



# The Swallow



Volume 22, # 2  
Spring/Summer 2005

## **Directors:**

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Secretary: Manson Fleguel 732-7703	Benita Richardson	
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Teresa Frechette documented this Boreal Owl as it roosted beside the home of Jayne & Gerald DeRoy on January 30, 2005. Several individuals of this uncommon northern species made appearances in the county this winter.

Membership in the Pembroke Area Field Naturalists is available by writing to: the PAFN, Box1242, Pembroke, ON K8A 6Y6. 2005/2006 dues are: Student \$5, Senior \$5, Individual \$7, Family \$10, Individual Life \$150, Family Life \$200.

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PAFN internet page: <http://www.renc.igs.net/~cmichener/pafn.index.html>

## • E v e n t s & T r i p s •

### **Owling Night**

When: 7:30 PM, Friday, April 1st, 2005

Where: Wilberforce Twp Park parking lot. Go south of intersection of Hwy 41 and Lake Dore Rd., cross the bridge, turn right after bridge and go a short distance to park.

Trip Coordinator: Chris Michener, 625-2263 (cmichener@renc.igs.net)

A route will be followed by car parade (car-pooling encouraged!) passing through varied habitat. A tape of owl calls will be used to encourage owl response.

### **Sky Walk**

Date: Friday, April 8, 2005; 7:30 pm (just before the sunset at 7:47 pm EDT)

Location: Soike Road (if it's clear of snow- please confirm with Jean at 625-2263)

On this day, around 4:30 p.m., the Sun and Moon will come together (New Moon) to produce a partial solar eclipse. Venus will also be in the mix forming a triad with the Sun and Moon as the three sink below the western horizon. (Remember you should NEVER look directly at the Sun as it could seriously injure your eyes.) New Moon creates the best night time viewing conditions because the sky is so dark.

Jupiter, the bright planet of "Growth & Expansion" and Saturn, the ringed and much dimmer planet of "Limitation & Contraction" are moving across the spring sky in a "squared" dance. With a little Jovian luck and a clear sky, we will observe Jupiter's four largest Moons (discovered by Galileo) as they have a gas whilst dancing in pairs around "the Big Guy". Whereas Jupiter or Jove confers luck, Saturn rewards effort. So if we work hard, maybe we'll get a peek at Saturn's rings and perhaps even get a glimpse of its largest Moon, Titan, which will be orbiting off Saturn at about the position of "5 o'clock".

Please dress warmly. Bring a lawn chair if you have one; a blanket; and a thermos of hot tea. The good news is we shouldn't need any insect repellent.

### **PAFN Annual Meeting**

Wed., April 13, 2005, 7:00PM, Room 201, Algonquin College, Pembroke.

The Club's business meeting will last until 7:30 or so, followed by refreshments. At about 8 PM, Jason Dombroskie will talk on the extraordinary insects of the Pembroke area. Jason's talk to the Natural History Day crowd last May was spell-binding and had everyone's total attention. His photos of very small animals are close-up and personal, and the subject matter reflects his passion.



Jason will surely mention the Great Tiger Moth in his talk, here photographed by Nancy Hiscock

### **A Trip to Bellow's Bay**

Date: Saturday, April 23, 2005.

Time: at 9AM.

Trip Leader: Manson Fleguel, 732-7703.

Meet at the marina in Pembroke, at the mouth of the Muskrat River. Car pooling will be offered. Bring rubber boots, as cowpies and mud will be encountered on the walk (1km total). Migrants, especially ducks, make the bay come to life. Spotting scopes are useful, binoculars essential.

### **3rd Annual Natural History Day - Free, but must pre-register!**

Date: Saturday, May 7, 2005. (tentative date)

Time: 9 AM and continuous through the afternoon.

Where: to be determined

Check our website for details as they will become available soon.

### **A Walk in the Petawawa Terrace (Old Fish Hatchery)**

Date: Sunday May 15, 2005.

Time: 5 PM.

Trip Leader: Myron Loback 735-1278.

Meet in the upper parking lot of the Terrace, on Laurentian Drive. (go west of Pembroke on Pembroke St. towards Petawawa, turn north on Laurentian Dr., watch for sign and parking area). Some migrant songbirds and waterfowl can be expected. Good outing for children as Canada Geese will likely be present and, quite possibly, with young. This is an enjoyable, relaxed outing.

### **PAFN - 9 and Dine - Fundraiser**

Date: Friday, June 17th, 2005.

Time: 5 PM. Tee-off time at your leisure.

