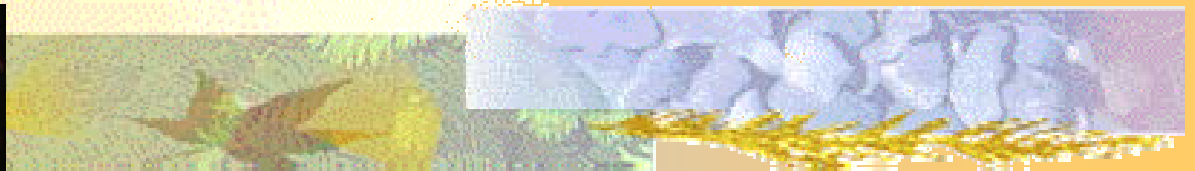


Barn Owls and Badgers: Recovery Efforts and Grasslands Conservation in Carolinian Canada



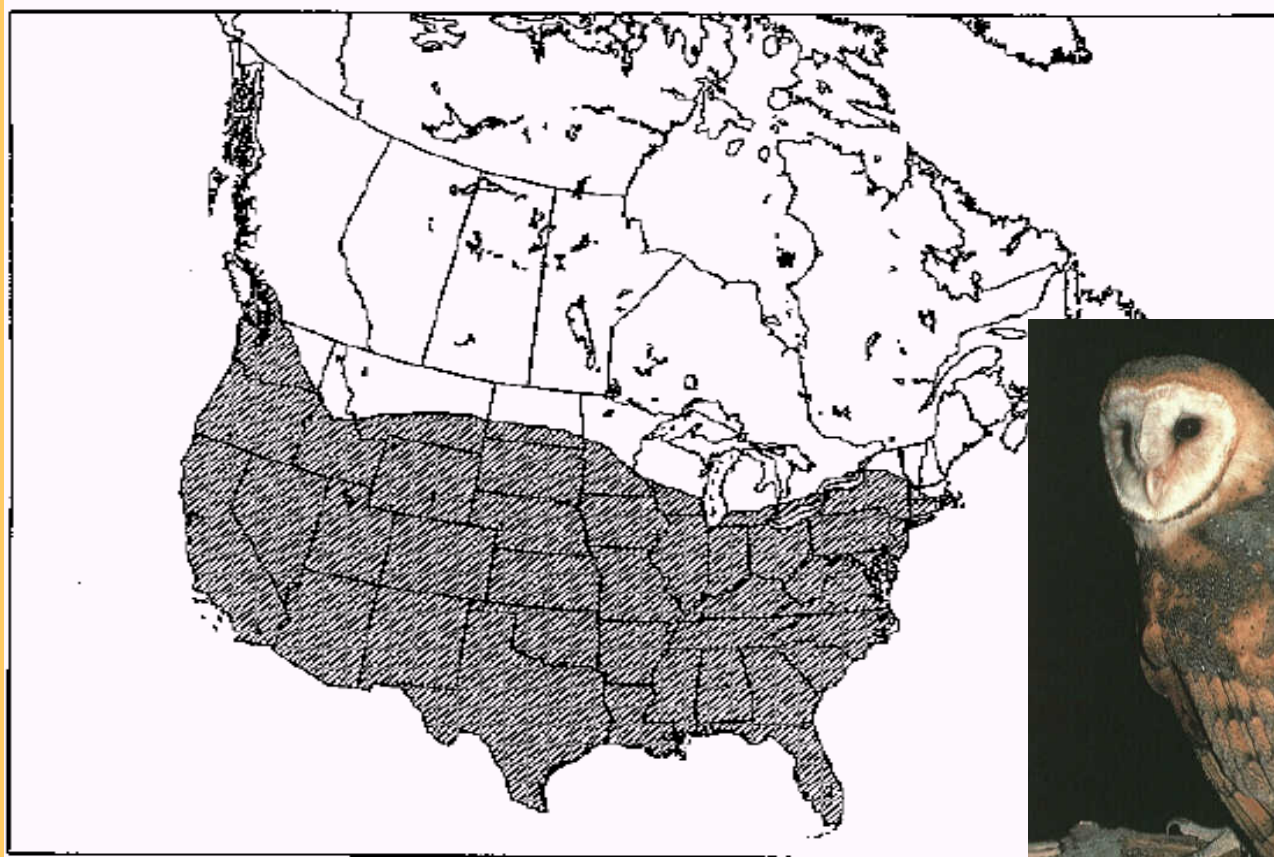
Bernt Solymár
EarthTramper Consulting Inc.



The Barn Owl in Ontario



North American Breeding Range



Barn Owl Facts

- COSEWIC *Endangered*,
Ontario *Threatened*
- Nocturnal
- Cavity nesters
- Hunt over grasslands,
agricultural fields
- Efficient mousers



Why are Barn Owls Endangered in Ontario?

Major reasons:

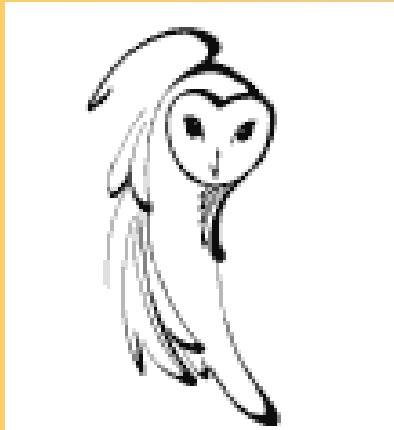
- Loss of habitat and reduction in prey numbers
- Harsh winters
- Nest predators
- Other factors



Recent Ontario Records for Barn Owls



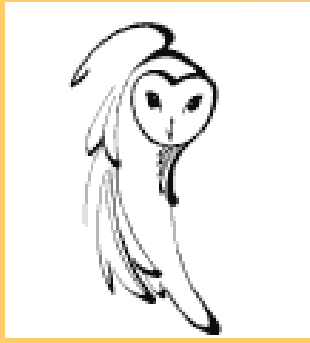
- 1981-85 Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas indicated only 4 confirmed breeding pairs (3 in Niagara, 1 in Haldimand)
- In 1999 2 road-killed birds (near Chatham and near Kitchener) reported to MNR
- Between 1999 and 2001, 4 confirmed sightings (2 Haldimand, 1 Norfolk, 3 Essex) and 3 highly probable sightings (1 Haldimand, 1 Kent, 1 Lambton)



The Ontario Barn Owl Recovery Team

Project Objectives:

- Monitor existing populations via nest box program and sightings
- Promote awareness and appreciation for Barn Owls and other grassland species
- Identify, conserve and restore grassland habitat in Southern Ontario



Nest Box Monitoring

- 300 nest boxes installed across southern Ontario
- Database created to monitor observations & sightings
- Farmers and rural landowners assisting our efforts
- *The Grassland Flyer*





Grassland Activities

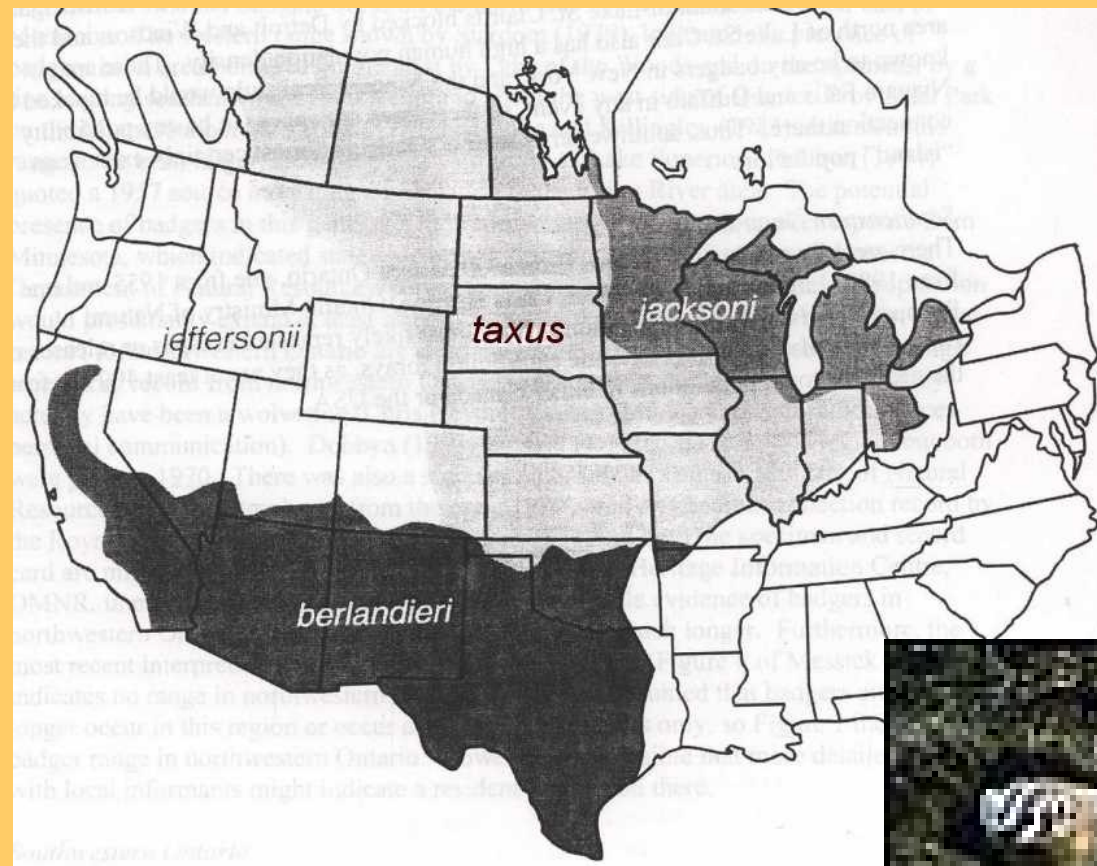
- *Grasslands Flora/Fauna of Ontario* posters to schools, conservation groups, etc.
- Southern Ontario grasslands inventory mapping project
- “*Best Management Practices for Grasslands*” booklet



The American Badger in Ontario



Breeding Range of Badgers



Badger Habitat Requirements

- Tallgrass prairie and savanna
- Farmland edges, wooded ravines
- Sandy soils for burrowing
- Preys primarily on fossorial rodents
- Opportunistic feeders



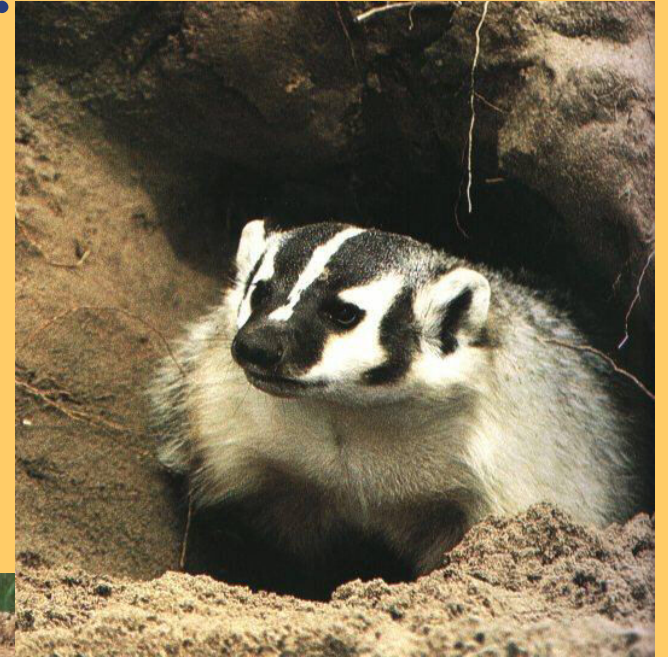
Nocturnal Nomads

- Solitary, nomadic and mostly nocturnal
- Home ranges up to 500 sq. km for males
- Travel up to 5 km/night
- Avg. 7-12 kg (up to 18 kg for large males)
- 1 to 5 young born Mar/Apr, disperse up to 100 km from den by July/Aug



