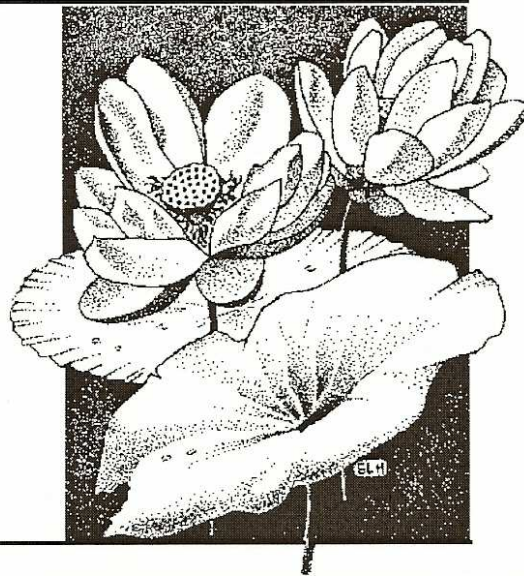


Lotus

NEWSLETTER

of the

NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



June

2007

Meeting Notes:

April 2007 Meeting

Baillie Birdathon: Mike McMillan will be our official NFN Birdathoner this year.

NFN News Article: Nina Cameron's article on the NFN and the Tree ID workshop at Backus was published in Port Rowan Good News. Other club members are encouraged to get the word out about the NFN using brochures, word-of-mouth, etc.

Norfolk - 2008 Forest Capital of Canada: Dolf Wynia announced that it is now official that Norfolk County will be the Forestry Capital of Canada for 2008. A coalition of groups have met to organize events. Long Point Foundation has agreed to act as the banker for this project. NFN could organize some joint field trips with others groups with a forest-theme.

Attendance: More than 60 people attended the April meeting.

April Speaker:

Lorraine Johnson from Toronto was the guest speaker. Lorraine is the author of several books on native plant gardening and environmental issues and a frequent contributor to Canadian Gardening magazine. Currently working on a book on Carolinian Canada, she lives and gardens in Toronto and visits Norfolk County often.

Lorraine began her inspiring and informative presentation on native plant gardening with an overview of the benefits of native plant gardening and then used her own excellent slides to illustrate the wide variety of native plants suitable for planting in typical garden settings.

First, she outlined some of the practical benefits of bringing native wildflowers into your home landscape including: native plant gardens are low-maintenance, require less water than conventional gardens, don't require synthetic chemicals, and don't need expensive equipment to establish or maintain them.

Other important benefits of including native plants in your garden are that you are contributing to biodiversity and are more likely to attract native wildlife.

Lorraine also highlighted some less tangible benefits of gardening with native species. Successful native plant gardening means working in harmony with nature rather than trying to alter nature and engaging in a constant battle with pests, soil conditions, and the weather. Using native species forces the gardener to learn about your home place rather than use a cookie-cutter approach to creating a garden. While a wildflower garden isn't a substitute for a natural area, it can be used to engage the interest of others and spread the word about conservation. In urban areas you may also need to educate your neighbours and municipal officials.

In starting a wildflower garden, Lorraine recommended that you look at local wild areas for guidance on how to "build habitat" for particular species. The needs of woodland plants are very different from those found in open meadows.

Woodland plants require shade, and a leaf-enriched soil with lots of compost and mulch. In addition to describing some of the many species of showy spring-flowering wildflowers and the smaller number of summer-flowering woodland plants which are suitable for woodland gardens, Lorraine also pointed out several native woodland grasses, ferns and sedges with interesting foliage features.

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Inside This Issue

Report- Native Plant Gardening (April Speaker)	1
Report- The Lives of Bats (May Speaker)	2
Article- Have A Summer Treasure Hunt!	3
Article- NFN Baillie Birdathon 2007	6
In Memorium: John Miles	4
Notice- Upcoming Meetings and Outings	8
Notice- Next Lotus Input Deadline	8
Notice - NFN Information and contacts	8

Native meadow and prairie wildflowers require sunny conditions and reach full bloom during the summer months. Most meadow and prairie plants can tolerate dry, nutrient-poor soil conditions and Lorraine recommended not adding compost or manure to native meadow or prairie gardens. Lorraine described more than 20 native wildflowers that could be included in a meadow or prairie garden, but cautioned that some of these species (e.g. fireweed) will spread, and others (e.g., cardinal flower and bottle gentian) require moist conditions.

