

NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS

July 1984



NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS
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SPRING 1984

Migration was held up this spring for many of our species due to the behavior of the weather systems which gave us such cold and windy conditions through March and most of April. Arrival dates for the larger birds are about as usual but the small ones, warblers in particular, were one to two weeks late, and the big wave came on May 19 "in the clear weather in the wake of a depression", to quote R. B. Stern, who witnessed part of this great influx of birds at Brier Is. Buds on trees and bushes--and insect life--were given a set-back due to their premature awakening in the warm weather of late February, followed as it was by a period of intense cold; so that tousled-haired birders reluctantly had to step out to feed tousled-feathered birds, in boisterous icy dawns.

The last snow came (in southwest Nova Scotia) on April 9, and the countryside remained brown and static until heavy rains released the soil, and temperatures finally rose above 0°, to stay.

Meanwhile, other signs of spring had come to notice: Goldfinches were being replaced by Purple Finches, the first ones singing by March 26. On March 20 Skunk Cabbages poked up through the snow; the Chipmunk came out of its burrow to fill its pouches with sunflower seed from under the feeder on March 27; two young rabbits with neat all-brown coat came out of the woods to feed on new succulent grasses under the hedge on April 27; at about this time, it was noticeable that the White Spruces were beginning to bloom, many of them quite covered with tiny rosy cones, giving them an appearance of rustiness from a distance. It has been many years since these trees have produced such an enormous crop of blossoms.

When growth started it was phenomenal--almost overnight the leaves came out, wild fruit trees burst into bloom, and in place of the snow-shovel out came the lawnmower. Mowed lawns seemed to be instantly populated with robins; swallows were investigating swallow houses, kingfishers and willets--so very vocal--were flying overhead, and late one night the loons gave their magnificent oratorio, from across the lake.

Some of the warblers and vireos had come before the trees leaved out but many of them have come since and have been identifiable by song alone. Reports show that most of our expectable birds are here by now (June 1), including a few rare and unusual species (but not as many of these as last year); and it has been good to see and/or hear Chimney Swifts, Nighthawks, and best of all, Winter Wrens much more frequently than of late years.

We had an exceptionally large migration of Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings, and the White-crowned Sparrow was noted this spring; but our Cardinal population does not grow as yet, and the House Finch population has almost vanished. Numbers, distribution and sophistication of our reporting body continue to improve, so that numbers and distribution and other general knowledge of our birds is also improving, a matter for legitimate self-congratulation, NSBS. Take a bow, those of you in the list to follow; and please accept many thanks for many years of faithful help, from:

the Records Editor,
Phyllis R. Dobson

BIRD REPORTS

LOONS AND GREBES

There was a mere smattering of RED-THROATED LOONS this spring: 2, noted in March in Schooner Pond (HEH); 1, April 1, at Clementsport (SH); 1, April 3, at Pinkney's Point (PRD), another there May 13 (MEC) and 1, at Grand Pre, May 19 (B & BT). The 18 COMMON LOONS seen by the Cohrs at Crescent Beach, March 16, were in various stages of changing plumage. Among those seen by Ian McLaren along the eastern shore, April 13, all but one were in winter plumage, while most of the 20 seen by him April 28, had changed to breeding plumage though still mostly in salt water. Ian also reported two Loons coming in for a landing at Brier Is., in a long shallow dive on set wings, making a loud roaring sound like a sustained Nighthawk "boom". On April 1, the Cohrs again observed what looked like a big movement of Loons--at least 65 along a 3-4 mile stretch of shore between E. Lawrencetown and Rocky Run, saying that many distant dots too far out to identify were also probably of this species. The first arrived on fresh water were on April 6, at Tusket Falls (PH & CJ); April 7, at Sandy Bottom (G & MN); April 14, Carleton Lake (JWT & ML); April 16, Lake William (L &)) and April 24, Eel Lake (PRD). There were still up to 30 off Hartlan's Point, April 15, and Sandra Myers reports "many" at Ship Harbour as late as May 20.

PIED-BILLED GREBES first made their presence known April 7, at APBS when Stuart Tingley heard two calling. The Thextons saw one there on April 22, and Con Desplanque found 4, there April 26. The only other sighting was of 1, at Canard on the NSBS Field Trip (RBD). HORNED GREBES were rather lightly reported in 3's and 4's along the South Shore and at Clementsport, where the latest observation was made: 2, April 30 (SN). The only large numbers were seen by the Cohrs who report dozens in spring plumage at Crescent Beach, April 14-15. RED-NECKED GREBES on the other hand, were seen in considerable numbers especially in mid-April when a movement appeared to be underway: 150+ at Cow Bay, April 11 (FLL & MA); up to 80, April 13, at Eastern Passage and 40 again at Cow Bay (IAM); about 40, April 14-15, at Green Bay and Crescent Beach (Cohrs); 35 at Lr. W. Pubnico, April 14, and 35, Hartlan's Point, April 15 (CF). Latest sightings were singles at Brier Is., and Weymouth, May 15 (MEC) and 1, at Cape Sable, May 19 (IAM). The Cohrs also reported that those seen in the Green Bay area were in breeding plumage and "setting to their partners with necks high and turned towards each other".

--C.R.K.A., ed.

FULMAR TO CORMORANTS

Blake Maybank found NORTHERN FULMARS scarce on his crossing of Cabot Strait on March 3, but they were abundant there on April 23: 98 birds on the Newfoundland half of the crossing, but 809 on the Nova Scotia side. Linda and Peter Payzant saw about 50 sitting on the water from CSS HUDSON on station between Cape Breton and Newfoundland, on April 11.

The cut-off date for this issue of NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS is a little too early to pick up the first arrivals of the southern hemisphere migrants, but Raymond S. d'Entremont, on Georges Bank, saw a GREATER SHEARWATER on May 13, a SOOTY SHEARWATER on April 21, and 2 WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS on April 25. The Payzants saw a Sooty off the east coast of Cape Breton on April 18. These dates for first arrivals all seem normal.

Our first NORTHERN CANNET sighting was on March 3, when Blake Mayhack saw a bird on the northbound ferry in Cabot Strait. Daryl Amirault's first sighting of the year, off Pubnico, was on March 21,

and an anonymous reporter (if you want the glory, please sign EVERY slip you send us) saw "many" diving at the entrance to Halifax Hbr., March 25. There were also "many" off Baccaro from March 28 onwards (MEC). The birds came by in large numbers after that: 40+ (mostly adults) off Green Bay on April 14 (Cohrs); 500+ off Seaforth Village, Hfx. Co., on April 20 (FLL, Ron Arsenault); on April 23, 2300 off Chebucto Head (RBD), and 60 in Cabot Strait--mostly on the Nova Scotian side (BM); 35, still heading north, off Hartlan's Point on April 28 (J. Taylor). There were still many birds off southern Nova Scotia on May 13; 100+ off Daniel's Head Beach, 100+, on the crossing to Seal Is., and small flocks (half adults, half immatures) flying south past West Cape, Yar. Co. (SJF,EHC,EM,H & HH).

GREAT CORMORANTS were seen all winter (100+) at Baccaro (MEC), and off Hfx. Co. (RBD), but there were few in either area after the beginning of April. The species breeds mainly in Cape Breton and the northern Mainland, and the skein of 24, 'breeding patches showing', which the Cohrs saw flying north past Martinique Beach on April 8, may have been on their way up there. DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS are more migratory, and winter in New England and farther south. They came back to us in the second week in April. There was a 'large raft' of them in the Tusket River, on April 12 (CRKA), and they arrived in the Crescent Beach area around April 14 (Cohrs). There were large flocks flying north off Cole Harbour Beach from April 15 onwards (RBD), 500+ at Lawrencetown on April 20, and 1000+ on April 28 (FLL). 400 birds were on their nests at Pictou on April 28.

--R.G.B.B., ed.

HERONS AND RELATIVES

First AMERICAN BITTERNS were at Chegoggin on May 5 (JD'E), and at Mavillette Beach and near Sydney on May 7, thus spanning the province. There were 10 more reports of 14 birds by May 21, which is more than usual. A female LEAST BITTERN was discovered close by the road at Grand Desert, Hfx. Co., by RBD on May 19, and it obliged other birders for another day or so.

A GREAT BLUE HERON evidently wintered in the Little Dover area (W & NP) and another at LaHave on Mar. 18, may have done so (JS & JLC). One at Melbourne Sanctuary on Mar. 25, was probably an arrival, as there were 25+ over their nesting island near Argyle on Mar. 28 (L. MacKenzie). In spite of the 50 or so around and on the C.G.S. "Dawson", at sea off N. Cape Breton on Mar. 30 (see Letters to the Editor), there were only scattered reports for the next week. Perhaps more were found at their breeding sites.

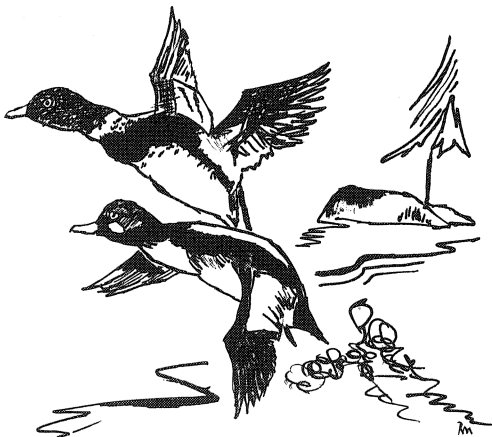
Reports of possible "GREAT WHITE HERONS" (the southern white form or subspecies of Great Blue Heron) are tantalizing, if inconclusive, and I give them here only to see if they fit a larger pattern. One of the herons at sea with the "Dawson", in late March was reported to RGBB as being pure white, and "as large as or larger than a Great Blue Heron". It flew around the ship and landed only briefly. Another large white heron at the Head of St. Margaret's Bay in mid-May was reported to the N.S. Museum and the C.W.S., but had left when local birders were alerted. However, one observer, Mrs. Barbara Gupta, insists that the bird she saw there on May 17 was as big as the Great Blues with which it was feeding and that it had yellow legs. The "Great White Heron" nests only as nearby as southern Florida, although some have wandered to the Middle Atlantic States. However, I hear that a number turned up on Bermuda last winter, and that birders there wondered what might become of them.

Of course, one or both of the above sightings could have been of GREAT EGRETS, but the only certain individual of that species was found dead on Seal Is., in mid-May by the Crowell brothers. The usual early-spring scattering of SNOWY EGRETS did not occur this year; the only report was of 3 at Overton, Yar. Co., on Apr. 4 (ER). Later arrivals were 1 at Broad Cove on May 6 (SJF), 1 near Canso on May 16 (W & NT), 1 at Crescent Beach on May 19 (var. obs.), 2 at Beach Meadows on May 21 (EPS), 5 on Bon Portage Is., May 21 (3 'til week's end; EPS et al., ELM), and 2 at E. Lawrencetown on May 23 (R. Foxall). Two adult LITTLE BLUE HERONS were reported: 1 at Sandford, Yar. Co., on Apr. 23 (MC,JG) and another on Seal Is., on May 26-28. There was also a weeks-dead corpse on Seal Is., at this time. To Bob Dickie goes the honor of discovering both of this spring's TRICOLOURED HERONS--our rarest "regular" southern heron. The first was an adult at Martinique Beach 20-23 April, and the second was an immature bird at Lawrencetown Lake, May 13-19. Both were seen by numbers of local birders. The flurry of some 25 CATTLE EGRETS around and on C.G.S. "Dawson", in late March (see letters to Editor) evidently dematerialized, as the only subsequent sightings were of single birds at Ketch Hbr. on May 1-9 (G.Oakley) and at Chebogue on May 21 (AP).

Our only GREEN-BACKED HERONS were 1 on Brier Is., on May 20 (RBS) and another on Seal Is., on May 27 (sev. obs.). Three BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS were on Cape Sable Is., on May 20 (MEC) and up to 3 were on Seal Is., on May 26-28, where they probably have nested. They, of course, have nested on Bon Portage Is., where there were up to 10 in residence in the week of May 21 (ELM). A single YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON was among the strangers on the "Dawson", on Mar. 30 and another was found during April as a corpse on Sable Island (AEL).

A GLOSSY IBIS on May 20-28 at Sunday Pt., Yar. Co. (var. obs.) and another on Bon Portage Is., on May 20-25 (var. obs.) were our only reports. Such birds should always be scrutinized closely; a White-faced Ibis is said to have turned up in Massachusetts this spring.

--IAM, ed.

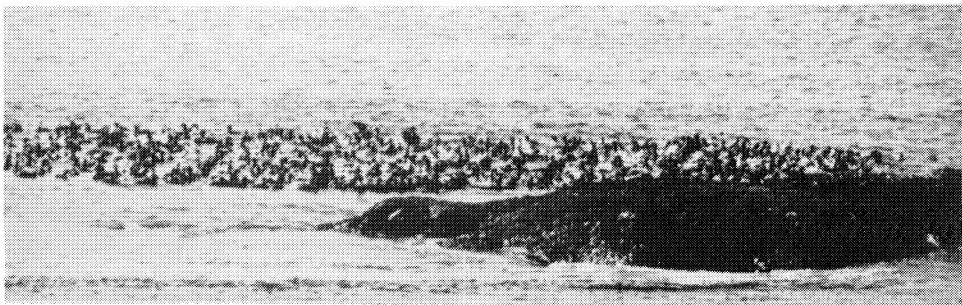


GEESE AND DUCKS

The Pubnico SNOW GOOSE joined a flock of Canadas in the harbour and remained there until March 16 (D'd'E). The earliest appearance of BRANT was of 38 at Northport, March 24, (SIT). There was a small flock (20-25) off Round Island near Seal, April 13 (DA); one of 72, at Grand Pré, April 28 (J Tufts) and 60, on the same date at Cape Sable (IAM). All other reports are of fluctuating numbers off Brier Is.: about 200, April 6-8; 600+, April 20; 350, May 5-7; 275, May 12-13; up to 30, May 14-15, and a last sighting of 120, May 17-21 (SIT,IAM, RBS). There is nothing particularly of note to report on CANADA GEESE. They appeared at their spring stop-offs on schedule and in their usual numbers. Highs of 1000 or more were reported at Martinique Beach, March 11 (RBD), at Lusby Marsh, April 22 (CD) and at Morien South Head, April 15-24 (OC & HEH).

Up to three WOOD DUCKS spent part of their winter at Sullivan's Pond. Others seen were a pair near Mount Uniacke, May 26 (JS & JLC) and another male at Brier Is., May 12 (SIT). A male GREEN-WINGED TEAL (Eurasian race) is reported by Fulton Lavender at West Lawrence-town, April 28, with a female which could be of either race, as they are indistinguishable. FLL also had 50+ (American race) at APBS and 100+ at Tidnish-Tatamagouche, April 21. Earliest sighting of this species was of 6, at Lusby, April 11 (CD), and 8, at Sullivan's Pond, Feb. 14, being no doubt, wintering birds. Only a few localities reported anything like respectable numbers of BLACK DUCKS: 100's in the Sydney area (OC & HEH); 790 from Northport to Port Philip, March 24 (SIT), and 1000+ from about the same region, April 21 (FLL), "countless numbers", March 3, on the Canard salt marshes, 9, May 7, at Russel Lake (JWT) reduced to 8, by May 14, and one of 5, May 22, at Canard Pond (JET,BT). The MALLARD situation is about the same as it was this time last year; so far they show little tendency to take over the Black Duck territory. We have two reports of broods: at Sydney River, May 23 (Jack MacNeil) and at Port Williams, 12 newly hatched young, May 14, (RBS,JET,BT).

NORTHERN PINTAILS have staged a big come-back as compared with last year: reports from 11 localities (only four in 1983) with a total of about 156 birds--about twice the last year's number. Most of the birds seen were in Cumberland County, 50, at APBS March 31; 50+ at Lusby Marsh and 20+ in the Tidnish-Tatamagouche area, April 21; all reported by FLL. BLUE-WINGED TEAL apparently began to arrive after mid-April. There was a male bird at Chezsetcook, April 20, and 10, at APBS, April 21 (FLL et sl.). Chris Field found two there April 22, and Con Desplanque recorded 6, April 29. Pairs showed up at the same time at Brier Is., and Port Williams (EPS, LL, B & BT) and single birds on May 3 at The Hawk and May 19 at West Lawrence-town and Sydney River. The first pair of NORTHERN SHOVELERS was seen at Amherst, April 7 (IAM,ELM,RF); other pairs were at Port Williams, April 18, Canard Pond, April 22 and at Port Williams Sewage Plant May 14, also a single male at Canard, May 11 (RBS,RBD). Three more pairs were: April 27-28 at Cape St. Mary's; April 29, at Lusby and April 30 at Port Williams--perhaps a repeat sighting. There was a total of thirteen GADWALL sightings, all at APBS and Lusby Marsh, between April 7 and May 7, greatest number seen at any one time being two pairs (CD,IAM et al.). Two male EURASIAN WIGEONS were at John Lusby and APBS from late March through April, seen by many observers. There were up to 20 AMERICAN WIGEON at APBS and Lusby Marsh during late April (CD,FLL), also 3 or 4 in the Port Williams area, April 30 and May 19 (B & BT). An early sighting was a pair at Linden, March 24 (SIT); and a pair at Crescent Beach, April 7, was Sylvia Fullerton's first record for that locality. RING-NECKED DUCKS were first reported March 31, at Short Beach (MEC) and by mid-April were established in their summer quarters. Greatest numbers were as usual at APBS, where Stu Tingley and Con Desplanque saw 40, on April 11 & 14, and Fulton Lavender found 50+ on April 21.



This massive flock of Common Eider off Herring Cove on March 25, extended well to the left of the photo. Photo - Ian McLaren

For the past several years there have been no reports of the great rafts of GREATER SCAUP which used to appear after late winter thaw in such localities as Three Fathom Harbour, Kingsburg and Salt Bay. The greatest number reported this period was 140+, March 20 at Salt Bay, Yar. Co. (CRKA). All other reports were of flocks of 10-20 or small groups of individuals here and there along the North and South Shores and the Bay of Fundy; last record being 10, at Eel Brook, April 21. Perhaps February's mild spell did something to COMMON EIDERS; at any rate, numbers of them appeared to be on the move: 250-300, Chebucto Head, February 26; about 5000 in four rafts near Duncan's Cove; 1000, Hartlan 's Point, April 19, (RBD,IAM,JWT). Ted D'Eon and party visited St. John's Island near Pubnico on May 27, where they found a breeding colony of Eiders, about 500 individuals with an estimated 200 nests, most of which contained 4-5 eggs and were located in such dense undergrowth that the incubating females could be easily captured (which was only carried out with several birds). At Seal Isl, Ian McLaren has reported 400, mostly paired Common Eiders by May 26-27. A couple of HARLEQUIN DUCKS wintered at Cranberry Head, where about eleven were last year. They were last reported there (the couple) April 3. The only other record for this period is of a female with eiders at Brier Is., April 20. A few OLDSQUAWS tarried well into May: 2, in partial summer plumage, at Brier, May 15 (IAM); a female at Little Harbour, Shel. Co., May 18 (EPS,SIT), and a male in summer plumage still at Brier, May 18-21 (RBS). Two seen by R.B. Dickie on April 29 had already donned their summer plumage.

BLACK SCOTERS, usually the least common of the family, easily top the list for this season: 140 in a large "strung-out" flock at Green Bay, March 16; a "very large" flock (of about 300) at Green Bay, April 14-15, probably mostly of this species; and 1000+ off Cherry Hill Beach, April 21 (with about 100 Surfs), (Cohrs); the only other number of any consequence is of 50 at Martinique, April 22 (L & PP). SURF SCOTERS made a very poor showing in comparison; 2, at Pinkney's Point, April 3 (PRD); 4, at Hartlan 's Point, April 15 (CF); 2, Northport, April 21, and their one bit of fame: 300, April 21, off Crescent Beach --a "pure culture" of this species according to the Cohrs, who saw only one (of this species) there last year. WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS, usually the most numerous of this family, were at the bottom of the list with only individuals seen in six localities: 58 at Mira and Sydney Harbour through March and April (HEH); 1, Pinkney's Point, April 3 (PRD); up to 20, Hartlan 's Point, late May (RBD); 2, Green Bay, May 18 (JSC) and 30, Grand Pre, May 22 (B &BT).

There seems to be nothing special to say about COMMON GOLDENEYES, whose numbers were much the same as this time last year at their usual wintering or spring stop-off points: 350+ at Crescent Beach, March 16 (Cohrs); 175, Northport, March 24, and 125, Port Howe, same date (SIT).

The last sighting was of 30+ at Northport, April 21 (FLL). The Bedford Basin BARROW'S GOLDENEYE was still on location, Feb. 26, according to RBD. He (the duck) or his forebears have wintered there for at least twenty-five years. The only other usable report is of 4-5 males and a female at Northport, March 24 (SIT). A few BUFFLE-HEADS were still around in April: 2, at Sandy Cove on the 6th; 2, at Melbourne on the 8th; 2 each at Seaforth and Three Fathom Harbour, April 20 (FLL,RA); 6, same locality, April 21 (Joyce Purchase); 1, April 24, Port Williams (JET,BT), and the last "still in the river" at Clementsport, May 11 (SH).

