

# The Orchid

January 2015  
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## ***Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists***

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Ross' Goose, Otonabee River between Locks 23 and 24, December 9, 2014 ~ Submitted by Luke Berg

Originally spotted by PFN members John Fautley and Marie Duscheneau, on November 30, 2014. This is the second record for Peterborough County. Previously observed in October 2013 near the Bensfort Road Landfill Site, south of Peterborough.

INSIDE: Peterborough and Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count Results  
Banding Saw-whet Owls at Oliver Ecological Centre  
Townsend's Solitaire Observed Near Bailieboro

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Bittersweet, Northey's Bay Road, October 2012  
~ Submitted by Martin Parker


## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Robert Loney**

**Patty Best  
Nathanael Best**

**Ariel Lenske**

## Coming Events

<p style="text-align: center;">Friday, January 23</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5:30 pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">McDonnel Street Activity Centre 577 McDonnel Street, Peterborough</p>	<p><b>PFN Annual General Meeting</b></p> <p>Join us for the PFN's Annual General Meeting on Friday, January 23 at the McDonnel Street Activity Centre in Peterborough. Keep up to date on club business, elect the next executive, enter the raffle for fabulous prizes, enjoy a delicious meal, and stay for an entertaining presentation by Dave Ireland, Managing Director of the Royal Ontario Museum Biodiversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doors open at 5:30 pm</li> <li>• Supper starts at 6:00 pm; choice of beef, chicken or vegetarian</li> <li>• Meeting at 7:00 pm</li> <li>• Silent Auction and Bucket Draw at 7:30 pm</li> <li>• Guest Speaker at 8:00 pm</li> </ul> <p>Reserve your tickets now! Only \$36 per person. Phone Don Pettypiece at 750-1145, or Kim Zippel at 740-0587.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Dates TBD in January, February and/or March</p>	<p><b>Wildlife Tracks and Sign</b></p> <p>Are you interested in observing wildlife tracks and sign near Peterborough? Don McLeod will lead one or more outings during the months of January to March which will focus on tracks and other wildlife sign. These outings will be scheduled when conditions permit, with details on place and time being announced later by email.</p>  <p>Any one interested in attending should send an email to Don McLeod &lt;<a href="mailto:donaldmcleod.com@gmail.com">donaldmcleod.com@gmail.com</a>&gt; so he can set up an email distribution list. When tracking conditions look good, Don will send an email to everyone on that list with details on when and where to meet.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday, February 11</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7:30 pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Peterborough Public Library</p>	<p><b>PFN Monthly Meeting: The American Kestrel</b></p> <p>Allie Anderson will present her graduate research pertaining to the wintering ecology and nesting phenology of the American Kestrel. This once-common bird has been declining in the province. This presentation will provide an understanding of their life history.</p>

## Coming Events continued

<p style="text-align: center;">Saturday, February 21</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1:00 pm</p> <p>Peterborough Zoo, North Parking Lot, Water Street</p>	<p><b>Winter Birds Along the Otonabee River</b></p> <p>This half-day outing, led by Martin Parker, will introduce participants to the water birds which are overwintering on the open waters of the Otonabee River and Little Lake this winter. The variety and number of birds depends on the amount of open water and ice. The outing will also visit the bird feeding stations operated by the Peterborough Field Naturalists at Beavermead Park.</p> <p>Dress according to the weather forecast for the day of the outing. Bring your binoculars.</p> <p>This outing is part of the Heritage Week activities, coordinated by the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee of the City of Peterborough.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday, March 11</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7:30 pm</p> <p>Peterborough Public Library</p>	<p><b>PFN Monthly Meeting: Ontario's Spiders</b></p> <p>Tom Mason, retired curator of invertebrates at the Toronto Zoo, will present a talk about the spiders of this province. Tom is one of Ontario's leading authorities on spiders, and is helping to document the species and their distribution within the province.</p>

## PFN Junior Field Naturalists (ages 5-12)

PFN Juniors are invited to attend our next Junior Naturalists event on Sunday, January 18 starting at 1:30 pm, at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre on Trent University's campus (Pioneer Road). Don McLeod will be leading us in some winter animal tracking. If you would like to be added to the email list for the PFN Juniors, please contact Lara Griffin at 705-749-3639.

An afternoon of skiing and snowshoeing is tentatively scheduled at Camp Kawartha (Birchview Road location). Mark Saturday, February 21 on your calendar for this fun event!

And check out the Reframe's REELKids Peterborough International Film Festival from January 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, which is a 4-day celebration of film and media for kids in grades 1 through 8. Of special note is their "Butterflies, Bugs, Birds and Blooms" Program. Visit <http://reelkids.ca/> for more information.

