

**My First Owl Survey!** On the evening of Saturday May 2, led by Jim and Dave, what ended up to be 11 club members and family and friends enjoyed a perfect night for an Owl Prowl. The route we were on started on route 435 in Whitney and was to lead up through Maple Glen. Yes “was to”. In spite of the best efforts there was a technological glitch.

The means of finding out if a specific owl is present in an area is to find if they are attracted to calls from owls of the same species. A recording of an owl’s call is played over loud speakers in a CD player. Well, owl surveys take perhaps one of the more careful approaches to data collection in terms of scientific integrity, as many variables as possible need to be controlled. Weather conditions are of course recorded as are background noises and the very specific locations surveyed. This data makes year to year analysis possible and adds to the validity of the results. The CD player is provided by [Bird Studies Canada](#) and this standardizes the quality and loudness of the recording played. On this perfect evening, the CD player provided refused to work. The official owl survey for the evening was off.

Not to disappoint the assembled group, most of which were new to owl surveying, it was decided to call for [Barred Owls](#) at two locations using the CD player in one of the group’s vehicles. This worked like a charm. In both locations, a pair of Barred Owls was very quick to respond and showed great curiosity and likely a bit of alarm at the presence of apparently another Barred Owl. Group members had a good look at the owls perched on very nearby trees and of the owls in flight as they swooped a few times in close proximity of the source of the mysterious calls. Some of us ducked.

There are other target species of course but the Barred Owl seems to be the most common owl in our area. If you have an opportunity to join in an Owl Prowl you are very unlikely to be disappointed.