

# The Orchid

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## Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists

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Know • Appreciate • Conserve Nature in All its Forms

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Barred Owl, 7<sup>th</sup> Line of Smith, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 ~ Submitted by Brennan Obermayer

INSIDE: Peterborough, Petroglyphs and Kids' Christmas Bird Counts  
Reserve Your AGM Tickets  
Winter Birding and Wildlife Tracking Opportunities  
Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count

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"At times there were around thirty American Goldfinches and a few House Finches perched on the siding of the house, presumably licking the clay/mortar on the bricks. Sean Smith, Brian Wales and I had never observed this goldfinch behavior before, and they drew similarities to Parrot and Macaw clay licks in Latin America. Birds will often swallow small bits of clay or gravel along roadsides to help digest their food, but less often they take it off of buildings. Other than House Sparrows, I have not witnessed this behavior from birds in Canada."

~ Submitted by Brennan Obermayer,  
University Heights (Area 2),  
Peterborough Christmas Bird Count,  
December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015



Pine Warbler, Bethany, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
~ Submitted by Kim Clark



Coming Events	
<p>January through March</p> <p>Dates, times and locations TBD</p>	<p><b>Wildlife Tracking Outings</b></p> <p>Once again this year PFN member and expert tracker Don McLeod will lead one or more outings during the months of January to March, focusing on tracks and other wildlife sign. These outings will be scheduled when weather conditions permit. The place and time will be announced by email shortly before each outing.</p> <p>Anyone interested in attending should send an email to Don McLeod (<a href="mailto:donaldmcLeod.com@gmail.com">donaldmcLeod.com@gmail.com</a>) so he can add you to an email distribution list. If you signed up for last year's outings you will automatically receive an email.</p>
<p>Friday January 22<sup>nd</sup></p> <p>Evening begins at 5:30 pm</p> <p>Peterborough Naval Association</p>	<p><b>PFN Annual General Meeting (AGM)</b></p> <p>Our AGM is scheduled on Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Peterborough Naval Association. Arnold Zageris is the keynote speaker whose featured talk is "On the Labrador". Arnold is a world-renowned nature photographer. He has made sixteen expeditions to Northern Labrador since 1984 (occasionally alone), to document, through his words and photographs "...the harsh and stunning beauty of the Labrador landscape, and the strength of the people who reside within its perimeters".</p> <p>The AGM is an opportunity to review some business from this past year, nominate a new Board of Directors, enjoy a delicious buffet dinner, take home treasures from the Bucket Draw, and through the artistic talents of our speaker, Arnold Zageris, take a trip to Labrador!</p> <p>Tickets are just \$35 per person, and <u>can still be reserved</u> by contacting Jim Young at: <a href="mailto:jbyoung559@gmail.com">jbyoung559@gmail.com</a> or 705-760-9397.</p>
<p>Wednesday February 10<sup>th</sup></p> <p>7:30 pm</p> <p><b>Camp Kawartha Environment Centre</b>  <b>Pioneer Road,</b>  <b>Peterborough</b></p>	<p><b>PFN Monthly Meeting: Climate Change Impacts on Polar Bear Populations</b></p> <p>Martyn Obbard is a Research Scientist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry based in Peterborough. Martyn has studied polar bears in Ontario since 1993, and much of his polar bear research has focused on the impacts of climate change on the bears of the Southern Hudson Bay population.</p> <p>Martyn's talk will discuss the evidence of effects of climate change on polar bear populations around the world, including Ontario bears, and will examine the question of whether there is a tipping point for sea ice and polar bear populations. Is there evidence that the disappearance of sea ice is inevitable and irreversible?</p> <p><b>* Please note the change of venue for this PFN monthly meeting *</b></p>
<p>Saturday February 27<sup>th</sup></p> <p>1:00 pm</p> <p>North Parking Lot,  Riverview Park &amp; Zoo,  Peterborough</p>	<p><b>Winter Birds Along the Otonabee</b></p> <p>This traditional half-day outing, led by Martin Parker, will focus on the waterfowl which overwinter on the open waters of the Otonabee River and Little Lake. The variety and number of birds depends on the amount of open water and ice. We will also visit the bird feeding stations operated by the PFN at Beavermead Park.</p> <p>Dress according to the weather forecast for the day, and bring your binoculars. This outing is part of the Heritage Week activities coordinated by the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee.</p>

