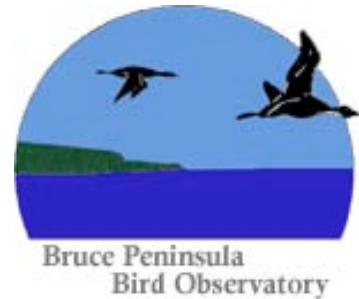


BPBO Beakon

Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory
PO Box 189 Tobermory, ON, NOH 2TO



Volume 04, Number 01

March, 2004

BPBO Raffle A Success!

Congratulations are in order for three supporters of BPBO. On November 1st, 2003, Marion R. Rothman of Richmond Hill, Chris Stone of Tobermory, and Rosemary Jeffries, a cottager in Tobermory, each won a beautiful print in the first raffle fundraiser ever conducted by BPBO. Marion won a print of the Cabot Head lighthouse, donated by Willie Waterton. Rosemary now has a beautiful photograph of a lush forest scene donated by BPBO Board Member, Doug vanHemessen. Chris was the lucky recipient of a photo of a Great Grey Owl, donated by BPBO Vice-President Ethan Meleg, and he has graciously donated his prize back to BPBO to be used in a future fundraiser. In total, BPBO's raffle raised just over \$1400.00 toward upgrades to Grebe Lodge (see inside for more details), and general operations at the observatory.

Framing and advertising for the draw were donated by FotoArt in Owen Sound. The Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory would like to thank FotoArt for donating their services, and for displaying the photos prior to the draw. BPBO would also like to thank those who supported the efforts of the observatory by buying or selling raffle tickets last fall. Your support will contribute to the continuing efforts of BPBO to monitor and protect the birds of the Bruce Peninsula. Thank-you!



Marion R. Rothman Accepts Raffle Prize
from BPBO Board Member, Deb Diebel

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Don't Forget to Mark BPBO's AGM On Your Calendars!

Saturday, April 17, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Visitor Centre, MacGregor Point Provincial Park

Join the board and members of the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory at their **Annual General Meeting** and get a jump on spring birding at MacGregor. Take part in the business meeting, find out about our bird highlights in 2003, and hear about our exciting plans for the research station. **Ethan Meleg** will lead a bird hike, **Ted Cheskey** and **Rod Steinacher** will do a bird banding demonstration, we will be honouring a valued volunteer, **Marion Mosolf**, and we're working on more additions to the program including a keynote speaker. Start off your spring birding with the experts! Join us for an interesting day with BPBO. Bring your lunch. Beverages will be provided.

BPBO Honours Volunteer, Former Treasurer ... **Marion Mosolf**

As we come to the end of yet another fiscal year, BPBO members have a very special person to acknowledge. Marion Mosolf has been a volunteer with BPBO since its inception, and served as BPBO's Treasurer from 2001 to 2003. During this time, Marion was able to piece together the accounting of the initial years of BPBO (not an easy task!) and create a logical accounting system, balancing our books and completing two year-end reports.

Marion, has always been interested in nature, but it was not until she was able to retire and move to Inverhuron that she became specifically interested in birds. Sitting and looking out the window at the birds at her feeder was enough to pique Marion's interest, and she went out and bought her first pair of binoculars and bird identification guides. Marion began accompanying local birder, Cindy Cartwright on birding excursions, soaking up as much as she could about the birds she was seeing. During one of these excursions Marion met Audrey Heagy, a veteran bander who was experimenting with migration monitoring at the Cabot Head Lighthouse. Audrey told Marion of her hopes that the "two cottages across the Basin" could one day serve as a bird observatory. Marion credits Audrey and Cindy with setting the wheels in motion in the initial phases of setting up the observatory. For her part, Marion spent countless hours cleaning up the cottages to make them habitable. It was also Marion who convinced the Huron-Fringe Field Naturalists to support efforts to replace the roof on Grebe Lodge (then known as the Glass House). Those who spend time volunteering and working at the observatory know and love Marion most for her efforts to feed its inhabitants with her yummy cuisine!

