

# THE BLUE BILL

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T H E B L U E B I L L

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OF THE KINGSTON FIELD NATURALISTS

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THE HELEN QUILLIAM STORY

by John C. McLaughlin

It is hard to think of the Kingston Field Naturalists without also thinking of Helen Quilliam. A member for more than 40 years, she has served as president, was editor and producer of The Blue Bill, and wrote one of the early books on the birds of the Kingston area. Helen initiated the search for and the purchase of the first nature reserve owned by the KFN - land which, as it was added to over the years, became today's Otter Lake Sanctuary. She served as a director of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists for many years and for her work with the FON was honoured with a Life Membership in that organization. She also played an active role in the founding of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority in 1965.

Born Helen Bishop Rose in Elmira, New York, in February 1905, Helen went on to major in art history at Wells College in Aurora, New York. In 1927 she answered an advertisement for teachers to work in Persia (now Iran and Iraq). Her first assignment: the beginner's class in English. Helen spoke no Persian and the class spoke no English. "I simply started with opening and closing the door and the words for that", she says.

In Persia, she met her husband-to-be, Cyril David Quilliam, a Captain with the British Army. Helen and Cyril were married in 1928. From 1929 on, they were seldom in one place or even one country for long, as Cyril's army career meant a succession of new postings, and after a year-and-a-half in Persia he received a new posting in India. At the outbreak of World War II, Cyril, now Brigadier Quilliam, was moved to Egypt as a member of British Army Intelligence. During the war, Helen helped with the American-British lend-lease program in the Middle East and for a time worked with British Intelligence in Cairo.

It was in Egypt, during the war, that Helen first took a serious interest in bird-watching, even though she had been observing birds since childhood. Her mother and grandfather had introduced her to birding in the Elmira, N.Y. area when she was a young girl. One of her earliest memories is of sitting on a tombstone in the local cemetery, scanning the trees. When a cemetery worker asked her what she was doing sitting up there on the tombstone, she replied that she was "looking for a rose-breasted grosbeak". The cemetery worker's reply to this is not recorded. In Egypt, as her interest grew, she went out from Cairo with friends to local ponds and sewage lagoons. There were no easy-to-use field guides and the group had to rely on detailed field notes. These they would check against live birds in the local zoo or skins in the Cairo museum. Helen recalls that there was

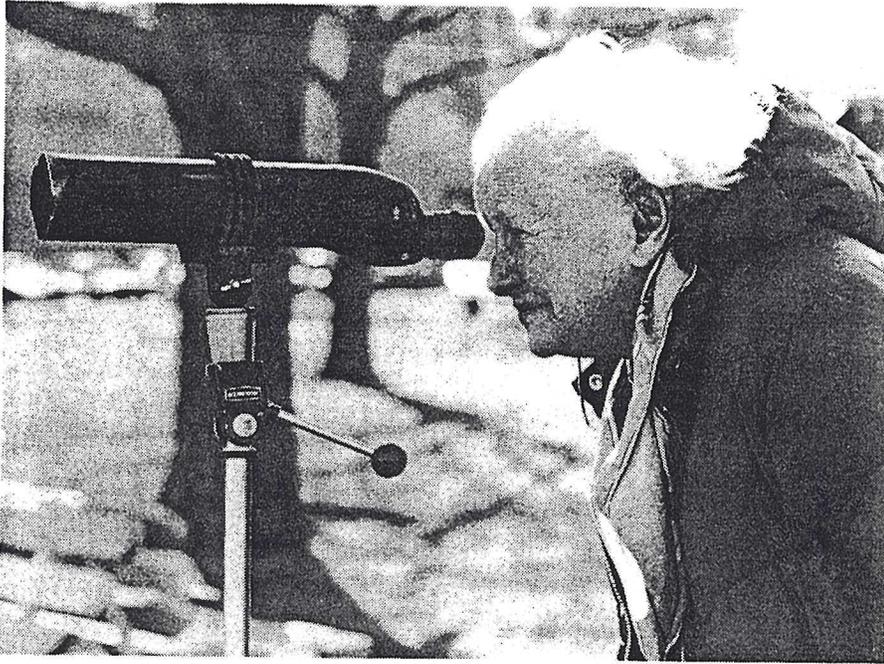
also a lot of phoning back and forth as each birder poured over the few field guides that were available, until such time as they felt they had a positive identification.

After the war, Cyril retired from the army and the couple decided to emigrate to North America, going first in 1952 to the United States, then in 1953 moving north to Kingston; still close to Helen's relatives in New York State, but living in a community with a British and military heritage. Here, they bought a country home on the Cataraqui River just north of Barriefield and to supplement income opened a secondhand bookstore 'The Old Book Collector', on Brock St. in downtown Kingston. Helen remembers one of their more interesting orders: Fort Henry was furnishing an Officers' Mess as it would have appeared in the nineteenth century and wanted books that might have been found in these surroundings in that period. Helen and Cyril were able to supply three shelves of books.

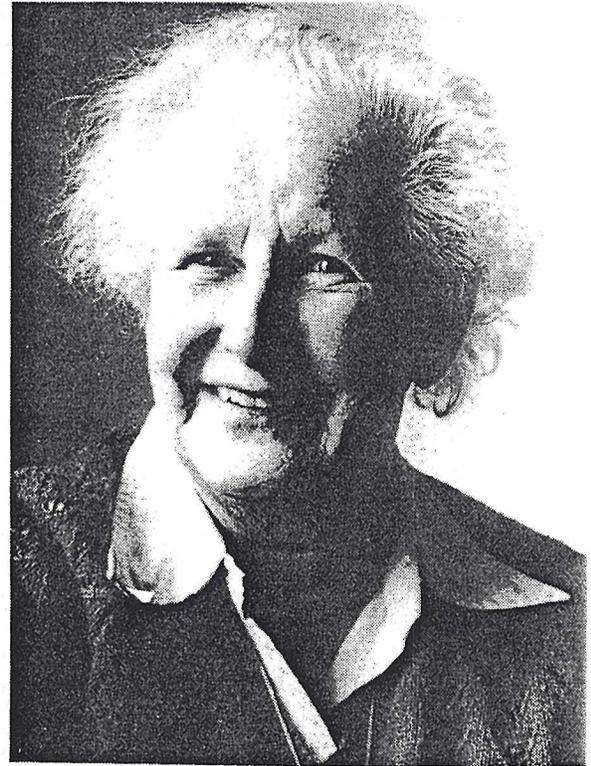
One of Helen's first actions in arriving in Kingston in 1953 was to join what is today the Kingston Field Naturalists. The club had been started in 1949 by George Stirrett, so was still in its formative stages. It was much smaller than today in those early years, but had a good number of dedicated, knowledgeable people. In 1959, when George Stirritt moved from Kingston, Helen took over the writing of his nature column - 'Notes on Natural History' - which appeared in the Kingston Whig-Standard, and continued producing the column for eight or nine years. The column generated a lot of local interest and attracted many members to the KFN.

It was in the early 1960's that Helen made a proposal that was to lead to a lasting legacy. She felt that some of the better natural habitats in the Kingston area should be bought by the club and preserved as nature sanctuaries, thus saving them from future cottage development. Art Bell and Walter Lamb assisted Helen in the initial search for suitable land. Helen's dedication and encouragement here were vital for there was an overall reluctance on the part of KFN members to be involved in property ownership and management. In 1963 the KFN purchased its first property, an 80 hectare (200 acres) lot in the Otter Lake-Sucker Lake area, 28 kilometres north of Kingston. The owner, the Gananoque Power and Light Company offered the land for less than \$500.00, which the club was able to provide from its general funds. Subsequent purchases over the years in the same area have added a further 126.6 hectares to the Sanctuary.

An interesting sidelight on the original 1963 purchase is that, until that time, the club had been known as the Kingston Nature Club. With visions of naked people flitting through the woods, the government suggested that the name be changed; hence, our current name, the Kingston Field Naturalists, came into being.



Helen's strengths in leadership and teaching, coupled with her curiosity about the world around her, have made her one of the mainstays of the KFN for more than 40 years.



The 1950's and 60's were productive years for Helen. In this period, she wrote the 'History of the Birds of Kingston', first published in 1965, with a second edition in 1974, and a supplement, co-authored by Ron Weir, in 1980. It was the first book documenting the birds found in this area; in fact, one of the few such books in Canada at the time it was first issued. The book compares the observation of bird sightings from Champlain's seventeenth century descriptions to the present, in a defined area around Kingston.

Research for her book involved working in the archives here and in Toronto, digging out what had been recorded in old diaries and other historic materials. H. Pearson Gundy, of Queen's University Archives, provided Helen with a small room in which to work and helped her search out the Archive's records. Most useful were the records of Edwin Beaupre (the uncle of our membership secretary, Wallie Beaupre). Edwin Beaupre was an active local birder who had kept extensive journals and records during the late nineteenth century and on into the 1920's, although he had never consolidated these into a book.

"I became very interested in what earlier people had found here and in the changes over the years", said Helen. And, as Ron Weir has pointed out, Helen's book brought out "all the things we didn't know. Some species were missing, and that prompted studies and censuses to fill gaps." 'History of the Birds of Kingston' led directly to strip breeding surveys of the Kingston area, where 25-mile routes are sampled each year to give estimates of bird populations. It also led to special surveys of Mourning Doves, Woodcocks and a census of Snowy Owls on Wolfe Island in 1964-65.

In March, 1954, the KFN published the first issue of The Blue Bill. Beginning in 1955 and carrying on through the next two decades, Helen was a major strength behind the production of the Club's quarterly journal. She acted not only as editor (from 1955 to 1961 and again for several years in the 1970's) but was also production chief and wrote many articles. For years her dining room served as the production centre, with Helen and other KFN members collating the journal and preparing it for the mail, working from her dining table and ironing board. During these same years, Helen kept the Club's bird records as daily sightings were phoned in; plus records of the Christmas count and the Spring and Fall Round-ups. To consolidate these records, Helen bought a computer in the early 1970's. Although this may not seem unusual today, a household computer was almost unheard of 20 years ago and Helen may have been one of the first people in Kingston - outside of major businesses and institutions like Queen's University - to own a computer.

The collection of bird data had begun at Prince Edward Point in 1971 and in 1975 the KFN began a full-scale observation and bird banding program at the Point, a program in which Helen took an active part. The lighthouse at the Point was rented from Parks Canada for one dollar a year and the club inaugurated a program for training and licensing bird banders and for 15 consecutive years carried out a fall program of banding Saw-Whet Owls. For some years, the club had someone at the lighthouse every night in October. One of the first uses to which Helen's computer was put was to enter all the data from the first five years of KFN bird-banding work - estimated at 75,000 entries.

Helen served as president of the KFN during 1963 and 1964 and, except for 1966, has served continuously on the KFN executive for the past 41 years. In 1967, she was named Honourary President of the club. Today, on the eve of her 90th birthday, she is still active, still curious about the world around her, still learning. She never misses an executive meeting and is able to advise and inform the executive based on her long years of experience.

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The editor wishes to thank the following for their contributions to this story: Faith Avis, Diane Lawrence, and Bob Stewart, with a special thanks to "Profile Kingston" for providing us with its 1988 profile on Helen Quilliam.

