



TORONTO BIRDS

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COVER PHOTO

Northern Saw-whet Owl *Aegolius acadicus*

Photo © Rick Lauzon

The cover photo of a Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) with a captured White-footed Mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*) was taken by Rick Lauzon at the Leslie Street Spit, *Toronto* on 29 October 2006.

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Toronto Birds publishes monthly bird records from the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario. It may also include articles and notes about birds, bird records, counts, surveys and birding in general, with the emphasis on the Greater Toronto Area and Ontario birds. *Toronto Birds* is distributed monthly to the active members of the Toronto Ornithological Club.

We welcome potential cover photos, or photos for use in illustrating the bird report. Please send photos to Winnie Poon winniepoon@sympatico.ca including date, location, subject, technical details and your preferred caption if any. Please do not email files exceeding 3MB without prior consultation. Please submit notes or articles to Dave Worthington worth@pathcom.com with a copy to Roy Smith rsmith@mrs.com. Bird observation records should be sent to Roy Smith.

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GREATER TORONTO AREA BIRD REPORT – DECEMBER 2007

The following are largely unchecked reports, not authenticated records. County/Region codes used in the *database* are: MT = City of Toronto; HL = Halton R.M.; PL = Peel R.M.; YO = York R.M.; DU = Durham R.M.; LO = Lake Ontario Pelagic, but full names are provided in the Report, except for locations within City of Toronto. Frequently cited place names in Toronto are abbreviated as follows: CSSP = Colonel Sam Smith Park; HP = High Park; HBP = Humber Bay Park (E or W); LSS = Leslie Street Spit; TI = Toronto Islands. Other abbreviations: HRF, DRF, YRF = Halton, Durham and York Regional Forests, respectively. TBO = Toronto Bird Observatory; TTPBRS = Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station.

Species names in **bold, underlined BLOCK CAPITALS** are OBRC rarities. These reports require acceptance by OBRC before they can be considered as part of the local records. They are qualified by [Documentation received] or [No documentation received], as applicable.

Species names in **bold** (but not underlined) are local rarities within the GTA. These reports require acceptance by the Toronto Bird Rarities Committee (TBRC) before they can be considered as valid records. They are qualified by [Documentation received] or [No documentation received], as applicable.

Individual species **marked * or specific reports marked *** indicate unusual local observations for which documentation is requested by TBRC and/or TOC Records Committee by virtue of rarity, difficulty of ID, extreme dates (early, late, unseasonal) or high counts.

Species names in [square brackets] indicate reports believed to relate to escaped or released birds, or to introduced birds which have not yet become established.

Names in *ITALICS* indicate subspecies, hybrids, morphs or other 'recognizable forms', which may be identifiable in the field. This does not necessarily imply that the compilers agree with such designations, or accept their validity.



OFO group **Winter Birding** at Colonel Samuel Smith Park, *Toronto*, 9 December 2007. Photo© Winnie Poon.

SNOW GOOSE - 1 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (CMRW fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS) & on 30th (RPye fide DRBA). 9 at Sobey's warehouse, Whitby, *Durham* on 1st (CSAM fide DRBA) & 1 at Whitby Harbour, *Durham* on 23rd (RGT,OXC, fide DRBA).

ACKLING (RICHARDSON'S) GOOSE - 1 at Frenchman's Bay, *Durham* on 1st (JFa fide DRBA) & 1 at Arkendo Park, *Halton* on 15th (SPXC fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS).

TRUMPETER SWAN - 4 (1 w wing tag) at Ashbridge's Bay Park on 1st (Andrew McKinley fide OUTON), 1 at HBP [W] on 8th (JBMW,DJM) & 1 at TI on 13th (NMu,MVL, fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 there on 23rd (TXC,BFe,&). 11 at Lumsden Property, Aurora, *York* on 15th (TH,&,RHXC), 1 at Newcastle Marina, *Durham* on 21st (MJL fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at LSS on 23rd (TXC,JRC,&) & 80+ at LaSalle Park, *Halton* on 26th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).

TUNDRA SWAN - 18 flying S at Kortright C. A., *York* on 8th (AA).

WOOD DUCK - 1 F at Ashbridge's Bay Park on 1st (SMF;AA).

GADWALL - 189 at LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL) & 178 there on 30th (NMu).

AMERICAN WIGEON - 6 at HBP [W] on 9th (DJM,OFO) & 24 there on 14th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK - 24 at LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL).

MALLARD - 216 at LSS on 30th (NMu).

NORTHERN SHOVELER - 11 at HBP [E] on 9th (DJM,OFO) & 6 at Mimico Cr. Mouth, HBP on 14th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).

NORTHERN PINTAIL - 1 at Whitby Harbour, *Durham* on 1st (JFa fide DRBA), 6th (THo fide DRBA) and 9th (MKP fide DRBA). 2 there on 23rd (RGT,OXC, fide DRBA). 1 M at LaSalle Park, *Halton*, on 25th (GLKJ fide OFO-W).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL - 2 at HBP [E] on 1st (AA).

CANVASBACK - 1 at Ward's Island, TI on 13th (NMu,MVL) & 12 at LaSalle Park, *Halton* on 26th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).

REDHEAD - 78 at Lake Ontario off Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 6th (THo fide DRBA), 20 at Sunnyside on 7th (SMF), 100+ at Unwin Avenue on 13th (FP fide ONTBIRDS), 200+ at HBP [W] on 14th (FP fide ONTBIRDS), 203 at LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL) & 52 there on 30th (NMu).

RING-NECKED DUCK – Singles at Lake Ontario off Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 6th (THo fide DRBA), TI on 23rd (TXC,BFe,&), LSS on 23rd (TXC,JRC,&) and at LaSalle Park, *Halton* on 26th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).

GREATER SCAUP - 1500 at HBP [W] on 9th (DJM,OFO), 600 at LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL) & 350 there on 30th (NMu).

LESSER SCAUP - 1 at Ashbridge's Bay Park on 1st (AA), 50 at HBP [E] on 9th (DJM,OFO) & 9 at HBP on 23rd (TXC,GC,&). 1 at LSS on 15th (NMu,&), 4 on 26th (NMu,MVL) & 2 at LaSalle Park, *Halton* on 26th (FP).

HARLEQUIN DUCK - 2 (M & F) at J.C. Saddington Park, *Peel* on 11th (WER fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 photographed there on 26th (Michael Mardus fide OFO-W). 1 F at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* on 23rd (THo,OXC, fide DRBA).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER - 1 at HBP [W] on 9th (RBHS,&,OFO), 18 at LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL) & 20 at LaSalle Park, *Halton* on 26th (FP).

BLACK SCOTER - 1 F at HBP [W] on 9th (JSchm,OFO).

LONG-TAILED DUCK - 750 at LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL) & 500 there on 30th (NMu).

BUFFLEHEAD - 132 at TI on 13th (NMu,MVL), 50 at LSS on 15th (NMu,&) & 78 there on 26th (NMu,MVL).

COMMON GOLDENEYE - 52 at TI on 13th (NMu,MVL), 75 at LSS on 15th (NMu,&), 300 on 26th (NMu,MVL) & 192 there on 30th (NMu).

HOODED MERGANSER - 9 at HP on 1st (SMF), 2 at Ashbridge's Bay Park on 1st (AA), 7 at HBP [E] on 1st (AA), 1 M there on 9th (DJM,OFO) & 2 at HBP [W] on 14th FP fide ONTBIRDS). 1 M at Whitby Harbour, *Durham* on 9th (MKP fide DRBA), 2 on 15th (REH fide DRBA) & 3 (2 M, 1 F) on 30th (RPye fide DRBA). 19 at TI on 13th (NMu,MVL, fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 there on 23rd (TXC,BFe,&). 10 at LSS on 15th, 5 on 26th & 11 on 30th (NMu,&).

COMMON MERGANSER - 27 at HBP [E] on 9th (DJM,OFO) & 200+ at TI on 13th (NMu,MVL, fide ONTBIRDS). 199 at LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL) & 47 there on 30th (NMu).

RUDDY DUCK - 1 at HBP [E] on 1st (DJM fide ONTBIRDS), on 8th (JBMW,DJM) & on 9th (DJM,OFO).

RING-NECKED PHEASANT - 1 F feeding on spilled corn at S end Sideline 34, Pickering, *Durham* on 9th (ETB) and 9 nr. there on 20th (ETB,JI).

WILD TURKEY - 7 at North Rd, S of 7th Conc., *Durham* on 3rd (ETB), 13 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 6th (THo fide DRBA), 15 at Columbus Rd & Wilson Rd., *Durham* on 7th (THo fide DRBA), 6 at St Johns SR & Jane St., *York* on 15th (TH,&,RHXC) & 9 at Halls Rd., *Durham* on 21st (SLaF fide DRBA).

COMMON LOON - 1 at L. Ontario off, Oshawa Second Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS), 3 at HBP on 9th (DJM,OFO), 1 at Unwin Avenue on 13th (FP fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL) & on 30th (NMu).

HORNED GREBE - 1 at CSSP on 1st (DJM fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at Mimico Creek Mouth, HBP on 14th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).

RED-NECKED GREBE - 7 at CSSP on 1st (DJM fide ONTBIRDS), 3 there on 8th (JBMW,DJM) & 4 on 9th (DJM,OFO).

NORTHERN GANNET - 1 at Whitby Harbour, *Durham* @ 08:00hrs on 1st [No doc. seen] (CSAM fide DRBA) & 1 at Port Credit Harbour, *Peel* on 15th [No doc. seen] (DEP,JLam,SPXC).

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT - 1 at Hanlan's Point ferry dock, TI on 13th (NMu,MVL).

GREAT BLUE HERON – Singles at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS), North Rd & 7th Conc., *Durham* on 4th (ETB), Grenadier Pond, HP on 8th, 9th and 12th (JBMW,DJM;DJM,OFO;SMF), Kortright C. A., *York* on 8th (AA), Salem Rd & 401, *Ajax, Durham* on 11th (SLaF fide DRBA) & at East Holland R, Newmarket, *York* on 23rd (MvdT fide RJF, fide ONTBIRDS).

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - 1 IMM at Mimico Creek Mouth, HBP on 14th (FP fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 at Mimico Creek N of Lakeshore on 15th (AA).

TURKEY VULTURE - 1 flying E at Philip Murray Ave, Oshawa, *Durham* on 12th (JFloer fide DRBA).

BALD EAGLE - 4 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (CMRW fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS), 2 (1 AD, 1 IMM) at Valley Inn, *Halton* on 8th (Michael Veltri fide ONTBIRDS), 1 AD at Sideline 34 & Conc 3, *Durham* on 9th (ETB), 1 AD at Taunton Rd & Townline, *Durham* on 10th (D. Dodd fide DRBA) & 1 AD at Conc 8, Sideline 24 Pickering, *Durham* on 20th (ETB,JI, fide ONTBIRDS). 1 at Burloak Park, *Halton* on 26th (HXC fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS), 1 JUV at downtown Whitby, *Durham* on 28th (CSAM fide DRBA), 1 JUV at Peninsula D, LSS on 29th (AA) & on 30th (NMu). 1 AD at Concession St E., *Durham* on 30th (MJL fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 SUB at Lake Dr, SW of Jackson's Point, *York* on 30th (Lorena Campbell fide RJF, fide ONTBIRDS).

NORTHERN HARRIER - 1 at CSSP on 1st (DJM fide ONTBIRDS), 2 at LSS on 8th (Andrew Don fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 there on 15th (NMu,&).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK – 6 reports of singles from different locations from 4th to 30th.

COOPER'S HAWK – 13 reports all from different locations of singles from 1st to 30th.

NORTHERN GOSHAWK - 1 IMM at LSS on 8th was photographed (IDMF fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 IMM at Kortright C. A., *York* on 30th (JWi,BKa).

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK - 2 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (CMRW fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at Campbellville Rd & Twiss Rd., *Halton* on 2nd (Matthew Jones fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* on 23rd (C. Jones,OXC, fide DRBA).

RED-TAILED HAWK - 98 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (CMRW fide JDL, fide DRBA). 1 (dark morph) at Dundas & Tomken, *Peel* on 27th (John Klymo fide Mike Burrell, fide ONTBIRDS).

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK - 1 at Oshawa Second Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS) & 34 (including 5 dark morph) at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (CMRW fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS). 1 at Valley Inn, *Halton* on 7th (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS), 1 (dark) at LSS on 8th (Andrew Don;IDMF fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at TI on 13th (NMu,MVL, fide ONTBIRDS).



An adult female **Cooper's Hawk** with a full crop, having just raided a feeder and consumed her prey; *Toronto*, 2 December 2007. Photo© Sandra Hawkins.

* GOLDEN EAGLE – Singles at Iroquois Raptor Platform, Heber Down C. A., *Durham* on 1st (ISRW fide MDW, fide ONTBIRDS), and Thicksons Woods, *Durham* on 1st (JFa fide DRBA). One at Hwy 48, 7km S of Beaverton, *Durham* on 30th [No doc. seen] (Mike Burrell fide ONTBIRDS). [Doc. reqd. in winter after 6 Dec].

MERLIN – 7 reports of 1 from 4th to 28th all from different locations.

PEREGRINE FALCON - 1 at Hwy 2 & Whites Rd, Pickering, *Durham* on 3rd (MDW fide DRBA), 1 JUV at LSS on 8th (IDMF fide ONTBIRDS), 2 at Philip Murray Ave, Oshawa, *Durham* on 12th (JFloer fide DRBA) & 1 (at Lift Bridge) at Burlington Beach Canal, *Halton* on 22nd (NMacd). 2 at T-CBC Rte 3: Upper Humber on 23rd (TXC,GR,NMcP, &), 1 at Kipling S of Hwy 401 on 27th (EKW fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 AD at Concession St E, E of Bragg Rd, *Durham* on 30th (SLaF fide ONTBIRDS).

* VIRGINIA RAIL - 1 at Grenadier Pond, HP on 9th [No doc. seen] (CJE,OFO) & 1 at Hyde's Mill Hollow, *Peel* on 14th [No doc. seen] (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS). In small patch of cattails about 20' x 50' in size, with small open water channel running S into Credit R., about 300m upstream from access at Tillsdown Park.

AMERICAN COOT - 15 at CSSP on 1st (DJM fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at HBP [W] on 8th (JBMW,DJM) & on 9th (DJM,OFO), 1 at Ward's Island, TI on 13th (NMu,MVL) & 4 at LaSalle Park, *Halton* on 26th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).

SANDHILL CRANE - 1 at Oshawa Second Marsh, *Durham* on 3rd (Otto Peter fide DRBA) & 1 flying W at Stevenson Rd & Philip Murray, Oshawa, *Durham* @ 10:30hrs on 3rd (Jim Yaki fide ONTBIRDS), presumably same bird?. 10 (very high up & calling) at LSS on 8th (Andrew Don fide ONTBIRDS).

KILLDEER - 1 at Lambton Woods (JWi,BKa) & 9 at HBP [E] (AA) on 1st. 1 at Mimico Creek Mouth, HBP on 1st (DJM fide ONTBIRDS), 8th (JBMW,DJM), 9th (DJM,OFO) & on 14th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).

PURPLE SANDPIPER - 3 at Lakefront Promenade Park, *Peel* on 3rd (WER fide ONTBIRDS), seen on the Douglas Kennedy Headland.

DUNLIN - 1 at Mimico Creek Mouth, HBP on 14th (FP fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at HBP [E] on 15th (AA).

THAYER'S GULL - 1 at Whitby Harbour, *Durham* on 9th (MKP fide DRBA).

ICELAND GULL - 2 at Whitby Harbour, *Durham* on 6th (THo fide DRBA).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - 1 at Burlington Golf & Country Club, *Halton* on 26th (HXC fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS).

GLAUCOUS GULL - 2 AD at Toronto Harbour on 11th & 1 on 17th (FP fide ONTBIRDS), seen from office window at 207 Queen's Quay West.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - 2 at HBP [W] on 14th (FP fide ONTBIRDS) & 3 at LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL).

MOURNING DOVE - 96 at Palace Court, Doncrest, *York* on 1st (Michael Biro) & 120 there @ 10:30hrs on 19th (WP). 75 at Beare Rd S of Steeles on 9th (ETB).

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL - 1 roosting in a Wood Duck box at the boardwalk at Kortright C. A., *York* on 1st (Lev Frid fide ONTBIRDS) It was photographed and can be seen at <http://lev.frid.googlepages.com>. 1 at Palace Court, Doncrest, *York* on 5th (Michael Biro fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 calling at S side of *York* Cemetery on 17th (Carolyn King,SLaF, fide GC).

GREAT HORNED OWL - 1 at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at 60 Miles Hill Cr, Richmond Hill, *York* on 18th, 19th & 23rd & 2 there on 27th (FP). 1 at LSS on 8th (IDMF fide ONTBIRDS), 2 on 15th (NMu,&), 2 on 29th (AA) & 4 there on 30th (NMu).

SNOWY OWL - 1 at NE corner Brock & Taunton Rd., *Durham* on 6th (C. Tappay fide DRBA), spent 3 hrs sitting on roof of a plaza there. 1 at Mayfield Rd W of Coleraine, *Peel* on 30th (Neil Baker, anon 2008).

BARRED OWL - 1 at LSS on 8th (IDMF fide ONTBIRDS), 15th (NMu,&), 26th (NMu,MVL), 29th (AA) & on 30th (NMu). 1 at YRF - Robinson Tract, *York* on 15th (Marianne Yake,NH,RHXC), 1 1Y at Brookbanks Ravine in late afternoon on 19th (JI fide WP) was seen trying to steal a EUST from a COHA which had caught it and was eating on the ground. It flew off at 17:00hrs as it got dark; active food searching in daytime suggests food stress (RJP). 1 at Boyd Conservation Area, *York* on 26th (AA), 1 at Dunlap Observatory, *York* on 27th (Denise Potter fide

ONTBIRDS); video of this bird was posted on YouTube [<http://ca.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvkiQXgDqcU>] It was seen again there on 28th (Glenn Steplock fide ONTBIRDS). *Ed note. This is the first occasion we are aware of where video of a bird reported in the GTA has been posted on YouTube, clearly a sign of the times!*

GREAT GRAY OWL - 1 at Warden, N of Davis Dr., *York* @ 15:30hrs on 12th (Lorena Campbell fide RJF, fide ONTBIRDS), looked for but not found on 13th (RJF).

LONG-EARED OWL - 1 at Ontario St, Cabbagetown on 1st (Max Perren fide ONTBIRDS), 2 at Lanark Rd, Markham, *York* on 18th (GDe fide TH) & 1 there @ 13:30hrs on 19th (WP). 1 at LSS on 23rd (TXC,JRC,&); also on 26th and 30th (NMu,&). 1 at Bronte Creek Prov. Park Campground, *Halton* during week ending 7 Dec (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS).

SHORT-EARED OWL – 1 flying N to S at dusk.at Hwy 407 E of Bramalea Rd, *Peel* on 3rd (AA) & 1 flying W at 155 Ravenscroft Rd, Ajax, *Durham* @ 08:15hrs on 20th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS).

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL – 4 reports of 1 at LSS from 15th to 30th (NMu,&;AA).

BELTED KINGFISHER - Singles at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS), Marita Payne Park, *York* on 23rd (RBHS,TXC) & at Don R S of Pottery Rd. on 31st (Glenn Steplock fide ONTBIRDS).

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER – Singles at Orono, *Durham* on 1st (JMR fide DRBA), Lambton Woods on 1st (JWi,BKa), at Solina Rd, N of Nash (Courtice area), *Durham* on 8th (P. Hogenbirk fide DRBA) & at Kortright C. A., *York* on 8th (AA). Singles also at #3410 Greenwood Rd., *Durham* on 15th (SLaF fide DRBA), Graydon Property, Humber Grove, *Peel* on 17-18th (PG, anon 2008), Hampton, *Durham* on 23rd (RPye,OXC, fide DRBA), Brentcliffe & Glenvale on 26th (JWi,BKa) & at Brydon's, Holland Landing, *York* on 27th & 28th (BB fide RJF, fide ONTBIRDS).

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER - 1 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS).

DOWNY WOODPECKER - 12 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS).

HAIRY WOODPECKER - 1 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (CMRW fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 at Beare Rd S of Steeles on 5th (ETB).

NORTHERN FLICKER – Singles at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (CMRW fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS), LSS on 23rd (TXC,JRC,&), Tecumseh Park Cres., Miss. , *Peel* on 24th & 25th (Judi Parker fide ONTBIRDS) & at Mill St., Bond Head, *Durham* on 27th (MJL fide ONTBIRDS).

PILEATED WOODPECKER - Singles at Whitevale Golf Course, *Durham* on 9th (ETB), Stouffville Rd, E of Yonge St, *York* on 12th (FP), McCowan & Davis Dr., *York* on 14th (ETB fide ONTBIRDS), Long Sault C.A., *Durham* on 14th (SLaF fide DRBA) & at feeder at 60 Miles Hill Cr, Richmond Hill, *York* on 25th (FP).

NORTHERN SHRIKE – 24 reports of single birds thro' the month & 2 seen at LSS on 29th (AA).

COMMON RAVEN - 3 at Iroquois Raptor Platform, Heber Down C. A., *Durham* on 1st (ISRW fide MDW, fide ONTBIRDS). 2 at Old Church & Mt Pleasant Rd, *Peel* on 1st (GCam, anon 2008) and 2 at Duffy's Lane, Palgrave, *Peel* on 15th (GCam, anon 2008). 1 at Durham Rd 5, W of Balsam Rd., *Durham* on 30th (RPye fide DRBA).

HORNED LARK - some at North Rd N of Hwy 7, *Durham* on 4th (ETB), 20 at Warden & 19th Ave, *York* on 15th (GDe,RHXC), 6 at Conc 3, Sideline 34 Pickering, *Durham* on 20th (ETB,JI, fide ONTBIRDS) & 30 at Halls Rd., *Durham* on 21st (SLaF fide DRBA). 2 at LSS on 23rd [Documented] (TXC, JRC, &) & 9 at Beechwood Cemetery, *York* on 23rd [Documented] (RBHS,WP,TXC); rarely recorded on the CBC due to lack of habitat within the circle. 1 at SE Tip, LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL).



Three of nine **Horned Larks** at Beechwood Cemetery, *York*, on the Toronto CBC, 23 December 2007. Photo© Winnie Poon.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE - 45 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS) & 94 at TI on 13th (NMu,MVL), roaming flocks of 20+ throughout.

TUFTED TITMOUSE - 1 at Shoreacres Park, *Halton* on 1st and various other dates to the end of the month (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH – 6 reports from 2nd to 29th of 3 or 4 at HP (SMF).

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH - 18 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER, David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS).

BROWN CREEPER - 2 at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at Lambton Woods on 1st (JWi,BKa) & 1 at Pine Hills Cemetery on 27th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).

CAROLINA WREN - 2 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at Shoreacres Park, *Halton* on 8th (Michael Veltri fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at Nature Reserve, TI on 13th (NMu,MVL). 1 at Mill St., Bond Head, *Durham* on 16th (MJL fide ONTBIRDS), 2 at Snake Island, TI on 23rd (TXC,BFe,&) & 1 at Echo Valley Park, Etobicoke on 25th (AA).

* HOUSE WREN - 1 at Shoreacres Park, *Halton* on 1st [No doc. seen] (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at Glendon College, Bayview & Lawrence on 2nd [No doc. seen] (Bill Kilburn fide MKP, fide GC). [Doc. required after 1 Nov].

WINTER WREN – Singles at Burloak Park, *Halton* on 1st (Dave Don fide ONTBIRDS), Shoreacres Park, *Halton* on 1st (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS), CSSP on 8th (JBMW,DJM) & on 9th (DJM,OFO), at HP on 12th (SMF) & Pine Hills Cemetery on 27th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET - 9 at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at CSSP on 1st (DJM fide ONTBIRDS) & 12 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS). 2 at CSSP on 9th (DJM,OFO), 2 at LaSalle Park, *Halton* on 26th (FP fide ONTBIRDS) & 3 at Cawthra-Mulock FON Reserve, *York* on 29th (RJF fide ONTBIRDS).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET - 1 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at LaSalle Park, *Halton* on 26th (FP fide ONTBIRDS;HXC fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS).

* BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER - 1 at Burloak Park, *Halton* on 1st (Dave Don fide ONTBIRDS).

EASTERN BLUEBIRD - 12 (moving) at Conc 3, E of Bowmanville, *Durham* on 26th (RLau fide ONTBIRDS), 10 (incl. 6 M) at Conc 3, 2.3km W of Bragg Rd., *Durham* on 30th (SLaF fide ONTBIRDS) & 10 at Pearse House Pond, Rouge Park (North) @ 11:00hrs on 30th (Alec Dobson fide ONTBIRDS).

HERMIT THRUSH - Singles at Ghost Road Bush, *Durham* on 8th (P. Hogenbirk fide DRBA), Allen Gardens Greenhouse on 9th (AA fide RBHS), Heart Lake C.A., *Peel* on 23rd (Bob Noble, anon 2008), Boyd C. A., *York* on 26th (AA) & at 39 Lincoln Ave on 28th & 30th (BY).

AMERICAN ROBIN - 65 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS).

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD - A good number of reports this month, despite low numbers on the West Humber CBC on 16th (only 4, due to snow) and on the Toronto CBC on 23rd (rain nearly all day). In total, there were 80 reports, broken down as: 43 *Toronto*, 25 *York*, 7 *Peel*, and 5 *Durham*, with none from *Halton*. The Richmond Hill CBC had 13, which equaled last year's record count, but details were not available for Peel-Halton, Pickering or Oshawa CBCs at the time of writing. As usual, the number of reports depends to a large extent on the activity of those observers who regularly report them.

BROWN THRASHER - 1 at Anderson & Dundas, Whitby, *Durham* on 23rd (DBar,OXc, fide DRBA).

AMERICAN PIPIT - 1 at Burloak Park, *Halton* on 1st (Dave Don fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 there on 3rd (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS). 1 at CSSP on 1st (DJM fide ONTBIRDS), on 8th (JBMW,DJM) & on 9th (DJM,OFO). 3 at Lakefront Promenade Park, *Peel* on 3rd (WER fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at W of J.C. Saddington Park, *Peel* on 12th (DEP).

BOHEMIAN WAXWING - 26 at Sideline 28, Pickering, *Durham* on 3rd (ETB), 200 at Scugog Point, Nestleton, *Durham* on 7th (BFA fide DRBA), 200 at Dominion St, Uxbridge, *Durham* on 8th (D. Connelly fide DRBA) & 300 there on 14th (ETB fide ONTBIRDS). 60 at Industrial Ave, Gormley, *York* on 15th [Documented] (RBHS,WP,RHXC), 10 at Albion Trail, Caledon, *Peel* on 21st (GCam, anon 2008), 16 at Conc 3, E of Bowmanville, *Durham* on 26th (RLau fide ONTBIRDS) & 20 at N End Bathurst Street, *York* on 29th (MvdT,&,Bradford CBC).

CEDAR WAXWING - 44 at Conc 3, E of Bowmanville, *Durham* on 26th (RLau fide ONTBIRDS), 22 at Goldfish Pond, LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL) & 40 at N End Bathurst Street, *York* on 29th (MvdT,&,Bradford CBC).

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER - 1 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 nr. 3rd Line & Lakeshore Sewage plant, *Halton* on 15th (SPXC fide CEde, fide ONTBIRDS).

* PINE WARBLER - 1 at Lake Promenade off Birch Hill Lane, Oakville, *Halton* on 15th [No doc. seen](SPXC fide CEde, fide ONTBIRDS).

* NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH - 1 photographed at Hendrie Valley, *Halton* on 10th [No doc. seen] (anon fide CEde, fide ONTBIRDS).

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT - 1 came to small open water pond in front yard at 9 Oakwood North, Port Credit, *Peel* on 14th (WER fide ONTBIRDS).

EASTERN TOWHEE - 1 F at Nature Reserve, TI on 23rd (TXC,AA,HE) & 1 F at Lambton Woods on 24th (AA).

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW - 20 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 5th (Sigmar Bodach fide ONTBIRDS), 24 at Patricia Kemp Community Centre, *York* on 8th (RBHS,WP) & 17 at TI on 13th (NMu,MVL). 100 at LSS on 8th (Andrew Don fide ONTBIRDS), 24 on 26th (NMu,MVL) & 10 there on 30th (NMu). 30 at Administration Building, Downsview Park on 30th (RBHS,WP).

