



OFO NEWSLETTER NUMBER 24

JULY 1991

Stay tuned for another exciting and informative, but of necessity, wordy treatise on what's new in Ontario birding circles. I trust you've all had an exciting and fruitful summer season and are planning your fall birding adventures with the well being of wildlife in mind.

The fall **Annual General Meeting** is fast approaching. As always, we are planning exciting speakers, including Bob Anderle on "The Identification of Problem Gulls", and several field trips to local points of interest. Many more details will soon follow, but mark **October 19, 1991** at **Erindale College** in Toronto on your calendar.

We have in the recent past received many generous donations from OFO members. Our sincerest thanks go out to those listed below (but stay tuned as more will follow in the next Newsletter). Remember you too could have your name printed here - just send money, honey!

Elizabeth Peterson, Margaret Bain, Red Mason, Book Brothers, Gerry Bennett and Scott Connop

The 1991 Baillie Bird-a-thon, handled by Sid and Dorothy Hadlington [and I would add superbly handled] was again a huge success. Thank-you to all who took the time to sponsor one of our celebrity birders, and thanks to Ron Scovell, Gerry Shemilt, Margaret Bain, Bill Crins and me(!) for birding for OFO this year. Congratulations to LPBO for another record breaking year.

A note to all members who added the GST to their 1991 membership renewals, we are GST exempt. If you fall into this category, please deduct \$1.40 from your 1992 renewal payment when you send it.

We need someone to represent us on the Federation of Ontario Naturalists Board of Directors. If you're interested in filling this portfolio (low time and effort commitment), please let us know right away.

And now for a commercial message

You may remember that we were fortunate enough to obtain several Tryon Mint limited edition bird prints a couple of years ago. These were on display at last year's AGM. Rather than raffle these off or store them indefinitely, we've decided to hold a mail-in auction of the remaining prints.

They are gorgeous and include a presentation folder, notes, hand drawn sketches by Loates, a Certificate of Authenticity and of course the numbered and signed Limited Edition Print. We've set reserve bids as listed below for each [this is only a fraction of their actual value]. Don't miss this chance to own one of these masterpieces. The lucky owner will be announced this fall at the AGM (if sufficient interest is shown). Send your bids to me NOW at my home address listed at the end of this Newsletter.

1. Sandhill Crane - Reserve Bid \$300.00
2. Blue-winged Warbler - Reserve Bid \$200.00
3. Key West Quail Dove - Reserve Bid \$200.00

For an descriptive colour flyer, send a SASE to Margaret Bain at 210 Byron St., Whitby, Ontario, L1N 4N1.

Site Guides: I hope you're enjoying the new feature in our Ontario Birds regarding detailed Site Guides to Ontario birding hotspots. We would like volunteer authors to write similar papers for Ottawa, Kingston, London, Sudbury, North Bay, and Simcoe. Any takers? Let us know as soon as possible and we will forward author instructions.

The 1991 Field trip List will be ready for the fall AGM at Erindale. Terrie Smith (416-266-3708) is our new Field Trip Co-ordinator.

Calls for Information/Commercial Tours:

1. Clive Goodwin is revamping his book "Ontario Bird-finding Guide". He is asking members who wish to suggest corrections to the first edition, additions or deletions to the text or new ideas to contact him at 45 LaRose Ave., Apt. 103, Weston, Ontario, M9P 1A8.
2. Mark Kubisz is sponsoring a non-profit (=free) James Bay Nature Experience from Moosonee under the auspices of Ontario Northland Tourism. Lasting three days (August 31-Sept. 2/91), it is designed to explore southern James Bay and the Moosonee area. Contact Mark at M. Kubisz, c/o Bill Hutchison, Box 203, Moosonee, Ontario, P0L 1Y0 (705-336-2993 days).
3. Al McTavish of London, Ontario is seeking companions who wish to travel to exotic birding places with him. Simply, you pay your own expenses, and go for it. Contact Al at 519-392-6450.
4. Quetico Birding - Contact Quetico Discovery Tours, J. Stradiotto and M. Morris, 18 Birch Rd., Box 293 Atikokan, Ontario, P0T 1C0.

5. Southern Georgian Bay Birding - Contact L. Normand at 140 Rushworth Cr., Kleinburg, Ontario, LOJ 1C0.
6. Bruce Connection Tours - Contact Bruce Connection Tours at 767 Bruce St., Port Elgin, Ontario, NOH 2C2.
7. David Scott of the University of Western Ontario is preparing a review of the time of laying for small passerines (i.e time of day that the eggs are laid, and seasonally when they are laid). Contact David at Department of Zoology, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, N6A 5B7.
8. Mike Cadman is working on a Black Tern Survey in Ontario along the Great Lakes corridor as part of a CWS project. In addition to the terns, Mike is looking for information on Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, Caspian and Common Terns, and Double-crested Cormorants. Contact Mike at the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 355 Lesmill Rd., Don Mills, Ont., M3B 2W8.
9. The Ontario Mammal Atlas is once again in full swing. Your records are needed now. If you would like to participate or have data to input, contact Mike Cadman at the above address.

In The News:

1. Cornell University is offering a free publication on landscaping ideas to help you attract birds to your garden. Send a SASE to Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, EIS Department N1, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.
2. The North American Bluebird Society has announced its 1991 John and Norah Lane Bluebird Award for outstanding contributions to bluebird conservation. Congratulations to Mr. L.A. Smith of Brantford, Ontario, this year's winner.
3. Update on Birder's Hotlines:

Calgary	403-237-8821
Vancouver	604-737-9910
Victoria	604-592-3381
Ottawa	613-761-1967
Quebec (French)	819-778-0737
Saskatchewan	306-545-2825
Scotland	0898 700 234
NE Gr. Britain	0898 700 246
NW Gr. Br. & Wales	0898 700 249
South Wales	0898 700 248
Midlands Gr. Br.	0898 700 247
East Anglia Gr. Br.	0898 700 245
SE England	0898 700 240

4. The Canadian Endangered Species list has just been updated and revised for 1991. It now includes 213 species of animals in peril. The Eastern Loggerhead Shrike and the Louisiana Waterthrush are additions of interest to birders.

Birding Etiquette:

Since the unfortunate allegations surrounding Port Hope's Brambling this past winter, the OFO Board of Directors have given serious thought to how we can better protect rare avian vagrants and the rights of property owners.

The Peterborough Field Naturalists fielded five birders to "guard" the Brambling for ten hours during the height of the rush. Our sincere thanks go out to those dedicated individuals who gave freely of their time to help the cause - Tony Bigg, Doug Sadler, Clayton Vardy, Drew Monkman and me (! - yes again).

We bantered about several ideas to help the birds and the homeowner cope. A rare bird kit was suggested, and would contain:

- 1) Caution tape to cordon off no entry areas (either to protect the bird or the property);
- 2) A letter to the owner explaining what he/she might expect regarding the numbers of birders and their actions;
- 3) A complementary guest book for the owner and later a good photo of the rarity;
- 4) Litter bags;
- 5) A sign board for birders, telling them where to stand to get the best views, rules of etiquette, off-bounds areas, where to park, etc.;
- 6) Instructions from the owner regarding who and when to call for information and special "house" rules;
- 7) A sign-in sheet to record times and locations of sightings for arriving birders; and
- 8) Instructions for the "guards" [provided by a local naturalist club] to help them handle arising situations.

This is a good start. What do you think? I'd appreciate your ideas. Please let me know. ... And remember cigarette butts are litter too!

New Publications:

1. French Nomenclature of North American Birds (Catalogue # S52-2-202) by the Canadian Communications Group, 45 Sacre Coeur Boulevard, Hull, Quebec, K1A 0S9. It covers 2000 names for all bird species mentioned in the AOU Checklist of North American Birds (\$13.95).

