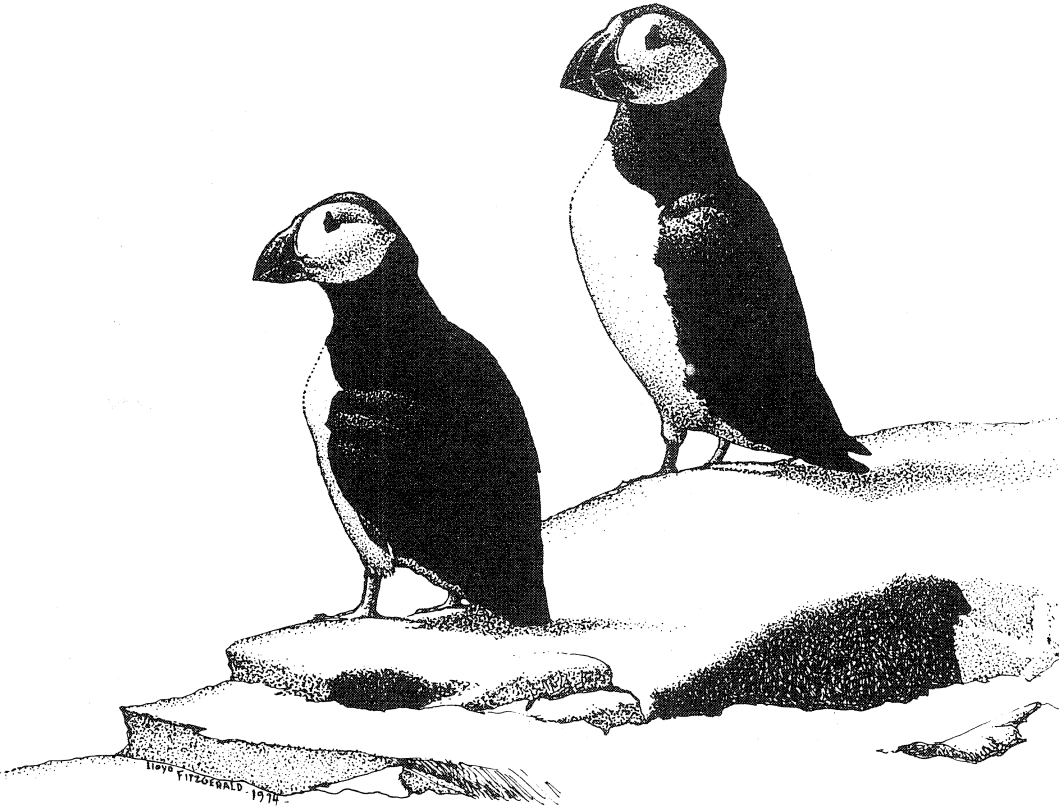


**nova scotia**

**bird society**



**january**  
**newsletter**

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NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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Volume 21, Number 1

January, 1979

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## NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

Incorporated 1957.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT  
1978 Annual General Meeting

Since the last Annual General Meeting, your Executive has held monthly meetings with the exception of July and August. Always of concern at these meetings is the state of the Society's finances. The serious financial situation presented at the Annual General Meeting last year which resulted in an increase in Membership Dues has not reappeared in the Treasurer's statement for this year. However, this does not mean our financial worries are over. Although we no longer pay the Provincial and Federal taxes on the printing of the Newsletter, costs of publication, especially postage continually rise. I can foresee a continuing need to be fully aware of the financial situation at all times.

Under a new policy of the Nova Scotia Museum, a number of the Societies hold displays every two years. This year, Ralph Connor undertook this responsibility, with the kind permission of Donald Smith and David Caldwell to use their bird sculptures, an excellent display was open to the public over a seven week period. Thanks indeed are extended to Ralph and to the other members of the Bird Society who volunteered their presence on Sundays and helped make this one of the most successful displays ever.

The Conservation Committee has been involved in several issues. A letter was sent to Mr. Merrill Prime, Director of the Wildlife Conservation Division for the Department of Lands and Forests putting forth suggestions regarding the future of Seal Island.

The Fundy Tidal Power Project is in a state of abeyance at the present time.

Ian McLaren, on behalf of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, the Halifax Field Naturalists and the Nova Scotia Resource Council, presented a brief on the Halifax County Municipal Development Plan.

1980 will be the 25th Anniversary of the organization of the Nova Scotia Bird Society. Committees have been organized to help make 1980 an eventful year for the Society. Special events, in the form of Field Trips, Meetings and informal gatherings to include all ages, will take place. This will provide an opportunity, as never before, to bring before the public the role of the Bird Society in the Community. Further information will be forthcoming in Newsletters, flyers and notices.

The slide collection has been reviewed, renewed and revised, also enlarged, thanks to Lisè Cohrs. Already it has been borrowed for use in various parts of the Province.

On September 30, 1978, I was invited by the Department of Biology at Acadia University to take part in the dedication of the "Robie W. Tufts Laboratory of Ornithology", honouring Robie Tufts for his lifetime devoted to the study of ornithology. It was a day full of activities, beginning with a Field Trip, followed by a lunch, the Dedication ceremony, a seminar on Shorebird Biology, a dinner and ending with a slide show. Since Robie Tufts was the first President of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, and had played such an important role in the organization of this Society, I felt it a great honor, as President, to represent the members of the Bird Society.

It would take a great deal of time to acknowledge by name all those members of our Society who do so much behind the scenes - those taking part in breeding surveys, Christmas counts, keeping records and reporting on sightings. I would like to thank a few at this time -

Don and Joyce Purchase, who did an excellent job lining up Field Trips this year (with no previous experience) and who have agreed to continue; to Ethel Crathorne who is always available for typing; to Molly Claydon and Lisé Cohrs for seeing that refreshments are always ready for the General Meetings each month; and to the Cohrs Family for handling the orders and purchasing of tons of Bird Seed to help our "feathered friends" survive the winter.

My most grateful acknowledgements must indeed go to the general membership and members of the Executive whose dedication and loyalty make it possible to carry out the aims of the Bird Society. My personal thanks to those who will no longer be serving on the Executive, for their assistance.

Our Honorary Solicitor, Mr. Kanigsberg, and our Honorary Auditor, Mr. Morrow, have agreed to continue in those positions. We are indeed grateful for their faithfulness and loyalty in serving the Bird Society so well.

Especially my thanks to Eric Cooke, our Vice-President. Eric has kept the General Meetings running regularly for years; through postal strikes, financial crisis, and last minute unexpected changes in scheduled speakers, Eric always has a monthly program ready. His dependability is evident today when he not only led the Field Trip, but had to fill in the President's role at short notice.

Finally, I would like to thank the Staff of the Nova Scotia Museum for their continued support and the willing cooperation given to the Bird Society.

Respectfully submitted,  
Margaret A. Clark.

#### N.S.B.S. 25th ANNIVERSARY IN 1978

The Nova Scotia Bird Society will be celebrating its 25th year in 1980. The Executive of the Society has asked Gillian Elliott and me to begin planning some appropriate celebrations. We have received many useful suggestions, from bird identification classes to the purchase of sanctuary land. We would like to include some projects or activities which everyone could take part in or attend. Please send us your own ideas, by letter or phone, on how the Society should celebrate, or how you yourself could contribute.

Evelyn Dobson 852-3042  
Gillian Elliott 434-6072



## FALL MIGRATION 1978

Our early spring led into a fine long summer, the sunshine with us well into November. Although late-ripening small fruits, like blackberries did suffer from lack of rain, for the most part wild berries were abundant as were the weed seeds and the cones on the evergreens. It was a propitious season for nesting birds, which quite obviously multiplied, here and in adjacent regions, if the size of the fall migration is any index.

As mentioned before, with a long-drawn-out spring migration, birds coming in almost meet the birds going away. On Sable I. where the population is easy to monitor a Cliff Swallow was seen to arrive June 26, a Gray-cheeked Thrush July 4. By July 27 the first flocks of mixed warblers, vireos, flycatchers and catbirds were assembling for departure, and on Aug. 7 along the southwest Atlantic shore an immense flock of Tree and Barn Swallows flew over Beach Meadows (the watchers, the Terry Wentzells, soon "lost count"). At St. Esprit warblers were assembling August 28, still passing, and in greater numbers by October 19.

The migration finally dwindled, as usual, by early November, but during September and October, for land birds, it was truly impressive. "Waves" - of frequent occurrence but clearly "peaks" were easily discernible and not only on our islands. Our reports covered the province well this fall - the Border and Economy regions, Truro, Antigonish, Halifax-Dartmouth, Chester, Annapolis Valley, Shelburne and Yarmouth counties. On August 31, the first peak mentioned by Ross Anderson in his banding operations on Brier I. was also observed in central wooded Yarmouth County near Wespark Lake, where many birds were found, including one flock described by CRK Allen as "the largest I've ever seen, including several hundred birds, mixed vireos, Black-capped Chickadees and eight species of warblers".

At Wilmot, Thelma Hawkins listed the dates of large numbers of birds "on the move" as Sept. 14-15, Robins, Blackbirds, Flickers and White-throated Sparrows; Sept. 18-23, Black-capped Chickadees, Juncos, warblers, Whitethroats, Catbirds, Bluejays, Robins, White-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers; Sept. 28, great many Robins. Whitethroats, Juncos; Oct. 11-14, Yellow-rumped Warblers very noticeable hanging around roof and eaves of houses in this vicinity.

One of the most unusual observations of the season was the one hundred and fifty Boreal Chickadees Chris Helleiner counted in two hours along the Cole-Harbour-Three-Fathom Harbour roads. On Brier I. the most noticeable concentrations of birds came August 31-September 1, September 8-10 and September 20-23. Thrushes were more common than usual this fall there, flycatchers abundant, both of these groups coming in all through September. Golden-crowned Kinglets are back to normal, and this was observable all over the province. On the other hand, although judged "some better" on Brier I., Ruby-crowned Kinglets were very low in number on the mainland. And Winter Wrens even lower, none banded on Brier this fall, only seven last year.

September 23 was called the "best day" on Brier I., with 193 birds of 29 species banded. This date recurred again and again in fall reports. There must have been a tremendous movement of birds all over the province. Perhaps the most remarkable account of a part of this movement came from Fulton L. Lavender, who wrote: "On the 23rd of September I revisited Russell Lake, a trip which has to be the most memorable I have made in recent times. The roads and weed patches were jam-packed with migrating sparrows, warblers, woodpeckers, bobolinks and thrushes, which were far more in number than was humanly possible to count with any accuracy." Lavender's esti-

mates - he tried! were thousands of Whitethroats (the most), Swamp Sparrows, Palm and 'Myrtle' warblers, and again thousands of thrushes. There were also assorted specials such as the Yellow-breasted Chat, Bald Eagle, Merlin, a Pied-billed Grebe, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Lesser Yellowlegs. Most of the birds were gone next day. An enviable experience.

Observations of many other reporters co-incided with the dates mentioned above and involved the majority of our native birds, plus, later in the season, an unprecedented roster of rarities. These for the most part were seen in October at Cape Sable, Seal and Sable I., and are featured in the main body of this report, which, thanks to the number and quality of the records received this fall makes interesting reading - many thanks!

One last picture to remember: Far on in November on an Indian summer day after our first snow, some of us down in the southwest end of the province saw and heard a commotion among the trees. We searched with the binoculars and found a grove of rowan trees, enormous clusters of crimson berries gleaming in the sun against a deep blue sky, and moving from cluster to cluster which dipped beneath their weight were many bright-breasted robins. They were snatching the berries with beaks dripping juice, and all murmuring querulously together "these are good, but the ones over there are better, let's move on" which they did, slowly drifting out of sight and sound, and the summer went with them; but they left a good picture behind of the fall of '78 - a picture which will be very good to remember through the long cold winter months ahead.

PRD Ed.

#### LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

C.R.K. Allen, Daryl Amirault, R. Ross Anderson, Kirk Atkinson, Peter J. Austin-Smith, Bill and Eleanor Barrow, Roy Blakeburn, Joan Bromley, Marion P.S. Brown, Elizabeth Chant, Margaret C. Cheesman, Roland D. Chiasson, Curtis H. Chipman, David S. Christie, Andrew Clarke, Evelyn E. Coates, J.L., J.S., Chris and Lisè Cohrs, Cyril Coldwell, Otis Cossett, Ethel Crathorne, George Crowell, Norman and Ivey Cunningham, Con Desplanque, L. Dixson, Alvah d'Entremont, Delisle J. d'Entremont, Raymond S. d'Entremont, Roland d'Entremont, Calvin D'Eon, Jerome D'Eon, Lester B. D'Eon, Milton D'Eon, Ted C. D'Eon, P.R. Dobson, Ross Dobson, Agnes Doucette, Stephen P. Flemming, M. Foote, Bernard L. Forsythe, Graham Fraser, Roberta B. Fraser, Sylvia J. Fullerton, J.R. and C.D. Gallagher, Rene Haldane, Edgar and Vernita Hamilton, Thelma P. Hawkins, Barbara Hayward, Ruth D. Hebb, C.W.Helleiner, Frank Hennessey, Peter Hicklin, M.W. Hilton, Barbara Hinds, Eric Holdway, Hedley Hopkins, Ralph L. Johnson, Keith N. and Vernon Keddy, Evangeline Killam, Dorothy B. Kirk, Fulton L. Lavender, E.LeFort, A.R.Longhurst, Clive Macdonald, Robert MacDonald, P. MacKay, N. MacLachlan, I.A. McLaren, James and Mary McLaren, Sara MacLean, Olive and Gordon MacLeod, Jeanne McNicol, L.B. Macpherson, Bruce D. Mactavish, T. Martell, Sandra, Reiner and Jan Meyerowitz, Eric L. and Anne H. Mills, H.P. Moffatt, Jean and Bill Morse, Sandra Myers, G.B. Nickerson, M.A. Nickerson, Mike O'Brien, C. Olsen, W. Peach, George D. Perry, G. Peciva, G. Pittman, Jacques Pleau, Merrill Prime, George Reede, A. Richard, A. Rogers, Albert and Ella E. Roland, Howard Ross, Robin Rymer, Barry S. Sabeau, M. Savoy, Peter Smith, Sid, Betty June, Locke and Beverley Smith, K. Sonnenburg, Francis Spalding, Arthur Spencer, Wendie and Karl Tay, Stuart I. Tingley, R.W.Tufts, Robert M. Turner, Univ. of Ste. Anne students, Terry Wentzell, W.E. Whitehead, Jim Wolford.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF REPORTSNEXT ISSUE

The next issue of the Newsletter containing reports of winter birds and Christmas Counts will be published in April 1979, not as hitherto, in May.

Deadline for receipt of bird reports by Dr. Dobson and other material (articles, letters, etc.) by the Editor will be February 28.

Bird reports to the Records Editor -

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

Photographs, sketches, articles and letters to the

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

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

Yarmouth Co.	Pinkney's Point, Tusket, Cranberry Head, Eel Brook, Cook's Beach, Melbourne.
Shelburne Co.	Cape Sable Island, Barrington, Brass Hill, Lockeport Mathews Lake, Upper and Lower Ohio.
Queen's Co.	Port Joli, Port Hebert, Beach Meadows.
Lunenburg Co.	Cherry Hill Beach, Broad Cove, Petite Riviere, Green Bay, Crescent Beach, Bayport, Crousetown.
Halifax Co.	Three Fathom Harbour, Conrad's Beach, Lawrencetown, Cole Harbour, Mooseland, Martinique Beach, Russell Lake.
Digby Co.	Brier Island, Smith's Cove.
Colchester Co.	Truro, Economy.
Annapolis Co.	Wilmot, Round Hill, Sandy Bottom Lake
King's Co.	Wolfville, Long Island.
Cumberland Co.	Lusby Marsh, Tidnish, River Philip
APBS	Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary

FALL REPORT, 1978

## LOONS AND GREBES

"Fair numbers" of south-bound COMMON LOONS were passing Cape Sable from mid-September on (SS). Many remained behind, however, victims of the local "sportsmen" who in that part of the province consider anything with webbed feet as fair game - and at any time of year. A pair of Loons in the Mira area had problems with the resident Bald Eagle who made persistent attempts to relieve them of the care of their one youngster. Whether because of the eagle or of pleasure boats no young loons were reared in that locality this past summer. Loons were abundant in Northumberland Strait in late September; more than 33 were seen on the NSBS field trip Sept. 30, between Tidnish and Wallace, a distance of about 35 miles (SIT). Largest number for the Atlantic coast region was 15+ at Cherry Hill October 29 (SJF&BH).

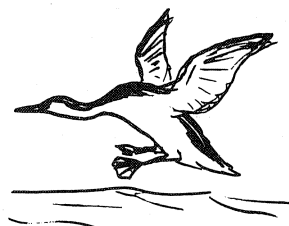
First south-bound RED-THROATED LOONS reported were at Baie Verte Sept. 20 (CD). Sightings of small numbers - singles and up to 3-4 birds - were made in all coastal waters from late September to mid-November. The only large number reported was 90+ in the Cape-Jourimain-Cape-Tormentine (N.B.) region just over the N.S. border on Nov. 19.

Participants in the NSBS Field Trip on Sept. 30 saw 40 RED-NECKED GREBES between Tidnish and Wallace and on Nov. 15 there were 45 at Tidnish Dock (SIT). The only other sighting is a very early one of a single bird still in partial breeding plumage at Lockeport Aug. 29 (RMT&GDP). Many of the birds seen on Sept. 30 were also in breeding plumage.

HORNED GREBES were more general: up to 10 along the Tidnish-Wallace shore Sept. 30, and 25+ at Tidnish Dock Oct. 18. One at Lr. Economy Oct. 22 was the only record for the head of the Bay of Fundy, where they are never common according to Frank Hennessey. All other sightings were along the shore of Halifax and Lunenburg Counties: 2 at Conrad's Beach Oct. 22, 8 at Crescent Beach Oct. 28 (Cohrs); up to 11 seen in Chester Basin area from mid-October to early November (RDH) and 12+ at Cherry Hill Nov. 4 (BH & SJF).

PIED-BILLED GREBES at APBS reached the fantastic number of 200 Aug. 13 (CD) and there were still 3 (1 juvenile, 2 adults) there Nov. 4 (SIT). Other reports - 5 in all - are of singles or 2 birds.

CRKA Ed.



FULMAR, SHEARWATERS, STORM-PETRELS

This has been quite a summer for NORTHERN FULMARS. They were abundant off Brier I. in June (Raymond Thurber). Peter Vickery estimated over 1,100 (c. 30 of them dark-phase) on a "Bluenose" crossing on July 4, and Kevin Powers of the Manomet Bird Observatory Seabird Scheme found them abundant down on George's Bank at about this time. Eric Mills saw a passage of several hundred going past Seal I. on Oct. 8, in contrast to only a single bird the previous day. But there are only two records for the intervening months: a light-phase bird off Brier I. on Aug. 15 (RGG) and a moribund bird at Sable I. on Aug. 24 (IAM).

Ian McLaren saw scattered numbers of CORY'S SHEARWATERS off Sable I. through much of the summer and the birds often came close inshore on calm days. MANX SHEARWATERS were common there in July but scarce later in the summer. Ian also passes on a report of a small black-and-white shearwater which Arnet Sheppard of Ottawa saw off Sable I. on August 27-28. This bird was smaller than the terns it was flying with, and had a very rapid wingbeat. Both size and wingbeat seem wrong for Manx, but right for either AUDUBON'S or LITTLE SHEARWATER; both have very fast wingbeats - not "auk-like" as the books sometimes describe it, but perhaps 10 very fast beats followed by a short glide. Audubon's occurs at the edge of the Gulf Stream off the eastern US and may go as far east as the Grand Bank; the Little is actually known from Sable through a nineteenth-century specimen record. So take your pick.

Peter Vickery saw 3 Manx Shearwaters on his July 4 "Bluenose" crossing. Dick Brown saw scattered birds - never more than 3 on a day - off Brier I. during the last two weeks of August. A bird he saw on Sept. 1, though smaller and more slender-billed than the GREATER SHEARWATERS it was sitting with, seemed rather large for a Manx, and had very brownish upper parts; perhaps the Balearic subspecies from the western Mediterranean?

In mid-May SOOTY SHEARWATERS were abundant quite close inshore to the north of Brier I. (Jimmy Thurber). Peter Vickery saw 10 Greaters and 6 Sooties from the "Bluenose" on July 4. Sooty Shearwaters were at their usual 25-50/day off Brier I. during the last half of August but, surprisingly, Dick Brown was hard put to it to find any Greaters - only one or two a day was the rule until a storm brought in c. 500 on August 30. This was all the more puzzling because the euphausiid shrimps were swarming at the surface and, according to Brown's Shearwater Law, Greaters are supposed to be abundant on these occasions. Raymond and Jimmy Thurber said that the birds had been abundant in late July and early August, but had then just moved away. There were plenty of sand-lance around at that time, and the Greaters may simply have followed the fish schools when these moved away.

Later on there was a massive passage of Greaters, when several thousands - perhaps several tens of thousands - moved south along the west side of Seal I. on the morning of Oct. 8 (ELM); the dead bird which the Smiths found at Cape Sable on Oct. 10 may have been a straggler from this migration. There was also a Manx Shearwater and at least 3 Sooties in this movement (Stuart Tingley). At first sight this looks like a massive return of Greaters going down to breed in the South Atlantic, but the timing is late: they are supposed to be back at their colony on Tristan da Cunha by mid September.

The only other Sooty sighting was a single bird off Seal I. on September 24 (ELM).

Peter Vickery saw at least 1600 STORM-PETRELS (75% of them LEACH'S) from the "Bluenose" on July 4. Gordon MacLeod's neighbour found what was either a Leach's or a WILSON'S STORM-PETREL ashore at Wine Harbour on Aug. 4. Anne Mills heard a Leach's calling on Seal I. on the night of Aug. 26, and Jim Wolford mistnetted 3 (but found neither adults nor young in the burrows he searched) on Bon Portage I. on Oct. 21-22. Wilson's were seen sporadically off Brier I. during the last half of August, but there were never more than two on any day (RGGB).

A little while back a Bowdoin U. student working on Kent I., New Brunswick, in the Bay of Fundy, took some banded Leach's Storm-Petrels from their burrows and released them in Northumberland Strait. They came home fast enough to suggest that they had flown across the Chignecto Isthmus rather than circumnavigated Nova Scotia by sea. The idea of Leach's buzzing across the Trans-Canada Highway is a little startling, but we nonetheless have a few records which suggest some kind of overland passage. On June 3 Karl and Wendie Tay saw a Leach's (identification confirmed by slide) sitting 10 miles inland on River Lake, Mooseland Road, Halifax Co.; it "stayed around for 3-4 hours (in very heavy rain) and did not appear to be weak or injured, but we did not see him fly". Later, during the first week in October, several Leach's were brought into the Nova Scotia Museum, and one was picked up dead at the Bedford Institute, Dartmouth, on Oct. 8 (Carolyn Lock, Alan Longhurst). Interestingly, this was a period of strong northwest gales, and it seems far more likely that these birds had been blown overland from the Bay of Fundy ("wrecked" is the technical term), rather than that they could have flown upwind from the Atlantic.

Finally an important Leach's record which I unaccountably left out of the last report. On April 27, about 140 miles south east of Halifax at 43°N 61°55'W, Eric Mills saw tens of thousands, mostly on the water feeding, and as far away as the eye could see. He says that "the water smelt strongly of plankton". There were smaller numbers of Leach's later the same day, about 105 miles SSW of Halifax, at the northern edge of LaHave Bank. These were all probably Newfoundland birds on their way back to their colonies off the Avalon Peninsula - the breeding centre for Leach's in the North Atlantic.

#### GANNET, CORMORANTS

Peter Vickery saw 8 GANNETS on his July 4 "Bluenore" trip. Birds, usually subadults, were seen in ones and twos off Brier I. all through the last half of August (RGGB). There seems to have been a fairly large passage south in October: 10 off Broad Cove Brook, C.B., on Oct. 14 (Jim Wolford); 48 off Hemeon Head, Shel. Co., on Oct. 5 (Robert M. Turner); 50+ in the big seabird passage west of Seal I. on Oct. 8 (ELM); many passing Cape Sable on Oct. 11 and 28 (the Smiths: the former birds, at least, were heading west). Meanwhile Stuart Tingley saw 30+ at Northport and 5+ at Tidnish Dock, Cumb. Co., on Oct. 18. The latest Gannets, 3-4 birds; were seen by the Cohrs off Cherry Hill Beach on Nov. 12.

Both GREAT and DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS were common along the Eastern Shore during the summer (Sandra Myers, Wendie Tay), though numbers nesting at Taylor Head seemed down, perhaps because of disturbance following the development of the area by the Provincial Parks and Recreation Department. The highest count of Greats was at Cherry Hill Beach - 57 on Oct. 28 (Cohrs).

We have enough reports to try to plot the fall migration of Double-crested Cormorants off southern Nova Scotia. Small numbers were always present around Seal I. between Aug. 23-Sept. 4, but there were as many as 60 there on Aug. 28, including a flock of 41

which left the island and headed SW; there were 100+ on Sept. 23, mostly in migrating flocks (ELM). Sylvia Fullerton's party saw only 3 on Sept. 29, but there was a monstrous wave of 1004 on Sept. 30, falling back to a mere 25 the next day. The 85 probable Double-crests which the Smiths saw off Cape Sable on Sept. 28 may have been part of this movement. On Oct. 17 Bruce Mactavish saw 1500+ off Seal I.; many were flying south, but 800+ roosted on Devil's Limb at dusk. Two late stragglers: a bird at Green Bay seen by the Cohrs on Oct. 28, and a bird which stayed at Eel Lake until the last week of October (PRD).

RGBB Ed.

