2010 Birds at Risk Surveys in Prince Edward County South Shore IBA, Ontario

Final Report

Produced for the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory

December 2010

David Okines

PEPTBO, PO Box 20055, Picton, Ontario, K0K 3V0 www.peptbo.ca.

Contents

INTRODUCTION 3
METHODS 4
RESULTS 9
Survey Effort 9
Point Counts 10
Nocturnal Survey 10
Incidental Observations 10
Species Summary 12
Species Diversity and Abundance 12
Whip-poor-will 12
Short-eared Owl 12
Black Tern 12
Least Bittern 12
Red-headed Woodpecker 12
Henslow's Sparrow 13
Common Nighthawk 13
Loggerhead Shrike 13
Bald Eagle 13
King Rail 13
Non-Priority Species that were also surveyed 14
Bobolink 14
Grasshopper Sparrow 14
Eastern Kingbird 14
Field Sparrow 14
Golden-winged Warbler 14
American Kestrel 14
Killdeer 15
Eastern Wood-pewee 15
Wood Thrush 15
Belted Kingfisher 15
Barn Swallow 15
Bank Swallow 15
Summary 16
REFERENCES 16

Figures

Figure 1: PECSS IBA 4
Figure 2: Location, stops and boundaries of section 1 5
Figure 3: Location, stops and boundaries of section 2 5
Figure 4: Location, stops and boundaries of section 3 6
Figure 5: Location, stops and boundaries of section 4 6
Figure 6: Location, stops and boundaries of section 5 7

Tables

Table 1: Survey efforts at each section surveyed in 2010 9
Table 2: Maximum number of birds counted during point counts in 2010 10
Table 3: Summary of stop results surveyed in 2010 10
Table 4: Status of priority species 11
Table 5: Status of non-priority species 11

2010 Birds at Risk Surveys in Prince Edward County South Shore IBA, Ontario

INTRODUCTION

Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory undertook baseline birds at risk surveys in and around the Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area (PECSS IBA) in 2010. This area includes diverse natural and cultural habitats that currently or previously supported populations of several bird species at risk.

The results of these surveys will clarify the current distribution and abundance of the ten target species in the PECSS IBA. This baseline information will also be useful in identifying species hotspots and habitat associations for future stewardship activities.

The objectives of the breeding bird surveys were:

1) To establish an appropriate sampling framework (sample points and protocols) to survey for bird species at risk in the PECSS IBA area
2) To conduct targeted field surveys for at least ten bird species at risk in the PECSS area
3) To distribute the survey data to relevant stakeholders
4) To work with landowners and other local stakeholders to promote appropriate habitat stewardship activities to benefit SAR in the IBA and elsewhere in Prince Edward County
5) To develop a work plan for continuing and expanding birds at risk stewardship activities beyond 2010, including additional surveys, partnership development, and public outreach.

This report contains a summary of the results of these breeding bird surveys carried out by David Okines in June and July 2010 in the PECSS IBA shown on Figure 1.

Several announcements were made to the media regarding these surveys –

- Terry Sprague, the county naturalist, prepared a newspaper article for inclusion in the Picton Gazette (see Appendix A) on the upcoming surveys.
- Terry Sprague e-mailed his entire list of over 500 contacts asking for any sightings of the listed species to be sent to David Okines (see Appendix B).
- An article was also written for posting on the PEPTBO website (see Appendix C).

A Landowner letter was prepared and carried in the event that entry to private property was needed to do further SAR searches; in the end this form was not required but is attached as Appendix D.

The 2001 – 2005 Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, *The Birds of the Kingston Region, 2nd Edition*, and *The Birds of Prince Edward County, 2nd Edition* were consulted for records of past breeding in the county.

Figure 1: PECSS IBA

METHODS

David Okines, an experienced field ornithologist, was contracted to undertake this project for the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory after the funding was secured in June 2010. All fieldwork was carried out in June and July 2010. The weather for the surveys was considered optimal; for each visit there were light winds and only one or two stops having some precipitation.

The PECSS IBA was broken down into five areas for easier recording purposes. Existing roads were used to determine the boundaries of the five areas. Each area contained 14 to 16 sampling points spaced at 1km intervals.