Coming Events cont'd	
<p>Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup></p> <p>6:45 am</p> <p>Tim Horton's, Sobey's Plaza, Lansdowne Street West</p>	<p><b>Hooters of Amherst Island</b></p> <p>Amherst Island, in the eastern end of Lake Ontario and 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 mice and voles in the grasslands. 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. Arrangements are being made to have some members of the Kingston Field Naturalists join us for this outing.</p> <p>Martin Parker will lead the group from Peterborough. We will catch the 9:30 am ferry to the island. Bring a packed lunch, clothes suitable for the weather, binoculars and camera.</p>
PFN Junior Field Naturalists (ages 5-12)	
<p><b>Saturday January 23 at 6:30 pm – Night Hike and Mini Film-Fest</b></p> <p>Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, 2505 Pioneer Road, Peterborough</p> <p>Bring the whole family for a winter night hike, guided by the light of the full moon. After hiking in the Trent Nature Areas, we will warm up with some hot chocolate and popcorn as we watch a few short nature-themed films. Suggestions for the films are welcome! Please RSVP to Lara by email (<a href="mailto:pfnjuniors@gmail.com">pfnjuniors@gmail.com</a>) if you are able to attend.</p> <p><b>Sunday February 21 at 2:00 pm – Cross-Country Ski Day</b></p> <p>Camp Kawartha (Main Camp), 1010 Birchview Road, Douro-Dummer</p> <p>Join us for the annual kids' cross-country ski day! This is a great opportunity for kids to try skiing for the first time (thank you to Camp Kawartha for loaning us their skis!). If you have your own skis, please bring them. Feel free to invite a friend to join in the fun! Please RSVP by email (include the number of kids and adults, and whether you need to borrow skis) so that I can be sure there are enough skis to go around: <a href="mailto:pfnjuniors@gmail.com">pfnjuniors@gmail.com</a>.</p>	
Other Events of Interest	
<p>Friday January 8<sup>th</sup></p> <p>7:00 pm</p> <p>Fairview United Church, 724 Centre Line of Smith</p>	<p><b>Peterborough Astronomical Association Monthly Meeting</b></p> <p>For more information on their January monthly meeting and other upcoming events visit <a href="http://www.peterboroughastronomy.com">www.peterboroughastronomy.com</a>.</p>
<p>Tuesday January 12<sup>th</sup></p> <p>5:00 pm</p> <p>The Gathering Space, Peter Gzowski College, East Bank, Trent University</p>	<p><b>Trent University's Endowment Lands – Public Information Session</b></p> <p>A public information session is being held to hear updates about the developments on the East Bank at Trent University. Representatives from the City of Peterborough and from Trent University will discuss the recreational developments, including the new Ball Diamond and the forthcoming Arena, along with the possibilities for a new Trent Research &amp; Innovation Park.</p> <p>To learn more about Trent's endowment lands, visit <a href="http://www.trentu.ca/trentlandsplan">www.trentu.ca/trentlandsplan</a>.</p> <p>For more information email: Alison Scholl, Community Relations Officer, Trent University, at <a href="mailto:trentlandsplan@trentu.ca">trentlandsplan@trentu.ca</a>.</p>



## Other Events of Interest cont'd

<p>Thursday January 14<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Doors open at 6:15 pm Talk begins at 7:00 pm</p> <p>Market Hall, Peterborough</p>	<p><b>Kawartha Land Trust's Speaker Series: A Sense of Place</b></p> <p>The third talk in Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) and Trent University's speaker series, "A Sense of Place: Perspectives on Relationship to Land and Water in the Kawarthas", will be presented by John Riley, Nature Conservancy of Canada's (NCC's) Chief Science Officer and National Director emeritus.</p> <p>The evening event, "The Once and Future Great Lakes Country: Grasslands, Extinctions, Invasives and Us", will provide a historical overview of our Great Lakes country – How it once was, how it has changed and where it's headed. This free event will include local catering, cash bar, and information tables hosted by local environmental organizations.</p> <p>Doors will open at 6:15 pm and the speaker goes on at 7:00 pm.</p>
<p>Saturday February 6<sup>th</sup></p> <p>9:30 am to 3:00 pm</p> <p>Westdale United Church 1509 Sherbrooke Street Peterborough</p>	<p><b>4<sup>th</sup> Annual Farm Stewardship Workshop</b></p> <p>The Kawartha Farm Stewardship Collaborative presents its 4th Annual Farm Stewardship Workshop. Farmers and rural landowners are invited to attend this full-day workshop which will include changing climate - a hot topic on the farm, local source water protection updates, and stewardship funding sources. For more information please email <a href="mailto:info@farmsatwork.ca">info@farmsatwork.ca</a> or call 705-743-7671.</p>

### Orchid Submissions Wanted!

Submission deadline for the March issue is **Thursday, February 25<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



**Membership Renewals:** PFN memberships expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> each year but Orchid deliveries will continue until March. After August new memberships are valid until the end of the following year. A tax receipt is issued for memberships and donations.

