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NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024

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Ontario Bird Banding Association AGM

March 2, 2024

Birds Canada Headquarters

115 Front Rd.

Port Rowan, Ontario

www.ontbanding.org

IN-PERSON with virtual option

[Register Here](#)

Upcoming Events:

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch – Annual General Meeting, April 20. Beamer Memorial Conservation Area
<https://nphawkwatch.ca/>

Eastern Bird Banding Association Meeting, March 22-24. Round Top, NY.
<http://www.easternbirdbanding.org/>

Eastern Bluebird Society, AGM on March 9 in person at First Unitarian Church in Hamilton.
<https://oeps.ca/>

North American Banding Council – Annual Meeting. August 12-13. Sackville, NB. www.nabanding.net

Great Canadian Birdathon – May 2023 – <http://birdscanada.org> – Birdathon page to be posted shortly.



OBBA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING DRAFT AGENDA

SATURDAY MARCH 2, 2024

- 09:00 – 10:00** **Registration (\$10 members, \$15 non-members), Bucket Raffle, Mingling**
- 10:00 – 10:20** **Business meeting**
 Introductions – Bob Hall-Brooks
 President’s Report - Bob Hall-Brooks
 Treasurer’s Report and Election of an Auditor – Barbara Campbell
 Nominations & Election of 2024 Executive – Bruce Murphy
- 10:20—10:30** **Awards - Janette Dean Award**
- 10:30 – 10:50** **Network Updates**
 Canadian Migration Monitoring Network Update – Stuart Mackenzie
 North American Banding Council Update – Norm North
- 10:50 – 11:10** **Coffee Break and Bucket Raffle**
- 11:10 – 11:30** **Station Update:**
Hilliardton Marsh Research and Education Centre
 Bruce Murphy
- 11:30 – 11:50** **Examining Environmental and Life History Drivers of Movement Decisions in a Nomadic Arctic Breeding Passerine**
 Samuelle Simard-Provencal, University of Windsor
- 11:50 – 13:00** **Lunch and Birding Break (Catered at BSC - \$15/person)**
- 13:00 – 13:20** **Station Update:**
Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory (PEPtBO)
 Ashley Jensen
- 13:20 – 13:40** **Mobilizing Motus – An Update on the Motus Wildlife Tracking System from a Banders Perspective**
 Stuart Mackenzie – Birds Canada



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- 13:40 – 14:00** **Coffee Break and Bucket Raffle**
- 14:00 – 14:20** **Canada Jay, Algonquin Park - The Value of Colour-Banding Birds to Determine the Age, Sex, and Reproduction of Birds in a Specific Population Over Time**
Dr. Matt Furst, Birds Canada
- 14:20 – 14:40** **Nocturnal Heterothermy Use in North American Songbirds During Migration**
Ryan Leys, PhD Candidate University of Waterloo
- 14:40 - 15:00** **T. B. A.**
- 15:00 - 15:15** **Coffee Break and Bucket Raffle**
- 15:15 - 15:45** **Open Discussion:
Challenges for Ontario Bird Banders**
Bob Hall- Brooks and Bruce Murphy
- 15:45 - 16:00** **Closing Remarks, Bucket Raffle Draw, End of AGM**
- 16:00 - 20:00** **Social at Birds Canada Headquarters**
Pizza Dinner: 17:30 (~\$15). BYOB

VIRTUAL OPTION: [Register Here](#)

LOCATION AND DETAILS:

The AGM will be held at the Birds Canada Headquarters at **115 Front Rd. in Port Rowan**. There is a registration fee of \$10.00 for members, \$15 for non-members. The event is filled with business meetings, station reports and a short scientific program related to bird banding in Ontario.

Long Point Bird Observatory's Old Cut Research Station (13 Old Cut Blvd., Long Point) will be operating where members can hone their skills, and share information and knowledge with each other. There are always a few surprises!



BUCKET RAFFLE: As in previous years, a bucket raffle will be held. Any member wishing to donate a prize should bring it to the meeting, or if they prefer, contact any board member!

ACCOMMODATIONS:

BED AND BREAKFASTS - ALL LISTED AT

[http://www.bbcanada.com/bb_search_results.cfm?search_general=port+rowan&x=0&y=0:](http://www.bbcanada.com/bb_search_results.cfm?search_general=port+rowan&x=0&y=0)

MOTELS: There are also several motels in nearby Tilsonburg, or Simcoe.

LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY—OLD CUT RESEARCH STATION:

There is also limited space available for \$50/night. If you would like to stay at Old Cut [Contact LPBO.](#)

FOOD AND SOCIAL:

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS:

Coffee, tea, other beverages, muffins and donuts will be served throughout the day. There will be a catered lunch (Chilli con Carne, mac & cheese, Chef's salad, buns, desserts) at Birds Canada. The cost will be around \$15 per person and payable at registration.

