

The

Orchid



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Know • Appreciate • Conserve Nature in All its Forms



Red-breasted Merganser, Male Photo courtesy of Dave Milsom ~ Otonabee River at Lock 19 ~ February 18, 2014

INSIDE

- Christmas Bird Count – Petroglyphs and Rice Lake Plains Results
- Banding Northern Saw-whet Owls at Trent University's Oliver Property
- Winter Water Birds Abandoning the Great Lakes
- Share Your Thoughts

In this Issue:

Coming Events.....	3
Junior Naturalists.....	6
Other Events.....	7
PFN Directors Listing.....	8
Rice Lake Plains Christmas Bird Count.....	9
Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count.....	10
Share Your Thoughts.....	11
Winter Water Birds Abandoning The Great Lakes.....	12
More Comments on the Amercian Crow.....	14
From the Archives: Lola Leach.....	14
Banding Northern Saw-whet Owls At Trent University's Oliver Property.....	15
Orchid Diary – Tony Bigg.....	18
From the Archives.....	20
President's Address: Annual General Meeting.....	20

Welcome New Members!

Marcy Adzich and Buckley River Yates
 Cathy & Jim Boothby
 Alicia Gabourie and Jakob Weeks



Sharp-shinned Hawk
 ~ Photo courtesy of Luke Berg ~ Peterborough, January 19



Sunset on Scollard Drive, Peterborough
 ~ Photo Courtesy of Dave Milsom ~ February 5



PFN Winter Tracking Workshop Led by Don McLeod ~
Photo Courtesy of Paul Elliott ~ February 2

Coming Events

Hooters of Amherst Island

Sunday
March 2

6:45 a.m.

Tim Horton's on
Lansdowne Street, in
Sobey's Plaza

Amherst Island, at the eastern end of Lake Ontario, west of Kingston, is known for its concentration of wintering owls. The owls and hawks are the top predators on the island and the hunters of the mice and voles in the grasslands of the island. The number and variety vary from year to year but normally one can find Snowy, Short-eared and Long-eared Owls. Depending on the northern flight, other species will be present. This is a joint outing with the Kingston Field Naturalists under the direction of Peter Good of Kingston. With Peter's local knowledge we will see the owls of this winter.

The spring migration will have commenced by this time.

Martin Parker will be leading the group from Peterborough to the ferry terminal for the passage to Amherst Island. We will be catching the 9:30 a.m. ferry to the island. Bring a packed lunch, clothes suitable for the weather, binoculars and camera.

Monthly Meeting - Ontario's IBA Program: Critical Sites for Birds and Biodiversity

Wednesday
March 12

7:30 p.m.

Ptbo Library

The Important Bird Areas Program is a global initiative to identify, monitor, and conserve the world's most important sites for birds and biodiversity. Using scientific criteria, nearly 600 Canadian sites have been designated. IBAs are found throughout the country. Ontario's 70 IBAs cover more than 23,000 square kilometres, largely along the coasts of the Great Lakes and Hudson and James Bays. Most sites regularly host large concentrations of birds, or significant numbers of species at risk.

Join Ontario's IBA Coordinator to find out more about these amazing sites and learn how you can help make a difference.



*Lake Ontario at
Port Hope,
Photo courtesy of
Dave Milsom*

February 2, 2014

Coming Events continued

<p>Saturday March 22</p> <p>9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Camp Kawartha Environment Centre</p>	<p>“The Next 75 Years” - What Are the Possibilities for the PFN?</p> <p>Special Member’s Forum – This day is being planned to generate active participation by PFN members. There will be stimulating questions and conversations about our collective vision on the future of our club.</p> <p>The discussion facilitator requests that each participant bring an object that symbolizes the moment or ‘wow’ experience which awakened your interest in the natural world and started you on the path of becoming an active naturalist. For many birders it usually relates to a specific observation. What was yours?</p> <p>Bring your ideas and a packed lunch. Coffee and other treats will be provided. Your thoughts and ideas are most welcome and we hope you will join this forum on the future of the PFN.</p>
<p>Sunday March 23</p> <p>8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Country Style at Old Keene Road & Highway 7</p>	<p>Waterfowl at Presqu’ile Provincial Park</p> <p>Join us for a full-day birding trip to Presqu’ile, led by Jerry Ball. Thousands of ducks, geese and swans use this resting spot on their spring migrations north. Bring a packed lunch, binoculars and a spotting scope, if you have one.</p> <p>We will meet at the Country Style at the junction of Old Keene Road and Hwy #7. There is an entry fee for each vehicle entering the park. Contact Jerry for more in 705-745-3272.</p>
<p>Sunday March 30</p> <p>8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Tim Horton’s on Lansdowne Street, in Sobey’s Plaza</p>	<p>Birds of the Lakeshore</p> <p>Tony Bigg will lead a day of birding along the shore of Lake Ontario. The initial destination is Cobourg harbour then westward to Port Hope, Bond Head, Oshawa Second Marsh and Whitby. We can expect a good variety of birds, including waterfowl, gulls, and early arriving land birds. Bring a packed lunch, binoculars, and telescope if you have one. Wear clothes suitable for the weather forecast for the day of the outing.</p>

Coming Events continued

<p>Sunday Mornings April 6 to May 25</p> <p>Spring Wildlife Walks</p> <p>8:00 a.m. Ptbo Zoo Parking Lot</p>	<p>Spring Wildlife Walks</p> <p>Our popular Spring wildlife walks will commence on Sunday April 6th and continue until May 25th, unless otherwise advertised. Most walks will start at 8:00 am and we will normally carpool from the parking lot of Peterborough Zoo on Water Street. Outings generally last about three hours. Bring some change to donate towards gas costs and bring binoculars if possible. In most cases the leaders will confirm the destination on the day.</p> <p>6th April Leader: Jerry Ball</p> <p>13th April Leader: Erica Nol</p>
<p>Thursday April 10</p> <p>7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Ptbo Library</p>	<p>Monthly Meeting - Koalas, Kangaroos and Kookaburras: Adventures in the South East of Australia</p> <p>Paul Elliott shares stories of wildlife encounters while exploring the Dandenong Ranges and the coast of Victoria and New South Wales during a trip to Australia in 2013. From walks among the world's tallest flowering plants and close-up encounters with colourful bird life to a heart-stopping moment in the shower, the native species of Australia never fail to impress.</p> <p>**Note the change to Thursday night due to another booking at Library.</p>