Lorraine emphasized the importance of buying from reputable nurseries which propagate their own plant material and do not sell plants that have been collected from the wild. In this area we are very fortunate to have some excellent local sources of native plants including the local *Pterophylla* and *Acorus* nurseries near Walsingham, the *Otter Valley* nursery in Elgin County and the *Sweetgrass* nursery on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford. Native plants seeds are available from various sources including seed exchanges (such as North American Native Plant Society, <http://www.nanps.org>) and native tree species can be found at the annual Guelph Arboretum plant sale.

Further reading:

More information on gardening with native plants is available in Lorraine's books including the following two which are available through the Norfolk County Library:

- *The New Ontario Naturalized Garden: The complete guide to using native plants.*
- *Grow wild! Native plant gardening in Canada and northern United States.*

NFN members might also be interested in reading two other books by Lorraine which deal with gardening within a much broader environmental context:

- *Green Future: How to Make a World of Difference.*
- *Tending the Earth: A Gardener's Manifesto.*

May 2007 Meeting

Director Nominations: During our next (September) meeting, directors will be elected for 2007-2008.

Nominations should go to Audrey Heagy or Peter Carson.

BSC Birdathoner - John Acorn: An invitation was extended to hear John speak at BSC on May 23. John is known as "The Nature Nut" and has published a number of field guides.

Forest Capital of Canada Coalition: Anne Wynia told us that the coalition established to plan activities in Norfolk during 2008 has designed a special logo and self-guided tours are being developed for the forestry station, which will celebrate its 100th year in 2008. NFN will have field trips, possibly in conjunction with the Health Unit's promotion to encourage more walking. Woodlot owners will be involved and tree planting outings are anticipated.

NFN Baillie Birdathon: Mike McMillan announced he will be doing his NFN birdathon Sat. May 12 and requested support with his targets of 100 species and \$1,500.00. (report inside)

Discussion and Wrap-up: Peter Carson emphasized the importance of the NFN Baillie Birdathon to the club; it is our major annual fundraiser.

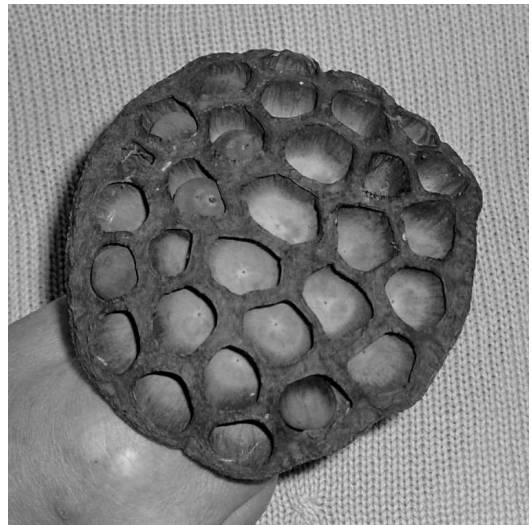
Peter also encouraged all members to identify columns or subjects they would like to see appear in Lotus and to contribute items and articles to Lotus. Please contact Peter or Anne Davidson with your suggestions.

"Show and Tell": Spring bird migration was well underway by May 8; sightings included Indigo Bunting, Northern Shrike, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Baltimore Oriole and two Orchard Orioles, a Scarlet Tanager that was a life bird for the observer, a pair of Pileated Woodpecker, 50-60 newly hatched goslings by the river in Simcoe and a muskrat. We were also told that loons could be heard flying over in the very early morning - until 5:30 or 6:00 a.m.

The lack of bees at flowering trees has been noticed - there have recently been several media reports about hives abandoned and concern about crop pollination.

Zeb Landon received a "Thank You" for looking after our coffee and refreshments at meetings.

Peter Carson and Mary Gartshore found a badly injured hognose snake they think may have come out of hibernation in one of the mild spells and subsequently froze. Diane Salter has had her first fox snake of the season on her veranda.



Mystery Seed Pod: Audrey Heagy passed around an unidentified seed pod and challenged members present to identify it. **Clues were:** **1-** too rare to be listed in Ontario but found at Rondeau, Turkey Point and Long Point; **2-** roots used to be collected and eaten. At coffee time it was identified - a Lotus.

Big Creek Walk: Members were reminded of the upcoming Big Creek evening walk on Tues. May 15, at 7 pm.

May Speaker:

Our May speaker was Lauren Hooton from UWO, who is a student of Brock Fenton, a renowned expert on bats. Lauren will be working at Long Point this summer, both at the base of the point and at the tip, researching bats for her Masters. She will be looking for differences in activity levels at these spots, using nets and acoustic monitoring to capture and locate them.



