



Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory

Annual Report for 2018



Prepared by the BPBO Board Member of Directors

BPBO 2018 Annual Report

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Acknowledgements

BPBO is grateful for the generous funding support we received in 2018. In addition to our individual supporters, we wish to acknowledge the support of Bruce Power, the Grey-Bruce Community Foundation, the Municipality of North Bruce Peninsula, and Environment and Climate Change Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program.

Cover Image: Dr. Alex Mills and Alicia Korpach releasing an Eastern Whippoorwill with nanotag near Cabot Head by Ted Cheskey, May, 2018.

Board Report for the 2018

2018 Migration Monitoring at Cabot Head Research Station

Adapted from Annual Report by Station Scientist, Stephane Menu

The defining characteristic of spring 2018 was the four-day snowstorm in mid-April, which delayed opening until April 20, with census and observations, and banding on April 22. Ground was 100% snow covered at that time. Snow banks prevented opening the last of the nets until May 9! Poor weather was also frequent early in the season, precluding banding for nine of the first 19 days of monitoring. In contrast, during the next 33 days, only one full day of banding was lost due to high wind. The spring 2018 banding total of 1159 birds of 67 species was well below the spring average of 1588 ± 505 banded birds. Three species, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Redstart, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet (in



Figure 1: Snowy Owl near Cabot Head by Ted Cheskey

decreasing order), represented 35% of the banding total. There were only seven days with banding totals over 50 birds (including two over 100 birds). The greatest number of captures was on April 24 with 130 birds banded. On May 9, 79 species were detected, the highest diversity of the spring.

A total of 160 species (two more than 2017) were detected during the spring monitoring period. Snowy Owls were observed a record six times from May 1 to June 1, compared to only

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one record in the previous 16 years. Likewise, Eastern Bluebirds were observed in large flocks of several dozen birds. The first ever recorded Virginia Rail at Cabot Head was found dead high up in a cedar in early May, most likely a fatal consequence of bad weather (fog, rain, and high wind).

Fall fieldwork began on August 15 and ended on October 31 for a total of 78 consecutive days of coverage. At Cabot Head, a total of 141 species of birds were detected in the standard count area over the course of the field season (21 more than 2017). Among them, 76 species have been seen every fall. The number of species detected this fall was slightly above the 2002-2017 average of 136 ± 10 . The highest one-day species total was 39, recorded on August 31. Highlights of the season were the observations of one Black Vulture, a new species for Cabot Head, and of a pair of adult Green Heron, the first time this species was detected in the fall. In total, 1,403 birds of 67 species were banded, representing the second lowest banding total ever for the fall season, with 73% of the species banded at below average numbers.

Table 1: Most frequently observed species in the spring 2018.

| Species | Number of days (out of 52) |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bald Eagle | 51 |
| Common Merganser | 50 |
| American Crow | 48 |
| Ring-billed Gull | 46 |
| Canada Goose | 45 |
| Tree Swallow | 44 |
| Turkey Vulture | 43 |
| Eastern Phoebe | 42 |
| American Robin | 40 |
| Blue Jay and Red-breasted Nuthatch | 39 |

Table 2: Most frequently observed species fall 2018

| Species | Number of days (out of 78) |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Black-capped Chickadee | 73 |
| Yellow-rumped Warbler | 63 |
| Red-breasted Nuthatch | 62 |
| Ring-billed Gull | 60 |

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| | |
|------------------|----|
| Bald Eagle | 56 |
| Herring Gull | 49 |
| Common Raven | 48 |
| Common Loon | 47 |
| Northern Flicker | 46 |
| American Crow | 43 |



Figure 2: Sandhill Cranes at Crane Lake by Ted Cheskey

The 2018 migration monitoring program was a success in no small part thanks to the efforts of the volunteers who contributed their time and enthusiasm to the project. This year, a total of 14 volunteers helped for the project, totaling 213 volunteer-days. Most volunteers came from Ontario but we had our first volunteer from China this year.

Table 3. Migration Monitoring Volunteers 2018

| >20 days | < 15 days | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Yibing Yu (China) | Sam Moore (MA) | Al Woodhouse (ON) |
| Ryan Ribeson (Maryland) | Judith Kennedy (ON) | Erik Van Den Kieboom (ON) |
| Valérie Tchang (QC) | Florence Masson | Anne Blondin |
| Mathieu Landry | Tania Havelka (ON) | Jackie Lamport (ON) |
| | Alicia Korpach | Amber Lammers |

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BPBO's Science Advisory Committee and Habitat Stewardship Program Report

By Ted Cheskey



Figure 3: Rolling out net to capture Whippoorwills by Ted Cheskey

BPBO's Science Advisory Committee includes Dr. Bridget Stutchbury (feature speaker at the 2018 fall banquet), Dr. Greg Mitchell, Dr. Ryan Norris, Cavan Harpur, Rod Steinacher and Ted Cheskey.

Dr. Stutchbury spoke to about 100 BPBO supporters at the annual banquet in Owen Sound about the effects of neonicotinoids – a family of pesticides that is widely used in agricultural practices – on certain species of migrating birds. Her talk suggested that certain exposures in White-crowned Sparrow, a common migrant over the Bruce Peninsula in early May, can impact the ability of some birds to navigate.

BPBO continued deploying Motus tags from the research station, thanks to Dr. Greg Mitchell, and station scientist Dr. Stephane Menu. A total of 26 Swainson's Thrushes and 12 Gray-cheeked Thrushes were marked with nanotags for the second year of this project. We hope that data from detections of these tags will lead to improved knowledge of these species movements from Cabot Head southward. The Motus Wildlife Tracking system (a program of Bird Studies Canada) is a growing network of receiver stations across parts of North America, Central America and South America mainly that captures transmissions from tiny nanotags placed on mobile wildlife like birds. Each tag

emits a unique signal that can be detected when within 10 to 15 kilometres of a Motus antenna. There are dozens of Motus stations in Ontario, and about 700 distributed across the Americas.

BPBO wrapped up work on the second year of our project funded by the government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship program "In support of our nocturnal aerial insectivores on the Upper Bruce." The main focus of work this past year was Eastern Whippoorwill. We hired researcher/contractor Alicia Korpach, a graduate student in Dr. Kevin Fraser's lab at the University of Manitoba, to lead this project. Several days of preparation and field work with a team of 4 to 8 people resulted in deploying seven Motus tags on Eastern Whippoorwill in late May and early June, 2018. Alicia reports that the Motus network has detected five of the seven birds tagged near Cabot Head in early June, most of which went due south, but two of which went west.

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On March 14, Alicia Korpach, Greg Mitchell and Ted Cheskey presented an on-line webinar on the results of the HSP work, including a discussion of conservation implications to over 20 participants. The webinar was recorded in two parts, and can be watched through these links:

Part One:

https://zoom.us/recording/share/6EoVr4VHAdhTcmK5MCIZ24ROGOhmAgR_eldgX6HT6OCwlumekTziMw

Part Two: Topic: BPBO Webinar: In support of our nocturnal aerial insectivores on the Upper Bruce

<https://zoom.us/recording/share/k3P2eIpx64DQ-kzJfK90m6LVJDPB5RALwpu1d4uAQUWwlumekTziMw>

Nicaragua Trip postponed!

Due to an unstable political situation in Nicaragua in 2018 we had to postpone the planned trip for BPBO members. We hope that the political situation will stabilize and that we will be able to return to this beautiful country that is a winter home to about 30 million birds from Canada, including dozens of species that pass through the Bruce.

Support our Nicaragua program by purchasing Nicaraguan coffee or hot chocolate from Noreen Steinacher, and by offering us a special donation to support our Nicaragua project. All donations are tax deductible.

Partnerships

Ontario Parks is BPBOs key partner in that our migration monitoring operations happen entirely on their property at the Cabot Head Nature Reserve. We are grateful for this relationship and the support that we have received over the years, allowing us to carry out our core *activities* of tracking bird populations, training dozens of volunteers in bird monitoring, and educating large numbers of the public on bird migration and conservation. Ontario Parks allows the operation of the CHRS within the Cabot Head Provincial Nature Reserve. Ontario Park's personnel also assist in the maintenance of CHRS site, among other things, opening and closing the facilities for us each year.

BPBO continues to explore new ways to partner with government and non-governmental organizations as our programs develop and move forward.

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Membership

by Beth Anne Currie

Membership is supported by Beth Anne Currie with special thanks to Anne Range and Cavan Harpur for helping with web-based membership payments. Membership is supported by our intrepid treasurer; Mary Houston, and I thank her for processing memberships and countless donations over the past year.

The annual 2018 BPBO Open House was held in September 2018 and a record number of guests and visitors joined us at the Cabot Head research station, including a few new members. Our goal for 2019 is to continue efforts in reaching out to lapsed members and to increase our membership at BPBO.

I have prepared and emailed two sets of membership renewal notifications (December 2018 and April 2019) to remind members about the importance of renewing their membership. The response from Members is always brisk and appreciated.

BPBO Celebrates its Members!

62 members paid to April 2019 including 2 Organizational memberships

- 14 paid to 2018
- 16 paid up to 2017

Life Members:

- 46

Thank you to everyone, for your ongoing support through membership at BPBO – an invaluable part our sustainable future.

Board News: The Year in a nutshell

The BPBO Board of Directors began 2018 with much enthusiasm and a desire for change. In this spirit the Board entered into an agreement with a private company to manage our website, our communications and fundraising. We hoped that this would bring in resources to increase our capacity, our membership and our profile. This initiative did not work out as we had anticipated. Fortunately BPBO did not suffer significant financial losses, and remains in good financial shape. We certainly learned as a Board from this experience, as we must in order to continue building a strong and resilient organization.

We are fortunate to have excellent resources on which we can depend, starting with the facilities at Cabot Head Nature Reserve (Ontario Parks), where we run our core migration monitoring activities. We have a great team of contract staff working for us, starting with Dr. Stephane Menu, whose excellent

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and steady work has produced reliable data to track migrations for nearly 15 years, and who has trained dozens of volunteers in advanced ornithology skills. We are very pleased to have Greg Lloyd as our Site Manager. Greg combines an excellent practical knowledge with regard to site maintenance with superb communication skills.



Figure 4: Stephane with Indigo Bunting by Ted Cheskey

BPBO depends on a small group of dedicated volunteers to keep it ticking along including our Board. After serving as President for the past four years, and about 10 years of our 18 year existence, I will be retiring from the Board, at least for a year, as I have a busy year of work coming up with Nature Canada, and also with my Grandson Cédric. I will continue to be involved as ex-President in a volunteer role for recruiting volunteers, fundraising, and on the scientific advisory

committee. Dr. Greg Mitchell will also be leaving the Board. Greg, who is a father of three young children, has increasing responsibilities as a scientist with Environment and Climate Change Canada in Ottawa.

Site improvements at Cabot Head are a priority this year. On the top of the list is the solar system for renewal energy. We are exploring ways of raising the required funds to make a significant investment in this system so that we can have an adequate and reliable source of electricity for the station.

As retiring President, I would like to thank all my BPBO Board colleagues who have been great to work with, and who have all contributed in important ways in the past year to keep the boat afloat and steered in the right direction. Most of all I want to thank you, a supporter and member of BPBO. We depend on your support, in whatever form that takes – a donation, volunteering, speaking out for birds.... We would not be able to track bird populations, attract volunteers from around the world, and work to recover species at risk without your support.

In short, our work depends on your support. I am a life member of BPBO. Please consider that for yourself or someone in your family or networks. Consider making a regular donation to us, or a major gift (legacy) that could allow us to expand our solar energy system, make important repairs to the station, or add staff capacity to use our data for conservation. You have an opportunity to leave your positive mark on BPBO, an organization that you believe in.

Birdathon – We need your support

The President's Choice Team of Rod Steinacher and Ted Cheskey raised \$1595 of which 75% supports BPBO. On May 19, Rod and Ted spent the day birding the upper Bruce Peninsula. Funds raised by

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birdathon are used to pay for the food stipend for long-term migrating monitoring volunteers. This year, Rod and Ted's "BPBO is the Best Choice" team will be back at their old haunts on the upper Bruce and would greatly appreciate your support. To sponsor BPBO's Best Choice Team, go to <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/bird-studies-canada/p2p/birdathon19/team/bpbo-is-the-best-choice/> 75% of the money they raise will come back to BPBO.

2018 BPBO Board, Staff & Volunteers

i) Current Board members

- Ted Cheskey - President, Science Committee, MM Volunteers
- Mary Houston - Treasurer
- Greg Mitchell - Member at large, Chair Science Committee, Events
- Cavan Harpur - Beakon, Science Committee, Community liaison
- Bernie Range - Secretary, Fundraising, Site liaison
- Elizabeth Thorn - Fundraising & governance issues
- Beth Anne Currie - Membership, fundraising
- Rod Steinacher - *Ex officio* - Past President, education/outreach, etc.

