

Editor: Sandra Dowds

President's Message

Bob Simmons



This is my last message as president of the Prince Edward Field Naturalists. After much thought, I decided to step down. I was to step down last May at the AGM. The executive decided to continue for another year without changes in anticipation of a decision from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment on the Wind Turbines at Ostrander Point. The environmental assessment was complete at the end of May, but no decision has been announced yet and it is almost the end of November. It is uncertain when the decision will be made, given the state of the provincial government.

So I decided since I have served a number of years, and it is not relevant for me stay on, I prefer to step down at this time and move on. I have enjoyed being on the executive but it is time for others. Myrna Wood, the vice-president, will fill in until our AGM in May 2013. I hope new individuals will step forward because every organization always needs to renew.

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Nov. 5, 2012



Local bird population eagerly awaits the unveiling of statue dedicated to Dalton McGuinty

November PECFN Speaker

Pamela Stagg

How Plants Adapt to the Sub Arctic

How do plants survive the extreme cold of the subarctic, raging winter winds and glacial flooding? Pamela Stagg takes you to the spectacular Coast Mountains to look at plants which make their home in incredibly harsh northern conditions.



Winter in the Subarctic *photo by Pamela Stagg*



Fireweed with bee

Pamela Stagg

- I graduated from art college and university, and began my career as a designer in advertising. There were career significant barriers (i.e. discrimination) against women designers in the 1970's, so I switched to writing and worked as an advertising writer and creative director for most of my life.
- In 1991, I won the Royal Horticultural Society Gold Medal, the world's top prize for botanical painting. That turned my painting hobby into a second profession and I exhibited on both sides of the Atlantic, illustrated a book on roses and designed the gold trillium coin for the Royal Canadian Mint. I was also asked to teach botanical art, which meant I was juggling three careers in my freelance business.
- In 2011 learned to kayak. The sport became my passion and I paddled every opportunity I got, certifying as an instructor in 2003. That was also the year I discovered the Yukon, a life-changing experience. I still go up to Whitehorse whenever I can.
- In 2004 I retired to Prince Edward County.



Pamela Stagg

Alexander Island PECFN Outing



This picture was taken on our PECFN September 25th, 2012 outing in the County on Alexander Island. From left Sheila Kuja, Sandra Dowds, Elizabeth Cowan , Sheena Kennedy (Cheryl Anderson photographer)

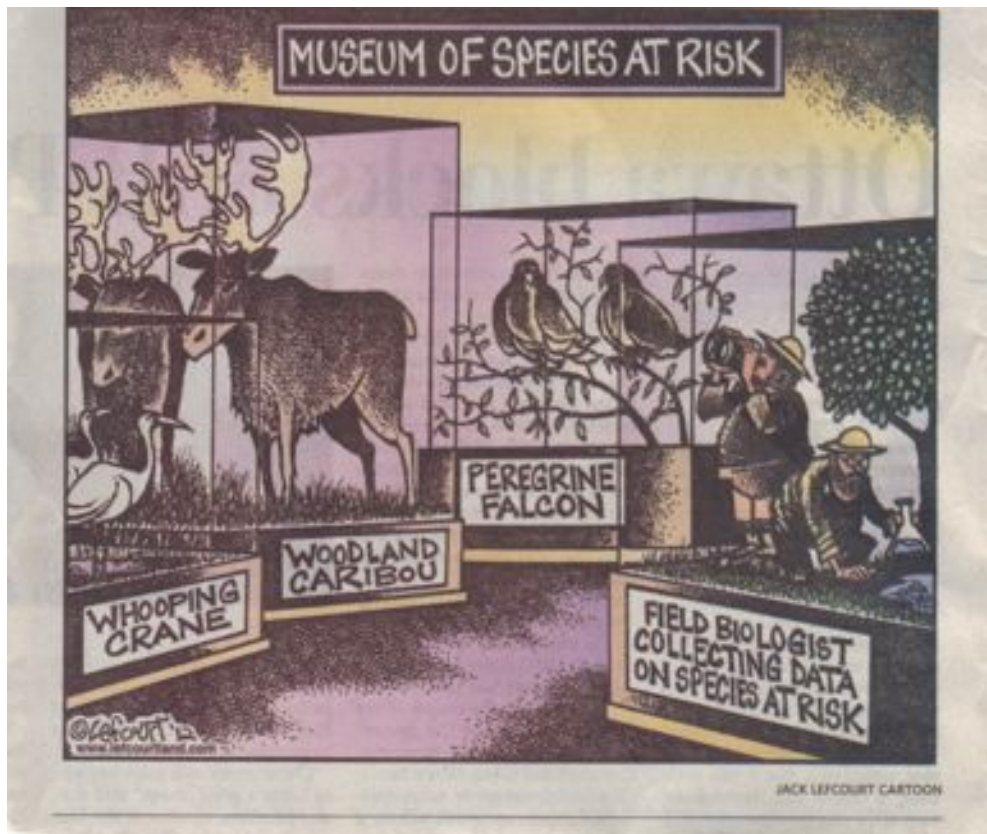
Are you a “*paid up*” PECFN member? Send cheque for \$15 to PECFN, Box 414, Bloomfield, ON K0K 1G0

Winter Outing to Amherst Island

Amherst Island is a gathering place for owls and owlers in the winter. The outing usually is an all day affair. It is important to wear very warm clothing and bring lunch, snacks and hot drinks. There are no "facilities" at Owl Woods, but the ferry is equipped. Usually, we meet and car pool from the Glenora ferry. The timing of our visit depends on the weather and the owls. Watch your email in late January or early February for notice of this outing.



Sandra feeding chickadee at Owl Woods on Amherst Island Feb. 2007



Birdlife International 90th Anniversary

From June 19-22, 2013, Bird Studies Canada and Nature Canada will co-host the next BirdLife International World Congress in Ottawa. The Congress will be one of the world's greatest gatherings of conservation leaders, with attendees from more than 120 countries. Participants will present and discuss solutions for biodiversity conservation and sustainability, and BirdLife will unveil its vision for 2020. To learn more, become a sponsor, or support the event, visit the [World Congress website](#) or email kmakela@birdscanada.org.

BirdLife International, the world's oldest international conservation organization, is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year! At the same time, the unique BirdLife Partnership is relatively young; in 2013 we will mark 20 years since the creation of this global partnership of national, independent grassroots bird and nature protection organizations. Today, BirdLife has partners in 116 countries on all continents.

Since 1994, Bird Studies Canada and Nature Canada have been BirdLife International's Canadian co-partners. Thanks to collaboration with our fellow partners worldwide, our work has significant impacts on a global scale, as well as in our own country. BirdLife partners are active in 12,000 Important Bird Areas around the world, and are working with more than 1 million school children annually for conservation.

As a Bird Studies Canada supporter, you are an important part of the BirdLife Partnership.



*Join us for BirdLife's
90th Anniversary
Gala Dinner. Margaret & Graham*

**FALL 2012 NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL BANDING
at Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory is finished for the year**



A Northern Saw Whet Owl recovered at PEPTBO that was banded at another station.
Photo © David Okines

Photos taken from the PEPTBO website 2012

Record numbers at Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory by *Carolyn Barnes*



This Fox Sparrow was the 10,000th bird banded at PEptBO this fall - a new record
Photo by David Okines

The Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory (PEptBO) set a new record recently when it banded its 10,000th bird of the fall 2012 season. PEptBO, at the southeast end of Prince Edward County on Long Point Road, is the first individual banding station among Canada's twenty-five migration monitoring facilities to reach this magic number in a single season. By the time the station closed for the year at the beginning of November, the grand total had climbed even higher to 12,302 birds banded.

PEptBO banded 114 different species during the fall including tiny Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, a wide variety of warblers, numerous hawk species, a Mallard duck (a fall first), 956 Northern Saw-whet Owls and species at risk such as Rusty Blackbirds and Bobolinks. After being banded, each bird was released to continue feeding and resting before it resumed its migratory journey southward.

"These remarkable numbers reflect the dedicated work of our long-time station manager and master bander, David Okines, volunteer banders Justin Walker and Ron Efrat visiting from England and Israel respectively, and the many local volunteers who keep this station going," says PEptBO president Cheryl Anderson. "And remarkable as the numbers are, they represent just a tiny fraction of the hundreds of thousands of migratory birds that come through Prince Edward County's south shore area every year. The southern part of the County is a crucially important stopping-off point for them."

Established in 1995, PEptBO is a non-profit and self-funded organization that supplies data for national and international research on avian migration and species health. PEptBO will reopen in mid-April 2013 for the spring migration.



PEptBO volunteer Ron Efrat holds a Barred Owl and a Northern Saw-whet Owl
photo by David Okines



Volunteer Justin Walker with a newly-banded Mallard - a first for the fall
Photo by David Okines

Christmas Bird Count 2012 by Terry Sprague

Once again, Terry Sprague, compiler for the annual Prince Edward Point Christmas Bird Count, is making plans for this year's count on Saturday, December 15th. All those who took part in the count last December will be e-mailed a reminder of the count and to verify their continued interest in helping this year.

Those who are not members of Bird Studies Canada will be happy to hear that the \$5.00 participation fee has been abolished. If you did not take part in the count last year, but would like to this winter, be sure to contact Terry Sprague at 613-476-5072 or e-mail tsprague@kos.net.



photo by Terry Sprague



Evening Grosbeaks
photo by Terry Sprague

Evening Grosbeaks at your feeder?

A shortage of hard wood seed supplies has caused the Evening Grosbeaks to wander about. Highest breeding densities are found in areas with spruce budworm outbreaks. The larvae are eaten by adults and fed to young. Current populations are much lower than several decades ago when budworm outbreaks were much larger and more widespread. We haven't had a major spruce budworm infestation since the 1970s, hence the lower numbers at feeders in recent years, when they occur at all. We will likely never see the numbers we used to have back in the early 1970s. That these birds have appeared this year, albeit in small numbers, is exciting.
Terry Sprague



Pine Siskin
photo by Adam Penson

Pine Siskins in the County this Fall

by Terry Sprague

Except for north-western Ontario, cone crops are very poor this year and that is what forced the pine siskins to come south, although being the nomadic birds they are, they will also move east or west as they seek out areas where cone crops, their favourite food, are still in good abundance. Huge numbers began passing through our area in late September and have continued into late October. Flocks are thinning out now as the siskins move on, although many will remain this winter at our feeders.

At first glance I thought they were Goldfinches at my feeders, but the pine siskins have a very streaky breast
Sandra



American Goldfinch for comparison



Pine Siskins
photo by Nathan Naslund

POINT PETRE LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION PLAN

by Myrna Wood

Some PECFN members attended a meeting Oct 26 about a plan to conserve the lighthouse and other buildings at Point Petre. The Hastings and Prince Edward Land Trust, which funded the Miller Land Trust, hopes to continue to preserve the natural wildlife habitats along the South Shore.

Marc Seguin, Save our Lighthouses, a local group working to preserve County (and other) lighthouses considers this an optimal site for preservation, especially given its historical value to the community.

PEPtBO would like to access the land to band birds, acquire more data on bird migration in the South Shore IBA, and to provide educational programs. PECFN considers the Point Petre site as an essential anchor on the western end of the Important Bird Area and would like to help consolidate Provincial and Federal lands as wildlife protected areas. PECFN will contact the Quinte FN, the Kingston FN, Ontario Nature and Nature Canada, all organizations with an interest in the IBA, for support of this project.

The groups decided to:

1) Submit a Draft Business Plan to DFO (Fisheries and Oceans) before Nov. 30, 2012 to acquire the Point Petre Lighthouse (for \$1.00) in order to conserve it and have it designated as a Heritage Lighthouse under the HLP Act (Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act).

2) Submit a Draft Business Plan to Environment Canada to acquire approx. 8 acres of land together with the keeper's dwelling and radio shack (HLP Act related buildings) as part of the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of Point Petre.

Note: These draft plans are required only to start the process and are not a firm commitment to acquire any land or buildings at this time.



Oct 26 Meeting at the Wellington Library 1 pm

Present: Marc Seguin, Save our Lighthouses
Stewart Murray and Dick Bird, H & PE Land Trust
Cheryl Anderson and Peter Fuller, PEPtBO
Doug Snider and Grant Robinson, Rotary Picton
Sheena Kennedy, Women's Institute and PECFN
Myrna Wood, PECFN

Update on Ostrander Point Appeal Fund

Myrna Wood

In order to be prepared for the worst case scenario of an approval for Ostrander Point we needed to raise \$3000 to retain a legal firm to do a preliminary review of information and preparation of the firm's strategy for an ERT appeal and the key steps required to put the appeal in place. Our members responded immediately. Along with their much appreciated donations, a donation from the Quinte Field Naturalists has taken us over the top of our goal to a total of \$3020 pledged to the Fund for this legal appeal. The account holds over \$2750. Thanks to all of you for such a prompt response.