Early HOODED MERGANSERS were at Port Williams and VanNostrand Pond, a pair in each locality, March 28-29 (JET,BT). An adult male was at Wallace Bay Sanctuary, April 21 (FLL); 3 males and a female in the Weymouth area, April 23 (MEC). The 2 males seen by KNK at Queensland, Feb. 16, are anyone's guess as to whether they were winterers or flukes, lured north by springlike weather. COMMON MERGANSERS began to appear in the upper tidal reaches of the Tusket River in mid-Feb., and began to show up in numbers on Eel Lake as soon as the ice went out: 200 were there on the 20th of March (JD'E). Numbers there fell off rapidly, and by the end of the month they had all dispersed and were appearing in the freshwater lakes: pairs at Sandy Bottom Lake, April 2 and 10 (G & MN); a male at Eleven-mile Lake, March 25 (SH), 12, at Lusby, March 24 and 2, at APBS, April 11 (CD). RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS were slower to disperse to breeding areas despite the fact that their displaying began earlier and was far more passionate. Fair numbers-- 2-3 dozen, were still putting on their acts as late as April 22 (CRKA). Greatest number reported was 1500+ seen by FLL et al. between Tidnish and Tatamagouche--roughly an 80 km stretch of coast--April 21. A very early, "earliest ever", RUDDY DUCK (male) appeared at APBS on April 7 (SIT).

--CRKA, ed.

DIURNAL RAPTORS

A TURKEY VULTURE over Digby Neck on Apr. 28 (MEC) and another at Brier Is., on May 20 (RBS) were traditional.

The first OSPREYS were at Bedford on April 1 (KNK), Belleville, Yar. Co., on Apr. 5, and at Broad Cove and L.W. Pubnico on Apr. 7. There were only 5 more reports before mid-month, and they did not seem fully in place until late April. We have 27 reports of some 40 BALD EAGLES (9 including 14 ad., 10 imm.), mainly in March and early April. An adult over Sable Is., on May 4 (APL) was the first reported there since the last century. Eaglets were hatched by mid-April in C.B. (J. McNicol).

A male N. HARRIER on Mar. 26 at Upper Clements, Anna. Co., and another on Mar. 29 at Grand Pré, might have wintered locally. However, 2 males at Brier Is., on Apr. 6-8, and another beating over the forest near Springhill on Apr. 7, were clearly migrant. Thereafter, there were 16 reports of some 40 birds, including 5 of each sex near Amherst on Apr. 21, and 3 females at Grand Pré, on May 20.

There were 16 reports of about 30 SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS, including a small "movement" of 4 on Brier Is., on May 16. Only 2 N. GOSHAWKS were spotted: at Wallace Bay on Apr. 21, and at Hammonds Plains on May 16. A "possible" RED-SHOULDERED HAWK was being harassed by Red-tails near Shubenacadie, on May 27 (JSC), but was seen too briefly for certainty. The first BROAD-WINGED HAWK was at Economy on Apr. 25 (ESP). Thereafter, there were migrants at Brier Is., on Apr. 29 (1), May 16 (1), and May 20 (a few), but by mid-month they were seen over breeding terrain at various mainland and C.B. localities. We received

12 reports of ca. 20 RED-TAILED HAWKS in March, 13 reports of 18 in April (most early), and of only 3 individuals in May. Many of our wintering birds may leave the province. There was a sprinkling of ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS in March--perhaps 5 in Kings Co., 4 in the border area, 2 near Sydney, and 1 each near Halifax and Paradise. There were still 3 at Tantramars Marsh on Apr. 21, and 1 at Grand Pré on Apr. 29-30, but birds in Dartmouth on May 16 and 21 were very late (R &DM).

A total of possibly 4 GOLDEN EAGLES was reported. The first, an apparently all-black eagle, with the right shape, was tentatively identified by IAM and ELM when it sailed rapidly across the highway just above tree-tops near Musquodoboit Hbr. on Mar. 4. This brief glimpse might not merit a report except that an adult (with just a touch of white at the base of the upper tail) was well seen by IAM at nearby Martinique Beach on Apr. 20. This bird was soaring high above 3 ad. Bald Eagles, and then made a long, shallow dive a km or so into the sun, where it met another unidentifiable eagle, which dropped some item in the air, promptly snatched by the Golden Eagle. This seems very like descriptions of courting behavior, and certainly suggests that we might look for breeding Golden Eagles in the inland fastnesses of the Eastern Shore. They have begun to nest again in New England, and informed opinion suggests that they may outnumber Bald Eagles in Maine. One of the Martinique Beach eagles was seen 3 days later by FLL et al., who also reported (with CS) an ad. near Tatamagouche on Apr. 21. The last bird to be seen was a well-described probable yearling over Brier Is., on Apr. 30 (EPS et al.).

Sightings of single AM. KESTRELS on Apr. 1, at W. Pubnico, Kelly's Cove, Yar. Co., and Grand Desert, Hfx. Co., suggest a widespread arrival. Thereafter, to May 20, we have 16 reports of some 15 individuals and 5 pairs. A plucky female was "on lawn eating a starling (after several days of hard weather) at Fort Lawrence, near Amherst, on Apr. 13" (SIT). This skill comes more naturally to the MERLIN, one of which was mantled over a Starling in the middle of a south end Halifax street on Apr. 22, much to the astonishment of some passing motorists, who were waved around it by IAM. Another large, hungry female was observed catching and consuming, first a Savannah Sparrow and then a Hermit Thrush on Cape Sable on Apr. 29. There were other reports of 1 on Apr. 1, 5 between Apr. 28-30, and 4 more by mid-May. The only PEREGRINE FALCON was at Seal Is., on May 16 (SJF,EC).

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

The Grand Pré flock of GREY PARTRIDGES (18 on Mar. 10) was later scattered; 2 were seen in late May (BT et al.). RING-NECKED PHEASANTS were seen in the usual numbers in the usual places. There were no spring reports of SPRUCE GROUSE, and 1 belated report of a bird at Sandy Bottom Lake, on Feb. 23 (MCN), serves as the only one so far this year. RUFFED GROUSE, by contrast, seem decidedly "up-cycle", with 20 reports of ca. 35 birds, including 7 on a 2-hr. walk around Green Bay on May 5 (JSC).

RALLIDS

Another crazy PURPLE GALLINULE was found dead on Mar. 1, on Cape Sable Island (E. Murphy); as it was frozen, its time of arrival is uncertain. Only slightly more sensible was a beautiful, tame bird that spent the period May 26 to June 4, in a small, seepage-enriched pool adjacent to a house on the main road at Shad Bay, Hfx. Co. (sev. obs). The only reported SORA was 1 heard on Apr. 29, at APBS by CD, who also reported a COMMON MOORHEN there on May 21. There were at least 4 AM. COOTS at APBS on Apr. 7 (SIT) and a like number at month's end (CD).

SPRING SHOREBIRDS

There were few surprises to compensate for this spring's bad weather, at least so far as shorebird-watchers were concerned. The BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER made a good showing: there were 22 on Cape Sable, Apr. 28-29, not yet in breeding plumage, and c. 150 in the same area May 19, by which time most of them were (IAM). Other sightings are from mid-May to the end of the reporting period, when there were still 200+ in the Wolfville area (JT,BT). A WILSON'S PLOVER was at Seal Is., May 26-28 (ISM,ELM et al.). The first PIPING PLOVER were 6 at Cherry Hill, Apr. 6, with 12 there Apr. 22 (SJF); there were 6 pairs at Conrad's, Apr. 20 (FLL et al.) There were 8 at Daniel's Head Beach, May 13, together with a nest and four eggs (EM). The KILLDEER, abundantly reported, appeared March 1 at Cape Sable (EM), Lr. West Pubnico (DA) and Brookside (EE), thereafter in small numbers throughout western and central N.S. Nests with four eggs were at Lr. W. Pubnico, May 20 (RSd'E) and Lockhartville, May 21 (D & GL) were nicely synchronized.

The first GREATER YELLOWLEGS were at Lr. W. Pubnico, March 28 (Jd'E). There were 2 at Cherry Hill, Apr. 8 (SJF); by Apr. 28 there were 30 in the Chezzetcook-Lawrencetown area (FLL,DC). The last noted were 2 at Sunday Pt. (B & ER) and 1 at Canard (JT,BT), all on May 13. Two WILLETS at Cherry Hill, Apr. 8 (SJF) arrived early, with others, on schedule, in the southwest, Apr. 19 (DJd'E) and Apr. 22 (CRKA). There were 10+ at Cole Hbr., May 13 (R & DM), but otherwise, numbers reported are low. SPOTTED SANDPIPERS were at Tusket Falls (PH,CJ) and Russell Lake (FLL) May 7, with 4 at Lingan, C.B., as early as May 10 (HEH). The relatively few other reports are from mid-month onward--perhaps the species is scarcer than usual this year.

Two RUDDY TURNSTONES were on Cape Sable, Apr. 28, the same number were there May 19 (IAM) and at Sand Beach, Yar. Co., May 27, still in basic plumage (BR). A RED KNOT was at Amherst Pt., Apr. 21, (FLL); two were at Cape Sable, Apr. 28, c. 10 there May 19 (IAM). Seventeen SANDERLINGS were at Martinique Beach, Apr. 8 (RBD) and c.30 at Cape Sable, Apr. 29 (IAM) are thought by the reporters to have overwintered. The LEAST SANDPIPER was not widely noted: one on Sable Island, May 2 (ARL), another at Brier, May 5-7, 8 there May 14, and larger numbers at Cape Sable, May 19 (IAM). Seventy-five PURPLE SANDPIPERS at Pond Cove, Apr. 20 (SIT) had dwindled to 10 by Apr. 29 (EPS,LL). The last noted were 10 at Louis Head, May 18 (SIT) and 6 at Crescent Beach, May 19 (JSC). Two overwintering DUNLIN were at Martinique Beach, Mar. 11 (RBD), two at Crescent Beach, Mar. 17 (JS & JLC), with later sightings of 5 at Cape Sable, Apr. 28-29 and 3, in breeding plumage, May 19 (IAM). Two early SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS were at Cape Sable, Apr. 28-29 (IAM), with another at Pond Cove, Brier, during the same time (EPS et al.). On May 13, there was (still?) one at Brier (SIT), (still?) 2 at Cape Sable (IAM). One was on Seal May 15 (SJF,EC).

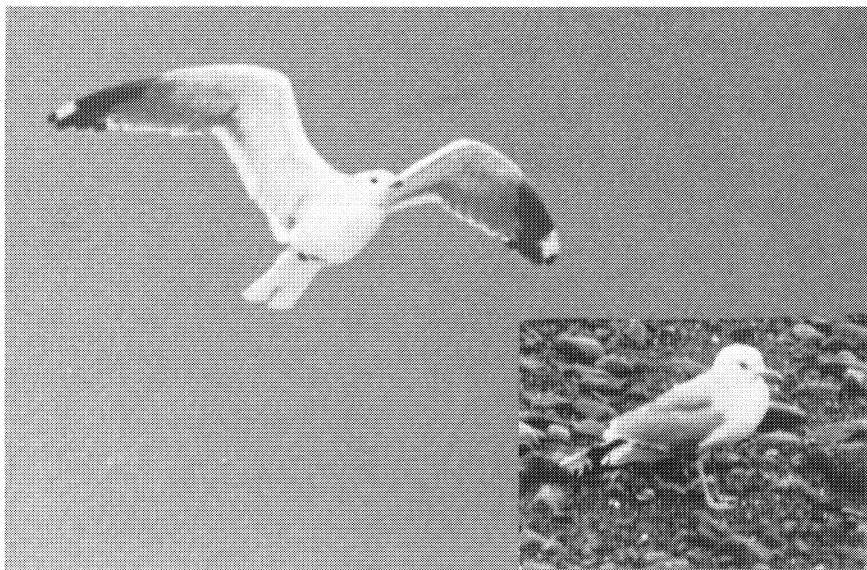
A COMMON SNIPE was at Wolfville, Apr. 14 (JT), another at Big Pond, C.B., Apr. 15 (JM), with several mainland reports from then to month's end and thereafter. The first AMERICAN WOODCOCK noted was at Tusket Falls, March 26 (PH,CJ). On May 19, five young, barely able to fly, were seen at Tusket (PRD) while the same day in Lun. Co., an adult "put on a fantastic 'broken everything' display" (JSC)--a second example of neatly synchronous timing among our breeding "shorebirds".

A female WILSON'S PHALAROPE was at Port Williams, May 13 (RBS), where it was joined by a male next day (JT,BT). The pair remained in evidence for the following three days --attention BLF.

JAEGER TO AUKS

Linda and Peter Payzant saw a POMARINE JAEGER behind CSS 'HUDSON', off Cape Breton, on April 18, and Raymond d'Entremont had an excellent view of another--a pale-phase bird, with the twisted tail tips well seen--on George's Bank on May 12.

HERRING AND GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS were their usual abundant selves, and deserve little comment. Ted C. d'Eon and party counted over 100 nests of each on St. John's Island, off Pubnico Point, on May 27. There were single LESSER BLACK-BACKS at the Halifax Volvo Plant and on Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth, on Feb. 26 (separate birds) (RBD). ICELAND GULLS were fairly common, as usual, as far south as Halifax, with single birds being reported from Yarmouth Bar, Apr. 8 (B & E Ruff) and Truro, Apr. 21, (FLL and party). The birds had all gone from Glace Bay by mid-May. GLAUCOUS GULLS, also as usual, were scarcer, and did not come as far south, the southernmost sightings was a 2nd-year bird in Mahone Bay on Apr. 16 (Cohrs).



The Dartmouth Mew Gull, a fifth record for the province. The large "windows" in the primaries, the dark eye, small, unmarked bill and rounded forehead are all diagnostic. The rather longish bill (for a Mew Gull) on this individual strongly suggest that it was an errant "European "Common Gull" rather than a wanderer from western N.America.
 --Photo, I.A. McLaren, 1984.

Our most interesting small gull was the MEW GULL/EURASIAN COMMON GULL which was reported from Oceanview Cove, Dartmouth, on March 12, by Fulton Lavender and many others. It was a rather battered 2nd-year bird with its central tail feathers missing--perhaps a storm-blown bird from Iceland or farther east, rather than one from the population which breeds in western Canada? The bird stayed in the Cove for 6 days, but obviously didn't leave the area afterwards; it was on Sullivan's Pond on Apr. 15, battered tail and all (RGG). RING-BILLED GULLS were quite common along the coast of Hfx. Co., in late winter and early spring. A few were still at Eel Brook, Yar. Co., on Mar. 11 (PRD). The 'small numbers' along Northumberland Strait on Mar. 24 (SIT), had built up to 300+ at Tidnish, Tatamagouche by Apr. 21 (FLL & party).

There were single LAUGHING GULLS on George's Bank on Apr. 24 (RSD'E) and off Bon Portage Island--an adult--on May 20 (EPS,SIT,RF). There was a BONAPARTE'S GULL at Canal Street, Dartmouth, on Mar. 4 (Cohrs), 3 at Eel Lake, Belleville, on Apr. 5 (Kenneth and Doris Peters), and 2 at Sydney on Apr. 29 (HEH). BLACK-HEADED GULLS were fairly common Hfx. Co., with as many as 30 on or near Sullivan's Pond on Mar. 12 (FLL). The Cohrs counted 10 adults and 2 immatures at Canal Street, Dartmouth, on Mar. 4, and 6 adults (2 of them with pink spring breasts) plus a couple of immatures at the Fairview Container Pier. 5 of the 6 adults which they saw on Lawrencetown Lake on Apr. 1, were 'pink', and also had completely black heads. Apart from that, there were 6 birds in North Sydney harbour on Mar. 3 (BM), ca. 4 at Yarmouth and Eel Brook on the week of 11-17 Mar. (PRD), and a bird at Crescent Beach on Apr. 2 (Cohrs). Only a single bird remained at Glace Bay by Apr. 21, and it too left a few days later (SM).

Blake Maybank saw 5 BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES on the Nova Scotian side of Cabot Strait on Mar. 3, and 6 on the Newfoundland side; there were, respectively, 2 and 5 on Apr. 23. About a dozen followed CSS 'HUDSON' of the Cape Breton coast on Apr. 10-18, and one actually came on board (L & PP). There were several Kittiwakes around Brier Is. on May 6-7, and May 14-16 (IAM), and a single immature off Cole Hbr., on May 21 (RBD).

As dutiful ornithologists, we leave no terns unstoned, and there have been plenty of them to watch. Both COMMON and ARCTIC TERNS arrived en masse at their colony on Peter Island, off Brier Island, on May 11 (RD,SIT), but the first Common off Point Edward, North Sydney, was only a couple of days later (HEH). The earliest 'Comic' Tern reported was seen west of Pubnico Point by Daryl Amirault, on May 3, but this is easily beaten by the adult CASPIAN TERN which Stuart Tingley saw roosting among gulls at Freeport, Digby Co., on Apr. 20.

Blake Maybank saw a total of 36 DOVEKIES from the Cabot Strait ferry on Mar. 3, and 14 on Apr. 23; on both days the majority were on the Nova Scotian side. He also counted, respectively, 46 and 5 THICK-BILLED, 13 and 7 COMMON and 38 and 49 unidentified MURRES, and saw 3 RAZORBILLS and 7 BLACK GUILLEMOTS on the Mar. 3 crossing. Elsewhere, there were single thick-bills off Chebucto Head on Mar. 4 (Cohrs and Purchases) and in Broad Cove on Apr. 7 (SJF), and a couple off Cole Hbr., on Apr. 23 (R & DM). The Payzants saw many Commons in the waters off Cape Breton on Apr. 17-18 (L & PP). Occasional Black Guillemots were reported off Halifax in late March and early April (RBD,CF,FLL); the 3 birds which Phyllis Dobson and Charlie Allen saw off Cape Forchu, Yar. Co., on Apr. 18, were already in summer plumage.

DOVES, CUCKOO

Jean Timpa, whose thorough counts of ROCK DOVES from Kings Co., I've documented previously, seems to be fatiguing; this time, her incomplete survey closes with "and so on". How about other localities? One can see "10-30 daily" around Sydney (HEH) and "10+ daily" at Cole Hbr. (R & DM); perhaps such daily estimates are the best ways to gauge their distributions. The Ruffs had up to a dozen at their Yarmouth feeder. JSC seems to sense such a horror in her report of 1 at Crescent Beach, on Mar. 17, as "first ever--hope it's not the beginning".

Ted D'Eon's MOURNING DOVES at M.W. Pubnico, dwindled from about 2 dozen in early March to a dozen in mid-April. At L. W. Pubnico, DJd'E had 4-10 through late May. Up to 20 were still coming to Lynda Conrad's feeder in W. Lawrencetown in mid-May. There were 11 until late March at Hazel Hill (W & NP). The half-dozen remaining at Ross Road, Dartmouth, in early April were "more interested in each other than in food" (JP). There were other scattered records of ones and twos.

The only cuckoos were 1 BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO near Canso on May 7 (W & NP), and another on Seal Is., on May 15 (SJF & EC).

OWLS

There were 5 reports of 12 GREAT HORNED OWLS, including a nesting pair with 2 almost fledged young near Centreville, Kings Co., on May 11 (RBS), and 2 "juveniles" (fledged?), with 2 adults at Black Brook, C.B., and Apr. 10 (fide HEH). There were reports of 3 hooting BARRED OWLS, and a nest with sitting female at Hopewell was shown to NSBS members by Harry Brennan on May 19. All but one report of SHORT-EARED OWLS were for birds at Grand Pré; these are best summarized by RBS, who noted up to 6 there in April, some paired off by early May. The odd-bird-out was presumably migrating at Chebogue Pt. on Apr. 1 (B & ER). Harry Brennan was also able to show NSBS members 2 SAW-WHET OWLS in his nest boxes, one on eggs and one with 6 young.

GOATSUCKERS, SWIFT, HUMMINGBIRD, KINGFISHER

COMMON NIGHTHAWKS were not senselessly early this year; the first one, spotted on the ground on Brier Is., on May 15, flushed rather groggily (IAM). The only subsequent reports were of 1 at Pleasant Lake, Yar. Co., on May 20, and of 2 hawking for insects in fog and stiff winds by the lights of St. Mary's stadium in Hfx., on May 23.

A WHIP-POOR-WILL was singing at the traditional site behind the Dartmouth Industrial Park on May 17 (FLL, I & V. Higgins). R. S. d'Entremont reports one with a question mark, and rightly so. His account follows: "...a bird flushed practically under my nose, and flitted away like a large brown moth. I flushed the bird 4 times, but each time it kept flying ahead of me, weaving between the trees, and I could never get a good look at it. Every time it flushed, it uttered a soft grunting sound. It had no white in the tail." As he notes in his report, this sighting does not rule out CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW. In fact, its vocalizations indicate that the bird was almost certainly an overshooting vagrant of this larger southern species. Bent, in his Life Histories..., gives a few paragraphs on this peculiar "growl" or "croak" given by Chuck-will's-widow when flushed, evidently not a feature of Whip-poor-will. Certainly Chuck-will's-widows are increasingly frequent in spring, well north of their normal ranges elsewhere in the east, and should be sought here.

The first CHIMNEY SWIFTS were 20 at Truro on May 12 (JT, Ross Baker), and 1 was seen next day at Big Pond, C.B. (JMacN). Next, there was a wavelet on May 21-23, with reports totalling 16 birds from 5 localities.

Single RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS were early at W. Pubnico on May 9 (RSD'E) and at Lockhartville next day. However, numbers came a few days later, with reports of 13 birds from 8 localities between May 13 and 16.

BELTED KINGFISHERS at Glenwood, Yar. Co., on Mar. 11, St. Margaret's Bay, on Mar. 17, and Conrad's Beach on Mar. 23, had probably wintered. Two at Cole Hbr. on Apr. 3 (JSC), 1 at Tusket Falls on Apr. 6, and 2 at Lr. Eel Brook on Apr. 7, were plausible first spring arrivals. Thereafter, there were few reports; were they scarce, or ignored?

The first YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER was at Paradise on Apr. 23 (J & BM). There were subsequent reports of 4 single birds and 4 pairs. Twenty-two reports of 45+ DOWNY WOODPECKERS support the Payzant's assertion that these were "somewhat more numerous than usual". Thirteen reports of 23+ HAIRY WOODPECKERS were about par.

