
*Nova Scotia
Bird Society*



Newsletter

Volume 14, Number 2

July, 1972

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NEWSLETTER

Editor: Phyllis R. Dobson

Volume 14, Number 2

July, 1972

SPRING MIGRATION 1972

"The weather story for April can be summed up in one word - SNOW! It involved the improbable situation in which the month was the snowiest of the entire winter. Needless to say, it was the snowiest April on record ----"

The above is quoted from the Department of the Environment's monthly summary for April, 1972.

The comments for May are hardly more complimentary: "May extended the string of months with below normal temperatures to seven. The abundant snowfall in April also carried over into May, and the snowstorm of the 9th-10th with its 6.2 inches, set a new 24-hour record for the month."

June continued the story: "precipitation was an inch above normal - - - Sunshine was 57.8 hours below normal - - - Fog was reported on twenty-two days, making it the foggiest June on record."

Nova Scotia extended a chilly and forbidding welcome to its spring migrants this year, and the northbound flocks which came anyway suffered in many cases dire consequences. Disastrous to the early arrivals was the storm of April 7-9, and a month later, the blizzard of May 9-10 which met the arriving swallows, warblers and thrushes, delivered a second blow to the April migrants. Heavy rains, combined with melting snows and late-thawing ice produced flood conditions which may well have delayed nesting attempts by many species, and drastically reduced the food supply.

Evidence of an extensive kill is to be found in the stories which poured in from NSBS members and others; and many species of bird were involved. The sight of hundreds of birds, frantically seeking food and shelter in a howling blizzard awakened deep concern, and many of us did what we could to help.

Some 2300 geese were fed at Amherst Point by personnel of the Canadian Wildlife Service, who distributed about 1500 pounds of grain transported over the marsh by snowmobile; at Pugwash, a field was ploughed by the RCMP and grain distributed, and the gamekeeper at the Cyrus Eaton estate fed another flock.

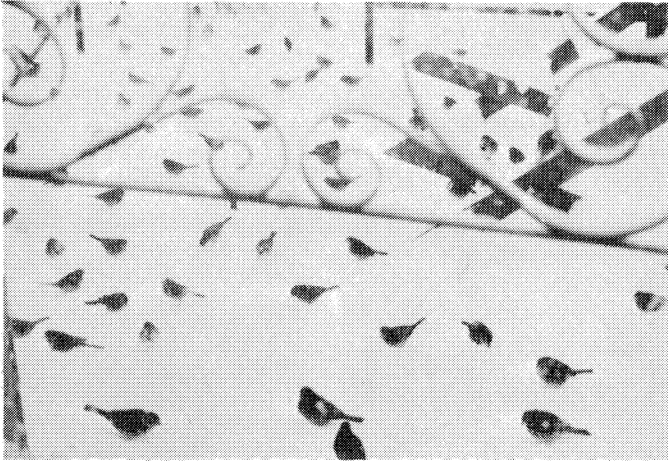
At Wallace, the geese could not be reached. This was during May, and the ice was unsafe for snowmobiles.

Evelyn Lowerison wrote: "On April 7th from Cameron Settlement to Amherst, it was snowing and blowing.....on the sides of the road in the ploughed shoulder section, numerous flocks of Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, robins, juncos, Fox, Song and Tree Sparrows were seen about every 100 yards. It would be impossible to total the numbers, I have never seen so many." A similar experience was described by Charlie Allen, coming up the South Shore from Yarmouth. The robins were in the worst case, and because of their somewhat specialized feeding habit, died in greatest numbers. All manner of foods were offered them, when they found their way to feeding stations and a few adventurous ones learned to eat dog food, macaroni and fruits of various kinds, chiefly apples and oranges. At Wilmot, the Hawkinses saw robins eating in the sumac tree for the first time, and in Halifax, Willett Mills reported robins eating Highbush cranberries, the very last resort as a rule, for any bird.

Sylvia Bower wrote: "On Saturday, April 8, along the Jordan Bay arm of the Atlantic in Shelburne County, we saw hundreds of robins and a lesser number of Fox Sparrows. They flew in over the water to land along the shore, resting on the ground, in the trees and shrubbery. It was snowing hard and we began immediately to see what food we could share with these hungry visitors. We fried our pound of bacon, using the fat to mix with half of our loaf of bread, two large packages of potato chips, a package of cheesies and some popped corn, rolled oats and a cup of sugar. They ate all of this very quickly. The men decided to go home and get food for them. While waiting, we watched, and saw clouds of robins rise from the shrubbery to fly north, but many others stayed. The men returned to camp with horse feed, rolled oats and cornmeal. The birds ate this, and squabbled a bit, especially the Fox Sparrows.....We know we saw at least five hundred robins and one hundred Fox Sparrows, at a very conservative estimate. There may have been a thousand birds, including some juncos and starlings."

At the Eaton's, Cole Harbor, "the dogs were rationed to feed the birds" where hundreds collected, clamouring for food. This was on the following day, still snowing and blowing hard. "They were so hungry they lost their fear, and I could photograph them through the open door, though the wind nearly blew the door from its hinges." Besides the robins and Fox Sparrows, there were Song Sparrows, Juncos, Black-capped Chickadees, Blue Jays, Redwinged Blackbirds, Cowbirds, Starlings, House Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, a Swamp Sparrow and the "faithful Rufous-sided Towhee that has stayed around since Dec. 2". The accompanying photograph shows some of the visitors gathered to share the provided bounty. But the Fox Sparrows sang all day.

Similar stories came from the Topple's at Loon Lake; from town feeders; from G.B. Nickerson in the Annapolis Valley, and the Hawkins' at Wilmot, the Timpa's at Bear River and many



A few of the (250+) birds at the Eaton's April 9,
1972. Rosemary Eaton.

others. The May storm involved other birds. Rosemary Eaton wrote again, "May 10: ten inches of wet snow, but a mere 75 birds this time. I counted 35 White-throats, 12 Juncos, 4 Song Sparrows, 5 Robins, 3 Blue Jays, 3 Black-capped Chickadees, 1 Pine Siskin, 1 Redwinged Blackbird, a pair of Purple Finches, 1 Starling, 3 male and 2 female Cowbirds (in this snowstorm I felt sorry even for them), 1 Swainson's Thrush, 1 Hermit Thrush, and 1 Myrtle Warbler. I was worried about 2 exhausted Tree Swallows huddled so close there seemed to be a double-headed bird teetering on the wire in the full blast of the storm. They buried their beaks in each others feathers. In the afternoon there were 7 herons sheltering at the edge of the woods near the cove, and I followed their large pigeon-toed foot-prints far into the woods.....by evening the Whitethroats became so tame you could stand within 2-3 feet of them."

Birds lost their fear that day and night, and many sought shelter in garages, porches, under doorsteps - a thrush flew into Roger Pocklington's office at Bedford Institute and a Parula Warbler through a cellar window at Rockingham. Even a snipe tried to get in a doorway at Amherst. The swallows were in real trouble, but did the best they could. Leta Delaney wrote "Just before sunset I was getting wood from the barn and a few Tree Swallows flew in (to the yard). A pair went into the nest-box over the back veranda, then another pair. There will be a fight now, I thought, but no one came out. Much to my surprise, 2 more went in. There was a lot of twittering and talking and then all was quiet. I stood right

under the nest-box until I got so cold I had to go in the house, but not a sound had come from the box. They must have huddled in there together to keep warm."

After the snow melted, many dead birds were found, chiefly Tree Swallows and Robins. At Conrad's Beach, back of the dunes, piles of feathers were found every few yards over a large stretch of territory, most of them recognizably robin feathers. This is the haunt of the red fox and the Short-eared Owl, who must have reaped a rich harvest from the grounded birds, exhausted upon arrival, and conspicuous against the fresh snow.

There is no way of knowing how many birds were lost, whether 100's among 1000's, or 1000's among 10,000's; but the fact of the matter is, that Robins are to be seen in great abundance about the countryside now, the first of July. Tree Swallows and warblers seemed to be down in numbers of individuals on the breeding bird surveys, but considering the weather in June, when the surveys were carried out, it may be just a matter of the birds not singing or being lost in the fog. As someone said, what was there to sing about? Whether in short supply or not, all of our migratory species have arrived, and as usual, some interesting strays among them.

COMMON LOONS began to establish themselves on the lakes immediately after the spring break-up, although many, largely immatures, were still reported in the bays and along the coast in early June. An instance of an immature Loon disputing territory with a Great Cormorant is reported from Catalone Lake, Cape Breton, by Philip Magee. After much wing flapping, the Cormorant beat a hasty retreat and the Loon was left in possession.

RED-THROATED LOONS began to pass through in numbers April 13-18 north shore of Cobequid Bay (FS); April 15 Halifax "circuit" (CRKA) and April 22-May 8 Yarmouth (MWH et al.). Heaviest movement reported was on June 2 along the south shore of the Bay of Fundy from Port George to Margaretsville. There, about 30 were counted, the majority flying in a southerly direction during a period of about one hour (DWF et al.).

Most RED-NECKED and HORNED GREBES had disappeared by the third week in April but a late Red-neck was seen near Yarmouth May 8 (MWH et al.), and 2 Horned Grebes on the circuit May 6 (P&NA). The earliest PIED-BILLED GREBE reported was seen on the Economy River, Col. Co., April 13 (FS).

The first SOOTY SHEARWATER of the season was seen 200 yards off Cape Sable May 18, and a week later about 30 were observed in the same locality; 30 again May 25 off Sable Is. (DWF&ELM).

LEACH'S PETRELS arrived at Cape Sable April 6 (a very early date) when small flocks were seen in the Lighthouse beam. Six dead birds were picked up the following day and 7 more on

May 7, all presumably having struck the light (SS).

The GANNET vanguard - 3 birds - went by Cape Sable March 17. In early April they were going by at the rate of 3 to 60 per hour. The flight continued throughout April and May, the last report being of birds passing the Cape on May 30 (SS&IM).

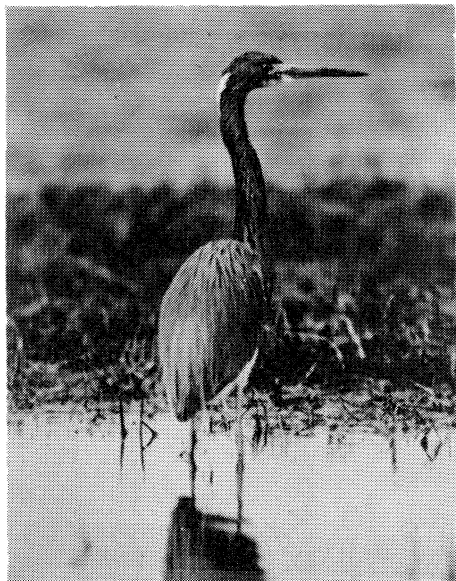
The winter shift of GREAT CORMORANTS gave over to the spring shift of DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS April 11 to 22 (SM, EH, FS, SS & RH); and the colony of Double-crested Cormorants at Abercrombie, Pic. Co. was well established by April 20, 78 birds present, and nests started. By May 17, 80 nests had been finished (EL&EH). Evelyn Lowerison wishes credit given to officials of the Scott Paper Company, whose plant is nearby, and who have undertaken to keep the cormorant colony from molestation.

First arrived GREAT BLUE HERON was at Brier Island Mar. 20, one day earlier than last year (WL). A few followed closely, including (4) April 12, "among the ice-floes" at Cole Harbor, but the first big influx came the third week in April, fair numbers, generally distributed, (25 observers). The little GREEN HERON put in five appearances, (1), May 20-21, Brier Is. (ELM); (1), May 22, on the Three-Fathom Harbor road (P&NA); (1), May 29, in a freshwater marsh in Pictou Co. (EH); (1), June 2, watched as it stood beside a gull on a rock in the river at Milton, Queens Co. (HH); and (1), June 7 at Sable Is. (JB). Two sightings of the LITTLE BLUE HERON were of (1), April 1, at Blue Rocks, Lun. Co. (per RM) and (1), May 20 in Yar. Co. at Cranberry Head "feeding at the mucky pond edge" (MWH&AH). Three CATTLE EGRETS March 19-21 at Brier Is. were described as "high plumage adults, hanging around the sheep" (DWF).

Between March 31 and April 18 there were six sightings reported of the COMMON EGRET, but it seems doubtful if more than (4) birds were involved, since all reports were from Yarmouth and Shelburne Cos. and a few neighboring areas. Reports of single sightings came from Dan Banks, Leta Delaney, M.W. Hilton, A. Hurlburt, D. Kirk and Sylvia Bower. Excellent descriptions of the birds involved, sometimes accompanied by pictures, have been received for most of the exotic waders. SNOWY EGRETS were seen at Cape Sable Is., (2), May 25 (W&JS), and (1), June 11, Halifax Co. "circuit" (P&NA).

We were especially fortunate this year to receive the accompanying photographs of the Louisiana Heron, seen April 16-17 at Cape Sable Island by Tony Lock, subsequently by others, and independently identified there by Mrs. William Smith. Mrs. Smith wrote: "The heron was of medium size and its long, thin neck was conspicuous. The most striking and readily seen of the bird's markings was the white belly. Definitely noted also were the black terminal portion of the bill, which showed some yellowish color near the base; the slaty color of the wing and the side of the neck; the white head plumes; the line of mingled rusty and white down the

front of the neck; the cinnamon filamentous plumes on the lower back; and the yellowish legs. Because the heron was seen from one side, no view of the rump was obtained." This description, sent to H.F. Lewis, was kindly relayed to us by Dr. Lewis.



Louisiana Heron, April 15, 1972. A.R. Lock.
Hawk Point, Cape Sable Island.

Another or the same Louisiana Heron was seen May 6-7 on Seal Is. (IM et al).

The only BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS reported were (1), May 14 at Clarke's Harbor (BKD&ELM) and (2) at Amherst Pt. Sanctuary, May 31, seen at dusk, "deroosting". The observer, Davis Finch, wrote that there may have been more, and it wouldn't be surprising to find them nesting, as they do in nearby New Brunswick. Barbara Hinds found her YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON, for the third successive season, at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., the last of May.

First date for the AMERICAN BITTERN is April 9, at Cape Sable (SS), up to 20 birds noted since as "first arrivals" in April and May in province-wide distribution. There was only one sighting of the GLOSSY IBIS, but it was quite spectacular, at Petite Riviere, Lun. Co. The Cohrs' wrote: "We came upon seven, feeding so close to Himmelman's barn, inside a fence, that we thought they must be pets. They were all close together, facing the same way and feeding greedily on the grass. We put them up and they flew overhead with their

long trailing legs and huge curved bills, to the swamp. They remained in various parts of the swamp and river estuary for that day and the next two - May 6, 7 and 8, but were gone on May 12 when we returned. We alerted Sylvia Fullerton at Broad Cove and she was able to get some pictures."

In answer to inquiry, Dr. H.F. Tufts of Port Mouton, Queen's Co., has written about the CANADA GOOSE: "There are some 6000 to 8000 wintering geese at the sanctuaries - Port Joli, Port Hebert and at Sable River, a few miles west of here. In their migrations they pass directly over Port Mouton, NE in spring, SE in fall. The spring move starts about March 18-20 and is over about the 28th. Some of the flocks fly east along the coast, others fly overland to the marshes along the Bay of Fundy - at Grand Pré and Canard meadows. They arrive back in fall from about Sept. 15 to a peak early in November." This spring, flocks of early migrants, 100's and 1000's from these wintering grounds and elsewhere were counted March 17 at Economy, Halifax "circuit", Caledonia, Cape Sable, Yarmouth, Annapolis River, Grand Pré, Cornwallis River, Amherst Point, Glace Bay Sanctuary and Lingan. Numbers declined in these areas through May, as the Canadas flew off to breeding grounds.

The first date for BRANT is March 10, (25) off Cape Sable (SS), and small numbers have been noted since in the Bay of Fundy (JSE, CRKA, and others). Brant were feeding on eel grass in a small lagoon at the entrance to Pictou Harbor (EH), up to (60) during April. The largest flock noted (300) was off Brier Is. during April and May (EM, RH, J&CG).

Frozen inlets and creeks made life hard for BLACK DUCKS in early spring. In the Glace Bay area numbers were picked up in starving condition along the shore (SM). No significant reports on breeding success are at hand, but a late nesting record was received from Sable Is., where a nest with 6 eggs on May 20 was found to contain 8 eggs on the 23rd. (IM).

Earliest sightings of GREEN-WINGED TEAL were (3) on the Grand Pré, March 19, and (2), same locality March 22 (DWF). Four were at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., March 26 (P&NA) after which sightings became common. BLUE-WINGED TEAL trailed the Green-wings by about two weeks, the first being reported from Cape Sable, April 1 (SS). "Hundreds" were at Amherst Pt. Sanctuary April 30 (CD). Three reports of paired AMERICAN WIDGEONS come from Debert, Col. Co., May 8 (RB); Amherst Pt. Sanctuary May and June, and Maccan Ducks Unlimited Project, also May and June (CD).

An early pair of SHOVELERS was seen under good conditions at Cranberry Head, Yar. Co., April 22 (MWH&AH), two pairs at Lingan Bay, May 1, and another pair at Glace Bay Sanctuary May 14 (SM).

The earliest pair of WOOD DUCKS reported was seen in Yarmouth, March 31 (MWH et al) and another pair or the same April 25 at nearby Cranberry Head by the same observers. Two

were at Debert Sanctuary on June 5 and (4) there June 17 (ELM). A series of observations at Lower Ohio, Shel. Co., indicates that a pair established themselves there on April 13, where they were joined by another male on May 25. From then until the last report on June 13, only the female was seen (HH).

Many sightings of RING-NECKED DUCKS have been reported throughout the length and breadth of the province. The first record for the season is of (12) at Waverley, Hfx. Co., on April 8 (EC). Several well-grown downy young were at Brooklyn Pond, Hants Co., July 2 (CRKA). A single CANVASBACK seen April 26 at Cape Sable remained about a week, associating with Common Eiders and Harlequins around Old Man Rock (SS). A group of (6) is reliably reported from Eel Lake, Yar. Co., April 10-13, where they were seen at very close range under ideal conditions (KL per MWH). GREATER SCAUP lingered well into April, 30-40 being seen at Barrington on the 15th.(TL); (7) at Pictou on the same date (EH) and (14) at Glace Bay Sanctuary April 16 (GG).

COMMON GOLDENEYE numbers dwindled rapidly in March, but, like the foregoing, were still around in late April when a pair was seen at Grand Pré April 22 and (2) on the Halifax Co. "circuit" April 23(CRKA). The latest reported sighting was of a pair at Economy Lake on the 26th.(FS). The spring movement of OLDSQUAW was apparently still in full swing by the last of April when (75) were seen in the circuit area, April 13 (P&NA). The only other mainland report, however, is of (2) at Pictou, May 15, (EH). The rearguard was still in northern Cape Breton as late as May 24, when (10) were at Ingonish (WPN).

A pair of HARLEQUIN DUCKS appeared at Cape Sable April 24 and stayed for about a week walking about Old Man Rock and feeding in the surrounding surf (SS). Rather scanty reports indicate that the main movement of COMMON EIDERS took place about mid- to late April. A concentration of (250) at Green Bay the middle of March had dwindled to 50-60 by early May (SC). In the Pennant-Sambro-Light area, 8-10 flocks were seen heading NE during an hour of observation (DMacD), and on the same date the Smiths at Cape Sable reported "many in flight all day". Thirty-five were counted at Brier Is. April 23 (RH) and (20) at Pinckney's Point May 8 (MWH). A high plumage drake KING EIDER was seen engaged in courtship performance at Seal Is. in company with about (20) Common Eiders on May 21 (BKD et al.).

Reports of WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS give no clue as to their 1972 migration time-table, although (30+) were still in Cobequid Bay below Truro on June 10 (CRKA); and (100+) in the circuit area, June 11 (P&NA). Spalding reports this the least common of the three Scoter species at Economy (Cobequid Bay) this spring. Reports indicate a "peak" of SURF SCOTERS in mid-May. There were many rafts, small groups and individuals distributed along the shore in the Risser's-Beach-Green Bay area May 13, which appeared to be composed largely of this species with COMMON SCOTERS next in numbers; and the peak for Pictou was May 15, when (120) were counted (EH). First sighting in Cobequid at Economy was April 3, with a peak of (50+) by the

third week of the month, and a few still present in late May (FS). At Economy, Common Scoters built up to their high point April 25, from first appearance April 5, and dwindled to two pairs, May 19 (FS). They also formed an appreciable portion of the rafts seen in Green Bay May 13 (see above).

A male RUDDY DUCK at Green Bay May 7 (SC), is one of the few Nova Scotia spring records for this species. COMMON MERGANSERS began to build up in numbers in the ice-free estuaries during March, a little later than usual; and pairing was evident by the end of the month. First observation of movement to fresh water was of (14), April 29 in the Stewiacke River (CRKA). Other reports are of several pairs of birds at Amherst Pt. April 30 (CD), Bear River May 20 (JT) and Warren Lake (WPN). The last record of these birds still on salt water is of a "raft" at Crescent Beach May 5-7 (SC).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS were reported "numerous" at Economy in mid-April (FS). At Pictou (500) were observed April 15 (EH), "100's" at Wallace Bay April 18 (CD) and (100+) on the circuit April 23 (CRKA). A female with 7 young was seen at Gold Lake, Shel. Co., June 7 (HH).

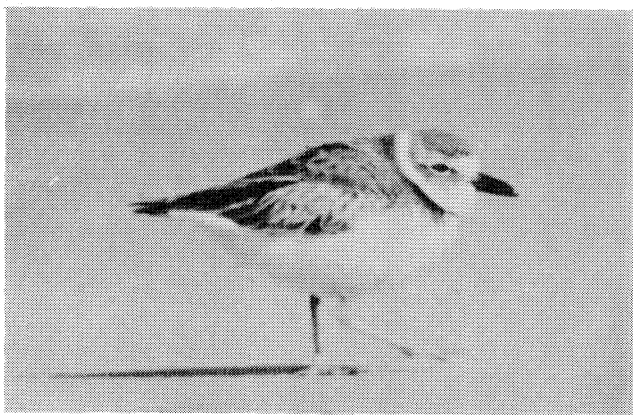
Harry Brennan noticed the GOSHAWK near its old nest site in Pictou Co. by March 31. Of the (6) others reported, one in mature plumage was seen investigating pigeons in a church belfry at Economy (FS). There are only the usual few reports of the SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, but one on May 22 "repeatedly carrying food over" at Economy suggests nesting. Up to (30) RED-TAILED HAWKS have been reported, one probably mated pair at Princeport, Col. Co., June 4, engaged in a fine aerial display. According to Bent, these hawks mate for life, and frequently continue such acrobatic flights in company throughout the breeding season. BROAD-WINGED HAWKS were first noted May 6 and 7 at Yarmouth, the Valley, Truro, and Economy, (22) seen to date, including (10) May 22 at Brier Is. (ELM) and (1) June 7 at Clyde River, Shel. Co., an unusual locality (J&CG).

A few ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were seen as late as April 23, none since. One, "light phase" April 11, was a first record for Sable Is. (DW&JB). The (46) BALD EAGLES seen, (30) in Cape Breton and (16) on the mainland included half-a-dozen immatures; and three nests have been reported, one at Pictou "in a live white pine 40 feet high, the top part broken off" (EH), and two at Homeville, C.B. (SM). Twenty-six reports of the MARSH HAWK cover the period April 4 (one at Maccan, Cumb. Co., CD) to April 22 (7 at Mabou, F.Mack.), and a good number since then, widely distributed. Reports of the OSPREY are encouraging. First sightings were at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. "circuit", (1) April 15; up to (6) by the following week (P&NA, DMacD & CRKA). Reports in April followed from Economy (FS); Pictou, where a second-year nest is occupied (EH), Louisbourg and Homeville (JO'C,GS); from Queen's Co. (RH) and Shelburne Co. (HH). About 30 birds have been seen, and there are two nests this year at Indian Path, Lun. Co., and a probable one at Cranberry Head, Yar. Co. An Osprey sighted May 24 at Sable Is. observed a typical arrival date there, (DWF). From April 11 on the

SPARROW HAWK reports came in every day, with a noticeable peak April 22-23; thereafter mentioned as "numerous" in many localities, Yarmouth to Amherst to Cape Breton.

For the benefit of those anxious to see a SPRUCE GROUSE, six were noted this spring, one each in the woods at Yarmouth (LD), Digby (JT), and Queen's (RH) counties, and (3) in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park (JMacD). RUFFED GROUSE were "drumming" May 6-14 in Guysborough Co., Halifax Co. and Digby Co. (EL, CRKA, JT), (4) heard in the last-mentioned locality, by Woody Davis (per JT). The GRAY PARTRIDGE was noted as usual in the Grand Pré area, in spring plumage, by several observers; and one pair in a new location, near Economy, during April (FS). Up to (14) SORAS were counted in the Amherst-Pt.-Sanctuary - Missaquash-Marsh area May 31 (DWF et al.) noted also by the Desplanques.

The shorebird migration came along as usual this spring, with expected species seen in small numbers, (a few unexpected individuals among them), 25 species in all. The only record of the SEMIPALMATED PLOVER was of (6+), May 6, head of Lingan Bay (RBe). Ian McLaren saw another WILSON'S PLOVER April 11 at Sable Is. (see photograph), among a few other shore-



Wilson's Plover, April 2, 1972, Sable Island.
Ian McLaren

birds, including PIPING PLOVERS, which seem to have come later to the mainland; first noted (10) April 16 at Cape Sable (SS) and (4) April 22 at Economy (FS). Three eggs were in a nest at Conrad's Beach by May 21 (EC). Two KILLDEERS arrived at Cape Sable March 21, well out in front (SS); (4), April 2 on Sable Is. (IM); (3) also April 2 at Economy (FS). Most of the rest of the first arrivals are dated April 3 to 13. At Cranberry Head two adults with four chicks were seen May 28 (AH, DK, VK & MWH).

A rarity in spring, the GOLDEN PLOVER was seen, (1) May 19 at Cranberry Head (DWF) and (1) Easter Sunday at Cherry Hill (SF, BH & EC). Scattered individuals of the BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER, seen March 12 (at Cape Sable) on, were followed by fairly sizable flocks in May, the largest, (600+), in the Evangeline-Beach-Canard area (DWF, JFK). Two RUDDY TURNSTONES were noted, May 20, at Brier Is. (ELM & RA).

The AMERICAN WOODCOCK should never have left the shore and taken to the woods; it fared worse than usual this spring, coming as it did April 8 and 9, during one of our worst snowstorms. Of (15) found by or reported to Willett Mills at this time in Halifax city and county, (5) were subsequently found dead. Others were found "very weak and cold" in Cape Breton Co., but many of course survived - at least (6) seen in the Rockingham area, Hfx. Co., April 17 (BC). The COMMON SNIPE did better; in fact, this appears to be a "snipe year", following a very low count of birds during the winter. First arrival at Sable Is. was on March 29 (DW) and at Cape Sable and Lower Ohio, Shel. Co. April 1 (SS, HH). An extraordinary sighting was of a "flock" of (12+) snipe, landing in a marsh in the Stewiacke Valley April 29 (CRKA). The birds were very much excited, so also, the viewer, who could not recall seeing snipe flying in such a sizable flock before.

Four reports of WHIMBRELL is unusual: (1) May 8 at Sable Is. (IM); (1) May 19 at Dan's Head, Cape Sable Is. (DWF); (3) May 21 at Three Fathom Harbor (EC) and (2) May 27 at Cape Sable (SS). Even more unusual is four reports of six UPLAND PLOVER: (1), May 6 at Lr. Ohio, well described by (HH); (1) May 11 at Cape Sable, another seen there flying over on May 16 (SS); (1) May 18, feeding on the lawn at Rockingham, Hfx. Co. (BC) and a pair, May 26, at Upper Canard, King's Co., watched by Robie Tufts for about 20 minutes, during which time "their behavior suggested breeding; but on three subsequent visits to the area I saw not a trace of them. The male (presumably) seemed nervous as he moved about on the ridge of a ploughed furrow, while the other skulked through the grass of an adjacent field, showing her head only occasionally."

A very early SPOTTED SANDPIPER flew in at Cape Sable about dawn April 15, but most of those returning came a month later, May 6 to 13. Nests have been reported at Lr. Ohio, Conrad's Beach and Green Bay. On April 22, one WILLET was seen at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (P&NA); (25+) were counted at Cranberry Head, (50+) at Chebogue Pt., both on April 29 (MWH, AH & DK), and (4) on the same day at Petpeswick Inlet (DMacD). By mid-May they had become common in usual habitats, which now include the North Shore and Cape Breton. One GREATER YELLOWLEGS, April 1 at Cape Sable was an advance scout, most coming three weeks later: April 22-23 to the Circuit, Hfx. Co.; to Economy; then another wave April 26-29, seen on the Cornwallis River (AH); the Round Is. area, C.B. (AF), Amherst Pt. (CD). Flocks were small - around (10) birds, and most were gone by May 20.

Ross Baker saw the only LESSER YELLOWLEGS reported,

May 8, (1) at North River, (2) at Murray's Siding. The KNOT, rare at any time of year, was present (1) May 26 at Sable Is. (IM&DWF); (3) May 20 at Brier Is. (ELM&BA); and (8) May 20-21 at Crescent Beach, full breeding plumage, by the Cohrs and others. The PURPLE SANDPIPER was last seen, (50+) May 8 at Port George, Anna. Co. (RL); (1) May 20 at Clarke's Harbor, on the offshore rocks (DWF&BKD). The only PECTORAL SANDPIPERS seen were (9) May 13 at Sable Is. (DW). One only WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER was noted, May 15 at Glace Bay Sanctuary (GG). There were five sightings of the LEAST SANDPIPER, three of them at Economy, on the Cobequid Bay; (7) May 8, (30) May 9, (15) May 11 (FS); another (20+) May 12 at Crescent Beach, only one left by May 20 (SC), and (8), May 20 at Brier Is. (ELM&RA).

Three DUNLIN were noted, (1) April 30, (1) May 20 in the Yarmouth area (AH&VK), and (1) May 30 near Wolfville (DWF&JFK). The SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER sent few representatives ashore, as usual in spring, (1 or 2) seen only at Sable, Seal and Brier Islands, Crescent Beach and the Halifax Circuit. Similarly the SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER for the most part passed us by, seen only (20+) May 19 at Pt. Michaud (BR), (4) May 20, Minas Basin (CRKA), (1) May 21 Brier Is. (ELM,RA), (2) May 22, Crescent Beach (SC) and (10's) May 28 near Amherst (CD).

One of the best collections of spring migrant shorebirds was at Cape Sable Is. on May 14, when Ben Doane and Eric Mills saw (a Black-crowned Night Heron, a Bittern) and 5 Piping Plover, a Killdeer, 4 Golden Plover, 100 Black-bellied Plover, a Ruddy Turnstone, a Whimbrel, a Spotty, 50+ Willets, 10 Greater Yellowlegs, 3 Knots in spring plumage, 6 Least Sandpipers, a Dunlin and 35 Short-billed Dowitchers.

The bird of the season was a Ruff, or more properly, a REEVE (the female), found by Sylvia Fullerton and Barbara Hinds, "feeding with Greater Yellowlegs on flats behind Crescent Beach, on May 6. This was a dull plumaged bird, with a small, reddish-brown head, bill about the length of the head, slightly decurved, yellow at the base. The breast was dull, the rump and belly clear white. The wing and back feathers were mottled, giving a scaly appearance. The legs were bright orange. In flight oval white patches on the outside of the tail feathers were clearly visible. The stance was different from the Yellowlegs', it walked deliberately, and fed with a probing motion."

Word has reached us that on a recent field trip in New Brunswick two more of these European birds were seen, a Ruff and a Reeve, the male in full breeding plumage, displaying to the female.

A few scattered "flocks" (1-7) of SANDERLINGS were seen in late May at Conrad's Beach and Crescent Beach. At Sable Is. Ian McLaren noted flocks of Sanderlings, up to (32), present late March and early April, evidently overwintering birds. Dr. McLaren also reported an extraordinarily early flight of shorebirds to Sable, strong SW winds from SE USA at the time, April 2-11. The birds included the Wilson's Plover,

Knot, Willet, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Whimbrel, Short-billed Dowitcher, Least Sandpiper and Semipalmated Plover.

Migrant RED PHALAROPES were seen only off Sable Is., (1-5) May 18 to June 5 (DWF et al, JB). The NORTHERN PHALAROPE is slightly better represented, (3) May 6 seen at Seal Is. (IM et al) and (8) May 10 at Cape Sable (S&BJS).

A fair number (7) of GLAUCOUS GULLS, probably non-breeders, were in no hurry to leave these latitudes and stayed on through April and May at Sable Is., Yarmouth and Glace Bay. The last straggler was seen at sea off Cape Breton, June 5 (RBe). Sightings of ICELAND GULLS follow the same pattern, (18) being seen during April and May from Yarmouth to Glace Bay. The latest observation was made on the same day as that of the Glaucous Gull and by the same observer - at sea off Cape Breton June 5 (RBe). Few reporters paid any attention to GREAT BLACK-BACKED and HERRING GULLS, the only comments of interest being from Pictou where adults of both species are noted to leave - presumably for nesting grounds - when the ice disappeared from the Strait (EH); and also from Cape Sable, where a Black-back's nest containing 3 eggs was found May 28 (SS).

RING-BILLED GULLS were reported in numbers from (1) to a dozen from all coastal areas; and a few, presumably non-breeders, were still around when last reports came in, in early June. BLACK-HEADED GULLS were seen in transitional plumage as early as March 18 (GS), and some in apparently full breeding plumage by April 3 (SM). The latest sighting was a bird in winter or immature plumage at Glace Bay May 19 (SM). A sub-adult LAUGHING GULL was at Sable Is. from March 24 to 29, seen daily, (DWF et al). The old abandoned nesting site of this species is near Harrigan Cove on the mainland about 90 miles due north of Sable, and a few adults have been seen there in recent years. BONAPARTE'S GULL observations are surprisingly few: (1) at Yarmouth Harbor, April 7, (3) at the same place April 11 and (1) at Eel Lake, April 12 (MWH, DK et al). The only other sighting was of (1) at Crescent Beach May 6 (SC).

First arrival dates for COMMON TERNS at various points are: May 12 Mahone Bay (SC), May 13 Yarmouth (MWH), May 13 Sable Is. (IM), May 14 Round Bay (ELM) and Circuit (P&NA), May 15 Pictou (EH), May 17 Lingan (RBe). Mills and Anderson reported 300+ May 20 at Peter Island off Brier Is., congregating at their nesting site; and Betty June Smith reported Terns (sp.) beginning to make nesting hollows at Cape Sable May 28. Despite foul spring weather these birds were seen at both Yarmouth and Pictou a week earlier than in 1971. ARCTIC TERNS beat the Common Terns to Sable Is. by a few days, arriving on May 8, and were first seen at Cape Sable on the 10th. By the 14th, a dozen permanent summer residents had arrived here flying in from the east, as did many more which passed by (SS). By May 27 there were at least (4) at Middle Head, C.B. (WPN et al).

A ROSEATE TERN was at Dan'l's Head May 19, also a few on Sable Is. the same date (DWF). A CASPIAN TERN well observed

and thoroughly described was seen at Cranberry Head near Yarmouth on May 2-3. Two were in the same area on May 6 and (1) on May 14 (MWH, DK, VK, AH). Two were also recorded at Homeville on May 9 (GS&SM). Four BLACK TERNS in breeding plumage were seen at Missaquash Marsh near the N.B. border by several observers including Davis Finch, who suggests that the birds might establish a nesting colony here if they have not already done so.

One COMMON MURRE, badly oiled, was picked up at Louisbourg on April 23 (JO'C) and another in like condition was found at Cape Sable a month earlier (SS). Four THICK-BILLED MURRES were seen off the Western Light at Brier Is., April 29 (ELM).

About (20) MOURNING DOVES reported, distribution general, is (2) more than last spring. Most reports were for mid-April, which probably represented a migratory movement, marked by the arrival of one April 26 at Cape Sable, (not its normal habitat). An earlier one, March 26, near Yarmouth, may have wintered here, in spite of the cold. Three BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS is not as many as reported last spring. These were at Wilmot June 8 (TH); Brickton, Anna. Co. June 1 (RL), and Oxford June 18 (IF).

The last SNOWY OWL was seen on April 7 at Upper Nappan, Cumb. Co. (EL). A BARRED OWL was showing interest in an old nesting site March 25, noted by Harry Brennan, in the deeply wooded area in Pictou Co. where he has found owls and hawks nesting for many years. Our only spring report of the LONG-EARED OWL came from Cape Sable, where one was observed May 10. This is an oddly regular occurrence, and most of our reports of Long-eared Owls come from Cape Sable, spring and fall migration time, although many probably nest throughout the province. John Kearny assures us that they do in fact nest behind Evangeline Beach, but are a very secretive bird. On Cape Sable it is difficult to be secretive, which is why it is such a valuable place to pinpoint migrations. Many SAW-WHET OWLS were heard singing on Brier Is. week-end of March 18-19, and one was noted, singing at a nesting site in Pictou Co. by April 8.

The WHIP-POOR-WILL was heard the last week in May in its usual haunt back of Williams Lake, Hfx. Co. One, recently dead, was found May 8 on Sable Is. A new location was indicated (perhaps not so new) along the road from Dartmouth to the Bicentennial Highway, which has been put through a part of the country previously unexplored, where the Elliotts report hearing a Whip-poor-will, the last of June. The first COMMON NIGHTHAWKS reported were (2), April 20, at Lake Loon, Hfx. Co. (BT), and the impression is that they are down in numbers this year. One was seen in the Sydney area May 3, and our handful of reports of first sightings since, mostly coincide May 20-28. The CHIMNEY SWIFT on the other hand has come back in good numbers; first seen (2) May 4 at Lr. Ohio (HH), at Economy (1) May 12 (FS), (25) May 15 at Truro, up to (50) there May 16 (RB), (50+) May 17 at Oxford (IF) and "abundant" in the Annapolis

Valley by May 20 (ELM). May 18 was arrival date in Cape Breton (SM). A curious and unfortunate occurrence was described by Daniel Welsh: "On the morning of June 11, 1972, on route 101 near Windsor, a large flock of swifts was observed soaring and hawking directly above the highway, apparently oblivious to automobile traffic. At the time of observation, about 11:30 a.m., there were 150-175 swifts in the air and between 50 and 60 dead on the road (a quick count gave 54). The setting was at the junction of open farm fields and mixed forest. The weather was calm and showery. It was first assumed that the birds were hunting insects between the rows of trees. They were soaring within inches of the highway and several were killed in a few minutes of observation. A close examination of the area above and beside the highway showed no obvious concentration. At the time it appeared to me as if the flock was attracted by the dead birds on the highway and were passing over for a closer look. After I caused some disturbance along the roadside, the flock moved away over the trees, dispersing as they went. Several birds were collected and given to the Nova Scotia Museum of Science."

The RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD was first seen at Port Maitland, Yar. Co., (1) May 4 (LD), and then one a day reported May 13-28, distribution general. On May 28 Francis Spalding at Economy counted (6) in one tree, another near at hand, marking the only "peak" observed. Cape Breton arrival date was May 24 at Sydney Forks (RB1).

The BELTED KINGFISHER is in somewhat short supply. Very few were seen here wintering, and a limited number of pairs has been reported since the change of season. Most reports were April 20-30, and the Kingfishers are to be found practically anywhere in N.S., if you happen to be lucky. This also includes Cape Breton, where reports came from the Mabou, Homeville, Sydney Forks and Main-à-Dieu areas.

The YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER has returned, but not to former abundance; the first one reported April 11, Caledonia, Queen's Co. (RH), the next April 15 along the circuit (CRKA), the first (2) at Cape Sable April 19 (SS), (30-40) April 29 at Brier Is. (ELM), and thereafter at large in the province, first noted in Cape Breton April 30 (SM). Seven reports of the PILEATED WOODPECKER this spring is exceptional. It is reported nesting near Hopewell, Pic. Co. (HB per EC). The best chance of seeing one is probably in this area or at Kejimkujik Park. Only one sighting of the RED-HEADED WOODPECKER has come in, a male seen May 20-21 at the cemetery, Brier Is. (ELM & RA).

Two YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS April 23 at Maitland, Hants Co., were the first of this species seen this year (LBM). Most reports were from May 1 on, and represent about two dozen birds, generally distributed in appropriate habitat. It is perhaps worth noting that the HAIRY WOODPECKER, seen only at feeders throughout the winter, became very evident, observed on all field trips April 15 to June 10, in various parts of the province (CRKA). There have been two observations of the BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER, (1) April 4 at Lr. Ohio,

Shel. Co., seen in the area several times (HH), and (1) near Truro May 31 (DWF).

The first sighting of the EASTERN KINGBIRD was of (1) May 13 at Cape Forchu, Yar. Co. (DK), followed by (1) May 15 at Economy (FS), thereafter good numbers seen generally. Four GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHERS were identified in June: (1) June 3 at Kejimkujik (RH, DWF); (2) June 7 and on, Brookside, Hfx. Co., apparently a male and a female (F&ED) and (1) June 14 at Brass Hill, Barrington (J&CG). The Brookside pair stayed around for the best part of a month, very lively and vocal, in the spruces by the lakeshore. A PHOEBE, seen and heard April 29 at Bear River by Jean Timpa, was a late "first arrival". Fourteen Phoebes have been identified since, (6) of them in the Bear River area by June 4. On the Hants County Field Trip May 27, a nesting pair of Phoebes was found, very near last year's nesting site.

First YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER identified was (1) May 11 at Sydney Forks (RB1); the first TRAILL'S, (1) May 24 at Wilmot (TH), and the first LEAST, (1) May 9 at Round Hill, Anna. Co. (WEW). These Flycatchers were all slow in coming - for the first time on record we heard no Traill's on the May 27 Hants Co. trip - but they are now established in good numbers. A very early WOOD PEWEE was heard April 29 at Markland, Yar. Co. (DK), only a few reported since. On the other hand, we have heard and seen an unusual number of OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS this spring, the first, rather amazingly, at Glace Bay, an arrival with the May 10 severe snow-and-wind storm. Aside from this and the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, dates in Cape Breton were all in early June.

HORNED LARK flocks built up in April, very generally reported, with largest flocks on April 5, when hundreds were seen with sparrows along the roadsides and snow-covered fields in Cumberland County; and "1000's" April 8-15, Nappan (100's there April 23); "numerous" until April 15 at Economy; (50+) April 16 on the Grand Pré; (40) near Glace Bay April 18 and (40) April 22 at Pictou. A NORTHERN Horned Lark was identified by Ethel Crathorne May 22, along the Windsor Road, a very pale bird, more white than yellow markings.

One lone TREE SWALLOW arrived in Shelburne County April 18 (HH), but on April 22 they were reported simultaneously in Queen's (8), Yarmouth (25+), Annapolis (1) and Kings (1) counties. By May they were quite generally distributed (May 14 in Cape Breton), but were coming in all of that month, and must have suffered considerable loss of numbers in the May 10 storm. Distribution of the BANK SWALLOW is of course rather irregular, but birds were seen digging in numbers (20-30) May 20 at a newly started colony in central Hants; May 30 (100+) arrived at an old colony near Pictou; and on June 4 were watched digging burrows in a very large new gravel pit near Truro. Hundreds of birds were swirling over the face of two adjacent banks containing around 150 and 400 burrows, the sand flying out of many as the birds worked, sometimes side by side, in a fury of activity. Are there more Bank Swallows around this

year, and fewer Tree and Barn Swallows? Except in the Annapolis Valley, counts of the two latter species have been exceptionally low so far.

One ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW came in at Seal Is. May 8, and was photographed (IM et al). BARN SWALLOWS were seen at Chester April 26, small numbers at Brookside, Hfx. Co. and Lr. Ohio, April 29, and on April 30 at Cape Sable, Yarmouth, St. Margaret's Bay, Amherst Pt. and Schooner Pond, C.B., with larger numbers swelling the ranks up to mid-May. Fifty were counted on Brier Is. May 21, and at Pictou Holdway reported main migrants arriving May 24 and later. The CLIFF SWALLOW arrived at Seal Is. (4) May 8, at Sable Is. (15) May 6. May 8 also saw two at Lr. Ohio where there are a few nests, and we have seven other reports of small flocks at nesting sites; the largest number (25+) May 20, around an abandoned building at West Paradise (ELM).

The PURPLE MARTIN (3-4) arrived at Oxford April 30 and again May 6, building up to be as plentiful as last year, according to Inez Finley. April 30 also saw the first arrivals at Amherst, where the Martins are again noted to be plentiful, by Evelyn Lowerison and the Desplanques. Two single birds were seen en route, (1) May 15 stopped over at Brookside, Hfx. Co. (F&ED) and (1), May 20-22 was at Seal Is. (BKD et al).

GRAY JAYS which disappeared into the fastnesses in March to take up household duties are now escorting their families in sooty immature plumage; drifting through the woods on quiet foraging expeditions, much to the agitation of warblers and other smaller birds. Young RAVENS too, fully grown by the end of June, but still under parental supervision are getting their first experience in finding their own food.

Chickadees, Nuthatches and Creepers are with us in usual numbers. The migrant RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH is abundant only in Cape Breton apparently, (20) counted May 3 in the Highlands National Park (WPN et al). A HOUSE WREN, May 20, was well seen near the Light at Seal Is., by Ben Doane, Davis Finch and Ian McLaren. For our own migrant WINTER WREN, the official arrival (at Cape Sable) was April 29; seen at Markland, Yar. Co. on the same day. A second "wave" came in May 6, when (8-11) birds were counted at Seal Is., and, on the same day, this Wren was heard at Bear River and at Stillwater Siding, Hfx. Co. In all, 37 Winter Wrens have been reported, reaching Colchester and Cumberland counties and Cape Breton May 19-24.

The MOCKINGBIRD has been observed, (1) each in six localities, one of which was Kejimkujik Park. Simon Lunn, Park Naturalist, has asked that visitors to the Park be kind enough to report bird sightings to him to be included in the Park records.

Reports of CATBIRDS start with (1) May 6 at Seal Is. and continue to June 1, well distributed on the mainland, no Cape Breton records. Numbers are good; in fact, Jean Timpa at Bear River writes: "there seems to be one in every hedgerow

this year."

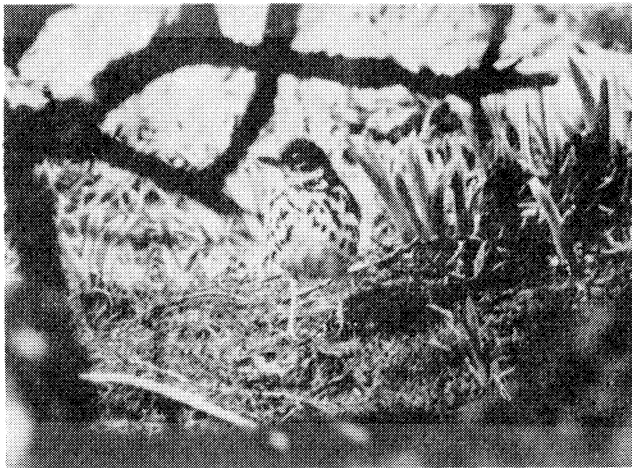
The BROWN THRASHER "came ashore" (1) April 29 at Markland, Yar. Co. (MWH et al); and (1) April 29-May 24 at Cape Sable (S&BJS). On May 1, Ray Conrad, Chief Engineer on the SS Imperial St. Lawrence, logged a Brown Thrasher winging its way north at Lat. 37°35'N, Long. 71°56'W (off Philadelphia?), possibly on its way to Seal Is., where (20) were counted May 6, probably about 15 still there May 20-22 (IM et al). One reached Cape Breton Highlands Park May 28, for the first Park record. (Wayne Neily, T. Moore and E. Unger).

April 2-3 were first ROBIN days, recorded by 12 observers from Yarmouth to Glace Bay, and including Sable Is. In most places there was about a foot of snow on the ground, and numbers died of starvation. The next wave came along April 14-15, and another coincided with the May 10th. storm, which was accompanied by high winds and also took a toll. In spite of these setbacks, the robin population was, if anything, above normal throughout town and country, by the end of June. Many people fed the birds, of course, during the storms. The robins were especially conspicuous, in their bright spring plumage, against the new-fallen snow, and some of us were fools enough to go out and shovel vast patches of lawn clear so that these very beautiful but quite unadaptable birds might dig a worm or two. Robins are selective eaters, and except on territory, non-aggressive. The accompanying photograph, taken at the Michael Eaton's, is a fine character study of the Robin and the Fox Sparrow, sharing difficulties.



Fox Sparrow and Robin, April 9, 1972, Rosemary Eaton.
"Didja ever see such awful weather?"

A thrush under happier circumstances was photographed on Seal Island May 7, 1972, for the first documented Nova Scotia record of the WOOD THRUSH (IM,BKD&DWF). Davis Finch wrote that the Wood Thrush may be extending its range north-eastward, very slowly increasing as a spring migrant at least, in Nova Scotia. The bird stayed until May 20-22, and another was seen on Sable Is. May 14 (JB). Although a few scattered



Wood Thrush, May 7, 1972, Seal Island.
Ian McLaren.

HERMIT THRUSHES were noted in April, the main migration wave coincided with the May 10 storm. Numbers were seen along roadsides with the Fox Sparrows and Juncos, others came to feeding stations, and, as mentioned in the Introduction, Roger Pocklington, at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, found one in his office that day. On May 11 Francis Spalding at Economy counted (50), and wrote: "probably hundreds passing through everywhere". Although these reports came from all over the province, (of 1 to 2 to "flocks"), not many of these thrushes appear to have settled in. (The SWAINSON'S THRUSH is outsinging the Hermit about 6 to 1, and although a fine singer, cannot compare with its red-tailed cousin - and what can? The Swainson's came in a little later, as usual.) The impression is that a large flight of Hermit Thrushes passing over Nova Scotia was grounded by the storm, and most subsequently took off again for intended destination. Most reports for the Swainson's are for May 19-28, (May 18 at Sable Is.), and earlier in Cape Breton, where (5) were noted at the Glace Bay Sanctuary May 14 (SM).

The GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH figured in more reports than usual this spring: (1) May 10 in Yarmouth (AH); (5+) May 12 at Green Bay, Lun. Co., "arrived" (1) May 19 at Sable Is., and

(1) May 21, again May 26 at Seal Is. A VEERY was seen May 1 at Sable Is., first seen on the mainland May 19 on the North Mountain near Clarence (RL), and was heard singing in usual habitats by mid-June. Five EASTERN BLUEBIRDS have been reported, which is encouraging: (2) May 6-8, Seal Is. (SF et al); (1) May 29 Brier Is. (R&CG); (1) June 3 on Digby Neck, heard singing also (DWF) and (1) June 13 and 19, Lr. Ohio (HH).

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS appear in Nova Scotia with some regularity in the fall, but spring sightings are real rarities. This year, however, one was observed (and well described) at Waterville on June 15 (NH). It is interesting that one was also noted at Fundy Park in southern New Brunswick on May 18. GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS, which disappeared from most of mainland Nova Scotia last January, continue scarce. Four were seen at Amherst Pt. Sanctuary April 2 (CD); (5) at Markland, Yar. Co. April 29, (2) in the same locality May 6 (MWH et al); (2) at Green Bay May 22 (SC). An injured or ailing bird was picked up at Glace Bay May 1 (GS) and (3) were seen at CBH National Park May 28 (WPN et al). Records received for first sightings of RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS make an unusually tidy migration picture: (1) at Cape Sable April 26 (SS); (24+) near Yarmouth April 29 (MWH et al); (1) in the St. Margaret's Bay area west of Halifax April 30 (CRKA); (1) each at Truro, Halifax and Economy, May 1 (RB, DMacD, FS); (1) at Mt. Hanley (RL), (8) at Pictou (EH) and (1) at Oxford (IF), all on May 6; (1) or more at Cameron Settlement, Guys. Co. May 12 (EL); and finally several in the Sydney Mines area May 14 (MH). One is, then, tempted to believe that the Ruby-crowns entered the province at the southwestern tip, and took a little over two weeks to sweep through to the northern extremity.

WATER PIPITS, so abundant in fall, are scarce in N.S. during spring migration. There were (3) at Cape Sable April 16, and three quite late sightings of (1's) and (2's) in Cape Breton (GS&WPN) and Sable Is. in the last week in May. BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS, which invaded the province in numbers last winter, lingered in a few places well into April. The latest report was of (1) still in Yarmouth April 13 (MWH et al); while in Cape Breton there were about a dozen at Reserve Mines April 9 (JMacD), and in Wolfville, April 4, a flock of 50-60 (JT).

The CEDAR WAXWING population is about the same as that reported for the winter - scanty. There was (1) at Sydney Forks May 29 (RB1), several at Bear River, June 4-5 (JT) and (5) in Truro June 8 (RB). A month separated the last NORTHERN SHRIKE, reported April 13 at St. Patrick's Channel (WPN), from the first LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE, May 13, Big Pond (BR), both sightings being in Cape Breton.

The STARLING is a partial migrant in Nova Scotia and several observers noted a significant build-up in numbers about mid-March. Holdway reported the wintering population at Pictou much reduced by April; and several other observers gladly noted smaller numbers than usual during the winter months.

The first SOLITARY VIREO heard was at Conrad's Beach

(circuit) May 7, and the largest day's sighting was (12+) in central Hants May 20 (CRKA). Most other first sightings were during the period May 15-21, and occurred all over the province from Yarmouth to Cape Breton (MWH, FS, SC, RB, IM, WPN, HH). Early RED-EYED VIREOS arrived at the same time as the main body of Solitaries, and were, in fact, reported "common" at Rawdon, Hants Co., on May 20-22 (EC). Most arrival dates were, however, during the May 28-June 7 period (TH, IF, EH, RB, WEW, FS). One WARBLING VIREO was seen and heard at close range in Lr. Ohio, Shel. Co., on June 3 (HH).

All 22 nesting species of Warblers have been well reported this spring, plus one exotic. Many were seen before they were heard, owing to the depressing weather no doubt, but they eventually burst into full song, 12 species (and many individuals) so heard along the railway track at Cole Harbor late May, by the Elliots. On July 2, on top of the North Mountain, along a 200-yard stretch of road a bewildering chorus of birds was eventually sorted out into 40 species, of which 99 individuals were warblers, of 13 species.

Our reports cover twenty representative regions, and give a fair idea of general occurrence. Following are listed first dates, peak arrival and number of regional reports, but space does not allow a listing of these last, which may be obtained from the editor, if anyone so desires. The BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER, first date May 1 Economy (FS), peak May 20-22, seen in all regions. TENNESSEE, May 20, Sable Is. (IM), May 21, Mt. Hanley (RL), peak May 31, 8 regions. NASHVILLE, May 7, Seal Is., peak May 20-23, 11 regions. PARULA, May 7, Seal Is., peak May 18-20, 15 regions. YELLOW, May 6, Cornwallis River (AHO), peak May 14-17, 17 regions. MAGNOLIA, May 14, Markland, Yar. Co. (MWH&DK), peak May 19-22, 16 regions. CAPE MAY, May 14, Amherst Pt. Sanctuary (CD), "peak" (very few) May 20-22, 5 regions. BLACK-THROATED BLUE, May 13, Economy (FS), peak May 19-20, 7 regions. MYRTLE, April 21, Centredale, Pictou Co. (MB), peak April 30-May 1, all regions. BLACK-THROATED GREEN, May 14, East Jordan, Shel. Co. (SB), Markland, Yar. Co. (MWH&DK), Mt. Hanley (RL) and Brookside, Hfx. Co. (F&EB), Peak May 19-23, 16 regions. BLACKBURNIAN, May 17, Nictaux, Anna. Co. (A. Nixon per TH), peak May 21-22, 10 regions. CHESTNUT-SIDED, May 17, Wilmot (TH), peak May 22, 11 regions. BAY-BREASTED, May 20, Lake Egmont, Hfx. Co. (CRKA) and Seal Is., peak May 23, 6 regions. BLACKPOLL, May 8, Debert (RB) and Seal Is., peak May 22, 12 regions. PALM, April 23, Halifax Co. circuit (CRKA), peak April 30-May 1, good numbers in 9 regions. N.B. On May 7 at Economy, numerous Palm Warblers were seen passing through, mostly from east to west, reverse of usual direction (FS). OVENBIRD, May 6, Bear River (JT), peak May 19-21, 14 regions. Ovenbirds are abundant this year. NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, May 13, Lr. Ohio, Shel. Co. (HH). No real peak, single birds seen May 16-24 here and there, 10 regions. MOURNING WARBLER, May 27, Hants Co. Field Trip (NSBS), no peak noted, 7 regions as follow: Hants Co.; Truro; Princeport, Col. Co.; Beaverbank Rd., Hfx. Co. and Brookside, Hfx. Co.; Economy; Amherst Pt. Sanctuary, and the Cape Breton Highlands Park. Mourning Warblers have been very scarce on mainland N.S. as a

rule, but quite a few were heard this spring. YELLOWTHROAT, May 1, Cape Sable, (SS), several peaks, first big one May 21, 17 regions. Yellowthroats are also abundant this year. WILSON'S WARBLER, May 15, Economy, (Sable Is. May 20), peak May 22, 16 regions. Wilson's Warblers have been exceptionally well reported this year. The same is true of the CANADA, first date May 20, Seal Is., peak May 22-24, 13 regions. AMERICAN RED-START, May 16, Lr. Ohio, Shel. Co. (HH), peak May 19, 18 regions, not as numerous as it was last year.

The exceptional warbler was a CERULEAN "an immature male with the throat band, but not full plumaged", a very small warbler observed by Dan Welsh and Jean Boulva May 20 on Sable Island, vouched for by both Davis Finch and Ian McLaren as a good sight record.

With two exceptions, Cape Breton dates have been consistently at least a week after mainland "peaks". The Magnolia and the Mourning Warblers were seen in Cape Breton one day later than on the mainland. It is interesting how many "firsts" and near-firsts have come from Economy, at the head of the Bay of Fundy. A big warbler wave came in via Brier Island May 21-24, with highest count of individuals on the 22nd., of 19 species. It is easier to list those missing, which were the Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush and Mourning Warbler. From (5) to (20) of each species were counted, and a real high on Parulas - (50), a second peak.

There is, understandably, a good supply of first sightings for BOBOLINKS, one of the least retiring of birds, the male making his presence known from the moment of arrival. Cape Sable sent the first report, of (1), April 28 (SS); the next showed up at Wilmot May 10 (TH), then simultaneous sightings May 14, of males at Economy (FS), and a single bird at Sydney Mines (MH). Evelyn Lowerison reports 7 males and a female at Cameron Settlement, Guys. Co., a locality where she had not seen them before; so that this species may still be extending its territories in the province. The main influx, at least of male birds, was about May 18-24. Spring MEADOWLARK reports outnumber last year's by one. There was (1) at Lingan April 10 (JM), (1) at Cape Sable Is. April 13-17 (TL), (1) at Lr. Ohio April 21 (HH), (1) at Bridgetown May 26, and a male at North Kingston May 30, seen by Davis Finch and John Kearny, who finds Meadowlarks regularly in June in this (North Kingston) area.

