

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2013

President's Message

Myrna Wood



Editor: Sandra Dowds

September 2013

PECFN is starting a new season with a bang. A Celebration to congratulate ourselves on the Environmental Review Tribunal decision on Ostrander Point. Lawyer Eric Gillespie will attend to talk about this historic first-ever Appeal on environmental issues and update us on the counter appeals.

We had planned to have the presentation on Woodland Caribou, postponed last spring, but unfortunately it has been cancelled again. However, the Nature of Things Thursday Sept 19 on the CBC will feature this endangered species. Walter Wehtje, PEPtBO bander, will step in and present information on the Species at Risk along the South Shore.

Speaking of the South Shore IBA our Tribunal appeal has inspired various groups to join a Coalition to organize a conservation plan for it in the County Official Plan. By working together we will try to establish an official status for the South Shore on municipal, provincial and federal levels. Protection for wildlife habitats and endangered species obviously depend on local citizens.

Our Executive has vowed to organize more outings this coming year. We would like to return to the Conservation Authority Areas, walk the barrier beaches of Huycks and Pleasant Bays, investigate the Miller Land Trust and the Millennium Trail. What days of the week do you prefer – weekdays or weekends? What sites would you like to see? Please tell a member of the Executive or send me a message myrna@kos.net.

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Blandings Turtle *photo Terry Sprague*



PECFN ERT Victory Celebration



We are celebrating our ERT victory on **Sept 24**.

Our celebratory potluck supper will begin at 6 pm. Please bring your own dishes and cutlery. Beverages, lasagna and vegetarian chili will be provided. Members are asked to bring their choice of salad, buns and butter, or dessert. After meeting and eating we will continue with our regular monthly indoor program.

Sept. 24 PECFN Speaker

Walter Wehtje: Species at Risk in the PEC South Shore IBA.

Walter Wehtje is an experienced wildlife consultant, biologist, bird bander, museum curator, university lecturer. He has worked throughout the United States on projects ranging from radio telemetry monitoring of Whooping Cranes to collecting avian and reptile specimens for the Mongolian Vertebrate Parasite Project of the University of Kansas Biodiversity Institute. Currently under contract at Trent University, Dr. Wehtje has been a project consultant for the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory on Species at Risk in the PEC South Shore IBA. His presentation will focus on his work for the Bird Observatory.



INDOOR PROGRAMS

- Oct. 29 Pamela Stagg Techno birding
- Nov. 26 Phil Norton Nature Photography
- Jan. 28 Members night
- Feb. 25 Kari Gunson – Road Ecology
- March 25 Terry Sprague



Aster photo Terry Sprague



Terry Sprague photo Dave Bell

PECFN OUTING

Monday Sept 30 10 am. Explore Miller Land Trust on the South Shore.

Terry Sprague will join us as we look at the various habitats on this site and observe the vegetation of the fall season.

Please bring a lunch and waterproof footwear as there may be some standing water where the walking path crosses the wetland.

Directions: From Milford, take County Road 10 for 3 km south and turn right on Royal Road. Follow Royal Road west for one kilometre and

MIGRATION MATTERS PEPTBO

Thanksgiving weekend October 12, 13, 14

Saturday, Sunday and Monday mornings there will be guided bird walks from the observatory to the lighthouse . Walks will begin at 9:00 am. Meet in the parking lot of the observatory. Fee: \$5.00 (children under 12 free)

A special banding demonstration at the Observatory will follow the walks. The demonstration will focus on how to identify birds in fall plumage .



Saw Whet owl photo David Hines



Looking for Hawks at Pt Petre in Prince Edward County

Location: Pt. Petre, end of the road (Co.Rd. 24) outside the gates to the historic lighthouse.

Hawk migration is very dependent on weather, i.e. if there are no NW winds then no or very little movement. Any dates after the 10th Sept can be good (75 or more a day counted at PEPTBO) providing you have the NW winds.

The following dates have had 75 or more counted at least once during the last three years Sept 12th-15th, 21st, 25th-27th, 30th, Oct 1st, 4th-7th, 10th, 14th, 17th-26th.

If you want to practice identifying hawks, watch the wind reports, and having a scope is helpful. A guide pdf is available by emailing myrna@kos.net.

PECFN's Speaker for October
PAMELA STAGG



Pamela Stagg *photo Marilyn Sprissler*

Radio tracking, feather analysis, GPS and satellite tracking -- new technology is radically changing our understanding of bird migration. Techno-birding takes a look at some new devices and what they're teaching us.

Pamela Stagg began birding in her teens when an uncle lent her his Second World War Army binoculars and gave her a copy of Roger Tory Peterson's Field Guide to Birds. Despite the postage-sized illustrations in the Guide, she taught herself to identify birds, starting with warblers -- one of the few pages in colour in the now-historic guide.

She took time away from birding for a career in botanical painting, teaching botanical painting and writing for advertising. When she retired, she was able to immerse herself in birding and has been teaching bird identification in workshops for Prince Edward County Field Naturalists and Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory's Spring Birding Festival. She is also a passionate kayaker and uses her boat to participate in the Canadian Lake Loon Survey. She also takes part in the Christmas Bird Count and the Great Backyard Bird Count.

HOT OFF THE PRESS!!!

At the last meeting of the Kingston Field Naturalists executive, it was unanimously agreed that the KFN will donate \$500 toward the Prince Edward County Field Naturalists' costs regarding the appeal of the ruling of the environmental tribunal.

They wish us good luck with the appeal!

Chris Hargreaves
KFN Conservation Committee' Chair



Fund Raising to pay for the Ostrander Point appeal continues on October 5 with Rednersville Radio. **We will need several members to make canapés and sweets.** Please let us know if you can help out with this. This will be an exciting evening – something different – a variety show with local talent and an excellent selection of great silent auction

A fund raising event
for Ostrander Point
Appeal Fund

Rednersville Radio Music and Comedy Variety Show

Saturday October 5,
7 pm

Active Arts Studio (the Church), 116 Barley Rd.
Rednersville

Free wine tasting by Karlo Estates

canapés, coffee &
sweets

with Rita diGhent,
Bluzone, Mark Despault,
David Somers and Debra
Tosh
& M.C. Richard Turtle

Donation to OPAF of \$50
per person requested
Limited Seating
Please reserve by
email :

cherylanderson23@sympatico.ca
@
or

phone: 613-471-1096

Rednersville Radio
a fund raising event for the Ostrander Point Appeal Fund

An evening of
exceptional performance
Music, Comedy
Outstanding
Silent Auction Items

Artists
Debra Tosh
Rita Di Ghent
Bluzone
David Somers
M.C. Richard Turtle
Mark Despault

Wine tasting courtesy of
Karlo Estates Winery

Active Arts, The "Church"
116 Barley Rd.
Saturday Oct 5
7 to 10 pm

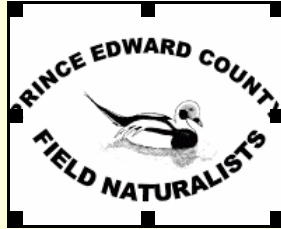
"Church Keys" required
a \$50 p.p. donation
is appreciated

BYOB

To reserve your "Church Key"
phone 613-471-1096 or e-mail
cherylanderson23@sympatico.ca

www.saveostranderpoint.org

PECFN letter thanking the County for their \$20,000



September 19, 2013

Dear Mayor Mertens and County Councillors,

Prince Edward County Field Naturalists wish to thank you for the generous contribution to the Save Ostrander Point Fund. It has helped us to meet our legal fees for the Environmental Review Tribunal appeal. This appeal was the first under the Renewable Energy legislation on environmental issues and has made an impression Province-wide.

Perhaps even more than the financial help we appreciate your acknowledgement of the importance of this case to the County's natural heritage. As a community we need to press provincial and federal governments to conserve the South Shore Important Bird Area with official status.

