



TORONTO BIRDS

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COVER PHOTO

Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*)

Photo © Glenn Coady

The Common Nighthawk was once a common breeding bird in the City of Toronto, nesting on the city's many older gravel-roofed buildings, and its courtship booming and nasal "peent" calls are well known to long-time birders in our area. The second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas has demonstrated a serious decline in numbers in all of Ontario's atlas regions except the Hudson Bay Lowlands. It has certainly declined noticeably as a summer resident in our area in the last 20 years, likely due to a combination of fewer suitable rooftops for nesting and increased avian (crows and gulls) nest predation. Despite its decline as a breeding bird, large pulses of fall migrants (often in the hundreds of individuals) are still regularly detected in a narrow time window in the last week in August. Such large and impressive late August flights were described by both James H. Fleming a century ago and Charles Fothergill two centuries ago.

This Common Nighthawk was photographed on the Woodland Nature Trail at Point Pelee National Park on 18 May 1983.

Produced and edited by the Records Committee, Toronto Ornithological Club:

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Toronto Birds publishes monthly bird records from the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario. It may also include articles and notes about birds, bird records, counts, surveys and birding in general, with the emphasis on the Greater Toronto Area and Ontario birds. *Toronto Birds* is distributed monthly to the active members of the Toronto Ornithological Club.

We welcome potential cover photos, or photos for use in illustrating the bird report. Please send photos to Winnie Poon winniepoon@sympatico.ca including date, location, subject, technical details and your preferred caption if any. Please do not email files exceeding 3MB without prior consultation. Please submit notes or articles to Dave Worthington worth@pathcom.com with a copy to Roy Smith rsmith@mrs.com. Bird observation records should be sent to Roy Smith.

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GREATER TORONTO AREA BIRD REPORT – AUGUST 2007

The following are largely unchecked reports, not authenticated records. Key to counties: DU = Durham R.M.; HL = Halton R.M.; PL = Peel R.M.; MT = City of Toronto; LO = Lake Ontario Pelagic; YO = York R.M. [County not specified for sites in Toronto]. Frequently cited place names in Toronto are abbreviated as follows: CSSP = Colonel Sam Smith Park; HP = High Park; HBP = Humber Bay Park (E or W); LSS = Leslie Street Spit; TI = Toronto Islands. Other abbreviations: HFR, DRF, YRF = Halton, Durham and York Regional Forests, respectively. TBO = Toronto Bird Observatory; TTPBRS = Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station.

Species names in **bold**, underlined **BLOCK CAPITALS** are OBRC rarities. These reports require acceptance by OBRC before they can be considered as part of the local records. They are qualified by [Documentation received] or [No documentation received], as applicable.

Species names in **bold** (but not underlined) are local rarities within the GTA. These reports require acceptance by the Toronto Bird Rarities Committee (TBRC) before they can be considered as valid records. They are qualified by [Documentation received] or [No documentation received], as applicable.

Individual species **marked *** or **specific reports marked *** indicate unusual local observations for which documentation is requested by TBRC and/or TOC Records Committee by virtue of rarity, difficulty of ID, extreme dates (early, late, unseasonal) or high counts.

Species names in [square brackets] indicate reports believed to relate to escaped or released birds, or to introduced birds which have not yet become established.

Names in *ITALICS* indicate subspecies, hybrids, morphs or other 'recognizable forms', which may be identifiable in the field. This does not necessarily imply that the compilers agree with such designations, or accept their validity.

[BARNACLE GOOSE] - 1 at Matheson Blvd E of Etob. Creek [PL] on 20th (Blaine Long fide MCr, fide ONTBIRDS).

Reported with Canada Geese in a wheat field on N side of Matheson, about 400m E of the Etobicoke Creek.

MUTE SWAN - 47 at LaSalle Park [HL] on 5th (DGa fide ONTBIRDS). **152** at CSSP on 20th (Lloyd Paul fide ONTBIRDS), would be a new record high count for GTA if documented. 79 (all adults) at CSSP @ 18:45hrs on 21st (RBHS,WP). 42 at LSS on 23rd (DDe,TTPBRS) & 47 at TI on 31st (NMu,ICa, &).



Mute Swans, Colonel Sam Smith Park, Toronto; 21 August 2007. Photo © Winnie Poon.

[TRUMPETER SWAN] - 8 (all with wing tags) at LaSalle Park [HL] on 5th (DGa fide ONTBIRDS), 2 (with wing tags) at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 12th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at LSS on 21st (DDe,TTPBRS).

WOOD DUCK - 34 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS) & only 2 there on 18th (RJF,KRS, fide ONTBIRDS). 10 at HP on 9th, 13th & 28th (SMF). Singles at Rattray Marsh [PL] on 19th (RBHS,WP) & Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 27th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).

MALLARD - 199 at LSS on 15th & 300 there on 23rd (DDe,TTPBRS).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL - 2 at LSS on 16th (DDe,TTPBRS). 40 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 18th (RJF,KRS, fide ONTBIRDS) & 223 there on 26th (WP,RBHS).

NORTHERN SHOVELER - 2 at LSS on 12th & 8 on 24th (DDe,TTPBRS). 3 (1 F, 2 small young) at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 18th (RJP,KM).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL - 9 at LSS on 20th & 11 on 30th (DDe,TTPBRS).

LONG-TAILED DUCK - 1 at LSS on 30th (DDe,TTPBRS).

BUFFLEHEAD - 2 (F or imm) at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 18th (RJP,KM) & 2 (F/imm) there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS).

HOODED MERGANSER - 5 JUV at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 (F or imm) there on 18th (RJP,KM). 1 F at LSS on 11th (NMu,&) & 1 at Snug Harbour, TI on 27th (NMu,&, fide ONTBIRDS).

RUDDY DUCK - 1 F at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 18th (RJP,KM).

COMMON LOON - 1 at LSS on 13th, 4 on 9th & 2 on 30th (DDe,TTPBRS). 4 flying S at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 26th & 7 there on 30th (JDL,CMRW, fide ONTBIRDS).

PIED-BILLED GREBE - 1 at LSS on 13th (DDe,TTPBRS) & 1 JUV at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS).

HORNED GREBE - 1 at LSS on 30th (DDe,TTPBRS).

RED-NECKED GREBE – 58 at Lake Ontario off Rattray Marsh [PL] during the week ending 16th (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS), and 69 there @ 16:10hrs on 19th (RBHS,WP).

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT - 14 at St Johns Sideroad Marsh [YO] on 30th (Siegmar Bodach fide ONTBIRDS).

AMERICAN BITTERN - 2 at Hochreiter Rd., N End Bathurst Street [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 there on 7th (RJF fide ONTBIRDS).

LEAST BITTERN - 1 at Hochreiter Rd., N End Bathurst Street [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS).

GREAT BLUE HERON – 7 reports from Cranberry Marsh [DU] beginning with 12 on 7th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS), a high of 50+ on 19th (MDW fide ONTBIRDS) & last report of 40+ on 27th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS). 10 at St Johns Sideroad Marsh [YO] on 18th (RJF,KRS, fide ONTBIRDS).

GREAT EGRET – 13 reports from Cranberry Marsh [DU] of 1 to 3 from 7th to 20th, a high of 10 on 27th & last report of 3 on 31st (JDL fide ONTBIRDS). 1 at Rattray Marsh [PL] on 4th (DEP), 2 there on 19th (RBHS,WP), 1 at HP on 5th & 3 there on 13th (SMF). 2 at St Johns Sideroad Marsh [YO] on 18th (RJF,KRS, fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 there on 30th (Siegmar Bodach fide ONTBIRDS). 1 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 18th (RJF,KRS, fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at 9th Line Ponds, Markham [YO] on 19th (BKM fide ONTBIRDS), 3 at Scarborough Townline Swamp on 19th (ETB) & 1 at Bronte Marsh [HL] on 22nd (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS).

