



Field Guides Tour Report

Point Pelee Migration Spectacle 2019

May 11, 2019 to May 18, 2019

Jay VanderGaast

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



The American Redstart is a common breeding bird in Ontario, as well as a common migrant. We had quite a few of these gorgeous birds, including this very pretty male that posed for guide Jay VanderGaast.

Spring migration at Point Pelee is always something of a crap shoot. Though the first couple of weeks of May always have something going on, you can never be sure of what you might get until you arrive. But there are things you can always be sure of: there will always be birds, and it will always be fun! This year's tour found us arriving at the park in between big migration pushes, so there wasn't a lot of movement during our three days there. There were plenty of birds though, and many of the birds that were around stayed put, so we had multiple chances to track them down. There was also plenty of variety, even if overall numbers of warblers were quite small, and by the end of the first day there, we had already picked up looks at 20 different warbler species, most of which were at eye level, and often at point blank range. This total included beauties like Bay-breasted, Cape May, Blackburnian, Prothonotary, and Blue-winged. We ended up seeing most of these 20 species over and over again in the next couple of days, really getting the chance to get to know them. Plus we also added a handful of new species, including two trip highlights: close, eye level views of a gorgeous male Prairie Warbler, a rare migrant here, and even closer views of a male Canada, which even perched on my foot for a moment! That bird actually was voted bird of the trip by the group.

But it isn't only warblers that make Pelee special, as there are plenty of other wonderful things to enjoy there. One of the most memorable experiences came on our first afternoon, shortly after we'd arrived in Leamington. Learning of a roosting Chuck-will's-widow in the park, we decided to go for it, and came away with excellent views of that bird, a rare vagrant to Canada, a lifer for most, and a country tick for me! And after enjoying the Chuck-will's-widow, we went on to track down both a roosting Eastern Whip-poor-will and a Common Nighthawk, giving us an unexpected nightjar hat trick! It was kind of hard to top that, but other memorable Pelee moments included the evening flight display of American Woodcocks right outside our hotel, a lovely Piping Plover on a beach in Leamington, a roosting Eastern Screech-Owl that we got in the nick of time before a Red-breasted Nuthatch spooked it back into its roost hole, a bold Sora scarfing down a huge earthworm just a couple of meters away, and locally rare White-eyed Vireo and Yellow-breasted Chat, both of which showed remarkably well.

Migrational movement picked up again the day we left Pelee, and the next couple of days gave us a taste of what a fall out is like. At Rondeau we had another 20 warbler day, including our first Tennessee and our only Orange-crowned, plus Red-headed and Red-bellied woodpeckers, Tufted Titmouse, Brown Creeper, a stray Summer Tanager, our only Lincoln's Sparrow, and the long-staying vagrant White-winged Dove. Things picked up even more at

Long Point the following day, when we had our single best warbler total of the tour, both in species numbers (23) and on overall numbers. Just at the tiny wood lot at Old Cut, we counted over 100 individuals of 18 species! This push mostly featured warblers we'd already seen well, though we did pick up our first Blackpoll Warbler there, plus both Philadelphia and Yellow-throated Vireos. Elsewhere in the region, we added stellar views of Hooded Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush, Grasshopper Sparrow, Virginia Rail, and many others. My trip highlight also came that day with the sighting of a beautiful Eastern Hognose Snake in Backus Woods, a long-awaited lifer for me.

We ended the trip by heading north, first to the shores of Lake Ontario, where Long-tailed Duck, Red-necked Grebe and a surprise Fish Crow were among the best finds, and then on to the lovely Carden Alvar (with a stop at the impressive lift locks along the way). The Carden area is one of my favorite birding areas in the province, and it came through once again with things like American Bittern, Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Towhee, and Bobolink, not to mention our final warbler species of the tour the gorgeous Golden-winged, #29! All in all it was a fun week of migration birding, and I had a great time spending that week with all of you. There were a lot of great birds, and a lot of great laughs along the way, and the only thing I can think of to have improved it was by making it longer! Thanks for joining me, and I hope to see you all again soon.

--Jay

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – Seen daily, including many pairs with goslings, particularly at Hillman Marsh. [N]

MUTE SWAN (*Cygnus olor*) – A couple were seen in passing at Big Creek NWA, but the hot spot was at Cranberry Marsh, where there were at least a dozen of these introduced beauties. [I]

TRUMPETER SWAN (*Cygnus buccinator*) – A lone bird in a stubble field near Hillman Marsh had been hanging around in the area for a while. Not a common bird in the area. Elsewhere, we had just one pair at Cranberry Marsh. [I]

WOOD DUCK (*Aix sponsa*) – We had flybys of this duck both at Pelee and Rondeau, but never really got a clean look at them.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Spatula discors*) – Pairs were at several wetland sites, with our highest number being just 4 at Hillman Marsh.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*) – Four birds at Hillman Marsh.

GADWALL (*Mareca strepera*) – The most numerous duck at Hillman, with about 1 dozen of them there. Our only other sighting was of a pair at Cranberry Marsh.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Mareca americana*) – About half a dozen in the shorebird cell at Hillman.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – By far the most commonly seen duck, recorded most days.

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK (*Anas rubripes*) – Apparently pure American Black Ducks are increasingly rare nowadays, so it wasn't surprising that the one we saw at Cranberry showed a small swatch of green on the sides of its head, indicating it had at least a little Mallard DNA, too.

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – A handsome drake at Cranberry was our only one for the trip.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – A lone drake at Hillman and a pair at Cranberry.

REDHEAD (*Aythya americana*) – We scoped a fairly distant pair at Hillman--our only ones for the tour.

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*) – John spotted our only one, a drake, at the Port Rowan Wetlands.