PFN Officers and Directors				Other Volunteers		
President	Lynn Smith	<a href="mailto:smithfam@nexicom.net">smithfam@nexicom.net</a>	944-5599	Ecology Park Feeders	JB Jaboor & Don Finigan	745-4750
Vice President, Fisheries Council	Kim Zippel	<a href="mailto:kimzippel@nexicom.net">kimzippel@nexicom.net</a>	740-0587	Orchid Diary	Martin Parker	745-4750
Secretary, Archives	Martin Parker	<a href="mailto:mparker19@cogeco.ca">mparker19@cogeco.ca</a>	745-4750	Orchid Mailout	Mary Thomas	
Treasurer	Don Pettypiece	<a href="mailto:don.pettypiece@gmail.com">don.pettypiece@gmail.com</a>	750-1145	Orchid Editor	Marla Williams	874-5653
Membership	Jim Young	<a href="mailto:jbyoung559@gmail.com">jbyoung559@gmail.com</a>	760-9397	Jr. Naturalists	Lara Griffin	749-3639
Program (indoor), Stewardship Council, Fisheries Council	Phil Shaw	<a href="mailto:pshaw78@hotmail.com">pshaw78@hotmail.com</a>	874-1688	Miller Creek Management Area	Jim Cashmore & Jim Young	
Program (indoor)	Marie Duchesneau	<a href="mailto:Duchesneau13@hotmail.com">Duchesneau13@hotmail.com</a>	874-5739	Municipal Planning Committee	Jim Cashmore, Jim Young, Lynn Smith, Martin Parker, Ted Vale	
Program (outdoor)	Paul Elliott	<a href="mailto:pauelliott@trentu.ca">pauelliott@trentu.ca</a>	740-0501			
Special Projects	Rene Gareau	<a href="mailto:rene.gareau@sympatico.ca">rene.gareau@sympatico.ca</a>	741-4560	<b>Post Office Box 1532</b>  <b>Peterborough Ontario K9J 7H7</b>  <a href="mailto:info@peterboroughnature.org">info@peterboroughnature.org</a>		
Webmaster, Jane's Walks	Chris Gooderham	<a href="mailto:webmaster@peterboroughnature.org">webmaster@peterboroughnature.org</a>	740-2081			
Ontario Nature Representative	Ted Vale	<a href="mailto:tedandmarion@sympatico.ca">tedandmarion@sympatico.ca</a>	741-3641			

### Membership Renewal Reminder:

2015 memberships expired on December 31<sup>st</sup>. If you have not yet renewed you can do so at the January 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual General meeting, or by mailing a cheque to: Peterborough Field Naturalists, PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7.

If you paid after September 1<sup>st</sup> then your membership is valid until the end of 2016. If you are uncertain whether you renewed then please contact Jim Young at [jbyoung559@gmail.com](mailto:jbyoung559@gmail.com).

### Thirty adults and thirty kids enjoy an afternoon at the 'Reptiles at Risk' workshop

Submitted by Lynn Smith; Photo courtesy of Kathy Parker

Last November 14<sup>th</sup> the PFN welcomed Jeff and Carlos from Scales Nature Park in Orillia ([www.scalesnaturepark.ca](http://www.scalesnaturepark.ca)) to the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre for an afternoon learning experience called 'Reptiles at Risk'.

Jeff led us through a very informative talk about the individual species of snakes and turtles of Ontario. We learned about their identification, habits, interesting facts and conservation. For instance, did you know the Eastern Hog-nosed Snake will roll over and play dead?

Many live specimens were available for us to observe. Carlos was inundated with children who were delighted to learn how to properly handle the snakes and take a turn. A Gray Ratsnake, Eastern Ribbonsnake, Eastern Milksnake and Eastern Gartersnake patiently accepted all the attention from both kids and adults.

It was a delight to see so many kids (and adults) eager to learn about these reptiles. And may we remember that many of our species of snakes and turtles are at risk and need our protection.

Editor's Note: If you missed this interactive workshop, there is still a chance to participate. The Ganaraska Forest Centre near Campbellcroft is hosting a Reptiles at Risk Workshop on Saturday, January 14<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. For details you can phone 905-885-8173; pre-registration is required.



### PFN Trip Report: 'The Greatest Concentration of Gulls' at Niagara Falls

Article and photo submitted by Lynn Smith

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, our group of eight including the leaders, Martin Parker and Matthew Tobey, headed to Niagara with a full day ahead. We convinced Martin to make a quick stop in Whitby to look for the mountain bluebird but alas, no luck.

We arrived at Adam Beck Generating Station and the gulls didn't disappoint. Seven species were noted, including Thayer's Gull, Iceland, Bonaparte's, Lesser Black-backed, Greater Black-backed, Herring and Ring-billed. Other notables were Canada Geese, Double-crested Cormorant, Turkey Vulture and Red-tailed Hawk. A good start to the day!



We had some excitement at the whirlpool when an unusually marked gull was spotted, then a second was spotted that was similar but a little different. Confused yet? After much speculation and reverting to the Field Guides a decision of identification was made. There was a Black-legged Kittiwake flying about as well as a juvenile Bonaparte's Gull. Check your Field Guide...yes, they are similar but a little different!

We headed to Dufferin Islands where last year I met my first Tufted Titmouse and we again enjoyed the antics of the Tufted Titmouse. Martin brought a supply of seed that was appreciated by several species. With Sean Smith competently calling in birds, the Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Dark-eyed Junco were added to our trip list. Sean was a regular pied piper! Other notables were American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Cardinal and House Sparrow.

At the Upper Falls about 75 Tundra Swans were observed with Bufflehead and Goldeneye, and were added to our day's list. We took a moment to enjoy Niagara Falls in all of its powerful glory as we headed to the Lower Falls. New species for the day included Gadwall, American Widgeon, Redhead and Pied-billed Grebe.

The weather co-operated and the gulls provided a wonderful day of entertainment. We hope to see more PFN members next year!

Editor's note: PFN members Martin Parker, Luke Berg, Dave Milsom and Jerry Ball were birding at Niagara Falls on December 1<sup>st</sup>, in advance of the PFN trip, when three of them were photographed by a news reporter with the 'Niagara Falls Review'. Their photo (left to right are Dave, Luke and Martin) and write-up were later published online!



