



THE BULLETIN

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE RICHMOND HILL NATURALISTS

NOVEMBER 2010 — No. 493

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

The Search for the Red-Headed Woodpecker

Why do we care about the Christmas Bird Count?

Rondeau Cottagers Conflict

Can Salmon make it to Richmond Hill?

Leslie Street Spit Hike

Global Greenbelt Conference

Outlook Grim for Rusty Blackbirds

Project Feederwatch Begins

CBC Potluck hosted by Athena Antiochos at 74 Cherry Hills Drive, Concord. Show up at around sunset to tally up the day's results, have a chance at winning a door prize or two, and chow down on the traditional chili supper. Please bring a salad or dessert to share!



A late, and chilly, Black-Throated Green Warbler spotted at Mill Pond on November 6, 2010. Photo by Rod Potter. Will he still be around for the Christmas Bird Count?

Participate in the Christmas Bird Count while staying warm and cozy indoors....

You don't have to spend the whole day braving the frosty weather to participate in the bird count. Keep an eye on your own back yard during some or all of Count Day (December 18th). Birds seen during the Count Week can also be reported. That's how we got the exciting Carolina Wren on the Richmond Hill list last year.

And just as wonderful are people who volunteer to let counters observe their back yards for a few minutes on count day. If you would like to volunteer your yard, please again email lezned@yorku.ca with the location. Please do not volunteer your neighbour's yard!

For those intrepid beginner or expert birdwatchers who can't wait to spend a morning, an afternoon or the whole day participating in the Christmas Bird Count, there is still time to sign up.

Please contact Gene Denzel if you would like to help in any way within the Richmond Hill Circle. You can leave a message with Gene at 905-889-7888 or email lezned@yorku.ca



THE BULLETIN

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE RICHMOND HILL NATURALISTS

The Bulletin is published 9 times per year, from September to May inclusive, by the Richmond Hill Naturalists, and is mailed free to members. The Bulletin is the official publication of the Richmond Hill Naturalists, a non-profit organization the objectives of which are to stimulate public interest in natural history and to encourage the preservation of our natural areas.

Address Correspondence to:
Richmond Hill Naturalists, P.O.
Box 32217, RPO Harding,
Richmond Hill, ON, L4C 9S3

Deadlines: The editor encourages submissions from any member on any topic related to nature or conservation, and in particular, any issue that might be of interest or concern to members of this club. e-mail: editor@rhnaturalists.ca Deadlines are the 2nd Thursday of each month.

Bulletin Advertisers have been selected because of their relevance to member interests. Members are encouraged to patronize our advertisers and please mention that you saw their ad in our Bulletin.

Change of Address: Any change of email or street address should be sent to Mike Turk who prints the envelopes for the Bulletin mailing.

Denise Potter, Bulletin Editor:
editor@rhnaturalists.ca

647-504-4586
Mailing Address: 128 Pugsley
Av, Richmond Hill, ON

Mailing Database: Mike Turk

Distribution: Athena Antiochos

Visit our Website at
www.rhnaturalists.ca

See the Executive List for
additional contact information.

2008 / 2009 RHN Executive

President.....	Marianne Yake (president@rhnaturalists.ca) 905-883-3047)
Past President.....	Natalie Helferty
2nd Vice President.....	Position Available
Secretary.....	Position Available
Treasurer/Secretary.....	Gene Denzel (treasurer@rhnaturalists.ca)
Field Trips.....	Joe Agg (trips@rhnaturalists.ca)
Environment.....	Position Available
Publicity.....	Position Available (publicity@rhnaturalists.ca)
Bulletin Editor.....	Denise Potter (editor@rhnaturalists.ca)
Membership.....	Mike Turk (membership@rhnaturalists.ca)
Events.....	Position Available
Ontario Nature Rep.....	Marianne Yake
Website Admin.....	Rod Potter (webmaster@rhnaturalists.ca)
Chair of AstroNats.....	Heidi DeBond (astronomy@rhnaturalists.ca)

Don't forget to Renew your Membership!



Your membership fee helps pay for our monthly hall rental, website registration, speakers, printing and postage for the Bulletin (all Website and Bulletin contributions and editing are on a strictly volunteer basis), and special events. Please renew by clicking on the "Membership" link on the website at rhnaturalists.ca or at the monthly General Meeting.

A single membership is \$30; get a membership for the whole family for only \$35.

Watch for Ravens this Christmas Bird Count

The Common Raven has never been reported in Richmond Hill's Christmas Bird Count so far. But the large corvid is known to be breeding in York Region now, so take a close look at any solitary large black Corvid that you see. In the photos below the Raven (left) is larger, has a much heavier beak and a wedge-shaped tail. The crow has a much thinner bill and a fan-shaped tail. Ravens also tend to be solitary or in pairs; Crows often flock in large groups.


Raven and Crow photos from http://depts.washington.edu/natmap/facts/crow_vs_raven.html





© Tim Knight

Coming Events

Thursday, November 25, 2010. 7:30pm Joint Meeting with West Humber Naturalists.


 Speaker: Barbara Frei, a doctoral candidate from McGill University - the Search for the Disappearing Red-Headed Woodpecker. NOTE: this meeting takes place at the Vellore Village Community Hall, Activity Room 3, 1 Villa Royale Avenue (just west off Weston Road between Major MacKenzie Drive and Rutherford Road.

 Wednesday, December 8, 2010, 7:30pm. Bird Study Group: Sapsuckers and Red-Bellied Woodpeckers. Location: Mike Turk's place, 217 Romfield Circuit, Thornhill. All welcome. Please call Mike at 905-731-8380 to RSVP.

 Saturday, December 18, 2010. All Day. CBC Christmas Bird Count. Please contact Gene Denzel if you would like to help within the Richmond Hill Circle. Potluck Dinner Athena Antiochos at 74 Cherry Hills Drive, Concord about 5:30pm. Please bring a salad or dessert to share. If you wish to be a counter or to volunteer your back yard please leave a message with Gene at 905-889-7888 or email lezned@yorku.ca

Please note: Richmond Hill Naturalists welcomes anyone to volunteer as an outing leader. Contact trips@rhnaturalists.ca if you would like to organize or promote an outing.



 Sunday, November 28 at 6:50AM (yes, AM). All Day. West Humber field trip: Niagara Gulls

Join Kevin Shackleton for the West Humber Naturalist club's annual excursion to the Niagara area. The Niagara River hosts a wide variety of gull species in winter while the surrounding area can be good for Carolinian songbirds, various waterfowl, and even some birds of prey. Pack a field guide, lunch, binos, and a scope if you have one. Be prepared for cold, damp weather and bring enough lunch to get you through the day; there is likely only one stop at Tim's in the morning and then nothing until late afternoon.

To car pool, meet at Vellore Hall at 6:50 a.m. on Sunday, Nov 28th. Those who want to go directly to the Falls area should head for the parking lot at the greenhouse south of the falls for 8:30. Stops will include the area around the barge, the interior pond, and Chippewa for Carolinian species. After that, we can stop for coffee at Tim's and work our way downstream to Niagara-on-the-Lake. If time allows, a visit to Van Wagner's Beach on the way home is possible. Call Kevin at 905-853-6959 if you require further information prior to the trip.

 Toronto Ornithological Club JIM BAILLIE MEMORIAL BIRD WALKS:

Sunday, January 23, 2011: Sunnyside/ Humber Bay, 1:30pm - sunset. Leader: Bob Cumming. Meet at 1:30pm in the Sunnyside parking lot at the foot of Windermere Avenue off Lakeshore West. Gulls, waterfowl.