A NORTHERN FLICKER made it through the winter around a feeder at the Head of St. Margaret's Bay (E.T. Garside), and a bird at Paradise on Mar. 15-16 had probably done likewise. Migrants were late; the first was near Wolfville on Apr. 20 (JT), and there were a number of records for the next few days, including 20 at Cape Forchu on Apr. 23 (MWH). The first C.B. record was on Apr. 30 (JMacN). Seven reports of 14 PILEATED WOODPECKERS are gratifying.

--IAM, ed.



FLYCATCHERS TO HORNED LARKS

A very early OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER was seen by Arthur Spenser, May 5, at Glace Bay. The only others noted were one or two on the Shubenacadie Field Trip, May 27. There were several early reports of EASTERN WOOD-PEWEEES, one each on May 11 at Stewiakie and Clementsport (heard only), one, May 19, at Cape Sable (seen), one, May 20, at Holy Cross, Lun. Co. (seen) and two on May 24, at Wolfville Ridge (heard). The Payzants at Waverley write "a very convincing imitation of the Pewee by a Starling on April 23. Caution is in order on non-sight records for this species". With this sentiment this Editor agrees emphatically. *saw later, same locale*

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER - Ian & Bernice McLaren 1915-1930 hrs., May 14. IAM, at last totally convinced (no matter what others think!) that he had an identifiable Acadian Flycatcher, closely (down to 1 m!) studied on foggy evening as it flitted among roadside bushes on Brier Is. Off-white, conspicuous eyering, bright greenish back, head and coverts (with no difference in tone or shade from head to rump), darkish wings, somewhat lighter tail, whitish throat with yellowish wash on flanks and undertail coverts. A large Empidonax, with a large, broad bill, pale lower mandible. Since studying skins of this species in the National Museum last year, IAM is confident of this identification, and invites others to scrutinize early Empidonax. This one was clearly hungry and distressed by the cold, foggy weather, and thus, could be observed at length and closely. Complete description submitted.

Of the other Empidonax there were no reports of the YELLOW-BELLIED and correspondants feel that both ALDERS and LEASTS were a week late in arrival this season. The two Alder reports are May 27, on Bunker Is., in Yar. Co. and May 28 at Eel Brook (BR,PRD). There were five reports of LEASTS from May 11 to 21st, the earliest, on May 11, being five at Stewiakie (FLL).

EASTERN PHOEBES are usually the first flycatchers to arrive, around April 10. In 1983, they were later (April 24) and fewer than usual, and this year we have but two reports before the end of May--MAY 14 (1) on Brier and one on the Hants Co. Day, MAY 26!!

No GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHERS yet.

EASTERN KINGBIRDS fared better. There were a few early birds-- April 30, on Long Island, May 5, Egypt Road, Yar. Co., and Green Bay, Lun. Co., May 6 at Brier and May 13 at Port Saxon, Shel. Co. (EPS,MEC, JSC,IAM). After that, they arrived in greater numbers--from the 17th to the 28th they were widely reported from all the South Shore counties.

HORNED LARKS appeared briefly before departing for their nesting grounds. Two were at Cooks Beach, March 4, 10 at Amherst Pt., March 31, two at Morien Bar, April (?) and 6-8, April 3, again at Cooks Beach (CRKA,CF,HEH).

SWALLOWS TO CORVIDS

Good news of the PURPLE MARTINS is that they have returned to all three colonies in Amherst, the first-comer being seen around town by Con Desplanque on April 29. The return of the swallows is eagerly looked forward to and always heavily reported, especially that of the earliest to come back, the TREE SWALLOWS. First seen at Tusket Falls on April 5, by Phyllis Hayes and Carol Jaeguard, they arrived in Kings, Shel. and Lun. Counties on April 14, (RBS,VR,JLC) and Anna. Co. on the 15th (SH). Sixteen birds were at APBS on the 17th and a flock of 75 were at Sebim Beach, Yar. Co., on the 18th. The first date for Hfx. Co., was April 20, at Three Fathom Harbour. By the end of the

month they arrived in droves (flocks?) and were very well established by May 1. Annie Raymond defeated a persistent pair of House Sparrows by putting a cork in the entrance to her swallow box until they got tired of waiting. After they (the sparrows) left she removed the cork and the swallows immediately moved in.

Two NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOWS were seen a N. Point, Brier Is., on May 12 by Stuart Tingley. The six reports of BANK SWALLOWS are as follows: ;, at Cape Sable and 1 at Lr. W. Pubnico, April 29 (IAM, DJd'E), 1 at Sunday Pt., May 13 (E&BR), 4 at Crescent Beach, May 19 (JS&JLC) and 1, May 22, at Clementsport (SH). CLIFF SWALLOWS arrived on time in early May. Margaret Churchill saw the occasional Cliff amongst the Trees along the Shel. Co. shore, May 4. One was at Pleasant Lake on the 6th, and several had reached Annapolis Royal by the 10th. Jack MacNeil welcomed them back on the 17th at Big Pond, C.B., including one bird with unusual markings that returned for the fourth year.

of the following 2 dates were omitted from the upcoming field trips. Please accept our apologies.

Bill Caudle

Leaders: Fred and Evelyn Dobson. A day to see early migrants and sea birds is limited; a prediction of walking cancellation. Meet at the Tancook Island

Sunday August 19 on this charming island in time for the 10 o'clock ferry. rain will result in an automatic cancellation. Meet at the Tancook Island shoes and lunches are a must. Meet for the 10 o'clock ferry. ferry terminal in Chester in time for the 10 o'clock ferry. Stuart

AMHERST & AMHERST POINT BIRD SANCTUARY--Leader: Stuart Tingley. Marsh birds, waterfowl, migrating shore birds and warblers. Meet at the Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary parking lot at 0930 hrs. Saturday August 25



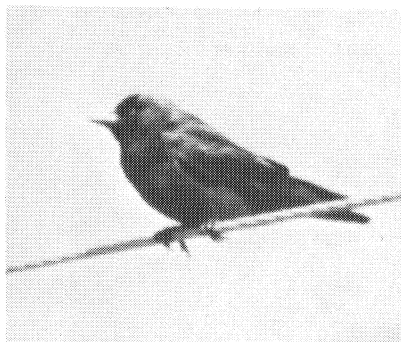
the best places to see migrant Gray-jays snapped by Zoe Lucas on Sable

show their arrival first in Shel. Co. they moved eastward, reaching Cape epstakes were won jointly by Lr. W. are Barns appeared April 28 (DJ d'E, ones and twos at the S.W. end of when the first concentration (20+) they were well established in Yar. Co., th (PRD, W&KT). Numbers seem "normal:

JAYS scattered here and there from Leson had three adults at her feeder 14 onwards there were six--the we still have something to learn feeders, BLUE JAYS were still in ough down in number as they retired

to nest. What might have been a migration occurred at Tusket Falls, March 6 and 19 were seen together (PH & CJ). Some did not retire far - Judy Tufts write of 2 nests within 60-80 Feet Of the house, one completed May 18, and the second on the 20th. Located at the top of young spruce trees (12-15 feet in height), they are occupied by sitting birds who do not seem at all wary.

The AMERICAN CROW and COMMON RAVEN are never heavily reported at this time of year, not because they are not present, but perhaps because of the enchantment of all the new arrivals. There were no reports of any particular significance--they are still around.



A distant relative, the JACKDAW has made the news. First spotted by John and Nancy Kearney on Brier Is., May 6, it was seen afterwards by several others, with photo taken by IAM. More details follow elsewhere in this issue.

←
The Brier Island Jackdaw stayed briefly on a power line to have its identity attested: charcoal body, glossy black forecap, paler nape, grey eye, and stubby bill (not actually pale, but here reflecting sunlight). Photo by Ian McLaren, May 6, 1984.

CHICADEE TO THRUSHES

BLACK-CAPPED CHICADEES like maple sap--Nellie Snyder writes of one drinking this from a dripping icicle on a damaged limb at Crousetown in March (a sort of Pop-chickle?). A possible migration was noted by FLL, March 28 at Russel Lake, where there was a flock of 40+. There is more news of BOREAL CHICADEES at feeders. Rene and Diane Matteau had four eating suet and bread at their feeding station at Eastern Passage. Twenty-five RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were seen, 20 of them in pairs (April and May). Most were at feeders, with only a few heard in the woods. There were twenty-three WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES reported--most encouraging--all but five at feeders, as usual. It is becoming rare to find them "in the wild". The "wild" ones were 2 in Pt. Pleasant Park, April 27, and a party of 3 calling and moving at Italy Cross, April 15 (CF, JL&JSC).

From March 3-May 19, fifteen BROWN CREEPERS were seen, six in the S.W. end and five in Hfx. Co. The others were at Clementsport and Hopewell.

A HOUSE WREN on Brier, May 12, was the only one noted (SIT). Fifteen WINTER WRENS were heard in time to get into this report. The earliest was at Lr. W. Pubnico, May 2, (still there May 20), followed by one on Brier, May 1, 1 at APBS on the 7th and 4 at Truro on the 12th. A most exciting sighting was that of a CAROLINA WREN on Seal Is., May 16 by Sylvia Fullerton and Eric Cooke. This was the third sight record for Nova Scotia. The others were by John and Shirley Cohrs, Oct. 6, 1974, and (2 birds) by C.R.K. Allen and Marie Henry, Oct. 15, 1975, both on Seal Is.

The song of the GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, distinguished from call notes, is heard only on the nesting ground and the three reporters who mentioned Golden-crowns did not say whether they were singing.? 110 They were at Pt. Pleasant Park, April 20, Tusket Falls, May 25, and Clementsport in May. This editor heard them singing at Petite Riviere, June 1, but as this was after the deadline, perhaps it shouldn't be included.

Many more people wrote about the other kinglet, the RUBY-CROWNED, whose spring song is much louder and more persistent. Geographically, early arrivals were well spread out--Amherst Pt., April 21, Forchu, Apr. 23, APBS, Apr. 24, Argyle Head, Apr. 28, Cape Sable, Apr. 29, Paradise, Sandy Bottom Lake and Russel Lake, Apr. 30. (all single birds except for 15 at APBS) (FLL, MWH, SIT, SRKA, PRD, IAM, JM, G&MN). On May 5, 8+ were singing at Green Bay with more there next day (JSC). Thereafter, arrival was steady until by the 14th -15th, they were well established.

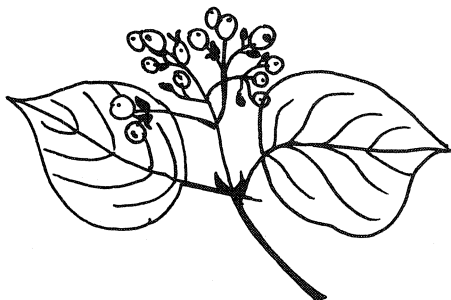
THRUSHES

An exceptionally early VEERY was heard by Judy Tufts on Wolfville Ridge, April 4. A whole month elapsed before the next one was seen on Brier, May 14. Two were on Cape Sable on the 19th and one had reached Tusket by the 20th (IAM, PH&CJ). Veerys were heard on both the Hants Co. Day and the Shubenacadie Trip, May 26 & 27, although in small numbers only. The earliest SWAINSON'S THRUSH was at Eleven Mile Lake, Anna Co. April 29th (SH). No more were noted until May 17 (1 Russell Lake) and on the 19th (3, Cape Sable). One or two were also heard on the Shubenacadie Trip. It seems obvious from the reports that HERMIT THRUSHES enter the province. by way of Digby, Shel. & Yar. Co.s and move eastward from there. Almost all the "single earlies" are from that area with a steady eastward move taking two to three weeks, finally arriving in Cape Breton about a month later. Viz:

April 14	Pleasant Valley
April 29	Brier, Cape Sable, Western Anna Co.
April 30	Wolfville, Pt. Joli, Sandy Bottom Lake
May 2	Hammonds Plains
May 10	Paradise, Waverley
May 21	Cole Harbour
May 22	Sydney

The Payzants feel that numbers are somewhat down this year. Two WOOD THRUSHES were seen and heard on Seal Is., at dusk, May 13-15 (EMC, SJF)

There is always a problem to decide when the overwintering AMERICAN ROBINS stop and the spring migrants take over, the bright new plumage being the best way to distinguish the newcomers.



We have several early Robin reports this year, some mention plumage and some do not. All are included here but in future it would be helpful to mention colour. The path of entry paralleled that of the Swainson's, although taking place earlier. MNH welcomed a R-O-T-L (Robin-on-the-lawn) on March 5, in Yarmouth town and reports of ones and twos proliferated in Yar. & Shel. Co.s from then to the 20th. A very early (for there) spring plumage bird was at the Agricultural College in Truro on March 13 (LAC)--or did it perchance come the other way? By the end of April, reports had come from Brookside, Paradise and Hammonds Plains and on May 1, they reached Big Pond, C.B. (ED, BM, KNK, JMacN). The first note of any number was April 1, when J&SC had three flocks of 30+ at Conrad's Beach, Chezzetcook and Middle Porter's Lake. On May 21, there were 2000+ going through Amherst (FLL).

CATBIRD TO STARLING

GRAY CATBIRDS seem very thin-on-the-ground (or in the bush). Numbers have dwindled during the last several years and so far this season, the trend continues. Apart from Richard Stern's report that they were "all over" Brier 19-20 May) the other reports (only 5 of them) are of ones and twos only. Earliest was April 29 on Brier; singles were at Paradise, Russell Lake and Clementsport by mid-May and Overton and Shel. Co., by the 27th. There was one on the Hants Co. Day but none on the Shubenacadie Trip.

From March 1 to early May, 31+ NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS were about (up from twelve in 1983). The only four BROWN THRASHERS seen were: March 12, Pubnico, April 10, Liverpool, May 13, Brier and May 19, Cape LaHave Is. (TCD, ERSJ, IAM, RF). Hubert and Helen Hall saw the only WATER PIPIT at West Cape, Yar. Co., May 13.

Although spring is here, the reports of Waxwings for this issue are all save one of the winter BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS. There were two in Dartmouth, March 12, and two at Economy on the 16th. Ten were still about in Paradise, April 1. April 6 was the last time Jack MacNeil saw the flock that had lingered several weeks at Big Pond and they were last seen around Wolfville, April 15 (EPS). CEDAR WAXWINGS usually begin to be seen around mid-April, but were very late, with only one report before the deadline--6 on May 26 in the Ruff's backyard in Yarmouth.

Four shrikes were seen. Three were NORTHERN SHRIKES--1 imm. at Cranberry Head, April 2 (ER), 1, Brier, April 7 (RBS), 1 imm., May 31, Maccan (FLL). The other could have been a LOGGERHEAD or a Northern, so must remain "Shrike (sp.)"--seen in poor light, April 14, at Lr. W. Pubnico by RSD'E.

"Daily" seems to be the most used word in the EUROPEAN STARLING reports, accompanied in some cases, like the Ruffs, with expressions of relief that the large winter flocks had thinned out to ones and twos.

-- JSC, ed.

VIREOS

So far, we have only one report of a RED-EYED VIREO; 1, heard at Carleton, Yar. Co., May 26 (PRD); a WARBLING VIREO was heard and seen May 20, at Port Howe by Jim Taylor; the SOLITARY VIREO was well established by this time, and first sightings run from May 10 to May 21, pretty well covering mainland Nova Scotia: 6, May 10 at Stewiacke (FLL), Yarmouth and Wolfville Ridge on May 11 (PRD, J Tufts), May 13, Halifax and Annapolis Counties (JS&JLC (SH), May 14, 15, 16, at New Ross, 6+ at Hammonds Plains and 1, at Brier Is. (KNK, IAM), May 19, at Petite Riviere, Lun. Co. (JSC), and Port Howe, Cumb. Co., May 21 (Jim Taylor).

WOOD WARBLERS

"After the heavy SW blow of April 6, early warblers turned up at Sable Island: 3 YELLOW-RUMPED, 1 BLACK-AND-WHITE, 1 NORTHERN WATER-THRUSH and a HOODED WARBLER, "according to Tony Lock and Sherod Crowell. (IAM's comment: "Sable triumphs again!"). Since that time all of our warblers have turned up on the mainland and some in Cape Breton, with the exception of the Canada, of which no reports came in before our deadline.

From Ian McLaren again: "The first really big day for warblers appears to have been May 19, when, in addition to those seen on Cape Sable proper earlier in the day, Roger Foxall came across a stretch of a mile or more, replete with warblers of a dozen species along the north side of Cape Sable Island: BLACK-AND-WHITE, 'MYRTLE' and BLACK-THROATED GREEN warblers were especially conspicuous". From R. B. Stern also comes: "We spent the weekend of 18-21 May on Brier I., and on the 19th, in the clear weather in the wake of a depression there was a large 'fall' of passerines--the whole island was alive with birds...16 species, particularly the WILSON'S WARBLER, the BLACK-AND-WHITE and the PARULA. Noticable also were the BLACKPOLL, NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH and sparrows which have their main beats across to the north (e.g. Newfoundland and Labrador)."

Eric Cooke and Sylvia Fullerton were present on Seal Is., May 15-18 (missed the 19th!) and found nine species of warbler there, the YELLOW-RUMPED outnumbering all the rest, with a count of 50. There was one real rarity among them, a WORM-EATING WARBLER, about which SJF wrote: "had several good looks at this secretive bird, which ranged from Salt Water Pond to just north of the Light". Note: Just received --a report of a Worm-eating Warbler, May 25 on Bon Portage Is., (ELM) Same? or another?



One further comment on this arrival day: from Raymond d'Entremont, who saw on that day, a BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER, a BAY-BREASTED AND A WILSON'S at Lr. W. Pubnico, and wrote, "This must have been a red-letter day for warblers". In the report to follow, there were twenty-six "first sightings" of warblers on May 19-20.

The TENNESSEE WARBLER was heard singing May 13, at Eleven Mile Lake, Anna. Co., by Sharon Hawboldt; the only other one so far reported was among those on Seal Is., May 15-18. An unusual sighting was of an ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, well seen and carefully described by Hubert and Helen Hall, who found it on May 10, in the Port Joli Pocket Wilderness; (details upon request). The NASHVILLE was first seen May 14, (KNK), eight reports since then, the last of a male, May 22, "in his usual spot...sitting in a hackmatack and singing", at Sandy Bottom Lake (G&MN). The first PARULA was seen, May 6 on Brier Is., (IAM); at least 40 reported since then, to date, well distributed. The YELLOW, May 10, reported simultaneously by HEH in Sydney, Arthur Porter in Yarmouth and Phyllis Hayes and Carol Jacquard at Tusket, has since then become common, certainly the "most vocal and visible warbler here this... (or any) spring" comment H&H of Yarmouth; at least 46 more seen and heard generally. CHESTNUT-SIDED, 1, May 9, was seen by Bill Morse at Paradise; 15 since then. MAGNOLIA, 2, May 10, at Stewiacke (FLL), 20 since then. CAPE MAY, 3 at APBS, May 10, noted by Stuart Tingley; only 1, since then, May 19, at Carleton Dam, Yar. Co., where it put on a most welcome display for C.R.K. Allen's class in Bird Identification.

The BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER, 1, was seen May 6 at Brier Is., (IAM) 7 since then. The YELLOW-RUMPED, 50+, March 15, at Cape Sable Island Causeway; 12, March 16, at West Pubnico, were all almost certainly wintering birds, and April birds are still somewhat uncertain until the end of the month, when reports of them indicate a good increase present: May 1, in Yar. Co., and along the South Shore; becoming "swarms" shortly thereafter, at Sandy Bottom Lake; a "deluge" May 5, at Green Bay, Lun. Co.; "abundant" at Hammonds Plains, Hfx. Co.; "150 at APBS, May 10, and "arrived" in Cape Breton, May 5. This was a generous-sized migration of our wintering warbler. The BLACK-THROATED GREEN was another warbler first seen on Brier Is. this spring: 1, May 6, with many coming in a few days later, May 10-13; called "very numerous" by twelve reporters, widely distributed; JSC wrote, "Many everywhere I've been in Halifax, Hants and Lunenburg Counties, since May 13-- singing in the cold, wet fog and wind!" This warbler also accommodated the Yar. Co. Bird Identification Class by collecting nest material for an appreciable time, right in front of their eyes.

The BLACKBURNIAN was seen three times: 1, May 15 at Brier Is.; 1, the same day at Seal Is., and 1, May 21, at Port Howe, Cumb. Co. (JWT); the PALM was very well seen this spring, with nine reports from April 20 to 30, including "8+, singing at APBS" (SIT) and "100+, April 29 at Brier Is." (EPS,LL) and ten more reports May 1-18 representing over 50 birds. The BAY-BREASTED received two only reports, of 4 birds altogether: 3, May 10 at Stewiacke (FLL) and 1, May 19 at Hopewell (JWT). One BLACKPOLL was seen May 1 (singing next day) at Sandy Bottom Lake (G&MN), and there were 10 on Seal Is., May 15-18; but Blackpolls arrived in good numbers on Brier Is., May 19, when (and after) most of the mainland sightings occurred--only seven altogether in Nova Scotia, of 12 individuals. The BLACK-AND-WHITE, first record, was of 2 birds, May 3 at Wolfville Ridge (JTtufts); thereafter twenty-two reports of 75+ individuals. AMERICAN REDSTART, first sighting was 1, May 6, at Tusket (CRKA); then nine other reports of 14 of these rather late-arriving birds. The OVENBIRD was first heard May 11 at Clementsport by SH, who wrote: "One flew up from under brush beside the path... perched in the tree beside me, calling...How often have I searched for them in the spring!" All things come to those who wait! On this same

date (May 11), another Ovenbird was seen at Waverley (L&PP), after that, twelve reports to the end of May, of 20 birds, now abundant and well distributed. On the mainland we have had only five reports of the NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH: 2, May 10 at Stewiacke (FLL); 1, May 12, at Paradise (JM); 2, May 15, at New Ross (KNK); 1, May 19, at Hopewell (JWT) and 1, May 20, at Green Bay (JS & JLC). Note also the reference to these warblers on Brier Is., May 19.

