



Their efforts have helped with such projects as reforestation, replacing exhibits in the visitor centre and developing a new line of nature guides. The release last year of a guide to Warblers in Ontario was a significant undertaking. This pocket-sized, yet comprehensive book offers excellent full-colour photos of Ontario's warbler species in both spring and fall plumage and sells for \$700. If you are visiting the park this spring, check it out while you are savouring a "birders' breakfast" at the visitor centre.

Lea Martel, business manager for the Friends, indicated that what makes the Friends of Point Pelee work is the enthusiasm and dedication of its support staff and volunteers. They are local people who take pride in the park and want to share that with visitors. "We're the park's biggest fans." Thanks to them, each spring, birders have been able to experience improved service and see an expanded product line while visiting the park. It is a win win situation.

- CLASSIFIED -

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Canadian Team Claims Victory

By Bruce Di Labio



L-R Ethan Meleg (driver) Tom Hince, Paul Pratt, Bruce Di Labio
Photo, Greg Geisler, provided courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife

It is a birding competition that will test the endurance of even the hardiest observer. Promoted as the biggest, longest and wildest birding tournament in the United States, The Great Texas Birding Classic lured Canada's Team Kowa into the heart of Texas' finest birding areas.

Since 1989, the Kowa team (sponsored by Kowa Optics) had successfully competed in the World Series of Birding, held in the state of New Jersey. Last year, the team opted to compete at the Texas Classic, a three-day event (24 hrs/day) spanning three areas – upper, central and lower coastal regions.

The team scouted seven days prior to the event, coming first at the lower coast on April 9 with a total of 182 species. The next two days were marked for scouting the central coast and then competing in this region on April 12, recording 188 species. The following two days, the team scouted the upper coast and on April 15, 197 species were found. A grand total of 302 different species were sighted for the event (that would be a pretty good total for the entire province of Ontario for the year!) but it wasn't until the awards banquet held on Sunday morning that the Kowa team found out the results. It was announced that "The

Canadians" (Ontario lads of course) had won the event. Twelve teams from Texas competed, with second place taken by the Dow Skimmers team, with a grand total of 297 species, so it was a close finish.

The strategy on the first big day was to try to locate all the specialties of the region that did not occur further up the coast, as well as to get as many nocturnal species as possible so the team could get more sleep as the competition progressed. This worked to our advantage, even though we had to keep reminding ourselves that we didn't have to see every species each day. We were able to draw on our combined experience doing big days to work out good strategy, devise routes which covered hundreds of kilometres each day and to remain focused on our goal, a challenge over the 3 competition days.

Ontario Birding News

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