GREATER SCAUP (*Aythya marila*) – A flock of 20 or more birds were seen daily off the west side of Point Pelee. On one day I did pick out a lone male Lesser Scaup among them, but wasn't able to convincingly show anyone in the scope.

SURF SCOTER (*Melanitta perspicillata*) – A group of southern California birders with whom we had just chatted alerted us to this bird's presence off the west side of Point Pelee, and we were able to enjoy some good scope views of this bird, a drake, which is uncommon in the area.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER (NORTH AMERICAN) (*Melanitta deglandi deglandi*) – John was also the one to pick out our lone White-winged Scoter amidst a group of Greater Scaups at Pelee.

LONG-TAILED DUCK (*Clangula hyemalis*) – Though a scarce bird on Lake Erie at this time of year, the deeper waters of Lake Ontario generally host plenty of them, and we saw up to 50 of them offshore along the Burlington waterfront.

BUFFLEHEAD (*Bucephala albeola*) – Four females at Port Rowan Wetlands were the only ones. Like most black-and-white ducks, the majority of these had already passed through the region.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*) – Fair numbers off the tip at Pelee, with much larger numbers on Lake Ontario.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

RING-NECKED PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*) – There's one field near Hillman Marsh where these birds can regularly be seen in the late afternoon, and we picked out two handsome cock pheasants there on our first pass. [I]

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – The numbers of these in Point Pelee NP just seem to keep growing, and turkeys are now common there and throughout southern Ontario. We only missed seeing turkeys on our day at Rondeau. [I]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – All of ours were seen on the same day, with a single bird at Big Creek NWA, and then 3 birds at the Port Rowan Wetlands.

HORNED GREBE (*Podiceps auritus*) – Three birds were on the shorebird cell at Hillman Marsh, then a single bird at the Port Rowan Wetlands.

RED-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps grisegena*) – When we first approached the cove where these birds have nested for years in Burlington, I was dismayed to see the nest platform (an old tire chained to the lake bottom) was either missing, or underwater (lake levels were incredibly high this year), but then the grebes swam out from under cover near the shoreline to give us all beautiful close views.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – We only tallied a single one on our checklists from near Hillman Marsh, but there must have been some more that we filtered out. [H]

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – For the 4th straight year, we saw this long-staying vagrant at Rondeau PP, and this is his 5th year there. Wonder how long he will hold on there?

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Seen daily in small numbers.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

COMMON NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles minor*) – The third and final Caprimulgid of our first afternoon in the park, this one was roosting on a high branch above the parking area at Sleepy Hollow. A few days later another one made a couple of passes overhead in broad daylight, also near Sleepy Hollow.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Antrostomus carolinensis*) – During the trip down to Pelee, word came in that one of these large nightjars, a rarity in Canada, was found on a day roost, so we decided to head straight into that park that afternoon and try to see it, as it was a lifer for everyone in the group (I think) other than me, and it would be a Canada tick for me. As it was, the bird was present for the next few days, though it was the only time we saw it, as on our only other attempt, it flushed just before we got there. In any case, we had excellent looks at it, and it allowed us to join a huge number of other birders in scoring a nightjar trifecta that afternoon!

EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrostomus vociferus*) – Reports of one of these on an easy to access day roost began trickling in shortly after the reports of the Chuck, adding more incentive for us to make a late afternoon visit to the park. This bird was sitting on a log a few yards off the main road to the tip, giving fantastic views, and allowing us the rare chance to compare it with the Chuck we'd seen just a short while earlier. Though their plumages were quite similar, the difference in size was obvious, with the Chuck being much larger and bulkier than the Whip.

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*) – Our best views were of a trio that zipped past overhead as we exited the Blue Elephant Restaurant after dinner in Simcoe, but we did have a couple of swifts fly past at Point Pelee's tip as well. The second one of those birds was obviously a Chimney Swift, but the first gave me the impression of being larger and bulkier, with a different flight, though I didn't see it well enough to feel certain it was anything else. In fact, I wouldn't have given it another thought if someone hadn't reported a possible Black Swift later that same afternoon, and while we were standing next to him looking for the Prairie Warbler. No further sightings were made of any large swift, so who knows what it was?

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) – Hummers were trickling in during our time at Pelee, and we tallied up to about a dozen a day. The flowers they were feeding on were pretty small and insignificant, but they must have been getting enough sustenance from them as the birds were pretty active. Our total count of 37 of these was on the low side.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

VIRGINIA RAIL (*Rallus limicola*) – Great looks at a calling bird moving along the edge of the cattail marsh at Big Creek NWA, with a second bird calling back in response. It was interesting to see the bird avoiding entering the invasive Phragmites that is such a problem here now, keeping itself to the cattails. We had another fairly cooperative bird the next day at the Sedge Wren Marsh in the Carden Alvar region, though it wasn't quite as bold as that first bird.

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) – It was difficult to get out of Point Pelee on our last afternoon there, as good birds just kept popping out. We learned of a showboat Sora that had been entertaining crowds at the Marsh Boardwalk, so we decided to allot a bit of time to looking for it, figuring we could always shower after dinner. It was a great decision--after a short wait, the bird strolled out of the tiny reed bed it had been frequenting and paraded around in the open a few feet away, eventually nabbing a long, juicy earthworm which it slurped down before vanishing back into its hidey-hole.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – Not an overly common bird in southern Ontario, and we picked up just one, swimming around at the Port Rowan Wetlands.

