

BAILLIE BIRDATHON RESULTS

Date: Thursday, May 20, 2010 4:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Number of Species: 120

Team members: Terry Sprague, Borys Holowacz, Cathy Felkar, Mike Burge

The Gods smiled on us this year and we not only had sunny skies, but there was nary a stir of wind which made spotting the species in the well leafed trees much easier. Although we were down by 5 species this year, we felt good about our results, although we missed common species like white-breasted nuthatch, pileated woodpecker and green heron. It happens that way, but you do the best you can in the time allotted.

It was an optimistic beginning when at 4:00 a.m., I was successful in checking of the first 20 species or so right from my sundeck as **Bobolinks** made their first rollicking notes of the morning, albeit still quite dark. These were quickly followed by **Swamp Sparrows** and an **American Bittern** calling from our marsh and a **Wilson's snipe** winnowing overhead. The great horned owl failed to call, even though it has called faithfully every morning up to the Birdathon day.

Our first major stop was at the Kaiser Crossroad flooded cornfields where our arrival last year at this time coincided with a major influx of dunlins in eastern Ontario. This year we found none, although other Birdathoners coming in behind us tallied one or two with no problem. Populations and makeup of species changes almost by the hour, so we found it a bonus to locate a **Wilson's Phalarope** foraging in the flooded corn stubble, its contrasting black, brown and white plumage stunning against the morning sun. Feeding with it were both **lesser** and **greater yellowlegs**, **Baird's sandpiper**, **semiplumbeated plover**, **semipalmated sandpiper**, **spotted sandpiper**, **least sandpiper** and **pectoral sandpiper**. A **Virginia rail** called and a single **northern shoveler** allowed us to catch a glimpse of him before he took off in whirl of wings. At the end of Kaiser, in Prince Edward Bay, we found three species of gulls, both **Common** and **Red-breasted Mergansers**, and it was also here, in a tangle of bushes where our first warbler of the day – a **Magnolia** – was found. **Long-tailed ducks** and the almost resident **Harlequin ducks** that have been present here since April were thoughtfully lingering for us at Point Traverse and subsequently added to our list before they moved on north.

In the Point Traverse Woods, we were able to start building up our list of warblers and vireo species for the day, and were delighted to add both **Cerulean Warbler**, **Mourning Warbler** and **Canada Warbler** to the list of 22 warbler species checked off in just the Point Traverse Woods alone. What a super birding spot!

We failed in our bid to add the red-headed woodpecker at Sandbanks, but did hear a **Pine Warbler** and an **eastern wood-pewee** singing. Every stop added a few more species to the list. An **indigo bunting** at Macaulay Mountain, **clay-colored sparrow** along Gorsline Road, the day's only **vesper sparrow** along Babylon Road, a **grasshopper sparrow** along Rosseau Crossroad, an **orchard oriole** singing along Long Point Road, and a **Common Raven** calling at Point Traverse. A **yellow-bellied sapsucker** and a single **rusty blackbird** – both of them rather late for this time of the year, made their presence known at Prince Edward Point. A peculiar sighting of a **belted kingfisher** in with a flock of high circling **tree swallows** over Little Bluff added that species to our list, discovered by its call, and initially dismissed as a tree swallow with a bad cold.

As we dragged ourselves on a hunch along the Millennium Trail off Danforth Road, west of Wellington, to a well known but hidden wetland, it was here where the adrenalin kicked in once more as we added four more wetland species to our list – a **common moorhen**, **piebilled grebe**, **blue-winged teal**, and several **black terns**.

We finished the day with “refreshments” at the Waring House Barley Room Pub where a couple of us celebrated with a meal of pan seared calves liver prepared with onions, mushrooms and Madeira wine demi-glaze ! And for me, a Coors Light for a chaser. It’s sort of a tradition with me to celebrate momentous occasions with liver at a restaurant, as my wife doesn’t like to prepare it.

Thank you to everyone who cooperated in this venture, especially to my cohorts, the staff at Waring House who tolerated our celebratory laughter, and especially to all of you who sponsored me in this endeavour. Some donations have yet to arrive, but is expected to exceed \$1,500, higher than last year. This revenue will go a long way in supporting the efforts of the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory.

Our checklist for the day follows.

Terry Sprague

LOONS

Common Loon

GREBES

Pied-billed Grebe

CORMORANTS

Double-crested Cormorant

HERONS & BITTERNS

American Bittern

Great Blue Heron

VULTURES

Turkey Vulture

DUCKS, GEESE & SWANS

Canada Goose

Mute Swan

Wood Duck

Mallard

Blue-winged Teal

Northern Shoveler

Harlequin Duck

Long-tailed Duck

Common Merganser

Red-breasted Merganser

HAWKS, KITES & EAGLES

Osprey

Red-tailed Hawk

FALCONS

American Kestrel

GROUSE & TURKEYS

Ruffed Grouse

Wild Turkey

RAILS & COOTS

Virginia Rail

Common Moorhen

PLOVERS

Semipalmated Plover

Killdeer

SANDPIPERS & PHALAROPES

Greater Yellowlegs

Lesser Yellowlegs

Spotted Sandpiper

Semipalmated Sandpiper

Least Sandpiper

Baird's Sandpiper

Pectoral Sandpiper

Wilson's Snipe

Wilson's Phalarope

GULLS & TERNS

Ring-billed Gull

Herring Gull

Great Black-backed Gull

Caspian Tern

Black Tern

PIGEONS & DOVES

Rock Pigeon

Mourning Dove

HUMMINGBIRDS

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

KINGFISHERS

Belted Kingfisher

WOODPECKERS

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Downy Woodpecker

Hairy Woodpecker

Northern Flicker

FLYCATCHERS

Eastern Wood-Pewee

Least Flycatcher

Eastern Phoebe

Great Crested Flycatcher

Eastern Kingbird

VIREOS

Warbling Vireo

Red-eyed Vireo

CROWS & JAYS

Blue Jay

American Crow

Common Raven

SWALLOWS

Purple Martin
Tree Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Barn Swallow

CHICKADEES

Black-capped Chickadee

WRENS

House Wren
Marsh Wren

GNATCATCHERS

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

THRUSHES

Veery
Wood Thrush
American Robin

MIMIDS

Gray Catbird
Brown Thrasher

STARLINGS

European Starling

WAXWINGS

Cedar Waxwing

WOOD-WARBLERS

Tennessee Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Cape May Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Pine Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Cerulean Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
American Redstart
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Mourning Warbler

Common Yellowthroat
Canada Warbler

TANAGERS

Scarlet Tanager

EMBERIZIDS

Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow

CARDINALS & ALLIES

Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting

BLACKBIRDS

Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Rusty Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Orchard Oriole
Baltimore Oriole

FINCHES

American Goldfinch

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

House Sparrow