



OFO NEWS

Newsletter of the Ontario Field Ornithologists

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Fall Birding in Canada's Capital

Christina Lewis and Bob Bracken

Ken Abraham Distinguished Ornithologist

Ron Tozer, Ron Pittaway, Bill Crins

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Ken Abraham will be the 2006 and ninth recipient of OFO's Distinguished Ornithologist Award.

Ken Abraham is respected worldwide for his knowledge of waterfowl and shorebirds, particularly Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Brant, Snow Geese, and Marbled Godwits.

Ken did his doctorate in 1980 on the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology of the Snow Goose in northern Manitoba under Fred Cooke at Queen's University. This led to a job as district biologist at Moosonee with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). Ken was responsible for an immense area of the Hudson Bay Lowland and northern coast. His current position is Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Scientist at the Ministry's main office in Peterborough. Every summer Ken returns to the Hudson Bay Lowland to lead MNR's long-term studies of waterfowl, shorebirds, wetlands and climate change.

Ken has authored several articles in *Ontario Birds* and *OFO News*. His most popular article, gaining international interest, was "Cackling Goose, Not New to Ontario" in the February 2005 issue of *OFO News* 23(1):2-6. Ken has published a number of papers in peer-reviewed journals such as the *Auk*, *Condor* and *Wilson Bulletin*.

Ken is the Ontario government's representative on international committees overseeing the management and conservation of waterfowl and shorebirds.

Jean Iron will present the Distinguished Ornithologist Award to Ken Abraham at the OFO Annual Convention and Banquet in Ottawa on Saturday, 30 September 2006.

Our National Capital area offers exciting birding. It is a premier birding location in the eastern region of our province. On both the Ontario and Quebec sides of our Ottawa Naturalists' circle, a 50 km radius from Peace Tower on Parliament Hill known locally as the 50 K, there has been an impressive history of birds and birding that continues to this day. To date, 346 species have been recorded within the 50 K, and more continue to be added almost annually due to the vigilance and enthusiasm of the local birding community.

Autumn birding can be enjoyed in two provinces within very close proximity of the downtown core of both Ottawa and Gatineau, mainly concentrated along the Ottawa River, but with several excellent peripheral locations. A few of these are described here, and hopefully visitors will be inspired to explore many more.

Ottawa River

Although not as large or species-rich as the Great Lakes, the Ottawa River is the place to be in fall. Public parks with facilities and recreational pathways managed by the National Capital Commission (NCC) provide easy access to numerous vantages along the river from downtown Ottawa to points east and west, as well as north on the Quebec side.

In late summer and early fall when the water levels of the river reach their lowest of the year, extensive mudflats, sand-bars and shoals form and provide feeding habitat for shorebirds as well as roosting and hunting grounds for gulls and raptors. The river is a major staging area for waterfowl—Britannia Bay, Crystal Bay and Lac Des Chênes—are great locations; 30 species have been seen here. Cackling Geese and Greater White-fronted Geese can often be found among the multiple 1000s of Canada

Geese that stage here each fall. Franklin's Gulls have appeared on occasion, Mew Gull has been documented (Oct. 1991), Lesser Black-backed Gulls are almost common here in recent years, and Parasitic Jaegers are seen flying downriver semi-annually. The east end of Andrew Haydon Park a.k.a. *Ottawa Beach*, a name that has stuck long after the demise of the Ottawa Beach Motel back in the 1970s, is a famous location to which shorebirds gravitate, including several rarities over the years such as Ottawa's 2nd record of Spotted Redshank (21 Aug. 1998), Marbled Godwit (also 1998), Western Sandpiper (Aug. 1993 and Oct. 1995), Buff-breasted Sandpiper (Sept. 1993), Red Phalarope and many others. Resident and migrant Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Merlins and Peregrine Falcons can frequently be seen hunting along the shoreline, and later in the season it is nowadays not unusual to see a Bald Eagle or two acting as part of the "clean-up crew" of the gull and duck carcasses. A Northern Wheatear dropped in for 2 days (Oct. 1995) along the beach at Lakeside Gardens where the rocky breakwater structures may have reminded it of home. The strip of shoreline from *Ottawa Beach* to Lakeside Gardens is also the best location for seeking Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow. From mid-September through mid-October, this secretive migrant takes advantage of the lush shoreline community of Tall Cord Grass (*Spartina pectinata*) and Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and can usually be found with patience, persistence, and a good pair of tall rubber boots.

Although the shorebird habitat is best on the Ontario south side of the river, the Quebec north side can also be very productive, and offers different perspectives. Again, several public parking areas and a recreational pathway make access very user-friendly. Many "lookout" areas mirror the Ontario side, and often provide a better view of birds that may be too distant to identify from the south side of the river. The best location to check in early fall is the Des Chênes rapids from the end of Vanier Street in the community of Deschênes and surrounding trails. On one memorable day (8 Oct. 2001), a visit to both the Deschênes (Quebec) and Britannia (Ontario) sides of the river yielded a bizarre but exciting mix of species: in one afternoon, a Boreal Chickadee, a Carolina Wren, a Gray-cheeked Thrush and a Fox Sparrow were found between

these two locations...and to top it all off, a juvenile Northern Gannet cruised over the rapids...where else can you go on a Sunday afternoon...?!

Continuing along the north side of the river, the Aylmer Yacht Club has been productive for a few rarities, including a Piping Plover (2004), but the most interesting habitat along the river on the Quebec side is the area collectively known as the Masson-Thurso marshes. This huge wetland complex is most rewarding in spring and the breeding season, and is noteworthy for nesting Least and American Bitterns, Virginia and Sora Rails, Common Moorhens and American Coots, and a thriving colony of Black Terns. The various marsh "sectors" are well-signed along Highway 148 east from Hull (Gatineau) and are easily accessible by vehicle, with only a bit of footwork required. Among the best locations in this area are Petit Baie Clement and Marais aux Grenouillettes, fondly known as the *Froggy Marsh*.



Ottawa Beach by Christina Lewis

Gatineau Park

While in Quebec, a visit to Gatineau Park can be a refreshing change from the river. The geography of this beautiful park managed by the NCC is unlike anything on the Ontario side of the 50 K. Part of the Laurentians, these ancient hills are a favourite for hikers, mountain bikers and birders who enjoy mature woods with spectacular fall colours. Best known for breeding birds rather than migrants, this park has several stunning lookouts from atop the Eardley Escarpment, and is interspersed with myriad lakes and rapid streams. The ice storm of 1998 damaged major portions of the canopy, unfortunately opening up the woods to invasive undergrowth. However, a good selection of uncommon species continue to breed here, including Red-shouldered Hawk, Philadelphia Vireo, Swainson's Thrush and Cerulean Warbler (rare in Ottawa). In spring of 2004, 2005 and 2006 a male Louisiana Waterthrush ardently proclaimed its desire to find a mate, and who could blame him? The habitat below the Mackenzie King estate is ideal for this species. It is not known whether his singing paid off, but it was certainly convincing. The park is also a haven for other wildlife seldom seen so close to an urban area, including American Black Bear and Eastern Wolf. In winter, a huge deer yard attracts Coyotes as well as both Bald and Golden Eagles. An extensive and well signed trail network can be

accessed from well maintained roads and several public parking lots. Maps can be obtained from the kiosk at the intersection of Gatineau Parkway and Rue Gamelin or at the visitor centre on the Old Chelsea side of the park. At this time, there is no fee to enter the park, but some of the parking lots do charge a daily rate.

