

The Orchid



June/July 2022
Volume 68, No. 5
peterboroughnature.org

Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists

Published nine times yearly. Publication Mail Agreement #4005104

Know • Appreciate • Conserve Nature in All Its Forms



"Endless Days and the Urgency of Life"

Photo of Chestnut-sided Warbler by Cathy Douglas

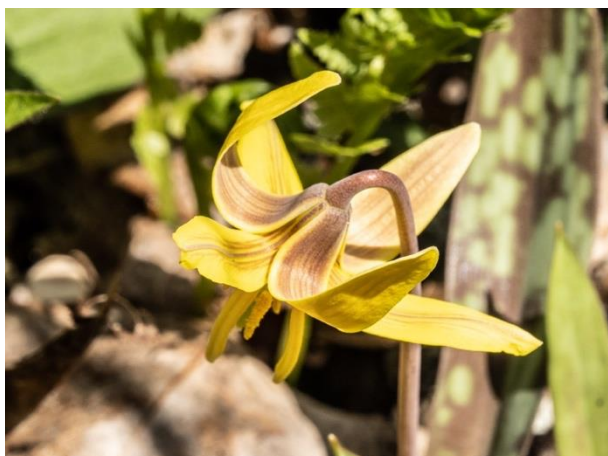
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Nature in June and July
Birding by Ear: Learning from Mistakes
Peterborough: A Bird-Friendly City
PFN Grant Recipient's Freshwater Zooplankton Study

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Welcome new PFN members!

- Kirby Park
- Mike & Erica Burrell
- Mike Cain & Bei Xie
- Wayne & Valerie Van Sickle along with their kids Julia, Rita, Isla
- Jennifer Lennie



Clockwise from top: Female Hudsonian whiteface dragonfly eating fly, Virginia ctenucha moth caterpillar, northern azure butterfly, young eastern cottontail rabbit, and trout lily (Ken Morrison)

PFN Coming Events		
<p>Choose from:</p> <p>June 2 and June 6</p> <p>30 minutes before sunset</p>	<p>Chimney Swift Roost Counts</p> <p>Chris Risley will once again be coordinating counts of Chimney Swifts entering their roost on five days this spring. PFN members are invited to join him. Come watch 80 to 100 Chimney Swifts enter a roost chimney in downtown Peterborough while learning more about this fascinating little bird. Watchers stand on the top floor of a parking garage and observe the swifts enter one or more chimneys at 30 minutes before official sunset. The watches last about an hour. Bring a lawn chair if you wish. The data are contributed to Project SwiftWatch coordinated by Birds Canada to learn about this declining species. Contact Chris if you would like to join the watch at risleych@gmail.com. Accessibility: Easy. No walking involved</p>	
<p>Saturday, June 4</p> <p>8 to 11 a.m.</p> <p>12 participants</p>	<p>June Birds & Blooms in Cavan Area</p> <p>Enjoy a hike along a rail trail and ATV trails on the Oak Ridges Moraine. There should be lots of bird song which will help with sightings. Your leader Lynn Smith is proficient using iNaturalist, eBird and Seek and can help you use these valuable phone apps. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather of the day. To register contact Lynn at smithfam@nexicom.net after May 5 and she will provide details and directions. Accessibility: Some hills, therefore easy to moderate.</p>	
<p>Thursday, June 9</p> <p>7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Zoom Meeting</p> <p>Invitations e-mailed to members</p>	<p>PFN Monthly Meeting: Owls</p> <p>The presentation by Marcie Jacklin will feature owls of Southern Ontario. It will be of interest to young and old, beginning and more experienced bird watchers. She will discuss identification features, habitats and how you can help owls.</p> <p>Marcie Jacklin has been an avid birder for 30 years mostly in southern Ontario but she has travelled to Africa three times and Central and South America seven times. During her travels she has seen and/or heard over 40 species of owls (out of about 250 species in the world). Marcie is also a volunteer at a remarkable owl rehabilitation facility called The Owl Foundation in Vineland Ontario. Marcie is a long-time Conservationist and founding member of the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre at Brock University.</p> <p><i>Note: There will be no meetings in July and August.</i></p>	
<p>Sunday, June 26</p> <p>10 a.m. to 1 p.m.</p> <p>20 participants</p>	<p>A Step Back in Time</p> <p>Mark S Burnham Provincial Park is an old growth forest on our doorstep. Please join us for a nature hike focused on Tree ID and reading the forested landscape. Trent University students, Kaylen Foley and Dawson Wainman, will be hosting this outing, providing insight into our local forests, and answering any tree or forest-related questions. A variety of topics will be covered, including forest succession, pillow</p>	