We look forward to working with Council on future projects of conservation on the South Shore and other natural features that make Prince Edward County so attractive to residents and visitors.

Thank you again,

Myrna Wood, President
Prince Edward County Field Naturalists



Ontario Nature is taking the Ontario Government to court over their stripping of the Endangered Species Act

After exhausting all other avenues, Ontario Nature has joined forces with Ecojustice and Wildlands League to [take the government to court](#) for unlawfully gutting Ontario's gold standard Endangered Species Act. We simply cannot stand by as the government trades in its gold standard act for fool's gold.

This spring, the government approved changes that dramatically weaken protection for Ontario's at-risk species, like Blanding's turtle, American eel and lakeside daisy. We believe the changes are unlawful. The Endangered Species Act was intended to protect and recover the province's most imperiled species. Instead the government has exempted a broad suite of industries from the law's requirements to protect species and their habitats and significantly reduced government oversight of harmful activities.

Forestry wins the jackpot with a five-year blanket exemption. A blanket exemption for an industry that affects over 40 million hectares of land in Ontario! You can imagine what that means for a species like the woodland caribou that has already been pushed out of 50 percent of its historic range in the province.

But forestry is not the only industry that gets off the hook with the new exemptions. Others include mining, pits and quarries, hydro, wind power, subdivision development, road-building and waste management. Across the board, the new regulations protect industries over species, allowing industry to pave, drill, drain and bulldoze crucial habitat with almost zero government oversight.

This is environmental deregulation pure and simple. It leaves industry policing itself. We are already hearing from people in the field that it's a free for all out there. The fox has been left guarding the henhouse. And that, as you can imagine, is a recipe for disaster.

Ontario's gold standard Endangered Species Act has been undone, and we intend to set it right. For the sake of the more than 200 at-risk plant and animal species in Ontario and for everyone who believes that the law should be implemented as it was intended; we're [taking the government to court](#).

Caroline Schultz
Executive Director
Ontario Nature



turtles painted by
Santee McMullan

**PECFN Fund Raising
Photo 'Ops' this summer**



Myrna Wood, Sheila Kuja, Agneta Sand and Sheena Kennedy at Karlo Estates



Agneta Sand and Borys Holowicz at Vicki's Veggies Tomato Tasting Event this summer



