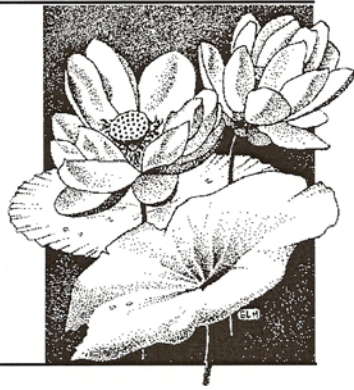


Lotus

NEWSLETTER
of the
NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



FEBRUARY 2015



Winter
Birding
Special

CBC WOODHOUSE COUNT RESULTS

Compiled by David Okines

Greetings Counters,

These are the results of the 28th Woodhouse CBC held on December 14th 2014. The Woodhouse CBC is centred 7 km east of Simcoe, at the crossroads of Highway 3 and Cockshut Road at Renton in Norfolk County and roughly covers from Port Dover to Waterford and just west of Simcoe to east of Jarvis.

Weather:

The weather this year was certainly different from last year. Last year had a significant snow cover, this year none. There was some drizzle overnight and the day was overcast with occasional light drizzle but this had stopped by mid morning. Most of the standing water was free of ice. Temperatures varied from a low of +2 when owling to a high of +5 during the day.

Many thanks to Madaline Wilson for hosting the round-up on short notice.

TOTAL SPECIES: 90 + 1 Count Week
(average for the last 28 years = 81,
average for the last 10 years = 85)

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 22,028
(average for the last 28 years = 28,889,
average for the last 10 years = 23,783)

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 34

NEW SPECIES TO THE COUNT

Ross's Goose 3
Barred Owl 1

RECORD HIGH - (previous high)

Turkey Vulture	6	(=peak count)
American Green-winged Teal	8	(=peak count)
Merlin	4	(=peak count)
Pileated Woodpecker	6	(=peak count)
Carolina Wren	15	(=peak count)
Common Yellowthroat	1	(=peak count)

RECORD LOW: (previous low)

House Finch 108 (= lowest) Average 239

COUNT WEEK SPECIES

American Coot 1 (7th Record)

Continued on page 2...

Right:

A Barred Owl

One of the 2
new species
to the count

Photo:

George Pond





Ross's Goose - one of the 2 new species to the count
Photo: Dick Daniels (Wikipedia)

Great Horned Owl	3	(6)
Yellow-shafted Flicker	5	(9)
American Crow	478	(768)
Horned Lark	18	(211)
American Robin	1	(16)
European Starling	936	(1809)
Cedar Waxwing	10	(66)
American Tree Sparrow	610	(915)
Song Sparrow	47	(59)
White-crowned Sparrow	6	(13)
Red-winged Blackbird	4	(27)
House Finch	108	(239)
Common Redpoll	3	(30)
American Goldfinch	200	(309)
House Sparrow	729	(934)

NOTABLE ABSENTEES

Canvasback	
Ruffed Grouse	5th year in a row
Snow Bunting	

ALSO WORTHY OF MENTION

Common Loon	1	(7th record)
Cackling Goose	3	(6th record)
Snow Goose	1	(9th record)
Wood Duck	2	(8th record)
Northern Shoveler	2	(7th record)
Long-tailed Duck	1	(3rd record)
Short-eared Owl	1	third time on count day since 2000
Chipping Sparrow	1	(9th record)
Eastern Meadowlark	1	(4th record)

Continued on page 3...

SPECIES ABOVE AVERAGE (last 10 year average)

Great Blue Heron	10	(5)
Mallard	5237	(1861)
American Black Duck	312	(171)
Gadwall	23	(15)
Hooded Merganser	23	(15)
Ruddy Duck	30	(7)
Coopers Hawk	14	(9)
Mourning Dove	799	(666)
Eastern Screech Owl	49	(34)
Downy Woodpecker	115	(92)
Blue Jay	509	(345)
Black-capped Chickadee	514	(442)
White-breasted Nuthatch	97	(68)
Golden-crowned Kinglet	43	(28)
Northern Mockingbird	6	(4)
Swamp Sparrow	26	(18)
White-throated Sparrow	31	(25)
Northern Cardinal	263	(212)
Common Grackle	14	(3)
Brown-headed Cowbird	1001	(431)
Pine Siskin	157	(68)

SPECIES WELL BELOW AVERAGE

Tundra Swan	7	(67)
Redhead	129	(550)
Greater Scaup	60	(141)
Lesser Scaup	15	(180)
Common Goldeneye	97	(154)
Common Merganser	117	(687)
Red-breasted Merganser	218	(715)
Northern Harrier	7	(13)
Wild Turkey	38	(131)
Bonaparte's Gull	89	(109)
Ring-billed Gull	561	(1210)
Rock Pigeon	488	(644)