Gruidae (Cranes)

SANDHILL CRANE (*Antigone canadensis*) – Cranes seem to be on the increase here, and are far easier to find than they were just a few years ago. As we did last year, we saw cranes on 4 different days, with a poor flyby view at Point Pelee, followed by excellent views in agricultural fields near Leamington, along the dike at Big Creek NWA and finally, on our last morning in the Sedge Wren Marsh in the Carden area.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – With water levels being incredibly high pretty much throughout the province, shorebirds were less concentrated than usual, and were likely to turn up in just about any flooded field rather than in the traditional shorebird cell at Hillman, (where we had not a single shorebird of any species!). Luckily, on our final afternoon at Pelee, we learned of a big group of these handsome plovers in the first fields north of the park, and we headed up for a look, finding at least 100 of these scattered around the waterlogged crop fields.

PIPING PLOVER (*Charadrius melodus*) – Classified as an endangered species in the province, though in the past few years, it seems to be repopulating several former nesting areas in the Great Lakes region. Still, this is an unusual bird for the Pelee area, so we had to follow up on a report of one along the shoreline in a park in Leamington. We did, and found the bird foraging along the sandy wash of a new construction area, where we got superb scope views of this lovely little plover.

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Very common, and seen daily in varying numbers.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

UPLAND SANDPIPER (*Bartramia longicauda*) – One of our many targets in the Carden Alvar, but they can be very sneaky and hard to see there. We'd been looking at something on the left side of the road when I glanced to the right and saw one bathing in the flooded field on the opposite side of the road. When it realized it had attracted our attention, it quickly flew off, though we all had a good view before it left, and it did stop a couple of times on prominent perches before dropping out of sight.

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*) – One was on the beach at the Piping Plover spot, then a group of 10 or so were seen on the tip each of the next two mornings. I've got to admit that I was a bit surprised to see that they all appeared to be in non-breeding plumage, as I would have thought they'd all have molted already like most of the other shorebirds.

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*) – Wow, these are handsome birds in their breeding finery. Often one of the most numerous shorebirds we see, but this year we were limited to one sighting of about a dozen mixed in with the Black-bellied Plovers. An interesting side note, about a week after the tour, friends reported seeing flocks totaling in the thousands migrating along the shores of Lake Ontario.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Calidris melanotos*) – A scarce spring migrant here, so one among the dowitchers at the flooded field near Hillman was a nice find.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus griseus*) – There was a reasonable movement of these birds moving through the region, and we saw them on three days, with a high count of 30+ in the Pelee area (others reported more than twice that number earlier the same day). We also had a group of 8 at the Port Rowan Wetlands. As usual, all the ones we saw were of the prairie race *hendersoni*, which are more richly colored, and more similar to Long-billed.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK (*Scolopax minor*) – As usual, woodcocks were displaying right outside of our Leamington hotel, and it was a fairly easy task to go out and track them down at dusk one evening. After watching one perform display flights out in front of the hotel for a while, we realized another was calling from the grassy area behind the hotel, and we were able to get great looks at it on the ground as it "peented" between bouts of its flight displays.

WILSON'S SNIBE (*Gallinago delicata*) – Superb views of one sitting atop a roadside fencepost on our final morning of the tour in the Carden Alvar.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – A lone bird was on the tip at Pelee one morning. Other than that one we only saw Spotties on our morning along the shores of Lake Ontario.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – Three birds were in the flooded field near Hillman Marsh. Though there were a good number of Lesser Yellowlegs there, too, these 3 birds seemed to keep to themselves and never allowed us a chance to see them side by side, though their longer, upturned bills were still notable.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – Most of the yellowlegs we saw were this species. We had them a couple of days in the Hillman Marsh area, then also saw a quartet at Cranberry Marsh.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BONAPARTE'S GULL (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) – Usually there are big numbers of these at the Hillman Marsh shorebird cell, but overall there were very few of these in evidence this year. Our largest count was of about 15 birds on the shore at the Piping Plover spot in Leamington. Other than that we only saw ones or twos at a couple of sites.

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – The most numerous gull in the region, and the most likely one to be seen away from lakeshores in places like Tim Horton's and McDonald's parking lots.

HERRING GULL (AMERICAN) (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) – A handful of these were seen daily at the tip.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus marinus*) – Four or five birds were lounging among the other gulls on the tip each day. Not really a regular species here at this time of year.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – Seen as flyover pairs a few times until we got to Whitby harbour, where there were dozens roosting among the gulls on the pier.

BLACK TERN (*Chlidonias niger*) – A distant pair at Big Creek NWA were far from satisfying.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo*) – The most often seen tern, with regular flybys at the tip, and a large number at Whitby Harbor.

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*) – Quite similar to Common Tern, but with silvery upperwings and more extensive black tip to the bill, which is orange rather than red. We had a few of these flashing their silvery wings at us at Big Creek Marsh.

Gaviidae (Loons)

COMMON LOON (*Gavia immer*) – A lone bird in non-breeding plumage was seen a couple of times off the tip.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Large numbers daily.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

AMERICAN BITTERN (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) – We flushed one at close range at the Sedge Wren Marsh on the Carden Alvar, and had great looks as it winged past before dropping out of sight into the extensive reed bed.

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – Seen regularly in small numbers.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Single birds at Seacliff Park in Leamington (where the Piping Plover was) and at Hillman.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – Jean and Scott saw one fly past our Leamington hotel on our first afternoon. The rest of us caught up with scope views of a gorgeous adult at Paletta Park in Burlington.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Regularly seen soaring past overhead throughout the tour.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – We finally nailed a couple of these on our final morning as we were driving back to Orillia from the Carden area.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus hudsonius*) – A female flew past towards the tip as we walked up the West Beach Trail on our first morning at Pelee, and a handsome male flew by the next day at the DeLaurier Trail. It seems likely that the possible Mississippi Kites reported on these two days were actually these birds.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – A large female circled around over Cranberry Marsh alongside a Cooper's Hawk, giving us a chance to compare the shapes of these two similar species.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – Our only one was the one mentioned above.