Leaving the Board Ted Cheskey, Greg Mitchell

ii) Contract Staff

- Greg Lloyd - Site Manager
- Stephane Menu - Station Scientist

iii) Volunteers

- Keith Early - Ontario Parks liaison
- Noreen Steinacher - workshop coordinator, coffee sales
- Cris Navarro - migration monitoring volunteers scheduling
- Anne Range - Website and social media, event organizing
- Norah Toth - event support
- Others – sorry if I forgot someone . . .

BPBO's Mailing Address

Please address surface mail to:

BPBO, PO Box 273, Lions Head, ON, N0H 1W0.

Station Site Liaison and Secretary's Report

By Bernie Range

As the CHRS Site Liaison, I can report on the following being completed or conducted during 2018-19.

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In May of 2018, Baxter Cottage Rentals (hired in October 2017) abruptly resigned, citing personal reasons, and I immediately called our second choice from the contract competition conducted in fall, a fellow called Greg Lloyd. Thankfully, Greg (We care Property Maintenance) was prepared to jump right in and assume responsibility. With a very quick introduction by myself and Mary, for the financial end of things, Greg was up and running. He conducted his work very efficiently and we finished another season very successfully. Greg was asked whether he was prepared to/would like to continue for another year and he agreed to this.

One of the projects completed was the “veranda overhang” repair at Wingfield Cottage, which Greg and his partner completed very effectively and aesthetically. Total cost was about \$5300.

Greg also completed a variety of smaller repairs and maintenance, and presented very detailed reports to the board each month, complete with photos. This was very effective and highly appreciated.

Greg has inspected the buildings and created a priority list that we need to consider as part of 2019 fundraising efforts.

Spring bird migration monitoring for 2019 is about to begin as I write this (April 14th).

The BPBO Board of Directors held 10 regular meetings, one ad hoc meeting with 4 members present (August 1st), one special meeting for Annual fundraising dinner finalization (Nov. 14th) and the Annual General Meeting (April 21st, 2018) during 2018-19. Based on the success of the last 2 years of holding the AGM, the BPBO has again chosen the Greystone Retreat in Georgian Bluffs (Big Bay, on Islandview Drive) as the site for the 2019 AGM on April 27th. Regular meetings are conducted via telephone teleconference and thanks must go to Nature Canada for hosting these. In 2019 we experimented with ZOOM as an alternative to Nature Canada for hosting the teleconference meetings, and have now chosen this platform.

Work on a Policy and Procedures file that contains all current relevant operating policies and procedures of the BPBO continues, albeit slowly. Fees and Charges policy is intended to be part of this.

Another role of the secretary is to present resolutions at the annual general meeting. Resolutions can come from any member and, if passed, will give direction to the BPBO board for the upcoming year. Resolutions may involve things such as Constitutional changes, which nonetheless are important in their own right.

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Treasurer's Financial Report for 2018

By Mary Houston

JANUARY 1, 2018-DECEMBER 31, 2018

- The bank balance at the end of the year was \$33,745.28 with \$7,055.77 in the Species at Risk grant and the Nicaragua Fund.
- Therefore, we began the year with operating funds of \$26,689.51. This was supplemented in early Jan. 2019 with an HST refund cheque of \$4751.00 which created a of \$4751.00 which created a good cash position.
- Our expenses were higher than income in 2018 leaving us with a deficit of -\$5802.74. This was due mainly to the purchase of new solar batteries.

REVENUE HIGHLIGHTS

- The revenue highlight of 2018 was definitely our fundraising dinner. Hard work by everyone, spearheaded by Beth Ann Currie, netted us \$11,872.00 making it the most successful dinner we have ever had.
- The live auction was a great success bringing in \$7300.00. Thank you for the generous donations and bids!
- The main shortfall in budgeted revenue was the Stewardship Program. We had budgeted \$19,000.00 based on the previous year and we came in at \$13,035.00.
- Our new Site Manager did not begin until April but because he hit the ground running he was able to book enough weeks to actually bring the revenue to our 15 year average of \$13,000.00.