Sunday, January 30, 2011: Durham Region, 9:00am- early afternoon. Leader: Rayfield Pye. Meet at 9:00am at the south-west corner of the Pickering GO Station (Bayly/Liverpool) to car pool if necessary. Waterfowl, gulls, possible winter finches, wintering sparrows and feeder birds.



The Search for the Red-Headed Woodpecker

Red-headed Woodpeckers are oft identified by their striking coloring and pugnacious nature. As of late they are recognized for a more infamous reason, their inexplicable and sudden disappearance from the parks and woodlands of Ontario. Barbara Frei, a doctoral candidate from McGill University, will speak about her search for the disappearing Red-headed Woodpecker, factors that may be leading to their declines and the interesting lives of these beautiful birds. Whether you are a conservationist, a local landowner or just a bird lover (or all three!), this talk should amuse and educate you about a local wildlife gem.

Barbara is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Natural Resource Science at McGill University. Her co-supervisors are Dr. Jim Fyles a forest ecosystem ecologist and professor at McGill University and Dr. Joe Nocera, a species-at-risk research scientist for the MNR and adjunct professor at Trent University. Barbara has extensive field experiences working with birds in several different habitats including species-specific surveys, nest searching and monitoring. She is also a licensed bird-bander since 2006 and has handled and banded >5000 birds of >80 species. Her M.Sc. thesis work focused on Bobolinks and their conservation and management in human modified landscapes. She has also created and given several talks on varying ecology and conservation topics and was a guest on CBC radio on grassland bird conservation in farmlands. She was involved in the inception of the McGill Bird Observatory, the only student created and run bird observatory in North America and served as bander-in-charge since 2006 and as the station coordinator from 2006-2010. She also currently sits on the board of Bird Protection Quebec.

Enjoy Barbara's presentation about the Search for the Red-Headed Woodpecker at the joint meeting with West Humber Naturalists

Location: Vellore Village Community Hall, Activity Room 3, 1 Villa Royale Avenue (just west off Weston Road between Major MacKenzie Drive and Rutherford Road.

Start Time: 19:30

Date: 2010-11-25

Why do we love the Christmas Bird Count?

111th Annual Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 18th is THE big day for Richmond Hill Naturalists. Just as they have done for the previous 55 years, Club members will brave the weather to follow their traditional routes, counting every single bird they see. Their results will be sent to Bird Studies Canada and combined with results from other societies across the western hemisphere, creating what has become the most comprehensive bird population snapshot in the world. It all began right at the turn of the last century, when Audubon Society leader Frank Chapman pitted the newfangled idea of bird watching against the Christmas "Side Hunt" tradition of going out on a hunt where the team who got the most kills "won". One hundred and eleven years later, the Side Hunt is an almost forgotten barbarism of the past while more than 60,000 people in nearly every country in the Western Hemisphere now participate in this great adventure in Citizen Science.

How accurate can it be? The question non-birders ask me most often when I tell them about the Bird Count or the Baillie Birdathon is, how do you know it's accurate? Given that count volunteers are mostly amateur and all are

human, and given that birds don't go out of their way to give observers a good look, data purity will never be 100%. But there are quite a few things working in favour of accuracy. Newcomers join established groups with at least one or more experienced birders. To maintain consistency from year to year, each group follows the same route each time, trying as much as possible to visit the same places each year. It might take an effort at first to remember to keep an accurate count of the European Starlings and House Sparrows when the Birder's mind naturally skips over these birds like ads in a magazine. Crows must surely have been present in Richmond Hill in the 1950s, as Theo Hofmann noted in his excellent analysis of 55 years of Richmond Hill bird counts (see Richmond Hill Naturalists Bulletin from March, 2010) but the compiler of the day did not even mention them. Human foibles aside, the Count is still accurate ENOUGH.

First Clue to a Problem Trends become significant when combined with the data from other Bird Counts. House Sparrow numbers have decreased continent-wide for example, and the Richmond Hill Count reflected that with peaks of 1300 to 2695 reported every year until 1990, and numbers of only 160 to 700 or so reported each year since then. The CBC is the first

clue that something is going on with this species. From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition – and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation. This year CBC compilers will enter their count data via Audubon's website at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc> where the 111th Count results will be viewable in near real-time. The Christmas Bird Count is made possible in Canada, in part, by generous support from The EJLB Foundation.



Wild Birds Unlimited
Nature Shop

Debbie & Andy Neale
Owners

8150 Yonge St.
Thornhill, ON, L4J 1W5
Phone: (905) 709-3775
Fax: (866) 902-5167

YOUR BACKYARD
BIRDFEEDING SPECIALIST

feathered_friendship@bellnet.ca
www.wbu.com/thornhill

Lots of Surprises for Naturalists Excursion to Leslie Street Spit

Several Richmond Hill Naturalists joined Ron Fleming of the West Humber Naturalists on October 23 for a surprising day. Passerines were sparse for the first half of the expedition but we did get great views of a Red-Tailed Hawk hovering in mid-air over a small meadow. We also had clusters of hermit thrush and robins, plenty of yellow-rumped warblers, kinglets, white-throated and white-crowned sparrows, song and tree sparrows, and of course chickadees. A side-trip down to the Banding Station added Eastern Phoebe to the collection. After three hours of walking we were up to barely 20 species, most of which we could see better from our back yards. Of course the company and the exercise were pleasant.

But wow, then it got amazing (and much colder)! The bird banders, who were just leaving for the day, told us to check the barren, east side of the spit for snow buntings and horned larks. Snow buntings are among my favourite birds. I never pass up a chance to watch the white and black patterned birds billow around me like a storm of giant snowflakes..and I was not going to be disappointed today! So instead of heading back to the cars, we wandered over to the east side of the spit. It was cold (as it always seems to be when snow buntings are around), with a bracing wind blowing off the lake, and the temperature seemed to have plummeted far below the predicted temperatures of 15 degrees. We soon found a flock

of American Pipits running through the weed and brick-choked barrens.

Then it happened. A movement on the large boulders along the shoreline caught my attention and I saw a large, tawny-coloured, round-headed raptor, almost the same colour as the boulders themselves. Meanwhile Ron was screaming "short-eared owl!" but he was looking in a completely different direction! Yes, we had not one, but TWO short-eared owls. They circled and diverged. We tracked one for a long time as it flew northeast over the lake towards the city.

Moments later we had our flock of Snow Buntings and Horned Larks. Other excited birders reported that a longspur had been seen, but we had to save it for another time!

Heading at last back towards the main road, as we went along the track north of the ponds, we came upon a flock of at least two dozen Rusty Blackbirds, a species that is truly becoming rare. All in all a brilliant day. Thanks, Ron!

Pergrines vs Falcons

by Athena Antiochos

On November 10th, the bird study group met at the home of Tony and Joandice Marshall and discussed the Merlin and Peregrine Falcon. Here are some facts we learned about the two birds:

Merlin: Uncommon but very widespread falcon can be found all over North America. Pigeon-sized with blue gray upperparts, the Merlin feeds on small birds and insects (especially dragonflies). After breeding and during migration it feeds on larger birds.

Peregrine Falcon: Much larger than the Merlin, but smaller than a red-tailed hawk, this long-tailed, long-winged bird was almost wiped out by DDT and efforts are being made to bring the bird back from near extinction. The Peregrine has adapted to urban life, inhabiting tall city buildings and bridges as well as the rocky cliffs of its past. The Peregrine feeds chiefly on birds but also consumes bats, rats, rabbits and voles and even insects.

Next meeting of the group will be Dec 8th at 7:30pm at the home of Mike Turk, 217 Romfield Circuit, Thornhill. The Sapsucker and Red-bellied woodpecker will be discussed.



That's West Humber Naturalist Ron Fleming in the back left with his scope on his shoulder; clockwise from Ron are Gene Denzel, Denise Potter, Barbara Jackson, Charlene Denzel and Joandice Marshall. Photo by Rod Potter

Outlook Grim for Rusty Blackbird

Bird Count Data points to Steep Decline for once-common species

The Rusty Blackbird was reported on average every third Christmas Bird Count in Richmond Hill since 1973. But it hasn't been reported at all in the Richmond Hill count since 1994 (Hofmann, 2010). It turns out that kind of pattern was happening all across the continent. It was by compiling the results of Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys from across the continent that researchers first became aware of the magnitude of the decline in the Rusty Blackbird population.

Two researchers noticed an anomaly in the mid 1990s during a summer stint in the Boreal wetlands. They found only a single pair of Rusty Blackbirds in an area where they had formerly been described as "very common". This is in a remote, undeveloped area of wooded Boreal wetlands, not a place where human development had obviously pushed the birds out. Russell Greenberg, a researcher with the Smithsonian National Zoo, and US Geological Survey researcher Sam Droege began to analyze data from decades of Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys and the Quebec Checklist to find out what was happening, and the pattern they found was alarming. Before 1920 the Rusty was described as "very common to abundant" in 56% of bird accounts across the country. By 1950 it was considered common in only 7% of accounts. After 1950 it was described as "uncommon" in more and more accounts as the years went by. But it gets worse. From these accounts it seems the Rusty Blackbird population has



Rusty Blackbird hides in a tree on Leslie Street Spit 2010

Photo by Gene Denzel, October 23

plummeted an estimated 95% over the past 30 years. Somehow this decline was overlooked, and as they write in their 1999 publication "On the Decline of the Rusty Blackbird and the Use of Ornithological Literature to Document Long-Term Population Trends", nobody seemed particularly alarmed.

Why did nobody notice? That's a question that still needs an answer. The jury is still out, as well, on the cause of the decline.

In 2005 the Smithsonian National Zoo launched a Rusty Blackbird Technical Working Group to try to get a grip on the cause of the decline. The Smithsonian points out that the Rusty Blackbird is a little different from most of its Icterid cousins (grackles, red-winged blackbirds and Brewers Blackbirds, for example) in that

it feeds almost entirely on aquatic invertebrates and small fish.

This may make it vulnerable to mercury contamination, to changes in the aquatic insect population caused by changes in water chemistry...caused in turn by global warming, mining, peat farming, and other human activity in the Boreal Wetlands where it breeds and in the bottomland wetlands where it winters. There seems to be more going on than just the reduction of its favorite wintering habitat, which had already happened well before 1920. In other words, the Rusty may be an indicator of the health of our Boreal and southern wetlands...and right now it doesn't look good.

Rondeau Cottage Conflict

Province to extend cottage leases 21 more years...with strings

Rondeau cottagers are upset that the province, rather than ending their leases and having them demolish their cottages in 2017 as was agreed in 1986, has now offered to extend the leases another 21 years to 2038. Why are cottagers so angry? Because with the lease extension, they would not be allowed to sell the cottages or transfer the lease to anyone except a spouse. Not even children can take over the leases. The Rondeau Cottagers Association and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent (with the support of Chatham-Kent Essex Liberal MPP Pat Hoy) have been actively lobbying the provincial government to have all leases extended for a long time. The Chatham-Kent Heritage Board wants to preserve the cottages, many of which are between 80 and 100 years old. The Yacht Club, also doomed under the legislation, does not want to die either.

