



CANADA MIGRATION TOUR REPORT

7th May to 17th May
2016

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Either for rarity value, excellent views or simply a group favourite.

- American Bittern
- American Black Duck
- Greater White-fronted Goose
- Canvasback
- Redhead
- Bufflehead
- Bald Eagle
- Virginia Rail
- Sandhill Crane
- American Woodcock
- Ruff
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Wilson's Phalarope
- American Black Tern
- Black-billed Cuckoo
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Eastern Screech Owl
- Whip-poor-will
- Cedar Waxwing
- Grey-cheeked Thrush
- Philadelphia Vireo
- Blue-winged Warbler
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Golden-winged Warbler
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Cape May Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler
- Wilson's Warbler
- Kirtland's Warbler
- Prairie Warbler
- Cerulean Warbler
- Black-and-white Warbler
- Prothonotary Warbler
- Worm-eating Warbler
- Ovenbird
- Mourning Warbler
- Hooded Warbler
- Canada Warbler
- Yellow-breasted Chat
- Eastern Towhee
- Summer Tanager
- Bobolink

SUMMARY:

This very relaxed tour began at the wonderful Niagara Falls, before we headed for an overnight stay near the superb watchpoint of Long Point, the first of a series of headlands we visited that protrude into Lake Erie and that act as a magnet to migrant birds. We then spent the next 8 nights at Point Pelee where the sheer numbers of birds arriving each day was simply unbelievable. We were fortunate to connect with the 'big one', a huge fallout of arriving passerines that local birders said was one of the best they'd seen in the past 15 years. We spent all day at the tip of Point Pelee where thousand upon thousand of birds were present, with many too close to focus our binoculars on. Species such as Cape May, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Pine, Prairie and Palm Warblers were showing so well and time passed all too quickly. We also visited Rondeau Provincial Park where we enjoyed our first of many Prothonotary Warblers, and I think everyone was fascinated with the day roosting Whip-poor-will here. All in all this was a great birding tour with the excitement of just not knowing what you'd find every day – but I think we did pretty well with 33 species of warbler seen.

Day 1 NIAGARA FALLS

After a seven hour direct flight we reached Toronto at 11.30am and literally whizzed through Immigration and baggage reclaim and were soon at the Hertz Rental Desk picking up our 7-seater minivans. The route to Niagara Falls was relatively simple and after checking in at the Howard Johnson Motel we drove just down the road and parked up opposite the falls. A pleasant couple of hours was spent walking alongside the river and viewing what is considered to be one of the modern day Wonders of the World – Niagara Falls. It is a pretty cool place and the hundreds of other visitors here this afternoon must have thought the same thing. Birds aren't numerous here but we did see **Double-crested Cormorant, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Ring-billed and American Herring Gulls, Common Terns** and a **Peregrine Falcon** along the river. Passerine interest was headlined by several **Grey Catbirds** in the trees bordering the car park, along with **Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, House Finch** and others. I did like the close views of a perched **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** as well. So a gentle introduction to the birdlife of Ontario and we just couldn't wait to see what tomorrow would bring.



Niagara Falls – not a bad place to start a tour.

Day 2 LONG POINT

An early departure from Niagara saw us calling in to a great diner in Simcoe for breakfast just as they opened, with a **Bald Eagle** having already been seen on the drive so far. Then, with our lunchtime sandwiches from Tim Horton's and our first **Chimney Swifts**, we drove with much anticipation to Long Point Bird Observatory and our first day of migrant hunting. Upon arrival, a quick check revealed nothing much of interest in the banding station so we hit the trails and in



Cedar Waxwing – Long Point

quick time found **Myrtle, Palm, Black-throated Green and Black-and-White Warblers**, plus a **Warbling Vireo**. We didn't walk very far but just hung around the same area for quite a while and new birds kept appearing all of the time and we had **Purple Martin, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow Warbler, Black-capped Chickadee, Baltimore Oriole**, and both **White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows**. We then walked along the street to the Provincial Park which was closed but saw a flyby **American Bittern**, as well as **American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow** and a few **Northern Cardinals**. With nothing else on offer we returned to the Obs and checked out the feeders which were attracting **Downy Woodpecker, Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, Blue Jay**, and a couple of really cracking **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks**.

