

Ontario Bird Banding Association  
Newsletter  
April 1973

April Meeting

The April Meeting will be held at Kontright Park, Guelph. Meet at the Park at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 14th. We will be given a tour of the research area, which should prove to be very interesting, it always seems this way when you can get "behind the scenes" so to speak.

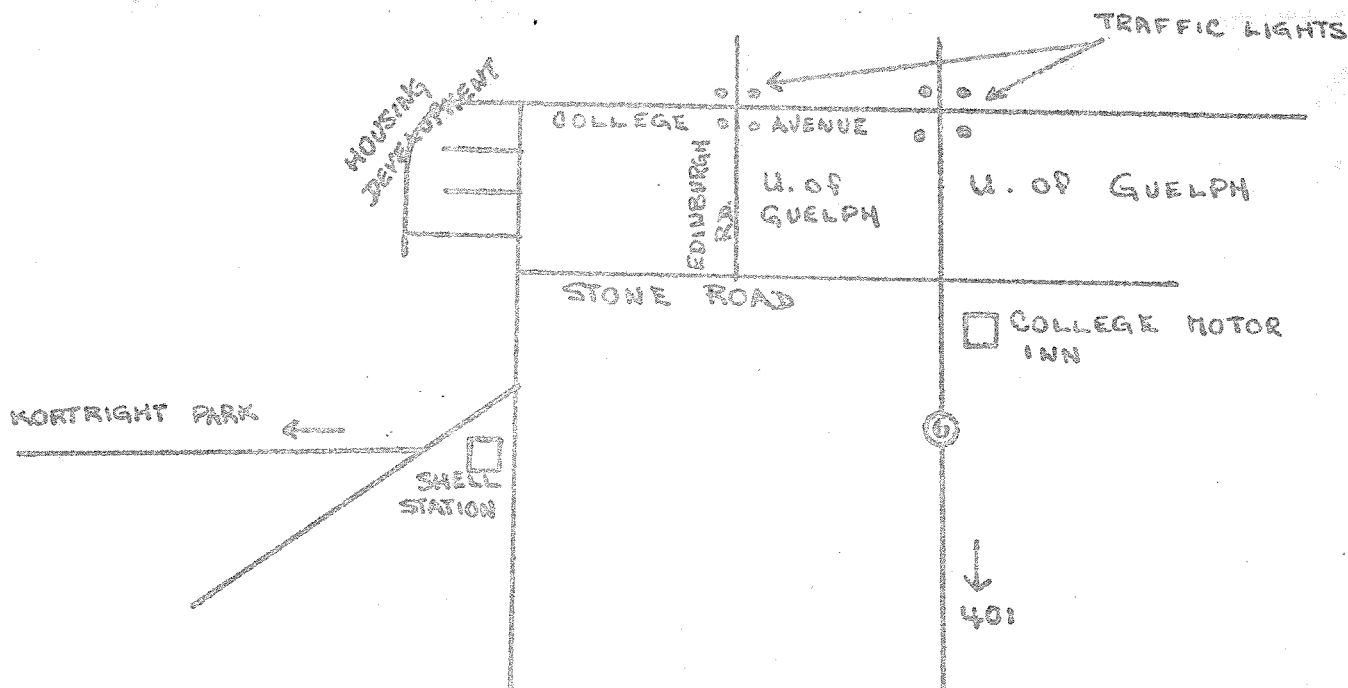
This will be the first 'field' outing of the year, so please try to attend and make it a good one.

May and June Meetings

To give you some idea of what will take place on the next two meetings, here is the rough outline of what has been planned.

May — Wye Marsh, Midland (90 miles north of Toronto) 10 a.m. Bring a canoe if possible, but come anyway, even if you don't have a canoe, as there are several good nature trails the Window on the Marsh, the Nature Centre, and for those who are interested in history, the village of Ste. Marie Among the Hurons is within walking distance of the Marsh. There are camping facilities in the town park and several good motels if anyone would like to make a weekend out of the trip and possibly take a boat ride to Beaverliek Is. the following day. May 25, meet at 10 am at the Marsh. More details in next Newsletter.

June — Luther Marsh. Again David Brewer will guide us around the Luther Marsh looking for Wilson's Phalarope, etc. Bring your own canoe. Meet at 10 a.m. but please let David know if you plan to attend, this way he may be able to tell you if there is a vacant seat in someone's canoe... write to him at 277 Arthur St. N., Guelph. This will be held on Saturday, June 16. 10 a.m.



reimbursed one dollar per egg for their trouble.

The number of eggs collected in on a sea will not be sufficient to harm the local population. Captive birds are, of course, given the best possible care.

### Black Tern Banding

At the Annual General Meeting in February, Marshall Field told of his success during the last breeding season with banding whole families of black terns.

