Hamilton OFO Trip

September 27-29

September 26

We drove to Toronto on Thursday September 26 and arrived at Colin & Hilda’s condo after lunch. Hilda took us to Colonel Samuel Smith Park for the afternoon, where we hiked to Whimbrel Point and all around the trails. Hilda showed us where the Snowy Owls were regular during winter. Red-necked Grebes provided most of the excitement on this fall day, although we did see one Yellow-rumped Warbler. We were pleased to have a tour of this famous Toronto birding location. We returned to their condo for supper, and were treated to an awesome sunset view from their 19th floor. We turned in early as we were all off to Hamilton at 6 am for the annual OFO Convention and birding field trips.

September 27

For our first day’s field trips, we drove separately, as we were canoeing at Cootes Paradise and Colin & Hilda were on a different all-day trip to the west end of Lake Ontario.

We arrived at the Royal Botanical Gardens in good time and birded the grounds while waiting for the other participants. We saw a Cedar Waxwing juvenile and a Red-bellied Woodpecker. We also heard a very loud Carolina Wren, but could not spot it.

Finally, the six of us were all set and we headed down to the shore for the canoes. It was calm as we paddled away from the dock.

We spotted a huge number of Double-crested Cormorants, and several Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets. There were several Black-crowned Night-Herons, mostly juvenile. We also got a couple of Belted Kingfishers and a Red-tailed Hawk.

A rare bird was also spotted – a Cattle Egret.

We saw Bank Swallow nest hole, and one shorebird, a Spotted Sandpiper. We also saw a few Ospreys, at least one Bald Eagle and a Cooper’s Hawk.

We returned to the Interpretive Centre and had our lunch at a picnic table outside. From there we drove to our afternoon field trip at the Valley Inn. It was very busy, and we had to park along the road. Ken from Ottawa was right behind us. We also spotted many familiar faces such as Mark, Lynda and Jean Iron. Birding was a bit slow with the highlight being a Green Heron. So, we joined some others and hiked to the boardwalk in nearby Hendrie Valley. We saw American Wigeons, a Common Grackle, several Great Egrets and Ospreys, a Red-tailed Hawk, a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds, including some juveniles, a couple of Trumpeter Swans, and lots of Wood Ducks.

After our successful day, we let our GPS direct us back to Toronto. Colin and Hilda had already returned as their trip had proved very slow. Hilda prepared supper for the weary birders.