These areas are referred to in the report and database as:

1) **Section 1** - South of Royal Road and west of Lighthall Road to the western and southern shorelines. (Figure 2)
2) **Section 2** – South of Royal Road to the southern shoreline and all areas between Lighthall Road to the west and Brewers Road to the east. (Figure 3)
3) **Section 3** – South of County Roads 10 and 13 to the southern shoreline and all areas between Brewers Road to the west and the north/south section of Babylon Road to the east. (Figure 4)
4) **Section 4** - South of County Road 13 to the shoreline except the eastern section of Babylon Road and includes all areas along Babylon Road and west of the southern section of Whattams Road. (Figure 5)
5) **Section 5** - South of County Road 13 to the shoreline and includes the eastern section of Babylon Road and all areas east of the southern section of Whattams Road to the tip of Point Traverse. (Figure 6)

Figure 2: Location, stops and boundaries of section 1

Figure 3: Location, stops and boundaries of section 2

Figure 4: Location, stops and boundaries of section 3

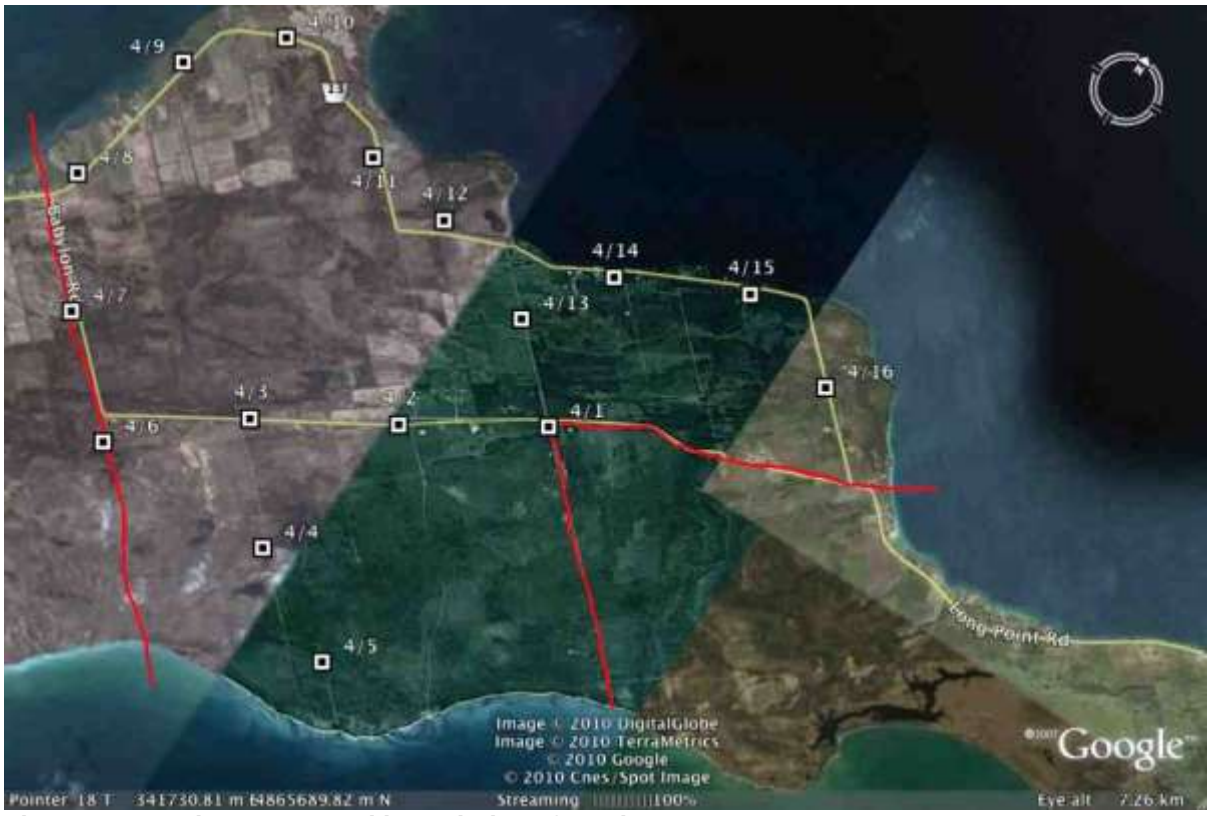

Figure 5: Location, stops and boundaries of section 4

Figure 6: Location, stops and boundaries of section 5

An early morning visit (05:00 to 10:00) was made to each stop. An evening visit (17:00 to 21:30) was carried out for the evening crepuscular activity before the birds went to sleep for the day. In June, a nocturnal visit (after sunset with a full moon, between 1st and last quarter and under favourable weather conditions) was also carried out at all stops to detect crepuscular and nocturnal bird activity, particularly Whip-poor-will. A second round of visits occurred at least 10 days after the first visit. Birds were surveyed using fixed-point counts at one-kilometre intervals along the existing roadways and tracks, as described below. Incidental observations of significant and unusual species observed during visits were also recorded. In addition to the ten target species, observations were also taken on 12 other species that will be coming up for review in the future.