FOX SPARROW - 2 at Palace Court, Doncrest, *York* on 1st (Michael Biro) & 1 there on 15th (Michael Biro fide NH).

SONG SPARROW - 1 at Burloak Park, *Halton* on 1st (Dave Don fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS), 2 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 6th (THo fide DRBA) & 4 at Peninsula B, LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL).

SWAMP SPARROW - 1 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (CMRW fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS) & 3 there on 5th (Sigmar Bodach fide ONTBIRDS). 3 at HP on 9th (DJM,OFO) & 1 there on 11th & 12th (SMF).

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW - 1 IMM at Kortright C. A., *York* on 1st (Lev Frid fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at Lambton Woods on 1st (JWi,BKa). 1 at HP on 1st, 2 on 2nd & 1 on 4th & 9th (SMF). 1 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 5th (Sigmar Bodach fide ONTBIRDS) & on 6th (THo fide DRBA). 1 at Dacre Crescent on 12th (SMF) & 1 at 34 Shady Lane, Thornhill, *York* on 15th (H&MF,RHXC).

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - 1 AD at Thicksons Woods, *Durham* on 4th & 5th (DBar fide ONTBIRDS). 1 at backyard in Whitby, *Durham* on 13th & 16th (G. Ernest fide DRBA) & 11 (incl. 4 AD) at 8th Line, 30m N of Britannia (Oakville), *Halton* on 28th (BFe).

DARK-EYED JUNCO - 47 at Palace Court, Doncrest, *York* on 1st (Michael Biro) & 45 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER,David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS).



Good showing of **Lapland Longspur** at Beare Road and Steeles, Toronto, 8 December 2007. Photo© Jean Iron.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR - 9 at Beare Rd S of Steeles on 9th (ETB) & 1 at SE Tip, LSS on 26th (NMu,MVL). CW for Toronto CBC [Sector 16A].

SNOW BUNTING – On the 1st there were 2 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd., *York* (RJF,MvdT, fide ONTBIRDS), 8 at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* (THo fide ONTBIRDS) & 5 at N end Jane St, Holland Marsh, *York* (RBHS,WP). 2 at LSS on 8th (IDMF fide ONTBIRDS), 8 at CSSP on 9th (RBHS,OFO), 40 at 60 Miles Hill Cr, Richmond Hill, *York* on 9th (FP), 375 at Stephenson Rd & Lakeshore, *Durham* on 21st (MJL fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd., *York* on 29th (RJF fide ONTBIRDS).

NORTHERN CARDINAL - 17 at Etobicoke Valley Park on 4th (WER, David Hallett, fide ONTBIRDS) & 10 at Sideline 34, Pickering, *Durham* on 9th (ETB).

* ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - 1 M coming to a feeder at 67 Satchell Blvd, Scarb., first reported on 21st & seen again from 25th to 31st [No doc. seen] (FB fide John Stirrat; FP; both fide ONTBIRDS).

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD - 1 at Darlington P. P., *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS), 1 M at Thicksons Woods, *Durham* on 4th (DBar fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at HP on 12th (SMF). 10 at Beare Rd S of Steeles on 9th & 10 on 12th (ETB).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD - 7 at Beare Rd S of Steeles on 8th, 12 on 9th & on 12th (ETB). 2 at Park Lawn Cemetery (TXC,GC) & 1 at Pine Hills Cemetery (TXC, KK, Ken McIlwrick) on 23rd. The Pine Hills Cemetery bird was seen again on 24th (RLau), 25th (David Selley fide ONTBIRDS; RBHS, WP), and on 27th (FP fide ONTBIRDS).



Rusty Blackbirds occasionally linger into the winter; this bird was found at Pine Hills Cemetery, Toronto, 24 December 2007. Photo© Jean Iron.

COMMON GRACKLE - 1 at Thicksons Woods, *Durham* on 4th & 5th (DBar fide ONTBIRDS).

PINE GROSBEAK – 28 reports thro' the month, highlights & high counts were: 59 at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS), 26 at Sunnypoint Dr, Newmarket, *York* on 1st (RBHS, WP), 12 at Oxford St, Richmond Hill, *York* on 7th (NMu), 23 at Kortright C. A., *York* on 8th (AA), 30-50 at #4250 Walkers Line, *Halton* on 10th (Peter McParland fide ONTBIRDS) & still there on 30th (Michael Veltri fide ONTBIRDS), ~50 at Rainbow Ridge Ave, Scarb. On 14th (ETB fide ONTBIRDS), 20 at Dunlap Observatory, *York* on 20th (Michael Biro fide Michael's Bulletin #350) & on 30th (JWi, BKa), 28 at W side McCowan S of Davis Dr., *York* on 31st (RJF fide ONTBIRDS). On the Richmond Hill CBC on the 15th 11 were reported at 292 Essex Ave, Richmond Hill, *York* (GEL, RHXC) & 14 at Lumsden Property, Aurora, *York* (TH, &, RHXC). At Concession St E, E of Bragg Rd, *Durham* there were dozens first reported on 26th (RLau fide ONTBIRDS) feeding on the row of crabapples in an apple orchard, 13 there on 27th (MJL fide ONTBIRDS) & 51 on 30th (MJL fide ONTBIRDS).

PURPLE FINCH - 1 F at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* on 1st (CMRW fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS) & 4 at Thicksons Woods, *Durham* on 30th (J. McKnight fide DRBA).

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL - 1 at Weldrick & Bayview, Richmond Hill, *York* on 9th (Michael Biro fide NH), 10 at Albion Trail, Caledon, *Peel* on 28th (GCam, anon 2008).

COMMON REDPOLL – 25 reports thro' the month, high counts & highlights were; 200 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd., *York* on 1st (RJF, MvdT, fide ONTBIRDS), 70 at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS), 62 at LSS on 15th (NMu, &), 35 at 155 Ravenscroft Rd, Ajax, *Durham* on 21st (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS), 41 at Mill St., Bond Head, *Durham* on 25th (MJL fide ONTBIRDS), 55 at 60 Miles Hill Cr, Richmond Hill, *York* on 26th & 28th (FP), 76 at Concession St E, E of Bragg Rd, *Durham* on 27th (MJL fide ONTBIRDS), 200 at Strawberry Lane, Holland Marsh, *York* on 29th (RJF fide ONTBIRDS), ~75 at Pearse House Pond, Rouge Park (North) on 30th (Alec Dobson fide ONTBIRDS) & 114 at Palace Court, Doncrest, *York* on 31st (Michael Biro fide Michael's Bulletin #350).

"GREATER" COMMON REDPOLL - 1 at 60 Miles Hill Cr, Richmond Hill, *York* on 3rd, larger and darker than the other 20 in the flock; possible an AD-F. Seen again there on 23rd & 28th (FP fide ONTBIRDS), identified as *rostrata*.

HOARY REDPOLL - 1 at Palace Court, Doncrest, *York* on 5th (Michael Biro fide Michael's Bulletin #340), 7 reported there on 15th [No doc. seen] (Michael Biro fide NH) & 3 there on 19th (WP). 1 at Island School (New), TI on 13th (NMu, MVL), 1 at Solina Rd N of Nash, Courtice, *Durham* on 15th (P. Hogenbirk fide DRBA), 1 at #2540 Conc 6,

Greenwood, *Durham* on 15th (SLaF fide DRBA) & 1 M (2 F also showed characters of *exilipes*) at 155 Ravenscroft Rd, Ajax, *Durham* on 21st (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS). 1 F at feeder at Island School (New), TI on 23rd [Documented] (TXC,AA,HE), 1 at backyard in Utica, *Durham* on 24th (JKa fide DRBA), 1 at Concession St E, E of Bragg Rd, *Durham* on 27th (MJL fide ONTBIRDS), 1 (*exilipes*) at Bluffer's Park on 28th (GLKJ fide ONTBIRDS) and 1 at Brydons, Holland Landing, *York* on 28th (BB, anon 2008).

PINE SISKIN - 2 at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS).

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH - 132 at Palace Court, Doncrest, *York* on 1st (Michael Biro) & 30 there on 19th (WP). 26 at Darlington Prov. Park, *Durham* on 1st (THo fide ONTBIRDS).

EVENING GROSBEAK - 2 at #3410 Greenwood Rd., *Durham* & 1 at Sideline 8, N of Conc 5, Pickering, *Durham* on 15th (SLaF fide DRBA). 30 at Palgrave, *Peel* on 18th (Christine Leslie, anon 2008).

