



The Swallow



Volume 29, # 2
Spring/Summer 2012

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Spring Peeper (Photo: Chris Michener)

Membership in the Pembroke Area Field Naturalists is available by writing to: The PAFN, Box 1242, Pembroke, ON K8A 6Y6
Dues for 2012/2013 are: Student \$10, Senior \$10, Individual \$15, Family \$20, Individual Life \$150, Family Life \$200.

The Swallow Interim Editor: Jean Brereton, 1311 Burchat Road, Golden Lake, ON, K0J 1X0
Submissions welcomed: (613) 625-2263 - email: jbrereton@hughes.net
PAFN web site (Webmaster, Mike MacDonald): www.pafn.on.ca

It's time to renew your membership for 2012!

Please print form below and mail it along with your cheque to:

The Pembroke Area Field Naturalists
Box 1242
Pembroke, ON
K8A 6Y6

**Pembroke Area Field Naturalists Membership Renewal Form
April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013**

The membership fees are:

Seniors:	\$10.00
Students:	\$10.00
Individual:	\$15.00
Family:	\$20.00
Individual Life:	\$150.00
Family Life:	\$200.00

Names and ages of children:

Please make comments or share suggestions (such as preferred activities, etc.)

Check out our web page: <http://www.pafn.on.ca>



Events & Field Trips

Note: Please be sure to check the PAFN web site for updates, notices, and details of all club events so you don't miss anything. www.pafn.on.ca The general public is always welcome to attend PAFN events!

2012

PAFN Annual Meeting

Date: Wednesday, April 11, 2012

Place: Algonquin College, Pembroke Campus, Room 201

Agenda: Doors open at 6:30 pm;
7:00-7:30 PM - annual general meeting;
7:30-8:00 PM - social with refreshments;
8:00 PM - Guest speaker Michael Runtz

Our speaker this year is Michael Runtz, one of Canada's most highly respected naturalists, nature photographers, and natural history authors. A birdwatcher since the age of five, he has lived, breathed, and worked with nature all his life. Professionally, Michael has worked as a naturalist in Canadian national and provincial parks, and has performed numerous biological surveys. A dynamic communicator, Michael Runtz is equally at home in a television or radio studio, lecture hall or classroom.

Bellows Bay Waterfowl Trip

Date: Saturday, April 21, 2012

Time: 9:00 AM

Trip Leader: Manson Fleguel (613-732-7703)

Place: Meet at the Pembroke Marina (at the mouth of the Muskrat River).

Car pooling will be offered. Bring rubber boots as mud and water will be encountered on the 1.5 km (total distance) walk. Migrant songbirds, ducks and friendly people are highlights. Spotting scopes are useful, binoculars essential.

"Spring in the Valley" Presentation by Michael Runtz

Date: Thursday, April 26, 2012 7:00 PM

Place: Bonnechere Union Public Library, 74-A Maple St., Eganville

Photographer, Biologist, and Author, Mike Runtz will give a talk on "Spring in the Valley".

Admission: Free

"Forest Birds Workshop" hosted by Forestry Research Partnership

Date: Thursday, May 10, 2012

Place: Petawawa Research Forest, 1000 Clouthier Road, Chalk River, ON

The workshop is geared towards landowners and land managers and will cover techniques to conserve forest birds during forest management practices.

For more information or to register, contact:

Nicole Bergevin nbergevin@cif-ifc.org phone: (705) 744-1715 Ext. 530

Shaw Woods: Mothers' Day Wildflower and Nature Walk

Date: Sunday, May 13, 2012

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: Due to limited parking at Shaw Woods, we will meet at Wilberforce Township Beach & Picnic Park. From here, we'll proceed to the Shaw Woods.

Trip Leaders: Grant Bickel (613-687-4765), orchid and sedge aficionado and Robin Cunningham, forester and naturalist.

The focus of this outing will be to enjoy early spring in the beautiful Shaw Woods. We expect to see Blue Cohosh, Trout Lily, Trilliums, and several other species of woodland wildflowers. This walk is for all ages and is an introduction to the Shaw Woods, an old-growth forest. The walk is easy to moderate on well-maintained trails. The pace will be determined by the participants and will last about 2.5 hours.

A Walk in the Petawawa Terrace (Old Fish Hatchery)

Date: Sunday, May 20, 2012

Time: 5:00 PM

Trip Leader: Robin Cunningham

Place: Meet in the upper parking lot of the Terrace, on Laurentian Drive. (To get here, travel west out 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 there are some wet/muddy areas.

10th Annual Natural History Day - Admission Free

Date: Saturday, May 26, 2012

Where: Eganville Community Arena, 178 Jane Street, Eganville

Time: Doors open at 8:30 AM

Agenda: Talks start at 9 AM. Adam Smith will give a presentation on The Birds of Ottawa: biodiversity in a big city. Field trips will head out after lunch and will include a guided walk in the Shaw Woods. Grant Dobson of Connaught Nursery will give a guided tour of the nursery and the gardens/habitats that have been created there. The Children's Program will start at 10:30 AM and run until lunch.

