

# *Nature Northwest*

ISSN 0836-4702  
VOLUME 67  
ISSUE 1



## THUNDER BAY FIELD NATURALISTS

### President's Report

The February newsletter always brings a transition. Annual reports of last year's projects remind us of what a busy and productive year our club has enjoyed. The new field trips list conjures up images of nature adventures soon to be enjoyed.

January brings new younger faces with fresh ideas to the Board. These people have big shoes to fill. Leaving the Board after an incredible 40 continuous years of service is Myra McCormick! Over the years Myra has served several times as president, also as programs lead, field trips organizer, bird records chair and Ontario Nature representative. Such a long commitment is hard to match! Also lost, through a move to Minnesota, is Willard Carmean, who served for so many years in roles as President, and as our representative on various forest management committees, and on the National

Marine Conservation Area Advisory Board. Of course Willard was also the driving force promoting the old growth forest at Greenwood Lake. We owe both of these hard-working long term volunteers a huge vote of thanks.

Fortunately, in the new younger faces on the Board I see people with skills and energy who are stepping in to fill the void. Who knows which of those new volunteers will be a "Myra" or a "Willard" in the making!

As you look through the pages of this issue please join me in appreciating all the hard-working volunteers, old and new, who bring so much to you as a member of the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists.

- Susan Bryan, President

### ***Editorial Policy***

*Nature Northwest* is a quarterly publication of the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists. Each volume (ISSN 0836-4702) consists of four issues published in February, May, August and November. A subscription to *Nature Northwest* is a benefit of membership.

Articles, notes, records, illustrations and photographs of local and regional natural history are welcome. Material accepted is subject to editing and revision. *Nature Northwest* is intended to be informative and thought-provoking. Articles may be edited and reviewed by different members of the TBFN Newsletter Committee. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists or the Editor.

Send events, stories, trip reviews, articles, pictures and observations. Your ideas and suggestions are welcome. Address all submissions to:

[naturenorthwest@gmail.com](mailto:naturenorthwest@gmail.com)

Deadline for submissions is the first day of the month in which the issue will be produced.

February issue ..... February 1st  
May issue ..... May 1st  
August issue ..... August 1st  
November issue ..... November 1st

### ***In This Issue:***

Upcoming Meetings .....	3
TBFN Workshops .....	4
President's Annual Report .....	5
Membership Annual Report .....	5
Bluebird Committee Annual Report .....	6
Project Peregrine Annual Report .....	7
Bird Records for 2012 .....	8
Nature Reserves Annual Report .....	9
TCBO Annual Report .....	10
2013 Field Trips .....	11
Christmas Bird Count .....	13
Bonaparte's Gulls Nest Near Thunder Bay .....	14
Willard Carmean .....	15
Support for Inventory Work on Bowman Island .....	16
TBFN 2009 Information .....	17

### ***From the Editor's Desk...***

Congratulations to Bill & Jess on the birth of son William in December. The bad news is that Bill has had to reallocate more of his time to work and family.

With this issue I have taken over Bill's duties as editor and Wendy McAlister, who is joining the committee, will act as liaison with the TBFN Board. Michael Carter has also agreed to help out on the newsletter committee and Brian McLaren will continue as a committee member.

This issue features the annual reports, a farewell to Dr. Willard Carmean who has moved to Minnesota, and a wide selection of meetings, workshops and field trips to mark on your calendar. Enjoy!

- Barbara Yurkoski, Editor

### ***Contributors:***

Susan Bryan  
Nick Escott  
Allan Gilbert  
Sharon Gilbert

Jean Lister  
Brian Ratcliff  
Susan Robinson  
Barbara Yurkoski

## UPCOMING GENERAL MEETINGS

Thunder Bay Field Naturalists meet on the fourth Monday of September, October, November, January, March and April at Lunan Hall, St. Paul's United Church, 349 Waverley Street, Thunder Bay.

Meetings begin promptly at 8:00 pm



### February 24, 2013 – Annual Dinner

Larry Weber: “*Spiders? Our Eight-legged Friends?*”

Larry is a spider aficionado! He will share his love of and wisdom about these amazing little eight-legged creatures. The annual dinner is hosted at the Current River Community Centre, 450 Dewe Avenue. Doors open at 4:30 pm and dinner is served at 5:30 pm. For more information contact Elaine Mackenzie at 473-0996 or [elaine@tbaytel.net](mailto:elaine@tbaytel.net)

### March 25, 2013

Dr. Scott Hamilton: “*Archaeological Dig at the Mackenzie River*”

Learn more about the interesting finds unearthed recently where the new bridge and the Highway 11-17 construction site cross the Mackenzie River just east of the City of Thunder Bay.

### April 22, 2013

Susan Meades: “*Using Native Plants for Site Rehabilitation in Northern Ontario*”

Susan is a botanist who launched the Northern Ontario Plant Database. Since January 2009 she has been working with Corridors for Life to improve vegetation management on hydro corridors through selective cutting and the use of native northern grass species in rehabilitations. Through Corridors for Life, Susan is leading the development of native seed mixes suitable for hydro-seeding on northern highways, utility corridors and mine site rehabilitation.

### Leaders and Speakers

The Club is always looking for field trip leaders and speakers for the general meetings. If you have a passion for and/or knowledge of a specific area of nature or a special place that would be of interest to club members, think about sharing either as a speaker or field trip leader, or if you know someone who would make a good leader for a field trip, please contact Marian Childs at 577-1324.

## **Thunder Bay Field Naturalists Workshops 2013**

Welcome to a series of workshops designed to help improve your natural history field skills. Each workshop offers a hands-on opportunity with an expert and is linked with a possible field trip experience in the summer. The workshops will be held monthly at Lakehead University in the Centennial Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Room CB 3013 (biology lab). Evening parking is free on campus (Lot 5 off Oliver Road is the closest). A fee of \$5 (\$10 for non-members) will be charged at the door to defray workshop costs. Pre-registration is not required.

### **Arctic-Alpine Disjunct Plants**

*Hosted by Sue Bryan*

- Thursday February 28, 2013, 7 to 9 pm

Learn where to find and how to recognize this unique set of plants found in the cold microclimate of Lake Superior. These disjuncts grow far from their usual homes in the high western mountains or in the cold reaches of the Arctic. Photos, maps and examination of pressed plants will help you become familiar with this group. A field trip to Bowman Island (fee involved) is planned in the summer to observe these plants in the field.

### **Native Orchids in the Thunder Bay District: Identification and Habitat**

*Hosted by Ryan LeBlanc*

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS ORCHID WORKSHOP HAS BEEN CANCELLED AND REPLACED BY THE LICHEN WORKSHOP

### **An Introduction to the Fascinating World of Lichens**

*Hosted by Erika North*

- Thursday March 28, 2013, 7 to 9 p.m.

Participate at any level you wish. Lichens are a part of the diversity of nature and although small, still hold some unanswered questions, such as what triggers the formation of the final structure that consists of a fungus and an alga. The session will start with a PowerPoint presentation of interesting lichens of the area, as well as the diverse habitats to encounter lichens. For the hands-on part, microscopes will be available to examine recently collected samples as well as herbarium specimens. Some chemical tests that can be useful in identification will be demonstrated.

### **Attracting and Identifying Butterflies**

*Hosted by John Walas*

- Thursday April 25, 2013, 7 to 9 pm

Learn how to quickly identify butterflies in the field and how to attract them to your yard and garden. As well, learn techniques and methodologies for raising them. This will allow you to identify common butterflies and understand their life histories, conditions that affect their numbers and their specific habitat needs, and how to create those conditions in your yard in order to attract them.

---

## **A Personal Challenge for 2013**

A new year is a chance to start afresh. Perhaps this will be the year you start a regular journal, entering your sightings in an orderly fashion, with dates, comments on weather, location, birds or plants seen, number, activities (for birds) and, perhaps, a bit of subjective comments of your own. Such records are invaluable to other members who wish to make scientific use of them. Try it. Winter is slack for birds and plants locally, so if you haven't begun yet, you can still start and have a nearly complete record for 2013.

- Adapted from the News Letter of TBFN Club of PA and FW- Feb. 1969 Vol. 32 No.1

## **PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT**

Duties of the President were shared in 2012: Brian McLaren held the office from January until he left on sabbatical to Ecuador in June and Susan Bryan took up the presidential duties until the end of 2012.

Many of the year's events are highlighted in the reports of various directors. However, not all the accomplishments of our group are evident in these reports. In January the membership approved a new set of bylaws. A very big change was the implementation of on-line membership renewal, donations and sales. Many thanks to Rob Foster for spearheading this initiative. Ryan LeBlanc, our representative to Ontario Nature, attended both the northern regional meetings and the provincial Board meetings of ON. Our newsletter team published four interesting issues of Nature Northwest for us to enjoy. Emily Kerton led the Junior Naturalists in a series of outdoor adventures and we sponsored one youth delegate to a provincial conference hosted by Ontario Nature. TBFN provided prizes at the local Science Fair and a scholarship to a student at Lakehead University. Elaine Mackenzie organized our annual February dinner meeting,

which included some excellent raffle prizes this year. Bluebird boxes were built and maintained. Members represented us on seven different advisory committees concerning everything from forestry management to fish. All of this volunteer effort goes on quietly in the background but is of great value to our club.

Thanks to the efforts of Directors Jim Cameron and Aaron Nicholson we have improved our handling of the many environmental issues our club is asked to comment on. The job of "Briefs and Environmental Advocacy" on the Board has always been a daunting task. With new guidelines the Board is now better able to hone in on a smaller number of key issues that we should be commenting on. It is truly amazing to see the many issues our club has capably addressed in this manner.

The President's job is certainly challenging, but I enjoy the support of a capable team of directors and an engaged membership. Thank you all for a job well done in 2012.

- Susan Bryan, President

## **MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT**

### **A History of TBFN Membership**

In 1933 Lionel Dear, a well-known Lakehead naturalist, sportsman and soldier, founded the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists' Club. He was its first President and he remained its Honorary President until the time of his death in 1959. In 1948 then President Claude E. Garton wrote, "Our paid-up membership for 1947 was 56. This is very gratifying to all of us, indicating as it does a growing interest in natural history and a desire to line up with an organization which seeks to help the individual learn with others to work efficiently for more effective conservation of our wildlife

resources." (News Letter of the TBFN, Feb. 1948, Vol. 2 No. 1). In 1967 the total membership had almost doubled to 97. In 1991 the total membership had grown to 232 or four times the number of members in 1947. In 2012 TBFN had 224 paid-up members: 103 families, 42 single members, 46 seniors, 6 life members, 4 students, 6 corresponding members, 6 honorary members, 9 complimentary members and 2 Science Fair winners. TBFN membership has steadily increased to and remained constant around 200 per year since 1991. In 2013, TBFN will be 80

years old as a club. Mr. Dear's vision has not changed. TBFN continues to interest members of our community in its field trips, in its general meeting topics, and in its protection of our wildlife and native plants by purchasing nature reserves.

