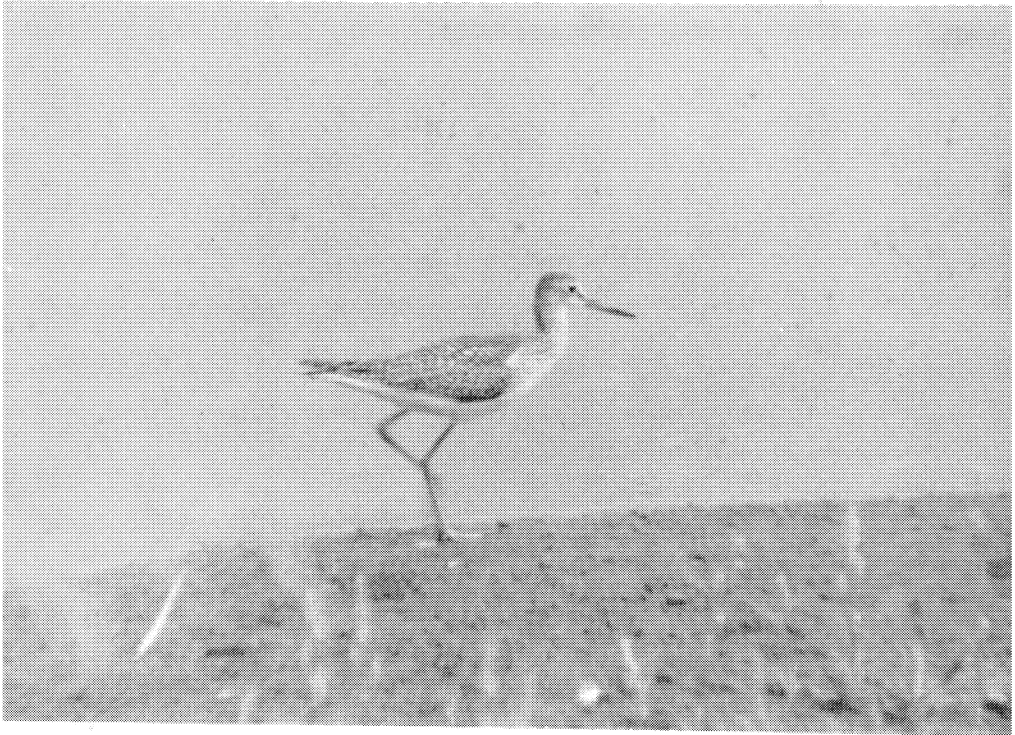




*Nova Scotia
Bird Society*



Newsletter

Volume 10, Number 3

November, 1968

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Volume 10, Number 3

November, 1968

TABLE OF CONTENTS

News of the Birds, Summer and Fall..... 94
Unusual Bird Records.....114
Field Trips.....117
Two New Breeding Records
 - R. W. Tufts.....124
First Nova Scotia Shovellers Banded
 - A. D. Smith.....125
Banding Ravens.....125
Bullfrogs Under Suspicion
 - Cyril Coldwell.....126
The Trust Fund.....127
Northern Birds in Eastern Canada
 - A. J. Erskine.....128
It's A Stork!.....131
Letters to the Editor.....132
Notes From Rosemary Eaton's Diary.....137

Cost of the publication of this
Newsletter is partly borne by
the Nova Scotia Museum.

Cover photograph - Lesser Yellowlegs - F. W. Dobson.

Printed by the Allen Print Ltd.

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

Incorporated 1957

c/o Nova Scotia Museum
Spring Garden Road
Halifax, N.S., Canada

NEWSLETTER

Editor: Phyllis R. Dobson

Volume 10, Number 3

November, 1968

SUMMER BIRDS and FALL MIGRATION, 1968

Hurricane Gladys was first picked up in the vicinity of Grand Cayman Island, in the Caribbean Sea, and took the following course: North across the western tip of Cuba, continuing south to north about forty miles west of Havana, it then crossed the western Straits of Florida, through the eastern part of the Gulf of Mexico. A landfall was made sixty miles north of Tampa, after which the storm cut across the Florida peninsula and came out at St. Augustin. It then proceeded along the coastline of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. Passing right over Cape Hatteras, it continued on up the Atlantic coast to about two hundred miles south of Halifax, when it cut due north across the eastern part of Nova Scotia. The centre at that time was well to the east of Halifax.

This information was obtained kindness of Dr. R. A. Hornstein, Officer-in-Charge of the Atlantic Weather Central Office at Halifax and clearly explains the lavish influx of southern seabirds along the coast of Nova Scotia, since Sunday, October 27. Literally thousands of Laughing Gulls, and hundreds of Black Skimmers, plus several exotic species of tern were spilled along our shores from the trailing edge of the dying hurricane. Small land birds escaped the blow, with the possible exception of a few Swifts, and Swallows. The Laughing Gulls and Black Skimmers stayed throughout the week following, affording great interest and pleasure to both bird watchers and coast dwellers, for they, the birds, were so abundant and so close at hand leisurely study was possible, and visual aids unnecessary. The gulls have mostly gone, and the exotic terns (Forster's, Caspian and Royal), but many of the Skimmers are still to be seen, in small flocks along the shores of coastal inlets. It is probable they will not survive, being specialized feeders.

The big storm put an end to what Dr. Hornstein described as "the driest summer in history, at least for 101 years", in Nova Scotia. Townspeople said "what beautiful weather", but there was considerable heartache for country people whose wells went dry, and whose crops failed. Fruiting trees, both wild and cultivated, did well, but ground berries shrivelled before they could ripen. Streams dried up and lakeshores receded. Wild animals and birds congregated at rapidly shrinking water holes,

where the smaller ones were easy prey for predators.

It is doubtful if such predators made any great difference to our bird population, however, which maintained normal numbers, by all accounts, as will be seen in the report to follow. One large segment of the population, almost half in fact, was quite unaffected by the dry weather; and this will always be the case in Nova Scotia, until the Atlantic Ocean runs dry.

COMMON LOONS began to appear in coastal waters in September. Earliest reports are by Anderson and E. Mills: one at Cow Bay Sept. 7; 8 at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., Sept. 28; and 3 in the same locality on Oct. 6. Erskine reports 7 at Pt. Michaud Oct. 8 and 5 were at E. Lawrencetown on Oct. 14. Thirteen passed by Chebucto Hd. flying southwest on Oct. 23 (E. Mills). E. Armworthy reported them as "plentiful" at Hazel Hill, Guys. Co., Oct. 25, and Mills and Anderson again reported a good flight of close to 40 at Chebucto Hd. on Oct. 30.

The first report of RED-THROATED LOONS is of a flock of 14 at Big Island, Pictou Co. Oct. 12 by E. Doull who also saw 2 at E. Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., on Oct. 14. Two passed by Chebucto Hd. Oct. 23 (E. Mills) and 2 were at Cole Harbor Oct. 27 (MacLaren). It is quite probable that the movement of Red-throats and Common Loons is still in progress at time of writing (Nov. 2).

RED-NECKED GREBES - many of which winter here - began to appear on Oct. 11 when 7 were seen at Tidnish by Erskine. J. Johnson reported 43 at Annapolis Royal on Oct. 22 and Fullerton 3 at Seal Island on Oct. 26.

An unusual HORNED GREBE record is of one seen at White Point, Queens Co., on July 5 by members of the Florida Audubon Society. Other observations are on schedule: 5 at Tidnish Oct. 11 (Erskine), 2 at Big Island Oct. 14 (Doulls) and 1 at Cole Harbor Oct. 27 (Anderson).

The scanty reports of PIED-BILLED GREBES probably does not give a true picture of the numbers of these retiring little birds. Allen reports one in a pond near Brooklyn, Hants Co. in salt water on Sept. 8. Neily reports them as "frequent" in the Ingonish area in Sept. and Oct., though not seen there during the summer, and Erskine saw one at Judique on Oct. 9.

Reports on pelagic birds are more numerous than ever before, thanks in part to the crew of the lightship "Lurcher" stationed off Yarmouth, and also to the number of our members who, this summer and early fall, managed to spend some time in offshore waters. Holdway reported 3 GREATER SHEARWATERS in Northumberland Strait July 21 and McLaren saw SOOTIES and a few CORY'S in addition to Greaters at Sable Island on July 28. Ten Shearwaters too far offshore for identification were seen by Pocklington and Willis on Seal Island Sept. 6-9, and a Greater

was observed at Big Island, Pictou Co., within 100 yards of the beach, by A. and E. Doull on Oct. 13.

Greater Shearwaters, up to 50 in one day, were seen from the Lurcher from late June to July 21, but Sooties appeared on only two days during this period, 2 on June 30 and one on July 1. A FULMAR was seen on June 30 and again on July 2.

The Lurcher also reported petrels during the period June 27 - July 21, the greater numbers (up to 60 in one day) being seen in early July, and tapering down to "singles" by July 19.

A LEACH'S PETREL was seen close to shore at Big Island, Pictou Co., by A. and E. Doull on Oct. 14, making the second off beat pelagic bird noted by these observers on this date (see above). Three others of this species were seen in Northumberland Strait near Pictou on Oct. 19 by E. Holdway.

WILSON'S PETRELS, which breed in the Antarctic and winter off our shores from June to October, were unusually well reported this year; members of the Florida Audubon Society sighted one near Bird Island, Vict. Co., July 7; another was seen by members of the NSBS off Halifax Harbour Aug. 10, one was reported by Erskine in Wallace Harbor Oct. 11 and 3 at Chebucto Head October 20 (Anderson & Mills).

Reports on GANNET sightings are spread over a considerable period, from Aug. 10 when 3 - probably non-breeders - were seen off Halifax Harbour (NSBS pelagic trip) to Oct. 30 when E. Mills sighted 15 off Peggy's Cove. The main movement may have taken place after mid-October, as Mills and Anderson report over 80 off Peggy's Cove on Oct. 18, and 300+ at Chebucto Hd. on Oct. 20.

Cormorants came in for little notice this season; E. Mills reported a flock of 10+ at Martinique Beach Oct. 6 and members of the NSBS saw several flocks totalling about 50 flying west over Seal Island on Oct. 7. On October 23, Mills reported 47 DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS passing Chebucto Hd. toward the southwest.

GREAT BLUE HERONS were on the move through Sept. and Oct. One "peak" was obvious from the report of the Eatons at Cole Harbor, Hfx. Co., for Sept. 13, of a concentration of 62 Great Blues "30 up the harbor, 32 down the harbor". A few stragglers were still being seen in the Halifax area at the end of Oct. A COMMON EGRET was at Cape Negro and Round Bay, Shel. Co., on July 1 and for several days following (Gallagher), and the Eatons reported a LITTLE BLUE HERON at Cole Harbor on Oct. 1, seen by the Topples at Lake Loon in Dartmouth on Oct. 2. (Probably the same one.)

The only SNOWY EGRET so far reported this fall is the one at Port Felix, Guys. Co., on Oct. 27 (Armsworthy et al).

The closest we can come to a GREEN HERON sighting this year is a mummified carcass picked up by members of the NSBS on

their Sept. 6-9 Seal Island expedition. The later Seal Island party (Oct. 5-7) did, however, find an immature LEAST BITTERN alive and healthy at a small pond on the North Side.

Reports of AMERICAN BITTERN indicate normal numbers - singles and pairs being sighted at widely scattered localities throughout mainland Nova Scotia. The only suggestion of a migratory movement was 5 seen in a series of shallow ponds near Brooklyn, Hants Co., Sept. 28 (Allen).

A CANADA GOOSE near Ingonish Beach on July 2 (Wilson) was either a very late straggler or a cripple, while 6 in the same area on Aug. 28 (Barker), and "3 dozen" seen from the Lurcher Aug. 18 must have been early migrants. Two small flocks (17 and 15) flew in to Cole Harbor Sept. 19 (Eatons). R. Anderson reported hearing geese flying over during the night at Halifax Sept. 20 and Sara MacLean saw 175 at Glace Bay on the 29th. Latest report is of 1000 at Martinique Beach Nov. 1 (Mills).

Fifteen BRANT on Sept. 15 at Pt. Michaud by D.D. Findlay is, strange to say, only the second record of this species for Cape Breton. The first was in June 1952 when 8 were observed at Neil's Harbor by A. A. Buchanan, Chief Park Warden.

Although BLACK DUCKS have been down in numbers in recent years, E. Mills estimated 3000 at Martinique on Nov. 1. Reports on GREEN- and BLUE-WINGED TEAL are too skimpy to be significant. A WOOD DUCK with 7 ducklings was seen at Grafton Lake, Queen's Co. on June 19 (R. Dobson) and a flock of 7, probably another brood, at Lake Egmont, Hfx. Co., Sept. 8/68 (Allen). This species has shown a great increase in the past few years due to the efforts of the Dept. of Lands and Forests in liberating young birds from the Wildlife Park at Shubenacadie and in placing nesting boxes in suitable habitats.

An unusual BUFFLEHEAD record is of one female at Annapolis Royal from June 18 to Oct. 12 (J. Johnson). E. Mills reported 30 of this species at Martinique on Nov. 1.

G. Armsworthy reports OLDSQUAWS off Canso in Sept., 7 were seen near Pictou on Oct. 21 (Holdway) and 20 at Chebucto Hd. on Oct. 22 (E. Mills.).

The COMMON EIDER migration was well under way by Sept. 14 when many flocks were seen during the NSBS field day at Brier Island, and was still in progress as late as Oct. 23. Three male KING EIDERS were seen by Holdway in Northumberland Strait near Pictou Oct. 19.

The Smiths reported AMERICAN SCOTERS going by Cape Sable Light in flocks Aug. 8-15 and Neily sighted 5 Surf Scoters in Cheticamp Har. Aug. 31. The southward movement of all three species is doubtless still in progress at time of writing (Nov. 2).

It has been a long time since TURKEY VULTURES appeared in this record but one made it this fall by being seen at Cape North on Oct. 3 by R.S. Johnson, Consulting Forester, Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

The only autumn GOSHAWK sighting reported is of one adult at l'Ardoise, Hants Co. Oct. 20 (Allen). SHARP-SHINS are lightly reported: 2 at Cape Sable Light Oct. 5 (Smiths) and 4 at Seal Island Oct. 4-6 (NSBS party). A COOPER'S HAWK, a rarity in Nova Scotia, was seen at Kejimkijik, June 29 by E. Mills.

W. Lent reported heavy flights of BROAD-WINGED HAWKS in Sept. at Brier Island, and estimated that 3000 passed over on Oct. 3 & 4. Five ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were at Meat Cove, Inverness Co. Sept. 1 (Neily), one at Big Island, Pictou Co. on Sept. 30 and again at the same place Oct. 12 (Doulls).

The only BALD EAGLE sightings have come from Antigonish and Guys. Counties, and from Cape Breton - mostly from the latter area. Two nests are reported: one with a single young bird at Malagawatch, Inv. Co. and one with 2 young at Marble Mountain (Foote & MacLean).

A late MARSH HAWK was at Big Island, Pictou Co., on Oct. 13 (Doulls), also 5 at Seal Island Oct. 4-6.

On Oct. 5 McLaren noted 50 SPARROW HAWKS at Brier Island and on the following day E. Mills observed an "impressive" movement of small falcons, including this species, between Lawrencetown and Martinique Beach, Hfx. Co. On the same date (Oct. 6) members of the NSBS at Seal Island witnessed the arrival of a number of Sparrow Hawks at the southern tip of the island. No accurate count was possible, but it is probable that 20-30 birds arrived during the morning.

During the same period PIGEON HAWKS were on the move; McLaren saw 20 at Brier Island on Oct. 5 and the Seal Island party estimated 6-10 on Oct. 6. These also took part in the flight seen by Mills on the same date.

PEREGRINE FALCON'S were seen at Seal Island by NSBS parties on Oct. 4-6 and again on Oct. 27-28 - 2 immatures each time. Another passed Chebucto Hd. Oct. 23 (Anderson & Mills).

The only nesting record for OSPREYS this year is one reported at Grafton Lake, Queen's Co., containing one young bird (R. Dobson).

Last year all reports on SPRUCE GROUSE came from Cape Breton. This year, however, the mainland takes a 3 to 1 lead. Mrs. Donald Robertson (per Lewis) found these birds more plentiful than usual in the Shelburne area; an adult with 5 young almost grown was seen July 26 at Cameron Settlement and another brood of 5 in the same locality on Aug. 23, made up of 3/4 grown young birds. (Lowerison) Sightings of single birds at Jacques Landing, Queen's Co., Aug. 6, at Baker Settlement Sept. 14 and at Mountain Lake Sept. were made by R. Dobson. Ross Anderson saw a flock of 5 birds at Eastern Passage always at or near the same spot on four dates between Sept. 8 and Oct. 13. The lone Cape Breton report is from W. Neily who found at least 3 broods in the Victoria Co. sector of the Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

SORA RAILS were reported twice: one at Sable Island on July 31 and Aug. 23 - possibly the same bird (McLaren), and one at Pictou Aug. 9 (Holdway). Eileen Armworthy reports a second YELLOW RAIL from her part of Guys. Co. in the past two years. This one was brought in alive for identification on Oct. 17. She also reports a COOT at Little Lake, Guys. Co., on Oct. 28. The only other Coot sighting was of 2 at Seal Island, Oct. 26-28 (Fullerton & Hinds).

The great shore-bird migration got under way on schedule in early July and the flocks of plover and 'peep' covered the flats and beaches which, a few weeks earlier, had been sparsely populated by our few native breeding species. Of the latter, PIPING PLOVER were reported from just two localities: 10+ at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. up to Sept. 24 (Hinds) and 12+ at Morien Bar Sept. 14 (MacLean). No summer reports on SEMI-PALMATED PLOVER were received but sightings of migrants are normal. Four nestings of KILLDEER are reported for this year: 2 from King's Co. - the first records for this county - reported by R. W. Tufts, one at Dartmouth by Allen who observed an adult with downy young. Other reports of from one to 6 adults come from Yarmouth, Shelburne, Digby, Cumberland and Pictou Counties.

Neily reports the first GOLDEN PLOVER at Cheticamp Island Aug. 9 and says that the migration reached its peak there Aug. 31 with over 30 birds. Up to 40 were seen in pastures at Yarmouth between Sept. 2 and 4 (Allen), and the last date for this species is Oct. 13 when 5 were at Pt. Michaud (Reid).

The first dates for BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER are July 27 when 20+ were at Grand Pre (E. Mills), and July 31 when the first one appeared at Sable Island (McLaren). Most other reports are for Sept. and Oct., and the peak of the flight must have gone through unobserved - or at least unreported although J. Johnson states they were more numerous than usual in his area.

There were at least 100 RUDDY TURNSTONES at Pt. Michaud Aug. 17 (NSBS party) but otherwise no reports of interest were received.

WOODCOCK, sitting tight in dense alder covers are usually missed by bird-watchers and our scanty reports are therefore no indication of their true numbers. R. Dobson saw 3 at Grafton Lake Aug. 1 and one at the same place Oct. 10. COMMON SNIFE, too, have a habit of lying close in boggy fields and escaping detection. McLaren reports one or two pairs breeding on Sable Island and young flying on July 14. Allen reports a concentration of at least 20 near Beaver River, Yar. Co., on Sept. 3, some of these hunting for food like Robins on a well-kept lawn.

Like the Black-bellied Plover, the main body of WHIMBRELS passed by unnoticed this year, only a few reports of 2 or 3 individuals being received.

An UPLAND PLOVER appeared at Sable Island on July 14 and again July 25 (McLaren). Another was seen at Cape Sable Light (which despite its name is several hundred miles away), on Aug. 27 (B. F. Smith).

R. Dobson reports a nest of the SPOTTED SANDPIPER at Kejimkujik, with 4 eggs hatching June 21. Fifty were seen at Seal Island by the NSBS party Sept. 6-9. Last reported sighting of this species is Sept. 29 (Hinds). McLaren reports the first SOLITARY SANDPIPER on Sable Island Aug. 1, Allen sighted 6 in various localities in the Yarmouth area Sept. 1-3, and one was at Cape Sable Light Aug. 23 (Smiths & Cunningham).

A movement of WILLETS was observed at Cape Sable Light Aug. 4 when 3 flocks were seen headed south - about 130 birds in all (Smiths).

There is some reason to believe that the GREATER YELLOWLEGS breeds in limited numbers in northern Cape Breton and a report from W. Neily bears this out. While searching for evidence of nesting Greater Scaup on the barrens near North Mountain July 21, he and Warden Fred Wallace were mobbed by 2 pairs of Yellowlegs. Later they came upon two of this species standing in shallow water, and these, on their approach, ran for cover in the bushes rather than taking flight. The Bells at Sable Island saw their first Greater Yellowlegs of the season on July 4 and say that they were common after July 8. Mills saw 5 at Lawrencetown July 5. No great concentrations were noted during the migration period although Neily saw 22 at Cheticamp Island on Aug. 23 and Pocklington & Willis found 30 at Seal Island Sept. 6-9.

The flock of Greater Yellowlegs seen by E. Mills on July 5 included one LESSER YELLOWLEGS, the first for the season. Another appeared at Sable Island on July 28 (McLaren), there were 10 seen on the Pt. Michaud field trip, and the last reported sighting is Sept. 30 at Cheticamp (Neily).

The Smiths had small flocks of KNOTS at Cape Sable Light from Aug. 15 to 19, but the earliest record is of 2 at Big Island, Pictou Co., on July 30 (A. Doull).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS are reported in 5's and 6's from many parts of the province but no observations of large concentrations like those seen last year have been received. One BAIRD'S SANDPIPER was seen at Cheticamp Island Aug. 31 (Neily). The first DUNLIN recorded was at Evangeline Beach Aug. 9 (Allen). All other reports are for October: 8 at Pt. Michaud Oct. 8 (Erskine), 3 at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. Oct. 6 (Anderson) and one at Eastern Passage Oct. 27 (Allen).

DOWITCHERS, which usually lead the field in the southward migration, were nearly a week behind Yellowlegs this year. (See above.) The first record is of 2 at Sable Island on July 9 (McLaren). By late July there was an estimated 3000-4000 in the Yarmouth area (Allen), and the last report is of 4 at Cole Harbor Sept. 7 (Anderson).

One record of the STILT SANDPIPER comes from Sable Island where one was seen on July 27 (Bell).

SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPERS descended in their hordes on

Evangeline Beach about July 27 when an estimated 10,000 were seen on the NSBS field trip. By Aug. 9 the number there had at least doubled. (Allen) The last report is of 6 at Seal Island Oct. 27 (NSBS party). SANDERLINGS were first reported July 20 when "a few" were at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (Anketell-Jones). The greatest number reported was from the same area on Oct. 20 when 60+ were seen (Hinds & Baldwin). The last report is for Oct. 27 of 17 at Eastern Passage (Anderson) but no doubt a few flocks are still around.

This has been a banner year for BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS; a total of 12 from four localities has been reported: one Aug. 23 and 2 Aug. 24 on Sable Island (McLaren); six - no less - on the Chester golf course Aug. 26 and for about a week thereafter - studied at close range by H. P. Moffatt; one Sept. 2 at Yarmouth (Allen); one Sept. 15 at Pictou (Holdway) and one Sept. 22 & 24 at Pt. Michaud (C. & B. Reid).

Only one HUDSONIAN GODWIT record came in this year - a report of 2 at Pt. Michaud on Aug. 17 (NSBS party).

As mentioned above, many Nova Scotia birders put out to sea this year and the number of pelagic species reported is well above that of previous seasons. E. Holdway at Pictou reports 40 NORTHERN PHALAROPES headed north on May 30, and 100 on the same course on June 9. He also reports 7 flying south on Aug. 7. Two dozen were seen from the Lurcher on Aug. 8 and hundreds flying north-east on Aug. 16. Late reports for this species are: 1, Oct. 20, and 2, Oct. 23 at Chebucto Hd. (Anderson & Mills). Seven RED PHALAROPES were seen by the NSBS party on their deep sea trip off Halifax Harbor on Aug. 10.

An immature Jaeger was seen by Holdway in Northumberland Strait Sept. 4, and a PARASITIC JAEGER was observed by McLaren and party at Sable Island on or about Aug. 20, chasing terns. Another of this species was seen close to shore at Big Island, Pictou Co. on Oct. 12 by A. & E. Doull - the same date and same place where they saw both Leach's Petrels and Greater Shearwaters.

Thanks to Hurricane Gladys the gulls and terns have provided the greatest number of exotics in this report; but first some bread-and-butter species: an adult GLAUCOUS GULL, first of the season, was seen in Halifax Oct. 14 by E. Mills. Another was at Chebucto Hd. on Oct. 23 and one in first winter plumage was seen at the Hfx. Ocean Terminals on Oct. 24 (Anderson & Mills). ICELAND GULLS were reported very early: 2 off Canso during August (C. Armsworthy) and one at Cape Sable Light Aug. 15 (Smiths).

Both GREAT BLACK-BACKED and HERRING GULLS maintained their numbers in the Halifax region at any rate, where E. Mills regularly counted them in the hundreds, with Herring Gulls predominating 2 or 3 to one. Numbers of RING-BILLED GULLS reported are surprisingly small; the first is of 7, July 23, at Cheticamp (Neily). All other reports are from the Halifax area and are of from 1 to 6 birds only.

The first BLACK-HEADED GULL was seen at Glace Bay

Sanctuary Oct. 8 (Erskine). The next was seen in the Northwest Arm, Halifax, on Oct. 9, by E. Mills who found another, an immature, on the Halifax Waterfront on Oct. 11. By Oct. 27 Mills and Anderson reported that the number had increased to 9 in the Halifax area.

The big news of the season, however, is the deluge of LAUGHING GULLS dumped on Nova Scotia by Hurricane Gladys on her course along the coast and across the province on Oct. 21. First hint of this was E. Mills' report of 66 birds of this species seen drifting southward past Chebucto Hd. on Oct. 22. From then on reports came thick and fast, all the way from Canso to Cape Sable, of many hundreds of Laughing Gulls along the coast and far up the inlets and estuaries. These birds were absurdly tame and caught the attention of many non-birders.

The sequence of reports suggests that they were dropped by the hurricane at points along the coast from Halifax eastward, but quickly began their return journey. At this date (Nov. 2) they have practically disappeared from the Halifax area, but reports still come in from the western part of the province. B. J. Smith says that small but diminishing flocks are still passing Cape Sable.

Coming back to earth - a stray BONAPARTE'S GULL was seen from the Lurcher on June 28. Next report is of one on Aug. 3 in Guys. Co. (Findlay). Holdway reports 40 southbound migrants at Pictou on Aug. 4 and Erskine saw 270 at Wallace and Tidnish along the Northumberland Strait shore on Oct. 11. There were 12 at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. on Oct. 14 (Hinds), but most reports for this month are considerably below average.

Early reports of KITTIWATES come from Sable Island where they were seen from July 2 to early August. Although usually staying well offshore, they moved into Halifax Harbor in numbers on Oct. 20 just ahead of Hurricane Gladys. Mills and Anderson saw 37 from Chebucto Hd. on Oct. 20 and 12 on Oct. 23. Helleiner reported many at Cape North Oct. 12-14, and S. Fullerton & B. Hinds saw numbers en route from Clarke's Harbour to Seal Island, Oct. 26. C. Armsworthys found them common off Canso from Oct. 20 on.

Another gift of Hurricane Gladys was the FORSTER'S TERN, which had been recorded previously for N.S. only three times. Members of the NSBS saw at least 6 of this species in the Cole Harbor-Cow Bay area between Oct. 27 and Nov. 1. Another was reported by the Armsworthys at Port Felix, Guys. Co., Oct. 27.

COMMON TERNS normally arrive in late May, but the first report we have is for June 18 at Kejimkujik (R. Dobson). Late sightings are Oct. 11 at Port Philip (Erskine) and Oct. 12-14 at Cape North (Helleiner). One at Cow Bay on Oct. 27 was probably a product of Gladys.

The only ROSEATE TERN report is of one at Bird Islands, Cape Breton, on July 7 (Mason party). This is the first record of this species for Cape Breton.

Laughing Gulls were by no means the only exotics and out-of-season species dropped by Gladys on her northward progress as will be seen in the sections that follow. On Oct. 22, 3 ROYAL TERNS were seen by E. Mills off Chebucto Hd. hurrying south. Also on the same date a CASPIAN TERN was seen in the same general locality moving quickly southward. Another of their species was noted by Mills on Nov. 1. A third, a banded bird, was brought alive to June Jarvis at Canso on Oct. 24. These were doubtless all storm blown waifs, but one at Cheticamp Island on Aug. 3 and another at Malagawatch on Aug. 9 were probably migrants from the small colony on the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The big excitement of the NSBS pelagic trip on Aug. 10 was three BLACK TERNS seen well off shore at the mouth of Halifax Harbor, far from their normal marshy habitat.

On Oct. 22 Anne and Elizabeth Doull observed a single BLACK SKIMMER feeding and resting in the long shallow inlet known as Graham's Cove, just east of Three-Fathom Harbour. Other birders hurried to the spot the next day anxious to add this species to their life lists. They were disappointed, but only temporarily; on Oct. 27 R. Anderson reported to local NSBS members that a flock of 52 Skimmers was resting on the sand at Eastern Passage. Another, consisting of close to 30 birds, was found on the same date at Cole Harbor (McLaren et al) and still another of 10 at Port Dufferin (Forbes & Whiston). On Oct. 29 Morland saw 17 Skimmers resting on the asphalt parking lot of the IGA market at Mahone Bay all very tame or in weakened condition. On this same date the Eastern Passage flock had dwindled to 21 birds and on Oct. 30 Mills saw over 50 headed south off Chebucto Hd. so that this attrition may have been due to departure rather than death by starvation. On Nov. 1 Donald Freeman (per Mills) reported about 200 Skimmers at Jeddore, some dying, but on the same day Mills again counted two flocks of 23 and 30 respectively, flying south past his favourite vantage point at Chebucto Hd.

Because of their specialized feeding habits, it seems unlikely that many of these birds will survive their long homeward trip. (M. Anketell-Jones picked up one, dead, at Eastern Passage on Nov. 3, and has presented it to the Halifax Museum.)

The only other record of Skimmers for N. S. is of an unspecified number left by the August gale of 1924 which also brought 3 Caspians and one each of Forster's Least and Sooty Terns to the province. (Tufts: Birds of Nova Scotia)

A single COMMON MURRE was seen by C. Armsworthy off Canso on Oct. 27. A DOVEKIE far south of its normal summer range was at Broad Cove, Victoria Co. on July 16 (Hemmerick per Neily) and another appeared off Canso on Oct. 23 (C. Armsworthy). Three BLACK GUILLEMOT reports have been received: approximately 15 off Indian Island, Lun. Co. Aug. 9 (P. Dobson & Hilton), a single at Big Island Oct. 14 (Doulls) and another in winter plumage Oct. 15 at Pictou (Holdway).

An immature PUFFIN was found in the yard near the lighthouse at Cape Sable on Oct. 20 (Smiths), this being the first

record for that locality although the fishermen report them as common off shore.

MOURNING DOVES are reported from all Cape Breton counties and from all those along the Eastern and South Shores, excepting Lunenburg Co. Of the counties bordering Northumberland Strait and Bay of Fundy, only one - Pictou - produced a record, this being of 2 seen at King's Head Aug. 22 by E. Doull.

The earliest sighting of this species was at Cape Sable Light Aug. 16 (Smiths), and the largest numbers reported were from Seal Island - 20 plus, Oct. 4-6, and 10 plus, Oct. 27-28 (NSBS parties).

A YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO was carefully studied by several observers at Ingonish on Sept. 26 (Neily), and another reported from Shelburne Oct. 24 (Robertson per Lewis); a BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO was seen during June and July at Annapolis Royal by J. Johnson who remarks that this species, common 10 years ago, has now become quite scarce. The only other reports are of one at Sable River in early August (Freeman) and of a dead bird on Sable Island Aug. 22 (McLaren).

The group of birds most sparsely reported in Nova Scotia is, without doubt, the owls. This may be because of a true scarcity of these species or it may indicate something concerning the habits of our bird watchers. In any case, our native owls and native birders seldom cross paths.

There is one report of a GREAT HORNED OWL at Cape Canso in October by C. Armsworthy, and one of a LONG-EARED OWL at Lower Ohio Aug. 18-19 by Mrs. B. Harris (per Lewis).

WHIP-POOR-WILLS were on their ancestral breeding territories at Jollimore and Bedford near Halifax this summer but no departure dates were indicated. Another was at Sable River July 12 (E. Richardson).

NIGHTHAWKS arrive late and leave early. R. Dobson writes that they first appeared at Kejimkujik on May 25 and were last seen on Sept. 9. C. Helleiner saw what must have been a migratory movement on the morning of July 31 when he observed 3 flocks totalling 40-50 birds, while driving on the Bicentennial Drive near Halifax. Flocks were still going by in Halifax County at the end of August (Carmichael) and stragglers were seen well into September; one in Colchester Co. Sept. 8 (Allen), and 3 from the Lurcher Sept. 13-15.

Sara MacLean reports a flight of CHIMNEY SWIFTS at Glace Bay on July 2, but whether or not this is a migratory movement is hard to say. Other reports are very late sightings, no doubt of storm-driven birds. Three were seen at Waverley Oct. 26-29 (Willis); one over Halifax Har. on the latter date (C. Helleiner & Macpherson); and 3, Nov. 1, over the city (Halifax) by Mary Helleiner.

Earliest departure date for the YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER

this year seems to be Aug. 9, when one was seen at Cape Sable Light (Smiths). The last one seen at Kejimikujik was on Sept. 8 (R. Dobson). There were at least 50 concentrated on Seal Island Oct. 4-6, (fewer than on the previous trip at that time), and 2 were still around at Conrad's Beach, Hfx. Co. Oct. 14 (Anderson). One of the sights of the Oct. 4-6 Seal Island trip was a group of 3 or 4 RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS, all immatures, but very showy birds, which remained together most of the time, flitting about the sheep pasture near at hand and obligingly plastering themselves against the fence posts at eye level. The YELLOW-BELLIED SAP-SUCKER deserves mention. One, seen by the Smiths Aug. 28, is the second record for Cape Sable Light, although interestingly enough 2 more followed, 1, on Sept. 30, and a third on Oct. 1. Ross Dobson reported the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker as "abundant, with numerous nests", at Kejimikujik. A late report is of 1, Oct. 4 at Port Mouton (H. F. Tufts). There is a record of eight sightings of the BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER reported since June, totalling 14 individuals and one nest. On June 7, 1 was seen at Indian Path, Lun. Co., by J. L. Cohrs; on June 16 a pair of birds and a nest was discovered near Cameron Settlement, Guys. Co., by E. Lowerison; Aug. 6, 1, Shelburne Co. (Gallagher) and a pair also in early Aug. in Shel. Co. (Robertson); 1, Aug. 15 at Barrington (Doane); 1, Aug. 26 and 1, Oct. 12 at Ingonish Beach (Neily); 3, Sept. 17, at Kejimikujik (R. Dobson); 1, Sept. 22, at Rockingham, Hfx. Co. (A. Mills); and 1 in Oct. at Port Mouton (Inness). For a description of the nest, see "Letters".

It is said that the EASTERN KINGBIRD habitually leaves Nova Scotia on the Labor Day week-end, but a few got away early this year, judging by reports from Cape Sable of one there briefly on Aug. 23 (B.J.S.); and from Kejimikujik of one there, the last time seen on Aug. 27 (R. Dobson). Two WESTERN KINGBIRDS were present on Seal Island, Oct. 5, seen by the NSBS party there at that time. Two more nests of the EASTERN PHOEBE were discovered this summer, one at Gaspereau, Kings Co., reported by Tufts (see note), and one at Kejimikujik, reported by J. Johnson and E. Mills. Both contained 4 young. Dr. Ian McLaren wrote from Sable Island that EMPIDONAX FLYCATCHERS and Kingbirds were regular visitors there until mid-July, none was seen after July 18, "until returns in mid-August". Empidonax Flycatchers were sighted from the Lurcher, passing in one's or two's, from July 30 to Sept. 15, on 14 separate occasions (Romain & Doucette). A sketchy outline of migration of the EASTERN WOOD PEWEE is bracketed between Aug. 16, when one boarded the Lurcher Lightship (Romain), and Oct. 6, when one last one was seen at Chezzetcook (Anderson, E. Mills). A Pewee appeared in the MacMullen garden in Dartmouth on Sept. 2, along with a Savannah Sparrow, a Downy Woodpecker, a Blue Jay, a Grackle, a Hummingbird, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, a Red-eyed Vireo and a female Yellowthroat. Dr. MacMullen said this was the outstanding collection of birds evidently migrating in his neighborhood, and it is interesting that the same date, Sept. 2, was mentioned by H.P. Moffatt in his report, as most notable for a movement of small birds in the East River - Chester area. Large flocks of HORNED LARKS began appearing Oct. 9, when 105 were seen at Pictou (Holdway, Doulls), and 35 at Mabou, followed by 8 at Cabot Landing, Vic. Co., Oct. 10 (Erskine). After that, a dozen or more reports up to date mention flocks in coastal regions

of Halifax County, numbering 10 to 50 individuals (Crathorne, E. Doull, E. Mills, D. Brown).

TREE SWALLOWS were getting scarce in Yarmouth Co. by Sept. 4, according to Allen, but latest dates of sightings are Oct. 26, 27, and 29, 6 at Seal Island, 10 at Peggy's Cove, and the last one at Eastern Passage, Hfx. Co. (Fullerton, Hinds, Doane, Macpherson and Helleiner). These were quite probably hurricane strays. A flock of around 75 Tree Swallows was seen flying over Seal Island Sept. 6, the usual date of departure. (Pockington, Willis). As early as July 30, 100 BARN SWALLOWS alighted at Cape Sable, where they attacked the newly spread hay, searching out "hoppers" (B.J. Smith).

Three Barn Swallows passed the Lurcher Aug. 18, 2 more on Aug. 19. About 1,000 were concentrated at Heather's Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 21 (Lowerison), and another large concentration was noted at Jacques Landing, Queen's Co. Aug. 29 (R. Dobson). On Oct. 27, 2 were seen at Cow Bay, Hfx. Co. (McLaren, Anderson), and on the same date 5 at Cape Sable (B.J. Smith). A very late record of the Barn Swallow has just come in from Barbara Hinds of 6 of these birds at Cow Bay, Hfx. Co., almost certainly storm-blown strays, rudely arrested on their flight to Mexico. Dr. McLaren reports Barn, Tree and Bank Swallows all occasional visitors at Sable Island through the summer. Only one report of the CLIFF SWALLOW preparing to leave, is of 100+ in a flock at central Hants Co. Aug. 3 (Allen). Evelyn Lowerison wrote that 3 pairs of PURPLE MARTINS nested in her Martin house this summer, and 5 pairs in the new Martin house built by Mr. Tennant at the old Percy Black colony in Amherst. All the Martins had left by Aug. 21.

For reference, summer through fall, 1968, produced no notable reports of Jays, Ravens or Crows, though all of our native species were mentioned as present in usual numbers and places. Aaron Bagg has written that there was a very good flight of BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES in parts of New England, "evident by the end of August at the head of Penobscot Bay, Maine, and being noticed in the first week of September in New Hampshire, eastern Massachusetts, and at Christmas Cove, Maine..... Farther east on the Maine coast it was noticed on Sept. 10." Mr. Bagg wished to find out if there was any evidence of an unusually augmented flight of Black-caps in Nova Scotia this fall. From reports received, the dates of interest are Oct. 12, 13 and 14. On Oct. 12, Tony Erskine saw 8 Black-caps on the Sackville Marsh, "200 yards from the nearest tree"; on Oct. 13, Ross Anderson saw 10, his maximum number for a field trip between Sept. 28 and Oct. 27 in the Chezzetcook area; and, on Oct. 14, Elizabeth Doull saw 20+ at Eastern Shore, Hfx. Co., her usual count in that area being 1 or 2. We have no other detailed reports, and would be grateful to receive any information corroborative or otherwise of an unusually large movement of Blackcaps this fall. The BOREAL CHICKADEE has been plentiful throughout the season. The largest concentration was noted at Seal Island, Oct. 4, 5, and 6, where up to 50 were seen, along with great numbers of RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES and BROWN CREEPERS. All 3 of these species were greatly diminished in number by Oct. 27, when the last expedition to the island took place. Incidentally only one's

and two's were noted on the earlier (Pocklington, Willis) trip, Sept. 6-9. One Red-breasted and 1 Brown Creeper were seen at Cape Sable Oct. 5; and an even later date for a Creeper is Oct. 24, at Lake Loon, Hfx. Co. (Topples). Both of these species were mentioned as being more abundant than usual this year, by a number of observers. Dr. McLaren found the Red-breasted Nuthatch "regular in ones and twos through summer on Sable Island" and queries "Why this of all species?" (Sable, like Cape Sable, is treeless.)

The HOUSE WREN reported at Round Hill in the spring was still present (or another of the same had appeared) on July 13 (W. E. Whitehead), and there were 2 House Wrens seen at Seal Island Oct. 5 by the NSBS party. It was possible to watch these tiny birds at close range, for considerable lengths of time, due to their frequenting unusually open terrain and the notable tameness of the birds, which seems to be characteristic of both spring and fall migrants in the midst of a large movement. A LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN was seen on the same Seal Island trip (Oct. 5) (Macpherson et al), another on Oct. 16 at Cole Harbor, Hfx. Co., by Eric Mills.

A few reports of the MOCKINGBIRD have come in; 1, Aug. 4 followed by 3, Aug. 5, at Sable Island (Higgins per McLaren); 1, Sept. 14, seen on the Brier Island field trip by the NSBS party; 2, Oct. 5, Seal Island (NSBS party) and 1, Oct. 24, at Shelburne (Robertson, per Lewis). A departing CATBIRD landed at Cape Sable Sept. 23 (B.F. Smith); up to half a dozen were with the Seal Island migrants, Oct. 4, 5, and 6; and a late record of 1, Oct. 22 comes from Ross Dobson at Kejimikujik. A BROWN THRASHER was seen on the Brier Island field trip, Sept. 14; 1, Sept. 20, at Cape Sable (B.F. Smith), 3 at the same place Sept. 29, and 5 there Oct. 1 (B.F. Smith). H. F. Tufts reports a Thrasher at Port Mouton on Oct. 4; the McLarens, 4, on Brier Island Oct. 5, and there were 10 or 12 of them about at Seal Island during the Oct. 4, 5, 6 trip. None was seen on the later trip to Seal Island, Oct. 26 to 28.

First noted large movement of the ROBIN is for Sept. 21, when C.R.K. Allen saw up to 100 flying over the fields and hopping along the roadsides in the Shubenacadie area, Col. Co. Ross Anderson noted a similarly high number moving on Sept. 29 at Eastern Passage, Hfx. Co. They were still plentiful at Kedge Oct. 18 (R. Dobson); and at Round Hill Oct. 21, where W. E. Whitehead noted "a big influx of Robins, 50 to 60 in the garden at one time". Three arrived at Cape Sable Oct. 22 (B.J. Smith) and there were many flocks arriving at Seal Island Oct. 26-28, building up to about 150 (Fullerton, Hinds). On Nov. 1, at Chebucto Head, Hfx. Co., Eric Mills watched a flock of about 200 Robins "flying high, along the shore" heading south.