Britannia Conservation Area (BCA)

The Britannia Conservation Area (BCA) is the “jewel in the crown” of Ottawa’s birding sites at any time of year, especially for water birds and passerines. To date, a total of over 250 species of birds has been seen in or from the BCA and represents 72% of all species recorded in Ottawa—an impressive statistic for a small isolated area of green space within city limits, a mere 9 km from Parliament Hill. During fall migration, this area, located at a constriction of the Ottawa River on the south side of the Des Chênes rapids and encompassing a wooded area surrounding a large pond known as Mud Lake, continues to be the most consistently rewarding migrant trap year after year. Britannia Bay and the rapids have hosted numerous Red-throated Loons as well as rarities such as Northern Gannet, both Franklin’s and Laughing Gull and Long-tailed Jaeger. This is a major viewing site for Arctic Terns (late May - early June), and in terms of larids in general, a total of 22 out of Ottawa’s 24 recorded species has occurred here. In fall, Mud Lake attracts Black-crowned Night-Herons and a good variety of puddle and diving ducks. Both Great Horned Owls and Eastern Screech-Owls nested in the woods in recent years, and the first modern record of breeding Merlins occurred here in 1997. The urban Merlin explosion continues in Ottawa to this day. As of fall 2005, the NCC has created a new trail to provide improved access through the woods and around the entire circumference of the pond offering a fine walk through an interesting variety of habitats. Side trails throughout the Britannia Conservation Area lead to good habitats for finding flycatchers, thrushes, warblers and sparrows during migration, and some excellent rarities have been found here including Cassin’s Kingbird (Sept-Oct. 1970), Western Kingbird (30 Oct. 2001), Gray Kingbird (31 Oct. 1982). Thirty-four species of warblers including Yellow-throated, Prairie, Prothonotary, Worm-eating, Connecticut and Yellow-breasted Chat have been found here. Rarities notwithstanding, the Britannia Conservation Area is the number one “magnet” for birds and birders alike during spring and fall migration. *A comprehensive site guide with to the BCA and some premier birding locations along the Ottawa River is found in the June 2000 issue of OFO News 18(2):2-5.*

Shirley’s Bay

This is the number one “hotspot” during late summer and early fall. A panoramic view of Lac Des Chênes and the impressive escarpment of the Gatineau Hills across the

Ottawa River, together with woods for songbirds and a rich shorebird feeding area, make this a must-visit location! Watch for Horned and Red-necked Grebes, rafts of ducks often congregate in the bay and on Lac Des Chênes. The first record of Tufted Duck for Ottawa was found here in 2003 and most local records of Black-legged Kittiwake and Pomarine and Parasitic Jaeger have occurred here. Lightning can even strike twice in two days: On both 17 and 18 September 2005, a juvenile Parasitic Jaeger literally flew over the heads of birders gathered in the boat launch parking lot, then proceeded to put on a spectacular show as it harassed the Ring-billed and Herring Gulls on the river. The famous Shirley’s Bay causeway offers a view of the “inner” bay and marshes of the Crown Game Preserve. In late summer and early fall the water levels of the Ottawa River often become extremely low. In 2005, the lowest level in 30 years was recorded, exposing marvelous mud flats, i.e. ideal puddle duck and shorebird habitat. This area also attracts herons and rails, including the first Ottawa record of a Tricolored Heron (2001) and a juvenile Purple Gallinule (28 Sept. 2003). Also, since 1996, Great Egrets are increasingly seen here in fall, culminating in a record high of 7 individuals on 19 September 2005. However, the biggest attraction for birders is the shorebird show. Hundreds take advantage of the exposed mud and the variety and numbers often change on a daily basis. Dynamic weather events sometimes bring in uncommon to rare migrants such as Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, Red Knot, Western Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher and all three species of phalaropes. The woods between Shirley Blvd. and the causeway can be productive for migrant songbirds. A nice mix of flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, warblers and other passerines is often found feeding along the trail, and rarities have included Varied Thrush (Nov. 1986) and Yellow-throated Warbler (Sept. 2005). Permission is required to access the woods and the causeway, as this is Department of National Defence (DND) property. A long-standing arrangement between DND and Ottawa Field-Naturalists’ Club (OFNC) has provided this privilege. Access is rarely denied as long as we respect the rules. Call the range control office at 613-991-5740.

Trail Road Waste Facility and Environs

Until a few years ago, the Trail Road Waste Facility a.k.a. *Nepean Dump* was our prime gull viewing hot spot where, with permission, one could drive among the dump trucks and get up close views of hundreds of gulls. Uncommon species such as Thayer’s Gull as well as multiple Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were often seen here. Rarities included Laughing, Franklin’s and California Gull. Unfortunately access is now prohibited, and Trail Road is gated. However, another location just south of the dump is still viewable and is excellent for fall birding. A large pond on the east side of Moodie

Drive is on private property (active sand and gravel operation) but most of the pond can be seen from the road. Aside from the multitude of waterfowl that stage here, a good variety of raptors, shorebirds and gulls are frequently encountered. Highlights in recent years include Greater White-fronted Goose, Ross's Goose (Oct. 2000 and 2005), Tundra Swan (rare in Ottawa in fall), Gyrfalcon (Nov. 2001), Peregrine Falcon (commonly), Laughing Gull (1997 and 2002) and Sabine's Gull (Sept. 2004). This is also a great location for shorebirds with Hudsonian Godwit and Long-billed Dowitcher seen here virtually every year. The agricultural fields south and west of this location are also worth checking for waterfowl, gulls and shorebirds including Buff-breasted Sandpiper (Sept. 2000).

Sewage Lagoons

Several sewage treatment ponds within the 50 K are located south and east of Ottawa and can be phenomenally productive. Apart from the Alfred lagoons (about 20 km outside the eastern boundary of the 50 K) there is no formal arrangement for public access to these sites. Officially, entry to the lagoons is verboten, therefore specifics regarding locations are not given here. Nevertheless, these eastern "waste lands" have hosted numerous breeders, migrants, and some fantastic vagrants. Ruddy Ducks and Wilson's Phalaropes breed, hundreds of Greater Snow Geese pass through annually, and other migration spectacles occur such as an influx of at least 320 American Golden-Plovers (Oct. 2003). Rarities such as Eared Grebe (1990, 1997 and 2001) have been found at the Embrun and Casselman lagoons and Ottawa's second record of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (July 2001) visited Embrun. Spotted Redshank (1990), Little Stint (1992) and Curlew Sandpiper (1996) all were at Casselman lagoons—no wonder it is called the *Siberian Connection*! Furthermore, the agricultural fields surrounding many of these lagoons are among the last strongholds of Gray Partridge in Ontario.

Historically, Ottawa has been home to many of Canada's best known naturalists and ornithologists, many were or still are associated with the Canadian Museum of Nature. With its rich legacy in field ornithology and incredible species diversity, the Ottawa area ranks as one of the premier inland birding locations away from the Great Lakes. We hope that you will attend the 2006 OFO Annual Convention on 30 September and 1 October to enjoy the birding, parklands and special places in our **Nation's Capital**. Local experts will be leading field trips to the hotspots mentioned in this article.

Excellent directions to birding areas can be found on the OFNC website www.ofnc.ca. Larry Neily's comprehensive Ottawa Birding website provides detailed directions, latest updates on rarities, and a wealth of information on

birding in Ottawa: www.neilyworld.com/birding/htm You can listen to latest local rare bird alerts and sightings summaries in English by calling the OFNC Bird Status Line 613-860-9000. For information about the Quebec side, the Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais (COO) operates its website in French at www.coo.nef.ca. and the COO bird line 819-778-0737.

Birds At Risk - COSEWIC

Updated April 2006

Ron Pittaway

This update covers only changes to birds on the official Ontario Bird Checklist (OFO 2006) whose status was changed by *Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada* (COSEWIC) at its April 2006 meeting.

Red-shouldered Hawk was down listed from Special Concern to *Not At Risk* because it has been stable or increasing over last 10-20 years. Also, populations are stable or increasing in most parts of the United States. **Ivory Gull** was up listed from Special Concern to *Endangered*. Breeding population declined by 80% over the last 20 years. Reasons for decline uncertain, but may include contaminants, hunting in Greenland, disturbance by mineral exploration and climate change. **Golden-winged Warbler** was up listed from Special Concern to *Threatened*. It has declined by 79% over last 10 years because of competition and genetic swamping (hybridization) with the Blue-winged Warbler, which is spreading north. Fortunately, the Golden-winged Warbler is maintaining small pure populations within the Blue-winged Warbler range. **Louisiana Waterthrush** met criteria for Threatened but remains *Special Concern* because Canadian population of about 200 pairs was stable over the last 20 years. Habitat degradation, particularly from ATVs, may be threat at some sites. **Rusty Blackbird** was up listed to *Special Concern*. Severe decline is ongoing, but at slower rate. Threats primarily on winter range include habitat conversion and blackbird control programs.

