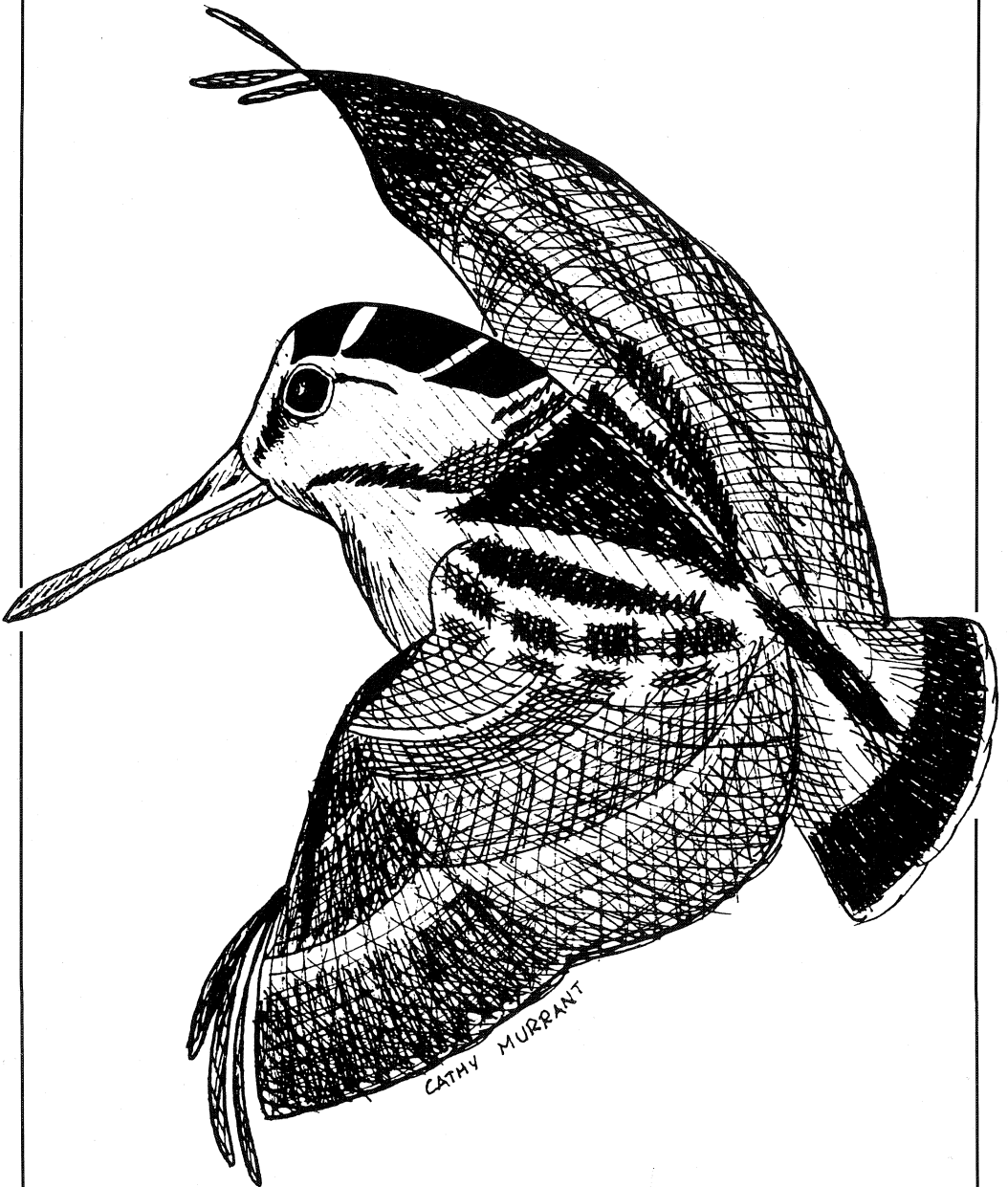


# Nova Scotia Birds



January 1993

NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS  
A Publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society

Volume 35 Number 1

January 1993

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☆☆  
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*Happy  
New Year!*  
☆☆  
☆☆  
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FROM YOUR

1992 - 1993 EXECUTIVE



Left to right: Jim Taylor, Bob Dickie, Janos Kovaks, Bernice Moores, Carol MacNeill, behind her--Don MacNeill, Bill Caudle, Lou Coutinho (not present at the time--Lisè Cohrs, Shirley Cohrs)

## RECORDS EDITOR'S REPORT

I am asking all bird reporters to use **THREE** initials when signing their bird report forms. It is common for people using two initials to find others with the same two. In fact, it is not unusual to find up to four people using the same two initials. When this happens, I have to distinguish among them by giving each a third initial.

Members want to know who saw what bird so the editors credit the reporters by using their initials in the species writeup. It would be best for everyone if we each pick a three letter identifier and stick with it.

I am asking each reporter to ADOPT A THREE LETTER IDENTIFIER to put on his, her or their reports and use them each time s(he) submits sightings. Please put your **three** initials as well as your name on your next reports (after that you can use either). If for any reason you choose not to select your own identifier I will choose one for you. If there is a duplication, I'll get in touch with one of you.

Bob Dickie,  
Records Editor.

Many thanks to the following report contributors...

<u>LAST NAME</u>	<u>FIRST NAME</u>	<u>INITIALS</u>
Almon	Mike	MA
Alsebrook	Keith & Marion	KMA
Amirault	Brad	BJA
Bartlett	C.	CB
Blades	Arthur	ABL
Boates	Gary	GB
Bray	Ansel	AB
	Cheryl	CBr
Brennan	Calvin	CB
Brinker	Lysle	LB
Clarke	Valery & Garnet	VGC
Cohrs	John	JLC
	Lise	LC
	Shirley	JSC
Coldwell	Cyril	CKC
Cornell	Christine	CC
Covert	Alan	AC
Crins	William	WJC
Crosby	Donna	DC
Crossland	Greta & Errol	GEC
Crowell	George	GC
	Jean	JC
Currie	David	DAC
Czapalay	Ava	AC
Daborn	Marion	MD
	Reg	RD
Davidson	Clair	CD
D'Entremont	Raymond	RSD
Dickey	Anne	ALD
	Tom	TGD
Dickie	Bob	RBD
	Brian	WBD
	Helen	HD
	Stewart	SWD
Dufresne	M.	MD
Erskine	Neil	NE
Field	Chris	CF
Fiske	Dean	DF
Forbes	Kay	KF



Forsythe	Bernard	BLF
Foxall	Sandra	SF
Fredericks	Roger	RF
Fullerton	Al	AF
Gates	Sylvia	SJF
Gibson	Joy	JG
	Jamie	JGi
	Merit	MG
	Richard	RG
Gordon	Ed	EG
Greaves	Helen	HJH
Hall	Hubert	HGH
	Peter	PH
Hamel	Robert	RH
Harris	Dana	DH
Harvey	Carol	CH
Haycock	Ruth	RDH
Hebb	Mike	MH
Heeney	Claire	CJH
Hilchie	Stephen	SDH
	Barbara	BH
Hinds	Chris	CH
Hover	Don	DJa
Jamieson	Dave	DJ
Jones	Janos	JK
Kovacs	Fulton	FLL
Lavender	Zoe	ZL
Lucas	Gwen	GM
MacDonald	Jake	JMa
	Angus	AM
MacLean	Stella	SM
	Carol	CDM
MacNeill	Don	DAM
	Pam	PM
Matthews	Blake	BM
Maybank	Hugh	HM
McCormack	K	KM
McKenna	Ian	IAM
McLaren	Jamie	JM
	Angus	AM
McLean	Peter	PM
McLeod	Dave	DBM
McQuorkadale	Eric	ELM
Mills	Bernice	ABM
Moores	N.	NM
More	Betty	BMo
Morrow	Jim	JCM
	Bill	BMo
Morse	Jean	JMo
	Allan	AMM
Murrant	Cathy	CM
	Reg	RN
Newell	Ruth	RNe
	Mona	MO
O'Laughlin	Don	DO
Osburn	Linda & Peter	L&PP
Payzant	Arthur	AP
Porter	Drew	DPr
Preston	Don	DP
Purchase	Joyce	JP
	Stephen	SR
Rand	Vicki	VR
Richmond	Jean	JR
Ritcey		

Robinson	Ted	TR
Russell	Dick	DR
Sabeau	Barry	BSa
Sarty	Bev	BS
Shepherd	Philippa	PS
Smith	P.C.	PCS
Smith	Stephen	SS
Spalding	Edgar	EPS
	Francis	FS
Spicer	Blaine	BSp
	Kathleen	KS
Stern	Richard & Elizabeth	RBS
Stevens	Clarence	CSII
Stouffer	Ruby	RS
Taylor	Jim	JWT
Thexton	Bill & Brenda	BBT
	Keron	KT
Thomson	C.E.	CET
Thorpe	Diane	DT
Timpa	Jean	JT
Tingley	Stuart	ST
Trueman	Gary	GTr
Tufts	Gordon	GT
	Judy	JTu
	Lillian	LT
Tutt	Kevin	KT
Ueffing	Susan	SU
Urban	Deanna	DU
	Eva	EU
Vienneau	Azor	AJV
Waldron	Eleanor	EW
	Joan	JW
Wilcox	Shelly	SW
Williams	Pixie	PW
Wingate	Dave	DW
Wolford	Jim	JWW
Wright	Don	DWr
Young	David	DHY

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, Chezzetcook

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 Pré, 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

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF REPORTS**

for

the **April, 1993** issue

**February 22 , 1993**

**Bird Reports to the RECORDS EDITOR**

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

**Articles, sketches and letters to the EDITOR**

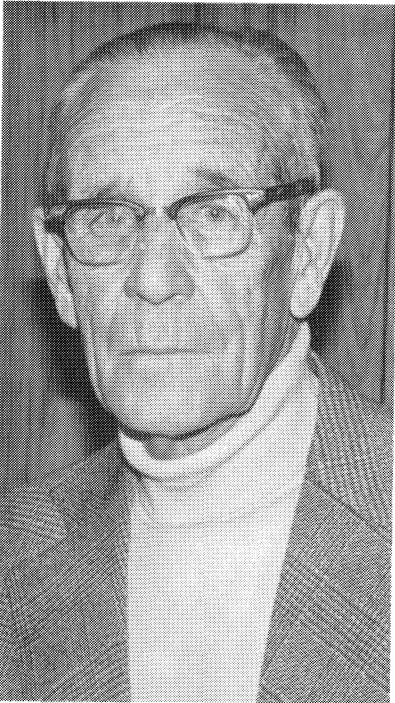
Mrs. Shirley Cohrs,  
8 Rosemount Ave.,  
Halifax, N.S. B3N 1X8

**Photographs to**

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

FRANK F. ROBERTSON

An Appreciation



"Someone should go with Frank, it's embarrassing, you go Shaun." These were my words to a group of New Waterford Birders on a "May Day Bird Count." We had started at 4:00 a.m. and it was now 11:30 a.m., our first rest. Stretched out beside me on a sunny slope were three young men in their early thirties and three teenagers. But Frank did not stop, he continued on down the wood road looking for one more warbler, one more species. This was the type of energy Frank had for birding. He was seventy-eight at the time. It was not just birding; Frank and Ada's home was a place to drop in for naturalists of all ages. I particularly enjoyed having Frank and Ada sort out a Cape Breton wildflower for me.

Frank was the 'Dean of Ornithology' for Cape Breton. His column, "For the Birds" appeared in the **Cape Breton Post** for seventeen Years and he had a radio program on birds with CBC for close to eight years. His efforts made birding an acceptable sport in this hard-nosed industrial area.

Certainly a gifted man, his book of poems, **The Humble Bowl**, has always been a best seller. In December, his new book, **Birds on a Rock** will be released. This is a collection of amusing stories about Cape Breton Birds that he collected over the years.

Frank has certainly gone to "Birders Heaven", where all birds are new, and all are colourful--a chance to start his life-list over again.

We miss you Frank

Sincerely,  
Clive S. Macdonald

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We have devoted much energy over the past several years to having the Premier declare the Osprey our Provincial Bird. In spite of the efforts of many of our past executives, we apparently still have not convinced the government that this is a worthy idea. We had hoped last year that with the assistance of the Department of Natural Resources, the Nova Scotia Museum, the Canadian Wildlife Service, ten provincial Naturalist groups and the election of a new Premier, we would have success, but once again our request fell on deaf ears. No reason has ever been given for this neglect but we believe it to be an important idea and I urge future executives to continue to pursue it.

This year the Society took over the operation of the Bird Hot Line. Blake Maybank agreed to continue to operate it from his home and it was agreed that the Hot Line and the Rare Bird Alert would co-ordinate their efforts.

After many years of organizing the Rare Bird Alert, Shirley Cohrs decided she needed a well-earned rest, so this service has been taken over by Carol MacNeill.

Our Society has, through the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund, for several years presented a trophy to the Photographic Guild for competition in bird photography. It was felt by the executive however, that we should have a trophy for competition within the Society. Bev Sarty's father donated a splendid hand carved Black Capped Chickadee to use as a trophy. This was won this year by Fred Green.

A disastrous poisoning of birds in the Kentville area was investigated by our Environment Committee. It was found that the matter had been acted upon quickly and very effectively by the Department of Natural Resources. At the request of the committee I sent a letter to the Minister, indicating our satisfaction with the speed and effectiveness of his department's action. A letter of commendation was also sent to the individual warden who dealt with the incident. We also sent a letter of concern to the Federal Department of Agriculture over the use of Furadan, a very toxic chemical approved by them for use in Canada.

Many of our best bird sightings have been made from the private property of people who are neither members of our society nor birders. Many of our members have related stories of being welcomed onto people's property even into their homes and in some cases being given hot drinks and food. We feel that our society should acknowledge such kindness to our members by sending those people a letter of thanks from the President. We are asking members who experience such hospitality to give us the name and address of your benefactor so that we may express our gratitude.

We have decided to have society crest lapel pins made up to go on sale this fall. Because of the heavy demand for pins for the Olympics this year, delivery has been delayed. People wanting them can order them through the Membership Secretary.

This year with the resignation of Marion Allsebrook as Membership Secretary, the job was taken over by Peter Payzant and me, jointly. The executive has agreed that *this is really too big for one person to handle alone* so we are experimenting at present with two people sharing the work. In this way, we hope that members will not have to wait so long to receive their cards.

At last year's A.G.M., we were informed that members want to maintain an Environmental aspect to our society. To do this we much have people who will volunteer their time to the Environment Committee. At present, Lou Coutinho is the sole member of that committee. We will continue to maintain an environmental component within the executive, but to be really effective in times of environmental crisis, we need a list of committed members upon whom we could call.

I would like to mention at this time that Joyce Purchase, who has served on the executive for many years is retiring tonight. Also because of personal commitments,

Marion Allsebrook had to resign from the executive during the year. Milton Gregg has also resigned from the Sanctuary Committee. I wish, on your behalf, to thank these people for their faithful and dedicated service.

I would also like to thank the executive for their support during my tenure as president and to you for giving me the opportunity to act as your president for the past two years. I also wish my successor good luck in the upcoming year.

Bob Dickie  
President.



This is not an exotic scene from a southern swamp, but rather the Ducks Unlimited pond at Egerton, Pic. Co., where Ken McKenna Photographed two lively young **LITTLE BLUE HERONS** in August.

## BIRD REPORTS

## LOONS AND GREBES

It was a wonderful autumn for Red-throated Loons. We had 15 reports totalling about 150 birds from Framboise, Richmond County to Lockeport Beach. High counts were 20+ at Big Island, Pictou County on Oct. 5 (KM), 50+ at the same place on Oct. 31, 20 at Cole Harbour and 40 at Cow Bay on Nov. 11 (BM,IAM,FLL).

A very pleasant surprise in the form of a PACIFIC LOON was enjoyed by many in the Cow Bay and Cole Harbour areas. On Nov. 8, PM and BS discovered the bird in Cow Bay and reported it on the Rare Bird Alert. RF saw it the same day. It was later discovered at Cole Harbour on Nov. 11 (BM). Descriptions by BS and PM are on file.

Breeding records for COMMON LOON came from Lake Warren, CBHNP (L&PP, July 12), Catalone Gut (GC/JC, Aug. 31), and Porter's Lake, Digby County (BJA, Sept. 5). A nest on an island in Powder Mill Lake, Waverley (BJA) could be seen from the shore, but it is not known whether this was a successful attempt or not. Late fall salt-water groups included 40 at Crescent Beach (ELM, Nov. 1), and 35+ (same ones?) at Cherry Hill on Nov. 7 (JSC et al.).

There were two breeding records of PIED-BILLED GREBE: an adult with 3 young was in the Eddy Marsh at Amherst on June 20 (RBS et al.), and an adult with 5 young was reported from Apple River on July 12 (KS). All other reports were of one or two birds, at the following locations: New Minas, Kingsburg (Lun. Co), Seal Island, Hartlen's Pt., Little Harbour (Shel. Co.), Cow Bay, Hawk Pt. (Cape Sable Island), and Broad Cove (Lun. Co.).

HORNED GREBES were very lightly reported: three reports of six birds. Locations were Eastern Passage, Mahone Bay and Cow Bay. There were a few reports of 4 or fewer RED-NECKED GREBES, and one of 10 birds at Cow Bay on Nov. 11 (FLL).

--LPMP, ed.

## FULMARS TO CORMORANTS

Blake Maybank, Fulton Lavender et al. saw 5 NORTHERN FULMARS on their pelagic trip off Halifax County on Sept. 13, and 25 out there on Sept. 26. Linda Payzant saw 50 Fulmars from CSS Pariseau, Emerald Basin, June 21. She and I saw at least 100 GREATER SHEARWATERS trailing behind CSS Hudson, as we came up onto Sable Island Bank on October 20. We'd had as many Fulmars as this behind us on Oct. 19, the day before, but they obviously preferred to stay in Newfoundland waters. Angus MacLean saw 20 Fulmars off Neil's Harbour on August 7. In general, Greater Shearwaters were widely reported off Nova Scotia, as we expect at this time of year, but many of the numbers were on the high side. Richard Stern saw "thousands" in the Gulf of Maine on Aug. 15, from the Portland - Yarmouth ferry. On Aug. 30, the MacNeils saw 200 off Brier Island on Sept. 8. The Halls, on Sir William Alexander, saw "100" off Sable Island on Oct. 9. There's only one report of a SOOTY, Alan Murrant's bird off Flint Island, Cape Morien, June 2. I note for the record that there were no reports of CORY'S SHEARWATERS, though we expect to see a few off southern Nova Scotia at this time of year. It is a subtropical species. Linda Payzant and I regularly saw singletons in the Sargasso Sea, on our oceanographic cruise to Morocco on Hudson, between Sept. 17 - Oct. 21. Raymond d'Entremont, fishing on Georges Bank on July 23, says that he was unable to spot a single Cory's, and the MANX SHEARWATER he saw that day was his first of the year. However, Ken McKenna et al. saw 2 Manx off Brier Island on Sept. 14. Ian McLaren saw 6 over the Gully, off Sable Island on July 6; Angus MacLean saw 1 of Neil's Harbour on July 8; Hubert Hall saw 1 from Bluenose, off Yarmouth, Aug. 30.

Alan J. Ruff, of St. Clair Shores, Michigan, sends us details of the AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER that he, Roger Foxall and others saw on Sept. 13, in outer Fundy: about 44° 41' N, 66° 22' W--about 17 n. miles west of Nova Scotia, the nearest point of land.

The full details will be published separately but, to summarize, it was a small "black-and-white" shearwater, about two-thirds the size of the Greater Shearwaters on the water beside it. However, comparison with passing Manx Shearwaters showed that the "black" was actually dark brown, about the colour of a Greater Shearwater's mantle. The white on the underwings and flanks was restricted by dusky patches, with notably less white than on a Manx, the white areas were cleanly defined and so was the dark cap. Given the range of species of comparison, the choice seemed to lie between the Little and Audubon's Shearwaters, with the odds on Audubon's because its flight was not particularly auk-like. Audubon's is a tropical species whose nearest colonies are in Bermuda, and whose non-breeders regularly come as far north as Cape Cod. I think this is the third record for Nova Scotia.

To turn to something even smaller, Richard Stern passes on a report by Marion Zinck, of LEACH'S STORM-PETRELS "singing" near the Gull Rock Road on Brier Island, in August 1991. She was familiar with the birds' song from visits to the colony on Bon Portage Island. She also found active burrows on Brier. I think this is a "first" for Brier. The Sterns also heard birds on Brier, near Pond Cove, at that time. There were scattered pelagic sightings in the Gulf of Maine and over the Scotian Shelf in the summer of 1992. The Halls saw small numbers of Leach's from **Bluenose**, near the Lurcher Shoal, Aug. 30, along with about 30 WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS. However, Richard Stern saw "thousands" of Leach's and Wilson's from **Scotian Prince**, in the middle of the Gulf of Maine, on Aug. 15. Farther north, the MacLeans and others saw at least 150 Wilson's off Neil's Harbour on Sept. 13, while James Taylor saw 6 on Oct. 6 in Northumberland Strait--probably blown inshore by gales. Angus MacLean and his party saw about 150 Wilson's off Neil's Harbour on Aug. 8. At the other end of the province, Raymond d'Entremont saw a Wilson's on Georges Bank, Oct. 4, and says "this is the latest that I've recorded Wilson's Storm-Petrel". However, Fulton Lavender and Angus MacLean saw 1 off Cow Bay on Nov. 13.

Linda Payzant saw a possible BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL, as well as a Leach's and 5 Wilson's in Emerald Basin on June 21. I've also heard unofficially of another possible sighting off Halifax in October; both attracted attention by their gliding flight. This is Leach's cousin from the subtropical eastern Atlantic, not recorded in Canada as yet, though it could easily be overlooked. The two species are virtually identical in the hand, differing only in the dark line down the centre of Leach's white rump, while the Band-rump is all white. This distinction is almost useless at sea--but the birds' flight behaviours are completely different, and are a good field-mark. Linda and I often observed Band-rumps on the **Hudson** cruise to Morocco. Leach's has a jerky, bounding flight, with a "gull-winged" wing silhouette. Band-rumps hold their wings FLAT, gliding and banking like miniature shearwaters, with occasional shallow wing-beats. Our westernmost Band-rump, identified in the hand, was just east of the Grand Banks--and well into the north-west Atlantic. Offshore birders should look out for them.

I'll start the NORTHERN GANNETS with 50+ birds, about two-thirds of them adults, that Linda Payzant and I saw from **Hudson** on Oct. 20, south-west of Sable Island. They appeared as we came up the Slope, and disappeared once we were on the Bank--as though there was a line of Gannets strung out along the shelf-break. However, this was only a segment of their fall migration off Nova Scotia. For example, Fulton Lavender saw 50 birds on Sept. 13, about 50 miles east of Halifax. The Halls, on the **Sir William Alexander**, saw 50 birds of all ages off Sable Island between Oct. 6 - 9. Angus MacLean estimates that there were at least a thousand birds off New Minas, Oct. 5, Raymond d'Entremont saw 25 Gannets in just a few minutes of watching from Cape Sable. The Cohrs saw 30-40, all adults, moving past Green Bay on Nov. 2. Bev Sarty and Peter MacLeod estimated 800 birds passing Chebucto Head during a three hour watch on Nov. 13. Only about half a dozen of these were juveniles from this year. The latest gannet report comes from Angus MacLean, who saw 50, 95% of them adults, off Neil's Harbour on Dec. 7.



Cormorants were also on the move, of course. Richard Stern and his party saw "many, many skiens" off Three Fathom Harbour on Oct. 18, "flying southwards--almost continuous". The Cohrs saw many skeins of DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS, 60-150 birds to a skein, off Crescent Beach and Cherry Hill on Oct. 13 - 15, and 15 GREAT CORMORANTS flying into Green Bay on Nov. 8. Blake Maybank and Ian McLaren saw 50 Greats off Hartlen Point on Oct. 18, "migrating south in formation". The only report from the Fundy side of the province was the 3 Double-crests that Judy Tufts saw off Evangeline Beach on Oct. 25.

--RBBB, ed.

#### HERONS AND ALLIES

Six reports of 8 AM. BITTERNS during fall--the latest on Oct. 19--were barely representative, but none was unusual. GREAT BLUE HERONS were thought to be less common around E. Apple River (KS) and Lockport (DC), and were "as usual" at Marriotts Cove (RDH). There were good post-breeding concentrations of 30 on Cape Sable Island on Sept. 3 (AC,BM) and 21 at Dominion Beach on Sept. 21 (GC), but no one submitted numbers for points in between. A few were noted to mid-November.

No one responded to my queries on Gray Herons on p. 60-61 of the last issue, but I confirmed that some Great Blues have no rufous in the forewing patches, and some have near-white "thighs". Correspondance with Icelanders and with Anthony McGeehan of N. Ireland, produced useful insights (they're looking for "our" birds). Gray Herons are considerably smaller, and even without Great Blues for comparison may seem relatively short-necked (neck tucked like a Night-Heron's) and short legged (only exposing a leg length equal to foot length when flying). Immatures and adults have strong blackish streaks on the foreneck. The "thighs" really are very pale grey, with no warm tone at all. The loreal region on Great Blues is dark, but pale in Grays. I also believe, although this remains to be tested, that our species shows consistently paler yellow on tibia and darker tarsi. Roger Foxall found this summer that Grays have a considerably higher "croak". Early spring birds in Iceland are believed to be E. European migrants deflected on their way back from Africa. We should look most closely at our earliest Great Blues in spring.

A GREAT EGRET was around Canning from Aug. 2 (MG) until at least month's end (var. ob.). Two were flushed from tree perches at Shulie, Cumb. Co., on Oct. 18 (KS et al.). Finally, a single bird reached Dominion Beach, Nov. 4 - 5 (GC, Amu, CM). What was presumably the same SNOWY EGRET, first reported at Three Fathom Harbour on July 4 (AV et al.), frequented the Conrad Beach area until late August (var. ob.). Another was around Canning from Aug. 25 (AM,SM) to at least the 29th. Late migrants were a freshly dead imm. on Sable Island on Oct. 10 (ZL) and a lively one at Hartlen's Point on Oct. 23 (BS,PM). Although several observers apparently saw our recurrent LITTLE EGRET on Bon Portage Island, only two thought to report it (July 4, PM, BS; Sept. 5 - 6, NSBS per PM). An ad. LITTLE BLUE HERON was at W.W. Port Mouton on July 14 (HM), 2 imm. were at the Ducks Unlimited pond at Egerton for ten days on Aug. 16 (KM), and another was on Bon Portage Island on Sept. 7 (KM,CB). An imm. CATTLE EGRET was at Avonport from Oct. 31 to at least Nov. 4 (DU et al.). As usual, BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS were reported during summer from Bon Portage Island (up to 5 imm. and an adult on Sept. 6; NSBS), on Seal Is. (up to 3 ad. on July 12; HH), and Cape Sable Island (up to 3 ad. in summer; var. obs.). Two imm. in mid-September on Brier Island (var. obs.) and 2 more at Lr. W. Pubnico on Nov. 12 (RSD) were on the move. A near-ad. YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON found at Three Fathom Harbour on July 17 (RF) was spotted from time to time in the same area until at least Oct. 24 (var. obs.). Immatures were seen at Mahone Bay on Aug. 14 (BSa), on Cape Sable Island on Sept. 4 (DAM et al.), and on Brier Island on Sept. 17 (AM).

IAM, ed.

## GEESE AND DUCKS

There was only one report of SNOW GOOSE last autumn: a single bird at Hartlen's Point on Oct. 1 (FLL). We also heard of only one BRANT, at Port Howe on July 17 (JWT). Please, birders--take a few moments to send us your sightings! The data reported in these pages depend entirely on your contributions.

An unusual flock of up to 19 CANADA GEESE at Seal Island was thought to be from "feral stock" (IAM). By Sept. 25, they were already being shot at by "the less civilized elements". Four were at Sable Island on Oct. 9 (H&HH). Notable autumn flocks included over 1000 at the Port Joli sanctuary on Sept. 8, 300 at Granite Village on Sept. 13 (DAM), 150+ at the Glace Bay Sanctuary on Oct. 9 (GC), 300 at Windsor on Oct. 15 (B&BT,DH), and about 2000 at Cole Harbour on Nov. 9 (FLL,AJV). It might be of interest to note that the breeding population estimate for the entire Maritimes as given in the **breeding bird atlas** is only 300 pairs.

For the record, a RUDDY SHELDUCK was seen with Canada Geese at Milford on Sept. 15 (IAM,RF), and IAM reminds us that this common collection bird was almost certainly an escape.

Up to 15 WOOD DUCKS were reported at Drain Lake near Halifax. Other reports included 2 at East Apple River, a single female on Sable Island on Sept. 15 (ZL **vide** IAM), 4 young birds at Windsor Junction, and 2 pairs at Publicover Lake off and on all summer (JSC).

Tens of GREEN-WINGED TEAL were reported from many locations. RBS reports "+" all October at the Canard Pond and other ponds in King's County. There were 35 at Seal Island on Sept. 3 (BLM *et al.*), and 25 at Bellevue's Cove, Digby County on Sept. 4 (BJA).

Black ducks appeared in good shape, especially in the Annapolis Valley. Hundreds were reported from the Canard Poultry Pond, Porter's Pt., the Windsor tidal flats and the Corwallis River. A Behavioural Ecology class from UCCB counted Black Ducks on Nov. 6 at three locations: Glace Bay - 241, Wentworth Park, Sydney - 85, and North Sydney - 102 (DBM). As usual, there were thousands in the Halifax Harbour/Bedford Basin/Sullivan's Pond circuit (m. obs.).

MALLARDS were generally ignored or missed, perhaps because their wild status is problematic. However, JWJ mentions 8 at Harris' pond in Canning on Oct. 25. The UCCB class mentioned above, also counted Mallards at the same three locations, with results as follows: Glace Bay - 17, Wentworth Park - 94, and North Sydney - 62 (DBM).

NORTHERN PINTAILS were reported from just three locations: 2 pairs bred on Sable Island (ZL **vide** IAM); a NSBS FT found 5 at the W. Lawrencetown Marsh on Sept. 12 (BS,PM) and the same observers had about 12 there on Oct. 4; and a long series of reports mentions up to 5 at once in Harris' pond near Canning between Oct. 14 and Nov. 9.

We received no reports of breeding BLUE-WINGED TEAL but there were several reports of ones and twos for the Annapolis Valley. KS had 4+ at East Apple River until at least Sept. 29, and a NSBS FT enjoyed 35 in the W. Lawrencetown Marsh on Sept. 12 (BS, PM).

Two male NORTHERN SHOVELLERS were at the Windsor Causeway on May 26, and at least 1 remained until June 18 (JCT). A single female at the W. Lawrencetown Marsh on July 25 (BS,PM) may have lingered until Sept. 24, when 2 females were seen by FLL and visiting Alaskan birder Rich Gordon.

A single male GADWALL at the Lawrencetown Marsh on June 28 (JSC *et al.*) may have been involved in breeding, but the Atlas has no record of breeding closer than APBS. Two birds were there (APBS) on Sept. 29 (AM), and a lone male migrant was in Canning on Nov. 12 and 16 (JCT,FLL,BJA).

A fall group of AMERICAN WIGEON at Harris' pond in Canning fluctuated between 8 and 25 individuals from Oct. 14 on. BLM/IAM speculate that the male and 2 females on Sullivan's Pond in Dartmouth may be the same three birds that spent the last two winters there.

A lone female REDHEAD was in the Eddy Marsh at Amherst on June 6 (PM,AJV,DAM).

RING-NECKED DUCKS are abundant and well-distributed breeders in Nova Scotia, and so we get reports from all over. There were 20 in Drain Lake on June 10 (BJA), small numbers in ponds in the Annapolis Valley during the summer, and a post-breeding lump of 200 at Fuller's Bridge, Framboise, Richmond County from Aug. 2 until Sept. 17 (DBM). The latest record is off 11 at Bull Lake, Digby County on Nov. 9 (BJA).

GREATER SCAUP were reported from three locations: 2 in "Dottie's Pond", Three Fathom Harbour on June 6 figure in a Big Day count (BLM), but only one remained there by July 14. The Pictou Causeway location had over 300 on Aug. 12, and by Sept. 4 there were about 900 (KM). JSC saw 240 in Fish Lake, Oakfield Park on Oct. 23. Our only report of LESSER SCAUP comes from Sable Island, where there was a single male from Oct. 9 to Oct. 11 (ZL file IAM).

COMMON EIDER were reported in good numbers from Louisbourg to Seal Island and up into the Bay of Fundy. RSD commented "It's been a great year for Common Eiders around here". IAM saw a few broods of about 6 young on June 10 at Seal Island, with about 350 pairs of adults present. DAM noted about 1000 at Hunt's Point on Sept. 14, and BJA saw 700 at Belleveau's Cove, Digby County on Nov. 10.

A very early (or very late) adult male HARLEQUIN DUCK was at Seal Island on June 12 and 13 (IAM). He comments that this bird showed no sign of illness or injury. At a more usual time of year, JSC had a male in eclipse at Pollack Point, Lun. Co., Nov. 10.

OLDSQUAW began arriving in the province around June 24, with a single male at Broad Cove (SJF). Groups were not reported until Oct. 31, when BS,PM had around 30 at Cow Bay. There were 15 at Munroe's Island, Pictou Co., Nov. 8 (KM), 20 in the Glace Bay Sanctuary on Nov. 9 (GC), and 40 at Cole Harbour on Nov. 11 (BLM,IAM).

A few BLACK SCOTERS were at Conrad's Beach in June, but the usual numbers began to show up in late summer, with 16 at Green Bay on Sept. 2 (JSC). There were no reports for October, but in the first two weeks of November we had about 24 in the Green Bay/Crescent Beach area, 10 at Cole Harbour and 3 at Cow Bay. SURF SCOTERS were about as usual, with six reports of about 130 birds. The earliest report was 50 at Economy on Sept. 19 (EPS). Only small numbers of WHITE-WINGED SCOTER appeared. Most reports were of fewer than 10, although RDH had 17 at Sandy Cove on Oct. 9, and there were 28 at Evangeline Beach on Oct. 25 (JCT).

Only two observers reported COMMON GOLDENEYE: there were 2 moulting females at Mabou on July 11 (WJC), and KJM had 3 at Wallace on July 20, followed by 200+ at the Pictou Causeway on Nov. 8.

There were three reports of good-sized groups of BUFFLEHEADS. DJA saw 22 at Digby on Oct. 28, JSC reports that her 30 at Petite Riviere on Nov. 1 were "back as usual at the usual time", and GC had 30 in the Glace Bay Sanctuary on Nov. 9.

HOODED MERGANSERS were reported in numbers starting on Oct. 10, when BJA had 9 in Bedford Basin. KJM had 25 at Lyons Brook, Pic. Co., Oct. 31, and there were 60 in the Annapolis Royal DU pond on Nov. 11 (BLF). All but one of these were females or males in eclipse.

Our only (!) report of COMMON MERGANSER is of 12 birds in the Glace Bay sanctuary on Oct. 9 (GC). However, several observers reported RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS, including possible nesting at Munroes Island, Pic. Co. (KM) and an adult with 8 young on Porter's Lake, Digby Co., in early August (BJA). There were rafts of 50 to 150 at Port Howe on the Northumberland Strait on Oct. 15 (JWT), and several hundreds at Waterside Park on Oct. 24 (KM).

We have three widely-spaced reports of RUDDY DUCK: 2 birds at APBS on Jun 6 (BLM), 1 at Crescent Beach on Aug. 14 (JSC), and 1 at Upham Creek, Col. Co., Oct. 25 (KM).

--LPMP,ed.

#### DIURNAL RAPTORS

TURKEY VULTURES were in ones or twos near Argyle on June 16 (JC) and Metegan on Aug. 8 (BJA). Four ads. on June 4 at Tidville, Digby Neck, were more significant, but only ones or twos were reported in summer from the Neck and Brier Island. From late September to Oct. 12 up to 7 birds were on Brier Is. and (sev. Obs.). Far more exciting was our sixth Nova Scotian BLACK VULTURE at East Margaretsville, Anna. Co., in early September. The bird was apparently first spotted by John Little and John Rubin on Sept. 5 (later reported to RBD), and then seen by a number of local residents up to Sept. 10. It was very well videotaped by Don Jamieson (thanks to JWW for securing a copy). The screen reveals a very alert and healthy bird, albeit with two porcupine quills sticking out of its head! We may wonder if this was the same individual spotted by JCz last spring. Also, given three-plus recent occurrences in eastern Canada during early winter, we should all keep our eyes open.

OSPREYS seemed to be in usual numbers in the usual places. A note on a nesting on an island in Pubnico Harbour does not indicate if this is a traditional site. The latest reported was over Halifax on Oct. 23 (JSC). A tantalizing report of a possible MISSISSIPPI KITE comes from BS and PM (who has seen the species in the southern U.S.). Although the bird was only seen briefly as it approached and passed over a hill, the description of its colouration ("gray...a few dusky spots on breast...tail darker with two white bands") and shape ("wings narrower near the body...outer primary...short...body long and tubular...tail long") certainly suggest a subadult of this species. It is worth noting that there have been several records in New England, including Maine, this year and last -- all, however, in spring. The few reports of BALD EAGLES don't imply any change in status. Curiously, sticks were being carried on Oct. 16 to the successful nest site at Greenwich (fide HM)-- shoring it up for winter? Breeding season reports of N. HARRIERS came from Yarmouth to Cape Breton Co. Fall migration seemed a trickle, with reported maximum day counts of 6 on Bon Portage Island, Oct. 2-4 (JCZ), 5 on Brier Island on Oct. 10 (ELM,IAM), and 5 at Grand Pré on Oct. 21 (PCS). Of interest was an imm. on Nov. 11 near Caribou Harbour with big wing tags, left red and right yellow (KM,CB). Can anyone enlighten?

SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS as usual were little in evidence during summer. The first undoubted migrant was on Seal Island on Aug. 26. They only reported respectable counts of passage birds were of 5 in Yarmouth on Sept. 21 (HH), 8 on Seal Island on Sept. 26, and 20-25 on Brier Island on Oct. 10-11 (IAM,ELM). They were lining up at feeders from early September. We have reports of 3 COOPER'S HAWKS with better-than-usual details. The first was a "large-sized" (i.e., presumed fem.) imm. bird at Evangeline Beach on Aug. 25, with relatively large head, a long, narrow, rounded, terminally white tail, white back markings, heavy breast streaks and white belly region all noted (JTU,JT,LB). All the same field marks were noted on an imm. male on Seal Island Sept. 26-27 (IAM,DW, Ben Doane). One near Wolfville on Oct. 3 was "i.d'd by head projection, rounded tail and size" (AM). We have reports of 4 N. GOSHAWKS from August and of 7 scattered individuals during fall. No details were submitted on 2 RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS seen in Shel. Co., July 20, one in Oakpark and the other in Port Saxon (HH). Astonishingly, there were only 4 reports of single BROAD-WINGED HAWKS, along with a sighting of 10 on Brier Island on Oct. 10 (ELM,IAM). Also, there were no reports of significant movements of RED-TAILED HAWKS, assuming that up to 9 in the Canning area on Oct. 28 were presumably settling in (JT, BTT). The first ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was noted at Grand Pré on Oct. 25 (JTU), and up to 3 had appeared in the area by Nov. 3. Another was at Caribou Island on Nov. 9 (CB). A GOLDEN EAGLE with golden hackles, but with white on tail and primary bases, was closely observed near Exit 8, Hwy 102, on the unusual date of July 12 (JCz). Presumably it was a wandering subadult. No details were submitted on an ad. seen on Brier Island on Sept. 27 (PM,JK).

The usual smattering of reports of summering and migrant AM. KESTRELS included no unusual sightings or events. A groups of 5-8 birds (a family or early migrants?) were at Grand Pré on Aug. 14 (BBT), 5 on Seal Island on Sept. 5, and a peak of 20 on Brier Island, Oct. 10-11. MERLINS commanded more attention. We know from the Atlas that they nest widely in the province. A brood of 2 was noted through late July at Maders Cover (B&JMo). A family group was noted on Monroe's Island, Pictou Co., July 20 (KM). Four fledged at Petersfield Historic Park, C.B. Co., on Jly 26 (Michael Novak), and 5 left the nest on Aug. 1 on the Acadia Campus (BLF,CKC). Another active family of 3 was at Smelt Brook, Vic. Co., on Aug. 9-10 (AM). There were 14 reports of ca. 22 scattered fall migrants and paltry peaks of 6 on Brier Island on Aug. 23 (AM), 6 on Seal Island on Sept. 5 (BM et al.). An adult PEREGRINE FALCON around Evangeline Beach and Starrs Point in early Aug. (JGI,PS) may have nested within foraging range. The provenance of 2 at Big Pond, C.B. Co., on Aug. 15 (CM,AMu) is debatable. The reported total of only 10 scattered fall migrants was the lowest in some years. A white-phase GYRFALCON swooping along Cape Mabou Road in the Mabou Highlands on Oct. 24 was a thrill for Cathy and Alan Murrant.

Severe under-reporting of raptors this autumn seems evident. To the above we can add a report of "100+?" unspecified hawks seen on Sept. 26 along the North Mountain near Burlington (*vide* DO) and a smallish flurry of mixed species at Green Bay between Sept. 29 and Oct. 1 (JSC). Surely bigger movements occurred somewhere, sometime.

#### GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

A GRAY PARTRIDGE near Canning on June 1 (GT) and two flocks of 14 and 8 summering around Starrs Point (*vide* GT) indicate that they still cling to life in Kings Co. Four were at Economy on Sept. 19 (EPS). RING-NECKED PHEASANTS flourish, and were reported in the usual places. A brood of 5 imm. with parents at the Thexton's feeder at Wolfville were from "a probable third nesting—the first two nests were destroyed by raccoons." Odd behaviour of a male at Broad Cove, attacking cars and people with a vim, drew attention through summer. The bird was still at it on Nov. 8, when JSC seemed to savour the fact that for the first time in "thirty years of birding" she was "attacked by a pheasant"; yet another life list? Broods of 5, 3+ and 6+ SPRUCE GROUSE were noted in summer. In fall, 7 scattered sightings and 2 roadkills along the Chignecto north shore (KS) were slightly above average. RUFFED GROUSE populations also seemed healthy. Two nests with 7 eggs each were found in the Apple River area (KS), and 7 broods (3 averaging 7.3 chicks) were reported from Cape Breton Island to Yarmouth County. Fall abundance is suggested by AMu's day count of 12 near

Boularderie on Nov. 8 and a note by CJH that she knows of 25 bagged (and 5 still remaining!) in the East Chezzetcook area.

#### RALLIDS, CRANE

The only reported VIRGINIA RAIL was flushed from a ditch near APBS on Sept. 29 (AM). Breeding-season SORAS were at Drain Lake, Hfx. Co. (BJA) and at Apple River, where KS found a pair with chick on July 12. A migrant reached Georges Bank on Aug. 12, finding "no place to hide aboard the boat" (RSD). A COMMON MOORHEN was at APBS on June 20 for NSBS field trippers. A vagrant appeared at Green Bay, June 14-19 (LC,JSC), and a late migrant was at Canning on Nov. 8 (BJA). Our only report of AM. COOT was of a migrant on Bon Portage Island on Oct. 12 (NSBS trip). Surely more were seen. An astonishing group of SANDHILL CRANES was seen flying east, just north of Kentville, on Nov. 3 (AM). They were thought to be heading toward Grand Pré, but were not seen again in the area. However, next day Gary McMahon saw 2 flying over HWY 102 (fide BH). Clearly these birds are becoming regular, if not commonplace.

--IAM, ed.

#### FALL SHOREBIRDS

Twelve northward-bound BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS were still at Cook's Beach, May 30 (H&HH). At Grand Pré about the same number were present June 27 and July 2 (JTU *et al.*), perhaps failed nesters southward-bound. Only a few were present later in July, from 3 at Glace Bay on the 14th WJC and other, to 22 on the 31st (no loc.--C&AM). The largest gathering reported was of about 300 at Grand Pré, Aug. 3-4 (JTU), with 60 there for the nest three weeks (BJM,JTU). RBS notes that numbers this year were "way down" in the area, last year's maximum having been about 1000. Still, there were 120 at Cape Sable, Sept. 3 (BM,AC) and 150 at Economy, Sept. 16-19 (EPS), and SJF's bi-weekly counts at Cherry Hill were slightly higher this year than in the past two. Small numbers were recorded until Nov. 10, when 6 were at Grand Pré (JTU). A LESSER GOLDEN-PLOVER in breeding plumage was on Seal Island, Aug. 24 (IAM), perhaps the same one reported there Sept. 4-6 (BM *et al.*); also in breeding plumage was 1 at Lewis Head, Sept. 8 (J&SC). About 80 were seen elsewhere in Sept.-- 10 on Sable Island (ZL), 15 at Hartlen's Point (Fil *et al.*) and 55 in the Minas Basin (BBT,EPS). Another 50 were noted in October, most of them at Yarmouth airport on the 23rd (HH); 5 were still at Grand Pré, Nov. 10 (JTU). An early SEMIPALMATED PLOVER was at Grand Pré, July 2, 100 there by the 25th and 475, the maximum, on Aug. 4. Numbers declined gradually to 200 on Aug. 18 (all recds.--JTU). At the same time 1000+ were at Cherry Hill (J&SC), and a week later c. 800 at Three Fathom Harbour (BS,GM), where there were still 100 on Sept. 24 (FLL,RG). About 60 remained through October, with 1 still at Glace Bay on Nov. 6 (DBM) and 2 at Church Point, Digby Co., Nov. 15 (BJA). The only breeding-season news of the PIPING PLOVER comes from Cherry Hill, where only 2 of 4 pairs persevered into July and had at best, limited success raising chicks (SJF), with 2 juveniles reported Aug. 7 (G&JTU). The only other juvenile noted was at Lockeport, Aug. 14-15 (DJC *et al.*) Late August reports are of 1 at Lawrencetown (DAM) and on Cape Sable Island (RSD). KILLDEER reports were few this summer, and breeding success may have been lower than usual. One was seen far offshore Sept. 15 by the pelagic trip out of Halifax (BM *et al.*)

Six GREATER YELLOWLEGS lingered at Conrad's Beach, June 2-8 (IAM), as did 1 at Canning, June 10-11 (AM,G&JTU), where 24 migrants had arrived by July 24, the number rising to 35 by Aug. 2 (JTU). At Conrad's there were 60, Sept. 24 (FLL,RG). Elsewhere small numbers were reported through October and early November, with 5 still at Port Williams, Nov. 7 (JTU) and 1 last at Economy, Nov. 15 (FS). An early LESSER YELLOWLEGS was on Brier, July 2 (EM,IAM). Largest numbers were 50, Aug. 22 (BM,IAM) and 80, Sept. 12 (FLL,RG). The last report is of 2 at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 14 (FLL,JWT,BJA). Nine SOLITARY SANDPIPERS were noted, all singles, from Aug. 2 at Canard (JTU) to Sept. 30 at Green Bay (JSC). WILLETS were beginning to gather as early as July 2, when 38 were at Wolfville Harbour (JTU). A bird on 4 eggs June 14 "sat so tight I had to place my hand underneath her breast to see the contents" (RSD). No fall dates for the species were reported. A SPOTTED SANDPIPER'S nest with 4

eggs was discovered Jly 1 at North River, Victoria Co. (GC,RH). Otherwise the species was lightly reported: on Seal, Sept. 26-27 (AM et al.), at Pubnico, Oct. 23 (RSD) and, verylate, on Caribou Is., Pict. Co., Nov. 9 (CB).

Three UPLAND SANDPIPERS were seen this summer. The first was near Stewiake, July 3 on the "Hunter's Loop"(?) by a Bucks Co., Pa., Aud. Soc. field trip (fide JTu). The second record, July 4 on Big Is., Pict. Co., constitutes the first breeding record for the province. A young bird and an adult performing distraction displays were seen that day (BM,KM,CB), the adult again on the 12th (KM).

About 40 WHIMBRELS were reported from July 10 to month's end, more than half of them from Cape Breton, including seldom-visited Scatari Island (DBM et al.). The largest flock was 14-15 at Glace Bay on the 14th (BM,WJC,DBM). Similar numbers occurred in Aug., with 17 at Grand Pré, Aug. 8 (BBT) and Prospect, Aug. 22 (BS). Mid-Sept. saw the last sizeable flocks, 12 at Baccaro on the 13th (DAM) and 13 at Hartlen's Pt on the 15th (FLL,BA). Late singles were at Grand Pré Oct. 21 (PCS) and Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 23 (BS,PM). There were already 21 HUDSONIAN GODWITS at Matthews Lake, July 19 (DHY). Other July sightings were of 5 at Lawrencetown on the 25th (BS,L&PP) and 12 at Pt. Morien on the 31st (C&AM). A few were at Grand Pré until Aug. 20 (JTU); 9 at Cole Harbour, Aug. 6 declined to 6, Aug. 22 (BM,IAM). Smaller numbers persisted well into Sept. 6-7 at Matthews Lake, Sept. 19 (NSBS), singles elsewhere, with very late birds (2) at Daniel's Hd. ("incredibly tame" - RSD) and at Crescent Beach (1 - ELM) on Nov. 1. A MARBLED GODWIT was at Port Howe, Cumb. Co., not far, it was noted, from its favoured Sand Pt. stop-off (PM et al.).

