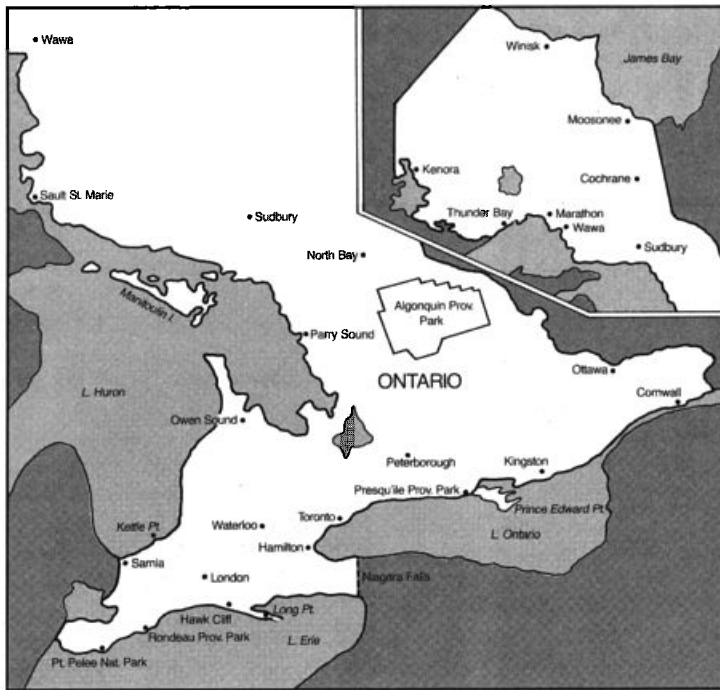


Ontario



Theo Hofmann

199 Arnold Avenue
Thornhill, Ontario L4J 1C1
(theo@hera.med.utoronto.ca)

Ontario birders were heavily involved in collecting data for the second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. It was expected therefore that a larger number of interesting sightings would be available for this report. Unfortunately, the deadline for submission for the Atlas data was too late for the results to reach the subregional editors in time for this report, and thus many could not be included. The season was significantly warmer than usual. There was very little rainfall in July, creating drought conditions that changed the habitat at stopover sites for migrating shorebirds. Extensive mudflats were created in some marshy areas, and many of the usual mudflats dried up completely. The drought also prevented farmers from making a second cut of hay, which resulted in increased abundance of field breeders like Bobolinks. Among the unusual rarities were a mid-summer Boreal Chickadee near Hamilton, a Barn Owl near Sarnia, and a Northern Wheatear at Long Point.

Abbreviations: C.A. (Conservation Area); C.W.S. (Canadian Wildlife Service); K.F.N. (Kingston Field Naturalists); Long Point (Long

Point Bird Observatory, *Haldimand-Norfolk*); M. N. R. (Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario); Pelee (Pt. Pelee N.P. and vicinity, *Essex*); W. T. P. (Water Treatment Plant). Algonquin and Presqu'île are Provincial Parks. Place names in *italics* refer to counties, districts, or regional municipalities.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Single Red-throated Loons at Pickering, *Durham* 1 Jun (GC), at Burlington, *Halton* 2 Jun (KAM), and at Bluffer's Park, *Toronto* 8–10 Jun (CH, TC, *fide* ONTBIRDS) were late stragglers, as were 2 Common Loons at Pelee 3 Jun (KS). On the other hand, a Common Loon at Kettle Point, *Lambton* 4 Jul (AR) and 2 at Bronte Harbour, *Halton* 14 Jul (GE) were probably summering nonbreeders, as were single Horned Grebes in Hamilton Harbour 24 Jun (BCh) and at Rattray Marsh, *Peel* 21–24 Jul (CSAM, CH, *fide* ONTBIRDS). At the Rainy River S.T.P., 4 Eared Grebes were observed 1 Jun (DE, m. ob.). A pair was nesting at the Emo S.T.P., *Rainy River*, 7 Jun (DE, BR, GCo) and photographed 10 Jun (G&MP, RBHS). The nest subsequently failed owing to lowered water levels (DE). Of several pairs of Red-necked Grebes attempting to nest in the Bronte Harbour Marina, *Halton*, only one pair had some success. By the end of Jul, it had 2 fledglings and some eggs still to hatch. Another pair lost all seven eggs when the nest slipped off the

floating tire (GE). They had rebuilt their nest by the end of Jul (GE, m. ob.). A total of 18 Red-necked Grebes was in the area of Bronte Harbour, *Halton* during the greater part of the period (GE), and 42 were at Rattray Marsh, *Peel* 20 Jul (CSAM, *fide* ONTBIRDS). Altogether this indicates a significant s. expansion of their range. A flock of 7 Red-necked Grebes at Nym L., *Rainy River* 22 Jul were early fall migrants (SP).

American White Pelicans were seen regularly on L. Superior at Black Bay (AE) and Mission I., both *Thunder Bay* (BR et al.).

There were 3000 imm. Double-crested Cormorants along with 20 ads. at Kettle Point, *Lambton* 30 Jun (AR), providing evidence for the increase in the population of this species in the Great Lakes Region. A good place to observe Least Bittern this year was the St. Clair N.W.R., *Kent*; at least 9 were seen flying above the cattails in one hour 22 Jul (BAM). An apparently active nest of Least Bittern was at Miller Creek C.A., *Peterborough* (EN). At Horseshoe Bay on Lake Huron, *Bruce*, 3 Glossy Ibis were present until 1 Jun (CC). Three pairs of Great Egrets returned to nest on High Bluff I. at Presqu'île for the 2nd year (C.W.S., *fide* MR). Otherwise there were few reports of Great Egrets from the Province except for 4 individuals at the Leslie Street Spit, *Toronto* 2 Jul (JSm) and one at High Park, *Toronto*, 7 Jul (RBHS), as well as the usual congregation of imm. birds in *Essex*: 184+ at Big Creek (KK, *fide* ONTBIRDS) and 200+ at Holiday Beach in June (FU, *fide* ONTBIRDS). A Black-crowned Night-Heron, a rarity for the Peterborough Area, was on a raft on the Otonabee River 14 Jul (BT). A record high number of 12 Mute Swans were in the Pelee Area 10 Jun (DW). A Brant lingered at Cobourg Harbour, *Northumberland* until 26 Jun (CEG), and another was at Driftwood P.P., *Renfrew* 5 Jul (BK, *fide* ONTBIRDS). Five families of Wood Duck at the Grand Bend W.T.P., *Lambton* were an unusual sight (AR). The Canvasback at the Leslie Street Spit, *Toronto* that provided the first nesting record for Ontario last year had abandoned the only nest with five eggs by 8 Jul this year (RBHS). Single Lesser Scaup at Hillman Marsh, Pelee 7 Jun–24 Jul (AW, et al.), at Cobourg Harbour, *Northumberland* 1 Jun–3 Jul (CEG), and at Darlington P.P., *Durham* 15 Jul (THo) were clearly out-of-season, as were single Greater Scaup at Tavistock W.T.P., *Oxford* 1–8 Jun (JH) and Mineral Springs, *Hamilton* 18 Jul (AW). Other lingering or summering nonbreeding ducks were a Ring-necked Duck at Humber Bay Park, *Toronto* 27 Jun (BY), a Long-tailed Duck at Prince Edward Pt., *Prince Edward* 27

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Jun (RTS), and a Common Goldeneye at Darlington P.P., *Durham* 2 Jul (THo). A female Common Eider on Amherst I., *Prince Edward* 1–30 Jun was helping female Canada Geese tend a nursery containing a large number of goslings (K. F. N.).

RAPTORS THROUGH TERNS

There were three occupied Osprey nests in the s Bruce Peninsula, *Bruce* during the period (JJ), more than in the last 40 years. A pair of Bald Eagles returned to nest at the Trent R. near Havelock, *Peterborough* and raised young (M N. R., *fide* DS). Young Bald Eagles also fledged from two nests in the Kingston area, *Frontenac* (K. F. N.). This represents a steadily improving situation in areas where nesting ended some 50 years ago (RW). Rough-legged Hawks were much in the news. Two summered near the Alfred W. T. P., *Prescott and Russell* (JB, GP, *fide* ONTBIRDS), while a single was at Amherst I., *Prince Edward* 15 Jun (KF, AS). In the Thunder Bay area, several were noted, very unusual for Jun and Jul (CE, RS, NE), as were 3 the Rainy River District during the period (DE). Urban Peregrine Falcons nested in nine places, three pairs in Toronto, two in Mississauga, *Peel*, and one each in Hamilton, St. Catherines, *Niagara*, London, and Ottawa. Unfortunately of the total of at least 27 eggs, only 13 young fledged and 9 survived to independence, a considerably reduced success rate compared to that of the 2000 season (MG, *fide* www.peregrine-foundation.ca).