Point count locations were identified prior to the field surveys to ensure systematic coverage of the entire area. The stopping points were strategically located along the extensive network of access roads and trails within the PECSS IBA at approximately 1km intervals.

The point count surveys were standardized by each stop having a one-minute listening period for all the species being surveyed at that point. This was then followed by a one-minute period when a tape recording was played for each of the species likely to be found at that point. After the initial tape was played, and for each subsequent species that was being tape lured, the observer moved a few metres (10m) down the road to listen and look for the species (that had previously been playing) for a period of three minutes for each species. To help save time at each stop the listening and looking period for the various species often overlapped with each other. At each stop, the number of birds seen or heard in each of the cardinal directions (N, S, E, W) was recorded separately for both the initial listening period and after the tape had been played. See below for an example of the total time spent for a typical stop where Field Sparrow (FISP), Eastern Kingbird (EAKI), Grasshopper Sparrow

(GRSP) and Bobolink (BOBO) were present or suspected to be present. (Assume a starting time of 10:00am).

Time / Action	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	08-09
Passive listening	X							
Playing FISP		X						
Listening for FISP			X	X	X			
Playing EAKI			X					
Listening for EAKI				X	X	X		
Playing GRSP				X				
Listening for GRSP					X	X	X	
Playing BOBO					X			
Listening for BOBO						X	X	X

The nocturnal survey was conducted by listening from the roadside at each stop for a period of 5 minutes. Playback was used. The nocturnal surveys followed the diurnal protocol that was used earlier in the day.

An attempt was made to distinguish “duplicates” (birds heard on previous point count) during each survey. All survey data including effort details, weather conditions, and observations were entered into a spreadsheet (electronic copy provided with report).

All records of Barn and Bank Swallows were of birds foraging or sitting on wires and were not necessarily breeding at that location.

RESULTS

Survey Effort

Survey effort at the five sections during the survey periods totalled 76.06 hours.

Table 1: Survey efforts at each section surveyed in 2010

Section	Survey	Date	Time In	Time Out	Duration (HH:MM)	Comment
1	Morning survey 1	25-Jun-10	05:45	09:03	3:18	
2	Morning survey 1	26-Jun-10	06:00	08:42	2:42	
3	Morning survey 1	27-Jun-10	06:15	09:39	3:24	
4	Morning survey 1	28-Jun-10	05:50	08:53	3:03	
5	Morning survey 1	24-Jun-10	05:50	08:52	3:02	
1	Evening survey 1	25-Jun-10	19:00	22:09	3:09	
2	Evening survey 1	26-Jun-10	18:22	21:39	3:17	
3	Evening survey 1	27-Jun-10	18:12	21:36	3:24	
4	Evening survey 1	28-Jun-10	18:15	21:18	3:03	
5	Evening survey 1	24-Jun-10	18:15	21:17	3:02	
1	Nocturnal survey	25-Jun-10	23:57	02:03	2:06	
2	Nocturnal survey	25-Jun-10	21:45	23:51	2:06	
3	Nocturnal survey	27-Jun-10	23:35	00:59	1:24	
4	Nocturnal survey	28-Jun-10	21:45	00:16	2:31	
5	Nocturnal survey	24-Jun-10	21:45	00:04	2:19	
1	Morning survey 2	14-Jul-10	06:42	09:52	3:10	
2	Morning survey 2	13-Jul-10	08:25	09:59	1:34	Part section
2	Morning survey 2	14-Jul-10	05:10	06:49	1:39	Part section
3	Morning survey 2	13-Jul-10	05:05	08:29	3:24	
4	Morning survey 2	12-Jul-10	08:03	11:06	3:03	
5	Morning survey 2	12-Jul-10	05:10	08:12	3:02	
1	Evening survey 2	14-Jul-10	18:30	21:38	3:08	
2	Evening survey 2	13-Jul-10	19:40	21:14	1:34	Part section
2	Evening survey 2	14-Jul-10	17:00	18:37	1:37	Part section
3	Evening survey 2	13-Jul-10	17:00	20:24	3:24	
4	Evening survey 2	12-Jul-10	16:10	19:03	2:53	
5	Evening survey 2	12-Jul-10	19:03	22:15	3:12	
1 - 5	Nocturnal survey	13-Jul-10	21:30	0:04	2:34	10 stops

Table 2: Maximum number of birds counted during point counts in 2010

		Section #					
Species		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Whip-poor-will	Caprimulgus vociferus	26	18	17	24	16	**101**
Short-eared Owl	Asio flammeus						**0**
Henslow's Sparrow	Ammodramus henslowii						**0**
Common Nighthawk	Chordeiles minor						**0**
Least Bittern	Ixobrychus exilis		3	1			**4**
Black Tern	Chlidonias niger	3	5				**8**
King Rail	Rallus elegans						**0**
Bald Eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus		2	1			**3**
Loggerhead Shrike	Lanius ludovicianus						**0**
Red-headed Woodpecker	Melanerpes erythrocephalus			1			**1**
Bobolink	Dolichonyx oryzivorus	19	57	36	61	33	**206**
Grasshopper Sparrow	Ammodramus savannarum	6	7	3	3	1	**20**
Eastern Kingbird	Tyrannus tyrannus	33	36	31	36	38	**174**
Field Sparrow	Spizella pusilla	14	13	23	20	28	**98**
Golden-winged Warbler	Vermivora chrysoptera						**0**
American Kestrel	Falco sparverius	3	1	1	3	2	**10**
Killdeer	Charadrius vociferus	5	3		2	1	**11**
Eastern Wood-pewee	Contopus virens	5	3	4	3	2	**17**
Wood Thrush	Hylocichla mustelina		1	5	1		**7**
Belted Kingfisher	Ceryle alcyon	2	4				**6**
Bank Swallow	Riparia riparia		6				**6**
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	89	233	49	79	60	**510**
Total Individuals		**205**	**392**	**172**	**232**	**181**	**1182**
Species Total		**11**	**15**	**12**	**10**	**9**	**16**

Point Counts

A total of 2519 target individuals of the 22 species were detected at the 76 stops (Table 3). Several of the staff at Bird Studies Canada were consulted for help with the protocol.

The abundance and frequency of occurrence by section of all species detected during the point counts are summarized in the attached excel workbook.

Table 3: Summary of stop results surveyed in 2010

Stop Results	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5
Number of Stops	14	15	16	15	15
Total target Individuals	205	392	190	233	187
Number of target species	11	15	12	10	9
Total other targeted Individuals	176	364	152	208	165
Number of other targeted species	9	11	8	9	8

Nocturnal Survey

Only one nocturnal species, Whip-poor-will, was detected during the nocturnal survey. A maximum of 101 Whip-poor-wills were heard from the roads.

Incidental Observations

A few additional notable species were detected during the surveys including:
Upland Sandpiper (2 pairs, Section 1, Stop 9), Peregrine Falcon (adult male, Section 2, Stop 15), Virginia Rail (adult +12 young, Section 2 Stop 3), Black-bellied Whistling Duck (on a small pond, Section 3, between Stops 13 and 14). Red-headed Woodpecker (although outside the study area this record should be included anyway) one seen on the May 24 long weekend about 1km east of Northport, PEC, by Bill Woods, 1643B County Road 15, Picton, ON (613-476-4286) bdwoods88@gmail.com.

Table 4: Status of priority species

Species	Scientific Name	Code	SARO Status	SARA Status	COSEWIC Status
Whip-poor-will	Caprimulgus vociferus	WPWI	Threatened		Threatened
Short-eared Owl	Asio flammeus	SEOW	Special Concern	Special Concern	Special Concern
Henslow's Sparrow	Ammodramus henslowii	HESP	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered
Common Nighthawk	Chordeiles minor	CONI	Special Concern	Threatened	Threatened
Least Bittern	Ixobrychus exilis	LEBI	Threatened	Threatened	Threatened
Black Tern	Chlidonias niger	BLTE	Special Concern		Non At Risk
King Rail	Rallus elegans	KIRA	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered
Bald Eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	BAEA	Special Concern		Non At Risk
Loggerhead Shrike	Lanius ludovicianus	LOSH	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered
Red-headed Woodpecker	Melanerpes erythrocephalus	RHWO	Special Concern	Threatened	Threatened

Table 5: Status of non-priority species

Species	Scientific Name	Code	SARO Status	SARA Status	COSEWIC Status
Bobolink	Dolichonyx oryzivorus	BOBO	Threatened		Threatened
Grasshopper Sparrow	Ammodramus savannarum	GRSP			COSEWIC Candidate
Eastern Kingbird	Tyrannus tyrannus	EAKI			COSEWIC Candidate
Field Sparrow	Spizella pusilla	FISP			COSEWIC Candidate
Golden-winged Warbler	Vermivora chrysoptera	GWWA	Threatened	Threatened	Threatened
American Kestrel	Falco sparverius	AMKE			COSEWIC Candidate
Killdeer	Charadrius vociferus	KILL			COSEWIC Candidate
Eastern Wood-pewee	Contopus virens	EAWP			In Preparation
Wood Thrush	Hylocichla mustelina	WOTH			In Preparation
Belted Kingfisher	Ceryle alcyon	BEKI			COSEWIC Candidate
Bank Swallow	Riparia riparia	BANS			Under Review
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	BARS			In Preparation