(last 10 year average)



Common Redpoll

Photo: George Pond

FULL SPECIES LIST AND TALLY

Common Loon	1	American Coot	CW	Field Sparrow	2
Great Blue Heron	10	Bonaparte's Gull	89	Song Sparrow	47
Turkey Vulture	6	Ring-billed Gull	561	Swamp Sparrow	26
Mute Swan	4	Herring Gull	163	White-throated Sparrow	31
Tundra Swan	7	Great Black-backed Gull	14	White-crowned Sparrow	6
Canada Goose	6000	Rock Pigeon	488	Slate-colored Junco	1029
Cackling Goose	3	Mourning Dove	799	Northern Cardinal	263
Snow Goose	1	Eastern Screech-Owl	49	Red-winged Blackbird	4
Ross's Goose	3	Great-horned Owl	3	Eastern Meadowlark	1
Wood Duck	2	Barred Owl	1	Rusty Blackbird	3
Mallard	5237	Short-eared Owl	1	Common Grackle	14
American Black Duck	312	Belted Kingfisher	3	Brown-headed Cowbird	1001
Gadwall	23	Red-bellied Woodpecker	27	Purple Finch	3
Northern Pintail	3	Downy Woodpecker	115	House Finch	108
Northern Shoveler	2	Hairy Woodpecker	13	Common Redpoll	3
American Green-winged Teal	8	Yellow-shafted Flicker	5	Pine Siskin	157
Redhead	129	Pileated Woodpecker	6	American Goldfinch	200
Greater Scaup	60	Northern Shrike	5	House Sparrow	729
Lesser Scaup	15	Blue Jay	509		
(Scaup Spp)	1	American Crow	478	TOTAL: 90 Species + 1 Count week	
Common Goldeneye	97	Horned Lark	18		
Long-tailed Duck	1	Black-capped Chickadee	514		
Bufflehead	220	Red-breasted Nuthatch	15		
Hooded Merganser	23	White-breasted Nuthatch	97		
Common Merganser	117	Brown Creeper	8		
Red-breasted Merganser	218	Carolina Wren	15		
Ruddy Duck	30	Golden-crowned Kinglet	43		
Bald Eagle	6	Eastern Bluebird	55		
Northern Harrier	7	American Robin	1		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	7	Northern Mockingbird	6		
Cooper's Hawk	14	European Starling	936		
Red-tailed Hawk	101	Cedar Waxwing	10		
Rough-legged Hawk	12	Myrtle Warbler	1		
American Kestrel	17	Common Yellowthroat	1		
Merlin	4	Eastern Towhee	1		
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	American Tree Sparrow	610		
Wild Turkey	38	Chipping Sparrow	1		



Long-tailed Duck

Photo: George Pond



Bird counters: (Top) Shelia Smith (Bottom) Larry Monczka, Madaline Wilson, Kathy Pickard

Photos: Diane Salter

CBC FISHERVILLE COUNT RESULTS

Compiled by: Linda Thrower

The Fisherville Christmas Bird Count was held on December 28th, 2014

For the end of December the weather was amazing. No snow to speak of, nice clear roads, open water, temperatures above freezing and low winds. I could not have asked for better weather. Well, maybe the glare off the lake could have been less, which would have allowed for a few more waterfowl to be counted. You would have thought with the weather like that the birds would have been easier to find, but I guess with the water and the fields being open the birds were spread out rather than all bunching up. I know we had to beat the bushes to get a few species that are usually an easy find in the winter. But thanks to the awesome birders who were nice enough to take the time to do this count, 77 species were counted.

Here are a few highlights: Square 5 found **4 Horned Grebes** which is a first time for this species since 2005. Square 4 found **7 Sandhill Cranes** which had not been seen since 2011 when 10 were seen in the same square. Great Blue Herons were seen in their lowest numbers since this count began with only **2** being counted. Even at the Ontario Power Generation Plant where there always were good numbers of herons, none were found after last year's lake freeze.

Canada Goose had the lowest numbers since 2007, **2761** were seen. Square 9's keen eyes found **1 Cackling Goose** at this count, 4 were found last year. Square 4 found the only **2 Mute Swans** of this count, which is up one from last year's count. But the **Tundra Swans** were out enjoying this day and the open water with their highest number since this count began with an amazing **260** being seen. **3 Wood Ducks** were still hanging around this count. Last time they were seen was in 2010. **Gadwalls** were out in their highest number since this count began with **205** counted. **American Black Ducks** had their lowest number since 1990. Once again a species that could always be found keeping a pond open at Ontario Power Generation Plant were for the first time nowhere to be found. Only **17** were counted this year. The **1604 Mallards** found this year was the highest since 2010, when 4680 were counted. **Redhead** numbers are up this count: last year's numbers were 77, this year **805** were seen. Now that's an increase!



Sandhill Cranes

Photo: George Pond

Greater Scaups were out in large numbers this count with **3091** found; last year's numbers were 59. **Lesser Scaup** were found this count after being absent since 2011, when only 1 was seen. This count their number was **14**. Square 8 found the only **Hooded Merganser** seen this count, last year their number was 39.

Common Mergansers were out in their lowest number since 2010 when 383 were seen, this count **417** were found. **2 Ruddy Ducks** were seen this count up 1 from last year. **Bald Eagle** numbers are down, 27 last year and this count **9** were counted. **Snowy Owls** were once again in the area with their number 1 down from last year with **4** being counted. **Long-eared Owls** have their highest number since 2006 with **9** found on this count, the same number as in 2006. **Yellow-shafted Flickers** did not enjoy this day with only **1** being counted, their lowest number since 2007. **Greater Black-backed Gulls** were not out on this day with their lowest number since 1990 when 3 were found, this count their number was **4**. Square 6 found **1 Pileated Woodpecker**, a first since 2009 when 1 was also found.

Continued on page 5...



Pileated Woodpecker

Photo: George Pond

American Crows were counted in their highest numbers since 2009 with **828** being counted, 600 seen near Cranbrassil. **Brown Creeper's** numbers were up after being down the last 3 years, this count **8** were seen. **Eastern Bluebird** numbers are still dropping from 39 seen last year and **20** counted this year. Once again the Fisherville count has **1 Myrtle Warbler**. **Snow Buntings** must still be up north waiting for the snow because only **40** were counted, the last time the numbers were this low was 1997 when 1 was seen.



Yellow-headed Blackbird Photo: Wikipedia

For the first time since 1993 a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was seen in the Fisherville Count Circle. It was reported the day after the count so we get it on count week. Although it is not a first for this count 1 female was seen in 1993 in the same square. **Rusty Blackbird** numbers have not been this high since 2011 with **20** being seen this count. The **Common Grackle** at my feeder is not the only one around; they were found in their highest numbers since 1992 with **18** being found. **Brown-headed Cowbirds** were out in their highest numbers since 2007 when 1356 were counted, this year their numbers were **1191**. **Pine Siskins** were found in their highest number with **7** being spotted.

Horned Grebe	4
Sandhill Crane	7
Great Blue Heron	2
Canada Goose	2761
Cackling Goose	1
Mute Swan	2
Tundra Swan	260
Wood Duck	3
Gadwall	205
American Black Duck	17
Mallard	1604
Redhead	805
Greater Scaup	3091
Lesser Scaup	14
Bufflehead	401
Common Goldeneye	224
Hooded Merganser	1
Common Merganser	417
Red-breasted Merganser	701
Ruddy Duck	2
Bald Eagle	9
Northern Harrier	24
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5
Cooper's Hawk	6
Red-tailed Hawk	128
Rough-legged Hawk	24
American Kestrel	34
Wild Turkey	68
Bonaparte's Gull	152
Ring-billed Gull	1792
Herring Gull	191
Great Black-backed Gull	4
Rock Pigeon	374
Mourning Dove	252
Eastern Screech Owl	16
Great Horned Owl	5
Snowy Owl	4
Long-eared Owl	9
Short-eared Owl	2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	47
Downy Woodpecker	77
Hairy Woodpecker	9
Yellow-shafted N. Flicker	1
Pileated Woodpecker	1
Northern Shrike	2
Blue Jay	221
American Crow	828
Horned Lark	55
Black-capped Chickadee	357
Tufted Titmouse	9
Red-breasted Nuthatch	12

White-breasted Nuthatch	58
Brown Creeper	8
Carolina Wren	8
Winter Wren	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	8
Eastern Bluebird	20
American Robin	2
Northern Mockingbird	10
European Starling	1806
Myrtle Warbler	1
American Tree Sparrow	266
Song Sparrow	6
Swamp Sparrow	3
White-throated Sparrow	10
Slate-coloured Junco	265
Snow Bunting	40
Northern Cardinal	86
Red-winged Blackbird	196
Yellow-headed Blackbird	CW
Rusty Blackbird	20
Common Grackle	18
Brown-headed Cowbird	1191
House Finch	112
Pine Siskin	7
American Goldfinch	227
House Sparrow	821

TOTAL SPECIES: 77
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 20,421

Continued on Page 6...



