

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE



*A Publication Concerned With
Natural History and Conservation*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Editor

Karen McLachlan
Hamilton

Production Assistant

Sandra Gushue

Mailing Team

Louis L'Arrivée
Co-ordinator

Associate Editor

Fenja Brodo

Diane Lepage
Jack MacKenzie
Karen McLachlan
Hamilton

Publications Mail Registration #09798

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Publication Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —

President

Eleanor Zurbrig

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) \$28 Sustaining (yearly) \$50
Family (yearly) \$30 Life (one payment) \$500

Benefactor \$500 Subscriptions to *Trail & Landscape*:
(libraries and institutions): \$28 per year (volume)

Postage for U.S. and other foreign countries please add \$5

Single copies of recent issues: \$6 each postpaid

Index to Vols. 1 - 20: \$10 postpaid; to Vols. 21-25 \$5 postpaid.

Membership application, correspondence :

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB
Box 35069, Westgate P.O.
Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 1A2

Information:

(613) 722-3050

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Published by
The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2

Volume 37 Number 1 January - March 2003

Welcome New Members	2
Volunteer Wanted / <i>Dave Smythe</i>	3
House of Commons Passes Species-At-Risk Act / <i>Federation of Ontario Naturalists</i>	4
Ontario's Endangered Species List - Another Kind of "Deficit." / <i>Federation of Ontario Naturalists</i>	5
Butterflies in Your Garden / <i>Jack Holliday</i>	6
Alfred Bog Fund-Raising Campaign - Interim Report II / <i>Frank Pope</i>	7
<i>Oenothera cruciata</i> - New to the Ottawa District / <i>John Sankey</i>	8
The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas Year Two (2002): News from Region 24 - Ottawa / <i>Christine Hanrahan</i>	9
Fall Bird Sightings 25 August - 15 November 2002 / <i>Chris Lewis</i>	30
Coming Events	35

Welcome New Members

Ottawa Area

Emily Coates
Philip Fry
Elizabeth Hargreaves
Stephen & Barbara Koch
Finley & Leydin Mullally
Debra O'Leary & family
Pat O'Malley
John & Barbara Peachey

Other Areas

Jon Hardey, Inverurie Aberdeenshire, UK
J. G. Woods, Revelstoke BC

Dave Smythe
Membership Committee
December, 2002



Volunteer Wanted

Dave Smythe

There is a need for someone to take over the responsibility for maintaining the membership database. This is the Club's record of names, addresses, membership type (e.g., family), payment status, membership number, and e-mail address if applicable. The database is used for producing mailing labels for membership renewal and *Trail & Landscape*, various reports to Council, and reports for *Trail & Landscape* (new members, Golden Anniversary List). We have been patiently expanding the list of e-mail addresses enabling us to communicate with members, quickly and at low cost, however, but do not have the appropriate software in place yet.

The database is in constant flux with the addition of new members, changes of address, changes in payment status, and deletion of members who lapse their membership or disappear for some reason. These changes must be made on a reasonable schedule to ensure the integrity of the information and in particular to ensure that mailing labels are correct. Anyone that misses a copy of *Trail & Landscape* can blame Canada Post or the database, in that order. The addition of new members and changes of address occur throughout the year, but the peak of activity occurs during membership renewal time, November to March. Information arrives on paper, by telephone, and e-mail. The person maintaining the database works closely with the Treasurer's Assistant who receives the mail and keeps financial records.

The computer software for this job was written specifically for the purpose about 15 years ago. It uses on-screen instructions and menus to guide the user and there is an operations manual to assist. Its age is beginning to show however, and the Computer Committee is working on a more modern replacement with the capability to link the database with e-mail communication.

If you are interested in this work or would like to know more about it, please contact me at 592-3011 or dsmythe@cyberus.ca.

House of Commons Passes Species-At-Risk Act

Federation of Ontario Naturalists

For the 402 species officially listed as at risk in Canada, June 11, 2002 was a good day. After many ups and downs, the House of Commons finally passed Bill C-5 (an act respecting the protection of wildlife species at risk in Canada) and has referred it to the Senate. The bill received first reading on February 2, 2001, and since then it has been the subject of parliamentary debate, committee hearings and public scrutiny - including input from Federation of Ontario Naturalists and many of the organization's supporters.

The fate of the bill itself had frequently seemed at risk, and improvements made at the committee stage seemed to have been lost by the time the bill got back to caucus. A back-bench revolt and the hard work of several Members of Parliament (including Karen Kraft-Sloan, Clifford Lincoln and Charles Caccia) forced some significant changes to the bill, which resulted in it getting enough votes to pass through the House of Commons.

While Bill C-5 is not as strong as many people had hoped, enough last-minute gains were made to make it worthwhile, and most conservation organizations are at least modestly pleased and have congratulated the government. Canada is now poised to fulfil an international commitment it made 10 years ago at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. By signing and ratifying the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity, Canada made a legal commitment to conserve biological diversity.

Among the positive amendments to the bill is that listing of species will be left largely to scientists rather than politicians (Cabinet would have to veto, within nine months, decisions of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada). Provisions to protect habitat - the loss of which is the greatest threat to wildlife - have also been improved, and mandatory protection is now in place for areas of federal jurisdiction, such as federal lands and aquatic species. Unfortunately, the bill contains no specific additional provisions for birds, beyond the provisions already existing for federal lands and provisions in the existing Migratory Birds Convention Act.

The ultimate value of the new legislation will be determined by how effective it is in helping wildlife and safeguarding habitats. Its effectiveness will depend, in part, on the federal funding in place for implementation and on cooperation with the provinces

and territories to provide a meaningful safety net for species at risk.

Ontario's Endangered Species List - Another Kind of "Deficit."

Federation of Ontario Naturalists

While discussions of species-at-risk legislation bring to mind the numerous federal attempts to establish a federal act, Ontario does already have an Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA, which came into effect in 1971, includes provisions to protect listed species and their habitat and it will ultimately form part of a federal-provincial safety net for species at risk. Ontario's ESA, though, protects only some of the province's endangered species. While three additional species received protection in 2001 and decisions regarding seven other species are pending, as of July 2002 there were still 31 Ontario endangered species missing from the provincial list, which also does not include an additional 39 threatened species.

With representation from Sierra Legal Defence Fund (SLDF), FON filed an application for review in 1999 of Ontario's endangered species list and made a formal complaint in March 2000 to the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. The review was declined, but SLDF and FON have now refiled their application for review and have urged the commissioner to address the situation. In the meantime, a great many of Ontario's endangered and threatened species remain unprotected - bad news for species such as Northern Bobwhite, Acadian Flycatcher, Barn Owl, American Ginseng, and Wavy-rayed Lampmussel. FON urges Ministry of Natural Resources to address the deficit in Ontario's ESA.

Editor's Note: The two preceding articles were obtained from the FON Fall Nature Network News.

Butterflies in Your Garden

Jack Holliday

Here in the Ottawa area one can not expect to get exotic butterflies in one's garden. So the hope of beautiful Blue Morphos is out, as are most of our local large showy butterflies.

The Monarchs, for example, are "rolling-stone" type creatures. They arrive from the South usually about mid-June, lay their eggs on Milkweed plants and then die. The second generation does not seem to live very long. Once emerging as adults, they breed, search out suitable Milkweed plants, lay eggs and expire. The third generation (and sometimes a fourth) is the one we notice most as they are the ones we are most likely to see in our city gardens. They are "on the wing" in mid-August and can be frequent visitors to our gardens until Thanksgiving, and perhaps if we are lucky, later. They are visitors only, on their way to Mexico. The Monarch you see today is not the one you saw yesterday. Yesterday's Monarch has migrated (hopefully) many miles to the south.

If you grow Milkweed and are fortunate enough to have a Monarch lay eggs on your plants (they seem to be very choosy, examining many plants before laying one or two eggs on the right plant), you will have the pleasure of watching the larvae grow and pupate. Although once it emerges from the pupa and dries its wings, it will fly away never to be seen by you again.

If you must have Monarchs, plant a Buddleia shrub. When in bloom in August and September, migrating Monarchs can not resist its attraction and will pause to "fuel up" on the plant's nectar. Buddleias also attract Cabbage Whites, Red Admirals, Painted Ladies and Milberts Tortoise Shells.

The butterfly you will see in your garden all summer and into the fall is that standby, *Pieris rapae*, the Cabbage White. When provided with the right food source, these butterflies will stay in your garden. Of course, one has to make available its preferred food, mostly plants belonging to the Cabbage family. The larvae feed on cabbage, Cauliflower, various mustards, Nasturtium and, I believe, Sweet Alyssum. So plant the lovely so-called Flowering Cabbage and Flowering Kale. These plants are attractive to look at in the garden and a perfect food source for the butterfly larvae. Since these plants will not be a food source for you, they will not need to be "sprayed" or "dusted" and the larvae will thrive thus supplying succeeding generations of lovely white butterflies all summer long.

The males have regular routes which they patrol for hours on end. When they meet other "Whites" they go into an intricate whirling flight, often high in the sky before dropping down and resuming their patrol. Sometimes when they are plentiful, one can see a hundred or more in a virtual white "tornado" go high into the sky. On a lazy summer afternoon one can sit quietly and watch the "whites" grace your garden with their magical presence.

Just remember to plant your Flowering Cabbage and Buddleia shrubs early.

Alfred Bog-Fund Raising Campaign- Interim Report II

Frank Pope

In the last issue of *T&L* I indicated that I hoped to have a full report for this issue.

Acquiring 3000 acres of bog land and raising \$2,500,000 is not, however, without its challenges. As of 1 November, the deadline for this issue, the Nature Conservancy of Canada is still working out some details of financing and of title and boundary verification. The Nature Conservancy has informed the owner that they intend to pick up the option and they expect to close the deal before the end of the year.

For our part, I am pleased to report that in the first week of October the Club sent the Nature Conservancy \$55,000, representing contributions by 260 people. I expect donations to continue to come in over the next few months and they will be needed to repay the loan that will surely be required to close the deal.

OFNC members have recognized this great opportunity to save a priceless natural area. Your support is appreciated very much.

