

# The Swallow



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Autumn 2007

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This was definitely the Summer of the Monarch caterpillar, as they were draped on all the Common Milkweed plants in our area. This one was at the Shaw Woods. Please see the article, 'Species in Focus', by Lauren Trute to learn more about this remarkable insect-animal.  
photo: Lauren Trute

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Membership in the Pembroke Area Field Naturalists is available by writing to: the PAFN, Box 1242, Pembroke, ON K8A 6Y6. 2007/2008 dues are: Student \$10, Senior \$10, Individual \$15, Family \$20, Individual Life \$150, Family Life \$200.

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ph: (613) 625-2263; e-mail: [cmichener@renc.igs.net](mailto:cmichener@renc.igs.net) - Submissions welcome!

a colour copy of the Swallow is available for download (.pdf) at:

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

## ● E v e n t s & T r i p s ●

### 2007 Outdoor Woodlot Conference

#### 'Planning the Future of Your Woodlot'

When/where: Sept 22 on Don Kilby,s property at 1039 Lake Clear Rd. Speakers will cover grading white pine and hardwood on your woodlot, hardwood management, red pine plantation management, and stewardship planning. There will also be displays and representatives to talk to from suppliers of forestry equipment and services, other forestry related organizations, and natural-ist/conservation groups such as Ducks Unlimited and the Bonnechere River Water-shed Project. Call Rob Cunningham for more information (613-732-8402)

### Kiwanas Walkway Birdwalk - in Pembroke along the Ottawa River

Date: Saturday, September 22 at 8 AM.

Place: Riverside Park Beach parking area. This is at the west end of the walkway.

The Walkway is a mini bird 'trap' for Fall migrants. Western Kingbird, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Connecticut Warbler have occurred along the walkway in the past few years.

Organizer: Chris Michener: 625-2263. cmichener@renc.igs.net



Western Kingbird, along Kiwanas Walkway  
photo: Chris Michener

### Westmeath Provincial Park beach walk

Date: Saturday, Sep. 29 at 8:30 AM.

Place: Trip starts from the municipal boat launch in the town of Westmeath. Coming from the west on County Rd. 12, turn left in Westmeath before the gas station at the blue building and continue down to the



Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, at Westmeath  
Provincial Park. photo: Christian Renault

water.

Sometimes encountered are Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, American Pipit, Lapland Longspur as well as various shore-birds, gulls, ducks and geese. Dark morph Leopard Frogs are numerous.

We'll drive west from Westmeath, to Sand Point Road for the walk.

Organizer Chris Michener, pH: 625-2263; cmichener@renc.igs.net

### Lake Dore Birds

Date: Oct. 27 at 9 AM

Place: Meet at the Wilberforce Twp. beach & picnic park. From the intersection of

Hwy 41/Lake Dore Rd., go south on Hwy. 41 over the Snake River Bridge and make the next right.

The focus of this trip will be water birds, but a few songbirds may still be frequenting the riparian habitat. Some species that have been seen on Lake Dore at this time of year are Red-throated Loon, Tundra Swan, Brant, the three grebes, the three scoters and the three mergansers.

Organizer: Chris Michener: 625-2263; cmichener@renc.igs.net

### **Pembroke Christmas Bird Count**

Date: Saturday, Dec. 15

Place: Within a traditional 15 km. diameter circle. Feeder watchers count birds in their yards, while field participants drive, ski or walk a pre-designated area keeping track of the numbers of birds. Reports are given to the compiler, Manson Fleguel, after the Count.

Participants are invited to meet at Manson & Judy's around 5 PM to go over results and enjoy pizza courtesy of the Club.

To view the Count circle map and

download forms, go to our web page. (see front cover of The Swallow for URL) Please contact Manson to confirm participation. pH. 613-732-7703;

email: mfleguel@nrtco.net.

Cost: \$5.00 for field participants

### **Eganville Christmas Bird Count**

Date: Sunday, Dec. 16

Place: Eganville circle includes Augsburg, the town of Golden Lake, Green Lake, Lake Dore, Mink Lake and more. To view the Count circle map and download forms, go to the PAFN web page. (see front cover for URL) After the Count, participants are invited to gather at the home of the compiler, Chris Michener, and partner Jean Brereton at 5 pm to go over results. They are at 1311 Burchat Rd. Please contact Chris to confirm participation and presence at compilation (buffet).

pH. 613-625-2263;

email: cmichener@renc.igs.net.

Cost: \$5.00 for field participants



## **Wild Turkey Hits the Big Time**

It is time to honour this species with a place on our Club checklist. The target of the pilgrim's blunderbus has managed by stealth to exist in Renfrew County for 10 years.

Those who keep a list will know that listing rules, as published by the American Birding Association, require a species to be established for 10 years on its own merit. The Wild Turkey has done this in many areas of Renfrew County and prospered. Whether it is having any effect on the native flora and fauna has yet to be seen. But in any case, if you have a Birds of the Upper Ottawa Valley checklist, you will see Wild Turkey placed after Spruce Grouse in the section of Partridge, Grouse & Turkeys.

## Trip Reports

### **Bellowes Bay Field Trip - April 21, 2007**

by Manson Fleguel

We couldn't have ordered a more perfect day; the temperature reached in to the 20's, there was no wind, the Ottawa River was still low, and the farm fields were quite dry!

20 birders showed up and we tallied a few species at the waterfront. From here, we went to the corner of Alfred and Fraser Streets in Pembroke where (for once) we were able to hear and then track down a singing male Northern Cardinal. Not everyone had this pleasure since Tim Hortons seemed to be too close to pass! On to Westmeath.

No flooding of the Ottawa meant there were few wet areas to view waterfowl from the road. We did see large flocks of Canada Geese, both on the open Ottawa and in large skeins flying north.

Our destination was Ron Laderoute's farm, where he has been graciously accepting our group for many years. This time he was at home and we were able to thank him. After the 650 m. walk across his fields (which were almost dry), we were able to get right to the low water edge of Bellow's Bay, where viewing was excellent. There were lower numbers of waterfowl, but more in terms of species available. After an hour, no more new species were forthcoming, so it was time to leave. The group dispersed at the farmhouse after a very successful outing.

This year the group found 47 species! Here is a listing of the birds identified:

Pied-billed Grebe	Double-crested Cormorant	Great Blue Heron
Turkey Vulture	Canada Goose	Wood Duck
American Wigeon	American Black Duck	Mallard
Blue-winged Teal	Northern Pintail	Green-winged Teal
Ring-necked Duck	Lesser Scaup	Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye	Hooded Merganser	Common Merganser
Bald Eagle	Red-tailed Hawk	American Kestrel
Sandhill Crane	Killdeer	Ring-billed Gull
Rock Pigeon	Mourning Dove	Belted Kingfisher
Downy Woodpecker	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Northern Flicker
Eastern Phoebe	Pileated Woodpecker	American Crow
Common Raven	Tree Swallow	Black-capped Chickadee
American Robin	White-breasted Nuthatch	European Starling
Northern Cardinal	American Tree Sparrow	Song Sparrow
Common Grackle	Red-winged Blackbird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Purple Finch	American Goldfinch	

Highlights: 2 Sandhill Cranes flying and calling as we started our walk to the Bay, Finally getting a Northern Cardinal to appear on the day of the walk, getting an outstanding 13 species of ducks.

Thanks to all who came out.



**Shaw Woods: Mother's Day Wildflowers and Nature Walk – May 13, 2007**  
by Grant Bickel

Seventeen participants enjoyed a warm and sunny spring day looking for wildflowers, listening for birds and taking photographs. Many of the common spring wildflowers were blooming. Along with the abundant Trilliums (both Red and White), Blue Cohosh, Jack-in-the Pulpit, Trout Lily and Bellflower (*Uvularia grandiflora*) were in bloom. Blue, white and yellow violets were also found blooming – these were *Viola conspersa*, *Viola mackloskeyi*, and *Viola pubescens*. The youngsters were enjoying finding salamanders under practically ever log, such as the Blue-spotted and the Four-toed Salamanders. The birds were a little quiet but Great Crested Flycatcher and Least Flycatcher were frequently heard. The photographers found numerous subjects to fill their memory cards.



Jack-in-the-pulpit. photo Chris Michener

Special thanks to Rob Cunningham who provided his expertise on tree and shrub identification and to Bernd Krueger who led the group of photographers. I also wish to thank all who attended. Everyone's participation made this outing very rewarding.



