstonfieldnaturalists.org](mailto:info@kingstonfieldnaturalists.org).



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Send submissions to the editor by the **FIRST** of the month of publication (i.e. the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, June, September, or December) to

**[editor@thebluebill.ca](mailto:editor@thebluebill.ca)**

Submissions may be in any format. Equations should be in  $\text{\LaTeX}$ . Please provide captions and credit information for photos.

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# 1 President's Preliminaries

*by Ken Edwards*



**Figure 1:** KFN President Ken Edwards.

The path ahead is subject to change. Wise words from Past President Anthony Kaduck in his last President's message, June 2020. At the time, the KFN was anticipating resumption of face-to-face meetings in September 2020. Will they resume a year later? Get vaccinated, stay safe and stay tuned!

Anthony deserves special thanks as he carried the title of President into September, four months past when his duties should have been completed. There have been two changes to the membership of the executive. Janis Grant, long time executive member, has stepped down from the role of Secretary and Carolyn Bonta has left the post of Field Trip Coordinator to pursue her post-graduate studies. Thanks to both for their hard

work on behalf of the club. I am certain they will both continue to be active members, contributing in other ways. Welcome back to Rose-Marie Burke who takes over secretarial duties and welcome to Gary Hillaby who joins the executive as the new Field Trip Coordinator.

From a KFN perspective 2020 wasn't all bad. We are financially sound, membership is up, and speakers can be recruited from anywhere in the world that has good Internet service. Work at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary, headed by Gaye Beckwith has been impressive with reworked trails and new maps coming soon.

New members should check the website regularly for new content on where to go birding in the area. Anthony Kaduck has posted an excellent guide to Marshlands and we hope more content will be added soon. Don't forget to download the free Pictorial Guide to the Birds of Kingston, put together by Erwin Batalla and featuring the photography of Phil Harvey and others.

While vaccination isn't proceeding as quickly as we would wish there is hope that we have almost completed this arduous journey. I would encourage everyone to get out and enjoy nature over the summer. Please share your experiences on our social media platforms or more permanently in the Blue Bill.

I am looking forward to seeing you all in the fall, if not face-to-face then at least virtually.

## 2 KFN Annual Reports

### 2.1 Publicity

*Jane Revell*

The role of publicity for the KFN this year was to a large extent curtailed by the various cancella-

tions of both in person meetings and various field trips and other club activities. We did place an ad, which was larger than in previous years, in the Frontenac Park Information Guide. We also placed an ad, complete with a write up about the Kingston Field Naturalists, in the Kingston This Week spring

2021 Activity and Leisure Guide. Special thanks to Anthony Kaduck for his assistance with the photos and layout for these two ads. Christmas count newspaper articles were as a result of Bill Depew and Kathy Webb communicating directly with the newspapers—again much appreciated. These articles have resulted in a significant increase in the number of people participating in the feeder counts on the Christmas count days, thereby producing more accurate numbers of birds observed. Hopefully as things begin to get back to normal and more in person activities are occurring we will be able to increase our publicity for the KFN to previous years' levels.

## 2.2 Annual Report of Rambles 2020-2021

*Anne Robertson*

Rambles from April to August 2020 were cancelled due to the Covid pandemic as well as those in January and February 2021. The result was just 9 rambles were held (compared with the usual 21).

The total number of participants for this shorter season was 44. The average number of participants was 16 with numbers varying from 21 to 11. This is a higher average than in past years. Participants needed to register in order to receive details of meeting points and so that contact details were collected and numbers might be limited due to the pandemic. Covid questions were asked of each participant at each ramble.

Locations were local and the timing was for morning outings to notice nature. We walked around Fort Henry Hill in September, along the Rideau trail near Sherwood Drive in later September and on the K&P Trail downtown for the early October ramble. We had a longer walk on the Rideau Trail and K&P Trail near Elginburg including a picnic lunch in late October. In November we had our biggest group for a walk in Lake Ontario Park and the second ramble of the month was held in the Collins Creek Woods. In December we were shown around Cartwright Point by John Cartwright and Jean Mair. After a gap with no

rambles we were back in March to walk beside a branch of the Cataraqui Creek from Malabar Drive and later in the month along the urban trail beside the Butternut Creek.

Janis Grant and Kathy Webb shared the responsibility of submitting our bird sightings to eBird for each Ramble. Reports of most of these rambles along with photos may be found in the Blue Bill.

This was an excuse to get out and enjoy nature locally and the number of participants shows enthusiasm for these outings. Thank you all!

## 2.3 Nature Reserves

*Erwin Batalla*

### Helen Quilliam Sanctuary

Gaye Beckwith, Janet and Bruce Elliott, and Gary Hillaby have continued to look after the trails on the property. The new route of the Faith Avis trail was officially unveiled during a field trip in September. Gaye organized the rerouting of the porcupine trail so that it no longer strays into the southern neighbour's property. This was done in cooperation with the Rideau Trail Association (RTA). Several KFN members helped with this (Mike and Liz Evans, Richard, Gary, Janet and Bruce, Anne Robertson).

The two duck boxes near the Betty Hughes trail and the two near the Greenwood track were checked but there was no evidence of nesting. Anne led the Teen trip to check the Wood Duck boxes along the Porcupine trail during the winter. These boxes showed signs of occupation. Meanwhile, Gaye, Gary, Janet and Bruce installed two other boxes on a pond near the Roland Beschel trail. Another two Duck Boxes (boxes built by Gaye and Richard) have been added at that location since then.

Markers have been placed at the southwest corners of the property. It is an area seldom visited so it is important for our forest management to schedule



activities there. Kathy Webb and Bill Depew, Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault, Janet, Gary, Erwin and Gaye trekked along the creek, mostly in snowshoes.

Gaye (with Betsy Beckwith, Gary, Kenneth Ross, Richard and Dianne, Kathy and Bill, Janet and Bruce, Erwin, Anne) has walked all the trails and has collected GPS tracks. He is developing an electronic map.

### **Martin Edwards Reserve**

Richard Brault is overseeing activities at this property. We continue to have cattle on the property to maintain the grassland. We are responsible for the water supply to the cows and there were a few water-level alarms in the dry spell in the Fall. A spare float valve was purchased and the well was filled for the last time by Richard on Oct 3.

Another wooden Purple Martin box was installed at no cost to us (Nature Canada project). A small group (Kurt, Erwin, Richard, Jack Staszak, Chris Grooms and Dale Kristensen) has met to discuss management of the Tree Swallow and Purple Martin boxes on both properties on Amherst Island. It was generally agreed that Kurt and Jack would look after the Purple Martin boxes while Richard and Chris would oversee the Tree Swallow boxes. The success of the Purple Martin wooden boxes means that we will decommission the metal boxes on MER and redeploy them elsewhere. The two furthest north on the property will eventually be replaced with wooden boxes.

Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault have done fall maintenance on the Tree Swallow boxes installed along the fence. Also, a section of the 9-wire fence inside the property had collapsed. Dianne and Richard and Erwin retied the fence to the T-bars with fencing wire.

Beavers have moved into the ponds and they have eaten most of the willows but the bushes should regrow. The roots should continue to stabilize the berm which can be weakened by leakage. Kurt visited the property with Chris Delage, a contractor for Ducks Unlimited (DU). Their contract with us

is still valid so they are responsible for the maintenance of the ponds. Chris (DU) decided to remove the stainless-steel valves from the control structure and Erwin assisted him on that work. The ponds were full and water was flowing over the boards to protect the berm. We should be able to control the water level more easily.

### **Sylvester-Gallagher Nature Reserve**

The group headed by Kurt Hennige continues to plan for this property. The Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MTIP) designation is being pursued. The Forester, Stew Hamill, has visited the property with Paul Mackenzie and got the necessary documents from Paul. Blue Bird boxes will be installed at the north end of that property.

We have received an estimate of about \$4000 to fence the southern end of the property. We will have to decide on the position or need for a gate at that end. Photographers' pressure on private properties has been intense on Amherst Island this past winter.

## **2.4 The Blue Bill**

*Peter Waycik*

As is usual, the Blue Bill was published four times in the last year in June, September, December, and March. Most KFN members receive an electronic version of the journal and get to see it in its original glorious colour, but the paper versions were still in black and white until the March 2021 edition joined the realm of the visible spectrum.

Thanks to Anne Robertson who provided a box of old issues, there are now electronic versions of the Blue Bill from 1993 to 2008 available on the KFN website. Previously only issues from 2009 to present were available. The September 1994 issue is actually still missing as are all the issues from 1992 and earlier. If anyone is able to provide these to be scanned, please contact [editor@thebluebill.ca](mailto:editor@thebluebill.ca).

The Blue Bill would not exist were it not for

the many people who contribute content. Anne Robertson has ensured that there is a report of every ramble and teen trip in the Blue Bill by recruiting participants to write up their experiences and provide photos. Thank you to anyone who has written a report and/or provided a photo or two to go along with one. Anthony Kaduck, Carolyn Bonta, Paul Mackenzie, Shirley French, and Karen Vanderwolf all wrote one or more articles in the last year and their contributions are greatly appreciated. Mark Read contributed huge amounts of information regarding birds to the Blue Bill including seasonal summaries, an annual bird report, and waterfowl inventory/survey reports. Erwin Batalla and Kathy Webb aptly summarized the results of the various bird counts. Anne Robertson compiled and reported on the results of the annual BioBlitz. John Poland and Al Quinsey kept us all informed of the butterflies and odonates, respectively, in the Kingston region. Alexandra Simmons extracted excerpts from past issues of the Blue Bill to delight us all in the final pages of the Blue Bill. Rick Bortolotti was our poet laureate and several others contributed photos to fill in the spaces that would otherwise be barren and lonely. All of these contributors deserve our thanks and hopefully, they will continue their contributions in the future.

With the departure of Al Quinsey, the Blue Bill is seeking someone to take on the annual Odonata List compilation and report. Ideally, this is someone who is knowledgeable about Odonates and spends some time in the field observing and reporting on them. If you are such a person, please contact [editor@thebluebill.ca](mailto:editor@thebluebill.ca). To see what is involved, please see past reports in December issues.

## 2.5 Website

*Anthony Kaduck*

The KFN website averages about 70 page-views per day.

The challenge for the website this year has been to reflect the rapidly-changing events schedule as field trips, rambles and the BioBlitz have adjusted

to the exigencies of the Covid pandemic. The main effort for the upcoming year is to expand the new Birding Resources page, which is intended to provide new birders and birders new to Kingston with information on what they can see in the Kingston Circle and how to find and visit the best birding sites. Suggestions and contributions to this effort would be welcomed. In particular if you feel you would be able to draft a site guide to one of our local hotspots please let me or Mark Read know. There is a new site guide for the [Marshlands](#) Conservation Area which can be used as a model.

## 2.6 Membership

*Kathy Webb*

At the end of the 2020/21 membership year (01-Apr-2020 to 31-Mar-2021) there were 425 adult memberships: 214 Individual, 204 Family, and 7 Young Adult members. Of these, 13 were Life and 151 were new memberships. Family memberships are comprised of 2 voting members, bringing the count to 629 voting members. There are also 15 complimentary memberships which receive newsletters and the Blue Bill. Of no less importance, the membership included 21 Juniors, 16 Teens and 2 Junior Leaders.

The ability to retain members and to generate new members is important to the continued success of the KFN. As of the end of May 2021, we have had 264 renewals and 98 new memberships for the 2021/22 membership year. Membership renewal notices and reminders have historically been sent in the mail. To reduce our environmental impact and to save on postage costs, renewal notices this year have been emailed, published in the newsletter and only sent in the mail to members without email addresses. Since adding the ability to pay for memberships online, this has become the preferred method of payment.

The majority of membership costs are comprised of postage and printing costs for new member packages, annual membership cards, charitable donation receipts, monthly newsletters to those without email addresses, and quarterly issues of The Blue

Bill where required.

The Membership Secretary manages the membership database, sends membership renewal notices and reminders, prepares charitable receipts and thank you letters for the Treasurer, distributes the newsletter by email and by post where required, distributes email notices for the electronic version of The Blue Bill and mails printed copies of The Blue Bill.

## 2.7 Youth Programs

*Anne Robertson*

### Junior Naturalists

No indoor meetings were held this year due to the pandemic. Between shutdowns 5 family field trips were held. 21 Juniors were registered and three faithful leaders accompanied us: Amanda Tracey, Heather Vanderlip and Meghan Hamp.

Field trips focus on NNN (Naturalists Notice Nature). Usually we hike to different locations to see different habitats. We may talk about different plant or animal groups and discuss details of life cycles. Educational games are played and we have a good walk. Often we play a listening game to see what we can hear in one minute of absolute silence (no moving!) This year we stayed fairly local as ride sharing was discouraged.

In September we went along the Invista shoreline noticing monarch butterflies migrating, male and female crickets and looking at different rocks (granite and limestone) on the lakeshore amongst other things.

October took us to Lost Lake/ Bayview Bog (Taylor Kidd Blvd.). Here we focussed on the difference between trees, shrubs and vines (paper, scissors, stone) and we played a game where natural items had been placed in the wrong habitat and needed to be noticed (e.g. cattail in the woods, cat skull in the conservation area, Hemlock branch in a shrub, Zebra mussel shells on a rock, moss in a shrub etc.)

We had a picnic lunch on this trip with 12 Juniors, 13 adults plus 2 leaders!

The November trip began at Rogers Side Road where we focussed on trees and leaf identification including the special Chinquapin Oak. We also made bark rubbings, played a blindfold game "getting to know a tree" (by feeling diameter, bark texture, where branches start and so on), and investigated a porcupine den at the base of a tree.

Our winter trip was to the Cataraqui Conservation (Division St.) property on a cold day with snow changing to rain. Just three Juniors (and 6 adults!) watched and fed the banditry of chickadees and learned some interesting facts about them. We also talked about plantations, habitat changes between winter and summer and, after finding tracks, the adaptations of Ruffed Grouse for winter. We also built a snow sculpture of a Snowy Owl watching a mouse also made of snow.

Our last trip in March went to Parrott's Bay (south side). Here we enjoyed the map of the area before hiking the south shore of Parrott's Bay. We learned about the life cycle of the Cedar Apple Rust with its alternating hosts and explored some rotting wood where we found centipedes and some bark beetle tunnels. We enjoyed a snack and the view from the lookout where we observed Canada Geese, Mute Swans and an Osprey platform. Before returning home we all sat on a billion year old (granite) glacial erratic rock.

We look forward to getting back to regular programming in September.

### Teen Naturalists

This year we had 16 Teen members registered which is more than usual. Six trips were held between pandemic shut downs mostly fairly local since participants had to be driven independently. All trips were written up and published in the Blue Bill and are available on line. Thank you to all the help provided by Erwin Batalla, Gaye Beckwith, Chris Grooms, Shirley French, Janis Grant, Peter Waycik and Walter Sepic.

In September we had our annual Canoe trip, this year to Parrott's Bay paddling into the bay from Bath Road. In October we focussed on using binoculars and scopes on a birding trip to the Marshlands Conservation Area. In November we went to the Meyer Woods Land Conservancy for KFLA property where volunteer hours were earned as we attacked a patch of the invasive Phragmites.

We spent our Christmas Bird Count at the Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre (ELEEC) walking round the big pond recording bird species. The January trip was cancelled. A traditional Wood Duck nest box cleanout at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary (HQS) was held in February and in March we visited the Fallow Deer Reserve. After this the stay at home orders cancelled the remaining field trips for the year.

We hope for better luck and more trips next year.

## 2.8 Conservation Committee

*Chris Hargreaves*

The Conservation Committee aims to provide a consistent "voice for nature" as Kingston grows and changes, particularly at meetings of the City of Kingston Planning Committee, where projects generally involve local conflicts between developers and neighbouring property owners.