Oenothera cruciata - New to the Ottawa District

John Sankey

The meadow to the north of the Dolman Ridge, the ridge west of Anderson Road, is copiously supplied with our common evening primrose, *Oenothera biennis*. So for a month I walked right by a plant of similar form but with a totally different flower without noticing it. True, this plant was almost buried by goldenrods (*Solidago canadensis*) and I was concentrating on a flora of a new interpretive trail to the west and ignoring other areas. . . but still!

O. cruciata has four stringy sepals, four thin recurved petals, and the usual anthers. The cross-shaped stigma characteristic of *Oenothera* sticks out a mile in front and is the flower's most visible feature, hence the common name Cross-shaped Evening Primrose. But unlike *O. biennis*, it seems to flower from the top down and easy to spot once you know what to look for.

It is a common native some 500 km to the south, from New England to southern Michigan. It obviously does not travel very well - I thank Dan Brunton for alerting me to the fact that this may be only the third Canadian record. I could find only one plant, so rather than take the usual complete voucher specimen, I have taken solely one flowering branch containing an over mature flower, two open flowers, a bud and leaf. That, in addition to photos in situ, seems sufficient to establish its identity. I note that the seed capsules do not look fertile, but we can always hope as I've moved a few to my garden and left the rest.

It is not sold as a horticultural species, and to be honest, no gardener would wax ecstatic over it any more than over our native *O. biennis*. This plant was some three meters off a well-used ski trail, and probably the seeds were transported by a skier who picked them up while visiting one of the popular skiing spots within its normal range. So, I assume that it was accidentally introduced and that the chances it will survive here are low.

The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas Year Two (2002): News from Region 24 - Ottawa

Christine Hanrahan

Introduction

With the successful completion of our second field season, the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (OBBA) is now close to the half-way mark in this project which runs until 2005. As always, the success of such a venture relies entirely on its participants. We really are lucky to have an enthusiastic, dedicated and knowledgeable group of atlasers in this region. **Thank you!**

In year one many atlasers told me they spent more time familiarizing themselves with their squares, searching for good habitat, and learning the techniques of atlasing, than actually surveying for birds. Year two, however, has clearly been a time of serious data gathering. Most squares reported big increases in numbers of species recorded. Many more point counts were done and some atlasers participated in the Atlas Nocturnal Owl Survey which was initiated by the OBBA in 2002 and will run until 2005.

Special funding enabled the OBBA to produce and distribute (free of charge to registered atlasers) a bird song identification CD-ROM, the *Bluebird*. It is hoped that with this tool more birders will feel confident about doing point counts which rely primarily on sound rather than sight. All Ottawa region atlasers had the opportunity to obtain one of these CD's.

Region 24 Information

For the new folk, here is a quick overview. Our region contains 86 squares, most of which are 10 km X 10 km in size. Squares which lie along the Ottawa River are usually smaller and are known as 'partial squares.' The region extends roughly from Casselman in the east to Westmeath in the west, south to Flower Station, Winchester and Finch, and with the Ottawa River as our northern boundary (*Figure 1*). The habitat diversity is great, from dense forests to extensive agricultural areas, and from wetlands to alvars. The bird life found on the atlas thus far reflects this variety.

Only one square, 18VR14, a sliver of land along the Ottawa River near Dunrobin has not yet received any coverage. However, it now has a volunteer ready to go for next year. Eight squares were not atlased this year, but were surveyed in 2001 and will be again in subsequent years.

Region 24

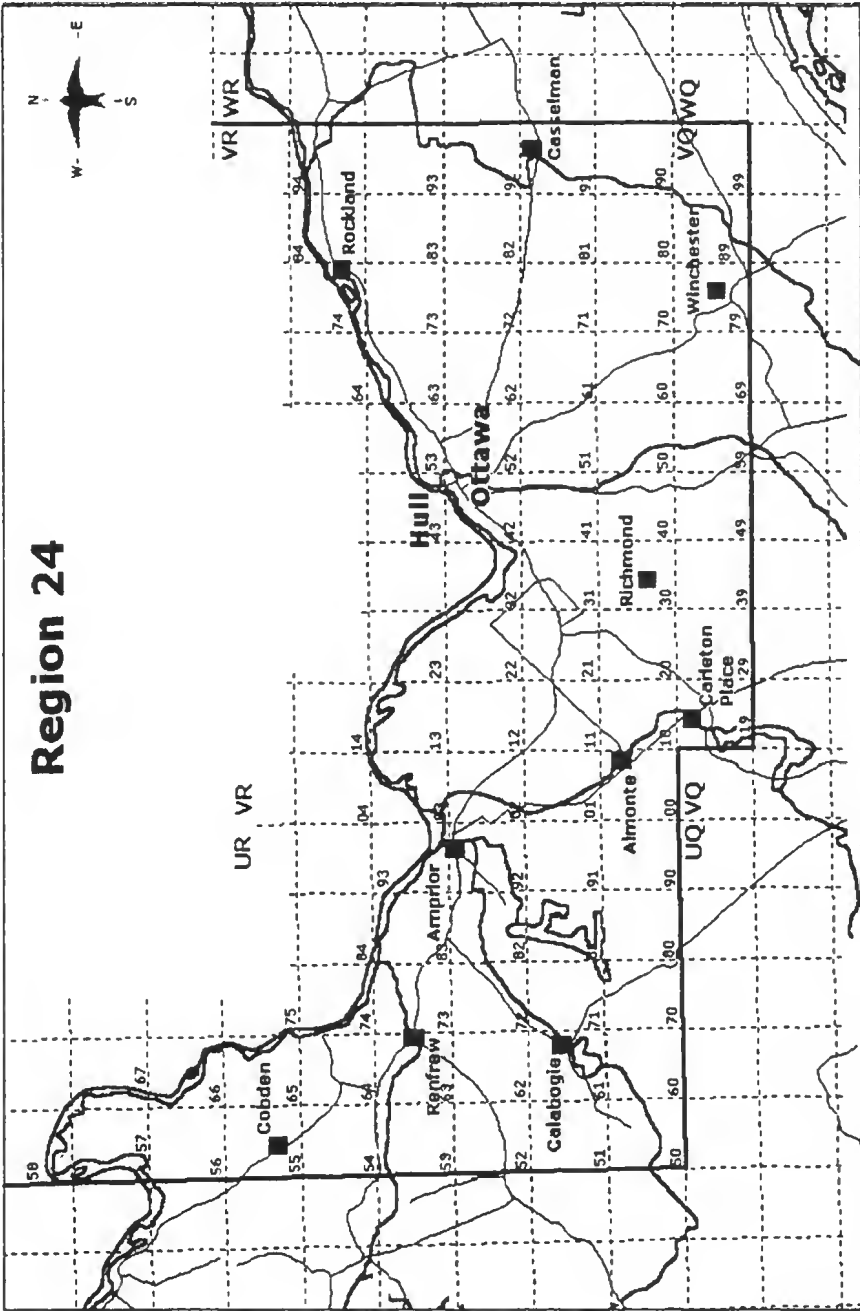


Figure 1. Map of Region 24.

Several of last year's atlasers moved on to new ventures. We wish them well and thank them for their significant contributions to the atlas. At the same time we welcome all the new volunteers who have now brought the number of participants to 95 (up from 81 last year). We continue to have two natural history clubs, the MacNamara Field Naturalists of Arnprior and the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists of Carleton Place taking part.

More Information can be obtained by contacting me at: vanessa@magma.ca, or by checking the local atlas pages on the OFNC website www.home.achilles.net/ofnc/, and the main atlas website: www.birdsontario.org.



Canada Goose Family. Photo by Peter Blancher

Atlassing Results

Breeding evidence has now been found for 177 species, with confirmed breeding for 139 species (Table 1).

Of the 85 squares that have so far been atlassed, 13 have recorded more than 100 species; the highest number recorded is 124 species in 18UR80. Twenty-four squares have recorded between 80-99 species. To date, only ten squares have reported 45 or more species with breeding confirmed. The highest total thus far is 72 species in 18VR30, followed closely by 70 species in 18VR52.

While Cape May Warblers were not recorded in Region 24 on the last atlas, they were found on two squares in 2001 and on five more in 2002. There was no confirmed

breeding and both the Tennessee and Cape May Warblers are essentially birds of northern coniferous forests. However, the last atlas saw scattered records for both species south of Algonquin Park and local Ottawa birders have generally anticipated a more southerly range expansion for these species as nesting birds. It will be interesting to see if the trend towards increased sightings of these warblers during breeding season continues during the next three years of the atlas. Keep your eyes and ears open for these species, but don't forget that they are also common migrants through our area in the spring. If in doubt, check the *Migration and Nesting Dates* section on the atlas pages at: www.home.achilles.net/ofnc/birding/bbanestdates.

Species of Regional and Provincial Significance in Region 24

Birds not recorded in this region during the previous atlas, or recorded on only a few squares, were designated *Regionally Significant*. Together with *Provincially Rare* species, they require completion of a Rare Bird Report Form (RBRF). However, in the 20 years since the first atlas, some of the Regionally Significant species have become increasingly common, particularly in recent years. Two such examples are Merlin and Wild Turkey where we will probably lift the requirement for RBRFs.

Provincially Significant species found in our region in 2001-2002 are listed with the highest breeding status found for each. These are: Black-crowned Night Heron (FY), Merlin (NY), Wild Turkey (FY), Herring Gull (P), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (H), Black-backed Woodpecker (H), Gray Jay (P), Philadelphia Vireo (T), Tennessee Warbler (B), Cape May Warbler (T), Bay-breasted Warbler (H). For a list of breeding codes see Appendix A on page 29.

New Species

Four species not recorded as breeding in Region 24 during the last atlas were found this year, two of them were upgrades from Observed Only ('X') in 2001 to breeding status in 2002: Black-crowned Night-heron (1 square), Black-backed Woodpecker (1 square), Tennessee Warbler (3 squares), and Le Conte's Sparrow (1 square).

