

## **Who We Are**

Founded in 1954, the Sault Naturalists is an international club with approximately 150 members. The objectives of the club are: to provide members with a common meeting ground for the exchange of ideas and for broadening their knowledge and understanding of natural science; to promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of our natural heritage; and to support and cooperate with other organizations with similar aims. The group is affiliated with the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the Canadian Nature Federation and the Michigan Audubon Society.

Meetings are held from September through June on the second Tuesday of each month, in either Sault Ontario or Sault Michigan. The annual meeting is in February.

Annual membership dues are: family, \$20 Canadian and \$15 U.S.; individual, \$15 Canadian (\$11 U.S.); student, \$10 Canadian (\$7 U.S.); and life, \$225 Canadian. The organization's mailing address for membership is c/o Ron Prickett, 90 Tilley Road, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada, P6B 3Y9.

## **Message from the President**

It is only February, but I am already excited about the prospect of another year of field trips and monthly presentations. Amongst the more memorable outings of 2002, for me, personally, were the April ski/snowshoe Red Rock Beach trip, birding at Point Pelee, hiking at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, botanical outings with the Meades, camping at Pukaskwa National Park, mushrooming, hikes and walks to many interesting areas, the list could continue. Apologies to those who led trips I was unable to attend and to those whose outings are not mentioned here due to space limitations.

The "Weekend Ramblers" have been having quite a bit of fun these last recent weeks, skiing and hiking. Consider giving one of the contact people mentioned in the last newsletter, or me, a call to find out what is planned for a coming weekend.

Ours is a group of people with different particular interests, brought together by our abiding appreciation of natural history (the study of natural objects, especially in the field) and non-consumptive enjoyment of the out-of-doors. The Sault Naturalists Club has, and should have, different meaning and points of interest for each of us. If any of you reading this find that your particular area of interest is under represented in the outings, talks, or activities sponsored by the club, I ask you to advise me or another executive member. We aim to please. Let us know what you are thinking and what you would like. This is **your** group.

Carl Linhart

**Current Executive**

President	Carl Linhart	(906) 635- 9891
Vice President	Helen Hutchinson	(705) 254-3648
Secretary	Gordon Van Midde	(705) 253 9746
Treasurer	Gail Andrew	(705) 942-0768
Outings	Chuck Bosley	(906) 248-328
	Evelyn Simon	(705) 949-8206
Programs	Dieter Ropke	(705) 942-9636
	John Lehman	(906) 635-5095
	Dan Schuurman	(705) 759 1147
Bird Observations	Ken McIlwrick	(705) 541-5643
Property	Gladys and Cliff Wallwork	(705) 779-3098
Membership	Ron Prickett	(705) 254-1533
Publicity	Tracy Latulippe	XXXXXXXXXX
Environmental Action	Don Marles	(705) 254-6344
Newsletter	Betty & Gerry Bennett	(705) 254-7214
Botanical Records	Sue Meades	(705) 777-0496
Telephone Convener	Mary Ryckman	(705) 253-6352
F.O.N. Rep.	Tony Walker	(705) 759-6151
M.A.S. Rep	Chuck Bosley	906) 248-3287
Web Page Maintenance	Don Hall	(705) 248-1834

### Membership Report

The following is the profile of our membership.

Life Members-	9
Year of paid up membership-	Number
2005	1
2004	1
2003	38
2002	62
2001	10

25 to a low of zero! Leaders often juggle their schedules in order to accommodate the planned outings they were to lead. (The outings are planned 2-3 months in advance because of newsletter constraints.)

The telephone number of the leader(s) are now included with the listed outing so that checking in for conditions and planned attendance is appreciated. The outing committee occasionally is called on to assist in arranging transportation for those without vehicles.

### Total Membership 121

Country-	Number
USA	39
Canada	82

If there is no scheduled weekend outing and you wish to play in the outdoors, please call those members listed in the newsletter for *ad hoc* trips. The Pukaskwa experience and camp-out was again re-instated this past July after a long hiatus. Unfortunately, the mosquitoes didn't rest, but the boreal fauna, flora and camaraderie was worth the irritation. This beautiful area was almost devoid of campers during our sojourn and we wonder how long the system will support the poor utilization of this park. **Members- please put a note on your calendar for the 2003 July long weekend, as we'd like to share this experience with a larger membership attendance.**

Respectfully submitted by  
Ron Prickett  
Membership Chairperson

Submitted by  
Ev and Chuck,  
Outings Committee.

### Outings Committee Report

The outings committee was "on their toes" in planning the 2002 field trips and adventures to accommodate a diversity of interests. As always, new ideas are welcome, as are volunteers to lead the field trips. The Sault Naturalists are very fortunate to have so much expertise and knowledge among the membership. As well, fun times are shared on the field trips and at workshops given. Our thanks and gratitude to the volunteer leaders and the participants for the sharing that was shown.