## Other Events of Interest

<p>Thursday, January 15</p> <p>10:00 am</p> <p>Galaxy Cinema, Peterborough</p>	<p><b>“Flight of the Butterflies” Film Screening</b></p> <p>In glorious 3D, “Flight of the Butterflies” will be playing as part of the Butterflies, Bugs, Birds and Blooms Program at Reframe’s REELKids Peterborough International Film Festival.</p> <p>Ticket and program information can be found at <a href="http://reelkids.ca/">http://reelkids.ca/</a></p>
<p>Saturday, January 24</p> <p>9:30 am and 1:00 pm sessions</p> <p>Ganaraska Forest Centre 10585 Cold Springs Camp Road, Campbellcroft</p>	<p><b>Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority’s Family Cross-Country Ski and Snowshoe Day</b></p> <p>Take in the beauty of the magnificent Ganaraska Forest in the depth of winter. Receive an introductory lesson and a guided ski through the forest. Make a day of it and give free snowshoeing a try! Please dress in warm layers. In case of poor ski conditions, the alternate day to participate is February 7th.</p> <p>\$20/person with complimentary ski rentals. Children must be 8 years or older to participate. Refundable equipment deposit required.</p> <p>Pre-registration is required by calling 905-885-8173. Please choose the morning or afternoon session before phoning to register.</p>
<p>Sunday, January 25</p> <p>1:00 pm</p> <p>Alderville Black Oak Savanna</p>	<p><b>Experimenting with Native Plants Workshop</b></p> <p>Featuring Amanda Newell (Element Ecological) &lt;<a href="http://www.elementecological.com">www.elementecological.com</a>&gt; Explore examples and methods of introducing or increasing native plants - from grasses and flowers to shrubs - in your outdoor spaces for diversity, conservation, aesthetics, and wildlife. Please phone 905-352-1008 to register.</p>
<p>Saturday, February 21</p> <p>7:30 pm</p> <p>Alderville Black Oak Savanna</p>	<p><b>Owl Prowl</b></p> <p>Beginning with a presentation, afterwards to set out to the field to call owls. Please bring a flashlight/headlamp, hiking shoes or boots, and dress for the weather. Please call 905-352-1008 to register.</p>
<p>Saturday, February 28 and Sunday, March 1</p> <p>10:00 am to 5:00 pm</p> <p>Evinrude Centre, 911 Monaghan Road Peterborough</p>	<p><b>Kawartha Rock &amp; Fossil Club’s 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gem, Mineral &amp; Fossil Show</b></p> <p>Minerals, fossils, gemstones, beads, equipment, books and displays will be available at this show. Live and silent auctions as well.</p> <p>Admission is \$3.00 per adult, and children under 12 years of age are admitted free. For more information please visit <a href="http://www.rockandfossil.com">www.rockandfossil.com</a>.</p>



## 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	don.pettypiece@gmail.com	750-1145
Membership	Jim Young	jbyoung559@gmail.com	760-9397
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	JB Jaboor & Don Finigan	745-4750
Orchid Diary	Tony Bigg	652-7541
Orchid Mailout	Mary Thomas	
Orchid Editor	Marla Williams	874-5653
Jr. Naturalists	Lara Griffin	749-3639
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!

Submission deadline for the March issue is **Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup>**.

Send submissions to Marla Williams via email: [orchid@peterboroughnature.org](mailto:orchid@peterboroughnature.org)  
or post mail to: PFN, PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7

## Report From the PFN Annual Niagara Gull Trip - December 6, 2014 Submitted by Lynn Smith

Six keen souls headed to Niagara on Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> for the annual PFN Gull trip. Martin Parker was our fearless leader with Matthew Tobey, our enthusiastic, youthful co-leader.

Our first stop in Niagara was not for a gull, but rather the Eurasian Tree Sparrow. We arrived at the correct spot, in time to note a completely silent and empty birdfeeder. The usual huge flock of house sparrows that would include the Eurasian Tree Sparrow had disappeared into a nearby thicket. When the immature Cooper's hawk flew over and around and about the birdfeeder, we understood why the sparrows went into hiding.

Niagara Falls ~ Submitted by Martin Parker



While we waited, a Northern Mockingbird popped up from the thicket for all of us to see. It was close to an hour before the flock again braved the birdfeeder and yes, we had a great view of the Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

Our next stop was Niagara-on-the-Lake, looking out onto Lake Ontario. Despite the almost unbearable blast of cold and wind we were rewarded with a nice view of the red-throated loon.



Tufted Titmouse

~ Submitted by Martin Parker

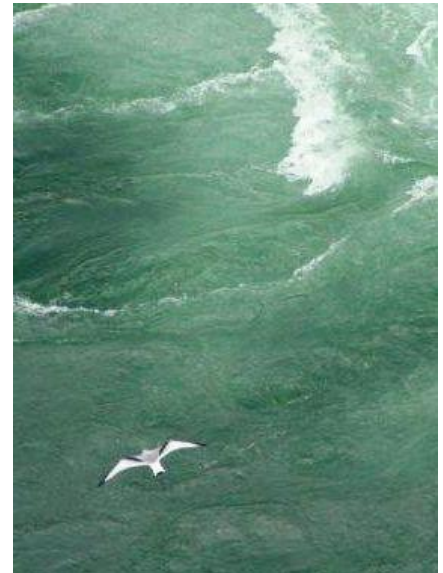
With a box of timbits to share, we continued our tour of several Niagara hotspots. Seven species of gulls were seen, as well as a great variety of other species as noted below.

My personal favourite was the tufted titmouse. They flitted here, there and all around us. They were so cute!