Among our activities over the past year we have:

- Spoken at the Planning Committee Public Meeting on the Rezoning of 215 Resource Road, Kingston, as the boundary of the Environmental Protection Area was shown differently on various maps in the report.
- Contacted Frontenac County with respect to motorized use of the K&P Trail, and expressed the KFNs interest and concern about this.
- Monitored proposals for Off-shore Wind Power Facilities in the Great Lakes on the American side of the border.

- Followed the criticism of the increased use of Ministers Zoning Orders to override local planning policies and processes, and the changes made to the Conservation Authorities Act, and endorsed Ontario Nature's response.
- Expressed concern that the Rideau Canal Draft Management Plan says very little about the environmental impact of increased recreational use and tourism that the revised plan encourages.
- Supported in principle the draft of the new Kingston zoning bylaw which increases protection for the 30 metre ribbon-of-life along waterways in areas not previously developed.
- Encouraged Cataraqui Conservation to add partial sides to the Barn Swallow Alternative Nesting Structure at the Lemoine Point Conservation Area, and co-ordinated informal monitoring of the structure.

We are currently participating in ongoing discussions about Transport Canada's Kingston Inner Harbour "Contaminated Sediment Management Project." – What are the environmental problems of leaving the polluted sediments where they are? What are the health risks of disturbing the polluted sediments? Should the focus be on the polluted water and sewage still leaching/draining into the harbour, rather than on polluted sediments already there?

Many thanks to Barrie Gilbert, Carolyn Bonta, John Donihee, Lesley Rudy, Sandra Toquica, Shirley French, and everybody else who has helped with the activities of the committee.

The Conservation Committee is organized on an informal basis – members receive a monthly report by email, and are invited to respond on any of the topics that particularly interest them, and/or to raise new issues. Additional members would be most welcome: just email [Chris Hargreaves](#) if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

## 2.9 Education

*Shirley French*

Education outreach has had to be online.

- 'What the KFN club is all about' for Kingston Frontenac Public Library May, 2020.
- Blue green algae Youtube videos, 'Cyanobacteria (Blue-green algae, BGA) workshop' and 'Using your foldscope to identify blue-green algae.'
- FLASF, grade school science fair was online in March, 2021. Lesley Rudy, Erwin Batalla and Shirley French did not find a candidate who studied conservation or nature.
- Anne Robertson shared pollination advice and suggestions for Courtney Mahoney, Kingston Centre Scouts.
- A new educational resource is the 'Pictorial Guide to the Birds of Kingston' by Erwin Batalla and Phil Harvey. Available to download from the KFN website under birding resources.

## 2.10 Field Trips

*Carolyn Bonta*

### Field Trips

Carolyn Bonta continued as the Field Trips Coordinator.

The number of field trips this year was much reduced by ongoing COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. But more than half of the trips were to new locations or of novel format and many were led by first-time trip leaders. In the long term, it's the new cohort of leaders and their fresh ideas that will keep KFN's Field Trips program thriving.

Five field trips took place:

- September 26, Faith Avis Trail at Helen Quilliam Sanctuary, Gaye Beckwith and Erwin Batalla.
- October 11, Burbrook Road section of the K&P Trail, Richard Brault\* and Dianne Croteau\*
- October 18, Lemoine Point, Steve Coates\*
- December 12, How to Conduct a CBC Survey training at Tree Frog Woods, Carolyn Bonta
- February 15, Owl Prowl at Wolfe Island, Erwin Batalla
- March 14, Car-Birding Tour of the Kingston waterfront, Jenny Newton\* – two tours offered

Trip participation was limited to 10-12 members/trip this year, with advance registration required for contact tracing. All field trips were very well attended, with most running at maximum group size; one trip was offered as both a morning and an afternoon session due to its popularity. All of the trip leaders / co-leaders listed above deserve a great deal of thanks for their efforts and expertise, and for the additional work they put in to trip registration and contact tracing. Particular thanks go out to our first-time trip leaders (\*) for stepping into this role. We are grateful for your willingness to lead fellow members in exploring nature in all kinds of seasons and weather.

Continuing an initiative began last year, field trips were clearly advertised in terms of what to expect for walking distance and terrain. This year sought to offer a greater number and diversity of outings close to home and, with COVID as an ongoing presence, members can likely expect to enjoy more local and physically distanced outings than in the past.

Unfortunately, many scheduled field trips and new offerings that were in the works did not proceed:

- May 24, Presqu'île Provincial Park and Brighton Lagoons, Steve Coates – cancelled (COVID)

- June 13, South Shore IBA and Chuck-will's Widow, Peter Fuller – cancelled (COVID)
- September 13, Canoe trip to Puzzle Lake Provincial Park, Carolyn Bonta – cancelled due to inclement weather
- November TBD, Exploring Local Geology, John Hanes – cancelled due to COVID-related lack of access to required teaching/demonstration props
- January 17, Car-Birding Tour of the Kingston waterfront, Jenny Newton – postponed (COVID)
- February 26-28, Algonquin Provincial Park, Anthony Kaduck – cancelled (COVID)

Even when a trip doesn't take place, a fair amount of work goes into the planning stages: scouting the route, securing landowner permission to access properties, monitoring wildlife sightings, drafting the trip notice, and organizing logistics – as only a few examples. These efforts tend to be overlooked, this year replaced by the concern that “without field trips, members aren't getting anything for their membership.” But hang in there! Just as a dormant plant concentrates its energies so as to thrive when conditions improve, so have KFN trip leaders been putting in the work to come out of COVID with a slate of interesting and enjoyable outings. Kudos to all the trip leaders listed above for your efforts!

In addition to the trips listed above that made it to being scheduled, other field trips that were discussed or in the early stages of planning included: a series of short “Explore a Backyard” outings to small neighbourhood hotspots; birding at Tree Frog Farm & Woods; Little Cataraqui Creek paddle to see least bitterns; multi-day Point Pelee, Pelee Island, and Kirtland's warbler breeding grounds; and regular car-birding tours along key routes in the Kingston area. Hopefully members can look forward to some or all of these outings another year!

## May Bird Walks at Lemoine Point

COVID restrictions on outdoor gatherings prevented us from offering our popular May Bird Walks to members and the public in Spring 2020.

## Round-ups

The annual Spring and Fall Round-up events give individuals and groups of members 48 hours to search and tally bird species in the Kingston Bird Area. This year's Spring Round-up did not proceed. However, a COVID-friendly Fall Round-up took place November 6-8, with members encouraged to survey independently or in small, self-formed groups. The usual guided birding events were not offered. Data compilation for the Fall Round-up was overseen by Erwin Batalla and Mark Read.

## Christmas Bird Counts 2020 Kingston Area

Despite the need to incorporate additional safety provisions due to COVID, many of our members coordinated and participated in ten Christmas Bird Counts in our region:

- December 14, Westport, Wendy Briggs-Jude
- December 16, Delta, Jim Thompson
- December 18, Thousand Islands, Josh Van Wieren
- December 19, Frontenac, Michael Johnson and Carolyn Bonta
- December 19, Prince Edward Point, Peter Fuller
- December 20, Kingston, Kathy Webb and William Depew
- December 23, Gananoque, Kurt Hennige
- December 27, Napanee, Kurt Hennige
- January 2, Moscow, Bonnie Bailey – long-time/experienced area surveyors only

- January 3, Amherst Island, Janet Scott & Bonnie Livingstone – Amherst Island residents only

## 2.11 Bird Records

*Mark D. Read*

Please see the Annual Bird Report 2020 later in this issue.

## 2.12 Vice-President

*John Donihee*

The Vice President serves in the absence of the President and according to KFN bylaws. I also represent KFN as the liaison with Ontario Nature and was responsible for organizing speakers for our monthly general meetings over the last year. Given ongoing COVID restrictions all Executive activities and involvement with Ontario Nature, as well as our monthly general meetings were virtual.

Ontario Nature activities involve participation in semi-annual Ontario-East regional meetings with other naturalist groups, organized by Ontario Nature and occasional involvement in advocacy on environmental matters on behalf of KFN. In the last year the regional meetings were held virtually in

the fall (September) and spring (April) in round table format. These sessions focus on the exchange of information about environmental and other initiatives in the region. KFN initiatives on advocacy matters related to submissions on Ministerial Zoning Orders and amendments to the Conservation Authorities legislation.

Speakers were arranged for KFN general meetings as follows:

**October** – Dr. Michael Runtz, Algonquin Wild;

**November** – Ms. Emily Giles, Senior Specialist Species Conservation WWF Canada, The Living Planet Report;

**December** – KFN Members' night;

**January** – Dr. Anne Gunn, Status of Caribou in Canada and Circumpolar World;

**February** – Dr. Elizabeth Gow, Assessing the Impact of Domestic Cats on Canada's Wildlife;

**March** – Mr. David Bree, Bringing Moths into the Light;

**April** – KFN AGM and Members' Presentations;

**May** – Ms. Joanne Barnaby, Strong Like Two People.

We are grateful to all the speakers who shared their time and insights with us.

## 3 Kingston Region Birds—Winter 2020/21 (Dec. 1 to Feb. 28)

*by Mark D. Read*

The KFN reporting area is centred on MacDonald Park, Kingston and extends for a radial distance of 50 km. An interactive map showing the KFN circle is available on the website. If errors are noted or significant observations omitted, please contact me and I will update accordingly. We also encourage you to submit *all* sightings, so that a better understanding of our region's birdlife can

be achieved. Members already using eBird can very easily share their sightings with the username 'Kingston FN'. Alternatively, please email or phone me directly with your sightings ([markdread@gmail.com](mailto:markdread@gmail.com) / 613-217-1246). Please note the total below includes the following species that remain unconfirmed until accepted by the Rare Birds Committee: **Eared Grebe, Amherst Island, 6 De-**



**cember; Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, Newburgh, 17 February.**

In total, **142 species of bird** were recorded in our region during the reporting period, 14 up on last winter and the best for many years. The vast majority of sightings were obtained from eBird – 20.24% of which were shared with the KFN account (a declining statistic). In total, 475 observers logged 6605 checklists, equating to 51 142 sightings. Only a few records were received via phone/email/word of mouth, indicating the continuing popularity of [eBird](#). As usual, an impressive number of individual birds (722 067) were recorded, though many of these were, of course, the same birds seen on subsequent days. A huge thank you goes out to every observer, without whom our understanding of bird distribution would be far more limited. Observers with sightings in the current report are acknowledged below.

After a brief cold snap in early December, the rest of the month right through to mid-January was relatively mild, with temperatures fluctuating wildly. It wasn't until late January/early February that a true cold snap arrived, freezing the ferry crossing to the islands. The open waters of Lake Ontario didn't concentrate the waterfowl this winter, though diversity was generally typical. However, a positive finch forecast yielded mainly favourable results with observers happy to see the return of more northerly species such as Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, both redpolls and both crossbills. A Gray-crowned Rosy Finch at Newburgh in February will, if accepted by OBRC, be a new species for the Kingston region. Ross's Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, King Eider, Barrow's Goldeneye, Little Gull, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Gyrfalcon were other great finds this winter. Here are the highlights for the winter of 2020/21:

**Snow Goose:** There were more than 30 sightings of this species over the winter period (all singles, and mainly from Amherst and Wolfe Islands), though a flock of 150 at Cape Vincent on 16 December was noteworthy (StK).

**Ross's Goose:** A single bird, found at Reed's Bay, Wolfe Island, on 31 December remained until 3 January (RBDC, MDR). What was possibly the same

bird was seen at Kaiser Cross Road, Prince Edward, on 9 January (RKB, AnK). A different bird (still showing immature plumage around the head) was seen on Howe Island on 10 January (SED, PeW).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** There was just one report this past winter of a single bird at Waupoos on 14 December (BER).

**Cackling Goose:** There were 23 reports this winter with the largest flock being 20, seen on Wolfe Island on 14 December (SHE, GJP).

**Trumpeter Swan:** It was a good year for this species with over 140 reports. This year's high count of 130 came from Lower Brewers Lock on 29 January (MJR). Other significant locations included Chaffey's Lock and Bedford Mills. No banded birds were seen this winter.

**Tundra Swan:** It was a good year for the species with widespread observations in December and January, and a few hangers-on (primarily on Amherst Island) through February. This year's high count came from Point Peninsula, NY, on 3 December, where 565 birds were seen (GeS).

**Wood Duck:** There were 3 records this winter: 1 at Sydenham on 19 Dec (MJR); 1 near Colebrook 17–26 January (KJH); and 1 at Gananoque on 8 February (LeK).

**Blue-winged Teal:** There was an exceptional record of 2 males at Belle Park, Kingston, on 7 January (KAW, WTD).

**Northern Shoveler:** A lone male spent a good chunk of the winter at Lemoine Point CA, Kingston, being last seen on 4 February (PhH). Another male was seen on Amherst Island 10–22 January (JoA et al).

**Northern Pintail:** As many as 2 birds were present in Cataraqui Bay, Kingston in the latter part of the winter but the highest count was of 12 at Hay Bay on 14 December (BER).

**Green-winged Teal:** As many as 9 birds spent the winter at Belle Park, Kingston, and were seen by numerous observers (KFN).

**Canvasback:** Most of this winter's records came from Cataraqui Bay, Kingston, where 1-2 birds spent much of the winter. The high count, however, came from Bath where 6 were seen on 1 January (PeF).

**Redhead:** The highest single count came from Prince Edward Point where 4500 were seen on 1 January (PaJ). A survey of Wolfe Island on 7 November tallied 10 100 birds (MDR).

**King Eider:** An adult female was seen off Pillar Point, NY, on 2 December (RiB).

**Surf Scoter:** An adult male was seen near Prince Edward Point on 24 January (PaJ).

**Black Scoter:** There were 5 records this winter: 2 females at Cataraqui Bay, 7 December (GeP); 2, Chaumont, NY, 18 December (RiB); 3, Big Sandy Bay, Wolfe Island, 8 January (MJR); 1, male, Bath, 14-15 January (KJH); 1, Dexter, NY, 16 January (RiB).

**Barrow's Goldeneye:** All three records came from across the border in New York.

**Ruddy Duck:** Four birds were seen at Dexter Marsh, NY, on 12 December (LyS). A female was at the Kingston ferry from 3-21 January (MJP et al).

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** As with the last 2 years, other than a handful of records from the states, all birds were seen on Amherst Island (KFN).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** A single bird was seen at Chafey's Locks on 10 and 19 December (BMDL, BER).

**Horned Grebe:** Birds continued to be seen off Prince Edward Point and Amherst Island until mid-January (KFN).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Four birds were reported during the period: 1, near Glenora, 5 December (TeS); 1, Amherst Island, 6 December (BMDL) and 10 December (LuB, Mat); 1, Howe Island, 11 December (PeW); and 1, Loughborough Lake, 19 December (AEK, MiL).

**American Coot:** A single bird was at Cataraqui Bay from 1-10 December (BER), with another at Bath from 6-21 January (WTD, KAW).

**Killdeer:** A single bird continued at Invista, Kingston, from 20-31 January (KFN)

**Wilson's Snipe:** A single bird was seen at Belle Park, Kingston, on 20 December (RBDC).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** The last record came from Button Bay, Wolfe Island, where 8 were seen on 11 December (KSB, JiR).

**Little Gull:** A single bird was seen at Hay Bay on 1 December (KSB, KJH).

**Iceland Gull:** It was a better year than last with 21 reports (compared to 8 in 2019/2020). Most reports came from Prince Edward Point, Bath, Violet Dump and Lansdowne Dump.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** There were just 3 records this year – 1 adult at Lansdowne on 3 December (LaM, JET); 1 adult and 1 immature on Amherst Island on 2 January (KSB, KJH); and 1 adult at Lansdowne on 17 January (BON).

**Glaucous Gull:** There were 21 records this season with birds seen across a wider area than Iceland Gulls (KFN).

**Red-throated Loon:** a single bird was seen in Hay Bay on 1 December (KSB, KJH), with another at Sacket's Harbour, NY, on 19 December (JSB).

