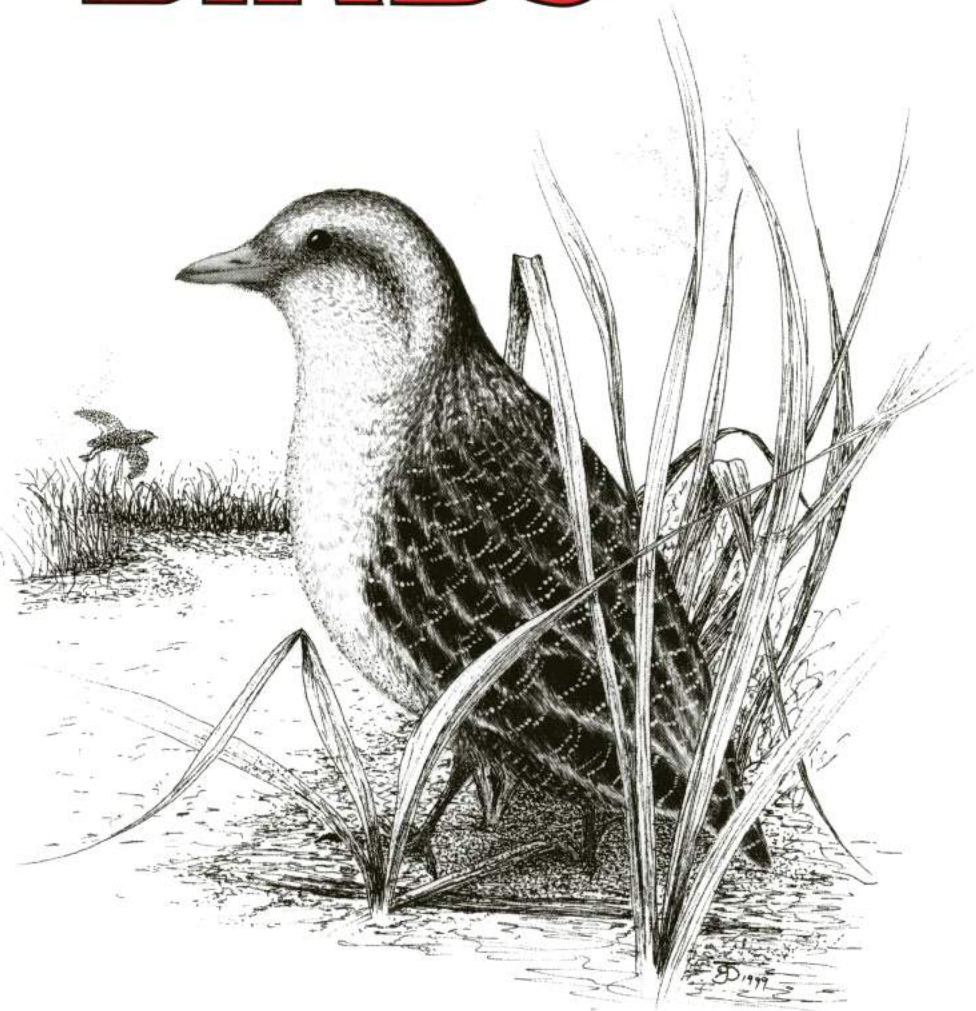


ONTARIO BIRDS



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Ontario Field Ornithologists

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Ontario Field Ornithologists is an organization dedicated to the study of birdlife in Ontario. It was formed to unify the ever-growing numbers of field ornithologists (birders/birdwatchers) across the province, and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among its members. The Ontario Field Ornithologists officially oversees the activities of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC), publishes a newsletter (*OFO News*) and a journal (*Ontario Birds*), hosts field trips throughout Ontario and holds an Annual General Meeting in the autumn.

All persons interested in bird study, regardless of their level of expertise, are invited to become members of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Membership rates can be obtained from the address below. All members receive *Ontario Birds* and *OFO News*. Please send membership enquiries to: **Ontario Field Ornithologists, Box 455, Station R, Toronto, Ontario M4G 4E1**.

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Ontario Birds

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The aim of *Ontario Birds* is to provide a vehicle for documentation of the birds of Ontario. We encourage the submission of full length articles and short notes on the status, distribution, identification, and behaviour of birds in Ontario, as well as location guides to significant Ontario bird-watching areas, book reviews, and similar material of interest on Ontario birds.

Material submitted for publication should be on computer disk, or type-written (double-spaced). Please follow style of this issue of *Ontario Birds*. All submissions are subject to review and editing. Submit items for publication to the Editors at the address noted above.

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Cover Illustration: Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*)
 by *Ross D. James*

Letter to the Editors

Gulls Eating Voles

On 2 June 1998, I watched a flock of approximately 40 Ring-billed Gulls flying low over a field on the Downsview Lands, adjacent to the Canadian National rail line in Toronto. Judging by their shifting head movements and sudden changes in flight direction, it became apparent that they were preying upon something on the ground. After spotting their prey, the gulls would "dive" and land in the tall grass. More often than not they would take to the air again with nothing for their efforts. The gulls frequently hovered a metre or so above the ground for a few seconds, waiting for the prey to reappear. During these observations, some of the gulls were seen to successfully capture and consume what appeared to be voles (*Microtus* sp.). I consider this to be unusual behaviour for Ring-billed Gulls.

Gerry Cuccio
Downsview, Ontario

Ron Tozer comments:

Ryder (1993) reported that summer studies of Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) breeding in the Great Lakes region recorded a diet of fish, arthropods and earthworms, but not small mammals. However, western populations of this gull foraging on agricultural lands were found to eat grains, arthropods, earthworms and rodents, including meadow voles (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) and deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*). Your observation of Ring-billed Gulls foraging on voles may be quite unusual in eastern North America.

Literature Cited

Ryder, J.P. 1993. Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 33 (A. Poole, P. Stettenheim, and F. Gill, editors). Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, and American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.