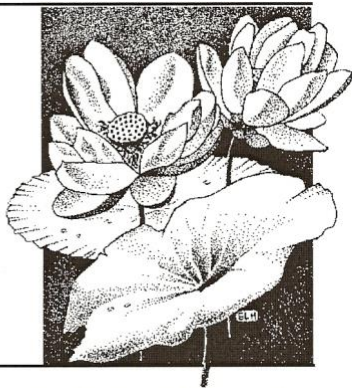


Lotus

NEWSLETTER

of the
NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



FEBRUARY 2020



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT — WOODHOUSE

Report by: Adam Timpf

These are the results of the 33rd Woodhouse CBC held on Sunday, December 15th, 2019. The Woodhouse CBC is centred seven kilometres 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.

First of all, let me thank all 45 participants for spending their time and energy and contributing important data to this count. It wouldn't be possible without you and I hope I can count on you all again next December. Also, let me thank the NFN for sponsoring the count and to my mom, Tresa, for putting on a delicious wrap-up dinner at her house. Nourishment is always needed after a full day in the field!



Hooded Mergansers

Photo by Diane Salter

Weather: The weather this year was relatively good, considering the day before was a wet and soggy mess. Temperatures started out around 0 with

some light snow, and the wind was mostly calm or light from the northeast. The lack of precipitation made for comfortable birding conditions, but the lack of snow cover made it tricky to find the birds and observers had to work for every bird they counted.

Total Species: 84 with no additional Count Week species (average for the last 33 years = 82; average for the last 10 years = 86)

Total Individuals: 14,555 (average for the last 33 years = 25,575, average for the last 10 years = 21,745)

Number of participants: 45



American Goldfinch

Photo by Larry Monczka

are not concentrated near open water or roadsides and feeders looking for food. We can only count what we can find!

The relatively low total number of individual birds seems to be a theme for many of the bird counts in Southern Ontario this year. Weather is likely the main culprit as perhaps the cold snap in November helped incentivize more birds to migrate south of the province this year. Also, the lack of snow cover means that birds

Cont'd. p.2

NEW SPECIES TO THE COUNT: None

RECORD HIGH: (previous high)

Common Raven	3	(2)
Brown Creeper	21	(18)
Winter Wren	12	(10)

RECORD LOW: (previous low)

European Starling	532	(740)
Rough-legged Hawk	1	(3)

NOTABLE ABSENTEES

Mute Swan 1st year missed since 2001

ALSO WORTHY OF MENTION

Cackling Goose	20	(2 nd highest count)
Peregrine Falcon	2	(3 rd time on count, ties previous high)
Golden Eagle	1	(3 rd time on count)
Eastern Phoebe	1	(5 th time on count)
American		
Green-winged Teal	2	(8 th time on count)
Fox Sparrow	1	(9 th time on count)
Turkey Vulture	1	(10 th time on count)
Wood Duck	1	(11 th year on count)
Hermit Thrush	1	(12 th time on count)

Horned Grebe	2	Peregrine Falcon	2	Brown Creeper	21
Great Blue Heron	3	American Kestrel	13	Carolina Wren	9
Turkey Vulture	1	Merlin	1	Winter Wren	12
Tundra Swan	10	Ring-necked Pheasant	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet	57
Canada Goose	4170	Wild Turkey	77	Eastern Bluebird	44
Cackling Goose	20	Bonaparte's Gull	58	Hermit Thrush	1
Wood Duck	1	Ring-billed Gull	140	American Robin	14
Mallard	1555	Herring Gull	112	Northern Mockingbird	1
American Black Duck	62	Great Black-backed Gull	3	European Starling	532
Gadwall	5	Rock Pigeon	525	Cedar Waxwing	11
Northern Pintail	5	Mourning Dove	613	Myrtle Warbler	7
Am. Green-winged Teal	2	Eastern Screech-Owl	4	American Tree Sparrow	187
Redhead	338	Great Horned Owl	1	Chipping Sparrow	3
Greater Scaup	75	Belted Kingfisher	3	Field Sparrow	3
Lesser Scaup	435	Red-bellied Woodpecker	41	Song Sparrow	37
Common Goldeneye	55	Downy Woodpecker	87	Swamp Sparrow	11
Bufflehead	78	Hairy Woodpecker	17	White-throated Sparrow	19
Hooded Merganser	15	Yellow-shafted Flicker	10	White-crowned Sparrow	16
Common Merganser	136	Pileated Woodpecker	1	Slate-colored Junco	804
Red-breasted Merganser	1262	Eastern Phoebe	1	Northern Cardinal	184
Ruddy Duck	2	Northern Shrike	2	Red-winged Blackbird	1
Bald Eagle	16	Blue Jay	336	Rusty Blackbird	4
Northern Harrier	6	American Crow	655	Brown-headed Cowbird	5
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	Common Raven	3	House Finch	141
Cooper's Hawk	7	Horned Lark	106	Pine Siskin	7
Red-tailed Hawk	111	Black-capped Chickadee	289	American Goldfinch	258
Rough-legged Hawk	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	10	House Sparrow	594
Golden Eagle	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	51	Total	84 Sp

Forest bathing... What? Forest bathing is the intentional practice of connecting with nature and surrounding yourself with the energy of the natural world. It is the Japanese concept of *shinrin-yoku*, or taking a slow walk in the woods and absorbing the forest atmosphere with all your senses. The Japanese word *shinrin* means forest and *yoku* means bath.

Never have we been so far from merging with the natural world and so divorced from nature. According to a study sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency (USA), the average American spends 93% of his/her time indoors. (Canadians are not far behind.) The good news is that even a small amount of time in nature can have an impact on our health. A two-hour forest bath will help you to unplug from technology and slow down. It'll bring you into the present moment and de-stress and relax you. Numerous studies have shown that *shinrin-yoku* has real health benefits.

The calming benefits of spending time in nature are well documented. They include decreased anxiety and a strengthened immune system. Japanese studies have shown that people who spend time in the forest inhale beneficial bacteria, plant-based essential oils, and negatively charged ions. Trees take in CO₂, carbon dioxide, from the air. They keep the carbon atoms and give back the oxygen. They also emit *phytoncides*, anti-microbial compounds, that the tree uses as defence against invading bacteria, fungi and insects. *Phytoncides* are also beneficial to us, they are our natural aromatherapy. The Association of Nature & Forest Therapy lists myriad benefits including reduced blood pressure, increased energy, and increased ability to focus.



A group walking in the forest

I only first heard of this practice only a short while ago. It was developed in Japan in the 1980s. Forest therapy isn't a new concept, it has roots in many

cultures throughout history. Most of us know how good it feels to be out in nature — the sounds and scents of the forest, the sunlight streaming through the leaves, the fresh, clean air all give us a sense of wellbeing. Being in nature can restore our energy, refresh and rejuvenate us. Forest bathing has now gained great popularity on the west coast.

I'll try to explain the concept of "Forest Bathing" in the following. First, you need a treed area, such as a forest. Trees are essential for this experience. Then, you open all your senses, sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, to absorb the atmosphere of the forest. Forest bathing can be practiced any time of the year and is suitable for any fitness level. It is almost a type of meditation. You may go with a group or by yourself, with or without a guide. You walk along slowly, almost aimlessly, often stopping. Forest bathing is not hiking or jogging. Unlike an interpretive nature walk, or hiking, which involves moving purposefully across terrain, forest bathing isn't about following a defined route and may span only about one kilometre in an hour or two. Rather than the destination, the point is to focus on the details of the journey. Take your time. It doesn't matter if you don't get anywhere. You are not going anywhere. You are savoring the sounds, smells and sights of nature and letting the forest in.

Leave your camera and the binoculars at home and turn off your phone. You don't need any distracting activities. You may want to sit quietly for a while. Listen to the wind whispering in the tree canopy... maybe there are birds calling or some insects buzzing. Observe the movements of the plants, trees and any living creatures around you. You inhale slowly and deeply and exhale calmly. Take in the aroma of the earth and the trees, you can almost taste the air. Touch the textures around you, the different barks of tree trunks, the leaves of the saplings and plants — leave the Poison Ivy alone! Release your sense of joy and calm. This is your sixth sense, a state of mind. Now you have connected with nature.