Endangered: Faces imminent extirpation or extinction.

Threatened: Likely to become Endangered if limiting factors not reversed.

Special Concern: May become Threatened or Endangered.

Not At Risk: Evaluated and not at risk of extinction.

Acknowledgements: I thank Michel Gosselin of the Canadian Museum of Nature, Don Sutherland of the Natural Heritage Information Centre of OMNR, and Marco Festa-Bianchet of COSEWIC for information.

COSEWIC website www.cosewic.gc.ca

Gordon Bellerby 1919-2006

Mary Ellen Hebb

My friend of many years, Gordon Bellerby, often told me that he was a lucky fellow, extraordinarily so at times. By the time he retired in 1983, he had already led a life that was richly fulfilling, exciting, and at times even terrifying. At that point he could easily have settled for the slippers, the armchair, the pipe and the fireside. But he didn't. Instead, he started a whole new career, birding.

Gordon was born in Dorking, England on 1 June 1919, the anniversary of a famous British naval battle. Perhaps it was an omen: in 1941, after studying law at Cambridge, he joined the Royal Air Force, and was sent to Hollywood to be trained as a pilot. Accommodations on the way there included being billeted in the Swine and Sheep pens at the CNE. Back in England, he became a fighter pilot, flying Hurricanes. After flying 86 missions in Libya and the Western Desert, he downgraded himself to student pilot in order to learn the art of aerial photography. Thereafter, he flew unarmed Spitfires deep into enemy territory, with instructions that he was to flee if spotted by an enemy fighter plane, but always to return the next day to finish the job! He flew 100 more missions, far more than the mandatory 30, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Having decided after the war to emigrate to New Zealand, he made a stopover in Montreal. There, an acquaintance of his father introduced him to "the prettiest girl in Canada," Diana Kindersley. His New Zealand plans were promptly abandoned. His good luck held when Diana's then-boyfriend was transferred to Seattle. Not long after they were married, Gordon's new boss, a birder, began drawing his employee's attention to birds. Gordon was only casually interested. Then, one day, came that moment that so many birders will recognize: a Red Crossbill showed up in his garden and he was hooked. Birds became his passion. He immersed himself in a host of bird projects, both in Montreal and later in Toronto. Thus,

years later, when he retired as an executive in the soon-to-be Petro-Canada, he was ready for his new career as full-time birder, birding-project participant/co-ordinator, bird-reporter, and for a little variety, wine connoisseur.

He and Diana, an accomplished artist, moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake, where he plunged into Ontario's first Breeding Bird Atlas, joined the local clubs, and helped monitor the peregrine hawk at Brock University. Next, he managed somehow to persuade the Shaw Festival's artistic director, Christopher Newton, that peregrines and plays would do nicely together: peregrines in a hawk box on top of the theatre, plays below! It didn't work out quite



The late Gordon Bellerby (right) with the late gull expert Peter Grant at Queenston Sand Docks on 18 November 1987. Photo by Kayo Roy.

that smoothly, but Newton gallantly never complained. Gordon became a founding member of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. At the Hawkwatch annual banquets, he would supervise a *very* jolly wine-tasting event. He shamed those of us in Niagara and some other jurisdictions into carrying out the arctic-coma-inducing January Duck Count. Heavenly hot soup and mulled cider afterward at the Bellerbys and a pair of gigantic Donald Duck

slippers for the finder of the most species were the reward for our heroism. In their *spare* time, he and Diana led wine-and-art tours in France. But his most important contribution to birding, and what subscribers online to *Ont-birds* will remember best, were Gordon's regular and astonishingly detailed reports on the Niagara River flypast of Bonaparte's and Little Gulls as they headed into Lake Ontario every evening through the winter months.

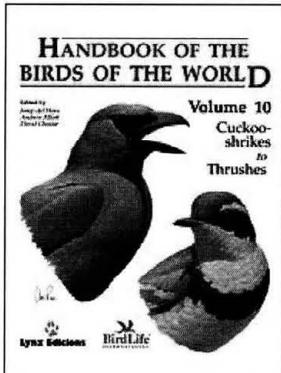
Gordon was bright, humorous, generous and witty, giving in only occasionally to brief bursts of outrage at perceived injustices. When he knew he was dying, he let it be known that he didn't want anyone to say that he had "passed away"—no euphemisms for him! Let it be said that he had *died*. Gordon Bellerby died on Tuesday 17 January 2006.

Gordon joined a young OFO in February 1983 and became one of our well known members. He always advised the leaders of the annual OFO gull trip to Niagara where to find the best gulls.

Book Review

Handbook of the Birds of the World Volume 10: Cuckoo-shrikes to Thrushes

Reviewed by Geoff Carpentier



Handbook of the Birds of the World. Volume 10: Cuckoo-shrikes to Thrushes. 2005. *Edited by Josep del Hoyo, Andrew Elliott and David Christie.* Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain. E-mail lynx@hbw.com. Hardcover 895 pages. \$185US. (ISBN 84-87334-72-5).

Okay, if I move the futon out of my den, get rid of the filing cabinet and push out the end wall, I can build a bigger bookcase to house my bird books, particularly my newest one: HBW Volume 10: Cuckoo-shrikes to Thrushes. Although I say this somewhat tongue in cheek, my collection of HBW books has grown to 10 volumes, each one as good as the last and all better than most! If I add in all my other Lynx Edicion volumes, they are enough to fill a couple of shelves on my new bookcase, rather my new “showcase” for that is what they deserve!

Twenty-one authors from five continents, including OFO member Dave Brewer collaborated to write this volume. Eighty plates, over 400 photographs and 700 plus range maps enhance the detailed text.

Ever wonder why some attempts to introduce birds are more successful than others, what factors influence the outcome and how one assesses the impacts on indigenous birds? The twenty-three page Foreword to Volume 10 will provide both entertaining reading and answers to these questions and so much more. 1900 attempts to introduce 400 species of birds around the world have been documented. Most involve the duck, pheasant, pigeon, parrot and sparrow families. After habitat loss these introductions, when successful, are the next most critical factor in endemic species extinctions. Reading this insightful article will help one understand how and why these introductions took place and what potential consequences are as a result. Any idea what Shakespeare had to do with some of these introductions? Better read the book the find out.

This interesting paper is followed by detailed sections on each of 14 families, 723 species in total: Cuckoo-Shrikes (86), Bulbuls (138), Leafbirds (11), Fairy-Bluebirds (2), Ioras (4), Silky-Flycatchers (4), Waxwings (3), Hypocolius (1), Palmchats (1), Dippers (5), Wrens (85), Mockingbirds & Thrashers (34), Accentors (13) and Thrushes (336). Each family discussion follows a set format, where an introductory section speaks to systematics,

morphology, habitat, voice, food/feeding, breeding, movements/migration, and interactions with humans, conservation and an extensive bibliography. The detailed text is generously interspersed with photographs that enhance the information provided. Following this section, each species is depicted by at least one painting, a distribution map and information on taxonomy, subspecies and distribution, habitat, food/feeding, breeding, migration, and a species specific bibliography.

While travelling on a cruise through the Falklands, South Georgia and the Antarctic recently, I had the opportunity to test some of the information presented in previous volumes—information on penguins, albatrosses, petrels, fulmars, prions, shearwaters, skuas and storm-petrels to be specific. Without fail, what I had read about each of these families proved correct. The information I gleaned from these books formed the foundation for several of the lectures I gave while on board ship.

Now that I’m back, I wanted to check out a tiny wren I saw in southern Argentina. Travelled birders, who claimed to know, asserted that wrens in this southern most region were Cobb’s Wrens. However, Volume 10 suggests that the Cobb’s is restricted to remote offshore islands in the Falklands and the Southern House Wren replaces it on the mainland. Seeing good paintings in Volume 10 for both species reaffirmed what I saw in South America. I checked the web and sure enough it agrees exactly with the HBW. Only one species now sits atop my Argentinean and Chilean lists, Southern House Wren, whereas the Cobb’s will have to wait for another day. So now when I go back to South America, I will be able to help others better understand the Troglodytes complex.

As always I like to test my books from a variety of perspectives, so I chose to check out what they had to say about Bohemian Waxwings. One thing of interest is that the author claims that the first evidence of their breeding in Ontario was in 1964. This coincides exactly with what Peck and James cite in their book *Breeding Birds of Ontario Nidiology and Distribution: Volume 2: Passerines* where a female with a brood patch was collected in July near Sutton River, suggesting local breeding. The HBW account of the Cedar Waxwing also speaks accurately about the results of the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas and the North American Breeding Bird Survey.

It is a privilege to own these comprehensive books. I hope you will take advantage of their availability and do likewise. You will not be disappointed.

2006 OFO Annual Convention & Banquet

Plan to attend this year’s Annual Convention in the Nation’s Capital on 30 September and 1 October 2006. Meet Ottawa’s top birders, ornithologists, bird artists, and old friends. Attend field trips led by local experts on both Saturday and Sunday to the best birding areas. Please use the convention brochure form enclosed with this issue to register soon.

OBRC Notes

Margaret Bain, OBRC Chair

The Ontario Bird Records Committee held its Annual Meeting at the Royal Ontario Museum on Saturday, 25 March 2006. Our thanks go yet again to Mark Peck for smoothly shepherding us through the Museum's security system, organizing the meeting room, producing specimens for review, and taking the usual group photograph.

The main business of the Annual Meeting of the OBRC is to finalize decisions on rare bird reports submitted in the previous year, but before the Committee embarked on this procedure, Doug Woods presented an excellent summary of progress on the electronic database he is developing for the OBRC. Doug is a dedicated birder, OFO member and a computer programmer, and thanks to OFO funding, hopes to have a trial program ready for testing by June 2006. Glenn Coady will act as liaison between the OBRC and Doug as this project finally gets off the ground.

The 2005 Committee then concentrated on the 120 reports processed for voting—22 of these received a second circulation, and 10 a third circulation. Of these records, 90 were accepted, and a further two accepted as to genus but not species (*Aechmophorus* sp. and *Fregata* sp.). One of the most difficult reports discussed was of the Pyrrhuloxia that spent 23 December 2004 to 1 January 2005 at Eagle in Elgin County. The identification of this bird was never in doubt—it was enjoyed by many birders and well photographed—but serious questions were raised as to whether it was truly a wild wanderer, or whether it had escaped from captivity or been transported to Ontario by some other means. Eventually this report was placed in the seldom-invoked Deferred Category to allow further research on this species' patterns of vagrancy in North America. Mark Peck is already requesting and collating information in this regard.

Election of three voting members to fill vacancies on the 2006 Committee then took place. Two of these vacancies arose through the completion of the partial terms of Ron Pittaway and Bob Curry by Margaret Bain and Jean Iron. The third followed current OBRC member Ian Richards nobly resigning his position after only one year to take over as Assistant Secretary for 2006, to become Secretary of the OBRC in 2007 at the end of Bill Crins' much appreciated lengthy tenure. Jean Iron and Mark Peck were duly elected to three-year terms on the OBRC and Margaret Bain agreed to complete the outstanding two years of Ian Richards' term. Margaret Bain was elected Chair of the Committee for a second year. Mark Peck agreed to continue as ROM Liaison in addition to his new status as a full member of the Committee. Thus, the voting members of the 2006 OBRC are Margaret Bain (Chair), Glenn Coady, Jean Iron, Colin Jones, Kevin McLaughlin, Mark

Peck, and Alan Wormington.

Sincere thanks were extended to Bill Crins for all his hard work in the preceding year. Although electronic circulation of reports and electronic voting makes life much easier for Committee members, it is actually a lot more work for the Secretary, though the database under construction should mitigate this somewhat. Thanks also went to Kayo Roy for his work as Assistant Secretary in 2005. As already mentioned, Bill Crins will continue as OBRC Secretary for one more year, with Ian Richards learning the ropes as his assistant to take over in 2007.

By the close of the Annual Meeting it became obvious that there were several important issues to be discussed without sufficient time left to do so. Accordingly, an OBRC Policy Meeting will be held in October to include topics such as review of the OBRC Guidelines and their publication on the OFO website, revision of the Ontario Review List, revision of the online reporting form, and progress on the database.

To make sure that the OBRC is receiving documentation on most of the rarities found around the province, Ian Richards, with the help of Alan Wormington, has just finished sifting through the Ontario seasonal reports for 2005 published in *North American Birds*, looking for species on the Ontario Review List seen during the year but not yet reported to the OBRC. To everyone's surprise and considerable dismay, at least 100 such observations have come to light by this method, in 2005 alone! Ian will contact the cited observers asking them to submit rarity reports in as many cases as possible. The Review List of species requiring documentation, together with an online report form, is easily accessed through the OFO website at www.ofo.ca/obrc. The Review List is also incorporated into the handy field checklist of Ontario birds produced by OFO Publications. Online report forms and electronic photographs should be emailed to obrc@ofo.ca. Written forms, sketches, and photographic prints or slides may be mailed to Bill Crins, OBRC Secretary, 170 Middlefield Road, Peterborough ON K9J 8G1.

Your OFO Membership Information Eleanor Beagan, Membership Secretary

Please take a moment to check your name and address on the envelope for this issue of *OFO News*. E-mail changes to your address, e-mail, and phone, and membership inquiries to [<etbeagan@sympatico.ca>](mailto:etbeagan@sympatico.ca) or send to the OFO mailbox at PO Box 455 Station R, Toronto ON M4G 4E1. Please note that OFO membership information is confidential and used only for official OFO business.

Spring Migration of Common Loons Over Central Toronto 1995 to 2006

George Fairfield

Introduction

Spring counts were made of migrating Common Loons (*Gavia immer*) from 1995 to 2006 inclusive from the deck of the writer's home at 332 Sheldrake Avenue in Toronto, Ontario. The property is on high ground overlooking Sherwood Park in central Toronto. The lookout provides a window of the sky of 1.1 km, west to east, from Mount Pleasant Road to Bayview Avenue and 0.7 km, north to south, from Erskine Avenue to Blythwood Road.

Observations

The Common Loon is a good choice for a migration study. They are easily seen and there is no difficulty in identifying them. They do not flock the way geese and cormorants do. I never saw a "V" or line of loons during my study. They travelled singly, in pairs, or in small groups with no apparent pattern to their grouping.

They flew at a fairly low elevation as they passed over my viewing area. Based upon the height of the buildings visible from my viewing site I estimated that they flew below 300 m above ground. I assume that the loons begin their flight in the northern part of Lake Ontario and have not reached their normal flying height when passing over my property which is only 9 km from the lake, a short flight for birds capable of travelling 100 km/h (Godfrey 1986). That these heights were well below the normal flying height for loons during migration is shown by radar studies. Kerlinger (1982) found that loons migrated be-



Common Loon by *Brandon Holden*

tween 900 and 2200 m above ground level with most birds flying between 1500 and 1800 m when migrating over inland New York State.

Kerlinger (1982) found the direction of flight was west of north and assumed that they were travelling from the Atlantic coast of the United States to Lake Ontario. I found that almost without exception the loons were flying northwest when they passed his viewing station. No doubt they were flying from Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay and the upper Great Lakes. These bodies of water would provide resting and feeding areas until the ice went out on

Years	Dates Covered	First Seen	Last Seen
1995	1 April to 15 April, 30 April to 3 June, 6 June	3 April	6 June
1996	14 April to 14 May, 17 May, 22 May to 27 May	16 April	24 May
1997	22 March to 8 June	3 April	3 June
1998	26 March to 9 May, 20 May to 6 June	7 April	1 June
1999	1 April to 7 June	9 April	5 June
2000	12 April to 7 June	13 April	3 June
2001	4 April to 4 June	10 April	30 May
2002	11 March to 13 May, 8 May to 30 May	10 April	29 May
2003	1 April to 9 May, 14 May to 31 May	18 April	31 May
2004	6 April to 15 May	8 April	15 May
2005	9 April to 5 June	13 April	29 May
2006	15 April to 15 May	15 April	12 May
Average		9 April	31 May

Figure 1. Observations for 1995-2006: dates covered; first seen; last seen; average dates of first and last seen.

their nesting lakes.

Loons are an early morning migrant over Toronto. There was a short gap between daybreak and the appearance of the first loons over our house. Williams (1973) found the Common Loon to be a diurnal migrant. There would be an advantage in leaving Lake Ontario as soon as daylight permitted in that it would provide a full day to reach the next resting place before dark.

The core time of the watch upon which the calculations in this study are based was 1.5 hours beginning at daybreak. However, the actual time of observation was usually two to three hours beginning at daybreak and ending when no more loons were coming over. Times were recorded in Eastern Daylight Saving Time and adjusted to minutes after daybreak. Daybreak was used rather than the official sunrise time because the flight began before sunrise. I found daybreak to be about 25 minutes before official sunrise. No doubt the loons' departure from Lake

Ontario would be based on the degree of daylight rather than sunrise.

Spring Loon Migration at Toronto

To find out when the loons were migrating, observations were started in March and ended in June for several years. The earliest date a loon was recorded was 3 April in 1995 and 1997 and the latest was 6 June 1995. See Figure 1.

The average first and last seen sightings were: first seen – 10 April, last seen – 29 May. The “last seen” dates in 2004 and 2006 were not included in the average in Figure 1 because I was away both years after 15 May.

This extremely long migration period of about seven weeks is no doubt related to the timing of melting of the ice on the lakes where the loons nest (Figure 2). Since loons require open water to take off and land, their arrival at nesting lakes depends on the disappearance of the ice. See additional information in caption of Figure 2.

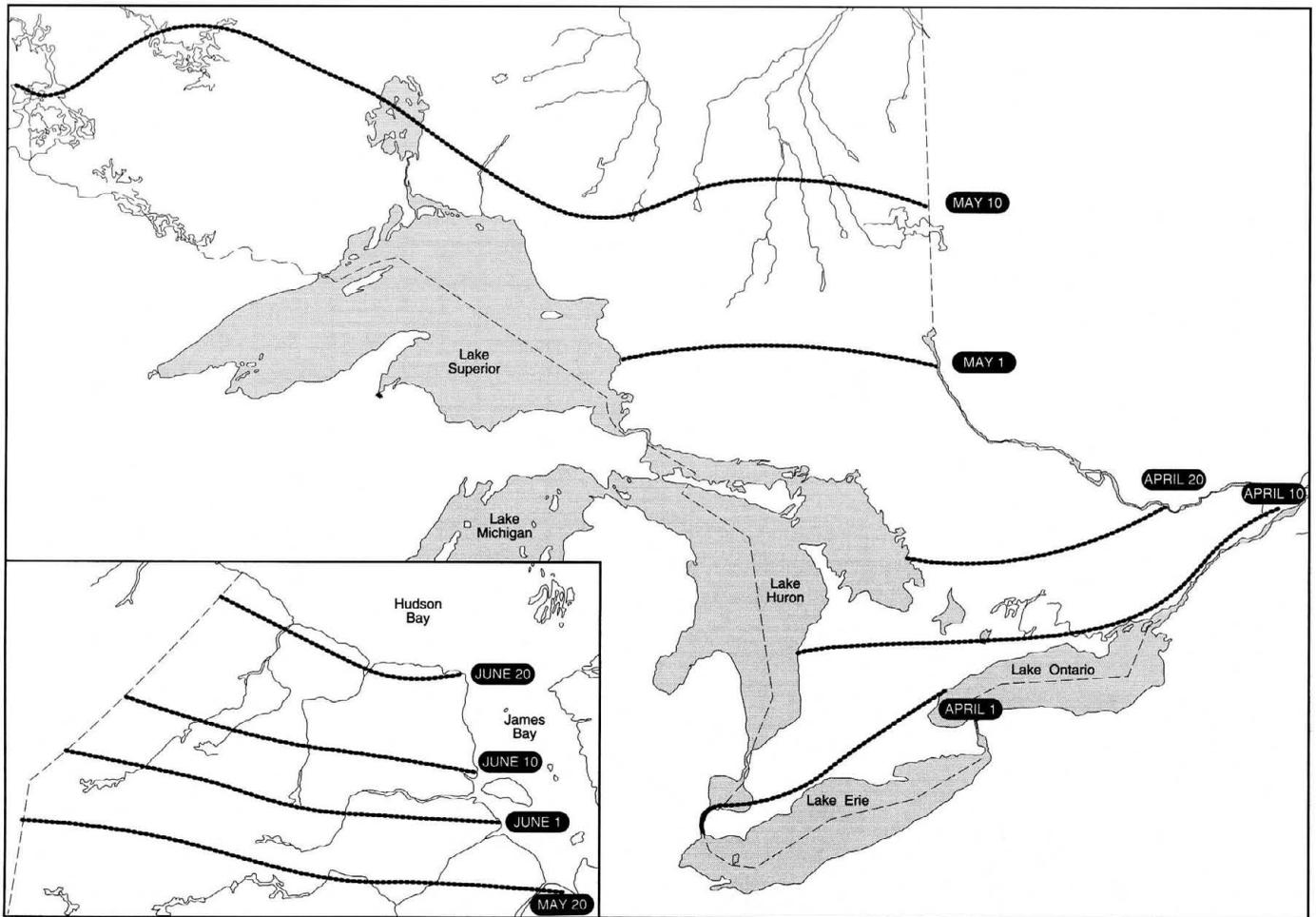


Figure 2. Horizontal lines on map of Ontario show the mean (average) dates at which the ice leaves lakes and bays progressing from southern Ontario north to Hudson Bay (inset map). With a warming climate in recent years, ice-out now occurs about one week earlier in Algonquin Park (based on park records) and probably elsewhere across the north. Common Loons are also arriving about one week earlier than 30 years ago in Algonquin Park. The first loons arrive before lakes are clear of ice, often landing at river mouths or in the first open water areas awaiting break-up (*vide* Ron Tozer). Map adapted from Crowe et al. (1977).

Population Trends

To detect trends in the population a sample was taken of the average number of loons counted per day during the heaviest period of migration, 15 April to 15 May, in the years 1995 to 2006. The count in 1995 is not included in this study because the period April 15 to April 30 was missed.

In Figure 3 on those days marked "0" no loons were seen. Days when no coverage was made were left blank.

There was a reduction in the number of loons seen over a 10 year period 1996 to 2005 as shown in Figures 3 and 4. In the year 2000 there appeared to be a reverse in the trend. This high average was the result of a flight of 162 loons on 11 May 2000 following a period of only 14 loons from 5 May to 10 May and may have been an aberration resulting from poor flying conditions for the previous six days.

Population Threats

McIntyre and Barr (1997) list many human activities that are having a detrimental effect on loon populations across North America. They list: hunting and trapping for food, pesticides and other contaminants/toxins, heavy metals including mercury from industrial plants, poisoning from lead sinkers and jigs used by fishermen, fishing nets and traps, development of shoreline and islands for marinas, summer homes and campsites, oil spills (loons dive rather than fly to try to escape oil slicks), and disturbance at nest and nursery sites during recreational use of lakes by humans. Jet skis are particularly damaging to chicks because they are fast, manoeuvrable, and able to run in shallow water.

All these factors are increasing as human populations grow. This is reflected in the increase in the use of lakes for cottages, recreation and hunting and fishing. Contaminants from both expanding urban centres and more intensive farming are resulting in the pollution of lakes and rivers.

