



THE BLUE HERON

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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT **DEC.18/10**

Coordinator – Alex Mills (705) 739-1094

Participants must register no later than Dec.11th with Alex, who will distribute participants (both beginners & experts) among the 9 teams, each with a leader. Followed by a Pot Luck Supper at the Church. Everyone invited to the supper – participants and non-participants.

It's Time to Focus on Feeders!

The 24th season of **Project FeederWatch** is quickly approaching. Please join our team of thousands of volunteers across North America. Your counts will help scientists monitor changes in winter feeder-bird populations from year to year. New participants receive a kit with a handbook, a bird-identification poster, a calendar, and an instruction booklet. The 2010-11 season goes from Saturday, November 13 until Friday, April 8. For more information about Project FeederWatch or to sign up, please visit www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/pfw or call

1-888-448-2473. There is a \$35 fee to defray program expenses (participation is free for Bird Studies Canada members). Project FeederWatch is a joint program of Bird Studies Canada and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Trumpeter Swan Survey

Bev Kingdon is a member of the North American Trumpeter Swan Society, a licensed trumpeter swan bander for the Province of Ontario and directly involved in the reintroduction of trumpeter swans in Ontario for the past 27 years. The project is managed by Harry Lumsden, a biologist from Aurora Ontario and a Director of the Trumpeter Swan Society.

The information collected will be used by Harry Lumsden, The Canadian Wildlife Services, Ministry of Natural Resources, Bird Studies Canada and eventually wind up with the US Fish and Wildlife Services and become part of the International Data Base on Trumpeter Swans.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Every five years, the North American Trumpeter swan survey is carried out by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service to assess the health of these birds. The 2010 survey will be conducted this fall.

If you have spotted a Trumpeter Swan, you can **help by sending a report of the sighting** to stewardship@wyemmarsh.com. The report should include your name, phone number, email address, home address, date, time, location, tag number, colour, number of adults and cygnets and any other comments you think are important. An official report will be available in 2011.

Adults swans are white with a solid black beak, legs and feet, weighing up to 30 lbs. with a 7 ½ - 8 ft wing span and can live up to 35 years in captivity. They are the largest waterfowl in North America and the largest swans in the world. Young swans under a year-old are called cygnets and are brownish/grey with a pinkish beak and legs. For more information www.trumpeterswansociety.org

FIELD TRIP REPORTS5/6 Side Road Wetland and Church Woods,
Shanty Bay May 12/10

Clear skies and a warm temperature of 17°C enticed eighteen people to participate on this mid-week evening fieldtrip. The focus of our first stop was a popular roadside-visible Heronry and those birds that use this cattail marsh. Virginia Rails & Sora nest here, but they were not evident on this outing. Spring Peepers were calling from the wetland.

Birds observed:- American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Canada Goose, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Solitary Sandpiper, Northern Flicker, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Yellow Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, & Red-winged Blackbird.

By the time we arrived at our second location in the shaded woodland of Church Woods in Shanty Bay, the temperature had dropped to 10°C. Our plan was to view wildflowers in the 25-acre parcel of mature mixed woodland held and managed by the Couchiching Conservancy. Spring flowers abound along the numerous foot paths in this old-growth forest. The abundance of Large-flowered Bellwort and the opportunity to compare Canada Waterleaf with the more common Virginia Waterleaf were highlights.

But Church Woods is surrounded by residential development; hence, several non-native plant species are encroaching from the edges. In particular the invasion of Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) in this woodland is problematic; it could dominate the under story if not removed. Under the direction of the Couchiching Conservancy and with the help of local residents and naturalists' clubs, hand pulling Garlic Mustard is the method of choice, if not the best one, to control this plant in this situation. So each participant was assigned the task of pulling Garlic Mustard as we walked the trails.

A Raccoon was peeking out from a hole in a tree.
Plants observed:- Blue Cohosh, Broad-leaved Dock, Common Burdock, Ferns:- Ostrich & Sensitive; Forget-me-not, Garlic Mustard, Creeping Charlie, Herb Robert, Jack-in the-Pulpit, Lemon Balm, Large-flowered Bellwort, Lesser Celadine, Lesser Periwinkle, Motherwort, Red Baneberry, Red-berried Elderberry, Red Trillium, Sharp-lobed Hepatica, Solomon's Seals:- False, Hairy & Starry False; Trout Lily, Two-leaved Toothwort, Violets:- Canada, Common Blue & Downy Yellow; 2 species of Waterleaf:- Canada & Virginia; White Trillium,

Wild Ginger, Wild Leeks, Wild Lily-of-the-Valley, Woodland Poppy & Wood Nettle.

