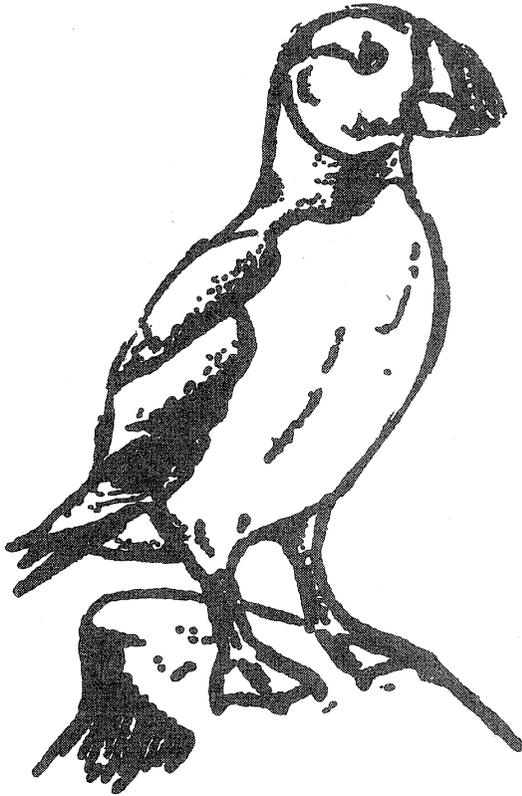


*Nova Scotia
Bird Society*



Newsletter

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1

APRIL, 1971

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 13, Number 1

April,

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Winter Bird Report.....

President's Report - by Eric Mills.....

Annual Meeting

Cape Breton News.....

Nova Scotia Bird Society Excursions - 1971.....

Christmas Counts - by L. B. Macpherson.....

A Christmas Count in Great Britain

Pros and Cons.....

Confessions of the Cooper's Hawk Kid - by Kent Sweeney

Letters To The Editor.....

The Meander in Winter by C. R. K. Allen

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

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

Incorporated 1957

o Nova Scotia Museum
47 Summer Street
Halifax, N.S., Canada

NEWSLETTER

Editor: Phyllis R. Dobson

Volume 13, Number 1

April, 1971

WINTER BIRD REPORT

1970 - 1971

Heavy snowfall and zero temperatures marked the winter 1970-71 as one of unusual severity. Nova Scotia had less snow than most of the rest of Canada and northern USA; but, even so, from early December on, storm after storm piled drifts in the woods, and heightened ramparts along streets and roadsides. Without snowshoes or some such support, woods travel came impossible.

Thick ice formed on streams, lakes and salt water outlets. During a late February thaw, accompanied by a deluge of rain, the river ice broke up, and, carried downstream by the swollen torrents, caused much damage to trees and bridges; great ice-cakes were left stranded far in on the meadows.

It is difficult to say how much effect the weather has on a bird population. Certainly we saw very few land birds in winter, but expectable species were present, and the Christmas Counts were up to average, even if not record-breaking. As noted in the November Newsletter, the migratory birds left very few stragglers behind. It looks suspiciously as if the birds are better weather prophets than we are.

Some species were up in numbers this year, some greatly reduced, and a few were not seen at all, after the New Year. The Siskins and Savannah Sparrows belong in the last group. The usual wintering Golden-crowned Kinglets, Myrtle Warblers, and Grosbeaks (in fact finches of all sorts, including Crossbills) have been encountered very seldom, as have the Titthroat, Fox and Song Sparrows. Most noticeable has been the dearth of Chickadees, which have been reported as very scarce in many parts of the province. It would be interesting to know what caused this scarcity of Chickadees, which cannot be attributed to the snow and cold, since Newfoundland reports the same species of Chickadee in normal numbers, as does New Brunswick, with much lower temperatures and much deeper snow, and a record high count of Black-caps (322) on January 2 at Sederickton.

Sea-birds, feeding along the coast, came in and out

of view, as the ice reached out or receded. Common Loons were plentiful, and a few Red-throats remained. Many of these loons were seen in the fall; the Smiths at Cape Sable saw flocks passing the island all day on October 20. Horned Grebes, scarcer last winter than Red-necked Grebes, at least along the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia, outnumbered the larger species this year by about five to one. Horned Grebes were first noted November 1, seven off northern Cape Breton (Homeville) nine off Barrington. Straggling Pied-billed Grebes were in Cape Breton, the Halifax area and near Yarmouth up to the end of December.

Gannets were on the move October 24, observed flying by all day at Cape Sable, since when the only ones seen from shore by our reporters were off northern Cape Breton. Great Cormorants have been frequent, twos and threes seen fishing among the loons and grebes along the Atlantic coast. One large flock of about forty of these cormorants spent the winter on ledge near Cape Sable until mid-February, when they began to "tend" at Black Rock, half-a-mile farther offshore.

Ducks and Geese were on the whole present in normal numbers despite limitation of their feeding grounds through early icing of the inlets and bays. Greater Scaup and Common Mergansers appeared on schedule in the Cole Harbor - Chezzet area about mid-February, and the former species jumped in numbers at Yarmouth from 50+ in the harbor on February 10 to over 200 at nearby Sluice Point on March 2. Common Goldeneye, Oldsquaws and Red-breasted Mergansers were definitely up, according to reports, the two former being seen in twice the numbers of last year's record. Scoters, on the other hand, have been lightly reported; one observer stating that where flocks were seen in recent years, only scattered individuals appeared this year. Interesting parallels exist with the similar severe winter of 1964. One of these is the relative numbers of the Red-necked and Horned Grebes. Another is the appearance of King Eiders (see report to follow), three seen in February and March.

White-winged Gulls, particularly Glaucous Gulls, were up this winter as in 1964, most numerous in Cape Breton as usual, but seen very generally. Twenty-four Glaucous Gulls, including those seen on the Christmas Counts, is the largest number we have on record. Black-backs and Herring Gulls maintained normal numbers, as did the much sparser Ring-billed but Black-headed Gulls were better than normal, spreading both south and west, to Cape Sable and the Annapolis Basin. This European species has now become a regular winter resident in Nova Scotia.

The usual few sightings of alcids included a fair number of Murres, both Common and Thick-billed, some Dovekie and Black Guillemots, and one Razorbill, this last seen December 12, off Herring Cove, by C.R.K. Allen. An amusing note about Dovekies comes from the Smiths at Cape Sable, November 9, when they saw several of these stout little birds flying in formation with Snow Buntings and Sanderlings. It

near thing for one of the Dovekies, caught up in a group of wanderlings when they suddenly decided to alight upon a rock. He made a quick swerve, sheering off just in time, to plunk in the water instead.

Seabird reports came from Glace Bay, from Sara MacLean; Pictou and vicinity from Wayne Neily; and on mainland Nova Scotia from Pictou (Eric Holdway); Halifax, Eastern Shore, St. Margaret's and Mahone Bays (Eric Cooke, Shirley Cohrs, Eric Mills, F.W. Dobson and C.R.K. Allen); Broad Cove, Lunenburg County (Barbara Hinds and Sylvia Fullerton); Cape Sable (the Sidney Smiths); Barrington (Evelyn Richardson, as reported to J.F. Lewis); Yarmouth area (Marion Hilton, Dorothy Kirk and A. Hurlburt); Brier Island (Eric Mills), and Bay of Fundy - Minas Basin area (John S. Erskine).

LATE MIGRANTS - RARITIES - LAND BIRDS

GREAT BLUE HERONS moved out Nov. 1 to 9 (M. Hilton, J. Richardson, C. Allen) leaving very few behind. The latest reported were 1 at Conrad's Beach, Hfx. Co., Dec. 13/70 (Eric Cooke); 1, Dec. 14/70 and 1, Jan. 10/71 at Cape Sable (S. Smith). hitherto unreported record of CATTLE EGRETS is of 3 on the Grand Pré dykeland during the past summer (J.S. Erskine, Peter Austin-Smith, Mark Mowatt, K. Henrik Deichmann et al). Other reports of this species are of 1 at Round Hill from Nov. 9 to 9 consorting with cattle in a farmyard and adjacent pasture - very tame (W.E. Whitehead), and of 1 the last week in Nov. at Saint-Ain-à-Dieu, Cape Breton (Clarence Johnson). The last American bitterns seen seem to be 2, Oct. 20 at Surette's Island, Yarm. Co. (M. Hilton, A. Hurlburt, D. Kirk).

Dr. Robie Tufts reports an albino MALLARD among a flock of about 50 wintering near Wolfville; and in the same note mentions 8 GREEN-WINGED TEAL which joined the Mallards on Feb. 25. Very late BLUE-WINGED TEAL were seen by Yarmouth observers at Cranberry Head (8-10) and at Chebogue (12+) Oct. 23 and 29 respectively. A EUROPEAN WIDGEON was a prize bird on the Halifax East Christmas Count Dec. 26. On Nov. 18 at Grand Arribou, Pictou Co., 4 GADWALL were observed and well described by Eric Holdway. A KING EIDER, in full breeding plumage, was first discovered by Eric Cooke just west of Three-Fathom Harbor, Hfx. Co., and was subsequently seen by others of the NSBS up to March 6. (A sight well worth a quarter-mile scramble over lassy ice along the rim of a sheer but crumbling headland, in the teeth of a gale.) A very recent report is at hand of

2 other King Eiders seen Mar. 14 off the breakwater at Rinckney's Point, Yar. Co., by D. Kirk, M. Hilton and A. Hurlbut. The last 2 King Eiders we have on record were seen off Cape Breton Dec. 21, 1964, by John and Gwen Lunn.

Another similarity with the winter of 1964 is the extraordinary number and variety of HAWKS and OWLS reported very generally over the province. Dr. Robie Tufts has written of the number of Hawks seen in the Annapolis Valley, those most common being, in the order given, RED-TAILS, SHARP-SHINNED, ROULETTED, PIGEON, GOSHAWK, and SPARROW HAWK. To these can be added four COOPER'S HAWKS, eight MARSHHAWKS and over thirty sightings of the BALD EAGLE, twenty of them on mainland Nova Scotia.

The four COOPER'S HAWK sightings are worthy of mention: 1, Jan. 7 at Louisbourg (Lunns); 1, Halifax West Christmas Count; 1, Yarmouth Christmas Count, also Dec. 26 (Sweeny); and 1, which visited the Cohrs' feeding station at Armdale, Halifax Co., several times in late December and which could have been the same bird as reported tentatively (as a Cooper's Hawk) by F. Dobson and D. Jeffries, in the same area around this time. The Cohrs saw him last on Dec. 31, and were glad to see him go as he had scared off all the other birds at the feeding station. The description was: "a blue-gray head and back, a red eye with a trace of a line above the eye. A dark bill with a yellow patch at the nostrils, fifteen chestnut bars on the breast, large yellow feet with a very long centre toe, three black bars on the tail, which was rounded and white at the tip." Mrs. M.P. Gott of Smith's Cove, Digby Co., wrote of watching a hawk feeding on a large piece of fat she had hanging in a tree immediately outside of her dining-room window. Never having seen such a bird before, she phoned Louise Daley to describe it, and Miss Daley suggested that it might be a GYRFALCON. The description was as follows: "He or she was 2' in height, snow white breast, long furred white pantaloons on legs, huge bluish-purple talons; head and back, tail and wings were dark gray and striped....it ate for about one-half hour and when it took off the wingspread was at least 48". This sighting is from a beginner, but quite in order in a winter of Arctic Hawks; the blue talons suggest an immature bird. An extremely late OSPREY was seen by E. Richardson, Dec. 4, 5 and 6, northeast shore of Barrington Bay. To quote from H.F. Lewis in the Shelburne Coastguard: "When seen on the 4th and 5th the bird was in flight, but on the 6th, in the blizzard, it was observed perched in a tree near the water and uttering distress cries."

RUFFED GROUSE and RING-NECKED PHEASANTS have been widespread in distribution, and the latter up in numbers from late years, according to our reports. The GRAY PARTRIDGE has had a particularly good year. Theo Robertson watched a flock of 6 or 7 one January morning at Maitland, Hants County, feeding in a snowy field: "quietly scratching the snow away like a domestic hen, they fed until after dinner on what must have been grass or rootlets. They trundle through the snow and burrow down where they are quite snug, raising their heads from

time to time in order to spot danger of any kind." The largest number of these partridges seen was sixty-four on the Wolfville Christmas Count, and about twenty were observed still at Evangeline Park on March 6, actively bickering and feeding on patches of lawn swept nearly bare of snow by the wind off the tundra.

A CLAPPER RAIL far from home was seen at Cape Sable by Sidney Smith on Dec. 17, and pursued for about a mile before it finally disappeared. A VIRGINIA RAIL took refuge in a garage in Dartmouth during a heavy snowstorm in the middle of December. Barbara Hinds, Staff Reporter for the Halifax Herald (and member of the NSBS) wrote the following story for the paper, as printed there Jan. 23:

"Mrs. Al MacPherson found it in the garage where it had taken refuge. A local tom cat often idled its days in the garage, so she removed the bird to the safety and warmth of her kitchen.

The wild bird flopped exhausted in its refuge and settled in a net-topped box, where her children had once kept a pet snake.



Virginia Rail and Barbara MacPherson Photo by Clyde Horner
Courtesy Halifax Mail Star

Feeding the bird was a problem at first.

The MacPhersons bought smelts, and the rail, which is so shy it is rarely seen in its normal habitat, now takes filleted raw smelt from the hand. It also eats bananas, munching strips, one and one-half inches long.

Since recovering from its injuries (it still has a slight limp), it has exhibited a wayward character. It hops, a step at a time to the basement. It potters about in the bathroom, gazes inquisitively at the guppies and goldfish in the living room aquarium and kicks up a ruckus when it wants to be fed.

Occasionally, Mrs. MacPherson fills the kitchen sink an inch or two, and the Virginia Rail paddles in the sink.

The bird runs like a chicken, evades the family Golden Labrador, Ginger, and threads its way, sylph-like through the maze of dining room chair legs, as a rail would through cattails on its home ground.

He drinks differently from most other birds observed by Mrs. MacPherson. He drinks with his head down and does not tip back his head to swallow.

Daily intake is a smelt or a smelt-and-a-half, plus fresh fruit. And if he sheds a feather and it adheres to his food, he dabbles it clean in his water bowl - like a raccoon.

The MacPherson family is probably the only one in Nova Scotia ever to have restored an injured Virginia Rail to health.

It will be freed in a nearby nourishing sewage treatment area when winter ends.

'When the frogs start to croak, it should be warm enough to let him go,' she said yesterday."

In the last Newsletter we said no AMERICAN COOTS had been seen in Nova Scotia in 1970. A subsequent letter from A.D. Smith of the Canadian Wildlife Service reports 2 young birds at Missaquash Marsh near Amherst on July 21, also 2 other young captured later in August at the same locality.

A very late SEMI-PALMATED PLOVER was present at Homeville, C.B. on Dec. 15, reported by Clarence Fergusson. Two KILLDEER were seen at Osborne Head, Hfx. Co., on Nov. 8 (Allen), and 3, Dec. 3; 2, Dec. 14 and finally 1, Feb. 7 at Cape Sable (Smiths). A late BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER was at Broad Cove Dec. 28 (Broad Cove Christmas Count) and another was seen Jan. 3 by participators in the Halifax West Christmas Count. A few RUDDY TURNSTONES continue to winter in Cape Breton, 1 seen Dec. 27 on the Sydneys Christmas Count, and 7 others on

the Louisbourg Count Jan. 3. An AMERICAN WOODCOCK always seems to get in this "late" list, and indeed there was 1, Dec. 10 this year, seen in Yarmouth (M. Nickerson).

Only four reports of the COMMON SNIPE are at hand, 1 in November, 3 in December. Being bog feeders, wintering snipe could not have survived the early freeze-up, but apparently very few stayed to try.

Another straggler was a SPOTTED SANDPIPER, Nov. 29, at Edge Island, Hfx. Co. (C. Helleiner). Other late lingerers were: a GREATER YELLOWLEGS Dec. 28 (Glace Bay Count); a LEAST SANDPIPER Dec. 6 at Cheticamp (S. MacLean); 5 DUNLIN Dec. 26 (Hfx. East Count); 4 of the same species on the Broad Cove Point Dec. 28, and 25-30 KNOTS, Jan. 1; ten, Jan. 3 at Cape Sable (Smiths). Our only regular winter sandpiper, the PURPLE SANDPIPER, came back in fair-sized flocks (15 to 30+), seen in its cheerless habitat at various points around the coast. It was noted Dec. 4 by the Sidney Smiths as "the first flock for some time" at Cape Sable, where it stayed, seen 20 strong Dec. 14; 7, Dec. 17; and finally 1, Feb. 7.

Gulls in general have been dealt with in the introductory paragraphs, but two additional notes are: a late BONAPARTE'S GULL Jan. 2 at Louisbourg (Lunns), and a BLACK-EGGED KITTIWAKE unusually close in shore Nov. 24 at Pictou (Holdway).

MOURNING DOVES, still seen fairly frequently through December, disappeared from reports in January. The last sighting, by Mark Mowatt, was of two perched together on a telephone wire beside the road, January 3, at Hardwood Lands, Hants Co.

There have been 4 YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS reported, all in early November. One was picked up dead Nov. 1 at Glace Bay (S. MacLean); 2 were seen skulking among the shrubbery at Newville, C.B., on Nov. 8 by Norman Fergusson and 1, Nov. 15 seen at Antigonish by Margaret Secco. Howard Glace of the Newfoundland Natural History Society reports an influx of these birds following a storm on Nov. 5. A BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO still later was reported to H.F. Lewis Nov. 22 by the Smiths at Anterville, Shel. Co.

OWLS, very lightly reported last year, have made up for it this winter of 1970-71. Four GREAT HORNED OWLS, 8 SNOWY OWLS and single BARRED, LONG-EARED, SHORT-EARED and SAW WHET OWLS were seen at widely scattered points in Cape Breton and on the Mainland. (The Long-eared was at Cape Sable, a specialty of theirs, late fall and winter.) The Snowy Owls were seen in January at Ingonish and Salmon River (P. MacLean and Hedley Hopkins); in Feb. at Glace Bay (G. Griffin); at Conrad's Beach in Jan. (E. Cooke); Osborne Head, Hfx. Co., early March (C.R.K. Allen); at Cape Sable Jan. 10 (Smiths); at Yarmouth in Jan. (J. Killam) and on the Wilmot Christmas Count, distribution very general.

A dozen or more reports of the BELTED KINGFISHER up

to Jan. 3 have been followed by only 2 in February, 1 at Rocky Run, Hfx. Co. (Eric Cooke, The Elliots), and 1 near Glace Gay, where the bird is maintaining itself by diving for fish in a tiny remaining opening in the ice (the inlet of a brook?). Sara MacLean, to whom this sighting was reported by Layton Fergusson, says the bird was described as very tattered, and opined that this might be so, only all Kingfishers look tatter to her.

Wintering FLICKERS were scarcer than usual this year, but were seen during the Hfx. West Count Jan. 3, and 1, Dec. 2 on the Ingomar Count. A RED-HEADED WOODPECKER was reported at Fox Harbor, Cumb. Co. on Oct. 10 by H. Deichmann, who, with A. Duke and P. Austin-Smith saw another on Nov. 9 at Long Island, King's Co. Two YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS were still a Centerville, Shel. Co. Nov. 22 to Dec. 21, reported by the W. Smiths to H.F. Lewis.

PILEATED, HAIRY and DOWNY WOODPECKERS were seen in December, January and February, at feeders and in the wild. The Pileated Woodpeckers were in Colchester County, 2 Nov. 28 (Allen); at Antigonish, 1 Dec. 26 and 30 (the Seccos); and at Ingonish Centre, 1 Jan. 26 (per S. MacLean); besides the one seen on the Halifax East Christmas Count. The only large flocks of HORNED LARKS reported were at Cape Sable (100, the last of October) where they have stayed, some of them all winter; and at Yarmouth (30, early in December). A few were seen around in January, none in February. Horned Larks regularly thin out in February (their numbers that is, not the birds themselves), they are accustomed to arctic conditions, and their favorite food, the seeds of Orach, (a member of the spinach family) grows in windrows of rotting seaweed back of beaches, which were kept windswept and available this winter, so we have no reason to blame their recent non-appearance on the weather. A healthy-looking flock of eight was seen, foraging in stubble near St. Croix, on March 6, which suggests the start of their usual spring build-up.

JAYS, both BLUE and GRAY, have wintered well, as have the COMMON RAVEN and the faithful COMMON CROW, the latter ofte the only living thing sighted in mile upon mile of driving through a bleak and silent countryside.

CHICKADEES, both BLACK-CAPPED and BOREAL have been reported scarce or absent very generally in Nova Scotia this winter, both in town and country. The WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH has been quite regular at feeders, and oddly enough the BROWN CREEPER as well, figuring in half-a-dozen such reports. Barbara Hinds has sent us a story about a Black-cap picked up from the road on a wet November day, and taken indoors to dry:

"As its feathers dried out and it warmed up, it began to perk up, its eyes lost the film on them, became bright and beady, and it moved its head about in little jerks to keep an eye on hovering humans. I gave it drops of water off my finger. After a while, it recovered sufficiently to fly about the kitchen and sat on the door

lintel. A little later, we tired of watching it and retired to the living room. It had disappeared when we returned and after a search, the tip of its tail was seen protruding from the lip of an old mug on a shelf.

As evening drew on, it found a roosting place for the night, hanging on the organdy curtains. It curled its toes into the cloth, locked its knees, tucked its head under its left wing and slept. Its feathers puffed out. It became ball-shaped. For fear of disturbing it, we would not turn on the main light, but dined by fashionable candlelight. I was down early next morning - 7 a.m. That's early. As the sky lightened a little, the chickadee began to twitch. Then its head came out from under its wing. Its feathers flattened down and it became sleek again. It looked about and began to flutter.

During all this time, it had not been able to close its beak, perhaps due to a dislocation, which may be why I found it on the road. At 8 a.m. I let it out. The last I saw of it, it was sitting in a poplar tree, still with its beak ajar."

(Birds do not put their heads under their wings, Barbara, it just looks that way. They lay their heads along the back, one side or the other, I've been told. Ed.)

The best count of MOCKINGBIRDS seems to be 11: 2 at Glace Bay, 1 at Port Hood, 1 at St. Peters, 3 in the Halifax area, 1 in Shelburne Co., and 2 or more probably 3 in Yarmouth since 2 were in the town, 1 was at Tusket, 15 miles away. (M. Hilton) These birds have wintered well, especially the one at Glace Bay, which is being fed on dates and other fruits, and warmed water! (S. MacLean)

Only 1 BROWN THRASHER has been reported, seen at Glace Bay Feb. 14 (S. MacLean).

ROBINS have made out on hawthorne berries and multi-floras, etc., apparently most of them in and near communities, where they have been noted in usual numbers.

Two late thrushes were a SWAINSON'S THRUSH, Nov. 19 at Cape Sable (S.F. Smith), and a BLUEBIRD, Nov. 14 at Cheticamp (per S. MacLean).

The GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET appears to have been present in usual abundance through Nov., dwindled in numbers during Dec., and we have only 2 reports since these: 2, Jan. 3 at Lakeside, Hfx. Co. (B. Hinds); and 3, Feb. 27 near Three-Fathom Harbor, Hfx. Co. (Eric Cooke). As in the case of the Chickadees, this situation reflects a genuine shortage of birds, not bird-watchers, as Kinglets have been sought in many of their usual haunts, quite fruitlessly. No amount of "swishing" would bring an answering whistle, or a bird in view. The last of the

WATER PIPITS went in November, seen at Cape Sable Oct. 25. small "flocks" of 3 to 6 birds (Smiths); a flock of 20+ at Chebogue Point, Yar. Co., Oct. 28 (M. Hilton) and the last reported from the same locality, 3, Nov. 9, by the same of and D. Kirk. The last CEDAR WAXWINGS were recorded on the Halifax West Christmas Count, and no BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS at have been around this winter, 1970-71. Five NORTHERN SHRE have been spotted, the first (since Oct.) at Crystal Cresc Beach, Hfx. Co. Dec. 12 by C. Allen; 1 each on the Sydney, Glace Bay, Halifax West and Digby Christmas Counts.

STARLINGS and HOUSE SPARROWS were always to be seen in towns and villages. The STARLINGS were still feeding in the fields in the country by mid-November, but the early snow in December sent them close to habitations. This was particularly noted in the Valley, at Wilmot, where Thelma Hawkins remarks "not present before the December snow", and at Wolfville, John Erskine counted 253 in February as against 196 in November in the same area. Mr. Erskine's count of House Sparrows, at the same time and place, was 87 to 243, a notable diminution in number.

Our last few belated warblers were sighted in November, silted up along the coast, reluctant no doubt to take to the ocean, and finding temperatures higher, food in the low but still available near the salt water. Wayne Neily saw a PALM WARBLER Nov. 22, at Ingonish Beach, and Sara MacLean reports a YELLOW WARBLER Nov. 9 at Glace Bay, both in Cape Breton. MYRTLE WARBLERS were reported on the Halifax West, Ingomar and York Christmas Counts, but have not been mentioned since. The 2 PALM WARBLERS were 1, Nov. 9, at Brookside (F. & E. Dobs) and 1, Nov. 15, at MacNab's Island, Hfx. Co. (NSBS Field). The YELLOWTHROAT was seen Nov. 8, 1 at the County Home bog, Hfx. Co. (C. Allen), and 1, Nov. 22, at Broad Cove (B. Hilton and S. Fullerton). Only one YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT has been reported this season, 1, Nov. 18 (and for a few days after) at Dartmouth (Evelyn Horobin). Two AMERICAN REDSTARTS figure on the list: 1, Nov. 17 at Cape Sable (B.J. Smith), and 1, Nov. 29, very late, at Cherry Hill, Lun. Co. (Hinds and Fullerton).

The Smiths had no less than 7 EASTERN MEADOWLARKS at Cape Sable on Oct. 24, but the only winter reports are of 1 on Dec. 15 at Centerlea, Anna. Co., (Whitehead), and 1 seen on the Halifax East Christmas Count on Dec. 26.

REDWINGED BLACKBIRDS which chose to spend the winter in Nova Scotia seem to have been able to cope with the kind of weather we had to offer. Several were seen on Christmas and a few were reported from Yarmouth up to Jan. 18 (M. H. Thelma Hawkins had 1 from Jan. 17 on at Wilmot, Anna. Co.; there were 2 in the Glace Bay area on Jan. 23 (S. MacLean).

There was the usual deluge of BALTIMORE ORIOLES - great rarities 20 years ago - at feeders and elsewhere during the late fall and up to the first hard freeze. Ian MacLean had numbers each day varying from 2 to 7 at his feeder through early December. Eleven sightings were reported by Lewis :

Shelburne Coastguard through November to early December. The
Scares at Glace Bay had a female on Dec. 7 and 19, and 2 birds
on Dec. 22. Another showed up on the Sydneys Christmas Count
on Dec. 27, and 2 in the Halifax area Dec. 9 and 12. Barbara Hinds
and Sylvia Fullerton also saw 2 at Broad Cove, Lun. Co., a bit
earlier on Nov. 8.

Barbara Hinds reports 3 of the 4 RUSTY BLACKBIRD sightings
for the period: 1 at Broad Cove, Lun. Co. Nov. 29, 1 at
Lakeside near Halifax Jan. 3, and 3 in Dartmouth Feb. 28. The
other record is of 5 seen by W. E. Whitehead at Round Hill
Feb. 13. The only COMMON GRACKLE reports are from Yarmouth
and Dartmouth. Marion Hilton reports a few, up to half a dozen
birds, wintering in the Yarmouth area. C. Allen saw a single
bird on Maple Street, Dartmouth, in the same neighborhood for
some reason where wintering Grackles have been seen for the
past 12 years!

The BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD has also been present in good
numbers though not as superabundant as it was last year. To
quote John Erskine again "Cowbirds have not suffered.....they
have moved in thousands to the grain mills in Port Williams".
Mr. Erskine went on to say: "Hawks are now in clover as an
immense crop of meadowmice has flourished under the protection
of snow and now are coming into evidence." According to reports
from feeders, hawks have also taken particular toll of Cowbirds,
and the reporters inferred that these were expendable.

On Nov. 19, 2 or 3 DICKCISSELS appeared with a flock of
house Sparrows at Olive Purdy's feeder in Arcadia. Another
sighted from Nov. 20 on with the Nickersons in Yarmouth and 2
were reported on Dec. 5 in Shelburne by H.F. Lewis. EVENING
ROSBEAKS have been unusually plentiful at feeders. Lloyd
Macpherson gives the following account of an unusual Evening
rosbeak at his Maitland feeder:

"In regular attendance at my feeding tray in Maitland,
Ants County, in company with others of its species, is a
brilliant, yellow Evening Grosbeak. The primary and secondary
feathers of the wings and the tail feathers are pure white.
(In the usual male the secondaries are white, the primaries
and tail feathers are black.) The rest of the bird, except for
the black eye, and the pink bill, legs and feet, is a startlingly
bright chrome yellow. The entire plumage is perfect and precise.

When feeding with others it is as belligerent and
reactive as the usual Evening Grosbeak, holding its own well
in the bill-sparring matches and not appearing to be singled
out for persecution. On occasion, however, it does seem to
choose times to feed when there are no other birds of any kind
present. Perhaps it is just more aggressive and gets there first.

One can presumably describe this bird as a xantho -
chromistic mutant. R. W. Tufts had a specimen some years ago,
as described, which I saw. As I recall, it still had the
plumage characteristics of a male, but with the yellow areas
expanded and the black areas diminished and suffused with

yellow. The present bird reminds one of nothing so much as a large, yellow cage-canary, but much brighter. Certainly it is one of the most spectacular birds I have ever seen."

PURPLE FINCHES were reported in small numbers from November on, particularly in the north-eastern part of the province in early winter, but began to show up in central Nova Scotia by February. GOLDFINCHES, also scarce in December and January, appeared at a number of feeding stations in the Halifax area in mid-February.

Most observers report PINE GROSBEAKS as scarcer than last year, but Wayne Neily saw 100 on the North Mountain, Inv. Co. on Jan. 28. REDPOLLS, too, have been sparsely reported compared to 1969-70. They were seen in small numbers up to a dozen birds on the Christmas Counts at Wolfville, Wilmot, Yarmouth, Halifax East, Springvale, the Sydneys and Glace Bay. No others were reported.