Breeding evidence was also found during 2002 for the following species which were recorded on the last atlas, but not in 2001: Least Bittern (4 squares), Philadelphia Vireo (2 squares), Northern Parula (1 square), and Lincoln's Sparrow (2 squares). Additionally, three other species were upgraded from Observed Only in 2001 to breeding status: Double-crested Cormorant, Lesser Scaup and Black Tern.

Species of Provincial Rarity recorded in 2001-2002 are: Least Bittern (NE), Ruddy Duck (FY), Bald Eagle (NY), Red-shouldered Hawk (NY), Peregrine Falcon (NY), Wilson's Phalarope (FY), Black Tern (NE), Short-eared Owl (FY), Red-headed Woodpecker (CF), Loggerhead Shrike (H) (See Appendix A).



*A family of Merlins nested in Carleton Place.
Photo by Arnie Simpson*

Species present in higher than usual numbers in 2002
Species known to be irruptive are ones which are present in some years but absent in others. Such irruptions are generally thought to be triggered by food shortages forcing these species to disperse widely in the quest for more abundant food supplies. This is particularly true of crossbills which feed almost exclusively on conifer seeds. While reports of crossbills were almost non-existent this year compared to last year, another member of the Fringillidae, the Evening Grosbeak, was widely reported in 2002. While this species is also of sporadic occurrence, it is less certain whether their presence or absence in any given year is tied as closely to food supplies as it is for crossbills. Evening

Grosbeak was found on 22 squares in 2002 (11 last year) with confirmed breeding noted on six.

Another species whose widespread appearance this year was linked to an abundant food source was the Black-billed Cuckoo. Birders know that when tent caterpillars proliferate, Black-billed Cuckoos are usually around to exploit the situation. They were recorded on 33 squares this year (10 last year) with confirmed breeding on four.

Other news:

Merlins continue to expand into Region 24 and are especially conspicuous in 18VR42, Ottawa Centre, where at least five nests were reported along with numerous sightings of single birds throughout the season. They seem to have taken to urban life with a vengeance! Cumulative data for 2001-2002 shows Merlins recorded with some breeding evidence on 16 squares and observed ('X') on four more.

Northern Cardinals have now been recorded on 54 squares (37 last year), and House Finches on 43 (31 last year). This is a remarkable increase over the first atlas when Cardinal was found on 19 squares and House Finch on four.

Last year I mentioned the relative dearth of grassland species found in 2001 and wondered what subsequent years would yield. While Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark are present on most squares (75 and 74 respectively), some sparrow species such as Vesper, Field, and Grasshopper, continue to be reported in low numbers. Grasshopper Sparrow was found on 27 squares during the first atlas, on four squares in 2001 and three more in 2002 for a total of only seven squares. Results thus far from the atlas database, show Grasshopper Sparrows as more widespread in southwestern Ontario than in eastern Ontario coinciding with results from the first atlas and reflecting, to a large extent, the more suitable habitat found south of the Ottawa Region. Grasshopper Sparrows prefer well-drained fields with low grass cover, scattered tall weeds to serve as perches, and few shrubs. This specific habitat has been reduced over time by natural succession and of course by development of old field sites. However, Grasshopper Sparrows will utilize less than 'perfect' old field locations. I suspect that they continue to be uncommon but are also under-recorded because their thin, insect-like trill is either overlooked or confused with that of Savannah Sparrows with whom they are often found. The latter species, on the other hand, is common and has been recorded on 71 squares to date.

Predictions?

It's always hazardous to make predictions because if you're wrong you risk looking foolish. Of course, if you don't mind looking foolish then predict away. The Region 24 Committee is predicting that Carolina Wren will be the next new breeding species for the atlas in this area. These wrens are increasingly found here in the winter and rumors of summer sightings have reached our ears but nobody has actually turned rumor into fact for us as yet. Another species that might turn up is Tufted Titmouse. And while Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is not a new breeding species for the area, it wasn't recorded during the last atlas. So how about it? Who is going to be the first atlaser to find one (or all!) of these species breeding in this region?

Looking Ahead: 2003-2005

Thanks to all our great volunteers, Region 24 is blazing ahead in terms of coverage. We want to keep things rolling along just as smoothly for the next three years, so I've identified areas where we can use some extra work. Watch for postings on the OFNC website for more details of square bashings, and other ploys to help us achieve our goal of full coverage. In the meantime, the following list pinpoints the areas where we want to focus our energies.

Increased Coverage of Squares - Region 24 goals

Based on our knowledge of the region and results from the last atlas, the local atlas committee has set a goal of *at least* 80 species per square east of Ottawa and *at least* 90

species west of the city. Quite obviously this is not a hard and fast rule, but a general guideline. For example, some squares east of Ottawa have a greater habitat diversity than others, and finding a 100 species or more is not only probable, it has already been done. In others, however, getting 70 species will present a challenge. Furthermore, some squares have less than 50% of their land mass in Ontario; expectations for these 13 squares will be somewhat different. A number of squares require more work in order to achieve the goals we have set out. See Table 2 for number of species per square.

Species recorded on 80 or more squares in Region 24:

American Robin (85)
American Goldfinch (84)
Mourning Dove (83)
American Crow (83)
Song Sparrow (83)
Red-winged Blackbird (83)
Red-eyed Vireo (82)
Blue Jay (82)
Black-capped Chickadee (82)
Common Grackle (82)
Ovenbird (81)
Common Yellowthroat (81)
Tree Swallow (80)
Chipping Sparrow (80)

Confirming Breeding Evidence - Go for 50

Confirmed breeding evidence is very low on many of the squares, even when total species numbers are high (Table 2). Atlas Central has set a goal of a 50% confirmation rate per square and we know that Ottawa atlasers can meet that goal, no problem! We all need a challenge in life, and this is ours - meet or exceed the 50% goal and show that Ottawa atlasers are tops! We'll be offering a workshop in early July to offer some hands-on pointers to help you confirm more birds on your squares. Watch for a notice next year. We'll also be posting more helpful tips on the local atlas pages of the OFNC website. We do know that atlasers who spent time in the field through July and early August generally had higher confirmation rates than others who stopped atlasing in June. However, birding at the right time is only part of the story, the other half is learning how to find concrete breeding evidence. Good luck and patience play a part too!

Finding Night Birds

Owls and crepuscular species (birds that are active at dusk and twilight) are certainly difficult to census, but the challenge they represent makes it all the more satisfying when they are finally found. Hearing these denizens of dusk and night calling from field and woods is, to say the least, enchanting. We'll be looking at organizing some nocturnal square bashes and possibly resurrecting the Owl Prowl again, in order to increase coverage of these neglected species. During the early part of 2002 Jeff and

Angela Skevington invited atlasers to join them on their several owling expeditions. As these were quite popular we encourage other atlasers to link up with each other and go on owl prowls together. Watch for emails and notices on the OFNC website for tips on looking for crepuscular species such as Woodcock and Whip-poor-will.

In 2002 the folk at Atlas Central developed the *Atlas Nocturnal Owl Survey* to (1) coordinate data collection with Bird Studies Canada's Nocturnal Owl Survey, and (2) provide a more systematic method for atlasers to approach owling. A CD or set of cassettes with owl calls, along with data forms and an instruction booklet were produced and are available to any atlaser wishing to participate in this survey. For additional information about owling, please check the atlas pages of the OFNC website (<http://home.achilles.net/ofnc/birding/owlfaqs.html>).

Clarifying Breeding vs. Migration Dates:

Deciding whether a bird is still migrating or already on breeding territory can sometimes be problematical. To obtain a general idea of early and late nest dates and migration dates, check the *Migration and Nesting Dates for Ontario Bird Species* posted on our local atlas web page and become familiar with who does what when. More information can be obtained at: <http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/wildspace/intro-e.html> and the Ontario Nest Records Scheme (ONRS) at: www.birdsontario.org. In addition to gathering information about migration and nesting dates, we need to use a degree of judgement, for birds don't know that we have set 'first and last nest dates,' or migration periods for them! These dates are only guidelines, to be used together with observations of behaviour, habitat, etc.

Point Counts:

Significantly more people did point counts in 2002 than in 2001. Most were surprised by how enjoyable it was and by how many birds they were able to tally for their square by this method. Point counts allow us to collect abundance data which gives a more accurate picture of breeding bird populations in the province. For example we know that House Finches have now been found on 43 squares in Region 24. Without collecting abundance data we cannot determine whether each square has a few birds or many and, therefore, we don't really know how abundant or not the species is. We certainly get a relative idea of their range, but it is also important to look at numbers as well.

This year several atlasers offered to help with point counts in squares other than their own. This kind of cooperative effort is something we want to encourage over the next three years.

How You Can Get Involved with the Atlas

It is never too late to volunteer for the atlas. Although we currently have no unassigned squares in this region, squares do become available as atlasers migrate to other areas or other pursuits - check out the local OFNC website for details. We are

always looking for Casual Observers (CO). As a CO you can submit data from anywhere in our region and if you choose to be registered as part of the atlas project you will receive much the same information package as atlasers assigned responsibility for a square. You will get an ID number, be put on the mailing list for both the local atlas group and for the OBBA newsletter and be able to access that part of the main atlas website available only to registered atlasers. However, you don't have to be an 'official atlaser' to submit observations.

Some casual observers are diffident about contributing observations to the atlas, for they think that common nesting birds have already been recorded. Let me assure you - ALL observations are valuable. You'd be surprised how many gaps casual observations fill. Let me give you an example: someone contacted me with a report of nesting Eastern Phoebes near her house. Although a common species, and recorded on the square, it had not been confirmed. Her observation elevated the record to confirmed breeding status, which is what we'd like for all the birds recorded. Therefore, I can't reiterate enough that all observations, YOUR observations, are important to the success of this project. Backyard bird watchers can help by telling us about birds they find in their backyard and in their neighbourhood.

What to look for:

You don't have to find nests! Simply noting which birds are present throughout the breeding season is great. If you can observe whether they are defending their territory, carrying nest material, carrying food back to a possible nest site, and so on, this is even better. Note it all down and contact me - I prefer if you don't wait until summer's end to do this, because I can then pass the information on to the person responsible for the square, and I can also update my own records as the season progresses.