Some changes were necessary this past year as participation in the outings went from a high of

## Program Committee Report

The Program Committee engaged the following speakers for the 2002 programs:

January 8. Floyd Byerly, *The Sierra Club; Activities of the Three Lakes Group*

February 12. Annual Dinner Program. Steve Dominy, *Yunnan, China Land of Beauty and Mystery*

March 12. Judy Westrick, *Toxic Blue Green Algae; Now in a Neighborhood Near You?*

April 9. Greg Zimmerman, *Invasive Plants of the Eastern Upper Peninsula*

May 7. Michael Doyle, *Plant Life in New Guinea*

June 11. David Szlag, *Applications of GIS and GPS for Naturalists*

September 10. Ruth Abbot, *Sailing on Lake Superior; a Slide-Fest*

October 8. Marjorie Hall, *Living Legacy; Recent Additions to the Ontario Parks System*

November 12. John Lenters, *Global Warming and its Impact on the Great Lakes Region*

December 10. *Special Holiday Program.* Readings by Jim Miller and Maureen Delaney-Lehman

Submitted by

Dieter Ropke,

Program Committee

## Viewing Platforms

In the winter of 2002, Bill Daniher, Tony Walker and Don Wilshere accepted the challenge of using a \$30,000 grant provided through the Great Lakes Heritage Fund, obtained largely through the efforts of Bob Knudsen, to build as many wildlife viewing platforms in the Sault Ste Marie area as possible. Ron Reffle of the Ministry of Natural Resources has been instrumental in overcoming landownership problems. A partnership has also been forged with Ducks Unlimited, represented locally by Tracey Latulippe.

First priority was a rebuild of the Pumpkin Point platform, originally constructed in the mid-1980s, which was falling into serious disrepair. Also important was finding partnerships to build other platforms: to date, such partners have been found at the Garden River First Nations, who are building a platform at the Squirrel Island memorial site, and the Village of Echo Bay, who are expanding the Loony site into an Environmental Centre.

The Pumpkin Point site work has progressed steadily over the year since the project began. The supports for the platform itself were discovered to be very strong and worth preserving, although the roof and walls - to one metre height - were taken off. Also, the cedar-shake cladding was removed. The boardwalk was entirely torn down as it was unsafe and not worth preserving. A local contractor--Carmen Belsito--was found to provide cedar logs for new posts and for sawing into dimension lumber, and also hemlock for the new stringers. A local tractor operator, Harvey Matthews, used a Kubota tractor, provided gratis by North Shore Kubota, to drill holes for the new posts required for the platform expansion and the new boardwalk.

Since the posts were installed, work has progressed steadily, and the project should be completed by this summer. Assistance has been

provided by several Sault Naturalist members, including Gail Andrews, Jack Jones, and Cliff Wallwork. Non-members have also been active, including Sam Rosa, and Len Siegfried, a retired carpenter who lives in the area, who has been helpful on many occasions.

A sign at the Pumpkin Point site announces the partners involved--including the Sault Naturalists and the Government of Ontario - and a barrier has been placed at the boardwalk entrance, as well as a sign, to indicate that the platform is closed.

Submitted by

Don Wilshere

### Year 2002 Bird Report

The Sault Ste. Marie Ontario/Michigan area provided birders with lots of excitement and in some cases new species in 2002. It was a year full of both typical and non-typical bird occurrences and at times bird sightings and movements seemed unpredictable. January 1, 2002 was no exception, as the start of the new year produced an adult **Western Meadowlark**, which was first found on a porch on River Road. This bird was photographed and fed crickets with hopes it would survive the winter conditions but was found frozen the next day. The body is now residing at the Royal Ontario Museum. The return of a **Bewick's Wren**, to a feeder in the Town of Massey, on January 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> helped ease this loss. This wren was first observed on December 18, 2001 and had a tendency to disappear for several days at a time before re-appearing. On January 23<sup>rd</sup> another unusual sighting was reported. An immature **Black Vulture** was observed feeding on a suet ball at a residence on Church Street in Echo Bay. While it remained, this vulture perched in nearby trees and fed occasionally on suet and was last observed on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

A few reports of **Gray Jays**, **Boreal Chickadee**, **Brown Creeper**, **American Tree Sparrow**, **Northern Cardinal** and **American Robin** came in during the month of January. A hardy **Brown Thrasher**, **Eastern Towhee** and **Hermit Thrush**, were observed on Sunnyside Beach Road, Fairmont Drive and Nino Drive respectively, between January 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. A **Black-backed Woodpecker** was observed along a ski trail at Hiawatha Highlands, on the 21<sup>st</sup>. **Bohemian Waxwings** were observed regularly in January in flocks ranging from a dozen to around 300. **Sharp-tailed Grouse** and **Snow Buntings** were observed occasionally in January and a group of 46 **Horned Larks** was reported along Calabogie Road in an open field.

January was a good month to observe grosbeaks, redpolls and crossbills. Several small flocks of **Pine Grosbeak**, **Evening Grosbeak** and **White-winged Crossbill** were around as were good numbers (500+) of **Common** and **Hoary Redpolls**. **American Goldfinch** were reported regularly but their numbers were not as high as the redpolls.

Raptors observed in January included **Bald Eagle**, **Gyr Falcon** (Sault ON, Sault MI and Sudbury), **Merlin**, **American Kestrel**, **Rough-legged Hawk**, **Northern Goshawk** (Echo Bay dump), **Cooper's Hawk**, **Snowy Owl** (Sault Locks) and **Northern Hawk Owl** (Thessalon River bridge at Rydal Bank on Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>). **Northern Shrike** were observed regularly throughout the birding area in January. **Herring Gull** numbers dropped throughout the month of January as did the number of other gull species. Both the Sudbury dump and foot of the St. Marys Rapids produced moderate numbers of white-winged (**Glaucous** and **Iceland**) and **Great Black-backed Gulls** early in the month. A very late observation of a **Bonaparte's Gull** was made on January 1<sup>st</sup> near the foot of the rapids. Other waterfowl reported in January

included 1 male **Harlequin Duck**, 1 female **White-winged Scoter**, 2 **Long-tailed Ducks** (headrace), 1 **Gadwall**, 1 **Hooded Merganser**, 16 **Tundra Swan**, 100+ **Common Goldeneye**, 50 **Common Mergansers**, 20+ **Black Duck** and about 400 **Mallards**.

February was a somewhat interesting month for birding in the Sault and area. In Echo Bay a **Red-winged Black Bird** was observed on the 1<sup>st</sup> and at a feeder in the Michipicoten Harbour area an **Eastern Bluebird** was observed on the 9<sup>th</sup>. The **Bewick's Wren** in Massey re-appeared on the 11<sup>th</sup> and was joined by a **Fox Sparrow**. Several dead and dying **Common Redpolls** were reported in February (likely due to *Salmonella* infection) and overall finch numbers decreased in some areas and increased in others. Gull numbers also continued to decrease as water bodies finally froze over. Waterfowl species not reported in January but observed in February included 2 **Bufflehead**, 1 male **Greater Scaup**, **Pacific Loon** (Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>, St. Marys River in by the Roberta Bondar Pavilion), **Common Loon**, and female **Red-breasted Merganser**. Several **Rough-legged Hawk**, **Bohemian Waxwings**, **Snow Bunting** and **Horned Larks** were reported in Sault Michigan in February. Also reported in Sault Michigan were 2 **Northern Shrike**, 1 **Gyrfalcon**, 1 **Northern Hawk Owl**, 1 **Snowy Owl** and 1 **Peregrine Falcon** (Edison Sault power plant on the 19<sup>th</sup>). On the 19<sup>th</sup> a **Common Grackle** and **Robin** were observed at a feeder on Mark Street and that same day the male **Harlequin Duck** and a **Belted Kingfisher** were reported at the locks. A possible early migrant **Peregrine Falcon** was observed on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Also observed on the 27<sup>th</sup> was a **Red-tailed Hawk** on Cemetery Road., a **Boreal Chickadee** at Wishart Park and a

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** on the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) grounds.

Due to late winter conditions, March started off very slowly for birders in the north as they waited for species being reported from Southern Ontario and Michigan to arrive. On the 5<sup>th</sup> a **Snowy Owl** was reported in Michigan near Rudyard. On the 7<sup>th</sup> an **Eastern Towhee** was reported on Nino Drive (over-wintered at this residence). Two **Red-winged Black Birds** were reported in Echo Bay on the 9<sup>th</sup> and a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was reported on the 12<sup>th</sup> at Langdon Crescent. Waves of **American Robins** were reported on the 19<sup>th</sup> crossing the St. Marys River at the foot of Pine Street. Also on this day more **Red-winged Black Birds** arrived on territory. The **Ring-billed Gulls** arrived in mid-March and total gull numbers rose steadily for the rest of the month. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, 4 **Turkey Vultures**, 1 **Harris' Sparrow** and **Purple Finch** arrived in Blind River. This same day, **Snow Geese** and **Killdeer** were being reported on Manitoulin Island. On the 29<sup>th</sup> **Common Grackles**, **Cedar Waxwings** and a large number of **Canada Geese** were reported for the birding area. Also seen on the 29<sup>th</sup> were the first **Sandhill Cranes** for the season and groups of **Sharp-tailed Grouse** getting ready for their lek.

Whitefish Point Bird Observatory reported migratory **Golden Eagles**, **Spruce Grouse**, **Long-tailed Ducks**, **Great Blue Heron**, **Red-shouldered Hawks**, **Northern Goshawks**, **Merlin** and **Bald Eagle** for March. A **Black-billed Magpie** that arrived on the 29<sup>th</sup> was the highlight of the month at the point.

The long awaited spring migration arrived in the north in April. On the 11<sup>th</sup> a **Fox Sparrow**

was observed on Fifth Line and **Song Sparrows**, **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **American Tree Sparrows** were numerous all over. Four more **Fox Sparrow** were reported on the 13<sup>th</sup> at four different locations. On Whitefish Island 1 **Carolina Wren**, 1 **Eastern Towhee**, 2 **Chipping Sparrow**, 2 **Swamp Sparrow**, 2 **Northern Cardinal** and a **Hermit Thrush** were observed on the 14<sup>th</sup>. By mid-April many of the waterfowl had arrived in the Sault birding area. New species included **Snow Geese**, **Redhead**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Tundra Swans**, **Hooded Mergansers**, **American Wigeon**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Blue-winged Teal**, **Northern Pintail**, **Ring-necked Ducks**, **Black Duck**, **Bufflehead** and **Common Merganser**. One **Common Snipe**, 4 **Tree Swallow** and 1 **Barn Swallow** were observed in the Echo Bay Marsh Complex on the 12<sup>th</sup>. A hawk count on the 13<sup>th</sup> at the Sault Locks yielded 217 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 12 **Rough-legged Hawks**, 1 **Osprey**, 3 **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, 3 **Northern Harrier**, 2 **Bald Eagles** and 3 **Golden Eagles**. Also seen this day were 4 first-winter **Glaucous Gulls** and 1 **Red-necked Grebe** at the foot of the rapids. At Whitefish Point Bird Observatory a **Black Vulture** was seen on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Also seen on the 12<sup>th</sup> were 2 **Short-eared Owls**. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, a **Harlan's Hawk** and 33 **Long-eared Owls** were observed. An unexpected, yet brief visit by a male **Western Tanager** ("First" record for the Sault area) on April 26<sup>th</sup>, at the CFS Arboretum, got the blood flowing in those who were not convinced that migration was in full swing.