Our picnic lunch was consumed a few kilometres back along the road at a picnic site set in some very large trees. An amazing flock of 100+ **Cedar Waxwings** was feeding here and further scrutiny produced **Hermit Thrush, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Carolina and Northern House Wrens, Brown Thrasher, 4+ Warbling Vireos** and an **Orchard Oriole**. Returning to the Obs it was very quiet although from an overlook across the marsh we saw **Great Blue** and

Green Herons, Eastern Phoebe, and yet more **Yellow Warblers**. But by now it was late afternoon and as the skies darkened and with rain splattering the windshield we drove the short distance to Port Rowan Wetlands, seeing a **Belted Kingfisher** along the way. The wetlands held a great little area of lagoons, marsh and reeds where **Song Sparrows** fed along the water's edge, a flock of 6 **Buffleheads** displayed, and numerous **Tree Swallows** flew low overhead. Best of all was a **Virginia Rail** that after calling for a while scuttled incredibly close to look at us before walking away across an open area and out of view. Wow! If that wasn't enough, a **Sora Rail** was also seen, along with **Pied-billed Grebe, Killdeer**, and a **Beaver**... Nice!



Virginia Rail at Port Rowan Wetlands

Other goodies seen as we drove between sites today included **Northern Harrier, Merlin**, 2 more **Bald Eagles** and a **Cooper's Hawk**.

Day 3 LONG POINT – POINT PEELE

After an early breakfast at the motel in Simcoe where some **Common Loons** were seen flying over the car park, we drove towards Long Point, stopping when Lia saw a **Sandhill Crane** feeding in a roadside field. Once at Long Point Observatory it was much busier and a complete contrast to yesterday with a big fall of **Myrtle Warblers** immediately apparent. Sifting through all the activity revealed a female **Pine Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler** and **Chestnut-sided Warbler** amongst the highlights. Walking the trails we also found **Northern Parula, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Nashville**, more **Black-throated Blues, Tennessee and Orange-crowned Warblers**, a **Veery, Ruby-throated Hummingbird** on a feeder, **Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Cedar Waxwing, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Towhee**, another **American Bittern** in flight, and a flyover **Bobolink**.

From here we drove up to the picnic area but didn't find much new although **Warbling Vireo** and yet more waxwings were seen, although their numbers were greatly reduced, and carpets of **White-throated Sparrows**. Just up the road we called in to an overlook and scanned the reedbed where 2 **Sandhill Cranes** could be seen in the distance, **American Coot, Pied-billed Grebe, Caspian and Forster's Terns** and a **Swamp Sparrow** were found, with a **Belted Kingfisher** seen as we were leaving. Then it was time to set out on the 2.5 hour drive Point Pelee, where en-route a quick check of the ABA Rarities Round-up revealed at least one and possibly two **Kirtland's Warblers** were present there. So we eventually arrived at 3.30pm and drove to the Visitor Centre, catching the next tram down to the tip. After a bit of a run-around, seeing **Wilson's Warbler, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher**, and **Blue-headed Vireo** we made it to the right spot where the bird had been seen only to find just two photographers waiting for it. We spread out and over the next hour noted numerous **Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets** and **Brown Thrasher** before Lee picked up the **Kirtland's Warbler** in a conifer right beside the trail. Over the next half an hour the bird gave point-blank views and we soaked up the whole experience of seeing such a rare bird – and a successful twitch. Leaving here we walked up to the tram stop and found a mixed feeding flock with 3 more **Black-**



The mega Kirtland's Warbler at Point Pelee

and-white Warblers, Nashville, Common Yellowthroat, Myrtle and a cracking **Blackburnian Warbler** to end an excellent day.

Driving in and out of Pelee today also produced a cracking **Red-headed Woodpecker** and **Wild Turkey**.