**Pembroke Marina Walk - August 18, 2007**  
by Ken Hooles

On the morning of the Pembroke Marina excursion held on Saturday, August 18, I was surprised to observe large whitecaps on the Ottawa River. My first thought was that not only is it going to be cold, but also that this wind may dramatically affect the number of birds we would find on the excursion. Several years ago, similar weather conditions on one of our counts resulted in only 14 bird species being spotted.

Well, the wind was indeed cool, but fortunately, it did not deter the 14 participants in the event who were able to successfully locate a very respectable 48 bird species.

This was only ten shy of the record of 58 bird species established in 1998.

This year, the waterfowl species were slightly down from last year with the sighting of only five species. These included Hooded Mergansers, Black Duck, Mallards, Canada

Geese, and several Cormorants sitting on the rocks. This year there were no signs of any Teal, Common Mergansers or Goldeneye ducks.

It was a fairly good outing for warblers. The group was able to locate eight warbler species including Common Yellowthroat, Nashville, Yellow, Black-and-white, American Redstart, Wilson's, Magnolia and Tennessee.

Other highlights of the walk included the sighting of Osprey, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Belted Kingfisher, Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, Merlin, Gray Catbird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Warbling Vireo, Herring Gull, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers and several other common birds.

Notably absent this year were members of the hawk Family, the sparrow family, some common birds like Northern Flicker, Tree Swallows, Great Blue Heron, and some other migrant warblers and shorebirds.

The Pembroke Marina Walk began in 1988. Between 1988 and 2006, a total of 120 bird species have been identified on this excursion over the years. This year, we added one new species - a Black-bellied Plover.

It may not have been a record breaking excursion, but considering the weather, it certainly was an enjoyable and successful outing! Thanks to all of you who turned out for the walk.



## **Butterflies and Dragonflies of the Summer** by Chris Michener

There were two butterfly counts and one dragonfly count this Summer. The **Lake Dore Butterfly Count**, held on June 30th, was the 19th such Count, the first being in 1988. One year was missed. Twenty-five species were identified with 779 individual butterflies being counted. High numbers of Northern Cloudywing (14) were seen. Monarchs were a little above average at 63 seen. There were 15 participants.



Participants in the 19th Lake Dore Butterfly Count are caught in a lull as they stand at the culvert on Burnt Bridge Road at the Shaw Dam. photo, Claire Lepine

On the **Hog Island Butterfly Count** (16th annual), held on July 14, 27 species were seen with 299 individuals being counted. There was a high count of Delaware Skipper at 18, Crossline Skipper at 4, and a new species for Renfrew County, Dion Skipper. Monarchs were above average at 55. There were 7 participants.



This Dion Skipper (upper wings left, lower wings right) is probably the most northerly occurrence in Ontario. Netted by Ethan Anderman, it is a new species for the County. It's location near Westmeath Provincial Park will definitely be checked in future years for colonization. photos Ethan Anderman

The **Lake Dore Odonate Count**, held on August 4th, had 10 enthusiastic participants. Twenty-nine species were seen and 277 individuals identified. Halloween Pennants were again found at Biederman Park on Lake Dore for the second year in a row. Other highlights included River Jewelwing at the Grist Mill in Eganville, Lake Darner on Basswood Road, Skimming Bluet at Wilberforce Township Park and Rusty Snaketail at the snowmobile bridge off of Crooked Rapids Road west of Eganville

Here, Tina Cappel has no trouble identifying this dragonfly as a Belted Whiteface (old name Red-waisted Whiteface). Who caught who, though?



Here daughters Tina and Dani, their mother Sue, and Chris and Jean go over identification of a butterfly while on the Lake Dore Butterfly Count.

photos: Claire Lepine

**Westmeath Provincial Park Walk - Sep 8, 2007**  
by Grant Bickel, Rob Cunningham and Chris Michener

Rob: “I remember there were seven of us. Early morning rain probably kept people away, but weather generally cleared and was OK. Some of the birds were:



Six plus one behind the camera makes seven! From the left, Grant, Bernd, Jackie, Rob, Leo and Benita. Chris is behind the camera. Here the participants are looking out over the large inner wetland in Westmeath Provincial Park. There was a great aerial display put on by a Sharp-shinned Hawk, an American Kestrel, two Merlins and those being chased, a large flock of Blue Jays, a Northern Flicker and a Pileated Woodpecker.