Before heading home there was the traditional stop for wine and Picard's peanuts, a treat my husband was delighted to see when I arrived home. A great day was had by all!

## 56 species observed:

X Canada Goose, 130 Tundra Swan, 25 Gadwall, 10 American Black Duck, X Mallard, 4 American Black Duck x Mallard (hybrid), X Canvasback, X Redhead, X Greater Scaup, X Lesser Scaup, 20 White-winged Scoter, X Long-tailed Duck, X Bufflehead, X Common Goldeneye, 15 Hooded Merganser, 5 Common Merganser, X Red-breasted Merganser, 2 Red-throated Loon, 1 Pied-billed Grebe, 6 Horned Grebe, X Double-crested Cormorant, 1 Black Vulture, 3 Turkey Vulture, 2 Cooper's Hawk, 1 Bald Eagle, 10 Red-tailed Hawk, 1 Purple Sandpiper, X Bonaparte's Gull, X Ring-billed Gull, X Herring Gull, 2 Iceland Gull, 1 Lesser Black-backed Gull, 5 Glaucous Gull, X Great Black-backed Gull, X Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon), X Mourning Dove, 1 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2 Downy Woodpecker, 2 Northern Flicker, 10 Blue Jay, X American Crow, X Black-capped Chickadee, 4 Tufted Titmouse, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatch, 2 White-breasted Nuthatch, 4 Golden-crowned Kinglet, X American Robin, 1 Northern Mockingbird, X European Starling, X Dark-eyed Junco, 5 Northern Cardinal, 2 Brown-headed Cowbird, 2 House Finch, 25 American Goldfinch, 60 House Sparrow, 1 Eurasian Tree Sparrow.



Bonaparte's Gull,  
Whirlpool Rapids,  
Niagara River

~ Submitted by Martin Parker

## **Report from the PFN Junior Field Naturalists – CBC4Kids Submitted by Martin Parker; Photo courtesy of Dave Milsom**

On Saturday December 13, 2014, nine young naturalists and seven adult assistants gathered for the Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids) at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre at Trent University. Most of the bird species were observed around the bird feeders.



### **Species observed:**

1 Downy Woodpecker, 2 Blue Jay, 3 American Crow, 27 Black-capped Chickadee, 1 Red-breasted Nuthatch, 3 American Tree Sparrow, 11 Dark-eyed Junco, 3 Northern Cardinal. A total of 8 species and 51 birds.

Another highlight was the abundance of Springtails (snow fleas) around the trees at one location on the trail. A sign of warming weather.

## **The 63rd Peterborough Christmas Bird Count Submitted by Tony Bigg**

The count is held in an area consisting of a circle with its centre at the junction of Chemong Road and Sunset Boulevard. The area diameter is 24 kilometres (15 miles). The area is split into 10 areas with a team to each area.

The count was held on Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The weather was ideal with little or no wind, overcast skies, and temperatures between -1°C and +2°C. A record number of 45 volunteers participated, finding a record number of 67 species, seven higher than the previous

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The compilation of the results was held at the Ashburnham Ale House on Hunter Street in East City, Peterborough, and was enjoyed by all.

	Record	Total
Pied-billed Grebe	4	1
Great Blue Heron	4	2
<b>Ross's Goose</b>		<b>CP</b>
Canada Goose	2244	540
American Black Duck	30	4
Mallard	1264	903
Common Goldeneye	292	18
Bufflehead	5	1
Hooded Merganser	9	6
Common Merganser	255	24
Bald Eagle	4	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	5
Cooper's Hawk	10	6
Red-tailed Hawk	62	64
Rough-legged Hawk	5	1
American Kestrel	14	6
Ruffed Grouse	82	12
Wild Turkey	287	306
Americam Coot	2	1
Ring-billed Gull	306	93
Herring Gull	1302	413
Glaucous Gull	5	2
Great Black-backed Gull	32	3

New record

New record

Rock Pigeon	1538	1705	New record	House Finch	1197	74	
Mourning Dove	1329	973		Common Redpoll	1736	250	
Eastern Screech Owl	3	1		Pine Siskin	750	10	
Great Horned Owl	40	6		American Goldfinch	941	532	
Snowy Owl	1	1	Equals record	Evening Grosbeak	971	4	
Barred Owl	2	2	Equals record	House Sparrow	2209	259	
Belted Kingfisher	3	1					
Red-bellied Woodpecker	8	7		Total Birds	15015	11827	
Downy Woodpecker	119	64		No. of Species	62	67	New record
Hairy Woodpecker	84	63		No. of Participants	35	45	New record
Northern Flicker	5	2					
Pileated Woodpecker	14	14	Equals record	<b>Species:</b>			
Northern Shrike	29	3		Woodpecker Sp.		4	
Blue Jay	469	363		Buteo Sp.		1	
American Crow	691	581		Gull Sp.		52	
Common Raven	5	24	New record	Finch Sp.		2	
Horned Lark	27	2					

## Notice to PFN Members - Nominations for Directors

The affairs of the Peterborough Field Naturalists are managed by 12 members who comprise the Board of Directors. The Nomination Committee annually prepares a slate of Directors for approval at the Annual General Meeting, to be held on Friday January 23, 2015.

There are at least two vacancies on the Board which the Nominations Committee has to fill. The normal term of a Director is three years.

If you are interesting in serving on the Board, or would like to suggest a member who may be interested, please advise the Chair of the Nominations Committee, Kelly Boadway, at [kjboadway@gmail.com](mailto:kjboadway@gmail.com) or phone Kelly at (705)775-0756.

## Thirty-Eight Species on Annual Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count Submitted by Martin Parker

The weather on this year's Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count was substantially different compared to last year. This year the temperature was about -6 C all day with very little snow, resulting in favourable conditions for the participants. Last year it was around -26 C all day with lots of snow.

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The twenty-three participants found a total of 38 species of the birds during the 29<sup>th</sup> count, held on Saturday, December 27, 2014. Some of the parties were out before dawn to look for owls and were rewarded by locating a record number of owls. A total of 2717 individual birds were found. The total number of species is just two short of the all-time record high number of species. The lack of cones and winter berries is the major factor in the absence of most of the irruptive winter finches.

According to Colin Jones, the count compiler, there were a number of significant sightings. Two new species were recorded for the first time on this count: two Eastern Screech Owls calling before dawn at a site along the Northey's Bay Road by Luke Berg et al, and a Merlin on the eastern shore of Stoney Lake by Tony Bigg and others. The number of White-breasted Nuthatches (233) was almost double the previous high of 119, while the ten-year average is 61.

Other highlights include a single Canada Goose, the fourth time this species has been on the count, Northern Harrier for the second time, Sharp-shinned Hawk for the sixth time, Boreal Chickadee for the sixth time, Winter Wren for the fourth time and Hoary Redpoll for the eighth time. A welcome find was 2 Gray Jays, one along the Kawartha Nordic Ski Trails and another at the Jack Lake Bog on the west side of Jack Lake. This species was formerly observed annually up to the 2008 count. It has been absent on the 2009 to 2013 counts inclusive. It's hoped that the Gray Jay will become a regular again.

### **The full count results:**

1 Canada Goose, 27 Ruffed Grouse, 64 Wild Turkey, 5 Bald Eagle, 1 Northern Harrier, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1 Merlin, 10 Red-tailed Hawk (new count high), 8 Herring Gull (new count high), 48 Rock Pigeon, 9 Mourning Dove, 2 Eastern Screech Owl, 3 Great Horned Owl (new count high), 11 Barred Owl (new count high), 48 Downy Woodpecker, 67 Hairy Woodpecker, 23 Pileated Woodpecker, 2 Gray Jay, 456 Blue Jay, 7 American Crow, 97 Common Raven, 1144 Black-capped Chickadee, 1 Boreal Chickadee, 43 Red-breasted Nuthatch, 233 White-breasted Nuthatch (new count high), 18 Brown Creeper, 1 Winter Wren, 106 Golden-crowned Kinglet, 46 European Starling, 37 Snow Bunting, 8 Common Redpoll, 1 Hoary Redpoll, 48 Evening Grosbeak, 1 Evening Grosbeak, 3 woodpecker species and 23 finch species.



Barred Owl, December 27, 2014 ~ Submitted by Tony Bigg

## **From the Archives – Has Anyone Seen This Bird Recently in the Peterborough Area?**

### **Submitted by Martin Parker**

#### **From The Orchid, April 1956:**

Male: Our only red bird with a crest. Size small robin. Face black around base of large conical bill. Rest of the bird all red.

Female: Crested; yellow-brown with red wash, red bill.

Song: clear whistled 'birdy, birdy, birdy' and "sweet-sweet-sweet whatcheer whatcheer whatcheer sweet-sweet-sweet".

Prefers bushy thickets (and evergreens) in town and open country.

This bird has been reported in this area for the past few years but its occurrence has never been officially confirmed. If you see or hear this bird please contact either Mr. J.L. McKeever (Dial 5-7866) or Frank R. Pammett (Dial 5-6493) as soon as possible. Will every Club member keep a watch for a Cardinal.

#### **From the Orchid, September 1956:**

We have also been able to verify the occurrence in the Peterborough area of the Cardinal! Two were seen in a willow tree in the garden of John Elliott, 176 Benson Avenue, Peterborough, on Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> (Civic Holiday) and a third (a singing male) was observed by Alf Bunker near the CNR tracks just west of Jackson Park on Sunday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1956. If local feeding stations are erected in good time and kept supplied with sunflower seeds perhaps more of these birds will be seen during the winter. If any person sees or hears this species, please let us know about it!

#### **Current Situation:**

The records of the Annual Peterborough Christmas Bird Count document that the average number of Northern Cardinals reported on the CBC over the past ten years is 83.3 individuals. The highest number was 120 individuals on the 1993 CBC.

In the spring of 2008 Donald Sutherland did a survey of the City of Peterborough and mapped out the location of singing male Northern Cardinals. He determined that there were just over 300 singing males (unpublished report). There could be more than 600 in the city when one makes allowance for the female birds. At the end of the nesting season the number swells.

Since 1956 the Northern Cardinal has become a year-round component of the bird life of Peterborough.

