

## **Carden Challenge**

This past May, 10 teams took part in the Carden Challenge, with Jean Iron as the celebrity birder. Her team of Eleanor Beagan, Ron Reid, and Andrew Keaveney captured the Carden Cup with a total of 132 species seen in the 24-hour period. While this did not break the record of 135 species set last year, the Challenge as a whole identified 153 species, including 8 species new to the Challenge. The most surprising find, a singing Kirtland's warbler was heard at the corner of Wylie Road and Alvar Road. Other unusual species for this area seen for the first time during the Challenge included pine siskin, black-bellied plover, a flock of dunlin, and red-bellied woodpeckers.

The 2012 Challenge raised \$23,000 for the conservation programs of the Couchiching Conservancy. Thanks to all who participated and to those who supported their friends with pledges. Participants would like to send a big thank you to the United Church Women who once again served up a delicious dinner including their mouth-watering pies.

## **Carden Nature Festival**

Despite the uncooperative weather, the sixth annual Carden Nature Festival, held from June 1-3, was a resounding success. Almost 300 participants signed up for the Festival and enjoyed outings and presentations led by expert leaders.

The Festival would not be the success it is without the continued support from almost 100 volunteers, many who have been involved for several years. The organizers extend their deepest thanks to these dedicated and hard-working people.

Plans are underway for the seventh annual event taking place the first weekend in June 2013.

## **Bird Carving Raffle**

Congratulations to Lynn Watson from Toronto who won the beautiful wood carving of an eastern loggerhead shrike designed by David A. Homer. Funds raised through the raffle go towards the conservation efforts of the Couchiching Conservancy. Many thanks to David A. Homer for his donation of the one of a kind masterpiece.

## **Earth Day Donation**

Many thanks to RBC Royal Bank branches in Orillia for donating 40 white spruce seedlings for a tree planting initiative at Washago Centennial Park on April 28<sup>th</sup>. And thanks to the volunteers from RBC for "getting their hands dirty" helping us plant the trees.

Also, the bank had patrons bring in electronic waste and the waste was then turned over to Norm at Electronic Distributors International who provided a cheque to the Couchiching Conservancy in the amount of \$400.00.

We are very appreciative of our local business leaders who support our conservation efforts.