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#### NEW APPROACHES TO PROTECTING ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

John C. McLaughlin

In the June 1994 issue we looked at the use of Land Trusts as a way to conserve natural areas. In this issue of The Blue Bill, we look at new methods for evaluating the true worth of natural habitats and the policy mechanisms that are available to us to help save such areas.

Unless carefully qualified, the value of land is assumed to mean its monetary value on the real-estate market. Further, the market value is usually assumed to take precedence over the land's other values, such as ecological, scenic and heritage characteristics. A public body wishing to preserve these values by acquiring the land must pay the market price, and it is considered the right of the owner to profit financially from the sale (Environment Canada, 1991). Because of the way that land is evaluated, senior levels of government cannot hope to acquire every area and site needing protection and new means are being sought to protect natural and cultural areas in Canada.

### Assessing Private & Public Values of Ecosystems

A basic value conflict in capitalist societies surrounds the issue of whether natural areas should be viewed as private or public goods. In practice many such areas in North America are privately owned. Given that in their natural state, wetlands, for example, often provide an important habitat for the rearing of fish - which are, of course, a common property resource - the line between private and public becomes blurred. We are dealing with a biological system, a biological resource, where one part may be in private ownership while another part lies in the public domain. This raises the still unresolved issue of the responsibilities of private landowners and their right to do as they please with their land, thereby causing adverse effects on ecosystems.

Economic accounting to evaluate the worth of natural systems must include not just the market value of individual components in an ecosystem - the fish, the timber, the land. It must also include the true value of what has been called the 'free work of nature', work such as water purification, erosion control, the vital formation of life-supporting oxygen, nitrogen and other gases, and so on (Odum, 1983). The present approach to public policy decisions is ineffective in preserving the natural environment as long as life support and other benefits of undisturbed natural systems are not weighted in land use decisions. Somehow, each function will have to be assigned a value. The problem is, how does one assign imprecise and intangible ecological and socio-cultural values to such functions and how does one then assign priorities to each function.

The problems in assessing private and public values for ecosystems leads to concern about the way in which the Gross National Product (GNP) is calculated. GNP measures the products of economic activity, but not the byproducts, such as pollutants and environmental degradation. A number of difficulties arise because environmental services are not subject to normal pricing mechanisms. Who should pay for such service? Certainly, farmers have no economic incentive to preserve wetlands or woodlots if no one is willing to pay them to do so. In the absence of pricing mechanisms, ways must be found to compensate landowners for the costs imposed by environmental or land use controls. Economists are now recognizing that one of the problems with traditional economic models is the difficulty, in the absence of property rights, (that is, where clear title to the environmental service is lacking), of establishing a price for environmental services such as wetlands, wildlife habitats, groundwater supplies or clean air (Science Council of Canada, 1991).

In traditional economic models, supply and demand establish the price at which goods are traded, and these market transactions involve an exchange of property rights. But environmental

services typically do not pass through markets and therefore are not priced. Cost-accounting methods for industrial, commercial and residential interests are well developed and can bring strong pressures to bear because of the nearly universal acceptance of evaluation techniques which show the cash value of a particular management alternative. Against these evaluation methods, conservationists and natural resource economists have been at a disadvantage because of the difficulty of translating the value of natural or undeveloped areas into monetary terms. Frequently, therefore, the alternative management decision of leaving land in its natural state is not seriously considered.

Some economists are now arguing that ways must be found to factor the value of environmental services into economic models. It is clear that cost-benefit analysis is inadequate when dealing with environmental services offered by natural areas. Its usefulness is often diminished by the methodologies used, the tendency to choose assumptions favourable to the proposed scheme and the practice of either ignoring environmental costs or giving them little weight. The selling price of natural areas continues to be set not according to their many services to society, but according to their financial value when converted to other uses.

What is required is a separate economic category and a change in accounting practices that takes environmental values into account. One suggestion is a replacement value approach which would make an accurate estimate of the monetary costs associated with the loss of a 'free' service performed by a natural ecosystem (Odum, 1981). For example, one can calculate what it would cost a city to install waste water treatment plants to replace the tertiary treatment work performed by a large riverine marsh. The cost in such a case, and therefore the value of the natural system, could run into millions of dollars.

#### Several Policy Mechanisms Are Available To Save Wildlife Habitats

Until better methods regarding natural area evaluation can be developed, there are a number of policy mechanisms available which could aid conservation. The mechanisms vary in terms of goal achievement, cost, the level of intervention and administration and the degree of tradeoff between these factors. And the higher the potential gains to be made from converting ecosystems to other uses, the greater the costs to keep them in their natural state (Bardecki, 1984). Further, the monetary benefits from converting ecosystems are usually highest in areas where substantial losses have already occurred, making the remaining natural areas extremely valuable from a societal standpoint. The policy mechanisms which governments (both provincial and municipal) have at their disposal include:

1. Land acquisition through outright purchase of the land (fee simple); expropriation; or purchase of development (easement) rights. There are both positive and negative aspects to the acquisition method. It offers an assured outcome since the land comes under the direct control of government. But there is an aversion to land purchases by government. Opposition arises to substantial government expenditures on an apparently unproductive asset such as a wetland or woodlot, which does not make a direct contribution to employment or economic activities. The public must see a direct public benefit, such as creation of parkland. And there is a general negative attitude towards expropriation, which involves the politically sensitive issue of 'private property right'. Widespread expropriation of rural lands could be viewed as an attack on the farm community.

Purchase of natural ecosystems, as they come up for sale, through a land trust may be more palatable to the public. A land trust is a non-profit charitable organization that works to protect significant land and natural features. Such organizations are usually private or quasi-governmental. Use of a land trust approach has again the advantage of actual land ownership and could build on local support, but land trusts are usually very limited by their funding and by the number of persons willing to donate land and money.

2. Financial Incentives. A broad group of potential measures falls under the general heading of tax relief. Such financial incentives include monetary grants to landowners, leasing or management agreements, lower land assessments, tax credits and rebates on property taxes. But, although these approaches are most acceptable to the public, none offer any certainty of protection. Persons planning to convert their natural areas are unlikely to take advantage of any incentive program, so the program would be protecting lands that are not in danger in any case.
3. Conservation Easements. A conservation easement is a contract between a landowner and another party (usually a branch of municipal or provincial government). The contract limits the development of property to certain specified uses which are less than those permitted under zoning bylaws. The organization holding the easement compensates the owner for the limitation and the restriction is usually registered on title for the property. The concept of conservation easements is similar to easements related to pipelines and utility corridors. An easement provides more certain protection than other methods such as designation and zoning, but is a relatively expensive approach (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, 1992).

A variation of this approach would be to provide farmers with financial incentives for improving the supply of wildlife habitat, particularly by retaining or improving wetlands, woodlots, and natural corridors on their farms. Such funding could be provided under existing or future federal-provincial soil and water conservation agreements. Any incentives to farmers for environmental protection should be permanent, using such devices as purchase of easements, provision for a one time payment or an annuity plan in return for long term land use commitments.

4. Regulation. Losses of natural areas could be regulated by prohibiting their conversion to other uses; perhaps by strict zoning classification bylaws. Land control by regulation is financially attractive because it does not involve cash outlays, but it is not likely to be widely accepted by the public who would view it as a strong infringement of property rights. Such a reaction would be particularly strong in rural areas where the Ontario Federation of Agriculture gives strong support to the reclamation of land for farm purposes. The Federation, whose mandate is to protect farmers' rights, has always objected strongly to any restrictions placed on the rights of farmers to use land as they see fit, and the Federation would almost certainly launch an official protest. In any case, there is an impermanence to zoning bylaws since they can be overturned through the local political process which is often adverse to long-range plans. New land use guidelines, applied under the Planning Act (see item 7), may be more palatable to municipal officials and landowners alike.
5. Landowner Stewardship. Ontario's Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) program was one early initiative to involve private landowners in identifying and protecting natural areas; however, the areas are merely designated and have no legal protection. Of more value is The Ontario Conservation Land Tax Reduction Program which provides financial incentives to landowners of Provincially Significant Wetland and ANSIs who will commit themselves to long-term stewardship. The rebate can be up to 100 percent of taxes. But, currently, only 15 per cent of eligible owners apply for the rebate, perhaps owing to the small amounts of money actually involved (Commission of Planning and Development Reform, 1992).

However, landowner stewardship has proven successful in at least one instance. Stewardship, in conjunction with conservation farming, is a principal component of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, a \$1.5 billion, 15 year program aimed at restoring waterfowl populations to the levels of the 1970s. Signed by Canada and the United States

in 1986, the plan's major thrusts are in the prairie pothole regions of the mid-west and the wetlands of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence lowlands. The United States is covering 75 per cent of the cost, Canada's federal and provincial governments pay 10 per cent each, and the private sector (organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, etc.) is responsible for the remaining five per cent. Among other things, the plan aims to protect and improve more than 1.5 million hectares of breeding habitat (Environment Canada, 1991). Even though the prime object of this international agreement is conservation of waterfowl, the plan is of inestimable value for natural area conservation.

6. Removal or Reduction of Farm Assistance Programs. A major factor in the loss of natural habitats - particularly wetlands - are government incentive programs to convert 'wild' lands to agricultural production. The common economic rationale behind these schemes is to increase agricultural output and raise farm incomes, but it is not actually clear whether they offer the best available investment for this purpose. Present drainage policy, for example, encourages over-investment in drainage to the detriment of wetland areas. Reducing public subsidization would allow normal market forces to prevail and provide a sounder economic rationale for land conversions. The persistence of rural financial aid may be based more on historical precedent than on fiscal efficiency, and it is possible that these funds could be put to better use by the farm sector.

A major complaint concerns the general lack of mandatory, comprehensive assessment of the cost-benefit or environmental impact associated with conversion projects (Bardecki, 1984). Present procedures for obtaining approval and assistance for such projects do not adequately take into consideration the uses and values of natural areas and the associated implications for the environment (Environment Canada, 1983). More careful appraisal of actual economic returns and the merits of alternative investments is badly needed.

7. Better Land Use Planning Procedure. Land use is one of the most direct ways to examine changes in environmental quality. Changes measured over time can indicate the extent to which humans have modified the basic land resource. Therefore, to place Ontario's conservation programs in context, they need to be looked at within the broader picture of Ontario's recent land use planning study - the 'Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario' (the Sewell Commission).

Land-use planning decisions have a major impact on the natural environment but environmental concerns are often treated as an add-on to the planning process. And often, the natural boundaries of land forms and ecosystems bear no relation to political and jurisdictional boundaries. The Commission recommended clear environmental goals, preferably within the Planning Act, with controls to prevent site alteration in advance of approvals. Currently, tree and soil removal, alteration to landforms, and draining and filling of wetlands is often carried out by developers prior to development approval. One of the major recommendation of the Commission was that wetlands, recharge areas, ravines, river valleys, stream-belts, flood plains, significant woodlots, and special natural features be identified, evaluated and protected before decisions about development are made (Commission Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1991).

The Ontario government has promised to implement the Sewell Commission's recommendation through two key amendments to the Planning Act: one, the environment will be protected through a series of policy statement; and two, municipalities will be given greater local control of the development process (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1993).

Policy statements will be incorporated within the Ontario Planning Act and will be implemented by municipalities through municipal plans, zoning by-laws and similar planning tools. Thus, the responsibility for land use is still left in the hands of the municipalities, and their planning committees. Subject as these units are to political and development pressures, this leaves land at the whim of politicians and the development industry and the tax dollar pressures of the time.

Any environmental protection offered by a municipality's Official Plan can be progressively eroded by a series of amendments. Aware of this, the Province will insist that all future decisions by planning jurisdictions 'shall be consistent with' the policy statements, rather than the present 'have regard to'.

Ontario has already stated that development will not be permitted in significant ravines, river, stream and natural corridors, nor in the habitats of endangered, threatened and vulnerable species; or on any lands where development could adversely affect the integrity of the ecological functions of the areas involved. New infrastructure is to be located outside of any significant features unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable alternative.

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SUMMER SEASON 1 JUN - 31 JUL 94

Ron D. Weir

The breeding bird surveys (several 40 km routes with stops every 800 m and two Forest Monitoring Surveys) done in the Kingston area show excellent results. The findings are similar to those from 1993. Again, a strong showing resulted for Black-billed Cuckoo, flycatchers, Wood Thrush, vireos (Red-eyed, Yellow-throated and Warbling), several warbler species (Yellow, Golden-winged, Pine, Cerulean, Ovenbird), N. Oriole, Vesper Sparrow and House Finch. In some parts of the eastern U.S.A., concern has been growing about the declining numbers of several of these species as breeders, but there is no evidence that any one of these is in trouble in eastern Ontario. The weather proved ideal during June, but became hot during July. Cormorant nesting was also strong, but there is more evidence of egg destruction by parties unknown. The Caspian Tern colony offshore from Prince Edward Pt. has expanded.

Our first ever nesting by Common Goldeneye was verified Jul 10 when an adult female was seen with her 10 downy chicks at Gananoque. This nesting is well south of that defined by the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. The Brown Pelican occurrence is our first ever for this vagrant to Ontario. Southbound wader migration was underway by late June and appeared to be normal for timing and numbers. Henslow's Sparrows remained elusive and appear to have declined significantly since the intensive surveys of the Atlas work. Between 15-20 breeding pairs of Loggerhead Shrikes were noted during the period, many of which raised broods.

Species Account:

- Brown Pelican - Jul 15-24(1) Chaffeys Lock area, Leeds, MHE et al., (photo).
- D-crested Cormorant - Jun 8 (800 nests), P.E.Pt., KFN. Many eggs destroyed by unknown humans.
- Snowy Egret - Jun 1(1) Dorland, JHE, MTE
- Canvasback - Jul 2(1) Bath, RMW, KH. Very unusual in summer.
- C. Goldeneye - Jul 10(1 female + 10 chicks), Gananoque, C. Grooms.
- Osprey - Jun-Jul (pair + 1 y), Amherst I., KFN land, successful nest on the nesting platform, first on Amherst in decades.
- Bald Eagle - Jun 7-19 (3im), Kingston to Ivy Lea along the St. Lawrence, RDW, LJNorrby.
- Baird's Sandpiper - Jul 9(1ad), Morven Lennox & Addington, RDW, early.
- Ruff - May 29(1 female), PEpt, JHE, RDW.
- Franklin's Gull - Jul 27(1ad) Kingston, RDW.
- Black-billed Cuckoo - high numbers after early June, peaks Jun 11 (11), Perth Road to Opinicon, JHE, RDW; Jun 18(10) Otter Lake Sanctuary, RDW.
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo - Jun 5-10 (8 in all), Jul 27 (2), Kingston area, KFN.
- Saw-whet Owl - Jun 15 (nest from which one young fell), Elgin, F. Hayes, M. Hendrick. Bird rescued and taken to Avian Care in Verona and later released.
- Olive-sided Flycatcher - Jun 11(1) Perth Road, JHE, RDW, probably a late spring migrant.

- E. Wood Pewee - peaks Jun 11 (24) Perth Road, RDW, JHE; Jun 18 (35) Otter Lake Sanctuary, RDW.
- Alder Flycatcher - peak Jun 5 (21) Roblin, JHE, RDW.
- Great-crested Flycatcher - peaks Jun 18 (30) Otter Lake Sanctuary, RDW; 19 (30) Canoe Lake, JHE, RDW.
- Western Kingbird - Jun 10(1) Bloomfield Prince Edward, M. Richardson, probably a late spring migrant.
- Brown Creeper - Jun 18 (4) nesting, Otter Lake Sanctuary, RDW.
- Sedge Wren - Jun 5 (2) Roblin, JHE, RDW; 18 (1) Otter Lake Sanctuary, RDW.
- Hermit Thrush - Jun 18 (4 territorial males) Otter Lake Sanctuary (Beschel Trail), RDW.
- Wood Thrush - excellent numbers that have remained high for several consecutive years. On five BBS routes, their totals were 36, 32, 29, 30, 44 (singing males). The decline in numbers reported in some locations of eastern U.S.A. is not evident here, JHE, RDW.
- Red-eyed Vireo - Our most common forest bird. On four BBS routes, their totals were 38, 90, 75, 90, JHE, RDW.
- Blue-winged Warbler - Jun 5(2), one Kingston site, JHE, RDW. No inroads to our numerous colonies of Golden-wingeds is evident yet.
- Golden-winged Warbler - On four BBS routes where some of the habitat is suitable for them, a total of 19 singing males was tallied, JHE, RDW.
- Magnolia Warbler - Jun 5(3) Roblin, 11(1) Chaffeys Lock, 19(2) Sydenham, JHE, RDW. Males on territory in suitable habitat, which represent a more southerly distribution. Their presence may be indicative of the changing habitat where young spruce and fir have been planted.
- Cerulean Warbler - On four of our BBS routes that pass through forests, 24 singing males were found, JHE, RDW.
- Ovenbird - The species remains abundant. On these same four BBS routes through forests, 144 were noted. In addition, on one of Forest Monitoring Surveys within the KFN Otter Lake Sanctuary, 75 territorial males were mapped within the allowed 10 minutes at each of five stops, JHE, RDW.