Birds observed:- Canada Goose, American Crow, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Chipping Sparrow, Northern Cardinal & American Goldfinch.
Phyllis Tremblay

Matchedash Bay May 11/10

Hi Friends: A cold frosty start to our day 0C, winds SW 20Km, high of 13C, overcast, cooler in the afternoon. The weather didn't dampen our spirits as the best birding highlight of the day was observing 6 American White Pelicans in Matchedash Bay. Others at very close range we watched two Virginia Rails, a very quick flash of a Sora and an excellent view of Common Moorhen. Thanks to Diane for guiding us away from the construction on the Main Street in Coldwater also to a great lunch in Fesserton.

Participants: Linda Crome, Diane Fletcher, Jim Forrest, Elizabeth Gillian, Margo Holt, Jennifer Howard, Dave Lord, Beryl Lougher, Loraine Moore, Don Scanlon, Phyllis Tremblay, Leanore Wiancko.

Number of bird species: 80
Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Sandhill Crane (H), Trumpeter Swan, Canada Goose, Mallard, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Osprey, Wild Turkey, Common Moorhen, Virginia Rail, Sora, Lesser Yellowlegs, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Mourning Dove, Rock Pigeon, Great Horned Owl - two young, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Least Flycatcher, Barn Swallow, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch (H), House Wren (H), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (H), Blue-gray Gnat Catcher, American Robin, Wood Thrush, (H), Brown Thrasher, Gray Catbird, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Warbling Vireo, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Redstart, Blue-winged Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Waterthrush (H), Oven Bird, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, American Goldfinch, Sparrows - White-crowned, White-throated, Chipping Field, Vesper, Swamp, & Song, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird,

Bobolink, European Starling, Eastern Meadowlark,
Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole
Beryl Lougher

Dave Lord & Brian Gibbon



Great Egret Brian Backland

Tiny Marsh

May 15/10

Dave Lord and I lead the outing, Dave met us at Tiny, and I led the group up from the Little Lake Parking Lot (LLPL)

8:30am at LLPL – heavy overcast sky, windy, 5C. Five people met at LLPL and we met the rest at Tiny, total of 17 people. Little Lake, **Birds** – Baltimore Oriole (3), White-crowned Sparrows and upon returning a Chipping Sparrow and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Tiny Marsh, **Birds** - Warbling Vireo, Canada Geese, Baltimore Oriole, Gray Catbird, Amer. Goldfinches, Black Terns, Sparrows- White-crowned, Tree, Song, Swamp; Common Loon, Bobolink (H), Great Crested Flycatcher, Red-winged Blackbirds, Black-capped Chickadee, Green Warbler, Amer. Crows, Turkey Vultures, Hairy Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Trumpeter Swans (H), Blue-winged Teal, Barn Swallow, Amer. Redstart, Oven Bird, Pied-billed Grebe, Amer. Robin, Mallard Duck, Sora, Blue Jay, Eastern Wood Pewee, Sandhill Cranes (2), Spotted Sandpiper, Red-tailed Hawk, Warblers-Pine, Yellow, Black-throated Green, Yellow-rumped, Yellow-throated.

Beryl led a group after lunch over to the 2nd and 3rd. Concessions and had great luck and added the following to the morning list. **Birds** – Common Merganser (2), Broad-winged Hawk (3), Osprey (2), Virginia Rail (H) (2), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (3), Eastern Kingbird (2), Eastern Phoebe (2), Least Flycatcher (2), Winter Wren (H) (3), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (2), Black-throated Blue Warbler (H) (3), Black and White Warbler (H) (3), Nashville Warbler (3), Common Yellowthroat (H) (2), Northern Waterthrush (H) (3). Beryl saw many more that were already on the morning list. 58 Species.

Rail Trail Walk

June 5/10

At Little Lake Parking Lot (LLPL) 7 people, 2 more joined up at the Hwy 26 parking lot. Heavy overcast, threatening rain – never came, 25C.

Birds – at LLPL – Blue Jay, Indigo Bunting, Baltimore oriole, Red-wing Blackbird, Mourning Doves, and Amer. Crows.