EVENING SOCIAL / DINNER:

On the Saturday evening there will be an after-party social following the meeting. Pizza, salads, and non-alcoholic beverages will be served between 17:30 and 18:30. The cost will be around \$15 per person and payable at registration. Members and guests planning to attend are encouraged to BYOB.

REMINDER: Bring cheques and/or cash for all payments.



THE BILL AND BETTY WASSERFALL AWARD

The OBBA's **Bill and Betty Wasserfall Award** provides critical funding to support bird-banding and related studies in Canada. Applications for the award will be considered as part of the Small Grants of the [James L. Baillie Memorial Fund](#).

In 2023 the Bill and Betty Wasserfall Award was granted to the Georgian Bay Land Trust. Their project entitled "Prairie Warblers of Georgian Bay: Evaluating Migratory Connectivity and Habitat Use" received a joint Baillie Fund Grant and the Ontario Bird Banding Association Wasserfall Award.

Eastern Georgian Bay is known as the most significant breeding area in Canada for Prairie Warblers. Focusing on the Prairie Warbler's breeding range, researchers were intrigued by a few questions:

- How does the Georgian Bay population of Prairie Warblers differ from the population in the United States?
- What do Prairie Warblers like about Georgian Bay?
- How can we protect Prairie Warblers habitat?



To learn more about this exiting research, please the 2023 Summer Research Updates PDF link below.

[Bird Research on Georgian Bay: Prairie Warbler and Whip-poor-will work.pdf](#)

To donate to the OBBA Awards and Grants Fund in support of the Bill and Betty Wasserfall Award and other bird banding and related studies across Canada contact [Barb Campbell](#). ***



THE JANETTE DEAN AWARD

The Janette Dean Award is presented annually by OBBA for outstanding contributions to bird banding in Ontario. It was established in memory of Janette Fleming Dean whose death on May 6th 1993, marked a significant loss to the banding community in both Ontario and the Caribbean.

The 2023 **Janette Dean Award** recipient was awarded to **Bill Read**.

When you hear Bill's name mentioned, bluebirds immediately come to mind. Bill is one of Ontario's most prolific EABL banders. He founded and has led the Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society (OEBS) since 1988. This group is dedicated to protecting and increasing the number of bluebirds in Ontario which has slowly been fighting its way back after massive losses to its population in the 1960s, due to agricultural chemical use and loss of habitat.

As the Editor of the OEBS newsletter, Bill has shared his knowledge of these birds to many. He has worked on building bluebird nest box trails and shown others how to do the same. Through these efforts the population of EABL has increased in Ontario to a point where it was delisted in 1996 based on a COSEWIC report [Read and Alvo, 1996].



Bill Read receiving the Janette Dean Award.

Bill worked with Dr. Christine Bishop (under contract to Environment Canada and Climate Change) as a field biologist during Christine's PhD studies of pesticides effects on bluebirds and tree swallows nesting in apple orchards in southern Ontario. He worked with her during 1994-1998 but before that he worked on contract for Dr. Chip Weseloh from 1988-1993 and during that time along with Chip Weseloh and Mary Gartshore, he installed several grids of bluebird boxes throughout sprayed and non-sprayed orchards. Post 1998, Bill kept checking, banding and recording the reproduction of the bluebirds in those same sites. This led to Bill and Dr. Bishop working together again when they published the 31-year study of reproduction of bluebirds in those study sites. This work was thanks to Bill's diligence and zeal to continue to track bluebird reproduction in southern Ontario. The paper won an award as a 'top 10' scientific article in the journal for that year (Read *et al*, 2021).

Currently, Bill, Dr. Bishop and their colleague Simon English are working on Bill's retrap data for banded birds to examine



Bill Read Examining the Contents of a Nest Box used in his NABS Award-Winning Research Paper "Bluebirds Experience Impaired Hatching Success in Conventionally Sprayed Apple Orchard Habitats: a 31-Year Study". Read *et al*, 2021.

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survivorship of the bluebirds year by year and among sprayed and non sprayed sites. There is no end to Bill's enthusiasm for bluebirds and science. In 2018 Bill was awarded the W.W.H. Gunn Conservation Award for his major contribution to restoration of the eastern bluebird population in Ontario.

When Bill is not working on bluebird activities Bill also volunteers with OBBA and has been a long-time member. He has served on the executive as Recording Secretary for 14 years, as well as various other positions – including President - for a total of almost 25 years! At other times, he can be found helping down at Old Cut. One of Bill's hobbies is the love of books. If there's a special book on birds that you're looking for, he's the one to talk to. He just might know where you can get a copy.

