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# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE



*A Publication Concerned With  
Natural History and Conservation*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

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# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

**Editor**

Fenja Brodo

**Associate Editor**

Bill Gummer

**Production Manager**

Sandra Gushue

**Production Assistants**

Suzanne Blain  
David Thomson

**Mailing Team**

Michael Murphy  
Co-ordinator  
Jennifer Chaundy  
Don Davidson  
Gwen Jenkins  
Roy Jenkins  
David Smythe  
Verna Smythe

Views expressed in *Trail & Landscape* and in its news supplement *The Green Line* are not necessarily those of The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club.

## The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —

*President*

E. Franklin Pope

**Objectives of the Club:** To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

**Club Publications:** THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and TRAIL & LANDSCAPE, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on club activities.

**Field Trips, Lectures** and other natural history activities are arranged for local members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

**Membership Fees:** Individual (yearly) \$23      Sustaining (yearly) \$50  
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**Membership application, correspondence :**  
THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB  
Box 35069, Westgate P.O.  
Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 1A2

**Information:**  
(613) 722-3050  
After 10 a.m.

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# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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Volume 29 Number 4  
October – December 1995

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## Table of Contents

Welcome, New Members .....	130
From the Editor .....	131
Wanted! Mailing Team Coordinator/ <i>Michael Ross Murphy</i> .....	131
Notice of the 117th Annual Business Meeting/ <i>Frank Pope</i> .....	132
Access to Shirleys Bay and the Munster Sewage Lagoons/ <i>Frank Pope</i> .....	133
Ottawa Duck Club Inc. 19th Annual Wildlife Art & Carving Show/Sale .....	134
The Ottawa District – a Hundred Years of Knowledge Gained/ <i>Joyce M. Reddoch</i> .....	135
Passage [Poem]/ <i>Robert Nero</i> .....	137
Eastern Screech Owls – Gone from Billings Bridge?/ <i>Chris Traynor</i> .....	138
A Birder's Guide to the Moses-Saunders Power Dam Area/ <i>Bruce &amp; Laurie Di Labio</i> .....	142
Second Ottawa-Hull Mid-fall Bird Count/ <i>Daniel St-Hilaire</i> .....	155
Winter Bird Sightings/ <i>Chris Traynor</i> .....	156
Newfoundland Mountains [Poem]/ <i>Brian Coleman</i> .....	160
Ottawa-Hull Christmas Bird Count 1994/ <i>Bruce M. Di Labio &amp; Daniel St-Hilaire</i> .....	161
Species List for Ottawa-Hull Christmas Bird Counts 1919-1994/ <i>Bruce M. Di Labio</i> .....	164
Index to Volume 29 .....	167
Coming Events .....	169
Ottawa-Hull Mid-fall Bird Count [announcement] .....	IBC
1995 Ottawa-Hull Christmas Bird Count [announcement] .....	IBC
Deadline .....	IBC

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# Welcome, New Members

## Ottawa Area

Laura Armstrong  
Maria Bohuslawsky  
Julien Brazeau  
John Cook  
Gail C. Cosgrove and Family  
Peter J. Gillespie  
Bonnie C. Harnden  
Shirley I. Holt  
Kelly A. Kilpatrick  
Francois G. Lafleche  
Jean-Sebastien Ledoux  
Maria E. Macrae  
Ross and Beth McLeod

Peter A. H. Meggs and Family  
Karen and Cameron Metcalfe  
M. Joan O'Brien and Family  
Nora O'Brien  
Diane Parkin and Family  
Dr. Pearl I. Peterkin  
Dr. Scott Redhead  
Fiona S. Reid  
Barbara and Stuart Robertson  
Linda J. and Erwin J. Wiens  
Mary Wyndham and Family  
Amanda Yenson

## Other Areas

Don Buckle, Saskatoon, Sask.  
Rosalind F. C. Chaundy, Toronto, Ont.



P.J. Mickey Narraway  
Membership Committee  
August, 1995.



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## From the Editor

I would like to think that Anne Hanes, the first editor of *Trail & Landscape*, would be very pleased with the journal that she launched with so much hope in 1967. I remember her delight and eagerness to receive material to publish. There must always have been that undercurrent of worry whether there will be enough to fill the next issue. We are not immune from that either. Invariably though, and in plenty of time before we go to press, new and interesting manuscripts begin to arrive. This is a sure indication that there is much to say of the local natural history scene, and that there are many people willing to put their observations and thoughts to paper. We thank you all; it is you who make this journal such a treasure.

It is with great pleasure that I thank Sandra Gushue my production and right-hand person as well as Alan German and friends of the Computer Committee who have smoothed out the difficulties inherent in computer changeovers.

Many thanks also to our reviewers, Tony Beck, Irwin Brodo, Ellaine Dickson, Albert Dugal, Bill Gummer, Joyce Reddoch, Phil Youngman, and especially to Jack Gillett who filled in as final proof-reader for the last issue because my other right-hand person, Bill Gummer, was not well but recuperating. ▣

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## Wanted! Mailing Team Coordinator

*Michael Ross Murphy*

A volunteer from the Ottawa area is needed to coordinate the mailing of the *Trail & Landscape* magazine, four times a year. Each mailing requires approximately one evening of effort with a team of 5 or 6 people, followed by a daytime visit to the postal terminal.

To maintain our very favourable mailing rules we must follow specific instructions. Canada Post will provide the necessary training which will give our volunteer coordinator valuable skills for using the Canadian postal system. Call Fenja Brodo at 723-2054 for more details. ▣

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# Notice of the 117th Annual Business Meeting

Canadian Museum of Nature  
7:30 p.m., Tuesday, January 9th, 1996

*Frank Pope*

The Annual Business Meeting is the only formal occasion during the year that members have an opportunity to learn about and to control the operations of the Club. Attendance normally ranges between 40 and 70 members. Most organizations find annual business meetings to be poorly attended, a situation that concerns some members.

In the past few years we have tried to keep the focus on business but to present it in an interesting manner. Members arrive at 7:30 p.m., pick up a coffee and peruse the annual report, noting any points meriting a question or comment. Having allowed study time, we consider it unnecessary to read the annual report aloud when the formal meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. Representatives from all committees are on hand to answer questions. A slate of officers and members of the Council is presented for election so there is little chance of a member being coerced into a job at this meeting. The formal part of the meeting is followed by a presentation featuring one of the committees. To date we have heard from the Conservation, Publications, and Education & Publicity committees. After an annual business meeting I am frequently approached by members who comment on how interesting the meeting has been and how much they have learned.

Featured this year will be the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. The committee managing it is made up of representatives from the Club, Friends of the Farm and Landscape Ontario. Speaking on behalf of the Committee will be Jeff Harrison, chair, visionary and driving force since the idea was conceived over a decade ago. This year, the time and energy put into the Garden is beginning to bear fruit. The backyard garden is in place, Building 138 has been refurbished inside and is in use, many of the plantings have become established and the garden is beginning to reflect the master plan. It has been a big project, one that few naturalists' clubs have attempted, and it makes an interesting story.

Don't miss it. □



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# Access to Shirleys Bay and the Munster Sewage Lagoons

*Frank Pope*

These two excellent locations for watching ducks and shore birds have been favoured by birders for years; therefore, some people may be disappointed to learn that access to them will be somewhat restricted in the future. Upon reflection, however, I am sure that most of us can understand the situation. These properties are not open to the general public. The current increase in legal claims against property owners and some of the settlements awarded for damages would make any property owner wary of offering free access to the general public. We have been privileged in the past to enjoy relatively free access to these properties.

Relatively free access will continue. Recognizing the popularity of these sites among our members, the Club has negotiated and signed agreements with both administrations to allow access to these sites under certain specified conditions.

## Shirleys Bay

To accommodate new training requirements for local civilian police the hand-gun range is being re-oriented and extended. This will increase the area where birders run a risk of being struck by stray bullets. Henceforth, the area west of the path from the road to the berm will be off limits. A chain-link fence, with a gate at the entrance to the berm, will be constructed soon. Access will be permitted only when the berm is safe. Club members may pick up the key to the gate from the Range Control Office in the Connaught Headquarters Building on Shirley Boulevard opposite the national flag (Building No. 34). The office normally is open from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., including weekends. Be prepared to show your OFNC membership card. To avoid disappointment, members of the Club should call before leaving home to find out if the berm is clear. The telephone number for the Range Control Office is 991-5740.

The "Rules of Access" to the Shirleys Bay Causeway published earlier in *T&L* no longer apply.

## Munster Sewage Lagoon

A fence with a gate has already been installed. Keys may be borrowed from the following sources:

**The President**  
Frank Pope  
7 Kimberley Rd.,  
Nepean, 829-1281

**Bird Status Line**  
Mike Tate  
4 Jerrilynn Cr.,  
Nepean, 825-5277

**Chair, Excursions and Lectures Committee**  
Colin Gaskell  
Apt. 6, 501 Athlone Ave.,  
Ottawa, 728-4582

**Chair, Birds Committee**  
Tony Beck  
2083 Magladry Rd.,  
RR #3 Navan, 835-4455

**Member at Large**  
Gordon Pringle  
236 Henry Farm Dr.,  
Ottawa, 224-0543

We are grateful for access to these two good sites. Remember that continued access depends upon our good behaviour.☐

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## Ottawa Duck Club Inc.

### 19th Annual Wildlife Art & Carving Show/Sale

OFNC Members should be aware that the Ottawa Duck Club will be holding its 19th Annual Show & Sale, October 27-29th in Hall B at the Nepean Sportsplex on Woodroffe Avenue. This event is to raise funds for wildlife conservation in the Ottawa area. The Duck Club builds and sets out improved boxes for raising not only ducks and geese but also nesting boxes for blue birds, swallows and martins.

This exhibition features wildlife carvers, antique and contemporary decoy collectors, taxidermists, wildlife artists and photographers. Carving and painting demonstrations are encouraged.

As in the past, our Club plans to have an exhibit in this show. The hours are:

Fri. Oct. 27, 5 - 9 p.m.; Sat. Oct. 28, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Sun. Oct. 29, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Admission is \$3. Call Ellaine Dickson (729-1554) for further information.☐



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# The Ottawa District – A Hundred Years of Knowledge Gained

*Joyce M. Reddoch*

The Ottawa District has an amazingly rich variety of plants, animals and habitats. From its almost 8,000 km<sup>2</sup> area, we have records of more than 1,500 species of vascular plants, about 400 lichens, 17 amphibians, 15 reptiles, 81 fishes and 94 butterflies. Of 336 species of birds sighted here, at least 178 have nested.

Our knowledge of the Ottawa District is the result of more than a century of dedicated work by Club members. One of the more important starting points was the agreement in 1895 to have a common study area for all branches of natural history.

Before that, in 1879, James Fletcher put together for Club members a list of the plants he had collected that summer within 12 miles of Ottawa. Twelve miles from home was about as far as one could reasonably expect to travel in a day.

But that soon changed. Naturalists began taking steam boat excursions east and west on the Ottawa River to Buckingham and Chat's Falls, and train trips in various directions, west to Galetta, southeast to Casselman and north to Wakefield. A 30-mile circle around Ottawa would include these favourite haunts.

And so, in 1895, the Club's journal, *The Ottawa Naturalist*, proclaimed the establishment of an official study area: "The Ottawa District – For purposes of Natural History and for more exactly defining the limits of the phrase 'Ottawa District,' it was unanimously agreed at the last Council meeting of the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club to limit the territory included, to that which is comprised within a circle whose centre is Ottawa, with a radius of thirty miles."

In 1981, the Council updated the definition of the Ottawa District in two ways. It approved the metrication of the circle's radius to 50 km and accepted the Peace Tower as the centre of the circle. "Ottawa" was no longer a dot on the map.

## The Ottawa District



*Outer circle: 50 km radius; inner circle: 30 mile radius.*

In the last hundred years, members have published an impressive collection of articles and books on the natural history of the District in Club and government publications. These reports have come from naturalists, biologists and geologists working on their own or as part of their jobs. Naturally, a fair number of studies were done by members employed by the federal and provincial governments: Agriculture Canada, the Canadian Museum of Nature, the Geological Survey of Canada, the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, to name the most prolific.