**Common Loon:** As usual, a number of sightings were received in December. The last bird of the winter was seen off the Bath waterfront on 27 January (JAL).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** There were a number of records in the early part of the season though the last was an injured bird at Nicolson's Point, Amherstview, on 30 January (KaG).

**Turkey Vulture:** There were 4 records this winter, all from Prince Edward where a population is known to overwinter (KFN).

**Golden Eagle:** An adult was seen at Sydenham on 2 December (BGB), with an immature seen near Elgin on 2 January (MDR).

**Northern Goshawk:** There were 5 records this winter; 1 adult, Camden East, 29 January (PJG);

1 adult, Sydenham, 29 January; 1 immature, near Desert Lake, 8 February (RaM); and 1 near Verona on 13 Jan, and 21–22 February (TAN).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** An overwintering bird was seen on several dates from 4 January to 13 February at Gananoque (JET).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** It was a great year on Amherst Island with a high of 52 reported on 18 February (ToB, NiS). However, this season's high came from Point Peninsula where 55 were tallied on 10 January (DoS, MiT). Wolfe Island, in contrast, barely had any reports.

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** There was a continued improvement in the number of observations compared to previous seasons with 26 records from a number of locations.

**Snowy Owl:** It wasn't a great year for the species compared to some of the recent invasions we've experienced but birds were still out there to be found, particularly on Amherst Island, where a high count of 13 was recorded from Amherst on 9 January (MiB)

**Long-eared Owl:** It was a poor winter for this species with just 5 records: 3 birds were seen at Marshlands CA, Kingston, on 19 December (BER) with 2 still there on 30 (VPM). The remaining reports came from Amherst Island where a high count of 8 was reported on 4 February (MJP).

**Short-eared Owl:** It was a great year for the species on Amherst Island with a high count of 61 on 8 February (AmG, LeF).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Most of the 10 reports came from Amherst Island where 4 were seen on 14 February (DaR).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** An adult female was seen from 19 December to 9 February at Bedford Mills (MEC, LJN). Another bird was present at Fairway Hill Park, Kingston, from 9–28 February (PhH et al). Another was seen on the Cressy Peninsula, Prince Edward, on 13 February (RKB, AnK).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** 1-2 birds were seen at Frontenac Provincial Park on 6 December (BLB,

BiH) and 19 December (MAJ). An immature bird was on Amherst Island from 7–11 December (JCG, VPM et al).

**Gyr Falcon:** An adult grey bird was seen on Wolfe Island on 2 January and 4 January (GrM et al). Another grey bird of unknown age was seen on Amherst Island on 18 February (ToB, NiS).

**Peregrine Falcon:** There were 30 observations this winter, from across the Kingston area.

**Northern Shrike:** There were 117 observations this winter, compared to the 79 of last year.

**Tufted Titmouse:** It was a bumper winter for this species with a well-watched bird at Fairway Hill Park, Kingston, for much of February (KFN). As well as numerous sightings from across the border in New York, birds were seen at another 7 locations on our side.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** A single bird was seen at Ravensview from 2-5 December (VPM) with another bird seen on 3 dates in the Invista area through to 1 January (KFN).

**Winter Wren:** Birds were reported from 24 distinct locations this winter which is a big increase over previous years. Two birds were seen at Belle Park, Kingston, on 4 January (KAW).

**Marsh Wren:** A single bird continued at Marshlands CA, Kingston, from 7–19 December (GeP et al). Another bird was seen at Perch River, NY, also on 19 December (JSB).

**Carolina Wren:** There was a noticeable increase in the number of birds seen this winter with 82 reports from 20 distinct locations.

**Gray Catbird:** Singles were seen at Prince Edward Point on 2 Dec (BER), and Castell Park, Kingston, on 13 February (JoL) and 14 February (EDB).

**Northern Mockingbird:** Birds were seen at Portsmouth Olympic Harbour, Long Point Road, Amherst Island, and the Greenview Drive and Bur Brook Road areas of Kingston.

**Hermit Thrush:** There were 44 sightings this winter, from a number of different locations. Two

birds were seen at Marshlands CA, Kingston, on 5 January (EDB).

**Bohemian Waxwing:** There were 26 reports this winter, with birds unfortunately not quite making it off the shield. A high count of 150 came from Chaffey's Lock Road on 29 December (RaR).

**American Pipit:** A single bird was seen on Amherst Island on 10 December (BMDL).

**Evening Grosbeak:** Birds did arrive in the area and were quite widespread but it wasn't the 'big' winter we were hoping for. The high count was 20 birds seen near Verona on 2 January (TAN).

**Pine Grosbeak:** There were 49 widespread reports this winter with a nice flock taking up residence in the Rideau Heights area of Kingston where 19 were seen on 15 December (MDR).

**Common Redpoll:** It was a bumper year for the species. The largest single flock (of 800) was seen at Chaumont, NY, on 10 January (RaL).

**Hoary Redpoll:** It was a great year for this species too with 149 reports. Often associating with Common Redpolls, their numbers are much lower with highs of just 2-3 birds.

**Red Crossbill:** There were 35 reports of this irruptive species this winter with a high count of 20 at Bedford Mills on 21 February (EDB).

**White-winged Crossbill:** Unlike the Red Crossbill, this species came off the shield but the total number of observations was lower at just 17. A high count of 30 came from Amherst Island on 10 December (LaM, BON, JET).

**Pine Siskin:** Compared to the zero observations of last year, the 130 this time around was much more pleasing. However, the species wasn't easy to track down, as numbers were generally low. A high count of 26 was received from Bur Brook Road, Kingston, on 9 January (PRM).

**Lapland Longspur:** It was another fairly poor year for this species with the majority of records coming from Wolfe Island. A high count of 15 birds came from Cape Vincent, NY, on 7 January (RiB).

**Snow Bunting:** It was a fairly typical year for the species but they truly are a species that becomes easier to find once snow covers the fields. A high of 430 was seen on Wolfe Island on 14 February (BaK).

**Chipping Sparrow:** A single bird was seen on Amherst Island on 7 December (BDL, WvH).

**Field Sparrow:** A single bird was photographed near Prince Edward Point on 28 December (PaJ).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** A number of lingering birds were seen into the early winter months but 2 examples of the Gambel's subspecies are noteworthy; an adult was present on Wolfe Island from 8 December to 9 February (MDR), with an immature near Prince Edward Point from 28 December to 23 February (PaJ).

**Savannah Sparrow:** There were 9 reports of at least 6 different birds this winter, from Amherst Island, Wolfe Island, Point Peninsula (NY), Napanee (2 locations), and Waupoos.

**Swamp Sparrow:** The warm start to the winter meant many birds lingered in the area with a high count of 13 at Marshlands CA, Kingston, on 14 December (CoG).

**Eastern Towhee:** Three birds were seen this winter: 1, Bedford Road, 19 December (DaK); 1, Newburgh, 27 December (BLB, BiH); and 1, Parrott's Bay, 7 January – 21 February (NiB).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** A single bird was seen near Watertown, NY, on 1 January (RiB), with another on Amherst Island on 1 February (JaB).

**Rusty Blackbird:** 5-6 birds continued at a feeder near Emery through to 23 December (JoH). Other singles were seen near Gananoque (GeP) and on Howe Island (SED), both on 23 December.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** Surprisingly, there were just 2 birds reported this winter. One was seen at Invista on 6 December (RBDC) and 8 December (CoG); with an additional bird at Gananoque on 23 December (KJH, ChI).

**Other species observed during the reporting period:** Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, American Black Duck, Ring-

necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Great Blue Heron, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Merlin, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Horned Lark, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, European Starling, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, House Finch, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal.

**Observers:** John Anstey (JoA), Bonnie L. Bailey (BLB), Erwin D. Batalla (EDB), Tony Beck (ToB), B. Gaye Beckwith (BGB), R. Kyle Blaney (RKB), Luke Berg (LuB), Kevin S. Bleeks (KSB), Jeff S. Bolsinger (JSB), Jaimie Bortolotti (JaB), Richard Brault &

Dianne Croteau (RBDC), Michael Brais (MiB), Richard Brouse (RiB), Mark E. Chojnacki (MEC), Sharon E. David, (SED), William T. Depew (WTD), Ben Di Labio (BDL), Bruce M. Di Labio (BMDL), Pete Freeman (PeF), Lev Frid (LeF), Cole Gaerber (CoG), Karen Geoffrey (KaG), Peter J. Good (PJG), Janis C. Grant (JCG), Amanda Guercio (AmG), John Haig (JoH), Stew E. Hamill (SEH), Phil Harvey (PhH), Kurt J. Hennige (KJH), Bill Hiemstra (BiH), Chantal Imbeault (ChI), Michael A. Johnson (MAJ), Paul Jones (PaJ), Barry Kant (BaK), Andrew E. Keaveney (AEK), Steve Kelling (StK), Leah Kiil (LeK), Andrea Kingsley (AnK), Dale Kristensen (DaK), John Lanteigne (JoL), Rachel Lewis (RaL), John A. Licharson (JAL), Michelle Locke (MiL), V. Paul MacKenzie (VPM), Lana Marion (LaM), Paul R. Martin (PRM), Greg McIntosh (GrM), Ralph Morgan (RaM), Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN), Barbara O'Neill (BON), Todd A. Norris (TAN), Linda J. Nuttall (LJN), Mark J. Patry (MJP), Gerard J. Phillips (GJP), Mark D. Read (MDR), Bruce E. Ripley (BER), Dan Roberts (DaR), Jim Robinson (JiR), Raleigh Robinson (RaR), Martin J. Roncetti (MJR), Dominic Sherony (DoS), Gerard Smith (GeS), Lynn Sprott (LyS), Nina Stavlund (NiS), Ted Stewart (TeS), Michael Tetlow (MiT), James E. Thompson (JET), Matthew Tobey (MaT), William von Herff (WvH), Peter Waycik (PeW), Kathy Webb (KAW).

## 4 Annual Bird Report 2020

*by Mark D. Read*

There were 271 species of birds seen within the Kingston Area in 2020, a 50-kilometre radial circle centred on MacDonald Park, Kingston. Most of the records submitted to the Kingston Rare Bird Committee have been reviewed (see below) but a couple still remain. In addition, the committee has decided to hold over/re-review a few records of Long-billed Dowitcher due to the complexities of identification. No known additional records went directly to the Ontario Birds Records Committee (OBRC) – but as they don't publish until August, any updates or corrections will be noted in Vol. 69 No. 2.

There are 3 additions to the 2019 report:

**Chuck-will's-widow**, 16 May, Prince Edward Point area, Mike Cadman

**Cattle Egret**, 6-12 June, Joyceville, Chris Heffernan et al.

**Spotted Towhee**, 19 November - 27 March, Prince Edward Point, Paul B. Jones.

This brings to total for 2019 to 270. This update is reflected in Table 1 below.

Compared with the 30-year average of 278 (1990-2019), 2020 was down on species but is a slight improvement over recent years. It is interesting to

note the decreased average in the 2010s compared to earlier decades. Yearly totals for the last 30 years are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Annual total bird species for the Kingston Area 1990 to 2020.**

Year	Total	Year	Total	Year	Total	Year	Total
1990	279	2000	282	2010	281	(2020	271)
1991	281	2001	285	2011	277		
1992	281	2002	287	2012	279		
1993	293	2003	282	2013	266		
1994	283	2004	280	2014	272		
1995	280	2005	278	2015	264		
1996	285	2006	274	2016	263		
1997	283	2007	272	2017	274		
1998	283	2008	272	2018	270		
1999	278	2009	281	2019	270		
<b>Avg.</b>	<b>283</b>		<b>279</b>		<b>272</b>		<b>(271)</b>

## Kingston Rare Bird Committee

The 2020 committee comprised Mark Read as Chair, with Erwin Batalla, Mike Burrell, Ken Edwards, Kurt Hennige, Paul Martin and Doug McRae as standing members. In total, they were tasked with reviewing 19 records. All members, including the chair, have a vote. For a species to be confirmed, 6 or 7 members must vote in favour. The first round of voting is 'closed,' allowing members to cast an unbiased vote. If a second-round vote is required, comments and decisions from the first round are circulated. Rounds 1 and 2 are conducted electronically but if a third vote is required, members meet in person. At this stage, if a record is still not confirmed, it is left as 'unconfirmed.'

The following records were confirmed by the 2020 committee:

**Cattle Egret:** 6-12 June 2019, Joyceville, Chris Hefernan et al.

**Eared Grebe:** 12 November 2020, Amherst Island, Jon P. Ruddy et al.

**Fish Crow:** 3 September 2020, City Park, Kingston, Chris Boccia.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** 6-22 October 2020, Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island, Kevin Bleeks/Ken Robinson et al.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** 12-17 October 2020, Button Bay, Wolfe Island, Mark D. Read et al.

**Lark Sparrow:** 24-25 October 2020, Elevator Bay, Kingston, Gerard Phillips et al.

**Pacific Loon:** 29 October 2020, Howe Island, Gerard Phillips.

**Summer Tanager:** 15 May 2020, Prince Edward Point, Kyle Blaney.

**Summer Tanager:** 5 May 2020, Owl Woods, Amherst Island, Kurt Hennige.

**Townsend's Solitaire:** 20 March 2020, Deer Park Lane, Desert Lake, Mary Rae.

**Western Meadowlark:** 3 May 2020, Prince Edward Point area, Ken Edwards et al.

There were also several records added to the 2020 list that would normally be reviewed by the Kingston RBC but were accepted by authorities in New York State (all with excellent supporting photos). These include:

**American Avocet** (28 April – 4 May, Cape Vincent, NY)

**Black-legged Kittiwake** (15 October, Tibbetts Point, NY)

**Western Tanager** (30 June, Henderson, NY)

An analysis of the last 10 years was conducted so that it will now be easier to track which species should be on the review list, and therefore require documentation in any given year. The criterion for this is, “a species that has been recorded 5 or fewer times in the preceding 10 years.” This will allow for a yearly update to the checklist to be produced – hopefully this update will be added to the KFN website later this summer. At any time, an eBird reviewer may also ask the Chair to distribute a record that they would prefer to be reviewed by the committee. Long-billed Dowitcher is a review species

due to its tricky identification.

The KFN bird list remains at 381. Good finds, not noted above, include Ross’s Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, King Eider (NY), Barrow’s Goldeneye, Whimbrel, Red Knot, Little Gull, Black Vulture, Golden Eagle, Gyrfalcon, Sedge Wren, Nelson’s Sparrow, and Henslow’s Sparrow (NY).

In addition to the work conducted by the rare bird committee, weekly bird reports are compiled and submitted to the Ontario Field Ornithologist’s (OFO) listserv ‘Birdnews.’ These reports are also hosted on the KFN website. Quarterly bird reports are also compiled and submitted for publication in The Blue Bill. In the past a summary of significant observations was also sent to the American Birding Association’s publication ‘North American Birds’ but due to the lack of an Ontario compiler this has lapsed but is due to resume this year. Volunteers have also begun writing site guides for birding hotspots in the Kingston area. Anthony Kaduck recently completed an excellent guide to birding at Marshlands Conservation Area in Kingston which is now published on the website. Erwin Batalla and Phil Harvey compiled a pictorial guide to some of the regular birds to the Kingston area, and it is also available on the website.

**Table 2: List of bird species seen in the Kingston area during 2020 with date of first sighting and associated observers.**

Species	Date	Observer(s)
Snow Goose	14 Jan	Richard Brouse
Ross’s Goose	11 Jan	William Bradford
Greater White-fronted Goose	04 Jan	Mark D. Read
Brant	14 May	Kevin Bleeks
Cackling Goose	04 Jan	Mark D. Read
Canada Goose	01 Jan	Kenneth Ross
Mute Swan	01 Jan	Peter Waycik
Trumpeter Swan	01 Jan	Mark D. Read
Tundra Swan	01 Jan	Peggy Hauschildt
Wood Duck	22 Jan	Kurt Hennige
Blue-winged Teal	09 Mar	Kurt Hennige and Paul Mackenzie
Northern Shoveler	02 Jan	Kurt Hennige



List of bird species seen in the Kingston area during 2020 with date of first sighting and associated observers (continued) ...

