

# The Swallow



Volume 26, # 2  
Spring/Summer 2009

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Pitcher-plant, *Sarracenia purpurea*, photographed in One Mile Fen, Conroy Marsh by Nancy Hiscock

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.

Editor, The Swallow: Chris Michener, 1311 Burchat Rd. - R.R.1, Golden Lake, ON K0J 1X0 - Submissions welcomed. ph: (613) 625-2263; e-mail: cmichener@hughes.net  
a colour copy of the Swallow is available for download (.pdf) at:  
New PAFN web site (Webmaster, Mike MacDonald): [www.pafn.on.ca](http://www.pafn.on.ca)



# • E v e n t s & T r i p s •

## **Owling Night**

When: 8:00 pm, Saturday, April 4th, 2009

Where: Wilberforce Twp Park. Go south on Hwy 41 past 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@hughes.net)

A drive through through varied habitat with a tape of owl calls will be used to encourage owl response.



## **PAFN Annual Meeting**

Wed., April 15, 2009, Room 201, Algonquin College, Pembroke.

Agenda: 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm - video and booksale. Benita is accepting any used nature books, videos, etc., which will be available for sale at the AGM for nominal cost.

7:00 pm to 7:30 pm - Annual General Meeting.

7:30 pm to 8:00 pm - social with refreshments.

8:00 pm. Mark Garbutt is a wildlife photographer with a special interest in ornithology. A lifetime spent as a naturalist in Alaska, Texas, Europe and Africa has given him ample opportunities to photograph some wonderful birds. He is coming to Pembroke to give a presentation of some of these birds he has seen from around the world.

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

Date: Saturday, April 18, 2009.

Time: at 9 am.

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 mud and water will be encountered on the walk (1.5 km total). Migrant songbirds, ducks and friendly people are highlights. Spotting scopes are useful, binoculars essential.

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

Date: Sunday, May 3, 2009.

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. Please bring rubber boots for some wet/muddy areas.

### **Shaw Woods: Mother's Day Weekend Wildflowers and Nature Walk**

Date: Sunday May 10, 2009 at 2:00 pm

Place: Due to limited parking at Shaw Woods, we will first meet at 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.

Trip Organizer: Grant Bickel, 687-4765 and photographer, Bernd Krueger, 625-2879.

The purpose of this outing will be to enjoy early spring in the beautiful Shaw Woods. The main focus will be to see woodland wildflowers. We should see Blue Cohosh, Trout Lily, Trilliums and several others species. This walk is for all ages and is an introduction to the Shaw Woods, an old-growth forest. The walk will be easy to moderate on well-maintained trails. The pace will be determined by the participants and will last about 2.5 hours. Photographers are welcome and we will split into groups depending on interests. A special bonus hand-out for participants is a CD containing recorded forest sounds from the Shaw Woods.

### **7th Annual Natural History Day**

Date: Saturday, May 23rd at the Shady Nook Community Centre.

Time: Doors open at 8:30 am; Talks start at 9 am; free lunch is at 12 am; field trips will head out by car at 1 pm. The agenda is being worked out, but will include talks on wetlands, pollinators and American Eel.

The Children's program will be a special program developed by The Friends of Bonnechere Parks on 13 bird species that are at risk.

Three field trip destinations will be offered: to a nearby wetland (Ross Road), to an old growth forest (the Shaw Woods) and to a managed forest containing a maple syrup operation ( at the Bonenberg's, Mapleside Sugar Bush).

Please register with a phone call to 613-732-3678 after April 14th. Leave a message with how many adults and children you are registering. The event is free and partially funded with a Trillium grant awarded to the McNamara Field-Naturalists, Arnprior.

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

Date: Friday, June 5th, 2009.

Time: 5 pm. Tee-off time.

Island Brae Golf Course will be the site of dinner and 9 holes of golf. The cost is tentatively set at \$35.00 each. The format will be "best ball". Players can play 'birdie bingo', which is bingo with flora and fauna instead of numbers. The cards are filled in as you golf.

If you don't golf, come for supper (reduced rate). To register a team or yourself and for more information, please call Benita Richardson at 735-5404.

