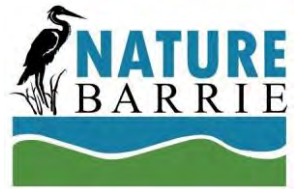


THE BLUE HERON



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Winter Issue 2024

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IN THIS ISSUE:

From the Editors	2
Trip Reports	3
Exploring the Wetlands	20
Birds in the Bush	21
World Migratory Bird Day	23
Tree Frogs	25
Member Photos	26
Upcoming Events	31

Snowy Owl
Bubo scandiacus

Photo Credit: Paul Forde

Winter Issue 2024

A Message from the Editors

As we head further into 2024, we would like to welcome our newest members, and to say thank you to all our dedicated volunteers. We have but one planet Earth, and each of us, as individuals and as part of a community, play a part in preserving our natural habitats and in conserving biodiversity.

There are many factors that influence our natural environment and pose a threat to Earth's fragile ecosystems. Amongst them are poor agricultural management practices, the illegal wildlife trade, climate change, deforestation, pollution, resource depletion, rampant consumerism, and urban sprawl.

What can one do? Reduce one's reliance on fossil fuels. Conserve energy and water. Plant a drought resistant, sustainable native plant species garden. Buy Fairtrade products such as cocoa, coffee, tea, and cotton. Switch to naturally derived household cleansers. Educate. Advocate. Volunteer. There are many ways to get involved in environmental conservation and sustainability from planting trees, to taking part in citizen science programs, signing environmental and wildlife conservation petitions, to advocating for sustainable development that includes conserving biodiversity and incorporates holistic farming practices that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and that of pesticides and herbicides.

Adapted from Pradip Shah, 2024. (Shaw, Pradip. "Green Goals for 2024: A Dual Approach to Environmental Conservation." Down to Earth, 11 Jan. 2024, <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/environment/green-goals-for-2024-a-dual-approach-to-environmental-conservation-93826>. Accessed 14 Feb. 2024.)



Trip Reports

2023-09-09 Exploring Springwater Provincial Park – Clare Holden & Lane Henderson

We couldn't have asked for better weather as a total of 23 Nature Barrie Members and friends set out to explore the beauty of this park.

We drove over to the far parking area, stopping only for a group photo, before heading over to a patch of Bleeding Tooth fungi that we had discovered the previous year. The specimens were a little past their prime but still gave us a good photographic opportunity. We had to adjust our route since there was a considerable amount of construction under way in the central clearing, including the bridge which was closed. Upon reaching the far side of the small pond, we weren't disappointed with the bird species that were making the most of this wet area. An Eastern Phoebe darted out and back from a dead snag, a Solitary Sandpiper strutted through the pond weed as a flock of Cedar Waxwings grabbed dragonflies in mid-flight.



Moving across the grassy field and parking lots, some birding enthusiasts broke away from the main group while we examined some interesting, Red-Stemmed Feather Moss and a bed of Thyme. Once again, we regrouped to head down the trail. The Red Banded Polypore from last year was still in place and was exhibiting Guttation (the bleeding out of internal fluid). Another great photo opportunity. Moving along the trail we discovered many different species of fungi; many

Autumn flowering plants and we also discussed the difference between our two native species of Banded Snails.

At the next junction we regrouped amidst a bountiful crop of Blue Silky Dogwood berries and some Riverbank Grape. This section of the trail provided a few minor challenges due to gravel washouts. One in particular, was in quite rough shape. However, adjacent to it, there was a patch of Bulblet Fern which caught our attention. The birders of the group then got distracted by the sweet melody of a Winter Wren, while others discussed the different Aster species.

Our not to be missed experience came next, as we worked our way back to the parking lot. A very large tree was blocking the route. The options were presented to the group; return to the parking lot by the road or do the limbo. What a group without exception we all shimmied our way under the deadfall. Now we had a clear path to another little pond where there was an abundance of vegetation including mosses, ferns and fungi along with some garden ornamentals from a previous generation living on this site.

2023-09-09 Exploring Springwater Provincial Park – continued

On exiting the trail, there was a general sigh, is it over? So, several of us headed back to the pond area in the hopes of finding some different bird species. That was somewhat successful, but we did discover an over enthusiastic area of Bleeding Tooth fungi, way more prolific than our first small patch. A very exciting discovery.

Bird checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S149471575>

Springwater Provincial Park, Simcoe, Ontario, CA 9-Sep-2023 8:52 AM - 11:27 AM

3.5 kilometer(s) 18 species

Canada Goose 1
Mallard 2
Ruby-throated Hummingbird 1
Solitary Sandpiper 1
Hairy Woodpecker 1
Eastern Phoebe 1
Blue Jay 4
American Crow 2
Black-capped Chickadee 6
Red-breasted Nuthatch 2
White-breasted Nuthatch 4
Brown Creeper 1
Winter Wren 1
American Robin 1
Cedar Waxwing 4
American Goldfinch 4
Common Yellowthroat 1
Yellow-rumped Warbler 1

Other Species noted and not mentioned in the report:

Plants: Autumn Olive, Interrupted Fern, Oak Fern

Fungi: Orange Jelly Spot, Chicken Fat fungi, Scalycap, Slippery Jack, Bonnet mushrooms.