Taking the Initiative

I'm always impressed when atlasers get so involved in this project that they go that extra step to gather more data, help other atlasers, or develop interesting suggestions for making things work better. I've already mentioned Jeff and Angela Skevington inviting people to go on owling excursions with them, and not just to their own square, but to other parts of the region. In Carleton Place, Cliff Bennett and the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists developed a letter explaining the atlas project and asked for interested recipients to contact them with information. This letter was then hand-delivered to rural residents in much of their square (18VR10). It worked! People were interested and happy to report their observations. Way to go Cliff and MVFN! Last year Alan and Carol German developed a letter which could be hand-delivered to residents in any local neighbourhood asking for reports of species such as nesting Hummingbirds, Cardinals, House Finches, etc. A brilliant suggestion. This letter is stored on our atlas web pages on the OFNC website and can be printed off. Other atlasers have volunteered to help with point counts wherever they are needed (Thank you Erica Dunn, Paul Schoening, and Mick Panesar), or have taken the time to help gather breeding evidence or perform point counts with birding pals atlasling far-flung

squares (Thank you Bernie Ladouceur and Steve Gawn). We have offers of more help for next year (Thanks, Mick Panesar and Steve Gawn). We're hoping to see more of this cooperative effort which makes of this project something extra-special. Thanks to all of you!

Acknowledgments

Heartfelt thanks to every one who participated in the Breeding Bird Atlas this year. Thank you for spending so much time and effort surveying your squares, contributing casual observations, helping out fellow atlasers, doing point counts, taking part in owl surveys, sharing your sightings and your enthusiasm. Without your help we simply wouldn't have an atlas. Many thanks to my local Atlas Committee: Mark Gawn, Paul Jones, and new member, Mick Panesar. They're always ready with comments, suggestions, thoughts, and plans for helping guarantee that our region runs smoothly. Mark organizes our workshops (this year at Jack Pine Trail), while Paul is our front man, talking to other local natural history groups about the atlas. Thank you also to Pete Blancher, Gord Belyea and Arnie Simpson for use of their superb photos. To see more great photos by these guys and others, visit the OFNC atlas pages and click on the Photo Gallery. Many thanks to the following individuals for contributing their observations: Tony Beck, Kathy Bissett, Bruce Di Labio, Georgina Doe, Dan Brunton, and Sandy Garland.

Table 1: Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas - Region 24, Ottawa Cumulative Results (2001-2002). Species in boldface are new for 2002. Under the heading "# of squares recording each species," the number in brackets includes species recorded as observed only.

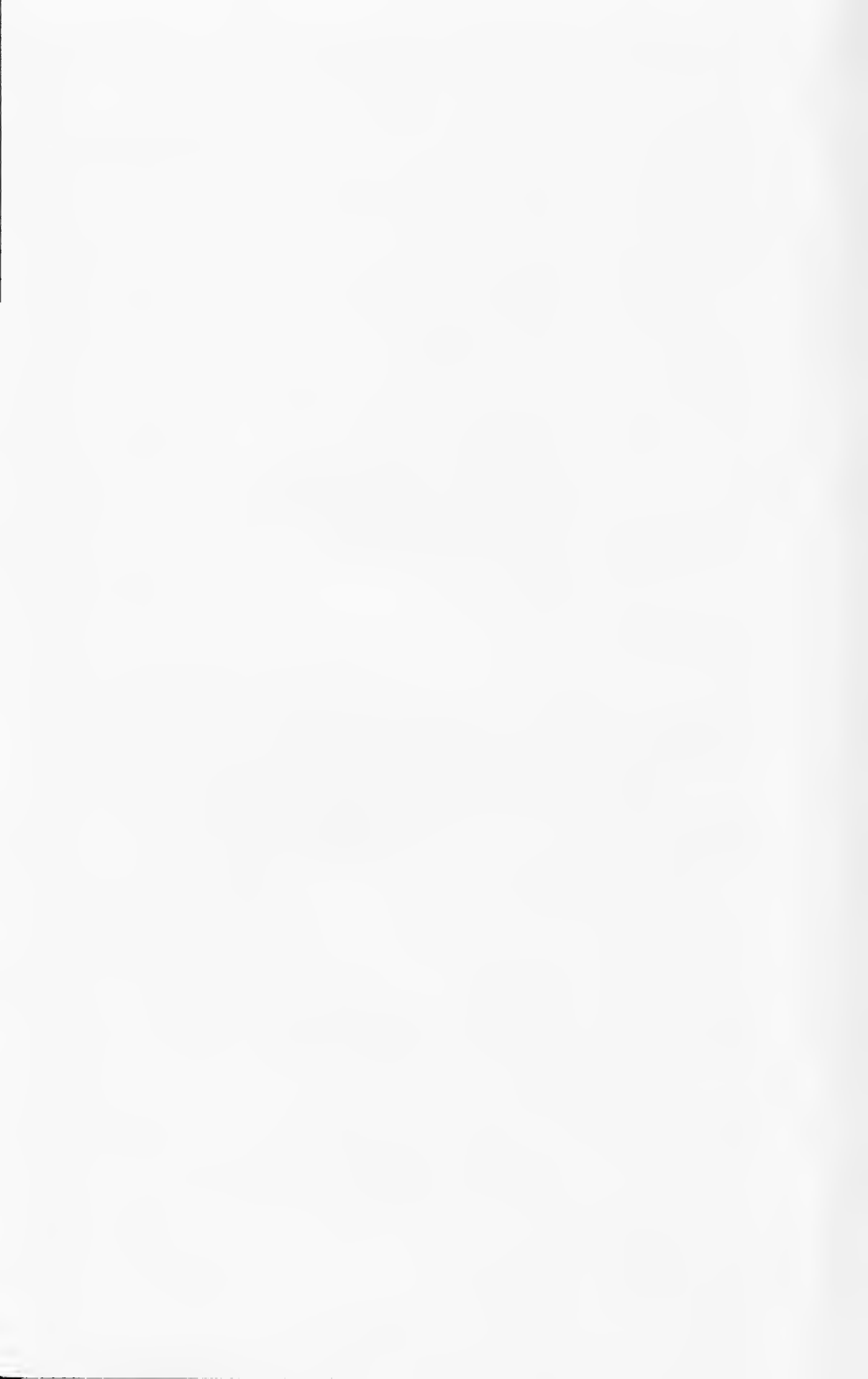
Species	# of squares recording each species	# of squares recording confirmed breeding
Common Loon	23 (26)	3
Pied-billed Grebe	14 (16)	6
Double-crested Cormorant	5 (14)	0
American Bittern	37	4
Least Bittern	4	1
Great Blue Heron	29 (69)	10
Green Heron	30 (35)	8
Black-crowned Night-heron	1 (4)	1
Turkey Vulture	39 (60)	2
Canada Goose	47 (59)	25

Table 1 con'd

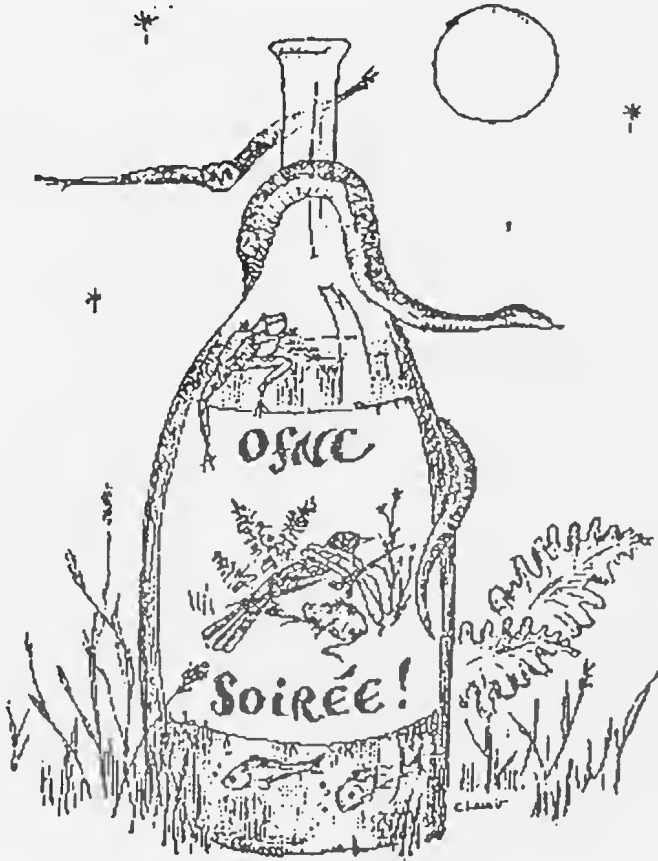
Species	# of squares recording each species	# of squares recording confirmed breeding
Wood Duck	53	37
Gadwall	4	0
American Wigeon	5	1
American Black Duck	22 (24)	9
Mallard	69 (70)	35
Blue-winged Teal	20	7
Northern Shoveler	6 (7)	2
Northern Pintail	2 (3)	0
American Green-winged Teal	8	0
Ring-necked Duck	6 (7)	0
Lesser Scaup	2 (3)	0
Hooded Merganser	19 (21)	5
Common Merganser	9 (13)	1
Ruddy Duck	5	2
Osprey	21 (27)	10
Bald Eagle	1 (2)	1
Northern Harrier	50 (52)	11
Sharp-shinned Hawk	26 (27)	7
Cooper's Hawk	12 (14)	3
Northern Goshawk	11	4
Red-shouldered Hawk	17 (18)	5
Broad-winged Hawk	27 (29)	5
Red-tailed Hawk	56 (59)	17
American Kestrel	60	22
Merlin	16 (20)	5
Peregrine Falcon	1	1
Gray Partridge	14	6
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	0
Ruffed Grouse	60	23

Table 1 con'd

Species	# of squares recording each species	# of squares recording confirmed breeding
Wild Turkey	18 (20)	3
Virginia Rail	24	10
Sora	22	4
Common Moorhen	5	1
American Coot	4	1
Sandhill Crane	2 (4)	0
Killdeer	75 (77)	40
Spotted Sandpiper	52 (54)	14
Upland Sandpiper	34	3
Common Snipe	57	5
American Woodcock	41 (43)	4
Wilson's Phalarope	3	1
Ring-billed Gull	10 (64)	3
Herring Gull	4 (20)	0
Common Tern	4 (10)	1
Black Tern	3 (8)	2
Rock Dove	72	31
Mourning Dove	83	31
Black-billed Cuckoo	43	4
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	0
Eastern Screech-Owl	12	1
Great Horned Owl	27	9
Northern Hawk Owl	1	1
Barred Owl	22 (23)	3
Long-eared Owl	6	0
Short-eared Owl	6	1
Northern Saw-whet Owl	18	0
Common Nighthawk	8 (10)	0
Whip-poor-will	13	0



OFNC S



PLACE: St. Basil's Church
Maitland Ave. just north of the Queensway.

RESERVATIONS: To order tickets, fill in the order form and send it along with remittance before April 19 to:

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
35069, Westgate P.O.
Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2

SOIRÉE

WINE & CHEESE PARTY

Saturday, April 26, 2003, 7:30 p.m.

- selection of wines
- cheese & crackers
- non-alcoholic punch
- tea & coffee
- fruit

Help make this another festive evening by coming to our annual party and mingling with fellow naturalists.

Join us in honouring The Member of the Year and recipients of the Service Award, Anne Hanes Natural History Award, Conservation awards and the President's Prize.

Members are invited to exhibit photographic prints and original art on a natural history theme. The best overall colour or B. & W. Photograph will be selected by ballot and a prize awarded to the lucky winner.

Mount display items for easy handling and bring them to the Unitarian Church between 4 and 7 p.m. on Friday, April 26th. Everything is to be taken home at the end of the evening. To reserve exhibition space and for further information contact Philip Martin (729-3218).

Prizes will also be awarded for the best Macoun Field Club displays. Children (primary or high school) who are OFNC members but not Macoun Field Club members are also encouraged to compete.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

Please send me ___ tickets to the OFNC Annual Soirée at \$9 (\$4 for students under 18) per person. Enclosed please find my cheque or money order for \$ ___.

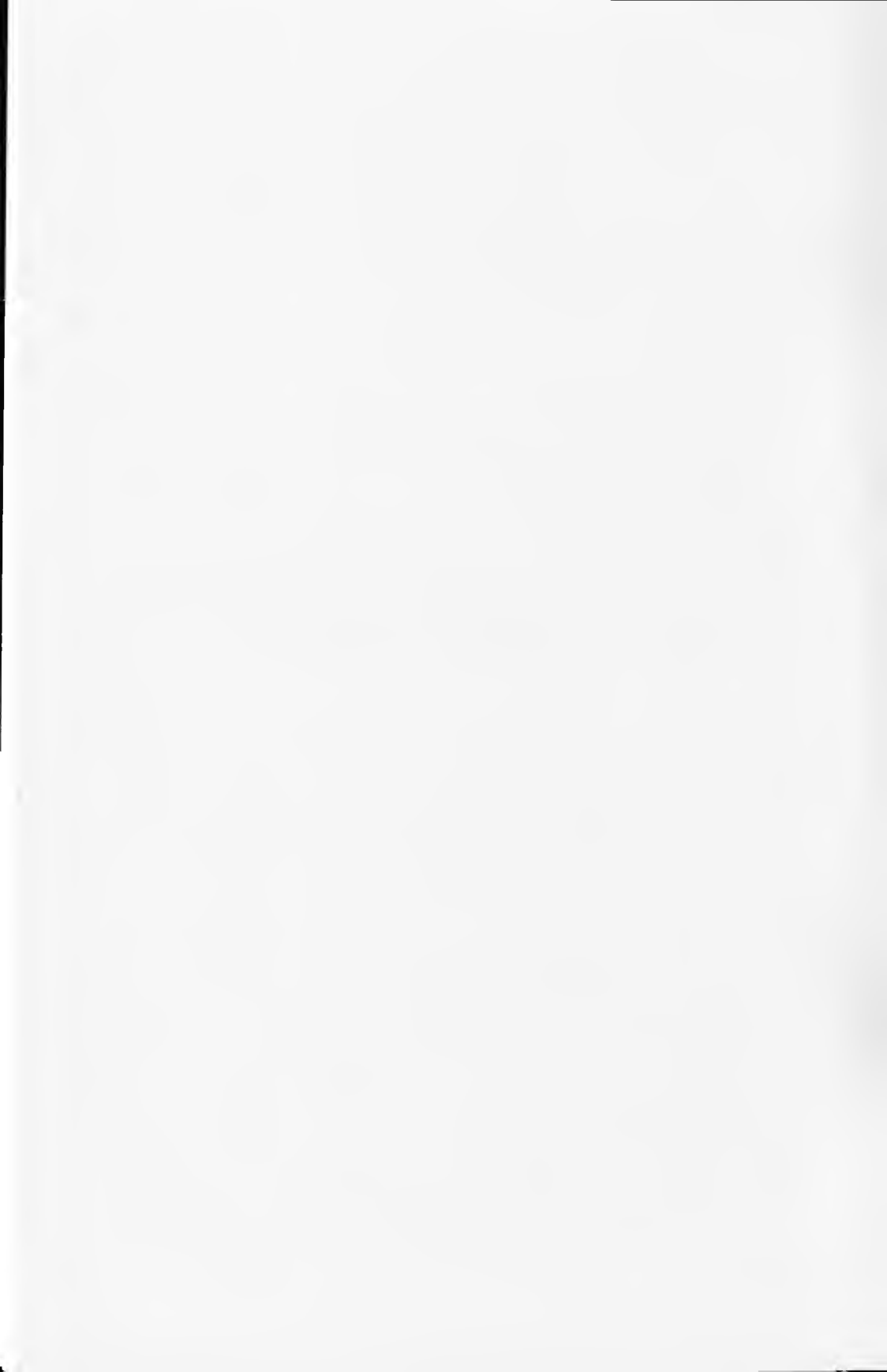


Table 1 con'd

Species	# of squares recording each species	# of squares recording confirmed breeding
Chimney Swift	13 (15)	2
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	61	7
Belted Kingfisher	63 (65)	19
Red-headed Woodpecker	5 (6)	2
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	62 (64)	28
Downy Woodpecker	68 (69)	27
Hairy Woodpecker	69	21
Black-backed Woodpecker	1	0
Northern Flicker	79	21
Pileated Woodpecker	55	9
Olive-sided Flycatcher	6	0
Eastern Wood-Pewee	73	8
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	4	0
Alder Flycatcher	60	5
Willow Flycatcher	22	1
Least Flycatcher	62 (63)	6
Eastern Phoebe	74	43
Great Crested Flycatcher	75	18
Eastern Kingbird	79	36
Loggerhead Shrike	1	0
Yellow-throated Vireo	3	0
Blue-headed Vireo	12	0
Warbling Vireo	68	7
Philadelphia Vireo	2	0
Red-eyed Vireo	82	14
Gray Jay	1	0
Blue Jay	82	28
American Crow	83	46

Table 1 con'd

Species	# of squares recording each species	# of squares recording confirmed breeding
Common Raven	46 (50)	11
Horned Lark	29	4
Purple Martin	28 (30)	14
Tree Swallow	80	52
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	22	12
Bank Swallow	31	17
Cliff Swallow	34 (35)	20
Barn Swallow	75	47
Black-capped Chickadee	82	47
Red-breasted Nuthatch	57	12
White-breasted Nuthatch	65	20
Brown Creeper	20	3
House Wren	55	15
Winter Wren	38	0
Sedge Wren	6	0
Marsh Wren	22 (23)	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	18	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	9	0
Eastern Bluebird	53	34
Veery	75	7
Swainson's Thrush	3	1
Hermit Thrush	41	2
Wood Thrush	65	6
American Robin	85	65
Gray Catbird	67	20
Northern Mockingbird	8	1
Brown Thrasher	61 (62)	16
European Starling	79	64
Cedar Waxwing	77	15

Table 1 con'd

Species	# of squares recording each species	# of squares recording confirmed breeding
Golden-winged Warbler	3	0
Tennessee Warbler	3 (4)	0
Nashville Warbler	53 (54)	7
Northern Parula	1 (2)	0
Yellow Warbler	79	31
Chestnut-sided Warbler	65	16
Magnolia Warbler	36	2
Cape May Warbler	7 (8)	0
Black-throated Blue Warbler	30	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	46 (47)	6
Black-throated Green Warbler	47	4
Blackburnian Warbler	17	3
Pine Warbler	31 (32)	1
Bay-breasted Warbler	2	0
Black-and-white Warbler	70	11
American Redstart	58	6
Ovenbird	81	14
Northern Waterthrush	41	6
Mourning Warbler	37	0
Common Yellowthroat	81	30
Canada Warbler	14	0
Scarlet Tanager	44 (47)	3
Eastern Towhee	9	1
Chipping Sparrow	80	42
Clay-coloured Sparrow	13	0
Field Sparrow	32	8
Vesper Sparrow	30	6
Savannah Sparrow	71	22

Table 1 con'd

Species	# of squares recording each species	# of squares recording confirmed breeding
Grasshopper Sparrow	7	1
Le Conte's Sparrow	1	0
Song Sparrow	83	55
Lincoln's Sparrow	2 (3)	1
Swamp Sparrow	68	18
White-throated Sparrow	76	14
Dark-eyed Junco	10 (16)	0
Northern Cardinal	54	14
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	74	24
Indigo Bunting	56 (58)	9
Bobolink	75	25
Red-winged Blackbird	83	57
Eastern Meadowlark	74	21
Common Grackle	82	61
Brown-headed Cowbird	75	21
Baltimore Oriole	74	32
Purple Finch	52	7
House Finch	43	14
Red Crossbill	2 (5)	1
White-winged Crossbill	13	0
Pine Siskin	21 (25)	0
American Goldfinch	84	12
Evening Grosbeak	33 (38)	6
House Sparrow	66	38

Species in Region 24 observed only (X)

*Note: these species were observed in suitable habitat in breeding season and may be elevated to breeding status in future. Species that were obviously migratory, such as northern-nesting shorebirds, are not included.