SPECIES SUMMARY

Species Diversity and Abundance

Whip-poor-will

Whip-poor-wills breed in dry pine or deciduous woodland with the nest placed on the ground. The birds sing at night from mid-May until early July. The best conditions for singing are calm, clear, warm nights with a full moon (or from 1st to last quarter) from late May onwards; singing decreases into July.

Whip-poor-wills were detected on 57 of the 75 stops in the first survey period (in June). This species seems to be surviving quite well in the red cedar scrub.

The second survey period was too late for whip-poor-wills, the top ten stops from the first round in June were surveyed again in July but only two birds were heard calling. Ideally in the future the first survey should be done in late May and the second survey done in June.

Short-eared Owl

Short-eared Owls breed in grassy fields; the nest is placed on the ground.
Short-eared Owls have bred in the past along Babylon Road (Section 4, Stop 2).

No Short-eared Owls were detected on this survey however.

Black Tern

Black Terns breed in flooded marshes; the nest is situated on a mound (e.g. Musk Rat mound) or on floating vegetation.

Black Terns were found at 3 stops.

This species may well be underestimated.

Least Bittern

Least Bitterns breed in dense cattails.

Least bitterns were detected at three locations; all had dense cattail marshes associated with them.

This species may well be underestimated.

Red-headed Woodpecker

Red-headed Woodpeckers breed in dead trees and prefer the edges of woods or scattered trees; areas flooded by beavers are also favoured.

One Red-headed Woodpecker, a juvenile, was seen on a dead tree at Section 3, Stop 12. This bird probably moved into this area after dispersing from its natal area elsewhere in the county. (see also Incidental Observations, P10)

Henslow's Sparrow

Henslow's Sparrows breed in hay meadows or sedge meadows. The nest is placed on or near the ground. In the past Henslow's Sparrows have been suspected of breeding at Prince Edward Point NWA where birds have been known to summer in the mid 1970's.

19 stops contained habitat that may be suitable for Henslow's Sparrows.

No Henslow's Sparrows were found on the surveys.

Common Nighthawk

Common Nighthawks are scarce during the breeding season in the county; they are not known to nest within the PECSS IBA.

No Common Nighthawks were found on the surveys.

Loggerhead Shrike

Loggerhead Shrikes need grassland areas with scattered hawthorns or scattered red cedars for breeding. Very little suitable habitat remains for this species. The only two areas that are now suitable are those in Section 4, Stop 2 and Section 3, Stop 8. Loggerhead Shrikes used to breed at Prince Edward Point NWA in the 1970's and 1980's.

No Loggerhead Shrikes were seen on this survey.

Bald Eagle

Bald Eagles last nested in Prince Edward County (@ Prince Edward Point) in 1938. This species is increasing in the Kingston area and may nest again in the county in future years.

Three young of the year were seen, two at Section 2, Stop 6 and another at Section 3, Stop 14. They were all suspected of having been dispersals from the nests near Kingston.

King Rail

King Rails require large areas of cattails for breeding.

Five of the stops had habitat that may have been suitable for King Rails.

No King Rails were detected during the surveys.

Non-Priority Species that were also surveyed

The following 12 species are species that are due to come under consideration for status review in the future. It was decided that these species should also be surveyed at the same time to provide a baseline of data for future reference should these species become listed.

Bobolink

Bobolinks require areas of tall grass for nesting such as hay meadows; grass that is cut too early in the summer can drastically reduce breeding success.

Bobolinks were detected at 37 of the stops with a minimum of 246 individuals being counted. Stops with more than 20 birds detected were – Section 2, Stop 14, Section 4, Stop 2, Section 4, Stop 8 and Section 4, Stop 13. The peak count at a stop was 29.

Grasshopper Sparrow

Grasshopper Sparrows prefer open short grass habitat that contains some longer grasses (i.e., grazed fields).

It was recorded at 14 of the 76 stops. 23 birds were recorded with only one of the stops having three or more birds present. Best stop was Section 1 Stop 11. Sections 1 and 2 had approximately twice of the numbers of the other sections.

This species is probably more abundant. Having the stops closer together would provide a better idea of abundance.