Recommended reading: *Forest Bathing: How Trees Can Help You Find Health and Happiness* by Dr. Qing Li

A local Tree enthusiast and "Zen Guy", to use his own words, Tommy Berencser, occasionally leads forest bathing walks in our area. Check out his "Tommy's Tree Talks" on YouTube and his Facebook page "Zen in the forest of Norfolk County"

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT — FISHERVILLE

Report by: Linda Thrower

December 28th, 2019 was certainly was not the weather of 2017, but who needs wind chills of -30°C while trying to count birds. Instead it was on the plus side with the temperature of +2 °C at midnight and no winds to speak of until later in the day. And who could complain about having open water, not the waterfowl. But even with the weather co-operating, the birds were well hidden. Did they know all of us were looking for them? Thankfully, there were a bunch of keen eyes out there and some really good species popped out here and there. So, the new high and low numbers look like this:

- Horned Grebes were found in their lowest numbers since 2001 when 197 were counted. This year, 76 were seen.
- American Wigeons are back on the count. The last time was in 2015 so finding 4 of them this year ties with their all-time high.



White-breasted Nuthatch Photo by Jan Grincevicius

- Redheaded Ducks come in with a highest number since 2014 with 750 being spotted in this count.
- White-winged Scoters had a highest number since 1994 when 8 were found. Now their number is at 6.

- Buffleheads find themselves with a new number of 187 — highest since 2003 when 171 were seen.
- Common Goldeneyes hit a number of 302, close to the highest number since 2009 when 332 were found.
- Red-breasted Mergansers number dropped since their highest number in 2012 at 18,590. Now they sit at 1,023.
- Bald eagles tied the number of 2015 — now and then 12 were spotted
- The surprising Golden Eagle seen on the count in 2016 was back this year with one being found.
- Merlins were seen in 2017, and this year one was spotted.
- Bonaparte's Gull back on the count since the last time of 2016 when 30 were seen. This year, 31 were counted.
- Ring-billed Gulls lost a few numbers since 2015 when their number was 2,378. This count found only 97.
- Even the Greater-black backed Gull were a hard find, tying their lowest number since 1990 with 3.
- Mourning Dove numbers dropped but still had their highest number since 2013 when 672 were counted; this count 339 were found.
- Long-eared owls were a hard find in 2015 when 8 were spotted. In 2019, 4 showed up.
- Red-bellied Woodpeckers were close to their high number of 47 in 2014, but on this count 41 were seen.
- Eastern Phoebe was a great surprise with only the second time being on the count since in 1993. One was found both then and now.
- Northern Shrikes come in with a highest number since 2013 when 10 were counted. In 2019, 4 is their count.

Cont'd. on p.5

- For the first time since 1989 area 6 had no Blue Jays — just a strange stat.
- American Crows in 2003 had a number of 32; this year, 131 were out flying about.
- Common Ravens that were never common in 2017, but this year 4 were counted.
- A bird that you would expect to find everywhere, the Black-capped Chickadee, had its lowest number since the count began.
- The very pretty Tufted Titmouse, with its lowest number since 2013, was 7.
- Even the White-breasted Nuthatch comes in with its lowest number since 1989, at 22.
- The very little Winter Wren is back on the count. The last time was in 2016 — one was seen then and now.
- A couple of Ruby-crowned Kinglets were spotted hanging around for the first time since 2003.
- Eastern Bluebirds seem to be on the rise with their highest number since 2016 — this year 28 were found.



- One American Pipit was spotted — a first since 2012 when the number was 7.
- American Tree Sparrows were seen in their lowest numbers since 1989 with 106 being spotted this year. Their highest number was in 1995 at 2,359.
- One Fox Sparrow was seen for the 4th time on this count; the last time was in 2012 when one was also seen.

- Swamp Sparrows were seen in their highest numbers since 2005 when 11 were found. This count 7 were seen.
- Slate-coloured Juncos come in with their lowest number at 134.
- Brown-headed Cowbirds were found with their highest number since the count began with 2,416.
- And last but not least the very pretty Purple Finch come in with its highest number since 1989 with 24 being seen on this count.



Merlin

Photo by Len Grincevicius

Well on with the weather for December 28th. The temperature at midnight was +2C_o and by 7:00 a.m. it had risen to +3C_o. By the afternoon, it was +5C_o, but then that nasty wind picked up and down it went. The visibility was about 12 km., and the winds went from 0 to 5 to 20 to 25 out of the south-west. There was no snow, and the water was open.