Marion's contributions to BPBO have been invaluable, and are very much appreciated by the board and membership at large. Marion has left her post as Treasurer, but remains a strong supporter for BPBO and dedicated volunteer. We take this opportunity to acknowledge her efforts, and thank Marion for her continued dedication to bird conservation and monitoring on the Bruce Peninsula. We also invite members to join us at the April 17th AGM to publicly acknowledge Marion and the work she has done on our behalf.

News from the Board

By Edward Cheskey

Station Volunteers Needed

Cabot Head Research Station needs you!! BPBO depends on volunteers. Board members are volunteers, who meet regularly throughout the year and set policy and direction for BPBO. Our treasurer and committee members are volunteers. Volunteers have joined work parties to clean up and repair the two cottages, and regularly help in different aspects of our operations. Most critically, we need volunteers to work with our Field Ornithologist/ Bander-In-Charge to monitor birds. It is most helpful to us if this person or these people are birders, capable of identifying most birds by sight and sound. If you think that you could contribute to BPBO in some capacity, as described above, please contact Ron Baker at ronbakerbpbo@sympatico.ca.

New Agreement With Ontario Parks Means Bright Future at Cabot Head

BPBO has recently officially entered into official agreement with Ontario Parks regarding stewardship and responsibilities for the buildings and facilities at the Cabot Head Research Station (CHRS) and on the Cabot Head Nature Reserve. BPBO is now the primary user of this facility. We are very fortunate to have a strong and very positive relationship with Ontario Parks, and look forward to a bright future at Cabot Head.

Fundraising Update - Corporate Sponsorship Campaign Underway

By Noreen Steinacher, BPBO Fundraising Committee

Fundraising is an essential ingredient in the work of non-profit organizations like BPBO, no matter what the focus of their activities. Tapping into and getting a commitment from a cross-section of sponsors, donors and funders is a challenge, but our organization is on track with the task.

In February, BPBO began its 2004 circulation of the new BPBO Sponsorship prospectus to businesses and companies in Owen Sound and area, which will be followed by a contact/mailout to businesses on the Bruce Peninsula.

Members of the committee, including Lorraine Brown, Doug van Hemessen and Noreen Steinacher along with Ethan Meleg will be making follow-up calls to the business community over the next few months. If there are leads or useful contacts within our membership or newsletter circulation groups which would further our efforts, please contact one of us.

BPBO continues scanning and writing proposals to foundations and other scientific/environmental granting organizations to receive funds, and planning events as well as appealing to our membership for support. We'll keep you posted.

Grebe Lodge Ready for 2004 Season!

By Ron Baker

BPBO is happy to inform members of the progress made to prepare Grebe Lodge, formerly known as the "Glass House", for the upcoming season. The larger of the buildings at the station has now been made habitable, and by May will be ready for occupation by groups for educational and research purposes. Under a Memorandum of Understanding with Ontario Parks BPBO now has the opportunity to utilize the buildings on the site as a source of funding for the maintenance of the site and to fund the activities of BPBO.

The Board is excited by the prospect of utilizing the facility and at the same time securing a sustainable source of funding. The Board has laid down guidelines to ensure that activity at the site does not interfere with Migration Monitoring or impact adversely on the environment of the nature reserve.

The lodge will accommodate small parties (10-12 depending on the time of year) for a minimum charge of \$250.00 per night or \$25.00 per person per night, whichever is greater. Universities and colleges have indicated an interest as have several naturalist, art and photographic organizations.

There are a few items we still need to fully equip the Lodge. Donations of any of the following items would be gratefully accepted:

Shower Curtains and Rods	Easy Chairs
Sofas	Computer Desk
Garbage Cans	Cooking utensils
Cutlery	Dishes
Pots and Pans	

Please contact us if you can donate any of these items, know of possible sources, or if you can transport items to the station on our behalf.

