

Lotus

NEWSLETTER
of the
NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



FEBRUARY 2016



WINTER BIRDING

IN HALDIMAND COUNTY

By Inga Hinnerichsen

WINTER BIRDING SPECIAL

Third time's a charm. I've tried to participate in this regular outing for the last 3 years. One year it was cancelled because of nasty weather, another time I had a sick hubby and a sick dog at home and couldn't go. I'm not an experienced birder, so outings like this present great learning opportunities for me. Finally, on Sunday, January 17, I met with the group of 10 birders led by Tim Lucas at the Port Dover pier. Just before I arrived a juvenile Bald Eagle sailed over the pier, I had missed it by mere seconds. One man had found us on the internet and came down from Mississauga. He later said it was well worth it. The forecast had the temperature falling well below freezing in the afternoon with light snow tapering off.

While waiting for everyone to arrive we had a chance to observe a large raft of Mallards by the pier. Ring-billed Gulls and a few Herring Gulls were lined up along the opposite pier. I teamed up with Len and Jan Grincevicius and we all drove off east along the lake shore.

At a stop near a creek Tim spotted a Northern Harrier hunting over a field. Repeated pishing didn't manage to lure birds out of the shrubs and trees, just a quick flash of a few Juncos by the road. Near Nanticoke a Rough-legged Hawk performed its balancing act with outstretched wings on a tree top in the distance. On the lake side we found a large gathering of water fowl: 10 Tundra Swans mingled with a couple of hundred Canada Geese. More large flocks arrived as we watched. Off to the side was a raft of American Black Ducks, Mallards and Buffelheads. Among them, a Black Duck-Mallard hybrid.



Short-eared Owl

Photo: Len Grincevicius

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Bald Eagle Photo: Len Grincevicius

A mature Bald Eagle sat in a tree by the shore. It lifted off for a leisurely cruise and another Eagle promptly took its place in the tree. A Northern Harrier came swooping by quite close disappearing behind a farm house scattering a number of smaller birds. It didn't re-appear, so we figured it had caught its dinner. Just before we continued our trek a Black-backed Gull glided by with slow wing beats. On the way to Selkirk Provincial Park another "Roughy" soared across the road above us easily recognized by its light underside and black wrist patches.



Red-bellied Woodpecker
Photo: Len Grincevicius

The woods at the park first seemed so quiet in the grey afternoon light. Tim whistled some Screech Owl calls hoping for a reply. Tim is a very talented bird call mimic! We stood still listening. Nothing. Then a few call notes and movements up in the trees caught our attention.

A few Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatches, Blue Jays and Chickadees and a Red Squirrel were busy foraging in the branches. Tim caught a glimpse of a Red-tailed Hawk flying behind the trees.

Along the road we kept an eye out for Short-eared Owls roosting in pines and spruces. Again, nothing. We had also hoped to see the odd flock of Snow Buntings, but they, too, were absent.

The temperature was dropping as the sun was setting and a chilly wind came up from the north west. In Selkirk we made a quick pit stop at the Sunflower Cafe for hot chocolate to warm numb fingers and the insides, too. One more try to find the Short-eared Owls as the dusk was gathering.

Tim stopped along a side road just as 6 Owls burst out of a stand of small conifers.

Regardless of the bone-chilling wind everyone got out of the cars with binoculars, scopes and cameras at a-ready. The birds put on a wonderful show swooping in and out of the trees, over the road and fields, posing for a moment on a branch and flying off again. That was definitely the icing on the cake. What a terrific afternoon!



A group of cold (but happy) Winter Birders
Photo: Inga Hinnerichsen

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

WOODHOUSE

Compiled by: David Okines

Photos: George Pond (or as noted)

Greetings Counters,

These are the results of the 29th Woodhouse CBC held on December 20th 2015. The Woodhouse CBC is centred 7 km east of Simcoe, at the crossroads of Highway 3 and Cockshutt 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 mild weather this year was a change from recent counts but it made the birding harder. Overnight it was mostly clear but cloud cover increased to total cloud cover by late morning and then there were some sunny periods in the afternoon. All standing water was free of ice. Temperatures varied overnight from a high of -3 around midnight to a low of -7 by dawn and then increasing to a daytime high of +5. The wind was mostly calm until the afternoon when it increased slightly.



Total Species: 85 + 1 Count Week
(average for the last 28 years = 81,
average for the last 10 years = 85)

Total Individuals: 21,877
(average for the last 28 years = 28,889,
average for the last 10 years = 23,783)

of participants: 39 (up 5 on last year)

NEW SPECIES TO THE COUNT

Sandhill Crane 124
Thayer's Gull 1

RECORD HIGH - (previous high)

Ring-necked Duck 12 (6)
Red-bellied Woodpecker 49 (44)
Northern Cardinal 352 (352)

RECORD LOW: (previous low)

Rough-legged Hawk 3 (= lowest)
Average 14
Northern Shrike 1 (= lowest) Average 4
Field Sparrow 1 (= lowest) Average 3
Lapland Longspur 1 (= lowest) Average 15
Rusty Blackbird 1 (= lowest) Average 7
Common Grackle 1 (2) Average 4
House Finch 79 (108) Average 656

COUNT WEEK SPECIES

Snowy Owl 1 (Recorded 3 times
previously)

SPECIES ABOVE AVERAGE

(last 10 year average)
Horned Grebe 4 (0.1)
Tundra Swan 314 (67)
Cackling Goose 12 (6)
Mallard 4160 (1861)
Pintail 3 (1)
Northern Shoveler 8 (4)
American Green-winged Teal 5 (1.5)
Ring-necked Duck 12 (1)
Bufflehead 396 (269)
Hooded Merganser 27 (15)
Bald Eagle 11 (7)
Downy Woodpecker 142 (92)
Pileated Woodpecker 5 (2)
Blue Jay 443 (345)
White-breasted Nuthatch 108 (68)
Brown Creeper 12 (7)
American Robin 34 (16)
Pine Siskin 120 (68)

SPECIES WELL BELOW AVERAGE

(last 10 year average)
Great Blue Heron 3 (5)
Redhead 94 (550)
Greater Scaup 13 (141)
Common Goldeneye 75 (154)
Common Merganser 45 (687)
Red-breasted Merganser 159 (715)
Ruddy Duck 2 (7)
Northern Harrier 7 (13)
Herring Gull 118 (165)
Great Black-backed Gull 4 (12)
Rock Pigeon 379 (644)
Mourning Dove 382 (666)
Horned Lark 5 (211)
Red-breasted Nuthatch 6 (14)
European Starling 988 (1809)
Cedar Waxwing 19 (66)
Song Sparrow 17 (59)
White-throated Sparrow 10 (25)
Snow Bunting 80 (600)
Red-winged Blackbird 17 (27)
Brown-headed Cowbird 310 (431)

NOTABLE ABSENTEES

Ruffed Grouse 6th year in a row

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Woodhouse

...continued from Page 3

ALSO WORTHY OF MENTION

Double-crested Cormorant 1
(4th record)
Snow Goose 1 (10th record)
Wood Duck 1 (9th record)
Northern Goshawk 2 (8th record)
Hairy Woodpecker 22
(best total since 2002)

FULL SPECIES LIST AND TALLY

Horned Grebe 4
Double-crested Cormorant 1
Great Blue Heron 3
Mute Swan 2
Tundra Swan 314
Canada Goose 6168
Cackling Goose 12
Snow Goose 1
Wood Duck 1
Mallard 4160
American Black Duck 155
Gadwall 15
Northern Pintail 3
Northern Shoveler 8
American Green-winged Teal 5
Redhead 94
Ring-necked Duck 12
Greater Scaup 13
Lesser Scaup 400
(Scaup Spp) 20
Common Goldeneye 75
Bufflehead 396
Hooded Merganser 27
Common Merganser 45
Red-breasted Merganser 159