## **Final Friendly Reminder: Renew Your PFN Membership!**

Memberships for 2014 expired December 31, 2014. Note that memberships issued after September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 will be valid until the end of 2015.

Renew your PFN membership at the January Annual General Meeting, or by mailing the membership application form found on the back page of The Orchid.



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

**Report and photos submitted by Tianna Burke**  
**Graduate Student, Biology Department,**  
**Trent University, Peterborough**

"The owl is one of the most curious creatures. A bird that stays awake when the rest of the world sleeps...What does he see and what does he know that the rest of the world is missing?"  
 - M.J. Rose

It is January once again in Ontario. On the streets, at stores, and in daily small talk with neighbours or acquaintances, we hear grumblings about winter and all the cold and snow that comes with it. But while others shudder at the thought of winter, all I can think about is migration and the wonderful birds that come with it.

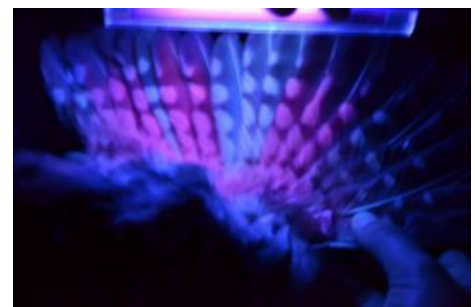
Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*) are nocturnal birds that migrate through the Peterborough area every fall, with numbers peaking in October. Northern Saw-whet Owls (NSWO) are robin sized and have large, bright yellow eyes. They are one of my personal favourites because each individual seems to have their own personality and just burst with attitude. NSWOs primarily feed on small rodents, however they have trouble hunting in deep snow that leads them to migrate from the boreal forest to areas of lower snowfall.



Since 1999, Dr. Erica Nol has been conducting an annual NSWO-banding project at Trent University's James McLean Oliver Ecological Centre near Nogie's Creek. This is a volunteer project that is sponsored by Trent University with assistance from local naturalist groups and donations from visitors. Each day of the week throughout October a bander-in-charge and a group of visitors go to the property to see what they might catch throughout the night.

Northern Saw-whet Owls are attracted to their territorial calls during the fall, which is something that we take advantage of. Three 12m X 2.6m mist nets are set up in a triangular pattern in a wooded area of the property. An audio lure broadcasts the territorial call, filling the woods with "too-too-too-too" from 8pm until midnight. Nets are then checked every 30 minutes or more when the temperature starts nearing 0°C. Each captured bird is removed from the nets and placed into a cloth bag before being brought into the banding station for processing. On days with rain, snow, excessive wind or temperatures below 0°C we keep nets closed in order to ensure the safety of the birds.

Each owl is banded (with a unique 9-digit code), weighed, and the wing chord is measured. We examine the moulting pattern within the flight feathers of the owl's wings to determine an age. Alternatively, we can determine age with a small black light. The black light will pick up on traces of pigment left in the feathers showing a pinkish colour (it feels very much like CSI!). Young birds will have all new feathers, meaning that under black-light all the



feathers will have a pink tone to them. As a bird ages and feathers become older, they will be white under the light. After second year birds will be a mismatch of pink and white as wing feathers will be a both old and new, being replaced as need be.

This fall, we began our capture efforts on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September and continued until the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, weather permitting. Owls were caught and banded on 27 days with a total of 147 NSWOs passing through our station. Seven of these owls were recaptured birds from previous nights, years or from other stations. Over the 27 days, we averaged 5.4 owls per night. Our busiest night was October 12<sup>th</sup> when we caught 15 owls! We caught more owls this year at the property than in 2013 when only 100 owls were caught.

**Table 1: Age and Sex of NSWO banded at the Oliver Centre during Fall 2014**

HY (f, m, u)	SY (f, m, u)	ASY (f, m, u)	Unknown	Total (f, m, u)
112 (77, 16, 19)	12 (9, 1, 2)	22 (18, 1, 3)	1 (1 f)	147 (105, 18, 24)

The majority of birds were female (71%), followed by unknown sex (16%), and then very few males (13%). This may sound like a very large number of females, but it seems to be a trend following previous years' data. Studies have noted that females tend to migrate further than males. The same can also be said for hatch year owls compared to older owls.

Hatch year owls (HY, born this season) made up 76% of the owls that were captured this year. Second year owls (SY, born last year) accounted for 8% of the age distribution. After second year owls (ASY, born 2 years ago or more) made up 22%. One percent of owls were not aged or sexed.

Of the 7 birds that were recaptured, 3 were from other locations. One owl was banded as an ASY in 2012 at the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory (PEPBO) near Picton, Ontario, and the second was banded at PEPBO as a SY in 2012. The third recaptured owl was banded in 2012 as a HY in Port Rowan, Ontario.

We have seen a greater number of NSWOs this fall and an especially greater number of hatch year birds. This suggests that this year they migrated from a location with a very successful breeding season. We hope that this will continue and that we'll see a good number of owls next year as well!



We love to provide members of the community with the opportunity to observe our owl banding efforts. This fall, we shared this fun and unique opportunity with 119 visitors. If you are interested in joining us next year at the Oliver Centre, please send me an email ([tiannaburke@trentu.ca](mailto:tiannaburke@trentu.ca)). Registration information will be sent out in September 2015.