There have been large die-offs of loons in the Great Lakes resulting from avian botulism. Type E botulism is connected with the consumption of

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
15 April	8			3	4	21	0	0	0	0	1
16 April		4	2		35	12	2	0	2	0	5
17 April		2	1		22	2	3	0	0	0	4
18 April	1	16	1	6	0	8	25	1	0	0	1
19 April	0	12	5	8	0	10	2	0	2	1	5
20 April		5	2	8	0	10	5	2	4	0	2
21 April	45	37	18	19	0	0	11	0	2	7	1
22 April	113	62	21	6	3	4	0	1	0	1	0
23 April	17	44	50	111	79	12	3	2	2	0	5
24 April	3	45	44	16	45	2	0	24	1	0	2
25 April	16	14	51	7	166	10	0	25	1	0	1
26 April	2	29	56	3	55	16	4	16	0	0	
27 April		1	13	23	6	1	12	17	3	0	6
28 April			2	24	2	23	0	1	2	3	3
29 April	66	12	8	3	11	14	11	10	0	1	0
30 April		4	6	9	23	27	0	29	1	0	6
1 May	4	7	39	29	2	10	39	0	0	5	7
2 May	3	9	18	5	16	8	0	17	13	0	
3 May	7		22	31	21	2	3	56	19	3	2
4 May	29	49		5	15	73	10	11	16	2	1
5 May	25	41	21	38	0	45	2	11	2	1	5
6 May	37	4	28	21	0		3	0	3	3	0
7 May	2	37	16	14	1	2	0	1	2	2	0
8 May	2	28	22		13	0	30	4	0	3	1
9 May	18				0	0	0	9	0	5	1
10 May		26		8	0	0	1		0	1	0
11 May	3	141		11	162	0	7		1	2	0
12 May	36	6		2	7	14	0		2	0	1
13 May	35	37		2	0	24	0		3	0	0
14 May	2	13			7	1		18	3	0	0
15 May		25		6		8		25	12	0	0
Loons	474	710	446	418	695	359	173	280	96	40	60
Days	23	27	22	26	29	30	29	27	31	31	29
Av/day	20.6	26.3	20.3	16.1	24.0	12.0	6.0	10.4	3.1	1.3	2.1

Figure 3. Number of loons counted between 15 April and 15 May from 1996 to 2006.

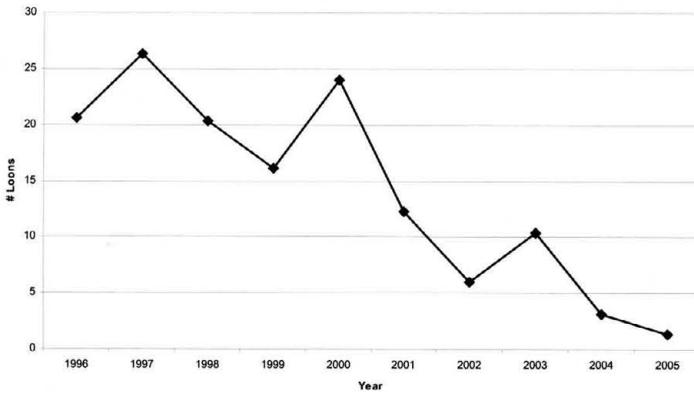
fish and occurs mainly in loons and gulls. It is believed that the bacteria are making their way into the ecosystem through zebra mussels and goby fish; both are recent invasive species.

Discussion and Conclusion

Do my counts over Toronto reflect an actual fall in the size of the loon population? I have had recent correspondence with John Carley who does a morning loon watch over his home which overlooks the Humber River in west Toronto and with David Martin who has been monitoring the spring loon migration

AVERAGE LOONS PER DAY

Figure 4



over his home at Belmont, close to London, Ontario. Both John and David have not found a fall in numbers similar to those reported here. It therefore appears likely that my study does not reflect a drop in loon numbers across Ontario, but only the birds that migrate over my viewing area. It may be that the area used for resting and feeding (staging) prior to their flight to northern lakes has changed. It is comforting to know that the fall in loon numbers over east Toronto is not reflective of the population as a whole.

Recommendations

I will continue monitoring loons because of the threats outlined above. I hope that John Carley and David Martin will publish their findings. I encourage others to monitor loon movements to accumulate base line data on their movements, flight direction, altitude, numbers and peak migration periods. This information will be important in understanding loon migration strategies and in detecting changes in numbers. Data from spring loon studies also will be important in the placement of wind farms.

Acknowledgements

I thank Geoff Peat of the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority for his literature search on botulism and die-offs of loons in the Great Lakes area. Many thanks to Barbara Kalthoff, Joan Winearls and my wife Jean for counting loons when I was away. Thanks to John Carley and David Martin for preliminary results from their spring loon surveys. Ron Tozer provided valuable information about ice conditions and loon arrival in Algonquin Park.

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Birds of Hamilton

by Bob Curry

Reserve your copy early of *Birds of Hamilton and Surrounding Areas* to be released in September 2006 by the Hamilton Naturalists' Club. This 600 page hardcover book will be the most authoritative regional publication ever published on birds in Ontario. Lead author is Robert Curry with chapters by top birders. Foreword by Fred Bodsworth. Thorough accounts of over 385 species including status, relative abundance, seasonal bar graphs for each species, colour maps of hot spots, habitats, behavioural and ecological information. Illustrated with 32 pages of colour photographs by Ontario photographers. Numerous paintings and drawings by Robert Bateman, David Beadle and Peter Burke. Use brochure enclosed with this issue of *OFO News* to order your copy of the *Birds of Hamilton*. Please note the deadline for a \$10 discount is extended to the 30 July for OFO members. The perfect Christmas present for your favourite birder.

Website www.hamiltonnature.org

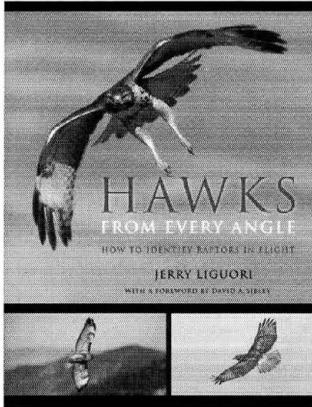
**Search for OFO Website Coordinator
From the OFO Board of Directors**

Brandon Holden has resigned as OFO Website Coordinator because of summer work and college this fall. OFO is searching for a volunteer to replace him. The job requires keeping this very popular site up-to-date with news on trips and other OFO activities and general maintenance. The Website Coordinator would also be encouraged to develop ideas for a revamped website in collaboration with the OFO Board. The ideal candidate would have the software knowledge, which is not complicated, to run the website. For more information, please contact Sandra Eadie <sandra.eadie@telus.net> or phone 416-883-8543 or any member of the OFO Board, see www.ofo.ca/officers.htm.

**Search for Ontbirds Coordinator
From the OFO Board of Directors**

Mark Cranford is retiring as *Ontbirds* Coordinator after almost five years. Under Mark's direction *Ontbirds* has become one of the largest and most successful birding listservs in the world. OFO is looking for a new volunteer *Ontbirds* Coordinator. A knowledge of computers and excellent interpersonal skills are essential. If you are interested in being *Ontbirds* Coordinator or would like more information, please contact Mark at <mark.cranford@ofo.ca> or phone 905-279-9576 or contact any member of the OFO Board, see www.ofo.ca/officers.htm.

Book Review
Hawks From Every Angle
Reviewed by Derek Lyon



Hawks From Every Angle: How To Identify Hawks In Flight. By Jerry Liguori. 2005. Princeton University Press. Softcover, 7.5 x 9.5 inches, 144 pages, 339 colour photos on 68 colour plates, 32 black and white photos, 2 maps. ISBN:0-691-11825-6. \$28.95CAN

This book studies the flight identification of 19 species of hawks. Author Jerry Liguori is a raptor conservation biologist who has studied hawk identification throughout North America. Jerry is currently regarded by many hawkwatchers to be the top hawk identification expert in North America. He has also written many articles on field identification of raptors.