**4th Annual PAFN Tri-wing Challenge.** This is a weekend long event where teams of one or more individuals are challenged to spend any amount of time from **4 pm Friday, June 19 to 4 pm Sunday, June 21** counting 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 as well as food items.

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

- weekend totals for bird species; (last year 122 species were seen)

- weekend totals for butterfly species; (35 species last year)
- weekend totals for dragonfly species; (28 species last year)
- weekend for total of all three. (185 total species last year)

Each team member (give your team a name!) 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@hughes.net). Four trophies are available to be won.

### **21st Lake Dore Butterfly Count**

Date: Saturday, July 4th, 2009 (Rain/wind date, Sunday, July 5th).

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

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

Bring butterfly field guide, binoculars, footwear (optional) for the bog after lunch, 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).

### **18th Hog Island Butterfly Count**

Date: Sat., July 18th, 2009 (lousy weather day, Sun., July 19th).

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.

### **The 12th Lake Dore Odonate (Dragonfly) Count**

Date: Sat., August 1st, 2009 (lousy weather day Sun., August 2)

Time: 9 am. Organizer: Chris Michener, 625-2263.

An excellent opportunity to appreciate this group of insects! We have had fun with nets and encountered a good variety of damselflies and dragonflies. The idea is to search for 'odes' within a 7.5 mile radius



'dragonfly emergence' photo: Chris Michener

of Biederman Park, Lake Dore. Meet at the Wilberforce Twp Park. Go south on Hwy 41 past intersection of Hwy 41 and Lake Dore Rd., cross the bridge, turn right after bridge and go a short distance to park. Picture guides will be available as well as experienced 'odonaters'. A large insect net, optional rubber boots, close focus binoculars, and lunch/drinks are suggested.



The Bellow's Bay outing leaves from the marina. On April 19th, 2008, this group of participants scans the Ottawa River for birds, while trip leader Manson Fleguel (centre with scope) explains the fine points of birding to a young birder. photo: Chris Michener

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

Date: Saturday, August 15, 2009

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!

### **Westmeath Provincial Park - entrance from Westmeath Rd.**

Date: Sunday, Aug. 30th, 2009

Time: 9 am.

Where: At the entrance to the Park. This is on County Road 12, about 5 km SW of Westmeath. Leaders: Leo Boland, Rob Cunningham and Bernd Krueger will be trip leaders. This time of year is great for migrants in the Park. Species that have been seen at this time are Sandhill Cranes, Bald Eagles, Merlin, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Wood-Pewee as well as various vireos and warblers, and if we make it as far as the beach, some shorebirds, terns and gulls.

### **Renfrew County Woodlot Conference**

Date: October 3, 2009.

Where: Call Rob Cunningham for more information (613-732-8402). The information will be in the September newsletter.

## Trip Reports

### Westmeath PP Beach Walk

by Chris Michener

On Saturday the 4th, Jacqueline Boulanger and myself, visited the beach in Westmeath Provincial Park. This was a Club sponsored walk, which has become an annual outing. I plan the walk to coincide with the migration of a number of species, such as Leconte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows, American Golden and Black-bellied Plovers, Orange-crowned Warblers and other migrants, It was a beautiful day with only 3 other non birding strollers out to enjoy it.

We identified 24 species. Highlights included a tardy Osprey, 7 Sandhill Cranes flying into Bellow's Bay, migrating flocks of Pine Siskins, a Lapland Longspur, American Pipits and Northern Harrier.

Other species seen or heard were Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Mallard, Common Merganser, Herring Gull, Hairy Woodpecker, American Crow, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-crowned Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Common Grackle and American Goldfinch.

The water level was high and no shorebird habitat was evident. It was strangely quiet.



### The 2008 Pembroke Christmas Bird Count

by Manson Fleguel

The count was held on Saturday, December 20, 2008. Field birders numbered 25 while 45 feeders were watched. The field birders traveled 33.25 km. and logged 23.5 hours on foot. They traveled 1257.5 km. and logged 74.25 hours in their cars. The feeder watchers tallied 208 hours at their feeders. These numbers indicate the serious effort that the participants make to ensure a good count of the birds in our circle. Thanks to all.