Ruddy Duck 2
Bald Eagle 11
Northern Harrier 7
Sharp-shinned Hawk 6
Cooper's Hawk 6
Northern Goshawk 1
Red-tailed Hawk 122
Rough-legged Hawk 3
American Kestrel 17
Wild Turkey 116
Sandhill Crane 124
Bonaparte's Gull 94
Ring-billed Gull 1430
Herring Gull 118
Thayers Gull 1
Great Black-backed Gull 4
Rock Pigeon 379
Mourning Dove 382
Eastern Screech-Owl 38
Great-horned Owl 4
Belted Kingfisher 4
Red-bellied Woodpecker 49
Downy Woodpecker 142
Hairy Woodpecker 22
Northern Flicker 8
Pileated Woodpecker 5
Northern Shrike 1
Blue Jay 443
American Crow 789
Horned Lark 5
Black-capped Chickadee 454
Eastern Tufted Titmouse 1
Red-breasted Nuthatch 6
White-breasted Nuthatch 108
Brown Creeper 12



Northern Goshawk Photo: Wikipedia

Carolina Wren 9
Golden-crowned Kinglet 21
Eastern Bluebird 48
American Robin 34
European Starling 988
Cedar Waxwing 19
American Tree Sparrow 642
Field Sparrow 1
Song Sparrow 17
Swamp Sparrow 20
White-throated Sparrow 10
White-crowned Sparrow 7
Slate-colored Junco 922
Lapland Longspur 1
Snow Bunting 80
Northern Cardinal 352
Red-winged Blackbird 17
Rusty Blackbird 1
Common Grackle 1
Brown-headed Cowbird 310
Purple Finch 2
House Finch 79
Pine Siskin 120
American Goldfinch 392
Evening Grosbeak 1
House Sparrow 1048

Total 85 Sp + 1 Count Week



HOODED MERGANSER
GEORGE E POND

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

FISHERVILLE

Compiled by: Linda Thrower

Photos: George Pond (or as noted)

December 28, 2015

Sadly, The Fisherville Bird Count lost two of its long-time members this year: Jim Heslop and Wes Raymond. Sincere condolences to both families and friends, they will be greatly missed.

Another reality has hit me this year, I do not think "bird" very well. I would have thought, with all the warm weather leading up to this count, and count day being the first really cold day, that the birds would have been out looking for food everywhere. Oh well, I was wrong again. There was a very nasty cold wind, so a big Thank You to all who participated. I do find it quite amazing what species we were able to find in spite of the weather.

Here are the highs and the lows of the count.

Species 2015 count (2014 count)

Common Loon 1 (1 in 2012)
Horned Grebe 9 (4)
Sandhill Crane 2 (7)
Great Blue Heron 3 (2)
Canada Goose 2670 (2761)
Mute Swan 2 (2)
Tundra Swan 172 (260)



Northern Flicker Photo: George Pond

Wood Duck 1 (3)
Gadwall 94 (205)
Am. Widgeon 4 (1 in 2013)
Am. Black Duck 4 (17)
Mallard 436 (1604)
Mallard/Black Duck X 1 (0)
Northern Pintail 1 (7 in 2013)
Canvasback 1 (4 in 2013)
Redhead 3 (805)
Greater Scaup 63 (3091)
Surf Scoter 1 (80 in 1995)
White-wing Scoter 2 (1 in 2013)
Bufflehead 351 (401)
Common Goldeneye 62 (224)
Common Merganser 81 (417)
Red-br. Merganser 262 (701)
Bald Eagle 12 (9)
Northern Harrier 34 (24)
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1 (5)
Cooper's Hawk 4 (6)
Red-tailed Hawk 117 (128)
Rough-legged Hawk 7 (24)
Am. Kestrel 12 (34)
Peregrine Falcon 1 (2 in 2013)
Wild Turkey 24 (68)
Killdeer 1 (2 in 2012)
Bonaparte's Gull 312 (152)
Ring-billed Gull 2378 (1792)
Herring Gull 44 (191)
Gr. Black-backed Gull 8 (4)
Rock Pigeon 367 (374)
Mourning Dove 163 (252)
Eastern Screech Owl 4 (16)