Rail Trail – Cedar Waxwing, Warbling Vireo, Least Flycatcher, Indigo Bunting, Amer. Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Mallard Duck, Canada Geese, Common Yellowthroat Warbler, Gray Catbird, Common Grackle, Yellow Warbler, Blue Jay, Amer. Robin, Amer. Crow, Black-billed Cuckoo, Brown Thrasher, Amer. Redstart, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Alder Flycatcher, European Starling, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Swamp Sparrow, Turkey Vulture, Belted Kingfisher, Red-eyed Vireo, Green Heron, Savannah Sparrow, Mourning Warbler, Veery, Chickadee, brown-headed Cowbird, Eastern Wood Pewee, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-winged Warbler, Amer. Redstart, Sharp-shinned Hawk

Brian & Lynne Gibbon

Carden Alvar

June 12/10

Cool, windy and raining off and on until 10:00 am, then heavy threatening overcast.

We were three intrepid souls wandering the back roads of Carden.

Birds – Robin, Red-wing Blackbird, Tree, Barn, and Cliff Swallows, Canada Geese, Mallards, Wood Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, Amer. Gold Finch, Meadow Lark, Wilson's Snipe, Bobolink, Yellow Warbler, Blue Bird (at box 85), Savannah Sparrow, Kingbird, House, Winter, and Marsh Wrens, Mourning Dove, Willow, Least, Alder, Great Crested Flycatcher, Baltimore Oriole, Field Sparrow, Warbling Vireo, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, Towhee, Gray Catbird, Sedge Wren, Wood Thrush, Turkey Vulture, Black and White Warbler, Amer. Crow, Veery, Song Sparrow, Red-eyed Vireo, Green Heron, Amer. Bittern, Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Moorhen, Killdeer, Rock Pigeons, Blue Jay, Brown-headed Cowbird, European Starling, Upland Sandpiper, Northern Water Thrush, Common Flicker, Osprey and chicks.

Animals - Muskrat, Porcupine

David Lord.



Upland Sandpiper Brian Backland

Oro Railtrail

June 26, 2010



At the Little Lake Parking Lot (LLPL) very heavy overcast sky with the very strong threat of rain. We left the parking lot and went out Georgian Drive to the Heronry and then on to Ridge Rd and out to the Seventh Con at Oro Station where we parked and entered the Railtrail. Just after leaving the Heronry it started to rain and continued for the rest of the morning, however 7 hardy, brave and slightly damp souls persevered. Just as we were stopping at the Heronry a large deer crossed the road about 20 yards in front of us.

Birds – At LLPL – Blue Jay, Red-eyed Vireo, Song Sparrow, Common Tern, Amer. Robin, Northern Flicker.

At the Heronry – Wood Cock (running around on the road, dodging cars), Virginia Rail, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Yellowthroat Warbler, Tree Swallow, Morning Dove, Blue-winged Teal, Great Blue Heron and some younger ones standing on the nests, Great Crested Flycatcher, Song Sparrow, Turkey Vulture, Mallard (female standing on old nest), Amer. Crows, Swamp Sparrow, Vireo.

At the Railtrail – Cedar Waxwing, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellow throat Warbler, Black-capped Chickadee, Broadwinged Hawk, Blue Jay, Indigo Bunting, Cardinal, and Catbird.

Plants – Spreading Dog Bane, Perennial Sweet Pea, Viper's Bugloss, Common Milkweed, Bladder Campion, Common St John's Wort, Japanese Bamboo or Japanese Knock weed (an escape), Dog Strangling Vine, Poison Ivy.

Brian & Lynne Gibbon

Vespra Trail Walk

July 10/10

At Little Lake Parking Lot (LLPL) sunny, clear sky, 24C with a steady light breeze. 7 people made the outing.

Birds – at LLPL Red-eyed Vireo, Amer. Redstart, Amer. Goldfinch, Blue Jay, Song Sparrow. On the walk – Robin, Northern Cardinal, King Bird, Chickadee, Indigo Bunting, Grackle, Baltimore Oriole, Barn Swallow, Vespra Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Red-tailed Hawk, Oven Bird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Pine Warbler, Yellowbellied Sapsuckers (2), Woodpecker (Sp.), Scarlet Tanager, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Turkey Vulture, Cedar Waxwing, Amer. Goldfinch, Black-capped Chickadee, Chipping Sparrow, Rough Grouse, Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Plants – Showy-tick Trefoil, Panicked Trefoil, Flea-tick Trefoil, Vipers Bugloss, Alfalfa, Common Yarrow, Cow Vetch, Daisy Fleabane, Bladder Campion, Ox-eye Daisy, St. Johnswort, Bedford Pink, Evening Primrose (Evening Lychnis?), Helleborine, Common Burdock, Yellow Avon, Thimble Weed, Nipple Wort, Bee-Balm or Wild Bergamot, Broadleaf Dock, Curly Dock, White Baneberry, Blue-stem Goldenrod (in bloom).