PFN Coming Events	
	and cradle topography, and Tree ID using leaf, twig, bark, and form. We are looking forward to this event and hope to see you there! Bring your binoculars, camera, and bug spray. Dress according to the weather forecast for the day and wear sturdy shoes. Register after June 6 by contacting Dawson at dawsonwainman@trentu.ca. Further details will be provided to those who register. Accessibility: Easy to moderate. There is a hill to climb
Sunday, July 3 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. 12 participants	Butterflies Along the Lang-Hastings Trail This outing is an introduction to butterfly watching along a section of the Lang-Hastings trail. The focus will be on learning how to distinguish between the different species present in early July. Join outing leaders Colleen Lynch and Don McLeod for this enjoyable learning event. Bring binoculars, camera and insect repellent and dress for the weather forecast of the day. Please contact Colleen Lynch at clynch166@gmail.com after June 6 to register for this outing. Further details will be provided to those who register. Accessibility: Easy 
Saturday, July 16 8:45 to 10:00 p.m. 20 participants	Bats in Jackson Park Enjoy a night walk with Paul Elliott looking for some of our local bats feeding on the wing in Jackson Park. We will use ultrasonic bat detectors to listen to any bats we encounter. Other nocturnal wildlife may also be seen. Bring a flashlight, bug repellent and dress appropriately for the weather. Children welcome. Register with Paul after June 6 at paulelliott@trentu.ca. Further details will be provided to those who register. Accessibility: Easy 
Saturday, August 13 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 pm. 20 participants	Hazel Bird Nature Reserve Historically, the Rice Lake Plains were covered with tall grass prairies and oak savannah. Dominated by massive black and white oak, grasses like big bluestem, Indian grass and switchgrass grew more than two metres high and a diverse range of wildflowers blossomed. Grassland birds and other rare species, including eastern hog-nosed snake, depend on this rare habitat to survive. The speaker from our April meeting, Val Deziel, and some of her volunteers will lead us on a tour of this rare ecosystem. There is the option to walk the moderate 4.1 km loop or the easy and short 0.3 km section. Bring binoculars, camera, water, bug spray and sunscreen. It's recommended to wear closed-toe shoes, long pants, and a hat. To register contact sueparadisis@hotmail.com after June 6 and indicate if you prefer the longer trail. Accessibility: Easy to moderate 
Note: Recordings of past PFN Zoom meetings can be viewed on PFN's YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAgbbqgr4ujZ16qba23LTQQ under the playlist menu.	

Volunteer Corner

Call for Outing Volunteers

Sue Paradisis, our outings coordinator, is always looking for more volunteers so please contact her if you are interested. Training is provided and an experienced leader will help until you feel ready to go on your own. She can be reached by phone at 705-559-2061 or email at sueparadisis@hotmail.com.



Call for Junior Naturalist Co-ordinator and Junior Naturalist Activity Volunteers



The next generation of nature lovers in Peterborough, needs YOU!

With wonderful summer weather approaching and the easing of pandemic restrictions, the Peterborough Field Naturalists (PFN) are looking to resume activities for our Junior Naturalists, ages 5 to 12. Junior Naturalist activities are led by PFN members and/or individuals from other organizations in the Peterborough community who volunteer to share their knowledge and skills. At this time, we are seeking:

- 1) PFN member(s) who would like to take a leadership role in co-ordinating the Junior Naturalists program; and
- 2) PFN members who have an interest in attending and helping to deliver Junior Naturalist activities.

Volunteering as part of the PFN Junior Naturalist team is an opportunity to inspire the next generation of nature lovers in our community. Please send your expression of interest to secretary@peterboroughnature.org. Additional information can be obtained from Board of Directors Liaison, Anda Rungis at 613 298 9062.

Looking for Nature Guides

I am a teacher at Crestwood Intermediate. We are currently planning an elective half day (morning) for our students in June. One option would be a walk on the Trans-Canada Trail from the Ackison Road trailhead to Jackson's Park where students could play disc golf or other sports together. Would it be possible to have one or two field naturalists join us for the hike, to help us identify what we will be hearing and seeing? We would aim to keep the size of the group to less than 25 people.

If you are interested contact Lisa at lisa_noble@kprdsb.ca.

In Memoriam

Peterborough Field Naturalists has recently been advised of the passing of PFN members Clare Sandy and Terry Hunter. Our condolences and sympathies go out to their family and friends.

Orchid submissions are encouraged!

The submission deadline for the next issue is Wednesday, August 24

Send submissions to Kathryn Sheridan via email: orchid@peterboroughnature.org
or post mail to: PFN, PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7

Peterborough: A Bird Friendly City

Submitted by Reem Ali, Chair, BFP Team

This World Migratory Bird Day was a very special one for our community. On May 12, 2022, Nature Canada officially announced Peterborough's certification as a Bird Friendly City, making it the 11th city nationally to gain this badge of honour!

"Nature Canada has developed a certification standard to certify eligible cities as a "Bird Friendly City", to recognize and celebrate the contributions they have made to save bird lives in their municipalities. The goal of certification is to provide local partners with a clear standard that reflects what a city needs to do to make it safe for birds. Certification is a badge of honor and a source of community pride. It tells the world that your city or town does things to help birds and reverse their declines in your own backyard."