Day 4 POINT PELEE – RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK

We woke to light rain this morning and were soon driving the 15 minutes to Point Pelee. Upon arrival we took the electric bus down to the tip in company with many other birders but the wet and windy conditions were not conducive to seeing migrants and in fact there was very little around. A **Wood Thrush, Savannah Sparrow,**



Wood Thrush

Cooper's Hawk, Red-eyed Vireo and a few **Yellow Warblers** were all that was on offer so we returned to the Visitor Centre for a much-needed cup of coffee and some cake. With news of a **Prothonotary Warbler** being seen at Pioneer we drove to this area situated further inland and on the leeward side of the promontory, seeing **Wild Turkey** and a **Merlin** along the way. A good walk around the trails continued in much the same vain with little on offer apart from our first **Swainson's Thrushes, Eastern Kingbird, Common Yellowthroat** and 4 **Spotted Sandpipers** along the beach, although walking to the next parking area was better. Many more birds such as **Red-bellied Woodpecker, Orchard** and **Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Grey Catbirds, White-crowned**

Sparrow and both **Veery & Hermit Thrush** were present, but alas no new migrants. So from here we checked out a few small pools near the entrance gate for a reported **Stilt Sandpiper**, although this bird seemed to have departed we had a flock of **Dunlin, 3 Least Sandpipers, 2 Lesser Yellowlegs, 2 Semipalmated Plovers,** and a **Short-billed Dowitcher.**

Then we decided to drive just over an hour to Rondeau Provincial Park, and upon arrival called in to the Visitor Centre for a welcoming bowl of soup and some coffee. The feeding station, as well as attracting birders, also provides nourishment for a variety of birds and we had incredible close-ups of **Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Downy Woodpecker** and **White-breasted Nuthatch** amongst others. Then we drove to where a **Prothonotary Warbler** had been sighted and amazingly after a short walk and a little wait we actually connected with this key bird. It was feeding around some pools in the forest and keeping low, just above the water in some fallen trees and branches and we were fortunate to be able to stay with it for half an hour. What an awesome bird and it has been maybe 10 years since I last saw one of these. Whilst watching this a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** and a **Brown Creeper** appeared as well, and a **Least Flycatcher** a little while later. Then we



Rose-breasted Grosbeak

walked along some trails and eventually came across a small flock with **Northern Parula**, **Blue-headed** and **Yellow-throated Vireos**, **Blackburnian Warbler** and the ultra-common **Yellow Warbler**. A quick check of the Paddock area revealed nothing new apart from a fine **Red-headed Woodpecker** so we drove back to Leamington and enjoyed an early dinner.

Day 5 POINT PELEE (THE BIG FALL)

Well, we can say that we were there on the day of The Big Fall. It really did happen and looking back I still can't quite believe it. An epic day of 25 species of warbler and it was literally raining birds that dropped into every conceivable sheltered spot to rest and feed, most of them within arm's length. Even on the tram ride to the tip I could see that the treetops were alive with birds and one can only imagine how many thousands of individual birds were involved today. It was non-stop action from dawn to dusk and I can't ever remember my arms aching so much from the constant raising of binocular and camera. It was absolutely awesome and we were truly lucky to witness one of nature's most amazing spectacles - it was indeed the miracle of migration happening right in front of us. To be honest you can use every superlative imaginable and it still wouldn't relate the excitement, fervour and sheer good fun to be here on a day like this. I must admit I was bit stunned really as everywhere you looked there was another brightly coloured sprite to look at and you never knew what was coming next. We spent the whole day here and you always felt like there was something new just around the corner. I think the collection of photos I took today sum the event up better than any prose that my still fuzzy brain can cobble together... But just to pick out a few highlights I think the exceptionally close **Pine Warbler** was pretty cool, there were beautiful **Cape May Warblers** landing on the rocks along the shoreline, **Blackburnian Warblers** (my favourite) feeding inches over our heads, and we had our first sightings of **American Redstarts**, **Ovenbirds**, **Cerulean**, **Hooded**, **Blue-winged**, **Golden-winged**, **Bay-breasted** and **Canada Warblers**. What a day!





Photos from the 'Big Day: Black-throated Blue Warbler and American Redstart (previous page top row)
Chestnut-sided and Blackburnian Warblers (previous page bottom row)
Magnolia and Cape May Warbler (top row), Northern Parula and Palm Warbler (middle row),
Nashville and Pine Warbler (bottom row)

