

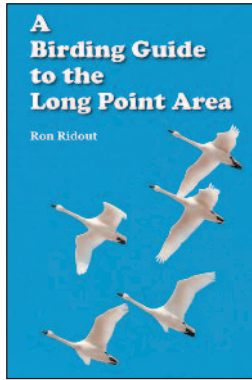
BOOK REVIEW

A Birding Guide to the Long Point Area. 2010.

Ron Ridout, Bird Studies
Canada, P.O. Box 160,
Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0,
146 pages, 14 x 21.5 cm.
\$24.95.
ISBN 978-0-9810904-1-2.

There are few places in southern Ontario that offer as wide a variety of habitats as the Long Point Area, and fewer still that combine such an excellent reputation as a migrant trap with such an extensive complement of breeding birds. The Long Point Area has amassed a bird checklist of 388 species with an impressive 176 species confirmed as breeding in the region. It is the home to the headquarters of both the Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) and Bird Studies Canada (BSC) and is fast becoming a world-famous birding and bird research destination.

In honour of the 50th anniversary of LPBO in 2010, BSC staffer and founding Ontario Field Ornithologists President Ron Ridout has produced a new birding guide to this exceptional area. Ron is uniquely qualified to produce such a guide, given his many talents as a birder, tour leader, biological consultant, photographer, artist and graphic designer. He has been birding at Long Point for 35 years and has lived in the area for 23 years. Few people know the area as thoroughly. This second edition of the birding guide to the Long Point area takes much inspiration from the first edition written by Bev Collier, Jeff Skevington and Terrie Woodrow in 1990, and greatly expands and thoroughly updates the information in a much more visibly pleasing and user-friendly design.



The book is bound with a spiral coil and has a folded back cover which can conveniently be used as a bookmark, much like the design of the popular American Birding Association's 'Lane Guide' series of bird finding guides. Inside the folding back cover is an excellent area-wide map which provides an overview of the 43 birding sites which receive extensive treatment. The book is well organized, with excellent introductory sections

on how to use the book, safety and security precautions, and useful internet sites dealing with birding, local weather and accommodations. Another section chronicles the typical birding year month-by-month. For those interested in 'green' birding options, there are sections on cycling routes and canoeing the Big Creek watershed.

The bulk of the book presents detailed information about the 43 birding sites that are profiled. Users will find it very handy (in the age of the hand-held global positioning system) that each site treatment begins with the UTM coordinates and Lat/Long for the entrance point to the site. Each site usually has a representative habitat photograph and an aerial photograph onto which suggested walking routes are overlaid. Most accounts point out particular 'Birding Tips' and routinely give very precise details about where specific target species may be found and frequently where past rarities have occurred. These site profiles also contain many practical 'Be Aware' tips on the specifics of land access and vehicle and personal safety that it would take one many trips to learn otherwise.

The book has a section on target species, wherein very precise and up-to-date information is given on the most likely locations to find each of 140 of the most sought after bird species in the Long Point area along with a synopsis of their local status.

The book ends by incorporating the Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of the Long Point Area (previously published separately by Vic Fazio, David Shepherd and Terrie Woodrow in 1985 and updated by Ridout, Fazio and Ian Richards in 2000). It has been updated to reflect the breeding status, relative abundance, and typical and extra-limital dates of occurrence for all bird species on the checklist. The frequency and occurrence bar charts are based on perhaps the best data set in the entire province and will be invaluable to both novice and very experienced birders alike. There is a treasure trove of information packed into these bar charts.

In summary, this birding guide is well organized, remarkably free of typographic errors, graphically eye-pleasing, and packed with up-to-date and precise information on where, when and how to find birds at Long Point. It is very easy and intuitive to use and I would recommend that it be an essential part of the toolkit for anyone making birding trips to the Long Point area regularly. For my money, this is the best example of a bird finding guide that has been produced for any locality in Ontario thus far. It is available from the Bird Studies Canada online store at: <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/shopping/shop.jsp>

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