On Sept. 21, near St. Andrews, Col. Co., C.R.K. Allen saw a dozen or more mixed HERMIT and SWAINSON'S THRUSHES, about half-and-half of each species. They were hopping along the margin of the road, in among the robins, also noted on the move that day. This unusual observation was undoubtedly of a migratory movement, but more in line with the usual dates of departure are the Oct. 8 report of a Hermit Thrush at Point

Michaud (A. J. Erskine), and the report of 1 each Swainson's and GREY-CHEEKED THRUSH, Oct. 18, at Cape Sable Light (B.J. Smith). We are happy to report at least one EASTERN BLUEBIRD in Nova Scotia this summer, seen at Sable River, July 19 & 20 (Freeman per Lewis).

The GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET was seen in good numbers on summer field trips (Anderson, Allen and others). A migration, or as Tufts suggests, a wandering movement, appears to have taken place this fall, according to the Seal Island records. On the Sept. 6-9 trip, around 15 Golden-crowns were counted (Pocklingtons and Willises); on the Oct. 4-6 trip they were practically uncountable, certainly many hundreds (the trees ringing the island were full of them) (Macpherson et al); and by the Oct. 26-28 trip (Fullerton, Hinds), numbers were down to 20 or 30 again. Relatively few RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS were present at Seal Island on Oct. 4, 5, and 6, but their migration may have co-incided to some extent as 5 were seen at nearby Cape Sable Light Oct. 5 (B.J. Smith).

A very early fall record for the WATER PIPIT, is 1, July 30, Cape Sable (B.J. Smith). This is followed by other early records: 1, Sept. 1 at Sober Island, Hfx. Co. (E. Crathorne) and 3, Sept. 2, at East River, Lun. Co. (H. Moffatt). Flocks of 40 to 60 were noted at Eastern Shore Sept. 13 and 14 (E. Doull); 7, Sept. 22 at Pictou (Holdway); 60, Oct. 6, at Annapolis (J. Johnson) 18, Oct. 9, at Judique, Inv. Co. (A. J. Erskine); 45, Oct. 10, Cape Sable Light (B.J. Smith); 30+, Oct. 13, Point Michaud (B. Reid); and 50 to 60, Oct. 18, Cape Sable Light (B.J. Smith).

CEDAR WAXWINGS were well reported this summer, and widely distributed around the province. An early migrant in a great hurry was seen from the Lurcher Aug. 17, and another single bird, said to be the first in years, was at Cape Sable Oct. 1 (B.J. Smith). Two NORTHERN SHRIKES were seen in Oct., 1, Oct. 10 at Money Point, Vic. Co. (A. J. Erskine) and 1 immature Oct. 21, at Three-Fathom Harbour, Hfx. Co. (Allen). A LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was reported Sept. 14 at Central Grove, Digby Co. by Neily and Wilson.

A late record for the SOLITARY VIREO is Oct. 27, when 1 was seen at Seal Island (Fullerton, Hinds). During the previous Seal Island trip Oct. 4,5,6, up to 20 RED-EYED VIREOS were among the migrant population congregated there. The density of small birds present on the Island during this trip was exceptional, even for Seal Island during the fall migration. The trees were hopping with Kinglets and Warblers, the ground covered with sparrows and their kind. A Brown Creeper lit on one of the party, a Junco flew in the window. Falcons whistled past our ears diving for the sparrows, and Brown Thrashers and Flickers pecked about like barnyard fowl. Among the WARBLERS, the commonest species were the PALM and the MYRTLE, the ratio about 4 to 1, and present in the hundreds. Next in numbers were the BLACK-THROATED GREEN, a dozen or more, and some evidently just arriving, as they lit on anything handy, panting, with wings drooping, then dropped to the ground to start feeding. They paid no attention to human approach. Among other species noted in number were the BLACK-AND-WHITE, PARULA, MAGNOLIA, BLACK-THROATED BLUE, BLACKBURNIAN, YELLOWTHROAT and AMERICAN REDSTART. On the earlier (Sept. 6) trip, NASHVILLE,

DAY-BREASTED, BLACKPOLL, NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH and WILSON'S were commoner, on the late trip (Oct. 26-27), all were gone except a few Magnolias, about 80 Myrtles, 2 Black-throated Greens, 30 to 40 Palms, a Yellowthroat and a Redstart. However, one other real rarity was well seen and closely studied at that time, a PRAIRIE WARBLER. Sylvia Fullerton, who made the identification, had seen one two months before, on Sable Island, where she was assisting Dr. McLaren in his Ipswich Sparrow study. Ben Doane first spotted the Prairie Warbler on Sable; he had seen them before, and has sent in the following description: "Seen on Aug. 20, at 4.30 p.m., sitting on a fence at the base of West Light, Sable Island. The bird was a warbler, with a bright yellow breast, heavily streaked with black on both sides; clear yellow throat, with streaks on the sides only - they did not meet across the mid-line. The streaks were short, heavy black, and curved under the cheeks. The crown was plain olive gray, the back unstreaked olive, the wings slate gray, no wing-bars; a thin pale line through the eye and a faint eye-ring. The bird was a conspicuous tail-wagger." Dr. Doane suggests that it was in transition plumage.

A second exciting discovery this summer was a BLUE-WINGED WARBLER, at McNab's Island, Hfx. Hbr., on Aug. 25. Mike Anketell-Jones, who identified it, wrote: "Seen on Aug. 25, at mid-day, weather cloudy but bright, bird perched on roadside shrubbery, at McNab's Island. A yellow warbler, with very evident white wing-bars, a bright yellow breast, and black eye-line as outstanding field marks. When the bird dived into the shrubbery, the white under the tail-feathers was clearly visible. I had a clear, unobstructed view, and on turning up my Peterson had no difficulty with the identification."

Another note of interest concerning our Warblers from Dr. McLaren, who reported "a few warbler stragglers through June on Sable Island. The last spring migrants were perhaps 2 CAPE MAYS on June 28, and the first fall migrant perhaps an immature YELLOW on July 29. A photo taken by D. Higgins, Aug. 22, is almost certainly of a YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER." Eric Mills reported "Parula warblers very common at Kejimikujik in June"; the Gallaghers, "Redstarts commoner than usual in Shelburne county in July". It is of interest that a Redstart was seen from the Lurcher Aug. 19, and another on Cape Sable Aug. 20. Oddly enough, Chris Helleiner heard Redstarts singing, in his garden in Halifax, on Aug. 22. An OVENBIRD nest was discovered by Frances Brown, July 3, near her summer home on the South Mountain. At that time it contained 2 eggs. The next day there were 3 eggs, the next day 4. On July 20, all four had hatched to bare (unfeathered) nestlings, which were well feathered out by July 24. As usual, the Smiths at Cape Sable saw our only reported HOODED WARBLER, on July 30 this summer. They also are responsible for most of our records of the YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: 1, Aug. 27; 1, Sept. 27; 1, Sept. 29; and 1, Oct. 5, at Cape Sable Light. Another Chat was seen on the Brier Island field trip Sept. 14, and one was at Seal Island Oct. 5. (The significance of spring and fall migration reports or any bird reports from Cape Sable is obvious. Brier Island and Seal Island, for example, are wooded, but Cape Sable is like a ship at sea.)

In the Yarmouth area, where BOBOLINKS are not usually present in numbers, a flock of 100+ seen on Sept. 3 was certainly a migratory movement (Allen). An EASTERN MEADOWLARK was seen at Seal Island Oct. 5; 1 at Port Saxon, Shel. Co. Oct. 13 (Doane); and another at Seal Island Oct. 26. The REDWINGED BLACKBIRD was reported on the move Oct. 12 at Kejimikujik, where a small flock was noted by R. Dobson. Another unusual concentration (16+) was noted near Dartmouth on the Dorothea Road Oct. 20 (B. Hinds); and Don Jeffries of Boulderwood, Hfx. Co., said his summer flock of 15 had most of them departed Oct. 18. The 4 or 5 remaining bid fair to stay the winter, being present at the feeder every day up to the time of writing (Nov. 2). BALTIMORE ORIOLES returned to Nova Scotia in good numbers this summer, and have been widely reported as present in Cape Breton (E. Chant); Halifax Co. (Brian MacLean and R. Anderson); Brier Island (NSBS); and Shelburne Co. (Robertson per Lewis). Four were seen at Cape Sable Light Sept. 4 (B.F. Smith), and October records of birds on the move come from Halifax city, 2, Oct. 30 (M.B. Allen), Dartmouth Piggery, 1, Oct. 28, (Mills, McLaren, Brown), and 20 to 30 birds at Seal Island Oct. 4, 5, 6; 1 only seen there Oct. 27.

The RUSTY BLACKBIRD appeared in good numbers in the spring, disappeared during the summer into its boggy fastnesses, and reappeared as usual this fall in umber plumage, congregating for migration early in October. A single bird passed the Lurcher Sept. 9; 60 were at Beaverbank, Hants Co. Oct. 6 (Hinds); 100+ at Conrad's Beach, Hfx. Co. Oct. 6 (Mills), 20 at Cape Sable Oct. 8 (W. Smith). Ten to 12 Rustys in small groups were seen from time to time Oct. 5 and 6 at Seal Island. No other blackbird was present at that time, but a few Rustys and a few Redwings (2 or 3) were seen on the Oct. 27 Seal Island trip. A peak in fall movement of the COMMON GRACKLE showed up in the records from the McMullins in Dartmouth, who note 3, Sept. 2; around 40 Sept. 3; around 125 Sept. 21 (half of these had no tail feathers); and 10, Oct. 6, in their vicinity.

Two unusual August records (most are for spring and fall) for the visiting SCARLET TANAGER are of 1, Aug. 18, at Hadley Cove, Guys. Co. (E. Crathorne), and 1, (singing) at Halifax Aug. 29 (Helleiner). Joseph Johnson saw 1 Sept. 3, at Annapolis, and Anderson and Mills 1, Oct. 6, at the Martinique Sanctuary.

Notes of interest on the ROSE-BREADED GROSBEEK are: from Round Hill, where young were seen in August (adults noted June 16) (W. E. Whitehead); and from Cape Sable, where 1 (immature) bird arrived Oct. 24 (B.J. Smith). A DICKCISSEL was at Sable Island June 28-30 (Mrs. Bell per McLaren); 6 were seen late Sept. through early Oct. around Guys. Co. (Armsworthy); 4 were "singing" and seen on Seal Island, Oct. 5 and 6 (NSBS), and 2 were reported from Shelburne, Oct. 24 (Robertson per Lewis). EVENING GROSBEEKS are reported to have summered in various places around the province from Guys. to Shel. Counties, but few seen in any one place. Late in October flocks of 20 to 30 began to appear at Malagawatch, Inv. Co. (E. Chant); at Eastern Passage and Chebucto Hd., Hfx. Co. (Anderson, Mills); at Loon Lake near Dartmouth (Topples); in Halifax city (12, flying over fast, Helleiner); at Sandy Pt. and Sandy River, Shel. Co. (Robertson per Lewis), and a small

flock of 5, at Seal Island, Oct. 27 (Fullerton, Hinds).

The PURPLE FINCH largely disappeared from view, after its notable spring invasion, and is still reported in only 2's and 3's here and there. Several dozen, however, were mingled with the flocks of sparrows feeding on the ground at Seal Island Oct. 5 and 6, and around 8 were still there Oct. 26-8.

Several extraordinary records of the COMMON REDPOLL came from Sable Island. Three were seen July 6; 1 July 12; 1 July 26, 27 & 29; and 1 Aug. 2; most of these by Mrs. Bell, some also by Dr. McLaren who wrote: "These records, following upon those reported in earlier June, seem to imply residence if not breeding on the island, which seems suitable in topography and vegetation." The PINE SISKIN was present on Sable, scattered records in early July, followed by flocks of 30-50 on July 18 to 30 (McLaren). Both S. MacLean in Cape Breton, and C.R.K. Allen on the mainland report Pine Siskins present in exceptional numbers this summer. One was heard singing repeatedly on the afternoon of Sept. 13 in an apple tree near St. Andrew's, Col. Co. (This I can vouch for personally. It was an unfamiliar song and, upon approaching the tree, I was delighted to be able to watch the little Siskin throw back his head and pour out his very sweet song, rarely heard in these parts. Ed.) The AMERICAN GOLDFINCH has been generally distributed in good numbers throughout the season, tapering off by mid-September in the Colchester-Hants region, according to C.R.K. Allen. Ross Anderson put the diminishing numbers later, in October, in the Halifax region. The Topples at Loon Lake were inundated by a flock of 50 Goldfinches on Sept. 29 definitely "on their way". Flocks were arriving at Seal Island Oct. 5 and 6, swooping in from the sea, and it was remarkable to watch them land, straight out of the air, on the big thistles back of the pebble ridge, sometimes a dozen birds to a thistle, which was rapidly torn to shreds under their voracious attack. Goldfinches were seen in 2's and 3's through June to late July on Sable Island, as were both the RED CROSSBILL and the WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL. Both species of Crossbill were more common than usual in Cape Breton this summer, according to W. Neily, and S. MacLean saw "many" Red Crossbills in Vic. Co. on July 7. Four White-wings were seen at Glace Bay Sept. 22 by the same observer, 1 in Guys. Co. Sept. 22 by E. Armsworthy, and 20 (7 at Bengy's Lake, 13 at Money Point) on Oct. 10 by A.J. Erskine on his Cape Breton trip this fall.

A good number of RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEES have been reported, all in October: 1, Oct. 3, Cape Sable (Smiths); 1, Oct. 15, Lake Annis, Yar. Co. (Mrs. R. Trask); 1, Oct. 18, Pt. Pleasant Park, Hfx. (A. Doull); 2, Oct. 20-23, Yar. Co. (E. Stubbert); and 2, Oct. 26-27, Seal Island (Fullerton, Hinds). There must have been 10 of these birds present on Seal Island Oct. 4, 5 and 6, possibly more, but we leaned over backwards to be careful not to count them twice.

The IPSWICH SPARROW showed a possible 5 to 6 fold increase on Sable Island, as a result of a highly successful breeding season, according to Dr. Ian McLaren. A few have been seen on the mainland this fall: 1, Oct. 6, at Conrad's Beach (Mills); 1, Oct. 16,

same place and observer, also by Ross Anderson at the same time; and 3, Oct. 27, at Cow Bay, Hfx. Co., by Anderson & McLaren.