TBFN welcomed many new members in 2012. A special thank you to those members who have shared their TBFN experiences with others and have attracted new members. We appreciate Ryan LeBlanc's untiring efforts at the Spring and Fall events at the Canadian Lakehead Exhibition with his colourful and informative charts representing the work of TBFN.

Thanks to all of our members for your continuing support of TBFN. I hope you will enjoy the field trips Marian Childs organizes and the guest speakers she provides for our general meetings.

### **Honorary Memberships in 2012**

At the February 2012 dinner we presented Myra McCormick with an honorary membership in recognition of her long service to TBFN and as our representative on the Ontario Nature board. In October we presented Willard Carmean with an honorary membership for his involvement on the advisory committee encouraging the MNR to declare the Ancient Pines near Greenwood Lake to be a research and education area. This is a 1000 ha area of 300 year old pines some of which have a diameter of one metre (News Letter of TBFN, May 1992, Vol. 46 No. 1).

### **Change in Newsletter Distribution**

When we distributed the November issue of Nature Northwest in 2009, we mailed out 168 and emailed 9. In November 2012, we mailed 67 and emailed 200. This is a significant change in how TBFN distributes the newsletter.

- Sharon Gilbert, Membership Co-ordinator

## **BLUEBIRD COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

Generally it was not a productive year for the Bluebird trails in our area. A number of factors could account for the poor results: weather conditions, predators (raccoons are now a threat in the Thunder Bay area) as well as the unexplained.

Several projects are in development for the TBFN Bluebird Recovery Program. Students in woodworking classes at one of the high schools are being enlisted to build 40 bluebird boxes. Some costs for production will be recovered from the sale of the boxes. Two information sessions (more if necessary), similar to the one at Hazelwood Lake in August 2011, will be presented in the North and South wards to educate the public about the Bluebird Recovery Program. In addition the committee is considering a project to identify neglected or unmonitored boxes that often become "predator breeders", and find monitors for these boxes.

Small but enthusiastic groups of bluebirders took advantage of the TBFN "Bluebird Bonanza" field trips in June of 2011 and 2012. In 2011 Marie Hamilton took us to her trails in Stanley and O'Connor, where the participants viewed bluebird parents on the fence and chicks in the nest box. We also saw seven chickadee babies in the nest, amazingly all facing the same direction! In 2012 Marie took us to a friend's property, where we had excellent views of bluebirds flying in and out of the nest box with food for the chicks, who were close to fledging. Both trips were quite successful considering it is difficult to pinpoint the time when the chicks will be in the nest. Bluebird Bonanza is on the field trip list again for 2013. Hope you will join us.

- Susan Robinson, Bluebird Recovery Program

## **PROJECT PEREGRINE ANNUAL REPORT**

Project Peregrine has been intensively monitoring the breeding population of Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) within the Ontario side of the Lake Superior Basin and northwestern Ontario since 1996.

The 2012 field season started out the same as in past years, but due to some unexpected funding delays and intense precipitation, produced some of the poorest results. Peregrines returned to the cliff sites approximately the same time as in the past (mid to late March) and many pairs were established by early April. On May 28, the Thunder Bay area experienced an intense weather system, and more than 100 mm of rain fell in just a few hours. Many peregrine territories that were active in April had no sign of adults or chicks in June. Productivity on the east side of Lake Superior was much better.

Project Peregrine has been fortunate to receive the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund to cover the cost of the June helicopter survey in the past. This year we were successful in receiving funds for the helicopter survey but the announcement was not made until July 17, about four weeks after the survey should have taken place. A portion of this funding was directed to cover volunteer banding expenses. Project Peregrine was able to assist OMNR staff on a limited helicopter flight that looked at approximately 25 territories around Thunder Bay and Nipigon on June 21.

In 2012, 48 peregrine falcon territories were identified. There were 39 territorial pairs and nine single birds on territory. The breeding success of the 39 territorial pairs consisted of 29 breeding pairs, of which 20 pairs were known to have fledged 38 young. The number of chicks assumed to have fledged would

be significantly higher, but nine confirmed nesting sites were not visited a second time to confirm fledging success. 11 sites that were previously occupied were also surveyed in 2012 but no birds found. 48 previous territories were not surveyed in 2012 and four new territories (Keemle Lake, Mica Bay, Gargantua, and LSPP- Beauvier Point) were confirmed.

Only five nest sites were accessed for banding, and ten chicks (six males and four females) banded. Banding was initiated June 15, and concluded July 2. The ten chicks banded was the lowest number since the program started in 1996 (16 chicks banded). Only one chick was noted as having a blow fly (*Calliphoridae spp.*) maggot infestation in its ears. To date, 511 peregrine falcon chicks have been banded since 1996.

Project Peregrine is indebted to the many volunteers, Pukaskwa National Park and OMNR staff who took time to survey known and new cliff sites for peregrine activity in 2012. Their time and efforts are greatly appreciated. To the banding team climbers: Frank Pianka, Leo Tardif, and Rod Swatton, who make up the banding team, a special thank you for your expertise and 102 hours of donated time. Your continued interest in this project is also greatly appreciated.

Funding received by Project Peregrine to continue the monitoring and banding of peregrine falcons was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund.

- Brian Ratcliff, Chair, Project Peregrine Committee

---

### **NEW RESOURCE ON WHITE PINE IN NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO**

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has published a booklet on White Pine in Northwestern Ontario, written by Dr. Willard Carmean, Professor Emeritus of Forestry, Lakehead University. The publication includes chapters that were printed in past editions of Nature Northwest. Acquisition information will be available in our next issue.