Please call 613-732-5511 to register and leave a message stating how many adults and children will be attending.

Please bring your own bag lunch.

Garage Sale - Fundraiser

Date: Saturday, June 9, 2012 - 7:00 AM - Noon

Place: The Children's Garden Nursery School,
375 Doran Street, Pembroke

This is a combined garage sale at The Children's Garden Nursery. Benita and other volunteers from the PAFN Club will be staffing the sale of all manner of goods with the proceeds going to both The Children's Garden Nursery School and the Pembroke Area Field Naturalists Club. Donations of goods are welcome during the week leading up to the sale.

For more information, please call Benita Richardson at 613-735-2259.

24th Annual Lake Dore Butterfly Count

Date: Saturday, July 7, 2012
[Rain/Wind date is Sunday, July 8]

Time: 9 AM

Organizers: Jean Brereton (613-625-2263) and Ethan Anderman

Place: Wilberforce Township Park (Beach & Picnic Area). Go south on Hwy 41 past intersection of Hwy 41 and Lake Dore Road, cross the bridge, turn right after bridge and go a short distance to park.

Bring: lunch, water, butterfly field guide, binoculars, rubber boots as we'll go to the bog after lunch, net (for catch & release). A map of the Lake Dore count circle will be made available. A participants fee of \$3 (under 13, free) is asked to cover publishing costs of the North American results (North American Butterfly Association - NABA.)

21st Annual Hog Island Butterfly Count

Date: Saturday, July 21, 2012
[Rain/Wind date is Sunday, July 22.]

Time: 9 AM

Organizers: Jean Brereton (613-625-2263) and Ethan Anderman

Place: Meet at Mullen's Esso, Pembroke St. E., near the turn off to Quebec. The count circle is half in Ontario and half in Quebec. In the past, some groups have gone to the Westmeath Park area; others have butterflyed on Allumette Island. You can choose the area you prefer. Maps of the circle and checklists will be made available. Bring lunch, water, butterfly field guide, binoculars, and net (for catch & release). A participants fee of \$3 (under 13, free) is asked to cover publishing costs of the North American results (North American Butterfly Association - NABA.)

The 15th Lake Dore Odonate [Dragonfly] Count

Date: Saturday, August 4, 2012 [
[bad weather day Sunday, August 5, 2012]

Time: 9 AM (come for a half day (9-12) or a full day (9-5)

Organizers: Harry Adams (613-602-3141) and Christian Renault

An excellent opportunity to appreciate this group of insects! We have fun with nets and encounter a good variety of damselflies and dragonflies. The idea is to search for "odes" within a 7.5 mile radius of Biederman Park, Lake Dore.

Place: Meet at the Wilberforce Township Park (Beach & Picnic Area) To reach the park go south on Highway 41 past intersection of Hwy 41 and Lake Dore Road, cross the bridge, turn right after bridge and go a short distance to park. Picture guides will be available as well as experienced participants. A large insect net, optional rubber boots, close focus binoculars, and lunch/drinks are suggested.

Pembroke Marina/Waterfront Bird Walk

Date: Saturday, August 18, 2012

Time: 8 AM

Trip Leader: Ken Hooles (613-735-4430)

Place: 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!

17th Annual Renfrew County Outdoor Woodlot Conference

Date: Saturday, September 22, 2012

Location: 558 Ferguslea Road, RR4, Renfrew, ON

Admission: \$5.00 (no pre-registration required).

Everyone welcome! This conference is focused on encouraging sustainable woodlot management on private land forests. The goal of improving the health of private woodlots is promoted by sharing ideas on forest management to meet individual objectives such as enhancing wildlife or improving timber sales. It provides an opportunity for people to network with other woodlot owners, professionals and related business representatives. This year's theme is woodlot certification and the program will include a tour of a local sawmill.

