



The Orchid

Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists


"Know ♦ Appreciate ♦ Conserve Nature In All Its Forms"

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Regular monthly meetings are held the 2nd Wed. of the month in the downstairs auditorium of the Peterborough Public Library at 345 Aylmer Street N.

COMING EVENTS

<p>Wed, Nov 12th 7:30 p.m. Ptbo Public Library</p>	<p>PFN Monthly Meeting: Woodland Amphibians and Vernal Pool Ecosystems</p> <p>Speaker: Janine McLeod</p> 
<p>Sunday December 7th 6:00 a.m.</p>	<p>Full day trip to the Hamilton-Niagara area</p> <p>We will be concentrating on waterfowl and gulls (up to a dozen species of the latter), and some of the local specialties. We should meet at 6:00 a.m. at the Tim Horton's on Landsdowne St. West, Canadian Tire Plaza. Participants may contact Tony Bigg (tanddbigg@sympatico.ca) for more information. The group will leave no later than 6:10 a.m. with whoever is there. Dress appropriately and bring a lunch.</p>
<p>December 10th 7:30 p.m. Ptbo Public Library</p>	<p>PFN Monthly Meeting: Member's Slide Night</p> <p>It's time again for our December regular meeting. We will once again be asking members to come with nature-related slides presentations and stories to share with fellow club members. To make things even sweeter, please bring along some holiday baking to enhance the festivities. <u>Note</u>: if you are interested in making an informal slide presentation and/or talk, please contact Roger Jones at 742-0132.</p>
<p>Fri, January 23rd 5:30 pm Baker's Hill Centre</p>	<p>69th Annual General Meeting</p> <p>Key Note Speaker: James Raffan of the Canadian Canoe Museum will present a talk titled "National Treasure: Exploring Possible Futures for the Canadian Canoe Museum"</p>

JUNIOR FIELD NATURALISTS

<p>Sunday November 16th</p> <p>2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Trent Nature Centre</p>	<p>Make Your Own Bird Feeder</p> <p>Come help our fine feathered friends get through the winter. The next session will be at the Trent Nature Centre on Nov. 16th at 2:00pm where we will make all sorts of homemade bird feeders as well as I will also bring some traditional fire making equipment eg. bow and drill so we can learn to make a fire for some hot chocolate. Bring a Mug. See you then...Neil</p> <p>To get to the Nature Centre. Follow the main campus road to Pioneer Rd. and turn right. The nature centre/portable is on the right side 300m up.</p>	
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OTHER EVENTS of INTEREST

<p>Thursday November 20th</p>	<p><u>Seminar and AGM:</u> The Kawartha World Issues Centre (K.W.I.C.) presents the Ontario Resource Regime and Ardoch Algonquin First Nation: an Update on the Uranium Issue from 6:30 - 9 p.m., at Artspace (378 Alymer St., Peterborough). Enjoy a presentation and discussion with Robert Lovelace (Lead Negotiator for the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation) and Chief, Paula Sherman. The presentation will be followed by the Kawartha World Issues Centre AGM. Free with donations accepted for Ardoch Legal Defense Fund. For more information call (705) 748-1680.</p>
<p>November 29th & November 30th</p>	<p><u>Workshop:</u> The Canadian Canoe Museum presents a two-day paddle making workshop at the museum (910 Monaghan Rd. , Peterborough). The workshop will be led by Hal Bowen and Don Duncan. Participants will learn to work with traditional hand tools such as the spokeshave and wood plane while shaping the black cherry paddle. The fee is \$175 which includes all materials. For more information or to register call (705) 748-9153.</p>
<p>November 21st to December 5th</p>	<p><u>Stargazing:</u> The Buckhorn Observatory presents "The Pleiades - Star Sisters" on clear nights at 8 and 9 p.m. at the Observatory (254 County Rd. 507). Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Reservations are required. For more information or to reserve, call (705) 657-7718 to reserve a spot.</p>



We would like to extend a special thank you to everyone for their donations to the PFN in remembrance of Doug Sadler. He will be missed.



- *John & Majorie Pavanagh*
- *Jan Rowland*
- *Alex & Kate Ramsay*
- *Jan & Carolyn Sutherland*
- *Rhea Bringman*
- *Enid & Gord Mallory*
- *The Hopkins Family*
- *Karen Ellis*
- *Tony & Diana Bigg*
- *Dawn Sutherland*
- *Terry Sprague*
- *Al & Mary Smith*
- *Bonachord Male Chorus*
- *Bob & Maxine Prentice*
- *Michael Jacob & Mary Blue*
- *Pete Gorrill*
- *Ruth & Terry Hunter*
- *Bob, Joan & Doug McRae*
- *Maureen Rammett*
- *Kenneth & Beverly Hurford*
- *Charles & Judy Ball*
- *Dorothy Blake*
- *Leonard & Margaret Murphy*
- *Brady & Kelly Dodge*
- *Carrie Gadowski & Jonathan Oldham*
- *Philip & Janis Niblett*

Baillie Birdathon Funds Raised

From January to August 2008, \$205.00 was raised through Bird Studies Canada's Baillie Birdathon with the Peterborough Field Naturalists Club identified as a designee. This means that the PFN has received a share of this amount (\$51.25). We would like to thank **Erica Nol** for her participation in the Birdathon - your efforts in support of both Bird Studies Canada and the PFN are greatly appreciated.



ORCHID SUBMISSIONS WANTED!



Please send in your stories, pictures, poetry, artwork, articles, reviews or PFN outing write-ups. This is your newsletter and we need your help to make it great!

Deadline for submissions for the December issue: Wednesday, November 26th, 2008

Please send all submissions to: **Rebecca Zeran, 495 Brioux Avenue, Peterborough, ON, K9J 4G6**
or via e-mail to: rebecca.zeran@mail.mcgill.ca

Fleming College Students Participate in Ecological Research at Altberg Wildlife Sanctuary and Altberg Wetland Nature Reserve

by Maria Papoulias, Ontario Nature, Ontario Nature Network News - October 15, 2008

As part of Ontario Nature's ongoing biological inventory for the Altberg Wetland Nature Reserve (City of Kawartha Lakes), a group of five third-year students from Sir Sandford Fleming College are conducting a mammal inventory of the property. The students are using live traps to capture and identify small mammals, which have thus far included Northern Flying Squirrels, Short-tailed Shrews, Eastern Chipmunks and Deer Mice. They are also identifying tracks and other signs of larger mammals such as Beavers, Muskrats and Porcupines. By the conclusion of this project, we will have a much better understanding of the wildlife species that call Altberg Wetland Nature Reserve home, as well as what habitat types are important to them. All of this information will inform the new management plan for that property.

In addition, over 50 second-year students from Fleming College joined Ontario Nature staff and members of the Kawartha Field Naturalists at Altberg Wildlife Sanctuary (also in the City of Kawartha Lakes) on October 3rd to help collect data from a set of long-term forest monitoring plots that were set up on the property last year. This is the second year in which Fleming College students have participated in data collection as part of this project, which was set up to follow the regeneration of vegetation in areas that suffered catastrophic blowdowns during tornadoes in 2006.

A Future with Caribou

by Anne Bell, Ontario Nature, Ontario Nature Network News - October 15, 2008

"So goes the North, so go the Caribou." But equally, "So go the Caribou, so goes the North." This is the message of *Caribou and the North: A Shared Future* by Monte Hummel, President Emeritus of World Wildlife Fund Canada and Dr. Justina C. Ray, Executive Director of Wildlife Conservation Society Canada. Laced with quotes and stories from northerners, scientists and other conservationists; sketches from Robert Bateman; maps; and more than 120 images from North America's best wildlife photographers, *Caribou and the North* brings both the facts and the feelings of the current situation to a North American readership. The authors look at why we need to conserve the caribou, the threats that face them and the actions we can take. Copies of the book can be ordered online at www.dundurn.com.

PFN Officers and Directors

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Other Volunteers

Book Sales	Anne Storey	743-0345
FON Rep	Rhea Bringeman	742-1035
Orchid Diary	Tony Bigg	652-7541
Orchid Mailout	Bob Quinn	
JFN Trip Leader	Neil Fortin	



Join us for our Annual General Meeting!

Open to both members and non-members alike, the AGM features a banquet dinner, a keynote speaker, a silent auction and a raffle.

Friday, January 23rd, 2009

Baker's Hill Centre, 555 Parkhill Road East

Tickets: \$25 per person (includes dinner)

Meet & Greet begins at 5:30 p.m. Dinner starts at 6:00 p.m.



Key Note
Speaker:

James Raffan

*“National
Treasure:
Exploring
Possible
Futures for the
Canadian
Canoe
Museum”*

Reservations are required

and must be received by January 16th, 2008.

Please call (705) 750-1145 or e-mail:

donem.pettypiece@sympatico.ca to reserve your tickets.

Winter Finch Forecast 2008-2009

- by Ron Pittaway, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Minden, Ontario, 18 September 2008
<http://www.ofo.ca/reportsandarticles/winterfinches.php>

General Forecast

This winter's theme is where will crossbills go and will they irrupt south? Both species wandered widely this summer. Cone crops are poor in the Atlantic Provinces and fair to moderate in Western Canada. In Ontario, spruce crops are fair to good west and east of Lake Superior and in central Ontario such as Algonquin Park, but cone abundance diminishes rapidly northwards into the boreal forest. White pine (Ontario's provincial tree) has heavy cone crops in most areas. The hemlock crop is poor in central Ontario. The white birch crop is fair to good west and east of Lake Superior to Lake Ontario, but poor in the boreal forest. The mountain ash (rowan berry) crop is excellent in Ontario and Western Canada, but poor in the Atlantic Provinces. Individual finch forecasts below apply mainly to Ontario, but adjacent provinces and states may find the forecast of interest. I also comment on three irruptive passerines and two boreal forest raptors.

Individual Finch Forecasts

Pine Grosbeak

A mountain-ash berry specialist in winter, Pine Grosbeaks will stay north of most birders this winter because mountain-ash berries are abundant in northern Ontario. A few normally get south to Algonquin Park, but they are unlikely farther south.

Purple Finch

This finch stays in the north only when most tree species have heavy seed crops. This fall most Purple Finches will migrate south out of the province because overall tree seed crops are too low. A very few may winter in southern Ontario.

Red Crossbill

This crossbill comprises nine ecotypes in North America; each has cone(s) preferences related to bill size and shape. The Types are difficult to identify in the field. Types 2 and 3 and probably 4 occur in Ontario. The white pine Type 2 is apparently the most frequently encountered Red Crossbill in the province (Simard 2007 in Atlas of Breeding Birds of Ontario). Since white pine has abundant crops in most areas, expect Type 2s to be widespread in small numbers. Hemlock Type 3 (subspecies *sitkensis* of AOU Check list 1957) prefers the small cones of hemlock and white spruce when bumper in Ontario. Type 3s should be absent from the province this winter because the hemlock crop is poor and the white spruce crop is average. Other Types are possible this winter given the bumper white pine cone crop and good crop on red pine. The Red Crossbill complex very much needs further study.

White-winged Crossbill

This crossbill wandered widely this past summer searching for extensive spruce cone crops. Reports came from Alaska, Yukon, Hudson Bay Lowlands, Ontario, Quebec and many northern states such as Michigan and New York. Most kept moving but some stopped and their singing suggested nesting but spruce cone crops are generally not large enough in most areas to support major nestings. The White-winged Crossbill specializes on the small soft cones of black and white spruces and hemlock when bumper in Ontario. This winter they should be widespread in small numbers in traditional areas such as Algonquin Park. However, spruce cone crops are generally low in most of Canada and as seed supplies are exhausted this fall and winter so a moderate southward irruption is probable, perhaps extending south into the central United States. Watch for them on ornamental spruces and European larch.

Common and Hoary Redpolls

The Common Redpoll is a white birch seed specialist in the boreal forest in winter. White birch crops are poor in the northern two thirds of the boreal forest, but seed abundance increases southward. In central Ontario, such as Algonquin Park, crops on white and yellow birches range from fair to good. It is uncertain whether the birch crop is large enough to stop the southward movement in central Ontario about latitude 45 degrees. Some Common Redpolls, including a few Hoarys, may get south to Lake Ontario if birch seed supplies run low.

Pine Siskin

A conifer seed specialist in winter, most Pine Siskins should leave the province this fall because the spruce cone crop is poor in the boreal forest. It is uncertain whether the huge white pine seed crop will keep some Pine Siskins in central and northern Ontario this winter.

Evening Grosbeak

A conifer and hardwood seed generalist in winter, Evening Grosbeaks should make a small southward movement this winter because food supplies are probably sufficient in the north. Older birders remember the 1970s when the Evening Grosbeak was a common feeder bird. Their memory is based on the greatly inflated numbers 30 years ago in Eastern Canada due to huge outbreaks of spruce budworm. The last Algonquin Christmas Bird Count to have high numbers of Evening Grosbeaks was in 1984 with 1474 individuals, which was the North American CBC record that year. A significant decline in grosbeak numbers began in the mid-1980s because the size of annual budworm outbreaks decreased. Ontario's breeding population is currently probably stable, subject to periodic fluctuations in spruce budworm (Hoar 2007 in Atlas of Breeding Birds of Ontario).

Other Irruptive Passerines

Red-breasted Nuthatch

Movements of this nuthatch are linked to cone crop abundance, particularly spruce, white pine and balsam fir in Ontario. Good numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches should winter in Ontario this year feeding on the bumper white pine seed crop and good spruce/fir crops in many areas such as Algonquin Park.

Bohemian Waxwing

Like the Pine Grosbeak, this waxwing is a mountain-ash berry specialist in winter. Mountain-ash crops are excellent across northern Ontario (bumper around Lake Superior) so very few Bohemians will wander out of the boreal forest this winter. Some may get south into traditional wintering areas of central Ontario such as Orillia, Peterborough and Ottawa where European mountain-ash berries are in good supply.

Blue Jay

Good numbers of jays will winter in central Ontario because the red oak acorn crop is good and beechnut crop is fair in central Ontario. Many other fruits and berries are abundant. Therefore this fall's flight should be average or smaller along the shorelines of Lakes Ontario and Erie.

Boreal Raptors

Northern Goshawk

A small flight is possible this fall because high snowshoe hare populations have declined in much of northern Ontario. However, grouse numbers (Ruffed, Spruce, Sharp-tailed) are generally good so they may buffer the decline in hares.

Boreal Owl

Small mammal populations have crashed across northern and central Ontario. In Quebec, Pascal Cote of Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac expects a flight of Boreal Owls this fall and winter following their 4 year cycle

linked to red-backed voles. Southern Ontario may get Boreal Owls and other northern forest owls this winter.

Where to See Finches

A winter trip to Algonquin Park is a birding adventure. The park is a mix of boreal and hardwood habitats only a three hour drive north of Toronto. Kilometre distances are marked from the west entrance. Watch carefully for crossbills and other finches in early morning eating road salt and sand. Two excellent birding spots are the Spruce Bog Trail at km 42.5 and the gate area on the Opeongo Road about 4 km north from km 46 on the highway. Watch and listen for finches, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Spruce Grouse and Black backed Woodpecker. The Visitor Centre and restaurant at km 43 are open only on weekends in winter. An observation deck overlooks a spectacular bog and black spruce forest. The feeders attract Evening Grosbeak, Pine Grosbeak, Common Redpoll and other finches depending on the winter. Gray Jays frequent the suet feeder and sometimes a pine marten or fisher goes to the suet. Eastern Canadian Wolves (*Canis lycaon*) are seen occasionally from the observation deck feeding on road killed moose put out by park staff. Arrangements can be made to view feeders on weekdays. For information call the Visitor Centre at 613-637-2828.

Acknowledgements

I thank staff of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) and birders whose reports allow me to make annual forecasts: Dennis Barry (Durham Region), Ken Corston (OMNR Moosonee), Pascal Cote (Tadoussac, Quebec), Shirley Davidson (OMNR Minden), Bruce Di Labio (Ottawa to Moosonee), Carrolle Eady (Dryden), Cameron Eckert (Yukon), Bruce Falls (Brodie Club, Toronto), Brian Fox (OMNR), Marcel Gahbauer (Alberta), Michel Gosselin (Canadian Museum of Nature), Skye Haas (Michigan), Charity Hendry (Ontario Tree Seed Plant), Leo Heyens (OMNR Kenora), Tyler

Hoar (Laurentians and Northeastern Quebec), Peter Hynard (Haliburton County), Jean Iron (Northeastern Ontario/James Bay), Christine Kerrigan and Peter Nevin (Parry Sound District), Richard Pope (Lake Superior), Bruce Mactavish (Newfoundland), Erwin Meissner (West Sudbury District), Scott McPherson (OMNR), Brian Naylor (OMNR North Bay), Larry Neily (Ottawa), Stephen O'Donnell (Parry Sound District), Fred Pinto (OMNR), Betsy Potter (Wilson, New York), Gord Ross (OMNR Moosonee), Rick Salmon (OMNR Nipigon), Don Sutherland (OMNR), Eve Ticknor (Ottawa), Ron Tozer (Algonquin Park), Declan Troy (Alaska), Mike Turner (OMNR Minden), Stan Vasiliaskas (OMNR), Mike Walsh (OMNR Muskoka/Parry Sound), Ben Walters (Northeastern Ontario), Alan Wormington (Point Pelee), Matt Young whose posts on New York State listservs were informative, and Kirk Zufelt (Sault Ste Marie). I thank Ron Tozer for ongoing discussions on winter finches and Jean Iron for proofing the forecast.

Previous Finch Forecasts

Previous Finch Forecasts are archived at Larry Neily's website (<http://ca.geocities.com/larry.neily@rogers.com/pittaway-old.htm>)

The recently published *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario* (2007) has detailed peer-reviewed information and maps on boreal winter finches. I highly recommend it.



The ORCHID DIARY for 29 September - 27 October 2008

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

Fall migration was in full swing with large flocks of blackbirds, jays and sparrows and robins passing through. Very few reports on unusual sightings were reported

- Oct 01 Myles Falconer and his Trent ornithology class explored the Lakefield Marsh and the Lakefield sewage lagoons. They found a total of 37 species with the highlights being a **Common Moorhen**, abundant **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, **Ruby-crowned-** and **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, and an **Orange-crowned Warbler** at the Lakefield Marsh. At the sewage lagoons they also had a large number of **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, one **Palm Warbler**, a **Rusty Blackbird** flying over, **Lesser Scaup** (15), **Hooded Mergansers** (several), **Blue-winged Teal** (3) and a single **Mallard**. Sightings elsewhere included **Wood Duck**, **Pied-billed Grebe**, **Double-crested Cormorant**, **Killdeer**, **Eastern Phoebe**, **Blue-headed Vireo**, **Gray Catbird**, **American Pipit** and **Pine Siskin**.
- Oct 02 Chris Risley saw the resident **Merlin** screaming along Homewood Ave after a month's absence, and heard a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** call from a bush on Gimour St.
- Oct 08 The highlight of this period was the finding today of a **Leconte's Sparrow** by Myles Falconer and his class, on the Trent campus!!
- Oct 09 Dave Legresley reported a partial albino/leucistic bird coming to his feeder on Cty Rd 8 just west of Lakefield.. Subsequent sightings and photos suggest that it was a **Chipping Sparrow**. Strangely the bird seemed to become progressively whiter in the week following the report.



- Oct 17 Ben Walters saw an interesting **American Crow** on the Trent campus. The crow had all white primary and greater covers as well as a white tail band. It was also smaller, particularly the beak, than other crows that were attacking it. (Author's comment: could this be a hybrid young from the American Magpie that was reported in the area last month?). Tony Bigg found his first **American Tree Sparrows** (3) of the Fall along the rail trail between Baseline Rd and David Fife Line.
- Oct 21 Micheal Butler saw four **Snow Buntings** on the Mt. Julian-Viamede Rd.
- Oct 23 In the Petroglyphs PP Michael Butler found six **Fox Sparrows** and more than sixty **Red-breasted Nuthatches**.
- Oct 24 Randy Smith had fifteen **White-throated Sparrows** at his feeder and lots of **American Robins** around his yard.
- Oct 26 On a PFN Sunday outing Jerry Ball reports seeing an **American Wigeon** near Gannons Narrows, and ten **Hooded Mergansers** just north of Lock 23 on the Otonabee River.



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:		Email(s):	

MEMBERSHIP TYPE & FEE SCHEDULE

Please make cheques payable to *Peterborough Field Naturalists*

1. Single (one adult or one child*) \$25

**Membership with the PFN automatically includes membership in the Junior Naturalists*

2. Family (couple or family with children) \$30

Please give the names and ages of the children you wish to be enrolled in the PFN Junior Naturalists

Name	Age	Name	Age

MAIN INTERESTS

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