Great Horned Owl Photo: Wikipedia

FISHERVILLE COUNT...continued from page 5

Now, the list of the 38 awesome birders who were nice enough to do this count.

Square 1: Mark Cranford, John Lamey

Square 2: Richard Skevington, Neil Faulkenham,
Adrain Jurrlink

Square 3: Bill Read, Jerry Gunther,

Feeders: Beth Powell, Mary Galli

Square 4: George Pond, Rick Dowson,
Pilar Manorome, Ruven Martin

Feeder: Wes Raymond

Square 5: Adam & Matt Timpf, Janice Chard

Square 6: Tom Thomas, Neil Taylor, Chris Street,
Bill Smith, Ron Campeau, Josh Shea

Feeder: Fred Kopier

Square 7: Hugh McAuthur, Julia Wever,
Jacob Wever, Randy Wilson

Feeders: Rob Smuck, Owen Smuck (age 6)

Square 8: Barry Jones, Bob Stamp, Jim Heslop,
Linda Thrower, Alan Thrower

Square 9: Audrey Heagy, David Okines,
Diane Salter, Greg Slater, Bailey Slater

And last but not least all the rest of the data:

Start Time:	12 Midnight
Finish Time:	12 Midnight.
Winds:	W 10 km
Temperature:	+ 2 to + 3 C
Snow Cover:	None, Clear Roads
Water:	Open
Visibility:	10km
Hours on Foot:	38.45
Km on Foot:	44.5
Hours by Car:	40
Km by Car:	617.2
Hours Owling:	6
Km Owling:	54.2
Observers:	38
Feeders:	6
Feeder Hours:	18

A special mention to Ontario Power Generation Plant for allowing access to their property. And **Thanks!** once again to all of those who took the time to do this bird count.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Winter 2015

The Directors' Meeting originally scheduled for January was postponed to February due to the absence of several board members.

The Report will be in the April Lotus.

NFN WINTER BIRDING FIELD EVENT

By: Cody Rowe

There is something about the call of the outdoors that brings birders together, regardless of the weather, and Sunday January 18, 2015 was no exception. A group of 13 birders flocked to the shores of Lake Erie, all were eager to venture forth and find birds a little less common than the handful of Mallards and Ring-Billed Gulls that were gathered around the Port Dover Harbour.



Birders: L to R

Cody, Berndt,
Joan and
Donna (behind
Joan)

Photo:
Audrey Heagy

Led by the wonderful guides, Audrey Heagy and Dave Okines, our seven-vehicle convoy made their way to Silver Lake. Unfortunately the lake was frozen over, but we did find a pair of American Black Ducks, hundreds of Canada Geese, House Sparrows, and some European Starlings. Leaving Silver Lake we followed the Lakeshore Rd to a beautiful dark morph Rough-legged Hawk (one of many seen that day) and a few American Crows. A little further down the road, we stumbled upon a large flock of Brown-Headed Cowbirds along with a few Red-winged Blackbirds feeding by the roadside and enjoying their day. We stopped briefly to view an amazing male American Kestrel sitting in a bush, this was the first of four of these birds to be seen during the afternoon. As Dave scanned the surrounding fields for the possibility of a Shrike he brought us more excitement. While he did not come up with the Shrike, he did spy a gorgeous male Snowy Owl sitting in the middle of the next field which warmed our chilly endeavour and excellent views of it were had by all.

Overjoyed with the Snowy Owl and satisfied with the diversity, a few of our crew headed homeward while the rest of us trudged on to find more birds.

Continued on page 7...

We were certainly not disappointed with a surprise Northern Mockingbird flitting about on a lawn just south of Fisherville that had just two trees on it making viewing easy.



SHORT-EARED OWL
George Pond



SNOWY OWL
George Pond

Short-eared Owl and Snowy Owl

Photos: George Pond

Although dusk was quietly approaching, it was held back by a brilliant Short-Eared Owl perched in a tree by the Raptor Preserve on the 6th concession. Within seconds, another Short-Eared Owl burst from the trees, then another and another. A total of four Short-Eared Owls emerged and started to dance around the tree tops giving the group beautiful views. A Northern Harrier was seen hunting at the back of the field. Around the corner two more Short-Eared Owls appeared, darting out from the Cedar hedges. As the sun slowly slid behind the horizon it was time to head home after a very enjoyable birding afternoon. We would like to thank our excellent leaders, Audrey Heagy and Dave Okines and everyone who participated! Thank you to the beautiful birds that made our day awesome!