The guide is divided into two parts: (1) an informative introduction and (2) the main part, the hawks. The introduction includes a short “how-to” guide to using it and a glossary of terms accompanied by helpful diagrams showing dorsal, ventral and head features of a hawk. The author then discusses lighting conditions that I think all birders should find useful, even hard-core hawkwatchers. Molts and aberrant plumages are discussed and again I think all birders should give this a thorough reading. Hawk migration and hawkwatch sites are briefly discussed, along with how weather affects migration. Missing is the effect of topography on migration. Optics used for hawkwatching are discussed next, including the author’s recommendations. Two small paragraphs outline the photo techniques used and the author notes that some photos were manipulated “to present identification traits in the most effective manner possible.” The need to change photos is questionable.

Three tables complete the introduction: the first is a migration timetable and the other two are highest one day counts for each species and highest seasonal totals for each species. These tables show more American Kestrels seen in one day than in any season. See pages 12-13. When I inquired about this possible error, I learned from Colin Horstead that Jerry wrote him saying, “I have had several comments about the daily and seasonal high tables regarding kestrel numbers and rightly so since they are misleading or confusing. In the next printing, I hope to have an asterisk under the table to clarify the problem. In 1970 there was not seasonal count conducted at Cape

May, but there were several one day counts conducted. That is when the massive kestrel flight occurred. Even though the daily high count is larger than the largest seasonal high count in North America, I still wanted the seasonal high count number to be represented by a season-long count. It was a decision I had to make, which probably could have gone either way.”

The remainder (and majority of the book) is the hawk identification guide. It is primarily a visual guide with a user-friendly layout for quick reference. Colour photographs emphasize plumage characteristics in various stages of molt, different morphs and different ages for all migrating hawks. Sedentary species are omitted. Some of the common pitfalls or mistakes made in identification of most birds are discussed, and some are highlighted in photos. A possible drawback is that some details the author notes to look at are just too subtle to see in the field except very rarely. Black and white photos are used to show structure and proportion of each bird from several angles. These pictures were sized so that all birds are the same size to emphasize proportion. Sometimes arrows or lines quickly point out differences. A helpful addition would be how to tell if a distant raptor can be classed as an eagle, vulture, osprey, harrier, buteo, accipiter or falcon.

For hawkwatchers along Great Lakes shorelines and ocean coastlines, there is a mountaintop bias in the photo selection. Many of the hawks were photographed from a high ridge or butte where the birds passed below the viewer. These views will not help observers who see only the underside of a hawk as it passes.

The 339 colour photographs and concise captions are a major strength of this book, particularly the large number of photos of uncommon hawks. The guide’s user-friendly layout makes it easy to use in the field, which is not the case with some hawk guides. I feel more confident about identifying a Northern Goshawk without help from others. I recommend this book as an essential supplement to every birder’s library, but not as your only guide on hawks.

Handbook of Bird Biology
Ron Pittaway

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology’s new *Handbook of Bird Biology* is recommended as an excellent reference on birds. Written by 12 ornithologists, the 10 chapters contain the latest information on birds including: Birds and Humans, A Guide to Bird Watching, Form and Function, Anatomy and Physiology, Flight and Migration, Understanding Bird Behavior, Vocal Behavior, Breeding Biology, Ecology, and Bird Conservation. Over 1000 illustrations, photos and figures. This is an ornithology text all birders should have in their library. Published in 2004 by Cornell in association with Princeton University Press. ISBN 0-938-02762-X. \$134.25 CAN from Amazon.ca

Dark Morph Rough-legged Hawks

Percentage of Dark Morphs: Where do they breed?

Ron Pittaway

Rough-legged Hawks occur in dark and light morphs as shown in Figures 1 and 2. Intermediates are uncommon. On 11 March 2006, hawk counter Phil Waggett (*Ontbirds*) recorded 2 light morph and 13 dark morph Rough-legged Hawks passing the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (Beamer) near Grimsby, Ontario. This high number of dark morph birds made me wonder what percent of the population is dark morph and where they nest.



Figure 1. Dark morph Rough-legged Hawk by Brandon Holden.

Dark Morph Percentages: What are the percentages of dark morph Rough-legged Hawks in different geographical areas? Interestingly, dark morphs are absent to exceedingly rare in Eurasian populations (Bechard and Swem 2002). In North America, there is a higher percent of dark morphs in the east than in the west. This is opposite to other hawks with dark morphs (e.g. Red-tailed Hawk) or dark subspecies (e.g. Black Merlin, Peale's Peregrine Falcon) whose dark forms are more frequent in the west. For the Rough-legged Hawk, Sibley (2000) says "dark morph 10 percent in west and up to 40 percent in east". Wheeler (2003a) reports 20% of the migrants at Hawk Ridge in Duluth, Minnesota are dark morphs (*vide* Frank Nicoletti). Wheeler (2003b) reports 7% dark morphs wintering on the western Great Plains and only 5% in Montana (*vide* Chad Olson). In southern Ontario, Colin Horstead (pers. comm.) counted Rough-legged Hawks in spring of 2005 and 2006 at Beamer and fall of 2005 at Hawk Cliff plus roadside winter counts in 2005/6. Horstead had a combined total of 350 individuals with a ratio of 148 light morph to 202 dark morph or 42% light morph and 58% dark morph. He reports an increase in dark morph numbers since 2002. Proportions of light and dark morph birds likely vary over time depending on prey cycles and geographical distribution of morphs during the breeding seasons and the laws of chance.

Where Do Dark Morphs Breed? Manning et al. (1956) reported that dark morph Rough-legged Hawks are uncommon breeders above the tree line in Canada where the light morph greatly predominates. So where do the dark morph birds nest that we see in eastern North America? Most apparently breed east of Hudson Bay in Quebec and Labrador (Palmer 1988, Wheeler 2003a). This huge region is interspersed with forests and barrens and many cliffs for nesting. This agrees with Gloger's Rule which states that dark pigments increase in humid parts of the breeding range and lighter pigments prevail in drier regions. Not surprisingly, the moist Ungava Peninsula of Quebec has the darkest Gyrfalcons (almost black) in the world and adjacent moist Labrador has the highest percentage of dark morph Parasitic Jaegers (40%) breeding in Canada (Pittaway 1995). This supports northern Quebec and Labrador as the source of most dark morph Rough-legged Hawks seen in eastern North America.

Acknowledgements

I thank Tom Carrolan, Colin Horstead and Gerry Smith for information on the morphs of Rough-legged Hawks. I am grateful to Brandon Holden for use of his photographs.

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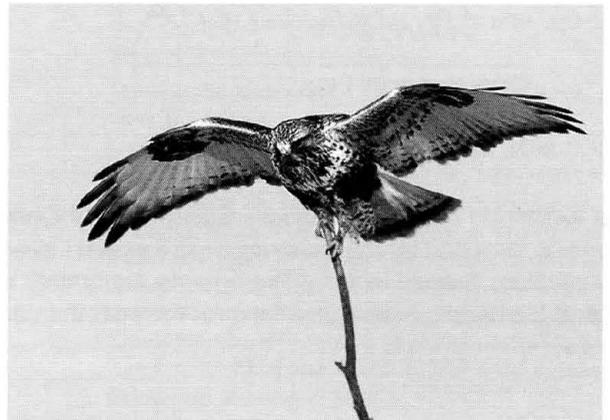


Figure 2. Light morph Rough-legged Hawk by Brandon Holden.