Lauren began by discrediting common myths about bats which make people think they are "scary" and "evil". There is no such thing as "blind as a bat"; they have excellent vision even though they use echos to locate prey. Bats do not "get caught in your hair"; they can tell where you are. The only bloodsucking species are in Central and South America; there are none in "Dracula country".

We were surprised to learn that, of the 4,000 species of mammals on earth, 1,000 of them are bats - a quarter of all known mammals. They are found world-wide with the exception of only the high Arctic and Antarctica; bats have diverse diets that include insects, fruit, nectar, frogs and fish.

Of the 17 species found in Canada, Ontario has 8, all of which are insectivores. Most are communal, others are solitary; three species migrate while the others hibernate. In order of size (smallest to largest), Ontario has:

Eastern Small-footed (3-5 grams) - the smallest in Canada

Northern Long-eared (4-7 g) - hawks (flying insects) or gleans (non-flying insects)

Little Brown (4-11g) - the most common in North America

Eastern Pipistrelle (5-7 g) - has a distinct snout and three-coloured fur

Eastern Red (8-18g) - solitary; roosts in foliage; migrates

Silver-haired (9-13g) - silver-tipped fur; solitary; migrates

Big Brown (10-20 g) - no relation to the Little Brown; easily trained to eat mealworms (used in lab work).

Hoary (18-39 g) - solitary; roosts in foliage; migrates

Bats emit frequent very fast (milliseconds) chirps at a very high frequency (we cannot hear them). The echo from the chirps identifies the presence of objects and prey. The chirps become faster and faster as prey is located and become a "feeding buzz".

Most bats collect at "swarming sites" in late August to mate and most species have one pup the following June. The Hoary and Eastern Pipistrell bear twins and the Eastern Red may have 1 - 5 young. Pups are naked and blind at birth, totally dependent on the mother for 2 - 3 weeks.

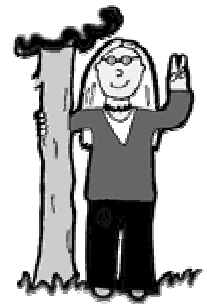
Hibernating bats are in a state of torpor and breathe about once an hour. It takes about half an hour to bring their temperature up to normal. If a hibernating bat is disturbed, it will likely die.

Roosts are in houses, caves, abandoned mines, trees (very high up - unlikely to be seen), and bat boxes with slats on the bottom.

Bats frequently live for more than 30 years and have been known to live to age 41. How many exist is not known. The communal species may congregate in enormous swarms (millions of bats) but little is known about numbers of the solitary species.

At Long Point this summer, mist nets and harp nets will be used to capture bats; acoustic monitoring will be used to identify their presence. Each species has a distinctive call which identifies it on the spectrograms.

Terri Groh thanked Lauren for her talk and expressed interest in visiting during the summer. It may be possible to arrange a visit to the project.



Have A Summer Treasure Hunt!

By Anne Wynia

Although nothing has been formally decided or initiated there is some discussion about having another **Great Tree Hunt**. Some of you will remember the Norfolk Field Naturalists with Brian Craig organized a **Great Tree Hunt** about 15 years ago which was an initiative to find the biggest and/or oldest tree of each species in Norfolk, particularly Carolinian species. Some of the old trees have died of old age or from other causes so it is probably timely to do it again.

Since this is such a beautiful time of year to be out walking and the leaves are now out on the trees, we thought it would be a good opportunity for members and others, who might wish to participate, to be on the lookout for large and old trees. They may be on your own property or along your favourite walking path or you may spot one while driving in Norfolk. It is much easier for most of us to identify trees when the leaves are on so it is a good time to start. It would be appropriate to have it done before Norfolk is designated as the **Forest Capital of Canada 2008**.

IF YOU FIND ONE that you think might qualify make a note of its exact location, its species, some measurements if possible e.g. height, diameter, age. Criteria will have to be established and we will let you know, if and when, that happens. In the meantime, we can enjoy the challenge of finding special trees and letting our members know about them.

The Ontario Heritage Tree Alliance is a new project to identify and conserve old and remarkable trees. It was created by a partnership of the Ontario Forest Urban Council and Community Heritage Ontario. Heritage trees are a community landmark because of their unique physical, cultural and historical significance. Linking with this group might be an option. Some of the trees we identify might also qualify for their designation. Having just completed a successful and fun day of Birdathon, identifying trees will be a sure find as they will not fly away!

Enjoy Tree Scouting!

**In Memorium
John Baxter Miles
1942 - 2006**



John Miles on an OFO trip to Norfolk, at the 3 bridges on Concession A, South Walsingham, June 19, 2004.

