

# Bird Wing Report



## Notices and Reminders

**Breeding Bird Atlas meeting:** Whether you are already an Atlas participant or a birder who would like to learn more about how you can contribute to the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, join us for a morning outing as we kick off the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the project! As you can see from Garry Waldram's photo below, Bald Eagles are already nesting.



- **Date/Time: Saturday, April 22, 2023 (10:00am - 12:00pm)**
- **Location: Laurier Woods Conservation Area  
Brule Street Parking Lot**
- **10:00am - 10:30am:** Join us at the Brule Street parking lot to meet with fellow atlasers and birders. We will review our Region's accomplishments to date and discuss how birders of all skill levels can contribute to the Atlas-3 project.
- **10:30am - 12pm:** From the Brule Street parking lot, we will walk part of the **Laurier Woods trails** together to look for early spring migrants and learn how to submit observations to the Atlas. Depending on time and interest we could then go to **Black Forest Preserve** a short distance up Highway 11N.



Registration is not required for this event, but if you would like to confirm your attendance or obtain more details, please contact Regional Coordinator (Region #29 North Bay) Grant McKercher at [northbay@birdsonario.org](mailto:northbay@birdsonario.org) or [gmckercher@mac.com](mailto:gmckercher@mac.com)

**Bird Wing Meeting:** Our final Bird Wing meeting of the season before outings begin in May is on **Tuesday, April 25**. This meeting will be **an in-person meeting at the North Bay Public Library in the Board Room** – downstairs to the left as you enter the building – and will start **at 6:30 pm and not 7:00**. The earlier time enables us to vacate the building before closing time to keep the janitor happy! **Sue Gratton will be talking about her private birding tour this past February in Cozumel** – with some photos to go along with her talk. Always fun to see birds of other countries and some of Sue's birds we will probably recognize.

**Bird Bash:** April's Bird Bash will take place over **the weekend of April 29-30**. We saw 52 species in March despite the weather and the continuing high snow depths and frozen lakes and lagoons. So a lot more to see come late April. Surely real spring will be here by then!

**May Laurier Woods Walks:** **Each Saturday morning in May, from 10:00 am until noon**, Dick Tafel will once again be leading bird walks in Laurier Woods through Friends of Laurier Woods. These walks are for the public, although Bird Wingers can certainly join in and usually do. These walks prepare us for our **Bird Wing outing in Laurier Woods on May 23 from 10:00 to noon**. Last year, we certainly saw some interesting birds during this Bird Wing outing, like the Green Heron, the Sora and the American Bittern. It was just one of those very special bird mornings in May.

So lots of dates to mark on your calendar. Busy spring ahead. Reminders will be sent before each event.

# A trip of a lifetime

Part 2, from East Falkland Island to South Georgia Island

*By Renee Levesque, photos as indicated*



*Courtesy of Fred Pinto*

## Introduction

My vision of Fred Pinto on Salisbury Plain amongst 100,000 King Penguins and a backdrop of snow-covered peaks and blue sky, with seabirds flying overhead is about to become a reality as Fred and his shipmates aboard the M/V Hondius head for South Georgia Island, leaving behind East Falkland Island and the continental shelf.

As the ship plies its way through the deep waters of the South Atlantic Ocean, for part two of Fred's once-in-a-lifetime odyssey, I will narrate his journey to South Georgia Island based on Fred's presentation at February's Bird Wing meeting, his itinerary, and some online research. (Birds mentioned for the first time during Fred's trip are highlighted.)

## From the Falkland Islands to South Georgia Island



JJ Harrison, Wikipedia

It wasn't long after leaving East Falkland that Fred was rewarded with seeing a **Wandering Albatross** (photo at left) to say nothing of Fin Whales, several of them quite close to the ship. (I have not mentioned much about the seals and whales Fred saw, though they would be of great interest.) Also flying around the ship were **Atlantic Petrels**, endemic to the South Atlantic. They are large, stocky seabirds, dark-coloured above and white underneath, feeding mainly on squid. They are listed as Endangered.

The Wandering Albatross is a large albatross similar in size to the other large albatross, the Southern Royal Albatross, but its wingspan is greater than any other living bird, enabling it to remain in the air for several hours at a time without flapping its wings.

It is a far-ranging bird, known to circumnavigate the southern ocean three times in a year, covering more than 120,000 km. As it follows Fred's ship, I think this must surely be the albatross the sailor shot in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It is a handsome albatross with its white body and black and white wings and its large pink bill. It spends most of its life in flight, travelling great distances to find food, and landing only to feed and, every other year, to breed.

