

*Nova Scotia  
Bird Society*



*Newsletter*

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REPORTS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE APRIL 1, 1975

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NEWSLETTER  
Volume 16, Number 3  
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SUMMER AND EARLY FALL, 1974

The Seasonal Report on Birds in Nova Scotia  
June 15 to October 15, 1974

It was a fine summer, quite cool through June and July, with sufficient but not excessive precipitation. These were good growing months. In August the sun came out and stayed out, with the result that considerable crop damage occurred, particularly for ground fruits (strawberries, blueberries) which ripened too small and quickly dried up. On the other hand, the Indian Pear (Shadbush) bore heavily, and the Mountain Ash became a real feature of the landscape, loaded with bright red berries, far into the fall, along the roadsides.

September brought cool weather again, and rather excessive rain, wind and fog. Insects, late in hatching out this (cold) spring, persisted in distressing numbers - distressing for humans, but doubtless helpful to the birds, fuelling up for their migration flight. As of last fall, the migration proceeded smoothly, with no great build-up of huge flocks such as we saw in 1971 and 1972.

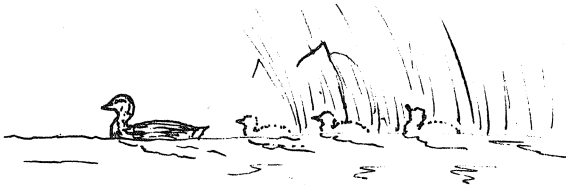
The cone crop is heavy on spruce, fir and pine.

October painted the landscape in exceptionally bright colours this fall, the colour reaching its peak in the southern end of the province just after Thanksgiving (Oct. 14), unfortunately not in full blaze elsewhere before the 20th, when snow came, and put the 'fires' out.

But that story awaits the next Newsletter.

Read the reports to follow; they are full of interest. The Newsletter is simply an extension of your own observations - you have only to put yourself in the other observer's boots. Every season is different, every year brings surprises, which is, after all, the fascination of birdwatching.

PRD, Ed.



## LOONS AND GREBES

There were 21 pairs of COMMON LOONS seen on lakes in the Keji area during the past summer. At least 5 pairs of these were accompanied by young in August (RB). A gathering of 8 Loons was at Birchtown Lake, Shelburne Co., on July 15, seen by the Gallaghers, and by August 11 they were appearing on salt water in the Yarmouth area (MWH et al.). They had left Trout Lake in Annapolis Co. in late August (LEN & HJMcG). The 2 Loons in Eel Lake, virtuosos in yodelling on August nights, traded back and forth from the lake, which is mostly salt, and the nearby open sea throughout September, finally disappearing the first week in October (PRD).

Stuart Tingley reports a RED-THROATED LOON in full plumage grounded off Sackville, N.B., on the amazingly early date of August 7. He also reports 24 of this species - 22 in full plumage - off Cape Jourimain near the N.S. border on September 28. Two were seen flying over Cook's Beach, Yarmouth Co., on October 12 (CRKA, PRD). Twenty-seven Loons of both species, seen by the Cohrs at Petite Riviere on October 14 could reasonably be considered an indication of a migratory movement.

A RED-NECKED GREBE in breeding plumage seen by the Cohrs off Crescent Beach, Lunenburg Co., August 10 had no business being there at that date. 'Many pairs' of PIED-BILLED GREBES summered at Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary and at Lusby Marsh. There were 20 at the former locality on September 8 and again September 29 (CD). Numbers at the Sanctuary fluctuated considerably during September: 10 on the 1st, 2 on the 2nd, 20 on the 8th, 10 on the 15th, 6 on the 21st, 8+ on the 28th, and 20 on the 29th. Two young broods were seen here June 7 (ST). All other reports are of singles or pairs - six reported sightings in all - during September in Cape Breton (SM), Port Hebert (RSW), Cape Sable (SFS), Pictou Co. (M. Kenney and E. Crathorne), and Eel Brook 1 Brook (CRKA).

## FULMARS, SHEARWATERS, PETRELS

NORTHERN FULMARS are uncommon in Nova Scotian waters, and are usually seen in winter and spring. But this seems to have been quite a good summer and fall for them. At least four were seen from a ship northeast of Halifax on July 17 (RGBB). Another resurrected a rather seasick expedition coming home from Seal Island on September 29; it followed the boat so closely that they could almost look up its tubenose (SJF & EHC). And Davis Finch saw c.15 from the North Point, Brier Island, next day.

An unusually early CORY'S SHEARWATER, unusually close inshore, was seen at the entrance to St. Margaret's Bay, about two miles west of Peggy's Cove, on July 8 (RGBB). The Smiths saw four off Cape Sable on July 21, and Ian McLaren's Sable Island party had good views of at least 12 off the eastern tip of the island on September 11.

As most people know by now Moore's Ledge, about three miles north of Brier Island, is an exceptionally good place for Shearwaters. The attraction



is the large swarms of euphausiid shrimps which come up to the surface on the flood tide. You can look over the side of the boat and see them as a vast, regimented army six feet down, and sometimes, when the whales and the mackerel are after them, they come shooting out of the water like a panful of hot popcorn. Dick Brown spent the last half of August there watching Shearwaters, whales and shrimps. It was a poor year for Shearwaters - at most, only a few hundred seen each day. The experience of the September 2 Labour Day party was typical: c.400 GREATER and c.40 SOOTY (EHC) - a disappointment after the wall-to-wall carpet of birds we had on Labour Day outings in 1971 and 1972. However, numbers built up to c.4000 Greaters and c.12 Sooties on September 30 (DWF). There was a report of a MANX SHEARWATER out there on about August 20 (RGG), and Davis Finch saw four from Brier Island on September 30. It's not clear exactly when most of the Shearwaters arrive. Certainly later than June 2, when we had only a few Sooties on our first field trip (see the last *Newsletter*), and probably later than July 1: Roger Pocklington saw three Greaters from the Grand Passage ferry on July 6.

The beauty of Brier Island is that there are so many Shearwaters so close inshore, but of course the birds are generally common in summer around our coasts, though they usually keep well offshore. Greater and Sooty sightings elsewhere need no comment. As for Manx, there was a total of seven seen from a ship northeast of Halifax on July 17 (RGG), and two were seen off the east tip of Sable Island on September 11 (IAMcL).

Storm-Petrels, like Shearwaters, are common off our coasts in summer, if rarely seen close to land. There were 2-3 WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS off Peggy's Cove on July 8, and there were small numbers (averaging 1 per 10-minute watch) seen from the CSS *Hudson* northeast of Halifax, along with rather fewer LEACH'S, on July 17 (RGG). Ian McLaren found large, fuzzy Leach's chicks in burrows at the Pearl Island colony on September 18, and the Smiths both saw and heard adults at Cape Sable light on September 20. The Pocklingtons saw two Leach's in Grand Passage, Brier Island, on July 6. There was only the occasional Wilson's on Moore's Ledge in late August (RGG), plus a Leach's seen on the Labour Day field trip (EHC). Davis Finch saw 8 Leach's and a Wilson's from Brier Island on September 30 and comments: "first Leach's Storm-Petrels I'd ever seen at or off Brier Island".

#### GANNETS, CORMORANTS

NORTHERN GANNETS in late August came regularly, in ones and twos, to feed on the herring shoals in the tide-rip off North Point, Brier Island, though they were lost among the flocks of gulls there (RGG). These Gannets were almost all subadult birds, but their presence is, hopefully, a sign that the species may be coming back to breed in the Fundy area. Up to a century ago they bred on Gannet Rock, in the Tuskets, and Gannet Rock, Grand Manan, and are now reported to be prospecting sites in the Grand Manan area. As it is, there is also evidence of a fall migration into the Fundy area; Davis Finch saw c.100 from Brier Island on August 27.

GREAT and DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS were commonly reported around the coast. Eric Holdway watched the progress of the breeding season at Pictou

Harbour Causeway: July 21 - 87 occupied nests (2-3 young in each nest); July 27 - 43 occupied nests; August 6 - 9 occupied nests; August 18 - 1 occupied nest (with 2 young in it).

#### HERONS, EGRETS, BITTERNS

Rosemary Eaton has sent in the following figures on the GREAT BLUE HERON population at Cole Harbour, Halifax Co., from late July to September: July 23, 34; July 27, 63; July 28, 44; August 10, 70; August 24, 94; August 26, 107; September 17, 30; September 20, 76. It is difficult to draw any conclusions from these figures, as Cole Harbour is a favourite summer feeding ground and at least some of the increase in numbers during the latter part of August may be due to arrival of this year's crop of young birds. Rosemary notes that the most of these birds were in the upper harbour, north of the railway causeway, and has, elsewhere, wondered if this may be because of pollution, which is often more concentrated in the lower reaches of estuaries. High counts of Great Blues in the Yarmouth area were 37 at Pinckney's Point September 19; 28 from Yarmouth to Cape Sable I. September 24, and 11 in the Yarmouth area September 30 (MWH et al.). Cape Bretoners report "very many" by September 1, and 25, September 16, at Lingan Bay. The high count for Caribou I., Pictou Co., was 15, August 18 (EH), and for Merigomish, also in Pictou Co., 50+, scattered about in ones and twos, September 14 (M. Kenney and E. Crathorne). At Cape Sable, Sidney Smith says that Great Blues gradually increase during August, and 40-50 may be seen during a cruise among the little islands southwest of the Light, throughout that period. High counts for Lusby Marsh, Cumberland Co., were: 40, September 1-2, and 25, September 21 (CD). Gordon MacLeod of Wine Harbour, Guysborough Co., reports a small but consistent population of herons there (up to 7 birds) from June 17 to the end of September.

One GREEN HERON at Cow Bay, Halifax Co. (BMacT) is the only record of this species for this report. On September 29 there was a LITTLE BLUE HERON in the salt marsh near Cook's Beach (Pinckney's Pt.). The bird was being perched for no apparent reason by a quartet of crows which kept flying up and alighting close to it, thus keeping it on the move (CRKA). Other Little Blues were an adult at Sable I. September 11-19 (NSBS party), and one at Cape Sable June 23; another or the same bird, observed July 5 at nearby South Side, Cape Sable I.

The only probable sighting of a GREAT EGRET during the report period was of a "large white Egret" at Cole Harbour October 5 (E. Crathorne). A SNOWY EGRET was in the marsh at Pinckney's Pt. September 29-30 (MWH, DR), and another at Lawrencetown Marsh, Halifax Co., July 25 (IAMcL). Lusby Pond, Cumberland Co., leads all other areas in sightings of BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS. One adult and 8 juveniles were seen there from August 12 to September 2 (Margaret Purdy per CD). Another sighting was of 5 adults and 9+ juveniles (no date given). Subsequent reports from the same place are: 5 juveniles September 14, 2 juveniles September 15, and 1 juvenile September 21, in different places. These were aerial observations. An adult of (almost certainly) this same species was at Amherst Point September 28 and another probable Black-crown at Keji June 29 (RB). Three Night Herons tentatively identified as this species were heard flying overhead at Brier I. on the night of September 3 (BMacT) and a single bird was at the pond at Cape Sable on June 17 (SF & BJS).

The single sure record of a YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON sighting was of 2 immatures at Sable I. in late August (DW), still there September 12-19 (IAMcL). An immature bird, probably of this species, was in the Pinckney's Pt. marsh September 14 (CRKA).

A LEAST BITTERN was seen at Sable I. September 13 by Ian McLaren and Bruce MacTavish. Con Desplanque reports the following sightings of the AMERICAN BITTERN in the Isthmus region (Amherst Pt. Bird Sanctuary, J. Lusby Pond, Missaquash): 1, June 14, APBS; 1, July 1, APBS; 5, July 11, Missaquash; 5, September 1 and 2, Lusby; 6, September 6, Lusby; 2, September 14, Lusby; 2, September 15, Lusby; 1, September 21, Lusby; 2, September 22, APBS; and 3, September 29, APBS. One may guess that some of the Lusby sightings are repeats of the same birds. Ian McLaren reports a fledged young bird at Brule July 31, which was "loath to flush and struck at my foot repeatedly with its bill". Other sightings are all of single birds, nine reports in all throughout July, August and September, the last record to date being one at Yarmouth Bar September 30 (MWH et al.).

#### GEESE AND DUCKS

An unusually early date for CANADA GEESE is August 7, when 7 were seen at APBS by reliable observers (reported to CD). There were 7 at Mactaquac, N.B., August 24, and a flock was heard flying over the APBS August 27 (also CD). There were 22 at Broad Cove September 2 (SJF); 30 at St. Esprit September 6 (SM), and 100 at Glace Bay Sanctuary September 29 (GS). The Port Joli Sanctuary held 1000 birds on September 19 (RSW). A single report of BRANT (which has not previously been mentioned) is of 6 seen May 26 at Brier I. by J.B. Hardie, who wrote they were "so tame that we thought they were domestic ducks".

News of MALLARDS, so abundantly reported in recent years, is surprisingly scanty for this period: 1, September 6 at APBS (CD), and 2, September 28 in the Mabou area (NSBS party). A late brood of BLACK DUCKS was noted July 21 at Glace Bay Sanctuary, where 500+, also of this species, were seen August 30. The peak for APBS during July-September was 200 August 6 (CD), and for the Yarmouth area 100+ September 9. Numbers at the Port Joli Sanctuary had reached 500 by September 19 (RSW).

Stuart Tingley reports 2 fledgling GADWALLS captured and banded on the Missaquash Marsh "right fair" on the border between N.B. and N.S., so that the province which can claim this new breeding record will never be known. Four other birds of this species were present at APBS September 28 (RB). There was a single PINTAIL at Seal I. September 22-23 (RB), and another or the same there September 28 (SJF). High counts are: 50, August 6 at APBS (CD), 50, September 19 at Port Joli Sanctuary, and 250 at Cape Jourimain, just across the border, September 28 (ST).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL are well reported for this period. Two large broods were noted at East Slope, Glace Bay area, June 23. Their pond subsequently dried up and their fate is not known (SMacL). High counts for this area are 22 immatures August 18 at Lingan Bay and 38+ August 25 at Morien Bar. The largest numbers seen in other localities all seem rather low for this species:

35, Cherry Hill, September 8; 14, Caribou I. September 15; and 14, Merigomish, same date; 25, September 19, Port Joli Sanctuary, 30 same date Cranberry Head, Yarmouth Co.; and 50 August 6, and again September 21-29, APBS. The relative abundance of Green-winged and BLUE-WINGED TEAL has been reversed according to reports for this period, the latter greatly outnumbering their relatives in many localities. There were two broods of Bluewings at East Slope, Glace Bay, June 23 (SMacL), and a brood of 9 at Caribou I., Pictou Co., July 14 (EH). At APBS, 100 on August 6 had increased to 200 by September 1, and there were also 200 birds here on September 8 and 500 on the 15th and 21st. On the 29th the number had dropped to 400 (CD). There were 60+ at Morien Bar on September 7; 90 at Cherry Hill, seen on September 8 and still there on the 22nd (SJF); 46, September 15 at Caribou (EH); 50 September 19 at Port Joli Sanctuary (RSW), and 38 at Sherose I., Shelburne Co., September 24 (MWH et al.). There were in addition to these large flocks reports of singles and "several" birds from various localities during August and September, the last sightings being on September 29 at APBS (see above) and 9 birds at Caribou I.

The first reports of AMERICAN WIGEON at APBS are of 10, June 14-July 7, 20 there July 14-August 6. By September 1 the number had increased to 40, still 40 there September 8. R. Burrows counted at least 25 in the same place on September 28 when a large mixed flock of water-fowl was flushed by a passing motorcyclist. Other sightings are of one at Seaforth, Halifax Co., September 22 (EHC); 2 at Brier I. September 6 (BMacT); and 25+ at Cape Jourimain, N.B., September 10 (ST). The one lone sighting of SHOVELERS is of 3 on September 28 in the mixed flock of ducks flushed by the above-mentioned motorcyclist (RB). There were 2 male WOOD DUCKS in the Mersey River at Keji on May 5, and 1, September 8, at MacIntosh Run (suburban Halifax) (RB). On June 7 there were another 2 males at APBS, and a pair there June 27 (ST). The same observer found 6 males on the N.S. side of the Missaquash creek on July 8. E. Holdway observed a female Wood Duck feeding with Black Ducks at Caribou I. August 4, and C. Desplanque had single birds at APBS on September 7, 21, 22, and 29. Bruce MacTavish saw a male on Seal I. on September 24.

First sighting of RING-NECKED DUCKS sent in is of a pair at Forest Haven Cemetery Pond, Glace Bay, in mid-May. There were 3 males at East Slope, Glace Bay, June 23, and 5, September 28 at Mabou (SMacL). Seven Ringnecks were at Long I., Digby Co., on May 26 (JBH) and three pairs at Economy Lake on the same date (FS). All other records are for late summer and fall: 6, at Little River, Digby Co., September 1 (LEN & HJMcG); 2, September 7 at APBS, where there were 50-100 September 21-29 (CD). Last reported sighting is of 5 at Raynardton, Yarmouth Co., October 18 (CRKA).

The only sighting of GREATER SCAUP for this period is the 20 seen off Crescent Beach, Lunenburg Co., October 13 (J & SC). (There were probably many flocks of this species and possibly a fair number of Lesser Scaup - commoner in our area than many birders realize according to the "wing counts" done by Canadian Wildlife Service, from hunters' bags - in the Northumberland Strait region during September and early October, but there was no one there to see them.) Gordon MacLeod of Wine Harbour, Guysborough Co., reports hearing an OLDSQUAW there on the unusually late (or early?) date of June 10, this being the only record of this species so far.

A surprisingly small number (10) of the COMMON EIDER was sighted by the NSBS Field Party at Brier I. over Labour Day weekend, but there were at

at least 100 there on September 7 (LEN & HJMcG). R.S. Widrig says that there have been at least 500 Eiders at Port Hebert all summer, and Sid Smith reports that small flocks of migrants have been passing Cape Sable since September 20 at least. Other sightings are of several - up to 40 birds during August and September from Pt. Michaud, Wine Harbour, Baccaro, Yarmouth, Parrsboro and Cape Split. Scoters are sparsely reported, which is expectable for this season. There was an adult male WHITE-WINGED SCOTER at APBS July 1 (ST) and 2 at Port Hebert September 25 (RSW). F. Spalding had at least 20 SURFS at Economy, and Bruce MacTavish saw 2 immatures or females off Brier on September 3. Three sightings of single BLACK SCOTERS were: July 1, APBS (CD); August 1, Economy (FS); and August at Brier (NSBS party).

A trio of HOODED MERGANSERS at Economy April 5-6 (FS) was not previously reported.

A group of 25 juvenile COMMON MERGANSERS was seen on Keji Lake in August by Roger Burrows, who mentions that this species is a fairly common nester in the Park. They are also reported to have bred successfully, "as usual", on the Economy River (FS). A female RED-BREASTED MERGANSER with 9 young was at Lime Hill, Inverness Co., July-August, seen by W. and M. Foote, reported to Sara MacLean, who says this is the only report of this formerly common bird for the Cape Breton region. There were 20 at Lusby Marsh July 11, probably (though not as stated) a group of males who had done their duty for the year. There were also 10 of this species at Cranberry Head, Yarmouth Co., September 30 (MWH et al.).