-Redhead

-Boreal Chickadee

Table 2: Number of Species Found and Confirmed, and Number of Hours Spent Atlasing per Square Cumulative for 2001 - 2002

Legend:

NOT ATLASSED - Square not assigned or atlaser unable to atlas this year.

2002 only - Square first atlased in 2002

2001 only - square atlased in 2001 but not in 2002

Species total shown in brackets () includes species coded 'X' as 'observed only'

Square Name & Number	Number of Species	Number confirmed	Number of Hours in Square
VR00 Almonte	77 (79)	21	10 (2002 only)
VR01 Blakeney	86 (93)	19	37.5
VR02 Kinburn	102 (104)	19	29.5 (2001 only)
VR03 Fitzroy Harbour	108 (113)	46	75.5
VR04 Quyon (5%)	78 (84)	21	19
VR10 Appleton	103 (104)	59	51.5
VR11 Corkery	109 (113)	21	45 (2002 only)
VR12 Marathon/Carp	89 (92)	18	23.5
VR13 Constance Bay	73 (75)	14	12.5 (2002 only)
VR14 Eardley (5%)		NOT ATLASSED	
VR20 Munster	105 (113)	57	98
VR21 Kanata/Stittsville	83 (90)	36	51
VR22 S. March	63 (74)	25	42.5
VR23 Dunrobin	107 (108)	41	35 (2002 only)
VR30 Richmond	114 (123)	72	92
VR31 Bells Corners	88 (92)	27	62
VR32 Britannia	49 (54)	19	3 (2001 only)
VR40 Manotick	74 (79)	48	28.5
VR41 Uplands Airport	103 (108)	50	111
VR42 Ottawa Centre	83 (85)	45	17
VR43 Rockcliffe	55 (60)	23	10.5
VR50 West Osgoode	81 (97)	60	42
VR51 Greely	85 (86)	18	24.5
VR52 Ramsayville	115 (120)	70	192.5

Table 2 cont'd

Square Name & Number	Number of Species	Number confirmed	Number of Hours in Square
VR53 Greens Creek	64 (69)	11	31
VR60 Vernon	68 (70)	9	16
VR61 Edwards	70 (74)	7	12
VR62 Carlsbad Springs	70 (76)	36	15
VR63 Martin's Corners	61 (62)	10	10.5
VR64 Cumberland (5%)	11	0	1
VR70 Morewood	63 (66)	27	19.5
VR71 Russell	78 (88)	32	24.5
VR72 Vars	99 (105)	36	100.5
VR73 Sarsfield	86 (93)	31	72.5
VR74 Rockland	54	3	2.5
VR80 Crysler	53 (54)	21	2.5 (2001 only)
VR81 Gagnon	79 (82)	14	14 (2001 only)
VR82 Cheney	84 (85)	21	30.5
VR83 Bourget	78 (83)	13	26
VR84 Clarence	78 (81)	9	27
VR90 Berwick	77 (78)	22	5
VR91 Mayerville	83 (84)	25	11
VR92 Lemieux	69	22	7.5
VR93 Pendleton	23 (26)	3	9 (2001 only)
VR94 Jessups Falls	49 (50)	4	13 (2001 only)
UR50 McCreary Mtn./Norcan Lake	76	14	16
UR51 Ferguson's Lake	79 (84)	12	10
UR52 Shamrock	83	13	13
UR53 Balsam Hill	48	3	2 (2002 only)
UR54 Bromley	50	6	2.5 (2002 only)
UR55 Cobden	64 (69)	12	18.5
UR56 Beachburg	54 (58)	4	6
UR57 Westmeath	78 (83)	4	9 (2002 only)

Table 2 cont'd

Square Name & Number	Number of Species	Number confirmed	Number of Hours in Square
UR58 Flannagan Bay	42 (43)	4	5
UR60 Flower Station	86 (88)	9	38
UR61 Calabogie	84 (86)	23	91
UR62 Ashdad	104 (107)	33	60
UR63 Renfrew	69 (76)	10	18
UR64 Haley Station	70 (74)	9	18
UR65 Queensline	72 (78)	24	17
UR66 Norman Rapids	48	7	2.5
UR67 La Passe	41	6	2
UR68 Davidson	10	1	0.5 (2001 only)
UR70 Darling Long Lake	24 (26)	2	13
UR71 Bagot Long Lake	74 (79)	17	18
UR72 Burnstown	77 (79)	20	36
UR73 Goshen	74 (75)	13	23
UR74 Castleford	34 (38)	5	7.5
UR80 Tatlock	122	57	77 (2001 only)
UR81 Lowney Lake	92 (95)	13	15
UR82 White Lake	93 (99)	30	71
UR83 Sand Point	74 (77)	4	15.5
UR84 Rhoddy's Bay (5%)	31 (33)	3	4 (2002 only)
UR90 Clayton	93 (96)	38	34
UR91 Cedar Hill	81 (85)	18	26.5
UR92 Pakenham	90 (91)	30	70
UR93 Arnprior	108 (112)	9	16
VQ19 Black's Corners	91 (94)	48	35
VQ29 Dwyer Hill	88 (92)	38	60
VQ39 Malakoff	113 (114)	49	33.5
VQ49 North Gower	58 (62)	18	17.5

Table 2 cont'd

Square Name & Number	Number of Species	Number confirmed	Number of Hours in Square
VQ59 Osgoode	78 (88)	57	22
VQ69 Winchester Bog	60 (63)	15	15.5
VQ79 Winchester	82 (83)	39	14
VQ89 Chesterville	87 (89)	42	15
VQ99 Finch	89 (91)	33	18.5

Atlas Volunteers 2002

Ken Allison, Ruth Allison, Robert Alvo, Ted Baldwin, Ron Bedford, Lisa Benedetti, Cliff Bennett, Lynda Bennett, Marg Benson, Peter Blancher, Celia Bodnar, Ludmilla Borshevsky, Brian Bowen, Colin and Pat Bowen, Rob Bowyer and Catherine Smith, Tracy Bridges, David Britton, Richard Brouillet, Peter Browne, Gerhard Bruins, Emily Burton, Janet Castle, Bob Cermak, Laurie Consaul, Daryl Coulson, Dave Critchlow, Dale Crook, Ron Curtis, Anthony and Gretchen Denton, Erica Dunn, Peter Fuller, Bill Fyfe, Marcel Gahbauer, Colin Gaskell, Jessica Gawn, Mark Gawn, Carol and Alan German, Jim Gillick, Al Graham, Marc Gravel, Anne Hackston, Christine Hanrahan, Mark Hovorka, Terry Huzarski, Roy John, Paul Jones, Michael Kahn, Anthony Keith, Rick Killeen, Maryanne Koot, Bernie Ladouceur, Roland Lamarche, Sandy Lang, Mike and Judy Lascelles, Chris Lewis and Bob Bracken, Dick Mabee, MacNamara Field Naturalists, Paul and Michelle Martin, Barb Martinovic, Bev McBride, Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists, Dave Moore, Carolyn Murphy, Mick Panesar, Bev Peterkin, Remy Poulin, Eric Ridgen, Jack Romanow, Mary Rothfels, Linda Ryan, Paul Schoening, Bev Scott, Arnie Simpson, Dan and Chris Simpson, Langis Sirois, Jeff and Angela Skevington, Dave Smythe, Daniel St. Hilaire, Mark Stabb and Caroline Schultz, Blair Stevens, Austin Taverner, Eve Ticknor, Kathryn Warner and Mike Enright, Sloane Watters, Laurie L. Wood, Eleanor Zurbrigg.



Alder Flycatcher on nest, 18VR52. Photo by Gord Belyea

Appendix A

Breeding Evidence Codes

Observed:

X - Species observed in its breeding season (no evidence of breeding)

Possible:

H - Species observed in season in suitable nesting habitat

S - Singing male present or breeding calls heard in breeding season in suitable nesting habitat.

Probable:

P - Pair observed in their breeding season in suitable nesting habitat

T - Permanent territory presumed through registration of territorial song on at least 2 days, one week or more apart at the same place

D - Courtship or display between a male and a female or 2 males including courtship feeding or copulation

V - Visiting probable nest site

A - Agitated behaviour or anxiety calls of adult

B - Brood patch on adult female or cloacal protuberance on adult male

N - Nest building or excavation of nest hole

Confirmed:

DD - Distraction display or injury feigning

NU - Used nest or egg shell found (occupied/laid during atlas period)

FY - Recently fledged young or downy young

AE - Adults leaving or entering nest site in circumstances indicating occupied site

FS - Adult carrying faecal sac

CF - Adult carrying food for young

NE - Nest containing eggs

NY - Nest with young seen or heard

Fall Bird Sightings

25 August - 15 November 2002

Chris Lewis

After one of the hottest and driest summers on record, the cool clear days of autumn were a welcome relief. . . until El Niño struck again, bringing below normal temperatures and snow in early November and leaving many of us longing for a bit of that summer heat. However, the influence of prolonged periods of warm days and southwest winds, interspersed with a few tropical storm residuals from the southeast as well as cold fronts from the northwest, did create some interesting conditions for fall bird migration. Both the seedathon (1 September) and the annual Fall Bird Count (19-20 October), sponsored by the Birds Committee of the OFNC, also provided some stimulation for birders to "get out there." The results were excellent. The seedathon team found 123 species and again raised a substantial amount of money to supply the OFNC bird feeders. A record high total of 139 species was found during the Fall Bird Count by 51 participants within the 50 km radius on both the Ontario and Quebec sides of the Ottawa River.

LOONS, GREBES, GANNETS, PELICANS & CORMORANTS

The fall birding season started with a bang! An exceptional sighting of **TWO JUVENILE AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS** was reported from Shirleys Bay on 28 August. Later on, we were up to our necks in **NORTHERN GANNETS**. It started on 9 October when a stray juvenile was spotted by two birders (in separate vehicles) who just happened to be driving on the Queensway near the Westgate Shopping Centre as it flew over, through to 11 November when another bird was seen flying up the Ottawa River between Dick Bell Park and Shirleys Bay, and continued on to 15 November when yet another report came of a bird heading east past the Parliament buildings. *Another* juvenile Gannet was found on 27 October, this time along a roadside in Wakefield and was brought to the Wild Bird Care Centre. According to WBCC staff, aside from being thin and dehydrated, the bird was quite active and began ravenously devouring fish and almost anything else that was offered to it. "Gannet the Gannet" was still being fattened-up as of mid November, while awaiting its complimentary flight (via commercial airline) back to the Atlantic coast.

