

The Orchid



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Know • Appreciate • Conserve Nature in All Its Forms



Red-Throated Loon, Little Lake, December 5th ~ Submitted by Dave Milsom

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Brown Thrasher at Meadowvale Park on Dec 12
~ Submitted by Dave Milsom

Welcome new PFN member!
Sara Whitehead



Bald Eagles at Lock 25 on Dec 19
~ Submitted by Sue Paradis



First-year Iceland Gull at Trent U on Dec 11
~ Submitted by Dave Milsom



Common Loon in Lakefield on Dec 19
~ Submitted by Sue Paradis

Coming Events	
<p>January through March</p> <p>Dates, times and locations TBD</p>	<p>Wildlife Tracking Outings</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 signs. These outings will be scheduled when weather conditions permit. The place and time will be announced by e-mail shortly before each outing.</p> <p>Anyone interested in attending should send an e-mail to Don McLeod at donaldmcleod.com@gmail.com so he can add you to an e-mail distribution list. If you signed up for last year's outings, you will automatically receive an e-mail.</p> <p>Accessibility: moderate to somewhat challenging. These outings will all involve walking in snowy conditions.</p>
<p>Friday, January 20</p> <p>5:30 PM</p> <p>Peterborough Naval Assn.</p> <p>24 Whitlaw St.</p>	<p>Join us for PFN's Annual General Meeting</p> <p>Keep up-to-date on PFN business, elect the next executive, enter the raffle for prizes, enjoy a delicious meal and stay for an entertaining presentation!</p> <p>Tickets are just \$35 for the evening and can be reserved by contacting Jim Young at 705-760-9397 or e-mail jbyoung559@gmail.com.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doors open at 5:30 PM, meal begins at 6PM • Meeting at 7PM, followed by raffle at 7:30PM • Keynote speaker begins at 8PM <p>The AGM speaker is Leora Burman, Corporate Founder and CEO of the organization "The Land Between". Leora's talk will focus on the last natural landscape in southern Ontario, and what the organization has achieved during the last 10 years.</p>
<p>Wednesday, February 8</p> <p>7:30 PM</p> <p>Camp Kawartha Environment Centre</p>	<p>Monthly Meeting: Mothing in Peterborough</p> <p>Basil Conlin is a member of The Peterborough Field Naturalists and is very passionate about moths. He has previously written on this subject in The Orchid.</p> <p>This year, Basil embarked on a personal project to document moths living within the city of Peterborough. To date, he has found 560 species. Basil will talk with members about his findings, and about moth diversity and moth conservation specific to our city.</p>
<p>February 17 to 20</p>	<p>The Great Backyard Bird Count</p> <p>The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a citizen science project initiated by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society in 1998. It was the first online citizen science project to collect data on wild birds and display the results in real time.</p> <p>People with feeders are invited to participate. Over 160,000 participated last year. All one has to do is tally the number and species of birds you see for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the Great Backyard Bird Count, from February 17th to 20th.</p> <p>Full details on how to participate can be found at the following website: http://gbbc.birdcount.org/</p> <p>Think about participating in this project.</p>

Coming Events	
<p>Saturday, February 18</p> <p>1:00 PM</p> <p>Trent University Campus Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, 2505 Pioneer Road</p>	<p>Electronic Record-Keeping of Observations</p> <p>A Citizen Science Workshop</p> <p>A recent trend is to keep one's observations recorded on centralized computer databases with two of the most popular being eBird and eButterfly. This afternoon's workshop will be an introduction to these two internet-based systems. The workshop will be conducted by Martin Parker and Matthew Tobey, both experienced users of these two systems. This is your opportunity to be introduced to these systems and for casual users to learn some tricks to get more information from these cooperative citizen science databases. For new users, bring a list of birds seen one day in your yard and at your feeders. This information will be entered into eBird.</p>
<p>Sunday, February 19</p> <p>1:00 PM</p> <p>Meet at north parking lot, Riverview Park & Zoo, 1230 Water St.</p>	<p>Winter Birds Along Canada's Heritage Waterway</p> <p>This annual 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. 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>Accessibility – Easy with some short walks</p>
<p>Wednesday, March 8</p> <p>7:30 PM</p> <p>Camp Kawartha Environment Centre</p>	<p>Monthly Meeting: All About Amphibians</p> <p>Peter B. Mills is a naturalist and an artist. He has recently written and illustrated "Metamorphosis", a guide book to Ontario's amphibians at all stages of development.</p> <p>Peter will bring us a deeper level of understanding of the larval life of frogs, toads, and salamanders, which is the critical developmental first half of their lives.</p>
<p>Saturday, April 1</p> <p>7:00 AM</p> <p>Meet at north parking lot, Riverview Park & Zoo, 1230 Water St.</p>	<p>Quest for Canada's New National Bird</p> <p>The Gray Jay has recently won the vote to be Canada's "national bird". This special outing will be an all-day trip to Ontario's oldest Provincial Park – Algonquin. The focus of the trip will be to look for Gray Jays (aka Canada Jays) and other characteristic Algonquin species such as Spruce Grouse. We will also keep an eye out for early spring migrants. Leaders for this outing are Martin Parker and Matthew Tobey.</p> <p>This trip has an early departure in order to maximize the time spent in the park. A stop will be made in Bancroft on the way to the park. A visit to the Park's Visitor Centre will be included.</p> <p>Dress according to the weather forecast for the day of the outing and bring winter footwear. Bring your binoculars, camera, and a packed lunch.</p> <p>Accessibility – Easy to moderate depending on the depth of the remaining winter snow.</p> <p>Celebrate Canada's 150th birthday by seeing Canada's new National Bird!</p>



PFN Junior Field Naturalists (ages 5-12)

<p>Sunday, January 22</p> <p>2 to 4 PM</p> <p>Camp Kawartha (Clear Lake)</p> <p>1010 Birchview Road - Duoro-Dummer</p>	<p>Juniors' XC Skiing</p> <p>PFN families are invited to enjoy a winter afternoon exploring the trails at Camp Kawartha. We'll also play a few games in the snow with Camp Kawartha's Outdoor Education staff. Beginners are welcome (this is a great chance to try out a new sport with your kids). Spaces are limited so registration is required (kids and adults). Not a PFN member yet? January is a great time to join. Child PFN memberships are \$10 per year and forms can be handed in at the event.</p> <p>Please book on-line at http://peterboroughnature.org/junior/ and note in your booking whether you need to borrow skis (at no cost) or will bring your own. Let's hope we'll have enough snow this year!</p>
<p>Saturday, February 11</p> <p>7 to 8 PM</p>	<p>Night Hike</p> <p>Join us for a night hike in the snow on Saturday February 11. Maybe the crisp night air will give you a new reason to love winter. There will be a full moon that night, so hopefully the sky will be clear. Please book on-line at http://peterboroughnature.org/junior/. We can decide as a group where to meet.</p> <p>Bring a flashlight and dress warmly. The hike will start at 7 PM and we'll walk for about 45 minutes to an hour, depending on group preferences.</p>

Other Events of Interest

<p>First Friday of each month</p> <p>7:00 pm</p> <p>Guest Services Building, Riverview Park & Zoo</p>	<p>Peterborough Astronomical Association Monthly Meeting</p> <p>For more information on their monthly meetings, please visit www.peterboroughastronomy.com.</p> <p>January 6: Video Astronomy by Crystal and Jared Cook</p> <p>February 3: Forgotten Computers "Women in Astronomy" by John Crossen</p> <p>March 3: Solar Astronomy by Brian Colville</p>
<p>Fourth Wednesday of each month</p> <p>7:00 pm</p> <p>Lion's Centre</p> <p>347 Burnham Street</p>	<p>Peterborough Horticultural Society Monthly Meeting</p> <p>Join us at 6:30 PM for socializing. The meeting begins at 7 PM. Annual membership rates are \$20 individual, \$25 family, and \$2 guest. All are welcome - and you don't have to be an experienced gardener! For more info visit www.peterboroughhort.com.</p> <p>January 27 - Susan Chan: "Pollinators: The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful"</p> <p>February 24 - Gladys Fowler, Master Gardener: "Square Foot Gardening"</p> <p>March 23 - Anna Mizyn, Owner of Anna's Perennials: "Cactus & Succulents"</p>

Other Events of Interest

<p>Friday, Feb. 10</p> <p>Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston</p>	<p>2017 Forests Ontario Conference</p> <p>The Annual Conference is a unique opportunity for landowners, forest professionals, educators and those interested in the health of our forests to connect.</p> <p>Our forests are being greatly impacted as climate change, pests and development pressures push them to their limits. Join us as we discuss how it takes a forest to build healthy communities and a robust and prosperous society.</p> <p>Registration is \$115 for non-members, \$80 for members and \$35 for students. Included with your registration is access to all sessions, coffee breaks, lunch, and the exhibitors. The silent auction is one of the highlights and is an opportunity to fundraise for Forests Ontario programs.</p> <p>For more information, visit www.forestsontario.ca/community/annual-conference/</p>
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Robinscheisse in the Yard

Submitted by John Fautley

This is a picture of what can happen if robins drop by when you're not home. Perhaps they were on their way to Sandbanks? I guess they remembered our grapes and buckthorns from previous years. By the looks of the spectrum of droppings -- purple, green, grey, brown and yellow -- they had been gobbling every kind of edible they saw on their way through. Fortunately, it soon snowed again and all traces of their meal were gone. But then soon after, another melt....