GREEN HERON - 2 at Hochreiter Rd., N End Bathurst Street [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS) & on 7th (RJF fide ONTBIRDS). 1 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 7th, 3 (2 AD, 1 juv) on 20th, 4 on 25th, 12+ on 26th (JDL,CMRW, fide ONTBIRDS) & 3 there on 27th (NMacd). 3 at St Johns Sideroad Marsh [YO] on 24th (RJF fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at LSS on 26th (DDe,TTPBRS).

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - 6 at Hochreiter Rd., N End Bathurst Street [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS), 3 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 7th & 9 (4 AD, 5 JUV) there on 20th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS). 3 flying SE at Richmond Hill Central Library [YO] @ 19:00hrs on 29th (WP).

TURKEY VULTURE - 1 at Carlton & Sherbourne, Toronto @ 09:00hrs on 12th (Rob Miller fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 20th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).

OSPREY - Singles at Glenbrook Drive, Markham [YO] on 4th (RBHS), Bronte Harbour [HL] on 11th (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS), Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 18th (RJF,KRS, fide ONTBIRDS) & at G. Ross Lord Park on 19th (Leslie Kinrys fide OUTON). The nest at Port Perry Baseball Fields [DU] had 3 young calling for food on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), while the 4th had moved to adjacent floodlight & 1 AD seen over lagoons. 3 (2 AD, 1 yng) there on 13th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS) & 4 (incl. 3 juv.) on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS). 2 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 18th (RPye fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS), 4 at Petticoat Cr. to Thicksons [DU] on 19th (OFO fide RPye, fide

ONTBIRDS) & 16 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 26th (JDL,CMRW, fide ONTBIRDS).

BALD EAGLE - 1 JUV at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 26th (JDL,CMRW, fide ONTBIRDS).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK - 18 at Iroquois Raptor Platform, Heber Down C. A. [DU] on 31st (ISRW,MDW, fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at Islington & Finch on 31st (AA).

COOPER'S HAWK - 1 IMM at HP on 20th & 1 AD there on 26th & 31st (SMF). 3 at Iroquois Raptor Platform, Heber Down C. A. [DU] on 31st (ISRW,MDW, fide ONTBIRDS) & 5 flying W at TI on 31st (NMu,ICa,&).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK - 1 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 18th (RPye fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 at Rosetta McClain Gardens on 18th (Frank Butson fide OUTON). 7 at Iroquois Raptor Platform, Heber Down C. A. [DU] on 31st (ISRW fide MDW, fide ONTBIRDS).

AMERICAN KESTREL - 22 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 26th (JDL,CMRW, fide ONTBIRDS).

MERLIN - 1 (local) at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 18th (RPye fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at Pumphouse Marsh [DU] on 19th (OFO fide RPye, fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at LSS on 20th & 27th (DDe,TTPBRS). 1 at Iroquois Raptor Platform, Heber Down C. A. [DU] on 31st (ISRW,MDW, fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 at TI on 31st (NMu,ICa,&).

PEREGRINE FALCON - 1 flying over at Whitby [DU] @ 20:05hrs on 8th (CSAM fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 AD-F at Dundas St W, S of Bloor on 18th (GC) was feeding on freshly killed ROPI in Loblaw's parking lot! 1 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 22nd (RJF fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at LSS on 26th (DDe,TTPBRS).

VIRGINIA RAIL – Singles at Hochreiter Rd., N End Bathurst Street [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS) & at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 20th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).

SORA - 1 at a backyard in East York from 16th to 19th (anon fide MCr, fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 24th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).

COMMON MOORHEN - 12 at Hochreiter Rd., N End Bathurst Street [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS).



The Holland Landing Sewage Lagoons, York, is a popular shorebirding site in August. Shown here is lagoon #4 on 26 August 2007. Photo © Winnie Poon.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER - 2 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 19th (OFO fide RPye, fide ONTBIRDS) & on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 there on 24th, 26th & 27th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER - 1 at Whitby Psychiatric Hospital [DU] on 17th (Don Sands fide RPye, fide ONTBIRDS).

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER - 3 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 13th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at LSS on 14th (DDe,TTPBRS). 1 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 18th (RJF,KRS, fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 there on 26th (WP,RBHS). 11 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS).

KILLDEER - 75+ at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS). 39 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th & 31 on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER - 5 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS).

SOLITARY SANDPIPER - 8 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS). 7 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), 3 AD on 13th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS), (4 AD, 1 juv) on 18th (RJP,KM) & 3 there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS). 3 at HP on 29th (SMF).

GREATER YELLOWLEGS - 10 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), 12 (incl. 4 AD) on 13th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS) & 9 there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS). 3 JUV at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 24th (RJF fide ONTBIRDS) & 4 there on 26th (RBHS,WP).

WILLET - 1 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] from 18th to 24th (m. obs). 1 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] @ 19:00hrs on 19th (Richard Pope fide ONTBIRDS) [No doc seen for either].

LESSER YELLOWLEGS – 5 reports from Holland Landing S.L. [YO] beginning with a high of 75 on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS) & last report was of 45 on 26th (RBHS,WP). 95 (50% juvs) at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), 209 on 13th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS) & 167 there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS).

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER - 10+ at Rattray Marsh [PL] on 4th (DEP). 3 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), 1 JUV on 13th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS) & 19 there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS). 12 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 24th (RJF fide ONTBIRDS) & 11 there on 26th (WP,RBHS).

LEAST SANDPIPER - 32 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS), 24 on 18th (RJF,KRS, fide ONTBIRDS) & 25 there on 22nd (RJF fide ONTBIRDS). 79 (40% juvs) at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), 98 (mostly juvs) on 13th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS) & 186 there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - 1 (molting) AD at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 6th (RJP) & 1 there on 22nd & 24th (RJF fide ONTBIRDS). 1 (molting AD) at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 18th (RJP,KM) & 2 (molting) AD there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER - 1 JUV at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 18th (RJP,KM), 1 on 19th (Richard Pope fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 JUV there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS). 1 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 24th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).



This rare **gray morph juvenile Baird's Sandpiper** (left) was found by Ron Pittaway *et al.* at the Nonquon Sewage Lagoons, *Durham* on 18 August 2007. Different from the typical buff morph (right, *Ontario*, 23 August 2003) a gray morph Baird's suggests a White-rumped Sandpiper. The colour of a gray morph Baird's Sandpiper comes from a genetic variation of the bird. Most of the recent shorebird field guides do not mention the 'gray morph', maybe because it is indeed rarely reported? Only Hayman *et al.* (1986) wrote "There is a rare grey 'morph' in which all plumage tones are grayer." This information prompted Ron Pittaway to look at specimens of Baird's Sandpiper in the national museum in Ottawa back in about 1990-91. He was able to divide the specimens fairly well into buff and gray morphs with some intermediates (pers comm.) The two morphs (and intermediates) occur in both juveniles and adults. More importantly to local birders the gray morph Baird's Sandpiper is on the Checklist of Recognizable Ontario Bird Forms (Pittaway 1996). *Photos* © Jean Iron.

Hayman, P., J. Marchant, and T. Prater. 1986. *Shorebirds: An Identification Guide to the Waders of the World*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

Pittaway, Ron 1996. Recognizable Forms. *OFO News* 14(3):4-5, October 1996.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER - 7 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS) & 4 there on 26th (WP, RBHS). 4 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), 6 (6 AD, 2 Juv) on 18th (RJP, KM) & 14 there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS). 5 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 27th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).