Insects: Monarch, Cabbage White (8), Autumn Meadow hawk, Green Sweat Bee, Bumble Bee.

2023-09-16 Exploring the George Langman Sanctuary – David Cowl

No report submitted. eBird checklists from George Langman Marsh that morning show 24 different bird species were observed. Amongst the sightings were 4 Wilson's Snipe, 2 Palm Warblers, 1 Chestnut-sided Warbler, and 1 Common Yellowthroat.

Lane Henderson spotted a Silver-bordered Fritillary Butterfly at the end of the walk. Ken MacDonald shared that at first, it was believed to be a Crescent. It was his favourite sighting of the outing and was a butterfly species that he had only seen once before.

eBird checklists:

<https://ebird.org/canada/checklist/S150311215>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S150014261>

2023-09-16 Exploring the George Langman Sanctuary - continued



Silver-bordered Fritillary, *Boloria myrina*
Photo credit: Ken MacDonald



Golden Spindles, *Clavulinopsis fusiformis*
Photo credit: Ken MacDonald



Purple Pitcher Plant, *Sarracenia purpurea*
Photo credit: Ken MacDonald



Milkweed Tussock Moth, *Euchaetes egle*
Photo credit: Ken MacDonald



Suillus spectabilis - Photo credit: Ken MacDonald

2023-10-07 Birding Simcoe Shores – Dave Knowler

Scheduled trip leader Jim Coey was indisposed on this day. Thankfully, Dave Knowler stepped in as trip leader and did an excellent job.

Joint Nature Barrie and Ontario Field Ornithologists field trip.

Trip Leader: Dave Knowler

Number of Participants varied from 21 at our Dock Road meeting place, down to 11 for our group "twitch" to Tollendal Woods Park, which we had bypassed initially, for the Pacific Loon ... we dipped. And Phyllis and two other intrepid birders went back to Allandale Station Park and got two Little Gulls, among other birds, to cap off the day.

Here are a few names of participants whose names I can remember.

Nature Barrie Participants: Dave Knowler, Ken MacDonald, Phyllis Tremblay, Chris Evans, Ruth Noland-Flores, Judy Gordon, Morris Ilyniak, Chris Dale, Wendy Dale, Bill Hester, Joy Loverock, a young 20 something couple from Barrie, Debra & Brian Smith, a very young (8 to 12?) person with their mother, OFO Participants: Ken Morin (?) or Tony Crasto (?), Brian Roberts, my apologies to those participants whose names I have missed.

Weather was comfortable with a few sunny breaks, 10 to 12 degrees C, wind SW 10 to 20 km/h.

Unusually low numbers, and variety, of waterfowl for this time of year, but there was some variety, particularly in the passerines with a few warbler species, both kinglets and a brown creeper, 41 bird species in total. I would suggest the most notable birds were the three Swainson's Thrushes seen by many of our group, the Eastern Phoebe seen and photographed by Chris Dale, and the four warbler species, especially the Magnolia Warbler photographed by Ken MacDonald.

Birding is always fun with other birders. There is always something to learn and to share with others.

eBird Trip Report: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/206596>

eBird checklists:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S162737884>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S162737930>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S162737969>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S162738062>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S162738103>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S162743532>

Submitted by Chris Evans



Nashville Warbler @ Tyndale Park, Photo credit: Ken MacDonald

2023-10-07 Birding Simcoe Shores – continued

Species observed

Canada Goose	46
Mallard	43
American Black Duck	1
Common Merganser	7
Red-necked Grebe	5
Spotted Sandpiper	1
Little Gull	2
Bonaparte's Gull	63
Ring-billed Gull	18
Herring Gull	18
Great Black-backed Gull	3
Common Loon	43
Double-crested Cormorant	206
Great Blue Heron	1
Turkey Vulture	1
Belted Kingfisher	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2
Downy Woodpecker	1
Eastern Phoebe	1
Blue Jay	6
American Crow	8
Black-capped Chickadee	5
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	7
Golden-crowned Kinglet	10
Brown Creeper	1
European Starling	26
Swainson's Thrush	3
American Robin	2
House Sparrow	12
American Goldfinch	3
Snow Bunting	24
American Tree Sparrow	7
White-crowned Sparrow	7
White-throated Sparrow	6
Song Sparrow	2
Common Grackle	4
Nashville Warbler	2
Magnolia Warbler	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2
Black-throated Green Warbler	1
Northern Cardinal	4



Photo credit – Bill Hester



Great Black – backed Gull, *Larus marinus*
Minet's Point

Photo credit – Ken MacDonald

2023-10-07 Birding Simcoe Shores – continued



Bonaparte's Gull, *Chroicocephalus Philadelphia* @ Minet's Pt. Photo credit – Ken MacDonald



Magnolia Warbler, *Setophaga magnolia*
Tyndale Park
Photo credit – Ken MacDonald



Photo Credit: Ruth Noland - Flores

2023-10-07 Birding Simcoe Shores – continued



Photos credit:
Ruth Noland - Flores



Birding @ Tyndale Park – Photo Credit: Chris Evans

2023-11-25 Nature Barrie Waterfront Birding Tour – Paul Forde

No report submitted. eBird shows checklists for Minet’s Point, Allandale Station Park, and the City of Barrie marina on the morning of November 25. Some of the bird species observed included Mallard, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Red-necked Grebe, Pacific Loon, White-winged Scoter, and Red Phalarope.

eBird checklists:

Minet’s Point

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S155179075>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S155183399>

<https://ebird.org/canada/checklist/S155174034>

Allandale Station Park:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S155157496>

City of Barrie Marina:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S155179423>

<https://ebird.org/canada/checklist/S155174673>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S155162723>

2023-12-16 Christmas Bird Count – Bruce Wilson

Bruce Wilson is still working hard on the final Barrie Christmas Bird Count 2023 report, but below is a link that you can use to view the 2023 data in Audubon, after specifying Country, Province, City.

<https://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/CurrentYear/ResultsByCount.aspx>

Compiler: Bruce Wilson

Species Observed: 63

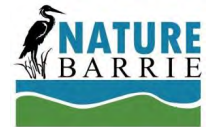
Count total: 10,371

The Barrie Christmas Bird Count took place on December 16, 2023. There were 58 In Field observers and 7 At Feeder observers.

Highest counts were observed for European Starling 1,903, Canada Goose 1,209, Mallard 1,049, and Common Merganser 924, while lowest numbers were observed for Ring-necked Duck, Black Scoter, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron (Blue form), American Coot, Iceland Gull, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Northern Flicker, Northern Shrike, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, sparrow sp., and Purple Finch each having 1 individual observed.

Some of the participants attended the Nature Barrie Christmas potluck after the count.

The next 4 pages of this newsletter are PNGS of the PDF data we obtained from Bruce, while page 15 includes the account of one of the participants of the CBC.



2023-12-16 Christmas Bird Count – continued

Count Summary Report

Printout Date: 2/25/2024

Count Name: Barrie	Count Code: ONBA	Count Date: 12/16/2023
Organizations & Sponsors: Nature Barrie	# of Party Hours: 94.55	Species reported on count date: 63

Compiler(s)

First Name	Last Name	Email	Is Primary Compiler
Bruce	Wilson	2022barriebc@gmail.com	Yes

Start & End Times

Start time	End time
06:00 AM	07:15 PM

Effort

Observers	
In Field	Total Number: 58
	Minimum Number of Parties (daylight): 17
	Maximum Number of Parties (daylight): 24
At Feeders	Total Number: 7

Party Hours and Distance (excludes viewing at feeders and nocturnal birding)			
By	Hours	Distance	Units
Foot	40.30	71.42	Kilometers
Car	54.25	623.30	Kilometers
Air			
All-Terrain Vehicle			
Bicycle			
Dog Sled			
Golfcart			
Horseback			
Motorized Boat			
Non-Motorized Boat			
Skis/Xc-Skis			
Snowmachine			
Snowshoe			
Wheelchair			

Other Time and Distance			
	Hours	Distance	Units
At Feeders	21.50		

2023-12-16 Christmas Bird Count – continued

Count Summary Report

Printout Date: 2/25/2024

Nocturnal Birding	3.70	26.20	Kilometers
Total Party	94.55	694.72	Kilometers

Weather

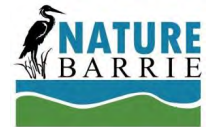
Temperature	Minimum: 1.0 Celsius	Maximum: 3.0 Celsius
Wind Direction	Southeast	
Wind Velocity	Minimum: 0.00 Kilometers/hour	Maximum: 30.00 Kilometers/hour
Snow Depth	Minimum: 0.00 Centimeters	Maximum: 5.00 Centimeters
Still Water	Open	
Moving Water	Open	

AM and PM Conditions

Cloud Cover	AM: Cloudy	PM: Cloudy
AM Rain	Light, None	
AM Snow	None	
PM Rain	Light, None	
PM Snow	None	