(As a note of interest there were over 8,000 robins on the Sandbanks CBC.)



PFN Volunteer Corner

Rallying for Refreshments

For the past 18 years, PFN members have enjoyed refreshments at the Club meetings, thanks to Emily Pettypiece and her backup, Don Pettypiece. Emily and Don feel it is time to retire from this job and they encourage others to come forward. Thank you so much for your efforts, Emily and Don!

Please contact Lynn Smith (smithfam@nexicom.net or 705-944-5599) if you are interested and willing to help look after the refreshment table at Club meetings. Your contribution to the PFN meetings will be most appreciated!



Nominations for Directors

The affairs of the Peterborough Field Naturalists are managed by twelve 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 20.

The Board of the PFN has vacancies for two Directors. The normal term of a Director is three years. If you are interested in serving on the Board, have any questions about the job of Director or would like to suggest a member who may be interested, please contact the Chair of the Nomination Committee, Lynn Smith (smithfam@nexicom.net or 705-944-5599).

Robins Highlight of the 2016 Peterborough Christmas Bird Count

Submitted by Martin Parker

American Robins did not get the weather forecast for this winter. A record number rejected the prediction of a long cold winter and remained in the Peterborough Region for the Annual Christmas Bird Count. The participants of the count this year reported observing a total of 1,943 American Robins, greatly exceeding the historic high of 759 seen on the count held in 2011. Several of the field parties reported observing flight after flight of robins flying across open fields into thickets with lots of grapes, in which they then proceeded to feed. The bumper crop of grapes is the attraction for the American Robins this winter. It will be interesting to see how long these numbers remain during the winter months.

The flocks of American Robins were just one of the many highlights of this year's Peterborough CBC held on Sunday, December 18, 2016. The participants observed 59 species of birds representing 13,860 individuals. Other highlights include:

New Species

Horned Grebe – 1 was observed on the Otonabee River behind the downtown Harvey's by the Donald Sutherland, Ken Abraham and M.E. Obbard group. It was also observed by two other groups. This individual had been around for a period of time prior to the count.

Eastern Bluebird – 2 were observed near the intersection of the Lang/Hasting Trail and the Old Keene Road by the party consisting of Scott McKinlay and Susan Malan. This is a new species for the Peterborough CBC.

Unusual

Snow Goose – 1 individual in a flock of Canada Geese. This is only the second time this species has been on the count.

Lesser Black-backed Gull – 1 on the Otonabee River represents the 4th time on the count

Brown Thrasher – 1 individual was reported and photographed by Dave Milsom. This is only the 2nd time on the count.

High Numbers

Sharp-shinned Hawk – 5 which ties the record high of 1995, 2000, 2010, and 2014

Bald Eagles – A total of 5 is a new count high exceeding the previous high of 4 in 2013

Eastern Screech Owl – The 4 recorded by 3 parties is a new count high. Previous was 3 in 2013

Red-bellied Woodpecker – 8 ties the previous high

American Crow – The 953 recorded exceeds the previous high of 691 in 2011

White-breasted Nuthatch – The 120 individuals exceeded the previous high of 116 in 2014

Dark-eyed Junco - The 543 individuals are a new high. The previous high was 515 in 2014

Low Numbers

Canada Goose – Only 71 were observed as the cold temperatures just prior to the count reduced the amount of open water. Numbers of other waterfowl were low as well.

Ruffed Grouse – 2 – The number of this species is continuing to decline from a peak of 82 in 1979

Great Horned Owl – 1 – A low number. In the 1992 count, 40 were reported.

Winter Finches – The following winter finches were absent due to lack of winter cones and other seeds: Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Red Crossbill, Pine Siskin, Common Redpoll, Hoary Redpoll and Evening Grosbeak.

Complete Count Results:

Snow Goose 1; Canada Goose 71; American Black Duck 5, Mallard 1006; Long-tailed Duck 1' Bufflehead 1; Common Goldeneye 95, Hooded Merganser 2; Common Merganser 1; Ruffed Grouse 2, Wild Turkey 88; Horned Grebe 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk 5, Cooper's Hawk 1' Northern Goshawk 2; Bald Eagle 6; Red-tailed Hawk 25; Rough-legged Hawk 2; hawk species 1; Ring-billed Gull 71; Herring Gull 131; Lesser Black-backed Gull 1; Great Black-backed Gull 1; white-winged gull species 2; gull species 1; Rock Pigeon 1006; Mourning Dove 515; Eastern Screech Owl 4; Great Horned Owl 1' Belted Kingfisher 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker 8; Downy Woodpecker 84; Hairy Woodpecker 40; Northern Flicker 5; Pileated Woodpecker 7; woodpecker species 2; Merlin 2; Peregrine Falcon 1; Northern Shrike 3; Blue Jay 261; American Crow 953; Common Raven 29; Black-capped Chickadee 1722; Red-breasted Nuthatch 15; White-breasted Nuthatch 120; Brown Creeper 6; Eastern Bluebird 2; American Robin 1943; Brown Thrasher 1; European Starling 2674; Bohemian Waxwing 4; Cedar Waxwing 220; Snow Bunting 1010; American Tree Sparrow 344; Dark-eyed Junco 543; White-throated Sparrow 1; Northern Cardinal 104; Brown-headed Cowbird 1; House Finch 44; Purple Finch 1; American Goldfinch 533; and House Sparrow 147.

Special thanks to the 41 field participants and 7 feeder watchers who collectively contributed 153.5 hours on Count Day on this long-term wildlife survey in the Peterborough Region. Thanks to Lara Griffin and the PFN Juniors who conducted a CBC4Kids on Count Day at the Environment Centre. Their results have been included in the overall count results. The count ended with a compiling of the results and a social at the Carousel Restaurant at the end of the day.

What the Heck Are Those Pigeons Up To?

Submitted by the Orchid Editor

Sometimes when I'm walking downtown, I become aware of pigeons flying above in repetitive patterns. There can be quite a number of them - often twenty or so, but sometimes fewer and sometimes many more - and they seem to be flying in formation. I can't help but stop to watch in wonderment. One theory I have as to why they are doing this, which I realize is silly but it amuses me, is: The pigeons in question are pigeon air cadets. They are part of a larger pigeon military apparatus that is preparing to take over the world from humans in the event that we really screw things up. These pigeon air cadets have no qualms about practicing their maneuvers in full public view. I can imagine the leader calling out commands: "Bank left! Go straight! Roll! Bank right! "Dive!!!" One could watch these goings-on with a sense of admiration as if watching the RCAF Snowbirds, or one could watch with fear and trepidation as if watching a crazy North Korean training exercise. I wonder...

In the next issue of The Orchid, I will publish the most plausible explanation for the pigeon behaviour and the most ridiculous explanation. Please send your explanations to the Orchid Editor (see 2nd last page for contact info).



Left: Barred Owl at Cranberry Marsh, Whitby on Dec 6

Right: Bald Eagle on Otonabee River on Dec 22

~ Photos submitted by Dave Milsom

Undercover Surprises

Submitted by John Fautley

While closing the cottage on Thanksgiving, we lifted the plywood septic pump cover and found this cozy little community: a trio of Blue-spotted (Jefferson?), Yellow-spotted and Eastern Red-backed Salamanders. Hanging above them, growing out of the damp underside of the cover, was this pair of mushrooms. The gills were facing down as expected, but *appeared* to be attached at the tip of the cap. (In the photo, the plywood is flipped over). A resourceful approach to optimal spore distribution? Jennie Versteeg gives a rough best guess as *Crepidotus crocophyllus*.



Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Report

2016 Report (Trent University's Oliver Property, Peterborough County)

**Text and Photos by: Tianna Burke (tiannaburke@trentu.ca),
Graduate Student, Environmental and Life Sciences Program , Trent University, Peterborough ON.**

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 Bobcaygeon, Ontario. Since then, many visitors have stepped through the doors of our station to watch us capture and band these beautiful, silent predators. Our banding station is also part of an amazing continent-wide project called Project OwlNet. For more information on this please visit: www.projectowl.net.org/

The Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*, NSWO) is a nocturnal bird that migrates through the Peterborough area every fall, with numbers peaking in October. NSWO are robin-sized and have large, bright yellow eyes. When they feel threatened, these owls will elongate themselves to camouflage better into branches surrounding them, just like the owl in the photo (right) is trying to do!

NSWOs primarily feed on small rodents, however they have trouble hunting in deep snow, which leads them to migrate from the southern boreal forest to areas with less snowfall. Owls are specially made to be silent hunters. With a disc-shaped face for directed hearing and fringed feathers for silent flight, owls can silently find and catch their prey. As researchers, we take advantage of them migrating through the area to capture and learn a little more about them.

During the month of October three 12m X 2.6m mist nets are set up in a triangular pattern in a wooded area of the property. Since they are attracted to their territorial calls, we use an audio lure, filling the woods with the sounds of "too-too-too-too" from dusk until midnight. Nets are checked every 30 minutes and every owl that is caught gets brought inside for a closer look. Each owl is banded with a unique 9-digit engraved aluminum band obtained from the Canadian Wildlife Service. The owls are also weighed (in a juice can, see photo to right), and the wing chord is measured. We examine the moulting pattern within the flight feathers of the owl's wings to determine an age. We use an ultraviolet light to see whether the feathers are fresh or old. Fresh feathers appear pink under this light, a lovely display.