Fund Raising Photo Gallery this Summer



Agneta Sand



Borys Holowacz
at Women's Institute Craft
Show



Sandra Dowds, Cheryl Anderson,
Rosemary Kent at PEC Fair

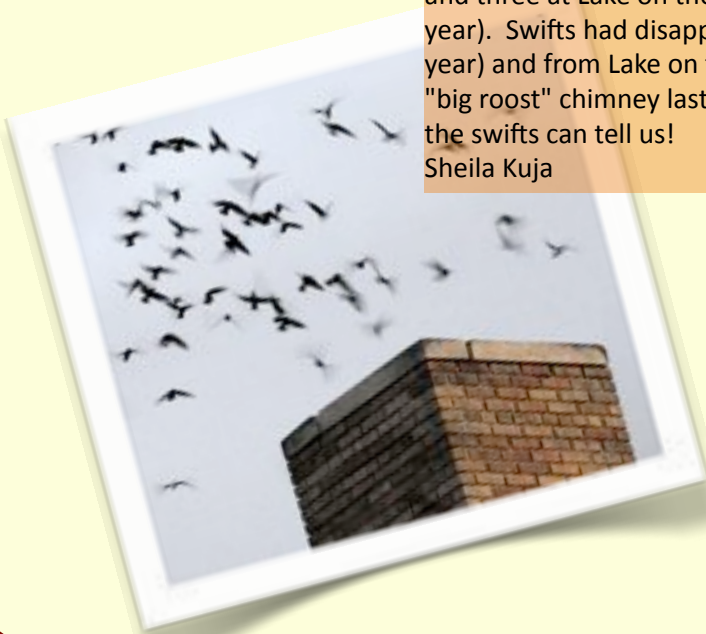
Swift Watch 2013



Because of its success in 2012, PECFN continued its swift survey in 2013. The first swift of the season was seen by Myrna on April 28. On May 18, six were seen entering chimneys on the north side of Main St. between 8:47 - 8:50 but our survey began in earnest on May 30 with a record number of observers - including Gloria and Brian Durrell, Molly Mulloy, Lorie Brown, Amy Bodman, as well as the "regulars" from last year: Sandra, Myrna, Agneta, Elizabeth, Pamela and myself (and frequently Allen) with a total of 18 birds observed entering chimneys in Picton. We had a high count of 55 birds on June 2 after a cold snap which might have brought birds to a common roost. Thereafter numbers in June ranged from approx. 20 -29 but often because of fewer observers, some chimneys weren't able to be checked.

An interesting twist this year was that in June swifts were observed entering chimneys at Lake on the Mountain (Pamela) and in Wellington (Sheila). Pamela and Agneta continued monitoring "their" chimney throughout the summer. For our Sunday July 28 Provincial Blitz count we recorded 34 swifts in Picton and three at Lake on the Mountain for a total of 37 (compared to 42 in Picton last year). Swifts had disappeared from town by Aug. 28 (approx. same time as last year) and from Lake on the Mountain by Sept. 4. Of note was the fact that the "big roost" chimney last year was not the same as the one this year. Why? Only the swifts can tell us!

Sheila Kuja



September is the time to renew your membership. If you renewed or paid your membership after April 2013 your membership is good until September 2014. Please print and complete the form and submit it with your annual dues. You may also complete and email the form; however, we still need the money!

Membership Application Form

Annual membership fee is \$15 single, \$30 family. Membership year begins in September.

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

E-Mail:

What other environmental organizations do you belong to? Please check:

Ontario Nature

Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory

Quinte Field Naturalists

Kingston Field Naturalists

Other – please specify

Please indicate your specific natural environment interests:

Birds

Insects

Reptiles and Amphibians

Plants and trees

Fish

Geography

Environmental issues

Other

Minutes Sept 9, 2013
Executive Meeting, Prince Edward County Field Naturalists
Picton Library

Present: Sandra Dowds, Myrna Wood, Cheryl Anderson, Sheena Kennedy, Agneta Sand, Sheila Kuja, Elizabeth Cowan.

1. Agenda was approved.

2. Status Reports:

A. Membership report – Agneta

Cheryl will send the Membership form to Agneta and Sandra to send to the membership list asking everyone to update their contact information. Agneta will have the forms available at the Sept meeting for renewals and new members.

B. Treasurer Report- Sheena (and OPAF fund)

PECFN Bank balance \$1216.60. OPAF bank balance \$13,231.31.

The tax return will be done this week. When Eric's account and our receipts are received we will send another payment.

Caroline Schultz, ON executive director called and will forward a letter explaining its financial position.

C. PEPtBO – Cheryl reported that the Annual Dinner will be Oct 26. Thanksgiving bird walks are planned.

She explained that the IBA Caretaker program will include regular bird counts and searches across the South Shore in order to update the IBA description. Peptbo will also continue searching for Species at Risk.

The application for Point Petre lighthouse and land has had a response from Env Can which wants to sell the land for full market value.

D. Ostrander Point and Tribunal – Myrna reported research on the habitat at Ostrander Point. We have not yet heard what new information might be allowed during the cross appeal. [The deadline for our materials has been extended to Nov. 15.]

Fund raising events: Sept 14 Milford Fair (table and crafts); Oct 5 Rednersville Radio – Cheryl will request volunteers to make goodies and canapés.

Myrna reported on an idea to organize all the local groups working on the conservation of the South Shore to form a Coalition to provide a Conservation Plan for the County Official Plan review.