EXPENSE HIGHLIGHTS

- General expenses were in line with previous years with the exception of Marketing. There was a \$2100.00 expense towards the contract we had with the Progressive Results Group.
- Significant work was done on our porch at Wingfield which was thankfully funded by Ontario Power Generation. Funding for the solar batteries came from our operating expenses.
- Occupancy expenses and personnel expenses were in line with previous years and on budget.

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| 2018 Statement of Activities, Income and Expense | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| FISCAL YEAR JAN. 1 2018 TO DEC. 31, 2018 | | |
| | Actual 2018 | 2019 Budget |
| Income | | |
| Contributed Support | | |
| Government Grants- Municipality | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 |
| Community Foundation Endowment Fund Interest | 998.00 | 1,000.00 |
| Donations Annual Dinner, silent auction | 12,353.00 | 7,000.00 |
| Miscellaneous-Adopt a Bird, | 250.00 | 400.00 |
| Individual and business contribution | 5,231.31 | 5,000.00 |
| Federal Grant Parks (for 15 year report) | 4,995.00 | |
| Total Contributed support | 25,827.31 | 15,400.00 |
| Earned revenues | | |
| Grebe Lodge and Wingfield Cottage stewardship | 13,035.00 | 17,000.00 |
| Birdathon | 1,368.75 | 1,300.00 |
| Fund Raising Dinner, ticket sales | 3,675.00 | 3,500.00 |
| Membership dues - individuals | 2,170.00 | 2,200.00 |
| Memberships Business, organizations | 400.00 | 400.00 |
| Miscellaneous- SAR grant income for admin, HST refund | 1,500.00 | 8,000.00 |
| Total Earned revenues | 22,148.75 | 32,400.00 |
| Total Income from contributions and earned revenues | 47,976.06 | 47,800.00 |
| Expense | | |
| Business expenses-Insurance, Fundraising dinner, dues, merchant fees, | 6,285.59 | 6,270.00 |
| Grant expense, 15 year report | 4995.00 | 0.00 |
| Non-personnel expenses (printing, postage, internet, travel board) | 1,976.00 | 2,340.00 |
| Progressive Results Group | 2,112.55 | 0.00 |
| Occupancy expenses | | |
| Building maintenance | 2,093.35 | 3,100.00 |
| Fire Wood, propane | 706.24 | 710.00 |
| Food subsidy for volunteers | 2,102.52 | 2,100.00 |
| Station supplies including furniture, nets, petty cash | 199.66 | 200.00 |
| Telephone & Internet | 1,554.52 | 1,554.00 |
| Utilities-Hydro and Solar battery replacement | 6,486.37 | 2,000.00 |
| Total Occupancy expenses | 13,142.66 | 9,664.00 |
| Personnel expenses | | |
| Site Manager | 5,007.00 | 7,200.00 |
| Station Scientist | 20,260.00 | 22,500.00 |
| Nicaragua Exchange volunteer | | |
| Total Personnel expenses | 25,267.00 | 29,700.00 |
| Total Expense | 53,778.80 | 47,974.00 |
| Net Ordinary Income | -5,802.74 | -174.00 |

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Appendix 1. BPBO 2018 Annual General Meeting

Saturday, April 27, 2018

Greystone Retreat Centre - 504780 Grey Road 1, Georgian Bluffs, Ontario

Agenda

8:30 AM - meet at **Greystone Retreat Centre, Georgian Bluffs** in preparation for spring birding excursion on the Greystone Retreat Centre trails.

10:00 AM (Coffee and refreshments)

10:30 - 11:30 AGM:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Acceptance of the 2018 AGM Agenda
3. Acceptance of the Minutes from the 2017 AGM
4. BPBO Annual Report
5. Report from the Station Scientist
6. Fundraising Report
7. Site Manager's Report
8. BPBO Treasurer's Report and acceptance of the 2018 financial statement
9. Election or acclamation of Officers or Directors
 - a. Board Members standing for another term: Cavan Harpur, Beth Anne Currie, Ted Cheskey, Bernie Range, Mary Houston, Elizabeth Thorn.
 - b. Nominated for the Board:
 - c. Election or acclamation of existing or additional Board Members.
10. Other Business
11. Adjournment

11:30 The annual Steinacher Bird Quiz (your record sheet is on the back page of this report)

12:00 Lunch (by donation)

12:30 Feature Presentation: ***Stephane Menu – highlights from 2018***

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Appendix 2. Annual Steinacher Bird Quiz Participant Record Sheet.

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