Have we learned everything about the natural history of the Ottawa District? By no means! Conditions have changed markedly during the last century and will continue to change. The need for updating is continuous. There are many areas that have never been explored – roadless parts of the Shield country and inaccessible woodlots and ravines on the lowlands. Even places that have been known since the 1880's can produce surprises like the Spotted Turtles discovered in the Mer Bleue only in 1974. There is every opportunity for naturalists to add to the knowledge built up during the last hundred years and to compile new information about the District in the years to come.

Listings of articles on the Ottawa District in *Trail & Landscape* can be found in the cumulative indices (1967 – 1986 and 1987 – 1991).

**Acknowledgements:** I am grateful to the following people for providing me with the current status of various flora and fauna: Albert Dugal, Ernie Brodo, Francis Cook, Brian Coad, Don Lafontaine and Bruce Di Labio.☐

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## Passage

*Robert Nero*

I miss all those birds  
but I knew they had to go  
their destiny drawing them  
down the continent  
far from our bountiful feeders:  
Fox Sparrows, Harris' Sparrows  
White-crowns, juncos, all  
streaming through the night  
mist-eyed flutterings over  
glittering towns and cities  
a phalanx of migrants sweeping  
past the cold white moon.

An abundance of birdseed  
kept them here longer  
than expected, their frantic  
bickering at mealtimes suggesting  
a lack of haste to depart  
but overnight they've vanished,  
their urges more compelling  
than our need to see them.

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# Eastern Screech Owls – Gone from Billings Bridge?

*Chris Traynor*



*Billings Bridge Screech Owl in a favoured roost, 1987. Photo by C. Traynor.*

For years now many Ottawa area birders have had their first introduction to the Eastern Screech Owl (*Otus asio*) by observing the birds in the Billings Bridge area. The old woods (east of Bank Street, south of the railroad tracks and just north of Kilborn Avenue) have had resident Screech Owls for such a long time that they were, for Ottawa birders, an institution. Screech Owls have been recorded from this area at least since the 1930's and appeared fairly often (every three years on average) on the Ottawa Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). This was the only place in our area where Screech Owls were seen with any degree of consistency. They were last recorded on an Ottawa CBC in 1987.

Screech Owls seem to show a preference for mature woods with streams or creeks close by. Not only did they have both here but large old trees, like those once found in this lot, are not very common in the Ottawa area. In addition, there were numerous cavities suitable for nesting and roosting making it very attractive for the owls.



The Billings birds were reported quite often in the local papers but their precise location was never divulged. There were several futile searches on my part before I discovered them. However, once having become familiar with the general area, their favoured roosts were easily seen.

I was once familiar with at least seven different roost spots. During the 1970's, when listing was at its peak (listing being the practice of recording as many species of birds as possible in a given time frame) the woods were visited every month. At that time the birds were using at least fifteen roost sites. Over the course of the last ten years, however, these roosts have been levelled, one by one, to the point where few now exist.

Screech Owls come in two colour phases or morphs, red and grey, and both were reported to be present. My luck was poor when it came to finding the more elusive red morph birds. Red morph birds were never reported as often as grey. I have been told that the red owls were more likely to slip back into their holes when approached. Grey birds will also slip back into a cavity when approached, so why were the red birds generally less visible? A possible explanation is that this behaviour is a survival adaptation. In a 1983 study (Merson *et al.*), it was found that red morph birds roosted inside cavities 80% of the time compared to 38% for grey morph birds. It has been suggested that red feathers do not absorb the heat as efficiently as grey. This would explain the tendency for the red birds to remain inside the cavity (Mosher & Henry 1976). It also helps explain why red morph birds are extremely rare in the Ottawa District and become more common as you head south. However, the grey morph birds were not shy and were probably the most photographed resident birds around, as most owl enthusiasts in the area can attest. It was naively assumed they would always be around.

A major destruction of their habitat occurred in the summer of 1987 when the greater part of the woods were cut down to make way for a road and eventually a small number of large homes. While this was certainly a set-back it did not deter the owls. In the spring of 1988, Peter Dunn and I provided nest boxes in the hope that these few extra cavities would give the birds a chance to hang on here. A day after installation the first box was occupied; that was certainly an exciting moment. With new homes available and a few of their favourite trees still remaining there was, at least, hope. Also, while they had lost a major part of their habitat they still had a small park (on the grounds of the Ottawa Archdiocese Centre) in which to hunt. On several occasions the birds were seen flying about there. In the summer of 1988 they successfully produced young. I remember Peter and I finding the fledged young in a small maple tree in the park. These young owls, not yet as stealthy as adults, had given



*Screech Owls take quickly to boxes, in this case the next day (1988). Photo by C. Traynor.*

themselves away by rustling about in the leaves. Unfortunately a manicured park makes a poor substitute for natural habitat and it is doubtful that this park alone provided enough food to support a family of owls. Probably the summer of 1988 was the last year they bred in this location.

On December 2, 1988 I found a grey phase Screech Owl roosting in a nest box. As far as I know, no Screech Owl has been seen here since. In the summer of 1993 there were a few dried up pellets (an owl pellet is the regurgitated undigested fur and bones of prey) inside a nest box but these were far from fresh. Several attempts to induce the birds to respond to taped calls met with failure. Of the two nest boxes they used one was lost when a large hemlock in the park was cut down for no apparent reason. The other box, that had been an instant favourite, has been checked often but with no success.

On October 2, 1994 I visited these familiar woods and was more than shocked (my actual reaction was neither polite nor printable) to see how little remained of their habitat. To make way for the expanding transit-way and to accommodate a new railway bed, most of the Screech Owl's woods were sacrificed. Not only had most of the remaining lot been destroyed but the shifting rail line had reduced the small creek that ran alongside the woods to a mere drainage

ditch. The nest box remained only a few feet from a sharp drop to the transit-way below. Since I have the feeling that it has been used for the last time in this location, I will move the nest box to a more promising location.

However, the situation is not without hope. Bruce Di Labio and I scouted out the remains of the area. Though the main part of the woods has been decimated there is still some suitable habitat in a park north of the railroad tracks and west of the Billings Estate. Here there are a number of suitable trees and some hunting area, although quite close to a large apartment building. There are too many variables for us to determine the range of any one urban owl, we assume that their original territory may have included this park. Both Bruce and I realized that, if we hadn't known Screech Owls were once resident here, we might have picked this spot to look for them. The Screech Owl is known as a city dweller and it is still possible it could survive here. They have been reported living quite close to houses locally in the Hampton Park area and in Rockcliffe Village. However, their reclusive nature can make them very difficult to locate at times. While far from common in our area they quite likely are somewhat under-reported.

The possibility remains that we have witnessed the dying off of the local owls in this woods. Or maybe these owls just moved out to the suburbs. If this is the case, then it is possible that a completely new pair of owls may move in here and make this area their home. Until then, the old regulars will be missed.

Author's note: While I personally have not recorded an owl here since 1988 (and have not heard of anyone who has) I recognize that it may just be terrible luck. I would certainly be interested in knowing if anyone else has recorded them since.

**Acknowledgements:** I would like to thank Bruce Di Labio for filling me in on some of the earlier history of Screech Owls in the Billings Bridge area as well as for his comments on the article itself.

#### References:

- Merson, M. H., Leta, L. D. & Byers, R. E. 1983. Observations on roosting sites of Screech Owls. *Journal of Field Ornithology*.
- Mosher, J. A. & Henny, C. J. 1976. Thermal adaptiveness of plumage colour in Screech Owls. *Auk* 93:614-619. □

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# A Birder's Guide to the Moses-Saunders Power Dam Area

*Bruce and Laurie Di Labio*



*Figure 1. Moses-Saunders Power Dam. Photo by Bruce Di Labio*

11 October, 1993 – Marbled Murrelet!! A great flock of birders descended on the Moses-Saunders Power Dam (MSPD) to view this exciting vagrant which was new for Ontario and New York State. For many it was an introduction to a new birding destination.

Situated along the St. Lawrence River at Cornwall, Ontario, the MSPD (*Figure 1*) was completed in 1958 as an Ontario-New York State joint hydro project, but this spot was relatively unknown to Ontario birders prior to 1980. Since then, the few birders who have ventured here have uncovered a unique birding location for migrating and wintering water birds.



The uniqueness of the MSPD is due to its location on a major north-south flyway and being situated on one of the largest bodies of water in the area. Also, the proximity of the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the east and the Great Lakes to the west attracts an exciting and diverse selection of birds. Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, Northern Fulmar, and Ivory Gull are just a few of the notables that have made the area not only one of the best kept secrets but one of Ontario's most challenging and rewarding birding destinations.

In addition to the above, Ontario's first recorded Leach's Storm-Petrel was found in a weakened condition on 19 July 1939, two miles below Cornwall along the St. Lawrence River, and on 19 November 1963, a Dovekie was picked up near Cornwall.

### General Information

Autumn and winter are the most interesting seasons to "bird" the power dam and surrounding area. Water along this section of the St. Lawrence remains open year-round, drawing many wintering and migrating species. But be forewarned, as with most birding areas situated near large bodies of water, foggy and misty conditions are a constant threat to visibility.

Successful birding depends greatly on knowledge of weather systems passing through the region. The most interesting birding opportunities follow storms or high winds originating from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and, during the fall and early winter, on the heels of cold fronts from the northwest. Other productive times follow cold snaps during the months of December and January. As calm waters freeze, many undetected late lingerers and other wintering birds are forced to seek the open water at the power dam.

Although weather affects the birding in this area, regular coverage can yield interesting finds. For example, both the Marbled Murrelet and the Atlantic Puffin were found on relatively clear days with no significant previous weather changes.

Most roads in the area are paved and make birding locations easily accessible regardless of the season. Cornwall and Massena are the two largest towns in this region and offer a variety of accommodations, restaurants, and gas stations.

Depending on the season and weather conditions, birding in this area requires at least one full day and possibly a second day to do the region full justice. Keep in mind that during the winter some of the locations near the dam may be frozen and snow-covered and less time overall may be needed to visit these sites.

Just two reminders. Firstly, when crossing the international border be sure that all optical equipment is registered in advance with Canada Customs. Secondly, most of the areas in this region have public access but remember to obey no trespassing signs and other signs restricting public use.

#### **Suggestions for Birding the Power Dam and Surrounding Area**

The Robert Moses section of the power dam (RMPD) and Hawkin's Point are the most important vantage points. If time is short, you should concentrate on these two locations. Although the power dam can be "birded" from either side of the river, viewing is far superior from the American side. Afternoon lighting conditions should first be taken into consideration. From the American side, the sun is at your back whereas you must look into the sun on the Canadian side.

The most significant factor, however, is the availability of public access to the power dam facilities. On the Canadian side, viewing at the Robert H. Saunders Generating Station (RSGS) is restricted to June, July, and August. Because the centre's hours change during the year, you should first contact Ontario Hydro in Cornwall to gain permission to access the area. Ontario Hydro can be reached by phone at (613)938-1518, or by mail at Ontario Hydro, R.H. Saunders Information Centre, P.O. Box 999, Cornwall, Ontario, K6H 5V1.

The RMPD on the American side is open year-round during the week from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on weekends from Victoria Day to the Canadian Thanksgiving. During the summer (June to September), public access hours are extended to 7:30 p.m. However, for safety reasons, the observation deck is closed to the public during strong winds and heavy rain or snow. For further information, call the New York Power Authority at (315)764-0226, or write to the St. Lawrence F.D.R. Power Project, Community Relations Division, P.O. Box 700, Massena, New York, 13622.

#### **Birding the Ontario Side of the Moses-Saunders Power Dam**

From Ottawa, take Highway 417 east for 60 km. Exit at Highway 138 just east of Casselman (*See Map 1*). Continue south on 138 for 40 km and turn right at the stop sign. Proceed for 1 km, turn left onto Brookdale Avenue and continue to Highway 2 west. Turn right onto Highway 2 (Vincent Massey Drive), then left onto Power Dam Drive to Saunders Drive and right at the stop sign to the generating station (*See Map 2*).

Birders from Kingston, Toronto, and other southern Ontario locations, follow Highway 401 east to Cornwall and exit south on Power Dam Drive. Continue south on this road, crossing Vincent Massey Drive (Highway 2) to Saunders

Drive and turn right at the stop sign. This route leads to the entrance of the RSGS.

**Robert H. Saunders Generating Station (Sites 2a and 2b; Map 2)**  
Proceed to the gate house and inquire as to whether access is permitted to the parking lot and observation deck. These are the best two vantage points to “bird” the dam. If access is denied, park in the western parking lot and walk up the embankment to view the headpond (Site 2b) or follow the fence line on the east side of the gatehouse to the edge of the river and view the base of the power dam (Site 2a). You can also walk along the bicycle path which runs parallel to the river and stop at various spots to scan for birds below the power dam. (See Site 5 for details about the birds).



Map 1. Ottawa-Cornwall region.

#### **Guindon Park (Sites 1a and 1b)**

Guindon Park is a large recreational area with many nature trails, cross-country ski trails, a boat launch, and picnic areas (Map 2). From the Generating Station, retrace the route to Vincent Massey Drive (Highway 2). Turn left and drive to the sign at the West Entrance of the park and turn left on Trillium Drive. Follow this road to the boat launch (Site 1a) which provides an excellent view of the headpond. Check for roosting gulls in the field. The most common ones will be Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed, but Iceland, Glaucous, and Thayer's are regular visitors during the fall and early winter. Also watch for Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Scan the open field during the fall and along the gravel roads in winter for the occasional Grey Partridge.

If you have a lot of energy and time, follow the dyke along the water's edge, from site 1a to 1b, as there are many bays and inlets that cannot be seen from the boat launch. The rocky shoreline along the dyke makes this a good area for Purple Sandpiper from mid-October to mid-November. Anything is possible! On the 1990 Massena-Cornwall Christmas Bird Count (CBC), a Northern Hawk Owl and a Gyrfalcon were observed here. Stranchan Island should be checked for Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Red-necked Phalarope, and other shorebirds. During the breeding season, the island is occupied by nesting Ring-billed Gulls and Double-crested Cormorants. On 3 May, 1991, an adult Great

Cormorant was observed on the island among the other cormorants. Continue by travelling east on Highway 2 to the east entrance of Guindon Park (Site 1b). From the parking lot you can see the dyke at a distance. Follow the trail to the dyke. (For a complete review of species, see Site 5b.)



*Figure 2. View of Stranachan Island. Photo by Bruce Di Labio.*

### **Birding the American Side of the Moses-Saunders Power Dam**

Return to Highway 138 (Brookdale Avenue) and proceed south through the town of Cornwall to the bridge to the United States. The first bridge leads to the Akwesasne Indian Reservation on Cornwall Island, and a toll of \$2.25 (either U.S. or Canadian) is collected upon entry and return. The second bridge crosses the border into the United States. After U.S. customs, proceed south to the traffic circle and take the first right onto Haverstock Road which leads to the Reynold's Aluminum Plant, the first stop on the route.

#### **Reynold's Aluminum Plant (Site 3; Map 2)**

Follow Haverstock Road past the Reynold's Plant and over the railroad tracks. At this point the road curves to the left and you can park anywhere along the guard rail to view the channel and banks of Cornwall Island directly across the river. The best time to check this area is from November through March. Depending on ice conditions, December, January, and February usually harbour the highest concentrations of waterbirds (the more ice, the more birds but only up to a certain point – too much drives them away). As this section of the river remains open during the winter, it provides a good location for roosting waterbirds. Common Goldeneyes and Common Mergansers are the most



abundant winter ducks. Carefully check for occasional wintering Barrow's Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Greater Scaups, Canvasbacks, Oldsquaws, Red-breasted Mergansers, or Hooded Mergansers. (During the winter of 1990-91, an immature male Harlequin Duck overwintered until 3 March 1991. On the Massena-Cornwall CBC 23 December 1990, a female King Eider was observed at this location.) Remember to watch along the breakwall for Snowy Owls in the winter and Cormorants in the fall. During early fall, it is also worthwhile to check for Bonaparte's Gulls and Little Gulls that frequently feed along this channel.

Once you have checked this area, continue west along Haverstock Road. From late fall through winter, investigate the tangles of grape vines along the road for the presence of American Robins, and Bohemian Waxwings and roosting Northern Saw-whet Owls. Upon entering the open fields and woodlots, look for Northern Shrikes, Snow Buntings and overwintering Northern Flickers as these birds frequent this area. Also watch for Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, American Kestrels, Grey Partridges, Horned Larks, and occasional Lapland Longspurs, particularly if manure has been recently spread in the farm fields. After passing the farm, take the first right, and follow South Grass River Road. Don't forget to check the residential feeders. Watch for American Tree Sparrows, Common Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, Mourning Doves, and overwintering blackbirds particularly Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Common Grackles.

At the stop sign, turn right onto Trippany Road and proceed to the dead-end sign where you turn left towards Highway 37 (see *See Map 2*), and then turn right onto 37 and continue to Route 131, located directly across from the St. Lawrence Shopping Centre. Turn right and continue on 131, the main road crossing over the Grass River. Watch for Bohemian Waxwings and Common Redpolls during the winter and in the fall, check any pine plantations along this route for wintering owls.

Continue along Eisenhower Lock Road (formerly Route 131) passing beneath the Eisenhower Lock which is the boundary to Robert Moses State Park. Go past the Information Centre, cross over Barnhart Island Bridge, and take the first left. This is also a good area to listen for Eastern Screech Owl at dusk or dawn. (Three were heard along this stretch on 18 December 1993 and 16 February 1995.)

#### **The Marina/Beach (Site 4; *Map 2*)**

Proceed north to the marina/boat launch area. From this vantage point, scan the open water for loons, grebes, cormorants, diving ducks, and gulls. As the water is frozen in the winter, the most advantageous time to "bird" this area is

during the fall and early winter. Check the islands off the marina for Snowy Owls which can be found on exposed rocks. Also check the islands for roosting Bald Eagles. To leave this area, turn left onto Barnhart Island Road to the dam. A variety of species, including Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Grosbeak, and American Robin can be found feeding on the oriental crabapple trees along this stretch of the road. One of the few New York State records of the Sage Thrasher was an individual found feeding in these trees at the entrance to the dam on 27 December 1971, the date of the first Massena/ Cornwall CBC.

### **Robert Moses Power Dam (Site 5a; Map 2)**

Once through the dam's main gate, proceed to the parking lot. You can view this area from the parking lot and from the observation deck on the top floor of the power dam. It is highly recommended that both areas be checked.

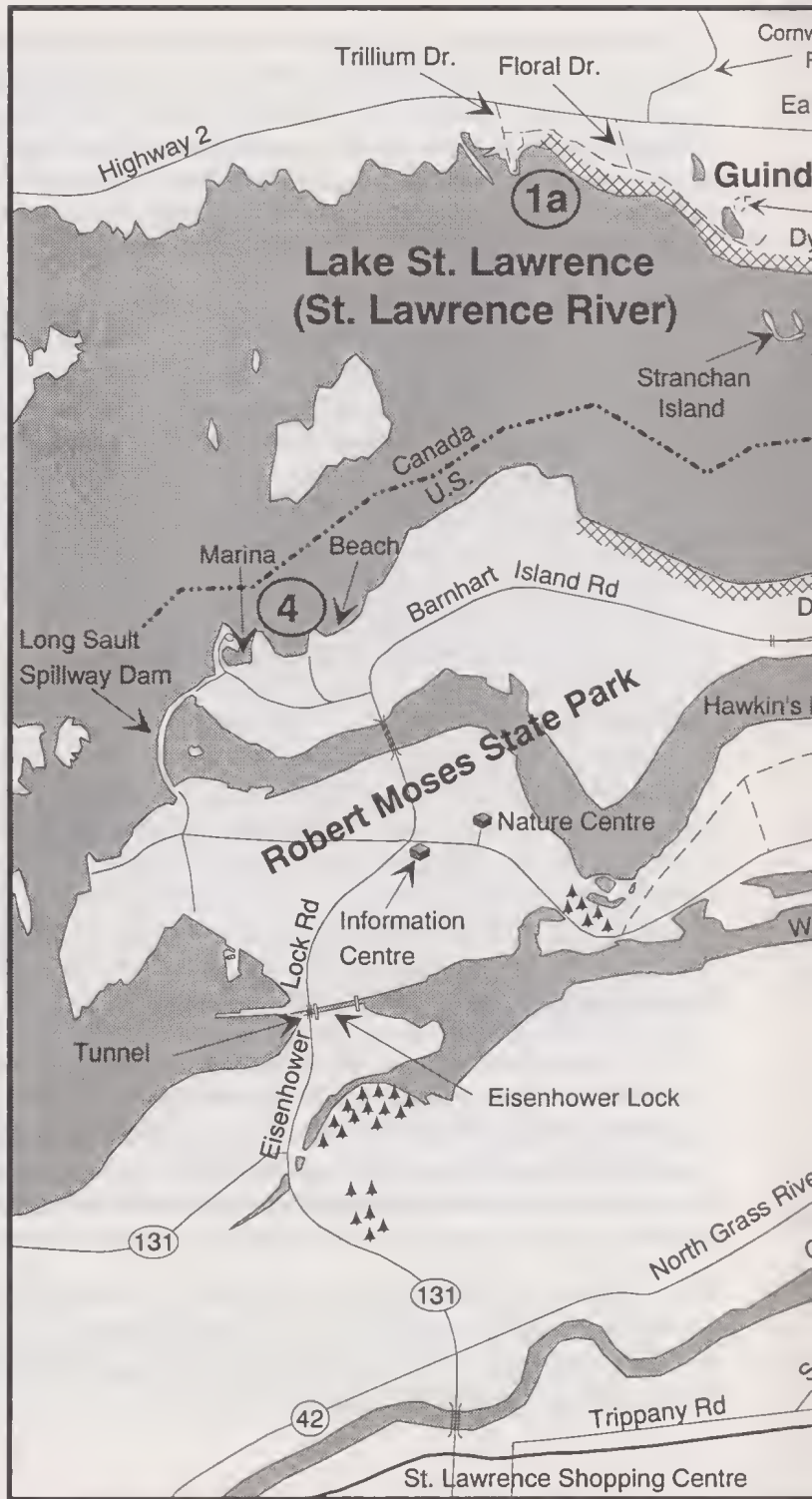
Over the years, the RMPD has hosted an impressive total of 16 species of gulls and four species of terns. The numbers of gulls and terns begin to increase in mid-August, and consist mainly of Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls and Common Terns. Carefully scan below the dam for Little Gulls which appear anytime from early August on. In September, there is a further increase in gulls as the first migrants move through the area. At this time, Bonaparte's Gulls can number anywhere from 100 to over 1000. Although not a frequent visitor, the Sabine's Gull is a good possibility during the latter part of September, most often observed feeding below the dam. Little Gull numbers generally peak at the end of the month. Eight were observed on 30 September 1990 and six on 25 September 1991. Common Terns peak in late September and early October. Usually numbering in the hundreds, this species can be found actively feeding below the dam or sitting on the dam structure itself. Also watch for Arctic Terns which have been observed twice during early October, feeding amongst the Common Terns. Black Terns are regular visitors in August to mid-September. Also watch for an occasional Caspian Tern migrating during the early fall.