## BIRD RECORDS FOR 2012

This is a summary of the birds that were reported in Thunder Bay District in 2012. The most current Thunder Bay District Checklist is the 5<sup>th</sup> edition which includes all 362 species of birds that have been recorded in the district up to the end of 2010. There have been no new bird species added to the checklist since it was produced. The checklist can be viewed on the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists website.

In 2012, there were 261 species reported. There were ten more species observed in 2012 than in 2011. Most of the reports were from birders posting on NWObirds, TBFN field trips, Dorion Canyon County Bird Festival, eBird, and observations from numerous birdwatchers.

There are 237 regular species of birds that one can expect to see in any year. In 2012, only four

regular species were not reported- Red Knot, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Marsh Wren, and Townsend's Solitaire.

There were 25 rare species of birds identified in 2012. The table below lists the rare species recorded. There was also one additional rare species reported, Mute Swan at Hurkett on July 25, but unfortunately there was not enough documentation to support this sighting.

One exotic species, European Goldfinch was reported on May 12 in Marathon.

A special thank you is extended to everyone who reported their bird sightings.

- Brian Ratcliff, Bird Records Chairman

Date	Species	Location	Observer
Jan 1-May 7	Spotted Towhee	Longlac	Fred Jennings, Jude Tulla
Jan.- Dec.	Black-billed Magpie (Pr)	Government Road	Pat Corbett
Mar. 31	Black-billed Magpie	Pass Lake	Nancy Knudsen
Apr. 3	Smith's Longspur	Misison Island	George Williams
Apr. 5-10	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Candy Mt. Road and Hwy 130	Brian J. Moore
Apr. 18	Black-billed Magpie	Nolalu	Jeff Meade
Apr. 21	Black-billed Magpie	Thunder Bay -Neebing Floodway	Edith
Apr. 29	Purple Sandpiper	Rosspport	Michael T. Butler
May 9-10	Blue Grosbeak	Rocky Bay	Agnes and Harrold Michon
May 12-14	Painted Bunting (M)	Reflection Lake Resort	Sharryn D. Mccollum
May-10	Franklin's Gull	Pukaskwa NP	Jon Pleizier
May 12, May 18	Golden-winged Warbler	Thunder Cape	John Woodcock
May-16	Summer Tanager (F)	Chippewa Park	John Schelling
May 19-20	Lark Sparrow	Dorion	Marlene and Buck Schaaf
May-20	Eurasian Wigeon	Chippewa Park	Nick Escott/Brian Moore
May-20	Pine Warbler	North Fowl Lake	Ted Armstrong
May 20-26	Red-headed Woodpecker	Dorion	Susan Fagan
May 26-30	Summer Tanager (F)	Longlac	Gary S. Selinger
May-24	Field Sparrow	Thunder Cape	John Woodcock
May-26	Grasshopper Sparrow	Thunder Cape	John Woodcock
May-27	Lark Sparrow	Heron Bay	Michael T. Butler
Jun. 8	Red-headed Woodpecker	Harstone Road, Stanley	John Schelling



Jun. 11	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Pic River	Mark Field
July 25, 26,	Rufous Hummingbird	Loon Lake	Gord Pinner
Aug. 5,	Rufous Hummingbird	Kama Point	Margaret Evans
Sept. 21	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Chippewa Park	Greg Kendall
Sept. 30	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Rosspport area	Michael T. Butler
Oct. 2	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Mission Island	Greg Kendall
Oct. 7	Western Grebe	Cloud Bay	Nick Escott/Brian Moore
Oct. 5	Great Egret	Hwy 61	Bryan Merritt
Oct. 9	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Thunder Bay Landfill	Nick Escott/Brian Moore
Oct. 5	Red-headed Woodpecker	Heron Bay	Alan Wormington
Oct. 16	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Terrace Bay Landfill	Alan Wormington
Oct. 22	Great Black-backed Gull	Terrace Bay Landfill	Nick Escott/Brian Moore
Oct. 29-Nov. 5	Eastern Towhee	Nipigon	Betty Brill
Nov. 12	Black-billed Magpie	Escape Lake Road	James Barber
Nov. 13-14	Eastern Towhee	Rossllyn	Janine Ferris
Nov. 14-Dec.22	Eastern Towhee	Thunder Bay	Charlene Comuzzi
Dec. 19	Eastern Towhee	Thunder Bay	Rachel Duclos
	Red-bellied Woodpecker	7 different reports	
	Trumpeter Swan	many reports	

## **NATURE RESERVES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

The highlight of the year was the purchase of Bowman Island Nature Reserve in February. TBFN was fortunate to attract 50% matching funding through the Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP), a Nature Conservancy of Canada – Government of Canada partnership that helps with protection of sensitive lands.

In July a team of TBFN volunteers went to Bowman Island to complete a Species at Risk inventory and to establish a baseline species inventory to guide future management activities. The volunteers identified several Species at Risk and also many arctic disjunct plants. Support for the monitoring came from the federal Ministry of the Environment through the OLTAP fund.