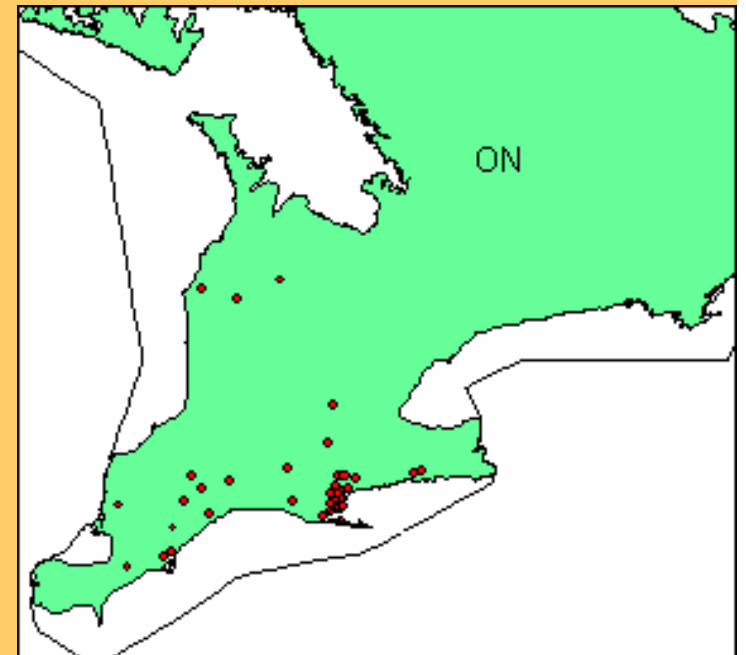
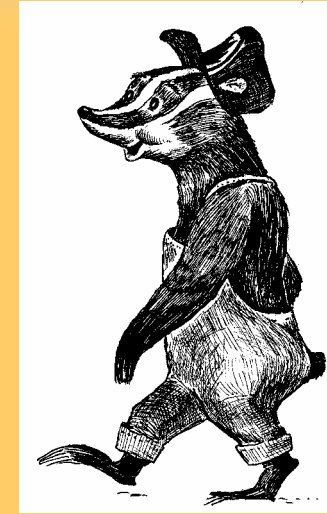
Nature's Excavators!

- Specialized Claws
- Wedge Shaped Body
- Capture groundhogs, chipmunks, rabbits, etc.



Status in Ontario

- Estimated < 200 badgers in Ontario
- COSEWIC *Endangered*
- No provincial status, so no special protection
- No longer a quota on Furbearers list



Why are Badgers Endangered in Ontario?

- On-going **habitat loss** and fragmentation
- **Road fatalities**
- **Agricultural practices**
- **Shooting and incidental trapping**
- **Genetic depression**
from population isolation