But those who wish to see this Important Bird Area returned to a natural state feel betrayed that the Province is even thinking of extending the leases. In an October 10 article, Ontario Nature pointed out that Rondeau is an important stopover for migrating birds, and a refuge for dozens of species at risk including the prothonotary warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, Fowler's toad, spiny softshell turtle, nodding pogonia and red mulberry. Its provincially and nationally significant habitats include coastal marshes, buttonbush sloughs, oak savannah, eastern cottonwood savannah and Great Lakes shoreline sand dunes. According to this article, individual cottagers have admitted to killing the endangered fox snake and intentionally planting invasive

non-native plants in their cottage gardens. Just by occupying that prime space, they inhibit wildlife. And, this is a park. Very little of Southwestern Ontario is protected as park space or conservation area as it is. Read the entire Ontario Nature article at http://www.ontarionature.org/action_alerts/alert_template.php?n_code=482

Cottagers -- and the local real estate and tourism organizations -- say forbidding the sale of the cottages will depress an already depressed real estate market further, and decrease opportunities to bring needed tourism dollars to the area.

For the cottager's perspective, take a look at this Wikipedia entry:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rondeau_Provincial_Park

All parties had until November 18th to submit comments to the government before the final details are entered into law. Cottages or not, Rondeau is still a remarkable and unique park. People will still want to visit Rondeau and the 35 million

Canadians who don't own cottages there have had a difficult time finding any roofed accommodation in the vicinity. Maybe the local business people could put their minds to solving their tourism problem in another way.

To view the Rondeau Provincial Park Management Plan (1991), go to <http://ontarioparks.com/english/invit.html>

AUTHENTIC TREE CARE INC.



1-888-366-CARE

416-990-CARE

- TREE & SHRUB PRUNING
- INSECT & DISEASE CONTROL
- PLANTING & TRANSPLANTING

- TREE & STUMP REMOVAL
- DEEP ROOT FERTILIZING
- CABLING & BRACING

I.S.A. CERTIFIED ARBORISTS

Can Salmon Make it to Richmond Hill?

They will someday if Richmond Hill Naturalist Joe Agg has anything to do with it. With several years as a member of the Don Watershed Council behind him, and the inspiration of East Don Partners head Phil Goodwin, Joe has learned a lot about what can be done with willpower and elbow grease. On behalf of the Richmond Hill Naturalist Club, Joe has won the Paper Hammer Grant (provided by Evergreen in conjunction with Home Depot), a small amount of money that will be used to help clean up German Mills Creek.

The East Don group has been planting trees, cleaning up waterways and just getting out there keeping an eye on things for about ten years now and the Salmon have returned as far north as the East Don Park. But from there they are getting stuck. "As you may know salmon are now in German Mills creek but migration is blocked in places by poorly designed structures such as culverts as well as beaver dams, debris, etc," Joe said. "Part of the work would be to open things up for the salmon to travel farther upstream to proper spawning areas."

German Mills Creek runs through Richmond Hill from its source at Gamble Road and Bathurst south to #7 east of Bayview and eventually connects with the Don River. "We will be partnering with local schools, churches and others as well as Ontario Streams in this effort," Joe explained. "Work would include garbage cleanup, restoration work and tree planting." Joe will be asking the Town to put up signs acknowledging the contribution by Home Depot and Evergreen.



A shadowy monster hovers in the East Don River. Salmon have made it as far as that, why not all the way to the northern reaches of Richmond Hill? Photo by Phil Goodwin, East Don Partners

Greenbelt Experts from Around the World Coming to Toronto

Looking for something Green to do in March? You might want to sign up for Greenbelts: Local Solutions for Global Challenges. The first ever Global Greenbelts Conference is being held March 22-24th in downtown Toronto. With more than 30 speakers and panelists from South America, Europe, Australia, the UK, Canada and the US, conference goers can learn a lot about how different areas are creating and keeping their greenbelts.

The conference is being held at the Radisson Admiral Hotel on the Toronto lakefront

249 Queen's Quay West

<http://www.globalgreenbeltsconference.ca>

Cost is \$250+ tax per person;

\$200 for early bird registrations.

