

# Michael D. Cadman

## *Distinguished Ornithologist*

Mark K. Peck



Figure 1. Mike Cadman (right) receives the 2007 Distinguished Ornithologist Award, presented by Mark Peck, at the 25th Anniversary Annual Convention of the Ontario Field Ornithologists on 13 October 2007.

Photo: Jean Iron.

*This note is based on remarks by Mark Peck at the Distinguished Ornithologist Award to Mike Cadman at the Ontario Field Ornithologists (OFO) Annual Convention in Leamington on 13 October 2007.*

The second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas will be published in December of 2007. It is the culmination of more than eight years of dedicated planning, organization, research, coordination, writing, editing and finally, publishing. It has

involved over two thousand volunteers, dedicated amateurs and professionals alike, working together to produce the most up-to-date information on the distribution and relative abundance of Ontario birds. The Coordinator of this Atlas, like the first Atlas 20 years earlier, was Mike Cadman. It is a difficult role requiring many hats: coordinating individuals and groups, clear and effective communication, openness to new ideas,

knowledge of current research and analysis, field expertise and time management. Mike excels in all of these areas. His commitment to the Ontario Atlas Programs, and his many other endeavours, make it easy to see the impact Mike has had in Ontario ornithology. This is why he is such a deserving recipient of the OFO Distinguished Ornithologist Award for 2007.

Mike was born in Blackpool, England. His interest in birds first began at the age of four, when his uncle took him to a soccer game. It turns out that Mike was more interested in the Rock Pigeons flying around the soccer pitch than the game itself. A birder was born!

At the age of fourteen, Mike and his brother took a week long boat trip across the Atlantic and joined their parents in Canada. They moved to Mississauga initially, eventually settling in Bramalea a few years later. Mike was the only birder in the family, but he had an understanding father who was willing to drive around to local hotspots, drop him off, and then return later in the day to take him home. Mike also often had the benefit of spending his earlier birding career with two of Ontario's best: John Lamey and Don Perks. For a young birder it was a very solid beginning.

After high school, Mike moved on to University of Guelph, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology in 1976. In 1977 he began work on his MSc. at the University of Toronto (U of T) and the

Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) with Allan Baker. Allan is a dedicated and detailed scientist who Mike credits with encouraging his love of science and research.

Mike shared his time between the U of T, the ROM and fieldwork in Virginia working on the greatest bird in the world, the American Oystercatcher. Even then, Mike was on his chosen path. While at graduate school, Mike had been reading about the recently completed British Bird Atlas, impressed with the remarkable research being undertaken in the country of his birth. In 1980, Mike successfully defended his thesis, "Age related foraging efficiency of the American Oystercatcher", and began looking for a job. A phone call to David Hussell started him in the right direction. David suggested he give Paul Eagles a call. The rest, as they say, is history. Paul offered Mike work writing up the instruction manual for the first Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. The pay was not great, \$2000.00 for a three month contract, but it was a start. Before the three months were up, Mike, with tremendous support from Paul Eagles, George Francis and Bruce Falls, was offered the position of Atlas Coordinator. It even came with a raise! The next seven years were busy. The logistics of organizing and running an Atlas in a province as large as Ontario prior to personal computers meant extensive mailings, numerous committee meetings and many late nights. Mike stayed with it though and in 1987 the Ontario

Breeding Bird Atlas was published, co-edited by Mike, Paul Eagles and Fred Helleiner, moving Ontario a giant step forward in our knowledge of the distribution of Ontario birds.

For Mike, it was just the beginning of a profession dedicated to Ontario ornithology. The Atlas was followed by the design, development and coordination of the Ontario Rare Breeding Bird Program from 1989 through 1992, under the auspices of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON). The program is still running today as the Ontario Birds at Risk program, administered now by Bird Studies Canada. Not one to rest on his laurels, Mike then took on the challenges of a whole new class of animals when he accepted the position of Coordinator, Atlas of the Mammals of Ontario in 1989 and 1990. This was followed by his appointment to Director, Atlas of the Mammals of Ontario from 1990-1992, also with the FON.