E. Newsletter Deadline Sept 15 – Sandra.

F. ON Representative: Elizabeth volunteered to be the ON Rep.

East Regional meeting. Sat Sept 21, Set up 9 am. Coffee and muffins; Lunch dessert; Peptbo coffee and shirt sales; 2 pm afternoon walk Pt Petre or West Point Sandbanks.

3. OUTINGS

Millennium Trail; Miller Land; County Conservation Authority sites; Barrier Beaches.
Oct 9 or 10 Owl walk – to be announced.

4. INDOOR PROGRAMS

Sept 24 Tuesday PECFN meeting and Celebration
Oct. Pamela Stagg Techno birding
Nov. Phil Norton Nature Photography
Jan. Members night
Feb. Kari Gunson. Wildlife and roads
March Terry Sprague
April –
May AGM



Cheryl , Elizabeth, Sheena and Frank
wearing the new PECFN t-shirts



This letter has been sent to Premier Wynne and to Min. Bradley from BC Nature.

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne
Premier of Ontario
September 16, 2013

kwynne.mpp@liberal.ola.org

Dear Honourable Ms Wynne,

Re: Proposed wind energy project at Ostrander Point (EBR 011-5239)

BC Nature (The Federation of B.C. Naturalists) is the provincial organization for naturalists and naturalist clubs in communities throughout British Columbia. Our motto is “to know nature and to keep it worth knowing”. As people concerned about the environment, our members are supportive of efforts to address climate change, including the development of renewable energy sources such as wind power. We are aware, however, that while renewable energy sources can offset greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change, their production may have negative impacts on wildlife habitat and other values, if projects are inappropriately planned or located. We believe this is the case with the proposed wind energy project at Ostrander Point, which is the location of an Important Bird Area, as recognized by BirdLife International (www.ibacanada.ca)

BC Nature partners with Bird Studies Canada and Nature Canada (the two Canadian Co-partners in BirdLife International) to co-ordinate the Important Bird Areas program in British Columbia. The Important Bird Areas program is an international effort to identify, conserve and monitor a network of sites that provide essential habitat for bird populations. Since the program was established in the 1980s, some 200 countries have joined together to build a global network of over 11,000 sites, of which nearly 600 are in Canada. Now that sites have been identified, our focus is on site monitoring and conservation.

As one of the lead partners on the B.C. Important Bird Areas Program, we are particularly concerned with the proposal by Gilead Power Inc. to establish a wind energy project at Ostrander Point (EBR 011-5239). Ostrander Point falls within the globally significant Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area and represents important habitat for migrating and breeding birds in the region. It is a candidate Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) and more than 200 different species of birds use the area, including 14 conservation priority species such as whip-poor-wills.



Federal biologists tally 'alarming' eagle deaths at U.S. wind farms

DINA CAPIELLO WASHINGTON — The Associated Press Published Wednesday, Sep. 11 2013, 1:56 PM EDT
Wind energy facilities have killed at least 67 golden and bald eagles in the last five years, but the figure could be much higher, according to a new scientific study by government biologists.

The research represents one of the first tallies of eagle deaths attributed to the nation's growing wind energy industry, which has been a pillar of President Barack Obama's plans to reduce the pollution blamed for global warming. Wind power releases no air pollution.

But at a minimum, the scientists wrote, wind farms in 10 states have killed at least 85 eagles since 1997, with most deaths occurring between 2008 and 2012, as the industry was greatly expanding. Most deaths – 79 – were golden eagles that struck wind turbines. One of the eagles counted in the study was electrocuted by a power line.

The president of the American Bird Conservancy, Mike Parr, said the tally was “an alarming and concerning finding.”

A trade group, the American Wind Energy Association, said in a statement that the figure was much lower than other causes of eagle deaths. The group said it was working with the government and conservation groups to find ways to reduce eagle casualties.

Still, the scientists said their figure is likely to be “substantially” underestimated, since companies report eagle deaths voluntarily and only a fraction of those included in their total were discovered during searches for dead birds by wind-energy companies. The study also excluded the deadliest place in the country for eagles, a cluster of wind farms in a northern California area known as Altamonte Pass. Wind farms built there decades ago kill more than 60 per year.