#### HERONS, EGRETS, BITTERN, IBIS

As usual, GREAT BLUE HERONS were widely and somewhat unsystematically reported. The only colony report was from the D'Eons, who found at least 50 nests on Bond Island near Lower Argyle. Large feeding concentrations were seen of 40 birds at the APBS on August 13 (CD, ST), 47 on Lawrencetown Lake on August 27 (JSC), 85 at Wallace Bay NWA on August 28 (ST), 49 in Pubnico Harbour on October 3 and 46 there on October 16 (both DJd'E). Some were definitely high-tailing from Cape Sable to the SW on September 23 (SS), but scattered singles remained through November. Three observers thought numbers were "normal", "usual", or "regular", and one that they were "down a bit".

Vagrant GREEN HERONS were seen at Brier I. on June 6 (RDH), at Lower West Pubnico on June 10 (DJd'E & JD'E), at Russell Lake, Dartmouth, on September 5 (FLL), and on Sable I. on September 23 (AAR). An immature LITTLE BLUE HERON was at Antigonish on August 13 (RDC). Our only CATTLE EGRET was at Cole Harbour November 1-5 (IAM et al). SNCWY EGRETS wandered to Lower West Pubnico on June 19 (DJd'E & TCD'E) and to John Lusby NWA between June 30 and July 2 (ST et al). We have no hints of nesting of BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS. There were 1 on June 19 at Lower West Pubnico (DJd'E), 1 from July 5 to 17 on Cape Sable (Smiths), 2 at John Lusby NWA on August 21 (ST), 3 on August 28, 2 on September 22, and 2 on October 12, all on Seal I. (ELM, BDM et al), 1 on September 8 at Wolfville (J. Bromley), and 1 on September 28 at Middle West Pubnico (MD'E). We claim one that boarded a Nova Scotian scalloper on Georges Bank on August 1 (RSd'E). At least 2 immature YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS lingered on Sable I. between August 6 and September 10 (IAM et al), and another was seen near Amirault's Hill, Yar. Co., on August 22 (CRKA).

Up to 5 AMERICAN BITTERNS were seen on June 22 in the APBS (CD) and 5-15 were seen daily on the border region in late August (ST). Elsewhere 16 scattered as ones and twos were seen, the latest at Canard Dyke, Kings Co., on October 31 (BLF).

A belated report of a GLOSSY IBIS on May 31 at Jersey Cove (RBF) is among the few records for Cape Breton. Others were at Sheffield Mills on June 11 (FJP) and on August 30 (BGS), and at Lockeport on July 3 (GDP).

IAM Ed.

## GEESE AND DUCKS

A very early group - a family ? of CANADA GEESE showed up at Port LeHebert Aug. 30 (RMT). From then on, through September and October flocks of up to several dozen birds arrived or passed through on their way to more salubrious climes. By mid-October the local wintering grounds were up to quota: 2500-3000 at Melbourne (CRKA), 1000 at Wallace Harbour (Evelyn Coates), 2500+ at Martinique Beach (Cohrs) and 4000 at Port LeHebert (Robert Turner).

The only south-bound BRANT to make the news were 100 seen at Freeport, Digby Co. Oct. 28 (Merrill Prime). SNOW GEESE appeared in two localities: 4 at West Sable River Oct. 2 (RMT) and a single at APBS Oct. 14 (CD).

Practically every large flock of Black Ducks nowadays seems to have one or two MALLARDS as members. There was however one group on its own - a female Mallard with 8 young at Coldwell Lake, Halifax Co. July 18 (FLL). Other sightings were: 2, Aug. 13, 1, Oct. 21 and 2, Nov. 4 at APBS (CD), a male Oct. 22 at Antigonish Harbour (RDC & SPF) and 2, Nov. 23 at Salt Bay, Yar. Co. (CRKA).

Largest number of BLACK DUCKS recorded for APBS was 200 on Aug. 5 (CD). Elsewhere numbers seemed to be about normal: 3000 at Martinique Nov. 5 (Cohrs), over 3000 at Melbourne Oct. 18 (CRKA) and gatherings of up to 400 at Port LeHebert Aug. 30 (RMT), Salt Bay Oct. 4 (PRD) and Antigonish Harbour Oct. 22 (RDC).

A male GADWALL accompanied by 2 females was at APBS Oct. 28, and another was seen at P.E.I. National Park Oct. 14 (SIT).

A single PINTAIL was seen at Martinique Beach Oct. 17 (ECra) and there on Nov. 5 (Cohrs). There were 52 at Harley's Lake, Shel. Co. Sept. 27 (RMT) and "peaks" of 100 at APBS on Oct. 29 and Nov. 4 (CD).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL were reported in good numbers from several areas: Russell Lake, Sept. 5 (FLL), in the 50's and 60's in Antigonish Harbour Oct. 22 and Nov. 4 (RDC&SPF), up to 200 Oct. 28 at APBS (SIT&CD) and 41 at West Pubnico Sept. 29 (DJd'E)

Numbers of BLUE-WINGED TEAL at APBS dwindled from a peak of 300 Aug. 31 to 200 by Sept. 19 (CD). Last report was of 5, Oct. 10 at Russell Lake (KNK).

A male EUROPEAN WIGEON shot near Belleville, Yar. Co. Oct. 10, reported by Kirk Atkinson is the only record for this straggler this fall. The greatest concentration of AMERICAN WIGEONS was as usual at APBS where there was a flock of 275 adult males on the evening of Aug. 27 (SIT) and where numbers had increased to 500 by Sept. 19(CD).

Ian McLaren finds NORTHERN SHOVELERS and Hooded Mergansers "clearly on the increase" and reports several of the former in the Lawrencetown-Three-Fathom Harbour area in late summer and fall. Two female Shovelers were also seen at Upper Canard through the fall (ELM & AHM). Highest number for APBS was 18 seen Sept. 28 (SIT).

Over 15 adult male WOOD DUCKS seen at APBS by Stu Tingley Aug. 24 must have been a sight to remember. The birds remained there at least until Aug. 27. A male of this species in eclipse plumage at Sullivan's Pond in Dartmouth is reported by F.L.Lavender as "knowing every inch of the pond as well as feeding times". Probably an old habitué as at least one Wood Duck has wintered there several recent years.

The Cohrs scored a triple play on rarities at Lawrencetown Lake Nov. 5 when they spotted a REDHEAD, a Ruddy Duck and a Hooded Merganser together. One other sighting of a Redhead was of 4-6 birds at the Antigonish Wildlife Management Area (Antigonish Landing)



Oct. 22 by Stephen Flemming and Roland Chiasson and carefully described by the former.

Con Desplanque reports that RING-NECKED DUCKS were less common at APBS than other years and departed early. The scarcity of other observations seems to bear this out: a family of 6 well-grown young with parent near Lake George, Yar. Co. Aug. 18 (CRKA), 11 at East Bay, C.B. Sept. 16 (CMacd), one at Bayport, Lunen. Co. Nov. 10 (JSC) and 4, Sept. 24, 1, Oct. 28 at McGowan's Pond, Kings Co. (JW).

The only early winter GREATER SCAUP sighting was of 6 at Annapolis Causeway Dec. 3 (CRKA, returning from the AGM). Five were at Cape Jourmain July 13 and 1, at APBS July 24 (SIT). There are probably several hundred right now in the Fox-Harbour-Wallace region but unfortunately no birders to confirm or deny... Two LESSERS were seen: one at Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth Sept. 23 (FLL), one at McGowan's Pond (they seem to favor Irish waters) Oct. 28 (JW) and one at West Lawrence town Nov. 1 (IAM).

First COMMON GOLDENEYES arrived about on schedule: 9, at Crescent Beach Nov. 11 (Cohrs), 5, at Five Islands Nov. 18 (FH) and 3, at Salt Bay (Lr. Bel Brook) Nov. 21 (CRKA). Two BARROW'S GOLDENEYES at Port Elgin, N B Nov. 5 were reported by Stu Tingley as his earliest record for this species in the Border region.

Like the two foregoing species BUFFLEHEADS usually arrive in early November. This year first sighting were 10, Nov. 5, at the Causeway Road near Seaforth, Hfx. Co. (ECra), and 15 Martinique Beach (Cohrs), followed by about 50 at Smith's Cove Nov. 11 (SIT with Peter Hicklin) and 5, at Abrams River Nov. 28 (CRKA).

A summering male OLDSQUAW was noted in St. Margaret's Bay July 30 by Eric Mills. By mid-October they were passing Cape Sable in small numbers (BJS), and large flocks, almost certainly of this species (white on head and long tails) were in Chester Basin area Oct. 22 and 30 (RDH). Small numbers appeared Nov. 4 and 8 at St. Esprit and Cherry Hill (RM&SJP).

Sandra Myers reported a male COMMON EIDER displaying for a female, and another female with two young near Taylor Head, also many pairs, June 17. There were 37 second year males at Cape Sable July 17 and flocks were passing west-bound by Sept. 23. By the 29th these flocks had increased in size, according to the Smiths, who stated however that overall numbers seemed to be down about 25%. Another breeding record is of 9 young and 3 adult females at Lr.W. Pubnico July 27 (KA). Largest number seen was 1200 at Hemeons Head Oct. 5 (RMTurner).

Because of their annoying habit of consorting promiscuously with other members of their genus SCOTERS, WHITE-WINGED, SURF AND BLACK must be treated simultaneously on this account. Frank Hennessey writes that 20-30 Whitewings were present all summer at Lower Economy and that by mid-October numbers of all three species had increased to over 250. By Nov. 19 the numbers had dwindled to about 50, mostly the first-named species. All other Scoter records of any significance are from the Cohrs and are from Green Bay and adjacent waters. Here on July 2 there were 70+ Scoters of which one or two were Whitewings and 10 were Surf. In one record, July 30 between Green Bay and Broad Cove, of 125 birds about 10 appeared to be Whitewings and the rest Black; Sept. 16 produced 35 Blacks and 2 Whitewings, while on Oct. 14 the only Scoters seen were Blacks. Finally Nov. 10-13 all three species were present: 6 Whitewings, 2-3 Surfs and 50 Blacks.

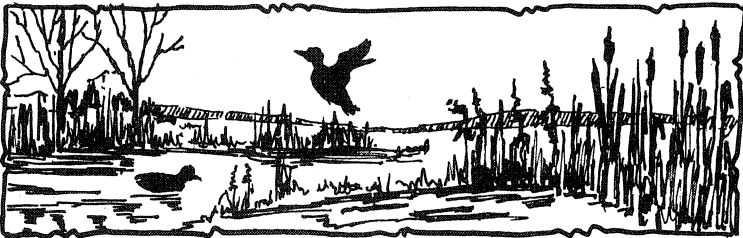
There were RUDDY DUCKS at APBS - 9 in all, one adult, male, the rest females or immatures - from Aug. 24 to late October (SIT). Fifteen showed up in Antigonish Harbour Oct. 29, these being mostly males (RDC&SPF), and a single female at Lawrencetown was one of the fabulous trio observed by the Cohrs Nov. 5 (See also under Redhead).

It is our impression without searching through back numbers that this is a record year for reports of HOODED MERGANSERS. There were 4 seen Aug. 5 in the Forchu area (Cape Breton) by a NSBS party; a pair at Albro Lake, Dartmouth Sept. 2-28 (FLL); one at Wallace Bay Sept. 30 and 8, Oct. 14 at P.E.I. National Park (SIT). Highest count for any locality on one occasion was 15, Oct. 20, Black River Lake (BLF), followed by 12 at Causeway Road, Hfx Co. Nov. 19 (ECra) and 9, Antigonish Harbour Oct. 22 (SPF). There were three of this species still at Black River Lake Oct. 25, perhaps the remnant of those seen there on the 20th (BLF) and the other three observations were of single birds: Oct 22 and Nov. 5 at Lawrencetown Lake (Cohrs) and Oct. 25, Little Harbour Lake, Shel. Co. (RMT).

Breeding success for COMMON MERGANSERS was apparently quite variable according to our two reports: an adult with 10-12 young at Great Pubnico Lake June 17 (Calvin D'Eon) and "many sightings on all Milford Lakes and east of there, young numbered 3-6 rather than larger broods" (MCC&GBN). First sightings for the season in two localities were: several flocks Sept. 23-24 in waters along Mooseland Road (Karl Tay) and 4, Nov. 21 at Eel Lake (CRKA).

Fourteen RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS were seen in flight - all immatures or females - Sept 15 at Green Bay, and 6 were seen there Oct. 14 (Cohrs). Small numbers were at Cape Sable since late October (BJS) and 5 showed up at Cranberry Head Nov. 20 (MWH et al). On Nov. 15 a concentrated flock of 1000+ was observed by Stuart Tingley off Tidnish Dock, "apparently feasting on a school of smelts".

CRKA Ed.



## DIURNAL RAPTORES

We have no nest reports on hawks, although Francis Spalding noted a "family group" of 3 GOSHAWKS at Economy on September 12. Otherwise, 7 scattered Goshawks were reported. One near Antigonish on October 22 was pursued by 6 Lesser Yellowlegs (RDC)! Hawk flights occurred at the usual times and places, although the Meyerowitz family thought that there were more than usual near St. Esprit, C.B. Six SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS near Pubnico on September 10 (DJd'E) were a beginning, and flights "seemed normal" on Brier I. (RA). Almost complete coverage of Seal I. between September 23 and October 20 revealed distinct peaks (with minima between) of about 25 on September 23, 50+ on the 30th, 60+ on October 7, 120 on the 12th, and an astonishing 150, mostly leaving to the SW, on October 16. The Acadia University party on Bon Portage I. saw 30+ on October 21-22. Reports from other localities were generally of ones and twos, totalling about 30 individuals. Sharp-shins and one or another of the two small falcons were seen on 6 of 7 days in October when IAM made research trips to beaches in Halifax Co., the birds in all cases moving southwest along the coast. Such coastwise "trickles" must accumulate and concentrate on islands at the south end of the province. The only reported COOPER'S HAWK (CWH, no details) was with an early flight of 8-10 RED-TAILED HAWKS at Cape Split on August 19. A more substantial movement of 43+ red-tails in 45 minutes was seen along Digby Neck on November 11 (ST). Others (42, mostly singles) were widely reported, evidently arriving in Yarmouth Co. after a summer absence (PRD). No flocking BROAD-WINGED HAWKS were reported; indeed only 6 individuals overall. However, two on Seal I. in early October (BDM et al) and another over George's Bank on September 8 (BSd'E) were clearly on the move. Charlie Allen's ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK near Tusket on July 4 (see FALL FLYER) bears repeating. The first autumn return was a bird on Bon Portage on October 21 (Acadia party), and 4 appeared elsewhere in November.

An adult GOLDEN EAGLE flying low at distances within 300 m. was observed for 5 minutes on September 24 near Oyster Pond, Halifax Co., by Alan Longhurst, who knows the bird well in both Europe and western North America, and whose description leaves no doubt. This is certainly the raptore of the season.

Our BALD EAGLE reports are somewhat amorphous. One nesting in Cape Breton was reported via Sara MacLean; the female began sitting on April 16 and the single young fledged on August 5. People generally don't report patterns in their areas, although Francis Spalding says that they were "starting to come down from the hills" at Economy in early October. Altogether, 26 adults, 14 immatures, and 4 unspecified were enumerated, some doubtless "repeats".

MARSH HAWKS were "alarmingly scarce" on the Grand Pré meadows this summer (RWT), but 1-2 could be seen daily in the APBS and John Lusby NWA (CD), and 5-15 daily in the Amherst area in late August (ST). Otherwise, there are scattered records of residents and migrants, the only hint of a "wave" being a peak of 7 on Seal I. on October 10. Observations by Keith and Vernon Keddy on September 20 of 3 individuals at Conrad Beach are given here at length. "All three birds were observed swimming in a marshy tidal pool. They propelled themselves somewhat jerkily, but resembled gulls both in deportment (high on the water, wing tips up, etc.) and general coloration. One bird even made a clumsy dive from a few feet up... We were astounded, and made absolutely sure of our observations by watching the birds take off again, display their rump-patch, hover, and do all the things Marsh Hawks were supposed to do. Had we not seen the birds on the wing first we may have bypassed the swimming hawks as 'just gulls' "(WNK). The observers were unable to find other such reports, either from the literature or fellow birders. Has anyone else?

Some suggested that OSPREYS are increasing and appearing at new sites, but we have no hard data. Twelve active nests were mentioned or implied, and one failed attempt at nesting on a power-line at APBS (CD). The latest record comes, oddly, from Cape Breton on October 25 (SM).

We had a gratifying number of PEREGRINE FALCONS: a bird seen several times in September near Mathews Lake (GDP), an immature on September 15 near Petite Riviere (JS&JLC), an adult on September 24 at Kelly's Mountain, C.B. (fide O. Cossitt), one on October 24 at Round Hill (WEW), one at Cherry Hill on October 28, with a broken or dislocated leg, but nevertheless harrying shorebirds (JSC,SF,BH), one on Seal I. on September 23-24 (ELM et al), and at least 2 adults and 3 immatures there between October 3 and 16 (BDM et al).

AMERICAN KESTRELS were sparingly reported during summer, but evidently nested near Boularderie, C.B. (fide SM) and brought off 3 young from a nest box near Wilmot on July 18 (TPH). Migration was underway on August 19, when 6 appeared with other raptors at Cape Split (CWH). On August 28, 8 were counted along 5-6 miles of road near Clyde River (Gallaghers). Another flurry of 5-7 was seen on September 10 and 13 at Lower West Pubnico (DJd'E). As usual, Seal Islanders saw more; peaks were evident of about 20 on October 8 and 18 on October 17 (BDM). Elsewhere, about 45 individuals, mostly in ones and twos, were reported, and they were thought to be as usual (1-2 per trip in appropriate places) during fall in Yarmouth Co. (PRD). Peaks of MERLINS on Seal I. were about 25 on October 8 and 10 on October 16 (BDM), fewer than we sometimes have seen there, but outmatching the total of 19 individuals reported from elsewhere in the province. Some were still dashing around Halifax in late November.

#### GROUSE, PHEASANT, PARTRIDGE

In addition to the pheasant-cuckolded nest of a RUFFED GROUSE reported in the FALL FLYER, one other was reported in the APBS with 9 eggs on June 5 (CD). Observers reported grouse as "regular", "numbers seem good", and "quite common", but Hardy Moffat is explicit in his hunters' report for Colchester-Hants Co. "The crop of wild apples and thornberries was abundant, and during the season to date 75 grouse have been seen - much greater in number than last year". One was "drumming" on November 5 in Antigonish Co. (RDC, SPF). Only two reports of SPRUCE GROUSE are to be added to the brood mentioned in the FALL FLYER: 1 on July 8 near Economy (FH) and 2 on the Clyde River Rd. (Gallaghers). Our 3 COMMON PHEASANT reports come from outside the pheasant-saturated "Valley", but GREY PARTRIDGES (a flock of 15+) were reported only from near Wolfville (ELM), as usual.

#### MARSH BIRDS

A VIRGINIA RAIL at Eddy Marsh near Amherst on July 29 (ST) may have nested locally, but individuals on August 24 and September 11 on Sable I. (IAM et al) and on September 10 at Sable River, Shel. Co. (RMT) were clearly migrants. SORAS were more widely reported (see also nest report in FALL FLYER). They were thought to be scarcer this year at APBS and Amherst Marsh (CD), but 10+ were counted on July 28 at Eddy Marsh and 8 on August 28 at Wallace Bay NWA (ST). Summer birds on 29 July at Black River, Kings Co. (BLF) and on August 27 at Dorothea Drive, Dartmouth (JSC), might have nested, but migrants were seen on Seal I. on August 31 (ELM) and October 11-12 (2, BDM) and on Sable I. on August 27 (2) and September 6 and 11 (IAM et al).

The Sable I. PURPLE GALLINULE on July 20 (see FALL FLYER) is the only exotic marsh bird reported. COMMON GALLINULES may be slipping from their bridgehead near the border; they were thought to be much less common in APBS this summer, and only 4 young were seen there on September 4 (ST). A "95% sure" juvenile was seen on Digby Neck on November 11 (ST). AMERICAN COOTS were also scarcer this year. Some 3-5 broods were produced at APBS this summer, and 4, including 2 flightless young, were banded at Wallace Bay NWA on August 14 (ST). The peak (largely immigrants) was only 35 at APBS on August 27; there were still 6 on November 4 (ST,CD). Fewer occurred on the coast than did last year: 1 on September 5 in Dartmouth (FLL), another on September 18 near Hirtle's Beach, Lunenburg Co. (a first in the area for RDH), and 1 on September 9 and 2 on October 20 on Sable I. (IAM).

IAM Ed.

#### SHOREBIRDS

It was a season of paradoxes. Most observers complained that shorebird numbers were low, but I received more reports than usual documenting many early and very late records, and two shorebird surveys recorded numbers much like last year's. Only six species on the Nova Scotian list of shorebirds were not recorded this year - of course those six were the exceptional rarities.

Two factors combined to make this an unusual season. The first was the disastrous breeding season for high Arctic species, caused by very cold weather in the Arctic islands. A number of species appear to have left the Arctic early, or perhaps spread their migration over a longer period. Many, probably the majority, stuck it out and left late, so that many peaks of migration, judging by the records reaching me, were between a week and three weeks late, if definable peaks occurred at all. Curiously enough this did not just apply to the species like Turnstones, Knot, Baird's Sandpiper, Sanderling and Red Phalarope that breed mainly in the Queen Elizabeth Islands, but also to some low Arctic or subarctic species like Black-bellied Plover, Greater Yellowlegs and Semipalmated Sandpipers. The second factor affecting this year's observations was certainly something about local environmental conditions. In general, most birds just kept going rather than stopping in Nova Scotia. When they were blocked here by weather, the results were dramatic. For example, Seal I. had a remarkable "fall" (in the British sense) of shorebirds on the 1st of September when rain and fog grounded about 1300 birds of 22 species, including 50 Yellowlegs (half of each species), 20 Turnstones, 20 Pectoral Sandpipers, 20 White-rumped Sandpipers, 50 Least Sandpipers, 2 Stilt Sandpipers, 800 Semipalmated Sandpipers, a Western Sandpiper, 63 Hudsonian Godwits and 3 Wilson's Phalaropes, 250 Golden Plover, passed over the island in the drizzle, arriving from the NW and departing due S.

Two breeding pairs of SEMIPALMATED PLOVER were noted on June 24 at Mathews Lake (GP) and the first migrants appeared there July 2. By mid July there were 20-40 at APBS (CD). Peak numbers were 250 at Mathews Lake, Aug. 5 (GP), 400 at APBS, Aug. 7(CD), 560 at Crescent Beach, Aug. 12 (SC) and 247 at Cherry Hill, Aug. 19 (SJF). The August peak was 7-10 days late and, in general numbers were low, a pattern that is repeated for many species following. 150 at Crescent Beach on 14 Oct. were late (SC) and there were 5 even later records, the last being one bird at Crescent Beach on November 10 (SC).

PIPING PLOVER were scarce except in their favoured haunts. George Perry found 30 at Cadden Bay, June 10, while the usual 2-3 pairs rested at Conrad's Beach, where a post-breeding group of 14 (including 10 immatures) were present on July 24 (ELM). At Mathews Lake Piping Plover disappeared after July 29 (usually present until September - GP) and thereafter there were only 3 records, all at Seal I. on August 24, 26 and 30 (ELM).

There were only two late spring-summer records of KILLDEER, the probable breeders at Round Hill, 28 May-July 2 (WEW) and one at Cape Sable, May 30 (SS). Most records (14 in all) were after mid July, the highlights being 20-50 at APBS, 26 July -19 Sept. (CD), 12 at Sand Pond, Yar. Co., on Aug. 4 (CRKA), 10 at Antigonish Harbour, 31 Aug. (RDC), and the last, one at Seal I. on October 8 (NSBS). Most of the remaining records in August/September were in Yarmouth Co.

GOLDEN PLOVER were relatively scarce; I received only 20 reports, the first 10+ at Fourchu, C.B., on August 5 (NSBS fide S.MacL). In the Amherst area there were 20-40 from August 13-October 14, far below the numbers found last year (CD). The late August peak never developed anywhere. The birds were obviously flying past us, for a fine flock of 250 changed course to examine Seal I. on the drizzly morning of September 1, then continued on due S. (ELM). The majority of records were in September and October, the last being 4 at Cook's Beach, Yar. Co., on October 18 (CRKA, PRD), and very late birds at Cherry Hill, October 28 and November 11 (SJF).

20 summering BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER occurred at Cape Sable June 18 and July 2 (SS) and one was at Mathews Lake, June 24 (GP). The first obvious migrants were 2 at Mathews Lake on July 15 (GP); thereafter there are many records through November 20 (14 at Cape Sable, SS) but numbers were low everywhere except at Mathews Lake, where 275 on August 24 was more than usual for that date (GP). The peak of migration was August 19-24 and considerable numbers lingered into November, for example, 17 at APBS on the 4th (SIT), 42 at Cherry Hill on the 11th (SJF), 25 at Crescent Beach on the 10th, and 14 at Cape Sable on the 20th (SS).

Hardy Moffat's excellent hunters' notes on WOODCOCK were supplemented by others indicating a good season for the migrants that reached Nova Scotia. Records extend from September 2 (1 at West Pubnico, DJd'E) through November 4 when a few remained in Hants Co. (HPM). Between those dates the main migration was October 9-30, and all were gone by November 13. COMMON SNIFE were rather sparsely reported, though the records indicate constant movement from late September through October, for example, 11 at Seal I., September 30 (SJF et al); 10 near Canning, October 8 (JW); 10-20 through October 14 at APBS (CD); 12+ at Bon Portage I., October 21-22 (JW et al). The striking aggregations occurred very early: 200 at APBS, August 9-13 (CD), and 100+ in the Amherst area on August 24 (SIT). One bird lingered at Tusket on November 16 (CRKA).