There were two full days at sea as the *Hondius* headed to South Georgia. Bird numbers began increasing as the ship approached the Antarctic Convergence where the cold, dense Antarctic waters flowing north converge with the relatively warmer sub-Antarctic waters. This "results in an upwelling of nutrient-rich water from the ocean floor," a process that is "key for all life around the Antarctic continent and the climate worldwide." Many species of birds, fish, vegetation, and animals that are typical of the Antarctic waters are rare on the other side of the convergence.

On the way to the crossing of the convergence, spotted flying alongside the ship were the **Cape Petrel**, the **Black-bellied Storm Petrel** and the Wilsons's Storm Petrel, as well as many prions, and yet another albatross, the **Light-mantled Sooty Albatross**.

The Light-mantled Sooty Albatross is a small sooty-brown albatross with a darker head, a dark bill and a partial white eyering. It begins breeding between 8 and 15 years of age, fledging a chick every 5 years or so. It can breed until 32 and live beyond 40 years.



Wikipedia

From the photos Fred showed, one of my favourite petrels by appearance is the Cape Petrel (photo at left), distinctively patterned in black and white. It is a small common seabird that breeds in the Antarctic Peninsula and in South Georgia, although in non-breeding season it can be found as far north as the Galapagos Islands. Don't let the name of the Black-bellied Storm Petrel fool you. It does not have a black belly, but rather a white one. Other than its white rump and a white band over its rump, it is a small dark seabird.

After crossing the Antarctic Convergence, Fred and the passengers experienced breaking waves of up to 3m, but it wasn't enough to stop Fred from going on deck to see the remote Shag Rocks, six dramatic rock formations on the South Georgia Ridge, with no significant vegetation but "plastered" instead with many seabirds – and their guano!

In the surrounding nutrient-rich waters were a Humpback Whale, a Wandering Albatross, a Snow Petrel and a **Northern Giant Petrel**, and giant it is, the size of a small albatross! It is a dark seabird with a whitish face and a massive pink bill 90 to 110 mm long (3.5 to 4.3 inches). It feeds mainly on carrion, fish, krill and squid, but it can be very aggressive, killing other seabirds like penguin chicks, sick or injured adult penguins and the chicks of other seabirds. It breeds in colonies, the largest being in South Georgia Island. I am showing a photo of it (at right) on the ground to show how massive its bill is.

To see even one albatross would be a joy for me, but for the two days at sea, Fred and the other passengers braving the deck despite the swells and the wind saw



Liam Quinn, Wikipedia

all five species of albatross, and many of the petrels, including one not yet mentioned, the **Gray-backed Storm Petrel**, a small dark greyish petrel with a grey rump as opposed to the usual storm petrel white rump. In contrast to its grey rump and upperparts, it has a white belly and white underwings.

I think by this stage in the trip, Fred must have developed the skill to identify most of the various seabirds. When I look at photos of them and describe them, they seem to have quite distinctive colours and patterns. Of course easy to say from where I sit, which is not on the deck of a rolling ship despite its stabilizing equipment.

After two days at sea, South Georgia Island was in sight. In 1775 Captain James Cook made the first landing there. It is an island covered with snow during the winter months from April to November, 170 km long and 35 km wide, with a mountainous terrain and many coves and fjords along the coast. As the ship sailed down East Cumberland Bay on a spring-like day, Shackleton's Cross (a replica of the original left by Shackleton's crew) and Mount Duse, at a height of 505 m, came into splendid view. Nearby was King Edward's Point (KEP), a permanent British Antarctic Survey research station and the capital of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. In terms of population, it is the smallest capital in the world!



*Jens Bludau, Wikipedia*

After anchoring, Fred and his fellow passengers made their way by Zodiac to Grytviken (photo above), once a whale slaughterhouse, established in 1904 and closed in the mid-1960s. Although the area is beautifully impressive now, the buildings of the whaling station and beached whaling ships still stand, rusty and decaying though they may be. Seals have taken over the buildings and **Antarctic Terns**, closely resembling Arctic Terns, nest among the decay. Somehow it is fitting. (Antarctic Terns will be discussed in third installment.)