100 RUDDY TURNSTONES were at Three Fathom Harbour, Aug. 6 (BS,PM), the largest group reported this season. There were still 70 at Hartlen's Pt., Sept. 12 (FLL et al.), 50 at Pt. Pleasant Park, Sept. 18 (BJA), and only 1, October report, of "a very pathetic-looking juvenile" on Sable Island on the 8th (H&HH). RED KNOTS were not numerous, about 50 sighted in all, from 6, July 27 at Fox Harbour, Cumb. Co. (NSBS), thereafter only a dozen in August, 22 in September, of which 13 were at Framboise, C.B., Sept. 8 (DBM). There were still 7 at Three Fathom Harbour, Nov. 7 (BM,IAM). The first SANDERLINGS were 2 at Grand Pré, July 25 (JTU), 100+ there by July 30 (RBS) and 200 at Cherry Hill, July 29 (SJF). A few flocks of 80-100 could be found from mid-September to mid-October at Conrad's (BS,PM,FLL), Crescent (JSC) and Cherry Hill (SJF), but DHY's comment that "numbers were down over 50% from previous seasons" may be justified for much of the province. There were still 20 at Economy, Nov. 15 (FS). Two early SEMPALMATED SANDPIPERS were at Starr's Pt., Ping's Co., June 30 (PS) and by July 11-12, small numbers had appeared at Wolfville Hbr. (JTU) and Seal (H&HH,ER). The increase at Wolfville Hbr., was steady: 90, July 16, 250 on July 23, about which time Grand Pré had 8-10,000, a figure that on Aug. 4 had risen to an estimated 30-40,000 and, a "guesstimate", to 120,000+ on Aug. 20 (thanks to JTu for all the above figures). Later flocks of 300-350 were at Cape Sable, Sept. 3 (BM,AC), Hartlen's Pt. and Three Fathom Hbr., Sept. 11, and 24 (FLL et al.) with 8 laggards at Economy, Oct. 29 (FS) and 1 at Crescent, Oct. 31 (SJF). LEAST SANDPIPERS were not numerous this fall, 100+ at Canard Pond, July 23 (RBS) and 50 at Cape Sable, Sept. 3 (BM,AC) being the only sizeable flocks. The earliest WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS were seen Aug. 8 (AM - no loc.), with large flocks at Framboise (120) on Sept. 17 (DBM) and at Evangeline (150) on Oct. 23 (DBM) and widespread reports of smaller numbers, the last of 12 on Nov. 11 at Three Fathom Hbr. (BM,IAM). At least a dozen BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS were reported, half from the Halifax area, Aug. 17 - Sept. 12 and Oct. 5 (one)--(FLL et al.). Dates for the PECTORAL SANDPIPER range from Aug. 8, when 2 were at Canard (RBS) to Nov. 6 when 1 was at Cherry Hill (J&SC). A total of 50+ were reported all told, including flocks of 15 near Northport, Sept 20 (NSBS) and at Conrad's Beach, Sept. 24 (FLL,RG). Our wintering PURPLE SANDPIPERS made this issue's deadline with room to spare: 1 was on Caribou Is. (Pic. Co.) Oct. 24 (KM,CB), and 8 were at Crescent (SJF) and Black Pt., Lun. Co. in Nov. (SC). Early DUNLIN were 4-6 at Wolfville Hbr., July 16 (JTU). Evangeline Beach hosted 25+ Oct. 3 and 23 (FLL,DBM), with reports of half a dozen or less elsewhere; 6 were still at Economy on Nov. 15 (FS). Two STILT SANDPIPERS were at Canard, Aug. 2-6 (RBS,JTu), 1 each at West Chezzetcook and Crescent, Aug. 16-17 (DAM,A&SM). One was at Conrad's, Sept. 24 (FLL,RG), 4 were there on the rather late date of Oct. 18 (BM,FLL,RF). Only 4 BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS appeared this fall: Sept. 11 and 24 in the Halifax area, Oct. 7 at Port Morien (A&CM) and Sable Is. (H&HH). An immature RUFF was at

Matthews Lake, July 23 (AC).

An early SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER was at Northport, July 5 (WJC); by July 13, 200+ were at Windsor (BBT) with like numbers at Pinkney's Pt. (H&HH) and Conrad's (L&PP) in the third week of July. Numbers peaked in early August, when 500 were at Grand Pré (JTU). Only a few were reported later, the last being 9 at Crescent, Sept 25 (FLL et al.) and 1 at Cherry Hill on Oct. 3 (SJF). A LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER was at Conrad's Beach on Oct. 18 (RF,BM,FLL). COMMON SNIPE were lightly reported, 3 in summer, 2 later at Starr's Pt., Kings Co., Nov. 6 (B&ST), 6 together, Nov. 8 at Canning (JWW). The secretive AMERICAN WOODCOCK was noted three times: at Brier, Sept. 13-14 (KM,CB), at Bon Portage (2) Oct. 10-11 (NSBS) and at Margo, Digby Co., Nov. 11 (BJA).

FS, ed.

#### PHALAROPES TO PUFFINS

We have a number of phalarope reports for this issue. On Bluenose, Aug. 30, the Halls saw small, scattered flocks of RED and RED-NECKED PHALAROPES west of the Lurcher Shoal, in outer Fundy. Fulton Lavender and others, saw 3 Reds about fifteen miles east of Halifax on Sept. 13, and 2 Red-necked closer to shore. He saw another 3 Reds about 25 miles SW of Halifax on Sept. 25. Ian McLaren saw a Red in basic plumage near Sable Island on July 4, and 2 ad. birds there on July 8. Ken McKinnon saw single Reds off the Caribou ferry dock on Nov. 2 and 8. The MacNeills saw 20 Reds off Brier Island on Aug. 9, and 50 Red-necked on Sept. 8. Edgar Spalding's party saw 30 Red-necked Phalaropes there on Sept. 14. Closer to land, Roy John saw 15 Red-necked off Portuguese Cove on Aug. 8. Bev Sarty saw 3 WILSON'S PHALAROPES at Conrad's Beach on Sept. 6, Roger Foxall saw one there on Sept. 20, and he, Blake Maybank and Fulton Lavender saw an immature bird at the same site on Oct. 18.

On Sept. 9-10 Carl Haycock of BIOS took one of his whale/seabird cruises to Brown's Bank, Roseway Basin and other areas about forty miles south of Cape Sable. He saw skuas and jaegers in this poorly-known area. Linda Payzant, on CSS Parizeau, saw a light morph SOUTH POLAR SKUA in Roseway Basin on June 21. Francis Spalding saw another light-morph South Polar off Brier on Sept. 13. Ian McLaren and David Wingate saw a dark-morph skua off Seal Island on Sept. 28. The warm tone of its feathers suggested that this was a GREAT SKUA (or BONXIE). Richard Gordon and others saw an immature Bonxie about twenty miles south of Halifax on Sept. 26. To complete the story, Raymond d'Entremont saw a Bonxie on Georges Bank on Aug. 20, and another on Oct. 5. Hubert Hall had an excellent view of a dark-morph Bonxie from Bluenose on Aug. 30, about forty miles west of Yarmouth.

The only report of a LONG-TAILED JAEGER is the 1 that Carl Haycock and Eric Mills saw off Brier on Aug. 22. Raymond d'Entremont saw a PARASITIC JAEGER on Georges Bank on July 23. Fulton Lavender and group saw 1 adult and 2 immature Parasitics about fifty miles east of Halifax on Sept. 13, and 3 first-years and 1 adult off Harbourville, Queen's Co., on Oct. 3. As usual POMARINES were the commonest Jaegers. The Halls saw 3 (or one bird three times?) just north of Sable Island on Oct 6. Raymond d'Entremont saw 3 on Georges Bank on Aug. 19; there were 15 jaegers there, mainly Pomarines, circling his boat, on Sept. 11. This was probably the biggest jaeger flock that he has seen. Peter MacLeod saw a Pomarine off Chebucto Head on Aug. 1. Fulton Lavender et al. saw 1 adult and 1 immature off Purcell's Cove on Sept. 13.

HERRING and GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS were their usual exuberant selves, and I'll pass them by. Donna Crosby and Ruby Stauffer saw 1 adult LESSER BLACK-BACK on Lockeport Beach on Sept. 5, and it's still there. They suspect that it's the bird that has spent the last two winters there. The first ICELAND GULL was 1 adult bird that Dave McQuorquodale saw at the National Sea plant at North Sydney on Oct. 17. In mainland Nova Scotia, Donna Crosby's (1) first bird was well to the south, in Lockeport Harbour on Nov. 3. David Currie's first bird (1) of the fall at Tribune Head was on Nov. 7. Our only report of a GLAUCOUS GULL so far is the 1 bird that Bev Sarty and Peter MacLeod saw at Hartlen's Point on Nov. 8.



I just don't know what to make of the IVORY GULL that Stephen Smith and Eva Urban saw in Oxford on Oct. 5. This is the most Arctic gull of all, breeding as far north as you can go. It winters in the pack-ice off Labrador, very occasionally reaching Cape Breton. But this one was sitting on a garage roof, framed in green leaves, in the centre of Nova Scotia's apple country! The observers had a good view of it through binoculars. Eva writes: "it was all-white with black legs, dark bill with a lighter tip, typical gull head." They watched for half an hour, at a range of eighty feet. It was scared off by a car before they could come close enough for a good photo, but as it left, they "had a good look at its black leggs, short body and wings that seemed too long". The slide that they sent me is poor, with no indicator of size to show that it wasn't a subadult Iceland Gull, for example. But it does show an all-white bird with a small head, stretching a rather long wing. This is consistent with the Ivory Gulls that I've seen in the Arctic.

Ken McKenna saw 1 adult and 1 second year LAUGHING GULL at Merigomish Is. on July 19, and a second year at Powell Point on July 27. He saw an adult BLACK-HEADED GULL in winter plumage at Powell Point on Sept. 26. Bill Crin saw a moulting adult at Northport on July 5. Dave McQuorkadale reports 6 adults in Glace Bay Harbour on Nov. 6. James Taylor estimated 100 BONAPARTE'S GULLS at Powell Point Provincial Point on July 10, and 700 at Waterside Park, Pic. Co., on Nov. 2. He says they were "numerous" at Port Howe from late July onwards. Eric Mills saw 100+ off Westport, Cumb. Co., on Aug. 16/17. Our RING-BILLED GULL reports include the 9 'very pristine' adults, with a juvenile, that Merritt Gibson and Judy Tufts saw in Harris' Pond, Canning, on Aug. 8. Francis Spalding saw 2 on Brier Island on Sept. 13. Dave McQuorkadale estimates 300 adults and 5-10 immature birds in Munroe Park, North Sydney, between Aug. 20 and Oct. 20. Bev Sarty and Peter MacLeod have a western stray to report: the 1 adult FRANKLIN'S GULL in winter plumage that they saw on Nov. 13--they don't say where. It was a small gull with a half-hood and a slate-grey mantle. The wing-tips were white and the black on the outer primaries was separated from the grey by a conspicuous white that ran across the entire wing. That fits Franklin's Gull pretty well. Dave McQuorkadale reported BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES breeding at Cape Pearce, C.B. Co., July 14. Helen and Hubert Hall saw only 5-10 Kittiwakes when they were anchored off Sable Island on Oct. 6-9. On Oct. 20, Angus MacLean saw 25-30 moving north off New Haven, C.B. Bev Sarty and Peter MacLeod saw 10 flying past Chebucto Head on Nov. 13. Fulton Lavender *et al.* saw 6 off Halifax County on their offshore trip on Sept. 13.

It feels odd to be writing about terns on a snowy day in December but, of course, we have the usual assortment of late summer reports to put on record. On June 13, Shirley Cohrs and her party counted 1300+ COMMON and ARCTIC TERNS sitting on nests on one islet in Mahone Bay, and 300+ on another one. Richard Stern and his party saw "probably up to 2,000 terns in the bay, on Grassy Island on June 14. The Payzants saw 12 Commons with chicks at Englishtown Ferry, C.B. July 12. The latest sightings are 1 adult and 1 immature Arctic seen on Sept. 13, from one of Fulton Lavender's cruises, about fifty miles off Hfx. Co. James Taylor, Bev Sarty and Peter MacLeod saw a BLACK TERN at Conrad's Beach on Aug. 6. It's been a good summer for CASPIAN TERNS. Bill Crins' party saw an adult at Sydney South Bar on June 10; the Payzants saw another in the Wallace Wildlife Area on Aug. 10; Donna Crosby saw 1 on Lockeport Beach on Aug. 22; Don Codling saw another singleton at the Amherst Point Sanctuary on Sept. 9; the field trip on Sept. 20 found 6 Caspians at Linden, and 1 at the Amherst Shore. However, our best tern was the ROYAL TERN that Eric and Anne Mills saw flying east off Linden, Cumb.Co., on Aug. 17, well if briefly seen at a range of 200 m.

Bev Sarty and Peter MacLeod saw our first DOVEKIES: a total of about 50 birds, flying in flocks past Chebucto Head. Richard Stern's party saw 2 RAZORBILLS OFF Pearl Island on June 14: Blake Maybank and Ian McLaren saw another couple, in basic plumage, off Cole Harbour on Nov. 11. As usual, we had small numbers of BLACK GUILLEMOTS in small numbers around our coasts: for instance, the 2 that Kathleen and Cindy Spicer saw off Eatonville Harbour on July 24, and the 3 that George Crowell saw off Gooseberry Cove on Aug. 31. On a slightly larger scale, Blake Maybank's party saw 10 off Seal Island on Sept. 5, and Richard Stern's group saw 50-60 in Mahone Bay on June 14.

I come at last to the ATLANTIC PUFFIN, our totem, and the only bird that can stop a whale cruise dead in its tracks. Our reports cover the waterfront pretty well. Don MacNeill saw 5 from a BIOS cruise off Brier Island on Sept. 8, and my old friend Illegible saw 5 from a cruise on Sept. 14. Bill Crins' party saw 1 adult on July 12, off Scaterie Island. Allan Murrant saw 1 near Flint Island on Oct. 9. The Cohrs' group saw 60-70 birds in Mahone Bay on June 14. Angus McLean saw 2 adults off Neil's Harbour on Aug. 7. Finally, Ian McLaren has an interesting report from Seal Island. "Ron Kenney tells me that a pair (?) hangs around Noddy Island and Mud Island this summer". I'm sure we all wish them the best of luck!

POSTSCRIPT: an important record that was mis-sorted, and didn't surface until after I'd submitted the "Fulmars to Cormorants" section. On July 25-27, Ian McLaren saw "thousands of Greater Shearwaters and Leach's Storm-Petrels". The ratio of Greater to Sooty Shearwaters as 25:1. That of Leach's to Wilson's Storm-Petrels was 100:1.

—RGBB, ed.

#### DOVES TO KINGFISHERS

The province's tenth WHITE-WINGED DOVE stayed at a feeder near Port Morien from Aug. 20 to Sept. 3 (CM), and was a fine lifer for a number of birders. A few MOURNING DOVES frequented some feeders through summer, but larger numbers, like 37 arriving Oct. 17 at a Port Morien feeder (AMu,CM), did not turn up until after peak migration. One certain migrant reached Seal Island on Aug. 28 (IAM), and a definite movement was evident in lower Lun. Co. and Queens Co. on Sept. 3 (J&JSC). Of interest was an apparent albino (with pink eyes) at Avondale, June 6-20 (VGC, **fide** JWW).

Migration in BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS seems a little confusing. A late spring migrant on June 11 was noted in the last issue. A bird was on summer terrain near Wallace Bay on July 23 (JWT), yet a certifiable fall migrant was on Bon Portage Island, Aug. 3 (RBS). This was followed by 2 island sightings on Aug. 25 and Sept. 3, but none later. YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS, which don't summer, behaved more predictably, with 8+ birds (including probably more than one at Hartlen's Pt.) sighted between July 26 and Oct. 23.

Another BARN OWL materialized, as usual unticked by birders. Its feet found on Aug. 27 at Moody L., near Halifax, were thoughtfully brought to the N.S. Museum for identification by Blaine MacDonald and Heiko Elsing. Evidently it was a victim of a GREAT HORNED OWL. Summer sightings of Great Horneds included 2 or 3 fledglings on June 18 at Overton (HH), and a fledgling (1 of 2) on May 19 at Apple R., with beak and feet full of porcupine quills (see photo); it was rehabilitated, but one of its parents was mortally struck by a car on May 22 (KS). The season's first SNOWY OWLS were at Pubnico Pt. on Nov. 7 (Maurice d'Eon) and at the Halifax airport on Nov. 10 (**fide** BS). We have no report on success of BLF's BARRED WOLS, except that 2 fledglings were noted from one nest on June 11 (AM,G&JT). There were reports of 7 post-August birds, some vocal. A calling LONG-EARED OWL on June 6 near Eagle L., Hfx. Co. (BM et al.) was in a new locality. There was no word on the pair(s) on Bon Portage Is., but one was seen there by NSBS field trippers on Oct. 10. A dearth of information on summering SHORT-EARED OWLS was ended by reports of up to 3 at Grand Pré on Oct. 20-23 (**fide** JWW) and a bird at Conrad's Beach on Nov. 10 (**fide** JWT). Apparently a dead BOREAL OWL was picked up near the Cheticamp entrance to C.B.H. Nat. Park in late April (David Lawley), but no live ones were reported. A few SAW-WHET OWLS were calling in early summer, and 2 continued to do so at Glenwood as late as Sept. 21 (RSD). On Bon Portage, 5 migrants were netted and banded on Oct. 10-11, and 6 more on Oct. 31 - Nov. 1. The N. HAWK OWLS at Tatamagouche were not reported after April but a pair (2) observed near Belle Cote, Vic. Co., until at least July 24 (Ansel Bray) was surely nesting in the area.

Were COM. NIGHTHAWKS scarce? Two observers (BA,RDH) thought so, and 1 on June 11 was the spring's first for JSC at Green Bay. Were 15 on June 9 in Dartmouth (JWT) migrants? We do have four reports of migrant flocks of ca. 15 to 50 birds between July 31 and Aug. 22. However, I received word from a visiting Dutch birder of flocks totalling 1200 birds over St. Stephen, N.B., on Aug. 25; clearly we are on the fringes. The latest were 2 birds on Seal Is. on Sept. 3 (BM et al.). Our only WHIPPOOR-WILLS were two heard by a number of listeners at Long L., Herring Cove, June 6-23. Wolfville's CHIMNEY SWIFTS again stole the show. There were scattered reports from elsewhere on the southern mainland, including a repeat nesting in East Dalhousie (3 fledged; JWW). They were said to be "quite common in Amherst and Oxford this year" (JWW), and 100 were seen entering the Temperance St. Chimney in New Glasgow on July 7 (KM). Jim Wolford as usual summarized the Wolfville picture. Numbers entering the chimney at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre leveled off at 150-200 after May, with "bulges" of 267+ on June 25 and 210-300+ during the periods July 7-20 and July 30 - Aug. 5. After this, numbers quickly fell to a single bird on Aug. 15, and a final sighting of 6 on Aug. 18 (which were our latest reported!). Jim also noted some peculiarities. Timed "morning" departures varied from 8:45 to 1:00! This year, the birds "grouped up" at great altitude before dashing into the chimney (which led to a broken neck for one bird), which may have been a response to the Merlins nesting in town. In early June, "some spectacular aerial copulations...were seen by Jake MacDonald" (JWW). All this action made for a well patronized tourist attraction this summer.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS were about in seemingly usual numbers in summer. An early nest was found near Gaspereau on May 31 (BLF, G&JTU). Six (6) reported last sightings between Aug. 23 and Sept. 10 were followed by a little flurry of individuals at three feeders between Sept. 24-27 (DAC,CH,KS). (We take identification of late female-plumaged hummers on faith.)

Nothing much can be said about the few reports of BELTED KINGFISHERS, except that a district migrataion was evident in lower Lun. Co. and Queens Co. on Sept. 23-24 (J&JSC).

#### WOODPECKERS

A few enthusiasts went to see 1 imm. RED-HEADED WOODPECKER at an Upper Sackville feeder on Oct. 26-27 (JWT et al.). Once much rarer, but clearly "on a roll", RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS, all males, turned up in three places this fall: at Nellie Vienot's feeder on First Peninsula from mid to late October, at Merritt Gibson's property in Canning, Nov. 2-5, and at Elgin, Pic. Co., on Nov. 2 (CB). Four (4) nesting YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS and 2 other summer sightings did not add to Atlas patterns. The only reported migrants were at Sackville on Oct. 7 (BJA) and on Brier Island on Oct. 11 (HG&HJH). We received ten reports of 16 DOWNY WOODPECKERS and seven reports of 11 HAIRY WOODPECKERS, fewer than in most recent years. Five (5) BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS between June 6 and Sept. 14 were about as usual. Reports of N. Flickers, including several nestings, were more thorough. The only kind of migration on the mainland was a group near Apple R. on Sept. 18 (KS). Thirty (30) were on Seal Island on Sept. 26-28, and a mere 15 on Brier Island on Oct. 10-11 suggest that the peak had passed. Ten reports of 14 PILEATED WOODPECKERS were fewer than usual of late, although 1 at Green Bay on Oct. 15 was only JSC's second there in twenty-five years.

## FLYCATCHERS TO SWALLOWS

There were just 6 reports of OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS through the summer and fall, with 2 on Seal Island on Aug. 28 (IAM), presumably being migrants. The number of EASTERN WOOD-PEWEES reported was also down, surprisingly, as this is a species that sings late into the season and should therefore be quite noticeable in late summer. No obvious migration was apparent.

There were nine reports of YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHERS during the summer (HD,RBD,BLF,BJA *et al.*). Another June sighting was of a presumably delayed migrant on Sable Island from the 17th to the 20th (ZL). The ALDER FLYCATCHER migration seems to have peaked on Aug. 23, when AM saw 75-100 at N. Point, Brier Island. Some were specifically identifiable by song. Just a week later, IAM only saw 5 on Seal Island. Other odd individuals were noted in expected locations during the summer. There were 2 LEAST FLYCATCHERS identifiable with the Alder's on Brier on Aug. 23. (AM), and 4 on Seal Island Sept. 5 (BM *et al.*). There were no other reports. Are people ignoring them or has there been a population crash? (or are people identifying them as "Emidonax sp." - perhaps more appropriate in many cases!)

The same could be said of the EASTERN PHOEBE - just 2 reports of presumably migrating individuals (Green Bay, JSC and Seal Island, SJF). In contrast there were 7 reports of GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHERS, generally thought to be much rarer, including individuals during summer at White Rock (GT), Forest Home (JTU) and Waverley (BJA), and migrants at Hartlen Pt., Sept. 4 (BM *et al.*) and at Pubnico Pt., Oct. 16 (RDS).

WESTERN KINGBIRDS were present at Eastern Passage (L&PP) and Hartlen's Pt. (DAM) on Sept. 20 - ? the same bird, and 2 birds at Portuguese Cove early Nov. (BS,PM). Another was at Lr. Canard, King's Co., also in early Nov. (sev. obs.). EASTERN KINGBIRDS are among our more noticeable early migrants, and several were seen around the usual migrant "hot spots" in late August and early September. A late individual was present in Broad Cove, Oct. 12 (JSC).

The first HORNED LARKS of the fall were noted by JTU at Grand Pré, Oct. 8. The only sizeable flock up to report time was of 42 birds in the same location on Nov. 3.

BBT visited the Oxford PURPLE MARTIN colony on June 30 and found 12 occupied nest sites. Ten (10) were also present at Collingwood, but they did not see any actually enter a nest hole. There were no big numbers or late dates reported for TREE SWALLOWS, and indeed KS specifically remarked that she did not see any after mid-July. RDH found this species scarce in the Chester area. A NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW was seen at Dotty's Pond by PM and BS, and another probable was seen at Bishop's Pond by BLF this summer. A few BANK SWALLOW colonies were reported, and 2 sizeable CLIFF SWALLOW colonies were noted--at Annapolis Royal (BJA) (a well known and long established colony under the railway bridge) and one of 50+ at Aylesford (GT). One hundred (100+) BARN SWALLOWS were present at Meadowville, Pic. Co., Aug. 16 (CH) and a late individual was at Chebucto Head, Nov. 3 (FLL,BJA).

## JAYS TO GNATCATCHERS

Several family parties of GRAY JAYS were present around the province, e.g. 2 adults with 4 young at E. Chezzetcook (CJH), 2 adults and 3 young at Apple R. (KS), and 8 individuals were seen along the Dufferin Mines to Eagle Lake Rd. in late June (BM *et al.*). Those people who kept feeders out during the summer continued to be visited by BLUE JAYS, e.g. 2 with juveniles in Dartmouth (Sue Hill) and 6-8 daily in Westmount (J. Cretein). MO saw 2 melanistic birds at Bramber, Hants Co. on July 12. There is only one report of this occurrence in the literature from 1971, so a detailed description, if available, would be most informative.

The AMERICAN CROW remains well reported. One banded in Wolfville by Cyril Coldwell on Apr. 5, 1991 was found dead near Cape North on June 24 (JWW). A partial albino with brownish underparts and head, light gray wings and mantle, was seen by HGH on Oct. 26 at Short Beach, Yar. Co. The Kentville roost of 10,000+ birds was beginning to build up by reporting time. Nobody reported any COMMON RAVENS, but from my own observations numbers seem to be O.K., at least here in the Valley.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES were widely reported as very plentiful, with "many more than usual" (G&JTU) etc. 100+ were seen on Bon Portage on Thanksgiving weekend. BOREAL CHICKADEES were also well reported during the summer and fall, e.g. 8 at Skir Dhu, Sept. 4 (EW), 17 at St. Margaret's Bay, Sept. 12 (BM) and 10 flying from the tip of Hartlen's Pt. to Devil's Island, Oct. 18 (BM,IAM).

Many RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were reported, including a number of spectacular movements--"hundreds" at the tip of Cape Split on July 25 (AM), "hundreds,? thousands" at Northern Pt., Brier Island on Aug. 23 (AM,ELM), an estimated 3000 on Brier Island, Aug. 30 (ELM). Twelve (12) reports of WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES and 16 of BROWN CREEPER were received by various observers in various areas at various times during the summer and fall--par for the course for both species.