STILT SANDPIPER - 2 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 there on 7th (RJP fide ONTBIRDS), 17th (DW fide ONTBIRDS) & 18th (RJP, KRS, fide ONTBIRDS). 2 (molting) AD at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at Pringle Creek, Whitby Harbour [DU] on 25th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – 5 reports from Holland Landing S.L. [YO] from 4th to 26th with a high of 3 on 7th (RJP fide ONTBIRDS). 1 (*hendersoni*) AD at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), 1 on 18th (RJP, KM) & 3 JUV there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS). 2 at LSS on 12th & 26th (DDe, TTPBRS). 8 JUV at Frenchman's Bay [DU] on 19th (MCR fide ONTBIRDS). 2 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 19th (OFO fide RPy, fide ONTBIRDS), 1 on 24th & 2 on 27th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).

WILSON'S SNIPER - 2 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 13th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE - 1 JUV at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 18th (RJP, KM) & 2 JUV there on 19th (Richard Pope fide ONTBIRDS) & 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS). 1 at Lake Ontario off Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 19th (MDW fide ONTBIRDS).

BONAPARTE'S GULL - 280 (20% juvs) at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), 300+ on 13th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS), ~700 on 18th (RJP, KM) & 500+ there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS). 150 (incl. 12 juvs) at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 7th (RJP fide ONTBIRDS), 100 on 18th (RJP, KRS, fide ONTBIRDS), ~200 on 22nd (RJP fide ONTBIRDS) & 209 there on 26th (RBHS, &).

CASPIAN TERN - 22 at St Johns Sideroad Marsh [YO] on 24th (RJP fide ONTBIRDS) & 12+ there on 30th (Siegmar Bodach fide ONTBIRDS). 1 JUV at Reesor Road Ponds [YO] @ 15:50hrs on 25th (RBHS).

BLACK TERN - 15 (incl. 4 juvs.) at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), 4 JUV on 13th (GCarp fide ONTBIRDS), 3 (1 AD, 2 juvs) on 18th (RJP, KM) & 4 there on 20th (MB fide ONTBIRDS).

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO - 1 banded at LSS on 13th (DDe, TTPBRS) & 1 at Snake Island, TI on 17th (NMu, ICa).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - 2 at Nonquon S.L. [DU] on 6th (MB fide ONTBIRDS), 3 at TI on 17th (NMu, ICa), 1 banded at LSS on 17th (DDe, TTPBRS) & 1 at Ward's Island, TI on 18th (AA). 1 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 23rd & 25th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL - 1 at Shell Park [HL] on 31st (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS).

COMMON NIGHTHAWK - 26 at HP on 18th, 14 at Keele & Bloor @ 19:30hrs on 23rd & 86 at Roncesvalles & Geoffrey St @ 19:00hrs on 25th (all GC). 14 at Richmond Hill Central Library [YO] @ 19:00hrs on 29th (WP).

CHIMNEY SWIFT - 100 at Ward's Island, TI on 15th (NMu, &).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - 4 at LSS on 11th (NMu, &) & 7 there on 31st (DDe, TTPBRS).

BELTED KINGFISHER – 4 reports from TI from 15th to 31st of 3 to 5 birds (incl. 2 juv) (NMu, &).

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER - 3 at Whitby Psychiatric Hospital [DU] on 19th (OFO fide RPy, fide ONTBIRDS).

DOWNY WOODPECKER - 9 at TI on 15th, 4 on 27th & 7 on 31st (NMu, &).

NORTHERN FLICKER - 19 at TI on 31st (NMu, ICa, &).

PILEATED WOODPECKER - 1 at Holland Landing S.L. [YO] on 17th (DW fide ONTBIRDS).

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER - 1 at Snug Harbour, TI on 15th & 17th (NMu,&). 2 at Brookbanks Ravine from 20th to 22nd (JI,RJP, fide ONTBIRDS), 1 at Peninsula D, LSS on 25th (DDe,TTPBRS) & 1 at Trout Pond, TI on 27th (NMu,& fide ONTBIRDS).

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE - 11 at TI on 31st (NMu,ICa,&).

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER - 1 banded at LSS on 13th & 2 on 22nd (DDe,TTPBRS). 3 at TI on 17th (NMu,ICa), 1 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 30th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS) & 2 at Ward's Island, TI on 31st (NMu,ICa,&).

ALDER FLYCATCHER - 1 at Hanlan's Point, TI on 27th (NMu,& fide ONTBIRDS).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER - 11 at LSS on 11th (NMu,&) & 2 at Hanlan's Point, TI on 27th (NMu,& fide ONTBIRDS).

TRAILL'S FLYCATCHER - 8 at TI on 18th (AA).

LEAST FLYCATCHER - 8 at TI on 15th, 10 on 17th, 21 on 27th & 11 on 31st (NMu,&).

EASTERN PHOEBE - 1 at LSS on 18th (DDe,TTPBRS).

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER - 7 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 27th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS; NMacd). 24 at TI on 27th (NMu,& fide ONTBIRDS), [not a record, max. was 48 on 16 Aug 1948]. 11 at TI on 31st (NMu,ICa,&).

EASTERN KINGBIRD - 35 at LSS on 14th, 67 on 24th & **140** on 25th which would be a new all-time record count for GTA, if documented (DDe,TTPBRS). 48 (37 on Wards) at TI on 15th (NMu,&) & 34 at TI on 17th (NMu,ICa). 350 at Halton Lakeshore, from Bronte Harbour to Sioux Lookout [HL] on 25th (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS), does not qualify as a high count since it involved multiple sites.

WARBLING VIREO - 18 at LSS on 11th (NMu,&) & 30 on 22nd (DDe,TTPBRS). 16 at TI on 17th, 8 on 27th & 12 there on 31st (NMu, &).

PHILADELPHIA VIREO - 1 at LSS on 22nd & 2 on 24th (DDe,TTPBRS). 2 at TI on 27th & 31st (NMu,& fide ONTBIRDS).

RED-EYED VIREO - 24 at TI on 27th & 28 on 31st (NMu,& fide ONTBIRDS). 8 at Peninsula D, LSS on 27th & 35 on 31st (DDe,TTPBRS).

COMMON RAVEN - 1 at Uxbridge Microwave Tower [DU] on 19th (ETB).

PURPLE MARTIN - 12 at N End Bathurst Street [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS). 14 at LSS on 12th & **1215** at SE Tip, LSS on 21st (DDe,TTPBRS) "The birds were flying off the endikement out over the lake... coming through in groups of 50-150 and were mixed with much smaller numbers of other swallows, forging thro' massive wind and waves as they disappeared over a turbulent L. Ontario" [2nd highest count in database for GTA]. 46 were also seen at Peninsula D on 21st & 95 were at LSS on 22nd (DDe,TTPBRS). 11 at Ward's Island, TI on 27th (NMu,& fide ONTBIRDS) & 500+ at Halton Region Building, Bronte Rd. [HL] on 28th (anon fide CEdge, fide ONTBIRDS).

TREE SWALLOW - 100 at TI on 15th (NMu,&).

BANK SWALLOW - 500 on wires at N End Bathurst Street [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS).

BARN SWALLOW - 100 at TI on 15th & 50 on 17th (NMu,&). 64 at LSS on 21st (DDe,TTPBRS).

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE - 43 at TI on 27th (NMu,& fide ONTBIRDS) was 'An unusual number there at this time of year in my opinion' & 35 there on 31st (NMu,ICa,&).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - 7 reports from HP from 9th to 29th of 1 to 3 birds (SMF). 1 at LSS on 11th (NMu,&), 1 banded on 16th, 3 on 19th, 6 on 27th & 8 on 31st (DDe,TTPBRS). 4 at TI on 17th, 3 on 27th & 10 there on 31st (5 pairs) (NMu, &).



Olive-sided Flycatcher in Jean Iron's garden, Toronto; 27 August 2007. Photo © Jean Iron.

CAROLINA WREN - 1 at Ward's Island, TI on 15th, 17th, 27th (NMu,&) & 1 at Snug Harbour, TI on 18th (AA).

MARSH WREN - 2 at Hochreiter Rd., N End Bathurst Street [YO] on 4th (NMu,ICa, fide ONTBIRDS).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET - 1 at Ward's Island, TI on 27th (NMu,&, fide ONTBIRDS).

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER – 7 reports from 13th to 30th of 1 at HP (SMF). 3 at LSS on 14th (DDe,TTPBRS) & 1 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 25th (JDL,&, fide ONTBIRDS). 10 at TI on 15th, 6 on 17th, 12 on 27th & 3 at Ward's Island, TI on 31st (NMu,&).

EASTERN BLUEBIRD - 1 near Skyloft, Chalk Lake Rd. [DU] on 19th (ETB).

VEERY - 1 banded at LSS on 15th & 3 banded on 26th (DDe,TTPBRS).

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH - 1 at Hanlan's Point, TI on 27th (NMu,&, fide ONTBIRDS) & 1 at Ward's Island, TI on 31st (NMu,ICa,&).

SWAINSON'S THRUSH - 1 banded at LSS on 15th & 5 on 31st (DDe,TTPBRS). 1 at TI on 18th (AA), 3 on 27th & 11 on 31st (NMu,&).

HERMIT THRUSH - 1 banded (record early) at LSS on 14th (DDe,TTPBRS).

AMERICAN ROBIN - 75 (incl. many juvs) at TI on 17th (NMu,ICa).

GRAY CATBIRD - 16 at LSS on 11th (NMu,&). 8 at TI on 15th, 10 on 17th & 9 on 27th (NMu,&).

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD - Just 83 reports this month, as follows: [MT] 28; [PL] 27; [YO] 27; [DU] 1; and [HL] zero. As usual, most reports came from the ongoing survey by RBHS and WP, so no particular significance should be attributed to the lack of reports in Durham and Halton. Others reporting this species were: ETB, DDe/TTPBRS, DEP and NMu.

BROWN THRASHER - 4 at TI on 31st (NMu,ICa,&).

EUROPEAN STARLING - 720 at LSS on 13th (DDe,TTPBRS).

CEDAR WAXWING - 80 at LSS on 12th & 95 on 24th (DDe,TTPBRS). 75 (most on Wards) at TI on 15th, 50 on 17th & 75 there on 27th (NMu,&).

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER - 1 M at Snug Harbour, TI on 27th (NMu,&).

LAWRENCE'S WARBLER - 1 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] @ 09:30hrs on 25th [No doc. seen] (Ross Lamb fide JDL, fide ONTBIRDS).

TENNESSEE WARBLER - 1 at Ward's Island, TI on 27th (NMu,&) & 10 at Peninsula D, LSS on 31st (DDe,TTPBRS).

NORTHERN PARULA - 1 at Peninsula D, LSS on 31st (DDe,TTPBRS).

YELLOW WARBLER - 34 at LSS on 11th (NMu,&), 36 on 13th & 11 banded there on 19th (DDe,TTPBRS). 13 at TI on 15th & 13 on 17th (NMu,&).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - 1 at LSS on 14th (DDe,TTPBRS) & 4 at TI on 31st (NMu,ICa,&).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER - 1 at HP on 14th & 15th (SMF). 1 at TI on 15th, 2 on 17th & 27 on 31st (NMu,&). 19 at Peninsula D, LSS on 31st (DDe,TTPBRS).

CAPE MAY WARBLER - 1 at HP on 19th (SMF). 1 at Peninsula D, LSS on 24th & 2 there on 27th (DDe,TTPBRS).

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER - 1 at LSS on 14th (DDe,TTPBRS). 2 (M & F) at HP on 22nd & 1 there on 26th, 27th, 30th & 31st (SMF). 5 at TI on 27th (NMu,&).

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER - 6 at LSS on 13th & 20 on 27th (DDe,TTPBRS). 1 at TI on 17th & 4 on 27th (NMu,&). 1 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 31st (JDL fide ONTBIRDS).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER - 3 at LSS on 25th (DDe, TTPBRS).

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER - 1 at HP on 9th (SMF) & 7 at TI on 31st (NMu, ICa, &). 5 at Peninsula D, LSS on 27th & 21 there on 31st (DDe, TTPBRS).

PINE WARBLER - 1 at Ward's Island, TI on 31st (NMu, ICa, &).

PRAIRIE WARBLER - 1 AD-F at Ashbridge's Bay Park @ 10:13hrs on 19th [Documented] (TFI) was seen in naturalized area S of the parking lot.

PALM WARBLER - 3 at Peninsula D, LSS on 31st (DDe, TTPBRS).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER - 1 at LSS on 16th (DDe, TTPBRS). 1 at Snake Island, TI on 17th & 8 at Ward's Island, TI on 31st (NMu, ICa, &).

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER - 1 at HP on 12th, 13th, 15th & 2 there on 14th (SMF). 2 at LSS on 14th & 5 on 22nd (DDe, TTPBRS). 1 at Thicksons Woods [DU] on 14th (NMacd). 1 at Ward's Island, TI on 15th & 4 there on 17th (NMu, &). 4 at TI on 18th (AA) & 5 on 31st (NMu, ICa, &).

AMERICAN REDSTART - 5 at LSS on 25th & 31st (DDe, TTPBRS). 13 at TI on 27th & 19 on 31st (NMu, &).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER - 1 at Thicksons Woods [DU] @ 08:45hrs on 29th (Mark Jensen fide ONTBIRDS). Brief documentation was submitted to OBRC.

OVENBIRD - 1 banded at LSS on 17th (DDe, TTPBRS).

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH - 2 banded at LSS on 13th & 25th (DDe, TTPBRS). 2 at TI on 15th & 3 on 27th (NMu, &).

CONNECTICUT WARBLER - 1 AD-M at Ward's Island, TI on 17th (NMu, ICa).

MOURNING WARBLER - 1 banded at LSS on 14th & 3 banded there on 19th (DDe, TTPBRS). 2 at TI on 18th (AA).

WILSON'S WARBLER - 1 at HP on 19th & 20th (SMF). 2 at LSS on 22nd & 1 on 23rd (DDe, TTPBRS). 4 at TI on 27th & on 31st (NMu, &).

CANADA WARBLER - 1 (banded) at Peninsula D, LSS on 12th & 10 there on 31st (DDe, TTPBRS). 1 at HP on 14th & 15th (SMF). 1 at Ward's Island, TI on 15th (NMu, &), 5 at TI on 17th (NMu, ICa), 18th (AA), 27th & 7 there on 31st (NMu, &).

SUMMER TANAGER - 1 F at Ward's Island, TI on 17th [No doc. seen] (NMu, ICa). 'Feeding on berries quietly right beside the [Eastern] gap in the early morning, good look'.

SCARLET TANAGER - 1 at LSS on 23rd (DDe, TTPBRS) & 6 at TI on 31st (NMu, ICa, &).

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW - 1 at Cranberry Marsh [DU] on 12th (JDL fide ONTBIRDS)

SONG SPARROW - 21 at LSS on 11th (NMu, &).

NORTHERN CARDINAL - 12 at TI on 15th, 12 on 17th, 10 on 27th & 12 there on 31st (NMu, &).