Koala Bear ~ Photo courtesy of Paul Elliott



Coming Events continued

<p>Wednesday May 14</p> <p>7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Ptbo Library</p>	<p>Monthly Meeting - Understanding the Eastern Wolf</p> <p>The talk will focus on the relationship among wolves and coyotes in North America and examine the future of wolf conservation in Ontario.</p> <p>Linda Rutledge received her PhD in Environmental and Life Sciences at Trent University, where she is currently a researcher and lecturer in the Biology department. Linda leads the Eastern Wolf Survey: a research project that uses noninvasive sampling methods to survey persistence and dispersal of eastern wolves in southern Ontario's Provincial Parks, including Frontenac, Bon Echo, and Kawartha Highlands, among others. Find out more at www.easternwolfsurvey.ca or follow the research project on Twitter @EastWolfSurvey.</p>
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*Eastern Wolf ~
Photo courtesy of
Michael Runtz*



PFN Junior Field Naturalists (ages 5-12)

The February outing was a great success. At Susan Chan's house we learned about solitary bees and how to build nesting houses for them. There will be a second program in the spring.

<p>Sunday March 23</p> <p>1:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Check out the maple syrup action at Camp Kawartha (Lakefield). Hopefully the sap will be running by then and we will help with the collection of sap. Be prepared for snowy/slushy conditions.</p>
<p>Sunday April 27</p> <p>1:30 p.m.</p>	<p>This day will be part of the overall "7 Days of Green" event hosted by Camp Kawartha at the Environment Centre at Trent University. We will look to welcoming spring (with open arms!) with crafts, games and hiking.</p> <p>See everyone soon. Stay warm! ~Neil.</p>

Other Events of Interest

<p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday March 25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Market Hall, Peterborough</p>	<p>Climate Change in my Backyard: Climate Change Impacts in Peterborough and the Kawarthas Region</p> <p>The Ontario Climate Consortium (OCC) is working with Trent University and other local partners to help facilitate a series of town halls with renowned natural and social scientists, local area experts and stakeholders. The aim of this town hall is to provide individuals and organizations in the region with the information and resources they need to begin to adapt to a changing climate.</p> <p>Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about the science of climate change and its impact through an interactive exchange with national and local experts. The intention behind this event is to begin an informational series and establish a continuous dialogue to explore the likely manifestations of climate change in the region and their potential impacts.</p> <p>We are pleased to have Dr. Gregory Flato as the main speaker for this event. Dr. Flato oversees the development of Environment Canada's global and regional earth system models, and their application to historical climate simulation, seasonal to interannual climate prediction, and long-term climate projection.</p> <p>More details about the event (including registration information) are available at: http://climateontario.org/wp/climate-change-in-my-backyard-climate-change-impacts-in-peterborough-and-the-kawarthas-region-2/</p> <p>Please feel free to contact Simran Chattha at schattha@trca.on.ca, or call 416-661-6600 ext. 5583 for more information.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Friday, Saturday, Sunday</p> <p style="text-align: center;">April 11 to 13</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Evinrude Centre, Peterborough</p>	<p>Peterborough Garden Show</p> <p>Our PFN club will have a booth at the Peterborough Garden Show during the weekend of April 11th, 12th and 13th at the Evinrude Centre. Be sure to drop by and say hello as you welcome the arrival of spring at one of the largest garden shows in Ontario. The PFN booth will have friendly faces as well as lots of information about our club including brochures, pamphlets and pictures.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Saturday May 10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Markham Civic Centre</p>	<p>Native Plant Sale – Markham, ON</p> <p>The North American Native Plant Society is holding its annual sale of wildflowers, ferns, grasses and sedges, as well as trees and shrubs. Our sale showcases hundreds of native species and introduces thousands of native plants into GTA gardens. See our displays and chat with knowledgeable experts to help you make the right choices for your planting project. All plants come from ethical growers and are locally sourced. Visit www.nanps.org to see the plant list. For more info email info@nanps.org.</p> <p>Location: Markham Civic Centre, 101 Town Centre Blvd, Markham (Warden & Hwy 7). Free parking.</p>



2014 'PLANTING OUR FRUITURE' TREE WORKSHOPS

For more information or to register, contact:
 Marcy Adzich (705) 745-3238 ext 212 \ workshops@greenup.on.ca
greenup.on.ca

SELECTING THE RIGHT FRUIT TREE AND PLANTING YOUR FRUIT TREE RIGHT!

DATE: Saturday, March 22

TIME: 1:00 – 3:30 pm

LOCATION: GreenUP meeting room, 378 Alymer Street North, Peterborough

COST: \$10

“The right tree in the right place” is the GreenUP Ecology Park mantra. Location, soil type and growing conditions can make all the difference in your backyard or farm orchard. Andy Harjula will also discuss how to select a healthy tree from a plant nursery. You are welcome to bring a small sample of your property soil for us to test pH.

HOW TO PROPAGATE FRUIT TREES

DATE: Saturday, April 26

TIME: 1:00 – 3:30 pm

LOCATION: GreenUP meeting room, 378 Alymer Street North, Peterborough

COST: \$10

There are many different ways to grow fruit trees- not just by planting a seed! This workshop will cover various methods of propagation to grow strong trees and productive orchards. Please bring a sharp exacto knife to practice some grafting techniques.

PFN Officers and Directors

President	Martin Parker	mparker19@cogeco.ca	745-4750
Vice President	Gina Varrin	gina.varrin@gmail.com	761-7787
Secretary	Kelly Boadway	kjboadway@gmail.com	775-0756
Treasurer	Don Pettypiece	donem.pettypiece@bell.net	750-1145
Membership	Jim Young	jbyoung@persona.ca	292-5444
Program (indoor)	Phil Shaw	pshaw78@hotmail.com	874-1688
Program (outdoor)	Paul Elliott	paulelliott@trentu.ca	740-0501
Fisheries Council	Kim Zippel	kzippel@cogeco.ca	740-0587
Webmaster	Chris Gooderham	webmaster@peterboroughnature.org	740-2081
FON Rep	Ted Vale	tedandmarion@sympatico.ca	741-3641
Special Projects	Lynn Smith	smithfam@nexicom.net	944-5599

Other Volunteers

Ecology Park Feeders	Sean Smith & Don Finigan	745-4750
Orchid Diary	Tony Bigg	652-7541
Orchid Mailout	Michelle and Emily Young	
Orchid Editor	Marla Williams	874-5653
Jr. Naturalists	Neil Fortin	292-6185
Miller Creek Management Area	Jim Cashmore & Jim Young	
Ad-hoc on Lily Lake Planning	Jim Cashmore, Jim Young, Lynn Smith, Martin Parker	
Local Planning Committees	Jim Cashmore	



ORCHID SUBMISSIONS WANTED

Deadline for submissions for the April 2014 issue: **Friday March 21**

Send submissions to Marla Williams via email: orchid@peterboroughnature.org

or post mail to: **PFN, PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7**

Rice Lake Plains Christmas Bird Count, January 1, 2014

The first Rice Lake Plains Christmas Bird Count was held on January 1, 2014. Nineteen field observers and 11 feeder watchers tallied 5545 birds of 41 species. One additional species (Purple Finch) was recorded during count week.

Like most Ontario counts, the weather was cold with temperatures ranging from -12°C to -18°C. Fortunately, winds were light and there was no precipitation. All still water was frozen with moving water only partly open.

Highlights included:

Great Blue Heron – 1 – a very sad looking bird

Ruffed Grouse – 38

Belted Kingfisher – 1

Brown Creeper – 13

Cedar Waxwing – 821

Lapland Longspur – 1

Northern Flicker – 1

Bald Eagle – 1

Wild Turkey – 246

Red-bellied Woodpecker – 9

Carolina Wren – 1

Eastern Towhee – 1

Common Redpoll – 6

Eastern Screech Owl – 10

The only winter finches seen count day were American Goldfinch and the six Common Redpolls.

Surprisingly low counts were tallied on American Robin (3) and Northern Cardinal (31).

Thank you to all the participants. Special thanks to Alderville First Nation for the use of the Alderville Black Oak Savanna Nature Centre for the countdown gathering.

Roger Frost, Compiler McCracken's Landing, ON



American Robin ~

*Photo courtesy of Dave Milsom,
Trent University Drumlin, February 15*

Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count

The 28th Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count was held on Thursday January 2, 2014. The temperature was a very cold -27 degrees Celsius in the early a.m. and only increased to about -20 around midday. There were also strong winds all day (including early in the morning). Many species were sparse this year due to a lack of natural foods but there is little doubt that the cold temperature and strong winds also contributed to the low numbers (even the Black-capped Chickadees were largely unresponsive to pishing, squeaking and owl calls).

Participants: 30

Total species: 27 (average is 32)

Total individuals: 1988 (average 2454)

Noteworthy Species:

CANADA GOOSE: 3 (3rd time on count) RED-TAILED HAWK: (count period only) GOLDEN EAGLE: 2 (visiting some beaver carcasses put out by a local trapper) BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER: 1 (Petroglyphs Provincial Park) AMERICAN ROBIN: 3 (5th time on count and first since 2004/05)

High Counts:

WILD TURKEY: - 126 (a new count high - virtually all were associated with feeders) BLUE JAY: 564 (near count high of 653) AMERICAN TREE SPARROW: 73 (above 10-year average of 24 but nowhere near count high of 218) DARK-EYED JUNCO: 21 (above 10-year average of 5 but nowhere near count high of 168)

Low Counts:

RUFFED GROUSE: 9 (below 10-year average of 19 and well below record high of 77) MOURNING DOVE: 5 (well below 10-year average of 21) RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH: 48 (below 10-year average of 96) WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH: 35 (below 10-year average of 61) EUROPEAN STARLING: 7 (below 10-year average of 24)

Misses:

NORTHERN SHRIKE: although not recorded every year, at least 1 is recorded most years GRAY JAY: missed for the fourth year in a row. Although single birds have been recorded in both Petroglyphs Provincial Park and the Kawartha Nordic Ski Trails last year, no family groups have been noted for several years. Prior to 2010, the average count was 5 and they were recorded every year with the exception of 1990.

Finches were very few as follows:

RED CROSSBILL: 4 (appeared to be small-billed individuals associating with Eastern Hemlock on Jack's Lake Road) AMERICAN GOLDFINCH: 202 EVENING GROSBEAK: 4

The count circle (including the 6 areas) can be viewed at the following link:

<https://maps.google.ca/maps/ms?msid=217208700112631695001.0004d125bfd0d20adc5de&msa=0&ll=44.660839,-77.950058&spn=0.2525,0.676346>

Thanks to all participants!

Colin Jones, Compiler McCracken's Landing, ON

Share Your Thoughts!



Rhea's Bringeman's Bequest to PFN

Rhea Bringeman was a member of the Peterborough Field Naturalists for over 40 years and volunteered for a variety of roles including President and Director. Rhea also compiled 'The Orchid Diary' for at least two decades, and represented the PFN at Ontario Nature for about 40 years. Rhea passed away in April 2013.

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Rhea has remembered the Peterborough Field Naturalists. The lawyers and trustees for the estate have informed the PFN that our share of the initial distribution of the estate is \$25,000. A final distribution will occur later and could result in another \$15,000. This is a tremendous legacy for the club.

The Board is in the process of determining the requirements and restrictions on the use of these funds by the Canada Revenue Agency or other government agencies.

The Board would also like to hear from PFN members regarding the use of these funds. There are many possible ways this legacy can be used to honour Rhea's contribution to the PFN.

Please submit your suggestions to any member of the Board. All submitted ideas will be considered.

"The Next 75 Years" - What Are the Possibilities for the PFN?

Special Member's Forum – Saturday, March 22 at Camp Kawartha Environment Centre from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The Peterborough Field Naturalists has had a rich history since its founding in May 1940. The club has been the documenter of nature in Peterborough County and beyond, has been a voice speaking on ecological and environment issues, and a means of learning about nature in all its forms.

