

## Spring Bird Count 2011

May 19 was a beautiful day! The sun was shining and the birds were singing – a great day for counting. With plans for a nine to five day we started at 28 Low St. to head towards the Bird Observatory at Prince Edward Point. Our first stop was beside the road at Bird house City. We saw King Birds, Tree Swallows Cardinals, Robins, Starlings, Song Sparrows and Grackles before moving (slowly) on. As we drove down Cty Rd 17 we spotted a group of Wild Turkeys in a farm field. We made several stops along Miller Rd, but really only saw Chickadees; however, we were able to identify a Red Eyed Vireo by “song”.

We stopped by the marsh on Old Milford Rd to watch a Common Yellow Throat sing lustily. A blue heron flew off and a Mallard pair showed up from the neighbouring wetland. While we were standing by the side of the road a Killdeer complained that we were too close and a Ruff Grouse drummed in the distance. Further along, past McKinley Crossroad, we screeched to a halt to see a Bobolink in the field. It was soon apparent that there were many pairs of Bobolinks in this field and we spent several minutes watching them sing while perched on the swaying grasses. To our great delight, the performance was repeated in another field further down the road – where the Bobolinks were joined by a Clay Coloured Sparrow, a Meadowlark and a Yellow-shafted Flicker.

A “pit stop” in Milford yielded a House Sparrow to our list. Our next stop was beside the Black River. We were hoping to see a King Fisher, but had to wait for that one! At South Bay Crescent we found a large Maple Tree that had also attracted several Warblers species – Bay Breasted, Yellow, American Redstart and Magnolia. The adjacent tree was home to a Phoebe.

As we drove towards Prince Edward Point, we picked up Common and Red breasted Mergansers, White Winged Scoter, Mute Swan, Turkey Vulture, Canada Goose, Long Tailed Duck and Double Crested Cormorant. The midges were swarming and at first we thought we were driving into mist, but the spots on the wind shield soon clarified that misconception.

At the Bird Observatory we sat down for a well deserved lunch break. It was hard to sit for long though – birds were calling. We walked through the net lane pathways and back to the Bird Observatory along the road just in advance of a brief thunder shower. During our walk we saw a Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Lincoln’s sparrow, Rose Breasted Grosbeak, Northern Oriole, Brown Thrasher, Gray Catbird, and Tennessee, Nashville, Black Throated Blue, Yellow Rumped, Blackburnian, Black Throated Green and Black and White Warblers.



a Baltimore Oriole at the Dean’s feeder

Because of the thunder we decided not to walk through Traverse Woods, but proceeded to our next “pit stop” at Black River Cheese Factory. Along the way a quick stop among the midges netted a Common Loon and the King Fisher!



If you look closely you can see the midges

From the Cheese Factory we went to Jane and Tony Dean's place on Morrison Point Rd. Their feeders were heavily used by Orioles and we added Ruby Throated Hummingbird to our list. Close by we stopped at Kathy and Doug MacPherson's feeding station to record White Breasted Nuthatch. Our final destination was Beaver Meadow and it did not disappoint. At the end of a long day it was a delight to see an American Bittern as he performed his mating ritual while in the background a pair of Wood Ducks swam silently by.



A good shot of a King Fisher at Beaver Meadow



The American Bittern was barely visible

If you have been counting you will realize that I have not mentioned some other birds we saw – such as Downy Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, Rock Pigeon, Herring Gull, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Cedar Waxwing, Barn and Cliff Swallows, American Crow, Great Crested Flycatcher. In a relatively short period of time we saw 69 species which I think is quite respectable. The team this year included 2 "Guest Birders": John Brett from the Wellington Rotary Club and Bob Bird from the Picton Rotary Club. Sarah Lowe from Guelph was back with us. Our other team member was George Pearce from Belleville. We are grateful to John Riley from Burlington for keeping our records

and acting as general support person. Walter Frey was missed, but we hope he will join us again next year. Altogether we raised about \$2500!

All the pictures in this report were taken by Sarah Lowe. Below there is a “bonus picture” taken at Bob and Mary Kay Morris’ driveway.



The Killdeer’s nest is right in the driveway.

A very special THANK YOU to all my contributors – your support is vital to the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory.