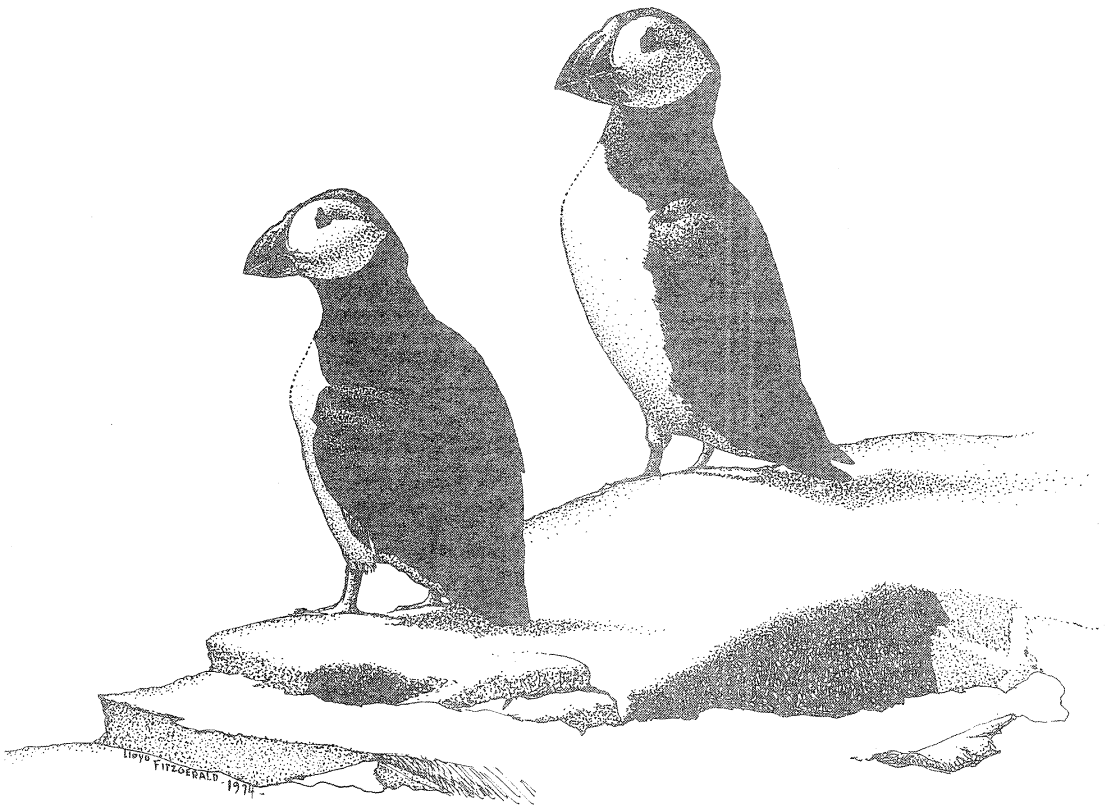


# NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

MAY 1977  
VOLUME 19 NUMBER 2

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Winter Birds	86
Mskegooakade - C.R.K. Allen	114
Christmas Counts	122
George Spencer, An Appreciation - F. Robertson	140
A New Bird for Nova Scotia - R. W. Tufts	141
Audubon's Shearwater, A Species New for Canada	142
Field Trip Reports	143
Up-coming Field Trips	144
Helping Oiled Birds	146
Letter to the Editor	147
Worm Watchers - Evelyn Dobson	149
Summary of Executive Meetings	150
Maritimes Shorebird Survey	151

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## WINTER BIRDS IN NOVA SCOTIA

1976 - 1977

1976-77, the year when the weather was News, Nova Scotia got off comparatively lightly. We had a winter of considerable severity, but it was not overwhelming as it proved to be in central Canada and the United States, where Arctic storms dumped snow upon depths of snow and carried paralyzingly low temperatures south to Florida and east to the Bahamas.

The west coast on the other hand, suffered "heat" waves and drought.

In western Nova Scotia we grumbled at the continuous snow shovelling, and we all of us grew tired of the freezing temperatures which persisted stubbornly from December through February. This steady severe cold caused heavy ice to form on lakes and inlets. Kingfishers and Great Blue Herons disappeared and geese and ducks moved out of range of shore-based binoculars. Alcids, on the other hand, came within this range as inshore waters cooled, and we have had more than the usual handful of reports of these deepwater birds.

Field trips on land were made through an austere and lifeless countryside - boisterous with wind and blowing snow; silently drearily dripping, or sparkling under a wintry sun - but in any weather practically birdless. A few crows, inky black in startling contrast to the immaculate snow cover, a cautious-stepping pheasant, a soaring buteo hawk or the bonus of a restless flock of Snow Buntings - this made a "big" day.

During the record fall migration birds denuded much of the countryside of its winter supply of seeds and berries, and snow cover obliterated the rest. Consequently the birds remaining in the region flocked to food provided, and those of us who maintained feeders were in luck. Here were birds in plenty.

Many species came to feed. Perhaps these birds are always present in Nova Scotia during the winter but remain at large in more open weather. This year they came boldly into view, driven no doubt by hunger. Whatever the reason, we had more Mourning Doves than usual reported, more Boreal Chickadees (and at last a firm record of one actually eating at a feeding tray, at the Henry's) more Red-breasted Nuthatches, more and earlier finches - the Purple Finches came in January instead of their usual middle of February invasion - more Juncos than last year and many more Tree, White-throated and Fox Sparrows mentioned than we have for a good long time. Jays and woodpeckers and robins were normal in numbers, Redwings (possibly) and Song Sparrows somewhat fewer than usual, and Yellow-rumped Warblers virtually absent from most of their accustomed territory.

"Wild" finches (non-feeder birds) such as Pine Grosbeaks and the Crossbills, which feed in tree-tops, were well up in numbers, but it was not a Redpoll year, nor have Siskins come back to us in any numbers as yet. Notable was a curious "invasion" of the Varied Thrush - three individual sightings so far reported.

We have never before had so many hawks, nor owls, seen in winter. Most of our regular species were noted, and of our Arctic visitors the Snowy Owl was present, although in small numbers, but the Rough-legged Hawks were numerous, 18 quartering the Grand Pré alone, counted at times throughout the winter.

This issue of the Newsletter contains the Christmas Counts (CBC's) for 1976, and you may note that both numbers of birds and numbers of species are up from last year. This is probably due to more people taking part in more counts; nevertheless there were 140 species of bird present here in Nova Scotia the last of December, 1976. In the report to follow many of these and some others will appear, still present even if rarely encountered. Our winter countryside cannot really be as lifeless as it seems.

Again, our heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to this very interesting report.

Phyllis R. Dobson  
Records Editor.

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\* S. Ferguson (SF).

It is probable that next year reports on winter birds will be asked for at the end of February instead of March. This is in accordance with the new ruling of the international record-keeping publication American Birds, and is also more realistic, even as far north as Nova Scotia.

We would ask that reporters keep the dates in mind: (last week of ) May, July, November and (next year) February - material to be received by the Records Editor no later than the last day of the month.

The Records Editor asks most urgently that reporters use their given names and wherever possible supply an extra initial.

The editors also earnestly request that reports be sent (as most of you do, now) on separate slips of paper, one per species, size about 2-3" by 3-4", giving the name of the bird, date seen, place seen and name of observer; any other information pertinent following and/or on the back - or if a lengthy description on an accompanying sheet of paper.

Sample	6x8 cm.
Robin	
3	
March 30	
Cheese Factory Corner	
Hants Co.	
R.E.Porter	
All bright males.	

Many of the birding areas in Nova Scotia "crop up" regularly in the following reports. To prevent repetition of the locations of these areas in the body of the text we include this list for reference:

<u>Yarmouth Co.</u>	Pinkney's Point, Tusket, Cranberry Head, Cook's Beach, Melbourne, Eel Brook.
<u>Shelburne Co.</u>	Cape Sable Island, Barrington Bay, Jones Harbour, Brass Hill, Upper and Lower Ohio, Upper Clyde, Lockeport, Matthews Lake.
<u>Queen's County</u>	Port Joli, Port Hebert, Turtle Lake.
<u>Lunenburg Co.</u>	Cherry Hill, Broad Cove, Petite Riviere, Green Bay, Crousetown, Crescent Beach, Bayport.
<u>Halifax Co.</u>	Grand Desert, Three Fathom Harbour, Conrad's Beach, Lawrencetown, Martinique Beach, Cole Harbour, Mooseland Road.
<u>Digby County</u>	Brier Island, Smith's Cove.
<u>Colchester Co.</u>	Economy
<u>Annapolis Co.</u>	Wilmot, Round Hill
<u>Kings County</u>	Wolfville
<u>Cumberland Co.</u>	Lusby Marsh, APBS (Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary)
<u>Guysborough Co.</u>	Wine Harbour.

CBC's - Christmas Bird Counts.

#### LOONS, GREBES

COMMON LOONS were reported from six places in Cape Breton, two on the Eastern Shore, eleven on the South Shore, three in the Bay of Fundy and none from the North Shore. Greatest numbers were seen on the CBC's: 84 at Halifax West, 79 at Brier I., 65 at Broad Cove and 60 at Halifax East. Several reporters noted the same numbers of birds in the same locations through the winter and suggested that individuals had taken up winter territories. By early November the RED-THROATED LOONS had passed by but left a sparse winter population. There were 2 at Louisbourg Nov. 2 (RB) and single birds at Lockeport Dec. 24 (RJC), at Glace Bay Feb. 3 (CSM), and in the LaHave Feb. 27 (EM et al), and in the N.W. Arm at Halifax March 7. Highest count was 7 seen on the Halifax W. CBC.

RED-NECKED GREBES are rather uncommon in winter in Nova Scotia waters except in a few favored localities. Three at Louisbourg Nov. 24 could be the tail end of the fall migration. One was found dead Jan. 23 at Cape Sable (SFS) where several were seen during the winter until the beginning of the spring build-up when 50-60 were reported March 27 (BJS). A single bird was seen at Jones Harbour on Jan. 22 and again (same bird?) on Jan. 23 (LEN, HJM). Christmas Counts, despite many more observers produced only several birds in each area except the following (numbers in brackets are individuals seen): Brier I. (118); Halifax W. (35), Broad Cove (25). Unfortunately no observers checked St. Margaret's Bay, Halifax Co., where fair numbers of these grebes usually winter. Sightings of

this species increased sharply in March with the onset of the spring migration which will be reported in next issue. HORNED GREBES were reported from a total of eleven localities not counting the CBC's, and of these nine were from the South Shore where over 80 individuals were seen, while single birds were observed at just two other places, both in the Bay of Fundy. Christmas Counts had three birds from the Fundy region (Annapolis and Advocate) and a total of 258 from the five other points where this species was seen, all on the South Shore: Halifax E. (19), Halifax W. (47), Port Hebert (30) and Broad Cove (162). Brier I. in the No Man's Land between the Bay and the open Atlantic had a CBC count of 31.

One of the 'finds' of the year was the EARED GREBE reported by the Smiths at Cape Sable Jan. 7, 1977. There has been only one other sight record of this species for Nova Scotia so it remains on the hypothetical list.

Two winter records of the PIED-BILLED GREBE are: 1 at Tusket Falls Dec. 14 and 2 at Cape Sable Jan. 2 (the CBC).

CRKA Ed.

#### FULMARS, SHEARWATERS, STORM-PETRELS

We have very few tubenose reports: just 75 NORTHERN FULMARS seen on the Cabot Strait CBC, and an unidentified SHEARWATER off Halifax West.

#### GANNETS, CORMORANTS

NORTHERN GANNETS were also poorly reported. Roger Burrows sends the latest record for Cape Breton - an immature at Louisbourg on Nov. 2 - and there was another immature at Lockeport on Dec. 5 (RJC). The first bird of the New Year was reported from Sable Island Bank on Feb. 26 by David Kulka, and the Smiths saw their first bird at Cape Sable on March 23.

GREAT CORMORANTS were seen all through January and February from the Halifax-Dartmouth ferry (ECra and others), and the Cohrs saw numbers with breeding patches off Bayport along the Lunenburg Co. shore on Feb. 18. There were none on the LaHave River on March 16 - though the Cohrs did see a couple of DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS there. There were occasional Double-Crests at Louisbourg, Glace Bay and Belfry Lake until early December (RB), and Brian Macleod saw 5 at Irish Vale on Nov. 28. The Smiths report 6 at Cape Sable on Feb. 6, and continued to see small numbers at least until March 27.

RGBB Ed.

## HERON, BITTERN

GREAT BLUE HERONS lingered in good numbers through December (17 individuals on 9 CBC's) and into January (7 reports). There was a single bird at Amherst Point as late as Jan. 30 (CD), though most January sightings were in Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties. A single heron was reported in February, at the other end of the province (Ball's Creek, CB, per FFR), and near the end of March the first returning migrants were seen, right on schedule (Mar. 22, Pinkney's Pt., MWH; Mar. 24, Cape Sable, Charles Symonds).

A few late AMERICAN BITTERN reports from the Smiths at Cape Sable round out the picture of the end of the fall, 1976, migration: they had a bittern Nov. 19-23 (the late date reported in the January Newsletter was Nov. 25) and another Dec. 18.

RL Ed.

## GEESE AND DUCKS

Apparently no large flocks of CANADA GEESE wintered in Nova Scotia this year, probably because of ice conditions on inshore waters. Largest number reported in winter quarters was a flock of 250 at Cole Harbour (EHC). The Henrys recorded small daily counts in the lower Tusket River of from 6 to 34 birds during December, increasing from 26 to over 100 in January, this increase being due no doubt to the freeze-up at the nearby Melbourne Sanctuary. Other localities where 100 or more birds were observed are: 250 at Lingan Bay Jan. 3 (CSM); two flocks of 500 and 300 flying by Cole Harbour Feb. 14 (EHC), 400 at Jones Harbour Jan. 22 (LEN, HJM) and 150 at Turtle Lake Jan. 2 (N&TB).

The 13 BRANT seen at Wolfville on the CBC count must surely have been wintering birds, but the 9 at Cape Sable Feb. 12 (SF&BJS) and the 15 at Long Island Jan. 30 (MP) are harder to place. A flock of 6 at Argyle Sound Mar. 10 (CRKA) were probably spring arrivals, the 56 at East Point (Grand Pre), Kings County Mar. 30 (G&AM) certainly must have been.

The largest number of presumably wild MALLARDS recorded this winter was the 5 seen in the Sydney area on the CBC. There was a male at Conrad's Beach Dec. 11, Another at Cole Hbr. Feb. 6 (EHC), and an unspecified number wintering with the mixed flocks of ducks at Sullivan's Pond in Dartmouth (ECra). As with the Canada Geese no great concentrations of BLACK DUCKS were noted this winter, probably for the same reason - freezing over of the usual feeding grounds. Cape Breton reports were of small numbers, mostly 50 birds or less, at Louisbourg, Lingan, Glace Bay and Port Morien, with a high count of 220 at Sydney River during February (RB). It was good to have a report from Antigonish, our first for a long time, where according to Roland Chaisson the Black Duck population was about the same as last year. In the Bay of Fundy, the largest number wintering anywhere was at Economy - 400 strong (FH). There were 150 at Bear River Feb. 19 (PRH et al) and over 100 at Windsor Feb. 20 (LEN, HJM). The only South Shore reports were from the SW region: 100 at Lewis Head Jan. 23 (LEN, HJM), 300 wintering at Cape Sable (Smiths) and small numbers in the lower Tusket estuary from December to mid-January when according to Reginald Doucette they disappeared until the middle of March.



PINTAILS, never common in winter showed up in three places; a female or immature at Louisbourg Dec. 2 (RB), a male at Martini-que Beach Feb. 1 (GB, RM) and 2 at Stirlings Pond, Greenwich, Kings Co., Jan. 20 (JW). A number of sightings in March will be included in the spring migration report, next issue.

Two GREEN-WINGED TEAL at Louisbourg Dec. 8 could have been late migrants but 1 seen at Sydney Forks Feb. 3 (RBF) had to be a wintering bird as did the 2 females Jan. 4 at Iron Mines, C.B., seen by Stuart Tingley. All March sightings will appear in the next issue.

An EUROPEAN WIGEON was observed under good conditions and well described Dec. 9-12 at Louisbourg (RB).

On Feb. 22 at Argyle Sound a male REDHEAD in rather nondescript plumage was observed under fair viewing conditions but for sufficient time to determine the species (CRKA).

The only sightings of RING-NECKED DUCKS are: 1 at Louisbourg Nov. 15 (RB) which could be a very late migrant, and a possible wintering bird seen on the Halifax West CBC.

Three male and 4 female CANVASBACKS were seen at Cole Harbour Dec. 5 by Eric Cooke, who subsequently saw a lone male of this species several times both here and in adjoining Three-Fathom Harbour up until March 13, always in company with a flock of Scaup.

Winter sightings of GREATER SCAUP were reported at Glace Bay Sanctuary where there were 12 Feb. 13 (SM), a number which had increased to 100 by Feb. 27 (RB). There were 210+ in the LaHave Jan. 15 (SJF), over 500 at nearby Bayport Feb. 18 (JL&SC), 90 Feb. 19 at Annapolis (LEN, HJM) and 11 in the Tusket Dec. 19 (Yarmouth CBC). There is a definite movement of scaup during February each year and whether or not this should be considered a part of the spring migration is anyone's guess. At any rate all February sightings have been included here while records for March have been held over for the next issue.

COMMON GOLDENEYES were present in moderate numbers - a half dozen to several dozen birds in all regions from mid-December to early March when the spring movement got underway. High counts were: 252 (Brier I. CBC) and 150 at Bayport, Lun. Co. Feb. 18 (JL&SC). A total of about 15 BARROW'S GOLDENEYES was sighted during the past winter, approximately equal, 7 each from Cape Breton and the North Shore; and 1, a female, at the Annapolis Causeway Jan. 30 (PRH) was well described leaving no doubt as to its identity. The Cape Breton sightings were at the Sydneys where 3 showed up on the CBC, and at Louisbourg where Roger Burrows saw an immature male and up to 3 females on a number of occasions during December and January. The North Shore observations were of 1 at Pugwash Jan. 22 (CD) and 6 males in the same locality Feb. 12 (FH, FS)

As usual Annapolis Basin produced the greatest number of BUFFLEHEADS - some 200 to 300 wintered there according to Annie Raymond. There were also small flocks at Cape Sable, Abrams River, Cherry Hill, Tusket River and Parrsboro. A few still tarry, at least in Yarmouth County inlets at the time of writing (early April).

The first OLDSQUAWS, 3 in number, were seen at Louisbourg Oct. 27, numbers increasing to 10 by Nov. 2, 16 on Nov. 9 and peaking to 65 by the 24th. They then levelled off to a daily average of a little over 20, and dropped off in early March, 2 being still there on the 20th. First record for the Eastern Shore was Nov. 8, when they were heard at Wine Harbour (G&OM). The largest number reported was about 200 (except for the 388 seen by the Brier I. CBC party), at Mahone Bay Mar. 16, seen by the Cohrs who described them as very active, noisy and beautiful in their new breeding plumage. Smaller numbers were seen at points in Cape Breton during January (HEH, SM) and along the South Shore from the N.W. Arm, Halifax (JBH) to the Yarmouth area (MWH, SFS), and in the Bay of Fundy (LEN, HJM). The Smiths at Cape Sable reported Oldsquaws in small flocks just off shore up to March 15.

A single female HARLEQUIN DUCK and a possible male were at Louisbourg Dec. 9, reported by Roger Burrows. There were 17 at Port Hebert Dec. 26 and 8 at Broad Cove Dec. 31, both seen by CBC parties; and 3 males and 5 females at Cherry Hill Feb. 27 (ELM, PRH).

Consistent observations by Roger Burrows at Louisbourg produced few COMMON EIDERS from early December to mid-February. Only other Cape Breton record is of 6 at Forchu (HEH). There were about 100 at their usual location at the head of Green Bay Feb. 18, 25% of which were males in full breeding regalia and 10% in intermediate plumage. Later (March 18) numbers at the same place had swelled to over 500 plus many other flocks of 20-30 along the shore to nearby Broad Cove (JL&SC). The Smiths reported 'good numbers' at Cape Sable until mid-January when they fell off and did not increase until the week of March 13-20 when a noticeable migration got underway. The NSBS party tallied 554 of this species on the Brier I. CBC.

A KING EIDER "spiced up" the Halifax East CBC on Dec. 18, and a male on Jan. 16 and later, Feb. 6 a female of this species were at Three-Fathom Harbour where they have been seen before by Eric Cooke, who reported them there again this year.

There were just 10 records of WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS at Louisbourg from Oct. 25 to Dec. 9, all being of just 1-2 birds. Numbers increased somewhat through January and February with highs of 14 on January 17 and 21 on the 19th. There were 89 White-wings at Irish Vale Jan. 4 (BM) and 30 in Sydney Harbour Jan. 23 (HEH). The only significant South Shore report is from Cape Sable where there were "fair numbers" of this species in company with Black Scoters up to mid-January when they became scarce; but as with the Eiders a few began moving by in mid-March (Smiths). They were last seen at Economy in mid-December (FH). Migrating SURF SCOTERS first appeared at Lr. Economy on Aug. 21 when over 20 showed up; there were 25 by Sept. 4 increasing up to 40, Sept. 18 and peaking to 75 by Oct. 11. Numbers remained in the 40's and 60's until mid-November when they began to fall off and 2 birds on Dec. 21 were the last seen (FH). At Louisbourg there were 15 records from early October when 15 birds were seen, to Nov. 27 when 1 appeared. Maximum number during the period was 31 on Oct. 25 (RB). These are the only records of sightings of Surf Scoters this year for the entire province. BLACK SCOTERS, to judge by records, were rare birds in Nova Scotia, although combined efforts of CBC parties managed to find fair numbers here and there. Aside from those there were 2

at Louisbourg Nov. 8, a maximum of 10 there Dec. 8, 1 on the 9th and 4 on the 12th. J. B. Hardie saw 1 in the N.W. Arm, Halifax on Dec. 9 and the Cohrs had 2 at Crescent Beach Mar. 17 and another 2 or the same at Green Bay (nearby) Mar. 18, in all probability migrants.

A female RUDDY DUCK, the only one of its kind to make this winter report was seen at Louisbourg Dec. 11 by Doug Pearl and subsequently by Roger Burrows who sent in a full description.

A HODDED MERGANSER on Dec. 27 is another rarity. This bird was at Joggins, Digby, where it was seen and identified by Barry Sabean.

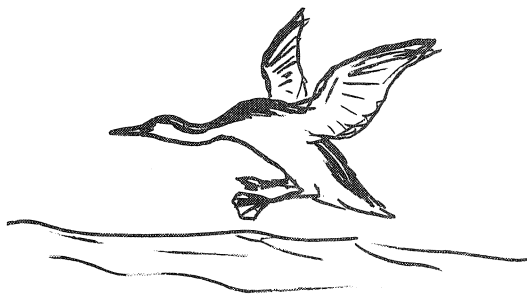
COMMON MERGANSERS were present in numbers varying from 2 or 3 up to about 65, mostly in ice-free stretches of the rivers in all parts of the province except the Eastern Shore where bird-watchers are scarce in winter. Winter records of RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS are surprisingly few; a flock of about 12 at Louisbourg up to Dec. 12 and 3 at adjacent Bennington Cove Dec. 9 (RB); 13 at Cape Forchu Feb. 22 (CRKA); a single bird Feb. 1 and 3, Mar. 3 in Halifax's N.W. Arm (JBH) and 12 at Petite Riviere Feb. 18 "much outnumbered by Common Mergansers" (JL&SC) make up the quota for the South Shore. Bay of Fundy sightings were equally scanty: 2 males Feb. 17 at Spencer's I. (FS) and 2 Dec. 19 at Margaretsville (LEN,HJM). The spring build-up which began early in March will be reported in our next issue.

CRKA Ed.

Additional to the above records we have these following which arrived too late to incorporate in the main report. Stuart I. Tingley sends his apologies. We value these North Shore sightings particularly as we feel this region is a rich one, especially for ducks, and is often neglected.

Great Scaup	Dec. 27	2 at Pictou
Common Goldeneye	Dec. 27	8 at Pugwash, 6 at Wallace, 25 at Pictou
Barrow's Goldeneye	Dec. 27	1 male at Pugwash
	Feb. 27	2a males, 1a female at Pugwash
Oldsquaw	Dec. 27	6 at Pictou
Common Merganser	Dec. 27	18+ at Pugwash, 55 at Wallace 230 at Pictou Causeway
Red-breasted Merganser		small numbers (5-15) at Pugwash bridge all winter.

These are the sightings of Stuart Tingley, assisted on Dec. 27 by Davis W. Finch and Peter Vickery.



## DIURNAL RAPTORS

This winter's hawk and eagle reports are exceptionally careful and complete - many thanks to the observers.

Seventeen GOSHAWK sightings, representing 9 or more individuals, do much to invalidate the gloomy picture presented by the CBC's (where Economy produced the only record). SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS, always most conspicuous in winter when they raid the concentrations of small birds at feeders, were very well reported. Over 60 sightings represent a minimum of 29 individuals. Several observers noted that their winter visitors gave up the feeders early in March, and two individuals in Con Desplanque's garden in Amherst, Mar. 12, were performing what "looked very much like display flights". Of 3 COOPER'S HAWK reports, 2 offer no trenchant details and the third, from Roger Burrows at Louisbourg, is persuasive without being definitive. His two pages of description certainly convey the feel of a Cooper's Hawk - but there is not a single characteristic (including rounded tail) which eliminates the possibility of the bird's having been a large adult female sharpie. I don't mean to be perverse on this point ... Roger's the only observer who's entirely convinced me of a winter Cooper's Hawk in my several years writing this portion of the summary. It is, however, an outstandingly difficult bird to call, and in many cases, I'm afraid, distinctions among accipiters are just impossible.

Among the Buteos, RED-TAILED HAWKS are reported wintering at various localities, but Thelma Hawkins' comment that they were "not as noticeable (around Wilmot in the Valley) as some winters" seems to apply generally. Twenty-two individuals on the Wolfville CBC were certainly a remarkable concentration, but they represent nearly 60% of the total for the counts of the entire province! Three or more birds wintered successfully around Wolfville (OM), and an adult at Keji was seen all winter, but aside from these birds, the only February records were from Yarmouth Co. For the second time, the Brier I. CBC produced a winter RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (Dec. 20).

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were scattered (mainly in coastal areas) on CBC's, and concentrated only at the marshlands near Wolfville. Oscar Morehouse (and others) report that "at least 5 individuals" remained, hunting the dykelands, in January and February. Eleven sightings from Yarmouth Co. indicate that as many as 6 birds wintered there (CRKA, et al). These hawks were present, but never numerous, on the border marshes this winter; Con Desplanque reports several sightings, but his high is only 2 birds (March 27, Amherst Marsh). Two wintering birds at Lawrencetown (EHC et al) and a handful of scattered single sightings complete the picture for the mainland portion of the province. After a few Cape Breton sightings in November, the only wintering bird reported for the island was a dark-phase bird observed repeatedly at Louisbourg by Roger Burrows.

Perhaps the most infuriating report of the season comes by way of Frank Robertson's Cape Breton Post column. The season's only GOLDEN EAGLE (January Newsletter, p. 17) was apparently shot by persons unknown.

BALD EAGLE records are numerous and widespread. It is very difficult to arrive at realistic figures for the wintering population, because we know little about the movement of these birds during the winter months. Some wintering areas, such as the one near Wolfville, and the one south of Yarmouth, seem to have stable populations, but isolated single observations from other localities might represent wintering birds or simply wanderers. Sifting the season's reports, I believe we have records of about 82 individuals (53 adults, 28 immatures and 1 unspecified), about one quarter of them from Cape Breton Is. It is not possible to break down the Cape Breton birds by county, because the Bras d'Or Lakes (where the island's 4 counties meet) are the focus of the eagles' winter activities, and they move from county to county, taking advantage of the best feeding conditions. There seems to be at least 21 separate individuals reported from Cape Breton as a whole. Kings Co. has a wintering flock of about the same size (22 individuals recorded in a careful census, Jan.22). I have assumed 9 additional birds for Hants Co., but there is a distinct possibility that the Shubenacadie birds are also seen at Wolfville, and possibly at Halifax as well. Halifax and Yarmouth Counties follow with at least 6 individuals each, then Colchester with 3, and only 1 or 2 individuals are reported from each of the remaining counties.

The percentage of immatures reported in the wintering population has fluctuated as follows:

1973-4:	33%
1974-5:	33%
1975-6:	48%
1976-7:	37%

If this overall increase in the percentage of young birds is real (and not merely the effect of uneven reporting), the trend seems to be a healthy one. A note on behavior: Roger Burrows reports a bizarre incident at Louisbourg, Feb. 18, when a Bald Eagle apparently killed an adult cat and was seen carrying it off to the floating ice to feed on it at leisure. We tend to think of these birds as scavengers...clearly, they do occasionally kill their own food.

One or more MARSH HAWKS seem to have wintered in the marshes of the Wolfville area. Three individuals were still there at CBC time, and Marsh Hawks were seen there Feb. 11 (OM) and March 7 (RM). Other winter records are single sightings at Cape Sable (Jan. 12, SS), Brier I. (Feb. 16, M&W Lent), and Yarmouth (Feb.25, CRKA). The Meyerowitz family at St. Esprit, CB, had an exceptionally late bird, Dec. 29, and what sounds very much like the first spring migrant, an adult male, Mar. 16.

The Cohrs had the only GYRFALCON reported for the period, Feb. 18, at Crescent Beach. A PEREGRINE FALCON was seen at Port Williams, near Wolfville, Feb. 26 and again Mar.6 (George Boyd), and this might well be the same bird cautiously reported as a possible Peregrine at Greenwich in mid-March (Christopher Elson). It was an excellent winter for MERLINS. Thirteen birds on 7 CBC's were a good start...and 5 records each for January and February, with one for March, represent individuals wintering locally from the Valley to Cape Breton. An AMERICAN KESTREL was seen repeatedly at Greenwich from January through March (BF,RM) and at several other locations near Wolfville (CC,OM), and one kestrel, possibly 2, wintered at Yarmouth (MWH). Three other January sightings, 1 in February and 2 in March complete the picture.

## GROUSE, PHEASANT, PARTRIDGE

Reports of SPRUCE GROUSE come from Waverley (T.D.Cousens) and Dalhousie Mtn, Pictou Co. (Jamie & Ralph Connor). Nearly 30 observations of the far more numerous and more easily observed RUFFED GROUSE extend throughout the length and breadth of the province, and reinforce Phyllis Dobson's observation that grouse were "common all winter". Eight RING-NECKED PHEASANT reports (representing only 25 or 30 individuals) are below average, but tell little about a population which is manipulated as intensively as that of this introduced game bird. Oscar Morehouse notes that "despite heavy hunting last autumn reports indicate above average numbers this winter," and several other observers note normal or above normal numbers. A half-dozen reports leave no doubt that our GRAY PARTRIDGE populations were in good shape last winter. The highest estimate of the Grand Pré-Canning population was in excess of 100 individuals. Frank Hennessey and Francis Spalding sent notes on a previously unreported population along the north shore of Cobequid Bay, at Great Village and Highland Village. Several coveys there represented 30 or more individuals.

## CRANE

On Dec. 18, a SANDHILL CRANE put in an appearance on the Halifax (east) Christmas count. The bird circled overhead and headed out to sea, giving good views to several parties. The most popular conjecture is that the bird was the same one seen repeatedly near Wolfville during the fall (January Newsletter, p. 18)

## MARSH BIRDS

Christmas counts which cover the Atlantic coast salt marshes are clarifying the winter distribution of rails in the province. Broad Cove (Dec. 31) had a CLAPPER RAIL (the second Canadian CBC record, the first having come from the same count in a previous year). Halifax (east) produced a surprising total of 6 VIRGINIA RAILS. Many of these rails that attempt to winter seem to come to bad ends in January. Carlene and Leslie Smith report a Virginia Rail found dead by the highway (apparently starved), near Barrington, Jan. 10. Another weak bird picked up Jan. 3 at Wedgeport was more fortunate; he was nursed through the winter at the home of Israel Pothier, and at press time was still alive and well and eating spaghetti. He will soon be released. The Halifax (east) CBC had 2 SORAS as well.

A late AMERICAN COOT record comes from Amherst Point, Dec. 4(RB).

RL Ed.



## SHOREBIRDS

The shorebird report for late fall and winter is usually a short one, enabling the reporter to recover after the effort of writing up the fall migration. Nonetheless, there are additions to be made to the fall records and a number of interesting winter records, many of them on Christmas censuses.

A few SEMIPALMATED PLOVER lingered through December: 2 individuals at or near Louisbourg, Dec. 2 and 9, and one on the Halifax East census, Dec. 18. KILLDEER were reported rather frequently. In the Halifax area there were 2 on Dec. 4 at Three Fathom Harbour, 2 Dec. 18 on the Halifax East census and one "near Halifax" Dec. 25 (EHC, DSM et al). One was present at Cape Sable from Dec. 25 to Jan. 7 (SS, BJS). One at Louisbourg on Mar. 20 is apparently the first spring arrival (RB).

In the last report I had records of BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER up to Nov. 28. On that date there were still 7 at Cape Sable (SS), and in Cape Breton I. Roger Burrows reports the last Black-belly at Louisbourg on Dec. 9. Two were recorded on each of the Boxing Day Christmas censuses, Port Hebert and Cape Sable Island.

There are nine records of WOODCOCK between Dec. 1 and 25, the most notable being 2 at Yarmouth on the 22nd. One was still present there on Jan. 5 (F. Goudey, fide MWH), and one at Lockeport on Jan. 9 was found dead on the 12th (RJC, GDP). COMMON SNIPE were recorded only on the Wolfville census (2), Dec. 19 and one a day later on the Brier Island census.

The last records of GREATER YELLOWLEGS extend into late November: one at Port Morien, CB, through Nov. 21, and small numbers at Louisbourg through Nov. 27 (RB). RUDDY TURNSTONES were very scarce in late fall and early winter. 4 remained at Louisbourg up to Nov. 14 (RB) and a group of 6 was seen there on Jan. 6 (CSM). On Cape Breton I. the last RED KNOT was seen on Nov. 14 (RB), but there were 12 at Matthews Lake on Dec. 26 (fide GDP), and a remarkable flock of 37 at Cape Sable Dec. 25-26 (SS&BJS). The flock at Cape Sable dropped to 21 by Jan. 11, and 3 were observed there Mar. 25.

The wintering shorebird par excellence is of course the PURPLE SANDPIPER. These hardy and inconspicuous periwinkle eaters have a mouse-like invisibility on wave-washed rocks of the outer coasts. We have no idea how many really winter here. For example, one February day a few years ago a cormorant-censusing biologist in a light plane buzzed Gull Rock, south of Brier Island and put up a flock of 700. How many other flocks like that are there on inaccessible rocky islets? The reports for this winter are usually of much smaller flocks, 5-70, from mid-November through late March. The first arrivals in Cape Breton were at Louisbourg on Nov. 14 and throughout January and February the species was regular there, reaching a maximum of 71 (RB). Elsewhere there were 75 at Advocate on Dec. 23 (CBC) and a regular flock of about 40 at West Head, through March 28 (RJC, GDP, ELM). There were at least 100 at Cherry Hill on Feb. 27 (PH, ELM, IAM) and a few straggled to Cape Sable between Dec. 29 and Feb. 27 (SS, BJS).

Two late records have come in from Cape Breton. The last fall record of PECTORAL SANDPIPER was Oct. 26 at Louisbourg (5 days after the mainland) (RB). Lone WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS stayed at Port Morien until Nov. 21 and at Louisbourg until the 27th.

There is a winter record, one at Louisbourg, Jan. 20(RB). The LEAST SANDPIPER reported on the Port Hebert census, Dec. 26, by Russel Crosby is an unusual record.

DUNLIN were reported only twice: 20 remaining at Cape Sable on Nov. 28 (SS&BJS) and 9 on Dec. 26 during the Port Hebert census. Even SANDERLINGS were quite scarce during the winter, though they lingered in low numbers through late November. Sanderlings had left most of the South Shore late in the month, but the Smiths saw 75 at Cape Sable on the 28th; there were still 10 there on Dec. 22, 12 on the 26th and 7 on Jan. 23. At Port Hebert there were 18 on the Christmas Census, Dec. 26, and a straggler or two up to mid-March (GDP). Two joined the Purple Sandpipers at Louisbourg on Jan. 16 and one remained on the 19th and 20th.

As these last frosty words are being written (8th April), the Piping Plover are back and the cycle is beginning again.

ELM Ed.

#### JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS, AUKS

The most unusual sight-reports of gulls both come from the Smiths at Cape Sable, who report a FRANKLIN'S GULL there on Jan. 8, and 2 SABINE'S GULLS from Dec. 28 at least until Jan. 19. Small flocks of BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES also appeared at Cape Sable around that time; some of these were oiled, and may have come up from the area of the "Argo Merchant" tanker wreck off Nantucket. The only other Kittiwake reports are from Digby (?numbers) on Dec. 27 (BS) and a single bird on the Margaretsville CBC.

The gulls otherwise present few surprises. A small flock of a dozen or so BLACK-HEADED GULLS hung around the North Sydney area from Dec. 27 at least until Mar. 20; on Mar. 17 their heads had turned black - "it happens almost overnight" (RGF). The half-dozen or so wintering on Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth, developed the rosy bloom on their breast feathers, characteristic of breeding plumage, during the early part of February (ECra). The CBC's also record small numbers at Glace Bay, Halifax and Yarmouth. The Smiths saw one on Christmas Day at Cape Sable, there were two at Eel Brook on Dec. 19 (PRD), and Peter Hope saw 2 at Mulgrave on Jan. 2, as well as 3-5 from the Canso Causeway (1 in breeding plumage), between Mar. 20-26. BONAPARTE'S GULLS were as usual in the minority. In Cape Breton there were 2 at Mira Gut on Oct. 24, 3 at Port Morien on Nov. 7, and 1 at Louisbourg on Nov. 12 (RB). The only mainland reports are of single birds at Lockeport Dec. 18-22 and Jan. 31-Feb. 2 (RJC, Emmerson Fiske), and one or two at Sullivan's Pond for much of the winter (ECra). The number of reports of both species seem low, but it's hard to say whether this reflects changes in habits of the birds or the observers.

The RING-BILLED GULL flock was back at Eel River and Abrams Brook in December - up to 200 birds were seen at times (CRKA, PRD). They left after the New Year and returned in early March. The only other reports are of a bird at Lockeport on Feb. 1 (RJC, EF), 7-8 immatures at Oxford after about Mar. 12 when the river opened up (IF), and a few birds all winter at Sullivan's Pond (ECra).



There were scattered sightings of GLAUCOUS GULLS during the winter, usually of single birds, from almost all around the province. ICELAND GULLS were equally widespread, but apparently commoner than usual. Ian McLaren notes "perhaps because of heavy ice in Gulf of St. Lawrence, more of these in Halifax than ever noted.. endless variants of 'Kumlien's' Gull present, including quite dark-eyed, dark-backed birds. But no 'Thayer's' ". Icelands were first seen at Louisbourg on Nov. 9 - just an immature at first, but increasing to 30 on Nov. 12, 40 on Nov. 20, 56 on Dec. 12 (RB). A flock of 50-60 was scavenging around the backyards for scraps there in January and February. Another high count was about 70 at Mulgrave on Jan. 2(PH). But numbers in southern Nova Scotia were fewer; between Dec. 28 and Feb.20 the Smiths' daily maximum at Cape Sable was only 5.

In an increasingly uncertain world it's a pleasure to welcome our LESSER BLACKBACK back to Digby. It was seen there on Dec. 19, Feb. 19-20, and Mar. 12 (A&ELM,PH,TB,LEN,HJM). GREAT BLACK-BACKED and HERRING GULLS are of course always with us. But this was an unfortunate winter for many of them because many of them were oiled by the "Argo Merchant" wreck off Nantucket just before Christmas, and made their way on up here. On Dec. 22 the US Coast Guard reported that there were 180 Herring Gulls and 45 Great Blackbacks around the wreck, of which 70% and 20% respectively were oiled. But the birds had already begun to disperse from the site. A few days earlier about 5 badly oiled Herring Gulls came aboard DAWSON about 100 miles NE of the wreck, and rode back up to Nova Scotia on her. On Jan. 4 several oiled gulls of both species came aboard the oil rig SEDCO H, at the edge of the continental shelf just south east of Emerald Bank. Several were caught and taken to the Bedford Institute, where Eric Levy was able to show, by gas chromatographic techniques, that the oil on them was indeed from the "Argo Merchant". This suggests that large gulls move widely in the waters off Nova Scotia in winter - SEDCO H was a good 200 miles NE of the Nantucket Shoals - and that there is a northward component in that movement even as early as New Year's.

Small numbers of lightly oiled THICK-BILLED MURRES were found on beaches northeast of Halifax at about the same time, but these were probably affected by some small, unrecorded local spill. (The attrition caused by these local spills is every bit as serious as the mortality caused by the more spectacular incidents). There also seems to have been a "wreck" of Thick-bills in the Amherst area just before Christmas. Con Desplanque caught and released one there and says that someone "saw a number crossing the road at Amherst Point and thought it was penguins". The Smiths also saw Thick-bills flying in numbers past Cape Sable in late December, and there are scattered reports of them inshore around Nova Scotia all winter. They even got into Bedford Basin; three were frantically trying to take off along narrowing leads in the ice on Jan. 14, and there were 20 on open water there on March 11 (RBBB). The highest count was 568 birds on the Brier I. CBC. COMMON MURRES were also seen inshore in small numbers. There were 2 on Jan. 23 at North Sydney, and they were seen regularly in January and February at Pennant Harbour (HEH, JD Carsons). There was also about 34 RAZORBILLS very close inshore on the Dec. 19 CBC at Margaretsville, and a CBC high count of 368 at Brier Island. The only later report is of a bird at Lockport on Feb. 10 (RJC).

DOVEKIES are the auks most likely to be "wrecked" in winter storms, but this doesn't seem to have happened much this year - although one disoriented bird landed in a field near Economy on Jan. 10 and was returned to open water (EPS). The CBC's show fair numbers off Halifax and eastern Cape Breton. But the peak numbers were around Brier Island. There were 237 there on the Dec. 20 CBC, and on Dec. 22 Eric Mills saw "hundreds passing through in flight" through Grand and Petite Passages. Another good place to find them in winter is at the edge of the continental shelf SW of Sable Island, but Dick Brown saw only a few there on Jan. 6 when he flew out to look for "Argo Merchant" oil.

BLACK GUILLEMOTS are the auks that are always with us, even if their presence is not always obvious. They were regularly seen off Louisbourg at least until February (RB,CSD), and there was a pair in Grand Passage, Brier Island, on Christmas Eve (DM). But ATLANTIC PUFFINS are the auks nobody knows - at least when they're out at sea in winter. There were reports of occasional birds along the Atlantic shore during the CBC's, but nothing more.

RGBB Ed.

#### DOVES

The abundant MOURNING DOVE records seem to reflect a genuine change in this bird's status in the province. Reports range from Cape Breton to Yarmouth Co., and refer, for the most part, to feeder birds. Several observers report lone doves wintering at feeders where they had not previously been seen (e.g. Ella Roland at Truro: "we have never seen one before..."). The typical pattern seems to be that observed by Thelma Hawkins at Wilmot in the Valley: "... began appearing here early December, and Dec. 9 we had 7. Flock gradually increased in number until on Jan. 5 we had 30. Just a few coming in March". Joyce Purchase in Halifax County counted 21 at her feeder on Dec. 7 and they were still there on Mar. 26. Is there widespread mortality among these doves that attempt to winter? There is some evidence to support this theory. The greatest concentrations occur in the Wolfville area where, in early January, Jim Wolford observed "120+" in New Minas, and at Avonport Mrs. Urban counts the doves at her feeder in dozens. Oscar Morehouse writes that in February Mrs. Urban was feeding between 60 and 70 doves regularly. I saw that amazing flock on the Wolfville CBC, and Mrs. Urban pointed out that, as winter progresses, many of the doves lose toes and even their entire feet, and that hawks take many of them late in the season. Perhaps this is the critical point, the weak link that makes the Mourning Dove only half-hardy in Nova Scotia: their tender feet succumb to some disease, or simply to freezing, and the weakened birds are finished off by predators.

#### OWLS

GREAT HORNED OWL reports are scarce this winter. The bird recorded on the Keji CBC was heard again in March (PRH). Hedley Hopkins reports a Great Horned Owl at Loch Lomond, CB, Feb. 12,

and Jamie and Ralph Connor repeatedly heard a single bird, or more probably a pair, at Dalhousie Mtn, Pictou Co., where they go winter camping (Jan. 2, 22; Mar. 18). After last year's peak flight, SNOWY OWLS were nowhere to be found. There were no sightings on the border marshes and the only record submitted was of a bird "coursing up and down the marshes" of the Annapolis River at Round Hill, Dec. 31 (WEW). Keji's BARRED OWLS are the only ones reported and 6 records between Dec. 19 and Mar. 10 all seem to represent different birds (PRH, et al). The Smiths at Cape Sable had a SHORT EARED OWL on the dunes, Nov. 28, indicating that there is some migratory movement of these birds, but the Grand Pre population, at least, seems to be made up of permanent residents. A visitor to their known roost can put up "several birds most any time during the day" throughout the winter (OM). The Lents had 3 Short-ears on Brier I., Feb. 17. SAW-WHET OWL reports were up after a low in the winter of 1975-6. A Brier I. bird was the only one reported on a CBC, and was heard again Jan. 4 by the Lents. Others are reported from Economy (Mar. 22, FS), Dalhousie Mtn. (Feb. 19, RC), Port Mouton (mid-February, Van Killam), and Keji (2 birds calling, Mar. 10, PRH and Bill Campbell).

#### KINGFISHER

Eleven BELTED KINGFISHERS appeared on 7 CBC's, and it seems probable that all individuals present that late in the year will attempt to winter. After that time, there are 6 reports for January, 4 for February and 3 for March. Three separate observers report a conspicuous wintering bird at Lockeport, and Barry Sabean notes that, at one location (Kelly Lake, near Moser River) the species has become a regular winter resident, appearing now for the third year in a row.

#### WOODPECKERS

The Cohrs had a late COMMON FLICKER Dec. 30 and 31 at Petite Riviere. PILEATED WOODPECKER reports are far more numerous than usual, and document 26 sightings of at least 17 different individuals, throughout the province (including Cape Breton, where, as Sara MacLean writes, they are normally "quite uncommon"). The HAIRY and DOWNY WOODPECKERS were in evidence at the feeders, and in some areas Downies seemed locally abundant (Economy, fide Frank Hennessey). In other localities, however, and particularly in the Valley some reporters noted low numbers of these familiar birds.

BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKERS were seldom seen. After 2 CBC records, we have only a single sighting at Keji (Jan. 26, PRH, Rick Swain) and one at Green Bay (Mar. 17, Chris Cohrs).

RL Ed.



## HORNED LARKS

Wintering HORNED LARKS were reported sparsely from Cape Breton; three localities - Glace Bay, Morien Bar and Louisbourg - with a total of just 6 birds (RB and the CBC's). They were more plentiful in SW Nova Scotia where there were "many" at Chegoggin, "100's" at Chebogue and smaller numbers at Pinkney's Point, Pembroke Shore, Cape Sable and Lockeport (CRKA, PRD, SF, BJS, EF). Brier I. had 40 Jan. 3(W&ML) and the Bay of Fundy shore produced two reports: 150 at Grand Pre Feb. 20 (JDC) and 14 at Waterville Feb. 20 (LEN, HJM); 10-20 still at Port Williams Mar. 23-25 (G&CM).

## CORVIDS

The GRAY JAY, universally present on the CBC's was rarely seen thereafter, which is characteristic of this jay - said to retire to the deep woods for most of the winter. There were a few January sightings, fewer in February and mostly in Cape Breton at that time. The BLUE JAY on the other hand was probably the bird most generally encountered during the winter; present at all feeders (up to 12 at some) and almost always seen once or twice on any field trip. The COMMON RAVEN, largest and most dignified of this group, nevertheless appears to get more enjoyment out of life than any of the others, excitable though they may be. Two Ravens, tilting and tumbling in an updraught is a familiar sight; it was both amusing and amazing to watch a raven and an eagle similarly engaged. At least the raven was - the eagle was sublimely indifferent, simply sailing round and round, wings set and motionless, while above him and in perfect formation sailed the raven. From time to time like a small boy taking a few running steps to keep up with big brother the raven had to give a few flaps to keep up its relatively huge companion; but for a good ten minutes at least he held his position "in formation" - fun to watch, according to CRK Allen and others at Argyle Head. The largest concentration of ravens noted this winter, and most unusually large, was the 56-64 seen early February at Boulardarie by Roberta Fraser. (Men were slaughtering at a farm). The COMMON CROW must be our most abundant land bird by far in winter, even if all of them flock to the Grand Pre for the Christmas Count - 15,000+ at Wolfville - which they do not. Crows are everywhere, and if we see nothing else on a winter bird walk, we see crows. It is a familiar sight to see them streaming across the evening sky home to roost. Annie Raymond of Smith's Cove writes that one such roost has recently been abandoned. "Crows - I am sure there are 1,000, no longer fly to Bear Island (in the Annapolis Basin) but late afternoon fly to the beach where a large freshwater stream flows into the Basin, and feed on the beach as the tide goes down. About dark they fly back to roost on the pine and spruce trees, the grove near Kelsey's (Kelsey Raymond's) home".

## CHICKADEES TO WRENS

Both BLACK-CAPPED and BOREAL CHICKADEES have been mentioned by most reporters as somewhat more numerous than usual, although there was wide variation on the CBC's. In January and February these were about the only birds which could be "swished up" along a country road, maybe a flock of 4-6 birds every other try. Feeders generally had their quota of Blackcaps at least, and as mentioned in the Introduction, a Boreal Chickadee was seen at the fat log at the Henry's feeding station. For the most part Boreals

linger near but do not come to food provided. This is apt to apply to the NUTHATCHES too, although the WHITE-BREASTED is a regular feeder bird. The RED-BREASTED, a forest bird, may or may not come to feeders; this winter many did. Six reports of the BROWN CREEPER are very widely distributed, Pictou to Cape Sable. One WINTER WREN was seen near the Mersey River Dec. 6 (TW); there were 8 seen on the CBC's, and a SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN was found on the Broad Cove CBC, Dec. 31.

#### MIMIDS

We have a small but stable population of MOCKINGBIRDS. Of the 6-7 seen on the CBC's, 4 may have given rise to duplicate sightings later in the winter. (They came from St. Peter's, Glace Bay, the Halifaxes E&W, Broad Cove and Yarmouth). Subsequent sightings were mostly at or near feeders - a dubious pleasure to have a Mockingbird, it tolerates no other birds near it. We had five winter sightings in Cape Breton (AS,GC,GS,FFR); 1 in Antigonish (RC); 1 in Truro in Dec. feathers found in the spring suggesting it had not survived (ER); 1 in Wolfville (AG); 2 or more in Yarmouth (VK,MWH); 1 at Barrington (BFS); 1 at Lockeport (RJC,GDP,EF); 1 in Liverpool (RSJ); 1-2 at Bridgewater (H&HM,PA-S); 2 in Halifax (LAC, who saw the two fighting, an adult with an immature, which it put to flight); 1-2 others in Halifax City reported to IAM; 2-3 in Dartmouth (ECra, Jamie Connor) and 1-2 at Lawrencetown, Hfx Co. (DM,EH). As can be seen distribution is provincewide.

The only two others in this group we have to report are a GRAY CATBIRD or possibly 2, seen in Yarmouth Co. Dec. 6&19 (the 19th was the CBC). The Dec. 6 bird was eating apples in an old orchard along with late-leaving robins, at Abrams River (CRKA). Ethel Crathorne reports three sightings of a BROWN THRASHER at Crichton Avenue, Dartmouth, presumably of the same bird. There was one other Thrasher, on the Yarmouth CBC (Count Period). We might add that Reginald Doucette of Upper Wedgeport had a Brown Thrasher in mid-October, and berated himself for forgetting to send in the report. Maybe this was the same bird, waiting around to be recorded.