A female Ring-necked Pheasant with 8–10 young was seen in the Upper Humber Valley in Toronto, where this species had been thought to have died out 3–4 years ago (JI, *fide* SE). A rare Northern Bobwhite was singing in breeding habitat in Middlesex during mid-Jun (PR). A Yellow Rail was heard calling in the Kabitotikwia R. marsh on L. Nipigon, *Thunder Bay* 21 Jul (NE). A rare King Rail was at Long Point 25 Jun–31 Jul+ (RR, m. ob.). A s. extension of the breeding range of Sandhill Cranes is suggested by several birds seen and heard in three places in the Peterborough area; 2 were at the mouth of the Otonabee R. flying and calling 7 Jun (MT); at Goose L., 3 were seen in early Jul (MBa); and another 3 were flying near Pigeon L. 18 Jul (BL, DS). Elsewhere 2 were at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* 6 Jun (DL). Two ads were at Sturgeon Creek, Pelee 4 Jun–31 Jul+ (AW), where they were joined by another 22 Jun (AW, et al.) and 2 more 5 Jul (AW). All 5 stayed past 31 Jul.

Late spring migrants were 15 Black-bellied Plovers at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* 7 Jun (FP) A Piping Plover was at Long Point 10–15 Jun (IR) and another at Presqu'île 2 Jun only

(JT, BF). An all-time record high count at Pelee was established by 579 Killdeer 16 Jul (AW). Single American Avocets were at Aylmer, *Elgin* 29–30 Jun (DMa, LW, *fide* ONTBIRDS), at Bond Head, *Durham* 1 Jul (ML, m. ob.), and at the Tollgate Ponds in Hamilton 22 Jul (MCR). Whereas a Greater Yellowlegs 2 Jun and one Lesser Yellowlegs 8 Jun (JH) at Tavistock, *Oxford* were considered late spring migrants, a Greater and a Lesser Yellowlegs at Pelee 22 Jun were likely early fall migrants (AW). All-time record high numbers of fall migrants were set at Hillmarsh and Sturgeon Creek, Pelee, by 44 Solitary Sandpipers, 91 Spotted Sandpipers, and 278 Least Sandpipers 16 Jul (AW). Short-billed Dowitchers were early fall migrants at Hillman Marsh, Pelee, with 4 on 29 Jun and 48 on 1 Jul (AW, DW). Three Willets at Cranberry Marsh 9 Jun (DL) were highly unusual. A Marbled Godwit was at Long Point 31 Jul (JA et al.) Flocks of 250 Ruddy Turnstones at Cobourg Harbour, *Northumberland* 5 Jun (CEG) and 600 at Prince Edward Pt., *Prince Edward* 7 Jun (RTS) were marginally late migrants for those areas, as were 15 White-rumped Sandpipers at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* 8 Jun (MB) and 3 for the Tip of Long Point 16 Jun (MH). A Pectoral Sandpiper 25 Jun was Long Point's earliest fall record by almost three weeks (JA, MH). A flock of 38 Dunlin at Ryder Ponds in Whitby, *Durham* 8 Jun was remarkable (MB). A Dunlin in breeding plumage at Presqu'île 8–11 Jul (JT, m. ob.) was probably the earliest fall migrant for the Park. An ad. female Ruff at Hillman Marsh, Pelee 28 Jul was the 11th recorded in the last 12 years (AW). An out-of-season Parasitic Jaeger was resting on the water near Port Dover, *Haldimand* 3 Jul (GR, *fide* ONTBIRDS).