The MOURNING WARBLER seems to have been seen only once so far: 1, at Middle Musquodoboit (Shaw's Lake), May 16, by Fulton Lavender. The COMMON YELLOWTHROAT is lightly reported, for it there were 15 reports of 35 individuals, April 26 (at Broad Cove) to May 25 at Little Egypt, Yar. Co., after which it became fairly "common". The WILSON'S, one of the species so noticeable on Brier Is., May 19, must have gone on to the north; we have here only two reports: 1, Cape Sable, May 19 and 1, Port Howe, May 20 (this one must have made a rapid flight!) So far, we have had no records of the CANADA WARBLER--these, if any, and we hope there will be, must be reported in a later issue of Nova Scotia Birds. The warbler reports (above) came from thirty observers (probably a few more) from among our members from mainland Nova Scotia, Sable Island, Cape Sable Island (and Cape Sable, proper), from Cape Breton of course, and Brier and Seal Islands, and a special report from St. John's Is., where Ted D'Eon and a party on May 27, found Black-throated Greens, Black-and-Whites, Ovenbirds and Yellow-throats present, on their Eider nest counting expedition.

TANAGERS through INDIGO BUNTINGS

We have a new assorted group here. We are told that recent AOU changes in classification are due to structural or genetic correspondence, and are considered more logical than previous associations of species. Meanwhile let us enjoy the following collection of birds.

One SUMMER TANAGER was present on Brier Is., May 15, seen there by IAM and described as "a striking female with orange tinge to breast, large pale bill, uncontrasting wings, closely studied by IAM on Brier Is., May 15". Another late report is of one at 23 Baker Street, Yarmouth, undoubtedly a male in a fine plumage which lit in a tree in full view of MWH, who wished to share the unusual sighting, but was thwarted by the sudden appearance of a black cat which frightened the Tanager away; this was on the morning of June 6. At least seven SCARLET TANAGERS have been sighted, all brilliant plumaged males: 1, May 6, in a Halifax garden (Lise Cohrs); 1, mid-May in Cape Breton (place not specified, mentioned in Frank Robertson's "olumn"); 1, May 20, at Brier (RBS); May 21 at Chebogue (AP); 2, on the Hants County trip (NSBS party), and 3, on Seal Is., May 26-28 (IAM). The NORTHERN CARDINAL keeps coming into N.S. but in very small numbers, all but one in Yar. Co., this spring: 1, (male) seen April 5 at Hubbard's Point, present at the John Doucettes' feeder, 1, male, April 8 at Spryfield (FLL fide Mike Almon); 1, bright male, April 12 at Tusket (CRKA); 1, male, April 26, at the Ruffs' feeder in Yarmouth; 1 (fe) May 9, at Pubnico, at the Hamiltons', where the first Cardinals bred a few years ago--possibly a returned native? There are rumors of other Cardinals in Yar. Co., but so far it has been impossible to find out if there are six birds or six people seeing one bird. We keep trying.

The ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK, the only one of this group native to Nova Scotia, is always seen and reported, so striking is its spring plumage, that is, the male bird; but seldom has it been seen in such numbers as this spring. At least 36 birds have been recorded, separately as well as the "small influx May 19, at Brier Is., with a lot more on the 20th" (RBS). Twelve of these birds were designated males, 7, females, the rest ungendered. Reports are from Cape Breton to Yarmouth, Port Joli to Paradise; many localities in between--universal distribution. Earliest seen was a female, April 4 at Canso, a male there by May 5 (W & NP), and at least ten of the sightings were in that month, the rest in May (note the influx at Brier mentioned above).



Blue Grosbeak, on Brier Island, April 28, 1983. Photographed by Ian McLaren

Scarlet Tanager, on Brier Island, April 28, 1983. Photographed by Ian McLaren



The **BLUE GROSBEAK** has been well observed this spring, sightings from April 17 to May 13; the first to show up, 2, both males, at M.W. Pubnico, April 17-26 (TCD'E), and at Reginald D'Eon's the next day, April 18-29; also seen by ten to twelve other observers. Roger Foxall later (April 29) observed a male and a female Blue Grosbeak at the tip of the Pubnico peninsula. An interesting bird of this description was the cause for a Rare Bird Alert (RBA) at Hammonds Plains, April 18, reported by Keith Keddy as "thought to be a female but there was violet-blue on the face", which probably means a male after the first moult (See Bent's Life Histories). This bird was seen by many others, reported by L & PP. A Blue Grosbeak appeared in Halifax, April 18-19, along with Indigo Buntings, causing some confusion until they appeared together (as Shirley Cohrs has written) when they were sorted out as one Blue Grosbeak and three Indigo Buntings. The Grosbeak (or another) was seen next day in Halifax by RBS, CF and others; another male of this species seen at E. Petpeswick, April 22 (L & PP). There are also several May birds: 1, May 2 at Annapolis Royal, and 1, same date at Victoria Beach Anna. CO.(SH); a female, May 13 at the West Cape, Yarmouth, seen by Hubert and Helen Hall.

INDIGO BUNTING reports give the number of these birds seen this spring as about one hundred, a real "fall", more or less accompanying the Blue Grosbeak arrivals from April 17 into May. (Indigo Buntings and Blue Grosbeaks are frequently found in association in their breeding territories in the southeast of the continent; they prefer the same sort of habitat). Over half of the reports are dated April 17 to 23 and really large numbers of these birds were counted: at Brier Is., 12 at one feeder, 5, at another (IAM), one only left by April 29 (EPS,LL); 6+ pairs in the neighborhood at Brookside Road, Hfx. Co. (EED); and 27+ individuals, 22 males and 5 females, counted by Jerome D'Eon in the Pubnico district, mostly 1's and 2's elsewhere. These Buntings had reached Cape Breton by April 21, when 1 was seen (later picked up dead) at Malagawatch by J. McNicol. They were present from there to Cape Sable Island (1, Apr. 18, MEC); from Middle Musquodoboit (2, April 20, MBS) to Bon Portage Island (1, May 20-21, EPS,SIT,RF), the last date.

SPARROWS

The TREE SPARROW left the Bedford area in February: 2, Feb. 26 (RBD) and 1, Feb. 27 (L & PP). It was not seen after March 28 (at Eastern Passage, Hartlan's Pt., New Ross, Yarmouth or Lr. W. Pubnico); there were eight reports in April, from the 7th in Dartmouth (D & JP, at which place the last Tree Sparrow left just as the Spring Peepers first started), to the 28th in Cape Breton--seen there and then by the NSBS Field Party (SM). April sightings amounted to about 40-50 birds, since then, none seen. Arrival dates for the CHIPPING SPARROW were: 1, April 24, Yarmouth town (MAN) to 10+, May 21 at Smiley's Park, Hants Co., (R & DM)--only the two April sightings; those in May totalled about 20 individuals, and one of these was in Cape Breton, May 10, at Glace Bay (JE). They were well established in Wolfville by May 6 (IAM). Two reports only, of the FIELD SPARROW, both sightings in May are 11, at Brier Is. (SIT) and 2, May 15-16 on Seal Is. (SJF, EHC).

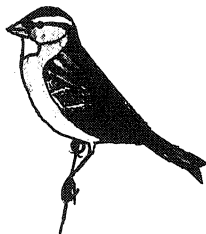
"First ever" was the sighting of a VESPER SPARROW, May 4, for Don and Glenda Lockhart of Lockhartville, who wrote that it remained four days. A few SAVANNAH SPARROWS were seen in April, 2, April 13, Conrad's Beach (IAM), and 1, at Seaforth, April 20 (FLL,RA); there were "many" April 28, at Grand Pré Meadows (JT); one pair, April 30, Dartmouth Piggery (FLL); the most (41) May 5-27, Glace Bay to Yarmouth, called plentiful this year. Ian McLaren found "Most of the non-territorial Savannah Sparrows on Cape Sable on May 19, appeared to be heavily marked--Labrador population?" SAVANNAH 'IPSWICH' SPARROWS on the mainland were all in April, or as IAM writes: "One at Cole Hbr. on March 11, was presumably a winter remnant; 5, at Eastern Passage and Conrad's Beach on April 11, were clearly migrant". Three on Pubnico Point on April 28, 2, on Cape Sable, April 29 and 1, on Brier Is., May 6, round out the season. The one on Brier was seen later, on May 18-21 (RBS), seen also by Stu Tingley. Other observations were: 2, Martinique, April 8th; 1, East Lawrencetown Marsh the same day, and 2, Cherry Hill Beach, April 15 (Cohrs). Also 1 male at Seaforth, April 20 (FLL,RA), and the 2 males still at Martinique, April 23 (FLL, CSJr.). Martinique Beach also harbored the first SHARP-TAILED SPARROW heard, 2 of them there May 6 (RBD); 1, May 13, at Cole Harbour and 4+ flying around there, May 13, "a foggy day" (R & DM).

This was a FOX SPARROW spring, 150+ counted in March and April in Nova Scotia. Earliest seen were at Brookside Road and Halifax (City) (EED,SJF), with only one other March record: March 30 at the Head of St. Margaret's Bay, reported by Ted Garside to IAM. FOX SPARROWS were widely scattered in 1's and 2's, twenty-five sightings, with greatest numbers in Cape Breton, and at Amherst and Canso (JM,GC,EM,OC,CF,W&NP, MWH and J&SJ). Shirley Cohrs had an unusual Fox Sparrow in the garden

(Halifax) on April 9: "Overall impression of black, white and gray. Some warm brown in tail and back but no rufous. Extensive gray around sides of head--breast creamy white with heavy dark chocolate (nearly black) streaks. (Bent gives many races of Fox Sparrow and they seem to overlap and interbreed so that I hesitate to give this one a name: but it is not our usual Eastern race)."

SONG SPARROWS are well reported; many started singing in March and even earlier (those warm February days), but most are listed as arrived in April, and numerous by the end of that month. Reports have come from all areas of the province. Most of these sparrows have fallen silent by now, and Nellie Snyder has two pairs nesting in the near vicinity, at Crousetown. Doubtless the others are mostly engaged in the same activity. The LINCOLN'S SPARROW came in with the big May 19 "wave", 4-5 seen that day on Brier Is. (RBS) and "around 8 on Cape Sable (proper) "the same day (IAM); no other reports. Our third Melospiza, the SWAMP SPARROW has been seen in usual numbers, eleven reports from April 12 (CD'E) to May 19, when about 10 were counted on Brier Is., among the multitude (RBS), plus on Cape Sable the same day where IAM estimated about 30 present. Other reports were from Yarmouth, Annapolis, inland Lunenburg and Halifax counties.

The WHITE-THROATED SPARROW which came back almost to strength last year has apparently remained so; well reported from expectable areas and still singing faithfully. Some wintered as usual in SW Nova Scotia, and it is difficult to determine when migrants first arrived, but it looks like the latter part of April when I came in (April 27) and 3, April 29 at Sandy Bottom Lake, Anna. Co. (G & MN). There are three reports of arrivals on May 4, at Clementsport (SH), Wolfville Ridge (Judy Tufts) and Waverley, Halifax Co. (L & PP). A "first sighting" at Sydney was May 12 (HEH). Undoubtedly White-throats were still coming in, as IAM reports "Only four White-throated Sparrows present at Cape Sable (proper) on April 29, large numbers (around 20) newly arrived May 19". Twenty-two WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS were noted in N. S.: May 6, at High Head, Yar. Co (MEC), to May 25, a pair at St. Esprit, Richmond Co., the first of the season for the Meyerowitzes. The others were seen May 8 in Annapolis Co. (Audrey Kennedy); May 11-16 at Lr. W. Pubnico (Dd'E), same dates at Yarmouth (B & ER) who said their bird was singing loudly and harassing House Sparrows at the shared feeder); May 13-16, 3, at Brier Is. (IAM); May 17, West Lawrencetown Road, Halifax Co. (Lynda Conrad); May 17 at Lockhartville--the first ever for D & GL; May 18-22, at Middle W. Pubnico (TCD'E); May 19, the 3, still at Brier, and 6, on Cape Sable (IAM); May 20, one male at Yarmouth town, feeding on dandelion seeds according to HH and I, May 27, at Seal Is. (IAM).



The DARK-EYED JUNCO was fairly plentiful in winter, seen mostly at feeders; a noticeable increase in numbers observed through April: 10, April 1, Sandy Bottom Lake, up to 20 there by April 9 (G & MN); "much trilling" April 3, Hammonds Plains, Hfx. Co., 25 Juncos there by April 8 (KNK); 1, March 23 at a Clementsport feeder, 50 on April 10 (SH); 2, March 30 at the Desplanque feeder, Amherst, 10 there, April 22; small flock at Glace Bay, mid-April (JG) and many, May 10 at Homeville, Cape Breton (PB); 24, April 9, at the E & WH's, Pubnico. A nest with four eggs was found May 20 on Wolfville Ridge "in the cut bank of an old logging road in the woods," by Judy Tufts.

Our only report of a LAPLAND LONGSPUR comes from Sylvia Fullerton and Barbara Hinds, of one in breeding plumage, April 1, at Rainbow Haven, Hfx. Co. Five reports of the SNOW BUNTING are as follows: 1, March 10 at South Bar, Cape Breton (Eldon Meikle); 3, March 26, near Bridgetown (SH); 20, March 31, at Amherst Point (CF); 50+ April 17, still at APBS (SIT), and 1, April 27, Cherry Hill (SJF).

ICTERIDS

The BOBOLINK appeared first on Sable Is., May 3 (A.R.Lock), and at West Pubnico, May 8 (JD'E). By the 10th they had come up the Bay of Fundy shore to Economy (FLS), and on the 11th were seen at Clementsport on the Annapolis Basin (SH). A day later, May 12, they showed up on the Northumberland Strait (JWT). All the above were sightings of one or two males but from then on numbers increased rapidly. By late May, Bobolinks were abundant and in all of their regular meadows, and the females were beginning to appear. The RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (bright males) came much earlier, March 24-28, with the Grackles, Joyce Purchase wrote from Dartmouth. First sightings during that period were of 1-4 at Broad Cove, Dartmouth, Economy, Big Pond, C.B., and at Wolfville, Sandy Bottom Lake, Tusket Falls and Pubnico. April brought as many more reports, of larger numbers per sighting, and presently swamps everywhere were resounding with "per-chee's" and decorated with Redwings balancing on the cattails. One EASTERN MEADOWLARK has been seen during the period, at Mount Besert, April 11, by Margaret Churchill. A YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (female) was well observed by Ted D'Eon's party, May 27, at St. John's Island. Besides Ted, were Jerome and Bertin D'Eon, Daryl Amirault and Onil d'Entremont.

Hedley Hopkins in Cape Breton, estimated 10-20 RUSTY BLACKBIRDS, March through May, from Sydney to Mira Gut. Elsewhere, all reports are in April and May, 1-6 birds per sighting: 1, April 4, at Crousetown fishing spot (JLC); 2 (one male), April 15, Cow Bay (RBD); 2, April 20, Belle Neck (CRKA: 1, (female) April 20, Old German Road, Lake Major (FLL et al.); 6, April 29 (none seen on the 27th and 28th), Brier Is., (EPS and Lance LaViolette) "at least four groups of 4-5 birds...much in evidence in unsuitable places", May 5 at Green Bay and Petite Riviere (JSC); 2, May 15, at New Ross, and 2, May 16, at Hammonds Plains (KNK).

The first report of the COMMON GRACKLE, observing its usual route, is of 1, March 16, at Economy (FLS); next reports are of 5, March 24, at Dartmouth (JP) and 1, same date at Wolfville (JET); March 26 saw 1, at Hammonds Plains, 4 more there the next day (KNK), and on the 27th also, 1, at Sandy Bottom Lake (G & MN). The Hammonds Plains flock rose to 20 by April 11; the Sandy Bottom Lake flock to 11, April 6. March 27, 28, 29 and 30 saw Grackles appearing in Glace Bay (on the 27th) (AS), and thereafter, good numbers very generally. April 11, Con Desplanque had 40 at the feeder in Amherst; 1000+ estimated from there to Minudie, counted, April 7th by FLL and friends! Grackles are reported in the southwest areas (Pubnicos, Yarmouth, Eel Brook, Tusket Falls) only during April and May, numerous by April 9 (MWH).

With the exception of Jean Timpa's feeder in Wolfville, the BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD was seldom seen this spring until early April, when it began to appear generally at feeders--a few males plus a female, no doubt with an eye to a convenient nursery for its projected progeny. Jean fed Cowbirds all winter, with around 50 there, Feb. 27, the number fluctuating thereafter from 1 to 30. Maggie Nickerson of Sandy Bottom Lake writes: "in previous years, we only had the occasional one or two as part of the blackbird flock. Why are they persisting this year? Perhaps, as with the House Sparrow, the extra half-acre of land we have cleared must make us look like 'agriculture' from the air!"

Four ORCHARD ORIOLES have been seen this spring: 1, a female, April 20-22 in Halifax "in a neighbor's plum tree, eating blossoms", according to IAM, who also reported the other 3: 1, female, May 6, and 1, a young singing male, May 7, both on Brier Is., (IAM,RF), and 1, May 28, at Seal Is. (IAM). The NORTHERN ORIOLE was first seen in April: 1, a male, April 18-25 at Porter's Lake, Hfx. Co. at Lynda Conrad's, "the first one ever to visit there"; and another male, April 29, was at The Hawk, Cape Sable Is., reported by Ethelda Murphy. In May, from the 4th (a male in song at Tusket, CRKA) to the 27th (a male at Liverpool, "first there in three or four years RSJ) we have had reports of 35 of these fine singers, 28 males and 7 females. Reports come from all directions, and except for the great preponderance of males (a seeming preponderance perhaps, since the females are much less conspicuous) suggest a good year for reproduction. Nellie Snyder, at Crousetown, noticed her oriole eating juniper berries and rare insects; (in my experience they relish tent caterpillars, which we wish were rare, PRD); R.B. Stern called his "our bird, the one which wakes us up in the morning in May and June, for the last three years in Kentville, from the tree across the road; returned May 17--there is also one at Brier Is." (If you have to be wakened in the morning, this sounds an ideal way--no wonder they keep one at the cottage too!).

GROSBEAKS AND FINCHES

The finches seem to move about at their own free will, and only one of these to be described can be classed as a regulation migrant. The PINE GROSBEAK for example, moves to different territory only as governed by food supply. This year, we must have had little to offer, as there have been minimal sightings of this bird: one only, for spring '84, a male, May 16, at Cole Harbour Dyke (JWT). For the PURPLE FINCH, there are many sightings reported--over 30 records, starting in February (25th), at least 5 birds at Hazel Hill, at the Peters' feeder. This number increased to 8+ by May 21 (W & NP); March brought them in generally, Cape Breton to Yarmouth, and they are still present, 1-8-12 per feeder, the males in full breeding plumage and both sexes displaying and warbling whole-heartedly.

Contrary to its recent status, the RED CROSSBILL is now seen oftener than the WHITE-WINGED. This is, unfortunately not really often, as we have only four reports of the former, one, of the latter bird: Red Crossbills 2, May 10, at Stewiacke (FLL); 2 males, May 11,

at Clementsport, 25 (males and females) there May 19 (SH), and 8, May 19, at the Somerset Road, Lun. Co. (JSC); the one sighting of the White-winged Crossbills was of 30+, April 21, near Stewiacke, along 102 Hwy, by FLL et al..

Very few COMMON REDPOLLS were seen this past winter in Nova Scotia, and those few took their departure in March and April: 10, March 18, the last time seen at the Desplanque feeder in Amherst; 1, April 4, in Marlborough Woods, Halifax, not seen again (CF), and 36, the last count, in April at Mira (HEH).

Few Redpolls, but many PINE SISKINS, was the story of the winter. The Siskins were present universally, came in Feb. and March, and were noted almost exclusively at feeders, numbers from 1 or 2 to 50 or 60. Hedley Hopkins and Otis Cossitt of Sydney calculated about 100 through the winter in most areas in their vicinity. Edgar and Vernita Hamilton at Pubnico, had around 60 by March; "Up to 50 at times, a steady winter visitor", at Waverley, Hfx. Co., according to Linda and Peter Payzant; 30+, Feb. 25 - March 23, at Hazel Hill (Warren and Nancy Peters); 40, March 22, at Wolfville (Jean Timpa), and 20, "with us constantly since February, on April 18, saw one with a tuft of our dog's fur in its beak" (Don and Linda Lockhart at Lockhartville). Eight reporters wrote that the Siskins left in April, the other (12) reporters that they left in May (or were still present).

The AMERICAN GOLDFINCH was also present universally this winter, and outnumbered the Siskins at many feeders, where it was regular, Feb. through May--enabling us to watch it change to brilliant summer plumage (mid-April to mid-May for most of them). There must have been thousands of these goldfinches in Nova Scotia throughout the season, for besides the flocks at feeders (av. 18-20), these birds were seen at large fairly often; one of the very few small birds to enliven the--mostly silent--winter landscape.

The EVENING GROSBEAK appeared in December, again mostly at feeders, and remained with us well into May, although in diminishing numbers. The largest flocks were: 80, Pubnico (E & VH); 75+, Hamilton Road, Yar. Co. (Lovitts and Taylors); 60+, Hazel Hill (W & NP); 30, Hammonds Plains (KNK); 30, Arisaig (one of this flock was all yellow and white, no black, seen by Father John MacGillivray); 20+, Liverpool (RSJ), and many others of 12-15 birds. Sara MacLean noted at Glace Bay, "Late April--beaks quite green".

