

# Regional Report

East  
Bruce Di Labio



**T**his fall, at least so far, Eastern Ontario has had its share of good birds! One of the rarest, a Fork-tailed Flycatcher was a 'one day wonder' at Prince Edward Point in Prince Edward County on Oct. 5. It was photographed feeding and flying around opposite the banding station for most of the afternoon. Unfortunately for those who arrived the following day, the flycatcher couldn't be relocated. Surprisingly, there are around 10+ records of this South American flycatcher in Ontario.



Northern Saw-Whet Owl  
Photo, Bruce Di Labio

Another southern vagrant, the Cave Swallow was found, where else, at Prince Edward Point, on Nov. 10 by Bruce Ripley, **believe it or not!** The swallow was observed flying around the lighthouse for a few minutes in the early afternoon and disappeared. On Nov. 13, I observed 3 Cave Swallows feeding around a grain elevator at Johnstown along the St. Lawrence River. This was part of a widespread fallout in north-eastern North America.

Again, the raptor migration was excellent this fall across Eastern Ontario, with numerous observations of Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon. One of the rarest finds was a Gyrfalcon, spotted flying along the beach and sitting on a tree on High Bluff Island at Presqu'île Provincial Park on Nov. 12. This arctic falcon is a very rare visitor to the south.

## INVASION

Regarding owls, there appears to be a large flight of Snowy Owls this fall/early winter. Since this south-bound movement began in the latter part of October, a number of Snowy Owls have been brought into wildlife care/rehabilitation centres in weakened condition. It appears they are arriving from the north in bad shape due to a lack of food in the Arctic - lemmings. If you do observe a Snowy Owl, please take into consideration that the individual may not be in the best shape. If you approach it too closely for better viewing or photographing, you may be contributing to its demise.

There was a good flight south of Northern Saw-whet Owls this fall. Both Innis Point (Ottawa) and Prince

Edward Point (Prince Edward County) recorded good numbers.

Another highlight was sightings of both Boreal and Northern Hawk-Owls in Eastern Ontario. This has the makings of a great owl winter! Amherst Island continues to attract a variety of owls including Snowy, Barred, Long-eared, Short-eared and Northern Saw-whet Owl.

Northern finches are on the move south so be sure to have your feeders stocked since winter is taking over and our feathered friends will need a helping hand. It is also a great way to study birds and bird behavior from the warmth of your home. There have been lots of reports of White-winged Crossbill, Pine Siskin, Common Redpoll and good numbers of American Goldfinches.

Also remember to put out suet - woodpeckers, chickadees and nuthatches enjoy it. There are a number of new bird field guides available this fall, including the *National Geographic Birds of Eastern North America*. When I started birding in the late 1960s, the choice was simple for field guides, either *Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds* or the *Golden Guide Birds of North America*.

## FIELD TRIPS

Beginning in January, 2009, I will be offering a winter birding course for all levels of birders. This is a great time to introduce you to the various winter species found in Eastern Ontario. Also, I'll be leading a number of specialty half-day and full-day trips for both novice and more experienced birders. For 2009, my tours include Cuba, February 7-17 and March 24-April 3, Point Pelee, May 3-8 and May 10-15, Churchill/Southern Manitoba (June), Grand Manan, New Brunswick (August) and Moosonee/James Bay (September).

For more information on my winter course, specialty trips or tours, check my website: [www3.sympatico.ca/bruce.dilabio/](http://www3.sympatico.ca/bruce.dilabio/) or e-mail: [bruce.dilabio@sympatico.ca](mailto:bruce.dilabio@sympatico.ca) or call me at 613-839-4395.