We have been wondering, as no doubt you have, what the closing of Parliament and the Premier's resignation will mean to our concerns. We asked Todd Smith's MPP office whether the Ministry of Environment would continue processing applications for approval of turbine projects here. Here is their answer: *"It is a Ministerial decision, and as long as there is a Minister there can be a decision made in processing applications. There has been no word if the applications will be processed."*

So it appears that we must continue by assuming that the bureaucracy will grind on. We have written the Minister again and reminded him that the South Shore is a site to be protected from development of any kind. If we have to appeal the Gilead project on a habitat such as Ostrander Point we will have done a service to the protection of IBAs and significant wildlife habitats everywhere.



Banting Homestead Heritage Park,
by George Pearce,

It was my great pleasure to be present for the ribbon cutting for the opening of the **Banting Homestead Heritage Park**, Saturday, November 10, 2012, near Alliston, Ontario. The preservation of this site, which is the place where **Sir Frederick Grant Banting** was born, and spent his early years, is to become a centre for the many activities that relate to care, research, and treatment of people living with **diabetes mellitus**.

It was Dr Banting's conceptual thinking, investigations, and experiments, that inspired the discovery, extraction, and purification of insulin in Toronto, Canada in 1922.

This facility is now here in place because of the determined efforts of descendants of Sir Frederick, regional municipal and provincial officials, and major donations from an area vehicle manufacturer, and a major hospitality and golf course facility.



Night photo of the Banting farm house in blue lights ready for World Diabetes Day

Minutes Nov 5, 2012
Executive Meeting, Prince Edward County Field Naturalists
Picton Library

Present: Sandra Dowds, John Brett, Bob Simmons, Myrna Wood, Cheryl Anderson, Sheena Kennedy, Agneta Sand.
Absent: Karen Smith.

1. Agenda was approved.

2. Minutes of Oct 1 were approved.

3. Status Reports

A. Membership report. John reported that he had records of 29 memberships. We discussed ideas for getting more members; how to publicize our programs i.e. Whattam's column, County Live, etc.*; it seems other groups have the same problem.

B. Treasurer Report. Bank statement: \$1024. OPAF: \$2550.

C. PEPTBO. The fall banding season was a record of 12,000 birds banded. 960 Saw whet owls.

Frey Memorial B & B garden - Cheryl reported that the CWS had agreed it only if it was put on the mound behind the building. Cheryl and Peter Fuller, VP, who has a natural plant nursery will design it.

Point Petre Lighthouse – Cheryl, Sheena (WI) and Myrna attended a meeting with people from the Land Trust, Save our Lighthouses, and Rotary Picton. Minutes attached FYI. Groups agreed to endorse the draft plans in principle.

Birdathon Fund – Cheryl said we should hear in January about application for funding to help with bird species studies across IBA.

D. Networking. Stewardship Council could incorporate and receive a grant of \$10,000 from MNR however it would have to buy insurance. Cheryl informed us that Volunteer Canada provides an insurance plan which costs each volunteer member \$50.

E. Wind Turbines-Tribunal. We discussed the government shutdown. A turbine project was given approval last week at Manitoulin showing that the process continues. Myrna reported that she has finished reviewing files that the legal study might need; and that she had contacted Greg Grabas about coastal wetlands in PEC.

F. Newsletter Deadline Nov 15.

G. ON AGM June 7-9

4. OUTINGS

Christmas Bird Count Sat. Dec 15. Terry has confirmed this date and will be emailing list from last year. We will organize an Amherst Island owl walk, date to be determined on advice from Joanne Dewey, KFN, Pamela Stagg, etc. Cheryl, Sandra and Myrna will confirm.

5. INDOOR PROGRAMS

Nov. 27 Pamela Stagg How plants adapt to the sub-Arctic

Jan. 29 Members Night

Feb 26 Lise Hoogkamp from the Trenton weather station

Mar 26 Terry Sprague

Apr 30 A2A. (Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association) Myrna will confirm.

May 28 AGM. We discussed programs of interest to a wide audience such as Coyotes and Wolves, Elk/Caribou .

June 25

Program ideas:

Leora Berman, the Land Between. Cheryl will follow up.

Joanne Dewey fishing or bird banding or Sandbanks or anything Sandra will follow up.

Mike Burrell eBird. Myrna reported that Pamela Stagg, who uses ebird, suggested a program covering all the citizen science programs including ebird: Marsh monitoring, Swift Watch, IBA caretaker program, etc. She will follow up for Sept 2013 program.

*IDEA – If someone prints off a description of the speaker or program around the 15th of the month I could give it to the Picton Library to circulate a copy for the bulletin board of each branch during week before meeting.