The rest of the data is:

Number of parties — 14; Number of feeders — 2;
Total Party Hours — 253.5; Total Driving Hours — 127.25; Total Km Driving — 1,160.7; Total Hours Walked — 132.5; Total Km Walked — 189.1

Owling Total:

Hours — 1.5; Distance — 3 km

Feeders:

Hours — 12

Cont'd on p6

A special Thank You goes out to Ontario Power Generation in Nanticoke for allowing the Fisherville Christmas Bird Count to be done on their site.

The birders whose effort I greatly appreciate are:

Area 1 — Rob Crawford

Area 2 — Cody Bassindale

Area 3 — Nancy Furber, Jerry Geuther, Aliya Gill, Sam Lewis, Rick Ludkin, Ella O'Neill, Beth Powell, Bill Read

Area 4 — Allan Aubin, Rick Dowson, George Pond

Area 5 — Janice Chard, Adam Timpf

Area 6 — Amanda Anstice, Bill Smith, Tom Thomas,

Area 7 — Hugh McArthur, Jacob Wever, Julia Wever, Randy Wilson

Area 8 — Judy Boone, Mike Boone, Michael Meade, Cody Rowe, Craic Rowe, Wonda Rowe, Rob Smuck, Bob Stamp, Terry Tait, Alan Thrower, Linda Thrower

Area 9 — Audrey Heagy, Diane Salter
Thank You One and All!

Total Number of Participants: 35

Horned Grebe	76	Bonaparte Gull	31	Northern Mockingbird	6
Great Blue heron	13	Ring-billed Gull	97	American Robin	8
Canada Geese	2404	Herring Gull	42	European Starling	1612
Gadwall	13	Gr. Black Backed Gull	3	American Pipit	1
American Wigeon	4	Rock Pigeon	360	American Tree Sparrow	106
Am. Black Duck	74	Mourning Dove	339	Fox Sparrow	1
Mallard	342	Eastern Screech Owl	3	Song Sparrow	12
Red-headed Duck	750	Great-horned Owl	4	Swamp Sparrow	7
Greater Scaup	836	Long-eared Owl	4	White-throated Sparrow	5
White-winged Scoter	6	Red-bellied Woodpecker	41	Slate-colored Junco	134
Bufflehead	187	Downy Woodpecker	60	Northern Cardinal	113
Common Goldeneye	302	Hairy Woodpecker	12	Red-winged Blackbird	10
Common Merganser	172	Eastern Phoebe	1	Common Grackle	1
Red-breasted Merganser	1023	Northern Shrike	4	Yellow-shafted Flicker	3
Bald Eagle	12	Blue Jay	219	Brown-headed Cowbird	2416
Northern Harrier	16	American Crow	131	Purple Finch	24
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	Common Raven	4	House Finch	127
Cooper's Hawk	4	Black-capped Chickadee	124	American Goldfinch	156
Red-tailed Hawk	95	Tufted Titmouse	7	House Sparrow	744
Rough-legged Hawk	12	White-breasted Nuthatch	22	White-crowned Sparrow	3
Golden Eagle	1	Brown Creeper	6	Sandhill Crane	3
Am. Kestrel	19	Winter Wren	1	Total Species	71
Merlin	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	13	Total Individuals	13,546
Peregrine Falcon	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2		
Wild Turkey	128	Eastern Bluebird	28		

⇒ The Bruce Trail Conservancy, in collaboration with Parks Canada, has enough funds to preserve Driftwood Cove – 3,276 acres of Bruce Peninsula wilderness and 8 km of Bruce.

⇒ Past issues of Bruce Trail Magazine can be found at <https://brucetrail.org/magazines>



⇒ The Strongman – Guiler Nature Reserve is a beautiful 52-acre site along Fisher's Creek and part of the Long Point Basin Land Trust. For more information, go to <http://longpointlandtrust.ca/our-lands/strongman-guiler-conservation-legacy/>

Link to Winter edition of ON Nature magazine:
http://view.publitas.com/on-nature/winter_2019/page/1

This past year, Ontario Nature:

1. Restored forest ecosystems and tallgrass meadow habitat at the [Sydenham River Nature Reserve](#);
2. Conducted a [prescribed burn](#) at the Stone Road Alvar Nature Reserve on Pelee Island to reduce the number of invasive species and promote native alvar species;
3. Acted as nature's watchdog to safeguard caribou and piping plovers.

