

## *Quebec and Ontario 7<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2003*

Combining a business trip in Montreal with a bit of a holiday tour did not lend itself to a full on birding trip, particularly as the trip was too late for the migration, even so my target was 100 lifers.

### *Saturday*

Having arrived the previous evening and early start was not on the cards and a touristy day in *Montreal* was planned. First stop was the Olympic stadium complex and its famous biodome. *Cliff swallows* were nesting on all structures and a *field sparrow* was with a small group of *house sparrows* easily distinguishable from them. The biodome was well worth a visit. *American robins* were everywhere on the walk to the botanical gardens which yielded lots of new species although common, *baltimore oriole*, *chipping sparrow*, *American goldfinch*, *catbird*, lots of *waxwings*, an *American wigeon* with the *mallards* on the lake but the best bird was a *brewers blackbird*. Also this is the best place to see chipmunks they are very tame.



*Ring billed Gull at Montreal*

### *Sunday*

An early trip to *Mont tremblant* was the order of the day, the hour or so trip produced marmots and *turkey vultures*, the touristy things were done in the town and then some walking in the woods and up the mountain. This produced

*warbling vireo, veery, black capped chickadee, chat* and the best bird of the day a lone *lark sparrow* out in the open on the mountain, the birding was hard due to the dense foliage and we retreated to the town for refreshments. After some lunch a trail which would loop through the woods and back via the lake was taken. It produced *pileated woodpecker* dive bombing us, *downy woodpecker*, a possible bobcat disappearing into the undergrowth and a *cape may warbler* was spotted. The lake only produced *yellow warbler* and, as we were leaving the water moved and an otter swam into view.

### *Monday*

Unfortunately the entire day was taken working, took a short walk to the river and saw *tree and bank swallows*.

### *Tuesday*

Managed a trip to *l'bizard* in the evening with a Birdpal member in search for a hummingbird, it is an excellent place for birding, *Yellow warbler* immediately in the car park, but nothing on the lake at all. The marsh was different however, *wood duck* and a whole family of *hooded mergansers* was spotted, while *the pied billed grebe* sat motionless on a nest and unnoticed until a fellow birder pointed it out. *Belted kingfishers* and *eastern kingbirds* dashed around. *Least and Great crested flycatchers* hawked for insects. further on by a beaver dam was prime woodpecker territory a *downy woodpecker* put in an appearance, followed by *northern flicker* and then the *pileated* incredibly close, and a *yellow bellied sapsucker* showed off. There were the usual *starlings, blue jays* etc around but we did pick up (and I must admit not identifying it myself) a *rusty blackbird*, I did spot the *song sparrows* however. The marsh wren site produced several calling birds but no sightings. A Scottish couple living locally now told us of a tree in which hummingbirds are commonly seen, we unfortunate did not see any and carried on to the last pond *wood ducks*, a hawk of some sort which we were unable to ID, then right in front of us a beaver surfaced and swam off to the dam. A quick stop on the way back produced a *ruby throated hummingbird* on the famous tree, then getting great views of a *rough winged swallow* sat in a tree.

### *Wednesday*

Despite the rain I took an afternoon walk on *Il St Helene*, plenty of marmots were around, *cormorants, black crowned night herons, ring billed gulls* and a lone

*greater black backed gull* were seen on the river. The rest of the site produced *house finch* and a *grey cheeked thrush* along with the usual fare.



*Marmot on Il St Helene*

### ***Thursday***

Managed some time in the afternoon after working to go the cemetery and up *Mount Royal*, the cemetery was by far the best, much quieter, it *produced red tailed hawks*, my first *indio buntings* of the trip, there is a section with lots of nestboxes stuffed full of *house wrens*. I had excellent views of *a hairy woodpecker* returning every few minutes to its nest to feed young. *A red eyed vireo* and *eastern pewee* were in the woods and several *brown thrashers* were around.

### ***Friday***

Despite the heavy rain, I made it to *Toronto* for a non birdwatching day, the weather improved and most of the day was had sightseeing before driving north to tiny marsh.

### ***Saturday***

I set off at dawn to *Tiny marsh*, it was a little misty and there were large numbers of *Canada geese* goslings and some wildlife photographers and a fisherman who had beaten me out. *Osprey*, *blue winged teal* and dozens of *black terns* entertained me on the marsh along with a *pied billed grebe*. There were some more ducks but they were far off and even with a scope to distant to identify but

the *swamp sparrows* kept me interested. The walk through the woodland / shrub / farmland alongside the marsh and river produced lots of birds, *common yellowthroat*, *redstart*, *phoebe*, *alder flycatcher* and a *caspian tern* flyover were the pick. On to *Wye marsh* (entrance fee) which is famous for its *trumper swan* re introduction program and I was not disappointed about a dozen adults were on the marsh along with lots of turtles. The only other thing of note was a musk rat. My next stop was *Carden plain* (get the excellent booklet from tourist info) I stopped at the canal lift first and then onto the main birding area. *Eastern meadowlarks* and *savannah sparrows* were easily spotted, all the bluebird nests were occupied by *tree swallows* but there were lots of *bluebirds* around. An *upland sandpiper* was clearly visible at the top of a bush. I carried on and a *broad winged hawk* was perched 3 feet away from me, I had to stop for *the clay coloured sparrow* in the road and had to back up to watch it as it approached. I left the plain and turned round for another pass where a *purple finch* on the top of a small tree, *common nighthawks* were abundant in the sky. *Sedge wrens* could be heard but not located and I had a tip off where the loggerhead shrikes were nesting but it was getting to dark and I could not spot them (I could have easily spent more time here allow 1 full day).



*Carden Plain*

### *Sunday*

Did the touristy thing at *Niagara* several *American herring gulls* were easily spotted amongst the *ring billed gulls*.





*Red Winged Blackbird at Niagra*

### ***Monday***

Visited **Long point**, the observatory had long since closed for the season I birded the area without seeing much out of the ordinary. I carried onto the point itself **caspian terns** were around along with several **kildeers**, the usual birds were around. I moved onto **Big Creek marsh** for sedge wrens and sandhill cranes, the marsh was closed so I had to find some other places, the day was not going well. I visited **Rowanwood Sanctuary** which turned up a co-operative **magnolia warbler** and a massive black snake and finally a **bobolink**, I visited a few ponds and marshes with nothing to note but a **willow flycatcher**.

### ***Tuesday***

I had no idea how big **Rondeau** was and it took me a full day to do even a small part of it. Midges here were getting very annoying and some tracks were avoided, the first track on the edge of the woods flushed a quail of some sort, I followed it and flushed it again it was a **bobwhite**, most unexpected as I carried on to my target area for **prothonotary warblers**, one showed after a few minutes and was feeding chicks in a nestbox. I walked down the long trail to the **shore eastern bluebird, towhees, arcadian flycatcher, several sparrows, indigo bunting** amongst others were encountered. At the shore **kildeer** and a lone **spotted sandpiper** were present. The trail back produced lots of garter snakes and the common birds. Other trails produced little else of interest. Some were avoided due to school parties and midges.

### *Wednesday*

This was the start of the epic part of the trip, today was *Point Peele* an early start to beat the school kids, the first stop Marsh Boardwalk produced *marsh wren*, a mink which walked right past me with a young *red winged blackbird* in its mouth. I took the first land train to the point and had it to myself getting to the point full hour before the school parties. *Bonapartes gulls* were abundant and careful scanning produced two adult *franklins gulls*, two *forsters terns* and several *caspian terns*.



*The Point at Peele*

Walking back to the visitors centre produced some excellent birds, *orchard orioles*, *both cuckoos*, as well as all the usual birds. I visited several of the trails and picked up *blue gray gnatcatcher*, *carolina wren* and a fantastic view of a *ruby throated hummingbird* but no cerulean warblers were to be found. I tried for sedge wren but to no avail and I left for *Jack Miners Sanctuary*.

There was little there but did see an otter a few feet away making up for the extortionate entrance fee. I continued to *Objway*.