TBFN's nature reserves benefited from a growing team of stewardship volunteers. Evan McCaul organized volunteers to plant 6,000 tree seedlings in an old cutover at Pine Bay 1. He successfully secured funds and assistance for the tree planting from the Thunder Bay District Stewardship

Council. Frank Barclay carefully monitored a Bald Eagle nest at Pine Bay 2 and hosted a TBFN hike to record some of the interesting orchids and bird species found on his reserve. Barb Yurkoski identified a maple sugar stand at Pictured Lake and put up signs to discourage snowmobiling on the property. New volunteer David Legge is just starting to learn about his chosen reserve at Caldwell Lake. Dr. Lesley Curthoys and her students from LU spent a day in Williams Bog mapping values. We hope that eventually each of the TBFN reserves will have dedicated volunteer stewards who know the property well and will help with monitoring and caring for the land. More volunteers are needed.

Many thanks to Barb Yurkoski and to Mike Bryan for their help with grant applications, volunteer orientation, maintaining a database of reserve records, and updating the website.

- Susan Bryan, Nature Reserves Chair

## **THUNDER CAPE BIRD OBSERVATORY (TCBO) ANNUAL REPORT**

The Thunder Cape Committee met twice during 2012. Committee members are Neil Dawson (MNR representative), Nick Escott, Rob Foster (TBFN representative), Allan Gilbert, Al Harris, Brian Moore, Brian Ratcliff and Melissa Rose.

John Woodcock, our Coordinator, was again in charge of the program. Spring and Fall migration coverage took place as usual with 5 volunteers in the Spring and 8 in the Fall. Volunteers came from S. Ontario (4), Thunder Bay (1), Quebec (1), Nova Scotia (1), USA (3), Japan (1), Switzerland (1), Germany (1), and the U.K. (1)

As usual, data were collected according to strict protocols developed by the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, and submitted to Bird Studies Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Common Nighthawks were again specifically monitored under the MNR Species at Risk program. Detailed accounts of our migration monitoring season, including lists of volunteers and financial supporters, are published in Thunder Cape News, which is distributed twice a year to TCBO members. Membership is \$10 per year, and can be combined with TBFN membership.

The number of birds banded was lower than usual. In the spring only 1600 individuals of 80 species were banded, and the fall counts were 3561 individuals over 95 species or forms. Over our 21 year history, the average spring and fall banding totals are 2618 and 4,944 respectively. Spring highlights included Lark, Grasshopper and Field Sparrows and the first spring banding of a N. Saw-whet Owl. However, the most significant sightings were not birds, but a Grey Fox and a Red-bellied Snake, both previously unreported north of Lake Superior. In the Fall N. Saw-whet Owls and Black-capped Chickadees put in a strong showing with 622 and 516 banded.

TCBO received good publicity during the year. Thunder Bay Guest Magazine published a two page special feature, "The Migrants of Thunder Cape" in its August issue. Blue Art Media visited TCBO as part of a documentary entitled "A Park for All Seasons". They spent half a day at TCBO filming and interviewing. The documentary is expected to air on TVO in early 2013.

- Allan Gilbert, Chair, TCBO Committee

### **BACK PAGE PHOTO: Great Gray Owl**

This winter Northwestern Ontario birders have been treated to viewings of some northern owls that are seldom seen in our area. On February 7, after presenting at the Dorion winter birding workshop, Greg Stroud drove to Pass Lake to try his luck. He spotted five Great Gray Owls, one sitting on a wire. When he stopped to watch, the owl flew down off the wire and landed in the snow in front of him, in perfect lighting for a picture. Luckily Greg had his camera ready. Do you think the bird knew?

## **2013 FIELD TRIPS**

Please phone or email trip leader to confirm your attendance as trips may be postponed or even cancelled due to weather or emergencies on the part of the leader. This avoids waiting and wondering if you are in the right place at the right time. You can also check the website at [www.tbfn.net](http://www.tbfn.net). We try to keep the website up to date.

### **Owl Prowl – Sleeping Giant – Friday, April 5**

A search for the elusive Saw-whet, Boreal, Barred, Great Horned or Great Gray owls. We hope to hear them all, and with luck maybe even see one. Carpooling is encouraged and please dress warmly. Call Al Harris 344-7213 to confirm time and meeting place.

### **Mission March – Saturday, April 27**

Join Keith Wade for early season migrants. Take Island Drive Bridge to Mission Island and meet at the Hydro Generation Station parking lot at 8:45 am. Dress warmly with waterproof boots. Call 935-3092 to confirm.

### **Baillie Bird-a-thon - Any 24-hour period in May**

See how many species of birds you can see in a single day. Get sponsored per bird or a flat rate and raise money for Thunder Cape Bird Observatory and other bird initiatives. Break the local record of species or at least have fun trying. Be sure to designate your funds to Thunder Cape Bird Observatory. For details see <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/support/birdathon/index.jsp?lang+EN>

### **Birding at Cloud Bay – Saturday, May 4**

Geoffrey Gooding will be your leader for this day outing to see what has returned. Meet at Arthur St. Marketplace opposite the Athletic Club at 8:30am. Drive to the Sewage Ponds and then to Cloud Bay. Spotting scopes welcome. Call 345-8513 to confirm.

### **Nature's Evening Choristers – Friday, May 10**

Join George Holborn for a guided walk at Mills Block at 8:00 p.m. We'll look and listen for frogs, snipe, owls, bitterns, nighthawks, and those songbirds that simply can't give it up. With luck we'll see bats and salamanders. Wear waterproof footwear and warm clothing. Bring a flashlight. Call 622-2113 to confirm time and date.