There were three impeccably-documented records of CURLEW SANDPIPERS this fall at nearly monthly intervals. One in near full breeding plumage was found on Sable I., August 24 (HR, IAM et al), another in breeding plumage at Cape Sable on September 24 (BJS), and a fall plumaged bird with Dunlin and White-rumps at Mathews Lake on October 22 (GP, RDT).

WHIMBREL were late arriving and occurred in lower than usual numbers. The first were recorded July 22 at Crescent Beach (SC), and July 25 at Mathews Lake (GP). Thereafter the records are mostly of 1-4 birds from mid-August through the 3rd week of September except for 14 at Mathews Lake, August 5 (GP), 54 at East Baccaro the same day (JRG, CDG), 15 at Aulac, N.B., on August 25 (SIT) and 5 at Grand Pre on September 14 (PJA-S). A lone Whimbrel at Mathews Lake on

October 22 was the latest record there by 10 days (GP). The equally terrestrial UPLAND SANDPIPER occurred three times: one at Mathews Lake on August 24 and 27 (GP), one at West Amherst on September 2 (SIT) and 2 at Sable I., September 5-8 (IAM et al).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER records were scanty, but they indicated normal numbers through late summer into mid October. One at Sydney on November 7 was late (HH fideSMacL). SOLITARY SANDPIPERS were late arriving, but peaked as usual between about August 20 and 30. A late bird was at Seal I. on October 8-9 (NSBS). Early records were of single birds at Sable I., July 25 (IAM) and APBS, 27 July (SIT) and maximum numbers were 5 at Sheffield Mills, Kings Co., on August 30 (BCS) and 3 at APBS on September 28 (SIT).

A remarkable flock of 200 Willet was at Cape Sable on June 15, and 20 at Hawk Point on June 25 might also have been non-breeders (SS)- Apart from these anomalies, the peak of flocking and dispersal was normal and the majority of birds had left by mid September. The main departure is much earlier, of course, and flocking began with 50 at Cape Sable, July 5 (SS), 85 at Crescent Beach on July 9 and continued through the month. 25 birds were flying S over the ocean from Cape Sable on July 13 (SS) and a seasonal peak of 115 was reached on July 29 at Mathews Lake (GP), where numbers declined sharply after August 5 and the last migrants were seen September 16. Our last records are September 30 at Tidnish, Cumb. Co., and October 12 at Bayfield, near Cape Jourimain, N.B. (SIT), the last rather late.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS, first arrived a few days late, probably 8-9 July (noted then at APBS and Mathews Lake, CD&GP), though we have a few late June-early July records of non-breeders. The early August peak, 12-17 August, was about 10 days late and numbers were low overall. This was true of the usual late August-September peak also. Thereafter there were many records through October into November (last at Cherry Hill, November 11, SJF) in usual numbers, especially abundant in Yarmouth Co. LESSER YELLOWLEGS appeared on July 1 at APBS (CD) to a peak of 100-500 at APBS (CD), 150+ at the John Lusby Marsh (SIT) and 50 + at West Lawrencetown (ELM) between July 26 and 31. Elsewhere peak numbers were in mid August, e.g., 25 at Mathews Lake and 15 at Crescent Beach on August 12 (GP,SC), and 25 arrived at Seal I. on September 1 (ELM). 14 at Seal I. on October 6 were late (SIT) and numbers stayed at APBS through November 5, dropping to 2 on the late date of November 11 (CD).

RUDDY TURNSTONE numbers were decidedly low, and my records indicate that the early summer arrival (not counting a non-breeder at Sable I. July 2, IAM) was about two weeks late. The first early fall record was of 5 at Mathews Lake and 2 at Crescent Beach, 29 July (GP,SC). Numbers were generally low in August except for 56 at Mathews Lake on August 12 (GP). At Seal I. between August 23 and September 1, 100 mostly in breeding plumage, were present at the beginning; this group dropped to about 80 between August 25 and 27, then declined to very few after August 30 (ELM). The large numbers recorded last year at Cape Sable in mid August were not repeated. Last records were 5 at Mathews Lake, September 9 (GP); 4 at Cape Sable, October 8; 2 at Bon Portage, October 21-22 (JW et al) and one at Cherry Hill, November 11 (SJF).

RED KNOT were about two weeks late arriving, though the late July-early August peak was about on time (23 on July 29, 51 on August 5 at Mathews Lake GP). The other records extend from July 25 (1 at Mathews Lake, GP) to November 20 (5 at Cape Sable, SS) in very low numbers, except for 16 at Cherry Hill on September 24 (SJF) and 12+ remaining at Mathews Lake into late October (GP).

Two PURPLE SANDPIPERS reported at APBS (CD) on August 16 were both very early and most unusual at that location. The other records are late and few: 30+ on November 11 at Crescent Beach (JC&SC) and 4 at Cape Sable on the 22nd (SS).

PECTORAL SANDPIPERS were well recorded and apparently followed a normal pattern in the usual or slightly above normal numbers. 4 at APBS on July 16 were the first of the sparse July-August birds. 20 arrived at Seal I. on September 2 (ELM), followed by others at many localities, including 5 at Sheffield Mills, September 5 (BCS); 10-30 at APBS 19 September-November 4 (CD) (the peaks were 80+ on September 28 and 60 on October 11, SIT) and 10 remained there through November 11 (CD).

A few (10) WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS lingered at APBS to June 10 (CD), but the fall migrants appeared first (1) about 10 days late at Sunday Point on August 3. Thereafter the species was seen regularly in low numbers (usually 1-10) through August and September, 5-12 most days at Seal I., August 23-30, increased to 20+ September 1-4 (ELM). On August 24 there were 20+ at the Eddy Marsh near Amherst (SIT) and 19 at Mathews Lake (GP), and on the 28th 150 at Wallace Bay (SIT). October-early November records were frequent and the numbers (in my experience) unusually high, e.g., on October 22, 50+ at Crescent Beach (KNK), 20 at Long Island, Kings Co. (ELM, AHM) and 13 at Mathews Lake; 20-25 were at APBS, October 29-November 4 (CD, SIT); and 52 at Crescent Beach, October 28 (SC). Last records (1 each) were at Economy (FS) and Glace Bay (fide SMacL) on November 10.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER varies so much from year to year that it is difficult to be categorical, nonetheless there were more records (11 birds in all, 7 records) than in the preceding two years. A very early migrant joined the Semi. Plovers at Three Fathom Harbour on July 31 (ELM), but there were no other records until late August. No Baird's turned up in the hundreds of peep at Seal I. this year, but 2 occurred on Sable I., August 23 (IAM); 1 and 3 at Mathews Lake, August 27-28; 1 at Sable, September 2-3 (IAM), 1 at Conrad's Beach, September 10 (JC&SC); and 2 again at Sable, September 13 (IAM). LEAST SANDPIPERS arrived on time (first record 3 at Mathews Lake, GP, 1 at Cherry Hill, SC, on July 1) but showed little evidence of a late July-early August peak. The late August peak (August 23-27) occurred on time, but numbers were low. At Seal I., August 23-September 4, 40-60 birds were regular, but there were 100 on the 26th and evidence of another arrival with many other species on September 1. At Mathews Lake the peak number was 100 on August 27; George Perry noted that this represented 1/2-1/3 the numbers usual in previous years. Two records were unusually late: 1 at Bon Portage, October 21-22 (JW et al) and 1 at APBS on November 4 (SIT).

A DUNLIN reported at APBS (CD) on August 16 was unusually early. Otherwise this species was recorded in normal or slightly above normal numbers, beginning with 3 at Mathews Lake, September 9 (GP) and 3 at Cherry Hill the next day (SJF). The main arrival can be documented this way: 25 at Mathews Lake, October 25 (GP); 47 at Cherry Hill, October 28 (SJF); 600 at Grande Anse, near Sackville, N.B., on November 3 (SIT); 100 at APBS, 4-11 November, gone on the 13th (CD); 250+ at Cape Jourimain, N.B., November 5 (SIT) and 32 still at Cherry Hill, November 11 (SJF).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS were nicely recorded from late August through early October as follows: 3 on Sable I., August 26 (IAM et al); 2 at APBS beginning August 29 and 1-7 through November 11, peaking at 7 on October 11-12 (SIT); 1 at Crescent Beach, September 4; and the last outside APBS at Sable, September 10 (IAM). The other, much commoner SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER arrived on schedule July 1 (5 at APBS, SIT and 10 at the Lusby Marsh, CD), peaked normally between July 16 and August 6 (though in unusually low numbers) and lingered late (1 still at APBS November 11, CD). Selected records: 60+, Cape



Jourimain, N.B., July 2 (SIT); 40-100 APBS and Lusby Marsh, 8-22 July (CD); 126, Mathews Lake and 69, Cherry Hill, 15 July (GP,SJF); 790 (far lower than '77), Cook's Beach, Yar. Co., 22 July (CRKA,PRD); 500-1000, Lusby, 26 July (CD); 175, peak Mathews Lake, 29 July, where the '77 peak was 300 (GP); 450, Cape Sable, Aug. 6, following visible southward movement (SS); and then relatively low numbers until mid September after which only scattered individuals were reported.

There was one unusual early summer record of STILT SANDPIPER, a bird flying strongly southwestward at Three Fathom Harbour on June 22 (ELM,IAM). During the normal migratory period, mid July to mid September, records were above normal, representing at least 25 individuals on 15 occasions. The first migrants (2 each) were adults at APBS on July 16 (SIT) and at West Lawrencetown on July 24 (ELM). Most of the later records were in the Amherst area, where one bird stayed through September 19(SIT,CD); at Mathews Lake (August 12, 24, September 3, GP), Seal I. (2 between September 1 and 4, ELM) and at Sable (3 on September 6, IAM). A well-described late bird was at Lower East Chezzetcook on October 1 (KNK).

The great spectacle of massed SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS was well studied in the upper Bay of Fundy, but as usual the records have not reached me. The many that did arrive may be summarized thus. Early arrivals were normal, but rather than a single late July-first week of August peak there were several minor ones around mid July, last week of July-early August (largest numbers then), mid August, first day or two of September, and mid September. At Mathews Lake the peak of 375 on August 12 was 2½ weeks late and 50% lower than in '77. Scattered birds continued to pass through Nova Scotia into early November. Some of the details follow: 6 (non-breeders?) at Cadden Bay June 6 (GP); 27 at Cape Sable, 2 July and 1000 July 17 (SS,BJS); 100-500 at APBS, July 9-22 (CD) and 10,000-50,000 at the Lusby Marsh, July 26-August 7 (CD), well below last year's total, but on time; 25,000-30,000 at Lusby, July 28 (SIT); 2000, Wolfville, August 12; peak of 800 at Seal I., September 1, only 30-200 other days, August 23-September 4 (ELM): ca.300 at Brier I., September 16 (JW); 3 still at Martinique Beach, November 5 (JC&SC) and 1 at Antigonish Harbour, November 8 (RDC). A very late bird was reported at the same place November 26 at a date when Western Sandpiper is a possibility (most winter "Semipalmated Sandpipers" on the US east coast are believed to be Westerns).

A WESTERN SANDPIPER was reported without confirming details, Cape Sable, July 13 (SS,BJS). This is remarkably early, since all previous Nova Scotian records have been in late August or September. One bird was well studied by George Perry and Robert Turner at Mathews Lake on August 28. On August 31 two well-marked individuals arrived at Seal I., accompanied by a more problematic 4, one of which gave the call of the Western Sandpiper. Of these, one easily-identifiable bird stayed through September 4(ELM). BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS arrived a bit late but in nearly normal numbers (13 individuals, 7 records), beginning with one at Mathews Lake, August 24 (GP). Different individuals occurred at Seal I. August 26 and September 2-4 (ELM); at Sable I. there were up to 6 between September 7 and 14. Last birds of the season were: 2 at West Head, Lockeport (GP) and 1 at Cape Sable (SS, BJS), September 17; 1 at APBS, September 19 (CD and Andrew Clarke).

13 HUDSONIAN GODWITS arrived about on time at Mathews Lake, July 15, peaked at 36 on August 12 (highest count ever for that location) and were regular until the last 3 departed September 3 (GP). Elsewhere, there were 18 in summer plumage at Cape Jourimain, N.B., July 18 (SIT), 2 at Wallace Bay, September 30 (SIT) and one at Seal I. on October 7 (SIT,BM). Of the 63 that arrived at Seal I. in fog and rain early on September 1, 52 left later the same day and 11 busily feeding birds stayed through September 4 (ELM).

It was a good season for RUFFS (most of them, more accurately Reeves or indet. immatures) - five records of 6 individuals. Most dramatic were a Ruff and Reeve at Sable I. in late July (IAM et al). A Reeve first found August 11 at West Lawrencetown (ELM,AHM) stayed nearly two weeks and was seen by many observers. The remaining records are a Reeve at Sable I., August 23 (IAM), one at Cherry Hill, August 28 (SJF), and a juvenile Ruff at Sable, September 1-2 (IAM).

SANDERLINGS showed the most distinctly unusual pattern of migration, for, although early season arrival dates were normal, the late September-early October peak was virtually non-existent and considerable numbers of birds continued to come through at least until mid November. Some of the details in outline as follows: 92 at Cape Sable, July 17 (SS); 45 at Crescent Beach, 29 July (SC); very few anywhere mid August to early September; 55 at Crescent Beach, September 4 (SC); 35 at Cherry Hill, September 16 (SJF); 50+ at Cape Sable, October 3 (SS) 65 at Lingan, C.B., October 8 (CMacd); 105 at Crescent Beach, October 14 (SC); still 35 at Lingan, October 29 (CMacd); 150+ at Cape Sable, November 7 (only 50 the day before) and 50 on November 18 (SS); finally, 20 remaining at Cape Jourimain, November 19 (SIT).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE records were the highest ever; a minimum of 23 individuals on at least 15 occasions. In the border region 3-4 adults spent the summer at Jolicure, N.B., and may have nested. Several records at APBS and the John Lusby Marsh began on July 29 and continued through September 2 (CD,SIT). The other records included 1 at Crescent Beach, August 16 (SC); 1 at Mathews Lake on August 27 (GP), and a very late bird at Seal I. on October 6-7 (BM,SIT). A single Wilson's Phalarope was on Seal August 23-26; it was joined by another on August 27, they by another on August 28, and a fourth joined them September 1 among the many other arrivals.

The pelagic phalaropes were very poorly reported this year, partly because of the dearth of the high-Arctic nesting RED PHALAROPES, which, according to Dick Brown's observations off Brier I. during the last two weeks of August, were only 1/10 as abundant as normal, i.e., ca.2000/day rather than much higher. NORTHERN PHALAROPES, in contrast, were up to normal numbers off Brier, presumably the usual 100-500/day, though at Sable I. Ian McLaren reported fewer than normal. The only other records were of one Red Phalarope at Cape Sable, June 6, 2 Northern's there on August 5 (SS) and a Northern at Cook's Beach Marsh, August 14 (CRKA).

ELM Ed.



Franklin's Gull: This is the second sighting for Nova Scotia. Ian McLaren, Sable Island, late August 1978.

JAEGERS SKUA.

There was a POMARINE and a PARASITIC JAEGER on the "Bluenose" run on July 4 (Peter Vickery), and 4 Pomarines, 6 Parasitics, 10 unidentified jaegers and 3 SKUAS in Eric Mills' seabird flypast of Seal I. on Oct. 8. The only other Skua reported was the bird seen by Howard Ross (via IAM) on Sable I. on July 2. The first fall Parasitic appeared on George's Bank on Aug. 21 and 1-2 were seen daily during the next week or so (Raymond S. d'Entremont). There was an adult Pomarine off Seal I. on Aug. 31 (ELM), and unidentified jaegers were seen off Brier I. on Aug. 15 (a dark-phase bird), and in Digby Gut on Aug. 26 (RGBB, Barry C. Sabean). Parasitics were moving past Sable I. in small numbers of up to 9 birds at a time on Sept. 5-9 (IAM); there was a single bird at Tidnish, chasing terns, on Sept. 20 (Andrew Clarke via Con Desplanque), and at least 8, chasing Kittiwakes, off Seal I. on Oct. 7 (ELM).

A note for those who are trying to figure out South Polar Skua identification from the published descriptions. I looked at a range of specimens in the American Museum of Natural History in New York recently, and I see what people mean by a "contrast" between the pale body and dark wings in the light-phase birds. The species is brown all over, right enough. But the wings are a dark brown - as dark or darker than the primaries of a juvenile Herring Gull. The head, neck and body are pale brown - paler than a first-winter Herring Gull but not quite as pale as a first-winter Great Blackback. This contrast seemed obvious even in dim museum light but, unfortunately, the specimens all had folded wings. The Skuas we see are usually a long way off and flapping hard, so the contrast may well be less apparent in the field. Just to set the record right: the bird I saw on the Grand Banks in June 1977 was not a South Polar Skua.

GULLS

HERRING and GREAT BLACKBACKED GULLS were, in one observer's words, "everywhere as usual". I agree, but I'm afraid that future historians researching gull population changes will curse us for making so little effort to count these birds. After all, gull numbers declined sharply in the last century because of eggging, climbed back to unprecedented levels with the growth of open garbage dumps, and will probably again decline now these dumps are being bulldozed over. All of this needs recording properly, and an isolated gull count here and there isn't enough. What's needed are regular counts - "guesstimates" are good enough as long as you always guesstimate the same way each time - done every week or so all winter at a dump, fish wharf, roost, etc. Any volunteers?

The last ICELAND GULL on Sable I. left on June 10 (Howard Ross, via IAM). The first to return to the Glace Bay area did so on Oct. 18, and birds were common by early November. They must have moved south quite fast because Chris Cohrs saw one at Chebucto Head on Oct. 22, and the Smiths saw another at Cape Sable on Oct. 26. Meanwhile, there was a GLAUCOUS GULL at Glace Bay from Oct. 7-9 (Sara MacLean); the only other report is of a third-year bird at Dartmouth Marine Slip on Nov. 12 (ELM). The LESSER BLACKBACKED GULL had returned to its usual Digby haunts by Oct. 10 (Stuart Tingley).

The first RING-BILLED GULL was a single bird at Chescent Beach on July 22 (Cohrs). There were 2 at Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth, on July 23, 20 on Aug. 3, and 50 on Oct. 12 (F. Lavender), but only 6-8 from Nov. 1 onwards (Ethel Crathorne). The first Cape Breton record was of 2 birds at Glace Bay on Aug. 5 (Sara MacLean) and the first at Arisaig, Ant. Co., was on Aug. 9 (Stephen P. Flemming).

In Yarmouth Co. the first arrivals at Argyle River were 4-5 birds on Aug. 4 (CRKA). There were 8 birds at Eel Brook on Sept. 13 - the first day they had appeared in any numbers there this fall - 10 on Oct. 24 at Salt Bay nearby, 25 at the Brook on Oct. 7, c.100 on Oct. 12-15, and 60-100 on Nov. 17 (though numbers had been higher the previous week) (PRD,CRKA); there were at least 120 at Pinkney's Point on Nov. 1. Stuart Tingley reports several large flocks in Cumberland Co.: c.500 adults at Wallace Bay NWA (Aug. 28), and Northport (Oct. 18), and c.200 at East Linden (Nov. 5).

I promised not to mention BLACK-HEADED GULLS breeding in North America again. But some sceptics have pointed out - quite rightly - that the only evidence for it is fledged young with their parents occurring in western Newfoundland and, since they could fly, these might have crossed the Atlantic from the nearest Old World colony, in Iceland. It seems unlikely that the birds would make such a migration so soon after breeding, and against the prevailing winds, but it's still a possibility. We'll just have to wait until someone finds some eggs. Meanwhile, the first record from the fall was an adult in winter plumage at Cape Jourimain, N.B., on July 17 (Stuart Tingley), and there were 2 adults at Northport on Sept. 30, 1 each at Northport and East Linden on Oct. 18, and 3-4 birds, including a juvenile, at East Linden on Nov. 5. Sara MacLean saw a bird in winter plumage at Glace Bay on Sept. 6. "The usual numbers - not numerous - about a couple of dozen" had arrived on Sept. 26. There were 4+ at Conrad's Beach on Oct. 22, 1 at Cherry Hill on Oct. 28, and 4 at Conrad's Beach on Nov. 5 (Cohrs), and 4 adults and an immature at Dartmouth Marine Slip on Nov. 12 (ELM and John Kearney).

The first BONAPARTE'S GULL sighting was a 1-year old bird at APBS on July 1 (Stuart Tingley), followed by a flock of about 12 at Cherry Hill on July 29 (Cohrs), and 7 at Lingan on Aug. 1 (C. MacD.). There were 5 in Antigonish Harbour on Aug. 31, 20 on Nov. 19 and 2 on Nov. 26 (RDC, Stephen P. Flemming). There was at least one bird at Brier I. on Sept. 16, and 10 at Little Narrows, C.B., on Oct. 15 (Jim Wolford). As usual, numbers were highest in Cumberland Co., where Stuart Tingley reports 275+ on Oct. 18, 425 (virtually all adults) on Nov. 5, and 125 on Nov. 15, all in the Northport-East Linden area.

There are four interesting species-sightings of the smaller gulls to report - one of them rather controversial. The FRANKLIN'S GULL which stayed on Sable I. from July 23 to Sept. 13 was well seen by many birders, and is the second record for Nova Scotia. Ian McLaren says that it was "probably a second summer bird, rather ragged, but with clear 'windows' on primaries, pale mantle, etc., all distinct from Laughing Gull (also bill size, etc.)" But LAUGHING GULLS were there too: 1 from June 22-July 2 and 2 on Oct. 5 (H. Ross and A. Richard, via IAM). And, for good measure, a second-summer LITTLE GULL among the terns, on Aug. 27 (Peter and Roberta Gilchrist, via IAM). Con Desplanque saw another Little Gull - an adult - on Aug. 5 at Cape Jourimain.

The controversial species was the ?SABINE'GULL which some of the NSBS field party thought they saw off Brier I. on Sept. 2. It was first seen from a distance, and at that range Dick Brown thought that the Sabine's three triangles - black primaries, white secondaries, grey back and upper wing - were clear enough, and called it a winter adult Sabine's. Wayne Nelly came back later and got a closer look, and identified it as a young Kittiwake with rather a lot of white on the secondaries. For safety's sake we'd better write it off as a Kittiwake. But Sabine's are still worth looking out for in Fundy. They turn up often enough there and in New England in the late summer for it to seem probable that some migrate to the Atlantic overland, via James Bay and the Great Lakes, as opposed to making the direct crossing between Baffin Bay and the Bay of Biscay.

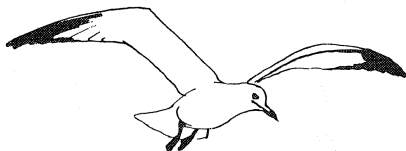
BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES were common around Sable I. this summer. Ian McLaren says that "they hung around in greater numbers than ever before in the decade". Only one adult and one subadult were seen off Brier I. during the last half of August (RBBB). Bernard Forsythe saw three immatures at Parker Cove, Anna. Co., on Aug. 13, and Sara MacLean picked up an injured young bird at Glace Bay on Aug. 25. There were several hundred flying past Seal I. on Oct. 8 (ELM). The Smiths saw only 1 off Cape Sable that day, but they say there were 30+ on Oct. 25, and with many more heading south out at sea. On that day, as during Eric Mills' fly-past, the birds had been brought close inshore by strong winds.

### TERNS

First, some nesting records. ROSEATE, COMMON and ARCTIC TERNS were all seen on the Tuskets by Charlie Allen and his field party from the Universite de Ste. Anne on July 15. Most of the young birds were already on the wing. There were 50+ adults and some young terns on the wing at Cape Sable on July 2 and many of the young birds must have flown in from another colony because there were more of them than there were eggs laid at Cape Sable (Smiths). Three pairs of Arctics were nesting in July-August at Lime Hill, Inv. Co. (M. Foote). The Gallaghers report 90 Arctics at the East Baccaro colony on May 28 and c.125 (including young) on June 16. At Wedge Island (Grassy I.), St. Margaret's Bay, Eric Mills estimated some 300 Commons on July 7, many of the nests still with eggs and hatching young. There was a minimum of 10 Arctics and 6 Roseates around the island, both species making trips with food. On July 27 fledged and flying juveniles were abundant; Commons were down to c.150 and there were at least 12 Arctics, and 10 Roseates (with 6 young). The bitter-enders were the Commons at one Sable I. colony, where the young were still being attended on Sept. 11; but the colony was abandoned 2 days later (IAM).

A Roseate Tern was seen at Cherry Hill on July 22 (Cohrs), and an adult and juvenile at Great Rafuse I., Mahone Bay, on Aug. 5 (ELM). BLACK TERNS were seen on Sable I. (IAM) on June 10 (1), Aug. 11-13 (1), Aug. 24-27 (2), Sept. 1(1) and Sept. 4 (2 new ones). In the Amherst area there were 10 adults at Missiquash Marsh on July 2, 5 birds (including 3 juv.) on Eddy Marsh in late July, and 4 (including 3 juv.) at APBS in early August (Stuart Tingley).

Finally, some late sightings. 4+ Commons were seen at Arisaig, Ant. Co. on Sept. 16 (RDC) and 10 "Comics" were feeding at the mouth of the Habitants River, near Canning, on Sept. 17 (Bernard L. Forsythe). Stuart Tingley saw 30+ Commons between Tidnish and Northport on Sept. 30, and 4 probable Commons at Northport on Oct. 18. The last to go were 4 Commons at Crescent Beach on Oct. 14 and 1 on Oct. 29 (Cohrs).

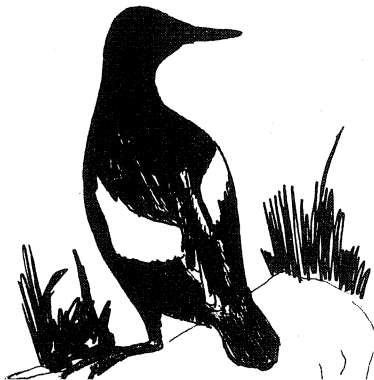


AUKS

There are two surprising records of DOVEKIES. The NSBS field party saw 2 on Aug. 5 in Cape Breton. And a bird in summer plumage popped up right beside the boats on the Brier I. field trip on Sept. 2, though most people were too preoccupied with Finback Whales to notice (I thought this trip was to watch birds?) Shirley Cohrs' sighting at Crescent Beach on Nov. 10 is more normal - no doubt the first of the winter influx.

T. Mintell saw a RAZORBILL at Bird Islands on June 17, and Bruce Mactavish saw another at Seal I. on Oct. 20. The NSBS field party saw 2 COMMON MURRES on Aug. 5 in Cape Breton, and there was a summer- and a winter- plumage bird off Brier I. on Aug. 22 (RGGB). There was also a remarkable sighting of an apparently healthy bird on a pond at River Hébert, Cumb. Co., on June 6-7 (FS). BLACK GUILLEMOTS were seen at Bird Islands on June 17 (T. Mintell), and they were still visiting nests on the Tusquets on July 15 (CRKA). Bruce Mactavish saw a total of 5 between Oct. 2-20 at Seal I., and the Cohrs saw 6+ in Mahone Bay on Oct. 29 - all the latter in white winter plumage. Dick Brown saw only 2 during the last two weeks of August at Brier I. but there were 30+ in Petite Passage, between Brier and Long Islands on Nov. 11 (Stuart Tingley). On the other hand, 1978 was the year of the ATLANTIC PUFFIN at Brier I.; they turned up every day in surprising numbers, with a peak count of 121 on Aug. 28 (RGGB). Some were adults in summer plumage, some either subadults or winter adults, and there was at least one juvenile of the year. Could Puffins be making a population comeback in the Bay of Fundy?

RGGB Ed.



## DOVES, CUCKOOS

Keith Keddy says that ROCK DOVES were "uncommon to absent in many rural areas". What do others think? MOURNING DOVES were noted summering near Wilmot (TPH) and Tusket (CRKA), but others were presumably migrants. These were reported mostly as singles from all parts of the province, including 1 as far as it could go at Cape North on October 13 (R.Dobson). By months there were 4 in August, 6 in September, 33 in October, and 10 in November, seemingly confirming that our migrants come from outside the province, and probably largely from points SW. In addition, larger groups occurred on our birding islands; 5 in mid October on Sable I., up to 13 on Bon Portage on October 21, and peak counts of 35 and 20 on October 11 and 16 respectively on Seal Island.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS evidently took up residence sparsely. Ralph Johnson often heard them calling near Liverpool, but otherwise only a few were seen or heard near Pubnico (LBD'E & G. Reede), Round Hill (WEW), and Maitland (L. Macpherson). An immature near Crescent Beach on July 24 (Cohrs) could have been produced regionally, but other summer and autumn birds could equally well have come from afar, especially since all but one (from Dartmouth, September 2, FLL) were seen on islands: 1 on July 24 and 3 between September 7 and 13 on Sable (IAM et al), and 1 in late August, 3 on September 23 and 4 on October 8 on Seal I. (ELM et al). As usual, stray YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS also occurred on Sable I. (3 between August 25 and September 14, IAM et al) and Seal I. (1 on September 23 and 3 on October 8, ELM, BDM, et al).

## OWLS

Readers are referred to the FALL FLYER for nestings of 4 species of owls. Other summer reports of GREAT HORNED OWLS come from the outskirts of Dartmouth, Lime Hill and APBS. There were only 3 individuals reported for autumn, BARRED OWLS were seen (regularly?) at Lime Hill, but we have only 2 autumn reports. SHORT-EARED OWLS are more migratory, and occurred on Seal I. on October 6, Bon Portage I. on October 21-22 (2 birds), and at Grand Pré on November 13. Curtis Chipman of Second Peninsula, Lunenburg Co., thinks that SAW-WHET OWLS in June were "just visiting" his nest box, but numbers must have nested somewhere, because Ross Anderson and the Acadia party caught and banded 13 (11 imm.) on Bon Portage on October 21-22. It is becoming increasingly clear from studies elsewhere in eastern North America that these little owls are routinely migratory, not merely "erruptive".

## NIGHTHAWK, SWIFT, HUMMINGBIRD, KINGFISHER

Observed pairs (or pairs inferred from numbers of individuals) of COMMON NIGHTHAWKS were reported from towns as follows: 3-4 in Truro, 2 in Stewiacke, 1 in Greenwood, 1-2 in Yarmouth, 1 or more at Beach Meadows, in addition to the pair found nesting at Liverpool (FALL FLYER) and others noted without numbers. This is one species for which we would welcome more detailed reporting town-by-town. Migration was early and substantial, although not as dramatic as last year's. Ten near Paradise, on July 22 (W&JM) were followed two days later by a loose flock of 100-125 near Waterville, Kings Co. "Despite the early date it had all the 'ear-marks' of a migratory movement" (RWT). Ten subsequent flocks, averaging 15 birds each, were reported from widely scattered localities (not Cape Breton) until the end of August. The last were 3 between Hebron and Saulnierville, Yar. Co. on September 17 (DJd'E).

CHIMNEY SWIFTS seem rare; with reports of 21 individuals (plus 2 reports of "several"), only Sydney reporting as many as 14 (SM). Thelma Hawkins comments that she "used to have periodic sightings of these through summer, but not any more". How about those Wolfville birds? The last was a bird at West Pubnico on September 7. By contrast, we had good numbers of RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS. Sara MacLean received accounts of 20 or more from observers on Cape Breton, where they "seem to have had a most successful year". Shirley Cohrs reported 7 on a 4-mile walk at Green Bay, where last year she saw none. The migration was clear to Eric Mills on Seal I., where numbers increased daily from 1 on August 23, to 25 on August 30, and remained at 10-20 per day until he left September 4. The last was a bird at Cape Sable on September 30 (BJS).

Only Ranier Meyerowitz in southeastern Cape Breton thought that BELTED KINGFISHERS were diminished; indeed "very rare this year". Noteworthy was a count of 14 on the "Lawrencetown circuit" on August 27 (JSC). As usual, a few remained until the end of the reporting period.

#### WOODPECKERS

COMMON FLICKERS had a "large-scale migration in the Chignecto-Apple River area" on September 15 (FS), 6-8 a day were reported in southern Yarmouth Co. on September 11-13 (CRKA), and 10-12 were seen there on September 23 (MWH). As usual, they were conspicuous on Seal I. with distinct peaks there of 100 on September 23-24, 30 on September 30, 60 on October 9, and 25 on October 19. A total of 13 individuals may have been involved in sightings of PILEATED WOODPECKERS at localities scattered from Cape Breton Highlands N.P. to Clyde River Road, Shel. Co. One at Mooseland Road was feeding a full-grown fledgling on August 28 (KT). We have reports of 24 YBELLIED-BELLIED SAP-SUCKERS, the last on October 9. Ross Anderson banded 7 on Brier I. compared with 3 in the previous 2 years. An adult on August 19 was sprawled gracelessly (sunning?) on Thelma Hawkins' driveway at Wilmot, and she wonders if it was the same bird that spent hours on some days last spring "getting his message across" via her TV antenna and eaves-troughs.

After a dearth of summer records of HAIRY WOODPECKERS we hear of about 30 individuals in autumn, including a small movement of 6 on Seal I. on October 19 and 4 on Bon Portage on October 21-22. DOWNY WOODPECKERS seem to have recovered from their recent low, with about 30 individuals reported, including 5 on Seal I. on October 18 (BDM).

This promises to be an extraordinary year for BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKERS. Some 24 widely scattered individuals have been reported, including a pair nesting and feeding a fledgling in July near Economy (FS). Far more exciting are at least 2 NORTHERN THREE-TOED WOODPECKERS at APBS since November 11 (CD). These are our rarest woodpeckers (including Red-bellied and Red-headed) and, if they stay, readers may contact Con Desplanques, Amherst, for directions; APBS is lovely in winter.

IAM Ed.



## FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

An exciting and very rare SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER occurred at Cape Sable Nov. 19. Betty June Smith and her family, all experienced birders, plus others in the area were able to study the bird for an hour in good light as it fed around the lighthouse and along the beach top. This is the second sight record for Nova Scotia. (The other was on Bon Portage by Evelyn Richardson).

A scattering of EASTERN KINGBIRDS were seen during the summer although Ella Roland at Bible Hill felt they were not as numerous as usual. Southward movement began in late August. Stuart Tingley reported that they were conspicuous during the last ten days of the month in the border region (N.B.-N.S.), while CRK Allen wrote that near Tusket the migration was two days earlier than the traditional Labour Day weekend there. CRKA also had the latest report, one bird Sept. 21.

The regularly straying WESTERN KINGBIRD was down in numbers, only five seen. These were (all single birds) Aug. 30, Seal I.; Sept. 23, Little Harbour; Oct. 8, W. Sable River; Oct. 16, Seal I. and Oct. 28, Port Joli (BLM, GP, RMT, BM). A GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER or perhaps more than one stayed around in Wolfville in May and June (JW). The only other was at L.W. Pubnico June 6 (DJJ'E).

A few EASTERN PHOEBES lingered late, as usual, with last birds seen Oct. 29 at Pubnico and Halifax (E&VH, IAM)

The EMPIDONAX group were present in abundance during the summer. On Seal I. they moved out at a rate of 10-30 a day between Aug. 23 and Sept. 4, peaking Aug. 30. On Brier I. Ross Anderson banded a total of 37 Yellow-bellied and 48 Least in late August and early September. Main movement for Least there was Aug. 31-Sept. 5 while for Yellow-bellied it was Sept. 10. On Sable I. IAM reported "a good flight" of Yellow-bellied in early September, with a peak of up to 10 on 6th.

EASTERN WOOD PEWEES passed through Seal Aug. 23-Sept 4 (2-7 daily) with a peak of 10+ Sept. 2. However, some were still minding late nests at that time, at Wolfville Ridge and Economy. The pair at Wolfville had a nest with two feathered young on Sept. 3 and were last seen Sept. 12, while at Economy an adult bird was feeding young on Sept. 7. (BLF, FS).

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS were definitely up in number after last year's poor showing. Over a dozen were reported from all points of the compass. Latest seen was Oct. 22 in Dartmouth (FL).

Small flocks of HORNED LARKS arrived at Morien Bar in the north as early as August, but the larger concentrations arrived in the usual areas between Oct. 20 and Nov. 20, with Cape Sable reporting the largest flock 160+ on Oct. 29 (SS).

Large flocks of Swallows appear to gather and depart around the end of August in Cape Breton (Meyerowitz) and the northern part of the mainland: "1000+ in mixed flock of four species at APBS Aug. 27, none Aug. 30" (ST). Small flocks of TREE SWALLOWS were moving throughout our area around mid-September and Trees were last seen on Cape Sable Nov. 13 (SS). There were only five reports of BANK SWALLOWS, all of small numbers and showing no departure pattern.

The only ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW was on Seal on Sept. 2. Was this the same one seen there on its arrival in May, departing by the same route?

BARN SWALLOWS, on the other hand, were well reported with the main migration Sept. 15-18 and shivering stragglers leaving Brier I. and Yarmouth Co. on Nov. 11 and 13.

CLIFF SWALLOWS appear to have had good success with many nests reported. Granville Ferry with 38 nests heads the list (WEW). An early record for the year received too late for the last NEWSLETTER was of two at Conrad's Beach on Apr. 16 (Howard Ross). The only report of a migrant group was of 22 birds ready to depart Aug. 17 from Lower Caledonia (SPF).

Apart from a report of three PURPLE MARTINS at Glace Bay the only mentions were as usual at Amherst: Evelyn Coates wrote of at least 86 nesting birds. These were showing signs of imminent departure on Aug. 20.

#### CORVIDS THROUGH MIMIDS

Several correspondents write of an abundance of GRAY JAYS this fall. Francis Spalding found many more than in other years at Economy and Stuart Tingley saw as many as 25 a day near the N.B. border with the birds frequenting unusual habitats such as open fields and roadside breakwaters.

BLUE JAYS were similarly numerous when they came out of the woods in late August. They became even more frequent by the third week in September - a flock of 30 was at Round Hill Sept. 27 (WEW) - and numbers continued to climb well into October. Definite migrations were noticed in Yarmouth Co. on Oct. 15 and Nov. 7 (PRD).

COMMON RAVENS were well in evidence as fall progressed with a possible migration at Cheticamp in mid September (S.MacL) COMMON CROWS seemed "as usual" except for a definite movement of 15 along the coast from Lawrencetown Head to W. Lawrencetown Nov. 1 (IAM)

Several migrations of BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES were documented. One small flock was seen at Glace Bay Oct. 9 but all others were in the western end. CRK Allen writes of definite flocks on the move in Yarmouth Co. on Aug. 30 (30+ accompanying migrating warblers) Oct. 11 (20-30), Nov. 1 (10+) and Nov. 17 (several small flocks). It is interesting to note that black-caps were seen on Seal I. this fall, as they were in the spring (see Vol. 20. No. 3) This is most unusual for Seal I. as all regular "Honorary Seal Islanders" will agree.

An unusual number of BOREAL CHICKADEES was noted by both Ian McLaren and Chris Helleiner on Oct. 22 in the Cole Harbour-Lawrencetown area with large flights occurring even over the beaches and out to sea. Stephen Flemming in Antigonish Co. feels that there is an abundance of Boreals there this year: almost half as many as Black-caps.

Ten reports of WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES came in. Although this is not comparable to last fall's unprecedented twenty-six (after years of scarcity) it is encouraging to note that they are still around in fair numbers.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES, always more numerous were quite heavily reported. Sixteen were at W. Pubnico on Sept. 13, they were "common" on Bon Portage I. Oct. 21-22, CRKA listed eight in his area Nov. 17 and many other correspondents have ones and twos attending their suet logs at press time.

BROWN CREEPERS, present all summer in deep woods re-entered villages and wood edges in October and early November with fourteen individuals counted.

The only HOUSE WRENS seen were, as last year, on Seal I., six from Oct. 2-20 (ST, BM, ELM). The one and only SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN, seen from Sept. 25 onwards and the only LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN on Sept 23 were both also Seal I. birds (Morse party, BM, IAM, etc.). The WINTER WREN remains a rare bird nowadays. Three reports of August birds and a comment by Eric Mills "Normal abundance on Seal I. despite very low numbers on the mainland" tells the story of this once frequently heard songster.

On the other hand we will soon spend more time listening to the MOCKINGBIRD. A few summer records were forwarded including one for May 28 at Neil's Harbour. The remaining nineteen were all October and November birds and all in areas from Halifax to Yarmouth along the South Shore.

GREY CATBIRDS were reported as "normal". While most reports were for September, two nesting pairs were observed earlier at Liverpool and Bel Brook. Paradise, Yarmouth and W. Pubnico had October Catbirds, the latest one being Oct. 16 at W. Pubnico.

Of the four BROWN THRASHERS seen, the latest and coldest was still trying to find the way south from Halifax on Nov. 25 (IAM).

#### ROBIN THROUGH KINGLET

The ROBIN migration was strongly marked by many heavy waves of birds. According to CRK Allen Robins began to concentrate, not in flocks, but well distributed "everywhere" in Yarmouth Co. Aug. 5-6. The first big wave noted was on Sept. 29 when 200+ were along the shore SW of Parrsboro. The following day 350 were at Antigonish (DC, RDG, SPF). On Oct. 1st 50 were flying high and south over Windsor while by 4th "hundreds" passed through Yarmouth Co. (TWL, PRD). For a week from Oct. 9 onwards Cape Breton was "innundated" with birds arriving "in pulses, about an hour apart ---all ravenously hungry, many young, some even spotted" (SMacL). Yet another wave of 300+ passed Bel Brook Oct. 19 and on 28th 250 or more were all over the Green Bay-Broad Cove area of Lunenburg Co. (PRD, Cohrs). Nov. 1st saw 100 at Pinkney's Point. There were four main movements through West Pubnico: Oct. 28 (125), Nov. 4 (100), Nov. 11 (150) and Nov. 19 (100) (DJd'E). The last concentration of any size was 30+ at Surette's I. Nov. 25, still feeding on the heavy rowanberry crop. A few remain...

Only one WOOD THRUSH was seen, on Sept. 10 at Sable I. by Howard Ross.

HERMIT THRUSHES often steal away quietly in the fall but this year three concentrations were noted. On Sept. 9 and Oct. 20 respectively, there were 5 and 4 together at Round Hill, while three were grouped on Bon Portage Oct. 21 (WEW, JW et al). Single birds have been sighted in November and with luck a few may stay to be counted in December.

Phyllis Dobson writes that SWAINSON'S THRUSHES and Veerys were down in number by 50% in the eastern part of Yarmouth Co. On the other hand Ross Anderson felt that numbers of thrushes were higher than usual on Brier I. He banded 48 Swainson's during September and noted three migratory waves - Aug. 31 -Sept. 1, Sept. 8-10, and Sept. 20-23. They were very numerous Sept. 18-22 in Cape Breton, especially in the Highlands where hundreds were on the move (S. MacL). A little late band of seven were seen by W.E. Whitehead at Round Hill Oct. 27.

Single GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSHES were on Sable and Seal I. Sept. 5 and Oct. 18. On Brier a migration was underway Sept. 22-24 while at the other end of the province the Purchases and the Cohrs saw more than a dozen on the same weekend in different spots in Cape Breton.

Not many reports of VEERYS were received and none showing any appreciable movements. Five nests were found on Wolfville Ridge, the latest on July 30 having three young (BLF). Last Veery seen was Oct. 11 at W. Pubnico (TCD'E).

No EASTERN BLUEBIRDS.

One BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER in that area near Pond Cove on Brier I. where gnatcatchers have been seen before - on Sept. 3 (JW et al).

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS are back in good numbers in their wintering areas and have made a good recovery from last year's low. RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS, so decimated in 1977, were back singing again this year, although numbers have not yet reached the norm. By the end of September they had almost all left, although five were at Argyle Head Oct. 7 and another wave "hit" Bon Portage Oct. 21-22.

#### PIPITS THROUGH STARLINGS

Earliest reported WATER PIPITS were on Sable I. Sept. 9 (IAM). Large flocks of 100+ occurred in Yarmouth Co. at Kelley's Cove Oct. 22 and Sunday Pt. Nov. 3. On Nov. 4th small flocks were still passing through Cape Sable. Last reported was a single pipit at Green Bay Nov. 12 (Chris Cohrs).

Our winter waxwing, the BOHEMIAN appeared early at Paradise where one individual was seen Sept. 12 (Morse). There were two just over the N.B. border at Sackville Nov. 26.

The commoner CEDAR WAXWING was indeed "common" from the end of August to date, revelling in the excellent rowan and hawthorne berry crop. There were fifty all in one tree at Middle Ohio Sept. 5 and 100+ at Sable River on 6th (JR, CDG,RMT). A catastrophe occurred at Glace Bay Sept. 27 when seven immature were window killed all at the same window (S.MacL).

1978-79 promises to be a NORTHERN SHRIKE winter. Already nineteen have been seen. Except for one bird at Sydney Forks Aug. 16 all other dates are from mid-October to deadline date and the sightings were made from Sable to Seal Islands and most counties in between.

Arthur Spencer writes of a LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE June 24 near the Sydney highway, WEW at Round Hill had two there July 20 (last year's Loggerhead was seen there around the same time) and another Aug. 8.

JSC Ed.



## STARLINGS

Nine reporters have given us counts of STARLINGS from July through November, 1978. Both WEW at Round Hill and EER at Truro noted Starlings as down in number (from "normal") early in the summer. However by the end of August there and elsewhere Starlings were on the increase "more than ever", "more than plentiful". By October flocks numbered in the thousands, some coalescing to form huge assemblages near the coast, looking like smoke on the horizon billowing up and down, presumably migrating birds readying for departure.

## VIREOS AND WARBLERS

Again this fall Seal I. produced one WHITE-EYED VIREO, on Oct. 6, just a day previous to the one found there last year by the same observers, Stuart Tingley and Bruce Mactavish. A small party of SOLITARY VIREOS (8+) at Green Bay Sept 15 was undoubtedly a "wave" of migrating birds (JL&JSC); the only late report (quite late for this species) was of one, Oct. 7 at Argyle Head (PRD). As usual there are about four times as many reports of the RED-EYED VIREO, which probably does not reflect the relative abundance of these, our two common vireos, since the Solitary is a woodland bird with normal song habits, the Red-eyed a town and suburban bird which sings incessantly. These vireos were still arriving by May 30, when one was found killed at Cape Sable Light (SS), and started to leave the last of August continuing through September and noted in October only at Seal I. Oct. 8, at West Pubnico Oct. 11 and on Bon Portage I. Oct. 22 (BDM, DJd'E, JW et al). One or two PHILADELPHIA VIREOS were seen on Seal I. in August (ELM) and in October (BDM). Word from Ross Anderson is that 6 were banded on Brier I. "which is average". Dates were Aug. 31 (2 birds), Sept. 4 (1), Sept. 10 (1) and Sept. 26 (2). Sara MacLean reported the WARBLING VIREO, three sightings this summer at Sydney Forks by Roy Blakeburn.

Ross and Mary Anderson and company again set up mist nets on Brier I. this summer, and banded representatives of 21 of our 22 species of native warblers, during late August and through September. Ross does not wish his data to be regarded as hard and fast statistics, but added to our other provincewide reports, including the ones from Seal I., Bon Portage and Cape Sable they do give us an idea of the relative abundance species to species and year to year, of the warblers. According to these sources the majority of our warblers were present this summer (1978) in normal numbers, with three or four species notably "down" and four or five probably "up". We have had reports from 50-60 people, covering all types of habitat in the province and believe that so far we need not regard any of our warblers as threatened species.

Besides our native warblers we have reports of 12 exotic species, probably a record, as follows: PROTHONOTARY, 1, June 3, Sydney Forks (RBI) and 1, Aug. 27, Sable I. (IAM et al). WORM-EATING 1, Oct. 14, found "freshly dead, had flown into a wire fence" on Seal I. (BDM); probably hybrid GOLDEN-WINGED, 1, Sept. 3 at Russell Lake, described by F.L. Lavender as "male Golden-winged warbler with the white in the face replaced by yellow, with a little yellow, if any, on the crown. Most of the yellow on the crown was replaced by dark gray"; BLUE-WINGED, 1, Aug. 25-26 at the Light at Seal I. (in the raspberry canes) (ELM); ORANGE-CROWNED, 6, Oct. 9-19 (high of 3 on Oct. 16), Seal I. (BDM); PINE, 1, male, Aug. 12-14 at Sable I. (Howard Ross); 1, Sept. 4 at Crescent Beach (bird sang as it was watched by John and Shirley Cohrs); 1, Oct. 9 at Seal I. (IAM, ELM); PRAIRIE, around 7 seen on Sable I. Aug. 19 to Sept. 14 (IAM et al) and 1-3, Aug. 26 to Sept. 23 on Seal (ELM). LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH, 1, Sept. 8 on Sable I.,

photographed by IAM; KENTUCKY, 1, Sept. 2 on Sable I., also photographed by IAM; CONNECTICUT, 1, female, Sept. 9-13 "too shy to photograph" (IAM); YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT, at least ten sightings Aug. 27 to Sept. 14 on Sable I. (IAM et al); possibly 13, Aug. 28-Sept. 3 on Seal I. - 5 on Aug. 30 - (ELM) and 1, seen Oct. 17 and 18 plus the remains of 2 others killed by a hawk on Seal, (BDM); 1, Sept. 1 near Dartmouth (FLL); 1, banded on Brier I. Sept. 6 (RRA); 1, Oct. 3, also 1, Oct. 22 at Cape Sable (S&BJS), and 1, Oct. 31 "for a few days" in Dartmouth (K&WT); HOODED, 1, female, Sept. 1, 1, male, Sept. 3-13 and 2 males Sept. 15-16 at Sable I. (IAM et al).

Notes on our native species of warblers are as follows:

BLACK-AND-WHITE, 19 reports - 8 from Cape Breton - noted as "below normal" on Brier - only 30 caught, no major wave observed; but at Seal a peak, 30+ on Aug. 30 down to 20 Sept 2 was noted by ELM, and Sara MacLean called them "quite plentiful" in Cape Breton; latest date seen this fall was Oct. 1 at West Pubnico (DJD'E).

TENNESSEE, 6 reports - 2 from Cape Breton - "very abundant in Dartmouth the middle of August, probably the best migration I have seen here, on Brier it occurred in normal numbers" (RRA); none reported since Aug. 23,1, West Pubnico (DJD'E).

NASHVILLE, 9 reports - none from Cape Breton - small wave Aug. 6 at Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth (ECra); seen Oct. 21 "moving through at Yarmouth" (MWH) and same date at Bon Portage (JW et al), normal numbers at Brier. Last date Aug. 28 at Yarmouth (MWH).

PARULA, 12 reports - 5 from Cape Breton - nest at Brass Hill June 6 noted to be the 7th Parula Warbler nest in the same spruce tree in the past 12 years (JR&CDG), seemed "less abundant than usual" on Brier - only 12 banded from mist nets, "remained fairly common all summer" at Mooseland Road (Sandra Myers), "our commonest warbler" at Lime Hill, C.B. (M.Foote), "small flocks moving through Yarmouth Aug. 21-28" (MWH), and latest date noted Aug. 27 (singing spring calls) just outside of Antigonish (Roland Chiasson).

YELLOW, 24 reports - 8 from Cape Breton - normal numbers at Brier, travelling in mixed warbler waves Aug. 6, Aug. 21-28 and Sept. 6, noted at Dartmouth by Ethel Crathorne, at Annapolis County by W.E. Whitehead and at Yarmouth by M.W. Hilton; the latest date was one seen Oct. 22, W. Pubnico (TCD'E).

MAGNOLIA, 14 reports - 5 from Cape Breton, Ross Anderson writes "our commonest fall warbler, 170 banded this year which I feel is normal, large waves noted Sept. 1 and Sept. 27". Another mixed wave which included Magnolias was Sept. 10 on the other side of the province at Marriott's Cove (RDH) and the latest sighting was Oct. 7 at West Pubnico by Ted D'Eon.

CAPE MAY, 7 reports - 2 from Cape Breton - called "normal" at Brier, noted in migration Aug. 23-24 at Marriott's Cove (RDH) and Seal I. where a peak occurred Aug. 25, "150+ birds that day, dropped to 30 on Aug. 31 when adults appeared among many juveniles" (ELM); another mixed wave noted Sept. 8 at Paradise included Cape Mays (Jean and Bill Morse). Latest date seen Sept. 17 at W.Pubnico (DJD'E).

BLACK-THROATED BLUE, 7 reports - 3 from Cape Breton - called "normal" at Brier and last noted, 5, Oct. 9, 1, Oct. 19 at Seal I. (BDM).

YELLOW-RUMPED 30 reports - 6 from Cape Breton - "but common" (SM)- 86 landed on Brier in Sept., with waves noted Aug. 25 at Seal ("molt-ing thin immatures daily, around 75-100 a day but peak of 150+ Aug. 25. Numbers dropped after Sept. 1 and adults in good plumage appeared" ELM); at Cape Sable, Sept. 18-23; at West Pubnico Sept. 23-24 (a small peak, 12-20 birds) and on Seal again Sept. 26-27 "Myrtles rose from 20 to 200+" NSBS party). On Sept. 30 another NSBS party

noted 100's migrating along the Northumberland Strait coast, Tidnish to Wallace. Throughout October 'Myrtles' were noted universally with successive peaks - Oct. 4 at Eel Brook and Cape Sable, Oct. 12 at Antigonish (SPF), Oct. 13 "lots" at Port Mouton (Van Killam), Oct. 13-17 also at W. Pubnico, Oct. 21-22 at Bon Portage I., Oct. 22 also at Beach Meadows (Terry Wentzell), and last seen at St. Esprit Oct. 30 (Meyerowitz) and Eel Brook Nov. 19, 2, probably here for the winter. There was in fact an enormous migration of Yellow-rumped Warblers, going on almost continuously through September and October.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN, 14 reports - 1 from Cape Breton - called "not so common this summer, 33 banded compared with 61 in '77 and 49 in '76" at Brier I. This is more or less borne out by the small number of reports received of this, one of our commonest and most easily recognized (both by sight and sound) of the wood warblers. However Ruth Hebb noted "lots of Black-throated Greens with mixed waves of migrating birds" at Marriott's Cove, and waves were noted with other warblers Sept. 6 and 11 at Paradise (Morses); Sept. 10 in Yarmouth Co. (CRKA) and Sept. 15 in the Crousetown area (Cohrs). Last date recorded Oct. 4 at Wolfville by Jim Wolford.

BLACKBURNIAN, 10 reports - 5 in Cape Breton - called "normal" at Brier I., one small mainland "wave" of 8 birds noted Sept. 6 at Round Hill. (WEW).

CHESTNUT-SIDED, 6 reports - 1 from Cape Breton - called "normal" at Brier I. mist-nets. All mainland reports for August or earlier, latest date Oct. 11 at Seal I. (BDM).

BAY-BREASTED, 5 reports - 1 from Cape Breton - called "normal" at Brier, on Sept. 22, one picked up dead in W. Pubnico (DJd'E), but latest date Oct. 16 at Seal (BDM).

BLACKPOLL, 10 reports - 2 from Cape Breton (M. Foote and Hedley Hopkins) - called "not so common this year" at Brier, "fairly common" at Mooseland Road (Wendie Tay). A peak of 200 at Seal I. occurred Aug. 25, same day as peaks of Yellowrumps and Cape May Warblers, otherwise around 40 a day, declining to 10 in September (ELM). Jim Wolford reported Blackpolls common on Bon Portage, and on Oct. 23 (the latest date seen) at Cape Sable "a small boxful were killed against the light, gathered before the gulls had eaten many" (SS).

PALM, 12 reports - 2 from Cape Breton - called "normal" on Brier I. A small peak (6 birds) was noted Sept. 2 at W. Pubnico (DJd'E) and latest date so far noted is Nov. 3, found just over the Border near Sackville, N.B. (SIT).

OVENBIPD, 12 reports - 3 from Cape Breton - called "extremely abundant, 70 banded this year compared with 40 in previous two years" at Brier. Two very late ones were seen, 1, Nov. 3 at Mooseland Road and 1, Nov. 4 at Cape Sable "feeding on a kelp-and-eelgrass bank with Horned Larks and Snow Buntings" (S,BJ&LS).

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, 7 reports - none from Cape Breton - called "normal" at Brier. RRA says "I feel this species is more common in Nova Scotia than most people realize. In the last three years we have banded 235 of these Waterthrushes on Brier". Our only mainland reports were of 1, Aug. 21 at Sable River, by Robert Turner, and 1, Aug. 10 at Tusket, (CRKA), and of 2, Aug. 11 at W. Pubnico by Ted D'Eon, who subsequently found two dead in front of his pharmacy on Aug. 30, "the birds were killed when they hit the window - sent to the N.S. Museum". Later sightings all in West Pubnico by Ted D'Eon were of 1, Sept. 15 and 16, 2, Sept. 21, 1, Sept. 23 and the last sighting 1, Sept. 29.

MOURNING, 11 reports - 2 from Cape Breton, both from Lime Hill (M. Foote) - RRA writes: "The surprise of the fall migration - 42 banded this year compared with 23 in the previous two years. The migration was in full swing on the 27th of August when we started banding operations this year and finally petered out on Sept. 23, but stragglers were still being caught on the 27th. Waves were noted on the 8-10 Sept. and again on Sept. 23". On Seal I. Aug. 25-Sept. 4 only 1-2 Mourning Warblers were seen (ELM) with a very late one Oct. 18 found by BDM. Two mainland October birds were 1, Oct. 9 at Antigonish (RC) and 1, imm. found dead in W. Pubnico Oct. 11 (DJD'E&TCD'E).

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, 24 reports - 5 from Cape Breton - not recorded at Brier I. during the mist-netting period by RRA et al. On Aug. 21-28 MWH in Yarmouth town noted "a small flock moving through", and Yellowthroats were called "common all summer" at Lr. Economy (FH), last one seen Oct. 28. Two November may winter, one at Eel Brook Nov. 9 skulking in a briar patch, one Nov. 10 at Green Bay, but the latest one of all will not - it was found dead at Lr.W. Pubnico Nov. 24 by Craig d'Entremont.

WILSON'S, 8 reports - 3 from Cape Breton - called "normal" on Brier. Wilson's Warblers retire rather quickly to their wooded regions so are not seen often enough to give an idea of their real numbers in Nova Scotia. Of a small group of these warblers at St. Esprit one was captured and identified (thus identifying the rest) and then released, by the Meyerowitz family; five sightings Aug. 30 through Sept. 23 at West Pubnico may have been of one or several of these birds, and Sept. 23 was the latest date one was seen in the province (TCD'E).

CANADA, 8 reports - one from Cape Breton (Aug. 9, Sydney Forks, RB1) - called "above normal, 35 banded, a good year at Brier". The latest sighting was of 1, Oct. 10 at Seal I. (BDM).

AMERICAN REDSTART, 16 reports - 7 from Cape Breton - called "normal" at Brier, very common at Mooseland Road. At Round Hill NEW saw "up to 20 seen at one time between Aug. 10 and 16". Two small mixed warbler waves were noted involving Redstarts, the one Aug. 6 at Sullivan's Pond and one Sept. 12 at Paradise. Last date recorded this year was Oct. 11 when Bruce Mactavish counted 5 on Seal I.

N.B. The following pronounced peaks of warblers on Sable I. perhaps of interest: Cape May - 27 Aug.; Yellow-rump - 10 Sept.; Bay-breasted - 7 Sept.; Blackpoll (most abundant) - 7 Sept.; N. Waterthrush - 8 Sept.; Yellow - 10 Sept. It is of interest that Waterthrush, Bay-breasted and Blackpoll peaked after northeasterlies, and Yellows and Myrtles after northwesterly winds. (IAM).

PRD Ed.

#### HOUSE SPARROW

In Cape Breton SM reports the HOUSE SPARROW "as usual". On the mainland the average at feeders ranged from 30 at Antigonish (RC) to 6 at Yarmouth (MWH) and was reported "still, thankfully, uncommon in many country areas" by Keith Keddy. Ian McLaren saw 5 on Sable I. on Oct. 20 "clearly arrived on their own, in spite of their non-migratory reputation".



## ICTERIDS

The BOBOLINK is common everywhere now in Nova Scotia but still more abundant as a breeding bird in the Border region. Only one probable nest was reported in SW Nova Scotia, May 22, in a grassy field at Brass Hill (JR&CDG). From the numbers of birds in the 8 reports from Cape Breton Sara MacLean judged them to be increasing there every year. At Amherst Point "in a 10 acre field July 16 at least 175 Bobolinks were counted, at least 40 of these adult males, many adult females and immatures. Appears to be a colonial feeding area. where families collect once the young are able to fly, perhaps due to a high abundance of insects? Bruce Mactavish and I saw a similar collection in this same field in late July, 1975" (SIT). Stuart went on to say that Bobolinks were frequently heard flying high overhead during daytime around the 20-25 of August, apparently migrating. At New Ross on July 24 a flock of 30, the males beginning to lose their breeding plumage was noted by KKK. August flocks were seen at Cheggoggin, Yar. Co. (MAN), Lr. W. Pubnico (DJD'E) and at Seal I. there were 20-50 per day through Aug. 23-Aug. 31, 100 on Sept. 1, slightly lower numbers through Sept. 4. Constant passage at night (3IM). At West Pubnico a count of 75-100 on Sept. 1 dwindled to 9 on Sept. 17, the last date reported this year.

We have four or five EASTERN MEADOWLARKS to report: 3, Oct. 17-19 on Seal I. (BDM), and 1, Oct. 18, 1, Oct. 21 at Cape Sable (SS).

The YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD has become a regular stray and 5 were seen this fall: at least 4, Aug. 26-Sept. 13 on Sable I. (IAM et al) and 1, first seen Aug. 13 on Cherry Hill beach feeding on beach peas and well seen and described by Shirley Cohrs, photographed, and seen next day by John and Lisé Cohrs, Sylvia Fullerton, Barbara Hinds and Eric Mills.

The RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD remains abundant in NW and central Nova Scotia but otherwise reports were scanty. In Cape Breton Redwings were "as usual", and were noted in migration from early Oct. on, with robins and grackles (SM). The big flocks were at Antigonish, e.g., 150+ in a cornfield Sept. 21-27 (RDC) and at Canning, a pure flock of 400, Oct. 7, other flocks nearby seen Oct. 8 (JW). Down at the end of the province Delisle d'Entremont kept a record through October which showed only 1-3 Redwings Oct. 5-29 at Lr. W. Pubnico, then 9, Nov. 10 and 18 Nov. 11. Around this time, Nov. 13, 2-3 Redwings came to the Scott Killam feeder in Yarmouth, very likely to remain for the winter.

Two ORCHARD ORIOLES were seen this fall, a female, Aug. 30 at Seal I. (ELM) and an adult male at Sable I. Sept. 28 (A. Richard).

The NORTHERN ORIOLE was well reported this season with sixteen reports from widely separated regions. As usual fall reports greatly outnumber those in the spring, and from early August on these birds have been observed moving out, the records adding up to well over 100 individuals. Numbers of migrants netted on Brier I. were called "normal"; peaks at Seal reached 20 birds twice (Aug. 30 and Sept. 2); 20 also were counted at Sable I. Sept. 9 at which time a few of these orioles were seen simultaneously at St. Esprit and Cape Sable. By October only singles were being reported, and only from Glace Bay (2) and Dartmouth (4) in the area. One of these orioles plus one from Seal I. possessed field marks typical of the Bullock's type of Northern Oriole - the Seal I. bird seen Oct. 8 (BDM, IAM, SIT ELM) and the Dartmouth bird at Dorothea Drive Oct. 28 (IAM). By November the few remaining orioles were seeking out feeders, "3 at various bird feeders in the Sackville, N.B. area, Nov. 20-28" (SIT) and up to 4 in the McLaren backyard in Halifax, Nov. 20-25 (IAM).

## A FIELD TRIP AND SOME BIRD SHOTS

The Brier Island Labour Day Field Trip is one of the best attended and anticipated Field Trips of the year. This trip attracts people not only from Nova Scotia but other provinces and the U.S. The birding attraction is not confined to the Fall Migration of land and shore birds but also includes pelagic species. Although large numbers cannot always be assured for this particular weekend at least one is sure of sighting Northern Phalaropes, Greater and Sooty Shearwaters and Puffins. Don Purchase has recorded the group of people assembled on Brier Island wharf waiting for the boats that will take them a few miles out into the Bay of Fundy. Their destination is the upwelling of water near a series of underwater ledges. Here food is brought to the surface of the water and attracts birds in large numbers.

The food also attracts whales. The sixty-five or more people who sailed in four boats were able to observe four Finback Whales within twenty-five feet of the boats.

The Brier Island weekend marks the end of a pleasurable summer season of birding and the commencement of fall migration. A representative selection of chance encounters, expected and unexpected, with our feathered friends during these seasons is shown on the following pages.

Shirley Cohrs has recorded on film one of a pair of constantly scolding Catbirds which nested in a barberry hedge in her backyard in Halifax. The male and female Bobolinks were photographed at Petite Riviere.

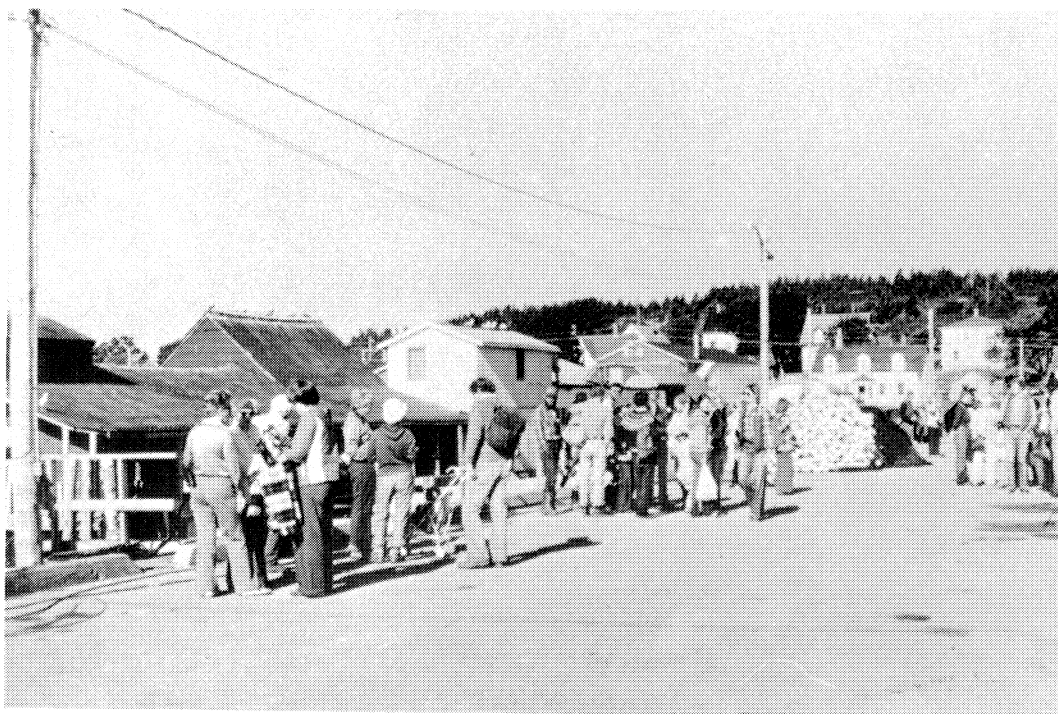
The Kittiwake on page 4 was photographed in flight by Ian McLaren off Newfoundland in 1977. The group of Gulls and Fulmars on the facing page were photographed by the well-known Halifax artist Alan Chaddock off southern Labrador in the spring of 1977.

The Black-billed Cuckoo, page 6, perched on a granite boulder was photographed on Seal Island by Ian McLaren during a Thanksgiving Day weekend trip this year.

The chick at the top of page 7 is a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Don Purchase heard two chicks but could find only one. Both were out of the nest with the parent birds in close attendance. The male carried out the feeding chores during this encounter which took place in mixed hard and soft wood in Lunenburg County, July, 1978. The chicks were in low shrubbery. The Red-eyed Vireo pictured in Don Purchase's feeder is not eating sunflower seeds, but recovering from a stunning collision with the housewindow, September 1978.

The closing shots are of vagrant wading birds, wanderers to our shores probably from southern Maine and New Hampshire. Ian McLaren photographed the immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron on Sable Island in August 1978, and the Cattle Egret at Cole Harbour, Halifax Co. on 1 November 1978.

Ralph Connor



**purchase**





cohrs



**cohrs**

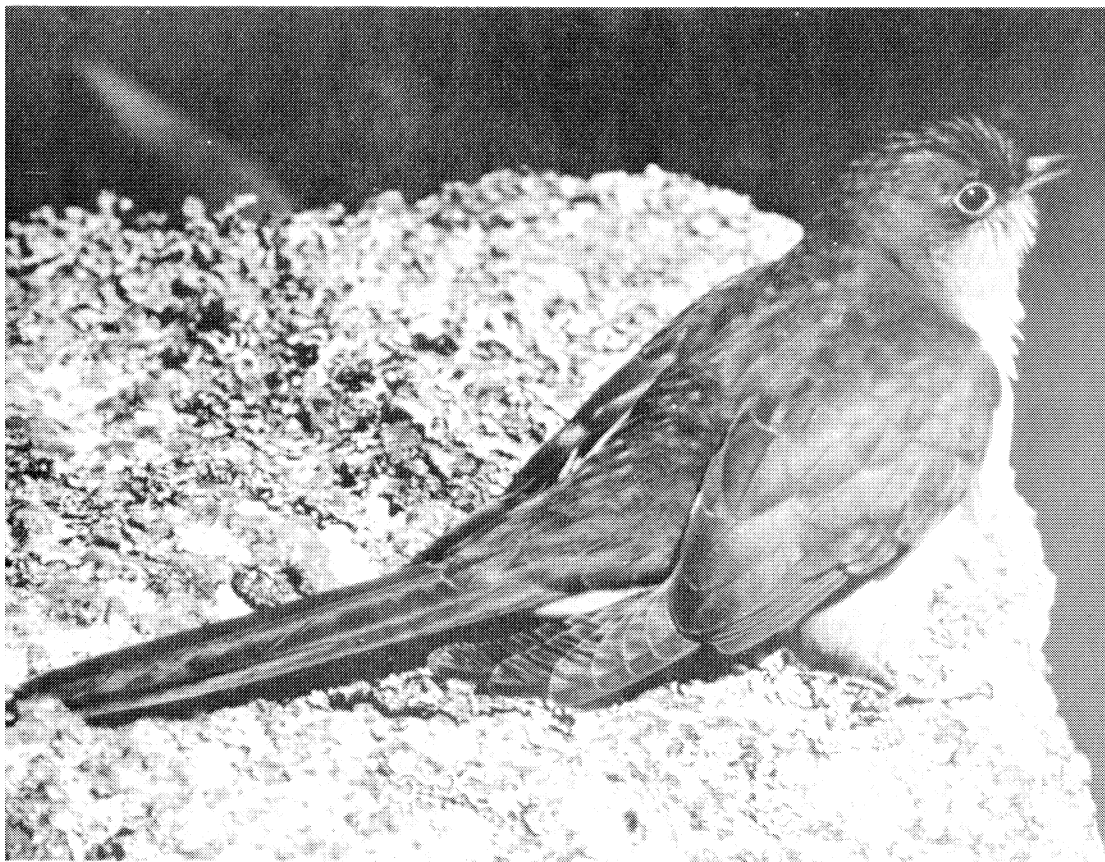


mclaren





chaddock



**mclaren**

**purchase**







**mclaren**



Ten reports of the RUSTY BLACKBIRD is average, but the Tays of Mooseland Road found it less common there than usual this year, both spring and fall. This bird is rarely seen in summer, which makes it all the more surprising for the Cohrs to have found two nests in the unexpected locality of coastal Lunenburg County: one, (two parents and two young) by a small pond along the shore from Broad Cove, the other pair nesting by a pond up an uninhabited road near Green Bay. Keith Keddy saw Rusty Blackbirds at Green Bay Aug. 11 and noted they were beginning to turn rusty. He also noted 15+ on Sept. 22 at New Ross - "the beginning of migration - perched in apple trees and around the garden (not their usual habitat)", and only two of these birds seen there by Sept. 23-24. Sizable flocks were present near Dartmouth - around a hundred mixed blackbirds from the middle to the end of October (ECra) and in the Valley, 600-700 at Round Hill Oct. 14-15 (WEW). The last of the Rustys seen were 1 at Sydney Oct. 18, also noted in Cumberland County on the same day (Oct. 18) by Evelyn Coates, and 2, Oct. 21-22 at Bon Portage I.

KN Keddy writes of the COMMON GRACKLE: "Regular, but not so common as in past years; few seen after mid-September. Locally abundant, a good number seen Aug. 22 around a garden in New Ross - later a good-sized flock raiding a garden with a few Blue Jays Sept. 11 in Bedford". To this may be added the RD Chiasson report from Antigonish: 500+ on Aug. 28 - broken flocks about 80 per flock flying SW to W in Antigonish County... Oct. 7, usual 8 Grackles at feeder but with short tails - moulting... thereafter a few seen locally with the last sighting on Nov. 22, 2 at the feeder. From Cape Breton Sara MacLean writes: "15+ Sept. 25, a migrating flock, in moulting condition. Oct. 6-18 many 100's passing, the first comers rather moulted and dowdy, later ones in better feather". As usual the larger flocks were in the Valley region, but even there less than usual, for example Jim Wolford saw 30 on Oct. 11 at Wolfville, his "only Grackle sighting this fall". WE Whitehead saw a congregation of 500-600 Grackles plus a few Cowbirds Oct. 13 at Centrelea, undoubtedly a pre-migratory flock, and by the end of October very few were left in the province. One at Cape Sable Oct. 28 may have been the last to leave, the few November birds reported (in Yarmouth County) may be wintering individuals.

The BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD has been lightly reported this fall, the only complaint coming from MW Hilton who saw "too many," Aug. 15 at Sunday Pt., and later 120+, Sept. 18 at Pinkney's Pt. Inland, Cowbirds could be found late summer through fall as singles or small flocks, and these increased in size through October: 50-60 Sept. 28 at Round Hill, 100+ there Oct. 20; 30-40 around for several days at Truro in early October (EER); 60, Oct. 28 at Cape Sable (S&BJS) - a few at least leaving the country; at Antigonish Nov. 9, around 30 Cowbirds roosting at the harbour, only one male left in the vicinity by Nov. 24 (RDC).

#### TANAGERS

A spring, 1978 SCARLET TANAGER not previously recorded was 1, May 29 at Beach Meadows - a bright male observed by the Terry Wentzells. This made six spring sightings of the Scarlet Tanager. This fall from Sept. 10 to Oct. 11 we have reports of 9 of these tanagers, 4 banded at Brier I. Sept. 10 and 3, Sept. 20, which RRA says is normal; 3, Sept. 23 at Seal I. (ELM); 1, Sept. 25 at Sable River (RMT) and one last one Oct. 11 at Seal again (BDM).

## PRINGILLIDS

The pair of CARDINALS at home in Yarmouth for five years (they came in 1973) once again nested at the MacDonald property, and raised at least one family. It is puzzling that these very conspicuous (but also very shy) birds disappear so quickly. We have received only four reports of Cardinals this fall, a pair, male and female, at the Nicker-son feeder in Yarmouth town during October and November at times, and sightings of four male birds, one, "harried by a Mockingbird" at the Fernald Allen feeder, early in November, one for two days eating haw-thorne berries at the Bracketts' in Beaver River, twenty miles up the shore from Yarmouth and one last sighting, Nov. 29 at nearly Port Maitland, by June Graves.

The ROSE-BREADED GROSBREAK migration at Brier I. was "normal" but no numbers given. A small migratory flock (5 birds) was noted in the Sackville, N.B. area the last ten days of August; other sightings added up to 15 birds elsewhere in the province (N.S.) and well distributed from Malagawatch to W. Pubnico, Round Hill to Sable River. The last one seen a female or immature at W. Pubnico Sept. 20 (TCD'E).

We have had four exotics in this group reported this year, the BLACK-HEADED GROSBREAK, the BLUE GROSBREAK, the INDIGO BUNTING and the DICKCISSEL. These birds were seen September through November: an adult male Black-headed Grosbeak, Sept. 18-19 on Sable I. was reported to IAM by A. Richard. An immature Black-headed was noted on both Sept. 17 and 18 at W. Pubnico by DJ d'Entremont, who wishes this to be regarded as a "probable" since it was a new bird to him. The Blue Grosbeak was seen Oct. 16 at Seal I. by BDM, who also reported a total of 8 Indigo Buntings, Oct. 2-20 (high of 4, Oct. 8). Several of these buntings were seen also by Eric Mills Oct. 8-9. One female, Oct. 9 was encountered behind the old Dartmouth Sugar Refinery (FLL). One Dickcissel, a bright bird, was noted Oct. 9 on Seal I. by IAM and ELM; Bruce Mactavish brought the number there to 4, Oct. 9-11. Three more Dickcissels were seen, one (a probable immature male) at Eleanor Barrow's feeder at River Philip, was seen also up to Nov. 22 when Stuart Tingley photographed it there; the two others came to Van Killam's feeder in Yarmouth town Nov. 30 and are still around.

There does not appear to have been any increase in summering EVENING GROSBREAKS, and no new nests have been found. Sandra Myers from Mooseland Road reports a pair there in May and Roy Blakeburn in Cape Breton had 3-4 around his place all summer. Wandering flocks began to be noticed by the middle of October, and are now commonly seen and widespread. Starting Oct. 21 we have reports for almost every day to Nov. 30 (and on). By the 22nd some had settled to feeders ( according to Gillian and Jim Elliott, Little Salmon River Drive). Flock sizes range from 6 (TPH at Wilnot) through 25 (the Hamiltons at Pubnico) to over 200 (Roland Chiasson at Antigonish - the woodlot).

MC Cheesman of Sandy Bottom Lake, Anna. Co. writes "the PURPLE FINCH, absent last winter, decided to stay all summer, delighting us with its song. At least five pairs must be nesting in the area and all come to feed still (September)". Most people like to have Purple Finches around and were able to enjoy them, in moderation, this summer. Other nests reported were at Marriott's Cove, Eel Brook and Crescent Beach, at which last place Shirley Cohrs found "young out of nest screaming for food, June 12". They were reported as "fairly common" at Mooseland Road, "normal" at Brier mist nets, and "five sightings" in Cape Breton. KNK reported "none seen this fall - a poor year" at New Ross. At Eel Brook we saw them through their moult, painful on both sides (how they scratched and how awful they looked) after which they left the feeder area, but could be encountered in fine feather - 1 to 10 maybe - by July 27 and on most late summer and fall field trips after that. At St. Esprit a male Purple Finch appeared Sept. 26 "a first for us here" (Meyerowitz family); one,

Oct. 29 with "very dull coloring" was apparently a newcomer at Antigonish woodlot (RDC) and Thelma Hawkins in Wilmot said "began having the odd one around late in October, and on Nov. 1 had 3, a male and two females" (or imm). Two showed up in Paradise Oct. 6, 2-4 at Pubnico Sept. 30-Oct. 21, but the only suggestion of a migratory movement were the birds banded at Brier (how many?) and the 5, Oct. 21-22 on Bon Portage I. (JW et al).

Our resident PINE GROSBREAK does not belong properly in this report, except to say that it appears to have returned to normal numbers after the "explosion" of last fall. We have had about a dozen reports, only half of them involving more than one bird. There was an aggregation "many", feeding along a roadside at Three Fathom Harbour Aug. 10 (Sandra Myers); around 10, Sept. 30 at Boutillier's Point, noted by David Christie who was visiting here at that time. Then, oddly, three reports came all for Nov. 19 of 3+ Pine Grosbeaks at Antigonish (SPF), 4 at Paradise (J&BM) and 8 at W. Pubnico (DJJ'E). Since birds either do not know the rules or do not abide by them, one (imm.) Pine Grosbeak found its way to Cape Sable Nov. 20, seen by Sid Smith.

A very early COMMON REDPOLL was present on Seal I. from Oct. 11 to 13, noted there by Bruce Mactavish.

"My last year's records show that we had a lot of PINE SISKINS here until June 23, and I noted fluffy babies on June 2 and 9. Since they left the only one I've seen was one on June 17 this year (1978) and not near here" (TFM at Wilmot). From the other 12 reports received it is evident that Siskins, though not abundant, are universally present and even common in some localities. The only flocks of any size reported this year are from Bible Hill, Truro "from mid-September to October a flock (10-12) began to build up - all left by the end of October" (EER); 6, Oct. 14 at Green Bay (JL&JSC); Antigonish Harbour, 10+ Nov. 26 (RDC); Martinique Beach, 6, Oct. 17 and Dartmouth, 20, Nov. 13 (ECra). There were two Siskins on Bon Portage Oct. 12 - but maybe they live there!

The AMERICAN GOLDFINCH became very obvious during August, "common to abundant" in most regions, 8 reports from Cape Breton, 24 from the rest of the province. Flocks were 8-20 birds, "young were still coaxing adults for food Sept. 23" at Wilmot, but "males well on their way to winter plumage" on the same date at New Ross suggests a long breeding season. Many of these finches leave us in the fall - at Brier I. they were normal this year in migration; at Seal I. a small flock occurred Sept. 26-27 (30 birds the 26th dropped to 15 next day, counted by the NSBS party there), but no remarkable concentrations have been reported. Although fewer in number flocks of Goldfinches are still (early Dec.) flying overhead, calling as they go and some, in drab winter plumage, have settled at feeders.

RED CROSSBILLS were plentiful last year but numbers have dwindled in favor of the WHITE-WINGED variety which have steadily increased in number, present in flocks with the Reds, and latterly by themselves. Reports of Reds are now of singles or pairs July through October and only eight have been received. Ruth Hebb, who reported "great quantities" of Reds last year saw only four, June-July this year. Then on July 20 a flock of 12-15 Whitewings appeared. Eric Mills saw four Red Crossbills July 2 at Indian Pt., St. Margaret's Bay and added "all crossbills I saw after this were part of the huge influx of Whitewings". The deluge invaded the Broad-Cove-Green-Bay area in July - flocks of up to 50 "singing hysterically, flying from tree to tree", still present Aug. 5 but petered out by October, according to JSC. The presence of these birds noticeably in coastal areas is doubtless due to the heavy crop of cones in the White Spruces this year (these being our "coastal" species of spruce). Whitewings spilled over onto Brier I., Seal I. and Cape Sable (not many spruces there):

200+ on Brier Nov. 13 (SIT), "present in small flocks on Seal Oct. 2-20, normally rare here" (BDM), and one male Nov. 4 on Cape Sable "unexpected visitor, but well seen, eating on a kelp bank with an Ovenbird, Pipits, etc." (S&BJS). In Yarmouth County the cone crop is far from decimated and the White-winged Crossbills are still around, in small companies, to be heard and seen flying about and swooping into tree-tops, from Pubnico, west to Belleville and on up the Quinan Road.

#### SPARROWS, LONGSPURS, SNOW BUNTINGS

There were 3 RUFUS-SIDED TOWHEES around this fall, a female Sept. 6 on Sable I. seen by James and Mary McLaren; an adult male Oct. 13 in an old orchard at APBS (SIT) and another adult male Oct. 23 at River Philip at the Barrow feeder, watched there by Bill and Eleanor Barrow and Stuart Tingley.

From Sable I. Ian McLaren reported "Sparrows had only a fair-to-middling year with an estimated 5000 birds at the end of the summer in the dunes, much below estimates in earlier years". Only 3 birds were seen outside of Sable, supposedly in migration - one Oct. 19 and 2, Nov. 4, all at Cape Sable (SS). This is the "IPSWICH SPARROW".

Reports on the nominate race, the SAVANNAH SPARROW, vary. Sara MacLean says "as usual" in Cape Breton; Jim Wolford et al. counted 50+ Oct. 1 in the Canning area (5+ later, Oct. 21-22, netted on Bon Portage); at Cape Sable the Smiths had 40-50 present all summer, many nesting; two other reports are of diminished numbers, from Wilmot and Yarmouth, very noticeably down from previous years (TPH, MWH, PRD, CRKA). And there were just the six reports.

A recent acquisition, the GRASSHOPPER SPARROW seems to be passing this way oftener in the fall, 15 sightings this year: 1, Oct. 20 at Sable (IAM); one, netted Oct. 21 at Bon Portage (JW et al) and 13, Oct. 8-18 at Seal (5 seen Oct. 16) reported by Bruce Mactavish and Eric Mills.

Two individuals of another rare species, a new one for us, were seen and well described - the HENSLOW'S SPARROW, one immature July 30-Aug. 3 on Cape Sable (Sid and Betty June, books in hand, had ample opportunity to examine this little stranger which repeatedly perched up on a grass blade and was quite unperturbed by the attention it was getting. A photograph was taken). The other Henslow's Sparrow may have been an adult male since Bruce Mactavish who saw it briefly on Seal I. Oct. 9, mentioned "a conspicuous green face". Further descriptions as given may be had upon request.

Our SHARP-TAILED SPARROW, sometimes neglected, received 14 reports this fall, of 28-30 individuals which is very encouraging. The majority of reports came from the Cohrs, from the Cherry-Hill-Petite-Riviere-Crescent-Beach areas, but others were from Antigonish Harbour (RDC), Lr. W. Pubnico (DJD'E&RSD'E), Surette's I. (PRD) and Sunday Pt., Yarmouth Harbour (MWH).

There are only summer records of the VESPER SPARROW, 1, July 31 at Lr.W.Pubnico (DJD'E) and 1, Aug. 5, Forchu area, C.B., NSBS Field Party. Hedley Hopkins reported them present in the Sydney area Aug.-Sept. (SM).

Another rare bird, an irregular stray, the LARK SPARROW put in an appearance this year, 1, imm. Aug. 15 seen at Crescent Beach (JSC); 1, Sept. 8 photographed at Sable by IAM, and 1, Sept. 24 at Seal (ELM, Andrew Clarke and John Kearney).

There is no shortage of the DARK-EYED JUNCO, universally called "common" throughout the summer and conspicuous at migration. Roadside flocks were observed from Aug. 6- one of 12 individuals at Eel Brook, (PRD) through to Nov. 3, one of 12 again at Fenwick, Cumb. Co. (EEC). "Waves" could scarcely be distinguished there were so many, but the number built up in October, noted Oct. 4-5, 11-12, 18-20, 23 and 27 in flocks of 15-30 birds seen simultaneously at several localities. WEW called it "a wonderful fall for Juncos", having counted 15, Oct. 5 at Round Hill, "scores" Oct. 12 at W. Paradise, then at Round Hill 30+ Oct. 18, 15-20 Oct. 23, 30-40 Oct. 30 and 6, Nov. 7. During November Juncos appeared at feeders, those still regular at Eel Brook numbering 10-12, and probably here to stay. One partial albino Junco deserves mention: at Sandy Bottom Lake, Oct. 23-25, shape, markings and mannerisms all those of a Junco, including white outer tail feathers, but its coloring was buffy and goldish in place of gray and white. Was with the other Juncos and last seen Nov. 25 (MPSB).

Already the TREE SPARROW has appeared, seen first at Sydney as might be expected, in early September by HH; first on the mainland 1, Oct. 22 at Conrad's Beach (IAM), then five November sightings: 1, Nov. 5 at Bissett Road, Halifax County (Chris Cohrs); 5, Nov. 15 at Antigonish Harbour (RDC) and 5, Nov. 15 also at Argyle Head (CRKA); 1, Nov. 27 came to feeder with Juncos at Eel Brook (PRD); 1, Nov. 27-28 was "feeding around house at W. Springhill" (MPSBrown) and 1, Nov. 27 arrived at Pictou (E. Holdway).

Twenty reports of the CHIPPING SPARROW are 9 in September, 7 in October and 1 in November (the others during the summer). Most reports represented flocks of 5-20 Chippies, flying up from the roadsides at intervals along the way; but in spite of the good number of reports the impression was that there were half as many of these birds around as usual - "usual" referring to the past three years, at least in SW Nova Scotia. ELM at Seal I. counted 15 Chipping Sparrows Sept. 23, 3 on the 24th; the Morse party on Seal Sept. 26 found 4 Chipping Sparrows that day, 18-20 the next; only 1 was netted on Bon Portage Oct. 21-22 (JW) and last report was of 1, Nov. 9 at Lr. W. Pubnico (DKd'E).

Our next three in this group are rare ones, especially the CLAY-COLORED SPARROW, although it is seen more often in the east of late years. We had only one reported, Oct. 7 on Seal I., vouched for by ELM and IAM.

The FIELD SPARROW is regular here in fall, in very small numbers, and has wintered. Sara MacLean writes simply "two reports" from Cape Breton, but two others give details: 1, Oct. 29 at Cape Sable, well seen and described by S&BJS; and 1, Oct. 30-Nov.? at Lake Annis, Yar. Co., at the A. Neals', seen and well described by D.B.Kirk, who reported it to us.

The "splinter migration" of the WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW straggled through from Sept. 19 to the end of October, 25 birds seen; at Sable I. ("around 12 each day Sept. 19 to Oct. 20" reported by A. Richard may mean 12 or many more, no way of telling); 3, Sept. 23 at Round Hill (WEW); 1, Sept. 26-28 at Seal I. (Morse party); 3, Oct. 4 and 1, Oct. 31 at Cape Sable (BJS); 1, Oct. 7 at Yarmouth North reported by MAN to MWH; 1 imm. Oct. 12 at W. Pubnico (DJd'E); many at Seal I. Oct. 2-20, highest one-day count, Oct. 18, 70+ birds, including one of the western subspecies 'gambelii'; 1, mist-netted Oct. 21 on Bon Portage and 1, imm. Yarmouth South at feeder at Van Killan's since Nov. 19, still there (early December).



The Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) for 1977-1978 as compiled and sent to us by A.J.Erskine showed that of the number of comparable routes on which it was found the WHITE-THROATED SPARROW decreased on 23 of them, increased on 10. Our reports of Whitethroats are conflicting: called "as usual" in Cape Breton, "Many migrating Sept. 15 to 25 passing continually "(SM). At Mooseland Lake, Wendie Tay called them "very common, and remained so all summer"; at Wine Harbour, only one (imm.) Whitethroat was reported, Sept. 5-15 (G.MacLeod); similarly in Yarmouth town, only one is reported, for Oct. 2 (MWH); at Sandy Bottom Lake M.C.Cheesman wrote "a notable lack of Whitethroats this year - none at all coming to feed and only a few heard in the woods"; and we have 1, Nov. 3, 2, Nov. 4, and only reports from Antigonish (SPF&RDC). In Yarmouth County CRK Allen noted a flock of 12+ on Surette's I. Nov. 25 and at W.Pubnico Ted D'Eon "had a dozen or so every day for the past two months (October and November) in the backyard. Last year about a dozen stayed all winter near the feeder. I believe they will do the same this year". In the Valley, WEWhitehead counted 17 Whitethroats on Sept. 29 at Round Hill, Thelma Hawkins had about a dozen late October for around two weeks, which then left with the Juncos, over the Nov. 7 weekend - at Wilmot. Many of these sparrows were seen in migration, from the 6, Sept. 30 at Cape Sable to relatively large numbers "hopping about the lawns in Bedford in October gone after the middle of the month" (KNK); and the many seen in the enormous mass migration Oct. 22 at Russell Lake by JL&JSC, and so graphically described by FLLavender.

The FOX SPARROW appeared in small numbers, 1-3 in most places and only about two dozen in all, seen this fall: 3, at St. Esprit Aug. 18, the rest in October from the 17th simultaneously at Antigonish and Cape Sable, to early November simultaneously at Amherst and West Pubnico, other places all in Halifax County or the Valley: Russell Lake, Wolfville Ridge, Wilmot, Paradise, Sandy Bottom Lake - some of these birds favoring us with song and most staying into the first week of November.

The LINCOLN'S SPARROW was seen only in Cape Breton (3 reports) this fall (SM) and on Seal I. 1, Aug. 29, 6, Sept. 23 by ELM. It might be added that the BBS for '77-'78 showed for the Lincoln's Sparrow a decrease on 13, increase on 4 of the comparable routes.

Eleven reports of the SWAMP SPARROW is better than average, but represents less than 20 birds. Quite naturally it was oftenest heard in boggy areas, e.g. Mooseland Road, McGowan's Pond, Windsor, and almost universal in Yarmouth County. It was noticed in migration Oct. 21-22 when two were netted at Bon Portage.

Most reporters mentioned the SONG SPARROW as present in normal numbers this year - "common" or "as usual". There seemed to be no noticeable decline although the BBS's for '77-'78 showed a decrease on 21, increase on 10 comparable routes (with 2 others no change). Distribution was universal and migrating flocks noted from Sept. 1 through October, notably 20+ Sept. 18 at Round Hill (WEW); "small flock passing through Sept. 23" at Cape Sable (SS); "large movement through here" at Wilmot Oct. 4 (TFH); "50+ Oct. 7 in a big flock along a fence row of shrubs - many of them singing loudly" (JW); "common" on Bon Portage Oct. 21-22 and (maybe) last date seen Nov. 19, Antigonish Harbour (RDC).

The next two species usher in the winter season, and we have had a surprising number of reports of the first one, the LAPLAND LONGSPUR. This obviously came here first on Sept. 22. On that date Edgar and Vernita Hamilton saw one at West Pubnico and one other was spotted on Cherry Hill Beach by ELM and Andrew Clarke. Then on Sept. 30, simultaneously 9 were seen, 6 at Mathews Lake by GDF and 3 in a salt marsh at Northport, Cumb. Co. by the NBBS Field Party there;



2, were at Cherry Hill Oct. 8 (SJF) and 10 on Long I., Kings Co. Oct. 22 (EL&Anne HM); finally 4, Oct. 29 at Cape Sable, 2 there Nov. 4 (S&BJS).

From Sept. 23 (100+ seen at Glace Bay) to Nov. 20 (13 seen at Markland, Yarmouth) we have had thirty reports of the SNOW BUNTING, numbering together over a thousand individuals. Reports from Cape Breton were from Glace Bay, Lingan (CMacd) and Boularderie (RBF). On the mainland most flocks were coastwise, the two exceptions being a Nov. 5 flock at Italy Cross, Lunenburg Co., 15-18 birds seen by TPH, and a flock of 50+ Nov. 13 at Grand Pre Dyke (BLF). Snow Buntings are easy to see and easy to count, but even so, we have had a good turn-out this year, and snow or no snow were happy to see them.

PRD Ed.

#### OPERATION BIRD SEED



Many thanks to Halifax Seed Ltd. who generously offered a substantial reduction in the price of 50-lb. bags of Sunflower seeds to NSBS members. Over two tons was ordered in bulk and distributed to the buyers.

## BARRED OWLS AT MEANDER

In the summer of 1974, I purchased a property of about eight acres on the Meander River, near Brooklyn, Hants County. The Meander rises behind Mount Uniacke, and, with the Herbert River, joins the St. Croix about a mile before it flows into the Avon below Windsor. The Meander is tidal less than a mile downstream from us. My place, which we call "Meander", is adjacent to the river where Highway 215 crosses it. The property is shaped by the existing north bank of the river, and the old riverbed to the north of that. It is heavily treed, mostly with hardwoods, but with several pines, firs and spruce, together with fruit and berry-bearing trees. About three acres is open grassland used as pasture, paddock or garden.

There are plenty of birds about, including breeders, transients, visitors and migrants. My list of those seen on or near "Meander" ranges from Great Blue Heron to Snow Bunting, and includes 78 species, of which I believe 29 to breed here. Another 20 species have been seen regularly in the general area. From late October to early April, I put out sunflower seeds, suet chunks, and drilled logs filled with the usual splendid mixture. In the appropriate seasons we have had Chimney Swifts raising young in our living-room chimney, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks doing the same across the river (but not in a chimney!). We are regularly visited by Pileated Woodpeckers in early autumn, and the Pheasant must know I'm not a gunner from their tameness in feeding in the garden shrubbery. Our glassed-in verandah has been broken into by Evening Grosbeaks, who lost their way, a Sharp-shinned Hawk who hadn't, (he was trying to pick off an Evening Grosbeak and didn't pull out in time!) and we have dined off a Ruffed Grouse who lost his head for a moment (and more permanently, later) and flew too straight a line.

Among the many birds that I have seen at "Meander", the show-piece must be our regular family of Barred Owls who have nested in the same place for the years 1975-1978, and raised young in each year except 1977, to my certain knowledge.

The only owls I had ever seen before were a Snowy, the odd Great Horned, some Short-eared and a few Barn Owls, the latter in England. I was aware of owls in the vicinity of "Meander" in the autumn of 1974, but it wasn't until 25 April, 1975, that it was very apparent that we had two on the property, and near the house. By 30 April, I had identified them by their distinctive eight-hoot call, and, at dusk that day, by a sighting of two in a tree near the house. The markings were distinct and the size differential between the two significant enough to indicate a male and a female Barred Owl.

The nest site is in an old, gnarled maple tree. It is over 60 feet high, about 16 feet around the base, and has many large, dead branches, some broken off. It is in one of these stubs, 5 feet high and a foot across, that the owls nest. The entrance is at the top of the stub, is oval in shape, probably a foot vertically and 7 inches across. I do not know how deep the nest-hole is, but its entrance is about 45 feet up and plainly visible in all stages of foliage. I have never been up the tree, and would enjoy a few hours in the bucket of one of the Power Corporation's cherry-pickers when the birds are in residence!

All through May and early June, in 1975, adult owls were evident, by sight and sound, in daylight and dark, using the nest-hole. The most obvious sound evidence always comes at night, at any time between sunset and sunrise. It is odds-on that the caterwauling, yelping, hooting, miaouing - whatever - can be heard by whoever is awake, for whatever reason, at any hour in the night! Daylight action is generally furtive and quiet, although the eight-hoot call is used significantly. Any movement by an owl towards the nest-hole is conducted

with many diversions to other trees. Sometimes these daylight returns occasion the attention of other birds in the vicinity. Chickadees, Nuthatches, Robins, Blue Jays and even Evening Grosbeaks will gang up around the nest-hole in a noisy endeavour to harass and prevent normal course! More in hope than anger, I'm afraid, as the owls always make it back. I only noticed this type of harassment in the big maple tree, and then only in the early evening, when there appeared to be an owl effort to settle down for the night. Equally obvious, but more noisy, are the efforts of crows when one of them discovers a resting adult owl during the day, perhaps several trees away from home or even across the river. One or two crows quickly set up such a racket that more come and join in. I have counted more than 30 crows in the same tree as an adult Barred Owl who was trying to be "cool" to the many aggressive, noisy swoops by the crows. Never, however, did an owl fail to escape and make it to the nest-hole if it wanted to. After dark, all harassment appears to stop. Then the owls start to make the noise, as food is brought or the watches changed.

Eventually, about mid-June, the fledglings will appear at the nest-hole. They can only be described as different - rather tatty and furry, with eyes already accentuated by eye-rings, an outsize beak, and the beginnings of the barred and streaked field marks. I have never heard any noise from them at this stage, but that could be the fault of my ears, which only respond to the more overt bird noises. The young sit in the nest-hole, or droop over its edge, and follow any movement they observe whether by a human, a horse or a pussy cat. No matter how close I ever got to the base of their tree, if I looked up, there was always a big pair of eyes staring straight at me.

The young will stay visible in the nest-hole for some hours at a time, entertaining itself by scratching, stretching, a bit of preening and some attempts at wing flapping. Much of the time a youngster occupies the nest-hole, an adult will probably be in the vicinity, either resting, deeply hidden near the trunk of a conifer, or in plain un-blinking view on the dead branch of an old willow. This on-watch time seems to be equally divided between mother and father, but I believe mother normally has the first night-time watch. (I believe the eight-hoot call of the male to be different, being much shorter, more abrupt, and not as draggy on the last hoot as the female's, and it has been this, to a large extent, with appropriate confirming size observations, that has led me to presume I have learned their family habits to this extent. This may be all rubbish, but I'm happy with it!)

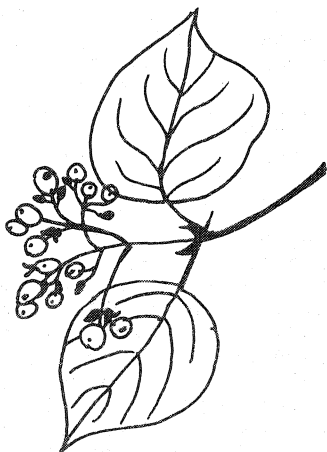
After about a week of being intermittently visible at the nest site, the young leave the nest. I have seen two "first-day-abroad" results. The more common is to observe one day the young on another branch of the nest tree, followed by 5 to 7 days of progressive movement from tree to tree, perhaps 75 to 100 feet a day away from the home tree, up-river to deeper woods. This year, however, late one afternoon we discovered the fledgling flopping about on the ground in the stable paddock. This was probably not by design, but it certainly give mother owl a chance to display her leadership skills, as she encouraged the youngster to fly and make his way to tall timber by dark. The persistence of the youngster was notable. Any attempt by us to get closer, or even think of helping, was met by much noisy and physical aggression by the adult.

Generally, by the last days of June/first days of July, owls cease to be visible, or at least around the house. Their calls may still be heard, but from a distance. I have sight records for August, though, and I believe that the adults bring the youngsters back to look over the property for future reference. On 6 August, 1976, after dark, I observed an adult and two juveniles sitting together on a branch of an old pine tree near the barn. They had attracted my attention by the racket they were making, and when I illuminated them with

a flashlight, they didn't show all that much concern, and stayed around a while longer.

I have seen or heard a Barred Owl in each month of the year, but not necessarily in the same year, and assume they stay in the area. I would welcome any member of the Bird Society for a visit at any time although April to July is obviously better. Photography would appear to be easy, as the slant range to the nest-hole need not be more than 60 or 70 feet. Hopefully anyone who comes will observe more than I have and help fill my information gaps. Possibly a phone call to 757-2756 might save an unnecessary trip, if there is no obvious activity to report, but please don't delay a visit just because you haven't phoned.

- Ian Macpherson



#### RARE KIRTLAND'S WARBLER IDENTIFIED IN QUEBEC

A Kirtland's Warbler, one of North America's rare and endangered bird species, was netted recently in the Gatineau Valley in order to read its band number and released unharmed. The Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada reports that this is the first confirmed record of a Kirtland's Warbler in Quebec.

Michigan is the only known nesting ground for the Kirtland's Warbler, which migrates to and from the Bahamas. The Quebec capture is the first known case of a Michigan-born bird singing on territory outside of that state. This suggests that the species may not be as restricted in its choice of breeding sites as has been believed so far.

BOOK REVIEW

Title: A Guide to North American Bird Clubs.

Author: Jon E. Rickert, Sr.

Publisher: Avian Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 310, Elizabethtown, Kentucky, 42701.

Price: \$15.00 postpaid, American funds.

Planning a winter trip? Next summer's vacation? Are you an expert birder, an experienced birder or a novice birder? Here is the best sourcebook (other than the Field Guide) available and travelling birders will no doubt find it invaluable. Listed in this guide are over 835 bird clubs found in the United States, Canada and other North American nations, including Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and as far south as the Panama.

Jon Rickert is the first person to undertake such a publication. Over ninety-five percent of his contacts were made by direct telephone interviews so that the 835 bird clubs listed he rightly calls "pure" bird clubs. He has compiled a list of local birding contacts with telephone numbers. Clubs or organizations listed include details on when and where meetings take place; information on any publications of the club; and field trips held in the area. In some cases a telephone number is given for recorded rare bird alert messages!

The listings of the clubs (club seems to be the author's favourite term applied to the bird organization or society) divides the book into four parts:

- (1) National Organizations,
- (2) U.S.A.,
- (3) Canada,
- (4) Other North American nations.

Within each part, the listings are arranged alphabetically by state or province and the clubs are listed within the state/province alphabetically. Easy to use! For further easy reference the descriptions of the clubs are divided into these headings following the names and addresses of contacts: Birding Report, Publications, Field Trips, and Meetings.

For example: Nova Scotia comes alphabetically in the listings for Canada. An outline map of N.S. shows the location by number of the three clubs (societies): 1. Halifax, Nova Scotia Bird Society; 2. Sydney/Glace Bay, Cape Breton Branch - NSBS; 3. Wolfville, Blomidon Naturalists Society. Then follows the address of contacts and the information under the four headings. Finger-tip information - and accurate! And it will not be outdated for some time either. Mr. Rickert has made every effort to avoid outdated by giving locations of a museum, library or local university should the names of contacts given not be available in two or three years.

Another feature that should be a commonsense part of every birder but too often is overlooked, is the author's listing of "A Few Reminders" - six in all - beginning with Do Not Telephone Anybody Before 8:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. THEIR time; and finishing with a reminder to write a "thank-you" letter.

This is a hardcover book with close to 600 pages in it but the format, the print, and especially the content make it an attractive, easy to use, and almost indispensable guide for the traveller. This book may be borrowed from the Nova Scotia Bird Society, c/o Nova Scotia Museum. It will be necessary to charge a rental fee of \$1.00 to cover postage.

It will be of interest to readers of this review to learn that Jon Rickert has been a member of the Nova Scotia Bird Society for the past four years.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor, NSBS Newsletter

As usual, I had a busy summer and fall. I studied White-throated Sparrows near Newcastle, N.B., from 1 May-25 July, then banded waterfowl in the Amherst area until 2 September when I took off for 2 weeks in the arctic, closing the C.W.S. field camp on Prince Leopold Island. I took the long way home and spent the last 2 weeks of September birding in southern B.C. That was a great experience, my first trip to the west, and finally my North American 'list' surpassed the magic 500 mark. My sights are now set on 600. Returning to Sackville in late September long enough to do a laundry, I rushed off to my home away from home, Seal Island, where Bruce Mactavish and I spent the first 10 days of October. I had to return to work, but Bruce stayed on for a couple of weeks. Bruce has informed me that he sent you our Seal Island observations so I have not repeated them in my report.

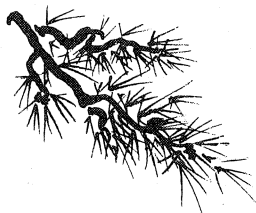
It was a great fall for shorebirds, especially at APBS and at the Eddy marsh near Amherst. Both areas were drained for a variety of reasons. (Eddy was drained partially in order to raise water levels in another section of the marsh to facilitate wild rice harvesting in August; one impoundment at APBS was drained for the sole purpose of providing habitat for shorebirds as C.W.S. management personnel realize the potential of marshes to benefit birds other than ducks; another larger impoundment at APBS was drained for most of the fall in order to allow heavy equipment to clear out choking vegetation and clogged drainage ditches) and shorebirds responded immediately to available feeding and roosting sites.

The Gray Jay phenomenon mentioned in my report was one of the fall highlights for me. I've never seen Gray Jays so conspicuous in my seven years of birding.

As winter sets in (we had 5" of snow last night) I anxiously await the appearance of the first Snowy Owls. Snowies have been virtually absent from the Tantramar marshes during the past two winters. Apparently many Snowies have recently appeared in Southern Ontario and Quebec suggesting a better flight this winter so I'm expecting at least a few.

Wild food seems to be in abundance, especially apples and berries, and the cone crop would seem to be slightly above normal. Despite the predicted cold winter ahead, I'm hoping for a few more lingering species on CBC's than we've seen in the last couple of years.

Stuart I. Tingley



Editor, NSBS Newsletter.

During the Annual General Meeting on December 2 one of our members asked if the Society had a policy on collecting birds. I am sure that it does not, so I would like to begin a debate on this subject based on my observations and thoughts in Nova Scotian surroundings during the past eleven years.

The first important factor to consider is that of local context. There is a frontier mentality about the use of natural resources in this Province and most people have very little idea of the conservation and ethical problems that hunting and other resource uses have engendered for many years on the rest of the continent. Hunting comes naturally in Nova Scotia, is widely practised, and goes on in and out of season with varying intensity from area to area. There is a serious problem of conservation and enforcement, but more important there is the problem of awakening many Nova Scotians (including some provincial civil servants and politicians) to the possibility that non-exploitive use of natural resources makes any sense at all. That responsibility falls partly upon the local naturalist and birdwatching fraternity.

Now to take up the issue of collecting birds. There are, in my opinion, two good reasons for collecting: 1) to establish or enlarge scientific collections that are actively used to solve problems of biogeography, speciation or variation in populations; 2) to allow the identification of species or races of some very similar birds that cannot readily be distinguished in the field and that occur often enough to be significant members of the Nova Scotian avifauna.

In this day of fine telephoto lenses and fast colour film, collecting birds is an anachronism for the bird lister. Careful field notes and good photographs will almost always be satisfactory to document new species for the Nova Scotian list. Even in cases of difficulty, how much does it really matter that, for example, Acadian Flycatcher is a hypothetical species identified on field characteristics rather than a corpse in a tray somewhere? Opinions may vary on that question, but I prefer the hypothetical, based on field skills and knowledge of the literature, to certainty based on the shotgun. To collectors, let me say that I too have collected rarities but I have given it up as outdated, almost always unnecessary, and often socially harmful.

This brings me back to the subject I started with. In the Nova Scotian situation, non-exploitive birding is a positive benefit in establishing ecological consciousness whereas collecting looks like a continuation of the dismal practices that are so common throughout the Province. In my opinion collectors should re-examine their motives and their effect on the community.

Probably our questioner is getting more in my answer than he asked for. I hope members of the Society will take the trouble to reply to my manifesto.

Eric L. Mills

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

JUNE 3 - CAPE BRETON - BROWN'S LAKE AND GRAND LAKE AREA

We met on an overcast morning but it was soon sunny and warm as we walked in to Brown's Lake. We later drove in to Grand Lake. We sighted 38 species of birds, but observed plants, trees, etc., as well. Leader was H. Hopkins and others, Graham Fraser, Sara MacLean, Edie MacLeod, Winnie and Eldon Meikle, and Bertha Hopkins.

Bertha Hopkins.

JUNE 10 - YARMOUTH COUNTY

The Yarmouth County Field Trip began bright and early as the party of about twenty people left the CNR Station in Yarmouth town shortly after 7:30 on June 10th. The first route was to Cape Forchu at the harbor's mouth with stops at Markland and the Bar; thence down the eastern shore of the harbor to Sunday Point and Chebogue in a successful search for Sharp-tailed Sparrows.

The afternoon was devoted to the back country: Ellenwood Provincial Park, Carleton, a woods walk through the Y. Camp territory and down the Kelley Road to Reynard's Lake where the trip officially ended. The weather was cool, but sunny and windless.

It was past the season of rarities and there were no startling finds, but birds were cooperative, visibility excellent - foliage not yet lush enough to hide the warblers.

The total list numbered 60. A few beginners had their first really satisfactory looks at Sharp-tailed Sparrows, Ovenbirds and Black-throated Blue Warblers; other people found several lifers for their lists.

All in all an unexciting but quite satisfactory day.

CRK Allen

JUNE 24 - CAPE BRETON - BIRD ISLANDS

It was a grand day for a trip around the Bird Islands but the heavy rain in the morning kept some who intended to come at home. The twelve who arrived really enjoyed the good view of Puffins, Razor-billed Auks, Guillemots, Common Eiders, Cormorants, etc. We saw 28 species on the trip. We enjoyed a lovely dinner at Mountain View Lodge prepared by Mrs. Van Schaick. Our leader was H. Hopkins and among the observers were Roger and Patricia Pocklington and children, M. LeRoy and son, and Gordon Maish.

Bertha Hopkins

JULY 15 - CAPE BRETON - BADDECK AREA

July 15th, 1978, was a perfect day for a field trip. It was clear, hot (90°F.) at noon, with a light southwest wind. Seventeen people met at the Provincial Building in Baddeck. We were gathered from a good many locations, Glace Bay, Sydney and Baddeck, Halifax, and Schenectady, N.Y., by way of Lime Hill, N.S. Our leader, Lloyd Stone of Baddeck, first took us to a narrow dirt road a few miles out of the village.

By mid-July the leaves are thick, but birds must cross open spaces, and this narrow road provided an ideal spot for watching



them at their morning chores. The day was so clear that a bird on the tip of a dead spruce some way off the road appeared to be a good size. One or two of us said "Shrike!" Someone less hopeful thought Robin, and when Graham Fraser got his telescope unlimbered, the plain truth was a Whitethroat, magnified against the blue. Whoever thought that Whitethroats disliked treetops? Not so for that character, at any rate. It was in that area that we found a pair of Cowbirds, and a pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

Next we drove by back roads to the end of a narrow lane where we left the cars. An uphill walk through open hayfields took us to forest, gradually thickening, and eventually ending in a rocky scramble, with a two-log bridge high over a busy brook. More rock climbing brought us out at lovely Uisge Ban Falls, where we gladly sat for a while, some of the party cooling their feet in the stream, while a few hardy souls climbed a ladder to the top of the first fall. Uisge Ban falls in two stages, the upper one being the higher. There was not a great deal of water coming over that day, but enough to justify its name - White Water.

Except in the deepest woodland, many voices were heard, and Marjorie Foote proved invaluable with her identifications - Ovenbird, Swainson's Thrush, various warblers.

During our lunch break at Baddeck River an immature Bald Eagle was coasting about, and when a hard-working Osprey came by clasping a perch, the young bandit tried his best to rob it. The Osprey with some effort was able to keep above the Eagle, at least as long as we were able to see them.

We thought 45 species, ranging from Common Loon to Song Sparrow, not a bad day's viewing for mid-July.

Sara MacLean

#### JULY 29 - LUNENBURG COUNTY

Twenty-five enthusiastic shorebird addicts gathered at Petite Riviere, Lun. Co., at 8:30 on the most perfect summer day 1978 had produced so far. The trip began at Risser's Beach boardwalk where, as the tide receded, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Semipalmated Sandpipers and Willets arrived on the mudflats. Sharp-tailed Sparrows, nesting nearby, were seen at close quarters; lifers for some of the party. Next stop was Crescent Beach where Short-billed Dowitchers, Least Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstones, Spotted Sandpipers, Sanderlings and a pair of Red Knots were added to the list. Assorted "dickybirds" were in evidence at the top end of the beach, and everyone had a good view of several White-winged Crossbills singing in the trees.

After a leisurely lunch at Risser's Provincial Park, the party proceeded to Cherry Hill Beach with a couple of stops along the way where Snipe, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird and Cliff Swallow were seen. Not everyone made it all the way to the top of Cherry Hill and back, but those who did were well rewarded with Piping Plover, eleven Bonaparte Gulls and two Caspian Terns, the latter being the real "birds of the trip", well seen both flying and standing on the rocks. The white sand, blue sky and sea and blazing sunshine added much to the pleasure of seeing the shorebirds back once more.

J. S. Cohrs

AUGUST 5 - CAPE BRETON

August 5th was a beautiful day and we had a grand time as we made various stops and drove from Marion Bridge to Gabarous, Belfry Beach, Fourchu, Fuller's Bridge and L'Archeveque. We saw 78 species in all, including Eagles, Ospreys, Hooded Mergansers and a Dovekie.

Our leader was Francis MacKinnon and other observers were Marjorie and William Foote, Winnie and Eldon Meikle, Pauline MacKinnon, Otis Cossitt, Bertha and Hedley Hopkins.

Bertha Hopkins

SEPTEMBER 23 - CHETICAMP ISLAND - CAPE BRETON

A traditional trip, but very fascinating (birds and people). Saturday morning, 8 o'clock, 11 members from Glace Bay-Sydney, Cheticamp and Halifax-Dartmouth areas met at Pont du Bras (Armbridge) located at the southwest entrance of Cheticamp.

It was the opening of the Indian Summer, sunny and warm (nearly 20°C); there was not a cloud in the sky, nor a breeze. Someone could hear a bird flying and needed to be careful not to count birds twice while reflecting in the waters.

Between 8:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M., we walked 4 miles, drove 8 and spent an hour on the ocean behind Cheticamp Island. The habitats visited were the same as last year, a salt water marsh, a spruce forest, sand bars, and dunes, the bay of Cheticamp and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. We counted 48 species for a total of more than 600 individuals. By order of quantity we had, 350 gulls (mainly Black-backed and Herrings), more than 100 immature Yellow-rumped Warblers, 70 shore birds (50 Semipalmated Plovers, 10 Golden Plovers, 10 Greater Yellowlegs), 25 Great Blue Herons, 20 Black Ducks, 10 Cormorants. All other species were under 5 in number, among which 1 Bald Eagle, 2 Fox Sparrows, 4 Water Pipits, etc...

In comparing our observations with the previous 3 years (75-76-77) we noticed: - that shore birds were not in so great number this year, it is easily explained by stormy weather of September, simply the birds did not stop.

The great number of gulls on Cheticamp Beach is closely related to the presence of a dead fin whale nearby.

The Yellow-rumped Warblers have never been so plentiful, with millions of budworms around it is not surprising.

Some 4 Pectoral Sandpipers were seen feeding on the Cheticamp Island headland called "LaPointe". The relation is simple: The site is regularly visited by local fisherman where they come and clean their nets.

The Great Blue Herons, about 20 were seen perched on spruce trees, very unusual in the area. Were they making up any plans for a new colony? The only known colony in the area is Margaree Island, which is about 15 miles in a straight line from Cheticamp Island.

All who attended were enthusiastic and went back home very happy. Many have added a new species to their life list, some had their first trip on the ocean, others discovered a new country, Cheticamp and its magnificent scenery.

Jacques Pleau

SEPTEMBER 30 - NORTHUMBERLAND STRAIT

Bright sunny skies, light winds, warm temperatures and a late-sleeping leader greeted 28 enthusiastic members at Tidnish bridge shortly after 10 a.m. Seven hours and innumerable stops later the group finally disbanded with a better knowledge of bird life and habitat along the north shore from Tidnish to Wallace and an impressive trip list of over 65 species.

Highlights for most members were a Hooded Merganser at Wallace Bay N.W.A., 13 species of shorebirds including Golden Plover, Hudsonian Godwit and an incredibly tame Dunlin, and 2 adult Black-headed Gulls posing for all to see at Northport. Large numbers of loons, grebes, herons, several Marsh Hawks, an Osprey and flocks of Juncos and Yellow-rumped Warblers provided entertainment for everyone. The only sad note, perhaps, was the sighting of a small flock of Lapland Longspurs which reminded us all too well that, despite the glorious summertime weather, winter was rapidly approaching.

Stuart Tingley



President's Annual Field Day Trip,  
Hants County, May 1978.

To all Members who go on Field Trips:

A MODERN PARABLE

It came to pass in the autumn of the year, when the shore birds were thick along the sands, that a certain shepherd agreed to lead his flock to a new land. They came together in the early morning and walked about happily in the sun exclaiming over the strange sights and wondrous birds to be seen.

And the time came to move on but, lo, the group became separated and the sheep began to cast anxious glances over their shoulders for their shepherd was far ahead and some of their brethren were not yet in sight on the road behind them.

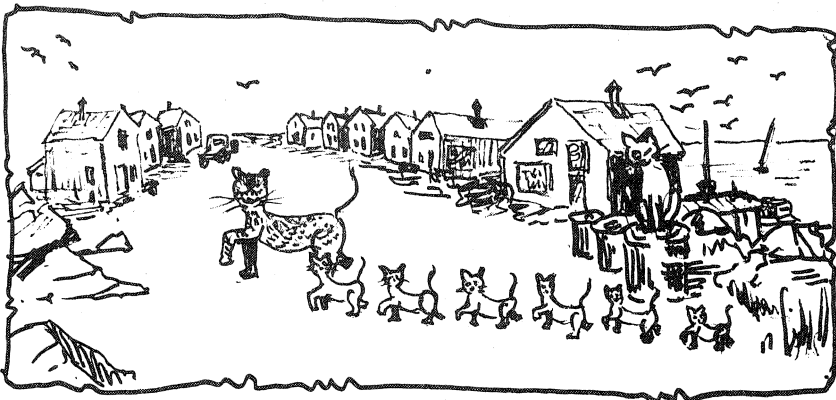
And they spoke amongst themselves, saying, "What shall we do, for we know not our destination or the way and we shall surely be lost if we do not hurry to follow the others". So they hurried to catch up with the rest for, although they were ashamed of deserting their brothers, they reasoned amongst themselves, saying it were better for most of them to reach their goal than to fall among the rocks and strange paths along the way. For, although they were of good intention, they were like the well-known bear of little brain and knew not what else they could do.

And, behold, as they tarried late by the wide and lovely river, their eyes were gladdened by the sight of their lost brethren who had finally found them. A great feast was spread for the company and the remainder of the journey was passed in contentment (and much singing of birds).

But later, when the sheep had assembled with others of their kind, they spoke of their experiences, looking to their elders for guidance. And the wise ones came forth and told them:

On a long journey, it is well if each and every one knows both the path to travel, the high road and the low, and their final destination. But if any stray or delay or meet with disaster, the last one in the line should wait where the road forks or turns, so all may be guided aright: if both fall behind, then the next (last) in the group should wait to show the way, and so on...in this manner will be all re-united at last, rejoicing together.

- Joyce Purchase



UP-COMING FIELD TRIPS

- Feb. 24 EASTERN SHORE - Coastal birds, ducks and  
Saturday geese. Leader: Eric Cooke. Time: 0800 hrs.  
Meeting place: Opposite Holiday Inn, Dart-  
mouth side of MacDonald bridge.
- March 24 GLACE BAY AREA - Leader and other partic-  
Saturday ulars to be announced. For information  
please contact Sara MacLean, Glace Bay.
- April 8 MARTINIQUE BEACH - Ducks, geese, early  
Sunday herons, Ipswich Sparrow, etc. Leader:  
John Cohrs. Time: 0800 hrs. Meeting place:  
Opposite Holiday Inn, Dartmouth side of  
MacDonald bridge.
- May 19 HOPEWELL AREA - Leader: Harry Brennan. Time: 0800 hrs.  
Saturday Meeting place: St. Columba Church, 1½ mi. south of railway  
crossing in Hopewell. (Leave Trans Canada Hwy. at Heather  
Motor Hotel, New Glasgow; turn left for Foord St., straight  
through Stellarton to Hopewell, about 6 mi.)
- May 26 PRESIDENT'S FIELD TRIP - HANTS COUNTY - Spring warblers and  
Saturday other good things. Leader: Margaret Clark. Time 0800 hrs.  
Meeting place: Mt. Uniacke railway crossing.
- May 30 PT. PLEASANT PARK, HALIFAX - early morning warbler walk.  
Wednesday Leader: Fred Dobson. Time: 0600 hrs. Meeting place: Tower  
Road entrance.
- June 2 & 3 KEJIMKUJIK NATIONAL PARK - Joint field trip with other nat-  
Saturday & ural history societies in N.S. Leader: Peter Hope. Time  
Sunday and meeting place: 0900 hrs. both days at the Park Infor-  
mation Centre Parking Lot. (Campers should note that main  
campground will be open). Bring a lunch for each day.  
Saturday - "Woods, warblers and whatever" - a series of  
short hikes to some of the more interesting  
woodlands looking at the ecology of the com-  
munities visited.  
Sat. evening - "Sounds of the Night" - a couple of hours  
spent listening for owls (4 species possible)  
plus up to 7 species of frogs and toads all  
singing. Meet: 9:15 p.m. at entrance to  
Jeremys Bay campground.  
Sunday - "Wild waterways" - a canoe trip across Kejimkujik  
Lake and part of West River plus exploration  
ashore on an island. This trip will be held  
in good weather and will be suitable for in-  
experienced canoists. Canoes can be rented  
in the park.
- June 9 YARMOUTH COUNTY - Cape Forchu, Deerfield, Carleton.  
Saturday Leaders: C.R.K. Allen and Phyllis Dobson. Time: 0830 hrs.  
Meeting place: C.P.R. Station on North Main St. in Yar-  
mouth town.

- MORE TO COME! -

If you have any queries or suggestions, call Don or  
Joyce Purchase at 434-5199.

The chief claim to immortality of people like Wilson, Cory, Baird and Sabine is that they have birds named after them. But did you ever wonder what the birds thought about it?

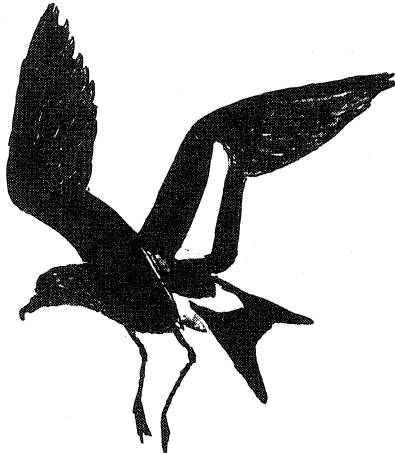
The Naming of Leach's Storm-Petrel

One sunny day a certain Leach  
 Was picknicking upon the beach -  
 An eminent Museum man;  
 And as he briefly paused to scan  
 The balmy sea, his roving eye  
 Espied a petrel flutter by.  
 Said Leach "But this is quite absurd -  
 "No-one has described this bird!"  
 He jotted down its salient points -  
 Rump and feet and ankle joints,  
 Down to the colour of its faeces.  
 "I name this undiscovered species  
 "Oceanodroma leucorhea\* -  
 "The pinnacle of my career."  
 Alas the bird, which hadn't listened,  
 Had no idea it had been christened;  
 Flew on as careless of its fate  
 As when it was innominate.  
 Leach promptly threw a fit of pique  
 And died of drink within the week.

The Moral is: Museum names  
 Make pleasing scientific games  
 But, in the end, lead to despair:  
 The bloody birds just do not care.

(\*OK. All right. I'm quite aware  
 It ends in "-rhoa", not in "-rhea".  
 But poets must, from time to time  
 Adjust their spelling to the rhyme.)

RGBB



## SWISHING AND SQUEAKING

by Jim Tucker

The January-February (1976) issue of BIRDING carried a request for information from the membership about "squeaking" and "pishing" techniques. Four responses were received: one each from Frank Deis, Gladys Donohue, Norman Mellor, and Steve West. In addition to their responses, four short notes were discovered in the NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER dating back to 1966. In addition to recounting his own experiences with such techniques, Frank Deis provided a key reference to an article carried in a 1953 issue of AUDUBON, which in turn identified a very important reference to an item in the October 12, 1952, issue of the NEW YORK TIMES. It seems that the TIMES article identifies a man named Roger W. Eddy who, after World War II, brought back an assortment of bird calls from Italy, where they were used by hunters. Eddy obtained permission to call one of them the "Audubon Bird Call". This small item has become well-known as an aid in attracting birds. The January-February issue of AUDUBON carried an article by Alexander Sprunt, Jr., entitled "That Lure of the Wild: the Squeak". The article was primarily concerned with mouth-squeaking, a technique that could well have spawned other mouth-generated sounds to attract birds. At any rate, few birders seem to remember much swishing, spishing, squeaking, pishing or whatever you call it, before that time, although Gladys Donohue indicates that both pishing and squeaking were in vogue when she first started birding in 1933. It would be interesting to hear from others who remember these techniques being used prior to the end of World War II.

In the July 1966 issue of the NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER Charles R.K. Allen had an intriguing article entitled: "Bird Calling - A New Technique". We are indebted to Phyllis Dobson, longtime Editor of that delightful and informative journal, for knowledge of this article, and the response to it which was carried in the November 1966 issue of the same newsletter. Since it is referred to as a "new technique", we can assume minimally that it was relatively unknown at least in Nova Scotia until the mid-sixties. No previous Canadian mention of the technique has been located. In his article, Allen coins the term "swishing", which he asserts is uttered by the "avant-garde bird-watcher as 'pish-wish-wish-wish' - and so on in rapid succession for five to ten seconds, or until his breath gives out". He concludes his article by recounting an experience with a passer-by whose strange reaction to his swishing was even more understandable when he realized that he was birding on the grounds of the county mental hospital.

In his complimentary but humorous response ("Letter to the Editor" in November, 1966, NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER) Dick Brown complained that a few tentative "swishes" had brought a flock of small passerines so close that he couldn't focus his binoculars on them. He went on to suggest that Charles Allen should "invent a system which would keep the birds back a bit, within binocular range". He also pointed out that Allen's experience at the mental hospital was nothing compared to the diagnosis he received from the two psychologists with whom he was birding when he elected to try out the new technique. All of these statements and comments leave one with the distinct impression that "swishing", at least, was a previously unknown phenomenon.

Not all birds are responsive to squeaking and swishing sounds. Allen (1966) reported that "swishing" attracted the following species and families in Nova Scotia:

Sharp-shinned Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Warblers
Merlin	Boreal Chickadee	Purple Finch
Woodpeckers	Nuthatches	Common Redpoll
Gray Jay	Kinglets	Sparrows

He found thrushes unpredictable. Sometimes they would be attracted, but at other times they completely ignored the sounds. Swallows were immune to Allen's noises, and members of the blackbird family, e.g. cowbirds and Bobolinks, were repelled by the sounds. In Allen's words, "At almost the first 'swish' they drop whatever they are doing and take off in the opposite direction".

Brown (1966) found that the following species were responsive to swishing:

Solitary Vireo	Common Yellowthroat
Parula Warbler	Canada Warbler
Magnolia Warbler	White-throated Sparrow
Blackpoll Warbler	

In a later note in the same journal, Brown (1975) commented again on the use of what he this time called "spshing". He recounted his initial experience as an immigrant from England in September of 1965. Within 48 hours after he had landed in the New World, he found himself in a birding party on Seal Island. He remembers little of the experience except the sight of "Charlie Allen, stalking along one of the island trails, and making the 'spshing' which we in England use to call the cat". He recalls that when asked about the behavior, Allen said simply, "It attracts birds". Thereafter, Brown also became a confirmed "spsher".

But when Brown went back to England he found that the technique had not the slightest effect. He remained baffled by this seeming inconsistency, until the publication by Neal G. Smith of his paper entitled "'Spshing noise': biological significance of its attraction and non-attraction by birds" (1975). Smith's paper was based on his observations at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in the Panama Canal Zone. Brown's analysis and comments regarding Smith's work are worth repeating:

Smith has worked extensively on the mixed-species flocks which many of our migrants join down there in winter. Such flocks also include one or more local species. The migrants are species such as Black-throated Green Warbler, American Redstart, and Red-eyed Vireo, all of which change their diets rather radically in winter, from insects to fruit and nectar - presumably because insects are scarce at that time of year in Panama. By contrast, migrants such as Wilson's Warbler and Northern Waterthrush, which don't change their diets, don't form mixed-species flocks. Smith's suggestion is that the first group of migrants need "instruction" on where to find their new food, and so they join flocks of local fruit-eaters, such as the Plain-color Tanager (*Tengara inornata*) in order to learn the ropes. To do this, of course, they must first find the tanagers, and the obvious technique to use in dense rain-forest is to listen for their calls which in fact sound very like "spshing". Smith played tape-recordings and showed that the fruit-eating migrants were strongly attracted both to "spshing" and to tanager calls. The two types of sound must share some common characteristics.

If that is why "spshing" works, why won't it work with European birds? Smith points out that the situation there is rather different. Most English warblers winter in Africa, and they arrive at a time when insects are abundant. They therefore do not switch to a fruit diet, nor do they form mixed-species flocks with local birds. On Smith's hypothesis, they don't react to "spshing" because they have no need to react to the calls of a local fruit-eating species. Other Eurasian migrants winter in India, and Smith did find some mixed flocks there. These migrants ignored his "spshing", but the reason was obvious. The local species to



which they were attracted was the White-eye (*Zosterops palpebrosa*), whose jingling calls are nothing like "spshing". An Indian ornithologist would presumably have to come up with some quite different sound in order to attract them.

Brown went on to add to the list of species that according to Smith were attracted to "spshing" in Panama. Those attracted are listed as follows:

Red-eyed Vireo	Bay-breasted Warbler
Philadelphia Vireo	Canada Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler	American Redstart
Tennessee Warbler	Northern Oriole
Black-throated Green Warbler	Scarlet Tanager
Blackburnian Warbler	Dickcissel
Chestnut-sided Warbler	and others

Species that were not attracted to "spshing" in Panama included Mourning Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Northern Waterthrush and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

In his response to Brown, Allen (1966) states that it was Dr. Chris Helleiner who was probably responsible for bringing the technique to Nova Scotia, but accepts that it has worked for him so well that he has used it almost exclusively in recent years to attract birds. Allen goes on to question Smith's conclusions, however, in the following statements:

There do seem ... to be at least two serious obstacles to acceptance of Neal Smith's suggested reason for its effectiveness. First is the behavior of the responding birds: this gives strong evidence of intense curiosity, agitation, anger - you name it - shown not only by their movements but (also) by erected crests, scolding or alarm calls, or even complete songs. Surely the emotion evidenced is much stronger than one would expect in a bird merely attracted by a mixed flock which might lead it to a supply of food.

The second and more telling objection is in the species attracted. Among the forty-seven species which have been lured by my own swishy wiles are many which normally would never stray within hundreds of miles of the tropical fruit-and-nectar-eaters. Among the most eager and consistent respondents are: Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Gray and Blue Jays, Black-capped and Boreal Chickadees, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, both species of kinglet, redpoll, Pine Siskin and Red Crossbill. The reaction of these boreal species is for the most part more eager and consistent than that of the vireos and warblers.

One might add still a third objection: if the evolutionary process taught the migrants where to locate food in their summer habitats, why not also in their winter territory?

Allen then adds to the list of species which, in his experience, are not attracted by "swishing". These include the flycatchers, waxwings, and starling, in addition to the swallows and blackbirds mentioned earlier. The article concludes with a rebuttal by Allen regarding Brown's spelling of the term used to describe the techniques. "And finally: How many times must I tell you, Dick, that the proper term is "swishing"? "Spshing", indeed!"

Since the term was spelled "spshing" in the scientific paper presented by Smith, there is at least a measure of officialism there. But since Allen has prior claim to "swishing", he also has an argument in his favor. Time will tell what the technique is finally called.

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- BIRDING, Volume X, No. 2.



### SEA BIRD COLONIES

Birds are greatly influenced by human activities and in this century there have been startling shifts in the populations and ranges of many species; but for only a few of them can we estimate with any certainty the magnitude of these changes. It is difficult to estimate the numbers of any bird species with sufficient accuracy to allow the detection of changes even as large as a halving or doubling of the population. However, accurate censuses can be made of those species which congregate for some reason such as migrating or breeding. Because most sea-bird species are colonial breeders we can hope to estimate their numbers accurately and monitor quite small changes in their populations.

The Canadian Wildlife Service already knows the location and approximate size of most sea-bird and heron colonies in this region and over the next several years we will be working to gather data of sufficient accuracy that we will be able to detect even relatively moderate population changes. There is little historical information on Nova Scotian waterbird populations and a large amount of information must be gathered to form a baseline against which future changes can be measured. This is a field in which the interested and informed amateur can make a valuable contribution. But colony censuses are not easy to do well. Accurate counts only come with experience and training and it requires some care if colony visits are not to be too destructive: every disturbance increases the risk of egg or chick loss to predators.

I am prepared to help Society members with a serious interest in doing colony work either in a specific area or on a particular species. I can provide training in the techniques of careful colony surveys and help co-ordinate results. If you are a naturalist with interests in this direction, let me know and I will do all I can to help.

- Tony Lock, Canadian Wildlife Service, Bedford Institute,  
P.O. Box 1006, Dartmouth, N.S.  
Phones: Work 426-3138; Home 479-2520

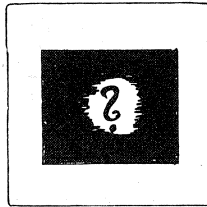
BAILIWICK BIRDING

It is not necessary to venture far afield to encounter interesting or even rare birds as some dedicated feeder watchers already know. Concentrated birding around your local area often results in some surprises. Fulton Lavender sends the following list of his finds in the period from October 17 to November 26, 1978. They were all seen within Dartmouth and environs. (OSR= Old Sugar Refinery).

- Oct. 17 - Black-headed Gull (First arrival)
  - Orange-crowned Warbler
  - Evening Grosbeak (First feeder birds)
- Oct. 18 - Common Loon
- Oct. 21 - Hooded Merganser (7) Albro Lake
- Oct. 22 - Shoveller (Sullivan's Pond)
  - Merlin
  - Northern Oriole (6 individuals)
  - Olive-sided Flycatcher
  - Fox Sparrow
- Oct. 23 - Lincoln's Sparrow (Sullivan's)
- Oct. 24 - Mourning Dove
- Oct. 25 - Tree Sparrow (First arrival)(OSR)
- Oct. 29 - Baltimore Oriole (1)
  - Brown Creeper
  - Rufous-sided Towhee
- Oct. 31 - Savannah Sparrow (Last remaining Dartmouth bird)
- Nov. 1 - Iceland Gull (OSR)
  - Broad-winged Hawk (OSR)
  - Northern Oriole (1) OSR)
- Nov. 3 - Western Kingbird (OSR)
- Nov. 5 - Hooded Merganser (5)
  - Orange-crowned Warbler
- Nov. 6 - Ruddy Duck (Sullivan's)
- Nov. 8 - Tree Sparrow
- Nov. 9 - Yellow-breasted Chat (Edgemere House)
- Nov. 12 - Northern Oriole (1)
  - Sharp-shinned Hawk (Crichton Park)
  - Snow Bunting (12, Albro Lake)
- Nov. 19 - Ruddy Duck (2, Russell Lake)
  - Bufflehead (2, Russell Lake)
- Nov. 23 - Yellow Warbler (Sullivan's Pond)
- Nov. 22 - Pine Grosbeak (Feeder Birds)
- Nov. 26 - Northern Oriole (2)

Three other birds merit mentioning due to (a) the arrival times of two of them, (b) the rareness of the third:

- Apr. 17/78 - Barn Swallow (Sullivan's Pond)
- June 12/78 - Indigo Bunting (Breeding Male, singing)
- May 28/78 - Orchard Oriole (Immature male, singing).

THE SLIDE COLLECTION

Many thanks to members who lent or donated slides for our collection. Here is an amended list of "wants"! As you can see we are particularly short of hawks and gulls.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>PLUMAGE</u>	<u>SEX</u>
Common Loon	Both	Any
Red-necked Grebe	"	
Horned Grebe	"	
Fulmar	Any	
Sooty Shearwater	"	
Wilson's Petrel	"	
Gannet	"	
Double-crested Cormorant	"	
Little Blue Heron	"	
Cattle Egret	"	
Common Egret	"	
American Bittern	"	
Gadwall	"	
Pintail	"	m & f
Blue-winged Teal	"	m & f
Shoveler		m & f
Wood Duck		m & f
Redhead		m & f
Common Goldeneye	"	m & f
Bufflehead	"	m & f
Oldsquaw	"	m & f
King Eider	Both	m & f
White-winged Scoter	Any	m & f
Common Scoter	"	m & f
Red-breasted Merganser	"	m & f
Turkey Vulture	"	m & f
Sharp-shinned Hawk	"	Any
Cooper's Hawk	"	"
Rough-legged Hawk	"	"
Broad-winged Hawk	"	"
Marsh Hawk	"	Male
Cryfalcon	Black-White	Any
Peregrine Falcon	Any	m & f
Pigeon Hawk	"	m & f
Sparrow Hawk	"	m & f
Gray Partridge	"	Any
Virginia Rail	Adult	"
Yellow Rail	"	"
American Golden Plover	Winter, Summer	"
Whimbrel	Adult	"
Willet	Winter, Summer	"

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>PLUMAGE</u>	<u>SEX</u>
White-rumped Sandpiper	Adult	Any
Stilt Sandpiper	"	"
Marbled Godwit	"	"
Hudsonian Godwit	Winter, Summer	"
Northern Phalarope	"	"
Pomarine Jaeger	Adult	"
Parasitic Jaeger	Dark phase, Light phase	"
Glaucous Gull	Adult, 2nd winter	"
Iceland Gull	Adult, winter, summer	"
Ring-billed Gull	Adult	"
Laughing Gull	Summer	"
Black-legged Kittiwake	Adult, summer, winter	"
Bonaparte's Gull	Winter, Summer	"
Roseate Tern	Adult, summer	"
Caspian Tern	" "	"
Dovekie	Winter, summer	"
Black Guillemot	" "	"
Common Puffin	Adult	"
Rock Dove	True plumage	"
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Adult, showing bill	"
Black-billed Cuckoo	" " "	"
Great Horned Owl	Adult	"
Long-eared Owl	"	"
Saw-whet Owl	Dark & light phase	"
Belted Kingfisher		female
Red-headed Woodpecker	Adult	m & f
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	"	"
Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker	"	"
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	"	"
Least Flycatcher	"	"
Eastern Wood Pewee	"	"
Common Raven	"	"
Brown Creeper	"	"
House Wren	"	"
Gray-cheeked Thrush	"	"
Veery	"	"
Wood Thrush	"	"
Brown Thrasher	"	"
Bohemian Waxwing	Adult, immature	"
Solitary Vireo	Adult	Any
Red-eyed Vireo	"	"
Warbling Vireo	"	"
Tennessee Warbler	Summer, immature	"
Nashville	Spring, fall	"
Parula	Spring	m & f
Blackburnian	Spring, fall	"
Northern Waterthrush	Fall	Any
Hooded Warbler	Spring, fall	Both
Bobolink	" "	Any
Eastern Meadowlark	Adult	"
Orchard Oriole	"	m & f
Baltimore Oriole	"	"
Scarlet Tanager	Adult, spring, fall	"
Summer Tanager	" " "	"
Indigo Bunting	Adult	"
Cardinal	Adult bird	"
Dickcissel	Adult	"
White-winged Crossbill	"	"
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	"	"
Vesper Sparrow	"	Any

Please send slides directly to Lisë Cohrs, 8 Rosemount Ave.,  
Halifax, B3N 1X8. Please mark "loan" or "donation". Thank you. LAC

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Nova Scotia Bird Society was held at the Lawrencetown Community Centre, Saturday, December 2, 1978, at 1:45 p.m. The Vice-President, Eric Cook, presided with approximately 90 members in attendance.

In the absence of the President, Margaret Clark, Eric Cooke welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was preceded by a morning field trip along the Eastern Shore and a delicious chowder luncheon held afterward at the Community Centre. The field trip, although a wet and windy one, netted about 30 species, including a Peregrine Falcon.

On behalf of the Society, the Vice-President expressed sympathy to the Cohrs family on the recent loss of their son, Chris. He stated that the Society has made a donation to the Scholarship & Trust Fund in memory of Chris Cohrs, and that members may also make contributions to this special fund.

It was moved by Charlie Allen and seconded by Ethel Crathorne, that the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting be accepted as circulated. Motion carried. Since there was no business arising from the minutes, the Vice-President called upon the various committees for their reports.

On behalf of the Membership Secretary, Fran Cook presented the following report of memberships to date for 1978:

Single:	423	(45 in Cape Breton)
Family	131	(13 in Cape Breton)
Student:	19	( 4 in Cape Breton)
Life:	4	( 1 in Cape Breton)
Totals:	<u>577</u>	(63 in Cape Breton)

Total membership is down somewhat from this time last year, more noticeably in student memberships which are reduced by 26. Fran Cook moved that the Membership Report be adopted, and this was seconded by Don Purchase. Motion carried.

The Treasurer, Sandra Myers, then gave the Financial Report. Sale of publications are up this year, and the new Nova Scotia Bird Society crests have been selling well. Shirley Cohrs was able to put through a tax rebate on the Newsletter. Disbursements have been lower than last year. It was moved by Sandra Myers, seconded by Molly Claydon that the Financial Report be adopted. Motion carried.

The Vice-President commented that the Society is in excellent financial condition this year, and this is especially attributed to the raise in dues, and the fact that we are no longer paying taxes to the Federal and Provincial Governments for the publication of the Newsletter. He also stated that there will be no increase in dues for the coming year.

Sara MacLean, the Cape Breton Representative, gave a report of their year and a Financial Statement. She moved, and it was seconded by Fred Dobson, that these reports be adopted. Motion carried. The slate of Officers for the Cape Breton Branch in the coming year are: Eldon Meikle - President, Bertha Hopkins - Secretary, Graham Fraser - Treasurer, and Sara MacLean - Cape Breton Representative.

A report on the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund was presented by Eric Cooke. The Financial Report for the fund was circulated among the members present. Eric Cooke moved the adoption of the report, seconded by Charlie Allen. Motion carried.

Don Purchase was called upon to give a report on field trips, and he began by thanking everyone for their support in participating in the outings this year, and issued a special thanks to the leaders. He gave a preview of some of the 1979 field trips to be held, and mentioned that details of those and others will be published in the Newsletter.

The Vice-President gave a report on the known dates of Christmas Counts for 1978:

Halifax East - Dec. 23	Coordinator:	Ian McLaren
Yarmouth - Dec. 30	"	Marion Hilton
Kejimikukik - Dec. 17	"	Peter Hope
Brier Island - Dec. 27	"	Eric Mills
Halifax West - Dec. 16	"	Shirley Cohrs
Broad Cove - Dec. 30	"	Sylvia Fullerton
Wolfville - Dec. 30	"	Peter Smith
Port Hebert - Dec. 17	"	George Perry
Amherst - Dec. 26	"	Stuart Tingley
Bridgetown - Dec. 16	"	Terry Hyson

The Nominating Committee presented their report, with Ethel Crathorne proposing the slate of Officers for the coming year:

President	-	Miss Margaret Clark
Vice-President	-	Mr. Eric Cooke
Secretary	-	Mr. William Caudle
Treasurer	-	Miss Sandra Myers
Editor	-	Mrs. Shirley Cohrs
Membership Secretary	-	Mr. Frank Hennessey

Charlie Allen moved the report of the Nominating Committee be accepted, seconded by Ross Anderson. Motion carried.

Charlie Allen moved that Mr. Kanigsberg continue as Honorary Solicitor, seconded by Fred Dobson. Motion carried.

James Morrow will also continue as Auditor.

The Vice-President then called nominations from the floor for two Executive Members. Ian McLaren and Don Purchase were nominated, and Ross Anderson moved nominations cease. This was seconded by Evelyn Donson. Motion carried.

The Vice-President commented that the Society is fortunate to have many valuable members serve on the Executive for the last number of years. He went on to say that regular members have responsibilities, too, to assist the Bird Society in any way they can.

The President's Report was read by Fred Dobson on behalf of Margaret Clark. (See Page 1 of this Newsletter).

Under new business, Ian McLaren gave a report on the recent shooting of a Whistling Swan in the Lawrencetown area by hunters. Various ideas were brought forth on how to deal with the continuing problem of the slaughter of migratory birds. Eric Mills suggested that the Society could help by putting pressure on the Department of Lands & Forests to enforce their protection of migratory birds. Tony Erskine made the point that even more importantly, pressure should be placed on the R.C.M.P. to enforce the hunting regulations already in effect. It was also suggested that education of the public be carried out, and what better way than to exploit the Whistling Swan incident to the fullest, by writing articles in newspapers and other publications. However, to do this, people are needed to coordinate and edit these articles. Curtis Chipman inquired what stand the Bird Society takes on the procuring of specimens.

Fred Dobson mentioned that N.S.B.S. Membership Lists should be sent out to members who request them.

The Vice-President pointed out there would be no monthly meeting in December, but the next meeting would be held on January 25th, when members' slides would be shown.

The Vice-President said that a letter had been received from the Canadian Nature Federation regarding a Youth Leadership Camp to be held next summer in Alberta. We have been asked to recommend participants, who must be 17-18 years old, male or female, who have shown outstanding naturalist ability. The Canadian Nature Federation will pay the participant's airfare, accommodation and instruction.

This year the Puffin of the Year Award was presented by the Vice-President to Charter Member Charlie Allen, who over the years has made many great contributions to the Bird Society. He helped organize the Bird Society in its infancy, and has been Chairman of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund for many years. He also played a great part in the writing of the popular publication, "Where to Find the Birds in Nova Scotia". In accepting the award, Charlie Allen declared it represents "some of the most enjoyable hours of my life, with some of the finest people".

The Annual General Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Anderson, Secretary

#### SUMMARY OF EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

The Executive held regular monthly meetings from April through November, with the exception of July and August.

During April, the Federal Tax Rebate for the Newsletter was received, and the amount refunded was \$402.04.

May brought forth the early stages of planning celebrations for the 25th Anniversary of the Society in 1980. It was suggested that a committee be set up to organize events.

Phase One of the Fundy Tidal Power Study is now completed, and it appears that the main bird colonies in the Bay of Fundy would remain unaffected.

It was agreed that a copy of the "Guide to North American Bird Clubs" should be kept on hand by the Bird Society, for use by members who wish to plan trips, etc.

Paid members in the Society as of November 30th, 1978, total 577, a figure which is down slightly over the same period last year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Anderson, Secretary



### 1978 PUFFIN OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Puffin of the Year Award was initiated to be "an award given annually to some member in recognition of his or her special contribution to the Society - to the well being of our birds or other wildlife - to some aspect of conservation - or in some field of nature study". I'm sure you will all agree that none meets these requirements or is more deserving than this year's recipient - Charlie Allen.

Charlie is a charter member of the Society. It was he who, at the first organizational meeting in January, 1955, made the motion to organize a society for the study of birds. He was elected Vice President at that meeting and continued to serve as Vice President, President, Past President and Director for some 15 years. Charlie was well qualified to play a dominant role in founding an organization like the Bird Society, for he learned about the world of nature almost from infancy, first from his father, E. Chesley Allen, an ornithologist of international stature and later through his formal schooling, including a Master of Science degree in Biology.

During the years when Charlie was President, the Society was incorporated, the Common Puffin was approved as symbol of the Society, the Corporate Seal was obtained, Hertford Island was purchased and with the assistance of Robert Kanigsberg, Q.C., and Willett Mills, the Eastern Shore Bird Sanctuary was established. When the Nova Scotia Bird Society Sanctuary & Scholarship Trust Fund was created, Charlie was named Chairman and remains so to this day.

This Society and the Newsletter are synonymous. However the Newsletter didn't reach its present position of respectability and credibility which it maintains in ornithological fields in Canada and the United States without a beginning. It began with Charlie Allen and Lloyd Macpherson. Before an editor was appointed, Charlie and Lloyd wrote more than half the articles that appeared in those early issues. Charlie is also the co-author of our popular booklet "Where to Find the Birds in Nova Scotia" and the line drawings in that booklet can be attributed to him also.

Charlie led the very first field trip for the Bird Society and is still leading them. He began those early Wednesday morning outings during spring migration, even leading as many as five of them one year. He instigated the annual Hants County Field Trip which is as popular as ever. Because of his endless patience, enthusiasm and ability, not only beginners but more experienced bird-watchers too learned a lot from Charlie - and still can.

Even in retirement at Tusket, Charlie is busy with Bird Society activities - leading field trips, giving lectures, negotiating for expansion of our Tusket Island holdings and always enjoying the bird life around his house and garden.

On behalf of Marg Clark and all members of the Society, it gives me great pleasure to present the 1978 Puffin of the Year Award to someone who has done so very much for the Society - Mr. Charlie Allen.

Eric Cooke



HALIFAX FIELD NATURALISTS - AGM

For our Annual General Meeting, HFN is hosting a unique symposium on a topic of urgent interest to all Canadian naturalists - the development of our northland. In the past, we have devoted several monthly meetings to the subject of the northern environment and these have been received with enthusiastic interest. Since federal decisions regarding oil and gas drilling in the North are pending, we feel it is important at this time to be aware of the risks that drilling would entail. Entitled "Potential Hazards to the Environment of Deep-water Drilling in Northern Regions of Canada", the symposium will feature:

- Dr. D. N. Nettleship and Dr. R.G.B. Brown, of the Seabird Research Unit of the Canadian Wildlife Service. Each will speak on the biological productivity of several marine areas in northern Canada which may be affected by oil or gas drilling, focusing on seabirds as indicators of productivity;
- Mr. Donald Gamble of the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee will describe several drilling proposals in northern Canada, the processes of governmental decision-making regarding oil and gas drilling and the risks of a spill or blowout if drilling proceeds in this area;
- Dr. J. Vandermeulen of the Marine Ecology Lab., Bedford Institute of Oceanography, will discuss the potential effects of an oil spill on a northern marine environment.

Chairman: Dr. I. A. McLaren of the Biology Department,  
Dalhousie University.

Place: Nova Scotia Museum auditorium.

Date: Saturday, February 3, 1979.

Time: 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

MISSING A JACKET?

After the AGM on December 2nd at the Lawrencetown Community Hall, Frank Himsl went off with the wrong navy jacket - which he discovered later to have valuables in the pockets. He has been unable to find the owner.

If it is yours - and you have his - would you please contact him at 5575 Stoneham Court, Halifax; Phone 453-2588 (evenings).



#### MEMBERSHIP AND FEES

Membership in the Nova Scotia Bird Society may be obtained by writing to -

Membership Secretary,  
Nova Scotia Bird Society,  
c/o Nova Scotia Museum,  
1747 Summer Street,  
Halifax, Nova Scotia.

B3H 3A6

Rates are as follows -

Life membership	\$180.00
Single Membership (1 year)	6.00
Family Membership (1 year)	8.00
Student Membership (1 year)	4.00
(available to those under 18)	









NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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Volume 21, Number 1

January, 1979

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EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief	Shirley Cohrs
Records Editor	Phyllis Dobson
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