Photo by: Jean Iron

John Miles and NFN

By Audrey Heagy

The passing of John Miles in December 2006 at the age of 64 was a major loss to the Norfolk Field Naturalists and the Ontario naturalist community. John got hooked on birding at the age of 13 during a Hamilton Junior Nature Club field outing in November 1955 when they found a group of Long-eared Owls roosting in trees. He must have got hooked on naturalists clubs at the same time as he went from being an avid junior naturalist in Hamilton to become a dedicated naturalist.

Over his lifetime, John was actively involved in many different local naturalist clubs as his work for the CIBC bank took him to various communities throughout southern and northern Ontario. If there wasn't already a local naturalist club, he would start one!

John's association with the Norfolk Field Naturalists began after he was transferred to Jarvis in the late 1980s. The first reference to John Miles in the *Lotus* newsletter was as the leader for a new "gull watching" outing to the Niagara River in November 1989. The next issue of the *Lotus* announced that John was establishing a new Christmas Bird Count, centered on Fisherville and covering Haldimand County, a region of Ontario that had not been "actively worked by birders" prior to John's arrival.

John was first elected to the NFN Board in 1990 as a director-at-large, and was quickly promoted to Director of Field Events and Vice President. This was followed by a stint as President and then several more years as the Director of Field Events.

Because of his experience as a young naturalist under the tutelage of several excellent mentors in the Hamilton Naturalist Club, John was a strong supporter of organized field outings as an effective means for experienced naturalists to share their knowledge and their curiosity about natural history with novice naturalists of all ages. The 1998-99 NFN program of field outings was typical of those John coordinated, consisting of a very full schedule of 34 field events covering a wide range of topics from amphibians and astronomy to waterfowl and wildflowers. John acted as the trip leader for no less than 8 of these outings.

John led several NFN field outings each year including an annual January driving tour looking for hawks and owls in Haldimand County, spring and fall walks in Selkirk Park, a summer outing to the Townsend sewage lagoon, and the November outing to the Niagara River to look for gulls and waterfowl. Highlights of many of these outings are recorded were the *Lotus* over the years. The trip reports convey the qualities that made John an outstanding leader- his expertise as a birder and naturalist, and his sharing of his passion for birding and natural history with others.

John never assumed that a species was too common or too familiar to be worth mentioning; but, when something unexpected showed up on one of his trips, everyone knew that they had seen something out of the ordinary. Pat Long's report on a July 1992 trip to the Townsend Sewage Lagoons mentions the many different birds seen or heard, from Mourning Doves to Short-billed Dowitchers. The report includes some of the additional details that John would have pointed out to the trip participants, such as the pair of Savannah Sparrow raising a cowbird nestling as part of their family, the fact that hearing a Marsh Wren at this location was a first, and the distinction between the musical notes of a Song Sparrow compared to the throatier Vesper Sparrow melody.

Reporting on the January 1999 Hawks and Owls of Haldimand outing, Adele Gaunt wrote: "*Suddenly, our ever calm, unruffled, non-excitabile field event leader broke into a gallop as he raced back to his car waving his arms around and shouting "It's a Tufted Duck! It's a Tufted Duck!"*. He retrieved a telescope and confirmed his findings. Apparently this was believed to be the first sighting of Tufted Duck on Lake Erie. As an amateur birder this was quite an education for me".

Many of the field trip reports mention John's amazing ability to spot an odd bird in amongst a flock of common species, such as spotting a Gadwall in a flock of 200 Mallards, or a White-rumped Sandpiper in a flock of Dunlin. Peggy McArthur reporting on the January 1997 Haldimand Hawk and Owl trip report noted: "*I had long suspected that John must have incredible eyesight and I am now sure. Frequently, he would identify a lone bird among others that I could only hope to identify once I got my binoculars on it; but usually I needed the scope to be sure.*"

Although many of John's trips were bird outings, he was an all-round naturalist, familiar with the common and unusual plants, trees and wildlife of his surroundings. Anne Wynia reported the November 1997 outing to Selkirk Park during which, in addition to identifying every bird seen or heard, John pointed out many unusual plant species and a Devonian rock outcropping with fossilized corals. "*John has spent so much time outdoors that I'm convinced that all our members can learn something from him on such a field trip.*"

One of the downsides of leading an organized field outing is that the weather and the birds don't always cooperate; this didn't seem to deter John. His own report of the November 1990 Niagara River Gull Watching Trip said: *"At Niagara we found the upper river devoid of interesting birds. Less than 10 Bonaparte's Gulls were present around the Peace Bridge where normally you would see several thousand at this time of year"*. Fortunately later in the day the group was able to spot Black-legged Kittiwake, Franklin's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Little Gull in the downstream section of the river despite reduced visibility due to a snow shower. John summed up the outing as *"another successful day on the Niagara River"*.