For information contact Karen Stokes 613-732-5523 karen.stokes@ontario.ca

Westmeath Provincial Park Beach Walk

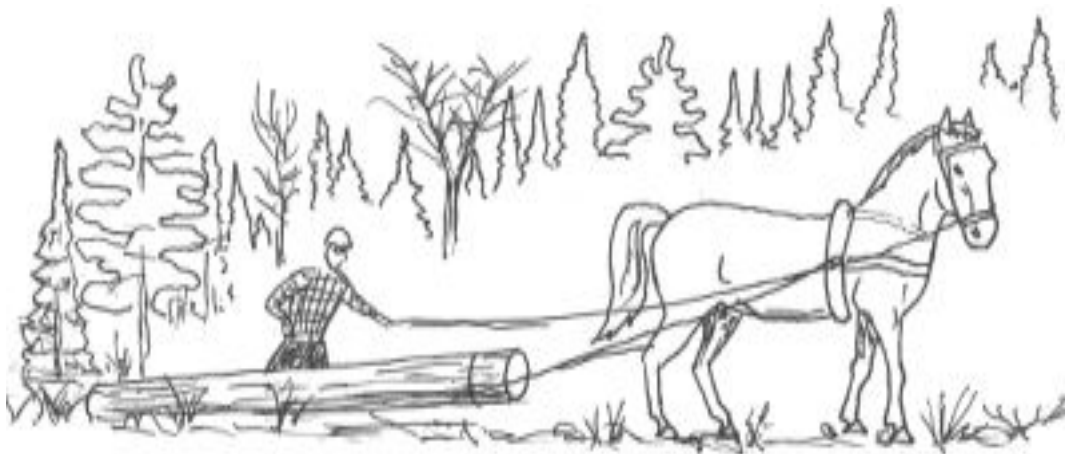
Date: Saturday, September 29, 2012

Time: 8:30 AM

Trip Leader: Christian Renault (613-735-8395), Ted Hiscock, and Robin Cunningham

Place: Meet at the municipal boat launch in the Town of Westmeath. Coming from the West on County Road 12, turn left in Westmeath at Synton Street and continue down to the boat launch. From the boat launch we'll drive West to Sand Point Road, then park and walk along the beach.

We're hoping to see sparrows (especially Nelson's Sparrow), shorebirds, ducks, and hawks. *Rubber boots recommended.*



*Illustration for Renfrew County Outdoor Woodlot Conference 2012
by Robin Cunningham, PAFN Vice-President*



Lake Dore Birds - October 29, 2011

By Manson Fleguel, Trip Leader

This trip was held as usual on the last Saturday of October. Chris Michener had always led this trip and had even done so the previous year, despite failing health and energy. We sure missed him. Fourteen people came on the outing this year.



Participants on Lake Doré Trip

(Photo: Jean Brereton)

While the temperature was below freezing at the start, it warmed up quickly and the sun made it “feel” warm for part of the trip. We started birding at the Wilberforce Township Municipal Park on the east end of the lake and found Canada Goose, Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Common Loon, both Horned and Red-necked Grebes and Blue Jay. Lots of loons, grebes and gulls could be seen further out on the lake.

We carpooled and drove south to Point Church Drive, where a second stop at an opening overlooking the lake yielded a couple of “good birds”: Red-breasted Merganser (*thanks to Christian Renault*) and White-winged

Scoter (*thanks to Jean Brereton*). We also found Long-tailed Duck, Common Merganser, Bonaparte's, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls as well as American Crow.

Near the boat launch at Warren's Bay, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal and Hooded Merganser appeared along the shoreline. We walked in from the gate to the beach at the Lake Dore Tent and Trailer Park. Here we were able to view the ducks feeding in the shallow weedy bay. We tallied Wood Duck, American Black Duck, and only after much deliberation due to the distance and position of the 'resting-head-under-the-wing' birds, identified Ring-necked Duck, and Pied-billed Grebe. Here we also sighted Great Blue Heron and Common Raven. On the walk back to our cars, Leo Boland stopped to hone in on a tapping noise that turned out to be a Hairy Woodpecker. At the same time White-winged Crossbills were heard and seen feeding on Hemlock cones over the road. American Goldfinches were also heard.

By this time it was close to noon and we decided to head back to our starting point. Two more species, American Tree Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco were spotted which brought our total bird species count for the trip to 30.

Thanks to all the good eyes and ears that made the outing so enjoyable.



The Pembroke Christmas Bird Count, December 17, 2011

by Manson Fleguel, Count Organizer and Compiler

This year, the snow hadn't yet arrived, truly an open fall and early winter and if it hadn't been for a sudden cold snap the day before the count, all water bodies would have been wide open. I had anticipated a higher than usual species count. (Our usual average was about 50 species) As it was, there was very little ice, but the temperature for the count day was -13 to -8 degrees. Cool!

On count day, Saturday, December 17, 28 field participants scoured the circle roads and 46 feeders were watched by 57 persons. For our efforts, **52 species** were noted and **7672 individual birds** were counted. Two new species were added to the count checklist: a Hermit Thrush, found by Christian and André Renault, and a Cackling Goose, discovered by Bruce and Ben DiLabio.

Once again, the six sectors were in a friendly competition to be the sector with the highest species count. This year there was a tie between **Sector 3E**, coordinated by Ken Hooles, along with Pat Hooles, Merv Fediuk, Vic Harmer and Ron Bertrand, and **Sector 1E**, piloted by Bruce DiLabio along with his son Ben, and Susan Ellis. Each of these sectors reported 35 species.

Sector 2S, captained by Jean Brereton, was a close second with 34 species. Also on her field participant team in this sector were Ole Hendrickson, Dustin

Ryckman, Chantal Hopkins, Claire Lepine, Kendra Smith and Christian and André Renault.

Sector 1W with Manson Fleguel, Mark and Michaela Dojczman, and David Beimers, had 29 species.