Other – Green frogs, Monarch Butterfly, Swallow Tail Butterfly, Variable Darner Dragonfly.

Brian & Lynne Gibbon

Lackies' Bush Field Trip

Sept 11, 2010

The day was sunny and comfortably warm. We had 13 participants including three new people.

We entered the bush at the Bayview entrance and walked along the path that borders the north side of Whiskey Creek. There we saw many plants that thrive in the wet shady environment, some native and some garden escapees. Bouncing Bet (Soapwort), Obedience Plant, (false dragonhead) Purple Stemmed Aster, Calico Aster, Touch Me Not, (Spotted Jewell Weed), Golden Rod, Joe Pie Weed, Broad Leaf Dock, Bittersweet Nightshade, Enchanters Nightshade, Burr Marigold, Chicory, Japanese Bamboo, Holly, Flea Bane Daisy, False Salomon Seal, Pearly Everlasting, Wild Basil, Garlic Mustard, Grape Vine, Herb Robert, Lilly of the Valley, Jack in the

Pulpit, Woodland Sunflower, Glossy Buckthorn, Tall Blue Lettuce, Wild Sarsaparilla, Wild Honey Suckle, Ostrich Fern, Sensitive Fern, Pale Swallow Wort, (Dog strangling Vine). We also saw a large active wasp's nest and many forms of colourful fungus plants. These were photographed by P.J., one of our guest hikers, and he plans to put them on face book.

We then crossed the creek and climbed the winding path out of the creek valley and into a clearing the appeared to be old gravel pit. There we hiked around and enjoyed late summer /early fall wildflowers such as Queen Anne's Lace, Purple Asters, Golden Rod and Ash trees with bright orange berries and we also spotted a Northern Harrier. The day was heating up and we were glad to return to the cool forest canopy again and make our way down, across the creek and home again.

Some of the large and beautiful trees in Lackies Bush are: Tamarack, Red Pine, White Pine, Scotch Pine, Balsam Fir, White Spruce, Base Wood, Sugar Maple, Oak, Aspen, Beach and Ash.

Birds Sightings at Lackies Bush were: Chickadee, American Crows, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, Hairy and Downey Woodpecker, Red Breasted Nut Hatch, Red Eyed Vireo, Canada Geese, and Northern Harrier.

Birds Sighted by Phyllis at LLP while waiting for the group were: Eastern Phoebe, Common Loon, DC Cormorants, Magnolia Warbler, American Goldfinch, Sharp Shinned Hawk, and Coopers Hawk.

Winn Bowser

Luther Marsh

Aug.10/10

Our mission today was accomplished excellent sighting of the **Scissor-tailed**

Flycatcher waiting for us on the Hydro line (see picture). The weather cooperated there was no rain but kind of hot, hazy and humid. We went on to the marsh had lunch. Most of our sightings were in and around the marsh. At the junction of County Roads 16 & 15 we encountered a double row of swallows on the hydro lines must have been over 200 birds.

For the amount of time we had at the marsh we had a great day.

Thanks to Linda for navigating us to Luther Marsh.

Participants: Linda Crome, Diane Fletcher, Jennifer Howard, Beryl Lougher, Phyllis Tremblay.

Other: Painted Turtles. Green, Leopard and Pickerel Frogs. American Toads. Monarch, Eastern Comma, White Cabbage, Red Admiral, Tiger Swallowtail and Skipper Butterflies. 2 Hummingbird Moths.

Number of bird species: 45

Birds:- Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, American Bittern, Turkey Vulture, Mute Swan, Trumpeter Swan, Canada Goose, American Widgeon, Mallard, Mergansers species, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Im. Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Rock-pigeon, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Northern Flicker, Eastern Kingbird, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Red-Winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch and House Sparrow.

Beryl Lougher



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher – Beryl Lougher

Birds of South Simcoe & Migrating Shore Birds Sept. 18/10 Leader – John Schmelsfske

Thirteen people met at the Tim Horton's in Alliston. Weather was sunny, moderate wind; temp started out at 12C/55F and by noon was up to 15C/60F.

We headed out of Alliston bond for the Beaten area sod farms,

Birds – Canada Geese, Blue Jays, Amer. Crow, Starlings, Broadwinged Hawk, Amer. Pipits, Barn Swallow, Pectoral Sandpipers, Merlin, Kestrel, Northern Harrier (F), Killdeer, Savannah Sparrow, Osprey, Morning Dove, Turkey Vulture, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker (H), Chickadee, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, Redstart, Warbler (sp), Palliated Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet (H).

Plants – Zigzag Goldenrod, Blood Root, Partridge Berries, Yellow Violet, Sweet Sisley, Common Goldenrod.

Other – Garter snake stretched out on the branches of some dead brush. A Red-backed Salamander, and a black with yellow stripes centipede.

Report submitted by Brian Gibbon



Shoveller Duck Brian Backland



North Simcoe Railtrail B. Backland

Late Warblers & Other Migrants Oct.3/10

Oro-Medonte Railtrail, October 3rd, 2010 – I was pleased to lead a group of about 16 Brereton members on a morning walk at the height of fall colours. At 8:35 am, we arrived at our starting place south of Orillia where the Oro-Medonte trail crosses Woodland Avenue. It was nippy, with a bit of a north wind, but the skies were mostly clear, and when we stopped in sunny spots along the trail, we were quite comfortable. We walked southwestward about 2 km, and then returned, getting back to the cars at about 11:15.

We were looking for birds, with a special interest in finding late lingering warblers. We had had a fair bit of cool weather by that point, but we still saw a good variety of birds—34 species. We found the expected Yellow-rumped Warblers, but we also managed to find Orange-crowned Warbler (probably two different individuals), which is a specialty for this time of year. There were lots of sparrows, but we only identified four species—Song, Swamp, White-throated, and White-crowned. We had a long look at a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. It was feeding actively, and it was evidently a male bird because it several times flashed its ruby crown in the bright October light. We saw one loon overhead, and over the course of our walk about 40 Turkey Vultures passes overhead (one group of seven together), moving from northeast to southwest. Two Red-tailed Hawks were also in this movement.

We also had a good look at several Wood Ducks, including a male in fresh plumage. Golden-crowned Kinglet, Rusty Blackbird, Cedar Waxwing, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Phoebe and Yellow-shafted Flicker also all made appearances.

Alex Mills



Ruby-crowned Kinglet B. Backland

North Simcoe Railtrail

Oct.17/10

Weather – 7C/45F, sunny, light breeze, 7 people.

We met at the LLPL and then drove out highway 27 and 26 to the Kiosk where the Railtrail crosses the highway.

Birds:- at LLPL – Merlin, Chickadees, Amer. Goldfinches, on highway out European Starlings, Blue Jays, and Morning Doves. On Railtrail – Red-winged Blackbird, Pileated Woodpecker, Canada Geese, Song Sparrow, Slate-coloured Junco, House Sparrow, Amer. Crow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadees, Purple Finch, White-crowned, Tree, Chipping, and Swamp Sparrows, Grackles, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (H), Phoebe, Rusty Blackbirds, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Blue Heron.

Brian & Lynne Gibbon

BOOK NOOK



Wesley the Owl: the Remarkable Love Story of an Owl and his Girl by Stacey O'Brien. 2008.

Pets are a long-term commitment. They require personal devotion, never-ending feeding, grooming, and cleaning up after. Our oldest cat had been with us for over twenty years. But caring for our aged feline lends little to the demands imposed by nineteen years of being the mate of an unreleasable barn owl! Life for its owner becomes a constant search for a reliable source of live mice, which had to be to killed, chopped up and frozen for the helpless bird. Since Wesley lived in Stacey's bedroom, the room had to be made safe for a bird of prey – all photos and paintings had to be removed from the walls, since they could become prey and the broken glass that would result would become very dangerous. Flooring had to be covered to catch any droppings and changed regularly. Absolutely no strangers could enter the room or they would be attacked. I think that you are beginning to get the picture!

Many humorous incidents occur, when one has an owl for a pet. One night, Stacey was transporting boxes of live mice for Wesley's dinner, when she had to stop for gas. Somehow, some of the mice had escaped from the boxes. Imagine the look of horror on the gas attendant's face (who it turns out was deathly afraid of mice!), when he sees the back seat of Tracey's car teeming with panicked mice! Tracey also had difficulty maintaining a relationship with a boyfriend. Few wanted to pay second fiddle to possessive barn owl.

The relationship began when Stacey O'Brien, a young lab technician at Cal Tech, volunteered to adopt an injured baby barn owl. The story reveals new discoveries about owl behaviour, their ability to communicate, and their intelligence. "It is an inspiring example of how animals are able to reveal to us who they really are and who we really are" (Marc Bekoff, University of Colorado). Wesley returns Stacey's unquestioning nurturing and care, when she becomes very ill toward the end of their relationship. This book is available at your local library; if it is not owned, ask the library to inter library loan it for you from another library. I am sure that you will enjoy it!