Island Brae Golf Course will be the site of dinner and 9-holes of golf. The cost is \$35.00 each. The format will probably be best ball. To register a team or yourself and for more information, please call Benita Richardson at 735-5404.

**2nd Annual PAFN Tri-wing Challenge.** This is a weekend long event where teams of one or more individuals are challenged to spend as much or as little time from **4 PM Friday, June 24 to 4 PM Sunday, June 26** counting all bird, butterfly and dragonfly species (or just one category if you want to concentrate your focus). At 4 PM Sunday, everyone is invited to a PAFN **potluck picnic** at the Wilberforce Township Park to tabulate the results. The park has swings, outhouses, tables under a roof and an extensive sand beach for swimming. Bring your own plates and utensils.

The 4 categories of the **Tri-wing Challenge** are:

- high count totals for bird species; (last year 115 species were seen)
- high count totals for butterfly species; (35 species last year)
- high count totals for dragonfly species; (34 species last year)
- high count for total of all three. (184 total species last year)

Each team member does not have to identify each species but does have to remain within earshot of each other. The Tri-wing Challenge is based on the honour system for the correct identification of all species. Species lists for birds,

dragonflies and butterflies can be found on our web site or contact Chris to have paper copies mailed to you. Pre-registration is not necessary. For more information contact Chris at 625-2263 (email: cmichener@renc.igs.net).

### **17th Lake Dore Butterfly Count**

Date: Saturday, July 2, 2005 (Rain/wind date, Sunday, July 3).

Time: 9 AM. Organizer: Chris Michener 625-2263.

Meet at the parking area at the intersection of Hwy. 41 and County Rd.30 (the Lake Dore Rd.). Bring butterfly field guide, binoculars, footwear (optional) for the bog, net (for catch & release) and lunch. A map of the Count circle and species list will be available. A participants' fee (under 12 free) of \$3 is asked to cover publishing costs of the North American results (North American Butterfly Association). A partial subsidy is paid by the PAFN as fees are paid in \$US.

### **14th Hog Island Butterfly Count**

Date: Sat., July 16, 2005 (lousy weather day, Sun., July 17).

Time: 9 AM.

Organizer: Chris Michener 625-2263.

Meet at Mullen's Esso, Pembroke St. E., near the turn to Quebec. The Count Circle for this butterfly Count is half in Ontario and half in Quebec.

In the past, some groups have gone to the Westmeath area; others have butterflyed on Allumette Island. You can choose the area you prefer. Maps of the circle and checklists will be available. A participants fee (under 12 free) of \$3 is asked to cover publishing costs. See previous event.

### **The 8<sup>th</sup> Lake Dore Odonate Count**

Date: Sat., August 6, 2005 (lousy weather day Sun., August 7)

Time: 9 AM.

Organizer: Chris Michener, 625-2263.

This has proven to be an excellent opportunity for all of us to appreciate this group of insects. We have had rewarding counts with plenty of species. The format will be similar to the previous years... search for dragonflies and damselflies within a 7.5 mile radius of Biederman Park, Lake Dore. Meet at the parking area at Hwy.41 and Cty. Rd. 30 (Lake Dore Rd.). Picture guides will be available as well as experienced 'odonaters'. A large insect net, optional rubber boots, close focus binoculars, sun screen and lunch/water are suggested. There is no fee for this Count.

### **Marina/Waterfront Bird Walk**

Date: Saturday, August 20, 2005

Time: 8 AM.

Trip Leader: Ken Hooles 735-4430.

Meet at the Pembroke marina, by the mouth of the Muskrat River in Pembroke. Ken will introduce us to migrant birdlife along the Pembroke waterfront. There are usually gulls, terns, ducks, geese, cormorants and songbirds such as vireos, warblers, sparrows and finches. Surprises usually occur and it's a good social outing... a chance to meet some very nice people!

# Trip Reports

Lake Dore Birds - October 30th, 2004

By Chris Michener

Scheduling an outing months beforehand is a risk only gamblers should take. The day may bring the storm of the century or it may dawn with a beautiful red sunrise and a warming breeze. Given the odds, the trip schedulers of the PAFN have been very lucky. On Saturday, what looked like a rainy and blustery day in the making, turned out to be a rainy and blustery day in the making.

Our luck, however, was witnessed by the late arrival of the bad weather. It was after we had circled Lake Dore that the rain settled in.