Eighteen RED CROSSBILLS were reported for the period as compared to 10 WHITE-WINGED - definitely not a Crossbill year. Nine Reds with 1 White-wing showed up Jan. 1 on the Springvale Christmas Count. There were 3 Reds at Louisbourg on Jan. 3 and 6 on the same date seen by the Halifax West Christmas Counters. Two White-wings were seen on the Halifax East Christmas Count and at the Baddeck Count on Dec. 31.

Quite a number of RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEES appeared in November and December; like the warblers and perhaps for the same reason, all were seen in coastwise regions: 1, Nov. 8 at Broad Cove, Lun. Co. (Hinds and Fullerton); 1, Nov. 15 and 16, Cape Sable (S. Smith); 1, Dec. 5 and 6, Northwest Arm, Hfx. (H. Murch); 2, a male Dec. 5 to 10 and a female Dec. 5 to 22, Westphal, Hfx. Co. (J. and G. Elliott); flock of 5, Dec. 15, Glace Bay (E. Chant); 1 male, Dec. 17 at Lockeport (per H.F. Lewis in the Shelburne Coastguard); 1, Dec. 26, Hfx. East Count; and 1, Jan. 3, Hfx. West Count. The Smiths had an IPSWICH SPARROW on Oct. 25 at Cape Sable; C. Allen saw one at Eastern Passage, Hfx. Co., Nov. 8; and the last 2 were recorded Dec. 26, Hfx. East Christmas Count. From the end of October on, only 6 SAVANNAH SPARROWS are reported, the last 2 at McNab's Island, Hfx. Harbor, (NSBS Field Trip Nov. 15). The SLATE-COLORED JUNCO on the other hand has managed quite well, small flocks of half-a-dozen birds still to be seen in various parts of the province, more in the woods than reported at feeders.

The first TREE SPARROW was spotted by Wayne Neily on Oct. 23 at French Mountain, Inv. Co., and thereafter they became widespread. Mostly seen 1 or 2 at a time, there was a flock of 11 at the Holdways' in Pictou by the end of January, and a goodly total of 98 was counted on the Hfx. East census Dec. 26.

We have only 1 CHIPPING SPARROW since the last report seen Oct. 20 at Morris Island, Yar. Co. (M. Hilton); and a rare sighting of a FIELD SPARROW, watched feeding on the lawn, at

Barrington, Nov. 27, by Evelyn Richardson. One more WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW was seen in the late fall, Oct. 20, at Cape Sable, by Sidney Smith. The WHITE-THROATED SPARROW was still present in normal numbers up to the end of December, a count of 37 of them made Dec. 26, on the Hfx. East census. Reports since then are very scanty, of ones and two's at a few feeders only. Four more FOX SPARROWS can be added to the 2 seen last October at Cape Sable: 1, Dec. 15 at Granite Village, Shel. Co. (the M. Allens); and 1 each Dec. 27, Jan. 3 and Jan. 3 on the Ingomar, Hfx. West and Yarmouth Christmas Counts. A few SWAMP SPARROWS stayed to be counted at Christmas, and one at least survived until Feb. 9, at the Elliott's feeder, Little Salmon River Drive, Westphal (near Dartmouth). The SONG SPARROW never abundant in winter, dwindled from four's to be seen on a day's trip in November to zeroes in February, but a few stayed regularly at most feeding stations. One sighting of the LAPLAND LONGSPUR, Nov. 11, at Chegoggin, Yar. Co., by D. Rawlins and D. Kirk is interesting, as the 6 birds seen were perched in a bush, an unusual place to see longspurs. They were observed at leisure, the rusty back pattern, face pattern still showing, a sooty smudge at the throat, characteristic bills and "chatter" left no doubt as to identity. Other Longspurs, groups of 3 to 11 were seen on the Glace Bay, Sydneys, Port Hood, Hfx. East and Wolfville Christmas Counts; no reports since then.

Snow Buntings stayed near the coast this winter, the flocks which first appeared in October and early November are still with us, some settled in at feeders, some finding their own sustenance on the fields and beaches kept open by the sea gales. Aside from the hawks, Snow Buntings have been our most reported bird, with flocks numbering from thirty to sixty individuals, all up and down the shore.



There was no noticeable change in the weather, but around the middle of February a stir occurred in the land bird world. Goldfinches built up at feeders, and Purple Finches appeared. The Chickadees came back. Wayne Neily from Cape Breton sent word of a "rash of Robin reports, Feb. 23 to 28". In the woods, the Gray Jays were seen in threes, instead of ones and two's, suggestive of courtship tactics. Does this add up to an early spring? If so, we had better forget the Groundhog, and put our faith in the birds instead.



Observers, upon whose records the above account is based, are: Allen, C.R.K.; Brayley, Jack (Special Feeder Report); Chute, W. (Special Feeder Report); Cohrs, M. and S. and family; Cooke, Eric; Deichmann, K.H.; Dobson, F. and E.; Eaton, Edrica (Special Feeder Report); Elliott, J. and G.; Erskine, J.S.; Fullerton, S.; Gott, M.P.; Hawkins, Thelma (Special Feeder Report); Helleiner, C.W.; Hilton, M.W.; Hinds, Barbara; Holdway E.; Hopkins, Andrew (Special Feeder Report); Horobin, E. (Special Feeder Report); Hurlburt, A.; Jeffries, D. and C. (Special Feeder Report); Killam, Van; Kirk, D.; Lewis, H.F.; Lunn, J. and G.; McLaren, Ian; MacLean, Sara, Records Secretary, C.B. Branch of the NSBS; Macpherson, L.B.; Mills, Eric; Mowatt, Mark; Neily, Wayne; Nicholson, J.G. (Special Feeder Report); Nickerson, M. (Special Feeder Report); Raymond, A. and K. (Special Feeder Reports); Robertson, Theo; Secco, M.; Smith, B.F., B.J., and S.F.; Toppie, Betty (Special Feeder Report); Tufts, R.W.; Whitehead, W.E. Among the Cape Breton observers were Chant, E. Ferguson, C.; Hopkins, H.; Johnson, C.; Lunn, J. and G., McAra I.; MacKinnon, F.; MacLean, S.; MacLean, P.; O'Connell, J.; Neily, W.; Spencer, the Arthurs.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

What is the Bird Society? This is a question that I'll answer in one way at the beginning of this report and look at again later on. First of all, to begin my report, the Bird Society is a group of people primarily interested in bird watching and in being in the out-of-doors and appreciating our environment. After this, the question gets more complicated.

For the executive, the Bird Society proves to be a fair amount of work. For example, the past year for this Society involved a massive pile of correspondence, of the order of seventy to one hundred letters, on routine business, in answer to all kinds of inquiries, and to express our views on environmental issues and on many other activities as well. This is not a complaint because I have learned a great deal about the people and the life of the province in this way, and I think the affairs of the Society have been advanced.

In April of 1970 I visited the Cape Breton Branch in Sydney. As in other years the Cape Breton Branch of our Society has been its most active part. Cape Breton Members, incidentally, attended most of the mainland field trips throughout the year. In addition they provided me with very much appreciated hospitality in Cape Breton during my stay there.

Our yearly program was a busy one, although the Executive met formally only twice. We find in general that most of our activities can be arranged by phoning and by personal contacts and this was done in large part except when formal decisions were necessary. I would like to thank the Executive very much for its help and for its goodwill throughout.

We held four field trips during the summer and the early fall seasons: to Amherst Point (the President's field trip) in early June, to the Cabot Trail late in June, Carleton Place in July, and to Port Joli in late August. The Cape Breton ranch had an active local program there. All of these trips were well attended, and also well appreciated by the people who came. We held our usual Spring early morning field trips near Halifax and also the traditional Hants County trip led by Charlie Allen. We found in our early morning field trips that the Kearney Lake Road is an unexploited resource of the Halifax area. It's easily accessible, and it proves to be very good for birding in May, so I hope that the people living in the residential areas along the west side of Bedford Basin will use the Kearney Lake Road more extensively. There must be other areas like this one near cities and towns deserving regular attention from our members.

Our Newsletter this year maintained its usual first-rate standard. Thanks to Mrs. Dobson's care and hard work, it is eagerly awaited, covers the migration well, and is the main attraction of the Society for many members. This year it has been graced by delicate and perceptive essays by Betty June Smith of Cape Sable Island. I would like to thank her for her fine essays, and also to thank Mrs. Dobson for her deeply appreciated work on our Newsletter.

Our individual field activities, apart from Society field trips, have been almost too varied to list. We've had the best birding ever, I would suspect, in the past year. Perhaps the marker of this is the fact that we added ten new species to the Christmas Census list for the province on the Christmas 1969 Count. Sable Island was visited routinely by Ian McLaren and his students, who were always on the lookout there for rarities, and they seldom missed them. We have many records now from Sable Island which have contributed a great deal in the way of rarities to our provincial list. On this account, as well as many others, we feel that Sable Island should be formally protected as a wilderness area.

Up to its retirement, the Lurcher Light Ship gave us an unparalleled picture of sea-bird abundance and also land-bird migration off the southwestern corner of the Province. Unfortunately, with the retirement of the Lurcher Light Ship and its replacement by an automatic buoy, we will no longer be getting these records. Captain Romaine, who was on the Lurcher Light Ship, is now on the CCGS Walter E. Foster based in Saint John, New Brunswick, and perhaps he may be persuaded to get us some more records during his travels on that ship.

Another aspect of Bird Society activities has been

protection of environment. Our main purpose, certainly, is as naturalists and as bird watchers. We are, however, faced with all kinds of challenges related to environment and this is because we are experts in or about environment. There are more problems, actually, than there are people with time, energy or knowledge to face them. I say this with some weariness after my first year or so in and out of the public spotlight on environmental issues, partly on behalf of the Bird Society. Roadside spraying by the Nova Scotia Department of Highways was suspended early in the year, and the Society wrote to the Minister of Highways to commend his suspension and the review of spraying with herbicides that was being carried out by his Department. After the review had taken place, the Department of Highways surreptitiously began spraying again, without notice to people or press. This was in distinct contrast to the fanfare which preceded the suspension and the review of spraying. The recent election in the Province has made pursuing this subject pointless at this time. I do wonder what will happen in the future with regard to road spraying. We should be alert to making our voice heard again if necessary.

In February of 1970 the tanker Arrow sank in Chedabuc Bay releasing a great deal of oil there. Some members of the Bird Society in the Canso area attempted to make a census of birds killed by recovering the bodies from along the shore, but in general the shore ice prevented recovery of many birds.

Also during 1970 a large portion of Brier Island, something over a thousand acres and four miles of shoreline, was sold to a U.S. real estate company. Eventually, the land has ended up in the hands of a private buyer who will apparently keep it in its present good state for the time being. Even though there is no apparent danger to Brier Island at the moment, it is still a great loss to the Province and is in particular a loss to the Nova Scotia Bird Society, who should well fear for its future should it pass on to other owners.

Cole Harbour is also well known to members of this Society. It has been suggested that Cole Harbour receives the treated sewage of the Halifax County Hospital (it receives some from there already) and from a new housing development, Colby Village, of up to 26,000 people over the next thirty years. This seems to most members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society to be the wrong treatment of a valuable resource which is admirably situated for recreation and conservation in the immediate outskirts of Halifax-Dartmouth.

During the year we presented briefs on development of Kejimikujik National Park and Cape Breton Highlands National Park. With many others, of course, we asked for some changes in the plan for Kejimikujik Park which make its future look much more promising than before. For example, it now appears that the ring road, which would have surrounded Lake Kejimikujik, has been suspended or cancelled and that a boating centre may not be put in at Fairy Bay, which is an environment particularly susceptible to damage. The Cape Breton Highlands Park is a most thorny issue, not yet resolved. The Cape Breton Branch of the

Society presented a brief on this park. Our work in preparing these briefs has pointed up to many of us that there is a need in Nova Scotia for many new kinds of areas, not necessarily large national parks, but small reserved areas which are of all sizes and for many kinds of purposes - for public recreation, for conservation, for the preservation of unique habitats, whether these be old farms or contain unusual animals or vegetation.

We have throughout the year considerably broadened our connections with other societies. For example, we have made strong moves to become affiliated with the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, which is a large society of naturalists in Ontario, made up of about 7,000 members. We have had a good deal to do with the FON in the past in preparing briefs and on other environmental issues, and affiliation will make stronger the voice of the naturalist in Canadian Society. We will be able to aid each other, to exchange ideas and to exchange publications in the same way that we have done before but with a formal sanction. We have been for some time an affiliate society of the Canadian Audubon Society. An attempt is now in progress to make the Audubon Society representative of naturalists across the country, and to step up its activities in the whole country. Ian McLaren represented the Nova Scotia Bird Society at a meeting in Winnipeg in October at which this subject was discussed, and we hope to hear more about it in the near future. It's time that the voice of the naturalist was heard abroad in the land.

For the future, what do we have to look forward to? What should we be doing? Here are some of the suggestions, as I see them, after a year in office. They range from fairly specific local items to things of broader importance. It seems to me, for example, that we should have a bird feeder in the Halifax Public Gardens. It would serve several purposes, including feeding birds, and would have a valuable role in public relations. We do have a role in education, and to have a bird feeder and some mention of the Society near it, say at an easily accessible corner of the Public Gardens, would be a very valuable thing. I hope very much that someone will pick up this idea, and perhaps in other towns as well.

We need more off-season field trips. While the Society is quite active during the summer and early fall, activity pretty much comes to a halt, except for private trips, during the colder part of the year. We should have at least two or three field trips through the winter season after the Christmas Census. It would also be a very good idea to have some indoor programs in various areas of the Province so that our activities can continue even when snow and cold prevent most people from getting out into the places we usually visit during the better seasons.

The third suggestion: Would it be possible to have a weekly column on natural history in the Halifax papers, which are widely distributed in the Province? We need someone willing to write such an article, to keep it going from week to week, so that people are kept in touch with what the Society is doing, with what is going on in the Province, with the changing seasons

and migrations. It could be patterned for example on the excellent column which Frank Robertson writes for the Cape Breton Post and which has aroused so much interest on Cape Breton Island.

As a final subject of interest this year, there has been a good deal of discussion about the formation of a natural history society, or naturalists' society, to use another term for it. As I see it, there are several reasons for forming a natural history society, or for converting the Nova Scotia Bird Society into one. There is a crying need for a general naturalists' society in this Province. There is no such thing at present; although there are conservation groups, we have no general naturalists' society. The Nova Scotia Bird Society certainly is just that - a natural history society, so that it seems to me that with a name change and with a very slight broadening of aims, the Nova Scotia Bird Society would then become a natural history society. We would in this way simply be legitimizing what most of us do already. We would probably find that we attracted a number of new members, although this is not a primary consideration in our rather large society. These new members, though, would bring in with them a breadth of interest and refreshing ideas that we could use. In addition I think that such a change would strengthen our connection with the Nova Scotia Museum, and it would also enable us to be more thoroughly an educational group than we are at present. For example, at the moment we have no young members specifically in a young naturalists' club, although there is provision in our Constitution for such a group. I think that we have been missing a good chance to raise a new generation of naturalists from young people in the province.