Eastern Kingbird

The Eastern Kingbird is a species that prefers open areas with scattered shrubs for nesting.

It appears abundant, being recorded at 73 of the 76 stops. 198 birds were recorded with 39 of the stops having three or more birds present. The best stop was Section 4 Stop 2. All sections had similar numbers present.

Field Sparrow

The Field Sparrow is a species that prefers scrubby areas to open fields.

It appears plentiful, and was recorded at 59 of the 76 stops. 113 birds were recorded with 13 of the stops having three or more birds present. The best stop was Section 5 Stop 1. Sections 1 and 2 had approximately two-thirds of the numbers of the other sections.

Golden-winged Warbler

The Golden-winged Warbler is a species that prefers scrubby to woody areas.

No birds were detected on this survey.

American Kestrel

The American Kestrel is a species that prefers open areas provided suitable nesting habitat is present.

It was recorded at 11 of the 76 stops. 15 birds were recorded with 4 of the stops having two birds present. Each section had 1 to 3 birds present.

Killdeer

The Killdeer is a species that prefers open areas, with or without standing water present.

It was recorded at 9 of the 76 stops. 12 birds were recorded with 1 of the stops having three birds present.

Several members of the public had noticed that there were fewer birds present this year.

Eastern Wood-pewee

The Eastern Wood-pewee is a species that prefers woodland or woodland edges.

It was recorded at 16 of the 76 stops. 16 birds were recorded with each of the stops having only one bird calling. Each of the section had 1 to 5 birds present.

Wood Thrush

The Wood Thrush is a species that prefers dense woodland.

It was recorded at 7 of the 76 stops. 7 birds were recorded with each of the stops having only one bird singing. Sections 2 and 4 had one bird present and section 3 had five birds singing.

Belted Kingfisher

The Belted Kingfisher is a species that prefers open areas of water that contain suitable banks for nesting in.

It was recorded at 3 of the 76 stops. 6 birds were recorded with 2 of the stops having only one bird present and the other had 4 birds present. Only section 1, stops 1 and 2 had birds present.

Barn Swallow

The Barn Swallow is a species that prefers open fields or marshes; they nest in barns, houses, sheds or under bridges.

It was recorded at 62 of the 76 stops. 575 birds were recorded with 11 of the stops having ten or more birds present. Best stop was Section 2 Stop 6, which was a marshy area; the birds were probably going to roost there. With the exception of the roost stop, each section had similar numbers present.

Bank Swallow

The Barn Swallow is a species that prefers open marshes; they nest in colonies in banks.

It was recorded at only 2 of the 76 stops. 8 birds were recorded with 2 birds present at one stop and 6 present at the other. Both stops had an area of open water. Best stop was Section 2 Stop 6, which was an area that had been flooded.

SUMMARY

PECSS IBA has long been an area that does support or has supported in the past several species at risk.

With the lack of farming in the area, the habitat is now returning to red cedar scrub and filling in to the point where the habitat of some of the species is becoming scarce, i.e. Bobolink. Some of the species are doing reasonably well at the moment, i.e. Whip-poor-will. Other species such as Field Sparrow are holding steady. However, some species have already been lost as breeders, i.e. Loggerhead Shrike and Henslow's Sparrows. With all these species we have no idea how many pairs there were or how many have been lost due to habitat change over the last 30 years.

The work this summer has collected some baseline data. However, because bird populations are dependent on many variables, several more seasons of data collection would ensure the reliability of the data collected. Also, it might be better to concentrate our efforts on just a few species at a time, e.g. Whip-poor-will, Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrow. As a result of this year's survey, it is recommended that Whip-poor-wills be surveyed at the same stops as on this survey as they can be heard for long distances and the stops are adequately spaced. However, the Bobolinks and Grasshopper Sparrows should be surveyed in all fields where they might be found. It was felt that more birds could have been found within the IBA if more frequent stopping points were identified.

In short we need to collect a larger baseline data set in order to have a better idea of the populations and status of these species within the PECSS IBA. Further, there should be repeat surveys at regular intervals of every five years.

REFERENCES

COSEWIC. 2009. COSEWIC assessment and status report on the Whip-poor-will *Caprimulgus vociferous* in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Ottawa.
(www.sararegistry.gc.ca/status/status_e.cfm).

Weir, R.D. 2008. Birds of the Kingston Region, 2nd Edition. Kingston Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 831, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 4X6

R. Terry Sprague, Ron D. Weir. The birds of Prince Edward County. 2nd Edition. 1984. Kingston Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 831, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 4X6

Cadman, M.D., D.A. Sutherland, G.G. Beck, D. Lepage, and A.R. Couturier (eds.). 2007. Atlas of Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005. Bird Studies Canada, Environment Canada, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and Ontario Nature, Toronto, xxii + 706 pp.