Day 1 - (optional, \$65 cost) you can go on one of five day trips including: the wine farms of the Niagara Peninsula, the Holland Marsh, the Crawford Lake section of the Bruce Trail, the Rice Lake Grasslands, Improving access to locally grown food in Toronto. Each trip includes opportunities to meet with researchers and other experts.

Day 2 - Wednesday - March 23 - International Perspectives on Greenbelts, sustaining Rural Vitality, the Changing Landscape of Farming, Incorporating the Economic Benefits of Greenbelts into Decision Making

International Perspectives on Greenbelts with speakers from

the Mazovia Region of Poland, the San Francisco Bay Area, the Iron Curtain Green Belt and European Green Belt

Day 3 - Enhancing Ecosystems and Biodiversity; recreational and tourism opportunities, minimizing negative impacts on the integrity of ecosystems;

Governing Greenbelts, Connecting People to Greenbelts, Improving Urban Food Access

Five Big Ideas for Greenbelts - with experts from Poland, Australia, the UK, and Canada

Bicknell's Thrush Ice Cream...

and other news from Bird Studies Canada

The Bicknell's Thrush, a rare, threatened songbird that breeds in high elevation areas of eastern Canada and the U.S., winters in the mountainous forests of the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. Highly secretive and difficult to detect, this species has been best known to researchers and birders...until now.

On November 3, Dominican Republic ice cream giant Helados Bon introduced a new flavour – "choco maple" – directly inspired by the Bicknell's Thrush. The flavour captures elements from the thrush's breeding and wintering ranges, and the chocolate is organic. A portion of proceeds from sales will help protect Bicknell's Thrush habitat.

The campaign launch was held at the Museum of Natural History in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and coincided with the November 2-4 meeting of the International Bicknell's Thrush Conservation Group. So if you happen to follow the thrush's path to the Dominican Republic this winter, be sure to stop in at the local "Bon" ice cream shop to order the choco maple. It supports a great cause, and it's delicious!

Ontario Atlas Abundance Maps Now Online
Relative abundance maps from the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario (2001-2005) are now available online. These maps are derived from point count surveys and colonial waterbird surveys. Visit the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas website to view the abundance maps, as well as breeding distribution maps from the first atlas (1981-85) and the second atlas (2001-05), in English and French.

To receive all of these maps in one convenient package that includes an explanation of the distributions shown, and why they have changed in recent decades, please purchase the atlas publication. The book is the most authoritative and up-to-date resource on Ontario's birds and bird distribution, and contains a wealth of information that cannot be found elsewhere. The price has been discounted to CDN \$63, which includes taxes

and delivery in Canada and the U.S.

The Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario is the result of a partnership between Bird Studies Canada, Environment Canada, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and Ontario Nature. Many thanks to all the atlasers who contributed to the project.

Project FeederWatch Underway

Every winter, more than 15,000 birdwatchers throughout North America volunteer for Project FeederWatch, a joint program of Bird Studies Canada and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participating in this annual survey of birds that visit backyard feeders is easy and fun! At regular intervals from November to April, 'FeederWatchers' count the kinds and numbers of birds at their feeders, then submit their observations. The results help scientists detect and study winter bird population trends.

Project Feederwatch began on Friday November 13, 2010 and runs until Friday, April 8, 2011. Participation is free for Bird Studies Canada members. Visit the BSC website at <http://www.bsc-eoc.org> to learn more about Bird Studies Canada and Project FeederWatch, or call BSC at 1-888-448-2473 to sign up.

Great Backyard Bird Count 2011 February 18 through 21

Get your notebook and camera ready for the Great Backyard Bird Count. The 2011 Count runs February 18 through February 21. Participants commit to spending at least 15 minutes on one day during this period counting all the birds they can see, then submit their list through the GBBC website. Participants can submit lists on each day of the count from the same site, and even submit lists from different sites on the same day. Prizes are awarded for best photographs. Go to www.bsc-eoc.org and click on the GBBC link for more information.