#### ROBINS

The huge migration of the AMERICAN ROBIN continued until early December when flocks were still noted, the largest - 30 at Antigonish Harbour Dec. 12 (RC) and 100, Dec. 6 at Pictou (EH), (down to 15 there Dec. 19). Large numbers were counted at Christmas (see the Halifaxes, Broad Cove, etc.) and there were reports in January of flocks - 20 in places in Cape Breton (SM), 15-20 in the Economy area (FH) - but oddly enough only 2's and 3's at a time in the rest of the province - according to our reports. In February sightings were down in numbers, about the same per sighting, except 7, feeding on old apples in the Gaspereau Valley (OM). March sightings have begun to come in, but shall be held for the spring migration report. Many robins succeed in wintering here, but are at a disadvantage because of their rather exclusive diet. Apples and certain other tree fruits are sought as long as they last, but some birds just give up the battle apparently. Beula Burman of Barrington wrote: "Four robins present all winter. One gave up the struggle, tucked his head over his back and went to sleep in the snow. They seemed to want only apples and fought each other for these."

## THRUSHES

Two, perhaps three VARIED THRUSHES came our way this winter. A bright male was observed by John Cliffe of South Maitland, Hants County, on Jan. 12, 1977, and his identification was shortly thereafter confirmed by Eric Mills and Howard Ross. Photographs were taken at that time, through the window and at very close range. Later, on Feb. 19 Larry Neily and Helen McGloin saw this bird at South Maitland and were, as John Cliffe said, his 27th and 28th visitors!

On Feb. 5, Louise Daley received a phone call from Mrs. Florence Haight of North Range, Digby County, asking for help in identifying a strange bird at her feeder. Miss Daley proceeded immediately to North Range and found the bird to be a Varied Thrush - again - a bright male. Subsequently Bob Lamberton saw the bird which "put on a fine show" and he concurred in the identification.

Dr. R. W. Tufts has advised us that in his opinion the Varied Thrush should now go on the Nova Scotia list, it has lost its hypothetical status.

A third report is as yet unconfirmed to the Records Editor - of a Varied Thrush at a feeder March 24 in Halifax (city).

Aside from a few CBC sightings, two HERMIT THRUSHES were seen in December: 1, Dec. 3 in Yarmouth (CRKA) and 2, Dec. 19 at Keji (PRH,EM). Two SWAINSON'S THRUSHES also lingered into December - 1, Dec. 5 seen at Dartmouth (ECra) and 1, Dec. 8 at Glace Bay (EMac).

## KINGLETS THROUGH SHRIKES

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS were poorly reported, very few mentioned since December, when they were still abundant and widespread. There are only two "all-winter" reports: 3-4 sightings through the winter at Lr. Economy (FH) and "often seen in woods near the house" at Barrington Passage (BB). These delightful little birds have been notably absent from the woods in Yarmouth County since the new year (PRD).

Three RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS lingered into December, one each at Amherst Pt. (RB), Lockeport (RJC) and Cape Sable (BJS) - afraid to jump off the springboard? A few WATER PIPITS were still in the province in December, 3 seen at Louisbourg (RB) and 42 altogether, all coastwise, on CBC's at Halifax East and West, Brier I. and Cape Sable. At Cape Sable there had been 100 pipits on Dec. 26; the Christmas Count on Jan. 2 found only 12 left (SFS).

A small invasion of BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS was spear-headed at Pictou where 21 of these birds appeared Dec. 8 (EH). They did not linger there, but a few seem to have scattered about the province, one only seen on Dec. 19 at Kingston in the Valley (a CBC bird); then two January sightings: 9 at Lockeport (RJC) and 8-9 at Wolfville (JT,BF); four February reports: 3 birds in Cape Breton, 12 on Second Peninsula, Lun. Co. (SJF) and one at CFB Cornwallis where a bird had found withered fruit on some of the cherry trees for which this region used to be famous; and a good-sized flock of 50, Feb. 16, in Halifax (IAM); finally Eric Cooke reports 4 Bohemians at Chezsetcook on March 20. The last CEDAR WAXWINGS reported were 2, Nov. 22 on their way out with a flock of robins which were stopping near Truro to feed on "wizened-up apples" (ER).

'76-'77 was a good NORTHERN SHRIKE year with well distributed reports from Louisbourg to Yarmouth December through March. These shrikes were seen on five CBC's and the Economy bird (or another) was still around Jan. 30 (PH), seen again (or another) at Economy Mar. 24 (FS). The three Valley reports were widely apart, probably different birds (WEW, OWM, LEN, TPH) and Thelma Hawkins called her shrike "a rare visitor" - the four Yarmouth County reports (CRKA, JG, PRD) were also in widely separated districts and believed to be different birds. One other was seen Feb 2 at Lockeport - "chasing sparrows in a hedge" (EF).

#### STARLING

The STARLING population is thriving but does not appear to be on the increase. Starlings remain universally present in Nova Scotia - came into towns (and to feeders) in December where their flocks this year numbered 2-3 up to 25-30 faithful in attendance until March, when numbers increased, doubling in some places, and they should soon start to disperse about the countryside. One very curious bird is described by Stewart Whitman (formerly of Granville Ferry, now of Bridgetown): "Two neighbors and myself have had a Starling with an unusually long beak, about three ins. in length. The beak is curved very much like the beak on a California Thrasher. One neighbor watched it feeding on the ground, said it held its head up-right in the normal position; and that the beak bent when eating and was pliable. The other neighbor saw it eating in his feeder and declared it held its head side-wise in order to pick up the food. It is very skittish and hard to approach. We saw it once on the ground near our feeder, the second I glanced through the curtain it took off."

PRD for SC

#### WARBLERS

The YELLOW-RUMPED (Myrtle) WARBLER was completely absent from SW Nova Scotia in the winter of '77, in fact from most of the province. The only sightings after December were in Antigonish County where a flock of 40, counted on the Antigonish CBC stayed through January and February "feeding on wild berries, numbers unchanged, along the Arisaig road" (RC). Late November sightings were still general, and Myrtles were seen in numbers along the Atlantic shore until the end of December (see Broad Cove and Port Hebert CBC's).

Of the other warblers, a few were still seen in December, none stayed beyond the year's end. A PINE warbler paused briefly on the Dalhousie campus in Halifax Dec. 10, "a drab bird", according to IAM. PALM warblers were seen, 1 Nov. 27 at Medford, Kings Co. (PRH), 1 Nov. 21 at Louisbourg (RB) and 1 on the Sydneys CBC, 1 on the Broad Cove CBC. An OVENBIRD Nov. 30 and a BLACKPOLL warbler Dec. 3 were late leaving the Lockeport area (EF). A YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT was reported from Louisbourg Dec. 10 (RB), none since; and a HOODED warbler was found on the Halifax W. CBC, Dec. 27, a new one for the list.

#### HOUSE SPARROWS

Most reporters write "as usual" after this species; "usual" ranging from 4 to 40 in the near vicinity - the latter number counted in Pictou Jan. 1, "reduced to about half in March" (EH).

## ICTERIDS

The EASTERN MEADOWLARK maintains its small population, scattered at random - after only one sighting reported in November (Nov. 27 at Medford, 1 seen by PRH), 13 were found on the CBC's, all coastwise, at St. Peter's, Halifax E., Broad Cove, Port Hebert, Yarmouth and Brier I. On Jan. 6 at Lockeport Emmerson Fiske saw 6 Meadowlarks, 1 seen later also by RJC; 1 was seen at Amherst in January (CD) and 10 at Sydney Forks in January. The only February sighting was of 1, Feb. 18 at Hardwoodlands, Hants Co., by Art Patton, Gay and Andrew MacInnis. Andrew wrote: "This bird was foraging on the roadside which was clear of snow in places. It seemed reluctant to leave this niche and returned repeatedly after being flushed by cars".

A dozen or more reports of the REDWINGED BLACKBIRD December through February add up to some hundreds of birds. At 10 feeders (reported) only 1-3 Redwings spent the winter, but at Wilmot by Jan. 5 the Hawkins had fairly large flocks of blackbirds, and noted that the Redwings present were mainly females or immatures. On Jan. 24 at Chebogue Pt. CRKAllen ran into "dozens" of blackbirds, at least one dozen of them being Redwings. Frank Hennessey of Lower Economy found an "uncut cornfield at Highland Village alive with birds - 50 of them Redwings, on Feb. 18". March reports begin to swell in numbers, undoubtedly migrants coming in, which will appear in the next issue.

Fourteen NORTHERN ORIOLES were seen in Nova Scotia in December, 1 each on four CBC's, 1 at Amherst (CD), 6 at Sydney (watched by Ada and Frank Robertson at the Duncan MacQuarrie feeder - 3 male and 3 female or immature birds), 1 at Glace Bay (GS), 1 at Halifax (IAM), 1 at Lockeport (RJC), 1 at Yarmouth and 1 at Wolfville. It is possible that the Halifax and Yarmouth birds were the same ones counted on the CBC's, also that 1 seen Mar. 6 at Pine Hill, Halifax, by J.B.Hardie was the Ian McLaren bird. If so, it is the only one known to have wintered - we have no January nor February records. (N.B. The only Baltimore Orioles now known to exist are the ones playing baseball.)

Winter reports of the RUSTY BLACKBIRD used to be rare, but are becoming usual. The last 3, very late fall migrants, were the 3 seen Dec. 26 at Cape Sable (SJS&BJS). Jim Wolford saw 1, Jan. 9 in King's Co.; Francis and Edgar Spalding saw 1 or 2 (males) throughout January, and at least 3, Feb. 1; 1 at each place was noted Feb. 6 at Glace Bay (EM,CL) and Feb. 12 at Sydney Forks (RBI), Feb. 27 at Sydney (HH), and Beula Burman had 1 at her feeder early in December, again on Dec. 27 and again on Feb. 25. Two well-seen, well-described BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS have been reported: 1, Jan.3-23 (at least) at Lockeport by George Perry, later seen by LEN,HJM. This bird was photographed, and identification confirmed by E.L. Mills and I.A.McLaren. The other Brewer's was a male seen Feb.13 at Economy, identified by typical field marks by F. Spalding, using 10x glasses at 40' during a light overcast. The bird was perched on manure spread on a garden plot.

The COMMON GRACKLE was present in 2's and 3's at feeders in most towns and villages, rarely seen elsewhere through the winter. This is as usual, as were the fair-sized flocks found at times in a few favored places, e.g. at Wilmot "fairly large flock by Jan. 5" (TPH); 20 Grackles Jan. 23 at Sydney (HH); "dozens" Jan. 24 at Chebogue (CRKA); 38 at a feeder in Wolfville Feb.13(OWM) and 50+ in the Lower Economy cornfield discovered by FH on Feb. 18.



The BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD came into winter quarters noticeably, early in December in Halifax (50 appeared Dec. 4 at a Dutch Village Road feeder (JDC) and in Yarmouth (30+ arrived Dec. 10 at the MWH feeder on Baker Street). They were present in their usual good numbers throughout the winter (see also CBC's) and very well distributed, although fewer reported from Amherst, Pictou and Cape Breton - and they, like the Grackles, favor town dwelling.

## FRINGILLIDS

Figuring as conservatively as possible there were 9 CARDINALS wintering in Nova Scotia in '76-'77. A pair in Yarmouth (male and female) attended three feeders quite regularly - the Fred Nickerson's, NW Hilton's and the Doug MacIntosh and adjoining Scott Killam places at the other end of town. Were there three pairs? It seems unlikely. The Cardinals were seen all winter, Dec. 5 to date (early April). This was also true of the other Cardinals in the province - present in Annapolis, Middleton and Liverpool throughout the winter. Only one (male) was seen in Annapolis, but seen by many people - reported to us by Fred G. Barrett, seen by him, Eleanore Barrett, Myrtle and Calder Fraser, Stewart Whitman, Lawrence and Helen Robinson, Peter and Lorraine Hope and Norm Bowers. This may seem excessive reporting, but a male (or a female - some think they are prettier) Cardinal is a fine thing to see, particularly against a snowy landscape. In Middleton Mrs. Clyde Neily is reported to have seen 4 male Cardinals at one time, the end of January. Jane Elliott saw 1 male, Mrs. Carl Bowlby and Rev. and Mrs. K. Lowe, 2 males, and 1, on Mar. 12 was seen by Frank Hennessey. At Liverpool a pair of Cardinals was present until early February when the male was killed by flying against a window. The female is still around according to Ralph Johnson. It looks as if 6 males and 2 females survived the winter - pity it is not the other way around!

We had a DICKCISSEL, Dec. 24, at a backyard feeder in Dartmouth, reported by Jamie Connor. It must then have been a different bird from Beula Burman's, which stayed at her feeder at Brass Hill daily Oct. 25 to Dec. 25.

Gordon MacLeod first heard the EVENING GROSBEAKS on Oct. 29. On Oct. 30 a flock of 30 or so settled in a tree back of the house and stayed a half an hour while he worked in the yard. He continued to hear them through November and 50 arrived to stay longer on the 22nd. The last report was for Mar. 21, 2 birds briefly at the feeder. The MacLeods also note that Evening Grosbeaks were reported at Sherbrooke by Frank Jordan who said the Senior Citizens at Maple Manor were feeding them. From Cape Breton Sara Maclean wrote "Flocks of 100 at feeders in January, numbers less in February and March, not as many as other years". This seems to be the general opinion through the province. In SW Nova Scotia the grosbeaks arrived early in December at feeders, with a marked peak in January. This was noted in Wedgeport (R), Yarmouth (MWH), Sel Brook (PRD) and Caledonia (PR&LH). Cape Sable reported 20 on Jan. 12. From day to day flocks generally numbered from 20-40, tending to be larger in NE regions: 75 at Oxford (IF), 90-95 at Antigonish (RB), 50 at Pictou (SH), 70 in Dartmouth (ECra), and harking back to arrival time Thelma Hawkins of Wilmot wrote "Huge flocks began assembling in Middleton Dec.4-7 - were being struck by cars as they flocked across the streets. Good numbers stayed at all feeders in this area." Three observers noted a drastic thinning of

feeder flocks upon the arrival of an attendant Sharp-shinned Hawk, but also noted a fair number of birds returning to the feeders in March after the hawks had left. "Zanthochromic" Evening Grosbeaks occurred in both Sydney and Halifax this winter, and caused some excitement. Frank Robertson in his column For the Birds in the Cape Breton Post for Jan.15 described the more than sixteen calls about the Sydney bird(s), which were pale yellow and creamy white with touches of black. In Halifax, Feb.12, Ian McLaren described his partial albino as all yellow with black and white wings.

Thirty reports of the PURPLE FINCH make it our most reported bird of the season. It is impossible to estimate numbers of birds seen, (there must be 1000's) as most reports were on-going December to March, and some only started in February. These finches tend to disappear in the summer and lately have returned in the middle of February. This year however they came back in January and it is interesting to note that the first few appeared in SW Nova Scotia, at Lockeport, Barrington Passage, Bel Brook, then Cape Sable, Yarmouth town, Wedgeport, then at Keji, on up the Valley and to Truro and Halifax (two reports there by Jan.23), then at Musquodoboit Harbour and Oxford. In Cape Breton Sara MacLean wrote "a few Purple Finches came to feeders in January, but by mid-February there was an explosion - reports coming in from everywhere, some from people who had never seen them before". These finches are still with us, still in force as of April 1st, average around 20-40 birds.

On the fifteen CBC's there were 246 PINE GROSBEAKS counted; fourteen reports at large add another 64 birds, giving us an (observed) population of over 300, unusually large for this bird. Reports came from all over including an area little known to us, New Ross in Lunenburg County. Here Keith and Vernon Keddy explored a stretch of overgrown (spruce) pastureland and found 20 Pine Grosbeaks. One of these had its tail missing, but was not greatly hindered thereby except for some lack of balance when eating. Since Pine Grosbeaks are treetop-eating birds they would not be affected by our snowy winter - they were quite big enough to shake the snow off the twigs.

This was an off year for the COMMON REDPOLL, counts sent in to us totalling 150 for the season. A fairly large flock of 35-40 birds was at Louisbourg Nov.24-28 (RB). Frank Hennessey saw none in Lr. Economy where they had been numerous last winter, but 2 did show up at Economy on Jan.15 (F&E). On the 15th also a flock of 50 was observed at Brier I. by the Lents - for the rest, 8 were seen at Greenfield Jan.18 (BF) and June Graves had 3 Redpolls at Hebron on that date.

We have ten reports only of the PINE SISKIN, still scarce in Nova Scotia except for the occasional good-sized flock in favorable habitat. The 91 found on the Springville, Pictou Co. CBC and the 59 on the Shubenacadie CBC are good example of these. Other flocks were: 24 on the Halifax E.CBC; 30-35 on the Lumsdon Road in the Valley Jan.31; 40 at Keji Feb.8 - "feeding on cones in a hemlock grove", and 20, Feb. 19 at River Philip (BF,PRH,CD). One's and 2's were seen elsewhere in woodsy country, but none was reported December to March from Cape Breton or Yarmouth.

The AMERICAN GOLDFINCH showed its wisdom in leaving Nova Scotia for the winter of '76-'77. The snow was too deep for mainly weed-seed-eating birds. Two of them became storm-stayed at Cape Sable as late as Dec.21, when they spent the night in the barn, sheltering from the storm - snow, high winds, -10 C.(SFS). A few Goldfinches came to most feeders through the winter - 1's and 2's for the most part, until the March build-up. The number at a feeder in Yarmouth reached 6 by Jan.31 (MWH); one in Halifax, 12 on Jan. 28 (JDC); they were "fairly common" at Lower Economy throughout the winter (FH), and at Louisbourg there were 35-40 Jan. 30 (RB). Jean and Bill Morse at Paradise noted 2 at the feeder Feb.12 showing more yellow color. Sara MacLean at Glace Bay, Records Editor for Cape Breton, wrote: "Many people do not recognize winter goldfinches - call them baby grosbeaks that haven't grown up yet". This is true. The winter goldfinch has been mistaken for many other birds, chiefly because people are unused to seeing it in such drab attire. Please note well.

Both of the CROSSBILLS have been seen quite frequently in approximately equal numbers, from November to March. Aside from the Christmas Counts reports of the RED CROSSBILL come from Roger Burrows, 8 on Nov. 7 on the Mira road near Sydney; 4 on Dec. 19 at Victoria Vale (LEN,HJM); 7, Jan. 14 at Round Hill (WEW); 13, Jan. 24 at Keji (PRH); 1, Feb. 2 at Urbania, Hants Co. (LEN,HJM); 2 24 "late February" at Sherbrooke (Frank Jordan to G&OM); 6, Mar.17 at Crousetown (CJC); and 5 Mar. 18 at Dalhousie Mtn. "up a tree calling and fluttering about" (Jamie Connor). Reports of the WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL are fewer but represent more birds: 7, Dec. 16, Round Hill (WEW); 7, Jan. 23 at Lockeport (EF); 4, Jan.26 at Round Hill (WEW); 2, Feb. 2 at Economy (FS); flock of 7, Feb.7-13 at Keji (RS,PRH); another flock of 30, Feb.9 (PRH); "hundreds" with other finches Feb.26 "chattering in the evergreens, darkened the sky when they flew from one side of the road to the other" at Springville, Pictou Co. (M&FK,ECra) and 20, Mar.17 at LaHave I. (CJC,SC).



#### SPARROWS

A RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE stayed for three weeks at the Herman Crosby's in Woodstock, that is from Jan.10 to Feb.5, reported to us by Leta Delaney of Port Maitland. This was probably a different bird from the one seen on the Yarmouth CBC. One other was seen on the Annapolis CBC.

Aside from the Towhees we have twelve SPARROW species to report, just a few of most of these, but many reports of Junco, Tree, Whitethroat and Fox Sparrows, a moderate number of the Savannah and Song Sparrows. This is the usual picture, but it seems fair to believe that this last winter feeders spelt survival for many of these small ground-feeding birds. Certainly most of them were seen at feeders (not at large) and were faithful in attendance.

This does not apply to the first on our list, the SAVANNAH, and it is perhaps significant that we have no records this year beyond December 31, when 10 were seen in the Petite Riviere-Reiser's Beach area. Eighty-two were counted on the CBC's - what became of them is problematical. A surprising sight was an "IPSWICH" SPARROW among many other small birds at Middle Porter's Lake on Jan.9 - closely observed by Ian McLaren (who should know his Ipswiches), who was amazed to see one  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the coast.

Two late VESPER SPARROWS were seen Dec.19 at Melvern Square on the Kingston CBC.

The DARK-EYED JUNCOS reported add up to well over 1000, and were universally present at feeders. Some had only a few - 1 to 4 birds, notably those in towns. Country feeders were more likely to have 10-20; the Hawkins at Wilmot had 30, the Mills at Head of St. Margaret's Bay had 60 all winter - the Mills flock including a pink-sided or "Oregon" Junco which is as Eric reminds us no longer classed as a separate species, but as a western race of the Dark-eyed. Don MacDougall saw "some unusual gatherings of juncos along the road near Middle Musquodoboit Feb.11 - about 475 in total in flocks of 50-75-100 gathered on bare spots scraped by the snow-plow along about 10 miles of road. There probably were a lot more as I got the above count while driving along".

There were thirty reports of Juncos, twenty-seven of the TREE SPARROW. Distribution of the latter was widespread by Christmas, 661 counted on nineteen CBC's, with Wolfville the highest - 264 birds. (These "exact" counts are taken directly out of the Counts as sent in - one wonders who got that last bird). As with the Junco, most feeders reported only 1-2 birds present; at Amherst Pt. RB saw 7-8 Tree Sparrows; there were 10-20 at the Hennessey's at Lr. Economy; 17 at Round Hill (WEW) and 20 at Lockeport (GDP). The number of Tree Sparrows noted this last season is about average; the surprising thing was finding them in one's own backyard instead of in a twittering flock in the alders down the road. Neat and sprightly, the Tree Sparrow is a welcome addition to any landscape.

More than the usual number of CHIPPING SPARROWS was present in Nova Scotia late into December, reported to us from the CBC's only - (LEN and HJM made special note of the 2 they found for the local CBC, 1, Dec. 18 at Greenwood; 1, Dec.19 at Margaretsville) - and the largest number found was the 12 at Liverpool. We did not use to expect Chippies as late as this. Care must be taken with the Spizella species in winter when ordinary field marks may be blurred or missing in some individuals.

This applies to another member of this group as well, the FIELD SPARROW, regular but very scarce in Nova Scotia. This one's pink bill is a help. One, possibly 2 of these appeared in the Petite Riviere region Dec. 31 this year (LA&CJC, FWD).

Another sparrow we do not expect here in winter is the WHITE-CROWNED. One wintered last year at Wolfville (OM), this year 2 (1a,1 imm.) were added to the Amherst CBC, and were regular guests at the Con Desplanque feeder Dec.15-Feb.19. Another, an imm. stayed at Beula Burman's from Nov.15 to date (early April). An adult Whitecrown arrived here (at BB's) Mar. 11, a bird with a damaged wing, but able to hop into low tree branches - and is still present.

The WHITE-THROATED SPARROW maintained its usual rather small numbers coming to feeders through the winter. Sightings at large were very large up to the end of December, then dwindled almost to the vanishing point. The enormous number seen on the Broad Cove CBC (1044 - couldn't they have found just one more?) was most unusual. It was difficult, observers said, not to step on them. Through the rest of the winter distribution was unequal as to number, but geographically even. The largest feeder flock was again at Eric and Anne Mills' at Head of St. Margaret's Bay - around 60 birds regularly; next in size, flocks of 10-20 were regular at Wilmot and Upper Wedgeport. Most other feeders had only 1-2 birds. Inez Finley had 1 only and said it (any at all) was very unusual at Oxford.

The FOX SPARROW is quite unpredictable from year to year, its movements mysterious. About 100 of them were seen around this winter starting in November, seen then at Louisbourg, and at Eel Brook; there were 54 altogether present on thirteen of the CBC's and almost an equal number scattered around at feeders throughout the winter. Late December and January sightings were from Yarmouth (town and county), Barrington Passage, Lockeport, Keji, Lr. Economy and Head of St. Margaret's Bay. February and March sightings were from Halifax, Dartmouth, Wine Harbour, Oxford, Amherst, St. Esprit, Glace Bay and the Valley (Blomidon Park, Belcher St., King's Co., Greenwich). Thelma Hawkins had one Fox Sparrow Dec. 26, then 1, Mar. 19 and remarked that it was "the first time that I've ever seen one in our yard during winter months". The distribution of Fox Sparrows according to the above dates suggests that food supplies in the wild held out longer in the latter named localities than in the former - not any sort of migration. Fox Sparrows are big strong birds, usually able to fend successfully. The 5-6 at the Eel Brook feeder ate with the rest all day, then returned at dusk for another feed, when they had the place to themselves - they would keep on until black dark. They and the Tree Sparrows were the first to leave the feeders when a short spell of warm weather in March suggested that spring had come.

Halifax East Christmas Bird Count was held Dec. 18, an early date, which perhaps accounted for the 17 SWAMP SPARROWS counted that day. On the three Dec. 19 counts - at Keji, Yarmouth and Wolfville - 4 more Swamps were counted. One other December record was from RB, Louisbourg - 2 on Dec. 2; and one genuine "winter" bird was seen Feb. 5 at Antigonish, when it "stopped in" at the Roland Chaisson feeder for a few minutes, standing round long enough to be carefully identified.

The twenty-nine reports of the SONG SPARROW received indicate that it was relatively scarce this last winter, present at twenty or more feeders, but only one bird as a rule. After December (fair numbers on the CBC's) the Song Sparrow population dropped drastically. In February there was a slight resurgence - on Cape Sable there was one Song Sparrow Feb. 22-23, 6 there on Feb. 24-26, noted also at some mainland feeding stations, usually the addition of one to two birds. It is not surprising that few Song Sparrows stayed with us, it is more surprising that so many of the other sparrows did.