October marks the increase in the numbers of larger gulls such as the Great Black-backed, Herring, and Ring-billed Gulls. Carefully check through the gulls as they feed on the water or rest on the power dam structure. With the influx of the larger gulls, an occasional Lesser Black-backed Gull may be found. Patience can be rewarded as the first New York State record of a Mew Gull was found feeding below the dam on 4 and 5 October 1986. Subsequent observations of this gull were made on 27 December 1992 and 19 November 1994. The California Gull, another western rarity, was also found feeding in this same area on 23 October 1990. Franklin's Gull has only been recorded once at this site with a first-winter plumage bird present from 12 September to

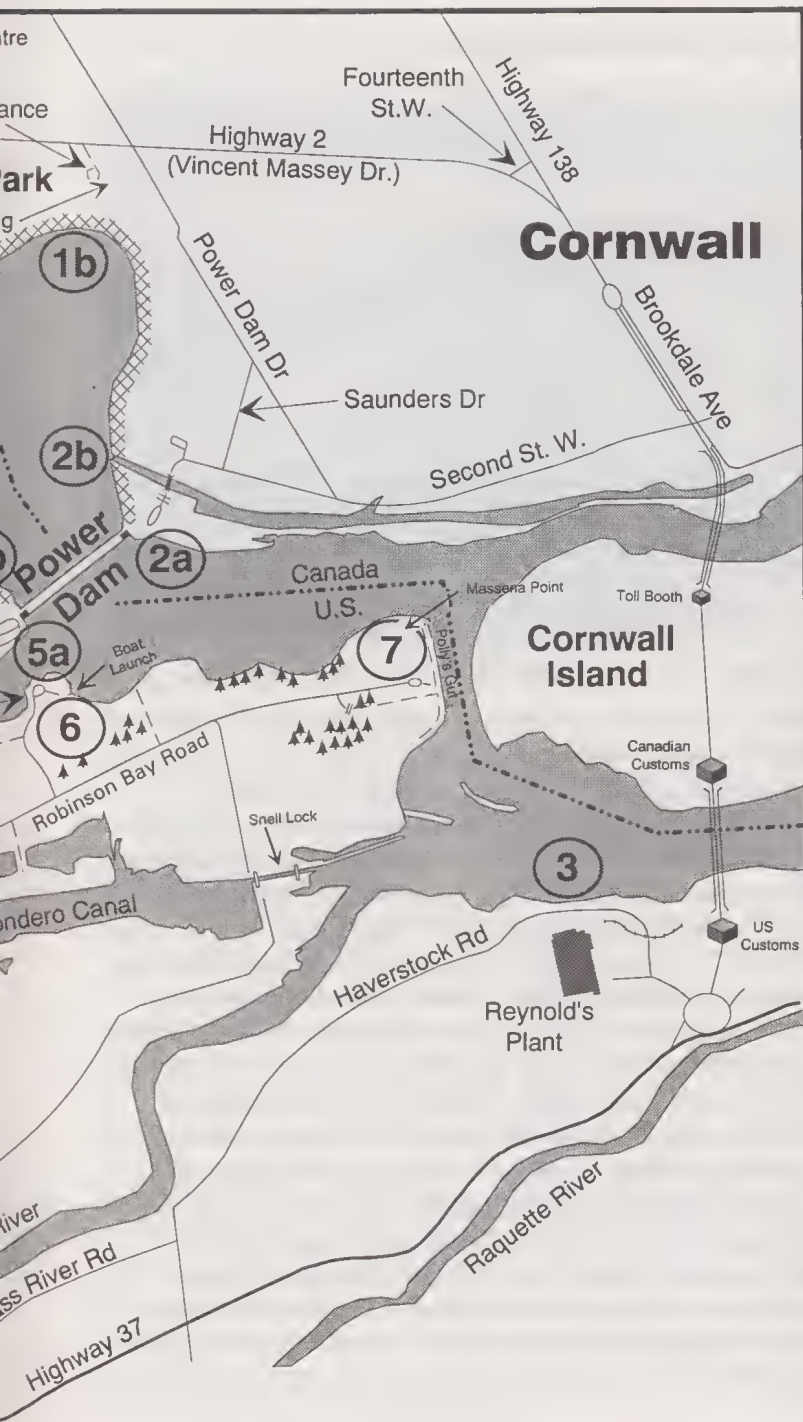
24 October 1986. Black-legged Kittiwakes are rare but regular visitors to the dam in small numbers. Usually one to three birds can be found feeding below the dam during November and occasionally in late October. Carefully scan through the large raft of Ring-billed Gulls resting on the water for first-winter Black-legged Kittiwakes. The majority of Kittiwake records are first-winter birds, but on 6 November 1986, 2 adult Black-legged Kittiwakes were observed feeding below the dam.

A significant fluctuation in gull numbers occurs during November and December, depending on weather conditions. If temperatures during late fall are cold, the Bonaparte's Gulls, will as a rule, have migrated out of the area. If the conditions are mild, this gull will remain though in reduced numbers. Carefully check the flocks of "Bonys" for Common Black-headed Gulls as they have been recorded four times, three of which were in November. All birds were adults in winter plumage and were feeding below the dam. Ring-billed Gulls follow a similar pattern to that of the Bonaparte's, however, they tend to linger in the power dam area longer, sometimes into late December. Numbers in the fall usually range from 1000 to 5000 birds, whereas in December, if conditions are favourable, a few hundred may remain. Early November also marks the arrival of the "white-winged gulls." Two northern species, the Glaucous and Iceland Gulls, usually appear at the dam site at about the same time, in response to the freezing of lakes further north. As the season progresses, their numbers increase. Record numbers are generally noted in January or February with a high count of 67 Iceland Gulls on 6 February 1991 and 53 Glaucous Gulls on 3 February 1992. It's interesting to note that no two years are the same. Data gathered over the past 10 years have shown that either species can outnumber the other, with no single factor, apparently, controlling this fluctuation. Another white-winged gull, the Thayer's Gull, is a rare but regular visitor, appearing anytime between early November and late February. With usually only one bird found each season, one must scrutinize the flocks of Herring Gulls to locate this elusive gull. Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls are regular winter residents at the power dam. Their numbers also vary with weather conditions. When severe cold hits the area numbers can be reduced from a few thousand to a few hundred overnight. There is only one record of the Ivory Gull, an immature found off Hawkin's Point on 8 December 1977 and 13 January 1978. More sightings of this species are definitely overdue!

Depending on weather conditions, by late February or early March the diversity of species decreases rapidly as wintering gulls move north or down to the gulf of St. Lawrence and are replaced by thousands of Ring-billed Gulls which breed on numerous islands above the power dam.







Map 2. Moses-Saunders Power Dam Area

Lake St. Lawrence / Headpond (Site 5b; Map 2)



Figure 3. Rare sighting of Juvenile Atlantic Puffin. Photo by Bruce Di Labio.

From the observation platform at the RMPD, survey the headpond located above the dam. This area can be very rewarding from August through to early January. Two of the rarest birds here have been a Marbled Murrelet (11-30 October 1993) and a juvenile Atlantic Puffin (14-16 October 1994) (Figure 3). Two Northern Fulmars and two juvenile Northern Gannets were also observed on 15 December 1994. One of the fulmars was found dead the following day. The other fulmar was again observed flying over the headpond during the Mas-sena-Cornwall CBC, 17 December 1994. Lake St. Lawrence is usually frozen by January but occasionally as early as mid-December. This location can net a variety of species, most notable being the Red-throated Loon, Red-necked and Horned Grebes, Brant, White-winged Surf and Black Scoters, all of which can be found during October and November. A Parasitic Jaeger was observed roosting on the water on 15 September 1991, and on 11 November 1989, three immature Pomarine Jaegers spent the afternoon feeding and resting in this same area. This observation deck is also a good location for watching hawks. Regular migrants included Red-tailed, Rough-legged, Red-shouldered, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks. Bald and Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcon and Merlin are occasionally observed. From late December through mid-March, overwintering Bald Eagles, from the Ivy Lea Bridge area west of Brockville, wander down river to the open water at the dam in search of food.

During late fall and winter watch for Snowy Owls resting on the power dam structure or sitting out on the ice.

#### **Hawkin's Point Lookout (Site 6; *Map 2*)**

Retrace the route taken to the power dam. After crossing the bridge, turn left onto Robinson Bay Road (formerly East-west Road) at the Information Centre. Continue eastward along this road checking the pine plantation on the left for owls, finches, Ruffed Grouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Golden-crowned Kinglets. At the transmission line structure, 3.8 kilometres from the turnoff, turn right onto the dirt road which leads to two ponds. A variety of waterfowl can be found here, but most notable were the 500 Redheads and 350 Ring-necked Ducks viewed on 3 November 1991. During the late fall and early winter the berry and fruit trees along this road are a haven for Bohemian Waxwings, wintering American Robins and Pine Grosbeaks. Carefully check any flock of robins because a male Varied Thrush was found feeding in a small group of 17 on 15 January 1991. Towards mid-winter and early spring, Ruffed Grouse can be observed just before dusk "budding" in nearby poplar or aspen trees. It is also during this time that Northern Shrikes can be found perched high in the deciduous trees. Return to the Robinson Bay Road; turn right to continue eastward; at the sign to the boat launch turn left. During winters of heavy snowfall, the road leading to Hawkin's Point may be inaccessible. Under these conditions it is best to walk to the point, a distance of about 1 kilometre from the turnoff. Located directly across the channel from the dam, the lookout site provides one of the best vantage points for birding. From this location thoroughly check the base of the dam as well as down river towards the bridge. All gulls and terns highlighted in the section under RMPD can be seen here as well. The sheltered bay, just east of the lookout, is a good spot for wintering ducks and gulls. Scan the roosting American Black Ducks and Mallards for other unusual visitors such as an occasional Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, or Northern Pintail. Snowy Owls are sometimes found during the winter resting on the ice or along the shore. Viewing from Hawkin's Point is at its best during late fall and winter. Diving ducks begin to increase in numbers during early fall and by mid-November thousands and sometimes as many as 10,000 Common Mergansers may converge to the area below the dam and to the bay. The Harlequin Duck has overwintered here twice and Barrow's Goldeneye is a rare but regular winter visitor. Annually since 1985, a few Barrow's have been found amongst the 500 to 2,500 overwintering Common Goldeneyes. Storms from the northeast from October to early December have produced a few rarities including an immature Razorbill on 27 November 1987, a juvenile Northern Gannet, which stayed from 22 November to 3 December 1986, and another on 3 November 1991.

### **Loop Road Area (Site 7, Map2)**

To reach the loop, exit Hawkin's Point and turn left onto Robinson Bay Road. Take the left side of the fork in the road and continue up the hill. From the road, check the bays and inlets for waterfowl and the open fields for Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, American Kestrels and Northern Shrikes. At dusk, watch for Short-eared Owls. The spruce woodlot on the right, about 300 metres from the road, can also be rewarding. During the winter of 1987-88, at least 5 Northern Saw-whet Owls and one Long-eared Owl were seen roosting there. The dense protection of this lone coniferous lot in the area attracts a variety of finches such as the White-winged Crossbill and Pine Siskin, as well as Northern Cardinals, Ruffed Grouse, Golden-crowned Kinglets and the occasional Carolina Wren. The end of the loop marks the entrance to the woods that lead to a number of vantage points, the most accessible being Polly's Gut and Massena Point. (Parking along the loop is permitted but do lock all valuables in car trunks as the vantage points are a distance from the road.) To reach these locations, follow the trail and turn left at the service road. At the T-junction, turn left towards Massena Point or right towards Polly's Gut. Polly's Gut is located directly across from the Reynold's Plant, therefore the birds found at the plant can be seen here as well. The advantage of this site is that many of the birds can be observed more closely. From Massena Point, on the other hand, you can see many bays and inlets that cannot be observed from other locations. Don't forget to walk through the woods to look for a variety of landbirds. Northern Flickers have been overwintering in this area for the past 10 years and up to 5 birds have been found annually.

### **Conclusion**

Since 1981 one of us (Bruce) has been regularly leading OFNC trips to this area and the next one is scheduled for October (see Coming Events). It is hoped that this site guide will generate further interest in this region, for much is yet to be learned about the frequency and diversity of species that pass through or winter in this area. For those who get the opportunity to bird the RMPD area, please forward a copy of your observations to the authors.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank Ross Harris, Liz Stevenson, Chris Traynor and Norm Crookshank for their valuable comments on earlier versions of the manuscript. We are grateful to Norm Crookshank for the preparation of the maps and Lee Harper for the use of his boat on a number of occasions. ▣



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# Second Ottawa-Hull Mid-fall Bird Count

15 October to 13 November 1994

*Daniel St-Hilaire*

This second Fall Count gives us a tally of the species reported by seventeen birders. The most important sightings were a **Red-throated Loon** on the Ottawa River (6 Nov., R. Curtis & B. Ladouceur); a **Harlequin Duck** at the Deschênes Rapids, Ottawa River (3 Nov., M. Aubé and 12 Nov., T. Beck, L. & M. Neily, & G. Pringle); all three species of scoter and a female **Ruddy Duck** at Brébeuf Park, Hull (2 Nov., M. Aubé); a **Bald Eagle** at Shirleys Bay (30 Oct., R. Curtis & B. Ladouceur); a **Purple Sandpiper** on the Ottawa River at Aylmer (6 Nov., Le Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais field trip); and 20 **White-winged Crossbills** in Hull (10 Nov., M. Aubé).

The following table compares the effort and the results of the 1993 and 1994 mid-fall birds counts.

	1993 16 Oct. - 14 Nov.	1994 15 Oct. - 13 Nov.
Number of Participants	30	17
Number of Birding Days	51	24
Number of Species	119	89
Number of Individuals	87,207	53,948

I thank all the participants and especially Collin Bowen who entered the data on computer. For this type of census we should produce a form for a Bird Check List on which each birder could report all bird observations and document the environmentally sensitive areas within the 50 km radius of the Peace Tower, Ottawa. Those places are frequently menaced by development. □

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# Winter Bird Sightings

1 December 1994 to 28 February 1995

*Chris Traynor*



*Varied Thrush. Drawing by Christina Lewis.*

The winter of 94/95 was in stark contrast to the previous winter. Very little snow and relatively mild temperatures made for comfortable birding. Was there anything to see? Well, with the exception of the incredible numbers of gulls, the weather did not appear to play a significant role in variety or numbers of other birds. While not one of our more exciting winters (to me, any winter without large numbers of owls is a dull winter) it had its moments.

## **Hérons**

A **Great Blue Heron** remained around long enough to be tallied on the Dunrobin-Breckenridge count (Jan. 2). Obviously a difficult bird to get on a Christmas Bird Count (CBC), especially in January, this was only the second recorded on this count. Another Great Blue was seen in the SouthBank area on Jan. 6.

## **Waterfowl**

No one went to the bother of reporting any of the ubiquitous **Blacks** and **Mallards** that remain in the area over the winter. Never-the-less they were around. A male **Green-Winged Teal**, at Billings Bridge (Feb. 18) was rather

unusual. Perhaps the warm spell made him believe it was actually April. Certainly one of the highlights of the season was the presence of the two Harlequin Ducks that appeared in the Deschênes Rapids near Britannia. Despite much effort, they were not seen on the Ottawa CBC. Barrow's Goldeneyes, seemingly regular now, were recorded in all three months. They could be seen mingling with their more common cousin, the Common Goldeneye, in both the Remic and Deschênes Rapids.

### Hawks

The Northern Goshawk, a hawk of the forest, was reported just once in February from Lees Avenue. Our two smaller accipiters, more adapted to city life, appeared to fare quite well this winter. Cooper's Hawks, however, were reported much more often than the smaller Sharp-shinned Hawk. This presents us with an interesting situation. Are people not reporting the more common "Sharpie" or is it time to get out the hawk identification books? A 3:1 ratio (Cooper's to Sharp-shinned) is certainly not reflective of their true numbers.

Neither of our two winter buteos were common although they could be found if looked for. The Greenbank Road/ Fallowfield area was a good spot for Rough-legged (as it usually is) and the Cedarview and Trail Roads had "Roughies" as well as the odd Red-tailed Hawk.

The magnificent Gyrfalcon, an Ottawa winter specialty, put in but one brief appearance on the Dunrobin/Breckenridge CBC from the Aylmer area. With the number of participants the Quebec side had it would have been hard to miss. They must have been bumping in to each other as a second party also reported a falcon species (large) which was recorded as the same Gyr. (How many people in your sector Bernie?) There were numerous reports of the Peregrine Falcon. The sightings were the usual from the Coates Building at Tunney's Pasture as well as from Albert and Lyon Streets downtown. A single Merlin, from Spadina Street (Feb. 22), was the only report of that species. It is always a difficult bird to see in Ottawa in the winter. American Kestrels were around in decent numbers although no one reported any. Though not as spectacular as the larger falcons, it is a successful little hunter, quite able to withstand the worst an Ottawa winter can throw at it. The Central Experimental Farm was an easy place to find one.

There were several reports of Bald Eagles this winter. One was spotted flying over McGillvray Street (canal area) on Christmas Day. Another was spotted off Fourth Line Road during the Dunrobin CBC. It was part of an amazing raptor hour (Long-eared Owl, Cooper's and Rough-legged Hawks, Bald Eagle in 45

minutes) on the Dunrobin CBC. What an hour! There was a single report of an immature Golden Eagle (Jan. 2) from the Dwyer Hill area.

### Gulls

Gulls put on an impressive show this winter with large numbers present on both the Ottawa and Dunrobin CBCs. The Great Black-backed Gull even outnumbered the Herring Gull on occasion. The Dunrobin count yielded record highs for both Great Black-backed (162) and Herring Gulls (127) and added a new bird for the count, the Glaucous Gull (9). These were conservative estimates. The Ottawa count had high numbers for the aforementioned gulls and also added Iceland and lingering Ring-billed Gulls. The continued expansion of the Great Black-backed Gull continues to impress us each year. It is interesting to note that just ten years ago (1985-86) Ottawa recorded a mere five Great Black-backs and even more recently (1989-90) recorded a combined 100 gulls of five species. Dunrobin, in the same season, recorded 0! Incredible!

### Owls

The winter of 94/95 will not be remembered as one of our more exciting owl winters. The three northern owls were virtually non-existent and resident owls difficult to find. Even the regular Snowy Owls were not easy to find till late January and February. Only Carleton Place, of the local Christmas bird counts, managed one. Great Horned Owls, while not plentiful on the CBC's, were likely around in normal numbers despite the lack of reports. Short-eared Owls, irregular at best, were reported only twice, one from the Central Experimental Farm (Jan. 29) and three from the Navan area (Dec. 24). There was only one report of a wintering Long-eared Owl. This bird was located in a dense cedar woodlot on the Dunrobin CBC (Jan. 2). Interestingly, it was the third straight year a Long-eared Owl was found in this woodlot. This is a fine example of the importance of being thorough on count day. Until three years ago no one had ventured into this secluded wood to check. The sightings for Snowy Owls started out slowly but they could be found in the usual locations (Greenbank, Fallowfield, and the fields around Richmond), with a high of four from Richmond on Jan. 17th. The Eastern Screech Owl, quite difficult to locate in Ottawa, was recorded three times in the period (Dec. 4, Dec. 26, Jan. 28), all from the Trail Road location. Always a rare bird in an Ottawa winter, the Northern Saw-whet was reported only twice. This diminutive owl has shown in the past that it can survive our harshest winters, yet only one from Greens Creek (Dec. 3) and one on the Carleton Place CBC (Dec. 27) were reported, despite a relative lack of snow and no lengthy deep chills. Its larger relative, the Boreal Owl, was again absent. Lastly, the only Hawk Owl recorded was from the Richmond Fen. This bird was reported on the Toronto Hotline and it is



believed it was seen from the train. This is our third straight winter without a reliable sighting of a Hawk Owl.

### Woodpeckers

**Northern Flickers** will occasionally overwinter in Ottawa but there was just a single report (Jan. 8) from Britannia. The rare **Red-bellied Woodpecker** was found in Bourget in January and was seen at least till the 22nd. This is a beautiful woodpecker made even more so by its scarcity. **Pileated Woodpecker** numbers appear to be quite healthy. Any ramble through the proper habitat usually yields one or two of these obtrusive characters. **Black-backed Woodpeckers** (3) were reported only twice, on the Dunrobin CBC and from Gatineau Park. There was only one report of the less common **Three-Toed Woodpecker**, also on the Dunrobin count from the River Road/Constance Lake area. This general vicinity is one of the safest bets for finding either species. Years ago birders could find **Three-toed woodpeckers** just about anywhere because of Dutch Elm disease. They were often found within the city feeding on the infected trees. This is no longer the case. Now they are usually found only in the more heavily wooded areas.

### Wrens

There were two interesting wren reports. An excellent find on the Ottawa CBC was a **Marsh Wren** from Gatineau. A **Carolina Wren** was discovered in Hull (Jan. 28) and remained at least till early February.

### Thrushes

There were two reports this winter of the **Varied Thrush**. One bird was found in February in Kanata and was very co-operative (as was the owner of the property) to those who sought it. An earlier report was from Bourget (Jan. 7) by the same individual who reported the **Red-bellied Woodpecker**. How many people get to record both those birds in these parts on the same day? Wow!

### Finches

Despite a fair cone crop, thousands of winter finches did not descend on Ottawa this winter. **Evening Grosbeaks** are still around but only in small numbers. The glory days of the seventies and eighties when hordes would empty a feeder in minutes appear to be gone. Even the Jack Pine Nature Trail at Stony Swamp, once an easy bet, was devoid of grosbeaks. **Pine Grosbeaks** were hard to come by as well. The birds seen in Merivale Gardens on the Ottawa CBC represent the only record this winter. Both species of crossbill were recorded on the Ottawa CBC from the Britannia sector. **White-winged Crossbills** were also reported from the Navan area in early December and Riddell Road in February. Anyone interested in looking for winter finches (and Three-toed Woodpeckers) and other more northerly birds would do well to scour the

Riddell/River Road areas as it consistently produces excellent sightings. As is often the case, neither the **Common Redpoll** nor **Pine Siskin** put in much of an appearance. Like many winter finches, they tend to be exceedingly common or very difficult to find at all. That was the case this winter. **Purple Finches** were relatively uncommon but they were reported a few times, often in company with the **House Finch**. The **House Finch** has become so common that you can find yourself wishing for **House Sparrows** at the feeder – seriously.

#### **Farther afield**

For birders who cannot confine themselves to the 50 km radius of our district (and there are many) there were enough interesting birds within a reasonable distance to fuel their desires. The highlight bird was certainly the **Ross's Gull** at Fort Chambly south of Montreal. This bird was seen in December at least till the 10th. Unfortunately it was likely the same **Ross's Gull** that was devoured by a **Great Horned Owl** at Port Weller, Ontario. A few feathers (and some **Great Horned Owl** tracks) was its legacy. A large flight of **Northern Gannets** at Beauharnois (P.Q.) and Cornwall in December excited many birders. Even more exciting were the two **Northern Fulmars** at Cornwall (Dec. 15) including one that stayed around for the Cornwall/Messina CBC. The second of these stiff winged seabirds fared worse and was scooped out of the water by Power Dam personnel on the 16th. Other interesting birds from here and there included a **Say's Phoebe** from Picton, **Summer Tanager** from Oshawa and a **Vermilion Flycatcher** from St. Clair.

Recent Bird Sightings reflect the reports called in to the Bird Status Line augmented by the author's own records and personal communications. Thanks to all those who called in their reports.☐

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## Newfoundland Mountains

*Brian Coleman*

Mountain sentinels  
playing soldier.  
Light green moss,  
red and purple berries,  
yellow flowers –  
on a trampoline of bog.

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# Ottawa-Hull Christmas Bird Count 1994

*Bruce M. Di Labio & Daniel St-Hilaire*



*Barred Owl, one of the two owls seen on the CBC.  
Drawing by C. Lewis from Wild Bird Care Center photo.*

A relatively mild but overcast day greeted the 68 participants and 53 feed watchers of the Ottawa-Hull Christmas Bird Count (CBC) held on December 18th, 1994. With temperatures ranging from  $-3^{\circ}$  to  $+3^{\circ}\text{C}$ , this was one of the more "comfortable" CBC's experienced in recent years. The mild conditions contributed to the record high numbers of **Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls** and **American Black Ducks** found along the open patches of water on the Ottawa and Rideau River systems. Other record highs included 75 **American Robins**, 246 **Northern Cardinals** and 1,346 **House Finches**.

A total of 71 species were observed, down from 76 in 1993. Highlights for the day included a **Marsh Wren** in the Gatineau sector, a first record for the CBC, as well as 2 **Three-toed Woodpeckers** in Aylmer, a **Brown Thrasher** in Gloucester, 2 **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, one found in Gloucester and the second bird at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Feeder, Experimental Farm, and a **Swamp Sparrow** in Aylmer.

Winter finches such as the Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, and Pine Grosbeak were low in numbers compared to 1993. With the continuing changes in habitat occurring in many areas within the count circle (7 1/2 mile radius from the Peace Tower), many field or open farmland species are becoming harder to locate. Records indicate this trend with no Snowy Owls nor Lapland Longspurs observed as well as low numbers of Horned Larks (1), Gray Partridges (22) and Northern Shrikes (5). No Bohemian Waxwings were seen but Cedar Waxwings were noted in 4 of the 6 sectors.

We would like to thank all participants and sector leaders for their continued support. See you all December 17th, 1995.

Gl=Gloucester; Ott=Ottawa; Br=Britannia;

Gat=Gatineau; Hull=Hull; Ayl=Aylmer

Boldface highlights a new species for the Christmas count or a new total high.

