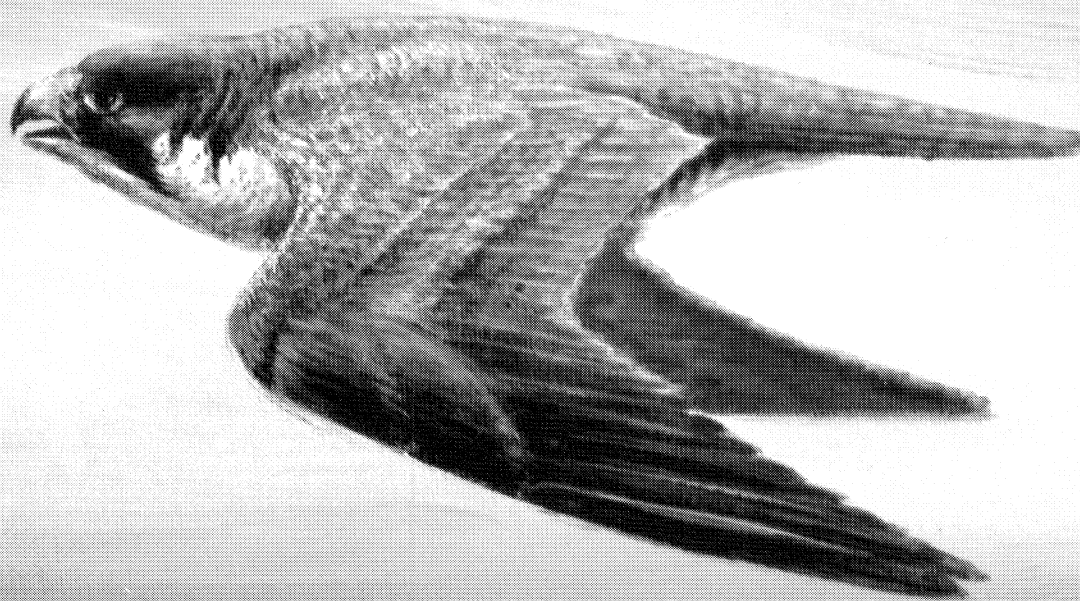


***Nova Scotia
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BIRD REPORTS

LOONS AND GREBES

Most reports of RED-THROATED LOON came from Col. Co. where FS saw 5 birds at Economy on March 29 and 8-9 were at the mouth of Bass River during the first half of April (WPH). Our latest report was of a lone bird seen on the NSBS field trip to Cape Sable Island, May 4 (JCZ).

Common Loons were widely reported but nowhere in large numbers. The best count was 21 off Louis Head Beach on Mar 2 (DHY). On March 7, 11 were at Port Morien (GC), while BMa counted 26 along the Eastern shore March 26. The bulk of reports from April on, were of one's and two's returning to inland waters. The first was a pair calling at Lake William, Waverley on April 8; 5 adult birds were at this location on May 18 (L&PP).

A possible YELLOW-BILLED LOON reported in our April issue, prompted a letter from Frank Robertson of New Waterford (see Letters to the Editor). He relates that on October 22, 1982, Robert and Jean Buchanan had reported seeing the previous day what they believed to be a Yellow-billed Loon on Buchanan Lake, Rich. Co. Unfortunately, without more details this sighting will have to be recorded as another "possible". Maybe some day....

The past several years saw few, if any, reports of PIED-BILLED GREBE for this period. However, April 2 saw the first arrivals at APBS with as many as 10 seen there since (CD,DAC,JL & JSC). At nearby Eddy Marsh, 5 birds were sighted on April 20 (BMa,FLL,JWT). The only report NOT from the Amherst marshes was of a singleton at Sand Point, Col. Co., April 27 (KJM).

Reports of HORNED GREBES were extremely low--5 reports numbering only 16 birds, all on the South Shore (JSD,BMa,JWT,WM,JeM) except for 1 at Herring Cove on March 17 (SDS). The latest report was of 8 birds on April 20 at Upper Kingsburg (BLF).

RED-NECKED GREBES were also scarce (--or was it observers who were scarce?). Five reports totalled only 130 birds, again, all from the South Shore. JSD accounts for more than half of the total with 76 at Pinkney's Point on March 25. Several much smaller flocks were recorded, all in Shelburne Co. (BMa, JWT,DHY). The first week of April saw the last 4 birds of the season for Mahone Bay (WM). One laggard was still at Cherry Hill Beach on May 11 (SJF).

More interesting is a report of a probable WESTERN GREBE seen from Chebucto Head on April 6 (JWW,HF). Their report describes a bird with a long slim neck and about the same size as the Common Eiders with which it was associating. They noted a black cap, white face and neck. Unfortunately for the rest of us, the bird couldn't be relocated on succeeding days.

BSa, ed.
(Bev Sarty, our guest editor this issue)

FULMAR to CORMORANTS

The Halls saw 10-20 NORTHERN FULMARS from **Bluenose** on April 23, when the ferry was 10-20 km west of Yarmouth; they petered out farther west. The birds were probably blown inshore by a southeasterly storm. Raymond d'Entremont, fishing on Georges Bank in late April/early May, saw occasional Fulmars. Tony Lock, on a ship off Sable Island on May 29, says that Fulmars outnumbered GREATER SHEARWATERS, but there were no Sooties. He had a good view of a flock of 9 CORY'S SHEARWATERS and, for good measure, a LEACH'S STORM-PETREL came aboard on the night of June 12. Jim Taylor, on an unrecorded date, visited the Leach's colony on Bon Portage Island, and estimated the 'usual number' of 30,000-50,000 pairs, some already on eggs. Raymond d'Entremont saw a Leach's on May 14 and a WILSON'S STORM-PETREL on April 24; Wilson's soon became 'quite common' on Georges. He also saw a SOOTY SHEARWATER on April 29: 'by mid-May the Sooty Shearwaters were still very scarce'. He only saw one Greater Shearwater, on May 16, in all the time he was out there. On May 13 John Parsons found a MANX SHEARWATER, in poor condition, on board an oil rig about 20 km SW of Sable Island. It was wearing a British band.

Blake Maybank, Jim Taylor and Fulton Lavender gave us 'snapshots' of the NORTHERN GANNET migration from the two ends of the Province. On March 29 they counted 102 adults in half an hour, passing The Hawk, Cape Sable Island. On April 6, up in Cape Breton, they saw 6 adults off Green Cove, Victoria Co., 'flying north along the edge of the ice pack.' Hubert Hall's 'first' from **Bluenose**, was an adult on April 2, about 5 km west of Yarmouth, and flying SW: 'nearly a month later than the first last year. Linda Payzant saw two adults off Yarmouth on April 14. Tony Lock saw 4 adults and 2 'brown' birds off Louisburg on June 3.

The first GREAT CORMORANTS were the 32 birds that Blake Maybank saw, 'mostly in breeding plumage', off Hartlen's Point on March 15. Blake makes no mention of DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS at that early date. However he, Fulton Lavender and Jim Taylor saw an adult in breeding plumage at Negro Harbour on March 29 ('first sighting for the spring'), 90 birds ('crests clearly evident on the adults') at the Canso Causeway colony on April 6, and 150 birds, moving North off Portuguese Cove, on April 23. Hubert Hall thinks that the Double-crests in the colony on Doctor's Island, in Yarmouth Harbour, arrived around March 30. There were only 20+ birds at Francis Spalding's colony at Economy on April 4; the numbers didn't build up until mid-month. Kenneth McKenna, at Pictou, saw a Great Cormorant on March 29, and 2 Double-crests at the causeway colony on March 31. The Pictou Causeway birds had built up to 60 on April 15 and, on April 17, there were 100 Double-crests at the colony and another 150 at the mouth of the harbour.

RGBB, ed.

HERONS AND RELATIVES

The earliest AM. BITTERN appeared April 17 (anon.) and was followed by 4 scattered birds April 21-27. Only 3 more were reported through May. The winter report's "surprising" GREAT BLUE HERON near Apple R. was found dead in early March (WMI). A bird at L.W. Pubnico, March 10, could have overwintered, but there was an impressive pulse at the end of March. The first were on March 27 at Little Hbr. (DHY), Canning (D&JGT) and Economy (FS), and were followed by 3 on the 28th, 6 on the 29th (one as far as Glace Bay, JG), 6 on nesting trees in Yarmouth Hbr. on the 30th (HH), and 3 on the 31st. Some thought that they did not arrive in numbers until mid-April.

The "southern" herons staged their best spring show in years. However, observers seemed **blasé**, as the birds were clearly under-reported; don't assume your birding companions will tell all! Three GREAT EGRETS at Cherry Hill on April 26 did not linger, and SF wondered if these were the same birds that turned up at Lr. Kingsburg from April 29 (var. ob.). The latter stayed until at least May 19 (2 birds, **fide** ELM). One at Cape Sable Is. April 27 (FLL, JGT, JWT) was still there May 4 (JCZ). One at Clam Hbr. May 15 (John Horne, **fide** JWT) could have been the same bird seen 10 days later at Sober Is., Hfx. Co. (BMa, MDu). Five is a safe total. A SNOWY EGRET found by JGT at Conrad Beach May 2 was thought to be different from the full adult found by Felix Hilton at nearby Cow Bay, May 10-11. The Snowies (at least 3) were back on Bon Portage Is. this spring, and were accompanied by our famous LITTLE EGRET, on the island for its 3d spring (PCS, JWT **et al.**). The first LITTLE BLUE HERON was an imm. "with a touch of grey on the wings" near Lockeport Apr. 12-14 (DJC **et al.**). An ad. at Hartlen's Pt. April 18 (Ralph Horne, JWT) was still there on the 25th (SDS). Another was a "nice surprise" for H&HH at Blanche, Shel Co., May 5. Finally, an off-white imm. bird discovered by SDS at Cole Hbr., May 27 had been seen there by non-birders for about a week. The TRI-COLORED HERON at Upper Kingsburg from Apr. 18 (m. ob.) was last seen May 12 (**fide** ELM). Another was seen on May 12 at L. W. Pubnico (JKD **et al.**). A CATTLE EGRET consorted with cattle in fields around Schnare's Crossing, Lun. Co., Apr. 28 to early May (v. ob.).

Our only GREEN HERONS were individuals on Seal I. May 3 (EM) and May 22 (IAM **et al.**). The earliest report BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON was on Seal I. May 16 (EM), where there were 3 a few days later. Two were on Cape Sable, May 19 (FLL **et al.**), but they must have been there earlier. We have no reports from our only known colony on Bon Portage Is.

IAM, ed.

GEESE AND DUCKS

A report of a GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE comes from Jamie Gibson. The bird was closely observed at Delhaven, near Blomidon, April 23 & 24. A pink bill with white around the base was noted. However, he feels that it was probably an escaped birds and has punctuated his report with several question marks. We'll do the same--?

While on the subject of escaped birds, we'll continue with the saga of the BARNACLE GEESE reported in our last issue. Yes, you just read the words "escaped" and "Barnacle Geese" in the same sentence, for it appears that that's what the family group discovered at Cape Sable Island were. It was learned that two pairs of Barnacle Geese released from the Grand Manan collection in the fall of 1989, remained in the area and last year one of these pairs produced 4 young, a family group identical to the Cape Sable Island birds. This is not welcome news for the listers, some of whom travelled from the other side of the continent to see these birds. Their wanderlings are chronicled as follows: Jan. 18 discovered at Cape Cod, Mass., where they tarried for about two months; a letter from Mr. Richards in Hopkinton, NH, tells us that the 6 birds spent a day, April 20, there on a flood control impoundment; most recently, a report that 3 of the birds have returned to Cape Sable Island (JCT).

Hopefully more "legitimate" are our 4 records of SNOW GEESE, one reported in Yarmouth Harbour, March 10-26 (LD) may be the same bird reported in our last issue. That particular bird was thought to be a "Lesser", much less likely as a winter laggard (IAM). The 3 additional sightings were: 1 (for about a week) at Big Island, Pictou Co., March 29 (KJM); 1 with Canada Geese at Falmouth Dyke, April 3 (BLF); and 1 on May 5 at APBS (KS).

Brant at Little Harbour, Shel. Co., increased from 5 on March 5, to 100 by March 30 (DHY). The largest flock was 1200 birds on March 29 at Cape Sable Island (The Hawk) (BMa,JWT). These had dwindled to 100 birds by April 27 (FLL,JWT,GT). Movement at Brier Island was as follows: 200, April 20, (HJ&HGH); 30, May 19 (K&MA) and 14, May 21 (A&ELM). From the Northumberland shore, KJM reports 250 Brant at Northport and 200 at Linden on April 27. On May 12, 105 birds were still present at Linden (JL&JSC). Several observers reported a flock of 100 near Wolfville in mid-May (BET,JT,JWW et al.)

Cole Harbour held about 2000 CANADA Geese on March 3 (SDS). The flock at Chezzetcook Inlet had more than doubled from 3000, March 12 (RBD) to 6500, March 15 (BMa). There were numerous reports from the Annapolis Valley (B&BT: JGT,JWW), with the largest concentrations in the Canning area, where MG counted about 1000 birds along the river on March 24. Reports of much smaller flocks came from Economy (FS), Bass River (WPH), Lusby Marsh (CD) and the Pubnicos (LD,BD,JSD,RSD).



Our Black Tern colonies along the N.B. border have not really been properly prospected in recent years. This bird on nest was photographed years ago in Montreal by I.A.M.

WOOD DUCKS were well-reported on mainland Nova Scotia with 14 sightings involving 25 birds. The first was of a male in Yarmouth Harbour, May 24 (LD), followed a week later, on April 1, by 2 males and a female at Lower West Pubnico (RSD). After this date, reports were widespread and were all of males except for : 2 pairs, Sheffield Mills, April 23 (MB); a pair April 28 at Gilbert's Cove, Digby Co. (HJH,B&ER), and 1 (lucky?) female being courted by 2 drakes at Overton, Yar. Co., May 2 (HJ & HGH).

Green-Winged Teal were reported much as usual with an upward trend after March 23. Numbers at Canard Poultry Pond have increased to 26 by April 12 (JGT,JWW). More noteworthy were counts of 100+ at John Lusby Marsh on April 17 (DAC), 250 at North Amherst Marsh on April 20 and 200 in the Advocate area on the same trip (BMa,FLL,JWT). The only Cape Breton report was of 30+ at Forchu on May (JMa).

One male Eurasian race Green-winged Teal was at Canard Pond on April 7 (JWW).

AMERICAN BLACK DUCKS were not reported in large numbers from any location. Flocks were dispersing along the Eastern Shore by March 15 when BMa had counts of 100+ at Cow Bay, Cole Harbour, Conrad's Beach and Chezzetcook. First report of a female with ducklings came on May 3 at Drain Lake, Hfx, Co. (Brad Amirault fide JWT). This was followed by similar reports throughout the month of May.

MALLARDS were reported 15 times and totalled just over 50 birds. Most reported 1-4 birds but 10 were at Wentworth Park, Sydney on April 6 (BMa,FLL,JWT) and IAM counted about 8 pairs on Seal Island "distressingly common...they have displaced Black Ducks."

First report of NORTHERN PINTAIL was of 12 on March 6 at West Chezzetcook (BSa,FLL). There were reports of several males in the Annapolis Valley during the last half of March and two pairs were at the New Minas Sewage Ponds, March 27 (JGT). On April 7, 5 were at Rushton Provincial Park (KJM). An exceptionally high count was at APBS--120 on April 20 (BMa,FLL,JWT).

The earliest reports of BLUE-WINGED TEAL were of male on Seal Island on March 29 (EM) and a pair on March 31 at Broad Cove, Lun. co. (SJF). There was no mention of them again until April 11 when 7 showed up at Apple River (KS) and April 16 at Cranberry Head 5 (JSD). From this date on, they were scantily reported, with most observations referring to 4-5 pairs in the Port Williams/Canning area (JGT,JWW).

First reports of NORTHERN SHOVELER were of a pair at Starr's Point, Kings Co., April 7 (GF,JGT) and another pair at Seal Island on April 13 (EM). APBS produced 10 birds on April (CD), while JWT had a single pair at John Lusby Marsh, May 5 and no fewer than 5 pairs on May 14 at Steverman Lake, Lun. Co.

We have 3 reports of GADWALL numbering 18 birds, more than usual. A pair was at Hartlen Point on May 4 (FLL,DAM). More to be expected, was the pair on the same date at APBS (CD). By May 11, APBS hosted 5 pairs, while 2 pairs were seen on the same day at nearby Maccan (JL&JSC).

A male AMERICAN WIGEON arrived in Advocate on March 18 (KS). This is followed by 14 additional reports, all but one for the month of April and the majority mentioning 1-6 birds. Exceptions were: the 5 pairs at Barney's River, Pictou Co. (KJM) on April 7; 40 birds at APBS on April 19 (CD) and 50 the next day at North Amherst Marsh (BMa,FLL,JWT).

Two of the winter CANVASBACKS made this report: the bird in Yarmouth Harbour was last seen by LD on March 12, while the Sullivan's Pond female lingered at least until March 15 (BMa).

RING-NECKED DUCKS were reported 24 times. As has become customary, the first report is from Rocky Lake, Bedford, where 16 birds were present on March 29, (L&PP), followed closely on April 1 by 6, all males, at Egerton, Pictou Co. After this date reports are numerous and widespread with the "big" counts occurring, once again, at Amherst on April 20: 60 at North Amherst Marsh and 50 at Eddy Marsh (BMA, FLL,JWT). On that date 12 were at Church Point and 8 at Tiddville Marsh, Dig Co. (HJ&HGH). Cape Breton reported 9 at the old Heavy Water Plant reservoir on Apr 26 (GC) and 6 pairs at Loch Lomond May 7 (JMa).

Our early winter "headliner", the Tufted Duck, was sporting largely new plumage & still frequenting Sullivan's Pond as late as April 6 (IAM).

The winter population of GREATER SCAUP in the Pictou/Trenton area has been on the upswing in recent years and this one was no exception with a peak in late March/early April of an astonishing 5000 birds (KJM). They were reported in much smaller numbers from scattered locations: 60 at Causeway Rd., Three Fathom Hbr., March 27 (FLL,BSa); 5 at Evangeline Beach, April 1 (JGT,GF); 30 at Rose Bay, Lun. Co., April 18 (WM,JEM,JGT) and 10, all paired, on April 20 at Eddy Marsh (BMA,FLL,JWT).

The only mention of LESSER SCAUP was of a bird seen from Feb. to end of May, in company with a female Surf Scoter at Broad Cove, Lun. Co. (SJF).

April found many observers making their way to the mouth of Halifax Harbour to scrutinize the large rafts of Common Eiders that had congregated-7500+ by mid-April. Close examination revealed a couple of partial albino females (Bma) but the stars of the show were the KING EIDERS. The first report of them came on April 3 when 4 males (3 ad., 1 imm.) were sighted amidst the Common Eiders off Chebucto Head. It's difficult to say which reports may be duplicates, but FLL's summary appears to be a fair assessment of the minimum number present: 6 males (4 ad., 2 imm.) and 4 females. - a spectacular showing, indeed! By the end of the first week in May, only much smaller & more scattered flocks of "COMMONS" remained. Only 2 other reports mentioned more than 20 birds: 60 on May 4, Cape Sable Island (JCZ) and 350 at Seal Island May 19-22 (IAM et al.) JWT found numerous nests on Bon Portage Island, May 18-20, as well as some young already taken to the waters.

Our "lords and ladies of the seas", the by-now-familiar pair of Harlequin ducks at Tribune Head, were still present at the late date of May 7 (RBD). What may have been a third bird was seen at Chebucto Head, April 4 (JGT)

There were only 10 reports of OLDSQUAW and half of these were of fewer than 5 birds each -not a good showing. By far the majority of birds reported were in Cape Breton: on March 27 GC counted 175 birds off of North Head, near Port Morien and on April 6, 140 were seen on the NE coast between Aspey Bay and Ingonish (BMA,FLL,JWT). A single bird at Cherry Hill Beach on May 26 had tarried long after others had departed.

None of the Scoters were well reported - was everyone too busy seeking out King Eiders? The only reports of any numbers of BLACK SCOTERS were: 80 at Hartlen Point on March 15 (BMA);70 at Little Bass River on April 26 (WPH). He notes that there were more Black Scoters in that area this year, where "Surfs" are usually the more common scoter. The latest report was for May 18 of 50 birds at Risser's Beach (FLL, MH).

The past several years have yield reports of 100's of SURF SCOTERS for this season but in 9 reports we have barely over 100 birds most of these, 60 birds in all, were reported from Economy and Little Bass River the first week in May (FS,WPH). An additional 30 were at Caribou Provincial Park, Pictou Co. on May 10 (KJM).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS fared only marginally better. The majority were in Cape Breton: 43 at North Head, March 15 (GC), and on April 6, BMa, FLL & JWT counted 40 at Cranberry Point and 110 at Ingonish Bay. The 30 birds at Evangeline Beach, April 27 (JGT) and a small flock a day later at Digby Harbour (HJH, B&ER) complete the White-winged Scoter report.

COMMON GOLDENEYE were also not overly "common" this time around. From late Feb to mid-April, up to 30 birds were reported from the Yarmouth area (LD, JSD). Forty-two were at Laurencetown Lake on March 15 (BMA). On an April 6 outing to Cape Breton, BMa, FLL & JWT observed about 90 birds, in numerous but small flocks, along the NE coast of Victoria County. The same day they saw 75 at the mouth of West River, near Pictou.

Four BARROW'S GOLDENEYE, 2 males & 2 females, were still present at Annapolis Royal on Feb. 26, when RBS was able to photograph them.

Three BUFFLEHEADS at the Trenton Power Plant outflow on March 2 (KJM) were likely overwintering but the 35 at Chezzetcook Inlet on March 15 and 45 at Cape Sable Island on March 29 (BMa, JWT) are more apt to be indicators of Spring Migration. Nine other reports covered all corners of the province but the only one numbering more than 10 birds was FS' report of 6 pairs at Parrsboro on April 25.

Thirteen HOODED MERGANSERS were reported. A male was still at Conrad's Beach on March 18, 4 males were on the Cornwallis River, near Wolfville (Judy Tufts, MP). A pair was at West La Have on March 20 (NS) and another pair at Sand Point on April 7 (KJM). Eric Cooke saw 2 males and a female at Dayspring on Apr. 3. A single female was discovered "shyly hiding among Ring-necked Ducks" on April 20 at Church Point (HG&HJH). A gruesome story reached our Records Editor of an unfortunate female that fell down the chimney at the home of Bob & Heather Hayes in Stewiacke - sadly, it perished in the fireplace.

Ten of our 21 reports of Common Mergansers were from the Annapolis Valley and not one mentioned more than 10 birds, usually 2-4, and most in April (RBS, JGT, JWW). At Chezzetcook Inlet on March 15, BMa counted 21. Eric Cooke reported 30, March 20, on the LaHave River at Bridgewater. The flock at the mouth of West River had augmented its numbers to an impressive 350 by April 6 (BMa, FLL, JWT). These roving watchers were in Cape Breton on the same day. There they tallied 80 at Sydney Harbour and 55 at North River, Victoria Co. When a female flushed from one of BLF's nest boxes at Methal's Lake on May 11, he discovered that the clutch of 14 eggs included 2 Hooded Merganser eggs.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS were more widespread but mostly in small flocks. Only 4 of 19 reports counted over 20 birds. These were: 50 at Port Morien on March 7 (GC); 42 in small groups along the Eastern Shore on March 15 (BMa); 22 on March 29 at Melbourne Sanctuary (JSD); and on April 6 at West River, 150 birds (BMa, FLL, JWT). This particular flock at the mouth of the West River on April 6 included not only the aforementioned 150 Red-breasted Mergansers, but also 350 Common Mergansers, 75 Common Goldeneye and 2500 Greater Scaup--quite a gathering!

BSa, ed.

DIURNAL RAPTORS

One TURKEY VULTURE was apparently hanging around Wolfville in mid-April (*fide* JWW). Two in Yarmouth April 18 (HH) and another there on the 28th (*fide* RKD) were par for that area. One soaring over Seal Is. May 18 (EM) was probably the same bird seen next day on Cape Sable I. (FLL *et al.*). Finally, one being harassed by a crow in Mid. Musquodoboit on May 26 (Bma, MDu) was less usual. OSPREYS did not come in with a rush. Although the first was early near Glenwood, Yar. Co., March 28 (JKD), we received only 2 more reports for early April and indicators are that they did not become widespread until after mid-April. However, they were probably under-reported. There was supplemental reporting on gatherings of BALD EAGLES in late-winter and spring, including 8 imm. and 4 ad. in Pictou Co. March 2 (KJM), 18 imm. and 3 ad. in the Kingsport area are March 21 (JT), and 8 imm. and 1 ad. near Pictou, April 6 (Nma *et al.*). The preponderance of young (more like 50:50 on earlier winter counts) indicates that adults were otherwise engaged, and indeed we have a few reports of nesting from the usual locations. A new nest site, quite close to human activities, was discovered at Greenwich, King's Co., April 22 (m. ob.). Five reports of N. HARRIER, all males, for the period March 8-18 may represent early migrants, but they were more widely noted in April. A pair at Apple River was displaying April 19 (KS) and another near Port Morien was carrying nesting material May 9 (GC).

We have a dozen reports of SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS, only two for May, when nesting birds become less obvious. Bernard Forsythe found a N. GOSHAWK nest near Newtonville with 3 eggs on April 22. Perhaps it was one of this pair that harassed feeder birds along Wolfville Ridge this spring (JGT). Another was on the move at Sober I., Hfx Co., May 25 (BMa). Kathy Spicer sends an excellent description of an ad. RED-SHOULDERED HAWK studied for 3 hrs on April 2 by her and husband Blair at Apple R. This was perhaps our first record of one arriving at the normal time for S. Canada. Our first BROAD-WINGED HAWK was at Armdale, Halifax, April 27 (DAC). There were 6 more reports from May 4-12, and a few thereafter. Some RED-TAILED HAWKS may arrive, but more probably leave in spring. The four reports for May included notes on a nest with 2 chicks at Gaspereau May 5 (BLF) and a male carrying nesting material at Argyle Head, May 6 (RSD). The half-dozen sightings of up to 4 birds in King's Co. during March were as expected, but one on Halifax Peninsula March 31 (JRM) was less so. The latest reported ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS in King's Co. were seen on April 6. Some 32 individuals April 20 in the Amherst area, mostly over Minudie Marsh, were most likely migrants (BMa *et al.*). Later birds were at Port hope April 22 (KJM), Cape Sable Is. April 27 (FLL *et al.*), and near Yarmouth May 11 (JCZ).

An AM. KESTREL in Kings Co., March 22 (GF) may have wintered, but nine reports of 15 birds between March 31 and April 8 surely reflect arrivals. Some move later, for the Cohrs noted none along the Northumberland Shore on May 11, but 4 next day. We have 9 reports of MERLINS, all for May. These included an agitated pair at Dingle Park, Halifax (Felix Hilton) and a nest near the clubhouse of the Ken-Wo Golf Course, New Minas (BLF). An imm. PEREGRINE FALCON on Brier Is. April 20 may have been eating freshly killed Great Black-back (H&HH); but did it kill the gull? Another was at L. Argyle May 4 (*fide* JKD) and a third was seen from the Mackay Bridge, Halifax, May 13 (JSC).

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

In King's Co., 6 GRAY PARTRIDGES were near Hillaton, March 13 (RGT, BET) and a pair was at Wellington Dykes, March 27. Reports to JWW suggest that the flock of ca. 20 near Windsor was halved by mid-March. RING-NECKED PHEASANTS were (under) reported from the usual localities. An albino male, first seen on the Yarmouth C.B.C (HH), persists at Overton (CRKA). I apologize to Jim Taylor (JWT) for last issue's attribution of his 6 SPRUCE GROUSE on the Hants W. C.B.C. to JWW! Our only spring reports are of 2 in King's Co. (*fide* JGT) and 2 more near Apple R (KS). Kathy Spicer also reported a half dozen spring RUFFED GROUSE from Apple R. area, and I can't believe that a mere two reports from elsewhere are representative.

RALLIDS

The first SORA was calling at A.P.B.S. May 1, where they were heard widely thereafter (CD). Away from the N.B.-N.S. border, birds were heard during May at marshes near, Windsor, Falmouth, Brooklyn (Hants), and Tiddville (Digby Co.). No VIRGINIA RAILS were reported for May, although I have been told of some found in early June. The overwintering AM. COOT at Sullivan's Pond remained until at least early April. At A.P.B.S. 10 on April 10 (CD) and 5 on April 20 (Bma et al.) may have included migrants, although a nest was noted there May 5 (JWT). Another bird arrived April 12 (anon.).

IAM, ed.



RAD.

SHOREBIRDS

A NORTHERN LAPWING was reported by local residents in the N.B. border area May 5 but not "officially" identified until May 27, when it was briefly on the N.S. side of the Missaguash River (IAM). This is the latest spring occurrence of the species in N.S.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS apparently overwintered: there were 3 at Little Hbr. Feb. 26 (DHY). Early migrants were one at Brier Apr. 20 (H&HH) and 25 at Cape Sable Apr. 27 (BM&al.), where there were 100 May 18 (M&KA). Elsewhere numbers at Economy rose from 1, May 2 to 30, May 27 (FS); 4 were at Brier May 21 (ELM). The only SEMIPALMATED PLOVER were 4-5 at Blanche (Shel. Co.) May 5 (H&HH). A PIPING PLOVER Mar. 30 at Cherry Hill was the first noted; by May 20 there were 3 pairs there (SJF). Migrants were at Lockeport May 10-11 (DJC) and Brier on May 19 (M&KA); potential nesters were at Baccaro, May 5 (H&HH). In addition one was at Glace Bay May 13 (GC). Some will have heard radio reports that a (the ?) nest at Conrad's was destroyed, and that all ten nests protected by the Wildlife Service in the Cadden Bay area fell victim to predation. Apparently mink, weasels or some other predator have discovered that the enclosures, effective in past years, are a source of food; whether the expressed intention to protect any re-nesters in the same way is a good idea remains to be seen. Almost two dozen reports of KILLDEER were submitted; the first is of one (very early) at Wallbeach (Kings Co.) Feb. 24&27 (RGT, BDT) and another, still early, at Hemeon's Hd., Mar. 6 (DHY). Near Lunenburg a female was on 4 eggs May 14 (JWT). At Economy, in patch of stony pasture favoured for the third year in a row there were 4 eggs as early as Apr. 30; they hatched May 24. Two days later one was carried off by a raven, but a week later at least two survivors "migrated": (on foot and en famille) to the nearby shore (FS).

GREATER YELLOWLEGS, mostly in groups of 1-3, were present from Apr. 17 at Apple River (KS) to May 23 at Economy (FS). Maximum numbers were 12 at Apple River May 2 (KS) and at Fullers Bridge (Rich. Co) May 8 (JMa). The only sightings of LESSER YELLOWLEGS were at Lusby Marsh, May 5 (NSBS) and at Conrad's, May 26 (FLL et al.) A lone WILLET was at Yarmouth, Apr. 17 (HH,LP); there are several reports from Apr. 25 to month's end, with larger numbers in early May (e.g. 18+ at Cherry Hill-(SJF) 20+ at Cape Sable(NSBS), and 8 at Glace Bay May 13(GC). There are only 5 reports of the SPOTTED SANDPIPER (13 individuals)- the earliest 2 were at Pubnico May 8 (RSD'E); 6 were in the Caribou Prov. Pk., May 11 (KJM). An UPLAND SANDPIPER was at Hartlen's Pt., May 4 (FLL, BM et al.). Unusual, at least in spring, was a WHIMBREL at Economy, May 27 (FS). The only RUDDY TURNSTONES were 10-14 at Brier May 19-21 (M&KA, RBS, ELM).

Four RED KNOTS were at Little Hbr. as early as Feb. 26 (DHY), a date that suggests they overwintered somewhere in the northeast. There were 35 in breeding plumage at Lusby, May 11 (Cohrs). The only Sanderlings noted were 50 on Cape Sable I. Apr. 27 (BM,IAM,RF). Sixty-five SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS were at Lusby May 11 (JL&JSC), but farther east the only report is of one at Cherry Hill (SJF,JWT,FLL). Small numbers of LEAST SANDPIPERS were Economy (5) May 12 (FS) and the Valley (6) May 13 (JWW). There were 25 at Hartlen's Pt. May 25 (IAM), 100+ near Sunken Lake May 19 (BLF), 20 at Canard May 20 (JWW et al.), and 14 at Brier May 21 (ELM) - a well-defined mid-May migration. Late-winter PURPLE SANDPIPERS were at Black Rock (King's Co.) Mar. 6(RGT,BET); spring sightings of 20-40 come from Economy Apr.4 (FS), Seal Apr. 12(EM) and Saulnierville Apr. 20 (H&HH). An overwintering DUNLILN was at Little Hbr. Feb 26 (DHY). A RUFF, actually a Reeve in winter plumage, was at Cherry Hill Mar. 22 (SJF), another at Brier May 21(ELM). At Lockeport a SHORT-BILLIED DOWITCHER made one of its rare spring appearances, Apr. 25 (DJC). A dozen reports of the COMMON SNIBE totalled some 20 birds. The earliest were 2 at Hemeon's Hd. Mar. 26(DHY) and Pubnico Apr. (JKD'E). The more secretive AMERICAN WOODCOCK received half as much notice, the first appearing Mar. 23 at Apple River (KS) and Athol (Cumb. Co.) Mar. 30 (FLL, MA). Evidence suggesting they are actually more plentiful comes from BM, FLL, JWT who report a calling male at each of three stops along the HFX. airport perimeter road.

PHALAROPES TO AUKS.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPES continue to baffle me. They were too scarce in September - but now there are far too many of them! Very little is known about the birds' spring migrations, because the routes are out at sea. But with NSBS observers in the right places and times, we seem to have struck gold twice this spring. First, on April 28, on a **Bluenose** voyage up Fundy from Yarmouth to Digby, the Halls and Ruffs saw 200-300 birds flying north along a tide-rip off Brier and Long Islands. This may be the spring equivalent of their stopover in Fundy on their return in August.

Raymond d' Entremont, fishing on NE Georges Bank, takes up the story. 'May 16 was definitely a phalarope day. From the first light of dawn they began passing by. At noon small flocks were passing by all around. By sundown the procession had not slackened a bit. On May 17 it was more of the same and they kept passing by until dark. On May 18 a few scattered flocks passed but the main movement was over. All that came close enough to be identified were Red-necked Phalaropes but that is not to say that there were no Reds among them. We never seem to get that many phalaropes during the fall migration. During those two days my shipmates were amazed at the number of little birds that passed through.' Wow! Raymond's Phalarope Spectacular is the stuff of birders' dreams!

He also sends us our only Jaeger sighting: a light-phase adult POMARINE JAEGER on Georges Bank on April 25. Blake Maybank saw a first-winter GLAUCOUS GULL at Hartlen's Point on March 15, and estimated 230 ICELAND GULLS in Halifax Harbour that day. He, Fulton Lavender and Jim Taylor saw a 1st. -winter Glaucous in Aulds Cove, Antigonish Co., on April 5, and Kenneth McKenna reports another immature at Pictou sewer on the same day. The Halls' bird at Outer False Harbour, Yarmouth Co., on April 15 was our southernmost Glaucous, and Jim Wolford's immature at Wolfville Sewage Ponds on April 28 was the latest. The latest Icelanders were Jim's two birds, also at Wolfville on May 17. One of these was probably a 1st.- year bird. We'll take the HERRING GULLS and GREAT BLACK-BACKS as read.

As for the smaller gulls, we have Lisette d'Entremont's 1-4 RING-BILLED in Yarmouth harbour in February and March, the 19 birds that Jerome D'Eon saw at Eel Brook on March 25, and Francis Spalding's 6 at Apple River on April 15-18. Kenneth MacKenna plots the Ring-bills' spring passage at the outflow of the Trenton Power Plant: 6 on March 23, 12 on March 25, and 80 on March 31. The numbers of BLACK-HEADED Gulls increase every year. In Halifax Metro and adjacent parts of the County, Blake Maybank saw 14 in Dartmouth and Fairview Coves on March 29 and 'hoods'. The Payzants saw 14 in Dartmouth and Fairview Coves on March 17. 3 of Sean Smith's 8 birds at West Lawrencetown on March 29 had 'hoods', as did all 4 of Jim Taylor's gulls at Conrad's Beach on April 12. David Young saw 16 at Matthew's Lake on March 14. On April 6, Blake Maybank, Fulton Lavender and Jim Taylor reported 4 adults and a 1st. winter at Wentworth Park, Sydney, and John MacInnis saw a singleton at Forchu, Richmond Co., May 8. Down in Yarmouth Co., Raymond d'Entremont saw 6, 3 of them in spring plumage, at Eel Brook on March 29. The earliest BONAPART'S GULLS were in Dartmouth Cove: Blake Maybank's first-winter bird on March 15, and the Payzant's bird two days later. Kenneth MacKenna saw 6 birds at Pictou on May 10, and Sylvia Fullerton had an immature at Broad Cove from May 20-26. George Crowell counted 20 BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES off North Head on March 27 and, two days later, Blake Maybank and Jim Taylor saw one flying north, past Cape Sable Island. Tony Lock saw Kittiwakes off the East Bar of Sable Island on June 1. But the oddest record was the couple that George Forsyth saw on March 31, at Cornwallis sewage pond, presumably blown ashore by storms.

Tern time is summer weather: we've made it through the winter at last! I swear I heard terns calling over Bedford Basin on April 25, but it may have been wishful thinking. The first actual sighting comes, as you'd expect, from Yarmouth Co.: Raymond d'Entremont saw a COMMON TERN at Lower West Pubnico on May 4, and there were many over their colony there on May 9. He saw 25 ARCTIC TERNS over NE Georges Bank on May 18, all heading northwest. The Alsebrooks counted at least 25 Arctics over their colony on Peter Island, off Brier, on May 19, but Richard Stern, next day, put it at 200 birds of both species. The Mills say that the migrants had arrived *en masse*. They quickly spread through the Province: George Crowell saw 6 commons in Glace Bay Sanctuary on May 22.

Among the Commons and Arctics in the colony at Port Dufferin, Halifax Co., Blake Maybank saw 2 ROSEATE TERNS on May 26. Kenneth MacKenna saw a CASPIAN TERN at Caribou Is. on April 27, and Tony Lock is '90% sure' of the Caspian he saw off Sable Island on June 1. Tony is running a tern survey for the Canadian Wildlife Service. He tells me that Rosemary Curley, one of his observers in eastern PEI, regularly sees Caspians in May in the Pisquid River area. However, the pride of our tern crop this spring was the LEAST TERN at New Minas Pond on May 13, well seen by Richard Stern, Jim Wolford and other NSBS observers.

BLACK GUILLEMOTS, as usual, were seen close inshore at various points around the coasts of Nova Scotia. For example, the McLarens and Fulton Lavender saw 100+ birds around Seal Island, between May 19-22. Up in Cape Breton, on April 6, Blake Maybank, Fulton Lavender and Jim Taylor saw a total of about 40 birds, in scattered groups between Green Cove and Ingonish. Most were in breeding plumage. They also saw a COMMON MURRE off the Cape Sable causeway on March 29, along with 3 unidentified murrelets. Blake also saw 3 murrelets off Hartlen's Point on March 15. Fulton saw a THICK-BILLED MURRE in Cow Bay on May 4. On Bluenose, on April 9, Hubert Hall saw an ATLANTIC PUFFIN on the water, about 30 km west of Yarmouth. Coral d'Entremont saw 10 Puffins on German Bank on May 11, and Raymond had 3 on NE Georges on May 3. Tony Lock saw one about 35 miles W of Sable Island on June 2.

RGBB, ed.



DOVES, CUCKOOS, OWL

ROCK DOVES in New Salem, March 7 (KS) and Musquodoboit Hbr., 19 May (RBD) were rated unusual. Among a dozen reports of MOURNING DOVES was one of 523 between April 1 and May 4 at Stewiacke (PVB); I don't know if "repeats" were culled from this cumulative count. Other reported numbers pale by comparison. How do we detect migrants? One on Seal Is. April 13 and 4 there on the 16th (KM) might do as undisputed first arrivals. One at Big Pond, May 5 (JMa) was also probably on the move. Winter residents got around to billing and cooing at Avonport by March 17 (KU). A nest with 2 eggs at W. Pubnico, March 27 (JKD) was certainly our earliest ever recorded.

No cuckoos were reported; don't forget to send arrival times for the next issue.

Hooting GREAT HORNED OWLS were not widely reported. Cyril Coldwell's half-wild female did it again, producing 3 eggs on his front-yard nest platform March 6 and nestlings by April 4 (BLF). Two eggs in another nest, in a witch's broom near Glenmont, Kings Co., had failed to hatch by May 13 (BLF). Another brooding female was seen at Tuskett Falls April 17 (MHW). About a dozen BARRED OWLS were reported for March-April. Bernard Forsythe documents 13 pairs, with total of 26 eggs (low?) in his nest boxes in King's Co. One female nesting at Hells Gate was banded as an adult 8 years ago. Perhaps 4-6 SHORT-BARRED OWLS were spotted around W. King's Co. in March and April, among which 3 at Wellington Dyke, April 17 (JCT) might be breeding. One at Conrad's Beach during the April 6 N.S.B.S. field trip was presumably migrant, but individuals at Glace Bay Sanctuary, April 21 (GC) and Cape Sable I. April 27 (FLL et al.) might have been settled in. We received word of only 4-5 scattered SAW-WHET OWLS. More exciting were 4 BOREAL OWLS giving their tremolo calls from high on the ridge behind St. Lawrence Village and Bay St. Lawrence, evening of April 6 at land's end on C.B.I. (Bma, FLL, JWT). An effort to find them next weekend was unsuccessful (KLM, AM, IAM); we have more to learn about the seasonality of their singing. A belated report of a N. HAWK OWL, seen by Ron Hounsell of the C.W.S. at Wallace, Dec. 28, is relayed by CLC. More suprising was one pursued by crows, and nearly colliding with CJZ's car, in Yarmouth, March 21.

GOATSUCKERS, SWIFT, HUMMINGBIRD, KINGFISHER

A C. NIGHTHAWK in Halifax, May 24 (B. McLaren) was the first of only two reported -- another 2 seen in Pictou Co. May 26 (KJM). No whip-poor-wills? The first CHIMNEY SWIFTS were 4 seen near Peggy's Cove, May 4 (Michael Downing). Jim Wolford sends a complete account of Wolfville's novel prime-time entertainment. The show began when the Front Street Chimney hosted 55 swifts on May 7, rising to 80 on May 11, up to 176 on May 13, and between 115 and 180 through May 19. On May 20 and 24 peaks of 540 and 500-600 entered. Throughout this period, none evidently used the Acadia University Chimney. There were scattered reports of other swifts in mid-to-late May. The first RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD was a male at the Purchase's feeder in Dartmouth, May 7. Another arrived May 8, 2 more on the 10th, and then a dozen birds in 10 localities on May 12-13. A hummingbird that produced a loud whistling sound in flight began coming to Frances Brown's feeders near Springfield, Lun., Co., in late May. It was thought to be slightly larger the Ruby-throats. No plumage details were obtained, but the report is suggestive of Broad-tailed Hummingbird; what's missed is mystery!

BELTED KINGFISHERS at Three-Fathom Hbr., March 15 (BMa) and in the Annapolis area March 17 (BLF et al.) may have overwintered, but probably not the one appearing at Overton, April 3 (HH). The next were on April 6 at Conrad's Beach (N.S.B.S.) and in Victoria County (BMa et al.), but there were no reports of others seen before mid-April.

WOODPECKERS

A "vivid" RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER at Portuguese Cove, May 11 (JWT et al.) qualifies as only our second spring record. A YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, on Brier I. April 20 (H&HH), was followed by 6 more at month's end and a few through May. We have dilatory reporting of about 12 DOWNY and 8 HAIRY WOODPECKERS, including a nest of the latter with vocal young on May 24 at Shubie Park (JWT). Three N. FLICKERS at L.W. Pubnico, March 14 (RSD) might have been migrants, although one at Avonport, March 17 is said to have "overwintered there" (EU). Twelve at Louis Head Beach, March 23 (DHY) were clearly "a first big influx" (DHY). There were a number of reports for March 29, and thereafter they became widespread. We have 11 reports of 16 PILEATED WOODPECKERS, including a nesting pair in Truro (Ross Baker).



The choice of perch by this Common Tern seems to tell us something of its life and times. Photo Keith Allesbrook.

FLYCATCHERS TO SWALLOWS

There were just 3 reports of the relatively uncommon OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER, all in the third week of May, from Hants (JWW, JSC) and Yarmouth (JWT) counties. EASTERN WOOD-PEEWEEES were around at the same time, although 3 on Seal Island May 19-22 (EM) presumably represented migrants.

Of the EMPIDONAX genus, YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHERS were better represented than usual with 2 Hardwoodlands (JSC), 1 at Greenfield (BLF) and 3 at separate points along the road in Halifax Co. (BMa) all May 25-6. 1 on Brier May 20 (RBS) was presumably a migrant. LEAST FLYCATCHERS were on territory on cue, with reports from Hants. (BMa,BSa), Halifax (JSC) and King's Counties all May 11-12. ALDER FLYCATCHERS are slightly later migrants, so the only one seen by the deadline was on Bon Portage May 18 (JWT).