A Laughing Gull was at the Tip, Long Point 15 Jun (MH). A Franklin's Gull at Wildwood Lake, *Oxford* 9 Jul was the 2nd record for the county (JH). Single Little Gulls were at Long Point 1–2 Jun (IR), at Kingsville, *Essex* 7 Jul (DW), and up to 3 were at Hillman Marsh, Pelee, in mid-Jul (AW). Little Gulls are found regularly at Port Burwell P.P., *Elgin* from Jul to Oct, but 14 individuals 19 Jul were the largest number at this site (DMa, LW, *fide* ONTBIRDS). A highly unusual nesting site of three pairs of Ring-billed Gulls was found in an open field—a bison pasture—in the Thunder Bay Area 10 Jun (GCo, M&GP, RBHS). The nests were on low piles of straw. A California Gull at Long Point 30 Jun was only the 4th record there (IR). Whereas a single Forster's Tern at Presqu'île on 2 & 6 Jun was unusual (D&IS, TB), a flock of 215 Forster's Terns 1 Jul at Sturgeon Creek, Pelee (AW) was exceptionally high, although it was close to the breeding

grounds. South of their regular breeding range were nesting Bonaparte's Gulls near Dryden, *Rainy River* (PRA, BM). A colony of Black Terns has been discovered on the Matawin R., *Thunder Bay* (KMc), and 124 were counted at the Kingsville, *Essex* waterfront 7 Jul (DW)

DOVES THROUGH CHICKADEES

A White-winged Dove at Lappe, *Thunder Bay* 28–30 Jun was a rare vagrant (D&AC, m. ob.) The observation of a **Barn Owl** in *Lambton* 28 Jul was a very rare event for s. Ontario (AR) A Snowy Owl at Erieau Harbour, *Kent* 13–15 Jun (m. ob.) was extraordinarily late. Northern Hawk Owls nested and raised 3 young in e Ontario near Alfred, *Prescott-Russell*, representing only the 2nd nesting record for the area (JB, m. ob., *fide* ONTBIRDS) Another pair nested near Verner, *Nipissing* and raised 4 young (RT, m. ob.), and six nesting pairs were recorded near Raith and Black Sturgeon L., both *Thunder Bay*, this spring (NE). All of these nestings are presumably the result of the record winter irruption of the species. Short-eared Owls were found at three new breeding locations in the Thunder Bay District (NE) A pair near Binbrook, *Hamilton* provided the first breeding record for *Hamilton* (PT) At Selkirk P.P., *Haldimand*, a juv. Northern Saw-whet Owl was banded 17 Jul (JBM) and may well represent the first breeding record for the county. A surprising number of Whip-poor-wills—15—was counted at Wainfleet, *Niagara* 2 Jul (YH). At the n. edge of their range, Whip-poor-wills were found n. of Kakabeka Falls (KM) and near Armstrong, both *Thunder Bay* (AH).

Red-headed Woodpeckers have suffered a severe decline in s. Ontario during recent years. It is encouraging, therefore, that reports of sightings and breeding have come from many different parts of the area. Thus most encouraging were 11 Red-headed Woodpeckers in the Rainy River Area 6 Jun (DE, BR), as well as probable nesting pairs at Darlington Park Road, *Durham* 14–29 Jul (ML, m. ob.), at a site near Cobourg, *Northumberland* in mid-Jun (CEG, SB), at Pinery P.P., *Lambton*, at Antrim, *Ottawa* 8 Jul (*fide* ONTBIRDS), and near Kleinburg, *York* during the period (JL). Four individuals were in Marcy's Wood at Abidon Point, *Niagara* 14 Jun (MT), and a family of 2 ads. and 2 juvs were at Humber Marsh, *Toronto* 21 Jul (GCo)

