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**NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

A COMMEMORATIVE
EDITION

CELEBRATING THE

TWENTY FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY

OF THE SOCIETY

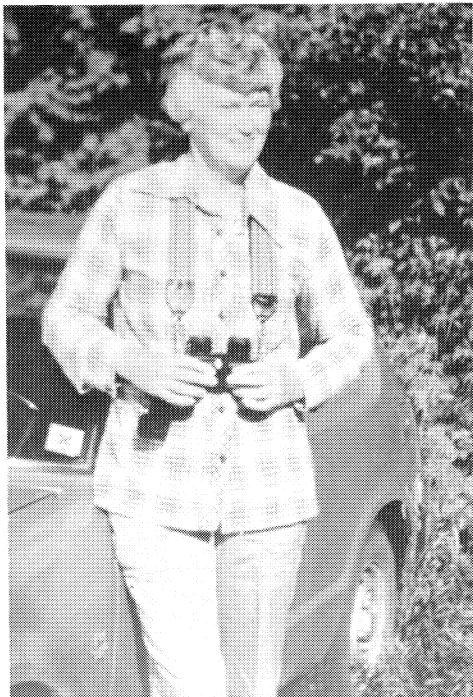
1955

1980

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings and Happy Anniversary to all members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society! It was twenty-five years ago, on January 26, 1955, that fifty-five people attended a meeting for the purpose of organizing a Nova Scotia Bird Society. In the intervening years, our organization has grown to a membership of over six hundred--persons interested in "watching, feeding, or studying our wild birds".

Those founding members can be justifiably proud of the development of the Society. The Bird Society has expanded and broadened its objective to being, not only concerned but actively involved in the debates over controversial conservation issues.

One of the greatest achievements that has come about over these past twenty-five years has been the growth and expansion of the Newsletter. It accomplished, a long time ago, the purpose it had set out to do--spreading and strengthening interest in any subject related to birds. The Newsletter is recognized beyond the

boundaries of our province for the ornithological data reported.

Our province offers an abundant and varied bird life. There is still a need for the Society to add valuable information and to continue, undaunted, its concern about the changes in our environment that could drastically affect the bird life.

It is my sincere hope and wish that you, the members, will continue to support the Bird Society in the future as has been done in the past. Only through this support, your participation, and your contribution can the Society achieve and maintain the purpose for which it was organized, "the study of birds in Nova Scotia and matters related hereto".

Margaret A. Clark

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

"We should form a society." "It is time we had a Bird Society." Tom Courtney said it to Charles Allen, who said it to Harding Moffatt, who said it to Forbes Thrasher, who said it to Willett Mills, who had been saying it to these and others for several years by now - 1955. It took the return of Harrison Flint Lewis, an organizer born and bred, to set in motion proceedings which led to an actual meeting and the official birth of the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

Willett Mills alerted Harrison Lewis and they got hold of C.R.K. Allen, talked among themselves, and finally decided to ask the Nova Scotia Museum staff to assist them in organizing a meeting to be held there when and if they could persuade Robie Tufts to join them, since it was felt that his presence would go far to attract prospective members - he was, they said, in himself, a one-man Bird Society.

Harrison Lewis had in mind "a small scientific group", and was asked to draw up a Constitution for the projected new society; C.R.K. Allen was to advertise the meeting and invite "anyone interested in birds" to attend; Harding Moffatt was suggested as Chairman of a nominating committee, all officers to be agreed upon beforehand, and the agenda of the meeting carefully planned.

And so it came about. At the Museum, Donald Crowdis and Lloyd Duncanson were immediately helpful and remained so; the advertisement brought fifty-five people to a meeting at the Assembly Hall, Nova Scotia Technical College (which then housed the Museum) at Halifax, on the night of January 26, 1955 - and Robie Tufts did come, to be elected the first President.

The others elected on this historic occasion were: C.R.K. Allen for Vice-President, W.J. Mills for Secretary-Treasurer, H.F. Lewis for Editor, F.A. Lane, D.K. Crowdis, J.R. Calder Fraser as members of the Executive Committee, and H.P. Moffatt appointed as Auditor. Dr. Lewis "chaired" the meeting until the President was elected, Phyllis Whynacht of the Museum staff was Acting Secretary. The Society was given its name - The Nova Scotia Bird Society in association with the Nova Scotia Museum of Science; the Constitution was adopted - article by article was discussed, some amendments made, each accepted in turn. Amendments have been made from time to time since then, but by and large this Constitution has remained the same - a useful framework for the functioning of the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

Since most of the "First Fifty-five" had come from Halifax-Dartmouth and environs, it was decided to leave Charter Membership open for the next two months to allow word to get around; accordingly, by March 31, 1955, our charter members stood at three hundred and forty-one. Although many of these people continued to come from the Halifax area, most counties in the province soon were represented, and we had several "foreigners" join us (the Gallaghers and the Henrys of Massachusetts should scarcely be called foreigners since they had long summered here and have, throughout this time, made valuable contributions to knowledge of our native birds).

The number of members in the Society has fluctuated very little throughout these twenty-five years, and for a long time growth was imperceptible. Twice during this period there was an abrupt rise above normal, the result of "membership drives", but this was not true growth as it disappeared almost immediately. Only in the last decade have we maintained a slow but sure increase in number - solid hope for the future - but we have not yet doubled our initial count. Only ten

per cent of the original founding group has maintained unbroken membership down the years since 1955.**

Who are the members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society?

Robie W. Tufts was for twenty-eight years, Chief Federal Migratory Bird Officer for the Maritime Provinces, and is the author of The Birds of Nova Scotia. Dr. Tufts' newspaper columns and talks to school children and others did much towards providing a foundation for the formation of our Society - many of our members refer to themselves as "Robie's boys (and girls!)". Harrison F. Lewis was a Ph.D. in Ornithology from Cornell, former Chief of the Canadian Wildlife Service, one-time Editor of the Canadian Field Naturalist, and upon retirement to his native Nova Scotia, continued to carry on bird studies. C.R.K. Allen, Master of Arts in Biological Sciences, was for twenty-six years Superintendent of the Halifax School for the Blind; had grown up under the guidance of his father, E. Chesley Allen, a field naturalist of international recognition. Willett J. Mills, merchant and philanthropist, and Harding P. Moffatt, Ph.D. and Deputy Minister of Education for Nova Scotia, were both self-taught amateur ornithologists of many years standing.

Following the report of that first meeting, people wrote for membership in the new Society - people like Martin McNally and W. P. Beazley, later instrumental in forming a Truro branch of the Bird Society; John Erskine, scientist and author, who shared both of these gifts generously with us; Louise Daley, of "Bird Hospital" fame; Ruth P. Emery, one of the editors of Massachusetts Audubon; H. F. Tufts, M.D., brother and early inspiration to Robie Tufts; J. Israel Pothier, conservation-minded citizen of Wedgeport; W.E. Whitehead, Entomologist as well as birder; the Delaneys of Hebron, the Topples of Dartmouth, the Snyders of Crousetown, the Kenneys of Springville - all of whom have contributed substantially to the success of the Bird Society from that day, most of them until the present time.

It is noteworthy that people who live on or near the water almost invariably become bird-watchers. Evelyn Richardson (author) of Bon Portage Island, Wickerson Lent and his sons at Brier Island, and later the Smiths of Cape Sable were all Lighthouse dwellers; Eric Holdway of Pictou was Captain of one of the Prince Edward Island ferries; Raymond d'Entremont of Pubnico is a fisherman on George's Bank; Tom Morland was a Captain in the Canadian Navy - all of these people sought membership in our Society and have made valuable contributions to it. Latterly, since the opening of the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, we have obtained many new members - to name a few: Roger Pocklington, Dick Brown, Fred Dobson, Jim and Gillian Elliott - oceanographers seem to be bird-watchers to a man.

It is impossible to introduce everyone of us to one another, but we find ourselves to be an assemblage of men, women and children of all ages and many different walks of life - united for the most part solely by our interest in birds and anything to do with them.

The life of a Society depends however, upon more than just interest; ours would not have survived without the early and unstinting effort of a few people. During our first decade Robie Tufts served seven times, Harrison Lewis, nine times, Willett Mills, six times, and C.R. K. Allen, ten times as an officer or member of the Executive. During this period also, L.B. Macpherson and J.S. McCarter, of Dalhousie (both members of the First Fifty-five), gave us five terms each, as did Sulvia J. Fullerton and Molly B. Claydon. As appointees, Willett Mills and later Harding Moffatt served the Society as Auditor for

** For names, NSBS Newsletter Vol.16, No.1, April, 1973, pp 22-23.

many years, and R.A. Kanigsberg, Q.C., as Honorary Solicitor from 1958 until the present. Ethel Crathorne, Phyllis Hemeon, Anna McInnis and Frances Cook carried the load of "secretarial committee" work from 1956 for many years, adding other people from time to time but bearing the responsibility themselves.

What have we done, as a Society?

According to the Minutes of our Executive meetings, starting in February, 1955, we lost no time; collected fee money - \$1.00 per membership - and made proper banking arrangements; sent informational pamphlets including Tufts' List of the Birds of Nova Scotia to the members; alerted the R.C.M.P. to infringements of the Migratory Birds Convention Act; collaborated with the Museum staff in the preparation of several Museum Newsletters devoted chiefly to birds; started a fall migration study, featuring Bird Banding on Brier Island; instituted the Annual Field Day, the Christmas Count and regular provincial field trips, as well as early morning trips in May to see spring migrants; set up a first environmental study on the effect of tree spraying on our birds; affiliated with the Ottawa Field Naturalist Society; adopted the Common Puffin as our official badge; sponsored the planting of (275) fruit-bearing trees and shrubs beneficial to birds, to replace those blown down by Hurricane Edna in Point Pleasant Park, Halifax; investigated the possibility of buying the Bird Islands off Cape Breton, for sanctuaries - discovered we could not do so unless incorporated, so became incorporated under the Societies Act and succeeded in buying Hertford Island, but Ciboux was not for sale - (Willett Mills carried out most of these negotiations, and R.A. Kanigsberg advised us concerning the incorporation; it was due to his efforts in this connection that we asked him to become our Honorary Solicitor, in 1961, as he has been to our great benefit ever since).

THE FIRST FIELD TRIP - Mount Uniacke, June 17, 1956.



From L to R, with some unidentified people in between are: S.O. Monies, Willett Mills, Mary Stirling, Fran Cook, Fred Lane Mary McCurdy, Anna McInnes, Ward Hemeon, Robie Tufts, David Haley. (Photo-Phyllis Hemeon)

The above list does not include all of the activities of the Nova Scotia Bird Society in its first five years of existence, but these were outstanding events most of them leading into an on-going program. As the Society grew it became increasingly evident that direct and frequent communication between members and between members and the Executive, was not only desirable, but necessary. Lloyd B. Macpherson, Editor for 1957-59, recognized this, gave up our association with the rather slow-moving Museum publication, and on March 25, 1959, Number 1, Volume 1, of our own Newsletter rolled off the duplicating machine and was mailed out to the members. In 1960, Dr. Macpherson turned over the editorship to Phyllis Dobson, retaining for himself, together with C.R.K. Allen, the job of Editorial Advisor(s). This set-up was maintained for the next fourteen years. (Did you know, by the way, that the pre-natal Newsletter was termed by the first editor the "House Organ"?)

Our second five-year period, 1960-65, was a busy one. We asked for and obtained from the Province a ten-year lease of the group of islands containing Gold, Halibut and Bird, which became our Eastern Shore Bird Sanctuary. Arrangements were made for two Wardens to post the islands with Sanctuary signs, act as Honorary Officers for Game Law Enforcement; take parties out from Necum Teuch or Harrigan Cove, to visit the islands (for a fee of \$15.00), and receive and honorarium of fifty dollars per annum.

Following this there were offers of, and suggestions for several other possible sanctuaries, all of which were investigated, but most of them turned down for one reason or another (often because they were too inaccessible, consisted of unsuitable habitat, or we could not afford the taxes). Pearl Island in Mahone Bay was kept in mind; and the Conrad's Beach area - first suggested by Ethel Crathorne in 1963, after the offer of an adjacent area from Dorothy Willis, because our main concern and subject of our first (of many) Briefs and/or Resolutions to the Provincial Department of Lands and Forests. We are still working on this.

Willett Mills brought up the question of whether we might be classed as a charitable institution and not have to pay taxes, and C.R.K. Allen began the long battle to bring this about - finally achieved by the formation of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund, administered appropriately by these two as well as others - but this lies well in the future of this history.

We gave prizes for an essay contest and a photographic contest among members; purchased a large filing cabinet; made a first trip to Seal Island, August, 1963 (suggested by B.K. Doane, reported by L.B. Macpherson, other members of the first party, J.A. McCarter and C.W. Helleiner); Dr. Macpherson also with C.R.K. Allen, completed an updated annotated list of the birds of Nova Scotia, which was included in the Nova Scotia Tour Book; we subscribed to a laboratory in the newly opened Department of Wildlife at Acadia University; we passed a Resolution allowing two Junior Groups to join the Society at special rates; the Banding Project at Brier Island continued under the direction of Harrison Lewis, who pointed out that this banding is represented by numerous stations along the Atlantic seaboard of North America. (The banding program went into abeyance for several years, but has been revived by Ross and Mary Anderson, during fall migration on Brier Island).

W.P. Beazley asked for help from our Executive in forming a Truro branch of the Nova Scotia Bird Society - a meeting was held there followed by a Field Trip in the near vicinity - one of many Provincial Field Trips which were a major part of our on-going program; so also were increased numbers of Christmas Counts. We assisted in several

bird population studies: the Bald Eagle, the Osprey, Black Duck, Woodcock, Wood Duck - all considered threatened species because of loss of habitat, widespread use of poison sprays for plants and insects, and/or pressure of shooting; we assisted in an emergency feeding of Canada Geese, frozen out of their feeding area in the sanctuary in the Sable River estuary, January, 1961; we protested the illegal shooting of sea ducks at Cape Sable; the use of air rifles, and the dumping of oil at sea. We explored the method of offset printing to improve the appearance of the Newsletter, and decided to try it, which entailed a rise in dues to \$2.00, which was voted in without demur; Ethel Crathorne became the Membership Secretary, which office was to become a regular part of the Executive, notice of motion to that effect given at the 1964 Annual meeting.

Executive meetings averaged four to five a year. Items for discussion came from members at the General Meetings, members of the Executive, or by letter, and everything received its fair share of attention. Decisions were made when possible (after discussion and argument, often heated, but never acrimonious) then and there by vote. Only matters of major importance were left for the more ponderous voice of a General Meeting. Average attendance at the General Meetings was about sixty (from a total membership of three to four hundred), and most meetings were held in Halifax. As often as possible a Special General Meeting was called elsewhere in the province, but this was difficult for the members of the Executive, most of whom were people with jobs (in Halifax), all short of time and some short of money.

A BIRD TOO FAR

on the way to Lawrencetown, June, 1957



Willett Mills, Anna MacInnis, two unidentified.

(Photo Ward Hemeon)

The next five years, 1965-70, brought new problems as well as a continuation of some of the old ones, but new names start to appear of people able and willing to share the load. MK. Anketell-Jones joined the Executive and became a contributor to the Newsletter, as did Ian McLaren and Ben K. Doane; Eric Mills was another such, and made literature of fame with his account of Hurrican Gladys and her birds which he watched off Chebucto Head all that day, October 21, 1968. Hazel Carmichael, Ross Anderson, Ross Dobson, Wayne Neilly (the two latter, Park Naturalists) joined us, as did A.J. Erskine, who first brought to our attention the Nest Record Scheme and the Breeding Bird Survey. A bright day dawned when we received our first letter from Shirley Cohrs, our present highly satisfactory Editor, whose family have all made great contributions to the Nova Scotia Bird Society; the interest and value of the Newsletter and our knowledge of birds was greatly enhanced by Rosemary Eaton's "Diary" of a year's birds at Cole Harbor, followed by a similar sketch of the birds of Cape Sable by Betty June Smith, and again the birds of four seasons along the Meander River, written by C.R.K. Allen.

Ford Alward went to Cape Breton and recruited a sufficient number of people (seventy at the first meeting) to create a branch society, the only branch of the Nova Scotia Bird Society which has survived, so far. The Cape Breton Branch was set up in December, 1966, with its own proper Constitution, but its members were considered to have full rights in the parent organization, and a representative of the Branch is always a part of the parent Society's executive.

Next in importance to the above, was the realization of the Trust Fund, which required looking into rules and regulations, most of this was the work of R.A. Kanigsberg and W. J. Mills. *The Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund was finally set up in March, 1967.* Besides this, we made protest against Martinique Beach losing its sanctuary status; against the taking of sand and gravel from Conrad's Beach; against the industrialization of the northern portion of McNab's Island; of the trapping and shooting Kingfishers at Fish Hatcheries; and against the possible use of phosphenidon for spraying trees for Spruce Budworm, as it was a spray lethal to birds, being used in New Brunswick at this time.

We carried out a Summer Bird Count for two years; had Field Cards printed for sale to members, some also placed in the Halifax Tourist Bureau; appointed an "Official List Committee" to decide upon the status of birds as reported to the Newsletter (R.W. Tufts the first Chairman); through the efforts of Eric Mills we received regular reports of bird sightings from the Lurcher Lightship, and *Ian McLaren started his work on the "Ipswich" Sparrow on Sable Island - both projects which had been under consideration for some time.*

Reports from the Lightship came from spring 1968, until the ship was retired from the Lurcher Shoals, fall 1969, but by then sightings were coming regularly from people crossing the Bay of Fundy on the ferry Bluenose (or sister ships), which, added to those from Banks fishermen, to a large extent made up for our loss.

Eric Mills, Department of Oceanography, Dalhousie University, ocean-wide traveller, has been a steady contributor to the Newsletter, President of the Nova Scotia Bird Society in 1970 and 1971, and from his summer home on Brier Island, has introduced many of us to its wonderful strangeness and abundant bird population. Ian McLaren's Sable Island studies continue to date; during this time he has held symposia, published a Monograph, lectured and written and supervised students, all in the interests of the "Ipswich" Sparrow. This is the bird which by all logic should be our official bird, and have its name changed to

such, as it is the only one which breeds exclusively in Nova Scotia. Ian McLaren is a professor of Biology at Dalhousie University and he and his associates and students have made numbers of very useful studies of birdlife in the province, which they have shared with us, for example, Jean Boulva, at Sable Island, Dan Welsh and the Palm Warbler, (besides many months on Sable), Winnie Cairns and the Piping Plover, Tony Locke and the seabird colonies, K. McAloney and Barry Sabeau and the birds of Tobacco Island, and Anne Linton, who has recently headed up the Conservation Committee for us, and investigated the potentialities of Outer Bald Island in the Tusquets, (a lonely and bleak place to spend a night). Also Ian McLaren was President of our Society for the years 1968- 69, became our first provincial representative at Canadian Nature Federation in 1970, and President of that august body in 1974. Reports of birds past and present come to us from other sources, only from Dr. McLaren have we received reports of birds of the future - his four-part series Nova Scotia Rarities in Perspective ** should keep us on the alert for some time to come.

In the last decade, 1970-80, we find that the work load of the Society no longer need be carried by a few; it is now possible to delegate almost any project to an able committee and expect it to be carried out creditably. Since our main concern is birds, we have become perforce, environmentalists and to some extent conservationists - long words which mean that we try to ensure living space in our country-side for birds - as much as possible and as clean as possible (no oil for the birds, no garbage for us.)

We have been and/or have bought four of the Tusket Islands off Yarmouth, nesting places for three species of Terns and for Storm Petrels. We still own Hertford Island off Cape Breton, but have given up the Eastern Shore Islands, now under government protection - we are however, still free to visit there, to use them as bird observatories. We tried to persuade the Province to buy both Seal and Brier Islands, but all of Seal and part of Brier have been sold to American interests. There appears to be no immediate danger of exploitation, but we *should* have control of the destinies of our two most valuable islands for migration studies. We tried to acquire Pearl Island and were told it was a Game Management Area - an unsatisfactory category as far as we are concerned, since on Pearl, is the tiny Puffin colony among other things, worth preserving unmolested. We had noted Bon Portage for sale and were reassured at its purchase by Acadia University. We have held the line on McNab's Island, in Halifax Harbour, for years. Plans were afoot to locate an oil refinery on the north end of the island, and other plans were published, showing McNab's laid out as a city subdivision. The main part of the island had belonged to the Federal Government and when the Armed Forces were withdrawn in 1967, this land was given to Halifax and Dartmouth for "recreational purposes". We joined forces with several other interested groups to try to save the island from exploitation: drew up a Brief which R.A. Kanigsberg presented at the meeting of the Municipal Council, called to decide this issue, which meeting we attended en masse, to stand up and be counted. In this case our protests were effective, and McNab's has remained untouched ever since. On the other hand, no effort has been made to adapt it to its intended purpose - a recreational area. Recently rumours are afoot, that there are again plans for "development" under consideration, and the Bird Society is alerted for further action if needed. Meanwhile, Roger Pocklington has been conducting regular field trips to McNab's (as have representatives of other organizations). The island has much to offer, history, as well as natural history, particularly around the ruins of the old McNab estate, the romance of which has

** NSBS Newsletters Vol.15, No.3, 1973, Vol.16, No.1 & No.3, 1974, Vol.17, No.1, 1975.

been the subject of two excellent novels, one of them, Hangman's Beach by our own Tom Raddall.

We have supported the Regional Park System, suggested by the Department of Recreation; the mountain route for Highway 101; have objected to the wording of the famous Bill 63, supposed to give protection to beaches, but in reality, leaving too much to the discretion of too many; E.L. Mills prepared a Brief on the plans for Kejimikujik National Park, petitioning for limited use of snowmobiles, for one thing; and Eric Cooke recently prepared a Brief on Man and Resources for the Canadian Council of Environment, which he presented at the meeting at Province House.

We have protested against the shooting of Raptors, the shooting of Robins in blueberry pastures, the continued use of "Bounties", and the threat of oil pollution from digging on Sable Island.

Anne Linton and Paul Keddy brought in a first report on the Wreck Cove project; the Society's position on that remains equivocal. Fred Dobson has drawn up News Releases and letters to be sent to Federal and Nova Scotia Ministers of the Environment and the Nova Scotia Minister of Lands and Forests, raising serious questions about the possible effect of the Fundy Tidal Power development on migratory birds, and asking what research has been done - has received some assurance that studies have been made, but the whole project is at the moment in abeyance until the Maritime Energy Corporation is formed. We are holding "watching briefs" on Spruce Budworm spraying, also city street and roadside (herbicide) sprays. Ralph Widrig noted that many in his area believe all shorebirds to be Snipe, a game bird. It was suggested that we ask for a closed season on Snipe, but there were objections, so a poster was designed (by Tony Locke) of a Snipe, thousands printed and distributed to be displayed in as many public places as possible, as an educational aid.

At the request of concerned citizens, we have kept an eye on the LaHave Islands, but now hope for the best, since they have been obtained by Parks Canada. The Cole Harbor area in Halifax County, has been the object of a long and steady battle fought with our usual barrage of Representations Resolutions and Briefs, lately embellished by a folder prepared by Rosemary Eaton and Ralph Connor, containing appropriate information and some of their magnificent photographs in support of the Cole Harbor Park plan - which would include Flying Point. From the Dorothea Drive to Three Fathom Harbor (the famous "circuit", where so many of us cut our bird-watching teeth) we have fought every step of the way - and just lately it looks as if we would win a part of the battle. Ian McLaren tells us that our Nature Conservancy is about to preserve the Conrad's Beach area.

Much of the work on sanctuaries is done by members of the Trust Fund Board, at present, C.R.K. Allen (Chairman), L.B. Macpherson, B.K. Doane, W.J. Mills and Eric H. Cooke. Environmental issues are brought up by the Conservation Committee and/or members of the Executive, whose policy is to attempt always to have some positive input, not only to say "do not do that", but "do this". By 1978, our image had become so good that we were asked for an opinion on the necessity for a formal wetlands management policy by the Environmental Control Council; by the Regional Authority for Halifax-Dartmouth on protection of shorelines and beaches, and by the Canadian Government for input at the Stockholm Conference on World Environmental Planning.

At one point, considerable agitation arose about the role of the Nova Scotia Bird Society: should it widen its base and become an all-embracing naturalist society with a change in name as well as aim. Eric Mills, President at this time (1971), sent out a letter to all

Society members, asking for their opinions on the matter. There were 151 replies, 52 for the change, 91 against. It seemed best to shelve the idea for a while, at any rate. Since the recent formation of the Halifax Field Naturalists' Club and our close affiliation with it, there seems less need for a change in our organization - in most of our conservation efforts we have received support from (or given support to) the Field Naturalists, the Nova Scotia Resources Council, the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists, the Nova Scotia Wildlife Federation, sometimes the Ecology Action Centre.

Our Newsletter has gained some reputation internationally - is known to give (and have given) full and accurate reports of bird sightings at three or four seasons yearly, for the past twenty years. Since 1962, it has been the policy of the editors to present these reports and other news to the members in as readable a form as possible - "to try to strike a balance between the coyness of much nature writing and the dullness of most scientific writing" (as said of Alex. Wilson**). Long may this be the policy. We now have about one hundred reporters well distributed around the province and feel that this gives us a fair sampling of the bird population, season by season. We have sold complete files of the Newsletter to various individuals and institutions (one recently to the National Museum at Ottawa and one to the Nova Scotia Museum at Halifax), and we exchange publications with a dozen other societies and libraries. Primarily, of course, the Newsletter is for the members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, and has attained its present status by the regular and reliable participation of these members. Long, also, may this continue.

