

Nocturnal Owl Survey Summary, April 2018

And the winner is...

As Lori Anderson puts it so well in her survey report, "The annual Nocturnal Owl Survey marks the beginning of the most exciting part of a year's birding activities – the arrival of spring and the return of the migrants."

And once you read the seven attached reports, you will surely see that it doesn't get much more exciting than a night out on a lonely and dark road with things that go bump in the night – hooting owls, other birds, dead racoons, porcupines, frogs, homeowners, barrelling trucks, barking dogs and blaring radios.

North Bay is in Central Ontario and the target owl species for the Nocturnal Owl Survey

BIRD WING OW! Survey Award

Ken Gowing

for Central Ontario are Barred and Northern Saw-whet owls.

All teams are vying for the coveted trophy as seen at left, a trophy donated by and made by Bird Wing, the only wing of Nipissing Naturalists Club. This is the third year for this contest. But how to pick a winner? The first year, it was easy. Without a doubt, the trophy went to Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing. The second year, a bit more difficult to choose, but in the end, it went to Gary and Connie Sturge. This year, with a great group of dramatists, it was harder than ever. Some participants even submitted photographs,

some of which I embedded in their articles, but to present a good little package, I added photos to all submissions – editor's and judge's prerogative. Getting fancier and fancier every year.

Highlights of the writer's submissions below –in alphabetical order except for the winner:

Lori Anderson has the one of the best humour lines: "Frogs totalled 2 or 3 – only about one or two million short of average!" I love that dry humour and not an easy form of humour to write well.

April McCrum writes about a close encounter of the owl kind. Feeling the air above your head and hoping the owl will not get entangled in your hair is surely a bit scary!

Doug Patterson expresses some safety concerns, and for those who do this survey, high visibility vests would be a good idea. He and his father had to park on a busy highway on a moonless night with trucks barrelling past them.

Oriana Pokorny, with her first route, is such an enthusiastic surveyor despite her rather poor route – one that was certainly not easy to drive and one that yielded only one owl, but not an owl that could be counted. Still, Oriana appreciates the beauty of a night in a northern woods.

Louise Simpson and group have the most unusual and dramatic midnight encounter, not only involving a Barred Owl, but also the police. Yes, the police!

Dick Tafel writes most dramatically with his emphatic repetition of words – *Nothing*. *Nothing at all!* and variations thereof, keeping the reader's attention throughout nothing at all happening. Not easy to dramatize nothing happening for a full nine stops.

And finally **Gary Sturge.** Well, with 18 Owls (four repeaters) of three species, two of which are target species, and eight flying out to meet the group, as well as sightings of wild creatures, one dead, the rest alive – and with all this written with great panache - Gary's group comprised of him, Connie and Rachel Sturge and first-timer Matt Procunier, the trophy has to go to the four of them. I can't imagine anyone would disagree with this choice. I mean 14 owls, minus the repeaters!! Hard to beat.

However, because every writer has something that was the best, perhaps there should be some sort of small token for each group. I will see what I can do.

Presentation of the trophy will take place at the September 25th Bird Wing meeting.

- Renee Levesque, Bird Wing Scribe and judge

A bat, two frogs and four owls

By Lori Anderson

The annual Nocturnal Owl Survey marks the beginning of the most exciting part of a year's birding activities – the arrival of spring and the return of the migrants.

Ideally, Ken Gowing and I survey in early April – just before the frogs get too noisy and the sound of run-off covers the voices of calling owls. But this year, we had to patiently await the departure of winter and a suitable evening – no wind, clear and not a Friday or Saturday when motor traffic is problematic on our route – downtown Chisholm Township. And so we had to wait until the evening of April 22. We hoped

the owls would still be calling!

Stop one is usually productive – Barred Owls, American Woodcocks, sometimes wolves and sometimes the attention of nearby residents fearing vandals. This year – dead quiet! One bat flew by, quietly.

Stop two – dead quiet – almost. In the final two minutes, a Barred Owl answers our playback! Twice, but it does not come near.

Stop three to eight come and go. We are staying warm. The night is perfect – so quiet it is eerie. The usual loud dogs at stop 4 do not disappoint us. This year they are accompanied by a loud radio. We listen to CBC news and dogs, but not to any owls!



Ken Gowing

Finally at stop 9, in the least populated section of the route, we are once more delighted to hear the Barred Owl. This time there are two - singing a duet!

At stop 10, a very disgruntled Barred Owl flies right in, giving us a great view on such a clear night.

