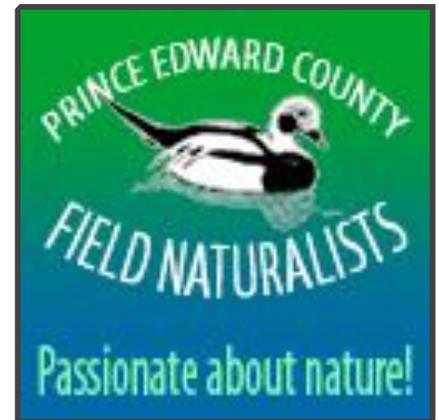


PECFN NEWSLETTER

January 2022



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Photos by Ian Barker

PECFN general meeting on Zoom
January 25 , 7pm

Paul Jones, local wildlife
photographer



CHARWELL POINT

Birds on the Southern Shore

Charwell Point : Birds on the southern shore.

Paul Jones, a local wildlife photographer and expert birder, will document the wildlife, particularly shorebirds, that use the habitats at Charwell Point, especially during migration.

Paul is retired and has lived on Long Point, PEC, since October 2019, although the County has always been a favourite place to visit for birding, especially at the Prince Edward Point NWA. He devotes much of his time to birdwatching and wildlife photography. His presentation will provide an overview of the avifauna of this special place, with a particular focus on shorebirds.

PECFN general meeting on Zoom.

February 22 , 7pm

Mike Burrell

‘Clouds and Crows;’ how the NHIC is engaging community scientists to improve knowledge of species biodiversity.

Mike will talk about the role the Natural Heritage Information Centre plays in monitoring and conserving species biodiversity and how iNaturalist and the naturalist community play a vital role.

Mike grew up in a nature-loving family outside of Waterloo, Ontario and inherited his love of birds from his Dad.

- He has participated in almost every bird citizen science project he can.
- Currently acts as the Ontario coordinator for eBird Canada.
- In addition, he acts as the secretary and archivist for the Ontario Bird Records Committee,
- Ontario regional editor for the Christmas Bird Count program, and
- several committees for the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas-3
- Is a member of the Bird Specialist Subcommittee of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.
- Mike, with his brother, Ken, also co-authored the book, *‘Best Places to Bird in Ontario’*.
- He lives in Peterborough and works as a zoologist with the Ontario Natural Heritage Information Centre.



Mike Burrell and daughter Abby

Prince Edward County Christmas Bird Count 2021 Dale Smith

December, 2021.

Twenty-eight enthusiastic citizen scientists headed out early December 18th on the forty-fifth Prince Edward County Christmas Bird Count. The count circle is centred on Waupoos Island in Prince Edward Bay and stretches along the water from Point Traverse of the Prince Edward National Wildlife Refuge to across to the Bay of Quinte near Adolphustown.

While the day began with mild, near freezing temperatures, with only a light SW breeze, it soon deteriorated to heavy snowfall causing the birds to hunker down and most teams to head home by noon. This unfortunate change in weather resulted in our second lowest species count of 57; well below our average of 66.8 species. Only 9,205 birds were counted, again well below the average of 31, 566.

Counts of water birds like Long-tailed Duck (3,425) and Common Merganser (44) were starkly lower than their respective averages of 18,885 and 759. Counts of common land birds like Blue Jay (88) and Black-capped Chickadee (167) were also lower than their respective averages of 147 and 316. Except for House Finches and American Goldfinches, finches were basically non-existent. And only one owl was found, a Great Horned, during count week.

On a more positive note, the tally for American Robin at 121 was nearly double that of the 45-year average. Similarly, the 376 Cedar Waxwings was twice the yearly average. Perhaps the abundance of red cedar berries accounts for this. 'Good' birds included Northern Shrike, six Bald Eagles, Merlin, Brown Creeper, and two blackbird species, either Red-winged or Rusty. Highlights of count week included Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Winter Wren, and a very rare Golden Eagle. The Eagle was subsequently counted and photographed during the Sandbanks CBC a few days later.

Thanks to all of the volunteers who made my first year as compiler so painless and especially to the team leaders, John Licharson, Barry Pinsky, Amy Bodman, Kathy Felkar, Les Stanfield, Cheryl Anderson, and Tyler Hoar.



Red-breasted Mergansers
Photo Ian Barker



White-breasted Nuthatch
Photo Ian Barker

Prince Edward County Christmas Bird Count 2021

Species	2021-22	All time total	time average	EAK COUNT	lowest count	years counted
Canada Goose	729	79848	1901	10453	1	42
Mute Swan	190	2808	148	534	2	19
American Black Duck	2	5116	114	1028	2	45
Mallard	284	33641	748	5232	1	45
Redhead	870	8407	290	3034	1	29
Greater Scaup	402	133780	2973	29932	1	45
White-winged Scoter	41	38887	904	10115	2	43
Long-tailed Duck	3425	849806	18885	148326	32	45
Bufflehead	147	10784	240	1246	3	45
Common Goldeneye	320	39987	889	4296	95	45
Barrow's Goldeneye	2	4	1	2	1	3
Hooded Merganser	21	315	10	51	1	33
Common Merganser	44	32645	759	7023	2	43
Red-breasted Merganser	80	4360	101	583	1	43
Ruffed Grouse	2	347	8	24	1	43
Wild Turkey	18	621	33	102	2	19
Horned Grebe	cw	389	11	90	1	37
Double-crested Cormorant	7	78	5	25	1	16
Bald Eagle	6	326	10	35	1	33
Red-tailed Hawk	8	751	17	50	4	45
Golden Eagle	cw	6	1	1	1	6
American Kestrel	3	143	4	10	1	36
Merlin	1	17	2	4	1	11
Ring-billed Gull	78	5610	128	757	3	44
Herring Gull	55	16536	367	1555	15	45
Glaucous Gull	cw	32	2	3	1	20
Great Black-backed Gull	3	2162	49	178	1	44
gull sp.	22	1562	65	533	1	24



Hooded Merganser
photo Ian Barker

Prince Edward County Christmas Bird Count 2021

Pg.2

All time total. time aver. peak count lowest years count
count

Rock Pigeon	99	4767	106	257.	1	24
Mourning Dove	52	5695	127	374	15	45
Great Horned Owl	ow	182	5	21	1	34
Snowy Owl	ow	14	1	3	1	10
Belted Kingfisher	1	31	2	4	1	19
Red-bellied Woodpecker	6	105	4	15	1	26
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	ow	2	1	1	1	2
Downy Woodpecker	5	1125	25	48	4	45
Hairy Woodpecker	3	558	12	35	1	45
Northern Flicker	2	106	4	10	1	30
Pileated Woodpecker	4	97	3	7	1	37
Northern Shrike	1	155	4	14	1	40
Blue Jay	88	6606	147	373	46	45
American Crow	55	4215	95	343	4	44
Common Raven	9	169	11	22	1	15
Black-capped Chickadee	167	14205	316	645	121	45
White-breasted Nuthatch	23	1470	33	97	7	45
Brown Creeper	1	78	2	7	1	34
Winter Wren	ow	17	2	3	1	6
Eastern Bluebird	5	216	9	53	2	23
American Robin	121	2954	69	435	1	43
European Starling	759	30810	685	3099	58	45
Cedar Waxwing	376	7544	184	897	4	41
Yellow-rumped Warbler	6	411	13	49	1	31
American Tree Sparrow	9	8670	193	928	5	45
Swamp Sparrow	ow	34	2	4	1	15
White-throated Sparrow	2	65	2	7	1	28
Dark-eyed Junco	289	6348	141	854	8	45
Snow Bunting	31	8252	217	2813	1	38
Northern Cardinal	8	487	11	32	1	44
Red-winged Blackbird	2	592	19	201	1	31
House Finch	22	3794	103	582	1	37
Common Redpoll	8	7921	344	2919	1	23
American Goldfinch	92	3653	81	282	2	45
finch sp.	12	15	8	12	4	2
House Sparrow	14	9685	220	679	2	44
Sparrow spp.	1	15	5	9	1	3
# Bird seen	9039	1400445	31121	156021	6798	45
Species total	57	2081	46.2	57	42	45

Notes: There were few feeders seen and few birds coming to those that we did see – partly due to the snow. Typical species seen but not observed today: Cardinal, Bald Eagle, Raven, Tree Sparrow, Bufflehead, Hairy Woodpecker, Cedar Waxwings, Wild Turkey. Kaiser's Crossroads was very flooded with large ponds on both sides of the road



Snow Bunting roost
Photo Ian Barker

Members' Sightings

Sandbanks Christmas Bird Count

Sheila Kuja

Allen and I went to help out with the Sandbanks Christmas Count. Due to my knee we were able to just drive around and look for birds rather than walk on the icy roads in the Wildlife Area. What a difference from last Saturday when we went on the Bird Count for Area 3A !!!! The sun was beaming, it was very calm and the birds were very active.

Our best birds were eight Bluebirds sitting in a line on a wire and we also found a male, snowy white, Snowy Owl at Point Petre in the DND property. It almost looked like a white stone off in the distance but every once in a while it would turn its head. We got out our scope and could see his eyes opening from time to time when he wasn't twisting his head. We also got really close to a pair of Yellow-rumps coming for a drink of water at the side of the road on Lighthall not too far from Co. Rd. 24. They were mixed in with a flock of Chickadees, Juncos, Goldfinch and a Nuthatch.

The best bird that Cheryl and Joanne saw, also seen by Paul Jones and Dale Smith, all surveying the Point Petre Provincial Wildlife Area, was a Golden Eagle which showed up on Simpson Road and then at the Lighthall impoundment and finally flying along the shore

so both parties were able to have a good look at it. Paul took a photo, so we might want to see if he'll send it to us (he's our speaker for January).



Long-eared owl
photo Amy Bodman

"That's the first Long-eared Owl I have ever seen on my own in the wild."

Golden Eagle
photo Paul Jones



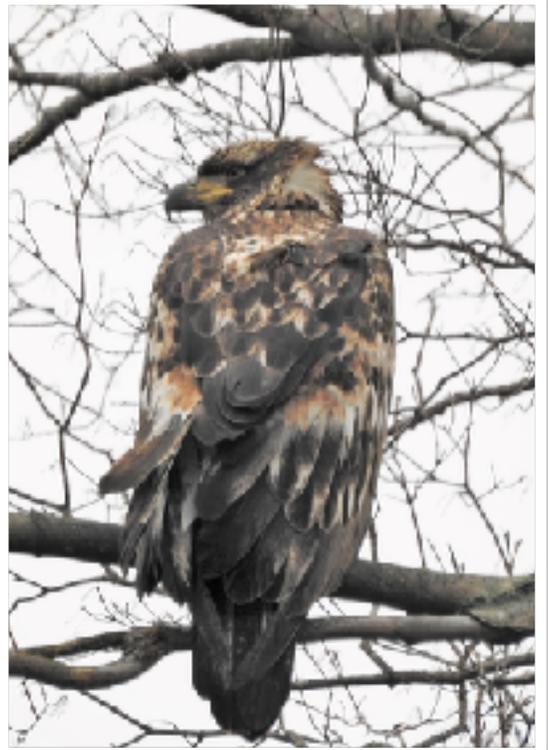
Elaine Jackson also saw **three** Long-eared Owls at Wellington on the Lake behind (31 Sandbanks Court)



photo Dale Smith

On January 19th an observant member of WOTL observed this pair of Long-eared Owls in the trees behind her place. Distinguished by their long ear tufts and tawny-orange face, Long-eared Owls are considered to be rare for this time of year and location.

More Members' Sightings



Bald Eagles
photos by Karen Mayville



Pileated
Woodpecker.
photo David Bree



Cooper's Hawk
photo Gaye Smith

For sheer appreciation of nature's variety and ability to surprise, I found lots to be thankful for this season on our land.

Marjorie Seguin

This year, 2021, was a remarkable year for two plants – apples, and mushrooms. Feral apple trees across the County were dotted with apples. And I noticed the mushrooms, both an abundance, and a variety, such as I had not seen in twenty years here by Wellers Bay, from July, and continuing into November. Here are some of them:

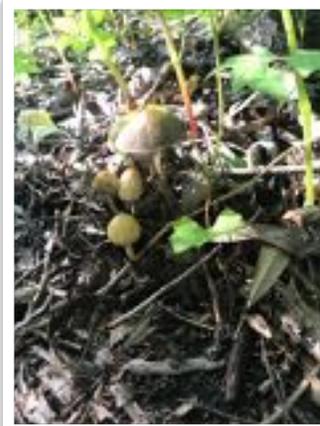
Low, flat, large white mushrooms appeared to be appreciated by wild animals, as we would find them mashed and turned over in the morning (pic 1, mushrooms before demolition). Donna Fano suggested that this was a species of *Lactarius*.



Shiny yellow mushrooms (White Pine Boletes) grew in abundance on our mowed trail (pic 2)



Tiny little spherical mushrooms appeared in the grass (pic 3)



Upside down umbrella mushrooms grew near the pond (pic 4):



And a perfect toadstool shaped mushroom also liked the soil on the trail near the pond (pic 5).



Finally late in the summer the conical, shaggy sided mushroom sprouted on our lawn. This one I believe is edible but I did not try it! (Pic 6) It's known as a Shaggy Mane or Inky Cap mushroom.

Trumpeter Swan Saga Story and photos by Dale Smith



Nanuuk (K46) and his mate (above), plus 'Wilson' and his two siblings from last year (top right), have returned to the Wellington harbour/West Lake. This would be a nice good news story except that one of the teenagers had a fishing lure dangling from his beak!

photos Dale Smith

Last Wednesday, folks from the Toronto Wildlife Center came down and managed to net the injured swan and I took it up to Sandy Pines Rehab. While they were able to successfully remove the lure from its tongue, with very high lead levels and other trauma, it did not survive.



More Members' Sightings



Tuesday, January 4, 2022, on the Sandbanks Outlet beach there was one huge Glaucous Gull that stood out amongst the other Herring gulls. It reminded us of the Albatross in New Zealand only smaller. We don't live near the water so identifying shorebirds is new to us.

Lee-Ann Scott

The photo attached and information below is from <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/eccc/documents/pdf/oiseaux-migrateurs-migratory-bird/eastern-canada-common-gulls-identification-guide-2019.pdf>

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) / GLGU These birds breed in the high and low Arctic as well as off the northern coast of Labrador. They are winter-time visitors to the rest of Eastern Canada. Their population status as of 2010 is considered 'secure' with estimates ranging from 25,000-50,000 individuals in Canada. However, preliminary evidence suggests populations have been in a moderate decline since 1970. ADULT: Large with an overall whitish appearance; similar in size to Great Black-backed Gull. However, unlike Great Black-backed Gulls, its mantle is pale grey and wing tips are white and unmarked. It is best differentiated from the Iceland Gull by its larger body size, broader and shorter wings and the longer, more gradual slope of its forehead. SUB-ADULT: Similar in size to adults, with whitish, unmarked wing tips. Plumage is variable between stages, but is more-or-less uniform across the body and may range from mottled tan to buff. Young birds have pink bills with black tips. For all life stages, when in resting position wing-tips extend only slightly beyond tail feathers.

Encouraging Young Adults and Youth to Join PECFN

At our recent Executive meeting, we voted to provide youth and young adults with free membership to PECFN. We have added to our Membership web page a new option that allows them to join or renew without paying dues. Intentionally, no age cutoff is defined.

If you know youth or young adults who may enjoy learning more about nature and our fragile environment with us, please encourage them to think about joining. We look forward to helping grow future generations of field naturalists.

The web page is: <https://pecfieldnaturalists.org/membership/>

PECFN ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES – Report by Paula Peel

We're off to a busy start in the new year. PECFN President Amy Bodman has already contacted Quinte Conservation regarding the 50-metre boundary around all identified wetlands in the County. Since PECFN was involved in asking for this provision in the new Official Plan, we wanted to follow-up with Quinte Conservation to ensure the County's wetlands will be protected to the greatest extent possible from development.

Amy has also been involved in following up on what has transpired between Quinte Conservation and the



Hubbs Creek wetland
Photo Terry Sprague

clearcutting of trees and filling in of significant parts of the Hubbs Creek Provincially Significant Wetland in order to expand farmland. PECFN helped to get the Hubbs Creek and Slab Creek wetland systems upgraded to "provincially significant" and we are actively advocating they be integrated into the Official Plan as a Natural Core Area. Based on our discussions with Quinte Conservation we have been led to understand that the landowner will voluntarily cooperate with Quinte Conservation and remove the fill and that Quinte Conservation will be monitoring the situation closely to ensure compliance.

One of our main focuses this coming year will be on development proposals that were submitted by developers just in time to avoid being evaluated under the new Official Plan. The developments we're currently looking at include the Port Royal Shores golf course on Half Moon Point on the County's south shore; the VineRidge subdivision consisting of 560 townhouses bordering on the Macaulay Creek Conservation Area; and Loyalist Heights, a subdivision consisting of almost 400 houses, apartments and townhouses located in the headwaters of Waring's Creek. In mid-December we had an informative (zoom) meeting with members of the Waring's Creek Improvement Association who brought us up to speed on the history and the significance of the watershed to area residents and farmers and the group's success in restoring Waring's Creek, the only cold-water creek in the County. Also on our radar is Huyck's Bay Estates. The developer is proposing to put up to a dozen luxury homes in a Natural Core Area with wetlands including a Provincially Significant Wetland.

As I write this report the County is in the midst of replacing the current procedural by-law with a new by-law. We are greatly concerned about several proposals in the new draft by-law, but most of all we're concerned about a proposal to limit deputations at council and Committee of the Whole meetings to 3 per meeting. Deputations are the only opportunity that PECFN (and other residents or groups) have to talk directly to council about the importance of protecting the County's natural heritage or any subject. PECFN has submitted comments on this and other changes on the County's *Have Your Say* website and we will be giving a deputation at the Special Committee of the Whole meeting on the draft procedural by-law on January 26'22. We hope to see you there.

PECFN Outing to Hanley Park North

By Amy Bodman

November 12, 2021



Bell Creek
photo Helene Tremblay



looking at the wetland
photo Helene Tremblay

On a sunny Friday morning, John Lowry led several of us on a wonderful tour of Hanley Park North in Belleville. Located in the Bell Creek watershed, Hanley Park North is a 3 hectare mature sugar bush on the east end of Belleville which is presently under threat of clearcutting for development. In an effort to support the fight to protect this beautiful and significant piece of land, John has been documenting its flora and fauna and spreading the word of its importance in any way he can.

Although in November we were too late to see any of its woodland flowers or its impressive canopy of leaves, we found it to be an outstanding natural resource. We struck by the more than 100 mature trees that populate the site, some over 200 years old, along with the beautiful wetland and creek that border it. We were impressed by the network of walking trails and bridges the local neighbourhood has developed to facilitate enjoyment of the area. Not only is it a place that provides a variety of habitats for wildlife - so rare to find on the edge of a city, it helps maintain the health of the watershed and is clearly a well-loved refuge for the citizens of Belleville.

All of us on the outing agreed that this valuable site should be protected. We greatly appreciate the hard work John has done to advocate for putting this area under protection and are happy to lend our support to this end.



Giant oak at Hanley Woods
photo Helene Tremblay