The Fisherville CBC that John initiated in 1989 attracted birders from across southern Ontario to document the impressive numbers of hawks and owls wintering on the agricultural grasslands of the Haldimand Clay Plain. Lingered migrants were often found at sites along Lake Erie and once in a while a real rarity would turn up, such as the Gray Flycatcher found at Taquanyah on December 14, 2003 - a first for Canada. This CBC often had some of the highest counts in Ontario, even Canada, for species such as Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawk, Eastern Screech-owl, Short-eared Owl, and Red-bellied Woodpecker.

John's interest in bird records extended beyond finding new species and spotting record numbers. For years, he maintained a database of Noteworthy Bird Records for Haldimand and Norfolk Counties. Seasonal summaries documenting rare birds and first and last arrival dates were regularly published in the Lotus during the late 1990s. Computers and the internet now make compiling bird sightings much easier, but getting birders to report their sightings or maintain records continues to be a daunting task. John's bird records database was recognized as a valuable source of information but it has not been carried on by anyone.

John also shared his extensive knowledge of the bird life of this region as a regular contributor to the Lotus. In addition to various notes about rare birds he had found, Birdathon reports, and many field trip reports, John published many interesting and informative articles in covering topics such as **Bird Migration** (Oct. 1994), **Birding in Haldimand** (August 1995), **Short-eared Owls** (Oct. 1995), **Bruce Birding** (June 1996), **Early Birding Experiences (of an Early Birder)** (Dec. 1996), and **Birding in Haldimand: A Self-guiding Driving Tour** (Dec. 1997).

John's outstanding contributions to our organization over the past two decades were typical of his level of involvement in other natural history, birding and bird banding organizations in Ontario. During his lifetime he served as president of several other naturalist clubs and the Ontario Bird Banding Association and founded the Haldimand Bird Observatory. He also had several other interests and hobbies and was a dedicated husband and father. He is survived by his sons Steven and James.

When I think about John's many legacies, the one I find most impressive is the number of people who have been fortunate enough to have participated in a field trip led by John. Over the past 51 years, the "ripple effect" of John's participation in that 1955 Hamilton naturalist club outing, led by George and Glen Myers, has surely spread to touch thousands of people throughout Ontario. No doubt many of them got infected by John's love of nature and enthusiasm. Hopefully, many of them also have followed John's example and taken up the torch to become trip leaders, serve on Boards, contribute to newsletters or take on other active roles in their local naturalist club.

John Miles

By Al Robinson

John asked me several years ago to audit the Haldimand Bird Observatory books. Two years ago, I asked why he needed so much black dye and a metal pot. He explained that the nets faded and had to be dyed to make them more invisible. I asked if he had dyed them in the bush and he said "No. At home on the kitchen stove." He explained the dye ate a hole in the pot and ran through the stove onto the carpet and was quite a mess to clean up. Of course, I laughed and said it would be.

Lessons from a Mentor

By Alf Senior of The Hamilton Naturalists' Club



Early in the morning of December 14, 2006, a Screech Owl in Hagersville let out one plaintive note to mark the passing in the local hospital of a mutual friend. The passing of John Miles leaves but another void in the nature study community. For me John was a role model in my youth. I will convey some personal memories in the hope of helping others and myself deal with his loss.

I first met John as a Hamilton Naturalists' Club Jr. member in the late 1950's; for kids like me, he became a teacher and "big brother" who taught about life. Many of his lessons and life lessons had to do with his role as a bird bander, such as Sunday afternoons sitting in the Dundas Marsh listening to Buddy Holly on the transistor radio, waiting for a bird to hit the net, and learning about nature.

A highlight of my adolescence was a spring break trip to Long Point Bird Observatory (in 1965?) and the many lessons John taught me. John enlisted me and another young birder, Gordon, to help out on a Brown Creeper project. The question was *"Do males arrive first and females later?"*. The plumage of both male and female is similar, so we had to go to the ROM and find an answer. After an afternoon of measuring study skins, we decided that we had our tool. The week-long trip in April covered the early part of Brown Creeper migration studied at the at the Long Point Breakwater banding station. John would band and the young birders would assist. Not only did John teach us about birds he taught about life and I learned some life skills. For example my family never played cards; our church did not condone it. There is little else to do after dark but light the gas lamp and play cards. I am a slow learner and it took time to teach me to follow suit.