In preparation for our celebration of 75 successful years, the Board felt it was time to reflect on the PFN: its past and its future. The overall focus of the morning's event will be "What are the possibilities now?". The day is being planned to generate active participation by the members. There will be stimulating questions and conversations about our collective vision on the future of our club.

The discussion facilitator requests that each participant bring an object that symbolizes the moment or 'wow' experience which awakened your interest in the natural world and started you on the path of becoming an active naturalist. For many birders it usually relates to a specific observation. What was yours?

Bring your ideas and a packed lunch. Coffee and other treats will be provided. Please mark March 22nd on your calendar and join this important forum on the future of the PFN!

Winter Waterbirds Abandoning the Great Lakes

By Dave Milsom

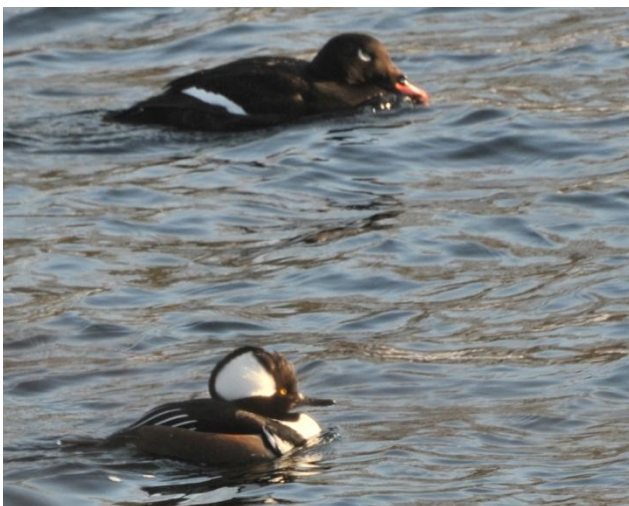
The winter of 2013/2014 has been remarkable for many reasons, including the extremely cold temperatures and the amount of snowfall. The Great Lakes of Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie and Ontario are huge bodies of water which rarely freeze over. Yet this winter the effects of the lasting cold temperatures and the Polar Vortex have contributed to a major freeze-up of these great water bodies.

From 1973 to 2010 annual ice cover on the Great Lakes showed a decline of 71%. In 2011-2012 the ice cover maximum was about 5% (Michigan State University Extension: 29-01-14). However, the Great Lakes this winter are iced over more than any time in the past 20 years, according to an article written in the *Peterborough Examiner* on February 15th, 2014. As of this date, **88.4 %** of the lakes were frozen: Lake Superior was 94% ice-covered, Michigan 81%, Huron 95% and Erie 96%. Lake Ontario was only frozen at its eastern end but in January there had been ice stretching 400 metres offshore all along the north shore. Traditionally, Lake Ontario does not usually freeze because it is further south and contains some very deep sections. Lake Erie, on the other hand, is by far the shallowest of these lakes so it freezes more regularly.

The result of this major freeze-up is the significant movement of ducks, loons and grebes off the lakes onto open water bodies and rivers in the interior. In London, Ontario, for example, White-winged Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Scaup, Horned and Red-necked Grebes and two Red-throated Loons have arrived on the Thames River (Peter Read, Ontbirds: 12-02-14). None of these birds are usually seen there in winter. In fact, Red-throated Loon has not been seen there in winter since 1898!



*Popham Bay off Huff Road, near Presqu'ile Provincial Park ~
Photo courtesy of Martin Parker ~ January 23*



A similar event has occurred on the Otonabee River between Peterborough and Lakefield; a waterway always partially open even in the coldest winters due to the force of the water cascading through the lock gates at various points along the river (these locks forming part of the Trent-Severn Waterway linking Lake Ontario with Georgian Bay, Lake Huron). White-winged Scoters have been discovered this February at Gannon's Narrows (2), at the entrance to Pigeon Lake, and on the Otonabee at Lock #19 just south of Landsdowne Street in Peterborough. According to Doug Sadler (*Our Heritage of Birds*: 1983), this species is a "very rare spring migrant" and not seen in winter. Long-tailed Duck has been found in many spots on the Otonabee this winter. It is normally a "very rare" visitor in winter.

White-winged Scoter and Hooded Merganser, Males ~ Photo courtesy of Dave Milsom ~ Otonabee River, February 16

At Lock #19, another very rare visitor, a male Bufflehead, was found on February 16th. Nearby was a Horned Grebe, which, according to Sadler, is an “uncommon species found every year in spring migration...arriving late March and early April.”

Red-necked Grebes “occasionally seen on the Otonabee River during migration” (J.L. McKeever : “A Checklist of the Birds of Peterborough County: April,1958”) have also arrived here: 4 in Lakefield (E-Bird, Iain Rayner: 17-02-14) and at least 2 further south on the river have been seen feeding on Green and Leopard frogs and brown Bullheads (E-Bird, Donald Sutherland: 17-02-14). Grebes have also been seen this February on the Gananoque River in Kingston, and on the Speed River near Guelph. They can survive easily on these various rivers because they are not too deep and the bird can dive to the bottom to retrieve “frogsicles” and small fish.



*Hooded Mergansers, Male
~ Photo courtesy of Dave Milsom
~ Otonabee River, February 4*

Two male Hooded Mergansers and a pair together, at Lock #19, have over-wintered on the Otonabee. Far more unexpected has been the recent influx of Red-breasted Mergansers onto the river. Classified as a “very rare spring migrant” (P.S. Burke, C.D. Jones et al: “Peterborough County Natural History Summary”: March, 1999), the following sightings have been recorded: 5 at Lock #19 and 2 at Little Lake (E-Bird, Iain Rayner: 20-02-14) ; 6 at Millenium Park on the Otonabee River (E-Bird, Ken Abraham: 19-02-14); 5 near Peterborough Zoo (E-Bird, Martin Parker: 18-02-14); 2 near Lock #25 (E-Bird, Susan Sauve: 15-02-14);

2 near Lakefield (E-Bird, Luke Berg: 18-02-14); 5 in Lakefield (E-Bird, Travis Cameron: 16-02-14); 3 at Young’s Point (E-Bird, Donald Sutherland: 17-02-14); and 2 at Gannon’s Narrows (E-Bird, Donald Sutherland: 17-02-14).