"Housekeeping" jobs take up most of the time and effort at Society meetings, as they should: when and where shall meetings be held (this path has lately been smoothed by the good management of Eric Cooke); what shall be the annual fee, and how much for a Life Membership (it was thanks to Chris Cohrs that this last was cleverly set at 30 times the annual fee); how shall we get enough money to pay for the Newsletter, which gets longer and longer - this has been a recurrent moan at many executive meetings - and has been met by solicited grants from the Nova Scotia Museum, generously forthcoming so far; It has also been a considerable help to receive tax exemption and a rebate, in 1978, this, the result of hard work on the part of our present Editor, J. Shirley Cohrs, L.L.B.; still, with inflation, dues had to have another hike, now (1979), \$6.00; shall we manage during the Postal Strike - with phones and buses; shall we buy our own typewriter - have sponged off others long enough - yes, in 1976, a Smith-Corona electric; but Ethel has resigned again - once from the position of Membership Secretary (which she held for sixteen years), now from official Newsletter typist - for the first time we must dig into our pockets to pay a typist; shall we divide the offices of Secretary and Treasurer - this was finally done at the Annual General Meeting on December 9, 1972, a move long overdue; should meetings be videotaped to send to other groups - no, not ready for that yet; can we set up a Rare Bird Alert - yes, there is now a Halifax number to call; we need new checklists, Roger Pocklington has updated them and Talbot's Bookshop has had them printed for us at cost - moreover, sells them in the store; the slide collection, worked on by many people was greatly helped on its way by Frank Himsl (first for his Wolf Cubs) and is now in the capable hands of Lise Cohrs, fifteen sets at the last report, ready for anyone who needs them; shall we buy sunflower seed in quantity at a lower price for distribution to members - this was possible in Halifax, thanks to the Cohrs, who used their garage as a warehouse for the three tons of seed ordered, until members could pick up each his own bag(s), (a similar, smaller operat-

** Words for Birds by Edward S. Gruson (Quadrangle Books: page 26.

ion was carried out in Yarmouth last year). This is a sampling of the sort of thing which has been dealt with month by month by the Bird Society Executive.

In the last ten years major achievements of the Nova Scotia Bird Society have included: (1) hosting the Canadian Nature Federation Conference held at Acadia University, the summer of 1973 - Hardy Moffatt was the co-ordinator of a large task force, and the visit was a complete success. That was also the first year (1973) for (2) our Museum display - set up at the request of the Nova Scotia Museum, and continued each year since. Heather Harbord and latterly Ralph Connor have produced a splendid display - there is talk of making it into a travelling show. (3) Roger Pocklington organized a Night School course for amateurs in ornithology in the Dartmouth schools, given in 1972-73, with attendance of twenty-five people each year, from among whom we got several new members. (4) The Christmas Bird Counts have been carried out every year since the Society was founded, at first co-ordinated by L.B. Macpherson, for many years, the last two by Ross and Mary Anderson. Twenty-eight counts were carried out in Nova Scotia by our members, Christmas 1978-79, reports of fourteen of these counts went to the American Birds international summary. (5) The Breeding Bird Survey was set up in the Province by A.J. Erskine, Canadian Wildlife Service and has been carried out substantially by the same "counters" for the last five to six years. We must try to keep it up a little longer, as Dr. Erskine says that seven years is minimum for valid comparisons in bird populations. (6) Way back in 1966, C.R.K. Allen started a Shorebird Post-breeding Migration study, but this was relinquished in 1974, when Canadian Wildlife Service took it over on a much more extensive scale (Maritime Shorebird Survey - Morrison). It is still in operation, manned by Bird Society members, with no definitive results as yet.

Puffin-of-the-Year Award was instituted by Eric Cooke the year he was President of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, 1972. A wood carving of the Common Puffin, in full breeding plumage is awarded each year for outstanding achievement, won so far by Phyllis Dobson, for editing the Newsletter for fourteen years, by H.P. Moffatt for hosting the Canadian Nature Conference in 1973, by Willett Mills for long service on the Executive, plus the Board of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund, and many other things, by Lloyd Macpherson, for editing the Christmas Counts for twenty-two years, to Ethel A. Crathorne for her work as Membership Secretary for sixteen years, to R. A. Kangisberg, for his work as Honorary Solicitor from 1961, until the present time, to C.R.K. Allen for his long years of executive service, plus his field trip work, and on countless other scores, and to Ian A. McLaren, again on countless scores: executive service, representation on the Canadian Nature Board, studies on Sable Island and other Nova Scotia areas, leadership of Field Trips etc..

(7) If there is any one thing of most importance to the Nova Scotia Bird Society, it is the Field Trip program. From the beginning it has been a chief concern of the executive to organize such trips in every part of the province, within reach of as many as possible of our members. There are local trips of course, for example, the early morning so-called "warbler walks", which have been carried out from the very beginning, both in the main Society (mostly by C.R.K. Allen) and later by the Cape Breton Branch - these must be organized locally for convenience, as are Roger Pocklington's expeditions to McNab's Island. Then there are the famous places, some of which have become a regular part of each year's program: the Hants County Trip the last of May, instituted by C.R.K. Allen, as a finale to the spring migration "walks", now carried on by Margaret Clark; Labor Day Week-end at Brier Island, chiefly co-ordinated by Ross Anderson and Eric Mills, but helped by many more; Thanksgiving trips to Seal Island, again the

responsibility divided among many - (there are spring trips to Seal and some in early fall, but October is apt to be most spectacular); approaching these places in frequency of choice are those made popular by, for example, Con Desplanque, at Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary, Jaques Pleau, at Cheticamp, Eric Cooke, around the "circuit", Peter Hope, at Kejimkujik, Harry Brennan, at Hopewell, Sid Smith and his family at Cape Sable, George Perry and his associates at Matthew's Lake, Sylvia Fullerton, at Broad Cove, the Cohrs at Crescent Beach, and now, Ted D'Eon, at Pubnico, and C.R.K. Allen at Tusket, in Yarmouth County.

Don and Joyce Purchase are the present co-ordinators of Field Trips for the Bird Society, and not only plan the program, but manage to attend most of the trips. They set up sixteen for 1979, four of them in Cape Breton - in our first year we had two expeditions, one to Mount Uniacke, the other to Evangeline Beach.

Field Trips are our fame and fortune - fame perhaps, fortuitous, since it parallels an increase of a worldwide interest in birds. We answer dozens of inquiries every year from people wishing to visit Nova Scotia in search of birds, who have heard of our Society, and at least two hotels have recently asked to be notified of the summer program of our Field Trips. By fortune is not meant riches (of money) but the good fortune of getting to know one another, and to become familiar with unexplored areas of our countryside, mostly very beautiful, and the birds to be found there. Some of us "loners" have had to admit that we learn faster in a group, and the oftener we meet our fellow birders, the more pleased we are to see them. People with special interests can be frightful bores to those outside of the group but are the best company in the world to one another.

Field Trips can be strenuous, but are good fun - not a negligible consideration these days - and whether one must explore the Piggery or clean beaches of Petite Riviere, there is always that thrill of expectation - Fork-tailed Flycatcher or Clapper Rail may turn up, and how much greater the pleasure if there are witnesses to share the find!!

Will you join me in thanks to those first founders of the Nova Scotia Bird Society? Yes, gentlemen, it was time.

Postscript: The above is a sketch of the life and times of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, 1955 to 1980, rather than a "history". For reference to the data contained in the sketch, and all other data for this period, see the four ring binders of Minutes of Executive and General meetings, plus documents and letters therein, and the Newsletter Volumes 1 to 21 inclusive. My apologies to my good friends not mentioned in the above story, many of them as deserving as those written-of, but space limitations prevented what might have amounted to mention of the complete roster of the Bird Society!

Phyllis R. Dobson

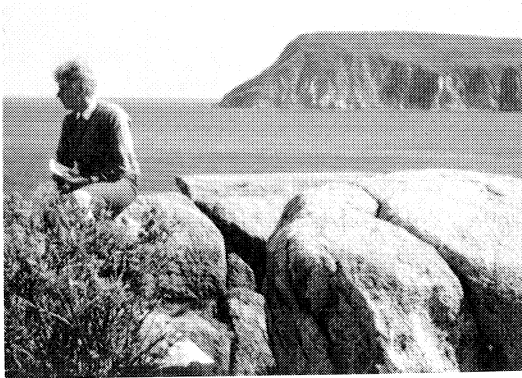
THE CAPE BRETON BRANCH

Sara MacLean

In case it should be thought that an interest in bird life awoke in a moment in Cape Breton, let us look back a few years.

In December of 1927, a young hunter crouched between the trees, in an opening of the forest that overlooked Morien Bay. He was waiting for a flight of ducks to pass so that he could pot a couple for next day's dinner. Suddenly, across the opening shot a small flock of birds of a kind he had never seen before. He fired at once, and brought down two of them. On examination, they proved to be some sort of plover, large of their kind, glossy greenish-black, with a white breast, and crowned with a handsome plume on top of the head. And that was the first known occurrence of the Lapwing in Cape Breton.

So, there were always people who took an interest in birds and had a deep curiosity about them. I remember as a child searching for birds' nests, and finding many too. I found where the Horned Larks nest; where they lay their eggs in boggy fields near the shore, so early that sometimes the nests are flooded with melt-water and the eggs are chilled or frozen.



*In the background Cape Smokey
-- in the foreground Mary Fraser
(photo Edie MacLeod)*

In 1945, the late Dr. Austin Cameron made the first Christmas Count on the island, in the Port Hood area. That was thirty-five years ago.

Some of us sent sporadic reports to the Nova Scotia Bird Society, but we felt as though we were wandering in the wilderness. People who knew and cared and could instruct use seemed to be far away and out of reach. But, in August of 1964, Rev. Ford Alward came to Glace Bay, and from then on things were very different. At that time Ford was a most active young man, quite dedicated to the study of birds, and happy to instruct anyone who would care to learn. Somehow or other he discovered kindred spirits and led us on many a wildgoose chase, in both a literal and figurative sense. Clearly do I recall a most interesting day, when a fairly large group, including a Newfoundland dog, walked through an abandoned farm, down along the shore, and out onto a muddy beach. We reached a little island where we ate our

lunch and watched the bird and animal life going on around us.

All was very pleasant until, on the way back, the mud beach proved to be quicksand, and gave way under a heavy birdwatcher. Ford, no mean weight himself, ran back and extracted her like a cork from a bottle, but her boots were left behind. The lighter people fished them up with sticks.

In the fall of 1964, Ford Alward invited a few people to a meeting at the parsonage, and we formed a nucleus, from which the Cape Breton branch of the Nova Scotia Bird Society hatched. As far as I can remember, the people at that meeting were: Ford Alward, Hedley Hopkins, Bob MacNeil, and myself, Sara MacLean. Soon afterward Wayne Neily joined us. So now we had two knowledgeable and dedicated instructors. We met most informally at the McConnell Library in Sydney, each time gathering a few new people, until in early 1966, the branch society was formally launched, with Hedley Hopkins as the first president. Other presidents were: Bob MacNeil, Betty Reid, Francis MacKinnon, John O'Connell, Edie MacLeod, Frank Robertson, Sara MacLean, Roy Blakeburn, Eldon Meikle. Some of these served for more than one term.

Ford Alward left the area in 1967, and Bob MacNeil, Wayne Neily, and John O'Connell, all active and valuable members, are now far away.

Perhaps spurred by his interest in the Bird Society, Frank Robertson began to write a column for the local paper, which he entitled "For the Birds". The activities of the Bird Society may wax and wane, but "For the Birds" never loses its charm for the public. At one time the paper, for some reason, left off publishing the piece for several weeks, and the editor confessed that he had more letters and calls inquiring about it than any other column had ever evoked.



HOMEVILLE 1978

Graham Fraser, Winnie Meikle, Davie Snow,
Mr. and Mrs. Otis Cossett, June Holm,
Bertha and Hedley Hopkins, Edie MacLeod

Sometimes we feel that we don't arouse enough interest, or at any rate, we don't seem to gather a great number of people who are keen enough to turn out on a cold winter's night to attend a meeting. However, our field trips seem to be enjoyed, and we hope they prove instructive. Every year many more people seem to be watching birds and offering food. Once a watcher asks that magic question "what bird is that?", he is hooked for life.

So, to conclude,--since beginning this little history of the Cape Breton branch of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, it seems clear that perhaps we don't need a whole slate of new officers every term, or a wall-to-wall crowd at all the meetings. As long as we keep up our field trips, which seem to be enjoyed, and as long as the new observers have someone available to ask the name of the bird in the backyard; how to feed and attract birds, and where to find a good book about all this, we shall survive and even give pleasure--which of course, is why we exist, isn't it?

CHRISTMAS COUNTS IN NOVA SCOTIA

Ross Anderson

The August 1956 issue of the Nova Scotia Museum of Science Newsletter, published the first N.S.B.S. Christmas Bird Counts. A total of seven counts were carried out in such diverse areas as Bedford, Country Harbour, Halifax, Peggy's Cove, Port Wallis, West Middle Sable and Wolfville. These were not the first counts organized in this province. We have to go back to the 23rd of December, 1913, when Harrison F. Lewis and E. Chesley Allen saw twelve species of birds on the first Yarmouth count. This count was repeated in December, 1914, and in December, 1915. Robie Tufts joined them by initiating the Wolfville count. The Wolfville count was repeated again in 1920, and published in Bird Lore, as were the previous counts.

The next publication to carry Nova Scotia Christmas Counts was the Canadian Field Naturalist, which had the December, 1935, count from Wolfville. Over the next fifteen years, Christmas Bird Counts flourished in the province with a high of five counts being carried out in December, 1945 and 1946. In December 1947, counts started dwindling in the province, until our own Newsletter started its reporting of counts in August, 1956. The highest number of counts ever carried out in the province was thirty-two in December 1976, our average over the ten years is around 26-30 counts a year.

The number of species seen on counts in the province has slowly increased from the first count in 1913, which saw only twelve species, to a high which was established in December 1976, of 141 species. It took forty-seven years for the century mark (100 species) to be counted in the province, that occurred on the December 1960 count. Over the past ten years we have averaged around 125 species. Maybe some time in the future with a warm, late fall and an above average number of counts, we might break the 150 level.

The number of individual birds seen on the 1978 Christmas Count was 168,047, which established a new all-time high for the province. The first time the 100,00 barrier was broken occurred in December 1973 and except for December 1975, when 78,889 birds were counted, each succeeding year has established a new record. If everyone in our Society participated in a count, the 200,000 mark would soon fall by the wayside.

The highest individual count of species ever carried out in the province on a Christmas Bird Count, belongs to the Halifax East count of December 18, 1976, when the participants saw 92 species, plus one additional rare. This will be a hard figure to surpass, but sometime in the future, some well organized Southwestern Nova Scotia count will do it.

In December 1978, the Brier Island count totaled 52,165 birds (48,000 of them being Kittiwakes) establishing a new record for the number of birds seen in the province on an individual Christmas Count. Another tough nut to crack, but it can be done.

At the end of the 1978 Christmas Count, our species list stood at 190 species, plus 3 additional rares. I feel that with the calibre of birders that we have in this province, that it will not take us too long to pass the 200 milestone.

The Yarmouth count was started by only two people. On our last count over 200 observers took part. We have come a long way in a very short period of time.



Doing the list at Broad Cove, Christmas Count,
December 31, 1977.

Unidentified leg with superior socks, Shirley
Cohrs, Sylvia Fullerton, Eric Cooke and a glimpse
of Ian McLaren (Photo John Cohrs)

CHANGES IN BIRD POPULATIONS IN NOVA SCOTIA

by R. W. Tufts

In response to a request for information regarding changes in the populations of birds which I have noted during the long period of my field observations, the following is submitted.

My interest in birds was awakened in early boyhood. It began by following in the footsteps of a much admired older brother. I recall, among other things, he used to keep records of his field experiences; a habit which I followed. My interest progressed rapidly during the ensuing years, twenty-eight of which, as Migratory Birds Officer for the Maritime Provinces - 1919 - 1947 - were spent mostly in the wide open spaces.

The changes which I am about to recount were brought about or were influenced by a variety of causes, some more productive than others. As I see it they are:

1. "Man and his works". (This covers a multiplicity of his destructive agencies)
2. Natural extension of breeding range.
3. Interference by competitive and more aggressive species.
4. Lack of normally available food supplies due to natural phenomenon.
5. Introduced species.
6. Enforcement of protective legislation, or lack of it.
7. Natural phenomenon not understood.

The numerals in parentheses, which precede each species relate to the foregoing.

(1) LOON

Prior to the late 1940's, or thereabout, it would be no exaggeration to say that practically every large or medium-sized lake in the hinterlands of Nova Scotia was the summer home of at least one pair of loons. Such is not the case today. They have been driven off by the hordes of summer cottagers which in recent decades have flocked to our lake shores. Practically all of them operate motor-boats of varying sorts, all of which tends to make life intolerable for the loons. There may be other factors less obvious, related to the poison-contaminated fish which the loons ingest. In other words, the loon population is down because of "Man and His Works".

(7) CATTLE EGRET

Unknown in Nova Scotia prior to 1957, the incident of one which suddenly appeared at East Sable, (Shelburne County) in November of that year, caused quite a stir among our birders. Since then, Cattle Egrets have been coming here with increasing frequency and now it might be considered 'rare' to 'uncommon'. Originally domiciled only in the Old World a number of them miraculously crossed the Atlantic from Africa, arriving in Surinam, South America. That happened about 1877. Since then their spread northward has been quite spectacular.

(4) BRANT

These birds occurred here in normal numbers during migration until the fall of 1931, when a severe population loss became apparent. It resulted from a strange disease or blight which destroyed the eel-

grass along this marine-plant's entire Atlantic coast range. Eel-grass is the Brant's main source of food and the birds became so alarmingly scarce that year-round protection was afforded them in both Canada and the United States. The federal authorities in Canada, in a desperate effort to remedy the situation, imported Pacific eel-grass plants, but before the results of their experiment were known, the native plant began to recover and in due course became normal, so did the Brant population. Incidentally, a scientific study was undertaken in order to determine the nature of the disease, but I believe the effort was fruitless.

(5) MALLARD

During the period under review and prior to about the 1930's this duck was recorded here with such infrequency as to be considered rare if not accidental. About that time a number of rather large-scale attempts were made by sportsmen to introduce mallards, having been prompted by a desire to improve their hunting chances. Though the birds bred successfully in the wild and are now still fairly common in the general area of their release, the expectations of those responsible for their importation have not been wholly met. This because imported wild Mallards show a marked tendency to become domesticated. In other words, they are not adaptable to their new enforced habitat.

(2) RING-NECKED DUCK

The occurrence of this duck in Nova Scotia was first brought to my attention in 1935. In the fall of that year I received by mail a duck's wing that was taken from a bird that had been shot at Port Joli (Queens County). I was unable to identify it and it was forwarded to the Museum in Ottawa. It proved to be that of a Ring-necked Duck. During the years immediately following, I began to find these ducks breeding quite commonly in marshy-margined ponds and swales in widely separated areas. I consider the foregoing to be a typical example of range extension.

(2) ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK

Prior to the winter of 1899-1900, I had never seen a Rough-legged Hawk. That winter they suddenly appeared on the Grand Pre' meadows (Kings County), in numbers which might have ranged between 40 and 50. Our local taxidermist at that time, D. R. Munro, shot and mounted a dozen or more because of their rarity and attractive appearance. (at that period in time all large hawks were commonly called "hen-hawks", and as such were thought to be 'bad birds', to be killed when opportunity was given) These hawks were probably attracted to this low-lying meadow by an over-population of field mice. Following that winter, my records indicate that Rough-legs were rare or absent on the Grand Pre' meadows until the winter of 1951-1952. Since then they have come to this area in small numbers with more or less regularity in winter.

(1) PEREGRINE FALCON

This bird was always uncommon in Nova Scotia but it did breed here regularly and successfully for many years on at least two cliff-sides known to me. These eries were abandoned early in the 1960's, and Peregrines appear here now only as rare transients. This downward trend in their numbers is general throughout most of their range in North America and is attributable, indirectly to man's use of poison sprays, details of which have been widely publicised.

(5) COMMON PHEASANT

After several much earlier attempts to introduce this bird to our countrysides, all of which met with limited success or outright failure, the feat was finally accomplished in 1935. In the summer of that year, the local branch of the Nova Scotia Fish and Game Association released somewhat less than 100 young birds in the farming areas of Kings County. Later on the Nova Scotia Government introduced additional birds over wider areas. But the pheasants have thrived best in the Annapolis Valley, particularly in Kings County. Extensive acreage of silage corn plantings in recent years throughout the Valley have been a boon to the pheasants, whose numbers are now (1979) considered to be at an all time high.

(5) GRAY (HUNGARIAN) PARTRIDGE

The story of the introduction of the Hungarian Partridge is very similar to that of the preceding species. A release of about 50 adult birds in the Canard area of Kings County was made in March, 1934. These birds were imported from England by the Kings County Fish and Game Association. The species is now (1979) firmly established throughout Kings County and to a lesser degree in some other parts of the Province.

(2) KILLDEER

Here is another clear-cut example of range extension. In the early days of the period under review, the sight of a Killdeer was a noteworthy incident. Their increase was gradual, but steady, the first nesting having been recorded in 1954, in Colchester County. Now (1979), the Killdeer has become a fairly common bird with a wide breeding range.

(1) WOODCOCK

My opinion that this bird has decreased in numbers in recent decades is well based. For forty years, 1925 to 1965, I was an ardent woodcock hunter; one who kept meticulous and detailed records at the end of each day's hunt. These compilations are still extant and valued. They indicate that Woodcock began to slip rather sharply in the early 1940's. Opinions given me by other Woodcock enthusiasts in late years tend to substantiate mine. Over-shooting throughout this bird's restricted range is probably the main cause but there are others, which are contributory. It is my sincere hope that the powers that be will soon take action that will lead to the prohibition of all Woodcock hunting in both Canada and the United States.

(7) WILLET

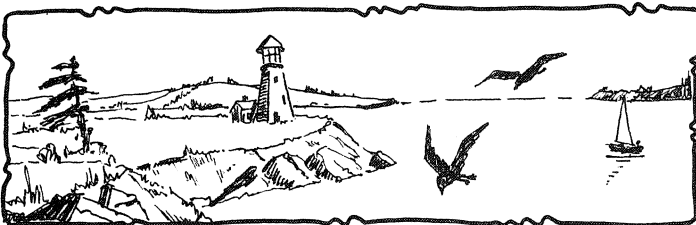
The population change of Willets which has taken place in Nova Scotia during the past forty years, more or less, is pleasing to say the least. I first became acquainted with this bird in 1920, in Digby County. At that time their distribution in Nova Scotia was confined to Digby, Yarmouth and Shelburne Counties, throughout which range, they were common in summer. Early in the 1930's they began to spread gradually, but steadily over the rest of the Province, and by 1951, they had reached Cape Breton. Now (1979), the species appears to be well established in suitable habitat, all over the Province and doing well.

(2) MOURNING DOVE

My earliest record of this bird dates back to October, 1896, when one was shot by a duck hunter on the Grand Pre' meadows. The specimen was highly prized as an outstanding rarity. The next record of a Mourning Dove came from Halifax, where one was seen in 1907, flying over the 'Wanderer's Athletic Field'. No more doves were encountered until 1910, when one was seen on January 20, near White Rock, Kings County. It was feeding among a patch of weeds on the snow. My notes indicate that from then on, Mourning Doves were being reported with increasing frequency. However, it was not until 1940, that a pair, apparently mated, gave an indication that they might be breeding here. That this surmise was correct, was proven by Cyril Coldwell, who saw two well-fledged young on July 12, 1964, closely following their parents in his orchard at Gaspereau, Kings County. By this time Mourning Doves were being seen commonly, in winter as well as in summer, but no nest was discovered until 1979, when on June 16, Mrs. Walter Urban found a dove sitting on a nest which held two half-grown squabs, near her home in Avonport, Kings County. Evidence that Mourning Doves have long breeding seasons is provided by Mrs. Urban's discovery of one sitting on two eggs in this nest as late as September 28, of that year.

(6) HERRING GULL

The increase in the Herring Gull population has been gradual, but sustained. I find among my early records, one which says that Herring Gulls are common in summer, but rather rare in winter. That may well have applied to the local situation only. It referred to the early 1900's. For many years the species has been abundant along coastal areas throughout the year. This has been brought about by a variety of causes, notably a more staple source of food, such as that made available at city and town garbage depositories, where they congregate especially during the 'lean' months. But there is another factor, which may well be pertinent. Gulls were once killed for the commercial value of their feathers. They were given year 'round protection in 1916, under the terms of the international Migratory Birds Treaty. Herring Gulls are now so over-abundant that in some areas they constitute a serious threat to the survival of other sea birds by preying on their eggs and nestlings. This has become so serious that many thousands of gulls' eggs are destroyed annually under Government supervision. The foregoing is applicable to the Great Black-backed Gull, but perhaps to a lesser degree.



(7) OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER

Originally this bird was a common summer resident in the Annapolis Valley, being found in settled districts as well as in forested ones. Since the early 1940's, its numbers have decreased notably, particularly in the areas close to settlement where, according to my field notes, it is now absent. The foregoing is believed to apply to other members of the flycater group, though to a lesser degree.

(3) EASTERN BLUEBIRD

My early records of this bird make rather interesting reading. Though I have them listed as 'rare and irregular' as far back as 1902, they were seen with increasing frequency until the late 1920's, and I can recall that it was not unusual to find them nesting. Since the late forties, however, these birds have become alarmingly scarce, and now (1979), a Bluebird is seldom reported. I'm sure it has been at least twenty years since I have seen one. While other factors may be involved the main cause of the scarcity of Bluebirds is linked with the upward surge in the Starling population, which began in the late 1930's. Bluebirds nest in cavities in trees. So do Starlings. Such nesting sites are at a premium and the more aggressive Starlings have successfully competed with the Bluebirds to the extent that they have finally 'driven them to the wall'.

(2) EVENING GROSBEAK

We have here another example of range extension. Evening Grosbeaks were unrecorded in Nova Scotia prior to 1913. In March of that year, the late Harrison Lewis reported having seen a small flock in Truro. Formerly restricted to north-western regions of Canada, the species is now well established here as a breeding bird throughout much of the eastern coastal areas, though no actual nest of an Evening Grosbeak has yet (1979) been recorded in Nova Scotia.

(5) STARLING

This bird was introduced in the United States about 1890. Its spread is said to have been very gradual for some ten years or longer. It reached Nova Scotia in 1913 at Dartmouth. This record is believed to have been the first for Canada. Since the 1930's and '40's their increase over the continent has been spectacular and they are now rated as being the most abundant bird species in North America.

{2} RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

This bird was first recorded in Kings County in December, 1899, when my brother collected one from a small flock on the Grand Pre' meadows. The specimen was highly prized as an outstanding rarity. More recently I have learned that Red-wings have long been abundant in summer on the Amherst marshlands where they feed extensively on wild-rice. Though not realized at the time, their arrival on the Grand Pre' meadows, was merely an example of a short range extension. By the time they became common in the Annapolis Valley, they had not reached Yarmouth County and I am under the impression that Red-wings are still rare there.

(2) COMMON GRACKLE

According to my field notes this bird reached Nova Scotia during the late 1890's. I first recorded one on May 3, 1896. I recall wanting to collect, but May 3rd was on Sunday that year and my father would not permit the use of firearms on the Sabbath. The following Spring, two were seen here on April 11, one of which was taken for my

collection, where it erroneously bore the label "Purple Grackle" for several years. Within a few years, ten to fifteen, grackles were seen regularly and with increasing frequency.

(2) BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD

On April 17, 1922, I collected a male Cowbird at Kingston, for the Provincial Museum. According to my records, it was a "first" for the Province. Individuals were seen near Wolfville, on September 27, 1923, and in May, 1924. During June, 1928, three were seen in Yarmouth County. The foregoing were all summer records. It was not until 1950, that a winter Cowbird was reported. It was seen in Wedgeport, Yarmouth County. At that period a winter Cowbird was noteworthy. Since those times, Cowbirds have become common and widely dispersed over the Province, being seen more commonly in winter than in summer.

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In addition to the foregoing, there is a fairly large number of species which in the early days were either unknown or were considered rarities, but which in recent times are being recorded with greater frequency. That this is because the species in question are gradually extending their range, is possible, but to me it seems far more likely that, in most cases at least, these apparent increases may not be actual, but are due to the recordings of qualified observers whose numbers have markedly increased in Nova Scotia during recent years. In other words, these "rarities" have been here all along, but were missed by us old-timers whose field coverage was understandably limited. The following are typical of those which seem to fit in this category: American Coot, Clapper Rail, Prairie Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Yellow-throated Vireo, White-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Short-billed Marsh Wren, Blue Grosbeak, Rough-winged Swallow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, Cardinal, etcetera.

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C.R.K. Allen and Ernest Jansen contemplate a real puzzler at Homeville, May, 1964.

(Photo Ward Hemeon)

BIRDS OF MARSH AND SHORE

Sylvia J. Fullerton

Shorebirds have always exercised a particular fascination for many of us, perhaps for a variety of reasons. Primarily, I think, because more than any other group of birds, they symbolize a freedom and elusiveness which catches our imagination. We are intrigued by the element of mystery in their migratory story, the unexplained gaps in our understanding of their ability to orientate and navigate over long distances from the Arctic to South America. We wonder too, at the energy packed into relatively small bodies which enable such long flights to be made. And lastly perhaps we are drawn to shorebirds simply because of the pleasure we derive from the beauty of their forms against the background of shore and marsh.

Whatever the reason for our partiality it is an added bonus to be able to contribute to a further understanding of their life history and perhaps to help in some small way to protect their threatened environment. Members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society who take part in the Canadian Wildlife Service's Maritime Shorebird Survey have been able to do just this. This scheme, under the direction of Dr. R. I. Guy Morrison, began in 1974 and has as its aim the "objective of identifying and documenting areas of major importance to shorebirds in the Maritime Provinces". The goal is to expand this survey on an international level and a number of sites are also being surveyed in the eastern United States, the Caribbean and Central and South America. It is hoped that with the aid of both public and private organizations in the countries concerned, moves can be made to protect the birds and their coastal habitats from various threats and encroachments. In the Maritimes, for example, the identification of resting and feeding areas used by shorebirds will be used in assessing effects on these areas of developments such as the Fundy Tidal Power proposals.

The actual surveys are carried out on every other weekend from mid-July to mid-October. Each volunteer is asked to cover a well-defined area and to make direct counts or estimates, if the numbers are large. Counts are made in a consistent manner either at half-tide, when birds are feeding or near high tide when they are roosting. Weather, tidal data and other conditions affecting counts are also recorded. Thirty-five major sites were surveyed in 1978, most of them by members of this Society. A total of 35 species are being studied.

So far the surveys have given a good picture of shorebird migration throughout the Maritime Provinces and have shown some interesting results. Supported by Dr. Morrison's banding and colour-marking operations over a wide section of the James Bay area together with local ariel surveys, he has been able to show that Maritime estuaries are indeed very important stopover areas for feeding and resting before the birds set off for their non-stop flight to South America. A good food supply, particularly of intertidal invertebrates, coupled with adjacent roosting areas appear to be the most important factors influencing shorebird distribution in our area.

As well, Dr. Morrison has been able to show that migration strategies and routes used vary from species to species. The most numerous species is the Semipalmated Sandpiper. Concentrations have been as high as 350,000 at St. Mary's Point in the Upper Bay of Fundy. Other species of shorebirds such as the Red Knot, Piping Plover and Hudsonian Godwit are birds whose numbers are shown to be alarmingly low. These birds are specialized in their habitat and food requirements and very sensitive to disturbance. Identification of the areas these species use, even for a few weeks each year, is of critical importance for their survival.

In comparison with the most important sites at St. Mary's Point in the Upper Bay of Fundy and John Lusby Marsh in the Cumberland Basin, where numbers and species counts are the highest, areas along the Atlantic coast, such as Matthew's Lake, Lawrencetown, Cape Sable, Crescent Beach and Cherry Hill are shown to have only moderate numbers but are unique in that they are visited by a wide variety of species.

These are a few of the results which form the basis for identifying the limited number of coastal sites of major international importance for shorebirds. And those of us who are refreshed by viewing these birds each fall are in debt to Dr. Morrison and his associates for their enthusiastic and dedicated work in attempting to ensure the future conservation of these unique creatures.

With acknowledgement to Dr. Morrison from whose reports most of the above was taken.

Morrison, R. I. G., 1979. Maritimes Shorebird Survey 1978. Preliminary report. Ottawa, Canadian Wildlife Service.

Morrison, R. I. G. & Harrington, B. A. 1979. Critical shorebird resources in James Bay and Eastern North America. North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. 44th, Toronto, 1979. Transactions. p. 498-507.



The Last Mile! Evangeline Beach, July 27, 1968.

Wayne Neily, Sylvia Fullerton, Phyllis Dobson
(Photo Ward Hemeon)

THE HISTORY
OF THE
SANCTUARY AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND
C. R. K. Allen

The birth of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund of the Nova Scotia Bird Society was not any easy one, but thanks to the gift-ed midwifery of Honorary Solicitor "Bob" Kanigsberg, it was accomplished in March, 1969.

The paternity of this infant body was in some doubt, but rumors pointed to a respected charter member of the parent society, one Willett J. Mills, whose close association with its financial affairs gave him both opportunity and inclination.

The facts are, that the Nova Scotia Bird Society, early in its life, became the owner by purchase of Hertford, one of the two Bird Islands in Baie Ste. Anne, Cape Breton, and shortly thereafter acquired by lease, five islands off Harrigan Cove, Halifax County, which supported breeding populations of Leach's Storm Petrels, Common Eiders Black Guillemots and Double-crested Cormorants.

As a property owner, the Society found itself with certain responsibilities on its hands: the erection of signs, payment of warden's fees and municipal taxes, all of which put a strain on its already slim exchequer.

Except for membership dues, the only source of revenue was donations, and these were few and far between - they could not be claimed as exemptions from income tax since the Bird Society did not qualify as a charitable organization. The Executive set about rectifying this situation by the establishment of a trust fund whose aims would qualify it for acceptance by the Taxation Division of the Department of Internal Revenue as a charitable institution.

There followed rather a lengthy correspondence between our Honorary Solicitor and the bureaucrats in Ottawa, but the affair was finally resolved, and the Society's application accepted.

What might be called the birth certificate of the infant Trust Fund, was the resolution passed at a meeting of the parent Bird Society held March 28, 1969, the substance of which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Nova Scotia Bird Society...is desirous of creating a Trust Fund for the purpose of acquiring and maintaining sanctuaries; to provide scholarship assistance to students in the field of Ornithology; to support research on birds and their environment on a non-profit basis,

"And Whereas it is desirable to create such a Trust independent of the normal objects of the Nova Scotia Bird Society,

"Be It Resolved as follows:

(a) That the (N.S.B.S.) hereby creates an independent Trust Fund to be known as the Nova Scotia Sanctuary Trust,

(b) That (this) be managed by an independent group of persons selected by the Executors...for five years and to consist of at least three persons with powers to add".

The trustees appointed at this meeting were C.R.K. Allen (Chairman), Willett J. Mills (Treasurer) and Dr. L. B. Macpherson.

The newly appointed Trust - which somehow added the word "Sanctuary" to its full title - did not have long to wait for its first assignment. The Henrys, David and Marie, of Upper Wedgeport, had been carrying out for a number of years, a banding program on a group of

small islands in the lower Tusket River estuary. These were called locally the Bald Tusket Islands, and they supported breeding colonies of Common, Arctic and Roseate Terns, plus large numbers of Leach's Storm Petrels and a fair population of Black Guillemots.

This little archipelago was one of the last strongholds in Nova Scotia for breeding seabirds and the Henrys recommended that the Trustees consider acquiring the group while there was still time. The recommendation was acted upon at once and in May, 1971, the deeds were signed and Mossy Bald, Middle Bald and Little Half Bald Islands became the property of the Trust.

This transaction was scarcely completed when word came that a fourth island in the group might soon be available. This was Outer Bald Island and as its name implies, was the most seaward of the cluster. It had the distinction of boasting the only house on the islands, and also the doubtful distinction of having won the unfavorable notice of an Iron Curtain newspaper.

Outer Bald had been bought some years previously by an American sportsman, Russel Arundel, during the heyday of tuna-fishing in southwestern Nova Scotia waters - where Soldier's Rip was labelled the "Greatest Fishing Hole in the World". A house solidly built of beach stones was erected on the island, and served as a haven for anglers whose stomachs were not able to cope with the pitch and toss of the Rip when wind bucked the tide.

Once in possession of the island, Arundel and his friends, tongues in cheeks, announced to the world the creation of an independent state to be known as the Principality of Outer Baldonia. They appointed civil and military officials, drew up a code of laws and even produced their own money and postage stamps - choice collectors' items to-day.

Word of this startling development on the international scene spread far and quickly, reaching even behind the Iron Curtain, where it was pounced upon by Soviet newspapers who issued a scathing denouncement of this latest evidence of capitalist imperialism. Nothing daunted, Outer Baldonia severed diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. No more was heard of the affair and one can presume that that the Soviet newspapers lapsed into red-faced silence.

A few years later the blue-fin tuna moved to other waters, followed by the anglers. Outer Bald was left to its birds and resident flock of sheep; the roof of the angler's refuge collapsed but the walls still remain standing, sound as the day they were built.

In 1971, Mr. Arundel, having no further use for the island, began negotiations which resulted in its being conveyed to the Nature Conservancy of the U.S.A. "subject to the conditions that the rookeries of Forster's Tern (sic) on said island shall be forever kept as a sanctuary for said terns and shall not in any way be disturbed. Said sanctuary to be known as a memorial to Earle E. Arundel, brother to Russell Arundel".

Since Outer Bald was in Canadian waters, the U.S. Conservancy asked its Canadian counterpart to take over ownership and management and to delegate this to some appropriate body. Thus in 1974 Outer Bald was deeded to the Nova Scotia Bird Society who immediately passed it over to the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust.

The trustees then found themselves responsible for a considerable parcel of island real estate; Hertford in Ste. Anne's Baie, the five Eastern Shore Bird Islands, and now, four Tusket Islands. Intermit- tent attempts were made during the next year or two to add Ciboux,

sister island of Hertford to the collection, but its owners clung to it like limpets despite all efforts to dislodge them. Recently however, the provincial government has acquired Ciboux as a part of its program of setting up wildlife study areas, thus assuring the continued safety of its seabird colonies.

In April 1977, Marie Henry, keen birder, ardent conservationist and principal sponsor in the acquisition of the Tusket Islands Sanctuary, died in Yarmouth. To perpetuate her memory friends set up a fund in her name, the purpose of which was to support research on seabird colonies and to contribute towards the purchase and upkeep of island sanctuaries in Nova Scotia. This fund is administered as a separate part of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust; the islands, Middle, Mossy and Little Half Bald have been given the name, The Marie Henry Breeding Bird Sanctuary and signs so identifying them have been erected on each one.