Day 6 POINT PELEE – HILLMAN MARSH

It was always going to be quieter at Point Pelee this morning and with overcast conditions and a glassy calm lake it sure looked like it. First bird of the day was a **Western Osprey** on the drive in. However, you can never foretell what will happen in migration time and an initial search around the point revealed very little except for a confiding **Red-eyed Vireo** motionless in a bush and a calling **Fish Crow** – quite a rarity here. Then all of a sudden a **Black-billed Cuckoo** flew through and set the pulses racing and we had a reasonable view of it perched before it disappeared. Then we followed this with a male **Cerulean Warbler** hanging around some bushes along the beach and although the light was quite gloomy it showed quite well overhead. There were other previously seen warblers around but nothing new, then all of a sudden a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was called but flew away just before anyone could get on it. So we returned to the Visitor Centre for a coffee and cookie before hopping back on the tram and returning to the point as we had heard the **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was apparently sitting motionless along a trail. As we pulled in to the tram stop area we could see people taking photographs of something and walked over and sure enough there was the cuckoo sat on the top of a tree. Wow. We spent a few minutes watching it before it flew away and then everyone split up for a quick check of the point. I managed to get a few shots of a **Black-billed Cuckoo** posing nicely during this period but there wasn't much else around apart from **Greater Scaup** and **Slavonian Grebe** out on Lake Erie.



A great day for cuckoos: Black-billed Cuckoo (left) and Yellow-billed Cuckoo (right)

Afterwards we took the tram to the mid-point and checked out West Beach for a reported **Kirtland's Warbler** without success before walking the Woodland Trail. Our target was **Yellow-breasted Chat** and sure enough we connected with a very obliging individual that began feeding along a creek before shooting up into a large tree overhead. Just a few metres away was a very large downy immature **Great Horned Owl** sat on a nest as well. We kept on following the path through mature woodland and after a while Lee scoped a **Common Nighthawk** perched in a bare tree quite some distance away. After that we staked out a singing **Blackpoll Warbler** that had taken residence in an area of pine trees by the Botham Loop near the Visitor Centre but it was very hard to see well, although we did eventually see it singing overhead. Whilst in this area a cracking **Philadelphia Vireo** was seen well, and we also saw **Cape May**, **Chestnut-sided**, **Northern Parula**, **Black-throated Blue**, **Magnolia**, **Pine**, **Yellow** and **Myrtle Warblers** here....!

Lunch at the Visitor Centre was followed by a fruitless check of the point before we drove to some pools in a housing development that we had heard was good for shorebirds. Just a few small pools and a stubble field held 100+ **Dunlin**, **Grey Plovers**, 3 **Least Sandpipers**, **Semipalmated Plovers** and a **Semipalmated Sandpiper**. In the fields a **Horned Lark** and **American Pipit** were present. Nearby Hillman Marsh was a little quiet with highlights being 8 species of duck including **Canvasback**, **Redhead**, **Wood Duck** and **Green-winged Teal**. A few **Short-billed Dowitchers** and a **Lesser Yellowlegs** were nice, and a **Merlin** did its best to mess up proceedings.

So with the light fading we decided to leave and drive just ten minutes back to our motel where we had the tricky decision of just where to eat dinner tonight!

Day 7 POINT PELEE

After heavy thunderstorms overnight I was hopeful of some new migrants at Point Pelee. So once we reached the tip and found the wind had also swung round to the north-east we headed to the leeward side and sure



Summer Tanager

enough encountered a large group of birders watching an immature male **Summer Tanager**. What a stunning bird and although much commoner further south in the USA it's quite a rarity up here in Canada. Most of the birders were walking along the beach as the sun was hitting the eastern side of the promontory and as we stood close to the tip there were lots of blackbirds, grackles, kingbirds and jays in flocks heading south in a good example of reverse migration, with **Cliff Swallow** and **Chimney Swifts** mixed in. We did a few circuits of the trails before returning to the beach and this time a cracking male **Cerulean Warbler** was putting on a show to an admiring crowd. This male was in bright sunshine, but still feeding in a bush with plenty of twigs between it and my

camera lense, but the photos almost do this exquisite bird justice – almost! There were also **Blackburnian**, **Chestnut-sided**, **Magnolia**, **Northern Parula** and other regularly seen species, but still much appreciated.

We returned to the Visitor Centre for coffee and snacks and whilst sitting in the warm sunshine we got word of a **Worm-eating Warbler** showing well in Tilden Wood. So we raced across the car park and into the woods only to find we were literally two minutes too late. However after a bit of a wait, during which a **Mourning Warbler** flew across the path next to us, the biggie was refound and everyone enjoyed stunning views. Surprisingly it was feeding high up in a tree in 'nuthatch' fashion. We also got better looks at the Rufous-morph **Eastern Screech Owl** that was right out in the open at the same roost spot. From here we birded the Marsh Boardwalk Trail through nice open forest and had nice looks at many regular species including **Common Yellowthroat**, whilst I got the briefest of looks at a waterthrush species. There was also a flyover **American Black Tern**, **Green Heron**, **Eastern Wood Pewee** and other warblers.