Lots of EASTERN PHOEBES were reported, with several early migrants from March 29 (2- Seal Island, EM) through April 15 (Lr. W. Pubnico, RSD) and several reported a little later around bridges, their characteristic nest sites Smiley's Park, (JSC) White Rock, (JWW) Greenfield, (JGT etc.). There was only 1 GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER report, from Seal Island, May 21 (FLL) although I have since heard birds calling in Wolfville and Kentville.

HORNED LARKS were of course thinning out as spring progressed, but 2 flocks of 10 birds each were still present at N. Amherst Marsh 20 April (BMa et al.).

JWT reported that only 4 PURPLE MARTIN boxes were up at the usual Oxford site by May 26, so we shall have to await further developments. By contrast this must be a good year for TREE SWALLOWS, as 25 separate reports have been sent in, often of large flocks. The earliest was of 2 birds at Little Harbour, Shelburne Co. April 8 (DHY), followed by 24 - 30 New Minas April 13 (JGT), 200+ Annapolis Royal April 16 (RBS), 500+ at both New Minas (JGT) and Amherst Pt. (DAC) on April 27 etc. No nesting details had yet been received at deadline time, though. BANK SWALLOWS are later arrivals, and indeed the first report was of 1 bird at Port Williams May 14 (BMa, RF) followed by 25 at Sackville May 25 (D&LC). HGH found 2 CLIFF SWALLOWS as an early vanguard in Digby April 29, and the only other report was of 2 birds on Seal Island May 20-22 (FLL et al.). This location was also (not surprisingly) the earliest sighting of BARN SWALLOW, with 2 on the early date of April 12. Numbers in the Province then built up, with, e.g. 10 Sackville April 24 (D&LC), 500+ Amherst Pt. May 1 (DAC) etc.

JAYS TO GNATCATCHERS

As usual there were a number of GRAY JAY reports from suitable habitat around the province, with no particular patterns or trends discernable in recent years. A family group of parents and 3 fledglings were present at Maple Lake, Pictou Co. May 26 (KJM). 16 separate reports of BLUE JAY were received, again with no particular major trends, except to say that the bird continues to be common everywhere, both at feeders and in the woods (JWW, PVB, D&LC, JC, JCZ et al.). A nesting pair was found by Eric Cooke at Head of St. Margaret's Bay.

There were lots of AMERICAN CROWS as usual. A few noteworthy ones included several coming regularly to feeders (JKD et al.), fishing from ice pans (SAC), nesting (JWW), and a late but most interesting report of one that had been banded on Boot Island, King's Co., Jan. 16, 1979 by Acadia University and recovered injured at Cape Anguille, Nfld. on July 10, 1990, 11 years later. Although COMMON RAVENS continue to seem common enough, at least in King's Co., there were only 5 reports received. However they included a nest with 5 young near Gaspereau (BLF, JWW).

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES continued to be abundant and highly visible. JCZ noted them all around the villages on Cape Sable Island May 4. JC had them "all Winter and Spring" etc. JWT noted a pair nest-building on May 10 at Laurie Park, Halifax Co., and there were many other reports. BOREAL CHICKADEES seemed, as usual, harder to find, but examples included 1 coming to a feeder in Apple River (KS), 3 on Wolfville Ridge April 6 (JGT), 2 in Blomidon Park April 14 (MT) and 1 noted constructing a nest at Loch Lomond, C.B. May 6 (JMa).

Perhaps the star of the season was the TUFTED TITMOUSE seen by Peter Smith on Bon Portage Island May 16. He was alone, but observed the bird in clear sunshine at 10-12 m. distance through 10x40 B.&L. binoculars. He described "An all gray-backed and dorsally winged bird about 1/4 larger than a Black-capped Chickadee; off-white/very light gray breast and undersides with reddish rusty flanks; crissum lighter white, as was area between eye and bill and beneath eye grading into off-white/very light gray on chest/ breast; definite crest; black bill, legs and feet; bird silent. "It was perched on a branch tip, then flew to an alder and finally disappeared and would not respond to "pishing". Peter is familiar with the species and had no doubt as to the identification. The bird breeds in Southern Maine and Southern Ontario in small numbers, but I am unable to find a previous record for Nova Scotia.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were perhaps less widely reported than last year, but several were still coming to suet feeders in mid-April and BMA had up to 8 at one time. A few WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were also present as usual around the province, with 1 at Lr. W. Pubnico, April 14 (RSD) and 1 on Seal Island April 11 (EM) both at unusual locations for this species. The usual smattering of BROWN CREEPERS was present, and 1 was still visiting a suet feeder in Wolfville on May 18 (fide JWW). I suspect that all of the above 5 species tend to be under-reported in the spring, as they are over-shadowed by the newly arriving warblers and vireos, and people have got used to seeing them around in the Winter.

After a "wrenless" winter, WINTER WRENS were paradoxically back in force this spring, with 6 reports. 1 was on the C.S.S. Hudson off Yarmouth (44d. 56m 65d. 24m. W.) on April 7 (L&PP), and 3 or 4 were singing around Economy on April 27 (FS). However, JWT thought that numbers were down from last year at Folly Lake in early May .

The Payzants nautical wren was joined by a GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, same boat, same location, same date! Small numbers, similar to last year but way down from 1989 were reported from around the province (BMA, HJH, JCZ, RBD et al.). The Halls felt that a very tame flock feeding low in bushes at Cape Forchu were newly arrived migrants. A migrating RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET was on Seal Island April 13 (EM) but singing birds on territory were not found till the more expected dates of April 24 (Apple River, KS; Kentville, RSB) and April 30 (Hants Co., JGT). A BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER was seen by the NSBS on Bon Portage Island on May 18.

BLUEBIRDS TO STARLING

A total of 6 EASTERN BLUEBIRDS was reported, all in the 3rd. week of May (Seal Isl., BMA, FLL, IAM; Apple River, KS; Brooklyn, AP; and Sackville, D&LC). No reports of nests yet, but the last few years have been encouraging for this species which, even the years before every suitable cavity was taken over by Starlings, was always right at the edge of its natural range here in Nova Scotia.

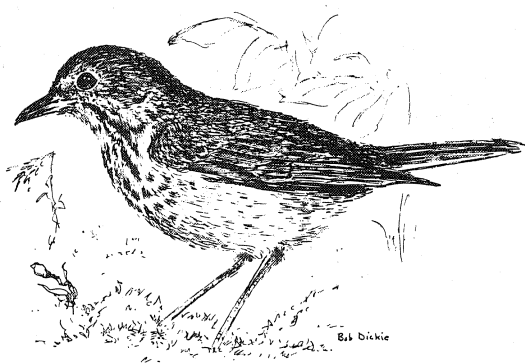
There were only 2 reports of VEERY (Greenwich, May 15, BLF; Seal Island May 19, FLL) although at deadline time they are singing away at dusk all over the Kentville area. Exactly the same can be said for SWAINSON'S THRUSH, with similar dates. By contrast HERMIT THRUSHES were much better reported, with 14 reports representing dates from April 6 on, and singing specifically noted from April 24 on (m. obs.). All parts of the mainland, but not Cape Breton, were represented. Are they really much more common than the other "Catharus" Thrushes, or just better reported, or are some that are just heard actually the very similar-sounding Swainson's? Of the 2 rare ones, the Gray-Cheeked was not reported this Spring, but a WOOD THRUSH was seen by the NSBS trip on Bon Portage Island May 20.

AMERICAN ROBINS were, as usual, widely reported by many observers, from 18 March (20+, Advocate, KS) onward. 35 were at Board Cove 2 days later (SJF) and "hundreds" were in Pictou Co. by March 29 (KJM). Nesting was active in Wolfville by April 22 (JWW) and in New Canada by May 7 (NS). Bma found a partial albino, with a white head, small black crescent on the hindcrown, and all-white outer tail feathers which had been hanging around a yard most of the winter in Maitland, and was still present on March 1. I had an excellent description of another bird that was certainly another partial albino in early May for a week around Foleaze Park, near Kentville. This is indeed a species in which albinism is relatively common, and always interesting to observe.

GRAY CATBIRDS seemed to re-enter the province around May 16-20, right on time, with several sightings on Seal (FLL et al) and Brier (RBS) Islands, and over the next few days I saw and heard several on territory in the Valley. Not too many other reports, though, yet, so I wonder if numbers are down this year. NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS remain well reported, I suspect partly because of their high degree of visibility, and there were 12 separate reports this Spring (RGT, BET, MG, DHY et al). JKD has a pair and 5 eggs in a nest at Lr. W. Pubnico, May 12. WEM noted 1 that had been around Sydney for several weeks, and 2 spent most of the spring around the lawns on the back road in Westport. Only 1 BROWN THRASHER was reported, from Bon Portage on May 16 (PCS), but I had a second-hand report of another on Brier around the same time.

Spring sightings of AMERICAN PIPIT are quite rare, and tend to be from mid-May on, so 3 on Seal Island March 30 (EM) and 1 at Pubnico Pt. May 7 (RSD) were distinctly unusual. Were they late over - wintering birds or early migrants?

The winter's BOHEMIAN WAXWING invasion lasted well into spring, with large flocks still being reported in March (e.g. 70-80 Tusket on 25th, JKD) and April (e.g. 175+ Wolfville Ridge on 8th., JGT) but none after April 20 (25-30, Freeport, H&HH). Relatively few CEDAR WAXWINGS have appeared so far, however, with about 25 in Wolfville April 11 (JWW), 12 at Ross Rd. May 25 (DW&JAP) and just two's and three's elsewhere.



The winter's phenomenal NORTHERN SHRIKE invasion continued well into the spring. Individual birds were still being seen well into mid-April. There are 29 reports AFTER mid-March, including 3 close together in Yarmouth Co., April 2 (Halls) and 1 giving its full territorial song from a perch at E. Lawrencetown, April 13 (BMa, MDu). One was on Caribou Island, C.B., April 27 (KJM). I wonder if any might stay around to breed, for example in the boreal fastness of interior Cape Breton?

A few people reported EUROPEAN STARLINGS, with no huge flocks, but I wonder if the relatively few reports are because the numbers are truly diminishing (doesn't look like it from my backyard !) or because people don't like them, or have become blasé about them.

R.B.S. ed.

VIREOS AND WARBLERS

The first SOLITARY VIREO was noted on May 7, in Hammonds Plains (KNK). Four observers reported seasonal firsts on May 11 in The Valley, Col. and Pic. Cos. Oddly, KS did not list one in Apple River Cumb. Co., until May 18. IAM had a total of 5 sightings on Seal Is. May 19-22. A WARBLING VIREO was closely studied on Seal Is. May 22, by IAM et al., following their May 21 close-up view of a PHILADELPHIA VIREO there. The RED-EYED VIREO appeared much earlier than last year, and even somewhat ahead of schedule in spots. The first spring record was at Herbert River, Hants Co., on May 11 (BMa, BSa), followed by 1 at Crousetown May 13 (NS). Report of a dozen other individuals in western N.S. followed swiftly, including 7 on Seal Is. May 20-22.

I did not speculate this year about whether birds in my charge were declining, flourishing or holding their own. It was noted, though, that our list of contributors was down 40% from last year, and the resulting spotty coverage made it difficult to determine migration patterns in many cases.

Arriving at Durham, Pic. Co., nearly a week before the norm on May 11. (KIM), the TENNESSEE WARBLER was subsequently reported at Russell Lake, Hfx. Co., on May 14, and on territory at Economy (4) May 17. Four observers sent in May 20. records for western N.S., including M&KA who found 10 on Brier Is. The NASHVILLE WARBLER appeared to be slightly behind schedule, a singleton on May 11 at Smiley's Park, Hants Co., being the first reported (BMa, BSa). Over a week passed before a few additional reports trickled in from Digby Co. and Sackville.

Fourteen observers sent news of the NORTHERN PARULA, with the Morses noting the first one at Mahone Bay, Lun. Co., on May 6. Reports followed within a few days from Hfx, Co., The Valley and South Shore; and Parulas appeared to be well-distributed all the way to Cape Breton by May 17, when 4 were observed at Big Pond (LTM). Ten pairs were noted on Brier Is. May 18-20 (M&KA), and they were "numerous" on the Prospect Rd. May 22, with nest building in progress (NSBS).

The YELLOW WARBLER was very well-reported, with nearly 100 individuals represented, from Seal Is. (where EM saw the first one May 6) to Cape Breton. Most spring firsts, right across the province, were in the May 11-17 period, with an abrupt migration suggested. DJC saw "dozens all over" Lockeport on May 13 after seeing her first of the year there the previous day. 50 were on Brier Is. May 18-20 (M&KA). Coverage of the CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER was slim, but it at least arrived on time - May 14 at Canson Rd., Lun. Co. (JWT). Scattered reports followed, including 5 on Brier Is. May 18-20, and 1 at Big Bond May 21. I found them common in the usual places around New Ross, Lun. Co., May 26. An early MAGNOLIA WARBLER appeared in W. Pubnico Apr. 27 (LD). Otherwise, season's firsts were 3 at Smiley's Park May 11. Others, reported May 16-21, were confined to the Halifax area, Seal Is., and Brier Is. where a "large flight" came through (RBS et al.). The first CAPE MAY WARBLER was sighted at Big Pond May 17. (LTM). Subsequent reports, totalling only 6 individuals, came from Risser's Beach, Green Bay and Seal Is. Only 3 male BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLERS were tallied before the May 27 deadline - May 10 at Oakfield, Hfx. Co. (JWT), 1 on May 19. at Economy (FS) and 1 on May 24 in Dartmouth (Purchases).

The usual reports wintering YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS came in from Yar. and Shel. Cos., including 30+ at Melborne on Mar. 25. (JSD). One at Crousetown Mar. 30 and 8 Martinique Beach Mar. 31 may have been early migrants. It was the latter half of April, though, when most birders along the South Shore, in The Valley in the Halifax area and on the Isthmus of Chignecto saw their first Yellow-Rumps - numbering only a few until FS noted around 25 at Economy on Apr. 27. On that same date, JWW saw a male in Canning being chased repeatedly by a confused male goldfinch. May reports were of higher numbers - 20+ on Cape Sable Is. on May 4, 53 at Laurie Park May 5 and 50 on Brier Is. May 18-20.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER numbers continued to recover from their low of a few years ago. RBR nabbed an early bird at Kearney Lake, Hfx. Co., on Apr. 27. The next one was noted at Crousetown May (NS), and one's and two's were also welcomed in The Valley, Col. Co. and Dartmouth over the next week. No news was received from farther east. Brier Is. offered up 50 May 18-20, and the Seal Is. migration on May 20 peaked at 11. One banded on Bon Portage Is. Oct. 27, 1989 by the Acadia Biology Dept. was killed by a cat in Gaspereau, May 27 (CKC). Well, May 27 was our "deadline"! Widely-scattered sightings of the beautiful BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER were received, the first being a male at Bib Pond on May 17. 20 on Brier Is. May 18-20 provided some spectacular viewing (M&KA).

The PINE WARBLER which spent the entire winter at the feeder of Reg and Claire d'Entremont in W. Pubnico stayed until Apr. 17 (LD). Its chestnut-capped cousin, the PALM WARBLER, was noted by four birders on Apr. 15. A total of 8 birds were reported that day - from Lr. W. Pubnico, Yarmouth, Seal Is. and Dartmouth (RSD, Halls, EM, Purchases resp.). A notable wave occurred around Green Bay on Apr. 26 (Cohrs), and Palms were generally well-reported the latter half of April, but only as far east as Wallace, before they retreated to the bogs and barrens. One was gathering nesting material in Quinan on May 5 (RSD). The first BAY-BREASTED WARBLER to be seen was at Loch Lomond, C.B. on May 9 (JMa). Records were scarce, with 1 at Economy May 19 and 4 total on Seal Is. May 20-22. However, they were "numerous" on th Prospect Rd. May 22 (NSBS). Three observers each sent reports of 1-3 BLACKPOLL WARBLERS May 20-24 at Green Bay, Big Pond and Wolfville Ridge; but numbers were more impressive on Brier Is. and Seal Is on May 20, with a peak of 50 on the latter (**file IAM**).

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER numbers were not impressive, but the migration could be sketched out - Cape Sable Is. where an early bird was located on Apr. 27, to Overton May 6, to Hfx. and Kings Cos. May 10 and to Caribou, Pic. Co., May 11. Brier Is. held only 2 May 18-20. The Cohrs caught our first spring AMERICAN REDSTART on May 11 at APBS. By May 16 were noted in The Valley, along the South Shore and in the Halifax-Dartmouth area 20 were present on Brier Is. May 19-20. A WORM-EATING WARBLER was listed by quite a number of observers on Apr. 23-24 at the Jones' feeders on Bald Rock Rd., Hfx. Co. It was spotted in nearby Ketch Harbour a week earlier; then spent at least 4 days around the Jones; (FLL et al.). May 12 saw the first OVENBIRDS reported - 2 Digby (Halls) and 2 on territory in Kentville (RBS). Only half-a-dozen more individuals were accounted for to May 21, on the South Shore and in Hfx. Co. RBS saw my favourite, a NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, on territory in Kentville on May 9 BMA and BSA worked diligently to discover 5 more on May 11 - 1 at Smiley's Park and 4 along the Herbert River. The MOURNING WARBLER has not been reported to deadline.

The first COMMON YELLOWTHROATS were singing at Cape Forchu, Yar. Co. (HJH), and in Wolfville (*vide* JWW) on May 15. Though two had reached Dartmouth by the following day (L&PP) and a male was seen in Apple River May 18 (KS), numbers appeared to build up very slowly. M&KA were in a poetic frame of mind when they counted 25 on Brier Is. around May 20. "Almost luminous" and "positively glowing" were their descriptions of this immaculate bird. Like the Worm-Eating Warbler, also likely a part of the major fallout of southwestern birds on Apr. 22-23 was a female HOODED WARBLER, first seen and painstakingly described by SDS at Bear Cove, Hfx. Co., on Apr. 25. It was subsequently observed by others and photographed, staying in the area until at least Apr. 28 (BMA, JGT). A bird which occurred in New Ross on or about May 8, and was described to me, was quite probably an early migrating male WILSON'S WARBLER. Singles at Apple River, Canning and Seal Is. May 18-20 were our only confirmed reports. A CANADA WARBLER was seen on Brier Is. May 18 (MA, HGH, RBS). A Canada at Drain Lake, Hfx. Co., May 20 (RBD) and 2 on the Dufferin Mines Rd., Hfx Co., May 26 (BMA) rounded out our warbler reports.

KNK, ed.



This Pine Warbler feeding on beach flies on Seal Island, May 30, 1989, seemed unencumbered by its curiously deformed upturned bill. Photo-- IAM.

TANAGER TO INDIGO BUNTING

A single male SUMMER TANAGER was discovered at the home of Joyce Starrett in Bass River. This bird was often seen fly-catching in the not yet leafed maples from April 23 through to May 2. At the least there were 17 separate sightings of SCARLET TANAGER in the province. The earliest report was on April 25 at Upper Kingsburg (IF), with several others sighted in widely separated areas before the end of the month. The majority of migrants were found during May with a total of 12 separate occurrences. There were 15 males and 2 females in total. NORTHERN CARDINALS were well represented during migration. There were 9 reports, all except an over-wintering bird in Amherst were males. Many were heard singing in the early morning sunshine and among those were 2 within a block of each other in Wolfville on May 17. (JW,T,JGT)

ROSE-BREADED GROSBEEKS began arriving in larger than normal numbers during the last week in April. These earlier migrants were found in the extreme southern parts of the province while more central and northern regions were graced with their presence throughout the month of May with the majority of sightings on or about May 15. The most impressive event of the spring migration was the arrival of literally hundreds of "little blue birds" during late April. Phone lines were clogged with talk of blue finches in backyards and local radio programmes often made special mention of the occurrence. BLUE GROSBEEKS were among these sightings with over 35 separate records. The earliest was of 2 at Little Harbour on April 22 (DHY). Then with a tremendous crash these and INDIGO BUNTINGS filled the coastal areas from Halifax Co. to Yarmouth Co. including select areas of the Annapolis Valley on April 23. At least 6 Blue Grosbeaks were found at the Jones' feeder at Bald Rock, Hfx. Co. on April 23 and 24. There were a total of 125 separate sightings of Indigo Buntings which was without doubt just a sampling of the extent at which these birds "fell" into our area. Nellie Snyder fielded about forty phone calls from feeder watchers along the South Shore with over 70 sightings as a result. This came after a short plea was made on the radio for reports in the Bridgewater area on April 23. Other notable entries were of 2 separate pairs looking quite settled in Rose Bay and Kingsburg. The pair in Rose Bay were seen carrying nesting material. (AT,IAM)

SPARROWS TO SNOW BUNTING

TREE SPARROWS departed most areas as usual by mid-April and last reports of stragglers were within a few days of each other. The last sighting was of 3 at Avonport on April 30. (EU) The first CHIPPING SPARROW of the season was one seen at the Spicer's feeder in Dartmouth on April 25. Other "firsts" followed within days from Yarmouth areas through central Nova Scotia and by May 5 sightings were noted from Cape Breton.

Eratum: A bird that was mistakenly neglected in the seasonal write up in the April issue of Nova Scotia Birds Volume 33 Number 2 as well as the Christmas Count section of the same issue was of a CLAY-COLOURED SPARROW seen by Fulton Lavender and Blake Maybank on December 30, 1990 during the West Hants Christmas Count. It should be noted that the species total in the West Hants Christmas Count should read 57 species, not 56. Our apologies for this error. Although this species has been noted in the province as late in the year as mid-November this is the first truly winter record.

A FIELD SPARROW was found on Seal Island by Ethelda Murphy on April 13 and possibly the same bird was seen again there from May 19-22 (FLL,BMa,IAM). A second bird was seen by Lisette d'Entremont at her feeder on April 28 in Lower West Pubnico. There were three records for VESPER SPARROW. The first was one at Kingston on April 30 that Jim Taylor thought could be the same individual seen in the same general area on May 2 by Judy Tufts. A pair was also found by Jim Taylor on May 26 in a blueberry field near Oxford. A single occurrence of LARK SPARROW was documented on Sable Island in mid-May by Donald Benoit (vide IAM). Lark sparrows are generally noted in Fall migration and this was record was one of only 5 spring sightings.

A bird described to Joan Czapalay by Dennis and Beatrice Smith at Shag Harbour suggests a LARK BUNTING. The description given was in detail and would not be unlikely, considering the impressive migration patterns we have experienced this year. The first Spring arrivals of SAVANNAH SPARROW were 3 "Ipswich" at Little Harbour, Shelburne Co. As well there were 25 of which at least 15 and possibly all were of the "IPSWICH" race at Martinique Beach, Halifax Co. on March 31. (Bma,MDu). Other earlier sightings were single P.s. Savanna at Chebogue on April 2 and Apple River on April 6. (H&HH, KS). Average arrival date of these birds is March 31 and are generally of the earlier migrating P.s. princeps race (Ipswich) with P.s. Savanna following during early April. It seems that it has been years since we have had SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS to report as they are usually so late to arrive that sightings fail to make the deadline for this issue of Nova Scotia Birds. This year however, we have 2 widely separated reports during the first week of May! The first was 1 on May 5 at Yarmouth (JCZ) and the second report was of 2 birds at Forchu, Richmond Co. C.B. on May 8. (JMa).

