

ONTARIO BIRDS



Chris Kerrigan '93

The Journal of the Ontario Field Ornithologists

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Ontario Field Ornithologists

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 and a journal, *Ontario Birds*, hosts field trips throughout Ontario and holds an Annual General Meeting in the autumn. Current President: Gerry Shemilt, 51 Montressor Drive, North York, Ontario M2P 1Z3.

All persons interested in bird study, regardless of their level of expertise, are invited to become members of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Membership dues are \$22.00 (Annual) or \$400.00 (Life Membership). All members receive *Ontario Birds*. Please send memberships to: **Ontario Field Ornithologists, Box 62014, Burlington Mall Postal Outlet, Burlington, Ontario L7R 4K2.**

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 birdwatching areas, book reviews, and similar material of interest on Ontario birds.

If possible, material submitted for publication should be double-spaced and typewritten. All submissions are subject to review and editing. Please submit items for publication to the Editors at the address noted above.

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President's Message

A new year has begun and may it be a happy, healthy and prosperous one for each of you. Some of you will be well into "winter lists", others starting their 1994 list and many looking, studying, enjoying and not keeping score. However you pursue this great pastime - may 1994 be a great year! Do we even dare think of another year like 1993? What a year!!

The Board of Directors is very happy and excited about the soon to be released "ORNITHOLOGY IN ONTARIO". This is a book that I am sure each of you will want to own. It is a history of ornithology in Ontario written by a number of authors and edited by Martin McNicholl and John Cranmer-Byng. Many people have been involved in this publication and will be acknowledged in the book. The person who has put it all together with deadlines that were promised and met, is Phill Holder. We are very grateful to Phill for his dynamic efforts on our behalf in getting this book published.

We hope to bring forth some new events this year. If any of the members have ideas or thoughts on what they would like to see OFO do please make them known to us. We will be happy to hear from you.

The subject of ethics keeps coming up. Some people have suggested that we adopt the ABA "Code of Ethics". Others have

suggested the British system of local clubs looking after "crowd control" at a rare bird. The "Brits" also collect 1 or 2 pounds from each person attending, the money then being given to the host/hostess of the bird. Your Directors will be bringing forward a recommendation that we feel will be suitable for OFO members.

The three Editors of the Journal, Bill Crins, Ron Pittaway and Ron Tozer have done a great job on the publication. On behalf of the members, I would like to compliment them on a job well done! Thank you for getting the Journal back on track.

Please support the OBRC and send your field notes on rare sightings to the committee. This aids them in keeping up to date. The Ontario check list is going to be revised this year. With all the rarities in 1993, there are add-ons and revisions to be made.

Happy New Year and Good Birding.

Gerry Shemilt
President

Letter to the Editors

More on Common Nighthawk Migration

Peter Ewins' article in *Ontario Birds* 11 (2), regarding Common Nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor*) foraging in large flocks on migration on 23-24 August 1992, sent me scampering (strolling) for my 1992 diary.

While Ewins noticed, on the 24th, a flock of at least 110 Common Nighthawks foraging in a reasonably systematic fashion, we were seeing greater numbers! Our house, on the "old" bank of the Humber, has a view west and southwest over the Humber Valley. This location is approximately 3 km from Ewins' point of observation.

Our notes from Monday, 24 August, read as follows (in the inimitable fashion of diary shorthand):

"218 Humbercrest Blvd.":

"at 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., a hot humid day, and sun finally came out - suddenly lots of nighthawks and gulls. Looking out into valley - almost like Niagara." (reference being to Adam Beck dam, when all the gulls in flight look like a feather pillow exploded)

"1,000 plus ring-bills and herring gulls; 300 + nighthawks. The sky was filled. When the wind puffed; suddenly they'd all be over our house."

I also noted in this diary entry that Victoria questioned my judgement of 300 + nighthawks and

thought easily 800+. Also, we noted that there must have been a hatch of some insect. Periodically, these insects were rising up over our house.

Whatever our counting abilities, it is apparent that this is a highly significant number of nighthawks. Unlike Ewins' observation, there seemed to be no systematic method of foraging. Most importantly though, this indicates that on 24 August 1992, a large number of nighthawks were in flight, and that this movement was occurring, at least in the west end of Toronto, on quite a broad front.

These initial observations were reported verbally at the September 1992 meeting of the Toronto Ornithological Club, and on reviewing the October 1992 newsletter of the TOC, it is also noted that ca. 450 were reported by Ray Geras (via Bob Yukich) at 6 Bernice Ave., Etobicoke. This is approximately 3 km almost due south of our observation point and about 4 km west-southwest of Ewins' observation point; further proof that a large movement of nighthawks occurred on 24 August 1992.

We are pleased that *Ontario Birds* publishes notes of this nature, and hope that our response may provoke others to look at their diaries for that day!

John R. Carley
Toronto, Ontario