There is a final point, too, which I think is a minor one for our Society but that deserves being mentioned and that is that if we were a natural history or naturalists' society, our voice would be more credible in environmental issues than it is as a Bird Society. As you realize, this question of environment is a tremendously important one, not just in our Province but in the world as a whole. The conversion of our Society to a natural history society would in no way, it seems to me, diminish our present activities, since many of us are here because we are bird watchers, and birds are our main interest in natural history. I have never seen such a society that has not been dominated by bird watchers, but with a very important group of people also associated interested in other aspects of the natural world around them. If there is a favourable response to this sort of change, which can be found out by polling the membership, then we can go ahead to make some changes. If not, of course, there is no necessity for a change and we have a well-functioning Society already. But I think the reasons are compelling, and I hope that the membership will think them over with great seriousness.

By way of conclusion, then, it has been a happy and a busy year for the Nova Scotia Bird Society and we hope that the year ahead is also a happy and busy one. No doubt it will be busy at least. I do feel, in conclusion, that we are not

completely filling our role as a group of naturalists. I believe that our role is to be in our natural environment as often as possible - to see it, to learn more about it and to teach others about it, all of these contributing to human awareness of, and to the protection of our environment which is so important to us all.

- Eric Mills, President



ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Nova Scotia Bird Society was held on the evening of December 1, 1970, at the new Nova Scotia Museum, Summer Street, Halifax, N. S. Following a short business meeting, and the President's address, Dr. William H. Drury of the Massachusetts Audubon Society spoke on Radar Studies of Bird Migration. Dr. Drury illustrated his talk with some of the 50,000 photographs taken by himself and his staff over the past four years. These photographs were taken of a radar screen, at set time intervals, and the "frames" strung together, projected as a moving picture showed birds, as blips, streaming past, in their various directions and numbers, and recognizable to the experts as shorebirds, warblers, etc., during a migratory movement. The effect was most impressive.

The studies are designed to determine the selective advantage of a pattern of behaviour, and the mechanisms of such a pattern. Why, for example, do 70 per cent of the birds move a 10 per cent of the nights during a season? Why do birds occur in unexpected places, particularly in the spring and fall? What birds fly inland off the coast?

Three reasons, or conditions, for a migratory movement have been shown to be (1) a rising temperature, (2) moderate but falling pressure, and (3) moderate but low humidity. Under these circumstances birds will move, the impulse being the same both spring and fall. Birds are able to maintain a course, but how, is still dimly understood. As for the rarities, immature birds,

undertaking a first flight, may be misled by the above condition (temperature, pressure, etc.) and fly in the wrong direction, landing in the above-mentioned unexpected places.

Dr. Drury's address was both witty and intensely interesting, and we look forward to hearing from him again.

The Executive Officers of the Nova Scotia Bird Society 1969-70 are continuing in office for another year. As before:

Past President	-	Dr. Ian McLaren
President	-	Dr. Eric Mills
Vice -President	-	Dr. Ben Doane
Secretary-Treasurer	-	Miss Molly Clayden
Membership Secretary	-	Miss Ethel Crathorne
Editor	-	Mrs. Phyllis Dobson
Cape Breton Representative	-	Mr. Wayne Neily
Executive Members	-	Miss Sylvia Fullerton Mr. Ross Anderson Mr. Ross Dobson

CAPE BRETON NEWS

The October meeting of the Cape Breton Branch of the Nova Scotia Bird Society was held at the James McConnell Public Library, and Wayne Neily, the Branch Records Secretary, presented the monthly program. Effectively using colored slides, Mr. Neily reviewed the year's field trips, employing the illustrative material to focus on the distinguishing and characteristic natural forms seen on each trip. Additionally, the annual election of officers and directors took place, the following appointments being decided:

President	-	Wayne Neily
Vice-President	-	Francis MacKinnon
Records Secretary	-	Sara MacLean
Secretary-Treasurer	-	Katherine MacRae

Past-President - Betty Reid

Directors - Rev. Thomas Bellis
Georgina Hennessey
Isabelle MacFarlane
John J. O'Connell
Frank Robertson

In November, the regular meeting was held at Xavier College, the program being presented by Mr. Al Godfrey from Acadia University. Mr. Godfrey, then representing the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests, described the transfer and relocation of the Willow Ptarmigan from Brunette Island near Newfoundland to Scatari Island, adjacent to Main-a-Dieu on the Cape Breton Coast. Specifically, the Willow Ptarmigan has been brought to Nova Scotia with the hope and intention that a breeding colony will establish itself, in time creating a migration to the mainland leading to the establishment of a population which can be hunted.

The January meeting (there was no meeting in December) was again held at Xavier College, and Mr. Charles MacLellan of the Department of Lands and Forests presented a program of films concerning conservation. Focusing on the richness and variety of Canada's natural resources, the films illustrated the ecological breadth of Canada, e.g. the mountains of British Columbia, the woodlands of Toronto, and the Canadian Sub-Arctic.

Finally, Mr. John O'Connell of Xavier College is presently offering a course in Ornithology in the Adult Studies Program. Concentrating on the fundamentals of avian biology, and the techniques of field observation, the course is designed to introduce the students to the living world of birds and to create an opportunity to observe them on scheduled field trips.



Bald Eagle at Lime Hill, Bras d'Or

M. B. Foote

Date: May 9 Leader: Hedley Hopkins
Topic: WATERFOWL & OTHER EARLY MIGRANTS Meet at: 1315, bridge, Marion Bridge

Location: Salmon River, C.B. Co.

loop around part of the Mira River, an interesting part of the island.

Date: May 12 Leader: Eric Mills
Topic: EARLY MORNING (MIGRANTS) Meet at: 0615, Kearney Lake Road

Location: Halifax area

Date: May 14 Leader: Betty Reid
Topic: EARLY MORNING (MIGRANTS) Meet at: 0600, towers, Grand Lake Road

Location: Victoria Junction, C.B. Co.

most of migrants should be in, especially in this spot with its "tropical" (for Cape Breton) fauna.

Date: May 17 Leader: Sara MacLean
Topic: EARLY MORNING (MIGRANTS) Meet at: 0600, Heavy Water Plant

Location: Morien - South Head area

repeat of a trip that was very successful last year to an always productive area.

Date: May 19 Leader: Fred Dobson
Topic: EARLY MORNING (MIGRANTS) Meet at: Cor. Prospect Road and Brookside Road, 0615

Location: Halifax area

Date: May 22-24 Leader: Austin Cameron
Topic: ISLAND ALIVE Meet at: 0730, Sandra C. Dingwall Wharf, Vict. Co.

Location: St. Paul's Island

effort to see if this island acts as a funnel for migrants similar to the lands off the other end of the province. Two nights' camping to increase

our chances of hitting a migration wave. Cost \$10 - \$15, plus your own food and camping gear. Reservations should be made by April 22. (See note at end of list re island trips.)

Date: May 26 Leader: Ben Doane
Topic: EARLY MORNING (MIGRANTS) Meet at: 0600, Armdale Rotary
Location: Susie Lake

Date: May 29 Leader: Charlie Allen
Topic: SPRING MIGRATION Meet at: 0730, Mt. Uniacke R.R. S
Location: Hants Co.

Our traditional easy-going version of the "Big Day".

Date: May 31 Leader: Mary Hay
Topic: EARLY MORNING (MIGRANTS) Meet at: 0600, Entrance to Seaview Golf Club
Location: Northside (Mahoney's Creek)

An interesting variety of habitats at the peak of the season.

Date: June 5 Leader: Isabel MacFarlane
Topic: MIGRATION CLIMAX Meet at: 0600 & 0800, Baddeck P.O.
Location: Baddeck area

Cape Breton's leisurely equivalent of the "Big Day".

Date: June 7 Leader: Frank Robertson
Topic: EARLY MORNING (LAST MIGRANTS) Meet at: 0600, towers, Grand Lake Road
Location: Victoria Junction

"Tropicana" revisited; to see the changes of two weeks.

Emphasis on birds. Whatever we find here will be new to most of us as is our first trip to this area, a "surprise package".

Date: August 14 Leader: Charlie Allen
Topic: EARLY SOUTHWARD MIGRANTS Meet at: 0800, Goshen
Location: New Harbour, Guys. Co.

75 species on the last trip here.

Date: August 20-23 Leader: Betty Reid
Topic: CAVE SWALLOWS, MAYBE? Meet at: 0800, 20 August & 0800
22 August, Sydn
Location: Sable Island Airport

A pilgrimage to the sand strip made famous by Dwight McLaren, et al. Tentatively two parties, a two-day trip for each, estimated cost \$60-\$100 each. As the limit will probably be 10 people, reservations should be made as early as possible. (See note on island trips.)

Date: August 28 Leader: Francis MacKinnon
Topic: SHOREBIRDS - CONGREGATIONS, Meet at: 0800, Pt. Michaud Bes
FLOCKS & HERDS

Location: Pt. Michaud

A perennial favourite; one of the province's best shorebirding areas.

Date: September 5 Leader: Eric Mills
PRESIDENT'S FIELD DAY
Topic: Labor Day Week-end Meet at: 0830, Graveyard on
Location: Brier Island Peajack Road

Make this a week-end outing.

Date: September 11 Leader: Mr. & Mrs. Fred Kenne
Topic: AUTUMN MIGRANTS Meet at: 0800, Intersection Tr
Location: Merigomish Island, Pictou Co. Canada & Route
(Sutherland's F

Another (for us) unexplored area, which looks very promising.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS IN NOVA SCOTIA - 1970

Edited by L. B. Macpherson

A winter that could be said to have started in earnest on December 6 (and never let up) may account for seven species fewer than last years' record high of 123 being recorded. However, in view of the restricting effect of the deep snow and storms in the period on the observers, recording 116 species was no mean feat.

Two new species were added to the Christmas Count list for the Province - European Widgeon (a male leisurely observed by a group, including the author, on the Halifax East Count) and, of all things, a Yellow-headed Blackbird (Amherst Count - seen at feeding stations by a number of observers over several days, checked by Evelyn Lowerison). These bring to 159 the number of species that have been recorded on Christmas Counts in the past 15 years.

Changes in abundance from last years Counts, that might have significance and in some way be connected with the very different weather conditions of the two Decembers, are as follows: Half the number of Canada Geese this year, twice as many Common Goldeneye, three times as many Oldsquaw and of all three scoters, numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawks (20, compared with 3 last year), about one-third the number of Black-capped Chickadees, half the number of Cowbirds, three times as many Evening Grosbeaks, a 90% drop in the numbers of Common Redpoll and White-winged Crossbill this year and, most noticeable, and remarked on by a number of observers, 20 times as many Snow Buntings reported this year. The latter were widely distributed, being noted on 23 of the 25 Counts. A further point of interest is that the Purple Finch was common and widespread in Cape Breton in December and virtually absent from the rest of the Province. Equally a point of interest is that the Cape Breton group continue to put to shame the birders of the mainland, in that the former organized and participated in 10 of the 25 Counts made in the Province. As pointed out in my report last year, there are a number of neglected areas of the Province which have sufficient birders to organize a Count, and they should do so.

The species most infrequently noted in 1970 (recorded on one Count only) were: Gannet (Sydneys), Green-winged Teal (Sydneys), European Widgeon (Halifax East), Greater Yellowlegs (Glace Bay), Bonaparte's Gull (Louisbourg), Snowy Owl (Kingston), Barred Owl (Halifax West), Short-eared Owl

Halifax East), Saw-whet Owl (Halifax West), Pileated Woodpecker (Halifax East), Winter Wren (Gilbert's Cove), Hermit Thrush (Salmon River), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (Salmon River), Cedar Waxwing (Halifax West), Meadowlark (Halifax East), Yellow-headed Blackbird (Amherst), Dickcissel (Halifax West) and Ipswich Sparrow (Halifax East).

The 10 most abundant species (as far as being recorded by our observers) were, in order: Starling (14,500 counted), Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, House Sparrow, Crow, Canada Goose, Evening Grosbeak, Cowbird, Raven and Snow Bunting (1,125 counted). Only Crow and Starling were recorded on each of the 25 Counts.

Summaries of 25 Counts are recorded below, in an approximately north to south order. The species names bracketed are those seen in the Count Period but not on the Count Day. Some Counts not made within the Count Period have been omitted. Appropriate parts of some overlapping counts have been combined.

IGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK, Victoria Co., 2 January 1971.

Twenty-one observers, 47 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Estimates: 46 Species identified; about 1122 individuals.

Common Loon,1; Red-throated Loon,3; Red-necked Grebe,2; Great Cormorant,1; (Canada Goose); Black Duck,88; American Widgeon,1; Greater Scaup,10; Common Goldeneye,64; Mufflehead,4; Oldsquaw,91; Common Eider,19; White-winged Scoter,19; Common Scoter,13; Common Merganser,20; Red-breasted Merganser,31; Goshawk,1; Red-tailed Hawk,1; Bald Eagle,1;uffed Grouse,1; Purple Sandpiper,12; Glaucous Gull,2; Island Gull,125 (1/3 Kumlein's); Great Black-backed Gull,118; Herring Gull,103; Black-headed Gull,2; Black-legged Kittiwake,1; Thick-billed Murre,2; Dovekie,10; Black Guillemot,2; Hairy Woodpecker,2; Downy Woodpecker,2; Gray Jay,4; Blue Jay,7; Raven,30; Crow,112; Black-capped Chickadee,29; Real Chickadee,56; (Robin); Golden-crowned Kinglet,13; Starling,166; House Sparrow,28; Evening Grosbeak,2; Pine Grosbeak,4; Pine Siskin,8; crossbill sp.,20; Slate-colored Junco,2; Snow Bunting,1.

Observers: Mary Barker, Gwen Beattie, Dorothea Cox, Gordon Doucette, Allison Fisk, Irene Gettas, Crystal Hussey, John D. MacDonald, Francis MacKinnon, Anne Moore, Art Moore, Wynne Neily (compiler); Betty Reid, David Reid, Patricia Reid, Barbara Rochester, George Rochester, Lorraine Rochester, Hazel Stockley, Murray Stockley and Frank Westhaver.

MARGAREE, Inverness Co., 29 December 1970.

Fifteen observers, 27 party-hours.

Observation conditions: medium.

Totals: 22 species identified; about 700 individuals.

Black Duck,24; Common Goldeneye,22; Oldsquaw,11;
Red-breasted Merganser,5; Bald Eagle,4; Great Black-backed
Gull,3; Herring Gull,5; Hairy Woodpecker,1; Downy
Woodpecker,1; Horned Lark,2; Blue Jay,30; Raven,14; Crow,167;
Black-capped Chickadee,10; Golden-crowned Kinglet,5;
Starling,182; House Sparrow,43; Common Grackle,3; Evening
Grosbeak,18; Purple Finch,44; Slate-colored Junco,7;
Snow Bunting, 99.

Observers: Anne Bellis, Rev Thomas Bellis (compiler),
Peter Chiasson, Ben Edwards, Dorothy Greenidge,
Kenneth Greenidge, Gerald Hart, Jeffrey Hart, Baxter Ingraham,
Gregory Ingraham, Leslie Ingraham, Maxwell Ingraham,
David MacDonald, Wayne Neily and Isabel Taylor.

PORT HOOD, Inverness Co., 28 December 1970.

Five observers, 12 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 32 species identified; about 794 individuals.

Common Loon,2; Red-throated Loon,1; Horned Grebe,2;
(Canada Goose); Black Duck,5; Common Goldeneye,8; Oldsquaw,13;
Common Eider,8; White-winged Scoter,2; Common Scoter,1;
Common Merganser,16; Red-breasted Merganser,1; Red-tailed
Hawk,2; Bald Eagle,2; Iceland Gull,6; Great Black-backed
Gull,13; Herring Gull,10; Great Horned Owl,1; Kingfisher,1;
(Gray Jay); Blue Jay,18; Raven,220; Crow,56; Black-capped
Chickadee,6; Boreal Chickadee,13; Mockingbird,1;
Golden-crowned Kinglet,7; Starling,327; House Sparrow,1;
Common Grackle,1; Evening Grosbeak,24; American Goldfinch,3;
Lapland Longspur,3; Snow Bunting,20.