This fall, we started our capture efforts a little later than usual, on October 13th, 2016 and continued through to October 31st. Although we had a late start, our season was very successful with a total of 80 owls banded in 18 days. Similar to past years, the majority of owls caught this year were born this year (hatch year birds, HY). The majority of birds captured were also female (65%), followed by a second group in which we were unable to identify the sex (22.5%), and then finally, as with most years, a few males (12.5%).

This may sound like a very large number of females and younger birds, given that many natural populations of birds have equal sex ratios. However, this is a trend that we have seen in much of our previous data. In fact, studies on saw-whets from other parts of their range have noted that females tend to migrate further than males, so that males are better situated to return to breeding grounds quicker and set up their territory. Thus, males in this population may spend their winter north of our banding station. Alternatively, males may also migrate later than females and after our operations cease.



Table 1: Age and Sex of NSWO Banded at the Oliver Center During Fall 2016

HY (Hatch Year), SY (2nd Year, i.e. born last year), ASY (After 2nd Year, i.e. born 2+ yrs ago); female, male, unknown

HY (f, m, u)	SY (f, m, u)	ASY (f, m, u)	Total (f, m, u)
54 (31, 8, 15)	16 (12, 2, 2)	10 (9, 0, 1)	80 (52, 10, 18)



We captured two Saw-whets this year that were previously banded at another banding station, a so-called foreign recapture. The first foreign recapture was of an owl banded in 2012 at a banding station located in Maryland, USA. It was aged as a HY bird at that time. This makes this male 4 years old! Our second foreign recapture was a female banded in 2013 as an adult at a banding station near Montreal, Quebec. While banding new birds is always exciting, for researchers it is these recaptures that hold the most excitement. From these we can find out ages, and get an idea of where these birds are migrating to and from - and possibly even where they are stopping along the way.

This year we welcomed over 100 visitors through our doors, including two nights specially dedicated to host the Peterborough Junior Field Naturalists. We would like to send out a big thank you to all the visitors who did come out this year. We hope that you had a great experience and as much fun as we did. Thank you also to Eric Sager for allowing us to band at the Oliver Property.

Gray Jay – Our New National Bird

Submitted by June Hitchcox, courtesy of The Apsley Voice

Canada has a National Bird! Some years ago, each province chose a bird to be its provincial bird (Ontario chose the Loon), but Canada did not have a National Bird. Now it has the Gray Jay, one of the best known, smartest, and popular of the northern birds. In Ontario, they are common year-round residents from Algonquin Provincial Park to the northern tree line, through cool northern woods, bogs, spruce and fir forests, and coniferous and mixed coniferous forests - although they are rarely seen south of Lake Simcoe. They are an established breeder in the Apsley area (ref. Doug Sadler), and many are in Petroglyphs Provincial Park. Now known as the Gray Jay, it has been known as the Canada Jay (1934-1980) and Whiskey-Jack, the latter name from the Ojibway Indians calling it wis-ka-chon. This fluffy Jay is larger than a Robin, being ~11 ½" long. It has a black patch across the back of the head with a gray and white forehead. It has a long tail, a short beak, and no crest. Its appearance suggests a huge, overgrown Chickadee. When flying, there are a few strong flaps followed by long glides. It will sometimes perch on tree tops. It is an early breeder, breeding from late February to April. Breeding pairs allow non-breeders to feed their fledglings but not their nestlings. The young are dark slate gray. The dominant sibling eventually wins to stay while expelled siblings try to join other pairs that have no young of their own.

Gray Jays eat insects, berries, fruit, mice, birds' eggs, pieces of meat, mushrooms etc., and store much of these foods behind flakes of bark, under tufts of lichen, among coniferous needles, and in tree forks. They glue the food with a sticky coating that they produce, to keep it together and in place. They rely on this food to see them through the cold winter. These Jays are curious, bold, and trusting. They seem quite tame. They will rob food from picnic tables, enter tents, and pry open containers! Usually quiet, they have a soft "whee-ah" and a harsh, rapid "cha-cha-cha" when mobbing predators. They are also able to imitate voices of other birds. They are rarely alone but in pairs or small groups. They need freezing temperatures to keep their stored food frozen as we do in our freezers. With a warming climate, southern ones may have to move further north to boreal and mountain forests to survive. What an interesting bird. No wonder that they are so well-liked.



Grey Jays in Manning Park, 2007.
Photo by Ronald Maas (Own work) [Public domain],
via Wikimedia Commons

Backyard Entertainment Squirrel-Style

Submitted by Sue Paradisis

I know that most people who like to feed birds, are not enamored with squirrels. Although I own a "Squirrel Buster" feeder and have baffles on the feeder poles, I have given up at trying to prevent the thieves from taking the seeds I scatter about for the ground-feeding birds. I put out a lot of seed. I feed a lot of squirrels! Not only have I given up trying to get rid of the squirrels, I am actually enjoying having them around. They can be interesting to watch.

I have a Grand-dog that is regularly in my backyard (chasing squirrels) and she left a stuffy toy outside. It is about the same size and shape as a squirrel. On more than one occasion I have observed a young squirrel playing with the toy. It behaves like a kitten pouncing on it, running around it and throwing it in the air. It climbs the tree beside where it is playing and jumps down on top of the toy and springs back into the tree. It's hilarious when it jumps straight up in the air.

The squirrel has a nest in a spruce tree beside my deck. I have watched it gathering leaves, stuffing its mouth full and going up the tree to improve its nest. It seems it thought the stuffy would be good company or padding. One morning, I saw the stuffy ten feet up the tree! It must have dropped it.

Last week I looked out first thing in the morning to see 10 centimeters of snow on the ground. I spotted the little squirrel coming down its tree and jumping into the snow. It may have been its first experience with the white stuff. It started to play. It ran around the tree and kept jumping up the trunk and back into the snow. It was acting just like a kitten again jumping straight up in the air.

Although the squirrels cost me plenty in bird seed, at least they provide me with good entertainment.

From the Archives: The 1963 and 1964 Bird Counts

The 1963 Christmas Bird Count was Peterborough's first count to be submitted to the Christmas Bird Count programme operated by the National Audubon Society. This article will look at the result of these early counts.

1963 Count – It was held on December 28 with 24 participants. They observed 33 species of birds consisting of a total of 3,316 individuals.

Some of the highlights include 1 Lesser Scaup, 3 Northern Goshawk, 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 9 American Three-toed Woodpecker, 3 Black-backed Woodpecker, 5 American Kestrel, 2 Cardinals, 370 Evening Grosbeak and 520 House Sparrows.

In 1963, the impact of Dutch Elm Disease was being felt on our native elms. Elms were dying by the thousands, resulting in loss of habitat for bark beetles. The two species of northern woodpeckers, the American Three-toed Woodpecker and the Northern Black-backed Woodpecker, responded. The number of American Kestrels and Evening Grosbeaks is interesting as none were reported on this year's count. The number of House Sparrow exceeds the 147 on this year's count.

1964 Count – It was held on December 26 with 15 participants. They observed 30 species, representing 1,083 birds. The weather conditions on this count were unusual with temperatures ranging from 35°F to 45°F (2 to 7°C) and very foggy conditions, making it difficult to see birds.

Some of the highlights include 1 Wood Duck, 2 Northern Harrier, 1 Snowy Owl, 1 American Three-toed Woodpecker, 1 American Kestrel and 7 American Crow. There were no Northern Cardinals or Evening Grosbeaks.

The impact of the warm temperatures and foggy conditions impacted the results - especially woodpecker numbers which were down from the previous year. Wet woodlands were not accessible.

Nuts to You, Blue Jay!

What could change your mood on a dull and dreary winter day
 More than the sight of a strikingly handsome, bold Blue Jay?
 On outstretched wings, he swoops from a higher perch in a hemlock
 To claim a birch snag as he mimics the scream of a red-tailed hawk.
 Still standing, he's fully alert with watchful eyes and crest erect,
 But no sign of predator or competitor is he able to detect.

There are various types of feeders hanging from hooks and high bar,
 But what he likes most is the flat, open feeder where the peanuts are.
 He sits there like a glutton, quickly picking good nuts to fill his crop,
 Then flies away to cache his loot - you wonder when he'll stop.
 If only he were a decent fellow like a cardinal or chickadee ...
 This bird is a hoarder; he's not dainty as we'd like him to be.

His forest pals bury countless acorns or beechnuts far from their trees.
 Unlike maple keys, these seeds aren't dispersed by the breeze.
 Some of the buried acorns are retrieved and eaten, others not;
 Seedlings result if the bird died, didn't need the acorns, or just forgot.
 Blue jays spread the oak forest northward after the last glaciation.
 Their adjustment of range to climate change merits our appreciation.

Murray Arthur Palmer, 2016



Blue Jay in Peterborough backyard, 2011.
 ~ Submitted by Murray Palmer.

**The Peterborough Field Naturalists
2017 AGM, Dinner, Guest Presentation**



The Land Between

Leora Berman will speak on "The Land Between"....
both the ecotone and the organization that is
dedicated to conserving and enhancing its unique
cultural, natural and economic features.



Date: January 20, 2017
Time: 5:30 pm
Cost: \$35/person

Please RSVP Jan 7th
To Reserve Tickets please contact
Jim Young at jbyoung559@gmail.com OR 705-760-9397

Doors Open: 5:30 p.m.
Dinner: 6:00 p.m.
Meeting: 7:00 p.m.
Raffle: 7:30 p.m.



Five-Lined Skink *Plestiodon fasciatus*

Contact Rene Gareau if you have items to donate
rene.gareau@sympatico.ca OR 705-741-4560

LOCATON: The Peterborough Naval Association
24 Whitlaw St.

Prairie Smoke (Geum triflorum)



The Orchid Diary



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

Information is compiled from eBird, Drew Monkman's Sightings web page,
the ptbosightings Yahoo group, and individual submissions.

Please submit your interesting observations to Martin Parker at mparker19@cogeco.ca or phone 705-745-4750.

Weather	The daily temperatures continued to be above average for most of the month.
Red-throated Loon	The Red-throated Loon , initially found on Little Lake on Nov. 27, remained on the lake until December 11 and was seen and photographed by many observers. At times, it was close to the Crescent St. shoreline, providing excellent views.
Horned Grebe	The Horned Grebe on Little Lake, initially reported on Nov. 27, remained on the lake or in adjacent Otonabee River until Dec. 18 when it was documented on the CBC by three parties. It was seen by many observers.
Nov. 29	Matthew Tobey found a first winter White-eyed Vireo in Stenson Park in the SW sector of the city. He was able to obtain a photo. This is the third known winter record of this species for Peterborough. The previous eBird records were on May 1, 2001 & May 7, 2000. The King Eider found on Nov. 28 at the Fothergill Isle Causeway, Pigeon Lake by Iain Rayner was still present until December 7. This is the first record for Peterborough County. At the same location, there were a variety of other waterfowl including American Wigeon , Gadwall and Long-tailed Duck Matthew Gavin and Iain Rayner found a Gray Catbird feeding on wild grapes in the Edgewater Road area on the NW side of Little Lake. Seen by many observers
Nov. 30	Drew Monkman received an e-mail from the mother of an employee at Unimin Mines. He stated he was seeing Bald Eagles all day, normally 2 to 4 at a time. On one day, in the late afternoon, at the tailings dam there were 20 in one group and 8 were full adults. There may have been a Golden Eagle within the eagle group. A Red-necked Grebe was spotted by Scott McKinlay and others on Little Lake between the cemetery and Beavermead Park and remained until Dec. 5
Dec. 1	Dan Chronowic found a Hermit Thrush in the Edgewood Road area on the NW shore of Little Lake. A late Fox Sparrow was seen in backyard by Matthew Tobey in southwestern part of city
Dec. 2	Matthew Garvin spotted a late Double-crested Cormorant on the Otonabee River in the area of the London Street bridge. A flock of 25 Bonaparte's Gulls at the Fothergill Island Causeway area by Iain Rayner. There were smaller numbers seen by other observers prior to this observation Late American Pipit on the Rotary Trail at Trent U. by Donald A. Sutherland
Dec. 3	Erica Nol & Chris Risley had a Black Scoter near Fothergill Isle on Pigeon Lake
Dec. 5	Sue Paradis reported on the antics of a young Eastern Gray Squirrel as it encountered snow for the first time. See separate story in this issue. A blue phase Snow Goose was found by Ken Abraham and seen by many other observers.
Dec. 6	Sue Paradis reported that a Northern Flicker was trying to find space in a crab apple tree with 2 dozen American Robins . A Northern Shoveler was present on the Lakefield Lagoon by James Barber. Bill Snowden reported that on the Otonabee River below Lakefield there were Bufflehead , Hooded Merganser and one male Wood Duck .
Dec. 7	The Cooper's Hawk returned to Sue Paradis's yard and flushed a dozen Mourning Doves . Donald Sutherland had 7 Bonaparte's Gulls at Fothergill Isle causeway.
Dec. 8	King Baker spotted a flock of approximately 100 Bohemian Waxwings feeding on berries near the corner of Ravenswood and Parkhill Road. Along the TransCanada Trail near Lily Lake he observed a flock of about 50 American Robins . Brian Wales, Jerry Ball & Dave Milsom had a Horned Grebe at Pengelley Point on Rice Lake.. Tim Dyson had a Hermit Thrush near South Bay, Stoney Lake.
Dec. 9	An Eastern Towhee arrived at the feeders of Michael Gillespie near Keene and came daily until December 31

Dec. 10	Five Sandhill Cranes flew by the home of Ulrike Kullik near Havelock.
Dec. 11	Jerry Ball & Dave Milsom had a 1 st winter Iceland Gull at Trent University, Ring-necked Duck above Lock 25 and Eastern Towhee and American Kestrel along David Fife Line. Jerry Ball observed a flock of about 100 Wild Turkeys in a field and the adjacent woods with a Coyote walking through the flock near Henderson Line.
Dec. 13	Jerry Ball had a flock of Cedar Waxwings in the City.
Dec. 14	Gwen Forsyth spotted four Trumpeter Swans on the Otonabee River south of Lakefield.
Dec. 16	In a posting to Drew Monkman's Sightings web site, Tim Dyson reported on mammals feasting on apples at Warsaw. He noted that despite the 2016 drought, there was an abundance of fruit. He noted that at night, the fallen apples are being fed on by Deer Mice , Northern Flying Squirrels and White-tailed Deer . The mice and flying squirrels were also feeding on the moths and other insects being attracted to the apples. One night a Porcupine was observed feasting on the apples. The next day a Beaver was also seen feasting.
Dec. 18	The 65 th Annual Peterborough Christmas Bird Count. The 41 field observers and 7 feeder watchers observed a total of 59 species of birds, representing 13,860 individuals. The number of American Robins observed totaled 1,943. The one new species was Eastern Bluebird (2 individuals) in the Assumption area. See separate count summary. Michael Gillespie had Common Loon along the Lakefield waterfront just outside the CBC area. Martyn Obbard had a Black-backed Woodpecker near Buckhorn. Rachael Burrows had two Eastern Bluebirds in her yard in the Warsaw area.
Dec. 19	Sue Paradisis had a female Wood Duck on the Otonabee River just north of Trent University and an adult and immature Bald Eagle on the ice above Lock 25. The adult was feeding on a fish. Jerry Ball & Dave Milsom had 5 Eastern Bluebirds along Hannah Line and a Rough-legged Hawk along Scriven Line.
Dec. 20	Dave Milsom & Jerry Ball had a small flock of Evening Grosbeaks along Northey Bay Road and Jerry Ball had a single Common Redpoll in the same area. Residents in the Aspley area photographed a Red-headed Woodpecker in their yard and showed the photo to Matthew Tobey during the Petroglyphs CBC.
Dec. 21	A late Yellow-rumped Warbler was found by Mike V.A. Burrell at his residence along the 8 th Line of Douro.
Dec. 23	Iain Rayner had a Northern Saw-whet Owl in the Bear Creek Road area of the city. It responded to audio play-back.
Dec. 25	Doug McRae had a Wood Duck on the Otonabee River south of 7 th Line of Douro
Dec. 28	Michael Gillespie had trio at his feeder on the David Fife Line with an Eastern Towhee , Northern Flicker , and American Kestrel , then saw 3 Eastern Bluebirds along the Lang-Hasting Rail trail. Wood Duck still present on Otonabee River, Lock 21 by Dave Milsom.
Dec. 30	Sue Paradisis reported the Northern Flicker had returned to her yard and that a Sharp-shinned Hawk flew into her yard and scattered the other birds.



Evening Grosbeak (left) and Bohemian Waxwing (right) in Apsley on Dec 27

~ Submitted by Dave Milsom

PFN Board of Directors				Other Volunteers	
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Director	David Heuft	dave.heuft@gmail.com	743-6164		
Peterborough Field Naturalists PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7					

Membership Renewals Are Due

This is a reminder that 2016 PFN memberships expired on DECEMBER 31.

Memberships can be renewed at the Annual General Meeting on January 20th or at any regular PFN meeting (2nd Wednesday of the month) or by mailing the application form at the back of the Orchid with a cheque to the PO Box address on the upper right hand corner of the form.

If you joined or renewed after the summer, you are paid up to the end of 2017. If you are not sure of your membership status, please contact Jim Young by e-mail (jbyoung559@gmail.com) or phone (705-760-9397).



Orchid submissions are encouraged!

The submission deadline for the March issue is **Wednesday, February 22.**

Send submissions to Kathryn Sheridan via email: orchid@peterboroughnature.org

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





PETERBOROUGH FIELD NATURALISTS

www.peterboroughnature.org

membership application form

Memberships may be obtained by mailing completed form and cheque to Peterborough Field Naturalists
PO Box 1532, Peterborough, ON K9J 7H7

CONTACT

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

MEMBERSHIP TYPE & FEE SCHEDULE

Please make cheques payable to *Peterborough Field Naturalists*

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

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

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

Name	Age*	Name	Age*

MAIN INTERESTS

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

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

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

I am interested in the following:

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

AGE GROUP

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

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

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

LIABILITY WAIVER

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