This year, the count circle was again divided 6 ways. Each sector had a coordinator who ensured all parts of his sector were explored. In total, we found 49 species and had 3 additional species that were found in "count week", the period of 3 days before and 3 days after the count day. Of course, part of the fun is a friendly competition between the sectors to claim the most species spotted. This year the top sector was 1E.

The following shows the results of the count, by sector:

In sector 1E, Bruce DiLabio, Laurie Brown and Susan Ellis, along with 2 feeder watchers, Einer Lund and Lynn Jones and Ole Hendrickson, found 35 species which included Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Barrows Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-winged Blackbird and Hoary Redpoll.

In sector 3E, Ken and Pat Hooles, Ron Bertrand, Vic Harmer and Merv Fediuk

drove the sector. Along with the feeder watchers, they found 32 species. The feeders were watched in this area by Jim and Marg Armstrong, Nancy Armstrong, Lorraine Bertrand, Ray Brazeau, Jack and Barb Darbyson, Merv and Jane Dougherty, Lorna Fediuk, Carolyn Lance, Francis Marcotte, Wendell McLaughlin, Allan Mills, Floyd and Attie Milton, Bob and Julie Pick, Mac and Diane Thrasher, Ray Virtue and Gary and Sue Walton. Am. Black Duck, Coopers Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, Glaucous Gull and Greater Black-backed Gull were added to the count in this sector.

Sector 2S found 29 species. In the field were Chris Michener and Mike and Sandra MacDonald. Their feeder watchers were Barbara and Sarah Beimers, Tina Beimers, Sheila and Gary Bucholtz, Dwight and Lucy Dickerson, Dawn and Tom Farnell, Ted and Nancy Hiscock, Erna Maves, Mark Raglin, Jill and Andre Renault and Jack Schreuder. American Robin was found in this sector.

Sector 1W also had 29 species. Here the field people were Bert Cain, Jennifer Montgomery and Manson Fleguel. Jean Berrigan was the feeder watcher. Gray Jay and Golden-crowned Kinglet were found here.

In sector 3W, 24 species were spotted. Myron and Evan Loback, Leo Boland, Teresa Frechette, Daryl Coulson and Mark, Levi and Michaela Dojczman were in the field. The feeder watchers in this sector were Dan and Jean Callaghan, Sabine Coulson, Howard and Frances Doelle, Judy and Ryan Fleguel, Ken and Pat Hooles, Beth Loback, Wes Loback and Harold and Shirley Wirth.

Sector 2N had 22 species. Robin Cunningham, Liz Link and Christian Renault were the field birders. Feeder watchers were Ann and Jim Clarke, Keith Curry, Todd and Karen Gauthier, Patricia Harmer, Marilyn Kruschenske, Ivy Levoy, Bruce Schoof and Sherry Soltysiak and Art and Shirley VanWinckle.

The following is the list of bird species found on count day:

Am. Black Duck	Long-tailed Duck	Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye	Barrows Goldeneye	Common Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser	Ruffed Grouse	Wild Turkey
Bald Eagle	Coopers Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk	Merlin	Glaucous Gull
Great Black-backed Gull	Rock Pigeon	Mourning Dove
Downy Woodpecker	Hairy Woodpecker	Pileated Woodpecker
Northern Shrike	Gray Jay	Blue Jay
American Crow	Common Raven	Black-capped Chickadee
Red-breasted Nuthatch	White-breasted Nuthatch	Brown Creeper
Golden-crowned Kinglet	American Robin	European Starling
Bohemian Waxwing	Am. Tree Sparrow	Dark-eyed (S.C.) Junco
Snow Bunting	Northern Cardinal	Red-winged Blackbird
Pine Grosbeak	Purple Finch	House Finch
White-winged Crossbill	Common Redpoll	Hoary Redpoll
Pine Siskin	American Goldfinch	Evening Grosbeak
House Sparrow		
Count Week species:		
Mallard	Northern Goshawk	Yellow-bellied sapsucker

## Report of Lake Dore Tour – October 25, 2008

by Chris Michener

Six brave souls circled Lake Dore in 3 cars, stopping, watching and listening. We dodged the forecast rain and only got a little damp with scattered showers. The wind seemed to come from every direction, was cool and shook the tripods.

We stopped on Point Church Road, in the Lake Dore Tent and Trailer Park, Biederman Park and a couple of other spots that afforded views of the lake.