A SAVANNAH SPARROW build-up for migration was evident at Chebogue, Yar. Co., when C.R.K. Allen saw 200+ restlessly moving about there on Sept. 3. One Savannah Sparrow rested on the deck of the Lurcher Lightship Sept. 8 (Doucette).

The last report received of the SHARP-TAILED SPARROW is for 1, Oct. 6, at Conrad's Beach, Hfx. Co. (E. Mills), and for the VESPER SPARROW, 1, Oct. 26, at Rockingham, Hfx. Co., from the same observer. A number of Vespers passed the Lurcher, seen on successive days, Sept. 6 to 16 (Doucette). We have 2 LARK SPARROWS to report, 1, Oct. 5 and 6 at Seal Island (Macpherson et al), and 1, Oct. 13, at Port Latour, Shel. Co. (B. Doane). The SLATE-COLORED JUNCO had an exceptionally good year in Nova Scotia, reported as "abundant, many big flocks of immatures in early August" by Anderson, Allen, Helleiner; and a flock of 60 built up to 250+ at Seal Island Oct. 27-8 (Fullerton, Hinds). A.J. Erskine reported early arrival of the TREE SPARROW, 1, Oct. 7 at Simm's Beach; 6, Oct. 9 at Mabou Mines; and 12, Oct. 10 at Money Pt. in Cape Breton. One was seen Oct. 14 at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (Clayden); 4, Oct. 20 at Round Hill, Anna. Co. (Whitehead); and 4 Oct. 27, at Seal Island. A late departure date for the CHIPPING SPARROW is Oct. 26-28, when up to 20 were counted at Seal Island (Fullerton, Hinds). An extraordinary number of FIELD SPARROWS were at Seal Island Oct. 4, 5, and 6, where a dozen or more were discovered among the ground feeders about the island. One was noted at the same time, Oct. 6, at Cape Sable, another on Oct. 9 (B.J. Smith), and at least 2 were still on Seal Island Oct. 26-8. The WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW reports this fall start with 1, Sept. 28 at Cape Sable (Smiths); 1, Sept. 29, at Lloy, Hfx. Co. (Hinds & Fullerton); followed by a number of October records: 2 in Guysborough Co. (Armsworthy); 1 at Annapolis (Johnson); 1 at Loon Lake, Hfx. Co. (Topples); 1 at Cole Harbor, Hfx. Co.; 4 immatures at Money Pt. (Erskine); and 4 or 5 at Seal Island on both Oct. trips. Some of these birds were in bright adult plumage, affording much pleasure to the beholders, unused to such elegance in sparrows in this part of the world. The WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, like the Junco, was said to be present on most field trips this summer by our regular reporters. One White-throat was flying around the deck of the Lurcher July 2, according to Captain Romain. This was one of the 2 only passerines seen by the Captain between June 27 and July 21 (the other was a Bank Swallow July 21). White-throats were still abundant in Hfx. Co. up to Sept. 28 at least, according to Eric Mills. No good migration dates are at hand, but there were again some dozen or more White-throats at Seal Island Oct. 4-6, none noted on the later trip.

Simultaneous reports of the FOX SPARROW came from a number of observers (Erskine, Allen, Topples and others) for Oct. 10. Erskine saw 8 birds at Money Point that day, and 10 were seen Oct. 13 at the Dartmouth Piggery by Barbara Hinds, 1, Oct. 18 at Pt. Pleasant Park (A. Doull). This indicates the arrival time of the Fox Sparrow, but probably not the size of the flight, nor its extent, difficult to ascertain in the fall, when the birds tend to alight in remote wooded areas. The LINCOLN'S SPARROW,

rarely reported, was seen this fall, Oct. 6, 1 at Cole Hbr., Hfx. Co. (Mills); and 1, Oct. 13 at Roseway Beach, Shel. Co. (E. Richardson per Lewis). A movement of SWAMP SPARROWS is indicated by 30+ counted Oct. 6, at the Hfx. Co. Hospital grounds (Mills); and 12+ seen at the Dartmouth Piggery Oct. 14 (Hinds). On the same day, Oct. 14, at the Piggery, Barbara Hinds also counted 40+ SONG SPARROWS, double the number seen there the day before.

The LAPLAND LONGSPUR arrival seems to be the period Oct. 6 to 14, when 1 or 2 of these birds were first seen in Hfx. Co. (Mills, Anderson, Crathorne, etc.) and in Cape Breton, when Erskine saw 8 at the Glace Bay Sanctuary, 11 at Port Morien. This is about a week earlier than the usual arrival time.

The SNOW BUNTING followed a few days later, first seen 1, Oct. 18, at Peggy's Cove (Mills); and 2, Oct. 20, Wedge Island, Hfx. Co. (Helleiner). These were followed by 5, Oct. 23 at Sandy Cove, Hfx. Co. (Pocklington), 1, Oct. 23, Baccaro (Doane); 2, Oct. 23, at Chebucto Hd. (Mills); 1, Oct. 24, Guys. Co. (Jarvis); and 2, Oct. 26-28 at Seal Island (Fullerton, Hinds).

REPORTS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE MARCH 25, 1969.

DON'T FORGET THE CHRISTMAS COUNT.



Confirmation of a New Record for Nova Scotia

Confirmation has been received from the National Museum in Ottawa of the identity of the Cave (Cuban Cliff) Swallow, *Petrochelidon fulva cavicola*, by Dr. Ian McLaren, who submitted the remains of a bird picked up on Sable Island, June 21, 1968, tentatively identified by him at that time as a Cave Swallow (NSBS Newsletter 10: 63 (1968)).

Unusual Bird Records - Nova Scotia

While travelling west along Hwy. 6, I stopped at a point beside Wallace Harbour, 200 yds. or so east of the lighthouse, and swept the harbour with binoculars, looking for water birds. At least 75 Bonaparte's Gulls were scattered along a line from mid-harbour to the southeast past Lazy Point, some resting on the water and others swooping and skimming the surface while feeding. Among the gulls I noticed a smaller, black bird, with long wings and a white rump, and I knew at once that it was my first Petrel. It was behaving much as were the gulls, swooping low over the water, sometimes pausing in one spot with wings raised, arched to either side but not beating (it was too far away to tell if it was "pattering" the feet on the surface while it was stationary). I was a little surprised that the flight did not seem obviously erratic, like a bat or Nighthawk, being more similar to that of a tern or small gull, though less powerful. The bird was too far away to tell if the tail was square or forked, although it gave the former impression, nor could I see if the feet extended beyond the tail in flight. At the time I had no field guides with me: on my return home two hours later, I consulted the Peterson and Audubon guides, and concluded from the flight description, and from the fact that the bird was seen inside the harbour (although in sight of Northumberland Strait) in daytime, that it was more likely to have been a Wilson's Petrel than a Leach's. It is possible that two birds were present rather than one, as the first and fourth observations were in one area and about a half mile distant from the second and third observations; the observed behaviour was similar on all occasions. The one objection to calling the bird a Wilson's Petrel is the date. Tufts (1962) gives 9 September as the latest record for Nova Scotia, and Squires (1952) 19 September as the latest for New Brunswick, both records being from the mouth of the Bay of Fundy, and general texts all indicate that the species leaves the north-west Atlantic in September. In contrast, Leach's Petrels migrating from (say) the colony at Bonaventure Island, P.Q., might be expected to be passing through the Gulf of St. Lawrence at this season, though their presence in such a place as Wallace Harbour would be quite exceptional at any time. Personally, I am calling it Wilson's Petrel, despite the date (11 October).

- A. J. Erskine

Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Note on a Buff-breasted Sandpiper seen at Caribou Island, near Pictou, N. S., on 15 September 1968, by E. Holdway.

A Buff-breasted Sandpiper was observed for twenty minutes at a distance of from 40 to 20 feet through 8 x 30

binoculars when associated with a flock of Semi-palmated Sandpipers. These birds were feeding over stranded seaweed (Laver and Irish moss) on a sand beach.

While closing the distance gradually the Semi-palmated Sandpipers rose together and landed about 50 yards away, leaving the Buff-breasted Sandpiper alone, standing upright and wary enough to stop feeding. The bird was then flushed and observed in flight until it rejoined the original flock of sandpipers nearby.

The following points were noted:

- (a) Bright yellow legs.
- (b) Long neck and round head, with a short dark bill.
- (c) A little larger than the associated Semi-palmated Sandpipers.
- (d) Uniformly buffy underparts which extended up and over the nape.
- (e) Scaled back feathers.
- (f) Dark above in flight, no wing stripe.

- E. Holdway

Nesting Bald Eagles

I am writing to give a report of a nesting pair of Bald Eagles at Lime Hill, Inverness County, Cape Breton Island.

The nest is in the crotch of a maple on a peninsula opposite our property on the West Bay - Marble Mountain Road. The tree can be seen from our cottage, but it is necessary to go out in a boat to observe the nest.

This nest was first noted during July of 1966. At that time it was rather small in size indicating to me that it was a new nest that year. In 1966 it contained one young eagle who was making flights from the nest by the end of July.

We next visited the nest in July of 1967. It had not changed in size and was not in use and we were disheartened.

On our arrival July 4 of this year we were delighted to find the nest again in use. It had been added to, about doubling the former size and contained two young birds. We checked the nest every few days from the boat and the young were still at the nest on Aug. 3, the day we left for home. During the period the adult birds were observed nearby and occasionally with food at the nest.

In addition to this pair there is another pair in the immediate vicinity who are nesting someplace up a brook a mile or so from our property. I have not located this nest so cannot report if this is a breeding pair. Also present was one immature eagle.

I am told by R. N. MacInnis that five eagles wintered in the area the winter of 1967-68 and he put fish out for them, which they took. Mr. MacInnis is a mink rancher on the West Bay-Marble Mountain Road.

I regret that I cannot report on the activity at this nest over a greater part of the year, but we are only at our summer cottage during the month of July.

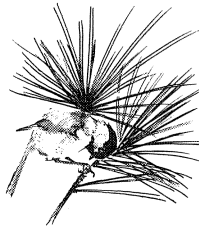
- Marjorie B. Foote

Chestnut-sided Warbler in Cape Breton

The Chestnut-sided Warblers (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) observed on May 25 at Donkin (Glace Bay area field day) by Hedley and Mrs. Hopkins and myself appear to be only the second record for Cape Breton Island. It seems that there is no previously published record, and the only other one that we have been able to unearth is from the unpublished notes of Dr. Tufts. In his file the following notes occur concerning this species: "1936 - P. A. Taverner says no record from Cape Breton to date. 1941 June 1 - One seen at Port Hood Island, Inverness Co., Cape Breton by A. W. Cameron."

The 1968 observations in the Donkin area were: one male in the Sand Lake area and two males by the nearby Birch Grove Road. All were seen clearly, in good light, and with binoculars at close range. Two were first noticed in song.

- Wayne Neily



FIELD TRIPS

A good many years ago my mother said to me "If you plan to spend your life in Nova Scotia, you must learn to carry on, no matter what the weather." This was sound advice, and I can only suppose that many others of us had similarly wise parentage, if attendance at Bird Society Field Trips is any guide. Last summer (1967) we were so ill-treated by the fog and rain we scarcely had the courage to plan a future program for fear nobody would come. But attendance was excellent this year, and as it happened, gorgeous day followed gorgeous day, and on fourteen of them, Society Field Trips were held.

There were 4 early morning trips in the Halifax area, and one all day trip, in May, for the spring migration, reported in the July Newsletter. Similarly there were 4 early morning trips in the Cape Breton area, in May, and one all day trip in June, at which time most of the migrants had arrived. The regions explored in Cape Breton were Donkin, Ball's Creek, Glace Bay and Horne's Road, Cape Breton County, and Ingonish Beach, Victoria County. Leaders for these trips were Sara MacLean, Mary Hay, Hedley Hopkins, Betty Reid and Wayne Neily. I should like to quote Frank Robertson, who accompanied the birdwatchers on one of these trips, and subsequently described it in the Cape Breton post:

"We crossed the bridge over Lingan Bay at approximately 5:30 a.m., just at the moment before and during the time the sun rose over the sea. Just before the sun came up, the bay, which was mirror-still with a pair of ducks sitting motionless in the middle, was flooded with bands of color, salmon, pink, rose, and when we reached the far end of the bridge the great, fiery, red ball of the sun pushed up slowly over the Lingan Sandbar and the sea beyond.

.....Between the Gardiner Road and the City we encountered thick fog, so thick you knew where you were only by the road signs. On the other side of Sydney this cleared up enough to allow good driving visibility, with just enough lingering to add a softness and quality to each scene that would have delighted the heart of any enthusiastic photographer. Everywhere the ponds, bays and inlets were mirror still, reflecting trees, boats and shore-side buildings.

.....Where were we going? To the early morning field trip in the Balls Creek area."

Sometimes people say to me, "I'd like to join the Bird Society, but not if it means getting up at five o'clock in the morning." There is, of course, no such demand made by the Society on its members, but the experience, rigorous as it seems, carries its reward.

Of the Ingonish trip, June 8, Wayne Neily writes:

"The first Nova Scotia Bird Society field day to be held in Cape Breton Highlands National Park proved to be a fine one and 18 bird watchers, all but one from the Cape Breton Branch, attended. Many of them added new birds to their life lists, and a total of 60 species was seen. Some of these are fairly common here in northern Cape Breton, but uncommon to rare elsewhere in the province at this time of year, such as the Great Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Greater Yellowlegs, Black Guillemot, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee, Tennessee Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Pine Siskin, and Fox Sparrow. Two species that are uncommon in this area were also spotted: the Cliff Swallow and White-crowned Sparrow, the latter by Doug Findlay, and the former by Roger Wilson. The secretary-treasurer of this Branch, Mrs. Betty Reid, was present as were several other Sydney members - Miss Mary Fraser, Miss Helen Kendall, Mrs. Florence Mackley, Gordon Naish, Father d'Intino and four young friends from Whitney Pier, and Mrs. Edith MacLeod from Glace Bay. Participants from the Ingonish area included Miss Irene Gettas, Mrs. Edith Webb, Miss Mary MacEvoy, and Miss Virginia Doucette. After exploring Ingonish Harbour, Freshwater Lake, the Clyburn Valley and Middle Head, everyone was quite ready to relax and indulge in a congratulatory post-mortem."

Next in point of time came the trip to Kejimikujik National Park, June 29, (I forgot that it stayed cold till the end of June!), and Ross Dobson has sent in this account:

"The Bird Society members met at 8:30 a.m. on a cold, wet morning at the Park entrance on Highway No. 8. The leader of the Field Trip was Dr. Eric Mills, who camped with his family the evening before in the Park. A tentative bird check-list for the Park (145 square miles) was distributed to about 15 Bird Society members. They came from Halifax, Digby, Dartmouth, Annapolis, and even Cape Breton Island.