Species	Date	Observer(s)
Gadwall	01 Jan	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault
Eurasian Wigeon	15 Nov	Christian Artuso and Alex Stone
American Wigeon	05 Jan	Paul Mackenzie
Mallard	01 Jan	Kenneth Ross
American Black Duck	01 Jan	Kurt Hennige
Northern Pintail	05 Jan	Erwin Batalla
Green-winged Teal	17 Jan	Gaye Beckwith
Canvasback	01 Jan	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault
Redhead	01 Jan	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault
Ring-necked Duck	02 Jan	Martin Roncetti
Greater Scaup	01 Jan	Gray Carlin and Jessica Brousseau
Lesser Scaup	01 Jan	Chris Shannen
King Eider	02 Dec	Richard Brouse
Surf Scoter	10 Apr	Paul Jones
White-winged Scoter	01 Jan	Paul Mackenzie
Black Scoter	02 Feb	Robert Scrimger
Long-tailed Duck	01 Jan	Gray Carlin and Jessica Brousseau
Bufflehead	01 Jan	Gray Carlin and Jessica Brousseau
Common Goldeneye	01 Jan	Mark D. Read
Barrow's Goldeneye	03 Jan	Richard Brouse
Hooded Merganser	01 Jan	Peggy Hauschildt
Common Merganser	01 Jan	Paul Mackenzie
Red-breasted Merganser	01 Jan	Paul Mackenzie
Ruddy Duck	14 Mar	Jeff Bolsinger
Ring-necked Pheasant	02 Jan	Brian Miller
Ruffed Grouse	01 Jan	Todd Norris
Wild Turkey	01 Jan	Mark Chojnacki
Pied-billed Grebe	03 Jan	Gaye Beckwith, Gary Hillaby, Sherri Jensen
Horned Grebe	01 Jan	Paul Jones
Red-necked Grebe	10 Apr	Paul Jones
Eared Grebe	12 Nov	Jon P. Ruddy
Rock Pigeon	01 Jan	Martin Roncetti
Mourning Dove	01 Jan	Kathy Webb
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	20 May	Mark Chojnacki

List of bird species seen in the Kingston area during 2020 with date of first sighting and associated observers (continued) ...

Species	Date	Observer(s)
Black-billed Cuckoo	17 May	Anonymous eBirder
Common Nighthawk	16 May	James Thompson and Gary Ure
Eastern Whip-poor-will	01 May	Carolyn Bonta
Chimney Swift	03 May	Barbara O'Neill
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	03 May	Ralph Morgan
Virginia Rail	09 Apr	Mark D. Read
Sora	18 Apr	Mark D. Read
Common Gallinule	15 Apr	John Licharson
American Coot	09 Feb	Gerard Phillips
Sandhill Crane	24 Mar	Stephanie Davison and Chris Hefferman
American Avocet	28 Apr	Jeff Bolsinger
Black-bellied Plover	21 May	James Thompson, Lana Marion and Barbara O'Neill
American Golden-Plover	12 Sep	Jenny Newton and Brenda Leduc
Semipalmated Plover	13 May	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault and Erwin Batalla
Killdeer	26 Feb	Pamela Stagg
Upland Sandpiper	18 Apr	Robert Watkins
Whimbrel	22 May	Janis Grant and Paul Mackenzie
Hudsonian Godwit	06 Oct	Kevin Bleeks and Ken Robinson
Ruddy Turnstone	31 May	Kurt Hennige and Steve Coates
Red Knot	24 Aug	Erwin Batalla
Stilt Sandpiper	08 Aug	Sarah Dzielski and Alex Cook
Sanderling	02 Jun	Paul Mackenzie
Dunlin	01 May	Mark Patry
Baird's Sandpiper	05 Aug	Jeff Bolsinger
Least Sandpiper	04 May	Kevin McGann
White-rumped Sandpiper	22 Sep	Chris Grooms and Kurt Hennige
Pectoral Sandpiper	27 Apr	Mark D. Read
Semipalmated Sandpiper	16 May	Ken Robinson
Short-billed Dowitcher	11 Jul	Bruce Ripley
Long-billed Dowitcher	09 Oct	John Licharson
American Woodcock	08 Mar	Paul Mackenzie
Wilson's Snipe	20 Mar	Bruce Ripley

List of bird species seen in the Kingston area during 2020 with date of first sighting and associated observers (continued) ...

Species	Date	Observer(s)
Wilson's Phalarope	01 May	Mark Patry
Red-necked Phalarope	08 Sep	Kurt Hennige and Kevin Bleeks
Spotted Sandpiper	28 Apr	Kurt Hennige
Solitary Sandpiper	03 May	Robert Watkins
Greater Yellowlegs	02 Apr	Cecile and Morris Yarrow
Lesser Yellowlegs	29 Apr	Kevin Bleeks
Black-legged Kittiwake	15 Oct	Steve Kelling
Bonaparte's Gull	24 Mar	Erwin Batalla
Little Gull	01 Apr	Rick Szabo
Ring-billed Gull	01 Jan	Kenneth Ross
Herring Gull	01 Jan	Paul Mackenzie
Iceland Gull	12 Jan	Mark D. Read
Lesser Black-backed Gull	31 Jan	Nancy E. McPherson, Barbara Charlton and Garth V. Riley
Glaucous Gull	01 Jan	Kurt Hennige
Great Black-backed Gull	01 Jan	Kurt Hennige
Caspian Tern	27 Mar	Jack Hughes
Black Tern	01 May	Irene Mazzocchi
Common Tern	28 Apr	Phil Harvey
Red-throated Loon	22 Oct	Blair Dudeck
Pacific Loon	29 Oct	Gerard Phillips
Common Loon	01 Jan	Paul Mackenzie
Double-crested Cormorant	12 Mar	Kurt Hennige
American Bittern	07 Apr	Mark D. Read
Least Bittern	06 May	Kurt Hennige
Great Blue Heron	01 Jan	Gray Carlin and Jessica Brousseau
Great Egret	15 Apr	Cecile and Morris Yarrow
Cattle Egret	17 Oct	Brenda Leduc and Jenny Newton
Green Heron	28 Apr	James Darling
Black-crowned Night-Heron	17 Apr	Erwin Batalla
Black Vulture	28 Apr	Paul Martin
Turkey Vulture	09 Feb	Chris Grooms
Osprey	28 Mar	Lee Ellsworth
Golden Eagle	21 Mar	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault

List of bird species seen in the Kingston area during 2020 with date of first sighting and associated observers (continued) ...

Species	Date	Observer(s)
Northern Harrier	01 Jan	Barbara Charlton, Jean Iron and Garth V. Riley
Sharp-shinned Hawk	12 Jan	Dave Shannon
Cooper's Hawk	02 Jan	Martin Roncetti
Northern Goshawk	07 Jan	Paul Martin
Bald Eagle	01 Jan	Mark D. Read
Red-shouldered Hawk	18 Jan	James Thompson
Broad-winged Hawk	18 Apr	North Leeds Birders
Red-tailed Hawk	01 Jan	Kenneth Ross
Rough-legged Hawk	01 Jan	Michael Johnson and Carolyn Bonta
Eastern Screech-Owl	04 Jan	Mark D. Read
Great Horned Owl	01 Jan	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault
Snowy Owl	01 Jan	Chris Shannen
Barred Owl	01 Jan	Todd Norris
Long-eared Owl	03 Jan	John Licharson
Short-eared Owl	05 Jan	Tina Sawicki
Northern Saw-whet Owl	20 Jan	Steve Kelling
Belted Kingfisher	01 Jan	Gray Carlin and Jessica Brousseau
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	20 Jan	Kathy Webb and William Depew
Red-headed Woodpecker	08 Mar	Carolyn Bonta
Red-bellied Woodpecker	01 Jan	Kathy Webb
Downy Woodpecker	01 Jan	Gaye Beckwith
Hairy Woodpecker	01 Jan	Mark D. Read
Pileated Woodpecker	02 Jan	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault
Northern Flicker	02 Jan	David Pryor
American Kestrel	01 Jan	Kurt Hennige
Merlin	01 Jan	Jim Palmer
Gyr Falcon	05 Jan	Jenny Newton and Mark D. Read
Peregrine Falcon	06 Jan	Chantal Imbeault
Olive-sided Flycatcher	17 May	Phil Harvey
Eastern Wood-Pewee	12 May	Martin Roncetti
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	18 May	Martin Roncetti
Alder Flycatcher	16 May	Mark Patry
Willow Flycatcher	16 May	Ken Robinson
Least Flycatcher	02 May	Steve Coates

List of bird species seen in the Kingston area during 2020 with date of first sighting and associated observers (continued) ...

Species	Date	Observer(s)
Eastern Phoebe	24 Mar	Paul Jones
Great Crested Flycatcher	02 May	Mark Chojnacki
Eastern Kingbird	02 May	Cecile and Morris Yarrow
Yellow-throated Vireo	02 May	Paul Mackenzie
Blue-headed Vireo	28 Apr	Jorden Matthews
Philadelphia Vireo	14 May	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault
Warbling Vireo	02 May	Kurt Hennige
Red-eyed Vireo	07 May	Jenny Newton
Loggerhead Shrike	04 Apr	Tom Wheatley
Northern Shrike	01 Jan	Paul Jones
Blue Jay	01 Jan	Gaye Beckwith
American Crow	01 Jan	Kenneth Ross
Fish Crow	03 Sep	Chris Boccia
Common Raven	01 Jan	Mark D. Read
Black-capped Chickadee	01 Jan	Kenneth Ross
Tufted Titmouse	14 Feb	Gerard Phillips
Horned Lark	14 Jan	Mark D. Read
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	09 Apr	Chris Heffernan
Purple Martin	19 Apr	Kurt Hennige
Tree Swallow	21 Mar	Richard Brouse
Bank Swallow	27 Apr	Brent Lewis
Barn Swallow	07 Apr	Kurt Hennige
Cliff Swallow	25 Apr	Kurt Hennige
Golden-crowned Kinglet	01 Jan	Anthony Kaduck
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	07 Jan	Paul Martin
Red-breasted Nuthatch	01 Jan	Todd Norris
White-breasted Nuthatch	01 Jan	Kenneth Ross
Brown Creeper	01 Jan	Todd Norris
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	03 May	Kyle Blaney
House Wren	09 Apr	Anthony Kaduck
Winter Wren	14 Jan	Paul Jones
Sedge Wren	22 May	Anonymous eBirder
Marsh Wren	02 Jan	Jeff Bolsinger
Carolina Wren	01 Feb	Bruce Ripley
European Starling	01 Jan	Kenneth Ross

List of bird species seen in the Kingston area during 2020 with date of first sighting and associated observers (continued) ...

Species	Date	Observer(s)
Gray Catbird	02 Feb	Steve Kelling
Brown Thrasher	09 Jan	John Haig
Northern Mockingbird	01 Jan	Jenny Newton
Eastern Bluebird	03 Jan	Paul Jones
Townsend's Solitaire	12 Mar	Steven Mix
Veery	03 May	Lana Marion
Gray-cheeked Thrush	16 May	John Licharson
Swainson's Thrush	13 May	Sharon David and Peter Waycik
Hermit Thrush	07 Jan	Paul Martin
Wood Thrush	25 Apr	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault
American Robin	01 Jan	Kenneth Ross
Bohemian Waxwing	23 Feb	Ken Ball
Cedar Waxwing	01 Jan	Gray Carlin and Jessica Brousseau
House Sparrow	01 Jan	Tom Wheatley
American Pipit	06 May	Kathy Webb and William Depew
Evening Grosbeak	05 May	Janet Scott
Pine Grosbeak	07 Nov	Todd Norris
House Finch	01 Jan	Martin Roncetti
Purple Finch	03 Jan	John Licharson
Common Redpoll	06 Jan	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault
Hoary Redpoll	05 Nov	Mark D. Read
Red Crossbill	07 Feb	Todd Norris
White-winged Crossbill	12 Jun	Todd Norris
Pine Siskin	05 Apr	Michael Hart
American Goldfinch	01 Jan	Gaye Beckwith
Lapland Longspur	12 Jan	Mark D. Read
Snow Bunting	05 Jan	Paul Martin
Grasshopper Sparrow	02 May	Chantal Imbeault
Chipping Sparrow	07 Jan	Ted Stewart
Clay-colored Sparrow	08 May	Erwin Batalla
Field Sparrow	15 Jan	North Leeds Birders
Lark Sparrow	24 Oct	Gerard Phillips
American Tree Sparrow	01 Jan	Todd Norris
Fox Sparrow	30 Mar	Paul Mackenzie
Dark-eyed Junco	01 Jan	Gaye Beckwith

List of bird species seen in the Kingston area during 2020 with date of first sighting and associated observers (continued) ...

Species	Date	Observer(s)
White-crowned Sparrow	23 Jan	Bruce Ripley
White-throated Sparrow	01 Jan	Gray Carlin and Jessica Brousseau
Vesper Sparrow	07 Apr	James Thompson
Nelson's Sparrow	27 Sep	Kurt Hennige
Savannah Sparrow	30 Jan	Kurt Hennige
Henslow's Sparrow	21 May	Gregg Dashnau
Song Sparrow	01 Jan	Kurt Hennige
Lincoln's Sparrow	09 May	Mark D. Read
Swamp Sparrow	31 Mar	Mark D. Read
Spotted Towhee	01 Jan	Gray Carlin and Jessica Brousseau
Eastern Towhee	01 Apr	Barbara O'Neill
Bobolink	01 May	Irene Mazzocchi
Western Meadowlark	03 May	Ken Edwards
Eastern Meadowlark	11 Mar	Mark D. Read
Orchard Oriole	09 May	Janine Psutka
Baltimore Oriole	02 May	Steve Coates
Red-winged Blackbird	03 Jan	Peter Waycik
Brown-headed Cowbird	03 Jan	Paul Jones
Rusty Blackbird	05 Jan	Simone Merey
Common Grackle	01 Jan	Gray Carlin and Jessica Brousseau
Ovenbird	29 Apr	Carolyn Bonta
Louisiana Waterthrush	05 May	Bruce M. Di Labio
Northern Waterthrush	25 Apr	Todd Norris
Golden-winged Warbler	11 May	Todd Norris
Blue-winged Warbler	13 May	Sharon David and Peter Waycik
Black-and-white Warbler	29 Apr	Erwin Batalla
Tennessee Warbler	05 May	Michael Hart
Orange-crowned Warbler	10 May	Mark D. Read
Nashville Warbler	03 May	Gary Ure
Mourning Warbler	17 May	Mark D. Read
Common Yellowthroat	03 May	Nick Bartok
Hooded Warbler	05 Jun	Bill Gruenbaum
American Redstart	03 May	Jorden Matthews
Cape May Warbler	03 May	Kyle Blaney
Cerulean Warbler	16 May	Gary Ure



List of bird species seen in the Kingston area during 2020 with date of first sighting and associated observers (continued) ...