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – A couple of flybys at Pelee, then another that made a close pass over the road as we were departing the Long Point PP area.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – A lone bird circled overhead along the trail leading to Tilden's Woods at Pelee, giving us a nice view of its distinctive features.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Though the most familiar and widespread *Buteo* in southern Ontario, this is a decidedly rare species around Pelee, and I don't think I've ever seen one there. Our only sightings were along the highways as we headed to Leamington the first afternoon and up to Burlington from the Long Point region.

Strigidae (Owls)

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops asio*) – A bird had been reported roosting in a hollow tree near the marsh boardwalk, so we birded our way up towards the area after lunch. When we got to the right spot, some other birders had just figured out which tree it was in, and we set up the scope and all had great looks as the bird, a gray morph individual, poked his head out and looked around. Our timing was good, too, as a short while later, and just before another large group of birders showed up, a curious Red-breasted Nuthatch startled the owl and it retreated into the tree and out of sight.

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – Friends of mine had located a nest not far from our hotel, so we stopped in for a look late one afternoon. The nest was well away from the road, but with the scope, we were able to get good views of an adult and a couple of large, nearly fledged youngsters. [N]

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – We didn't see these until we got up around Lake Ontario, and then we ran into them at several sites, including a pair hanging out near a suitable nesting bank at Burloak Park in Burlington.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – We had a great woodpecker day around Long Point, seeing six of the seven species possible on this trip, including our only one of these birds at Backus Woods. Flicker was the only woodpecker we missed that day.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) – This handsome woodpecker has declined in Ontario in recent years, and it is never a given that we will find one on this tour, though we usually manage. This year we managed pretty well, seeing one each at Pelee, Rondeau, and Long Point, the last one giving us arguably the nicest looks.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes carolinus*) – And this woodpecker has been on the increase in Ontario, though we didn't fare much better with this than Red-headed. Though we heard these a few times at Pelee, we didn't get our first looks until Rondeau, and then had another the next day at Long Point, alongside our Red-headed there.

DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Dryobates pubescens*) – The most regularly encountered woodpecker of the trip, with sightings daily.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Dryobates villosus*) – A scarcity at Pelee, at least at this time of year, but these birds do nest around Rondeau and Long Point, and we saw our lone one in the latter area in Backus Woods.

PILEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – Also scarce at Pelee (though I thought I heard one there), but regular at the other two parks. We heard one at Rondeau, then saw a couple at Backus Woods, though they were a bit flighty and elusive.

NORTHERN FLICKER (*Colaptes auratus*) – The next most common woodpecker after the Downy, and we saw them on several days. For you westerners, this may have been a new taxon, as the birds here are all of the "Yellow-shafted" variety, *race luteus*, to be exact.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – Another pick up from our final morning, as we returned to Orillia following our morning of birding on the Carden Alvar. A male was spotted perched on some roadside power lines.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*) – Given the poor flycatcher showing overall, with most species not having arrived in numbers, if at all, getting one of these uncommon migrants, which generally pass through later than most other species, was quite a coup. We had great looks at one at the Sleepy Hollow Picnic area. Nice spotting, Laura!

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax flaviventris*) – Only Paul got to see one of these as our lunch picnic was being prepared and everyone was wondering around on their own. His photographic evidence confirmed it, but unluckily for us, we couldn't relocate it after lunch.

LEAST FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax minimus*) – The only Empid that had arrived in numbers, and we saw quite a few most days. We also glimpsed another Empid that other birders around us were calling an Acadian, but it got away before we could get any field marks. Our final count of 41 was more than the total of all other flycatcher species added together.

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) – Just a couple of sightings of single birds at Rondeau and Long Point.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – Very few of these had arrived and we tallied only three in total, with the first one at Rondeau giving great looks as it fed low and close along the Spicebush Trail.

EASTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – These were starting to come in, and were the second most often seen flycatcher after the Least. We didn't have any our first day at Pelee, saw a couple the next, then kept running into more as the week went on. We had 20 of these over the course of the tour.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*) – We decided to make a return visit to the park late on our final afternoon at Pelee, mainly to try and track down one of these scarce vireos that had been reported a short time earlier. Though no one was around when we got to the right place, we were soon looking at a very cooperative White-eyed Vireo feeding right along the main road. Of course, everyone driving by stopped to ask what we were watching, and that soon led to a large number of people hanging out on the roadside watching the bird. We heard and glimpsed another one at Rondeau, but it was a lot less cooperative.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*) – Good views of one on our first morning at Pelee at the Sleepy Hollow picnic area, though Scott and Jean missed it as they had headed back to the van while the rest of us headed for the rest rooms. Luckily, we picked up another a few days later at Long Point, and that bird showed well for all of us.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Vireo solitarius*) – This vireo is the earliest of the vireos to pass through southern Ontario, and the bulk of them had likely already gone through, but there were still a few birds around, and we saw one or two each day. By tour's end, we had tallied a measly 6 birds overall.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO (*Vireo philadelphicus*) – This one never is very numerous here, so I don't usually expect many, but we still usually manage to find one or two. We were running low on chances when we finally did find a couple of these (3 actually) near the Old Cut Banding Station at Long Point, getting great looks at them, too.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*) – We saw or heard this usually common species on most days, but the numbers of them were really low, with a count of only 14 through the week.

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*) – A very common breeder in the province, and usually a numerous migrant, but we had none at all at Pelee, then just a single bird at Rondeau. It wasn't until our day at Long Point that they were finally starting to come through in larger numbers. We ended up with just 18, 14 of which came in the Long Point area.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BLUE JAY (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – Seen daily, including several flocks of migrants flying about at the tip.