2005 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance Sheet 31 December 2005

ASSETS

	2005	2004
Cash in Bank	\$13,269	\$12,033
Canada Savings Bonds	5,000	0
Ontario Savings Bonds	40,000	45,000
Convention Deposit	450	450
Accounts Receivable	2,228	4,424
Accrued Interest	1,767	595

LIABILITIES

	2005	2004
Deferred Membership Dues	\$12,264	\$17,288
Members' Equity		
Balance beginning of Year	45,214	45,446
Net Income for Year	5,236	-232
Balance end of Year	50,450	45,214

TOTAL	\$62,714	\$62,502	TOTAL	\$62,714	\$62,502
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INCOME and EXPENSE STATEMENT

Year Ended 31 December 2005

INCOME

	2005	2004
Membership Dues	24,980	\$24,330
Donations	7,032	6,873
Annual Convention (Net)	675	-575
Baillie Birdathon	3,991	2,647
Advertisements	7,500	8,050
Sale of Merchandise	2,158	2,770
Interest	699	872
Sale of Publications	211	349
GST Rebate	1,552	3,349

EXPENSES

	2005	2004
Printing and Mailing		
- Journal Ontario Birds	\$22,080	\$24,006
- Newsletter OFO News	8,378	7,804
Liability Insurance	3,013	2,095
Field Trips	2,231	1,315
Purchase of Merchandise	2,148	1,444
Administration	3,977	5,012
Awards	414	574
Stationery and Printing	0	4,578
OFO Website and Ontbirds	321	1,033
Thickson Woods Land Trust	0	1,000
Windmill Ranch-Garden Alvar	1,000	0
Total Expenses	43,562	48,897
Net Income for Year	5,236	-232

TOTAL	\$48,798	\$48,665	TOTAL	\$48,798	\$48,665
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 Christopher J. Escott
 President



 Eileen B. Deagan
 Treasurer

I have examined the 2005 Financial Statements of Ontario Field Ornithologists and reviewed supporting documentation and information supplied by the Treasurer to the extent I deemed necessary.

In my opinion, these Financial Statements accurately reflect the financial position of the organization as at December 31, 2005 and the results of its operations for the year then ended.



 Donald E. Burton, Auditor

Thank you OFO Donors

OFO is a registered charity. Donors receive a tax receipt for donations over \$10. Donations are an important source of revenue for OFO because they help pay for our publications *Ontario Birds* and *OFO News* and other services to birders such as *Ontbirds*, the OFO Website and field trips. We thank the following members for their generosity in 2005.

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Annette Van Niejenhuis
Thomas T. Warren
Peter Webb
Glen Wood
Irene Woods
Irene and Gordon Wright

Future 2006 OFO Field Trips

Dave Milsom, Trips Coordinator

Phone: 905-857-2235

Email: milsomdave@hotmail.com

Check trip details on the OFO website

www.ofo.ca

August 5 (Saturday) Rock Point Provincial Park and Eastern Lake Erie Shore

Leader: John Black. Meet 8 a.m. at entrance to Rock Point Provincial Park near entry kiosk. Park entry fee.

Directions: *From west on Highway 3*, drive into Dunnville. Where Highway 3 curves left, continue straight on Main Street, staying along river. On reaching bridge that crosses river, do not cross bridge but continue straight onto County Road 3 eastbound. Go through Stromness, and turn right onto Rymer Road about 8 km from bridge in Dunnville. Take first left onto Downy Road. At next intersection turn right. Park entrance on your left. *From east on Highway 3*, drive into Dunnville and turn left onto Inman Road. Turn right onto next road, Mumby Road. Follow this to County Road 3 then turn left. Follow directions from bridge in Dunnville above. Shorebirds and early fall migrants.

August 13 (Sunday) Durham Region and Lake Ontario Marshes

Leader: Rayfield Pye. Meet 7:30 a.m. at Lynde Shores Conservation Area parking lot on Victoria Street in Whitby. Exit Hwy 401 at Brock Street (Exit 410). Turn left (south) onto Brock Street. Turn right (west) onto Victoria. Continue 2.5 km to Lynde Shores Conservation Area on the south side. Visits to Cranberry Marsh, Oshawa Second Marsh, Corner Marsh and Frenchman's Bay. Early fall migrant warblers, vireos, flycatchers, shorebirds and butterflies.

September 10 (Sunday) Presqu'ile Provincial Park

Leaders: Don and Ian Shanahan. Meet 8 a.m. at the Lighthouse parking lot. Park entrance fee. Fall migrants, shorebirds, hawks.

October 7 (Saturday) Hamilton, Burlington & Area

Leader: Tom Thomas. Meet 8:00 a.m. in Hutch's Restaurant parking lot at Van Wagners Beach on Lake Ontario in Hamilton. From Niagara on QEW, exit Centennial Parkway, turn left onto North Service Road and follow to Van Wagners Beach Road. Continue to Hutch's Restaurant. From Toronto on QEW, exit Woodward Avenue, turn right at lights, then right at next lights, go under bridge, turn right onto Van Wagners Beach Road. Continue to Hutch's Restaurant. Jaegers, gulls, shorebirds, fall migrants.

October 21 (Saturday) Hawk Cliff and Area, south-west of London

Leaders: Pete Read and Ian Platt. Meet 9:30 a.m. From Hwy 401 interchange 177B, take Hwy 4 south through west St. Thomas until it becomes Sunset Drive. Continue about 8 km to the village of Union. Turn east onto Elgin Road 27, Sparta Line Road. Go east one road, about 3 km, to Elgin Road 22 (Fairview Road). Head south. The second road south is Elgin Road 24, (Dexter Line) and you will meet a stop sign. Looking south is Hawk Cliff Road. Go south on dirt road to lake. Park along road allowance. Hawks, waterfowl, gulls and late migrants.

Native Vegetation in Provincial Parks

Ron Pittaway and Jean Iron

We support *Ontario Parks* in managing for native vegetation in provincial parks. For example, Balsam Lake Provincial Park intends to eliminate 95% of its red pine in plantations, reduce white spruce by 75% and reduce white pine by 70%. The park will allow natural succession to occur, control non-native and invasive species, and manage the endangered butternut tree.

Most provincial parks in southern Ontario such as Presqu'île on Lake Ontario also have stands of planted conifers. They were planted to prevent erosion and to reforest "waste" land. Clarke (1971) termed these plantings "The Cult of the Red Pine" because this pine was commonly used in reforestation, but other conifers such as non-native Scots pine and European larch were planted too. These conifer monocultures occupy valuable habitats where native vegetation should be growing.

Some *Conservation Authorities* are doing the opposite of *Ontario Parks* by planting conifers where deciduous or mixed forest is natural. For instance, rows of spruce and pine were planted recently in the field west of Halls Road in Whitby, Durham Region. This area, recently added to Lynde Shores Conservation Area, had many Great Gray Owls feeding on meadow voles from January to April in 2005. Why not let this field revert naturally to a forest? We encourage managers of public lands to ensure ecological integrity either by natural succession or by planting the appropriate native species for the site.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Dianne Slyford of Ontario Nature for locating the late Doug Clarke's article in the *Ontario Naturalist*. We thank Ron Tozer and Mike Turner for commenting on this note.

References

Clarke, C.H.D. 1971. The Cult of the Red Pine. *Ontario Naturalist* 9(4):14-15.

Notice of Intent to Conduct Vegetation Activities at Balsam Lake Provincial Park. *Ontario Parks*. 30 January 2006.

Search for Editors of *Ontario Birds*

From the OFO Board of Directors

Ron Tozer, Ron Pittaway and Bill Crins are retiring as editors of *Ontario Birds* after publication of the December 2006 issue. They will have completed an amazing 16 years as journal editors. Ross James and Glenn Coady have stepped forward to be new editors, but an essential third member of the editorial team is needed. Ross and Glenn bring an extensive ornithological knowledge, writing experience and broad network of contacts to the job. The third editor, however, need not be a bird expert. The Board is looking for a person with computer skills and publication experience who would format articles and guide the journal through its printing phase. We are confident that there is an OFO member who has the skills needed to complete the new editorial team of *Ontario Birds*. Please contact a member of the Board or the current editors if you are interested in serving OFO as a third journal editor with the required computer and publication skills. For more information, contact OFO President Chris Escott <chris@escott.ca> or 416-444-8055 or e-mail the editors of *Ontario Birds* at <of@of.ca>.

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Mark Cranford - Coordinator

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