

# Prince Edward County South Shore IBA 2016 Caretaker Report



Prepared by Peter Fuller  
Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory  
December 2016

## Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird and Biodiversity Area

The IBA is on the south shore of Prince Edward County between Point Petre and Prince Edward Point.

- It includes approximately 26 square kilometres of land and 65 square kilometres of near shore waters.
- It encompasses about 30 kilometres of shoreline, one of the only lengthy, undeveloped strip of shoreline remaining along Lake Ontario
- Prince Edward Point was designated an International Monarch Butterfly Reserve in 1995
- It is important for concentrations of migrating birds, bats and butterflies and also supports several rare vascular plants.
- The waters off the tip of the peninsula are an important waterfowl staging and wintering area, for Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck and White-winged Scoter. Other waterbirds regularly recorded in large numbers include Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser and Red-breasted Merganser.
- Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory became official caretaker of the IBA in 2012



(Waterfowl Blitz Team – April 2/16)



## Survey Areas



PEtBO has established 9 sample survey blocks (green areas) that are visited during spring migration, breeding season, fall migration and winter. A series of point-count stops have been set up along Army Reserve Road, Babylon Road and County Rd 13. Waterfowl observation points have also been set up around the shoreline (W1, W2, etc.)





## Waterfowl Blitzes

Using the IBA Protocol on eBird, PEPTBO organized 4 Waterfowl Blitz counts in 2016.



(Horned Grebe)



(Greater Scaup and Redhead)

## Bobolink Banding in the Miller Family Nature Preserve

(by Cheryl Anderson)



Bobolink banding at the Miller Family Nature Reserve started on Saturday August 13 and went until Saturday September 3, 2016. The nets were set up in an H configuration similar to the set up used at PEPTBO. The banding regimen also was similar to that used by PEPTBO that is, nets were opened at sunrise for four hours. A Bobolink call lure was used to attract the Bobolinks to the nets. We used the portable shelter that was purchased with the Stark Family Fund grant as a banding lab. Banding duties were carried out by master bander Cindy Cartwright. Volunteers were Cheryl Anderson, Peter Fuller, Allen Kuja,

Joanne Sulzenko and Helene Tremblay.

We were unable to band on four days due to rain, and closed early on three other days due to high winds and billowing nets which put the birds at risk for wing strain and other injuries. We also had to turn down the volume on the lure on 4 occasions due to the high volume of birds being attracted and the absence of enough volunteers to extract them quickly from the nets.

Bobolinks were heard and observed in the early morning when Cindy and the volunteers arrived on-site to open the nets at sunrise. The majority of the Bobolinks captured and banded occurred within the first hour of luring. During this time period, the highest numbers of Bobolinks in flight were also observed.



A total of 543 Bobolinks were banded over the 17 days of banding. We also banded 54 other birds of 20 species. Four Bobolinks that had been banded at PEptBO in previous years were recaptured – three that were banded in 2014 and one in 2015. Five Bobolinks were banded and recaptured at the Miller Reserve five or more days later. In addition two Bobolinks were recaptured at PEptBO after being banded several days earlier on the Miller Reserve. This, admittedly sparse,

data shows us that the Bobolinks do stay around on the South Shore for some period of time feeding, resting up and waiting for an appropriate time to make the Lake Ontario crossing on their way to their wintering grounds in Argentina.

The monitoring at the Miller Family Nature Reserve is part of activities funded under the Habitat Stewardship Program of Environment Canada. The project titled Birds at Risk Stewardship in the Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area includes education and outreach activities and avian surveys through the Important Bird and Biodiversity Area. Bobolink monitoring in the Miller Reserve was considered a great success and shows the importance of protecting important natural habitat. Monitoring work at locations like this is essential for conservation work on this and other endangered species and is an important part of PEptBO's mandate. The Bobolink monitoring will continue at the Miller Reserve in 2017.



(Merlin)

## Other Initiatives in 2016

We conducted a Whip-poor-will survey during breeding season in June along County Rd 13, Babylon Rd. and Army Reserve Rd. From 26 stops we detected 46 individual birds (and one Chuck-will's-widow). Density was very high along Babylon Rd.

Two volunteers kayaked in the large marsh between Lighthall and Charwell Point Rd to prepare for some Least Bittern monitoring in 2017. We easily located a number of Bittern in addition to many other wetland species.