CITED OBSERVERS: & et al.; ISRW Iroquois Shores Raptor Watch; OFO Ontario Field Ornithologists; AA Alfred Adamo; BFA Bruce F. Aikins; DBar Dennis Barry; ETB Eleanor Beagan; FB Fred Bodsworth; DBo Dan Bone; BB Bruce Brydon; JRC John Carley; GCarp Geoff Carpentier; OXC Oshawa Christmas Count; GC Glenn Coady; GDe Gene Denzel; SE Sandra Eadie; CEdge Cheryl Edgecombe; HE Herb Elliot; CJE Christopher Escott; JFa Jim Fairchild; BF Bruce Falls; H&MF Harold & Muriel Farrant; SMF Steven Favier; BFe Bruce Ferry; IDMF Iain Fleming; RJF Ron Fleming; JFlo Joachim Floegel; MGa Marcel Gahbauer; CPG Chester Gryski; REH Ross Harris; SCH Sandra Hawkins; NH Natalie Helferty; CH Carl Hills; THo Tyler Hoar; TH Theo Hofmann; JI Jean Iron; GLKJ Gabriel Lau Kin Jock; RJo Richard Joos; BKa Barbara Kalthoff; JKa James Kamstra; KK Karl Konze; SLaF Steve LaForest; JLam John Lamey; RLau Rick Lauzon; GEL Graham Leonard; MJL Marcus J. Lise; MVL Margaret Liubavicius; JDL J. Doug Lockrey; NMacd Neil Macdougall; JMack Jess MacKenzie; CSAM Craig S.A. McLaughlan; KM Kevin McLaughlin; NMcP Nancy McPherson; JBMW Jim Baillie Memorial Walk; DJM Dave J. Milsom; MM Marilyn Murphy; NMu Norman Murr; anon Unknown Observer; OFO-W OFO website; ONTBIRDS OFO Email Hotline; OUTON OutdoorOntario.net; MKP Mark K. Peck; DEP Don E. Perks; FP Frank Pinilla; RJP Ron Pittaway; WP Winnie Poon; RPy Rayfield Pye; CMRW Cranberry Marsh Raptor Watch; DRBA Durham Rare Bird Alert; WER Wayne E. Renaud; JMR Jim M. Richards; GR Garth Riley; JSchm John Schmelefske; MSch Mary Schuster; KRS Kevin Shackleton; HSh Howard Shapiro; RBHS Roy B. H. Smith; PS-S Patrick Stepien-Scanlon; RGT Ron Tozer; MvdT Mike Van Den Tillaart; EKW Eleanor Kee Wellman; MDW Mike Williamson; JW Joan Winearls; DW David Worthington; HXC Hamilton Xmas Count; KXC Kleinburg Xmas Count; RHXC Richmond Hill Xmas Count; SPXC South Peel Xmas Count; TXC Toronto Xmas Count; BY Bob Yukich.

REFERENCES:

anon 2008. *Selected November and December 2007 Sightings*. West Humber Naturalists Newsletter Jan 2008, p. 10-12.

Compiled by Dave Worthington for the TOC Records Committee.

Photo editing by Winnie Poon.

Data entry by Roy Smith. 1379 reports were added to the database for December 2007 (some CBC data not yet received).

Please send reports to: Roy Smith 20 Harding Blvd. W, Suite 1002, Richmond Hill, ON L4C9S4 Tel: 905-5084045 Fax: 905-5084730 email: rsmith@mrs.com by 8th of the following month, please. Send photos for possible use in the bird report to: winniepoon@sympatico.ca, following guidelines in TOC Newsletter #175 (March 2007).

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Errata:

October 2007 Bird Records:

A report of Snow Goose from Dundas Marsh, *Hamilton*, was erroneously included; this is outside the GTA.

A report of Short-billed Dowitcher at Reesor Pond, *York*, on 9th October should have been preceded by **** as requiring documentation at this date.

November 2007 Bird Records:

The photo caption for Pine Grosbeak (page 128) should have referred to Cobden, *Renfrew* (not Cobden, *Ottawa*).



The 83rd Toronto Christmas Bird Count – Sunday December 23, 2007

Marcel Gahbauer (TOC CBC Compiler)

It seems that weather is almost always an important part of the Toronto Christmas Bird Count story, but rarely as much so as this year. Last year's count was by far the warmest on record with a high of 13 Celsius, and a couple of years earlier in 2004 we suffered one of the coldest in memory, with the windchill dropping to -36 by afternoon. But this year's rain was arguably even worse, since it not only made for a miserable day in the field, but also severely reduced the activity of many birds. Officially, 20 mm of rain fell on Toronto on count day, and to make matters all the more galling, for most of the circle the downpours began around sunrise, and ended only a half hour or so before sunset. At least it was reasonably mild, with the temperature ranging from 3 to 8 Celsius, but when the wind picked up in the afternoon, especially near the lake, it felt much colder.

Despite the unpleasant conditions, all sectors of the count circle were covered, and several leaders doggedly stuck to their usual routes, even though there were some long periods of slogging on foot without seeing or hearing any birds at all. However, the layout of some sectors permitted some surveying to be switched to the car – both party hours and kilometers on foot were down by 40% compared to last year, while hours by car increased by 50%.

The weather limited our ability to detect many species on multiple levels. Landbirds were simply less active due to the rain, especially those that roost in cavities, such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, and chickadees. Those that were active were more difficult to detect than usual due to the “noise pollution” produced by the rain, as well as raging rivers in some sectors. This was especially problematic for species with weak call notes, such as creepers, kinglets, and sparrows, all of which were reported in below average numbers. Finally, the reduced effort on foot likely explains the reduced counts of species like Hermit Thrush and Winter Wren that are typically found by chance encounters while trekking through long sections of potentially suitable habitat.

Considering these limitations, we can be very pleased with our total of 81 species. This is only slightly lower than our average of 87 over the previous decade, and is in fact our 12th highest count ever. Where the effects of weather were more noticeable was in terms of individuals. Only 33,563 were recorded, the fewest since 1995 – but the low count that year is a bit misleading, as that was the last year before the large European Starling roost underneath the Gardiner Expressway was found, which boosted total counts by an average of ~14,000 individuals per year. This year's total number of birds is over 40% lower than the average of 57,676 over the previous decade; the proportion is almost identical if European Starlings are removed from the total (23,060 vs. 40,302).

Despite the number of European Starlings on the 2007 count being less than half of what was recorded in 2006, it nevertheless remained the most abundant species in the count circle with 10,496 individuals – more than double the 4,136 Rock Pigeons in second place. The top five were rounded out by Long-tailed Duck (2,671), Mallard (2,302), and Greater Scaup (1,944).

For the second year in a row, we did not add a new species to the all-time list for the count, which remains at 176 species. We also missed warblers entirely for the second consecutive year, and for the first time since 2002 had no shorebirds either. It was a poor year for rarities in general. The “Hole Truth Award” for the best bird of the day was deservedly given to Alfred Adamo and Herb Elliott for the Hoary Redpoll they found on the Toronto Island West route, the first sighting of the species on the count since 1997. The only other species on this year's count with as long a gap since its last occurrence was Horned Lark. The total of 11 observed (9 in Thornhill, 2 on the Leslie Spit) is the highest since 13 were recorded on the 1980 count. [A Black Scoter, last seen on the count in 1991, was also reported. However, as a rarity requiring documentation for CBC purposes, and none was received, it had to be removed from the count.]

New record high counts were set for just three species this year, while another two tied previous records. The three new highs were all introduced species. Trumpeter Swan is officially countable this year (by Ontario Bird Records Committee having accepted it as now established), but in any case the 6 individuals seen is a new high for the count. Mute Swan also set a new record, for the third time in 8 years, this year's count of 220 eclipsing the 191 found in 2005. Nearly half of them were in the Lower Humber sector; that count alone (109 individuals) is higher than all counts prior to 1996. Finally, the 4,136 Rock Pigeons represent a jump of over 17% from the record of 3,521 set in 2002. This increase may be related to the greater amount of driving this year, which resulted in many parties spending more time in industrial and other urban areas, as opposed to more natural parklands where the species is scarcer. Merlin and Red-bellied Woodpecker each tied previous record highs with 3 individuals.

Only a few species counts were notable for being higher than average. The 4 Wood Ducks were the highest count since 1994. The 342 Common Mergansers were the highest count since 1998, and the 4th highest ever.

At the opposite extreme, the list of species reported in unusually low numbers was a very long one this year. The following list represents only the most extreme of these (i.e. counts less than half of the mean for the previous decade, and in most cases at their lowest level in more than a decade):

Species	2007 count	Fewest since	Mean count (1997- 2006)	2007 count as % of mean
Canada Goose	831	736 in 1985	3472	24
Long-tailed Duck	2671	447 in 1993	8434	32
American Kestrel	5	0 in 1959 ¹	16	31
Ring-billed Gull	1355	1103 in 1985	5251	26
Great Black-backed Gull	15	7 in 2006 ²	70	21
Downy Woodpecker	75	56 in 1983	157	48
Pileated Woodpecker	0	0 in 1996	5	0
Song Sparrow	14	14 in 2004 ³	38	37
American Goldfinch	201	169 in 1996	521	39
House Finch	78	49 in 1985	492	16

¹ The CBC database may be in error, as the mean count for the three preceding counts was 33, and the three subsequent ones 25, with the lowest count in any of those years 18. If the American Kestrel data for 1959 are in fact just missing, then this year's count is the fewest since the species was missed in 1948.

² Prior to 2006, this year's Great Black-backed Gull count is the lowest since 13 in 1975.

³ Prior to 2004, the count of 14 is the lowest since the species was missed entirely in 1947.

Among these ten species, the most shocking decline was registered by the House Finch. The 78 individuals observed resulted in the lowest count since 1985 – and the first time since 1987 that fewer than 300 were reported! House Finch was first recorded on the 1981 count, so the 1985 count of 49 birds represented a population still in the early stages of expansion. In 2006, 21 of the 27 Toronto sectors reported House Finch; this year only 11 did. Considering how much the rain influenced numbers this year, the extent of the decline may well be exaggerated – some observers did report having seen considerably larger numbers in their sectors in the days before or after the count. However, it seems highly unlikely that the results do not also reflect a true reduction in the House Finch population. The renewed prevalence of conjunctivitis in the population may well be to blame, even though the previous outbreak in the 1990s did not have a drastically noticeable impact on Christmas Bird Count numbers in Toronto.