We would like to send out a big thank you to all the visitors who did come out this year, and to Eric Sager for allowing us to band at the Oliver Property.

## Request for Items for AGM Bucket Draw

The January 2015 Annual General Meeting is fast approaching! One tradition that the Peterborough Field Naturalist Club (PFN) has maintained over the years is the Bucket Draw.

Items are still welcome for donation to the bucket draw. Please contact Lynn Smith at <[smithfam@nexicom.net](mailto:smithfam@nexicom.net)> or at 944-5599.

Proceeds from this draw are used for various PFN projects throughout the year.

## Townsend's Solitaire – Third Sighting in Peterborough County Submitted by Iain Rayner

It was November 23rd and I was driving back from some birdwatching along Lake Ontario. It was around noon and I decided to cut across Hannah Road to see if anything was swimming around on Rice Lake. It was late November and most songbirds were long gone. I noticed a kingbird-sized bird 50 yards ahead in a bush by the road. I put my binoculars on it and immediately thought Mockingbird. Excited I got out of the car with my camera hoping to get a picture of the first one I had seen this year.

The bird flew towards me 10 yards at a time, all the while flashing light colour in the wings and white on either side of the tail. It wasn't until it landed on the fence beside me that I realized it had too small a bill and a giant white eye ring. The bird continued to fly around me. Landing on the road and posing for a nice picture in the tree. Once I saw the eye ring I was pretty sure I was looking at a Townsend's Solitaire, a bird I had never seen before and definitely wasn't expecting. All that remained was to go home, confirm in Sibleys and post to e-bird.



Above and left photos:  
Townsend's Solitaire, Hannah Road  
near Bailieboro, November 23, 2014  
~ Submitted by Iain Rayner



**Notes from Martin Parker:**

This is the third reported record of a Townsend's Solitaire in Peterborough County. The first observation was at Nephton Ridge, northeast of Stoney Lake on February 10, 1991 by Claudia Schaefer and Alvaro Jaramilo.

(Bain, Margaret, 1993. Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 1992. Ontario Birds, Volume 11, Number 2, August 1993. Ontario Field Ornithologists).

The second observation was one Townsend's Solitaire found in Peterborough on November 9, 2001 by Peter J. and Patricia A. Beales. The report notes this was the second consecutive year for unprecedented numbers of this species in Ontario.

(Roy, Kayo, 2002. Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 2001. Ontario Birds, Volume 20, Number 2, August 2002, Ontario Field Ornithologists).

Iain Rayner's observation reported above is the third documented observation of this species in Peterborough County.

The normal winter range of this species is in the western section of the continent, primarily in areas with Pinyon-juniper. It feeds on juniper and other berries. In the winter solitary individuals can be found in the eastern half of the continent.



PFN member Luke Berg observed and photographed the Townsend's Solitaire the following day, November 24, 2014.



## 74<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting: The Beginning of Our 75<sup>th</sup> Year

**Friday January 23, 2015 5:30 pm**

**McDonnell Street Activity Centre  
577 McDonnell Street, Peterborough**

Join us for the PFN's Annual General Meeting on Friday, January 23rd at the McDonnell Street Activity Centre. Keep up to date on club business, elect the next executive, enter the raffle for fabulous prizes, enjoy a delicious meal, and stay for an entertaining presentation!

- Doors open at 5:30 pm
- Dinner starts at 6:00 pm
- Meeting at 7:00 pm
- Silent Auction and Bucket Draw at 7:30 pm
- Guest Speaker at 8:00 pm



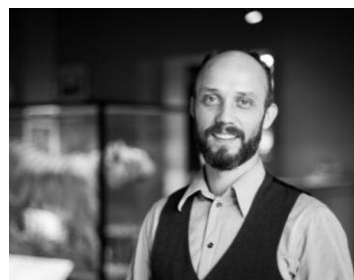
"Passion"

by artist Kelly Dodge

Reserve your tickets now! Phone Kim Zippel at 740-0587 or Don Pettypiece at 750-1145. Tickets are \$36 per person for the evening, including a delicious catered dinner, silent auction, bucket draws, and guest speaker.

Please indicate your choice of beef, chicken, or vegetarian.

**AGM Keynote Speaker:  
Dave Ireland, Royal Ontario Museum**



### **"The World's Largest BioBlitz Initiative, and Telling Our Stories Effectively"**

Dave Ireland, Managing Director of ROM Biodiversity will join us and share four stories that together form a single powerful message: public engagement in science and science communication are dramatically changing the frame on conservation biology. More than ever scientists depend on the public for support, advocacy and action. Our scientists need our help to tell their stories. Dave will describe successful programmes that the ROM is using to help re-frame the conversation.



## **PFN – OFO New Year's Day Birding Outing**

### **Submitted by Dave Milsom**

Twenty-two birders, from the Peterborough area and as far away as Toronto and Kitchener, braved the cold, snow and wind to record a total of 29 species on our annual joint PFN - OFO (Ontario Field Ornithologists) January 1st outing.