Checklist

Species	Number or cw	Flags	Max Number	# Of Counts	Editor Comm.
Cackling Goose	15		15/124	2	
Canada Goose	1209		2289/113	36	
Trumpeter Swan	18		35/119	17	
American Black Duck	21		375/103	52	
Mallard	1049		3237/115	51	
Ring-necked Duck	1		3/103	9	
Greater Scaup	11		73/123	23	
White-winged Scoter	8		16/123	9	
Black Scoter	1		1/124	3	
Bufflehead	107		137/105	40	
Common Goldeneye	182		2699/111	50	
Hooded Merganser	39		290/116	37	
Common Merganser	924		2257/117	47	
Red-breasted Merganser	149		149/124	35	
Ruffed Grouse	4		34/80	52	
Wild Turkey	118		449/104	33	
Red-necked Grebe	77		203/116	33	

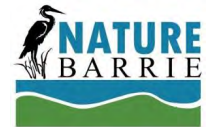


2023-12-16 Christmas Bird Count – continued

Count Summary Report

Printout Date: 2/25/2024

Double-crested Cormorant	1		17/116	15	
Great Blue Heron (Blue form)	1		5/103	30	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	cw		6/117	37	
Cooper's Hawk	4		11/117	32	
Red-tailed Hawk	5		37/99	52	
American Coot	1		20/99	17	
Bonaparte's Gull	16		1250/116	22	
Ring-billed Gull	275		3264/116	50	
Herring Gull	268		4114/100	55	
Iceland Gull	1		5/119	29	
Great Black-backed Gull	10		287/102	37	
gull sp.	23		519/104	34	
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	683		1046/119	50	
Mourning Dove	364		877/117	51	
Great Horned Owl	1		7/102	42	
Barred Owl	1		7/122	24	
Belted Kingfisher	2		4/123	38	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	16		20/122	25	
Downy Woodpecker	96		127/115	55	
Hairy Woodpecker	34		59/115	56	
Northern Flicker	1		1/124	3	
Pileated Woodpecker	10		18/117	50	
Northern Shrike	1		16/76	54	
Blue Jay	185		520/77	56	
American Crow	324		1241/101	52	
Common Raven	24		28/119	27	
Black-capped Chickadee	872		1094/115	56	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	35		49/123	55	
White-breasted Nuthatch	79		139/119	56	
Brown Creeper	7		16/106	51	
Winter Wren	2		3/123	7	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	13		45/83	53	
Eastern Bluebird	2		7/118	4	
American Robin	7		296/99	36	
European Starling	1903		5080/109	56	
Cedar Waxwing	39		284/118	38	
Snow Bunting	13		11393/75	55	
American Tree Sparrow	100		519/76	55	



2023-12-16 Christmas Bird Count – continued

Count Summary Report

Printout Date: 2/25/2024

Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored)	255		459/117	44	
White-throated Sparrow	cw		8/93	38	
Song Sparrow	1		11/118	35	
Swamp Sparrow	1		3/94	12	
sparrow sp.	1		22/89	7	
Northern Cardinal	69		103/114	54	
House Finch	64		521/92	37	
Purple Finch	1		176/85	36	
Common Redpoll	9		1665/87	42	
Pine Siskin	17		282/88	42	
American Goldfinch	521		593/116	54	
House Sparrow	80		1407/80	56	
Total Individuals	10371				
Total Species Reported	63				

cw = Reported count week
 US = Flagged as an unusual species
 HC = Flagged as an unusually high count
 LC = Flagged as an unusually low count

Species Requiring Rare Bird Reports to be Submitted to Regional Editor

Species

Special Aspects

--

2023-12-16 Christmas Bird Count – continued

Participating in the Christmas Bird Count with my family is a wonderful way to spend time together and appreciate nature's beauty. Exploring and discovering previous unknown hidden habitats basically right in my back yard always surprises me.

Lover's Creek never completely freezes and provides Mallards the perfect place to wait out the cold. Watching from the banks and making themselves heard are Cardinals, Crows, and Chickadees in abundance.



In the parks and yards of our neighbourhood, unexpected guests make counting feeder birds a little difficult!



2023-12-16 Christmas Bird Count – continued

But we can always look up!



I encourage everyone to come out and join Nature Barrie's many field trips scheduled throughout the year. Make sure to sign up for the 2024 CBC and explore your city!

Cheers

Darren and family.

2024-01-05 Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids) – Dave Knowler

On Friday morning, a group of us from Nature Barrie (Chris, Ruth, Dave Knowler, David Cowl, Lane Henderson and Clare Holden and yours truly ventured out with about 20 kids on a cold, dreary, dismal day to see how many birds we could count at the Tiffin Outdoor Education Centre
Dave started off the morning with a very informative, interesting and engaging PowerPoint presentation about the myriad of the ways to identify birds in general and how to identify specific birds such as the different woodpeckers and the nuthatches.
Thank you, Dave!

The kids joined in on a pattern poem followed by trivia riddles about the birds that do not migrate in the autumn presented by yours truly.
We then were divided into 3 groups, and I participated in the group headed up by Chris Evans. Lucky me and lucky kids as Chris provided us with a wealth of fascinating information about birds.