The HOUSE SPARROW, like the Cowbird, often appears near feeders in April--usually a female and several male birds--this year April 11 to 24, 5-6 birds (MWH) at Yarmouth; and (RSJ) at Liverpool. Other reports ranged from "only 1 or 2 occasionally", March and April, at Hammonds Plains (KNK) to "around 40, March 25, at Wolfville (JET), and came from all over. Included were two of special interest:..." I was shocked to find a lone House Sparrow 'singing' from the top of a tree--a two-tone effort quite unfamiliar to me. Half an hour later I encountered another doing the same thing. The 'song' was quite different from the familiar 'chirp' we know so well, and each of these birds was alone--not, as usual, occupying a hedge with dozens of its fellows. I consulted the National Geographic (new) book, Peterson, Audubon Society, Tufts and a couple of others--most make no mention of any sound at all and the others mention only the familiar 'chirp'." (Shirley Cohrs), who added: "Intriguing!". The second story is of an albino: "Though certainly not unusual to have this species at our feeder, we had an unusual female make a brief visit May 9, she was a very light tan, almost cream-coloured". The feeder was D & GL's at Lockhartville.

Contributors to the above report were : Jean Addelson; C.R.K.Allen; Mike Almon; Daryl Amirault; Ron Arsenault; Ross Baker; Dan Banks; G. Billoway; P. Boucher; Margaret E. Churchill; Lisè Cohrs; J.L. & J. S. Cohrs; Lynda M. Conrad; Eric H. Cooke; Otis Cossitt; G. Crowell; Sherod Crowell; Dave Currie; Ronnie Denton; Bertin D'Eon, Jerome D'Eon; Reginald D'Eon; Ted C. D'Eon; Delisle d'Entremont; Onil d'Entremont; R.S. d'Entremont, Con Desplanque; R.B. Dickie; F.W., E. E., and Elizabeth Dobson; P.R. Dobson; the John Doucettes; Margaret Ellis; Allison Ferguson; Chris Field; Roger Foxall; Roberta B. Fraser; Sylvia J. Fullerton; Ted Garside; J. Gates; June Graves; Hubert and Helen Hall; Edgar and Vernita Hamilton; Sharon Hawboldt; Phyllis Hayes; Vernon and Ivy Higgins; Marion W. Hilton; Barbara Hinds; Hedley E. Hopkins; Carol Jacquard; June and Sam Karvis; John Kearney; Keith N. Keddy; Audrey Kennedy; Lance LaViolette; F. L. Lavender; A. R. Lock; Don and Glenda Lockhart; Viola and MacLovitt; David Lawley; Father John MacGillivray; E. B. MacKay; I. A. McLaren; Sara MacLean; Jeanne McNicol; Jack MacNeil; Don and Carroll MacNeill; Rene and Diane Matteau; Blake Maybank; Sandra M. Meyerowitz; Eric L. Mills; Iris Mitchell; Eric and Edith Morris; Jean and Bill Morse; Ethelda E. Murphy; Sandra C. Myers; Granville and Margaret Nickerson; Margaret A. Nickerson; Stan and Louise O'Brien; Linda and Peter Payzant; Ken and Doris Peters; Warren and Nancy W. Peters; Arthur Porter; Joyce and Don Purchase; Annie K. Raymond; Frank Robertson; Veralyn Rogers; Eric and Barbara Ruff; Mabel B. Smythe; Nellie Snyder; Edgar P. Spalding, F. L. Spalding; Arthur Spencer; Richard B. Stern; Clarence Stevens Jr.; Karl and Wendie Tay; Jim W. and Bernice Taylor; Jean E. Timpa; Bill and Brenda Thexton; Stuart I. Tingley; Judy and G. N. Tufts; Linda Tufts; John and Tye Zinck.

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 of references:

Yarmouth Co. (Yar. Co.)	Arcadia, Pinkney's Point, Tusket, Cranberry Head, Eel Brook, Chegoggin, Melbourne, Bartlett's Beach, Overton
Shelburne Co. (Shel. Co.)	Cape Sable Is., Matthews Lake, Lower Ohio, The Hawk
Queen's Co.	Port Joli, Port Hebert, Caledonia, Cadden Bay, Summer-ville Beach
Lunenburg Co. (Lun. Co.)	Cherry Hill, Broad Cove, Petite Riviere, Green Bay, Crousetown, Crescent Beach, Bayport, Lower LaHave, Second Peninsula
Halifax Co. (Hfx. Co.)	Three Fathom Hbr., Conrad's Beach, Lawrencetown, Cole Hbr., Mooseland, Rocky Run, Conrad's Road, Queensland, Waverley, Martinique Beach, Hartlan's Point
Colchester Co. (Col. Co.)	Economy
Annapolis Co. (Anna. Co.)	Wilmot, Round Hill, Paradise, Sandy Bottom Lake Clementsport
Kings Co.	Wolfville, Greenfield, Melanson, Canard, Lockhartville, Black River Lake, Gaspereau, Grand Pre
Cumberland Co. (Cumb. Co.)	Lusby Marsh
Hants Co.	Shubenacadie

WE REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THE RETIREMENT OF PHYLLIS DOBSON AS RECORDS
EDITOR OF NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS

At the same time, we realize that she needs a rest from a job she has handled for over twenty years. For a long time she was Editor-in-Chief, Records Editor and Photographic Editor, as well as writing up the entire list of Seasonal Reports by herself. As many of you know, she gave a personal interest and dedication to all those positions, corresponding with many members who became close friends and writing to encourage first-time reporters. Readers will still be able to read her humorous and sagacious prose in future issues, as she will continue to write part of the seasonal reports.

Our new Records Editor is Bob Dickie, who will take over in time for the January Issue. So please note,--SEND YOUR FALL MIGRATION REPORTS TO BOB.

R. B. Dickie
43 Deepwood Crescent,
Halifax, N.S. B3M 2Y5

DEADLINE DATE: NOVEMBER 25

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF REPORTS

FOR

THE JANUARY ISSUE

NOVEMBER 25

Bird reports to the Records Editor--

Mr. Bob Dickie,
43 Deepwood Crescent,
Halifax, N.S. B3M 2Y5

Articles, sketches and letters to the--

Editor-in-Chief, NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS
Nova Scotia Bird Society,
c/o The Nova Scotia Museum,
1747 Summer Street,
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6

Photographs to--

Dr. I. A. McLaren,
1755 Cambridge Street,
Halifax, N.S. B3H 4A8

FIELD TRIP REPORTSFebruary 26 - Sewer Stroll

For the past two or three years this particular outing has been blest with wonderful weather. Well, in 1984, we paid the piper!! I have it on good authority that the sun rose as usual in the east, but we knew nothing about it. It was wet, cold, dull, cloudy; the forecast for the day was freezing rain. Much to my surprise, I was joined by about 14 other zealous souls who wanted to go birding. So, birding we went. We started at Chebucto Head, travelled by way of Portuguese Cove, Ferguson's Cove, Point Pleasant Park, Mill Cove in Bedford Basin, Sullivan's Pond, Eastern Passage and ended up at Hartlen Point.

Birds? We saw about 37 species--2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, one at the Volvo Plant and one at Sullivan's Pond; a Barrow's Golden-eye at Mill Cove; a Killdeer at Herring Cove--in all, a most satisfying day. It did not rain ALL the time and it never got to be freezing rain.

Those of you who believed the weatherman and stayed at home in a warm bed, SHAME on you, you don't know what a good day you missed.

--Bill Caudle.

March 24 - Glace Bay, Sanctuary Area

Sixteen participants turned out on a cold March morning to take their places on the first Cape Breton field day of 1984. Three of these were people who had not been out with us before, though probably on trips in other parts of Canada.

Our first stop was the Glace Bay Sanctuary. Believe me, it was cold and windy on that causeway. Trying to squint through a telescope with tears coursing down the cheeks is not the ideal way to see wild life, especially when the wildlife doesn't want to stand around and be watched. The road was too soft to take the cars out there. The birds are accustomed to cars, but a row of people walking along, drives them away in behind the points where we have to be contented with a row of heads sticking up observing the observers from behind a grassy point or from a safe expanse of water.

There were plenty of Black Ducks there. If they are a declining species, it isn't at the Glace Bay Sanctuary. There were a few Red-breasted Mergansers about, pretty wild, and the family of resident eagles--parents and one grown-up child, I think it is two years old now.

We saw Oldsquaw and Dovekies as we continued along the coast, and thousands upon thousands of geese in Morien Bar. The bar was full of stranded ice claspers and some of the geese were on top of them, drinking the fresh water that accumulates on sea ice. Some were feeding, walking, talking--just resting there on the way north. There were plenty more Black Ducks in here too, and one of the resident eagles as well, sitting on a large block of ice, possibly taking account of the health of the livestock around it--they cull any sick or slow birds.

We found the unpaved roads too soft, so missed getting in to some places where we can stroll down wooded lanes--my idea of perfect bird-watching.

We made a lunch stop at Homeville River, and a further swing out to Catalone in hopes of seeing the large flock of Scoters that come there. There were no Scoters that day, and the bay was so rough that I don't believe we could have seen them anyway. However, there was another eagle, one of the pair that lives at Catalone Lake.

In all, we saw twenty-three species--not too bad for the hardy birds that have endured the whole winter right here. Except for the geese there were no migrants, and even then, fifty or more geese remained here all winter. I don't think the big flocks went very far, they weren't gone long.

--Sara MacLean

March 25 - Dartmouth to Eastern Shore

The morning of March 25 was sunny, just below 0°C, with a strong S.W. wind blowing. Thirty-one birders gathered in the usual parking lot to have a look at the lingering winter birds with the possibility of seeing some new spring arrivals.

We by-passed Sullivan's Pond this year in order to arrive at the shore at low tide, so the first stop was near the railway crossing on the West Lawrencetown Road. A walk along the track proved unrewarding but Linda Conrad's feeder produced a throng of birds, 9 species in all. As we returned to the cars, a Red-tailed Hawk was spotted.

At Conrad's Beach, it was hard to see the Loons, Red-necked Grebes and 5 species of ducks, as they rose and fell in the wind-whipped waves. Most of the party crossed the slippery rocks to Fox's Point to look for Purple Sandpipers but they were nowhere to be found. Spirits rose at the sight of a mature Bald Eagle floating low overhead.

A walk through the woods provided a welcome respite from the cutting wind and we found some Juncos and Yellow-rumped Warblers. The latter may have been over-wintering birds but gave us our only glimpse of Spring.

MacDonald Head was too windy for comfortable viewing so we headed for Three Fathom Harbour and lunch was enjoyed in the lee of the trestle bridge over Rocky Run .

After a stop at Willis's to count the ducks beyond the pond and a drive along Causeway Road to find the Bufflehead, we wound up the trip at Grand Desert. Here, on the calm water, we were able to examine an immaculately feathered male Oldsquaw at leisure. The final tally for the day was 30 species, about usual for a windy day in March.

--Joyce Purchase.

April 28 - Salmon River Area, Cape Breton

It was rather cold and windy on April 28, but 13 faithful birders met at the Marion Bridge Crossroads at 8:00 a.m. We had 24 species for the day, including four kinds of hawks--Red-tailed, Kestrel, Marsh, Osprey; also, 2 eagles, 2 kinds of Cormorants, Ravens, 1 loon, Robins, Red-winged Blackbirds, Song Sparrows, Evening Grosbeaks, Chickadees, American Goldfinches, etc.

Highlights of the trip were the mating dance of two gorgeous white swans at the Two Rivers Park and, while returning home by way of the Trout Brook Road, we saw a pair of matched Clydesdale horses hitched to a manure spreader. After Joy Gates got to her home at Reserve, she saw a Ruffed Grouse.

--Hedley Hopkins.

May 16 - Warbler Walk - Old St. Margaret's Bay Road

Seven warmly-dressed birders showed up on this brisk, crisp morning for the first early morning warbler walk of the year. We were too early. The birds weren't all back yet, and those that were only managed an occasional song, mostly in sun-washed patches of evergreen. We heard a loon call over the lake, and a few Hermit Thrushes gave us a short but aetherially beautiful serenade from the deep woods beside us. Of the warblers, we saw Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Nashville, Balck and White, Palm, and Ovenbird. A Solitary Vireo gave us his lonely notes, as did some Whitethroats. We were roundly serenaded by first Ruby-crowned, and then, in a much higher key, by Golden-crowned Kinglets.

Ruddy-cheeked, we returned to our cars, refreshed, happy and glad there were no flies (but sorry there were so few birds).

--Fred Dobson.

May 19 - Hopewell, Pictou County

The woods were soaked from the previous night's rain; the sun was but a memory, and a cold drizzle fell off and on. Was this what people got up at 5:30 and drove 180 km for? It most certainly was!

Harry Brennan's famous field trip at Hopwell, Pictou County attracted a crowd of 16 eager birders. One, arriving a little late, found the rest of us by scouting the back roads until she came on our tire marks, and then just looked for cars with field guides inside. A total of 66 species was seen and heard, which is quite good, considering that most of the warblers were down in the grass hunting for insects that were too cold to fly. Notables included a good look at a Northern Waterthrush, a Spotted Sandpiper, and high overhead, a whinnying Snipe.

The highlight of the trip was not one but two nestboxes tenanted by the smallest of the Maritime owls, the Northern Saw-whet. There is a certain something in the air when, as a small round head pops out of a nest box, half a dozen hardened veterans simultaneously add one to their life lists. These little charmers were almost too cute to be true, but the sight of their unlovely nestlings brought us back to reality somewhat. Harry's efforts in locating the birds and putting up nest boxes were warmly appreciated by the group. In between the Saw-whets, we were treated to a Barred Owl, again in one of Harry's boxes. She watched us out of her chocolate eyes from a nearby tree as her chicks hissed and wheezed from the bottom of the nest box.

It was a really fine day in spite of the weather, and many thanks go to Harry Brennan for hosting such a happy field trip.

--Peter Payzant

May 23 - Early Morning Warbler Walk-Hfx. Co.

'Tho a cold and misty morning, nine members ventured out to count newly arrived warblers and anything else that might be about. The woods were rather quiet at first, no vireos or wrens and very few Ruby-crowned Kinglets or thrushes were heard. White-throats were singing, Juncos trilling and Song Sparrows abounded. As for warblers, some species were missing, like Canada's and Blackburnian, but then, they are always the late comers and this spring seem to be somewhat behind-hand. There WERE Magnolias, Black-throated Greens, Ovenbirds, several Palms having a fight, Yellowthroats, Myrtles (or, if you prefer, Yellow-rumped) and a couple of Black and Whites. There were several

beginners along and they were able to get some good views of new birds for their life lists and try to become familiar with some of the songs.

To the delight of one member, a patch of bluets were well out, and white and purple violets decorated the side of the trail. Spring was definitely here.

--Shirley Cohrs

May 26 - Hants County Field Trip

Sunny skies with some cloudy intervals, lots of black flies, and a warm May day, provided the twelve birders with a perfect setting for the annual Hants County field trip.

The day began with promise--a pair of Wood Ducks were seen by the Cohrs on a lake as they headed for the meeting area in Mt. Uniacke--the Cohrs, not the ducks! But the Wood Ducks were not on the Hants County side of the line!

A hummingbird, an Eastern Kingbird, and singing warblers at Mt. Uniacke heightened the anticipation for a successful day's birding. However, the next few stops, including the grounds of Uniacke House, were disappointing in their silence.

Widening roads in preparation for paving, lots being cleared for housing, has--been ponds no longer inhabited by Bitterns or Ducks, continually force changes in the route and stops for the Hants County field trip, but there are always highlights and this day was no exception. The song was recognized first, then the hill (it seemed to be a mountain) was climbed and finally THE bird was spotted--a male Scarlet Tanager!! Everyone was able to have a good view of him. But then, lo, a few kilometres later at the next stop, there in full view, easily seen without binoculars was another male Scarlet Tanager! None have been seen on the Hants County field trip since 1973, when I first kept records and here were two this year. What a thrill!

On the final stop, where the water level was unusually high, another thrill--finding a Willet's nest with three eggs in it!

74 birds were noted altogether--a most successful Hants County Field Trip.

--Margaret A. Clark

May 26 - Grove's Point and Boularderie Island - Cape Breton

Sitting on the back steps, listening to the morning concert, makes for a good frame of mind to recall the field day of May 26. It is a back step, not a "patio", and not a porch, which to me means a structure with a roof over it. No, this is a back step, and from it one can see the big flock of Purple Finches, which are being fended off the white sweater hanging on the clothes line. At this time of year Purple Finches are so beautiful, but they lose a lot of their charm once they get near the clothes line--don't you agree? nice warble, though, rather like a little stream running over rocks.

The Robin, that ventriloquist, was up in the black ash tree. The tree is still bare, only showing its greenish-black flowers, but I wasn't able to find the Robin until he flew. Sometimes I was sure he was there; a moment later he sounded two hundred yards away.

The yellow warbler is exploring the big Partarian honeysuckle, doing his song, which is a pretty good effort as warblers go. It always sounds to me like ripping silk. Starlings are smacking their beaks, and the Song Sparrow is doing his pretty little tweedle-dee, while he runs, mouse-like, to see what the other birds have knocked off the feeder.

The gorgeous Goldfinches are singing and this would inspire the dullest spirit to rapture. Well! May 26 was our warbler day.

Like many such days, it didn't produce any great amount of warblers. There were plenty of other nice things though, reaching taxonomically from loon to Song Sparrow. The Song Sparrow was extra generous, in that we were able to find her nest, with two speckled eggs, newly laid. She will likely lay two more.

Our leader for the day, Eldon Meikle, mustered a group of twenty-one, and led us to what is for us a new birding area. We followed the shore road along Sydney Harbour and around Point Edward. Here we saw loons, double-crested cormorants, terns, a Bonaparte's Gull--the usual birds that like to live near the shore.

We carried on up the south side of Boularderie Island, home of the Bald Eagle. Several of them permitted us to view them sitting on their chosen perching trees.

At our lunch stop we had a good long look at a Rough-legged Hawk, something one doesn't see frequently. We roamed around in groups searching the likely spots. One of our number exclaimed that there is always such good company on these trips. So there is. Of course, when you are with a group of people whose interests are the same as your own, you are invariably in good company, aren't you?

It was a lovely balmy day, the leaves not yet large enough to hide the birds from us, and most of the birds not yet deeply involved in family matters. They were still frisking around a bit, bolder and more visible than they will be in a couple of weeks time.

Warbler Day, warblers or not, always seems to repay the hardy souls, or crazy old fools, whichever way you look at it, for all the cold, the wind, the mud, the misery, the grudging co-operation of something a quarter of a mile away, behind a sandspit, rather than a Black-throated Green Warbler dancing up and down before our eyes on a lovely wood road.

--Sara MacLean

May 27 - Shubenacadie Region, Col. Co.

May 27, 8:30 a.m. was a beautiful sunny morning. Nine members, including June Graves, who thought enough of the field trip to leave Yarmouth that morning to attend, assembled at Shubenacadie for our annual trip through Hardwood Lands. Roslyn McPhee led with the able spotting assistance of Fran Cook. We started with a long and comfortable look at an American Bittern, which also played us a concert on the tuba of the birdsong orchestra. The birds were principally from the righthand page of the check list menu, flycatchers, swallows, thrushes and warblers, seventeen species of warblers; with an appetizer of hawks, shore birds and woodpeckers. A total of 76 species between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., was a tribute to Roslyn and Fran's careful preparation the weekend before and the day before the trip. A lot of finds, a pleasant day and good company--just what a field trip should be.

-- John Cohrs

✓ May 26 - Paradise, Anna. Co.

The weather was clear, with enough wind to discourage some of the blackflies (but not the ticks!), for the May 26th bird walk in Paradise. We spent the morning climbing to the top of the South Mountain, and were rewarded by seeing and hearing 69 species.

A quick jaunt around the Morse's property did not bring out the resident Barred Owl, but we did see more birds. We stopped in Upper Granville to listen to no avail for a cuckoo, but the Belleisle Marsh yielded several species, including the American Bittern. Our last foray was on the dyked land in Annapolis, which is being developed by Ducks Unlimited. This added 4 shorebirds to our list. The Osprey hovering over the river as we drove back through Round Hill, gave us a total of 88 species (17 warblers), a record for our walk. This was made possible by the enthusiasm of the 17 birders who took part--8 local and 9 from Halifax and the South Shore. A special thanks to all of them, especially to the ones who rose at dawn to join us for a great day.

--Jean & Bill Morse



HANTS COUNTY DAY FIELD TRIP

The lunch stop at Smiley's Park

Standing: Molly Claydon, John Cohrs, Peter Payzant, Ron Walsh, Alan Covert, June Cruickshank.

Seated: June Graves, Linda Payzant, Millie Rogers, Shirley Cohrs, Marg Clark, Millie Lawrence

On the ground-- Mary Primrose

✓ June 3 - Yarmouth County Field Day

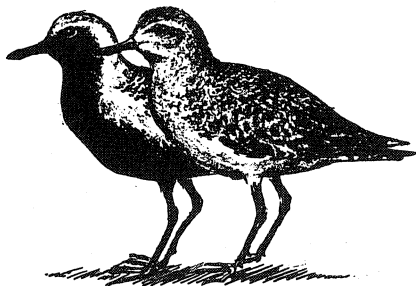
Route: Perry Road and Kelley Road in Carleton.
To Tusket for lunch (CRKA'S) and p.m.,
Sunday Point, Sandbeach and Chebogue Point.

Windy, cool, overcast and discouraging weather in the morning but eighteen birders showed up at the Carleton School playground. Weather began to improve almost at once, and birds began to co-operate. The walk in the Perry Road produced numbers of Black-throated Green Warblers--the dominant species there, plus half-a-dozen others, including 2-3 Blackburnians and a Bay-breasted Warbler. Leaving Carleton, two sightings of interest were two Chimney Swifts flying over (a rare sight of late) and Cliff Swallows building nests under eaves and gathering mud to do so. In the afternoon the shore trip was unexpectedly successful: besides the Glossy Ibis (still present at Sunday Point), there were two American Bitterns putting on quite a display in the marsh, and at nearby Bunker Island beach a surprising number of shorebirds were found: Killdeer, Semi-pal. Plovers, Black-bellied Plovers, Semi-pal. Sandpipers, (a little flock of about 20 of them), Spotted Sandpipers and Willets. Altogether we collected 61 species, in spite of the cold, cold wind.

--C.R.K. Allen

BIRDING KNOWLEDGE

(Seventh in a series meant to upgrade readers' knowledge and appreciation of some of our commoner species)



BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER

pluvialis squatarola

Possibly the easiest shorebird to identify, the "BBP" is fairly large - 11-13½" with a wingspan of 22-25".

In Nova Scotia we see them along the shore in salt marshes and on sand and mud flats. A few appear in spring on their way north to nest, in spanking black and white plumage. Many more come our way in late summer and fall. The adults leave the nest-sites first and are still wearing most of their black and white on their way south. These are followed by the juveniles, in winter grey, not so easy to spot. However, when the bird flies the black axillars ("armpits") are noticable and diagnostic in all plumages

The Nest - in the tundra moss in a mere hollow in which 4 eggs are laid in May-June and are incubated by both sexes for 27 days.

Range - In N. America, it breeds in the arctic and winters from S.W. British Columbia along the Pacific coast to Mexico, Chili and the Galapagos Islands and along the Atlantic coast from N. Jersey south to Argentina.

Flight Speed - Timed to 50 m.p.h. in 1970.

Call - a mellow melancholy call of three syllables, easy to recognize.

Other Names - Bottle-head, Ox-eye, Black-breast, Bull-head.

UP-COMING FIELD TRIPS

- Saturday Aug. 4 KINGS CO.
EVANGELINE BEACH --Leader: Ralph Connor. Meet at the Grand Pre Historic Park at 0900 hrs.
- Sunday Aug. 12 YAR. CO.- Shore birds. Leader: E.R.K. Allen. Meet at CPR Station, Yarmouth at 0900 hrs.
- Saturday Aug. 18 FULLER'S BRIDGE & PT. MICHAUD
Cape Breton. Leader: Eldon Meikle. Meet at Marion Bridge at 0800 hrs.

Saturday Sept. 18 LOUISBOURG AREA, Cape Breton. Leader: TBA. Meet at the end of Morrison Rd., on Louisbourg Rd. at 0800 hrs.

Sunday Sept. 9 YAR. CO. Middle West Pubnico. Meet at La Pharmacie at 0100 (1:00 p.m.) Leader: Ted D'Eon.

Saturday Sept. 22 LUN. CO. - Crescent and Cherry Hill Beaches. Shorebirds, etc. Leader: Shirley Cohrs. Meet at the entrance to Crescent Beach 0900 hrs.

Saturday Oct. 13 SEAL ISLAND. Leader: James McLaren. This is a two night (Sat. & Sun.) trip and limited facilities are available--reservations only. Contact Jamie McLaren at 429-7024 before October 1.

Sunday Oct. 28 CAPE SPLIT. Kings Co. - Leaders: Frank and Mary Himsl. Meet at 0900 hrs at the parking lot at the beginning of the hiking trail (at the end of the shore road beyond Scott's Bay) This is a 12 km hike offering spectacular scenery.

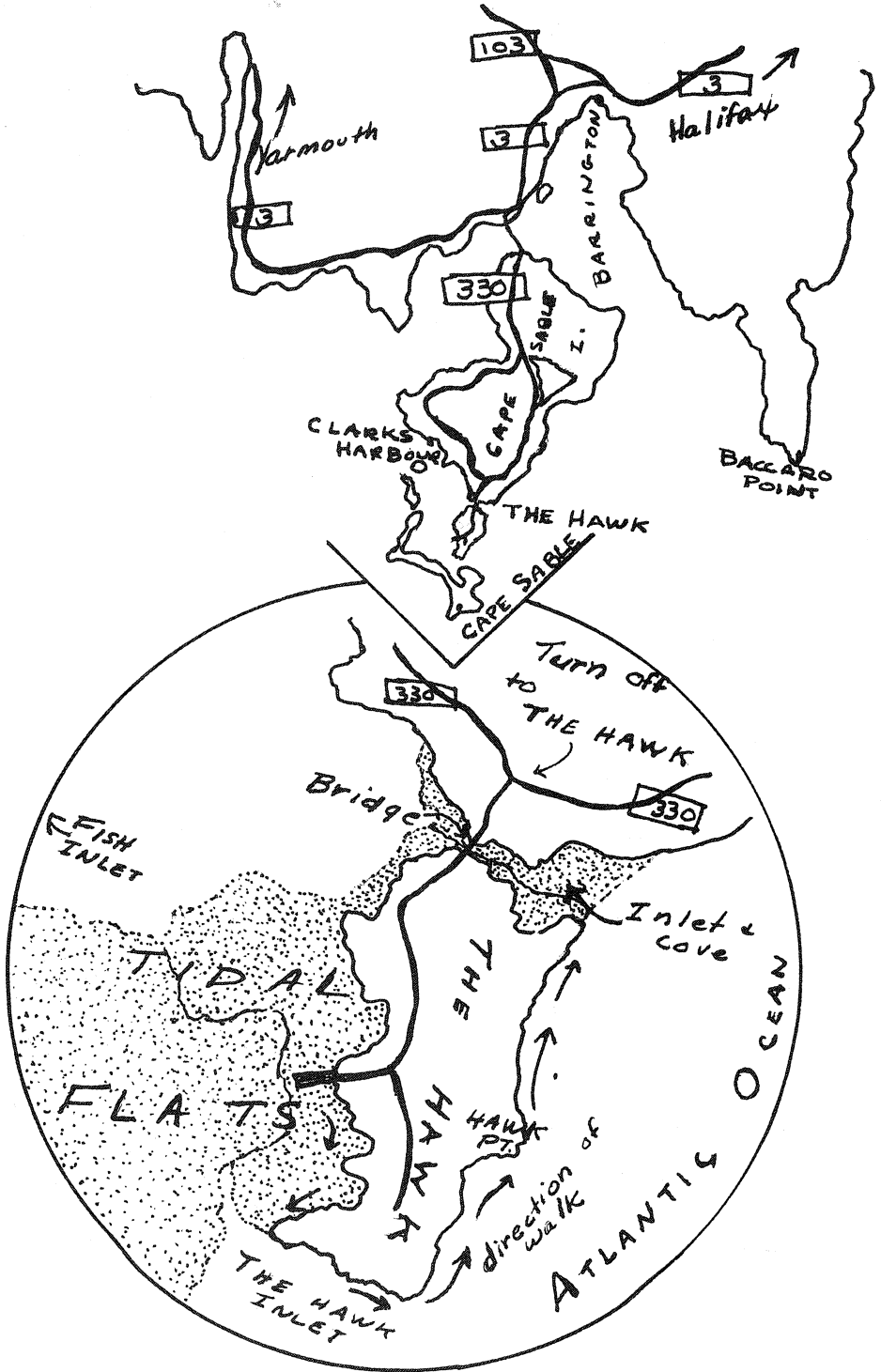
ENQUIRIES: Field trip Co-ordinators
Frank and Mary Himsl
453-2588

**PLANNING A TRIP?**

We have a list of bird clubs and societies in every Canadian province and territory, every State in the United States, the Bahamas, Belize, Bermuda, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Trinidad and Tobago.

If you plan a trip to any of these areas, let us know and we'll send you the club's name, address, contact persons, best birding areas and any other information we have.

Write to Bob Dickie, 43 Deepwood Cres., Halifax, N.S., B3M 2Y5.



WALKING THE HAWK

At 43° 25' N, The Hawk is east-coast Canada's most southern mainland point--which should mean something to the birds, and seems to, to shorebirds anyway. In summer and fall, thousands swarm over the square mile, plus, of rich sandflats exposed between this point and the enclosing arm of Cape Sable after ebb tide drains the shallow lagoon. Along The Hawk's eastern side, smaller flocks patter about the sand beach and feed, or roost on gravel bars, in the inlet cove by the bridge. Bridge? Let me backtrack to clarify The Hawk's topographical status, and give you travelling directions.

To reach The Hawk, follow Route 3 in Shelburne County to Barrington Passage. Turn south onto Route 330, crossing the causeway to Cape Sable Island, and follow the road of your choice toward the southern end; (see map). Watch for the road sign Hawk Point, and there turn southward again for a brief drive through the Hawk Road community of bright houses in rocky yards and spruce copses. Almost every yard sports swallow houses on poles or outbuildings, or hung in trees; the fanciful designs and gay paint really bring 'em in--from April through August, Tree Swallows wing about, and when you reach the bridge, leading to The Hawk proper, you find dozens of them soaring and swooping with dozens more of Barns, Banks, and Cliffs, feeding over the cove's ripples--or its flats, depending on the state of the tide when you get there...

Nowhere in the (Barrington) township are tide and land in a more toast and water state. The Hawk itself is really an island for a salt inlet makes in behind it, without adding to its remoteness however, for to a car the bridge ¹ that spans it is only one or two rattles wide.

...now, indeed, not even a rattle marks it, for road and bridge are paved. Can such a small break make a point an island? Still, the inlet through the dunes can be waded only at low water, and this cove in an easterly storm fills with a rushing salt flood that drowns all the low land around it and breaks over the bridge. So, maybe The Hawk really is an island, and all the more enticing to many, for "island" has special connotations, particularly if the ocean is involved:

At the end of The Hawk another inlet... separates it from a small island of drifting dunes. Here at the southernmost tip of Nova Scotia, solitary Cape Sable Light lifts a white finger to warn that these sands have buried many a ship and many a seaman and lie ready to do so again. Beyond Cape Sable and along the outer side of The Hawk lies only the ocean, "dark-heaving, boundless,² endless and sublime, the image of Eternity".

This ocean-given sense of eternity could make a summer's day walk around The Hawk almost another-world experience, encouraging you to savour leisure, to scan and enjoy each part, starting at this little bridge. From wires overhead a kingfisher tilts an eye, alert for gudgeons (saltwater sticklebacks); hundreds of these dart about rivulets through the cove, the marsh and flats on the west; millions more shelter under the eelgrass blades greening that area where Great Blue Herons stalk, poise and strike. Seen through fog (which we well know distorts vision!) these herons appear grotesque, flying like great, mindless hulks of the early world.

1. From Norfolk to The Hawk, E.M. Richardson

2. Ibid.

Under a clear sky, the wide sandflat surface warms to a temperature above that of the seawind blowing across it, and vapour forms. Softly tinted, wispy billows move on the wind, a few inches to a few feet high, and drift like scarves about the herons standing statue-still, necks craned in snakelike curves. The sunlight, reflected and diffused through all the moisture droplets, creates a luminous yellow-ochre backdrop of disturbing intensity, till shapes and dazzle seem to become an Egyptian frieze. This is quite fitting, because time and distance don't matter today and not only are the herons stiffly elegant in plumage and stylized posture, but as with sculpted Egyptian courtiers, their rituals celebrate Death.

What a contrast to turn back and find the cove at your feet has drifted full of every-day shorebirds. Bustling about, they feed in a way that speaks Life and cheers the heart. Where cove-side dune grasses bend over dappled, sandy, elf-sized trails, Mother Spotties scold and entreat errant youngsters. Two little plovers brace orange feet for a tug-of-war over, and with , a great red worm. In warm, salt puddles some peep bathe, vigorously contorting, egastically ducking and throwing spray, shaking, and uttering small grating shrieks. They join the settling flock to preen sedately, even drowsily, at last fluffing plumage to catch every possible ray of sunlight. A whispering rises and falls; heads turn to rest along backs, feet nestle up into bellies, eyes close and a sudden sleep like a fairy enchantment falls on the tiny ones crowded together on miniature gravel bars--looking themselves like pinky-grey pebbles, round and smooth, but so warm and soft withal! Better leave now or fall under the same spell, to which I can succumb at the drop of a feather.

The road leads on over shrubby, low knolls, past more stunted coastal spruce: though houses are many and bright, the natural scape dominates and the wind is full of flavours. One breathes a light tea, a steeping by moisture and sun's heat of leaves of wintergreen, snake-eyes, and cranberry. You may taste alder catkins and bayberry, pitcherplant and wild orchids growing in a tiny bog. The blends vary with wind and season and at the tip are always more salt than sweet.

Pressing straight on one mile from the bridge, you reach the public wharf road, a good place to park and explore on (booted, we hope) foot, as the main road goes only a few hundred yards more before it becomes a private lane at the foot of Windwhistle Hill. The telephone wires above the wharf road display swallows and a few flycatchers--lovely views of tummies of Empidonax, Eastern Phoebe and Pewee, Eastern and Western Kingbirds, and perchance a Yellow-headed Blackbird. Bobolinks warble and bounce around a pasture sloping west to the shore, shared with a tethered lamb and yellow birds flashing through alder clumps--some families of Yellow Warbler, or goldfinches just getting down to business--and not too seriously at that, judging from their frequent flights to frolic and enjoy most leisurely snacks among luxuriant thistles. Heigh-ho!

South and west the view is over low Cape Sable to the ocean's rim. As Evelyn Richardson knew, the shoals and reefs of this area do indeed lie ready to deal death: since she wrote those comments in 1953, three ships that strayed too close escaped total loss only through subsequent good luck and expensive modern salvage techniques. Still, Cape Sable's bedrock ledges, sea-built cobblestone walls, and long, white-sanded beaches do protect The Hawk and the interlying tidal flats. These are worth a walk while the tide is out, for you go right amidst plovers, sandpipers, yellowlegs, dowitchers, Willets, Whimbrel, and godwits, they are so intent on making the most of every moment to feed. Gulls gorge on the great red worms--disgusting maybe, but protecting the clams, for which a few children are rearranging the surface into mounds and wells. Terns splash down in the channel and



beat up to wing away, bearing silver fish to chubby flightless young. During a few weeks last summer, a Black Tern skimmed with rocking, buoyant flight among the sedgy shallows. You may well come upon a Stilt Sandpiper dining alone--in fact, you could find here any stray that a storm could carry from sea or land.

Plentiful underfoot are moon snails and their egg-bearing sand collars (all sizes from quarter to pie tin); sand dollars; periwinkles large and sombre, or tiny and bright; a few neptunes and spindle shells; Rock and Jonah crabs, and northern awning clams.

Amid the clean debris at the channel bottom, only a few feet deep with glass-clear water, well-camouflaged flatfish challenge you to discern them. Drop in a pebble: startled, they move, sand puffs up; you can see them. Hermit crabs bumble along; Polka-dotted, frilly-finned sculpins pout and grump, for all the world like bratty little girls decked out for Mary Jane's party and hating it. Perhaps they'll sweeten up at the arrival of this school of tiny eels, should any swim down that far...or perhaps they'll end up on the prongs of a spudge pole and prove their worth as bait.

Ahead of a flood tide licking over the flats the birds move shoreward to find rock roosts above the weedy, seedy, buggy tideline, frequented now by appropriate sparrows--whole families of Savannahs, Songs, and Sharp-tails; by Spotted and Least Sandpipers; Northern, even Louisiana, Waterthrushes; later by pipits, longspurs, and Snow Buntings. Over the shortgrass meadow just above may roam Killdeer, Yellow-shafted Flickers (the sand is very ant-y), Upland and Buff-breasted Sandpipers; and Pectorals.

Until some fifty years ago this species was plentiful and made up the main course of daily summer picnics for small boys who roamed the dunes and shores, setting snareboards, "firing" pebbles at individual birds from alder snapguns, and ambushing flocks, particularly of these "chirps". In 1905, a submarine telephone cable was laid connecting Cape Sable's Marconi station to this mainland point, whence communication continued through a wire strung above this plain. Hidden in higher grass at the edge, the boys waited until feeding Pectorals grouped beneath the wire, then jumped up, flushing them, and gathered the goodly number lying dead, stunned, or wounded from crashing into the wire. As the wounded were gathered, each neck was placed between two fingers of the left hand; when the spaces were filled, all necks were broken simultaneously by giving arm and hand a quick downward "slat". The same execution befell various victims of the clever snareboard; a piece of shingle or driftwood, small enough to be hidden easily under sand or seaweed, large enough to hold a struggling bird. The snare is a noose, tied in a long strand of horsehair (on the getting of which hangs a tale) and has its stem pushed through the wood of the snareboard. When they had set numbers of these, the boys again flushed a flock of birds, thick on a kelp bank. Because the birds took off with extra force, they drew the loops tight around any legs that happened to be within. These tiny but plump creatures were often the only meat the children could expect during the Depression summers, and fried, or roasted on sticks, even though scorched, half raw, green with smoke from sour stumps or half-dried seaweed, they were delicious. Older boys shot the large, meatier "greybacks" on the flats--so, after a lunch of smoky chirps, the boys might sup at home on well-prepared dowitchers. Nowadays we're pleased to find a flock of perhap nine Pectorals...

American Bitterns, Virginia (and maybe King) Rails, night herons, Glossy Ibis and such, visit a drain meandering through rushes and sedge, which thin out to sparse marram grass, dusty miller and sandbur; then a great tangle of orach and beach pea romps out to the south and

and east beaches. Northern Harriers, Kestrels, Merlins and Short-eared Owls patrol the "tundra", and sometimes an Osprey hunts the channel--a good eight miles from the nearest eyrie we know of, near the head of Barrington Bay.

I can't honestly recommend this point to those whose only passion is Tetraonidae, but during twenty-six years, while Sid and I lived on Cape Sable, often travelling this route, we did see one grouse merrily winging out from shore a few yards to Horserun Ledge. (This unlikely name may have evolved from "Horse Thrum"; nearby bits of rock and turf are the "Dog Thrums", where Common and Arctic Tern nested on minute beaches until, wearying, we suppose, of having nests go adrift on full tides, they re-planted the colony on larger Cape Sable.) Large glacial boulders topping the Ledge invite rock scramblers to a view over the smaller ledges reaching seaward and Cape-ward, offering free roosts and lunches of periwinkle to such summering seafoal as Common Eider and Scoter, mergansers, even a Guillemot or two--then, during fall and spring migrations, concealing duck hunters in their small boats.



East of the Ledge, low tide exposes roots and stumps of drowned trees still hanging on in the hard black duff of ancient forest beds, their trunks battered down to stubs, the layers of lighter soil washed away during the thousands of years this coast has slowly been tilting downwards, letting the sea flood into valleys. Such stumps stick up here and there on most of our shores and come up tangled in fishing gear far at sea. "Pickled in brine", the wood is hard; storms tear out pieces that weather to silver driftwood on the beach.

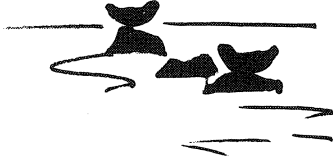
The shore turns northward, away from the Inlet, and fronts lower Barrington Bay, practically open water, with a steady surf running icy green and white. Because the water is shallow and the bottom white sand, waves break one after another offshore, then reform as they move in, ranks of them, all their bases that special sea-green of clear water lit from below by reflected sunlight.

Sanderlings play stop-and-go through the shallow foaming fingers this surf sends up the sloping sandbeach here. Not only shorebirds peck and dig over the banks of seaweed at high tide line, rotting, and sustaining the grubs of billions of sandfleas and "kelpflies", but warblers, flycatchers and scavengers abound. The flies swarm endlessly in clouds (just head high) above the upper beach throughout warm weather. They do not bite, but assuming you want to breathe as

you walk, be advised to hike the lower strand.

Along there, Ruddy Turnstones root up pebbles, or join peep feeding and roosting on mattresses of rockweed floating above hold-fasts on submerged boulders. Atop roosts farther out, cormorants stare superciliously into space as hours and tides swirl past their feet, the sea winds die and breeze from another quarter. Sooty Shearwaters on the move above tide races dive, often to their entangled deaths, about bright net-markers. Dolphins sometimes cruise these currents, leaping high out of the water with sleekest grace, arching, splashing down, head, tail or back first, no matter, in glorious play. Common Blackfish do their best imitations--unfortunately, their gambols rather often end in the shallows at ebb tide, where they die, to be washed ashore on succeeding floods and decompose, slowly and noticeably. Away out across the mouth of the Bay, gannets plane, soar up, dive explosively; white with distance, skim drifts of kittiwakes, tern and phalaropes.

Farther on, rocks breaking the surface offshore provide thrones for a troupe of harbour seals who insist on lying on them, arched backwards--I ask you, wouldn't it be more sensible and comfortable to let one's heft droop down over the rock than to maintain that ridiculous banana pose? If you do see a drooper, better check it out: in 1976, a walrus visited the Bay; we found it settled over the top of its chosen rock like icing on a cupcake.



The seals.

Long ago, one of these ledges wrecked a ship named The Hawk; now the whole island/point bears the name, but charts show The Hawk Point is the one running eastward just here to a small drumlin, now a high-water islet; its outer side is rugged, of great, fractured rocks dropping to kelp-haunted swells which always breathe a chill, sending you back gladly to the warmth of the sunny beach. It leads on, dunes building on your left, its fine sand hatched with tiny prints, some perhaps set by the feet of Piping Plover, for a family sometimes nests here, and a few turn up in fall migration. May you hear the sweet whistled call now, as you come to the inlet and cove again, the walk completed.

One walk is never enough! not even a summer's idyll. You could try fall's bracing winds, when the colours of sea and dunes are richer and brighter. Then the sea fowl pour past in thousands; a "stiff easterly" pushes the great flocks near, even right over, the shores. Winter brings Oldsquaws, Buffleheads, and loons; Dovekies, murrets and auks feed among Guillemots and grebes; Snowy Owls sit on the drifted headlands. Purple Sandpipers scramble and hop on rocks awash with sludgy saltwater ice, a few yards from the death site in 1984 of a Purple Gallinule...

Suppose you walked The Hawk shores and saw no birds of note (no pun intended)? You would still have found sea vistas, open sky, wilderness winds, and a glimpse of Eternity.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor, NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS:

...The real purpose of this note is to mention a most unusual and, to me, unique visitor in late December/early January. The grosbeak population sometimes grows to about 25-30 and on three separate days within a week, what I would call the equivalent of an "albino deer" showed up. This bird, a standard grosbeak in everything but color, flew, zigged and zagged with the flock and seemed to be accepted by the rest of the flock, but instead of being black, yellow and white--there were no black feathers, just all yellow with white on the wings. From a distance it stuck out like a yellow light bulb with the other birds. I noticed it with the rest in some spruce trees, where they hang out before coming to the feeders, about three feet outside the kitchen window. I called the housekeeper's attention to it and would say that the diagnostics of this creature would be the "Oh's!" and Ah's!" of anyone who gets a good look at it. It was a beautiful creature indeed. I mention this in case some member may have reported its visitation from somewhere else so its existence may be confirmed. The yellow was bright, about the same shade as the eye streak on the standard male grosbeak. If this has not already been named, may I suggest "*Hesperiphona Vespertina Arisaigensis*"! It sure was a "sports-model" grosbeak!

--Fr. John MacGillivray

Editor, NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS:

As the Nova Scotia Bird Society is involved in a raptor rehabilitation project, the members may like to hear about a Nova Scotia Red-tailed Hawk that ended up in a similar program in Massachusetts. The story began on April 1, 1983, when I climbed up to a Red-tail nest in Greenwich, Kings Co., and found it to contain 3 eggs, a fourth egg was later laid. However, one failed to hatch and 3 healthy chicks were raised. By May 18, their legs had developed enough for Cyril Coldwell and me to place a band on each bird. A later visit revealed that the young had fledged successfully.

Recently Cyril received word that one of the young, No. 597-77845, had been picked up in Walpole, Ma. on November 18, 1983, suffering from a gunshot wound to its wing. It was taken to the Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, where the injured wing was pinned until it healed. After several months of rehabilitation it was released to the wild again. Its mishap was reported in the Walpole Times, as well as the Kentville Advertiser. Through banding, we were able to follow the misfortunes of this young hawk that I first saw as an egg.

Another interesting point about this nest is the early egg date. Most Red-tails in Nova Scotia do not begin to lay until mid-April. On March 29, 1984, I again visited this same nest and found it to contain the first egg of this years clutch. Early again! Time will tell whether the bands on this season's young will reveal more facts about the lives of these interesting birds.

--Bernard Forsythe

Editor, NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS:

Here is a story which may be of interest to your readers.

The Bedford Institute of Oceanography research vessel C.S.S. Dawson was working in the Laurentian Fan area (about 600 kilometers east of Halifax) late in March. During a severe storm on March 30, a mixed flock of Great Blue Herons and "some white birds" landed on the Dawson. There were about two dozen of each species in the flock. The crew of the Dawson fed the birds sardines and fresh water.

Most of the birds left later on the same day; some stayed until the next day and a few stayed a couple of days. A few of the Great Blue Herons died, and one of the white birds stayed on the ship until they returned to Halifax. This bird was taken over by Dick Brown of the Canadian Wildlife Service's Seabird Research Unit at BIO. He identified it as a Cattle Egret.

--Linda Payzant

Editor, NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS:

While camping on the weekend of May 19, I made quite a discovery. We were in Kemptville, camping for the weekend and while all the others went fishing, I went for a walk through the woods. I was walking very slowly and listening to the warblers singing, when all of a sudden a bird flew from about two feet from me. After the bird landed I looked through my binoculars and found that it was just a Dark-eyed Junco. Being curious, I bent down and looked where the bird flew from. There was a hollow place under a rock. The rock was covered with moss and dried grass. I moved the grass and there was the junco's nest with four eggs in it. The eggs were off-white with brownish spots. The nest was well constructed of twigs woven in moss on the outside and dried grass on the inside.

I have seen 23 different bird's nests up to now and the only one which was better constructed than this one was a Northern Oriole's nest.

--Jerome D'Eon

Editor, NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS:

Referring to the article in the January, 1984 Nova Scotia Birds, comes this suggestion to fill out the picture:

I thought of the Eider on Bear Island and I believe the map shows there are none in this area. Do you know of anyone who would be interested in the trip to Smith's Cove to visit the island, one mile off shore. When the tide goes down one can walk to the island. Kelsey (my son) has a small clipper dorey. He usually knows when the Eiders arrive--late March or early April. I could let such a person know when the time came. Only clam diggers go to the island and they dig on the south point.

--Annie K. Raymond

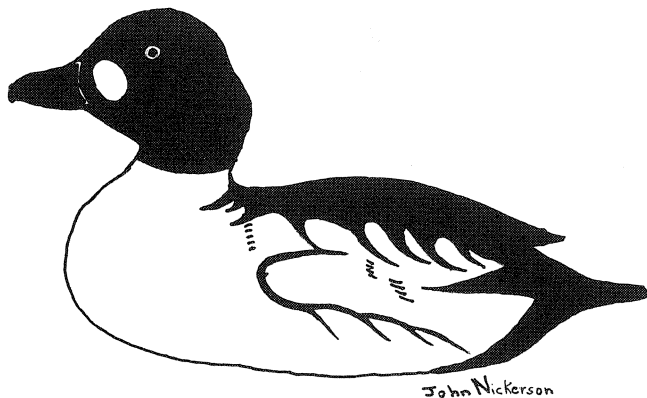
Mrs. Cecil Raymond
Smith's Cove, N.S. B0S 1S0

COMMON GOLDENEYE DECOY WINS 1984 CASHA CONTEST

In 1981 the Cape Sable Historical Society of Barrington, Nova Scotia, opened an annual contest to all students in the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour, for work in almost any medium on any aspect of local history. Since then, students have entered models, genealogies, many forms of written and art work, and taped oral histories--all in pursuit of the CASHA Award.

This large wooden plaque bears the names of each year's winning class or individual; its motif, a Cape Sable Island fishing boat complete with lobster gear and fisherman, was carved by John Smith of Barrington. Following its presentation at May meetings of the CSHS, the plaque is displayed in the winner's school until next year's winner carries away plaque and honours.

1984's winning entry was a Common Goldeneye decoy and brief history of decoys in this area, by John Nickerson, Class 9-C, Barrington Municipal High School. Ducks in their natural habitat and decoys are among John's greatest interests. More of his work appears on Page 41, illustrating "Walking the Hawk".



RAPTOR REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

Progress Report

From Cape Breton

Dave Harris, Sara MacLean, Corrine Cush and Charlotte Carmichael

Dave Harris is the Lands and Forests representative in Cape Breton County. In February he acquired an eagle with a broken wing that had been found at Big Pond.

The eagle was taken to the Vet. to have the wing set and a pin put in. Then it went to the Two Rivers Park in the Mira area, where there is a collection of captive animals. It did well there; the wing healed and the pin was removed. Finally, it was judged to be fit to live in a flying cage, where it could exercise itself in preparation for the DAY.

A number of people were invited to see the launching, which was on April 2. First, the eagle was returned to Big Pond, because that is its home. At this time the eagles are nesting, and there were great hopes that it would find its way back to its own nest where the mate would be waiting to welcome it.

The classes of the Big Pond elementary school were there with their teacher, Mr. Jackie MacNeil. Mr. MacNeil likes to expose his classes to every opportunity to study and enjoy wildlife, and has engendered a real interest in nature study subjects in his students. It was so enjoyable to see the intelligent curiosity of these young people and the wonderful rapport they have with this splendid teacher.

Along with the classes were a good number of the local Fire Department, who had driven the children to the field where the eagle was to be liberated; also a photographer, a Lands and Forests man--Tony Duke from Truro, and me. Dave had very kindly invited me along as a representative of the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

The eagle was taken out of its crate and banded. Then came the big moment. The cameras came to the fore, Dave lifted the eagle and tossed it up.

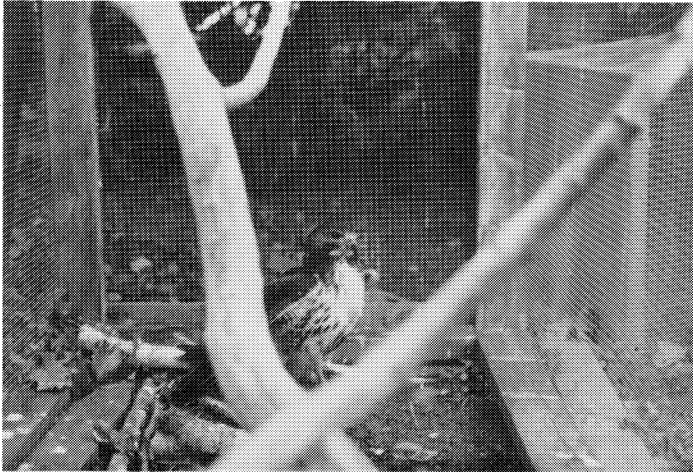
It couldn't fly.

It took off bravely, flapping and running down the field, but was unable to rise. Finally, Dave had to run after it and gather it up again. It appeared totally exhausted, and lay in his arms with its head hanging down, a very pitiful way to see an eagle behave. In my opinion, for what it is worth, I'd say that the wing was all right. The wings seemed to flap equally, but it just didn't seem to have the muscular strength to lift itself--too long in captivity, probably. So, it was stuffed back into the crate and returned to the Park. It was a big disappointment for Dave, and I have no doubt, for the eagle too. However, it will fly, and one hopes, in time to resume its home life again.

--Sara MacLean

It did indeed fly. After a further month of rest and feeding up on cod in Mira it was released again on May 2, and flew strongly to its perching tree.

From the Rehabilitation Centre at Mason's Point



Red-tailed Hawk

During the past few years we have housed and cared for several interesting birds at Mason's Point. Depending on the convalescing time required, some birds have remained for a few days and others, over five months.

This summer we are planning to build a large unit designed to be more efficient for feeding purposes. Also, we have considered the value of a flight run, especially for the larger raptors. To date, we have had no difficulties releasing birds. However, it certainly would be beneficial to have the birds exercised before release, especially with numerous injuries whereby the entire wing is secured with a body bandage.

The following raptors have been cared for under the present raptor rehabilitation programme:

Marsh Hawk (new name-Northern Harrier)
 Merlin
 Great Horned Owls (3)
 Barred Owl
 Sparrow Hawk (Kestrel)
 Red-tailed Hawk

We have also cared for several song birds and a Canada Goose.

Red-tailed Hawk

Our first adult Red-tailed Hawk arrived from the Dartmouth Veterinary Hospital on November 23, 1983, with full amputation of the left leg as a result of being caught in a leg-hold trap. Within three days he adjusted well to the missing limb and gained surprising balance. At feeding times he became ravenous, almost snatching the food from our hands. A very aggressive eater, he was at the same time a pleasant bird to care for. We were able to supply the hawk with a varied nutritious diet, including chicken, rabbit and mice.

He was banded on the evening of January 26, 1984, with band No. 597-77863. Grand Pré was chosen as the release site. Over an open cornfield, surrounded by a hardwood stand, he flew and perched on the edge of the wood. His flight was accurate and direct. Michael placed a rabbit carcass on the field. The weather provided mild temperatures with haze cloud cover and the next few days remained pleasant.

It was certainly a pleasure to care for the Red-tailed Hawk. He was strikingly beautiful with feather colours of rust, browns and white chest--for us indeed a very special bird.

--Elaine Kew

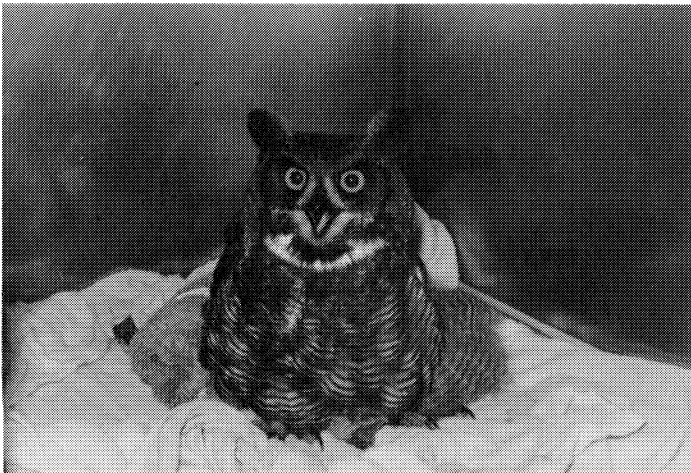
From two of our Veterinarians

We've had a fairly busy time at our practice since last fall with raptors brought in by Lands and Forest as well as other interested persons. In going through our records, we've seen 2 Great Horned Owls, 3 Barred Owls, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk and 1 Red-tailed Hawk. It's been a learning experience for us, both in the handling of the different species and in dealing with certain injuries. It's also been a very frustrating experience as we've worked very hard on one owl in particular, only in the end to resort to euthanasia. Four of the raptors were injured by shotgun blasts, two by mishaps with cars and one caught in a leg hold trap. As you can see, we are really just trying to undo damage brought about by other members of "our species". The Red-tailed Hawk had its lower leg fractured in a leg hold trap and the injury was at least three days old. The prognosis was not good, but an effort was made to surgically pin and cast the leg. Lack of blood supply to the lower leg doomed this to failure but after some discussion, we opted to amputate the leg at the knee joint. Elaine and Mike Kew housed this bird for some time, where it made an uneventful recovery. Discussion took place with people in the Wolfville area and it was decided to release the bird back to the wild and this was done. All birds are banded before release so we hope that if the hawk was unable to make it through the winter, we will hear about it.



Red-tailed Hawk with Ian MacKay

The Sharp-shinned Hawk had been blasted with a shotgun and died shortly after receiving emergency care. One of the Barred Owls, who tangled with a car, received a broken back and was euthanized. The second Barred Owl injured in the same way had a concussion and was badly stunned, but responded well and was sent to Cyril Coldwell's for R & R. Another Barred Owl was found in a weakened state, having been shot some time previously. It had lost the use of one leg by a pellet and had healing fractures in its wings, also caused by pellets. We treated it for several days and it was also sent to Cyril Coldwell.



Great Horned Owl

One young Great Horned Owl had apparently been hit by a car and was presented in a stunned, weakened state. It was treated at the hospital for a few days and was able to be released. The second Great Horned Owl was the victim of a shotgun blast that caused a terrible fracture of the large bone in the wing, the humerus. After treating for shock, the fracture was surgically repaired with a stainless steel pin, having first debrided the wound to remove all dead tissue. The blood supply had been badly damaged, and the wound was

infected when we started, so the prognosis was guarded. After several months of care at the Kew's home, many repeat radiographs and one second attempt at surgical intervention, we finally had to admit defeat as we had a "non union" of the fracture. There was soft callous formed but no true bone. The bird could fly short distances but could not be released, and so, reluctantly we had to put this magnificent bird down.

In closing, I'd just like to say a few things about the ease of handling the various species. Barred Owls become extremely tame, can be easily handled and stroked, even (somewhat foolishly) without gloves. If they do decide to grasp with their talons, they are extremely strong and it can be difficult to have them release them. The mature Great Horns are another matter, with their clacking beaks and flexing talons telling you to leave them alone. The size and strength of their feet is truly amazing and when you see them rip a restraining towel to shreds, you are thankful it's not your arm. They do, however, become easier to handle with time, although they never lose their fiesty nature. With the hawks, one has to be careful to prevent self injury, as they become frightened very easily with any movement or attempt to handle them. We've really enjoyed our work with the raptors and find that as time goes by, we learn a little more about handling and treatments and we trust our results will show steady improvement as well.

--Ian McKay & Jack Cameron

We welcome Dr. Dave Richardson, who is new to our project and who is helping raptors in Sydney, Cape Breton.

On behalf of our membership, we wish to thank our veterinarians and the owners of our "rest and care" areas for their time and expertise which is given without charge. Their out-of-pocket expenses, such as transportation of the birds, food, caging materials, surgical and drug supplies, etc., are paid by our Society's Sanctuary and Trust Fund. If any member wishes to contribute to the cost of this project they should send their donation to:

N. S. Bird Society Sanctuary and Trust Fund
c/o of the Nova Scotia Museum
1747 Summer Street,
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6

The Sanctuary and Trust Fund is a registered charitable organization and will issue receipts for income tax purposes.

-- Shirley Cohrs
Co-ordinator
R. R. Programme



THE EAGLES OF BRAS D'OR

Nova Scotia has a relatively large eagle population as a result of some of the best Bald Eagle habitat in eastern North America. Since 1975, wildlife biologists with the Department of Lands and Forests have been examining the birds habitats, their nesting and feeding habits and their movements. In 1980 we began making a 16 mm movie to bring all we had seen and learned into the province's school classrooms. On April 11, 1984, the film was released to the public and Mr. Streach, Minister of Lands and Forests, announced that six young eagles would be sent to Massachusetts to help establish a breeding population of birds there.

On hand to see the film was Howard Larsen, Regional Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who accepted the gift of six eagles from the minister and also commented on the four birds donated to New Jersey last year. The four were doing well. However, one had migrated to Virginia, where it had begun feeding on a flock of domestic turkeys. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel had to recapture it and take it farther south.

The six eaglets this year, will come from Cape Breton and will only be taken from nests with more than one eaglet in them. The birds will be about eight weeks old when they will be flown directly to Massachusetts to "hacking" cages which have been set up for their gentle release to the wild. A great deal of money is being spent on this project by the U.S., for such things as 24 hour video monitoring of the birds in the hack boxes and occasional monitoring after their release. They also offered assistance for a province-wide survey of our eagle population before any more birds were taken south.

The film the Department produced is eighteen minutes long. Filmed primarily in Cape Breton, the film begins in early spring with nest buildings and incubation. Close-ups cover the activities of the young in the nest and the food brought by the adults. The film shows the birds' first flights and their fishing attempts as they learn to feed themselves. Aerial views of the Bras d'Or Lakes in summer surrounded by forest and undeveloped shoreline give an eagle's eye view of an ideal place to live. Scavaging for food during the winter around farms and the broken ice in the Shubenacadie river complete the eagles' year.

Highlights of the Department's eagle research are also shown as wildlife biologists band the eaglets to study their movements and survey the lake shoreline to count birds and estimate their population and seasonal distribution.

The film was produced by the Department of Government Services for the Department of Lands and Forests. The first filming was done in the spring of 1980, and all work was completed by the fall of 1983. The total cost to Lands and Forests was about \$18,000.

Special thanks from the Department goes to Herman Burfelo, Riverside, Colchester county who spent many hours attracting and counting eagles and providing equipment for winter eagle research and filming. Also thanks to Cyril Coldwell of Gaspereau, Kings County, who runs a raptor rehabilitation facility on his farm and has studied eagles for most of his 66 years. Cyril's birds provided many of the close-ups and Cyril, much advice.

The film was produced for use in the Department's film program that reaches 74,000 students and 3,000 adults annually. It is available for loan through our film library in Truro. It is also available

on ½ inch video cassette for home viewing.

Tony Duke
Wildlife Biologist
N.S. Department of Lands and Forests

NSBS President, Bill Caudle and Editor of Nova Scotia Birds, Shirley Cohrs, were invited to the showing of the "Eagles of Bras d'Or" and were impressed with the quality and superb photography. We hope to show it at one of the Halifax museum meetings next winter.

THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM IS IN NEED OF MORIBUND BIRDS FOR TAXIDERMIC PURPOSES. THEY PARTICULARLY NEED THE COMMON, URBAN BIRDS --SPARROWS, ROBINS, STARLINGS, ETC., AND HAVE ASKED US TO HELP. BODIES SHOULD BE STORED FROZEN AND SENT OR DELIVERED TO THE MUSEUM ADDRESS C/O FRED SCOTT.

STUFFED BIRDS ANYONE?

While doing some recreational reading in 19th century Nova Scotian Ornithology, I have been struck by the frequent references to taking of specimens, some quite interesting, for private collections. Some of these collections may still exist in old homes or public buildings around the province (other than those of the N.S. Museums system). I would be grateful if readers could write to me if they know of any such collections, however small.

Ian McLaren
Biology Department
Dalhousie University
Halifax, N.S. B3H 4A8

NEW RARE BIRD ALERT

The Halifax based Rare Bird Alert is to be reorganized in September, in time for all the fall rarities!

With people moving away, changing telephone numbers, or becoming more or less interested in being included, the simplest way of doing this is to COMPLETELY CANCEL the present lot and start afresh.

IF YOU WISH TO BE INCLUDED PLEASE LET US KNOW BEFORE AUGUST 30

Include: Name, address and a telephone number for daytime and evenings
If you live outside the Metro area please state that you are willing to accept collect telephone calls.

All members who participate in the RBA are reminded of the OBLIGATION TO GET THE NEWS PASSED ON, even if your first contact(s) is temporarily unavailable. Sometimes this means a fair amount of telephoning down the list as well as making the effort to reach the unavailable parties later.