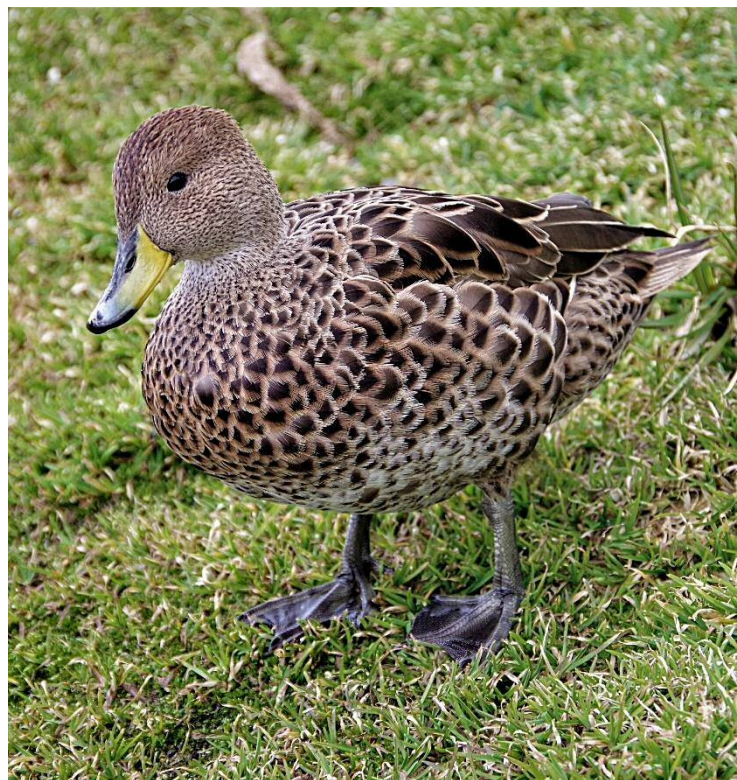
Although Grytviken has no permanent residents, it is an area of Special Tourist Interest that is temporarily inhabited during the summer months to manage the South Georgia Museum, the post office and the small gift shop. It also has a church and a cemetery where Sir Ernest Shackleton and his right-hand man, Frank Wild, are buried. Here at the cemetery Fred and others raised a glass of Shackleton whiskey in a toast to “The Boss”. (Today’s Shackleton whiskey is a replica of the whiskey Shackleton and his crew drank and if you are a whiskey drinker and an admirer of Shackleton, you can probably order it from the LCBO.)



Courtesy of Fred Pinto

Shackleton died of heart problems in January 1922 on his last expedition to the Antarctic and was buried in Grytviken at the request of his wife. Shackleton’s physician, Alexander Macklin, wrote in his diary, "I think this is as 'the Boss' would have had it himself, standing lonely in an island far from civilisation, surrounded by stormy tempestuous seas, & in the vicinity of one of his greatest exploits." (There are many documentaries on Shackleton on YouTube, but one I would recommend is *Shackleton’s Captain* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hKRP8EDAa4>)

Maybe Shackleton was watching over the passengers because in the area of the cemetery, two endemic birds were spotted, the **South Georgia Pintail** (photo at right) and the **South Georgia Pipit**! The South Georgia Pintail is a small, mottled dabbling duck with a reddish crown and a yellow and black bill.



Fred Pinto



The South Georgia Pipit is a sparrow-sized stocky pipit and the only passerine found in South Georgia. It is amazing that a duck and a song bird can even be found this far south!



**Fred Pinto**

Next stop in South Georgia was Fortuna Bay, named after the first whaling ship to operate in Grytviken. And there Fred and crew found their first King Penguin colony, some in their moulting stage (photo at left). Safely navigating through Fur Seals, they made their way to a scenic viewpoint giving a magnificent panorama of the colony below, the *Hondius* anchored in the bay, and the Fortuna Glacier, a tidewater glacier at the foot of the bay.

From Fortuna Bay it was on to Gold Harbour at the eastern end of South Georgia. And here the wildlife was beyond belief – 25,00 breeding pairs of King Penguins, Gentoo Penguins, Brown Skuas, Giant Petrels, Snowy Sheathbills, and the two endemic species, the pintail and the pipit, all these birds in addition to hundreds of Elephant Seals of all ages. The seals and both species of penguins occupied

almost the entire coastal zone! It sounds so incredible when I write it, but it must have been even more than incredible to witness it, to actually be there!