Our best sightings were a Hoary Redpoll with a large flock of Common Redpolls at a feeder on Library Road off Northey's Bay Road near Petroglyphs Provincial Park. Nearby 2 more Redpoll flocks were seen, as well as a flock of over 30 Evening Grosbeaks. Other finds included 45 Wild Turkeys on Northey's Bay Road and 2 Bald Eagles; one at the Peterborough Zoo and the other near Woodview. On the ice at Little Lake in Peterborough there was a first-year Iceland Gull, a Great Black-backed Gull, and a Snowy Owl along with Herring Gulls. Both nuthatches and several Common Ravens were also found.

Many thanks to Martin Parker and Matthew Tobey for co-leading this tour.

PFN members interested in birding other regions of the province are welcome to check the OFO website ([www.ofo.ca](http://www.ofo.ca)) for upcoming field trips.



Above:  
Common Redpoll, Corbeil, January 2009  
~ Courtesy of Lucas Beaver

Right:  
Red-breasted Nuthatch, Gilmour feeder,  
Presqu'île Provincial Park, February 2012  
~ Submitted by Martin Parker





# The Orchid Diary

Compiled by Tony Bigg 705-652-7541 [tanddbigg@sympatico.ca](mailto:tanddbigg@sympatico.ca)

## ORCHID DIARY - November 28 to December 31, 2014

This period is a busy time for birders with the start of the three month winter period for the keen listers, and the many Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) throughout the world. In our area two counts took place: the Peterborough CBC and the Petroglyphs CBC. Another key occurrence this month was the appearance of the Ross's Goose, a new species for the county and well seen by many. The Boreal Owl photographed in Warsaw was another noteworthy sighting. A large influx of Barred Owls was noted in the southern Shield area of the county, documented mainly by Tim Dyson and resulting in a record number (11) on the Petroglyphs CBC. Again this year several Snowy Owls have appeared.

- 
- Nov 26 Bob and Maxine Prentice had a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** visit their feeder on Franmor Drive off Armour Road. This bird stayed around until at least the CBC on Dec 14th.
- Nov 28 At dusk, Luke Berg, Jerry Ball and Tony Bigg were driving south on Highway 28 when Luke picked out a **Barred Owl** sitting beside the highway about 4km north of Apsley. As they turned back to see it they saw another **Barred Owl** 30m from the first one. As they drove on south and between Apsley and Northey's Bay Road the sharp eyes of Luke picked out two more **Barred Owls** beside the road – four **Barred Owls** in twenty minutes!
- Nov 29 Another **Barred Owl** was photographed on County Road 6 at Hull's Road by Sabine and Wilco Overink.
- Nov 30 A pair of **Eastern Bluebirds** were present in Michael Gillespie's orchard at the south end of David Fife Line. Luke Berg and Robert Baumann reported that the Townsend's Solitaire was still present on Hannah Road near Bailieboro. Marie Duchesneau had a **Carolina Wren** at her feeder on Conger Street. Later, she and her husband, John Faultley, went to the Lakefield Sewage Lagoons and saw three female **Buffleheads**. On their way back to Peterborough, they noted a possible **Ross's Goose** with a large group of **Canada Geese** just south of Lakefield. At first they thought it was a Snow Goose but the size (in comparison to nearby Mallards) seemed too small. Later, they had a male and female **Hooded Merganser** below Lock 24.
- Dec 01 A further **Barred Owl** was reported by Jeff Keller on Northey's Bay Road.
- Dec 02 The identification of the **Ross's Goose** reported yesterday was confirmed by John Faultley at the Lakefield Beach. It is possible that this bird had been around since mid-November but had been misidentified as a Snow Goose by several birders, myself included. The goose stayed around until December 11th, just missing the CBC. Martin Parker and Jerry Ball found a **Pied-billed Grebe** on the Otonabee River between Lock 25 and the two islands. This bird did stay around till well after the CBC.
- Dec 03 Shawna-lee Masson found a **Barred Owl** in the Harold Town Conservation Area.
- Dec 04 Don Herriman owns 100 acres in the Cavan Swamp, west of Mount Pleasant, and has put up trail cameras to monitor wildlife activity. On the nights of December 4 and 5, one of the cameras recorded a huge **Black Bear**, which must have weighed close to 400 lbs. It's by far the biggest bear he had ever seen and, being an avid hunter, he has seen hundreds of bears.