We went to various feeders, set up in the conservation area, but unfortunately, we did not spy as many birds, as we had hoped.
However, we did manage the help of screech owls sounds to locate a number of chickadees and white-breasted nut hatches.
At 11 o'clock we returned to the building and had hot chocolate and Dave then collected the numbers from the various groups.

Thank you, Dave, for once again for initiating, organizing, and coordinating this very worthwhile event for children in the Barrie area.

Submitted by Gwen

Species tally and totals:	
Common Merganser	12
Herring Gull	2
Mourning Dove	4
Downy Woodpecker	2
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Pileated Woodpecker	1
Blue Jay	1
Black-capped Chickadee	26
Red-breasted Nuthatch	5
White- Breasted Nuthatch	8
Dark-eyed Junco	1
American Goldfinch	17
Total Birds	80

2024-02-10 Minesing Wetlands Raptors – Brian Gibbon

Leader: Brian Gibbon, Sweep driver: Ruth Noland-Flores, eBird Recorder: Tess Jackes, eBird Trip Report
Compiler: Chris Evans.

8 to 10 cars in loose convoy with GMRS radio communications.

21 Participants in total, including those as named above:

Leader: Brian Gibbon, Dave Lord,

Wayne & Cathy Gilmour,

David Cowl,

Judy Gordon,

Jean Wilson, Marilyn Kyer,

Chris & Wendy Dale,

Robin Craig, Lauren Hughes, Phyllis Tremblay,

Sweep: Ruth Noland-Flores & Chris Evans, Wendy Charron, eBird recorder: Tess Jackes,

8 vehicles at start at Little Lake Park,

Two more vehicles joined at Fralick Road:

Teddy & Christina,

Darren & Treena MacTavish

so, there were then 10 vehicles after Fralick.

31 Bird Species observed + 2 other taxa, 1 eagle sp. Accipitridae sp. (eagle sp.) and 25 gull sp. Larinae sp.
in 6 eBird Checklists.

Here's the list of the birds and the mammals...

Bird Species observed

131 Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*
5 Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator*
13 Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*
117 Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*
2 Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis*
1 Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*
1 Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*
4 Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
4 Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*
2 Rough-legged Hawk *Buteo lagopus*
4 Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus*
4 Downy Woodpecker *Dryobates pubescens*
2 Hairy Woodpecker *Dryobates villosus*
1 Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*
1 Merlin *Falco columbarius*
2 Northern Shrike *Lanius borealis*
4 Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*
25 American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*
6 Common Raven *Corvus corax*
12 Black-capped Chickadee *Poecile atricapillus*
3 Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*
2 White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*

2024-02-10 Minesing Wetlands Raptors – continued

- 5 European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
 - 4 Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*
 - 2 Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*
 - 37 (19 + 18) Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*
 - 5 American Goldfinch *Spinus tristis*
 - 1 American Tree Sparrow *Spizelloides arborea*
 - 1 Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored) *Junco hyemalis hyemalis/carolinensis*
 - 1 Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*
 - 1 Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*
- ADDITIONAL TAXA
- 25 gull sp. *Larinae* sp.
 - 1 eagle sp. *Accipitridae* sp. (eagle sp.)

Mammals:

- Common Raccoon
- Eastern Grey Squirrel
- North American Porcupine x2

ebird Trip Report:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/202552>

ebird checklists:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S161249922>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S161158135>

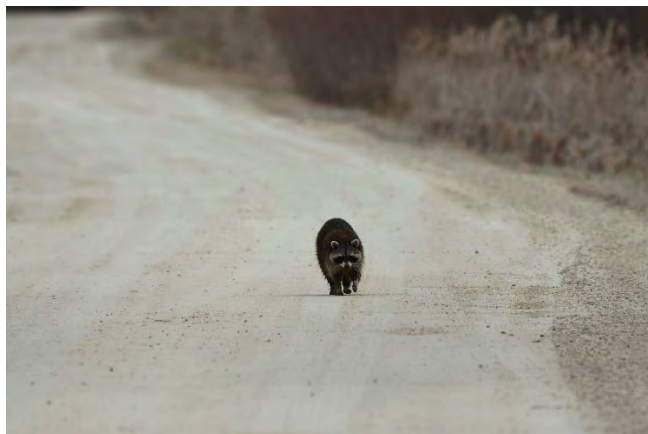
<https://ebird.org/checklist/S161158132>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S161741571>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S161158124>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S161744935>

Submitted by Chris Evans



Raccoon walking along McKinnon Road, Angus



Bald Eagle – photo credit Lauren Hughes.



Bald Eagles nest with 2 Bald Eagles – photo credit Lauren Hughes



Exploring the Wetlands: Searching for Raptors, Finding Community

Photo Credit: Lauren Hughes

By: Lauren Hughes

Our recent birdwatching trip through the Minesing Wetlands was nothing short of spectacular! Back in December, Jean and Bruce welcomed me - a novice birder - to join them for the CBC. Their warmth and kindness encouraged me to attend my first Nature Barrie trip. Fast forward to February 10, and there I was, eager to embark on a journey led by the knowledgeable Brian to search for the raptors that call this area home.

I had the pleasure of carpooling with Robin and Phyllis, who generously shared their expertise. They enthusiastically answered my questions and opened my eyes to species I had never noticed before, deepening my appreciation for the ecological diversity of our region.

Throughout the day, we were treated to an array of wildlife sightings, from goldfinches, to woodpeckers, to hawks & eagles (among others!). We even encountered a curious raccoon and a couple of porcupines. Being new to birdwatching, I was thrilled to spot several "lifers", including Northern Shrikes and Eastern Bluebirds. Each sighting was a treasure!

One particularly memorable moment was when a distant chorus of trumpeter swans filled the air, drawing our attention skyward. The elegant birds flew directly overhead, allowing us to capture a photograph of a wing tag (which we later learned belongs to a male, hatched pre-2011, banded in Washago) – a reminder of the successful conservation efforts supporting the species.

Reflecting on the day, I am filled with gratitude to have found such a welcoming group of like-minded individuals. Thank you to Brian, Robin, Phyllis, Chris, all the attendees and organizers for a truly unforgettable experience. Here's to many more adventures yet to come!

How Many Birds in the Bush?

By Claude Cox

Everyone loves a contest! This contest asks how many White-crowned Sparrows you can count in the photograph of a bush in our backyard. Before I show you the photo, here's a little background. It was May 2019. A fine spring for birds in our backyard: Sun., May 12: a male American Redstart and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Tues., the 13th: a Chipping Sparrow; the next day, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak; and on Wed., the 15th, the first Hummingbird; a few days later, Tues., May 21: 2 Red-eyed Vireos; and the next day, Fri., May 22nd, we saw the last Junco of the season—leaving after a winter in the south, where it's warm!

Back to the White-crowned Sparrows, a handsome bird to be sure. That spring we had White-crowned Sparrows from May 13th to May 24th, eleven days. Here are two photos of one of them. The 13th, the day of the photos, was cold and rainy. The Sparrows, the mini-mini-flock of them, spent much of the day in a pair of dense bushes along the west fence of our backyard. The bushes were just in bud. They would fly out of their lair (?) to get a snack (?) and then fly back in. In and out; out and in. Some of them were singing.



Photos credit: Claude Cox



If you would like to hear what the bird on the right is saying, sorry, singing, click on this link. It's a short, Cornell U., clip.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUZhASfDf-4>

Oh, I promised a contest, a skill-testing challenge. As I said, these bushes the Sparrows took to are dense. Other birds like them too, the Chickadees, House Finches, Juncos, Kinglets—the smaller birds, all seasons. The bushes are so dense that one can hardly see through them. They're not even in leaf in these photos; even so, I had trouble finding them all in the bushes and had trouble counting how many of them there were. So, here's the contest: How many White-crowned Sparrows can you find in the photo below?

(story continues on next page)

How Many Birds in the Bush?



HOW MANY BIRDS DO YOU SEE IN THE BUSH?

Photo credit: Claude Cox

I was there, trying to count how many there were in the bush when I took the photo, from a window about four metres away. Feel free to enlarge the photo on your screen; I did. In my notes that day I wrote, “six white-crowned in shrubs. photos.” So that’s a clue: there are not more than six, I think. How many do you see?” But here’s another question too. What do we learn about White-crowned Sparrows from their attraction to this bush along the west fence? (Winds blow from the NW.) I leave it with you. I’m looking at the photo again, myself ...



World Migratory Bird Day 2024 – Protect Insects, Protect Birds



Illustration by Gwen Petreman

WMBDD 's Slogan for May 11, 2024 is "Protect Insects, Protect Birds."

The State of the World's Birds Report released every 4 years shows globally that 49% of bird species are declining and 1 out of 8 is threatened with extinction!

Most of the decline has been by birds that depend entirely on insects.

Terrestrial birds that rely mostly on insects for their food sources have declined in population by an astounding 2.9 billion birds in the last 50 years.

It turns out that the birds that do not rely on insects for their main food sources have actually increased in count by 26.2 million!

Birds provide us with more than a dozen benefits!

One of the most important ecological benefits of birds is the fact that they play a huge role in the regeneration of forests.

When they fly here and there, the tree seeds they have eaten are dispersed through their droppings. The fertilizer from the poop helps new tree saplings to grow.

It turns out, birds are the very best animals we have for controlling unwanted pests that eat our crops.

They eat between 400 and 500 million tons of insects every single year!

For example, in its lifetime, a barn owl may eat more than 11,000 mice, and those mice would have consumed 13 tons of crops.