### **Spring warblers – Hurkett Cove – Saturday, May 18**

Meet at the County Fair Gas Bar at 8:00a.m. Bring lunch and appropriate clothing for this day outing. Confirm with leader Geoff Gooding 345-8513

### **Dorion's Canyon Country Birding Festival – Saturday, May 25 & Sunday May 26**

Details are available at <http://www.dorionbirdfest.ca/index.html>

### **Painted Rock Nature Reserve – Saturday June 1**

We will watch for interesting birds and view the spring flora as we make our way around this pretty little lake off of Boundary Drive near Oliver Lake. Feet may get wet crossing a stream. Bring lunch. Meet at 9 a.m. at Arthur St. Marketplace opposite the Athletic Club. Leader: Barbara Yurkoski 475-8299

**Bluebird Bonanza – Saturday, June 8**

Join Sue Robinson for this workshop/field trip to check on nesting bluebirds and their broods as part of TBFN's Bluebird Recovery Program. Meet at Thunder Bay Mall opposite the Athletic Club at 9 a.m. and we'll car pool from there. Call Sue 344-1739 to confirm.

**Mink Mountain – Saturday, June 15**

This all day event will explore the trails and treasures of Mink Mountain and its birds. Bring a lunch. Meet at 7:30 at Arthur St. Marketplace opposite the Athletic Club. Contact Brian Moore 344-2986 to confirm.

**Caldwell Lake – Saturday, June 22**

All day hike along moderately strenuous trails and shoreline. See orchids and insectivorous plants on the floating bog. Arctic plants along the Lake Superior shoreline. Your feet will get wet on the bog mat - wear old running shoes, not boots. Meet at 8 a.m. at Arthur Street Marketplace (Thunder Bay Mall) at the south end of the parking lot in front of the Athletic Club. Carpooling is recommended. Bring lunch, drinks, sunscreen and bug repellent. Call Susan Bryan at 345-6446 to confirm or for more information.

**Sleeping Giant Weekend – June 29-July 1**

TBFN is looking for volunteers for this annual event when our members give talks, lead hikes and offer children's activities at Sleeping Giant Provincial Park. There is time to enjoy the park on your own as well. If you are interested in helping, please contact Marian Childs at 577-1324.

**Boat Trip to Bowman Island – Saturday, July 6-Sunday, July 7**

Visit TBFN's new nature reserve, Bowman Island. Charter boat from Nipigon Marina, passing TBFN's Nipigon River Mouth Reserve and Paradise Island Reserve on the way. See arctic plants, Pukaskwa pits, and spectacular wilderness scenery. Overnight accommodation at Bowman Island Charters lodge and cabins. Bring lunch for Saturday only. All other food provided. Cost \$225 per person. Moderately strenuous. Limit 10 passengers. Book early!

Trip Leader for details and to book: Susan Bryan (345-6446) or [bryan@tbaytel.net](mailto:bryan@tbaytel.net).

**Fledgling Falcons - Saturday, July 13**

Come out in the evening (7 p.m.) and watch fledging peregrine falcons as they try out their new wings. Exact location along the Nor'westers is to be determined. For comfortable viewing, bring a lawn chair, binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. Contact Brian Ratcliff 768-8408 for directions.

**Fungus Finds – TBA**

Join mycologist Dr. Len Hutchison to learn about local mushrooms, toadstools, and other fungi.

**Silver Islet Migrants – Saturday, October 5**

Search out migrating fall warblers and other birds at Silver Islet. Meet by the Landmark Inn at County Fair Plaza at 8:00 a.m. This is an all-day affair so please bring a lunch. Contact Bert Harding 630-4735 if you have any questions.

**Christmas Bird Count – December 26**

Leader – Nick Escott

## **73rd THUNDER BAY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT December 26, 2012**

Note: significant sightings are bolded on first mention; species considered rare in Thunder Bay District are capitalized.

This year we had 42 observers in 13 field parties and 3 people sent in counts from their feeders. The low of -22C in the morning felt even colder due to the north wind, and the high reached only -12C. Despite very little snow cover, with bare ground in places, but we tallied few ground-feeding birds. In addition the wild food crop was generally poor, with few mountain ash berries, and good cone crops in only a few places. Most of the harbour was frozen.

Nevertheless we tallied a total of 50 species, which is about average for the Thunder Bay count. The average for the past 10 years is 49. The total count of individual birds came in at 7559, well short of the record of 16,668 set in 1994. The average for the past 10 years is 10,758.

The field group with the highest species total was Brian Ratcliff's team in the Vickers Heights area, with 25. Next was Area 12 with 22 species, covered by Allan Gilbert and John Woodcock. This area includes the Thunder Bay airport north to Oliver Road, west of the Thunder Bay Expressway. Ten other groups counted between 17 and 21 species, attesting to the dedication and field identification skills of our participants, and the fact that any of the 14 areas in the count circle, whether urban or rural, has the potential of finding as many bird species as any other.

A new species was added to the cumulative list this year, a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** which came to a suet feeder in the north ward. We have had it as a "count week" species before, but never on the December 26 count. Other highlights were two **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** and two **Northern Cardinals**. Red-bellied Woodpecker had been recorded only twice before, single birds in 2003 and 2006.

New record high counts were set for **Bald Eagle**, **House Finch**, **White-winged Crossbill**, and **Hoary Redpoll**. The population of Bald Eagles

has continued to increase since they were first recorded on the Thunder Bay CBC in 1994. Only one flock of **Evening Grosbeaks** was found, although it was a fairly large one, and low counts were recorded for several species, including Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, and Dark-eyed Junco.

Count Week species, i.e. species seen in the 3 days before or after Dec 26, but not on count day, were **Northern Hawk Owl**, **Black-backed Woodpecker**, and **BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE**.