- Dec 05 This morning on Nima Taghaboni's drive to work he came across his first **Snowy Owl** of the season on a fence post at Highway 28 and Strickland Street near Lakefield. The owl was slightly away from the road but Nima still managed to grab a picture. With all the owl sightings recently, I am hoping and looking forward to a winter owl irruption.
- Dec 07 A **Red-breasted Merganser** was seen at Gannon's Narrows by Martyn Obbard.
- Dec 08 JB Jaboor netted a wounded juvenile **Sharp-shinned Hawk** in his garden near Campbelltown, south of Peterborough. He had it taken into care with what appeared to be a damaged wing. Jerry Ball and Tony Bigg saw several **Evening Grosbeaks** at a feeder on Northey's Bay Road. They also found a couple of **Ruffed Grouse** in the Petroglyphs Provincial Park. At his feeder in Lakefield Tony had a mixed flock of **American Goldfinches**, **Common Redpolls**, and **Pine Siskins**.
- Dec 09 Sean Smith reports that a male **American Kestrel** has been hanging around, and seen this day, in the scrubby fields west of the Trent Drumlin/Canal and east of Armour Road for about three weeks.
- Dec 10 Two male **White-winged Scoters** were seen by Don Sutherland on the Otonabee River on the Trent Campus. An immature **White-crowned Sparrow** is reported by Bill Snowden to have been feeding at his feeder in Ennismore since late September.
- Dec 11 Tim Dyson put out a lengthy report on his recent **Barred Owl** sightings (see Drew Monkman's website) in the southern Shield area. He speculated on an influx of Great Gray Owls later this winter.
- Dec 12 Ken Rumble found an immature **Bald Eagle** feeding on the ice by Little Lake Cemetery. He also saw a **Great Black-backed Gull** and a **Belted Kingfisher** at the cemetery. A **Snowy Owl** flew over Cheryl Lewis's head this afternoon as she was leaving the No Frills grocery store on Water Street at Sherbrooke Street in Peterborough. The owl flew out over the river and after that she lost sight of it.
- Dec 13 Gord Mallory was able to photograph a **Coyote** leaping and catching a mouse at Lily Lake. At the Rowing Club on the Trent campus Luke Berg found two **Thayer's Gulls**, a Kumlien's **Iceland Gull**, and two **Great Black-backed Gulls**.
- Dec 14 A rare **Boreal Owl** was seen and photographed by Jan Myland. It was sitting out on a branch in her yard in Warsaw. It was very tame, and she was able to walk right up to it. The owl seemed completely unconcerned by her presence. It was also very nonchalant about the fuss the jays were making over its presence. It was there all day; it just climbed a little higher in the tree when the jays annoyed it too much. The chickadees also kept a wary eye on it. Unfortunately the bird was gone the next day. The Peterborough CBC occurred on this day and is reported elsewhere in this edition. Several good sightings were made but of particular note is the **Gray Catbird**, new for the count.
- Dec 15 A single **Purple Finch** was seen/heard by Don Sutherland flying over the Trent Rotary Rail Trail north of the Trent Campus. He also heard a **Winter Wren** in the same area.
- Dec 16 **Cedar Waxwings** were seen by Ken Rumble, feeding on Mountain Ash berries in the Highland Cemetery. A **Pileated Woodpecker** visited Bill Snowden's suet feeder in Ennismore. He also notes that the **White-crowned Sparrow** still occasionally visits him.
- Dec 18 The **Peregrine Falcon** was watched by Don Sutherland, sunning itself on the MNR building. He comments that it seems on cold, sunny days the falcon likes to sun itself on the south side of Robinson Place.
- Dec 20 Nancy Kafik photographed a **Coyote** on the ice off Fife Bay Marina Lane, Chemong Lake. She didn't see anything on the ice that looked like food. The Coyote stood there looking around before turning and heading back down toward the Fowler's Corners end of the lake. It did stop several times and look back up toward the causeway end before disappearing behind the point.



- Dec 21 Jen Sanderson saw a male **Snowy Owl** perched on a cedar post in the field on her farm along County Road 19/Smith 3rd Line. This is the same area where a Snowy Owl hung around last winter. It was seen later by Drew Monkman and Sue Wurtele. Sue then found a second female **Snowy Owl** on a hydro tower adjacent to the Solar Farm on Ackison Road. A **Cackling Goose** in a flock of **Canada Geese** was seen in Little Lake by Daniel Williams. Fourteen **American Robins** were seen by Paul Frost in the Loggerhead Marsh in Peterborough.
- Dec 22 The downtown **Peregrine Falcon** was seen again by Bill Crins eating a Rock Pigeon at 300 Water Street.
- Dec 23 Jane Bremner saw a **Belted Kingfisher** flying low over the Indian River near the Warsaw Caves.
- Dec 26 Paul Frost found a **Northern Shrike** and a **Northern Flicker** in the Loggerhead Marsh in Peterborough.
- Dec 27 The Petroglyphs CBC was run on this date. New birds for the count were a **Merlin** and two **Eastern Screech Owls**. Ian Sturdee found a **Winter Wren** near Cordova Lake.
- Dec 28 Tim Corner found a very late **Great Blue Heron** between the Navy Club and Otonabee Inn off of Lansdowne Street East.
- Dec 29 Scott Gibson found a **Hoary Redpoll** mixed in with **Common Redpolls** at his feeders on Bissonette Drive in Peterborough. Yet another **Barred Owl** sighting, this time by Karen and Stewart MacDonald, on a telephone wire on Highway 507, just past the Catchacoma Community Centre, before the turnoff to Beaver Lake Road.



White American Goldfinch observed at the feeder of Bryce and Jan Norman, off Yankee Line near Omemee, December 2014



# PETERBOROUGH FIELD NATURALISTS

[www.peterboroughnature.org](http://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"/> Hiking	<input type="radio"/> Conservation	<input type="radio"/> Field Trips
<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: \_\_\_\_\_