Throughout the month of May there were many new arrivals in a very short period of time. On May 1<sup>st</sup> the **Western Tanager** was seen heading west on Old Baseline Road. On the 17<sup>th</sup> a **Western Tanager** (possibly the same bird) was observed at Bellevue Park (Topsail Island). On May 4<sup>th</sup> a **Willet** was seen at the mouth of Whitefish Creek near the Locks

(another "First" record for the Sault). Also on the 4<sup>th</sup> were reports of **Forster's Tern**, **Black-crowned Night Heron**, **Lincoln Sparrow**, **Savannah Sparrow**, **White-throated Sparrow**, **White-crowned Sparrow** and **Clay-coloured Sparrow** on and around Whitefish Island. The last report of the male **Harlequin Duck** in the St. Marys River was on the 10<sup>th</sup>. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, an incredible report of two male **Painted Buntings** (yet another "First" record for the Sault) at a residence on Highway 17 in Batchawana Bay came in. Both were photographed by Bob Knudsen at a feeder the same day but apparently they had been around this residence for two weeks prior to being reported.

By early to mid-May migrants such as **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, **Palm Warbler**, **Black-throated Green Warbler**, **Black and White Warbler**, **Yellow Warbler**, **Northern Parula**, **Nashville Warbler**, **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, **Ovenbird**, **Chestnut-sided Warbler** and **Orange-crowned Warbler** had arrived. The first **Eastern Kingbirds** and **Purple Martin** were seen on the 11<sup>th</sup> on Lake George Road and Lakeview Road. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of May the first report of a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was made and a male **Yellow-headed Black Bird** was seen on Prince Lake. **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks**, **Northern Oriole**, **Swainson's Thrush** and **Scarlet Tanager** were observed at Whitefish Island on the 15<sup>th</sup>. On the 16<sup>th</sup> the first report of **Indigo Bunting** came in. Observed on the 18<sup>th</sup> was an adult **Harris' Sparrow** and **Wilson's Warbler** on Church Street in Echo Bay, a **Yellow Rail** and **Bobolinks** at the end of Lake Street in Echo Bay, an **American Redstart**, 90 **Dunlin**, 30 **Short-billed Dowitchers**, 3 **Ruddy Turnstone**, 2 **Lesser Yellowlegs**, 6 **Spotted Sandpiper** and 2 **Solitary Sandpipers** on and around Whitefish Island. On May 19<sup>th</sup> an adult **Eared Grebe** was seen at Bruce Mines Sewage Lagoons.

Between the months of June and October bird records were not kept due to uncontrollable circumstances. Breeding Bird Atlas co-ordinators for the North can be contacted for more details on breeding reports for 2002.

The fall migration was quite intense for songbirds and shorebirds this year; however waterfowl migration was a bit non-dramatic. On some clear nights in September and October hundreds of migrants could be heard flying south in a period of only ten minutes and on some mornings, trees and shrubs along the St. Marys River would be dripping with warblers and alive with sparrows and thrush. Following a cold snap and a blanket of snow on



the Eve of Halloween many of the later migrants in the area moved south to warmer locales. Amongst this group were most or all of the remaining **Great Blue Herons, Sandhill Cranes, Canada Geese, Double-crested Cormorants, Spotted Sandpipers, American Robins, Mourning Doves, Common Grackles, White-throated Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Tree Sparrows** and **Winter Wrens**.

During the month of November a number of bird species were regularly found at feeders and wooded areas in the Sault birding area.

This includes small groups of **American Goldfinch, Blue Jay, Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, Red- and White-breasted Nuthatch, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, American Crow, Common Raven, European Starling, House Sparrow, Mourning Dove and Rock Dove**. The first **Common Redpolls** were reported at a feeder behind White Pines High School on the 18<sup>th</sup> but were gone by the 27<sup>th</sup>. Birds found irregularly at feeders and wooded areas included **Pileated Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet** and **American Tree Sparrow**. **Northern Cardinals** were not reported as abundant; however, reports for these birds were regular and widespread indicating a good number of over-wintering individuals. A highlight on the 25<sup>th</sup> was the report of a **Carolina Wren** on River Road. This bird stayed around in the area for most of November.

Raptor migration was sparse but steady during the first weeks of November. **Red-tailed Hawks** and **Eagles** were most prevalent. On the 7<sup>th</sup> an immature **Golden Eagle** was observed feeding on a carcass on Ranger Lake Road and on the 8<sup>th</sup> an adult **Golden Eagle** was observed flying over the Great Lakes Forestry Centre. A number of adult and immature **Bald Eagles** took up residence along the river in November. They were regularly seen in front of the Pine Street Marina, at the foot of Dacey Road, and/or on the Michigan side flying or perched in riverside trees along the river. A **Kestrel** observed on Whitefish Island on the 15<sup>th</sup> took up winter residence and was seen throughout the rest of November. Only two reports of **Merlin** came in for the entire month of November, which appears to be down from other years. A light phase **Rough-legged Hawk** first observed in late October was last observed hunting on Whitefish Island on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Two other light-phase **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen occasionally along Highway 17 between Echo



Bay and the Pine Island turn-off. **Northern Shrike** reports for this time of year seemed a bit down from other years. The appearance of a dark phase **Gyr Falcon** on the 28<sup>th</sup>, at the Great Lakes Forestry Centre, was the first of a half a dozen reports of **Gyr Falcon** to come in before the end of the year. A late report that came in near the end of the month indicated that a dead **Great Gray Owl** was found on the shores of Pancake Bay on the 14th. No other owl reports came in during November.