Congratulations Bill!

Read WF, English SG, Hick KG, Bishop CA. 2021. Bluebirds Experience Impaired Hatching Success in Conventionally Sprayed Apple Orchard Habitats: A 31-Year Study. Environ. Toxicol. Chem. 40 (12) 3369-3378. DOI: 10.1002/etc.5218

Read WF and R Alvo. 1996. Updated status report on the Eastern Bluebird in Canada.

The **Janette Dean Award** is given to individuals that have made outstanding contributions to bird banding in Ontario. To nominate an individual, send a written nomination with a brief explanation of the candidate's qualifications to [Ontario Bird Banding](#). ***

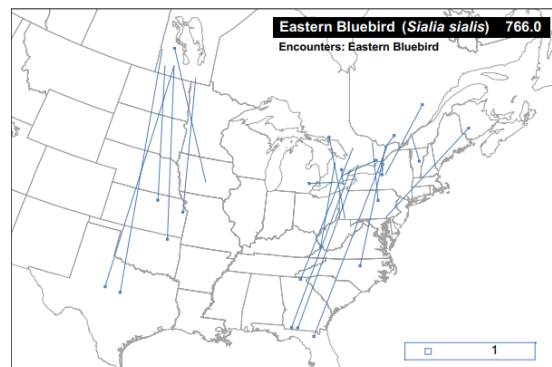


MIGRATIONS DESTINATIONS AND LONGEVITY OF EASTERN BLUEBIRDS IN CANADA - BILL READ

With Bill Read's permission and published through the North American Bluebird Society magazine.

The Canadian Atlas of Bird Banding clearly shows the migration destinations of the Eastern Bluebird in Canada. (See Map) The central population residing in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Rainy River area and in Ontario above the western end of Lake Superior migrate to areas around Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma. Four birds banded as nestlings in Manitoba wintered in Texas and Kansas.

The eastern population comprising Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, making up possibly 75% to 80 % of Canada's Eastern Bluebirds, migrate to the central regions of the Eastern United States to the Gulf Coast. Four winter encounters of Ontario birds occurred in Kentucky, North Carolina and Georgia. Encounters of Ontario birds in Georgia and Florida in March also indicate a southern US wintering distribution for these birds.



Eastern Bluebirds nest above Lake Superior in clear cuts, forest burn areas and human habitations. Bluebirds were found in these habitats during breeding bird atlas work in the Maritimes and Quebec. (Erskine 1992, Cyr and Larivee 1995). Gowatty and Plissner suggest (1998) that burned areas in the boreal forest may have been ancestral habitat for bluebirds. This at a time when Ontario was covered by climax forest with some prairie.

The Thunder Cape Bird Observatory located at the tip of Sleeping Giant National park - east of Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada - has recorded as many as 740 bluebirds during fall migration. These birds are coming from areas above Lake Superior. There would seem to be a spot somewhere along the Northern Lake Superior shoreline, where bluebirds reaching Lake Superior either go west or east along the shoreline.

Those that go east would migrate to the central regions of the Eastern United States. Those that go west would end up going through Minnesota on their way to the Texas, Kansas area. Most would continue along the Superior shoreline but some would head to the tip of Sleeping Giant Provincial Park, where they would either turn around and go back to continue their migration, or fly across to Pie Island and then through Minnesota. This happens at the Old Cut Banding Station in Long Point Ontario where birds are observed flying out to the tip of Long Point, and later turning around and coming back to continue west along the Lake Erie shoreline.

Due to climate change, bluebirds are not wintering as far south as before. Each year more and more bluebirds overwinter in Ontario and continue to be found further north during their winter stay. Close to 1,000 bluebirds are recorded each year on Christmas Bird Counts in Ontario.



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HOW LONG DOES AN EASTERN BLUEBIRD LIVE? The answer is not very long. I have banded over 10,000 Eastern Bluebirds. During my nestbox monitoring, I have re-trapped 1,800 previously banded birds. These birds have survived and returned to breed. I have re-trapped some individual birds as many as nine or ten times. Only three of 1,800 were seven years old. Less than ten of the 1,800 were six years old when last re-trapped. The average age of those 1,800 re-trapped bluebirds was just slightly over two years. When we factor in birds that fledged and did not survive to return to breed, the average age would be between 1-2 years.

I often hear reports from bluebirders of the same pair returning year after year. Because bluebirds look the same, it is hard to tell if they are indeed the same pair. It is more likely two or three pairs. Bluebirds differ greatly in their breeding behavior. When I monitor some nestboxes, both adults will completely disappear and wait until I am gone. At other nestboxes both male and female, usually the male, will immediately attack me. On occasion, the male has hit me on the head.