Oregon Junco Photo: Wikipedia

Gr. Horned Owl 5 (5)
Snowy Owl 2 (4)
Long-eared Owl 8 (9)
Short-eared Owl 2 (2)
Red-bellied Woodpecker 28 (47)
Downy Woodpecker 53 (77)
Hairy Woodpecker 6 (9)
Northern Flicker 1 (1)
Shrike 1 (2)
Blue Jay 202 (221)
Am. Crow 191 (828)
Horned Lark 4 (55)
Bl.-capped Chickadee 259 (35)
Tufted Titmouse 18 (9)
Red-breasted Nuthatch 3 (12)
White-breasted Nuthatch 43 (58)
Brown Creeper 5 (8)
Carolina Wren 1 (8)
Golden-crowned Kinglet 23 (8)
Eastern Bluebird 17 (20)
Hermit Thrush 1 (1 in 2013)
Am. Robin 7 (2)
Northern Mockingbird 1 (10)
European Starling 2446 (1806)
Cedar Waxwing 47 (41 in 2013)
Am. Tree Sparrow 306 (266)
Swamp Sparrow 2 (3)
Song Sparrow 8 (6)
White-throated Sparrow 8 (10)
Dark-eyed Junco 407 (265)
Oregon Junco 1 **first this count**
Snow Bunting 1 (40)
Northern Cardinal 76 (86)
Red-winged Blackbird 50 (196)
Rusty Blackbird 1 (20)
Br.-headed Cowbird 1286 (1191)
House Finch 79 (112)
Am. Goldfinch 183 (227)
House Sparrow 796 (812)

Total Species 79
Total Individuals 14,361

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Now the 32 Participants who braved the cold day:

Rob Crawford	Linda Thrower
Tom Thomas	Matt Timpf
Richard Skevington	Audrey Heagy
Bill Smith	Janice Chard
Jeff Skevington	David Okines
Ron Campeau	
Adrian Juurlink	
Hugh McArthur	
Neil Faulkenham	Start Time: 12 Midnight
Jody Allair	Finish Time: 6 pm.
Bill Read	Temperature: -4 c to -3c
Thomas Harrison	Winds: 20 to 40 km NE
Jerry Gunther	No Snow Cover
Milou Geven	Cloudy
Beth Powell	Visibility: 8km
Fred Kopier	Water: Open, waves ½ to ¾ of a meter.
George Pond	Hours on Foot 35.84
Rob Smuck	Hours by Car 45
Allan Aubin	Km on Foot 50.7
Deny Gardiner	Km by Car 751.9
Rick Dowson	Hours Owling 2.25
Bob Stamp	Km Owling 20
Reuven Martin	Number of Observers 32
Barry Jones	Number of Parties 12
Pilar Manorome	Number of Feeders 4
Al Thrower	Feeder Hours 16
Adam Timpf	



Red-tailed Hawks in aerial battle
Painting by: John James Audubon (Wikipedia)

I must tell you the story of the day. We were on top of the ash hill at Ontario Power Generation watching a Bald Eagle when all of a sudden it spotted a Red-tailed Hawk. It and the Red-tail ended up talon to talon, spinning in the air until the Red-tail was very close to the ground and then the Eagle let the Red-tail go just in time to right itself and land safely on the ground. Not something I see every day! So, a special mention to Ontario Power Generation Plant for allowing access to their property.

Linda Thrower, Compiler

Thank You!

to the

Bradstreet Foundation

For a very generous donation to NFN of
\$1,500.00

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

2015 - 2016 season:

Lisa Timpf and Ginette Pieper

We are looking forward to meeting you and hope you will participate in and enjoy all the NFN indoor presentations and field outings!

Thank You!

From Norfolk Field Naturalists to

Will Partridge
Guardian Computing

For hosting our website

Ostrander Point Wind Project Lawsuit

Editor's note: You may recall that NFN donated \$1000 to Ostrander Point Appeal Fund to assist with legal fees in regard to their lawsuit. Here're some follow-up highlights:

All the witnesses were heard by November 27. The Winter Wonderland Walk fundraiser produced over \$2400 for the South Shore Appeal Fund. Before January 15, the legal teams submitted written briefs and replies summing up the case. On the 15th final oral submissions were presented. Eventually the Tribunal will issue a decision on the issue of timing and bias. The final decision on the remedy issue will follow.

The ERT Hearing resumes on Tuesday, February 2

Interested in more details? Check these websites:

www.savethesouthshore.org

www.saveostranderpoint.org

www.facebook.com/SavetheSouthShore

85 Years of Connecting People to Nature!

2016 marks Ontario Nature's 85th anniversary and we're celebrating by engaging Ontarians from all walks of life with nature.

Join Ontario Nature at Evergreen Resort, South Bruce Peninsula on June 3-5, 2016 for our annual gathering!

Note: this event also coincides with the NFN Bruce Peninsula weekend. Plan to be there!



Rams Head Orchid

Photo courtesy of ON

A successful year for nature

The accomplishments of last year have set the pace for another great year in 2016 helping to protect the wild species we love and the wild spaces they call home. Here's to another successful year for nature in Ontario!

The Board of Directors met on the 26th of January at Len and Jan Grincevicius' home. In the absence of our regular Secretary Eleanor Chithalen, Jan kindly offered to take notes of the meeting. Here are the highlights:

Financial: Barb Hourigan, Treasurer, reported that the balance in the chequing/savings account as of December 31, 2015 was \$13,087. Total Current Assets were listed at \$52,072.

It was decided that the \$1,500.00 donation from the Bradstreet Foundation to be moved into the Protection and Securement Fund, which we are again building up for future support of land acquisitions. The Rowanwood 5-year GIC comes due on February 7, 2016. It was agreed to place it in a short-term GIC to make it accessible for any future projects.

Speaker Program: Due to the cancellation of our January Members Meeting the Guest Speaker, Kristyn Richardson, has been re-scheduled to present her research on Barn Swallows and bank Swallows in February, 2017. The Speaker program for the next season is beginning to take shape, 2 speakers are confirmed so far.

Outings: The Winter Birding in Haldimand was a success and ended on a very good note with many Short Eared Owls topping off the day.

Len and Bernie have been organizing the trip to the Bruce Peninsula, which will be held from June 3 to 5, 2016. More information to follow.

Nature's Calling Environmental Education: A new outdoor education program will be launched called "Lessons in a Backpack" for grades 1 - 8. The Board discussed a donation to NCEE in support of the "Rooted in Nature" festival. A \$2,000.00 donation will be tabled to the General Membership for approval at the February meeting.

Cancellations: In case of bad weather conditions we will send an email notice as soon as possible to all those with internet access. A notice will also be posted with MyFM 98.9 radio station in Simcoe.

Members are encouraged to check these postings. **Norfolk Woodlot Owners Association:** the NFN will again have a display at the NWOA's AGM on March 2. This year we'll have a joint display with NCEE.

Ontario Nature Youth Summit: The NFN is looking for a suitable young person from Norfolk County to sponsor for this event.

The next Board Meeting will be held on April 26, 2016.

Upcoming NFN

2016 Winter/Spring Events

Backus Woods in Winter:

Tree Ecology Hike

Sunday, March 6th, 1 pm to 3 pm

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 P.M.

Dress for the season!

Contact Bernie at 519-428-0706.

Guest Speaker:

The Natural Wonders of Iceland

Tuesday, March 8th, 7:30 pm

Charles Baldwin, from the Otter Valley Field Naturalists, will talk about Iceland, land of fire and ice. Geologically, Iceland is very young and is still in the midst of creation. Its barren landscapes demonstrate the creative power of the four basic elements — earth, air, fire and ice.

Guest Speaker:

Tackling Invasive Plant Species

Tuesday, April 12th, 7:30 pm

Linda Read is part of the Elite Invasive Squad of High Park Stewards in Toronto.

High Park is an untouched, never farmed oak savannah with an intact seed bed. So you never know what will pop up! Much is being done to restore and protect its unique ecosystem. Garlic mustard is being dealt with in new and innovate ways. Other species of concern include Norway maple and buckthorn.

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 2016

Input dead line:

Friday, March 25, 2016

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

2015 - 2016 NFN Executive with contact & project information

		All 519-	
President	Inga Hinnerichsen	875-5601	daveinga@live.ca
Vice-President	Len Grincevicius	428-6796	portie_1989@eastlink.ca
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Secretary	Eleanor Chithalen	582-4382	eleanor.chithalen@gmail.com
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Field Events	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