To learn more about these topics, and more, visit: www.ontarionature.org

Ontario Nature's 84th Annual Gathering

Join Ontario Nature and *rare* Charitable Research Reserve on May 23 for a day on the Grand River at *rare's* ECO Centre in Cambridge.

Youth Council Sends Letter to Cabinet

Ontario Nature's Youth Council rang in the new year by sending all 27 Ontario cabinet ministers a letter expressing their support for the province's recently announced measures to make pollinator health a priority.

Lawson Nature Reserve Gets a Facelift

Lawson Nature Reserve got a facelift this winter. With help from local high school students and boy scouts, the Ingersoll District Nature Club updated the reserve's entrance for wheelchair access, installed nesting boxes, built a bridge and added new picnic tables and benches.

**Upcoming NFN
2015 Winter Events**

**Tree Ecology Hike
Backus Woods in Winter**

**Sunday, March 8, 1pm - 3pm
NCC ecologist Brett Norman**

will take us on a crisp winter walk in the North Tract of Backus Woods to learn how to identify trees in winter and their ecology. Meet at the Backus Woods Parking lot off Hwy. 24 at 1.00 pm.

Dress for the season!

Contact Bernie at 519-428-0706

**Meeting and Guest Speaker
Geographic Variation
of Bird Song**

Tuesday, March 10, 7.30 pm

Beth MacDougall Shackletonis

is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at the University of Western Ontario.

Beth will describe the geographic variations of bird song. As most birds learn to sing early in life, songs vary geographically. The

songs males sing convey information as to their place of origin. Do females use this information, and if so, how?

**Meeting and Guest Speaker
Outdoor Perspectives**

Tuesday, April 14, 7.30 pm

David Baird, a photographer and hiker, is a member of the Otter Valley Naturalists and the Woodstock Naturalists Club. Since retirement David has taken a

keen interest in nature photography and will provide a perspective into the development of observation and discovery skills while enjoying the outdoors.

NFN Meetings

Norfolk Field Naturalist meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month from September to May.

Meetings take place at the **Simcoe Seniors Centre, 89 Pond Street.**

The meetings are free and visitors are always welcome. Doors open at 7:15 pm, programs begin at 7:30 pm.

NFN Mailing Address

**Norfolk Field Naturalists
PO Box 995, Simcoe, ON
N3Y 5B3**

Next Lotus issue:

April 2015

Input dead line:

Friday, March 27, 2015

About the NFN

Norfolk Field Naturalists members participate in meetings and field outings, many of which are family-friendly. **Membership fees are \$20 Individual and \$30 Family.** Donations are eligible for income tax credits. Charitable registration # 11905869RR00001

Guest speakers present programs on interesting and relevant natural history and conservation topics. Club members receive the Lotus newsletter with articles on local natural history and club activities. Copies of the Lotus are available at meetings, by mail or by email and posted on the NFN web site. Articles published in the lotus reflect the views and opinions of the authors, but not necessarily those of the NFN.

www.norfolkfieldnaturalists.org

2014 - 2015 NFN Executive with contact & project information

		<u>All 519-</u>	
President / Field Events	Bernie Solymár	427-9969	solymar@nornet.on.ca
Vice-President, Environment/Sanctuary	Peter Carson	586-3985	gartcar@kwic.com
Past President	Audrey Heagy	586-9464	aheagy@kwic.com
Treasurer	Barb Hourigan	583-1198	bbhourigan@yahoo.ca
Secretary	Eleanor Chithalen	582-4382	eleanor.chithalen@gmail.com
Director/ Membership	Diane Salter	586-7775	bigcreek@kwic.com
Speaker Program	Len Grincevicius	428-6796	portie_1989@eastlink.ca
Publicity	David Curry	875-5601	david.curry@hotmail.com
Director-at-large	Barb Hawke	586-8375	bhawke@kwic.com
Director-at-large,	Inga Hinnerichsen	875-5601	daveinga@live.ca
Director-at-large	Vacant		
Director-at-large	Vacant		
Director-at-large	Vacant		

Lotus Editor (appointed) Inga Hinnerichsen 875-5601 daveinga@live.ca
Butterfly Counts: (appointed) Adam Timpf 586-9964
Christmas Bird Counts: (appointed) David Okines - Woodhouse Count 519-586-9464
 Linda Thrower - Fisherville Count 905-774-1230

Honorary President: Al Robinson **Honorary Directors:** Harry Barrett, Jim Harlow