A LAPLAND LONGSPUR complete except for a tail, showed up at Cape Sable Jan.9, followed by 3 on the 11th, 10 on the 12th and 3 again on the 22nd(S&BJS). Other localities where there were more than one sighting were in Cape Breton. At Port Morien they were recorded twice: 21 on Oct. 24 and 7, Nov.21; there were six sightings in Louisbourg during November ranging from 1 to 10, and a single bird was seen at Gabarus Oct.30 (all these reported by RB). There were three reports from around the head of the Bay of Fundy: 1 at Economy Jan.24(FS), 6 at Highland Village Feb.9(FH) and 5 at Amherst Pt. Mar. 22(CD). The South Shore produced five sightings of which three were from Cape Sable: a single on Jan. 4; 3, Jan.11 and 10, Jan.12 (Smiths). There were also 3 at Pembroke Shore with their usual companions the Snow Buntings and Horned Larks on Feb.13, and another 3 at Chebogue Pt. Feb.17 (CRKA). The Lents reported 6 at Brier I. Feb.1st, while a single bird seen by Lorraine Hope at Caledonia, Queen's Co., Jan.18 was the first record for this inland community (PRH).

SNOW BUNTINGS were very well reported from every region of the province. Number of sightings by months was: for October, 9; November, 15; for December, 6; January, 7; February, 16 and for March, 13. Nearly all of the October and November sightings were from Cape Breton. The number of sightings from each region were: Cape Breton - 32; North Shore - 2; Bay of Fundy region - 20; South Shore - 13; Eastern Shore - 1. Total numbers for each region cannot be estimated as many reports simply stated "100's, very common, many small flocks", etc., but the highest actual figures reported were 800 at Amherst Pt. Dec.27 and 500 at the same locality Mar. 22(CD). The Snow Buntings which came south to us last fall were drab little creatures hard to distinguish in the November stubble fields. The departing flocks in March however were resplendent with males in black-and-white breeding plumage, and they no doubt will bring the same lift to the spirits of birders in the far north as that which our spring robins bring to ours.

PRD Ed.

SC wishes to thank PRD for writing up 'Horned Larks to Starlings' thus enabling her to spend two truant weeks learning about birds on Sanibel Island.

#### DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF REPORTS

Reports of spring birds for the July issue - May 31.

Please send them to the Records Editor,

Dr. P. R. Dobson,  
RMB 170,  
R.R. 1, Ste. Anne du Ruisseau,  
Nova Scotia. BOW 2X0

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Any articles, letters to the Editor, photographs, etc., should be sent to the

Editor in Chief, Newsletter,  
Nova Scotia Bird Society,  
c/o Nova Scotia Museum,  
1747 Summer Street,  
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6

## MSKEGOOĀKADE\*

by C. R. K. Allen



Woodland edges of the Salt Marsh.

The salt marshes which fringe the estuaries of the Chebogue and Tusknet rivers in southwestern Nova Scotia are among the few remaining undisturbed 'natural' areas in this part of the country. They are numerous and vary greatly in area from a few acres to several square miles; but though differing in size they are uniform in character and in the harsh and challenging nature of their environment, and very few plants and animals have succeeded in adapting to their exacting conditions. Those which have done so however have filled the marsh with teeming life from spring to late autumn.

The principal cover is grass, three species, all members of the genus *Spartina*, and all going by the common name "cord grass". Each favors an area of different salinity so that their stands are distinct and can be distinguished at a distance by height and shade of green. In some places the salinity is too high even for these grasses and such places are sparsely occupied by plants with very high salt tolerance, for example sea blite and samphire, the latter eagerly sought by "wild-food" gourmets as one of the choicest of the native pot-herbs.

Although relatively undisturbed now the sea marshes were in the past regularly invaded by men who every summer cut as "marsh hay" one of the species of cord grass, greatly prized as livestock fodder. Unlike the upland hay this was not stored in barns but built into stacks right on the marsh. To prevent them from being carried away by high tides these stacks were built on groups of posts driven into the mud and standing several feet high with a tall pole in the centre around which the stack was constructed. This structure was called a "staddle", a word of obscure derivation, and the marsh is still dotted with them although this sort of haying is almost obsolete today. Now the staddles serve as perches for crows, hawks, Willets and other birds which live or visit in the area.

\*Marshlands (Micmac)



Staddle

These marshes play a vital role in the economy of the neighboring sea - they are great processing plants which receive their raw materials from the land via the rivers, and pour out their finished products as rich nutrients through the estuaries on the ebbing tides.

The resources of the marsh are shared by many creatures from the surrounding territory - creatures of all sizes and many species. Predatory insects like dragonflies, robber flies and tiger beetles feed on the hordes of midges and mosquitos. There are no amphibians nor reptiles in our northern salt marshes but a number of mammals either visit or make their homes there. Meadow voles and shrews of several species live in the drier portions and venture out into the cord grass saltings at low tide; raccoons and mink roam freely over the whole area, otters hunt along the creeks and foxes smell out the runways of the shrews and voles.

These mammals like their kind everywhere are seldom seen, but leave the record of their movements and activities by their prints in the mud. Much more visible and audible are the birds. The bird population of the marsh varies from near-zero in the dead of winter to a high point reached when the throngs of south-bound waders touch down for food and rest during late summer and early fall. Between these extremes will be the lesser flow of spring migrants including a trickle of waders; the summer birds of the surrounding area who visit the marsh for food, and the true residents who also raise their young there.

The summer bird population of the salt marsh in terms of full-time residents is sparse compared with that of most upland natural habitats, in fact the only one supporting fewer types is probably a peat bog. Because of this and because of the kinds of birds which live there the salt marsh is not a melodious place.

When the dawn mists lift their curtain along the woodland edges the soft chorus of the upland songsters begins. In the marsh, the reveille is loud and clear: the ringing challenge of newly arrived Willets resounds from upland fringe to seaward dunes. Though modest and quiet on the ground, when a-wing in their flashing colors, their far-carrying din makes up in volume at least, for the scarcity of other vocalists.

Once the tumultuous establishment of territories and the wooing of mates is over, family cares continue to keep their emotions at fever pitch. Willets never do things by halves, and this includes defence of eggs and young; any birder who is curious as to how an owl feels when mobbed by a flock of crows need only walk out onto a marsh somewhere in the general neighborhood of a Willet's brood, to find out.

Evening does however bring respite from the Willet's din. Then as sunset fades to gloaming there can be heard the call of another of the true marsh dwellers, the gurgling thump of the Stake-driver, the Thunder-pumper, the Bittern. The calls of some birds so closely resemble those of other species that tyros are confused and discouraged. Not so the lovelorn Bittern; as a vocalist he stands alone. Those uncouth strangled gulps - like bubbles rising from the muck - are the true and fitting voice of the ancient marsh. Perhaps a pterodactyl once sang thus and bequeathed its melody to this distant descendant.



There is, by bird-watchers' standards, just one true songster among the inhabitants of the salt marsh. This, the last on our short list is the Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Smallest of our local sparrows and latest of the spring arrivals it follows the other lag-gards - such as the Nighthawk and the Red-eyed Vireo - by more than a week, reaching its marsh some time after the first of June. From then on its brief wheezing ditty can be heard throughout the summer, continuing long after most of the other singers have fallen silent.

Unlike Victorian children this little mouse of a sparrow is more often heard than seen. Occasionally it will favor the viewer by giving its solo from the stake of a "staddle" (the rack for a marsh hay stack), but mostly it lurks in the short grass leads which are its preferred home, and when flushed flies only a short distance before dropping again into hiding.

Although a late arrival, the Sharp-tail is in no hurry to leave. The birder who prowls the proper places in fall can usually add it to his record cards well into November.

Willet, Bittern, Sharp-tailed Sparrow; these three then are the only true bird dwellers in our north-eastern salt marshes.



Some walk, some hop.

There are many others however which live along the fringes, and spend most of their active time feeding on the bounty of the shallow pools, the tidal creeks, the open flats and the cord-grass meadows. Some come from a considerable distance; from early April on Great Blue Herons, whose rookeries lie some miles inland, commute regularly to the tidal creeks, and during the period of high tide stalk the killifish which swarm in the pools of the grassy marsh. For them the little fish are merely appetizers, nibblings to fill in between the main courses, but for a number of other species they are an important item of diet.

These marsh pools form a large proportion of the whole area; they are very shallow, with bottoms of soft ooze over which lies a rich culture of bacteria or algae. Most unattractive they are in appearance, and also odoriferous when the hot summer sun releases bubbles of marsh gas from the black muck, but the pools support a fantastically high population of minute animals; they swarm with fundulus minnows known variously as mummichugs, killifish or in these parts simply "minnows" which is a misnomer for they are not even distantly related to the rightful owners of that name. They bask in large schools in the lukewarm water, and when disturbed dash off through the shallows darkening the water like a miniature squall and sounding like a heavy shower. These little fish which average between two and three inches in length are by far the most abundant

vertebrates in the salt marsh and foragers come from near and far to harvest them.

Hérons and Bitterns are their chief predators in spring and early summer but these are later joined by other fishermen. Common Terns released from family responsibilities begin to wander in from their colonies on the offshore islands by late July, and their grating calls vie with those of the Willets as they hover and dive into the shallows. Yellowlegs of both species begin to appear in numbers at about the same time and are surprisingly skillful at capturing the lively alert little fish. They appear to be the only shorebirds which hunt this sort of food.

The smaller species of gull are also ardent killi-fishermen. In the fall and again in spring after the little fish come out of hibernation in the mud, they are eagerly sought by Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls en route to and from their breeding grounds.

A rarer visitor to the marsh pools is the Hooded Merganser, smallest and spriteliest of its family, which chivvies the shoals of killifish in the salt ponds which are much too shallow for the fishing techniques of its larger relatives.

A food resource of the salt marsh sought by larger birds is the flotsam carried in on the flood tides and left for the various species of scavengers. At the beginning of the ebb they come: crows in straggling flocks from the distant black spruce uplands, to join the Black-backs and Herring Gulls which seem to appear magically out of the clear sky. With them come the Starlings, most versatile of scroungers, in hundreds during the summer, thousands in autumn, descending in dusky clouds on the low grass reaches, wickering and wheezing and probing, leaving nothing edible behind them.

Once in a great while if any substantial carrion is stranded by the ebbing tide, the marsh will be favored by a visit from a Bald Eagle, largest of the raptors, but a scavenger by choice.

Other raptors patrol the marsh regularly for living prey. From early spring to fall Marsh Hawks quarter the grassland slowly, methodically tacking on uptilted wings just above the grass tops. Rarer but with the same hunting methods is the Short-eared Owl which unlike its relatives, is by preference a day-time hunter. Like a great pale brown moth it flaps slowly over the grass tops, ready to drop on a meadow vole or shrew - but always with an eye out for an unwary sandpiper. Both the Marsh Hawk and Short-eared Owl will strike an unwary or sickly shorebird if the opportunity presents itself, but alert healthy birds have little to fear from them.



Summer-fall.

The first of these shorebird migrants appear in the marsh in the early days of July. These will almost certainly be a "skein" of a dozen or so Dowitchers, the Robin Snipe of the old market gunners, and aptly named, for their beaks are as long as those of the true snipes, and their breasts in summer plumage - soon to be lost - are a rich russet brown. Their little flocks multiply and their numbers swell from hundreds to several thousand as July merges into August.

Other species come close on their heels: the little "peep", the Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers and Semipalmated Plovers are next, with a scattering of flashily dressed Ruddy Turnstones, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and a handful of Knots with breasts of a color similar to that of the Dowitchers but rather more pink.

The marsh now begins to reach its peak of activity. Flocks of Golden Plovers drop in for a few hours or a day during late July and early August but do not tarry as most of the others do. The Black-bellied Plovers appear also late in July and their numbers grow through August to early September. Later comers are the Dunlins and White-rumped Sandpipers; never very numerous, and difficult for the tyro to recognize, their small 'peaks' are in September. Latest of all is usually the Sanderling, the peep of the open beaches, which comes to the marsh only to rest and preen between the tides.

Most of these species in fact do little feeding on the marsh; it is for them a resting place after the last long leg of their southward journey, a place to wait out the flood tide period when only the Least Sandpipers seem able to find food along the high water mark.

These roosts are in the same place in any marsh year after year and one wonders how many centuries they may have served the south-bound migrants. As the tide ebbs, the roost is deserted; but at half flood the birds begin to appear again, so that by high water slack there seems to be Standing Room Only in the favored spots. There may be as many as a dozen species of 'peep' and larger species present at any one time, mostly at rest with beak tucked into the back feathers, but always with a few moving about restlessly as if in search of a more comfortable spot, or picking in an aimless desultory manner. The exceptions are the two species of Yellowlegs. The tides do not seem to govern their daily time-tables. They continue to pursue the killifish and other prey without break, perhaps taking their rest at night.

It is easy to see why these roosts are favored by the small waders - they are open, low, gravelly ridges well away from the tall cord-grass stands, with little growth except for scattered sea lavender, samphire and sea blite. Approaching peril can be seen at a distance. Any four-footed predator such as a mink would stand little chance of getting within pouncing range. Their principal danger comes from the air, literally on the wings of the wind. The little Merlin, speediest and deadliest of the small bird-eating hawks attends their flocks during the southward journey, and its swift low-level attacks are made with such savagery and precision that one wonders how an intended victim ever escapes.

Now and then an even more fearful enemy arrives in the shape of a Peregrine, probably from a Greenland aerie as they are said to be extinct in eastern Canada. As long as the big falcon stays in

the vicinity the whole population of the marsh is in a state of restless tension - the birds feed in half-hearted fashion and if at the roosts frequently take to wing in panic false alarms.

In late summer the salt marsh can be literally teeming with life: Willets are restless, numerous and still vociferous, flying hither and thither on flashing wings like big black-and-white butterflies; terns, equally noisy, are everywhere zig-zagging over the open areas, hovering over and diving in the shallows; at least one or two flocks of shorebirds seem to be in the air constantly - the silvery stippling of their bellies flashing in the sun as they bank and turn. Barn and Cliff Swallows from the adjacent farmlands and Bank Swallows from their colonies on the islands close in shore, hawk low to harvest the flies and mosquitos which shimmer like heat haze over the grass tops; Nighthawks drifting southward in great loose flocks take their toll of the higher-flying insects.

As summer moves toward early fall changes in the bird life of the marsh can be dramatic and sudden: to-day it will be throbbing with life, to-morrow almost drained, but the following day alive again. The flow of migrants becomes intermittent and arriving flocks gradually more and more widely spaced. In late August the swallows gather in enormous flocks of many hundreds made up of all species and rest on the bayberry bushes, the low spruces and on the gravelly ground itself along the edge of the marsh. They will be there in their hundreds one day, and on the next hardly a swallow can be found.

Similarly great mixed flocks of blackbirds - Redwings, Grackles, Cowbirds and a few Rustys will work over the drier stretches along the spring tide level, and after a day or two vanish as suddenly as they appeared.



The ebb of the shorebird flocks is more gradual and less noticeable. First of the regulars to disappear are the Dowitchers, Lesser Yellowlegs and Turnstones whose numbers drop off sharply in late August and have for the most part departed by mid-September. Resident Willets also leave at about this time. Numbers of the smaller peep begin to dwindle next and the Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers and Semipalmated Plovers are scarce by late September.

The rest - Black-bellied Plovers, Greater Yellowlegs, White-rumped Sandpipers, Dunlins and Sanderlings do not seem to have any strict schedule and so frequently linger on well into November. None of course follow hard and fast rules, individuals of all species often lagging weeks behind their fellows so that it is not surprising to find a few Semipalmated or Least Sandpipers still pattering around in puddles in early November.

As the shorebird flocks dwindle and before the leaves of the hardwoods in the uplands begin to change, autumn colors come to the salt marsh. *Spartina* beds in summer are varying shades of green depending on light, weather and stage of growth. After mid-summer comes the first suggestion of warmer hues - a faint wash of yellow over the tall grass tracts which deepens to russet, gold and even orange as the fall advances; the sea lavender is covered with minute pale mauve blooms, the sea-side goldenrod bears curved bright yellow plumes, the fleshy little samphire plants on the sterile mud turn blood red, and the orach along the pebbly seaward ridges is brilliant madder pink. Under a clear late September sky the marsh is a glorious sight to behold.

Although it has lost many of its summer birds, replacements are moving in. The Water Pipit flocks arrive with the equinox - small flocks at first but increasing rapidly in early October. They trade freely back and forth between the seashore and marsh and the air is full of their thin musical flight calls as flocks of from a dozen to fifty or more twist and turn over the gravel ridges and grassy flats. They forage slowly and carefully, like gleaners, over the same territory as that covered by the great Starling and blackbird flocks, and seem to find sufficient leavings to justify the hunt. Their stay is brief, almost bounded by the month of October; and their arrival and departure lack the tapering periods of most migrants. Numbers build up quickly from the vanguard flocks and late stragglers are few.

Shortly, in October, the Horned Larks arrive, and from the middle to the end of the month steady streams of Snow Buntings pass by, the majority continuing further south, but a few flocks remaining to face the winter here. With them are usually a goodly sprinkling of Lapland Longspurs, almost all of which will be transients. They are easily distinguished from the buntings even in flight by their darker color, smaller size and distinctive dry chattering call when on the wing.

The larks, buntings and longspurs tend to remain along the drier margins of the marsh and are not therefore strictly marsh birds; but they are very much a part of the autumn pageant in the great estuarial lowlands, and are last of the small birds to be found there as winter sets in.

In November the colors fade and the marsh takes on its winter tawny brown. The Great Blue Herons come less and less frequently, but the migrant ducks begin to drop in to feed in the tidal creeks. Greater Scaup and Common Goldeneye, bands of bouncy little Buffleheads, popping up and down in the murky water like jack-in-the-boxes, and Red-breasted Mergansers - they feed amicably together, each species to its own taste with apparently little competition. The scaup and most of the goldeneyes move on, not to re-appear again till late winter, but the Buffleheads and Mergansers remain to form part of the scanty winter population.

## PHOTO SECTION

### Winter Gulls.

The various winter gulls seen in Halifax Harbour and the dump area were photographed by Ian McLaren. On the first page there is a second-year Iceland or "Kumlien's" Gull. Note the high forehead and small, dark-tipped bill. The upper photograph on page two shows a "Kumlien's" Gull in foreground with Herring Gulls behind. Some "Kumlien's" Gulls approach Herring Gulls in intensity of mantle shading. Note the difference between the two Herring Gulls. Note also that this "Kumlien's" is dark-eyed - approaching Thayer's Gull in this respect. A fine adult Glaucous Gull is seen in the lower photo on page two. Note the low forehead and the robust bill. Page three (upper photo) shows a near-adult "Kumlien's Gull", it is light-eyed, but has quite heavily-marked primaries. Page three (lower photo) A mystery gull. The second-year bird at left is Iceland-sized, (note larger young Herring Gull) but it has much too robust a bill and low forehead. It might be a hybrid Herring and Iceland Gull.

On page four is the photo of a Virginia Rail photographed by Ralph Connor. This is one of two Virginia and three Sora Rails spotted by Ross Anderson on the Halifax East Christmas bird count and photographed the following day. (The Eatons picked up a frozen Virginia Rail on the shore at Cole Harbour on January 15, when the temperature was minus 22° Celsius). In the lower photo, page four, there is a Yellow-Rumped Warbler photographed in winter by Ralph Connor.

On page five there are two delightful photos of a Pied-billed Grebe and chick - by Ralph Connor. For a young Grebe, only a few days old, transportation poses a problem: it can ride the parent's back or swim by itself. This Grebe was observed diving several times, and each time emerging with the chick still in place on the parents back. The first time Ralph observed this bird it had at least eight young. The following day only one remained. The loss is attributable to a predator. Another grebe observed in the same pond also only had one young which was two-thirds mature size. The predator may also have dispatched the missing members of this brood.

(continued)