Meanwhile on February 20th in Fort Erie, where the Niagara River flows into Lake Erie, were 570 Red-breasted Mergansers, 118 White-winged Scoters, 143 Long-tailed Ducks, and 880 Buffleheads among the rafts of ducks there (Ontbirds, William Watson: 20-02-14).

All these statistics are the result of the Great Lakes freezing over, not the result of early migration of waterbirds from their southern wintering grounds in the Atlantic Ocean off Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas. These birds will return to the north at the end of winter, in mid-to-late March. The ones currently found on our inland waterways are undoubtedly there because of the freeze-up of the Great Lakes.

More Comments on the American Crow

By June Hitchcox, Courtesy of the *Apsley Voice*

More wonderful Crow comments from you, the readers, that I would like to share with everyone plus a video from Elaine. All showing that Crows are surprisingly intelligent, like a challenge, like to have fun – behaviour not usually found in bird species.

<http://cottagelife.com/83449/blogs/clever-crow-toboggans-down-a-rooftop-on-a-jar-lid-2>

Also found via Google by typing “Clever Crow Toboggans down Rooftop on a Jar Lid”. It shows a Crow on the peak of a snowy roof holding a jar lid in its bill, positioning its feet in the lid and repeatedly sliding down the roof in this “lid toboggan”.

From Helen: I had a very aggressive coyote/brush wolf coming through the woods to my garden. It was probably after my chickens and ducks, but despite my shouting at it several times and its being chased off by my 2 dogs, it continued to come towards me. Then, suddenly, a large flock of Crows appeared from the trees and squawked and dive-bombed the coyote until it actually ran off. There certainly must be more to Crows than we think. There are always quite a few around here but I tend to take them for granted. It is always interesting to read other snippets about them.

From Carol: I have heard that birds are looked upon as message conveyors.

From Fran: In the Native American tradition, Crow can bend the laws of the physical universe and “shape shift”. Crow is also thought of as an omen of change. With Crow medicine, you speak in a powerful voice when addressing issues that, for you, seem out of harmony, out of balance, out of whack or unjust.

If you have had any interesting bird experiences, please send them to me so that we can all enjoy them: hitchbob@sympatico.ca. Thanks, everyone.

From the Archives: Lola Leach, 1900-1985 – A Dedicated Member

Excerpt from “The Orchid”, December 1985, Volume 31, Number 9, Written by Doug Sadler:

“Few of today’s membership knew Lola Leach for she was a quiet, background person. She died earlier this month at the age of 85, having been a member of the Club for as long as anyone can remember.

Although her enjoyment of nature was personal and unassertive, she was among our most faithful members and contributed greatly over the years. For a long time she carried the job of Treasurer. She was Membership Secretary for some years. Although she never seems to have gone on a Christmas Bird Count, she volunteered to host the excited and ravenous horde at her home for year after year.

She rarely missed a meeting, and never seemed to change much. I had the opportunity to chat with her for a little while at the last meeting I was able to go to, and found her as cheerful and lively as ever, in her quiet way. Death was quick and unexpected. We shall miss you Lola.”

Lola Leach Award

The Peterborough Field Naturalists periodically awards the Lola Leach Award in recognition of Loyal Club Service. Dedicated members who have received the Lola Leach Award include:

1985	Nan Luscombe	1993	Geoff Carpentier	2011	Tony Bigg
1986	Rhea Bringeman	1994	Stan Reiten	2012	Bob & Noreen Quinn
1987	Maurice Nisbett	1995	Clayton Vardy	2013	Neil Fortin
1988	Harry Williams	1997	Cathy Dueck	2014	Jim Cashmore
1989	Don Porter	2001	Bob Sarginson		
1990	Terry Hunter	2002	Jean Greig		
1991	Doug Sadler	2005	Gerry Ball		
1992	Pat Dunsire	2007	Drew Monkman		

These are just a few of the people who contributed in many ways to the Peterborough Field Naturalists, since its founding in May 1940.

Banding Northern Saw-whet Owls at Trent University's Oliver Property (Peterborough County)

By Walter Wehtje,
Biology Department, Trent University, Peterborough ON
(Photos on pages 15 and 16 courtesy of Walter Wehtje)



With winter seemingly incapable of leaving us, it's providing a good reminder of why so many of our breeding bird species migrate south each fall. Passerines, raptors and waterfowl are all easily noted as they head towards warmer climes, but they're not the only species on the move. Many nocturnal species also migrate, but less visibly than their diurnal brethren. Among the more abundant nocturnal migrants are Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*), robin-sized birds that feed primarily on small mammals. Unlike larger owls, they have difficulty hunting when the snow gets deep, so move south from the boreal forest in fall. Peak numbers pass through Peterborough County in October each year. For the past 15 years, Dr. Erica Nol of Trent University has led a banding effort at Trent University's James McLean Oliver Ecological Centre near Nogie's Creek. This is a volunteer project sponsored by Trent University with assistance from local naturalists groups.

Last fall, we began capture efforts on 29 September and continued until 2 November, weather permitting. For some reason, Northern Saw-whet Owls (NSWO) are attracted to territorial calls during the fall, something that we take advantage of. We set up three 12 m X 2.6 m mist nets in a triangular pattern in a wooded area with a shrubby understory, place an audio-lure broadcasting NSWO calls in the center of the triangle, and wait. Any owls attracted by the calls are captured in a mist net as they approach the audio-lure. To the extent possible, we keep nets open from 8 PM until midnight (four hours) unless rain, snow, excessive wind or cold temperatures force us to close them. We check nets every 20-30 minutes, more often when the temperature is near 0° C. Each captured bird is removed from the net and placed in a cloth bag before being taken to an indoor location for processing. We band, weigh and measure the wing chord of all captured birds. We age

each bird by examining the moult patterns of their flight feathers. We sex the birds using established criteria for wing chord and weight. All captured birds are released after processing.

We opened nets for 29 nights in 2013 and captured 100 NSWOs. All but three were new captures. The two most productive nights were on October 7 and 14, when we captured 13 NSWOs. On no other night did we capture more than seven birds. We captured far fewer birds at the Oliver site in 2013 compared to 2012 (100 versus 177), despite banding for the same number of nights during both years.