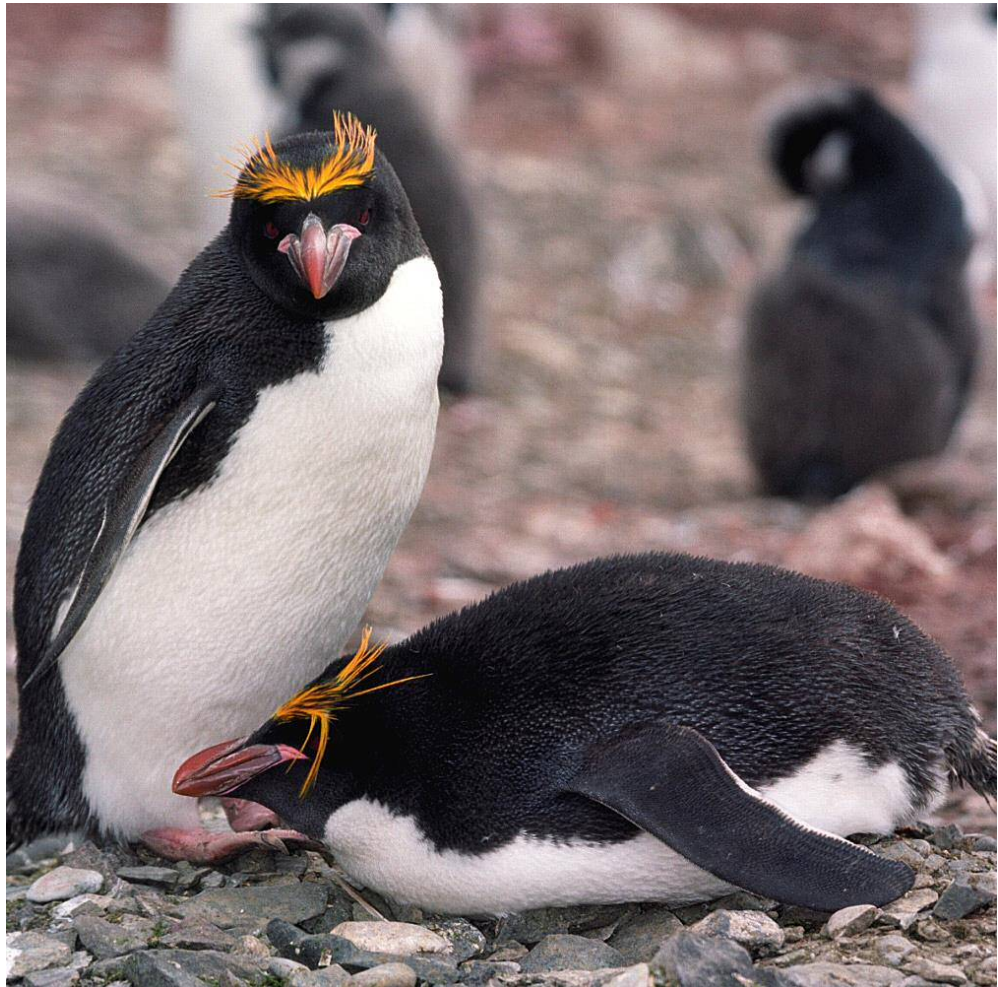
In the continuing spring-like weather, the cruise ship then headed north to Godthul and on the way Fred and passengers were fortunate to see a large group of Humpback Whales feeding along the coast. Godthul was never a whaling station, but was once a whaling supply depot. There are remnants of abandoned small wooden vessels and rusty barrels, and whale bones can be seen along the little beach. Still, it is a scenic place with its harbour surrounded by steep and grassy cliffs, (photo at right) home to several hundred pairs of Gentoo Penguins. (You may recall from last month's installment that



**Liam Quinn, Wikipedia**

these penguins use stones, moss and feathers to build their simple nests and are known to steal stones from each other, sometimes resulting in noisy skirmishes.)

It was then a Zodiac cruise west to Cobblers Cove and Rookery Point, home to a large **Macaroni Penguin** colony. (Photo of a nesting pair at right.) The Macaroni, reminding me of the Rockhopper mentioned in last month's installment, is one of the crested penguins that sport a very striking yellow crest. Also distinctive is its large, bulbous, orange-brown bill. It has a red iris and a patch of bare skin from the base of the bill to the eye. The female generally lays two eggs, but discards the first smaller one after laying a larger second egg. Incubation is done by both the male and the female. For about the first 12 days, both adult Macaroni Penguins keep the egg warm, after which the male will leave for 12 days to hunt for food. When he returns, the female will then leave for 12 days to hunt. During the time each are away, the other will not eat and will lose about 40% of its weight.



*Jerzy Strzelecki, Wikipedia*

Next stop was Rosita Harbour where the beach was littered with Fur Seals, including a leucistic one. Nearby were many South Georgia Pintails and South Georgia Pipits.

And now onto the famous Salisbury Plain, a broad coastal plain on the north of South Georgia Island. Whenever anyone tells me they would like to go to the Antarctic, I picture, among other images, thousands of King Penguins on South Georgia Island and now I can add Fred to that image, for there he is fortunate enough to be standing with them! (See photo at the introduction.) And if it isn't enough to envision thousands of penguins, there is the beach covered with Elephant Seals and in the background, dramatic snow-covered peaks.