Species	Date	Observer(s)
Northern Parula	03 May	Kyle Blaney
Magnolia Warbler	13 May	James Thompson, Lana Marion and Barbara O'Neill
Bay-breasted Warbler	12 May	Paul Mackenzie, John Licharson and Janis Grant
Blackburnian Warbler	11 May	Ralph Morgan
Yellow Warbler	01 May	Daniel Miller
Chestnut-sided Warbler	05 May	Barbara O'Neill
Blackpoll Warbler	17 May	Dianne Croteau and Richard Brault
Black-throated Blue Warbler	02 May	Crystal Kirkman
Palm Warbler	13 Apr	Paul Jones
Pine Warbler	11 Apr	Erwin Batalla, Gaye Beckwith, and Gary Hillaby
Yellow-rumped Warbler	02 Jan	Paul Jones
Prairie Warbler	12 May	Raymond Spahn
Black-throated Green Warbler	01 May	James Thompson
Canada Warbler	17 May	Mark D. Read
Wilson's Warbler	17 May	Kurt Hennige
Summer Tanager	05 May	Kurt Hennige
Scarlet Tanager	13 May	Raymond Spahn
Western Tanager	30 Jun	Julie West
Northern Cardinal	01 Jan	Martin Roncetti
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	28 Apr	Cecile and Morris Yarrow
Indigo Bunting	13 May	Robin Booth

## 5 Spring Round-up 2021

*by Erwin Batalla*

The weather for the 64<sup>th</sup> KFN Spring Round-up was very good. To gather a snapshot of the birds in the whole study area (circle with a radius of 50 km centered on Kingston) in migration, small groups and individuals went to a variety of locations to determine the number of birds of different species that were passing through our area this

spring. Birds were recorded between noon Friday, May 21 and noon Sunday, May 23. Because of COVID restrictions, no field trips to Important Bird Areas were organized during the round-up this year.

Once again, Gaye and Betsy Beckwith assembled the largest group with Richard Brault and Dianne

Croteau, Gary Hillaby and Jane Revell, Mike and Liz Evans and Phil Harvey with Nadia. With that many eyeballs, they found Red-shouldered Hawk and Louisiana Waterthrush on Canoe Lake Road but they had to rely on veteran Round-up participants, Mike and Liz Evans, to locate a pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers on James Wilson Road.

Most other eBird reports were submitted by individuals. Paul Mackenzie found a Northern Pintail at Martin Edwards Reserve; Kurt Hennige, a Ring-necked Pheasant on Amherst Island; Anthony Kaduck, two Pied-billed Grebes on Camden Lake; Kevin Bleeks, a Sandhill Crane and five Black-bellied Plovers at Kaiser Crossroad; Kyle Blaney, a White-rumped Sandpiper at Kaiser Crossroad; Matthew Tobey, a Red-throated Loon at Prince Edward Point; Bruce Ripley, a Least Bittern at the Moscow Marsh; Paul Jones, a Black-crowned Night-heron at Prince Edward Point; Gary Ure, a Barred Owl near Napanee.

Nathan Miller and his dad had a big day on Saturday visiting Amherst Island and tallying 108 species including a Peregrine Falcon and a late Rough-legged Hawk. On the same day, Ken and Andrew Edwards found Grey-cheeked Thrush and Hooded Warbler at Prince Edward Point. Jenny Newton visited all the counties and submitted 17 checklists while Tom Wheatley was a distant second with 13 checklists. Tom spotted an Olive-sided Flycatcher on Amherst Island.

Last year, no Alder flycatcher were seen but this year, they were observed in four counties. However, nobody scoured the Scheck Nature Reserve for the endangered Loggerhead Shrike.

Mark Read found a Horned Lark on Wolfe island; Chris Grooms, a Golden-crowned Kinglet

near Hay Bay; James Thompson, three Carolina Wrens in Napanee; Erwin Batalla and Alexandra Simmons, a Vesper Sparrow near Wilton Creek; Barbara O'Neill, three Golden-winged Warblers on Marble Rock Road; Peter Waycik, two Blue-winged Warblers on Howe Island and James Darling, two Cerulean Warblers on Opinicon Road.

With the slightly later date for the Round-up this year, the bulk of the warbler migration had taken place. As in 2019, we recorded 30 species of warblers, but the number of individuals was slightly down. Linda Mott found Tufted Titmouse and Prairie Warbler on the US side of the recording circle.

Other participants were: Caroline Biel, Christopher Boot, Daphne Christie, Steve Coates, Stephanie Davison, Uma d'Elia, Tom Dibblee, Bruce Elliott, Skyler Freeman, Dan Galvin, Charlotte Grabell, Janis Grant, Michael Hart, Christine Hough, Chantal Imbeault, Marlene Krami, Ellyn Lambert, Brenda Leduc, Brent Lewis, John Licharson, Richard Lott, Alastair Maclean, Todd Norris, Linda Nuttall, Lloyd Paul, Janine Psutka, Peter Reimer, Martin Roncetti, Kenneth Ross, Ted Stewart, Rick Szabo and Frances Tackaberry.

Over 70 participants took part and a total of 186 species were observed, well below the 200 mark achieved in 2019. No new species were added to the cumulative list. The table below shows the highest number of each species reported in a single checklist (eBird) for the four counties: Leeds and Grenville (L&G, 16 checklists), Frontenac (85 checklists), Lennox and Addington (L&A, 43 checklists), Prince Edward (PE, 19 checklists). Big misses, like Rusty Blackbird and several Ducks, are left as blank rows in the table.

**Table 3: 2021 Spring Round-Up Bird Counts**

Species	L & G	Frontenac	L & A	PE
Canada Goose	30	30	150	40
Mute Swan	43		4	2
Wood Duck	24	6	2	1
Blue-winged Teal		2	4	

## 2021 Spring Round-Up Bird Counts (continued) ...

Species	L & G	Frontenac	L & A	PE
Northern Shoveler			2	4
Gadwall		5	2	1
American Wigeon	1	1		
Mallard	4	14	10	4
American Black Duck		1	2	
Northern Pintail			1	
Ring-necked Duck				1
Greater Scaup				
White-winged Scoter				40
Long-tailed Duck				3
Bufflehead				
Common Goldeneye				
Hooded Merganser		12		
Common Merganser			12	3
Red-breasted Merganser		7	2	30
Ring-necked Pheasant			1	
Ruffed Grouse	1	1		3
Wild Turkey	1	2	1	2
Pied-billed Grebe		1	4	
Rock Pigeon	30	5	3	9
Mourning Dove	8	6	18	6
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		2		
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	1		1
Common Nighthawk		1		1
Eastern Whip-poor-will		2		1
Chimney Swift	18	1		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2	1	2	2
Virginia Rail	1	1	1	
Sora	1		1	1
Common Gallinule		2	4	
Sandhill Crane				1
Black-bellied Plover				5
Semipalmated Plover	5	4	3	9
Killdeer	1	7	10	46
Upland Sandpiper	2		1	
Dunlin		1	52	8

## 2021 Spring Round-Up Bird Counts (continued) ...

Species	L & G	Frontenac	L & A	PE
Least Sandpiper	4	1	12	6
White-rumped Sandpiper				1
Semipalmated Sandpiper		1	2	
Short-billed Dowitcher			1	
American Woodcock	1		2	1
Wilson's Snipe	1	1	4	1
Wilson's Phalarope			8	1
Spotted Sandpiper	4	6	15	1
Solitary Sandpiper			1	1
Greater Yellowlegs	2		2	
Lesser Yellowlegs	2		2	1
Bonaparte Gull				8
Ring-billed Gull		80	45	70
Herring Gull		4	25	15
Great Black-backed Gull				
Caspian Tern		4	2	4
Black Tern			10	
Red-throated Loon				1
Common Loon	3	1	3	2
Double-crested Cormorant	2	100	250	300
American Bittern	1	1	3	
Least Bittern			1	
Great Blue Heron	2	1	3	1
Great Egret			2	5
Green Heron		2	2	1
Black-crowned Night-heron				1
Turkey Vulture	7	6	12	8
Osprey	3	1	3	2
Northern Harrier		1	2	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1		
Cooper's Hawk		1	1	
Bald Eagle		1	1	
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	1		
Red-tailed Hawk		1	1	1
Rough-legged Hawk			1	
Great-horned Owl			1	

## 2021 Spring Round-Up Bird Counts (continued) ...

Species	L & G	Frontenac	L & A	PE
Barred Owl	1			
Belted Kingfisher		3	1	1
Red-headed Woodpecker		2		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		3		1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	1	4	1
Downy Woodpecker	1	2	3	1
Hairy Woodpecker		2	1	
Pileated Woodpecker	1	1		
Northern Flicker	1	3	1	2
American Kestrel		1	1	
Merlin		1		1
Peregrine Falcon		1	1	
Olive-sided Flycatcher			1	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	3	4	8	8
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			1	2
Alder flycatcher		1	1	1
Willow Flycatcher	1	1	1	1
Least Flycatcher		3	20	10
Eastern Phoebe	2	4	2	3
Great Crested Flycatcher	2	6	10	6
Eastern Kingbird	2	5	45	4
Yellow-throated Vireo	1	1		
Blue-headed Vireo	1	1		1
Philadelphia Vireo		2	1	3
Warbling Vireo	2	8	18	6
Red-eyed Vireo	12	10	20	35
Blue Jay	3	20	15	45
American Crow	4	4	10	3
Common Raven	2	2	8	1
Black-capped Chickadee	5	5	6	7
Tufted Titmouse				
Horned Lark		1		
Northern Rough-winged Swallow		3	4	6
Purple Martin		15	75	
Tree Swallow	1	10	100	3
Bank Swallow				1

## 2021 Spring Round-Up Bird Counts (continued) ...

Species	L & G	Frontenac	L & A	PE
Barn Swallow	2	5	25	15
Cliff Swallow		6	1	12
Golden-crowned Kinglet			1	
Red-breasted Nuthatch		2	1	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	2	3	3	1
Brown Creeper		1	1	
House Wren	1	8	10	5
Winter Wren	1	1		
Marsh Wren	1	3	3	
Carolina Wren	3	2		
European Starling	4	30	30	2
Gray Catbird		5	25	5
Brown Thrasher		2	15	2
Eastern Bluebird		2		2
Veery	1	1		
Grey-cheeked Thrush		1		1
Swainson's Thrush		3	6	4
Hermit Thrush		1		1
Wood Thrush	1	6	2	2
American Robin	13	12	35	20
Cedar Waxwing		2	4	20
House Sparrow		3	8	
House Finch	3	2	1	
Purple Finch	2	2		
Pine Siskin		1		1
American Goldfinch	3	7	12	7
Grasshopper Sparrow			4	
Chipping Sparrow	2	8	15	9
Clay-colored Sparrow			1	2
Field Sparrow	1	2	3	4
White-crowned Sparrow			1	5
White-throated Sparrow		1		3
Vesper Sparrow			1	
Savannah Sparrow		1	30	1
Song Sparrow	2	14	40	10
Lincoln's Sparrow		1		2

## 2021 Spring Round-Up Bird Counts (continued) ...

Species	L & G	Frontenac	L & A	PE
Swamp Sparrow	5	7	16	1
Eastern Towhee		7	5	14
Bobolink	6	4	40	2
Eastern Meadowlark	1	3	30	10
Orchard Oriole			3	
Baltimore Oriole	1	10	25	12
Red-winged Blackbird	24	25	65	35
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	5	15	4
Rusty Blackbird				
Common Grackle	10	20	60	8
Ovenbird	2	12	1	1
Louisiana Waterthrush		2		
Northern Waterthrush	3	7	1	1
Golden-winged Warbler	4	1		
Blue-winged Warbler		2		1
Black-and-white Warbler	6	2		2
Tennessee Warbler		1	18	9
Nashville Warbler		2	1	1
Mourning Warbler		1	1	2
Common Yellowthroat	3	14	8	7
Hooded Warbler				1
American Redstart	1	8	15	15
Cape May Warbler		1		1
Cerulean Warbler		2		
Northern Parula		1	1	1
Magnolia Warbler		4	8	3
Bay-breasted Warbler		1	1	10
Blackburnian Warbler		2	2	6
Yellow Warbler	5	20	80	70
Chestnut-sided Warbler	1	3	1	4
Blackpoll Warbler	1	2	3	10
Black-throated Blue Warbler		1	1	1
Pine Warbler	2	4	3	
Yellow-rumped Warbler		2		2
Prairie Warbler				
Black-throated Green Warbler	5	4	1	3



## 2021 Spring Round-Up Bird Counts (continued) ...

Species	L & G	Frontenac	L & A	PE
Canada Warbler		1	1	2
Wilson's Warbler		4		2
Scarlet Tanager	4	2		4
Northern Cardinal	3	3	5	5
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	4	18	6
Indigo Bunting	1	1	2	2
Region total	87	145	135	133



**Figure 2:** Least Bittern . (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 4:** Sandhill Crane . (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 3:** Pied-billed Grebe . (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 5:** Black-bellied Plover . (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 6:** Northern Pintail . (Peter Waycik)



**Figure 7:** Black-crowned Night-heron . (Peter Waycik)



**Figure 8:** Red-shouldered Hawk . (Phil Harvey)



**Figure 9:** Barred Owl . (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 10:** Red-headed Woodpecker . (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 11:** Peregrine Falcon . (Anthony Kaduck)





**Figure 12:** Olive-sided Flycatcher . (Peter Waycik)



**Figure 14:** Horned Lark . (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 15:** Golden-crowned Kinglet . (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 13:** Alder Flycatcher . (Peter Waycik)



**Figure 16:** Carolina Wren . (Janis Grant)





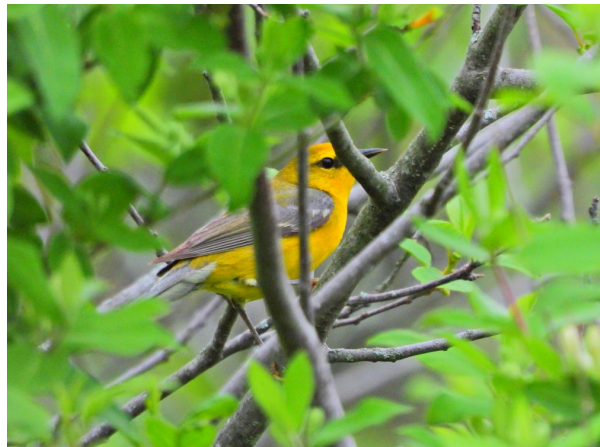
**Figure 17:** Grey-cheeked Thrush . (Peter Waycik)



**Figure 20:** Golden-winged Warbler . (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 18:** Vesper Sparrow. (Peter Waycik)



**Figure 21:** Blue-winged Warbler . (Peter Waycik)



**Figure 19:** Louisiana Waterthrush . (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 22:** Hooded Warbler . (Phil Harvey)



**Figure 23:** Cerulean Warbler . (Phil Harvey)



**Figure 24:** White-rumped Sandpiper . (Kurt Hennige)

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## Evening Song

by Rick Bortolotti

I was younger and  
I dreamed  
Of living in Rome

Not to say I won't—  
I've been moved

But never as hearing  
A thrush sing  
By lone pine pond

## 6 Articles

*Note from March 2021 article on Sedges: Paul Mackenzie would like to belatedly thank Dale Kristensen for contributing his expert advice and editing for the article on sedges.*

### 6.1 2020 Eastern Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Program Summary Report

*by Hazel Wheeler and Jane Hudecki*

The following article is reprinted with permission as it is of local interest to Kingston Field Naturalist members. The article is included as a series of images (one per page), so text can not be selected, links will not work and figure numbers will overlap with other figures in this issue.



## 2020 EASTERN LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE RECOVERY PROGRAM SUMMARY REPORT

*Prepared by:*

Hazel Wheeler, Lead Biologist  
Jane Hudecki, Conservation Breeding Coordinator

December 4, 2020

### COVID-19 PROGRAM IMPACTS

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This year, certain projects and initiatives related to the Loggerhead Shrike (LOSH) Recovery Program were impacted as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Initiatives that were significantly affected due to measures taken to mitigate the spread of the virus included:

- **Wild population surveying and monitoring:** Field biologists typically begin surveys of the wild LOSH population at the start of May, but this activity was delayed until June, with a single biologist working in each core. As such, data collection this year was limited relative to what would be achieved in a typical season.
- **Volunteer surveys:** The community science “Adopt-A-Site” program uses volunteers to survey assigned patches of LOSH habitat three times from April 15 to June 30. Twenty-four volunteers expressed interest in the program in early March, but WPC made the decision to cancel the program in early April, and all volunteers were contacted on April 9 with that notice.
- **Conservation breeding and release:** Due to border restrictions, closures, and staffing limitations at U.S. and Ontario partner breeding facilities, only a small number of pairs were introduced and given the opportunity to breed this season. As such, a limited number of juveniles were produced and transferred to field sites for release.
- **Public education and outreach:** LOSH program staff were scheduled to participate in several presentations and outdoor outreach events in the spring, all of which were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### WILD POPULATION

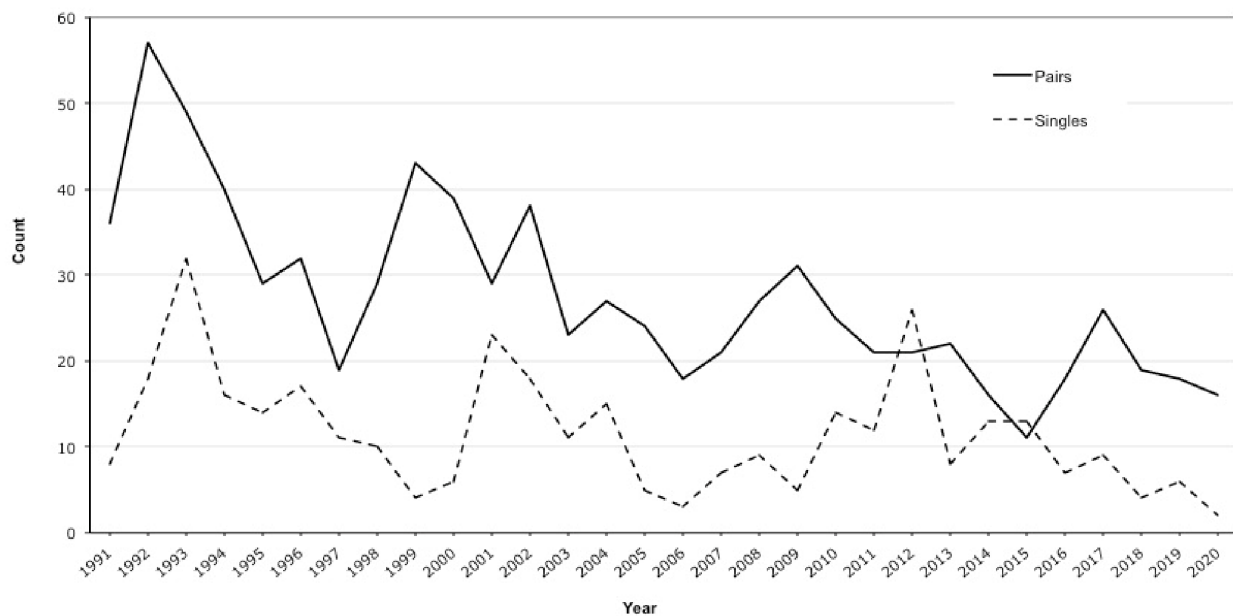
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#### Monitoring

**Sixteen pairs** of Loggerhead Shrike were confirmed in Eastern Canada this season: 11 in Napanee, 4 in Carden, and 1 in Smiths Falls (Fig. 1). Napanee continues to hold steady at 11 pairs for the third year running, but Carden showed a slight contraction, decreasing by one pair compared to 2019.



Sporadic isolated pairs are becoming something of a pattern near the Ontario-Quebec border, as at least one pair has been seen in that region in three of the last four years.



**Figure 1. Number of Loggerhead Shrike pairs and single birds in Ontario and Quebec**

All pairs observed in Carden this year fledged young, as did all but one pair in Napanee. **Forty-one fledglings** were confirmed this year (28 in Napanee, 13 in Carden), and the average number of fledglings per successful nest (2.9) showed a modest increase from 2019 (2.4). This number is almost certainly an underestimate, however, as staff observation of one nest started after young had already fledged. Further, survey and monitoring effort was generally lower than usual this year because of the late start to the season and the lack of field assistants in each core.

The breeding status and outcome of the isolated pair in Smiths Falls is unknown as observations were largely completely opportunistically by local volunteers. However, this pair did persist on territory until August, so though a nest tree was never confirmed there were likely breeding attempts.

In addition to breeding pairs, at least two single birds were confirmed this year, both in Napanee. Single birds were actually encountered on four different sites, but only one of these birds was banded allowing definite identification. The remaining birds were all unbanded, or band status was undetermined; given the timing and location of the sightings they could not confidently be counted as three separate individuals, so they are conservatively counted as one.

Using conservative counts of confirmed pairs and single birds, the **observed LOSH population in Ontario for 2020 was 33 adults**. This is a significant drop from the 42 seen in 2019, but as mentioned previously, this is likely an underestimate of actual population size.

### Returning captive-bred birds

Eight captive-released birds were confirmed returning to Ontario breeding grounds this year. These captive-origin birds made up 24% of the population of adult shrike in eastern Canada.

Five of these birds were observed as part of breeding pairs with wild birds, two paired with birds of unknown origin either because the mate was never seen or it's band status was unconfirmed, and one was a single bird. Five of the seven birds in confirmed pairs bred successfully, with at least 12 fledglings confirmed (29% of all wild juveniles seen in Ontario); however, this fledgling count may be an underestimate, as one successful nest was confirmed after young had already fledged. Of the remaining two pairs, the outcome of one (in Smiths Falls) was unknown as regular monitoring by WPC staff was not possible, and the second pair's nest failed due to mammalian predation. The female of the latter pair was the one of captive origin, and she was not seen again following the nest failure.

Five of the returning birds were confirmed as 2019-releases (7.8% return rate), and the remaining three were 2018-releases. One of those 2018 birds was also seen in 2019, but with the addition of the two novel 2018-releases, the cumulative return rate for that year's cohort is 6.9% (up from 5.4% in 2019).

### Trapping and banding

Four wild LOSH were trapped and banded this year, all in Napanee. All birds were adults in breeding pairs. Additionally, one captive-origin adult was trapped in Napanee, but as this bird had a full band complement it was simply measured and released. All newly-caught birds were banded with OR/SI on right, to indicate wild birds caught in 2020. Regular behaviour was observed at all territories the day after trapping activities.

Following all trapping, 52% the observed adult LOSH population was banded. Band status was confirmed for all birds except two individuals. One of these may have been banded SI on the left, making it a captive-origin bird, but the lack of property access on this site made observations more challenging so it was never confirmed. The second bird was not directly observed, but presumed through observation of a single adult with fledglings on an isolated site later in the season. Though the nest was not located for this family group, the mate was assumed by virtue of the fledglings.

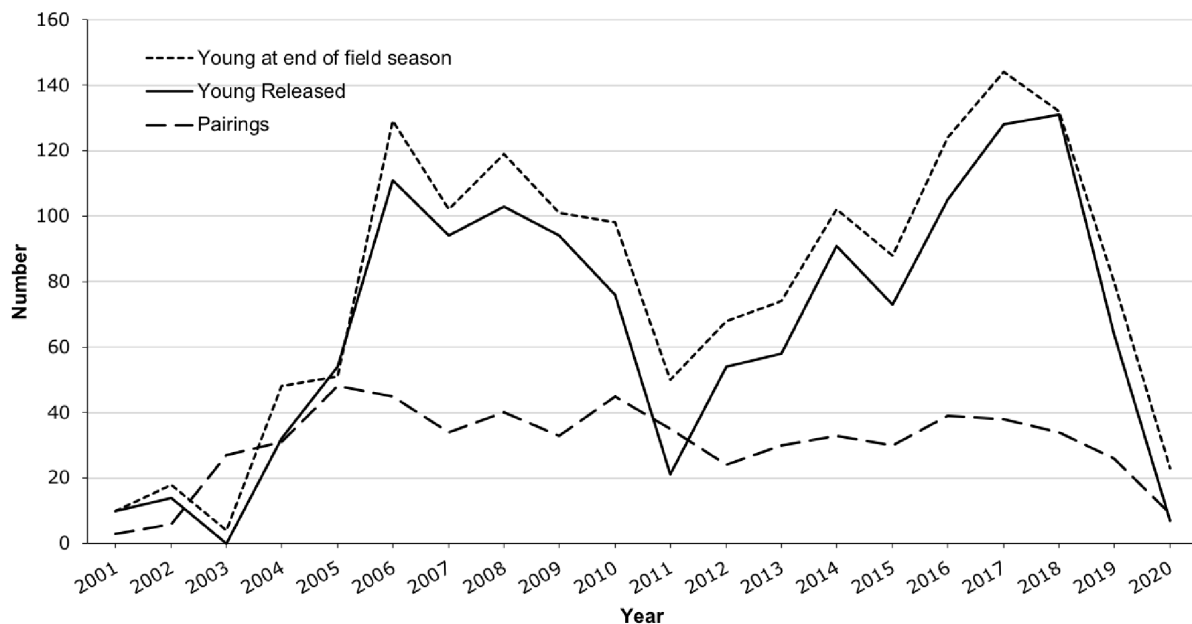
## CAPTIVE POPULATION

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### Captive breeding and release

Owing to limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic only 9 pairs were introduced and given the opportunity to rear young across partner facilities. **Six of these pairs produced 23 young** that survived to release or retention (Fig. 2). Seven of these young were released into the wild at our Carden field site, one was hand-raised as an outreach bird, and the remaining 14 were retained to add to the captive breeding population.





**Figure 2. Captive LOSH pairings, young surviving to end of season, and young released**

### **Banding and Radio Tags**

Twenty-one captive juvenile shrikes received stainless steel bands this season (7 released young and 14 retained young). Released birds that received colour-bands were given a combination that included OR/SI on the left leg to identify them as a 2020 release bird. All birds received some sort of temporary colour-marking (Sharpie) to aid in individual identification while in the release enclosures and during post-release monitoring.

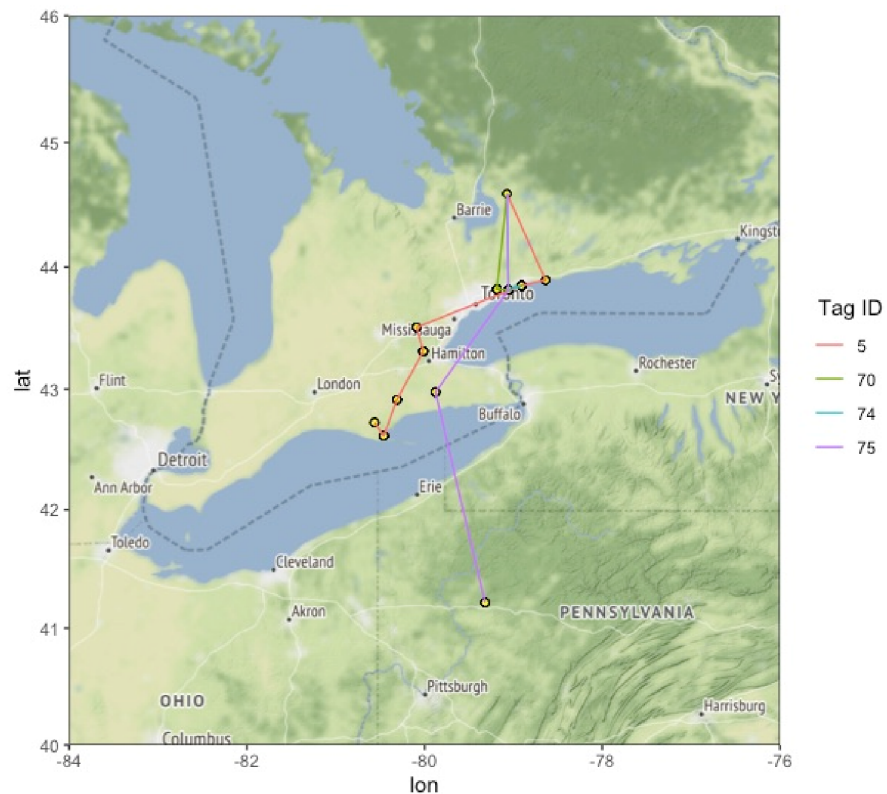
Radio-tagging was not conducted this year to prevent potential spread of COVID-19. Radio-tagging requires close contact by two staff people and subsequent handling of birds for pre-release checks, and every effort was made to reduce bird handling as much as possible this season to reduce risk to birds and staff.

### **Motus detections and band resightings**

Four of the 10 birds released in with radio tags in 2019 were detected by the Motus network that fall; all originated from the Carden release site and were hatched at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, one of our U.S. breeding partners (Fig 3). Three of the birds were only detected on towers in Ontario; the fourth bird was picked up on a tower in Pennsylvania approximately one month after being released. This is the second consecutive year of birds being detected in PA, and interestingly all detections appear to be on a similar path. Three of the tags deployed in 2019 had a 10-month battery life (compared to 5 months for tags deployed to that point) that would allow for spring detections, but no 2020 hits have yet been uploaded. However, one captive-bred LOSH was resighted during spring migration: a 2018-release that returned to breed in Napanee in 2019 was spotted near Meadville, PA on April 9/20. It was only seen the one day, but the observer submitted a picture so band combination could be confirmed. This bird was not resighted by WPC staff in Ontario during the field season.

No juveniles were released with radio-tags this year, due to low release numbers and efforts to maintain distance between staff.

**Figure 3. Fall 2019  
Motus detections for  
birds released that  
year.**



### Status of the captive breeding population

As of November 16 there were 66 birds in the captive population (including partner facilities in both Canada and the U.S.). Sixty-one of these birds are considered breeding stock, one is a retired bird that has aged out of the breeding population, three are education/exhibit birds, and one is a non-releasable non-breeding adult, retained from the 2019 breeding season. The current breeding stock includes: 48 birds that are 5 years or younger (HY 2015-2020), 12 birds that are 6-10 years old (HY 2010-2014), and one over 10 years old. Fifteen juveniles were retained this year following a decrease in breeding stock from off-season mortalities at African Lion Safari. One juvenile was hand-reared at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and will be housed there as an education and outreach ambassador.

### HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

Planning for stewardship projects is underway, with a focus this year on Napanee as several landowners with key areas of LOSH habitat have reached out about work that is needed on their properties. WPC also purchased a new Bush Hog this year, as the machine we had was in need of repairs and the parts were no longer available to bring it up to provincial safety standards. The unit is currently being held by a landowner in Napanee, and will be used for habitat stewardship over the winter.

## RESEARCH

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There are a number of ongoing research initiatives involving the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Program that are being led by graduate and post-graduate students, LOSH Working Group members, and Wildlife Preservation Canada staff. Projects that have continued through this year include:

- Expression of migratory urge in captive Loggerhead Shrikes
- Diet and food preference in captive Loggerhead Shrikes
- Identification of overwintering grounds and migratory routes
- Genomic tools for species conservation and management

In addition to research initiatives that have continued through 2020, two manuscripts were accepted for publication this year:

- Morgan, G., and A. Chabot. 2020. Visually Sexing Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius Ludovicianus*) Using Plumage Coloration and Pattern. *Journal of Visualized Experiments* 157: e59713 doi:10.3791/59713
- Schutten, K., A. Chabot, and H. Wheeler. In press. West Nile virus seroconversion in Eastern Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus migrans*) after vaccination with a killed vaccine. *Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine* [Publication anticipated March 2021]

Other manuscripts currently under review or in development include:

- Hudecki, J., H. Wheeler, and A. Chabot. Evidence and impact of plastic use by the Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*). Revised manuscript submitted for publication.
- Analysis of environmental contaminants in LOSH eggs
- Stainless steel band removal protocol
- Use of geolocators to study LOSH movements
- The value of quantitative genetics for conservation breeding: a review

## PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

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The majority of scheduled outreach events (in-person displays and presentations) were cancelled this year due to COVID-19. One virtual outreach event did occur, however: Hazel Wheeler, along with artists Richard Ibghy and Marilou Lemmens, was part of a panel discussion on July 21 hosted by the Wave Hill Public Garden and Cultural Centre in The Bronx, NY. The discussion followed a screening of Ibghy and Lemmens' video "Banding Young Eastern Loggerhead Shrikes in the Carden Alvar", which was recorded during the 2019 season, and included in their multimedia series, "The Violence of Care". The discussion was broadcast on Facebook live, and the recorded video remains accessible through the Wave Hill website (<https://www.wavehill.org/calendar/eco-urgency-ibghy-lemmens>).

The LOSH recovery Program was also mentioned in the following media pieces:

- "Minimalist art that speaks for the birds" (Gregory Volk, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020) – A Brooklyn-based arts and culture website that covered the Nebraska exhibit by Ibghy and Lemmens, which featured WPC (mentioned above) <https://hyperallergic.com/537920/minimalist-art-that-speaks-for-the-birds/> [Accessed October 27 2020]

- “Rebuilding troubled species takes decades of patience and persistence” (Aanders Gyllenhaal, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020) –personal blog which examined lessons from the LOSH program. Both Jane Hudecki and Hazel Wheeler quoted. <https://flyinglessons.us/2020/05/27/rebuilding-species-takes-decades-of-patience-and-persistence/> [Accessed October 27 2020]
- Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) – North American Songbird Working Group newsletter (Leighann Cline) – Cline (LOSH keeper at SCBI) wrote an article about their hand-reared education bird, Barb, for this newsletter. Article mentions WPC and the LOSH program, and directs any with interest in joining the program to contact Hazel Wheeler.

Finally, independent journalist, Luke Fuendling, attended the captive juvenile release in Carden this year, after which he wrote a piece about the LOSH program. It has not yet been published, but ON Nature has expressed interest.

## PROGRAM SUPPORT

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WPC is grateful to all supporters of Loggerhead Shrike recovery activities. Funding this year was provided by:

- Private foundations
- Private donors
- BluEarth Renewables
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Species at Risk Stewardship Program
- Colleges and Institutes Canada Career Launcher Internship
- Kingston Solar LP
- Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and Temporary Wage Subsidy

In addition, we would like to thank all the landowners, whose continued support and stewardship efforts are essential to recovery efforts.



## 6.2 Wildlife Photography Tips #8—Depth of Field

*by Anthony Kaduck*

In my early days as a wildlife photographer I was happy just to get a shot of the birds, beasts and insects I came across. But it wasn't long before I started wanting to take better photographs. Looking back critically at images from a few years ago I found that some of my photos, particularly of birds and butterflies, were not as fully in focus as I wanted them to be. It was time to get a better han-

dle on depth of field.

Depth of field is a relatively simple concept. Basically, it's the area in a photograph where objects are acceptably sharp. Aside from exotic specialist equipment, cameras can only focus on one point. That point, and anything else at the same distance from the camera, can be precisely in focus, but any-

thing nearer or farther will be less than optimally focused.

That's where "acceptably sharp" comes in. Because the reduction in sharpness happens gradually, there is a range within which objects are sharp enough that they appear to be in focus. The range between the nearest and farthest objects that are acceptably sharp is called the depth of field (DOF). So as long as your subject is within that range all will be well.

(Note that apparent sharpness changes when an image is printed in a larger format, or when the observer is closer to the image, so an image that is acceptably sharp in 5"×7" format may not be when blown up to 16"×20").

Landscape photographers obsess about getting maximum depth of field, and they use highly technical concepts such calculating hyperfocal distance to work out the optimal DOF. Depth of field preview functions, available on some camera models, are also used primarily in landscape photography. Fortunately we as wildlife photographers don't need or have time to delve into those issues because our targets are constantly moving.

For us there are two main reasons to consider depth of field: to ensure that the whole target bird, turtle or butterfly is in focus, and to make an artistic choice about how much of the background should be in focus.

So back to the challenge of getting better images. I noticed that some of my photos of birds and butterflies had insufficient depth of field: typically in images of birds taken at close range the tails would be out of focus, and for butterflies one antenna was in focus but the other one was not (see Figures 25 and 26).

To address this issue, we need to understand the two main factors that influence depth of field: aperture size and proximity to the subject. Larger apertures reduce depth of field, as does moving closer to the subject.

If you are interested in the technical explanation for why this is so, a search of the Internet will bring up multiple sources. I recommend you start with

Wikipedia or Cambridge in Colour. But I believe it is not necessary to understand the physics as long as you understand the effect.



**Figure 25:** Broad-winged Skipper. Right antenna out of focus. (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 26:** Broad-winged Skipper and Virginia Ctenucha. One insect out of focus. (Anthony Kaduck)

## Aperture

Before we begin this section let's refresh our memories about apertures. The aperture governs the amount of light passing through the lens. Larger apertures (bigger openings) are expressed by smaller numbers. Thus  $f/2.8$  is a large aperture, and  $f/11$  is a small aperture. Again, you can read up on the technical reasons for this or you can just remember the differences and move on.



The images below show the differences in depth of field as aperture size changes. Notice that the point of focus (the cocktail glass) remains constant, but the objects behind it start to become fuzzy as the aperture increases (i.e. the aperture number becomes smaller).



**Figure 27:** f/8 (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 28:** f/5.6 (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 29:** f/4 (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 30:** f/2.8 (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 31:** f/1.8 (Anthony Kaduck)

### Proximity

While increasing the aperture (changing to a lower f stop) reduces DOF in a linear manner; increasing your proximity to the subject reduces DOF as an inverse square law. So as you get closer to your subject DOF decreases radically – a major challenge for macro photography.

Butterflies and odonates present a special challenge. Because they are small the temptation is to get as close as possible. But that is where the inverse square law comes into play – get too close and your DOF will be so shallow that parts of the insect will be outside the acceptably sharp range.

### So how do I fix this?

The Canada Jay photos below show DOF in action. The birds were close (the images are uncropped) and there was not a lot of light available. Image 8 is taken at an aperture of f/6.3 and the tail is not acceptably sharp. Image 9, taken one half stop up at

f/7.1 is noticeably better. So in principle, when taking photos of close-in subjects a higher than normal f stop (i.e. a smaller than normal aperture) is recommended. For more distant subjects a mid-range aperture should suffice. (See figure 36 below).



**Figure 32:** Canada Jay at f/6.3 (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 33:** Canada Jay at f/7.1 (Anthony Kaduck)

As a rule of thumb if there is enough good light available, apertures in the f/7.1 to f/8 level should give you a good chance of capturing all the details of a bird that is relatively close.

For butterflies and odonates, a search through my files shows that in general I got better images from remaining a bit farther away, using a smaller aperture and letting my telephoto lens do its job.



**Figure 34:** White Admiral at f/8 (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 35:** White Peacock (Cuba) at f/10 (Anthony Kaduck)

If your subject is cooperative, remember that a key advantage of digital cameras is that you can check your images on the camera's monitor and see immediately whether the depth of field is correct.

### DOF and artistic composition

Having made the case that ensuring adequate depth of field is important, let's now look at a situation where you may want to limit DOF. Many sports and wildlife photographers subscribe to a fetish that background detail is to be avoided at all costs as they claim it detracts from the subject. In general I believe that wildlife is best depicted in its environment, and that means there should be background detail – an animal is not an icon to be shown detached from the ecosystem it inhabits.

However there are situations where the back-



ground detail would not add any value – perhaps it's too far away to be sharp regardless of the aperture setting, or perhaps the background is an unattractive pile of random scrub. In those cases choosing a field deep enough to just cover the subject can create an attractive effect. The Savannah Sparrow in the image below was perched on a fence with nothing behind it but long grass. In this case an aperture of  $f/5.6$  was enough to ensure that the bird, the wire and the one leaf below it are sharp, while the background is a sea of formless colour.



**Figure 36:** Hooded Mountain Tanager in its environment.  $f/5.6$  (Anthony Kaduck)



**Figure 37:** Savannah Sparrow  $f/5.6$  (Anthony Kaduck)

### Camera management for DOF

So... let's imagine that I have convinced you that

depth of field is a thing you should consider. How should you go about controlling it?

The first step is to confirm how your camera displays the critical information: aperture, shutter speed and film speed. This information is probably displayed in your viewfinder and/or on an information panel. Check your manual to be sure, and then make a habit of keeping an eye on the aperture setting.

### Modes

If you use the Programme or Automatic mode it suggests that you are relatively new to photography and need some help from the camera so you can concentrate on the subject. There is no shame here – everyone starts out using an automatic mode and those who aren't intent on getting the best possible images can happily stay in those modes. Just be aware that by leaving all the decisions to the camera you will have no control over depth of field.

Many of the more experienced photographers use one of the semi-automatic modes: Aperture Priority (shown on the mode selector as A for Nikon cameras and Av for Canons), or Shutter Priority (S for Nikon, Tv for Canon).

In Aperture Priority mode you control the aperture setting manually. The camera will make what it thinks are necessary adjustments by changing shutter speed and (if you enable Auto ISO) film speed. If you use this mode keep a close eye on the shutter speed. For wildlife (or plants if there is a breeze) you should use shutter speeds below  $1/500$  sec with extreme caution. Motion blur will ruin any image regardless of how well you have judged the depth of field. If you are in Aperture Priority mode and need more shutter speed you can select higher film speeds (ISO) until you reach a point where the camera boosts shutter speed to compensate.

In Shutter Priority mode you essentially give up control of the aperture setting. If there is not enough available light your camera will default to a wide open aperture setting regardless of what you might want to see from a depth of field perspective, though in fairness most of the afford-



able telephoto lenses have base apertures of  $f/5.6$  or more so even wide open there will still be some depth to the image. Again, increasing film speed will eventually cause the camera to compensate by stopping down the aperture.

There is a way to balance all elements of the light triangle – aperture, shutter speed and ISO – yourself to ensure that you can make the best decision under the circumstances. It involves taking the plunge into Manual mode – a topic for a future installment of this column.

Some random final notes

- If macro photography is your thing, one way to get around the issue of very shallow depth of field is to invest in a camera that allows focus stacking. This process involves taking a large number of images of the subject with the focus point moved slightly between each image. These images are then “stacked” using software to yield a single image that is in crisp focus from one end to the other. I have seen some amazing insect and flower images taken using focus stacking. One consideration, though, is that the subject has to remain completely immobile (which usually means it needs to be dead).
- Smaller apertures lead to greater depth of field, but only up to a point. Using apertures of  $f/11$  and above can bring diffraction into play. Without delving into the technical explanation, the bottom line is that diffraction can seriously degrade the sharpness of your image. So more isn’t always better.
- The notion that telephoto lenses have inherently shallow depth of field is a common myth that is repeated by many supposedly expert sites. A more accurate statement is that telephoto lenses appear to have a shallow depth of field because of the distribution of sharpness. Telephoto lenses tend to have an even distribution of acceptable sharpness in front of and behind the focus point, whereas for wide angle lenses the bias

is tilted to the areas behind the focus point. In landscape photography this is an advantage because it creates a more gradual fading away of sharpness towards the horizon. But the bottom line is that a given aperture (e.g.  $f/5.6$ ) will give the same depth of field with any focal length of lens.

- Finally, it is a fact that the size of the sensor on your camera affects DOF. Counterintuitively, the large sensor of a full frame camera will develop a shallower depth of field at a given  $f$  stop than a camera with a cropped sensor. This is an interesting factoid, but one that’s not particularly relevant to wildlife photography. If I were in the market for a new camera body I can think of a lot of factors that I would consider before I got down to that one.



**Figure 38:** I am acceptably sharp. (Anthony Kaduck)

### 6.3 Exploring the Backyard: Reminiscing on Backyards Past

*by Carolyn Bonta*

What is a backyard?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a backyard narrowly as “an area at the back of the house” (and other dictionaries further refine this to specify some degree of garden or landscaping) but also more broadly as “a nearby area” such as a neighbourhood. As an adjective, backyard is used to describe where something is located or occurs; it also refers to the skill set of one who lacks professional training in a certain realm. Over the years, I’ve put each of these definitions into practice.

My early childhood was spent poking about in the grass, veggie garden, and cedar hedge of our literal backyard. I spent hours playing in the sandbox with my Fisher Price farm set, utterly obsessed with herding a flock of obstinate beetles back into the sandy pastures I had created. The more docile of the two species were the June beetles, but I never managed to figure out to what species the larger (approximately 20 mm long), faster black beetles belonged. Any thoughts? Regardless, the beetles were more engaging than the tent caterpillars that stuck to their pile of leaves inside the barn and easier to contain in the paddock than the grasshoppers.

As the watchful eyes of my parents waned, pre-teen me would wander regularly to the closest patch of “natural” land in the neighbourhood. The 15-minute walk was worth it, especially in spring when the meadows would hold water and provide breeding habitat for American toads. My favourite book was a thin softcover called “Look What I Caught” (or was it “See What I Caught”?), a children’s guide to the different critters that an older sister and her younger brother had caught, complete with instructions for catching and briefly caring for these critters yourself. Armed with my net and pail, off I went to catch some tadpoles. Returning home, I told mum I needed a gallon jar (mum thought a fishbowl would do, but no – the book clearly specified a gallon jar) and some baby pablum. For the next month we’d raise the tadpoles into minuscule toadlets before releasing

them back in the damp meadows.

Two weeks every August through my early teen years were spent visiting my grandmother in Burlington, Ontario. My grandmother wasn’t a motherly type – she was happy to see me at meal-times only and I was equally happy to spend the long summer days roaming her 19+ acres of beautiful Niagara Escarpment lands. From catching frogs in a seepy area behind the house, to walks along an old dirt laneway looking for Dekay brownsnakes, to forays down into the ravine where I’d turn over countless rocks and logs in search of red-backed salamanders. Floating sticks down Grindstone Creek and wandering the Bruce Trail filled my time as I wondered about the bigger picture of where the water flowed and the trails led. My last visit to this “backyard” was in adulthood, hired by my family to negotiate land transfer to Conservation Halton for the purpose of protecting my grandmother’s property in perpetuity. I now dream of returning to these lands through an end-to-end hike of the Bruce Trail.

Into early adulthood, my backyard became whatever natural area surrounded me at the time. My Masters research had me based on the prairies: one summer, my backyard was the Sheyenne River valley in North Dakota, where I’d bike loops between the town of Fort Ransom by the river and the high prairie outside the valley so as to target the highest diversity of habitat (and therefore bird species) in the shortest distance. I never kept a bird list, although now I wish I had! Clay-coloured Sparrows called from the nearby ski hill, Swainson’s Hawks soared overhead, Western Meadowlarks sang their beautiful melody, and the marsh birds... oh, the marsh birds! The potholes were alive with the sounds of ducks, grebes, rails, coots and – my favourite – Yellow-headed Blackbirds. The following summer was spent a little further north, near Minnedosa, Manitoba, where my backyard forays brought one particularly memorable experience: While exploring my new ‘hood by bicycle, I encountered a badger loping down the dirt road. Fix-

ated on the animal, I approached until I was almost alongside. The badger tried to dart away, but the adjacent land was no longer field and, facing an inhospitable wetland, the badger turned to face me and stand its ground. The sight of its sharp incisors and long, strong claws was utterly frightful. Badger won: I departed quickly.

These past couple of months, between research and work, I don't roam far and "backyard" tends to be more of an adjective. In previous articles I've written about our backyard naturalization project, and edging the natural area are several new vegetable gardens. A green thumb I am not; rather, my thumbs – and I seem to be all thumbs when it comes to gardening – are simply browned with dirt. But still, my gardens produce an adequate supply of fresh veggies through much of the summer. I imagine myself as a small-scale "backyard

farmer" and marvel at the diversity of plant adaptations to different moisture conditions, nutrient levels, and soil types. Through cultivating garden vegetables I have gained enormous appreciation for the abilities of our native plants to exist, persist, and even thrive, despite anthropogenic and climate-related changes affecting their ecosystem.

My interest in nature has been with me since those earliest days in the sandbox. Guided by curiosity, willing to explore, and patient in investigating new discoveries, I've developed a broad knowledge of ecology and can identify numerous local species from many taxonomic groups. I'm no expert in a particular area and it's been years since I received any formal training relating to my interests. Without a doubt, I am a backyard naturalist – and very content to hold that title.