Only 2 HOUSE WRENS were seen, 1 on Nov. 12-15 in Halifax (PM,BS) and 1, identified as a western race presumably by its paler grayer appearance, at Purcell's Cove on Nov. 14 (FLL). There were five WINTER WREN reports, including two of 3 birds (Pockwock, Hfx. Co., June 20, BJA, and Eatonville, July 24, KS) and one of 4 birds together (Seal Island, Oct. 10, SJF et al.). The MARSH WREN, whose breeding habitat just reaches our area at Eddy Marsh and surroundings near Amherst, was indeed observed there on July 5 feeding young in a nest (JWT) and again on Sept. 20 (KM,CBr), and I was present out of range at Lawrencetown Beach on Oct. 18 (BLF et al.). The CAROLINA WREN is a species that is expanding its range northward, so perhaps one day we won't have to underline it, but at the present time it is still a "hot line bird". One (1) spent at least the first week of July in and around a backyard in Bedford.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS seemed under reported, with no large movements. The numbers do fluctuate and one wonders whether this year was a "low" or whether people are really under-reporting them. Odd RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS were also noted around the province, again with no large movements or abnormally late dates. Four (4) BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS were seen with 1 on Seal Island on June 12 (IAM), 1 at Green Bay, Sept. 1 (JSC), 1 at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 1 (FLL,RBS,IAM,RF) and 1 late visitor at Apple River, Oct. 19 (KS,BSp).

A NORTHERN WHEATEAR was at South Bar, Syndey and was well seen and studied by DBM and WJC.

#### BLUEBIRDS TO STARLINGS

The EASTERN BLUEBIRD has certainly held its own this year, with successful nests being reported from 6 locations--3 were in backyard birdhouses near large blueberry fields west of Parrsboro, one of which raised 4 young at York Settlement, (KS,CS). In one the first nest was destroyed by a raccoon but the pair relocated and were then successful (fide Ross Hall); 1 was in an old apple orchard near Sheffield Mills--interestingly just 5 km due south of where 8 birds over-wintered near Canning last winter (PM,JWW,RBS et al.); another Valley site was in a backyard in Gaspereau, where even after the male was killed by a car, the female raised 2 young (CD); 1 in Port Greville, Cumb. Co. (JC). In addition, an unpaired male occupied a nest box in the Murrant's back yard at Port Morien, C.B. and several individual and groups of birds were seen at several locations after the breeding season, including a group of 12 on a lawn at Woodville, King's Co., Oct. 9 (JR).

Single TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRES were present on Oct. 7, in the Margaree Valley (RG), on Sable Island on Oct. 9 (ZL,HGH,HJH) and 1 Nov. mist-netted on Bon Portage (fide JWW). An excellent detailed description of a bird that was undoubtedly of this species was also submitted by JTu--seen by GT in an area of spruce and ground-juniper near Gaspereau, Nov. 12, and later that day relocated by both the Tufts, but not subsequently seen, much to the chagrin of many hopeful birders.

Only odd single reports of 1s and 2s of VEERY, SWAINSON'S THRUSH and HERMIT THRUSH were received after an initial spring sighting of 20 mixed thrushes on June 4 near White's Lake (BS). The Cohrs specifically commented that they saw no Swainson's or Veerys and "very few" Hermit. RDH of Chester also commented that Hermit Thrushes were "thin" this year. According to the mathematical estimates of population in the **Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces**, there should be 892,---/- 135,000 pairs in toto of these three species breeding in the Maritimes; 207,000 +/-, 42,300 in Nova Scotia alone. In contrast there were seven reports of GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH, (estimated more than 1000 pairs in the Maritimes), admittedly mostly of migrants from the periphery of the province (e.g. Bon Portage, Sable Island, and 1 apparently not of our local "Bicknell's" race in Spryfield, Oct. 3 FLL). Do people report Gray-cheeked and ignore the others because the former are rare and therefore more exciting, or has there been a crash in the Thrush population in the last few years? Are there any longitudinal survey results, such as serial Breeding Bird Surveys, available for these species? My own admittedly personal and subjective impression is that the song of the "Catharus" Thrushes, surely as much the quintessence of our Nova Scotia wilderness as the cry of the Loon or anything else, is disappearing from our woods. Does anybody have any comment?

Getting back to simple observation, AMERICAN ROBINS were commonly seen and reported, with large movements being represented by 500+ at Sandy Cove, Hfx. Co., Oct. 11 (DAC), 300+ over Hfx., Oct. 23 (JSC) and 300+ around multiflora roses on Skyway Drive, Wolfville, Nov. 7.

There were just 7 reports of GRAY CATBIRDS this season, ranging from Port Morien to Sable Island. In Kentville, where the species is abundant, the numbers were much as usual (RBS). Nine (9) single NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS were seen, around average, but with 2 additional sightings representing nesting pairs with young--1 at Amherst Shore (JWT) and 1 in Glace Bay (AMu,CM). An (1) adult with 3 imm. plumaged birds in Fairview Cemetery, Halifax, Aug. 14 (BJA) could have been another locally successful nest, or an early migrating family group. As usual, BROWN THRASHER sightings were mostly from migration hotspots, i.e., one each from Little Harbour, Sandy Cove, Hartlen's Pt, Seal Island (GT,JTu)--the first on June 2 and the rest in October.

The first AMERICAN PIPIT arrivals were at Crescent Beach, Sept. 21 (JLC,JSC) with small numbers being reported thereafter from various locations. The only sizeable flock so far was of 12-15 birds at Cook's Beach, Pinkney's Point (JHJ,HGH).

There were the expected smattering of CEDAR WAXWING flocks around during the fall. In Kentville there were as usual, large numbers feeding on choke and pin cherries, mountain ash berries, etc. Some noteworthy sightings included 1 out on George's Bank (I wasn't sure from the report if it was a fly-by or on a boat) Sept. 13 (RSD), 10-15 juveniles on Sable Island, Oct. 8 and 9 (H&HH) and a late flock of 50 at Portuguese Cove, Nov. 6 (FLL,JWT,BJA). As of reporting time, no BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS have been reported.

The NORTHERN SHRIKE is always interesting to see, but not so welcome when, as described by ZL on Sable Island on Sept. 13, one was "impaling and eating warblers". This was also an unusually early date. Two (2) other reports were received, both of single birds, from Apple River, Oct. 25 (KS) and White's Lake on Nov. 14 (BS).

Several observers commented that EUROPEAN STARLINGS were "getting more numerous" (AP), "especially abundant" (RSD), "increase in numbers annually" (J. Cretien). etc. A flock of 2000 was at Pinkney's Point, Oct. 23 (RSD). However, I understand that researchers using data from "Project Feederwatch" and Breeding Bird Surveys have found that Starlings may be on the decline!

--RBS, ed.

### VIREOS AND WARBLERS

Confirmation of breeding for the SOLITARY VIREO came from Fenwick Park, Cumb. Co., where KS found a nest, with young being fed on June 20. Widely-scattered reports of 1-5 Solitary Vireos in migration during September and October were received. One (1) on Seal Island, Oct. 11 was of the Rocky Mountain or plumbeous race, according to AM, who noted the darker, similarly-coloured head and back and the very narrow strip of yellow on the flanks. Last birds reported were 2 at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 31 (FLL et al.). AM found a YELLOW-THROATED VIREO on Brier Island, Aug. 23, while DAM had 1 on Bon Portage Island, Shel. Co., Sept. 5. Several reports were received of 1 at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 18, while IAM found 2 there on that date. A WARBLING VIREO on Brier Island, Sept. 13 was noted by at least four birders (KM,CB,RC,FS). A PHILADELPHIA VIREO nest with young was found at Kejimikujik Park in late July by Ann Fearon and Chris Lavergne (see photo). The only other provincial breeding record was of 1 carrying food at Dingwall, C.B. on July 29, 1990. Nine (9) additional Philadelphia Vireos were accounted for--all except 1 in the first half of September. Areas represented were Seal, Brier and Bon Portage Islands, Lower Kingsburg, Lun. Co. and Hartlen's Pt. (many obs.). The last one (1) seen was at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 1 (FLL,BJA). Scattered breeding season reports of the RED-EYED VIREO were received, but no opinions as to numbers relative to past years were received. Western counties reported a total of 29 migrants. Most reports were from September, but BM et al. noted a strong movement (15) on Seal Island, Oct. 12. Last birds seen were 3 at Hartlen's Pt. and 1 at Herring Cove, Oct. 31 (FLL,DAC).

JSC's impression of warbler numbers was expressed in such phrases as "worst season yet" and "depressing", whereas DAC felt that "this year, especially in Hfx. Co., warblers were plentiful...better than previous four years at least". From the numbers reported, a case could be made to support either argument. I suspect though, based on reported numbers of some of our uncommon and rare species, that more common, less attention-grabbing species were generally under-reported.



An (1) adult male BLUE-WINGED WARBLER was found at Sandy Cove Rd., Hfx. Co., on Sept. 7 (DAC), while another probable male was noted at Little Harbour, Shel. Co., Sept. 20 (DHY). Two (2) GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLERS were also reported in September, the first an imm. male "one-day wonder" in Peter MacLeod's yard, Halifax, Sept. 9; and the second, an adult male at Hartlen's Pt., Sept. 24 (FLL,RG). Summer reports of the TENNESSEE WARBLER indicated numbers were up to scratch at least in Hfx. Co. (BM et al.), but migrants numbered only 3, the last, Oct. 13 at Green Bay (Cohrs). In contrast, the rare ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER had a high profile, especially in Hfx. Co., where as many as 16 individuals were reported between Sept. 13 and Nov. 11; Hartlen's Pt., Portuguese Cove, Purcell's Cove Rd., Herring Cove Rd., French Village and Sambro, were the hot spots. Four (4) were at Hartlen's Pt. on Nov. 8 (PM,BS). Singletons were also noted at Sable River, Shel. Co., Sept. 15 and on Seal Island, Oct. 11 (DAM, BM et al.). The NASHVILLE WARBLER garnered little attention during summer, but its migration was fairly well-documented. Beginning to stir across the province in late August and early September, no more than 2 per day were noted until 8 moved through Seal Island, Oct. 12 (BM). To ensure that it was counted, 1 even flew through the open window of the bunkhouse". A bird at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 31 (BS,PM) was our final report.

Summer data for the NORTHERN PARULA were received from Apple River, Cumb. Co; Elderbank, Hfx. Co. and Marriott's Cove, Lun. Co. Six (6) birds stopped over in Hfx. Co., Sept. 12 - Oct. 1, 5 of them were at Hartlen's Pt. (FLL). One (1) on Seal Island, Oct. 12 (SJF) and 1 lingering at Portuguese Cove, Nov. 7 (FLL,CC,KT) rounded out our somewhat meagre documentation.

News of summering YELLOW WARBLERS came from virtually throughout the province, but KS didn't think she saw them as often as usual around Apple River. HGH tells of a male in Yarmouth which stunned itself at a window. Shortly, a female arrived, "walked around the downed male, picked at him gently and then walked on his back, as if to give artificial respiration". After several minutes she flew off unrewarded, but the male did eventually recover. The migration went largely unnoticed, with singles at Hartlen's Pt., Sept. 11 and at Seal Island, Oct. 12.

I found the CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER in its usual spots around New Ross, Lun. Co., during summer. Out of five others who sent summer reports, two included news of dead birds--1 by a window and 1 by house cat (CH,CJH). Let's hope that some survived to migrate, though none were noted. Successful breeding efforts of the MAGNOLIA WARBLER were observed in Apple River and Marriott's Cove (KS,RDH). Migration was first noticed Aug. 30, when 14 were seen in a movement on St. Margaret's Bay, Hfx. Co. (BM,MD). Otherwise, scattered September reports were received, with the last 2 at Hartlen's Pt., Sept. 15. BS never saw so many CAPE MAY WARBLERS as in the last half of August around Bedford. Indeed they were well-reported into the autumn, but largely over southwestern Nova Scotia 12 on Seal Island, Sept. 5 represented a three-day peak there. One (1) lingered on Seal until Oct. 12 (JTU), and 1 hung on in Waverley, Hfx. Co., to Nov. 14 (L&PP). Local pockets of the BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER were found in Hfx. and Kings Cos. during the summer. Seven (7) singletons were reported during migration (about average), the first in a mini-wave at Wolfville, Aug. 16 (GT) and the last at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 18 (BS,PM).

There was no lack of YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER reports, with observations from Seal and Sable Islands to Skir Dhu, C.B. (EW et al.). Numbers gradually built to a peak in early October, with most significant movements falling in the Oct. 2-11 range. Sizeable flocks, but no more than 100, were indicated in the Valley, on the South Shore, in Hfx. Co. and on Sable and Seal Islands in that time period. The species went totally unreported after mid-October.



An (1) adult female TOWNSEND'S WARBLER at Hartlen's Pt., Sept. 13 offered a "fantastic look" to BS,PM and JK. CJH felt that there were lots of BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS around E. Chezzetcook during the summer. Migration began in early September with September reports from Digby, the Halifax-Dartmouth area and Skir Dhu, C.B., but numbers were few. Six (6) or more were at Apple River, Sept. 23 (KS), 4 were on Seal Island, Oct. 12, and 1 lingered at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 14, our last report. Five (5) summer reports of the BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER came in from Yar., Hfx. and Cumb. Cos. If you want to see one, RSD states, "I always manage to see Blackburnian Warblers in Argyle Head". Six (6) in Meadowvale, Pic. Co., on Aug. 9, were probably migrants, as CH writes, "First I've seen here this year". Two (2) at Cheticamp Park, Aug. 17 (AMu, CM) and 2 on Seal Island, Sept. 4 (BM et al.) rounded out our information.

Seventeen (17) or 18 PINE WARBLER individuals were reported, from Sept. 1 to deadline. Fourteen (14) of these were in Halifax, Dartmouth or Hfx. Co., while the other 3 or 4 were on Seal Island. Sightings were of 1s and 2s, except for the 6 at E. Chezzetcook, Sept. 1 (CJH). It was a great fall for the PRAIRIE WARBLER. Beginning with a report of a female on Seal Island, Aug. 28, at least 16 individuals were accounted for. Besides Seal Island, Cape Sable, Bon Portage, Brier and Sable Islands were all represented, as well as localities ashore in Hfx., Lun. and Shel. Cos. Thirteen (13) or more occurred in September. The latest report was of a male at Herring Cove, Oct. 21 (BS,PM).

Beginning early and with a bang in late August (RSD saw "hundreds" at Pubnico Pt., Aug. 26), the PALM WARBLER migration was well-covered in the western part of the province. Other larger numbers were "lots" around Sable River, Sept. 15 (DAM) and 10 on Seal Island, Oct. 10. The latest report was of a "western" bird in Dartmouth, Nov. 5 (JWT). The BAY-BREASTED WARBLER got a lot of summer recognition in Hfx. Co. and in Cape Breton, including 25 noted in the Dufferin Mines Rd--Eagle Lake area of Hfx. Co. (BM). The only migration report was of 3 at Hartlen's Pt., Sept. 15 (FLL, BJA). Good numbers of BLACKPOLL WARBLERS were seen during summer as well, from Overton to C.B.H.N.P. Major movements were in September, with 34 moving along St. Margaret's Bay, Sept. 12 (BM). The last 1 reported was at Westmount, C.B. on Oct. 2 (Jackie Cretien). A total of 8 CERULEAN WARBLERS were reported as follows: 2 males at Sambro, June 9 (SW), 1 at Port Morien, C. B., Sept. 8 (AMu, CM), 1 imm. passing through Timberlea, Hfx. Co., Sept. 11 (DAC), 1 imm. male at Hartlen's Pt., Sept. 15 (FLL) and 3 on Bon Portage Island in October, several days before the Thanksgiving Weekend (PCS). The BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER was not seen as often in Apple River, according to KS, and indeed anywhere, based on the dearth of reports. However, scattered sightings of 1-3 birds, Aug. 31-Oct. 31, from Cape Forchu to Skir Dhu, indicated that it wasn't quite extinct. One (1) hung on at Dartmouth to Nov. 5 (JWT). After a fairly well-documented breeding season, the AMERICAN REDSTART started moving by Sept. 6, when 15 were seen on Seal Island. Five (5) were noted on the mainland during September and October, with 1 at Hartlen's Pt. to Nov. 8 (BS,PM).

A male PROTHONOTARY WARBLER, "a glowing bird on a dull day", was seen and thus described by IAM at Hartlen's Pt. on Oct. 16. It stayed until at least Oct. 18 (JWT). A WORM-EATING WARBLER was observed by many in Halifax Nov. 11-14. An extreme rarity, a SWAINSON'S WARBLER, was reportedly (well) seen at Avonport, Kings Co., on Sept. 3, but no description was given (EU,DU).

News of the OVENBIRD was confined mostly to the summer months, including word of a nest with 3 eggs at Smiley's Park, Hants Co., on June 13 (fide JWW). The only migrant mentioned was 1 at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 14 (JWT). Half a dozen NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH were reported during summer, including 1 carrying food at Pockwock, Hfx. Co., June 20. One (1) on Georges Bank on Aug. 20 met a bizarre end on a fishing boat when a killer scallop suddenly slammed shut on its head (RSD)! After that report, the rest is anticlimactic, but 6 other Waterthrush, hopefully still alive, were seen during migration at Matthews Lake, Cape Sable, Seal Island and (the last 1 on Oct. 31) at Hartlen's Pt.

The Sable Island KENTUCKY WARBLER (see last issue) remained until at least June 2 (IAM), but it was spotted there again Sept. 13 (ZL). One (1) was also seen on Bon Portage Island in October, a few days before the Thanksgiving weekend (PCS). The MOURNING WARBLER was fantastically well-reported in summer, with 24 individuals mentioned--13 in C.B., 7 in Hfx. Co. and 4 in Kings Co. One (1) on Seal Island, Aug. 24 and 2 seen there Sept. 5, were the only migrants noted. The COMMON YELLOWTHROAT migration appeared to peak early, with 6 along St. Margaret's Bay on Aug. 30, and 7 at Hartlen's Pt. on Sept. 15 (and only 2 there Sept. 24). Thereafter, only 2 singletons were noted, including one in the Hall's birdbath at Overton, Oct. 22. No less than 5 HOODED WARBLERS were reported, with a female on Bon Portage Island, Sept. 5 (PM), 1 at Avonport on Sept. 6 (EU,DU), 1 adult male about fifty miles east of Halifax Harbour, Sept. 13, and 2 on Sable Island, Oct. 13-15. "Scarce this year" was BM's June 6 comment on the WILSON'S WARBLER, and the fall migration bore this out. One on Seal Island, October 10, 2 at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 14, and 1 at Greenwich on Nov. 1, were "the works". Few breeding season reports of the CANADA WARBLER sparked concern, though an (1) adult was seen feeding 1 young in Bedford on Aug. 15 (BS,PM). One (1) was seen on Sept. 8 at Marriott's Cove (RDH); and 1 on Oct. 24 at Three Fathom Harbour (L&PP) was a late record. The YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT was well-reported, with about 9 different birds accounted for--all on Seal Island or at Hartlen's Pt. between Aug. 24 and Oct. 19, except for 1 in Halifax on Nov. 15.

--KINK, ed.

#### TANAGERS TO TOWHEE

Late spring early summer records of SCARLET TANAGERS included a male at Waverley on June 13 (L&PP); 1 at Wolfville Ridge on July 6 (GT,JTu) and 1 at North Range, Digby Co. on July 9. The fall brought several reports from early August to late October. Among these sightings were 3 seen on Bon Portage Island during the NSBS field trip on Oct. 10-12. As well, during the same period was 1 immature male on Seal Island with interesting moulting patterns which gave its wings a look similar to a Red-winged Blackbird (GT JTu et al.). Hartlen's Point was one of the better spots to find these birds with several from that area including 2 birds on Oct. 3 and 1 lingering immature male on Oct. 31.

A (1) female NORTHERN CARDINAL was coming to a feeder at the home of Jack and Joyce Morehouse in New Salem, Cumb. Co. on May 31. An interesting record came to us from the North Mountain, near Sheffield Mills, where 1 male was heard singing, then a pair (2) seen regularly until late July. Later records include one of 1 male in the Pubnico area (RSD) on Oct. 24 and 1 female at the Payzant's feeder in Waverley on Nov. 2.

Several ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS were sighted, but only 1 was recorded during the fall migration. That report was of 2 females at a feeder in Chevarie (T,KC). Others were of 3 pairs (6) nesting at Blockhouse discovered on June 26 (JMo) and males seen during July at North Range, Digby Co. and at Pockwock. (BJA). BLUE GROSBEAKS, most often associated with our spring migration were found readily throughout the province this fall. The first of many was of 2 on Aug. 29 at Rose Bay (ELM). There were 4 individuals seen on Aug. 30 in many separate areas and 1 seen on Sept. 18 at Petite Riviere. The majority of sightings were during the week of Oct. 10-17, when 18 birds were found along coastal locations from Yarmouth to Halifax. The largest number seen in one day was 8 on Seal Island on Oct. 12. The last was a bird still lingering at Hartlen's Point on Nov. 14 (L&PP). Whatever weather front affected the Blue Grosbeaks swept with it INDIGO BUNTINGS as well. Their occurrence here along coastal areas and islands coincided with in numbers and dates. Notable were 3 on Seal Island, Oct. 12, 1 on Sable Island, Oct. 13 (ZL) and 2 along Purcell's Cove Road on Oct. 28. (PM).

There were two sightings of DICKCISSELS in this period. One (1) was banded at Hartlen's Pt. in mid-October. This bird was seen several times by many observers until at least Nov. 12. The second record was of one near Blandford on Oct. 28 (MH).

Four (4) RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEES were found. The first occurrence was a male found at the Young's feeder in Little Harbour, Shel. Co, on Oct. 15 and 16. A second male was seen at Herring Cove on Oct. 25 (AJV,DAC): a male at Lr. W. Pubnico on Nov. 2 (RSD) and the last record was of a female at Greenwich on Nov. 11 (J&GT).

#### SPARROWS

The Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas shows that there are indications that AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS are indeed breeding in Northern Cape Breton. An interesting record comes from the Lake Ainslie area, Hay's River Road to be more specific, of a bird seen on July 30 by Mike Novak. The earliest fall record was Oct. 12 on Bon Portage Island. Sightings of 1 or 2 birds became more numerous in widely scattered locations from Oct. 29 through Nov. 9. CHIPPING SPARROWS were seen as usual in most areas with 1 or 2 among flocks of sparrows foraging along roadsides and clearings. Several birds were coming to a feeder in Apple River throughout September and October and a late sighting of 2 immature birds came from Brier Island on Nov. 12 (RBS). There were 2 reports of CLAY-COLOURED SPARROWS. The first was one seen at Hartlen's Point on Nov. 3 (JWT) and the second was an adult found traveling with Juncos at White's Lake on Nov. 6 (BS).

There were record numbers of FIELD SPARROWS sightings this season. The first recorded was 1 at Kingsburg on Aug. 30 (ELM); 2 at Brier Island on Sept. 6 (L&PP); 1 juvenile at Sable River, Sept. 15 (DAM); 2 at Pubnico Point, Oct. 8 (RSD); 3 at Sable Island on Oct. 10 (IAM) and 1 found at Hartlen's Point on Oct. 31 (FLL). VESPER SPARROWS were found in typical breeding habitats near Oxford, Kingston, Springhill and Pictou during June and July. The only fall sighting was 1 on Grand Pré Dyke, Oct. 21. (PCS). LARK SPARROWS were well recorded as well with four reports of 5 individuals. Two were found at Hartlen's Point on Sept. 9 (JWT); one seen at Green Bay on Sept. 27 (Cohrs); an immature at West Dover on Oct. 4 (BM) and one at Hartlen's Point seen by several observers on Oct. 18.

It appears that there was no significant change in numbers of SAVANNAH SPARROWS during the summer months but there were few fall records. Typical were sightings of 2 or 3 along beaches or field-edges. SAVANNAH (IPSWICH) SPARROW was better reported, no doubt because of its rarer status. At Hartlen's Point there were 3 on Oct. 1, increasing to 4 by month's end. The Hall's, when visiting Sable Island saw anywhere from 50-150 there on Oct. 8 and 9 and there were 10 at Cherry Hill Beach on Oct 31 (SJF). There were at least 2 GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS found on Seal Island. There were 2 on Oct. 10 and 12 and 1 there, possibly 1 of the previously seen duo, on Nov. 12 (many obs.)

A very good description of a LECONTE'S SPARROW came from Bev Sarty and Peter MacLeod, who saw this adult bird on Sept 12 at Hartlen's Point. SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS are always one of the very last spring migrants to arrive in Nova Scotia. In 1992 it was even later than usual with first sightings occurring by mid June. Fall records came from Hartlen's Point on Sept. 12, 15 individuals and 1 seen at Framboise on Sept. 4. A late sighting was 1 seen at Cherry Hill Nov. 7 (Cohrs.). A single record of SEASIDE SPARROW came from the Little Harbour area on Oct. 16-17. This bird, 1 probable immature was well seen in excellent conditions by David Young.