The research affirms an AP investigation in May, which revealed dozens of eagle deaths from wind energy facilities and described how the Obama administration was failing to fine or prosecute wind energy companies, even though each death is a violation of federal law.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has said it is investigating 18 bird-death cases involving wind-power facilities, and seven have been referred to the Justice Department.

Wind farms are clusters of turbines as tall as 30-story buildings, with spinning rotors as wide as a passenger jet's wingspan. Though the blades appear to move slowly, they can reach speeds up to 275 kilometres per hour (170 miles per hour) at the tips, creating tornado-like vortices.

Wind farms in two states, California and Wyoming, were responsible for 58 deaths, followed by facilities in Oregon, New Mexico, Colorado, Washington state, Utah, Texas, Maryland and Iowa.

In all, 32 facilities were implicated. One in Wyoming was responsible for a dozen golden eagle deaths, the most at a single facility.

The research was published in the Journal of Raptor Research.

From endangered to extinct: the tragic flight of the Eskimo curlew

Another 200 species described as 'on the brink' of extinction



Wildlife artist John James Audubon's famous portrait illustration of two Eskimo curlews as seen during his 1833 research expedition to Labrador.

Randy Boswell Published: August 2, 2013, 12:01 pm

It is — or was — a long-legged shorebird about the size of a mourning dove, with mottled brown feathers and a distinctively long, thin, downward-curving beak.

For the Eskimo curlew, a once-plentiful species of sandpiper that's eerily linked in history to a better-known North American bird — the passenger pigeon — this is a watershed year.

Before the end of this summer, exactly 50 years will have passed since the last time an Eskimo curlew was seen alive anywhere in its vast range between Arctic Canada — where all that ever lived were hatched in northwest tundra breeding grounds — and its winter home on the pampas of Argentina.

It's a sorrowful milestone: a half-century of utter **ABSENCE** from the scientific record for a creature once known for its prolific numbers, its epic migration, its widespread presence. Within Canada alone, the bird's distinctive flight or head-bobbing gait have been witnessed, at one time or another, in every province and territory except British Columbia

Now, though, the Eskimo curlew's time is up. Under Canada's endangered species protocols, the elapse of 50 years since the last confirmed sighting of any animal is a key criterion for formally declaring it extinct. And while it could take years for that to happen, when Canadian officials eventually do take the step it will be the first time since the passenger pigeon vanished almost a century ago — in 1914 — that any bird in Canada will be officially classified as lost forever.

Environmental politics in Canada is largely about weighing “risks” and “threats” to wildlife and ecosystems against the benefits of economic development, with debates typically revolving around uncertain impacts and other disputed facts. But there is no ambiguity with extinction; a formal declaration of a lost species — particularly when human actions are known to underlie the disappearance — is also an admission of failure and an instantly symbolic moment.

The fate of the Eskimo curlew is also seen as a worrisome omen for other Canadian bird species, particularly at a time when ongoing habitat destruction and climate change are transforming northern nesting sites and important migration stopover spots.

At an Ottawa conference in June, [Birdlife International released its latest *State of the World's Birds* report and warned that, globally, about one of every eight species — totalling more than 1,300 distinctive genetic lineages — is currently at risk of extinction.](#) And the impending disappearances of the Eskimo curlew and another 200 species described as “on the brink” of extinction are sentinels of a sick planet, the U.K.-based organization warned.

“As a marker, it's a significant event,” says Jon McCracken, director of national programs at Bird Studies Canada and editor of a 2009 report on the Eskimo curlew issued by COSEWIC, the federally mandated Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

While the “50-year threshold is a guideline” and not a “hard and fast rule,” notes McCracken, a contributor to the *State of the World's Birds* report, he says a half-century gap between credible sightings of a fragile species means rediscovering it is only “a very slim probability.”