Lynne Gibbon

NATURALIST'S NOTES

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher **Aug.15/10**

Lynne and I left home about 9:00 am to drive down to Monticello a little cross-road community southwest of Shelburne were the Luther Marsh is as well

as the Monticello Wetland. The reason for the trip was to try and find a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher a bird from the Southwestern United States that got lost and ended up here. The drive took about an hour and a half with intermittent drizzle and rain. Upon arrival we drove out to the west end of the community to an area that Bruce and Jean Wilson had seen the bird. No luck so we retraced our steps and turned south on the 21/22 Side Rd and ended up at Luther's Marsh. At the Marsh we saw Cedar Waxwings, Tree Swallows, Northern Loon, Double-crested Cormorants, Pied-billed Grebe. Driving back down to the intersection we stopped and carefully searched the dike area by the duck blind were some people at Luther's said they saw the Flycatcher just a short time before. No luck. We did see numerous Great Egrets out in the Monticello Wetland. We slowly worked our way back to Bruce and Jean's lucky spot with no luck, but 5 Sandhill Cranes flew over just at tree top height. A couple of cars stopped to ask if we had found it yet, one car were a couple from St Catherines; we followed them back up the 21/22 Side Rd. and parked again opposite the duck blind. A few minutes searching with the binoculars and I found him sitting out on a dead shrub branch just below the dike. We both set up our scopes and all four of us had a real good look. Also had a Northern Harrier, Turkey Vulture, two Broadwinged Hawks, Green Heron, Bobolink and Canada Geese. We watched the Flycatcher for awhile until the thunder started to get very close, so said our goodbyes and started to head for home when the sky opened up with some very heavy rain for a half hour or so.

When we got home at 3:00 pm the temperature was 28C and the humidity was 80%.

Brian Gibbon

Hello Fellow birders:

This morning (Sunday May 2) at 7:05 am I saw 13 black-bellied whistling ducks from the observation platform in the southwest corner of Tiny Marsh.

Alex Mills

**"Big Year" sightings from
December 1/09 to November 30/10**

For those members unfamiliar with the term a "Big Year" describes the attempt of a birder to try and see as many birds as they can within a defined area i.e. Simcoe County. The following individuals had a friendly competition during their Big Year

| <u>Sightings to-date</u> | <u>As of</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Linda Crome..... | 35 Jan 26/10 |
| Diane Fletcher..... | 151 Jun 17/10 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----------|
| Sid Hadlington..... | 185 | Jun 17/10 |
| Margo Holt..... | 188 | Jun 17/10 |
| Jennifer Howard..... | 131 | Jun 17/10 |
| Beryl Lougher..... | 203 | Jun 17/10 |
| Phyllis Tremblay..... | 202 | Jun 17/10 |
| Leanore Wiancko..... | 158 | Jun 17/10 |
| Jim & Pat Woodford..... | 189 | Jun 17/10 |

BEST Sightings so far.....

DIANE = Bohemian Waxwings, Northern Shrike

SID = Snowy Owl (pure white), Northern Hawk Owl

MARGO = Northern Goshawk, Snowy Owl, Prairie Warbler

JENNIFER = Screech Owl, Short-eared Owl, Great Horned Owl, Varied Thrush, Eastern Bluebird

BERYL = Boreal Owl, Barrow's Goldeneye, Short-eared Owl, Harlequin Duck, Tennessee Warbler

(Lifer), American White Pelican, Brewer's Blackbird

PHYLLIS = Long-tailed Ducks, Great-horned Owl, Pine Siskin, Horned Lark, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, Prothonotary Warbler, Orchard Oriole, Black & Yellow-billed Cuckoos

LEANORE = Northern Hawk Owl, Hooded Warbler, Whip-poor-will

PAT & JIM = Barred Owl, Prothonotary, Cerulean & Orange Crown Warblers, Black & Yellow-billed Cuckoos

Did you know as of April 4, 2009 that 482 species have been seen in Ontario (per OFO)

Beryl Lougher

BIRDING THE EASTERN SHORE OF GEORGIAN BAY

The eastern shore of Georgian Bay has some interesting habitat for bird life. The Canadian shield, characterized by rock consisting of granite quartz and gneiss is overlaid by Juniper, White Pine, with deciduous stands of Red Oak, and lesser quantities of Red Pine, White Oak, Red Maple, and other trees.