Little Gull from Lake Dore Fall 2004. Photo: Chris Michener

Seven people witnessed Lake Dore in a fog and not an early morning foggy state of mind, for we started at a very leisurely 9 AM. The visibility being 300 metres, the middle of the lake was out of bounds to birders. Standing around with scopes and binoculars is a pleasant pastime, depending on the bird activity, and there was just enough to make it worthwhile. One hears gossip, facts, jokes and news of other outings such as Grant Bickel's outing to the Fourth Chute Alvar, where a large colony of Fringed Gentian was in flower (first reported by John Macgillivray). (see article later in The Swallow)

The first sighting of the morning was a Common Loon (total of 7); the last a Little Gull. Sandwiched between were: Horned Grebe (18), Red-necked Grebe (1), Mallard (71), Greater Scaup (8), Lesser Scaup (1), Surf Scoter (12), Black Scoter (3), Bufflehead (15), Common Goldeneye (60), Common Merganser (5), Rough-legged Hawk (1), Bonaparte's Gull (26), Ring-billed Gull (3), Herring Gull (2), Great Black-backed Gull (1), Mourning Dove (2), Blue Jay (3), American Crow (3), Common Raven (1), American Tree Sparrow (10), Song Sparrow (2), American Goldfinch (3).



A magician was performing on a cruise ship and each night while performing his pet parrot kept saying "its up his sleeve" "its in his pocket". "its in his shoe" "in his pants", etc., and the magician was losing his patience. One night while performing his tricks the ships boilers blew and the ship sank, but the lucky magician was able to grab onto a ship's table and float on the sea for a few days. The parrot in the meantime seemed non-plussed and was looking quizzically at the magician for a few days whilst drifting. Finally on the 4th day, the parrot looked at his master and said, "I give up... what did you do with the ship?"

## The 2004 Pembroke CBC

by Manson Fleguel, Count Coordinator

This year, the Count was held on December 18, 2004. The weather was quite cold, with some light snow in the morning hours. Winds of 20 kph. made listening for bird sounds difficult.

This year there were 20 field birders spread over the 6 sectors in the Pembroke circle and 48 feeders were watched. Our final count was 46 species, down 3 from last years 49 species. Total birds counted were 4812, surprisingly high considering the weather. This year at the roundup, we had no Ruffed Grouse reported, but later input gave us some numbers. The total (3) for Ruffed Grouse, ties the all time low number on the Pembroke count set in 1985. All time high counts were made in 2 species; Northern Cardinal (8) and Bohemian Waxwing (729).



Found near Desjardenville, Allumette Island, the Northern Hawk-Owl is a rare visitor to the area.  
video frame: Chris Michener



It's been a northern owl kind of winter and Lauren Trute photographed this Great Gray east of Pembroke

Here is a synopsis of the 6 sector findings and participants. Thanks to all that made the day another outstanding count day!

The Quebec sectors were combined this year because of a lack of available coordinators. Section 1E and Sector 1W together had 31 species found. Field birders were Chris Michener, Bert Cain and Manson Fleguel. Einer Lund, Howard and Doris McLean (along with Drake McLean), and Jean Berrigan watched feeders. This sector contributed the only Canada Goose, Long-tailed Duck, Coopers Hawk, Northern Hawk Owl and Song Sparrow.

Sector 3E, led by co-ordinator Ken Hooles ended with 30 species. His field birders were Pat Wolfe, Jack Rumbles and Merv Fediuk. Feeder watchers were Floyd and Attie Milton, Dave and Nora Potts, Ron and Lorraine Bertrand, Bob and Julie Pick, John MacGillivray, Fern and Caryle Lance, Ken Recoski, Nancy Armstrong, Merv Dougherty, Ray Brazeau, Marg and Jim Anderson, Francis Marcotte, Mac and Diane Thrasher, Wendell McLaughlin, Marilyn Rumbles, Lorna Fediuk, Harry and Marie Fick, Moe Guimond, Ray Virtue, Eileen Gahagan and Mike and Marilyn Kruschenske. This sector spotted the only Red-tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, Great Gray Owl, Common Grackle and House Finch.

Sector 2S ended with 24 species. Co-ordinated by Jean Brereton, her field people were Jason Dombroskie and Jenny Montgomery. This was a first count for Jenny. Feeder watchers were Mark Raglin, Tom and Dawn Farnel, Gary and Sheila Bucholtz, Dwight and



First seen by Jean Brereton behind the NewRO, this bird was still being seen a month later. video frame: Chris Michener

Lucy Dickerson, Erna Maves and Sarah Beimers. This sector found the only Rough-legged hawk, Snowy Owl, Golden-crowned Kinglet and White-winged Crossbill.