Sector 3W, having Myron and Evan Loback, Teresa Frechette, Benita Richardson, John MacGillivray and Leo Boland found 26 species.

Sector 2N had Robin Cunningham and Elizabeth Link in the field, ending the day with 16 species. They found the only Merlin on the count. This was only the 3rd sighting on the count since it began in 1978.

Some count highlights: a larger than normal Canada Goose count (1729), good numbers of Wild Turkey (250), 6 Bald Eagles, 1 Iceland Gull located during Count Week, 741 Black-capped Chickadees, 147 Bohemian Waxwings and 20 House Sparrows. (The last few years have seen a real decline in this species in our area, for reasons unknown.)

Of course, the count would not be anywhere near complete without an army of feeder watchers to tally the birds addicted to their feeders. This year we had another sizeable army! Listed here are the names of the feeder watchers (in alphabetical order). I thank each one for their participation and efforts on the count.

Jim and Marg Anderson, Nancy Armstrong, Barb Beimers, Ron and Lorraine Bertrand, Astrid Bonter, Ray Brazeau, Sheila and Gary Bucholtz, Ann and Jim Clarke, Keith Curry, Pat Darbyson, Dwight and Lucy Dickerson, Howard and Frances Doelle, Merv and Janie Dougherty, Tom and Dawn Farnel, Merv Fediuk, Judy, Brady and Isaac Fleguel, Beth Guimond, Sheila Handke, Mary Lou Hansen, Pat Harmer, Ken and Pat Hooles, Jeremy Inglis, Lynn Jones, Marilyn Kruschenske, Carolyn Lance, Eric Leskie, Ivy Levoy, Beth Loback, Wes Loback, Francis Marcotte, Karin Maree, Erna Maves, Wendell McLaughlin, Mac Nussey, Jill Renault, Jack and Cecile Schreder, Michele Smith, Mac and Dianne Thrasher, Art and Shirley VanWinckle, Gary and Sue Walton and Harold and Shirley Wirth.

At the end of the count day, a delicious pizza supper, courtesy of the PAFN, was served up at the home of Christian and Jill Renault.

Here is a listing of the birds counted: Cackling Goose 1, Canada Goose 1729, Am. Black Duck 4, Mallard 26, Greater Scaup 1, Lesser Scaup 1, Bufflehead 7, Common Goldeneye 173, Hooded Merganser 5, Common Merganser 16, Red-breasted Merganser 1, Ruffed Grouse 16, Wild Turkey 250, Common Loon 5, Bald Eagle 6, Northern Harrier 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 7, Rough-legged Hawk 7, Merlin 1, Ring-billed Gull 3, Herring Gull 4, Rock Pigeon 409, Mourning Dove 162, Barred Owl 2, Downy Woodpecker 43, Hairy Woodpecker, 51, Pileated Woodpecker 14, N. Shrike 2, Blue Jay 182, Am. Crow 492, Com. Raven 89, Black-capped Chickadee 741, Red-breasted Nuthatch 60, White-breasted Nuthatch 81, Brown Creeper 6, Golden-crowned Kinglet 15, Hermit Thrush 1, Am. Robin 1, European Starling 963, Bohemian Waxwing 147, Am Tree Sparrow 63, Dark-eyed Junco 46, Snow Bunting 1242, N.

Cardinal 14, Pine Grosbeak 1, House Finch 19, Common Redpoll 142, Pine Siskin 2, Am. Goldfinch 376, Evening Grosbeak 18, House Sparrow 20.
Thanks again to all who took part and made for another very successful and fun Pembroke CBC!



*Two Pileated Woodpeckers enjoying the abundance of the Loback Family feeders
(Photo: Beth Loback)*



**The Chris Michener Memorial Eganville Christmas Bird Count,
Sunday, December 18, 2011**

by Jean Brereton, Count Organizer and Compiler

The weather leading up to the count was mild with not much snow. And mild temperatures with lots of open water is cause for Christmas bird counters to lick their chops in anticipation of a really high tally of species. The cold snap that moved in on Friday, however, found us with fingers crossed and hoping Lake Doré would stay open two more days until sundown on Sunday when the count would be over. By the morning of count day, December 18, it was -15C and a large portion of Lake Doré had frozen overnight. Gratefully, a fair number of water birds had concentrated in the portions that remained open.

A friendly competition with the Pembroke count has always added to the 'joy of the chase' for Eganville's field participants - even though most of the field participants are the very same people. And I'm serious about "friendly". As it happened, Manson Fleguel (club secretary and coordinator of the Pembroke CBC) along with his son Brady, located the only Glaucous Gull seen this year on Eganville's CBC, as well as the day's only Iceland Gull. The Pembroke CBC

ended up with **52** species and the Eganville CBC had a final total count of **54 species**. So many thanks to you Manson!

This year we had 22 field participants covering our six traditional count zones. At the end of the day, **Golden Lake Zone** won the high tally with a total of **34** species.