Park Stewards for Cabot Head Research Station

By Norah Toth

Interested in experiencing the Bruce Peninsula first hand; while at the same time helping nature? The Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory is offering a Park Steward program at the Research Station in Cabot Head Provincial Nature Reserve. Spend a week this summer enjoying the rustic setting, appreciating the pristine, isolated location and spending some time performing a number of volunteer duties which include minor maintenance, recording observations and providing information to boaters and others using the property.

Be a volunteer who accepts rough cottage facilities and is willing to spend time as a paying volunteer. Formerly co-ordinated by Ontario Parks, this program is now administered by the Bird Observatory. Please contact Ron Baker with any inquiries at your earliest convenience.

Bruce Peninsula Winter Birding Update

By Ethan Meleg

Winter birding on the Bruce Peninsula is highly varied from year to year, depending on whether or not there is an invasion of winter finches and northern owls. This winter seems to be a fairly quiet one. Common Redpolls are the exception – they are fairly abundant, with small flocks making the rounds of feeders, and with the odd Hoary Redpoll mixed in. Other winter finches seem to be absent, although a few Pine Grosbeaks were reported in December. No Great Grey Owls or Northern Hawk Owls have turned up on the Bruce this year, which reflects what is going on throughout southern and central Ontario. Invasions of northern owls are not an annual occurrence - they seem to happen every few years, and a big invasion, like the one that occurred about 7 years ago, is much more rare. A couple of Snowy Owls have been seen in southern Bruce County, but none have been reported yet this winter on the Ferndale Flats.

The Christmas bird counts held in December on the Bruce Peninsula (at Tobermory, Wiarton and Owen Sound) produced average totals both for number and diversity of species. Two unusual species turned up on the Tobermory count: Harlequin Duck (2) and Black-backed Woodpecker (1). Overall, this was a record year for Red-necked Grebes on peninsula counts. A whopping 71 were found on the Tobermory count, smashing the previous total.

With spring just around the corner, and days getting longer, you can expect an increase in bird activity. Great-horned Owls are hooting away already, and it won't be long before Northern Cardinals are singing. Early migrants such as Horned Larks and Red-winged Blackbirds will be back soon. So dust off your binoculars, and brave the last blast of winter. It won't be long now before the warm days of spring bring back colourful migrants!

Upcoming 2004 Red-necked Grebe Survey

By Rod Steinacher

The Red-necked Grebe is BPBO's "signature" bird, appearing prominently on our new logo. The original reason behind the Cabot Head area first being identified as an Important Bird Area was the concentration of grebes staging in the waters along the Dyers Bay shore each spring. Monitoring of the spring numbers over the last three years have confirmed that hundreds of Red-necked Grebes do, in fact, use this area each year, although numbers vary significantly from year to year.

In order to gather consistent data, a set route along the shoreline, from the dock in Dyers Bay to the lighthouse at Cabot Head, is followed twice weekly from the end of March to early May. Surveyors stop for 10 to 15 minutes at each of five specific stations, scanning the bay with binoculars and spotting scopes, and recording their observations. This provides thorough coverage of the population of the several species of water birds that are usually present. In the past, it has usually taken surveyors between 1.5 and 2 hours to complete the route, plus any driving time necessary to get to and From Dyers Bay. At the end of the season, the data is compiled and analyzed.

Over the past three years, a variety of birders, both local and living off the Bruce Peninsula, have participated. They all share the ability to identify water birds, often by their

profile on the water or their flight characteristics, and the enjoyment of collecting data in the field. It is hard to imagine a more beautiful place to gather information!

This spring two birders, who have participated in the survey for each of the past three years, are offering training sessions for any one who would like to “learn the ropes” of conducting a Red-necked Grebe survey. Join Ethan Meleg (emeleg@bmts.com) (519) 596-2879) on Wednesday, April 7 or Rod Steinacher (rstein@golden.net) 519-745-6215) on Saturday, April 10 at the Dyers Bay Dock at 10:00 am, weather permitting. Gale force winds, “high seas”, and/or driving rain will not allow adequate surveying to be completed.