Often I encounter people who, when they discover I am from Hamilton, ask if I knew John Miles. Many speak of him as a hike leader and many naturalists remember his leadership role in their clubs. The last time I saw him in the field was as a participant on a moth trip, with his dry sense of humour. After the leader talked about field guides, John remarked: "There are too many pages of LBM's (little brown moths)."

Many will miss John Miles but we must remember his lessons: enjoy nature; share it with others; learn what you can; teach what you can; take a club leadership role if you can.

Finally, if you miss John, go out and look up; very high up there is a raptor circling that embodies John's spirit.

John Miles
By Harry Barrett

I first met John Miles in the early 1960s when we reported our sightings for the Long Point Bird Observatory's Long Point Christmas Census. For several years John was its dedicated Compiler. He became a very special friend and I miss him. When I registered the Woodhouse Christmas Census for the Norfolk Field Naturalists in 1968, John was an eager participant, asking for the eastern side of the territory as his special domain.

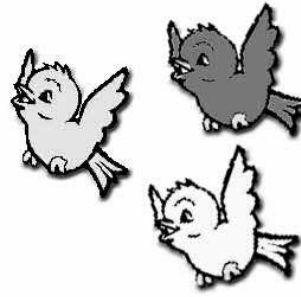
At the end of count day, Dec. 26, 1968, he arrived about 5:30 pm with a tired and hungry crew of young birders from Hamilton in tow. Much to Hellen's consternation, they burst into the kitchen, shedding outer clothing and mud as they went, and charged into the front room to give me their report of the day's findings. Toby and his sisters were not impressed, as they walked over his new train set and other Christmas toys, quite oblivious to their existence. It was my family's first experience with John's "one-track-mind" obsession with birding. All he could talk about were the numbers and species of ducks seen, a Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Subsequent years were less hectic as, forewarned, Hellen met John and his entourage at the door to suggest leaving their boots on the mat, offering a hot drink before they reported their day's findings. On Dec. 26, 1970, John arrived with two young fellows, all bubbling over with excitement at having counted 126 Meadowlarks, a Red-headed Woodpecker and 30 White-crowned Sparrows. One of the fellows with John kept unsuccessfully trying to get his attention.

Finally John looked around and said: "Where is Willie?" to which the fellow replied "That's what I'm trying to tell you. You said we would pick them up at that bridge at five o'clock." John, with a rather perplexed expression on his face, replied "Oh! Yeah. I guess I better go and get them." It was now well after six o'clock. By seven o'clock John had returned with two very cold, hungry young fellows who were the other half of the crew John had started the day with at 6.30 a.m. They seemed especially glad to see us all as John continued with his account of the day's highlights to anyone willing to listen.

NFN Baillie Birdathon 2007

By Mike McMillan



It was Sat., May 12 and, as usual on Birdathon Day, I left home in darkness heading toward Walsingham to join Jeff and Darlene Sauder and their friends, Jack and Linda. The day dawned cold and the wind was so strong we failed to hear any wild turkey gobbles from Jeff and Darlene's deck. However, once it was light enough a few of the usual early birds appeared at the birdfeeders: Grackles, a Blue

Jay, a Baltimore Oriole. White-throated Sparrows, a male and female Cowbird, and an Indigo Bunting; even a Ruby-throated Hummingbird came for an early breakfast.

Soon we left to head for the Old Cut Bird Banding Station on Long Point. Down the road we stopped to pick up Diane Salter to bring our party up to six people. On the causeway, Tree Swallows and Purple Martins were dipping and diving over head while a Mute Swan was spotted in the marsh.

At the bird banding station we warmed up with coffee and a huge doughnut compliments of the BSC. Staff. While waiting for the first guided tour to begin, two Green Herons flew over. Once again Ron Ridout was our tour leader. We began by walking to the nearby marsh hoping to hear or catch a glimpse of a rare Yellow-headed Blackbird which had been in the marsh for a couple of weeks. This bird is normally found in the west but an occasional one does show up in Ontario. The wind off the bay was very strong and cold, and it seemed that a poor birding day lay ahead - no yellow head to be seen. We quickly retreated back into the wooded area behind the station for shelter.