Badger Den Monitoring



Badger Recovery Efforts

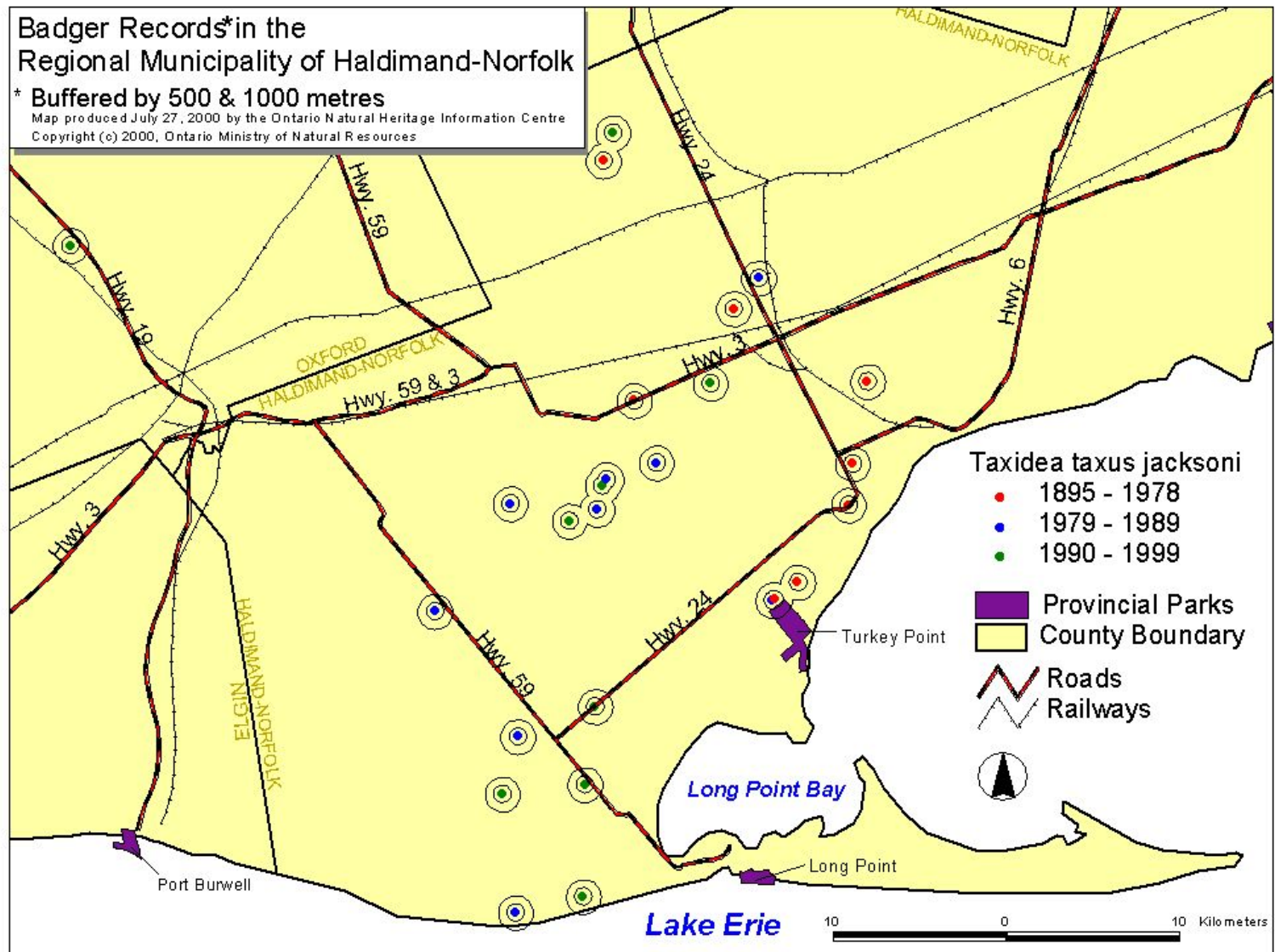


- Awareness Blitz in Norfolk County, 2002
- Database and Mapping of Sightings
- Draft Recovery Plan
- Formation of a Recovery Team in 2003

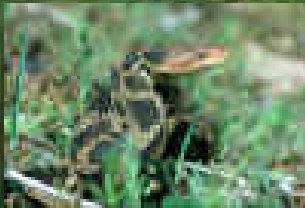
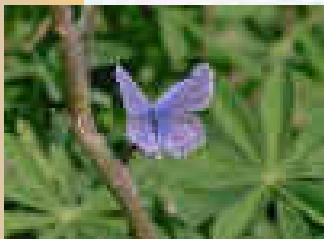
Badger Records* in the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk

* Buffered by 500 & 1000 metres

Map produced July 27, 2000 by the Ontario Natural Heritage Information Centre
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The Barn Owl, Badger and Other Species-at-Risk are Indicators for Healthy Grasslands and Biodiversity



What are Grasslands?

- Tallgrass prairie
- Upland meadow
- Wetland fringe
- Agricultural
- Retired farmland
- Other



Value of Grasslands

- Shelter, Food, Nesting for Wildlife
- Biodiversity
- Environmental Filters
- Recreation
- Carbon Sequestration/Sinks

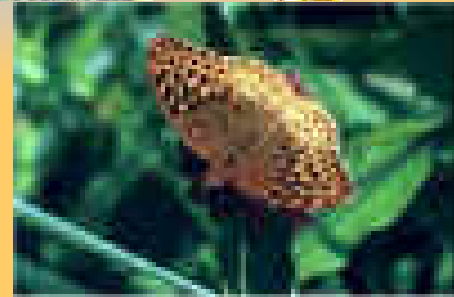


Grassland CPR: Keys to Success



- Identify, and protect grassland habitat; restore tallgrass prairie and oak savannah
- Increase public and media awareness of SAR, habitat conservation and restoration, and sustainable agricultural practices
- Build strong grassroots partnerships and recruit dedicated volunteer base

Grassland CPR: Keys to Success



- Actively promote, facilitate and implement voluntary habitat and land trust agreements, conservation easements
- Provide information and expertise to farmers and rural landowners on sound land stewardship practices, environmental on-farm planning, and sustainable agriculture practices

To Increase Populations of



&



We need to C. P. R. Grassland Habitat



Thanks!