Appendix A. OUTREACH – Website

Special Project at PEPtBO - Species at Risk Survey

During the summer of 2010, David Okines, PEPtBO's bander-in-charge and station manager conducted a baseline birds at risk survey in and around the **Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area** (PECSS IBA). This area includes diverse natural and cultural habitats that currently or previously supported populations of several bird species at risk. The results of these surveys will clarify the current distribution and abundance and identify species hotspots and habitat associations of the ten target species in the area.

Short-eared Owl *Photo© Bruce Parker*

The Ten Target Species	
Whip-poor-will	Short-eared Owl
Black Tern	Least Bittern
Red-headed Woodpecker	Henslow's Sparrow
Common Nighthawk	Bald Eagle
Loggerhead Shrike	King Rail

In addition to the ten-targeted species, David also was collecting baseline data on twelve other species in the IBA that are due to have their status reviewed by COSEWIC in the future.

Bank Swallows *Photo© Rosemary Kent*

COSEWIC Future Review Species	
Bobolink	Grasshopper Sparrow
Eastern Kingbird	Field Sparrow
Golden-winged Warbler	American Kestrel
Killdeer	Eastern Wood Pewee
Wood Thrush	Belted Kingfisher
Bank Swallow	Barn Swallow

Data from the baseline surveys will be provided to the Natural Heritage Information Centre and shared with relevant stakeholders particularly the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Point Petre Provincial Wildlife Area and Ostrander Block) and Canadian Wildlife Service (Prince Edward Point NWA). It will be used to develop a work plan for continuing and expanding birds at risk stewardship activities beyond 2010, including additional surveys, partnership development, and public outreach.

Funding for this project is being provided by the Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, a fund established by the Ministry of Natural Resources to stimulate and enhance investment in species at risk protection and recovery.

Appendix B. OUTREACH – Newspapers

SURVEY TO DETERMINE SPECIES AT RISK

The Picton Gazette, Thursday, July 15, 2010

If you walk the trails at Prince Edward Point this month, you will be entangled in webs and covered in spiders. Unlike May when these same trails were bustling with birders from across Ontario and Quebec, there is a noticeable stillness now, isolated sprigs of prickly ash leaning in toward the centre of the trail, the paths now thick with invasive dog strangling vine. At the banding station, bird banding will not resume for another month when volunteers will arrive to mow the net lanes and access paths preparatory to the fall season, and the daily census as part of the Migration Monitoring Network becomes active again. July and August traditionally are the months when activity, both human and bird-wise, is at its lowest ebb.

However, this summer, Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory bander in charge David Okines, is back on site after barely a month's sabbatical. His mission? To collect baseline information of those birds within the South Shore Important Bird Area (IBA) that have been identified as "species at risk." High on his list will be whip-poor-will, short-eared owl, least bittern, black tern, Henslow's sparrow and red- headed woodpecker.

A "species at risk" is any naturally occurring plant or animal in danger of extinction or of disappearing from the province. Once classified as "at risk", they are added to the Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) List. Sometimes called the "endangered species list", the SARO list is actually much broader and during the summer David will be looking at additional high priority species in that category as well, including common nighthawk, bald eagle, loggerhead shrike and the king rail. Funded with support from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, the collection of data from the IBA will be taking place throughout this month.

The birding and banding expert explains that one of the purposes of the survey is to develop a work plan for continuing and expanding birds at risk stewardship activities beyond 2010, including additional surveys, partnership development and working with landowners to promote appropriate habitat stewardship activities that will benefit species at risk in the IBA and elsewhere in Prince Edward County.

"The South Shore Important Bird Area which includes all the area from Royal Road south and from Point Petre east to Prince Edward Point previously supported populations of these species at risk that we are targeting. We want to clarify their current status within our IBA," says David Okines.

Fieldwork, says Okines, will consist of passive point counts along the existing road system, but additional targeted off road surveys in priority habitats will be conducted, where landowner permission is obtained. However, much of the area included in the survey is public land and includes the Point Petre Provincial Wildlife Area, the Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area and the Ostrander Point Crown Land Block. The south shore of Prince Edward County represents one of the largest stretches of relatively undeveloped shoreline along the north shore of Lake Ontario. The area boasts significant numbers of migrating, wintering and breeding birds. A report on the breeding birds in 2000 concluded that the identified IBA is an ideal area for conservation and management practices that can enhance habitat for birds and other wildlife.