Between 300 and 500 gulls, mostly **Herring**, concentrated at foot of the St Marys River Rapids in November. On the 8th one first-winter **Glaucous Gull** and one first-winter **Greater Black-back Gull** were observed in the group. These two birds were last seen on the 18th. One male **Harlequin Duck** was observed feeding amongst 40 **Common Mergansers** and 20 **Common Goldeneye** in the upper, middle and lower portions of the rapids throughout the entire month. **Common Goldeneye** numbers were low for the main portion of the river but larger groups of 100 plus birds were seen in other open water areas such as Haviland Bay and Temby Bay. Also seen in Haviland Bay, on the 2nd, near the mouth of Stokely Creek, were 4 **White-winged Scoter**, 1 **Green-Winged Teal**, 10 **Canada Geese**, 3 **Red-necked Grebes**, 1 **Horned Grebe** and 2 **Hooded Mergansers**. That same day along the western shore of Haviland Bay, 14 **Horned Larks** and 8 **Snow Bunting** were seen foraging in the gravel. Also of note that day were 25 **Bohemian Waxwings** taking turns drinking water along the banks of the Stokely Creek. A similar size group of **Bohemian Waxwings** was seen on the 10th at Whitefish Island. No other reports for **Bohemian Waxwings** came in for the remainder of the year. On the 9th, an **American Coot** was reported in the marsh at Echo Bay. Three hundred and twenty **Tundra swans**, 300+ **Canada Geese**, 100+ **Hooded Mergansers**, 26 **Bufflehead**, 200 **Mallard**, 20 **Black Duck**, 30

**Goldeneye** and 1 **American Wigeon** were observed in the Echo Bay/Pumpkin Point marsh complex on November 16th. One **Red-throated Loon** in winter plumage was reported at the top end of the recreational lock along with an unidentified **Scoter** on the 15th. One **Red-necked Grebe** and one **Common Loon** in winter plumage were seen at the foot of Pine Street on the 22nd. On the 30<sup>th</sup>, 110 **Mallards**, 6 **Black Duck**, 70 **Common Mergansers**, 80 **Common Goldeneye** and 2 **Hooded Mergansers** were seen between Algoma Cabins in Sault Ontario and the downstream side of the compensating gate. At the foot of Dacey Road on the same day, the following species were observed: 3 **American Wigeon**, 9 **Gadwall**, 5 **Hooded Mergansers**, 13 **Bufflehead**, 14 **Canada Geese**, 40 **Mallard**, 3 **Black Duck**, 2 **Common Goldeneye** and 3 **Common Merganser**.

The last month of the year provided a few interesting sightings. A small flock of **Cedar Waxwing** was observed on December 1 within the new conservation reserve near Pine Shores Road. On December 2 and 9<sup>th</sup> an **American Robin** was observed near the foot of Pine Street. Three **American Robins** were observed along Queen Street near Dacey Road on the 6th. On December 3rd and 6<sup>th</sup>, two pair of **Northern Cardinals** were reported on MacDonald Street and Parkdale Drive respectively. Also on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, a **Northern Flicker** was reported coming to a suet feeder behind White Pines High School. Another **Northern Flicker** was observed feeding at a suet ball on December 9 at a residence on Parkewood Drive (just off Airport Road). Both Flickers were observed regularly in these areas for the remainder of the year. Also observed on Parkewood Drive was a female **Black-backed Woodpecker** on the 11th. The numbers of **American Goldfinch** being reported increased noticeably the first week of December but reports for **Pine Siskin**, **Common Redpoll**, **Pine Grosbeak** and

**Evening Grosbeak** were noticeably absent. The first reports for crossbills came in around mid-December. On the 17th and 20th, 21 **White-winged** and 2 **Red Crossbills** were observed feeding on Spruce cones behind White Pines High School. On December 27<sup>th</sup>,

12 **White-winged** and 2 **Red Crossbills** were observed along Ranger Lake Road and on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003, 2 dozen **White-winged Crossbills** were observed in the trees along a snowmobile trail, north of Peoples Road. Three **White-throated Sparrows** were also reported on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> coming to a feeder on Parkdale Drive. Two **Gray Jays** and half a dozen **Purple Finch** were observed on the 13<sup>th</sup> in the woodlot behind White Pines High School. **Mourning Doves** became much less noticeable in December as temperatures dropped and snow levels increased. Sixteen **Bohemian Waxwings** were observed just outside of Algoma Mills on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 10 **Cedar Waxwing** were observed on December 20 at the CFS Arboretum. About 200 **Snow Buntings** were observed on the 12<sup>th</sup>, on Riverside Road between 11 and 12 Mile Road in Michigan. Fifty **Snow Buntings** were observed on the 15<sup>th</sup> in Rydal Bank and 20 were observed in the football field behind White Pines High School on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Also

observed along Ranger Lake Road on December 27<sup>th</sup> were 6 **Purple Finch**, 6 **Evening Grosbeak**, 1 **Pine Siskin** and 12 **Goldfinch**.