The majority of the birds captured were females (79.6%), followed by birds of unknown sex (15.7%) and very few males (4.6%). The age distribution of the captured birds was interesting, with second year birds (birds hatched in 2012) making up 54.6% of the total captured. This wasn't surprising, considering the large cohort of hatch year birds (53.7%) banded in Fall 2012. They were followed by birds older than two years (ASY), who made up 27.8% of the total. Hatch year birds (HY – hatched in 2013) only made up 17.6% of the total (Table 1).

Table 1: Age and sex of Northern Saw-whet Owls banded at the Oliver Centre during fall 2013

HY (f, m, u)	SY (f, m, u)	ASY (f, m, u)	Total (f, m, u)
19 (13, 1, 5)	51 (38, 2, 11)	30 (27, 2, 1)	100 (78, 5, 17)

(Key: HY-hatch year; SY-second year; ASY-after second year; f-female; m-male; u-unknown)

Of the recaptured birds, one was banded as an adult in 2012 south of Hamilton, Ontario, while the second was banded as an HY in 2010 in Potter County, Pennsylvania. We haven't received information on the third recaptured bird yet. In addition to the NSWOs, we captured one Eastern Screech-Owl (*Megascops asio*). We released it without a band as we didn't have the correct band size available. No owls were injured or died during the banding.



Because NSWOs feed so heavily on rodents during the breeding season, when we caught many fewer hatch year owls in 2013 than in 2012, it suggested that they came from areas that had a less successful breeding season in 2013. Vole and deer mice numbers often track the availability of fruit and seeds available from the previous summer. The very dry summer of 2012 resulted in a low seed and fruit crop in the boreal forest (but somehow a high crop of young NSWO), something we enjoyed last winter as large numbers of winter finches and Bohemian Waxwings came south in search of food.

Northern Saw-whet Owls have very sharp talons. One way to avoid being pierced is to give them something to hold onto.

The summer of 2013 had plenty of rain and a bumper crop of fruits and seeds, so this winter we have few reports of Bohemian Waxwings, Evening Grosbeaks or crossbills in Peterborough County. If the rodents up north have taken advantage of all the available food, they may allow NSWOs to have a very successful breeding season in 2014. We'll be out at the Oliver Centre, ready to find out.

P.S. One of the goals of this project is to provide members of the public with the opportunity to observe our work. Last fall, we were able to provide 125 visitors the opportunity to watch us band. If you are interested in visiting the Oliver Centre this coming fall, please send an email to Walter Wehtje (wehtje@gmail.com) and I will send you registration information in September. Finally, we would like to thank Eric Sager for allowing us to band at the Oliver property and Sandra Sisson for the use of her property for additional banding.



Hey PFN Members!

Have you renewed your membership for 2014? If not, please note that this will be the last issue of the Orchid that you will receive. If uncertain of your membership status, please call Jim Young (705) 292-5444.



Crimson Sunbird



Indian Hoopoe



Scarlet Minivet, Female



Hanuman Langur



White Throated Kingfisher



Tiger

Thanks to Tony Bigg for sharing these colourful photos from his recent trip to India!



The Orchid Diary



Compiled by Tony Bigg. 705-652-7541. tanddbigg@sympatico.ca

ORCHID DIARY - December 31, 2013 to January 29, 2014

The cold weather continued throughout the month. Significant sightings in the county were of many Snowy Owls, a Gray Jay, several white-winged gulls, a White-winged Scoter, a Long-tailed Duck, Golden Eagles, and a Black-backed Woodpecker.

Rather than enter each Snowy Owl sighting in the report below I list them here:

Jan 5, Chemong Rd at 3rd Line, Don Sutherland, Warren Dunlop, Scott Gibson. Jan 5, Deyell Line south of Millbrook, Elaine Flewelling. Jan 8, north of Lakefield, Yvonne Mark. Jan 11, London St footbridge, Peterborough, Debra Duprey. Jan 11 or 12, 4th Line of South Monaghan just east of Smithson Road, Jamie Brockley. Jan 13, Chemong Rd at 3rd Line, Drew Monkman. Jan 14, Selwyn Twp just outside of Lakefield, Teresa Gall. Jan 18, Chemong at 3rd Line, Sue Sauve. Jan 20, Deyell Line south of Millbrook, Elaine Flewelling. Jan 21, Deyell Line south of Millbrook, Elaine Flewelling. Jan 22, Chemong Rd at 3rd Line, Drew Monkman. Jan 23, Mapleridge Park in the west end of Peterborough, Margaret Thomas. Jan 23, intersection of Cty Rd 2 and Scriven Rd, Paul Frost. Jan 24, Chemong Rd at 3rd Line, Hans McKee

Jan 01 Tony Bigg's first bird of the year was the **Eastern Screech Owl** calling north of Storrel Rd in the woodlot on the south side of the Bensfort landfill. Scott McKinlay reports that two or three **Purple Finches** have been coming to his feeder in Cavan for the last three days. A pair of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** visited Toni Sinclair's feeder near Buckhorn for the first time this winter. A rare winter **Brown Thrasher** has been coming for about a week to Susan Milligan & Kristyn Foster's feeder on Rochelle Ct in southeast Peterborough. The **Red-necked Grebe** at Trent University, and the **American Coot** in Lakefield seen last month, were reported by several people.

Jan 01 cont'd The OFO outing to the Peterborough area, led by Dave Milsom, added **Mallards**, **Common Goldeneye**, **Common Mergansers**, and **Long-tailed Duck** to the sightings on the Otonabee River. In the Petroglyphs area they saw **Bald Eagle**, **Red-tailed Hawk**, **Common Raven**, **Brown Creeper**, **Hairy Woodpecker**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, and **Golden-crowned Kinglet**. In other sites two **Ruffed Grouse**, two flocks of **Wild Turkeys**, two flocks of **Snow Buntings**, a **Pileated Woodpecker**, a **Cooper's Hawk** and several **White-breasted Nuthatches** were added.

Jan 02 A **Hooded Merganser** was seen on the Otonabee River between Trent and Lakefield by Tore Buchanan (e-birds).

Jan 05 Luke Berg saw the Brown Thrasher on Rochelle Ct, and then visited Little Lake seeing fourteen **Glaucous Gulls**, fifteen **Iceland Gulls**, one **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and one **Thayer's Gull**. An **Opossum** died in the barn of Marie Adamcrynck, Rice Lake.

Jan 07 JB Jaboor spent an hour admiring a beautiful **Cooper's Hawk** on his property overlooking Cty Rd 2 between Keene Rd and Campbelltown Rd. A little later his first ever **Ruffed Grouse** for his yard strutted around pecking away at the trunk of Highbush Cranberries. Sue Paradisis had a busy day at her feeder in Ashburnham - with the extreme cold, the birds were coming even though a **Cooper's Hawk** was spotted three times. The third time, it had gone deep into one of the spruces looking for birds. While she was trying to find it, a **Northern Shrike** landed in the top of the tree but didn't stay long. A while later, her daughter let her dog out into the yard before noticing the hawk on the ground with a pigeon. The dog startled the hawk and the pigeon escaped.

Jan 08 On January 8 at about 3 p.m., Marilyn Freeman watched a **Cooper's Hawk** eating a sparrow behind 305 Mason Street in the Chemong/Reid area. The hawk stayed for about 45 minutes as it feasted.

Jan 08 A **Long-tailed Duck** was seen by Chris Risley (e-birds) in the Otonabee River behind Millenium Park

Jan 10 A **Gray Jay** made an unusual appearance south of the Shield, showing up at the feeders of Bruce Kidd on his farm on Cty Rd 8 east of Douro. A **Great Horned Owl** was observed by Donald Sutherland on the Rotary Trail north of Trent University being mobbed by **American Crows**.

- Jan 11 Marg Byer of Chamberlain Street photographed a **Cooper's Hawk** eating a **Rock Pigeon** that it had caught, through her window. Don Sutherland re-found the **Red-necked Grebe** at Trent.
- Jan 13 Fred Hall watched two **American Robins** in his yard on Cartier Court in Peterborough.
- Jan 14 Between 10:05pm and 10:15pm Tony and Diana Bigg listened to a pair of **Great Horned Owls** calling (duetting) behind their house. They could not see them in the woods. There was almost a full moon and the birds stopped calling as the clouds covered it.
- Jan 18 Luke Berg heard/saw three **Eastern Screech Owls**, one calling from woodlot on the side of the Bensfort landfill from Storrel Rd, the other two responded to a tape on Mervin Line.
- Jan 19 Sue Paradisis watched a mature **Bald Eagle** soaring above the beaches at Beavermead Park around 4pm in the afternoon.
- Jan 22 Nancy Cafik at Fife's Bay on Chemong Lake saw a **Cooper's Hawk** hunting near their bird feeder.
- Jan 23 The two male **Hooded Mergansers** were seen (e-birds) by Luke Berg below Lock 24 on the Otonabee River.
- Jan 24 The first (e-birds) of several reports of a **White-winged Scoter** were made by Iain Rayner & Walter Wehtje, in the Otonabee River, above Lock 25, south of Lakefield. The Hooded Mergansers were seen (e-birds) in the same spot by Iain Rayner. A **Barred Owl** showed up in Lois Keller's backyard just south of Lakefield on County Road 29. The owl was sitting on top of an Eastern Cottontail it had just caught. Her grandson, Jeff, was able to photograph the bird.
- Jan 25 Further sightings (e-birds) of the **White-winged Scoter** were made by Paul Frost, Erica Nol, and Walter Wehtje in the same spot as yesterday. The two male **Hooded Mergansers** were reported (e-birds) by both Chris Risley and Luke Berg.
- Jan 26 The **Northern Flicker** was back at Sue Paradisis' feeder in Ashburnham. The **White-winged Scoter** was seen by Andrew Silver, now south of Lock 24 on the Otonabee near the 'bus barns'.
- Jan 27 The **White-winged Scoter** was still near the 'bus barns' as reported by Tore Buchanan. Sue Paradisis reports that the Cooper's Hawk plaguing her feeders in Ashburnham has now been replaced by a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** (photo).



*Sharp-shinned Hawk ~ Photo courtesy of Luke Berg
~ Peterborough, January 19*



*Beaver ~ Photo courtesy of Dave Milsom
~ Port Hope, February 25*

From the Archives – Regional Gathering

Federation of Ontario Naturalists – Peterborough

Saturday, May 27, 1939

Local Chairman	- F.J.A. Morris, 694 Aylmer St., Peterborough
Place of Meeting	- North Side, Peterborough Collegiate Institute, George & McDonnell Sts.
Time of Meeting	- 1.30 P.M. Standard Time
Field Trips	<p>(a) Attractions: Beautiful Panorama of Valleys and Woods</p> <p>(a) West of Scott's Corners</p> <p>(b) West of Mount Pleasant</p> <p>Fine woods of virgin timber, glacial drift, variety of plants in swamp, woods and upland.</p> <p>b) How to reach locality to be visited:</p> <p>Vicinity of Mount Pleasant, 10 miles west of Peterborough. Detailed directions at place of meeting; Groups will be formed under competent leaders</p>
Evening Meeting	<p>Picnic supper at 5.30 p.m. West of Wilson's Woods. Visitors will supply their own supper.</p> <p>Conference – reports of leaders, talks by guest speakers</p> <p>Those who take part in this outing are asked to refrain from all picking and uprooting of flowers, ferns and plants.</p>

Archivist Note: There were five Regional Gatherings held in the last 1930s and after the May 18, 1940 gathering the PFN was founded. The first Regional Gathering was held in 1937 and the history of the club states the fifth was held in 1940. After the supper the Peterborough Nature Club, now the Peterborough Field Naturalists, was formed. Thirty-two adults and four juniors became the founding members. (From: *40th Anniversary of the Peterborough Field Naturalists, 1940 to 1980* by John E. Fitzgerald, 1980).

President's Comments – 73rd Annual Meeting – 25 January 2014

By Martin Parker

The Annual meeting is a time for all us to look back at the past year and think about the upcoming year, and for the Peterborough Field Naturalists the year 2015. The Peterborough Field Naturalists was founded on the 18th of May 1940. Next year will be the 75th year of the Club. It is time to think and prepare to celebrate this milestone in the history of the Club.