Observers: Austin Cameron (compiler), Donald Campbell,
Mrs Earl Hawley, Eugene Hawley and Wayne Neily.

BADDECK, Victoria Co., 31 December 1970.

Thirteen observers, 37 party-hours.

Observation conditions: medium.

Totals: 26 species identified; about 928 individuals.

Black Duck,8; Common Goldeneye,16; Common Merganser,40
Red-breasted Merganser,5; Sharp-shinned Hawk,1; Bald Eagle,4;
Ruffed Grouse,1; Great Black-backed Gull,5; Herring Gull,108;
Belted Kingfisher,1; Hairy Woodpecker,1; Gray Jay,13; Blue Jay,
Raven,77; Crow,138; Black-capped Chickadee,18; Boreal
Chickadee,38; Golden-crowned Kinglet,7; Starling,179;
House Sparrow,73; Evening Grosbeak,76; Purple Finch,15;
Pine Grosbeak,60; White-winged Crossbill,7; Slate-colored
Junco,20; Song Sparrow,1.

Observers: Effie Bain, George Bartlett, Roy Campbell,
Malcolm Fuller, Queenie Fuller, Isabel MacFarlane (compiler);
Jack MacKillop, Buddington MacLeod, Robert MacLeod,
Edith MacPherson, Wayne Neily, John G. Nicholson, Lloyd Stone.

THE SYDNEYS, Cape Breton Co., 27 December 1970.

Nineteen observers, 34 party-hours.

Observation conditions: medium.

Totals: 50 species identified; about 8503 individuals.

Common Loon,2; Gannet,2; Great Cormorant,2; (Great Blue Heron); Black Duck,48; Pintail,1; Green-winged Teal,1; American Widgeon,1; Common Goldeneye,123; Oldsquaw,41; Common Eider,2; White-winged Scoter,109; Surf Scoter,1; Common Scoter,27; Common Merganser,21; Red-breasted Merganser,31; Bald Eagle,11; Ruddy Turnstone,1; Purple Sandpiper,19; Sanderling,2; Glaucous Gull,5; Iceland Gull,45; Great Black-backed Gull,1459; Herring Gull,2800; Black-headed Gull,8; Black-legged Kittiwake,1; Black Guillemot,1; Belted Kingfisher,3; Downy Woodpecker,1; Blue Jay,36; Raven,85; Crow,384; Black-capped Chickadee,17; Brown Creeper,1; Robin,3; Golden-crowned Kinglet,3; (Northern Shrike); Starling,2252; House Sparrow,619; Red-winged Blackbird,1; Baltimore Oriole,1; (Rusty Blackbird); Common Grackle,4; Brown-headed Cowbird,2; Evening Grosbeak,276; Purple Finch,2; (Common Redpoll); Pine Siskin,2; American Goldfinch,4; Slate-colored Junco,19; Tree Sparrow,1; Song Sparrow,2; Lapland Longspur,3; Snow Bunting,18.

Observers: Mrs Joseph Aguinaga, Mrs Harold Babcock, David Burchell, Raoul Dieltgens, George Hay, John Hay, Mary Hay, Georgina Hennessey, Hedley Hopkins, Mary Large, William Large, Francis MacKinnon, Mrs Duncan MacQuarrie, Richard McCurdy, John O'Connell (compiler), Kay O'Connell, Betty Reid, Frank Robertson and Gordon Sutherland.

GLACE BAY, Cape Breton Co., 28 December 1970.

Seven observers, 28 party-hours.

Observation conditions: medium.

Totals: 35 species identified; about 2183 individuals.

Common Loon,1; Red-necked Grebe,1; Canada Goose,73; Black Duck,412; Common Goldeneye,37; Oldsquaw,40; Common Merganser,5; Red-breasted Merganser,13; Bald Eagle,3; Greater Yellowlegs,1; Glaucous Gull,5; Iceland Gull,229; Great Black-backed Gull,202; Herring Gull,261; Ring-billed Gull,1; Black-headed Gull,21; Dovekie,4; Black Guillemot,3; Downy Woodpecker,2; Blue Jay,3; Raven,37; Crow,144; Black-capped Chickadee,5; Mockingbird,1; Northern Shrike,1; Starling,678; House Sparrow,129; Brown-headed Cowbird,21; Evening Grosbeak,39; Common Redpoll,1; Pine Siskin,8; Savannah Sparrow,3; Song Sparrow,1; Lapland Longspur,6; Snow Bunting,11.

Observers: Francis MacKinnon, Mrs James MacLachlan, Sara MacLean (compiler), Edith MacLeod, John O'Connell, Frank Robertson and George Spencer.

LOUISBOURG, Cape Breton Co., 2 January 1971.

Two observers, 9 party-hours.

Observation conditions: medium to poor.

Totals: 33 species identified; about 2883 individuals.

Common Loon,4; Red-necked Grebe,3;Great Cormorant,1;
(Great Blue Heron); Black Duck,7; Greater Scaup,1; Common
Goldeneye,9; Oldsquaw,59; Common Eider,3; White-winged
Scoter,17; Red-breasted Merganser,21; Cooper's Hawk,1;
Rough-legged Hawk,1; (Spruce Grouse); Ruddy Turnstone,7;
Purple Sandpiper,20; Sanderling,1;Iceland Gull,69 (40 Kumlein'
Great Black-backed Gull,850; Herring Gull,1500; Black-headed
Gull,2; Bonaparte's Gull,1; Black Guillemot,5;
(Great Horned Owl); Gray Jay,2; Raven,7; Crow,49; Boreal
Chickadee,3; Golden-crowned Kinglet,1; Starling,104;
House Sparrow,47; (Purple Finch); Pine Grosbeak,2;
Pine Siskin,2; Red Crossbill,3; Slate-colored Junco,7;
Snow Bunting,74.

Observers: Gwen Lunn, John Lunn (compiler).

ESKASONI, Cape Breton Co., 3 January 1971.

Eight observers, 11.5 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 26 species identified; about 363 individuals.

Common Loon,1; Black Duck,32; Greater Scaup,29;
Common Goldeneye,44; White-winged Scoter,47; Common
Merganser,13; Red-breasted Merganser,7; Red-tailed Hawk,2;
Bald Eagle,9; Iceland Gull,2; Great Black-backed Gull,5;
Herring Gull,26; Belted Kingfisher,1; Hairy Woodpecker,1;
Gray Jay,1; Blue Jay,19; Raven,12; Crow,68; Black-capped
Chickadee,9; Boreal Chickadee,3; Golden-crowned Kinglet,1;
Starling,16; Pine Siskin,8; American Goldfinch,4;
Slate-colored Junco,2; Snow Bunting,1.

Observers: Billie Digout, Clarence Digout,
Eva Digout, Francis MacKinnon (compiler), Richard MacKinnon,
Robert MacKinnon, Katherine MacRae and Betty Reid.

SALMON RIVER, Cape Breton Co., 31 December 1970.

Six observers, 8 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 20 species identified; about 412 individuals.

Sharp-shinned Hawk,1; Ruffed Grouse,2;
Hairy Woodpecker,2; Downy Woodpecker,2; Gray Jay,7;
Blue Jay,34; Raven,4; Crow,55; Black-capped Chickadee,5;
Boreal Chickadee,1; (Hermit Thrush); Golden-crowned Kinglet,4;
Ruby-crowned Kinglet,1; Starling,72; House Sparrow,107;
Evening Grosbeak,66; Purple Finch,3; Pine Grosbeak,23;
Pine Siskin,1; (American Goldfinch); Slate-colored Junco,19;
Tree Sparrow,2.

Observers: Audrey Duchemin, Ruth Goode, Frances Hussey
Hedley E.Hopkins (compiler), Hedley H.Hopkins and
Darrell Leach.

ST. PETERS, Richmond Co., 1 January 1971.

Seven observers, 20 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 36 species identified; about 831 individuals.

Common Loon,1; Red-throated Loon,1; Red-necked Grebe,1; Black Duck,72; Common Goldeneye,32; Oldsquaw,18; White-winged Scoter,1; Common Merganser,5; Red-breasted Merganser,15; Bald Eagle 4; (Spruce Grouse); Ruffed Grouse,3; Iceland Gull,1; Great Black-backed Gull,7; Herring Gull,61; Dovekie,2; Belted Kingfisher,2; Hairy Woodpecker,1; Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker,1; Gray Jay,4; Blue Jay,1; Raven,53; Crow,146; Black-capped Chickadee,18; Boreal Chickadee,27; Red-breasted Nuthatch,1; Brown Creeper,1; Mockingbird,1; (Robin); Golden-crowned Kinglet,18; Starling,228; House Sparrow,65; (Red-winged Blackbird); Common Grackle,1; (Brown-headed Cowbird); Evening Grosbeak,4; Purple Finch,22; Pine Grosbeak,10; (American Goldfinch, Slate-colored Junco); Song Sparrow,1; Snow Bunting,2.

Observers: Claire Digout, Clarence Digout, John Digout, Murdock Digout (compiler), William Digout, Katherine MacRae and Wayne Neily.

AMHERST, Cumberland Co., 3 January 1971.

Eight observers, 11 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 15 species identified; about 1941 individuals.

Common Merganser,4; Rough-legged Hawk,4; Pigeon Hawk,1; Pheasant,21; Great Black-backed Gull,545; Herring Gull,553; (Hairy Woodpecker); Horned Lark,15; Blue Jay,16; Raven,154; Crow,169; Black-capped Chickadee,2; (White-breasted Nuthatch); Starling,145; House Sparrow,201; (Yellow-headed Blackbird); Evening Grosbeak,108; Tree Sparrow,3; (Snow Bunting).

Observers: Mrs Walter Freeman, Mary Harrison, Barbara Hennigar, Mrs David Latta, Evelyn Lowerison (compiler), Dora Myers, Mrs Morris Scovil and Alan Smith.

Northport, Cumberland Co., 2 January 1971.

Two observers, 4 party-hours and feeder.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 9 species identified; about 96 individuals.

Sharp-shinned Hawk,1; Pheasant,6; Herring Gull,1; Blue Jay,7; Crow,41; Starling,9; House Sparrow,7; Song Sparrow,1; Snow Bunting,23.

Observers: Duncan MacNeil and Robert G. MacNeil.

PICTOU, Pictou Co., 31 December 1970.

One observer, 5½ hours.

Observation conditions: very good.

Totals: 15 species identified; about 255 individuals.

Common Goldeneye,6; Red-breasted Merganser,4;
(Pigeon Hawk, Pheasant); Great Black-backed Gull,3;
Herring Gull,122; Downy Woodpecker,2; Blue Jay,4; (Raven);
Crow,23; Black-capped Chickadee,3; White-breasted Nuthatch,2;
(Robin); Starling,27; House Sparrow,40; (Brown-headed Cowbird
Evening Grosbeak,14; Purple Finch,1; Slate-colored Junco,1;
Tree Sparrow,3; (Song Sparrow, Snow Bunting).

Observer: Eric Holdway.

SPRINGVILLE, Pictou Co., 1 January 1971.

Three observers, 10 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 24 species identified; about 702 individuals.

Black Duck,2; Common Merganser,1; (Red-breasted
Merganser, Goshawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk); Red-tailed Hawk,2;
(Bald Eagle); Great Black-backed Gull,160; Herring Gull,100;
Hairy Woodpecker,2; Downy Woodpecker,1; (Black-backed
Three-toed Woodpecker); Gray Jay,2; Blue Jay,40; Raven,7;
Crow,97; Black-capped Chickadee,22; Boreal Chickadee,50;
White-breasted Nuthatch,1; (Robin); Golden-crowned Kinglet,10
Starling,122; House Sparrow,46; Brown-headed Cowbird,2;
Evening Grosbeak,4; Pine Grosbeak,6; Red Crossbill,9;
White-winged Crossbill,1; Slate-colored Junco,14;
Tree Sparrow,1; (Snow Bunting).

Observers: Harry Brennan, Fred Kenney (compiler),
Margaret Kenney.

SHUBENACADIE, Hants Co., 29 December 1970.

Three observers, 8 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 21 species identified; about 495 individuals.

Canada Goose,4; Pheasant,2; Great Black-backed Gull,3
Herring Gull,7; Hairy Woodpecker,2; (Gray Jay); Blue Jay,6;
Raven,33; Crow,200; Black-capped Chickadee,3; White-breasted
Nuthatch,1; Brown Creeper,1; Starling,109; House Sparrow,52;
Common Grackle,1; Brown-headed Cowbird,6; Evening Grosbeak,20
Pine Grosbeak,35; Common Redpoll,7; Slate-colored Junco,1;
White-throated Sparrow,1; Song Sparrow,1; (Snow Bunting).

Observers: Mary Geddes, Mrs A.Gass,
Roslyn MacPhee (compiler).

HALIFAX (EAST), Halifax Co., 26 December 1970.

Twenty-eight observers, 55 party-hours.

Observation conditions: medium.

Totals: 71 species identified; about 7671 individuals.

Common Loon,37; Red-throated Loon,1; Red-necked Grebe,1; Horned Grebe,10; Pied-billed Grebe,1; Great Cormorant,1; Great Blue Heron,1; Canada Goose,1200; Mallard,1; Black Duck,1150; Pintail,1; European Widgeon,1; Greater Scaup,4; Common Goldeneye,340; Bufflehead,85; Oldsquaw,320; Common Eider,6; White-winged Scoter,42; Surf Scoter,2; Common Scoter,4; Common Merganser,2; Red-breasted Merganser,38; Sharp-shinned Hawk,3; Rough-legged Hawk,1; Bald Eagle,3; Marsh Hawk,2; Sparrow Hawk,1; Common Snipe,1; Purple Sandpiper,55; Dunlin,5; Sanderling,1; Iceland Gull,2; Great Black-backed Gull,165; Herring Gull,860; Ring-billed Gull,35; (Short-eared Owl); Belted Kingfisher,4; Pileated Woodpecker,1; Hairy Woodpecker,5; Downy Woodpecker,5; Horned Lark,13; Gray Jay,9; Blue Jay,68; Raven,140; Crow,360; Black-capped Chickadee,43; Boreal Chickadee,14; White-breasted Nuthatch,1; Red-breasted Nuthatch,3; Brown Creeper,1; Robin,1; Golden-crowned Kinglet,30; Starling,1280; Myrtle Warbler,1; House Sparrow,620; Eastern Meadowlark,1; (Rusty Blackbird); Brown-headed Cowbird,15; Evening Grosbeak,23; Pine Grosbeak,1; (Common Redpoll); Pine Siskin,3; American Goldfinch,29; White-winged Crossbill,2; Rufous-sided Towhee,1; Ipswich Sparrow,2; Savannah Sparrow,5; Slate-colored Junco,38; Tree Sparrow,98; White-throated Sparrow,37; Swamp Sparrow,3; Song Sparrow,36; Lapland Longspur,11; Snow Bunting,385.