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBREAK - 8 at Ward's Island, TI on 27th (NMu, &).

INDIGO BUNTING - 3 at HP on 22nd (SMF).

BOBOLINK - 6 at LSS on 19th (DDe, TTPBRS).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE - 30 at LSS on 13th (DDe, TTPBRS). 41 at TI on 15th, 44 on 17th, 15 on 27th & 6 on 31st (NMu, &).

PURPLE FINCH - 1 at Snug Harbour, TI on 15th (NMCh fide NMu) & 6 at Peninsula D, LSS on 31st (DDe, TTPBRS).

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH - 42 at LSS on 11th (NMu, &). 31 at TI on 15th (NMCh fide NMu), 52 on 27th & 32 on 31st (NMu, &).

Cited Observers: & et al.; ISRW Iroquois Shores Raptor Watch; OFO Ontario Field Ornithologists; AA Alfred Adamo; MB Margaret Bain; ETB Eleanor Beagan; TTPBRS Tommy Thompson Park Bird Res. Station; ICa Ian Cannell; GCarp Geoff Carpentier; GC Glenn Coady; MCr Mark Cranford; DDe Dan Derbyshire; CEdge Cheryl Edgecombe; SMF Steven Favier; RJF Ron Fleming; TFI Tom Flinn; DGa Dave Gascoigne; PJG Peter J. Good; JI Jean Iron; GLKJ Gabriel Lau Kin Jock; JDL J. Doug Lockrey; NMacd Neil Macdougall; BKM Barry MacKay; NMCh Naish McHugh; CSAM Craig S.A. McLaughlan; KM Kevin McLaughlin; DJM Dave J. Milsom; NMu Norman Murr; anon Unknown Observer; ONTBIRDS OFO Email Hotline; OUTON OutdoorOntario.net; DEP Don E. Perks; RJP Ron Pittaway; WP Winnie Poon; RPye Rayfield Pye; CMRW Cranberry Marsh Raptor Watch; KRS Kevin Shackleton; RBHS Roy B. H. Smith; MDW Mike Williamson; DW David Worthington.

Compiled by Dave Worthington for the TOC Records Committee.

Photo editing by Winnie Poon.

Data entry by Roy Smith. 650 reports were added to the database for August 2007.

Please send reports to: Roy Smith 20 Harding Blvd. W, Suite 1002, Richmond Hill, ON L4C9S4 Tel: 905-5084045 Fax: 905-5084730 email: rsmith@mrs.com by 8th of the following month, please. Send photos for possible use in the bird report to: winniepoon@sympatico.ca, following guidelines in *Toronto Birds* 1(4):36 (April 2007).

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The Common Nighthawk in the Greater Toronto Area

Glenn Coady

Introduction

The Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) has a very widespread breeding range, spanning across the tree line from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean, and south through almost all of the remainder of the North American continent, and much of Mexico, and locally as far south as Panama (see Figure 1). It also has one of the longest migration routes of any North American bird, wintering as far south as northern Argentina (Poulin et al. 1996).

It is one of the most widespread breeding species throughout Ontario, where it is found in rock barrens, forest openings, burns, clear-cuts, eskers, bogs and fens in the Hudson Bay Lowlands and the Canadian Shield in the north. Its range also extends to southernmost Ontario, where it breeds in grasslands, sand plains, agricultural fields and pastures, prairies, alvars, gravel pits, burns and moraines in rural areas, and on flat gravel roofs, railways and airports in urban areas (Sandilands, *in press*).

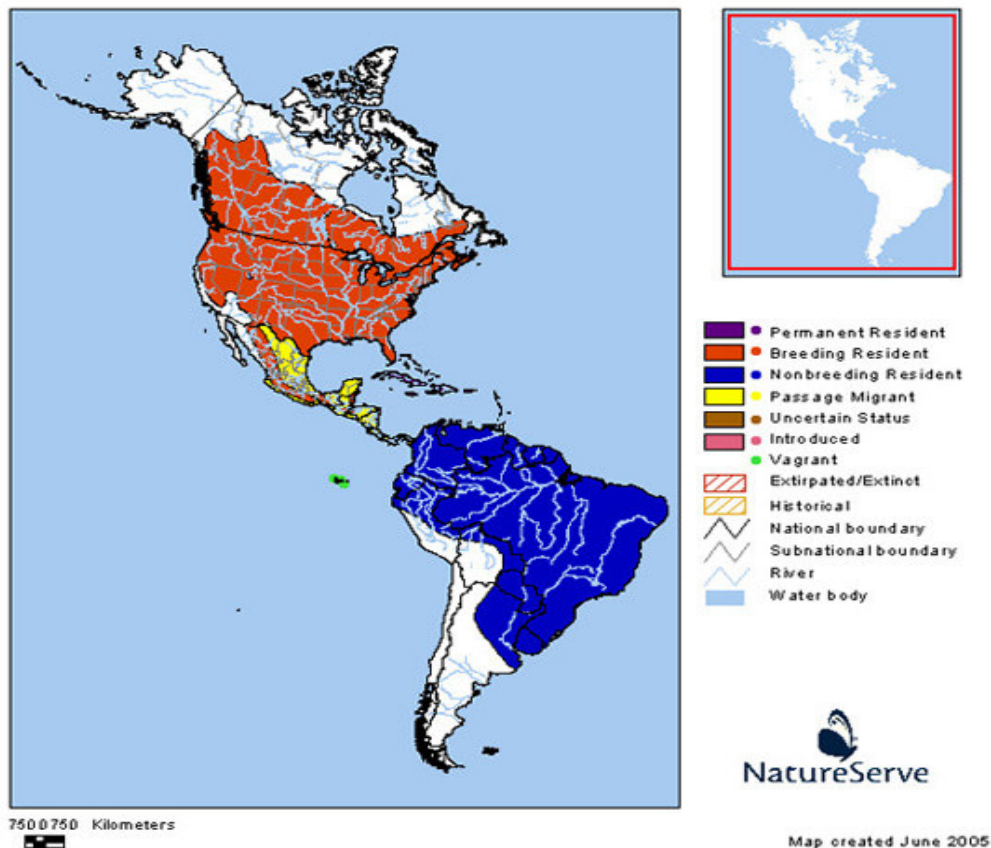


Figure 1: Range of the Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) in the Americas

(Source: Ridgely, R.S., T.F. Allnutt, T. Brooks, D.K. McNicol, D.W. Mehlman, B.E. Young, and J.R. Zook. 2003. Digital Distribution Maps of the Birds of the Western Hemisphere, version 1.0. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia, USA).

Status in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)

The Common Nighthawk is a local and declining summer resident breeding species in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It was formerly described by both Fleming (1907) and Goodwin (1979) as a common summer resident in the Toronto area, and perhaps more precisely as a *locally* common summer resident by both Tozer and Richards (1974) and Parker (1983), since it is absent from many areas of the GTA with apparently suitable habitat.

Indeed, my earliest summer memories as a young boy in the south Parkdale area of the late 1960s and early 1970s, include the ever-present twilight calling of the crepuscular Common Nighthawk. Their erratic and bounding flight, harsh “*peent*” calls, and booming courtship displays, made them very conspicuous in my neighbourhood. They were often easily found while nocturnally foraging for flying insects around the bright lights of tennis courts, sports stadiums, and parking lots in the area. Their individual territories in that era were spaced more closely than the stoplights along King St. West, in large part due to the area’s abundance of Victorian residential, commercial and industrial buildings with large, flat, gravel roofs that Common Nighthawks preferred for nesting.

By the mid-1970s, Ontario birders had anecdotally begun to notice a decline in Common Nighthawk numbers (Goodwin and Rosche 1970, 1974), and by the mid-1980s Goodwin (1984) noted that in the Toronto region “summer birds have become rather scarce, but still widespread”. Subsequent monitoring efforts have served to confirm this early impression of decline.

The probability of detection of the Common Nighthawk in atlas squares with adequate coverage (20+ hours) declined 39% across the whole of Ontario between the first (1981-1985) and second (2001-2005) Ontario Breeding Bird Atlases, with the most precipitous declines occurring in the Southern Shield (67%), Lake Simcoe-Rideau (60%) and Carolinian (59%) regions (Sandilands *in* Cadman et al. 2007).

Between 1968 and 2006, Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes have shown significant annual declines for the Common Nighthawk of 6.2% and 4.4% in Ontario and Canada, respectively (Downes and Collins 2007). Declines have occurred even in boreal routes, suggesting they are not limited to southern portions of the range.

In April 2007, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) recommended the Common Nighthawk for Threatened status and inclusion on Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act, due to a loss of close to 50% of its former population in the last 40 years. The current Canadian population is estimated at 400,000 breeding adults (Savignac 2007) based on BBS population estimates.

Reasons suggested for the decline in numbers of Common Nighthawks have included reforestation, fire suppression, agricultural intensification, pesticide toxicity, declining numbers of gravel roofs in urban areas, tower kills, increased mammal predation in forest openings (Poulin et al. 1996), collisions with automobiles and recreational vehicles (Bender and Brigham 1995), mosquito control efforts, increased frequency of tropical storms (Savignac 2007), increased gull and crow predation of roof nests (Pittaway 2000, Iron and Pittaway 2002), and decreased availability of moths and other insect prey due to pesticides and light pollution (Curry 2006).

Despite the documented decline, breeding evidence for the Common Nighthawk was found in more squares in the Toronto atlas region in the second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas than in the first atlas (14 of 16 squares from 2001-2005 versus 11 of 16 squares from 1981-1985). This is almost certainly an artifact attributable to a tripling of the number of hours of effort expended within this region in the second atlas, in comparison with the first atlas.

Spring migration

The earliest spring migrant Common Nighthawks in the GTA are usually noted in mid-May, although they are generally a late migrant, with the bulk of the birds returning in late May and early June. They are most commonly a solitary migrant in spring, but small flocks are occasionally seen. The largest spring count in the GTA involved 40 nighthawks seen over Oshawa, *Durham R.M.*, on 23 May 1960 by Ron Tozer (Tozer and Richards 1974).

The earliest spring migrant for the GTA (and for all of Ontario) involved one found in Toronto, *City of Toronto*, by Gordon Lambert on 6 April 1947, following an unusual storm that brought many early arrivals to our area (Gunn and Crocker 1951). It should be noted that another Common Nighthawk was also reported in the Niagara Frontier region on 7 April 1947 (Beardslee and Mitchell 1965).

Other exceptionally early spring migrants have included individual birds seen at: Oakville, *Halton R.M.*, on 27 April 1969 by Angela Curry (Parker 1983); Grenadier Pond, High Park, *City of Toronto*, on 7 May 1950 by Jack Satterly (Toronto Ornithological Club record books); and at Pickering Beach, *Durham R.M.*, on 8 May 1965 by R. Charles Long (Long 1966). Fleming (1907) noted one as early as 1 May, but provided no further details.

Confirmed breeding and nest records in the GTA

Although formerly quite common and widespread in the Greater Toronto Area, the number of confirmed records of breeding of the Common Nighthawk is rather small, due to the difficulty in finding nests, eggs, or fledged young, as a result of their excellent camouflage.

The following is a chronology of the confirmed breeding records in the GTA:

- 1) A nest with two eggs (ONRS# 26216) was discovered on a flat gravel roof in the suburbs of Toronto, *City of Toronto*, on 28 June 1892 by L. Jackson (ROM# 650 in the egg collection).
- 2) Speirs (1976) reported a nest and two eggs (ONRS# 26068) discovered in Uxbridge, *Durham R.M.*, by F.H. Scott on 16 June 1896 (ROM# 12006 in the egg collection).
- 3) Baillie and Harrington (1937) noted a nest with two eggs that was discovered in a field in Toronto, *City of Toronto*, on 4 June 1912 by Theodore Glasgow (ONRS# 26218).
- 4) A nest with two eggs (ONRS# 26217) was discovered by Paul Harrington on 6 June 1912, in a vacant field, littered with rubbish, in Rosedale, *City of Toronto* (ROM# 5889 in the egg collection).
- 5) A nest with two eggs (ONRS# 26219) was discovered on the roof of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, *City of Toronto*, on 21 June 1921 by Lester Lynne Snyder (ROM# 648 in the egg collection).
- 6) Baillie and Harrington (1937) reported that two small young were observed on the roof of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, *City of Toronto*, on 9 August 1923 by James Little Baillie, Jr.
- 7) A nest with one egg (ONRS# 26220) was discovered in June 1926 [exact date unknown] in Kettleby, King Township, *York R.M.*, by Stuart Logan Thompson (ROM# 7647 in the egg collection).
- 8) Snyder and Logier (1930) reported collecting an adult female nighthawk that was observed feeding two nearly fully grown young in King Township, *York R.M.* on 25 July 1928.
- 9) A nest with two fresh eggs (ONRS# 26069) was discovered on 28 May 1932 by K.W. Lomax, when an adult was flushed from a nest on a gravel roof of a bank building in Whitby, *Durham R.M.*
- 10) Another nest with two eggs (ONRS# 26070) was discovered on a gravel roof in Whitby, *Durham R.M.*, on 1 June 1934 by K.W. Lomax.
- 11) A nest was shown to teenager J. Bruce Falls by his teacher, on the gravel roof at Humewood Public School, 15 Cherrywood Avenue, York, *City of Toronto*, in June 1937 [exact date unknown].
- 12) A nest with two eggs (ONRS# 26221) was discovered on the gravel roof of Eaton's Annex store in Toronto, *City of Toronto*, on 10 June 1941 by W.W. Smith (ROM# 5897 in the egg collection).
- 13) A nest with one egg (ONRS# 26222) was discovered in Toronto, *City of Toronto*, on 26 June 1944 by James Little Baillie, Jr. This nest contained two eggs on 29 June 1944 and 2 young were observed 17-27 July 1944.
- 14) A nest with two eggs (ONRS# 26223) was discovered on a gravel roof in Toronto, *City of Toronto*, on 12 June 1949 by Archie Reid (ROM# 5899 in the egg collection).
- 15) A nest with two eggs being incubated by an adult female (ONRS# 26071) was discovered on 17 June 1961 on the gravel roof of an apartment building in Oshawa, *Durham R.M.*, by James M. Richards (Tozer and Richards 1974).
- 16) A nest with two young (ONRS# 26224) was discovered on the roof of an office building at 40 Murray St., Toronto, *City of Toronto*, on 13 July 1961 by George M. Fairfield.
- 17) A nest with one young was reported on the Ortona Barracks roof on Kerr St., Oakville, *Halton R.M.*, on 28 June 1966 by George K. Peck (ONRS# 25987) and Barry Ranford (ONRS# 120186).
- 18) A nest with one flightless young (ONRS# 25988) still being brooded by an adult female, was noted on 11 July 1967 on the gravel roof of Hopedale Plaza in Oakville, *Halton R.M.*, by George K. Peck.
- 19) A nest with one egg (ONRS# 26176) was discovered on 3 July 1980, on the gravel roof of the Botany Building at the University of Toronto (College St. and Queen's Park Circle), Toronto, *City of Toronto*, by John (Jack) L. Cranmer-Byng. This nest was later known to have failed, likely due to predation.
- 20) A nest with two eggs (ONRS# 26177) was observed 15 June – 1 July 1981, on the roof of the Beecham Canada building (½ mile west of Jane St. and Wilson Ave.), Weston, *City of Toronto*, by Tom Cosburn. Two young continued to be observed at this nest 10-25 July 1981.