A report on December 2 indicated that a pair of **Barred Owls** had been seen and heard in the Goulais area. On December 5, a light-phase **Rough-legged Hawk** and a **Kestrel** were observed along Highway 17 near the Pine Island Turnoff. In Michigan on the 7<sup>th</sup>, six **Rough-legged Hawks** (4 light morphs and 2 dark morphs) were observed along M129 and 1 male **Northern Harrier** was observed at the Straits. This same day one **Northern Shrike** was observed at the corner of Ridge and 5½ Mile Road and another **Northern Shrike** was observed on Ridge Road between 6 and 7 Mile Road. Additionally two **Gyrfalcons**, one larger dark phase female and one smaller gray phase male were reported flying together at the foot of Dacey Road, Sault ON, on December 7. Both birds were pestering a group of 8 **Bald Eagles**, 4 adult and 4 immature. They were watched for several minutes before flying off. On the 15<sup>th</sup> two similarly described **Gyrfalcon** were reported on the top of a utility pole on Government Road, between Smith Road and Puddingstone Road. Also on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 1 **Red-tailed Hawk** and 2 **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen just outside Echo Bay. Adult and immature **Bald Eagles** were seen almost daily along many portions of the St Marys River throughout December. A report on December 20 indicated that a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was calling behind White Pines High School in the late evening and early morning hours. On December 17<sup>th</sup> a report of a **Great Gray Owl** came in. It was seen flying over M28, west of I-75 and just east of O'Jala Road in Sault Michigan. The **Northern Shrike** that had been hunting on Whitefish Island was last reported on the 14<sup>th</sup>. A report on December 28 indicated that a **Snowy Owl** and a **Northern Shrike** were observed on 7 Mile Road west of Shunk Road in Sault Michigan.

During December, **Herring Gull** numbers around the St. Marys Rapids varied between 300 and 1500. Reports of around 20 **Glaucous Gull**, 1 **Great Black-backed Gull**, 1 **Nelson's Gull** and 1 **Iceland Gull** came in during December. One male **Harlequin Duck** was seen occasionally in the rapids in December and was last reported on the 15<sup>th</sup>. One **Greater Scaup** female was observed on the 12<sup>th</sup> at Dock # 1 on the Michigan side. About 400 **Mallards**, 20 **Black Duck**, 50 **Common Mergansers**, 2 **Red-breasted Mergansers**, 150 **Common Goldeneye**, 6 **Bufflehead** and 15 **Hooded Mergansers** were seen along portions of the St. Marys River in December. The numbers of **Common Goldeneye** increased slightly as the month progressed. A family group of 5 **Mute Swans** (2 adults and 3 immature) was seen near the end of Dacey Road on the 20th.

Some other birds that were not reported to the hotline but recorded in December during the Christmas Bird Count include: 3

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, 1 **Common Grackle**, 16 **Pileated Woodpeckers**, 2 **Ruddy Duck**, 6 **Common Loon**, 2 **Gadwall**, 4 **Merlin**, 1 **Golden Eagle** and 1 **House Finch**.

Thanks to all those who phoned, e-mailed or passed on their bird observations directly to Bob Knudsen and myself in 2002. I would like to personally thank Bob Knudsen for his dedicated efforts put towards the Border Birder Hotline, towards bird surveys and towards outdoor awareness and education. I would also like to thank Bob and his wife Joanne for sharing so much of their birding insight and knowledge, with myself and others, over the last few years.

As Bob would say...*Great Birding in the Border Area.*

Ken McIlwrick (recently appointed Ornithological Chair)

### 103rd Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, December 14, 2002

As always, the weather played a decisive role in the 48th (for Sault Ste. Marie) annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC).

All year it seemed that each season came late, beginning with a late spring, followed by a late summer and a very late fall. But those of us who were expecting the pattern to continue with a late winter were fooled by Mother Nature: winter came right on schedule. However, the initial week or so of snow and cold was followed by a very mild period. This had the effect of holding back migration.

The excellent food crop in the bush surrounding the CBC circle - partly dependent on this year's weather, and partly dependent on the growing cycles of various tree species - also affected numbers, as many small passerines found food sources easily, and were not forced to concentrate in small areas, such as feeders.

The mild spell also ensured that ice cover was virtually non-existent, so diving and dabbling ducks of all kinds, as well as loons and swans, were able to forage with little or no trouble.

An overcast day, with no bright sunshine glaring or snow falling, ensured that visibility was excellent for the 62 observers in the field and 21 at the feeders. Also, the very light winds made it easier for observers to hear distant calls.