– Nature Canada

In Peterborough, the work "behind the scenes" is being led by the Bird Friendly Peterborough (BFP) Team. Established in the fall of 2020, the BFP Team has been working diligently to secure Peterborough's certification and to ensure the sustainability of ongoing efforts as well as advocate for new initiatives for protecting birds and their habitats. The Peterborough Field Naturalists are proud to have been part of BFP's journey from day one, alongside the Kawartha Wildlife Centre, Camp Kawartha, GreenUP, and Riverview Park and Zoo. In less than two years, the BFP Team was successful in securing two Nature Canada grants to support the development (and maintenance) of the BFP website in addition to purchasing bird boxes, window decals, and other materials for educating the public on different bird protection measures. Thanks to in-house efforts by KWC staff and contributions from local naturalists, our BFP website is the first of its kind amongst all other Bird Friendly Cities, offering a variety of articles and resources around birding and bird feeders, bird friendly habitats, and threat reduction. Further, last fall the BFP Team supported the successful application by Riverview Park and Zoo to the Healthy Communities Initiative, funded by the Community Foundations of Canada. The money is going towards renovating and launching the first (official) Bird Friendly Trail in our community – a short trail that is suitable for all ages, with increased accessibility and marked birding spots and fun activities along the Otonabee River.

The BFP Team is looking forward to celebrating our city's certification once some of the planned renovations to the Bird Friendly Trail are completed this summer. A city-wide competition will also be launched to select our City Bird of the year. Our goal is to have this annual competition serve as an opportunity to develop educational materials about different birds in our community and inspire many more community members to participate in local efforts for protecting our bird population.

While certification is indeed great news to celebrate, it is also only the beginning of much work to be done. Peterborough city gained entry-level certification, which means there's lots of room for improvement and growth. Nature Canada's scoring rubric is focused on three main categories: Threat Reduction; Habitat Protection, Restoration, and Climate Resiliency; and Community Outreach and Education. We will keep you posted on our workplan for how we intend to advance our city's efforts across all categories.

A huge thank you to Councillor Kim Zippel for her ongoing support to the BFP Team and for helping us secure a Letter of Support from the Mayor's Office to strengthen our application for certification. We are looking forward to a City Council resolution this June that will further formalize our Bird Friendly City certification.

Finally, we wouldn't be here without the solid efforts and perseverance of my fellow BFP Team members: Thom Luloff, Kawartha Wildlife Centre; Jacob Rodenburg, Camp Kawartha; Vern Bastable, GreenUP; Cathy



Photo of Osprey by Reem Ali

Mitchell, Riverview Park and Zoo; James Byrne, City of Peterborough (liaison); and our wonderful social media volunteer, Josh Russell, Trent University (student). A special note of gratitude to Drew Monkman and to all of you who are supporting us and advocating for the health and wellbeing of birds and the environment.

Congratulations Peterborough!

Project Write-up From Student Who Received PFN Undergraduate Research Grant

The following submission by Anna Dlugosz details her 4th year undergraduate research project at Trent University. Anna was the recipient of an Undergraduate Research Grant which was funded by the annual income from the PFN Legacy Fund. Annually the PFN awards small grants to 4th year biology students to assist in their 4th year research project. A condition of the grant is reporting to the PFN members through a submission to *The Orchid*. The PFN Legacy Fund is managed on behalf of the PFN by the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough which provides the annual grant to the PFN.

Effects of Stoichiometric Food Quality and Temperature on Gene Expression of *Daphnia pulicaria*

By Anna Dlugosz

Food quality is important for organisms to meet their metabolic demands. Nutritional limitation occurs when an animal does not receive enough essential nutrients from its diet. When an animal experiences nutritional limitation, this can result in negative physiological effects (e.g., growth and reproductive constraints) that can ultimately lead to their population declines. This is especially true for freshwater zooplankton, such as *Daphnia*, as their algal food source greatly varies in nutrient content. Similar to nutrient limitation, heat stress can affect *Daphnia*'s metabolism and associated physiological and biochemical functions. Thus, it is predicted that increased metabolic rates due to higher water temperatures can potentially mitigate the effects of nutrient limitation in these aquatic herbivores. This is because an increased metabolism can increase the elimination of excess nutrients and improve the nutritional state of nutritionally stressed animals.

The objective of my research was to examine how phosphorus limitation and heat stress influence associated gene regulation networks in the zooplankton species, *Daphnia pulicaria*. My results showed no strong patterns on the temperature and phosphorus dependence of sensitive metabolic pathways in *Daphnia pulicaria*. This suggests that either the treatments had no effect on gene expression, or the results are inconclusive due to methodological limitations. Overall, my results show that the effects of temperature on *Daphnia*'s metabolism and gene regulation networks vary with food quality in complex ways. Thus, a more careful examination of these effects is needed in the future to understand whether and how the expression of genes associated with physiological adjustments depends on heat stress and food quality.

Nonetheless, this work is a necessary first step in developing 'biomarkers', or biochemical indicators of nutritional stress. The identification and development of nutrient-specific biomarkers would be valuable for large-scale studies in natural systems allowing us to use just one gene to directly determine the type and intensity of nutrient limitation. Thus, these biomarkers would present a novel targeted approach to tracking and predicting nutrient stress in natural populations of *Daphnia*. Being able to assess the nutritional state of a keystone species will also aid in the implementation of management strategies of our freshwater resources.



Photo: Dieter Ebert, Basel, Switzerland

Outing Report for May 1: Kermit's Friends and Timber-doodles

Submitted by Sue Paradisis

How fortunate that the rain stopped and held off until after Martin Parker's annual Kermit and Friends outing in the Cavan Swamp along Hooton Drive and Preston Road. Twelve of us enjoyed a nice evening listening for birds and frogs. Before we set out, Martin played the calls of the Wilson's Snipe and the American Woodcock so participants would recognize them. Normally this outing takes place in early April, but this time on May 1, the Brown Thrasher was back and was easily called in to put on a great show for us with his loud, mimicking two phrase song in the thickets next to the road.