Male REDWINGED BLACKBIRDS arrived on schedule during the last week in March and the first few days in April. The only reports on first arrivals of females are: (1) at Pictou April 17 (EH) and "some" (number not indicated) April 14, Amherst area (CD). A nest with 6 eggs (two females and one male) is reported by Ian McLaren, June 11 at Conrad's Beach. Another interesting observation of land birds at sea came from Ray Conrad, C/E of SS Imperial St. Lawrence, who saw Redwinged Blackbirds, a male and three females, at Lat. 37°24'N, Long. 69°02'W, or about 600 miles off the N.S. coast, headed this way(?) April 10.

A female ORCHARD ORIOLE was seen in company with Baltimore Orioles at Northern Pt., Brier Is. May 21; the only sighting of the Orchard this year (ELM). The first BALTIMORE ORIOLE to appear on the spring scene, picked Seal Is. as so many birds do, for its landfall on May 6 (IM). All other sightings were from May 16 to early June, of single birds and several pairs, and all from the southwestern half of the province, with two exceptions: single birds (possibly repeats) at Oxford May 21 (IF), and (1) at Sydney Forks, May 31 (RB1). RUSTY BLACKBIRDS behaved beautifully this year, arriving on mainland Nova Scotia just when they should, during the last days of March and the first week in April. In Cape Breton they first showed up at Sydney Forks April 12 (RB1). They were still arriving in force however by April 29, when (100+) were observed in the Stewiacke Valley (CRKA). The first spring COMMON GRACKLE arrived at Wilmot in a snow storm, March 28 (TH); while the second showed up far to the east at Cameron Settlement March 31 (EL). Other first sighting reports for mainland N.S. are from April 1-10 (EH, CD, RB, RH, FS, WEW, DMacD). Holdway reports them nesting at Pictou May 10 and Spalding found a bird on the nest at Economy May 18. Marion Hilton reports them "flying back and forth over my yard continually with beaks full of - who knows what? - eggs or nestlings; or stalking about the grass looking sinister." In Nova Scotia where Common Grackles first began to appear some time around the turn of the century, they have turned out to be somewhat of wolves in sheep's clothing (black sheep?), as our small native birds do not appear to regard them as predators, and show few signs of the agitation they would evince at the appearance of a nest-robber of similar size, such as the Gray Jay.

Sizable flocks of BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS were seen during early April at Yarmouth, Cape Sable, near Halifax and at Caledonia, Queen's Co. These flocks broke up during the month and later reports are of pairs "snooping about the thickets" (EC), or of scattered small groups. Pairs have also been observed hanging around swallow nest boxes, and other nesting small birds, and at least one cowbird egg has been found in the nest of Yellow Warblers at Yarmouth (MWH).

There were the same number of sightings of SCARLET TANAGERS in 1972 as in the previous year - (7) - although '71 was ahead in numbers of individuals as (5) were seen in one day at Brier, making a total of (11) as compared with (7) for this year. Last year's records were all for May, while there were two later observations for 1972, both on June 11, one at Milton, Queen's Co. (AA), and one at Beaverbank, Hfx. Co., this one in full song (CRKA). The other (May) '72 sightings were at Lr. Ohio (SB), Sable Is. (DWF), Port Maitland, Yar. Co. (LD), Clyburn Valley, C.B. (WPN) and Yarmouth (MWH et al). Four SUMMER TANAGERS have been reported: 2 males at Centre-dale, Pictou Co. (MB) and a female, May 26 at Lr. Ohio (HH).

Nineteen records of the ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK extend from May 5, (1) which stayed until May 10 at least in a secluded garden in Halifax South (CWH); (1) the same (first)

date in the Marion Bridge area, C.B. (Ella Matheson per FR); - to (1) May 28 in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park (WPN et al). Sightings were of (1-2) birds, and most were clustered around May 19-21. Quite a number of one of our most admired "regular" strays, the INDIGO BUNTING, stayed with us a few weeks, May 5 to May 30: (1) May 5 in Dartmouth (BH); (1) May 8 at Lr. Ohio (SB); (1-3) May 9 and 10, various parts of Halifax city (CWH, RB, and Marjorie Major per WM); (1) May 1 to 8, Lakeside, Yar. Co. (Mrs. E. Miller per MWH); (1) May 13 Little Egypt, Yar. Co. and (1) May 14-18, Yarmouth town (MWH, DK, AH); (3) May 15-20 Liverpool, (Vera Joudry, who wrote that she had an Indigo Bunting, a Purple Finch and a bright male Goldfinch all together among the bare branches of a tree in her garden one morning); (1) May 30, singing, at Bear River (JT).

Two DICKCISSELS, another spring stray, were seen (1) April 8-12 at River Denys, Inv. Co., reported as very tame by Mrs. J. N. MacDonald; and (1) May 11 at Glace Bay (Mrs. J. MacLachlan per SM). The EVENING GROSBEAK was last seen at most feeders around the end of April, but a few lingered through May, and are fairly commonly encountered in the woods and along the roadsides since then. On May 24, Jean Timpa at Bear River observed a pair of these Grosbeaks in an apple tree "billing"; and at Amherst, June 2, the Desplanges watched a pair courting and mating on a feeder. We should surely have some more nest records this summer. The PURPLE FINCH arrived May 1, simultaneously at Cape Sable, Yarmouth, Bear River, Halifax (3 observers), Dartmouth, Economy, Amherst and Glace Bay. The birds arrived in good numbers from then on - one such flock observed, May 13, on the Conqueral Road, Lun. Co., where (45+) were feeding in the grass, very excited, eating avidly, and very evidently newly arrived. As we passed, they rose in a body, singing as they dipped in flight over the trees, spring plumage shimmering ruby-red in the late afternoon sun - a marvellous chorus, and a very pretty sight. Since mid-May they have been singing everywhere in town and countryside, and we are glad to have them back.

The COMMON REDPOLL stayed until April in most parts of the province; (1) last seen April 8 at Sable Is.; flocks of (40+), Halifax Co. circuit; (50) April 16 at River Ryan, C.B.; (6) April 16 at Mason's Pt., Lun. Co.; (1) April 22 at Truro and even later at Amherst, where a flock which had been at the feeder did not leave until mid-May. The PINE SISKIN, present all winter, has been reported as increasing in numbers, especially the first two weeks in May; but is seen only in small flocks (3-15) infrequently about the countryside. The AMERICAN GOLDFINCH disappeared from all but the southwestern end of the province during the winter, and migrants were late in returning. Reports are scattered, and no large numbers noted, but increases occurred May 23-30, and June 2-4, when a sizable invasion was noted, in Bear River (JT) and at Princeport, Col. Co. (CRKA). This is not a "goldfinch year", but the birds are now regularly seen and heard, in small numbers, on all field trips.

All reported RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE sightings are for the period April 7-May 29, and are from the three "straggler centres"

of the province: Cape Sable, Brier and Seal Islands. A minimum of (21) and a possible maximum of about (40) birds was seen. A number of these could have been repeats. The first was a single bird at Cape Sable on April 7, followed by (1) on May 1, a pair May 10, and (1) again May 14 (SS, ELM & BKD). There were up to (15) at Seal Is. May 6-8, and (17) there May 20-22 (IM,DWF&BKD). At Brier Is. there were (2) May 21, one in full song, and (1) May 29 (ELM,RA,J&CG).

A well-described IPSWICH SPARROW far off course at Clifton at the head of Cobequid Bay was seen on April 30 by a careful observer, Ross Baker. On their normal course the earliest observation for the period was (1) March 27, at Eastern Passage, Halifax Co. (CRKA). Other records are of (3) at Cape Sable April 2 and a very late one there May 18 (S&BJS); single birds throughout April from the Sambro area and Three Fathom Harbor (DMacD), and from the Yarmouth area, where the latest observation was at Cranberry Head May 20 (MWH&AH). Ian McLaren states: our censuses suggest that the Ipswich indeed "piles up" in Halifax Co., striking out for Sable in NW-WNW light winds. Spurts of arrival begin on the 2nd of April.

The first SAVANNAH SPARROW was reported from Wilmot April 8 with winter still in the driver's seat (TH). From then on the picture is something like this: up to April 22 there were sightings of about (9) birds in western N.S., (5) in the central region (Halifax-Hants), and (2) in the northern region (Col.-Cumb.); numbers increased markedly in these three regions during the period April 23-30, when they were reported as "numerous" at Economy (FS), while other observers noted from (8-10) birds where (1-2) had been seen during the previous fortnight. The first for Cape Breton were seen on April 30, (2) at Lingan (RBe). Reports were spotty during May, but with the great majority of sightings (16) being from the western and central regions, and numbers varying from (12) to "very many". Northern and eastern regions during the same period produced only six sightings and a total of (17) birds. The lone exception to this is Economy where FS reported flocks passing on May 1, the day after he had seen numerous Savannahs in the same locality.

A SHARP-TAILED SPARROW well ahead of schedule (see Tufts: Birds of Nova Scotia) was heard at Cranberry Head near Yarmouth May 20 (MWH&AH). No others have been reported yet, the tale remains to be told. The only VESPER SPARROW records are from Economy, where (1) was seen April 26 and another May 5 (FS).

The SLATE-COLORED JUNCO sent a few scouts ahead in late March, but the first big influx was April 2-4, noted at Cape Sable, Yarmouth, Berwick (IT), Round Hill, Oxford, Economy, Amherst and Glace Bay. Another big migration April 7-9 was noted at Cape Sable, Lower Ohio, Halifax county, Pictou and Economy again. These joined in the "sparrow fall" during the heavy storm at that time, lining the roadsides with the Fox Sparrows, etc. wherever snowploughs left a cleared space. This is, in fact, a "Junco year". Inez Finley at Oxford remarked that she found Juncos more numerous than ever before

in 15 years of record keeping, and saw birds gathering nest material May 28. On June 1, at Bear River a nest with 3 eggs was discovered (JT). Junco arrival at Sable Is. was April 9 (IM).

The TREE SPARROW, never abundant last winter stayed around until mid-April, except in northern N.S. and Cape Breton, where a few were seen, (1) May 6 at Pictou (EH); (2) May 11 at Glace Bay (SM) and (10) to mid-May at Amherst (CD). A few CHIPPING SPARROWS arrived in April, (2) April 9 at Cape Sable, (1) April 26 at Sydney and (1) April 29 at Yarmouth; a few, the first weeks in May, but most came May 19-23, thereafter common and singing in expected habitat. Three or (4) FIELD SPARROWS were seen only at Cape Sable (S&BJS), (1) April 7; and (2) May 6-7 (one again May 20) at Seal Is. (IM et al, DWF et al). Quite a few WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS were seen this spring: (1) May 3 and (1) May 13-24 at Cape Sable (S&BJS); (3) May 7 and (4) May 8 at Seal Is. (IM et al); (1) May 10-16 at Clarence, Anna. Co. (RL); (1) May 13 near Mt. Hanley (RL) and (1) May 13 in Halifax city (PD); (2) May 15 at Brookside, Hfx. Co. (F&ED) and (6+) May 15 at Glace Bay (SM), (3) May 15 at Lingan (RBe); (1) May 16 at Truro (RB); around (8) May 20-22 at Seal Is. (BKD et al); (4+) May 24-29 at Sable Is. (DWF); (2) May 24, (3) May 25-28 at Brier Is. (ELM et al). It looks as if they made a round trip!

The WHITE-THROATED SPARROW is always difficult to pin down as to first arrival, since many are here all winter. The first (doubtful) date we have this spring is April 2 (3) at Round Hill; but (2) at Cape Sable, (1) at Lr. Ohio and (1) in song at Chester Basin April 22 were almost certainly migrants, followed by small numbers about, until late May. At Economy Francis Spalding noted small flocks scattered through the woods May 1-2, and a second influx May 9-13, which was also noted (both peaks) at Yarmouth and in the Sydney area. Whitethroats in May did not seem to be here in abundance, but by the end of June they could be heard and seen in good numbers - perhaps they were silent and secretive in the very cool weather.

The FOX SPARROW story for this spring was one of hundreds of desperately hungry birds flooding into the gardens and backyards of towns and cities in search of food, reduced to the vanishing point by the unseasonable heavy snows. Although many reporters commented "more than I have ever seen before", these Fox Sparrow springs are not too rare and seem always to coincide and, in fact, be caused by, heavy April snows. The first reports of true spring arrivals were (1) in Dartmouth March 27 (BT), "many" at Maitland, Hants Co., April 3, where none was seen the previous day (LBM), and (1) at Sable Is. on the same date (IM). Many Fox Sparrows stayed for nearly two months, and sang enough to make up for all of the other silent birds put together.

First LINCOLN'S SPARROW sightings were (2) or possibly (3) May 11 at Economy and the observer, Francis Spalding makes the straight-faced suggestion that - for the Lincoln's Sparrow - this might constitute a migratory peak. Supporting this is the

report of another (2) seen on the same day at Nappan, 30 miles to the north as the Lincoln's Sparrow flies (CD). There was (1) at Truro May 14 (RB); (4) at Sable Is. and (2) at Seal Is. on May 20 (IM); and (1) at Brier Is. May 24-25 (KR&WS), (1) there May 28 (ELM). The Cape Bretoners report (1) May 27 at Highlands Park (WPN) and (2) seen on the June 10 Field Day in Cape Breton Co. Judging from reports SWAMP SPARROWS came through the spring at least as well as last year. There are 15 records totalling (47) birds compared with 6 sightings of (8) individuals in the spring of '71. The first noted this year was an unusually early one at Cape Sable (SS), and the greatest number for any one date was (10) at Brier May 24 (ELM).

The singing SONG SPARROW in March will always be a puzzler as to whether he is an early arrival or a winter hold-out stimulated by the false Nova Scotia spring. There were, however, enough reports this year, of singing birds in various parts of the province where they had not been in evidence before, to suggest that the vanguard of the main migration entered the province during the last 10 days of March. In Tusket, near Yarmouth, singing birds were common (30+) on April 2, where only one had been seen the previous day (CRKA), and on the 3rd. "many" were reported from Round Hill (WEW). They became numerous in the northern region (Economy) following first arrival April 2 (FS), but the first record of any number in the Halifax-Hants-Lunenburg region is of (20+) on April 15 (CRKA). There are no reports from the eastern region, and the first from Cape Breton is of a single, April 10, Glace Bay (SM), followed by other reports of lone birds from adjacent localities (JMacD, WPN&CF). From April 8 to 23 seventeen Cape Breton sightings were made, but no numbers given.

One may then speculate from these few statistics that some Song Sparrows moved up the northern shore of the Bay of Fundy and crossed Chignecto Bay into Cumberland County, entering the province at about the same time as others which had waited for favorable conditions to cross the mouth of the Bay to Yarmouth County.

The LAPLAND LONGSPUR was still to be found on the Grand Pré March 22 (DWF), and the last sighting there was of (4) April 16 (CRKA). The last one at Economy was seen April 10 (FS). Very large flocks of the SNOW BUNTING were seen around in a number of regions the end of March, (in Annapolis, Lunenburg, Kings, Pictou and Cumberland Counties), and some were still present well on into April: 30+ at Yarmouth, 250-300 at Digby, "1000's" at Nappan, Cumb. Co., all on April 8; last date seen April 16 at Cape Sable, Grand Pré and Economy; April 23 at Nappan; May 12 at Sable Is. and May 14 at Ingonish. It really is a wonder that they ever left at all, this spring of all springs ideally designed for the "Snowbirds".

Grateful thanks are due to our reporters, upon whose records the above account of the Spring Migration, 1972, is based. The initials used are those of the following individuals:

make sure he knew of the meetings and to find out what input the Canadian Wildlife Service was providing), Ben Doane (to see what the N.S. Resources Council was doing), and Ian McLaren (to see what the Canadian Nature Federation was doing). Fred Dobson agreed to do this, and he and Roger Pocklington agreed that if a brief were called for, they would co-ordinate it, and make sure that interested people got to the hearings.

The question of dues for coming years was then introduced by Eric Cooke. Some attempt was made to extrapolate present expenditures and income three years ahead, and to estimate the resulting financial position of the Society. The matching grant paid by the Museum for publication of the Newsletter was included in these extrapolations. The question of payment of Society member's travel expenses (to and from Executive Meetings, the annual Canadian Nature Federation meetings, etc.) was raised, and required funds estimated. It rapidly became clear from the discussion that by raising the dues by a mean amount of one dollar, the Society could just keep pace with inflation over the next two years, allowing for no additional travel. It was moved by Fred Dobson, seconded by Phyllis Dobson, that the Executive recommend to the membership that the annual dues be raised from \$2.00 to \$4.00 per year. An amendment was then moved by Shirley Cohrs, seconded by Roger Pocklington, that family memberships at \$6.00 and student memberships at \$2.00 be included in the recommendation (the student memberships were to be offered until age 16). Both motion and amendment were passed unanimously. The Secretary-Treasurer was directed to ensure that this recommendation appear in the form of a notice one month before the annual General Meeting.

Further business included only a few items. Eric Cooke announced that the speaker at the April 27 meeting (8:00 p.m. at the Museum) would be the Deputy Minister of Lands and Forests, who would talk on Government policy in his department. Eric Cooke agreed to inform the press of the meeting.

E. Reid asked for, and got, a list of the year's field trips (these will be published in the May Newsletter).

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Fred Dobson,
Secretary-Treasurer

DATE: June 21, 1972.

PLACE: F. Dobson residence, Brookside Road, Hfx. Co.

PRESENT: Eric Cooke, Pres., H. Carmichael, S. Cohrs, E. Crathorne, F. Himsl, R. Pocklington, F. Dobson, P. Dobson.

The meeting was brought to order at 8:10 p.m. Fred

Dobson read the minutes from the last (April 12) meeting of the Executive. Business arising from them was dealt with first.

1. Educational activities: Roger Pocklington has been asked to organize a series of ten lectures for amateur Ornithologists in the Dartmouth Night School program. He asked if the meeting favored such an undertaking (there is apparently some remuneration, which Roger proposed be divided among the lecturers and the NSBS Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund). The meeting was enthusiastically in favor, but Eric Cooke noted that quite a lot of work was involved, and asked that before Roger agreed to take on the task, he draw up a schedule and ensure that he had sufficient speakers to do a good job on it. Roger agreed.

There followed a report by Fred Dobson on the status of replies to his request to the School Boards of the Province for help in making the NSBS better known. So far Halifax Co. and Yarmouth Co. have replied, requesting that we send our Newsletter to the libraries of various schools - a total of fourteen. There was some discussion about how to deal with the requests; they would cost a considerable amount if many more came in, but fulfilling them is almost our duty since the Museum is an educational institution. It was finally moved by Fred Dobson and seconded by F. Hims1 that we send the Newsletter on a regular basis to those schools which answered our initial inquiry, until the end of the 1973 fiscal year. Then we should assess the situation and if necessary request that the schools pay our regular dues thereafter. The motion was passed.

Next F. Hims1 reported on progress with preparing an "automated" lecture for the Wolf Cubs, to be given by the Museum. He has seen the interested people on the Museum staff and will pattern the lecture after one presently given on geology, which is a 45-minute tape-recorded talk accompanied by slides shown at regular intervals. He has almost enough slides (10-15) now, but needs a few more of common birds to complete the talk; any more would be appreciated. The cost of obtaining copies is \$.30 per slide. Eric Cooke suggested that Roger Pocklington might use it for his lecture series introduction; Roger agreed that it would be an excellent idea.

2. Fred Dobson reported he had sent \$100.00 to the Canadian Nature Federation as a founding grant, and that its receipt had been gratefully acknowledged by the Federation.

3. Fred Dobson gave a brief resumé of the goings on at the Halifax public hearings on the Canadian position at the Stockholm Conference on the Environment in June.

4. New business came next. H. Carmichael said she had recently talked with a friend who worked in a bookstore, who said that they can't keep bird books in stock these days, and suggested that the NSBS insert membership applications in new books. This suggestion was received with great enthusiasm and E. Crathorne said she would supply Hazel with the necessary forms if she would take them and put them in the books. Hazel agreed to do so.

5. Roger Pocklington asked if people would phone in and give their numbers for the upcoming Mushaboom Field Trip. Fred Dobson reported he had mailed out lists of the trips to Tourist Bureaus at strategic locations; it was found that tourists had to ask for the information since most bureaux had no bulletin boards on which to post them.

6. Fred Dobson next gave an Interim Financial Report (appended). It showed that as of June 16, 1972, our bank balance was \$156.35. This included all known income and debts. Since November 1, 1971, the Society had collected \$1,068.96 in dues for membership. The meeting agreed to ask the Museum for this amount now in order that we may keep operating. Eric Cooke agreed to write the Head of the Board of Directors as soon as he could. It was noted that when costs for the next Newsletter were totalled up the Society would probably end the fiscal year with little to spare.

7. There followed a long discussion on the request made by the Canadian Nature Federation (through Dr. McLaren) that the Society organize the Federation Conference to be held at Acadia University in late August of 1973. The Society must commit itself by August 1972. The conference will last one week, and the "Host Society" must arrange field trips, social activities, schedules for meetings, rooms with equipment reservations, etc.

Much debate followed. F. Himsl said he would try to be at the 1972 Conference (in Edmonton) to glean advice and experience. Fred Dobson suggested that no commitment should be made until one individual agreed to be in charge of it all. S. Cohrs and E. Crathorne argued that the leader should have business experience. F. Dobson and R. Pocklington maintained that someone was needed who knew the ins and outs of scientific meetings. (Dobson and Pocklington also pointed out that they were both fully committed to large field programs of their own in the summer of 1973, and therefore could probably give little assistance at such a conference.) R. Pocklington suggested that the leader should be paid. The meeting disagreed, saying that only a volunteer would put his heart into the job. Several names were mentioned as possible candidates for such a job. The meeting agreed to exert all their available energies in searching out a leader. E. Cooke asked that all reports on findings come to him and decided that the deadline on such reports should be August 1. Meanwhile, E. Cooke will write to the Federation in care of Dr. McLaren, asking for all the information available on what was involved in the job.

8. Last (but not least), E. Cooke announced that a Field Day had been scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on July 8 at Moncton Airport by the fledgling New Brunswick Naturalists Society, and that all interested birders from the NSBS and from PEI and Maine had been invited.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Fred Dobson,
Secretary-Treasurer

Financial Position of N.S.B.S.

16 June 1972

As of Nov. 1, 1971

Disbursements	\$ 944.37	
Outstanding bills	117.44	
Receipts to June 1		\$1,122.83
Receipts for June		<u>116.33</u>
	\$1061.81	\$1,239.16
Balance (16 June 1972)		\$ 177.35
Less Rebate to Cape Breton Branch		<u>21.00</u>
		\$ 156.35
Collected dues and Trust Fund Receipts		1,177.29
Disbursements to Trust Fund		<u>214.00</u>
Total Dues to June 1		\$ 963.29
Dues less Trust Fund disb. to June 16		<u>105.67</u>
Total dues collected Nov. 1971 - June 15, 1972		\$1,068.96

N.B. Dr. Roger Pocklington sends word that he has undertaken to plan and find speakers for the course entitled "Birds and the Environment" to be included in the Dartmouth Continuing Education Program this fall and winter. Registration dates for this course are September 13 and 14, at the Dartmouth Senior High School, Thistle Street entrance.

APRIL MEETING

A meeting of the Nova Scotia Bird Society was held Thursday night, April 27 at the Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, to hear Mr. Fred Payne, Wildlife Biologist, describe present governmental policies on Wildlife Management in the Province.

Guidelines are being discussed for the use of Crown Lands, and areas are being acquired, for example special habitats, waterfowl marshes, and beaches, for protection.

Mr. Payne put up a strong plea for co-operation from our members (who have a special obligation in this respect), asking us to write to him of any such special places - unique, perhaps fragile areas - we may know of; and/or to the Department of Lands and Forests, expressing our interest in preservation of the environment, acquisition of (rapidly diminishing) lands for sequestration, particularly coastal areas.

Mr. Payne emphasized that in his experience 95 per cent of the people "like to look at wild things", and it is increasingly important to preserve wilderness, to manage our renewable resources, even in Nova Scotia, to support diversified species, from birds to people.

Following Mr. Payne's address, Roger Pocklington gave us a short talk on our native migrants, soon to be seen on Field Trips, illustrated with color slides, contributed and taken by some of our own members.

Lively discussion over coffee closed the evening.

FIELD TRIPS

When the Executive of the NSBS met to plan the spring and summer field trips for 1972, the dates were chosen with care, and could scarcely have been planned better, to coincide with the worst weather of the season. On April 1, rain, sleet and wind accompanied those brave few who arrived at the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park; who nevertheless were able to observe the captive waterfowl as long as they (the observers) could stand it.

On May 10 we had a blizzard, and the trip to Kearney Lake was cancelled. On May 17 there was a dense fog accompanied by a blinding downpour. Three of us sat snugly within the F.W. Dobson residence at Brookside, and saw what we could through the windows. The Susie Lake trip on May 24 and the

Hants County trips were eminently successful. Not all field trip reports are in yet, none from Cape Breton.

PLEASE NOTE WELL: The Labor Day excursion dates are September 2 and 3, Saturday and Sunday, of which Sunday is the official "President's Field Day". In the April Newsletter, the wrong dates were given, (as September 3 and 4).

[In connection with this particular occasion, we have the promise of a most exceptional sighting (although it is odd that it should be so). One of our members has written: "If the committee can come to unanimous agreement as to which kind they want to do the honors, I'll come, and promise them a stork!]

PLEASE NOTE ALSO: At a meeting of the Executive of the Cape Breton Branch, two additional field trips were planned:

1. Margaree Harbor and Inverness County Coastline to Mabou. September 30, 8:00 a.m. Leader Rev. T. Bellis. Meeting Place Margaree Harbor, Paul Pix Shop.
2. Boulardarie Island. October 21. Meeting at the Texaco Service Station, Bras d'Or. 8:30 a.m.

FIELD TRIP BARRINGTON - CAPE SABLE

From the last Newsletter one gathers that Cape Breton members don't like to admit their area inferior in any way to the rest of Nova Scotia. Admirable spirit, but maybe, after May 21 with us, they secretly feel our fogs are thicker, wetter, colder, more consistent and prevalent than those of their lovely island? (Any who disagree are welcome to come back in our Foggy Season.)

As the first few early birders met at the dripping, appointed hour, the leader of the visiting group was already pursuing warblers' warbles and the possibility of a Cardinal through brush by the Cape Sable Island Causeway, and near the Hotel, where I watched Purple Finch and Pine Siskins at the feeder. Even single siskins seldom reach Cape Sable. What a nice way to get our day off the soggy ground!

From there, Viola Sperka led to Gallagher's and Jordan's Point for a variety of birds - an Osprey, Great Blue Heron, Willets, and warblers. A Chestnut-sided Warbler came to Wayne Neily's swishing after he and Eric Tull had impressed us amateurs by identifying its song. Chimney Swifts and swallows were flycatching over the trees.

Thence to Stoney Island beach. Where Baker's Inlet touches the roadside our limited view included a half-dozen Black Ducks, and a Redwing rocking on a tall reed, fog-lights glowing. Later the Inlet produced an American Bittern, Green- and Blue-winged Teal. Before that, our original group (8) enlarged as other parties caught up: all went on to watch Bank Swallows settling in a few yards above the breakers, Arctic and Common Tern fishing, and a Pintail overhead.

Usually goldmines of shore and marsh birds, Dan'l's Head, South Side, and Hawk beaches were bleak and bare, any possibilities smothered in blustering fog. I know Sperk felt betrayed, but her earlier good guiding made our morning.

After lunch Sid was taking us to Cape Sable so we left some visitors and picked up others for the short trip across the Inlet - this very kindly provided by Norman Cunningham, who finished out the day with us and noted Cape Sable's first Dowitchers for spring. B. Smith crossed the flats, seeing Knots, Piping Plover, and Spotted Sandpiper. The rest combed the dunes and Eastern Shore, rewarded at once with a Philadelphia Vireo. Notable also-seens: Iceland Gull, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Brown Thrasher, Green Heron, and Gannets - some of these firsts for some members. We walked south as far as we could in Nova Scotia, then for a brief while over tea we happily reviewed our day. We appreciate the good spirit shown by all who took part, including the birds, of which 91 different species were recorded for the day, 36 of them at Cape Sable; and hope the visitors enjoyed it as much as we enjoyed welcoming them to our area.

- Sid and B.J. Smith

FIELD TRIP - HANTS COUNTY

About 15 members and guests met at Mount Uniacke at 8:00 a.m. May 27 to take part in the annual Hants County Field Day. The only unusual feature of the trip was the weather, which was fine and warm, a condition which has occurred only once or twice since these events were begun some years ago.

Visibility was good because of the delayed leafing out of trees and shrubs; and birds were co-operative, so that, although the list was not spectacular - 67 species for the day - everybody had leisurely looks at most of those found.

"Lifers" for a number of the party were Ring-necked Ducks, at Brooklyn Pond; the Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Solitary Vireo, Blackpoll and Wilson's Warblers, and the Northern Waterthrush, which, after an all-day search by the guides, brought the day to a close with a wonderful solo performance in full view, on the bank of the Herbert River.

Bonuses of these field trips (all Society field trips) are the inducement to explore unaccustomed territory, and the opportunity to meet fellow members from other parts of the province. Most of us have to rise quite early to reach the meeting place on time, and around about twelve noon, we find a remarkable unanimity pervading the group - how about stopping for lunch? On the Hants County trip, curiously enough, we seem to find ourselves at this time in the vicinity of Smiley's Intervale, which is an ideal place for lunch, and for exploiting the second bonus mentioned; being comfortable, spacious and shady, and the natural choice of the leader, C.R.K. Allen, since through it flows cool, gentle and now fabled Meander River.

FIELD TRIP - EASTERN SHORE SANCTUARY

In spite of unpromising weather - early morning fog and rain, nine members of the NSBS drove to Mushaboom, the morning of July 1, to embark for the Bird Islands, under the guidance of Roger Pocklington. Present were Jean Crowdin, Pauline Lawrence, Heather Heath, Carolyn Lock, Mary Stirling, Dick Brown, Bob Lamberton, Eric Tull, and Roger Pocklington. The fog, plus a brisk SW wind made a lengthy trip up the coast inadvisable; but this had been anticipated, and within the harbor there are plenty of islands to explore. The party left the Government Wharf in Jeremiah Boutillier's Cape Island boat and set sail for the Outer Guildfords. These are small and bare, but one has a colony of Great Cormorants, and some more daring members went ashore in the flat-bottomed rubber boat, brought along for difficult landings, to get a close view. An easier landing on a sheltered sloping beach at Western Island allowed us all ashore, and here Great Black-backed Gull chicks were mobile, and much in evidence. Most exciting was an Osprey's nest in a relatively low tree, though attempts to climb adjacent trees for a look inside were unsuccessful, (in fact, near disastrous!). The final stop was at Horse Island, where Double-crested Cormorants nest, and chicks of both Herring and Great Black-backed gulls practically carpeted the island. The Eiders, which nest on these islands, had their broods afloat, and the young could be seen round about. Plenty of Terns, both Common and Arctic, were overhead, but nests were not found; nor were the hoped-for Fox Sparrow nests, but there were many land birds to be seen, mostly sparrows and warblers. These islands are really wild and desolate, engendering a true spirit of adventure; those of us who have ever visited them do not quickly forget the experience.

ADVERTISEMENT

WE WISH TO ANNOUNCE THE PUBLICATION OF A NEW BOOK, ENTITLED "BIRDS AND THEIR WAYS", BY ROBIE W. TUFTS, AUTHOR OF "THE BIRDS OF NOVA SCOTIA" (PUBLISHED IN 1962, NOW LONG SINCE SOLD OUT). THIS NEW BOOK IS A PAPER BACK, ILLUSTRATED IN BLACK AND WHITE. COPIES ARE AVAILABLE ONLY FROM THE AUTHOR, WHOSE ADDRESS IS WOLFVILLE, NOVA SCOTIA. THE BOOK, AUTOGRAPHED, WILL BE FORWARDED POST PAID, ON RECEIPT OF THE PRICE - \$3.00. SEND FOR YOURS TODAY. THE EDITION IS LIMITED.

Department of Misinformation

Some of the world's most travelled winter vacationers become subjects for considerable outdoor study in the spring. As the equinox nears, ducks and geese which have been enjoying the warmth of southern climes during winter begin winging their way north to summer nesting grounds.

Their flights are watched with interest by biologists, nature enthusiasts, wildlife club members, and others interested in the outdoors all across the country.

Limited food supplies means that the birds will not stay in one locale too long. It's best to check with local conservation authorities and find out where the birds have been seen in past years. Usually, this will be a marsh or shallow lake.

Equipment needed is simple. A pair of good binoculars, a field identification handbook (try "A Field Guide to the Birds" by Roger Tory Peterson), and some hot coffee to ward off morning chill. Launch your boat and get into position before dawn. Camouflage clothing and a dark canvas will help hide your rig.

While waiting for the sun to rise, see if you can identify some birds by their calls. Mallards quack like barnyard ducks, while pintails usually sound off in low whistles. Your guide book will probably list the various sounds.

In addition to waterfowl, be on the lookout for other

species such as red-wing blackbirds, herons, the long, winding lines of Brewer's blackbirds, and the many songbirds that return this time of year.

- Yarmouth Vanguard
May 31, 1972

We are on the lookout!

MARITIME NEST RECORDS SCHEME

Twelfth Annual Report - 1971 Season

SUMMARY: In 1971, the Maritimes Nest Records Scheme received 1664 nest record cards for 108 species of birds from 81 co-operators. Since beginning in 1960, the scheme has assembled 13,408 cards (6003 from New Brunswick, 6028 from Nova Scotia, 1377 from Prince Edward Island). These include 1603 for Robin, 1007 for Common Grackle, 860 for Barn Swallow, 583 for Starling, 544 for Red-winged Blackbird and over 200 each for seven other species (excluding waterfowl and grouse broods). Data for twelve species was consulted by researchers during the year. The report discusses the success of the new card design put into use during 1971.

METHODS: For the benefit of readers not already familiar with the functioning of nest records schemes, a few sentences will suffice. The scheme's aim is to provide a permanent record of information on bird nesting in the Maritimes and to make it available to persons who wish to study various aspects of breeding biology. Volunteer co-operators record, on 4 x 6 printed cards, details of their observations of birds' nests and send the data to the scheme's office where the information, much of which otherwise might not be available, is kept on file for future research. (For further information on nest record schemes, see Erskine, 1971.)

The 1971 Response:

In 1971, 1664 nest record cards were received, more than in any previous year. This pleasing response was the result of a considerable increase in the number of cards from both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. However, the Prince Edward Island total decreased for the fifth successive time. Within the two larger provinces, little information was obtained from some areas, notably Cape Breton and northern New Brunswick.

By provinces the response was:

New Brunswick:	1008	cards,	48	contributors
Nova Scotia	638	"	33	"
Prince Edward Island:	18	"	3	"

Two persons submitted cards from two provinces and one from all three provinces for a total of 81 co-operators, one less than the record number of 1970.

This year there were four contributions in excess of 100 cards and 14 others of 20 or more. Tony Lock 's survey of Nova Scotian seabird colonies for the Canadian Wildlife Service yielded 258 cards. Bill McIntyre with a project on swallows at Fundy Park sent in 162 cards, while Roger Meservey and Susan Merrill, studying the Arctic Terns at Machias Seal Island, submitted 112 cards.

Ford Alward's 153 cards represent a great effort by one whose nest finding is not associated with his work. Others such as Marguerite Hope, Jim Wilson, Cyril Coldwell, Dale Tingley and Larry Neily also made notable spare time efforts gathering nesting information.

Not only quantity but also quality of information is important. Ron Weir reported nests of several of the harder to find species, including Lincoln's Sparrow and Mourning Warbler. Return visits to a nest to gather more information on the progress of nesting can provide very important data. Among those who had good series of visits were Marguerite Hope, Jack Fraser, Rudy Stoczek, and Ken Ross. Others who sent in only one or two cards often provided much useful information because of return visits to the nests.

The 1664 cards received provided nest or brood records for 108 species, four of them (Upland Plover, Black-legged Kittiwake, Mourning Warbler, and Fox Sparrow) not previously represented in the scheme's holdings.

The Upland Plovers were the first definite breeding records for the Maritimes. David Christie and Eric Tull found a newly hatched young at Salisbury, N.B., June 19, while three days later Mary Majka and David Galinat found a larger young, just able to fly, at the same place. Undoubtedly a few pairs are nesting in that area.

The Black-legged Kittiwakes discovered by Tony Lock on Green Island, off Cape Gabarus, N.S., were also the first reported Maritime breeding record. There were at least 77 nests on the island June 7.

Mourning Warblers are known to nest in all three Maritime Provinces, but the M.N.R.S. had no records of them till this year. Ron Weir spent 10 hours to find a well-hidden nest of this species at Erbs Cove, Kings Co., N.B., July 11. Later in the month he located another nest at Kingston, N.B.

Fox Sparrows are believed to be breeding in at least three areas of the Maritimes, northwestern New Brunswick,

northern Cape Breton, and the "Eastern Shore" of Nova Scotia, but no one had ever found a nest until Barry Sabeau located one with four young on June 29 at Tobacco Island, off Liscombe, N.S. Also on Tobacco Island, Keith McAloney observed adults feeding two newly fledged young June 1, as did Ken Ross June 9 on Guildford Island, Halifax County.

Other interesting records included 2 pairs of Puffins discovered on Pearl Island, Mahone Bay, N.S., by Tony Lock. A pair of Razorbills probably nested there too. The only other existing colony of these species in Nova Scotia is on the Bird Islands off Cape Breton Island. A Least Sandpiper nest found by Ian McLaren at Lawrencetown, Halifax Co., is apparently the first nest on mainland Nova Scotia. A brood was reported by Ken Ross near Fourchu Head, Cape Breton. All previous records appear to have been from Sable Island and Cape Sable Island. Jean-Paul Label obtained the first breeding records of Pied-billed Grebes in northern New Brunswick, a nest and a brood at Eel River Bar.

APPENDIX I

Instructions for Use of Nest Record Cards

Please record only what you observe and please do not fill in the unlabelled squares which are for the coding of data for computer storage.

1. Use one card for each nest, but for colonies visited only once use one line for each nest or group of nests with similar contents and for nests parasitized by Cowbirds complete two cards, one for Cowbird and one for host species.

2. Species: Be sure that the species is correctly identified on or at the nest. Use the full species name in Peterson's Field Guide or the A.O.U. Checklist. (North American bird books published since 1958 use the most recent A.O.U. names). A.O.U. number can be included if it is known.

3. Eggs & Young: Fill out cards for all nests of which the contents can be seen, felt, heard or otherwise inferred. Give evidence of inferred occupancy under comments (e.g. "young calling in nest"). Count eggs or young whenever possible. If number is not known positively use a check mark or phrase such as "at least two". The time of visit is particularly important during egg-laying, hatching and nest leaving periods.

4. Return Visits: If possible, revisit all nests, but especially those found during construction; the latter are essential in assessment of nesting success. Many kinds of information can only be obtained from nests that are revisited. If more than 10 visits are made, enter the additional data on a second card, and attach the cards together. Please record all visits, including ones when the nest was empty.

5. Outcome of Nest: Make sure that you fill in the appropriate spaces in the "Outcome of nest" questionnaire on the back of

the card. Adequate details permit easier and more effective analysis of nest record data.

6. Cowbirds: Two cards should be submitted for each nest in which Cowbird eggs or young are found. Location, habitat, and nest description will be the same on both cards. One card gives data for the host species, and should have the "Cowbird use" space marked. The other card gives the Cowbird data. These cards should be cross-referenced and/or fastened together. Attention to this matter may save hours for your compiler, who must otherwise check each card for Cowbird records and fill in the extra cards himself. Indicate clearly the number of eggs and/or young of each species.

7. Location: Give the location as precisely as possible, with direction and distance from nearest town and/or other major landmark. In remote areas, give latitude and longitude or UTM grid reference if possible, as many names (e.g. Mud Lake, Duck Creek) occur several times in each province. Please indicate county and province.

8. Habitat: If possible, check one or more of the options given, and write in further details of the important features of the area around the nest. It will not be possible to check one of the options for all habitats, for example, bogs, rocky barrens and coastal beaches.

9. Nest Description: Please note the difference between nest position and habitat. Habitat describes the vegetation type and landscape in the nest area. A spruce tree is not the habitat, but the nest site which should be stated, for example, as "excavated cavity in trunk of spruce" or "saddled on branch of spruce". Remember that persons making use of the cards have not seen the nest and must visualize what you observed from the details provided on the card. For bank or cliff nests give height above cliff base and height of cliff.

10. Additional Details: Supplementary information can be included in the sections for comments at each visit or on the reverse side of the card. Try to get in the habit of noting such items as "adult on nest", "adult off", "eggs warm", "eggs cold", "young naked, eyes closed", "pinfeathers", "feathers opening", "large enough to leave nest", etc.

May 31, 1972

D. S. Christie, Co-ordinator
Maritimes Nest Records Scheme
New Brunswick Museum
Saint John, N.B.

- References: Erskine, Anthony J.
1971 a. Nest Record Card Program in Canada
Can. Field-Nat. 85 (1):3-11.
(A limited number of reprints of this article are available from the M.N.R.S. office).
1971 b. Some New Perspectives on the Breeding Ecology of Common Grackles. Wilson Bull. 83 (4): 352-370.

SPRUCE BUDWORM

An Evaluation of *Bacillus thuringiensis* for control of the Spruce Budworm.

Bacillus thuringiensis will be evaluated as a control agent for the spruce budworm this summer in northern Maine, near Portage. The project is a co-operative effort between the State and U.S. Forest Services and the University of Maine. Environmental groups have had a large part in getting the test organized and scheduled for this year.

The insecticides Zectran and fenitrothion that have replaced DDT for budworm control appear to provide great improvement in several aspects of environmental safety. But they nevertheless are conventional, broad spectrum insecticides and must be expected to reduce numbers of many non-target insects.

The *Bacillus* appears very attractive as a possible control agent because it is presently the closest thing we have to a specific insecticide. For the most part, it is active only against lepidopterous insects, that is, moths and butterflies, and should affect only those forms that are in the caterpillar stage when the material is applied. The *Bacillus* should have little or no effect on parasites and predators of the budworm, or on most innocuous forms of insect life.

Interest in *Bacillus* as a control agent for budworm extends over several years. Early tests in Canada and in Maine in 1963 were evaluated as unsuccessful, but new, more potent strains of the B.t. have been developed along with important additives that increase effectiveness. Dr. Vladimir Smirnoff of Quebec discovered a year ago that adding the enzyme chitinase to the B.t. significantly enhanced its activity against the budworm, probably by speeding up the penetration of the B.t. into the insect body.

Chitinase is a little-known material in the environmental sense. There is some concern that it may affect materials such as hair, feathers, and skin. However, it is a naturally occurring material in the digestive tracts of most insect-eating animals such as birds and fish, helping them to digest their insect food. Preliminary Canadian studies indicate that it is safe to use, and we in Maine will monitor for possible side effects as well.

The *Bacillus* will be tested with and without chitinase on small plots treated with a helicopter. The effectiveness in reducing budworm numbers, in protecting tree foliage, and in injuring non-target insects will be studied and compared to similar effects in areas treated with the conventional insecticide Zectran. We hope for favorable results. A full report should be possible by late fall or early winter.

John Diamond
Forest Entomologist

Quoted from Maine Audubon Society Newsletter, June 1972.

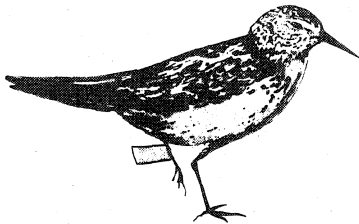
ASK FOR COLLABORATION FROM BIRD WATCHERS

SHOREBIRD RECAPTURE OPERATION

The objective of this research is to study the migration routes of North American shorebirds in relation to their flight range capabilities.

A field staff has undertaken a marking programme in 1970 and 1971 on the Atlantic coast (Magdalen Islands) of southbound migrating shorebirds to know the percentage of birds that use an oversea route to the Caribbean and northern South America as compared with those that follow the coast down to Florida before passing to South America.

Shorebirds will be mist-netted and banded with regular bands, from July 10 to October 15 again this year. Each bird will be color marked; we will use feather dyes on the underparts and streamers attached to the leg. Birds caught on the Magdalen Islands will be marked YELLOW. The flight range capabilities of each individual will be estimated from its fresh weight and other parameters.



TYPE OF COLLABORATION WE WOULD APPRECIATE FROM YOU

- Note the band number (when caught alive), and report to us the locality, date, color of streamer or dye and species.
- Weigh the bird (when caught alive).
- Report to us any sight records of color marked shorebirds (underparts and streamer, yellow).
- Inform us of any person interested in taking an active part in this programme.
- Do not hesitate to communicate with us.