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – Pretty scarce at Pelee, and I think we only heard one there. Everywhere else they were pretty common.

FISH CROW (*Corvus ossifragus*) – During a stop at the Whitby harbor to look through the loads of gulls on the pier, we noticed a crow among all the gulls, and my first thought was that it was likely a Fish Crow. I had left my playback equipment back in the van so when the bird took off, I was unable to coax it into calling, but John had his phone handy and quickly played the call as the bird passed by, and we got a quick response, confirming that it was indeed a Fish Crow. This species seems to be increasing in southern Ontario.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Just a single sighting of a lone bird flying over at Carden, carrying a small egg in its beak.

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – Nice looks at a pair in an ploughed field near Hillman Marsh.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – A few birds were seen around Pelee, including a pair feeding low over the water along the De Laurier Trail.

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*) – Only seen around Old Cut, where a group of 25+ were wheeling about overhead. I suspect they had just flown in across the lake, as I don't ever recall seeing many there before.

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – Next to the Barn Swallow, the most numerous swallow in the region, and we saw them daily. Several were using nest boxes at Pelee and the Carden area. [N]

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – Small numbers at several sites, with the biggest concentration at Burloak Park where there was an active colony above the Red-necked Grebes preferred nesting site.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Numerous and seen daily, with several nests at the tram stop at the tip of Pelee. [N]

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – A few birds among the many swallows at Hillman flew low and close giving us some nice looks.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE (*Poecile atricapillus*) – An extremely common forest bird through most of Ontario, but not so at Pelee, where they are unusually scarce, though we did see a pair or two there. We had plenty everywhere else though.

TUFTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – Quite local in the province, and our only one was a bird I whistled in at Rondeau, which is one of the best sites for this species in Ontario.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*) – One of the early migrants, and usually by this time there are just a few stragglers around, but like many other species, they were a bit on the late side, and we saw them daily, with as many as 10+ a day at Pelee. The vast majority of them were females, the males having already passed through earlier. Our total count of 53 was far higher than we normally would expect. In fact, over the previous 5 tours, only 11 of these were tallied overall!

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*) – A few birds at both Rondeau and Long Point, both areas in which this species breeds.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*) – Another early migrant that has usually already passed through by this time, so we were lucky to find a single bird at Rondeau.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – A common breeder in the region, and we had them daily.

WINTER WREN (*Troglodytes hiemalis*) – These tiny wrens are also among the early migrants, but given the delayed migration of so many birds, perhaps it wasn't all that surprising to see one foraging next to the boardwalk in Tilden's Woods.

SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*) – The aptly-named Sedge Wren Marsh in the Carden Alvar is our usual spot for this local species, and that's where we got our only one. We were lucky though, as it seemed there was just one bird to have returned so far, and it took us two tries to finally get a good look at him.

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) – We also saw just one of these wonderful little wrens, but this one came easy, popping out into the open as we tried to locate the calling Virginia Rail at Big Creek NWA.

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – We heard Carolina Wren daily at the Lake Erie migration spots, and a few folks saw one entering a nest hole while we watched the White-eyed Vireo, but we never had a clean look for the whole group.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – Seen in small numbers daily until our final morning on the Carden Alvar, with about 33 being counted through the week.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus satrapa*) – These are normally all further north by this time, but we had a single, rather scruffy-looking bird hanging around Old Cut. I suspect the bird's poor health kept it from moving on with all the other kinglets.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – Another early migrant that is normally mostly gone by this time, and while numbers were dwindling, we still saw quite a few in Pelee. Our first day in the park saw us tally 25-30, the next we were down to about half that, and by the third day, we had just a few. Beyond Pelee, we had just a couple at Old Cut. Roughly 44 of these were totalled through the trip.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – Our first pair was seen during our roadside stop for Grasshopper Sparrow in the Long Point area, but it's the Carden Alvar that's the real hotspot for these birds, and we had some lovely views of several of the roughly a dozen birds we saw there on our final morning.

VEERY (*Catharus fuscescens*) – This thrush played hide and seek for the first couple of days, with me seeing several but being unable to show them to anyone before they disappeared. Finally, on our last morning at Pelee, we got everyone on one along the Woodland Trail, and then, of course, they kept popping out everywhere, including in the lawn surrounding the picnic tables at the Visitor Center! Overall we ended up with 17 sightings of these thrushes.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH (*Catharus ustulatus*) – Coming through in good numbers, and we saw this species daily at the Lake Erie hot spots. Our overall tally was of 28 birds.

WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – This thrush breeds locally, and is rarely in big numbers in the park, but we saw and heard a few, beginning with a close bird in the swamp forest along the Tilden's Woods boardwalk, but I think the one that posed so nicely for us at Rondeau was the best. Paul took a shine to this species, and chose it as his favorite bird of the trip.

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*) – Abundant everywhere, and I lost track of how many nests of these familiar birds we saw, but there were several per day at Pelee! [N]

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – Present in small numbers at pretty much all the sites we visited, and overall a pretty easy bird to see here at this time of year. We tallied about 53 altogether.

BROWN THRASHER (*Toxostoma rufum*) – Seen only on the Carden Alvar, where they are pretty common, and not all that hard to find. We had about half a dozen of them.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Seen in small numbers most days. [H]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Overall there were very few of these sociable birds around, though a flock of 11 along the West Beach Trail on our first morning at Pelee posed nicely for us. Elsewhere we saw just a half a dozen at Rondeau, and a single bird at Paletta Park.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – I think all of our sightings were just outside the doors of our hotel in Leamington. [H]

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – A group of 5 or more birds feeding in a tall tree that was just bursting into bud along the Woodland Trail were a good find, and fairly late, as most of these birds have already moved north by this time.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis*) – Common in open scrubby areas throughout southern Ontario. Our best looks were at the swarms of them at the Rondeau VC feeders.