21) A nest with one egg (ONRS# 26178) was observed on 15 June 1983, on the roof of Silver Creek Public School, Wincott Ave., Etobicoke, *City of Toronto*, by Tom Cosburn. This nest contained two eggs 25-30 June 1983, one egg and one young on 4 July, and two young from 5 July – 5 August 1983.

22) A nest with one egg (ONRS# 26179) was observed on the roof of Kipling Collegiate, Etobicoke, *City of Toronto*, on 17 June 1986 by Tom Cosburn. This nest contained two eggs from 18 June – 1 July 1986, one egg and one young on 6 July 1986, and two young from 7-30 July 1986.

23) A nest with two eggs was (ONRS# 26180) was discovered on 12 June 1990, on the roof of the Labatt's Brewery at Islington Ave. and Hwy 401, Etobicoke, *City of Toronto*, by Tom Cosburn. This nest contained two eggs on 29 June 1990, one egg and one young on 3 July 1990, and two young from 4 July – 4 August 1990.

24) The author discovered a female incubating a nest with two eggs (ONRS# 199192) on a third floor gravel roof on Women's College Hospital at 76 Grenville St. in Toronto, *City of Toronto*, on 18 June 1990. The two eggs were present until 22 June 1990, but the nest appeared to have failed due to predation on 23 June 1990.

25) The author discovered an adult female with two fledged young (fully grown, but flying weakly) on 31 July 2002, in a gravel parking lot of an old industrial area, adjacent to a railway line, on the east side of Sterling Rd., about halfway between Dundas St. W. and Bloor St. W. in Toronto, *City of Toronto*.

26) A nest with one flightless young (ONRS# 199193) was discovered on the former General Motors north fabrication plant in Oshawa, *Durham R.M.*, on 6 July 2003 by Tyler Hoar.

The last two records comprised the only confirmed evidence of breeding in the entire GTA during the second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (2001-2005).

Fall migration

Separating the earliest fall migrants from summer residents can often be problematic. The earliest fall migrants usually occur in the first week of August, when late local breeders are still present. Some of the earliest fall migrants in the GTA include: two seen over Aldershot, *Halton R.M.*, on 3 August 1980 by Dave and Thelma Powell (Curry 2006); three seen over Petticoat Creek, Pickering, *Durham R.M.*, on 5 August 1962 by J. Murray Speirs (Speirs 1976); and one observed by the author on 5 August 2007 over the corner of Dundas St. W. and Pacific Ave., Toronto, *City of Toronto*.

Although the Common Nighthawk tends to be a solitary migrant in spring, it can be quite gregarious in autumn migration. For almost two centuries, Ontario naturalists have been documenting large autumn flights of this species in late August.

R. D. Black (1934) reported that Charles Fothergill noted in his diaries "upwards of a thousand seen over Toronto on 30 August 1817". It should be noted that, in 1817, the name "Toronto" was used in reference to present-day Port Hope, and that present-day Toronto would have been referred to as "York" in 1817, so this was undoubtedly a Port Hope record, and hence outside the GTA. Nonetheless, it serves to document that massive flocks of Common Nighthawks were seen in the last week of August, on the north shore of Lake Ontario, almost 200 years ago.

Captain H.W. Hadfield (1857) noted an autumn movement of 40-50 at Kingston on 26 August 1857.

McIlwraith (1894) wrote: "Towards the end of August, when the first frosts begin to cut off their supply of insect food, large gatherings of Nighthawks may be seen in the evenings moving toward the south-west". This still quite adequately describes the situation to this day.

Fleming (1907) noted that "large flocks" were seen in Toronto on 8 September 1892 and 28 August 1904.

Saunders (1947) noted a then-record flight of 706 nighthawks over his garden on McMaster Ave. in Toronto in the space of 45 minutes on 31 August 1944.

Beardslee and Mitchell (1965) noted five counts of 100 or more nighthawks in the Niagara Frontier region between the dates 28 August and 5 September.

Weir (1989) noted three Kingston counts of 100-300 birds between 26-29 August.

Curry (2006) noted high counts of 1000 and 500 individuals recorded by William Smith at Victoria Park in Hamilton on 2 September 1993 and 20 August 1994.

In the Greater Toronto Area, many high counts of fall migrants appear in the literature (Saunders 1947, Tozer and Richards 1974, Parker 1983, Bennett 1987, Ewins 1993, Carley 1993, Worthington 1998, Worthington 2001).

From 1977 to 1986, I lived in an apartment on the 24th floor of a building on High Park Ave., one block north of Bloor St. W. Our balcony faced east, providing an arresting view of the city, and an excellent vantage point from which to observe both the autumn raptor and Common Nighthawk migrations. While most hawks passed above my balcony (some just barely above), nighthawks passed both above and below my point of view. In this period, I recorded many high counts of Common Nighthawks, and in Table 1 (below) I have presented an all-time list of single site counts of 100 or more nighthawks in the GTA. I still live in this general area, and continue to watch for large movements of nighthawks in advance of cold fronts in late August in the area just north of High Park.

Table 1: Single site counts of Common Nighthawk of 100 individuals or more in the GTA.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Observer</u>
Aug. 27, 2001	1129	Mountview Ave. & Glenlake Ave. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 26, 1994	800	47 Cameron Crescent, Leaside [Toronto]	Harry Kerr
Aug. 25, 1998	737	Keele St. & Bloor St. W. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 31, 1944	706	McMaster Ave. [Toronto]	Richard M. Saunders
Aug. 27, 2001	568	Quebec Ave. & Dundas St. W. [Toronto]	Craig S.A. McLauchlan
Aug. 27, 1961	550	1141 Woodeden Dr. S., Lorne Park [Peel R.M.]	Don Perks
Aug. 27, 1989	500	39 Lincoln Ave. [Toronto]	Bob Yukich
Aug. 26, 1994	457	Keele St. & Bloor St. W. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 24, 1992	450	6 Bernice Ave., Etobicoke [Toronto]	Ray Geras
Aug. 27, 2006	387	High Park Blvd. & Parkside Dr. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 26, 1978	374	High Park Ave. & Glenlake Ave. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 27, 1989	355	High Park Ave. & Glenlake Ave. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Sept. 6, 1944	304	Alderwood [Toronto]	J. Jarvis
Aug. 24, 1992	300+	218 Humbercrest Blvd. [Toronto]	John & Victoria Carley
Sept. 4, 1995	300+	39 Lincoln Ave. [Toronto]	Bob Yukich
Aug. 20, 1995	300	Keele St. & Hwy. 7 [York R.M.]	Theo Hofmann
Aug. 25, 2000	300	Bayview Ave. & Major Mackenzie Dr. [York R.M.]	Graham Leonard
Aug. 24, 1992	264	Grenadier Pond, High Park [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 27, 1982	249	High Park Ave. & Glenlake Ave. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 25, 1980	206	High Park Ave. & Glenlake Ave. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Sept. 1, 1986	200	19 Chicora Ave. [Toronto]	Ross Harris
Aug. 26, 1994	199	Sherwood Park ravine [Toronto]	George Fairfield
Sept. 6, 2002	187	Keele St. north of Bloor St. W. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 25, 1994	185	Sherwood Park ravine [Toronto]	George Fairfield
Aug. 21, 2001	184	Keele St. & Bloor St. W. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 22, 2001	180	Mill Pond, Richmond Hill [York R.M.]	Frank Pinilla
Aug. 24, 1970	150	Richmond Hill [York R.M.]	Ott Devitt
Aug. 24, 1980	150	Richmond Hill [York R.M.]	David Fewster
Sept. 27, 1995	139	High Park [Toronto]	Norm Murr
Aug. 26, 1975	133	208 Jameson Ave., Parkdale [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 27, 2001	127	Mill Pond, Richmond Hill [York R.M.]	Frank Pinilla
Sept. 8, 1994	125	39 Lincoln Ave. [Toronto]	Bob Yukich
Aug. 24, 2000	119	276 Glenforest Rd. [Toronto]	Craig S.A. McLauchlan
Sept. 1, 1986	115	Keele St. & Bloor St. W. [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 23, 1992	110	Keele St. 1 km. north of Bloor St. W. [Toronto]	Peter J. Ewins
Aug. 24, 1972	107	141 Close Ave., Parkdale [Toronto]	Glenn Coady
Aug. 23, 1991	100	39 Lincoln Ave. [Toronto]	Bob Yukich
Aug. 26, 1997	100	39 Lincoln Ave. [Toronto]	Bob Yukich