Unusual species for this year's count included **Purple Finch** 15; **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** 3; **Common Grackle** 1; **Ruddy Duck** 2; **Brown Creeper** 1; **Red-tailed Hawk** 3; **Red-bellied Woodpecker** 2; **Northern Flicker** 2; **Northern Cardinal** 4; **American Robin** 3; **Merlin** 4; **Harlequin Duck** 1; **Long-tailed Duck** 1; **Iceland Gull** 1; **American Kestrel** 1; **Red-breasted**

**Merganser 3; Golden Eagle 1; Mute Swan 4; Hooded Merganser 12; Bufflehead 2; Gadwall 1; and - quite a coup for Joanne Knudsen - a Saw-whet Owl!**

Also, in the Count Week were **House Finch 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk 1; White-winged Crossbills 21; and Red Crossbills 2.**

Unusual numbers included **Pileated Woodpecker 17; Bald Eagle 17; Common Loon 6; Glaucous Gull 19; Merlin 4.**

In unusually low numbers this year were **American Tree Sparrow 8; Snow Bunting 4; Pine Grosbeak 4; Cedar Waxwing 36.**

Totally missing from the count were **Redpoll 0; Evening Grosbeak 0; Sharp-tailed Grouse 0; and Snowy Owl 0.** The 2 **Gyr Falcon** that had been seen the weekend before the Count Day were spotted the day after several miles outside of the circle, near the St Joseph Island turn-off!

As always, birders, both in the field and at feeders, did a tremendous job of finding both good species and good numbers and are to be congratulated for their hard work and dedication. Many experiences of fun and adventure have been relayed to me over the past while from participants, including: a wonderful sighting of a moose by Donna Ryckman-Rooney's group; Al Gordon's discovery of a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** in his yard, surrounded by a considerable flock of very nervous passerines; the thrill that Harold Brain and Ken Willis felt when they spotted a **Golden Eagle**; Bob Knudsen and his group sighting a **Long-tailed Duck** barrelling 'up the pipe' to some very important destination upstream; and the **Gadwall** that Tony Walker and his group saw in the waters of the St. Marys River. Also reported were frustrating moments, including an exasperating keys-locked-in-the-car experience for Helen Hutchinson's group; the near miss for Doug

Munson who told me of a huge mixed flock of waxwings and other winter passerines, unfortunately near his home in Brimley, quite outside of the circle; and a similar experience for Carl Linhart who saw several good species, unfortunately also just outside the confines of the CBC circle. I had a mixed experience when I spotted and identified the **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** on Fish Hatchery Road. I experienced the thrill familiar to all birders when they spot a good species, but it was combined with the sinking feeling that no one would believe me.

The total number of species was 55 (plus 4 more for Count Week species) and the total number of individuals on Count Day was 8,582.

See the following page for a complete listing of sightings.

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Wilshere,  
CBC Compiler

**“A” List - (usually seen on Count)**

Common Loon	6
Canada Goose	16
Mallard Duck	1158
Black Duck	19
Common Goldeneye	152
Common Merganser	73
Rough-legged Hawk	9
Bald Eagle	17
	(14 ad.+ 3 imm.)
Ruffed Grouse	7
Herring Gull	1856
Glaucous Gull	19
Rock Dove	895
Mourning Dove	139
Downey Woodpecker	30
Hairy Woodpecker	22
Pileated Woodpecker	17
Northern Shrike	4
Blue Jay	118
Common Raven	382
American Crow	447
Black-capped Chickadee	715
Red-breasted Nuthatch	45
White-breasted Nuthatch	47
European Starling	1931
American Tree Sparrow	8
Dark-eyed Junco	80
Snow Bunting	4
Pine Grosbeak	4
American Goldfinch	241
House Sparrow	13

**“B” List - (not usually seen on Count)**

(cw = count week)

Mute Swan	4
Hooded Merganser	12
Red-breasted Merganser	3
Bufflehead	2
Long-tailed Duck	1
Harlequin Duck	1
Ruddy Duck	2
Gadwall	1
Iceland Gull	1
Golden Eagle	1
Red-tailed Hawk	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk(cw)	1
Merlin	4
American Kestrel	1
Saw-whet Owl	1
Northern Flicker	2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2
American Robin	3
Gray Jay	2
Cardinal	4
Brown Creeper	1
Common Grackle	1
Cedar Waxwing	36
House Finch (cw)	1
Purple Finch	15
Pine Siskin	2
White-winged Crossbills (cw)	21
Red Crossbills (cw)	2

### Environmental Action Committee

Environmental Action Committee activities are ongoing. Requests for input continues, be it reviews and comments on public documents, participation in workshops, participation on advisory committees, networking and responding to environmental concerns. These requests are from our members, our community, industry, provincial and state governments, provincial, state and national organizations and associations.

As public interest in the protection of our environment and natural heritage grows, the need for networking and partnerships with other interest groups grows. The need for our participation, support and involvement grows.

To move forward, we need full support from all our members. To accomplish this in 2003, we need additional members for our committee.

We have need of a recording secretary, volunteers for fund-raising publicity, letter writing, ecological surveys, monitoring environmental conditions, attending public information sessions and meetings. Most importantly we need a meeting place.

We can be proud of our past achievements. As a result of our past work regarding the protection of the last roadless area in our area - The Megisan Lake E.A., and of our input to the Ontario Living Legacy Program, most of the recommendations that we advocated have been accepted, or are in the process of being implemented.

The Great Lakes Heritage Coast and 21 sites in the Sault Ste. Marie District have been protected and set aside as provincial parks or conservation reserves. Please follow the development of Algoma Headwaters Signature Site.

Members of the Environmental Action Committee serve as representatives to St. Marys River Bi-National Public Advisory Council, the Sault Ste Marie Local Citizens Committee concerning timber management

planning, and the Lake Superior Advisory Committee.

There is a large number of activities and projects associated with the above committees.