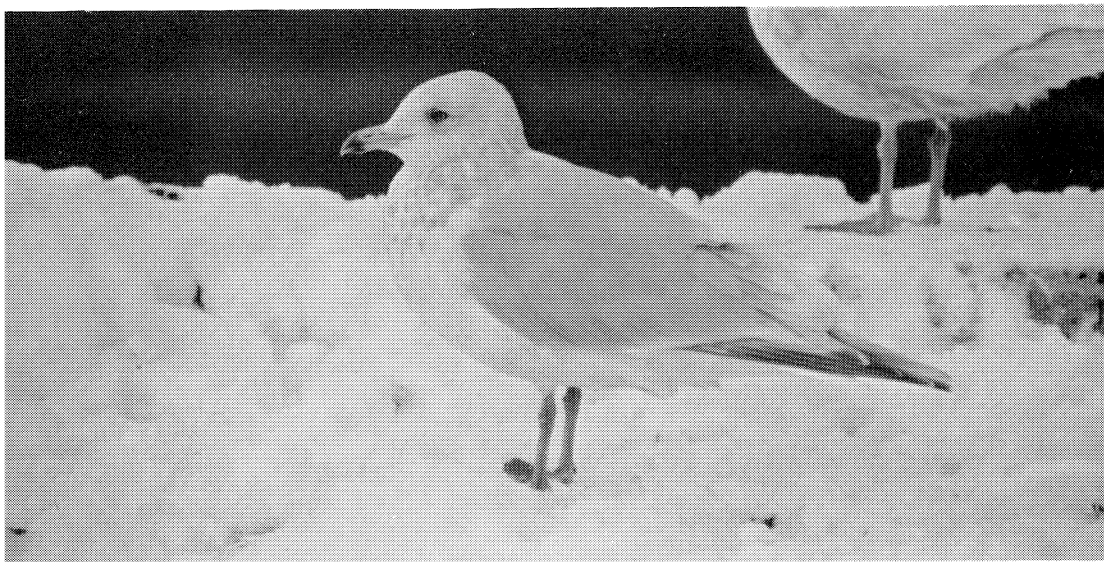
"kumlien's" gull

WINTER GULLS - HALIFAX HARBOUR AND DUMP



top, "kumlien's" and herring gulls  
bottom, glaucous gull

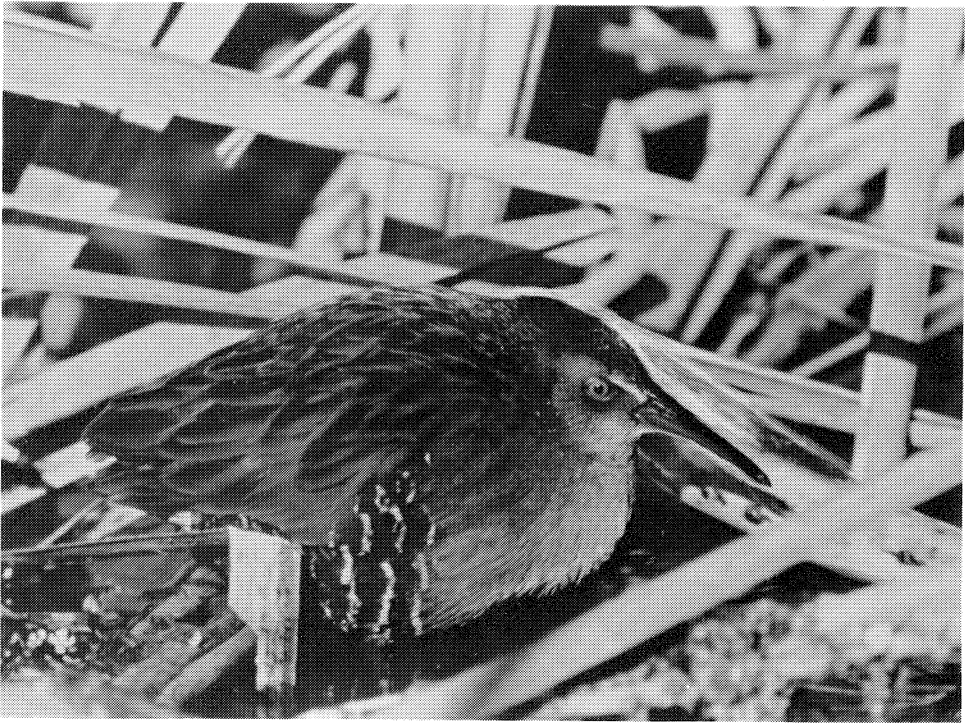




near-adult "kumlien's" gull



"mystery" gull and young herring gull



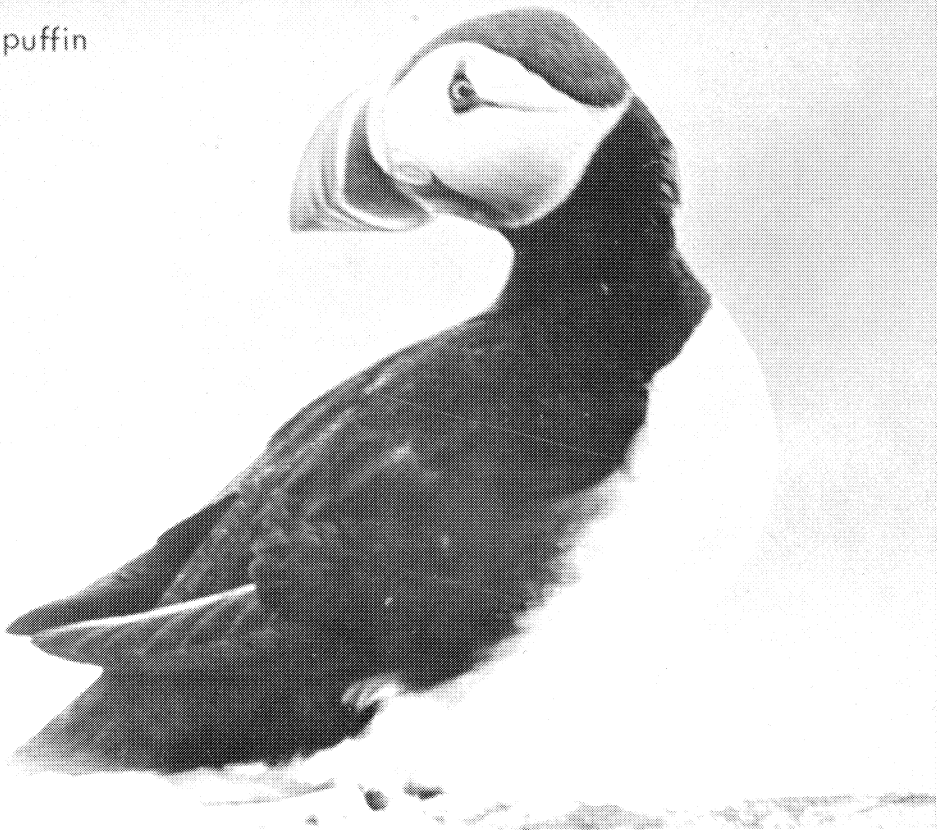
photos ralph connor

virginia rail



yellow-rumped warbler

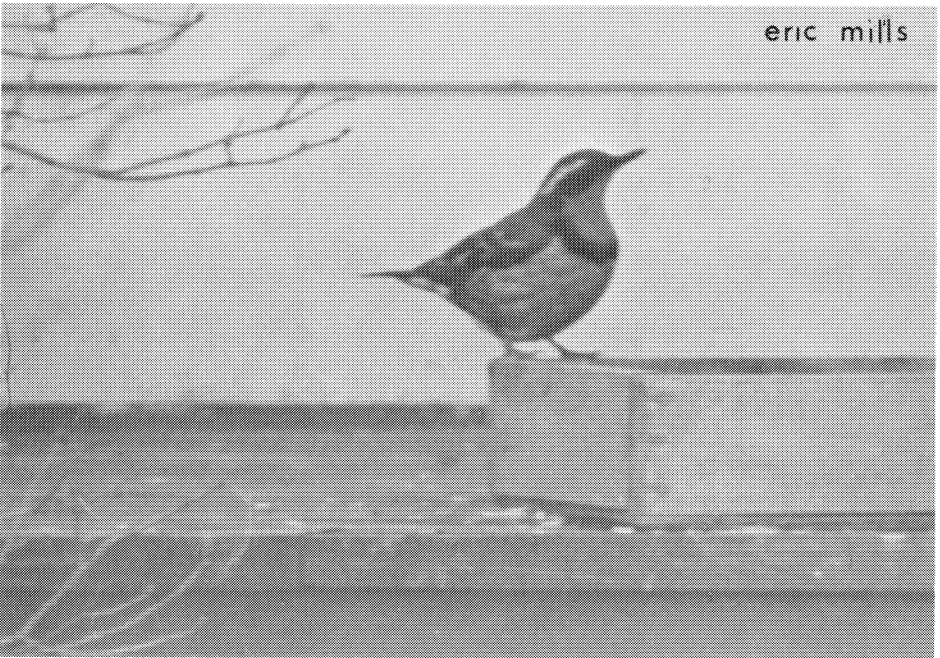
common puffin



photos ralph connor

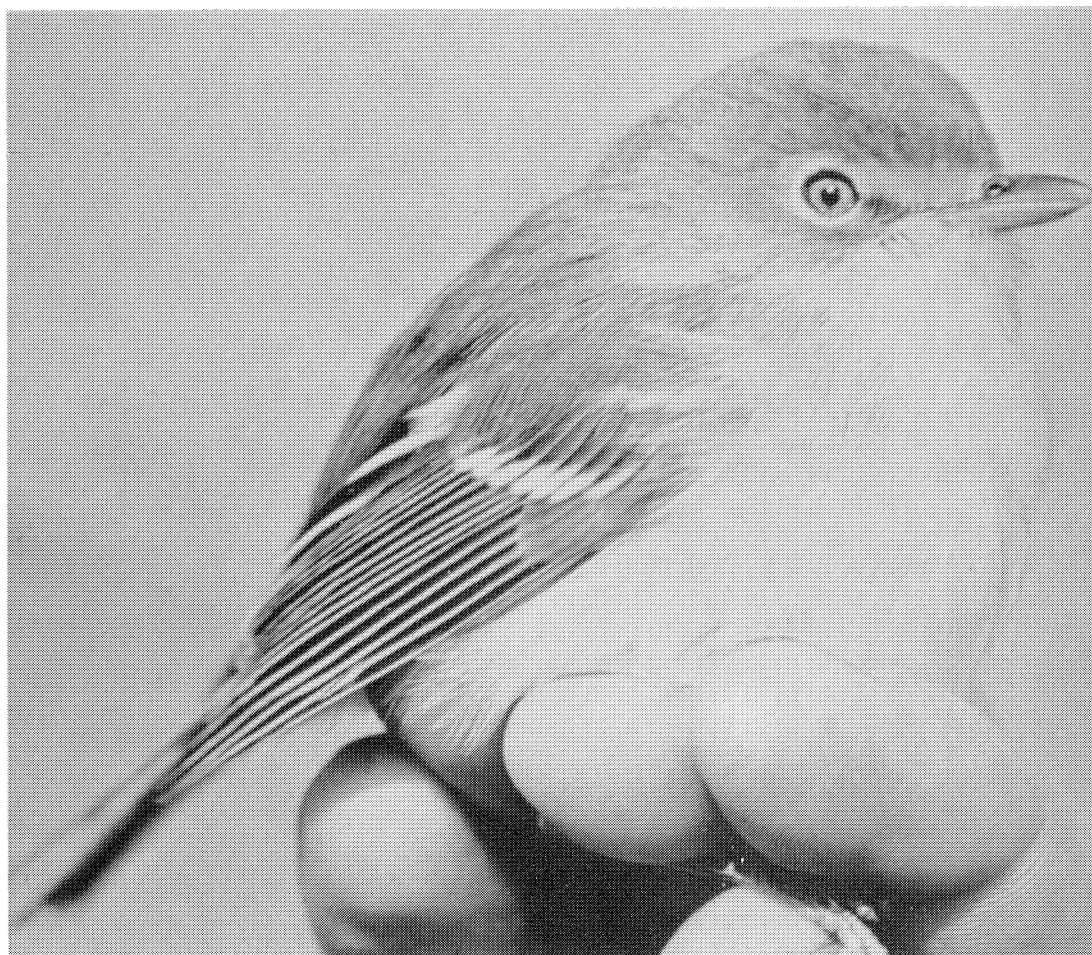
young atlantic puffin





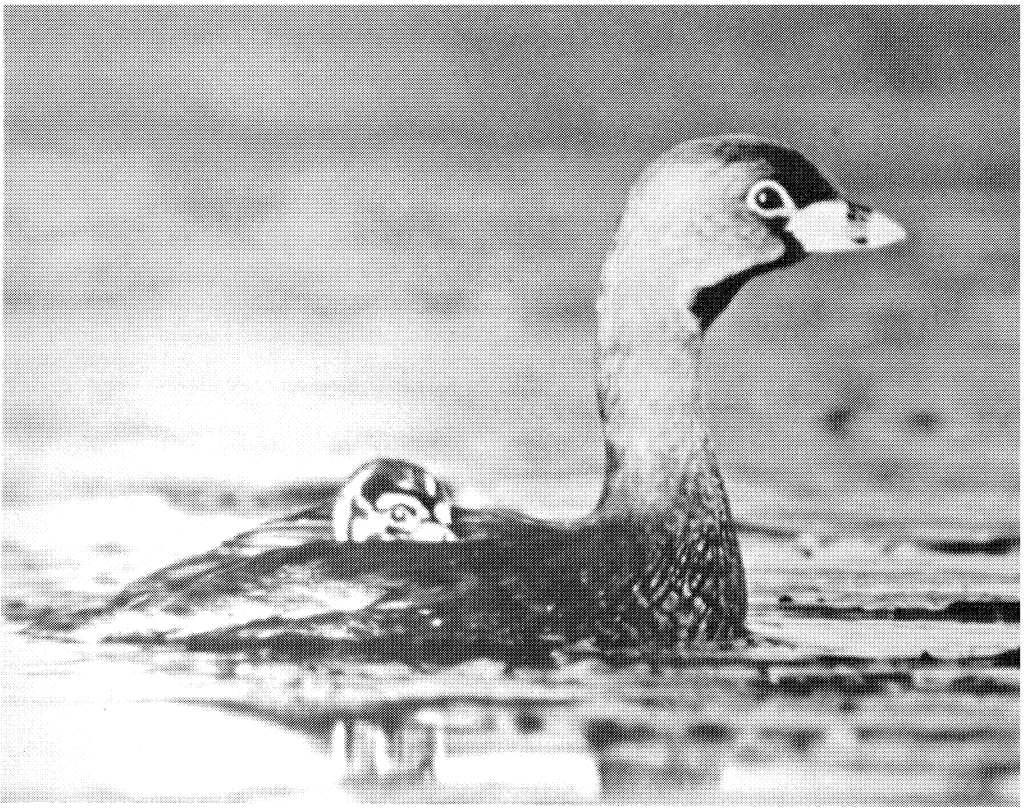
varied thrush

macgregor



j. sherman boates

white-eyed vireo



pied-billed grebe and chick



PHOTO SECTION

(continued)

On page six there are photographs of a Varied Thrush by Eric Mills and I. MacGregor. It was seen on January 16 at John Cliffe's feeder at South Maitland, Hants Co. These photos were taken on the 19th. and 20th. January. It came to the feeder for some time and appeared to thrive on mixed chicken scratch. Eric reports it was so tame that he had a problem in getting far enough away from it to get it in focus at 6 - 8 feet with a 300mm. lens. Finally he got a photo from inside the storm door and standing on a chair. This is the first confirmation of a Varied Thrush in the Province of Nova Scotia.

The excellent photograph of a White-eyed Vireo was taken by J. Sherman Boates (see page seven). Sherman was one of a party from Acadia University under direction of Dr. Peter C. Smith at Bon Portage Island on the Thanksgiving weekend. The bird was taken in a mist net and examined closely. It is a first confirmation for Nova Scotia. There had been a storm shortly before the bird was found.

Ralph Connor took the two photographs of Atlantic Puffins shown on page eight. Ralph says he has found little information about immature puffins - the one in the lower photograph was found among the rocks at Herring Cove during the Halifax West Christmas bird count. The bird died during the day and is now a study skin at the Nova Scotia Museum.

R.E.



And last but far from least of the regular winter residents to arrive, the Rough-legged Hawk appears, a little ahead of the first snows, and includes the drier parts of the marsh in its vole patrol.

Once in a long while there will be a Snowy Owl Year in the south and the marsh will have its share of visits from the big white mousers. Like the Short-eared Owl they are daytime hunters and ground-perchers, and their large white forms and unsuspecting nature make them ridiculously easy targets for the sportsman who has an irresistible urge to lay low any large living wild thing, however beautiful and appealing it may be.

The marsh is a sombre, brooding place in November. And silent. Only the tinkling notes of the buntings and the plaintive calls of the larks overhead break the stillness. The clouds hang low, and the level horizon is infinitely far away.

When the first snow flurries whiten the land the marshes remain brown - the light snow is quickly melted by the salt or washed away by the tides. Later as the cold increases ice forms over the shallow pools, and the mud congeals. Then, after a snowfall the marsh becomes a part of the winter landscape, but more lifeless and desolate than even the upland burns and barrens. Vertical ice cliffs form along the creeks and the incoming tide spreads miniature floes and bergs helter skelter over the mud-stained white expanse.

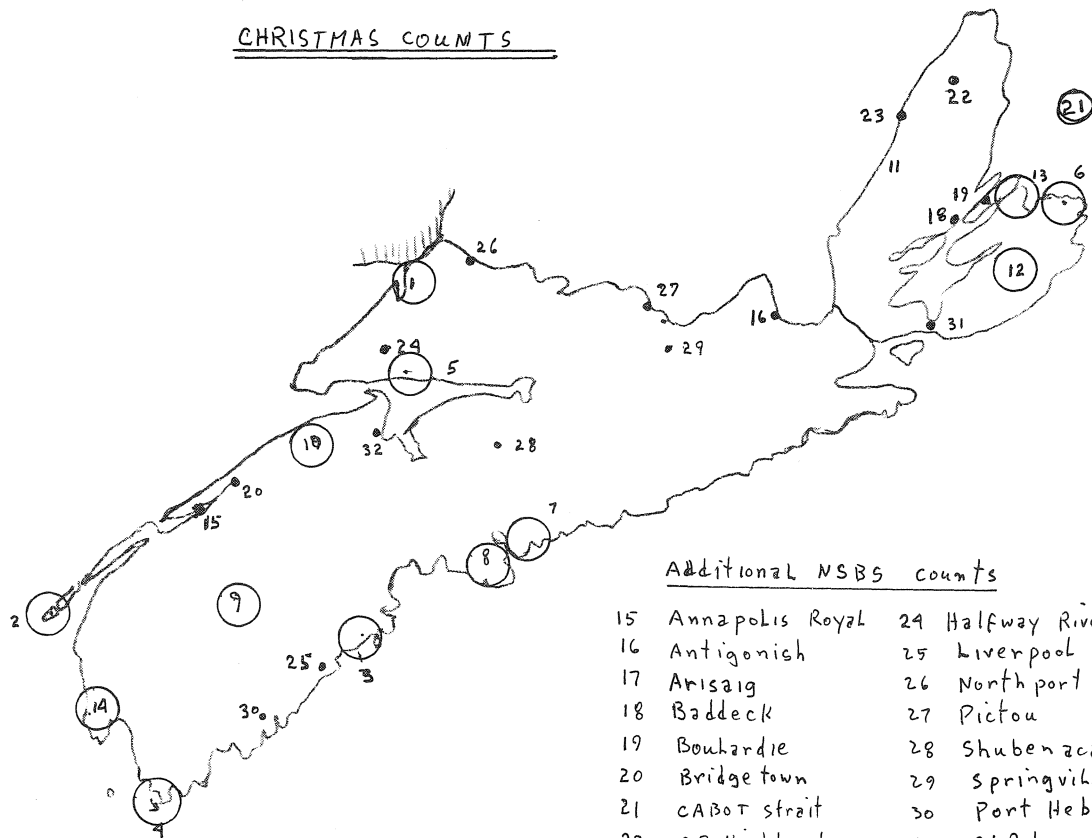
Though lifeless, the marsh surface is in a state of constant change from wind and tide, like a young planet in its early formative aeons. Here and there in the memory of the teeming life that was, tufts of cord-grass project above the frozen surface and tiny pointed drifts of blown snow form in their lee.

Spring and the first heron are long weeks away.





CHRISTMAS COUNTS



JLC

Audubon Counts

- 1 Amherst
- 2 Brien Is.
- 3 Broad Cove
- 4 Cape Sable Is.
- 5 Economy
- 6 Glace Bay
- 7 Halifax East
- 8 Halifax West
- 9 Kejimikujik
- 10 Kingston
- 11 Margaree
- 12 Salmon River
- 13 The Sydneys
- 14 Yarmouth.

Additional NSBS counts

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 15 Annapolis Royal | 24 Halfway River |
| 16 Antigonish      | 25 Liverpool     |
| 17 Arisaig         | 26 Northport     |
| 18 Baddeck         | 27 Pictou        |
| 19 Bonhardie       | 28 Shubenacadie  |
| 20 Bridge town     | 29 Springville   |
| 21 Cabot strait    | 30 Port Hebert   |
| 22 CB Highlands    | 31 St Peters     |
| 23 Cheticamp       | 32 Wolfville     |

Christmas Counts

NOVA SCOTIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS, 1976-77

During the Christmas Count period this year, more than 250 dogged observers participated in 33 counts. This is an increase over last year, which had 200 observers take part in 27 counts.

Last year there were 130 species of birds plus 1 additional race seen, while this year we enlarged the number to 140 species plus 1 additional race.

The total number of individuals counted this year stands at 102,015 birds, up 29% over last year.

Weather was favourable for most counts in the province, being generally clear and cold.

Many species were considerably up in numbers this year. To name a few: Canada Goose, up 60% (5294 to 8512), Common Goldeneye, up 56% (816 to 1278), Great Black-backed Gull, up 20% (4461 to 5394), and Yellow-rumped Warbler, up 92% (82 to 158).

There were, of course, some species which declined in numbers as well. A few were: White-breasted Nuthatch, down 31% (16 to 11), Brown Creeper, down 44% (34 to 19), Common Starling, down 34% (13,536 to 8895), and House Sparrow, down 12% (6289 to 5484).

A hearty thank-you to everyone who took part in Nova Scotia's Christmas Counts! The more observers who participate, the better coverage we have of each area, and a more accurate study of populations can be determined.

A single underlining of a species name denotes an unusual species for the particular count. Underlining of a number denotes an unusual number of that particular species.

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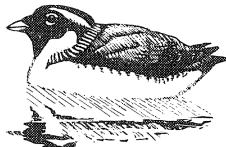
ADVOCATE, Dec. 23; 8.0 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Temp. 15F. Four observers in 3 parties. Total party hours, 24 (20 on foot, 4 by car); total party miles, 66 (16 on foot, 50 by car).

Common Loon 1; Red-throated Loon 3; Red-necked Grebe 2; Horned Grebe 1; Black Duck 93; Common Goldeneye 4; Bufflehead 34; Oldsquaw 5; White-winged Scoter 2; Surf Scoter 5; Common Merganser 3; Red-breasted Merganser 1; Ruffed Grouse 1; Purple Sandpiper 75; Iceland Gull 1 imm; Great Black-backed Gull 4; Herring Gull 55; Thick-billed Murre 5; Murre sp. 4; Hairy Woodpecker 1; Blue Jay 2; Common Raven 15; Common Crow 30; Black-capped Chickadee 14; Boreal Chickadee 13; Red-breasted Nuthatch 1; American Robin 8; Northern Shrike 1; Starling 13; House Sparrow 60; Common Grackle 4; Cowbird 1; Pine Grosbeak 5; American Goldfinch 40; Tree Sparrow 9; Snow Bunting 24.

Total 35 species, about 540 individuals. Frank Hennessey, Nan Hennessey, Edgar Spalding, Francis Spalding (compiler).

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AMHERST, Dec. 27; 8.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. Temp. 0-3C. Five observers in three parties, plus one at feeder. Total party hours, 10 (7 on foot, 3 by car); total party miles, 88 (14 on foot, 74 by car).



Great Blue Heron 2; Mallard 3; Common Merganser 1; Rough-legged Hawk 3; Ruffed Grouse 6; Great Black-backed Gull 75; Herring Gull 20; Rock Dove 93; Downy Woodpecker 1; Blue Jay 11; Common Raven 9; Common Crow 286; Black-capped Chickadee 30; American Robin 5; Golden-crowned Kinglet 3; Starling 275; House Sparrow 254; Rusty Blackbird 1; Brown-headed Cowbird 2; Evening Grosbeak 28; Purple Finch 1; Tree Sparrow 5; White-crowned Sparrow 2; Snow Bunting 800+.

Total 24 species, about 1916 individuals. (In count area during the count period but not seen on count day: Ring-necked Pheasant, Thick-billed Murre, Mourning Dove). Evelyn Coates, Con Desplanque (compiler), Keith McAloney, Cora McKay, Dora Myers.

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ANNAPOLIS ROYAL, Dec. 27; Overcast, wind light. Temp. 26 F. Fresh water frozen. 8.0 a.m. to 5.0 p.m. Five observers in three parties. Total party hours 16 (7 on foot, 9 by car). Total party miles 57 (11 on foot, 46 by car).

Common Loon 5; Horned Grebe 2; Great Cormorant 3; Mallard 4; Black Duck 189; Greater Scaup 56; Common Goldeneye 63; Bufflehead 8; Oldsquaw 3; Common Eider 14; White-winged Scoter 16; Black Scoter 6; Common Merganser 11; Sharp-shinned Hawk 3; Red-tailed Hawk 2; Ruffed Grouse 1; Ring-necked Pheasant 2; Glaucous Gull 2; Great Black-backed Gull 43; Herring Gull 145; Thick-billed Murre 4; Dovekie 2; Rock Dove 1; Hairy Woodpecker 1; Downy Woodpecker 3; Blue Jay 52; Common Raven 14; Common Crow 163; Black-capped Chickadee 10; Red-breasted Nuthatch 1; American Robin 9; Golden-crowned Kinglet 2; Starling 78; House Sparrow 77; Red-winged Blackbird 4; Rusty Blackbird 3; Common Grackle 2; Brown-headed Cowbird 176; Evening Grosbeak 38; White-winged Crossbill 3; Rufous-sided Towhee 1; Savannah Sparrow 3; Dark-eyed Junco 7; Tree Sparrow 2; White-throated Sparrow 12; Fox Sparrow 8; Song Sparrow 3; Snow Bunting 125.

Total 48 species, about 1382 individuals. Allison Dalton, Calder Fraser (compiler), Harold McCormick, Joe Ternan, W.E. Whitehead.

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ANTIGONISH, Dec. 29; 8.0 a.m. to 1.0 p.m. Overcast a.m., overcast with intermittent snow p.m. Temp. -10C to -3C. Wind, light NE. Fresh water open but closed in harbour. One observer. Total party hours 5 (4 on foot, other 1).

Common Goldeneye 1; Great Black-backed Gull 1; Herring Gull 1; Rock Dove 1; Downy Woodpecker 1; Blue Jay 5; Common Raven 1; Common Crow 1; Black-capped Chickadee 1; American Robin 15; Golden-crowned Kinglet 1; Starling 1; House Sparrow 1; Common Grackle 16; Evening Grosbeak 6; American Goldfinch 2; Song Sparrow 1.

Total 17 species; about 56 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Tree Sparrow). Roland Chiasson (compiler).

ARISAIG, Dec. 28; 2.15 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Mostly clear. Temp. -7C. Wind, light westerlies. Fresh water open. Two observers in one party. Total party hours 2 (1 hr. 40 min. on foot, 20 min. by car). Total party miles 2 1/4 (2 on foot, 1/4 by car).

Spruce Grouse 1; Rock Dove 2; Belted Kingfisher 1; Hairy Woodpecker 2; Blue Jay 15; Common Raven 1; Common Crow 1; Black-capped Chickadee 1; Boreal Chickadee 1; Starling 1; Yellow-rumped Warbler 40; Evening Grosbeak 10.

Total 13 species; about 76 individuals. Alyse Chiasson, Roland Chiasson (compiler).

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BADDECK, Jan. 1; 8.30 a.m. to 4.0 p.m. Mostly clear. Temp. -5C. Wind, 5 m.p.h. Fresh water frozen. Fourteen observers in four parties. Total party hours 13 (6 on foot, 7 by car). Total party miles 68 (8 on foot, 60 by car).

Canada Goose 1; Common Goldeneye 7; Common Merganser 16; Bald Eagle 3a, 1 imm.; Ruffed Grouse 1; Great Black-backed Gull 1; Herring Gull 14; Hairy Woodpecker 6; Downy Woodpecker 9; Gray Jay 5; Blue Jay 33; Common Raven 175; Common Crow 225; Black-capped Chickadee 48; Boreal Chickadee 26; American Robin 6; Starling 90; House Sparrow 125; Northern Oriole 1; Evening Grosbeak 19; Purple Finch 7; Pine Grosbeak 7; American Goldfinch 11; Dark-eyed Junco 10; Tree Sparrow 2; Fox Sparrow 2; Song Sparrow 2; Snow Bunting 2.

Total 29 species, about 853 individuals. Diana Banks, Doris Black, Ewan Clark, Ial Coleman, Chris King, Judy King, Richard MacCurdy, Edith MacPherson, Burland Murphy, John G. Nicholson, Harold Popma, Dave Smith, Jess Stone, Lloyd Stone (compiler).

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BOULARDERIE, Dec. 28; 9.0 a.m. to 3.0 p.m. Mostly cloudy a.m., mostly clear p.m. Wind west. Temp. -7C. Salt water open, ponds frozen, brooks partially frozen. One observer. Total party hours 6 (3 on foot, 3 by car). Total party miles 35.8 (2 on foot, 33.8 by car).

Black Duck 7; Oldsquaw 1; Red-breasted Merganser 4; Duck sp. 2; Bald Eagle 1a; Merlin 1; Herring Gull 17; Blue Jay 9; Common Raven 52; Common Crow 22; House Sparrow 50; Pine Grosbeak 16.

Total 11 species; about 180 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Grebe sp. 1; Snow Bunting 80+; Hairy Woodpecker 1; Dark-eyed Junco 2; Great Black-backed Gull 30). Roberta Fraser (compiler).



BRIDGETOWN, Dec. 18; Party cloudy. Wind light. Temp. 26F. Fresh water frozen. Fourteen observers.

Ruffed Grouse 5; Ring-necked Pheasant 2; Great Black-backed Gull 6; Herring Gull 10; Hairy Woodpecker 8; Downy Woodpecker 7; Gray Jay 1; Blue Jay 27; Common Crow 11; Black-capped Chickadee 13; Starling 78+; House Sparrow 120+; Red-winged Blackbird 2; Common Grackle 3; Brown-headed Cowbird 22+; Evening Grosbeak 40+; Dark-eyed Junco 5; Tree Sparrow 1; White-throated Sparrow 6; Song Sparrow 1; Snow Bunting 5.

Total 21 species; about 373 individuals. Helen Clark, J.F. Doig, Sue Goodwin, Mrs. G. Hyson, K. Hyson, Terry Hyson (compiler), Wilfred Marshall, Eric Morris, Elizabeth Pineo, Mrs. Keith Ramey, Paul Slauenwhite, Mr. & Mrs. Wickerson, Stewart Whitman.

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BRIER ISLAND, Dec. 20; 6.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Overcast a.m., overcast p.m., rain in mid afternoon. Temp. 29 to 35F. Wind SE, 5-15 m.p.h. Snow cover 6 to 8 in. Fresh water frozen. Salt water open. Wild food crop fair. Nine observers in six parties. Total party hours 48 (39 on foot, 9 by car). Total party miles 79 (26 on foot, 53 by car).

