

## Spring Bird Count 2010

Cheryl Anderson

Before I begin my account of this year's birding adventure, let me thank everyone very much for their support of **Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory**. Of course, there is nothing more enjoyable than a day tripping around the County searching for birds to add to our list (some may dispute that); however, it is all in the cause of helping the birds. Migration Monitoring is one way we have of finding out how they are doing. We depend on donations and grants to fund that activity at "the point" and the money you donate is very important to the continued operation of the Bird Observatory.

My partners in birding this year, were: Walter Frey, Cecile Yarrow and George Pearce.

Walter and I decided to make a start at 4 pm on Tuesday May 18. Our plan was to hike through Point Traverse Woods to pick up any warblers that might be just settling in for the night. . Along the way we spotted **Eastern Kingbirds, American Goldfinches, Bobolinks, Eastern Phoebes, American Robins, European Starlings, Common Grackles** and **Blue Jays**. A **Great Blue Heron** flew overhead. At Point Traverse, we were rewarded with several species: **Bay-breasted Warbler, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler** as well as an **Eastern Towhee**. As I peered over the cliff the famous **Harlequin Ducks** swam into view – a young male and his harem of three females. This species does not usually visit our waters, so when my friends Sarah and John and I spotted them on Earth Day it was pretty special. Since then they seem to have hung around the Point and many birders have come from all over Ontario, Quebec and the U.S. to see them.



This picture was taken by Sarah Lowe when we originally spotted the Harlequin Ducks.

Walter had thoughtfully prepared sandwiches for us and we sat watching the water and had our supper. A **Common Tern** flew by and a small flock of **Red Mergansers** swam just off shore. Of course, there were many **Ring-billed Gulls** and a couple of **Mallards** to add to our list, as well. It was time to head home. Along the road we spotted a **Wild Turkey**. We shared the road with two flocks of **Canada Geese** and three bunny rabbits! We also saw two **Ospreys** – one had recently been on a successful fishing trip – perched on poles along Cty Rd 13. When we reached the cheese factory we paused briefly to admire a pair of **Mute Swans** with cygnets floating in the Black River. Proceeding into town we were rewarded finally with an **Eastern Meadowlark**.

On the next morning the whole team met up at 7 am at Cecile and Morris Yarrow's home on Black Rd. The Yarrows have an active **Purple Martin** colony in their back yard; as well as, nesting **Bluebirds** and **Killdeer**. As we were piling into the van to get started on our day we heard a **Wilson's snipe** calling and were able to add it to our list.

We proceeded immediately to the Big Island marsh where we picked up **Common Yellowthroat, Swamp Sparrow, Marsh Wren, Caspian Tern** and **Chickadee**. Our next stop was the Kaiser Crossroad flooded fields. There are usually two large ephemeral ponds created here every spring. This year as a result of the dry weather there is only one pond. We saw **Dunlins, Semipalmated Sandpipers, Least Sandpipers** and **Semipalmated Plovers** feeding along the edge. A quick trip to the Fifth Town Artisanal Cheese Factory allowed us to replenish our supplies while spotting two soaring **Red Tailed Hawks**.

Our plan was to carry on to Prince Edward Point – walk to the lighthouse, have lunch and then finish off the birding day with a second hike through Traverse Woods. The day was becoming very warm and our energy level was, I'm afraid, beginning to lag. Nevertheless, we stuck to the plan and straggled from the Banding Station to the Lighthouse. Along the way we were rewarded with sighting a **Bald Eagle** and, at the opposite end of the size register, **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** building a nest. There were **Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows** and **Cliff Swallows, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Oriole, Rose Breasted Grosbeak** and **White Throated Sparrow** in this little section of the point. **Double-crested Cormorants** were swimming nearby.



The picture above shows my companions at lunch.

I would love to tell you that our walk through Traverse Woods enabled us to see 10 more species of Warblers. However, it was about 30 degrees out – and the birds were wisely keeping cool and quiet. We did spot **Canada Warblers** and an **Indigo Bunting**. Other species seen were: **Brown Thrasher, Rough-winged Swallow** and **Grey Catbird**. Throughout our day we saw many **Turkey Vultures** soaring overhead – and of course **Rock Pigeons** and **Mourning Doves**.

If you have been counting as you read through my story, you will notice that our total of species seen is significantly lower than last year. Weather was a big factor this year. It was so hot that the birds were wisely hiding to keep cool. However, the good news is that with your help we raised about **\$1400**.

Thank you so much for your support.