Later in 1977, the holdings of the Trust were substantially reduced - the Department of Lands and Forests began a program in which it set aside certain coastal islands for wildlife management. It asked the Trust to relinquish its lease on the Eastern Shore Bird Islands, so that they might be included in this program, which was accordingly done.

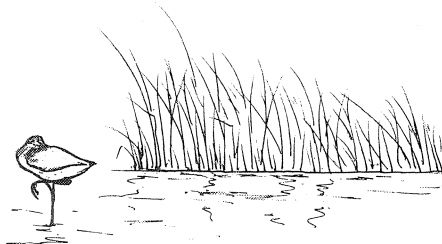
Meanwhile the coffers of the Fund had been filling slowly, but steadily; the financial statement for 1977 showed a balance of \$5,999.99; in 1978, donations including early contributions to the Marie Henry Fund, brought this up to \$7,947.39. In the past year the balance has more than doubled now standing at \$19,246.78. This large increase is for the most part due to two donations: one made by John and Shirley Cohrs, as a preliminary gift from the estate of their son Chris, who was one of our most enthusiastic and knowledgeable birders; as the other from our solicitor "Bob" Kanigsberg, given in memory of his wife Margo, which is for the purpose of promoting interest in bird study among young people.

It need hardly be said that this increase in assets means a broadening in the Trust's potential activities and an added responsibility to see that such funds do not lie idle, but are wisely used.

The Trustees hope to sponsor this coming summer a survey of islands and mainland areas in southwest Nova Scotia, which may need protection; and will welcome suggestions regarding other locations.

The acreage of suitable natural habitat in the province is shrinking every year and with soaring prices, the buying power of our dollars is doing likewise.

The time for action is all too short.





Colchester County Trip, June 30, 1962
 L to R: Phyllis Dobson, Ward Hemeon, Doug
 Godsoe, Lloyd Macpherson, Charlie Allen,
 Cecily Tod, Ethel Crathorne, Mary Kenny,
 Gertrude Gilbert (Photo Phyllis Hemeon)



A Damp Trip to Hopewell! May, 1973.

Ross and Mary Anderson, Fran Cook, Harry
 Brennan, Ethel Crathorne, Frank Himsl, Shirley
 Brothers, Phyllis Hemeon. (Photo Ward Hemeon)

THE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY IN NOVA SCOTIA

Anthony J. Erskine

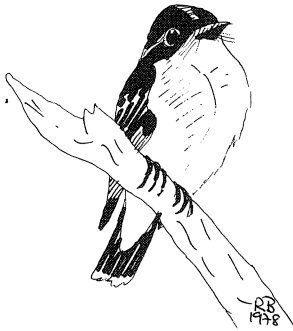
In 1980, the 25th year of the Nova Scotia Bird Society (NSBS), the co-operative Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) will be completing 15 years of surveys, as it became operational in 1966. It was started by Chandler S. Robbins of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a means of detecting and measuring trends in numbers of birds, especially the small land birds which earlier had tended to be neglected as being neither of interest to hunters nor obviously vulnerable to toxic chemicals. The method had been previously used for obtaining index counts of various game birds: the drumming of grouse, crowing of pheasants, cooing of doves, and peenting of woodcock, all had been assessed by stopping a car at regular intervals along a road, and counting birds heard during a predetermined time at each stop. By selecting starting points at random - rather than in anyone's pet birding area - the results were amenable to statistical treatment. The procedure established in Chan Robbins' 1965 pilot project in Maryland has been used ever since: each randomly selected route is surveyed once a year, in June, in good weather, starting 30 minutes before local sunrise; 50 stops (including the starting point) of 3 minutes each at one-half mile intervals, make up the observation schedule for a survey. One person makes all the observations, although others often assist by recording data, timing the stops, or driving the car. Only surveys made by the same observer, under comparable conditions of weather and date, are included in comparisons between any pair of years. The results are assembled in Ottawa and in Maryland for analysis, which usually involves grouping of data. In the Canadian analyses, the Nova Scotia data are combined with those from the other Maritime Provinces (but not Newfoundland).

From 1966, to the present, 24 BBS routes have been surveyed in Nova Scotia, the number covered per year varying from 23 in 1972, down to only 14 in 1976. The basic sampling unit is the degree-block of latitude-longitude, but owing to the irregular coastline partial blocks had to be combined into sampling units of roughly the same size. All counties are sampled by one or more routes, except Pictou and Yarmouth - no slight intended, it just happened by random selection. Intuitively, it seems likely that the habitats in Pictou County are adequately represented by routes in adjoining counties (Tatamagouche, Trafalgar, James River), but the temperate forest element of Yarmouth County is less well covered off by adjoining routes (Digby Neck, Kejimikujik, Shelburne, and Barrington). Still, the overall differences in the common birds of different parts of Nova Scotia are not very great, and scarce elements are not sampled in sufficient numbers to provide reliable trend data anyway.

Most of the observers in this province have been Nova Scotia Bird Society members. Many people drive 100 miles or more to survey distant routes year after year. The Halifax group has been especially faithful; besides the Halifax County routes, Haligonians also routinely cover all three routes in Guysborough County and others starting in Cumberland, Lunenburg, Queens, and Shelburne Counties. At least 46 different people have acted as observers on Nova Scotia routes, and with their assistants, the total number of persons involved over the years in this province must approach 100. There has been considerable turnover owing to people moving, and the long span of time is also reflected by various people having retired - although only one former observer, the late Capt. Tom Morland, has passed away. Not one of the original 1966 observers surveyed a Nova Scotia route in 1979, although Wayne Neily did one in Manitoba and I did routes in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Most of the more experienced NSBS members have taken part at some time, and a listing of observers includes various past presidents, past and present editors, and assorted executive

members, besides many of the names that come up year after year as contributing observations in the season reports. I did five routes in Nova Scotia in 1966, but all of these have since been taken over by more effective observers. The Bird Society has made the BBS go in Nova Scotia.

In highlighting what was accomplished by the BBS in Nova Scotia, I must emphasize that the data have never been worked up separately for this province, although it is a more natural biological unit than most provinces. One of the first things that emerged from the results was that the average route in Nova Scotia produced fewer both of species and of individual birds than the average route in New Brunswick, although more than on Prince Edward Island. Many Nova Scotians tend to think of bird lists in terms of the vagrants that accumulate at the ends of capes and on offshore islets, with which their province is well endowed, rather than the generally common species. But Nova Scotia is close to being an island, and islands typically support fewer species of animals than comparable areas of a continent. Later, when we looked at data from across the continent, it turned out that New Brunswick averaged more species per BBS route than almost any other part of North America, and 97 species on the Hampton route a few years back was the highest number ever recorded on one survey. Most Maritime routes include forests, farmland, edge, and water, with extensive monocultures being the exception, so the high variety of species is not surprising. Comparisons within Nova Scotia are less reliable, since at the level of the individual route, differences in the abilities of observers to detect birds by sound or sight may outweigh variations in densities of birds. A "good" observer will often record half again as many individual birds as one who is merely "competent", say 900 vs. 600 birds, while a "super-observer" - and we have several - may come up with 1200 or more birds per survey. Differences in numbers of species are less dramatic, with competent observers detecting 50-60 species compared to 60-70 for good and 70-80 for super-observers. Generally, the intensively farmed floor of the Annapolis Valley and the scrub and barrens of the Atlantic coast produce fewer species than average, while the rich hardwoods and mixed farmland of the centre of the province produce more than average.



The BBS also provides convenient indices to distribution of individual bird species over extensive areas. Nova Scotia is not really large enough for this kind of general comparison, but a few apparent range extensions have emerged from the results. The establishment of Fox Sparrows as a breeding species in northern Cape Breton Island took place shortly before the BBS began, and the 1966 and 1967 surveys of the Cape North and Pleasant Bay routes helped to show that the first records were not merely casual occurrences (cf. A. J. Erskine, NSBSN 10: 128-130, 1968). Chestnut-sided Warblers were first reported on

Cape Breton Island in 1968 (W.P. Neily, NSBSN 10: 116, 1968; and pers. obs. - on Mabou BBS) and have been noted since then on several routes. The most extensive advance, however, is of the Veery, which through 1961 was virtually unreported east of Kings County (R.W. Tufts, The Birds of Nova Scotia, 1962). I found them near Mattatall Lake, Colchester Co., on the Tatamagouche BBS in 1966, and they have been noted there regularly since. More recently they have also been detected on the Trafalgar BBS in Guysborough Co. (Barbara Hinds) and on the Cape North route in Victoria Co. (Simon Lunn, Roger Burrows). Probably they can now also be found in other rich hardwood sites in Pictou, Antigonish, and Inverness Counties, where I detected none during my regular trips through 1968.

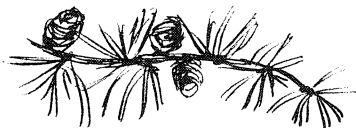
Short and long term trends may be derived from BBS data, but with small samples the reliability of such trends is low. Generally it is necessary to compare samples of 20 or more BBS routes, covered in comparable conditions in successive years, to achieve a reasonable level of confidence in the results. The Nova Scotia data have been analysed for trends only as part of the Maritimes sample (cf. A.J. Erskine, The first ten years of the cooperative Breeding Bird Survey in Canada. CWS Rpt. Ser. no. 42, 1978). Changes resulting from climate, particularly the declines in insectivorous species after the very cold springs of 1967 and 1974, with subsequent recovery, however, are obscured owing to the apparent long term recovery of bird populations in New Brunswick from the effects of DDT spraying against spruce budworm in 1952-67; so we cannot assume that the graphs for trends in the Maritimes reflect the situation in Nova Scotia very precisely. The sustained declines suggested for a few species (Erskine, ibid., Fig.7) presumably apply in Nova Scotia as well as throughout the Maritimes, as does the upward trend in Red-winged Blackbird numbers (Erskine, ibid., Fig.11). Of course, most species have not shown any consistent trends over the past 15 years, but fluctuate around intermediate levels without either increasing to pest status or dwindling to extinction; Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" has not happened on any wide scale, nor have the birds taken over, à la Alfred Hitchcock. The BBS has made it possible for us to make those statements with some confidence, with figures to back them up.

How long we can continue the BBS is another question. With scarcity and cost of gasoline pressing in, one can only wonder how long people will be able to take part in worthwhile projects of this kind on the scale seen over the past 15 years. We have had problems in the past in securing coverage in some areas; for example, no route on Cape Breton Island was surveyed in 1979. Seven other routes involved trips of 100 miles or more from the observers' homes, although some of these involved overnight stops at summer homes nearer to the routes. Further more, the Maritimes experience probably the most unsettled weather of any part of Canada, so that more survey attempts have to be postponed, often after travelling a long way and staying overnight. Although the Bird Society does have members in many parts of the province, not all are sufficiently familiar with bird songs and calls, particularly of the less conspicuous species, so simply asking people to do surveys where they live would give quite patchy coverage. This would be true also if the method were modified so as to reduce or eliminate dependence on cars, as will presumably become inevitable sometime in the future. I have written all this before, but I wish to re-emphasize that we need continued monitoring; if there is to be a new method based on surveys on foot, bicycle, canoe, etc., then it must be started before the regular BBS surveys by car are ended, so that no break in continuity occurs.

It was the 1965 A.O.U. meeting in Columbus, Ohio, that Chan Robbins asked me if I thought we could get one or more BBS routes surveyed in each degree-block in the Maritimes. I replied affirmatively,

and that winter set out to recruit people to make it happen. Since then, I have been deeply involved in making the BBS into the country-wide monitoring system we now have. In the process, I have personally surveyed BBS routes in every province except Newfoundland (maybe there too in 1980? !), and have many pleasant memories of experiences in the field as well as of contacts with people coast to coast. It was in Nova Scotia (on the Mabou route 2, June, 1966) that I did the first ever BBS run in Canada. With the help of the people of the Bird Society, we now have a longer run and larger quantity of comparable BBS data for the Maritimes than for any other part of Canada.

(Canadian Wildlife Service, Sackville, N.B. EOA 3C0)



PRESIDENTS AND VICE PRESIDENTS FROM 1955-1980

Jan. 1955	R. W. Tufts	(C. R. K. Allen)
1956	R. W. Tufts	(C. R. K. Allen)
1957	C. R. K. Allen	(H. F. Lewis)
1958	H. F. Lewis	(C. R. K. Allen)
1959	H. F. Lewis	(C. R. K. Allen)
1960	H. F. Lewis	(C. R. K. Allen)
1961	H. F. Lewis	(C. R. K. Allen)
1962	J. R. Calder Fraser	(L. Macpherson)
1963	L. Macpherson	(Mrs. V. Cardoza)
1964	L. Macpherson	(Mrs. V. Cardoza)
1965	H. F. Lewis	(C. R. K. Allen)
1966	C. R. K. Allen	(F. Alward)
1967	I. McLaren	(B. Doane)
1968	I. McLaren	(B. Doane)
1969	E. Mills	(B. Doane)
1970	E. Mills	(B. Doane)
1971	E. Cooke	(R. Pocklington)
1972	R. Pocklington	(J. Elliott)
1973	R. Pocklington	(J. Elliott)
1974	R. Lamberton	(A. Locke)
1975	Fred Dobson	(R. Anderson)
1976	Fred Dobson	(R. Anderson)
1977	Margaret Clark	(E. Cooke)
1978	Margaret Clark	(E. Cooke)
1979	Margaret Clark	(E. Cooke)

EVELYN M. RICHARDSON

by

J. Shirley Cohrs

Bon Portage, a scrap of an island of some thousand acres, lies off the south coast of Nova Scotia. For some thirty-five years it was the home of Evelyn Richardson and her husband Morrill. There they were keepers of the Light; there they raised their family of three; there Evelyn wrote her books and there she discovered the fascination of bird-watching.