*Fred Pinto*

It is such an iconic vision of Salisbury Plain that probably even Fred doesn't have the words to describe how it must have felt to actually be there. I think it would have to be overwhelming, that you would have to pinch yourself that you are standing in a "photo" you probably have seen many times. (Photo above with Fred's cruise ship in the background.)

The King Penguin, a great diver, diving over 100 m (300 ft.) and sometimes to 300 m (1000ft.), is the second largest penguin after the Emperor Penguin, but looking very similar to it. It is a penguin that was nearly wiped out by whalers who used its blubber to make oil for lanterns, heat and cooking. Today, the King Penguin is protected.

When breeding, the King Penguin does not build a nest, but instead keeps a pecking distance from its neighbouring penguins, and is very territorial about the position it has chosen. Its breeding cycle is a long one, taking around 14 to 16 months from laying its egg to when the offspring is fledged. The egg is incubated for about 55 days. Both parents share in the incubation duties in shifts of around 6 to 18 days. Each parent takes turns balancing the egg on their feet and incubating it in their brood pouch. Once the chick is hatched, it continues, as a chick, to spend its time balanced on either parent's feet and sheltered in its brood pouch. The parents alternate duties every 3 to 7 days with one parent guarding while the other forages for food. This lasts for 30 to 40 days, by which time the chick is able to keep warm and protect itself against most predators. (See photo of a fluffy, brown begging chick on the next page.)

In the spirit of communal care, the chicks form a crèche that is watched over by a few adult birds while the parents go foraging for food for themselves and their chicks. It takes from 14 to 16 months before the King chicks are ready to go to sea, leaving their parents when it is summer, a

time when food is more plentiful and conditions more favourable for its survival. (This is much different from smaller penguins that rear their chicks through a single summer. The King chicks develop during the harsh winter months and by doing so, it enables them to meet the challenges of being on their own when they are ready to go to sea come summer.)

One last thing before leaving Salisbury Plain – in addition to the overwhelming visual sensation, imagine all the noise from the penguins and seals and imagine the smell from the guano.



*Fred Pinto*

The final South Georgia adventure began with a very early morning view at St. Andrew's Bay on the north coast. The sun was just rising over the horizon adding to the magnificent scenery (photo below) - high glaciated peaks towering over the huge numbers of Elephant Seals and the half million King Penguins on the beach, the largest colony of King Penguins in South Georgia. Cook Glacier once dominated the bay, but retreated in the 1970s, leaving a lake and the gravel beach in its wake.

With lenticular clouds like saucers in the sky above and with strong blowing winds causing the ship to roll from side-to-side as impressive waves crashed against the bow, the Hondius bid South Georgia goodbye for new adventures in the Antarctic Peninsula.