In total we encountered four Barred Owls - this is respectable on the route. But we missed the sometimes abundant American Woodcock and Wilson's Snipe. And we missed hearing other owl species and birds of any sort. Dog numbers remained steady. Traffic was thankfully almost nil.

We return home, happy that our Barred Owls seem undeterred by the long winter and reassured we will find them again next year.

The air from its wings

By April McCrum

This was my second year doing the nocturnal owl survey in Restoule and it ended up being another successful one! There sure is a healthy population of Barred Owls in this region of Ontario, at least there was during the evening of April 21.

A total of seven Barred Owls were identified, with six of them landing in trees right beside the car. Connie Hergott and her son, Josh, came with me to do the survey and they proved to be great assistants.

I noticed the owls didn't do a lot of calling. They seemed more curious when the calls were played, and those that did call did so after the second and third taped calls.

There was one owl in particular that was quite intrigued when the calls were being played, or more probably wasn't pleased that another owl was in its territory! It first landed in a tree near our vehicle and then after every Barred Owl call played, it would swoop across the road to another nearby tree. It continued to do this and each time it tried to get closer to the CD player. At one point, the owl came so close to us that we had to duck so it wouldn't hit us. As we ducked, Connie and I could feel the air from its wings. It was pretty amazing being so close to such a large bird. Still, I was glad it didn't land on one of our heads!

I will be looking forward to the owl survey next year to know how many owls I will hear and see.



No moon, much traffic and two owls

By Doug Patterson Jr.

My father, Doug Patterson Sr., and I did our usual route, from 533 Argo Run to the north end of Mattawan, sometime in April on a moonless night.

In total, we heard, but did not see, two Barred Owls, both near the south end of the route, including one at the southernmost stop at Argo Run. Since that is less than 1 km from my house, that owl is quite possibly the local Barred I see and hear a lot.

I usually try to get a nice clear night when the moon is shining brightly, but that didn't work out this year. Our survey night that yielded our two Barred Owls was moonless, cloudy and somewhat windy, with a fair amount of traffic.

The heavily treed hardwood stands with large yellow birch and dense conifer forest areas along the northern 2/3 of the route had no owl activity. Much of the forested area near Antoine Creek has a lot of wet sections, so perhaps that reduces rodent food populations. I don't know. What I do know is that both owls we heard were in areas that had a bit of meadow and a fair amount of immature mixed woods.



Renee Levesaue

The road is usually quite quiet on weekday nights, but we had the bad luck of quite a bit of fast-moving traffic, including three large lumber trucks. It was rather uncomfortable to have them race by so close to us at the edge of the highway. It might be a good idea to adjust some of the stops on this route since a few are at places where approaching traffic might not easily see a parked vehicle and those doing the survey.

A lone mute owl

By Oriana Pokorny

It was a warm night on April 22 in what was an otherwise cold, cold April.

It was my first year running my very own owl survey route. I foolishly took on a route that had been surveyed only seven times in the 25 years of research. I quickly discovered why. Since the route's initial creation, the roads have been shifted and logging operations have moved. Now this was a particularly snowy April, but even in a normal spring, the last three stops would be off limits to any normal vehicle. With the coordinator's blessing, I decided to create new stops to replace the old inaccessible ones.

But then it snowed, and snowed, and snowed. I love snow! I really do. I was overjoyed to continue skiing and snowshoeing, but as April trudged on and still my owl survey route was inaccessible, I began to worry that I would not be able to run the survey at all. But then a warm sunny weekend occurred! My intrepid assistant and I grabbed our chance and set out one morning to set up new stops on the route. In the course of one day, our route went from snow-packed snowmobile trail to muddy mess of a logging road. Luckily we were prepared with an all-terrain vehicle, and a day spent muddin' in the sun was fun.

We returned that night. Zero degrees Celsius was the warmest night we had experienced yet that year. The air was crisp, the stars were clear, we were dressed warmly and had hot chocolate, so the night was simply marvellous. But we didn't hear any owls. Stop after stop we waited in silence, twice wondering (or hoping) if the faint roar of the highway was maybe an animal or owl. We would take turns holding the speaker, adopting poses in attempts to make the other laugh. Seven stops of silence. We were starting to get cold. By the eighth stop, we were perhaps whispering a bit more than we should have. By the

ninth stop we had pretty much given up. We were back on paved road, the highway was louder, and the chances seemed inordinately slim. The sky was still clear, the stars were still bright, we were cold, but we were still enjoying the evening despite the lack of wildlife. We got ready to drive another 2km to our final stop of the evening. We turned on the lights and drove less than 200m up a hill and around a corner and there in the very middle of the road was a large Barred Owl!! It paused for a second, perhaps caught off guard, and then flew away into the trees. We turned off the vehicle and waited. We looked and hoped and looked again. But the secretive creature was gone. After several minutes of waiting and hoping, we turned the vehicle back on and drove to our last stop of the evening. Now we had seen an actual owl, so we were excited, maybe this time we would hear one. It was implausible, nearly beside the highway now, but one can dream.

The tape ended and no owls were heard. Nothing that I could write on my survey sheet. But at least we had completed the survey -afeat in itself, considering this poor route! We congratulated ourselves and made confident promises that next year we would hear more action. We drove home to our warm beds where I dreamed of our lone mute owl.



Midnight drama

By Louise Simpson

It was a beautiful (if a little chilly) starry night for my first ever owl survey, along the Feronia route. As a complete rookie, I was not sure exactly what was in store – I was simply hoping to see some owls! Marc Buchanan, Fred Pinto, Sarah Wheelan and I met at the MNRF parking lot at 8.15 p.m. on April 20. Marc brought a good supply of coffee, and we all had plenty of layers of clothing to keep us warm. We bundled into Marc's car and off we went!

The first stop on the route was only a short drive away. We pulled over on the side of the road to

get set up. This involved making sure the rather temperamental CD player that Fred had brought was in position on the hood of the car and would actually play. (Because I am British, it is difficult for me not to say bonnet instead of hood.)

As the beginner, I was happy to assume the role of "the person who counts the cars that go past", assuming that was pretty foolproof.



When it was time, my team began

playing the recordings, and I (while watching for cars) listened and looked at the tree line in earnest! Nothing happened until near the end of the recording when suddenly we could hear two Barred Owls approaching to check us out. We heard them calling a couple of times (I am not sure what they were saying, but it didn't sound welcoming), but unfortunately the recording and our allotted time was up, and so we piled back into the car without seeing the owls.

The second stop was on a quieter road, which I as the car-counter appreciated. Once again, we set up, Fred used his magic touch with the CD player which would work only for him, and we started the recording. This time it did not take long for two Barred Owls to show up, and boy

Fred Pinto

were they loud! Sarah had told me that they sounded like monkeys, which I had laughed at, but she was spot on. Angry monkeys! They stayed with us for the whole recording, flying back and forth over our heads and perching on the trees on either side of the road. As someone who had not seen an owl clearly since my childhood, it was pretty magical. I had prepared for a night of

standing around in the dark and probably not seeing anything and so was delighted to have reached my goal of seeing an owl very early on!

The rest of the stops alas, while full of good conversation and an enjoyable examination of the stars using an app on Fred's phone, did not yield any more owls. At one stop, we did hear some "people-owls" as Fred called them - some snowmobilers on the hydro line on the other side of the trees calling back in response to our recordings. They did a pretty good imitation of an owl, I have to say! I have no idea if they thought we were real owls or if they knew it was a recording they were hearing, although I think it is unlikely that anyone outside of the Naturalists Club would expect people to be driving around at night playing recordings of owls.

Aside from people-owls there were only dog-owls. Our chilly and focused brains would occasionally con us into thinking that the dog barking in the distance was an actual owl calling! Fred was usually the one to dampen our excitement and set us straight!



Louise Simpson

After the final stop, with numb toes, we bundled back into the car to head home after midnight. On the way back, as we were driving down a quiet road, we passed a car pulled over and a man

standing beside the road. I had a casual glance as we drove past and after about 30 seconds of processing time, I told the others, "Hey, that guy was HOLDING an owl!"

Naturally, Marc pulled over and we all got out to see what on earth was going on. We met a young man who had a Barred Owl perched on his arm. He said he and his friend had encountered it on the road. and when trying to move it out of harm's way, it latched onto his arm and would not let go. Sure enough the owl, who did not appear to be injured but was obviously out of sorts in a sleepy dazed way, seemed content to stay right where it was, with no inclination to leave. While we quietly marvelled at the beautiful owl, a police car pulled up with his lights on. This added a little extra drama to the event!!



Sarah Wheelan

We discussed what on earth can be done with an owl that will not let go! Fred suggested a refuge centre in Sudbury, and because the policeman could not get in touch with the Humane Society and had no better ideas, the young man was allowed to take the owl home to his back deck for the evening to allow it to recover safely. His plan was that if it got better and flew off then great, but if not, then he would take it to the centre in the morning.

We left after saying our goodbyes and wishing the rescuers good luck, but it must have been a unique car ride home with an owl in tow. None of us wanted to intrude so we did not ask the young man for his contact information. I regret that now because I know we all wonder what happened.

Our own exciting owl-filled evening ended with us going our separate ways, hoping that the owl that had chosen a human friend had a speedy recovery and has a good long life. Who knows, maybe we will see it during next year's survey, but hopefully in the trees this time!

Owl prowl non-pareil

By Dick Tafel

It was to be a golden night! April 22 – just the right time to find mysterious owls! But the location – a long way from home and an even longer drive back to home! McConnell Lake Road. For many years it had been a magnet for nighttime owls. And no wonder. Not a home upon it. No telephone wires to interfere with the sounds of nature, not even those high-pitched, eerie sounds which are beyond the ability of human beings to conjure.

And so, three intrepids from the big city – Jim Haskins, Lori Beckerton and yours truly found ourselves alone within the deep, dark woods of the McConnell Lake pathway. It was approaching sunset as we passed lonely, decrepit monsters of wood-collecting machines parked slovenly along some of the edges of the route.

Shortly after entering this lonely cut amidst the huge sentinels of trees bordering the path, there crossing right in front of us, like a meteorite, was a brownfeathered image. Was it one of the owls – maybe a large Great Horned? Mixed feelings of fright and excitement entered the minds of the car-protected threesome. Was this to be a sign of scenes to come?

The trio lumbered onwards
– mostly north further and
further away from the
civilization of which they



had recently been such a part. The darkness slowly enveloped them. They were to be at the start of the adventure a half hour after sunset. That was the rule of those who established this unusual pilgrimage. They had to be at the head of the route, ready and willing and able to venture some 20 kilometres in search of wild owls by 8:45 p.m. They made it on time, with enough time left to check out their speaker equipment placed carefully upon the top of the car; indeed they even had time to walk a short distance beyond the starting point. Time was at their command.

They listened for American Woodcocks, these fairies of the darkness, giving their plaintive Bronx cheers of endearment and their soaring, noisy climbs in the night air to their waiting females below. This was a usual spot for such vibrations, but tonight nothing whatever was heard! Nothing at all.

And so the humans turned on their trajectory for sound, crying out for a response from one of the myriads of owls they expected to hear. The brilliantly-designed tapes gave bleats of despairing sounds, mixed with Boreal Owl cries, and then after many minutes of nothing, the screechy calls of barking Barred Owls. The trio waited for sounds of response. Nothing! Nothing at all.

They packed up and moved forward the two kilometres to the next anticipated owl stop where their speakers barked out the same sounds all over again – the bleats, the Boreal Owl repeat, the pauses before three – or was it four - Barred Owls calls emanating out of the magical speakers on top of the car. No sounds from the woods; no sounds of anything; no calls of frogs, or snipe, or Common Loons. Nothing! Nothing whatsoever! All remained eerily quiet. Very eerily so.

Up in the heavens, the clusters of stars, like the amazing Pleiades, were readily visible; the Big Dipper illustrated clearly the area from which they had just departed – the north, via the North Star! It was a clear, star-lit night, a night perfect for owling!

The edge of the roadway was filled with snow – some six feet in height; the woods beyond were deeply covered in white. Not a sign of any living thing was noticed, except, of course, for the wintering trees, sometimes coniferous, sometimes deciduous. But no sign that even the trees were aware that they were still alive.

The one member of the threesome relegated with the job of keeping track of the cars passing by had a difficult time! She watched and listened as carefully as one who was about to pass an entrance exam, but not one car disturbed the quiet of the evening.

Stop three. Stop four. At stop five, some of the group wandered up ahead, down the rough road, avoiding the muddy areas, and the intermixed slippery ice, listening, just listening for sounds of life. All that could be heard was the sound of the taped calls of the sought-after Barred Owls. But nothing! Nothing responded.

Stop six. Stop seven. Stop eight. At each stop, the threesome left their warmly enveloping car and listened carefully for the responding call of the owls. The temperature dropped to below freezing; but the complete lack of any winds, combined with the group's concentration upon listening for any sound kept their bodies and minds relatively warm.

Stop nine. Nearing the end. Surely something is out there wanting to join in the exciting adventure of the civilized threesome. But nothing! Nothing at all.

The group approached the last stop. It was by then midnight. As the leader of the group, yours truly announced that this last stop would no doubt be the expedition's climax, the exuberant highlight experience all had been awaiting, the proof that there were indeed other living beings in these snow-filled woods!

The speaker gave its first buzz; then its pause for several seconds; then the ebullient Boreal Owl chant; then pause again. A few minutes later, the first Barred Owl call from the speaker; the lengthy pause; another Barred Owl call; further pauses; a third call. All three observers continued to wait expectantly – as in the nine previous interludes. A final beep of the machine announced the end of the tape recording. Yours truly began packing up the speaker and tape

machine from the top of the car. And then from the northwest came a call of frenzy! The other two naturalists had already entered the vehicle, but they could also hear it. It was coming closer. And then another call from the east. A second Barred Owl!!

Both Barreds were obviously upset, disturbed by the interloper in their midst who had dared to disturb their quiet pursuits within their newly-established territory. They would not stop calling! Both came nearer to the car, while continuing their tirade of disgruntlement at being interrupted.

The humans listened with bated breaths. Might the owls attempt to ambush them? But slowly all calls stopped. The owls had achieved their purpose – the humanemanated owls had disappeared. And so, therefore, should they.

The trio calmed their excitement as they gulped at the wonders of nighttime in a northern woods. They commenced their route back to civilization, making it home by 2:00 a.m.



Dick Tafal

Thereafter, they would only dream about the extreme stillness of a northern woods during a cold April night, a night mixed with the excitement of the sudden appearance of barking Barred Owls. What an experience!

The truth and nothing but the truth

By Gary Sturge

Because of weather and snow conditions, we left the survey until very late in April. We've always been more successful after mid-April anyway. So on the evening of April 26, on a balmy 9 degrees C, and on a clear and windless night, we set out to hunt The Owl. The task force included me, Connie, Rachel, and new Bird Winger, Matt Procunier. Matt's assignment was to bring us beginner's luck, just as Rachel had done last year.

Recently, I finally broke down and conceded that I needed a much better camera if I wanted to produce photos like the other photographers in our group. I got a very nice camera and lens. And to prepare for this night, I had been playing with it for a couple of weeks. I even had an extra battery all charged up. My assistant was instructed how to hold it and when to give it to me to catch that perfect owl photo. Remember this fact.

Stop 1: We arrived on station on South River Road, just 5 minutes before launch and quickly set up. Last year we had two owls here and so we anticipated success. Lots of nature noise, geese and running water and we had Matt. After 13 minutes elapsed and we had nothing, I asked Matt when he was going to turn his luck on. To my dismay, he asked how? **0 owls!**

Stop 2: So down the road we hustled, stopped, set up and launched the boom box. Minute 1, minute 2, BOOW, BARR, BARR, oh oh what's happening, no owls. But then from a distance a wonderful *Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all?* A Barred Owl and then another - and one flew out to meet us! Hallelujah, we're not going to be skunked after all!! I yelled for my camera which my assistant promptly presented. I turned it on, aimed, pushed the button and nothing — no flash and the pictures were blank. What's wrong?? It should work. Wait, what's that on the menu screen? Very low battery!! OK where's the other? In my eagerness, I had left it at home. We'll just have to rely on the smart phone people with us and their phone cameras, all smarter than I was. **But 2 Barred Owls!**

Stop 3: We hopped in our vehicles and confidently cruised to the next stop, set up and began listening. First up was a Northern Saw-whet right after the BOOW, but he quieted right down after two Barred Owls replied to the first BARR call. They were calling from different directions and soon flew near to meet us. One was male and the other female according to her calls, said our resident expert, Rachel, the ornithologist. They flew out to meet us and called to each other until we packed up and departed. Who knows, maybe



we had just initiated an owl relationship. 1 Northern Saw-whet and 2 Barred Owls. Matt's presence is working. Keep it up!

Stop 4: We arrived and set up shop, started the CD and immediately got a reply from the nearby resident dog. Luckily he was not too close nor stimulated and just woofed occasionally. There was not much action here and some were appreciating the view of the distant North Bay lights through the canyon of trees when suddenly there was a distant reply. Thank goodness for young folks with excellent hearing. From the distance and direction this candidate was deemed to likely be a repeater from Stop 3. **One more Barred, but one we had met before.**

Stop 5: On down the road in the darkness and out again. Action started after the first BARR, a distant Barred Owl. After the next BARR, there was a second owl and then a third, a pair of dueters. The love birds flew out to us for an introduction. The field note recorder was hectically scurrying between observers seeking data, what, where, direction, how far and then came a shhhhh...listen over there.

For the three who can hear, there was the distant squawking of the female **Great Horned Owl!**Guess all our ruckus had disturbed her, likely on her nest. With everything finally recorded, we embarked for the next stop. Geez, four more: 3
Barreds and a Great Horned.

Stop 6: Last year there was "No Joy" at this stop, only quiet darkness and trees, but this year we had Matt! After a couple of BARRS, an owl deemed to reply and after another BARR, he was joined by his partner and they dueted at a distance. From the direction we deemed this pair to likely be the dueters



Renee Levesque

we had at the previous stop. We heard them out and then loaded up and ran down the road. 2 more Barreds, but ones we had met before.

Stop 7: This stop is past a dwelling in the middle of nowhere next to a swamp. It's called Alsace on Google Maps, but is distant from the present road carrying that name. We set up just

past the swamp and were greeted by a nearby American Woodcock. After the first BARR, we had a reply and after the second, another reply, a different owl. We heard them out and were about to depart when a low dreadful scream came from the swamp. Sounds like a raccoon being killed said Matt. (Likely a local predator got him.) Now Matt is a country boy who has raised chickens and executed raiding raccoons, so I'll call him our expert. Final tally: **2 Barreds**, **1 woodcock and a dead raccoon!**

Stop 8: Around and up, down and around to near the end of the road by a small lake. A number of very nice houses and cottages here, but in the past when this route was set up, there was likely nothing. So find a place to stop to avoid a home with lights on or someone there. It was now 10 minutes to 11 o'clock and we started up the CD. At the nearest house with lights, activity was stirring. After the third BARR, an owl flew silently out from somewhere and sat in a large tree nearby quietly observing us. Also at this time, a flashlight commenced moving up the driveway and in our direction. I decided to confront the flashlight, wielded by a man in a house coat. "What are you doing there?" "Oh just doing a nocturnal owl survey, nothing to worry about. We'll be gone soon", I explained. "Oh" he replied, "you looked suspicious, but there was an owl here this morning". For this tidbit I thanked him and returned to my duties. By now there was a second owl involved, so we heard them out and then turned around and left. Tally: 2 Barreds and 1 homeowner.



Gary Sturge

Stop 9: Now this route backtracks, so to get back to the main route and down to the next stop is about a 6 km drive. As we drove over a crest nearing the stop, something large and furry blocked the middle of the road. I slowed and approach it. Ahh a porcupine. I'll just go round him to the left, he went left, OK I'll go right, he went right so we were still 3 feet apart in the middle of the road. I can do this. I'll fake right but go left and it worked. He went right and toddled off to the ditch. We set up near a noisy creek and were entertained by a drumming Ruffed Grouse until the 4th BARR when a distant owl gave us a reply. From the distance and direction we deemed him to be a repeater from one of the earlier stops near the swamp or lake. 1 more Barred, one we had met before, 1 porcupine and a drumming grouse.

Stop 10: The route now leads us around Wolfe Lake past the swamp at the end to just a few hundred feet from Alsace Road. As soon as we got out of the vehicles, there was a bird calling. It was in the swamp and was constant. Rachel said, "That sounds like a yellowlegs. Heard them a lot up north." We pulled out a smart phone, accessed the Cornell Bird site and sure enough it was the Greater Yellowlegs warning call (must have heard us coming). By now the moon was near full and very bright, shining through a misty sky, the shadow of the trees fell over the road, deathly quiet, a perfect Halloween setting! Just then the 4th BARR call went off and a silent shadow drifted over the road. Startled, we all looked up. There beside us high in a tree and highlighted by the moon was our silent nemesis, a Barred Owl. It just sat there observing us, making no sound as we scurried trying to get a perfect photo. I'm sure it found us perplexing. Well, the boom box indicated an end to the night's activity, so we packed ourselves up and headed home, arriving safe and sound. 1 more silent Barred Owl and 1 yellowlegs.

The night was exceptional: 18 Owls of 3 species, 2 target species, 4 classed as repeaters, and 8 flying out to meet us; 1 American Woodcock; 1 Ruffed Grouse: 1 Greater Yellowlegs; 1 Porcupine; 1 Homeowner: and a dead Raccoon.



Matt Procunier

Quite a night and I've already got Matt under contract for next year's survey!