## PFN Volunteer Corner

### Assistants needed to staff PFN display tables

The PFN has been invited to host a display table at two upcoming community events:

Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup> – evening – at Kawartha Land Trust/Trent University Speaker Series

Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup> – evening – at the showing of the film 'The Messenger', ReFrame Film Festival

PFN volunteers are needed to help answer questions from the general public, hand out information, and sell PFN publications. Volunteers will be paired with a PFN Board Member. If you are available and willing to volunteer at either of these events please contact Lynn Smith at [smithfam@nexicom.net](mailto:smithfam@nexicom.net) or 705-944-5599.



## Reminder to watch for 'The Messenger'

### Submitted by Kim Zippel

The Peterborough Field Naturalists are co-sponsoring a feature length documentary film (93 minutes) entitled 'The Messenger' at the ReFrame Film Festival. 'The Messenger' will be screened on Friday, January 29th at Showplace Theatre on George Street in Peterborough. A panel discussion will take place following the film.

From the website: <http://songbirdsos.com/about/> "The Messenger is a visually thrilling ode to the beauty and importance of the imperiled songbird, and what it means to all of us on both a global and human level if we lose them. Humans once believed that birds could carry messages, their presence was meaningful. They have helped predict the change of seasons, the coming of storms and the rise of toxins in the food chain. Once again they have something to tell us, and the message is not a comfortable one."

### Tickets

Passes to the ReFrame Festival are available at the following venues: GreenUp (378 Aylmer Street North), Hi Ho Silver (392 George Street North), and the Trent Central Student Association (Trent University, West Bank Drive next to the Bata Library). More information is available on the festival's website at: <http://reframefilmfestival.ca/>.

## **Hare Today, Gone Tomorrow?**

**Poem submitted by Murray Palmer**

It spreads down from his ears and up from his feet.  
 Over about ten weeks you'll see his change complete.  
 Reddish brown guard hairs are replaced with white  
 In his fall moult that helps him disappear from sight.  
 Living mainly in boreal forest, he forages mainly at night.  
 A snowshoe hare, the world's smallest, is hardly a bite  
 For wolves, fishers, cougars, bears, lynx, hawks and owls,  
 And every forest skulker who watches or prowls.  
 In winter he moves over snow with thickly-furred, big feet  
 To find buds, twigs and bark, maybe even some meat.  
 When there is snow on the ground, he's well camouflaged,  
 But lately the snow is delayed, his security sabotaged.  
 Climate change is the culprit; how can he effectively hide  
 When snow cover and his moult to white don't coincide?  
 These snowshoe hares don't know they're mismatched,  
 Easily spotted by predators and quickly dispatched.  
 There's less risk in spring; they respond less to daylight,  
 And can genetic plasticity put this hare-brained fix right?

Murray Palmer, 2015

### **Prints for silent auction to be available at Annual General Meeting**

This year the PFN is very fortunate to have two outstanding prints for auction at the PFN AGM on Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The first print is by Kelly Dodge and is entitled 'Twilight Reflections' (pictured right). It is an artist's proof, numbered and signed, and is unframed. Kelly, a PFN member and internationally recognized artist, annually donates a print for PFN's annual meeting. Last year her work was featured at the Algonquin Park Art Gallery.

The second print is of a Bobcat, framed and from 1990, by Audrey Casey, who is a noted wildlife artist from Manitoba. The print number is 292 of 550. This work is reported to be highly realistic and nicely mounted and framed.

Proceeds from the print auction support the special projects of the PFN.



### **Request for items for AGM bucket draw**

An important tradition of the Annual General Meeting of the PFN is the Bucket Draw. A large number of items will be available to be won by guests at this meeting. Past items include a great selection of books, as well as bird seed, artwork, pottery, home baking and preserves. Participants purchase a ticket which they place in a cup beside the item they wish to win. After dinner one ticket will be drawn from each cup, and the ticket holder is entitled to that item. Proceeds from the Bucket Draw support the special projects of the PFN.

This year's Bucket Draw coordinators are Rene Gareau ([rene.gareau@sympatico.ca](mailto:rene.gareau@sympatico.ca)) and Kathy Parker ([mparker19@cogeco.ca](mailto:mparker19@cogeco.ca)). If you have an item to donate please notify Rene or Kathy so they can be prepared.



## **Cackling Goose New Species for Peterborough CBC**

### **Submitted by Martin Parker, Count Compiler**

On Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, forty-nine members and friends of the Peterborough Field Naturalists conducted the Annual Peterborough Christmas Bird Count; a Christmas tradition since at least 1953. Forty-five people spent all or part of the day in the field. The first field party was out at 4:30 am listening and calling for nocturnal owls. By 8:15 am all the field participants were out walking the trails, scanning the Otonabee River and driving the roads in search of birds. Three other people kept track of birds visiting their yard and feeders, and Don Finigan monitored the PFN feeders in Ecology Park.

At the end of the day most of the participants gathered for a hot meal (photos at right are courtesy of Brian Wales) to review the highlights of the day, and to compile the final results. The participants recorded a total of 58 species of birds, representing 16,558 individuals.



The warm weather in December resulted in an abundance of waterbirds, where 13 new highs were established and a new species was added. This is the second-highest number of individuals recorded on the Peterborough CBC, with the high being 62 species in 2006. The total number of individuals represented a new high.

The new species for the count was Cackling Goose. It was found on the Otonabee River north of Peterborough by the groups consisting of Dave Milsom, Iain Rayner and Anne Anthony. This brings the total number of species seen on the Peterborough CBC to 128 species.

#### **New count highs were established for:**

**Canada Goose** – 3795 (previous was 2244 on the 1999 count, with an average of 559 in the previous ten years)

**Northern Shoveler** – 4 (previous high was 1 on the 1974 & 1982 counts, with an average of zero over the previous ten years)

**Redhead** – 2 (previous high was 1 on the 1983 & 1990 counts, with an average of zero over the previous ten years)

**Bufflehead** – 13 (previous high was 5 on the 1999 count, with an average of 0.6 over the previous ten years)

**Hooded Merganser** – 15 (previous high was 9 on the 1962 count, with an average of 2.9 over the previous ten years)

**Ring-billed Gull** – 399 (previous high was 306 on the 2011 count, with an average of 119 over the previous ten years)

**Eastern Screech-Owl** – 4 (previous high was 3 on the 2012 count, with an average of 1.21 over the previous ten years – special thanks to the pre-dawn owlers)

**Belted Kingfisher** – 4 (previous high was 2 on five different counts, with an average of 1.3 over the previous ten years)

**Pileated Woodpecker** – 17 (previous high was 14 on the 1992, 2012 & 2013 counts, with an average of 7.5 over the previous ten years)

**American Crow** – 813 (previous high was 621 on the 2011 count, with an average of 462 over the previous ten years)

**Black-capped Chickadee** – 2044 (previous high was 1951 on the 2012 count, with an average of 1643 over the previous ten years)

**White-breasted Nuthatch** – 138 (previous high was 116 on the 1973 count, with an average of 73 over the previous ten years)

**Purple Finch** – 60 (previous high was 52 on the 1992 count, with an average of 7.6 over the previous ten years)

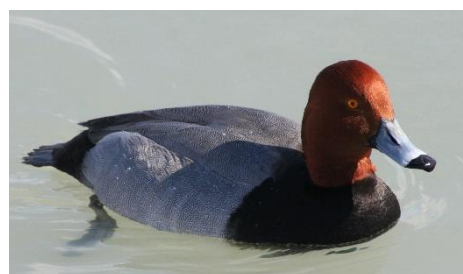
### Total Count Results:

Cackling Goose 2, Canada Goose 3795, American Black Duck 3, Mallard 1141, Northern Shoveler 4, Redhead 2, Great Scaup 1, Bufflehead 13, Common Goldeneye 45, Hooded Merganser 15, Common Merganser 54, Ruffed Grouse 8, Wild Turkey 164, Northern Harrier 4, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Cooper's Hawk 3, Bald Eagle 2, Red-tailed Hawk 45, Ring-billed Gull 399, Herring Gull 440, Iceland Gull 1, Great Black-backed Gull 1, Rock Pigeon 1861, Mourning Dove 337, Eastern Screech-Owl 4, Great Horned Owl 3, Barred Owl 1, Belted Kingfisher 4, Red-bellied Woodpecker 5, Downy Woodpecker 86, Hairy Woodpecker 51, Pileated Woodpecker 17, Merlin 3.

Northern Shrike 1, Blue Jay 191, American Crow 813, Common Raven 19, Black-capped Chickadee 2044, Red-breasted Nuthatch 13, White-breasted Nuthatch 138, Brown Creeper 6, Golden-crowned Kinglet 6, Hermit Thrush 1, American Robin 202, European Starling 1995, Cedar Waxwing 270, Snow Bunting 308, American Tree Sparrow 253, Dark-eyed Junco 436, White-throated Sparrow 1, Song Sparrow 1, Northern Cardinal 112, Red-winged Blackbird 1, House Finch 80, Purple Finch 60, Common Redpoll 2, Pine Siskin 128, American Goldfinch 887, and House Sparrow 112.



Left: Cackling Geese,  
Cobourg Harbour,  
November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012,  
courtesy of Dave Milsom



Right: Common Redhead,  
Cobourg Harbour,  
February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014,  
courtesy of Martin Parker

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### Report from 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count

Submitted by Colin Jones, Count Compiler

The 30<sup>th</sup> Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count was held on Wednesday, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 under very good conditions. The day was overcast but the wind was calm, allowing for excellent listening conditions. There was a little light precipitation (snow/freezing rain) in the early morning. Twenty-two people participated in the count.

A total of 30 species consisting of 2666 individuals were observed. This result ties the previous high number of species observed on the 1997 and 1999 counts. The average number of individuals over the past ten years is 2244.

One new species was recorded – **Mallard**, with 27 individuals. This species is long overdue on this count and extensive areas of open water resulted in 26 being observed on Stoney Lake and 1 on Jack Lake.

The open water also resulted in several other species often not recorded on the count including Canada Goose 3 (5<sup>th</sup> time), American Black Duck 10 (new high and 4<sup>th</sup> time), Bufflehead 1 (2<sup>nd</sup> time), Common Goldeneye 28 (new high), Hooded Merganser 30 (new high and 4<sup>th</sup> time), Common Merganser 500 (shattering the previous high of 97 and 5<sup>th</sup> time), Common Loon 2 (new high and 3<sup>rd</sup> time) and Herring Gull 4 (10<sup>th</sup> time).