Thanks to all participants for getting outdoors to count birds despite the cold temperatures, and to Sue and Mike Bryan for hosting the pot luck dinner and countdown after the count.

- Nick Escott, Compiler

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Canada Goose	40
American Black Duck	3
Mallard	94
Common Goldeneye	5
Ruffed Grouse	5
Wild Turkey	4
Bald Eagle	217
Northern Goshawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk	3
Merlin	4
Herring Gull	298
Glaucous Gull	7
Rock Pigeon	683
Mourning Dove	19
Great Horned Owl	1
Snowy Owl	1
Northern Hawk Owl	CW
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER	2
Downy Woodpecker	49
Hairy Woodpecker	46
American Three-toed Woodpecker	1
Black-backed Woodpecker	CW
Pileated Woodpecker	8
Northern Shrike	4



Gray Jay	12
Blue Jay	76
BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE	CW
American Crow	815
Common Raven	636
Black-capped Chickadee	876
Red-breasted Nuthatch	169
White-breasted Nuthatch	10
Brown Creeper	1
American Robin	14
European Starling	1067
Bohemian Waxwing	332
Cedar Waxwing	10
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
White-crowned Sparrow	1
Dark-eyed Junco	5
NORTHERN CARDINAL	2
Red-winged Blackbird	1

Common Grackle	1
Pine Grosbeak	229
HOUSE FINCH	52
Red Crossbill	7
White-winged Crossbill	293
Common Redpoll	678
Hoary Redpoll	11
Pine Siskin	23
American Goldfinch	15
Evening Grosbeak	35
House Sparrow	691
Total species	50
total individuals	7559
plus 3 CW = "Count Week" species	

### **BONAPARTE’S GULLS NEST NEAR THUNDER BAY**

Bonaparte’s Gull is the only gull in our region that nests in trees. While the migrating birds are often seen close to town, breeding birds are normally found further north. So when Sue and Mike Bryan heard through the grapevine that some had been spotted flying around one of their birding lakes near Upsala, they headed out for a look.



*Photo by Mike Bryan*

From a bog mat dotted with the small black spruce and tamarack where these gulls like to



*Photo by Mike Bryan*

build their stick nests, Sue and Mike counted 12 adults flying overhead. Then two of the gulls began dive-bombing them. That was their cue to look closely for the chicks, who jump out of the nest at an early age to live on the bog mat near the water’s edge, where the parents feed them. Sure enough, the intrepid birders found one fluffy youngster almost underfoot, thus confirming a nesting site near the southernmost limit of this gull’s breeding range.

## WILLARD CARMEAN and TBFN

Dr. Willard Carmean came to Thunder Bay in 1979 to join the Faculty of Forestry (now Natural Resources Management) at Lakehead University as Professor of Forest Soils. Soon after he joined the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists and became involved in many of the club's activities, participating in field trips and giving lectures to the membership on the various forest and cultural values in countries such as Turkey, Haiti, Italy, and South Africa.

In 1998 Will joined the board as a Director until he became President, serving from 2003-2006. He served as Past President until 2008. The board was a serious group of focused members who worked diligently to achieve the club mandate.

In his last decade with the club, he represented TBFN on various committees. From 2003 he chaired the Advisory Committee for the Greenwood Lake Old-growth White Pine Conservation Reserve. It is to his credit that the old-growth stand of White Pine was set aside as a Conservation Reserve.

<http://www.borealforest.org/greenwood/index.htm>

One primary goal of Will and his committee was to maintain the trails for hiking and enjoyment of this great old forest. Since his departure from Thunder Bay in the fall of 2012, that committee chairmanship has been filled by Bill Towill.

When Parks Canada requested a representative for the Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area Committee, TBFN appointed Will. In addition he was a club representative for two committees of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. The first was the Local Citizens Committee Lakehead Forest, at the time of the struggle to protect Black Bay Peninsula from an all weather road. This road would have changed the dynamics of the water table which in turn would have threatened TBFN's nature reserve, with its provincially recognized wet land and Sharp-tailed Grouse lek

(<http://www.tbfnet.net/everard-fen>). The second

was the Local Citizens Committee Dog Lake/Mattawan River Forests which concerned the area containing the Greenwood Lake old growth White Pine Conservation Reserve. Will also represented the club on a Remedial Action Plan concerned about the "blob" of creosote (or the 'real sleeping giant') located in the Thunder Bay Harbour. After an arduous struggle, this committee was successful in persuading the various powers involved to remove this source of toxic materials from the harbour.

In his career, Will published more than 80 scientific papers; the last one was entitled "White Pine in Northwestern Ontario - yesterday, today and tomorrow". This was published by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in 2012 and has just been released. Two copies have been allocated to the TBFN Board. The intent of this paper is to increase White Pine management to promote the value of the timber as an economic resource as well as the values of recreation, wildlife and aesthetics.

Three articles published by Will in TBFN's 2009 newsletter were based on this recently published paper. Each was a shortened version of a longer manuscript and appeared in *Nature Northwest* Vol. 63 No. 2, 3 and 4. Dr. Carmean contributed other articles to *Nature Northwest*. One was in defence of protection for Square Top Mountain, an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest located in the Nor'Wester Mountains. The unique feature of this ANSI is the presence of Sugar Maple and Yellow Birch. This special area was threatened by the possibility of cross country skiing and more recently by wind turbines. Other articles were on the nature of forestry in Turkey, the degradation of forests in Haiti and a description of successful forestry practices in Romania.

Will now resides in St. Paul Minnesota where he has family. He sends regards and invites friends and acquaintances to call him at 651-275-5535.