## 7 KFN Outings

### 7.1 Car Birding Kingston's West End Waterfront (March 14, 2021)

*by Jenny Newton*

*Can you help?* wrote Carolyn Bonta, KFN's Field Trip Coordinator, back in October in an email asking if I would consider running a short one-to-two-hour birding tour in my corner of Kingston. To say that I was surprised by the request was an understatement – what could I, a 16-month birder and graduate from Anthony Kaduck's 101 Birding course the year prior, possibly offer to the extremely experienced KFN membership? A conversation with Carolyn ensued where we discussed the difficulties of finding good spots to bird especially for new birders or ones new to the area, as well as the difficulty of birding with mobility issues. I explained how I mainly birded by car in quiet areas giving me the opportunity to sit unencumbered while I worked to identify new life birds. From this very illuminating discussion, a car birding tour was born! One that would take new birders or those looking for new birding hotspots from Portsmouth Olympic Harbour to the south parking lot of Lemoine Point Conservation Area.

Undeterred by Covid lockdowns, two tours were set for Sunday, 14 March, one beginning at 8:00 am and the second at 1:00 pm. Kyle Ruttan, my great friend and birding partner, joined me as my chauffeur, checklist scribe, fellow birder and photographer. We were joined in the morning by Janis Grant, Chris Cannon/Virginia Wakeford and, Diana Mansell/Ken Peer, and in the afternoon, by Peter Strahlendorf, John Dougan/Carla Baetz and Ray/Marlene Rothenbury – a birding group ranging from beginners to seasoned! Route maps and walkie talkies were passed to all, as well as a USB stick filled with "cheat sheets" I created to help me with my birding. My briefing (cannot take the military out of me!) ended with suggestions to look up at the prison for potential hawks perched along the roof tops; to observe the swallows in the summer diving over the inner harbour; and to enjoy the house sparrows living in the center's soffit.

Finally on our way, we toured Portsmouth Har-

bour exiting from the north side to travel west through the Portsmouth Village. Our next stop took us to Beechgrove Complex/Providence Care with a quick stop along the water's edge near the old, abandoned psychiatric hospital. This was followed up by a quick drive through Lake Ontario Park parking area. I pointed out the boat ramp at the foot of the hill explaining that it was a great spot to launch kayaks/canoes for birding Cataraqui Bay.

Commodore Cove at Trailhead Place South was our next point of interest. Here we disembarked for a few minutes. Walking between Cataraqui Bay and Elevator Bay, I explained how I regularly parked my car against the water's edge to scope out the duckies from my car seat. If I was up for a short hike, the trails along the quay also offered many species of birds to be observed. I regaled them with my story of trying to find the Lark Sparrow last year, which had been seen at the foot of the short quay located between the two bays. I actually missed seeing that rarity by minutes. Once we accounted for the few species in the area (thank you Janis for bringing out your scope), we drove across the street to the parking lot of Marshlands Conservation Area. Here, I pointed out the entrance to the 2 km trail running along the golf course, and highlighted the birds I had seen in the clearing while sitting in my vehicle.

Continuing west, we drove onto King Street West parking next to the Marshlands Bay across from the frozen Cataraqui Bay. Given the railway track located there, I reminded the participants that this was an active track and that they should always use caution when walking near it. After a few minutes of cold wind, we quickly moved towards our next stop – Invista Lagoons. Janis again brought out her scope to help identify the various waterfowl enjoying the warm waters of the lagoon. After exiting the Invista site, we pulled over to the shoulder on Front Road to observe the Dupont forest located in the Penitentiary field. Unfortunately, we had no luck seeing any Wild Turkeys or Bald Eagles, both regular frequenters of the forest. We then rode into the Reddendale neighbourhood, where I could point out three parkettes where birding could be enjoyed.

With another quick stop at Horsey Bay Parkette

located at Old Front and Front Roads, we slowly drove this quiet neighbourhood to Shingle Beach, then headed into the Norman Rogers Airport for a quick look-see. With the tour nearing its end, we took the time to observe the bird feeders at the foot of Lemoine Point and Front Road before ending our tour in the south parking lot of the conservation area.



**Figure 39:** Morning Tour All Done! (Kyle Ruttan)

With respect to the various species we observed along our route, the morning tour was much more fruitful. There was no doubt that siesta time was happening for our afternoon time frame! In total, 27 species were observed, which included a Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Common Goldeneyes, Hooded and Common Mergansers, Gadwalls, Mute Swans, Common Redpolls, Northern Cardinals and Song Sparrows. Between tours, Kyle and I actually observed a Bald Eagle fly over my home – a first for my yard checklist!

In anticipation of writing this article, I solicited comments from our participants so that I, as well as Carolyn, could determine if this type of field tour was worthwhile. Ray and Marlene wrote: "We discovered places we hadn't been before on the waterfront and you've rekindled excitement for birding that we seemed to have lost over this past isolating year." Chris added that both her and Virginia had lived in the area for over 40 years and had "never realized the wealth of sights in the Beechgrove complex" nor had they ever explored the Commodore Cove area: "That's another terrific spot."

Carla and John also expressed similar sentiments happy to have discovered “secret birding locations right in our own backyard. You have opened our eyes to the gems right here in Kingston.” Peter indicated that he planned to take his wife when he birded this area next. Diana and Ken, novice birders like Kyle and I, appreciated the USB with the birding cheat sheets – they are planning to upgrade

their own birding equipment and print out their own birding binder.

All in all, a successful day! I would like to take a moment to thank Carolyn for the opportunity to run these two Car Birding tours for KFN; Kyle for assisting me with all, especially the checklists; and for all the participants who took time out of their schedules to spend time with fellow birders.

## 7.2 Ramble to Butternut Creek (March 16, 2021)

*by Anne Robertson*

It was chilly when we gathered for a two hour ramble on 16 March. 18 members met on Innovation Drive to walk the Butternut Creek Trail to Gore Road and back—a good 4km. This urban trail has been well designed and planted with native species. It passes through woods and open areas as well as overlooking the Creek for part of the way with a few granitic outcrops at the south end.

The bird feeders on the backs of some houses bordering the trail encouraged a goodly selection of bird species, spectacularly over 100 Common Redpolls and also including Northern Cardinals, White-throated Sparrows, American Tree Sparrows and Song Sparrows. Some members were pleased to get their first sighting and hearing of male Red-winged Blackbirds for 2021. Downy Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch and Blue Jays were added to the list. Altogether 21 Bird species were seen including Bald Eagle.

The variety of trees and shrubs was impressive and included Red Pine (2 needles in a bunch which break when bent), White Pine (5 needles in a bunch), Bur Oak— both mature trees and some young specimens (buds concentrated at the tip of the twig and corky ridges of bark on the smaller branches), Black Cherry (its almost black bark is like squarish scales curving outwards), Red Cedar

with bark torn off and then shredded by a Red Squirrel for its nest.

Shrubs included Nannyberry (Caprifoliaceae), Serviceberry (the first flowering shrub of spring), Highbush Cranberry (the berries are a good native wild bird food), Grey and Red Osier Dogwoods, hawthorn, and the vines of Riverbank Grape and Bittersweet.

Bruce Elliott managed to capture a shot of a mink in the creek seen also by Bill.

Despite the heavy use of this trail it was an enjoyable walk with plenty of native species to observe.



**Figure 40:** Mink in Butternut Creek (Bruce Elliott)



### 7.3 Ramble to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area (April 6, 2021)

by Janis Grant

This Ramble took place on an exceptionally fine day with a clear sky and temperature averaging 8 degrees Celsius.

Anne had 10 people register for the excursion but unfortunately a more restrictive lock down because of Covid 19 was announced just before we were to start. Groups could be no larger than 5 members. This problem was solved by dividing into 2 groups; one primarily interested in looking at birds, led by me, Janis Grant, and a traditional, botany focused group led by Anne.



**Figure 41:** Birding group. (Janis Grant)

Using a staggered start, both groups began at the administration building and walked along Trail 4 which climbs into a reforested area which was once a farm. Trail 4 continues for 10 kilometers behind the old reservoir before joining other Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) trails. We, however, took a much shorter route, circling back to the parking lot after 2 kilometers.

The “birding group” saw a total of 16 bird species. The most spectacular find was a pair of Wood Ducks that had landed on tree branches in the woods. They were clearly looking for a nesting site. We thoroughly enjoyed the colourful plumage of the male duck. Other woodland birds were Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, American Crows, a Common Raven and Black-capped Chickadees. Once we left the woods, we observed an Eastern Phoebe with its characteris-

tic song, American Robins, Song Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds and a Northern Cardinal. In the pond near the parking lot were Canada Geese, several Gadwall and Mallards while overhead 5 Turkey Vultures circled.



**Figure 42:** Jane Revell feeds a chickadee. (Janis Grant)

Because of the warmth, insects were about as well. Bees were humming and we were lucky enough to see a Mourning Cloak and two Compton Tortoiseshells.



**Figure 43:** Compton Tortoiseshell. (Jane Revell)

Meanwhile Anne’s group of five first checked out some Red Pine needles. These paired needles snap in half when bent whereas Austrian Pine Needles do not. They later tasted red Basswood buds and

observed the fruits with bract attached for dispersal. By comparison they noticed the sulphur yellow buds of the Bitternut Hickory. They looked at Red Oak and American Beech leaves and compared Balsam Fir twigs (smooth) with the twigs of White Spruce which are rough with little pegs where the needles were attached.

They talked about invasive species and tasted some of the fresh young plants of Garlic Mustard just coming up. There is a very large area of Dog-strangling Vine and interestingly no plants under a Black Walnut that had been planted. Walnut roots produce a toxin called juglone that perhaps stopped the Dog-strangling Vine from growing. They also inspected the walnut leaf scars which are

similar to those of its relative the endangered Bitternut and look like a monkey face.

In a small stream emerging from underground and tumbling down the hill they found Bitternut Hickory nuts and a walnut. Bark beetle tunnels were discussed– the tunnel increases in diameter as the larva grows eating its way from the egg location to emergence from under the bark and making extraordinary patterns. They observed a number of bracket fungi and several of the bird species noted by the birding group as well as the same butterfly species.

The loud singing of peepers and chorus frogs was a sure sign of spring on this lovely morning.

## 8 Clipped Classics

*Edited by Alexandra Simmons*

### *Excerpts from past issues of The Blue Bill*

*[In recent weeks, some KFN members began to perform bird surveys in areas assigned to them for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, which they will continue until 2025. Data is collected by volunteers at 20-year intervals, with two earlier atlases from 1981-85 and 2001-2005. The goal of the Atlas is to map the distribution and abundance of Ontario's nearly 300 species of breeding birds.]*

*Long before then, Kingston Field Naturalists members were making extensive observations of nesting birds in our area. A Blue Bill article from nearly 60 years ago described some from the area of the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary, including species observed nesting in our area for the first time. Who knows if similar surprises are in store for those surveying for the current Atlas?*

*Contact Mark Read if you wish to take part.–ed.]*

**Nesting Records – 1963** (from The Blue Bill Volume 10, Number 2, June 1963)

**by H. R. Quilliam**

There have been several important nesting records this season and presumably there will be more be-

fore the season is complete. The most important is probably that of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Last year one was seen near Odessa several times during the summer. This gave us hopes that they might be breeding unsuspected in our area. No nest has been reported since 1899 when the Rev. C. J. Young sent a set of 2 eggs collected May 31 to the Royal Ontario Museum.

On May 12, Martin Edwards and Lew Lowther saw a pair about a hole in a tree close to Sucker Lake in the sanctuary. The birds were going in and out of the hole at frequent intervals and doing a good deal of calling. On June 1 and June 9 Lew visited the site again and saw the male enter the nesting hole. It may have been feeding young but this would not be easy to see if the birds were feeding by regurgitation. On June 16 a sapsucker entered the nest hole and remained for at least 5 minutes, during a downpour which finally drove the observers away.

Walter Lamb on June 2 discovered the nest of a pair of Cerulean Warblers. To date we had had only a record of young out of the nest being fed (July 1, 1961). On June 23 the female was seen on the nest.

One of the most interesting nests watched this year was that of a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers at the sanctuary. This is not a first record for the area but finding a nest of this beautiful species and being able to watch even for a short time is a thrilling experience. The pear-shaped hole was located high up in a dead stub on May 12 when a Pileated Woodpecker was heard calling in that area. The Pileated Woodpecker makes quite a different looking nest hole from its rather long rectangular borings after grubs, and it can be easily distinguished from other woodpecker holes because of its size and because the others are all perfectly round, not pear-shaped. (But a Flicker has been seen to nest in a similarly shaped hole – perhaps a hole begun by a Pileated and later abandoned?)

On June 8 four of us took up position on the bank opposite the nest tree and watched while the male woodpecker came in to feed the young. One could not see that it was carrying food, for it is regurgitated to the young. He went into the hole entirely. When he emerged, he was carrying white fecal sacs in his bill which he took out of our sight. The young in the nest were too young at this point to come up to the edge of the nest to be fed nor could we hear their voices from the hole.

A week later, on June 16, we again took up a waiting position. The female had spotted us as we came in, and after excited calling on her part she sat in the top of a dead tree preening and watching us for what seemed like ages. Then finally she began to move about and we assumed that she was gathering food. After a wait of 40 minutes, we were rewarded by seeing her approach the hole and this time we could not only see but also hear the young. We were only able to make out two nestlings but there may have been more. Already they had bright red caps and the striking black facial markings. She did not go far away after this feeding and soon the male flew in. We waited a short time longer hoping that he also was bringing in a meal but after a time he flew off again. For several minutes after the feeding the young continued to peer out of the hole but finally disappeared inside again.

While watching the woodpeckers we saw a pair of Common Grackles carrying food to a nest and carrying away fecal sacs. These they dropped into the water not far away, then dipped their bills into the water and wiped them on a dead log. Also a Downy Woodpecker was gathering food and flying with it to the edge of the beaver pond.



**Figure 44:** Harris's Checkerspot catching a ride on John Poland's shoulder. (Peter Waycik)



**Figure 45:** A Little Blue Heron recently visited Lemoine Point. (Anthony Kaduck)



# Kingston Field Naturalists

## Objectives

The Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN) is an active, local club of over 500 members interested in a wide variety of natural history. The objectives of the club are:

- to acquire, record and disseminate knowledge of natural history;
- to stimulate public interest in nature and in the protection and preservation of wildlife and natural habitats; and
- to acquire, receive and hold lands for the purpose of preserving their natural flora and fauna, and to encourage and assist other organizations and individuals to do likewise.

## Nature Reserves

The KFN owns properties that are designated as nature reserves.

*Helen Quilliam Sanctuary at Otter Lake:* A 217 hectare (536 acre) property of mixed forest located in the Canadian Shield in the Township of South Frontenac accessible to members through a trail system..

*Martin Edwards Nature Reserve:* A 100 hectare (247 acre) property of fields and marshland located on the southeast shore of Amherst Island.

*Sylvester-Gallagher Nature Reserve:* An 80 acre (32.4 hectare) parcel of forest and grassland, adjacent to the Martin Edwards Nature Reserve.

## Conservation and Education

The KFN actively supports conservation efforts. Issues such as park creation, wildlife and habitat protection, and environmental welfare are of on-going concern. The club also makes natural history resources and knowledge available to the community through education programs which include field courses, talks, awards and a loan library.

## Be a Contributor!

This edition of The Blue Bill could have contained your  
article, anecdote, fantastic photo, nature sketch,  
report, puzzle, quiz, conundrum,  
cartoon, or other contribution.



(If it did, many thanks!)

Email The Blue Bill ([editor@thebluebill.ca](mailto:editor@thebluebill.ca)) for more information.



**Kingston Field Naturalists**

Box 831

Kingston ON K7L 4X6

<https://kingstonfieldnaturalists.org>