Otherwise, there was single report of a **Red-throated Loon** on the Ottawa River from McLaren's Landing on 20 October, and **Common Loons** were sparse, as were both **Horned and Red-necked Grebes**. **Double-crested Cormorants** were in evidence in

large numbers especially at Shirleys Bay until the end of October.

HERONS & BITTERNS

TWO GREAT EGRETS found at Shirleys Bay on 17 August lingered until 27 September, frequently providing excellent views and creating a Floridian ambiance as they hunted in the reeds and mudflats west of the dyke. **Green Herons** were seen repeatedly at Mud Lake in the Britannia Conservation Area until the third week of September, and a pair nested at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. **Black-crowned Night-Herons** lingered very late this fall, with five present on Mud Lake on 20 October and at least two juveniles still here on the 27th.

WATERFOWL

From mid-October onwards, waterfowl were "the story" this fall. Two **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** were among the thousands of Canada Geese on the Ottawa River east of Andrew Haydon Park on 18 October, and a single bird was observed among the Canada's in a pond along Moodie Drive south of the Trail Road landfill on both 12 and 20 October. **Canada Goose** numbers were impressive, with a record 46,867 counted during the Fall Bird Count, reflecting a significant increase in this species in Ontario over the past few years. At least one of the tiny northern subspecies, *Branta canadensis hutchinsii*, a.k.a. **Richardson's Goose**, was reported from the Moodie Drive pond on 12 and 14 October. The largest collection of **Snow Geese** was a flock of 28 that spent a few days at a pond on Earl Armstrong Road south of the Ottawa International Airport in early October; several smaller flocks were reported from the Ottawa River and Moodie Drive until early November. The cool crisp weather in early to mid-October brought in the **Brant**, with 300-400 seen on the Ottawa River on 6 October, followed by tight and restless flocks of 40-50 during the next two weeks, also a group of 14 on 30 October at Andrew Haydon Park.

A male **EURASIAN WIGEON** in eclipse plumage was found at Shirleys Bay on 20 October and was seen again the following day but became elusive afterward. A male **Redhead** lingered at the Moodie Drive pond until at least 20 October. Sea ducks including small groups of **Long-tailed Ducks** and good numbers of all three species of **scoters** were seen on the Ottawa River during their typical time (mid-October to November). **Barrow's Goldeneyes** began appearing on the river in late October. Two males and one female were seen from the Remic Rapids Lookout on 3 November, among the hundreds of **Common Goldeneyes** which started to congregate here in late October. At least 200 **Hooded Mergansers** were happily feeding on Mud Lake in the Britannia Conservation Area until a sudden freeze-up on 3 November, and both **Common** and **Red-breasted Mergansers** were present (albeit in small numbers) on the Ottawa River from 1 October onward. **Ruddy Ducks** are now widespread breeders in the Ottawa area, as was proven again this fall with reports of numerous adults and

juveniles from most of the eastern sewage lagoons and other locations such as Shirleys Bay and the Moodie Drive pond. A female **Common Shelduck** raised some eyebrows this fall. She was reported by several observers at the Dechênes Rapids Lookout along the Ottawa River Parkway from August 26 through the end of the period. A tame and obviously healthy bird, this duck was most likely an escapee from a waterfowl collection. In spite of the outside chance that she may have made her way from Europe all on her own, this species is NOT countable in North America except as an "exotic." For those who keep bird-lists, sorry but "them's the rules."

HAWKS & EAGLES

Due to obvious geographical differences, raptor migration in eastern Ontario never reaches the magnitude of what is seen along the Great Lakes. However, a few moderate flights of **Turkey Vultures** and **Red-tailed Hawks** were observed in mid-October. **Rough-legged hawks** began arriving during the third week of October. A couple of spectacular eagle sightings included an immature **Golden Eagle** migrating over the Russell sewage lagoon on 20 October and an immature **Bald Eagle** that spent several days feeding on gull carcasses and spooking the waterfowl. The eagle provided excellent views for many who saw this bird at various locations including Britannia and the east end of Andrew Haydon Park from 29 October until at least 13 November.

Merlins were again prosperous local breeders (again mostly in urban and suburban areas) and one or more was frequently seen harassing the shorebirds at Shirleys Bay and Andrew Haydon Park this fall. The downtown **Peregrine Falcon** pair successfully raised two out of three chicks (refer to Eve Ticknor's comprehensive summary of the 2002 Falcon Watch in the October - December issue of *T&L* 36(4):141-144).

RAILS, GALLINULES, COOTS & CRANES

The eastern sewage lagoons again hosted several families of **American Coots** - five adults and 12 juveniles were observed at the Embrun lagoon on 1 September. At least 25 coots were at Shirleys Bay on 22 October and two were still here on 10 November. The Alfred lagoon was another great breeding site for both coots and **Common Moorhens**. The number of breeding pairs of **Sandhill Cranes** in the Mer Bleue bog is still unknown, but this species has obviously done very well in eastern Ontario. A record high number of 32 individuals was found on 20 October, most of them were often seen feeding in the cornfields along Milton Road west of Navan during the following weeks.

SHOREBIRDS

An excellent number and variety of shorebirds made birding on the Ottawa River a real pleasure this fall. Extensive mudflats on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River from

Shirleys Bay to Lakeside Gardens attracted some uncommon yet very conspicuous and accommodating visitors including two **HUDSONIAN GODWITS** and three **Long-billed Dowitchers**. These birds remained until mid-October at Shirleys Bay. Sixteen species of shorebirds were found on the Fall Bird Count, and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Sanderling**, **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, **White-rumped Sandpiper**, **Baird's Sandpiper** and **Stilt Sandpiper** lingered into the following week. One hundred and eight **Dunlins** were found on the Fall Bird Count; a late group of nine was at Shirleys Bay on 11 November. The almost annual occurrence of **PURPLE SANDPIPER** at this time of year in Ottawa was repeated again this fall, with a single bird found in the Deschênes Rapids on 11 November. A **RED PHALAROPE** appeared briefly at Constance Bay on 7 November.

GULLS

The most exciting gull sighting was an unprecedented number of **Bonaparte's Gulls** on 19-20 October. A flock of 102 were seen at the Winchester sewage lagoon, feeding intensely in the ponds and apparently oblivious to the close approach of non-avian observers. Seven **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were reported from the pond on Moodie Drive south of the landfill on 20 October, and **Ring-billed** and **Great Black-backed Gulls** continue to increase each fall.

OWLS

The dedicated owl-banders at the Innis Point Bird Observatory netted 36 **Northern Saw-whet Owls** from 3-19 October. Otherwise, no owl species were reported.

WOODPECKERS

After raising two young in a burnt area in Constance Bay this summer, a pair of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were last reported on 29 August. Considering the ideal habitat, it is hoped that they will return here next year. One of the many good birds discovered on the Fall Bird Count was a **male Black-backed Woodpecker** in the Larose Forest.

PASSERINES

Generally speaking, songbird migration was uneventful with the most significant numbers reported in mid-September. Hundreds of **Swainson's Thrushes** and several **Veerys** were heard calling almost continuously during the nighttime hours of 14-15 September. A record high number of 2,253 **American Robins** were counted on 19-20 October and many remained at Britannia and Shirleys Bay through the end of the period. Most of the four species of **vireos** and 18 species of **warblers** reported from early to mid-September were found in the Britannia Conservation Area and the woods at Shirleys Bay. Despite the lack of rarities or significant warbler fall outs this fall, an

impressive total of 184 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were still in the area in the third week of October.

A rare immature **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** hung out with the warblers at Britannia from 14-18 September. A surprisingly early **Olive-sided Flycatcher** appeared briefly in a backyard north of the Royal Ottawa Hospital on 25 August, and a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** put on a good show for several birders at Britannia on 17 September. A late **Eastern Wood-Pewee** was still singing at Shirleys Bay on 1 October. Swallows had vacated the Ottawa area by mid-September, just as the **Golden-crowned** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** began to arrive - good numbers of both kinglets were reported until the last week of October.

Corvids, particularly **Blue Jays** and **American Crows**, were a hot topic this fall due to the media reports of West Nile virus in southern Ontario. Although both species were reported to be quite reduced in southern Ontario, the numbers of crows found in Ottawa-Gatineau during the Fall Bird Count were nearly double those of last year, and Blue Jay numbers were average for the season. **Sparrow** numbers, on the other hand, were nowhere near as high as last fall. Forty six **Fox Sparrows** and plenty of **White-throated** and **White-crowned Sparrows** as well as **Dark-eyed Juncos** were reported throughout the month of October. Ninety five **Lapland Longspurs** were reported on the Fall Bird Count, most of them from agricultural fields near Marionville; at least one was among a flock of 40 **Horned Larks** at the Central Experimental Farm on 8 November. Snow Buntings began to appear at the end of October. **Rusty Blackbirds** broke the Fall Bird Count record with 451 reported, and huge flocks of **Common Grackles** and **Red-winged Blackbirds** began to gather in late August and were prevalent until mid-October. Conversely, a general decline in **House Finches** has been noted on Fall Bird Counts since 1995.

There was no indication by mid-November whether or not this would be an "invasion winter" (i.e. northern owls, **Bohemian Waxwings** or winter finches) so stay tuned to the OFNC Bird Status Line for updates!

The bird sightings mentioned in this article were derived from various sources including reports to the OFNC Bird Status Line as well as personal communications. Many thanks to all who made the effort to share their observations. The results of the Fall Bird Count can be found on the OFNC Web site.

To report bird sightings as well as listen to reports from the Ottawa-Gatineau area, call the Bird Status Line at (613) 860-9000. For more information about great birding locations as well as field trips and other birding events organized by the OFNC, call (613) 722-3050 or visit the OFNC web site at <http://www.achilles.net/ofnc/>

Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee.