Cerulean Warbler

We went for lunch at Freddy's restaurant just outside the park entrance and enjoyed a leisurely rest and good meal before heading to the Route 33 wader pools. This time **Short-billed Dowitchers** were in attendance and feeding close to our cars, plus a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was new, as were a couple of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, whilst the **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was still there. Leaving here we returned to Point Pelee and Tilden Woods where the **Worm-eating Warbler** was seen well again but this time we well and truly nailed a **Mourning Warbler**. After this we returned to the motel having had another exciting day, stopping along the way when Julie spotted something in a roadside field. So we checked it out and discovered a lovely **Northern Harrier** on a kill surrounded by a flock of 25 **Killdeers**.

Day 8 RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK

Made the bold decision to go straight to Rondeau Provincial Park, just over an hour's drive in the heavy rain. My decision didn't seem that good as the first trails we tried were very quiet as the weather was damp, overcast and pretty cold but we persevered and at the South Point Trail we found an **Ovenbird** skulking at the edge of a muddy pool inside a dense cover of bushes. It wasn't easy viewing and a couple of people failed to connect with it but I had reasonably high hopes we'd find another. With things still slow we drove to the Visitor Centre to see what news had come in and to grab a nice hot coffee. Then we walked the Tulip Tree Trail which begins at the car park and this took us through great woodland where we connected with a number of regular warblers, along with a fine **Philadelphia Vireo**, female **Bay-breasted Warbler**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, several **Prothonotary Warblers**, and other commoner species.

A hot bowl of soup at the Visitor Centre was much appreciated and whilst here news reached us of a roosting **Whip-Poor-Will** back at the South Point Trail so we headed straight down there, stopping along the way to photograph a few **Spotted Sandpipers** on a garden lawn. We eventually found the roosting site after a bit of a search and what a cracking bird. It was roosting 8 feet up at the top of some bushes close to the trail and was oblivious to us. Walking further along the trail we found lots of **Blackburnian Warblers**, as well as **Blackpoll** and **Tennessee Warblers** that were also much appreciated. Then we drove back to the VC and walked the Tulip tree Trail again, this time getting good looks at **Veery** and **Wood Thrush** before bumping into another **Ovenbird** – this one in more open woodland and allowing great views for around twenty minutes.



Whip-poor-will

Driving back to Leamington at 6pm and we had a flyover **Broad-winged Hawk**. Other species seen today included **Snowy Egret**, **Great Black-backed Gull**, **Bonaparte's Gull**, **Red-headed** and **Downy Woodpeckers**, **Northern Flicker**, **Eastern Kingbird**, **Brown Thrasher**, **Eastern Bluebird**, **Eastern Towhee**, **White-breasted Nuthatch**, **Northern Parula**, **Magnolia**, **Chestnut-sided** and many **Black-throated Blue Warblers**.

Day 9 POINT PEELE

A windy day with snow flurries (yes snow....), temperatures hovering around 0 degrees and birding was tough today. We probably reached the tip of Point Pelee the earliest of our entire stay to see the waves crashing over the western side of the promontory and a howling gale making finding birds impossible. Hirundines were using the leeward beach to rest and hunt for insects and we had very close views of **Cliff Swallows**, and a bunch of **Sand Martins** looking very sorry for themselves as well. There was also a flyover **Western Osprey**, **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and **Cedar Waxwing**, with some **Bonaparte's Gulls** off the point as well. Still we persevered and eventually after a wait a few of us had views of the female **Prairie Warbler** that had been found yesterday whilst we were at Rondeau (our 32nd species of warbler so far). But the high winds made it very tricky to see this bird and it soon disappeared, so we went for coffee and a chance to recover from the weather. Then we returned to the point and found the sun was out and even the wind had abated, so the **Prairie Warbler** had relocated to a more sheltered spot and showed very well indeed, along with **Canada** and **Blackpoll Warblers** practically in the same bush. We then took the tram to the midpoint stop and walked the Woodland Trail getting news of a **Connecticut Warbler** further along the trail, so of course we headed straight there but as it is 'near-mythical' and practically invisible and impossible to see – well, we didn't see it. But point-blank views of **Prothonotary Warbler** was a little compensation and the **Great Horned Owl** chick was a little more showy at its nest.