All indicators of an ongoing increase in the population, at least 7 Acadian Flycatchers were noted migrating through Pelee 4–23 Jun (AW), 5 territorial males were in the Long Point Area (IR), 4 pairs bred successfully at Skunk's Misery near Newbury, *Middlesex* (PR), and a

singing male was at Halton Region Forest 8 Jun (JO, m. ob.) A pair of Eastern Phoebes at the De Laurier House, Pelee fledged 3 young 5 Jul, the first breeding record for Pelee in many decades (AW). A pair of Western Kingbirds nested on a microwave tower at Rainy River 14 Jun–6 Jul (GCo, RBHS, G&MP, DE). Single vagrant Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were at Whitby, *Durham* 15 Jul (CA et al.) and at the Embrun W.T.P., *Prescott-Russell* 25–26 Jul (JS, m. ob., *fide* ONTBIRDS). A s. breeding expansion of Blue-headed Vireos is indicated by the observation of ads. with fledglings on Canoe L. 15 Jul and Perth Road 21 Jul; both locations are n. of Kingston, *Frontenac* (RW). N. of typical breeding range was a pair of Warbling Vireos building a nest at the waterfront at Thunder Bay 10 Jun (BM, NE). Common Ravens are expanding their range in s. Ontario. One was at Grafton, *Northumberland* 5 Jun (CEG) and another at Long Point 5 Jun (JF), the 7th Long Point area record. A Saskatchewan Horned Lark (subspecies *enthymia*) at the West Beach, Pelee 5 Jun has not previously been recorded in Ontario (AW). An unusual event took place on Pelee I., *Essex* 30 Jun when a Bullfrog swallowed a newly-fledged Tree Swallow (DW, *fide* ONTBIRDS). A flyby of 13,000 Bank Swallows in two hours at the Tip at Pelee 29 Jul (AW) may have been an unprecedented spectacle. A **Northern Wheatear** was at Hastings Drive, Long Point on 8 Jun (RC, AM, et al.) and was a first for the Long Point Area; this bird could have been part of a late spring push of the species through e. Canada. A **Boreal Chickadee** at Beverley Swamp, *Hamilton* 10–11 Jun (AW, DG et al.) was the first since 1976 in this general area (AW).

WRENS THROUGH FINCHES

A Sedge Wren at Fullerton, *Oxford* 1 Jun was the first reported in the area in 16 years (DB). An ad. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher with 3 young was near Wiarton, *Bruce* 26 Jun at the n. edge of its usual breeding range (JJ). Numerous sightings of Northern Mockingbirds, especially in the Greater Toronto area, attest to a large increase in the population, although more effort due to atlasing may account for some of the increase. A genuine increase in the population seems likely and can be accounted by a high rate of fledging, thanks to the dry summer. Confirmed breeding was reported from two sites in *Peel*, 11 sites in York, and eight sites in Toronto (RBHS, *T.O.C. Newsletter*, Sep 2001). In one 10 x 10 km square in the York Region alone, six active nests were confirmed and two more were probable (TH). As well, there was a number of single birds reported (TH, RBHS, WY). At least 3 Northern Mockingbirds were as far n. as the

Thunder Bay Area (m. ob.); the males were singing daily. Another bird was on the Sibley Peninsula, *Thunder Bay* (PC). A male Brewster's Warbler was in Kanata, *Ottawa* 8 Jul (CL, *fide* ONTBIRDS). A rarer female Lawrence's Warbler was at Dundas Valley, *Hamilton* 24 Jun (JO, m. ob.). An ad. male Northern Parula at Pelee 16 Jul was a record early fall migrant (AW, HTO). A male Blackburnian Warbler at Woodstock, *Oxford* 20 Jun was a late spring migrant (JH), whereas one at Pelee 21 Jul (PR, DMa) and another at Long Point 30 Jul (IR) were early fall migrants. More than 12 pairs of Cerulean Warblers were found at Skunk's Misery near Newbury, *Middlesex* during the season (PR). Single male Louisiana Waterthrushes in the Ganaraska Forest, *Durham* 2 Jun (RP) and at the Boyd C. A., *York* in mid-Jul (LN) were unusual. A singing male Kentucky Warbler was at Dundas Valley, *Hamilton* 28 Jun–mid-Jul (SMcG), and 2 were at Long Point 13 Jun (IR). The population of Hooded Warblers may be increasing: 10 were found at Marcy's Wood near Abidon Pt., *Niagara* 14 Jun (MT); 12 birds were reported from the Greater Toronto area; 12 breeding pairs were at Dundas Valley, *Hamilton*, for the period (BC, AW, SMcG); and at least 50 territorial males and 35 nests were recorded at Long Point (IR). Male Yellow-breasted Chats near Inverhuron, *Bruce* 6 Jun (DF) and at Ancaster, *Hamilton* 16–17 Jun (JH) were most unusual. A male Summer Tanager was present at Wilson Tract at Long Point during Jun and Jul (m. ob.). Only one Henslow's Sparrow at Roblin, *Lennox & Addington* 1 Jun (RW) was reported for the whole province. A White-crowned Sparrow was at St. Robert School, Markham, *York* 29 Jul (WY), the first summer record for the Greater Toronto area. Single Clay-colored Sparrows were singing at the Headquarters of Long Point for most of Jun (IR) and near Sauble Beach, *Bruce* 20 Jul (JJ). A Lark Sparrow was banded at Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* 8 Jun (BRod).