Next month: From the South Orkney Islands to Antarctica

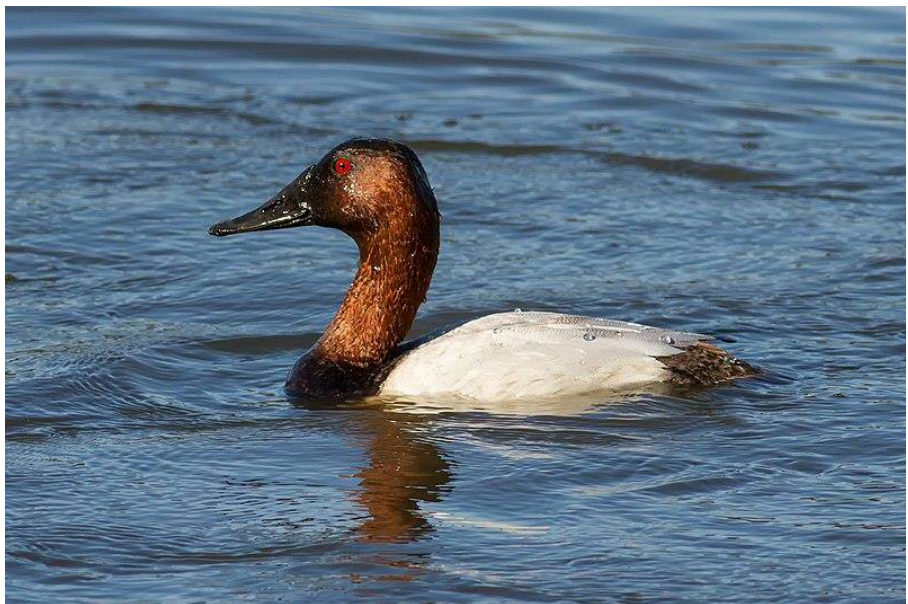


*Ian Parker 201*

*Ian Parker*

## Seeds and Cones

**Two Birds:** I am not doing a full article on the two birds Bird Wingers reported they saw during March's Bird Wing meeting because Dick Tafel's Bird Bash Report was just sent and it includes all the birds mentioned at our meeting and there were some good ones. Top of the list has to be Jérémie Corbeil's Canvasback that he saw in Restoule! (photo at right) There are some years none of us see one, although I find it can often be seen at Sundridge Lagoon and some of us have seen it at Warren Lagoon. Another good sighting was a Greater Scaup seen by Garry Waldram and Lori Anderson in Bonfield. A day after the meeting, Garry also saw a Green-winged Teal there.



*Frank Schulenberg, Wikipedia*

Migrants are trickling in – some American Robins, some Red-winged Blackbirds, a Northern Harrier or two, at least one American Kestrel, and a couple of Turkey Vultures. Some Ring-billed Gulls have joined the Herring Gulls; Canada Geese have increased in number since Dick and I first saw one in the Sturgeon River on March 12, with a few now being seen on most areas of open water; and two Sandhill Cranes were seen in flight in the Quesnel Road area near the Sturgeon River. Garry also saw out of the corner of his eye a Great Blue Heron across from Columbia Forest Products while he was driving along Hwy. 17E to Mattawa. Naturally, **Garry stopped and captured the heron that graces the cover of this issue.**

The weather has not been very conducive to seeing a lot of migrants. On too many days this month there have been snow squalls and many days have been very windy. I can't help but think of the English nursery rhyme: The March wind doth blow/ And we shall have snow/ And what will poor robin do then?/He'll stay in the barn and keep himself warm/And hide his head under his wing, poor thing. (Actually it is a north wind, not the March wind, but March is the only time of the year I think of this nursery rhyme because it is when our robins arrive.)

**Azores:** The nursery rhyme is about a European Robin, a real robin, not a thrush like our robin, and one that Denise Desmarais, our Hanmer and Verner Bird Wing member, saw this March in the Azores off the coast of Portugal. The day after Denise and her husband arrived, they took a



*Denise Desmarais*

private birding tour with a local guide. Denise will be writing a report about her birding adventure, but in the meantime because she was in the Azores and not in Hanmer or Verner, she could not join us at our meeting and so sent me by email the two birds she wanted mentioned at the meeting. One was the cute little European Robin, although looking a bit haggard in the coastal winds in the photo at left that Denise sent. Her other bird was an endemic species, the Azores Bullfinch, a threatened member of the finch family largely restricted to a small area of native forest at the eastern end of the island of Sao Miguel.

**Heronry:** And speaking of Great Blue Herons, in February during a Nipissing Naturalists Club hike along the Gauthier Marsh Trails (off Callander's Cranberry Trail), a work in progress by Andree Morneau and Daniel Kamininski, Grant McKercher captured a photo of a heronry (below). There are about 25 to 30 nests on an island in the middle of the marsh. I wasn't aware of the heronry in that location, only the one at the end of Birch's Road, although last year, there was only one occupied nest, quite significantly down

from the six occupied nests of previous years.



**A Success Story:** In January 2018, Peter Ferris did a presentation to Nipissing Naturalists Club on his canoe trip on the Berens River and talked about the work that was being done to have the area, Pimachiowin Aki, 30,000 square km in the heart of Canada's boreal forest, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

From the article Peter wrote for *The Woodland Observer*: *In August 2017, I was fortunate to take another canoe trip in Manitoba, this time along the Berens River, one of several free-flowing major rivers – the others being Bloodvein, Leyond, Pigeon and Poplar – that have their headwaters in an immense area of subarctic boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. It is a pristine area known as Pimachiowin Aki, “The Land that Gives Life”. (Photo of the Berens River below.)*



**Peter Ferris**

At the time of Peter’s trip, Pimachiowin Aki was a candidate for designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. And today, all the work and effort over the last 10 years that was put into obtaining this designation has paid off thanks to four First Nations – Bloodvein, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi, and Poplar River - and their Manitoba and Ontario provincial partners. This land that gives life is now Canada’s very first UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of the very few World Heritage Sites that recognizes both natural and cultural values.