This is your opportunity to participate in an important and rewarding BPBO project, possibly continuing with you completing a future survey on your own. What a great way to actively contribute to your BPBO!

Coming Events....

BPBO AGM MacGregor Provincial Park April 17, 2004

Huron-Fringe Birding Festival May 28 - June 6, 2004

Bruce Peninsula Birdathon May 21, 2004

So many species and so little time! If a day of birding on the Bruce Peninsula during the peak of spring migration, with a bit of friendly competition mixed in sounds good to you, then Friday, May 21 is it! A handful of birders will be doing their Baillie Birdathons that day on the Bruce, as a fundraiser for Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory (BPBO) research. Sure birders will be trying to one-up each other for species totals, but it's really just a fun day in the field raising money for a good cause. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to participate. Mark Wiercinski and Ethan Meleg welcome challengers to try to beat their 2002 Bruce Peninsula big day record of 162 species! For more info, feel free to contact Ethan at emeleg@bmts.com.

BPBO Workshops

BPBO is proposing to run three weekend workshops run by BPBO members in the upcoming months. On May 15 –17 Ted Cheskey will lead a **banding/birding** weekend. Registration is limited and preference will be given to members of BPBO. The cost of the weekend, food and accommodation is \$300.00. Al Woodhouse has volunteered to lead a **butterfly and moth** weekend in the summer and Ethan Meleg will be offering one of his popular **nature photography** courses in the fall. Details of these will follow in subsequent newsletters, and on our website. We are grateful to these friends of BPBO for offering their services.

To register or for more information – contact Ron Baker at ronbakerbpbo@sympatico.ca

Wendy Durante Joins Us As BPBO's New Treasurer

Wendy and her husband, Lou, have a cottage in Dyers Bay and are both outdoor enthusiasts and amateur birders involved in the Breeding Bird Atlas. She is the Controller

for Naylor Engineering Associates Ltd. in Kitchener and lives in the K-W area. Wendy learned of the BPBO while attending a presentation given by Ethan Meleg. She and fellow kayakers were provided an unexpected opportunity to visit the BPBO station after strong winds forced her party ashore while kayaking the North shore last summer. In return for the generosity shown to them at the station that day, Wendy later volunteered her services as Treasurer.

New Fund-Raising Brochure Printed and Distributed

We've enclosed a copy of BPBO's new 4-page, full-colour sponsorship brochure. A major mailing of this brochure went out to 250 corporations in Grey and Bruce in January. Members of the fund-raising committee subsequently followed up with phone calls. Our goal is to find local corporations that might consider BPBO as a favoured charity.

Future mail-outs are planned for NGOs, foundations, and individuals.

If you know of an organization or individual that might want to offer financial support to BPBO, please e-mail the information to Noreen Steinacher, nsteinacher@gto.net.

Kid's Korner

Hey Kids! Spring migration will be starting soon..... be sure to keep your eyes peeled for spring migrants! Until then, get out your field guides, and see if you can figure out what these common feeder birds are!



BPBO operates with donations and grants from a variety of sources. Throughout the year, requests are sent out for funds to buy nets, tools and other supplies that cannot be donated and are needed to carry out our research projects. We are grateful for the support of organizations such as the Trillium Foundation of Ontario, the Ontario

Ministry of Natural Resources Protection and Enhancement Fund, Ontario Parks, Ontario Bird Banding Association, Canada Trust Friends of the Environment, the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund, the Bluewater District School Board, and the Canadian Nature Federation. Many individuals have helped by donating specific items we need.

Much of the research done by BPBO is completed by volunteers, but we need a qualified master bander to oversee the migration monitoring research. While we have been fortunate to have received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to ensure operations in 2002 and 2003, this grant has run its course. This year, we may have to rely on the generosity of individuals and businesses to fund the balance of our operations. You can help by making a donation, or notifying a board member of potential funding sources.

Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory Board, 2002-2003

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Noreen Steinacher Fundraising	63 Van Camp Avenue Kitchener, N2M 1J1	(519) 745-6215 rstein@golden.net