Sector 2N had 23 species. Robin Cunningham was the coordinator and he had Liz Link and Carey and Gwen Purdon as his field personnel. Viola Nitschke, Jim and Anne Clarke, Art and Shirley VanWinckle, Keith and Alice Curry, Ivy Levoy and Vic Harmer watched feeders. This sector had the only Ruffed Grouse contributed by a field birder. (The other report came from a feeder watcher)

Sector 3W also had 23 species. Led by Myron Loback, his field birders were George Young, Teresa Frechette, Benita Richardson, and Barb and David Beimers. Feeder watchers were Mac Nussey and Mary Lou Hansen, Howard and Frances Doelle, Judy Fleguel, Rick and Sharlene Kranz, Kathleen and Logan Moss, Gary and Sue Walton, Daryl Coulson, Leona Junop, Wes Loback, A J Recoskie, Pat Wolfe and Harold and Shirley Wirth. No species were found only in this sector (but the count compiler thinks some of these field birders have the most fun).

The following is a listing and the numbers found (in brackets) of all species reported on the count. (CW) means the species was reported during the count week but not on the day:

Canada Goose (16)	Long-tailed Duck (3)	Common Goldeneye (103)
Bufflehead (CW)	Common Merganser (9)	Bald Eagle (4)
Coopers Hawk (1)	Northern Goshawk (CW)	Red-tailed Hawk (2)
Rough-legged Hawk (1)	Hawk Species (1)	Ruffed Grouse (3)
Wild Turkey (16)	Herring Gull (2)	Rock Pigeon (352)
Mourning Dove (122)	Snowy Owl (1)	N. Hawk Owl (1)
Barred Owl (1)	Great Gray Owl (3)	Downy Woodpecker (54)
Hairy Woodpecker (64)	Pileated Woodpecker (12)	Woodpecker Species (2)
Blue Jay (312)	American Crow (179)	Common Raven (90)
Black Capped Chickadee (878)		Red Br. Nuthatch (87)
White Br. Nuthatch (44)	Brown Creeper (3)	Golden Cr. Kinglet (1)
Bohemian Waxwing (729)	Northern Shrike (2)	European Starling (245)
Northern Cardinal (8)	Am. Tree Sparrow (24)	Song Sparrow (1)
Sparrow Species (3)	Dark-eyed Junco (12)	Snow Bunting (246)
Common Grackle (1)	Pine Grosbeak (12)	Purple Finch (16)
House Finch (5)	White-winged Crossbill (5)	Common Redpoll (562)
Pine Siskin (53)	American Goldfinch (338)	Evening Grosbeak (145)
House Sparrow (38)		

Note: The Bufflehead (CW) and the N Goshawk (CW) as well as those indicated as a "Species", are not considered separate species for the count.

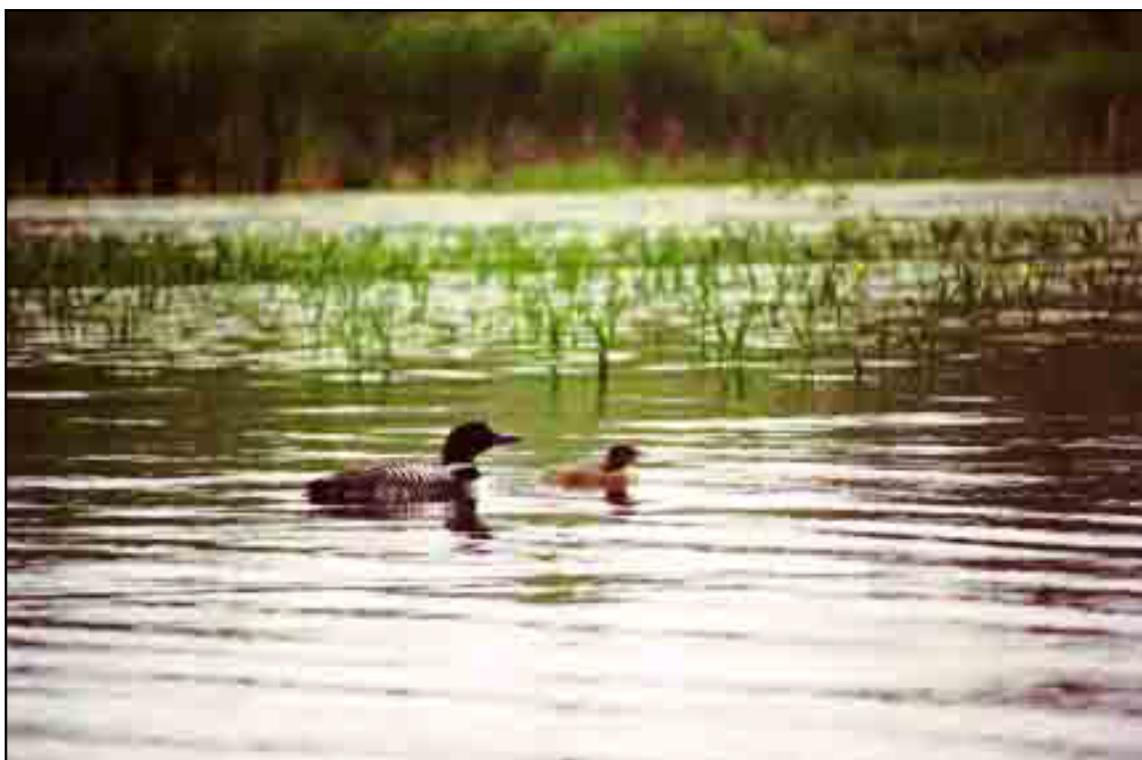
Results of the Eganville and Killaloe CBC's can be found on the Audubon Web site: [www.audubon.org/bird/cbc](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc)

## Lake Dore Common Loon Egg

by Manson Fleguel

The Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, a project to monitor the success of Common Loon nesting in Canada, has been co-ordinated by Bird Studies Canada for a number of years (this is the same organization that runs the Christmas Bird Counts in Canada). I have been monitoring the Loons on Lake Dore for several years now and it has been an interesting process.

Starting in early June and continuing through September, I have counted the number of adult loons on the lake as well as any young loons. The purpose of the data is to see how many loon chicks actually reach maturity. Any nesting activity is also documented. Usually Lake Dore has a resident adult Loon population of between 30 and 70 birds, building from the lower numbers in the early part of the spring season to higher numbers as the summer progresses. Of these birds, only 2 pairs actually nest on the lake to date. Most years each pair raises 1 or 2 young loons. The rest of the loons normally hang out in flocks of 5 to 15 birds in the central part of the lake. I assume they are all too young to breed on their own.



Common Loon nests are usually quite easy to find as they have to be located so the adult can push herself directly from water up onto the mound that the nest is built on. The nest is often built on top of an abandoned Muskrat winter home. These “push-ups” are located in water deep enough for the Loon to use, (usually 2 to 4 feet). Sometimes floating logs from an abandoned duck hunting blind have been used the following spring. The top is then covered with vegetation gathered from the area and flattened enough to hold the

mother. A large adult sitting on top of this mound of wet vegetation (about 6 inches above water level) can be seen from at least a half mile away.

On June 29, 2002, a loon nest with 2 eggs I had been observing for a few weeks, was now abandoned and a mother and only 1 downy chick swam about in this vicinity on the lake. A day later, I boated to the nest and found 1 abandoned egg, apparently not going to hatch (it was cold to the touch), so I collected it before another predator did, and made a few notes.

The egg was well packed and then sent via Canada Post to a lab in Hull for analysis. I certainly hoped the packaging was sufficient for the trip, as the smell of an addled (rotten) egg that had broken, would not have been pleasant for those handling the mail. A few weeks later, I received a letter thanking me for the egg. It advised that testing was only completed when there was a large enough sample of collected eggs and I would be advised of the results of this egg at that time.

On October 15, 2004, the results were sent to me. The primary test is to determine the levels of Mercury present in the egg. Also the levels of Selenium are recorded as it is believed that the latter element interacts with the mercury to make it less toxic. "My" egg had a slightly higher-than-average level of Mercury (.77 microgram mercury per gram) and a slightly lower-than-average level of Selenium (.50 microgram selenium per gram). This rating was based on the analysis of 157 eggs that are in the database since testing began. The rest of the egg contents are archived in the National Specimen Bank freezers in the offices of the Canadian Wildlife Service.

This latest bit of information about the quality of the environment Loons must face (and also we humans must face) is just another example of "Citizen Science", a process each of us can contribute to.



### **Autumn Blues** by Grant Bickel

On Labor Day weekend 2004, fellow club member John Macgillivray, informed me of his discovery of Fringed Gentian near the Fourth Chute of the Bonnechere River. I was very interested in his report because I had not been expecting to find Fringed Gentian in Renfrew County. I quickly organized a trip with Elise and Heather (my intrepid daughters) and we were soon rewarded with the thrilling sight of hundreds of Fringed Gentians in bloom – one of the most beautiful flowers in Ontario. These flowers were a great highlight to close out the summer season (although the girls may claim that the ice cream stop in nearby Eganville was the real trip highlight).

Fringed Gentian (*Gentianopsis crinita*) is the most famous member of the Gentianaceae family. It is known for its deep violet-blue flowers with a satiny sheen. The flower is deep vase shaped with four rounded deeply fringed lobes. The lobes spread horizontally in sunshine or warm weather. Fringed Gentian is

found in wet calcareous (limestone) meadows and shorelines. It blooms from late August to late September. It is considered uncommon in Renfrew County and is only expected where exposed limestone is prevalent. Due to over picking and habitat loss, the Fringed Gentian is becoming threatened throughout much of its range.

The Gentian family contains several species that have blue flowers and that bloom in late summer or autumn. Narrow-leaved Gentian (*Gentiana linearis*) makes its home on granitic or acidic soils in the northwestern portion of Renfrew County. The flowers of Narrow-leaved Gentian never “open”. The flower is a cylindrical shaped calyx with incurved lobes. Bees pollinate narrow-leaved Gentian; they are the only insects strong enough to squeeze between the lobes and enter the calyx to get at the pollen inside. I have seen many bulging flowers with a bumblebee moving around inside. Narrow-leaved Gentian blooms during the month of August in wet woods and meadows.

The third blue Gentian to be found in Renfrew County is Bottle Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*). Bottle Gentian is very similar to Narrow-leaved Gentian; however, the flower of Bottle Gentian is shaped more like a football, the lobes are slightly fringed, and the leaves are much broader. Bottle Gentian is considered rare in Renfrew County and my only observation of this species was also in the Fourth Chute area at the Bonnechere River. Bottle Gentian blooms in August and September.

Keep an eye out next autumn for these three members of the Gentian family and then take some time to closely study these spectacular and fascinating “autumn blues”.



photos: Grant Bickel



conservation updates for member groups

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## ONTARIO NATURE NEWS

### CENTRAL ONTARIO NEWS

#### Alvar Workshop and Guided Field Trip by the Carden Field Naturalists

Carden Field Naturalists will be holding an Alvar Workshop and Tour on Saturday, May 28th, 2005 from 9:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Carden Recreation Centre, Lake Dalrymple. In

the morning, Dr. Paul Catling, Research Scientist and Curator, Biodiversity, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, will address the participants on the topic "The Significance of Alvar Landscapes in Biodiversity Protection". After lunch, buses will transport the group on a guided field trip to nearby Carden Plain Alvar habitats such as Cameron Ranch and Windmill Ranch.

Prairie smoke (three-flowered avens) will be but one of many unusual flora species in bloom. Grassland birds such as Eastern meadowlarks, vesper sparrows, brown thrashers, upland sandpipers and bobolinks should be active on their breeding territories. The Carden Plain is the nesting ground for several of the remaining pairs of the endangered eastern subspecies of loggerhead shrike.

The cost for this event is \$30 per person. The fee includes welcoming coffee and light refreshment, lecture by Dr. Catling, lunch, guided tour of the Alvar, bus transportation, and support to Nature Conservancy of Canada for acquisition. This event will run rain or shine. Advanced registration is required, and is limited to the first 80 paid applicants.

Deadline for registration is May 16th, 2005. Confirm by sending a cheque or money order, payable to Carden Field Naturalists, to:

Paul Laver, Treasurer  
31 Loon Drive, RR#1,  
Sebright, ON L0K 1W0

For more information about the event, contact Bob Bowles (705) 325-3149  
rbowles@rogers.com.

### EASTERN ONTARIO NEWS

#### Alfred Bog Success by Ottawa Field Naturalists

After a long campaign of the Alfred Bog Committee, formed in 1985 by Frank Pope and Charles Sauriol of the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club, the Bog is now protected from peat extraction, logging and drainage. On October 26, 2004 the Prescott-Russell County Council passed the Alfred Bog Protection By-Law.

All appeals of the county official plan pertaining to the Bog are withdrawn and the years-long mediation of the Ontario Municipal Board terminated. The Bog now has an official boundary and wetland designation.

Many organizations and people contributed to the success of the effort to save the bog over its 20-year history. Involved were all levels of government (federal provincial and municipal), Nature Conservancy Canada, South Nation Conservation, the Vankleek Hill Nature Society, Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club, Alfred College, Ontario Nature, private industry and many individuals. Congratulations all.



Judge: "Young man, it says here you shot and killed a California Condor. How do you plead?"

Defendant: "Guilty your honor."

Judge: "GUILTY!? Don't you know how endangered these condors are? There are hardly any left at all."

Defendant: "Yes sir, I know, but I had to feed my family, we're so poor."

Judge: "That's no excuse. I fine you 30 days in jail. By the way, what does California Condor taste like?"

Defendant: "It's real good, kinda like a cross between Bald Eagle and Whooping Crane!"



### Bird banding note by Chris Michener

I was studying the geese at Riverside Park on November 29, 2004 when I noticed a goose with a neck band. I was able to read the code on the band as 8E1Z. Back home, I did a quick find for bird banding and found a fill-in form for band numbers on the US Geological Survey. I filled in the details and hit send. I forgot all about it until I received a Certificate of Appreciation in the mail. The bird had been banded near Pickerington, Ohio by bander Mark Shieldcastle of the Ohio Division of Wildlife. This was on June 26, 2002 when the bird was too young to fly.

Costa Rica: March, 2001  
by Geoff Post

Can you have a pleasant late winter getaway with a non-birding spouse and still get in some productive birding? Definitely!

I had been on a birding trip to Costa Rica before so this was Sylvia's trip. She picked out the locations: a spot to see a 3-toed sloth, an isolated beach area to



PAFN Honorary Life member, Bill Walker, found this Sloth in Costa Rica on March, 2002

laze around and somewhere up in the cloudforest that wasn't Monteverde. We spent the first 5 days at La Paloma, a nature lodge on the Osa Peninsula on the southwest Pacific coast, accessible only by 8-passenger plane from San Jose to Palma Sur, a rickety van to Sierpe and a fast 8-person skiff powered by 2 hand operated 50 HP motors out the Rio Sierpe and along the Pacific coast to Bahia Drake (pronounced DRAHkay and, yes, named after the eminent seafarer) on a 45 min boat trip to our quite luxurious lodge. As we walked up the trail to the lodge, we were greeted by a mother 3-toed sloth and baby, quite active and only 3-5m away. They were there for a few hours

then disappeared into the upper reaches of the forest. Sylvia's primary natural objective was met before we even settled in. Excellent. The trip was downhill from there.



This photo of an Emerald Basilisk was taken by Bill Walker in March 2001 in Costa Rica

While at La Paloma, we hiked in Corcovado Park, went hiking and snorkeling at Isla del Cano and walked out along the coast, enjoying the little coved beaches. It was hot, 30+. The lodge had a small pool in which to cool off at the end of the day where we could watch the toucans, parrots, a Fiery-billed Aracari and a spectacular basilisk gliding up a tree nearby. All these areas yielded lots of birds, including the area right around the lodge.

From here, it was a full day of travel that included a return to San Jose via boat/van/plane, then local bus/ferry/more bus over a dirt road to a late arrival at Montezuma, a very relaxed beach area on the south end of

the Nicoya Peninsula, still on the Pacific coast, now northwest. Still very hot , but a truly easy-going place. We weren't sure at first: we were by far the oldest among the reconstructed hippies and young travelers from around the world taking a long breather here before moving on. But soon we settled in - 5 days in the shade with long walks out to the waterfall and pool to cool off in the late afternoon and a local bus-ride out to Cabo Blanco Park for a 7-hour hike, 7 hours only because I stopped often along the way to drink more water (stay hydrated as they say these days) and listen to the birds. Two stunning, memorable birding experiences: on the way in to Cabo Blanco I spent a 1/2 hour in the midst of a group of 8-10 Black-headed Trogons, calling back and forth and responding to my whistle as they moved about around me! On the way back, pretty tired and hot in the mid-afternoon, I came upon a pair of beautiful male Long-tailed Manikins competing for the attentions of a very aggressive female in a lek. A spectacular display!

For the next leg of our trip, another long travel day started at 5:30 am. We used the bus and ferry, more local buses and a final short taxi ride to take us to La Ceiba, a wonderful bed-and-breakfast in the Lake Arenal district behind Monteverde. Again, there were lots of birds right around the lodge but here in the mountains the beginning of the rainy season had started, so were unable to see Vulcan Arenal. Nonetheless, we enjoyed a very relaxed couple of days where we could bird from our breakfast table overlooking Lake Arenal and for supper have excellent steak at a nearby Italian restaurant under Argentinean management with a couple from southern France. We spent most of two days with them and realized in retrospect that we had spent more time speaking French than Spanish on our trip.

We had a good trip. A bonus for me was an additional 18 lifers - quite unexpected. I thought that after the kind of intensive, dedicated birding trip I had been on with Scott Connop (Turaco Birding Tours) in 1998 when I had seen more than 380 species, that even a couple of new birds would be a treat.

Animals seen: 3-toed sloth, agouti, coati, white-faced capuchin, mantled howler monkey, variegated squirrel, white-tailed deer, gladiator frog, whiptails, anoles, green iguanas, basilisks, plus many and varied insects.

At La Paloma: Short-billed Pigeon, Red-lored Parrot, I had seen these parrots fly over every evening here but never got a close enough look to identify them. Finally, I had a good long opportunity to observe them in the distance and their bright red wing flash was obvious several times, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Violaceous Trogon, a female sat quietly for a long time before I noticed it, Blue-crowned Motmot, excellent views right beside the swimming pool, Fiery-billed Aracari, outstanding views right beside the pool. I saw it fly by into a nearby tree as I was swimming, Chestnut-mandibled Toucan, excellent views right by the swimming pool, Hoffmann's Woodpecker, Lineated Woodpecker, Pale-billed Woodpecker, both male and female, Dot-winged Antwren, Dusky Antbird, male and very heavily streaked female, Orange-collared Manakin, Rufous Mourner, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Streaked Fly-

catcher, Dusky Antbird, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Tropical Gnatcatcher, Bananaquit, White-winged Tanager, both male and female, Yellow-throated Vireo, Thrush-like Schiffornis, Riverside Wren, Buff-throated Saltator.

At Corcovado: Boat-billed Heron, Very good views along the river leading to the waterfall., Double-toothed Kite, Scarlet Macaw, Black-throated Trogon, very nicely whistled in by our guide Javier, Ringed Kingfisher, Green Kingfisher, Black-striped Woodcreeper, Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Rufous Piha, Red-capped Manakin, Black-tailed Flycatcher, Tawny-crowned Greenlet.

At Isla del Cano: Pale-vented Pigeon, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Dacnis.

Near San Jose: White-collared Swift, large, distinctive swift seen from the bus as we got closer to San Jose.

At Montezuma: Bare-throated Tiger-Heron - on the previous day we saw one at the mouth of the river but today there were two of them further up the river leading to the waterfall making what sounded at first like the howl of a monkey - they appeared to be displaying, strutting high in the tree tops near each other and calling very loudly with their bare yellow throat distending, moving toward on another, possibly two males challenging or a male and a female? Quite amazing in the late afternoon sun; Northern Harrier, Orange-fronted Parakeet, Social Flycatcher.

At Cabo Blanco: Squirrel Cuckoo, Black-headed Trogon, On the way in I came upon a group of 6-10 of them calling in the trees around me. At first I couldn't see them but they whistled like other trogons, a 3-note call which was easy to imitate. I stayed for about 30 min. watching them as they moved closer, then away. Beautiful! Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Long-tailed Manakin - LEK! Fantastic display by two males and one female. A very exciting 15 min or so watching these beauties, Lesser Elaenia, Rufous-and-white Wren.

At Arenal: Fasciated Tiger-Heron, Although this was sighted from the bus which was moving very slowly around the potholes, we got a very good look - very gray. And it was in the right habitat along a fast mountain stream flowing into Lake Arenal. Nonetheless, this sighting has to be considered a "possible" only as it is a relatively rare species, particularly on the Pacific slope.



Bill was chuckling all the way back to Calgary after capturing this Laughing Falcon on film in Costa Rica in March 2002

At La Ceiba: A pair of Laughing Falcons eating a coral snake, Cattle Egret, Osprey, Swallow-tailed Kite, Gray-headed Chachalaca, Red-billed Pigeon, White-winged Dove, Mealy Parrot, Mountain Robin, Clay-colored Robin, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Southern Rough-winged Swallow, Yellow-bellied Siskin, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Rufous-collared Sparrow, Olive Sparrow, Grayish Saltator, Montezuma Oropendola, Baltimore Oriole, Black-cowled Oriole, Bronzed Cowbird, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Thick-billed Seed-Finch - good opportunity to study and distinguish it, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Passerini's Tanager, Scarlet-rumped Tanager - very common, Blue-gray Tanager, Thick-billed Euphonia, Golden-hooded Tanager, Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Olive Tanager, Red-crowned Ant-Tanager, Summer Tanager, Plain Wren, Ochraceous Wren, Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush, White-winged Becard, Masked Tityra, Brown Jay, Long-tailed Tyrant, Great Kiskadee.



photo: Jean Brereton

Secretary, Manson Fleguel, says, "Thank you", as he presents a framed photo of Praire Fringed Orchid by Grant Bickel to outgoing Director, Gwen Purdon, as Past President, Carey Purdon looks on. Also presented was a photo collage of events during their time as directors. The time they spent on the Board of Directors is much appreciated by the Club. They were very involved in Club outings and other activities and Carey was a good chairperson at all the meetings. Thanks again to you both!