Then things started looking up. The sun came out, the temperature went up, and the birds became active. On this walk which extended into the provincial park and lasted about an hour and a half a number of warblers were seen. These included Black-and-white Warbler, Canada Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and an American Redstart. But everyone agreed that the best warbler sighted was a beautifully coloured Cape May who sparkled in the sunlight. A Scarlet Tanager was sighted in a tree in the park. Birds seen flying overhead were two Sandhill Cranes, a couple of Double-crested Cormorants, a Loon, a Herring Gull and a Ring-billed Gull. As we passed the marsh on our way out of the park again, we searched again for the Yellow-headed Blackbird. This time we were rewarded. Although it was a considerable distance away I did catch a glimpse of the yellow head while the bird was flying.

We then got into our vehicles and followed Ron Ridout to several nearby locations. A brief stop at Lee Brown Sanctuary produced an American Wigeon and some Canada Geese. A treat was in store next. Ron had received special permission to take our group into the Bayou Club (a private hunt club). This was a wonderful property with excellent wildlife habitat. Our lengthy walk through resulted in numerous bird sightings which included Bay-breasted Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Orchard Oriole, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Downy and Hairy Woodpecker, and a glimpse of a flying

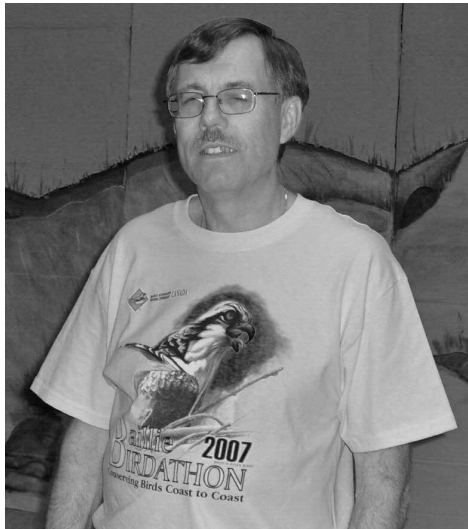
Request for 2007-2008

**We need
Field Trip Leaders
and
Suggestions for Field Trips
(locations or topics)
Please contact Audrey Heagy
by June 30, 2007**

email: aheagy@bsc-eoc.org

phone: 519-586-9464

Red-headed Woodpecker. The best sighting here was a Pileated Woodpecker perched for some time on the side of a dead tree. As we approached, it flew, giving everyone a good look. For me this was a life bird.



Mike McMillan, our NFN Baillie Birdathoner

Photo by: Anne Davidson

Our next stop was on the 1st concession at Big Creek. In a pond here we saw a Gadwall, an American Coot and some Mallards. On some mud flats was a Semipalmated Plover. While we were looking, a Short Billed Dowitcher flew in and landed. Nearby was a Kingfisher and an Eastern Phoebe while Bank and Rough-winged Swallows were swooping over the pond. Cliff Swallows were flying under the bridge, where they were probably nesting.

From here we moved on to the Backus woods where everyone enjoyed a lengthy look at a Hooded Warbler. Other than hearing a Great Crested Flycatcher and a Cerulean Warbler this location produced nothing else.

At this time our small group separated from the main group to head back to Jeff and Darlene's place for lunch. While enjoying lunch on the deck we saw Song Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, a Chipping Sparrow and an Eastern Towhee on the ground beneath the bird feeders. A quick walk around Jeff and Darlene's property produced a Field Sparrow, a House Sparrow and a House Wren.

Once back on the road we stopped at the Timpf property to see a Gray Catbird and an Eastern Bluebird. Further down the side road in a ploughed field we picked out two Vesper Sparrows. Then it was off to Peter and Mary's property to check out their field of prairie grass for a Grasshopper Sparrow. For the second consecutive year we failed to spot one but we did see both a male and a female bluebird and an American Kestrel that was perched on a birdhouse at the top of a high pole.

From here we headed to BSC for a rest and a good chili dinner compliments of the BSC Staff. While enjoying dinner, a Great Blue Heron flew over the wetlands down below. Later, from the deck, we were able to identify Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, a Spotted Sandpiper, and a Least Sandpiper in the wetlands.

Then we joined Ron Ridout and a sizeable group for a tour of BSC property. On our way to the back of the property a Bald Eagle flew over giving everyone a wonderful look. It was close enough that the white head was clearly visible. From the top of the bluff overlooking the bay we saw Ruddy Duck, Redhead, and both Greater and Lesser Scaup. A Caspian Tern flew over. The rest of the walk produced a Red-eyed Vireo and a Willow Flycatcher in a brushy area beside the wetlands.

