

ONTARIO BIRDS



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Ontario Field Ornithologists

Ontario Field Ornithologists is an organization dedicated to the study of birdlife in Ontario. It was formed to unify the ever-growing numbers of field ornithologists (birders/birdwatchers) across the province and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among its members. The Ontario Field Ornithologists officially oversees the activities of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC), publishes a newsletter (*OFO News*) and a journal, (*Ontario Birds*), hosts field trips throughout Ontario and holds an Annual General Meeting in the autumn. Current President: Gerry Shemilt, 51 Montessor Drive, North York, Ontario M2P 1Z3.

All persons interested in bird study, regardless of their level of expertise, are invited to become members of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Membership dues are \$22.00 (Annual) or \$440.00 (Life Membership). All members receive *Ontario Birds* and *OFO News*. Please send memberships to: **Ontario Field Ornithologists, Box 62014, Burlington Mall Postal Outlet, Burlington, Ontario L7R 4K2.**

Ontario Birds

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The aim of *Ontario Birds* is to provide a vehicle for documentation of the birds of Ontario. We encourage the submission of full length articles and short notes on the status, distribution, identification, and behaviour of birds in Ontario, as well as location guides to significant Ontario birdwatching areas, book reviews, and similar material of interest on Ontario birds.

If possible, material submitted for publication should be double-spaced and typewritten. All submissions are subject to review and editing. Please submit items for publication to the Editors at the address noted above.

Table of Contents

Letter to the Editors	85
Articles	
Observations on the nesting habits of Red-shouldered Hawks in York Region <i>Peter Dent</i>	85
Cliff Hope at Attawapiskat Lake in 1939 <i>Ross D. James</i>	94
Red Crossbills feeding at mineral sources <i>Ron Tozer</i>	102
Recognizable Forms	
Subspecies of the Horned Lark <i>Ron Pittaway</i>	109
Notes	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher killed by entanglement on Burdock <i>A. David Brewer</i>	115
Additional records of birds caught on Burdock <i>Martin K McNicholl</i>	117
A probable Wood Duck x Ring-necked Duck hybrid in Ontario <i>Bruce M. DiLabio and Michel Gosselin</i>	119
White-throated Sparrow Scavenges Carcass of Conspecific <i>Anthony L. Lang</i>	122
Book Reviews	
Finches and Sparrows: An Identification Guide reviewed by <i>Ron Pittaway</i>	123
Birds of Tropical America reviewed by <i>Jim Wilson</i>	125
Photo Quiz	
Common Loon <i>Bob Curry</i>	126
Cover Illustration: Red Crossbill in White Pine by <i>Christine Kerrigan</i>	

Letter to the Editors

Bicknell's Thrush Identification

After reading Henri Ouellet's article *Bicknell's Thrush in Ontario* (*Ontario Birds* 11: 41-45), I looked at specimens of *bicknelli* in the collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences. The Academy has thirteen specimens, all collected during the breeding season. While all distinguishing characteristics mentioned are readily apparent when comparing birds in the hand, it seems to me that none would be reliably useful in the field.

Aside from size, the most reliable feature of the birds I looked at was the colour of the back and tail. However, some *minimus* specimens were just as brown as *bicknelli*. Other features, such as throat colour, were variable in both *bicknelli* and *minimus*, with a fair degree of overlap.

I find the illustration in the National Geographic Society's *Field*

Guide to the Birds of North America particularly misleading in that it shows extreme examples of plumages for both *minimus* and *bicknelli*, without describing the full extent of variation in either race.

Dr. Ouellet mentions, but does not emphasize, the difficulty in identifying this species in the field. Until more is known about *bicknelli*, the identification of individual birds in Ontario (or outside the breeding range) is probably best confirmed by measurements, or by direct comparison with birds in the hand. In short, *bicknelli* should not be identified in the field unless it is singing.

I thank Dr. Ross D. James for his comments on birds in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum.

David Agro
Academy of Natural Sciences
of Philadelphia

Articles

Observations on the Nesting Habits of Red-shouldered Hawks in York Region

by
Peter Dent

Introduction

The nesting habits of Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatus*) were studied on a casual basis in York Region in the vicinity of the Oak Ridges Moraine. This report embraces the observations of 46 nests used by what

were judged to be 20 different pairs over the last 14 years. It describes the habitat, annual nesting cycle, productivity and ecology of this colourful hawk, now considered "rare" in Ontario (Austen et al. 1994).