Unfortunately, as birds have been declining at an alarming rate, so has our insect population.

Ecologist Rodolfo Dirzo of Stanford University points out that of the 3, 623 terrestrial invertebrates, 42% are classified as threatened with extinction.

That works out to be 1,541.

Entomologist Martin Sorg, involved in monitoring insects, reported the following, "The decline is dramatic and depressing, and it affects all kinds of insects, including butterflies, wild, bees, and harbour flies."

He is a Scientist that pointed out there is a close relationship between the decline of insects and non-native lumber, non-native ornamental flowers, and invasive plant species, that continuously are replacing native plant communities in city landscaping, home gardens, and on farms.

Without birds, many of the ecosystems on this earth would not exist.

It has been demonstrated that insects that are herbivorous prefer native plants and do not survive well with non-native plants.

Planting many native plants, including trees and flowers, will help decrease the alarming decline of our much-needed insects such as wild bees, honey bees, bumble bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, beetles and flies.

Lots of people are surprised to learn that flies are the most important pollinators after bees.

If we increase the number of native plants, consequently we will increase the number of insects on which birds depend, and therefore begin to slow down the alarming decline both insects and birds! A native oak tree for example supports 2,300 organisms and 326 different species, and 229 species depend on oak trees for their survival. (UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology)

It is highly recommended that you check out local sources for native plants.

By Gwen Petreman

TREE FROGS

We live on the top floor of an apartment building that backs onto Bear Creek wetlands and in the fall of 2019, we were removing our flowerpots from the balcony when we noticed a dead frog in the water of one of the pots. It was a Grey Tree Frog and while it seemed to be a bit of a puzzle, I thought it probably hitched a ride in the pot from the garden centre and thought no more about it.



Fast forward to the next spring and summer. We brought our choice of plants home and yes, I did check the pots carefully for hitch-hiking frogs. There were none and so imagine Lesley's surprise when she found a frog under a cushion a few days later. It was a Grey Tree Frog and an alive one this time. I checked the pots, and we had another couple of frogs minding their own business among the leaves.

I was concerned that they might end up suffering the same fate as the previous year's frog, so I took them back down to the wood lot, the edge of which is about 40 feet from our balcony as the crow flies and placed them at the base of a tree. They were tree frogs after all.

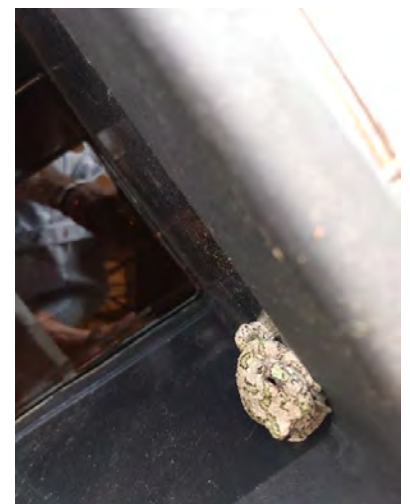
A few weeks later we discovered they were back. I'm not sure if they were the same frogs but I decided to leave them. I did bring them down to the woods in October when we brought the pots in off the balcony for the winter.

Tree frogs will climb tall buildings because they are attracted to lights and the resultant moth banquet and after dining, I suppose they hunkered down for the day in the flowerpots or under the cushions of the balcony furniture.

Our balcony had a good supply of ants and other insects until last summer when I noticed a dearth of insects and especially moths around the lights and as you might have guessed no tree frogs. I had heard them singing in the woods and had thought they might return but it was not to be.

I am not very hopeful that things will change this spring given the insect apocalypse that we seem to be going through and the virus Chytridiomycosis that is taking out our amphibians worldwide. I will keep you posted.

By James Coey



Photos credit: James Coey

MEMBER PHOTOS

2024-02-20 Minesing Wetlands, McKinnon Road access solo Nordic Ski by Chris Evans

Some shots of a light morph Rough-legged Hawk I took on a solo ski into Minesing Wetlands last week. They show most of the diagnostic features of this winter visitor from the north. In particular, the middle photo shows its feathered legs which inspired its Rough-legged moniker. It is an adult, as evidenced by its dark red irises and the dark terminal band on its tail.



Photo credit: Chris Evans

MEMBER PHOTOS – continued

2024-02-20 Minesing Wetlands, McKinnon Road access solo Nordic Ski



Photos credit - Chris Evans

MEMBER PHOTOS - continued



Trumpeter Swans - Photo credit David Cowl



Red Squirrel – Photo credit David Cowl

MEMBER PHOTOS – continued



Fledgling Great Horned Owl - Photo credit Bill Hester



Northern Harrier Juvenile – Photo credit Bill Hester

MEMBER PHOTOS – continued



Northern Pintail in Collingwood bay – Photo credit: Paul Forde



Redhead Ducks in Collingwood Harbour – Photo credit: Paul Forde



Canada Jay in Algonquin Park – Photo credit: Lauren Hughes

*Please email articles and photos to
naturebarriemembership@gmail.com.*

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars! Visit <https://naturebarrie.com> for full details on Nature Barrie monthly meetings and field trips.