*Objway*. Arriving at *objway* I headed for the bird feeders, *blue jay*, several *woodpeckers* and two *rose breasted grosbeaks* were present, I waited for 45 mins and saw a *hummingbird* and by chance turning round a *coopers hawk* had been watching the table as well. A walk through the woods produced a racoon several *robins* and I could hear a whip poor will but did not locate it. I drove

through the torrential rain deep into the night into Michigan catching some sleep in the car.

### **Thursday**

I arrived at **Grayling** bang on time for the **Kirtlands warbler** tour and after the talk and slideshow we convoyed our way to the site, it was very hot even at that time and everyone walked past a **vesper sparrow** without interest except myself. Several **nashville warblers** and **hermit thrushes** were easily located before we got a view of a male **kirtlands**, further along we saw another and then a female. The walk back to the cars produced another male and a 13 lined ground squirrel and a **white crowned sparrow** while the squirrel was centre of attention. After a quick bite to eat a 1.5 hour journey to **Sleeping Bear Dunes**. The visitor centre pointed me in the right direction for **pipng plovers**. Duly one was located in the fenced off section of the beach sitting on a nest, another was feeding in the surf with some terns for company. Although it was early in the day I had a massive journey ahead and did a quick bird tally before setting off to **Algonquin**. I had a total of 87 lifers a bit short of my 100 bird target, so I would have a go at 95 instead. An emergency stop for a **sharp shinned hawk** on the telegraph wires upped to total to 88 and my original 100 looked more achievable but I was still in doubt.

### **Friday**

I arrived an hour later than I had planned and immediately parked at **the Oxtongue picnic ground** and took a walk, white throated sparrows were plentiful but not much else. I moved on to the **whiskey rapids trail** and all was quiet eventually things started moving and two squabbling **gray jays** (89) were observed just above me and then several **boreal chickadees** (90) passed me slowly feeding through the branches. A **blackpoll warbler** (91) turned my attention from the kingfisher by the river. It was still early and 100 was looking good. The next stop was the **Mizzy lake trailhead**, when I eventually found it! It was blisteringly hot and the short walk was exhausting but was rewarding a **dark eyed junco** (92) and **yellow rumped warbler** (93) were very obliging, I could hear several olive sided flycatchers about could not spot them. I stopped at the side of the road where several cars had stopped to view two moose, a baby and mother.

I went to the visitor centre for some advice on trying to find some other birds, they were not very knowledgeable and I continued on my own. This time I stopped by one of the lakes where two other cars were they were watching a **common merganser** (Goosander to us UK birders) and its brood of about 12 ducklings. My prize however was a male **black duck** (94) sitting at the edge of the lake. I tried without success for spruce grouse in the marsh / woodland area called **spruce boardwalk** but was unsuccessful but a nice **blue headed solitary vireo** (95)

was very obliging. I back tracked to *hardwood hill picnic grounds* which I had driven past earlier by mistake and took the very up and down hike through the woods. It proved lucky with *red and white breasted nuthatch* (96 + 97) and just as I was leaving a *black throated green warbler* (98). Time was almost up and still needed two species, back for the spruce grouse and olive sided flycatcher at the *spruce boardwalk*, with only 20 minutes until I had to leave for *Montreal* I headed quickly up the trail, no flycatchers but a female *spruce grouse* and two chicks (99) were spotted and I managed to get about 2 feet from them before I left. Arriving in *Montreal* at about 1am totally exhausted.



*Me and the Moose*

### ***Saturday***

My final day but with no birdwatching planned the 100 was going to elude me, the only bird of note was a *kildeer*.

### Target Birds I missed

Objway	Tufted Titmouse
Peele	Red headed woodpecker
Rondeau	Cerulean Warbler
Big Creek Marsh	Sandhill Crane, Sedge Wren
Algonquin	Black Backed Woodpecker



There were not many ducks or waders anywhere and I saw no Loons

### Species List

1. Alder flycatcher \*1
2. American Crow
3. American Goldfinch\*2
4. american hering gull \*
5. american kestrel \*4
6. american redstart \*5
7. American Robin \*6
8. American Tree Sparrow \*7
9. american widgeon
10. arcadia flycatcher \*8
11. Baltimore Oriole \*9
12. Bank Swallow \*10 – subsequently realised it the same as sand martin.
13. Barn Swallow
14. Belted Kingfisher\*11
15. black billed cuckoo\*12
16. black capped chickadee\*13
17. Black Crowned Night Heron
18. black duck\*14
19. Black tern\*15
20. black throated green warbler\*16
21. blackpoll warbler\*17
22. blue gray gnatcatcher\*18
23. blue headed solitary vireo\*19
24. Blue Jay\*20
25. Blue winged Teal\*21
26. bobolink\*22
27. bobwhite\*23
28. bonaparts gull\*24
29. Boreal chickadee\*25
30. Brewers Blackbird\*26
31. Broadwinged Hawk\*27
32. brown headed cowbird
33. brown thrasher\*28

34. canada goose
35. cape may warbler\*29
36. Cardinal
37. carolina wren\*30
38. caspian tern\*31
39. Catbird\*32
40. Cedar Waxwing
41. chat\*33
42. chestnut sided warbler\*34
43. Chimney swift
44. Chipping Sparrow\*35
45. clay coloured sparrow\*36
46. Cliff Swallow\*37
47. common grackle
48. common nighthawk
49. common yellowthroat\*38
50. coopers hawk\*39
51. Dark eyed junco\*40
52. DC cormorant
53. downy woodpecker\*41
54. eastern bluebird\*42
55. Eastern Kingbird\*43
56. eastern meadowlark
57. eastern pewee\*44
58. eastern phoebe\*45
59. eastern towhee\*46
60. Field Sparrow\*47
61. fish crow
62. forsters tern\*48
63. franklins gull\*49
64. gray jay\*50
65. Great Blue Heron
66. Great crested flycatcher\*51
67. greater black backed gull
68. Green Heron
69. grey cheeked thrush\*52
70. hairy woodpecker\*53
71. hermit thrush\*54
72. Hooded Merganser\*55
73. house finch\*56

74. House Sparrow
75. house wren\*57
76. indigo bunting\*58
77. killedeer
78. kirtlands warbler\*59
79. lark sparrow\*60
80. leastflycatcher\*61
81. Magnolia warbler\*62
82. Mallard
83. marsh wren\*63
84. mockingbird
85. Mourning Dove
86. mute swan]
87. nashville warbler\*64
88. Northern flicker\*65
89. orchard oriloe\*66
90. osprey
91. philadelhipa viroe\*67
92. pied billed grebe\*68
93. Pileated woodpecker\*69
94. piping plover\*70
95. prothonotary warbler\*71
96. purple finch\*72
97. purple martin
98. raven
99. red breasted nuthatch\*73
100. red eyed vireo\*74
101. red tailed hawk\*75
102. Red winged Blackbird
103. Ringbilled gull
104. Rock Dove
105. rose breasted grosbeak\*76
106. Rough Winged Swallow\*77
107. Ruby Throated Hummingbird\*78
108. rusty blackbird\*79
109. savanah sparrow\*80
110. sharp shinned hawk\*81
111. song sparrow\*82
112. spotted sandpiper\*83
113. spruce grouse\*84

- 114. Starling
- 115. swamp sparrow\*85
- 116. tennessee warbler\*86
- 117. Tree Swallow
- 118. trumpeter swan\*87
- 119. turkey vulture
- 120. upland sandpiper\*88
- 121. veery\*89
- 122. vesper sparrow\*90
- 123. warbling vireo\*91
- 124. white breasted nuthatch\*92
- 125. white crowned sparrow\*93
- 126. White Throated Sparrow\*94
- 127. willow flycatcher\*95
- 128. Woodduck
- 129. Yellow Bellied sapsucker\*96
- 130. yellow billed cuckoo\*97
- 131. yellow rumped warbler\*98
- 132. yellow warbler\*99