As Peter wrote, *the nomination bid sums it up well: “The Pimachiowin Aki partners share a vision of the World Heritage Site as an ancient, continuous and living cultural landscape in which the Anishinaabeg, the forest, waters, fish and wildlife, and all other beings are understood and safeguarded as one living entity. The landscape and all its tangible and intangible values are celebrated and shared for the benefit of the partner communities, for visitors and for all humanity.”*

You can read Peter’s article, “Journey Through a Boreal Wonderland” in its entirety by going to <https://www.nipnats.com/newsletters/> and scrolling down to the January 2018 issue of *The Woodland Observer*. You can also watch the YouTube video, showing photos of the landscape

and the wildlife, including birds, that celebrates this new designation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czMSITNV5tQ>.

**Author, Author:** Congratulations are in order for Bird Wing member, Linda Stoner. Through sheer initiative, determination and a lot of creativity and skill – to say nothing of cost – Linda’s children’s book, *Chippy’s Family Helping Others*, (photo of cover below) is being printed as I type this and will be available to buy in mid-May. And don’t think it is only for children because adults will enjoy it too.

It is one thing to write a book, another to design and creatively build the miniature sets photographed in the book – and then, after the sets are built, to lure a real live chipmunk onto the set, and not just anywhere but into the exact position Linda wants it to be in. Not an easy feat, though sunflower seeds on a bit of peanut butter can help. But still, a chipmunk is not a person and you can’t tell it where it must position itself and how long it must stay in that position so the photographer can get the best shot.

Linda’s skills as a former studio, wedding and portrait photographer and all her photo equipment greatly helped, although it often took days and days to get the shot just the way she wanted it – and all this done outside, not in a controlled studio environment. It really is quite remarkable once you know the story behind the scenes.

It is best to purchase Linda’s book directly from her, because that way you get a hard copy with the photos on glossy paper. If you order from the printer, you get a soft cover without the glossy paper.

The link to Linda’s website is: <https://www.chipmunktales.com/>, and her book ordering email address is: [lindastonerchipmunk@gmail.com](mailto:lindastonerchipmunk@gmail.com). Send her an email letting her know you want to buy a book so you can get your name on the list before they are all sold out. She has already started a list that includes Science North and Coles and many individuals. Always good to support a Bird Winger.

- *Renee Levesque, with photos as indicated*





## Woodpeckers: The Hole Story

On November 2022, Bird Wing purchased the PBS DVD, *Woodpeckers, The Hole Story*, and we finally got an opportunity to watch it at March's Zoom meeting.

Sue Gratton and I were in agreement that it was really quite special for us birders in Northern Ontario to watch a documentary on woodpeckers that did not concentrate on exotic species, as interesting though they may be, but focused instead on the many woodpeckers we see in our area –Pileated, Hairy (photo at right), Downy, Northern Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Red-bellied. We don't always see the Red-bellied, but as stated in the documentary, it is making its way up north and is now quite prominent in Central Ontario. I don't believe we have any breeding evidence of it here in Nipissing, but one day, I think we will. Certainly some of us see one



Renee Levesque

at least once in the year, mainly in the fall and winter, and Mary Young in Corbeil has had one at her feeder all winter. (The Red-bellied graced the cover of the October 2022 report with a photograph taken by Buddy Myles, a former member who moved from our area.)

We don't get the handsome Red-headed Woodpecker here, but one was at a feeder on Wasi Road this past fall. I am unaware if there have been other sightings so close to home.

There was no mention of the Black-backed (photo at left) or the Three-toed. Most of us don't get to see the Black-backed without some hunting and few of us see the Three-toed in our area. I know some always see the Black-backed on Peacock Road and I know some never see it there! There was a Three-