\*\*Record high \*Ties record high

### 1994 OTTAWA-HULL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

SPECIES/ESPÈCES	Gl	Ott	Br	Gat	Hull	Ayl	Totals
Canada Goose/Bernache du Canada	1		7	1			8
American Black Duck/Canard noir**	165	190	352	14	165	22	908
Mallard/Canard colvert	125	176	215	5	251	3	675
Hybrid Black x Mallard/Canard noir x C. colvert	15	3			5		23
American Widgeon/Canard siffleur d'Amérique*					1		1
Common Goldeneye/Garrot à œil d'or	48	286	109	3	330	57	481
Barrow's Goldeneye/Garrot de Barrow**	2	3	2			1	6
Com. x B.'s G'eye/Hybride œil d'or G. Barrow**		1					1
Bufflehead/Petit Garrot		1	1			3	4
Hooded Merganser/Bec-scie couronné	1	1					2
Common Merganser/Grand bec-scie	17	11	19	1		5	53
Red-breasted Merganser/Bec-scie à poitrine rousse		1			1	1	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk/Épervier brun*	1	1	3		1	2	8
Cooper's Hawk/Épervier de Cooper		2	2		1	1	4
Northern Goshawk/Autour des palombes	1	1				1	3
Red-tailed Hawk/Buse à queue rousse	5	2				1	8
Rough-legged Hawk/Buse pattue	1	1	1	1			4
American Kestrel/Crécerelle d'Amérique		6	3	2		2	13
Merlin/Faucon Émérillon	1	1	1				2
Peregrine Falcon/Faucon pèlerin*		1					1
Gray Partridge/Perdrix grise		15			7		22
Ruffed Grouse/Gélinotte huppée	4	1	2	4	4	8	23
Ring-billed Gull/Goéland à bec cerclé	2	2	3		5	2	14
Herring Gull/Goéland argenté**	17	211	5250	8	176	3000	5250
Thayer's Gull/Goéland de Thayer*			1				1
Iceland Gull/Goéland arctique			14				14
Glaucous Gull/Goéland bourgmestre		1	52			5	52
G. Bl.-backed Gull/Goéland à manteau noir*	17	83	1785	7	116	700	1785
Rock Dove/Pigeon biset	489	989	1238	535	495	273	3746
Mourning Dove/Tourterelle triste	9	43	66	104	22	75	319
Great Horned Owl/Grand-duc d'Amérique			1		2	1	4
Barred Owl/Chouette rayée					2		2
Downy Woodpecker/Pic mineur	21	27	22	11	23	16	120
Hairy Woodpecker/Pic chevelu	8	13	3	6	17	25	72
Three-toed Woodpecker/Pic tridactyle						2	2



1994 OTTAWA-HULL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

SPECIES/ESPÈCES	Totals						
	Gl	Ott	Br	Gat	Hull	Ayl	
Northern Flicker/Pic flamboyant	1	2				1	4
Pileated Woodpecker/Grand Pic	4	7	2	6	2	4	25
Horned Lark/Alouette cornue						1	1
Blue Jay/Geai bleu	39	86	34	60	101	189	509
American Crow/Corneille d'Amérique	127	415	503	56	127	167	1395
Common Raven/Grand Corbeau	1		2	3	4	8	18
Black-capped Chickadee/Mésange à tête noire	407	375	535	373	545	646	2881
Red-breasted Nuthatch/Sittelle à poitrine rousse	2	2	27		13	4	48
White-breasted Nuthatch/Sittelle à poitrine blanche	25	26	14	14	28	29	136
Brown Creeper/Grimpeur brun		2	6	7	3	2	20
Marsh Wren/Troglodyte des marais				1			1
Golden-crowned Kinglet/Roitelet à couronne dorée	6	13	2				21
American Robin/Merle d'Amérique**	6	5	11	2	32	19	75
Brown Thrasher/Moqueur roux*	1						1
Cedar Waxwing/Jaseur des cèdres	3	1	87			2	93
Northern Shrike/Pie-grièche grise	4			1			5
European Starling/Étourneau sansonnet	1115	795	895	493	1012	678	4988
Yellow-rumped Warbler/Paruline à croupion jaune	1		1				2
Northern Cardinal/Cardinal rouge**	36	72	35	8	49	46	246
American Tree Sparrow/Bruant hudsonien	82	10	9	41	31	70	243
Song Sparrow/Bruant chanteur		1	1	1		2	5
Swamp Sparrow/Bruant des marais						1	1
White-throated Sparrow/Bruant à gorge blanche						1	1
Dark-eyed Junco/Junco ardoisé	34	15	37	20	37	42	185
Snow bunting/Bruant des neiges	111	406	97	1	3	33	651
Red-winged Blackbird/Carouge à épaulettes			1				1
Common Grackle/Quiscale bronzé		2					2
Brown-headed Cowbird/vacher à tête brune				3			3
Pine Grosbeak/Dur-bec des pins		1	2		5		8
Purple Finch/Roselin pourpré	8	7	1	18	32	3	69
House Finch/Roselin familier**	101	393	228	232	153	239	1346
Red Crossbill/Bec-croisé rouge			2				2
White-winged Crossbill/Bec-croisé à ailes blanches	5		15		60		80
Common Redpoll/Sizerin flammé			1	5		9	15
Pine Siskin/Chardonneret des pins	1			1	2	23	27
American Goldfinch/Chardonneret jaune	111	123	266	311	251	296	1358
Evening Grosbeak/Gros-bec errant	9	9	22	1	7	9	57
House Sparrow/Moineau domestique	410	798	769	472	604	268	3321
<b>Totals</b>							
Species	46	50	52	39	40	50	71
Individuals	3600	5639	12757	2832	4725	6998	31482

Note: Individual totals may seem incorrect but that is because the compilers considered there to be some species overlap in the count. Species totals do not include the hybrids.□

# Species List for Ottawa-Hull Christmas Bird Counts 1919 – 1994

*Bruce M. Di Labio*

The following list is a summary of Ottawa-Hull Christmas Bird Counts from 1919 to 1994. The list contains a total of 143 species recorded in a 7 1/2 mile radius of the Peace Tower of the Parliament Buildings.

The list includes the following information: **species names** in both official languages; **first record** – the year a species was first recorded; **years recorded** – the number of CBC counts on which the species has been found; **record high** – the highest number of individuals of a species found on any one count; and **record year** – the year in which the record high was recorded. When the record high was tied for more than three years, the number of years is given rather than the years themselves. Less specific records (for example, scap sp., accipiter sp., hawk sp., gull sp.) are not included in this treatment.

A=First Record; B=Years Recorded; C=Record High; D=Record Year;  
**Boldface** highlights additions to list since the last major compilation in  
*T&L* 19(5): 247 (1985).

SPECIES/ESPÈCES	A	B	C	D
Red-throated Loon/Huart à gorge rouge	1970	2	1	70,91
Common Loon/Huart à collier	1962	3	1	62,77,84
Pied-billed Grebe/Grèbe à bec bigarré	1968	4	1	4 yrs.
Horned Grebe/Grèbe cornu	1973	1	2	1973
Red-necked Grebe/Grèbe jougris	1949	7	4	1987
<b>Double-crested Cormorant/Cormoran à aigrettes</b>	1990	1	1	1990
Great Blue Heron/Grand Héron	1952	7	2	1965
Snow Goose/Oie des neiges	1992	1	1	1992
Canada Goose/Bernache du Canada	1957	19	2,203	1992
Wood Duck/Canard branchu	1971	5	3	1979
Green-winged Teal/Sarcelle à ailes vertes	1979	2	2	1990
American Black Duck/Canard noir	1941	48	908	1994
Mallard/Canard colvert	1931	38	997	1993
Northern Pintail/Canard pilet	1975	2	2	1979
American Widgeon/Canard siffleur d'Amérique	1993	2	1	93,94
Canvasback/Morillon à dos blanc	1968	2	1	68,73
Ring-necked Duck/Morillon à collier	1952	16	9	1966
Greater Scaup/Grand Morillon	1952	7	4	1979
Lesser Scaup/Petit Morillon	1969	14	4	84,92
King Eider/Eider remarquable	1983	1	1	1983
Harlequin Duck/Canard harlequin	1971	2	2	1987
Oldsquaw/Canard kakawi	1956	10	6	69,84
Surf Scoter/Macreuse à front blanc	1984	1	1	1984
White-winged Scoter/Macreuse aux ailes blanches	1970	5	1	5 yrs.
Common Goldeneye/Garrot à œil d'or	1924	71	586	1993
Barrow's Goldeneye/Garrot de Barrow	1960	25	6	1994
Bufflehead/Petit Garrot	1953	16	7	1993
Hooded Merganser/Bec-scie couronné	1937	34	5	1984
Common Merganser/Grand Bec-scie	1926	65	90	1991
Red-breasted Merganser/Bec-scie à poitrine rousse	1948	28	13	1949

SPECIES/ESPÈCES	A	B	C	D
Bald Eagle/Pygargue à tête blanche	1972	4	3	1991
Northern Harrier/Busard Saint-Martin	1984	3	1	84,90,92
Sharp-shinned Hawk/Épervier brun	1921	27	8	5 yrs.
Cooper's Hawk/Épervier de Cooper	1960	23	7	1993
Northern Goshawk/Autour des palombes	1924	37	8	73,76
Red-shouldered Hawk/Buse aux épaulettes	1948	2	1	48,55
Red-tailed Hawk/Buse à queue rousse	1960	24	9	73,93
Rough-legged Hawk/Buse pattue	1956	30	28	1973
American Kestrel/Crécerelle d'Amérique	1940	51	22	1990
Merlin/Faucon émerillon	1931	14	3	39,59,92
Peregrine Falcon/Faucon pèlerin	1972	10	1	9 yrs.
Gyr Falcon/Faucon gerfaut	1972	4	3	1980
Gray Partridge/Perdrix grise	1948	45	675	1980
Ring-necked Pheasant/Faisan à collier	1932	53	56	1944
Spruce Grouse/Tétras du Canada	1944	1	2	1944
Ruffed Grouse/Gélinotte huppée	1919	74	93	1979
American Coot/Foulque d'Amérique	1969	2	1	69,84
Common Snipe/Bécassine des marais	1970	5	1	5yrs.
Common Black-headed Gull/Mouette rieuse	1986	1	1	1986
Ring-billed Gull/Goéland à bec cerclé	1957	13	53	1984
Herring Gull/Goéland argenté	1923	43	5,250	1994
Thayer's Gull/Goéland de Thayer	1973	4	1	4yrs.
Iceland Gull/Goéland arctique	1956	25	22	1993
Lesser Black-backed Gull/Goéland brun	1979	3	1	79,90,92
Glaucous Gull/Goéland bourgmestre	1943	35	62	1993
Great Black-backed Gull/Goéland à manteau noir	1957	21	1,785	1994
Black-legged Kittiwake/Mouette tridactyle	1981	2	1	81,88
Thick-billed Murre/Marmette de Brünnich	1952	1	1	1952
Rock Dove/Pigeon biset	1932	55	7,369	1980
Mourning Dove/Tourterelle triste	1952	25	544	1993
Eastern Screech Owl/Petit-duc maculé	1923	22	2	4 yrs.
Great Horned Owl/Grand-duc d'Amérique	1929	47	47	1971
Snowy Owl/Harfang des neiges	1954	28	10	1967
Northern Hawk-Owl/Chouette épervière	1922	6	2	65,91
Barred Owl/Chouette rayée	1933	33	6	1977
Great Gray Owl/Chouette lapone	1983	1	23	1983
Long-eared Owl/Hibou moyen-duc	1973	6	1	6 yrs.
Short-eared Owl/Hibou des marais	1957	7	9	1962
Boreal Owl/Nyctale boréale	1973	2	1	73,76
Northern Saw-whet Owl/Petite Nyctale	1971	10	2	1986
Belted Kingfisher/Martin-pêcheur	1964	10	2	4 yrs.
Red-bellied Woodpecker/Pic à ventre roux	1979	2	2	1979
Downy Woodpecker/Pic mineur	1921	73	211	1980
Hairy Woodpecker/Pic chevelu	1921	73	224	1975
Three-toed Woodpecker/Pic tridactyle	1941	21	29	1976
Black-backed Woodpecker/Pic à dos noir	1927	28	20	1980
Northern Flicker/Pic flamboyant	1958	10	5	1984
Pileated Woodpecker/Grand Pic	1926	45	27	1993
Eastern Phoebe/Moucherolle phébi	1969	1	1	1969
Horned Lark/Alouette cornue	1948	22	167	1960
Gray Jay/Geai du Canada	1921	20	19	1972
Blue Jay/Geai bleu	1921	69	663	1984
American Crow/Corneille d'Amérique	1921	73	1,716	1984
Common Raven/Grand Corbeau	1971	23	48	1991
Black-capped Chickadee/Mésange à tête noire	1919	76	3,089	1993
Boreal Chickadee/Mésange à tête brune	1927	24	24	1972
Tufted Titmouse/Mésange bicolore	1979	2	1	79,89
Red-breasted Nuthatch/Sitelle à poitrine rousse	1920	59	388	1976
White-breasted Nuthatch/Sitelle à poitrine blanche	1921	74	263	1980
Brown Creeper/Grimpeur brun	1920	65	51	1979
Carolina Wren/Troglodyte de Caroline	1971	6	2	80,93