So after lunch at the VC we tried again along the Woodland Trail and staked out the Connecticut Warbler spot, seeing **Scarlet Tanager**, **Tennessee Warbler** and **Acadian Flycatcher** before heading over to Tilden Woods where Lee found us a **Grey-cheeked Thrush**. Then we drove to the Route 33 wader pools again, but nothing new was on offer, although it was still nice to have a look at **Semipalmated** and **Least Sandpipers** and a few **Short-billed Dowitchers** before getting to the motel at 5pm for a nice long rest before dinner.

Day 10 POINT PELEE – HILLMAN MARSH

This was a bit of a funny day as we'd pretty well cleaned up on almost all available trip ticks. It started in Tilden Woods first thing which was productive for a lot of the commoner breeding species, then at the tip which was very windy and birdless, so we returned for coffee at the Visitor Centre. Then we walked the Woodland trail and had a pair of **Blue-winged Teal**, both **Yellow-throated** and **Philadelphia Vireos** and **Blackpoll Warbler** amongst others, but we were on the lookout for waterthrushes which just seemed to be eluding us. So we headed back to the Marsh Boardwalk and after a bit of effort we finally nailed **Northern Waterthrush** - thank goodness! There were lots of other goodies around and as well as the more commoner species there was a fine **Bay-breasted** and even more **Cape Mays** before we returned to the Visitor Centre.

After lunch we returned to Tilden Woods and had a great time with the now long-staying **Worm-eating Warbler** watched feeding beside the trail. Nearby a **Mourning Warbler** showed very well for this often tricky species, and this area was literally dripping with birds. There were **Black-throated Blue**, **Chestnut-sided**, **Blackburnian**, **Nashville** and **Palm Warblers**, **Ovenbird**, **Grey-cheeked Thrush** and a **Winter Wren**. The benefits of standing in one place and letting the birds come to us were plain to see and you really don't have to keep on yomping around the woods....



Worm-eating Warbler



Prothonotary Warbler

Then we left to go for an early dinner before heading to Hillman Marsh just 10 minutes away. It was getting late but shortly after we arrived a pair of **Sandhill Cranes** flew in – a great bonus. There were also several **Short-billed Dowitchers**, **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, **Dunlin**, **American Wigeon**, **Canvasback** and **Redhead**. The lagoon behind us had a pair of **Ring-necked Ducks** and **Wood Duck**, and an immature **Bald Eagle** flew over.

And we saved the best for last, as at an open area on the way back to the motel we finished the day with crippling views of several displaying **American Woodcocks**. Holy cow!

Day 11 POINT PELEE – HILLMAN MARSH – TORONTO – END OF TOUR

One final bash at finding some new birds didn't start well down at the tip despite a change in the weather with much calmer conditions than we've had for many days. So we left after a short visit and drove up to the DeLaurier Trail which was also quiet before heading to the Route 33 wader pools as a **Greater White-fronted**

Goose had been seen there and sure enough it was still present when we arrived. This is a late migrating bird and very scarce at this time of the year. There was also a pair of **Solitary Sandpipers** present as well.

From here we drove to Hillman Marsh and spent a pleasant hour checking out the wildfowl and waders. I'm not a fan of ducks generally but there was a nice assortment with **Blue-winged** and **Green-winged Teals**, **American Black Duck**, **Greater Scaup**, **Redhead**, **Bufflehead** and **Canvasback** all present. However the shorebirds provided the best excitement with a pair of smart **Wilson's Phalaropes** on the far side looking rather sexy in the scope. Then a **Ruff** flew in and landed opposite the hide and caused a lot of excitement as it's a real rarity here and proved to be our last trip tick, and also the rarest species we had seen on the tour! A **Pectoral Sandpiper**, lots of **Short-billed Dowitchers**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Dunlin** and **Grey Plovers** completed the cast and so we left at 10.30am for a short drive to the motel to pack and get ready for the 3.5 hour drive back to Toronto and our flights back to the UK.

Nick Bray



A cold day at Point Pelee - but the migrants are coming!