Defensive vocalizations start as soon as they see me - or my car. Sometimes you can tell by their behavior that it is the same pair returning from the previous year. Maybe you have a mealworm feeder that they immediately recognize and go to, or they perch in a regular spot. They may either not view you as a threat, or display that aggressive behavior mentioned above. This may help in deciding if it is the same pair.

Tree Swallows have a lifespan that is almost twice as long as an Eastern Bluebird. In 2015, I analyzed the Tree Swallow re-trap data from the three Tree Swallow grids located at Long Point and Port Rowan, Ontario, Canada. Each grid (the Tip, Sewage Lagoons and Mud Creek) was set up exclusively for Tree Swallows and contained around 60 nest boxes each. Averages in years of all re-trapped adults at each grid were: Mud Creek 3.64, Sewage Lagoons 3.58 and the Tip, 3.68. Each of those grids contained one nine-year-old Tree Swallow.

Canadian Atlas of Bird Banding: Volume 1; Doves, Cuckoos, and Hummingbirds through Passerines, 1921-1995. Environment Canada Canadian Wildlife Service.

Gowaty, P.A., and J.H. Plissner. 1998. Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*). In *The Birds Of North America*, No. 381 (A. Poole and F. Gill, Eds). *The Birds of North America*. Inc., Philadelphia.

Read, William F.; Tree Swallow re-trap data - unpublished work. Long Point 2015.

Erskine, A.J. - 1992 Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritimes Provinces. Nimbus Publishing and Nova Scotia Museum, (Chelsea Green) Halifax.

Cyr, A., and J.LARIVEE. 1995. Atlas saison-nier des oiseaux du Qubec, Les Presses de L'Universite de Sherbrooke et Societe de Losir Ornithologique de L'Estrie, Sherbrooke, PQ.

Special thanks to John Woodcock and Rinchen Boardman for providing both spring and fall Eastern Bluebird migration numbers recorded at The Thunder Cape Bird Observatory at the tip of Sleeping Giant Provincial Park.***



WHY BELONG TO THE OBBA?

1. **Meet** like-minded people who enjoy banding birds by providing a forum for communication among Ontario banders.
2. Chance to **share** and compare the results of your banding efforts with others.
3. Receive a **newsletter** reporting on current banding activities and topics of interest to banders.
4. Contribute to and receive the organization's long running **journal – Ontario Bird Banding** - that reports annually on the bird banding activities of its members and read articles on banding techniques.
5. Take part in an **annual general meeting** where you can present, listen to, and meet guest speakers and share your banding interests with other banders from across Ontario in a pleasant social atmosphere.
6. Get opportunities to **learn** different banding techniques and share knowledge of different issues and the latest trends in the banding world.
7. Have the chance to recognize extraordinary efforts of individuals through the **Janette Dean Award**, or fund your research through the **Wasserfall Award**.
8. Benefit from the **North American Banding Council's** network of activities, training workshops and certification programs and connection to the Canadian **Bird Banding Office** under the Canadian Wildlife Service.
9. Encourage **mentorship**, share **enthusiasm**, **contribute** to knowledge of bird banding and take part in collaborative projects (such as Mourning Dove and Snow Bunting banding).
10. Most of all – have **FUN** while contributing to **bird conservation science!**

TO JOIN OR RENEW: Please fill out the renewal form or send the same information along with payment to Barbara Campbell – [barbcampbell52 AT gmail.com](mailto:barbcampbell52@gmail.com). A renewal form is at the back of this newsletter or can be found on the OBBA website:

[Join or Contact Us – Ontario Bird Banding Association \(ontbanding.org\)](http://ontbanding.org)

Please specify “membership” in the comments field.



ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION (2023-24)

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Ontario Bird Banding Association

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www.ontbanding.org

<https://www.facebook.com/OntarioBirdBanding/>

Membership Application or Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: () _____ - _____

Email: _____

NOTE: All correspondence with the OBBA will be electronic. If you wish to receive a hard-copy of the materials, newsletter and/or journal, you must specify below.

- Please send me the Newsletter by regular mail
 Please send me the Journal by regular mail

Membership Category:

- Life Membership (\$500)
 Individual / Family - Household (\$25/\$40)
 Student (\$15)
 Outside of Canada and United States—\$10 mailing surcharge

Additional Donation: Tax receipt issued if \$10 or more.

Make cheque payable to: **Ontario Bird Banding Association**

RENEW ONLINE

Please specify "membership" in the comments field.

Or mail to:

Barb Campbell - OBBA
19 Harwood Lane
Kanata, ON K2K 1X7

