

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE



*A Publication Concerned With
Natural History and Conservation*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Editor

Karen McLachlan
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Production Assistant

Sandra Gushue

Mailing Team

Louis L'Arrivee
Coordinator

Associate Editor

Bev Hymes

Susan Howell
Diane Lepage
Jack MacKenzie
Louise O'Neil
Dave Smythe

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The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —

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Michael Murphy

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.

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

Information:

(613) 722-3050

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Welcome New Members

Ottawa Area

Pamela Alexander & family
Robert Auger & family
Sharon Caughey & family
Julius Cibula
Roy Fox & family
Ann Gibson
Julie Huband
Judy Hyland
Wendy Jermyn
Renee Leduc & Rick Devereux
Laurent Lesage
Suzanne Lorrain
Rod MacDowell
Andrew Marshall & family
Dawn Smith & family
Cecilia Taiana
Viviane Trubey
Margaret & William Tyson
Lisa Zaslavsky

Dave Smythe
Chair, Membership Committee
August 2005

Conservation Matters

Christine Hanrahan

As always your Conservation Committee was kept busy with numerous issues, some ongoing, some recent, others brought to our attention for information purposes only. The following report touches upon only the most pressing of the current issues we are dealing with.

5309 Bank Street (South Gloucester Conservation Area)

I think it is important to remember that this site was once called the *South Gloucester Conservation Area*, a designation that underscores its ecological importance. It is also important to remember that the battle to save this area goes back to the 1970s (for detailed information see <http://www.ofnc.ca/conservation/bank/index.php> and <http://www.greenspace-alliance.ca>).

There have been numerous opportunities for the old Regional government (RMOC) and the current City of Ottawa to preserve the land at little cost to themselves, but short-sightedness has brought us to the present situation. In the last week of June the City Planning & Environment Committee voted in favour of the rezoning application giving Tomlinson the green light to quarry the land. City Council also passed amendments #57 and #31 to the Official Plan permitting R.W. Tomlinson to expand their quarry onto this environmentally significant site.

Despite two inadequate Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), both giving negative peer reviews, and despite Tomlinson violating the sale agreement (Rosenbaum 2005), the City appears determined to forge ahead. The OFNC, the Greenspace Alliance (GA) and many individuals have attempted to provide a voice of reason through letters and presentations, to no avail.

Therefore, the GA and others have appealed the matter to the OMB. They are asking if OFNC members would be willing to come forward to serve as expert witnesses should this OMB hearing go ahead. Geologists (particularly those familiar with the value of quarry rock), Environmental Planners, Hydrologists (to examine water loss), and perhaps lawyers (familiar with the Aggregate Resources Act and the Planning Act), are the types of experts required to help with this appeal. If you are interested in this last chance to try and preserve one of the city's most unique natural

areas, please call Bill Royds at 733-7727, email 5309Bank@royds.net.

Ontario Nature - Eastern Region

Operating on the old adage of strength in numbers, the Conservation Committee is seeking to work cooperatively with other Ontario Nature (ON; formerly the FON) Eastern Region clubs and through the ON regional representative, on environmental and natural history issues that affect all of us. In particular we believe that it is vital to join forces to lobby the Ontario Government to reconcile conflicts in legislation affecting natural areas. As Stan Rosenbaum noted "*We need to make it clear to them [the government] that we are not just a few isolated individuals, but represent a larger group whose proposals they would be well advised to consider seriously.*" An Eastern Ontario Regional meeting is planned for October 2005 and the OFNC will discuss cooperation on environmental concerns then.

The Southern Corridor

Bill Royds, a CC member, has taken the lead on this issue with Greenspace Alliance. This long-standing battle to defend the Ottawa Official Plan designation of "Major Open Space" against the NCC's contention that the Southern Corridor should be declared a "General Urban Area" has the city maintaining the "Open Space" designation in contrast to suggestions by City staff that it should be re-designated. As things stand, Greenspace Alliance is working with the City and the NCC to find a compromise that may include provisions for the Poets' Pathway which the Greenspace Alliance has been working on for some years (<http://www.flora.org/greenspace/poetspath-1/index.shtml>).

Official Plan Amendment #16 (Kanata Special Study Area)

This OP Amendment was passed thus ensuring loss of the woodland and paving the way, so to speak, for development. However, Kanata residents are still fighting to preserve a large chunk of the Trillium Woods and Marchwood-Lakeside Natural Area just to the east. The history of this particular area is another in a long list of lost opportunities to protect a truly splendid and important natural area. Over the last 20 years, the lands around Kanata have been whittled away until very little is left. Even areas once thought protected, such as Trillium Woods, have come under pressure from developers. As noted in a recent article (Hobden 2005), several appeals to the OMB over this issue have been filed.

Greenway Corridor Workshop

Ontario Nature, Eastern Region, is planning a workshop on greenway corridors to be held this fall in Ottawa. Details will be posted on the OFNC website.

Other Issues

The Conservation Committee works on many issues during the year, some of which may go dormant until something happens that generates renewed need for action. Larose Forest, although far from being preserved, is one such issue that is “lying low” for the present. Updates on the forest can be found at

<http://www.ofnc.ca/conservation/larose/index.php>. We also are still keeping an eye on the proposed Carp Ridge development. For more information on the Carp Ridge proposal check out <http://www.carpridge.ca/>.

Acknowledgments: The report was prepared using material submitted by various Conservation Committee members.

References:

- Hobden, David. 2005.
Conservation Matters.
T&L 39(2): 59-60.
- Rosenbaum, Stan. 2005.
Conservation Matters.
T&L 39(3): 115-116.

Please check the Conservation Pages on the OFNC web site for more information and updates:
<http://www.ofnc.ca/conservation>.

OFNC Membership Cards

D. Smythe

The Club has decided to discontinue the issuance of membership cards starting with the 2006 membership year. The cards are not required for participation in field events or entry to the monthly meetings and there are no other significant benefits to having one. The cost saving is small but will be put to good use elsewhere in the OFNC operations budget which has been under increasing pressure in recent years.

In the longer term, the Club hopes to use email for issuing membership renewal notices where possible. When that happens, it would be impractical to send membership cards by mail to those members receiving their notice by email.

News from the FWG: Summer 2005

Christine Hanrahan

Spring 2005 was so cold and wet we wondered if summer was heading the same way. But by the time June rolled around, temperatures had risen along with the humidity, turning summer into endless days of steamy 30° C temperatures. Remarkably, volunteers continued coming to FWG and work carried on despite the weather.

Backyard Garden News

The information sign for the Backyard Garden (BYG) was erected in late July and looks tremendous. Congratulations to Jay Ladell, BYG Manager, who did a great job on this attractive well-designed sign. Check it out for yourself, it is the first thing you see as you head towards the backyard garden.



Changes to the garden continue with the focus this summer on the creation of the grass garden where native local grasses, attractive as ornamentals and beneficial for wildlife, will be showcased. Brick edging has been placed around several of the garden beds, and new plant labels are being produced. If there is time, the patio behind the Interpretive Centre will be re-graded. As always, the work is carried out by the Friday morning group and the Wednesday evening gang who all carried on despite the intense and stultifying heat. If you would like to help out in the BYG (a great opportunity to learn more about native plant gardening) please contact Jay at jay_ladell@yahoo.com or leave a message at 234-6767.

Events

International Migratory Bird Day, always the second Saturday of May, has been celebrated at FWG for many years. The event focuses attention on the return of spring migrants to their northerly breeding grounds. The cool, rainy weather on May 14 prevented many people from coming out, but 30 visitors braved the day for a guided birding tour of the FWG capably led by Dave Moore who can always find interesting things along the way, even if the birds are quiet.

The Annual Native Plant Sale was held June 4. More plants, more variety and more people attending made the day an overwhelming success. It was our best sale yet. Thanks to Jay Ladell who did a great job of organizing the event, to Jay and Sandy Garland for growing so many of the plants, to Elizabeth Gammell for once again running the "Information Table" and to all the volunteers who turned out in force. Stay tuned for the 2006 plant sale on the first Saturday in June.

Brochures

The new FWG general brochure is now ready and available for pickup from the Interpretive Centre. It replaces the original brochure from the mid-1990s with a fresh design, and new text. Many thanks to Elizabeth Gammell who did a superb job on the writing and design, and kudos to Jay and David for helping with layout and editing, and to the rest of the FWG Management Committee for their input and advice.

Problems

While the fire season seems confined to the beginning and the end of the school year (Hanrahan 2005), summer brings problems of a different sort. Plant theft from the garden appeared to be minimal this summer, but trouble arrived with a group of Orienteers in late June. This group of approximately 20 - 30 people dashed mindlessly back and forth through the FWG, heedless of newly planted shrubs and nesting birds. If we'd been notified of this event in advance we could have warned them about avoiding the garden. Adding insult to injury, it appears that they *drove* through the old field (narrowly missing a Yellow Warbler nest) in order to set up

their "checkpoint." A letter was sent to the group responsible.

Once again we remind readers that if they see anything suspicious at FWG to please call AAFC Security at 759-1985 and the FWG at 234-6767.

Managing the Garden

Invasive species control

Dog-strangling Vine /Pale Swallowwort (*Cynanchum rossicum*)

Despite many hours spent trying to control this species in 2004, we were dismayed but not overly surprised to see how vigorously Dog-strangling vine (DSV) or Swallowwort grew back in 2005. It was clearly more abundant than ever. Only the areas mulched in 2004 appeared to show some success and, of course, we don't know if this is temporary or permanent. Last summer two different types of mulch were tested: several cleared areas were covered with the cut DSV plants and then with tarpaulins, while other sites used thick layers of newspaper covered with soil. Although some plants grew on top of the mulch under the tarp covered pile, they were most likely from seeds that had lodged there and not from plants growing up through the mulch itself. It will be interesting to see what happens over the next few years as the mulch layers decay. Will DSV re-assert itself in these areas?

This past summer, DSV on the north side of the pond was cut and covered with large, heavy-duty tarpaulins. Hopefully this will prevent the plant from growing next spring, or at least growing as thickly. Several volunteers set up test plots to determine rate and density of regrowth after pulling or cutting the stem, and work was also done to determine plant density. If we are to come up with some sort of workable solution for controlling DSV at the garden then we need to learn more about the biology and ecology of this species. Check our website for reports on our progress with this invasive alien plant, and for links to recent scientific works: http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/research/index_e.php#dsv.

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

Recent research has helped us learn more about this plant and how best to control it. Armed with this knowledge we now feel pretty confident that in time we will be able to remove most, if not all, of this species from FWG. To get a copy of our new *Invasive Species Information Sheet on Garlic Mustard*, check out our website at: http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/research/index_e.php#garlic.

Common Burdock (*Arctium minus*)

Common Burdock has become quite a problem at the garden in the last few years. Current research into burdock control has given us new insights into this plant allowing us to believe that in time we will be able to control the species. Approximately 300 burdock plants were cut back this past summer, with a few left

standing to provide winter seeds for birds. Hundreds of burdock basal rosettes are growing at FWG but continued removal over the next 5 - 10 years should, we hope, see reasonable control of this species. For more information about burdock, download a copy of our new *Invasive Species Information Sheet on Common Burdock*, from our website:

http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/research/index_e.php#burdock.

Buckthorn species

(*Rhamnus frangula*, *R. cathartica*)

As noted in previous articles, we have been working at removing both buckthorn species from FWG since 2001. In 2004 many fruiting (female) trees were taken out of the thickets around the Old Field. Tony Denton has been handling this project for the last five years and has seen helpers come and go. It would be wonderful if we could find some willing able-bodied folk to give him a hand sometimes. This valuable work is time-consuming for one person. If you'd like to get involved with the buckthorn project, and learn about controlling invasive woody species at the same time, please contact Tony at ajmdl@sympatico.ca. We know that this species, along with various other trees, can re-sprout quite rapidly from the trunk, even when cut close to the ground. Tony came up with the ingenious idea of covering the stumps with a heavy plastic pool liner and covering with soil. So far, we have not seen any regrowth. We have recently learned of a bioherbicide, a microbial biological weed control agent, that might have applications for use at FWG. Hopefully, we will have more news in future updates.

Dale Crook

With great sadness we report that Dale Crook, a long-standing FWG volunteer, passed away in August 2005. Dale was very active at the garden, working on buckthorn removal (his article on buckthorn can be found on our website), compiling an inventory of walnut and butternut trees at FWG (also on the website), maintaining our feeders, and so much more. Dale had a passion for and an insatiable curiosity about, the natural world and was always bringing interesting observations to our attention, pointing out things that we had not noticed. He took many wonderful photos around the garden and could often be found with camera and binoculars enjoying everything he saw. We miss Dale greatly.

Flowering Rush (*Butomus umbellatus*)

Over the last few years, Flowering Rush has been consistently removed from the FWG pond and finally appeared to be far less prevalent in 2005. However, vigilance is needed as with any invasive species, and so the three pond ladies, Sandy Garland,

Isabelle Nicol and Diane Lepage, were back in the pond removing the plant. This time they had some help from a Muskrat who has taken up residence in the pond and shows an appetite for Flowering Rush roots.

Amur Maple (*Acer ginnala*)

This garden ornamental has spread like the weed it is throughout the garden and most of the saplings are now producing seeds, thereby increasing the number of new maples exponentially. Colin Freebury cleared a large area of this species in the fall of 2004, but in 2005 we noticed that they were back and thicker than ever. As of this writing (mid-August), plans were underway to remove one of the large "mother" trees and as many seedlings and saplings as possible.

Other invasive plants

Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) appeared in several new locations at FWG, although its stronghold is still the Old Field area. *Galerucella* beetles introduced onto some plants in that area last year obviously moved on before doing any damage. We always remove any plants we see and are confident that we can contain them that way. Canada Thistle (*Cirsium canadensis*) increased dramatically throughout the garden in 2005 and it is clear that we are going to need to look seriously at how best to deal with this plant which spreads not only by seed but vegetatively.

Plants and Animals

Plants

It may seem from the above report on invasive plants, that all we do at FWG is think up ways to eradicate vegetation! In fact, we are always fascinated by the variety of plants at the garden and how things change from year to year. While many of the plants are non-native species, as you would expect from a site that was cultivated for agriculture and ornamental plants (all those crabapple varieties!), it is very gratifying to see all the native species that appear without our help. Most noticeable in late summer of course are the goldenrods and asters, particularly in the Old Field area. Fortunately, many of the non-native plants are not terribly intrusive even though common, and many provide nectar for insects, particularly butterflies, and seeds for birds.

Birds

Sadly, it appears that Green Herons did not nest at FWG this summer. Unlike previous years, they were rarely seen after May, often only every few weeks at most. The kestrels, on the other hand, did nest after a hiatus in 2004. While very much in evidence during April and part of May they were fairly inconspicuous apart from the young birds jockeying for position to stick their heads out of the nest box and take a gander at the world. By early July the two young had fledged and eventually the entire kestrel family left the garden for other areas.

The Tree Swallows, so noisily evident throughout the summer departed en masse as always, this time around July 14, although birds moving around the region were sometimes briefly seen at FWG. As of mid-August, I had cleaned half the nest boxes and those with Tree Swallow nests (the majority) were, for the most part, successful. One nest with four eggs was abandoned, another nest had one unhatched egg, but of the 18 boxes cleaned to date, only one dead bird was found, a half-fledged house sparrow. A report on all the nest boxes at FWG will eventually be posted on our website.

There were at least eight Red-winged Blackbird nests around the Pond, and consequently there was much blackbird activity until they too left in July. For whatever reasons, the blackbirds failed to congregate at FWG in late July evenings as they have done in the previous two years. The absence of both swallows and blackbirds by late July was striking and despite the searing temperatures it was apparent that summer was entering its final stages.

The usual species nested in and around FWG this summer, including the Baltimore Oriole, Great-crested Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, and Yellow Warbler. A Turkey Vulture roosted in the Arboretum on June 16, a Black-crowned Night Heron flew around the farm on June 12, and the Red-tailed Hawk found perching on the red barn in mid-July has stayed around since. There were reports of Vesper Sparrows and Horned Larks on the farm around Morningside Lane, in the same area as nesting Savannah Sparrows and Killdeer. A female American Redstart hung around the Ash Woods for a few days before vanishing. This species occasionally nests at FWG.

Other Fauna

I spent several enchanted evenings in June late listening to the amazing chorus of frogs. The chorus was so loud, it could be heard on Morningside Lane on the other side of Prince of Wales Drive! Although Gray Treefrogs were the primary vocalists, American Toads and Green Frogs were interspersed. The cacophony was quite literally deafening, but wonderful. In late June, the nightly chorus was enhanced by scores of fireflies flitting amongst the cattails like miniature fairy lights. Truly magical.

Green frogs are still occasionally calling as I write (mid-August), but activity has definitely fallen off. Other species found at FWG were Bullfrogs and Wood Frogs, the latter fairly abundant (for the size of the pond) in May.

It was a good summer for butterfly diversity at FWG, although none were seen in large numbers. In particular Clouded Sulphurs, all the blues, and Common Ringlet populations have been noticeably low over the last few years.



Banded Hairstreak. Photo by C. Hanrahan

My notes for the summer of 2005 show sightings of Silver-spotted Skipper, Hobomok Skipper, Least Skipper, European Skipper, Tawny-edged Skipper, Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Spring Azure, Silvery Blue, Summer Azure, Banded Hairstreak, Eastern Comma, Mourning Cloak, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, American Lady, Fritillary Sp., White Admiral, Viceroy, Little Wood-Satyr, Common Ringlet, and Monarch. The latter species were more evident this summer

than last.

Other insects of interest included Cicadas (one hitched a ride on David Hobden's hat!), Hover Flies, Ctenucha Moths, several species of Sphecid Wasps, Pennsylvania Leatherwings, Milkweed Bugs and Beetles, various Scarab beetles, Phymata (Ambush) Bugs, Megachilid (Leafcutting) bees, bumblebees, and various other bees, wasps and dragonflies. Soldier beetles were found nectaring on DSV flowers and Dance Flies were quite common around DSV leaves on late evenings in June.

The Muskrat first noted in the spring has been present all summer and, as noted above, seems to enjoy a diet of Flowering Rush roots. Groundhogs made an appearance this year after being absent for some time; however, two were found dead and no doubt victims of dog attacks.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you would like to help us remove invasive species, plant trees, work in the BYG, or with any number of other activities, please contact the FWG (details at end of article).

The Friday morning (BYG) and Sunday morning (the rest of the FWG) work crews will continue throughout the fall, with the latter no doubt operating until the first snow flies. The Wednesday evening volunteers will become a spring only group starting in 2006.

Acknowledgments

As always, a big thank you to the many volunteers who really showed their dedication in the summer of 2005 by continuing to work despite the hot and steamy weather.

FWG Details and Contact Information

The FWG is located off Prince of Wales Drive on the Central Experimental Farm. For more information please visit the website at:

<http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher.php>. There you can sign up for our free newsletter *What's Up at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden*, available electronically. Brochures about the garden are available from inside on Friday mornings from spring through fall, Sunday afternoons in the summer, or during the week June through August when we have a summer employee.

- FWG phone number: 613-234-6767
- David Hobden, Chair, FWG Management Committee: dhobden@magma.ca
- Jay Ladell, BYG Manager: jay_ladell@yahoo.com
- Sandy Garland: Newsletter, information about the FWG: sgarland@magma.ca
- Christine Hanrahan: bird and wildlife observations: vanessa@magma.ca

References

Hanrahan, Christine. 2005. News from the FWG: Spring 2005. *T&L* 39(3):123-130.

Erratum

VOLUME 39 NUMBER 2 PAGES 113 - 160 JULY - SEPTEMBER 2005 as depicted on the front cover of the last issue **should read**

VOLUME 39 NUMBER 3 PAGES 113 - 160 JULY - SEPTEMBER 2005

Monaghan Forest

Connie Clark

July 2005 was a scorcher. However, on July 31, it was cooler, drier and 24 people joined me for a walk through Monaghan Forest.

Monaghan Forest is located off Fallowfield Road, between Moodie Drive and Richmond Road. It is owned by the City of Ottawa and managed by Parks Planning. In order to learn more about the forest I spoke with John Monaghan, a descendent of the Nepean Monaghan family and a former member of the Nepean Heritage Society, the Nepean City Hall staff, and Kevin Wherry who oversaw the name change from Lorinzetti Forest to Monaghan Forest.

Detailed information about the land is sketchy at best, but it seems that a Mr. Smith obtained the land in the early 1800s. He eventually sold it to a Dr. Danby, who in turn sold it to the City of Nepean. A Toronto land developer, by name of Lorinzetti, purchased it from the City of Nepean. He eventually decided not to develop it and sold it back to the City of Nepean. With the amalgamation, it became the property of the City of Ottawa. For generations since the 1800s, the Monaghan family lived near the forest. They substantially contributed to the development of the local area, and when Lorinzetti sold the property back to the City of Nepean, John Monaghan, was approached about changing the name to Monaghan Forest. He agreed.

The forest is a mature deciduous forest typical of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence forest region. In 1948 it was made into a managed pine forest, planted, thinned, harvested and replanted. The pine plantation failed as the area is too wet for pine. Then, in 1998, following the ice storm, an estimated 1000 damaged trees were removed. Over time natural succession has occurred, and the forest now contains pine, ash, maple, beech, birch, poplar, elm, cedar, and balsam fir.

Within a few kilometres numerous habitats exist. Some areas in the forest normally never dry out completely (mosquito metro). There are drier areas, a sunny hydro line cut with rutted mud base, and dry shaded areas. I have found that the number of wildflowers in the forest, as the seasons progress, is impressive. In spring the forest is full of thrushes and wrens. On the day of our walk an Indigo Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Wood-Pee-wee, Great Crested Flycatcher, American Goldfinch, Downy Woodpecker, Nuthatch and Chickadee

were seen. Also noted was a Leopard Frog, Eastern Garter Snake, Great Spangled Fritillary, Monarch, Cabbage Butterflies, two beautiful *Argiope aurantia* spiders, guarding their reinforced zig-zag web, and many insects large and small.

It gave me great pleasure to introduce others to this seldom accessed area. For anyone who might be interested in returning, I have included an old rudimentary forest map (Figure 1). Beware—the city does not maintain the trails and some paths periodically disappear into the undergrowth while new paths exist which are not on the map. You may get turned around. I have also included my plant and butterfly inventory list from Monaghan . Enjoy!

Wildflowers

Adder's-tongue	Everlasting Pea	Sharp-lobed Hepatica
Agrimony	Fleabane	Shinleaf Pyrola
Alfalfa	Foamflower	Squirrel-corn
Bearberry	Goat's-beard	St. Johnswort
Beardtongue	Gromwell	Swamp Raspberry
Bedstraw	Helleborine	Vervain
Beechdrops	Loosestrife	Violets
Bittersweet (Nightshade)	Canada Mayflower	Vipers Bugloss
Black Currant	Milkweed	White Lettuce
Black-eyed Susan	Miterwort	White Baneberry
Bloodroot	Monkey-flower	White Trillium
Broadleaf Toothwort	Mugwort	Wild Ginger
Burdock	Mullein	Jack-in-the-pulpit
Butter-and-eggs (Toadflax)	Parsley	Joe-Pye-weed
Canada Thistle	Pippsissewa	Lance-leaved Goldenrod
Coltsfoot	Primrose	Wild Leek
Cow Vetch	Queen Anne's Lace	Yarrow
Creeping Bellflower	Raspberries	
Crown Vetch	Red Baneberry	
Cut-leaved Toothwort	Red Clover	
Daisies	Rough Cinquefoil	
Enchanter's Nightshade	Self-heal (Heal-all)	

Ferns

Bracken
Broad Beech
Christmas (forma Incisum)
Ground Pine
Ground Cedar
Lady

Maidenhair
Oak
Polypody
Rattlesnake
Sensitive
Spinulose Woodfern

Butterflies

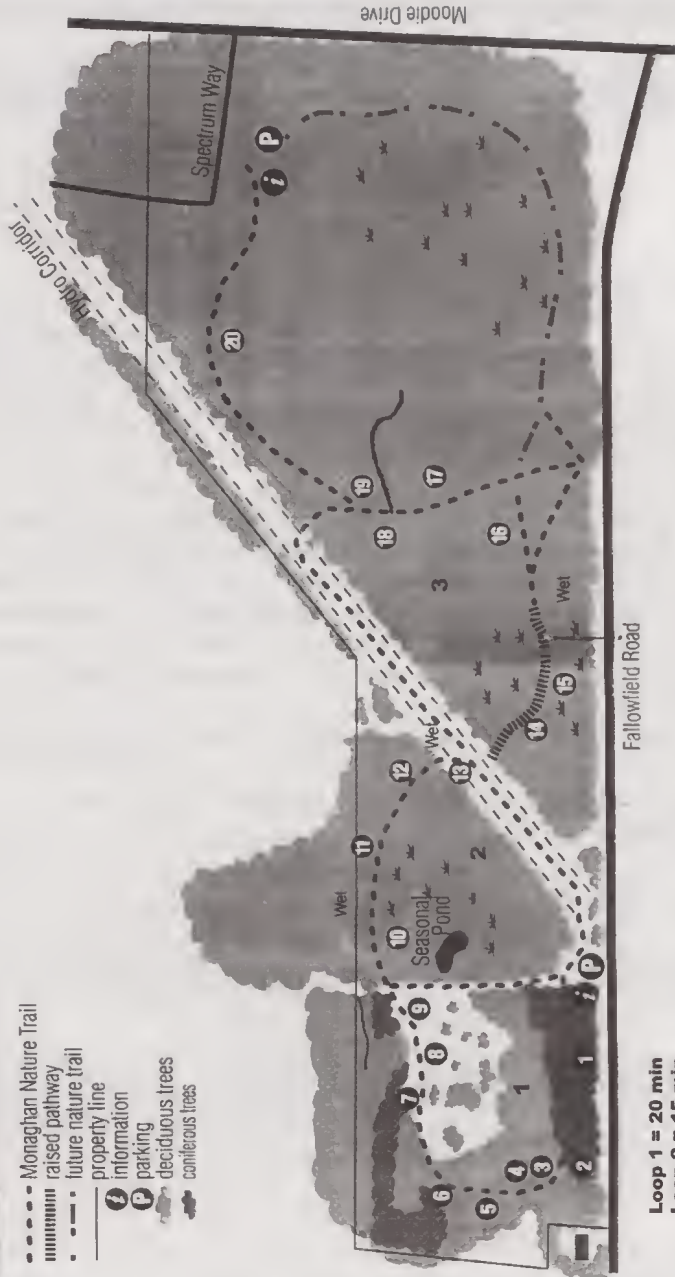
Fritillary
Meadowfly (Dragonfly)
Pearl Crescent
Silver-spotted skipper
Sootywing
Virginia Ctenucha Moth
Whitetail Dragonfly
Viceroy

Figure 1. Map of Monaghan Forest Trail.

MONAGHAN FOREST TRAIL

LEGEND

- - - Monaghan Nature Trail
- ||||| raised pathway
- · - · future nature trail
- property line
- i** information
- P** parking
- deciduous trees
- coniferous trees



- Loop 1 = 20 min
- Loop 2 = 15 min
- Loop 3 = 40 min



Annual Fall and Christmas Bird Counts

Chris Lewis

Annual Ottawa-Gatineau Fall Bird Count

This event will be held Saturday October 15 (3:00 p.m.) - Sunday October 16 (3:00 p.m.). Post-count Compilation - Sunday October 16 (approximately 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.) at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretive Centre, Prince of Wales Drive, Ottawa.

The count covers the entire Ottawa-Gatineau birding area (a 50 km radius from the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill). The main objective is to have fun and discover what birds are out there in fall in our region. You DON'T have to be an "expert" birder to participate, and you DON'T have to be out all day and night for the full 24 hours . . . but you DO have a great post-count compilation and dinner to look forward to on the Sunday evening—free of charge to all participants!.

For those interested in counting bird on the Ontario side, please contact Eve Ticknor at (613) 737-7551 or email sandbird@magma.ca. To participate on the Québec side, you may contact Daniel St-Hilaire at (819) 776-0860 or email savannarum@videotron.ca.

Annual Christmas Bird Counts

The Ottawa-Gatineau Count will be held on Sunday December 17. Please contact Eve Ticknor (info above) to bird on the Ontario side, and Daniel St-Hilaire (as above) for the Québec side for more information.

The Dunrobin-Breckenridge Count will be held on 17 December. For information on participating in this event, please contact Bruce DiLabio at (613) 839-4395 or by email at bruce.dilabio@sympatico.ca.

Book Review: Compact Guide to Ontario Birds

Karen McLachlan Hamilton and Christine Hanrahan

Trail and Landscape had the opportunity to review another book in the Lone Pine series— **Compact Guide to Ontario Birds**.

This book contains 192 pages and contains seven different sections. The first section is a reference guide which divides the featured birds into categories such as waterfowl, birds of prey, gulls, owls, wood-warblers and tanagers etc. Each of these categories is colour coded and this coding is followed throughout the book in the form of thumbnails. The introduction gives novice birders an idea of what to focus on for proper identifications (i.e. habitat preferences, songs, etc.), a brief list of contacts, notes of general interest and instructions on how to use the guide. The glossary covers 17 terms and identifies several body parts while the checklist contains 319 species regularly seen in Ontario and follows the American Ornithological Union's standard of taxonomic order. There is also a selected reference section and a complete index. The book sells for \$12.95.

Two pages are devoted to each species and covers a 83 in total. One page features a colour illustration with arrows pointing to pertinent identification characteristics. Species particulars such as size, habitat, status, song and other identification features are found on the facing page. A range map and some unusual characteristics specific to the bird are also included. What is unique to this guide are the smaller illustrations of similar birds (which can be readily compared to the featured bird), nesting information with a colour picture of its egg.

A different approach was taken for this review. The book was brought to the Fletcher Wildlife Garden for the Friday morning crew's perusal and opinions. The participants included people of varying knowledge of birds, but all have a keen interest in nature. Here are their comments.

Positive Aspects:

- Everyone liked the colour coding. For example, in the Table of Contents and in the Reference Guide, Woodpeckers and Flickers are coded red. This made it easy to look them up in the text. A quick flick through the pages

looking for red tabbed pages was a breeze.

- The selection of species was thought to be pretty good in that they were the ones most likely to be seen by general birders (beginners, etc.).
- Another positive was the comparison with similar species. For example, Northern Saw-whet Owl was compared to similar birds. This is a very useful feature because so many birds look similar to a beginner (example: Northern Saw-whet Owl and Boreal Owl). Having similar species listed on the same page made comparing one species to another easy.
- They all liked the "Did you Know?" feature which gives little tid-bits of useful information. Ditto for the "Look For" feature. Still on saw-whets for example, the first feature talked about why the owl was named saw-whet and at the same time provided a good clue as to what this species sounds like. The "Look For" feature told us that in October many of these owls gather at certain spots in Ontario.
- They also liked the illustrations of the eggs of all the species. It is nice to have that kind of information in one guide.
- They found the introductory paragraph about the species to contain other interesting nuggets. For example, on the page about Pileated Woodpeckers, we are told that a woodpecker's bill becomes shorter as it ages.
- The guide is small and compact enough to tuck into a pocket or backpack.

Negative Aspect:

- Although it was recognized that this guide is aimed at beginners or the general armchair/backyard birder, some felt it was not useful enough to replace a standard field guide of which there are already many to choose from. Why bother with this abbreviated guide when you can buy a guide showing all species? What happens if you see a warbler, for example, not depicted here. Would a beginner think that there were only a handful of warblers in Ontario?

The consensus was that this guide is aimed at beginners and backyard birders and would have limited appeal for those already knowledgeable about birds. However, there are some features included in this book not generally found in most field guides and would make this a useful addition for anyone interested in birds, beginner or not.

Call for Nominations for OFNC Awards

The Awards Committee

It is time to think back and consider those OFNC members (and, in one case, even non-members) who, by virtue of their special efforts and talents, are deserving of special recognition.

The Club has six awards: Honorary Membership, Member of the Year Award, George McGee Service Award, Conservation Award for OFNC Members, Conservation Award for Non-Members, and the Anne Hanes Natural History Award. A seventh award, the Education Award, was presented for the first time last year. At a time when dedicated and effective natural history educators, both professional and amateur, are both under-appreciated and under-funded, the OFNC wants to draw attention to the importance of natural history education in schools and in our community at large. The award is described in its own section below.

An elaboration of each of these categories is presented in this centre-fold, together with space to put the nominee's name and accomplishments. (Additional sheets can be used if needed.) If necessary, the Awards Committee will seek out more information on individuals nominated, but of course, the more information you provide, the easier it is for the committee to make a decision. An informative article on the background of these awards, and a list of recent recipients, was published in Volume 33, Number 4, of *Trail & Landscape*. Last year's awardees are highlighted in the previous issue of *T&L*. The deadline for the submission of nominations is December 31, 2005. Nominate as many individuals as you like, but be sure to give your reasons. Return the nomination form to the Chair of the Awards Committee:

Dr. Irwin Brodo
28 Benson Street
Ottawa, ON K2E 5J5

If you have any questions regarding the nominations, feel free to contact Irwin Brodo, Chair of the Awards Committee, at 723-2054, or at ibrodo@sympatico.ca.

NOMINATION FORM FOR AWARDS

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

In the appropriate spaces, please submit the names of those you wish to nominate for OFNC awards and your reasons for each nomination. The more information you provide, the more effective will be the assessment of nominees. Attach additional information if the space is inadequate. Nominations may be made for more than one person. The Awards Committee may contact you for further information regarding any of your nominations.

Name of Nominator: _____ Email _____

Address: _____ Telephone _____

HONORARY MEMBER: This award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions by a member, or non-member, to Canadian natural history or to the successful operation of the Club. [Usually people awarded an honorary membership have made extensive contributions over many years. At present honorary membership is limited to 25 people.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

MEMBER OF THE YEAR: In recognition of the member judged to have contributed the most to the Club in the previous year. [Members of the Executive are excluded from consideration.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

GEORGE MCGEE SERVICE AWARD: In recognition of a member or members who has (have) contributed significantly to the smooth running of the Club over several years. [Members of the Executive are excluded from consideration.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

ANNE HANES NATURAL HISTORY AWARD: In recognition of a member who, through independent study or investigation, has made a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural history of the Ottawa Valley. [The award is designed to recognize work that is done by amateur naturalists.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

EDUCATION AWARD: For members, non-members or organizations, in recognition for outstanding achievements in the field of natural history education in the Ottawa Region. Potential recipients would include museum personnel (both professional and volunteer), biology teachers, talented and dedicated field trip leaders, authors popularizing local natural history, and other educators of children or adults.

Nominee: _____

Reasons for nomination: _____

The 2005 Falcon Watch Final Report

Eve Ticknor

This proved to be a year that will stand out in our minds for years to come!

It started quite normally, with my first sighting of Horizon on her nest on April 11. She had chosen the west side of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, near the north end. The spot she chose was rather difficult for us to see from the roof top across the street as she was tucked in between debris left on the ledge and at an angle that put most of her behind a pillar. Nonetheless, Chris Traynor and I confirmed four eggs by April 14. Now we settled in for the long wait until the hatching.

As always, the actual date is a guesstimate since I never know when she starts brooding in earnest. Peregrines do not start full-time brooding until the last egg is laid, so it is a combination of when she is no longer seen on a regular basis, Connor's behaviour, and past history. She had been there a few days before I first saw her. As it takes an average of 33 days to hatching, I came pretty close, saying it might be around the May 11. As it turned out, it was two days earlier. . .

May 9 was the hatching day for two fluffy chicklets. Seeing them for the first time gives me a thrill that never changes from year to year. And seeing the parents being so gentle and careful with them is heartwarming. Once again, we will have the Falcon Watch so it was time to put our organization into operation. I had the wonderful, capable assistance of Marie Clausén, who did all the volunteer scheduling. Saying I couldn't have done this without her is a cliché, but so true!

Once in a while I went on the roof of the Constitution Square, Tower 1, for observations of our family. Horizon made sure no one stayed there for long, and some days, not at all. When she says go, we go! Phil Maillard and I were watching from the street on May 28 when we saw three peregrines in the air. It was soon evident that Horizon and Connor were escorting another female out of the area. They were right with her until they went out of sight near the river. Soon both of ours came back without her. This was the first time I had actually seen another peregrine in the area during the breeding season.

June 10—Banding Day. As we were holding this ceremony in the Pinnacle Room of the hotel's penthouse, we chose to close all the drapes to lessen the stress on Horizon. She got really worked-up last year with all the people standing by the windows not realizing her nest was right underneath! Although this year's nest was at the other end, we thought it prudent. One set of drapes stayed open, as they were broken, so we put up a barrier to keep everyone from rushing that area. We could see Horizon on the ledge, relaxed so far. Some photos were taken without alarming her. This changed rapidly once our "predator" was out on the ledge. Tracy Simpson had said after last year's events, she wouldn't go out again. Surprise, she was doing it again. Afterwards, she said that the high heat and humidity worked in her favour as Horizon was too stressed from the weather to put up as much of a fight as before.

It was evident during the banding that we had one male and one very large female. Littlefoot, named so by Crystal Allan and Susie Costa of the Altama Bank, weighed in at a respectable 700 grams. His sister, however, weighed in at 1040 grams, the largest we have had. Both were 32 days old, virtual twins! She was named Storm by Nic Conroy, who said that was because peregrines fly fast like lightning in a storm. Good thinking! Both chicklets seemed quite calm during the procedure.

The next day we started the Falcon Watch. We seem to hit the extremes in weather with this annual venture. As we swore 2004 was the coldest, 2005 started out the hottest (and soon the wettest). A high humidex affects our birds as well as us, so it was a very quiet day. Gilles Vautour and I started the day out around 5:30 a.m., the best time comfort-wise. We were visited all day by neighbours who were waiting for the Falcon Watch to start again. It is so nice to see "old friends." We also met guests of the Crowne Plaza, who were excited about the Falcon Watch as they have peregrines in their home town of Nottingham, England. One lady had the bus driver tell everyone to come and see, so at various times, they did. Entertainment was also provided by a nest of six baby squirrels in the attic of the building next to us, and their daring mother. Connor also took it upon himself to escort a Turkey Vulture away from his territory. A big plus this year was the discovery of the Scone Witch, right next to us. Heather Matthews, owner, became interested in our birds and would check with us for daily updates, as well as dropping off a bag or two of scones at the end of her day. Keep them coming, Heather.

The second day saw two young falcons peeping over the edge for their first look at a new world. They are so cute with their little heads bobbing up and down as they look at everything around them. Over the next few days we saw more of them as well as the wing-flapping exercises they need to be doing. Some evenings we were treated to Horizon and Connor enjoying the winds and appearing to fly for the pure enjoyment of it. Hopefully Storm and Littlefoot were thinking the same.

And then, it was time. Littlefoot suddenly took off from the northwest corner of the ledge. He tried to get to the roof but missed, tried the middle of Tower C, missed that as well and flew right back to his home—the first time any of our chicklets have done that so quickly! He took just five minutes to accomplish this, and with an overhang to fly under. I had an interview on location at 6:20 a.m., with Lucy van Oldenbarnveld of Ottawa Morning (radio). More people will know about our chicklets now!

Day 9 saw both chicklets taking flight. Littlefoot went to the roof of the Delta while his sister decided to try her wings and make a lot of short flights, first to the top of Tower C, then the Minto Place, then the Delta. Littlefoot tried again, this time landing on a window ledge of the Crowne Plaza, and eventually to the West Memorial Building, and finally to the East Memorial. The next morning Connor chased three crows so fast they left a few feathers behind! What a start to his day. Storm spent her day doing a lot more flying while her brother shuttled between the East and West Memorial buildings. Unfortunately he disappeared after lunch and hasn't been seen again. He was last seen flying east on Albert St., supposedly towards Tower B. We spent a lot of time from then onwards searching for him on the ground, on ledges and balconies, and on rooftops. Nothing. So we are going on the premise that he got excited while flying and simply kept going out of range. At this point, hopefully instinct will have kicked in and he will have learned to hunt. We will go with this unless we hear otherwise. It is a bit disconcerting as we have never had a chicklet disappear for so long. Meanwhile we have a strong flyer to keep our eyes on, his sister. She is proving to be a quick learner and should do very well.

And so we came to the end of this year's Falcon Watch, with mixed feelings. Although concerned about Littlefoot, we feel that our Watch was a successful one. Storm never needed rescuing and has shown to be a superb flyer, strong and graceful, just like her mother. This is what we are all about.

And now for an addendum; we have lost our Horizon! She met with an accident on July 6. While flying north around Tower C, she was seen to have been caught by a gust of wind and went out of sight. Later she was found on the roof of the East Memorial, bleeding and unable to fly due to an injured wing. Chris Traynor carefully took her off the roof and to the Wild Bird Care Centre. She was examined by Steve Hamlyn, and Dr Robin Roscoe of the Lynnwood Animal Clinic. Her wing proved to be severely fractured and the x-rays showed that her fractures would never allow her to fly again. The MNR had her immediately transferred to Guelph to be seen by a falcon expert, Dr. Michael Taylor. After his examination, the MNR made the tough decision to have her euthanised. The ultimate reasoning was with

her dignity and quality of life in mind. As hard as it is to accept, it was the right decision. We will all miss her but her spirit will be with us always. I know that come the next Falcon Watch (there will be as soon as another female shows up here), Horizon will be looking over my shoulder to make sure I do things the right way, and that Connor doesn't sneak in too much food to his new chicklets.

I would like to thank all the volunteers, especially Marie Clausén who has had the honour of scheduling all our volunteers. And I wish to thank the many others who have been involved with our falcon family, and the many passers-by who supported all our efforts.

