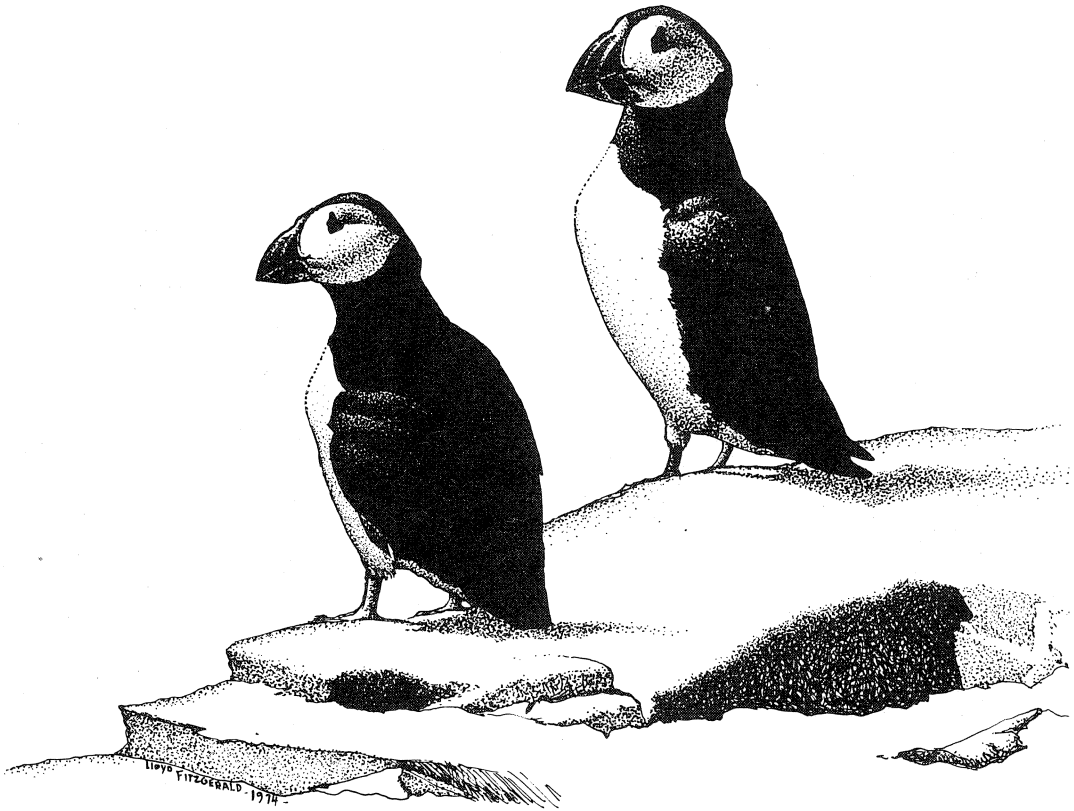


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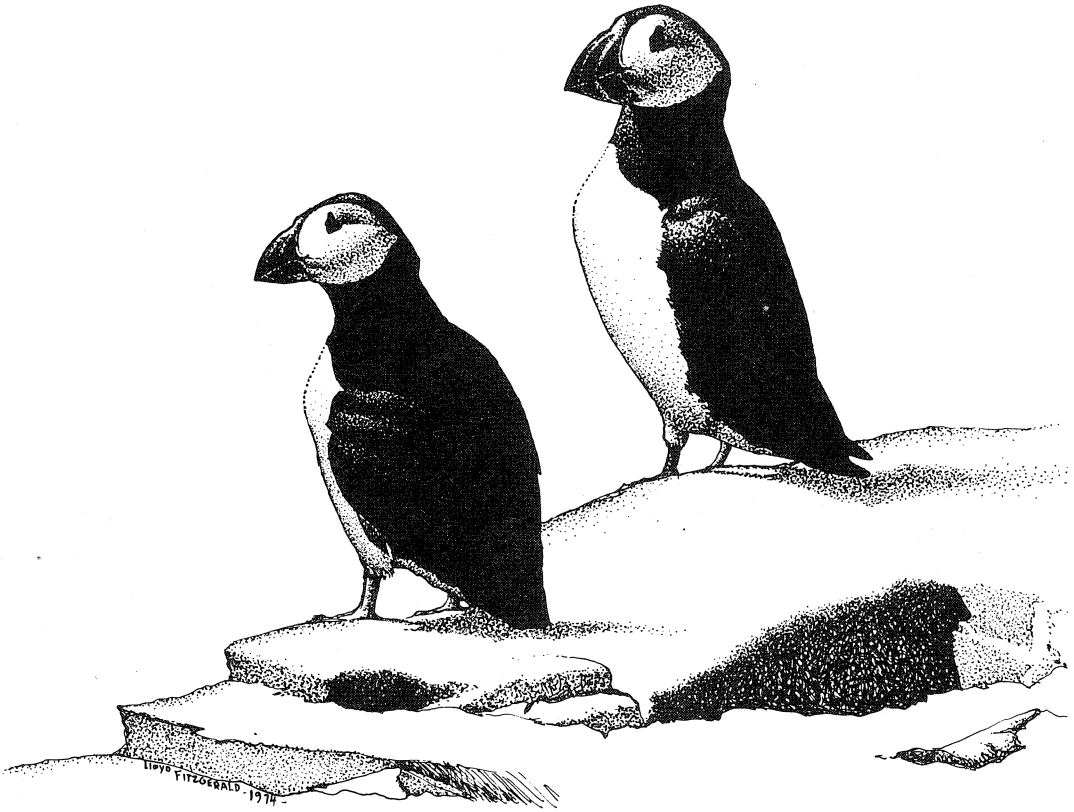


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NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 21, Number 3

July, 1979

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NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

I often wonder why we subject ourselves continuously to the "poison spray" poured out from the News Media day and night, which must affect our mental health adversely after a time. If, upon awakening, you find yourself with that careworn expression and feeling of hopeless dreariness, try, as an antidote, not turning on the News, and instead open your window or preferably go out-of-doors in the still of the morning and listen to the birds. (This advice unfortunately will not reach you in time to do much good this spring but there may be others). It is best if you live in the country but even in town and as early as April you may hear the "quirping" of a robin, or the cheerful trills of Junco and Song Sparrows. What a thrill the first day you make out the little quaver of the Myrtle (yes, yes, Yellow-rumped) Warbler, and, just out of town maybe, the winnowing of a Snipe overhead. Next perhaps there is a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and a Black-throated Green Warbler - then a Kingfisher rattles overhead, and one morning, in the distance, you can just make out the chime of a Hermit Thrush. Black-and-White Warblers, Parulas, Magnolias, thick and fast they come, a new one a day in early May. And now the Flycatchers punctuate the chorus, swelled by Catbirds and Veerys and Orioles and many many others, until full strength is reached by June the First - and it is time to do those early early morning Breeding Bird Surveys.

It is my guess that we will have a bonanza this year, it sounds like old times out - whatever those may be -: We have had a good spring - an early and gentle spring - this year. A slow but steady rise in temperature has been accompanied by sufficient rain (more than enough lately, but no forest fires); and since the "silver thaw" the last of February there have been no bad destructive storms. Wild fruit trees, shrubs and vines are blossoming well though not as abundantly as last spring; and trees were out early (first "greening over" of the woods and roadside trees was noticeable May 10, when the Indian Pear was in full bloom, in southwest Nova Scotia). Black flies were fearsomely abundant for a while in May and the mosquitos bid fair to be the same. On the other hand, wood ticks seem to be fewer than usual - possibly due to the severe cold last February. Does anyone know how much they contribute to the diet of nesting birds?

First arrivals of the migratory birds were on time or slightly early, and later arrivals have kept coming until the woods are full to bursting. It is hardly safe to drive between the trees, little bodies keep bombing across the road criss-cross from all directions. We have a lot of birds this year and should make a note of that for future reference. After several seasons of worrisome shortages we can take heart again. We are still low on Chimney Swifts and Nighthawks - and Winter Wrens - but there seems to be hope for the last mentioned bird - there were over half-a-dozen reports of it including this from Frank Hennessey in Economy: "Winter Wrens returned April 27, very numerous".

The northward trend of the big waders, noticeable of late years in New England may have been the reason for the exceptional number of Glossy Ibis which came our way this spring. We did not have many rarities among our returning birds, but there were a few and some unusual and interesting occurrences, which are noted in

the text to follow - every year and season has its own pattern.

It is too bad that we must introduce one sad note, a really tragic note to this report. The Kurdistan oil spill has made life a misery for birds and concerned people from Glace Bay Sanctuary(!) down the Eastern Shore to past Halifax, to date, June 6, 1979. The attempt to clean up the spilled oil is costing several fortunes and is too late to save the lives of several thousands of sea and shore birds. Perhaps the sooner oil reserves give out the better, if we cannot prevent this sort of thing from happening. True, a real attempt is made to clean up the mess and this should be encouraging; but it is always in terms of the commercial fishery and the recreational aspect of beaches. This is of scant comfort to those of us who have lost our indifference to birds, so vulnerable to this horrible, entirely man-made pollution of their natural environment.

It might help if more people lost their indifference to birds, and undoubtedly Bird Societies provide some of this help. Rachel Carson had the right approach. Paint a picture of the seashore empty of all birds, no loons nor grebes nor sea-ducks, no terns nor ospreys fishing, no white gulls in the sky. People soon get the message. We can but try, for if we take comfort from the little birds singing of a summer morning it is only fair to lend a hand to the big ones, in their plight.

- - -

PRD Ed.

SPRING BIRD REPORTS March through May

LOONS AND GREBES

COMMON LOONS this spring were well reported from the entire area. First sighting on fresh water was at Turtle Lake, March 30 (N&TB) followed by 3 at Lake Vaughan April 8 (CRKA, PRD). Elsewhere they showed up on their breeding territory on or about mid-April. The 14 loons seen by the Cohrs at Green Bay March 9, and the 40 the following day in adjacent waters suggest a build-up of arrivals from farther south. An ARCTIC LOON in winter plumage was so identified by Mike Rymer who saw the bird March 21, in the estuary of the Tusket River off Maple Island and described it as being "much smaller than a Common Loon and having a straight rather than an up-turned bill". The only RED-THROATED LOONS seen were in the Bay of Fundy where from 2 to 13 were observed between March 25 and April 23 (FLS, FH). Two were also seen as late as May 12 flying southwest off Brier I. (BDM&JK).

RED-NECKED GREBES were on the move by late March when 3 appeared on the 21st at Argyle Sound where they had not been seen all winter (CRKA), and numbers at Cape Sable grew from 2 on Feb. 22 to 12 March 22 to 25-36 in April, the last being seen April 24 (SS). The last reported sighting of any number of HORNED GREBES in St. Margaret's Bay where they are common during winter, was of 20-30 on April 1, all being still in winter plumage (KNK). There were also 12 at Lr.W. Pubnico March 30 (RSd'E) and 6-8 sleeping, between legs of their journey, at their usual stopover off Pinkney's Point March 26 (CRKA). A PIED-BILLED GREBE at Barrington, present on March 18 was probably an over-wintering bird, according to Ian McLaren, who reported it. If this is so, the first record is of one at APBS April 21, where it was later joined by 5 others - presumably - as there were 6 there by May 6 (CD). The only other report of a Pied-billed is of 1, May 24, at Penhorn Lake (FLL).

CRKA Ed.

FULMARS, SHEARWATERS, STORM-PETRELS.

Our tubenose records are mainly from out at sea. Raymond S. d'Entremont saw plenty of NORTHERN FULMARS on George's Bank on May 17, along with other seabirds. Dick Brown, on a research cruise which took in most of the Scotian Shelf during the last week of May, was surprised to find that the Fulmars were commonest on the southwestern Nova Scotian Banks, but that GREATER SHEARWATERS predominated on the Banks east of Sable Island. The eastern waters are cooler than the western, and Fulmars are supposed to be cool-water birds. The Fulmars - probably all adolescents from west Greenland and British/Iceland colonies - were almost all light-phase birds, and almost all were moulting their primary feathers. So much so that it was sometimes surprising that they could get airborne on the three or four flight feathers that remained on the end of each wing. By contrast the Greater Shearwaters, newly arrived from their colonies in the South Atlantic, were only beginning to lose their primaries. It was odd that the few SOOTY SHEARWATERS, also from the Southern Hemisphere, should have had perfect, unmoulted wings. The timing of wing moult is important for birds like shearwaters which spend so much of the time flying. So why do Greater and Sooties time it differently?

The relative timing of the arrival of the two shearwaters is also interesting. As usual, Sooties arrived first; Raymond S. d'Entremont saw his first on George's Bank on May 10, against May 16 for his first Greater. The Smiths report many Sooties off Cape Sable on May 27-28, and that these had become a nuisance to the fishermen (taking bait off their hooks?). But the Smiths' only Greater sighting, over the Horseshoe off Cape Sable where the Sooties were feeding, was on May 27.

The only MANX SHEARWATER seen was on May 31, about 40 miles ESE of Cape Sable, and heading east (RGGB).

Both LEACH'S and WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS were quite common offshore in the Sable Island area during the last week in May (RGGB). The Leach's seemed commonest over the deep waters at the edge of the continental shelf, and also over the deeps of Emerald and Roseway Basins within the shelf. This should please the Dalhousie oceanographers, who think that there is upwelling - and therefore rich feeding areas for birds such as Leach's - in the Basins and at the edge of the shelf. It should also please Anne Linton, who found that Pearl Island Leach's coughed up species of fish found only far offshore, and predicted in her Dal. MSc thesis that the birds must be commuting out to the edge of the shelf to feed.

Storm-petrels rarely come inshore unless there is a gale to bring them in, so we have few other records. The Smiths found a dead Leach's at Cape Sable on April 23. Stephen Flemming saw a definite Wilson's off Ann's Beach, Antigonish on April 28; it's unusual for Wilson's to enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

GANNET, CORMORANTS

There was an abundance of GANNET records. Several, unfortunately, were victims of the oil spilled from the "Kurdistan" - but we will describe that in a later issue of the NEWSLETTER. The first sighting - and the first for Cape Sable this year - was 12 birds there on March 25, and there were flocks of two to six passing all day on April 4th (Smiths). A procession of birds - including one immature - went by Conrad's and Martinique Beaches on April 8 (Cohrs, FLL). Total numbers were not great on that day, but there were 100+ off Brooklyn Breakwater, Queen's County, on April 12; 130 off Hartlen Point on April 13, dwindling to 30 on the 15th, 40 on the 16th, 20 on the 22nd, 5 on May 5 and 2 on May 12 (FLL). The largest counts come from Brier I. where Bruce Mac-tavish saw over 1000 flying by, out of the Bay of Fundy, on May 10, and a few hundred doing the same on May 11 and 12. These birds like the 50+ which Eric Mills saw off Brier on May 20, were mostly immatures. There were birds out on George's Bank on May 17 (Raymond d'Entremont) and a few still going past Cape Sable on May 27-28 (Smiths). On the Banks west of Sable I. Dick Brown saw a total of 7 between May 26-31 - all but one immature.

Cormorants are normally inshore birds, and so Dick Brown was surprised to see a dogged little flock, 1 GREAT and 2 DOUBLE-CRESTED, out on Roseway Bank on May 31 and heading north for the land 60 miles away. More conventionally, Greats were seen in inshore areas from at least as early as February 27, when Keith Keddy saw a single bird near Peggy's Cove. There seems to have been some kind of migration off Green Bay on March 10 when the Cohrs saw two "light formations", respectively of 40 and 50 birds, flying NE. There were both Greats and Double-crests on the island colony near Taylor Head on May 6, though only the Greats were carrying nest material; Sandra Myers felt that numbers had increased over last year. G. Crowell counted 17 occupied Great nests in the Mira area on May 21.

The first records of Double-crests are of single birds at Economy March 26-April 1 (FS), and two at Mahoney's Beach on March 31 (RDC,SPF). Michael Lynes' first record from Pleasant Lake was of four birds on April 8, and Gordon MacLeod's first bird at Wine Harbour was seen on April 9. Numbers built steadily up during April, with 30 birds at Pleasant Lake on April 21 and 22, and 40 at Economy on April 23, though Francis Spalding thought that the Economy build-up was slow this year.

RGBB Ed.

HERONS, EGRETS, BITTERN, IBIS

GREAT BLUE HERONS were rated as late by several observers and scarce by some (JSC,RDC,SPF). The earliest, surprisingly, was one at Whycoomagh, C.B., on March 31 (HH). Other early birds were at Pubnico on April 4 (E&VH) and Economy on April 5 (FS). Several reports come from April 7-9, including a half-dozen in from the sea at Martinique Beach on April 8 (JLC). By the 13th the colony of ca. 35 on Lawlor's Island, near Halifax, was bustling (FLL), but first sightings from other localities continued through April. GREEN HERONS appeared on May 10 and 25 (2) near Dartmouth (FLL) and May 19-21 on Sable I. (BMct). A CATTLE EGRET on 18 May at Lower Granville stayed a few days (WEW). A GREAT EGRET was seen in early May at Hawk Pt., Cape Sable I. (E. Nickerson). However, the big influx of SNOWY EGRETS was exceptional. Four at East Lawrencetown on April 28 had increased to 7 by May 10, and at least 2 remained until May 27. Elsewhere, there were 2 at Pubnico on May 10 (E&VH), 3 on Brier I. on May 10-12 (BMct, ELM), and 2 at Tobacco I., Guys. Co., on May 23 (BS et al). A LOUISIANA HERON was photographed by BMct on Sable I. on May 18-20.

Single BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS were seen at Cape Sable on April 12 (SS), and at Round Hill on May 6 (WEW). The first AMERICAN BITTERNS were on April 27 at W. Pubnico (DJd'E) and Brooklyn Bog, Yar. Co. (CRKA), and next day were as far along as Falmouth (BCS) and Antigonish Hbr. (RDC). Subsequent reports included birds "pumping" at New Ross and Brule.

GLOSSY IBISES invaded in force. Eric Cooke discovered 4 at East Lawrencetown on April 20, which increased to 7 by April 28, diminished to one by May 6-13. Several Metro area birders added these fine birds to their lists, but none were so twice-blessed as KNK, who "found 2 full bottles of booze in a ditch" nearby. Another local influx of 8 ibises occurred on May 11 on Cape Sable I. (E. Nickerson) with perhaps 3 other birds nearby (fide SS). One bird at Upper Canard April 19-27 (BCS), 2 at Pubnico for a few days after April 28 (E&VH), and single birds on Sable Island on 9 May (Q.Lucas) and 28 May (BMct) complete an impressive season's list.

IAM Ed.

GEESE AND DUCKS

The 4000 CANADA GEESE seen at Cole Harbour March 3 (EHC) and the 3000+ at Morien Bar on the 10th (AF) were probably wintering flocks, supplemented by spring arrivals, as there were over 1000 birds in both areas during the winter. First geese at Lusby Marsh, a flock of 30, appeared there on March 6, an early date for this locality (David Milner per EEC), while 20 were seen at Truro, 20 at Great Village and 10 at Economy on March 8, 9 and 10 respectively (FLS). The small flock of seven birds which wintered in Antigonish Harbour increased to 26 on March 13 and peaked to 75+ on the 24th, thereafter dropping off to 15+ on April 14 (RDC,SPF). The main influx at Lusby occurred on March 24 when 1000 appeared there a week later, and 500 on April 8 was the last reported sighting (CD). A series of observations in the Tuskent estuary at Pleasant Lake between March 10 and April 9 found numbers increasing from 60 to a peak of 480 on the 24th and dwindling to 16 on April 9 (MR). In several places geese tarried through April and even into early May; there were still over 5000 at Morien Bay April 2 and on April 17 a single bird attempting to fly was so saturated with Kurdistan oil that it was first mistaken for a cormorant. A flock of about 3000 was seen off Conrad's Beach April 21 (FLL) and the latest report is of 10 seen flying in the Hammonds Plains area May 22 (KNK).

As mentioned in the last issue, Freeport on Digby Neck may possibly be a wintering station for BRANT but it is certainly directly in their spring flight line. There were up to 800 there on March 17 and over 1000 on April 14 reported by Merrill Prime. Non-breeding birds often lag behind the main body and this spring 200-450 were at Pond Cove, Brier I. May 10-12 (BDM,JK) and still about 80 May 19-20 (ELM). The only report of the small Atlantic coast flight was from Cape Sable where 9 were seen March 26, 14 April 27 and 35 on April 29 (BJS).

A single SNOW GOOSE showed up at Lr.W. Pubnico March 5 (RSd'E), while 6 were seen at St. Esprit April 21 (R&JM).

It has been said that MALLARDS are replacing our native Black Ducks in Nova Scotia but judging from the reports to hand they still have a long way to go. At Albro Lake, Dartmouth a pair was seen March 25, then two pairs March 31 and a female with 8 young May 17 (FLL). There were 2 April 8th and 4 April 13th at Lusby (CD) while Economy, Truro and Cranberry Head produced one bird each (FLS, MWH). Reports on BLACK DUCK are chiefly characterized by the smallness of the numbers seen. The largest flocks observed were: 600+ at Port LeHebert May 21 (RMT)(non-breeders or grass widowers?); 500 at Lusby March 24 (CD) and up to 200 at Salt Bay March 19(CRKA). Mike Rymer's almost daily records during March and April showed a fairly steady decline in numbers from 92, March 3 to just 3 birds April 29. Keith Keddy also writes that very few birds were left at Lawrencetown by April 22. Only record of a brood was of a female with 10 young at Russell Lake, Dartmouth, May 15 (FLL).

Lusby Marsh again produced our only GADWALLS for the period: 2, April 13, 3, April 16 (CD) and a single male there May 5 (ELM).

There were 100 PINTAIL at Lusby on March 25 (CD) and 100 in the Amherst area which is close to Lusby on April 28 (FH,FLS). Only other record of any significant number is of 20 at Pt. Michaud March 22 (D&GH per SM).

There was a bright male GREEN-WINGED TEAL at Sullivan's Pond in Dartmouth Feb. 27 (KNK), probably one of the wintering birds reported in the last Newsletter. This one departed on or about March 29 (FLL). Probable true spring arrivals were the 20 at Lusby, March 24, where the number had increased to 100 by March 31 and to 200 by April 8, dropping to 40 by April 13 and to 6 by May 19 (CD).

The COMMON TEAL is the European opposite number of our Green-winged, and Con Desplanque spotted one of these strays from overseas at - where else? - Lusby Marsh on March 25 and again on the 31st.

The first BLUE-WINGED TEAL showed up at Sheffield Mills April 4 (BCS); no others were seen until April 13 when 4 were at Lusby where the number had risen to 20 by the next day. There were still 14 there on May 19 (CD). They reached Cape Breton by April 15 where 10 were seen at East Slope on that date and 2 at Bras d'Or on the 27th (RBF). Other reports are of 6 at Lr.W.Pubnico May 1 (DJd'E), 5 at Russell Lake May 11 (FLL) and two pairs at the Antigonish Wildlife Management Area May 18 (SPF,RDC).

A very early AMERICAN WIGEON, a male in bright plumage, was seen by Francis Spalding at Lawrencetown Lake on March 1 - possibly a wintering bird as there have been a few such records. There was also a pair at Debert April 18 and 3 there on May 2 (same reporter). At Lusby Marsh there were 3 on March 24-25, 10, April 8 and 20, April 13, while only 2-3 appeared at adjacent APBS during the same period. Still 13 at Lusby on May 19 (CD).

Two observers, Bernard Forsythe and Barry Sabeau, spotted 3 SHOVELERS at Canard, on May 9 and 11. Con Desplanque reported 6 at Eddy Road Marsh, Amherst on April 14 and 2, at his Lusby Marsh April 16 where there were still 2 on May 19 and 10 back at Eddy Pond on that last date.

An early male WOOD DUCK was at Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth March 18-20 (EHC,FLL). Two others, both males, were at Front Lake, Jolicoeur, just over the border in N.B., May 6(ELM), and at Pond Cove, Brier I. May 12 (BDM,JK).

If we needed any further sign that this was an early spring the RING-NECKED DUCKS have supplied it by their arrival dates which are at least several days earlier than those for the past three years. This year the main influx was during the last week in March, while in '78 it was April 8-10, in '77, April 1-9 and in '76 there was one sighting on March 27 but all others were after April 15. No great numbers were reported this year, the most being 20 at APBS May 19 (CD), 8 at Three Fathom Harbour May 6 (JLC), 10 near Bedford April 24 (EHC) and 10 on Harmony Lake, North Queens, March 29 (N&TB), all the rest of the reports of singles.

It is hard to pinpoint arrival dates for GREATER SCAUP as they winter with us, but numbers do build up in late winter at various localities, such as Three Fathom Harbour, Bayport and Salt Bay, Yarmouth Co. At Bayport, Shirley Cohrs estimated 300 on March 9 and notes that there were 1500 there on March 16, 1977, and 3500 March 21 last year. At Salt Bay there was a flock of about 500 - too closely packed for an accurate estimate - on March 19, and this dwindled steadily to about 300 on the 20th, to 200 on the 26th and down to a handful by mid-April (PRD). A pair at Economy April 12 was something of an event for that region which they seldom visit (FLS). Only report of LESSER SCAUP is of a pair, April 26 seen by Hedley Hopkins (no locality given but presumably in Cape Breton).

Largest concentrations of the COMMON GOLDENEYE were at Crescent Beach - 150 on March 10, and 1000 at Bayport March 21 (Cohrs). Latest reported sightings were 2 at APBS April 13 (CD) and 2 in the Tusket estuary at Pleasant Lake April 2 (MR).

Late BUFFLEHEADS were at Parrsboro from the last of April to mid-May: 12 on April 24, 9, on the 30th, four pairs on May 7 and a single female May 16 (FLS).

Last OLDSQUAW seen at Antigonish were 6 off Mahoney's Beach April 14 (SPF,RDC). Elsewhere they lingered somewhat longer: 2 at Lawrencetown Beach April 28 (FLL), a pair at Brier May 12 (BDM,JK) and a pair in breeding plumage also at Brier (Pond Cove) May 20 (ELM).

A heavy movement of COMMON EIDERS this spring was recorded by several observers: 2500 at Conrad's Beach April 8 and 1200 at nearby Hartlen's Pt. April 15 (FLL). Eric Cooke also saw 800 at Conrad's April 20 but none on the following day. There were 700 at the head of Green Bay as early as March 16 (Cohrs) and approximately 500 at Brier as late as May 11 (BDM). Eiders were paired by May 6 at Taylor Head, and the few remaining spinsters being hotly pursued by five unattached (we hope) males (SCM). The Smiths at Cape Sable report an average or better flight this year.

Sara MacLean writes that there were hundreds of WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS at Mira Bay April 21, saying that "the whole bay was full of them". Francis Spalding makes the interesting comment that at Economy proper this species consists only of "fringe" birds compared to SURFS, while at Lower Economy just five miles away the reverse is true. He goes on to say that the first SURF SCOTER showed up March 31 and the second not until April 6;

greatest number seen was 50+ on April 10 and there were still 28 there on May 1. Few BLACK SCOTERS were seen: 2 at Economy March 31 (FLS), 4 at Hartlen's Point April 16 and 4 at East Lawrencetown Beach April 21 (FLL). Six were seen at Crescent Beach as late as May 18 (Cohrs).

There are just three reports of HOODED MERGANSER: a pair at Lawrencetown March 24 (EHC), a single male in Petite Riviere estuary March 10 (Cohrs) and 2, flushed from a woodland pond at Round Hill March 27 (WEW).

Fulton Lavender states that COMMON MERGANSERS began to move inland about the end of March, and this is borne out by other reporters who found them on fresh water from about March 25 on. Only concentration of any size was 100 birds reported at Mahoney's Beach, Antigonish, March 3rd (SPF,RDC). RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS were present in usual numbers in their usual haunts around the province, feeling the spring urge earlier than most of their kind and putting on spectacular displays of aquatic acrobatics as early as late February. By May many were paired and settling down, one nest at any rate located, on Cape Sable.

CRKA Ed.

DIURNAL RAPTORES

TURKEY VULTURES are becoming routine in spring, (up to late July last year, according to Wickerson Lent) on Brier I., and Eric Mills wonders if they nest somewhere on Digby Neck or the islands. Three were there on May 11 (BMct) and up to 7 on May 20 (C&A LeLein, fide ELM). Another was seen on April 27 at Argyle River (CRKA,PRD).

GOSHAWKS were unreported after early winter, and one harrying ducks at Barrington Bay on March 16 (Purchases and Cohrs) may have been on the move. Thereafter there were 5 reports of about 7 birds (3 said to be imm.). Only S. Flemming opined that they were "high" in number. A nest with 3 eggs was found near Newtonville, Kings Co., on April 19 (BLF). About 15 widely scattered SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS were recorded - none too many. Bernard Forsythe reports his first nest of this species, under construction on April 27, at Sunken Lake, Kings Co., and with 2 eggs on May 19. RED-TAILED HAWKS evidently had a good winter, with some 30 recorded, including several pairs. An early BROAD-WINGED HAWK was seen on April 25 by Evelyn Coates at Fenwick. A movement of 12+ adults occurred on May 11 on Brier I. (JK, BMct), and there were about 10 other sightings around the province. The redoubtable Bernard Forsythe found a first nest of this species for Kings Co. (fide RWT), near Black River, with 2 eggs by the 19th. Five scattered ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were seen April 13-27, evidently on their way through.

With some interpretation I conclude that about a dozen adult, 7 immature and 4 BALD EAGLES of unstated age were seen on Mainland Nova Scotia, and about the same number came from Cape Breton. One pair was refurbishing its nest at Malagawatch as early as March 22 (J.McNicol).

A female or immature MARSH HAWK at Chebogue Point on March 14 (CRKA) was probably our first migrant. Subsequently about 40 individuals, including several pairs, were reported - more than usual. The first OSPREYS appeared on April 13 at West Lawrencetown (B.Moore), Halifax Harbour (FLL), and inland at Ingraham River (KNK). These birds, interestingly, were a day or two ahead of several earliest reports from South Shore localities.

The raptore of the season was an almost white GYRFALCON discovered by Con Desplanque at Lusby Marsh on March 24. It was seen by him and a few other lucky observers in April, and is believed to have been seen last at the Missiquash impoundments by Gay Hansen on May 20. Our only PEREGRINE report was of one seen in mid-March at Sydney River by R. Blakeburn (fide F. Robertson). At least 2 MERLINS got through winter in Halifax-Dartmouth. Nine birds in April-May were presumably migrants, including one unfortunately found shot near Antigonish (RDC). AMERICAN KESTRELS wintered here and there, but birds at Cape Sable on March 8 and 20 (SS) and at Chebogue on March 23 (CRKA) were probably early returns. A total of 40 in April, including several reports of threes and fours in coastal localities between April 15 and 25, gives some impression of good numbers of migrants and residents.

GROUSE, PHEASANT, PARTRIDGE

Although only about 10 birds were reported as individuals, RUFFED GROUSE were thought to be "average or slightly below" at New Ross (KNK), and "in usual numbers" in Yarmouth Co. (PRD). A pair was "courting" at Orangedale, C.B., on April 2 (J. Gardner), and May 12 was thought to be the height of the drumming season at New Ross by KNK. RING-NECKED PHEASANTS included a ringless cock and 9 hens at Smith's Cove (AKR). Evelyn Coates reports 2 near Fenwick as new to that locality, in her experience. GRAY PARTRIDGES are said to be common near Great Village (FS), and 4 were reported from their usual Kings Co. headquarters (BLF).

MARSH BIRDS

The SORA on April 7 at Russell Lake, Dartmouth, had evidently lived through winter and perhaps the same one was heard there on May 19 (both FLL). Another was at Upper Canard on April 12 (GRB). At least two COMMON GALLINULES were back at APBS on May 21 (IMcL) and several AMERICAN COOTS were there then, having returned by April 14 (CD). One Coot was found "shot by an unknown idiot" at L.W. Pubnico on April 11 (DAA) and another was seen at Three Fathom Harbour on May 6 (JSC).

IAM Ed.

SHOREBIRDS

The spring migration followed a familiar pattern, that is, records of most shorebirds were rather sparse. By the time most of the Arctic-bound shorebirds reached Nova Scotia in late May and early June the Newsletter deadline was upon us, or the fine weather distracted people from birding. Late spring records will appear in the next account.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER records are scanty: 1 at Brier I., May 12 (BM,JK) and 2 pairs at Cape Sable, May 22 (SS). At least 2 breeding pairs were on Sable I. June 2-7 (BM,ELM). PIPING PLOVER were better recorded, beginning April 4 at Cape Sable (SS) and April 8 at Conrad's (3) and Martinique (1) Beaches (IAM). At least 4 were at Conrad's on April 20 (EHC), where the resident birds were much in evidence by the third week of May. At Mahoney's Beach Roland Chaisson and Stephen Flemming's survey showed 5 on April 21, 7 by May 5 and nesting by May 27. One bird at Green Bay on May 20 was the first record for that location (JSC).

Many observers recorded the arrival and peregrinations of KILLDEER, beginning with one heard flying over Halifax, March 13(BKD). Thereafter I have many records between March 28 and the first week of May, showing the arrival of this species in northern Nova Scotia and its gradual spread south and westward into Yarmouth Co., for example: 1, North Grant, Ant. Co., March 28 (SPF); 4, Sheffield Mills April 4(BCS); 3-4 Economy, April 4-5 (FS); 1, Eastern Passage, April 6 (IAM); 2, Truro, April 21 (RB); 1, Cape Sable, April 21 (SS); and 1, Pleasant Lake, Yar. Co., 24-29 April (MR). There was a nest on the Wolfville Ridge by May 21 (BLF) and signs of nesting the following day at Cape Sable (SS).

Twelve early BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER appeared at Cape Sable on April 22 (SS). Thereafter, all records were between May 12 and June 1, peaking late in the month, when there were 50+ at Cape Sable May 22-27 (SS) and 30+ at Chebogue, June 1 (CRKA).

A WOODCOCK was noted March 12 at Canard Dike (BLF), then March 18 at Lockeport (GP). The first Halifax Co. bird was at Morris Lake on March 24 (FLL), the same day that Gordon MacLeod heard his first at Wine Harbour in Guys. Co. In Yarmouth Co. the first was at Pleasant Lake, April 16 (MR). Overall, the pattern is an extended arrival, mid-March to the third week of April. Late (probably wintering) COMMON SNIPE were seen at Barrington Bay March 16 (JP,JSC) and at Economy, April 6 (FS). Arrivals range from April 9 through the 30th, but without a clear geographic pattern: 1 at Pleasant Lake, April 9 (MR); 2, Lower West Pubnico, April 13 (DJD'E); New Ross, April 13 (still increasing 12 May, KNK); Truro, April 14 (RB); Round Hill, April 16 (WEW); Sydney, April 22 (HH); Antigonish, April 27 (SPF,RDC).