The earliest FOX SPARROW was 1 found at Broad Cove on March 2. (SPF) The 5 plus reports submitted indicate that the majority of arriving birds were seen between March 20 and March 31 over all parts of the province. SONG SPARROWS began singing as early as Mar. 2 in parts of the Annapolis Valley (GF), but really became noticeable from March 18-30 as more migrants started staking out territories. There seemed not to be large numbers of migrants but there were 25 birds found on March 25 at Cape Sable Island (Bma, JWT) and this population increased to over 40 individuals by May 4 (JCZ). The first SWAMP SPARROW of the season was April 7 at Ells Poultry Farm near Port William (JGT). This is just a day later than the earliest Spring record. Others were first found more typically from April 19-28 in most parts of the mainland areas and by May 2 the first was spotted in Cape Breton at Big Pond (LTM).

WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS were sighted at feeders for the first time April 17-18 in two locations in Halifax Co.-Waverley and Lower Sackville. (L&PP,DC,LC) All other locations found single or very small groups by May 10. One comment from the Purchases in Dartmouth is that these birds seem to be more abundant in their area than has been the case in the last several years. At least 9 individual WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS were discovered in the province and all were first seen during the period from May 9 to 17 and from very scattered locations. Brier Island, Lower West Pubnico, Port Williams, West Northfield, Apple River and Big Pond C.B. all had single birds with the exception of 2 birds at Ecomony on May 15 (FS). DARK-EYED JUNCOS seemed to have returned in force as many birders suggested that there were larger than usual migrating flocks returning by late March with the majority of records during the period of April 1 to 7. Several reporters noted partial albinism in some individuals and Carol Currie in Fort Lawrence had an "OREGON" race at her feeder there on April 15-18. This bird had a grey head with black lores, brown/grey back, wings and tail which might suggest "pink-sided" but had clear chestnut coloured sides. Two other birds fitting this description were also discovered in nearby Sackville, New Brunswick during the same period.

The very occasional LAPLAND LONGSPUR was spotted during March and April. Single birds were found at Cherry Hill, Conrad's Beach and Pennant Point and 4 were seen with Snow Buntings at Grand Pré. The latest recorded was a female in fresh breeding plumage at Cherry Hill on April 28 (JSC,JLC). During March, SNOW BUNTINGS were relatively easy to find in those favoured areas of Grand Pré, and coastal beaches. A large flock of 600 was seen at Grand Pré on March 1 and at the other end of the scale single late individuals were found near Inner False Harbour, Yar. Co., and Advocate on April 15 and 20 respectively (H&HH,BMa). The latest and close to an all time record by just two days were 7 birds seen on May 19 at Louisbourg by Cyril MacInnis.

ICTERIDS

Although there were earlier sightings of BOBOLINKS most first sightings occurred May 12 and were widely scattered. The first was a male seen on May 3 on Seal Island by Ethelda Murphy. On the mainland, the earliest sighting was of a male as well which visited Kathleen Spicer's feeder for over two hours on May 7 in Apple River. Male RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS began arriving as usual during the last week of March. A few records came from Port Williams, Canning and Dartmouth starting on March 11-18 but these were exceptions to the majority of sightings. A female was noted on Seal Island on April 2 and there were several near Amherst on April 4. The only EASTERN MEADOWLARK was one flushed from the tall grasses at Conrad's Beach on April 12 by Jim Taylor.

A young male ORCHARD ORIOLE arrived on Seal Island May 14 and was joined by another May 15. What was probably one of those birds was seen around the lobster traps there from May 19-22 (EM,IAM). The earliest of many NORTHERN ORIOLES was of 1 that arrived with the Indigo buntings at a feeder in West Pennant on April 23. (BMa et al.) From that date through to mid-May dozens were seen. Most notable was a large flight of migrating orioles seen during May 18-19 on Brier Island. (RBS) Interestingly, while other birds were still entering the province, there was a pair already carrying nesting material at Rose Bay on May 6 (fide NS).

RUSTY BLACKBIRDS arrived a bit behind schedule with the first sighting at Economy on March 29 (FS), but were well reported during the first two weeks in April and found regularly throughout May. At Davidson Lake, Hants County there were up to 6 individuals on April 30, this being noteworthy as it seems unusual to see more than a pair in any one area at this time. (GJT) COMMON GRACKLES arrived as early as March 18 and by the 21st they were well documented from all areas of the province. It seemed that from all reports grackles came back in small groups and slowly, but surely built up in numbers over a longer period of time. Most reports were of 3-10 individuals with the exception of over 75 at Abercrombie Point on April 6. (BMa,FLL,JWT)



BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS arrive slightly later than grackles and were first noted on Mar. 26 in Lower Sackville (DC,LC). Most all other "firsts" of the season occurred by April 1 and were well represented in all parts of the province. The following extraordinary report was compiled by Ian McLaren after consulting the diary of Ethelda Murphy who identified the first Nova Scotia and Canadian sight record of BRONZED COWBIRD. "The bird appeared on May 8 at Ethelda Murphy's feeder at the "cookhouse" in "West Village", Seal Island. However, it had been seen in the area about two days earlier by Wade Kenny, who mentioned the strange, red-eyed blackbird to Ethelda. The bird was usually accompanied by several Common grackles. Brown-headed Cowbirds and Red-Winged Blackbirds were also coming to the feeder for comparison. It was quite approachable and Ethelda Murphy and others were able to observe it closely through a window about 4 metres from the feeder. Everyone was impressed with its deep red eyes. It was smaller and shorter-tailed than the grackles, thought to be about the size of a Red-wing, but sturdier. The black body plumage was variously described, but the consensus was that it was like a "bronzed: grackle, but less iridescent and more greenish in some lights. The thick plumage of the neck and back seemed to accentuate the contrasting colour of the wings. Its beak was not described in detail, but it was said to be shorter and thicker than a grackle's. All observers agreed that it matched the illustration of the adult male Bronzed Cowbird in the **National Geographic Guide**, which was not available for consultation until after the bird had been present for a day. Ethelda Murphy left the island May 10, and the bird had gone when she returned on the 13th. This is an astonishing first sight record for Canada. The bird is a partial migrant, occasionally strays to the Gulf Coast and Florida, and last Spring there were a few records somewhat beyond its normal boundaries in the southwestern U.S."

FINCHES

Again this season we have very few PINE GROSBEAK sightings. The only Spring records are of a pair seen on the NSBS field trip along the Prospect Rd. area of Halifax Co. and 3 individuals were found on Sober Island on May 25. (BMa) PURPLE FINCHES became relatively common at feeders by the end of April. Birds began arriving in early April, earliest April 1 in Stewiacke and at White's Lake. (PVB,BMa) A noticeable insurgence was evident from May 5-8 with up to 26 arriving at feeders at one time. (WPH) It certainly is evident that HOUSE FINCHES will be a species found abundantly in this province. Over the last six years I have seen the Spring reports go from zero to at least 25 individuals in this report. Apart from the males at Apple River and Broad Cove on April 16 and 21 respectively all other sightings were in the Wolfville, Avonport, Port Williams area and throughout Yarmouth County. A note from Eric Mills states that these birds are well established in South Western New Brunswick and quite abundant there and could easily be the source of our recent records. On Seal Island up to 6 birds were spotted on May 14 and later in the month there was a male and female acting like a pair which could produce a nesting record as the season progresses. (EM)

RED CROSSBILLS were uncommon but were found in small groups in Yarmouth, Shelburne, Lunenburg and Halifax Counties. The largest flock was 12 seen on May 15 in Dartmouth. (DWP, JAP) There was 1 female of the Newfoundland race found at White's Lake on February 24; the only report of this race. (BMa) I would like to encourage reporters to make note of "large-billed" Red Crossbills if at all possible and indicate this on your reporting slips. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS are again very uncommon in Nova Scotia. There were only two reports. One on March 31 at Martinique Beach where 3 were seen by BMa and MDu and the second sighting was of 9 seen at Sheet Harbour on May 26. (BMa)

PINE SISKINS have since last fall been relatively constant in most areas.

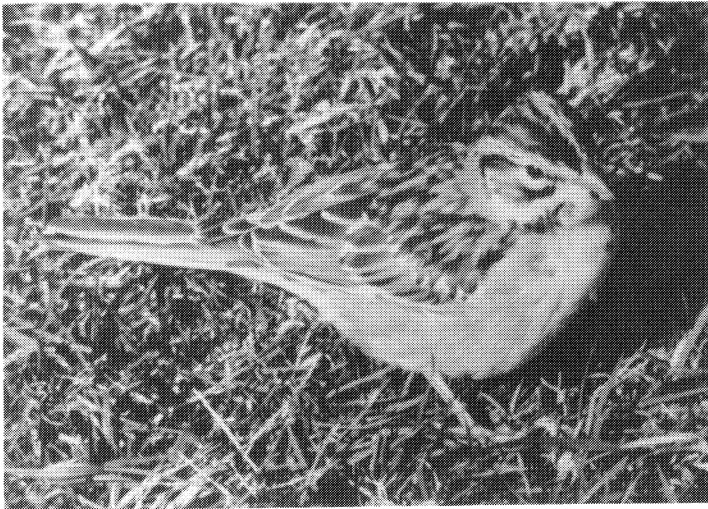
There seemed not be any drastic increase or decrease in their numbers as Spring approached. There were very few large flocks but instead, very manageable and well-behaved groups visiting feeders. The largest flock was 40 at White's Lake on March 2 and generally sightings were commonplace but of between 3 and 12 individuals. Ethelda Murphy on Seal Island has had a Spring full of rarities and to cap this list off she observed a EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH at her feeder on May 7-9. This bird was obviously an escapee but we will likely never know from where. AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES were quite abundant all winter and increased greatly by the first of March. The Purchases had about 100-125 at Glenwood on March 2. All observers agreed that these birds were plentiful and regular in all areas.

EVENING GROSBEAKS AND HOUSE SPARROWS

Although EVENING GROSBEAKS were reported by many observers they were by no means a common sighting. Several people noted that these birds disappeared after December then reappeared in mid to late March. There were not excessively large flocks found, the largest consisting of 40 individuals at Glenwood on Mar 2. and Mar. 25. All other sightings were of 20 or less.

HOUSE SPARROW populations continue to be difficult to assess as many people are seeing marked decreases in their areas while others are seeing small increases or a return of normal numbers. It is likely safe to say that the population in the province is constant and probably is not growing.

DAC, ed.



This Lark Sparrow posed obligingly for Blake Maybank on Seal Island, Oct 8, 1989.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF REPORTS

for

the **January, 1992** issue**November 12, 1991****Bird Reports to the RECORDS EDITOR**

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

Articles, sketches and letters to the EDITOR

Mrs. Shirley Cohrs,
8 Rosemount Ave.,
Halifax, N.S. B3N 1X8

Photographs to

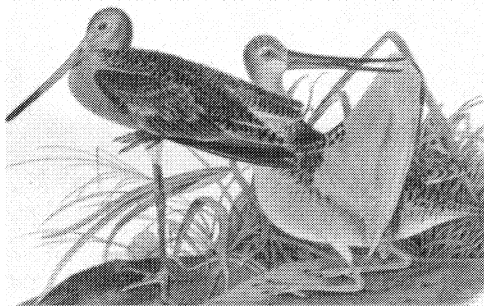
Dr. I.A. McLaren,
1755 Cambridge Street,
Halifax, N.S. B3H 4A8

LIST OF REPORTERS

<u>Last Names</u>	<u>First Name</u>	<u>Initials</u>
Allsebrook	Keith	KA
	Marion	MA
Almon	Mike	MAI
Bay	Pearl	PVB
Boylinsky	Mike	MB
Brennan	Calvin	CB
Caldwell	Cyril	CKC
Carmichael	Hal	HC
Casselman	Karen	KLC
Codling	Donald	DC
	Lois	LC
Cohrs	John	JLC
	Lisè	LAC
	Shirley	JSC
	S.A.	SAC
Connell	John	JCo
Connelly	Jacqueline	JC
Cretien	Donna	DJC
Crosby	George	GC
Crowell	Carol	CLC
Currie	Dave	DAC

Czapalay	Joan	JCZ
Dadswell	Mike	MDa
Dawse	Nancy	ND
D'Entremont	Lisette	LD
	Raymond	RSD
d'Eon	Jerome	JSD
Desplanque	Con	CD
deVries	Maria	Md
Dewolfe	Jane	JHD
Dickie	Bob	RBD
	Brian	WBTD
	Donald	DDD
	Helen	HD
	Marlene	MAD
	Michael	MDo
	M	MDu
Downing	Ev.&Ed.	EEE
Dufresne	Richard	RE
Eagles	Irene	IF
Elliott	George	GF
Falvey	Roger	RF
Forsyth	Sylvia	SJF
Foxall	Joy	JGi
Fullerton	Helen	HG
Gates	Jamie	JG
Gibson	Merritt	MG
	Helen	HGH
Hall	Hubert	HGH
	Michael	MHW
Hawkwood	Mike	MH
Heaney	Ward & Phyllis	WPH
Hemeon	P.	PH
Hicklin	Sue	SH
Hill	Barbara	BH
Hinds	Ron	RH
Hounsell	J.P.	JPH
Huang	Matt	MHu
Hughes		
	Keith	KNK
Keddy	Fulton	FLL
Lavender	Jake	JM
MacDonald	Cyril	CM
MacInnis	John	JMa
	Ken	KJM
MacKenna	Walter	WEM
MacKinnon	Laurie	LTM
MacNeill	G.B.	GBM
Masons	Blake	BMa
Maybank	Jane	JMc
McConnell	Bernice	BM
McLaren	Ian	IAM
	Billy	BMi
Mills	Eric	ELM
	Jane	JMi
	Maureen	MM
	Jim	JRM
Morrow	Bill	WM
Morse	Jean	JeM
	Ethelda	EM
Murphy	Terry	TM
	Lillian	LN
Nickerson		

Ogilvie	Nancy	NN
Oickle	Roleen	RO
Parsons	Joan	JO
Payzant	Glen	GPa
Porter	Linda & Peter	L&PP
Pratt	Arthur	AP
Proulx	Mary	MP
Purchase	Gini	GP
	Don	DWP
	Joyce	JAP
Riggs	Stan	SR
Ritcey	Olive	OR
Ross	Ian	IR
Ruff	Ruff	BR
	Eric	ER
Ryan	Ann	AR
Rymer	Robin	RR
Sarty	Bev	BSa
Shank	B.	BS
Smith	Peter	PCS
	Sean	SDS
Snyder	Betty	BSn
	Nellie	NS
Spalding	Francis	FS
Spicer	Kathleen	KS
Stern	Richard	RBS
Tams	Miriam	MT
Taylor	Jim	JWT
	Lela	LT
Thexton	Bill	RGT
	Brenda	BET
Timpa	Jean	JT
Trueman	Gerry	GMT
Tufts	David	DT
	Judy & Gordon	JGT
Urban	Eva	EU
Webster	Dave	DW
Wolford	Jim	JWW
	Betty & Barry	BBY
Youll	David	DHY
Young	Marion	MZ
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, Overton, all the Pubnicos, Glenwood, Dayton, Quinan
Shelburne Co. (Shel. Co.)	Cape Sable Is., Cape Sable, Matthews Lake, Lower Ohio, The Hawk, Seal Is., Sand Hills, Little Harbour Port L'Hebert W.
Queen's Co	Port Joli, Port L'Hebert E.
Lunenburg Co. (Lun. Co.)	Cherry Hill, Broad Cove, Petite Riviere, Green Bay, Crousetown, Crescent Beach
Halifax Co (Hfx. Co.)	Three Fathom Hbr., Conrad's Beach, Lawrencetown, Cole Hbr., Martinique Beach, Hartlen's Point, Oakfield Park, Laurie Park, Powder Mill Park, Chezsetcook
Colchester Co. (Col. Co.)	Economy, Glenholme
Annapolis Co. (Anna. Co.)	Wilmot, Round Hill, Paradise, Sandy Bottom Lake Annapolis Royal, Clementsport, Eleven Mile Lake
Kings Co.	Wolfville, Greenfield, Canard, Black River Lake, Gaspereau, Grand Pre, White Rock, Starr's Pt., Lumsden Reservoir
Cumberland Co. (Cumb. Co.)	Lusby Marsh, APBS*, Lorneville, Linden, Port Howe
Hants Co.	Shubenacadie, Noel Shore
Digby Co.	Brier Island
Guysborough Co. (Guys. Co.)	Hazel Hill
Cape Breton (C.B.)	Big Pond, C.B. Highland National Park (C.B.H.N.P.)

*APBS-Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary
CBC - Christmas Bird Count

SANCTUARY AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND

The winning entry in our competition for the best bird slide taken by a member of the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia is this study of

Great Black-backed Gull with Young

taken by Pat Wall



PHOTOGRAPH COMPETITION

RULES

1. This competition is open only to members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society.
2. Up to 5 colour transparencies may be submitted by each photographer. Duplicate slides which will be added to the Society slide collection would be appreciated. However, if an original slide is entered and the photographer wishes it to be returned, we will do so provided that a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage is included with the entry.
3. The slide must be of a species that has occurred in Nova Scotia. The bird must have been in the wild and must not have been caged or otherwise restrained when photographed.
4. Species winning in previous years are not eligible for the trophy
5. Photographs must not have been previously submitted in any other N.S.B.S. competition.
6. The Nova Scotia Bird Society may copy all entries and use them for educational purposes, publish them in **Nova Scotia Birds** and display them at meetings of the society, with credit to the photographer. Copyright remains with the photographer.
7. A brief account should be enclosed with each entry, giving the circumstances in which each photograph was obtained, technical details (focal length of lens, exposure details, make of camera and film--if available), locality, date and photographers name and address. Name and address should also appear on each slide mount.
8. Deadline for entries is December 15, 1991. Entries may be hand-delivered at regular monthly meetings of the Society, or may be mailed to: Bev Sarty, Site 14A, Box 60, R. R. #4, Armdale, N.S., B3L 4J4
9. Entries are submitted at the photographer's risk.
10. Entries are accepted only on the above conditions.

JUDGING

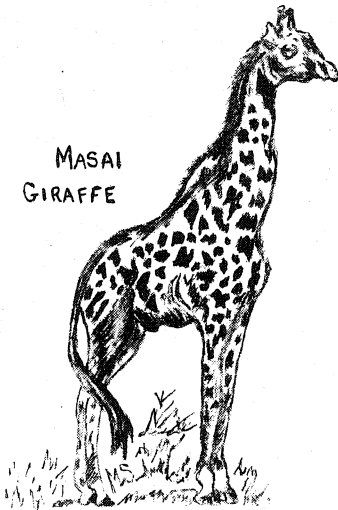
The International Standard of judging colour slides will be used, which is based on a numerical system of 5 points for each of three judges: 5,4,3, and 2--the "1" is not used.

Judging will be based on the following factors: Technique, Interest or Impact, and Composition--in that order, "Technique" refers to the handling of the camera and its equipment: the use of the appropriate lens, depth of field and zone or differential focusing, and the calculation of the correct exposure. "Interest or Impact" refers to scientific interest, originality and aesthetic appeal. Composition is defined as the the arrangement of the various elements (objects, lines, contrasts and colour) in relation to one another, and within the picture format, so as to produce a pleasing picture.

At least one of the judges selected will be recognized as a well-qualified judge of nature photography. The judges will declare a winner whose name will be announced at Members Slide Night in January. A trophy, which will be competed for annually, will be presented at that time.

AN EAST AFRICA SAFARI

by Maragret A. Clark
 Drawings and photos by Margaret Slatkin



The trip to Africa finally became a realized dream. The decision was made to go with Questers Worldwide Nature Tours and their itinerary of East Africa: Serengeti, Masai Mara and Great Rift Valley. We had travelled with Questers on two previous trips--to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, as well as New Zealand and Australia and had been completely satisfied with the all inclusive arrangements including their selection of Naturalists.

The war in the Persian Gulf had serious consequences on the tourist industry worldwide, especially in East Africa with so many cancellations. However, the five who had selected Questers for this trip felt the benefits, for we met very few other safaris. Hence, driving over the Game Reserves and through the National Parks, with the keen eyes of both our Naturalist and our driver, we were able to see 48 different mammals, 5 reptiles, and 319 different species of birds.

These were gratifying numbers since our movements were restricted in most areas.

Delays in the flight from New York to Amsterdam, forced us to be rerouted to Nairobi by way of Frankfurt, Germany. Thus, instead of arriving in the evening and having a good night's sleep before beginning our safari, we arrived the following morning and headed for Tanzania with only time to shower and change clothes. Not exactly the ideal way to face the drive over rough "black top" roads, or the very stoney, dusty ones of the game reserves.

The first week of our three week trip took us to Arusha National Park, Ngorongoro Conservation area, Serengeti and Lake Manyara National Parks. Although we had glimpses of ostrich, gazelles, and zebra before we reached the parks, the thrill of seeing our first giraffe standing in the middle of the road, forcing a sudden stop of the minibus imprinted itself in our memories forever.

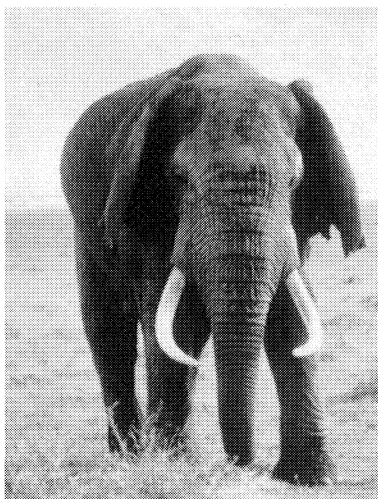
Ngorongoro Conservation Area was established to conserve the natural resources of the region and to safeguard the interests of the indigenous Masai people. The wildlife co-exists with the Masai cattle so that as one is driving the extremely steep winding road in a four wheel drive vehicle down into the crater, 2000 feet below, this becomes very evident as it is necessary to stop many times as a Masai herdsman urges his cattle across the road or a herd of zebra or wildebeest, with their calves, change their direction to gallop in front of our Land Rover.

Ngorongoro Crater is the second largest crater or caldera in the world but it is unique because it is the only one that has fresh water and brackish lakes, as well as open plains which can support the abundant wild life. Here we saw John, at 59, the oldest elephant in the crater, and came across three lions gorging on the remains of a wildebeest while three jackals, eleven hyenas, and a dozen or so vultures waited their turn.

A stop at Olduvai Gorge gave us an opportunity to visit a museum and look over the site where Drs. Louis and Mary Leaky unearthed the remains of prehistoric man (and where I saw the first Secretary Bird). Then it was on to Serengeti, which means "extended place" in Masai language, where herds of wildebeest, zebra, gazelles can be seen grazing and roaming the vast open plains of grassland. It can be called anything but handsome, yet there was something attractive about the wildebeest--perhaps it was their way of kicking up their heels and cavorting. They are the most prolific and successful of the antelopes, and we saw thousands of young with their mothers and fortunately witnessed the birth of a baby wildebeest.

Serengeti is noted for its lion population, especially resting in trees and indeed that's where we saw them. Ignoring the vehicle parked close by, they gazed off into the distance until finally one female slowly climbed down the tree and sauntered off, soon lost to view in the grassy plains.

Lake Manyara supposedly has the largest concentration of elephants in Africa, yet we didn't see any there. However, we can vouch for the large baboon population! One dropped in our neighbour's room to make off with a bag of film. A Masai attendant was able to retrieve the film and we made sure our doors were always closed! However, this area will be remembered for the bird life on and about the lake--White-fronted Cormorants, various species of storks, both White and Pink-backed Pelicans, Grey-headed Gulls, Maccoa Ducks and the thousands and thousands of flamingoes.



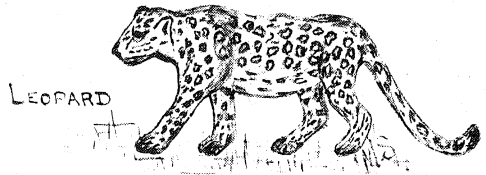
We left Tanzania to cross into Kenya and on to Amboseli National Park, where we saw the greatest concentration of elephants--171, of which about 70 were babies. Late February was nearing the end of the calving season and we were entertained many times by the actions of babies--wildebeest, elephants, the spindly-legged gazelles, zebras and warthogs. Amboseli will be remembered, not just for the number of elephants seen, but for "dust devils" which were so frequent and intense that they sometimes blocked views of animals and Mount Kilimanjaro. We did spot giraffe as well as elephant grazing in fields against the backdrop of Kilimanjaro bathed in a spectacular African sunset. The sunrise on our game drive was equally magnificent but we were made aware of the drastic measures that are necessary to rid the country of poachers as uniformed Park Rangers with their automatic rifles were very evident. Poaching of elephants and rhinoceros, which was at one time about 200 a month, has been reduced to less than 200 a year.

A fascinating one-night stop was at Mountain Lodge set in a forest at 7200 feet, on the slopes of Mount Kenya, north of Nairobi. The lodge is built on trunks of the eucalyptus tree above a floodlit water hole. The window and balcony of each room overlooked this area where it was possible to watch elephants, lion, waterbuck, Cape buffalo, bush buck and other animals come to drink through the night. There was very little sleep that night!

Our two weeks in Kenya took us sometimes high and deep into the Great Rift Valley, where we spent two to three days in the areas of the Rift Lakes. Lake Nakuru was established primarily for birds and became famous for the millions of flamingoes that dwelt there. However, ecological changes sent the flamingoes elsewhere and now both the White and Pink-backed Pelicans have taken over and the lake provides a spectacular concentration of waterbirds such as Sacred and Hadada Ibis, African Spoonbill, Yellow-billed and Maribou storks, grebes, stilts and herons. Lake Bogoria has become the refuge for flamingoes. It was on the road to Lake Bogoria that we spotted a leopard giving chase to a dikdik.



KIRK'S
DIK-DIK

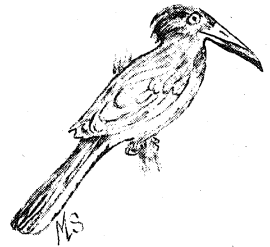


LEOPARD

At Lake Baringo we were ferried across to Ol Kohwa Island to stay three days in tented facilities. This area is noted for two ornithological attractions. The island has the largest colony of Goliath Herons in East Africa and the western escarpment of the Great Rift Valley is the breeding area of the Verreaux's Eagle, the Bristle-crowned Starling (rare) and the Hemprick's Hornbill.

What can one write about African birds with their extended names, such as White-bellied Go-away Bird? Was it a White-crested, White-tailed, White-thighed or Silvery-cheeked Hornbill? How about a Stripe-breasted Sparrow Weaver or a White-browed Sparrow Weaver?—and the fine distinction between Northern Masked, Masked, Speke's or Vitelline Masked Weavers, male and female, could become a frustrating exercise in bird identification but Francis (our tour guide), not only an expert at sight and sound, was also an excellent teacher at pointing out the finer features of the look-alike birds.

Birding at Lake Baringo was wonderful—sitting outside the bar at siesta time watching Blue-naped Mousebirds, both the Beautiful and Superb Sunbirds, the Paradise Flycatcher and Weavers feeding on fruit placed nearby. Then there was the boat trip to see the Heron colony with dozens of beautifully coloured Carmine and Cinnamon-chested Bee-eaters flitting about. An early morning bird walk was arranged for us, with Hilary Gallant to see the Hornbills, Eagles and numerous other birds. Perhaps the climax came at dusk on our last night, watching two Spotted Eagle Owls perched on a branch outside our tent.



HEMPRICK'S HORNBILL

More excellent birding was to come at Lake Naivasha, where Fish Eagles, Hammerkops, and the Giant Kingfisher were added along with many waterbirds. We included many European migrants to our list as well.

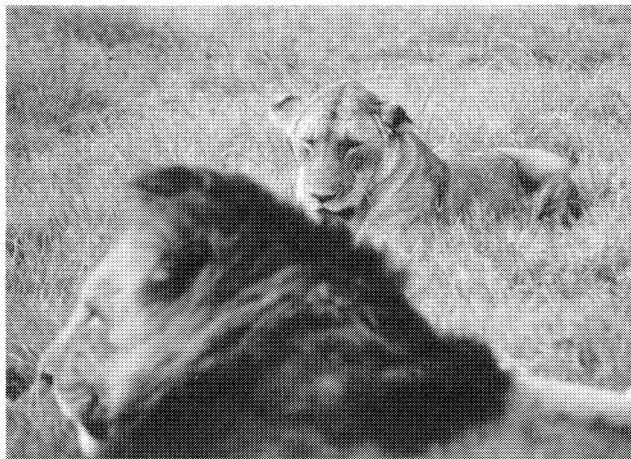


HUNTER'S
SUNBIRD



WHITE-FRONTED BEE-EATER

We visited Elsamere, the home of Joy Adamson of **Born Free** fame, birded in the area where Elsa lived, enjoyed afternoon tea in Joy's livingroom, watched Black and White Colobus monkeys draped over tree limbs, examined the work room and library where she worked on the legacy she left Kenya—the paintings of the tribes in their native dress and the flora of East Africa, all of which are hanging in the National Museum in Nairobi.



The best was yet to come. We flew from Nairobi into Masai Mara, which is really an extension of the Serengeti Plains of Tanzania but in Kenya territory. We stayed in a recently opened tent camp, no electricity but where kerosene lanterns marked the paths in the tent area and provided us with light after dark. Here two Masai natives, armed with spears, escorted us to and from our tents after dark, one in the lead and one in the rear. As the camp had been set up in a Game Reserve, animals wander about, especially at night. Watching the colourful African sunset from our tent, we also were blessed with perching Long-crested Eagles and Hooded Vultures, and each morning we were awakened by a troop of baboons just before hot chocolate and cookies were delivered to our tent.

Here at Masai Mara we saw our first cheetah. He was spotted sitting in tall grass, erect and alert. Then he caught sight of gazelles and so began his stalking, then chasing, until he made his lunge for the throat, killing the young gazelle instantly. Our driver then brought us to within ten feet of the cheetah and while five cameras clicked and rolled, the cheetah ignored us completely and began his meal. He would have his fill before the hyenas appeared. Once hyenas come upon the scene, a cheetah will leave the remains of the kill to them.

Mornings dawned clear and sunny; by noon clouds were forming; by late afternoon thunder rolled, lightning flashed and the rains came, heralding the beginning of the rainy season in Masai Mara

We considered our East Africa trip to be a true safari. Not only had we seen some of the most exciting wildlife in mammals and birds, but we helped push our minibus out of sand and mud, drove over the grasslands of the plains and were towed out of a river by the British Army!

The finale came on our last evening in Nairobi, where we were wined and dined at a private home, hosted by the owner of the Safari Company through which Questers had booked us. Then it was the long flight home, to relive our trip in the memories and pictures that will remain with us forever.



Ostrich



Hamerkop Bird

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

March 23 - Lingering Winter Birds (Cape Breton)

It was a cool crisp morning and the sun was shining brightly. There was a small, but very enthusiastic group that turned out for our first field trip of the year.

Our first stop was the wharf at Port Morien. The drift ice was very prevalent due to the strong northwest wind. There was still some open water in and around the wharf, where we spotted a raft of 80 Red-breasted Mergansers. Among them were 5 Oldsquaw and 3 White-winged Scoter. Inside the breakwater there were 4 Common Loons, 1 Black Guillemot and an adult Bald Eagle flying overhead.

The bone-chilling wind persuaded us to move on to Black Brook Cemetery. There we set up our scopes in the lee of the trees and watched a great raft of no less than 1000 Canada Geese. The geese were crowded in a long strip of open water, jockeying for position to feed on the eel grass. In other patches of open water we spotted Common Goldeneye, Black Ducks and Common Mergansers. On the ice we saw 2 Ravens numerous Crows and off in the distance we could see 2 adult eagles and 3 immatures sitting on the ice together. So we left for Southhead for a closer examination. As we were leaving we saw a female Hairy Woodpecker.

From our new vantage point we could see what all the fuss was about. We can only assume that a goose had wandered too far from the crowded flock and now had become a tasty dinner for the five eagles. While we watched Black-capped and Boreal Chickadees flitted among the spruce trees seemingly unaware of the carnage below.

Our next stop was Mira Gut, where we spotted many Evening grosbeaks, American Goldfinches and Blue jays at a backyard feeder. Among the trees and alders at the side of the road was a lone Red-winged Blackbird and a Northern Mockingbird. In a small patch of open water 40 White-winged Scoter were diving for fish and an Iceland Gull glided by.

After lunch we left for the wharf at Glace Bay. There we spotted Black-headed, Greater Black-backed and Herring Gulls. Seeking open water a male and female Bufflehead and a male and female Oldsquaw came within 50 feet of the wharf. Farther down the wharf we spotted a female Greater Scaup.

We left there to seek the prize of the day. We set up our scopes at the edge of an open field overlooking the ocean. Even though the field is in a residential area the Short-eared Owl made its appearance at 3:30 p.m., silently preying on unsuspecting mice. A grand sight to end a grand day!

--Andrew Gingell

March 24 --Past President's Field Trip--cancelled because of snow stormApril 6 -- Eastern Shore

Only a dozen birders turned up for a day that was much better than forecast -- calm and at times sunny. We walked Conrad's Beach, stopped at good spots up the shore, lunched at Grand Desert, and strolled the length of Martinique Beach. Our list was only 51 species, but we enjoyed a pretty Short-eared Owl at Conrad's Beach, fine looks at about five Ipswich Sparrows at Conrad's Beach and 25+ at Martinique, and the usual spring robins, blackbirds and sparrows. We were disappointed and a little disturbed not to see any Piping Plovers, although there were recent footprints at Conrad's. At the end, some of us stopped at Sullivan's Pond, and were surprised to find the female Tufted Duck, which had not been seen for a couple of weeks.

Ian McLaren.

April 28 - Wolfville Area

Sunny spring conditions resulted in a large turnout for this joint NSBS/BNS pond-hopping trip. Our 18-car caravan first stopped at the Wolfville wharf, where 3 newly arrived Willets were a good omen.

We then drove across the Grand Pré dykelands to the closest point to Boot Island. After nothing notable there, our next stop was the Wolfville sewage ponds, where in early morning I had seen a Glaucous and 2 Iceland Gulls; but they had flown elsewhere.

In Wolfville I showed a Raven's nest in a tall spruce at the University Faculty Club (this nest did not produce young this year). Then we had a "pit stop" at Hennigar's Farm Market.

Along the Greenwich railroad tracks there is a new nest of Bald Eagles this year. We all walked in to the nest, had a good view of both adults at the nest, and ate our lunches there.

At a pond near Starr's Point, we saw a Barn Swallow with Tree Swallows, and everyone had good looks at a beautiful Palm Warbler with a Myrtle Warbler.

At Canning, along the Habitant River, there were about 100 Canada Geese plus 14 Greater Yellowlegs. Canard Poultry Pond (now Canada Packers) held about 20 Green-winged Teal and on Blue-winged Teal.

Our final stop was the Ducks Unlimited pond at New Minas, where another Barn Swallow was seen with Tree Swallows.

This year I remembered to put on sunscreen, but I forgot about my increasingly hairless dome (ouch!).

--Jim Wolford

May 22 - Morning Warbler Walk-Old Prospect Road

We have been doing this walk now for the best part of a decade, and none were better than this one. The sky was blue with puffy clouds following a fiery sunrise, the air was cool and eminently walkable, and the ground dry beneath our feet, and carpeted in bluets. Unfortunately, the flies thought it was pretty good weather for them too, so we had some attentive company. We fought back and won for the most part with various brands of repellent and persistent swatting.

There were nine of us, and we kept busy; the woods were hopping. All the warblers were back a week earlier than normal thanks to a lovely spring, and they were all out, many defending territory. What was more exciting to me, they were all in their proper habitat. The Bay-breasted Warblers were in the spruce, as were the Magnolias and Black-throated Greens; the Blackburnian was in the same maple tree we see him in four years out of five. The Palm and Yellow-throat were pouring forth their song to the bog, as ever, with a Hermit Thrush whistling a soft "whit?" in the undergrowth and on the path ahead of us. The Purple Finches vied with the Ruby-crowned Kinglets for the treetop songster honours, while the Golden-crowned, singing almost as loudly but at a higher pitch, remained in the back of the trees with the Boreal Chickadees. Pine Grosbeaks, a pair of them as tame as chickens, were in the gravel driveway at the road's entrance, picking up something in the dust which we couldn't see, by placing their big beaks sideways along the dusty ground as a parrot would. The Tree Swallows were in their nesting boxes next to the house, and the Barn Swallows toured the fields, "wickering" as they flew. A loon flew into the lake, laughing excitedly; a Great Blue Heron flew by with measured strokes. Gulls used the wind, as did a Raven. As we walked home, we put up a Ruffed Grouse within a few feet of where we found him last year; a Solitary Vireo sang his "cheer!"... "cheaar" from a maple nearby--all in the brilliant sunshine. Some of us, just returned from Bon Portage, regaled us with tales of Blue Grosbeaks, Little Egrets and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. There are no better times for birders. We watched a female Downy Woodpecker drum above her newly-cut nest hole.

There are no better times for birders. We watched a female Downy Woodpecker drum above her newly-cut nest hole.

As never before it was made clear to us that these birds belonged there, each in its appointed place. They had been coming back to this place since time out of mind--coming home to sing and to nest and to raise their young.

Fred Dobson

May 25 - Hants County Field Trip

The weatherman forecast showers but those who gathered in Mount Uniacke did so under sunny skies. Fortified with various brands of insect repellent, our field trip began with some disappointment as the birds that were singing were difficult to spot. And why is it that we expect birds seen one year to be in the same place, if not the same position, the following year?!

It is more common to hear the Ovenbird, than to see one, but we were fortunate to have good sightings of two Ovenbirds on the ground at our first stop and another excellent view of one in a tree later in the morning. Solitary and Red-eyed Vireos were heard and seen but the Northern Waterthrush was not seen, heard only and not in the usual places.

A Common Nighthawk was both heard and seen at the Uniacke Grounds, the first recorded for the Hants County Field Trip since 1980.

Flycatchers were scarce but an Alder Flycatcher and an Eastern Wood Peewee were heard and everyone had a chance to see the Eastern Phoebe in Smiley's Park.

For the second year no Snipe were seen, nor did we see Osprey or Spotted Sandpiper. However, we were rewarded with an eagle's nest, high in a distant pine tree but binoculars and a telescope clearly showed one adult sitting on the nest while the mate soared in the distance.

The gravel pit on Route 215 produced very little but we added two Willets. The pond across the road brought the best sighting of the day--not only heard but seen--two Soras, a first for the Hants County Field Trip.

The twenty-four birders, including a visitor from Washington, D.C., helped bring the total to 75 for the day.

Margaret A. Clark

FORTHCOMING FIELD TRIPS

REMINDER: Please be sure to phone the field trip leader or contact person ahead of time to register for the trip. In this way no trip is oversubscribed and you can be contacted in case of cancellation.



Sat.
July 27 North River (Cape Breton)
Leader: Nancy More (828-2534)
Meet at Sydney River Shopping
Centre at 8:00 a.m.

Sun.
July 28 Wallace Bay area Leader:
James Taylor (434-8516). A
variety of habitats including
shoreline, woodland, riverside
and marsh will be explored.
Nesting eagles at lunchtime.
Meet at Wallace Wharf at 8:30
a.m. Bring lunch. No regis-
tration necessary for this trip

Aug.
TBA Trip to MacNabs Island. Leader
Roger Pocklington (464-0300).
In conjunction with Friends of
MacNabs Island and other
societies protest visit to is-
land. Watch newspaper for date
and time -- perhaps a civic
holiday.

Sun.
Aug. 4 Economy Area Leader: Francis Spalding (1-467-2837). Meet at the general
store at 9:00 a.m. Returning shorebirds and birds of the area. Great
scenery and lots of back roads.

Sat.
Aug. 10 Yarmouth Area Leader: Eric Ruff (H 1-742-8145, W 1-742-5539) Meet at
CPR station at 9:00 a.m. Bring a lunch and suitable footwear for rocky,
wet walking

Sat.
Aug. 17 Fuller's Bridge Cape Breton) Leader: Andrew Gingell (1-564-8298). Meet
at Marion Bridge at 8:00 a.m.

Wed.
Aug. 21 Crescent and Cherry Hill Beaches. Leaders: John & Shirley Cohrs. (Hfx-
477-6036, Green Bay 688-2131) Meet at entrance to Crescent Beach, 9:15 a.m.
Be prepared for a short walk at Crescent Beach in the morning and
more rugged one at Cherry Hill in the afternoon. This is a shorebird
field trip

Sun.
Aug. 25 Hartlen's Point and Eastern Shore Leader: Peter MacLeod (454-2006)
Migrating shorebirds, etc. Meet at old entrance to Hartlen's Point Golf
Course at 7:30 a.m.

Aug. 30 Bon Portage Island (Labour Day Weekend) Leader: Peter MacLeod(454-2006)
to Arrive at Prospect Point Wharf, Shag Harbour for 6:00 a.m. (there is a
Sept. 2 very low tide at 7:45) Friday, Aug. 30. Depart Island about 3:00 p.m.,
Monday afternoon. There is a fee for accommodation and transportation.
Bring your own food, drinking water, sleeping gear, clothing and a sheet
to cover the mattress. Pre-registration is necessary!

Sun.
Sept. 8 Tidnish to Wallace Leader: James Taylor (434-8516). Meet at Tidnish
Bridge on Route 366 at 9:30 a.m. Bring a lunch.

Sat.
Sept. 14 Cape Breton Migrating Shorebirds. Leader: Bob More (828-2534) Meet at
East Bay Church at 8:00 a.m.

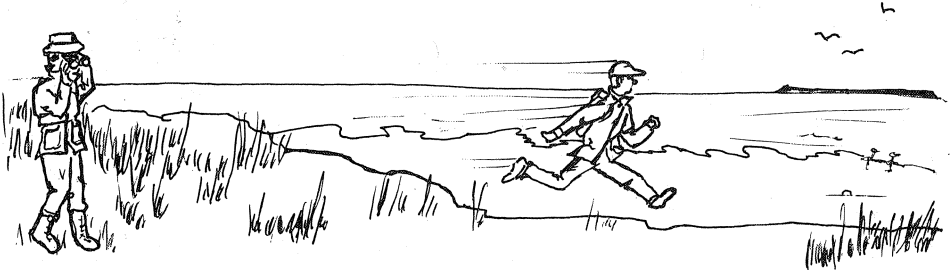
- Sat. Sept. 14 Matthews Lake (rain day 15th) Leader: David Young (656-2225) Meet at parking lot at Hemeons Head at 8:30 a.m. To get there proceed down Hwy. 103 to Exit 23. Go south for 2 miles until "Lighthouse Route" turns left at Little Harbour. Proceed down this road for approximately 7 miles to "STOP sign". Go straight through on dirt road for approximately 2 1/4 miles until end of road is reached at Hemeons Head (approx. 2 1/2 hrs from Hfx.) Wear waterproof boots or be prepared to wade barefoot for a short distance if tide is not completely out. Walking distance is approximately 5-6 miles and 3-4 hours. Bird the area in afternoon as well as on your own.
- Sat. Sept 21 Wolfville Area shorebirds. Grand Pre birds and ducks. Leader: Jim Wolford (542-7650) Meet at Robie Tufts Nature Centre--Front St. Wolfville (Chimney Swift Chimney) at 11:30 a.m. Bring a lunch. Outing to be shared with Blomidon Field Naturalists. No need to pre-register.
- Sun. Sept. 29 Tidnish Crossroads & Northumberland Strait. Leader: Stuart Tingley. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Tidnish Bridge on Hwy Rt. 366. Fall migration of loons and grebes, etc. Bring a lunch.
- Sun. Oct. 6 Hartlen's Point & Eastern Shore. Leader: Peter MacLeod (454-2006). Meet at old entrance to Hartlen's Point Golf Course at 8:00 a.m.
- Oct. 11 Bon Portage Island (Thanksgiving Weekend) Leader: Peter MacLeod (454-2006). Meet at Prospect Point Wharf, Shag Harbour, Oct. 11 at 5:30 p.m. There is a very low tide at 6:55. There will be a charge for the crossing and accommodation. Bring drinking water, food, sleeping bag and a sheet to cover the mattress. Pre-registration is necessary. We depart the island at 3:00 p.m. Monday afternoon.
- Sat. Oct. 26 Eastern Shore. Leader: Peter Payzant (861-1607). Late shorebirds, lingering waterfowl and early winter arrivals. Meet at the shopping centre at the end of Porters Lake at 9:00 a.m. We will visit several locations from Martinique to Lawrencetown. This is an all day trip.
- Sat. Jan. 11 1992 Sewer Stroll I (rain day 12th) Leader: Fulton Lavender (477-8984). This is an all day trip. Meet at Hartlen's Point at 8:00 a.m. We will work our way around to Herring Cove via Bedford.
- Sun. Jan. 19 Riverside Eagles. Leader: Ross Hall (893-9665). Meet at Kentucky Fried Chicken at Exit 11 (Stewiacke) on Hwy 102 at 9:00 a.m. Visit Berfel Farm and an eagle nest near the Gosse Bridge. About 3-4 hours. Great for the family.
- Sat. Feb. 8 Sewer Stroll II. (rain day 9th) Leader: Fulton Lavender (477-8984). Meet at Hartlen's Point at 8:00 a.m. This is an all day trip to Herring Cove via Bedford.