Passerellidae (New World Sparrows)

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – Stupendous close views of a responsive bird in suitable old field habitat in the Backus Woods area.

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – A couple of birds were feeding on the sandy beach at Pelee's tip one morning, but most of our sightings came after we left Pelee, as these birds were regular at all the other sites visited.

FIELD SPARROW (*Spizella pusilla*) – We only saw one, but it was a great look at a bird that popped up as we were trying to see the Grasshopper Sparrow at Backus. This isn't surprising, as this is another bird that prefers old field habitat.

DARK-EYED JUNCO (*Junco hyemalis*) – Juncos should have all moved to the north well before the start of a tour, but a female was hanging around below the feeders at Rondeau, and we saw her hopping about the lawn as we ate our picnic lunch there.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) – Coming through in good numbers and for the most part they outnumbered the White-throated Sparrows, which are slightly earlier migrants, though they were still around in fair numbers. We counted about 64 altogether.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – Still passing through in small numbers, though the bulk of them came about a week or so earlier, with reports of thousands of them coming through Rondeau and Pelee! A far cry from the 37 we tallied in total.

VESPER SPARROW (*Pooecetes gramineus*) – One sighting of a somewhat flighty bird on our first afternoon on the Carden Alvar.

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – Pretty common in the grasslands in the Carden Alvar, which was the only place we saw any.

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*) – Since this is one of the most numerous birds in most scrubby habitats in southern Ontario, it always kind of surprises me that they are pretty rare in Point Pelee NP, and, again this year, we did not see any there. Once we left there, though they were everywhere.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*) – Just starting to trickle through the region during the tour, and our only one was along the Tulip Tree Trail at Rondeau, though I think it eluded a couple of folks.

SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*) – First heard (and seen by some) at Big Creek NWA, but the majority of ours, and our best views, were in the Sedge Wren Marsh in the Carden Alvar.

EASTERN TOWHEE (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) – One was singing all through our picnic lunch at Sleepy Hollow, and we finally tracked it down after lunch for a nice scope view. We had several more after we left Pelee, with a high count of 6 of them on our final morning in the Carden Alvar.

Icteriidae (Yellow-breasted Chat)

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – I've seen very few of these at Pelee, and all previous ones were found by others, so it was pleasing to find our own this trip. We spotted it in a dead fall south of the Sparrow Field, but it quickly disappeared, so we stuck around and watched for it to pop back up. It eventually did, but much closer to us than it had been, and we hadn't seen it move at all! Man these things are sneaky!

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

BOBOLINK (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) – What's not to like about Bobolinks? They have a fun name, a cheery, bubbly song, dapper plumage, and they like to hang out in beautiful, good quality grasslands, like up in the Carden Alvar, where we saw a bunch of them.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*) – Also common in the Carden grasslands. Both this and the Bobolink are declining species in the province due in part to current farming practices which limit their habitat at a critical time in their breeding cycle.

ORCHARD ORIOLE (*Icterus spurius*) – These were on the late side this year, and over the first two days at Pelee, we had brief views of a single male each day. A minor influx arrived on our final day there, and we had good views of a couple of pairs then.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE (*Icterus galbula*) – It's an easy time to see these brilliant birds at Pelee, as there were fair numbers around, and there was very little foliage to hide them. Plus, many were feeding pretty low, so no neck strain either! While there weren't as many as we usually see in a normal spring, we still bumped into a bunch of these every day. We counted somewhere in the vicinity of 120 of them by tour's end.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – There weren't many moments of any day where there wasn't one or more of these within spitting distance.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – Small numbers were around on a daily basis, though never approaching the numbers of Red-wings and grackles.

COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*) – Loads around every day.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – Heard more often than seen, but we picked up several close looks at these forest floor birds, particularly along the boardwalk in Tilden's Woods and in Backus Woods, where they are common breeders. We recorded about 13 birds in total over the week.

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*) – Though a regular breeder in the Long Point area, this species has usually proved difficult to track down on this tour, so I was happy to get a hot tip from a friend I bumped into at the Old Cut banding station. And happier still that the tip worked out so well. We were able to drive up to a territory and very quickly had excellent looks at a singing bird! Nice!

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – Singles were heard, and sometimes glimpsed, most days, but easily our best view came at Rondeau, where we were able to enjoy a bird feeding in the open along Tulip Tree Trail for several minutes. Total count was of about 10 birds in the course of the trip.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – As usual, our final warbler of the trip (#29!). We rarely find one at the migration hotspots, and are reliant on finding them on territory in the Carden region. And we found three birds there on our final morning, though they were tricky, as they were feeding more than singing, and were only intermittently showing themselves. We stuck with it though, and ended up with some gorgeous looks.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) – Another warbler we usually rely on finding on territory, rather than on migration, though we did have a lovely male feeding on the ground near Sleepy Hollow at Pelee. We also had super looks at a couple of other males near Long Point; the one that showed best looked almost like a pure Blue-winged, though its wing bars were yellow rather than the usual white, indicating that it probably had some Golden-winged DNA as well. These two species hybridize regularly.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – Though we saw these on almost every outing in suitable habitat, the numbers were consistently low, with a high tally of 5 birds around the Old Cut banding station. We tallied about 22 of these on the trip.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*) – Again this year there was an active breeding pair along the boardwalks on Pelee's Woodland Trail, and the male put on a wonderful show there once again. Another pair along Rondeau's Tulip Tree Trail were likewise cooperative. This is a very scarce and local breeding species in Ontario (and Canada, as this is the only province in which they breed), so it is always a big target for visiting birders. Laura picked this beauty as her favorite bird of the trip.