Also of note, the American Crow population in the Toronto circle has yet to show any signs of recovery following the West Nile Virus outbreak in 2002. In the decade prior to that, we had counted a mean of 879 individuals per year, peaking at a record high of 1467 in 1998. However, the count plummeted from 1201 in 2001 to 49 in 2002, and has remained low with 76 in 2003, a record low of 26 in 2004, 74 in 2005, 72 in 2006, and now 52 in 2007. A similar pattern, though less extreme, exists for Blue Jay. The ten-year mean from 1992 to 2001 was 113; in the six years since West Nile Virus struck, it has been 39. After rebounding to 96 last year, the count was back down to 36 this year, which is the lowest since 1968 (excluding the West Nile Virus era).

The weather may also have played a role in ending a nearly 20-year pattern in abundance exhibited by White-breasted Nuthatch, in which it reliably occurred in high numbers (mean 176; range 112-224) in odd years (1987-2005) and low numbers (mean 63; range 27-119) in even years (1988-2006). This year's count of 67 falls distinctly within the "low" range despite 2007 being an odd year, but whether this indicates a true disruption of the cycle or just a lower rate of detection due to the rain is unclear at this point.

An interesting bit of trivia from this year's results is that for the first time Peregrine Falcon was the most abundant of the falcons on a Toronto Christmas Bird Count! All were quite scarce, but the six peregrines, combined with the lowest count of American Kestrels in decades (5) and the still low number of Merlins (3) led to this surprising result.

Reports throughout the late fall of large numbers of boreal birds moving into southern Ontario created high expectations for Christmas Bird Counts throughout the region. Unfortunately, our results proved to be meager. We had no sightings at all of "northern" owls – not even Snowy, recorded on 6 of the past 10 counts. Also missing were Bohemian Waxwing, Purple Finch, crossbills, and grosbeaks. We did have our first Hoary Redpoll since 1997, but the other small finches (Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Common Redpoll) were actually all far below the average numbers recorded for each over the past decade.

Count week yielded an additional seven species. These were a Bald Eagle along the Humber River near James Gardens, a Northern Goshawk near Riverdale Park, a Barred Owl and a Lapland Longspur on the Leslie Spit, a Pileated Woodpecker in Sunnybrook Park, a White-crowned Sparrow at an Etobicoke feeder, and a Brown-headed Cowbird at a Leaside feeder.

However, the list of species missed this year, despite having been recorded on at least 5 of the past 10 Toronto counts, is quite long: Double-crested Cormorant, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Harlequin Duck, Thayer's Gull, Snowy Owl, Short-eared Owl, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle.

In closing, I won't court disaster by promising better weather for next year's Toronto Christmas Bird Count, but I certainly hope that we are due for a more pleasant outing in 2008. Meanwhile, sincere thanks to the 81 participants (down from 102 in 2006, unsurprisingly) who did brave the elements to give us a respectable count this year, especially those who stayed out all day and covered long distances in the rain (six sectors reported at least 8 party km on foot). Only 8 newcomers took part in this year's event; hopefully the soggy experience will not have deterred any of them from returning next time. Last but certainly not least, I would like to especially thank Naish McHugh for again providing great assistance in organizing leaders and assistants for all of the sectors, and Mary Ellen Hebb and Robin Fraser for taking over this year as hosts of the evening roundup and providing a welcoming atmosphere and good food and drink for all. I also thank the Toronto Birds production team for their editorial work and re-formatting the count spreadsheet for this publication.



John Carley presented the 'Hole Truth' Award to Herb Elliott and Alfred Adamo (absent), 14 January 2008. *Photo © Glenn Coady.*

THE 83RD TORONTO ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT – 23 DECEMBER 2007

PART 1 SPECIES	Totals	SECTOR												
		1	2	3	4A	4B	5A	5B	6A	6B	22	30	23	9
Common Loon	2													
Red-necked Grebe	1													
Great Blue Heron	5			1										
Black-crowned Night-Heron	11													
Canada Goose	831	141	184	32	44							1		
Mute Swan	220	15	109											
Tundra Swan	4													
Trumpeter Swan	6		3											
Wood Duck	4													
Gadwall	556	5	23											
American Wigeon	48		19											
American Black Duck	87	1	21	1							1			
Mallard	2310	48	482	319	7	2			3	2	8	33	96	6
Black x Mallard hybrid	5			1										
Northern Shoveler	11													
Green-winged Teal	1													
Redhead	1267		173											
Ring-necked Duck	2													
Greater Scaup	1944		1620											
Lesser Scaup	36		9											
scaup sp.	440													
White-winged Scoter	15		2											
Long-tailed Duck	2671	5	117											
Bufflehead	472	4	121											
Common Goldeneye	546	24	34	3										
Hooded Merganser	60	2	28											
Common Merganser	342		37	7										
Red-breasted Merganser	213	3	25											
duck sp.	4													3
Bald Eagle	0			cw										
Sharp-shinned Hawk	7	1		1	1	1				1			1	
Cooper's Hawk	13	1	1				1			1				1
Northern Goshawk	0													
Red-tailed Hawk	66	2	2		4	2		1	2	3	4	2	2	
Rough-legged Hawk	1									1				
American Kestrel	5		1						1		1			
Merlin	3													
Peregrine Falcon	6			2 ^[1]			3 ^[1]							
Ring-necked Pheasant	2					2								
American Coot	4		1											
Bonaparte's Gull	1													
Ring-billed Gull	1355	153	207	61	13	15	2	2		7	32	4	5	
Herring Gull	359	6	14	6		1							19	11
Iceland Gull	4													
Glaucous Gull	2		1											
Great Black-backed Gull	15	2	2											
gull sp.	66						1	2	36					
Rock Pigeon	4136	30	47	133	223	6	218	76	106	37	66	434	120	51
Mourning Dove	309	8	11	12	1	21	1	1	8	23	25	28	11	1
Eastern Screech-Owl	9		3											1
Great Horned Owl	3		1											
Long-eared Owl	3		2											
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1													

PART 1- continued	SECTOR														
	SPECIES	Totals	1	2	3	4A	4B	5A	5B	6A	6B	22	30	23	9
Belted Kingfisher	8		1	1	1							1	1		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3						2								
Downy Woodpecker	75	3	4	3	4	3	1	2	3	4	1			2	
Hairy Woodpecker	42	1	1	3		2				1	2				1
Northern Flicker	2														1
Pileated Woodpecker	0														
Northern Shrike	3											1			
Blue Jay	36		5	3	1				3			1	2		
American Crow	52	3	2			3	4			2	1	1			3
Horned Lark	11												9		
Black-capped Chickadee	647	5	41	26	13	24	3	9	20	20	19	4	12	11	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	45		9	4	1			3	2			1			5
White-breasted Nuthatch	67	1	3	3	1	5	2	2	2	1	3			2	1
Brown Creeper	9	1	1												
Carolina Wren	6					3									
Winter Wren	3		1												
Golden-crowned Kinglet	13	1	3												
Hermit Thrush	1		1												
American Robin	480	21	5	42		1						1		142	2
Northern Mockingbird	19	1	1				1		1		5	2			
European Starling	10498	4	57	14	105	21	15	6	96	44	76	67	229	3	
Cedar Waxwing	95			14						7				23	
Eastern Towhee	1														
American Tree Sparrow	154	1	10			19				4				1	1
Song Sparrow	14		2	2	1										1
Swamp Sparrow	3	1													
White-throated Sparrow	16	5	1	2	1				1					3	
White-crowned Sparrow	0			cw											
Dark-eyed Junco	393	12	13	17	5	35	1	9	6	21	16	2	2	14	
Snow Bunting	1														
Northern Cardinal	320	6	5	6	4	93	1	1	14	4	7	10	6	7	
Rusty Blackbird	3		2												
Brown-headed Cowbird	0														
House Finch	78		6			10				8	1		2		
Common Redpoll	22						2						1		
Hoary Redpoll	1														
Pine Siskin	3									3					
American Goldfinch	201	7	8	20	2	22	1					2			15
House Sparrow	1754	46	110	58	26	186	20	45	122	2	34	98	88	34	
# Species (not incl. CW)	81	35	54	28	20	23	16	14	21	18	21	18	18	19	
# Count Week species	7	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
# Individuals	33563	570	3592	797	458	479	277	165	445	183	330	764	672	169	
Party hours on foot	115.7	3.5	5.5	4.5	3.0	4.0	2.5	1.5	1.7	6.5	3.3	0.0	3.0	4.0	
Party hours in car	75.2	0.5	3.5	0.5	1.0	1.0	2.5	0.5	4.3	2.0	3.5	6.0	13.0	5.0	
Party km on foot	143.1	3.0	8.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	2.5	1.5	5.0	5.0	0.0	3.50	4.0	
Party km in car	677.5	8.0	12.0	13.0	12.0	10.0	7.0	4.5	30.0	20.0	37.8	70.0	110.0	10.0	
# Participants	80	3	4	5	2	2	5	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	
# Feeder watchers	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
# Parties	35	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	
Hours owling	7	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	