Other notable species included:

Winter Wren 2, including one singing (new count high and 5<sup>th</sup> time on count)

Other record highs included:

Pileated Woodpecker: 30 (previous high was 26)

Low Counts:

Mourning Dove 5 (below 10-year average of 21), Barred Owl 1 (below 10-year average of 4), and Blue Jay 151 (below 10-year average of 321)

There were good numbers (i.e. significantly higher than 10-year average) of the following species, likely due, in part, to excellent listening conditions all day, thus aiding in their detectability: Red-breasted Nuthatch 244 (average of

83), White-breasted Nuthatch 132 (average of 77), Brown Creeper 32 (average of 9), Golden-crowned Kinglet 49 (average of 30), and Dark-eyed Junco 65 (average of 7).

#### Total Count Results:

Canada Goose 3, American Black Duck 10, Mallard 27, Bufflehead 1, Common Goldeneye 287, Hooded Merganser 30, Common Merganser 500, Ruffed Grouse 31, Wild Turkey 40, Common Loon 2, Bald Eagle 8, Northern Goshawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 2, Herring Gull 4, Rock Pigeon 32, Mourning Dove 5, Barred Owl 1, Downy Woodpecker 32, Hairy Woodpecker 37, Pileated Woodpecker 30.

Northern Shrike 1, Blue Jay 151, Common Crow 11, Common Raven 95, Black-capped Chickadee 660, Red-breasted Nuthatch 244, White-breasted Nuthatch 132, Brown Creeper 32, Winter Wren 2, Golden-crowned Kinglet 49, European Starling 18, American Tree Sparrow 33, Dark-eyed Junco 65, Snow Bunting 5, Purple Finch 10, Red Crossbill 51 (two different call types), Common Redpoll 18, Pine Siskin 167, American Goldfinch 91, and Evening Grosbeak 1.

### Results of the Christmas Bird Count 4 Kids

#### Submitted by Lara Griffin

We had a great turnout at the Christmas Bird Count 4 Kids on Sunday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Juniors branched out into two groups to look for birds in the Trent University Nature Area, then enjoyed hand feeding some chickadees upon arriving back at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre.

Species observed include Canada Goose 32, Ring-billed Gull 10, Herring Gull 17, Downy Woodpecker 2, Blue Jay 1, American Crow 10, Black-capped Chickadee 40, Red-breasted Nuthatch 1, White-breasted Nuthatch 2, American Robin 35 (all in one area of tree canopy), Dark-eyed Junco 6, Northern Cardinal 2, and Purple Finch 1 (male). Our results were reported to eBird Canada by Martin Parker. Many thanks to Martin Parker, Dave Milsom and Sean Smith for leading the groups and teaching us more about birding! Thank you to all the families who came out to participate in this citizen science project!

### Great Backyard Bird Count

#### Reproduced from the Bird Studies Canada website ([www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org))

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a joint partnership between Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, with Bird Studies Canada (BSC) as the official Canadian partner. The GBBC is an annual four-day event that engages birdwatchers of all ages across North America in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are. Anyone can participate, from beginners to experts. You can count for as little as 15 minutes on a single day, or for as long as you like each day of the event.

It's free, fun, and easy - and it helps the birds! The upcoming GBBC is from February 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>.

It's as simple as counting the birds at a location near you, estimating how many birds you saw of each species, and filling out an online checklist on the Great Backyard Bird Count website. As the count progresses, you can visit the GBBC website to view results and share photographs. You can also enter the photo contest, win prizes, and share your experiences on the Facebook and Twitter social networks.

Email [gbbc@birdscanada.org](mailto:gbbc@birdscanada.org) for more information. To read more about the GBBC and to find out how you can join, please visit: [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)!

BSC is also seeking Great Backyard Bird Count Ambassadors. If you are interested in promoting the GBBC in your area, please contact the Canadian Great Backyard Bird Count Coordinator, Kerrie Wilcox, at [gbbc@birdscanada.org](mailto:gbbc@birdscanada.org) or phone 1-888-448-2473 extension 134.

Happy backyard birding, PFN members!

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

Article and photos submitted by Tianna Burke, Graduate Student, Biology Department,  
Trent University

It sometimes feels that no matter what store I enter, owls are all around me. Whether they are on scarves, sweaters, book covers, coasters, or even some kitchen appliances, they are the latest and hottest trend. While many people are sporting these owl goods, few people actually get the amazing opportunity to see them up close and personal as owl banders and researchers do.

Since 1999, Dr. Erica Nol has been conducting an annual Northern Saw-whet Owl (NSWO) - banding project at Trent University's James McLean Oliver Ecological Centre near Nogie's Creek. A second property, the Sisson Property, was also used this year for a few days in South Peterborough. This is a volunteer project that is sponsored by Trent University with assistance from local naturalist groups and donations from visitors. Each day throughout October a bander-in-charge and a group of visitors go to the property to see what they might catch!

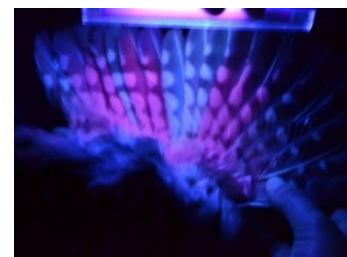


Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*, NSWO) are nocturnal birds that migrate through the Peterborough area every fall, with numbers peaking in October. NSWO are robin sized and have large, bright yellow eyes. They are one of my personal favourites because each individual seems to have their own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

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 dusk until midnight. Nets are checked every 30 minutes. 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 their safety.