Common Loon 79; Red-throated Loon 3; Red-necked Grebe 118; Horned Grebe 31; Northern Fulmar 1; Great Cormorant 249; Double-crested Cormorant 1; Great Blue Heron 1; Canada Goose 10; Black Duck 80; Common Goldeneye 252; Bufflehead 10; Oldsquaw 388; Harlequin Duck 1; Common Eider 554; White-winged Scoter 30; Black Scoter 6; Red-breasted Merganser 130; Sharp-shinned Hawk 1; Red-tailed Hawk 1; Red-shouldered Hawk 1; Rough-legged Hawk 2; American Kestrel 1; Ring-necked Pheasant 1; Common Snipe 1; Purple Sandpiper 10; Glaucous Gull 1; Iceland Gull 1; Great Black-backed Gull 435; Herring Gull 583; Ring-billed Gull 4; Black-legged Kittiwake 343; Razorbill 368; Common Murre 5; Thick-billed Murre 568; Dovekie 237; Black Guillemot 303; Common Puffin 2; Short-eared Owl 2; Saw-whet Owl 1; Common Flicker (Yel.-sh.) 1; Horned Lark 151; Gray Jay 7; Blue Jay 1; Common Raven 97; Common Crow 179; Black-capped Chickadee 1; Boreal Chickadee 3; Winter Wren 1; American Robin 16; Golden-crowned Kinglet 2; Water Pipit 17; Starling 100; House Sparrow 30; Eastern Meadowlark 3; Red-winged Blackbird 5; Rusty Blackbird 2; Common Grackle 7; Brown-headed Cowbird 6; Evening Grosbeak 21; Common Redpoll 1; Pine Siskin 1; American Goldfinch 8; Savannah Sparrow 2; Dark-eyed Junco 3; Tree Sparrow 3; White-throated Sparrow 43; Fox Sparrow 5; Swamp Sparrow 3; Song Sparrow 6; Snow Bunting 8.

Total 71 species; about 6623 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Black-headed Gull). Ross Anderson, Fulton Lavender, Wickerson Lent, Ian MacGregor, Bruce Mactavish, Anne Mills, Eric Mills (compiler), Rick Palindat, Ann Wetmore, Jim Wolford.



BROAD COVE, Dec. 31; 7.30 a.m. to 5.0 p.m. Clear. Temp. 28-31 F. Wind West 5-15 m.p.h. No snow cover. Fresh water frozen. Salt water open. Wild food crop excellent. Twenty-five observers in twelve parties. Total party hours 94 (74 on foot, 19 by car, 1 by boat). Total party miles 275 (99 on foot, 171 by car, 5 by boat).

Common Loon 65; Red-throated Loon 2; Red-necked Grebe 25; Horned Grebe 162; Great Blue Heron 1; Great Cormorant 63; Double-crested Cormorant 1; Canada Goose 98; Black Duck 114; Greater Scaup 122; Common Goldeneye 161; Bufflehead 32; Oldsquaw 146; Harlequin Duck 8; Common Eider 523; White-winged Scoter 20; Black Scoter 8; Common Merganser 27; Red-breasted Merganser 35; Hooded Merganser 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk 4; Red-tailed Hawk 1; Marsh Hawk 1; Merlin 2; Ruffed Grouse 11; Ring-necked Pheasant 2; Clapper Rail 1; Purple Sandpiper 34; Glaucous Gull 1; Great Black-backed Gull 334; Herring Gull 813; Common Murre 1; Dovekie 2; Black Guillemot 10; Rock Dove 13; Belted Kingfisher 3; Common Flicker 3; Horned Lark 5; Gray Jay 13; Blue Jay 59; Common Raven 41; Common Crow 263; Black-capped Chickadee 156; Boreal Chickadee 38; White-breasted Nuthatch 1; Red-breasted Nuthatch 22; Brown Creeper 1; Short-billed Marsh Wren 1; Mockingbird 1; American Robin 35; Hermit Thrush 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet 140; Water Pipit 1; Starling 171; Yellow-rumped Warbler 36; Palm Warbler 1; House Sparrow 109; Eastern Meadowlark 1; Brown-headed Cowbird 111; Evening Grosbeak 248; Purple Finch 14; Pine Grosbeak 15; Common Redpoll 15; Pine Siskin 9; American Goldfinch 87; Red Crossbill 27; White-winged Crossbill 68; Savannah Sparrow 24; Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow 2; Darkeyed Junco 538; Tree Sparrow 49; Field Sparrow 1; White-throated Sparrow 1044; Fox Sparrow 8; Swamp Sparrow 5; Song Sparrow 136; Lapland Longspur 5; Snow Bunting 18.

Total 77 species; about 5545 individuals. Mary and Ross Anderson, Norman and Thelma Bowers, Winnie Cairns, Chris, John, Lise and Shirley Cohrs, Eric Cooke, Ben Doane, Evelyn and Fred Dobson, Gillian and Jim Elliott, Sylvia Fullerton (compiler), Dave Gray, Anne Linton, Barbara, Robert and Tina Long, Ian MacGregor, Ian McLaren, Howard Ross, Nellie Snyder.

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CABOT STRAIT, Dec. 23; 11.15 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Clear a.m., partly cloudy p.m. Wind W 10-20 m.p.h. Temp. -4 to -2 C. One observer. Total party hours 4 3/4 (all by boat). Total party miles 96(all by boat)

Northern Fulmar 75; Oldsquaw 1; Glaucous Gull 11; Iceland Gull 67; Great Black-backed Gull 113; Herring Gull 4; Black-legged Kittiwake 304; Thick-billed Murre 5; Dovekie 47; Black Guillemot 5; Alcids sp. 15.

Total 10 species; about 647 individuals. Peter Hope(compiler).

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CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDS, Jan. 2; 8.0 a.m. to 1.0 p.m. Mostly cloudy a.m., snow p.m. Temp. 8-18 F. No wind. Seven observers in three parties. Total party hours 24 (23 on foot, 1 by car). Total party miles 33.5(9.5 on foot, 24 by car).

Common Loon 1; Common Goldeneye 95; Oldsquaw 44; Common Eider 24; White-winged Scoter 8; Common Merganser 8; Red-breasted Merganser 9; Ruffed Grouse 2; Glaucous Gull 15; Iceland Gull 25; Great Black-backed Gull 24; Herring Gull 126; Common Murre 1; Dovekie 4; Black

Guillemot 1; Downy Woodpecker 1; Gray Jay 1; Blue Jay 7; Common Raven 3; Common Crow 39; Black-capped Chickadee 34; American Robin 1; Starling 4; House Sparrow 1; Pine Grosbeak 25; Dark-eyed Junco 7; Snow Bunting 1.

Total 27 species; about 511 individuals. Gordon Doucette, Irene Gettas, Percy Giles, George Leonard, Hazel Stockley, Dave Warner (compiler), Dale Wishart.

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CAPE SABLE, Jan 2; 10.0 a.m. to 5.0 p.m. Mostly cloudy a.m., clear p.m. Temp. 18-32 F. Wind 20-40 m.p.h. Fresh water frozen. Four observers in two parties. Total party hours 12 (12 on foot). Total party miles 11 (11 on foot).

Common Loon 6; Red-necked Grebe 3; Pied-billed Grebe 2; Great Cormorant 22; Double-crested Cormorant 5; Black Duck 340; Common Goldeneye 60; Bufflehead 35; Oldsquaw 58; Common Eider 550; White-winged Scoter 5; Black Scoter 9; Common Merganser 4; Red-breasted Merganser 5; Killdeer 1; Purple Sandpiper 4; Glaucous Gull 1; Iceland Gull 7; Great Black-backed Gull 135; Herring Gull 185; Sabine's Gull 2; Razorbill 1; Thick-billed Murre 4; Dovekie 2; Black Guillemot 23; Horned Lark 68; Common Crow 32; Water Pipit 12; Starling 18; Evening Grosbeak 1; Savannah Sparrow 2; Lapland Longspur 9; Snow Bunting 30.

Total 33 species; about 1641 individuals. Betty Smith (compiler), B.J. Smith, Jr., Locke Smith, Sid Smith.

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CHETICAMP, Dec. 19; Overcast and snowing a.m., heavy snow p.m. 8.30 a.m. to 4.0 p.m. Temp 19-27 F. Wind 20-25 knots. Five observers in four parties. Total party hours 13 (2 on foot, 11 by car). Total party miles 88.5 (3 on foot, 85.5 by car).

Great Cormorant 14; Mallard 6; Black Duck 20; Duck sp. 20; Common Goldeneye 13; Bufflehead 2; Common Eider 4; White-winged Scoter 55; Black Scoter 2; Common Merganser 22; Red-tailed Hawk 1; Bald Eagle 1 imm.; Ruffed Grouse 1; Great Black-backed Gull 94; Herring Gull 120; Common Raven 23; Common Crow 74; Black-capped Chickadee 1; American Robin 1; Starling 35; Pine Grosbeak 21; Sparrow sp. 1; Snow Bunting 20.

Total 21 species; about 551 individuals. Allister Dixon, Muriel LeGresley (compiler), Gerard Poirier, Jordan Wentzell, Mary Anne Wentzell.

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ECONOMY, Dec. 28; 8.0 a.m. to 5.0 p.m. Mostly clear. Temp. 10-20F. Wind NW 15-20 m.p.h. Fresh water open. Seven observers in seven parties. Total party hours 60 (58 on foot, 2 by car). Total party miles 90 (70 on foot, 20 by car).

Black Duck 286; Common Goldeneye 10; Oldsquaw 9; Goshawk 1; Red-tailed Hawk 1; Rough-legged Hawk 2; Bald Eagle 2a; Ruffed Grouse 16; Great Black-backed Gull 14; Herring Gull 179; Ring-billed Gull 1; Thick-billed Murre 1; Rock Dove 13; Barred Owl 1; Hairy Woodpecker 2; Downy Woodpecker 2; Gray Jay 1; Blue Jay 4; Common Raven 25; Com-

mon Crow 64; Black-capped Chickadee 90; Boreal Chickadee 50; Red-breasted Nuthatch 27; Brown Creeper 2; American Robin 17; Golden-crowned Kinglet 26; Starling 90; House Sparrow 225; Brown-headed Cowbird 108; Evening Grosbeak 1; Pine Grosbeak 26; Pine Siskin 3; American Goldfinch 72; Dark-eyed Junco 35; Tree Sparrow 41; White-throated Sparrow 11; Song Sparrow 7; Snow Bunting 56.

Total 38 species; about 1521 individuals. (In count period in count area but not seen on count day: Bufflehead, White-winged Scoter, Surf Scoter, Common Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Purple Sandpiper, Mourning Dove, Pileated Woodpecker, Hermit Thrush, Northern Shrike, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Purple Finch, Fox Sparrow). Tony Duke, Ross Hall, Frank Hennessey, Nan Hennessey, Edgar Spalding, Francis Spalding (compiler), Frieda Wales.

HALFWAY RIVER, Jan. 1; Partly cloudy. Temp. -4C. Fresh water frozen. Two observers.

Gray Jay 1; Blue Jay 3; Common Crow 1+; American Robin 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet 1+; House Sparrow 4; Common Grackle 3; Evening Grosbeak 6; Dark-eyed Junco 4; Tree Sparrow 2.

Total 10 species; about 26 individuals. Cameron Fullerton, Mal Fullerton (compiler).

GLACE BAY, Dec. 27; 8.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m. Rain a.m., heavy rain p.m. Temp. 39-41 F. Wind SSE 40-50 m.p.h. Fresh water frozen. Salt water open. Food crop excellent. Nine observers in four parties. Total party hours 28 (2 on foot, 26 by car). Total party miles 137 (3 on foot, 134 by car).

Great Cormorant 3; Canada Goose 74; Mallard 5; Black Duck 101; Common Goldeneye 42; Oldsquaw 23; White-winged Scoter 7; Common Merganser 24; Red-breasted Merganser 16; Ruffed Grouse 1; Iceland Gull 76; Great Black-backed Gull 189; Herring Gull 258; Black-headed Gull 9; Dovekie 11; Rock Dove 8; Horned Lark 3; Blue Jay 1; Common Raven 9; Common Crow 103; Starling 226; House Sparrow 168; Evening Grosbeak 23; American Goldfinch 4; Dark-eyed Junco 1; Snow Bunting 20.

Total 26 species; about 1405 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Bald Eagle(adult), Downy Woodpecker, Mockingbird, American Robin). Otis Cossitt, Graham Fraser, Bertha Hopkins, Hedley Hopkins, Sara MacLean (compiler), Eldon Meikle, Winnie Meikle, Ann Spencer, Arthur Spencer.





HALIFAX EAST, Dec. 18; 7.0 a.m. to 5.0 p.m. Mostly cloudy a.m., mostly clear p.m. Fresh water partly open. Salt water partly open. Wild food crop excellent. Forty-four observers in twenty-two parties. Total party hours 167 (142 on foot, 25 by car). Total party miles 427 (184 on foot, 243 by car).

Common Loon 60; Red-throated Loon 4; Red-necked Grebe 1; Horned Grebe 19; Great Blue Heron 4; Canada Goose 3420; Mallard 7; Black Duck 424; Pintail 1; Green-winged Teal 1; Common Goldeneye 191; Bufflehead 46; Oldsquaw 152; Common Eider 60; King Eider 1; White-winged Scoter 67; Surf Scoter 38; Black Scoter 26; Hooded Merganser 1; Common Merganser 33; Red-breasted Merganser 114; Sharp-shinned Hawk 4; Rough-legged Hawk 3; Bald Eagle 1a; Marsh Hawk 1; Merlin 5; American Kestrel 3; Spruce Grouse 2; Ruffed Grouse 19; Sandhill Crane 1; Virginia Rail 6; Sora 2; Semipalmated Plover 1; Killdeer 2; Common Snipe 1; Purple Sandpiper 53; Glaucous Gull 1; Iceland Gull 6; Great Black-backed Gull 298; Herring Gull 1567; Ring-billed Gull 45; Black-headed Gull 15; Bonaparte's Gull 1; Razorbill 1; Murre sp. 3; Dovekie 27; Rock Dove 6; Mourning Dove 7; Belted Kingfisher 3; Hairy Woodpecker 2; Downy Woodpecker 1; Horned Lark 5; Gray Jay 2; Blue Jay 56; Common Raven 98; Common Crow 716; Black-capped Chickadee 199; Boreal Chickadee 118; White-breasted Nuthatch 3; Red-breasted Nuthatch 8; Brown Creeper 3; Winter Wren 5; Mockingbird 1; American Robin 45; Hermit Thrust 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet 192; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1; Water Pipit 9; Northern Shrike 1; Starling 1144; Yellow-rumped Warbler 4; House Sparrow 618; Eastern Meadowlark 1; Red-winged Blackbird 3; Rusty Blackbird 2; Brown-headed Cowbird 28; Evening Grosbeak 251; Purple Finch 30; Pine Grosbeak 2; Common Redpoll 2; Pine Siskin 34; American Goldfinch 267; Red Crossbill 4; White-winged Crossbill 26; Savannah Sparrow 31; Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow 1; Dark-eyed Junco 402; Tree Sparrow 77; Chipping Sparrow 3; White-throated Sparrow 248; Fox Sparrow 2; Swamp Sparrow 17; Song Sparrow 82; Snow Bunting 64.

Total 92 species (1 additional race), about 11,563 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Sand-erling, Common Yellowthroat). Mary & Ross Anderson, Michael Benskin, Shirley Brothers, R.G.B. Brown, Winnie Cairns, Hazel Carmichael, Betsy Chambers, Margaret Clark, Molly Clayden, Chris, John & Shirley Cohrs, Jamie & Ralph Connor, Frances Cook, Eric Cooke, Ethel Crathorne, Ben Doane, Gillian & Jim Elliot, Sylvia Fullerton, Heather Harbord, Barbara Hinds, Estelle LaBerge, Fulton Lavender, Anne Linton, Robert & Wendy MacDonald, Ian MacGregor, Bruce Mactavish, Ian McLaren (compiler), Eric Mills, Willett Mills, Sandra Myers, Karen Ogden, Rick Palindat, Pat & Roger Pocklington, Don & Joyce Purchase, Howard Ross, Karl & Wendie Tay.

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HALIFAX WEST, Dec. 27; 7.30 a.m. to 5.0 p.m. Cloudy becoming clear p.m. Temp. 20 F. Wind SSW 10 m.p.h. Fresh water partly frozen. Fifty-three observers in thirty-six parties. Total party hours 160 (145 on foot, 14 by car, 1 by boat). Total party miles 361 (163 on foot, 196 by car, 2 by boat).

Common Loon 84; Red-throated Loon 7; Red-necked Grebe 35; Horned Grebe 47; Shearwater sp. 1; Great Blue Heron 1; Great Cormorant 112; Canada Goose 9; Black Duck 37; Ring-necked Duck 1; Greater Scaup 5; Common Goldeneye 40; Bufflehead 4; Oldsquaw 165; Common Eider 199; White-winged Scoter 55; Surf Scoter 7; Black Scoter 68; Common Merganser 8; Red-breasted Merganser 86; Sharp-shinned Hawk 6; Red-tailed Hawk 2; Rough-legged Hawk 2; Bald Eagle 1 imm; American Kestrel 4;

Spruce Grouse 2; Ruffed Grouse 11; Purple Sandpiper 69; Iceland Gull 143; Great Black-backed Gull 1528; Herring Gull 5362; Ring-billed Gull 17; Black-headed Gull 20; Black-legged Kittiwake 13; Common Murre 8; Thick-billed Murre 36; Dovekie 68; Black Guillemot 51; Atlantic Puffin 1; Rock Dove 1081; Mourning Dove 5; Great Horned Owl 1; Belted Kingfisher 1; Hairy Woodpecker 4; Downy Woodpecker 15; Horned Lark 5; Gray Jay 12; Blue Jay 87; Common Raven 12; Common Crow 329; Black-capped Chickadee 286; Boreal Chickadee 122; White-breasted Nuthatch 2; Red-breasted Nuthatch 19; Brown Creeper 6; Winter Wren 1; Mockingbird 3; Brown Thrasher 1; American Robin 85; Hermit Thrush 4; Golden-crowned Kinglet 119; Water Pipit 2; Starling 4309; Hooded Warbler 1; House Sparrow 1009; Red-winged Blackbird 1; Northern Oriole 1; Common Grackle 8; Brown-headed Cowbird 306; Evening Grosbeak 1560; Purple Finch 4; Pine Grosbeak 2; Common Redpoll 4; American Goldfinch 80; Red Cross-bill 81; White-winged Crossbill 10; Savannah Sparrow 7; Dark-eyed Junco 220; Tree Sparrow 20; Chipping Sparrow 2; Field Sparrow 1; White-throated Sparrow 192; Fox Sparrow 13; Song Sparrow 104; Snow Bunting 71.

Total 87 species; about 18,608 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Pied-billed Grebe, Mallard, Wood Duck, American Woodcock, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Rusty Blackbird, Rufous-sided Towhee). Kay Anderson, Mary & Ross Anderson, Ruth Bedwell, Michael Benskin, Claire Bowditch, Hazel Carmichael, Barbara Christie, Walter Chute, Chris, John & Lise Cohrs, Shirley Cohrs (compiler), Jamie & Ralph Connor, Joan Corkum, Ethel Crathorne, Niels Daan, Ben Doane, Evelyn & Fred Dobson, Ruth Edsall, Gillian & Jim Elliott, Sylvia Fullerton, David Gray, Pamela Gray, Heather Harbord, Chris Helleiner, Ethel Helpard, Frank Himsl, Barbara Hinds, Marina Horrocks, Gerda Jansen, Charlotte Jeffries, Fulton Lavender, Anne Linton, Ian MacGregor, Bernice & Ian McLaren, Anne, Chris, Eric & Karen Mills, Willett Mills, Karen Ogden, Roger Pocklington, Howard Ross, Harriett Rueggeberg, Jereene Simard, Margaret Talbot, Betty & Wes Topple, Pauline Wood.

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KEJIMKUJIK NATIONAL PARK, Dec. 19; 7.30 a.m. to 8.0 p.m. Clear a.m., partly cloudy p.m. Temp. 10-20 F. Wind NW 5-15 m.p.h. Fresh water partly open. Twenty-three observers in 15 parties. Total party hours 71 1/4 (60 1/2 on foot, 8 by car, 2 3/4 by snowmobile). Total party miles 160 (61 on foot, 82 1/2 by car, 16 1/2 by snowmobile).

Black Duck 7; Common Goldeneye 9; Red-tailed Hawk 1; Ruffed Grouse 11; Great Horned Owl 1; Barred Owl 2; Pileated Woodpecker 1; Hairy Woodpecker 13; Downy Woodpecker 13; Gray Jay 5; Blue Jay 132; Common Raven 37; Common Crow 28; Black-capped Chickadee 153; Boreal Chickadee 15; Red-breasted Nuthatch 24; Brown Creeper 3; American Robin 12; Hermit Thrush 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet 18; Starling 14; House Sparrow 21; Brown-headed Cowbird 3; Evening Grosbeak 37; Purple Finch 3; Pine Grosbeak 16; Pine Siskin 5; American Goldfinch 9; White-winged Crossbill 2; Crossbill sp. 2; Finch sp. 19; Dark-eyed Junco 23; Tree Sparrow 3; White-throated Sparrow 21; Fox Sparrow 1; Swamp Sparrow 1; Song Sparrow 10.

Total 35 species; about 687 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Common Loon, White-breasted Nuthatch, Snow Bunting). Norm & Thelma Bowers, Margaret Cheesman, Gary Corbett, Russel Crosby, Neils Daan, Chester & Shirley Fancy,

Emmerson Fiske, David Gray, Peter Hope (compiler), Bill Hussey, Granville Nickerson, Eric Mullen, Wallace Polchies, Tim Reynolds, Glen Rhodenizer, Tom Sheppard, Rick Swain, Bob Thexton, Robert Turner, Geraldine & Sherman Williams.

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KINGSTON, Dec. 19; 6.45 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Clear a.m., partly cloudy p.m. Temp. -7 to -10 C. Wind W 20-30 k.p.h. Fresh water partly frozen. Five observers. Total party hours 10  $\frac{3}{4}$  (2 on foot 8  $\frac{3}{4}$  by car). Total party miles 62 (1 on foot, 61 by car).

Great Blue Heron 1; Great Cormorant 1; Grebe sp. 1; Oldsquaw 5; Common Eider 10; White-winged Scoter 30; Red-breasted Merganser 2; Red-tailed Hawk 1; Merlin 1; Purple Sandpiper 40; Great Black-backed Gull 4; Herring Gull 41; Black-legged Kittiwake 1; Razorbill 34; Rock Dove 7; Mourning Dove 7; Hairy Woodpecker 2; Downy Woodpecker 2; Blue Jay 39; Common Raven 4; Common Crow 66; Black-capped Chickadee 13; American Robin 13; Golden-crowned Kinglet 6; Bohemian Waxwing 1; Starling 64; House Sparrow 376; Red-winged Blackbird 6; Common Grackle 51; Brown-headed Cowbird 30; Evening Grosbeak 12; American Goldfinch 4; Red Crossbill 4; Dark-eyed Junco 43; Tree Sparrow 7; Chipping Sparrow 1; White-throated Sparrow 65; Swamp Sparrow 1; Song Sparrow 7; Vesper Sparrow 2; Snow Bunting 50.

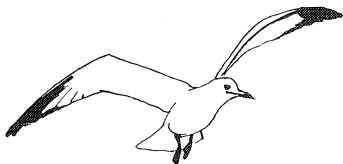
Total 41 species; about 1055 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Common Goldeneye). Frank Hawkins, Thelma Hawkins, Darcy McGloin, Helen McGloin, Larry Neily (compiler).

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LIVERPOOL, Dec. 19; 9.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m. Clear a.m., clear to mostly clear p.m. Fresh water frozen. Two observers in party. Total party hours 8 (5 on foot, 3 by car). Total party miles 38 (6 on foot, 32 by car).

Black Duck 14; Common Goldeneye 27; Hawk sp. 1; Great Black-backed Gull 21; Herring Gull 32; Downy Woodpecker 1; Blue Jay 1; Common Raven 6; Common Crow 17; Black-capped Chickadee 5; American Robin 8; Golden-crowned Kinglet 2; Starling 72; House Sparrow 38; Brown-headed Cowbird 3; Evening Grosbeak 57; American Goldfinch 8; Dark-eyed Junco 16; Tree Sparrow 2; Chipping Sparrow 12; White-throated Sparrow 22; Song Sparrow 3; Snow Bunting 4.

Total 22 species; about 372 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Common Grackle, Hairy Woodpecker, Ruffed Grouse, Winter Wren). James S. Harding, Terry Wentzell (compiler).



MARGAREE, Dec. 28; 7.30 a.m. to 4.0 p.m. Overcast with light snow a.m., intermittent light snow p.m. Temp. 17-24F. Wind 10-20 m.p.h. Fresh water party frozen. Salt water open. Snow cover 6-15 in. Seven observers in four parties. Total party hours 28 (12 on foot, 16 by car). Total party miles 82 (13 on foot, 69 by car).

Canada Goose 5; Common Goldeneye 29; Oldsquaw 9; White-winged Scoter 16; Common Merganser 10; Bald Eagle 3a; Ruffed Grouse 1; Great Black-backed Gull 31; Herring Gull 31; Dovekie 25; Downy Woodpecker 4; Blue Jay 23; Common Raven 15; Common Crow 109; Black-capped Chickadee 29; White-breasted Nuthatch 1; American Robin 1; Starling 44; House Sparrow 69; Evening Grosbeak 12; Pine Grosbeak 18; Snow Bunting 18.

Total 22 species, about 503 individuals. Thomas Bellis, (compiler), Brenda Hart, Edsel Hart, Frances Hart, Gerald Hart, Baxter Ingraham, Alex Miller.

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NORTHPORT, Dec. 25; 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Clear. Temp. 10F. Wind light westerly. Fresh water frozen. Two observers in one party. Total party hours 12 (8 on foot, 4 by car). Total party miles 25 (4 on foot, 21 by car).

Common Goldeneye 2; Bufflehead 26; Great Black-backed Gull 8; Herring Gull 16; Rock Dove 94; Mourning Dove 18; Pileated Woodpecker 1; Downy Woodpecker 1; Blue Jay 13; Common Raven 6; Common Crow 42; Black-capped Chickadee 6; American Robin 1; Starling 18; House Sparrow 19; Common Grackle 1; Dark-eyed Junco 11.

Total 17 species; about 283 individuals. Duncan MacNeil, Robert MacNeil (compiler).