Perhaps the most unique species of bird that nests inconspicuously in juniper, is the Prairie Warbler. (So inconspicuously I have yet to find a nest!)

The name is a misnomer- it is not found in prairies, however its wintering grounds in the west Indies may resemble prairies, hence, perhaps the name.

It returns in early May and can easily be identified by its ascending buzzy zee zee zee zee song, with each note on a distinctive pitch. The song can be heard until early July, when the birds become silent, and difficult to find. Based on my observance of this species in this area over the last fifty years I would state that its status hasn't changed much, probably as the habitat has not been altered significantly.

Other common breeding warblers in the area

include Pine, Black-throated blues, and greens, black and white, yellow-rumped, Nashville, ovenbird, Magnolia, Redstart, and Common Yellow-throat. Yellow Warblers re uncommon, being present only where stands of willow are present.

With the maturing woodlands Pileated Woodpeckers are becoming increasingly common.

The common raptors of the area include Turkey Vulture, Broad-winged Hawk, Merlin and Osprey.

Water birds include Cormorants, Common Loons, American Mergansers, Mallards, and Wood Ducks, and of course, Canada Geese!

Herring and Ring Billed Gulls, Caspian and Common Terns are also common.

Notably absent are many of the target birds for the Marsh Monitoring Program, including rails, and grebes. (I have heard and seen American Bitterns but I believe they breed in the myriad of inland lakes, and not the coastal (shield) Georgian Bay waters.

A relative newcomer to the area is the Sandhill Crane. I believe low water levels have created more satisfactory habitat for this species. Of course the "Blue Heron" is abundant!

Unless one owns a cottage in this area, (and even if one does), the best way to bird the area is by kayak as most of it is inaccessible by road. I prefer a kayak with a rudder as it is easier to control, and less disruptive to the birds, on approach. I have used canoes, but only in calm conditions, as they are more difficult to control.

One of the most accessible areas to bird the area is Beausoleil Island (part of Georgian Bay National Park). Here there are a plethora of trails with not only the "shield" habitat but also habitat more similar to that found at Awenda Provincial Park to the south. This island can easily be reached from Honey Harbour.

I have recorded around 100 species of birds in this area. More could be added if I birded the area in the winter, (or more during migration). Every year I manage to add one or two more to my list. This year I was happy to hear my first Wood Thrush!

Dave Lord

Ontario Nature Report:-

Two BFNC youth members, Gordon Bell and Curtis Cook attended the 2010 Youth Summit for Biodiversity the 1st weekend in June.

Ontario Nature hosted a Youth Summit for Biodiversity in honor of the UN's International Year of Biodiversity. The focus: - develop an understanding of Provincial biodiversity issues as

well as develop a drive and ability to take action and leadership in their own communities. Out of the summit, a Youth Council of interested teens will advise Ontario Nature and the Nature Network as we move forward in developing programming accessible to our youth across the province. The goal is to strengthen the network of young naturalist network throughout Ontario.

The Spring Regional Meeting on April 24 was hosted by the Carden Field Naturalists. The morning's agenda included club reports, Nature Network updates and a presentation by David A. Homer on The Carden Alvar & Its Birds. A draft resolution on the 404 Extension was submitted. After lunch Ron Reid took us on an informative tour of the Little Bluestem which was just out the back door of The Carden Recreation Centre.

Spring Excursion

Little Bluestem was purchased in the fall of 2009 by The Nature Conservancy of Canada partnering with the Couchiching Conservancy. The property is contiguous with The Prairie Smoke property, Cameron Ranch and Windmill Ranch. The Carden Field Naturalists act as stewards of both Little Bluestem and The Prairie Smoke under the direction of the Couchiching Conservancy.

Ontario Nature Huronia Fall Regional Meeting will take place October 23, 2010 in Orillia, hosted by the Orillia Naturalists' Club. All are welcome to attend. We will be visiting Grants Woods in the afternoon.

Phyllis Tremblay



Chimney Swift B. Backland

Chimney Swift (CHSW) Project Report 2010

Nine BFNC members attended the CHSW Workshop on Saturday, May 1, 10:30 - 3:30.

Project coordinator, Elisabeth van Stam from Bird Studies Canada, presented information on the chimney swift, possible reasons for its decline, the goals and protocol of Ontario SwiftWatch. In the afternoon we started the chimney inventory in downtown Barrie.