The ERT hearings concerning the proposed wind turbines at Ostrander Point finally reached a resolution in 2016 with approval for the project revoked. We celebrated with Prince Edward County Field Naturalists and all those who worked so hard for many years. The Tribunal concerned with the White Pines Wind Project continues with a possible resolution in 2017 (updates are available from the Alliance to Protect Prince Edward County:

<https://appec.wordpress.com/>)

We trained some volunteers to do monitoring for migrating Common Nighthawk and Rusty Blackbird in the fall.



We held 2 free workshops in the fall, one for fall warbler identification and one for waterfowl identification.

Two Christmas Bird Counts covered parts of the IBA and we were able to add winter species lists to our data.

Highlights from this

year included large flocks of American Robin and Cedar Waxwing, and smaller numbers of Eastern Bluebird, Rusty Blackbird, Bonaparte's Gull, Purple Finch, Greater Black-backed Gull, Bald Eagle, and Turkey Vulture.



(Eastern Bluebird)



(Charwell Point)



(Lighthall Marsh)



## Volunteer Hours in 2016

| <i>Date</i>     | <i>Event</i>   | <i>Volunteers</i> | <i>TOTAL HOURS</i> |
|-----------------|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| Feb to Dec      | Block Surveys (Gravelly, Helmer, Duetta, Charwell, Lighthall, Simpson, Ostrander, Pt. Petre) | 18                | 108.75             |
| Apr 2           | Waterfowl Count (whole IBA)  | 15                | 45                 |
| May 20          | SBF Night walk (Brewer's Rd)   | 1                 | 1                  |
| Jun 13          | Breeding Evidence Survey (Simpson, Lighthall, Charwell blocks)                               | 6                 | 29.5               |
| Jun 18          | Whip-poor-will Survey  | 2                 | 6                  |
| Jun 20          | LEBI survey (Lighthall)  | 2                 | 4                  |
| Jun 25-26       | PECFN Bioblitz at Little Bluff CA  |                   | N/A                |
| Aug 9           | LEBI survey (Lighthall)  | 2                 | 6.5                |
| Aug 13 to Sep 3 | Bobolink banding in Miller Family Nature Preserve  | 5                 | 70                 |
| Aug 23, 25, 26  | CONI survey (various)  | 4                 | 9                  |
| Oct 3           | Waterfowl Count (whole IBA)  | 8                 | 28                 |
| Oct 24 -25      | RUBL survey (Pt. Petre, Lighthall, Simpson blocks)   | 3                 | 6                  |
| Nov 5           | Waterfowl Count (whole IBA)  | 11                | 38.5               |
| Dec 1           | Waterfowl Count (whole IBA)  | 6                 | 24                 |
| Dec 17          | PEC CBC (coverage of east end)   | 6                 | 12                 |
| Dec 20          | Sandbanks CBC (coverage of west end)   | 12                | 15                 |
|                 | <b>TOTAL HOURS</b>   |                   | <b>420.25</b>      |

## Thank you to our wonderful volunteers for 2016

|                                 |                  |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Cheryl Anderson                 | Krys Baklinski   | Ian Barker       |
| Amy Bodman                      | Mike Burge       | Paul McKenzie    |
| Kathy Felkar                    | Sheila Kuja      | Peter Fuller     |
| Michael Gelman                  | Mike Parry       | Wallace Rendell  |
| Helene Tremblay                 | Kellianne Martin | Brian Durell     |
| Gloria Durell                   | Ketha Gillespie  | Pat Peterson     |
| Rick Edgar                      | Ellen McFaul     | Steve Leonard    |
| HanneLise Simoes                | Ayman Rizk       | Ali Giroux       |
| Mark Read                       | Janice Grant     | Allen Kuja       |
| JoAnne Sulzenko                 | Terry Sprague    | Cindy Cartwright |
| Belleville Birding Group (BABA) |                  | 2016 CBC Teams   |

(photos donated by Peter Fuller, Cheryl Anderson, Rick Edgar, Ian Barker, Helene Tremblay, Jeff Haffner)



(Waterfowl Blitz Volunteers)



(Golden Eagle)



(Viceroy)



(Lake Ontario)