



THE BRUCE PENINSULA BIRD OBSERVATORY

BEAKON

BIRDING WITH KIAH



With every season comes change and with change comes new adventures. Even though many species have left for the season, there is still plenty of birding to be done.

On the Bruce Peninsula, like all of North America, Birders head outdoors to participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The CBC count period runs from December 14th to January 5th. On one day in this time period, people are assigned a route within the 24km x 24km count circle, where they are tasked with counting every individual bird they see. This winter I was able to participate in 4

CBCs around Bruce County. These included: Wiarton, Pike Bay, Cape Chin, and Saugeen Shores. The Wiarton bird count included a nice sighting of 2 Winter Wrens and a high count of Blue Jays. On the morning of the Pike Bay count, I spotted 6 Pine Grosbeaks. These are very hard birds to find in Bruce county and I was quite happy to find them. Later that day I was very excited to find 28 Bohemian Waxwings perched in a tree. The following day on the Cape Chin count the weather wasn't co-operating, still, I managed to spot an overwintering American Robin feeding on some Sumac and a large flock of Common Redpolls. Highlights from the last count in Saugeen

Shores were Snowy Owls, Common Goldeneyes and a massive flock of European Starlings. This was my first year participating in the CBC and I am looking forward to it being a yearly ritual.

I have now been an active member of the Bruce Birding Club (BBC) for over a year.

Twice a month the BBC members gather together for outings across Bruce County. These outings are great opportunities to learn more about the birds of the area and the environment they live in. Field trips are exciting to attend for bird enthusiasts of all levels as it provides a place to share sightings, exchange knowledge and ideas. On a January outing, we were lucky enough to spot 38 Bald Eagles and 27 Snowy Owls in just a few hours. Sometimes the BBC leaves Bruce County in search of birds that harder to find in our area. Recently on one of the



outings, we went to Grand Bend and the Pinery Provincial Park. It was a great day as we found all of our target species including: Red-headed Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse and more than 5000 Tundra Swans...quite an impressive sight.

One of my favorite places to visit this time of year on my own is the Lions Head Harbour. It has been a good spot for me in the past and is a short drive from my house. Highlights from the harbour this winter include; Red-necked and Horned Grebes, Common Loons and very photogenic Long-tailed Ducks. I also try to bird the Tara area, it's a great spot for open country birds and this area has been quite productive for me. In January I was ecstatic to spot an adult Golden Eagle as they are hard birds to come across in Bruce County. Also, in March I found my first Northern Harrier, American Wigeon, and Killdeer of the year there. This area is also a hotspot for Snowy Owl sightings, which are always exciting birds to see.

Birding around my house is great any time of the year and this winter has been no exception. One night in late January, I was fortunate enough to hear 3 species of owls



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Swithin 1/2 hour while standing on my front porch. (Eastern Screech, Great Horned, Barred) I was very surprised and lucky to have had the Eastern Screech Owl fly through the trees and land on a branch above my head. For several minutes we watched each other before it flew off into the night. This type of sighting is the reward you get from spending hours out in nature. Currently, around my property, the signs of spring have begun to arrive with the American Woodcocks return. At sunset, I hear the familiar PEENT noise coming from the clearing and within minutes, I am treated to the woodcock's magnificent display flight.

The great thing about birding is that the next season always brings new adventures. So keep getting yourself up and outside to enjoy everything that nature has to offer.

Happy Birding!

Kiah Jasper



BPBO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Mark your calendars. BPBO is hosting it's AGM on April 21st at Greystone Retreat (more on Greystone on page 7). Join us in the morning for a bird hike along Greystone's amazing trails and stay to hear a presentation by Miptoon, Naturalist, Elder of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation and former BPBO Board member. For more details on the event go to our website- www.bpbo.ca.

2018 SEASON STARTS

Stéphane's weekly station reports will soon be back so you can follow what happens at the station. Stéphane's blogs are all posted on our website and on our facebook site. As a member, we now send this to you so it lands in your email for you to enjoy. If you are not receiving these posts, you might need to check your spam folder.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Renew your membership to BPBO. Your membership is critical to supporting bird research, monitoring and stewardship programs on the Upper Bruce Peninsula. To find out more about being a member or to renew your membership visit our website- www.bpbo.ca.