Although she is well known as an author, especially of the prize-winning *We Keep a Light*, it is not so widely realized that Evelyn Richardson was a pioneer among bird-watchers in the province. Situated as she was on an offshore island, at a period in her life when her children were grown and the workload somewhat lightened, the time and place were just right when in May of 1954, a fortuitous visit to Bon Portage by ornithologist Harrison F. Lewis, resulted in Evelyn becoming, in her own words, "hooked" on birds.

Nowadays Bon Portage is one our "hot spot" islands, comparable with Seal, Cape Sable and Brier Islands in the west and Sable Island, in the east. These are the places where many spring and fall migrants drop to rest and feed. Some are flying their usual routes, but others, the strays, are off course, lost, and perhaps storm driven. They are the rarities that quicken the blood of any keen birder.

Back in 1954, very little island bird watching had occurred and Evelyn began to identify and document many species supposedly rare or non-existent in Nova Scotia. She made careful and painstaking identifications and kept excellent records, knowing full well that others might look askance at some of her finds - "incredibles", as she put it Green and Little Blue Herons, Cattle Egrets, Glossy and White Ibises, Wilson's Phalarope, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Blue-winged Warbler and Field Sparrow are just some of the rare or never-before-reported birds she saw. There was even a "possible" Bahama Swallow which may turn up again one day.



Evelyn in full birding regalia.

She made her identifications with care and conviction and her judgement was vindicated many times over in subsequent years as species after species became confirmed.

When the Richardsons retired from light-keeping, they left Bon Portage and deeded the island to Acadia University as a bird Sanctuary. There today valuable work is being carried on by staff and students. Evelyn continued her birding activities on the mainland at Barrington with many trips to bird on Cape Sable Island, where her daughter and son-in-law, Betty June and Sidney Smith kept the light. She joined the Nova Scotia Bird Society when it was formed in 1955, and contributed her great interest and enthusiasm for bird life as well as many pertinent reports for our records. She died at Barrington in 1976.

A Charter member to be proud of.

PUFFIN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Eric Cooke

Robie Tufts was President of the Nova Scotia Bird Society in 1957, but because of stormy weather, he was unable to attend the executive meeting held on October 25th, so the Vice-President, Charles Allen, conducted the meeting. At that meeting, it was agreed that the Society should adopt as its badge, a design incorporating a Common Puffin. The Secretary-Treasurer, Capt. T. Moreland, was requested to prepare a suitable design, consulting with other members as necessary to ensure heraldic accuracy. The Secretary-Treasurer was also authorized to procure a Corporate Seal for the Society, based on the design of the badge. A sketch was prepared by Forbes Thrasher and submitted to the Executive for approval at a meeting on January 10, 1958. Since that time, the Common Puffin has appeared on our letterhead, the Newsletter, and Society badge.

While President, I felt we should have some way of acknowledging our gratitude to those who make some special contribution to the Society and on Labor Day, 1972, at Brier Island, the first Puffin of the Year Award was presented to Phyllis Dobson. When presenting that first award, my remarks included the following:

"The Nova Scotia Bird Society was organized and built up through efforts of its members. A Society such as this depends on the active participation of its members, without which this Society wouldn't be the success it is now. From the time of its organization by a few enthusiasts in 1955, until today, when its membership is over 600, members have contributed their time, efforts and enthusiasm to build up the Society. Many have contributed by serving on the executive - by leading field trips - by submitting reports and information for the Newsletter - by mailing out notices - by enthusiastic participation in various activities.

Some members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society have made special contributions to its success and it seems appropriate to recognize their efforts in a special way. Since the insignia or mascot or emblem - call it what you will, of this Society is the Puffin, I have designed a "Puffin of the Year Award" - a lifesize carving of a Common Puffin in full breeding plumage, to be awarded annually to some member (or non-member in special circumstances) in recognition of his or her special contribution to the Society - to the wellbeing of our birdlife or other wildlife - to some form of conservation - or in some field of nature study.

The recipient of this award shall be chosen at the sole discretion of the President of the Society, with or without consultation with others, as he or she desires, and shall be presented either at the Annual General Meeting or at some convenient time.

While the Puffin of the Year Award will be presented to one person annually in recognition of his or her special efforts, we should all continue to do our own parts to make the Nova Scotia Bird Society an organization dedicated to protection of the birds of the Province and conservation of the habitat, and one that provides enjoyment, interest and comradeship to its members."

Recipients of the Puffin of the Year Award have been:-

- * 1972 - Dr. Phyllis Dobson, Editor of the Newsletter.
- * 1973 - Dr. H. P. Moffatt, Organizer of the 1972 Canadian Nature Federation Conference at Wolfville.
- * 1974 - Mr. Willett Mills, Charter member, director of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund.
- * 1975 - Dr. Lloyd Macpherson, Charter member, director of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund.
- * 1976 - Miss Ethel Crathorne, Charter member, longtime Membership Secretary.
- * 1977 - Mr. R. A. Kanigsberg, Q.C., Solicitor for the Society, generous contributor to the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund.
- * 1978 - Mr. C. R. K. Allen, Charter member, many activities including Chairman of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund.
- * 1979 - Dr. Ian MacLaren, Past President of N.S.B.S. and Canadian Nature Federation, many conservation related activities.



PUFFIN OF THE YEAR AWARD 1978 - Charlie and Bunny Allen
(Photo by Purchase)

A BIRD WATCHER BY ANY OTHER NAME

Among the many pleasures of bird-watching--and I cannot claim twenty-five years, as can many in our society--is the powerful new vocabulary made available to one. The mammal viewer, snake inspector or toad watcher is largely restricted to single and mundane names--wolf, cougar, deer, green snake, horned toad, and so forth. Not for them, the enrichment of BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY, FAIRY TERN, GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL, WORM-EATING WARBLER, LARK, VESPER or, GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW. These glorious words give the hobby of birding a tremendous joie de vivre. AND, what a goldmine when we wish to expand horizons to describe with suitable names, bird-watchers we have known.

How many of us have arisen early -- too early to shave -- and, all unkempt, have encountered on a field trip a similarly hairy individual, impossibly cheerful, who cannot stop whistling and humming a cheery tune -- perhaps the BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRDER.

Remember the many trips with our knowledgeable guide in search of the elusive Seaside Sparrow? How easily he is identified as the SAGE CATTAIL THRASHER. Or, perhaps you may recall the startled looks as you emerged from the woods, overlooking a neighbour's back yard barbecue in full spate. What would they have seen if we bore the flamboyant names of the birds we watch? The SKULKING WOOD PEEKER?

I remember a trip spent in company with a dieter. At the dessert stage of the lunch stop (during which she ate two crackers and sipped water) I offered a banana, reluctantly refused. The devil tempted me, a Nova Scotia BANANA QUITTER was added to my life list.

Think of the uncomfortable days in the field when, at the return of the group after a long, cold, rainy six hours, a glance around revealed a LUGUBRIOUS WETEAR, a LONG-FACED SHIVERER and a WATER DRIPPER.

Some of us have read an account of a well-known member's attempt to "spsh" out a warbler on the grounds of the Halifax County Home, to be questioned by a passerby, "lost your cat?". If only we could have entered the mind of the onlooker. How would he classify the birder-- a GRAY CATCALLER?

Oh, the fertile grounds of the pelagic trips. Have you seen the rare GREEN-FACED TRIPPER? As the boat gets farther from shore and the waves build up, you realize your misidentification--it was only the COMMON STOMACH TURN.

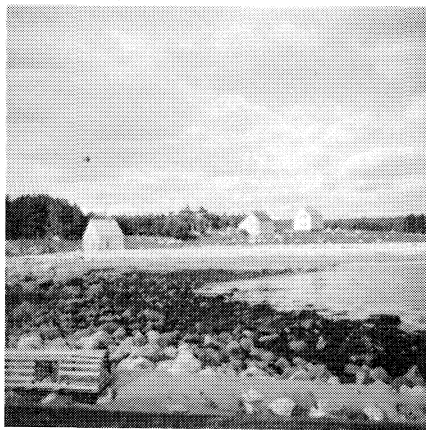
Assess yourself and your family and classify with the *phylum aves*. Does my compulsive whistling, chirping and swishing, cause my companions to specify me as a WHISTLING TREE-LOOKER? My wife's insistence that all months from April to November, dictate the wearing of shorts as the appropriate birding costume, regardless of the state of the weather, automatically dubs her the SLENDER REDSHANKS. My daughter, running along the beach during her recovery from measles, irrevocably entered the life lists of all birders present, as the first SPOTTED SANDRUNNER in the province.

Then there is the loner--the birdwatcher who, even when coerced into joining a field party, crashes away through the bush on his own-- could this be the SOLITARY MISANTHROPE?

I must lay down my pen--hundreds of species, some rude and unsuitable for a family publication, rage behind my clenched teeth, struggling to get out. I see my NOBLE SCREECH-BEARER bringing me my nightcap and so shall close before my readers can be truthfully classified as BORED ALLS.

A WONDROUS FOGGY ISLE

L. B. Macpherson



Where, in Nova Scotia, do you search the piles of lobster traps for Prairie Warblers? Where might you see 150 Northern Orioles at once? Or 5 Red Headed Woodpeckers in sight at one time, mixed flocks of Kestrels and Flickers and many other wonders? On what wet foggy island could you have seen a Marbled Godwit and 15 Hudsonian Godwits in one telescope field? (Little matter, soon corrected, that they turned out to be one Hudsonian and 15 Yellowlegs.) Where do birds migrate northwards in the fall? Where, in the bad old days in Nova Scotia, could you imagine aiming the collecting gun at a Spragues Pipit and picking up a Grasshopper Sparrow? Where else but Seal Island.

The trips there in the early days of the Nova Scotia Bird Society furnished an abundance of bird life; happy, indeed sometimes hilarious times with good friends, and rarities galore. Nova Scotia "firsts" there, include Say's Phoebe, Short-billed Marsh Wren and the aforementioned unlucky Grasshopper Sparrow.

Champlain probably landed on Seal Island. At least he named both it and Mud Island, the next north in the Tusket Islands chain, and recorded an abundance of sea birds in the area. The first serious birder to visit was Harold F. Tufts, in June of 1907. He recorded his observations in the *Ottawa Naturalist*, 21(6):93-95. Robie W. Tufts was there in 1922, and again in the late thirties. I think what particularly attracted the Tufts brother was the hope of finding the nest of Bicknell's Thrush, in which quest they were successful. Certainly the prospect of seeing this thrush subspecies, was also the hope of Ben Doane and myself on a casual trip to Seal Island in July of 1958. We were not successful in finding the thrush, nor, as far as I know, has anyone found one there since. But what we did find was a place, remote, beautiful in a special way; an island that has unparalleled fascination for those interested in oceanic islands, unusual plants, lobster eating, shipwrecks and, above all, birds.

Seal Island is the outermost of the Tusket Islands, lying twenty miles west of Clarks Harbour and some twenty-six miles southwards

from Yarmouth. This is about as far west and south as you can go and still be in Nova Scotia. Access is by fishing boat and landing by dory at either of two inclined slipways. The island is about two miles long, nearly a mile wide in one place and is for the most part covered in stunted, but very dense spruce woods. It is divided into north and south parts (drumlins) by a large brackish pond that is surrounded by a considerable savannah. There is a large pebble beach on the west and a number of sandy beaches on the eastern shore. A few smaller ponds, some boggy places and a considerable amount of brushy "edge", as well as a few man-made clearings, complete the quite varied habitats to be found. The fog whistle at the lighthouse operates about 60% of the year.



SEAL ISLAND 1968

Mrs. Winifred Hamilton and Sylvia Fullerton (Photo Eric Cooke)

province and its seaward islands for migration studies in the fall.

Nothing can be written about Seal Island without paying grateful tribute to its premier inhabitant, Mrs. Winnifred Hamilton, owner and descendent of owners of the island, who has lived there all of her life. Her generous hospitality, as well as the provision of snug accomodation, will always be remembered with gratitude.

The group identified 202 species of birds on Seal Island in the eight years under review. It should be noted, from a few trips made in the spring, that there seems to be a considerable concentration and variety at that time too. The little that is known of the summer breeding bird population indicates a limited and specialized number of species. Next to nothing is known of the winter birds.

In the fall four features stand out - the frequent abundance of birds, the regularity with which real rarities are found, the regular occurrence of a number of western species and, above all, the chance to observe small land bird migration in progress.