A singing Western Meadowlark, first heard in early Apr, was present at Clappisons Corner, Hamilton to the end of Jul+ (RD, m. ob.). Orchard Orioles were successfully nesting in both traditional and new locations. One pair was at Cobourg, *Northumberland* 21 Jun, along with a single bird (CEG). Single Orchards were banded at Selkirk P.P., *Norfolk* 17 & 26 Jul and 3 on 29 Jul (JBM), which suggested a good breeding season. Male Yellow-headed Blackbirds at the Port Darlington Marina, *Durham* 8 Jun (MB) and in Bond Head, *Durham*, 1 Jul were well outside their usual sw. Ontario range. The only noteworthy record from Algonquin for this season was a pair of Red Crossbills with 2 fledged young at Basin Lake Road 17 Jun (RSt).

Cited observers (subregional editors in bold-face): Jody Allaire, **Robert Andrie**, Ted Armstrong, Charmaine Anderson, **Margaret Bain**, Mike Barker (MBa), Tony Beck, Siegmarm Bodach, Jacques Bouvier, Dave Brown, **Evelyn Brown**, Geoff Carpentier, **Cindy Cartwright**, Barry Cheriére (BCh), D. & A. Christianson, Glenn Coady (GCo), P. Colby, Rob Copeland, Mark Cranford (MCR), Thomas Crooks, Bob Curry, **Robert Dobos**, Sandra Eadie, Carolle Eady, **Dave Elder**, Gavin Edmondstone, Aarre Ertolahti, **Nick Escott**, Bob Falconer, Dave Fidler, J. Fisher, K. Fleming, Marcel Gahbauer, D. Gardiner (DG), **Clive Goodwin** (CEG), Al Harris, Y. Henderson, Matt Hindle, Tyler Hoar (THo), **Theo Hofmann**, **James Holdsworth**, Carol Horner, Jean Iron, **Joe Johnson**, Karl Konze, Burke Korol, Bob Lemon, Chris Lewis, Markus Lise, Doug Lockrey, Joan Love, Blake A Mann (BAM), Dave Martin (DMA), Sheldon McGregor (SMcG), Craig S.A. McLaughlan (CSAM), Kevin McLaughlin (KAM), **John B Miles**, Alex Mills, Kimberly McNaughton, Brian Moore, Erica Nol, Lionel Normand, John Olmsted, Henrietta T. O'Neill (HTO), ONTBIRDS (an email listserv by Ontario Field Ornithologists; for information: www.interlog.com/~ofo), George & Mark Peck, Shirley Peruniak, Frank Pinilla, Gordon Pringle, Rayfield Pye, Brian Ratcliff, Penny Ratushniak (PRa), **Peter Read**, **Ian Richards**, **Alf Rider**, Ron Ridout, **Maureen Riggs**, Garth Riley, Bruce Rodrigues (BRod), **Doug Sadler**, J Slumkowski, A. Scott, Keith Sealy, Don & Ian Shanahan, **Roy Smith** (RBHS), Jake Smythe (JSm), R.T. Sprague, Mike Street, Rick Stronks (RSt), Rob Swainson, Richard Tafel, Monika Tan, Ben Taylor, Peter Thoem, John Thomson, **Ron Tozer**, Michael Turisk, Fred Urie, Dean Ware, **Ron Weir**, Linda Wlardaski, **Alan Wormington**, Bob Yukich, Winnie Yung.