We were assigned 14 squares of 500 metres. This is a random sampling to evaluate chimney swift numbers in Barrie. Of these 14 squares, there are 7 habitat types which have been determined by the Ontario SwiftWatch coordinator:- 2 Downtown, 2 Medium Density Housing, 2 Low Density Housing, 2 Open, 2 Commercial, 2 Industrial and 2 Institutional. One survey square from each habitat type was inventoried. (i.e. 7 of 14; all 14 could have been done if we had more observers). Chimney inventory is a systematic assessment of potential swift nest & roost chimneys.

Nineteen BFNC members participated in the Ontario SwiftWatch Program which followed the protocol produced by Bird Studies Canada. These volunteers were:- Brian Backland, Win Bowser, Inga Brinckmann, Chris Evans, Elizabeth Gillan, Al McNair & Catherine Mercer, Dave Nichols, Lyn Pope, Don Scanlon & Marita Pinto, Joyce Thompson, Phyllis & Paul Tremblay, Liz & Bert Van Niekerk & grandson, Kieran, Jean & Bruce Wilson.

The Chimney Swift observations began with Presence/Absence Surveys in mid-May. This technique helps to identify the number of active chimneys in each square. With this method, we found a total of 8 active chimneys in the 4 inventoried squares (500m x 500m) in central Barrie. Evening monitoring continued at these chimneys on the same night every week until mid-July.

A 15 minute one time only Daytime Survey was conducted on July 25 by observing the 8 chimneys where CHSW presence had been determined during the Presence /Absence Surveys. The Daytime Survey helps distinguish the difference between a nest chimney (frequent entrances/exits for nest building & feeding the young) and a roost chimney (multiple birds enter one time only to spend the night). Daytime activity was noted in 4 of the 8 chimneys.

Roost Monitoring was carried out weekly from August 3 - September 16 in the 2 squares closer to Kempenfelt Bay. We saw our last 4 CHSW enter a chimney on Collier Street on September 9, 2010. For a week or more after the young CHSW had fledged, the nest chimneys appeared to become a small roost, presumably for the family of birds that nested there.

Inga Brinckmann prepared a spread sheet of our results and we were fortunate to have Elizabeth Gillan photograph the sites.

All those involved agreed that this is a worthwhile club project, but we need more participants next year.

Summary of CHSW Activity

May 1 - Chimney Swift Workshop presented by Bird Studies Canada

- CHSW observed in downtown Barrie

May 18 - August 17 94 Dunlop Street, E. (The Queen's Hotel) - CHSW counts performed. Spring & Summer Roost Chimney

May 27 - August 19 166 Collier Street - Presumed to be a Nest Chimney

June 15 - August 17 - 114 Worsley Street (Old Barrie Jail) - Presumed to be a Nest Chimney

June 17 - September 9 - 149 Collier Street - Presumed to be a Nest Chimney

July 6 - July 13, 55 - 59 Collier Street - Small Roost Chimney

July 6 - August 24 - 50 - 58 Dunlop Street, E. (Dollarama) - Presumed to be a Nest Chimney

July 25 - 30 Mary Street - Daytime Monitoring - Presumed to be a Nest Chimney

August 13 - 12 members took part in the Ontario-wide Chimney Swift "Blitz"

August 13 - August 20 24 Dunlop Street, E. (Ash Bar & Grill) Presumed to be a Nest Chimney. (It was a Fall Roost in 2009).

August 31 - September 2 130 Dunlop Street, E. (Tiff's) - Fall Roost Chimney

September 9 - Last evening CHSW were observed (149 Collier St.)

Phyllis Tremblay



Chimney Swift count crew B. Backland

NIGHT SKIES

- November 17 watch for the Leonid meteors, best seen after moonset about 3:00 am.
- December 14 watch for the Geminid meteors again best after moonset about 6:00 am.
- December 13 you can spot Jupiter unaided before sunset 6 degrees below the Moon.
- December 21 total lunar eclipse, visible best in west. Totality at 2 am. This moon is the Cold Moon – the Winter Solstice.
- December 26 two shadows on Jupiter, best in the East of North America around 8:06 pm.

DID YOU KNOW?

- U.S. astronomer Harlow Shapley was born 125

years ago on November 2.

-November 12, 30 years ago Voyager 1 made its closest approach to Saturn.

-November 21, today's full Moon is the Beaver Moon.

-December 19, 50 years ago Mercury 1 was launched on an unmanned test flight.



Top to bottom, nothing stops a naturalist, dragonfly
Everyone gets educated, coyote in brush.

Thanks to Brian Backland Photography