Great Backyard Bird Count

You can join in the 23rd annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), a free and fun event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Running from February 14-17, 2020, participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings.

Go to <https://gbbc.birdcount.org> for more information or to register.

To receive selected information by email, you can sign up:
ontarionature.org

Welcome New NFN Member

2019 - 2020 Season

Christine Shepherd

We look 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 & Morgan Partridge
Guardian Computing
For hosting our website**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

The NFN Board of Directors met on January 28, 2020. The following are highlights from this meeting.

Financial: Barb Hourigan, Acting Treasurer, reported that as of December 31, 2019, the balance in our chequing account is \$8078.94. Our expenses in the next month will add up to approximately \$1550, including the hall rent, support for the Christmas Bird Count round-up dinner and our liability insurance premium, which has doubled after we decided to add the Directors' Liability coverage to the policy. We received a very generous donation of \$3000 from an anonymous donor for the Harry B. Barrett Fund. Thank you!

Environment: Various important environmental issues were discussed. Among those were the Norfolk Forest Conservation By-Law, which is now scheduled for a lengthy review. We will keep track of the progress and Cindy Presant will do a deputation on behalf of NFN when the by-law comes before Council later this year. A letter from NFN will also be submitted for information. Bernie outlined the proposed Natural Heritage Systems Strategies and ways we can work to cooperate with other local environmental groups and Norfolk County Council to make this a reality. Many other municipalities in SW Ontario already have this strategy in place. We'll keep you posted of new developments. The NFN would also encourage all members to show up at Council meetings when any of these issues are being tabled. It is of importance to show up in good numbers at these meetings to impress on Councillors and the Mayor that the Norfolk citizens are concerned. We will try to send out reminder emails about two days prior to these Council meetings.

Membership: Jan Grincevicius, our Membership Chair, reported two new members in January. This is usually a quiet time for us, so we are delighted to have new members signing up. Welcome!

The next Board of Directors' meeting will be on April 28, 2020. The report from this meeting will be posted in the Summer issue of the Lotus.

Upcoming NFN 2020 Winter Events

**Sunday, March 1, 2020,
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

Winter Backus Woods Tree Ecology Hike

NCC Ecologist, Brett Norman, will take us on a crisp 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 on the south side of Highway 24 (#218). Dress for the season. *Contact Len at 519-428-6796.*



Looking for an Exhaustive List of Norfolk Plants?

The Carolinian

Canada Coalition and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has a "List of the Vascular Plants of Ontario's Carolinian Zone (Ecoregion 7E)" which can be downloaded from: https://www.sse.gov.on.ca/sites/MNR-PublicDocs/EN/ProvincialServices/List%20of%20the%20Vascular%20Plants%20of%20Ontario%27s%20Carolinian%20Zone_Final_June_7_2017_2.pdf

This list contains information on 2,545 vascular plants known from Ontario's Carolinian floristic zone (Ecoregion 7E), including which ones are native to the area and which are introduced from elsewhere.

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 2020

Input deadline:

Friday, March 27, 2020

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

2019 - 2020 NFN Executive with Contact and Project Information

		<u>All 519-</u>	
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Treasurer	Barb Hourigan	583-1198	bbhourigan@gmail.com
Secretary	Cindy Presant	586-9258	cindy.presant@gmail.com
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Director Speaker Program and Field Events	Len Grincevicius	428-6796	portie_1989@eastlink.ca
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Director-at-large	vacant		
Director-at-large	vacant		
Lotus Editor (appointed)	Jan Grincevicius	519-428-6796	pwdtwo_2@eastlink.ca
Butterfly Counts: (appointed)	Adam Timpf	429-4147	
Christmas Bird Counts: (appointed)	Adam Timpf - Woodhouse Count	429-4147	
	Linda Thrower - Fisherville Count	905-774-1230	
Honorary President:	George Pond		
Honorary Directors:	Anne and Dolf Wynia		