Birds identified:

Common Loons, Pied-billed, Horned and Red-necked Grebes, Great Blue Heron, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Surf and White-winged Scoters, a large flock of scaup, Mallards, an American Black Duck, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Bald Eagle, Ring-billed, Herring and Bonaparte's Gulls, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, American Crow, Common Raven, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, Snow Bunting, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Pine Siskin and American Goldfinch.



Participants were: Ken Hooles, Leo Boland, Rob Cunningham, Erick Leskie, Walter Culine and Chris.  
photo: Chris Michener





## Species in Focus – Lake Sturgeon

What do Lake Sturgeon and the Egyptian pyramids have in common? They're old...very, very old! In fact, the sturgeon family goes way back to the days of the dinosaurs.

The Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) lives in large freshwater rivers and lakes from Hudson's Bay to the Mississippi River Basin and in the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River basin. In Renfrew County, Lake Sturgeon can be found in several rivers and lakes, including the mighty Ottawa River, where it is our largest freshwater fish.

What does it look like?

Adult sturgeon vary in colour from olive-brown to grey on the back and sides and whitish on the belly. Instead of scales, their body is covered in armour (the fish version), with rows of bony plates or shields and very tough skin. They are torpedo-shaped, with a pointy snout and four barbels (whiskers). Their mouth is on the underside of their head and acts like a suction hose, extending and retracting to suck food off



the river or lake bottom. The barbels help to direct the food into the mouth. Sturgeon can weigh over 200 lbs (90kg) and can get to over 7 feet (2m) in length, although the average is usually 3-5 feet (1-1.5m) and ranges from 10-80 lbs (4.5-36kg). One of the largest Lake Sturgeon on record was caught in Batchewana Bay, Lake Superior in 1922 and was over 300 lbs and almost 8 ft long. A hefty fish!

What does it eat?

Lake Sturgeon are benthivores, which means it eats food off the bottom of the lake or river. By moving very slowly along the bottom, it can use its barbels to detect food. It then sucks it up with its vacuum-like mouth. Lake Sturgeon aren't picky eaters and will feed on crayfish, insect larvae, fish eggs, clams and mussels, and leeches.

A day in the life...

Or in the case of sturgeon...a year in the decade. Lake Sturgeon are extremely slow growing; females don't start reproducing until about 24-26 years old, while

males can sometimes start earlier. Females spawn (lay their eggs) only once every 4-9 years, and males are able to fertilize eggs every 2-7 years. Spawning usually happens in May and June in areas with gravelling bottoms. Like salmon, sturgeon have a strong homing instinct and return to the same areas to spawn each time. A female can lay about 5000 eggs per pound of body weight. Hmm, and some people worry about having triplets! Eggs hatch in about a week, and by 14 days, the young look like miniature adult sturgeon. They reach about 6 inches (15cm) by the fall.



How long do they live? Well, that's up for debate, but females do live longer than males. Females can live to 90-150 years on average, with males living to about 55 years. The age of a 208 lb sturgeon from Lake of the Woods was estimated at 154 years of age.

#### Sound Fishy?

In North America lake sturgeon were nearly fished to extinction for their eggs (caviar) and also their flesh. Overfishing, loss of habitat and the construction of dams significantly reduced Lake Sturgeon populations by the early 1900's. Lake Sturgeon are listed as either threatened or endangered in most of the states in which they occur. In Ontario, they are listed as a species of Special Concern.

Check out the Royal Ontario Museum website for more info on sturgeon: [http://www.rom.on.ca/ontario/risk.php?doc\\_type=fact&lang=&id=308](http://www.rom.on.ca/ontario/risk.php?doc_type=fact&lang=&id=308)

## Woody Woodpecker - Acorn, Pileated or Ivory-billed?

The following are excerpts from a discussion on which woodpecker inspired Woody Woodpecker. The online listserve, ID Frontiers - Frontiers of Field Identification, spawned this discussion as a distraction from another long-winded subject, Red Crossbill speciation.



Subject: [BIRDWG01] Woodpecker identification

Date: Friday, March 6, 2009

From: various

All,

The recent discussions of crossbill call-types /species have been fascinating, but like some of the ruminations on gull identification that have preceded them, they cry out for a brief, temporary change of subject. So, probably in flagrant violation of the rules of this listserve, I wanted to address the subject of the identification of Woody Woodpecker.