- Jean Lister

## SUPPORT FOR INVENTORY WORK ON BOWMAN ISLAND



TBFN volunteers examine raised cobble beaches on Bowman Island. Photo by Mike Bryan

TBFN Nature Reserves has received a grant of \$1,581 from the Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program (OLTAP). The funds helped the Club with a Species at Risk (SAR) and natural history inventory completed in summer 2012 at our new nature reserve on Bowman Island.

In the course of that inventory a number of Species at Risk were identified, including 12 Arctic disjuncts: Appalachian Fir-clubmoss (*Huperzia appalachiana*), Black Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), Common Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*), Knotted Pearlwort (*Sagina nodosa*), White Mountain-saxifrage (*Saxifraga paniculata*), Bird's-eye Primrose (*Primula mistassinica*), Fragrant Cliff Woodfern (*Dryopteris fragrans*), Hair-like Sedge (*Carex capillaris*), Tufted Leafless-bulrush (*Trichophorum caespitosum*), False Oats (*Trisetum spicatum*), Alpine Blueberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*), Mountain Cranberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), Ontario Goldenrod (*Solidago simplex* var

*ontarioensis*) and the Great Lakes Arctic-Alpine Basic Open Bedrock Shoreline community also have SAR status, as well as a pair of Bald Eagles which may be nesting on the reserve.

Although Woodland Caribou were not observed, the site has been home to this species until recent years (last caribou sighting on Bowman was 1984). Suitable habitat for caribou still exists on the island. Many of the unusual plants listed in the table are arctic-alpine disjunct species of great interest to botanists.



TBFN volunteers survey the shoreline of Bowman Island by canoe. Photo by Mike Bryan

The Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program assists eligible recipients with costs associated with land securement and management planning to help conserve Ontario's biodiversity. OLTAP is an initiative of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance, supported in partnership with Environment Canada.

- Susan Bryan



### **Bowman Island: Reflections on Five Days of Wild Life on Lake Superior**

Barbara Yurkoski has written a 20 page journal/photo album of her experience as part of the TBFN monitoring team that visited Bowman Island. If you would like to know more about the island, or just want to escape the winter cold for a while, free electronic copies (pdf) are available. Email: [naturenorthwest@gmail.com](mailto:naturenorthwest@gmail.com) to request a copy.



## Thunder Bay Field Naturalists --- Information for 2013

The Thunder Bay Field Naturalists Club is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study of natural history, the wise use of resources, the preservation of natural areas, and teaching the public to understand and protect nature

### Directors:

President .....	Susan Bryan .....	345-6446
Vice President .....	Rob Foster .....	626-0089
Treasurer .....	Mary Davies .....	
Secretary .....	Sandra Barro .....	768-9753
Newsletter Editor .....	Vacant .....	
Field Trips .....	Marian Childs .....	577-1324
Nature Reserves & Youth .....	Evan McCaul .....	
Publicity and ON Nature Rep .....	Ryan LeBlanc .....	768-7973
Programs .....	Wendy McAllister .....	
Director at Large .....	David Legge .....	983-2155
Director at Large .....	John Pentick .....	577-4540
Director at Large .....	Jim Cameron .....	

### Program Volunteers:

Membership Co-ordinator .....	Sharon Gilbert .....	768-8582
Nature Reserves Chair .....	Susan Bryan .....	345-6446

### Projects:

Thunder Cape Bird Observatory .....	Allan Gilbert .....	
TCBO Cell Phone .....		1-807-251-3673
Project Peregrine .....	Brian Ratcliff .....	768-8408
Bluebird Recovery .....	Susan Robinson .....	
Bird Records .....	Brian Ratcliffe .....	768-8408
Webmaster .....	Rob Foster .....	346-4950

### Annual Membership Fees:

Family .....	\$30
Student .....	\$20
Corresponding .....	\$16
Single .....	\$25
Senior (65+) .....	\$20
Life Member .....	\$350

### Mailing Address/Phone:

Thunder Bay Field Naturalists  
P.O. Box 10037  
Thunder Bay, ON P7B6T6  
Cell Phone: 807-474-6007

### Website:

www.tbfn.net

### Meeting Dates:

- 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of September, October, November, January, March, and April
- Annual Dinner meeting is held 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of February

## Membership Application/Renewal Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Email) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ (Postal Code) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work/cell) \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to receive Nature Northwest by (please circle one): Post mail (\$5 fee) / Email (0\$ fee) / Both (\$5 fee)

F Family.....\$30      F Single.....\$25      F Senior (65+).....\$20      F Student.....\$20

F Life.....\$350      F Corresponding (non-voting).....\$16      F Thunder Cape Bird Observatory .....\$10

F Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to (circle one) (TBFN) (TCBO) (Jr. Nat's) (Nature Reserves) (Tax receipt issued for donation)

**Juniors:** Name(s) + Age(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to share knowledge in a particular area as a speaker or field trip leader or co-leader? If yes, in what area? \_\_\_\_\_

Please add \$5 to your renewal fee if you want to receive Nature Northwest through the mail. For example, please pay \$35 for a family membership). Your TBFN and TCBO memberships expire on December 31<sup>st</sup>. To ensure a May Newsletter, please register by February using this form, or printing the form from the TBFN website ([www.tbfn.net](http://www.tbfn.net)) and mail to above address.

All membership information is considered to be confidential, and as such the Club will not sell or distribute this information



*Photo by Greg Stroud*

Thunder Bay Field Naturalists  
P.P. Box 10037  
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 6T6

Publication Agreement No. 41362520