David Okines is seeking public input regarding any species in the above list that may have been observed in an effort to get a better handle on the current status to complement the work he is doing this month. The reports of sightings would ideally have the date they were seen, the number of individuals observed, and the location as near as possible (road name and civic address number would be ideal). He says the first 10 species are his priority, but would welcome sightings on species like bobolink, golden-winged warbler, eastern wood-pewee, wood thrush, bank swallow, grasshopper sparrow and field sparrow, just to name a few of the additional species in which he is interested. Sightings may be e-mailed to davidokines@aol.com . Those without e- mail can submit the information to me, and I will forward it on.

Once all the surveys have been completed and any data from the public have been incorporated into the effort, David will be summarizing his results in a detailed report. This report will include the GPS coordinates for all observations and sighting reports in a format suitable for use in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and will be incorporated in the Natural Heritage Information Centre database. With the entire south shore area facing constant development pressure, it is important that these natural heritage features be identified.

Appendix C. OUTREACH – E-mail

David Okines, the bander in charge at the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory, has asked me to send out the following request to birders on my listserv regarding a Species at Risk survey he is undertaking in the south of the County.

David is doing field surveys of the below species in the Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area with support from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund. The data collected is to form a baseline data set of these species in the IBA and he would like information on sightings of all these species seen during June and July and which have been seen in the area from Royal Road and south, and from Point Petre to Prince Edward Point proper. The reports of sightings would ideally have the date they were seen, the number of individuals seen and the location as near as possible (road name and nearest 911 # would be ideal). The first 10 species are his highest priority, but records of the other species would be very welcome as well.

You can e-mail David at davidokines@aol.com with the details of any sightings.

Whip-poor-will
Short-eared Owl
Henslow's Sparrow
Common Nighthawk
Least Bittern
Black Tern
King Rail
Bald Eagle
Loggerhead Shrike
Red-headed Woodpecker

Bobolink
Golden-winged Warbler
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Wood Thrush
Bank Swallow
Barn Swallow
Grasshopper Sparrow
American Kestrel
Belted Kingfisher
Field Sparrow
Killdeer
Eastern Kingbird

Thank you for any information that you can provide

- Terry Sprague

Appendix D. OUTREACH – Landowner Permission Form

Landowner Permission Form

☐ I agree to allow the PEPTBO staff and/or representatives to visit my property for the purpose of conducting species at risk monitoring surveys during June and July of 2010. The legal address of my property is:

Roll #
Lot Description
First Name Last Name
First Name Last Name
Municipality
County

Owner Name: _____ Signature:_____

Date: _____

If you agree to allow a PEPTBO agent to visit your property, please provide additional contact information

Phone Number: _____ Email address: _____

OR

☐ I do not give permission for PEPTBO staff to visit my property at this time.

Owner Name: _____ Signature:_____

Date: _____

Please indicate if you would like additional information:

I would like _____ following the study. YES ☐ NO ☐

Comments: _____

(Please use reverse side if more space for your comments is needed.)

Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory (PEPTBO) will be conducting field surveys in the Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area to help improve our understanding of biodiversity in this Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area. This project is an initiative of PEPTBO with support from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund.

A representative from PEPTBO hopes to visit a number of sites throughout the Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area to update and collect new information on species at risk. This new knowledge and information will be added to the database and will be used to support conservation planning for the Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area. The data will also be submitted to the OMNR/Natural Heritage Information Centre to support conservation planning at the provincial level.

As a landowner and an important Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area stakeholder, we hope that you will support this work by allowing the PEPTBO biologist to visit your property to study its natural features. A typical survey involves a walk throughout your property by the PEPTBO field biologist to search for the species being monitored. Surveys will be conducted during the summer of 2010 and range in length depending on the size of the property, but are generally less than an hour. The PEPTBO biologist will make every effort to not cause any damage and will be very respective of your property, crops and livestock. If a rare or at risk species is encountered, it is an indication of a healthy and diverse ecosystem and shows that your current farming practises are working perfectly for the birds. PEPTBO is willing to provide a summary of the findings of your property to you, the landowner, if requested.

An access permission form is attached to this letter and we hope that you will take the time to complete and return the form. Please be assured that your personal information will remain confidential and a survey will only be conducted if you grant us permission to access your property.

If you have any questions about the survey, please feel free to contact Rosemary Kent at phone 613-476-0065. Rosemary Kent is working on behalf of PEPTBO to coordinate landowner contacts and the fieldwork for this project.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and your ongoing stewardship of the natural heritage of the Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area.

Sincerely