Although it was very quiet when we started walking, it wasn't long before the Spring Peepers were calling along with a few Leopard frogs. Most of the bird song was from American Robins but we soon heard the Wilson's Snipe winnowing in the distance and several White-throated Sparrows started singing. Chipping, Song and Swamp Sparrows were also heard. We also caught a glimpse of a beaver swimming up the open channel.

By the time we returned to our starting point, the American Woodcocks were performing their "sky dance". While on the ground, we could clearly hear his very nasal "peent" call, then the chipping trill of his wings as it soared skyward and finally the twittering on his descent. This comical little shorebird has an unusual gait rocking back and forth as it moves along. If you have not seen it, there are videos on the internet. They prefer a habitat of wet thickets and shrubby fields and can be found at dusk along country roadsides.

We then travelled over to Preston Road where more Peepers were calling along with the "quacking" Wood Frogs. This late in the season, the water level was much lower so we couldn't see the Leopard Frogs right next to the road and needed to identify the others by sound.

All in all, it was a very pleasant evening walk and the frogs and birds did not disappoint.

Outing Photos for May 8: A Walk on the Hogsback Trail, an Esker Near Omemee



Clockwise from top: Leader Scott McKinlay with group, Red-bellied Snake, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Midland Painted Turtle. Photos: Marilyn Hubley

Outing Report for May 14: Ingleton Wells - Prime Spring Birding

Submitted by Cathy Douglas

Due to the predicted weather forecast this outing was changed to Saturday, May 14. The 14th was a beautiful sunny, warm day for our hike through the forests at Kawartha Land Trust's Ingleton Wells Property. Yes, there were a few bugs but fortunately the black flies were not biting. Forty species of birds were seen by the ten members that accompanied me on this hike, the highlights being an Eastern Bluebird carrying food, a beautiful male Scarlet Tanager flying around above us, two Blue-winged Warblers chasing each other, and many other birds singing including Winter Wren, Ovenbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Indigo Bunting, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Chestnut-sided Warbler.



Photo of Winter Wren by Cathy Douglas

Outing Report for May 21: Spring Birding in the Catchacoma Old Growth Forest

Submitted by Stewart MacDonald

An enthusiastic group of ten PFN members joined the author in a search for spring migrants in this northern Kawartha forest. We were greeted by a humid day, and the participants were rewarded with a total of 35 bird species and other observations, including animal tracks and, of course, many majestic Eastern Hemlock trees, which the forest is well known for.

A total of 12 warbler species were identified during our three-hour outing. Excellent views of a singing Northern Waterthrush, singing Chestnut-sided Warblers and a male Bay-breasted Warbler were most notable. In addition, other migrant species such as Great Crested Flycatcher and Veery gave us excellent presentations during the



Great-crested Flycatcher. Photo: Don McLeod



Photo: Don McLeod

morning. A Wood

Thrush's flute-like song also provided an appropriate background to this wonderful property! An American Woodcock was also an interesting sighting by the group.

In addition to our bird sightings, animal tracks were found including moose and coyote, racoon and fox. A common garter snake also cooperated, giving us a good opportunity to study it.

Of course, the eastern hemlocks were an attraction and the group was led into an area where we could study numerous old growth

hemlocks, as well as old growth pine and maples. Numerous trilliums dotted the landscape of our outing. A red-banded conk [fungus] was observed, as well as fringed polygala in the stand of hemlocks.

Thanks to all participants as well as to Don McLeod for his photography during our most interesting day!

Nature in June: Endless Days and the Urgency of Life

From the Book *Nature's Year in the Kawarthas* by Drew Monkman

In June the world is brand new. Never in the year is the foliage fresher, the kaleidoscope of greens more vivid, the smells of the natural world more alluring and the urgency of life more palpable. Growth and procreation are the order of the day. June's long days convey a sense of unending time. Hal Borland spoke of June as "long, sweet days we bought and paid for with long, cold nights and short bitter days at the dark turn of the year."

This is a wonderful time of year to enjoy all that our senses can perceive. The smell of the early June air, especially on a damp morning, conveys the essence of a green world. It is a compelling perfume with accents of Balsam Poplar, lilac, cherry, and freshly mown grass. Rising early on a June morning is worth the effort for the fragrance of the air alone. On our farms, a signature scent of June is freshly-cut hay curing in the sun. It is claimed that from a downwind location, you can smell a hayfield a mile away.

Although June brings new opportunities for the naturalist, this is a time of relative calm after the hectic days of May. There is still much to be seen, but the pace of change has slowed, especially since spring migration has finally ended. Insects receive more attention, some for their beauty but others for their nuisance factor! Plants, too, take over the spotlight with highly-sought species such as orchids blooming throughout the month.

In June we have the sense that this time of long days and short nights will last forever. The sun arches high overhead giving more than 15 hours of daylight. On or about the 21st of the month, we celebrate the summer solstice as the sun rises and sets farther north than on any other day of the year and thereby signals the imperceptible transition into summer.

Nature in July: Summer at Its Height

From the Book *Nature's Year in the Kawarthas* by Drew Monkman

The preparations and toil of spring begin to bear fruit in July. Eggs are now fledged birds; flowers have become ripe berries and seeds; tadpoles have grown into small frogs, and the once-green roadsides are now a riot of colour and floral diversity. Where several weeks ago there were mostly white and yellows, the intense colours of high summer have added blues, oranges, pinks and magentas to the roadside palette.



Northern Water Snake.
Photo: Robert
Difruscia

July is a treat for all of our senses. The warm, humid air is often replete with the sweet smell of milkweed flowers, while the fragrance of flowering basswood trees draws bees and other insects by the thousands. Our palates, too, are well-served in July as strawberries, raspberries, tomatoes and the first sweet corn ripen. Although the annual cycle of bird song is winding down now, the serene, haunting song of the thrush gives beauty to early summer evenings. The voices of Bullfrogs, Whip-poor-wills and Common Nighthawks take over as darkness falls.

This, the warmest month of the year, brings hot, humid and thundery weather. Afternoons shake and tremble with intense thunderstorms whose gift of rain is often too short and violent to be of much benefit to the thirsty soil. The fact that the sun is rising and setting a little farther to the south each day largely goes unnoticed



"There's always one annoying piece left over."



American Bullfrog with
Midland Painted Turtle. Photo:
Don McLeod

as we go about enjoying the summer weather. But like a cruel joke, the first thing that happens once true summer has finally arrived is fall migration. The vanguard of southward-bound shorebirds is already starting to arrive in our area and, by month's end, the first warblers will be departing. And so the wheel of the year continues to turn, allowing us very little time to simply sit back and admire the fresh, new world around us – the intimations of autumn are already beginning to make themselves known.

Updates From Ontario Nature

Submitted by Fiona McKay



Ontario Nature has cancelled their in-person Annual General Meeting due to the ongoing pandemic. The meeting will be held virtually on Saturday, June 11 from 9 a.m. to noon. The agenda includes a presentation of highlights of 2021, a fun “challenging your nature knowledge” quiz, the announcement of Conservation Award winners, and general business (approval of 2021-2022 audited financial statements, electing new board directors). You can register for the event at <https://ontarionature.org/events/annual-gathering/>.

Ontario Nature has a new Nature Network Organizer, Leslie Rudy. Leslie is hoping to expand their capacity and training opportunities, etc. going forward. PFN is a member of the Lake Ontario North Region of the Nature Network. We look forward to working with Leslie.

High Park Nature, a member club of Ontario Nature, is pleased to announce that the Grenadier Pond Wetland Complex in High Park was given the status as Provincially Significant Wetland by the Ontario government in April of 2022. Grenadier Pond is one of the areas within High Park that has been designated as an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources based on a report by Steve Varga in 1989. According to this report, “The wetland communities at Grenadier Pond are noteworthy at the local level for harbouring one of only two remaining lakefront marshes in the City of Toronto, the other being the Humber River Marshes. The remaining wetlands at Grenadier Pond should be protected as a locally significant lakefront marsh which still supports regionally rare wetland species.”

Tips for Birding by Ear From an Experienced Novice

Submitted by Kathryn Sheridan

Lots of birders have their own thing. Some people enjoy watching birds and are just curious to know what the birds are that are visiting their feeders. Some are the competitive sort and keep track of the birds they see with an eye to reaching goals (a “Big Year,” for instance); they are sometimes referred to as “listers.” Others like to go out and commune with nature, and wish to know what other creatures are also out there, birds being the most easily found due to their vocalizations. The latter description probably fits me best, though I do have some listing tendencies.



I bring my binoculars just about wherever I go, but more often than not, it's by sound that I learn of a bird's presence. I have found birding by ear to be very challenging but also very rewarding. I love to hear the birds sing and call and I'm saddened when many of them stop singing after breeding season. Birding by ear is my thing. However, I still have a lot to learn and I'm fallible. Every year I learn a few more calls and songs, and every year I find out that something I thought I knew well turns out to be not as clear-cut as I had imagined.

There are two traps I sometimes fall into: 1) Assuming nothing else makes the same call or song that I have just learned and 2) Fatigue: Not recognizing when I'm tired and my brain has been overloaded such that I can no longer be relied upon to accurately ID a bird by sound (e.g., when I'm stumped by a cardinal's song). Both traps can lead to overconfidence and/or complacency. The first trap is the reason for this article. I wanted to make a list of similar sounding birds so that I could study them every spring before birding season and keep myself sharp and less vulnerable to those mistakes when I'm tired. And why not turn a handy study list into an article to share with others? The second trap is simply worth mentioning. It can happen to any of us.



Hermit Thrush. Photo: Steve Paul

Hermit Thrush and Wood Thrush - The songs of both birds have a similar ethereal, thrush-like quality but the Hermit Thrush's song begins with a single note (a *hermit* note, so to speak). The Wood Thrush's song doesn't, and it has an "ee-o-lay" section, as pointed out in the *Birding by Ear* CDs by Peterson Field Guides, which I highly recommend for beginner birders.

Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Swamp Sparrow and Pine Warbler - I really have a hard time with these four. Habitat and time of year are helpful indicators. In situations where a few of these species are possible, I need a visual to be sure. Apps such as the popular "Merlin Bird ID," which give suggestions, might be helpful in

instances when the user is unable distinguish the species from each other by sound. However, if you can't tell them apart, then it would be difficult for you to confirm Merlin's suggestions by listening to Merlin's samples of songs and calls. These apps are getting better but they aren't perfect. I don't have good advice for these four birds except to suggest that you try doing your own research and practise, practise, practise. Good luck!

House Finch, Purple Finch and Warbling Vireo - It is certainly possible to learn to tell these warbling songs apart with practise and keeping your wits about you. The Warbling Vireo ends on a higher note, the Purple Finch usually ends on a lower note, and the House Finch usually sings a harsh "zree" at some point in its song.

Northern Flicker and Green Heron - The Northern Flicker's "keew" call can be mistaken for the Green Heron's "skeow" call. Habitat is a good clue sometimes but not always. Usually, it's possible to get a visual on either of these two birds to be sure.

Northern Flicker and Pileated Woodpecker - To me, the Pileated Woodpecker's rattling call has a toy trumpet quality to it that helps me to distinguish it from the Northern Flicker's call. Still, I wouldn't stake my life on my ability to tell these two apart just from the rattling call. I need a few more years of practise.

Hairy and Downy Woodpecker - These two woodpeckers have similar calls but the whinnying call of the Downy definitely goes downward in pitch, whereas the Hairy's whinny stays at an even pitch. The pik call of the Hairy tends to be louder and sharper than that of the Downy.



Scarlet Tanager. Photo: Ken McKeen

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, Baltimore Oriole and American Robin - These birds have sing-song-type songs. With practise, these can be distinguished by paying attention to tone, much as how you would recognize a friend's voice. It has been said that the Rose-breasted Grosbeak sounds like a robin who has taken voice lessons. The Scarlet Tanager's song sounds a bit "burry". The Baltimore Oriole's song has a

bit of a constricted throat quality to it, and also has a characteristic rhythm that you may come to recognize. The American Robin's song is probably what you have when you have ruled out the others. Likely, though, you will have seen the robin and will just know from the visual.

Gray Catbird, American Goldfinch, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - All three of these have fooled me at least once. The Gray Catbird's mew is on the raspy side whereas the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker sounds nasally and almost has a toy trumpet sound to it. The Goldfinch's "tristis" call goes upward in pitch like a kid protesting with an "Ahhh" when he doesn't get what he wants. It's not a mew, but it still confused me when I was new to birding by ear.

The Warblers - When some of the warblers veer away from their signature song, things can get very difficult indeed. The American Redstart has an alternate song that sounds like a Black-and-White Warbler except that the Redstart's song is usually shorter. Also, one of the Redstart songs sounds to me a lot like one of the songs of the Chestnut-sided Warbler. An off-script song of the Yellow Warbler reminds me of the Nashville Warbler's song. These are just some of the warblers whose IDs are vulnerable to the effects of fatigue on the part of the listener. Of all the bird song issues I've mentioned, I think the warblers' songs are the most important to keep practising year after year. One can quickly get up to speed with many of the other bird songs but it's easy to lose one's precarious grasp of the warbler songs if one doesn't actively practise recognizing the songs.



Pine Warbler. Photo: Dave Milsom

Sounds You Might Not Notice or Realize Are Bird Sounds Until Someone Points Them Out

Drumming of the Ruffed Grouse

Least Flycatcher's "chebec" song

Chatter of Chimney Swifts in the sky

Unusual, repetitive sounds in late May and June. These may be the sounds of young birds begging.

Sounds You Might Think Are From Birds but Are From Something Else

Gray Treefrog Versus Bird - I don't know any bird that sounds like the Gray Treefrog but lots of people, including myself, have thought that the Gray Treefrog's call must be from a bird because what else could it be from?

Spring Peeper Versus Sora - The Spring Peeper's call might be confused with the Sora's "ker-wee" call except that the Spring Peeper's call tends to be quite repetitive. In the early spring, you will likely hear a chorus of Spring Peepers so there shouldn't be any confusion. A little later on, you're more likely to hear solitary frogs so, if you're in a wetland, it's good to be aware of this potential mix-up.

Chipmunk Versus Wild Turkey - Not long ago I learned the sound of the Wild Turkey cluck, which sounds to me like a low, monotone, repetitive knocking sound. I was very pleased to add this new bird sound to my knowledge-base - that is, until a day in mid-August last year when I heard what I thought was a Wild Turkey in my neighbour's backyard and found out it was a chipmunk, darn it. So now I know that I can't identify a Wild Turkey by the clucking sound. I had to go back to correct a few of my eBird lists.

If anyone would like to share their own tips for birding by ear, I can share them in a future issue of the Orchid if you send an e-mail to Kathryn Sheridan at orchid@peterboroughnature.org. Orchid submissions are encouraged!