Observers: C.R.K.Allen, Paul Breen, Hazel Carmichael, Eric Cooke, Ethel Crathorne, B.K.Doane, Evelyn Dobson, Fred Dobson, Phyllis Dobson, Rosemary Eaton, Jim Elliott, William Elliott, Sylvia Fullerton, Dennis Gordon, John Hamilton, Phyllis Hemeon, Ward Hemeon, Frank Himsl, Barbara Hinds, W.A.Hughes, Connie Klemp, Ian A.McLaren, L.B.Macpherson (compiler), Eric Mills (organizer), Willett J.Mills, Joe Mortenson, Betty Topple, Wesley Topple.

HALIFAX (WEST), Halifax Co., 3 January 1971.

Fifty-four observers, 75 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 71 species identified; about 12,530 individuals.

Common Loon,18; Red-necked Grebe,21; Horned Grebe,17; Pied-billed Grebe,1; Great Cormorant,63; Black Duck,71; Common Goldeneye,23; Oldsquaw,345; Common Eider,2; White-winged Scoter,120; Common Scoter,2; Common Merganser,7; Red-breasted Merganser,28; Sharp-shinned Hawk,5; (Cooper's Hawk); Red-tailed Hawk,3; Rough-legged Hawk,2; Marsh Hawk,1; Pigeon Hawk,2; Sparrow Hawk,1; Ruffed Grouse,2; Spruce Grouse,1; Black-bellied Plover,1; Common Snipe,1; Purple Sandpiper,12; Glaucous Gull,3; Iceland Gull,52; Great Black-backed Gull,900; Herring Gull,3300; Ring-billed Gull,8; Black-headed Gull,13; Black-legged Kittiwake,1; Thick-billed

Murre,1; Black Guillemot,9; (Barred Owl, Saw-whet Owl); Belted Kingfisher,1; Yellow-shafted Flicker,1; Hairy Woodpecker,5; Downy Woodpecker,16; Horned Lark,1; Gray Jay,1; Blue Jay,64; Raven,31; Crow,295; Black-capped Chickadee,72; Boreal Chickadee,5; White-breasted Nuthatch,13; Red-breasted Nuthatch,7; Brown Creeper,7; Mockingbird,3; Robin,57; Golden-crowned Kinglet,18; (Cedar Waxwing); Northern Shrike,1; Starling,5000; Myrtle Warbler,3; House Sparrow,950; Red-winged Blackbird,1; Baltimore Oriole,2; Rusty Blackbird,1; Common Grackle,1; Brown-headed Cowbird,90; (Dickcissel); Evening Grosbeak,470; (Purple Finch); Pine Grosbeak,4; American Goldfinch,105; Red Crossbill,6; Rufous-sided Towhee,1; Slate-colored Junco,130; Tree Sparrow,32; White-throated Sparrow,4; Fox Sparrow,1; Swamp Sparrow,1; Song Sparrow,31; Snow Bunting, 63.

Observers: C.R.K.Allen, Ross Anderson, Mrs T.Anderson
Ray Bowditch, Mrs Ray Bowditch, Jack Brayley, Paul Breen, Shirley Brothers, Hazel Carmichael, Walter Chute, Mrs P.S.Christie, Chris Cohrs, John Cohrs, Shirley Cohrs, Frances Cook, Eric Cooke, Ethel Crathorne, Ronald Dicks, B.K.Doane (organizer), Evelyn Dobson, Fred Dobson, Phyllis Dobson, Elizabeth Doull, G.H.Edsall, Ruth Edsall, Gillian Elliott, Jim Elliott, Sylvia Fullerton, Mrs Ralph Het Mrs R.H.Helpard, Phyllis Hemeon, Ward Hemeon, Frank Himsl, Barbara Hinds, W.A.Hughes, Mrs Donald Jeffries, Connie Klemp, A.R.Locke, L.B.Macpherson (compiler), Bernice McLaren, Eric Mills, Willett J.Mills, Claude Mitchell, John Mitchell, Harding Moffatt, Joe Mortenson, Mrs A.E.Murray, Ken Ross, John Rutherford, Mary Sandford, Caron Somers, Betty Topple, Wesley Topple and Mrs C.L.Torey.

WOLFVILLE, Kings Co., 1 January 1971.

Five observers, 16 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 33 species identified; about 9737 individuals.

(Common Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Horned Grebe); Mallard,4; Black Duck,400; Common Goldeneye,3; Common Merganser,9; (Goshawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk); Red-tailed Hawk,1
Rough-legged Hawk,9; Bald Eagle,2; (Pigeon Hawk); Pheasant,23; Gray Partridge,64; Great Black-backed Gull,600; Herring Gull,2000; (Mourning Dove); Hairy Woodpecker,2; Downy Woodpecker,1; Horned Lark,60; Blue Jay,28; Raven,200; Crow,1500; Black-capped Chickadee,5; Boreal Chickadee,1; White-breasted Nuthatch,2; Robin,3; Starling,3000; House Sparrow,1000; Brown-headed Cowbird,700; Evening Grosbeak,72; Purple Finch,4; Common Redpoll,9; Slate-colored Junco,33; Tree Sparrow,2; White-throated Sparrow,1; Song Sparrow,3; Lapland Longspur,7; Snow Bunting,80.

Observers: Cyril Coldwell, Fred Elderkin, Mark Elderkin, Oscar Morehouse (compiler) and Mrs Morehouse.

KINGSTON, Kings Co., 31 December 1970.

Seven observers, 19 party-hours.

Observation conditions: poor.

Totals: 34 species identified; about 1320 individuals.

Great Cormorant,1; Black Duck,3; Common Goldeneye,2;
Bufflehead,1; Common Eider,5; White-winged Scoter,6;
Red-breasted Merganser,1; (Goshawk); Sharp-shinned Hawk,2;
Red-tailed Hawk,4; Pigeon Hawk,1; Ruffed Grouse,3; Pheasant,3;
(Gray Partridge); Purple Sandpiper,1; Great Black-backed
Gull,24; Herring Gull,221; Mourning Dove,1; (Snowy Owl);
Hairy Woodpecker,4; Downy Woodpecker,7; Blue Jay,74;
Raven,16; Crow,126; Black-capped Chickadee,16; White-breasted
Nuthatch,3; (Robin); Starling,139; House Sparrow,536;
Red-winged Blackbird,7; Common Grackle,4; Brown-headed
Cowbird,29; Evening Grosbeak,10; Common Redpoll,3;
Pine Siskin,3; (Slate-colored Junco); Tree Sparrow,2;
Song Sparrow,2; Snow Bunting,50.

Observers: Wayne Bell, Alfred Bent, Murray Bent,
Neville Garrity, Frank Hawkins, Thelma Hawkins,
Larry E. Neily (compiler).

BRIDGETOWN, Annapolis Co., 2 January 1971.

Four observers; 2 party-hours, 3 feeding stations.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 16 species identified; about 304 individuals.

Sharp-shinned Hawk,1; Red-tailed Hawk,1;
Ruffed Grouse,12; Pheasant,15; Great Black-backed Gull,7;
Herring Gull,8; Raven,1; Crow,15; Black-capped Chickadee,8;
(White-breasted Nuthatch, Robin); Starling,40;
House Sparrow,30; Red-winged Blackbird,1; Brown-headed
Cowbird,125; Evening Grosbeak,30; (American Goldfinch);
Tree Sparrow,1; (Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Snow Bunting).

Observers: George Allen, Terrance Hyson (compiler),
Mrs Lycett and Mrs V. Nickerson.

DIGBY, Digby Co., 2 January 1971.

Twelve observers, ship, on foot and feeders.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 33 species identified; about 1595 individuals.

Common Loon,1; Great Cormorant,10; Black Duck,141;
Greater Scaup,60; Common Goldeneye,3; Bufflehead,6; Oldsquaw,14;
scoter sp.,2; Red-breasted Merganser,4; Sharp-shinned Hawk,2;
(Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Bald Eagle, Pigeon Hawk,
Sparrow Hawk, Spruce Grouse, Pheasant); Great Black-backed
Gull,3; Herring Gull,120; Ring-billed Gull,2; (Black-headed Gull);
Black-legged Kittiwake,2; Hairy Woodpecker,2; Downy
Woodpecker,4; Blue Jay,19; (Raven); Crow,22; Black-capped
Chickadee,8; White-breasted Nuthatch,2; (Brown Creeper); Robin,5;
Northern Shrike,1; Starling,115; House Sparrow,600;
Brown-headed Cowbird,124; Evening Grosbeak,250; Purple Finch,4;
(Pine Grosbeak); American Goldfinch,9; Slate-colored Junco,6;
Tree Sparrow,10; White-throated Sparrow,26; Song Sparrow,16;
Snow Bunting,2.

Observers : Mrs Victor Cardoza, Louise Daley (compile
Henrick Deichmann, Mrs Lee Everett, Kenneth Harris, Mary Harr
Mrs Charles Hersey, Stanley Hinton, Mrs Stanley Hinton,
Annie Raymond, Kelsey Raymond, Vera Soulis, Marjorie Tupper.

GILBERT'S COVE, Digby Co., 2 January 1971.

Seven observers, 5 party-hours.

Observation conditions: good.

Totals: 18 species identified; about 1044 individuals.

Common Loon,2; Great Cormorant,1; Black Duck,100;
Greater Scaup,150; Common Goldeneye,150; Common Scoter,15;
Red-tailed Hawk,2; Rough-legged Hawk,2; Pheasant,1;
Great-black-backed Gull,200; Herring Gull,255; Blue Jay,7;
Crow,100; Winter Wren,1; Starling,37; House Sparrow,15;
Song Sparrow,3; Snow Bunting,3.

Observers: Eileen Marshall, James Outhouse,
Ann Rogers (compiler), Anna Ruth Rogers, John Rogers,
Rory Rogers and R.MacLeod Rogers. (This Count, which may be
renamed, overlaps the earlier established Digby Count by
about 2-miles on its northeast perimeter - it will have to
establish a new base point.)

BROAD COVE, Lunenburg Co., 28 December 1970.

Five observers, 15 party-hours.

Observation conditions: very good.

Totals: 45 species identified; about 1721 individuals.

Common Loon,17; Red-throated Loon,1; Red-necked
Grebe,1; Horned Grebe,34; Great Cormorant,7; Canada Goose,356;
Black Duck,49; Greater Scaup,100; Common Goldeneye,193;
Bufflehead,15; Oldsquaw,41; Common Eider,11; White-winged
Scoter,43; Surf Scoter,103; Common Scoter,1; Red-breasted
Merganser,27; Red-tailed Hawk,1; Bald Eagle,1; Ruffed Grouse,1
Pheasant,3; Black-bellied Plover,1; Dunlin,4; Sanderling,1;
Purple Sandpiper,10; Glaucous Gull,1; Great Black-backed
Gull,58; Herring Gull,216; Thick-billed Murre,1; Gray Jay,1;
Blue Jay,13; Raven,4; Crow,61; Black-capped Chickadee,6;
Boreal Chickadee,1; Robin,1; Starling,121; House Sparrow,1;
Evening Grosbeak,7; Pine Grosbeak,2; American Goldfinch,7;
Slate-colored Junco,36; Tree Sparrow,8; Swamp Sparrow,2;
Song Sparrow,10; Snow Bunting,144.

Observers: C.R.K.Allen, Eric Cooke, Phyllis Dobson,
Sylvia Fullerton (compiler), Barbara Hinds.

YARMOUTH, Yarmouth Co., 3 January 1971.

Twenty-one observers, 16 party-hours, 10 feeders.

Observation conditions: very good becoming poor.

Totals: 37 species identified; about 3536 individuals.

Great Blue Heron,1; Canada Goose,500; Black Duck,1500;
Greater Scaup,15; Common Goldeneye,6; Bufflehead,40;
Oldsquaw,3; Red-breasted Merganser,2; (Cooper's Hawk-no details
given); Sharp-shinned Hawk,2; Red-tailed Hawk,4; Pigeon Hawk,2;
Sparrow Hawk,1; Great Black-backed Gull,122; Herring Gull,225;
Hairy Woodpecker,1; Downy Woodpecker,1; Horned Lark,18;
Blue Jay,8; Raven,5; Crow,56; Black-capped Chickadee,4;
Mockingbird,1; Robin,4; (Northern Shrike); Starling,172;
Myrtle Warbler,11; House Sparrow,110; Red-winged Blackbird,4;
Common Grackle,53; Brown-headed Cowbird,370; Evening
Grosbeak,206; Purple Finch,2; (Common Redpoll);
Slate-colored Junco,20; Tree Sparrow,28; White-throated
Sparrow,7; Fox Sparrow,1; Song Sparrow,11; Snow Bunting,24.

Observers: Mrs Earle Cann, Mrs Munro Gardner,
Mrs Allen Hatfield, J.Clark Higby, Mildred Higby,
Marion Hilton (co-compiler), Helen Hurlburt, Lucy Jarvis,
Marjorie Kenney, Marston Kenney, Dorothy Kirk (co-compiler),
William Lent, Mrs Grant Lockhart, Margaret MacIntyre,
Israel Pothier (additional species from his Wedgeport count,
which overlaps the Yarmouth circle, are included above),
Mrs G.E.Saunders, Edwin Sollows, Vera Sollows, Kent Sweeney,
Helen Weld and Hazel Williamson.

INGOMAR, Shelburne Co., 27 December 1970.

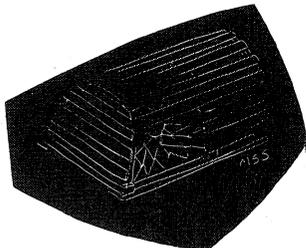
One observer, 10 hours.

Observation conditions: good becoming poor.

Totals: 34 species identified; about 749 individuals.

Common Loon,7; Red-throated Loon,2; Horned Grebe,11;
Great Cormorant,22; (Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose);
Black Duck,13; Common Goldeneye,10; Oldsquaw,9; Common
Eider,8; (White-winged Scoter); Common Scoter,184; Common
Merganser,3; unidentified ducks,100; (Red-tailed Hawk);
Marsh Hawk,2; (Pigeon Hawk); Sparrow Hawk,1; (Pheasant);
Purple Sandpiper,7; Glaucous Gull,1; Great Black-backed
Gull,22; Herring Gull,91; (Yellow-shafted Flicker); (Gray Jay);
Blue Jay,1; (Raven); Crow,14; Black-capped Chickadee,6;
Boreal Chickadee,9; Robin,5; Golden-crowned Kinglet,2;
Starling,57; Myrtle Warbler,3; House Sparrow,2;
(Common Grackle); Brown-headed Cowbird,1; Evening Grosbeak,7;
American Goldfinch,1; Slate-colored Junco,11;
Tree Sparrow,2; White-throated Sparrow,1; Fox Sparrow,1;
Song Sparrow,9; Snow Bunting,124.

Observer: Loran L.Goulden.



A CHRISTMAS COUNT IN GREAT BRITAIN

From Roger and Helen Hughes, presently in North Wales, has come the following Christmas Count, made on December 28, 1970:

"We thought it would be interesting to do a Christmas Count for comparison with yours. Yesterday (28th) we did a 3-hour count (10:00-13:00) along a stretch of salt marsh about two hours before high tide at the head of Morecambe Bay; in a freshwater marsh adjacent to the salt marsh, and in neighboring fields. The huge expanses of muddy sand in the bay were covered with water thus forcing huge flocks of waders onto the grassy banks at the edge of the salt marsh. The result: 1,000 curlew (one flock), 2,000 knot (one flock), 1,000 dunlin (one flock), 2,000 oystercatchers (two flocks), 80 widgeon, 8 shelduck, 100 redshank (3 flocks), 250 ring plover (two flocks), 300 turnstones (one flock), 6 greater blackbacks, 1 lesser blackback, 100 black-headed gulls, 20 herring gulls, 50 linnets, 7 meadow pipits, 13 skylarks, 4 jackdaws, 2 pied wagtails, 6 carrion crows.

For some odd reason the freshwater marsh was unproductive - it is usually crowded with goldeneye, tufted duck, pochard and little grebes at this time of year. However, our meager list was: 20 mallard, 6 coot, 2 mo hen, 1 water rail, 12 shoveller, 2 teal, 2 pochard, 1 buzzard, 2 magpies, 6 crows, 7 black-headed gulls, 23 herring gulls, 14 lapwing, 3 wrens, 20 blackbirds, 2 robins, 3 rooks, 12 chaffinches, 10 wood pigeons, 1 pheasant, 3 blue tits, 15 snipe, numbers of house sparrows and starlings.

The grazed fields had a faint sparkling of snow but the soil was soft, thus offering lots in invertebrates for winter visitors. Thrushes were spread out so we only saw 2 fieldfares, 3 redwing, 4 song thrushes, 2 mistle thrushes, and 12 blackbirds. Many waders had come in to feed - 170 lapwing, 20 redshank and 80 curlew. The year-round common birds were in usual abundance - 40 chaffinches, 2 tree sparrows, numerous house sparrows and starlings, 10 jackdaws (around buildings), 4 dunnocks, 2 pied and 1 gray wagtail (by a small stream), 1 heron flying over, 2 bullfinches eating buds, 6 great and 5 blue tits, 5 partridges, 1 skylark and 5 common gull, 20 black-headed gull, 3 crows, 30 rooks, 4 wrens, 5 robins, 2 kestrels. That should be a total of 53 species - less than the total will be for Nova Scotia. Although the species are rather few, the sheer number of birds is quite astonishing

Comment from Nova Scotia: the sheer number of species is quite astonishing, seen by two people in three hours.

PROS AND CONS

Should the Nova Scotia Bird Society broaden its scope and/or change its name? Periodically over the past few years this question has come up for discussion. Suggestions for one or the other of the above changes, or both came from a sufficient number of quarters this year to

make it advisable to find out how many Society members were advocates of the idea.

At a meeting of the Executive of the Nova Scotia Bird Society held Oct. 4, 1970, the members of the Executive requested the President, Eric Mills, to write a letter to all members of the Society, asking for an opinion on this matter of change. Dr. Mills has so far received about a hundred replies, out of a possible five hundred. When this Gallup poll is completed, some of the replies will be printed in the NSBS Newsletter. One such follows, from Dr. Anthony J. Erskine, in which he warns us, if we should re-christen ourselves, not to get lost in long tangles of initials.

1215 Agincourt Road,
Ottawa 5, Ontario

20 January 1971

Nova Scotia Bird Society
c/o Nova Scotia Museum
Summer St., Halifax, N. S.

Dear Sirs,

I am writing in response to an open letter from the President of the Society, dated 19 December 1970 and received here today (some mail service, that), on the subject of the name of the Society. I have not lived in Nova Scotia since 1957, although I worked there much of the time in 1960-68 from my base in New Brunswick. So my views will probably differ from those of many residents, and need not be taken too seriously.

A few years ago I advocated a change in the name of the Society Newsletter to more closely reflect what I felt to be its function - the bird magazine for the Maritimes, with a general natural history role such as that provided the Prairies by the Blue Jay in the future, as adequate support developed. This of course is pretty well what the President is suggesting, since the Society and its Newsletter must travel more or less parallel courses. The executive of that time turned down the idea, although not without considerable debate. I would support a change in name, to reflect a wider naturalistic role for the Society, provided a suitable name can be agreed on.

Various names spring to mind, but one objection comes at once to mind for that suggested by the President - Nova Scotia Natural History Society. This name is too long, and the mere fact that Canadians all know what NS stands for and all naturalists recognize NHS is not sufficient grounds for calling the group NSNHS. As a member of another society with a five-part name (C.S.W.F.B. - anyone want to guess what that stands for?), I have no hesitation in saying that five words is too many for an effective title, and should be avoided. Nova Scotia Naturalists' Society (NSNS) or Nova Scotia

Naturalists (NSN would be vastly preferable. Many state bird or nature societies have named their bulletins after birds, as did the Saskatchewan Natural History Society; but there are merits to having a name such that the same set of initials can serve the publication as well as the society - for example, the Nova Scotia Naturalist, published by the N.S.N. Unfortunately, the name Atlantic Naturalist is preoccupied by a magazine from Maryland, but something like the East Coast Observer is still another possible lead. In fact, so many names can be suggested that I feel the only possible solution would be to select up to five alternatives, representing the various kinds of name available, for the publication as well as for the society, and circulate these for an open vote. A time limit and a percentage required for decision would have to be determined in advance, and it might be necessary to hold several ballots. But if several alternatives received roughly equal support, it might be better not to make the change at all rather than split the group. Perhaps first, second, and third choices would help resolve it better than a straight, single vote.

Anyway, I do not feel that there is any one name that is ideal or that is likely to be acceptable to the whole society. My point that the name be kept as short as possible is more important than my preference for any particular name.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Erskine

Mr. Kent Sweeney, world traveller and raconteur of note, has recently sent us this delightful essay on the Conversion of a Cosmopolite.

CONFESSIONS OF THE COOPER'S HAWK KID

by Kent Sweeney

Those who think they know the true me, in all my many facets - the wit, the bon vivant, probably picture me idly passing my days in the small Nova Scotian town in which I reside, sipping champagne and nibbling wild strawberries before striking out again for the fleshpots of the world. They and my friends and neighbors here, who regard me in kindly fashion since I have forsworn the fleshpots, will find the following disclosure scarcely credible. How I came to stoop to folly is a long, dark story which I shall not reveal at this time, but the sinister truth is, I have become a bird watcher. A bird watcher in no uncertain terms, equipped with spyglasses, two bird feeders, copious amounts of crushed corn and sunflower seed, and a card denoting membership in the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

For those who are not among the initiates and imagine bird watching to be a dull business indeed, let me state that not since Izaak Walton has an avocation arisen which has provided opportunity for so much speculation and contemplation. To the sceptics I proceed to relate an incident illustrative of the several delights and various thoughts which

accrue to us of the Brotherhood.

The day after Christmas was stormy and overcast, a typical dull, cold, winter's day, and I sat reading in my library, comfortably esconced in the plushiest and softest chair. There are two almost obligatory pleasures which I enjoy during the Christmas season, one of which is reading, and the other is to welcome in the New Year by removing my glass from the mantle and, honouring the old tradition, toast the Queen (still Victoria, if we are to judge by the picture which hangs over the fireplace). On this day, as I said, I was comfortably reading when I heard a bird on the rose bush outside, and going to the window, I looked out into the yard where I saw the usual variety of winter birds; evening grosbeaks, cowbirds, starlings, and what the hoi-polloi usually refer to as house sparrows but what we, the cognescenti, rightly call weaver finches. My attention was held by the starling on the bush directly below me when suddenly the ground was clear of birds and the air was silent. I hadn't seen him come but there, to reverse the old order, was not a plane, not a superman, but....a bird!

And not just any bird at that, for pinioned beneath his claws was a cowbird, late of my feeder but now decidedly dead. Feverishly I hunted through the pages of my bird guide until I found his picture. There could be no mistake about it...."the short rounded wings..., aggressive, often destructive..., 14-18 inches...", and a picture to confirm it. What had visited my backyard was the notorious Cooper's Hawk.

By this time the hawk had dragged his prey to within the shelter of my mock orange bush and after casting a wary and knowing eye skyward, he slowly surveyed the entire area. Satisfied that no other predators were in the vicinity he began his Boxing Day meal, drumstick first. Fascinated by the whole procedure I called to my sister to come witness this unusual sight. She appeared, glanced briefly on the scene, made a sour face and muttered 'disgusting' before making a rapid exit, thus forever falling from grace with me and all other True Believers. There is no accounting for tastes. I returned my attention to the hawk who was now tearing tufts of meat and feathers from the cowbird, which he held firmly planked down with both claws, continuing every few minutes to glance around lest someone should come and wrest this delightful morsel from him.

It was like watching one of those banquet scenes from some old Cecil B. DeMille movie, I thought, where Henry the VIII or Julius Caesar twists a drumstick off the bird and with much lip smacking and greasy finger licking proceeds to gnaw at it. Thinking thus suddenly made me hungry and I momentarily repaired to the kitchen whence I returned with a handful of cookies. I began to munch. My hawk proceeded to munch. I munched some more. He munched some more. All of a sudden I didn't feel like munching so much anymore.

After nearly an hour my hawk became either satisfied or bored with the whole matter and with a graceful flapping of wings he rose high on the wind and then glided off over the roof-tops and out of sight. He left behind on the snow some feathers and bones and a few splotches of red, and a rather indelible impression on my mind.

The next day while at the gas station I mentioned the incident to a friend of mine who is also fanatically interested in birds. Among his many accomplishments he can speak Latin like a Native and, more important,

he makes the rounds of the various feeding areas in his Cadillac. It's just as I've always said: anyone who carries his bird seed on the back seat of a Coup de Ville Cadillac has just got to have class. At the mention of the Cooper's Hawk he suddenly became conspiratorial as if the hawk were close by and about to listen in on our conversation. "About how big was he?" Feeling rather ludicrously like the drunk in the joke about the penguin, I said, "Oh, I'd say about this high," indicating the measurement with my hands. "Do you think he could kill one of my pigeons?" he asked. I had forgotten that pigeons were his special bag, and before I left he confided to me that he intended to load up a gun with shot, "just in case". I had a great urge to growl, à la Bogart, "Don't mess with my hawk, Charlie but with admirable restraint, I refrained.

On the third day after sighting the hawk I received a phone call from another member of the Bird Society and during the conversation I just happened to mention that I had sighted a Cooper's Hawk in my backyard. Immediately she pounced upon this kernel of information and suggested that I send it in to the Nova Scotia Bird Society so that it could be published in the Newsletter. Now, the only other person of my acquaintance who I know to have submitted such a thing to the Society was a woman who had a phoebe build its nest near her summer home, and ever since she's been known throughout the length and breadth of the land as "Phoebe Ferguson". I'm glad mine was a hawk, but when I tried the name on for size, I couldn't get it to fit. "The Cooper's Hawk Kid" was the best I could come up with, but who wants to go through life being known by that cognomen? Maybe I could stretch things a bit and become known as "The Condor Kid", but even that didn't sound quite grand enough.

As I write this it is now the fourth day and I stare out of my window at the feeder wondering whether my white-winged warrior will ever return. I think also of my friend who, somewhere, with ready rifle and girded loins, is also searching the skies, prepared to help my hawk across the threshold of eternity. For a dedicated bird-watcher, even such a small incident as sighting a Cooper's Hawk can be a source of great soul searching and despair. Perhaps some new bird will come today, one that I can tell my friend and the Nova Scotia Bird Society about, one that has a name with nice ring to it. I just hope it isn't a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker!

Letters To The Editor

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

Further to your inquiry pertaining to Brier Island, and many similar inquiries, I ordered an investigation on this matter.

The summarized report of this investigation is as follows:-
"A large portion of Brier Island was sold by Scosea Limited to an ardent conservationist. The two trustees for this conservationist assure us that they intend to keep Brier Island in its present ecological state as long as possible. The land will not be despoiled in any way; no cottage lots

be sold; no factory will be built."

At the present time I am quite satisfied with this report.

However, we intend to keep a close watch for any changes on the
1. Should any be proposed which we feel would be detrimental to its
2. If any, further action will be implemented by this Department.

Thanking you for your manifested interest,

Yours sincerely,

Director
of Lands & Forests
Washington, D. C.
July 29, 1971

Benoit Comeau

Newsletter

David Christie of the N. B. Museum has asked me to write to you
for additional information on the European Goldfinch which my wife and I
saw near Digby, last September 11. I want to apologize for this - I guess
the field marks were so obvious that I missed putting them down on the card.

The bird was noticeably larger and heavier than an American Gold-
finch (of which there were several at hand for comparison). It had a dull
face, a tawny brown, or yellowish vertical streak bordering the red on
the face, a black cap, and light cocoa brown back and upper sides. The
wings were a dull whitish, blending into brown on the sides, and the wings
tips were black. Through the wing was the characteristic yellow vertical
streak, which is a good field mark, and was visible from a considerable
distance.

My first impression of it, as we drove by, (it was perched on a
twig of a zebra-striped finch, obviously too large to be a Siskin or
Chipping Finch, and yet too small to be an Evening Grosbeak, which the general
appearance, posture, and wing markings reminded me of.

I immediately turned the car at the next available spot and drove
up. As we came within sight of it, it took off, and flew up the road,
away from us, with the characteristic bounding flight of a goldfinch. How-
ever, it landed again, and we were then able to identify it through our
binoculars.

A moment or two later, the bird flew across the road to a patch
of thistles, and joined a flock of approximately 20 American Goldfinches,
many of which were picking on the seeds. We were able to walk up the driveway of
the house and get within 20 feet of the feeding flock. We had an
unobstructed view of the bird for about four minutes, until the flock shifted
to another thistle patch some distance across the field.

While perched on the thistle, the bird became surprisingly
conspicuous, as its brownish back, and yellowish streakings seem to have
a camouflage effect, and blend well with the vegetation. The red face is a
bright shade, and isn't too obvious unless you see the bird at quite close
range.

At that time, I knew that there was only one European Goldfinch record for N. B., and I was very curious to find out if there had been any previous sightings in N. S. We drove on to the tourist bureau at Digby, where we obtained a list of all species for the province. It didn't include it. I have since learned that there were only four Canadian records up to the time of publication of Godfrey's "Birds of Canada".

The woman at the tourist bureau also gave us the names of two local bird enthusiasts (I've since forgotten the names!) and we tried to telephone them. No answer at either home.

I am really sorry that I couldn't have gotten in touch with someone else who could have gone down there right away. Finches are usually such erratic wanderers that the probability of finding the bird after only a short time would have been very small.

Yours truly,

42 Hillheights Road
Saint John, N. B.
December, 1970

James Wilson

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

Being a newcomer to the Society, I am not sure just what is news and what is not, but here are a few of my observations from my living-room window - of visitations to my feeder on Belcher Street, in Kentville.

We put up the feeder the first week in December and supplied it with suet, mixed seed and sunflower seeds. During the first two weeks we had the usual visitors - 6 to 10 Blue Jays, 20-30 Evening Grosbeaks, numerous Cowbirds, starlings and English or House Sparrows, plus two White-breasted Nuthatches, 4-6 Downy Woodpeckers - daily.

Suddenly on December 19 we noted the feeder was vacant and not a seed had been touched. Upon checking, we found the reason - a Sharp-shinned Hawk was perched in a tree about 15 feet away. We watched and about 3 hours after he left the birds came back. But they were very wary.

Since that time the hawk has visited the area several times and one day I watched him catch his dinner - a starling just across the road from the feeder.

We have had very few chickadees visit us this winter. Have they been scarce in other places or is the hawk in the area the cause of this? Another thing I have noted is that since Feb. 9 the Blue Jay and Sparrows have not been back to the feeder, but we still have daily visits from the Nuthatches, Downy Woodpeckers, Evening Grosbeaks and, during the past two weeks, a flock of 30-50 Goldfinch have been frequent visitors. This is the first winter that we have seen the Goldfinch.

Also during the zero weather, we had a busy time rescuing sparrows and starlings from our chimney, by opening the cleanout in the basement so they could get out of the chimney and then we could catch them and return

them to the outdoors.

Am enjoying the Newsletters very much and it makes my own watching more interesting to know what others are noting.

114 Belcher St.
Kentville, N. S.
March 21, 1971

Edria W. Eaton

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

I must report to you the exceptional "beginner's luck" I had in seeing a Snowy Owl perched in the top of our Horse Chestnut tree around 5.30 last Sunday evening (Jan. 24). A neighbor called me on the phone to 'go look at the beautiful owl in the top of the tree'.

I rushed out with binoculars and had an excellent view of this beautiful bird. It was a thrilling experience and amusing that on Friday I had sent in my first membership fee to the Bird Society. I'm pretty sure this will top my experiences for the year's birdwatching.

Yesterday, I watched a flock of between 50-60 Snow Buntings, then some Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls. The gulls were on the ice in the harbor and made a fine sight through the glasses.

Although I've been an ardent wild-flower enthusiast all my life, it was only upon seeing and hearing my first Baltimore Oriole two years ago that I began to take my eyes off the ground, so to speak. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Texas last May and now the Snowy Owl have completed my conversion or ruin, though I suspect I will always be poorly trained as a 'bird-dog', apt to wander down the flower trail at any time.

Sincerely,

Yarmouth, N. S.
January 26, 1971

Evangeline Killam

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

Ducks are very plentiful with us this winter. But, strangely, we have almost no "little birds". Everybody remarks on it. Frank and Ada Robertson were here yesterday and Frank commented on the dead silence in the woods. No woodpeckers, siskins, goldfinch, kinglets, chicks, nuthatches. There is an abundance of food, and we've had nearly no snow - nothing like there has been on the mainland as far as the causeway. I haven't worn rubbers for days, the sidewalks are perfectly dry.

Each evening just at dusk I have a flight of black duck past my kitchen window. It's exciting to see them against the darkening sky. They come over from the sanctuary and spend the night here behind our house where the banks are high and they are sheltered. I'm awakened in the night

by loud gossiping quacks. Haven't yet seen a snowy owl, but one was nearby last week.

I made the acquaintance of one of the light-keepers from Flint Island and his wife, a nice, youngish couple, and the Cape Breton group has agreed to provide him with a bird book, for which he has promised to send us reports of pelagic birds and migrants. He knows birds, but only by his own names, which I mightn't be able to interpret, since he identifies all sorts of things I showed him in the Godfrey - "carey chickens", "the cock-a-wee" (and even better) the "hen-a-wee"!

Glance Bay, N. S.
February 27, 1971

Sara MacLean

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

You know what our weather has been like this winter. I didn't bother to keep an accurate account, but I feel sure we've bought 400 pounds of mixed grain and 70 pounds of Gaines Dog Meal since December to put out for our birds. (I soak the meal and serve it hot, and most of them enjoy it.) When you consider we have 50 pigeons coming at least twice a day, along with all the other regulars, it doesn't take long for it to disappear.

On Nov. 12 I was working around the yard and heard and then observed a Belted Kingfisher flying along the river by our house. I checked with Tufts and it appeared to be a late date, so I'm mentioning it. On Dec. 6 the weather really settled in, and the different ones in the yard that day were 1 Robin and a small flock of Evening Grosbeaks. Also, that day we had a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers at the suet. These two, 1 male, 1 female, are regular visitors yet.

The Evening Grosbeaks aren't so regular because, although I have sunflower seeds on hand, they are so skittish I can't help them with so many other birds about. The Blue Jays (regular numbers as other years) aren't helpful, yelping every time something moves!

I've had 4 Downy Woodpeckers all winter, 2 male, 2 female, and that is normal for here. The Brown-headed Cowbirds arrived in the yard about the middle of December, and the Starlings were unseen before the snow arrived in December.

One thing of note among my other friends as well as here: the Black-capped Chickadees are not using the feeders this winter. There are a few about at times, and they can be heard in the woods, but I am interested to know whether this is a general thing in the province or if it is somewhat local. I had 3 flit into the yard on Jan. 19 - sample a bit of suet and then they disappeared completely again. I don't understand it.

A pair of White-breasted Nuthatches is regular in the neighborhood. My husband and I hide sunflower seeds in the bark of the elm trees for them, and so far the Blue Jays haven't caught on!

On Dec. 19 we had a forlorn Mourning Dove arrive, and from then

until Dec. 28 she came daily for grain. She became quite brave as the days passed and I hoped to keep her alive over the winter, but I strongly suspect one of the Sharp-shinned Hawks got her. (They are here in normal numbers compared with other years.)

From Dec. 19 to the present, we have acquired 4 Tree Sparrows, one at a time; Jan. 4 and on, 1 Song Sparrow; and, Jan. 17 and on, a female Redwinged Blackbird.

On Dec. 24 a female Ring-necked Pheasant arrived and comes quite often to a special place for grain. Lately she has been waiting until 5.00 p.m. and later because we have had a Red-tailed Hawk spending a lot of time about the place. Dec. 19 was the first time we noticed it and on Dec. 25 and 29 there were 2 staying very close together, perching on the same branch, etc., but lately there is only one at a time, so I don't know if one came to grief or not.

I must tell you that on Feb. 14 my husband and I took a walk down along our property to see how the river was flooding and, lo and behold, where the river had come up and flooded the alders, wasn't there a flock of several "chatty" chickadees very busily engaged at something which we took to be a check for insects down near the water. Now where had they been all winter?

Wilmot, N. S.
February 23, 1971

Thelma Hawkins

THE MEANDER IN WINTER

by C. R. K. Allen

Nova Scotia place names often tend to exaggerate; ponds are "lakes", hills "mountains" and ridiculously small streams "rivers". Such is the case with the Meander River which flows for twenty miles through the centre of Hants County and out into the muddy basin of Cobequid.

Although its size is modest and its course short, the little Meander flows through a far greater variety of habitat than many a mightier stream. It rises in the sterile black spruce woodlands and sphagnum bogs around Coxcomb and Uniacke Lakes and its waters at first are the color of well-steeped tea from the leachings of the acid humus. The Meander's youth in this poverty-stricken environment is, however, a short one; after flowing for about three miles through this lonely boreal zone it enters the relatively rich long settled region of central Hants. Here its banks have been cleared, tilled, and sometimes allowed to lapse again into wilderness, by generations of farmers. The black spruce, withewood, white birch and red maple give way to the red spruce, hemlock, yellow birch and ash. Hardwoods predominate and in old abandoned orchards the apple trees struggle to survive amid the encroaching alders.

Downstream the scene changes again: our little river has grown in size enough to produce its own miniature flood plains - rich flat lands lapped with alluvial soil from the upper reaches - treasured and cultivated by the farmers who still maintain their holdings where the earth is generous. Here the large hardwoods disappear and shrubs cling in tangles along the brink of the little river.

Finally, the fresh water meets the incoming flow from the muddy estuary and the Meander achieves its own tiny dykeland. The bordering growth along the final reaches consists of hornbeam, elm, highbush cranberry and the native hawthorn, laden in the fall with large coral red berries which carry autumn's colors far beyond the last of the maple leaves.

In early summer the winding little valley of the Meander and its widening flood plains lower down are alive with birds and bird song. It is a veritable Eden for the insect-eaters. The old orchards with their dying trees and the lush bordering thickets produce hosts of crawling and flying forms, and the waters themselves shelter billions of larvae which in their time develop into clouds of ephemerids, gnats, mosquitoes and their kin.

Winter, however, is a different story. With the first fresh snow of late December the bird chorus has died to a faint whisper and the dominant sound along the river is the murmur of its water against the shelves of ice which reach out from shore.

The richness of bird life has gone with the last of the migrants, and so the value of the individual bird has risen accordingly. A day's walk down along the little valley will produce perhaps only fifteen or so species but the discovery of each one will be an exciting and delightful experience.

If we begin such a walk on the upper reaches our first bird will probably be heard rather than seen - the distant croak of a foraging Raven. This land of spruce and tamarack bogs is, however, the home of one of our "glamour birds" and with any luck we may find one or two ridiculously tame Spruce Grouse which will almost let us pluck them off the branches where they perch.

It seems as though many of the birds of this boreal region have never learned to be suspicious of man - perhaps because primitive men were rare stragglers in such infertile environment. At any rate the Pine Grosbeak whose clear three-noted call occasionally breaks the winter silence is another confiding type, and hardly less so are the two species of Crossbill which shower an observer with the scales of spruce cones as they feed busily a few feet over his head.

The Gray Jay too has never learned to fear man, but rather attaches itself to the wilderness trapper and timber cruiser. Why a bird with such panhandling tendencies has not adapted itself to town and city life is a mystery, but certainly something holds it to the wilds.

The Boreal Chickadee and the Red-breasted Nuthatch, also inhabitants of this region, have confiding dispositions but no more so than their sophisticated cousins. There are, however, wild and wary birds here too. We could hear Crows in vocal fury mobbing something in a dense spruce tree and finally could get a flashing glimpse of their victim as a great blue-gray Goshawk darts away between the trees. Other predators which choose to eke out an existence in this barren territory are the Northern

rike and the Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Where the river empties out of Coxcomb Lake, however, the change in winter is sudden and marked. Deciduous trees now predominate, with here and there a big old red spruce or hemlock. Sturdy young yellow birches are growing up between the dead rampikes of their giant ancestors, killed a generation ago by an epidemic disease, and now pitted with the nesting holes of Flickers and the feeding cavities of Pileated Woodpeckers. Here theuffed Grouse leaves frequent trails like winding chains of plus signs in the snow. As the stream curves around the base of a gently sloping hill once an extensive orchard, these trails become abundant, for this is a favorite grouse haunt well known to local gunners, and presently we see against the sky no less than three fat grouse feeding on one of their favorite winter foods, the buds of yellow birch. Usually one of the most alert and "jumpy" of birds, a grouse when budding is unbelievably stupid. The Pot Hunter can stand beneath the tree with a gun and pick them off one by one, the survivors going calmly on with their meal until their time comes.

In this old orchard the decrepit apple trees have their bark maddled with the regular rows of holes made by Sapsuckers during the summer. The Sapsuckers are now long gone and far away, but both Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are frequent visitors to these old trees, and their striking black and white livery with the brilliant red spots on the heads of the males, are an ever welcome sight in the drab winter landscape.

It is interesting that most of the bright relieving colors of winter are some shade or hue of red. The orange-red fruit of the highbush cranberry hang in clusters and delight the eye along these middle reaches of the Meander, and hang on long after the bright red fruit of the rowans and hawthorns have been stripped by the last of the fall migrants. Often in late winter you will find the snow bespattered with pulp under the cranberry bushes where Pine Grosbeaks have extracted the seeds; and you may come upon a flock of wintering Cedar Waxwings gulping down the whole berries, seed and all. But, for the most part, these shrivelled acid fruit are at the bottom of the list of desirable foods for our winter birds.

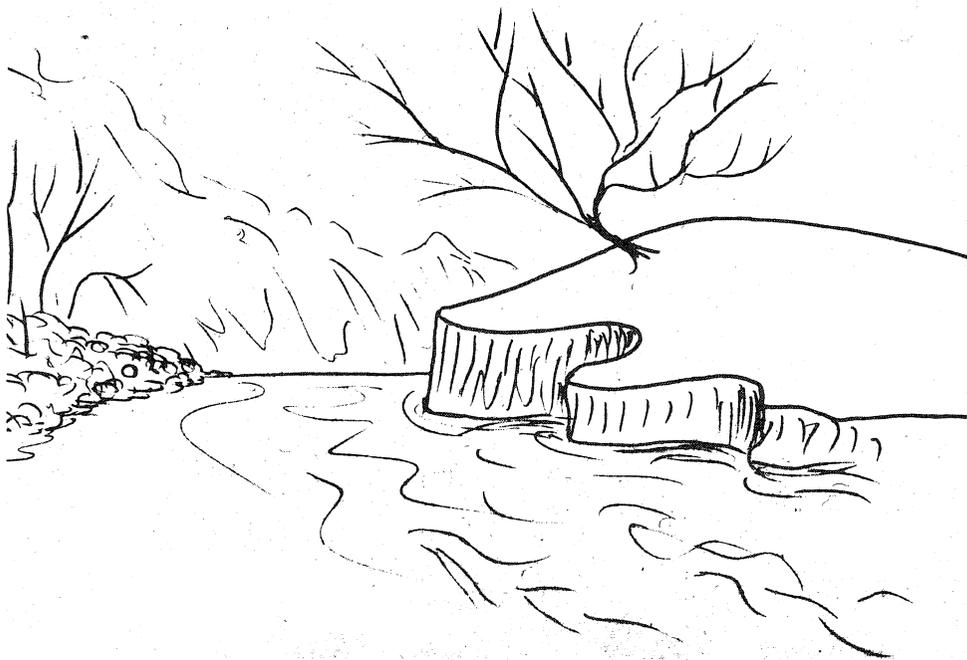
More muted, but perhaps more welcome to the eye, are the rosy tones on the plumage of many birds. To me, one of the biggest thrills of a winter bird walk is to see a flock of finches undulating across the sky and suddenly eddying down into the treetops as though drawn by powerful suction. With luck, one can usually get close enough to these restless little migrants to identify them before they take off again. They can, of course, be quietly colored - olive drab winter Goldfinches or streaked brown Siskins, but some winters they are more apt to be Redpolls with pink breasts and bright red caps, or Red- or White-winged Crossbills or even wintering Purple Finches.

We have not, of course, followed faithfully all the twisting twenty miles of the Meander's flow, but have cut many corners in order to arrive at its lower reaches before the end of the brief December day. Now the woodland gives way to tilled fields and pastures, and retreats to the steeper hillsides or hugs the stream banks where old alders, hornbeam, elms and red osier dogwood form a tangle to trap the flood wood carried down during spring freshets.

Here are the birds of the open country and the low thickets. Here we can find Tree Sparrows alighting on the dry stems of St. John's

wort, and shaking them vigorously to scatter the seeds from their half-opened pods to the snow below. Here we can flush a Short-eared Owl from a wild rose clump behind our little river's first dyke and see it flap away like a giant tawny moth. Here too is the owl's competitor for the meadow mice on the oat stubble, the Rough-legged Hawk which quarters the open fields all day long and hovers like an Osprey over likely spots.

On its last stretches the Meander has minute mud flats a few yards in extent where a gentle tide pours in for a few minutes twice each day and brings a modest contribution of red Fundy silt. Along this miniature estuary we can sometimes flush a Black Duck or two in early winter, or even a small straggling flock of Green-winged Teal. Beyond the dyke the Meander loses its identity in the confluence of three greater streams in a steep-sided muddy canyon choked at this season with an obscene welter of pallid fudge-brown ice cakes. It would have been better perhaps to have said farewell to our gentle little river a short way upstream, but one compensation for staying to the last is a flock of Horned Larks which flush from the salt marsh and fly inland over the snow-covered plowing with soft plaintive calls as the lowering sun lengthens the shadows from the west



REPORTS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE JUNE 15, 1971.