To finish the day everyone got in their vehicles and headed to the causeway for a walk along the dyke. It was a productive walk. A Palm Warbler was spotted in the reeds along with a couple of Marsh Wrens. The reeds also produced a Swamp Sparrow and a Northern Waterthrush. We saw a Bufflehead and a Hooded Merganser on the water. From out in the marsh a Least Bittern was heard but not seen. Another highlight here was a pair of Sandhill Cranes with a young crane.

It was almost dark when we arrived back at Jeff and Darlene's house but our birding wasn't quite finished. We walked out into a field to hear an American Woodcock. That was my final bird of the day.

When it was all done I had seen 104 species and heard 5 others for a total of 109 species identified. – not bad for a day that began windy and cold.

Once all the money is in I will have raised over \$1700, by far the most I have ever raised. That's because many of you supported this BSC fund raiser very generously. Remember also that a portion of this money will come back to our club. It was an honour this year to be the official birder for NFN. Thanks to all of you for your support. Official receipts will be mailed to you by Bird Studies Canada later this year.

Editor's Corner:

Here's another suggestion for something to do this summer. I had an email from Alicia Salyi saying how pleased she was that her photo of the Winter Tree Hike had appeared in the April Lotus and said that our use of her picture gave her the incentive to consider a public showing of her work. She is now compiling several of her nature photos into a show that will be at the Simcoe Branch of the Norfolk County Public Library for the entire month of July. You might want to visit this (free, library) exhibit; the photos being displayed were all taken in Norfolk County. If you want to know more about this, Alicia can be reached at asalyi@uoguelph.ca

**Remember to
Send your Director Nominations to
Audrey Heagy or Peter Carson**

And - have a wonderful summer!

Upcoming NFN Outings

Sat. June 23/07

10am

Canoeing on Big Creek

Contact: Audrey Heagy
519-586-9464



Sat. July 7/07

Long Point

Butterfly Count

Contact: Doug
Timpf
519-586-9964



Sun. July 8/07

1 pm

**Butterflies and
Bluebirds in an
Old Field**

Contact: Audrey
Heagy
519-586-9464
Family-friendly.



Sun. Aug. 12/07

9pm to Midnight

**Moths and Meteors
At Pterophylla**

Contact: Peter Carson
or Mary Gartshore
519-586-3985



Next NFN Meeting

Tue. Sept. 11/07 7:30 pm

AGM with

Election of Directors

For 2007 - 2008

NFN Meetings

Norfolk Field Naturalist meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month from September to May. The election of Directors takes place at the September meeting.

Meetings take place at the Simcoe Seniors Centre on Pond Street. They are free and visitors are always welcome. The doors open at 7:15 pm and the program begins at 7:30 pm.

Next issue of Lotus:

October 2007

Input cutoff date:

Fri. Sept. 21 / 07

Club Mailing Address

Norfolk Field Naturalists
P.O.Box 995, Simcoe, ON
N3Y 5B3

About the NFN

Norfolk Field Naturalist members participate in the meetings and frequent field outings, many of which are family-friendly.

Membership fees, due in September, are \$20- Individual and \$30- Family; donations are eligible for income tax credits.

Club members receive the Lotus newsletter with articles on local natural history and club activities. It is published bi-monthly from October to June by volunteer club members. Copies of the Lotus are available at meetings but will be mailed (free of charge) to members if not picked up. Articles published in the Lotus reflect the views and opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NFN.

Guest speakers present programs on interesting and relevant natural history and conservation topics, and the NFN has taken active roles in protecting local areas of significance by participating in planning exercises.

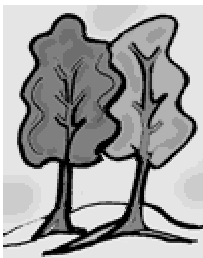
NFN members have raised funds to support protection and conservation of Backus Woods, the largest remaining stand of Carolinian forest in Canada. The NFN is also the steward of Rowanwood, the natural sanctuary for which club members helped raise funds.

A complete listing of Norfolk's flora and fauna, compiled by NFN members, can be found on the NFN website. Visit it at:

www.kwic.com/nfn

And Don't Forget To Do A Great Tree Hunt

This Summer



2006 - 2007 NFN Directors with Contact and Project Information

		all 519-	
President + Natural Areas.	Peter Carson	586-3985	gartcar@kwic.com
Vice-President	Tara Crewe	586-3791	taracrewe@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Lynda Kosalle	426-0826	kosalle@amtelecom.net
Secretary + Causeway	Vivienne Heydorn	586-9528	heydorn@amtelecom.net
Dir. + Membership	Diane Salter	586-7775	dianesalter@execulink.com
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Director -at-large	Zeb Landon	428-9021	landonz@sympatico.ca
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