Golden Lake Zone: Jean Brereton (zone coordinator); Ethan Anderman; Chantal Hopkins; Dustin Ryckman; Claire Lepine; and Gerald Priestly, recorded a species count of **34**.

Green Lake Zone: Ken Hooles (zone coordinator); Myron Loback; Manson Fleguel; Brady Fleguel, recorded a species count of **32**.

Augsburg Zone: Bernd Krueger (zone coordinator); Ken Birkett; Joanne Murray; Christopher Von Herff; Michael Von Herff; and William Von Herff. This zone recorded a species count of **27**.

Mink Lake Zone: Christian Renault (zone coordinator), and André Renault recorded **23** species.

Micksburg Zone: Robin Cunningham (zone coordinator), and Sheldon Davis, recorded a species count of **20**.

Highway 41 Zone: Margaret McLeod (zone coordinator), and Kendra Smith, recorded a species count of **16**.

The final tally of the day, **54 Species**, was made up of the following:

Canada Goose	American Black Duck	Mallard
Greater Scaup	Black Scoter	Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye	Hooded Merganser	Common Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser	Ruffed Grouse	Wild Turkey
Bald Eagle	Golden Eagle	Northern Goshawk
Red-tailed Hawk	Rough-legged Hawk	Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull	Iceland Gull	Glaucous Gull
Rock Pigeon	Mourning Dove	Rufous Hummingbird
Barred Owl	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Belted Kingfisher
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	American Tree Sparrow	Dark-eyed Junco
Snow Bunting	Northern Cardinal	Pine Grosbeak
Purple Finch	Red Crossbill	Common Redpoll
Pine Siskin	American Goldfinch	Evening Grosbeak

Our committed and sharp-eyed feeder watchers also really delivered this year! Three new species were added to the Eganville CBCs ongoing checklist and all three were observed on or near a feeder. Golden Eagle (near Mike & Heather

Lett's feeder); Rufous Hummingbird (observed by Bernd Krueger at Lorna and Dennis Peterson's feeder); and a Red-bellied Woodpecker that over-wintered at Audrey and Harold McKibbon's feeder on Mink Lake (viewed and reported by the McKibbons.)

Feeder watchers (listed alphabetically): Rosemary Cammaert; Bob and Lauren Clarke; Ernie and Vivian Freitag; Jim and Sandra Killeen; the Lett family: Michael, Heather, Mitchell, and Deann; Ted, Lee, and Theo Manto; Kornil Mielke; Pat and Larry Tamosetis; and Norman Schiemann,



*Red-bellied Woodpecker at Audrey & Harold McKibbon's feeder
(Photo: by their daughter, Michelle)*

At the end of the day field participants and a few feeder watchers gathered at the home of Bernd Krueger and Liz Reeves to enjoy a warm and hearty meal. Thank you Bernd and Liz for your easy and welcoming hospitality and all the great food. The gathered group remembered and toasted Chris Michener whose presence was so greatly missed this year.

Thank you to everyone who participated this year in the Chris Michener Memorial Eganville Christmas Bird Count.



Owl Prowl of March 24, 2012
By Christian Renault, Trip Leader

At 7 :30 pm, a total of 27 people showed up at the Wilberforce Township Park. There were many familiar faces but also a few new ones, including three youth. The participants who had never gone on an Owl Prowl were not to be disappointed on this night.

Before heading out, a quick scan of Lake Doré revealed 7 Common Mergansers, 5 Hooded Mergansers, and 2 Common Goldeneye. We could hear gulls calling, and in the nearby fields, American Woodcocks were calling. Jean Brereton brought some PAFN Bird Checklists which were distributed to the participants.

The large group crammed into six cars, with Leo Boland bringing up the rear of the convoy in order to signal our presence to traffic. We drove to Shaw Woods, where upon our arrival we heard Mallards and Canada Geese calling. A couple of minutes after we arrived and began calling owls with a recording, a Barred Owl flew in, landing on a branch of a tree situated close to the road. Everyone had a good look at it, and those who had never seen an owl before were blessed on this their first try! They expressed their delight. The Owl was quiet at first, but soon to everyone's pleasure, it began hooting as it flew to a nearby tree. We stood there in total silence for a good 20 minutes, enjoying its presence as well as its flight displays.

Our second stop was near wet forest, prime habitat for Eastern Saw-Whet Owl. For about 5 minutes we tried several owl calls. Jean Brereton heard a brief sound from the nearby woods. This focussed our attention, then our patience was rewarded when the second Barred Owl of this trip came in closer. Soon thereafter, it began calling and from the sound, seems most likely to have been a female. Again, we had a good look as it flew in to nearby trees hooting every once in a while. These two birds were the most vocal owls encountered by most participants in the recent past. What a great start, 2 for 2!

The third stop was about a kilometer further, where another Barred Owl showed up within a minute of our calling for it. These last two might have been a pair. This one did not call but stayed very close to the road, almost at eye level, offering us a very easy and enjoyable sighting. We did not see it for long as an approaching car had stopped to ensure that we were alright. Soon after the owl disappeared out of sight. We saw an incredible 3 owls at 3 stops! Since it was 8:45 p.m, we drove on to our final stop.



The night's first Barred Owl near Shaw Woods

(Photo: Christian Renault)

On Bulger Road, near Shaw Woods we tried calling several species of owls to no avail. But everyone seemed to have enjoyed the evening, and applauded our success. We concluded with me giving a brief talk about the ethics of owling.

The weather was also cooperative: about 5°C, cloudy, a gentle breeze, with just a few minutes of drizzle that was easily endured during the sighting of our second owl.



Bellows Bay Field Trip, April 21, 2012

by Trip Leader, Manson Fleguel

This year was different! The ice had disappeared from the Ottawa River on March 26, by far the earliest since 1984, when I began keeping records of this trip. During that week the temperature reached the high 20's and summer seemed to have arrived. The spring runoff was over in early April and we had no rain for this month. That meant there were no flooded fields nor high water

to keep some of the ducks and shorebirds in the area. What would we find on this trip?

Today was certainly not summerlike! The 12 participants met at the Pembroke Marina at 9 AM. A cold wind blew in from the north-west creating whitecaps and the 3C temperature coupled with heavily overcast skies made this less than ideal for watching birds. We persisted for a ½ hour but only found a few birds, mainly Double-crested Cormorants and gulls. Time to get back into the cars and get warmed up.

The walk across Ron Laderoute's farm was dry, as was the shoreline of the bay. A spectacular pair of Sandhill Cranes flew across our path to the river, calling loudly all the way. A Northern Harrier, Killdeer and Green-winged Teal were spotted on the way down to the bay.

At the water's edge, several American Wigeon were feeding as well as a Pied-billed Grebe. Further out on the bay, large numbers of Ring-necked Ducks were active, both on the water and in the air. A lone male Northern Shoveler was spotted across the bay. As we made our way westward to another vantage point, 2 immature Bald Eagles soared into view. Bufflehead, Mallards, Wood Ducks and Canada Geese were also present as were Common Goldeneye and Common Merganser. A pair of Scaup were noted, but not long enough to determine if they were Lesser or Greater. Several Great-blue Herons were present too.

After we were cooled by the weather and no more species were being spotted, we went back to the cars for a stop at the Westmeath wharf. A Northern Cardinal was heard and a possible Gadwall seen at the outer edges of our scoping ability.

Time to go. The car heater felt great! Once again it had been a wonderful outing. Thanks Walter, for keeping the sightings list for me. Hope to see you all again next year.

This year the group found 44 species! Here is a listing of the birds identified:

Canada Goose	Wood Duck	American Wigeon
Mallard	Northern Shoveler	Green-winged Teal
Ring-necked Duck	Scaup [Species]	Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye	Song Sparrow	Wild Turkey
Pied-billed Grebe	Double-crested Cormorant	Great Blue Heron
Turkey Vulture	Bald Eagle	Northern Harrier
Broad-winged Hawk	Sandhill Crane	Killdeer
Ring-billed Gull	Rock Pigeon	Mourning Dove
Yellow Bellied Sapsucker	Downy Woodpecker	Eastern Phoebe
Red-winged Blackbird	American Crow	Common Raven
Tree Swallow	Black-capped Chickadee	Blue Jay
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Common Grackle
American Robin	European Starling	Chipping Sparrow
Common Merganser	Dark-eyed Junco	Northern Cardinal
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	



Bird Lister's Corner

by Ken Hooles

The newest feature on the Pembroke and Area Field Naturalists website is now in full operation and available for viewing. Bird Lister's Corner is an opportunity for club members to list their most recent total number of "life" birds in four recognized categories. It is a great opportunity for club members to engage in some friendly competition and to watch and measure your own progress over the upcoming months and years.

The four categories include:

- Pembroke Circle (50 km circle)
- Ontario (anywhere in the province of Ontario)
- North America (ABA area-includes Canada, United States and Alaska)
- World – (all bird species from anywhere in the world including ABA list)

Must not include duplicates - a mallard is a mallard no matter the country where you list it. If you have any doubts if it is the same species, Latin names must be compared. For example, the Northern Gannet is not the same as the Gannet encountered in Europe (different Latin names).

Come and enjoy the fun and track your bird listing progress every quarter.

To register, just forward your total life bird number for each of the categories and your best new lifer bird for each category and where you saw it during the last three months, to Ken Hooles at hooles@bell.net
For example, Pembroke circle- 120 (Rufous Hummingbird, Eganville.

The list will be updated quarterly. The next listing date will be June 1st, 2012. Your updated or new lists (for new participants) deadline will be May 22, 2012. You can of course forward your list prior to this date.