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Sandhill Crane, Pied-billed Grebe, Merlin, Northern Harrier, Mallard, American Black Duck, American Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue Jay.”

Grant: “Chris and I ran into a flock of warblers. I could add: Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler.”

Chris: “I can add to that: Tennessee, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided and Nashville Warblers, Eastern Wood Pewee, Gadwall (uncommon in our birding area), Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Crow, Common Raven, Song Sparrow, Brown Creeper, Blue-headed Vireo, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Double-crested Cormorant and Black-bellied Plover.”

Rob: “Habitats included marshes and open water, Silver Maple swamp, Red Pine plantation, Red Pine natural stand, Ottawa River.”

It was a nice day!







### **Species in Focus - Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)**

The monarch is probably the most widely recognized butterfly in North America. This beautiful, brightly coloured insect can be seen fluttering by in fields, roadsides and gardens throughout most of the summer months. The monarch is also a Species at Risk (listed as Special Concern), primarily due to habitat loss in Mexico, where the entire eastern population spends its winters. Here's a little more info on this winged wonder:

**Range:** In Canada, monarchs have been noted in all 10 provinces and the Northwest Territories. The eastern population makes up about 90% of the total population in Canada. This eastern population makes an incredible fall migration to one of 12 overwintering sites in Central Mexico. The western population occurs in British Columbia, south to California. Populations are also present in Central America and recently Bermuda. They have been introduced to Australia, South America, and Hawaii.

**Description:** Adult monarchs are bright orange in colour, with white spots and black stripes and have a 9 to 12 cm wingspan. Don't be fooled by the viceroy (*Limenitis archippus*), a monarch look-alike; the Viceroy has an extra black stripe across its hindwing. The larval stage of the monarch is quite colourful as well with bright yellow, black and white stripes, and can grow to about 5 cm in length. The bright colours of the adult and the larvae serve as a warning to predators that their would-be meal is poisonous!

**Ecology:** Butterflies have four stages to their life cycle: egg, larvae (caterpillar), pupa, and adult. The process of moving through these life cycles is termed metamorphosis.

Mating occurs during the spring and summer months. After mating, adult female monarchs deposit their fertilized eggs on the underside of milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) leaves; females can lay up to 400 eggs in a season. Milkweed plants are the "host plant" for monarchs; a female identifies a plant as milkweed by scraping the leaves and smelling the plant juice with her antennae. Depending on temperature, the eggs can hatch into larvae in anywhere from three to twelve days. The caterpillars are milkweed eating machines, and grow to about five centimetres in about four-



photo: Claire Lepine

teen days. The next stage, the pupa, is formed when the caterpillar attaches itself to a twig and moults one final time to form a hard casing around its body. The pupa (a.k.a chrysalis) is an emerald green colour with yellow-gold spots. Magic is happening inside the chrysalis, and about two weeks later, an adult butterfly emerges. Just before the adult emerges, nature gives us a sneak peak...the chrysalis becomes nearly transparent, and the butterfly inside is visible. The entire life cycle takes anywhere from 20 to 45 days, with the average being about 30.



The chrysalid changes from green to transparent just before the butterfly emerges. photos: Chris Michener

Monarchs can produce two to three generations each year during the period of June to September, depending on the availability of food and the temperatures. Warm and sunny = good for the monarch! The generation of monarchs that emerges in the late summer is the generation that migrates to central Mexico to over-winter. Overwintering monarchs enter a state called diapause, where they do not reproduce. In late winter or early spring, diapause ends, and the monarch begins its journey north, following the availability of food sources. The northward migration is completed in stages, with females stopping to lay eggs, and the offspring continuing northward. This step by step generational migration is necessary because their main food source dies out so quickly. How this animal manages to return to the same overwintering spots over a gap of several generations is a wonder.

Conservation: Like other animals, monarch populations see a natural fluctuation in numbers due to storms, predation, poor breeding habitat and disease. The primary threat to the monarch occurs in Mexico, where logging has severely altered the forest composition, and has enabled increased predation by birds (some bird species are immune to the poisonous monarch) The western population, which winters along the California coast is threatened by habitat loss.