The Annual Report gives an excellent summary of the activities of the club over the past year - activities which will continue for the upcoming year. I offer my personal thanks to the Directors who made the last year a success. They were an excellent team and always willing to step forward on behalf of the members to do things. Along with the Directors there are a large number of volunteers who contribute to the club – as speakers at meetings, as leaders of trips, writers of submissions to 'The Orchid' and participating in natural history inventories. Your volunteer efforts make the club strong and vibrant.

There is one person I would like to recognize – Rebecca Zeran. Rebecca has been the Editor of 'The Orchid' since March 2005. The Orchid is received by all members of the club and is in many ways the glue

which keeps the club together. On behalf of the members of the PFN and myself, thanks for a job well done. Rebecca please come forward to accept a token of our appreciation.

Over the past year I've had the privilege of having the club archives stored in my residence. I have used these to prepare a regular feature in 'The Orchid'. The intent of these short articles is to bring attention to aspects of the history of the club – a rich history. We are continuing to build on the foundations established in 1940.

Another group of people I would like to thank are the leaders of the outings the club offers. These eighteen people have volunteered their time to share their knowledge of nature with other members of the club and visitors. On one fall outing we had a visitor from Scotland, who was interested in birds and we managed during the morning trip to show him a number of species, many which were new to him. He later wrote and thanked the leader and club members for being so welcoming. In early July Fritz Heilingbrunner lead an outing which looked at various aspects of the Dummer Moraine. Fritz was President of this club in 1960. Under the guidance of Regina Varrin and Philip Shaw the indoor meetings covered a variety of topics and visited places around the world. It is interesting to note that one of the reasons Grad Students at Trent approach us to offer to make a presentation is that we are an informed group of people personally interested in the topic of their study. One just has to listen to the questions and comments.

During the past year we lost a couple of long-term members to the club; Dave Hambly and Rhea Bringeman. Both contributed to the club for many years, especially Rhea who volunteered for about 40 years. I am pleased to announce that Rhea remembered the PFN in her will. The incoming Board will have the pleasure of dealing with Rhea's legacy. Many members make annual donations to the club and this is appreciated and permits us to operate the bird feeders at Ecology Park and other initiatives such as the "Nature in the Kawarthas" publication.

I would also like to announce that Bill Snowden has donated to the club a Giclee print by Joan Tovey for a fund raising initiative. We will be applying for a license to sell raffle tickets for this print. Thanks for your kind donation Bill.

Also thanks to all who make the PFN successful, educational, and welcoming.

*PFN Winter Tracking Workshop
~ Photo courtesy of Paul Elliott
~ February 2*



A Resounding Thank You!

Thank you to all who donated to the Bucket Draw at the Annual General Meeting. It was appreciated and certainly added further entertainment and fun to our evening. Thanks are extended to: John Bottomley, Enid Mallory, Martin & Cathy Parker, Noreen Quinn, Lynn Smith, Sean Smith, Jim Young, Laura Irving, Rebecca Zeran, Kim & Mark Zippel, and Bill Snowden.

And a special thank you to Kelly Dodge, who donated the beautiful print for the Silent Auction.



PETERBOROUGH FIELD NATURALISTS

www.peterboroughnature.org

membership application form

Memberships may be obtained by mailing completed form and cheque to

Peterborough Field Naturalists
PO Box 1532, Peterborough, ON K9J 7H7

CONTACT

Name (s):		Home Tel:	
		Work Tel:	
Address:		Receive Orchid by:	<input type="radio"/> snail mail <input type="radio"/> e-mail <input type="radio"/> both please
		Email(s):	

MEMBERSHIP TYPE & FEE SCHEDULE

Please make cheques payable to *Peterborough Field Naturalists*

1. Single Adult \$25 ☐ 2. Single Student \$15 ☐ 3. Single Child* (age 5-12) \$10 ☐

4. Family (couple or family with children*) \$30 ☐

*Please give the name(s) and age(s) of the children you wish to be enrolled in the PFN Junior Naturalists

Name	Age*	Name	Age*

MAIN INTERESTS

<input type="radio"/> Birds	<input type="radio"/> Butterflies/insects	<input type="radio"/> Botany (Wildflowers/trees/shrubs)
<input type="radio"/> Astronomy	<input type="radio"/> Aquatic Life	<input type="radio"/> Geology <input type="radio"/> Field Trips
<input type="radio"/> Hiking	<input type="radio"/> Conservation	<input type="radio"/> Other (specify)

I (name _____) am knowledgeable in the following areas _____ and would be prepared to

☐ lead an outdoor session ☐ give a presentation ☐ prepare an article for The Orchid

I am interested in the following:

☐ Joining the PFN Executive ☐ Sitting on research or conservation committees ☐ Working on field projects
☐ Helping with refreshments at meetings ☐ Please have a member of the executive call me

AGE GROUP

This information helps us to understand the needs of our members. If a family membership, please check for each adult

<input type="radio"/> Under 20	<input type="radio"/> 20-29	<input type="radio"/> 30-39	<input type="radio"/> 40-49	<input type="radio"/> 50-59	<input type="radio"/> 60-69	<input type="radio"/> 70-79	<input type="radio"/> 80< over
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DONATIONS

Membership fees cover the general operating costs of the club while other sources of revenue are needed to fund special projects such as ecological restoration. You can assist the club by making a donation to help further our work in such areas. The PFN is a registered charity and issues receipts for income tax purposes. All donations are gratefully received and any member of the executive will be happy to speak to you concerning the use of such funds.

LIABILITY WAIVER

In consideration of the Peterborough Field Naturalists (PFN) accepting this application, I hereby for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns forever release and discharge the PFN, their officers, directors, servants and agents from any liability whatsoever arising from my participation in PFN activities, whether by reason of negligence of the PFN or its representatives, or otherwise. I affirm that I am in good health, capable of performing the exercise required for field trips or other activities in which I participate, and accept as my personal risk the hazards of such participation. As a member of the PFN and/or as a parent/guardian of a member under 18 years of age, I have read and understood the above, and accept its term on behalf of all of my underage children.

Signature: _____