March 1 - 31, 2024 Event - Bird Friendly City Poll. Visit <https://www.barrie.ca/community-recreation-environment/environment/conservation-sustainability/bird-friendly-city> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/barrieafc> for updates.

March 9, 2024, 8:30am -12:30pm Field Trip - HORNED LARKS AND OTHER HARBINGERS OF SPRING. Driving outing, depart from Little Lake parking lot (LLPL). Leader - Brian Gibbon.

March 15, 2024, 07:30pm - 09:00pm Monthly meeting - Introduction to Astronomy. Location – Northwest Barrie United Church.

March 30, 2024, 8:00am Field Trip - SPRING BIRDS IN THE MINESING FLOOD LANDS. Driving outing, meet at the South- east side of Bradford Gardens Parking lot, County Rd. 90. Leader – Jim Coey.

April 17, 2024, 7:30pm – 9:00pm Field Trip - AMERICAN WOODCOCKS. Depart from LLPL. Leader Ian Cook

April 19, 2024, 06:00pm - 09:00pm – Potluck and Annual General Meeting. Location – Northwest Barrie United Church.

April 19 - 21, 2024 Event – Barrie Spring Into Clean. Visit <https://www.barrie.ca/community-recreation-environment/community-events/spring-clean> for details.

April 20, 2024, 8:00am Field Trip - MINESING MEANDERS. Meet at Bradford Gardens, S. East side of parking lot. Leader - Henrique Pacheco.

April 22, 2024 Event – Earth Day 2024. 2024 Theme: Planet vs Plastics. Visit <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2024/> for more information.

April 27, 2024, 7:30am -12:00pm Field Trip - COPELAND FOREST. Depart from LLPL. Leader - Alex Mills.

May 4, 2024, 7:30am Field Trip - SPRING MIGRATION AT TINY MARSH. Depart from Park and Ride at Highways 26 /27. Leader - Chase Moser.

May 8, 2024, 6:30 pm Field Trip - THE GABLES. Meet at The Gables Parking lot. Leaders - Clare Holden & Lane Henderson.

Saturday, May 11, 2024 is World Migratory Bird Day. Program to be announced. 2024 Theme is Protect Insects Protect Birds. Further details will be posted on Nature Barrie, the City of Barrie, and World Migratory Bird Day websites.

May 12, 2024, 8:00am Field Trip - CHURCH WOODS. Depart from LLPL. Leader – David Cowl.

National Swift Population Roost Monitoring Blitz 2024 - May 18 (optional), May 22, May 26, May 30, & June 3. Additional counts before, between and after the above dates are encouraged! **Coordinator and monitoring volunteers required.**

May 22, 2024, 8:00am Field Trip - THE LANES OF LITTLE LAKE. Depart LLPL. Leader – Robin Craig.

Upcoming Events – continued

May 24 & 25, 2024 Event - Native Tree & Plant Sale @ Beacon Environmental. See Living Green Barrie and Pollinate Barrie websites for updates.

May 26, 2024, 8:30am – 1:00pm Field Trip - ORO-MEDONTE RAIL-TRAIL FLORA & FAUNA. Depart from LLPL. Leaders - Brian & Lynne Gibbon.

June 1, 2024, 7:30am – 3:00pm Field Trip - BIRDING CARDEN ALVAR. Depart from LLPL. Leader - Brian Gibbon.

June 2, 2024, 8.00am Field Trip - A SAUNTER IN SUNNIDALE PARK. Meet at the Dorian Parker Centre in the park. Leader - Tess Jackes.

June 5, 2024, 7:00pm Field Trip - EASTERN BLUEBIRD NEST BOX TRAIL. Meet at the mailbox parking lot at the corner of Seadon Rd and Barrie Hill Rd. Leaders – Clare Holden and Lane Henderson.

June 8, 2024, 8:00am Field Trip - PACKARD TRACT PINE-OAK HABITAT RESTORATION AND THE KIRTLAND'S WARBLER. Meet at 8.00 a.m. at the end of 9th Line, access off Hwy. 90 West. Leader – Jim Coey.

June 15, 2024, 8:00am Field Trip - Exploring the George Langman Sanctuary. Depart LLPL. Leader - David Cowl.



MEMBERSHIP

Annual fees:

Family \$30

Individual \$25

Student - Free with current student ID

Memberships run from January 1st to December 31st.

To join the BFNC, please come to one of our meetings, or complete the [downloadable PDF application form](#) and send with your payment.

Visit us on <https://naturebarrie.com/> and on  at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1470726149815044/>