TENNESSEE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – Two or three were at Pelee on our first day there, but they gave most of the group the slip. They were just starting to pick up in number over the few days after we left Pelee, and though we never saw a many (maximum of about 5 at Rondeau), we did get some good scope views of singing birds both at Rondeau and Paletta Park in Burlington. In total, we counted 14 of these warblers.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) – Of the regularly occurring migrant warblers, this is one of the rarer species, and we don't always find them. This year we had just one, a bird that showed nicely along the Tulip Tree Trail at Rondeau.

NASHVILLE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) – Seen daily in varying numbers, with biggest numbers showing at Pelee, where one area around Sleepy Hollow seemed especially full of them. "Just another Nashville" became a pretty common refrain on that walk! Still it was nice to get repeated good views, with several birds showing their orange crown patches nicely. Through the course of the tour, we found around 60 Nashvilles.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – One of the few warbler species that actually stop and breed in Pelee, and consequently, it's a common bird here. Not a day went by that we didn't see multiple birds. Roughly 65 of these were recorded on the tour.

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*) – We narrowly missed seeing one along the trail near Sleepy Hollow, but this is a bird that breeds around Long Point, so we usually can find them on territory and that's what we did again this trip. We had fine views of a singing male right around the parking lot at Backus Woods, then had more good looks at another male at a roadside stop in Spooky Hollow.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – This is a very common breeding bird through much of Ontario, and generally a common migrant as well, though the numbers present weren't all that great. We saw several each day, with a high count of about 15 birds around Old Cut Banding Station, nearly a third of our total count for the tour, which was 42 birds.

CAPE MAY WARBLER (*Setophaga tigrina*) – It was a pretty good trip for these warblers, which are rarely in big numbers in the area. We saw a few each day, with some incredible close views of several handsome males. The Old Cut Banding Station again gave us our high count, with about 10 birds being seen there, out of our total count of 34.

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*) – Not as numerous as they often are here, but many of the 17 parulas we saw gave us extraordinary views, often at eye level or lower!

MAGNOLIA WARBLER (*Setophaga magnolia*) – These gorgeous little warblers were a big hit with Sue, who picked it as her overall favorite bird of the trip. Like many other warblers, this species was in lower numbers than usual, though we still tallied 37 of them, with 10 of those showing up at Old Cut.

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER (*Setophaga castanea*) – There are never many of these around, but by putting in the time, you can usually turn up a handful. Our first was a female feeding near the ground on the Woodland Trail. Later birds were all males, and we had super scope views of a singing male along Warbler Way at Rondeau. Our total count for this species was only 6 birds.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER (*Setophaga fusca*) – Is there any warbler more gorgeous than this stunning creature? Just an incredible bird, though there is plenty of stiff competition. In any case, we counted about 23 of these overall. Our first was arguably the best, seeing as it was feeding just above the ground and not far away. We watched as it chowed down on a large slug, then went on looking for more.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – Another Pelee breeder, and by far the most numerous warbler, showing up anywhere and everywhere. We had close to 300 of these on the tour, though that could easily be grossly underestimated.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – I always enjoy seeing these here in fresh breeding plumage, as I always run into them in their drabber winter dress in Costa Rica each March. Quite a contrast! We had a few of these daily, with a total count of 29, and a high of 8 birds at Old Cut.

BLACKPOLL WARBLER (*Setophaga striata*) – One of the latest of warbler migrants, and usually these are just starting to trickle through during the tour. We had just two, the first of which, at Old Cut, eluded part of the group. Luckily, a visit to Cranberry Marsh got us great looks at another, one of only 3 migrant warblers we found there!

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER (*Setophaga caerulescens*) – The dapper males are pretty unmistakable, the more subdued females a bit more confusing, though I think by tour's end everyone felt pretty comfortable with sorting out the females as well. Another warbler that was present in small numbers daily. Our high count was just 8 birds on our final morning at Pelee, with a total of 29 being seen through the trip.

PALM WARBLER (*Setophaga palmarum*) – I've been at Pelee during some pretty impressive movements of this species, but in most years, there aren't that many coming through, and this was one of those years. We saw only 5 in total, but a couple of them showed beautifully, particularly one feeding on the ground alongside the boardwalk in Tilden's Woods. That tail-wagging behavior always makes them pretty easy to identify.

PINE WARBLER (*Setophaga pinus*) – An early migrant that has usually vacated Pelee by this time, and I think the pair we saw near the screech-owl may have been the first I've ever seen in the park. We usually look for birds on territory around Long Point, and we did have our only other one there at Spooky Hollow, singing from the canopy high above the road.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (*Setophaga coronata*) – Another early migrant, and usually there are only a handful of these, mostly females, still passing through here. This year, they were a bit more numerous than we usually encounter, and we tallied 32 of them, including a fair number of males.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Setophaga discolor*) – A rare migrant at Pelee, and one I've seen here just once before, but leading up to the tour, there had been several reported, so it looked to be a good year for them. When we learned of a reliable bird along the DeLaurier Homestead Trail, we headed out for a look. We found the bird after a short search (in the company of plenty of other birders), but initially it played a little hard to get. We stuck with it though, and eventually had point blank views of this beauty, at eye level!

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Setophaga virens*) – Overall there weren't that many of these, and we didn't see them every day, but we had several excellent looks at them, with a high count of half a dozen at Old Cut, and a total of about 23 birds.

CANADA WARBLER (*Cardellina canadensis*) – Another of the highly sought-after species, here, this is among the later arriving migrants, and is rarely numerous. We ended up seeing just one bird, along the boardwalk at Tilden's Woods, but what a view! The bird initially flew past us, landing a few meters away behind us, where it began foraging on the ground right next to the boardwalk, and working its way back towards us. As we watched, the bird hopped right below the rear end of a photographer who had crouched to take some pictures, before it flew directly at us, pausing briefly on the toe of my boot before moving off into the undergrowth. Thanks in part to being picked as the trip favorite by both Scott and Jean, this was the overall winner as bird of the trip.

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*) – Another of the later migrants, this warbler never seems as common here in the east as it is out west. We had just three birds, two at Pelee, one at Old Cut, with Paul spotting our first one along the seasonal trail between Sleepy Hollow and Dunes picnic areas.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) – Not known to breed in Ontario, and one of a handful of more southerly species that regularly overshoot into Ontario (along with Worm-eating Yellow-throated, and Kentucky Warblers, Blue Grosbeak, etc). There seemed to be more than usual being reported in southern Ontario this spring, including a 1st year male that was visiting a feeder near the Rondeau Visitor Center, and that's the one we got to see.

SCARLET TANAGER (*Piranga olivacea*) – Seeing these brilliant birds without the hindrance of foliage is always a memorable experience; that scarlet coloration is simply incredible. We started with a handful of these at Pelee, but our best experience with them came at Rondeau, where we saw 10 (of 23 overall on the trip) including several males together feeding low along the Tulip Tree Trail. For John, this was one of just a handful of lifers, and it was his top choice for bird of the trip.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – A common year-round resident and breeder, these were around in good numbers daily.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – Though we had these every day of the trip, numbers were just starting to peak, and they weren't as numerous at Pelee as they can be. Still, there were more than enough of them around to satisfy us, and as they often do, many were feeding in the low vegetation right near the trails, offering fantastic looks. All in all, we tallied 53 of these, with a high of about 15 of them at Rondeau.

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – When we left Pelee without having seen a single Indigo Bunting, I was a bit concerned that we might miss them altogether. Fortunately that wasn't the case, and we managed to pick up a few. We only had 6 overall, though, so I think the bulk of the population had yet to arrive. Our totals were made of up 3 at Rondeau, one (heard only) at Spooky Hollow, and finally two cooperative males that showed really well at Paletta Park.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Seen daily, though never in Pelee NP proper, where they are happily quite rare. [H]

MAMMALS

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – A few of these were seen daily at Pelee, mainly on the main road during the drive into the park.

PLAIN EASTERN CHIPMUNK (*Tamias striatus*) – Oddly absent at Pelee, but common at Rondeau and in the Long Point area. Backus Woods is especially infested with these little guys!

WOODCHUCK (*Marmota monax*) – Just a lightning-quick view of one dashing for its burrow at Paletta Park.

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – Lots daily, though there are far more black ones here than gray.

RED SQUIRREL (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) – Prefers coniferous forest, and generally scarce or absent at Pelee. We saw a few at Old Cut, Paletta Park, and Cranberry Marsh.

MUSKRAT (*Ondatra zibethica*) – Big Creek NWA seems to have a healthy population of these animals, and we saw several during a brief stop there.

RED FOX (*Vulpes vulpes*) – I spotted one of these handsome animals lounging on the edge of a field with a couple of wary Canada Geese keeping a close eye on it, during the drive from Rondeau to Simcoe.

NORTHERN RACCOON (*Procyon lotor*) – A single raccoon, looking rather cold and damp, was seen on the road just past the entry gate at Pelee one morning.

STOAT (SHORT-TAILED WEASEL) (*Mustela erminea*) – A big surprise at Pelee was seeing one of these rarely seen animals dash out onto the road in front of our van, where it paused for a second, before scurrying across and out of sight. This was my first sighting ever in the park.

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – We saw just one deer in Pelee, but did see a few more here and there, usually during the drives. Especially numerous at Cranberry Marsh, where there seems to be far more than there should be, and I can only imagine the ticks are going to be bad there as a result of all those deer!

Herps

EASTERN HOG-NOSED SNAKE (*Heterodon platirhinos*) – Definitely my critter of the trip! Laura found one of these in the leaf litter at Backus Woods, and boy, was I happy. The snake was far more strikingly marked and colorful than I had expected, with a bold black and rusty brown pattern. It also had a fair bit of red coloring, which showed especially well when the snake expanded its hood, cobra-like, in a threat display. Part of me really

wanted to get the snake to play dead, but it seems like unnecessary harassment to annoy one that much, so we let it be after a few photos. This was my first ever hog-nose, and it's a snake I'd long wanted to see.

COMMON GARTERSNAKE (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) – The cool weather wasn't particularly good for snake activity at Pelee, but warmer temps at Rondeau and Long Point had them stirring a bit more and we found a single of these at Rondeau, and a few in Backus Woods.

GREEN FROG (*Lithobates clamitans*) – We saw just one along the Tulip Tree Trail at Rondeau.

PAINTED TURTLE (*Chrysemys picta*) – The most commonly encountered turtle in the province, and we found a few around Rondeau and Long Point once the warmer temps arrived.

BLANDING'S TURTLE (*Emydoidea blandingii*) – Quite a rare species in Ontario, and classified as "Threatened" under the Endangered Species Act.

We had excellent looks at one that was in a large puddle in the middle of the road at the Sedge Wren Marsh in the Carden Alvar.

AMERICAN TOAD (*Anaxyrus americanus*) – Several of these were singing along the Tulip Tree Trail at Rondeau.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 186 bird taxa and 10 mammal taxa