Rusty Blackbird - Jul 2(3), KFN Otter Lake Sanctuary near Sydenham, RMW, KH. These birds were way south of range. The Sanctuary habitat is composed of rough Shield containing beaver swamps, but relatively few fir and spruce trees which are used extensively by the species within the boreal forest at more northern latitudes.

Vesper Sparrow - On four of our BBS routes that pass through farmland, 51 singing males were found, JHE, RDW.

Lincoln's Sparrow - Jun 5 (1 territorial male), Roblin, JHE, RDW.

Evening Grosbeak - Jun 11 (2) Chaffeys Lock, 19 (1) Canoe Lake, JHE, RDW.

Contributors:

|              |                            |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| M.H. Edwards | Kingston Field Naturalists |
| J.H. Ellis   | R.D. Weir                  |
| M.T. Ellis   | R.M. Worona                |
| K. Hennige   |                            |

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POPULATION TRENDS OF SHOREBIRDS IN EASTERN CANADA, 1974-91  
(Article from "Bird Trends", Number 3, Winter 1993/94)

by R.I.G. Morrison, C. Downes, and B. Collins, CWS, Hull, PQ

Information from shorebird surveys done by volunteer observers on the east coast of Canada and the U.S. currently provide the only source of long-term data available for the assessment of shorebird population trends. Analysis of International Shorebird Survey data collected in the eastern U.S. between 1974 and 1983 indicated that 3 of the 12 species analyzed had declined significantly (Whimbrel, Sanderling, Short-billed Dowitcher). Six of the remaining nine species showed declines that, although not statistically significant, were substantial in terms of annual (3-12%) or cumulative (up to 75%) changes (Howe et al. 1989). In Canada, the Maritimes Shorebird Survey (MSS) has been carried out by volunteers on the east coast since 1974. Data from the MSS have recently been analyzed to assess changes in shorebird numbers in eastern Canada during the period 1974-91.

The Maritimes Shorebird Survey is done by volunteers who count the numbers of shorebirds at particular sites every second weekend from late July to late October, during the period of southward migration. The MSS covers areas in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland. Some 276 sites were censused during the 18 years of the surveys; 30-80 sites were covered often enough to contribute to the trend analyses for

different species. The 13 shorebird species selected for analysis were those that have an ecological preference for coastal stopover sites and are thus likely to use MSS sites on a regular basis.

Ten of the 13 species analyzed showed negative trends during the period 1974-91 (Morrison et al., in press). Significant declines were most consistently recorded for Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper and Short-billed Dowitcher. Decreases for Black-bellied Plover and Red Knot also approached statistical significance. Population trends varied during the study. Most species declined during the latter part of the 1970's, increased during the first half of the 1980's, and declined again, but less markedly, in recent years.

Causes of declines in shorebird populations are potentially complex and may occur at many points during the annual cycle of the birds. Those species showing the greatest declines in this analysis do not appear to share any features of distribution across their annual migration cycles, which might suggest that they face common problems in a localized part of their range. It is possible that a series of cold summers on the breeding grounds during the 1970's may have led to the observed population declines at that time.

Severe weather in mid-June in 1974 led to widespread mortality among shorebirds on Ellesmere Island, and many adults died of starvation. Other possible causes of decreasing numbers of shorebirds in eastern North America include losses of important habitat, pollution, and increased disturbances. Shorebirds on migration are particularly vulnerable to such changes owing to their need to store fat reserves for their long flights.

References cited:

Howe, M.A., Geissler, P.H., and B.A. Harrington. 1989  
*Population Trends of North American shorebirds based on the International Shorebird Survey.* Biological Conservation 49: 185-199.

Morrison, R.I.G., C. Downes, and B. Collins. *Population trends of shorebirds on fall migration in eastern Canada, 1974-91.*  
In press. Submitted to Wilson Bulletin.

\* \* \* \* \*

AMHERST ISLAND FIELD TRIP

by Bill Cutfield

On August 14, 1994, the weather was fair and the winds light from the north when the parties met at the Kingston Field Naturalists property at the east end of the island. Eyes were quickly drawn to the Osprey platform where three fledglings were seen devouring a quite large carp which had lately been delivered by an adult.

Shorebirds were not immediately evident in the long grasses in the empoundment but after a Harrier passed low overhead several disparate flocks were flushed and eagerly focused on upon landing. After much glass work, sixteen different species were identified. The more unusual were a lone Stilt Sandpiper, several Bairds and two immature Wilson's Phalaropes. Black Terns were flying their usual insect searches low over the water and the two distant ducks out on Lake Ontario were definitely Lesser Scaup (head shape, you know!).

Hundreds of Double-crested Cormorants had possession of the outer bar, leaving just enough space for Caspian Terns and a couple of Common Terns. Many Mallards in eclipse plumage swam in the shallows, among which were also four Northern Pintail and a number of Blue-winged Teal. Inland thousands of Tree Swallows bedecked the wires and most of the sparrows were Savannahs. Not to be neglected was the sighting of a Black-billed Cuckoo.

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AMHERST ISLAND FIELD TRIP

by Robert Worona

On September 4, 1994, 14 people assembled at the Millhaven dock for the 7:20 a.m. ferry to Amherst Island. Once on the island, a few warblers and sparrows were found at stops made along the north shore road and, during the walk to the bar, we saw well over a thousand swallows. Some of the birds of the day were American Bittern, Osprey, Lesser Golden Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Common Tern, Purple Martin and Blackpoll Warbler. Total species observed on the island was 61.