We started into the Park in a car caravan, and made short stops beside the Mersey River. At the first stop the Park Naturalist gave a brief talk on the flora and fauna of the area. The group soon arrived at Jim Charles Point on Kejimikujik Lake, on the site of the previous Kedge Lodge which operated from 1909 to 1964. After some birding on the Point and a lunch break, the cars travelled to Jacques' Landing at the outlet of the Mersey River.

The last stop was at the Grafton Lake Federal Fish Hatchery. After a pleasant visit here the group compared notes before disbanding and returning home.

Over the day about 62 species of birds were identified. A few of the highlights of the trip are as follows:

- lots of thrushes heard, especially Veery

- At Jacques' Landing an American Bittern was seen, and a Northern Waterthrush heard. Also three Pine Grosbeaks were observed closely.
- At the Fish Hatchery some young Downy Woodpeckers were seen, and some Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. This area was rich in bird life, and Warblers, Vireos, Flycatchers, and Purple Finch were spotted, together with a nesting pair of Wood Pewees.

Here at the Fish Hatchery was the "find of the day", a nest of Eastern Phoebe discovered by Joe Johnson (naturally). Joe quickly found the nest with three young Phoebe in it under a small bridge.

Eric Mills reported the sighting of a female Marsh Hawk the day after the Field Trip at Peter Point within the Park.

In spite of discouraging weather, the trip was a success in many ways. For some it was their first experience of the natural beauty of "Kej.", and it can be seen that the Park area offers excellent possibilities for future visits. The Park Naturalist would welcome any and all bird observations made by Bird Society members, and everyone is invited to drop in on him at his office."



The Cape Bretoners also sponsored a trip to the Bird Islands, conducted by Captain Richard Ahle, on July 6. There is no full report for this trip, but it produced 78+ Puffins, 63+ Razorbills, 700+ Great Cormorants, and 120+ Black Guillemots, according to W. P. Neily. Fifteen people went out, but it was too rough to land.

July 27 was a beautiful day, fine and hot, and there were 33 of us at Evangeline Beach, to witness the beginning of the shorebird migration. Dr. R. W. Tufts put on a magnificent show for us, as tens of thousands of "peep", mostly Semi-palmated Sandpipers, flew in clouds up and down the beach in front of us, wheeling in to settle on the sand from time to time, and allowing us to approach sufficiently near to identify Dowitchers (30+), Black-bellied Plover (20+), Sanderlings (10+), Least Sandpipers (50+), and a few Ruddy Turnstones among them. Eric Mills noted: "at times the birds looked like snow driven in a blizzard, the co-ordination of the flocks was most impressive." Later in the afternoon, we quartered the Grand Pre, flushing many Savannah Sparrows and a few Sharp-tails, but total number of species that day was small, only 15 altogether.



The highlight of the season was the President's Field Day at Point Michaud. Not only was it a beautiful day, and the birds plentiful and of outstanding interest, it was also the first occasion for Cape Bretoners and Mainlanders to smoke the pipe of peace together. The "pipe" was provided by the Cape Breton Branch in the form of a lavish luncheon, al fresco, on a beautiful headland (see photo), and chefs for the occasion were Mr. Bob MacNeil, President, Mr. Hedley Hopkins, past-President, and Mrs. Betty Reid, Secretary-Treasurer of the Cape Breton Branch, no less. Dr. Ian MacLaren, President of the N. S. Bird Society, and Mr. D. D. Findlay led the trip, and 33 members were present. Again we were looking at shorebirds for the most part, and it was an ideal spot for observation - acres and acres of sand flats with tide pools here and there, and hundreds of birds feeding. Of particular interest were the 3 Hudsonian Godwits, the great number of White-rumped Sandpipers (100+), and the opportunity to watch Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs side by side, and note their distinguishing characteristics. Species count that day was 61. Mr. Findlay has been wanting us to have a trip to Point Michaud for some time, and we are grateful to him for the suggestion, one of the best yet. We are also deeply grateful to our hosts, the members of the Cape Breton Branch, for their very kind and characteristic hospitality.



At Cape North-Cheticamp, September 7, the second Cape Breton Highlands National Park field day was also a fine one. Nineteen people managed to get to Cape North early that morning, all but one from the Cape Breton area, to begin a search for hawks and shorebirds.

Unfortunately we didn't strike a major migration wave, however diligent searching managed to produce 57 species, including 14 hawks of four species and 10 species of shorebirds. Because of the distance to be covered, most of the bird watching had to be done from the road, and many of the woodland species that might be expected were not seen.

The Cheticamp area was very productive. For example, one pond at Petit Etang contained 24 Black Ducks, 2 Fintails, 8 Green-winged Teal and 8 Blue-winged. Doug Findlay, in passing by there a few days later, noted the same numbers and species. The Cheticamp Island shorebird treasure-trove was not at a peak, but Golden and Black-bellied Plover were present, along with one Knot, seven Dowitchers, and some commoner species. There was a good opportunity to compare Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. A Mourning Dove was also spotted by one of the parties from Sydney (Gordon Naish, Hedley and Mrs. Hopkins, Betty Reid and Frank Robertson) and later picked up by Tracy Black (Park Warden for the Pleasant Bay area) and myself.

The highlight of the day for most of us came earlier, at a fish plant in Cheticamp. Here we had a good opportunity to study a Kittiwake wheeling with the dozens of more common species of gulls. This was a 'lifer' for me and many of the others, and thus made the day that much more enjoyable.

As well as Past-President Hopkins of the Cape Breton Branch, our current president, Bob MacNeil was here with his family and Elizabeth MacCullough from Westmount. Floridans Miss Rowena Bloss and Miss Cora Belle Stanton up from Miss Bloss' summer home at Marble Mountain were also present, as were Miss Hilda Wright and Miss Kay Keeler from Glace Bay, and Mr. & Mrs. Karl Willms of Point Edward.

- Wayne Neily

The last trip for the season was held at Brier Island, September 14, led by the Wickerson Lents and Miss Louise Daley. This was the best attended trip, with 36 people assembled, to range the island from end to end, starting at the wooded end and then to the Lighthouse, and working back from the cottage road down to the beach, following along the rocky ridges through the sheep bog and over to the mud-flats. Lunch was at the Lighthouse, kindness of Mrs. Lent, and many people were happy to stay inside, as it was an overcast day, with a chill wind, a foretaste of autumn in the air. This trip produced the greatest variety of species, (after all, it was on famous Brier Island!), 71 in all, outstanding

among them being an immature Bald Eagle, Killdeer, Golden Plover, Dunlin, a Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Yellow-breasted Chat, Baltimore Orioles and a Mourning Dove. Among the shorebirds were White-rumps and Dowitchers, Sanderlings in fall plumage, Ruddy Turnstones and Black-bellied Plover in fall and winter plumage.

The accompanying photographs were taken by Hazel Carmichael and Wayne Neily, to whom our grateful thanks, as to all who have contributed to a very successful program for summer, 1968.



TWO NEW BREEDING RECORDS FOR KINGS COUNTY

On May 19 (1968) I was directed to the nest of a pair of Phoebes. The location was on top a rafter inside a long-abandoned house at Gaspereau. Though the doors of the building were all missing it seemed probable that entrance to the nest room was gained directly through a broken window. It contained four eggs which appeared to be almost fresh. When visited on June 16 the young were nearly ready to fly. No parent bird was on hand to protest my intrusion either time. The manner of construction of this nest indicated that it was a 'double-decker'; the line of demarcation being quite distinct. In other words a new nest had been built this year on top of one used the year before. We are hoping the pair will return in 1969.

.....

The other species is the Killdeer. Though several nests of this shorebird have been found in Nova Scotia in recent years none had previously been recorded for Kings County. On May 7 (1968) Cyril Coldwell, of Gaspereau examined a nest which I later visited. It was located in a dry, stony pasture and contained the usual four eggs. On May 22 another Killdeer's nest was reported to me by Eric Mullen who found it in a pasture at Black River (Kings Co.). Judging by the number of sight records of Killdeer in Nova Scotia in recent years, plus the supporting evidence just cited, it would appear that their numbers are increasing in the province.

- R. W. Tufts



FIRST NOVA SCOTIA SHOVELLERS BANDED

For the past three years I have observed a pair of Shovellers on the Missaquash Marsh (Cumberland County) during late May and the male remained throughout the month of June. Although brood inventories were carried out at regular intervals during June and July, a Shoveller brood was never observed.

However, on July 27, 1968, during the course of night-light banding operations on the Missaquash, seven young shovellers were captured and banded. On successive nights four other young were banded in the same general area. All eleven shovellers were of the same age class (approx. two weeks from flying) and are presumed to have been from the same brood.

Shovellers have been banded at other Maritime locations (Deroche Point, P.E.I., 1967; Sheffield and Jemseg, N.B., 1968); however, the above was the first Nova Scotia record.

- A. D. Smith
Wildlife Biologist

INTERESTING BANDING RETURNS: RAVENS

<u>Band No.</u>	<u>Banded</u>	<u>Recaptured</u>
687-74990	March 27, 1967	September 11, 1967
687-74992	March 27, 1967	September 11, 1967
827-16920	December 2, 1967	February 10, 1968
827-16921	December 2, 1967	February 10, 1968
547-12017	November 22, 1966	August 21, 1968
547-12032	November 22, 1966	August 21, 1968

The three pairs of Ravens noted above were banded on the same date and found in the trap again, months later. This seems to indicate they are mated pairs and travel together throughout the year.

- Cyril Coldwell

BULLFROGS UNDER SUSPICION

During the latter part of September (1968) I was moose hunting in the Wallace, Cumberland County area of Nova Scotia. Lloyd Duncanson, an official of the Nova Scotia Museum was with me. In the course of our travels we came upon a small water-hole which was all but dried up due to a prolonged dry spell. As we passed by I noticed two Pine Grosbeaks lying dead in about two inches of water close to the edge of the pool. Though both were completely water-soaked, the firmness of their flesh indicated that they had not been dead for long. Closer examination showed no mark of injury, but a few loose, dry feathers floating near-by suggested that there had been a struggle. The soft mud left by the receding water-line held no foot prints of any predator. Near the centre of the pool which had shrunk in size to about 12 by 6 feet were several large bullfrogs, their bodies exposed due to the shallowness of the water.

Mr. Duncanson, who has had considerable close-up experience with bullfrogs in captivity mentioned that they are quite vicious predators and that when in search of food he has known them to seize any small creature, even killing their own kind at times.

Our conclusion was that the birds having come there to drink were pounced upon by the frogs and held under water till they drowned. Why had they not been devoured? Perhaps others of their kind had been and these would be eaten in the course of time when stomach space became available.

Examination of another similar-sized pool nearby revealed no dead birds in the water but on looking more closely we found feathers of some small bird lying on the soft mud left by the shrinking water, some of which we identified as being those of Pine Grosbeaks. Also, basking peacefully in the sun were three large bullfrogs. Here, as at the other location, there were no animal tracks in the mud. I would be interested in hearing from anyone else who may know of bullfrogs attacking small birds while the latter were drinking.

- Cyril Coldwell

Further to Cyril Coldwell's account of his experience with the Wallace bullfrogs, it is this writer's opinion that his suspicions are well founded. Recalling a similar incident which I published some time ago, a search of my records has revealed the following which appeared under my weekly column, WOODS, WATER and SKY. It reads:

FROG EATS BIRD

The bird eats the frog and the frog eats the bird, and that is the way of the wild. Birds belonging to the heron family, and others too to a lesser extent are known to prey heavily on

frogs and that fact in itself is not worthy of comment. But when a frog devours a bird, that's news.

Such an incident has recently been brought to my attention by a correspondent who told of finding the fresh remains of an Olive-sided Flycatcher in the stomach of a large bullfrog. This bird, slightly smaller than a Robin, is not uncommon as a summer resident in Nova Scotia. Its normal habitat is high up among the tree-tops from which lofty vantage point it sallies forth to pick off the high-flying insects in a manner characteristic of its kind. But just what this unfortunate individual was doing in the lowly haunts of a bullfrog, aside from the possibility that it was merely thirsty, is a matter of speculation.

- R. W. Tufts



NOTES

The Trust Fund

Here is our chance to invest in the future of our people and our beautiful province. NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY SANCTUARY AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND is committed to the preservation of natural areas as well as to the support of ornithological studies through the granting of scholarships.

While generous private support will be most helpful, it is interested participation of all members that will give the TRUST FUND a steady and healthy growth. It is suggested that any who can and wish to do so, add a dollar or more when paying their annual dues, as a donation to this Trust Fund. Contributions are tax-deductible, the Fund is registered for Income Tax purposes and receipts will be issued.

NORTHERN BIRDS SUMMERING IN EASTERN CANADA

In recent years, many bird species have been found in summer outside of their known breeding ranges. General warming of the climate during the past half-century is often believed to have permitted southern birds to summer farther to the north, but the greatly increased number and skill of persons reporting such occurrences offer an equally plausible explanation. If the increase in reports of southern birds summering north of their breeding ranges is largely due to an increase in number of competent observers, there should be a similar increase in reports of northern species in summer in more southern areas. This paper reports recent summer occurrences of three northern birds in eastern Canada, chiefly in the Maritime provinces.

The Rough-legged Hawk (Buteo lagopus) breeds on the Canadian tundra east to central Ungava, and locally in central Newfoundland, and it has been reported in summer on Anticosti. It winters from Newfoundland and the Maritimes south and west, particularly in extensive grassland areas. In New Brunswick, Squires (1952) listed the earliest arrival date as 21 October, and the latest departure as 31 March, while for Nova Scotia Tufts (1962) gave extreme dates of 25 October and 28 April.