I would like to acknowledge all the good work that Mike MacDonald did on the website to get it fully operational. Thanks Mike!

Good Birding and I look forward to receiving your lists.





Marmota monax

Woodchuck, Whistle Pig, Marmot, and a few that I can't put in writing. These are all reserved for the mighty Groundhog, *Marmota monax*. So mighty, in fact, that February 2nd is reserved especially for them. Can you name me another rodent that gets its picture taken with the Mayor? They've got a movie and a tongue twister on their resume as well. Although their predictions for the remaining winter are highly questionable and no one is really sure how much wood a Woodchuck can chuck, there is no doubt that for some they rival the return of the Red-wing Blackbird as a sure sign of spring's arrival. For others...well, maybe not everyone looks forward to their return.

The Groundhog is a rodent, one of the 14 species of marmots, which are members of the squirrel family. It is widespread across North America, digging holes from Alaska to Louisiana.



The Mighty Groundhog

(Photo: Lauren Trute Kruschenske)

Groundhogs like edges and open areas; they live in fields, hedgerows, clearings, and near road, stream and forest edges. They are excellent diggers and are also good climbers and swimmers. Apparently the term "Woodchuck" comes from an interpretation (or misinterpretation) of the "Wuchak", a Native American name which means "the digger".

The white tips of the brown guard hairs on the Groundhog's fur gives it a grizzled appearance. These guys can weigh anywhere from 4-13 lbs (~2-6 kg) and are anywhere from 16-26 inches (42-67 cm) long. They are territorial and

most interactions are limited to mating, which happens early in the spring just after they come out of hibernation. Males mate with many females; litter size ranges from 1-9, but usually averages 3-5. The young are dependent on the female for about 8 weeks.

Groundhog dens are like underground condominiums, with several tunnels, chambers and multiple entrances and exits and escape holes. They emerge from their dens to feed and to sun themselves. They are predominantly herbivorous, but will also eat insects, eggs. Significant fat stores are required to get them through winter - Groundhogs are true hibernators. Their abandoned dens become homes for Skunks, Rabbits, Weasels, Foxes, and a wide variety of other critters.

Natural Groundhog predators include Coyotes, Red Foxes and larger hawks. Groundhogs are considered pests by many people. For a farmer, their den holes create a potential leg-breaking hazard for cattle; their voracious appetites are the bane of many gardeners, devouring tender shoots and ripe produce. In the wild, Groundhogs usually only live 3-6 years (there are exceptions, see Sidebar). They communicate with each other through scent; they are also capable of making a number of sounds, including whistles, growls, hisses and barks.

Love 'em or hate 'em, and despite the accuracy of their meteorological predictions, there's no denying that Groundhogs are industrious little beasts. Don't believe me? Try to convince one to leave your yard.



Modern Groundhog Condo

(Photo: Lauren Trute Kruschenske)

Sidebar

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention a Groundhog that I know. Good friends of mine have a female Groundhog that lives under their wood pile; she's affectionately named "Mommy Groundhog". Mommy is breaking Groundhog longevity

records. Perhaps it's because she is so well fed that she hibernates about 10 months of the year. Perhaps it's a lack of natural predators. But by all counts, if Mommy emerges from hibernation this spring, she will be 9 years old!!

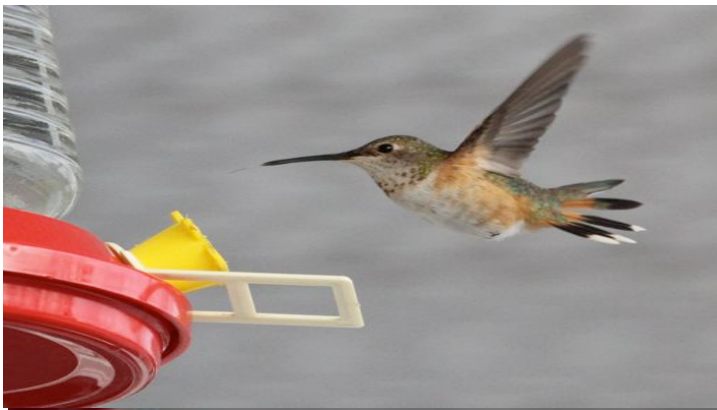


Rhonda, the Rufous Hummingbird by Christian Renault

In December of 2011, we learned about a Rufous Hummingbird coming in to a feeder near Eganville. Interesting news as it's a western species and very seldom seen in Ontario. In fact, Bruce DiLabio, a friend of PAFN who participates annually in our Pembroke Christmas Bird Count, told me it was only the fourth recorded occurrence in Ontario.

Though it had been at the Peterson's hummingbird feeder since September, it was not made publicly known until December. This was because Petersons didn't realize it was a rarity. They have fed hummingbirds for years, and usually took their feeder down at the end of September when there were no more 'hummers' around. This year as Mrs. Peterson was about to remove the feeder, she heard and saw this hummingbird right next to her, so she decided to leave the feeder in place. When she saw the bird coming in everyday she kept replenishing the feeder.