From 1992 until the present, Mike has been with Environment Canada as a Senior Songbird Biologist and the Coordinator of the Ontario Forest Bird Monitoring Program. It has been a busy time, as Mike also assisted in the design and development of the Marsh Bird Monitoring Program in 1993 and 1994, and with staffing and supervising the Ontario Peregrine Falcon survey from 1985 through 1990. He followed that work as Recovery Team Chair for Acadian Flycatcher, Hooded Warbler, and Loggerhead Shrike from 1992 through

2001, publishing reports and articles on different aspects for many of these projects. He has also spent time on several committees within Bird Studies Canada: Chair, Ontario Program Committee (1995-2001); Board of Directors (1995-2002); National Council (1995-2003); and on the Board of Directors, Society of Canadian Ornithologists (1996-1998). Throughout it all, Mike credits much of his success due to the strong support of Environment Canada staff members Dan Welsh and Rick Pratt.

Forward to 1999 and the second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. While representatives from the five sponsor organizations were busy getting things ready for the second Atlas, Mike happened to miss a meeting. Michael Bradstreet, never one to miss an opportunity, suggested to Paul Pratt that they should ask Mike to be the coordinator. After all, he was doing a lot of the initial work anyway — he might as well get credit for it. It was kind of like a mutiny in reverse. This time, however, Mike knew what he was getting into, and after taking a couple of days to think about it, and discussing the offer with his family, Mike was once again the Coordinator of the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas.

In some ways, the 2nd atlas has been easier, because much of the initial work had been sorted out during the first atlas. Mike knew he had regional coordinators he could work with, and he knew the volunteers much better this time. The committees were well organized, with Mike sitting or chairing most

of them. Personal computers and online data entry would make data collection easier and confirmation faster. Relative abundance estimates through point counts and improved GIS capabilities were valuable additions to the second atlas which were quickly accepted and supported by Mike. The big difference between the two atlases, according to Mike, was the increased complexity in the second atlas, and the challenge of relating the findings between the two atlases.

Working with Mike during this atlas, it was easy to see how important his efforts were to the success of the project. Through his education and experience, Mike brought a complete package to the table. He is a proven field biologist, his knowledge of the literature and research techniques is excellent and his communication ability is unparalleled. I couldn't help but be impressed with his handling of difficult situations, his skill at listening, his acceptance of new ideas, his ability to put aside his own biases, and his willingness to take risks in support of the atlas. It all meant a much stronger end product.

Equally important, throughout all of the dedication and productivity shown during his 28 year career, Mike has been able to maintain a balanced home life, and credits his family with much of his success. To paraphrase a line from Mike's thesis: "Finally, special thanks go to Elspeth McCarrol-Cadman, Rachael Cadman and Ellen Cadman, for their undaunted assistance and encourage-

ment at all stages of this study". When I asked his daughter, Ellen, if she was aware of all of the great work her Dad had done, she told me — "not completely, but I am very proud of him. He is a great Dad".

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of all OFO members and Ontarians everywhere, it is time to recognize the outstanding contributions of Michael Cadman during a career in support of Ontario ornithology. It is my great pleasure to present the Ontario Field Ornithologists Distinguished Ornithologist for 2007 to Michael D. Cadman.

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### Selected Publications

- Schalk, G., H.J. Dewar and M.D. Cadman.** 2002. Recommendations for assessing trends in forest bird populations based on the experience of the Ontario Forest Bird Monitoring Program (FBMP). *Journal of Field Ornithology* 73 (4):340-350.
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- Friesen, L.E., M.D. Cadman and R.J. MacKay.** 1999. Nesting success of neotropical migrant songbirds in a highly fragmented landscape. *Conservation Biology* 13(2):1-9.
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- Cadman M.D. and A.M. Page.** 1994. Status of the Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, Ottawa.
- Page, A.M. and M.D. Cadman.** 1994. Status report on the Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virens*). Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, Ottawa.
- Cadman M. D. and A.M. Page.** 1994. The status of the Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, Ottawa.
- Cadman M.D. and A.M. Page.** 1994. The status of the Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*) in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, Ottawa.
- Cadman M.D.** 1990. Update status report on the Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) in Ontario. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Toronto.
- Cadman, M.D.** 1990. Breeding bird atlas projects and natural area protection. *Natural Areas Journal*: 10(2):84-87.
- Books:**
- Austen, M.J.W., M.D. Cadman and R.D. James.** 1994. *Ontario Birds at Risk: Status and Conservation Needs.* Federation of Ontario Naturalists and Long Point Bird Observatory. 165 pp.
- Cadman, M.D., P.F.J. Eagles and F.M. Helleiner.** 1987. *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario.* University of Waterloo Press, Waterloo, Ontario. 617 pp.
- In Press:**
- Cadman, M.D., D.A. Sutherland, G.G. Beck, D. Lepage and A.R. Couturier.** 2007. *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001 - 2005.* Bird Studies Canada, Environment Canada, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Ontario Nature.

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