Those with access to a cove and a marsh may wish to try your own project with Black Terns, using the following description of the traps and method used by Marshall as a guide...

"The traps are constructed from 1"x1" or 1"x2" welded wire mesh 18" high for the sides and 1" chicken wire with a 6" x 10" hole for the top. I constructed six cages, which would seem to be all one person could handle at one time. The traps are 18" in diameter.

A cove was used to locate the nests which are constructed on floating rafts of cattails. On May 21, nests were located with one, two and full clutches of three eggs. About May 24 would seem to be an appropriate date to start trapping at this latitude (Long Point)

The method I used was to place the trap over the nest and allow about one hour to elapse before coming back to check. With a little luck, both parents can be taken on the first try. Rings of 1/2" hardware cloth 6-10" high 18" in diameter can be used placed around the nest and will contain the young when hatched for banding. The tarsus of the young tern is sufficiently large to take a band without slipping over the foot. Care should be taken not to try and band on days when it is cold enough to chill the eggs.

Colour marking of the young and adults would make it possible to observe the dispersal after the nesting season. If the nests were plotted, it would be possible to check the homing instinct of the pairs in the selection of future nesting sites."

### Long Point Bird Observatory Headquarters Planned Near Port Rowan

The L.P.B.O. is planning to set up a Headquarters in the Backus Conservation Area, about 2 miles north of Port Rowan. The use of a large house, known as the Backus Homestead, has been offered to LPBO by the owners, the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, provided that the Observatory can find the means to have the house restored.

The house is attractively situated on a hill overlooking the historic Backus Mill, which was built in 1798 by John Backhouse, one of the early pioneer settlers of Norfolk County. Unfortunately the house was built of a friable sand brick, which has resulted in slumping of the walls, and extensive renovations will be necessary to make the building habitable. The LPBO is working with the Conservation Authority to raise the necessary funds to undertake the restoration.

If everything goes according to plan it is hoped that the house will be ready for occupation as the LPBO Headquarters in the spring of 1974. The building will provide office and laboratory space, a library-study area, and some temporary accommodation for short-term visitors. A banding programme is planned and there will be a special banding room in the laboratory area. Banders will be needed to man the programme and easy access to the area will also provide good opportunities for prospective banders to gain experience.

A suggestion from Harold Richards has brought up the idea of renting a rear-view screen for the display and he has also lent some of his slides.

Surely some of you take pictures of the birds you band? Any clear, interesting picture of a bird (in the hand or otherwise) would be appreciated. So far, I have slides of the following to give you some idea: a hummingbird, a Northern Shrike, a white-headed Starling, a banding kit, wings of Am. Goldfinches, showing plumage differences between male and female adult and immature.

140 slides are needed to fill a carousel. Please try to help if you can.

If you pencil your name on the frame and send a list of the slides you are lending, I will keep careful record and return them as soon as possible after the meeting. Even one or two slides would help (more if you have them though!)

Mail them to me, Jayne Evans, at P.O. Box 551, Midland, Ont. L4R 4L3.

### The Snipes

Monograph No. 5, *The Snipes* by G.L.M. Tuck, 432 pages, 14 1/2 tables and figures; illustrated in colour and black and white. Price \$7.25 (Cat. No. W65-7/5). Available from your bookseller or from Information Canada. Mail orders from Information Canada, 171 Slater St., Ottawa. Enclose a money order or cheque made out to the Receiver General of Canada.

### How Snowy Owls Stay Warm

Nature Canada Oct./Dec. 1972.

According to J. Gessaman of Utah State University, Logan, Utah, the plumage of snowy owls is a better insulator than that of any other bird studied, and is equivalent to the pelage of other arctic animals such as arctic fox and Dall sheep. Writing in the *Journal of Arctic and Alpine Research* Vol 4 pp 223-238 (1972), Gessaman shows that snowy owls can survive at lower temperature than have been recorded in North America. Owls in general have low metabolic rates than many animals, and the snowy's diet of lemmings has 16% more food energy than the diets of temperate-zone owls. Snowy owls need 4-7 lemmings per day to stay alive, so they cannot remain in the Arctic in winter unless lemmings are abundant. The snowy owl is the largest owl, and this too helps in the Arctic environment as its body surface area, through which heat is lost, is smaller in proportion to the volume of its body than in small animals; hence the rate of heat loss is reduced. The combinations of adaptations to cold climates and high energy food enable the snowy owl to live under arctic conditions.

### Membership Dues

Those of you who have not yet received your membership card for the current year have not paid your dues. Please mail them as soon as possible to the secretary.

Name.....  
Address.....  
City..... Prov./State..... Postal Code.....  
Student \$2. (under 18 yrs.) Associate \$5 Husband and Wife \$7

Miss Jayne C. Evans, Secretary, P.O. Box 551, Midland, Ont. L4R 4L3.