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Editorial Policy

Ontario Birds is the journal of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Its aim is to provide a vehicle for the documentation of the birds of Ontario. We encourage the submission of full length articles or short notes on the status of bird species in Ontario, significant provincial or county distributional records, tips on bird identification, behavioural observations of birds in Ontario, location guides to significant birdwatching areas in Ontario, book reviews and similar

material of interest on Ontario birds. We do not accept submissions dealing with "listing" and we discourage Seasonal Reports of bird sightings as these are covered by *Bird Finding in Canada* and *American Birds*, respectively. Distributional records of species for which the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) requires documentation must be accepted by them before they can be published in *Ontario Birds*.

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Editorial

Exotics on the Doorstep

In commenting on the first special issue of *Ontario Birds* (4:81-82; 1986), Ross James characterized northern Ontario as a frontier offering much to learn. We might expect the opposite of southern Ontario, where large numbers of people are crowded into the highly urbanized "Golden Horseshoe". We probably do know more about the population and distribution of birds in southern Ontario generally than in any other part of Canada. Nevertheless, much of the area we know well is man-altered landscape, and the comment by Bothwell and Hillmer (1988:1569) that "the history of Ontario's forests has been one of depletion" applies especially here, where special efforts are now required to secure what little remains of "Carolinian Canada".

A visit to Backus Woods (north of Port Rowan) in late May, June, or July has added Cerulean Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Golden-winged Warbler, and Blue-winged Warbler to numerous year, life, and Canadian lists within seconds of emerging from the vehicle. "Pishing" will soon bring Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Scarlet Tanager over to inspect the source of the noise. An hour of enduring the thousands of mosquitoes will easily add several more species regarded elsewhere in Canada as exotic southerners. Though Backus Woods probably represents much of

extreme southern Ontario's "natural" habitat, its 263 hectares is tragically our largest remnant of these magnificent forests.

When Thomas McIlwraith (1894) revised his *Birds of Ontario*, he still lacked any evidence of such Carolinian species as Chuck-will's-widow, Tufted Titmouse, White-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, and Kentucky Warbler even wandering into Ontario, let alone breeding. He included Acadian Flycatcher only speculatively, and was delighted to "introduce" readers to the Carolina Wren. Forty years ago, the finding of a Hooded Warbler nest near Orwell, Elgin Co. was a very special event. More recent surveys for the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, an extensive biological inventory of the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk, and some of the specific studies in this special issue of *Ontario Birds* all indicate that these species breed on a regular basis in Ontario, albeit at varying densities and over different expanses. These studies should not be regarded as final, but rather stimulate birders to explore further. Here we have the opportunity to not only document the northern limits of the ranges of several species, but also to study their interactions with more northern species where their ranges intersect and to document their responses to changing habitat.

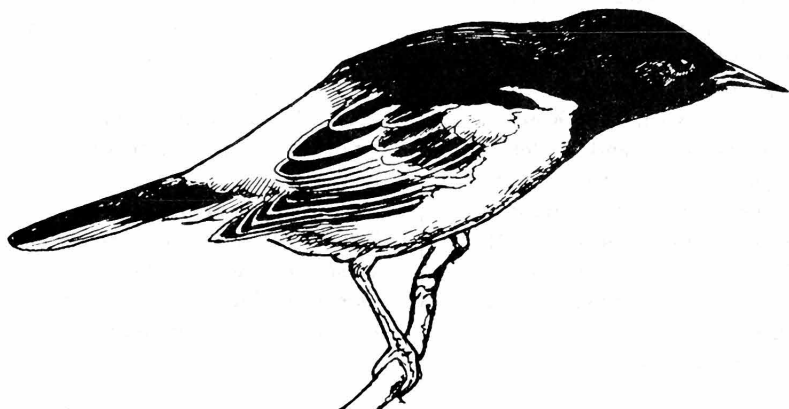
Some of the recent evidence of

higher populations than known previously undoubtedly reflects expansion of knowledge, but some also involves expansion of range. The Northern Cardinal is a classic example of a species that had expanded extensively into southern Ontario, but there are several other species that have undergone such an expansion (see reviews by Snyder 1957 and de Vos 1964). Forest depletion both in Ontario and on tropical wintering grounds (see review by Hutto 1988) is producing declines in populations of several species. Even where some forest is left intact, fragmentation-produced "edge" habitat often results in increased predation and/or parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbird. In Ontario, birders have an excellent opportunity to examine the dynamics produced by such changes in habitat and resulting interactions among species. Such studies are not only a pleasure to undertake, but also vital to our efforts to maximize species diversity and richness in a rapidly vanishing

habitat on the very doorstep of Canada's largest concentration of birders. And then there are the numerous questions one might ask concerning adaptations to the new urban and agricultural habitats that are replacing the pristine forests. May the publication of this special issue stimulate the greater exploration and study of both dwindling Carolinian habitat and the expanding habitats that replace it.

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Northern Oriole / drawing by Barry Kent MacKay

Letters to the Editor

In defence of the Long Point Company

Frankly, I found Tim Sabo's letter re "Closing of the Long Point Cuts" (*Ontario Birds* 6:12) to be more than a little disturbing. Amongst other things, I wonder whether *Ontario Birds* is really the proper forum for registering personal complaints — particularly when they can only worsen an already delicate situation. Mr. Sabo clearly should have addressed his concerns privately with the Long Point Company (LPC).

In any event, he should not have to be reminded that the LPC has provided an enormous service through its long stewardship and protection of Long Point and through its recent donation of an immense natural area to the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS). Moreover, the LPC has generously permitted the Long Point Bird Observatory access to portions of its land for use as a much-valued field station. Mr. Sabo presents a very unbalanced and distorted view of the LPC.

Judging from the tone of his letter, I am certain that Mr. Sabo loves Long Point, cherishes its solitudes, and is a thoughtful and careful naturalist. And I empathize with his "loss". However, the "Cuts" have come under increasingly heavy recreational pressure, despite the fact that CWS and LPC holdings have been clearly posted with "No Trespassing" signs for several years.

Beach "traffic" had increased enormously, to the point where there was visible damage occurring to the vegetation and sand dunes of an internationally significant natural area. Certainly, the solitude of which Mr. Sabo speaks was fast disappearing. Certainly, there was great potential to needlessly disrupt nesting gulls and terns (perhaps even a Piping Plover?), not to mention the loafing and feeding flocks of shorebirds and waterfowl.

Since access was impossible to regulate, the LPC had no other recourse but to completely prohibit it. After all, if you let in one well-meaning birdwatcher, why not let them all in? And how do you tell the well-meaning ones from the slob? What do you tell the masses of well-meaning picnickers, partyers, sun-bathers, and the just plain curious? The LPC's answer, while seemingly extreme, was rational, fair, and ultimately well-intentioned. Furthermore, as a private landowner, the LPC has every right, perhaps even an obligation in this case, to enforce the Trespass Act. Finally, Mr. Sabo failed to mention that in order to access the "Cuts", he first must trespass across CWS property.

Sadly, conservation measures in southern Ontario appear to be destined to become increasingly more severe as recreational pressures are further exerted upon natural areas. Birders, being part of the pressure, should not expect to somehow be