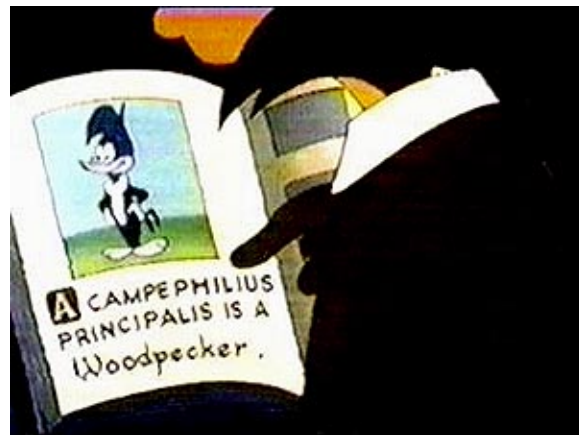
[I was alerted] the other day to a brief piece on NPR's "All Things Considered" that made reference to Woody Woodpecker's true avian identity. In an earlier story on attempts to "control" Acorn Woodpeckers that were damaging houses in northern California, NPR stated that Acorn Woodpeckers were the inspiration for Woody Woodpecker. Then, this Tuesday, NPR ran an apology. A listener in Oregon, as well as a frequent and very enjoyable commentator on bird matters on All Things Considered, both corrected host Robert Seigel - Woody Woodpecker was, in fact, a Pileated Woodpecker. Seigel apologized for the "error," admitting that "the last laugh" was on them.

By happy coincidence, in the late 1980's Walter Lantz (the creator of Woody Woodpecker) personally gave me a copy of his biography which was written by Joe Adamson and published in 1985 by G. P. Putnam's Sons, NY. The book contains the "smoking gun" which proves that Woody Woodpecker was indeed inspired by the Acorn Woodpecker. Although Lantz grew up around New York City, he moved in 1927 (at age 27) to Los Angeles. It was in 1940, while honeymooning at his cabin in Lake Sherwood (in an oak woodland/oak savannah habitat mix about 30 miles west of Los Angeles) that Walter and his new wife Grace gave birth to Woody. They were struck by the comical behavior of the Acorn Woodpeckers as they stored acorns under the roof shingles, and by the "little raucous scream" they gave. Grace told Walter: "Why don't you make him into a character?" And the rest was history.

As in the crossbills, however, there is a slight disconnect between morphology and vocalizations. Woody's call is clearly similar to that of an Acorn Woodpecker (think "ra-a-a-ka" instead of "ha ha ha ha-ha"); Pileateds give nothing similar. However, the crest is more of a Pileated feature. So the Pileated camp may be partly right - perhaps Lantz did develop Woody's morphology in part from pictures of some crested

woodpecker such as a Pileated. But the fact remains that it was clearly the Acorn Woodpecker that inspired Woody Woodpecker. Opportunities for inspiration by Pileated or other crested woodpeckers around the Los Angeles area are rare; there is but one record of Pileated south of the southernmost Sierra Nevada and adjacent ranges – a bird in Malibu 12-13 Aug 1989; any claims of Ivory-billed in the Los Angeles area are not accompanied by identifiable photos.

Response to cartoon inspiration: "Pileated may be the inspiration, but that is not what he was identified as in the show. There is a Woody Woodpecker episode where someone is trying to hunt down "Campephilus principalis" and Woody looks him up in a book, and there he finds a picture of himself. The episode is from 1964, called "Dumb like a Fox". [ed. Campephilus principalis = Ivory-billed Woodpecker]



Another response and our final: "Unless there was some hybridization going on I think Woody was an Acorn Woodpecker with a blue suit, a face job and a red toupee. Pure Hollywood. Here's Woody giving his famous call:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXciQmSCYFw>

Oh - Stay with Woody to the end of the clip; For the finale Woody launches into the Barber of Seville, a hilarious "classic" of cartoon art."

For more information on Woody Woodpecker go to:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woody\\_Woodpecker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woody_Woodpecker)



Woody Woodpecker and his captive client in The Barber of Seville (1944)