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PICTOU, Dec. 19; 12.0 p.m. to 4.0 p.m. Light snow. Temp. -16C. High winds. Salt water open. Two observers. Total party hours 4, (1 on foot, 3 by car). Total party miles 14 (1 on foot, 13 by car.)

Horned Grebe 5; Double-crested Cormorant 1; Greater Scaup 25; Duck sp. 3; Glaucous Gull 17; Great Black-backed Gull 15; Gray Jay 4; Blue Jay 2; Common Crow 2; American Robin 1; Starling 32; Dark-eyed Junco 35.

Total 11 species; about 142 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Bald Eagle, Downy Woodpecker, Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch). Mr. G. Wortman, Mrs. G. Wortman (compiler).

PORT HEBERT, Dec. 26; 7.15 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Light rain a.m., heavy rain p.m. Temp. 32-36 F. Wind SW 20-25 m.p.h. Fresh water party open. Ten observers in five parties. Total party hours 29 (20 on foot, 9 by car). Total party miles 162 (30 on foot, 132 by car).

Common Loon 17; Red-necked Grebe 3; Horned Grebe 30; Great Blue Heron 3; Great Cormorant 47; Canada Goose 3500; Black Duck 1500; Pintail 1; Green-winged Teal 1; Greater Scaup 7; Common Golden-eye 15; Bufflehead 16; Oldsquaw 11; Harlequin Duck 17; Common Eider 83; White-winged Scoter 7; Surf Scoter 13; Black Scoter 39; Common Merganser 10; Red-breasted Merganser 12; Sharp-shinned Hawk 2; Red-tailed Hawk 1; Bald Eagle 1a; Marsh Hawk 1; Merlin 1; American Kestrel 1; Ruffed Grouse 8; Black-bellied Plover 2; Dunlin 9; Sanderling 18; Knot 12; Least Sandpiper 1; Glaucous Gull 1; Great Black-backed Gull 124; Herring Gull 617; Black-legged Kittiwake 1; Dovekie 7; Belted Kingfisher 2; Common Flicker 5; Horned Lark 1; Gray Jay 4; Blue Jay 17; Common Raven 9; Common Crow 74; Black-capped Chickadee 18; Boreal Chickadee 3; American Robin 7; Golden-crowned Kinglet 3; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1; Starling 21; Yellow-rumped Warbler 75; House Sparrow 22; Eastern Meadowlark 1; Brown-headed Cowbird 5; Evening Grosbeak 55; American Goldfinch 32; Savannah Sparrow 1; Dark-eyed Junco 18; Tree Sparrow 3; White-throated Sparrow 17; Fox Sparrow 2; Song Sparrow 17; Snow Bunting 79.

Total 63 species; about 6631 individuals. Barbara Addelson, Jeanne Addelson, Richard Addelson, Russel Crosby, Emmerson Fiske, George Perry (compiler), Robert Turner, Shirley Turner, Cameron Widrig, Christopher Widrig.

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SALMON RIVER, Dec. 18; 8.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m. Drifting snow a.m., clear p.m. Temp. 27-32 F. Wind NW 25-30 m.p.h. Water mostly frozen. Ground partly snow-covered. Wild food crop good. Seven observers. Total party hours 12 (5 on foot, 3 by car, 4 at feeder). Total party miles 62 (2 on foot, 60 by car).

Black Duck 16; Red-tailed Hawk 1; Bald Eagle 1a; Ruffed Grouse 3; Ring-necked Pheasant 3; Great Black-backed Gull 152; Herring Gull 320; Hairy Woodpecker 1; Downy Woodpecker 2; Gray Jay 3; Blue Jay 17; Common Raven 46; Common Crow 106; Black-capped Chickadee 32; Boreal Chickadee 6; Red-breasted Nuthatch 1; American Robin 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet 8; Starling 52; Pine Warbler 1; House Sparrow 124; Northern Oriole 1; Rusty Blackbird 1; Evening Grosbeak 110; American Goldfinch 40; White-throated Sparrow 2; Fox Sparrow 3.

Total 27 species; about 1054 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker). Otis Cossitt, Audrey Duckemin, Bertha Hopkins, Hedley Hopkins (compiler), Frances Hussey, Darrel Leach, Jackie MacNeil.

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SHUBENACADIE, Jan. 2; 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Mostly clear with snow flurries. Temp. -6 C. Wind 15-20 m.p.h. Fresh water mostly frozen. Seven observers in three parties. Total party hours 15 (8 on foot, 7 by car). Total party miles 26 (5 on foot, 21 by car).

Canada Goose 75; Black Duck 23; Sharp-shinned Hawk 1; Red-tailed Hawk 3; Bald Eagle 8a, 3 imm.; Ruffed Grouse 4; Great Black-backed Gull 4; Herring Gull 47; Rock Dove 4; Hairy Woodpecker 5; Downy Woodpecker 4; Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker 1; Gray Jay 4; Blue Jay 37; Common Raven 94; Common Crow 106; Black-capped Chickadee 51; Boreal Chickadee 18; White-breasted Nuthatch 1; Red-breasted Nuthatch 15; Brown Creeper 1; American Robin 8; Golden-crowned Kinglet 16; Starling 236; House Sparrow 188; Common Grackle 1; Brown-headed Cowbird 118; Evening Grosbeak 120; Purple Finch 28; Pine Grosbeak 35; Pine Siskin 59; American Goldfinch 37; Red Crossbill 4; White-winged Crossbill 5; Dark-eyed Junco 312; Tree Sparrow 36; White-throated Sparrow 15; Song Sparrow 6.

Total 39 species; about 1733 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Barred Owl, Snow Bunting). Mary Geddas, Roslyn MacPhee (compiler), Jean Murray, Mrs. Rainforth, Jean Schwartz, Annie Wallace, Lorne Weaver.

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SPRINGVILLE, Dec. 18; 9.0 a.m. to 3.0 p.m. Partly cloudy to overcast a.m., mostly clear with snow flurries p.m. Temp. -10 to -3C. Wind westerly 8 m.p.h. Fresh water frozen except for very small areas. Four observers in two parties. Total party miles 60 (10 on foot, 50 by car).

Black Duck 2; Red-breasted Merganser 3; Red-tailed Hawk 2; Ruffed Grouse 4; Great Black-backed Gull 5; Herring Gull 77; Rock Dove 9; Hairy Woodpecker 1; Blue Jay 23; Common Raven 70; Common Crow 97; Black-capped Chickadee 11; Boreal Chickadee 23; American Robin 52; Golden-crowned Kinglet 11; Starling 104; House Sparrow 36; Evening Grosbeak 205; Purple Finch 14; Pine Grosbeak 28; Pine Siskin 91; American Goldfinch 2; White-winged Crossbill 3; Savannah Sparrow 1; Dark-eyed Junco 262; Tree Sparrow 10; White-throated Sparrow 7; Song Sparrow 1.

Total 28 species; about 1154 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Goshawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Bald Eagle, Pileated Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Fox Sparrow). Harry Brennan, Timmy Brennan, Fred Kenney (compiler), Margaret Kenney.

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ST. PETER'S, Jan. 2; 7.30 a.m. to 5.0 p.m. Mostly cloudy with intermittent light snow. Temp. -8 to -10 C. Wind NW 15-20 m.p.h. Fresh water frozen. Four observers in two parties. Total party hours 12 (6 on foot, 4 by car, other 2). Total party miles 41 (16 on foot, 25 by car).

Common Loon 1; Canada Goose 28; Common Goldeneye 8; Oldsquaw 1; Common Merganser 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk 2; Bald Eagle 1a; Spruce Grouse 2; Ruffed Grouse 3; Great Black-backed Gull 21; Herring Gull 85; Common Murre 6; Dovekie 1; Hairy Woodpecker 1; Downy Woodpecker 1; Gray Jay 5; Blue Jay 2; Common Raven 5; Common Crow 15; Black-capped Chickadee 2; Boreal Chickadee 12; White-breasted Nuthatch 1; Mockingbird 1; American Robin 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet 6; Starling 55; House Sparrow 50; Eastern Meadowlark 4; Evening Grosbeak 12; Purple Finch 3; Pine Grosbeak 2; American Goldfinch 1; White-winged

Crossbill 12; Savannah Sparrow 1; Dark-eyed Junco 16; Tree Sparrow 2; White-throated Sparrow 5; Song Sparrow 4.

Total 38 species; about 379 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Horned Grebe, Mallard, Field Sparrow, Black Duck, American Bittern). Alisa Digout, Eva Digout, Murdock Digout (compiler), William Digout.

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THE SYDNEY'S, Dec. 31; 8.0 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Cloudy with snow flurries. Temp. 20-25 F. Wind west 20 m.p.h. Two inch snow cover. Lakes and ponds partly frozen. Salt water open. Wild food crop good. Seven observers in 3 parties. Total party hours 30 (15 on foot, 15 by car). Total party miles 95 (5 on foot, 90 by car).

Great Cormorant 4; Canada Goose 126; Mallard 5; Black Duck 52; Common Goldeneye 56; Barrow's Goldeneye 3; Oldsquaw 72; White-winged Scoter 27; Common Merganser 90; Red-breasted Merganser 16; Bald Eagle 4a; Merlin 1; Purple Sandpiper 2; Iceland Gull 5; Great Black-backed Gull 1003; Herring Gull 2095; Thick-billed Murre 2; Dovekie 2; Rock Dove 15; Belted Kingfisher 1; Hairy Woodpecker 4; Downy Woodpecker 3; Blue Jay 16; Common Raven 29; Common Crow 151; Black-capped Chickadee 20; Golden-crowned Kinglet 3; Starling 180; Palm Warbler 1; House Sparrow 140; Rusty Blackbird 1; Common Grackle 2; Evening Grosbeak 140; Purple Finch 40; Common Redpoll 2; American Goldfinch 24; Dark-eyed Junco 2; Tree Sparrow 1; White-throated Sparrow 2; Song Sparrow 7.

Total 40 species; about 4349 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: American Robin, Hermit Thrush). Otis Cossitt, Mary Hay, Hedley Hopkins (compiler), Eldon Weikle, George MacInnis, Denise MacKeigan, Brian MacNeil.

WOLFVILLE, Dec. 19; Sunny. Wind light NW. Temp. -6C. Nine inch snow cover. Ponds frozen. Brooks partly open. Forty-four observers. Total party hours 108 (66 on foot, 29 by car, feeders 13). Total party miles 266 (64 on foot, 192 by car, 10 on skis).

Canada Goose 68; Mallard 16; Black Duck 801; Brant 13; Common Goldeneye 4; Oldsquaw 20; Common Eider 4; White-winged Scoter 2; Surf Scoter 15; Common Merganser 30; Sharp-shinned Hawk 4; Red-tailed Hawk 22; Rough-legged Hawk 18; Bald Eagle 4a, 5 imm.; Marsh Hawk 3; Merlin 2; Ruffed Grouse 2; Ring-necked Pheasant 133; Gray Partridge 61; Common Snipe 2; Great Black-backed Gull 557; Herring Gull 1305; Ring-billed Gull 9; Black-legged Kittiwake 1; Rock Dove 488; Mourning Dove 67; Short-eared Owl 6; Hairy Woodpecker 4; Downy Woodpecker 15; Horned Lark 415; Gray Jay 1; Blue Jay 223; Common Raven 201; Common Crow 15,213; Black-capped Chickadee 113; Boreal Chickadee 19; White-breasted Nuthatch 1; Red-breasted Nuthatch 38; Brown Creeper 3; American Robin 284; Hermit Thrush 4; Golden-crowned Kinglet 29; Northern Shrike 1; Starling 1005; Yellow-rumped Warbler 2; House Sparrow 1424; Red-winged Blackbird 2; Common Grackle 4; Brown-headed Cowbird 798; Evening Gros-

beak 295; Purple Finch 22; Pine Grosbeak 40; Common Redpoll 23; Pine Siskin 4; American Goldfinch 98; Savannah Sparrow 10; Dark-eyed Junco 515; Tree Sparrow 264; Chipping Sparrow 1; White-throated Sparrow 266; Swamp Sparrow 1; Vesper Sparrow 1; Song Sparrow 135; Lapland Longspur 14; Snow Bunting 433.

Total 65 species; about 25,583 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Great Blue Heron, Purple Sandpiper, Iceland Gull, Dovekie, Winter Wren, Mockingbird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Rufous-sided Towhee, Fox Sparrow). Peter Austin-Smith, Adeline Bayne, Chris Berry, J.S. & N. Bleakney, Larry Bogan, Curtis Chipman, Cyril Coldwell, Pauline Crouch, Robert Curry, Bruce Dunlop, Russel Eagles, Richard Elliott, Rachel Erskine, R. & C. Flanigan, Mary Forbes, Bernard Forsythe, M. & J. Gibson, B. & E. Goodstein, Dave Harris, M. & N. Hillis, Andrew Hopkins, Robert Lamberton, Ondrej Krepinsky, Andrew MacInnis, R. Morehouse, O. Morehouse (compiler), Margaret Purdy, Susan Rotoroff, Jack Scott, E.C. Smith, P.C. Smith, B. & B. Thexton, J. & J. Timpa, W. Urban, C. & J. VanKirk, James Wolford.

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YARMOUTH, Dec. 19; 8.0 a.m. to 5.0 p.m. Clear a.m., partly cloudy to mostly cloudy p.m. Temp. -8 to -3C. Wind NW 10-25 m.p.h. Fresh water frozen. Twenty-nine observers in five parties. Total party hours 49 (16 on foot, 33 by car). Total party miles 112 (11 on foot, 101 by car).

Common Loon 5; Red-throated Loon 1; Red-necked Grebe 7; Great Blue Heron 3; Canada Goose 1100; Black Duck 768; Greater Scaup 11; Common Goldeneye 138; Bufflehead 25; Oldsquaw 19; Common Eider 8; Common Merganser 23; Red-breasted Merganser 19; Sharp-shinned Hawk 2; Red-tailed Hawk 1; Rough-legged Hawk 1; Bald Eagle 3a, 1 imm.; Marsh Hawk 1; American Kestrel 3; Buteo sp. 3; Ruffed Grouse 2; Ring-necked Pheasant 3; American Woodcock 1; Glaucous Gull 2; Iceland Gull 3; Great Black-backed Gull 155; Herring Gull 378; Ring-billed Gull 24; Black-headed Gull 3; Rock Dove 56; Mourning Dove 7; Barred Owl 1; Belted Kingfisher 1; Hairy Woodpecker 2; Downy Woodpecker 3; Horned Lark 24; Gray Jay 2; Blue Jay 46; Common Raven 42; Common Crow 248; Black-capped Chickadee 4; Boreal Chickadee 3; White-breasted Nuthatch 1; Mockingbird 1; American Robin 15; Golden-crowned Kinglet 2; Northern Shrike 1; Starling 365; Yellow-rumped Warbler 1; House Sparrow 126; Eastern Meadowlark 3; Red-winged Blackbird 25; Northern Oriole 1; Common Grackle 72; Brown-headed Cowbird 239; Cardinal 5; Evening Grosbeak 122; Purple Finch 1; Pine Grosbeak 3; American Goldfinch 5; Rufous-sided Towhee 1; Dark-eyed Junco 28; Tree Sparrow 23; White-throated Sparrow 92; Fox Sparrow 7; Swamp Sparrow 2; Song Sparrow 41; Snow Bunting 91.

Total 67 species; about 4425 individuals. (In count area in count period but not seen on count day: Dovekie, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher). C.R.K. Allen, F.C. Allen, M.B. Allen, H. Cann, D.F. MacDonald, T. D'Eon, P.R. Dobson, R. Doucette, G. Elliot, J. Elliot, D. Henry, M. Henry, K. Herkes, C. Higby, M.W. Hilton (compiler), S. C. Hilton, A. Kenney, E. Killam, B. Kinsman, D.B. Kirk, M. E. MacIntyre, M.A. Nickerson, H. Robbins, B. Ruff, E. Ruff, R. Rymer, C. Sollows, E. Sollows, V. Sollows.



SUMMARY OF HIGHEST COUNTS OF INDIVIDUALS FOR NOVA  
SCOTIA IN 1976-77

The 1976 Christmas Count added 6 new species to the list and they are underlined in this summary. This brings the Nova Scotia list to 187 species plus 2 additional races. All-time high counts were recorded for 40 species as opposed to 23 last year. These numbers are underlined.

Common Loon 84 (Halifax West); Red-throated Loon 7 (Halifax West); Red-necked Grebe 118 (Brier Island); Horned Grebe 162 (Broad Cove); Pied-billed Grebe 2 (Cape Sable); Northern Fulmar 75 (Cabot Strait); Shearwater sp. 1 (Halifax West); Great Cormorant 249 (Brier Island); Double-crested Cormorant 5 (Cape Sable); Great Blue Heron 4 (Halifax East).

Canada Goose 3500 (Port Hebert); Brant 13 (Wolfville); Mallard 16 (Wolfville); Black Duck 1500 (Port Hebert); Pintail 1 (Halifax East & Port Hebert); Green-winged Teal 1 (Halifax East & Port Hebert); Ring-necked Duck 1 (Halifax West); Greater Scaup 122 (Broad Cove); Common Goldeneye 252 (Brier Island); Barrow's Goldeneye 3 (The Sydney's); Bufflehead 46 (Halifax East); Oldsquaw 388 (Brier Island); Harlequin Duck 17 (Port Hebert); Common Eider 554 (Brier Island); King Eider 1 (Halifax East); White-winged Scoter 67 (Halifax East); Surf Scoter 38 (Halifax East); Black Scoter 68 (Halifax West); Hooded Merganser 1 (Broad Cove & Halifax East); Common Merganser 90 (The Sydney's); Red-breasted Merganser 130 (Brier Island).

Goshawk 1 (Economy); Sharp-shinned Hawk 6 (Halifax West); Red-tailed Hawk 22 (Wolfville); Red-shouldered Hawk 1 (Brier Island); Rough-legged Hawk 18 (Wolfville); Bald Eagle 11 (Shubenacadie); Marsh Hawk 3 (Wolfville); Merlin 5 (Halifax East); American Kestrel 4 (Halifax West); Spruce Grouse 2 (Halifax East, Halifax West & St. Peter's); Ruffed Grouse 19 (Halifax East); Ring-necked Pheasant 133 (Wolfville); Gray Partridge 61 (Wolfville); Sandhill Crane 1 (Halifax East).

Clapper Rail 1 (Broad Cove); Virginia Rail 6 (Halifax East); Sora 2 (Halifax East); Semipalmated Plover 1 (Halifax East); Killdeer 2 (Halifax East); Black-bellied Plover 2 (Port Hebert); American Woodcock 1 (Yarmouth); Common Snipe 2 (Wolfville); Knot 37 (Cape Sable); Purple Sandpiper 75 (Advocate); Least Sandpiper 1 (Port Hebert); Dunlin 9 (Port Hebert); Sanderling 18 (Port Hebert).

Glaucous Gull 17 (Pictou); Iceland Gull 143 (Halifax West); Great Black-backed Gull 1528 (Halifax West); Herring Gull 5362 (Halifax West); Ring-billed Gull 45 (Halifax East); Black-headed Gull 20 (Halifax West); Bonaparte's Gull 1 (Halifax East); Black-legged Kittiwake 343 (Brier Island); Sabine's Gull 2 (Cape Sable); Razorbill 368 (Brier Island); Common Murre 8 (Halifax West); Thick-billed Murre 568 (Brier Island); Dovekie 237 (Brier Island); Black Guillemot 303 (Brier Island); Atlantic Puffin 2 (Brier Island).

Rock Dove 1081 (Halifax West); Mourning Dove 67 (Wolfville); Great Horned Owl 1 (Halifax West & Kejimikujik National Park); Banded Owl 2 (Kejimikujik National Park); Short-eared Owl 6 (Wolfville); Saw-whet Owl 1 (Brier Island); Belted Kingfisher 3 (Broad Cove & Halifax East); Common Flicker 5 (Port Hebert); Pileated Woodpecker 1 (Kejimikujik National Park & Northport); Hairy Woodpecker 13 (Kejimikujik National Park); Downy Woodpecker 15 (Halifax West & Wolfville); Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker 1 (Shubenacadie); Horned Lark 415 (Wolfville); Gray Jay 13 (Broad Cove); Blue Jay 223 (Wolfville); Common Raven 201 (Wolfville); Common Crow 15,213 (Wolfville); Black-capped Chickadee 286 (Halifax West); Boreal Chickadee 122 (Halifax West); White-breasted Nuthatch 3 (Halifax East); Red-breasted Nuthatch 38 (Wolfville); Brown Creeper 6 (Halifax West).

Winter Wren 5 (Halifax East); Short-billed Marsh Wren 1 (Broad Cove); Mockingbird 3 (Halifax West); Brown Thrasher 1 (Halifax West); American Robin 284 (Wolfville); Hermit Thrush 4 (Halifax West & Wolfville); Golden-crowned Kinglet 192 (Halifax East); Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1 (Halifax East & Port Hebert); Water Pipit 17 (Brier Island); Bohemian Waxwing 1 (Kingston); Northern Shrike 1 (Advocate, Halifax East, Wolfville & Yarmouth); Starling 4309 (Halifax West).

Yellow-rumped Warbler 75 (Port Hebert); Pine Warbler 1 (Salmon River); Palm Warbler 1 (Broad Cove & The Sydney's); Hooded Warbler 1 (Halifax West); House Sparrow 1424 (Wolfville); Eastern Meadowlark 4 (St. Peter's); Red-winged Blackbird 25 (Yarmouth); Northern Oriole 1 (Baddeck, Halifax West, Salmon River & Yarmouth); Rusty Blackbird 3 (Annapolis Royal); Common Grackle 72 (Yarmouth); Brown-headed Cowbird 798 (Wolfville); Cardinal 5 (Yarmouth); Evening Grosbeak 1560 (Halifax West); Purple Finch 40 (The Sydney's); Pine Grosbeak 40 (Wolfville); Common Redpoll 23 (Wolfville); Pine Siskin 91 (Springville); American Goldfinch 267 (Halifax East); Red Crossbill 81 (Halifax West); White-winged Crossbill 68 (Broad Cove); Rufous-sided Towhee 1 (Annapolis Royal & Yarmouth); Savannah Sparrow 31 (Halifax East); Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow 2 (Broad Cove); Vesper Sparrow 2 (Kingston); Dark-eyed Junco 538 (Broad Cove); Tree Sparrow 264 (Wolfville); Chipping Sparrow 12 (Liverpool); Field Sparrow 1 (Broad Cove & Halifax West); White-crowned Sparrow 2 (Amherst); White-throated Sparrow 1044 (Broad Cove); Fox Sparrow 13 (Halifax West); Swamp Sparrow 17 (Halifax East); Song Sparrow 136 (Broad Cove); Lapland Longspur 14 (Wolfville); Snow Bunting 800 (Amherst).



ERRATA: Newsletter -

Vol. 19, No. 1, Pp. 65 & 66. Throughout these letters to the Editor from Harry Brennan the word 'Boreal' should have read 'Barred'. The four owl nests were Barred Owl nests: no Boreal Owl nest has yet been found in Nova Scotia.

Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 36. The GREENLAND WHEATEAR seen by Stuart Tingley aboard ship was not off St. John's, Newfoundland, but far north of there off Baffin Island.

## GEORGE SPENCER - AN APPRECIATION

I had a long-standing date to study shore birds and water fowl with George Spencer. It was one of those indefinite "sometime" arrangements which unfortunately too often never come off. Neither of us was young, yet neither of us felt old, but physically we were not young anymore and it seemed that if one of us was not in the hospital or recuperating, the other one was. So, we never went.

The loss is mine because I needed the benefit of George's life-long experience with the birds of the shore, the lakes and ponds, and there was no one I knew who knew them as well as George did. Almost unexpectedly, it seemed, George passed away on January 12, 1977.

Beside the deep personal loss to his family and those friends closest to him, George's passing will be felt keenly by the active birding people of Cape Breton. Unlike a good many of us who developed an interest in birds and birding late in life, George grew up with it, and his association with, and knowledge of, the birds in the Homeville area where he was born and raised, was intimate.

Whenever the Bird Society would schedule a field trip in George's home territory, he would rouse out some of his family early and scout the area so that when the rest of us arrived he knew where the birds were to be found, what we could expect to see, and the best route to take for good viewing. On other occasions there were special, quickly arranged trips to see interesting "finds" he had come across in his private scouting; like the Yellow-crowned Night Heron, the Redshank, American and Snowy Egrets, and a lone Snow Goose in the midst of a flock of Canada Geese; accidentals which the rest of us would not have seen without his help.

When birding-tourists came along and asked to be guided, everyone breathed a sigh of relief if George went along. Like the late August afternoon when a hurried call sent George Spencer and Sara MacLean out to the Homeville area with an American professor and his wife. Usually when you are anxious to find something special to show visitors, nothing turns up. But George found a Willet waiting high in a tree overlooking a marsh, and at the right moment the Willet co-operated by flying off, spreading wide its wings to give a clear view of its markings.

A little farther on, where a pond sits behind a bar between it and the ocean, they found a number of young Black Ducks, close inshore. Suddenly, while the visitors admired them, they panicked and rushed pell-mell toward their parents farther out. Someone asked, "What happened?", and at that moment a Bald Eagle, white of head and tail, swept silently close overhead. It had been concentrating on the ducklings and ignoring the humans until someone cried out. Working its great wings to regain height it swept up and away while the visitors watched.

Hardly had the eagle disappeared when George called their attention to a fox sneaking along the sandbar, also concentrating on the ducks. At an advantageous spot it bedded down in the kelp, lifting its head now and then to check on its quarry. Then, discovering the watchers on the beach, it retraced its steps and went out of sight. By then it was getting dark; the excited visitors went back with tales to tell.

At the regular branch-society meetings, George's natural knowledge, born of experience, brought a touch of reality and heightened interest to the discussions. We are all poorer for his passing; we are all richer for his help.

We never had our planned shore trip, but possibly, some day when I am scouting alone, I will imagine I hear him say, "Now, if you're looking for Eiders, go over this way - ", and I'll go, and they'll be there. I will know then that we have kept our date.

Frank Robertson

#### A NEW BIRD FOR NOVA SCOTIA

In the realm of Nature her children customarily follow definite rules and regulations which she has wisely provided for their every-day behavioural welfare. But sometimes, for reasons which are difficult to understand, they do things that cause us to do a bit of 'eye-brow raising'.

The incident about which I am writing happens to be one such. It occurred sometime last May or June but was not revealed until December 18. It has to do with cross-breeding among birds. It is well known that individual birds of different species which are closely related - Black Ducks and Mallards, for instance - quite frequently cross-breed, but species belonging to different Genera have very seldom been known to cross. An outstanding example of the latter is a specimen in the collection of mounted birds on display at Acadia University of a cross between a Spruce Grouse and a Ruffed Grouse.

But the latest example of 'misbehaviour', according to the dictates of Nature, is that of a feral hen Pheasant which apparently could not resist the amorous advances of a domestic rooster.

On the day above cited one of our local pheasant hunters flushed a hen that was accompanied by two "queer looking birds". As the trio were taking off one of the queers gave the customary 'cackle' of a wild cock Pheasant. This induced him to shoot it and after a brief examination in the field he brought it to me for identification. The bird is definitely a cross as above described. It has a square tail with no suggestion of elongation nor has it any trace of spurs on its tarsi. But its plumage in general resembles that of a very much 'washed-out' cock Pheasant. The fact that it was in the company of a typical wild hen suggests that she was its mother and that it was a remnant of a brood that had not yet become completely disseminated.

The specimen in question is to be labeled Gallus domesticus X Phasianus colchicus. It is presently resting in my deep freeze in Wolfville but is destined shortly to be shipped to the National Museum of Natural History in Ottawa.

R. W. Tufts

## AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER, A SPECIES NEW FOR CANADA



In the morning of 8 September 1975, Canada's first specimen of the Audubon's Shearwater, (*Puffinus Iherminieri Iherminieri* Lesson), was found dead by J. Stuart McGiffin on the lawn of his home some 4 1/2 to 5 km north of Almonte, Ontario. The species is widely distributed (in eight subspecies) in the tropical Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. The nominate race breeds in the Lesser Antilles, Bahamas, Virgin Islands, and on Bermuda and wanders northward to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, rarely to coastal Massachusetts.

How this pelagic bird was able to stray so far inland and so far north is not readily explainable. In reply to my query, Project Meteorologist William Hodge of the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration writes (9 October 1975) as follows: "I have looked through our hurricane track charts and weather maps and find that the indications are inconclusive. There were no remarkably strong weather systems moving from the Caribbean toward Ontario in the weeks just preceding September 8 . . . Southerly winds of relatively short duration occurred in your area ahead of the low pressure systems that appear on the maps of September 1, 2, 6 and 8. Whether these were significant, I do not know.

The only hurricanes from mid August to early September were Caroline and Doris. The latter can be ruled out immediately because it stayed east of longitude 50 degrees west. Caroline formed in the central Gulf of Mexico August 29, moved westnorthwest, and dissipated over Mexico September 1."

Thus it is uncertain whether meteorological conditions were a major factor in carrying this bird so far outside its normal range. One must consider also the possibility that the bird might have been transported by human agencies as a hoax, but this can almost certainly be ruled out. Careful examination showed that the specimen was in very fresh condition, the plumage in excellent shape, the eyes, interior of the mouth, and the feet moist and soft with no drying out effects characteristic of preservation by freezing. The stomach was empty. The body showed no visible fat. There was a small contusion at the base of the foreneck, possibly indicating a collision in flight with hydro wires nearby. The McGiffin residence is on the west shore of the Mississippi River. The shearwater was doubtless attracted to, and probably following, this body of water. The above evidence in total thus makes it clear that no hoax was involved in this surprising record.

In size and coloration this specimen is referable to the nominate race. Colors of the soft parts were, eyes brown; bill, culmen blackish, most of remainder of bill bluish gray; legs and feet, grayish flesh except outer side of outer toe and outer side of tarsus bluish to bluish gray.

The specimen, a female, was donated in the flesh by Mr. and Mrs. McGiffin to the National Museum of Natural Sciences where it was prepared as a study skin (catalogue number 62529).

W. Earl Godfrey

(Reprinted from The Canadian Field Naturalist Vol. 90 No. 4.)

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

We are sad to say that no reports have reached us concerning the Kingsport and Annapolis Basin Field Trips.

Leaders of trips are urged to send in reports promptly.

SC

Glance Bay, Morien and South Head Area

On Saturday, March 26, six members of the Cape Breton Branch braved strong easterly winds, thick fog and -3 degrees C temp. - the direct opposite conditions of a year ago.

All coves and inlets were ice bound with the exception of clear tidal channels. These conditions restricted the 13 species observed to 11 Great Cormorants, 600 (more or less) Canada Geese, 45 Black Duck, 12 Old Squaw, 6 Red-breasted Mergansers, Great Black backed Gulls, Herring Gulls, Common Murre, Crows and Ravens.

Fifty Evening Grosbeaks and Dark-eyed Junco and 12 Snow Buntings were also encountered - not a bad count considering weather conditions.

G. J. Fraser

Shubenacadie, March 27

This was an interesting and rewarding field trip to a not-so-well-known (to many of us) birding area, admirably led by Roslyn MacPhee.

'Tho cold and windy, with spatterings of rain alternating with spring-like sunny intervals, fifteen birders started the day with the sight of 300 Geese and 200 Black Ducks in the Shubenacadie marshes. Accompanied by Mallards, Mergansers and a pair of Pintail they were a sight indeed, especially when, put up by an approaching helicopter, they wheeled in a huge semicircle and then slowly glided down, with never a wing beat, to the river.

A very late Great Cormorant and an early flock of some 200 male Red-winged Blackbirds were other good "finds", as were early Grackles and no fewer than four Bald Eagles cruising along the river.

The latter part of the morning uncovered an array of the usual winter finches and an assortment of spring-singing sparrows, nuthatches and chickadees.

After a late lunch at Port Maitland the party broke up for the trip home in the spring sunshine. Many thanks to Roslyn for showing us the area she knows so well.

Shirley Cohrs

UP-COMING FIELD TRIPS

Saturday May 28 WARBLER DAY - Meet the members of the Cape Breton Branch for a pleasant outing concentrating on warblers. Leader: Otis Cossitt. Meeting Place: Radar Base, parking lot, at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday May 28 HANTS COUNTY - This annual outing is one of the outstanding field trips of the year. Expect to see over 80 species of birds from ducks to flycatchers, warblers and sparrows. Leader: Margaret Clark. Meeting Place: Railroad crossing in Mount Uniacke at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday May 28 and Sunday May 29 KEJIMKUJIK NATIONAL PARK - A weekend outing along with members of the Halifax Field Naturalists to look in depth at a number of intriguing habitats. Along with warblers and flycatchers we will seek out Scarlet Tanagers and Great Crested Flycatchers. After dark owls and other "creatures of the night" will be listened for. Sunday's outings, by canoe, will look at aquatic environments. Leaders: P. Hope, R. Swain and T. Bowers (242-2512). Meeting Place: Park Information Centre at 9:00 a.m. on both days.

Saturday June 4 HOPEWELL - In this part of Pictou County you will have a chance to look for Sora and Virginia Rails and other swamp birds, check the nearby woodlands and with luck catch a glimpse of some of the raptorial birds of the area. Leader: Harry Brennan. Meeting Place: St. Columba Church, Hopewell at 9:00 a.m. (Leave Trans Canada at New Glasgow via Foord Street, go 7 miles to Hopewell, then through village to church.)

Saturday June 11 PRE ROUND MARSHES - Spend a day birding this fertile dykeland along the Annapolis River. Willets and Bobolinks are regular nesters while Short-eared Owls, Killdeer and Eastern Meadowlarks are usually present. Other nearby areas will also be visited. Leader: Rev. Calder Fraser (ph. 532-5581). Meeting Place: Church on Route 1 in Annapolis at 9:00 a.m.

Saturday June 18 TUSKET ISLANDS - Weather permitting, a boat trip among many of the Tusket Islands, passing by some of those owned by the Bird Society. There will be an excellent chance to view terns, probably including a few Roseates. Leader: Charlie Allen (648-2752). Meeting Place: Arcadia Post Office at 9:00 a.m. If you plan to attend, contact the leader at Box 42, Tusket, N.S., at least two weeks in advance. There will be a fee required for renting of the boats.

PLEASE NOTE: After the Field Trip to the Tusket Islands on June 18, there will be a general meeting of the N.S.B.S. at 7:30 p.m. in the Yarmouth Historical Museum. Speaker - Dr. Lloyd Macpherson.

- Saturday  
June 25 AMHERST AREA - A day long outing to a number of fascinating birding areas. There will be an early trip to John Lusby Marsh for ducks; then later in the day to Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary for coots, galinules, grebes and ducks. A trip through town for Purple Martin and a visit to the Missiquash Marsh in hopes of Black Terns are also planned. Leader: Con Desplanque (667-3790). Meeting Place: Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary parking lot, 2 miles west of the Victoria Street exit from Trans Canada Highway at 7:30 a.m. for early trip or 10:00 a.m. for rest of the day.
- Saturday  
June 25 BIRD ISLANDS - The Cape Breton Branch sponsors this trip at the peak time to see the seabird colonies, with our society's bird, the Puffin, as a special feature. Please make reservations in advance. Leader: Hedley Hopkins (Sydney, 564,7405). Meeting Place: Mountain View Lodge, Bras d'Or at 9:00 a.m.
- Saturday  
July 30 EASTERN SHORE - A visit to the always fascinating shoreline of the Lawrencetown-Conrads Beach areas for early migrating shorebirds. Several species of shorebirds will be present plus the hoped-for special Stilt Sandpipers. Leader: Eric Cooke (429-2642). Meeting Place: Holiday Inn, Dartmouth at 7:30 a.m.
- Saturday  
August 6 BADDECK - Either a visit to a heronry or some time spent island-hopping are the plans for this trip in the heart of the Bras d'Or Lakes. Leader: Alastair Fraser. Meeting Place: Lands and Forests Depot, Baddeck, at 8:00 a.m.
- Saturday  
August 27 CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK - Hike along the Cheticamp River, which has carved its valley deep into the highland plateau. From the lush fern growth at your feet to the top of the 400-meter high mountains, birds and many natural wonders await. Leader: Jacques Pleau. Meeting Place: Cheticamp Visitor Centre at western entrance of the National Park at 8:00 a.m.
- Labour Day  
Weekend,  
Sept 3-5 PRESIDENT'S FIELD DAY at Brier Island. This always interesting weekend combines the best elements of a friendly reunion with excellent birding outings on land and short boat trips offshore. Along with shearwaters and phalaropes there may be a chance for close-up views of whales. On land waves of migrating species are common with many rare strays showing up every year. Weekend totals usually number 120 to 130 species. Leader: Dr. Fred Dobson (852-3042) and many others. Meeting Place: Mornings at 8:00 a.m. at the cemetery on Peajack Road on Brier Island. (Note: Boat trips will cost approximately \$5.00 per person.)
- Saturday  
Sept 17 CAPE SABLE - A short boat trip from The Hawk on Cape Sable Island will take us to this small offshore island as guests of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Smith--the light keepers. The stroll among the dunes down the length of the island will make the trip worthwhile and with the right conditions birding can be fantastic. A variety of shorebirds, sparrows, hawks and some warblers should be expected. Leaders: Sidney Smith and Charlie Allen. Meeting Place: Cunningham & Sons at the wharf at The Hawk Cape Sable I. at 9:30 a.m. (Small fee for boat rental).



- Saturday  
Sept 24      CHETICAMP ISLAND - An annual outing in search of shore-birds and some of the hardy inhabitants of the area. Leader: Jacques Pleau. Meeting Place: Motel parking lot in Cheticamp at 8:00 a.m.
- Saturday  
Oct 15      FRAMBOISE - A look at some of the late migrants along this stretch of coast. Leader: Roy Blakeburn. Meeting Place: Marion Bridge at 8:00 a.m.
- Saturday  
Oct 15      AMHERST POINT BIRD SANCTUARY - A trip through the area to observe migrant waterfowl. An afternoon outing will be determined later to take in another area of particular interest. Some of the province's more uncommon waterfowl regularly frequent this area in the fall so good birding can be expected. Leader: Con Desplanque (667-3790). Meeting Place: Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary at 8:30 a.m.



#### HELPING OILED BIRDS

The Massachusetts Audubon Society has developed a new technique for assisting oiled sea birds, as reported in their February 1977 Newsletter.

The former technique was developed in the wake of the Torrey Canyon disaster. It involved cleaning the birds with solvent and holding them captive until the natural oils were restored. In practice the birds became man dependent or died under forced feedings or of shock. As a result of their near total failure to rehabilitate some 8000 birds, the Royal Society for Protection of Birds adopted a policy of humanely killing of all oiled birds. Since trying the new technique they have revised this policy.

The new technique involves a quick cleaning of the bird with solvent, careful alignment of the feathers and immediate release. It is now believed that the natural oil dressing has less influence on buoyancy and insulation that was once thought and the quick cleaning and release subjects the bird to less shock than long captivity. In any case the M.A.S. method is reported to result in a high survival rate.

The real solution to the problem of oiled birds is of course prevention rather than cure since in any spill only a small percentage of oiled birds would ever be recovered for cleaning and the great majority would die at sea.

JLC

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

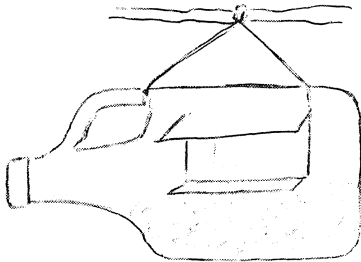
Editor, NSBS Newsletter

On Christmas morning, in brilliant sunshine, we drove to the alder swale by Hennegar's canteen, where we watched on count day, and again saw Hermit Thrush and Yellow-rumped Warbler. Driving on to the ACA at New Minas we saw there one of the most beautiful sights of our birding experiences, - shoulder to shoulder on the horizontal limbs of a maple 76 Mourning Doves, so close and so iridescent in the light. They habit that area for the spill from poultry grain cars. However, Mrs. Urban of Avonport probably deserves the title of Dove Lady for the large flock she has fed through many past winters.

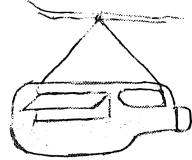
At our feeders we had a Fox Sparrow, coming regularly until the storm of the 17th-18th December, day before our count. Not heard of since. Evening Grosbeak, Whitethroated, Song and Tree Sparrows; Juncos; Jays; Grackles; the Finches of which the Purples are increasing daily; Chickadees are fewer probably sheltering in heavier woods; a pair of Downys; a few Starling; Robins still forage in rose bush and privet their disinclination to mix make it difficult to assist them, ground meat and apple being gobbled by others before they condescend to partake; several Cowbirds and that leads me to the topic of selective feeder design.

Not only is the feeding of the winterers interesting, as you well know, it also is at times challenging. And as one pursues the practice can produce some odd innovations. I began by using glass fronted hoppers, flat trays on posts, and the ground beneath small evergreens. This made birds vulnerable to hawks and cats; the food subject to winds and snows; and too readily available to House Sparrow and Starling. Next I built a window box and out on the lawn stacked, tepee fashion, a quantity of brush, putting a mixture in each of corn, grain and sunflower seed. From the near trees I hung suet-seed blocks in mesh hags. While this offered some protection it still permitted the larger birds to intimidate the smaller; and, the Jays carted away sunflower seed before Grosbeak could congregate. Then, little more than a month ago Cowbirds came - great hordes of the black parasitic creatures ..... Robie Tufts says they should be taken off the protected list while Peter Austin-Smith wants to watch nest records to see if they will peak then decline ..... opinions aside something had to be done here fast - short of using a shotgun. Apart from putting cobs of corn under the cedars away from the house I ceased putting food on the ground. Though I continue to dip the tips of evergreen twigs on a cold day in melted suet, this congeals quickly and serves many of the small birds.

From a number of white opaque plastic jugs and bottles the dispensers sketched were constructed. These feeders as can be seen are simple and anyone with a sharp knife can make one in a few minutes. They are quite weatherproof and if a few small holes are punched in the bottoms the feed will remain dry. The openings and size of jug should be somewhat in proportion to the size of the birds one desires to feed. They have proved for me to be quite successful - the Cowbirds are being discouraged with but few flying in.



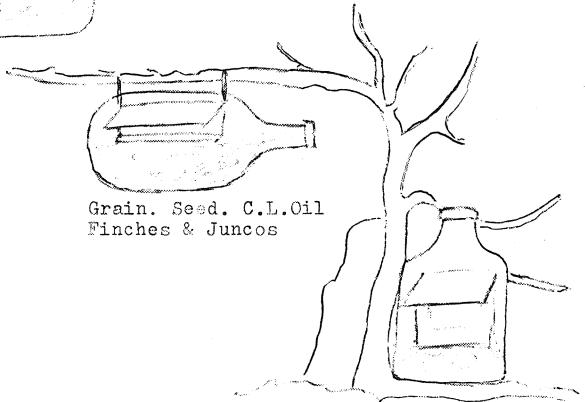
Sunflower seed only  
Evening Grosbeak



Millet  
Goldfinch & Tree sps.



Sunflower seed  
Chickadees



Grain. Seed. C.L.Oil  
Finches & Juncos

Grain mixture & gnd. Suet  
White-throated & Song Sprrs.

For the past half hour I have been watching an Evening Grosbeak with an injured wing and leg in his attempt to have his share of seed. His own kind have collectively turned upon him driving him off. This is probably the bird I saw yesterday being pursued and struck by a Sharpshin and getting away. It will not survive. Short shift for the injured is the way of the wild. An act of mercy is needed sometimes. However, we who are birders know not all is sadness in the feathered world; I think their seeming happiness is largely what turns us on.

Mrs. Reid of Hantsport is thrilled and proud of her flock of Red-winged Blackbirds. Louise Daley writes of her love and care of her Baltimore Orioles. For these and the rest of us who make up the millions who feed birds there is surely great therapy in the pleasure and awareness of that comes from a closeness with the beautiful in nature.

Oscar Morehouse

## WORM WATCHERS

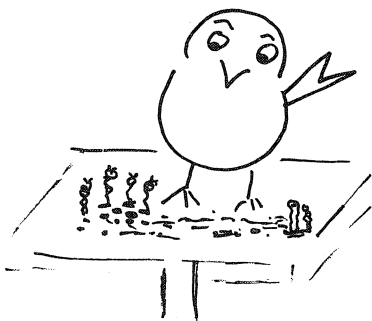
October found bird watchers scurrying around replenishing depleted stores of seed for their feeders. It was discovered that Halifax Seed Store had a quantity of last year's seed available at a reduced price. There was a problem, however, the seed had become infested with the larvae of the Egyptian Grain Moth. Would the birds reject the seed or would they delight in the added morsels? Some who bought seed weren't sure.

January found my kitchen stores depleted and I made a trip to our local health food store for grains and seeds I need daily for food preparation. Upon the purchase of some bulk sunflower seeds (shelled ready for Granola) I commented to the clerk, "My last purchase contained a dead worm so I'm looking carefully".

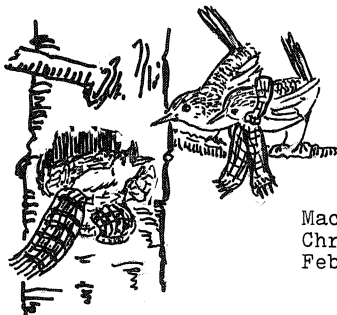
"Oh, you were lucky it was dead, they're often alive", she returned. "They're difficult to keep out of the sunflowers seeds, but most people don't seem to mind."

I wonder if the grosbeaks know that?

Evelyn Dobson



It may be possible to obtain 'wormy' seed at a reduced price again this fall. If so, particulars will be in the Fall Flyer.



Congratulations to Bob and Wendy MacDonald on the birth of their son Christopher James Beaumont in Halifax, February 10, 1977.

## SUMMARY OF EXECUTIVE MEETINGS, JANUARY-MARCH, 1977

Three Executive Meetings were held since the printing of the last Newsletter.

The Treasurer was authorized to transfer the N.S.B.S. account to the Royal Bank of Canada on the corner of Spring Garden Road and Queen Street where a Current Account and a Bonus Non-Personal Savings Account were opened.

The N.S.B.S. Display held at the Nova Scotia Museum, which has been an annual one in the spring, will now be held every second year.

In the absence of the Vice-President, who is responsible for arranging Field Trips, Peter Hope will arrange further outings which will be printed in the Newsletter.

A letter was received from Dr. F. C. Cooch of Ottawa replying to a letter the President had sent to him regarding a change in the Migratory Birds Convention Act. Great concern has been expressed by many members of the Society about the killing of shore birds. It was felt that if the Snipe were placed on the list of protected birds then fewer shore birds would be killed being mistaken for Snipe. Dr. Cooch acknowledged that other shore birds were being shot, and that a study on the Snipe has been underway for two years. It is doubtful that a change in the Act would be forthcoming unless further studies indicate it to be necessary.

The cost of printing the Newsletter has increased 25% in 1976 over 1975. This is due to an increase in postal rates as well as printing costs of larger editions. Much concern is felt about these increased costs and the Executive has been discussing ways of coping. The President has requested an increase in the annual grant from the Museum. It is expected that the membership fees will have to be increased also.

As of March 25, 1977, the total membership is 327, with 233 single, 70 family and 24 student.

Balance on hand as of March 29, 1977, is \$1651.61.

A General Meeting of the Society will be held in Yarmouth on June 18 in conjunction with a field trip to the Tusket Islands.

Margaret A. Clark, Secretary

NEST RECORDS

Members who wish to record nests this year - and all are urged to do so - are reminded that the address for supplies of cards and information is: A. D. Smith, Co-ordinator Maritimes Nest Records Scheme, Atlantic Region, Canadian Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1590, Sackville, N.B. EOA 3C0.

## MARITIMES SHOREBIRD SURVEY 1977



The Canadian Wildlife Service would again like to request the assistance of volunteer participants for the Maritimes Shorebird Survey scheme in 1977. The principal objective of this scheme is to identify the document areas of major importance to shorebirds in the Maritime Provinces, as well as to provide information on routes used by different species and the timing of their migrations. Information gathered on the shorebird surveys will be essential in determining conservation measures for the birds and in assessing the ecological impact of the many developments presently threatening Maritimes estuaries. The surveys will also provide very important baseline information for monitoring future trends in shorebird populations.

Participants are asked to adopt a particular study area in which they regularly count the shorebirds every second week during the southward migration. Results are reported on forms provided by the Canadian Wildlife Service. In 1977, survey dates will be the weekends of 16-17 July; 30-31 July; 13-14 and 27-28 August; 10-11 and 24-25 September; 8-9 and 22-23 October. We are also interested in obtaining information from shorebird areas during the spring migration. In addition to regular counts, information from other areas which you may visit occasionally, e.g. on vacation, is also most useful, particularly around peak migration periods.

The Maritimes Shorebirds Survey scheme was started in 1974 and has already provided a great deal of very valuable information on shorebird distribution and migration in the Maritime Provinces. It is most important that this work is continued and extended in order to provide sound information collected over a number of years from which future population trends may be reliably monitored and the impact of proposed developments assessed. Information from the MSS scheme is currently being used in assessing the potential impact of the proposed Fundy Tidal Power project on shorebirds.

The MSS scheme is an outstanding example of the way in which volunteer participants can make an extremely valuable contribution to our knowledge of shorebird migration over a wide geographical area. This is now particularly the case, since the Maritimes scheme is being co-ordinated with similar censuses on the eastern seaboard of the U.S., the Caribbean Islands and South America.

The Canadian Wildlife Service would like to hear from anyone who may be able to contribute to the shorebird surveys in 1977. Potential participants may contact - N.S. coordinator, Don S. MacDougall, 6 Arlington Avenue, Halifax (902-477-6109), or Dr. R.I.G. Morrison, Canadian Wildlife Service, 2721 Highway 31, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0E7.

We are indebted to Mrs. Jean Rosahn of Kensington, Connecticut, for a generous contribution to the Sanctuary and Scholarship Fund of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, given in memory of Helen, Mrs. E. S. Bringloe, who died December 15, 1976, at Hubbards, Nova Scotia.

To those members who may not be aware of the Hubbards Sanctuary, it was brought into being by the joint efforts of the Rosahns and the Bringloes. It is a thirty-acre nature reserve; it is now the property of the Nova Scotia Museum, and was donated to it in memory of Mrs. Rosahn's mother.



#### BREEDING BIRD SURVEYS

Each year in June thousands of observers across the continent, rise well before dawn to take part in the Breeding Bird Survey project organized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service. This massive survey is designed to determine long-term and short-term changes in wild bird populations, particularly of songbirds.

Starting a half hour before sunrise each observer counts the birds he or she sees and hears at 50 sampling points along a 24½ mile route. The route is surveyed in the same manner on one morning each year.

Observers able to identify most common birds by their songs and willing to get up early enough to see the sunrise (once) in June are needed to help with this survey. If you are interested write to the co-ordinator for the Maritimes, David Christie, 277 Douglas Avenue, Saint John, N.B. E2K 1E5.

#### PIPING PLOVER SURVEY

The Society is interested in the status of the Piping Plover in Nova Scotia. We want to discover if the species is losing ground here as nesting sites are lost because of increased use of our beaches for recreation.

If you know of nesting sites or populations in your area, please write down what you know of them, both historically and now, and if they are threatened in any way, and send your information to: Piping Plover Survey, c/o Nova Scotia Bird Society, c/o Nova Scotia Museum, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6.











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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Winter Birds	86
Mskegooakade - C.R.K. Allen	114
Christmas Counts	122
George Spencer, An Appreciation - F. Robertson	140
A New Bird for Nova Scotia - R. W. Tufts	141
Audubon's Shearwater, A Species New for Canada	142
Field Trip Reports	143
Up-coming Field Trips	144
Helping Oiled Birds	146
Letter to the Editor	147
Worm Watchers - Evelyn Dobson	149
Summary of Executive Meetings	150
Maritimes Shorebird Survey	151

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