For further information,
call the Club number (722-3050) after 10:00 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 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 Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2, 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. In order for the Club to offer a bus trip, we need just over 33 people to register. If fewer than 30 register, we have the option of cancelling the trip or increasing the cost. Such decisions must be done a week in advance so we encourage anyone who is interested in any bus trip to register as early as possible. We also wish to discourage postponing the actual payment of bus fees until 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 (613) 860-9000 to learn of recent sightings or birding potential in the Ottawa area. This service is run on behalf of the Birds Committee and is available to members and non-members.*

Tuesday
14 January
7:00 p.m.
Social & Club
Business

OFNC 124th ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

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

7:30 p.m.
Formal
program

The President and Council for 2003 will be elected at this meeting and a brief review of the activities during 2002 will be given, as well as a statement of the Club's finances. Following this, Excursions and Lectures Committee will add some humour to the evening with a short talk on entitled "Bizarre Moments." Come early to read minutes and committee reports. All members are welcome so also take this opportunity to meet the Council and fellow Club members

WINTER BIRDS

Leader: Ken Allison

Sunday
19 January
9:00 a.m.

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

Ken offers a full day outing to observe a number of birds that stay over the winter. Gulls, waterfowl and other seasonal species in the vicinity of Ottawa will be seen. Bring a snack and a drink, and be sure to dress warmly.

Sunday
9 February
8:00 a.m.

WINTER FINCHES

Leader: Bernie Ladoucer

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, north-east corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

Our destination will depend upon the arrival of winter finches in their traditional areas in Quebec. If these birds are scarce there, other birding spots will be chosen. These could include several locales along the Ottawa River to observe winter waterfowl and other wintering species. Bring a snack and a warm drink.

Tuesday
11 February
7:00 p.m.
Social & Club
Business

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
INSECTS IN MY BACKYARD

Speaker: Henri Goulet

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

7:30 p.m.
Formal
Program

Dr. Goulet, Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada, has taken some remarkable digital photographs of insects in his own back yard. He will give a vivid account of some of the more visible "bugs" which form but a small proportion of the insects and related creatures that reside in his garden. We will see the role of dandelions and other "weeds" as providers of pollen and nectar for several important insect predators such as ladybirds and lacewings - a convincing argument as to why our natural allies should not be destroyed by herbicides or pesticides!

Sunday
23 February
8:00 a.m.

WINTER RAPTORS

Leader: Mark Gawn

Meet: Greenboro Shopping Centre (in front of the Second Cup at the northern end of the parking lot). This location is close to public transit (transitway, O Train). Note: We do not have an agreement with this shopping centre to park cars all day, therefore, cars will be left at your own risk.

On this excursion we will probably be heading either south or east to locate various species of hawks and owls that may be seen in fields and woodlots in the Ottawa region. Warm clothing, binoculars, a snack and a hot drink are strongly recommended.

Friday
February or
March
Date and time to
be determined

MUDPUPPY NIGHT

Leaders: Fred Schueler and Philip Martin
Meet: Oxford Mills at the parking lot just below the dam at the bridge in the village - not the Hanlan Bridge outside (west or downstream) of the settlement.
Directions: Follow the Leeds-Grenville County Road 18 south from Kemptville or north from Prescott to Oxford Mills.

This is an opportunity to see our giant aquatic Salamanders at the only place in Ontario where they are known to be easily viewed during their winter activity. We will walk around the shore or ice shelves and hope to see from five to maybe 60 Mudpuppies prowling the bottom or feeding on fish or crayfish. Afterwards, we retire to the nearby Brigadoon Restaurant for hot drinks, desserts, and telling of tall tales. For more information contact <bckcdb@istar.ca> or call 258-3107 or 258-3016. Two other sources of information are:
http://www.geocities.com/dungwarrior_2000/fred-david3.jpg
and http://www.geocities.com/dungwarrior_2000/mudpup3.jpg

This trip is limited to the first 20 to register at 722-3050 (before February 6, please). Final details will be given to the registrants. You will need rubber boots, a flashlight and a dip net (if you have one). Children are welcome.

Tuesday
11 March
7:00 p.m.
Social & Club
Business

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
PRESQU'ILE PROVINCIAL PARK

Speaker: Don Shanahan
Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

7:30 p.m.
Formal
Program

Shorebirds are almost constantly on the move commuting between their Arctic breeding ground and wintering areas as far south as Patagonia. Presqu'ile Provincial Park is an important yet vulnerable haven for these traveling birds. Brighten resident and frequent haunter of the Presqu'ile beaches, Don Shanahan, will introduce you to many of the forty shorebird species that have been recorded at Presqu'ile. Don will also talk about the incredible voyages made by many of those shorebirds and why their time at Presqu'ile is so important. This talk will prepare us for the Club's traditional spring trip planned for April 6th (see below).

Saturday
22 March.
8:30 a.m.

WINTER PLANTS

Leader: Albert Dugal

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, north-east corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

Join in the challenge to identify trees and shrubs by their shapes and other less conspicuous features. Albert will introduce us to a plant community in one of our local conservation areas. Please REGISTER WITH THE CLUB NUMBER (722-3050) after 10:00 a.m. by March 15.

Saturday
29 March
6.30 a.m.

SPRING ARRIVALS AT BEAR BROOK

Leader: Ken Allison

Meet: Elmvale Acres Shopping Centre, northwest corner of the parking lot at the junction of St. Lawrence Blvd. and Smyth Road. (Please note the Club only has parking arrangements at Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre - that is they will not tow away a car with an OFNC card on the dash. This is not the case with other shopping centres, so if you leave your car it is at your own risk.)

The flat clay lands in this area flood annually and are slow to drain. This attracts large numbers of waterfowl as well as other early migrants. Join Ken in identifying this wonderful variety of birds. A telescope would be useful if you have one. Because of the variation in climate and arrival dates of birds you should check the Club website or phone the Club number (722-3050 after 10:00 a.m.) close to the date for last minute information.

Sunday
6 April
6:30 a.m.
to
6:30 p.m.

SPRING BIRDING AT PRESQU'ILE

Leader: Roy John

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

Cost: \$30.00 (PLEASE REGISTER EARLY; see the introduction to Coming Events for information.)



The Club's traditional spring outing to Presqu'ile Provincial Park offers an ideal opportunity to study the diverse assortment of waterfowl that congregate in the surrounding waters during their northward migration. Transportation will be by a comfortable motor coach equipped with washroom. Anyone thinking about attending this excursion should consider attending the 11 March meeting.

Tuesday
8 April
7:00 p.m.
Social & Club
Business

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
UNDER THE ICE

Speaker: Kathy Conlan
Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

7:30 p.m.
Formal
Program

See the penguin and the Polar Bear perspectives! Dr Kathleen Conlan, a Research Scientist in marine biology at the Canadian Museum of Nature, will share some of her research and diving experiences under the sea ice in the Arctic and Antarctic.

Saturday
19 April
1:00 p.m.
to
5:00 p.m.

BASIC BOTANY

Teachers: Phillip Martin and Roy John
Meet: Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets, room number to be determined.

This is a parallel course to the introduction to Birdwatching given previously. It will cover the basics of field botany and is intended for beginners.

Saturday
26 April
7:30 p.m.

OFNC SOIRÉE WINE AND CHEESE PARTY AND ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY
Meet: St. Basil's Church. Maitland Ave. just north of the Queensway.

PLEASE NOTE change of venue and change of day. See centrefold for further details.

15 May
to
18 May

SPRING EXCURSION TO POINT PELEE

The Club is planning its biennial four day bus excursion to this protected area to coincide with the peak of spring bird migration. This trip is tentatively scheduled for the dates listed, and plans will proceed if there is a sufficient and early response from the membership. Accommodation has been reserved so if you are interested, please call the Club number (722-3050) as soon as possible. Full details of the itinerary and the cost will appear in the April - June issue of *T&L*.



NOTE: Concerning Bus Trips

When the Excursions & Lectures Committee organizes a bus trip it needs to observe certain principles. First, by Council's direction, we are not to make a loss. Second, by Club policy we are not to make a profit either. This means we try to break even on each trip, and if we do not, we aim to balance the books over each season. A bus typically costs about \$1000/day. If we charge \$30 each we need just over 33 people to register. We are allowed some discretion. If only 31 or 32 people have registered then trip would go, but at a slight loss. We would hope that another trip would make a small profit and we would balance out. Several trips lately have had around 25 people sign on. This leaves us with a choice of canceling the bus or raising the price to \$40. We have checked with other bus lines (we typically use Carleton) and there are smaller buses available, but they also cost \$1000/day so there is no saving. We could use vans but these come out to \$54/head. School buses, while cheaper, are no longer used by us because we had too many complaints of discomfort. Excursion & Lectures tries to provide outings in acceptable comfort, to interesting places, at reasonable cost. To do this we need to make a decision at least a week in advance of the trip date as to whether we should proceed, cancel the bus or, as we did with two recent trips, contact a few people planning to go by private car and persuade them to join the bus (and so help us to balance the books!). We hope this clarifies the way we organize our bus trips.

DEADLINE: Material intended for the April - June 2003 issue must be in the editor's hands by February 1, 2003. Mail your manuscripts to:

Karen McLachlan Hamilton
2980 Moodie Drive, Nepean, ON K2J 4S7
H: (613) 838-4943 e-mail: hamilton@storm.ca

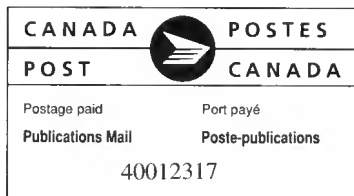
ANY ARTICLES FOR TRAIL & LANDSCAPE?

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. We accept e-mail, IBM-compatible diskettes, or submissions in traditional form- typed, written, printed or painted!

URL of our site:
<http://www.achilles.net/ofnc/>

WEBMASTER's e-mail
ofnc@achilles.net

ISSN 0041-0748



TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Published by

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB

Postage paid in cash at Ottawa

Change of Address Notices and Undeliverable Copies:

Box 35069, Westgate P.O.

Ottawa, K1Z 1A2

Return postage guaranteed

Printed by
LOMOR PRINTERS LTD.