PART 2	SECTOR														
	SPECIES	17A	17b	10A	10B	11A	11B	12	13	14A	14B	16A	16B	15	18
Common Loon													2		
Red-necked Grebe													1		
Great Blue Heron								2						1	1
Black-crowned Night-Heron								11							
Canada Goose									324	3	35	38	2		27
Mute Swan									21	2	36	12	21	4	
Tundra Swan													4		
Trumpeter Swan											2	1			
Wood Duck								2						2	
Gadwall									23	10	10	311	158	16	
American Wigeon									9			14	6		
American Black Duck								6	2		4	33	15	3	
Mallard	3	9			11	2	172	148	45	215	181	420	82	16	
Black x Mallard hybrid								1					2	1	
Northern Shoveler													11		
Green-winged Teal													1		
Redhead								64			20	700	310		
Ring-necked Duck											1	1			
Greater Scaup								11				52	250	11	
Lesser Scaup										7			20		
scaup sp.											440				
White-winged Scoter											8	3	2		
Long-tailed Duck								859	60	620	651	311	48		
Bufflehead								34	36	135	47	64	31		
Common Goldeneye								39	6	95	286	50	9		
Hooded Merganser								13	4	1	8	4			
Common Merganser								85	6	45	59	85	18		
Red-breasted Merganser								23	12	115	15	11	9		
duck sp.													1		
Bald Eagle															
Sharp-shinned Hawk															1
Cooper's Hawk	2	1	1			1		3							
Northern Goshawk								cw							
Red-tailed Hawk	3	9	1	1	2	1	10					1		4	10
Rough-legged Hawk															
American Kestrel								1							1
Merlin			2					1							
Peregrine Falcon													1		
Ring-necked Pheasant															
American Coot									1		2				
Bonaparte's Gull													1		
Ring-billed Gull	21		12		43	25	55	339		4	18	185	140	12	
Herring Gull		1				6	22	60	5	4	130	38	14	22	
Iceland Gull								3						1	
Glaucous Gull													1		
Great Black-backed Gull					1			3				4	3		
gull sp.		7				5	9								6
Rock Pigeon	597	28	1	7	51	175	1047	209		30		13	130	301	
Mourning Dove	24	7	2			20	36		6	6		4	7	46	
Eastern Screech-Owl															5
Great Horned Owl												1			1
Long-eared Owl												1			
Northern Saw-whet Owl															1

PART 2 - continued	SECTOR														
	SPECIES	17A	17B	10A	10B	11A	11B	12	13	14A	14B	16A	16B	15	18
Belted Kingfisher				1				1						1	
Red-bellied Woodpecker															1
Downy Woodpecker	2	1	3		4	2	10	1	2	3	2	1	2	2	12
Hairy Woodpecker	2		2			1	5		1	4	5		6	5	
Northern Flicker											1				
Pileated Woodpecker					cw										
Northern Shrike										1	1				
Blue Jay			2		1	3	5			8					2
American Crow	3				8		6								16
Horned Lark											2				
Black-capped Chickadee	22	15	40	2	47	4	54		45	76	7	5	19	104	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4		1			2	6						3	4	
White-breasted Nuthatch	3		6		11	3	4		1	3			1	9	
Brown Creeper		1					1			3			2		
Carolina Wren										2					1
Winter Wren															2
Golden-crowned Kinglet							3			4			2		
Hermit Thrush															
American Robin	1	21	126	25	9	8	23						4	49	
Northern Mockingbird		1			1	1	3					1		1	
European Starling	62	84	101		67	100	344	8750	6	34	9	14	30	160	
Cedar Waxwing			1	2	16					30	2				
Eastern Towhee									1						
American Tree Sparrow	1				1	3	8		25	7	25	10	25	13	
Song Sparrow					1		1		2		2	1	1		
Swamp Sparrow									1					1	
White-throated Sparrow						1			1					1	
White-crowned Sparrow															
Dark-eyed Junco	26	9	20		19	8	45		5	10		1	27	70	
Snow Bunting											1				
Northern Cardinal	17	4	8		24	11	21		6	10		4		51	
Rusty Blackbird														1	
Brown-headed Cowbird						cw									
House Finch	16	2	1				7						1	24	
Common Redpoll	7								8		2	1		1	
Hoary Redpoll									1						
Pine Siskin															
American Goldfinch	49	6	10		5		29			1		1	5	18	
House Sparrow	61	15	29		6	250	260	29	3	130		25	29	48	
# Species (not incl. CW)	21	17	20	6	20	23	31	23	28	36	35	40	34	36	
# Count Week species	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	
# Individuals	926	221	369	38	328	634	2212	11050	310	2154	2626	2061	689	1044	
Party hours on foot	6.0	2.0	4.5	1.0	4.0	1.5	10.8	1.5	6.0	7.0	4.0	2.0	10.5	12.0	
Party hours in car	2.5	0.5	1.0	0.0	1.5	2.0	6.5	2.5	0.3	0.0	4.0	7.0	0.5	3.7	
Party km on foot	12.0	2.5	4.5	2.0	8.0	7.0	14.5	0.5	11.0	5.0	3.0	7.0	4.0	13.6	
Party km in car	40.0	10.0	2.0	0.0	30.0	30.0	66.0	17.0	2.0	0.0	10.0	55.0	8.0	63.2	
# Participants	5	2	3	3	3	2	7	3	2	3	5	2	5	4	
# Feeder watchers	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
# Parties	3	1	3	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	
Hours owling	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.3	

List of Sectors and Participants

Revised Sectors 2004; 7.5 mile radius circle, centered on Avenue Road and Roselawn Avenue.

Sector 1	(High Park):	Bob Yukich , Patrick Stepien-Scanlon, Roger Powley.
Sector 2	(Lower Humber):	Glenn Coady , Carl Wegenschimmel, Jan Doherty, Ebrahim Patel.
Sector 3	(Upper Humber):	Garth Riley , Nancy McPherson, Peter Aukenthaler, Karen Aukenthaler, Enver Domingo.
Sector 4A	(Weston South):	Hugh Currie , Gene Denzel.
Sector 4B	(Weston North):	Hugh Currie , Gene Denzel.
Sector 5A	(Downtown):	Jess Mackenzie , Theo Hofmann, Mark Brubacher, Zoe Lebrun-Southcott, Marcus Feak.
Sector 5B	(Central West):	Theo Hofmann , Jess Mackenzie, Zoe Lebrun-Southcott.
Sector 6A	(Downsview West):	Dan Bone , Susan Blayney, Michael Bates.
Sector 6B	(Downsview East):	Don Barnett , Margaret Kelch, Celia Harte.
Sector 22	(York University):	Chester Gryski , Sandra Eadie.
Sector 30	(Thornhill):	Roy Smith , Winnie Poon.
Sector 23	(Willowdale):	Ross Harris , Don Burton, Jim Fellowes.
Sector 9	(Bayview):	Naish McHugh , Andrew Jano.
Sector 17A	(East Don Central):	Bob Ross , Neil MacDougall, Neil Meehan, Michael Austin, Allan Sangster.
Sector 17B	(East Don North):	Andrew Keaveney , Sarah James.
Sector 10A	(Sherwood):	Joan Winearls , Bob Falconer, George Fairfield, Jean Fairfield, Barbara Kalthoff , Corinne Falconer.
Sector 10B	(Sunnybrook):	Marcel Gahbauer , Bruce Massey, Ed O'Connor.
Sector 11A	(Wilket Creek):	Marcel Gahbauer , Bruce Massey, Ed O'Connor.
Sector 11B	(Leaside):	Eleanor Beagan , Marilyn Murphy.
Sector 12	(Central East):	Mary Schuster , Don Peuramaki, Theresa Dobko, John Nishikawa, Robert Miller, Kevin Seymour, Howard Shapiro.
Sector 13	(City Shore):	Ray Geras , Tom Flinn, Dennis Duckworth.
Sector 14A	(Toronto Islands West):	Alfred Adamo , Herb Elliott.
Sector 14B	(Toronto Islands East):	Bruce Ferry , Mick Panesar, Attila Fust.
Sector 16A	(Leslie Spit):	John Carley , Carl Hills, Jean Iron, Ralph Toning, Alex Phillips.
Sector 16B	(Portlands):	Richard Joos , Margaret Heslin.
Sector 15	(East Toronto):	Bob Kortright , Julie Graham, Victor Wong, Nancy Deadman, Becky Bray.
Sector 18	(East Don South):	Karl Konze , John van Nostrand, David Agro, Ken McIlwrick.

[1] Other observers for peregrines: Harry Crawford, Paul Marshman.

Sector leaders' names are in bold.

Note that the total number of participants does not add horizontally because some people worked in more than one sector eg. 5A, 5B etc.



Owl Monitoring and Research at Tommy Thompson Park

Dan Derbyshire and Seabrooke Leckie



Photo © Seabrooke Leckie /TTPBRS

Background

The Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station (TTPBRS) was established in 2003 by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and is dedicated to the understanding, protection and awareness of birds in Toronto. A growing array of monitoring and research programs is conducted annually to assess viability of avifauna in the urban landscape of the Greater Toronto Area. Programs also serve continental monitoring schemes for both migratory and breeding bird species. Such programs include Migration Monitoring, Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship and Nocturnal Owl Monitoring to name a few.

Northern Saw-whet Owl Populations

Saw-whets have been shown to follow an approximate four-year population cycle, with populations peaking roughly every fourth year. Previous population peaks occurred in 1999 and 2003. Keeping with the four-year pattern, 2007 was another peak year for Northern Saw-whet numbers, with voles plentiful during the breeding season, allowing for high breeding productivity. However, seed crops through the owls' breeding range suffered high failure rates this year, resulting in a population crash among voles and other rodents. This unique combination of high saw-whet productivity and low prey availability caused atypically high numbers of owls to migrate south.

Fall 2007 was the fifth consecutive year of the Nocturnal Owl Monitoring program at TTPBRS. The program is designed to gather population trends on the Northern Saw-whet Owl. While all owl species will move during times of food shortages, saw-whets are the only truly migratory owl species, and as such make an ideal candidate for population monitoring during spring and fall migration. However, the distance that the birds move and their abundance is intrinsically tied to cycles in prey population, with larger movements of

owls into the south in years of low prey availability. Migrating owls favour nights following the passage of a cold front with light north winds and a new moon. Overcast nights or nights with full moon are limiting factors as owls depend on dark conditions to hide from predators and to forage. It is expected that light pollution from the city is a limiting factor on the abundance of migrating owls in Toronto. Despite the deterrents to owl migration in Toronto, high numbers pass through annually. On November 1, 2003, 61 owls were banded in four hours and it is not uncommon to capture 10 or more owls on a single check of the nets.