SPECIES/ESPÈCES	A	B	C	D
Winter Wren/Troglodyte des forêts	1950	9	2	1974
Marsh Wren/Troglodyte des marais	1994	1	1	1994
Golden-crowned Kinglet/Roitelet à couronne dorée	1927	40	57	1992
Ruby-crowned Kinglet/Roitelet à couronne rubis	1949	3	4	1982
Hermit Thrush/Grive solitaire	1960	6	2	1994
American Robin/Merle d'Amérique	1921	38	75	1994
Varied Thrush/Grive à collier	1979	1	1	1979
Northern Mockingbird/Moqueur polyglotte	1964	14	4	73,79
Brown Thrasher/Moqueur roux	1968	5	1	5 yrs
American Pipit/Pipit d'Amérique	1954	1	1	1954
Bohemian Waxwing/Jaseur boréal	1930	28	4,953	1985
Cedar Waxwing/Jaseur des cèdres	1932	30	403	1984
Northern Shrike/Pie-grièche grise	1921	62	24	1977
Loggerhead Shrike/Pie-grièche migratrice	1962	1	1	1962
European Starling/Étourneau sansonnet	1924	70	6.742	1984
Nashville Warbler/Paruline à joues grises	1992	1	1	1992
Northern Parula/Paruline à collier	1993	1	1	1993
Yellow-rumped Warbler/Paruline à croupion jaune	1967	12	7	1979
Black-throated Green Warbler/Paruline verte à gorge noire	1984	1	1	1984
Pine Warbler/Paruline des pins	1982	1	1	1982
Common Yellowthroat/Paruline masquée	1979	1	1	1979
Ovenbird/Paruline couronnée	1990	2	1	90,91
Northern Cardinal/Cardinal rouge	1945	28	246	1994
Rose-breasted Grosbeak/Cardinal à poitrine rose	1968	2	1	68,82
Rufous-sided Towhee/Iohi à flancs roux	1969	5	1	5 yrs.
American Tree Sparrow/Bruant hudsonien	1920	61	477	1984
Chipping Sparrow/Bruant familier	1969	4	1	4 yrs.
Field Sparrow/Bruant des champs	1965	3	2	1971
Savannah Sparrow/Bruant des prés	1966	1	1	1966
Grasshopper Sparrow/Bruant sauterelle	1993	1	1	1993
Fox Sparrow/Bruant fauve	1984	1	1	1984
Song Sparrow/Bruant chanteur	1924	48	25	1979
Swamp Sparrow/Bruant des marais	1968	11	6	1977
White-throated Sparrow/Bruant à gorge blanche	1922	30	16	1976
White-crowned Sparrow/Bruant à couronne blanche	1948	7	4	1970
Harrls' Sparrow/Bruant à face noire	1992	1	1	1992
Dark-eyed Junco/Junco ardoisé	1932	40	232	1984
Lapland Longspur/Bruant lapon	1937	12	30	1961
Snow Bunting/Bruant des neiges	1921	67	1,876	1975
Red-winged Blackbird/Carouge à épauettes	1928	35	15	1972
Eastern Meadowlark/Sturnelle des prés	1931	5	2	1980
Rusty Blackbird/Quiscale rouilleux	1964	12	7	1977
Common Grackle/Quiscale bronzé	1930	40	12	72,73
Brown-headed Cowbird/Vacher à tête brune	1960	18	29	1980
Northern Oriole/Oriole du Nord	1978	1	1	1978
Pine Grosbeak/Dur-bec des pins	1919	51	1,446	1985
Purple Finch/Roselin pourpré	1920	40	519	1976
House Finch/Roselin familier	1980	12	1,346	1994
Red Crossbill/Bec-croisé rouge	1950	20	108	1976
White-winged Crossbill/Bec-croisé à ailes blanches	1927	30	300	1984
Common Redpoll/Sizerin flammé	1919	62	3,264	1981
Hoary Redpoll/Sizerin blanchâtre	1952	12	15	1952
Pine Siskin/Chardonneret des pins	1919	61	1,133	1986
American Goldfinch/Chardonneret jaune	1923	61	1,591	1984
Evening Grosbeak/Gros-bec errant	1923	48	2,621	1972
House Sparrow/Moineau domestique	1927	68	6,655	1968

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## Index to Volume 29

### Birds

Bird Feeders 1995 Update, OFNC .....	40
Bird Sightings 1994, Summary of Notable .....	113
Winter 1994-95 .....	156
Bird Status Line .....	42
Birder's Guide to the Moses-Saunders Power Dam Area, A .....	142
Christmas Bird Count, Ottawa-Hull, 1994 .....	161
Species List 1919-1994 .....	164
[Crow & Robin] Change of Heart [poem] .....	99
Duck Club Inc. 19th Annual Wildlife Art & Carving Show/Sale, Ottawa .....	134
Eastern Screech Owls – Gone from Billings Bridge? .....	138
Great Horned Owl: Supper at -10°C .....	10
[House Sparrow & Peregrine Falcon] Extremes [poem] .....	55
[Killdeer] Transformation [poem] .....	103
Late Summer Shorebird Trip, A .....	107
Loons [poem] .....	57
Mid-fall Bird Count, Second Ottawa-Hull .....	155
Spruce Grouse, Moose and Gray Jays in Algonquin Park .....	104

### Club History and Affairs

Annual Business Meeting, The 116th .....	52
The 117th, Notice of .....	132
Coming Events .....	43, 73, 122, 169
Editor, From the .....	131
Fletcher Wildlife Garden: Diary of a Habitat Manager .....	60
“Golden Anniversary” Membership List 1944-1995 .....	51
Information Highway, The OFNC - Now on the .....	6
OFNC Committees for 1995 .....	56
Ottawa District – A Hundred Years of Knowledge Gained, The .....	135
Shirleys Bay and the Munster Sewage Lagoons, Access to .....	133
Soirée and the 1994 OFNC Awards, The 1995 .....	83
Storage Problem for Back Issues of <i>Trail &amp; Landscape</i> .....	3
<i>Trail &amp; Landscape</i> Circulation .....	51
Wanted! Mailing Team Coordinator .....	131
Welcome, New Members .....	2, 50, 82, 130

**Conservation**

Aylmer's Natural Landscapes ..... 24  
Madawaska Highlands Land Use Planning Process, The ..... 31

**Excursions**

Fall Rhapsody ..... 111  
Late Summer Shorebird Trip, A ..... 107

**Invertebrates**

[Woolly Aphids] A Woolly Wonder! ..... 58  
Water Bugs Take a Dive at the Sportsplex ..... 88

**Mammals**

Weasel, Life Cycles: One Year in the Life of a ..... 18

**Plants**

Asters of the Ottawa District ..... 89  
Butterfly Gardening Network - *Reminder* ..... 86  
Canadian Rare Plants Project ..... 72  
Ephemerals and Other Woodland Spring Flowers, Lifecycles: ..... 66  
Thoroughworts of the Ottawa District ..... 100

**Poems**

Change of Heart ..... 99  
Extremes ..... 55  
Loons ..... 57  
Loughborough Lake ..... 110  
Newfoundland Mountains ..... 160  
Ode to Happiness: Afternoon Walk in Mer Bleue [poem] ..... 12  
Passage ..... 137  
Sermons in Stones ..... 9  
Transformation ..... 103

**Miscellaneous**

Changes Natural and Normal: 25 Years in Stony Swamp ..... 13  
Mugs, Mugs, Mugs ..... 5  
Ottawa Regional Science Fair ..... 87

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# Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee  
For further information,  
call the Club number (722-3050) after 10 a.m.

*Times stated for excursions are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to ask the leader. Restricted trips will be open to non-members only after the indicated deadlines.*

*ALL OUTINGS: Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and the activity. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by car pool.*

*REGISTERED BUS TRIPS: Make your reservation for Club bus excursions by sending a cheque or money order (payable to The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club) to E.M. Dickson, 2037 Honeywell Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 0P7, at least ten days in advance. Include your name, address, telephone number and the name of the outing. Your cooperation is appreciated by the Committee so that we do not have to wait to the last moment to decide whether a trip should be cancelled due to low registration. We also wish to discourage the actual payment of bus fees on the day of the event.*

*EVENTS AT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE: The Club is grateful to the Museum for their cooperation and thanks the Museum for the use of these excellent facilities. Club members must be prepared to show their membership cards to gain access for Club functions after regular museum hours.*

*BIRD STATUS LINE: Phone 825-7444 to learn of recent sightings or birding potential in the Ottawa area. To report recent sightings call Michael Tate at 825-1231. This service is run on behalf of the Birds Committee and is available to members and non-members.*

*Le Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais has a similar service, in French, run by Daniel St-Hilaire. The Club number is 776-3822 and the Bird Status Line is 778-0737.*

Date and  
Time to be  
decided

## GULLS OF THE CORNWALL POWER DAM

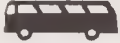
Leader: Bruce Di Labio

Meet: Elmvale Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, St. Laurent Blvd. at Smyth Road.

This will be full-day outing to the the Moses-Saunders Power Dam to observe various species of gulls. Bring proof of citizenship or residency for entry into the U.S.A. Call the Club number (722-3050) by October 1 to register.

Registrants will be informed of date and time of trip.

Sunday  
1 October  
9:00 a.m.  
to  
4:00 p.m.



**BUS EXCURSION:  
AUTUMN COLOURS IN GATINEAU PARK**  
**Leaders:** Colin Gaskell and Ellaine Dickson  
**Meet:** Supreme Court Building, front entrance, Wellington at Kent Street.  
**Cost:** \$8.00 (PLEASE REGISTER EARLY... see Registered Bus Trips at the beginning of COMING EVENTS for details).  
Our tour will visit several interesting locales within the Park affording ample opportunity to wander along different trails.

Tuesday  
10 October  
8:00 p.m.

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING  
THE NATURAL WONDERS OF STONY SWAMP  
THROUGHOUT THE SEASONS**  
**Speaker:** Bill Gummer  
**Meet:** Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.  
The Stony Swamp Conservation Area comprises nearly 5,000 acres of wetlands, woodlands and field habitats surrounded by the neighbouring communities of Kanata and Nepean. Bill's introduction to this alluring natural area occurred in 1972. Since then he has returned on countless occasions in all seasons to enjoy and photograph the flora, geology, winter snow scenes, ice growths and the tales of wildlife recorded in tracks on the surface of the snow. Copies of Bill's recently published book on Stony Swamp will be available for sale.

Sunday  
22 October  
8:00 a.m.

**FALL BIRDING ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER**  
**Leader:** Tony Beck  
**Meet:** Britannia Drive-In Theatre, 3090 Carling Avenue.  
We will visit several spots along the Ottawa River on this half-day outing to observe water fowl and other migrants.

Saturday  
4 November  
9:00 a.m.

**LATE FALL RAMBLE IN GATINEAU PARK**  
**Leader:** Philip Martin  
**Meet:** Supreme Court Building, front entrance, Wellington at Kent Street.  
This general interest walk will focus on the identification of various nuts, fruits, seeds, fungi and other interesting forms of plant life. The occasional bird or mammal may also be encountered along the trails. Bring a lunch and dress warmly.



**Sunday**  
**5 November**  
**8:00 a.m.**

**NOVEMBER MIGRANTS**  
**Leader:** Jim Harris  
**Meet:** Westgate Shopping Centre, southeast corner of the parking lot, Carling Avenue.  
Participants will be led on a quest for late fall raptors and passerines as well as some intriguing early winter arrivals that signal the cold, harsh days ahead. This is a half-day outing.

**Sunday**  
**12 November**  
**9:30 a.m.**

**GENERAL INTEREST WALK IN THE WEST END**  
**Leaders:** Ellaine Dickson and Robina Bennett  
**Meet:** Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.  
Dress warmly and bring a snack for this long half-day adventure in the fall woods. The leaders will select a particularly rewarding locale a few days prior to the trip.

**Tuesday**  
**14 November**  
**8:00 p.m.**

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**  
**THE BRUCE PENINSULA THROUGH A**  
**PHOTOGRAPHER'S LENS**  
**Speaker:** Darryl Davies  
**Meet:** Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.  
Darryl Davies, a criminologist by profession with the Department of Justice, is also a noted nature photographer whose works have appeared in magazines, books and calendars. His presentation will portray the rich diversity of flora and fauna found on the scenic Bruce Peninsula, as well as emphasize his passionate belief in a stewardship approach to the environment.

**Sunday**  
**3 December**  
**8:00 a.m.**

**LATE FALL AND EARLY WINTER BIRDS**  
**Leader:** Tony Beck  
**Meet:** Britannia Drive-In Theatre, 3090 Carling Avenue.  
Participants will join Tony in search of lingering fall migrants and various species of birds that choose to inhabit the Ottawa District during Nature's harshest season. This is a half-day outing.

**Tuesday**  
**12 December**  
**8:00 p.m.**

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**  
**THE PLIGHT OF THE PORCUPINE CARIBOU HERD:**  
**A CONTENTIOUS TRANSBOUNDARY ISSUE**

**Speaker:** Dick Russell

**Meet:** Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets

Since 1987, the American proposal to drill for oil and gas in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Range has raised considerable concern for the welfare of the 170,000 member Porcupine caribou herd. At risk are the herd's core calving grounds as well as the best foraging and insect-relief areas along the Arctic coastal plain. Potential alterations to the herd's traditional migratory patterns would also severely affect the Vuntut Gwitchin in the Old Crow Flats region. The Yukon First Nation depends on the caribou for sustenance and considers the species an integral part of its cultural identity. Dick Russell, a biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service, will discuss the ecological, sociological, political and international issues pertaining to the topic in an illustrated presentation.

**Tuesday**  
**9 January**  
**7:30 p.m.**

**OFNC 117th ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

**Meet:** Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

The 1996 Council will be elected at this meeting and a summation of the various Committee activities in 1995 will be given plus a full disclosure of the Club's financial position. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about the inner workings of your Club. As an added bonus, the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Committee will present an overview of the great achievements they have accomplished during the past year.



**Saturday**  
**13 January**  
**8:00 a.m.**

**WINTER BIRDING AT THE CORNWALL POWER DAM**

**Leader:** Bruce Di Labio

**Meet:** Elmvale Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, St. Laurent Blvd. at Smyth Road.

Overwintering gulls, waterfowl and seasonal species frequenting the vicinity of the Moses-Saunders Power Dam will be sought on the full-day outing. Bring a lunch, a warm drink and heavy winter clothing as well as proof of citizenship. (We may travel to the American side of the dam.) Transportation will be by private car.

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## Ottawa-Hull Mid-Fall Bird Count

Once again The OFNC is proud to coordinate a Fall Bird Count. This year we will hold the event on one day only, **Sunday, October 29, 1995.**

The Ottawa District (50 km radius of the Peace Tower) will be the count area. The area is divided into four sectors by the Ottawa, Gatineau and Rideau Rivers. There are plenty of excellent birding spots to choose from. **All birders**, of every skill and level, are welcome. Due to popular demand, on count evening, we will hold a compilation party at Riverpark Place, near Andrew Hayden Park. Food and refreshments will be served.

If you are interested, contact Bev Scott at work: 228-8911 or home: 225-6842.

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## 1995 Ottawa-Hull Christmas Bird Count

This year's Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 17th. Members interested in participating should contact the coordinator, Daniel St-Hilaire, of the Club's Birds Committee at 776-3822 (home phone), or at 19 rue Connaught, Hull, J8Y 4C8. He will provide information on action time, sectors where counts will be made and the sector leaders.

At 4:00 p.m., after the count, there will be a meeting of all interested people involved to review the events of the day and to compile an official summary of numbers and species of birds. This will be followed by a meal. Participants will be informed by the section leaders of the location for this get-together.

The figures from the final count will be presented as the official Ottawa-Hull report to the National Audubon Society. As previously, participants will be asked to pay a fee of \$5.

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## Any Articles for Trail & Landscape?

Have you been on an interesting field trip or made some unusual observations recently? Is there a colony of rare plants or a nesting site that needs protection? Write up your thoughts and send them to *Trail & Landscape*. If you have access to an IBM or IBM-compatible computer using 5.25 or 3.5 inch diskettes, all the better. If you don't, we will happily receive submissions in any form—typed, written, printed or painted!

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**DEADLINE:** *Material intended for the January-March 1996 issue must be in the editor's hands by November 1, 1995. Mail your manuscripts to:*

Fenja Brodo  
Editor, *Trail & Landscape*  
28 Benson Street  
Nepean, Ontario, K2E 5J5  
H: (613)723-2054; Fax: (613) 990-6451.

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## The GREEN LINE



### Leading By Example

Opinion by Michael Ross Murphy

**Q: What's the difference between the Canadian Museum of Nature and a condo developer?**

**A: A condo developer isn't "committed to ensuring that all of its programs and activities are carried out in an environmentally-responsible manner".**

Tips for condo developers from the CMN:

Decide what you want to do, basing your decision on narrow, short-sighted economic objectives: do not unnecessarily complicate your decision at this stage by considering either consequences or alternatives. Pretend to do so only after you have committed irrevocably to a course of action.

Hire a reputable engineering firm that also offers an environmental impact assessment service, to do your servicing studies. Relying on repeat business as they do, they can be relied upon to write a report that minimizes the value and significance of the site selected. All studies they produce must support and justify your original decision; this is especially important if the decision turns out to be wrong.

Ignore key goals of the Canadian Wetlands Conservation policy, such as: "*no net loss of wetland functions on all federal lands and waters*". Fail to provide the positive leadership role of the Federal government on which the success of the policy depends.

At this point, it helps to be behind schedule so you can apply pressure to any agencies whose approvals you may need.

Score points by voluntarily submitting to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) which can't harm you either. Since there is no way to mitigate the environmental impact of the destruction of the significant wetland you'll be building on, demonstrate your commitment to the environment by promising not to use herbicides on the lawns.

When you're ready to submit your project to the public review process, the time has come to be as cynical and as manipulative as your imagination allows. Some practical suggestions:

1) When naturalist groups like the OFNC won't play along, slander and smear their reputations.

2) Make the rounds of any other Environmental Non-Government Organizations (ENGOS), looking for at least one group not actually opposed to your project that you can describe as favourable. For example, try Wildlife Habitat Canada or the Canadian Wildlife Federation, conservation organizations known to be concerned with wetlands. Attempt to portray any lack of concern about a tiny wetland that isn't productive duck habitat as support for your project.

3) Hold a public meeting for no other purpose but to smoke out your opponents' strategies. Hope they'll vent all their anger and frustration in a forum where it won't do them any good. Use the occasion to patronize and to educate them. Explain that your planning process is much too far along for you to consider another site. Keep a record of the proceedings as evidence that you consulted the public.

The beauty of Environmental Assessment, as it is governed by the CEAA, is that although it insists that you ask yourself all the right questions, it doesn't make you listen to the answers. It shouldn't surprise anyone when you take the tough decision to proceed with the mission-critical project after all.

It looks simple, doesn't it? But remember, it takes great patience, skill and commitment from all levels of your organization - especially senior management - to resist and effectively wear down your opposition. Your staff must be courteous and polite at all times but it is essential they frustrate any attempts by the public to obtain information that may be helpful to their cause.

Oblige them to consult the single copy of your study, withholding the references, during restricted hours at remote locations inaccessible by public transit. Miss no opportunity to inconvenience the public: if they want to exercise their rights, make it good exercise!

News Editor: Michael Murphy (613) 727-1739 / Fax: 727-1245  
ai536@freenet.carleton.ca

# Nature of The Museum

by Michael Ross Murphy

The Canadian Museum of Nature (CMN) intends to build their new research and collections facility on Pink Road in Aylmer, Quebec. Although it is clearly a good idea to consolidate CMN staff and collections into a single building designed for the purpose, the CMN has chosen a wetland as the building site! Just how this came about is a long, convoluted and unpleasant story.

It suffices to say that in 1989 Public Works procured the lands, partly on behalf of the CMN. Unhappy with the building they had been provided with, the CMN decided in 1991 to build their own facility. They obtained approval for a scheme to transfer ownership of the land as security to a builder who would finance the design and construction of a new building under a "leaseback" arrangement. But it wasn't until late in 1994 that any field investigations were conducted. The field work was accurate (so far as it went) but the analysis of the data failed to indicate the presence of a large wetland occupying almost the entire property. When the OFNC critically reviewed these reports, we remarked that the evidence in the consultant reports actually indicated that more than half of the proposed site must be a peat wetland.

The environmental study reports were later supplemented with observations gathered in additional field work conducted in June 1995 by CMN contractors and scientific staff. But even now this information is neither comprehensive nor complete; it is more of a reconnaissance than an inventory. For instance, only one family of insects, Tipulid craneflies, was collected. Despite the fact that an amazing diversity and abundance of cranefly species was found on the site (including a species new to science), no other insect families, - not even lepidoptera! - were investigated. One thing definitely established was that over 80% of the site to be developed is old-growth cedar swamp. As some measure of the value of the wetland to be destroyed, there are 410 vascular plants, of which 93 are regionally-significant and 3 are provincially-significant species, such as Clinton's Wood Fern.

Nevertheless, the CMN intends to proceed with the project. Their Environmental Assessment Report concludes that there would be "no significant environmental impact" due to the proposed development and actually goes so far as to predict improved conditions on the site for the Midland Chorus Frog, which is listed as provincially-rare!

# The Short Story . . .

## Wetlands Working Group reports

The Wetlands Working Group (WWG) has made its final report, consisting of 11 recommendations to the Council of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC), on how to implement the Ontario Wetlands Policy in the RMOC without causing a backlash from rural property owners. The WWG will be presenting their report to the Planning & Environment Committee of the RMOC on October 10th at 17:00 at Regional Headquarters. Those interested in attending, or in obtaining a copy of the report, should contact Michael Murphy, OFNC representative to the WWG, at 727-1739 for information.

## NCC Swaps Land with the City of Ottawa

If the Federal Treasury Board approves the deal, the NCC will obtain ownership of Rockcliffe Park from the City of Ottawa in exchange for a 168 acre parcel of NCC lands in the Alta Vista area, known as the Eastern Corridor. Local activists are pleased that the City of Ottawa will keep Grasshopper Hill and Orlando Park as parkland. Rockcliffe Park, east of the Prime Minister's Residence, includes the Rockcliffe Lookout and the gazebo. The Western Corridor and Pinecrest Corridor lands remain in NCC ownership.

## Mer Bleue Designated by Ramsar

The NCC-owned Mer Bleue Conservation Area has been awarded an Internationally-Significant Wetland designation under the Ramsar Convention. Note that by the beginning of October, the boardwalk facilities accessed via Ridge Road will be protected by "dusk to dawn" gate closures to prevent further vandalism and related problems. The NCC has expressed willingness to provide after-hours (or early-hours) access to the OFNC for scheduled outings.

## Shirley's Bay Access

OFNC members have been experiencing problems gaining access to the dike at Shirley's Bay, even when following the protocol recently negotiated between the OFNC and the Department of National Defence. Until further notice, it is recommended that OFNC members cooperate when forbidden access.

## OFNC Bird Status Line Update

The OFNC Bird Status Line number has been changed, effective September 27th, 1995, to permit local calling to the Status Line without long-distance telephone charges over a wider service area. The new number is (613) 860-9000. Please continue to report sightings at (613) 825-1231.