The Orchid Diary








A summary of noteworthy observations by PFN members and others in Peterborough County. Information compiled from e-bird, Drew Monkman's Sightings website, PTBO Sightings and individual submissions. Please submit your interesting observations to in Parker at mparker19@cogeco.ca or phone 705-745-4750. FOY: First-of-year, LH Trail: Lang-Hastings Trail, NFC: Night Flight Call station which records call notes of birds passing over.

April 18	Jerry Ball had 2 Common Loons & 4 Double-crested Cormorants on Little Lake, Green-winged Teal on the pond on Nicholson Road, and Red Fox on Drummond Line.
April 10	Sora observations from Fairburn Street Marsh & University Road wetland by many
April 20	Northern Mockingbird along Humphries Line by Henrique Pacheco & Dolan Bohnert.
April 21	Long-tailed Duck fly-over recorded at Jeff Stewart NFC Station, Millbrook. Canvasback with 4 Redhead on Pigeon Lake off Kerry Line by Donald Sutherland. Redheads seen by many others. Up to 3 Bonaparte's Gulls off the James Gifford causeway by several observers. Palm Warbler at Corrigan Hill by Tim Haan.
April 22	Up to 20 Redhead off Pengelly Point by multiple observers. 2 Red-breasted Mergansers off Pengelly Point by Henrique Pacheco & Kevin Gevaert.
April 24	20 Canvasback on Chemong Lake off Selwyn Conservation Area by Philip Niblett. Spotted Sandpipers at Centre Line of Smith by Don Sutherland, dock at Buckhorn by Ken McKen & Lakefield Lagoon by many observers. Golden Eagle along Mt. Pleasant Road by Luke Berg. Northern Mockingbird on Centre Line, Selwyn by Mike Cowan, Kim Bennett & Travis Cameron. Long-tailed Duck at Stewart NFC station near Millbrook. Least Bittern in the Cunningham Blvd storm water ponds by Scott Gibson. Several reports from same location in days following. Great Crested Flycatcher in Ecology Park by Sue Paradisis, Tim Haan & Laurie Healey.
April 25	Bill Snowdon reported a small flock of Caspian Terns with the Ring-billed Gulls along the James Gifford causeway. Grasshopper Sparrows were recorded at the NFC station at Millbrook (Jeff Stewart) and Lakefield (Iain Rayner). Baltimore Oriole in Maria Street area by Daniel Williams. Influx of Black-and-white Warblers , Yellow Warblers , Black-throated Greens , by many different observers.
April 26	Golden Eagle over Brealey Dr. near Forester Ave. by Matthew Tobey. Multiple reports for Great Crested Flycatcher from Beavermead Park by many observers. Wood Thrush in Ecology Park by Laurie Healey. Northern Parula in Beavermead Park by Chris Risley & Ben Taylor. Yellow Warblers from many locations by multiple observers. Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Beavermead Park by Don Sutherland.
April 27	1 Dunlin in flooded field on 2 nd Line, Bailieboro by Don Sutherland. Rough-legged Hawk along Scriven Line by Don Sutherland. Grasshopper Sparrows report by Rayner NFC at Lakefield & Stewart NFC at Millbrook. Black-throated Blue Warbler at South Bay, Stoney Lake by Cathy Douglas.
April 28	4 Northern Pintails on Johnson Drive ponds by Darren Smith.

	Rough-legged Hawk at Peterborough Airport by Lynne Cotton. Red-eyed Vireo on South Drumlin Nature Area, Trent U. by Ali Giroux. Marsh Wren in Lakefield Marsh by Travis Cameron. Baltimore Oriole at Engleburn Ave. by Ben Taylor.
April 29	Marsh Wrens calling at May's Creek Marsh by Don Sutherland & Johnson Drive ponds by Laurie Healey. Northern Mockingbird in area of Lakefield Speed Skating Oval by D. Ordell. Fox Sparrow in Westwood area by Don Sutherland. Baltimore Oriole along Whitfield Road by Tony Barrett. Northern Parula in Johnston Drive ponds by Laurie Healy
April 30	Marsh Wrens, Eastern Wood Peewee at University Road wetland by Steve Paul & Laurie Healey.
May 1	Greater Scaup on Pigeon Lake off Kerry Line by Don Sutherland. Red-eyed Vireo in Beavermead Park by Steve Paul & Laurie Healy and at Jackson Park by Kathryn Sheridan. Common Tern at west end of James Gifford causeway by Carol B - still present on May 8. Cape May Warbler near Lakefield by Iain Rayner and Havelock by Cathy Dueck.
May 2	Yellow-throated Vireo from Beavermead Park by Tim Haan. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Bridgenorth by Judith Amesbury.
May 3	2 Northern Parula in Meadowvale Park by multiple observers.
May 4	Great Egret in Sawyer Creek Wetland by Maureen Smith. Carolina Wren along Lakefield waterfront by Luke Berg. Blue-winged Warbler in Rotary Park by Kait Dueck.
May 5	Red-breasted Merganser off Meadowvale Park by Don Sutherland. Red-necked Grebe in Little Lake by Travis Cameron & Iain Rayner.
May 6	160 Brant flying over at Buckley Lake by Luke Berg.
May 9	Red-headed Woodpecker on Duncan Line South by Don Sutherland & in Trent Nature Area by many observers (continued to be reported from this location).
May 10	Orchard Oriole near Assumption by Bill Crins.
May 11	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher along Hooton Drive by Marilyn Hubley. Clay-colored Sparrow near Lakefield water tower by Cathy Douglas - multiple reports from that location in days following. Additional Clay-colored Sparrow reports from Maria Street by Daniel Williams. Orchard Oriole in Lakefield by Travis Cameron and multiple reports from Otonabee Gravel Pits C.A. until at least May 15. Mourning Warbler at Otonabee Gravel Pits CA by Luke Berg. Yellow Rail in wetland along Cty Road 46 north of Havelock in Twin Lakes area by Tyler Hoar. This is a very secretive wetland species, usually heard and difficult to see. Long-eared Owl in area of Cty Road 46 and Sandy Lake Road by Tyler Hoar -- seen next day by others.
May 12	White-winged Scoter on Rice Lake off Pengelly Landing by Don Sutherland. Red-headed Woodpecker in the Otonabee Gravel Pit CA by Luke Berg. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Corrigan Hill by Tim Haan. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher reports from Pengelly Landing by Donald Sutherland and Mervin Line by Tony Barrett. Orchard Oriole at Pengelly Landing by Don Sutherland. Mourning Warbler in Cavan Woods by Scott McKinlay & Otonabee Gravel Pits CA by Luke Berg.