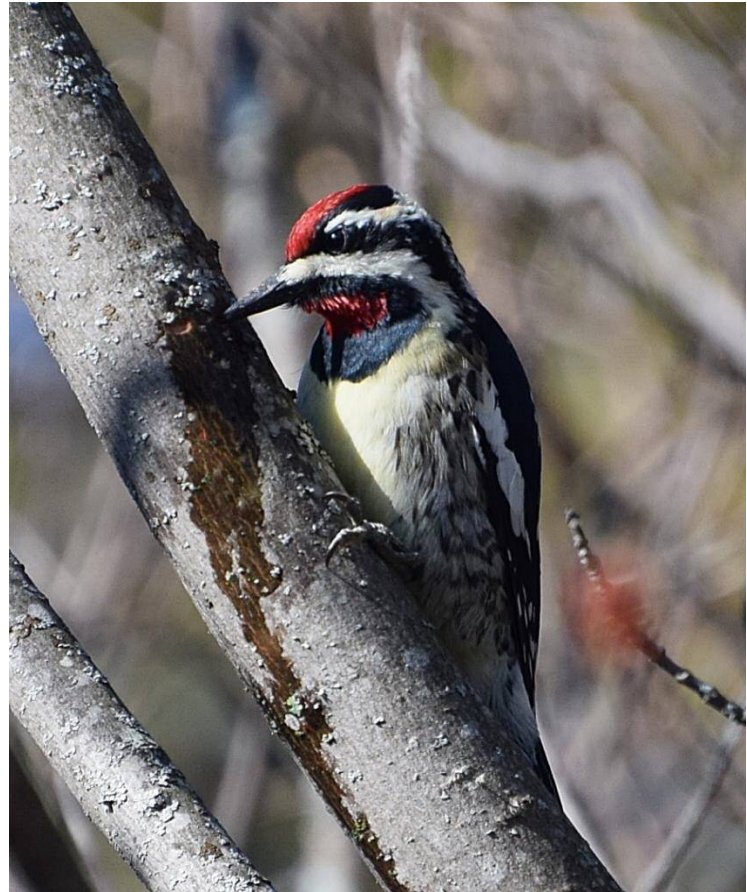


Stephen O'Donnell

toed in Algonquin Park this winter, but I don't think it stayed around for many to see. And one year before my time, Chris Sukha and Dick Tafel saw one in the Field area. I have often seen it mentioned on eBird in the Timmins area and each time, I wish I had taken up birding then, but I was a teenager during an exciting decade and birding was not in my radar, although I did write a poem about a bird.

Faye Oei was taken with the variety of woodpeckers throughout the world and all their different colourings. It seems wherever we go in this world, we are very taken by woodpeckers. I think the most exotic woodpecker I have seen is one endemic to Cuba, the Cuban Green. Not that it is terribly exotic looking compared to many despite the fact it has green upperparts. Still, it was one of my most pleasing sightings in Cuba's Zapata Marsh. (An endemic bird is always a must to see.)

Sue's favourite part of the documentary was finding out that the Ruby-throated Hummingbird planned its migration in tandem with the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (photo at right of a male feeding at the tree's sap), enabling it to feed on the sap from birch trees while waiting for flowers to bloom. And our fierce little hummer will defend the sapsucker's holes against all other birds, its own included, except the sapsucker. What a great symbiotic relationship the two of them have.



*Renee Levesque*

Another interesting woodpecker was Lewis's Woodpecker, found on Manitoulin Island this past winter despite it being a western bird, and its reliance on catching insects on the fly, just like a flycatcher. This practice is known as hawking.

Faye enjoyed seeing all the nestlings inside their warm holes just waiting for their exhausted parents to bring them a juicy insect, like the carpenter ant. It was amazing that they placed the camera right inside the nest, giving us a bird's eye view of their cosy home and their hungry mouths. But what is more amazing is just what great carpenters woodpeckers are, and how their holes benefit so many

other creatures of the woods and forests. It is no wonder the large nest cavity of the Pileated is protected under Canada's new Migratory Bird Regulations, 2022.

One of my favourites was the Acorn Woodpecker (photo at right). I saw it in California, but did not know until the documentary that it spends an inordinate amount of time fitting acorns just so into hundreds of holes in their trees. And if that isn't enough, then testing them to determine how secure they are, and if not secure enough, taking them out and repositioning them or putting them in another hole. That's like constantly taking everything out of your junk drawer and rearranging it.



*Renee Levesque*

Over 30 species depend on unused Pileated Woodpecker nests to survive, including the Northern Saw-whet Owl, the Northern Flying Squirrel, and the endangered Little Brown Bat. (The Pileated has a nest cavity, a roosting cavity and a feeding cavity. Only the large, hollow nest cavity is protected.)

If a Pileated abandons its nest in an area where there is industrial activity, the empty nest must be protected and monitored for 36 months, and remain empty during this time before it can be disturbed. After 36 months, there are rules that must be followed to officially declare that the cavity can be disturbed. Garry Waldram's photo of the Pileated graced the cover of last month's report. A pair is excavating close to his home and I have asked him to try and get a photo of one with a carpenter ant in its mouth.

Sue videotaped a Pileated drumming outside her South River home. Watch it at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BIelbUsnbLVsS8z8m3HZu35zl0xbwbwY/view?usp=sharing>.

Thank you Sue and Faye for your insights and it won't be long before you will see the elusive Black-backed of Peacock Road. And thank you Gary Sturge for recommending the purchase of this DVD.

- *Renee Levesque with photos as indicated*