Some more random photos from a great tour: Sandhill Crane and Short-billed Dowitcher (top row), Grey-cheeked Thrush and Scarlet Tanager (middle row), American Woodcock and Myrtle Warbler (bottom row)

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SYSTEMATIC LIST – CANADA MIGRATION TOUR MAY 2016

L – Leader Only Sighting

ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae

Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>
American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>
American Black Duck	<i>Anas rubripes</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas carolinensis</i>
Canvasback	<i>Aythya valisineria</i>
Redhead	<i>Aythya americana</i>
Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>
Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>
Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>
Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>
Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>

GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae

Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>
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GAVIIFORMES: Gaviidae

Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>
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PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae

Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
Horned (Slavonian) Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>

PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae

American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>

SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae

Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>
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ACCIPITRIFORMES: Cathartidae

Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
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ACCIPITRIFORMES: Pandionidae

Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
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ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Northern Harrier
Bald Eagle
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk

Accipiter striatus
Accipiter cooperii
Circus hudsonius
Haliaeetus leucocephalus
Buteo platypterus
Buteo jamaicensis

GRUIFORMES: Rallidae

Virginia Rail
Sora
Common Gallinule
American Coot

Rallus limicola
Porzana carolina
Gallinula galeata
Fulica americana

GRUIFORMES: Gruidae

Sandhill Crane

Grus canadensis

CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae

Grey Plover
Semipalmated Plover
Killdeer

Pluvialis squatarola
Charadrius semipalmatus
Charadrius vociferus

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae

American Woodcock
Short-billed Dowitcher
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Solitary Sandpiper
Spotted Sandpiper
Ruddy Turnstone
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Dunlin
Ruff
Wilson's Phalarope

Scolopax minor
Limnodromus griseus
Tringa melanoleuca
Tringa flavipes
Tringa solitaria
Actitis macularius
Arenaria interpres
Calidris pusilla
Calidris minutilla
Calidris melanotos
Calidris alpina
Philomachus pugnax
Phalaropus tricolor

CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae

Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
American Herring Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Caspian Tern
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
American Black Tern

Chroicocephalus philadelphia
Larus delawarensis
Larus marinus
Larus smithsonianus
Larus fuscus
Hydroprogne caspia
Sterna hirundo
Sterna forsteri
Chlidonias niger surinamensis

COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae

Rock Dove
Mourning Dove

Columba livia
Zenaida macroura

CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Black-billed Cuckoo

Coccyzus americanus
Coccyzus erythrophthalmus

STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae

Eastern Screech Owl
Great Horned Owl

Megascops asio
Bubo virginianus

CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Caprimulgidae

Common Nighthawk
Eastern Whip-poor-will

Chordeiles minor
Antrostomus vociferus

APODIFORMES: Apodidae

Chimney Swift

Chaetura pelagica

APODIFORMES: Trochilidae

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Archilochus colubris

CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae

Belted Kingfisher

Megaceryle alcyon

PICIFORMES: Picidae

Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker

Melanerpes erythrocephalus
Melanerpes carolinus
Dryobates pubescens
Colaptes auratus

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae

American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon

Falco sparverius
Falco columbarius
Falco peregrinus

PASSERIFORMES: Tyrannidae

Eastern Phoebe
Eastern Wood Pewee
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Acadian Flycatcher
Willow Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Great Crested Flycatcher

Sayornis phoebe
Contopus virens
Empidonax flaviventris
Empidonax virescens
Empidonax traillii
Empidonax minimus
Tyrannus tyrannus
Myiarchus crinitus

PASSERIFORMES: Vireonidae

Yellow-throated Vireo
Blue-headed Vireo
Warbling Vireo
Philadelphia Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo

Vireo flavifrons
Vireo solitarius
Vireo gilvus
Vireo philadelphicus
Vireo olivaceus

PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae

Blue Jay
American Crow
Fish Crow

Cyanocitta cristata
Corvus brachyrhynchos
Corvus ossifragus

PASSERIFORMES: Bombycillidae

Cedar Waxwing

Bombycilla cedrorum

PASSERIFORMES: Paridae

Black-capped Chickadee

Poecile atricapillus

PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae

Horned Lark

Eremophila alpestris

PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae

Sand Martin

Riparia riparia

Tree Swallow

Tachycineta bicolor

Purple Martin

Progne subis

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

Stelgidopteryx serripennis

Barn Swallow

Hirundo rustica

American Cliff Swallow

Petrochelidon pyrrhonota

PASSERIFORMES: Regulidae

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Regulus calendula

PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae

Marsh Wren

Cistothorus palustris

Carolina Wren

Thryothorus ludovicianus

Winter Wren

Troglodytes hiemalis

House Wren

Troglodytes aedon

PASSERIFORMES: Polioptilidae

Blue-grey Gnatcatcher

Polioptila caerulea

PASSERIFORMES: Sittidae

Red-breasted Nuthatch

Sitta canadensis

White-breasted Nuthatch

Sitta carolinensis

PASSERIFORMES: Certhiidae

Brown Creeper

Certhia americana

PASSERIFORMES: Mimidae

Grey Catbird

Dumetella carolinensis

Northern Mockingbird

Mimus polyglottos

Brown Thrasher

Toxostoma rufum

PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae

Common Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae

Eastern Bluebird

Sialia sialis

Veery

Catharus fuscescens

Grey-cheeked Thrush

Catharus minimus

Swainson's Thrush

Catharus ustulatus

Hermit Thrush

Catharus guttatus

Wood Thrush

Hylocichla mustelina

American Robin

Turdus migratorius

PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae

House Sparrow

*Passer domesticus***PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae**

Buff-bellied Pipit

*Anthus rubescens***PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae**

House Finch

Haemorhous mexicanus

American Goldfinch

Spinus tristis

Pine Siskin

*Spinus pinus***PASSERIFORMES: Parulidae**

Ovenbird

Seiurus aurocapilla

Worm-eating Warbler

Helmitheros vermivorum

Louisiana Waterthrush (L)

Parkesia motacilla

Northern Waterthrush

Parkesia noveboracensis

Golden-winged Warbler

Vermivora chrysoptera

Blue-winged Warbler

Vermivora cyanoptera

Black-and-white Warbler

Mniotilta varia

Prothonotary Warbler

Protonotaria citrea

Tennessee Warbler

Leiothlypis peregrina

Orange-crowned Warbler

Leiothlypis celata

Nashville Warbler

Leiothlypis ruficapilla

Mourning Warbler

Geothlypis philadelphia

Common Yellowthroat

Geothlypis trichas

Hooded Warbler

Setophaga citrina

American Redstart

Setophaga ruticilla

Kirtland's Warbler

Setophaga kirtlandii

Cape May Warbler

Setophaga tigrina

Cerulean Warbler

Setophaga cerulea

Northern Parula

Setophaga americana

Magnolia Warbler

Setophaga magnolia

Bay-breasted Warbler

Setophaga castanea

Blackburnian Warbler

Setophaga fusca

American Yellow Warbler

Setophaga aestiva

Chestnut-sided Warbler

Setophaga pensylvanica

Blackpoll Warbler

Setophaga striata

Black-throated Blue Warbler

Setophaga caerulescens

Palm Warbler

Setophaga palmarum

Pine Warbler

Setophaga pinus

Myrtle Warbler

Setophaga coronata

Prairie Warbler

Setophaga discolor

Black-throated Green Warbler

Setophaga virens

Canada Warbler

Cardellina canadensis

Wilson's Warbler

Cardellina pusilla

Brewster's Warbler

*Vermivora cyanoptera x chrysoptera***PASSERIFORMES: Incertae Sedis 2**

Yellow-breasted Chat

*Icteria virens***PASSERIFORMES: Icteridae**

Bobolink

Dolichonyx oryzivorus

Baltimore Oriole

Icterus galbula

Orchard Oriole
Red-winged Blackbird
Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Grackle

Icterus spurius
Agelaius phoeniceus
Molothrus ater
Quiscalus quiscula

PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae

Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Savannah Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Eastern Towhee

Melospiza melodia
Melospiza lincolnii
Melospiza georgiana
Zonotrichia leucophrys
Zonotrichia albicollis
Junco hyemalis
Passerculus sandwichensis
Spizella passerina
Spizella pusilla
Spizella pallida
Pipilo erythrophthalmus

PASSERIFORMES: Cardinalidae

Summer Tanager
Scarlet Tanager
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Northern Cardinal
Indigo Bunting

Piranga rubra
Piranga olivacea
Pheucticus ludovicianus
Cardinalis cardinalis
Passerina cyanea



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