

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: Jean Iron, 9 Lichen Place, Don Mills, Ontario M3A 1X3 (416) 445-9297 (e-mail: jeaniron@globedirect.com).

All persons interested in bird study, regardless of their level of expertise, are invited to become members of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Membership rates can be obtained from the address below. All members receive *Ontario Birds* and *OFO News*. Please send membership inquiries 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.

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Cover Illustration: Le Conte's Sparrow
by *Ross D. James*

Letter to the Editors

Review Criticized

I was astonished by the lengthy review of Clive Goodwin's *A Bird-Finding Guide to Ontario* (*Ontario Birds* 13: 77-82). One page of review and five more mostly carping criticism.

By its very nature, an extensive guide for the whole of Ontario will be deficient in some respects. Dwelling on such defects to the exclusion of its obvious merits is destructive. Last minute revisions are impractical and expensive (ever built a house?). Clive Goodwin deserves great credit for producing a second edition after only 13 years -- Pettingill took 25!

After publication of the first edition, many birders wrote in with corrections and suggestions, all of which were graciously acknowledged by the author. Seemingly, the reviewer did not do likewise. Pity.

Birders visiting the United States seldom travel without their ABA Lane guides. Modern systematic lists with bar codes are far superior to the old four seasons system. Especially so with fast moving migrants (e.g. Fox Sparrow). Goodwin has taken much trouble with his systematic list and subjected it to review by none other than three of the province's top authorities: James, Weir and Ridout. I am glad he has followed ABA's example, and visiting birders will find

it invaluable (locals too) despite the reviewer's scepticism. Many other criticisms deserve rebuttal, but I will cite only two:

1. Lack of precise directions for locating Louisiana Waterthrush. *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario* classes this bird as "rare", with only three nesting sites being in any form of protected area. All other sites are on private land. *Ontario Birds at Risk* calls it "threatened". Need I say more?

2. Now for the hilarious Woodlawn/Woodland storm-in-a-teacup. Likely Goodwin was mislead here by using *local* sources. OFO's excellent "Bird Finding Guide #1: Birding in the Hamilton Area" in *Ontario Birds* 8 (3) has no less than three references to Woodlawn Cemetery. This guide was written by a Hamiltonian, but alas, his collaborator lived east of the dreaded Credit River! As Ed Mirvish might say, "a touch of humility" was needed here.

I suggest that most experienced, as well as novice, birders will welcome this second edition of *A Bird-Finding Guide to Ontario* and find it helpful, if only for hot-line birds in unfamiliar areas. I consider my money very well spent.

Gordon Bellerby
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Ontario