2005 Falcon Watch Volunteers:

Gilles Vautour	Jill Hawkins
Marion Bird	Langis Sirois
Christine Grant	Jim O'Neil
Phil Maillard	Nel Ahmed
Jim Sutton	Elizabeth Greene
Frank Marshal	Frank Pope
Dominique & Elsa Marshall	Barbara Chouinard
Lorraine Montoya	Bev Bryant-Bennett
Barbara Campbell	Chris Traynor
Marc D'Aoust	Robyn McColgan
Nic Conroy	Yvon Cormier
Lynne, Conroy & Calvin Mathe	Wayne Houston
Nancy Scott	Doreen Duchesne
Chris Earland	Susan Goods
Mark Kepkay	Roseanne Bishop
Jimena Eyzaguirre	Nick Zeis
Bonnie & Dick Mabee	Jerome LeHenoff
Marie Clausen	Bill Bower
Steve Farkas	Lois Knaggs
Deanne Ryan	Lorraine Elsworthy
Steve Heiter	Joe Dafeo
Joyce Colotelo	Jack Romanow
Ruth Koch-Schulte	Gayle Duggan
Bernie Ladouceur	Kristina Makkay
Tony Beck	Tracy Simpson

2005 Falcon Watch Volunteers (continued):

Mary Hurley

Sandra Masson

John & Leclerc, Eliane Ayres

Heather Ritchie

Polly Thompson

Micheline Beaulieu-Bouchard

Associates for Certificates of Thanks:

Crowne Plaza Hotel

Constitution Square

Marriott Ottawa

Alterna Savings Bank

Crystal Allan, Alterna Bank

Susie Costa, Alterna Bank

Pud Hunter, MNR

Melissa Thompson, MNR

Heather Matthews, The Scone Witch

Delta Ottawa

Hainer, Richard

Jane Breen

Lucy vanOldenbarnaveld & Denise Fung, Ottawa Morning Show, CBC Radio

Security staff, Place de Ville (A & B)

Maintenance Staff, Memorial Building

New: \$5 evening parking fee at the CMN

For all these many years our members have enjoyed free parking at our monthly meetings at the Canadian Museum of Nature. Starting in September, we are asked to pay a flat evening rate of \$5 per car.

We are grateful that the Museum is very graciously continuing to allow us the use of the auditorium and the services of an expert audiovisual technician for no cost to our Club. The parking fees help to support the Museum's educational and research programs that are so vital to its existence. Members should also be aware that although extensive renovations are going on at the CMN, the Museum remains open to the public.

Horizon 1996-2005

Chris Traynor

For the past nine years the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club has conducted the falcon watch to monitor and rescue newly fledged Peregrine Falcons from the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Ottawa. Many Club members, volunteers, and members of the public have experienced, close up, the thrill of watching these falcons raise their family.

It is with much sadness that we report that Horizon, the falcon mother, has died. Horizon was picked up, injured, on July 6. She was taken to the University of Guelph for examination and possible rehabilitation. However, her injuries were deemed too severe for her to ever fly again and the decision was made to euthanise her. She died on July 14. This was a decision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and was based on the quality of life she would likely have.

To all the volunteers over the years, both Club members and the general public, both myself and our Falcon Watch co-ordinator Eve Ticknor, thank you all for your participation in the falcon watch and expressions of concern over Horizon.

"She died with dignity and is at peace. We will all miss her. Her spirit will be with us always."

Spring Bird Sightings: Highlights from February - June 2005

Chris Lewis

While not an outstanding season for rarities, it was nevertheless a great spring for bird watching, with lots of migration and breeding activity for everyone to enjoy. In fact, the month of May in the 50 K surpassed even Point Pelee for variety and numbers of birds, especially in the Britannia Conservation Area.

RARITIES

A **SNOWY EGRET** graced the Rideau Canal at Dow's Lake for eight days in April and was last reported from the Rideau River at Billings Bridge on 26 April. A male **EURASIAN WIGEON** returned to the marshes west of Masson, Québec for the third year in a row, and was reported from 16 - 23 April. An adult **CALIFORNIA GULL** that appeared in the vicinity of the Trail Rd. landfill on 15 April was likely the same bird that was discovered earlier on 30 March on the Ottawa River at Parc Brebeuf. The phenomenal **GREAT GRAY OWL** invasion lasted into early April. A wintering **TUFTED TITMOUSE** remained faithful to a feeder near Almonte until at least the end of February, and another appeared at a feeder in Carp on 01 May. The east-end suburb of Rothwell Heights hosted a singing **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** from 02 February - 05 April, and on 02 April a male **VARIED THRUSH** put in a brief appearance in a backyard in Aylmer, Québec. The most interesting warblers were a **BREWSTER'S WARBLER** "back cross" near Huntmar Dr. southeast of Carp on 15 May, and a singing male **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** from 04 - 10 June at exactly the same location in Gatineau Park where one was present last year in the latter part of May.

LOONS, GREBES, HERONS & BITTERNs

The first reports of **Common Loons** on the Ottawa River came right on time in mid-April; a more unusual location was Mud Lake in Britannia, where one was seen fishing on 29 May. A **Pied-billed Grebe** was on the early side in the channel at Britannia on 28 March, and a smattering of **Horned** and **Red-necked Grebes** were present on Lac Deschênes later in April. Very unusual in summer, a **Red-necked Grebe** was a surprise on the river near Lemieux Island on 22 June.

American Bitterns were not hard to find in most of the local marshes. The more elusive **Least Bittern** was again alive and well on both the Ontario and Québec sides, in the Constance Creek wetland and the Marais aux Grenouillettes. Single **Great Egrets** flew over Huntmar Dr. on 28 May and the Britannia Conservation Area on 05 June, and two were reported from the Marais aux Grenouillettes west of Masson, Québec, on 09 June. A beautiful and very accommodating **SNOWY EGRET** in breeding plumage was actively fishing in the Rideau Canal from 19 April until the 25th, when the filling of the canal commenced; it was last seen farther south along the Rideau River at Billings Bridge on the 26 April. **Green Herons** were seen in several locations from mid-May onwards, and **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were reported on 20 May—one was at Mud Lake in Britannia and three flew past Parliament Hill the same evening, and one was seen again at Britannia on 25 June.

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese remain rare but annual migrants in our area; single birds were found near Pendleton on 06 April and at the Jock River near Richmond on 09 April. Good numbers of **Snow Geese** moved through in the early part of April, with up to approximately 7500 birds seen at the South Nation River north of Riceville on 06 April. Smaller flocks continued to be seen, mainly east of Ottawa until mid-April, and a group of five extremely late (or very lost?) birds were on the Ottawa River near Remic Rapids on 04 June, with one still hanging around until the 8th. . . almost unheard of in June! Unbelievably early was a **Brant**, a first April record for Ottawa, on 07 April in the cornfields along Milton Rd. southeast of Carlsbad Springs. A **Cackling Goose** (the diminutive species recently split from Canada Goose) was seen in flight near Kinburn Side Rd. at Hwy. 417 with a flock of Canadas on 13 April. For the third consecutive spring a **Tundra Swan** showed up at the Embrun sewage lagoons and remained from 16 - 29 April.

On 26 - 27 March, a male **Gadwall** was an early arrival in the channel at Britannia. A male **EURASIAN WIGEON** was once again found in Petite Baie Clement west of Masson, Québec from 16 - 23 April, and reports of **Redheads** came in from various locations such as the Alfred sewage lagoons, Petrie Island, and the Moodie Dr. pond. in early April through the last week of June. Two male **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were last reported from the Ottawa River at Remic rapids on 26 March, and a very interesting and well-studied male **Common X Barrow's hybrid** was present on the Rideau River near the Rideau Tennis Club for most of February. A lingering female **Long-tailed Duck** was still at Shirleys Bay on 06 May, and a group of 48 **White-winged Scoters** dropped in briefly here on the 27 March. **Ruddy Ducks** were again plentiful in some of the eastern sewage lagoons as well as the Moodie Dr. pond.

HAWKS & EAGLES

Always a sign of spring, **Ospreys** began to arrive in our area in early April. Small numbers of **Bald Eagles** could still be found along the Eardley Escarpment of Gatineau Park in mid-March, and more unusual sightings of this species were reported in June—an immature bird flew over the Jack Pine Trail on the 16th, and an adult was perched along the Madawaska River east of Arnprior on the 18 March. Persistent north winds prevented any notable movement of raptors, but **Red-shouldered Hawks** were noted at Shirleys Bay on 13 March and in the Dunrobin area on the 28th, and an extremely early juvenile **Broad-winged Hawk** was at Frank Kenny Rd. on 09 April. The rare **dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk** that wintered at the Gatineau airport was still present until at least 06 April. In falcon reports, **Merlins** were again more frequently seen than **American Kestrels**, and breeding activity was noted again in suburban areas. The local breeding pair of **Peregrine Falcons** successfully hatched and fledged two chicks from the ledge on the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The young female did exceedingly well, from her first flight (19 June) onwards, but the young male apparently disappeared on 21 June and was still AWOL at the end of the month. Once again, the vigilance and dedication of all the volunteers involved in the annual Falcon Watch helped ensure a good start to the always precarious lives of these birds.