BPBO STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

A Chance to Get Away- Space Available
The Cabot Head Stewardship Program is a unique opportunity for those interested in experiencing the Bruce Peninsula first hand, while at the same time helping nature. The program offers two waterfront rustic cabins, Wingfield Cottage or Grebe Lodge, situated at the Research Station in Cabot Head Provincial Nature Reserve on the coast of Georgian Bay. For rates and availability visit our website- www.bpbo.ca.





place, but it is also the potential to make our little bit of the world (speaking as an outsider), a better place, and make the world a better place for birds. We are fortunate on our Board to have such a good range of perspectives and skills. Dreaming, planning, financial, science, practical, people-skills, local knowledge, communications – we have the basic bases covered. But, renewal is good and succession important for the health of any organization. The board is looking to find new members to step up and get involved. Being on the board is a commitment to the concept and a commitment to the whole. We have monthly phone meetings, and everybody is expected to contribute in some way.

We have much to celebrate this past year.

The board, through the leadership of board members Elizabeth Thorn and Beth Anne Currie raised the bar of campaigning by

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

With the AGM coming up soon, it is time to reflect on the year and my own experiences in BPBO. Nearly 12 years ago I moved out of southern Ontario to live in Gatineau Quebec and work in Ottawa with Nature Canada. I was the president of BPBO at the time of moving. I have trouble believing that I am in that same role now, though my dear friend Rod Steinacher had the role for many of the intervening years. When I moved, Stephane Menu was our Station Scientist.

Twelve years later, he still is. It is not that unusual that people grow attached to a place and an institution that means so much to them, and keep coming back. BPBO means a lot to us. I am pretty sure that, like me, my Board colleagues feel a strong sense of attachment to BPBO. For me, BPBO is a force for birds and nature; a concept that brings people together around common and shared concerns for birds and for the Bruce. It is birds, it is



raising tens of thousands of dollars to do what we thought was impossible – repair and replace the failing septic system at the Cabot Head Research Station. Board Member Dr. Greg Mitchell, not only brought us a great speaker for our Banquet, Dr. Grant Gilchrist, but also helped tremendously with the science we are doing at the station – by providing and training our Station Scientist in the deployment of Motus nanotag transmitters and through his stellar work on other scientific matters. The rest of us have plugged along in our roles. Significantly, one of our board members who is not renewing, Stew Nutt, provided leadership in helping

the Board learn about an opportunity that could lead us down a slightly different path with regard to communications and development. This will result in a new business model that we hope will allow us to get to the next level – more secure finances, investment in our infrastructure, investment in our future. We will tell you about this in the near future, but we are not quite there yet.

While all of this is happening, the birds continue to migrate and we continue to monitor them at Cabot Head. That was the starting place, and I need to remind myself what it looked like when BPBO was incorporated. It was ready for the bulldozer, yet, thanks to the investment of Ontario Parks, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Gosling Foundation, Parks Canada, Ontario Power Corporation, and many other funders, and the hard work of so many people, we collectively realized the potential of this site as a focus for our activities and place to contribute to bird conservation. Which brings me back to why we do this – our love for birds. At the upcoming AGM we will be able to tell you the story of our first 16 years of monitoring birds at Cabot Head. Over the winter, Stephane, with the support of some of the Board and through funding from Parks Canada, produced a report that highlights the bird stories of our first 16 years. I look forward to sharing that report and some of its stories with you at our AGM, where I hope to see you!

Ted Cheskey
BPBO President.



More On Greystone Trails & Retreat

GREYSTONE TRAILS - host of the BPBO 2018 AGM "Bird Watching Hike"

During our bird watching hike in 2016 at Greystone Trails, over 26 species were spotted in less than one hour on a 1km loop hike along Creek and Barn Trails.

This private 430+ acre managed forest/wildlife reserve with 15km of mowed/groomed hiking trails is a perfect place to bring friends and family for hiking, bird watching and wildlife viewing opportunities. The wide trails allow you to traverse through 3 distinct micro-environments (lake, forest, plateau) when you explore the entire property, each with its own flora and fauna. Six ponds and five rest areas, with privies, are wonderful places to stop, rest and enjoy the beauty that surrounds you.

Open to the public, year round. Free parking, no entrance fee. No motorized vehicles.

GREYSTONE RETREAT - host of the BPBO 2018 Annual General Meeting.

We are proud to host the BPBO AGM for the third consecutive year! Greystone Retreat is a private waterfront year-round vacation rental home located about 6km south of Big Bay. It sleeps up to 16 guests (with children) and features 5 large bedrooms, 3 full washrooms, a 2-story great room (where lunch is served at the AGM) with floor-to-ceiling wood burning stone fireplace, dining table that seats 14 guests, a fully equipped kitchen and a walk-out recreation room. The recreation is the space where our AGM is held.

Website: www.GreystoneRental.com

Address: 504785 Grey Road 1, Georgian Bluffs, ON N0H 1S0

Parking: plenty of free parking ... in Greystone Retreat driveway, at the top of the driveway on Grey Road 1 and across the road at Greystone Trails public parking area.