#### VULTURES, HAWKS, EAGLES

Raptors, unlike most of the smaller birds, are diurnal migrants, and fall flights of Hawks are often spectacular and exciting. It would be interesting and valuable to have more data on flights in the Province, especially in view of the fact that hawk flights are carefully watched in the northeastern United States, and with enough observations, some correlation might be made between our flights and those in New England. Generally speaking, heavy flights might be expected along the coast, and on ridges such as the North Mountain (though no significant movements of Hawks along Nova Scotia ridges have been observed). The major flights reported this year were for the islands at the southwest end of the Province, and may be found summarized in Table 1.

The season's only TURKEY VULTURE reports come from Brier Island. Stuart Tingley suggests that two individuals were involved on September 5 and 7, the September 5 bird an adult with conspicuous red head, and the September 7 bird a dark-headed immature (BM, ST, LJJ, HJMcG). Davis Finch saw a single bird there on September 30.

Five scattered GOSHAWK reports for late summer and fall range from Shelburne Co. to Cape Breton. Twenty-two reports of the smaller and far commoner SHARP-SHINNED HAWK are similarly scattered, and, with the exceptions of the heavy flights observed at Seal Island (see table), were of single birds or pairs. COOPER'S HAWK, by far our rarest accipiter, and an extremely difficult bird to identify with certainty, is reported three times; but in each case the observers' reputations make the reports printable. Two Cooper's Hawks were

seen in the heavy wave of 150-300 Sharpies at Seal, September 23, and 1 on September 26 (IMacG, BM, ST). This seems by far the most likely situation in which Cooper's Hawk might be picked up in the Province. The other report is of a single bird at Kejimikujik NP, July 13 (R. Burrows).

The commoner of our two summering Buteos, the RED-TAILED HAWK, appears in 10 reports, each representing one or two birds. A familiar pair returned to Lime Hill, C.B., as Marjorie Foote reports: "The same pair of birds no doubt. They have been in the vicinity for 20 years or more that I know of." At least three adults were present in Kejimikujik NP during the summer, and though no nests were found, at least one pair is thought to nest there (R. Burrows). Keji had a summering BROAD-WINGED HAWK as well, seen from early May to August 10 by park naturalists (R. Burrows). It is interesting to have this report of a summering bird for the western part of the Province, where, to the best of my knowledge, there are no nesting records. Other Broad-wing reports are of single birds at Middle Clyde, Shelburne Co., August 13 (JRG, CDG) and at Round Hill in the Annapolis Valley, September 21 (WEW). A small concentration of migrating Broad-wings involving at least five individuals occurred at Brier Island, September 5-7 (BM, see table). An unusually late ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was observed by Con Desplanque near Maccan, Cumberland Co., June 16, in an area frequented by large concentrations of Rough-legs in winter. By early October, Rough-legs had begun to return to the Province, and two migrants were observed by the NSBS party at Seal Island, Thanksgiving weekend.

Ten BALD EAGLE reports for the summer represent 15 individuals - a decidedly low figure for these conspicuous and usually well-reported birds. Of the eagles whose age was specified, one-third were reported as immatures. All reports were for Cape Breton Island, except the following: June-July, Wine Harbour, Guysborough Co. (GMaL); September 5-6, Brier Island (BM); September 21, Economy, Colchester Co. (FS).

The MARSH HAWK is probably our commonest large nesting raptor, and because it is conspicuous in its open feeding areas it is well reported. Most reports come from the border marshes and coastal areas of the mainland and Cape Breton Island. However, two apparent migrants, a female and an immature, at Kejimikujik NP, September 17 (R. Burrows) suggest that not all our Marsh Hawks pass along the coast. Several distinct peaks of migrants are noted in the table.

Over 50 individuals are represented by 22 reports of OSPREY for summer and fall, including nine nests observed or suspected. The nest in Lunenburg Co., observed by the Cohrs, and mentioned in the July summary, produced two young which fledged and were last observed September 2. From Cape Sable, the Smiths report that the tree supporting one familiar old Osprey nest was *chopped down* last year. "Fortunately, the same island has another suitable tree and B.J. Smith found they had built there this spring and whenever we passed the island, this August-September, we saw 3 or 4 ospreys and could make out the nest, but didn't land." (SS). Southbound birds were present in Yarmouth Co. through the end of the report period (CRKA, PRD), and this editor (RDL) observed a migrating Osprey, October 11, high over the middle of the Bay of Fundy, off Digby.

PEREGRINE FALCONS are reported from Brier Island and Seal Island. A single bird at Pond Cove on Brier was seen September 7 (LJN, HJMcG), and two

TABLE 1. FALL HAWK MIGRATION PEAKS REPORTED, 1974

August 18. Long Island, Digby Co., along Route 217 (the Pocklingtons).

American Kestrel, 25

Late summer concentrations on hydro wires probably represent only local populations, swollen by the young of the year and preparing to migrate, rather than actual migratory movements.

September 5-7. Brier Island (BM).

Broad-winged Hawk, 5, 2, 3

Marsh Hawk, 10+, 12 (0?)

These are the only Broad-wing reports of more than one bird. The peak of Marsh Hawks, September 5-6, followed a week in which no more than 5 birds per day were recorded.

September 20. Sandford, Yarmouth Co. (CRKA).

American Kestrel, 14

This concentration is quite possibly related to the heavy flight at Seal Island a few days later.

September 21. Cape Sable Island (SS).

Merlin, 6

September 22-23. Seal Island (RGG, IMacG, BM, ST).

Sharp-shinned Hawk, 150+

Peregrine Falcon, 2

Cooper's Hawk, 2

Merlin, 30+ (also: Merlin, 3,

Marsh Hawk "no less than 10"

at Cape Sable, 20 miles from Seal (SS))

American Kestrel, 150+

"Seal Island; the fog lifted in the afternoon of Sept. 22 and a few hawks began to come down the island, but the big migration was the next day. When we made the checklist up at noon on the 23rd we reckoned 150 each of Kestrels and Sharp-shins and 30 Merlins but they were still coming down; the day's total must have been double that." -- RGG

September 29. Maccan, Cumberland Co. (R. Burrows).

Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1+

Merlin, 1+

Red-tailed Hawk, 1

American Kestrel, 1+

Marsh Hawk, 1

"... there was quite a movement of hawks in the area in dull and windy weather." -- R. Burrows

October 13. Seal Island (IAMcL & NSBS party).

Sharp-shinned Hawk, 50+

Peregrine Falcon, 1

Marsh Hawk, 6+

Merlin, 20

Rough-legged Hawk, 2

American Kestrel, 15

The October 13 wave at Seal came on north winds. Sharpies that had apparently overflowed the island started coming ashore into the wind at the south end of the island during the morning, and some were later seen departing toward Mud Island to the north, apparently heading back toward the mainland. Several hundred Blue Jays arrived on the island with the hawks. Rough-legs and Marsh Hawks appeared to be passing over the island and out over open ocean to the SW.

The Atmospheric Environment Service monthly meteorological summary for September for CFB Greenwood (90 miles from Brier and 125 miles from Seal) indicates that the 2nd, 5th, 6th and 23rd were the only days with prevailing north winds in western Nova Scotia for the month -- a striking correlation with two of the raptor flights reported above.

peregrines were present on Seal September 23 (IMacG, BM, ST) and September 27-28 (SJF). A single immature performed at Seal, Thanksgiving weekend, for the NSBS party led by Ian McLaren. MERLIN reports are curiously scarce, except for the concentrations of migrants at Seal Island and Cape Sable (see table). One was seen harassing a flock of pipits (a favoured prey?) at Cape Chebogue, Yarmouth Co., September 17 (RDL) and one or more birds were observed in migration at Maccan, Cumberland Co., September 29, by Roger Burrows. Thirty AMERICAN KESTREL reports support the observation that these birds were "common all over" this summer (LEN, HTMcG). Several concentrations of migrants are mentioned in the table. Ian McLaren picked up fresh fragments of a kestrel on Pearl Island, Halifax Co., which he reports with the question, "Who eats em? No mammals there."

#### GROUSE, PARTRIDGE, PHEASANT

SPRUCE GROUSE are reported only from the mainland, with two reports from the Gallaghers in Shelburne Co., and a note from Francis Spalding at Economy, Colchester Co., that they were noted "in a couple of their normal places" in August and September. From Kejimikujik NP, Roger Burrows reports that Spruce Grouse were "fairly common in suitable habitat; about 10 records for the summer" including one brood in late July. He found RUFFED GROUSE predictably commoner: "very common breeding species .... At least 15 broods seen throughout the park, varying from 4 to 14 young." Other scattered reports include broods at Cape Split, June 23 (LJN, HTMcG) and Lime Hill, C.B., where Marjorie Foote found that "ruffed grouse were plentiful, with good sized families."

The Grand Pre meadows remain the best place in the Province to see GRAY PARTRIDGE. Four birds were seen there, August 11 (LEN, HJMcG). Other reports are singles at Nappan, Cumberland Co., June 16 (CD), Sable River, Shelburne Co., June 19 (ACH), and the Cornwallis River, near Grand Pre, June 25 (ACH). A scattering of RING-NECKED PHEASANT reports gives little indication of the state of this introduced and maintained population. A nest with 15 eggs, uncovered by a farmer mowing the dikes, was seen at Grand Pre, July 19, with the mother still incubating, although she was completely exposed (RDL). Broods were reported on roadsides in Shelburne Co. (August 13, 8 young, JRG, CDG) and Yarmouth Co. (September 19, 7 young, CRKA).

#### MARSH BIRDS

Stuart Tingley writes, "How many places in Nova Scotia can you hear Sora, Black Tern, Virginia Rail, and Long-billed Marsh Wren all at one time? Well, I found a place which fits that description just last night (July 8) on the Nova Scotia side of the Missisquoi marsh. I found at least 4 Virginia Rails, two of which were giving the mysterious "kicker" call which was attributed to Yellow Rail until quite recently. I heard at least 15 Soras in the small piece of marsh which I covered and there are probably 75 to 100 in the entire marsh."



The reports of rails and other marsh birds are, as usual, almost exclusively confined to the border region, and come principally from the Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary. Reports from APBS were received from Con Desplanque, Stuart Tingley and Roger Burrows, and are summarized below:

MARSH BIRDS AT AMHERST POINT BIRD SANCTUARY, 1974

(NOTE: In the July summary, May 4 was indicated as the early date for Sora, Common Gallinule and American Coot at APBS.)

SORA: "many in APBS during summer" (CD)  
"max. of 25+ at APBS, evening of July 17" (ST)

VIRGINIA RAIL: one calling, July 17 (ST)

COMMON GALLINULE: "seen frequently throughout summer. Produced young." (CD). July 14. 2 ad. w/ 2 downy young (CD); Sept. 2. 2 ad. w/ 4 juv. (CD); Sept. 28. "6, at least 4 were birds of the year" (RB).

AMERICAN COOT: "One pair seen all summer at APBS. An employee of Ducks Unlimited saw a brood (6-7) there in late June by aerial survey, also two broods at Jolicure, N.B." (ST)  
Sept. 8. 8 (CD); Sept. 28. 1+ (RB).

The only other marsh bird reports are from islands around the Province. Single Soras are reported for Seal Island, September 1-5 (IAMcL) and September 23 (BM), and the "usual sprinkling on Sable, Sept. 10-12 and Sept. 19" (IAMcL). Ian McLaren also passes along the information that "residents of Seal Island report repeated sightings of a PURPLE GALLINULE along lighthouse path in June." A single Common Gallinule at Sable, September 18, was preceded by a single American Coot (IAMcL).

SHOREBIRDS

There is a small breeding population of the SEMIPALMATED PLOVER in the province, and it is therefore difficult to tell very closely when the first southward migrants appear. Here then, for what they are worth, are the first reported sightings from various localities: 1, July 7, Wine Harbour (GMacL); 3, July 9, Economy (FS); 2, July 13, Melbourne Sanctuary (LEN & HJMacG); several small flocks totalling 50-60, July 19, Cape Sable (BJS); 1, July 19, Glace Bay Sanctuary (NSBS party); 1, July 27, Pictou (EH). Possible peaks for these and some other places are: "numerous by Aug. 3 at Economy (FS); 500+ Aug. 3, Cook's Beach (CRKA); 350, Aug. 4, Cole Harbour, Hfx. Co. (DMacD); 50+, Aug. 6, Wine Harbour (GMacL); 17, Aug. 18, Pictou (EH); 1000+, Sept. 14, Cherry Hill, Lun. Co. (J & SC). Some of the above figures are probably not true peaks for their areas but are included because they are the highest number seen by the reporters.

R.S. Widrig has sent in quite complete notes on a breeding pair of PIPING PLOVER: one adult arrived at Johnston Pond, Shelburne Co., May 16, and was

joined by another May 29. The pair was seen frequently during the following weeks, and a nest containing three eggs, with the female incubating, was found during the NSBS Field Trip to that locality July 13. Adults were still incubating July 27, but two eggs had hatched by August 3. Chicks were half grown by August 16 and were attended by both parents. On August 22 and 29, just one chick and one adult were seen. By August 31, the chick, almost full size, could fly - "snipe-like". These two birds were last seen September 2. There were 8 fledged young Piping Plovers at Conrad's Beach, Halifax Co., July 14 (IAMcL), and "large numbers" during the summer in the southwest Port Mouton area (DW).

Ian McLaren reports a "big year" for WILSON'S PLOVER in our area - no less than 13 birds seen at three separate localities on four dates. There were 3 at Seal I. August 31; 2 at Conrad's Beach September 8; 6, no less!, at Sable I. September 11-13 and 2 still there September 18-19.

KILLDEER showed up for all the months of the report period except the last - October. There were single birds at Tremont, June 15; at Economy June 16, 19 and 28; and at North Kingston June 22 (FS, LEN & HJMacG). There were 2 of these birds at Melbourne Sanctuary July 13, and singles at Cook's Beach August 3 and 17; near Wallace August 5, Pictou August 18, at Keji August 27, and Brier August 29. Numbers picked up slightly during September: 2 at Lusby September 1st, 3 at Cook's Beach September 2, a single at Brier September 5 and 6, 4 at Sunday Pt. September 9th, 7, September 16 at Starr's Road, Yarmouth, dwindled to 4 on the 17th and 2 on the 19th. There was one bird at Seal on the 22nd, and a high of 15 on September 30 at Cranberry Head, Yarmouth Co.

One of the highlights of the southward shorebird migration this year was the unprecedented flight of GOLDEN PLOVERS which passed through the southwest end of the province in late August and early September. Approximately 100 in the marsh near Cook's Beach August 17 was an unusually high number for this spot (CRKA), but it was completely outclassed by Ian McLaren's 570 birds at Seal I. on August 29. Ian states that there were "zero" Golden on August 28 and that the huge flock came in on an easterly with heavy rain. The Gallaghers with Davis Finch et al. had 240 at Dan's Head, Cape Sable I. August 29, and 200 at Cape Sable Light August 31. Davis Finch's party also saw 40 at Cranberry Head, 86 at Yarmouth airport, and 20 at Chebogue, all on September 2. Both Ian McLaren and Norman Cunningham, who estimated a conservative 300-400 on Cape Sable September 3, say they have never seen so many at any one time. There were 600 at Evangeline Beach September 2 seen by Ken Ross and Don MacDougall, who himself saw several hundred in the Cole Harbour area at about the same time. There were still 200 Golden at Sable I. September 10-13 (IAMcL), and a remnant of 12 birds on Seal September 23 (RGBB). Other reports are of more normal numbers - singles, up to 20-30, all from the southwest half of the province.

The status of 3 BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS at J. Lusby Pond June 9 is doubtful although they could very well be nonbreeders as the writer has seen such on Florida beaches in late June. Betty June Smith reports 9 June 23 at Cape Sable and goes on to say that "they seem to be around all summer". One at Cape Jourimain, N.B., July 6 is a first sighting for that area (ST). Five records from the Yarmouth region give 5 at Pinckney's Pt. August 6, an increase to 60 there on the 23rd and 50+ same place September 9. Numbers dropped off to 20

there September 19 but there were 30 at Cranberry Head north of Yarmouth, September 30 (MWH et al.). Danny Welsh estimated about 2500 Black-bellies on Sable I. in late August. Sylvia Fullerton had her highest counts of these birds at Cherry Hill on September 1, 8 and 15, numbers being 43, 30 and 36 respectively, and CRKA had high counts at Cook's Beach on three successive visits August 17 (60+), September 2 (75), and September 14 (78). Other reports of small numbers here and there do not fit into any pattern.

First RUDDY TURNSTONE to be spotted was at Cape Sable July 18 where there were 7 on July 20 and 30, August 4 (BJS). Another July record is of 7 at Pictou on the 27th (EH), numbers began to build up in August = 46 at Caribou I. August 5 (LEN & HJMcG), 10 August 9 and 30+ August 15 at Pt. Michaud (M & WF), "many" after August 16 at Port Hebert (RW), 30-35 at Brier September 1-6, 23 at Pictou September 15 (EH), and 20+ at Cape Sable again September 27 (SS), this being the latest sighting sent in.

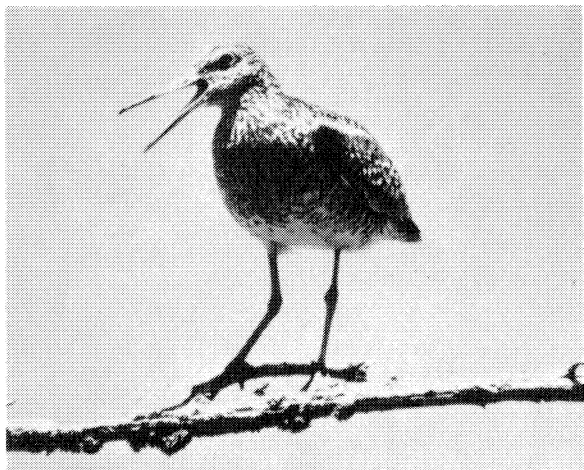
Reports of AMERICAN WOODCOCK are scanty; these birds are lurkers in the alder and wire birch covers and are largely nocturnal - or at least crepuscular - in their activities. A determined birder especially with a good dog can flush 30 to 40 birds on a good day in the height of the fall flight, but the casual birder may go for several years without seeing a single specimen. R. Burrows lists Woodcock as "fairly restricted breeding species in Keji Park" with "at least 6 birds located in late May but no nests or young seen". There was one at Brier September 6 (BMacT) and one "heard after dark" at Wine Harbour September 28 (JMacL).

COMMON SNIPE, dwellers in the boggy fields, are more often encountered than the last species. Unlike Victorian children they are frequently heard though not seen as they continue their "winnowing" display flights into mid-summer or even later, as Bruce MacTavish reports one giving its performance over a bog on Brier as late as August 29. High counts this period are from APBS where there were 25 August 6 and 10 on September 2 and 7 (CD). Cape Bretoners saw 6 August 30 at the Glace Bay Sanctuary and 7 at Lingan September 7. Two Snipe at Broad Cove, seen September 14 in company with a Sora, is of interest as other observers have noted this association between these two species (J & SC).

First WHIMBRELS were seen at Homeville, C.B., where there were 6 July 10 (CF); there were 2 at Cape Sable July 15, one there on the 17th, 6 on the 19th and 10, on August 7 (NC & SS). At Brule on July 31 there were 18 of this species, the highest number reported although much larger flocks must have passed through. Most other reports are of singles or several birds but the Gallaghers had 10 at Dan'l's Head August 29; R & S Meyerowitz saw 10 at St. Esprit September 7 and there was a flock of 7 at Cherry Hill September 14 (J & SC).

An UPLAND SANDPIPER was seen and studied at leisure near the graveyard on the Peajack Road, Brier I., by S. Tingley and B. MacTavish. Shortly after Labour Day the bird was later flushed, and gave its characteristic call.

SPOTTED SANDPIPERS are reported in normal numbers on their breeding grounds and chicks were seen July 7 at Marble Mtn., C.B. (R. Beecher) and at Keji mid-July by R. Burrows. Latest reports from various localities are: September 2 APBS, September 15 Pictou, September 20 one heard flying over Scotia



Conrad's Beach Birds

Ian McLaren

This Willet and Sharp-tailed Sparrow were both photographed on June 14, 1974.

Square in the heart of downtown Halifax (RB), September 21 Glace Bay, September 23 Seal I., September 30 Cook's Beach and a late October 12, Green Bay, this last seen by the Cohrs.

SOLITARY SANDPIPERS trickled through in their usual unobtrusive way from mid-August to late September. In nearly all cases sightings were of single birds as one would expect but here and there 2 birds shared a puddle. All birds were reported from Halifax to the southwest except for 2 sightings at APBS. A total of 14 birds were seen in 8 localities.

A report of a pair of WILLETS with nest, photographed by R. Beecher, comes from Cape Breton - presumably some time before mid-June as on June 20 the young (how many?) were hatched and had left the nest, and on July 6 a female with 4 young was observed at Homeville - perhaps the same brood? Last record for the Cape Breton area is of 16 "immatures" at Lingan, September 7 (NSBS party). Besides the above, a brood of 3 chicks at Lockeport, July 21, and another at Cook's Beach August 3, seems to indicate a long breeding season or possibly several "attempts". Even while downy chicks were being guarded by hysterical parents, flocks of full-grown birds were gathering. The Cohrs saw over 200 at Crescent Beach, July 24; Sid Smith had 100+ at Cape Sable July 28 where Norman Cunningham saw 150+ on August 5. The latter observer goes on to say: "A smallish flock was seen to fly to sea then returned to land and out of sight, calling. Shortly a greatly enlarged flock flew past and out to sea, out of sight." He states further that Willets and Dowitchers then began to leave every clear day - "a good thing as there is much shooting." Final sightings for the period were: 2 September 2 Cook's Beach (CRKA), a lone juvenile at C. Sable I., September 6 (IAMcL), one at Cherry Hill September 22 (SSF), and 30 September 23 at Pinckney's Pt. (MWH et al.).

First of the southbound GREATER YELLOWLEGS were noted at Cape Sable July 7 by Sid Smith. There were 2 at Clementsport July 12 and another couple at Melbourne Sanctuary July 13 (LEN & HJMcG). They showed up at APBS on July 14 where there were 10 birds, the same number as the last sighting there on September 21 (CD). Cape Bretoners saw their first migrants of this species on July 20 and reported "very many" during August. Ian McLaren's earliest Yellowlegs was a flock of 150 July 21 at Lawrencetown of which just 5 were of this species. Numbers dwindled during September although 100 were at J. Lusby on the 2nd and 50 still there on the 21st of that month (CD). The outpouring of migrants had dwindled to a trickle by mid-October but laggards will no doubt linger well into November.

Although our Cape Bretoners were relatively tardy in reporting first southbound Greater Yellowlegs they led the field with the LESSERS, having 3 on July 19 at the Glace Bay Sanctuary. Of Ian McLaren's flock of 150 Yellowlegs at Lawrencetown July 21 noted above, 100 were of this species, and on the same date Rosemary Eaton had 15 at Cole Harbour a few miles to the west. Rosemary also had a flock of 107 Yellowlegs in what she calls "our garden cove" on August 23 but was not able to sort these out as to species. Other reports of one to several Lessers came from Port Hebert (RW), Crescent Beach (the Cohrs), and Pictou (EH) during August. The two last records are of 10 at Brier I. September 10 (BMacT) and 3 September 24 (MWH et al.) at Yarmouth.

Of 14 recorded RED KNOT sightings, 10 were made between August 29 and

September 5, one was on August 3, two on August 11, and one August 14. The breakdown is as follows: 42 at Chezzetcook, August 3 (EHC), 4 Evangeline Beach, August 11 (LEN & HJMcG), 75+, same date, Cape Sable (NC), 5 Dan'l's Head, August 29 (Gallaghers), up to 14 on Seal I., "late August - early September" (IAMcL), 4 sightings for August 31: 100 at Cape Sable (Gallaghers), 1 at Economy (FS), 3 at Port Hebert (RW), and 18 at Cherry Hill (J & SC). There were 2 at Brier September 2, 4-5 at Economy and 2 at Cook's Beach same date, and 12 at Brier again September 5. The last record is of 11 at Cherry Hill September 14 (J & SC).

Given below is a verbatim account by Sara MacLean of the REDSHANK seen by her and a companion at Homeville, July 26: "Size of a Greater Yellowlegs but shorter legs and a sturdier bird. Legs and beak, red. Tip of beak may have been black, or just muddy. Back spotted or evenly marked, dark brown and white or whitish. Underparts all light except for a rather broad speckled band across the lower breast. --- Silent on the ground and --- in flight. Observed from 25-30 yards for 10 minutes or more with field glasses. Conditions only fair, rather late in the evening, but bird clearly visible. George and I consulted our texts separately and came to the same conclusion - a Redshank."

It is hardly possible to doubt or suggest an alternative species in the face of such a careful and detailed account as this - a model in fact, for all describers of rarities!

Two notes on PURPLE SANDPIPERS are of 20 on Pearl I., Mahone Bay, September 28 (IAMcL) and of one at Seal October 6, which obligingly posed for a photograph (J & SC).

First PECTORAL SANDPIPERS to appear were: one at Cherry Hill August 4 (SJF), and 10 at Pinckney's Pt. August 23 (MWH et al.). Both birds and bird-watchers were out in force on the Labour Day weekend; there were 2 Pectorals at Cape Sable August 31 and 2 at Blanche, Shelburne Co., September 1 (JR & CDG); 2 also, same date, at Cherry Hill (J & SC) and up to 11 at Brier September 1 (BMacT). A few days later (Sept. 7) there were 8 at Pond Cove, Brier I. (LEN & HJMcG) and on the same day, 2 at J. Lusby (CD). Another record for Cherry Hill also by the Cohrs is 8 on September 14 and on that date there were 2 at Merigomish (MK & EC) and 3 on the following day at Pictou (EH). Last reported sightings were of 2, September 22, and one September 23 at Seal (RGGB).

Ian McLaren's first southbound shore-birds were a mixed bag including 10 WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS, seen July 14 (locality not given). Sylvia Fullerton found one at Cherry Hill July 21, two there on the 29th and 3 August 4. On August 31 there were 28 in this spot (J & SC). The Gallaghers had 2 at Dan'l's Head August 10 and 50 at Cape Sable August 31. Seven of this species were seen at Pt. Michaud August 15 by M. Foote, 20± at Pond Cove, Brier I., September 1 had dwindled to 2 by September 21 (LEN & HJMcG). Francis Spalding noted "a few" at Economy on August 31. At Cook's Beach there were approximately 25 on September 2nd, 8 September 14th and a few still around in mid-October (CRKA). The NSBS party logged 40 at Brier I. on its Labour Day weekend excursion.

The Order to which the shore-birds belong must be well out in front of the others in the matter of strays and rarities recorded for this period. Already we have had Wilson's Plover, Upland Sandpiper, Redshanks and now a spate of BAIRD'S SANDPIPER sightings (and there are more eye-openers to come!). There

were 2 at Cape Sable July 28 (SS), 1 at Brier August 25 (DWF), 2 at Seal August 30 and again September 6 seen by Ian McLaren who also found 4 at Sable I. September 9-13 and one still there September 18-19. Ian sighted another, his eighth at least for the season, September 28, on Pearl I. in Mahone Bay feeding on the intertidal rocks with Purple Sandpipers. The Smiths were visited by another at Cape Sable on September 27 and there were 2 still on Seal I. September 22-23 (BMacT, IMacG & ST). Bruce MacTavish was high-liner with up to 13 of this species at Brier, September 1-6. He says: "The 13 on September 6 were the result of a very cautious survey of the entire beach and dunes in Pond Cove. There definitely was no repeat and there may have been a few more we missed."

Larry Neily's story is also worth quoting: "After pointing the Turkey Vulture out to us Stuart and Bruce told us that there were --- 2 Baird's Sandpipers still at Pond Cove, and sure enough, there were. They were with Least's, Semipalmateds, Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstones, Gr. Yellowlegs, a Dowitcher and White-rumped with Pectorals in sight. The Bairds were distinctly different (from Semipalmateds?) although we might not have found it quite as easy if they had been alone. Comparison is a useful tool." Amen!! [ed.]

Ian McLaren reports 2 nests of LEAST SANDPIPERS at Conrad's Beach, found June 23. The Smiths at Cape Sable saw 7, apparently their first on June 23 and report that small flocks were around all summer. Next report is of 6 July 13 at Melbourne Sanctuary (LEN & HJMcG). Ralph Widrig of Port Hebert and M. Foote who visited Pt. Michaud reported this species to be abundant, but several other observers remarked on their scarcity compared to other years. Surveyors of the Arctic breeding grounds report a disastrous nesting season there and have predicted that the southward migration of many species of immature shore-birds will be light. Four separate localities in the province were visited at more or less regular intervals during the period July to mid-October by the same observer(s) and in the case of common and numerous species such as Least's it seems worthwhile to give the reports in detail.

Pinckney's Pt. (MWH et al.): 20 Aug. 6, 15 Aug. 23, 20 Sept. 9, 1 Sept. 19.

Cherry Hill (SJF): 6 July 14, 16 July 21, 9 July 29, 8 Aug. 4, 11 Aug. 18, 23 Sept. 1, 19 Sept. 8, 26 Sept. 15, 20 Sept. 22.

Cook's Beach (PRD & CRKA): 8 July 20, 12 Aug. 3, 91 Aug. 17, 32 Sept. 2, 5 Sept. 14, 1 Sept. 29.

Pictou (EH): 7 July 21, 1 July 27, 4 Aug. 17, 4 Aug. 18, 9 Sept. 15

DUNLIN sightings were few and far between: one at Port Hebert August 29, one at Brier, Labour Day weekend, 1 or 2 at Economy August 31, other singles at Cherry Hill September 15 and at Pond Cove September 21; 2 at Cook's Beach September 29, and 5 there October 12. The only concentration was at Cherry Hill October 4 where the Cohrs saw about 95 in flocks of 4-6.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS are normally in the van of the southward shore-bird flight in this region but this year in several places Semipalmated or Least Sandpipers beat them to the wire, possibly because the severe Arctic spring had cut short the incubation periods of these 'peep'. First Dowitchers

reported were at Cape Sable where 27 showed up on July 8 (SS). The Smiths say for this locality that "the usual large and well-scattered flocks were all over C. Sable flats and shores. Some began leaving Aug. 5 and now (Sept. 21) only a few are left." There were 250 at Pinckney's Pt. August 6 and about 50 at Town Pt. and Sunday Pt., August 11 (MWH et al.).

The census takers at Cherry Hill and Cook's Beach sent in the following:

Cherry Hill: 14 July 21, 31 July 29, 27 Aug. 14, 8 Aug. 18, 10 Sept. 1,  
3 Sept. 8, 1 Sept. 15, 10 Sept. 22.

Cook's Beach: 8 July 20, 50± Aug. 3, 110 Aug. 17, 'several' Sept. 2, 18 Sept. 14.

One report of LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS is of 20 on Sable I., September 12 (BMacT per IAMcL).

STILT SANDPIPERS appeared five times: 2 August 6 at Conrad's Beach and 2 on Sable September 12-13 (IAMcL), 3 at Brier I. August 31-September 2 (NSBS party) and 1 September 5 (BMacT), and 3 at Matthews Lake, Shelburne Co., September 1 (DWF).

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPERS beat the Dowitchers to the flats of Ste. Anne du Ruisseau, Yarmouth Co., by several days, appearing about July 4th. There were small flocks at Cape Sable July 19 and from then on were scattered over the flats in numbers impossible to count. Eric Holdway saw 63 at Pictou July 23 and had a high of 139, August 18. There were 400+ at Cook's Beach on the first visit, July 20, and 2500+ there August 3. Numbers then fell off to 550 August 17, 740 September 2, 320 September 14, 35 September 29, and 4 October 12 (PRD & CRKA). Larry Neily made a rough and conservative estimate of 5000 Semipalmateds at Evangeline August 5 and Ralph Widrig reports many thousands at Port Hebert during August. One showed up at Economy July 5 and they were numerous there by August 31 (FS). Cape Bretoners report flocks coming in in mid-August (first sightings?) and hundreds through September. The high figure of 5000+ at Evangeline may be compared with estimates from the same beach in recent summers of 10,000 or 20,000. It may be that this abundant little 'peep' suffered along with others from the rigors of the spring in the Far North.

From here on the rarities tread closely on each other's heels. A WESTERN SANDPIPER at Crescent Beach August 10 allowed the Cohrs to photograph it in company with Semipalmateds in order to give contrast. Davis Finch saw another "nice and obvious juvenile" at Cranberry Head on Labour Day (Sept. 2) and passed on the tidings along with meticulous directions to the local buffs. He also saw single birds at Cape Sable (Aug. 31) and Matthews Lake, Shelburne Co. (Sept. 1). Another was picked out of a flock of 900 Semipalmateds at Freeport, Long I. (Digby Co.) on September 7, and well described by the observers (BMacT & ST). Ian McLaren had up to 4 among Semipalmateds on Seal September 1-5 and was able to get photographs, and the Gallaghers with Davis Finch had another at Cape Sable Light August 31. Bruce MacTavish had one on Seal I., August 25.

It has been a good year for BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS - or at least for the observers of this species. There were up to 11 on Seal August 29, 2 at Cape Sable September 6 and one at Sable I. September 10-12, all these sightings by Ian McLaren. Various members of the NSBS party at Brier over the Labour



Day weekend saw up to a minimum of 6. There were 2 in company with Golden Plover at Starr's Rd., Yarmouth, September 16 (CRKA), 2 at Blanche on September 1 (DWF), and sightings of single birds at Cape Sable again August 31 (Gallaghers) and September 15. The last sighting was by Sid and Locke Smith (father and son) who report that their ruffled feelings are now at long last soothed. Previous sightings were made here by outlanders such as the Gallaghers and Davis Finch who always made their finds when the Smiths were away on annual leave. All, however, is now serene!

Earliest HUDSONIAN GODWIT was seen at Lawrencetown (Halifax Co.) July 21, where up to 5 were seen in early August and one September 8. These observations, with up to 9 in late August on Seal were made by IAMcL. The Gallaghers had 2 at Hawk Beach (C. Sable I.) August 13, one at Port Clyde August 21, 14 at Dan'l's Head August 29, 34 at Cape Sable Light August 31 and finally 6 at Blanche, Shelburne Co., September 1. BMacT had singles at Brier September 1 and at Conrad's Beach, September 8. On August 11 there were 23 at Evangeline Beach (LEN & HJMcG) and on September 15 C. Desplanque observed 3 at J. Lusby Pond.

One RUFF (male, fall plumage) was seen in company with Greater Yellowlegs in the marsh near Cook's Beach September 29 (PRD & CRKA).

Reports on SANDERLINGS are variable, R. Widrig says 'many' August and September at Port Hebert; Larry Neily who found none at Evangeline Beach August 11 and apparently few elsewhere considers them scarce. There were 12 at Cherry Hill July 22, the first report (J & SC) and 400 July 28 at Cape Sable (SS). Fifty at Pt. Michaud August 15 (M. Foote) is the only other significant number. Sanderlings are late stayers, some even wintering here, so no October dates are of any particular significance.

Bruce MacTavish's and Stuart Tingley's AVOCET at Cole Harbour September 8 and several days thereafter vies with the REDSHANK for the title of Most Fabulous Shore Bird of the Year. Word was spread and we understand that a number of other birders were lucky enough to get a sight of it during its brief stay although it was too 'spooky' to allow a good photograph.

Flocks of Northern and RED PHALAROPES in "unguessable numbers" were off Brier I. on May 26 (JBH) where 3000 were estimated during the NSBS field trip September 1 (EHC et al.). Several other sightings of singles were made elsewhere in the southwestern counties. There were no less than 4 sightings of WILSON'S PHALAROPES, one September 1 at Blanche, Shelburne Co. (Gallaghers), one September 2 at Three-Fathom Harbour, and one at Conrad's Beach September 22 (both by EHC), and one at Cherry Hill September 15 (SJF & BH).

NORTHERN PHALAROPES were greatly in the minority during the September 1 boat trip or the NSBS party off Brier I., where just 100 were seen compared with the 3000 Reds noted above. Last sighting was made by (J & SC) returning from Seal October 7. No number mentioned.

## JAEGERS THROUGH AUKS

A SKUA was seen from a ship off Cape Canso on July 17 (RGG); there was a bird off Brier I. on September 1, and two there on September 2 and 30 (EHC, ST & DWF). Davis Finch had a POMARINE JAEGER off Brier on August 26, and another over Melbourne Sanctuary on August 28. There were at least two PARASITICS northwest of Halifax on July 17 (RGG) and a dark-phase bird off Sable Island on September 11 (BMacT).

Both HERRING and GREAT BLACKBACKED GULLS were common as usual. In July and August the odd Great Blackback and a few Herrings even turned up in Kejimikujik National Park (RB). Our Digby LESSER BLACKBACK could not be found on August 23, but was there on September 28 (DWF). There was a RING-BILLED GULL at Caribou I. on August 5 and another on August 25 (LEN & HJMcG), and 5 at Pinckney's Pt. on September 30 (MWH). Larry Neily and Helen McGloin also had BONAPARTE'S GULLS at Caribou; Eric Holdway had them at Pictou, in increasing numbers from July 3 to September 29. There were at least 20 at Merigomish, Pictou Co., on September 15 (MK & EC) and 6 at Economy on September 17 (FS) and a single bird at Brier I. on September 5 (ST). There were also the usual scattered reports from along the Atlantic shore. A SABINE'S GULL - probably a subadult - was seen on Sable I. on September 12 (EHC, IAMcL). The only report of BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES comes from Glace Bay Harbour, where the NSBS field party saw 2 immatures on September 7 (SMacL). One expects to see the odd bird off Brier I. at this time of year, but none have been reported.

COMMON and ARCTIC TERNS occurred as usual. The Gallaghers note that there were at least 50-60 adult Arctics at the East Baccaro colony, Crow's Neck, Shelburne Co., in July; Mrs. W.R. Foote saw young Arctics being fed by their parents on the beach at MacKenzie Point, C.B., on August 15-16; Ian McLaren saw numbers of weakly fledged Arctics still being fed at Sable I., September 10-13 and found a large, unfledged and apparently abandoned Common chick there on September 13. On the same day he also had four ROSEATES. There were up to 6 BLACK TERNS on Missaquash Marsh in July (CD, ST), 5 on Sable I. on September 13 and 3 there on September 18-19 (EHC, IAMcL).

Auks are scarce at this time of year. BLACK GUILLEMOTS are the only common species, with reports coming from Cape Breton (SMacL), Lunenburg Co. (RW), Brier I. (NSBS field trip), and Cape Split (EHC). The only other auks were COMMON PUFFINS. These were scarce but regular off Brier I. in late August and early September; Dick Brown's maximum count on Moore's Ledge was of c.25 birds on September 2. Davis Finch had one off Digby on September 28, and 9 off Brier I. on October 1.

## PIGEON THROUGH OWLS

The most exciting stray of the season is undoubtedly the BAND-TAILED PIGEON observed on Seal Island from September 23 to at least October 13. This bird, which has no business being any closer to us than west Texas, was seen by at least 20 observers, including most of the NSBS party on Seal, Thanksgiving weekend. It appears to be the first eastern Canadian record for the species, and the third for northeastern North America. The following accounts of the first sighting have come in:



Band-tailed Pigeon

Stuart Tingley

A good view of the season's most remarkable rarity, taken on Seal Island on October 19th. This photograph clearly shows the yellow, black-tipped bill and narrow white band on the back of the neck, and gives a good impression of the bird's bulky size. The yellow eye and orange eye-ring were clear enough in the field, but do not show up in a black-and-white print. Other field marks were the yellow feet and the long, squarish tail with a black band halfway down.

Dick Brown: "Seal Island, Sept. 23 -- seen by RGBB (who thought it looked like an English Wood Pigeon, but browner and without the wing-flashes), Bruce MacTavish, Stuart Tingley and Ian MacGregor (a Californian -- who made the identification). Still there the following weekend (SJF). Bruce MacTavish has apparently tried to photograph it (with what success?). NOT a Rock Dove (though even that would be unusual for Seal Island)."

Stuart Tingley: "The moment I saw this bird, I immediately knew it was not a Rock Dove, by size alone. It was truly massive!! When I finally overcame my shock, I had a brief, but very good, look at the topside of the bird as it flew by us very close. I was amazed by the complete lack of a white rump; this was very obvious. Also there appeared to be a dark tail band but it definitely was not terminal but appeared to be about mid-way down the tail. Later, Dick Brown and I saw the bird fly by again, being chased by a Merlin. The Pigeon was definitely larger than the Merlin. Ian and Bruce both immediately shouted "Band-tailed Pigeon" as the bird approached and passed by us the first time. Both Ian and Bruce noted the key field marks (yellow bill, light band on tail). There is no doubt in my mind as to the correctness of the identification."

Of 11 MOURNING DOVE reports, only one comes from Cape Breton (Mabou, September 28, NSBS party, per Sara MacLean). Most of the remainder are clustered around the western end of the province, particularly Brier I., Digby Neck, Cape Sable and Seal I. (v.o.).

Only 2 YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO reports have come in for this fall. A single bird was recorded at Round Hill, in the Annapolis Valley, October 1 (WEW) and the remains of one, "dead some time", were picked up on Seal I. September 22 (RGBB). Bruce MacTavish had a BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO at Waverley on August 20. The four other reports of this species come from the Annapolis Valley. W.E. Whitehead had cuckoos at Round Hill, June 13 and July 18, and Larry Neily and Helen McGloin report 2 birds from Clementsport, July 12, and one "heard by Mrs. Earle Neily in Tremont in July -- singing every day. Last year it was there too and instantly became a mystery sound, until we caught up with it after many 'wild cuckoo' chases."

GREAT HORNED OWLS are reported from scattered points on the mainland and from Brier I. (Sept. 1-6, BM). A downy young bird was seen at Cape Split, June 23 (LEN, HJMcG) and Eric Cooke reports that the "pair that nested at Cole Harbour raised one young to the flying stage. One adult and one young almost grown last seen near the nest on June 22." Roger Burrows reports an immature near the fish hatchery at Kejimkujik NP, August 25, which "still had down feathers on head and back." BARRED OWLS are widely reported, with the usual concentration of reports from Kejimkujik NP, where Barred Owls are frequently heard throughout the summer. Larry Neily and Helen McGloin had an adult Barred Owl with an immature on the Cape Split trip, June 23, which also gave them the downy Great Horned Owl mentioned above.

SHORT-EARED OWL reports are curiously lacking, after the abundance of reports from rodent-rich fields around the province last winter. A hesitant report comes from Lime Hill, C.B. (M. Foote), and another from Cole Harbour (RE). SAW-WHET OWLS are reported from Mira (Aug. 2) and Lingan (Sept. 16),

both in Cape Breton (GS, per Sara MacLean) as well as Brier I. (Sept. 3, BM) and Hammonds Plains, Halifax Co., a roadkill June 16 (LEN, HJMcG).

#### NIGHTHAWK THROUGH KINGFISHER

After scattered late-summer sightings, the departure of the COMMON NIGHTHAWKS from the province is impressively depicted in 17 reports. A first wave was on the move in the western part of the province, August 18-20. The Pocklingtons had over 150 Nighthawks along Route 1 in the Annapolis Valley between Digby and Berwick on the 18th, and that same day, C.R.K. Allen noted flocks "numbering up to 90-100" along the Tusket River, Yarmouth Co. Over 150 birds passed over Kejimikujik NP the following day (the 19th) between 7.00 and 7.20 p.m., heading southwest (R. Burrows), and on the 20th W.E. Whitehead noted 125-150 at Round Hill in the Annapolis Valley. The following day, August 21, Rosemary Eaton reports a flock of 12 at Cole Harbour, and what must have been an entirely separate wave was seen by Stuart Tingley along River Philip, Cumberland Co., on the evening of August 28 (75+). Several observers note the absence of nighthawks after the end of August. Single birds September 8 at Spryfield (R. Burrows) and Cape Sable (N. Cunningham) were clearly stragglers, as was a single very late bird, September 22, at St. Esprit, C.B. (Meyerowitz family). Last of all were single birds on Seal I. on September 25 and 26 (Bruce MacTavish).

The scattered reports of CHIMNEY SWIFTS for late summer are disturbingly sparse. Roger Burrows noted a few swifts migrating with the wave of nighthawks at Keji, August 19. Larry Neily and Helen McGloin report swifts "much reduced" for the western part of the province after the heavy mortality reported in the spring. The latest record is of three swifts, Labour Day weekend at Brier I. (NSBS party).

Nearly 30 RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD reports are scattered throughout the province, and several observers report usual numbers for the season. Several late-summer concentrations at red garden-flowers are noted (i.e. "as many as 7 at one time feeding at a row of scarlet runner beans", in Dartmouth, August 14-30, Robert Sutton). The latest report is of four hummingbirds at Mrs. Hamilton's flowers on Seal I., September 22-3 (RGGB).

BELTED KINGFISHERS are reported "common", "present in good numbers", from Cape Breton to Cape Sable. The reports give some indication of a departure about the first week of October from several areas.

#### WOODPECKERS

The COMMON FLICKER was reported "ubiquitous -- all over the place" at St. Esprit, C.B., this summer (Meyerowitz family) and this note is echoed across the province with few exceptions. Concentrations were seen at Brier I. (30+, Sept. 6, BM) and Seal I. (30, Sept. 21-22, RGGB). My last report is from Chebogue, Yarmouth Co., October 6 (CRKA) but stragglers will doubtless be seen well into the winter. All seven PILEATED WOODPECKER reports come from the

western part of the province, 3 from Keji (R. Burrows), one from Barton, Digby Co., August 1 (M & W Lent), and others from Annapolis, Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties.

An interesting summer report of RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, an adult bird described in detail, comes from Kejimkujik NP, July 2 (Debi Burrows). Several sightings of Red-headed Woodpeckers were also reported for Seal Island this fall, including an adult seen by the NSBS party, Thanksgiving weekend. There are few reports of the YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, and Sylvia Bower at Lower Ohio, Yarmouth Co., reports this bird less common than usual in her area, while the Gallaghers in Shelburne Co. had only one sighting all summer. However, Roger Burrows found them "fairly common in birches, June-August, at Kejimkujik NP; 13 records involving 15 birds, including one immature seen in mid-August." One straggler remained at Seal I., Thanksgiving weekend (NSBS party).

Reports of HAIRY and DOWNY WOODPECKERS suggest that numbers are down in some areas, but are not complete enough to permit generalizations. Roger Burrows sends observations for Kejimkujik NP: Hairy Woodpecker - "fairly common nesting species; 11 records, including 6 pairs and 2 nests with at least 2 young in each." Downy Woodpecker - "uncommon nesting species; 7 records, including one nest with young." By some quirk of fate, we have received as many reports of the generally rare BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER as of the common Hairy. Roger Burrows reports at least 4 birds at Keji, but no pairs or nests, and other reports come from Port Hebert, Shelburne Co. (RSW) and MacKay's Lake, Shelburne Co. (3 sightings, July 26-Aug. 30, JRG, CDG).

#### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

Two early EASTERN KINGBIRD reports come from Glace Bay, C.B., June 1, and Wine Harbour (Guysborough Co.) June 5 (S. Mach, G. Mach). From the middle of July on Larry Neily and Helen MacGloin noted family groups of four to five in Annapolis Co. August 30th found 6 at Brier I. (NSBS) and September reports from Marion Hilton in Yarmouth Co. include 6 on September 9, 6 on the 15th and on the 17th at Pinckney Pt.

Two WESTERN KINGBIRDS are reported: one at Cape Sable September 24 (BJS) and one at Seal I. October 6 (J & SC). Roger Burrows reports at least 4 GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHERS at Keji during early summer. Bruce MacTavish saw one at Seal I. September 23, and both saw and heard one at Waverley on June 15.

Reports of the EASTERN PHOEBE come from Cape Split (1), Keji (1), Middle Clyde, Shelburne Co. (2), and Brier I. (1). The two at Middle Clyde were harassed at the nest by Barn Swallows and the outcome of the nest uncertain. The fourth N.S. record of a SAY'S PHOEBE was well seen and photographed on Sable I. by Ian McLaren, Al Smith et al. on September 18th.

The EMPIDONAX group are down this year and no reports came in of any migratory concentrations. Single birds of all three species were present in Shelburne, Lunenburg, Yarmouth and Guysborough Counties and in Cape Breton with the LEAST a common breeding species at Keji. There were 3 (SP) at Brier I.

on Labour Day (NSBS) and one at Petite Riviere, Lunenburg Co., on September 15 (MWH & SCH) and one at Seal I. October 6th (J & SC).

Apart from one bird on June 7th at Port Hebert (RSW) all other reports show a late arrival of the EASTERN WOOD PEWEE. They were "heard frequently" in the Valley area (LEN & HJMcG) and in August were numerous at Oakfield, Halifax Co., and Rawdon (Hants Co.) (EC). As in the case of the Empidonax group, there seems to have been no 'peak' this fall. Only one bird was at Brier I. September 1st, the only later report being of one on 23rd at Spryfield, Halifax Co. (RB).

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS seem to have arrived and left early. Gordon MacLeod heard one calling at Wine Harbour on June 5th, and by 14th 8 were heard at Lime Hill, C.B., and one appeared July 28 at Conrad's Beach, Halifax Co. Davis Finch notes "a rather sharp peak" on Brier I. on August 26. After that date we have no reports except for one very late bird on September 19 at Glace Bay (SMacL).

Two early HORNED LARKS arrived at Pictou on September 26 (EH), and by October 13th there were 150+ at Cherry Hill, Lunenburg Co. (J & SC).

The TREE SWALLOW suffered badly from the late May blizzard. Except for early flocks at Pictou (100+, EH) and "many" at Port Hebert, report after report tells of drastically reduced numbers and absences of customary nests. Amidst the gloom Willett Mills writes of a successful nest with four young in downtown Halifax behind Spring Garden Road. NSBS party at Brier I. saw a wave of 200 going through on August 30 (only 2 remained the next day). The latest report received is from Cape Breton where a late lingerer was seen September 18 (SMacL).

BARN SWALLOWS are either made of stronger stuff or arrived later in the main. Although many kills were recorded in the May storm the broods were later and numbers average. They had departed from Cape Breton by September 5 (R & SM), Guysborough Co. by 6th (GMacL) and Broad Cove, Lunenburg Co., by 22nd (SJF). There were two waves through Brier I. - one of 300 August 30 (NSBS) and one of 250 September 5 (BM & ST). At APBS a later wave took place on September 21st (50 birds) with 10 on the 22nd and only one left on the 29th.

CLIFF SWALLOWS were sadly reduced in number. At Middle Ohio (Shelburne Co.) there was one nest where normally there are 3-5 (JR & CDG), no nests at all at Port Hilford "for the first time in many years" (GMacL). A maximum of four nests were found at Keji (RB) and only one at Petite Riviere (Lunenburg Co.) where usually there are a dozen or more (J & SC). Sara MacLean reports four nests at Marble Mountain - the only ones heard of from Cape Breton.

With the exception of Cape Breton where a good season was reported (and a late record of September 15 at Main-a-Dieu) (SMacL), the BANK SWALLOW was similarly affected, mostly due to the cold spring but also because of destruction of their habitats by erosion and construction. A migration of 100 went through Brier I. September 1st.

As a whole the Swallow reports show a definite overall decline in numbers and nests particularly of Bank and Tree Swallows but noticeable for all.

Did anyone notice a corresponding increase in the number of mosquitoes or do we imagine this?

Two PURPLE MARTINS appeared at Brier I. September 5th (BMacT).

#### CORVIDS THROUGH WRENS

GREY JAYS nested at Lower Ohio and brought their young to Sylvia Bower's feeder. Juveniles and adults were seen throughout the nesting season at Keji (RB). After summering in the woods they are emerging near settlements together with the BLUE JAYS. These latter also nested at Keji and are appearing now at feeders as noisy as before.

COMMON RAVENS and COMMON CROWS were average in number during July and August with an increase of crows around the shorelines during September.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE reports were few from the mainland but M & WF report that they were abundant and feeding young at Lime Hill, C.B. Only six reports came from Keji after mid-June but CRK Allen reports flocks of 50+ building up at Chebogue Pt. October 6th.

BOREAL CHICKADEES have been present in their usual 'average' numbers, with no signs of any concentrations or waves.

The WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH continues to be scarce. Two reports only: up to four at Keji at various times during the summer (RB) and two sightings of single birds by the Gallaghers in Shelburne Co. It is therefore encouraging to note that the RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, so scarce last winter and this spring, is making a comeback. Marjorie Foote saw "many" in July and August at Lime Hill and a NSBS field party saw and heard "many" at Mabou September 28. They were "frequently seen" in Shelburne Co. culminating in 20 together August 26th at Upper Clyde. Evidence of a wave going through on Labour Day weekend comes from Lunenburg Co. where eight to ten were seen in a previously empty half mile at Green Bay September 1st (J & SC).

Keji park seems to have had all the BROWN CREEPERS this year - one on June 28 (LEN & HJM) and two August 14th (RB).

A HOUSE WREN was seen on Seal I. September 22nd (RP) and again (same one?) October 6 (J & SC). The spring report promise of a WINTER WREN year seems to have been fulfilled. The Gallaghers write that they were heard "more frequently than in other summers" in seven localities in Shelburne Co. Seven reports came in from Keji (RB) and others from APBS, Halifax Co., Brier and Seal Islands, Chebogue Pt. and other points throughout the province. Latest report is of "several" on Seal I. October 5-7.

The N.S./N.B. border area yielded four LONG-BILLED MARSH WRENS singing on July 8th, happily 75 feet on the N.S. side (ST). One other report of a Long-billed comes from Seal I. on September 28-30 (SJF). Seal I. is the only source of sightings of the SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN - one September 24 (BMacT) and one September 28-30 (SJF) and one October 5-7 (J & SC). A hypothetical



CAROLINA WREN was observed on Seal I. October 6th by J & SC. Seen in a good light it had all the field marks, the rufous colouring and larger size.

#### MIMIDS

Five scattered reports of single MOCKINGBIRDS have come in. One at Barrington July 14 and onwards (JR & CDG), one, a juvenile in mid-July in Cumberland Co. (CD), one at Brier I. September 1st (NSBS), a spotted plumaged juvenile on Sable I. September 10 (BM), and one at Tusket October 14 (CRKA). It is interesting to note the two juveniles and to wonder where the mockers are breeding in the province.

GREY CATBIRD. Six reports of 13 birds came in for the Catbird. They cover the period from June to October and are widely scattered geographically from Mira, C.B. (AS), to Seal I. Several correspondents conclude that they were less common than usual (LEN & HJMcG etc.). Latest report is from Seal I. October 7th.

BROWN THRASHERS are also down in number - four birds reported. Ian McLaren writes of a singing male and a skulking female at Conrad's Beach, Halifax Co. June 8th - a liaison which apparently came to naught. One was seen at Brier I. September 1st, and one at Seal I. October 6th.

#### ROBIN THROUGH KINGLETS

Once again many correspondents report ROBIN numbers down this year. However, Larry Neily and Helen McGloin report from Annapolis Co. that they were "common, everywhere". Sizable waves passed through Yarmouth Co. in late August through to October (PRD) especially on the October 6 weekend. Flocks of 20+ passed through Cumberland Co. October 1 and 2 and Sylvia Bower writes of a large flock at Lower Ohio October 3. Strangely there were only 6 on Seal I. September 21-23 (RGBB), and none at all the next weekend. A late report of interest is of 500+ on and over McNab's Island (Halifax Co.) on October 19 (NSBS). They were active, noisy and agitated - perhaps they were prescient of the unseasonable blizzard the next day. An exceptionally late nest report comes from Green Bay, Lunenburg Co., where a nest with three baby robins was observed by J & SC in their cottage garden on September 1st.

Bruce MacTavish both saw and heard WOOD THRUSHES at Waverley at least up to the middle of June - no doubt holdovers after their welcome addition to the spring Newsletter. The HERMIT THRUSH was very much in evidence and appreciated for the gorgeous singer he is. "Common" throughout the period at Fort Hebert (RSW); "beautiful song evident everywhere" in Annapolis Co. (LEN & HJMcG); "very common breeding species" at Keji (RB). Marjorie and William Foote at Lime Hill, C.B., observed a nest on July 27 and followed it through until August 16 when two young had hatched. Hermits left early though - only one seen on Labour Day at Brier I. (NSBS).

SWAINSON'S THRUSHES were well reported throughout the province, but no

reports point to any migrations in the fall. Latest sighting was at Petite Riviere, Lunenburg Co., on September 15 (MWLT).

No GREY-CHEEKED THRUSHES were reported. Except for Keji where the VEERY is a common breeding species there are only two reports of four individuals: Larry Neily had one June 19 and one July 7 in Annapolis Co., and Phyllis Dobson had two close to her home at Ste. Anne du Ruisseau, Yarmouth Co., throughout August. Sad to report after encouraging spring sightings of the EASTERN BLUEBIRD there are no fall sightings.

The BLUE-GREY GNATCATCHER was seen - by Ian McLaren on Seal I. September 2-3.

Some GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS bred at Keji from May-August (RB) but remained sparse elsewhere until the fall "build-ups". There were, however, three pairs at Green Bay on July 23 (J & SC). Thirty-four were seen on Seal I. September 21-23 (RGG), 14 September 25 at Round Hill, Annapolis Co. (WEW), 20 on September 28 at APBS and 25+ at Chebogue Pt. and environs on October 6 (CRKA).

Few fall reports of the RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET came in. Only one at Brier I. September 1, one on the 15th at Petite Riviere (MWH), three October 2-7 in Yarmouth town (MWH), one Petite Riviere October 4 "singing!" (J & SC), and a "few" - 4-6 - on Seal I. October 5-7 (J & SC).

#### PIPITS THROUGH STARLINGS

Earliest date for the arrival of the WATER PIPIT is from Sylvia Fullerton who had 8 at Cherry Hill (Lunenburg Co.) on September 8. By September 15 they had arrived at Cape Sable (BJS), on the 19th at Port Hebert (RSW), increasing in numbers around the coast until October 6 when C.R.K. Allen saw "10's or even 100's - very active flocks" at Chebogue Pt.

CEDAR WAXWINGS were present in many areas; 9 in Halifax (J.B. Hardy writes "not seen at Pine Hill for at least eight years"); plentiful and carrying nesting material at Lockeport (RSW); and 11 June 20 at Musquodoboit Harbour (R. Sutton). There was also an extraordinary flock of 100+ at Lower Ohio, Shelburne Co., September 18 (SB).

Three LOGGERHEAD SHRIKES are in the news. C. Desplanque saw one at Amherst July 7 and one at APBS September 15. R.E. Whitehead reports one at Round Hill, Annapolis Co., July 12.

In the five STARLING reports received all agree that numbers are increasing especially during August. As Sara MacLean writes "a great many must die over the winter (though one seldom sees a dead one), else we'd be wall-to-wall in starlings."

## VIREOS

On September 16 a strange bird at Cape Sable was identified by Sidney and Betty J. Smith as a WHITE-EYED VIREO. "It was in our yard all afternoon, size, markings, and colouring all well seen and corresponded with the White-eyed Vireo, immature (lack of white eye and colouring around head more nearly resembling that shown in our Audubon's of immature than of adult). It stayed until dusk and might have stayed longer, except that I dropped the clothespole, just missing it, and it seemed to feel unwanted after that." Another small vireo at Seal I. September 28 was identified by Bruce MacTavish as a White-eyed Vireo. The YELLOW-THROATED VIREO, reported in the July Newsletter, was last seen (at Susy Lake) on June 16, by Ian McLaren.

The SOLITARY VIREO, one of our two common breeding species, was well reported this summer, and some idea of its occurrence can be gained from Roger Burrows' studies in Kejimikujik Park, where he found it to be present and raising young from May to July, 32 records in all, very few after late July. These birds were seen in migration on September 2 (12+ at Oakfield, Halifax Co., E. Crathorne); September 5, "many" at Port Hebert (RSW); September 15, noted in "warbler waves" at Springville, Petite Riviere and Keji; also a few in a late wave October 16 at Chebogue Point, Yarmouth Co. The other breeding species, the RED-EYED VIREO, was rated as "abundant" at Keji, with 44 records May to August, very few seen after mid-August, by Roger Burrows. At the September 2 fly-by at Oakfield, Ethel Crathorne counted 20+ of these vireos, "low in the trees", and that same day Ralph Widrig noted "many" at Port Hebert. Four accompanied the September 15 warbler wave at Petite Riviere. A nest of the Red-eyed Vireo found at Timberlea July 6 contained 4 eggs, one of them a Cowbird egg (LEN, HJMcG).

We have five reports of the PHILADELPHIA VIREO, 6 birds altogether for the season: 1, heard singing at Keji July 5 (RB); 2, seen at Brier I. September 3 (BMacT); 1, found dead at Cape Sable September 24 (Betty June Smith has it in her freezer and asks if anyone wants it?); 1 at Waverley September 20 (BMacT); and 2, with the huge migratory movement October 6, at Yarmouth (MWH). A WARBLING VIREO was "attracted to the lawn sprinkler during very dry weather, July 1" at Pictou, where it was observed in a honeysuckle bush by Eric Holdway, and again, in song on July 2 and 12, not seen thereafter. Bruce MacTavish saw one on Brier I. on September 3.

## WOOD WARBLERS

Exotic species among the warblers reached an all-time high this summer and fall, with 10, possibly 11, rare species reported by reliable observers. Distribution of our native varieties appears to be normal, but numbers may be down, judging by the Cape Breton reports and the September observations at Brier I. and Cape Sable. Early nesting attempts may have been poor, due to the cold weather and dearth of insects in June. Marjorie Foote wrote from Lime Hill, Cape Breton: "From the time of arrival I felt the warbler population was way down from former years and I had no reason to change this opinion at departure time. Most of the warblers listed were restricted to one pair. The exceptions were the always abundant Magnolias, represented by three or four pairs, and the Ovenbirds, again three or four pairs. During the final days of our stay Black-

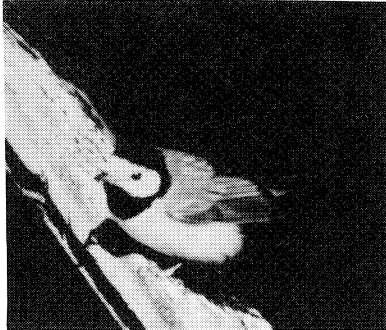
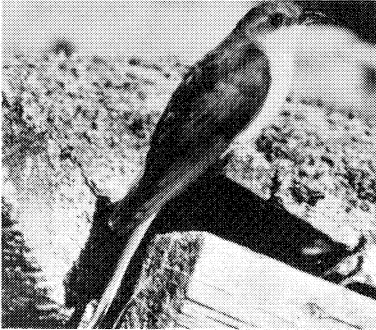
and-Whites with young were suddenly everywhere." From Stuart Tingley, "There were no great waves of warblers at any time during our stay on Brier I. (Aug. 29-Sept. 7). There weren't even any trickles to speak of. A few species seemed to reach reasonable numbers on a few days as follows: Black-and-White, 30+ September 6; Magnolia, 12+ September 6; Black-throated Green, 22+ September 1; Mourning, 10 September 3; Wilson's, 25+ September 6." On the Labour Day field trip at Brier 18 species of warblers were counted, but only two or three of each, except for the 22 Black-throated Greens, plus 30-40 Common Yellowthroats. On Seal I. Ian McLaren found large numbers of "Myrtles" (Yellow-rumped), Blackpolls and Cape Mays late August and early September, "but no variety of northern species until the end of the first week."

At Kejimikujik, Roger Burrows found 22 species of warblers, 21 of our native breeding birds (all but the Mourning) and one rarity. The commonest breeding species were the Northern Parula, Magnolia, Ovenbird and Common Yellowthroat. The rare one was a possible CERULEAN WARBLER, "singing July 5 from the treetops a typical song of this species, but not seen well enough for positive identification."

Comparatively few reports of warblers have been received from Cape Sable; the largest, 7 species on September 23, one or two of each, some of them found dead. The species were Magnolia, Cape May, Yellow-rumped, Bay-breasted, Mourning (caught), Yellowthroat and American Redstart; the Magnolia, Yellow-rump and Yellowthroat "several seen since, alive." On Seal I. September 21-23, 19 species of warblers, all of our natives except the Nashville, Black-throated Blue and Northern Waterthrush were found, but only about 1-10 of each, except the Black-throated Green (50) and Redstart (25). Warblers predominated in the September 23 movement of passerines, the largest count, of 230, was made at Spryfield, Halifax Co. (RB). A slightly earlier wave of warblers, on September 15 was noted in Pictou and Lunenburg Counties and included the Nashville, Yellowrump, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted and Palm. Much later, October 6, a very large mixed-species wave reported only from various places in Yarmouth Co. included "numbers" of the Yellowrump, Baybreast, Palm and Yellowthroat, with the Yellowrumps remaining and increasing in number up to October 18, when about half of them disappeared. It appears that the warbler migration was diffuse and rather late.

The "plums" of the season were not all found on the outlying islands this year, although most of them were. Two male PROTHONOTARYS, September 10, were identified on Sable I. by Bruce MacTavish. (An earlier sight record of one, a female, not reported previously, was made on Digby Neck, May 26, by J.B. Hardie.) Roger Burrows came up with several specialties this September, one, a GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER, September 8 at MacIntosh Run, Spryfield, described as in very good plumage and easily identified by the generally gray colouring, two yellow wing-bars and black markings on the face (plus other corroborative details). A Northern Parula chased the stranger away before a photo could be taken.

On Brier I. August 31, Bruce MacTavish found a YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER, among the others seen there that day, on the field trip, in the woods near the Mills' cottage. Bruce also found two of the three PINE WARBLERS sighted, one at the Piggery, Dartmouth, September 8, also seen by Stuart Tingley, and one on Sable I. September 10, both of these, males in good plumage. The third Pine



Sable Island Strays

Ian McLaren

Ian McLaren photographed all these on September 19th, 1974.

Top left: the ninth Island record of Black-billed Cuckoo - not so rare, but rarely so tame.

Top right: a male Hooded Warbler - the 16th individual record from Sable.

Bottom left: Wilson's Phalaropes - the eighth Sable record.

Bottom right: the first Say's Phoebe from the Island, and the fourth from Nova Scotia.

was identified September 15 at Spryfield, Halifax Co., by Roger Burrows, noted as "large in size, prominent wing-bars, white undertail coverts, yellowish flanks and breast, yellowish gray head and eye ring, greenish brown back apparently unstreaked."

Up to 4 PRAIRIE WARBLERS were found on Seal I. August 29-September 5, by Ian McLaren, who also found 2 on Sable I. September 10-12, one there September 19. Davis Finch had one on Brier I. on August 26. Another of this species was seen on Seal I. September 28 by Sylvia Fullerton and Bruce MacTavish. Seal had another plum for Ian McLaren, "a decisively marked bird, seen Sept. 4, undoubtedly a LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH", a Nova Scotia "lifer" for McLaren. On September 23, Ian MacGregor saw a Waterthrush which he tentatively identified as a Louisiana, possibly the same bird, on Seal I.

Still another surprise was a KENTUCKY WARBLER, possibly 2, adult males, on Seal I. September 4 and 6, identified by Ian McLaren, another "lifer" for him. One of these was again seen on Seal September 23 by Bruce MacTavish, Ian MacGregor, Stuart Tingley and Roger Pocklington.

A bird described as "seen with Common Yellowthroat, which was definitely smaller in size; features noted - very conspicuous white eye-ring, complete gray head, yellow underparts including undertail, flanks slightly buffish, pale legs, skulked low in alder and maple, only venturing into open once when 'shushed'", seen at Spryfield September 22 and identified by Roger Burrows as a CONNECTICUT WARBLER; was companioned by another of this species seen on Seal I. September 28 by Bruce MacTavish, and also well described (deep gray throat mentioned). It was feeding on goldenrod when observed.

A small flight of YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS paused here in September: 1, September 3 at Seal I. (IAMcL); 4, September 10 at Sable I. (BMacT); 1, September 12 at Sable (same observer); 1, September 21 at Cape Sable (SS): 1, September 23 at Seal I. (RGBB) and 1, September 28 at Pearl I. (IAMcL). Finally, a HOODED WARBLER, a male, was on Sable I. September 12 and the same or another there September 18-19 (IAMcL).

#### HOUSE SPARROWS

House Sparrows continue to deserve their name, found for the most part in settled areas, few to none in the country (MWH, GMacL); and in spite of their long breeding season (Edith MacLeod reports these sparrows raising a third brood September 20 at Glace Bay) numbers do not appear to be increasing. Evidence of a migratory movement early in October can be found in two reports - a flock of 10+ accompanied the big flight of warblers, vireos, etc., noted at Yarmouth October 6, in a small area where only one or two House Sparrows had been usual; and at Seal I., Dick Brown saw a single female or juvenile September 23, but on October 5, 6 and 7 the Cohrs found a flock of 9, which they photographed (in order to be believed, presumably! The House Sparrow is a rarity on Seal I.).

## ICTERIDS

Although the BOBOLINK population had reached full strength in the Annapolis Valley by May 23 (ACH), these birds were not noted in many areas until June (MWH, RB, GMaCL), and were still coming in by the end of that month, when 2 pairs plus one single stayed a day at Cape Sable (June 23, SS). The Bobolinks cover the whole province now, found from Homeville, Cape Breton (GS), to Yarmouth Co. (AH, DK, MWH); and in Shelburne Co., another probable nest was reported, the male singing July 4-13 at Brass Hill (JR & CDG). Bobolinks were noted at Pictou (EH) and large numbers of both young and adults at Brule Bay in July (IAMcL); they were called "fairly common" in the Valley (LEN, HJMcG) and many males and females were seen "flying around the church meadow at Indian Point, Lunenburg Co., July 4, feeding on old weed heads and singing, one male from the eminence of a small pebble" (RE). Three only were counted on Brier I. over the Labour Day weekend (NSBS), but 25 were at Seal I. September 23 (RGG), one only there October 5 (J & SC).

On August 31 at Cape Sable Light, a YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD was well observed by JR & CD Gallagher, Davis and Sally Finch et al.; another found at Sable I., a young male, September 10-13 by Ian McLaren, Eric Cooke et al.; a third, at Seal I. September 23 seen by Stuart Tingley and Bruce MacTavish, and photographed - a very beautiful picture, for the NSBS collection.

We have scanty information on the migration of Blackbirds so far this fall. The REDWINGED BLACKBIRD, which arrived in the Valley in March (ACH) was common there in marshy areas throughout the summer (LEN, HJMcG); called a fairly common breeding species at Kejimikujik (RB); frequently noted at Wine Harbour and vicinity (GMaCL); seen all summer in the cattail swamps near Lime Hill, Cape Breton, (M & FF) and a few at Grand River, C.B., in July (Jan Meyerowitz), but were not as numerous as usual in Shelburne (JR & CDG) and Yarmouth Counties (CRKA et al.). Our only migration report is of a flock of 300+ at Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary September 28 (RB).

One report of an ORCHARD ORIOLE has come in - a female, seen September 10 at Sable I. by Bruce MacTavish. The NORTHERN ORIOLE was seen June through August at Yarmouth (MWH), in the Valley (ACH, LEN, HJMcG), at Keji (RB), at Sherbrooke (Frank Jordan, reported to Gordon MacLeod); and started leaving late August; 2 immatures found at Cape Sable Light (JR & CDG et al.) on August 31; one at Brier I. September 1, 3 the same day at Green Bay, Lunenburg Co., then 2 seen at Seal I. September 1, up to 23 there September 23, and a late one October 4 at Spryfield (in order above, NSBS, the Cohrs, RGG and RB). Four of these orioles at Nictaux July 27 consisted of one female and 3 immatures, noted by Larry Neily and Helen McGloin.

The RUSTY BLACKBIRD was not often seen throughout the summer, but then it never is, breeding in inaccessible places as it does; but Roger Burrows found it "fairly common at Keji", with a record of 10 sightings there. It can be found if looked for in the right places, as the Gallaghers saw 2, July 10, at Bloody Creek, Middle Clyde, Shelburne Co., also one, August 30 at Birchtown Lake, one the same day at Deception Lake and 3 that day at MacKay's Lake, in the same county. One was also seen September 15 at Springville, Pictou Co., by M.Kenny and Ethel Crathorne.

Both the Rusty Blackbird and the COMMON GRACKLE were reported as more numerous than usual at Round Hill, Annapolis Co., summer 1974, by W.E. Whitehead, who also wrote that no migrating flocks of these birds had been noted to October 2, time of writing. The only such flock so far noted was one of 40+, September 6 "moulting", at Glace Bay (SM). Grackles have been passing through Yarmouth Co. in varying sized flocks since the first of October, and are still doing so, October 15 (CRKA et al.).

The BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD has been busy this summer. Larry Neily wrote: "Almost half of the nests we saw this summer had Cowbird eggs in them (Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Sparrows and even a Hermit Thrush were all victims). Possibly the nests victimized by the Cowbirds are the easy ones to find - after all, we found them!" According to A.C. Bent ("Life Histories") a female Cowbird selects a territory containing a number of suitable nests, and keeps a close watch on it, in case of her need. She is only dubiously safe with the Yellow Warbler, which has been found frequently to discard a Cowbird egg, or more often, wall it off, some nests having been found with three stories, the two lower each housing a Cowbird egg.

#### TANAGERS THROUGH CROSSBILLS

Three observations of a singing male SCARLET Tanager (1,2,3 birds?) were made in Kejimikujik Park June 13-July 1 by Peter Hope, E. Noller and Roger Burrows, but we have no further reports from the Park. Several fall reports include two on the mainland. In order of date seen, we have one September 12 at Sable I. (IAMcL); 1, female or immature September 15 at Petite Riviere, Lunenburg Co., (MWH); 1 at Waverley September 19 (BMacT); 1, September 23, full-plumaged male, at MacIntosh Run, Spryfield, accompanying the warbler flight there (RB); 3, the same day at Seal I. (RBB); 2 on Seal September 24 (BMacT); and one of these, probably, possibly another, still on Seal September 27 (SJF).

We have reason to believe that some of the CARDINALS did breed in Nova Scotia this past summer. Most of them disappeared by the end of June, but two pairs lingered, and are in fact still in attendance at their feeders of choice. These pairs are in Yarmouth Co., one across the pond (Lake Milo) just out of Yarmouth, at the D.F. MacDonald's. Gladys MacDonald says they did disappear about September 1, but the male returned last Thursday, October 24. The other pair, 2 of the 4 at the Edgar Hamilton's feeder in Pubnico all winter, since January 2, undoubtedly raised young. The female left in June, but in mid-July re-appeared and was observed feeding a young bird (ivory beak, fluttering wings). The Hamiltons were not sure how many immatures were fed thereafter, but guessed at three. After a time, the young birds disappeared, but the two parents are still (late October) around the feeder. Edgar Hamilton said he became very familiar with the mating song of the male bird in June, and could still imitate it. He did not think the nest was far away, but did not attempt to find it, as the birds flew in from a fiercely tangled area on neighboring property. They feed now mostly on corn, sunflower seed and suet, and apparently are here to stay. They are quiet and non-aggressive, seen mostly at dawn and early dusk.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS were well reported from the Valley (ACH, LEN,



HJMcG), young birds seen August 8 (WEW); from Economy ("summer residents up river bottoms, coming to the lowlands in Aug. and Sept., i.e. around our house", FS); and from Keji. On Seal I., 3 were seen September 22, up to 12 by September 23, on which day RB saw one, female or immature with the warbler flight previously mentioned, in the vicinity of Spryfield, Halifax Co. It seems doubtful that the 70+ Rosebreasts counted among the spring arrivals this year stayed in the province to multiply, unless they were very secretive about it, and about their departure.

At least two BLUE GROSBEAKS made a longish visit to N.S. this fall, one female at Lower Ohio, Shelburne Co., from September 18 to October 2, seen by Edith and Sylvia Bower and others, and a male, seen (and photographed) at Seal I. September 22 by the party there at that time, and still in the briar patch behind the Lighthouse the following weekend. Another regular stray, the INDIGO BUNTING, paused on Seal late September, 2 on September 22, 4 there September 23. Twenty of these birds were seen this spring, to which should be added 2 more, noted by Roger Burrows as he drove through Queen's Co. May 19. A small flight of DICKCISSELS, around a half a dozen, appeared at Seal I. September 22, one of them, a well marked male, photographed at the Lighthouse; and 2, probably of these, remained to be seen September 27, by the next party (SJF et al.). An earlier bird was seen there on August 24 by Bruce MacTavish. According to Bent, some Dickcissels, like the Evening Grosbeaks, carry out a considerable east-west, west-east migration and some of them, from their breeding grounds in the middle western states reach the Atlantic Ocean, mostly along the Massachusetts coast, in August and September. Here they may fan out, most going south (they winter in Costa Rica and northern South America), a few out to sea, and others are diverted northward. Tufts (The Birds of Nova Scotia, 2nd Edition, 1973) has records of increasing numbers of individuals and small splinter groups of Dickcissels reported in Nova Scotia from 1902 on. A few have been found here in January, noticed at feeders, which, one must suppose, would be their only means of survival. Finches are, however, a hardy and adaptable breed, and Dickcissels are notably erratic in their feeding range; perhaps in the course of a long long time, we will have a northern race of Dickcissels.

The EVENING GROSBEAK is definitely breeding now in Nova Scotia, and summering here in increasing numbers. It was noted through June, July and August very generally (but none seen in Keji after May). At Round Hill, Annapolis Co., W.E. Whitehead saw a female accompanied by 3 young on July 27, and at Homeville, C.B., Allison Ferguson noted a pair with 4 flying young July 29. The PURPLE FINCH evidently prefers greater seclusion for breeding, seldom seen all summer, although the few noted had very general distribution. It was present in Keji in greatest numbers, rated there as an "uncommon breeding species", with 17 records, June-August. A few, mostly singles, accompanied the flocks of migrating passerines in September.

Following an irruption in 1972-73, the PINE GROSBEAK had an off year in 1973-74 (American Birds: 28, 608, 1974). Notably scarce in Nova Scotia the past year, there may be signs of recovery. Three sightings in different areas in Shelburne Co. July 15-September 5 totalled 7 birds (JR & CDG); 4 were seen at Keji, and "several" at Port Hebert throughout the summer, also 4 at APBS September 29, and F & M Foote reported "flocks" at Lime Hill during July and August. Similarly, the PINE SISKIN, scarce of late, was reported only in three

places on mainland N.S. this summer, but in flocks at Lime Hill, Cape Breton.

The AMERICAN GOLDFINCH has been abundant all summer and fall, generally distributed. Numbers decreased in Cape Breton after August (SMacL). Along a country road near Crousetown, Lunenburg Co., on August 31, a flock of 300+ was encountered, the birds already in winter plumage (J & SC); the Goldfinch was the only finch present on Brier I. over the Labour Day weekend (sorry, one Purple Finch was there Aug. 31), 3, September 23 were seen on Seal I., and on October 6, at Yarmouth (23 Baker St.) 50+ were among the warblers etc. filling the trees, only 15 left around next day (MWH).

The RED CROSSBILL continues to outnumber the WHITE-WINGED, although both are scarce, the Red seen only in two places in Cape Breton, four on the mainland (Lime Hill, Mabou, Keji, Spryfield, Northfield Road, Annapolis Co., and APBS) 19 birds altogether, although at Lime Hill, "small flocks from time to time" in July and August were mentioned. The only reports of Whitewings are: 1, singing, June 11 at Keji, and 1, the same day on the Northfield Road, Annapolis Co., both seen by Roger Burrows.

#### SPARROWS

Fifteen species of this group were represented in Nova Scotia this summer and fall, 11 of our natives and 4 vagrant types. Of the latter, one RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE in bright plumage (male) was found on Cook's Beach, Yarmouth Co., September 30 (AH & MWH). We do not yet have the fall report on Sable I., and the only "IPSWICH SPARROWS" to hand are 3, seen October 5 at Prospect Pt., Halifax Co. (RB). SAVANNAH SPARROWS were abundant in appropriate habitat throughout the province, increasing in number after the first week in July, when the young ones added to the population. We may have missed the migration peaks of the Savannah this year, but it is interesting that such as we have coincide with last year rather closely (the two peaks then were on Aug. 27 and Oct. 8) - this year September 1 and October 6, but much smaller concentrations involved; on the first date at Brier I., on the second, the Yarmouth Co. mixed "wave", noted at Chebogue Pt. (30-40 birds in a small but crowded area).

Our second rarity was a couple of GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS, September 23-24 at Seal I. (BMacT).

The SHARP-TAILED SPARROW was noted as usual mostly in the salt grass behind beaches: Caribou I., Pictou Co. (EH); Evangeline Beach (LEN & HJMcG); Martinique Beach (E. Crathorne); Conrad's Beach (E. Crathorne & IAMcL); Petite Riviere (PRD); Pinckney's Pt. (LEN & HJMcG) and Sunday Pt. (MWH & AH). RB found some at Keji in meadows. We never seem to find Sharptails in migration, and this year was no exception. However, Ian McLaren saw numbers of adults in moult plus weakly flying young, being fed, September 21 at Conrad's, so we should keep an eye out for late October.

Five LARK SPARROWS, the third stray, were somewhat scattered in place, but close in time: 1 on Seal I. August 24 (BMacT); 1, August 30 at Upper Ohio, spotted by Davis Finch and well seen by Sally Finch, Julia Stark, Fabienne Haudrey, Ros and Connie Gallagher; 1, August 31 at Broad Cove, seen at a

distance of 10 ft., then it flew and perched in a scrub birch 30 ft. away, where it was viewed for 3 minutes by John and Shirley Cohrs; the other 2, September 2-5 at Seal I., found and identified by Ian McLaren, one still present September 22 (RGGB et al.).

The DARK-EYED JUNCO has kept up its numbers well, in spite of some difficulties; for example, the three nests found by Sylvia Bower at Campsite in East Jordan, where eggs were incubated and young hatched, then to disappear, unfledged - squirrels or crows, she suggested. Small birds have much to contend with. The wood edges were alive with Juncos through September, but large flocks were not found at either Brier or Seal on any of the fall trips. About 12 were among the throng at Chebogue Pt. October 6 (CRKA). The CHIPPING SPARROW was present this summer in normal numbers (never as abundant as the Junco). The count on Seal I. went up from 1 to 6 September 23, and 3 were among those present at 23 Baker St. in Yarmouth October 6 (none there since June), 2 also in the flock at Chebogue that day.

Roger Burrows heard a song characteristic of the FIELD SPARROW on July 20, across the Mersey River in Keji, too far for a sighting. Our fourth stray, the WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, came through in a tight little flight, the first seen, 1, September 27 at Cape Sable (BJS), the second, 10, September 29 at Amherst (CD), then 1, October 5 at Prospect Pt., Halifax Co. (RB), and 40+ the same day at Seal I., there October 5-7, reported by John and Shirley Cohrs as 2 with white crowns, the rest immatures. Bent gives the ratio of immatures to adult birds as usually 2 to 1, but can be as high as 97 to 1. Bent also mentions that in the spring, when northbound Whitecrowns are held up on the trip, they sing softly while waiting for good weather. This spring on Seal these birds were singing, indeed softly - the first time some of us had heard the song, which did not, then, indicate intention to become territorial, as we had hoped. We hadn't done our homework. The Whitecrown is not really a stray, since we are on its regular flyway to the Arctic, at least regular for some few of them.

The WHITE-THROATED SPARROW was abundant and singing all summer, and still is, the middle of October. No migration has been reported as yet, that is, unusual concentration in an area. The FOX SPARROW seems to have missed us altogether, only 2 reported, September 15 at Pictou (EH), not counting the one which appears to have spent the season in N.S., at Tusket, Yarmouth Co. (MH).

Roberta Beecher found and photographed a nest of the LINCOLN'S SPARROW June 17 at Gardiner Mines, C.B. It contained 4 eggs, three of which had hatched by June 17. There were 6 other Lincoln's Sparrows in the vicinity. On September 15, 3 of this species were seen at Green Bay, Lunenburg Co., not a regular habitat; and further evidence of a fall movement was the presence of 4 on Seal I. September 23. Reports of the SWAMP SPARROW were general but few, which is usually the case. No migration noted as yet. The SONG SPARROW was abundant all summer, but the 75 present on Seal I. September 21-23 were undoubtedly an augmented population, most of them on their way.

We will be seeing more of these birds in the next six weeks or so. Probably most of our native birds have left the province, and those which follow will be migrants from other territories. They will be reported in the next issue of the Newsletter. The early cut-off date for reports for this number makes the season seem short, something we would rather not do, but it was necessary, in

order to reach the membership in time for the Christmas Bird Count.

Please continue to send reports to Phyllis Dobson, and note the new address: R.R.#1, Ste. Anne du Ruisseau, N.S., BOW 2X0. If you wish to save postage, bring the reports along to the house. It is situated on Bel Lake, 15 miles out of Yarmouth on old Route 3. The birds are wonderful [ed. note].

Please send in photographs directly to Rosemary Eaton, Bissett Road, R.R.#1, Dartmouth (even if they accompany an article or bird reports). If they are really "STOP PRESS" please send them to Ian McLaren, c/o Department of Biology, Dalhousie University, Halifax. As well as photographs of rarities we would welcome good shots of more common birds going about their daily business. Black and white glossy prints are best, or colour slides can be copied. Line drawings would be appreciated. We would like to run some illustrated articles of favourite bird habitats around the province; showing features of the landscape, plant typical of the area or used as food by birds, and the birds themselves if possible (not forgetting a photo of the birdwatcher watching his favourite haunt).

For the reports making up the above summary of the season, many thanks to: C.R.K. Allen, Roberta Beecher, Roy Blakeburn, Edith Bower, Sylvia Bower, R.G.B. Brown, Roger Burrows, John and Shirley Cohrs, Eric H. Cooke, Ethel Crathorne, Norman Cunningham, Con Desplanque, Fred and Evelyn Dobson, Phyllis R. Dobson, Michael and B. Foote, Sylvia J. Fullerton, J.R. and C.D. Gallagher, Edgar Hamilton, J.B. Hardie, Frank and Thelma Hawkins, Marion W. Hilton, Sylvia C. Hilton, Eric Holdway, Peter Hope, Andrew C. Hopkins, Adele Hurlburt, Fred and Margaret Kenney, Dorothy B. Kirk, Donald MacDougal, Ian MacGregor, Helen J. McGloin, Ian A. McLaren, Sara MacLean, Edith MacLeod, G. MacLeod, Bruce MacTavish, J. McNichol, Rainer, Sandra and Jan Meyerowitz, Larry E. Neily, Richard and Roger Pocklington, Mrs. L. Roberts, Sidney F., Betty June, Locke and Beverley Smith, Francis and Edgar Spalding, Arthur Spencer, George Spencer, Robert Sutton, Stuart Tingley, Daniel Welsh, W.E. Whitehead, Ralph S. Widrig and Hazel Williamson.

Sightings on Seal I. August 28-September 6 were made by Ian A. McLaren and family. At Sable I., September 11-13, sightings were made by all or most of those present, who were Ian McLaren, E. Cooke, B. Doane, B. MacTavish (there on the 10th) and J. Robins. Ian McLaren and Al Smith (Can. Wildlife Service) were the observers at Sable September 18-19. At Seal I. September 21-23, the observers were Dick Brown, Roger Pocklington, Bruce MacTavish, Ian MacGregor and Stuart Tingley, and at Seal, September 27-29, the observers were Sylvia Fullerton, Barbara Hinds, Willett Mills and Eric Cooke.

Date for Reports for the next Newsletter

APRIL 1, 1975



#### WINTER BIRD TABLE

A birdtableful of Evening Grosbeaks (or Grosventres?) and a presiding Starling, photographed by 12-year-old Lise Cohrs. She had her camera on a tripod and after a long patient wait shot this photo through the dining room window. Lise has her own special bird feeder which she keeps stocked. She is a keen bird-watcher and has a life list of 162 species (all but 3 seen in Nova Scotia). At Christmas when her parents are out on the bird count, Lise stays home and reports on the birds at the Cohrs' feeders for the Christmas count.

#### SOME TIPS ABOUT FEEDING BIRDS

"Always take a second look when you are looking at birds." (What you think is something - may be something else. For instance, your pestilential flock of ravenous English Sparrows may have some Dickcissels tagging along. Three were seen this year at Cole Harbour among the regular flock of sparrows at the Eaton's).

Birds are always glad of food after a storm and it is good to hear that CBC asks listeners to help feed the birds on such occasions.

Obviously regular feeding is most important; if you start a feeder you should keep it going all winter. For those new to feeding birds, suet is better than fat if you can get it from your butcher (and that is unlikely before Christmas). Sunflower seeds are better value than the mixed seeds in attracting what one expert calls "the better class birds" (House or English Sparrows, and Starlings, not being classy). You get better value for your dwindling dollar at a feed merchant when you buy 50 lb. sacks - than you do from the small packets of wild bird seed sold by groceries or supermarkets.

Try and figure out what a bird needs in the way of food and cover and place feeders where the birds will be safe from cats. Thick spruce branches can be cut to provide cover from hawks. Most birds like to perch on a twig before flying to a feeder, and it helps to have a branch nailed to the bottom of a seed hopper. Small holes should be drilled at the bottom of these hoppers so that rain can drain out and they should have a good overhanging roof to keep the seed dry.

One birdwatcher keeps feeding the wild birds till early summer "That way you can keep 20-25 Purple Finches singing until the end of June, up the street and down the street and across the block - all singing away, it's like a bird paradise." This observer keeps feeding the Finches till they leave to nest, and then the young ones come back.



Roger Pocklington

#### OFF TO McNAB'S BY BOAT

Members of the N.S. Bird Society always enjoy field trips to McNab's Island in Halifax Harbour. It is so close, and if a group gets together it may not cost more than a dollar or so per head for the boatripe from Eastern Passage. At present it is ideal for those who like an outdoor ramble, and for children - there are no roads yet and so no traffic hazards. Besides being a good place for birdwatching there are some interesting old homes, fortifications, and there are picnic sites and sand beaches - so anyone can have a good time. The birders usually go to the end of the island and back, covering about six miles, but one can always sit in one place and still see a lot. However, plans are afoot for a big recreation development at the south end of the island with a causeway from Eastern Passage. One can guess that industrial and residential development will follow at the north end of the island once a causeway is built. If you want to see the island as it has been these last few hundred years - you may not have much longer.



Nova Scotia Information Service

#### CAPE SPLIT

On June 22, 1974, Helen McGloin, her ten-year old daughter Darcy, and I decided to visit Cape Split. It was already afternoon, so we took our tent and some food, planning to camp on the trail and spend the next day exploring and birding. We ran into fog at Scots Bay but were unperturbed, for we knew all would be well. On our way up the Valley I had quite innocently said, "I wonder what the weather will be like tomorrow?", as I was turning on the radio in the vain hope of catching the news and weather. And as I spoke, the radio answered, "...cloudy with showers Saturday. Sunday mostly sunny." At that I immediately turned it off. I was extremely pleased, not only with the forecast, but with the "You are psychic!" look I got from Helen.

We began our hike from the parking area at the end of the road only a short time before dark and soon realized we weren't going to get very far before we had to set up camp. Our decision of where to halt was made for us. A drenching downpour occurred while we were under the cover of some trees, and since there was a handy spot with a soft, inches-thick mattress of dead leaves we pitched our tent. We got soaked, of course, but if you don't get wet you don't get to enjoy that pleasant feeling of warming yourself over an open fire, in this case a can of Sterno. Then we went to sleep, with, amazingly, only one root under us.

The next day I was up first, having had the root to sleep on. I finally got the others up. After eating, we cached most of our equipment and started along the trail just as the treetops lit up with the early morning sunshine and the dew began to sparkle. It's a beautiful walk! For several miles one travels through an enchanted forest, brushing the cliff edges on the Minas Channel side

of the Cape. Then the path takes an abrupt turn back across the Cape and down, down, down into a small cove on the Scots Bay side. From there one can go back up, up, up and along the top of the cliffs to the 'split' or play tag with the tide and go along the beach to the end of the Cape. But make sure you get back to the cove before the tide comes in, because the cliffs are too steep to climb and anywhere from 100 to 400 feet high!

Birding was exceptional! Two ovenbirds were the first to announce themselves. Then a Swainson's thrush and a black-th. green warbler. The next bird we ran across was a mourning warbler. They seemed to take the place of yellowthroats on the Cape. We saw no yellowthroats or yellow warblers all day. But several mourning and black-th. blue warblers! Winter wrens were scattered over the Cape. White-th. sparrows, robins, red-eyed vireos, redstarts, catbirds, a hairy woodpecker and a family of ruffed grouse with an anxious mother were all woodland residents we encountered. The side hill above the cove was alive with birds. It appears to have been put to the axe at one time and is still growing over. There we saw eastern phoebes, e. wood pewees, crows, ravens, magnolia, parula, chestnut-sided, blackburnian, myrtle, black-th. green, and mourning warblers; flickers, red-breasted nuthatch, and boreal chickadees. We also had a glimpse of three large hawks, travelling together, that we couldn't identify. The end of the Cape, from the cove on, is more open and the sea comes into view. There we saw the usual herring gulls, a flock of common eiders, a pair of bank swallows, a junco and a pine siskin. At the very end, beyond the 'split', was a nesting colony of great black-bk. gulls, 150+ present, with fifteen downy young evident. Beyond the gulls was a smaller colony of double-crested cormorants, around thirty present. On a previous visit, July 17, 1971, there were about eighty each of the gulls and cormorants.

But the thrill of the day was definitely the owls. Firstly, at nine in the morning, we heard a barred owl, a goodly distance away through the woods. It called only once so I hooted back a few times hoping it would answer. None was forthcoming. Resigned to having no better luck with owls than usual, we were about to proceed when we heard it hooting again only a hundred feet away. We quietly rushed over and stood staring at it about thirty feet away. It simply stared right back. After watching it for a short time, I exchanged hoots with it. It just cocked its head a little and stared all the more. Shortly thereafter there was a flutter and it flew off majestically on huge wings. But before we could follow, another flew in and perched on the same branch. This must have been a young one, with bits of down still visible here and there, and with only whines for a voice.

Farther down the trail, at the cove, we had descended to the beach. We were scaling 'Gull Rock', an offshore protrusion connected only at low tide, when we spotted a whitish bird. It was in a spruce tree which stood by itself on a small ledge, three-quarters of the way up the cliff (a mere 100 feet high here). We easily identified it as an immature, downy owl but couldn't get close enough from below to specify it. After getting the best view we could from the beach we decided to try to get to the cliffs above it and get a closer look.

It was then we discovered the tide had been busy while we were occupied. Fortunately, we were close to the cove, because the tide had cut us off from using the beach to reach it. But we could still get back by scrambling over a section of rock jutting out from the cliff face. It formed the 'border' of



the cove and once in the cove one was safe. But it wasn't easy.

I had been this way before, alone, in 1971. I had hiked out along the beach to the very end and climbed the very last angular piece of land connected to the Cape at low tide. There, in mid-July, not one solitary human could be seen. The Cape was silent and still but the waters were swirling savagely even though the air was calm. I had been warned of the vicious rip tides tearing along the Cape and the veritable maelstroms of the Cape, where fallen, fully-limbed, spruce trees had been seen to rush toward, plunge into and come up a moment later, newly delimbed and debarked. But as I hurried back I couldn't resist crawling hands and knees through the 'Chimney', a short tunnel under one of the splits, that takes you out to the other side of the Cape. And, of course, when I got back I was cut off. It's a long walk!

We had, fortunately, and not without some foresight, left Darcy in the cove to play on the beach. She busied herself looking for agate and amethyst. We climbed the outcropping and crossed it as I had three years before, but this time we found a new aid. Someone else, perhaps as unheedful of time as we, had attached a rope to the top of the promontory, overhanging the narrow, wet, seaweed-covered ledge, that, as I recall, I had to risk my neck to get to in '71. Helen and I, not without some difficulty, even with the rope, finally made it to the ledge. There we had to roll up our pant-legs and jump three or four feet into a couple of feet of water (it comes in quickly!) and wade into the beach. The water is fairly calm on the cove side of the outcropping, only a slight undertow from the current rushing by it.

Then we went up to the top of the cliff where the trail branches to the cove and to the end of the Cape on the topside. We took the branch nearest the cove and followed the cliff along until we found a spot directly above and about thirty feet away from our owl. There the three of us examined him at our leisure. As for him, he was a bit nervous but moved very little, mostly a turn of the head now and then. The adults were not visible, though possibly nearby. The bird was mostly white and downy but tufts were visible and its plumage, especially its facial markings, was beginning to show. After a close study under excellent conditions, we decided it was a Great Horned Owl!

That should give you some idea of what a day on Cape Split can be like. Beautiful, wonderful and full of surprises! Yet, what will it be like in years to come? It is still mostly unscathed, having avoided the touch of human hands over the years. But how long before someone decided to 'develop' it? The only people who seem to be using it at present are hikers and nature lovers, but even they aren't taking care to see that it remains as beautiful after they've left as when they arrived. At the end of the Cape, at the 'split', we found a pile of trash, left, no doubt, by people camping there. That hurts; but how much worse if someone initiates a major logging operation on the Cape and destroys the large stands of virtually untouched, deciduous woodland. Their primeval, cathedral-like atmosphere; their deep, mossy-green mattress of quiet grace; their aura of wilderness and their freedom from fear and man all contribute to their exemplary beauty. I feel somewhat like I'm delivering a 'testimonial', but I really feel that we shouldn't allow an exceptional, natural environment such as this to slip away under the axe and bulldozer. And the land use policies of our society frighten me. I would like to know what if any,

protection it has. And if none, why not?

--- Larry E. Neily ---

#### NOTES

BANDING RECORD for Glossy Ibis. During the incursion of Glossy Ibises in Kings Co., April 8 through May, 1974, Donald Harvey saw several feeding by a swale on his farm at Grand Pré. Shortly afterward he found a dead one there which was wearing an official leg-band. A report came in, August 22, from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Laurel, Maryland, stating that the bird had been banded as a chick, by Dr. R.A. Byrd, at Williamsburg, Virginia, on May 30, 1970.

This information was relayed to us by Dr. Robie Tufts, who went on to say: "the fact that all of the Glossy Ibises seen by myself" (at this time) "were normally wary and actively feeding, coupled with the fact that all disappeared suddenly suggests that these birds had become oriented and left for home."

NESTS OF THE SHORT-EARED OWL. In the 'Year of the Mouse 1973-4', so named by Joe B. Ternan, he had found five nests of the Short-eared Owl, up to June 19, in the Bellisle Marsh, near Annapolis Royal. His report is as follows

- #1. Struck by farm machinery, quite by accident. The old bird was injured but flew away. Several young killed and the uninjured were left with the idea that the parent birds would return. There were no birds there the following day. This was told by Mr. Warren.
- #2. Built on the bank of an inlet in the reeds and grasses. This nest was destroyed by fire. There are still farmers in the area who insist upon setting fire to any dead vegetation they come across. It makes no difference if birds are nesting or not. This nest was found by my Labrador. I did not see it.
- #3. Built on the bank of an inlet in very heavy vegetation. My dog found this nest. I almost walked in it. There were 2 birds, very much alive. The old birds seemed more interested in the dog than in me. I felt that it would be O.K. to have our Official Photographer, Mr. Bill Wetmore, and the Chief (Rev. Calder Fraser) of our Identification Branch, do their stuff. They did. A fire on the bank of the inlet had been stopped by GREEN vegetation just a few feet from this nest. The fire was set that late in the season.
- #4. Nest on a slope of an inlet. It was found by my dog. I did not see this nest.
- #5. Nest in FIELD. Spotted by operator of a plow. He bypassed it. Bird undisturbed. Raised a family. Photographed by Mr. Warren. I did not see this nest.

A word about using a dog to hunt birds' nests etc. He is a black Lab. now quite deaf and there are indications of cataracts. We have been together on the marshes, rivers, woods and shore about every day in the dozen years I have had him. He touches nothing and never kills. If he finds a porcupine he will bark until I 'get the message' and he then goes on. In the case of ground nesting birds ... when the Willet swoops down on him I feel it safe to assume that the nest belongs to them. Same with the Short-ears. I feel that this is a reasonable way to identify. I never knowingly go near a nest.

I mention this just in case someone might feel that the birds were being harassed or at the least disturbed. The owls, I might add, seem to enjoy the dog. He probably gives them a little diversion.

TWO VISITS TO A HERONRY. An account by Roberta Beecher, formerly of Glace Bay, present address 161 Webster Ridge, Berlin, Conn.:

Our largest shorebird, the Great Blue Heron, is usually seen wading in shallow water stalking food. Mr. and Mrs. Stanley McRury and I had the unique opportunity of observing a nesting area of these magnificent birds. The rookery is located approximately a mile and a half from the Mira River, the nearest large body of water. The precise location will remain unnamed because of the danger of indiscriminate shooting.

On the twenty-eighth of April, 1974, we slogged through the snow still in the woods and arrived in the general vicinity of the rookery. (Robert McRury found the rookery two years earlier.) The herons sounded like a flock of geese or occasionally like barking dogs. We followed the noisy voices of the herons through the spruce growth, past a small grassy bog hole, and into a growth of maple and yellow birch. The herons seemed upset by our presence and flew off their perches, circling the rookery area. We were quiet and the herons soon perched in the trees or on a nest.

The nests were constructed of dead sticks, most less than an inch in diameter. The nests appear flimsy to support such a large bird; the sky could be seen by looking up through the nest. They were all built in hardwood trees although spruce was available. One tree held five nests. Some were located in the fork near the trunk and others were halfway out on a limb. Most were as far up the tree or as far out on a branch as would support the weight of the nest and the heron. Using the range finder on the camera, the height of the nests above ground was from thirty-five to fifty feet. The colony covered approximately an acre of open hardwood growth; we counted thirty-two nests and approximately forty birds. The heron uses the nests year after year, repairing them each spring as was noted on our second visit on the twentieth of May.

It is interesting to contrast the behavior of the herons on the two visits. In April they were noisy and two males were attempting courtship but were rejected. On the May visit the herons were much quieter and settled on their nests more quickly. I could not see into the nests, but I do not think any eggs had been laid. The herons were merely standing, not lying in the nests. The nests appear to have been repaired and made stronger during the month of May, but we did not observe any herons carrying sticks. Again,

approximately forty birds were present. We did observe two or three flying to or from the rookery, while walking out of the woods.

The physical appearance of the herons was gorgeous. The black plumes trailed out behind the head; the breast and underbelly were covered with fluffy white feathers, one of which I found. The feather appeared to have two parts, a long (five inches) and a short (two inches) joined at the base of the shaft. The bills were bright yellow, contrasting sharply with the bright black eye.

It was fascinating to watch this magnificent wader perched in a tree, opening and closing its wings and grasping flimsy branches in a tree top, balancing in the wind.

PRINCIPALITY OF OUTER BALDONIA: for the birds. Recently the Nova Scotia Bird Society has come into possession of four of the so-called Bald Tusket Islands, off Yarmouth County. There is a romantic story in connection with one of these islands, which many of you have heard. For the benefit of those who have not, we are herewith reprinting an article from The Nature Conservancy News - Summer, 1974, 1800 North Kent Street, Arlington, Va. 22209. This was obtained for us kindness of Dr. and Mrs. J. Roswell Gallagher, of Barrington, N.S. and New Haven, Connecticut.

"In 1949, Russell Arundel, an ardent sportsman, was fishing off the coast of Nova Scotia, Canada, in the great tuna fishing area known as Soldier's Rip, when his boat was overtaken by a squall. He took refuge on a treeless island occupied only by some half-wild sheep and a nesting colony of terns. Enchanted by the place, Arundel decided to buy it, and before long, he was the owner of tiny Outer Bald Island, the outermost of the Tusket Islands located some miles south of Wedgeport.

"Arundel decided, however, that ownership of the island was not enough. After proclaiming himself "Prince of Princes," he drew up a Declaration of Independence and a Constitution for the Principality of Outer Baldonia. The Declaration states that "fishermen are endowed with the following rights: The right to lie and be believed, the right of freedom from question, nagging, shaving, interruption, women, taxes, politics, war, monologues, cant and inhibitions, the right to sleep all day and stay up all night." Two dozen colleagues were made Princes of Outer Baldonia, and a number of local guides were commissioned as Eight Star Admirals in the Outer Baldonian Navy. These appointments were made by Letters Patent bearing the Coat of Arms of the Principality (dominated by tuna, sheep and a grinning, top-hatted lobster), authenticated by the Great Seal and signed "Russell Rex" by Mr. Arundel. Passports and postage stamps were designed. A currency was established, based on the "tunar," the coin of the realm. And on the island's ragged cliffs, a twenty-by-thirty-foot stone castle was built and adorned by the royal Baldonian banner.

"Arundel then set about the task of attaining foreign recognition of Outer Baldonia. The principality was listed in the District of Columbia telephone book; Rand McNally was instructed to correct its maps to show the new state, as was the National Geographic Society; the Board of Geographic Names of the U.S. Government was likewise regally commanded to take notice of the new fact. The Provincial Government of Nova Scotia issued a press statement that

it was undecided about recognition of the new state. The U.S. Government did not respond officially, but a minion of the State Department did call once to ask about the principal exports.

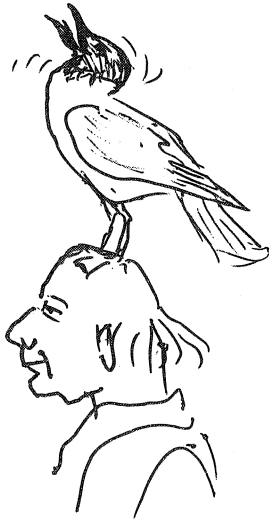
"Before long, tongue-in-cheek articles about Outer Baldonia began to appear in Canadian newspapers; the story somehow reached Germany and was translated and printed, in all seriousness, in the journal *Industriekurier*. In 1952 the German article reached Moscow. The Soviet response was to publish a blast in the *Moscow Literary Gazette*, quoting the Declaration of Independence and excoriating the Western Imperialist, Prince Russell, who had given his people the right not to adhere to the ethical and moral laws established by mankind. What else would one expect? Outer Baldonia sent an official protest to Moscow.

"As the years rolled by Mr. Arundel's interests turned more to the birds that nested on Outer Baldonia and he decided to assure its future as a sanctuary for breeding sea birds. In 1973 he gave the island to The Nature Conservancy by simple deed, disdaining a Treaty of Cession, partly because the Conservancy was advised by counsel that it probably did not have the power to annex an independent country.

"Today the only relic of Outer Bald's illustrious past is Prince Russell's castle (now a winter shelter for the island's sheep). Through arrangements made by the Conservancy and its sister organization, The Nature Conservancy of Canada, the island and its rookeries are now owned and protected by the Nova Scotia Bird Society."

BLOMIDON NATURALISTS' SOCIETY. With an initial membership of over 60 people, mostly from the Cornwallis-Anapolis Valley, the Blomidon Naturalists' Society (BNS) has been formed. The first *Newsletter* of this society was published in August 1974; editor Jean Timpa, whose address is Mrs. John W. Timpa, R.R.#3, Box 129, Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0, telephone number 542-5678. The Nova Scotia Bird Society wishes to congratulate the people who have been instrumental in forming this new group, which has already brought and will in future bring widening interests to many others in this region. The first publication contained articles and described lectures and field trips dealing with such things as Observatory Star Watching, Frog Choruses, Early Migratory Birds, Glacial Geology, Canoe Trip up the Black River, Biology of Intertidal Zones and the Cape Split Hiking Trail.

THE BIRDS OF KEJIMKUJIK NATIONAL PARK. "At present 146 species have been recorded in the park, plus three hypothetical sightings. Of these, 99 species are known to breed or have bred in the park." So reads the introduction to a recent pamphlet sent to us by Peter Hope, Park Naturalist at Keji, which pamphlet contains an annotated list of the park birds, and may be obtained at the park, or by mail. Visitors to the Park are urged to contribute their observations there to the Park Naturalists, especially notes of birds classed as rare and very rare.



DOUBTFUL RECOMMENDATION. The Gallaghers of Brass Hill, Barrington, like most of us, prefer to stand in good repute with the neighbours. Since taking up bird-watching, with all the activities pertaining thereto, they have noticed a certain uneasiness, which they felt would not be dispelled by a recent well-meant message from a fellow enthusiast. Returning from an expedition one afternoon, they were met at the door by a neighbour who said somewhat doubtfully, "I expect it was a joke, but a man came looking for you, but couldn't wait, and said 'just tell them Davis Finch called to say he saw a Laughing Gull today, standing on Dan'l's Head'."

#### BIRD SOCIETY NEWS

The Newsletter is still settling down after the changeover from Phyllis Dobson's sole editorship to that of an editorial board. We hope members will forgive omissions and delays during the process of transition. For example, we should have acknowledged Francis Spalding's contribution to the Members' Slide Show. And it was particularly unfortunate that the last issue only came out after the cut-off date for records for this one. That was because the Managing Editor spent much of the summer bouncing, like a demented intercontinental pingpong ball, from Halifax to Greenland to Toronto to Canberra to Moore's Ledge, with only brief stopovers at home in which to deal with the Newsletter. He is less peripatetic in winter - let's hope this issue is more punctual.

After the President's Field Trip this fall, Roger Pocklington, on behalf of the Society, presented a painting of Purple Sandpipers to Phyllis Dobson on her 'retirement' to Yarmouth County. Phyllis is still helping to edit the Newsletter, and is busy watching the departure of the migrant birds to places south. Birdfeeders are up beside her new home on a lake and no doubt we will be getting interesting bird reports from there.

Watch out for the CBC TV series 'Land and Sea' and 'The Way Out'. A program of each series was shot on Seal Island in September, and is due to be shown sometime in the New Year. You may recognize some Society members....

#### Executive Meeting

One was held at the President's home on October 17th. The President was in the chair; R. Lamberton, F. Dobson, H. Carmichael, E. Crathorne, R. Anderson and J. Elliot were present; apologies for absence were received from E. Cooke and P. Dobson. The Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as read. The Treasurer reported that grants of \$1200 for 1973 and \$1500 for 1974 had been gratefully received from the Nova Scotia Museum. Progress towards a new checklist and Society brochure was reported by R. Pocklington, who has had conversations with Provincial Department of Tourism officials in the hope of enlisting their support for the project.

The time having come for re-appointment of Trustees for the Sanctuary, Scholarship and Trust Fund, the Secretary will approach present Trustees to see if they are prepared to serve another five-year term, with power to add additional Trustees as necessary. Appreciation was expressed for services already rendered.

Certain islands and leases currently in the name of the Society should be transferred to the Sanctuary, Scholarship and Trust Fund. The meeting authorized the Secretary to contact our Honorary Solicitor to find out how to go about this. This matter, and the re-appointment of Trustees, will be placed on the agenda for the Annual General Meeting.

#### Help Wanted

Last year Margaret Monks bravely made a one-woman Christmas count by bicycle at Liscomb. She plans to repeat the count this year, but would appreciate help, preferably from someone with a car. Anyone interested should get in touch with her, either at 472 Logan Street, Saint Lambert, Que., or (just after Christmas) at Pye's Head, Liscomb.

#### Reports of Field Trips

##### August 31-September 1

The Labour Day weekend at Brier Island got off to a bad start, but eventually proved rewarding for those few who stuck it out to the end.

Weather prognostications were unfavourable, which discouraged many people from coming, so we had a relatively small party of around twenty-five, but all of the best. Roger Pocklington was officially in charge, with help from Eric Cooke. Charlie Allen was there, Willett Mills, Terry Hyson, Bruce MacTavish, Marion Hilton, Dorothy Kirk, the F.W. Dobsons (whole family) and Phyllis Dobson, the Roger Burrows, the Hemions, Peter Hope from Keji, Frank and Mary Himsl, Margaret Clark and nephew, Dave Swinimer; the Coldwells, J. Wilson, Jean Taylor, Ralph Connors (the photographer), Stuart Tingley, Fran Cook and Shirley Brothers, Larry Neily and Helen MacGloin, Dick Brown came late, and we were very pleased to have with us the Norman Bowers and the Arthur Langfords from Quebec, only sorry that they were unable to stay for the belated pelagic trip.

Most of us arrived with the wind and the rain and the fog on Saturday, August 31, and held an impromptu gathering at the Dobsons, at their campsite where we sat around in our rain attire, drinking hot coffee and discussing the prospects for the morrow. These did not look too hopeful, but as it turned out, the rain held off, the fog lifted (to some extent), and it stayed warm - well, warmish. At any rate we were able to put in a good day of birding, parties covering the island thoroughly, to meet for lunch at Roger's (the Mills cottage), where we made up The List. We exchanged territories in the afternoon, when the sun came out and some warblers had arrived, bringing our list to 95 species. We had worked for them, however, as the number of individuals was small, and many expectable ones just not present. We had found a Mockingbird, and Bruce got his Yellow-throated Warbler that afternoon, but aside from that, no rarities.

At sea the visibility remained nil, so many of us called it a day, and went home. This was a mistake. Eric Cooke has written: "On Monday (Sept. 2), only four of us were left - Fran Cook, Shirley Brothers, Stuart Tingley and I - but the weather was good so we went out in a boat. It turned out to be the most exciting of the pelagic trips I've been on. Not as many Greater Shearwaters or Phalaropes as we've had other times, but more Puffins and a higher percentage of Sooty Shearwaters (about 400 Greaters, and we counted 18 Sooties sitting on the water around the boat at one time, 40 altogether for the trip).

Several whales were around, and porpoises played about also. But most exciting was the Skua which put on quite a show for us, landing on the water twice so we were able to approach within 50 feet; attacking first a Gannet, then a gull, then another gull, all close to the boat often within 50 feet of us, for about 5 minutes. What a display it was! And you can imagine how excited we were!

"Dick Brown and Bruce MacTavish were out in another boat from Long I., and their estimates differed somewhat from ours [not significantly] but we put it at around 3000 Red and 100 Northern Phalaropes and 25 Puffins, besides the Gannets (10), Cormorants, one Leach's Petrel, gulls, 4 Terns, a Loon and a Guillemot."



This party also added 9 species of land bird to the weekend list, bringing the grand total to 114, not bad, considering the weather, and the lack of any migration peak.

--- Phyllis Dobson ---

Editor,  
NSBS Newsletter.

I am listing a number of species that I have seen during the spring - some general dates (not necessarily first sightings) and some specific details. All sightings were in the estuary of the West/Rights/South rivers at Antigonish, or along the rivers. I have included migrants and residents:

<u>April:</u> Common Loon	<u>May:</u> Pied-billed Grebe (one there for two weeks)
Double-crested Cormorant	Great Blue Heron (breeding)
Canada Goose	American Bittern
Mallard	Blue-winged Teal (breeding)
Black Duck (breeding)	American Wigeon (1 pair)
Pintail (2 pairs plus 3 drakes)	Ring-necked Duck (1 pair nested, plus several unmated drakes)
Green-winged Teal (breeding)	Red-tailed Hawk (1)
Greater Scaup	Marsh Hawk (1)
Common Goldeneye	Osprey (8 breeding pairs - 6 nests located)
Barrow's Goldeneye (1 drake, 2 ducks)	Killdeer
Bufflehead	Spotted Sandpiper (several breeding)
Hooded Merganser (1 drake)	Willet
Common Merganser (breeding)	Bonaparte's Gull (several adults and immatures)
Bald Eagle (at least 2 pair breed in the area, plus at least 6 immatures)	Common Tern (several)
American Kestrel	Mourning Dove
Ruffed Grouse	Great Horned Owl
Common Snipe (breeding)	
Greater Yellowlegs (breeding)	
Great Blackbacked Gull	
Herring Gull	

Antigonish,  
June 4 1974

Norman Seymour

Ed. We hope this list will draw observers' attention to a part of the province from which we receive surprisingly few records.

Editor,  
NSBS Newsletter.

This past Saturday a.m. (May 4) was one of my most exciting experiences since I started birdwatching. I rose early and went over to Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary. There is a small dyke which extends out into the new impoundment area, with a large stump at the end of it. I was able to sneak out and place myself upon the stump without raising too much suspicion and soon became totally ignored. I watched a pair of Common Gallinule feeding no more than 50 yards away for 15 minutes when I diverted my attention to an American Coot who pulled up on shore about eight feet from where I was sitting and pruned himself for several minutes. Whenever I whistled or spoke to him, he protested very loudly, the noise being exactly as on the Peterson record. After several minutes he slowly "pumped" away and joined a second coot in the nearby cattails. From my vantage point I was able at one point to count fourteen Pied-billed Grebe. With all the grebes calling, a screeching coot, several whinnying Sora, and the occasional grunts from the Gallinules, the noise was deafening. (I forgot the four or five winnowing Common Snipe.) To add colour to the scene were 3 Wood Ducks, 100+ Green-winged Teal, 40+ Blue-winged Teal, and 100 or more other assorted ducks (Am. Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Pintail, Blacks, Mallards), many of which were displaying and adding their own particular sounds to the roar. It was truly a morning to remember. Other local recent sightings of interest include a Great Egret at the point on May 1, and a Glossy Ibis yesterday at Jolicure.

Sackville, N.B.  
May 7, 1974

Stuart Tingley

Editor,  
NSBS Newsletter.

Firstly, some highlights of last season; secondly, sightings from winter week-end wanderings, and thirdly, activity about our several feeding stations.

May 20/73 A pair of black-capped chickadees busy with a family in a tiny nesting box at the top of our garden.

June 10/73 With Cyril Coldwell made a twelve-hour, between tides, visit to Boot Island, off Grand Pré, observing approximately 3000 nesting gulls, of which two thirds were Blackbacks; looked over about 600 nests containing newly-laid eggs (average three) to half grown young. On the basis of previous visits, the Blackbacks are pushing the Herring Gulls into a much restricted portion of the island's east end. In the wooded area at least fifty pairs of Blue Herons had nests with young, while in the more scrubby evergreens along the precipitous northeast shore, a hundred pairs of double-crested cormorants were nesting - a colony that has more than doubled in the past three years.

A mockingbird came to our garden on June 20, and remained to scold and display wing patches, but not to sing, until August 5.

On June 10/72 my wife observed a pair of nesting Killdeer in a small grainfield on the Wolfville Ridge, and the young were photographed. Reported to

Tufts, he pronounced them to be the first Killdeer observed in this area since 1954. This summer of 1973 the farmer fenced the field and turned loose some hundred hens, geese, and ducks which subsequently had their strings of young. The field soon became one big mud pie. The Killdeer returned planted a nest in the midst and reared four of a family. They could be seen from the roadway wandering among the chicks, goslings, and duckling until early August. John Erkiner living less than a half mile away mentions another pair nesting near his home. We may have something developing, and this of course we will be watching in the coming seasons.

July 29/73, again with Cyril Coldwell, canoed the Black river lake and Methals waterway in search of nesting Eagles. Saw three, two of them mature birds. Examined one nest that had been restored but not occupied, and another containing young. This later one was later vandalized with one of the young being removed which in consequence of its captivity met with a tragic end. That, however, is another story the final chapter of which is yet to be written.

Ellenwood Park, Yarmouth Co.; August 7th. found a Veery Thrush nesting in a spreading mat of Wintergreen. Photographed the bird, also her lichen lined nest with its three plain blue eggs.

The Mocker (or another) was here again Sept. 22nd. & 23rd. An albino Robin roamed the neighborhood for a week in mid October. Observed by a number of our neighbors.

Our winter wanderings produced on Dec. 23rd. a Yellow-breasted Chat; later observed by several 'birders' including Bob Lamberton. Last sighted on Jan. 7th. a mild day, as it flitted in and out of the Rosamultiflora appearing to be quite restless.

An interesting observation is the increase in the number of Eagles along the Gaspereau and Cornwallis rivers during the past several winters. Cyril Coldwell reports sighting, on a day in mid January, ten at one time near his Crow baits, five of them mature birds. You may be aware that Cyril has trapped and banded more than 2000 Ravens over a number of years. He has now entered upon a Crow banding program.

Looking the dykelands over on several occasions I have seen but one Roughleg, which leaves me rather puzzled as there exists a high population of field mice this season. Redtails are here in about the usual numbers as one or two may be seen on any outing - riding the updraft over the Wolfville Ridge or over the municipal garbage disposal.

Wintering Robins seemed to be doing quite well until the recent heavy snows - haven't seen one in more than a week. Thus far have seen only one pair of Bohemians, which appeared first on Feb. 1; mid-February usually brings its group of from 30 - 60. Have seen only one small flock of Buntings, and one covey of 10 Hungarian Partridge; no Snowys, Redpolls, Horned Larks or Longspurs as yet; this is not indicative of their absence but possibly because my outings this winter have been fewer in number.

Feeding our winter birds is a pleasure many of us enjoy. In the face of today's growing storm there were present: 10 Pheasants, 20-30 Juncos, 6 White-throats, 3 Tree Sparrows, 2 Song Sparrows, 9 Purple Finch, 1 pair of Goldfinches, 5 Bluejays, several Chickadees, small flocks of House Sparrows, Starlings,

Cowbirds, and 6 crows.

A stray female Redwing Blackbird was seen only once, Jan. 19. A pair of Mourning Doves came regularly for a time in early January but have not been seen recently.

One last reference, and this has to do with Sharpshins: During the past three winters we have had a Sharpshin raiding the feeders once to three times a week. Two years ago the bird had two rows of pure white feathers down its back - indicating some tendency to albinism. We were urged to collect this bird and forward it to Godfrey in Ottawa but refused. The hawk has its place in the nature of things. However, last winter's hawk was a big immature, and for some time I was ready to say "Cooper's" until I had taken and studied some photographs. The bird was very aggressive, and with a dozen or more bird feeders within a half-mile area, soon established a regular roost in a thick group of spruces in a near-by ravine. On Feb. 4/73, the ground being bare from rain and high temperatures, I examined his lair and found feather remains of 2 Juncos, 2 Robins, 1 Goldfinch, 4 Cowbirds, 1 Bluejay, 1 not identified, but possibly Evening Grosbeak, and the near-by remains of a hen Pheasant - which could have been a cripple or killed by a Redtail.

This winter we have been more generous with the crows, and have sighted a marauding Sharpshin only three times. And one is still left with the question: "Encourage the crows to the area to rob the songster's nests next season, or allow the hawk to raid the wintering ones congregated about the feeders?"

We still have much to learn that only a great deal of patient observation will tell us.

Wolfville, N.S.  
Feb. 20, 1974

Oscar W. Morehouse

## NOVA SCOTIAN BIRD RARITIES IN PERSPECTIVE

### PART III. GOATSUCKERS TO VIREOS

by Ian A. McLaren

I apologize for not having made the last issue of the *Newsletter*. Let's see, we made a prediction about Ground Doves last time. Instead, White-winged Doves turned up in Maine, N.Y., and Connecticut in late December last year, and of course our very own Band-tailed Pigeon has confounded the odds. Rarities by definition are unpredictable. Nice to note, though, that a European Whimbrel has turned up to match expectations.

The following list considers about half the land-bird rarities. Although we are sea-girt, it is these land birds that seem to offer most opportunity for Nova Scotian rarity baggers, for reasons discussed in the introduction to Part I.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW. Although on our list, it has not been seen alive in Nova Scotia by any of us. It is bound to turn up again, even if only seen briefly when flushed, and might impress the observer by its large size relative to our native goatsuckers.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD. The sighting of a male by a visitor to our province on 30 May 1964 remains unique. There are several Florida records and one possible sighting in Connecticut.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD. Our 1967 bird stayed around for a couple of days, and it is a pity it wasn't seen by others and photographed. There are Florida and Gulf Coast records and recent ones from Maryland and Ontario.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER. A good deal rarer here than its Red-headed cousin, the Red-bellied seemed to have stalled its northeastern advance in 1972, but picked up again last fall and winter.

LEWIS'S WOODPECKER. Why not? There are Ontario records for autumn 1972 and late winter 1973 and a second Massachusetts record in 1969.

GRAY KINGBIRD. The sight record from Sable Island on 20-23 October 1973 is the most recent in the northeast since sightings in Maine and New Brunswick in September 1965. This distinctive stray from the southeast should be looked for in late fall.

WESTERN KINGBIRD. This bird can hardly be called a rarity in Nova Scotia; rather, it is a regular stray, recently even in spring. Phyllis Dobson underlined its absence in 1969. However, birders should always be aware of two other possibilities. An individual of a race of the TROPICAL KINGBIRD has occurred once in Maine, and CASSIN'S KINGBIRD has occurred perhaps thrice in Ontario. Remember, though, that white outer tail feathers can be dirty, worn, or lost in the Western.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER. It is a little surprising that we have no records of this bird, but do have the FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER, one of 3 sightings in the northeast in a decade and one of about 17 for North America. The Scissor-tailed has been seen about a dozen times in the northeast in the same period, including in Maine and New Brunswick. There are a half-dozen earlier records from nearby New Brunswick (Boyer, 1950). So let's get cracking. About half the northeastern sightings are from May-June and the rest from autumn, some quite late.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER. Rumour has it that one or two of our NSBS members suspect they've seen it in Nova Scotia. A photo should distinguish it from our now regular Great Crested Flycatcher. There are a few records from the southeast, including a recent spring one, and recent sightings from New York (late November 1970), Massachusetts (late November 1972), and Maine (mid-September 1971).

SAY'S PHOEBE. The bird is a fairly regular stray in the east, and we now have our share -- 3 sightings since our 1966 specimen.

EMPIDONAX FLYCATCHERS. The field-guides rightly stress the difficulties of field identification of these small birds when they are silent, out-of-season and out-of-habitat. Yet the Yellow-bellied is quite distinctive, and the smaller, grayer-backed Least Flycatcher is generally easy to tell from the "Traill's" in migration hereabouts. However, the truly keen won't want to stop at this. "Traill's" has now been "split" into

our Alder Flycatcher (song "fee-be-o") and the more southern WILLOW FLYCATCHER (song "fitz-bew"). The Willow Flycatcher has become a regular breeder in coastal New Hampshire, and the first two Maine records were in early June 1973. It will no doubt turn up in Nova Scotia, hopefully as a singing male "overshoot" in spring. If you hear a "fitz-bew" in Nova Scotia, contact someone with good recording equipment. The bird is indistinguishable in general appearance from the Alder, but about 90% are said to be separable in the hand by complicated measurements (Stein 1963). Another possibility to be aware of is the ACADIAN FLYCATCHER, not yet recorded from its nominate home. It nests in Connecticut, and one was said to have been mist-netted in New Hampshire in August 1972. Davis Finch and Eric Mills pursued an Acadian-like bird on Sable Island in May 1973 without being wholly sure. It is a greenish-backed and often (especially in fall) quite yellow-bellied bird, but its whitish throat and larger size (bigger on average than "Traill's") should distinguish it from Yellow-bellied Flycatchers if seen well. Acadian Flycatchers migrate into their summer range in April, whereas the Yellow-bellied do not pass through this range until May and arrive in Nova Scotia usually quite late. Early Empidonax should be looked at with care. I would like to have seen the "Yellow-bellied Flycatcher" recorded here on 27 April 1967 (Newsletter, July 1967). Finally, given our attractiveness for western strays, you might look at Plate 45 of Godfrey (1966) and weep. Nevertheless, anything is possible: the southwestern GRAY FLYCATCHER, quite distinct in appearance and unknown in Canada, was found in Massachusetts in late October 1969. Bird banders on our offshore islands should of course be prepared to make the discriminating measurements of birds in the hand. And any late Empidonax kills (cats, lighthouses, what have you) should be frozen and sent to a museum or an authority with a collecting permit. (Late Peewees should also be kept.)

VERMILLION FLYCATCHER. One was reported to have come aboard a fishing boat near Seal Island on 25 May 1955 (N.S. Mus. Newsletter, August 1955). One assumes that the possibility of it being a Scarlet Tanager was rejected, but the record does not appear to have been referred to, even as "hypothetical), in subsequent books and lists. Certainly it is conceivable. There are recent records from the U.S. southeast.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW. Our sight record in late August 1965 was followed by one in New Hampshire two weeks later that year. Looks like a once-in-a-lifetime event; but we've had presumed western (Great Basin race) Cliff Swallows since.

ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW. This one, first recorded on Sable Island in 1964, will probably nest in Nova Scotia some day. It first did so in New Brunswick in 1969.

CAVE SWALLOW. Our 1968 and 1969 records from Sable Island and 1971 individual from Seal Island remain unique north of Florida. Certainly birders should be alerted to the possibility of this species "trapped", perhaps, among Cliff Swallow flocks and compulsively carrying on north with them. The few who have seen the Cave Swallow can now turn their attention to flocks of Tree Swallow in the hope of some day spotting a vagrant BAHAMA SWALLOW -- which seems on the face of it just as likely as a

Cave Swallow. And has anyone pored over field marks of the subtropical martins?

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE. The fairly regular occurrence of Magpies in the U.S. northeast is attributed to escapes by some. But people list them anyway. Our Brier Island bird in May 1973 and the (same?) one seen earlier in New Brunswick were quite shy, but this is no assurance of origin in the wild west.

FISH CROW. The records on Cape Sable Island (one in February 1966; two noted in B.-J. Smith's list in the April 1972 *Newsletter*) and the one from Sable are as yet our only evidence. Such a tricky bird might remain "hypothetical" until a good voice recording or specimen is obtained. The species has wintered for years at a dump just south of Boston and recently nested there for the first time.

TUFTED TITMOUSE. The bird was quite common last winter in New Hampshire and is occasional in Maine. We can expect a stray down Yarmouth-Digby way some day.

WRENS. All our recorded wrens except the Winter are somewhat rare. The House Wren has nested, and the Long-billed and Short-billed Marsh Wrens nest near our border with New Brunswick. The LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN is of interest because of the possibility of guessing at the origin of birds that are spotted. Inland birds (*dissaeptus* and *iliacus*) are larger and usually tinged with buff below. East coast birds (*palustris* and more southern forms) are smaller, darker backed, and whiter below. Detailed notes or colour photos might place your bird. The white-eyelined CAROLINA WREN, which could possibly be confused with the Long-billed Marsh Wren, has occurred regularly in the northeast, recently in Maine. Furthermore, there are Maine and New Hampshire records of BEWICK'S WREN. As a very far-out possibility, a ROCK WREN occurred in Massachusetts in winter 1965-66, having been misidentified for months previously!

VARIED THRUSH. Our three Nova Scotia sightings are at the fringe of a "corridor" of records across the continent from the west coast (Keith 1968). Another western thrush, TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE, has occurred 8 or 10 times in the northeast, including New Brunswick and recently twice in Quebec.

FIELDFARE. Our most unsatisfying (to local birders) occurrences in October 1971 and 1972 are among the half-dozen North American specimens or sightings.

WOOD THRUSH. Now a breeding bird in Nova Scotia, it is of interest to find that there was a northeastern surge in the twenties, when it nested in New Brunswick (Squires 1948).

WHEATEAR. There have been about one a year in the northeast since the mid-sixties, including our 4 Nova Scotian sightings since 1969. So keep your hopes up and carry a camera.

THRASHERS. The Brown Thrasher is no longer a rarity, but why hasn't it been found nesting? Western possibilities include the SAGE THRASHER, with

a number of east coast sightings including one in Massachusetts in October 1965; and also the CURVE-BILLED THRASHER, known in the southeast and recorded in New Hampshire in October 1964.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT. There are of course no Nova Scotian records, but I know some birders who have scrutinized Water Pipits with palish legs (which evidently occur) hopefully. Sprague's has occurred in the southeast but not yet, I think, in the northeast.

VIREOS. Among our "regular" rarities, the Philadelphia and Warbling probably breed, and this year's unmated male Yellow-throated was on territory. More exciting is the WHITE-EYED VIREO, for which we have a recent addition to the late Dr. Lewis's scrupulously documented sighting of May 1953. The White-eyed is a hardy bird, wintering at times in the south-east and having occurred in early November in Massachusetts. BELL'S VIREO has yet to occur here, and is far less likely. It might be looked for as an early overshoot -- it has occurred in late march in New York, late April in Massachusetts, and early May in New Hampshire.

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