One day in early December, Lorna Peterson read in Elizabeth Le Geyt's Ottawa Citizen bird column about another hummingbird sighting. Someone else had one at their feeder in Embrun, east of Ottawa. She thought: 'Hey, we have one here too!' That is what alerted her to the idea that it was rare for this bird to be here in the month of December. So she wrote to Mrs. Le Geyt to share the news of her unusual resident bird. It was published, and eventually read by Bruce



DiLabio who was aware that the Ruby-throated Hummingbird is the only species of hummingbird here in eastern North America. He was also aware that there had been very few sightings of the Rufous Hummingbird over the last few years.

Rufous Hummingbird
(Photo: Christian Renault)

Curious, Bruce called the Petersons and asked permission to come see the bird. They were open to a visit and Bruce's hunch proved right: it was a Rufous Hummingbird. The very first record for Renfrew County, and a rarity indeed for Ontario. Though they are nesting from Alaska to Washington State, some do wander East during migration but this is mostly in the U.S.A. Perhaps others have been seen in Ontario, but not apparently by birdwatchers who would have

shared this unique sighting. Perhaps we remove our hummingbird feeders too early. Maybe we should do like the Petersons, and tarry a little before putting our feeders in storage.

Soon after his visit, Bruce shared his sighting in an online bird list named 'OntBirds'. Keen birdwatchers (listers) came from many parts of Ontario and Québec to see it. However, I missed it on my first try. But the Petersons were quite hospitable and kindly agreed to a visit. Although I drove there immediately after school one day, Rhonda, as she was affectionately named, had decided that bedtime was at 4:00 p.m. My trip was in vain. The Petersons insisted that I come in and eat a cookie or two and they proceeded to tell me their story.

They showed me pictures of the bird at the feeder, and photos of it being banded and afterwards as it was held in their hands. They also showed me a local newspaper article. What a kind couple! They told me that a bird expert had come up from southern Ontario to see the bird and had banded her. The bander had brought a cage to go around the feeder, and this he propped with a stick used to push the cage against the ceiling of the porch. An open door gave access to the feeder but was controlled by pulling a string. After a few tries, Rhonda found her way in and fed as the door was gently closed behind her.



(Photo : Christian Renault)

She weighed a 'healthy' 5 grams... Sibley says the average weight is about 3.4 grams. She was banded, and lying on her back, was handed to Mr. Peterson, where she remained motionless, and as if in a torpor, she lay like a sheep on its back. It was a great moment in his life!

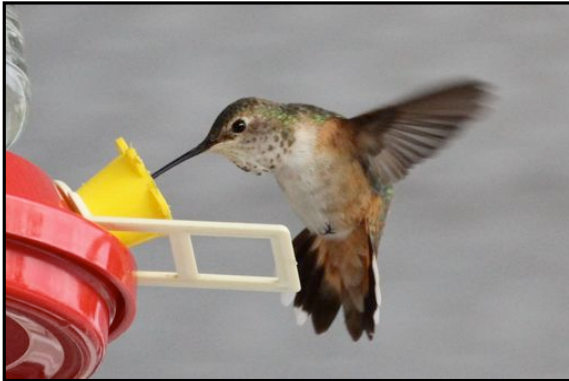
Rufous Hummingbird

The banding expert told them that this little creature could resist temperatures down to -20°C. Incredible for that size! He added that she will migrate when she wants to, and doesn't need to be rescued. He then gave them a 5 kg bag of sugar, and told them to keep filling the feeder with a higher concentration of sugar to water (one to three, instead of one to five). He encouraged them to place a feeder with liquid water, instead of letting it freeze at night; so they did.

They invited me to come back again when I was able so I took the opportunity a few days later during the Chris Michener Memorial Eganville CBC. This time, I came during lunch so I could have a glimpse of it and take a few photographs of the little marvel. I saw it with my son André. Soon after we arrived, we heard humming. It took a few seconds before we pinpointed the small presence in a nearby tree. I started shooting pictures, hoping to get at least one good shot. Then it showed up at the feeder. I used my fast shutter speed settings, hoping for the best. I managed a few decent shots while it came in to feed twice within

a minute. She never stopped flying while at the feeder. Wow, what a thrill! After we left, my son and I shared thoughts of how fantastic these these small bodied creatures are. To be able to resist the cold, and migrate such distances!

Rhonda was last seen on December 24th. The night temperature was below -24°C. She might have sensed the approaching extreme cold and moved on.



Seeing Rhonda would have been nearly impossible if it weren't for the media coverage (newspaper, the web) and our naturalist club. Now I'm thinking I'll keep my hummingbird feeder up a bit longer, with a stronger concentration of sugar at the end of the summer, just in case...

Rhonda, the Rufous Hummingbird
(Photo: Christian Renault, December 18, 2012)