GALLINACEOUS BIRD, RAILS & CRANES

The much-sought-after **Gray Partridge** is never an easy quarry, though a covey of 12 were readily viewable in an old field at the corner of Moodie and Borphy Dr. through the third week of February. Quite the opposite in terms of “viewability” were **Wild Turkeys** which continue to proliferate in the Ottawa-Gatineau area. Many were regularly seen south of the international airport and on the Shirleys Bay Crown Game Preserve, and in late March spectacular Toms in full breeding display were noted along March Valley Dr. All of our common rails were back on schedule in their usual marshy habitats, and **Sandhill Cranes** returned again to their breeding grounds in the Mer Bleue bog. Up to five were seen, in flight and in display, in the fields along Milton Rd. southeast of Carlsbad Springs during the first two weeks of April. Two were seen at this location on 05 May, and a group of seven were reported flying over Bear Brook Rd. on the unusually late date of 08 June.

SHOREBIRDS

Numbers of any species of shorebirds were less than spectacular this spring, but a few highlights included four **Upland Sandpipers** near Masson on 30 April and 05 May, a **Hudsonian Godwit** in breeding plumage (rare in our region in spring) at the Alfred sewage lagoons on 06 June, 11 **Short-billed Dowitchers** and three **White-rumped Sandpipers** at the Embrun lagoons on 22 May, as well as five **Dunlin** and nine **Short-billed Dowitchers** at the St. Albert lagoons on the 28 May. Also

noteworthy were at least 15 **Wilson's Phalaropes** at Embrun on 15 May and several also at Alfred. On 22 May, a pair of **Red-necked Phalaropes** appeared at St. Albert and a gorgeous female of this species offered excellent views at the Russell lagoons the same day. Otherwise, a few **Black-bellied Plovers** were at Alfred and the Moodie Dr. pond during the first week of June, small numbers of **Semipalmated Plovers**, **Least** and **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were at most of the eastern lagoons in late May and early June, and on 06 June there were three **Sanderlings** on the Ottawa River at Parc Brebeuf. Later in the month, 18 **Lesser Yellowlegs** at the Alfred sewage lagoons (29 June) and two **White-rumped Sandpipers** at Embrun (reported on the 25 June) were perhaps already heading south.

GULLS AND TERNS

Although **Bonaparte's Gulls** seemed to be in short supply this year compared to seasons past, the hugely successful **Ring-billed Gull** colonies on the Ottawa River at Deschênes and Lemieux Island flourished again. Most exciting (but frustrating!) was an adult **CALIFORNIA GULL** discovered on the river at Parc Bebeuf on 30 March. The ice on the river broke up very shortly thereafter, making it nearly impossible to try to relocate this bird . . . then another adult (likely the same bird) was discovered two weeks later at the Moodie Dr. pond south of Trail Rd. It also was not relocated afterward. Back on 27 March, again before the break-up of the ice, an advanced first winter **Thayer's Gull** was at Parc Brebeuf. Both **Iceland** and **Glaucous Gulls** continued to be seen from the river as well as the vicinity of the Trail Rd. landfill into mid-April, and a very late third summer **Glaucous Gull** was at Andrew Haydon Park on 14 May. **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** of various ages were also seen in the Trail Rd. area—seven were in the fields near the dump on 08 April, two were in an adjacent pond on 23 and 25 May, and another was at the Deschênes rapids on 04 June. A **Caspian Tern** flew over Mud Lake, Britannia on 11 May, and another was at Remic rapids on 15 June. The annual flight of **Arctic Terns** through the Ottawa valley occurred again, with three birds seen at Constance Bay on 27 May, and three below the Deschênes rapids on the 28 May. A colony of **Black Terns** was again thriving in the Marais aux Grenouillettes by the end of June.

CUCKOOS, OWLS & WOODPECKERS

The first reports of **Black-billed Cuckoos** began to come in during the month of May and as usual they could be heard, if not always seen, in typical habitat. A prize on 26 June was a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** at Shirleys Bay.

Great Horned Owls were literally "in the news," as a pair returned to breed for the second consecutive year in the Britannia woods. One of the two offspring survived and was flying well around the woods by the end of June, under the ever-watchful

eyes of its parents. An individual **Great Horned Owl** suggestive of the very pale *subarcticus* subspecies (a migrant rarely seen in our part of the world) was in the Clyde Ave. woods on 08 April. A **Snowy Owl** was still at Eagleson and Akins Rd. on 19 March, and the wintering **Northern Hawk Owl** was still a fixture along ski trail #5 in Gatineau Park as late as the 20th of that month. The "**GREAT GRAY INVASION**" lasted well into March, with predictably dwindling numbers as the birds headed back to their northern breeding grounds, the last local report of a **Great Gray Owl** was on 13 April along Dunrobin Rd. northwest of Constance Bay. On 24 April at least one **Short-eared Owl** was back where they have bred south of the international airport. A **Boreal Owl** was found along a trail off Jinkinson Side Rd. between Ottawa and Carleton Place on 13 March, and on 14 April a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** checked out the feeders at the south side of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden.

A pair of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** successfully over-wintered in Constance Bay and remained to breed again in the old burnt area where they have done so for the past two years. Another wintering woodpecker, a female **Red-bellied**, was last reported at a feeder on Rideau Valley Dr. south of Manotick on 13 March. A female **American Three-toed Woodpecker** was a transient in the Britannia woods on 16 April, and a pair of **Pileated Woodpeckers** nested again in the Britannia woods.

PASSERINES

While March and April were warm and welcoming for the early migrants and local residents, many of the later arrivals were delayed by cool temperatures and sometimes strong north winds during the month of May. However, these conditions were ideal for causing a build-up of numbers and heightened activity. By mid-May the migrant traps, particularly Britannia, were hopping with birds. So much for the doomsayers who have complained in recent times that "the birds are all gone," or that it "isn't like the old days!"

Flycatchers and vireos of note included a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** in Gatineau Park on 05 June, and a singing male **Yellow-throated Vireo** along the railroad tracks east of Huntmar Dr. from 20 - 26 May. **Common Ravens**, the largest of our passerines, were again successful urban breeders. And if anyone was wondering if **Purple Martins** were in decline, a visit to the Moodie Dr. pond on a windy day in late May put that speculation to rest, 100s of them, along with **Tree, Bank and Barn Swallows** were flying over the pond and nearly crowding each other as they rested out of the wind behind the surrounding sand banks. **Marsh Wrens** and **Sedge Wrens** were back on territory in late May, with singing males of both species present in the wetlands near the Nepean Equestrian Park and the Marais aux

Grenouillettes.

A **TUFTED TITMOUSE** was still a regular customer at feeder in Almonte until at least the end of February, and another briefly visited a feeder in Carp on 01 May. The sedate suburban neighbourhood of Rothwell Heights in Ottawa's east end became well-known for two special winter residents: a **Carolina Wren** (until at least 17 March), and a very rare **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE**. The Solitaire, first discovered back on 02 February, was frequently observed feeding on Common Buckthorn berries and was also occasionally heard singing softly to himself, until at least 05 April. Two **Carolina Wrens** also showed up at a peanut feeder in Alta Vista on 18 March, the same location where one was seen earlier in the winter. Notable thrush reports included a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** in the Britannia woods on 17 May, and when the nights finally became less windy later that month, good numbers of **Swainson's Thrushes**, as well as the odd **Gray-cheeked**, were heard flying over. A male **VARIED THRUSH** found its way to a backyard in Aylmer, Québec, on 02 April. Single **Northern Mockingbirds** were found in the Arboretum of the Central Experimental Farm and the Fletcher Wildlife Garden on 11 - 13 May, as well as at Andrew Haydon Park on the 19 May. **Cedar Waxwings** put on quite a show in Britannia for two weeks in mid-May; multiple 100s, perhaps up to 1000, of these handsome birds were trilling in the trees and many were observed offering each other berries and even flowers during their courtship rituals. A few **Bohemian Waxwings** were still in Gatineau Park in the first week of April.

Of the 27 species of warblers reported from April through June, 25 were found in Britannia, many in numbers not seen in recent years. A thriving colony of **Golden-winged Warblers** was noted again in the Huntmar Dr. area, with several singing both the Golden-winged and the Blue-winged Warbler song-types. On 15 May, a male **BREWSTER'S WARBLER** "back cross" was found here, likely the progeny of a rare male **Blue-winged Warbler** that was on territory at this location back in May 1999. It is also interesting that a male **Brewster's Warbler** was seen here last year (the "back cross" is the offspring of a first-generation Brewster's and a Golden-winged Warbler). **Cerulean Warblers** were back in Gatineau Park in early June, and a rare **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** sang along the stream at the Water Fall Trail below the Mackenzie King Estate in the Park, from 04 - 10 June. This is exactly the same location where a singing male was found last year. Later on 25 June, a male **Palm Warbler** (a rare breeding species in Ottawa) was heard singing at the Mer Bleue boardwalk.