In my first five years' residence near the dyked grasslands of the N.S.-N.B. border marshes, my earliest local record in fall was 11 November 1964, and my latest in spring was 12 May 1962. Outside those dates, I saw individuals near Jemseg, Queen's County, N.B., on 6 November 1964, and near West Bay Road, Inverness County, N.S., on 24 May 1962. At the time, I considered both these May records as exceptional. It was with great surprise that I identified two Rough-legged Hawks on the marshes north of Upper Sackville, Westmorland County, N.B., on 26 June 1965, and one, possibly one of the same birds, about five miles farther east, near point de Bute, on the following day. At least two different birds were reported by Canadian Wildlife Service personnel engaged in duck trapping operations on the local marshes on various dates during August and September 1965. In 1966, I noted at least two Rough-legged Hawks on the local marshes on six dates from 26 May to 18 October, and I received as many more reports from other people working in the same area. I also saw single birds near Cleveland on 31 May, and near Red River on 24 July, both in Inverness County, N.S., in 1966. I saw no Rough-legged Hawks on the N.S.-N.B. border marshes between 25 April and 11 November in 1967, but I received reports of probably two summering birds there. Most of these records were in September, when duck banding crews were making daily visits to the local marshes. I also learned of one bird seen on a Nova Scotia Bird Society field trip near New Harbour, Guysborough County, N.S., on 9 September 1967. There have been no reports to date (29 August) in 1968 from the local marshes, but one bird was seen near Meat Cove, Inverness County, N.S., on 27 August 1968. While both color phases of Rough-legged Hawks are represented among the recent summer records, all, or nearly all, of these birds were apparently sub-adults. Most were indistinctly patterned, and at least one bird, on 22 June 1966, was noted to be replacing flight feathers, as it showed more

or less symmetrical gaps in both wings. It seems unlikely that the same birds could have been involved in all three summers' observations in the local area, as sub-adults in 1965 would have matured by 1967. There is no suggestion that these hawks are at present breeding in the Maritimes. Wintering populations here have also increased both in numbers and in regularity in the past 15 years, so these sub-adult birds may have lingered in response to locally favourable food supplies.

The Snowy Owl (Nyctaea scandiaca) is a tundra species which breeds only as far south as extreme northern Ungava and Labrador (Godfrey, 1966), and which does not reach settled parts of Canada every winter. In the Maritimes, extreme dates, apart from a record on 31 August 1880, were 18 October and 16 May (Godfrey, 1954; Squires, 1952; Tufts, 1962). I was inclined to doubt two summer records of Snowy Owls on Cape Breton Island, N.S., on Ciboux Island, Victoria Co., on 26 August 1962, and by the Cabot Trail (no precise location given) on 1 August 1964, when these were reported in the Nova Scotia Bird Society Newsletter, although one could hardly imagine anyone misidentifying this species. In October 1966, when Richard Fyfe visited the Magdalen Islands, Quebec, he received reports that six Snowy Owls had been there all that summer as well as through the summer of 1965, and he personally saw four of them. This report made the earlier ones seem less incredible, and in 1968 I personally saw Snowy Owls far south of their summer range, though not in full summer. With my parents, I saw a Snowy Owl on 9 May 1968 near Kamouaska, Quebec; we had seen what could have been the same bird about three miles to the west, in the half-light the evening before. Another bird was on the marshes east of Upper Sackville, N.B., from 22 May until 2 June 1968 and possibly longer. Only the records from the Magdalens are even suggestive of breeding, and such hearsay reports must be treated with caution.

Fox Sparrows (Passerella iliaca) are a more southern bird than the two previously discussed, as they breed commonly in Ungava and Newfoundland, and in small numbers on islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence (Godfrey, 1966). Christie (1968) has recently presented evidence that this species breeds south into extreme northern New Brunswick as well, while there have been intermittent reports of individual birds on small islands off the coast of Guysborough County, N.S. (Tufts, 1962). Squires (1952) gave 20 September and 8 May as extreme fall arrival and spring departure dates in New Brunswick, and Tufts (1962) gave 28 September as the earliest fall record in Nova Scotia. On spring visits to Cape Breton Island in 1960 to 1963, I saw Fox Sparrows only in 1961, the latest date being 7 May. Accordingly, I was surprised to hear two Fox Sparrows singing by the North Aspy River, in northern Victoria County, N.S., on 31 May 1965. That was a very late spring, with snow lying deep in the woods there at the end of May, so I assumed that these were belated migrants en route to Newfoundland. However, the editor of the Nova Scotia Bird Society Newsletter relayed to me a report of a Fox Sparrow nest found near West Bay, in southern Inverness County, in early May 1965, by John Weslein; the nest was later destroyed by "blackbirds". In 1966, Rev. Ford Alward found one singing Fox Sparrow southeast of Glace Bay, Cape Breton County, on 7 June,

while Gwendolen Lunn reported one between Louisbourg and the Mira River, about 20 miles farther south, during July. In northern Cape Breton, John Lunn reported Fox Sparrows singing at his farm near the South Aspy River during the summer of 1966, and he listed two on the Cape North breeding bird survey route on 25 June. On 24 July 1966, I heard a Fox Sparrow singing on the steep, shrubby hillside east of Bay St. Lawrence, about 15 miles north of my 1965 observations, which assumed a different significance in the light of these 1966 records. In 1967, the breeding bird surveys showed a further increase in Fox Sparrows; Lunn found six on the Cape North route, near Capstick and along the north side of Aspy Bay, while Wayne Neily found twelve between Corney Brook and Mackenzie Mountain and one on North Mountain, on the Pleasant Bay route. In 1968, Lunn found three near Capstick, eight along the north side of Aspy Bay, and one near South Harbour, while Neily found nine on French Mountain and Mackenzie Mountain, on the same two routes. These records on Cape Breton Island, except the breeding record from West Bay, are all in the extreme north or east of the Island, where the vegetation is boreal in character, and the climate is often severe. Although the one nesting record was far removed from all other summer observations, it is highly probable that this species is not breeding regularly in northern Cape Breton. Satisfactory proof of its breeding (specimens, photographs, or detailed descriptions of nests or young birds submitted in knowledge of their significance) is still lacking.

Almost the only point in common between these records, leaving aside the first two Snowy Owl reports, is that they started in 1965. While 1965 was a late spring in northern Cape Breton, weather records do not suggest that summering areas in Newfoundland or Ungava were unusually late in becoming snow-free in 1965, so weather is unlikely to have been primarily responsible for these recent summer occurrences of birds south of their previous ranges.

I wish to acknowledge the use of unpublished observations made available to me by Rev. Ford Alward, Mrs. J. W. Dobson, Richard Fyfe, Robert Gibbon, John and Gwendolen Lunn, Capt. T.F.T. Morland, Allen Smith, and Stanley Teeple.

Literature cited.

- Christie, D.S. 1967. Summer occurrence of the Fox Sparrow in New Brunswick. *Can. Field-Nat.* 82:54
- Godfrey, W.E. 1954. Birds of Prince Edward Island. *Nat. Mus. Canada Bull.* 132:155-213.
- Godfrey, W.E. 1966. The birds of Canada. *Nat. Mus. Canada Bull.* 203: 428p.
- Squires, W.A. 1952. The birds of New Brunswick. *N.B. Mus. Monogr.* 4: 164p.
- Tufts, R.W. 1961. The birds of Nova Scotia. *N.S. Mus.* 481p.

- A. J. Erskine

IT'S A STORK!

In the February number of Audubon Field Notes 22:4 (1968), Paul DeBenedictis writes concerning the hazards of field identification:

"Perhaps the biggest problem associated with sight records is the number of fallacies associated with them. The only question that has any meaning whatsoever is, was the identification correct?

Many of these fallacies concern the observer. The number of observers is helpful only if all who see the bird identify it independently of one another, if all record separately their criteria, and if there is no contradictory evidence. It is nearly as easy for a group of people to be deceived as it is for one. I know of at least one instance when nearly an entire party identified a rock as an owl, seen moving its head and blinking its eyes."

This reminded me of an occasion when a number of us spread out around a pond, and carefully and stealthily stalked a lily-pad fluttering in the breeze.

DeBenedictis continues: "The experience of the observer is no guarantee of accuracy. Beware the observer or expert who always sees the rarity; in my experience, he is as apt to be always wrong as he is to be always right. Otherwise, regardless of the experience and stature of the observer, the fundamental question remains, was he right?"

Another occasion came to mind. A party of us stopped to re-fuel at a gas station, and, of course, the binoculars came up and were poked out of the car windows. It was a foggy drizzly day, and presently I found myself looking at some very peculiar grosbeaks, perched in a tree. Upon withdrawing the binoculars to wipe the lenses, I discovered (with the naked eye) that the tree overhung the car, and the grosbeaks were English Sparrows. This was a shattering experience, my only comfort being that I am a novice, and that I hadn't exclaimed: "Look at the Grosbeaks". Other comfort was soon forthcoming, however, for upon confessing my error, one companion, a really experienced bird-watcher, described the occasion upon which he had identified a flock of starlings as Canada Geese. And he had exclaimed "look at the Geese". And this was topped by a third member of the party with the story of the time he fell asleep after lunch on a field trip and woke on his back, looking up into a bright summer sky. Very high up he saw a Bald Eagle soaring, and it wasn't until he sat up to reach for his glasses that he discovered the eagle was a gnat, hovering within 2 inches of his nose.

This trick of deceptive distance is easily rectified, but the moral of the story is, that these two expert birders were sufficiently experienced to know that upon occasion they could be wrong. For my money, I put most reliance upon reports from those observers who have learned the hard way that they can be wrong,

and are willing to confess it. Such people approach any identification with due caution.

- The Editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

Nova Scotia is our favourite province and we would like to spend a whole summer there, on our own, rather than with an Airstream Caravan whose hectic schedule leaves little opportunity for serious birding.

We drove over the Cabot Trail on a Sunday and saw many boreal chickadees, a female pine grosbeak on a telephone wire and a red crossbill, the latter preening his feathers on the top of a small fir tree near the highway. We took Captain Ahle's trip to the Bird Islands and, while the sea was very rough, we saw flocks and flocks of puffins, but were unable to identify to our satisfaction any Arctic terns.

At Halifax we had the pleasure of a boat trip with Dr. Mills and a walk in woods Mr. Allen told us about. We finally found gray jays and spruce grouse in Kejimikujik National Park but were sorry the ranger could not take us across the lake where he said black-backed woodpeckers nested. We saw quantities of shore birds at and near Evangeline Beach.

Back here on our beach, the Limpkins and Florida gallinules are feeding, but the gulls, ducks, etc. have not yet arrived for the winter. Last week we had an excellent view of Apollo VII streaking up in the blue sky - a most exciting Florida "bird". Right now Hurricane Gladys seems to be sending flocks of egrets our way and we wait here - with our fingers crossed - to see what direction she will take next!

We do hope members of the Bird Society will visit here sometime and that we can be of some help in their search for birds.

Orlando, Florida
October 18, 1968

Betty K. King

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

On Aug. 21 a family of Cedar Waxwings appeared in my garden, 4 adults and 4 immatures. I saw a flock at Northport on Sept. 7 (about 10) and also at Cameron Settlement (Guysborough Co.) saw them Aug. 24 with Evening Grosbeaks eating "Choke cherries". Both species literally stripped the trees by the Black Brook, together with the Robins. Total for this group of Grosbeaks, 3 males and 1 female and about 6 Cedar Waxwings. On July 24 a Bald Eagle was sighted at Cameron Settlement over the St. Mary's River West Branch also a sighting for a Red-tailed Hawk on June 15 and Aug. 24, still Cameron Settlement.

I found a nest of Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker on June 16, about 5 miles from the main Cameron Settlement Highway. It was about 20 feet up in a live pine in a once cut over area (not a burned one). The bark had been stripped off for about 2 feet and the nest was in the near centre of this area. I did not see the young but they could be heard "chittering" in the nesting cavity, both parent birds were about making quite a fuss. I have reported this to Tony Erskine and he says this is a definite nesting record as far as he is concerned, so I sent in a card. I had never seen one before. Tree swallows last year nested under the shingles of the roof, did the same this year and raised a good family.

In Cameron Settlement we have had lots of Blue Jays and Grey Jays this late summer, the Barn Swallows who nest in the well house had 2 broods, the first left the nest before July 22, and they used the nest again, the last young left the nest (5) on Aug. 27 (Is this a late date?). At Heather's Beach on Aug. 21, saw many Swallows, apparently migrating, mostly Barn but some Tree. I should judge over 1000, on the wires and the ground very early in the a.m. It was difficult to miss them as they were on the shoulders of the road, overhead wires and in the middle of the road.

We have been in to the Bryden Brook (Lower) twice this summer, on June 16 and Aug. 22. Each time I saw several Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. This place is so remote from settlement one wonders what in the world they find to eat there.

I took two British Columbians for a walk of the Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary last week, a Mrs. Smith and a Miss Arnold, I believe, and they seemed to enjoy it. They are doing a tour of N.S. looking for birds. Wasn't it fortunate a Red-winged Blackbird was there, and also a White-throated Sparrow (a first for them)? I am afraid they knew more about ducks and shore birds than I did, but they told me they enjoyed it all. A pair of Cliff Swallows built 2 nests at the Ponderosa under the eaves this summer. A really beautiful bird, but as usual the Barn Swallows lost many of their young by the young ones falling out of the nests.

I should mention that the Red-tailed Hawk at Cameron Settlement was chased by a King Bird on June 15, after that it

was chased by the Barn Swallows. It circled up very high and those little devils followed it until it was out of sight. The last date was Aug. 24.

Near Cameron Settlement I saw a Ruffed Grouse with 7 young on June 15 and also the next day. On July 21 saw a female Ruffed Grouse with almost fully grown young at Rocky Lake and on July 26 I saw a Spruce Partridge with 5 almost fully grown young, also on Aug. 23 saw a Spruce Partridge with five three-quarters grown young.

The Canada Geese cover of the last Newsletter was most attractive. You might mention to the members that if they wish to see this sight, it would be around March 25 for about a week.

To sum up, it has been an excellent summer for the Swallows, Blue Jays and Grey Jays, all plentiful, also both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, Cedar Waxwings, and Evening Grosbeaks. By the way, they came last evening to my garden (the latter) and left this a.m.

Evelyn Lowerison

Amherst, N.S.
Sept. 24, 1968

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

I mentioned a Swamp Sparrow nest which succeeded in spite of having been "cowbirdized" in my last letter. In July I found a Cowbird egg in a White-throat's nest. It didn't even hatch, although the White-throat's egg did. From the 2 Cowbird layings that I found this year, the species doesn't seem to be doing much harm to other birds!

I saw an Evening Grosbeak and heard several more on Aug. 7. I also heard 1 or more in late May or June. This fall they arrived here on Oct. 19, and I've heard and seen several every day for the last 3 days. There have been some here every summer for the last 4 years. Usually at that season I hear them flying high; and if I do see them, they usually aren't near enough to identify by sight. Maybe they would be reported in summer more often if everyone knew their call.

I am going west soon and probably won't be back in N.S. for some years. I will stay a member of the Society for another year though to see what is going on in it and what the birds are doing in N.S.