FOX SPARROWS were rather well reported in the fall migration. There were several records of breeding birds in Terrance Bay, Prospect and East Ironbound Island. Fall sightings of 1 - 3 birds occurred in the Valley areas of Kentville, Wolfville and Avonport during October with a late individual at Sue Hill's feeder on Nov. 17-18 in Dartmouth. SONG SPARROWS occurred in good numbers this year with many birders commenting about this bird's abundance. Fall sightings were of many individuals in mixed flocks foraging in suitable habitats. Lingering feeder birds of up to 6 individuals were not unusual with reports submitted from Yarmouth to the most northerly parts of the province.

LINCOLN'S SPARROWS were seen in August, September and October. There were 4 birds at French Mountain, Inv. Co. on Aug. 29 (AMu,CM) and the latest record was of 2 on Seal Island from Oct. 9-12 (sev. obs.) SWAMP SPARROWS were not well reported, however, there were pockets such as the Kentville area where there were many migrants observed during mid-September (RBS). Other sightings included 4 at Beaverbank on Sept. 9 and up to 10 on Seal Island from Oct. 10-12. It seems from all reports that WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS were readily found throughout the reporting period with many people commenting on how common they were this year. The fall migration was well noted throughout the province. Of note were 35+ arriving on Sable Island during Oct. 9-10 and 4 still visiting a feeder in Kings Co. on Nov. 3. The close relative WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW occurred rather frequently with approximately 30 individuals counted from June 18 through Oct. 30. Of note were 10+ on Bon Portage Island, Oct. 10-12 with 5 on close-by Seal Island on the same dates. Other sightings of 1-4 birds occurred from Cape Breton (Sand Lake) to Lr. W. Pubnico during the fall period.

DARK-EYED JUNCOS were abundant, to say the least. Not only did the reports indicate a good breeding season, but these birds were occurring in flocks of 25-100 throughout September and October. Typical were 50+ at Apple River on Oct. 20; many in the Valley area, and flocks of 25-60 along the headlands of Hfx. Co. during late September and the month of October. Many are still lingering on into November where feeders are filled and roadside food crops are good. Often the seasonal bird reports hold very few records of LAPLAND LONGSPURS, however this fall we have many. Numbers seemed to be very high. There were over 80 at Sable Island on Oct. 10 (ZL); 73 at Cherry Hill on Oct. 18 (SJF,BH); 30 at Port Morien from Sept. 25 - Oct. 28; up to 40 at Grand Pre on Nov. 3; 20 at Caribou on Oct. 10 and an assortment in numbers from 1-10 from many areas throughout the province. The first SNOW BUNTING of the season was 1 single bird seen at Port Morien on Oct. 22 (AMu,CM). Most first sightings occurred between Oct. 25 and Nov. 1. A few larger flocks of 100-150 were found in Pic. Co., Port Williams, Grand Pré and Belliveau's Cove, Digby Co. from Nov. 3-10.

#### ICTERIDS

BOBOLINKS arrived later than usual to most areas. In Cumb. Co., where they seem to arrive first each year, it wasn't until May 30 to June 16 that the first birds were seen. A few fall records include 7 at Hartlen's Point on Sept. 11, 1 Seal Island, Oct. 12 and 1 at Hartlen's Point on Oct. 31 (BS). RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS were found in numbers during September, October and November. Larger flocks seen included 100 at Canning on Oct. 3 and between 130-140 at New Minas. Lingering birds occurred at Petite Riviere on Nov. 6 where 5 were found. There were two reports of 3 MEADOWLARKS. Both observations could not conclude the birds specific species. Two (2) were found at Conrad's Beach on Oct. 23 (BS,PM); and 1 was located at Portuguese Cove on Nov. 7 (CC,KT,FLL).

An (1) adult male YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD was first found at Lockeport by Arthur Blades and his grade three class with a flock of starlings near the elementary school on Oct. 15. This bird stayed in the area for several days and was seen by several people at least until Oct. 18. Although this species has been found occasionally mainly in fall in Nova Scotia, there are few records of adult males. RUSTY BLACKBIRDS began migrating during the last week of September and peaked in early October. There were 20 found at Canard Pond on Oct. 3 and several flocks of 10-30 seen from Herring Cove to Sandy Cove, Hfx. Co. on the same day (DAC). A later report came from Apple River where two were seen at a feeder on Oct. 19-21 (KS). There was only one observer who reported BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS during this period. Kathleen Spicer of Apple River noted 5 at her feeder during July and 1-2 lingering on there into November. Although there were few reports of this species it is probably not indicative of their abundance but more a protest of their presence.

COMMON GRACKLES were very well recorded during September and October. Flocks of sometimes hundreds were observed passing through. With the outbreak of cinch bugs, several observers commented on the arrival of 100-200 of these birds landing to feast on the lawn pests. An albino was seen by Arthur Power in Yarmouth on Sept. 9, accompanied by a large flock of more normally plumed individuals.

An (1) ORCHARD ORIOLE occurred on Seal Island during June 11-12. Most certainly a late migrant this bird would more normally be found south and west of Nova Scotia at this time. NORTHERN ORIOLES were found during the summer months especially in the Valley areas. In fall though these birds were just short of being common. Coastal areas from Port Morien to Yarmouth held many individuals for extended periods of time from mid-September to late October. As the migration slows down the birds that decide to stay start moving to feeders and by late October and early November there were several of these birds feeding on fruit left by caring homeowners. Although most sightings were of 1-4 birds there were 7 seen at Sand Lake Rd. in Port Morien (CM).

#### FINCHES

Over the last three years there have been few sightings of PINE GROSBEAKS and although we have records for June, July, August, September and October, there was just a single occurrence in each month. These birds remain secretive and quite difficult to find. Notable, were 1 adult female feeding young at White's Lake on Aug. 19 (BS) and 4 found at Port Morien on Oct. 18 (CM, AMU).

HOUSE FINCH sightings were all from Yar. Co. During May and June the Halls had up to 5 regularly tending the niger seed and making use of the bird bath. Other birds occurred on Seal Island where 2 were found on Oct. 9 and 1 stayed there until at least Oct. 12 (SJF,DHY,BH). PURPLE FINCHES were quite common all summer especially being noted at feeders. However, all sightings were of small groups of 2-10 birds. After September there was a significant drop with only a few reports submitted and just 1 single bird found in the month of November.

RED CROSSBILLS were very well reported with sightings of 2-12 occurring in all months from June to November from Yar. Co. to C.B. counties. The bill size, determining the subspecies was noted by several observers. Most were the typical northeastern race with medium-sized bill structure. There were two sightings of WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS in this period and they occurred in summer. The first was of 8 from June 15 - 18 at Chester Basin (RDH) and the other was 1 bird at Main-a-Dieu, C.B. on July 12 (CB,DBM,WJC).

PINE SISKINS were easily located, especially at feeders throughout the period. The numbers dropped significantly during September and only isolated reports of small flocks were noted in October. Typical were 50 at C.B.H.N.P. on July 12 (L&PP), 24 at East Chezzetcook on Sept. 2 (CJH) and 40 on Sept. 5 in Timberlea (DAC). Large numbers of AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES were to be found all summer and into September but as with siskins and Purple Finches, their presence was less conspicuous by late September. A large flock of 250 migrating across the mouth of St. Margaret's Bay was observed on Oct. 4 (BM).

#### EVENING GROSBEAK AND HOUSE SPARROW

A single summer record of EVENING GROSBEAKS was of 7 birds coming periodically to Kathleen Spicer's feeder in Apple River from early June to late August. Up to 20 were there on Nov. 11. The only other sighting was 6 at Westmount, C.B. on Oct. 23 (JC).

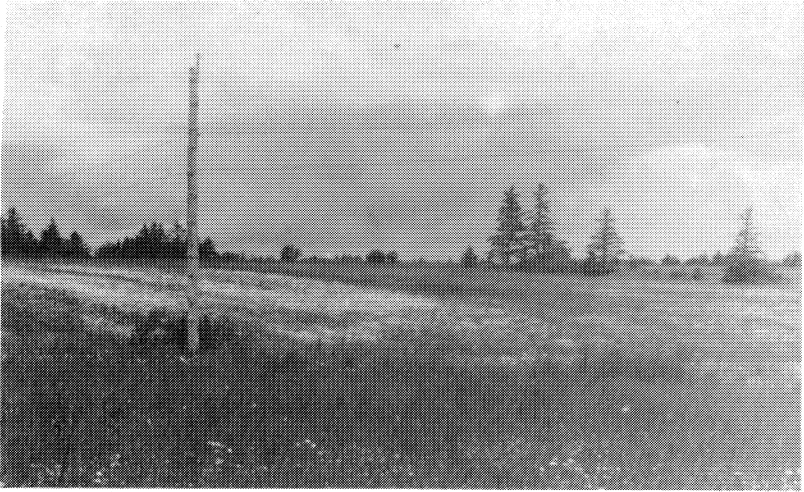
HOUSE SPARROWS were quite well reported with indications from the observers that they were fairly successful this year. I reported last spring that the resident flock in my area of Timberlea had reduced drastically over the winter from 10 to 4 individuals. At time of writing the groups stands at 15 birds.



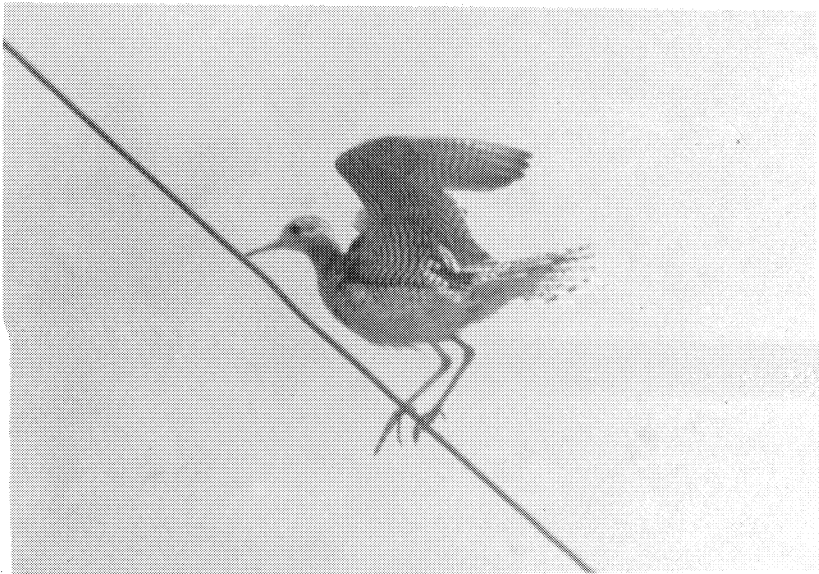
This photograph, taken from Don Jamieson's video of the bird in action, serves amply to confirm Nova Scotia's sixth BLACK VULTURE, found in Ann. Co. in early September.



Ann Feron and Chris Lavergne confirmed the first nesting of PHILADELPHIA VIREO in Nova Scotia. This agitated adult, the yellowish breast quite clear on the original colour print, was photographed by Chris off the Snake Lake trail in Kejimikujik National Park, on July 26. The nest, suspended about 3 m up on a slender branch, was thought to contain at least three young, one of which appears to be a few days old on another photograph.



The meadow, on Mergomish Island, Pic. Co., was similar to many others along the Northumberland Strait, but will be forever known as the site of Nova Scotia's first confirmed nesting of UPLAND SANDPIPER. The tiny speck on the telephone wire is resolved by Ken McKenna's 'scope as an agitated adult of this beautiful shorebird.



## A SIGHT RECORD OF AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER IN NOVA SCOTIA

Roger A. Foxall

On Sunday, August 9, 1992, my son Andrew and I took the morning whale-watching cruise out of Westport, Brier Island, Nova Scotia. The weather was sunny, with some high cloud, and very calm. For almost the entire trip the water was so calm as to have a glassy appearance, reflecting the few clouds clearly. Although such conditions are excellent for watching whales, it is not so good for watching shearwaters, which depend on waves for their dynamic soaring. Cetaceans were plentiful, particularly Atlantic White-sided Dolphins. Other species were Humpback and Minke Whales and Harbour Porpoise. Bird numbers were not high. Besides about 5,000 phalaropes (roughly equal numbers of Red and Red-necked), there were about 30 Greater Shearwaters, 2 Manx Shearwaters, about 10 Gannets, 2 immature Atlantic Puffins, 1 Murre (sp), 2 Arctic Terns, and one bird which, on the basis of the following account, was identified as an Audubon's Shearwater, *Puffinus herminiere*. All observations described below were made using 10 x 25 Leitz Trinovid compact binoculars.

At about 11:45 a.m., the boat was about five miles east of Northern Light, heading back towards Westport. As we approached a feeding flock of phalaropes, I noticed amongst them a small, seemingly all dark shearwater at rest. The bird flushed as the boat approached to within about seventy-five metres, and flew about three hundred metres before it settled ahead of the boat. Again the boat approached and flushed the bird at about fifty metres. This time it flew off at a forty-five degree angle to my right before settling again. No further observations were possible. A complete description follows.

When settled, the profile of the bird from a side view was very compact, reminiscent of a teal, with a relatively small head. The back, wings, crown, hindneck, and sides of the head to just below the eye were a uniform blackish-brown; the cheeks, throat, foreneck and sides of the underparts were a dull white. The boundary between the dark side of the face and the white cheek was diffuse, not sharp.

My impressions of the bird in flight were its smaller size compared to Manx Shearwater (two of which had been seen a few minutes earlier), the reasonably uniform blackish-brown upper surfaces of the wings, rump and tail (not black as in Manx), an obviously long tail (which seemed out of proportion to the wingspan), and an overall dingy appearance compared to the immaculate black and white contrast typical of a Manx Shearwater. There were some irregular paler brown areas in the outer wings, which may have been pale primary shafts. The tips of the tail feathers were clearly visible, giving a ragged appearance to the end of the tail.

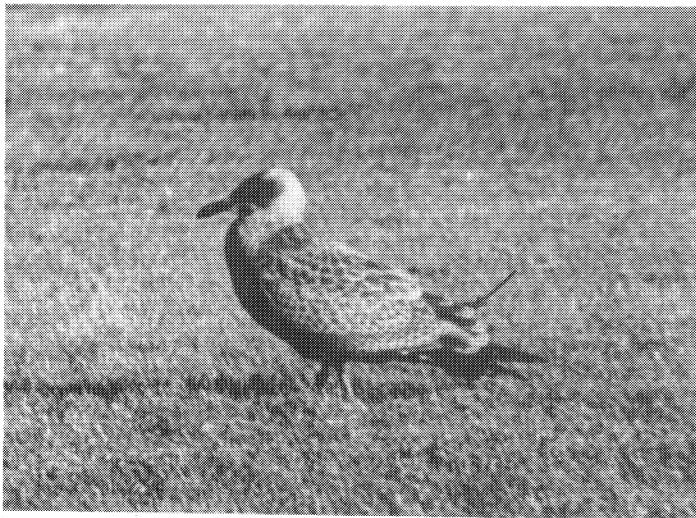
Each time it flew, the flight consisted of about fifteen quite rapid (compared to Manx and Greater Shearwaters) wingbeats, followed by a brief glide with the wings held horizontally.

Because the bird flew horizontally very close to the water surface, the complete underwing surfaces were not seen. It did, however, bank away from me at one point, giving me a view of one side of the bird. Dark feathering extended as an irregular line from the side of the head and neck, through the axillars (separating the white belly from the white undercoverts of the wing) and flanks to what seemed to be dark undertail coverts (although the latter were not seen well due to the angle of observation).



The combination of field marks noted above is consistent with Audubon's Shearwater and eliminates similar species (two forms of Little Shearwater and three forms of Manx Shearwater--nominate, Balearic and Yelkoan) at all likely to the present in north Atlantic waters. However, the dark axillars are problematic. According to Palmer's **Handbook of North American Birds**, and Blake's **Manual of Neotropical Birds**, the narrow dark band through the axillars is expected in Audubon's, but is not mentioned for either Little or the nominate subspecies of Manx. Photographs and various other sources do not show or refer to dark axillars in Audubon's, although they are mentioned for Balearic/Yelkoan (which average larger than the nominate Manx). This discrepancy may reflect variation within Audubon's Shearwater, or the occurrence of an unexpected subspecies.

There are few records of Audubon's Shearwater in Canada. The first (and the only specimen record) was of a bird referable to the Panamanian subspecies loyemilleri found dead at Almonte, Ontario, on September 8, 1975 (**Birds of Canada**, W. E. Godfrey). Previous sight records for Nova Scotia are of one on Western Bank, October 7, 1979, and one in the Gulf of Maine on August 27, 1980 (**Birds of Nova Scotia**, 1986). A subsequent record was of one in the Gulf of Maine on September 13, 1992 (Alan Ruff, *vide* Ian McLaren).



This young gull, photographed by Ted Casselman, hung around his neighbour's yard for a couple of days in late summer 1991. Karen Casselman forwarded it for identification, wondering if it could be a LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL. One diagnostic feature is in the pattern of the tertials (arrow). In this juvenile HERRING GULL, the tertials have pale notches along the sides and end, whereas a juvenile Lesser Black-back would have a neater, unbroken pale fringe. A first-winter Lesser Black-back (of which some have been claimed locally) in addition, in flight would show an extra dark bar on the outer greater wing coverts, absent in the Herring Gull.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

May 2 - Cape Sable Island

On Saturday, May 2, two optimistic birders braved an overcast, cold, damp day to look at birds on Cape Sable Island. Robin Rhymer from Tusket and Joan Czapalay from Yarmouth met at the Causeway to scan the Herring and Greater Black-backed gulls on North East Point. There was a pair of Common Loons near the land as well as a Red-necked Grebe and several Double-crested Cormorants. Farther out toward the Island there was a pair of Common Mergansers and at North East Point a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers.

We visited Jody Hopkin's duck pond in this area and admired the Wood Ducks and Shovellers nesting there, as well as some exotic birds and many Rock Doves. While admiring the non-countables, we were visited by a White-throated Sparrow. Soon we had seen a dozen Robins, a "hundred" Starlings, eight Bluejays, four Mourning Doves, ten Brown-headed Cowbirds, ten Rusty Blackbirds and a dozen Crows. There was a plump Ruffed Grouse under a tree at Clam Point. Stoney Island yielded Tree Swallows and one Barn Swallow by the Wharf Road, and Goldfinches, Juncos, Purple Finches, Chickadees and Song Sparrows at Oliver Ross' feeder. We visited the beach dunes at Stoney Island which is nearly destroyed. My first visit to this beach was over twenty years ago. At that time there were about two hundred Piping Plovers along the strip to South Side. We saw none. There were two Canada Geese at the edge of the pond which I believe may have been from Randall Ross' place, where the tame Barnacle Geese are still visiting.

Only one Savannah Sparrow showed itself through the mist, and we saw no sign of the Yellow-rumped Warblers which had been here on Wednesday. Nor were there any Bank Swallows as yet--thankfully, for it has been too cold for the flying insects to hatch.

A small raft of twenty-five Common Eider were just off shore, and a Northern Raven was flying toward The Hawk, our next destination. En route, we saw many Willets (a total of twenty pairs for the day), about two dozen Black Ducks and a dozen Mallards. One Mallard is noteworthy. It was in the Boat Shed Bay at Centreville. The entire breast, neck and part of the head was white, somewhat resembling a pintail, but the head, bill, back wings and curly tail were male Mallard. It was joined by another Mallard and together they were dipping and swimming. When we first noticed our "mystery mallard", it was swimming very fast. We looked in vain for the Black-crowned Night Heron which I had seen on both Wednesday and Thursday at Newellton. There were many Great Blue Herons on the way to The Hawk and at Dan's Head we observed a Greater and a Lesser Yellowlegs, side by side. When I approached to take a photo, they flew in different directions, giving different cries of alarm. There were Grackles at The Hawk and a Killdeer in the graveyard.

While having lunch at Geneva's Restaurant, four Brant flew in and there were three more farther along in Lower Clark's Harbour Bay. The only hawk of the day was a Kestrel. A male Red-winged Blackbird was seen in the *early morning when I made a quick search for a Towhee*. On Sunday, April 26, a Rufous-sided Towhee arrived at Virginia Smith's feeder. On both Monday and Tuesday it visited the feeder of Mary and Edward Allen, also in Centreville, but was not seen thereafter. Robin and I sadly noticed a large Siamese cat in the area. I thought it looked rather pleased with itself and wondered if it had eaten a gourmet meal during the past week.

We decided to leave the island at 2:30 p.m., as it was raining and very cold. There were House Sparrows and Rock Doves near the Causeway. In spite of the low number of species, we enjoyed the birds we found. This is a rich hot-spot at times, but quite unpredictable for birding listers.

Joan Czapalay & Robin Rhymer

May 5 -- Annual Field Trip to Amherst Point

## Observations:

3	Common Loon	4	Sora
6	Pied-billed Grebe	7	American Coot
7	D-cr, Cormorant	5	Greater Yellowlegs
6	Gr. Blue Heron	2	Lesser Yellowlegs
1	American Bittern	6	Gr. Black-backed Gull
157	Canada Goose	6	Herring Gull
1	<del>Snow Goose</del>	8	Rock Dove
1	Mallard	3	Common Flicker
31	Black Duck	200	Tree Swallow
2	Gadwall	6	Barn Swallow
41	Pintail	1	Blue Jay
110	Am. Green-winged Teal	2	Common Raven
6	Blue-winged Teal	4	Am. Crow
12	Am. Wigeon	6	Black-capped Chickadee
7	Northern Shoveler	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch
2	Wood Duck	12	Am. Robin
50	Ring-necked Duck	4	<del>G-crowned</del> Kinglet
3	Common Merganser	4	Ruby-cr. Kinglet
1	Broad-winged Hawk	18	Starling
1	Bald Eagle	20	Yellow-rumped Warbler
2	Northern Harrier	40+	Red-winged Blackbird
3	Osprey	20	Common Grackle
1	Merlin?	12	Savannah Sparrow
1	Ruffed Grouse	10	White-throated Sparrow
		2	Swamp Sparrow
		4	Song Sparrow

Total: 49 Species + ? Merlin  
842 Individuals

Al Smith

May 30 --Warbler Walk, Cape Breton

## Setchell's Field/Swamp:

Song Sparrows	Grackles
Chickadees	European Starlings
Double-crested Cormorants	Am. Robin
Purple Finch	Am. Goldfinches (m&f)
Common Crow	Male Downy Woodpecker
White-throated Sparrows	Common Flicker (Red-Shafted)
<del>Male Bobolinks</del>	Savannah Sparrow
Red-winged Blackbird	Herring Gull
Pheasant	Female Marsh Hawk
Rock Doves	

## Canadian Coast Guard College:

Song Sparrows	Am. Robins
White-throated Sparrow	Rock Doves
Am. Goldfinches (m&f)	Am. Redstart
Spotted Sandpiper	Slate coloured Junco
	Black-capped Chickadees

## Petersfield Provincial Park:

Blue Jay	Yellow Warbler
2 Common Terns	
Total: 25 species	

Jackie Chretien

June 27 -- Schooner Pond, Cape Breton

It was a dull day when we set out for the first stop on our trip. My feeder was well stocked and well attended when we arrived. One birder was happy to see Purple Finches so plentiful; they were finding them scarce. All birders commented on our flicker stump. They thought it an unusual item for a yard and were surprised to see that the flickers would use it so close to the house. The reason for making my yard a stop on our trip appeared just as the sun came out to show him off--the Eastern Bluebird landed on his nest box and everyone enjoyed a good look. This was my last sighting of the Bluebird. We continued on, stopping at several of my favourite spots. We had an interesting crowd, which included John Willie MacInnis from Big Pond (Eagle Tours). John Willie told us what he experienced to be the best spots around for warblers. He also spent some time telling us stories of the nests he has found and the ones for which he is still searching.

Cathy Murrant

July 25 -- North River, Cape Breton

The early morning mists were clearing as we set off for the North River trip, giving way to a calm, warm and beautiful day. The contrast with last year's stormy weather was immediately commented on by the assembled bird-watchers.

The first stop at Point Edward gave us the opportunity to watch birds in two distinct habitats: beside a tidal pond and out in the bay. Nineteen species were observed here, including a family of Black Ducks, a lone Black-headed Gull, and several varieties of shorebirds.

We then visited three provincial picnic parks. Groves Point on the South side of Boulardrie Island proved a disappointment in contrast to earlier visits there. At Dalem Lake, however, we were fascinated by the sight of a pair of Ospreys on the far shore who were bathing in the lake. This is a somewhat isolated park and the lake is extensive--well worth a visit.

We ate our lunch in St. Ann's Park on the Cabot Trail and were rewarded with the sight of a Red-tailed Hawk and a pair of Bald Eagles perched one above the other in a larch tree beside the water. We then drove to North River, and finished the outing with a walk along the trail to North River Falls and trout pools. The variety of habitats we had explored yielded a species total of 33.

Nancy More

July 26 - Wallace Bay, Cumb. Co.

It was a beautiful sunny Sunday morning for the fifteen people gathered at the Government Wharf. I knew better from the tide tables but the tide looked too high so we headed first to the aboiteau at Wallace Bay. A beautiful path now exists up the dykes and a nice observation house is up at the far end for quiet viewing. Our usual Virginia Rail failed to respond this year but we had good views of various ducks and some Bonaparte's Gulls. Snipe and various shorebirds were to be seen along the river. The new path continues around the impoundment and during breeding season should be a wonderful adventure. N.S.B.S. members should remember to avail themselves of this new area in future springs.

We then headed for Fox Harbour and the tide was out. (I should have gone here first, the tide tables were right). Nice shorebirds were seen and a few ventured over the sand flats and we were rewarded with some nice summer plumage Red Knots. Lunch was at the Fox Harbour Provincial Park--great facilities.

The final stop at Rivendal Farm in Middleboro, was very rewarding as the resident eagles had fledged two days before and were sitting out on the tree limbs near the nest, waiting for their dinner from mom and dad.

It was a great day, enjoyed by all, 72 species seen.

--James Taylor



WALLACE BAY FIELD TRIP

September 12 -- Cheticamp, Cape Breton

A small group set out in bad weather for a day on Cheticamp Island. A downpour of rain kept us in our cars and a promise of clearing skies never came through for us. Few determined birders stayed behind after most had left. Birding from the car windows, we came up with twenty-five species including a Greater Scaup that was in with some Black Ducks and two Lesser Golden Plover in the field near the lighthouse.

Cathy Murrant

October 24 -- Eastern Shore

Nine participants met at Chezzetcook for a long trip along the Eastern Shore. Two of them were visitors from Northern Ireland (one of them a warden at the R.S.P.B. sanctuary on Rathlin Island), and so the Canadians were anxious to find species which our visitors had not yet seen. It was not an ideal day for birding, with high winds and the duck-hunting season in progress.

Our first stop was the Shore Road at Chezzetcook. Here there were lots of Greater Yellowlegs and fewer Lessers, and we could see two or three White-rumped Sandpipers from the road. At Martinique Beach there were large numbers of Canada Geese and Black Ducks, but not many other species. A small flock of pipits flew over, and there were about ten Sanderling on the beach. Sea-watching was almost pointless, with the strong on-shore winds and high surf. Nevertheless, we did manage to get some Common Loons, two White-winged Scoters and a passing Gannet. At a stop on the way back toward the highway, we had brief but clear views of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

A group of small passerines at the Causeway Road seemed to be mobbing something (which we couldn't locate), but it included Boreal Chickadee and a very late Canada Warbler, both new to our Irish visitors. Viewing the other side of Three Fathom Harbour from "Smelly Cove", we had six Semipalmated Plovers and five Black-bellied Plovers.

The Yellow-crowned Night-Heron which had spent the summer in Rocky Run was still there, and was actively feeding at the edge of the grass. We spent a lot of time viewing it through scopes, making sure that it was not a Black-crowned. Lawrencetown Beach and the old railway right-of-way held little of interest, but Conrad's Beach yielded about sixty Sanderling, four Horned Larks, a Common Snipe and a Black-headed Gull. The duck and shorebird area was disappointingly vacant.

The trip ended with quick stops at Sullivan's Pond and the Maitland Street sewer outfall, for comparisons of Black-headed and Bonaparte's Gulls. We had seen a total of 47 species by the end of the day, and I think that our visitors were happy with the sampling of Nova Scotia birds that we were able to show them.

Peter Payzant

September 26 -- Wolfville Area

For the past two years, Grand Pré has been very unproductive for late fall shorebirds. Therefore, and because of today's very high tide, which gave us more time, I decided to look at freshwater pond birds first.

Our first highlight occurred at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre, where a large nestling Rock Dove had prematurely fallen out of its nest. Jennifer Wright got up on my shoulders and replaced the squab in the nest, and one parent-pigeon immediately attended it.

A beautifully warm, calm, sunny day resulted in a ten-car caravan carrying about twenty-five people, mostly from N.S.B.S. After a brief view of the very high tide at the Wolfville wharf and at Port Williams, we went to Harris' Pond in Canning.

On our way, at the Canning aboiteau (Habitant River), there were several diving Double-crested Cormorants, a Kingfisher and big mixed flock of Starlings Cowbirds. At Harris' Pond, we had good looks at five American Wigeons, four Mallards, three Blue-winged Teal, Black Ducks, six Greater Yellowlegs (including three "swimming" or wading up to their bellies), six Pectoral Sandpipers, a Killdeer and many gulls (two of them Ring-billed).

Our second highlight came from one participant who wandered away from us--she found EIGHT PAINTED TURTLES ON A BICYCLE! Someone had dumped a new-looking mountain bike with a flat front tire into the pond and the seat and handle bars and a tire served as basking perches for the turtles. Also at Harris' pond was a very attractive large clump of Jerusalem artichokes, which seem to be very rapidly spreading throughout our region now.

Then we drove to Grand Pré and across the dykeland, where we viewed a single Raven on the ground and two flying Harriers.

We parked the cars at the Guzzle, the narrow channel at Boot Island. On a small gravel/mud beach, we saw a small sandpiper (White-rumped?) dragging a badly damaged wing, plus five Dunlin, a Sanderling, a few Semipalmated Plovers, and several Semipalmated Sandpipers.

We walked on the dyke to the east end of Evangeline Beach, where the tide had now receded too far for good observation (my fault). However, there were not many shorebirds in sight.

Roger Pocklington tip-toed out onto the upper intertidal mud and his scanning (while we sat) produced a distant Merlin that was chasing a small shorebird.

We also saw a distant flock of moulting male Common Eiders. (Some friends of mine saw ten Golden Plovers, two Black-bellied Plovers, White-winged Scoters and a few Red-throated Loons there today).

Presumably those traditional late shorebirds, such as hundreds of Black-bellied Plovers, are now utilizing another locality for roosting and foraging--perhaps at the Windsor Causeway mudflat?

Jim Wolford

#### September 17 -- Mathews Lake

My general impression that birders usually have a good time regardless of the prevailing conditions on any given day, was reinforced on Saturday, September 17, when twenty-one of us set out for Mathews Lake with the visibility at times not exceeding seventy-five feet because of fog--just a normal day on the south shore! After three hours of diligent work, we managed to ascertain twelve species of shorebirds among less than one hundred individuals. The best of these were four Hudsonian Godwits and two or three Whimbrel. The fog was the limiting factor, of course, but I must mention that my shorebird counts throughout this season have shown a marked drop from previous seasons.

At one point, as a Merlin flew over, someone mentioned that this was an indication of the proximity of numbers of shorebirds but this was countered by the remark that maybe the Merlin was thinking along the same lines! Probably the highpoint of the day was towards the end as a light lunch, prepared by my wife Joan, was enjoyed by all.

David Young

## 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.

## FEBRUARY



- Sat. 6 Harbour Hop-Cape Breton. Leader: Cathy Murrant (737-2684). Meet at 8 a.m. at Renwick Park (Brookside & Commercial St., Glace Bay)
- Sat. 13 Sewer Stroll II Leader: Fulton Lavender (477-7808). Meet at Hartlen's Pt. 8:00 a.m. This is an all-day trip to Herring Cove via Bedford. Bad weather day, Sun. 14.

## MARCH

- Fri. 26 Owl Prowl-Cape Breton. Leader: Allen Murrant (737-2684). Meet at Morrison Rd and Broughton Rd.-6:00 p.m. Bad weather date, Sat. 27

- Sun. 28 Eastern Shore. Leader: Joyce Purchase (434-5199). Dartmouth, Conrad's Beach, Grand Desert, etc. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Scotia Bank, Bridge Plaza MacDonald Bridge, Dartmouth.

## APRIL

- Sat. 3 Eastern Shore, Martinique Beach. Leader: Ian McLaren (429-7024) Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Scotia Bank parking lot, Bridge Plaza, Dartmouth.
- Sun. 18 Seabirds, Ducks, etc. Leader: Barbara Hinds (422-9407). Halifax to Sambro Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the parking lot of Pt. Pleasant Park, end of Tower Rd Halifax. The trip will last until 2:30-3:00 p.m.
- Sat. 24 Lingering Winter Birds-Cape Breton. Leader: Andrew Gingell (562-0012). Meet at the old site of the Heavy Water Plant, Glace Bay at 8:00 a.m.
- Sat. 24 Owl Prowl-Brooklyn. Leaders: Fulton Lavender (477-7808) and Jim Taylor (434-8516). Meet at Church's Esso Station, corner Rte 236 & 215, approx. 1/2 mile north of Brooklyn, which is off Rte 14, Exit 5 on Hwy 101 at 7:00 p.m.
- Sun. 25 Wolfville Area. Leader: Jim Wolford (542-7650). Pond hopping for ducks and early migrants. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Robie Tufts Nature centre Front St., Wolfville. Joint trip with the Blomidon Naturalist Society.

## MAY

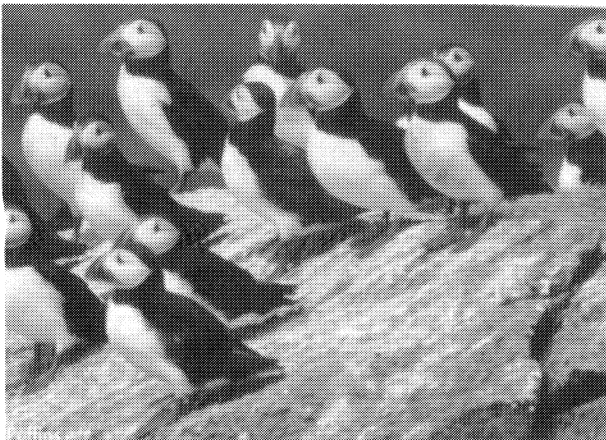
- Sun. 2 Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary. Leader: Alan Smith (H 506-536-0164) (W 506-536-3025) Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the APBS Parking lot. Take Exit 3 from the TCH 104 at the Wandlyn Inn and proceed a few km toward Nappan, the entrance is on the left side. Wear appropriate footwear for wet conditions. Enjoy a day of observing waterfowl, shorebirds and early migrants.
- Sat. 8 Eastern Shore. Leader: Fulton Lavender (477-7808). Meet at the old golf course entrance, Hartlen's Point.



- Sat. 15 Yarmouth and Carleton Area Warbler Walk. Leader: Hubert and Helen Hall (742-4467). Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Carleton School, Hwy 340. Bring a lunch and fly dope.
- Wed. 19 Halifax County Warbler Walk. Leader: Fred Dobson (852-3042). Meet at the parking lot at the junction of the Prospect Rd, Rte 333 and the St. Margaret's Bay Rd. at 6:00a.m., 2-3 hours duration.
- Fri. Bon Portage island. TBA. Contact Jim Taylor for reservations and information (434-8516). Meet at the wharf in Shag Harbour, May 21 at 7:30 to Mon. 21-24 p.m. There will be a charge for crossing and accommodation, Bring food, drinking water, sleeping bag and necessary clothing and footwear. Reservations are necessary. Depart the island at 3:00 p.m., Monday 21.
- Sun. 23 Hopewell Area (Pic. Co.). Leader: Harry Brennan (923-2780). Meet at St. Columbia Churchyard, about 1 mile south of Hopewell at 8:00 a.m. General Birding, Saw-whet and Barred Owl possible--excellent for beginners.
- Wed. 26 Kearney Lake Early Morning Warbler Walk. Leader: David Currie (876-8745). Meet at Hammonds Plains and Kearney Lake Rd intersection at 6:00 a.m.,
- Sat. 29 Warbler Walk-Peters Field Park- Sydney, C.B. Leader: Jackie Cretien (564 4640). Meet at the Sydney River Shopping Centre at 8:00 a.m.
- Sat. 29 Hants County Day. Leader: Mar. Clark (443-3993). Meet at the railway crossing in Mt. Uniacke at 8:00 a.m. Observe abundant birdlife in a variety of habitats. This trip extends well into the afternoon.
- Sun. 30 Shubenacadie Area. Leader: Roslyn MacPhee (758-3265). Meet at 6:00 a.m. in front of Scotts Restaurant in Shubenacadie.

**ATTENTION LEADERS:** YOU ARE REMINDED TO SEND A FIELD TRIP REPORT TO THE EDITOR OF Nova Scotia Birds, Nova Scotia Bird Society, c/o Nova Scotia Museum, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6.

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.



## OAXACA AND CHIAPAS, MEXICO - CHRISTMAS 1991

This past Christmas we took a tour with Nature Travel Service to Oaxaca and Chiapas, in southern Mexico. Our leader was Gus Yaki. The tour lasted 16 days, and visited Oaxaca City, Tehuanapec, Tuxtla Gierra, Comitan and Villa Hermosa. Getting there involved travelling through Boston, Dallas, Mexico City and onward to Oaxaca; it was necessary to overnight in Boston.

Oaxaca is an old Mexican city, and suffers greatly from pollution. The river is an open sewer and smells accordingly, while the rural roads are strewn with litter dumped just outside town limits. The air quality also leaves something to be desired. However, once the border is crossed into the state of Chiapas the situation improves, as Chiapas is much cleaner and has much less garbage.

The different habitats visited on the tour ranged from desert scrub to cloud forest, with changes in elevation from sea level to 9000 ft. This resulted in a good diversity of birds. The group as a whole saw 240 species during the trip, although Marion and I saw only 195 of these.

Very few waterfowl or seabirds were found, although a flight of some 300 White Pelicans was impressive. Great, Snowy and Cattle Egrets, and Great Blue, Little Blue and Green-backed Herons were common. One Reddish Egret was found.

Raptors included White-tailed and Snail Kites, and Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, Roadside, Zone-tailed, White-tailed, Short-tailed, and Grey Hawks. Parrots included 200 Green, Aztec, and Orange-chinned Parakeets, while among the hummingbirds we encountered Violet Sabrewing, Fork-tailed Emerald, White-eared, Berylline, Magnificent, Plain-capped Starthroat, Beautiful and Rufous. Unfortunately, but typically, many more hummingbirds were seen than identified.

Mountain and Collared Trogons were discovered, and the three different kingfishers included Green, Amazon, and Ring-necked. Flycatchers were numerous and tricky, but we identified: Cassin's and Tropical Kingbirds; Boat-billed, Social, As-throated, Grey-silky, Tufted, Scissor-tailed and Vermillion Flycatchers; and Greater Pewee. A variety of jays included Steller's (southern form), Unicolored, Magpie, Brown and Scrub. As for thrushes, in addition to the familiar American Robin, also noted Rufous-collared, Clay-coloured and Rufous-backed Robins.

Some 27 species of warbler were seen, including Olive, Crescent-crested, Townsend's, Hermit, Kentucky, Red, Pink-headed, Golden-browed, Rufous-capped, and Slate-throated Redstart. Six species of Oriole made the list, and both Blue-hooded and Yellow-throated Euphonia were found. Two different buntings were observed, Indigo and Orange-breasted, while exotic sparrows sneaked through the grass, among them Bridled, Stripe-headed, Cinnamon-tailed, Rufous-crowned and Rufous-collared. The most memorable birds were the Orange-breasted Bunting and Slate-throated Redstart because of their vivid colouration.

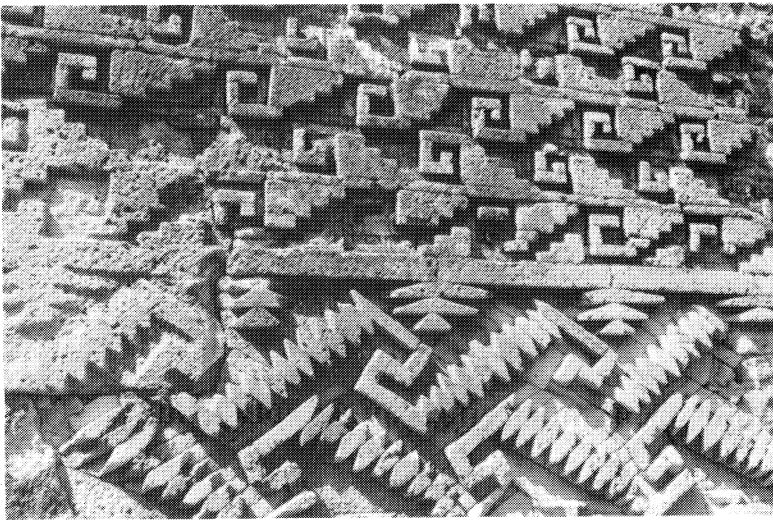
It should be noted that the colouration of most of the species was more vivid than shown in the field guides, despite it being winter. The use of Davis' **Birds of Mexico and Central America** is not recommended, both because of its frequently incorrect field marks, as well as its habit of often straying from commonly accepted English names for the Mexican species used in other guides.

All in all, the range of species made the trip rewarding, although the experience was quite tiring for both of us.

Keith and Marion Allsebrook



Mexican ruins at Monte Alban  
--Photo-Allsebrook



Mitla-individual pieces assembled  
in wall without mortar  
--Photo-Allsebrook



Cindy Spicer photographed two southern grosbeaks in Cumberland Co. last spring. The subadult male BLUE GROSBEAK was at her own feeder at Apple River May 23-25, and the female NORTHERN CARDINAL was at the Moorehouse feeder in New Salem on May 31.



## Hoopoes and Nightingales in France

by Liz Townsend and Harry Robertson

Most Maritimers would be excited to hear a nightingale. But what about being kept awake all night by one? In late April, we stayed 3 nights at D'Astros near a tiny village called Le Pin in South West France. (You'll only find Le Pin if you go to the level of an ordnance survey map; Le Pin is close to St. Nicholas de la Grave, about half-way between Toulouse and Agen, just off the road to Bordeaux).

A nightingale sang every night at our open window. We had discovered D'Astros advertised in *British Birding* and decided to check out their appealing list of bird sightings as part of 12 days relaxing on trains and in cafes and birding in various corners of France. We were particularly keen to see hoopoes, those wonderfully coloured, orange birds with a fan tail and, a remarkable, impressive black and white striped crest. They migrate North from Africa to breed in central Europe with a few reaching as far as England.

Birding in France was exciting since we were new to so many species and subspecies. Birding from D'Astros was our most rewarding stop. D'Astros is a Countryside Guest House in the heart of the agricultural corner formerly called Gascony, now sometimes referred to as Forgotten France. The closest village, Le Pin, consists of a few houses and a spectacular Chateau. Other small villages nearby have wonderfully abundant markets which sell produce from the miles of orchards and mixed farms, and excellent red wine from local Moissac and Bordeaux grapes.

What did we see beyond a Maritimer's usual sightings? Well, we saw very few crows! The private forest next to D'Astros was teeming with birds such as black caps, blue tits, melodious warblers, and stonechats. The wild boars which are protected in the forest failed to show themselves although they are occasionally seen. The wind rows and fields, which surround D'Astros with red soil like Prince Edward Island, had green woodpeckers, returning golden orioles and so many black kites and common buzzards that it was hard to look up without seeing up to 10 circling at any time. Perhaps they account for the lack of crows! There were chaffinches, collared doves, European blackbirds, European robins and European species of jay, kestrel, hen harrier, swallow, magpie and goldfinch. One day we walked across back-roads to the nearby Garonne, one of France's major rivers. We saw white wagtails, corncrakes, black redstarts, swifts and greenfinches. Even in the towns, there were surprises. The medieval townhall of St. Nicholas de la Grave was home to numerous jackdaws. On an unpaved road near the Garonne, we watched a nightingale sitting in a bush next to us singing its heart out. Although nightingales are considered secretive in other parts of the world, they are apparently willing to show themselves occasionally here. The song of the nightingale leads you to expect a beautiful bird but in reality, it is plain brown bird, somewhat smaller than the American robin. But can it sing! Along the Garonne, near its juncture with the river Tarn, we walked through a protected marshland and along a dike finding moorhens, common sandpipers, black-headed gulls and black terns. We also saw, in the space of 2 hours – if you can believe this – 35 night herons! At one place on the dike, we had over 20 night herons in sight. They were sitting like bowling pins placed along the opposite bank on the shore and in bushes. And the hoopoe? We saw two flying across fields but were unable to get a closer look.

The hosts of D'Astros, an English couple named David and Jenny Boniface, were extremely helpful with information on their 17th century converted farmhouse, the local

community and all types of wildlife. They had listed for possible sighting the species we saw plus black and red Kite, hobby, hawfinch, longtailed tit, and barn, little, tawny and pigmy owls. They also listed great, little and middle spotted woodpeckers and booted eagle. For those interested, they had nearby a large array of orchids, including the lizard orchid. Insects included western whip, stag beetles, hummingbird hawkmoth, scare and southern swallowtail butterflies.

This was not an organized birding expedition but a chance to stay in a idyllic, pastoral inn at reasonable rates without needing a car and where the hosts were "twitchers" (British phrase for "birders") and magnificent gourmet cooks. We returned with information on D'Astros and the variety of foods, sports, festivals and other activities nearby. We have passed the information to Bob Dickie in Nova Scotia. Anyone intrigued by D'Astros is encouraged to contact us, Bob Dickie, or David and Jenny at D'Astros

Liz Townsend and Harry Robertson  
2384 Clifton Street  
Halifax, NS B3K 4V1  
PHONE: 902-422-6737



Hoopoe.

## OUR SABLE ISLAND ADVENTURE

by Captain Hubert Hall

My wife, Helen and I were given the rare opportunity to visit the storied and mysterious island of Sable Island on a recent supply trip of one of the Canadian Coast Guard lighthouse supply ships as it made its fall trip. We were invited by the Canadian Coast Guard to sail on the **Sir William Alexander** on the trip from October 5 to 9. The actual Coast Guard description of the ship is: "Major Navais Lender/Light Icebreaker, Type 1100." She was built in 1987 by Marine Industries Ltd., Tracy, Quebec, and is 83m long, 16.2m wide and draws 5.75m of water. The ship was under the command of Captain Harvey Adams on this voyage.

We boarded the ship at 1600 hours on October 5, at her berth at the Coast Guard Base in Dartmouth. Our cabin was a most comfortable one on the port side forward on the Boat Deck, immediately under the bridge. Dinner was at 1700 in the Officer's Mess, where we met some of the other passengers and some of the officers.

We cast off at 1800 hours and were given the freedom to roam around the ship and the bridge as we wished. Captain Adams was a most gracious host during the entire voyage and provided us with many fond and warm memories.

This trip is made twice a year; usually in the late spring and in early October. Supplies, fuel and technicians needed to service the two light stations are landed on the island, either by boat or, as on this trip, by helicopter.

Leaving Halifax Harbour, we were treated to a spectacular sunset, which silhouetted Sambro Island and its lighthouse as we passed this last landmark at the entrance to Halifax.

On Tuesday morning, October 6, our arrival at Sable Island was heralded by gale force northerly winds and accompanied by heavy squalls of rain. We anchored two miles north of the island off the Main Station which is about a half mile east of the West Light. It was soon obvious that there would be no helicopter flights that day, and in fact the anchorage proved to be too rough to even stay in the area. We hove up the anchor, which had been let out with five "shots" of chain (75 fathoms or 450 feet) and headed east to clear the shoals and find a more sheltered anchorage on the south side of the island. It was a sixty mile voyage to a position two miles off the island off the Main Station on the south side. The wind was still too strong and the ship pitching too much for the helicopter.

As we steamed around the island we were surrounded by hundreds of Greater Shearwaters swooping and soaring in the high winds over the turbulent seas. At no time during the trip did we see any other species of shearwater--only Greaters. There were some gannets in all varieties of plumage, Northern Fulmars, a few Black-legged Kittiwakes and fairly large numbers of Herring and Black-backed Gulls. As we left our first anchorage, a large, dark bird came into view. It turned out to be a Pomarine Jaeger and either it or a similar one was seen two more times within an hour on the north side of the island.

There were fewer birds around the ship on the south side and no new species until around supper time we saw a Merlin beating past the ship, heading for the island. After supper when I returned to the bridge, the Merlin was perched precariously on the bow. However, it remained with us for only a few minutes before leaving and was not seen around the ship again. Our first day on the ship ended with massive dark grey clouds obscuring the sunset; an ominous portent of more wind to come.

Wednesday, October 7, proved to be a repeat of yesterday's weather with high winds persisting all day, making it impossible to land anyone on the island.

There were a few new bird sightings as land birds landed on the ship to rest. The first visitors were two Robins, followed by a pair of Yellow-rumped Warblers, a White-throated Sparrow and a Water Pipit which we saw having a drink from a small depression in the flight deck, which hopefully contained fresh water. An adult Glaucous Gull was seen with the other gulls circling us.

At 1930 that evening we got word that an 84 foot fishing vessel named **Flying Dart**, owned by the Clearwater Company, was taking water in her engine room and in danger of sinking. Her position was only eighteen miles south of us so we immediately hove anchor and got underway to assist if required. However, another Clearwater vessel the **Atlantic Odyssey** was much closer and reached her before we did. She passed a portable pump to the **Flying Dart** and they were able to lower the water level in the engine room enough to discover the source of the incoming water, which was a broken pipe in the cooling system. The crew of the **Flying Dart** were taking no chances and put their inflatable liferaft over the side and donned their survival suits. In one memorable radio communication from the Captain of the **Flying Dart**, he said he didn't know which would be worse, drowning without the survival suit or sweating to death in it. Apparently he had been very busy getting the situation under control. Later that night the **Atlantic Odyssey** took the **Flying Dart** in tow and they arrived safely at Lockport on Friday morning, the 9th.

Thursday, October 8. We were back at our anchorage, south of the island to begin operations by 0800, but it was not until early afternoon that the helicopter was finally able to take off on its first flight. The first flights were dedicated to essential Coast Guard personnel, the technicians and essential supplies before the passengers were taken ashore. It was both Helen's and my own first helicopter flight and we had looked forward to it with much anticipation. The short two mile flight to Main Station was over all too soon as we set down on the circular pad set among the grass covered dunes and the few buildings at the station.

Here the dunes are covered with grass, low bushes and vines with small freshwater ponds between some of the dunes. We were immediately struck by the large number of birds in the immediate area. It turned out that the largest land bird concentrations were in this area.

There were many Yellow-rumps, the Ipswich Sparrow, which seemed to pop up out of the grass wherever we went and a small flock of Cedar Waxwings perched in the mesh of a wire fence. There were also several Purple Finches in various plumage feeding on seeds near the ground (sand).

Since we had only an hour and a half before the return flight, we set out for the south beach to see a whale carcass we had flown over on the way in. On the way to the beach, which was only a few hundred yards away, a Merlin or two swooped past as did a Peregrine Falcon. We passed a small pond on the shore on which was a Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. I like it when both species are together like that—it makes them much easier to identify. A lone Black-bellied Plover and a pair of Mourning Doves were also feeding by the pond. The doves were much darker looking than those we are used to at home, but we decided they were indeed Mourning Doves.

Out on the beach, which was much farther away than we thought, a lone Ruddy Turnstone was crouching on the sand behind whatever meagre shelter there was to try to hide from our approach. The whale carcass had been there for many months, but was still a fairly large mass of bone and blubber. A few seals stared at us from just outside the breaking waves and we in turn stared back. As we returned to Main Station a flicker flew up out of the grass.

Our next stop was the "Souvenir Shop"—the last thing we expected to find on Sable Island. It stocks a few items, such as caps with a very nice crest of "SABLE ISLAND, GRAVEYARD OF THE ATLANTIC" circling a large sailing ship aground. I was especially interested in a stamp that could be applied to some envelopes that I had brought and sure enough they had one. They also had a nice postcard showing Sable Island horses, as well as a few other souvenir items, which are purchased by visiting



technicians and others who are permitted ashore for some valid reason.

The famous Sable Island horses should not go unmentioned, as they were certainly much in evidence and quite approachable and undisturbed by cameras.

We were impressed by the distances to travel when on foot in order to do any kind of comprehensive bird survey. Most travel by those staying on the island is by ATV's or truck on the south beach to the airplane landing area. A pair of gateposts at Main Station made from the spars of some unfortunate ship of long ago were a reminder of the grim reputation of the island.

All too soon it was time to board the helicopter again for the return to the ship for the night and to anticipate our next visit.

Friday, October 9. During the night the ship hove anchor and returned to the north side again, where it was now in the more sheltered anchorage and a shorter flight for the helicopter as we could anchor within one mile of the shore. There would be a great many flights this day, so distance was a major consideration. This voyage during the night was another sixty miles and passed the Lasmo drilling and production platform and its attendant supply ship and storage tanker.

Our turn in the helicopter came shortly after 0900 and we were soon once again setting foot on Sable Island. We set out walking along the north beach towards the east where we saw a few Dunlin feeding along the shoreline. After about a mile, we crossed the island to the south beach to walk along the shore of Lake Wallace, a somewhat optimistic name for the shallow body of salt water about a mile long, that is frequently flooded at high tide.

As we walked along the shore we were constantly followed and stared at by several seals in the shallow water. They came within a few feet of shore and made very rude noises, apparently at us as there was no one else around.

While walking along this area, I suddenly found myself almost knee deep in a gelatinous mixture of sand and water. However, it was not quicksand and I was able to extricate myself with only wet feet.

There were several species of shorebirds feeding here. They pulled long red worms out of the soft sand and often had to run some distance to discourage others from trying to steal the worms from them before they could eat in peace.

Here we saw a Buff-breasted Sandpiper, two Lesser Golden Plovers, several Black-bellied Plovers, several Greater and a few Lesser Yellowlegs. There were also about twenty-five Semi-palmated Plovers and several Semi-palmated Sandpipers.

This is in the landing area and while there the weekly "grocery flight" arrived. The pilot is guided in by a truck with a portable windsock mounted on its back.

We then crossed back to the north beach where we walked another mile or so hoping to see the remains of a ship named the *Skidby* which is just visible at low tide. We did not locate this wreck, but back on the south side again, we came across the inner keel and lower parts of ribs of a wooden ship that was wrecked many years ago. Helen found a genuine Sable Island artifact in this area, a carpenter's brace, heavily encrusted with rust and sand—a shipwreck souvenir or someone's discarded junk? I like to think it was from some ship's carpenter shop.

Back at Main Station we found the promised lunch supplied by the ship's steward and delivered by helicopter while we explored all morning. It was now time to turn towards the West Light, only about a half mile away and joined by a road of sorts. Bird life here was plentiful, although no new species from yesterday's sightings had yet been seen. The best was yet to come!

Spotted by Helen, a Gray Catbird-sized bird was perched on a guy wire. It did not have a black cap and it had a conspicuous eye ring and when it flew off to another nearby perch it had orange wing bars! Certainly this bird was nothing we had ever seen before and apparently not by many others in Nova Scotia, according to Robie Tufts. Later, back on board ship with the help of the **National Geographic Field Guide**, we identified it as a Towns' Solitaire. The **Golden Guide** shows it as a much browner bird than this one was.

There were many cranberries on the island and we took time to pick a few quarts as another souvenir of Sable Island. Because so much of the walking is in soft sand, it is difficult to cover as much ground as one would expect and it is very tiring. One reminder of "civilization" while on the island was a loud sonic boom, which we were told sometimes rattles the buildings.

We returned in late afternoon to the ship where a feast of freshly caught mackerel awaited us. During the day, between a short visit to the island and between other duties, Captian Adams and some of his crew had caught more than enough mackerel to feed anyone who wanted one. Pan fried, they were without doubt the best tasting mackerel we ever ate!

At 1900 hours that night with all the supplies ashore and the after deck filled with empty barrels and other materials unwanted on the island, we hove anchor and headed for the Coast Guard base in Dartmouth. We docked there at 0800, ending a voyage that took us 530 nautical miles, circumnavigated Sable Island, went to the aid of a vessel in distress and participated in a bit of Nova Scotia's history. Helen and I would both like to express our deepest gratitude to the Canadian Coast Guard for inviting us on this "once in a lifetime" trip--also to Captain Harvey Adams for being the "perfect host", and with whom I spent many hours reminiscing about ships and people we have known. I cannot omit mentioning Quartermaster Rob Maidment who always seemed to know just when a perfectly fixed cup of coffee or hot chocolate would be most appreciated.

Many others helped make this a memorable voyage, including Eric Stevens, who was in charge of the "shore parties", as we were called; and a special "thanks" to the cooks and stewards who looked after us with very special care.

### ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

MEMBERS WHO HAVE JOINED US SINCE OUR ANNIVERSARY YEAR IN 1980, MAY NOT KNOW OF OUR SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE WHICH CONTAINS THE HISTORY OF THE NSBS, ARTICLES ABOUT OUR VARIOUS ACTIVITIES AND MANY PHOTOGRAPHS. IT IS AVAILABLE FOR \$2.00 PLUS \$1.00 FOR POSTAGE FROM THE MUSEUM ADDRESS: NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY, c/o NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM, 1747 SUMMER STREET, HALIFAX, N.S. B3H 3A6



1. CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS BIRD?

OR

2. CAN YOU THINK OF A CAPTION FOR THE PHOTOGRAPH?

The correct answer to the first question and the most amusing caption will EACH win a year's membership in N.S.B.S.

Reply to: The Editor  
**Nova Scotia Birds**  
c/o Nova Scotia Museum  
1747 Summer Street  
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6

DEADLINE MARCH 15, 1993

## PUFFIN OF THE YEAR AWARD

The first PUFFIN OF THE YEAR was presented to Phyllis Dobson in 1972. Since that time it has been awarded annually to members who have made substantial contributions to the betterment of our society. Since Dr. Dobson, there have been nineteen winners. For your information, the recipients are as follows:

- '72 Phyllis Dobson
- '73 Harding Moffat
- '74 Willett Mills
- '75 Lloyd McPherson
- '76 Ethel Crathorne
- '77 Bob Kanigsburg
- '78 Charlie Allen
- '79 Ian McLaren
- '80 Eric Cooke
- '81 Don and Joyce Purchase
- '82 Sandra Myers
- '83 Shirley Cohrs
- '84 John Cohrs
- '85 Peter and Linda Payzant
- '86 Ian McKay and Jack Cameron
- '87 Elaine and Mike Kew
- '88 Ross Anderson (posthumously)
- '89 Ken Gregoire
- '90 Bob Dickie
- '91 David Currie

This year the Puffin goes to a husband and wife team. The wife in this case had been a backyard birder for a long time with no interest being shown by her husband. In June, 1983, she dragged him off to the Nova Scotia Museum to see an introduction to birding by Roger Pocklington, followed the next day at 6:00 a.m. by an early morning bird walk. This was the start of their birding together and they joined the society immediately.

In his initial records he recorded having seen an "Black-chested Green Vireo". He was, however, taken in hand by Fulton Lavender who administered an intensive and exhausting course in bird identification and his knowledge has improved somewhat since then.

He became Secretary of the Society in 1984 and remained in that position for three years at which time he was elected Treasurer, a post he still holds.

She was elected Membership Secretary in 1989, which post she filled until 1991, when she became Vice-President. This year she is nominated for the office of President.

Both were actively involved in the **Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas** having completed a square of their own and assisted in several others. He has served as Treasurer of the Maritimes Bird Atlas Trust for seven years and both have been members of Cornell's Project Feederwatch.

In case you haven't already guessed, this year's winners are Don and Carol MacNeill.

Bob Dickie  
President

PUFFIN OF THE YEAR



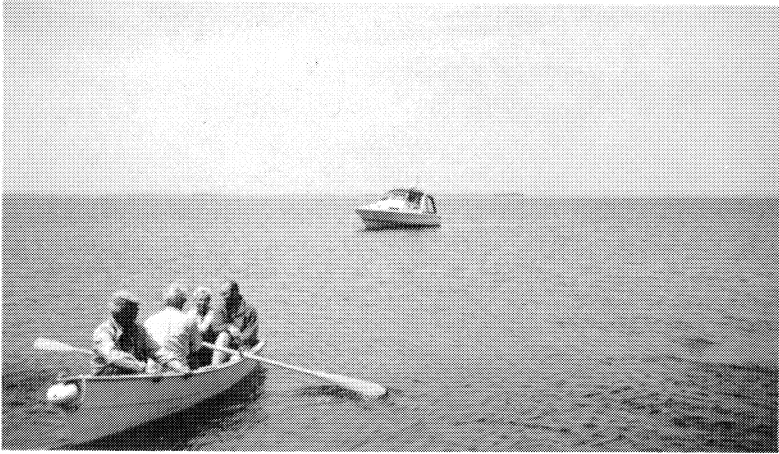
Bob Dickie presents the Puffin of the Year  
to  
Carol and Don MacNeill  
at the  
Annual General Meeting

Photograph: Peter Payzant

## SEABIRDS IN MAHONE BAY

Text and photographs by  
Eric Cooke

In late June the Directors of the Society's Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund visited a number of islands in and near Mahone Bay to view seabird colonies. We stayed well offshore from islands where terns and puffins were nesting to avoid disturbing them but anchored and rowed ashore at others. We went in Chairman Ken Gregoire's boat. The rest of the crew were Directors Dave Currie, Alan Covert, Shirley Cohrs, Bob Dickie and myself.



On East Ironbound Island, many burrows of resting petrels had been disturbed by some predator--a cat? racoon? mink? -- which had been digging at the holes. Scattered petrel feathers nearby showed successful predation.

Most gull eggs had already hatched and the young appeared to be two or three weeks old. Here Shirley holds a Herring Gull chick while Bob looks on.

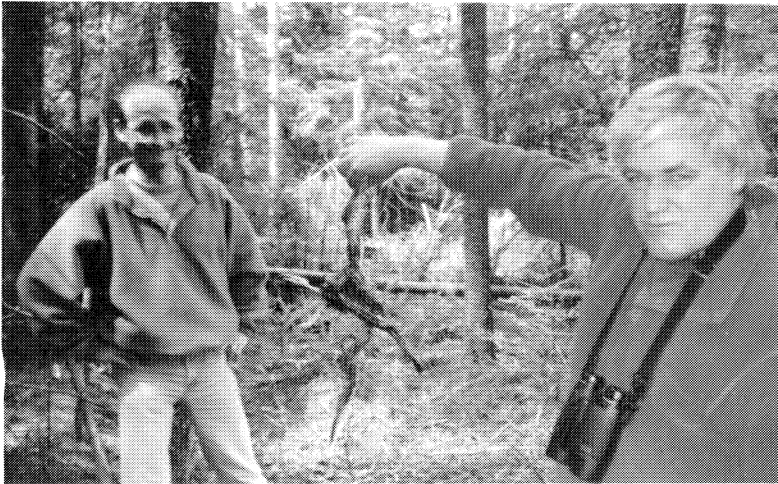


Where possible, Double-crested Cormorants prefer to build their nests in trees but on this treeless island, their nests were on the ground.

Dave and Ken step carefully to avoid nest while Alan, Shirley and Bob inspect cormorant eggs on the nests. Other nests held recently hatched young.



On another island, we tramped through thick bush and over deadfalls to see a nesting colony of Great Blue Heron. The nests were high in the trees, and on the ground below, a number of dead young were lying, apparently having fallen or perhaps been pushed out by stronger siblings. Alan holds one of the dead chicks while Dave looks on.



It was a very hot afternoon with many biting insects inland and the indescribable smell at the heronry was such that we did not linger. The trip ended on an encouraging note for although many tern colonies are having problems this year, in general those around Mahone Bay appear to be doing quite well.

## PROFILE--CAROL MACNEILL



Christmas Carol--born December 24, 1943. A native of Halifax, Carol is married to her highschool sweetheart Don and is the mother of two, Alana and Colin.

Although Carol now follows her career at the Great West Life Assurance Company, she stayed at home when her children were small. It was at this time that she became interested in bird watching.

Carol got a **Peterson Field Guide** for a Christmas present and spent considerably more time reading it than she did in having success in identifying anything. This method did pay off to some extent, as eventually she began to recognize new birds when she saw them. Her first entry on her life list is "winter, 1969--8-12 Cedar Waxwings eating crab apples in the tree in the backyard". Her old lists show that for the next fifteen years or so all of her sightings are around home or areas where the family vacationed. During this time neither Don nor anyone else she knew was interested in watching birds.

In June of 1983, she talked Don into attending a lecture on bird identification at the museum, given by a friend, Roger Pocklington. This was followed the next morning by an early morning walk before work. This was their first experience of organized birding and they were both hooked. They became members of N.S.B.S. that fall, enjoyed the meetings and took advantage of many of the field trips offered by the Society and learned much from the many members who attended the walks and shared their knowledge so generously. Now, all their vacations are birding trips, as are trips to the grocery store or to work, etc. Over the years she has reverted to her more leisurely ways and often finds that if you sit quietly (preferably with a cup of tea in hand) lovely birds will come to you while others are out beating the bushes for them.

Don was elected to the Executive as Secretary in 1984, and after five years of listening to everyone laughing and having a good time at the Executive meetings when they were held at their house, Carol volunteered to serve on the Executive in 1989. She was Membership Secretary from 1989-1991, Vice-President the following year and now President. Don and Carol have both felt that they should contribute something to the Society in their own small way in return for all the pleasure they have received from it over the years.

She was involved along with Don in the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas project and is currently involved with Cornell University's "Project Feederwatch". She is the new co-ordinator of the Rare Bird Alert.

When not birding, Carol enjoys reading, travel, gardening, playing the flute and having dinner parties.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor, **Nova Scotia Birds**,

This evening I received a phone call from Blaine MacDonald and Heiko Elsinga about an incident involving an owl. Near dusk, at Moody Lake, in the Williamswood area of suburban Halifax, Blaine spotted a Great Horned Owl that had, apparently made recent kill and had taken it to a tree to eat. Because of the approaching darkness he left the area and returned in the morning. Climbing the tree to the spot where the owl was sitting, he found a few bones and two clawed birds feet.

Blaine and Heiko took the feet to Fred Scott at the Nova Scotia Museum, where they were identified as those of a BARN OWL.

In view of the rarity of this bird in Nova Scotia, I want to take this opportunity to thank Blaine and Heiko for making the effort to have the species identified and Fred for directing them to report it to **Nova Scotia Birds**.

Bob Dickie  
Records Editor

The Editor, **Nova Scotia Birds**;

My father David G. Stewart of Charlottetown, as a gift, gave me my first membership to this Society. An avid birder himself since his youth, he instilled in me a great sense of excitement in birding from a very early age. (He also encouraged me to send you the account below).

My husband Lorne and I moved to our current home in Kentville in mid-August, 1989 and have maintained a feeder in our yard since that Labor Day Weekend. I was astonished how quickly our feeder was "discovered" (4-8 hours) and with the numbers and varieties of visitors since that time (including unwelcome raccoons and on chipmunk!)

The feeder is stocked primarily with sunflower seeds even during the summer months. As a result of the latter activity I was privileged to observe a young chickadee receiving its education from its parents.

Note: the tale is better told in person, so you need to picture the following description in your most "chickadee antic" light.

Three chickadees, two adults and one young, arrived in the tree near our summer feeder. The young chickadee was situated between the two adults. The sight of the three perched together caught my attention first. One adult flew to the feeder, obtained a seed and returned to its position. It opened the seed between its toes and fed the young one. This was repeated several times by each adult.

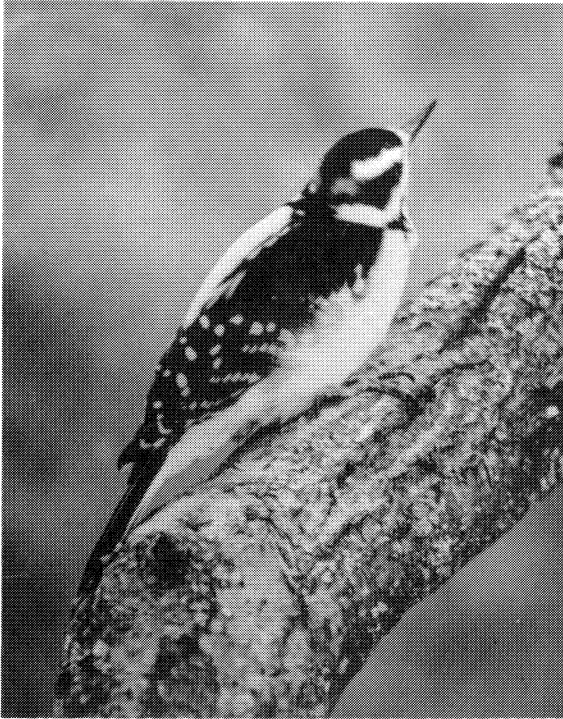
The young chickadee then flew to the feeder and returned to its middle position with a seed. It then attempted to put the seed between its toes. The seed would not co-operate (or the toes wouldn't). It kept sliding under the branch out of reach. An adult chickadee reached down underneath in upside-down position to push the seed back up between the young one's toes. This antic was repeated several times. The young then took one peck at the seed, underneath goes the seed—adult pushes seed back in place. After several such attempts, the young chickadee finally succeeded in opening the seed and extracting the meat. This process continued for at least five more seeds.

The sight of this nearly caused me to fall off MY perch in mirth. If the young chickadee had the ability to stick out its tongue in concentrating on his job and effort in organizing his toes, it couldn't have been a funnier sight. Chickadee antics are always amusing but this "lesson" ranks with the best I have seen (right up there with an adult patiently teaching its summer song to carefree "rock and roll" chickadee young—

another story!).

*The tale likely loses much in the telling on paper, but I thought you might enjoy it! I am amazed at how many people miss out on such entertainment because they don't own a feeder. I have converted several innocents, including my husband, his sister and brother in-law and my mother-in-law. They can't avoid the exposure—it's contagious!*

Pamela Stewart MacKinnon,  
Kentville, N.S.



This bird, photographed by Ted Casselman, can readily be diagnosed as a HAIRY WOODPECKER, from its good-sized beak and spotless outer tail feathers.

## LIVING ISLAND--Part VIII

Evelyn Richardson

One name for the bake-apple is "mountain raspberry" and the fruit does resemble our raspberry in size and in the way each berry consists of round, closely-joined, seed-containing sections. However, instead of growing on a bush, each berry is supported on a single stalk, only three to five inches high, and it rises above four or five large crinkled leaves. The newly-formed berry is tightly enclosed by thick, overlapping sepals which, as they begin to open, disclose round knobs, hard and green as any tiny apple. As the sepals open further, the berry yellows and, when fully grown, has taken on the red cheeks and shine of a firm apple. It then ripens to a luscious golden semi-transparency like that of an apple baked to exact rightness. Of all the berries I have eaten, this is the most delicious.

\*\*\*\*\*

...it was on an expedition to the northern end of Bon Portage in search of bakeapples that Evelyn and Morrill Richardson had this fascinating shorebird experience. They set out in a skiff in light fog with a threat of rain, which weather deteriorated to heavy rain with thick patchy fog. Evelyn writes:

At last we decided we had all the berries worth picking, and we headed towards the trees on the wooded ridge that forms the island's northern end. By then my coat, though barely holding together, had shed enough rain to fill the feet of my rubberboots, and my slacks were soaked to the top. We had sandwiches in our pockets and Morrill had brought a thermos of coffee. My idea was to have a quick snack--mostly hot coffee--under the trees, then hurry to the skiff and home to dry clothes. Not so Morrill's. A picnic, especially on a rainy day, demanded a fire, even though we could not possibly spare time to dry out and would soon be wet again if we could. (When we disagree under such circumstances I claim Morrill "gets stubborn and stubborn"; he says I become "owly".) I was sent, sodden and sulking, to gather branches from dead firs and dry bark from the few birch boles. The saturated trees sent rivulets down my neck whenever I brushed a branch, my wet head merely forming a watershed. Morrill wasn't having much luck either, but the harder it was to start a fire the more determined he became to have one, while I grew increasingly mean in temper and countenance. The most maddening part was that, once the fire blazed up, its warmth was comforting, and it did cast a lovely flickering upon glistening leaves and trunks, so that our little bivouac was cosy and delightful. Not that I was ready to admit this. By the time the last sandwich and sip of coffee were gone, the rain had been replaced by a low dense fog. We were still wet, but we felt better and Morrill, who is quick to forgive and forget (especially since he usually manages to have his way) and who knows just how to get around me, offered, "Wouldn't you like to go over the ridge to see if any shorebirds are in the Salt Water Pond?"

Many gunning expeditions had made him familiar with the winding way through the trees, where grassy patches and bits of stonewall remain of a onetime field. When we topped the rise we could hear from the pond the excited clamour of flocking birds. By then we were drenched again so we pushed recklessly through the interlocked branches of the spruce thicket bordering the pond. The tide was out. The down-pressing fog was of the "soup" variety and we could not see beyond the nearest sand bar, only a few yards away. But I caught my breath. Never had I seen so many shorebirds. They crowded so closely that the very flats on which they fed seemed to be stirring and lifting and dropping in constant movement. Because of the compact formation, busy feeding and noisy confusion of voices, we believed the multitude must have recently arrived, although we had seen a few migrant shorebirds almost two weeks before.

"How many?" I asked Morrill.

"A thousand at least that we can see. There must be several times that many out in the fog. Just listen to them!"

We had often seen and heard hundreds of shorebirds about the Salt Water Pond bars and knew that many journeying birds doubtless paused there to feed, when no human eye watched, no ear listened. But we could not have imagined such a congregation as this. How I wished the fog would lift, even for a moment, so that I could see the birds whose disembodied voices came through the blowing fog-wreaths, voices which had brought from the Arctic's empty shores, so lately left behind, some of the great North's loneliness. Without binoculars, and peering wet-eyed through the distorting fog, it was difficult to pick out distinguishing marks--and, at best, I find shorebirds confusing. The big dowitchers, stitching the sand with their "sewing-machine" bills, were unmistakable, the yellowlegs identifiable. The smaller semipalmated sandpipers and the semipalmated, or ring-necked, plover were too numerous and familiar to escape notice; but most of the "peeps" blurred into one another and the fog.

Amid the constant twitters I heard a far willet's cry, likely uttered by a Bon Portage native, for willets never form part of the early shorebird migration, while I knew a few pairs had nested under the trees at the southern end of the Salt Water Pond. Ten days before this we had come upon several empty nests, neatly made and well-rounded, while a willet had flown over us scolding so fiercely we had suspected her young were not far off.

After the first sight of the shorebirds, I had not been conscious of my wet condition, yet we decided not to face the dripping trees again but to take the longer shore route to our skiff. We moved along the pond's inner margin and crossed the open end of the ridge where it narrows and "makes off" as the long Northern Bar.