So, how can you help? Lots of ways! You can plant “butterfly friendly” species of plants in your garden, leave the ditches and meadows around your house go wild with milkweed and other wild flowers. You can help track the monarch’s northward migration at <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/>. At this site, you can submit your sightings and see the migration northward from Mexico. Really neat!



photo: Claire Lepine

# Book Review

**Review of Reptiles and Amphibians of Canada.** 208 pages. Authors: Chris Fisher, Amanda Joynt and Ron Brooks. List Price \$18.95

Two reviews are presented here by a couple of friends of reptiles and amphibians, Nancy Hiscock and Lauren Trute.

Nancy:

Hi everyone,

Chris has asked me to provide a review of Lone Pine Publishing's recent book, Reptiles and Amphibians of Canada, authored by Chris Fisher, Amanda Joynt, and Ronald Brooks.

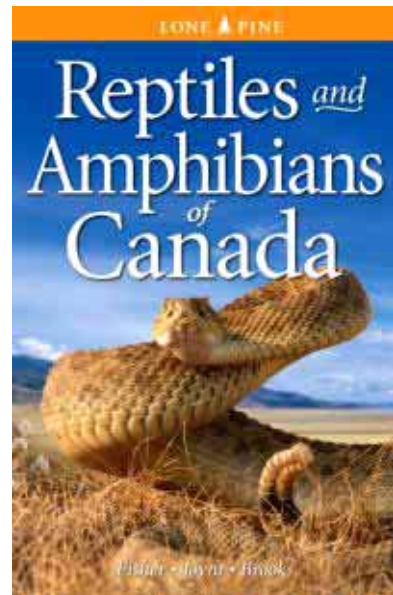
After a quick study, I found it to be a great little book; not only did it provide good overviews of many species, but in particular, what I really liked was that it could be enjoyed by our younger naturalists as well.

The book is nicely laid out with illustrations and photographs, easy to read species accounts, including identification characteristics, activity patterns, reproduction, diet, and habitat. Other information such as range maps, similar species, best sites for viewing and a "Did you Know" trivia section provide additional details about each species.

It also makes a very good attempt at dispelling the myths, fears and misconceptions that have developed around reptiles and amphibians, and helps to make the connection as to how each species plays a special role in our environment. I particularly liked the Species-at-Risk overview which includes the current status of each species and why it may be at risk - very appropriate and timely.

Another treasure from Lone Pine!

Nancy is a private consultant biologist who enjoys finding species at risk!



Lauren:

Reptiles and Amphibians of Canada would be an excellent book for the novice naturalist or for anyone wanting to learn a little more about the “herps” in their backyard.

Similar to other books published by Lone Pine, this one begins with “species at a glance” pages, helping the reader to navigate to the critter they are looking for. The book’s introduction is twelve pages long, and is informative and very well written. The reader is educated in plain language about the evolution of reptiles and amphibians and of the basic life cycles of each. The vast habitats in Canada are separated into the temperate West Coast, interior Okanagan, Grasslands, Great Lakes region and the Maritimes with some general characteristics of each explained. The next section in the introduction is called “The Good, the Bad and the Misconceptions” and it delves into

some of the reasons that people have a fear of the scaled and slimy. The “Hands On” section of the introduction gives people a crash course in handling (or not) the critters they might find in the field. This section has some really good advice, including making sure your hands are clean (no bug spray), handling gently, and promptly returning to the point of capture.

The individual species accounts feature illustrations for the most part, as well as some “getting to know you” information about the species and then the identification features, range, etc. Although the illustrations are wonderful, in some cases they seem a little blurry, and may not be sufficient for someone using the book for species identification. There are photographs of several species, and these are clear, colourful, and of excellent quality.

Other interesting features of the book are the “Did you know?” sections which present interesting factoids for the different species. For example, “Did you know? Coastal tailed frogs are the longest-lived frogs in Canada; some individuals live up to 20 years!...” Also, the glossary section gives a few good explanations of commonly used “herp terms”.

All in all, this book is well written and illustrated, and gives the beginner naturalist, young or old, a good introduction to reptiles and amphibians.

Lauren is a biologist currently employed as the Fire Management Clerk, Pembroke Fire Management Headquarters, Ministry of Natural Resources, Pembroke