Any questions or suggestions should be directed to the Field Trip Co-ordinator, Jim Taylor (434-8516), 69 Woodlawn Rd., Dartmouth, N.S. B2W 2S2

MORE EXOTIC BIRDERS OF NOVA SCOTIA

Once again we have an opportunity to study and discuss three of the more obscure species of birdwatchers you may encounter. If you wish to improve your skills as a birdwatcher watcher, you must do your homework, study the plumages carefully, learn the calls, and most of all, study the habits and behaviour of your quarry in the field. There is no easy road to becoming an expert birdwatcher watcher, but the rewards are great.

Our first species in this lesson is LEADING BEACH RACER. There is a nearly related species called TRULY SOLITARY BEACH RACER, but this has never been seen by any watcher watchers. As it's name implies it is truly solitary while racing.



Like so many species names, the description of the species is inherent in the name. You will always find this watcher leading a field trip. Occasionally a juvenile or sub-adult will be seen assisting a mature LBR, but you rarely if ever see a LBR in a mixed flock of birdwatchers and never on an inland fieldtrip.

What are the principal field marks we look for? The plumage can be quite variable, but is always sparse to reduce weight and promote cooling. Footwear is also light and suited for high speed. The species rarely perches. Even food is taken on the fly, as it were. It never makes stops for views of nature, or indeed even for calls of nature.

You can be pretty certain that your field trip leader is a LEADING BEACH RACER if, on arriving at the selected beach, you get out of the car, stretch, reach for your telescope, and look for the trip leader without success. If he is still in sight but some way down the beach, there is some doubt, but if he is already out of sight you were in the company of a LBR. Their principal characteristic is their blinding speed.

The challenge of this species is not one of identification! Immediately on arrival at a beach the LBR identifies itself. The real difficulty is to be able to observe one of these Racers and to compile field notes of its unusual behavior. I have had some success with the following tactics. If you can find which beach will be visited, be there at least thirty minutes ahead of start time. Make sure you have had coffee, a snack, a comfort break and have your lightest binoculars in hand (forget about a telescope, if you stop to use it the LBR will be out of sight). When you see the cars of the party approaching get set in your starting blocks and be ready to go as soon as the trip leader emerges from his car.

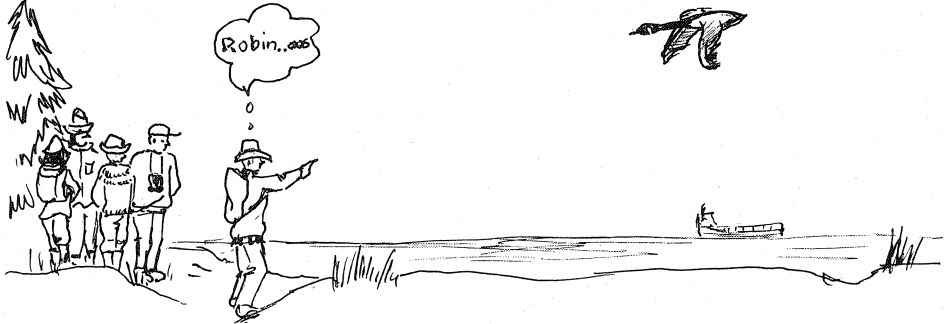
You will achieve some success using these methods but what happens if the LBR is younger or fitter than you, the observer? Believe me, he usually will be! Either you must be satisfied with the fleeting observations you can make as the LBR disappears over a sand dune leaving you and ninety percent of the field trip panting in his wake or you must use the cunning of a true birdwatcher watcher. Only attend field trips on relatively narrow barrier beaches such as Martinique or Cherry Hill.

The LBR is fast but neither clever nor with a good sense of direction. If you walk down the center high ground of the beach you may observe the LBR tacking back and forth between the open sea side and the salt marsh. You may observe his little dashes to good viewing points and hear his little chuckle of delight at a rarity sighting which he and he alone has seen.

If he is still too fast for you, return at your own pace to your car. The one time the LBR is still is at the end of the trip when he recounts all the goodies he alone has seen. Only the swift deserve the rare.

Our next study are the two closely related members of the family MISLEADER. They are MISLEADER MISLEADER MISCALLER, the rarer species, and MISLEADER MALAPROP MUMBLER, the more common and more attractive species.

Since you are far more likely to encounter the MUMBLER, let's discuss its field marks first. The species is almost invariably detected by its call. The shyer individuals must be "called", or swished up before they utter. Very young and some mature watchers of the species often utter their calls, songs, and alarm notes with little persuasion. The watcher must always remember that this species, unlike the very similar MISCALLER, rarely miscalls a bird, and never does so deliberately! At the same time, he will never name a bird correctly and audibly.



On sighting a Robin, the MUMBLER either whispers a word inaudible to the nearest companion or utters a distorted word which could be rock, rabbit, Oboy, orbit or ouch. Once a consensus is reached by the party that the bird in question is a Robin the MUMBLER will then articulate clearly "that's what I said!". A much rarer habit of this bird is best revealed by the regular substitution of one bird's name for another. I recall a two week trip with a birding party that had two watchers of this species. The first had mixed up Mourning Doves and Kestrels in the computer of his mind. I have never heard so many Kestrels called. The second was much more scary. Somewhere in the synapses of the nerves controlling the tongue, the word Pelican was switched to Penguin. We were in a place where there were a lot of Pelicans, but it was in Canada after all. If I have spent some time on this species, it is because I am a MALAPROP MUMBLER. My eye sees or my brain thinks Whimbrel, but out of my mouth comes Avocet. I hold the all time record for calling Avocet in Nova Scotia.

A much more sinister species is the MISLEADER MISCALLER. Two races exist, the MISCALLER DELIBERATE and the MISCALLER ACCIDENTAL. The differences are so slight that they can only be confirmed from museum skins, so we will make no attempt to distinguish them. It has been my experience that the deliberate race miscalls to mislead, while the accidental miscalls because he has been misled. In any event, one of this species can lead to high expectations on an otherwise dull field trip.

To recap, if you are on a birding trip and one of the birders consistently utters but you can't make out the name of a bird, or if one or two species are always miscalled, you have a MUMBLER. A MISCALLER on the other hand, can be detected by the way he will vary his utterances. A Robin will be called a Starling the first time, a Red-wing the next, a Cowbird the third, and so on.

Our last species of this lesson will be the very easily identified NATURAL BROWSER. There have been doubts expressed over the status of this species. It doesn't act like any other birdwatcher, yet is almost always seen with birdwatchers and is often mated or paired with one! Until we have further evidence to the contrary, I for one will consider them a primitive species.



Probably the most definitive fieldmark of a BROWSER is that it eats and eats constantly. Now most birdwatchers eat, some eat frequently and many eat a lot. Eating seems to go with the territory. In general, this eating takes place at definite intervals and the food is carried with the birdwatcher. The BROWSER not only eats the diet of the normal birdwatcher, but gathers food as he walks, tasting and testing almost every living thing he encounters and even some of the less attractive items.

Rose hips, fruit, berries, seeds, nuts, buds, goose grass, mushrooms, toadstools are all grist for his mill. Dissection of specimens has revealed that the species has managed to survive because all members have one of two well developed adaptations. Either they have developed an instinctive and powerful ability to recognize poisonous substances or they have acquired cast iron digestive systems that can deal with sticks and stones as our systems would deal with chicken soup.

This is not a difficult species to recognize. It is included because it is such a fascinating species to observe. Next time you encounter one on a field trip follow for a while. Observe its little bobbing movements as it pecks its way along the trail gleaning tidbits as it goes. Try to measure the total intake in its varied diet. I can assure you that you will forget both birdwatching and birdwatcher watching in the presence of a true NATURAL BROWSER.

That's all for this episode of watcher watching. I'm watching you!



A VISIT TO BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE AND WILDLIFE DRIVE

by H. G. Hall

The Refuge is located in the southeastern part of Maryland on the eastern shores of Chesapeake Bay. It is about two hours drive from Baltimore on Highway 97 south to Bay Bridge at Annapolis, following Highway 50 south to Cambridge, then Highway 16 west to Church Creek, then left on Highway 335, following the Refuge signs. The Refuge consists of tall pines in wooded areas, marshlands and ponds with an observation tower.

Along the approach road I noticed a few birds perched on power wires. Stopping for a better look, I was thrilled to see that they were Eastern Bluebirds, a dozen or so in twos or threes—a good introduction to the Refuge area!

I was impressed with the number of Turkey Vultures seen during the day. We covered a large area of that part of the state and they were everywhere! In the Wildlife Refuge we saw four on the ground near the road and got a good look at their ugly faces.

The first area we came to in the Refuge was a pond with hundreds of ducks and Canada Geese. The variety of ducks was limited to Mallards and Northern Pintails. The Pintails were impressive in their spring finery; I had never seen so many at such close range. I had no scope so there were other ducks in the distance that I could not identify. I saw no Black Ducks in the area through which we drove. In a wooded area I was thrilled to see a Pileated Woodpecker at eye level busily pecking on a pine tree. There were a few Northern Harriers hunting low over the marshes, which curiously enough had been recently burned.

Canada Geese were present by the thousands and were in many of the cornfields and ponds we passed. Another interesting observation was a hundred or so Whistling Swans in two of the ponds—an impressive sight in the wild.

I was somewhat surprised by the apparent lack of herons and egrets—only one Great Blue was seen. In fact, that was the only heron I saw all day, despite the fact that we travelled in the Chesapeake Bay area the whole time. There were large numbers of Common Grackles everywhere, a lot of Red-winged Blackbirds and even some Starlings. I saw only three Robins and one Bluejay. In all, a total of twenty-seven species were seen, mostly all while we were driving.

If you are in the area a stop at the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge is certainly worthwhile. The drive covers about two miles, although there was another part we did not visit just outside the Refuge that is noted as an eagle nesting area and appeared to be a good duck viewing spot as well. In the Refuge there are two short walking trails, half a mile and a third of a mile respectively. One is a woods trail and the other is a marsh edge trail.

LIVING ISLAND IV

Evelyn M. Richardson



Shorebirds at Northern Point Photo -- John Cohrs

Back in 1954, very little island birdwatching had occurred and Evelyn began to identify and document many species, supposedly rare or non-existent in Nova Scotia. She made her identifications with care and conviction and her judgement was vindicated many times over in subsequent years as species after species became confirmed. The chapter in **Living Island** entitled "Rare, Hypothetical and Incredible" is fascinating--so much so that we will bring it to you in installments.

--Ed.

Shortly after I began bird watching I realized I was seeing individuals not supposed to be in Nova Scotia and others considered rare here. Although the range of many birds is known to have changed through the years, I believe that several birds had remained unlisted or "hypothetical" simply because, until Dr. Lewis's column afforded a clearing station for various observers, few records had been kept in this tip of Nova Scotia, and no medium existed for the exchange and comparison of information on unusual birds. For instance, my brother never forgot finding (as a child on the island next Bon Portage) a wonderful snow-white bird with black legs, big yellow feet and beautiful plumes. Not until recent years did he know he had held the body of a snowy egret. There must have been many similar unrecorded visitants.

With binoculars every bird was to me a new experience and delight, confusingly rich with details not before noticed, and for a time I was prone to let myself be carried away by beauty or movement, and then find I was not quite sure just what I had seen. Gradually I adopted some system in my observations and looked for size, distinctive colours, wing-bars, streaked or plain breasts, shape of tail and bill. When I reached the house I made a quick list of salient points before I opened a book, so that I wouldn't persuade myself I had seen something I hadn't.

I never lacked for reference books: first my authoritative Taverner's **Birds of Canada**, and some children's books, well illustrated if limited in scope. A friend had given us Peterson's **Field Guide to the Birds** some years before I became a confirmed bird watcher, and a reader of the "gunning yarns" in my book, **We Keep a Light**, sent us Kortright's **Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America**; for added information on eggs and nesting habits I bought the comprehensive **Birds of North America**; a friend found and sent me a second-hand volume of Chapman's **Birds of Eastern North America**; a guest contributed **Bird Songs** by Aretas A. Saunders; I had the Nova Scotia Bird Society's annotated list of provincial birds, and received the society's helpful **Newsletter**. With Dr. Lewis as final recourse, by letter, there was really little excuse for me not learning to identify the birds I saw. Since its appearance in 1961, I have had **Birds of Nova Scotia** by R. W. Tufts, the province's leading ornithologist.

Some birds are "rare" on Bon Portage although they are fairly common on the mainland. For example, I have almost as many records of the hypothetical field sparrow as for English sparrows (eight against nine) although it is true I see only singles of the former and flocks of from twelve to fifteen of the latter, usually during their limited fall migrations.

Blue jays, grey jays and belted kingfishers are noteworthy on Bon Portage but common in the mainland woods; only one northern shrike has ever come to my attention although during some winters they are not uncommon in the province. The ovenbird, purple finch and pine siskin breed in Nova Scotia, but I have only single records for the first two and of one flock of siskins. The Lapland longspur is a mainland winter resident; I have seen one and also one chestnut-collared longspur, not even on the provincial list. I have records for only three Lincoln sparrows, common in parts of Nova Scotia, but for fifteen of the "rare" lark sparrows. I have seen only two nighthawks on the island. Swifts average less than one a summer, usually a single bird which becomes trapped, confused and frightened in the barn. One got down the lighthouse ventilator. I have sighted single swifts overhead, bent on crossing the Sound to the mainland where the species nest in considerable numbers. I have sighted only five woodcock in my thirty-five years on Bon Portage, though it is a well-known game bird in the province; but in the spring of 1963 I could study at leisure a ruff—a stray from Europe. Still very rare on Bon Portage but now wintering in sizeable flocks on the adjacent mainland, are the yellow-and-black evening grosbeaks.

There is something infinitely pathetic about the few purple martins which fly forlornly through the fog about the lighthouse and buildings. All one drizzling day a wet female sat on the front porch of the tree swallows' house. Now and then she half-heartedly attempted entry at the door behind her but as if she had no real hope and knew beforehand that it would be too small (of course it proved so; we cannot provide doors which would accomodate the ubiquitous starlings). Another spring brought a female which flew about the yard in an aimless and baffled manner, with bits of wet dead grass in her bill. Once a pair hovered about our TV aerial for two days before moving on, but these showed no interest in birdhouses or nesting material; if they had we might have tried to erect some hasty shelter for them. I do not remember ever seeing martins in this part of Nova Scotia--though I may have done so--but they built in numbers at other areas, and forty years ago my father had a well-patronized "tenement" martin-house at our home near Halifax. Now the martins' breeding range seems to be receding from the province and, as if they knew and despaired, the strays we see have a lost, discouraged air. (This is not just my imagination; I recorded the birds' dejected behaviour before I read of its decreased numbers and range.)

One foggy May morning I startled three immature bald eagles from the trees along the road. I studied them carefully as I followed them up the shore, for the few bald eagles I had previously seen were adult scavengers about the winter field. A few weeks later Anne and I observed a single bald eagle above the lighthouse; still later, I saw two up the island. The swordfishermen who used to cruise off Cape Breton tell me these big birds were then common in that part of the province, but their numbers seem to have decreased throughout their range during late years, and members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society have been asked to note carefully this bird's occurrence.

The grey-cheeked thrush is listed as rare, but it once nested on Bon Portage, for during our early years here the visiting Mr. Tufts recognized the song of "several" as he walked from slip to lighthouse and asked permission to return and secure a specimen for the National Museum. (He never got back to do this.) I note the occasional grey-cheeked thrush, usually with spring strays, but I believe none now nests here.

I have seen two eastern meadowlarks, rare throughout the province, one in the spring and one in the fall; both fed about the field for several days, giving their sweet slurred notes and, at my approach, displaying their distinctive white tail pattern as they fluttered and sailed low about the field before settling down again.

Only once have I seen eastern bluebirds, and that many years ago, but I remember the fall afternoon and my small children's pleasure in the twenty winged puffs playing around the big red gate while the wind ruffed their orange breasts and blew open their tails. They lacked spring's radiance but I could credit Thoreau's remark, "The bluebird carries the sky on his back." This bird is now less common in eastern Canada than formerly, but it is still seen on the mainland.

Other birds, rare and irregular throughout Nova Scotia, occur here comparatively often (usually as single birds among other species) since this is on the route by which they enter or leave the province. Among these are:

The yellow-breasted chat, that large and eccentric warbler with the thick bill and white spectacles, of which I saw several before their occurrence in the province was officially recognized. They also frequented Cape Sable in some numbers, and there they persisted in entering the engine-room where they had to be repeatedly caught by hand and released outside. (It was hard for ornithologists to convince the bird-watching lightkeepers that they couldn't possibly be seeing chats!)

The neatly patterned grey-and white mockingbird, of which we see the occasional, but songless, individual during June.

The Baltimore oriole, the dazzling "firebird." During recent years this bird has visited the island with increasing frequency.

The rose-breasted grosbeak. Though none nests here, the stray spring males often treat us to burst of clear, rich song. I have never heard a whisper against this handsome bird's character, but when one appeared about the yard, twenty barn swallows "ganged up" on him, forcing him to take refuge under a shed. In the fall, a visiting male is often accompanied by his modestly dressed mate.

The elegant great-crested flycatcher, with its rufous tail. This bird often appears on Bon Portage in company with western kingbird, whose delicate grey and yellow have the same touch-tempting tones as the waxwings' plumage.

The brown thrasher. I no longer think of it as really rare, for although I have only eight records, most of the birds which came to the island spent a fortnight or more with us and one stayed all summer. I saw my first thrasher several years before I became a bird watcher. It sat within a few feet of where I was picking wild raspberries. When I returned to the lighthouse and my books there was no difficulty in identifying the yellow eye, the rather ugly bill and the characteristically held tail. The thrasher is becoming more common on the island and seems to find our scrubby growth to its liking. John Burroughs wrote: "There is no other bird that I know of that can chip with such emphasis and military precision as this yellow-eyed songster. It is like the click of a giant gunlock." I have come to recognize the loud click, almost a "smack," coming from the bushes, even when I cannot see the bird. Burroughs goes on "Why is the thrasher so stealthy? It always seems to be going about on tiptoe. I never knew it to steal anything, and yet it skulks and hides like a fugitive from justice. One never sees it flying aloft in the air and traversing the world openly like most birds, but it darts along fences and through bushes as if pursued by a guilty conscience." Yet I don't find the thrasher exceptionally furtive; it moves openly about the garden, and while it keeps just ahead of me as we both make our way down the road, and is always ready to disappear into the low growth on either side, it is never in any hurry to do so. Burroughs claimed that only when it sang did it come into full view and invite the world to hear and behold. He judged it a wonderful songster and, after the spring of 1963 when a sojourning thrasher treated us to weeks of mellow richly pouring matins, we agree.

Other rare birds reach the island, off-course during spring rains with mist, or in the long spells of fog. Probably no other aspect of weather affects island life, both human and avian, as does fog. Some visitors here have never seen more than a few yards to either side and their conception on Bon Portage must be a place of cold grey fog, colder greyer water, fog-dripping buildings and feet-drenching grass. For myself I love fog--its cold moisture on my face, the sense of mystery it engenders by its distortion of familiar sights and sounds, even the rank smell it picks up as it rolls in over the decaying seawrack--but I can understand its lack of appeal for others. To mariners and birds it can be as cruel as the sea which spawns it.

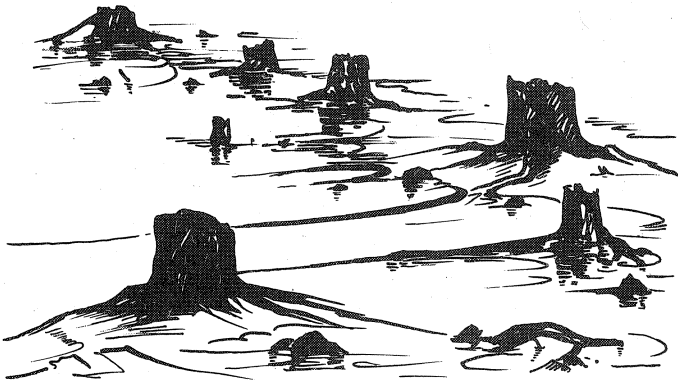


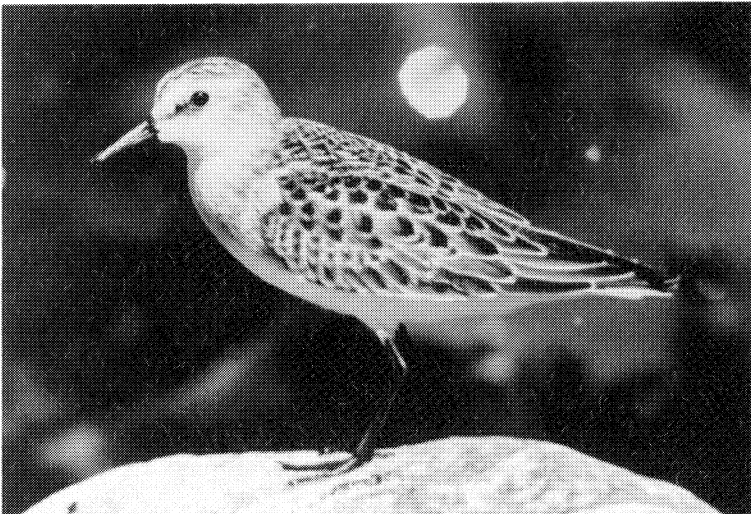
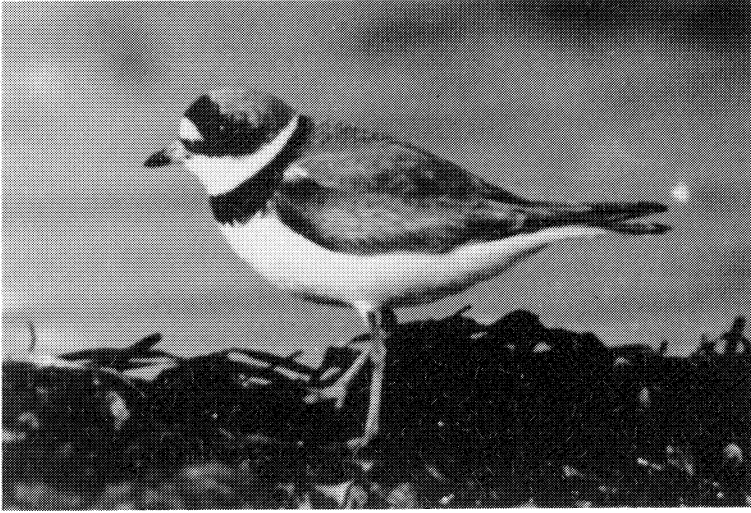
The spring fogs blot out the world. Gulls glide overhead as spectral figures, the piping cries of lost birds come through the grey mists. When the fog lightens and warms it still distorts; ducks on the calm sea appear to be riding in the sky and many a time I have focused my glasses on what I thought was Morrill's coming boat to have it turn into a near gull. It would be small wonder if birds, flying blind, became confused; less wonder if they dropped to the first land to escape the heavy dampness, especially if they have been carried long and foodless distances on stormy air currents.

These strays are the most colourful birds we see. The beautiful little indigo bunting is probably our commonest spring stray, and of my sixteen records for this bird only three are for the fall. Though few strays sing, two buntings which arrived together one spring sang rather frequently throughout their short stay. Usually indigo buntings are hungry but otherwise none the worse for their long flight; one was not so fortunate. Morrill brought it to me during a cold April rain. How tiny such a bird looks in the hands, especially with its wet feathers plastered to its delicate bones. I fixed a basket for it, with food and water, but before dark the little blue body was lifeless.

The air current which brings an indigo bunting sometimes carries an accompanying scarlet tanager, of which I have eight records, six for spring. This scarlet-and-black bird, with its indescribable sheen and depth of colour, evokes special memories, for during the spring when Morrill and I and baby Anne lived in a Boston suburb, a pair of scarlet tanagers nested in a vacant lot across the street from our apartment. If one can have only a single pair of birds to watch, what more satisfying than the brilliant male tanager and his plainer but readily discernible mate? (I have seen only two females on Bon Portage.)

Some birds which arrive out of the spring storms and fogs are not particularly rare, but their early or late arrivals mark them as strays, picked up on southerly air flows and carried north "ready or not." Such was the mourning dove which arrived in early April, and the phoebe of March 29. One May evening as we were eating supper, a good-sized bird flew out of a cold wet fog and smashed into our kitchen window. I ran to peer through the streaming pane and saw that a great-crested flycatcher had fallen into the wheelbarrow just below. As I looked, it struggled to its feet, looking dazed--also wet and bedraggled--then perched briefly on the barrow's rim before starting a slow flight to the nearest trees. I saw it about for several following days, apparently uninjured by its abrupt landing. The only two house wrens I ever observed arrived together during a thick fog.





Dave MacKinnon obtained portraits of both Semipalmateds last summer at Hartlen Point.

HARTLEN'S POINT

Part 4

Fulton L. Lavender

Autumn appears quietly at Hartlen's Point, with few initial signs of its arrival. In Atlantic Canada, this is the season of greatest bird diversity, with frequent and delightful rarities. The first group to reach Hartlen's Point are the shorebirds. The most numerous species seen through the first half of August are: Willet; Least, White-rumped and Semipalmated Sandpipers; Red Knot; Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs; Semipalmated Plover; Killdeer, Hudsonian Godwit; Solitary and Spotted Sandpiper; Whimbrel; and Short-billed Dowitcher.

Mid-August can offer rarities such as Wilson's and Red-necked Phalarope, and Stilt, Baird's, Western, Pectoral and Buff-breasted Sandpiper. At this time small movements of passerines begin, such as warblers, vireos, and flycatchers. These flights are mainly comprised of southbound northern breeders. However, the occasional "wrong-way" southern stray is a reward for a diligent search of the mixed flocks in Hartlen's Back Cove.

The last two weeks of August see the collection of shorebirds at Hartlen's Point increase in volume and variety. Added to the swelling host of "peeps" are moderate-sized flocks of Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, and the earliest Dunlin. The larger flocks of the commoner shorebirds are frequently highlighted by strays, such as Western Sandpiper, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalarope, Lesser Golden Plover, and Ruff. At the end of August the shorebird flight peaks for a few days. By mid-September only a few scattered flocks remain.

Hunting the shorebirds are Sharp-shinned Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harrier, and Merlin. A high percentage of these raptors are juveniles, taking advantage of the Point's rich avian food source while practising their newly acquired hunting skills.

In synchronisation with the shorebirds, an intense passerine movement normally occurs at the end of August. Although this is not a guaranteed event, a slight increase in land bird movement is always experienced at this time. A good Labour Day weekend usually includes all of the native warblers, vireos, flycatchers and thrushes, as well as a few extralimital prizes such as Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Yellow-throated Vireo, along with such rare warblers as Prairie, Blue-winged, Cerulean, Connecticut, and Kentucky.

The rest of September is influenced greatly by the force (or lack thereof) of this holiday passage. If migration has been heavy, the chances are that the remainder of the month will produce many surprises. If not, then September will have a meagre portion of birds to offer. As mid-September passes, shorebird numbers rise toward a small late-month peak. Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin, Sanderling, White-rumped, Semipalmated and Pectoral Sandpiper are the most common. For most of October, and even into the early part of November, the major push of fall migrants takes place.

Robins, Bluejays and icterids are the most obvious birds, often making up more than fifty percent of these late autumn flights. Sparrows are well represented too. White-throated, Song, Swamp, Savannah, Lincoln's, Sharp-tailed, Tree and White-crowned Sparrows mix with Marsh and Winter Wrens to feed on the bug-laden cattails and sedges of Hartlen's Back Cove.

An assortment of warblers, vireos and finches join the October feeding flocks alongside more familiar territorial birds such as chickadees, kinglets, nuthatches and creepers. Most common are: Red-eyed and Solitary Vireo; Nashville, Yellow-rumped, Palm, Blackpoll and Black-and white Warbler; Northern Parula; Common Yellowthroat; Purple Finch; and American Goldfinch. The season's last hummingbirds, swifts, and swallows also trickle through, passing hawk-weary flickers as they go.

Discreetly hidden from human sight in Hartlen's Back Cove marsh are Virginia Rail and Sora. They are most regular the last week of September and into the first half of October. A few even hang on through the last of the month into early November.

Another marsh bird that builds in numbers during October is Common Snipe. In the nearby woods, small numbers of American Woodcock are found during the day, while Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet Owl are occasionally encountered at night. Hartlen's consistently meagre hawk show is best in October, with Northern Goshawk, Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Sharp-shinned, Broad-winged, Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawk represented in small numbers.

By now the autumn tides have covered Hartlen's south-side beach with numerous layers of fresh kelp--a veritable marine feast for hundreds of newly-arrived shorebirds and seaside migrants such as Savannah and Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Horned Lark, Snow Bunting, Lapland Longspur and Water Pipit. The shorebird flocks now have a very different flavour. Flock after flock is dominated by White-rumped Sandpiper. Semipalmated Sandpiper are still fairly common, with Dunlin, Sanderling, Red Knot and Pectoral Sandpiper reaching their high count for the season. Also peaking are Black-bellied Plover and Lesser Golden Plover. On their final autumn passage are Semipalmated Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Least and Baird's Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Red-necked and Red Phalarope. Gulls also gather along the kelp edge to forage along Hartlen's rotting tideline. Most regular are Common Black-headed, Bonaparte's, Ring-billed, Herring and Great Black-backed.

Fall migration would be incomplete without seabirds. Seabird movements often involve strange combinations of very different species, with October and early November the best time to see the greatest variety. At the forefront of this oceanside parade are: Common and Red-throated Loon; Great and Double-crested Cormorant; Northern Gannet; Canada Goose; Common Eider; Black, Surf and White-winged Scoters; Common Tern; and Black Guillemot. Less numerous are Greater Shearwater, Black-legged Kittiwake, Red-necked Grebe, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Mallard, American Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Oldsquaw, and Red-breasted Merganser. Other species are rarely seen from land except during or following strong onshore winds. These include Pomarine and Parasitic Jaeger, Northern Fulmar, Leach's and Wilson's Storm-Petrel and Manx, Sooty and Cory's Shearwater.

Although rarities make up but a small percentage of fall migration, they are the ones that put the sparkle in a birder's eye. The following is a composite list of the more uncommon and extraordinary species seen at Hartlen's Point and Eastern Passage from late September to early November:

Pied-billed Grebe	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Kentucky Warbler
American Bittern	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Connecticut Warbler
Snowy Egret	Eastern Kingbird	Hooded Warbler
Black-cr. Night-Heron	Western Kingbird	Yellow-breasted Chat
Lesser Scaup	Eastern Phoebe	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Gadwall	Great-cr. Flycatcher	Blue Grosbeak
Wood Duck	White-breasted Nuthatch	Indigo Bunting
Harlequin Duck	House Wren	Rufous-sided Towhee
King Eider	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Grasshopper Sparrow
Clapper Rail	Gray-cheeked Thrush	LeConte's Sparrow
Black Rail	Mountain Bluebird	Seaside Sparrow
American Coot	Brown Trasher	Vesper Sparrow
Greater Golden-Plover	Northern Mockingbird	Lark Sparrow
Little Stint	Gray Catbird	Field Sparrow
Broad-billed Sandpiper	Northern Shrike	Clay-coloured Sparrow
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Philadelphia Vireo	Fox Sparrow
Ruff	Warbling Vireo	Dickcissel
Mew (Common) Gull	White-eyed Vireo	Lark Bunting
Forster's Tern	Yellow-throated Vireo	Eastern Meadowlark
Atlantic Puffin	Blue-winged Warbler	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Black-billed Cuckoo	Orange-crowned Warbler	Scarlet Tanager
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Pine Warbler	Western Tanager
Boreal Owl	Prairie Warbler	Red Crossbill
Bl.-backed Woodpecker	Cerulean Warbler	

As the first week of November departs, so do the last of the flycatchers, both common and vagrant. Dominated chiefly by late "empids", this small group of birds features the occasional pewee, phoebe, kingbird (usually western) or tyrant flycatcher.

The last three weeks of November see a large decrease in shorebird and passerine numbers and an equally dramatic increase in loons, grebes and ducks. Common and Red-throated Loon, Red-necked and Horned Grebe, all three Scoter, Common Eider, Bufflehead, Oldsquaw and Red-breasted Merganser all reach late fall peaks.

In Hartlen's Back Cove, the principal forest species are Black-capped and Boreal Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Song, Swamp and American Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch and Pine Siskin. A few lingering Yellow-rumped Warbler, an occasional vagrant wren and one or two Common Snipe, also add to the cast.

For shorebirds, late November is a quiet time. Small flocks of White-rumped Sandpipers, Dunlin, Sanderling, Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone and Black-bellied Plover hold a few late season stragglers such as Semipalmated and Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover and Greater Yellowlegs. They join Horned Lark, Snow Bunting, Lapland Longspur, Savannah Sparrow and the season's last American Pipits.

By the end of November, a few returning Iceland Gulls dot the Hartlen's Point-Eastern Passage shoreline. The last lines of Double-crested Cormorant and Northern Gannet file by Devil's Island and both Rough-legged Hawk and Snowy Owl stake out their winter roosts.

Another sign of oncoming winter in early December is a final push of late fall migrants, accompanying an influx of winter residents. Common Snipe, Belted Kingfisher, Osprey and Great Blue Heron bid Hartlen's shores farewell, while Song, Swamp, White-throated and Savannah Sparrows entice an occasional warbler, wren, or bunting into staying behind. Incoming winter flights are made up primarily of American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Snow Bunting, Pine Siskin and American Goldfinch, joined at times by Northern Shrike, Pine Grosbeak or Common Redpoll.

Hartlen's December ocean is a busy place. Loons, grebes, ducks and gulls lead the way, with storm-blown alcids such as Dovekie and Thick-billed Murre a regular occurrence as well. A shorebird count at this time reveals little. Dunlin, Red Knot, Purple Sandpiper, Sanderling and Black-bellied Plover are the only stragglers seen. By mid-December any other shorebird species is a Christmas counter's prize. On the raptor front, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Short-eared Owl and Snowy Owl share Hartlen's vole population.

Halfway through December, the Eastern Passage-Hartlen's Point area is once again under siege from snow and ice. The birds that remain, notwithstanding a few wrong-headed waifs, are all prime candidates for a January list. We now arrive at the point where we began twelve months earlier, at the start of this article.



20 YEARS AGO....

1971--that was the year that the Executive, prompted by some members, considered changing the society from an exclusively BIRD oriented association to a natural history society. Eric Mills was the President that year and he sent out a questionnaire asking for the opinion of each member. The three issues of the **Newsletter** contained many letters both pro and con, some quite heated. At the Annual General Meeting, Eric announced that we would remain a BIRD society. One hundred fifty replies had been received, fifty-two favouring a change, ninety-one opposing it and eight being neutral...

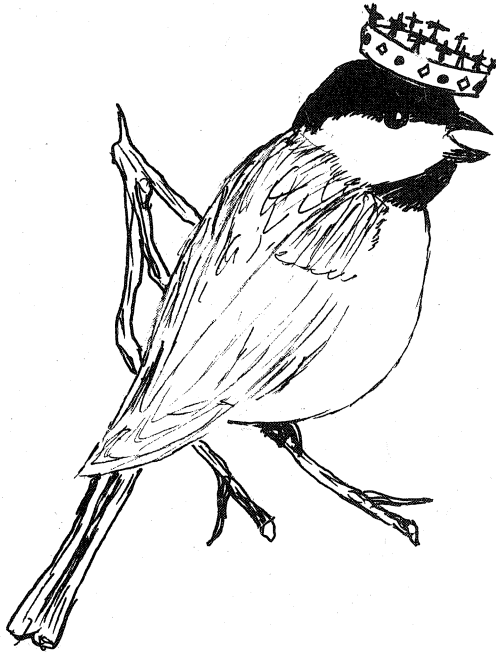
On may 16 a Cave Swallow was seen on Seal Island--for the second Canadian Record.

A Barn Owl was found on the floor of Robb Engineering Works in Amherst on May 29. It was examined, found to be uninjured and released.

One of the Nova Scotia Bird Society "Excursions" for 1971 was a trip to Sable Island. The leader was Betty Reid; departure was from Sydney Airport on August 20 and 22 for two, two day trips. The estimated cost was \$60-110. Bird hoped to be seen - a Cave Swallow.

LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBIRD
Pete Dunne

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Of all the questions birders pose to birders, the one that stops me every time is most commonly phrased: "Have you seen any 'good' birds?" Now I ask you, how do you go about fielding a loaded question like that? What puts the good in a good bird?

Usually I find myself not answering right away. I just stand there impersonating a yellow-crowned night heron with tetanus. Part of me wants to reach to the errant soul to offer an impromptu chickadee appreciation seminar. The other part wants to kick the kneecap of this snob birder who is trying to back me into a metaphysical corner.

"Just say no," prompts my sainted wife, Linda, out of the corner of her mouth. "Don't make a big deal out of it or play Ghandi or Rambo. Just say..."

No! I scream (in my mind). I haven't seen any "good" birds, nothing but garbage, trash birds. Worthless chickadees and titmice. Scruffy song sparrows. Brrrr.

How dare you and your fascist bird snobbery impugn the reputation of titmice (I dream of shouting). Have I seen any good birds? Pah. I spit on your notion of good birds. I...

But this is just a fantasy. "Yes," I hear myself surrendering, hating my ethical paralysis. I say either, "a curlew sandpiper is feeding with stilt sandpipers over in the west pool," or "No, I haven't seen anything...good." Fact is, I catch myself asking the same question whenever I meet other birders in the field, perpetuating this unjust system of avian segregation.

Why must good be synonymous with rare? Why does a bird have to be a thousand miles from where it belongs or heading for biological bankruptcy to be good?

Why can't the good in good bird relate to color and shape and design? That's what is good in good art. Has anyone ever admired a Van Gogh because it was perched in a gallery four thousand miles from Arles? No. It is admired because it's great art.

Why can't the good in good bird relate to a bird's poise or behavior? That's what is good about good acting. Nobody (except maybe Marlon Brando) has ever developed a reputation for good acting by turning up on a set about as often as Cox's sandpipers turn up in Massachusetts.

Why can't the good in good bird relate to a bird's skill or finesse? That's what is good in a golfer's putt, a second baseman's play.

I'm not the only one who has trouble meeting other people's expectations for a good bird. I saw famous bird-tour leader Victor Emanuel try to respond to the deadly demand in Cave Creek Canyon, Arizona, last summer.

Victor, a true renaissance birder, held forth enthusiastically on Strickland's woodpeckers, elegant trogons, sulphur-bellied flycatchers and a "wonderful" painted redstart. Finding these species in Cave Creek is the birding equivalent of going to Mount Rushmore and discovering the likeness of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt.

The woman who had posed the question to Victor regarded him as if he were offering her the Brooklyn Bridge. These weren't good birds (her expression said). These were everyday birds. She wanted to hear about good birds (American redstarts or eared trogons), which are good birds, I think, but no better than painted red-starts or elegant trogons.

What she wanted was to visit Mount Rushmore and find the Acropolis. If you want to see the Acropolis, try Greece. Here--I'll draw you a map. If you want to see an American redstart, try Massachusetts. Eared trogon? Try Mexico.

I know I'm being simplistic. I understand and appreciate the pleasure of watching birds that I rarely see either because they are uncommon or the species falls outside my normal range. But I'm nervous about endorsing a system of values that accents avian paucity. If uncommon is good and rare is better, what does that make extinct?

I'm not one to denigrate chickadees and titmice just because consistency is among their considerable charms. A chickadee is just a good bird that I see all the time.

So I think, therefore, that the next time some passing birders pose the deadly demand and want to know whether I've seen anything "good", I will reply: "Yes, all the usual good birds," and hope that they don't press me for details.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor, *Nova Scotia Birds*:

I had occasion to be in St. Catherines, Ontario during the last week of March, attending to family matters, and found myself with a "free day" on Tuesday, March 26.

In that particular area on the shores of Lake Ontario, in the Niagara Region, spring comes early and the area that I was visiting was simply alive with House Finches, a liberal sprinkling of Purple Finches and pairs of Cardinals, all joining in a virtual symphony of spring song.

I had bigger game in mind though as I was but ten minutes drive from Grimbsy, located on the slopes of the Niagara Escarpment, and I knew that the famous "Grimbsy Hawkwatch" would be in full progress.

I subsequently drove to Grimbsy, and after a few enquiries, made my way up Mountain Drive to the Ridge Road and then on to the Quarry Road. Then I found a narrow road leading through a wooded area which led to a large open area in the midst of a remnant of the Carolinian Forest, perched on top of the Niagara Escarpment.

Here I noted a group of eight observers, intently watching a bright overcast sky and calling out identities of overflying Buteos, Accipters, Harriers and Eagles to a very busy recording observer who had a stopwatch attached to his clipboard and who was hard pressed to keep up with the numbers of birds being identified by the observer team.

When I identified myself as a member of N.S.B.S., one observer detached from the group and explained that as a casual visitor, I could not have arrived at a better time. A major migration was in progress as "stacks" of hawks drifted in from across Lake Erie and picked up the thermals from the escarpment before dispersing across the broad farmlands.

The eight very busy observers had seven years of experience and I admired their expertise in identification by silhouettes. The observation period began at 8:00 a.m. and terminated at 3:00 p.m. In view of my interest as an "out of province" visitor, I was given the tally for the day as well as a copy of last year's summary. Anyone interested in making this trip can contact Bruce Duncan 1-519-622-4709. The Hawkwatch continues during the months of April and May.

Here is the tally for the day I attended (March 26, 1991)—Red-tailed 235; Red-shouldered-233; Rough-legged-18; Sharp-shinned-37; Harris'-8; Coopers-29; Kestrel-8; Peregrine-2; Goshawk-1; Turkey Vulture-20; unidentified -100; for a total of 681 birds of prey.

It was an awesome experience and I would certainly recommend it to anyone who happens to be in the area.

Allen Eddy

Editor, *Nova Scotia Birds*:

An article in the July, 1989 issue of *Natural History* titled "Beware of Well-fed Felines" documents the results of a one-year study into the extent of house cat predation on small mammals and birds. The following precis may be of interest to your readers.

The study involved 77 cats in a small village in Bedfordshire, where one of the authors lived. Each cat owner was given a supply of polyethylene bags marked with the cat's code letter. The owners were asked to bag the REMAINS OF ANY ANIMALS CAUGHT BY THE CAT, AND THE BAGS WERE COLLECTED WEEKLY. If a cat was seen to eat an entire prey item, it was recorded as an "unknown".

The major prey of these cats (64% of the total) was small mammals, including wood mice, field voles and common shrews. Birds were always in the minority, except during the coldest part of the winter when small mammals are inactive above the ground. The catches peaked in July, when the 77 cats among them caught about 150 animals. All of the cats were fed by the owners.

Birds made up a total of 35% of the catch, ranked as follows: House Sparrow 16%, Song Thrush 4%, Blackbird 3%, Robin 2%, other 10%. The researchers estimated the number of sparrows in the village, and using published data on sparrow population dynamics, calculated how many sparrows would be expected to die during the course of a year. Comparing this figure with the total number of sparrows caught by the cats, they found that between a third and a half of all sparrow deaths were attributable to cats. Extrapolating this figure to cover all of Britain, the researchers estimated that "cats kill at least twenty million birds a year in Britain". They conclude by saying that "The delightful, well-fed, domestic cat may be the major killer of small birds and mammals in urban and suburban environments".

My thanks to Dave Bunbury of Antigonish for bringing this article to my attention.

Peter Payzant

Editor, *Nova Scotia Birds*:

I have been reading the April 1991 copy of *Nova Scotia Birds* and noted on page 5, that there is the possibility that the sighting of a Yellow-billed Loon at Ferguson's Cove on December 2, might be a FIRST for Nova Scotia and second or third for eastern North America.

Next to the illustration of the Yellow-billed Loon in my copy of *The Birds of Canada* by Earl Godfrey, I find this penned notation:

"Seen on Buchanan Lake, Richmond County, by Mr. and Mrs. Robert (better known as "Bert") Buchanan." (Mr. Buchanan is a retired park warden of Cape Breton Highlands National Park). "Called on October 22, (year not noted). Bird observed since Oct. 20 on the lake below their house."

Wishing to have the exact date, I wrote Mr. Buchanan asking for a confirmation, and received the following answer:

"Yes. My wife, Jean, and I sighted a Yellow-billed Loon on October 21, 1982, on Buchanan Lake at Grand Anse. When I spotted it I knew it was unusual, so I took the binoculars to examine it more closely. I then consulted *The Birds of Canada* by Earl Godfrey and confirmed it was a Yellow-billed Loon. I just checked my 1989 diary to confirm the date."

I realize that I should have forwarded this report to whomever was in charge of Records at that time. My sins of Omission greatly outnumber my sins of Commission - I hope.

I am not nitpicking, but I fear Mr. Buchanan will be disappointed in me. You are doing a great job. Keep it up.

Frank Robertson

Editor, *Nova Scotia Birds*:

I was most upset with the fact that the names of the participants in 12 of the 24 Christmas Bird Counts were not included, as well as the reasons given, in the Count reports in the April 1991 issue. I realize that feeder-watchers were to be reported separately, according to the instructions, but this request was in the middle of a paragraph and obviously missed, or misunderstood, by half the Count compilers, including myself.

Even if this request had been made unambiguously by *Nova Scotia Birds*, I feel it was rather high-handed to leave out the names of the participants in half the counts. Many people give up a precious day around Christmas time and turn out in frequently atrocious weather to count birds. For some it is the highlight of the birding year, and for many it is their only contribution to what is at least a serious attempt at a long-term census, and thus a contribution to research and conservation. They like to see their names in print as an acknowledgement of their efforts, and are frequently disappointed and discouraged when their names do not appear. Furthermore, it makes it impossible for compilers and other interested parties to see which individuals have turned out for the Count for comparison with previous or subsequent years.

I feel it would have been more appropriate to have included all the names for this year, together with a warning that for next year if this request is not acceded to, then the names might indeed be left out. I also feel that a major change such as this should have been drawn more clearly to compilers' attention, particularly as the rules governing the feeder-watchers for *American Birds* are different. Indeed, why cannot the Nova Scotia Bird Society's rules be brought into line exactly with *American Birds* rules? Perhaps for this year you would consider including all the missing names in the July issue.

Best wishes,

Richard Stern

Editor, *Nova Scotia*:

In response to Dr. Stern's letter regarding the omission of the names of participants on Christmas counts in 1990, it was not the intention of the editors to be high-handed. We certainly regret your feeling that way and sincerely hope that with our "growing pains" of setting up new guidelines, we will try harder to anticipate potential problems.

We believed the Christmas Count instructions clearly conveyed the proper information to the compilers, but it appears not to have been the case for everyone.

Although we regret this misunderstanding, at the same time we thank you for bringing the matter to our attention so that we may continue to revise and improve the Christmas Count instructions and format.

Mary Anderson & Dave Currie

Editor: *Nova Scotia Birds*:

We planned an island hopping trip this long weekend 17-20, May 1991. Less adventurous than those who went to Bon Portage and Seal Islands, we birded Cape Island and Brier Island, plus other spots en route. The weather was hot on Friday (28C at Bridgewater) and windy (SW).

We met some of the Bon Portage group on Cape Island, but nothing more special than 100 Black-bellied Plover and a group of 4 Eastern Kingbirds was seen. Saturday morning started out with rain, and it was cold and windy. All the birds went into hiding, so we drove on to Brier via Tusket, Yarmouth, and best of all, the Bowater pocket wilderness at Wentworth Lake. Here we found a spot in the sun, sheltered from the wind, where we saw six species of warblers including a singing Black-throated Blue, a Blackburnian, plus a Solitary Vireo.

The highlight of the trip was Brier Island, where we met the Halls, Ruffs and Prossers (from Yarmouth) and the Sterns (from Kentville), who provided excellent company. Our centre was Brier House, which permitted pre-breakfast bird walks of the town, the Northern Light and the trail to the pond up the hill behind Brier House, all of which yielded large quantities of warblers. Blackburnian, Black-throated green, Yellow, Yellow-rumped and Tennessee were common, with 16 species of warblers seen in all.

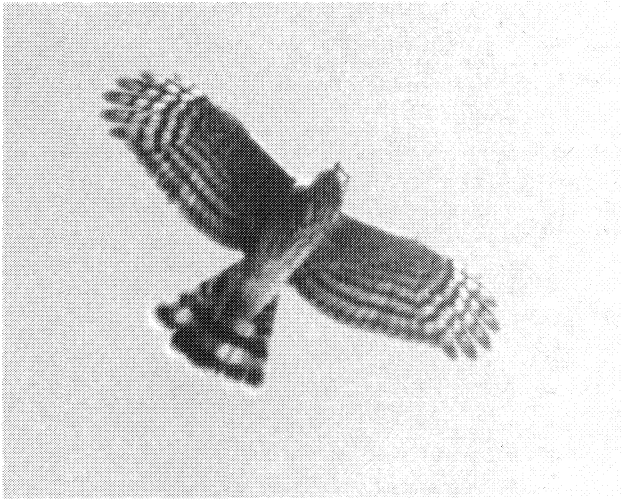
Rarities were also seen, including Indigo Buntings and Cardinals (both rumoured to be nesting), Scarlet Tanagers (male and female), and a Piping Plover. Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls were abundant although the local Mother's Day gull egg hunt was said to have been short on eggs, possibly due to the increase of coyotes on the island. The islanders are now setting leg-hold traps so the unwary birder should take great care in the bush. Terns were absent upon our arrival on the island, but both Arctic and Common appeared in great numbers on Monday morning. Brant were found on Pond Cove, but the local talk of a large, plain gray Heron/Egret on Big Pond was not confirmed.

The birds were too numerous to list here, but suffice it to say that the group saw over 100 species on the island (and more en route). All in all, this was a perfect birding experience, comparable to anything Point Pelee could offer, and without the crowds. It was generally agreed that it had been one of the best weekends in memory. The weather had turned out to be almost perfect (especially since it snowed in Truro), there were no bugs to bother us and the leaves were not too far developed. More importantly, the birds co-operated too.

Many thanks to the Halls, Ruffs and Prossers for providing a most memorable lobster supper, and to Clair Leng for her excellent hospitality at Brier House, which is highly recommended. This Brier experience is one which has us planning ahead for next year, although we hear that Brier is even better in fall migration!

Keith and Marion Allsebrook

P.S. Accommodation on Brier is limited to 16 rooms and informal campgrounds. N.S.B.S. members get a discount at Brier House. There are three restaurants (in season) and whale-watching trips.



This should be an easy one to identify.
Try it. Photo Richard Stern



Ringed-billed Gulls have a kinder gentler
appearance and around Sullivan's Pond are
more approachable than the larger gulls.
Photo Shirley Cohrs.

COMPUTERIZED BIRD REPORTS

I am currently working on a program in dBASE which will maintain a list of personal sightings. It will also generate bird reports in a format suitable for submission to **Nova Scotia Birds**. Is anyone interested in using this? It will run on either an IBM PC or Atari ST 1040 with hard drive, and will not require the user to have any knowledge of dBASE.

Functions will include the usual:

1. Add a sighting
2. Edit a sighting
3. Print/display sightings selected by user
4. Print bird reports for magazine
5. Delete/undelete a sighting

Each sighting will include the following data:

1. Bird name (25 characters)
2. Date (default will be today/date entered by user)
3. Number (25 character field allows for 5 male, 2 immature)
4. Location (2 lines of 25 characters)
5. Observer (default will be your name)
6. Notes (5 lines of 25 characters)
7. Bird Report (Indicates if bird report to be printed)
8. Bird Code (For sorting bird reports, transparent to user)

You can "quick-enter" the bird name by either:

1. Entering a 4 digit code;
2. Using a partial name (e.g. "Ind " would mean Indigo Bunting since this is the only N.S. bird which starts with Ind, "Great" would display all the N.S. birds which start with Great--Great Black-backed Gull, Greater Scaup, etc. and allow you to select the one you actually want);
3. Using a Query key--entering "?" allows you to browse through the whole list of N.S. birds until you see the one you want to select.

Note that Bird codes, and name search only apply to N.S. birds, but the program can be used for worldwide sightings by entering other bird names manually.

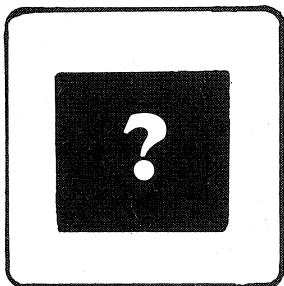
Entry of notes could be via a memo field (like using a word processor, you would not have to watch for the end of the line, however, a maximum of the first 125 characters would be saved).

The bird reports can be printed in code and date order, to make it easier for the Records Editor to sort. They will be printed on standard 8.5 by 11 inch paper, 3 across the page and 3 down. You can easily cut the page into 9.

If you are interested in using this program, have any comments, or would like to tie in your existing dbf database file, please contact me as soon as possible.

Marion Allsebrook
 Site 14, Box 148, R.R. #2,
 Windsor Junction, N.S.
 BON 2VO

SLIDES FOR THE NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY COLLECTION



Efforts to raise the quality of the Nova Scotia Bird Society Slide Collection continue, and it is expected, slides from members will be needed for a long time to come.

They should be given to Milton Gregg, 7007 Fielding Avenue, Halifax, N.S. B3L 2H1 (telephone 454-0187) or passed to Milton at a meeting of the Bird Society.

Slides which members wish to keep will be duplicated for the collection and returned.

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**Summary of All-time Highest Counts of Individuals for
Christmas Counts Conducted in Nova Scotia**

In December 1913 Harrison Lewis and E. Chesley Allen conducted the very first Christmas Count in Nova Scotia. During that count twelve species of birds were identified. Since then Christmas Counts have become very popular as the main event of the year for those interested in birds.

The Nova Scotia Bird Society Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund has sponsored a project to collect data and organize it with the aid of computer medium for use by interested parties. It is hoped that the information gathered will be easily accessible and readily available at minimum costs.

The following is an updated list of all-time records of individuals seen on count days. To date there have been a total of 89 counts conducted in the province with a species list of 227 as of the 1990 Christmas Count. Hybrids, distinct forms and subspecies are included in the list for interest.

Red-throated loon 12, (Pubnico 1985); **Arctic loon 1**, (Halifax West 1979); **Common loon 177**, (Halifax East 1987); **Pied-billed grebe 2**, (St. Peter's 1966, Halifax West 1980, 1983); **Horned grebe 196**, (Broad Cove 1976); **Red-necked grebe 118**, (Brier Island 1977); **Eared grebe 1**, (Halifax West 1966); **Northern fulmar 300**, (Brier Island 1990); **Greater shearwater 1**, (Bay of Fundy 1973); **Northern gannet 20**, (Cape Breton Highlands National Park 1984); **Great cormorant 433**, (Halifax West 1984); **Double-crested cormorant 21**, (Annapolis Royal 1990).

American bittern 1, (Bridgetown 1960, Halifax East 1960, 1964, 1986); **Great blue heron 9**, (Halifax East 1983, 1986); **Snowy egret 1**, (Halifax East 1979).

Snow goose 1, (Sable Island 1989); **Brant 35**, (Brier Island 1979); **Canada goose 10666**, (Halifax East 1987); **Wood duck 37**, (Shubenacadie 1982); **Green-winged teal 26**, (Margaree 1982); **American black duck 2500**, (Yarmouth 1968); **Mallard 170**, (The Sydneys 1982); **MallardXBlack duck hybrid 17**, (Shubenacadie 1990); **Northern pintail 13**, (Broad Cove 1984); **Blue-winged teal 6**, (Yarmouth 1977); **Northern shoveler 1**, (Yarmouth 1988); **Gadwall 11**, (Shubenacadie 1986); **Eurasian wigeon 1**, (Halifax East 1970); **American wigeon 8**, (Halifax West 1989); **Canvasback 1**, (Yarmouth 1990); **Ring-necked duck 7**, (Shubenacadie 1990).

Greater scaup 1500, (Cape Sable 1973); **Lesser scaup 24**, (Glace Bay 1990); **Common eider 1145**, (Broad Cove 1985); **King eider 4**, (Cape Breton Highlands National Park 1987); **Harlequin duck 27**, (Port L'Hebert 1979); **Oldsquaw 4584**, (Annapolis Royal 1989); **Black scoter 328**, (Port L'Hebert 1985); **Surf scoter 192**, (Halifax West 1974); **White-winged scoter 567**, (Port L'Hebert 1987); **Common goldeneye 471**, (Antigonish 1984); **Barrow's Goldeneye 8**, (The Sydneys 1981); **Bufflehead 329**, (Annapolis Royal 1990); **Hooded merganser 5**, (Wolfville 1965); **Common merganser 322**, (Yarmouth 1977); **Red-breasted merganser 530**, (Halifax East 1986); **Ruddy duck 2**, (Halifax West 1956).

Turkey vulture 2, (Brier Island 1989); **Osprey 1**, (Margaree 1982, Halifax East 1985); **Bald eagle 148**, (Wolfville 1989); **Northern harrier 10**, (Amherst 1990); **Sharp-shinned hawk 17**, (Wolfville 1987); **Cooper's hawk 1**, (Halifax West 1966, Louisbourg 1970); **Northern goshawk 3**, (Wolfville 1982, Margaree 1986); **Red-shouldered hawk 1**, (Brier Island 1974, 1976, 1979); **Broad-winged hawk 1**, (Halifax East 1983, 1990, Yarmouth 1989); **Red-tailed hawk 154**, (Wolfville 1989); **Rough-legged hawk 27**, (Amherst 1986); **American Kestrel 7**, (Broad Cove 1974); **Merlin 5**, (Halifax East 1976); **Peregrine falcon 1**, (Advocate 1980, Brier Island 1981, Eskasoni 1966, Halifax East 1962, 1964, Halifax West 1969, 1984, Port L'Hebert 1980, Sable Island 1989, Yarmouth 1975); **Gyrfalcon 1**, (Amherst 1982, Brier Island 1980, Halifax East 1965, Wolfville 1962, 1981).

Gray partridge 64, (Wolfville 1970); **Ring-necked pheasant 224**, (Wolfville 1986); **Spruce grouse 10**, (Country Harbour 1958, 1960, 1965, 1966); **Ruffed grouse 25**, (Country Harbour 1958); **Clapper rail 1**, (Broad Cove 1973, 1976); **Virginia rail 6**, (Halifax East 1976); **Sora 2**, (Halifax East 1976); **Common moorhen 1**, (Halifax East 1980); **American coot 2**, (Halifax West 1983, 1986, 1988); **Sandhill crane 1**, (Halifax East 1976, Shubenacadie 1981).

Black-bellied plover 20, (Cape Sable Island 1973); **Semipalmated plover 1**, (Brier Island 1973, Halifax East 1976); **Killdeer 23**, (Cape Sable 1973); **Greater yellowlegs 8**, (Halifax East 1969); **Lesser yellowlegs 3**, (Halifax East 1990); **Spotted sandpiper 1**, (Halifax West 1967, Salmon River 1967, 1979); **Whimbrel (Eurasian) 1**, (Broad Cove 1974); **Ruddy turnstone 10**, (Catalone 1963, 1964, Port L'Hebert 1981); **Red knot 12**, (Port L'Hebert 1976); **Sanderling 150**, (St. Peter's 1966); **Semipalmated sandpiper 6**, (Cape Sable Island 1973); **Least sandpiper 1**, (Port L'Hebert 1976); **White-rumped sandpiper 2**, (Halifax East 1974); **Pectoral sandpiper 2**, (Port L'Hebert 1978); **Purple sandpiper 700**, (Brier Island 1968); **Dunlin 52**, (Port L'Hebert 1989); **Short-billed dowitcher 1**, (Port L'Hebert 1989); **Common snipe 8**, (Wolfville 1974); **American woodcock 12**, (Yarmouth 1984).

Laughing gull 2, (Halifax East 1968); **Common black-headed gull 102**, (The Sydneys 1969); **Bonaparte's gull 22**, (Eskasoni 1973); **Mew gull 1**, (Amherst 1990, Halifax West 1988); **Ring-billed gull 1056**, (Wolfville 1990); **Herring gull 10163**, (Wolfville 1990); **Iceland gull 1062**, (Glace Bay 1982); **Lesser black-backed gull 3**, (Halifax West 1985); **Glaucous gull 68**, (Glace Bay 1969); **Great black-backed gull 3000**, (Yarmouth 1973); **Black-legged kittiwake 48000**, (Brier Island 1978); **Sabine's gull 2**, (Cape Sable 1976); **Ivory gull 1**, (The Sydney's 1977, 1982); **Common tern 1**, (Halifax West 1985); **Forster's tern 1**, (Broad Cove 1984).

Dovekie 1246, (Cabot Strait 1973); **Common murre 18**, (Annapolis Royal 1988, Cape Breton Highlands National Park 1983); **Thick-billed murre 20000**, (Brier Island 1973); **Razorbill 368**, (Brier Island 1976); **Black guillemot 500**, (Brier Island 1973); **Atlantic puffin 200**, (Brier Island 1990).

Rock dove 1965, (Halifax West 1986); Mourning dove 569, (Wolfville 1989); Great horned owl 4, (Economy 1980); Snowy owl 22, (Brier Island 1960); Barred owl 5, (Kejimikujik National Park 1988); Long-eared owl 6, (Wolfville 1980); Short-eared owl 6, (Annapolis Royal 1974, Wolfville 1960); Northern saw-whet owl 2, (Brier Island 1959); Belted kingfisher 5, (Halifax East 1980, 1981); Red-headed woodpecker 1, (Digby 1973, Halifax West 1973); Red-bellied woodpecker 1, (Halifax West 1986); Yellow-bellied sapsucker 1, (Halifax West 1986); Downy woodpecker 44, (Wolfville 1989); Hairy woodpecker 25, (Wolfville 1987); Three-toed woodpecker 1, (Halifax West 1979); Black-backed woodpecker 6, (Amherst 1974); Northern flicker 13, (Port L'Hebert 1990); Pileated woodpecker 13, (West Hants 1989).

Western kingbird 1, (Cape Sable Island 1973, Halifax West 1984); Eastern kingbird 1, (Halifax East 1974, Yarmouth 1973); Horned lark 257, (Wolfville 1963); Tree swallow 10, (Liverpool 1981); Barn swallow 1, (Halifax East 1981); Gray jay 39, (Pubnico 1990); Blue jay 822, (Wolfville 1989); Jackdaw 1, (Halifax West 1984, 1988, 1989); American crow 27400, (Wolfville 1982); Common raven 644, (Wolfville 1989); Black-capped chickadee 755, (Wolfville 1990); Boreal chickadee 163, (Halifax East 1986); Red-breasted nuthatch 237, (Economy 1988); White-breasted nuthatch 23, (Halifax West 1967); Brown creeper 18, (Halifax East 1990); Winter wren 5, (Halifax East 1976); Sedge wren 1, (Broad Cove 1976); Marsh wren 3, (Halifax East 1983); Golden-crowned kinglet 403, (Halifax East 1988); Ruby-crowned kinglet 4, (Halifax East 1974); Blue-gray gnatcatcher 1, (Halifax West 1984).

Eastern bluebird 1, (Paradise 1961); Hermit thrush 4, (Halifax West 1976, Wolfville 1976); Wood thrush 1, (Yarmouth 1967); Redwing (Eurasian) 1, (Sable Island 1989); American robin 783, (Pubnico 1978); Varied thrush 1, (Halifax East 1985, Wolfville 1978); Gray catbird 2, (Halifax West 1985, Yarmouth 1977); Northern mockingbird 13, (Halifax West 1987); Brown thrasher 2, (Halifax West 1979); Water pipit 38, (Yarmouth 1987); Bohemian waxwing 326, (Wolfville 1986); Cedar waxwing 193, (Bridgetown 1986); Northern shrike 9, (Amherst 1990); Loggerhead shrike 1, (Yarmouth 1978); European starling 28901, (Wolfville 1987).

Solitary vireo 1, (Halifax East 1984, Halifax West 1984); Orange-crowned warbler 3, (Halifax East 1983, Halifax West 1984); Magnolia warbler 1, (Halifax West 1973); Cape May warbler 1, (Pubnico 1984); Yellow-rumped warbler 140, (Cape Sable Island 1986); Black-throated gray warbler 1, (Halifax West 1984); Pine warbler 9, (Halifax West 1988); Prairie warbler 1, (Halifax East 1983); Palm warbler 15, (Halifax East 1987); Black and white warbler 1, (Halifax West 1974); Common yellowthroat 2, (Broad Cove 1973, 1983, 1987, Halifax East 1969, 1973, 1975, 1979); Hooded warbler 1, (Halifax West 1976); Wilson's warbler 1, (Halifax West 1984); Yellow-breasted chat 4, (Halifax West 1987).

Northern cardinal 6, (Yarmouth 1973); Rose-breasted grosbeak 1, (Antigonish 1978); Blue grosbeak 1,

(Bridgetown 1988); **Indigo bunting** 1, (Halifax East 1979); **Dickcissel** 4, (St. Peter's 1969); **Rufous-sided towhee** 5, (Halifax West 1967).

American tree sparrow 324, (Wolfville 1989); **Chipping sparrow** 12, (Liverpool 1976); **Clay-coloured sparrow** 1, (West Hants 1990); **Field sparrow** 2, (Economy 1982); **Vesper sparrow** 15, (Wolfville 1967); **Lark sparrow** 1, (Halifax East 1985, Hazel Hill 1988); **Lark bunting** 1, (Halifax East 1959); **Savannah sparrow** 52, (Halifax East 1987); **Savannah (Ipswich) sparrow** 78, (Sable Island 1969); **Grasshopper sparrow** 1, (Broad Cove 1971, Cape Breton Highlands National Park 1971, Halifax East 1965, 1979); **Sharp-tailed sparrow** 20, (Halifax East 1987); **Seaside sparrow** 2, (Halifax East 1979); **Fox sparrow** 20, (Halifax West 1965); **Song sparrow** 151, (Wolfville 1987); **Lincoln's sparrow** 1, (Halifax East 1979, 1981, Pictou 1967, Port L'Hebert 1989); **Swamp sparrow** 34, (Halifax East 1987); **White-throated sparrow** 1044, (Broad Cove 1976); **White-crowned sparrow** 3, (Halifax East 1973); **Harris' sparrow** 1, (Kingston 1981); **Dark-eyed junco** 671, (Wolfville 1986); **Dark-eyed (Oregon) junco** 1, (Broad Cove 1982, Halifax East 1960, Halifax West 1972, New Glasgow 1960); **Lapland longspur** 150, (Amherst 1968); **Snow bunting** 2314, (Amherst 1981).

Bobolink 1, (Halifax East 1973); **Red-winged blackbird** 100, (Kingston 1969); **Eastern Meadowlark** 5, (West Middle Sable 1953); **Yellow-headed blackbird** 1, (Halifax West 1985, Kingston 1981, 1988); **Rusty blackbird** 24, (Bridgetown 1977); **Brewer's blackbird** 1, (Sable Island 1969); **Common grackle** 1009, (Kingston 1974); **Brown-headed cowbird** 3300, (Kingston 1974); **Northern oriole** 6, (Halifax West 1980, 1988, The Sydneys 1969); **Northern (Bullock's) oriole** 1, (Halifax West 1969).

Common Chaffinch 1, (Halifax West 1988); **Pine grosbeak** 261, (Wolfville 1977); **Purple finch** 102, (Cape Breton Highlands National Park 1968); **House finch** 4, (Yarmouth 1989); **Red crossbill** 138, (Broad Cove 1972); **White-winged crossbill** 688, (Economy 1988); **Common redpoll** 1079, (Wolfville 1968); **Hoary redpoll** 2, (Brier Island 1986); **Pine siskin** 643, (Broad Cove 1990); **American goldfinch** 989, (Halifax East 1982); **Evening grosbeak** 2141, (Halifax West 1985).

House sparrow 2500, (Halifax West 1958).

Notes

Notes

Notes

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
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