



ONTARIO BIRDS

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Reports of rare birds (those for which the OBRC requires documentation — see supplement to *Ontario Birds* 5 (3)) should be sent to:

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Ontario Bird Records Committee

c/o Ontario Field Ornithologists
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Burlington, Ontario
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Editorial Policy

Ontario Birds is the journal of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Its aim is to provide a vehicle for the documentation of the birds of Ontario. We encourage the submission of full length articles or short notes on the status of bird species in Ontario, significant provincial or county distributional records, tips on bird identification, behavioural observations of birds in Ontario, location guides to

significant birdwatching areas in Ontario, book reviews, and similar material of interest on Ontario birds. We do not accept submissions dealing with "listing". Distributional records of species for which the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) requires documentation must be accepted by them before they can be published in *Ontario Birds*.

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Cover illustration: Black-billed Magpie by *Ed Poropat*

Note from the Editors

With the publication of this issue of *Ontario Birds*, a new triumvirate of editors begins its work. In the past, OFO has always had a single editor, who has been assisted by other members in various ways. As the new editorial team, we hope that we will have the continued assistance and support of the membership as we edit forthcoming issues.

We believe that there will be several advantages to having an editorial board composed of three members. One of these is that the work load for each individual will be manageable. Also, since we live relatively close to one another, we will be able to meet from time to time to discuss plans for new features and edit manuscripts. Hopefully, since we all have different contacts and acquaintances, we will also be able to tap a wider array of potential sources for articles, notes, and features.

In this issue, you will find the second in our series of Bird Finding Guides, this one on the Rainy River area. Also, we are initiating two new regular features: "Recognizable Forms" by Ron Pittaway, and "Photo Quiz" by Doug McRae. We are working on a few other ideas for new features, and we're looking forward to hearing your views on these and other concepts. We would like to encourage you to submit notes, articles, and letters to the editors, and to drop us a line with ideas about what you would like to see in *Ontario Birds*.

As OFO approaches the age of 10, we hope we can continue to produce a journal that is interesting and informative, and that evolves along with its readers' interests.

Bill Crins, Ron Pittaway, Ron Tozer,
Editors

Letters to the Editors

Suggested changes for *Ontario Birds*

There has been some concern expressed in recent months over the lack of material to publish in *Ontario Birds*. This is undoubtedly creating a dilemma for the board of directors of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. With fewer or thinner issues to send to members, interest wanes and subscriptions are not renewed, fewer prospective members are attracted and the cycle repeats itself. Without some changes, *Ontario Birds* may

soon go the way of the *Ontario Field Biologist*.

What I would like to suggest is something that I know was discussed in OFO's early years, and in fact was voted down by the board of directors at the time. But considering today's circumstances, maybe it is time to give it some more thought.

Many OFO members are active in the field and make a number of interesting sightings. With all due respect to *American Birds*, very few of

these records are included in that publication, either because of lack of space allotted for the Ontario section, or because the sightings may not seem to be significant enough to warrant inclusion in a publication of continental scope. However, I believe these sightings are of interest — to Ontario birders. I believe it would be most worthwhile to institute a seasonal summary section in *Ontario Birds*. People would be interested in seeing their name and records in print while feeling they have contributed something worthwhile without having to author a full article (or even a short note). Perhaps more importantly, significant records of birds would be officially documented. At this point in time I don't think any publication serves this purpose effectively. The Federation of Ontario Naturalists' publication *Seasons* used to have a seasonal summary but that has been dropped. *Canadian Birding* mentions some interesting Ontario sightings but reporting is more incidental than complete and is certainly not refereed. And as

mentioned earlier, *American Birds* fails to perform this function. I think that if *Ontario Birds* adopted this role it would serve Ontario's birds and birders much more successfully. *I would venture to say that membership in OFO might increase as well.*

Perhaps it is too much to suggest that *Ontario Birds* be expected to also include documenting the results of the Christmas Bird Counts held in Ontario. However every year I hear of more and more people who are disgruntled with the fee that *American Birds* enforces, now up to five dollars. As an example of inequity, why should Ottawa area birders fork over \$450 for one column of data while Pacific Canal Area birders in Panama pay only \$165, yet generate three columns of data? The paying and collecting certainly takes some of the fun out of doing a CBC. And anyone who does four or more counts can more than pay for an annual membership in OFO.

P. Allen Woodliffe
Chatham, Ontario

Erratum

The article entitled "Wilson's Plover at Windermere Basin" (*Ontario Birds* 8:82-84) should have stated that it was reprinted from *The Wood Duck* 44:26-27 (1990), the newsletter of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club.