One of this years concerns of the Lake Superior Advisory Committee is the apparent increase in lamprey predation on the Black Bay/Nipigon fisheries

The purpose of the St. Marys River Bi-National Public Advisory Council, is the cleanup and restoration of the St. Marys River. The council addresses issues such as the Stage II Report; Research proposals; BPAC office; Algoma Steel; St. Mary's River Fisheries Task Force; LAMPS; BiNational Programs and all other issues relating to the watershed of the St. Mary's River including human health; Michigan State Public Advisory Council (SPAC); IJC; Environmental Forum.

Some workshops and information sessions were attended in addition to the above committee meetings. These include:

- \* Great Lakes Heritage Coast.
- \* Friends of St. Marys River .
- \* October 3, 2002 Attended a Free Volunteer Leadership Development Program
- \* Voice Workshop & Community Forum. Subject was "Well-managed, effective volunteer organization".
- \* November 27, 2002. Attended a Cost Volunteer Leadership Development Program Workshop. Subject was "Legal Issues".
- \* Save Gros Cap Bluffs. Our interest in preserving and protecting Gros Cap Bluffs is on going. We thank our members within our club and from the community for their continuing support for this project.

Other areas of activities were the following:

- \* Truck Road Access from Trunk Road to Highway 17 (New) Primary Design Study G.W.P. 406-01-00
- \* December 5, 2002. Answered a survey regarding Algoma Headwaters Provincial Park for Sault College student.
- \* Stewardship of Shore Ridges Conservation Area
- \* Dust on Street
- \* Lake Superior Provincial Park
- \* Clean North Green Garden Tour
- \* BPAC Environmental Summit
- \* St. Marys River Fisheries Task Group
- \* Algoma and Area Regional Trails Council
- \* Richardson Creek
- \* Moose Committee
- \* Casino property pollution
- \* Lands for Life
- \* Tree planting
- \* L.C.C. Committee
- \* Correspondence
- \* Algoma Headwaters Signature Site

In addition to the above, the club continues to participate in the Adopt-a-Highway Project. In May and October 2002, several members of the club picked up litter along about one km. of Highway 550 near the intersection with Airport Road. Helen Hutchinson, Wendy Lalouette, Doreen Guerriero, Judy Falkins, Marie Linhart, Joan Jones, Elizabeth MacKinnon, and Betty and Gerry Bennett, with advice from Cliff Wallwork, donned safety vests and gloves, to collect several black bags of garbage for MTO pickup.

These activities are the results of the many hours and hard work by dedicated, committed environmentalists. My deep thanks to each for their support and valuable contributions. Some

of these are: Ray Gareau, Judy Falkins, and Terry Armstrong.

We invite you to come to our meetings. Join with us, and make the world a little better.

Respectively submitted,

Donald L. Marles

### **From the Editors' Desk**

We would like to thank all contributors to the 2002 Annual Report of the Sault Naturalists, and also those who have contributed to the *Wake-Robin* in 2002. We continue to be impressed by the quality of your submissions.

Many of you have shown interest in receiving future publications of our club in digital format. We can provide copies of the *Wake-Robin* and Annual report as an email attachment if you make the request and provide your e-mail address. In order to keep the download time to a minimum we can delete the graphic content; but if you have high-speed internet access we can include the graphics if you so desire. Any attachments will be in Adobe Acrobat format, a file format which can be read by any computer system.

We request any comments and suggests from our readers. We would like to hear from you re design, format, content – you name it.

**Financial Statement for the Fiscal Year 2002**

Prepared and submitted by Gail Andrew, Treasurer

**Operating Expenses (CIBC account, Canadian dollars)**

<b>Receipts</b>		<b>Disbursements</b>	
Membership	\$ 1,425.35	Stationary	\$ 322.48
Donations	\$ 55.00	Postage	\$ 233.23
Resale and Crafts	\$ 68.75	Newsletter	\$ 145.36
Premium on U.S.	\$ 23.82	Border Birder Hotline	\$ 603.74
Capitol Projects	\$ 23,043.29	Insurance	\$ 355.00
		FON Membership	\$ 150.00
		Miscellaneous	\$ 55.28
		Annual Dinner	\$ 109.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 24,616.21</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,974.81</b>

**Operating Expenses (Huntington National Bank Account, U.S. Dollars)**

<b>Receipts</b>		<b>Disbursements</b>	
Memberships	\$ 307.00	Postage	\$ 81.47
Resale	\$ 5.00	Donations	\$ 98.00
		Stationary	\$ 19.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 312.00</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 198.72</b>

**Savings (Northern Credit Union Account, Canadian Dollars)**

Membership Shares	\$ 25.00
Patronage Shares	\$ 88.00
Plan 24	\$ 1,002.19
Term Deposit #1	\$ 2,468.59
Term Deposit #2	\$ 1,975.49
Term Deposit #3	\$ 1,159.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 6,718.31</b>

## Sault Naturalists Membership Form

C/o Ron Prickett, Membership Chairperson, Sault Naturalists; Telephone (705) 254-1533  
 P.O. Box 21035, 292 Northern Ave., Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, P6B 6H3, Canada

### Categories and Fees

- |                                     |                                  |                          |                                     |                      |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$10.00 CD<br>\$ 7.00 US | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | 15.00 CD<br>11.00 US |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Family  | 20.00 CD<br>\$15.00      | <input type="checkbox"/> Life       | \$225.00 CD          |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Country & Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

The YEAR on your address label indicates the year of paid-up membership.  
 The membership year is from January to December.