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 blood pigment left in the feathers showing a pinkish colour. Hatch year owls (HY, born this season), will have all new feathers, meaning that under black light all the feathers will have a pink tint to them. As a bird ages and feathers become older, they will be white under the light. Second year owls (SY, born last year) will have pink outer and inner most feathers, while middle flight feathers will be white. After second year owls (ASY, born 2 years ago or more), will be a mismatch of pink and white as wing feathers will be a both old and new, being replaced as needed.



**AHY Owl with black light  
and no black light**



This fall, we began our capture efforts on September 26<sup>th</sup> and continued until the November 4<sup>th</sup>, weather permitting. Owls were caught and banded on 24 days with a total of 104 NSWOs passing through our James Oliver station and 6 passing through our Sisson station. 5 owls captured had already been banded, meaning these birds were previously caught on past nights, years or from other stations. Over these 24 days, we averaged 5 owls per night. Our busiest night was October 23<sup>th</sup> when we caught 20 owls!



**Table 1: Age and Sex of NSWO banded at the Oliver Centre during fall 2015**

HY (f, m, u)	SY (f, m, u)	ASY (f, m, u)	Total (f, m, u)
62 (46, 3, 13)	30 (28, 0, 2)	18 (17, 1, 0)	110 (91, 4, 15)

The majority of birds were female (83%), followed by unknown sex (14%), and then very few males (3%). 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 (56%) compared to older owls (44%).

Of the 5 birds that were recaptured at the James Oliver station, 4 were from other locations. Two owls were banded in 2014 as HY birds: one was banded near Gilford, Ontario and a second banded in Ohio, USA. The third recaptured owl was banded in 2011 as a HY at the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory near Picton, Ontario. The final owl was banded as an after hatch year in 2012 in Pennsylvania, USA.



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 over 120 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 2016.

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 and to Sandra Sisson for the use of her property.



## The Orchid Diary



A summary of noteworthy observations by PFN members and others in the Peterborough Region.

Information is compiled from e-bird, the Drew Monkman Sightings website, PTBO Sightings, and individual submissions. Please submit your interesting observations to Martin Parker at [mparker19@cogeco.ca](mailto:mparker19@cogeco.ca) or phone (705) 745-4750.

Nov 28	There were over 1,000 male <b>Common Mergansers</b> with a few female plumaged birds on Chandos Lake north of Apsley, according to King Baker. It was a massive feeding flock with the birds on the back end of the flock flying continuous over the flock to the front end to land and start fishing. There was also a dozen <b>Common Goldeneye</b> and a few <b>Bufflehead</b> . King observed one adult <b>Bald Eagle</b> and some <b>Pine Siskins</b> as well.
Dec 2	<b>Cackling Goose</b> was reported from Little Lake. Up to 4 individuals were present for most of the month and seen by multiple observers.
Dec. 3	A <b>Golden Eagle</b> was observed by Martyn Obbard about ½ km south of Buckhorn. Wendy Hogan has a late <b>Common Grackle</b> near Little Gull Marina on Catchacoma Lake north of Buckhorn. Jerry Ball had <b>Evening Grosbeaks</b> at a feeder on Northey's Bay Road and a <b>Northern Harrier</b> in the area of the intersection of County Road 2 and Hiawatha Line.
Dec 6	Iain Rayner found <b>Gray Jays</b> in both Petroglyphs Provincial Park and along County Road 40 southeast of Stoney Lake.
Dec 7	Bill Snowden had a flock of 8 female plumaged <b>Common Mergansers</b> on the south end of Buckhorn Lake in the morning which was replaced by a flock of 19 male plumaged <b>Common Mergansers</b> in the afternoon.
Dec 9	Carol Horner reported a <b>Cooper's Hawk</b> in her yard in the East City part of Peterborough. Gord Mallory reported a <b>Barred Owl</b> in Jackson Park. Don McLeod reported a gathering of over 150 <b>Mallards</b> in the western end of Chemong Lake which were repeatedly diving under the surface. He showed a video of this activity at PFN Member's Night.