Among the scarcer migrants, only one WHIMBREL report reached me this year, one on May 13, Cape Sable I.(SS). At Mahoney's Beach, Roland Chaisson and Stephen Flemming had close views of an UPLAND SANDPIPER on May 18.

A very early SPOTTED SANDPIPER was at Three Fathom Harbour on April 8 (IAM), another at Sydney on April 21 (HH). Closer to normal timing, there was one at Shubenacadie on May 4 (BCS), then a cluster of records from May 7-18, beginning at Cape Sable (SS), peaking May 12, when there were records from Economy (FS), the outskirts of Dartmouth (FLL) and Antigonish Co. (RDC). Only one SOLITARY SANDPIPER was recorded, Brier I., May 11 (BM,JK).

The earliest WILLETS were seen at Lockeport, April 20 (GP) and at Argyle, April 24 (PRD). Most (though not all) records are from SW Nova Scotia, for example, West Pubnico, April 24 (DJD'E); Cape Sable, April 28(SS); Markland & Cape Fourchu, May 3 (MWH); Cow Bay (6), May 5 (FLL); Antigonish Co. and Brier I., May 10 (RDC, BM). By May 16 Willets were common in the Yarmouth area (MWH) and elsewhere.

The Yellowlegs were rather well reported, beginning with a GREATER YELLOWLEGS on April 22, Antigonish Harbour (RDC); 8 at West Lawrencetown, April 28 (FLL), 7 at Conrad's the following 2 days (EHC, Cohrs), one heard at Cape Sable April 30(SS); then 11 records from May 1-27, including the first at Economy, May 1(FS); up to 4 at Glace Bay, May 9-10 (NSBS), 1 at Lockeport, May 15 (RJC). Two were at Cape Sable on May 27 and one restless bird at Sable I., June 3 (BM,ELM). The first LESSER YELLOWLEGS (never an abundant species in spring) were at West Lawrencetown and Dorothea Drive, April 29 (Cohrs), then 4+ at Antigonish Harbour, May 4-8 (RDC); 1 at Rawdon, May 8 (BCS) and 2 in the Sydney area, May 19 (NSBS, fide SM).

RUDDY TURNSTONES somehow evaded birders this spring: only two records, 1 at Brier I., May 21 (ELM) and 2 at Conrad's Beach, May 27 (EHC).

Our wintering PURPLE SANDPIPERS, or migrants from farther south, lingered into early May at least at Conrad's Beach, where there were 30+ March 1, 24 on March 24, 35 on April 8, 20 on April 22 and 40 on May 3 (KNK, EHC, FS, BM). The last at Cape Sable were seen on March 21.

LEAST SANDPIPERS peaked late in May, when there were 10+ at Conrad's Beach (ELM, EHC), but the first record was May 3 at Conrad's (BM), followed by 4 at Brier I., May 11 (JK); 3 at Hartlen's Point, May 12 (FLL), one at Brier I., May 20 (ELM) and many singing, displaying residents at Sable I., June 2-7 (ELM). SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS were seen with Willets at Surette's I. (4), May 2 (CRKA) and a small flock visited Brier I. fleetingly about May 11 (WL).

Without a doubt the most unusual shorebird of this reporting period was the well-documented STILT SANDPIPER that was present off and on at Cape Sable from February 22-March 26 (S&BJS) when it should have been in South America.

Lurking among the Least, SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS were recorded only on May 27: about 6 at Mahoney's Beach (RDC) and 3 at Conrad's Beach (ELM, EHC). The only SANDERLINGS reported were the last wintering birds, April 5 at Lockeport (GP), April 8 at Martinique Beach (JLC) and 3 reddish-patchy migrants at Sable I., June 3 (BM, ELM).

Phalaropes were rather sketchily reported, largely because they did not congregate in large numbers this year near Brier I. or Sable I. An injured male RED PHALAROPE at Cape Sable on April 27 was early; 8 females were killed there at the light on May 23-24 (SS). A bright female visited Conrad's Beach on May 27 (EHC, ELM). Large numbers of NORTHERN PHALAROPES passed by Brier I. in the period 12-21 May; almost all were flying SW out of the Bay in small flocks (and presumably flying NE into the Bay somewhere else) (BM, JK, ELM). Raymond d'Entremont reported phalaropes (probably Northern) abundant on George's Bank, May 14, and at Cape Sable 3 were seen on 23-24 May; no doubt their migration continued to the end of the month.

ELM Ed.



SKUAS, JAEGERS

In the last week in May Dick Brown saw a total of 3 SKUAS on the Scotian Shelf. They all had deep chocolate brown plumage, relieved by golden streaks on the head and neck, and must have been birds from Scotland/Iceland and not South Polar Skuas. There were also a few Jaegers out there - in all, two light-phase and two dark-phase POMARINES, and what was probably a LONG-TAILED. The Smiths saw a Pomarine off Cape Sable on May 27. Raymond S. d'Entremont saw 3 PARASITICS on George's Bank on May 17 and Eric Mills saw another, harassing terns off Brier I. on May 20.

GULLS AND TERNS

There's nothing much to be said about HERRING or GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS, apart from the fact that they were common as usual. Keith Keddy thought the Black-back he saw on Lake Ramsay, New Ross, on August 14 was uncommon for the area. Charlie Allen saw a Black-back incubating on a nest on a rock in Lake Vaughan on April 8. Eric Mills saw no sign of our LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL at Digby on May 19 (this sounds like an obituary, but May 19 is late for a gull to stay at the winter feeding grounds). On the other side of the balance the 3rd-year bird which Eric Mills saw in the Dartmouth area in January was last seen there, at Lake Banook, on March 10 (ELM, FLL).

GLAUCOUS GULLS were around the Halifax area at least until March 14 (FS). The Smiths' sighting of a bird off Cape Sable on April 19 is quite late, and the first-winter bird which Eric Mills saw at the Digby fish plant on May 19 was even later. ICELAND GULLS were as usual commoner. The latest records are three birds at Cape Sable on April 19 (Smiths), and one at Hartlen Point on April 22 (FS).

The interesting - also frustrating - thing about Glaucous and Iceland Gulls is telling the difference between the two. There are some birds which are quite simply unidentifiable. Bruce Mac-tavish saw one in Grand Passage, Brier I., about May 11; judge it for yourself:

"Despite having had exposure to 1000's of Glaucous and Iceland gulls in the last three winters I can still be puzzled by these white-winged gulls at times. Such was the situation when J. Kearny and I discovered a white-winged gull sitting on the kelp on St. Peter's I. just off of Brier I. At this distance of 2 or 3 hundred yards we thought it was an imm. Iceland mainly because it had long looking wings which extended an inch or so beyond the tail. But then it got up and flew across the passage to the beach by the ferry dock in Westport. In flight it appeared rather big and stocky like a Glaucous. We raced over to Westport where it was perched on the beach near 15 Herring Gulls, only 40 or 50 yards from the road. Even from this range it took us 15 or 20 minutes of staring before we came to a final conclusion as to what it was. Our verdict was a small Glaucous Gull with longer than normal wings and a smallish bill. Maybe it was an hybrid Iceland/Glaucous!

I think I'd have chickened out on this one, called it a Glaucous Gull and left it at that.

There was a RING-BILLED GULL on Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth, on Feb. 27 (Keith Keddy), another on Pleasant Lake on March 27 (Michael Lynes), and about 20 on Eel Brook run-out on March 24-29 (PRD). Charlie Allen saw 49 on Abrams River Estuary on April 10. As many as 8 were in the Cow Bay-Eastern Passage area May 5-12 (FLL).

BONAPARTE'S GULLS were as usual mostly over towards the New Brunswick border. Stephen Flemming and Roland Chaisson saw over 30 on Ogden's Pond, Antigonish Co., on March 31. But there were also 28 on Sydney Harbour on April 7 (H. Hopkins). The adult, which over-wintered at Dartmouth Cove was last seen - showing partial black on its head - on April 11 (FLL).

BLACK-HEADED GULLS wintered with us as usual. I promised not to write about their breeding, but the timing of their breeding plumage ought to be put on record. The bird which Francis Spalding saw on March 14 was in "spring plumage" (= black head?). On March 18, two of the 13 birds in Dartmouth Cove were "showing hoods", and 17 of the 21 there on April 10 were "in breeding plumage" (FLL).

Our single IVORY GULL sighting - part of our late winter bonanza, no doubt - was at Glace Bay on March 1 (Sara MacLean).

The Smiths found a dead, oiled BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE at Cape Sable on March 21, and saw 9 heading E off shore on May 27. On Brier I. 15 adults were flying past Brier I. out of the Bay of Fundy on May 10, and 7 on May 12 (Bruce Mactavish, John Kearny) and there were 15+ on Grand Passage, Brier I. on May 20 (Eric Mills). Offshore, Raymond d'Entremont saw a bird on George's Bank on May 17; Dick Brown saw a total of 3 on the Banks east and west of Sable I. between May 26-31.

Our first tern - COMMON or ARCTIC - was the bird which Raymond d'Entremont saw on George's Bank on April 27, followed by George Perry's bird at Matthew's Lake, Shelburne Co., on May 6. From then on they spread quickly through the province - 10 Commons at Ann's Beach colony, Antigonish Co., on May 10 (RDC,SPF), 6 - the first arrivals - at Albro Lake, Dartmouth on May 13 (FLL), and Gordon MacLeod's "first heard definitely" at Wine Harbour on May 17. The Ann's Beach colony had increased to 80+ birds by May 27 (RDC), and on the same day 150+ birds "began nesting" at Cape Sable (Smiths).

At St. Peter's I., in Brier Island's Grand Passage, the first terns arrived May 8 (Wickerson Lent). Of the 300+ birds there on May 10-13, Bruce Mactavish and John Kearny thought 25% were Arctics and the rest Commons. But by May 20-21 Eric Mills estimated that there were 500-1000 Arctic Terns at St. Peter's I. and that only 2-5% of the terns there were commons. Because of the obvious identification difficulties these percentages are at best only very rough estimates. But it does look as though Commons returned first.

Apart from that, Russel J. Crosby saw a single ROSEATE TERN at Lockeport on May 28. Eric Mills saw a BLACK TERN on May 21st, flying into Grand Passage, Brier I., with a group of c. 30 Arctic Terns, coming north off the Bay of Fundy. He asks: "Did it come with them from South America or South Africa?" A very reasonable suggestion.

AUKS

There are only two possible RAZORBILL sightings - one at St. Esprit, C.B., on March 15 (R. Meyerowitz) and one about 70 miles NE of Sable I. on May 26 (RGGB); neither is very certain. There were still a few late DOVEKIES out on the Banks east of Sable I.; Dick Brown saw 8 between May 25-28, as well as a total of 6 PUFFINS, both east and west of Sable, between May 25-29. MURRES have had an unhappy spring - they were among the species which were worst hit by the "Kurdistan" oil spill. Sara MacLean, for example, saw a badly oiled COMMON at Glace Bay on April 17 "steam-boating, unable to rise, here at my house away up the harbour where no Murre ever came". She also tells of another bird which came ashore on April 23; it was carefully cleaned and cared for by Richard Jerrott, and did well for a time, but then relapsed and died. The only inshore THICK-BILLED records are of a single bird very close inshore at Sambro on March 1, two at Lawrencetown on March 14 (FS), and two at Hartlen Point on April 15 (FLL). Off-shore, Dick Brown saw a total of 9 east of Sable I. May 26-28; most were Thickbills, but one was definitely a Common. BLACK GUILLEMOTS were sparsely reported. There was a bird in transition plumage off Cherry Hill on March 6 (Cohrs), 2 each at Sambro and Cole Harbour on March 14 (FS) and a scattering of birds off Cape Sable (Smiths) and Hartlen Point (FLL) beginning, respectively, on April 4 and 15. A week-old dead bird was found on April 17 on Mahoney's Beach (RDC,SPF). The only large flock was of 50+ birds off Brier I. on May 20 - unusually common, according to Eric Mills.

RGGB Ed.

DOVES, CUCKOO, OWLS

Two MOURNING DOVES at Tusket on March 27 were the first of the year (CRKA), followed closely by birds at Fenwick (EC) and Yarmouth (MWH) on March 31. About 11 birds were reported subsequently, with no comments on breeding activities.

The only reported BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO was singing near Liverpool on May 15 (RJ), and the only (evidently) spring visitant YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO was a weeks-old corpse in early June on Sable I.

Ethel Crathorne reported a GREAT-HORNED OWL nest with two young at Hopewell on May 19. Otherwise these owls were mentioned only by TG at Orangedale. BARRED OWLS were widely recorded: at least 22 birds, including pairs. Bernard Forsythe reports 3 nests in mid-May in Kings Co., each with 2 young: one in a box placed by him, one in an old Goshawk nest, and one in a poplar stub 9 m. high. He also found a LONG-EARED OWL on May 9 with 2 eggs in an old crow's nest near Canard. The only SHORT-EARED OWLS were one (or more) on Cape Sable April 1-27 (SS) and 2 at Hartlen Point, near Dartmouth, in mid-April (FLL). A dead SAW-WHET OWL near Wine Harbour on March 21 (GL) and another alive on Sable I. in mid-May, but later found dead (BMct), were less fortunate than the pair nesting in a box at Hopewell on May 19 (E.Crathorne).

NIGHTHAWK, SWIFT, HUMMINGBIRD, KINGFISHER

A COMMON NIGHTHAWK reported at Pleasant Lake on April 24 was very early, and, if merely heard, may have been a Woodcock (see last July Newsletter). Otherwise the first was on Brier I. on May 10 (JK). "Many" occurred at West Northfield on May 20 (Jim Morrow), and scattered individuals elsewhere in May. Two CHIMNEY SWIFTS were early at Bridgewater on May 2 (TW) and another was found dead that day at N.W. Pubnico (DJd'E). There are a number of reports (including 100+ by RB at Truro) after May 5. The first RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD was at Cape Sable on May 12 (Smiths), with 5 later sightings around the province, May 18-23. Overwintered BELTED KINGFISHERS were recorded (or can be inferred) from Queensland, Bass River and Sydney. The first migrant may have been one at Cranberry Head on April 14 (MWH), but numbers appeared elsewhere only by April 18-28, with late first sightings on May 12 at Truro and St. Esprit, C.B.

WOODPECKERS

COMMON FLICKERS on March 1 at Pleasant Lake (MR) and on March 24 at Mt. Denson (BCS) probably wintered, but a bird at Chebogue on April 3 (GRKA) may have been our first spring arrival. Several were reported from Yarmouth Co. between April 14 and 17, and one was looking over nest holes at Argyle Head on April 22 (PRD). Up-province first records were between April 22 and 28. A female at Wolfville Ridge had 2 eggs on May 9, Bernard Forsythe's earliest nesting. The Morses at Paradise and R.D.Chaisson at Antigonish thought that Flickers are more plentiful than usual. There were reports of about 8 PILEATED WOODPECKERS, including a nest 10 m. up in a live poplar near Newtonville, with 3 eggs on May 18 (BLF). Keith Keddy reports that the Bedford RED-HEADED WOODPECKER was still going strong in early April and wonders if it will summer. The first YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER was seen on April 22 by the Morses at Paradise. They report them as "in usual numbers - 2-3 daily". However, only 9 other individuals were reported. About 25-30 of both HAIRY WOODPECKERS and DOWNY WOODPECKERS were reported. A BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER was seen by M. Nickerson and B. Coombs near Cape Forchu on May 11. Francis Spalding reports sightings of one near Economy, and 3 others in Cumberland Co.

IAM Ed.

- * Lewis Nicholls reports that the Red-headed Woodpecker in Bedford was still going strong on May 9.



FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS.

The earliest EASTERN KINGBIRD was seen at Starr's Pt., Kings Co., on May 9 by P.G. Austin-Smith. On 10th an unusual crowd of nine passed through Brier I. and by 12th single birds were spotted at Argyle Head, Wine Harbour and Economy (BMact, CRKA, G. MacL, FS). By 19th they had arrived in Antigonish and Halifax Counties, by 22nd in Annapolis Co. and by 23rd at Cape Sable I. All sightings other than the one at Brier were of single individuals.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHERS were "up" from one last year to three in 1979: May 10 Brier, May 19 near Bridgetown and May 21 at West Northfield (Lun. Co.) (BMact, ELM & Jim Morrow).

Our earliest arriving flycatcher, the EASTERN PHOEBE was near New Ross on April 14 (KNK). Gordon MacLeod heard a very noisy Phoebe sing all day at Wine Harbour on April 27. All the other reports are comparatively late: 3 on Brier May 10, one each at Markland, Mooseland Rd. and Greenfield on May 11, 18 and 19 respectively. There was no Phoebe at its usual nesting site under a bridge in Hants Co. on the Field Trip (May 26).

No YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER was reported and very few observers noted ALDER FLYCATCHERS. PRD and CRKA noted that Alders were general in Yarmouth Co. by the last week of May and BLF heard two on Wolfville Ridge on 28th. Only one was heard on the Hants Co. Trip (usually there are many).

LEAST FLYCATCHERS were more heavily reported with a tie between Brier I. and Paradise for the early bird on May 10 (5 on Brier, 1 at Paradise - BMact and Morses). From 12-18th they arrived over a wide area, Shelburne, Colchester, Yarmouth and Lunenburg Counties. Keith Keddy wrote that at New Ross from May 15-17 there were about half a dozen birds, all singing loudly and often so that their characteristic song dominated the birdsong in the area. He clocked one excited bird at 33 "che-beks" per minute. There must have been more than one EASTERN WOOD PEWEE around in May, but they managed to escape notice completely. The single bird was at Smiley's Park on the Hants Co. Day where it was viewed by the group in a torrential downpour.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS appeared first in Cape Breton in the Glace Bay area Field Trip May 19. There was one at Black River Lake on 21st, one near Economy on 23rd and one at Brooklyn on 29th (BLF, FS, FLL).