Dr. Raymond McNeil
Centre de Recherches
écologiques de Montreal
4101 est, rue Sherbrooke
Montréal 406, Qué., Canada

NOTES ON SABLE ISLAND BIRDS IN 1866

Contributed by Evelyn Richardson

from

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CRIMEAN CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING SPORTING AND DRAMATIC INCIDENTS IN CONNECTION WITH GARRISON LIFE IN THE CANADIAN LOWER PROVINCES, by Frederick Harris D. Vieth, Late Captain and Adjutant of the 11th Halifax Reg't. of Nova Scotia Militia. Printed in Montreal 1907.

In the summer of 1866 news reached Halifax that a large iron steamer, the "Ephesus" had been wrecked on Sable Island. The schooner "Daring" employed by the government on lighthouse service was sent to the scene, and Captain Vieth, with his friend Dr. Moren, obtained leave to go as passengers.

Captain Vieth describes the island, the sea animals, the horses, the topography and flora, and gives the following notes on the bird life, which may be interesting to compare with those made by recent visitors to Sable Island.

"... numbers of ducks of many kinds rest on the Island. The black or dusky duck (*anas obsкуро*) and the shell-duck (*mergus merganser*) yearly breed there. I saw hundreds of them in the lake, but they were too young to be of use to the cook, and the Superintendent allowed nothing to be killed wantonly for the killing sake even if we wished it, which we did not.

There is not a great variety of birds to be found there: ring-necked and various kinds of plovers, and bay-birds, so-called, the yellow-legged tatter (*Totanus flavipes*), several English snipe (*Scolopax Wilsonii*) and were told they are quite numerous late each autumn. Some of these birds breed there. I was not surprised at seeing the little brown sparrow (*fringilla*) about the house and stables, for he is such a cosmopolitan he generally turns up wherever one goes. A hawk flew over us one morning, but not sufficiently near to distinguish what he was, but I judged him by his size to be a marsh-harrier (*Falco cyaneus* of Audubon). They are rare here. Fish hawks (*Falco halivetus* of Lin) are common. The white or Arctic owl (*Strix nictes*) occasionally drops on the island but his visits are few and far between. Gulls, as may be imagined, of all descriptions are very numerous, but especially the tern (*Sterna hirundo*) or, as I have heard them called, the 'mackerel gull'. Fishermen round the coast of Nova Scotia have told me that they are nearly always apprised of the arrival of a school of mackerel by seeing a flock of these birds hovering over the water and repeatedly darting down to the surface....But I hardly think so small a bird could manage to carry off a fish of a mackerel's size. I imagine it is to feed on the same little fish called 'bait' by the fishermen which is a great attraction to the mackerel themselves.

The terns build on the South West Bar literally in

thousands. The nests in the sand are so close together in places that you can scarcely put your foot down without crushing the eggs or young ones, and you no sooner invade their territory than they endeavour to drive you away. Uttering the most piteous cries they flutter in a cloud over you, diving down within a few inches of your head and never stopping until they make it sufficiently unpleasant for you to leave. On my first experience I thought they meant to pick my eyes out, so vicious they seemed. Terns eggs are...extraordinarily large when one considers the size of the bird. They are fair eating. I may mention that an old English Encyclopedia I accidentally stumbled upon makes the assertion that 'tern were formerly choice food'.

Wild geese, too (*Anser Americanus*) on their migratory flight north and south occasionally when tired drop -- I cannot say rest -- in the lake, for they are not allowed to remain long in peace."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Spring in Town and Country

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

Here are some bird notes, if you care to put them in some future Newsletter.

Fox Sparrows came March 30, Song Sparrows April 1, Robins April 2, little groups of 5 and 6 birds everywhere - a fine and sunny day here, by the way, the only nice day since early March.

On March 26 we went to the MacDonald farm in Bridgeville, about 10 miles from here, where we saw Horned Larks and about 50+ Snow Buntings. The Larks have been coming here for several years. I have seen immature birds, but have not found a nest as yet - will look again this year. We saw 8 or 10 birds that day. There are nearly two dozen there now, some will probably move on.

Today, April 8, my two boys and I went down to Abercrombie where the cormorants nest on the old pier. Two birds came in and landed just as we arrived, a mated pair I believe, for they stood with necks crossed and crooked, and one bird kept raising those small horns.

We saw many Common Mergansers, a pair of Red-breasted,

two or three Common Goldeneye and a flock of Oldsquaws flying. There were Horned Larks in three places along the shoulder of the highway, about 15 birds in the largest flock.

Two weeks ago I saw a Barred Owl near an old nest site. It was feeding on a rabbit. Good Friday I went to an old Goshawk nest. They move in quite early and stake their claim. The boys heard the Saw-whet Owl one evening, they were nesting at this time last year. I think it had something to do with the food - there were many meadow voles in the winter of '71 - the usual time for nesting is late April. I will let you know how things shape up.

Springville, Pictou Co., N.S.
April 8, 1972.

- Harry Brennan

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

On April 30, Elsie (my wife) and I visited some of our favorite haunts to look for new arrivals. Only a portion of the pond at Debert was open water and the rest was still frozen. At the edge of the ice in the middle of the pond there was a flock of Rusty Blackbirds feeding from the rotten ice or from the water, we couldn't tell which. A pair of Red-breasted Mergansers landed on the water and a pair of Tree Swallows was sailing around overhead.

From Debert we drove to Clifton and started down a back road which was in such bad condition that we decided it was unwise to continue. We were turning in a driveway when we noticed a snipe in a wet grassy area nearby. We discovered three others feeding with it.

Then, while scanning with binoculars we noticed a sparrow, about the size of a Whitethroat, with very prominent yellow streaks above the eyes and a white streak through the middle of the head. It had a streaked breast and prominent light streaks in the back, which was gray. The legs were pinkish and the rump was very white. We spotted two others within a radius of ten feet. We had Petersen's Field Guide with us and as nearly as we could determine they were Ipswich Sparrows. Incidentally, the spot in which they were seen was less than a quarter of a mile from the river. The birds were not overly timid and remained as long as we cared to watch them.

We made reference to Tufts' and Earl Godfrey's books when we got home and still felt that the birds we saw were somewhat larger and much lighter in color than the Savannahs which both authorities use for comparison.

Next evening we saw several Savannahs en route to Clifton to see the Canada Geese, so we decided to see if the "mystery birds" were still where we found them, and sure

enough, they were. After having seen the Savannahs we were better able to make comparisons, and they were obviously different. The Savannahs were smaller, darker, not so white underneath and the yellow streaks were not nearly so prominent.

It was interesting to see the Canada Geese on the marshes in the Lower Truro - Clifton area. They were there by the hundreds - maybe thousands - from some time in early April on. Trips to see the geese have resulted in other sightings. Sparrow Hawks are plentiful this year, and so are snipe. We have seen a Marsh Hawk on two occasions and several Great Blue Herons. At Lower Truro I saw a hawk flying past, and as it disappeared behind a hill, I noticed another following it. I was sure they were not Marsh Hawks, but could not make a satisfactory identification. We were back in the area the following day and while walking along the railway track I heard a call which sounded familiar and I soon spied a hawk in an old dead tree. The call, which I recognized from my excursions last year with Harry Brennan and Cyril Coldwell, was that of the Broad-winged Hawk.

When we got home we played the recording of it from "A Day in Algonquin Park" and my wife agreed that it was the same as the call we had heard. Harry Brennan and I visited the nest twice last spring, once with Cyril Coldwell, and on both occasions the hawk sat in a nearby tree calling at us.

A year ago we had about 20 pairs, each, of Goldfinches and Purple Finches at the feeder in March and April, but this year we saw only two female Purple Finches at the feeder since the first of January, and only three or four Goldfinches on two or three occasions. I have seen several Purple Finches in the Park since the middle of April, and on May 9, several Goldfinches - in summer plumage - with some Pine Siskins, feeding on catkins in a group of poplars.

Shortly after 7 o'clock a.m., on April 3, a great flock of Grackles, Redwings and Cowbirds descended on the back lawn, trees and hillside beside the brook about 150 feet from the back door. A flock of about 25 Fox Sparrows and a like number of Juncos and a few Robins arrived at about the same time. The regular flock of about 35-40 Evening Grosbeaks and similar numbers of House Sparrows and Starlings were hardly noticeable among the newcomers.

Most of the birds left within an hour but the Fox Sparrows and Juncos remained and continued to come every day. During the snowstorm on April 9 the others returned by the hundreds and kept coming the next few days until the snow melted enough for patches of bare ground to be seen.

On May 8, we stopped at a pond by the Debert interchange to see a pair of American Widgeons (probably from the nearby sanctuary) when I noticed that the trees, bushes and tall grass on the opposite side of the highway were alive with small birds. They were so active we were not sure if there were more than a few "strangers" in the flock, which

was mostly Palm Warblers and Myrtles. I did identify a Black-poll among them.

On May 15 I drove to a favorite spot in the Park, and as it was cold, I decided to lower the window of the car and listen before starting out to look for new arrivals. The first sound I heard was entirely new to me, and it was coming from a nearby juniper tree. I had no difficulty locating the songster and it kept singing long enough for me to examine it at close range from various angles before it flew to some low bushes and tall grass where it disappeared.

I returned to the car and with the help of Petersen's Guide I was able to identify the bird as a Lincoln's Sparrow. I was interested to hear the song described as "gurgling" for it was that particular characteristic that first attracted my attention.

Presently the bird returned to its first location and gave a repeat performance, giving me an opportunity to re-check distinguishing features. The only way in which the bird did not correspond with the various text books was that it did not appear overly shy or "furtive" in its actions.

From the various records it seems that reports of this sparrow are from Guysborough County and Cape Breton, so I thought a sighting in central Nova Scotia would be of more than passing interest.

Another report may not interest you so much, but will ease my excitement at having seen a White-crowned Sparrow today on the back lawn! It flew into the cherry tree and from there to the lawn, then to a quince bush and back to the cherry tree. It was on the lawn about ten minutes giving me ample time to study it with and without binoculars. I noted the head in particular - the large white streak and black formation; the pinkish bill and the buffy gray abdomen. There was no yellow by the eyes nor white on the throat. Books confirmed the features I had noted to identify it.

I can well imagine that three unusual sparrows reported by an amateur must seem unbelievable, and that is why I have made lengthy reports of all details noted in the observations.

Truro, N.S.
May 16, 1972

- Ross Baker

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

April 2 was our first beautiful day of the spring. We awoke to sunshine (at last) and Juncos and Song Sparrows were singing everywhere. Robins, Redwings, Grackles and Fox Sparrows were more evident as the day progressed, and that

evening 2 flocks of Canada Geese flew east up the valley. Next morning there were a few female Juncos which I hadn't noticed before - must have come in overnight to join the males. The last of March Black Ducks went up and down the river quite frequently.

After that one beautiful day things got pretty tough again for the (by now) hundreds of birds around. They crowded around the houses both in town and country, so much so that many people noticed them who had never been conscious of them before. Some of the instructors at the Vocational School approached my husband for identification of the Fox Sparrows and Juncos especially.

People asked me what to feed the birds. The Robins were so finicky it was hard to help them, but I finally was successful in getting two of them to try soaked Gaines' Dog Meal, and from then on they had it made! One fellow was so satisfied he kept coming to the feeder for it even after the snow had almost disappeared. I'm sure he ate almost a quarter of a cup at once during a few visits I happened to notice.

The continual chorus from the Fox Sparrows and the Song Sparrows was the only cheerful thing about that week-end, but by April 10, the huge flocks began to thin out. We've had another albino Junco here, which seemed quite at home and not at all shy. The tail is the whitest part, with the rest of the feathers pearly gray and slightly darker about the head. My sister in Nictaux had a part-albino Fox Sparrow - the tail pure white, and the back white with a few dark feathers in it.

April 30 we picked our first Mayflowers (in our field), and saw two different butterflies. A Sulphur was down on the basement floor, so we set it outside - it was pretty wobbly - to fly away when it was ready; and there was a Mourning Cloak in the yard. Alvin, "our" chipmunk appeared at the back step on April 14, and became a permanent fixture again. He stays under the house and hears the back door very easily from there. I saw him taking dead leaves into a hole at the back of the house, so presumed he had moved upstairs to his summer bedroom. By May 15, "Alvin" was pregnant! Those leaves were for a good purpose.

We didn't hear any peepers or bullfrogs until May 4, then they went quiet again, but started up the week of May 16. The Flickers used the transformer for drumming again, we seem to have a good supply of them in the neighborhood. Black-capped Chickadees and a pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches came to the feeder for suet until late in May. The Nuthatches always stayed close together to feed.

A male Marsh Hawk came April 15 and 17, with sightings since then, and a female joined him May 11.

We've all heard stories of unusual behavior of the birds because of the spring storms, and we had our share of them. "Our" little Savannah Sparrow was so miserable (May 10)

he would run right up to our feet by the doorstep each time we went out, and we would place a little pile of small bird seed in the same spot for him so he would have a private lunch before all the others came flying back. It was a sight to look at our back doorstep, which has a shelter built over it. There were five kinds of sparrows there, including the juncos; and cowbirds, robins, grackles, and redwings. How they fought! I couldn't do anything about the swallows, but put out stuff to help the other species. I shudder to think how many swallows and warblers must have perished. I found a dead Savannah Sparrow out by the henhouse, but that was surprising because they all seemed to find something to eat here through the day. Friends of ours had a Junco come to their camp window after dark, and when they opened the door, it flew in and spent the night with them!

May 27 we went out on the South Mountain for a trip, and had good long looks at two separate Blackburnian Warblers, which is one species I seem to have to go to Albany to see. Also, in that vicinity, I always see a good lot of Ruby-crowned Kinglets. A friend has a summer cottage there, and it is amazing to see at least a dozen Tree Swallow couples sharing 2-ended apartments, or should I say "Duplexes"? They are as compatible and contented as possible, and all the dozen or more houses are placed in a small dooryard area. I can't figure it, they usually fight like tigers if anyone comes within seeing distance of a house here.

If you haven't read the book called *The Lovely and the Wild* by Louise Lawrence, I recommend it. She describes the tragedy of the spring of 1956 (I think) in Ontario - what we experienced - our birds this spring - was mild compared with the plight of their migrants during that episode.

Our Phoebe is back at the bridge again this year, but I wonder about it, there are so many children of all ages around there, it seems doubtful if it could nest successfully. For two weeks it called steadily, and one morning I watched it preening and calling, no trouble about seeing it at close range. It has stopped, and may have gone away, or have tried nesting in a bush along the river where it would be much safer.

We still hear Killdeer pass over, so I presume they are nesting in the vicinity somewhere. Also we have two Ovenbirds nesting near here, I'm sure, because they are calling from two different directions. They have always stayed back of the house, but this year they call from up the river as well.

We seem to have our share of Veerys and Hermit Thrushes, as usual, and a good supply of various warblers to be heard. There is a large hawk around, which I have seen but do not recognize, black and white underneath and it beats its wings very slowly. My husband had a couple of glimpses of it, but when I saw it my bantam hens were out, and I was concerned about them, so didn't have that good a look!

Next thing, we will be seeing the immatures around; the House Sparrows have young already.

Wilmot, N.S.
June 15, 1972

- Thelma Hawkins