Joseph W. Johnson

Granville Ferry, N.S.
Oct. 24, 1968

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

We greatly enjoyed the last Newsletter and especially the Sable Island features - Mrs. Androschuks "Appreciation", etc.

It has been a wonderful season in this part of Nova Scotia and no doubt that accounts for the plentiful numbers of small birds we've seen lately, especially the week of Oct. 5. On Oct. 9 the weather was very mild, calm and hazy. Besides the excitement of so many birds around field, yard and buildings, we found ourselves a resting place for migrating Monarch Butterflies. Easily 500-600 were in sight at all times through the day and 100 spent the night clinging to the house, etc. Of course the children loved this and counted those clinging to the window frames by the kitchen table.

On Oct. 20, Charles Symonds caught an immature Puffin, alive, in the yard, perhaps stunned by bumping into a building. It said many unpleasant-sounding things and we kept our distance as Norman held it by outstretched wings. A first sighting for all of us but Norman, and Charles Symonds. He used to fish too and Puffins are common offshore.

On July 30 we found terns nest at Little Dog Thrum destroyed by mink. Several boys from The Hawk report they have since caught the mink.

Norman Cunningham reports petrels common during daylight at the Horserace fishing ground. Usually they are about only at night.

Sept. 28 was a dull and windy fall day. Sid was cleaning the Old Light (storehouse). I took out last year's Christmas tree, rather dingy but the needles stay on as the building is cool and damp. I set the tree up by the pole of the clothesline, spread seeds, added suet to the branches. Within minutes a Downy Woodpecker was on the trunk and Sparrows in the branches and at the base. But Nuthatches from the pasture fence didn't come. Until cows and winds destroyed it, the little tree attracted many birds - Chats, Thrashers, Sparrows and Juncos.

Betty June Smith

Cape Sable Light, N.S.
Oct. 30, 1968

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

A paper entitled "Birds of the St. Pierre et Miquelon Archipelago" by Austin W. Cameron has appeared on my desk. It is a reprint from "Naturaliste Canadien" 94 (4) July-Aug. 1967 pp. 389-420.

Most interesting to me was the table of differences between the bird fauna of S.E. Newfoundland and St. Pierre et

Miquelon. The implications are that appropriation of niches which other species would occupy by one species excludes other related species; e.g. he finds Grey-checked but not Hermit or Swainson's Thrushes, Ruby-crowned but not Golden-crowned Kinglet, Boreal but very few Black-capped Chickadees. (Hairy but no Downy Woodpecker.) The analogy with Seal I. and maybe other N.S. islands is obvious.

He also notes a relatively large number of southerly accidentals: Snowy Egret, Wood Duck, Catbird, Purple Martin, Etc. Mention is also made of Leach's Petrels breeding on an island at the mouth of St. Pierre Harbour, and of the Pigeon Hawk as the commonest bird of prey. In complete contrast to Seal I., the Fox Sparrow is recorded as "probably the most abundant land bird on the Archipelago....observed everywhere from the thickly wooded interior.....to areas on the coast"; a statement perhaps applicable to the Song Sparrow on Seal I. On St. Pierre et Miquelon, however, the Song Sparrow is one of the unexpected absentees, others being the Sparrow Hawk, Bank Swallow, Red-eyed Vireo, Magnolia Warbler and Lincoln's Sparrow.

It certainly seems as though this "exclusion from islands by interspecific competition" idea has some merit and it might be something for us to bear in mind with respect to our more isolated Nova Scotia islands.

Institute of Oceanography
Halifax, N.S.
Sept. 19, 1968

Roger Pocklington

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

On Oct. 10, I walked out the Money Point road (north-eastern tip of Cape Breton) to see if any northern birds that had come over from Newfoundland were to be seen. It was a good guess. The farther I went towards the tower, the more northern the birds became, from White-throats and Juncoes to Fox Sparrows, to Tree Sparrows, to White-crowns and the Shrike near the Point. I've written Wayne Neily in case he wants to visit there sometime.

I did no other birding in N.S. since my return from Newfoundland, except a family trip to Canning in late August. Aside from the last Kingbirds and Spotted Sandpiper near Blomidon and Scott's Bay on 26 and 27th., the only notable item was a male Kestrel taking a Least Sandpiper from a flock at Scott's Bay. I haven't even been to Amherst Point this fall! Sorry about that, as they say. I did have a good trip to Miscou Island, N.B., and the Gaspé in mid-Sept., with a fine view of a Parasitic Jaeger, over 225 Gannets, and 6 Hudsonian Godwits at Miscou, Arctic 3-toed Woodpecker at Mt. Albert in the Gaspé.

Sackville, N.B.
Oct. 15, 1968

A. J. Erskine

A FEW NOTES FROM ROSEMARY EATON'S DIARY

- 29/6/68 A pair of adult Barn Swallows have appropriated a ledge at the back of the garage and are building a nest.
- 6/7/68 There are now 3 eggs in the nest and my husband is leaving his car outside the garage till the brood has gone - not so much thought for the swallows as consideration for the car.
- 7/7/68 The last egg was laid today in the swallows' nest.
- 14/7/68 There were low bands of fog in Cole Harbour; the top half of a human clam-digger was visible, and the graceful head and body of a Gt. Bl. Heron seemed to float on the fog. (We have had Ospreys this summer, but no Bitterns, no Bald Eagles.)
- 20/7/68 Two Common Terns were fishing in the cove. In the garage two young had hatched in the Barn Swallows' nest.Nighthawks were numerous.
- 22/7/68 Saw the first Yellowlegs of the season and watched it for ages before concluding it was a Lesser Yellowlegs. It was very tame and I walked close to it....Two of the most elegant Cedar Waxwings I have ever seen were perched on a dead tree. They seemed not to have feathers at all, but to be carved from smoothly sanded wood. Is there any other bird with such style and finish? The third Barn Swallow has hatched and the first two are growing fast, the adults are jittery and fly around, giving two-note alarm calls when I visit the nest. (The fourth egg hatched next day, but disappeared.)
- 24/7/68 The swallows seem to work from dawn till dusk feeding their young. (My husband took two Indian friends to the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park. They were delighted with the peacocks, being the national bird of India - but they didn't want to look at the Great Horned Owl, as an owl is considered an evil spirit in their part of the world.)
- 25/7/68 Three Yellowlegs flew into the cove, I think - Greater. My dog must have moved, as one bird gave an alarm call. Another had just swallowed a minnow, and the lump in its throat was visible. The bird looked agitated, tried to call, and disgorged the minnow, then both birds flew off....(From that day on Yellowlegs and Peeps became quite common.)....The Indian pears are as big as small grapes and amazingly sweet, the birds are feasting on them. During a dry summer, there is nothing like sitting very still near a spring for seeing birds. Many warblers, young Song Sparrows..., a young Flicker perched very close and watched us enquiringly. A pair of young Catbirds, only a suspicion of rust under the tail, came to the spring, as did a Red-winged Blackbird and flocks of Goldfinches and brown Starlings...There

are now three enormous young Barn Swallows overflowing their nest...A male Hummingbird was hovering at a deep crimson rose.

- 31/7/68 About 3.45 p.m. I saw an unfamiliar wader in the cove. It alighted about 40 feet from where I was sitting - its wings were held stretched high for about a second before they were folded. It had dark legs, a straight long dark bill, and the eyes ringed with white seemed large. The upper parts were dark brown, a little speckled, but not "scaly". Below it was buffy-gray and seen from the front the sides of the neck were darker. It was smaller than a Yellowlegs. The bird settled down at the edge of the shore (near where a rather smelly marsh drains out) and started bathing. It nodded its head occasionally and then ducked its head repeatedly under water, opening its wings to splash the water. This was followed by some thorough preening and head-scratching, then it fanned out its mainly white tail, which had a dark central wedge. It said what sounded like "Eeep Eeep" a couple of times. I moved to try to get a closer look, the bird seemed aware of an intruder, but completed its preening before flying off. In flight the tail had narrow dark bars. I think it must have been a Solitary Sandpiper (autumn immature).
- 2/8/68 The young Barn Swallows are acquiring feathers. An inoffensive Snowshoe Hare was grazing on the front lawn when it was attacked by the adult Barn Swallows. The birds dive-bombed it, really skimming its ears, and the hare ducked nervously - eventually they drove it from the lawn.
- 5/8/68 My husband was plumbing our ever-lower well water when the nesting swallows made several angry passes at him... A young Grackle and parent come every day - the young one is moulting and tufts of its peacock-green head feathers are missing. Its tail is at least two inches shorter than its parent's, and the plumage brown...Five Nighthawks flew over.
- 10/8/68 The Holloways told us there were two pairs of Ospreys nesting on Petpeswick Head, and Michael saw one nest with an adult bird in it.
- 19/8/68 Flickers have been very much in evidence this summer - a good dry year for ants? Two young ones and an adult were feeding in the garden for the first time since we came here. I saw three Semi-palmated Plovers in the cove, close to the house, in company with Peeps and a Lesser Yellowlegs.
- 23/8/68 Quite busy in the cove. Ten Heron, 9 Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, 3 Spotted Sandpipers, 3 Least and 7 Semi-palmated Sandpipers - and 2 Goldfinches! Two of the Peeps and the Lesser Yellowlegs were dozing, their bills tucked into their back feathers. One Yellowlegs opened

a dark watchful eye every few seconds to check on me. In another cove a Greater Yellowlegs was feeding when a second flew in. The first one uttered a soft "churr churr churr churr" and pecked at the intruder, which pecked back, and they sparred like this for some seconds. Then the newcomer opened its wings and "jumped" a foot in the air, sometimes both birds were in the air together. The duel went on for two minutes, then the original Yellowlegs suddenly resumed feeding as though nothing had happened.

- 8/9/68 This morning I saw a small dark grayish-blue hawk chasing a Peep round and round the cove at high speed. There seemed to be a light band at the end of the hawk's tail. Finally the Peep went to ground in some marsh grass. The hawk flew off, passing low over a flock of 17 Yellowlegs bunched on some floating dead eel grass. Two of the waders lost their nerve and flew off, but were not chased....I had never seen so many together in the cove. At night there is a fine large moon, so perhaps they are on their way south. In the afternoon I counted 21 Yellowlegs, and 34 mixed Semi-palmated and Least Sandpipers.
- 9/9/68 Fifteen Yellowlegs and 21 Peeps in the cove. As the tide came up the waders came closer, as did the herons. Two Kingfishers were plopping into the cove, there was a single Osprey, and a Black Duck. At 8.30 a.m. my husband did a check out in Cole Harbor. He counted 62 Herons, saw a flight of about 100 fast-flying small duck (Teal?), 61 duck on the water too far away to identify and 30 large waders, probably Yellowlegs. There was a second large flock of duck he thought were probably Black Duck, and then some larger birds that looked very much like Canada Geese. He saw 3 Black-bellied Plover, 10 Semi-palmated Plover, and 10+ Peeps. At 7 p.m. we heard a small flock of Canada Geese fly over the house, but the cloud was too low for sighting.
- 14/9/68 500+ Duck in the main channel too far to identify. Three Canada Geese flew over. There are only a few Yellowlegs left now....Goldfinches are passing over. Song and White-throated Sparrows are all through the bush, the latter giving occasional quavery songs. One Marsh Hawk.
- 21/9/68 We had a visitation from Mr. Hart's young Museum group. They said they had seen 2 small flocks of Canada Geese (17 and 14).
- 22/9/68 50 Canada Geese flew over.
- 24/9/68 One Fox Sparrow hopping along our dried-up flower bed.
- 26/9/68 About 200 Black Duck, and the next day 150+ in the harbour.
- 29/9/68 Yesterday my husband saw a white bird on the shore of

the first island north of the railway track. Today he watched it through the glasses. He noted its heron-like pose, and when it flew off could see its legs trailing and fast wing beats. It was white all over, the legs and base of bill appeared medium light and he estimated it to be three-quarters of the size of a Gt. Blue Heron.He also saw 19 Semi-palmated Plover, 5 Yellowlegs and 24+ Gt. Blue Heron. Due to the prolonged drought a nearby pond in the bush is absolutely dry. In the deepest part there was a damp mud "wallow" about 2 feet across, and radiating in all directions in the driest mud of the pond were thousands of bird and animal tracks, and also bird feathers everywhere. So the owls and foxes, etc. must have done well.

- 7/10/68 Confusing fall sparrows as well as warblers seem to be going through. A female Baltimore Oriole was perched for some time in the poplar close to the house. Saw a Hermit Thrush very close, and had a brief glimpse of a flycatcher (it looked like a Phoebe). 5 Golden-crowned Kinglets, male and female, and many others heard. Several Boreal Chickadees were hunting grubs in the trunk of a spruce.
- 9/10/68 About 90 Canada Geese flew out of Cole Harbour at noon. About 10 Black Ducks were dabbling outside our cove. A Kingfisher was hovering, searching for fish, and seemed to be doing well....Still many Myrtle Warblers around. Because of lack of water I put out a new bird bath and it was soon found by a Song Sparrow, which chased off a second. Two Black-capped Chickadees appeared and 3 Blue Jays.
- 10/10/68 3 Song Sparrows, 5 Juncos, 1 White-throated Sparrow and 4 Blue Jays took turns drinking from or splashing in the new bird bath.
- 11/10/68 Last Kingfisher we saw.
- 12/10/68 Last Flicker.
- 16/10/68 Teal are about and a few Yellowlegs. Heard an extraordinary series of bird noises and concluded it must be a Blue Jay showing off, but it was a Whiskey Jack with a snowy head patch and cheeks.
- 19/10/68 There was a caucus going on in the spruces: 3 Black-capped Chickadees, 5 Boreal Chickadees, 1 Junco and 3 Golden-crowned Kinglets, all calling at once. (Our old neighbor says he always called Juncos "Bluebirds" till he bought a bird book, and says "Junco, what kind of a name is that? They wouldn't allow themselves to be called that name if they knew, upon my soul they wouldn't"....Regular sightings of male and female Hairy Woodpeckers.

27/10/68 Saw about 75 white and dark tern-like birds flying very fast in the tightest formation over Cole Harbor (saw 7 four days before), and was impressed by their formation flying - they would suddenly shoot up into the air high above the sea...We had Kittiwakes (1 adult, 1 immature) in the cove at the bottom of the garden daily from 25/10/68.

NOTE: Mrs. Eaton regretted that she couldn't see the "tern-like" birds close at hand, and even more so when she realized they were the Black Skimmers we were all talking about. Her 7, seen on Oct. 23, must have been the vanguard, of which Mrs. Doull and Elizabeth saw the first representative, at Three-fathom Harbor on the 22nd.