A few HORNED LARKS were seen before their summer disappearance: 1 at Cape Sable, March 8, 14 at Morien Bar April 7, 1 April 13 at L.W. Pubnico and one very late lark at Conrad's Beach May 27.

This would appear to be a super year for the TREE SWALLOW. Very widely reported they arrived the week of May 15-25 simultaneously all over the Province. There is no evidence of any particular directional movement - they just arrived, and in larger than usual number, eager to get on with nest building. Roy Blakeburn in Sydney River, wrote that the arrival date there (April 20) was considerably earlier than any year he has recorded (back as far as 1964). The previous early date was May 6. At the end of May the Smiths on Cape Sable had pairs working at most of the 20 nest boxes despite the cold, wet and foggy weather. They were so anxious at Wine Harbour that they flew into boxes resting upside down on the car top as Gordon MacLeod was getting ready to put them up. Many people with nest boxes report full houses with one pair not waiting for the paint to dry. A single early bird was at Tuskett Falls April 6 (MR).

More reports than usual came in concerning BANK SWALLOWS, usually seen in sizable flocks. First arrival was a flock of 12 at Paradise May 8. By May 13 "several" were at Cape Sable and 20 were flying around their nesting area at Economy. Ross Baker saw 12 at Valley (Col. Co.) on May 14th, and on 15th a flock of 25+ were at Crescent Beach in company with Barns and Trees (JSC). PRD reported two to three dozen milling around a "bank" at Abram's River on May 21.

BARN SWALLOWS abound, nesting (wanted or otherwise) in porches, light fixtures and, naturally, barns. They appeared first towards the end of April in the "Western end" - at Turtle Lake on 20th (1), L.W. Pubnico on 22 (1), Tusket Falls (3) and Cape Sable (2) on 24th. On 29th two were at Upper Canard and two flying over George's Bank. By May 2 they had reached as far east as Economy and by 5th APBS. The early date for C.B. was sent by Ranier Meyerowitz who saw one fly in over the oil clean up crew at Kempt Pt.

Nine correspondents reported CLIFF SWALLOWS, four sightings being in early May (5th-7th) and the others later between 19-25th. Early birds were: 1 at L.W. Pubnico May 5, 10 at Brier I. on 6th and 1 each at Russel Lake and Cape Sable on 7th. By 19th there were 20 building nests at Freeport and on 20th there were 2 at Westport and 20 at Marble Mountain, C.B. where they were building at two different sites. F.S. noticed the first at Economy on May 25. Beverley Smith on Cape Sable writes that the two there at first were soon joined by three more pairs and by May 27 all were "busy with mud and feathers".

Note of four PURPLE MARTINS came in: one May 10 in Halifax (James McLaren), one May 16 at Cape Sable, and two May 20 on Brier I. (SS,ELM). All were male.

CORVIDS

GREY JAYS, having disappeared from view to nest in March, remained in seclusion during April and most of May, but at press time were beginning to be seen again with their sooty young.

Noisy BLUE JAYS, nesting later, were most apparent in March and April with fairly large flocks reported: 16 at Dartmouth and 13 at Pleasant Lake March 23, 15 at New Ross and 6-8 at Rockingham "during March". The Cohrs had 16+ in April but there were no later reports other than of odd single birds here and there.

COMMON RAVENS were well reported - whether there are more Ravens or more reporters is a moot point. On Feb. 12 a pair on the harbour ice at Glace Bay were "rolling, bathing and fluffing themselves in the newly fallen snow" (HH). By early March they were breaking sticks off the trees there. Several people wrote of Ravens carrying sticks in March and indulging in their usual pre-nuptial aerobatics. Nesting pairs were observed on Cape Sable, at Pleasant Lake, Morris Lake (Hfx.Co), Smith's Cove and Mooseland Rd. B.L.F. located six nests in the Wolfville area. One was lost to raccoons but the other five yielded 16 feathered young by the end of May.

Twenty to thirty COMMON CROWS were around Pleasant Lake all of March with 41 in one flock (MR). A nest was found in April at Glace Bay. Elsewhere they were reported "common", "plentiful" and "as usual".

CHICKADEES THROUGH WRENS

Two migratory movements of BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES occurred. On May 10 at Brier I. Bruce Mactavish saw a group of about 75 in the last bushes of North Point "trying to follow the warblers and fly off to the north, but they would only make short starts and dive back into the bushes as if a hawk was chasing them". Again on Brier, on May 19-21, Eric Mills noted about 20 in loose flocks apparently still migrating. Some of the feeder Chickadees did stay, however, as Wendie Tay writes, "The approximately 15 birds which brightened many dark winter days by being so cheerful and ever-present at our feeder have remained and are still around in May".

BOREAL CHICKADEE appear to be regular but not common in most areas, the few that attended suet logs having departed to the woods. B.Mact. had 5 or 6 with the Black-caps on Brier May 20 (see above).

The Sullivan's Pond WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH stayed around at least until April 21 (FLL). The only others noted were: 1 at Lake Holden in the New Ross area May 23 (KNK) and one in Smiley's Park on the Hants Co. Day.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were much more abundant. A pair were seen at Orangedale, C.B., March 5 (J. Gardiner), while Michael Rymer had 2's, 3's and up to four throughout March and April at Pleasant Lake. A dozen or so were seen in April and May, mostly in the western end. PRD noticed a Red-breasted taking fat from the "log" and feeding it to another nuthatch. She thought it might be feeding young, but when she managed to get a good look at the recipient, she found it was an adult quivering her wings - courtship after all.

Eight BROWN CREEPERS were around, all save one at Paradise in our western counties.

The seven WINTER WRENS were fewer even than last spring. These were: May 7 Pleasant Lake, May 8 Black River Lake, May 12 (2) Brule, May 21 Somerset Rd. (Lun. Co.), and May 10-13 Brier (2). (Late report from Frank Hennessey in Economy states Winter Wrens "returned April 27 - very numerous" there - so perhaps there is hope after all!) No other species of wren was seen.

MIMIDS

MOCKINGBIRD numbers were decidedly down with only five reported. Viz: March 25 Wine Harbour, April 23 and 30 at Pleasant Lake and Liverpool, May 18 Economy, and an overwintering mocker at the McLaren's in Halifax (last seen in March).

Two GREY CATBIRDS were early arrivals in April, one at Pleasant Lake on 25th and the other at Tusket on 27th (MR&CRKA). Twelve days elapsed before another was reported from Brier I. May 9. There were two more there on 11th. In the next week Catbirds were seen at Cape Sable, Black River, Broad Cove, McKinnon's Neck and Russel Lake. By the third week in May they had reached Round Hill and Antigonish and thereafter were fairly general in their usual habitats.

Four BROWN THRASHERS were on Brier I. May 10 decreasing to one the next day and none on the 12th. May 11 saw one thrasher on Cape Sable, and on 21st one was at Pleasant Lake. The only other was seen in Halifax on May 27 by James McLaren.

ROBINS THROUGH KINGLETS.

AMERICAN ROBINS arrived steadily, mostly in fives and tens with very few of the usual large "waves". CRKA saw a robin as early as March 16 at Tusket which he feels was a spring arrival, the winter flocks having disappeared three weeks previously. In nearby Hebron Joyce Purchase and Shirley Cohrs saw three "bright, new and tired" robins on March 18. From then until the 30th they appeared at divers places from Yarmouth Co, through Lunenburg, Annapolis, Halifax, Cumberland and Guysborough Counties, in that order. The only flocks of more than five were 50 on 28th at St. Esprit, CB, (!) and 10 on 29th at Eel Brook. In April density thickened but still without occurrences of any large flocks. PRD wrote that by April 10 numbers had doubled in SW Yarmouth Co., but without any large influx of birds. On 9th there were 30-40 at Round Hill and by 20th PRD was reporting five flocks of 6-12 per flock going through inland Yarmouth Co., the first "good wave" seen there. The only really large concentration was at Crichton Park School in Dartmouth on April 25 when 100+ were seen (FLL). Evidence of an early nest comes from the Bowers at Turtle Lake who observed a robin feeding young on May 11.

From Brier I. BMact. reported a WOOD THRUSH singing on May 10 and again (he feels it may have been a different bird) May 11th.

HERMIT THRUSHES arrived slowly and quietly in small numbers, no flocks or concentrations being noted anywhere. Early Hermits were at Canard (2) and at St. Margaret's Bay area (1) on April 22, (BLF, Vernon Keddy), Turtle Lake on 23rd, Markland on 24th (Bowers & MWH), Anna Co. and Cole Harbour on 28th (MCC, FLL) and Truro May 1 (RB). They were heard at Wine Harbour on May 4th and had reached Cape Breton by 16th (NSBS). They were well established in good numbers in Yarmouth Co. by mid-May (PRD) and seem as usual in other areas.

Although Phyllis Dobson writes that there are very few SWAINSON'S THRUSHES around Yarmouth Co. this year there were more reports sent in than usual, although from different areas and usually of single birds. CRKA heard a very early Swainson's at McKinnon's Neck May 8 and IAM had one at Pt. Pleasant Park in Halifax on 12th. Single birds were at the Tobetic Sanctuary on 15th, Cape Sable on 17th, Mooseland 18th, Russel Lake and C.B. on 19th. On 20th they were in Lunenburg, Colchester and Guysborough Counties. A couple were heard during the Hants Co. trip on 26.

There were five specific reports of VEERYS in May and a note from PRD that she had heard them in several places around Yarmouth Co. by the end of the month.

One EASTERN BLUEBIRD - a male - stopped on Cape Sable May 12.

There was also one BLUE-GREY GNATCATCHER. This was at Petite Riviere on May 19. Hearing a soft vireo-like and unknown (to her) song, JSC investigated and found the bird flycatching around a low bushy area, occasionally singing but more often giving its "buzz" or "wheeze". It remained there for the rest of the day but had gone on 20th.

KINGLETS THROUGH STARLING.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS disappeared from Yarmouth Co. in February and up to press time had not returned. A few sightings were made in April at New Ross and N.W. Pubnico on 14th and Paradise on 17th. Two were seen at New Ross on May 2 and they were heard singing on Hants Co. trip.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS are back, but whether numbers continue to recover from the decimation of the winter 1976-77 remains to be seen. Early Ruby-crowns were heard at Turtle Lake on April 22. On 24th there was a sizable wave in Yarmouth Co. where MWH saw three flocks of 8-10, 5-6 and 15-20 in the Markland-Forchu areas. They were in Halifax, Kings and Colchester Counties by 25th, Guysborough on 27th and Lunenburg Co. by 28th.

Not so common as spring transients several WATER PIPITS were on Brier on May 10 and 12 (2 on 10th, 1 on 12th).

The last (and only for this period) flock of BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS was at Bass River where there were 14 March 2 (fide FS).

There were six reports of CEDAR WAXWINGS stretching from March 3 to May 28. In March there were 3 at Paradise on 3rd, 11 at Liverpool on 23rd, and 100 at Sydney on 27th (Morses, RJ, & HH). In April there was a small flock in Rockingham on 26th and 7 in Liverpool on 27th (MAC,RJ). The May birds were 2 in Dartmouth on 28th (FLL).

The bonanza of NORTHERN SHRIKES spilled over from winter to early spring with many reports for March and April from all corners of the province. Allowing for duplication there were at least 30 birds seen and perhaps 40 or more. They chased Snow Buntings and formed welcoming committees for in-coming Song Sparrows lurking in hedges and low scrub. Latest seen was one at Economy April 25.

Two LOGGERHEAD SHRIKES were mentioned, one at Forties (Lun. Co.) April 16 (Fred Payne) and one at Hebron April 21 (MR).

The STARLING is a partial migrant here and several correspondents noted numbers building up in March and early April. There was an increase of 45+ in Antigonish town on March 3 (RDC,SPF). At Pleasant Lake a flock of 100 around March 21, decreasing to 40 by 27th and 10 by 29th (MR). New flocks arrived at Glace Bay on 30th and on the same day a flock of 200 was at Dartmouth (ELM,FLL). A flock of 40 dug for food in the lawn at 23 Baker St.(Yarmouth), followed by several smaller flocks on succeeding days. The Cohrs in Halifax have Starlings nesting in an old hollow tree and feel that this particular pair are indeed either gifted or psychotic having a repertoire far surpassing most species. In the course of one day they made a credible effort at being Pine Grosbeaks for a while before changing into Wood Pewees. After lunch it was immature Herring Gulls with bits of Red-winged Blackbird thrown in. Then came a Cat-bird and an occasional Grackle, with all the while the usual starling whistles, squawks and screams for good measure.

VIREOS AND WARBLERS

There were three vireos this spring: the first, a stranger, a YELLOW-THROATED VIREO was seen on Brier I. May 11 by Bruce Mactavish and John Kearney. Of the other two, the SOLITARY was reported first from King's County: 1 on May 7, by BLF, followed by 1, May 8 and 2, May 9 from Yarmouth County (PRD,DJd'E,CRKA) and 1, May 9 from Economy (FLS). At Brier I on May 10, 30+ were counted by BDM, none left there by May 12, when they had become general on the mainland. First dates for the other, the RED-EYED VIREO, were May 8, when RSd'E saw one at Lr.W.Pubnico and May 9 when RB noted one at the Park in Truro. By May 15 there were 5 counted in the Tobetic Sanctuary by BCS, FJP and PJA-S; and by another week distribution was general and numbers "normal".

We get impatient for the Wood Warblers, which somehow seem to be the essence of spring for many of us, but this year we had not long to wait. They all came, all twenty-two of them plus two extras and they were if anything early arriving. The trouble is, we expect them too soon. There were six species here in April, some in very small numbers, which is as expected, all the rest by May 15, except the Canada, not seen until May 19. Bruce Mactavish spent a week on Brier I. and wrote: May 10th was the big day. A big wave of birds had come that very warm night and the north point of Brier took on a Point Pelee style the first two hours of daylight as 100's of warblers (15 species), orioles, grosbeaks, flycatchers, etc., flew northward off the island. I saw 95 species May 10 and I missed some common birds such as bluejay and sparrowhawk. My total list of species for my stay was 119... Bruce's "big day" led to a mainland "big day" on May 12, when 16 species or warbler were seen, at 36 localities. May 9 there were 7 species in 14 places; May 10, 15 in 23 places; May 11, 9 in 13 places. That was the week to wait for - May 8-15, for the birds were coming not as 1's and 2's but in large numbers, all anxious to establish their territories, so that the chorus of song was soon practically deafening!

Following is the run-down of arrival dates and places this spring: BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER, May 3, Sandy Bottom Lake, Anna. Co. (MCC), May 8-12, 16 reports, 50+ birds; TENNESSEE, May 14, Economy (FLS) 3-4 birds noted and May 27, Brooklyn, Queens Co. (FLL) 2 birds seen - all reports so far; NASHVILLE WARBLER: May 8, Yar. Co. (PRD), May 10-15, 21 birds reported from 7 places; PARULA WARBLER, May 3, Markland (MWH), May 8-14, 20 birds in 12 localities; YELLOW WARBLER, 3 April dates, 1 at Ligan April 26 (HH) and 1 at Cole Harbour (FLL), a pair, April 28 at Economy (FLS), main arrival May 10-18, 47 in 17 places; MAGNOLIA WARBLER, 10 on May 10 at Brier I. (BDM), main arrival May 11-21, 15 birds in 11 places; YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (Myrtle), 1, April 14 at Lusby Marsh (CD), main arrival April 22-29, 240 in 16 places (includes the 200 heard at Russel Lake early May by FLL); BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER, May 8, Markland (MWH), main arrival May 9-13 (seven reports for May 9), 61 from 12 places; BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, May 10, Brier (BDM), only 6 birds seen at 6 places until May 23, when they are called "rather common" at New Ross by KNK; CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER, May 12, Wolfville Ridge (BLF), main arrival May 15 to 25, only 17 in 11 places; BAY-BREASTED WARBLER, 4 birds on Brier I. (BDM), only 4 other reports, from Russel Lake, 2 from Truro and Economy, the last reading "no arrival date but numerous in woods by May 22 (FLS); BLACKPOLL WARBLER, May 10 at Cape Sable (SS) and at Brier, 10 birds on the 10th (BDM), 5 other reports of 16 birds, 12 of them at Albro Lake, Dartmouth (FLL); PRAIRIE WARBLER, this stray seen at Cape Sable May 11 and 12 by the Smith family, Sid, Betty June, Locke and Beverley; PALM WARBLER, our other early one, April 22 at MacKinnon's Neck, Yar. Co., seen by MWH,DBK and PRD, also on April 22 at Cape Sable

(S&BJS), 2 there on the 25th, from which date until May 17, 58 birds noted in 11 places, including the 25 on Brier May 10 (BDM). CAPE MAY WARBLER, only 4 reports, 1, May 8 at Cape Forchu (MWH,MAN,EK), 7 May 10 on Brier (none there by May 12, BDM), 5-6, May 16 at Economy (FLS), and 1, May 18 at Truro (EER); BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER, May 8, Brier I. (Wick Lent), from then until May 28, 14 in 6 places, then called "rather common" in the Lake Holden area, New Ross, by KNK. OVERBIRD, an early record, April 25 of one bird on Georges Bank (RSd'E), main arrival May 10-17, 29 birds in 13 places, thereafter widespread; NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, very early date April 22, 1 at Conrad's Beach (K&WT), then from May 10 (at Economy) to May 24 at New Ross, 8 in 5 places; CONNECTICUT WARBLER (possible) May 21 on the Somerset Road, Lun. Co. - JS and JL Cohrs were "attracted by an unfamiliar song, located the bird in a high tamarack, light medium - an all gray head, large heavy-looking bird, large white eye-ring, song resembled that of the Connecticut on the record"; MOURNING WARBLER, 1, May 9 at Paradise (JM), our only report so far; COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, 1, May 6, Glace Bay (EMM), 1 male, May 8, Cape Sable (S&BJS), 1, May 9 at Markland (MWH), and 3, May 10 at Brier (BDM) - most Yellowthroats come in at the bottom of the province - main arrival May 12-16, 26 birds from 13 places, very common after that; WILSON'S WARBLER, 1, May 12 at Markland (MWH), 1, May 13 at Albro Lake (FLL), 2, May 16 at MacKinnon's Neck (CRKA), 2, May 17 at Cape Sable (SS) and 1, May 18 at Economy (FLS,PH), all the Wilson's noted so far; CANADA WARBLER, 4 birds seen on May 19: 1 at Green Bay (JSC) 1 at Sandy Bottom Lake (MCC) and 2, at Russel Lake, Dartmouth by FLL; AMERICAN REDSTART, 2 early dates, 1 on April 30 at the Georges Bank (RSd'E) and 1, May 2 at W. Pubnico (DJd'E), then from May 8 to 16 there were 27 birds reported from 13 places around the province.

By the end of May most of the warblers had not reached Cape Breton. Those seen were the Black-and-White, Yellow, Yellow-rumped and Redstart. All but the Yellow were seen on the May 19 Field Trip, the Yellow also noted April 26 at Ligan (HH), May 9 at Indian Brook (Don MacDonald) and at Glace Bay on May 20 by G. Crowell. Earliest dates of arrival in Nova Scotia for all but four of the warblers came from the Brier-Yarmouth-Cape Sable regions, the four exceptions being, according to our this year's records, the Yellow-rumped, Chestnut-sided, Northern Waterthrush and Canada warblers, the first three of these favoring the Amherst-Economy area, the Canada only (so far) in the Halifax-Dartmouth and Valley regions. Our reports came in from active birders in every county in the province, and although sightings are to some extent a matter of chance the above "run-down" does suggest the distribution of our warblers in place and time for this spring. I wish we had space to include all reports, everyone of which was valuable in making up this summary.

ICTERIDS

Early BOBOLINKS were seen on May 8 at Lr.W. Pubnico, May 9 at Canard and May 10 at Brier I., 4 there May 10, 10 May 11 and only one left May 12 (DJd'E, BLF, BDM). Most other reports were for May 11, 12 and 13, with 2, May 16 at Cape Sable and four reports for May 17 at Chegoggin, Paradise, Musquodoboit and Port Joli (MWH, J&BM, AR and KN), making this the largest (recorded) arrival day. In Cape Breton Roberta Fraser saw a Bobolink on May 16, others seen later, May 19, on the NSBS Field Trip. Bobolinks continue to increase in number in SW Nova Scotia. The EASTERN MEADOWLARK population remains about the same, this spring there were four reports: 1, March 24 at Mt. Denson (BCS), 1, April 20 at Hemeon Head, Shel. Co. (RJC), 2, May 10 at Brier I. (BDM) and 1, May 15 at Pubnico (E&VH).

A few REDWINGED BLACKBIRDS chose the southern route, 3 seen March 4th at Lr.W.Pubnico (DJd'E) and 1, March 8 at Cape Sable (BJS). On March 16 a flock of 25 males (Bright-winged) lit on a field at Upper Nappan (EEC), and at the garden of Con Desplanque in Amherst 2 Redwings were present March 23, 20 there March 24. During the week between, small groups had appeared up and down the Valley and by April 2, a flock of 12+ had reached Pleasant Lake (CRKA), both males and females present in this flock. On May 20 at Brier I. Eric Mills noted Redwings still migrating, of 10 present on the island "2 females, flying high over Northern Point were headed north for New Brunswick".

An ORCHARD ORIOLE, a well-marked immature male, was seen May 10-11 at Lockeport, identified by George D. Perry and Robert M. Turner. A few days later, May 16, a similar bird, immature male Orchard Oriole - "green plumage, black bib" - landed beside Shirley and Lise Cohrs as they sat taking tea in the garden in Halifax. After making sure it was recognized by the Newsletter editor, it flew off. The NORTHERN ORIOLE made a landing at Cape Sable April 30, at Sable River May 2, and 30 were on Brier I. May 10 to greet Bruce Mactavish, but left almost immediately, none seen there May 11, 12 or 13. From that date on up to May 28 reports have come in of these orioles seen at Great Village (EC), Sheffield Mills and Paradise in the Valley (PJA-S, J&BM), Port Joli (JN), West Pubnico (BH) and Yarmouth (MWH) where they are now "all over town".

Eleven reports of the RUSTY BLACKBIRD is quite good. Reports come from expected wooded areas, the first from Lr. Economy, March 23 (FH), the next from Turtle Lake near Keji, March 25 (N&TB) and from Orangedale in Cape Breton March 31 (JG). One more, March 30 at Drain Lake, Halifax Co. (BCS), then the April and May dates indicate general distribution and usual sparse numbers. At Cape Sable Rustys arrived singly through April and one in May on the 8th - on the 7th a blackbird was noted by Sid and Betty June Smith which they have designated a BREWER'S, a rarity in the northeast.

Frank Hennessey wrote "the COMMON GRACKLE, back at Lower Economy March 17". Four further reports, all dated March 24 and five dated March 25 account for 170-180 birds, distributed from Antigonish to Argyle Head, from Amherst to Lockeport. Four Grackles were noted in Glace Bay March 28; 20, March 31 at Orangedale and 80+, a flock, April 28, by the NSBS Field Party on that day. Flocks were small along the South Shore and in the Yarmouth area, noted as such by Gordon MacLeod, Keith Keddy and M.W. Hilton.

The BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD, present all winter, comes to feeders in the spring, a pair up to a small flock, about the time Juncos and Song Sparrows put on their breeding plumage. This sinister behavior was noted universally this spring, throughout April and May - when the Warblers arrive as well. The only flock of which we have a record is a flock of 40-50 birds seen April 17 on the Salmon River Road, Truro, by Ross Baker. Frank Hennessey had a female Cowbird at his feeder May 26, with a silver band on the lower right leg and wonders if this has any special meaning -?

TANAGER

Annie K. Raymond of Smith's Cove has written that her neighbor, Isabel Cossitt, a longtime student of birds, told her of watching a SCARLET TANAGER "stay around for a good meal at dusk the last day of the ice storm, Feb.28". Regular reports of these tanagers were three this spring: 1, May 15 at Tusket (MBA); 1, "in May" at Great Village, Enid Cooper per FLS, and one male each day May 10 and 12 at Brier I. (Bruce Mactavish who saw them said they were recognizably different birds).

FINCHES, GROSBEAKS

We have unearthed another pair of CARDINALS, thanks to AKR at Smith's Cove, whose neighbor, Isabel Cossitt has been feeding the pair winter and spring, Feb. 26 to March 14. The birds left when warmer weather came. John Cohrs was the only one to see the Yarmouth Cardinal on the March 18 trip - that is, the Cardinal at the Saunders in Hebron, seven miles up from Yarmouth. There was a good flight this year of the ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK, the first to arrive, two males on April 22 at Liverpool (RSJ), one other April date, 2 males at Pubnico, April 30 (stayed for two days (E&VH). By May 2, there were 2 males at Allendale (RMT), May 3 at female at Cape Forchu (MWH), the same day another female at Chestnut St., Yarmouth (MAN), and by the 8th, 2 males at Markland (Cape Forchu). We have three reports for the 11th (1, Economy, 1, Bass River, FLS and 4, Port Joli, JA), three for the 12th at Wolfville Ridge, Tusket and New Ross - where KNK noted them eating poplar catkins. (Evidently they have a wide range of foods, as in Yarmouth one of the males was observed watching Purple Finches eat from a hanging sunflower feeder, and shortly using it himself - a curious sight, as the feeder was designed for chickadees and too small for finches, let alone grosbeaks.) By May 13 Norm and Thelma Bowers had 6 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in an apple tree near the house at Turtle Lake; by the 16th they were in Antigonish (RDC); by the 17th in Paradise (B&JM) and that day a male noted at Cape Sable (BJS); and thereafter widespread. Bruce Mactavish had found 35+ of these grosbeaks on Brier I. May 10, only three there by the 11th, two by the 12th, the two "big" days on the mainland.

Another migrant, but a stray in Nova Scotia, a BLUE GROSBEAK was present for a period of time at Yarmouth, mid-May, at the Fernald Allens'. The INDIGO BUNTING, another "regular" stray, came in good numbers this spring first seen on March 28, when one, a male, flew into a window at Smith's Cove and killed itself - subsequently sent to the N.S. Museum by the finder, John MacDonald (AKR). From April 10 on (a male at W.Pubnico, TDD'E) to May 20, another male at Port Hebert (RMT) altogether seven males and one female of this species have been reported, distribution general.

The story on the EVENING GROSBEAKS seems to be that they were present winter and spring in usual numbers in the Border regions and in the Valley, scarce in Cape Breton and very scarce in Yarmouth Co. They were last seen May 27 (small flock) in Antigonish (RDC,SPF). Two possible nesting reports come from St. Croix, Hants Co. where Margaret Clark says two pairs are still feeding the backyard and "they seem to be paired as the males will drive off the other male and the females chase each other away. Two come, feed, and leave together"; and at Paradise where Jean and Bill Morse had 50 of these grosbeaks all winter, now down to 12, "nesting in the woods". The PURPLE FINCH, also present the year round, but more fickle even than the Evening Grosbeak confounded our predictions again and did not arrive at feeders until well on into the spring, in most places. its progress around the province went as follows: 6, March 1, Liverpool (RSJ) and 10, March 1, Yarmouth (MWH); 1, March 25 at Eel Brook March 31 at W. Pubnico, April 2 at Paradise, April 24 at Amherst, April 25 at Dartmouth and April 26 at Guysborough and in Cape Breton. In all of these places and many others these finches quickly increased in numbers, the earlier males soon outnumbered by brown females and/or immatures, at feeders in the range of 2-20 total, and a gradual thinning out by the end of May when they disappeared into the woods to nest presumably, at any rate to join the roadside singers, well on into June.

The PINE GROSBREAK and the PINE SISKIN have both received usual mention, the latter more than usual - in fact, it has made a sort of comeback. We have 17 reports from 15 areas, of flocks varying from 3 to, for example, 15+ at Mahoney's Beach, May 18 (SPF,RDC) and 30+ at a Halifax garden, May 17 (JSC). The Siskins showed up rather suddenly at feeders all over the place in early March, usually accompanying the Goldfinch flocks. As usual the AMERICAN GOLDFINCH was with us during the winter in good numbers near wooded sections, scanty elsewhere. In March and again in May there was a boost in flock size, the latter groups showing fine new plumage. Goldfinches were well reported from Cape Breton, and in all, provincewide, we had thirty reports sent in this spring, adding up to 317 individual birds seen.

We have only one report of the RED CROSSBILL, a pair on the ground at the edge of a wood road at Turtle Lake, March 4, Norm and Thelma Bowers. The WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL was still around March through May: 7, March 1, 15, March 10, 20 March 21 and 15 March 23 at Pleasant Lake (MR); 15, March 3 at W. Pubnico (DJD'E), 12, March 24, Morris Lake, Dartmouth and 1, March 29 at South Dartmouth (FLL); "heard" March 29, 5-6 April 25, "heard" May 4 and 18 at Wine Harbour (GM); 3, April 14 at Middle W. Pubnico (DJD'E); 1 male May 11 and 1 female May 12 at Brier I. (BDM); "one or more" heard May 23 at Moose River, Cumb. Co. (FLS)

SPARROWS

Heading this list are four members of a visiting family, the RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE, three males and one female seen on Brier I. May 10 by BDM. The next, the SAVANNAH, SABLE ISLAND RACE (Ipswich) was well reported, 30-50 counted at Martinique Beach April 8 by John Cohrs, others seen up to April 22, mostly at Conrad's Beach (where Ian McLaren saw his first April 1, and incidentally noted a banded Ipswich April 13) and at Hartlen's Point nearby (FLL,KNK). The SAVANNAH SPARROW (nominate race) was also well reported, from 18 regions, the first migrant noted April 12 at Eastern Passage, Hfx. Co., by Ian McLaren. (Three of these sparrows had wintered at Conrad's and Cole Harbour, IAM). On April 13 Frank Hennessey saw a Savannah at Great Village, Col. Co. - his first - then on April 22 three reports came in, one of them of 7 of these birds at Cape Sable, where by May 20 some appeared to be nesting (SS). From April 22 on each day brought a report, reaching Cape Breton by May 2, and the night of May 19-20 they were "buzzing all over the place in the fog and rain at Petite Riviere"(JSC).

As of June 1 the Sharp-tailed Sparrow has not been reported.

Only two reports of the VESPER SPARROW is usual, one bird each seen April 29 at Lakeville (PJA-S) and May 11 at Lr. W. Pubnico (DJD'E). There were 20 reports of the DARK-EYED JUNCO (not seen all winter in some regions, abundant in others). Arrival time in the west (Amherst, Economy was March 23-26(FH,CD,EEC), at Antigonish March 1 (RDC,SPF), at Wine Harbour March 19 (GM), at Bridgetown "early March"(TW), at Cape Sable March 15 "a sight for sore eyes" according to BJS. in Annapolis Co. March 18-25(MPSB,MCC,B&JW,WEW), at Hammonds Plains Road March 28, a week or two longer in the New Ross area (KNK). In Cape Breton Juncos were around all winter(as also in Halifax, Dartmouth-Rockingham and also Yarmouth-Pubnico regions), migrants appearing in March and a flight passing by as late as May 19.

Spring Things

During my late teens, spent in the southern part of Quebec, it was my custom and preoccupation to journey forth each evening at dusk and return just at or before the light of the next day, during July and August, the purpose of my comings and goings was playing in a jazz group. It was during these comings and goings that I first noticed the harsh peent and booming sound produced by some bird or other creature up in the sky.

It was many years later that I saw this creature lying lengthwise on a limb in an oak tree in my backyard one morning. Being late for work I gave it only a quick glance and judged it to be some type of woodpecker with which I was not familiar. However, being a member of the NSBS and taught to question each identification my day was long and troubled until I came home and rustled through the pages of a bird guide, which did not do more than leave doubt in my mind that it could be a Common Nighthawk. However, my son and his friend came to my rescue a week later with a dead specimen, fresh in hand, found near a school with a gravelled roof. On investigating the site, lo and behold, the harsh peents and booms. Here the sky was alive with the creatures of my youth and I knew at last what they looked like.

The story behind the picture taken by Ann Landry is more interesting. It was taken with the bird on its usual nestless nest which in this case is composed of the bark and chips which form the debris left by many piles of wood consumed by campers at the Jeremy Bay campground at Kejimikujik (locally abbreviated to Kedge) National Park. The nesting was successful despite the daily intrusion of men, women and children, accompanied on occasion by dogs or cats. This was way back in July 1976, long before fuel shortages were heard or thought of except by erudite energy economists working in the seclusion of statistical support of economic thesis. Few were they that observed the nighthawk in the woodpile. Thanks to Ann Landry for her nicely recorded observation.



common nighthawk

landry



parula warbler

corbett

hermit thrush

williams

palm warbler

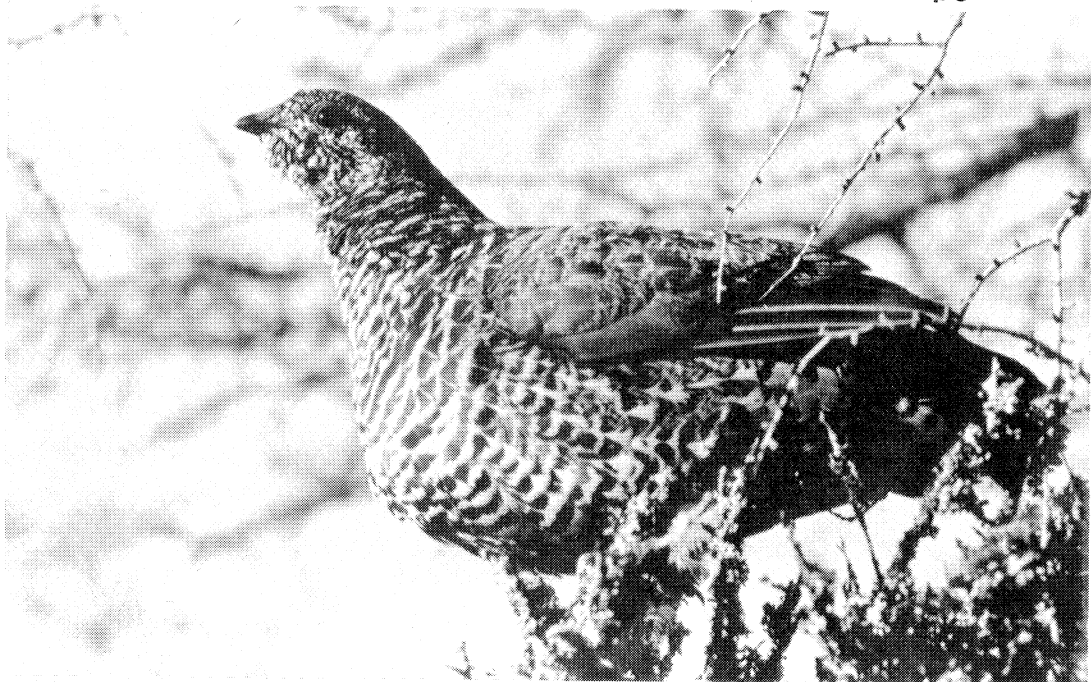
hope





baby ovenbirds
spruce grouse

williams
hope



Here is he who nests in beard-moss. The Parula photographed by Cary Corbett has struck a pose often used by painters of birds.

The Hermit Thrust was photographed incubating eggs on its ground nest in the hardwood forests by Sherman Williams who was a naturalist at Kedge in 1971.

According to my wife the photograph of the Palm Warbler taken by Peter Hope is one of the finest to appear in the Newsletter. The location is Kedge and the time June 1976. And the pine appears to have up to nine inches of new growth. Alas what I would give for a load of Kedge soil.

The roofed-over nest of the ovenbird is not as conspicuous in the photograph of the three nestlings as it usually is. However the ground location and the response of the birds ever-ready for nourishment is typical. Sherman Williams photographed this nest in Kedge hardwood forest in June 1971.

The last photo, taken by Peter Hope, is of a Spruce Grouse. Peter took this picture in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park on the road to Branch Pond.

For those who at this very moment are burning up rolls of film accompanied by the clicking of shutters, the whir of motor drives and the precise noises produced by solid state cash registers, it is with great anticipation that we await your submissions for the next Newsletter. Best of luck and many thanks to those who have contributed and to those who enjoy looking at the pictures.

Ralph Connor



Lingering TREE SPARROWS were noted up to March 10 in Yarmouth Co. (MR,DJd'E), on into April at Round Hill: 7, April 6 and 3, April 13 (WEW) and at Amherst: 1, April 6 and 3, April 7 (CD). Twenty-three reports of the CHIPPING SPARROW is good news. There were three individuals way out in front, one seen March 30-31 at 23 Baker St., Yarmouth (MWH), one at Eel Brook April 1 (PRD) and one in Glace Bay April 22 (EMM). Other arrivals dated from May 2 at West Springhill (near Sandy Bottom Lake,MP SB) to May 23, several areas. The greatest concentration of reports was around May 9-12; in Cape Breton, May 19 (SM). The largest number of birds noted in any one report was the 25 counted by Bruce Mactavish on Brier I. May 10.

The "splinter migration" of the WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW this year was small and lasted about two weeks - the first seen was 1 at Cape Sable May 2, the last in the same place, 3 birds, May 17 (SS). Between these dates there were 4 more at Cape Sable; 1, May 11 at Markland (MAN&BCoombs), 2, May 12-13 at Economy (EPS,FLS,PH); 1, May 12 at East Mapleton (PH); and at Brier I. 2, May 9-10, 3, May 12 and 8, May 13 (Wick Lent, JKearney & BDM). The WHITE-THROATED SPARROW was well reported, 24 reports of up to 400 birds seen. Like the Junco, many Whitethroats wintered in some regions, and it is difficult to pinpoint the first wave of migrants. It is probably safe to put it in mid-April, when a few appeared at Cape Sable, Port Joli, Wine Harbour, also Bridgewater, New Ross, Paradise and West Springhill. At Cape Sable other waves occurred on May 2 (50), May 7 (40+) and May 8 (150) "new birds". In Cape Breton first dates were mentioned from May 13 to May 22 (SM,EEM). Fulton Lavender wrote on May 24 "as of this writing (Whitethroats) are at least 25% more common than last spring".

The FOX SPARROW dipped down into Nova Scotia on its way across the isthmus "on March 24 in large numbers, for instance on April 7 had 25+ at the feeder and several hundred in the area of the house; April 21 was about the end of them". This was a note from Frank Hennessey, from Lower Economy, head of the Bay of Fundy. There were 16 other reports, but of 1's and 2's, scattered birds spread out from the main invasion, the first, 1, March 23 at Liverpool (RSJ), the largest flock, 7, April 7 at Wolfville Ridge where they stayed about 10 days at the feeder of BLF, the last 1, April 23 at Cape Sable (SS). At Amherst EEC and CD saw 1 and 2 of these sparrows only, and in Cape Breton there were only three reports in March, one in April, each of one bird (JG), "missed the main migration flocks" according to Sara MacLean.

There are 3 reports of the LINCOLN'S SPARROW, of 1, May 10 at Brier I. (BDM); "first heard May 15, noisy since" at Wine Harbour (GM), and 1, May 26 at Albro Lake, Dartmouth (FLL). Eleven reports, well distributed, of the SWAMP SPARROW run from April 21, one seen at West Pubnico (DJd'E) to May 18, 4 birds at Antigonish Wildlife Management Area (SPF,RDC). Two were seen at Cape Sable May 17, probably still coming in on that date.

The third and last of our Melospiza species, the SONG SPARROW, received 35 reports this year, as usual our most reported bird and a real harbinger of spring. Song Sparrows started singing in February and are still in good voice, the first week of June. To establish arrival of migrants, again it seems safest to look to Cape Sable and adjacent mainland, and find mid-March on, a cluster of reports which represent new birds almost certainly: 3(one singing) March 14 Eastern Passage (FLS), 2, March 16 (Pubnico (E&VH), 1, singing, bright plumage, on the wharf at Yarmouth - no doubt hitched a ride on the ferry - March 21 (PRD), 8, March 22, Cape Sable (SS) and 2 new "bright" ones at Glenwood the same day, in full song, then March 23 found 4 new ones at West Springhill, Anna. Co.(MP SB) and 2 new ones at Dartmouth (FLL), on March 24 four more reports, March 25, four more, and so on to the end of the month, with an April wave

at Cape Sable to continue swelling the ranks. We are plentifully supplied with Song Sparrows this year, now well into their nesting activities, which should meet with success this mild, gentle and insect-ridden spring.

Michael Rymer has supplied us with our only report of a LAPLAND LONGSPUR. A few of these accompanied the Snow Buntings at Egypt all winter, the last one noted - or its absence noted March 13. This was the last time also that MR sighted the SNOW BUNTINGS. There were five April sightings of these birds: two in New Ross (KNK), one at Cape Sable (SS), one (of 4 birds) at Antigonish (RDC,SPF), two in Cape Breton (HH,RBF), one in Economy, and one, the very last May 1, also at Economy (FLS).

PRD Ed.

This completes the Spring Bird Report, based on the records of the following members of the society, to whom our sincere thanks:

Jeanne Addelson; C.R.K.Allen; M.B.Allen; Fernald Allen; Daryl Amirault; Peter J. Austin-Smith; Ross Baker; Roy Blakeburn; Norm and Thelma Bowers; George R. Boyd; Marion P.S.Brown; E. Chant; Margaret C. Cheesman; Roland D.Chaisson; Margaret A. Clark; Evelyn E.Coates; John L. Cohrs, J.Shirley Cohrs, Lise Cohrs; Eric H.Cooke; B. Coombs; Enid Cooper; Otis Cossitt; Jenny E. Costello; Ethel Cra-thorne; Russell J. Crosby; G. Crowell; Delisle J. d'Entremont; R.S. d'Entremont; Ted C. D'Eon; Con Desplanque; Gerald E. Dickie; P.R. Dobson; A. Ferguson; S.P.Flemming; B.L.Forsythe; Roberta B. Fraser; J. Gardner; Edgar and Vernita Hamilton; Del & Gil Hancock; Barbara Hayward; C.W.Helleiner; Frank Hennessey; M.W.Hilton; Hedley Hopkins; Ralph S. Johnson; John Kearney; Keith N., Vivian, and Vernon Keddy; Evangeline Killam; D.B.Kirk; Fulton L. Lavender; Wickerson Lent; Ian A. McLaren; Sara MacLean; Edie M. MacLeod; Olive and Gordon MacLeod; Bruce D. Mactavish; J. McNicol; Rainer, Sandra, Jan Meyerowitz; Eric L. Mills; John Mills; David Milner; the Jim Morrrows; Bill and Jean Morse; Sandra C. Myers; K. Nicholson; Everett Nickerson; G.B. Nickerson; Margaret A. Nickerson; Flora Otto; Fred J. Payne; George D. Perry; Merrill Prime; Joyce Purchase; Annie K. Raymond; Frank F. Robertson; Albert and Ella E. Roland; J. Russell; Michael Rymer; Barry C. Sabeau; Sid, Betty June, Locke and Beverley Smith; F.L. and Edgar P. Spalding; Arthur Spencer; Myrtle Stuart; Karl and Wendie Tay; Robert M. Turner; Terry Wentzell; W.E.Whitehead; Hazel Williamson.

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These reports depend on our correspondents and the sightings and records they send in. The editorial staff do have a problem however, with reports received after the deadline. Upon receipt of reports on the due day Dr. Dobson packages them and mails them out to the appropriate editors who then collate them and write up their section of the list. These sections are then sent to the Editor to be proofread, typed and prepared for the printer. It creates a real problem if late reports have to be sent on, sections of the list rewritten, etc., etc. The mails are slow, so please allow at least six days for your reports to reach Dr. Dobson.

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, Glenwood, Pleasant Lake.
Shelburne Co.	Cape Sable I., Lockeport, Matthews Lake.
Queen's Co.	Port Joli, Port Hebert, Turtle Lake, Caledonia.
Lunenburg Co.	Cherry Hill, Broad Cove, Petite Riviere, Green Bay, Crousetown, Crescent Beach, Bayport.
Halifax Co.	Three Fathom Harbour, Conrad's Beach, Lawrence-town, Cole Harbour, Mooseland.
Digby Co.	Brier I., Smith's Cove.
Colchester Co.	Economy, Brule, Bass River.
Annapolis Co.	Wilmot, Round Hill, Paradise, Sandy Bottom Lake, West Springhill.
King's Co.	Wolfville, Greenfield, Black River Lake.
Cumberland Co.	Lusby Marsh, Upper Nappan.
APBS	Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary
CBHNP	Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF REPORTS

Reports of fall migration for the January issue - November 30.

Please send reports of birds to Records Editor -

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

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

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

OIL SPILL

Much concern has been and is being felt by many of our members about the recent Kurdistan oil spill. The effect on birdlife has been widespread and devastating, affecting not only those birds thought of as seabirds, but other species as well. Members in Cape Breton saw some of the nightmare first hand and excerpts of their letters appear below. By and large the effect of the oil and of the clean-up operations on wildlife in general and birds in particular has been played down by the media so we are printing these accounts to bring the true picture to our readers.

- Ed.

"Undoubtedly you have thought of all of us Cape Breton bird watchers as well as the Cape Breton birds since the Kurdistan broke up. All that we learn from such an event is what we didn't learn from the previous one.

Even the weather would have been co-operative had they sent several tankers to suck up the floating oil. The cost once it hits the shore is much more than monetary. One pool of oil at Kempt Pt. (Rich.) which we can see from the house contained 40 unrecognizable birds (we saw 2 dead Gannets) and we suppose St. Esprit Island (and how many other islands) will not be cleared and become a graveyard for the cormorants which summer there.

The workers at the Point are smeared, actually coated, with black to upper breast height on their govt. issue yellow overalls and jackets. They have become so used to it that they don't realize that bystanders feel threatened when those clothes get too close. The oil sticks to the rocks and is difficult to move when the sun has been out a while.

We wish that they had started on the sand beaches here first because the oil sinks into the sand when it becomes warm, leaving a shadowy mark to show its passing. Of course, anything volatile can be released to the sands. The unwary can find themselves walking in it. The helicopters which have been flying back and forth undoubtedly miss much at this point. Perhaps they hope it will go away. Oil started coming in April 12.

When Pascal wrote that it takes only a drop of water to kill a man, perhaps - had he known of crude oil - he might have added one small blob of oil to kill a sea bird.

Not a very cheerful letter, but we thought you might be interested in a personal report from the area."

Sandra and Rainer Meyerowitz, St. Esprit
(April)

"The last place still to be cleared of oil is in the Heavy Water Plant area as the papers say - they forget to mention that the area is also the Bird Sanctuary and alive with birds - geese, ducks, blue heron, longspurs, crows, and smaller shorebirds most of the time. Hundreds have died because of the oil - even seals have been found dead near the shore of Big Glace Bay Lake which is part of the Sanctuary."

Eddie M. MacLeod, Glace Bay
(May)

"They're still at work on nearby beaches with more or less efficiency. For conscientious people it must be a frustrating job trying to clean uncleanable rocks. We are concerned about St. Esprit Island where there may be a clean-up soon. Rainer and Jan were out there in the kayak the other day (Jan was very impressed with the view) and nesting is going on. R. still has to see what kinds of eggs. Certainly any prolonged operation there (fly or boat in?) would be very disturbing during hatching.

We've just talked to the foreman of our crew here, over the phone, who is the daughter of one of our neighbors. I had spoken to her earlier about the island, that it would no doubt disturb the nests, and that the chances of cormorants and gulls (the two main or only nesting birds there) getting into oil which was ashore on the rocks were very small, while the chances of interrupted hatches or dying chicks (none had hatched by last Sat., May 12) were very great. Personally, I feel sure that sea birds get oiled by floating oil not by oil ashore, 9 out of 10, anyway. But the Coast Guard or Dept. of Env. say that the oil must be cleaned, regardless of what happens to the nests.

If the clean-up had been that thorough everywhere, they might have a point, but it has not. Several crews, for ex., have been working at Point Michaud (one of our most popular beaches in the country) and the blobs of missed oil are so numerous, it would be impossible to sit down on the sand w/o getting black. There are many reasons for this, too long to go into here."

Sandra Meyerowitz, St. Esprit
(May)

"On Easter Sunday the Kurdistan oil came in. The worst place on the whole coast is the Glace Bay Sanctuary. What a slaughter, it's indescribable. We were over there on May 19th, and after hundreds of men, shoulder to shoulder, for a month digging up oil, there is still a strong stench, and of course all the grass where the ducks nested is ruined. We saw one lovely heron in full breeding plumage, fouled with oil, he must have waded into it and got it on his breast. They seem to live less than 24 hours even if the oil is only a spot. They die of exhaustion from cleaning themselves, and of course, they ingest it in the process and are poisoned. Nothing is safe, the ducks, the geese, the pelagic birds of course. But the very eagles will pick up a crippled duck, the kingfishers dive into it, even the tree swallows feed on the fouled kelp, flies along the land-wash. It's like that horrible Grimm's fairy tale of someone who gets stuck to something by evil magic, and all the people who come to release him get stuck on, too. A nightmare-causing time, believe me."

Sara MacLean, Glace Bay



FIELD TRIP REPORTSAPRIL 8 - MARTINIQUE BEACH.

About 35 winter-weary and house-bound members started from Dartmouth at 8:15 a.m. on a raw day 0° with intermittent short flurries of snow or sleet and some sunny intervals. Stops at Sullivan's Pond yielded little but Salmon River Bridge gave excellent sightings of a Killdeer and a fine pair of Ring-necked Ducks. Martinique Beach was somewhat disappointing but the day was warmed by the first year's sightings for most present of four or more Great Blue Herons, a large number of Ipswich Sparrows, and a pathetic sight of a Sanderling and a Piping Plover keeping close company in the absence of any other shorebirds. The return via Rocky Run and Conrad's Beach gave the remaining party members good views of a Northern Shrike, a Black-headed Gull and three more Piping Plovers. A number of Gannets - up to 8 were sighted passing from south to north off the coast and well to sea.

Not a productive trip in terms of numbers but pleasant company on a relaxing day and enjoyable sightings of some of our eagerly awaited spring arrivals.

John Cohrs

MAY 19 - CAPE BRETON

May 19, 1979, turned out to be what any birder would consider perfect. Not much wind, so that the more fragile creatures weren't forced to hide in the shelter of the underbrush. Not too hot or cold for the field party. The flies were out, but they hadn't become determined enough yet to be a trial. The leaves still small, so that the little things couldn't conceal themselves behind them.

When one thinks of all the field days when one trudges along with eyes streaming tears, wind howling up coat sleeves every time one raises the binoculars, mud to the hocks, or snow to the fetlocks, yes - the nineteenth of May repaid us for all those contests of will against conditions.

Nine people gathered at the Glace Bay Sanctuary at 7:30 in the morning. That name - Sanctuary - has an ironical ring, considering the results of the Kurdistan spill. It was anything but a sanctuary for its inhabitants on April 15th, the day the oil came in. Nowhere along the whole coast was so badly fouled.

A month later, wonders have been done by the cleaning crews. Anyone unfamiliar with the place wouldn't see anything amiss. But the border of thick grass where the ducks nested had to go. I don't suppose there is a single duck nest there this year. A sickening stench of oil rises from the eel grass along the shallows. We didn't go out on the dry marsh, the Willets were claiming it, and the terns. One doesn't feel like tramping about in their territory right now, so we watched them from a distance. So sadly few ducks, but plenty of herons, one large handsome fellow in full panoply, but sad to say, oiled. He must have waded into a deep spot and got it on his breast. Poor thing, he was doing what all the birds do, cleaning, cleaning, cleaning until exhausted, and polluted by swallowing the oil from his own breast.

The date was just a little bit early for the warblers to reach Cape Breton, or at any rate the extreme eastern tip of the island. Not that there was any scarcity of warblers, just that there were only a few species. Myrtle Warblers were in throngs,

with a few Black and White Warblers and one Yellow; one pair of Redstarts. It wasn't that there was anything strange and wonderful about. I often think that perhaps we try too hard for the rarities - though of course there isn't any bigger thrill than to spot something rare - but that day was simply one to renew our acquaintance with the thrushes, sparrows, finches; bird neighbors who have been south for the winter and are now back home again with us.

At Homeville Bridge we saw Willets again, raising their lovely wings and posing like big butterflies.

Kingfishers were chasing each other overhead in courting play each time we stopped.

This particular route always takes in a visit to the historic Loyalist Church set in a spruce grove and overlooking Morien Bay. Chipping Sparrows and Juncos chirp their little songs there, chickadees swing through the mossy old branches, and the Great Cormorants were catching smelts in the channel inside Morien Bar.

On the return journey we got the reward for the delightful day's outing - there was a Glossy Ibis in the marsh at Homeville.

This party was made up of the following people: Otis Cossit, Sydney, Bertha and Hedley Hopkins, Sydney, Wallace MacDonald, Sydney, Francis MacKinnon, New Waterford, Sara MacLean (leader), Glace Bay, Edith MacLeod, Glace Bay, Pearl MacMillan, New Waterford, and Frank Robertson, New Waterford.

Sara MacLean

MAY 19 - HOPEWELL

Birders who gathered at Hopewell on Saturday, May 19, from Truro, Halifax, Pictou Co., etc., were treated to another of Harry Brennan's excellent field trips. Leaving promptly at 9:00 a.m., we spent some time investigating the possibilities in a large swampy area near a farm. There we were treated to a display by a Killdeer attempting to lead us away from the nest. Wings askew and tail fanned downward, lurching slowly away, the bird was unable to outwit Harry who soon pointed out the four eggs clustered in a shallow scrape in the surrounding gravel - though they were undistinguishable to most of us at first. Many other birds typical of marshy terrain started our day off well.

We were promised owls and owls we saw. Walking through a wood as quietly as a party of about 20 could and ignoring the strong odour of skunk, we were rewarded by the sight of two Great Horned Owl young peering at us from their high home. Apparently owls do not build their own nests, preferring abandoned crow's nests, for example, and this edifice had been constructed by Harry in a suitable location and habitat. Later, we were shown a nesting Saw-whet Owl which answered to a knock on the dead tree containing an old Pileated Woodpecker's nest cavity.

Climbing a hill over which a Kestrel was patrolling, Harry showed us a large nest box which he had placed there high in a tree. It was being utilized by the Kestrels and contained two eggs.

This is good warbler country, too, and several members were able to add good sightings or firsts to their life lists. In a tree beside a country road, we were all able to get a good view of a Parula pair, the female building her delicate-looking nest of Usnea moss with her mate singing near-by. This is the third year in which Parulas have nested in this same tree.

A beautiful warm sunny day, a friendly lunch in the park by St. Columba church, a list of over 50 species - another satisfying trip in Pictou County.

Joyce Purchase.

MAY 26 - HANTS COUNTY



There once was a Field Trip named Hants,
Where birders did gather and chance
To spy through the fog,
Grassy field, mud and bog,
Sixty-six different species, in wet pants!

That is to say the birders, not the birds, were in wet pants! The sign post said Mount Uniacke but the weather was typical of Yarmouth Field Trips in June. Undaunted 16 hardy birders showed up to faithfully follow their leader in search of warblers and other migratory birds that had returned but were reluctant to be heard and difficult to see in the early heavy foliage of this spring.

We missed spotting a Kingfisher, an American Bittern, and some of the sparrows as well as others usually seen but the rewards were worthy of the discomfort. Bob MacDonald had just finished stating that the Hummingbirds wouldn't be out on such a day, when his wife spotted two on the grounds of Uniacke House.

A Swainson's Thrush obliged us by remaining in or under the same tree long enough for all to compare its marking with the picture in the Field Guide.

The Snipe was in its usual pond surrounded by Redwinged Blackbirds, Bobolinks and Swallows - this time remaining on the ground for all to see and admire.

Jean Morse, from Paradise, was in another form of paradise when she not only heard but saw a Northern Waterthrush high in a tree in the picnic area of Smiley's Park. Two other Waterthrush were heard in other areas. The nests of the Yellow-shafted Flicker and the Redwinged Blackbird were found but most fascinating, perhaps, was watching the speed with which the female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was building her nest - at the same time her handsome mate was perched nearby apparently overseeing the construction of their nest.

When the rain continued steadily from midmorning on, it was decided to eliminate some stops and head for the President's home in Ste. Croix to get warm, dry out and partake of the usual. Ste. Croix had other rewards when a few birders explored the dykes and a back road to add six species to the list.

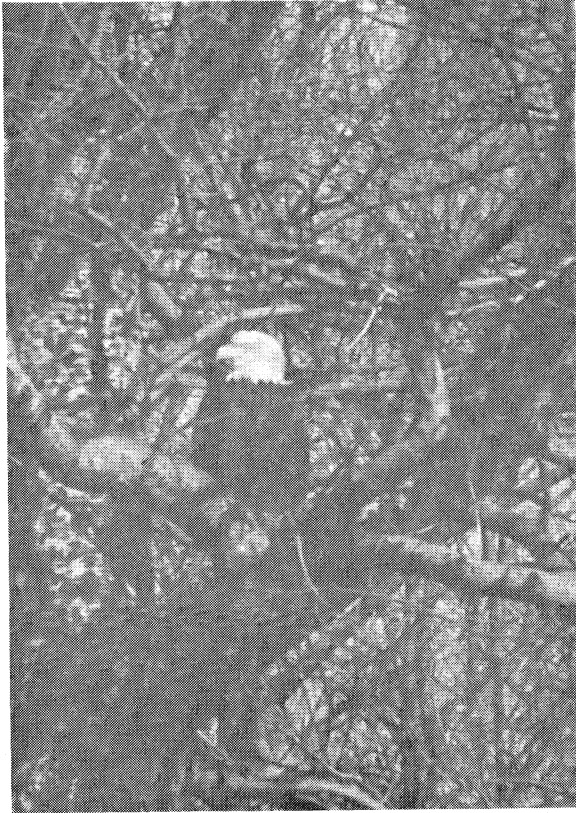
In spite of the weather, it was an extremely worthwhile Field Trip; and good to have three generations of the Hedley Hopkins' Family included, the Ross Bakers from Truro, as well as those from the Metro area of Halifax.

Margaret A. Clark

MAY 30 - EARLY MORNING WARBLER WALK.

The morning was, as is usual for these walks, foggy and cool. Seven of us set off through the lovely paths of Point Pleasant Park in Halifax, along with the joggers and dog-walkers. The birds, after a brief sunrise chorus, became disgruntled and stopped singing. Swishers were pressed into service, and we dug them out - Robins, Whitethroats, Black-capped Chickadees and Black-throated Green and Yellow-rumped Warblers. The birding was not as good as Suzy Lake, but we did have a few high points: two Canadas, two Parulas, Chickadees, Whitethroats and Purple Finches, all in one patch; a White-breasted Nuthatch, a Golden-crowned Kinglet and two Solitary Vireos in another. The highlight of all shook the ear-based warbler hunters to their roots. We located, after careful search, a completely strange songster - he uttered a melodic, loud, clear whistling warble which had the most experienced of us flummoxed, after he had finished singing his regular buzzy, wheezy song - a completely ordinary in every way Black-throated Green Warbler! Just when you thought you had them all organized in your mind.....

Fred Dobson



This Bald Eagle appeared, with a companion, in downtown Glace on Brookside St. where it sat long enough for its picture to be taken by the local newspaper.

From Edie MacLeod, Glace Bay

UP-COMING FIELD TRIPS



July 7 ECONOMY, THE COBEQUID SHORE AND MOUNTAINS
Saturday Leaders: F. Spalding and F. Hennessey.
Time: 0900 hrs. Meet at the Company Store,
Bass River. Bring a lunch but our hosts
will be providing a supper - you can't
beat that!

July 7 CAPE BRETON - Lime Hill area. Leader:
Saturday Marjorie Foote. Time: 0800 hrs. Meet at
Cleveland on Hwy #4 at Marble Mountain
and West Bay turn-off.

July 15 McNAB'S ISLAND - Leader: Ross Anderson
Sunday and others. Time: 0900 hrs. Meet at the
Eastern Passage wharf. There will be a
\$2.00 per head charge for the boat -
children exempted.

August 4 CAPE BRETON - Forchu Area. Leader: Francis MacKinnon.
Saturday Time: 0800 hrs. Meet at the Mira River, Marion Bridge.

Sept 1 & 2 BRIER ISLAND - Leaders: Ross Anderson and others. Meet
Saturday at 0830 at the cemetery, corner of Peajack Rd.
Saturday & Sunday and Western Light Rd. for the pelagic trip. There will
be a charge for the boat. It is hoped that on Sunday
guided trips will be arranged to different parts of the
island.

Sept 15 CAPE BRETON - Cheticamp area. Leader: Jacques Pleau.
Saturday Time: 0800 hrs. Meet at the Visitors Centre at the
Park entrance.

Sept 15 & AMHERST AREA AND NORTH SHORE - A two-day bird expedit-
16 ion. Saturday we will meet at the Amherst Point Bird
Saturday & Sunday Sanctuary at 0900 hrs. when Con Desplanque will guide
us over the Sanctuary and adjoining Marsh area. Sunday
we will meet at 1000 hrs. at the bridge over the Tid-
nish River on route 366 at Tidnish Bridge and Stuart
Tingley will show us the birds of the North Shore from
Tidnish to Tatamagouche. There are camping facilities
at the Riverside Trailer Park at Tidnish Bridge on
Route 366.

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

STOP PRESS

OCT 6. Thanksgiving Weekend. Trip to Seal Island. Leader
Ralph Connor. Leaving on Sat Oct 6th, returning Monday 8th
(weather permitting - may be storm-bound!) There will be a charge
for the boat. Reservations to be made before Sept 15. Call Ralph at

469-8370.

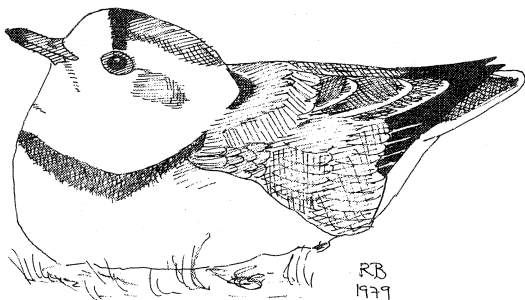


BIRDS FOR SHORE-KOUCHIBOUGUAC NATIONAL PARK, N.B.

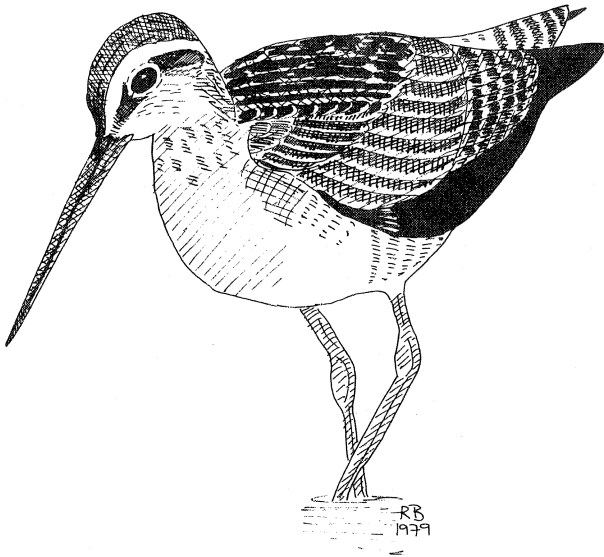
For those of you who regularly or otherwise travel outside Nova Scotia and want to know of good birding spots, a visit to Kouchibouguac National Park in Kent County, New Brunswick, is a must. Situated about 50 miles from Moncton on Highway 11 near Richibucto, the park offers a variety of habitats in its 53 square miles of saltwater lagoons, sandy beaches, salt marshes, bogs and forests. It is quite possible to see over 100 species in a day's birding and I totalled 158 species in the period August 1st to October 15th despite a ban on woods travel.

The most popular place in the park is Kelly's Beach but don't think that the crowds present in the summer keep the birds away - far from it. The lagoon side of Kelly's Beach attracts large numbers of shorebirds during the fall and 22 species were noted on the salt marshes and sand flats. Early on Semipalmated Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Spotted Sandpipers, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers are the commonest species but Piping and Blackbellied Plovers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Red Knots, Short-billed Dowitchers, Hudsonian Godwits and Sanderlings also occur in small numbers.

Piping Plover
Kouchibouguac Beach



Later in the fall the majority of shorebird migrants are Blackbellied Plovers, Greater Yellowlegs, Whiterumped Sandpipers, Dunlins and Sanderlings although a few migrants of other species are still passing through. In the late summer and fall of 1978 I also noted two Marbled Godwits, American Golden Plovers, Killdeers, Solitary Sandpipers and probable Stilt and Buffbreasted Sandpipers. A bird that looked very much like a European Green-shank was seen on the same day as a Longbilled Dowitcher and I suspect that other long distance migrants were also present.

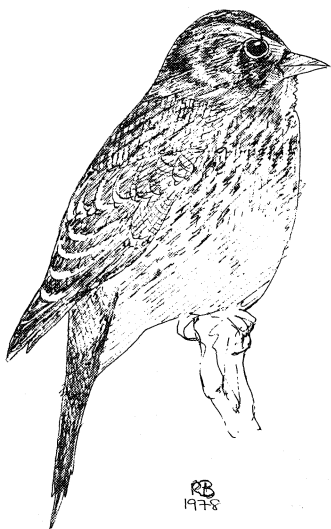


*Longbilled Dowitcher
Kelly's Beach*

Considering the influx of European shorebirds in recent years perhaps one more is not as surprising as it might have seemed a few years ago. I photographed a "peep" in Kouchibouguac last fall that may well have been a Little Stint as the plumage was intermediate between a Least and Semipalmated Sandpiper complete with the "V" on the back. Also present in the Kelly's Beach area are large numbers of Doublecrested Cormorants, Canada Geese, Black Ducks, Greenwinged Teal, Redbreasted Mergansers and Common Terns together with some Great Blue Herons, Mallard, Pintail, Bluewinged Teal, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Marsh Hawks, Ospreys, five gull species, Arctic Terns, Bank Swallows, Savannah, Sharptailed and Song Sparrows. Common Goldeneyes, Common Mergansers, Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings arrive in early October.

Other good birding areas are Portage River, where most duck species can be seen as well as a few shorebirds, occasional Black-crowned Night Herons and migrating warblers and sparrows, Black River, where a large flock of Hooded Mergansers was located in mid October, and South Kouchibouguac Beach, which is excellent for seabirds, especially Common and Redthroated Loons, Northern Gannets, Great Cormorants, Common Eiders and all three scoters. During the fall an Arctic Loon and Leach's Petrel were seen offshore here and a Seaside Sparrow was noted along the salt marsh shore. Peregrines are rare in the Park but one was noted along the North Kouchibouguac Beach on September 28.

A ban on woods travel seriously curtailed observations of songbirds but the park is a meeting point of southern and northern breeding species and anything can be expected to occur in season. During the three months of fall Northern Mockingbird, Northern Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting and a fullplumaged male House Finch were seen and no doubt further investigation would have revealed many other unusual species. My observations in the fall of 1978 confirmed the good impressions I received in the spring of 1976. At that time I noted a female Harlequin, several Pileated Woodpeckers, Purple Martins, Eastern Bluebird, Philadelphia Vireo, Orangecrowned and Hooded Warblers and a full male



Seaside
Sparrow.

RB
1978

Chestnutcollared Longspur in addition to many species seen again in 1978. The park is waiting to be "discovered" by a keen birder. Bert Crossman is the Chief Park Interpreter at Kouchibouguac and would be glad to direct you to the best birding spots.

In case you're wondering where I might turn up next, it's Terra Nova National Park in Newfoundland. Rest assured I'll be trying to add to their Spotted Redshank of a few years back.

Roger Burrows



Greenshank

RB

The "Launching" of a Book

Harry Brennan, Marg Clark and Ross Baker

On Friday evening, April 6, 1979, close to 400 people gathered in the Lecture Room of the Colchester-East Hants Regional Library in Truro to attend the "launching" of Ross Baker's book "Reflections of a Bird Watcher".

Mr. Lorne MacDougall, a neighbour and friend, acted as Chairman of the programme. Relatives and friends came from various parts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Special guests were introduced and Mayor Glassey of Truro brought greetings and congratulations to Ross.

Ross showed a series of slides, mainly of birds but also of animals, flowers, fall scenes and sunrise and sunset. The slides were taken from Ross's own collection as well as that of Harry Brennan, and were filmed in the Central Nova Scotia area which is the centre of Ross's birding as described in his book.

Rev. William Pope, the Publisher, was also in attendance and spoke to the gathering.

As President of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, Ross had invited me to attend and had sent me an autographed copy of his book to review for the occasion. I was very pleased and honoured to be included. Following the review, Harry Brennan presented an enlarged framed picture of a Spruce Grouse to Ross. The book was dedicated to Harry whose skill at bird identification is comparable to the skill he displays in the pictures he takes of bird life.

While refreshments were being enjoyed, Ross was kept busy autographing copies of his book. The number of copies sold that evening was certainly an indication of the interest and esteem shown to him by those who gathered there; and for Ross a gratifying reward for the time and effort put into the publication of the book.

Margaret Clark

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor, NSBS Newsletter

During a week long visit to the Everglades National Park in March, we were delighted with the variety of birds which were more or less unknown to Nova Scotia. In addition, imagine our immense surprise to see 2 species described in the Audubon Field Guide as "accidental" to Florida.

One of these, the Key West Quail Dove, has attracted birders from all over the U.S., because it has not been seen in Florida for years - estimates we heard varied widely from 15 to 40 years. Although one of the wardens muttered his concern that it might be a "released" bird, most viewers did not entertain such mundane thoughts as they examined this beautiful bird.

The Key West Quail Dove has taken up residence about 6 feet from a trail which has a wilderness tram traversing it 2-3 times daily. It appeared a bit apprehensive at the audience, but did not leave the scene, and we had a good look and took some photos. This quail dove was first reported by Audubon and is seen in the Caribbean and again this winter in Florida. It is about 11-12 inches long, greenish on the top of the head, with a white stripe below the eye, rufous on the back and tail with purplish sheen, pale pinkish to white underparts. We were told that Audubon could not decide if it should be called a quail or a dove and therefore compromised by giving it both names. Visitors to southern Florida are all agog over this stray.

The other accidental species was a Scarlet Ibis, which joined Roseate Spoonbills and White Ibis on a pond. It was not a brilliant scarlet, but was a bright coral shade and stood out from its companions.

Although it was great to see these 2 accidentals, my favorite memory is of 3 Swallow-tailed Kites which soared over us for about 10 minutes - the ultimate in gracefulness.

Jean Morse,
Paradise.

Editor, NSBS Newsletter

Concerning the article "Why Pay for Christmas Counts?" - my opening remark is why not? My own personal opinion is, I would not disapprove of a reasonable fee in relationship to the counts. Mr. Robert Arbib's report only serves to further prove a point that we are all aware of, - inflation. The cost of any service and material is, in our day, almost impossible to provide free of any charge. No reasonable individual would expect it. However, it would be totally unjust for members to pay for only the counts they participate in since that places the heaviest financial burden on the shoulders of a few; rather it should be distributed, perhaps, as a yearly fee from the general memberships. I wish not to deeply pursue this matter, but start a chain reaction of thoughts concerning it, for the solution is not simple, but it should be seriously considered.

I would like to say that a huge sum of praise is in order to the editorial board who compile and publish our Newsletters. Without any doubt, we have a talented, devoted group of people working in the N.S. Bird Society. Keep up the excellent work.

Terry Wentzell

Letter, NSBS Newsletter.

I have been following the discussion on bird collecting in the recent issues of the Newsletter. While both Dr. Mills and Robie Tufts make eloquent and telling arguments in support of more collecting of birds, neither seems to tackle the point of where the Society should stand on the issue.

Dr. Mills defends the collection of some birds for scientific study that might be required to benefit the birds but deplores collecting simply to verify the presence of a specimen. All well and good but who makes the decision and grants the licence? Do some faceless bureaucrats say, "You can collect 10,000 starling stomachs but not one osprey?" And what is to be the stand of the Society if some fledgling ornithologist is granted the right to collect four hundred piping plovers - perhaps 10% of the eastern Canada population?

And what of the private collection? One must respect Robie Tufts' argument. His work has earned all our respect. But who will grant permission to the private collector? Where would it end? Imagine private collections becoming as fashionable as the English schoolboy passion for egg collecting in the early part of this century. Again does some faceless bureaucrat conduct a draw as for moose licences? Do warblers become a renewable resource with ten thousand Blackburnian Warbler licences being issued because the nesting season was good? In short - where is the control?

Well, what should the position of the Society be? I feel that you can stand for the birds without having to be against everything else. We should not allow ourselves to be drawn into a position of just being against things. We should not gain the reputation of being a crank society against scientific collecting - against private collectors - against hunting - against house cats - or against budworm spraying. Our common purpose should be for the study and preservation of birds, and all our public stands should be positive in support of this purpose. Individually we can and will take any stand we wish to.

Thus, the Society need not be against collecting birds in the circumstances described by previous writers. The Society should certainly not support or endorse such actions! It is particularly important that the Society not support the killing of birds for any purpose. It would destroy our credibility if ever we had to take a strong stand to protect the birds from some other depredation if we had to explain or defend a previous decision to condone killing in certain other circumstances (for after all, the euphenistic terms hunting, collecting, controlling, etc., all involve killing).

Having reserved a position where we know a certain amount of collecting does take place, the Society retains the right and ability to speak out if such actions are likely to have serious effects on the bird populations. Such a "stand and watch" attitude is not a dereliction of our duties. It is simply reserving our position until it is considered necessary, important or even timely to speak out.

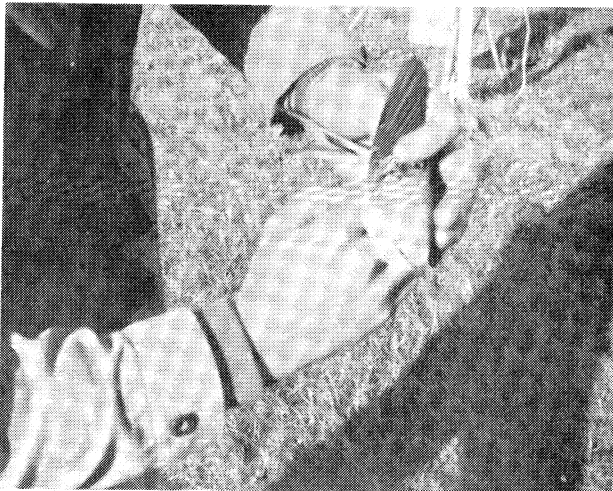
I personally am against collecting for any purpose (except perhaps to get rid of some of these pesky starlings), am against house cats and am against poisoning seed grains (another great bird killer). But that is an easy stand for me to take. I am neither scientist, cat lover nor farmer. My stand costs me nothing. I could as easily be against eating live Gold fish! That too is a pleasure I shall forego cheerfully. If on the other hand, any of these appeared to be having serious short or long term effects on

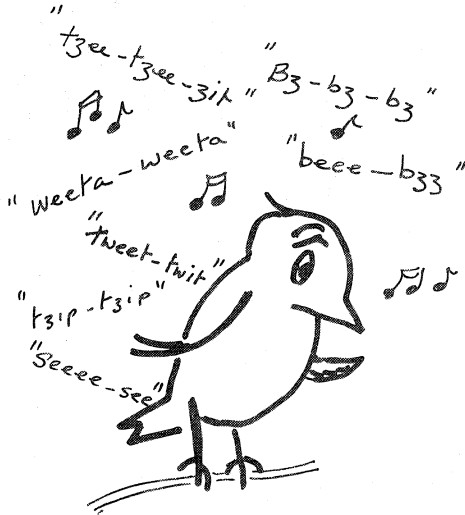
our bird populations I would expect our Society to take some positive action and speak out for the birds. After all, the birds can only sing.

John L. Cohrs



Sidney Smith holding the SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER at Cape Sable, Nov. 19, 1978. (See NSBS Newsletter, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 1979, p. 27). The photographs mean that this is a first documented record for the Province.



A MODEST PROPOSAL

I was somewhat shocked the other day to discover that the Myrtle Warbler was no longer with us. Not, I hasten to add, that the species has become extinct but that the American Ornithologists Union no longer gives it that name in the Check-List of Bird Names. Moreover I gather I am five or more years behind times in this discovery. Well, the loss of this name from the list set me thinking of some logical extensions of this search for better and more sensible names. Here are the preliminary results.

Take the warblers: a lovely group of invisible birds. I claim to have wandered over hill and dale for more than 30 years without seeing a single warbler. In conditions of strict privacy some of my ornithological friends have admitted a similar failure to actually sight a specimen. What warblers do is sit under leaves and sing, and you identify them from their song. These songs are absolutely characteristic for each species and are given in bird manuals, e.g., "tweet-tweet-tweet", "beee-bz-bz-bz", "beeee-bzz" (inhale and exhale), "tizip-tizip-tizip", "seebit", "seeeeeeee-up", "weeta-weeta-weetee"; the latter I want to rename the Julius Caesar warbler.

No, I didn't make up any of those songs, they are straight out of Peterson. My personal hangup is that when I'm actually outside I have difficulty distinguishing say 'beee-bz-bz-bz' from 'beeee-bzzz (inhale and exhale)', whatever they sound like. If only we had the chestnut-sided warbler in this neck-of-the-woods I could actually start my warbler list. I reckon anything that comes right out and sings "I want to see Miss Beecher" should be pretty easy even for dumb mutts like me. Maybe she is the teacher the ovenbird spends its days looking for.

To get to the point of discussing warbler songs, and that is that over the tremendous range of their notes not a single one of them actually warbles ('warble', v. tr. to sing with trills, runs or other melodic embellishments); they cheep and peep and chat, but when it comes to melodic embellishments they are as dumb as I am.

Now to move to the finches and sparrows. Here we have some really melodious trillers. No one seems to keep canaries anymore, only budgies, possibly they competed too much with the Muzak, but the song of a canary, which is a finch named after a dog, is a glorious soaring cascade of sound. Out in the fields, in fact in my own backyard, we have the song sparrow (one pair raised two broods in my hedge in 1978), another glorious songster, a bit repetitive but sweet and melodious. I must admit the chipping sparrow lets the clan down a bit but by and large the finches are good songsters.

The modest proposal now becomes obvious. We have to switch names: the warblers we will call finches and the finches warblers. In order not to cause confusion a change-over date will have to be fixed. I suggested 1 January 1980, but a masochist friend of my acquaintance (up at 4 a.m. on Boxing Day to count birds) points out that this might cause confusion in the reports of the Christmas 1979 -New Years Day 1980 combined bird reports so some other starting day must be agreed upon. Maybe take the financial year and start 1 April 1984.

You will be pleased to hear that the research continues. Take the titmice for instance (if titmouse has such a plural), they don't especially look like mice, they don't even squeak, nor do they look like - well, we'll continue the report on these in a later edition. And by the way, just in case I meet one, will someone please tell me what I now call a Myrtle Warbler?

M. J. Harvey

(Reprinted with the premission of the Halifax Field Naturalists
Newsletter.)



WATCH FOR TAGGED EAGLES

The Wildlife Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests is continuing a program of monitoring the seasonal movements of Bald Eagles. Eagles captured last winter were banded and tagged with an orange wing marker. The marker consists of a small bright orange tag attached to the lower shaft of the outermost primary feather of each wing.

It would be appreciated if anyone sighting an eagle would check for these tags, and if a marked bird is observed, the following information should be recorded: date, place of observation, observer's name and address.

Send all reports of sighting to: P. J. Austin-Smith,
Wilflife Division, P.O. Box 516, Kentville, N.S. B4N 3X3

BOOK REVIEW

Title: Where to Find Birds in Eastern Massachusetts

compiled, revised and edited by

Leif J. Robinson
and
Robert H. Stymeist

Publisher: Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts, 462 Trapelo Rd.,
Belmont, Mass. 02178

Price: \$5.00

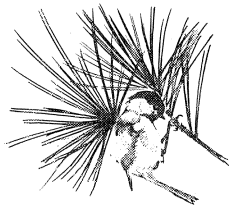
Leif Robinson and Robert Stymeist have compiled this book from articles that originally appeared in a magazine that began publication in 1973 called The Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts. The author of each article focuses on a particular birding site and writes in the manner most fitting to the author's style. Thus there are included descriptions of birding walks; check lists of birds found in a certain area; census taking; accounts of birding experiences over several years; historical reviews of a sanctuary area, as well as many others.

The book is not divided into chapters but divided according to articles dealing with areas. The first ten articles centre around Boston, the remaining twenty are divided to cover birding North, South and West of Boston with one article dealing with the Eastern side of Boston, i.e., pelagic birding.

A truly significant feature of the book are the maps. At the beginning of the book is a map of Eastern Massachusetts with numbers on it to match the number of the area about which an author has written. In addition most of the articles have a map to show the birding areas described. Thus anyone wishing to bird in such areas as Newburyport, Peabody-Salem, Nantucket, Plymouth, to name but a few, will have no difficulty finding the routes (highways and byways) that lead to the birds!

No doubt not all selections in this anthology will appeal to all readers, but the book is intended to stimulate, planned or impromptu, visits to some of these areas. Because many Nova Scotians have a close association with the New England States, this Eastern Massachusetts region will have special appeal and the book could have a definite value for Nova Scotia birders visiting there - \$5.00 well spent.

Margaret A. Clark



BOOK REVIEW

Title: Reflections of a Bird Watcher

Author: Ross Baker

Publisher: Lancelot Press, P.O. Box 425, Hantsport, N.S. BOP 1P0

Price: \$7.95

Here is a delightful book, written by one who, by his own admission, reached well into adulthood before he began to take Nature seriously, especially the bird life. The author over a 12 year period, lists 190 birds found mainly in a triangular section of Nova Scotia with the outer points being Truro - Brule Point - along to Merigomish and back to Truro again. This is "home territory" so to speak, and Ross, either alone, with his wife Elsie, or good friend Harry Brennan has explored and birded this area very extensively.

The book is divided into five chapters dealing with such topics as how the author became interested in birds and his first birding trip; the birds seen around his home in summer and winter listed and given in considerable detail, and then a final chapter given to miscellaneous topics pertaining to birds and the changes in life style that has affected bird habitat.

While reading the accounts, one easily recognizes that the author must have kept meticulous records and notes of his birding experiences to write with such description and detail. The format used is much the same for each bird - telling the location and how to get there; identifying the bird and then a careful description of it; giving other characteristics such as habitat, feeding and nesting habits. Such detail and accurate reflections warrant this book's use as a reliable reference book.

The book is dedicated to Harry Brennan - a fine tribute to a true ornithologist. Harry is very deserving of the credit given, for his interest, knowledge and innate skill in the identification of birds, their songs and habitats have not been fully recognized or appreciated.

Although this book is written mainly about birds and birding trips, underlying all descriptions and details given is a sensitive appreciation of Nature. Ross writes with an awe and a concern about conserving and protecting what Nature has given us in Nova Scotia.

Those who read this book will reflect their own personal experiences and the similarities with the experiences of the author, who has been a member of the Nova Scotia Bird Society for many years.

"Reflections of a Bird Watcher" will make delightful and enjoyable reading.

Margaret A. Clark

AN OFFICIAL BIRD FOR NOVA SCOTIA?

Could you name the American state that lists the Nene as its official bird? If you guessed Hawaii you'd be right and you might start to wonder about the "official" bird of Nova Scotia. As far as can be determined Nova Scotia does not have an official bird and your Executive feels this is an omission that should be remedied as part of the special activities planned for our twenty-fifth anniversary in 1980. In order that the Society may make a recommendation to the Legislature early next year we invite your recommendations and suggestions now! What criteria should be used for our selection? Should we consider only resident birds? Should we exclude birds such as the black-capped chickadee that have been claimed by other jurisdictions? (Maine and Massachusetts) It is hoped that a final selection could be made at our annual meeting in December.

Please send your ideas to:

"Official Bird"
Nova Scotia Bird Society,
c/o Nova Scotia Museum,
1747 Summer Street,
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6



DON'T FORGET THE 1980
25th ANNIVERSARY

The competition for the cover design for the special News-letter is still open.

Prize: A year's free membership,
(plus the fame and glory)

Entries should be approximately 6 x 8½" in black ink or paint on a light background.

Send directly to

Shirley Cohrs
8 Rosemount Ave.
Halifax B3N 1X8

ENTER NOW - No limit to the number of designs from each member.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATIONSHOREBIRD COLOUR-MARKING

In 1979, the Canadian Wildlife Service will be continuing a large-scale program of banding and colour-marking shorebirds in James Bay. Since 1974, over 38,500 shorebirds have been captured, resulting in more than 1,700 'bird days' of sightings of dyed birds ranging from eastern Canada to South America. Much valuable information on migration routes and strategies is being obtained and observers are again asked to look out for and report any colour-dyed or colour-banded shorebirds that they may see. Reports should include details of species (with age if possible), place, date, colour-marks and, if possible, notes on the numbers of other shorebirds present. For colour-dyed birds, please record the colour and area of the bird that was dyed. For colour bands and standard metal leg bands, please record which leg the bands were on, whether they were above or below the "knee", the colours involved (yellow or light blue), and the relative position of the bands if more than one was on a leg (e.g. right lower leg, blue over metal, etc.). All reports will be acknowledged and should be sent to: Dr.R.I.G. Morrison, Canadian Wildlife Service, 1725 Woodward Drive, Ottawa, Ontario. K1G 3Z7.

MARITIMES SHOREBIRD SURVEY 1979.

The Canadian Wildlife Service has decided to continue the Maritimes Shorebird Survey scheme in 1979 and would again like to request the assistance of volunteer participants. The principal objective of this scheme is to identify and document areas of major importance to shorebirds in the Maritime Provinces, as well as to provide information on routes used by different species and the timing of their migrations.

Participants are asked to adopt a particular study area in which they regularly count the shorebirds every second week during the southward migration. Results are reported on forms provided by the Canadian Wildlife Service.

It is not too late for this (1979) season. Anyone interested should contact: Andrew MacInnis, Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests, Box 23, Site 2, R R. #1, Waverley, N.S. B0N 2S0. (902-861-2560).

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
c/o Nova Scotia Museum,
1747 Summer Street,
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6

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NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Volume 21, Number 3

July, 1979

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