Regarding abundance, the following are examples of one day peak numbers: Merlin 35, Lesser Yellowlegs 80, Bairds Sandpiper 7, Black-billed Cuckoo 10, Ruby-throated Hummingbird 50, Traills/Least Fly-catcher 150, Palm Warbler 1000+, Northern Oriole 150. These, in the experience of the observers, are very large numbers for Nova Scotia;

A proper birding expedition was not organized until the end of August, 1963, when Ben Doane, Chris Helleiner, Alec McCarter and I spent the better part of three days on the island. In the seven subsequent years, I kept records of 15 visits by groups of two to eight, all in September or October. The principal additional participants were, Charlie Allen, Dick Brown, Phyllis Dobson, Sylvia Fullerton, Willett Mills and Tom Morland. Ian McLaren and Eric Mills made substantial contributions before their studies on Sable and Brier Islands, respectively, became their major interest. This group, all founding or early members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, was the first to exploit the immense potential of Nova Scotia for bird study, as pioneered by Robie Tufts and others and to realize the unique character of the south-western part of the

sometimes large in any North American terms.

Nova Scotia has produced an amazing number of rarities and an inordinate proportion of these, some examples of which are listed, have been seen on Seal Island. Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Least Bittern, Stilt Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Say's Phoebe, Short-billed Marsh Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-throated, Philadelphia and Warbling Viero, Prothonotary, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Orange-crowned, Yellow-throated, Connecticut, and Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Grasshopper Sparrow.

It is known that during the fall migration in North America, there is an eastward movement of birds as well as the dominant southward one. Remembering that species nesting in New Brunswick and westwards, but not usually in Nova Scotia, are western birds from our point of view, the number of these that regularly and frequently turn up in Nova Scotia in the fall is remarkable, particularly on Seal Island. More could be listed, but the following are representative. Red-headed Woodpecker, Western Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Brown Thrasher, Prairie Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Lark, Field and White-crowned Sparrow.

These first three features, abundance, rarities and western strays, are undoubtedly explained by a combination of geography and the reluctance of small land birds to fly over large bodies of water if they can avoid it. Once into Nova Scotia the birds have the direction of their travel modified by the coast and are often "caught" in the sea-surrounded confines of the province. A proportion of these never do get out and become the regular rarities at our feeding stations in early winter. Many of them, however, try to get south and arrive in the natural "catching trap" of Seal Island. They are often concentrated there by adverse weather conditions.



Eric Cooke in front of the North Home, Seal Island, June 1971

So, from time to time in the fall a lot of birds of many species, both ordinary and rare, are concentrated on Seal Island. They have the urge to fly south, but the ocean confronts them. The usual result is that they fly north.

Seal Island, then, has been one of the focal points for bird study and the enjoyment of birds in Nova Scotia so it is appropriate, in this 25th Anniversary year of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, to suggest that the importance of Seal Island might not have been recognized without the formation of the Society. For it was this farsighted action which brought together like-minded people who, as a group, did what scattered individuals were unlikely to have done.

THE MARITIMES NEST RECORDS SCHEME

Allan D. Smith

The Maritimes Nest Records Scheme (M.N.R.S.) has been operative for twenty years. From its modest beginnings in 1960, with seven persons contributing 129 cards, the scheme has grown steadily to the present average annual receipt of approximately 1400 cards from over 80 contributors. The repository now contains in excess of 23,000 record cards for over 180 species of birds. Provincially, New Brunswick accounts for 49% of the Scheme's holdings, Nova Scotia for 40%, and Prince Edward Island for 11%.

The concept of collecting nesting information, particularly from people who would not otherwise publish their data, first began in England in 1939 by the British Trust for Ornithology. The English idea of a nest records scheme was brought to British Columbia in 1955, and now six nesting data collection schemes are operating in Canada (Newfoundland, Maritimes, Quebec, Prairie, and British Columbia).

The Maritimes Nest Records Scheme was established in 1960 by Tony Erskine of the Canadian Wildlife Service at Sackville, New Brunswick. Tony served as the coordinator of the Scheme until 1968. The Maritimes Nest Records Scheme moved to Saint John, New Brunswick in 1969, and was housed at the New Brunswick Museum, where David Christie was its coordinator until 1973. The Scheme returned to Sackville in 1974 and continues under the auspices of the Canadian Wildlife Service where Wildlife Biologist, Al Smith, serves as its coordinator.

Tony Erskine in his article "A Nest Record Card Program in Canada", published in the Canadian Field-Naturalist in 1971, outlined the purpose of a Nest Record Scheme as follows:

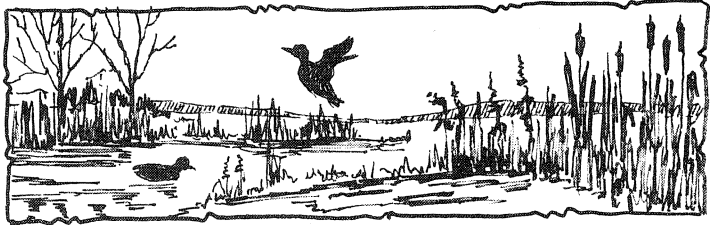
"The main purposes for assembling such observations include studies of (a) breeding success, (b) nesting biology, and (c) breeding distribution. The objective is of interest to all persons concerned about the continued existence of birds, and particularly those responsible for conservation and management of bird populations. It is the most critical as well as the most difficult objective. The second is probably most often pursued in university research programs, while the third objective is a primary concern of museums. Persons pursuing the other objectives can contribute to the first one, which by other means can only be studied on a local scale. Naturalists are interested in all of these, but especially in the last two objectives.

"Nest record schemes are not and never have been a substitute for detailed research, but they can be very helpful. Examination of nest record files at the start of a study shows quickly whether nests of a given species are easy or difficult to find, where studies may begin, and which people may be able to give useful advice. Nest records extend the range of special studies by providing data from areas which the research worker could not visit in the time available. And they save for future studies the by-products of other field activities, i.e. observations not bearing on the study in hand, which would otherwise pass unrecorded or remain unheeded in a notebook."

A check on the M.N.R.S. holdings illustrates the vast amount of data that has accumulated over the past twenty years. One species,

American Robin, has nearly 2500 cards on file and two species, Barn Swallow and Common Grackle, have over 1000. There are more than 500 cards on file for Tree Swallow, Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, Song Sparrow, Black Duck, and Osprey, and over 200 cards for 19 other species.

The M.N.R.S. is coordinated by the Canadian Wildlife Service, but relies on volunteer cooperators for the nesting records. Cooperators record their nest observations on 4"x6" printed cards supplied by the Canadian Wildlife Service. Those cards are submitted to the Scheme's repository at the end of the nesting season, and an annual report on the Scheme's holdings is prepared and sent out to all cooperators. In addition to receiving cards from naturalists, the repository annually receives a large number of cards from wildlife biologists and technicians who in the course of their field duties, record nesting information on birds. Also, the Scheme often serves as a repository for field data collected by researchers studying the breeding biology of a particular bird species.



Members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society (N.S.B.S.) have, from the beginning, figured prominently in the success of the M.N.R.S. The Society's membership lists have periodically been used to recruit new cooperators and the N.S.B.S. Newsletter has, over the years, published notices of the Scheme, thereby generating additional interest. The Society's input to the M.N.R.S. principally relates to the Scheme holdings for the Province of Nova Scotia. On the average, 33 cooperators from Nova Scotia contribute approximately 400 cards per year, and of those 33 persons approximately 50% have been N.S.B.S. members. In 1979, thirteen N.S.B.S. members contributed 350 cards, which accounts for approximately 55% of the total cards received from Nova Scotia cooperators. Over the past years, 28 N.S.B.S. members have contributed on a regular basis to the Scheme. Contributions by individual members are naturally variable from year to year, but several persons deserve special mention for their contributions. In the early years of the M.N.R.S., the principal Nova Scotia contributor was Joe Johnson, who, over the six year period, 1963-68, submitted 963 cards to the Scheme. Top honours now go to Bernie Forsythe, who started contributing to the Scheme in 1975, and since that time has submitted 685 record cards. Bernie's annual contribution for the past two years has been over 170 cards. Other N.S.B.S. members who have been steady contributors to the Scheme are Cyril Coldwell, who has contributed annually since 1963, Dr. and Mrs. John Gallagher, Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Smith and family, Ms. Evelyn Coates, Cpt. Eric Haldway, Mrs. Rosemary Eaton, and others who have made a significant contribution in the past

are Harry Brennan, Wayne Neilly, Bill McNutt, and Winnie Cairns.

The aim of the M.N.R.S. is to provide a permanent repository for bird nesting data in the Maritimes, and to make it available to all researchers studying the breeding biology of birds. Cards are normally loaned out for a three week period and cards for rare or threatened species may in some cases, not be released without special clearance due to a possible threat to these birds if their nest locations are widely known. On the average, seven to ten researchers have annually borrowed cards from the Scheme. While use of the Scheme has not been extensive, the data bank has made significant contributions to several research studies, and has been most useful in planning numerous other projects. As the data bank accumulates more cards, it will become increasingly more attractive to researchers studying nesting success. Generally, at least 500 cards of a species are needed from any one region in order to allow comparison with other sub-samples.

Through the efforts of dedicated individuals such as Bernie Forsythe, the M.N.R.S. repository expands its holdings each year by approximately 6%. The Scheme encourages people to look at birds and their nests with care and judgement. That activity stimulates an awareness and understanding of our wildlife heritage, and through the standardized recording of their observations a significant contribution is made to a scientific data repository.

New cooperators are always most welcome, but must practice a responsible code of conduct at all nest sites. Only a very few well timed visits to a nest are necessary to record basic data and to determine nesting success. Instructions on nest finding, timing visits to the nest, code of conduct at the nest site and on completing the nest record cards are available by writing to the Coordinator, Maritimes Nest Record Scheme, c/o Canadian Wildlife Service, P. O. Box 1590, Sackville, New Brunswick, E0A 3C0.

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President's Field Day, July 19, 1969.

Martinique Beach

Jackie Ewart, Hazel Carmichael, Ian McLaren,
et. al. (Photo Wayne Neilly)

OF FELLOWSHIP AND FIELD TRIPS

Sara MacLean

Since 1946, we in Cape Breton, have wandered along many a path, searched hundreds of thickets, tramped untold miles of beach; sometimes shivering along beside the drift-ice of April, or flailing away at the blackflies of June, sweltering in the August heat, or wiping tears of cold wind from our eyes at Christmas Count time. All for fun. And it is fun. To see a new bird, or a bird new again in spring, is such a happy experience; and it is made immeasurably happier by sharing the pleasure with people whose interests are the same. No one could possibly have attended all the trips, but each one has something to be recalled, long after that one point in time has slid into the past.

The day we went along the cliff-top at Schooner Pond, looking down, down at the Guillemots on their nests or flashing their tomato-coloured feet as they swam above the spot where the S. S. Watford was wrecked in a hurricane. That day, we had with us, two young boys, unacquainted with the seashore. They had no fear of the cliff-edge and insisted on walking on nothing but a mat of cranberry vines protruding over a hundred foot precipice, with the surf gnawing at the rocks below. I died a thousand deaths and turned into a shrew, yelling at them to keep back, keep back, until we came to a patch of Krumholly forest, which was entrancing enough, with its dwarfed and contorted shapes to win them away from certain death.



At the gravel pit near Homeville, 1977.
Bertha Hopkins, David Snow, Hedley Hopkins,
Otis Cossett, Art Spencer and George MacInnis
(Photo - Edie MacLeod)

We had a lovely and most productive day at Lake Ainslie, when John O'Connell was our president and leader. There was a large group because it was high summer and we had tourists along to join in the day. Fields, lake shore, marshes, forests--all full of birds, and so many kinds of birds. They skipped all around us in the picnic park, hundreds and hundreds of young Siskins and other little things, twittering above our heads, almost within arm's reach.

Then, there are the field trips that aren't official at all; just a few friends strolling down a wood road or along a beach. Perhaps they are the best of the lot; the oriole burns brighter among the spruce boughs in the memory of those days; the vireo whispers a more secret song, deep in his thicket beside the path, and the Gray Jays are even more confiding than usual.

We went to see a new Cormorant rookery, just begun, and only discovered by a fisherman who saw it from his boat. The Cormorants were those of Longfellow's poem, "The fierce cormorant (flies) back to his rocky haunt/With plunder laden." Not fierce except to fish, but lov-



able and brave. Their hearts must have been pounding with fright, to be invaded from the forest whence they had never expected a threat. But, they stayed at their nests, refusing to desert their fluffy brown teddy-bear children, because the Black-backed Gulls took the opportunity to go cruising along the side of the cliff, back and forth, saying in low, deep voices, "kuk, kuk, kuk," and hoping that the cormorant parents, only a yard or so away, would be frightened off just for one moment; a second would be enough. One must be objective about this. The Black-backs, too, have families to feed. But, let the watchers withdraw quietly all the same, the gulls must find other game, and the cormorant rookery is still a secret.

George Spencer and Sara MacLean check out the gulls at Glace Bay Wharf, c. 1975. (Photo-Edie MacLeod)



Lunch time at Cheticamp, Cape Breton, September, 1977. Eric Cooke, Marg Slatkin and Cricket, Marg Clark, Frank and Mary Hims1

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