At noon we met what turned out to be the 11:00 a.m. ferry which was not allowed to leave until 1:00 p.m. due to a medical emergency.

\* \* \* \* \*

ORCHID OUTING TO PURDON BOG

by Winifred Smith

At 10:30 a.m. on June 26, 1994, thirteen KFN members and friends from the Pittsburgh Township Seniors set out for the trip by way of Westport, Maberley, Elphin, McDonalds Corners and then to Purdon Bog. Actually the "bog" is really a "fen" (because it has slow drainage) and is managed by the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority.

We parked in the parking lot for the handicapped and went down a short trail to the boardwalk. A Red-bellied Sapsucker welcomed us and most of the party had a good look at it. The sapsuckers were nesting beside the road by the main parking lot.

Almost immediately we found leafy white orchids with small white flowers (*Habenaria dilatata*). Another find was the northern green orchid (*Habenaria hyperborea*) with its small inconspicuous green flowers.

Finally we reached the Showy Lady's Slipper orchids (*Cypripedium reginae*) with their spectacular flowers, clump by clump, both close to the boardwalk and in through the trees. The showy flowers vary from pink to deep rose. Here and there we found groups of pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*) in flower, and their leaves, which are closed on the edges, hold the water collected within. Insects crawl inside the plant and are unable to get out because of the hairs on the leaf. The carnivorous pitcher plant then digests the insect.

When we looked up to try to locate a Black-and-White Warbler that was calling, we found Tamaracks with their beautiful rosy red cones. The Tamarack (*Larix laricina*) has clusters of soft needles which turn yellow and shed in autumn to make it our only deciduous conifer.

As we continued we found Round-leaved Purola (*Pyrola rotundifolia*) blooming beside the walk. When we climbed up the flight of steps there was Pipsissewa (*Chimaphila umbellata*) in bloom. As we turned right for a view of the Lake, we went through masses of Fly Honeysuckle (*Lonicera canadensis*). Another plant that is most abundant on this upper trail is Lousewort or Wood Betony (*Pedicularis canadensis*).

Jessie Deslauriers had a list of 69 species at the end of the trip, which was more than doubled on a subsequent trip.

\* \* \* \* \*

SANDBANKS PROVINCIAL PARK OUTING FOR FALL FLOWERS

by Winifred Smith

As I drove to the meeting place on Sunday, August 28, 1994, it started to rain, hard enough to require the windshield wipers. Two brave souls turned up and, although it threatened, for a good part of the day it did not rain again. But the wind was very strong and the little birds tucked their heads under their wings and stayed out of sight.

Sandbanks Park has three entrances with toll booths and two entrances without, signed as "unauthorized" entrances. We went in one of the unauthorized entry places and walked on a man-made panne. There were large patches of Kalm's Lobelia (*Lobelia kalmii*) which were a lovely blue and, even though the flowers are small, their mass shows for quite a distance.

Slender Gerardia (*Gerardia tenuifolia*) was also abundant in its purple glory. The little ladies' tresses orchids were abundant and we identified three species - the slender Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes gracilis*), the Nodding (*S. cernua*), and the Hooded (*S. romanzoffiana*). A plant with tiny yellow flowers was identified as Dwarf St. Johnswort (*Hypericum mutilum*).

After entering the park legally, and having lunch at a picnic table under planted European trees, we walked among the dunes and on a natural panne. Again we saw Ladies' Tresses and Purple Gerardia (*Gerardia purpurea*). Kalm's Lobelia and Fringed Gentians (*Gentiana crinata*) were abundant in bud, but there had not been enough warmth to open them. There were a fair number of gentians at both sites.

Birds sighted included gulls, cormorants and three crows. The family of Red-headed Woodpeckers that I had seen ten days before were hardly likely to move out of a violently blowing tree. The variety of the flora was rewarding but it was disappointing that the one rare flower, the Fringed Gentian, did not display its full charms.

\* \* \* \* \*

BOOK REVIEWS

by John C. McLaughlin

The two books reviewed here have just been published by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and will be for sale at the KFN October and November general meetings. Price will be approximately \$10.00 each. Either book will make a great Christmas present for the naturalist on your list; or why not treat yourself?!

ATLAS OF THE MAMMALS OF ONTARIO by Jon (Sandy) Dobbyn

The Atlas is the culmination of a four-year project to collect data on the distribution of Ontario's 86 wild mammal species. Over 161,000 records were collected and used to compile detailed distribution maps for each species. The Atlas will serve as a benchmark with which to compare past and future changes in mammal distribution, and will be a welcome reference for anyone interested in Ontario's wildlife. It should serve as an aid in determining conservation priorities and as a resource for environmental impact assessments.

The presence of a balanced, functioning mammal fauna in an area is an indicator of the general health of that environment. And knowledge of the geographic distribution of all species within a region, particularly in habitats sensitive to human activities, provides the basis for studies of biological diversity. Ranges of mammals may be limited by geographic barriers, but in many cases, the distribution and abundance of an individual species are governed by environmental factors that influence its chance to survive and reproduce.

The Mammal Atlas makes use of information collected from institutions such as the ROM and by a large number of volunteers (who are listed in an appendix to the Atlas) including a number of KFN members who worked with the local area coordinator, Peter Good. The Atlas maps actual mammal specimen records, sightings and telltale evidence. Species accounts also outline factors known to affect local distribution, including habitat preference, land-use practices and climate. The maps in the Mammal Atlas are similar in design to those used in the 1987 'Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario', and utilize the same 10x10 km squares. However, the maps are not as comprehensive as those found in the Breeding Birds Atlas as volunteers often had difficulties in finding and identifying smaller mammal species. For some species more detailed study is needed. Despite this shortcoming, the Mammal Atlas is still a necessary part of every naturalist's library.

\* \* \* \*

ONTARIO BIRDS AT RISK; STATUS AND CONSERVATION NEEDS  
by Madeline J.W. Austen, Michael D. Cadman and Ross D. James  
Illustrations by Judie Shore

'Ontario Birds at Risk' is a joint project of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Long Point Bird Observatory. The FON and LPBO had cooperated in the 1980's to produce the 'Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario'. From the Atlas grew the Ontario Rare Breeding Bird Program (ORBBP), the results of which form the basis of the book. The Rare Breeding Bird Program had two main aims; to gather field data on the breeding locations of rare species, and to produce status reports on those species.

'Ontario Birds at Risk' is about the history and status of those bird species which currently breed in low numbers in Ontario. It addresses the question of which of these species should be of most concern. The viewpoint taken in ranking species is that the highest level of conservation activity should be assigned to birds whose breeding populations in the province are most at risk owing to previous or on-going human activities. Although conservation of rarities should be only one priority, the difficulties faced by rare species exemplify those of many other species. The problems of habitat loss, fragmentation and isolation of habitat, and toxic chemicals are known to be affecting populations of rare and common species alike.

Detailed accounts for the 58 species covered by ORBBP in southern Ontario are provided in taxonomic order. Briefer accounts for 22 northern species are provided in a separate section. Accounts for the northern species are shorter because relatively little is known about these birds in Ontario due to the remoteness of their breeding areas; accordingly they were not covered by the ORBBP program. The account for a given ORBBP species includes a brief description of the species, a map of its breeding range in North America, plus breeding distribution in Ontario, selected references, together with information on habitat, history in Ontario, status and conservation needs. The maps of distribution in Ontario show the approximate location of the 10 km squares in which each species was reported. The map outline is stylized and the dots shifted slightly to disguise specific breeding locations.

This is an excellent book, well laid-out and well illustrated, and a worthy complement to every birder's library.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kingston Field Naturalists  
Balance Sheet  
As At March 31, 1994

## Assets:

|                                    |                   |                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Cash                               | 5,264.38          |                   |
| Account Receivable - Quarry Press  | 391.71            |                   |
| Account Receivable - Scotia Mcleod | 107.94            |                   |
| Treasury Bill                      | 10,000.00         |                   |
| GIC                                | 21,339.00         |                   |
| NHA - Mortgage Backed Security     | 25,000.00         |                   |
| Property                           | 120,800.00        |                   |
| Equipment                          | 7,860.15          |                   |
|                                    | <u>190,763.18</u> |                   |
| Total Assets                       |                   | <u>190,763.18</u> |

## Liabilities and Members Equity:

## Current Liabilities:

|                                       |                  |                   |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Unearned Interest Income              |                  | 940.70            |
| Members' Equity April 1, 1993         | 171,558.20       |                   |
| Excess of Revenue over Expenses       | <u>18,264.28</u> |                   |
|                                       |                  | <u>189,822.48</u> |
| Total Liabilities and Members' Equity |                  | <u>190,763.18</u> |

Kingston Field Naturalists  
Bank Reconciliation Statement  
For The Year Ended March 31, 1994

|                                   |                  |                   |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Balance April 1, 1993             |                  | 14,140.83         |
| Cash Receipts                     | 90,674.79        |                   |
| Cash Payments                     | <u>99,551.24</u> |                   |
| Excess Expenditures over Receipts |                  | <u>(8,876.45)</u> |
| Balance March 31, 1994            |                  | <u>5,264.38</u>   |

We have reviewed the cash book, together with the supporting documents. We find the above statements accurately reflect the financial position of the Kingston Field Naturalists for the year ended March 31, 1994.

L.S. Wright



J.H. Ellis



Kingston Field Naturalists  
Income Statement  
For The Year Ended March 31, 1994

## Revenue:

|                                    |                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Interest Earned                    | 2,290.25        |
| Donations for Property Acquisition | 19,005.10       |
| Grazing and Property Tax Rebate    | 2,619.84        |
| Grants                             | 2,250.00        |
| May Dinner                         | 930.00          |
| Membership                         | 4,561.15        |
| Sales                              | <u>1,205.31</u> |

## Total Revenues

32,861.65

## Expenses

|                            |              |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Bank Service Charge        | 38.45        |
| FON                        | 390.00       |
| Insurance                  | 500.00       |
| Juniors                    | 619.08       |
| May Dinner                 | 744.00       |
| Membership                 | 2,774.36     |
| Miscellaneous              | 2,415.02     |
| Office Supplies            | 709.50       |
| Printing                   | 1,992.00     |
| Lawyer                     | 908.08       |
| Room Rental                | 450.20       |
| Safety Deposit Box         | 32.10        |
| Property Taxes             | 2,953.74     |
| Accrued Interest - NHA MBS | <u>70.84</u> |

## Total Expenses

14597.37

## Excess of Revenue over Expenses

18264.28

MONARCH BUTTERFLY TAGGING AT PRESQU'ILE

by Shannon Reed & Megan Ashlee Serin  
Teen Naturalists

On a warm fall day  
Down in Presqu'ile Park,  
We met there to tag  
The southbound Monarch.

First we brushed off some scales  
And put on a sticker,  
Then gently released it  
And watched it flutter.

We ate our lunch down by the shore  
Then walked back to the car.  
Upon the boardwalk we did see  
Some cattails from afar.

We went down to beach number three  
To look for many things,  
We saw some gulls and skeletons  
And a bunch of Sanderlings.

At last we looked at wildflowers,  
Little insects, too.  
We'll have to go another time  
'Cause there's so much to do.

\* \* \* \* \*