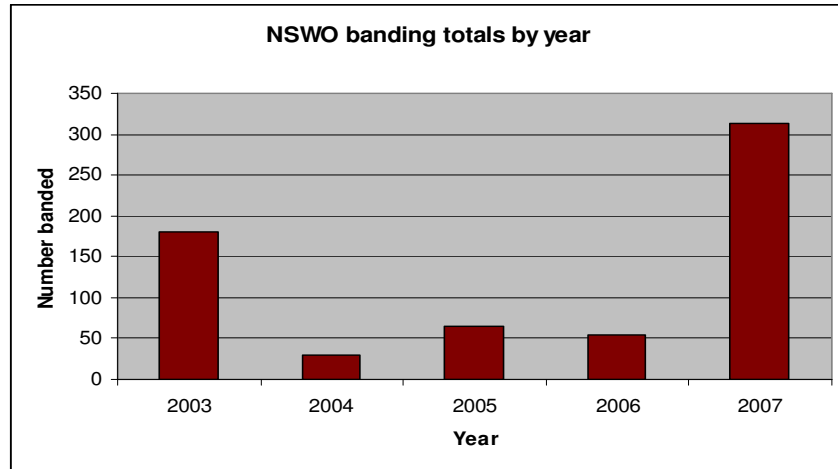


Figure 1. Northern Saw-whet Owl Captures By Year at TTPBRS

The protocol for the Nocturnal Owl Monitoring program is designed around a standardized capture regimen that employs the use of nets from fixed locations that are operated beginning a half hour after sunset and run for a period of 4 hours. The net array consists of both passive mistnets (30mm mesh) as well as a set of three connected owl nets (60mm) in an L shaped configuration. The Northern Saw-whet Owl call is broadcast from a sound box located in the middle of the owl net array. Sampling has been restricted to the fall as spring attempts have yielded no owls. Results from 2003-2006 were variable with a high of 184 total captures in 2003 and an average of 49 owls captured between 2004 and 2006. The 2007 season was exceptional as record high numbers of owls were sampled at TTPBRS and other Ontario sites. A total of 314 Northern Saw-whets and 1 Long-eared Owl were banded in 2007. An additional 7 owls were recaptured having been banded at other stations in North America.

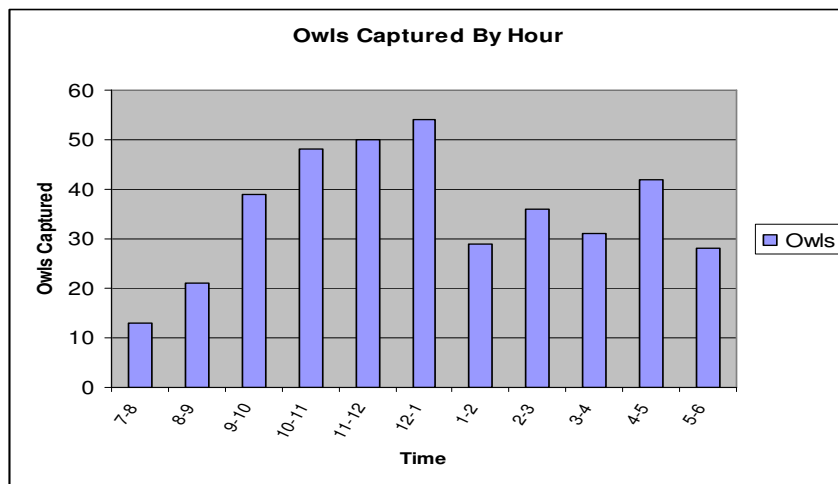


Figure 2. Owls Captured by Hour at TTPBRS in 2007

In 2007 we sought to determine peak timing of owl migration during the daily window for migrating owls, which is roughly 7pm-6am (variable with sunset and DST). Specifically we wondered if owl abundance during the first 4-hour period of the evening was consistent with abundance for the remainder of the

night/morning. To accomplish this it was necessary to operate nets well into non-standard hours (beyond first 4.5 after sunset). A total of 30 nights from September 23 to November 10 were sampled in 2007, which encompassed 1824 total net hours. This effort is roughly triple that of the average of 621 hours per season between 2003 and 2006. The first owl was captured on September 26, which was record early by nine days. Results indicate that owl movement builds gradually from 7pm and peaks around midnight to 1am. Abundance drops after 1am but is consistently strong through to sunrise. Capture rate for the non-standard effort was 20 owls per 100 net hours while the rate was 13 owls/100 hours for the standard period. These results suggest that the first four-hour period would derive a representative sample although opening nets 1-2 hours later than is current practice would increase the sample.

A summary of demographic statistics for captured owls by year is presented in Table 1. The ratio of hatch-year birds to adults was highest in 2007, which is reflective of higher than normal breeding productivity during the year. The ratio is also high in 2003 as one would expect given the volume of owls that passed through in that year. For owls captured in all years combined, a remarkable 70% were female. It is believed that females respond more aggressively to audio lures, which would explain higher capture probabilities. This is supported by a study at Cape May, New Jersey, where the ratio of females to males increased substantially with the introduction of an audio lure in 1989 (Duffy and Matheny 1997).

Table 1. Northern Saw-whet Owl Demographics: 2003-2007

Year	Total Captures	HY	F	M	Sexed Captures	Percent F
2003	184	0.73	110	22	132	83.33
2004	30	0.56	19	5	24	79.17
2005	71	0.45	31	16	47	65.96
2006	58	0.72	43	8	51	84.31
2007	335	0.8	155	98	253	61.26
Total	678	0.65	358	149	507	70.61

Northern Saw-whet Owls are one of the most frequently recovered species of birds for North American bird banders. This year we captured 7 owls that had been previously banded at other locations. These owls were originally banded at locations as far away as Temiskaming, in northern Ontario, Prince Edward Point, near Kingston, and Whitefish Point, in northern Michigan. Such recoveries can also often provide interesting information on movement patterns, such as the TTPBRS bird, banded this fall, that was captured by Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory just 7 days later – a movement of 200 km northeast!

For more information on TTPBRS, contact:

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Acknowledgments

Thanks to Andrew Jano and Seabrooke Leckie for their lost sleep during the Nocturnal Owl Monitoring program in 2007.

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NOTES

Status of the Northern Saw-whet Owl in the Greater Toronto Area

Winter:

The Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) is an uncommon annual wintering species in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Spring:

It is an uncommon spring migrant from early March to mid-April.

Summer:

It is a very rare breeding species in the GTA, having nested at: Fisherman's Island, *City of Toronto*, where 5 young were collected (ROMZ 28.5.31.17-21) from a nest on 23 May 1928 by James L. Baillie (Baillie and Harrington 1936); Thorah Island, *Durham R.M.*, where 8 nests were discovered by J.A. Edwards as follows: a nest with 6 eggs found in an elm stub at 20 feet on 7 April 1929 (Ontario Nest Records Scheme [ONRS]# 25910), a nest with 6 eggs found in an elm stub at 20 feet on 8 April 1929 (ONRS# 25912), a nest with 6 eggs found in an elm stub at 10 feet on 9 April 1929 (ONRS# 25911), a nest with 6 eggs found in a pine stub at 8 feet on 10 April 1929 (ONRS# 25913), a nest with 5 eggs found in a birch stub at 20 feet on 16 April 1929 (ONRS# 25914), a nest with 5 eggs found in an elm stub at 12 feet on 16 April 1929, a nest of unknown contents found in April 1930 (ONRS# 25916), and a nest with 6 eggs found in an elm stub at 15 feet on 4 May 1936 (ONRS# 25917); the Cedarvale ravine, *City of Toronto*, where Richard M. Saunders concluded they nested in 1943 (Saunders 1947); and at Terra Cotta, *Peel R.M.*, where Richard M. Saunders found a nest with 3 eggs on 25 May 1952 (ONRS# 25920); at Avenue Rd. and Bloor St. W., *City of Toronto*, where a recently fledged juvenile was seen in trees behind the church on 23-24 July 1994 by Barnaby Southgate (*vide* Mike King, TOC database); in the vicinity of Yonge St. and College St., *City of Toronto*, where two separate recently fledged young were found in the downtown area: one at College St. east of Bay St. (Roy B.H. Smith *et al.*) and one on McGill St. just east of Yonge St. (Glenn Coady) on 19 July 2005 (Worthington 2005).

Fall:

It is a common fall migrant in the GTA, with the largest numbers encountered at lakefront locations. The earliest migrants appear in the last week of September, with the peak movement in mid-October, and the last migrants still passing in late November. All-time single-night high counts of fall migrants at banding operations have included 40 (36 banded plus 4 seen) on Toronto Islands on 22 October 1961 (Taylor 1962), 45 on Toronto Islands on 14 October 1965 (Charles Hopkins, TOC Log book), and 61 at the Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station on the Leslie Street Spit on 1 November 2003.

Interestingly, the recognition of the migratory nature of the Northern Saw-whet Owl was first made by Percy A. Taverner (Taverner and Swales 1911) and W.E. Saunders (Saunders 1907) in Ontario about a century ago. Taverner noted that the 24 birds found dead on the shore of Lake Huron after a storm by Saunders on 21 October 1906, in addition to the 12 birds found at the tip of Point Pelee by himself and B.H. Swales on 15 October 1910, and the description of a large movement on Lake Huron alighting on the deck of the steamer "Helena" off the Little Duck Islands, Lake Huron, on 10 October 1903, left little other explanation other than a regular mid-October migration by these owls.

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