The present RBA remains in effect until replaced by the new one:

DEADLINE: AUGUST 30

CONTACT: SHIRLEY COHRS
8 ROSEMOUNT AVE.
HALIFAX, N.S. B3N 1X8

TELEPHONE: 477-6036



GRAND PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTEST

► OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

- * FIRST PRIZE \$100.00
- * SECOND PRIZE \$50.00
- * TWO PRIZES OF \$25.00



JUDGES: MARY PRIMROSE
RALPH CONNOR



- RULES:
1. PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE OF BIRDS OCCURRING IN NOVA SCOTIA
 2. COLOUR SLIDES OR BLACK AND WHITE PRINTS ARE ACCEPTABLE
 3. PLACE NAME AND ADDRESS ON EACH PHOTO AND ON SLIDES MARK THE LOWER LEFT CORNER (AS VIEWED) WITH A SMALL CROSS.
 4. WE WOULD LIKE TO RETAIN ENTRIES TO ADD TO OUR SOCIETY'S COLLECTION AND TO APPEAR IN NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS, BUT IF YOU WISH YOUR ENTRY TO BE RETURNED, PLEASE INCLUDE A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO DUPLICATE THE SLIDES IN THOSE CASES.
 5. EACH MEMBER WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR ONE PRIZE ONLY
 6. THE SOCIETY IS PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN SLIDES OF OUR COMMONER SPECIES - ROBIN, CROW, RAVEN, ETC., AND PHOTOS OF SUCH BIRDS ARE VERY WELCOME
 7. THERE IS NO LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF ENTRIES PER MEMBER.

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 1, 1984 WINNERS TO BE ANNOUNCED IN JANUARY 1985
ISSUE OF NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS. WINNING
ENTRIES WILL BE SHOWN ON MEMBER'S SLIDE
NIGHT, WHEN PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED.

SEND ENTRIES TO: MARY PRIMROSE
6411 South Street, Apt. 22
HALIFAX, N. S. B3H 1V1

A BREEDING BIRD ATLAS IN THE MARITIMES?

Peter Payzant

An exciting new aspect of birding may be about to develop in Nova Scotia. Following in the footsteps of successful work in Great Britain, New York, Ontario and elsewhere, Maritime birders may have the opportunity to take part in the compilation of a Breeding Bird Atlas for the Maritime Provinces.

A Breeding Bird Atlas is a book of maps. Each map shows the breeding range of a single species of bird, much like the maps in field guides. Dots on the map indicate the breeding status of the species: a large dot indicates a confirmed record, a medium-sized dot a "probable", and a small dot a possible breeder.

The first atlas was completed in Britain in 1976, after five years of field work. Britain was divided into squares, 10 km on a side, and volunteer birders were assigned to each square. Between 10,000 and 15,000 people worked on the project over its 5 year life, spending hours out in the field looking for indications of breeding activity. The result was the first detailed record of what breeds where in Great Britain, and it was compiled almost entirely as the result of volunteer, and in most cases amateur, labour.

Other countries became enthused, and projects began in Europe, Australia, and North America. In Canada, atlas projects are currently underway in Alberta and Ontario, and are in the planning stages in Quebec and Saskatchewan.

The area to be covered by the atlas is divided into squares, usually 10 km on a side as in the British atlas. Each square is visited by a team of birders, who look for and record signs of breeding activity. No attempt is made to locate nests, partly because it takes too long, but mainly because it would disturb the breeding bird and might even lead to predation. Instead, the observers look for clues, such as food or nesting material being carried, presence of recently fledged young, and so on. A set of criteria is used to classify each observation into possible, probable, or confirmed breeding status.

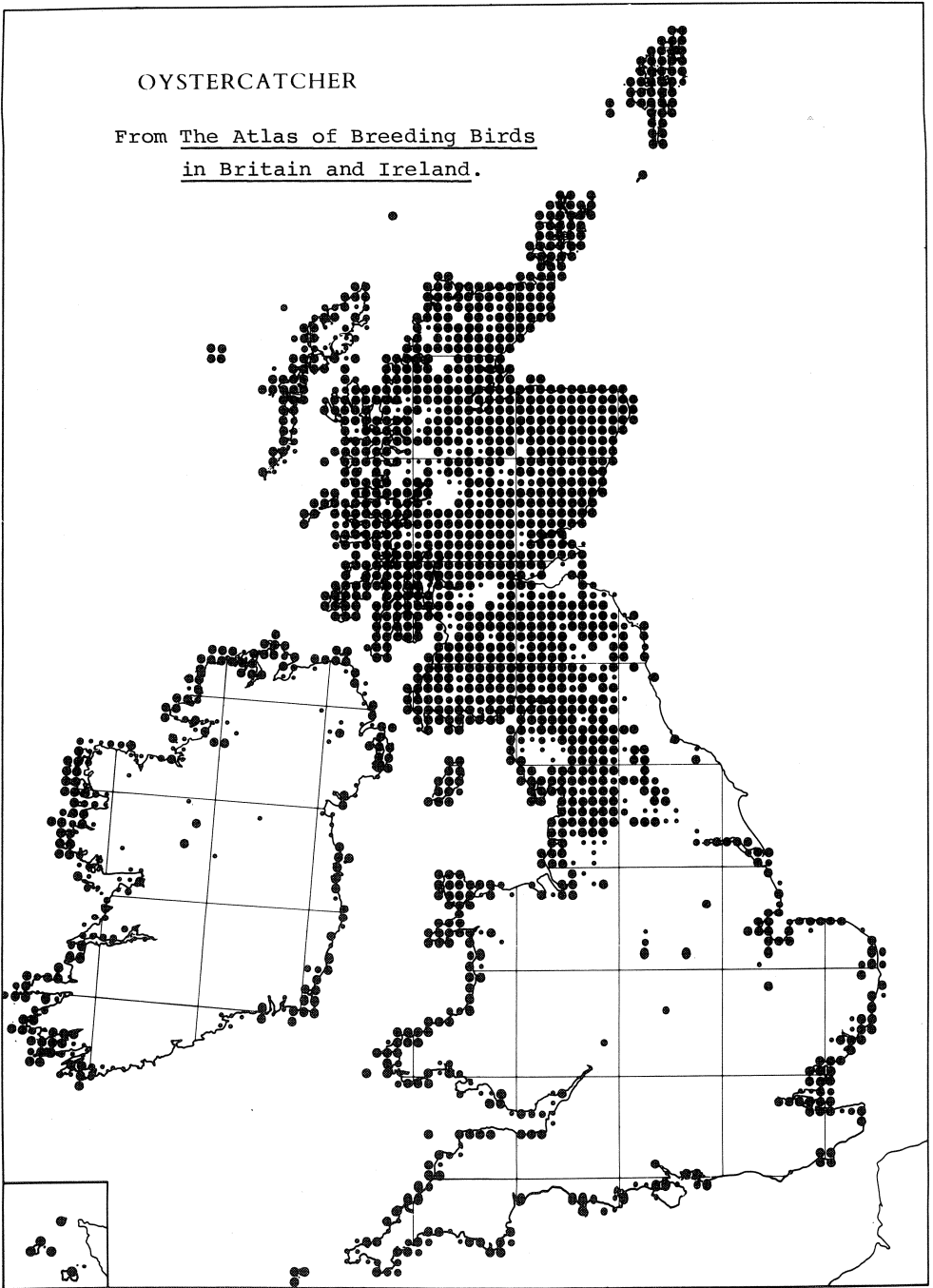
Notes are kept on pre-printed cards which are sent to local coordinators at the end of the season. After the cards are checked by the coordinator, they are entered into a computer, which in the end plots a map of the data returned by the observers.

Because of the large areas covered, organizers generally plan on the field work taking 5 years. This may seem like a long time, but in terms of population dynamics, it amounts to almost a snapshot in time. The Atlas is valuable then as a source of baseline information. Ten or twenty years down the road, it will be a good guide as to how the populations of various species are changing. At present, it is almost impossible to make a convincing argument about changes in bird populations.

Another advantage to the atlasing technique is that data are collected for all atlases in almost exactly the same way. This means that meaningful comparisons can be made from region to region. For example, it will be possible to say almost for certain that Indigo Buntings (e.g.) breed more widely in Ontario than they do in the Maritimes. Without carefully controlled field work, this sort of statement would not be given much weight by the scientific community.

OYSTERCATCHER

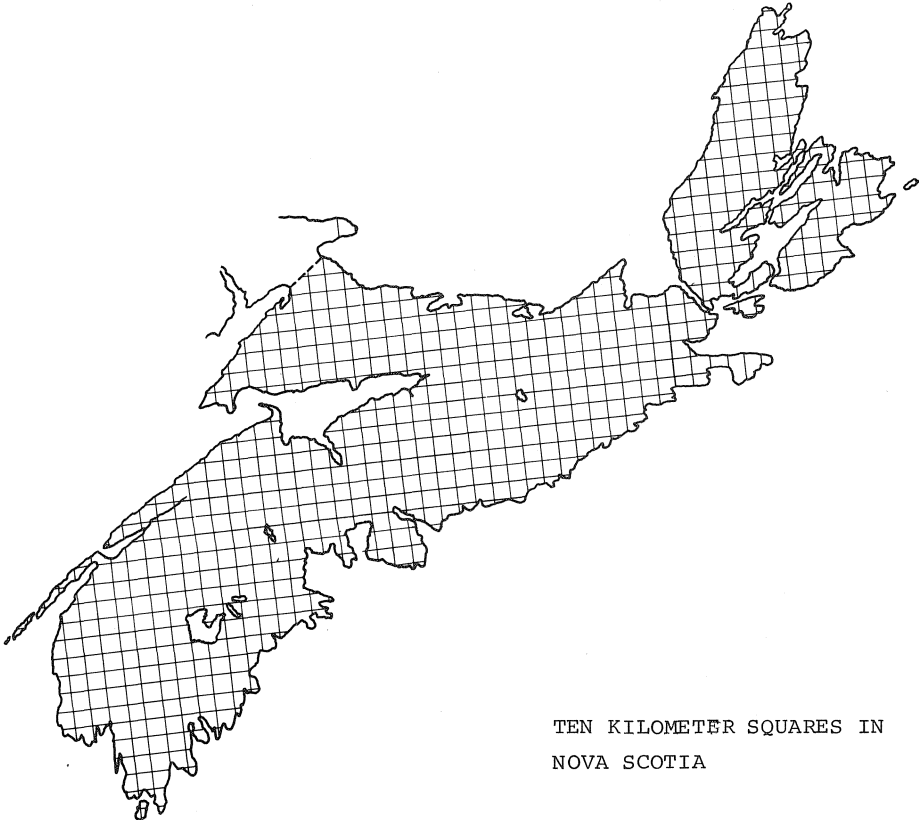
From The Atlas of Breeding Birds
in Britain and Ireland.



One of the most valuable aspects of the BBA project is that it documents areas of special habitat. If a bird is detected as breeding in only a few unique places in the Atlas area, then these places should be kept in mind as needing protection when threatened by development. Also, of course, this may indicate that the species itself is in low numbers within the Atlas area, and may be in need of protection as a "threatened" or "endangered" species.

A breeding Bird Atlas project is a golden opportunity for birders to make a real contribution to the corpus of scientific knowledge about birds. You will be acknowledged in the pages of a major scientific work, and more importantly, one square (at least) on each of the two hundred odd maps will be YOUR SQUARE. If it is filled in, it is filled in because you found evidence that a particular species was breeding in that square. If it is blank, it is blank because you looked and looked, and didn't see any sign of that species breeding.

What about the beginning birder, perhaps one who is a little unsure about his (or her) ability to correctly identify birds? This is all the more reason to get involved. Since this is a five year project, you can have a few years to go out with others and learn the ropes. Then having acquired the necessary knowledge, you will be all set to lead a team into a square yourself. If you already can identify most of our birds, this is a chance to learn a new birding skill--very few of us at present have the ability to analyse bird behaviour to tell whether or not an individual is breeding.



TEN KILOMETER SQUARES IN
NOVA SCOTIA

Other reasons? Working on a square is a good excuse to go into unfamiliar territory and find out about new birding areas you may never have known existed. It gives you a good reason to get out into the field during a traditional lull in birding activity: late spring and summer. And then, there is the thrill of "square-bashing" or "block-busting"--making a special trip to a remote or difficult area to quickly and efficiently survey it, and then leave--a special task requiring dedication and endurance.

The Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas project will require the joint efforts of naturalist organizations in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Considerable support will be required from Government agencies, and a full time coordinator will have to be hired for at least part of the project. At present, it looks like the project will begin with a practice season next spring (1985), followed by the first actual field season in spring and summer of 1986.

The most important ingredient in a Breeding Bird Atlas project is volunteers. In order to decide whether we go ahead with the project or not, we need a good idea of how many people are interested in taking part. If you want to be included in this project, or if you just want more information, please get in touch with Peter Payzant at (902) 861-1607, or by mail at the Nova Scotia Bird Society's address (on the inside back cover).

There is something for everyone in a Breeding Bird Atlas project. It is an ambitious and worthwhile task, and taking part in it would be a real milestone, not only for you as a birder, but also in the history of the Nova Scotia Bird Society.



All the agonizing words over Thayer's Gull (see e.g. last issue) is no match for a good picture. If you see a first-winter bird like this one--generally a dark, Iceland-like gull, with tail and primaries decidedly darker than the back mottling--you have a countable bird. This individual, photographed by Tom Hince at Ottawa on October 26, 1974, was later collected for the National Museum of Canada, thus certifying its identification.

EXPEDITION: MIDSUMMER'S DAY.

R.G.B. Brown

Come all you bold ethnologists, I'll not delay you long,
 But if you're for Alaska bound, take warning from my song.
 Bring along your thickest underwear--do exactly as I say--
 For the weather's bloody horrible, on the shores of Hooper Bay.

Now you have to be there at the right time of year to get an account
 in full
 Of the sordid little love affairs in the life of the Sabine's Gull.
 Well, that sounds all right, but there's just one blight--at the time
 they begin to lay,
 We were never told that it's bloody cold on the shores of Hooper Bay.

Now you properly trained ethologist doesn't care about things like that,
 It can hail and rain and snow again, and his eyelids just won't bat.
 But for normal guys, who look at flies, it's the hell of a job each day
 To sit inside of a damn cold hide on the shores of Hooper Bay.

There are other nits who look at tits but who always seem to want
 To wander free beside the sea, in the Emperor Goose's haunt.
 Well, it may be drab to sit in a lab from nine till five each day,
 But at least you're hot, and it's certainly not on the shores of
 Hooper Bay.

At ten below each Eskimo in Hooper Bay is glad
 To remove his sealskin underpants and to wander lightly clad.
 But if you're out for fun in the midnight sun, and a sunshine holiday,
 You'll change your tune in early June, on the shores of Hooper Bay.

Come all you bold ethnologists, I've warned you quite enough
 Leave Alaska to the Lesser Breeds, and to men of sterner stuff.
 If you're out for fame and to make your name, and a vast increase in
 pay,
 Choose a bird which breeds amid tropic seas--and stay away from HOOPER
 BAY.

PEREGRINE SIGHTINGS

The Peregrine Falcon was never abundant in the Maritime Provinces but was considered a rare resident and transient. Locations of only 13 eyries have been recorded in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. A concentration of historical nest sites occurred in the upper Bay of Fundy, where five were in Minas Basin and Minas Channel, and three on the New Brunswick cliffs of Chignecto Bay and the Petitcodiac River. The last recorded active peregrine eyrie in Nova Scotia was in 1955. Since that time, peregrines observed in the province have been transients.

The decline in the number of peregrines has been almost worldwide. As early as the 1950's, the reduction in the number of active nests in Great Britain was considered serious; by 1965, population declines were reported from most of Europe and North America south of the tree line. Today, the Peregrine Falcon has world recognition as an endangered species.

In 1970, the Canadian Wildlife Service began a program to breed peregrines in captivity. The resulting peregrines were to be used to re-introduce the species to areas where it no longer nested and to increase native populations in areas where severe reductions have occurred.

The first re-introduction to the Maritime Provinces took place in 1982, when six young peregrines from the breeding facility at Wainwright, Alberta were released at two sites. Three birds were released near Advocate, Nova Scotia and three from a site at Fundy National Park, New Brunswick. Six additional birds were released in July, 1983, and more releases are planned for 1984 and future years.

The released peregrines have a standard monel metal band on their left leg and a red band on their right leg. The location of any sightings of peregrines, banded or unbanded, should be sent to:

Myrtle C. Bateman
Wildlife Biologist,
Canadian Wildlife Service,
P. O. Box 1590,
Sackville, New Brunswick E0A 3C0



RESIDENT BREEDING AVIFAUNA

*Of Newfoundland, Its Distinct Character,
As Compared To That Of The Nearby Maritime Provinces*

K. H. Deichmann
April 9, 1984

Unlike other vertebrates (mammals and herptiles for example), birds do not appear to have been strongly limited (except in a few instances, of which more later), in their occupation and colonization of Newfoundland. It is obvious, when considering the climate, and some of the basic similarities in the vegetation (ecosystem structure and species composition), that there would be certain correlations between two geographical areas which are in such close proximity to each other. Upon further examination however, it seems some of the most patently successful Newfoundland birds, do not in all cases, appear in the same relative abundance in the Maritimes. Newfoundland does not have as wide a diversity of breeding birds found in the Maritimes, a fact which complicates comparison to a certain extent. (This is an impression which may be gleaned from Table 2).

In what follows, it is not meant to imply that the species in the examples used are not common in both areas. The point being made is that the species used are THE common members of the genus in Newfoundland. In conformance with Bergman's Rule, the species which stand out, and are the apparent choices, are physically larger members of the genus or family, e.g. (see Table 1 below).

TABLE 1

<u>Genus</u>	<u>Dominant in Newfoundland</u>	<u>Dominant(s) in Maritimes</u>
Anatidae	Black Duck	Black Duck & Blue-winged Teal, American Wigeon
Accipitridae	Nor. Goshawk Bald Eagle	Sharp-shinned Hawk Osprey
Turdidae	Am. Robin, Hermit & Swainsons and Grey-cheeked Thrushes	Am. Robin, Bluebird (historically), Veery, other thrushes
Corvidae	Raven	Crow
Parulidae	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Magnolia Warbler
Fringillidae	Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow	Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow

All of this is quite relative, and it's arguable that personal bias crept into the examples used to prove a point, e.g., the Wood Thrush (a large Thrush) breeds (rarely) in the Maritimes, but not at all in Newfoundland.

It's a bit simplistic to give Bergman's Rule credit for all the observations contained in this short paper, as in actual fact, the extant avifauna of Newfoundland seems to have been affected by at least three significant areas of influence,

1. The Marine Environment
2. The Boreal Environment.
3. Characteristics distinctly by and inherently of Newfoundland, (not readily definable?) e.g., could explain the relative rarity of the Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, (a Boreal Species), contrasted to the common status of the Downy Woodpecker, a species more associated with mixed woods and hardwoods of the mid-temperate zone.

Some species of birds which are/were physically unable or behaviorally unlikely to cross open sea to colonize Newfoundland.

1. Two species of galliformes (The Ruffed and Spruce Grouse) Both disinclined to make flights of over a few kilometers, have both been successfully introduced to Newfoundland by man.
2. Certain Buteo hawks which don't like to cross storm-prone waters VIZ Red-tailed and Broad-winged Hawks.
3. Woodpeckers, e.g., the Pileated Woodpecker (basically resident where it occurs) could find suitable habitat over much of western and central Newfoundland.
4. The Woodcock, a migrant shorebird, which would find considerable suitable alder bed earthworm supporting habitat in western and central Newfoundland.

Notes:

1. Introduced to Newfoundland ca. 1960.

EXAMPLES OF SPECIES OF BREEDING BIRDS
FOUND IN EASTERN CANADA - AND THEIR
RELATIVE STATUS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF
THE REGION

TABLE 2

Species	A Common in the Maritimes/Rare/ Absent from Nfld.	B Common in Nfld. Rare/Absent in the Maritimes	C Common in Both Nfld. and the Maritimes
Common Loon			X
Great Blue Heron	X		
American Bittern			X
Canada Goose		X	
Black Duck			X
Blue-winged Teal	X		
Northern Goshawk			X
Sharp-shinned Hawk	X		
Red-tailed Hawk	X		
Merlin		X	
American Kestrel	X		
Ruffed Grouse			X
Willow Ptarmigan		X	
Semipalmated Plover	X		
Killdeer (Plover)		X	
Greater Yellow-legs		X	
Am. Woodcock	X		
Common Snipe			X
Herring Gull			X
B.L. Kittiwake		X	
Great Horned Owl			X
Boreal Owl		X	
Saw-Whet Owl	X		
C. Nighthawk	X		
E. Kingbird	X		
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher		X	
Tree Swallow			X
Barn Swallow	X		
Gray Jay			X
Blue Jay	X		
Northern Raven	X		
Boreal Chickadee			X
American Robin			X

Species	A Common in the Maritimes/Rare/ Absent from Nfld.	B Common in Nfld. Rare/Absent in the Maritimes	C Common in Both Nfld. and the Maritimes
Black-capped Chickadee			X
Gray-cheeked Thrush		X	
Red-eyed Vireo	X		
Black & White Warbler			X
Tennessee Warbler	X		
Yellow-rumped Warbler		X	
Bl.-Thr. Green Warbler			X
Blackpoll Warbler		X	
Northern Water Thrush			X
Red-winged Blackbird	X		
Rusty Blackbird		x	
Common Grackle	X		
Evening Grosbeak			X
Pine Grosbeak		X	
Savannah Sparrow			X
Northern (Darkeyed) Junco			X
White-throated Sparrow			X
Fox Sparrow		X	
Song Sparrow	X		
Parula Warbler	X		
<u>Totals</u>	19	14	20

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NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
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