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It is often strewn and discoloured with seawrack, while high tide hides all but the uppermost cobblestones and the dark ropes of seaweeds. That day the ebb had left the sand clean and white and as we stepped upon it we saw that the winding trails of whelks and periwinkles were overprinted by patterns of many little three-toed feet. And through the fog, above the deep roar of seas across the bar, came the same restless and varied pipings we had heard at the pond. We moved down the smooth expanse and came upon shorebirds running everywhere, energetically stabbing the sand with long bills. There was a dim band of small dark figures at surf line and as we neared this we found the tide had turned and was creeping in froth-edged scallops up the sand. The small peeps nimbly followed the changing line of foam, now and then lifting above a wave-edge as if timid of wet feet, but always carrying on their cheerful conversations. The beach afforded them room to spread and move freely about; the fog here was thinner than over the pond; so these birds were more definitely outlined and more easily identified. Mostly they were the common semipalmated sandpipers, along with many semipalmated plover. I made out a few sanderlings; a white-rumped sandpiper; a few leasts with their yellow-green legs; and several spotted sandpipers, some of which were already losing their spots. We could not pause to watch these flocks since we had by now overstayed our time, but we observed what we could as we hurried along. On a patch of seaweed I saw two dunlins, or redbacked sandpipers, with their black belly-patches and upcurved bills, rare birds on Bon Portage. On the pebbly tongues interspersed among the sand were hundreds of dowitchers, showing the white-triangles along their backs when they flew; some twenty black-bellied plover with their stout bills and their habit of hurrying along, full tilt, then stopping short to look about, or to lift with a mellow, far reaching cry; smaller groups of great yellowlegs and of ruddy turnstones.

Ruddy turnstones are favourites with me. At rest their rich chestnut and bold black-and-white pattern is striking, while their bright orange feet and legs show to advantage against grey rock and brown seaweed. Even in immature or sober fall plumage they display a pleasing pattern as they fly low over the water. Larger than the sandpeeps and much more vividly marked, they were among the first shorebirds I learned to identify. The bird gets its name, of course, from its habit of turning over small stones to seize the crustaceans beneath--though I have yet to catch one in the act. (A friend, who teaches Chaucer and Shakespeare and who loves words, was so fascinated by the bird names I mentioned on a group walk around the island, particularly by "ruddy turnstone", that he was inveigled into bird watching and has become an enthusiast. What's in a name, indeed?)

By the time Morrill and I had reached the end of the sandy cove, and were within sight of our skiff, we had seen another thousand or more shorebirds. And our bake-apple day had truly turned out to be one for the birds. It is what I saw on that rainy, foggy, half-unreal day that I shall always remember, although I have paid many visits to the Salt Water Pond in shorebird season. Once with Betty June and Sid, I saw a rare Wilson's plover there. Arth often brings a boatload of friends--his and ours--to spend a Sunday on the island, and if there are a goodly proportion of bird watchers among them, he will take us all in his large boat, anchor off the northern bar and set us ashore by punt so that we can roam the beaches and sand-spits where shorebirds congregate.



This BAIRD'S SANDPIPER posed nicely for Ken McKenna during the Society's field trip to Bon Portage Island, in early September 1991.

HANTS COUNTY DAY FIELD TRIP

May 23, 1992



Back row--left to right:

Elinor Curry, Helen Gibson, Ethel Crathorne, Bill Caudle, Millie Lawrence

Front row--left to right:

John Cohrs, Shirley Cohrs, Marg Clark (with the Hants County Puffin) Inez Roberts

--Photo, Marg Slatkin

## SANCTUARY AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND REPORT

1991-1992

As in the past, our projects for 1992 were a continuation of 1990-1991.

The Youth Field Trip with six excellent students from Parkview Education Centre's Baccalaureate Biology class was held at Crescent Beach. Again we thank leaders John Cohrs, Eric Cooke and Bill Caudle who made this trip so successful.

We participated in the Photo Guild Bird Photograph competition. Shirley Cohrs was one of the judges and Joyce Purchase gave a talk at the meeting.

Our Raptor Rehabilitation Programme continues with Elaine and Mike Kew and our Dartmouth Veterinarians. This year they had sixteen birds, ten of which were owls. The majority of the owls were young birds which were thought to have been abandoned by their parents. No gunshot or leg hold trap injured birds were sent to the centre. No Peregrine Falcons were treated in 1992.

Dave Currie continues to work on the Ross Anderson papers and hopes to have the project completed by the spring of 1993.

In 1991 we hired Krista Amey under Tony Lock's supervision to determine the tern breeding success which turned out to be zero. Thus, in 1992, with a local committee from Brier Island, the S.S.T.F. provided funding to hire a warden. The warden, under Tony Lock's guidance, would discourage gull nesting, enhance habitat and erect a warden's cabin. The cabin was built and erected by the Peters' Island Protection Committee, and funded by a grant from C.W.S., which Tony had obtained.

The terns were late in returning due to our very cold spring and early summer with only forty or so birds seen at one time. The birds never did return and nest on Peters' Island. Instead, Machias Seal Island's population increased by five hundred pairs. The cold temperatures and lack of suitable food resulted in the same phenomenon in Mahone Bay's small colonies where terns abandoned nests with eggs and returned to a large colony on Grassy Island.

Tony and Stephen Kress of the National Audubon Society visited Peters' Island and have made recommendations for our 1993 programme. I want to thank Tony Lock of C.W.S. and Virginia Tudor of Peters' Island Tern Protection Committee for their work on the project.

Our Eider Duck Survey is still being done yearly at the same time U.S.F.W. covers this area. The Eider Duck nesting boxes on Pearl Island have produced limited results to date. In 1993, we plan to continue with our previously mentioned projects and also enhance the habitat of Indian Island. We welcome any new ideas from the membership.

In closing, before we have Dave Currie, our Treasurer, give his financial statement, I would like to thank our executive, who have faithfully attended and opened their homes for our meetings:

Secretary - Dr. Allan Covert  
 Treasurer - Dave Currie  
 Directors - Shirley Cohrs  
               Eric Cooke  
               Bob Dickie

Respectfully Submitted  
 G. Kenneth Gregoire  
 Chairman

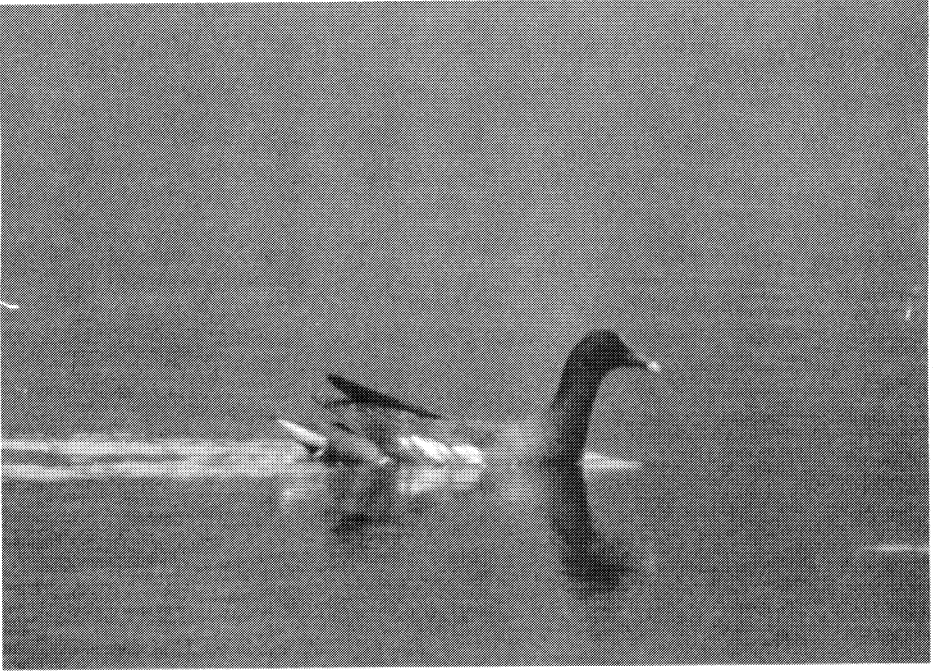


Last July's CAROLINA WREN in Bedford, although snapped at a distance on its favoured perch on private property, is easily recognized on Alan Covert's photograph. It is only the second of its species to be photographically confirmed in the province

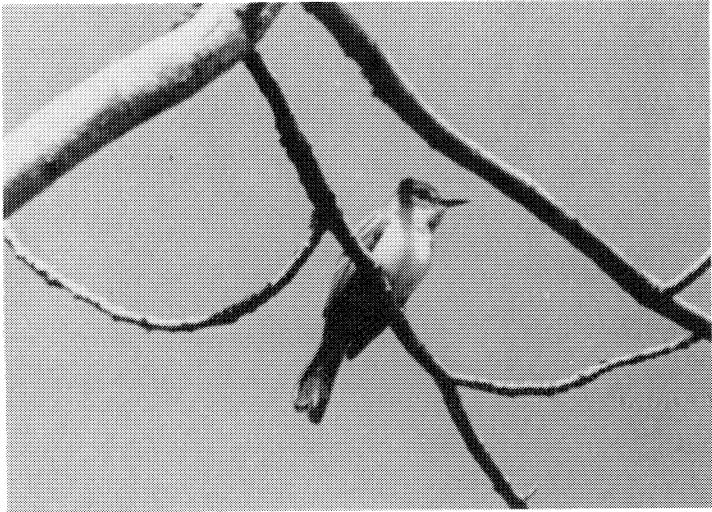


This MOURNING DOVE was found moribund in W. Pubnico last spring by Raymond D'Entremont. All mottled with white feathering, it was clearly unfit in other respects.





Common Moorhen (formerly Common Gullinule) at Green Bay, June, 1992  
Photo--Shirley Cohrs



I don't believe that we have ever published a photograph of a GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER. This one was photographed by Alan Covert in Waverley, in woods across from Powdermill Park, where it was calling, and presumably nesting, from late May.

## SIGHT RECORD OF A PACIFIC LOON IN NOVA SCOTIA

Roger A. Foxall

At about 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, November 8, 1992, my son Andrew and I returned home from a morning birding outing to receive word of a possible Arctic Loon at Cow Bay. I telephoned Ian McLaren for more details, but he had already left to look for the bird. We immediately set out for Cow Bay, arriving at the "Moose" about 3:15 p.m. Scanning with a 22X telescope, I noticed a possible Arctic/Pacific Loon diving very close to shore about 300 yards along the natural causeway which heads towards Hartlen's Point. We drove around the pond below the parking lot to the stony beach, to approximately where the bird was seen. There was no sign of the bird. After more scanning, I found the bird again farther along the beach. We walked as far as possible, i.e., to the channel, quickly located the bird, feeding the other side of the channel, and studied the bird for about thirty-five minutes. By then the bird had moved closer to the point (off the golf course) and no more useful observation was possible.

The weather conditions were not ideal. Cloud cover was total. There was very little wind. The lighting was neutral, that is, no sunlight or shadow effects, but not of sufficient brightness to discern colours very well.

Throughout the observation the bird fed actively very close to shore, mostly right in the waves breaking against the shoreline. For most of the time it was accompanied by a Red-throated Loon in adult alternate plumage (except for moulting in the upper foreneck area). Several times both birds were together in the telescope view. Direct comparisons were made with respect to overall size, bill shape and proportions, and intensity of colouration. All field marks noted below were seen using a 22X telescope at distances of about 150 to 200 yards.

The overall size was not distinguishable from that of the Red-throated Loon. All of the body above the waterline, extending through the hindneck to include most of the head appeared to be a very dark blackish brown (black in poor light), in contrast to the greyish overall appearance of the Red-throated. No variations in the colour were noticed, although the lighting conditions were not good enough to discern any subtle variations that might have been present. Similarly, no markings were visible within the dark plumage, except for a relatively small white patch about two-thirds along the body towards the tail, which was sometimes visible as the bird lifted its body up in the diving motion. The lack of any paler markings in the mantle indicates the bird was an adult in basic plumage.

The cheeks and neck down to the waterline were white, except for a region of diffuse somewhat darker feathering on the throat and upper foreneck. Side-on views showed the white cheek region to be restricted to the area below the eye. The lores were dark. The junction of the white cheek with the dark brown remainder of the face was sharply defined. Frontal views showed the white of the foreneck to be widest at the waterline, narrowing steadily until the darker region below the throat. Again, the junctions of the white foreneck with the dark brown sides of the neck were sharply defined.

The bill was slender (compared to a Common Loon), straight, about the same length as that of the Red-throated, and was always held horizontally. The culmen was curved normally, not decurved as in the Red-throated, and the smooth curvature of the upper and lower mandibles was symmetrical. The bill colour seemed fairly dark, not contrasting particularly with the dark areas of the head.

Other points seen were the lack of white along the side of the swimming bird or in the flank region (characteristics of Arctic Loon), the slender head and smoothly curved crown compared to Common Loon, and the snake-like appearance of the bird as it lunged into its dives.

Of the various drawings and photographs of Arctic/Pacific/Red-throated Loons in my possession, the closest similarity to the head, bill and neck of the bird is the photograph of a basic-plumaged Pacific Loon in **A field Guide to the Seabirds of the World** by Peter Harrison (The Stephen Greene Press, 1987, illustration 44, page 31).

Separating the loons can be difficult at times, especially birds in non-breeding plumages or in partial moult. However, the bird was clearly not a small Common Loon. Several features are not consistent with Red-throated Loon, including the reasonably uniform dark brown/blackish mantle (unmarked), hindneck, crown, lores, and face above the eye; the sharply defined separation of the dark plumage from the white in the face and down the sides of the foreneck; the narrowing of the white upper foreneck; and the shape and posture of the bill.

Neither do the marks fit the characteristics of the Arctic Loon as far as I am aware of them. In particular the bird showed no obvious white along the waterline nor any obvious white flank patch, was too small, and had a bill length that was too short (I consider these size comparisons to be reliable in view of the close proximity of the Red-throated during the observation). Therefore, I conclude that the bird was a Pacific Loon. It was probably an adult in an advance stage of moult into basic plumage. The darker diffuse region below the throat would likely be remaining from the black throat in breeding plumage. It would have been useful to have noticed a thin dark "chinstrap", which is frequently present in basic-plumaged Pacifics, but this may have been masked by the darker diffuse feathering on the throat and upper foreneck.

Eight previous sight records of Pacific Loon are referred to in the Third Edition of **Birds of Nova Scotia**, all occurring between September 3 and April 3. However, there is as yet no specimen or definitive photographic evidence for the occurrence of the species in Nova Scotia. Similarly, there is no evidence for the occurrence of Arctic Loon in the province, although the previous sight records may not have been sufficiently detailed to eliminate this possibility.



Wouldn't you look grumpy if you had a bunch of porcupine quills stuck in your mouth?  
Photograph by Ted Casselman.

N. S. B. S. PINS

BY THE TIME THIS REACHES YOU THE LAPEL PINS **MAY** HAVE ARRIVED. AT THE TIME OF WRITING THEY HAVE NOT. THIS HUGE DELAY IS BEING INVESTIGATED. MEANWHILE, ORDERS ARE STILL BEING RECEIVED. WE ASK THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY PAID TO BE PATIENT!!!

S T O P P R E S S

**THEY ARE HERE!!!**

Price is \$3.00 which includes

GST and mailing.

Contact: Bernice Moores  
1361 Edward Street  
Halifax, N.S.  
B3H 3H3

Phone: 422-5292

## EVENING PROGRAMMES FOR THE WINTER

Nova Scotia Museum  
8:00 p.m.

- Jan. 28 Members Slide Night  
10-12 slides per member--those having slides please come early (7:30) to organize the carousels
- Feb. 25 Stuart Tingley  
Birds of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Antarctic
- March 25 Ted D'Eon --Birds of Yarmouth County
- April 22 Cindy Staicer-Avian Behavior Ecologist, Dalhousie University
- Songs of Warblers

(Please note: this is the **4th** Thursday of the month--which is **not always the last** Thursday)

## 1992 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

The 1992 A.G.M. of the Nova Scotia Bird Society was held on Thursday, October 22 at 8:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, Nova Scotia. The President, Bob Dickie chaired the meeting and 40 members attended.

Bob Dickie called for the adoption of the minutes of the 1991 A.G.M. which had been distributed at the beginning of the meeting. Margaret Clark moved and Bernice Moores seconded--Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes.

None.

Financial Report

Given by Don MacNeill. Total receipts were \$13,779.85. Total Disbursements were \$13,352.26. The excess receipts over disbursements was \$427.59. Membership dues are down approximately \$500.00. Membership dues are not enough to pay for **Nova Scotia Birds**. An annual grant from the Nova Scotia Museum is necessary to pay the remainder. A new cost of \$274.52 was for the Bird Information Line. It was moved by Don MacNeill and seconded by John Cohrs that the report be adopted. Carried.

Membership Report

Bob Dickie presented the report. Marion Allsebrook had to resign during the year and Bob Dickie and Peter Payzant are sharing the duties of Membership Secretary. Membership has been paid by some members right up to the year 2000. Some membership information has already been entered into the computer and the remainder will be put in over the next year. Membership is down by \$500.00 Bob Dickie moved for the adoption of the report. Seconded by Peter Payzant. Carried.

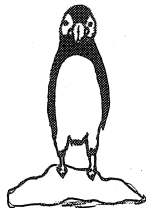
Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund

General report given by Ken Gregoire. Financial report given by Dave Currie. The adoption of the reports was moved by Dave Currie and seconded by Eric Cooke. Carried. For reports see page 65 and 74.

President's Report (see page 1)

Bob Dickie thanked Bernice Moores and Janos Kovacs for preparing the wine and cheese party to follow.

The President presented The Puffin of the Year Award to the husband and wife team of Don and Carol MacNeill. (see page 54)



Nominating Committee

Chris Field presented the report prepared by himself and Peter Payzant. James C. Morrow has agreed to serve another year as Honorary Auditor and Tony Robinson will continue to serve as Honorary Solicitor. The following slate of officers for 1993 was presented.

President	Carol MacNeill
Vice President	Louis Coutinho
Secretary	Jim Taylor
Editor	Shirley Cohrs
Treasurer	Don MacNeill
Membership Secretary	Bob Dickie/Peter Payzant
Honorary Solicitor	Tony Robinson
Honorary Auditor	James C. Morrow

After three calls for further nominations and none being received, the above were duly elected. Bill Caudle is also on the executive as Past President.

Nominations for the three Director positions were called for and the following nominations were received.

<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Mover</u>	<u>Secunder</u>
Lisè Cohrs	Dave Currie	Phyllis Bryson
Janos Kovacs	Fulton Lavender	Bev Sarty
Bernice Moores	Joyce Purchase	Lou Coutinho

Bob Dickie declared nominations cease. Secunder Carol MacNeill. The above were duly elected.

New Business

Carol MacNeill took the Chair and called for any new business.

Bird Information Line

Chris Field asked the executive to consider the possibility of converting the line to a 1-800 number for Nova Scotia only. The executive will research the feasibility of this idea and report back at the November or January Bird Society meeting.

Canadian Nature Federation August, 1994 Convention (CNF)

Bob MacDonald, member of the Halifax Field Naturalist's Society and Chairman of the Organizing Committee for CNF called for volunteers interested in conducting field trips, indoor programs, etc., at this upcoming convention scheduled for August 5-7, 1994 in Halifax.

Peter Payzant asked members to check the expiry date on their society card before sending in 1993 membership fees. Some members are paid up to the year 2000. He also announced that the publication **Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas** is available in bookstores now and that all society members are invited to the book launch one week from tonight at the Museum.

Ian McLaren noted that appreciation should be directed to Peter and Linda Payzant who were the heart and soul of the **Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas** project. He also asked the executive whether the Society is a member of the "Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists" and noted that if we are not, perhaps we should be. Eric Cooke concurred.

### Field Trips

Jim Taylor notified members that the Brier Island trip needs organizers before it can be offered in the next issue of **Nova Scotia Birds**.

There being no further business, Carol MacNeill moved the meeting be adjourned.

A wine and cheese party followed.

Respectfully submitted  
Paul Duval



## SANCTUARY AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND

Financial Statements  
to Sept 30, 1992

(With comparison for the 12 months ended Sept. 30, 1991)

## Statement of Receipts and Disbursements

	1992	1991
<b>Receipts</b>		
Contributions	6,845.00	1,919.47
G.I.C. Interest	2,331.49	2,826.25
Bank Interest	215.92	248.90
Surrender of G.I.C.	.00	3,000.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>9,392.41</b>	<b>7,994.62</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>		
Bank Charges	66.56	63.53
Taxes	533.80	446.77
Raptor Rehab. Project	33.81	989.00
Purchase of G.I.C.	6,000.00	.00
Youth Field Trip	.00	149.00
Peter Is. Tern Project	3,416.00	2,500.00
C.B. Piping Plover Beach Proj.	360.00	.00
Cole Hbr. Rural Heritage Soc.	.00	200.00
World Wildlife Fund	.00	.00
Cdn. Nature Conservancy	.00	200.00
McKeever Owl Rehab. Fund	.00	200.00
Photo Guild Annual Competition	.00	43.24
Maritimes Bird Atlas Trust	.00	.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	431.11	355.62
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>10,841.28</b>	<b>5,147.16</b>
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements	-1,448.87	2,847.46
Opening Bank Balance	5,243.86	2,396.40
<b>Closing Bank Balance</b>	<b>3,794.99</b>	<b>5,243.86</b>



**Balance Sheet****Assets**

Guaranteed Investment Cert.	27,400.00	21,400.00
Outer, Middle, Little Half and Mossy Bald Islands	.00	.00
Hertford Island	1,000.00	1,000.00
Indian Island	160.00	160.00
North Kemptville Property	12,000.00	12,000.00
Peter Island	1,500.00	1,500.00
Kelsey Property, Port Joli	20,000.00	20,000.00
Bank Balance	13,000.00	13,000.00
	3,794.99	5,243.86
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>78,854.99</b>	<b>74,303.86</b>

**Statement of Surplus**

Opening Balance	74,303.86	74,456.40
Excess of receipts over Disbursements	-1,448.87	.00
Inc/Dec in G.I.C.	.00	2,847.46
	6,000.00	-3,000.00
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>78,854.99</b>	<b>74,303.86</b>

# NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

(Incorporated 1957)

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended September 30, 1992

(With comparative figures for the year ended September 30, 1991)

	1992	1991
<i>STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS</i>		
<i>Receipts</i>		
Membership dues	\$7,919.00	\$8,478.00
Sale of publications, etc.	2,845.72	3,097.15
Nova Scotia Museum grant	2,000.00	2,000.00
Interest – savings account	144.02	654.86
– guaranteed investment certificates (net)	701.39	973.48
Sale of computer		600.00
Mailing list cost recovery	50.00	50.00
Miscellaneous income	119.72	107.85
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Receipts	13,779.85	15,961.34
<i>Disbursements</i>		
Nova Scotia Birds and Fall Flyer	9,000.92	9,344.57
Editor's expenses	301.94	338.63
Field trip coordinator's expenses	42.35	44.20
Printing and stationery	1,028.47	534.07
Cost of publications and other items for sale	167.99	6,104.92
Postage	590.57	502.86
Slide collection	95.71	98.95
Monthly meeting expenses	56.27	68.38
Annual general meeting expenses	326.80	376.33
Guaranteed investment certificates increase	845.39	973.48
Insurance	200.00	175.00
Photography and other awards	139.30	8.12
Computer purchase, repairs and parts	16.43	1,165.56
Bird Information Line	274.52	
Miscellaneous expenses	265.60	119.39
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Disbursements	13,352.26	19,854.46
<i>Excess receipts over disbursements</i>	427.59	(3,893.12)
Opening bank balance	4,745.47	8,638.59
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Closing bank balance	\$5,173.06	\$4,745.47

**BALANCE SHEET****Assets**

Electric typewriter (cost \$296.45)	\$1.00	\$1.00
Steel filing cabinet (cost \$99.96)	1.00	1.00
Steel filing cabinet (cost \$98.99)	1.00	5.00
Computer and printer (cost \$1,034.22)	507.00	724.00
Guaranteed investment certificates	10,395.26	9,549.87
Bank balance	<u>5,173.06</u>	<u>4,745.47</u>

**Total assets and members' equity**

<u>\$16,078.32</u>	<u>\$15,026.34</u>
--------------------	--------------------

**STATEMENT OF MEMBERS' EQUITY**

Opening balance	\$15,026.34	\$17,488.98
Excess receipts over disbursements	427.59	(3,893.12)
Fixed asset purchases (net)		770.22
G.I.C. purchases	845.39	973.48
Less: depreciation	<u>(221.00)</u>	<u>(313.22)</u>

**Closing balance**

<u>\$16,078.32</u>	<u>\$15,026.34</u>
--------------------	--------------------

*Robert B. Dickie*

R. Dickie, President

*D. A. MacNeill*

D. MacNeill, Treasurer

Audited and found correct  
according to the books

*J. Morrow*

J. Morrow, Auditor









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

Executive 1992-1993

President - Carol MacNeill  
Vice President - Lou Coutinho  
Past President - Bill Caudle (for Bob Dickie)  
Treasurer - Don MacNeill  
Secretary - James Taylor  
Newsletter Secretary - Bob Dickie  
Editor - Shirley Cohrs  
Executive Member - Bernice Moores  
Executive Member - Lise Cohrs  
Executive Member Janos Kovaks  
Solicitor - Tony Robinson  
Auditor - James C. Morrow

Membership Fees

Life Membership	\$360.00
Single Membership	12.00
Family Membership	15.00
Institutional Membership	20.00

Note: Outside Canada please add \$1.00

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Volume 35 Number 1

January 1993

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