From Table 1, we can see that 28 of the 38 highest all-time Common Nighthawk counts in the GTA occur within a very narrow window of five days from 23-27 August.

We can also appreciate that some massive flights have been simultaneously observed by more than one observer on the same evening.

On 27 August 2001, the astounding total of 1129 birds I observed one block north of High Park, probably overlapped very little, if at all, with the 568 birds seen by Craig McLauchlan at Quebec Ave. and Dundas St. W., about 1.3 km. away to the northwest (particularly since all the birds were moving from northeast to southwest). The 127 birds also seen that same evening in Richmond Hill by Frank Pinilla ought to tell us that a truly staggering number of Common Nighthawks were probably moving across a broad front through the GTA that evening, and that the 1824 individuals counted by these three observers likely considerably underestimated this movement.

Similarly, the 800 birds seen by Harry Kerr in Leaside, the 457 seen by me near High Park and the 199 seen by George Fairfield at Sherwood Park, all on 26 August 1994, likely represents a similar massive movement on a broad front.

Likewise, the 450 birds seen by Ray Geras in south Etobicoke, the 300+ seen by John and Victoria Carley further north in the Humber Valley, and the 264 seen by me over Grenadier Pond, all on 24 August 1992, represented another very large flight on a broad front.

The 500 individuals seen by Bob Yukich near Runnymede Rd. and Annette Ave. and the 355 seen by me just north of High Park, both on 27 August 1989, represent yet another large flight.

I am inclined to suspect that we are routinely underestimating the magnitude of these massive pulses of nighthawks through our area, and that some years they are missed altogether, simply due to a lack of observers. In some years, weather systems no doubt simply fail to concentrate the birds into such large flights.

Sometimes, these large flights of nighthawks involve birds seen foraging on large hatches of flying ants as described by Ewins (1993) and Carley (1993), whereas some flights involve birds rapidly passing through to the southwest with no evidence of feeding. Exactly what serves as the trigger for such a powerful synchrony of Common Nighthawk exodus is a mystery, but I suspect that McIlwraith's attributing it to their fleeing from a disappearance of aerial insect prey with the rapid onset of cold fronts, is likely the most sensible explanation.

After the third week in September, counts of Common Nighthawks usually involve fewer than ten individuals. Some notably high exceptionally late counts have included: 139 birds seen at High Park on 27 September 1995 by Norm Murr; 25 seen over 39 Lincoln Ave. on 1 October 1993 by Bob Yukich; 15 seen over High Park on 5 October 1993 by Patrick Stepien-Scanlon; 14 seen over 39 Lincoln Ave. on 5 October 1993 by Bob Yukich; 50 seen in Toronto on 7 October 1947 by Robert Trowern; and 10 seen over Upper Canada College on 9 October 2003 by Piers M. Perren.

By the second week in October, the last of the nighthawks have usually already left our area. Some notably late sightings have occurred on the following occasions: one seen over the Nature Reserve on Toronto Islands on 11 October 1996 by Alfred Adamo; one seen at Britannia on 12 October 1959 by Don Gunn; one seen at Long Branch on 12 October 1962 by Don Perks; one seen over Centre Island on 12 October 1991 by Hugh Currie; one seen over south Etobicoke on 14 October 1991 by David Langford; one seen over Thicksen's Woods on 14 October 1993 by Mike King; one seen over the Leslie St. Spit on 14 October 2000 by Craig McLauchlan and Ron Scovell; and one seen over the Oshawa lakeshore on 15 October 1956 by George Scott.

The latest fall record in the GTA involved an individual observed fluttering around the lights inside a building of the General Motors South Plant in Oshawa at 2:00 a.m. on 23 October 1973 by James M. Richards.

Late October and early November hawk watchers and lake watchers should take note, however, that an extremely late individual was observed just outside the GTA, over the north shore of Cootes Paradise, on 9 November 1983, by Dave and Thelma Powell (Curry 2006). As Common Nighthawks are not as likely to utilize torpor in the manner of other nightjars (Poulin et al. 1996), records very much later than this would appear to be most unlikely in the GTA.

Summary

The Common Nighthawk is a local and declining summer breeding species in the Greater Toronto Area. Its local decline from the 1970s to the 1990s has correlated very closely with the marked increase in urban crows and gulls in the GTA in that period, leading to speculation that these potential avian predators may have developed a very good search image for roof nesting Common Nighthawks in urban areas, and may be implicated in reducing their productivity.

In the summer of 2002, the Toronto area (particularly the western half of the GTA) experienced its first outbreak of West Nile Virus. This newly introduced Old World disease was spread from mosquitoes to both birds and humans, and rapidly caused the mortality of greater than 95% of the area's locally breeding American Crows. Annual outbreaks have kept local American Crow populations suppressed (whereas Blue Jays and Black-capped Chickadees, originally similarly affected, have since recovered). At the beginning of 2003, the last large garbage dump near the City of Toronto, the Keele Valley landfill, was permanently closed. Its closure has subsequently reduced the number of gulls (and perhaps also crows) in the GTA at all seasons, and in particular, to greatly reduce the number of gulls making twice-daily commutes across the entire city in search of food in summer, between the landfill and the lakefront. My own observations, and those of others, are beginning to show that in the last five years, a noticeable increase of Common Nighthawks in the city in summer has correlated with this recent decline of local gull and crow prevalence.

The timing of the spring and fall migration of the Common Nighthawk has remained remarkably constant for the past two hundred years of observations. Despite the known decline of the species, large numbers continue to pass through the GTA in migration in late August and early September. In fact, the majority of the all-time highest fall counts have occurred in the last fifteen years. The only Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas region in which there was no significant decline was the Hudson Bay Lowlands. Although the Common Nighthawk occurs at lower densities in the north, the vastness of this area of suitable and relatively unaltered habitat suggests a high proportion of the provincial population likely nests there. This undiminished population most likely provides much of the numbers seen in late-August "pulses" of birds in fall migration. These peak counts, therefore, might appear to remain stable, perhaps even "masking" significant population decline throughout much of the rest of Ontario.

It would appear that useful population monitoring of Common Nighthawks using fall migration data will require systematic coverage (similar to a hawk watch) over the entire early August to early October migration period, rather than targeted coverage of a narrow window of peak migration dates.

I sincerely hope that the increased awareness of the challenges faced by the aerial insectivore guild, particularly the Common Nighthawk, our only insectivorous, crepuscular species that is widely distributed in a large variety of habitats across all of Canada, will result in conservation efforts and strategies that will reverse their known population declines.

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