2. Saskatchewan's Playground - A History of Prince Albert National Park, Fifth House Publications, 620 Duchess Street, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7K 0R1. 148 pages, \$29.95.
3. John Macoun - The Field Naturalist has just been released by the University of Toronto Press, 10 St. Mary Street, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2W8. 287 pages, \$30.00 + \$2.50 P&H.
4. Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Ontario by Dr. Ross D. James of the Royal Ontario Museum, ROM Publications Services, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C6. 128 pages, \$13.95.

This long overdue second edition is totally revised and expanded. It covers the status of 442 species which have been adequately documented, 12 species requiring further documentation, 285 breeding species and 7 hypothetical breeding species, dealing with status, distribution, seasonal abundance, dates of occurrence, egg dates and subspecific relationships. One can appreciate that to squeeze this information into such a small book is a monumental task as one can envision by referring to the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario. The author has chosen to give some information about each species to offer an overview of the status of the species in Ontario. With this in mind, and remembering this is not to be considered a complete account of the history of the birds here, the book is very useful as a primary reference source. An adequate "Literature Cited" and "Literature Referred To" section will offer many other sources of information to readers. Naturally, many shortfalls become apparent with the author's "overview" approach. The reference list certainly could be more exhaustive as several well known publications were omitted. Since the book is so short a complete list of references would be of paramount value to the researcher. The introductory sections explaining the purpose of the book are informative and well written, and cover the touchy issue of acceptance of rarities onto the official record. Appendices on escapes and subspecies are likewise informative. However, I would have liked to see a better discussion on how escapes are considered to be such, and comments on the records cited, which incidentally is not a complete list. I also feel that a comment on colour phases of some species such as the House Finch would be useful and of interest. The bulk of the text is devoted to the specific status of the species found in Ontario. While generally very brief, and for the most part accurate, there are some glaring omissions and errors. From other published records, I noted difficulties with the Western Kingbird record from Kent County, the cursory treatment of Brewster's Warbler, the Short-billed Dowitcher's breeding range, the references to sight records only for localities when photographic evidence has been published (i.e. Sandwich Tern at Presqu'ile) and the vagueness of the Dovekie report to

name a few. However, despite all this I still think the book is a good **primary** reference and will lead researchers to other more detailed accounts. I strongly recommend obtaining this volume for your library.

Short and Tweet:

Lorelie Mitchell of Oakville reports on a Belted Kingfisher nesting in June 1989. The bird nested in a sandpile in a vacant lot in downtown Oakville at Lakeshore and George Streets, successfully fledging young. In 1990, a new building is being constructed on the site, so the birds will have to find a home elsewhere.

Gail Worth tells of an unusual phenomenon involving nesting bluebirds. Apparently, a successful nest was robbed by **something**. Large young were observed sitting in a complete nest in a bluebird box. As the days passed, the nest **decreased** in size as the nest material was meticulously removed from under the babies. The babies successfully fledged, but who stole the nest? A wren? Most likely! Do you have any ideas?

In Closing:

What do you call a Gathering of Animals?

A covey of grouse is a family group, but a group involving more than one family is called a pack. A flock of geese is correctly named if they're standing. In flight, they're called a skein and if on water, a gaggle. A bunch of eagles are called a convocation. A group of larks is called an exultation and several hummingbirds are called a charm (seems appropriate).

But is a group of birders correctly referred to as a party about to happen?

Results of the World Birders' Survey:

You may remember that in 1990, I asked OFO members to submit their birding lists for that year, so we could see where they went and what they saw throughout the world. Twelve birders responded and reported birds from Ecuador, Canada, USA, Ethiopia, Cuba, Germany, Kenya, Grenada, Portugal, Siberia and Australia! A total of 2074 species representing 142 families were identified. The compilation of this brief summary took me hours to do. Remind me never to suggest this idea again! Regardless, thanks to all who replied.

Geoff Carpentier, 964 Weller Street, Peterborough, Ont., K9J 4Y2.