



Point Pelee & Algonquin Park Trip Report May 12 - 23, 2025

[Link: Point Pelee & Algonquin Park Trip Report May 12 - 23, 2025](#)

Birding the migration hotspots along Lake Erie, along with Carden Alvar, and Algonquin Provincial Park, our group tallied an incredible 180 species over 12 days! Some rarities included: Western Grebe, Cerulean Warbler on breeding territory, Black-backed Woodpecker, and great views of an American Woodcock, not to mention the 28 species of warbler we recorded! Never a dull moment, each day brought new places, new trails, and new birds!



Day 1: Toronto (May 12)

We gathered for dinner at our hotel and fueled up for what would be an exciting 12 days exploring southern Ontario. Some guests that arrived early took advantage of the day by birding nearby parks.

Day 2: Toronto to Leamington (May 13)

After an early morning departure (which would be the norm on this tour), we found ourselves at a birdy Colonel Samuel Smith Park on the shores of Lake Ontario. The breeding colony of Red-necked Grebes put on a great show and posed for pictures. The first taste of migrating warblers, large rafts of Long-tailed Duck, and one wayward Western Grebe rounded out an excellent start to the tour. We dragged ourselves away and made the long drive to Leamington. With some time to spare enroute and reports of Whimbrel, we popped into Wheatley Harbour, with no avail, although we were able to spot Ruddy Turnstone.

Day 3: Point Pelee National Park (May 14)

We would start the morning at Point Pelee making the pilgrimage to the Tip to sift through the gulls and terns before dispersing to explore other trails in the park. Tilden's Woods and Sleepy Hollow provided us with our first looks at a wide array of migrants, and we all began to suffer from "warbler neck" as many of the warblers were feeding high in the canopy. After dinner we headed over to Hillman Marsh for some shorebird action and were rewarded with locally rare Wilson's Phalarope.

Day 4: Point Pelee National Park (May 15)

The morning sojourn to Point Pelee started off with a sunrise tour of the Marsh Boardwalk, where we were delighted by numerous Swamp Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, and our first Black Tern. We then walked Tilden Woods Trail where we had our first big hike with lots of action, including warblers, icterids, kinglets, flycatchers, and vireos. After a report of Fish Crow and Eurasian-collared Dove at the tip we quickly made the trek out and were rewarded by both species, along with Black and Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

Day 5: Hillman Marsh, Point Pelee National Park, Wheatley Provincial Park (May 16)

After reports of Neotropic Cormorant and Red Knot we started the day by visiting Hillman Marsh. Many shorebirds continued at Hillman Marsh including our first Black-bellied Plover and numerous Dunlin. We dipped on the Neotropic Cormorant unfortunately. We did, however, track down the Red Knot at East Beach. After a report of Canada Warbler and Wilson's Warbler at the tip we quickly made the trek out and were rewarded by both species, along with our only American White Pelican. We walked halfway back to the Visitor Centre by taking Redbud Trail and picked up a White-eyed Vireo before swiftly moving to Tilden Woods in search for reported Kentucky Warbler and Worm-eating Warbler...unfortunately, no luck. Today was a 'move day' and we stopped at Wheatley Provincial Park for our park pass and a quick walk around the group campground with a selection of local breeders, including our first White-breasted Nuthatch.

Day 6: Rondeau Provincial Park and Port Stanley Sewage Lagoons (May 17)

Arriving at Rondeau Provincial Park, we relished the lack of people and good birding, despite the drizzle and cooler weather that moved in overnight. Sifting through the thrushes, vireos, and warblers we were kept busy with highlights including White-eyed Vireo, Red-headed Woodpecker, Prothonotary Warbler, and a very cooperative Pileated Woodpecker. Always hard to leave Rondeau, but we made our way to Port Stanley Sewage Lagoons where we added Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, and American Coot.

Day 7: Long Point (May 18)

We started the day with a short walk at Big Creek National Wildlife Area in the hopes of finding some secretive marsh birds (e.g., Least Bittern), with no luck. Birding at Long Point Bird Observatory meant not only birds in the bushes but birds in the hand! Warblers were on the menu again with good diversity and some coming through the banding lab where we watched the birds get banded, weighed, and measured. Exploring some nearby areas, we added Grasshopper and Field Sparrows, along with Blue-winged and Hooded Warbler. But best of all, not only did we stumble on a lovely brewery for lunch, but there was also a Cerulean Warbler singing about in the trees!

Day 8: Rock Point Provincial Park and Niagara Falls (May 19)

It was decided the day before that the group would be VERY interested in visiting Niagara Falls, which conveniently enough has a massive gull nesting colony and of course wineries. We started the morning with exploration of Rock Point Provincial Park where we finally picked up Willow Flycatcher and a small group of late migrant Bufflehead. From here we eventually found a parking spot near the falls to explore and admire one (if not the) of the largest gull colonies in Ontario. Of course, there was some brief shopping before visiting a local winery for a late lunch.



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Day 9: Carden Alvar and Nearby Area (May 20)

The Mecca for grassland birds in southern Ontario was exceptional and provided stunning views of Wilson's Snipe, Upland Sandpiper, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, and American Bittern, among other goodies. A short distance away we visited Turner Road for a known breeding location of Golden-winged Warbler, which also produced a Blue-winged Warbler and the hybrid Brewster's Warbler.

Day 10: Algonquin Provincial Park (May 21)

It was a dreary, chilly day spent exploring the spruce bogs and boreal forests of Algonquin Provincial Park, which was a stark departure from the Carolinian forests of the deep south. Breeding birds like American Black Duck, Canada Warbler, Pine Siskin, Common Raven, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and Golden-crowned Kinglet were all on their home turf. Moose were a sign of the north, and we saw several as we crisscrossed the park. Probably the best birds of the day though were Canada Jay and Black-backed Woodpecker at the Logging Museum, along with great views (and photos) of American Woodcock at Spring Lake Resort. We also had a mammal highlight on this day, a Pine Marten on Lake Opeongo Road.

Day 11: Algonquin Provincial Park to Toronto (May 22)

Another drizzly cold day for our final morning in Algonquin meant we could head to the Visitor Centre. A very quick glimpse of an Evening Grosbeak and unfortunately, we were unable to find any crossbills. We ended up spending a good chunk of the morning driving around looking for Moose and Black Bear, the latter we were not able to find. After a busy trip, Nick took the group to a local family restaurant that he has frequented for 40+ years, to the delight of the tour participants.

Day 12: Toronto (May 23)

Everyone began their journey home for some much-deserved rest after a very successful bird adventure. [Point Pelee & Algonquin bird list May 12 - 23, 2025 \(eBird\)](#)



Our group