May 13	Yellow-billed Cuckoo by Stewart NFC station at Millbrook. Willow Flycatcher near Peterborough Airport by Don Sutherland. Northern Mockingbird at Trent University by Ali Giroux.
May 14	Willow Flycatcher reports from Bailieboro area by Connor Thompson, Airport area by Kim Bennett and Rotary Greenway Trail by Paul Frost. White-winged Scoter flying over Pigeon Lake by Camryn Prikker. 2 Lesser Scaup at the Lakefield Lagoon by Paige Wearing & Michelle Young - still present on May 17 by Don Sutherland. Orchard Oriole along LHT between Dillon Rd & Redmond Rd by Steve Paul & Laurie Healy.
May 15	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher along Jones ¼ Line by Jennifer MacKenzie. Clay-colored Sparrow along Jones ¼ line by Don Sutherland & Paul Frost.
May 18	Butterfly observations by Jerry Ball -- Charlie Allan Road -- Red Admiral, West Virginia White . Hubble Road -- Clouded Sulphur, Northern Azure, Cabbage White and along Sandy Lake Road -- Chryxus Arctic, Henry's Elfin, Juvenal's Duskywing & Columbine . Female Cottontail Rabbit with one young feeding in yard of Kathy Parker in city - present daily since May 12.
<p style="text-align: center;">Mississippi Kite</p> <p>Lakefield Lagoon by Donald Sutherland -- first record for Peterborough in eBird database. The following is the information Don posted on eBird: "First noted directly overhead (gradually drifting eastward and out of sight beyond the tree line) in the same thermal with 3 BWHA (2-1st yr., 1 adult). All four hawks an estimated 200 m above ground level. Roughly the same size as the nearby BWHA, but of obviously different proportions. Immediately striking were the long, narrow, pointed wings (i.e., P10 noticeably shorter than adjacent P9 and P8) and longish, narrow tail, narrowest at the base and flaring somewhat laterally at the tip (almost with a slight notch when tail not fanned; central rectrices perhaps not yet replaced?). The tail was barred/banded, pale and dark, evident when backlit by the sun. It was pale and essentially unmarked dark beneath, except for the undersides of wings (wing coverts), which appeared mottled, but with evident translucent 'windows' in the inner primaries (through wear?). Flight, not a series of repeated spirals (as was the case with the BWHA), but more undulating with changes in direction, occasionally folding its wings; it flapped its wings only occasionally during the short, 1 to 2 minute, period of the observation. During banks, the upper sides of the wings were unmarked and dark with contrasting lighter coverts and the tail was dark (i.e., no white rump; not NOHA). It did not appear 'light-headed', but this may have been due to the backlit conditions. Watched initially through Zeiss 8x42 binoculars and then for the majority of the short observation through a 25-60x Swarovski scope. Soaring to 200 m height). Unsatisfactory attempt to video the bird with an iPhone 10." Note: This year there have been numerous reports of this species from Point Pelee and numerous other locations in southwestern Ontario.</p>	
May 20	Jerry Ball had Henry's Elfin, Eastern Pine Elfin & Brown Elfin (butterflies) & Chestnut-sided Warbler & Eastern Towhee along Sandy Lake Road. Yellow Rail heard calling along LHT between Technology Road & Keene Road by Luke Berg and many other observers.
May 21	Ruddy Duck on the Lakefield Lagoon by Cathy Douglas and later in day by others. Short-billed Dowitcher in flyover at Rayner NFC station near Lakefield. Orange-crowned Warbler in Miller Creek Wildlife Management Area by Donald Sutherland. Cerulean Warbler along Deer Bay Reach Road by Donald Sutherland.
<p style="text-align: center;">The Storm to Remember</p> <p>On the afternoon of May 21, a windstorm to remember blew through southern Ontario resulting in many downed trees and multi-day power outage for many. The impact on early nesting birds and other forms of wildlife can only be speculated.</p>	

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Osprey photos by Reem Ali

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Name	Age

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