Again, the fields south of the international airport were the best location for finding nine species of our resident sparrows, such as **Clay-coloured, Field, Vesper** and **Grasshopper**. An early **Fox Sparrow** was found on Riddell Rd. in Kanata on 31

March, followed by several reports from all over the region during the next week. Two territorial male **Lincoln's Sparrows** were very vocal along the southeast portion of the boardwalk at the Mer Bleue Conservation Area on 22 and 28 May, and three were found here on 25 June. Apart from our common resident species, finches were generally few and far between and the only report of a **Hoary Redpoll**, a single female, was from the feeders on Hilda Rd. near Shirleys Bay on 13 - 14 March.

No one expected a blistering heat wave in early June to follow such a cool month of May. For about a week, the conditions made breathing, let alone birding, difficult to say the least! But a return to more moderate temperatures and humidity levels on 16 June was a welcome relief, and was perfect for the final year of the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas.

Acknowledgements

The bird sightings mentioned in this article were derived from the many and much appreciated reports to the OFNC Bird Status Line, as well as personal communications. Some information was also gleaned from postings to the Ontario Field Ornithologists' listserve, ONTBIRDS. Thank you to everyone who shared information.

To report local bird sightings, please call (613) 860-9000 and follow the instructions. Weekly summaries are also posted on the OFNC web site as well as ONTBIRDS.

A wealth of information about birding in the National Capital region, as well as other aspects of local natural history, can be found at www.ofnc.ca.

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Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee.

For further information,
call the Club number (722-3050).

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.*

BIRD STATUS LINE: *Phone 860-9000 to learn of recent sightings or birding potential in the Ottawa area. To report recent sightings use the 860-9000 number and stay on the line. This service is run on behalf of the Birds Committee and is available to members and non-members.*

Note: For all these many years our members have enjoyed free parking at our monthly meetings at the Canadian Museum of Nature. Starting in September, we are asked to pay a flat evening rate of \$5 per car.

Saturday
1 October
8:15 a.m.

BIRD BANDING AT INNIS POINT

Leader: Eve Ticknor and Marilyn Ward

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

Special arrangements have been made for a visit to the Bird Banding Station at Innes Point for the first 20 people who register at the Club phone, 722-3050. Please dress appropriately for the weather.

Tuesday
11 October
7:00 p.m.
Social & Club
business

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING

FISHES OF CANADA'S NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Speaker: Noel Alfonso

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

7:30 p.m.
Speaker

Fishes are the most successful vertebrates. In sheer numbers, they exceed mammal species by a factor of five. They can be found in a vast variety of habitats, from coral reefs and the deep-sea bed to lakes hidden away in caves. Noel, an ichthyologist at the Canadian Museum of Nature, will explain concepts of taxonomy, systematics and biogeography with a focus on our rich variety of local fishes. **Note: Speaker and topic have changed since advertised in previous T&L.**

Saturday
15 October
3:00 p.m.
to

ANNUAL FALL BIRD COUNT

The annual fall bird count covers the entire Ottawa-Gatineau birding area (a 50 km radius from the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill).

Sunday
16 October
3:00 p.m.

For those interested in counting birds on the Ontario side, please contact Eve Ticknor at (613) 737-7551 or email sandbird@magma.ca.

To participate on the Québec side, you may contact Daniel St-Hilaire at (819) 776-0860 or email savannarum@videotron.ca.

Sunday
30 October
10:00 a.m.
to
noon

STONY SWAMP

Leader: Isabelle Nicol

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the mall parking lot, junction of Richmond and Assaly Rds. Stony Swamp is wonderful in all seasons. Join Isabelle to explore this unique conservation area and learn more about its flora and fauna. This time, however, it will be from the perspective of fall and the changes and preparations plants and animals must make to survive the harsh winter ahead. This should be a good day for the whole family, so bring children, parents and in-laws!

Sunday
6 November
10:00 a.m.
to
about 2:00 p.m.

KING MOUNTAIN TRAIL, GATINEAU PARK

Leaders: Connie Clark & Fenja Brodo

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the mall parking lot, junction of Richmond Road and Assaly Road. An alternate meeting spot will be at the King Mt. Parking lot at 10:30 a.m.

Brisk fall days are great for an invigorating hike. This particular trail skirts a piece of tiny Black Lake, then climbs up the escarpment, through hemlock woods and then oaks and maples for spectacular views of the Ottawa valley. The trail then takes us more gently down through a mature Beech/Maple woods. Dress for the weather, bring along a lunch and don't forget binoculars and magnifiers to help identify the big and the small that we are likely to encounter on this lovely trail. Call Fenja Brodo at 723-2054 if the weather looks questionable.

Tuesday
8 November
7:00 p.m.
Social & Club
business

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING

TIPS ON BIRDING

Speaker: Bruce Di Labio

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

7:30 p.m.
Speaker

Birding is one of the most popular OFNC activities and Bruce is one of our popular speakers on this topic. His talk will be of interest to novice birders, experienced birders, and all those in between. He will give tips on getting started including choosing optical equipment and field guides, and will suggest what to wear and where to go birding in eastern Ontario. He will talk about Christmas Bird Counts, getting "lifers," and "birding in the fast lane." The latter being prestigious birding competitions such as the World Series of Birding, Great Texas Birding Classic and our own Taverner Cup.

Sunday
13 November
10:00 a.m.
to
2:00 p.m.

URBAN GEOLOGY

Leader: Geof Burbidge

Meet: and park, at the front lot of the Supreme Court building on Wellington Street.

There are dozens of different kinds of "dimension stone" used on the exterior and interior of buildings in downtown Ottawa, from locally-quarried sandstone to spectacular granites and marbles from North American and Europe. We shall stroll down Wellington and Sparks to Elgin Street and back, doing our best to identify and appreciate the rock types we see. Lunch on the outdoor steps of the World Exchange Plaza if the weather permits. A magnifying glass and a small magnet on a string are fun but not essential accessories. (Pouring rain may cancel this trip.)

Tuesday
13 December
7:00 p.m.
Social & Club
business

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING

WINTER SURVIVAL TACTICS OF SOME ANIMALS

Speaker: Kenneth Storey

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

7:30 p.m.
Speaker

Sheltered by our warm parkas and warm houses, humans are little more than inconvenienced when the mercury drops below 0°C, but for cold-blooded animals winter presents severe challenges. A surprising number of insect, other invertebrate, frog and turtle species have learned the trick of freezing survival, allowing them to endure the winter with approximately 65% of their total body water locked up as extracellular ice. Our studies of two models in particular, the Goldenrod Gall Fly (*Eurosta solidaginis*) and the wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*), have identified many of the molecular secrets of survival in the frozen state—the synthesis of cryoprotectant sugars, the control of ice propagation, the regulation of massive cell volume changes, and the intricate suite of gene, protein and enzyme changes that address many of the consequences of freezing. The solutions to animal freeze tolerance in nature also have important applications in the development of medical organ cryopreservation technology. For more information, please visit: www.carleton.ca/~kbstorey.

Saturday
17 December

**25th ANNUAL DUNROBIN - BRECKENRIDGE
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

This is another opportunity to participate in a Christmas bird count if you are unable to attend the previous one or wish to attend both. Contact coordinator Bruce Di Labio at 839-4395 or at bruce.dilabio@sympatico.ca if you are interested in participating.

Sunday
18 December

OTTAWA - GATINEAU CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Come and join this annual event that encompasses both sides of the Ottawa River. People of all skill levels are welcome and it promises to be a lot of fun.

Please contact Eve Ticknor at (613) 737-7551 or email at sandbird@magma.ca for the Ontario side and Daniel St-Hilaire at (819) 776-0860 or email at savannarum@videotron.ca for the Québec side.

Tuesday
10 January
7:00 p.m.
Review of Minutes

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
127th ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

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

7:30 p.m.
Meeting

The Council for 2006 will be elected at this meeting, and a brief review of the 2005 activities and a statement of the Club's finances will be given. This is an opportunity to meet most of the Club's executive and the chairs of the various committees and to find out what makes your Club tick. Remember the recent photography contest? Tonight the winning photographs will be shown and prizes awarded by Suzanne Dechêne and her committee.

DEADLINE: *Material intended for the January - March issue must be in the editor's hands by November 1, 2005. Mail your manuscripts to:*

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

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webmaster@ofnc.ca

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