Dec 9	Kim Clark had a <b>Pine Warbler</b> visiting her feeder in the Cavan area. It remained for a couple of weeks. Bill Snowden had a <b>Brown Creeper</b> on the White Birch in his yard on Buckhorn Lake. It would fly from the top to the base of the tree and then ascend to the top feeding on the way. Sean Smith spotted a bat, which he identified as a <b>Little Brown Bat</b> , flying over Little Lake.
Dec 12	Late <b>Common Grackle</b> on the 8 <sup>th</sup> Line Douro, south of County Road 4 by Iain Rayner.
Dec 15	A flock of 6 <b>Sandhill Cranes</b> flew over Sunnymead Farm along Frank Hill Road according to Don McLeod.
Dec 15	A <b>Snowy Owl</b> was observed in Keene by Michael Gillespie.
Dec 10	A <b>Canvasback</b> and <b>Common Loon</b> were spotted off Sandy Point, Pigeon Lake by Donald Sutherland.
Dec 13	On Pigeon Lake off Sandy Point, Donald Sutherland spotted 4 <b>Ring-necked Ducks</b> , 1 <b>Black Scoter</b> , 1 <b>Red-breasted Merganser</b> , 3 <b>Red-necked Grebes</b> , 1 <b>Double-crested Cormorant</b> , and 2 <b>Bonaparte's Gulls</b> . Very late date for these species due to the warmer than normal temperatures and lack of lake ice.
Dec 18	Jerry Ball had a <b>Rusty Blackbird</b> and <b>Pine Siskins</b> at a feeder on Northey's Bay Road.
Dec 20	Annual Peterborough Christmas Bird Count. The 49 observers spotted a total of 58 species of birds with <b>Cackling Goose</b> being a new species for the count. See count report in this issue of The Orchid.
Dec 21	Don Sutherland, Iain Rayner and others found 4 <b>Northern Shovelers</b> on the Lakefield Lagoon. They were present on the lagoon and/or Otonabee River until at least January 1 <sup>st</sup> . Four <b>American Black Ducks</b> joined the massive feeding flock of <b>Mallards</b> on the western end of Chemong Lake according to Don MacLeod.
Dec 22	<b>Muskrat</b> swimming in the Lancaster Bay area of Chemong Lake by Don McLeod. King Baker reported <b>Hooded Mergansers</b> and <b>Common Mergansers</b> still present on Chandos Lake, Aspley.
Dec 23	Dave Milsom had a <b>Sharp-shinned Hawk</b> in his yard in the northeastern section of the city.
Dec 24	Margo Tant and Al Sippel reported that about 11:00 am on Christmas Eve they observed a <b>frog</b> crossing County Road 28 in the Fraserville area. It hopped amongst the wheels of passing vehicle. They were unable to find a body so the frog likely successfully crossed the road with success. Not sure of the species.
Dec 25	Roasted <b>Turkey</b> was a featured menu item today.
Dec 29	Bill Snowden reported a single <b>American Tree Sparrow</b> has arrived at his feeder. With the arrival of some snow cover they should start showing up at more feeders.
Dec 30	30 <sup>th</sup> Annual Petroglyphs CBC. The count date was shifted to this date due to the weather forecast for the 29 <sup>th</sup> . Was an excellent day for listening for birds. A total of 40 species were recorded, which matches the previous count high. Only one new species, <b>Mallard</b> . Noteworthy number and diversity of waterfowl due to the ice-free lakes. See full count report in this issue of 'The Orchid'.
Dec 30	On Stoney Lake, off Viamede Resort, which is outside the Petroglyphs CBC circle, there were a number of <b>Mallards</b> and <b>Common Mergansers</b> and little ice, observed by Sean Smith, Dave Milsom, Matthew Tobey and Martin Parker. On the Petroglyphs CBC there were sightings and tracks of the following mammals: <b>Coyote (possibly Eastern Wolf)</b> , <b>Fisher</b> , <b>Mink</b> , <b>Red Squirrel</b> , <b>Muskrat</b> and <b>Beaver</b> . J. Philpott reported a flock of 200 to 300 <b>Common Mergansers</b> at the Gannons' Narrows Causeway. They were in a feeding frenzy.
Dec 31	Martin and Kathy Parker had an <b>American Robin</b> in the tree in the front yard on the western side of Peterborough.
Fall 2015	A person who does not want to reveal the details sent several videos of up to seven <b>American Otters</b> playing and interacting near his lakeshore.



Left: Purple Sandpiper,  
Presqu'ile Provincial Park,  
December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Right: Snowy Owl,  
Gull Island at Presqu'ile Provincial Park,  
November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015

~ Photos submitted by Dave Milsom

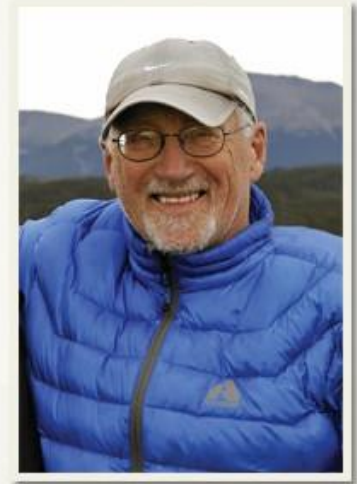


The Peterborough Field Naturalists  
AGM 2016, Guest Presentation  
Friday, Jan 22, 2016

# ON THE LABRADOR

## Arnold Zageris, Photographer

Arnold, a world renowned nature photographer, will share a photo documentary from his sixteen expeditions to Northern Labrador. His images capture “the harsh and stunning beauty of the Labrador landscape, and the strength of the people who reside within its perimeters”.



Doors Open: 5:30 pm

Buffet: 6 pm

Meeting: 7 pm

Silent Auction & Raffle: 7:30 pm

Guest Speaker: 8 pm

Cost: \$35

**RSVP by December 30th**

Call Jim: 705-760-9397 or

Email: [jbyoung559@gmail.com](mailto:jbyoung559@gmail.com)

**Date:** January 22, 2016

**Location:** The Peterborough Naval Association  
24 Whitlaw St





# 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"/> 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

☐ Under 20 ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70-79 ☐ 80< over

### 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: \_\_\_\_\_