

# Where to See Shorebirds in the Pelee Birding Area

BY JEAN IRON, QUEST LEADER, SHOREBIRD FIELD GUIDE AUTHOR

Watching northbound shorebirds is one of birding's greatest pleasures. Spring shorebirds are in full breeding plumage with beautiful colours and intricate patterns. Add to this the fun and challenge of identification. Point Pelee is the best place to view these marvelous flyers migrating through southern Ontario from wintering areas to the breeding grounds in boreal muskegs and the tundra. Here are the top locations to see shorebirds during the Festival of Birds:

- 1** The Tip of Point Pelee can be good for shorebirds any time of day as they cross Lake Erie and may land at the Tip to rest. Watch for Sanderlings, Willets, Black-bellied Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Dunlin, and others.
- 2** Onion Fields north of Point Pelee are famous for large flocks of American Golden-Plovers and Black-bellied Plovers. Mixed in are a variety of other shorebirds including Short-billed Dowitchers and Ruddy Turnstones. Rareties can show up at any time.
- 3** Hillman Marsh Shorebird Cell (pictured below) is strategically located beside Lake Erie near Point Pelee National Park, where traditionally shorebirds rest on northbound migration. The cell hosts a continuous influx of migrants from mid-April to early June because its managed water levels create mudflats and shallow areas attractive to shorebirds. Most birders visit in the afternoon. The cell is a birding hotspot in Hillman Marsh Conservation Area.
- 4** Wheatley Harbour, rock jetties and flooded fields should be checked for resting shorebirds that have crossed Lake Erie.

Jean will be presenting two of her celebrated "Northbound Shorebirds" Lunch & Learns at the Point Pelee Visitor Centre Theatre! During these illustrated sessions, Jean will present the shorebird species you can expect to see in the Pelee Birding Area during the Festival of Birds, share many identification tips and also tell us more about the choice locations to see them. The sessions will take place on Saturday, May 12 at 11:30 am and Thursday, May 17 at 12:00 noon.

**Editors Note:** In 2020, Jean is leading our *Scotland, the Faroe Islands, & Iceland Expedition Cruise* (learn more on page 9).

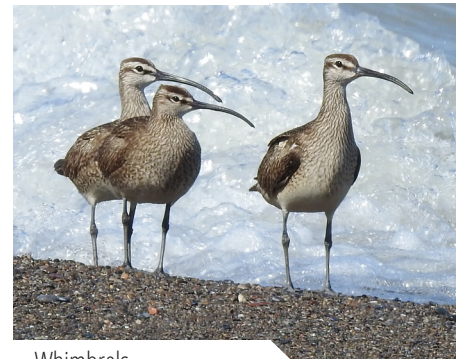


**To request a detailed itinerary or reserve your spot, please contact Quest Nature Tours:**

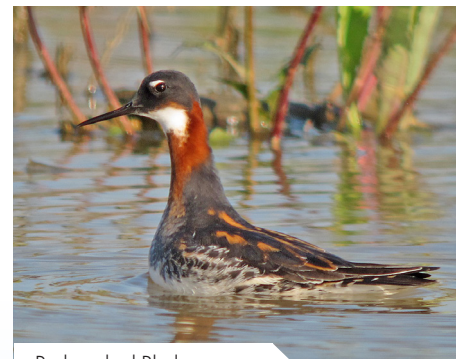
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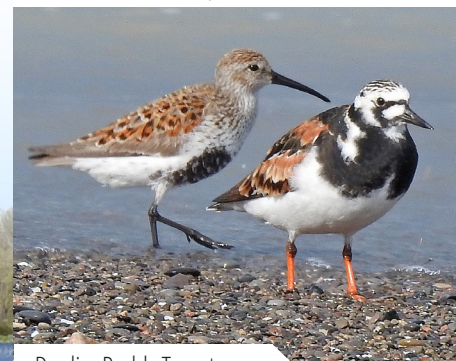
*That's Jean!*



Whimbrels



Red-necked Phalarope



Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstone

