

Nova Scotia Birds



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SPRING MIGRATION 1993

LOONS AND GREBES

Only 4 RED-THROATED LOONS appeared for the spring report: 1 Apr. 19 on the Fundy shore of King's Co. (RBS,JGT) and 1 in Cow Bay on Apr. 30 (DHH). Two others were seen on May 16--1 flew past Brier Is. (BLM,ROF,IAM) and 1 bird in breeding plumage was at Scots Bay (JWW).

In spite of, or perhaps because of, an unusual amount of onshore drift ice this spring, there were numerous reports of COMMON LOONS on coastal waters from Cole Harbour all the way around to the Fundy shore of King's Co., but none from beyond this section. BLM,JWT,& BJA felt that ice conditions were responsible for the large numbers of loons they saw on Mar. 15: 100 at Cape Sable Island, 30 at Baccaro Pt., Shel. Co., and 50 at Western Head, Queens Co. Nineteen Common Loons crowded into tiny but well sheltered Indian Hbr. near Peggy's Cove on Mar. 14, the day after the so-called "storm of the century" (AJV,BDS); another 22 were in the harbour at Prospect a few days later. Many remained on salt water well into April--for example, 30-40 in Lunenburg Bay area (WGC,CMR)--while others sought out the first patches of open fresh water. The first such report was Apr. 1 from Lake Thomas (Waverley) (JGT). According to the Payzants, things gradually settled down to one pair per lake in this area. Other inland reports were of single pairs but RBS noted 3 pairs on Aylesford Lake on May 24.

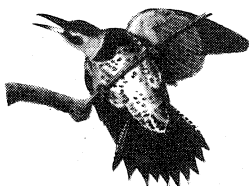
The DU Pond at Annapolis Royal had 1 PIED-BILLED GREBE, Apr. 20 (RBS) and 2 on May 20 (BLM). Two were at Sand Point on Apr. 25 (KJM) and a lone bird reached Apple River by May 7 (KFS). Six birds on Apr. 24 at APBS (BLM,ALC) had increased to 40 by May 29 (BLM,ROF).

HORNED GREBES fared somewhat better than in our winter report with a total of 200-225 birds. Most of these were in Lun. Co. where there were 25 at Broad Cove, Feb. 26 (SJF) and 104 "in a small piece of open water at Bush Island" on Mar. 20 (Cohrs). Most other reports mention 1-15 birds, but 20 were at both Cape Sable Island and Baccaro Pt. on Mar. 15 (BLM,JWT,BJA).

Twenty reports of RED-NECKED GREBES tallied barely over 100 birds. Most of these turned up along the South Shore (Lun. & Shel. Cos.) and along the Fundy coast.

A letter from Kelsey Raymond of Smith's Cove, Dig. Co., gives details of a sighting of a WESTERN GREBE last December. The bird, first spotted in late November was too distant at that time to allow a positive identification. However, a close view (150 ft.) for over 30 minutes on Dec. 24 nailed it. Maurice Mondale of Chester, N. S. was there at the time and confirmed the I.D. Nice Christmas present, Kelsey, and thanks for letting us know!

BDS, ed.



FULMAR TO PELICAN

Early 1993 was one of our nastier winters, with blizzards arriving punctually, every three days for most of February and March. This didn't do the seabirds any good, but the storm-bound rarities certainly pleased the birders. However, I'll keep to the usual order of species. NORTHERN FULMARS are regular visitors, of course. Hubert Hall and Eric Ruff saw 1 from **Bluenose** on May 4, Illegible (sorry!) saw 10 off Port Morien on May 17 and a GREATER SHEARWATER on May 22. Zoe Lucas saw a Fulmar from Sable Island on May 20. Raymond d'Entremont took the prize with 200 Fulmars on Georges Bank on April 19. He also saw 25 SOOTY SHEARWATERS, but the Greaters had not yet arrived. There were 25 WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS. There's an anonymous report of a LEACH'S STORM-PETREL off Port Morien on May 21. Hubert Hall and Eric Ruff saw 2 Leach's from **Bluenose** on May 4--the first of the year about thirty-five miles west of Yarmouth. Ken McKenna said that Leach's were active with 50,000 birds at the colony on May 21.

The spring migration of NORTHERN GANNETS was only patchily recorded. Christine Cornell and Kevin Tutt saw 300+ flying past on April 17, but they don't say where they saw them. This was the first report of the season. In Fundy, Richard Stern and Judy Tufts saw 20 off Huntingdon Point, Kings Co. on April 19 and 20+ on April 19 in the Halls Harbour area. Blake Maybank and others saw 15 Gannets, about half of them adults, off Brier Island on May 16, and 9 on May 22. Hubert Hall saw 15 off Yarmouth on May 4, all adults or near-adults. The only report from the Atlantic side was the 3 that Bill Caudle saw off Lunenburg Harbour on April 26. Bev Sarty saw a Gannet off Lr. Prospect.

Bill Caudle and Christine Ross saw about 25 GREAT CORMORANTS in Lunenburg Bay in February-March, but they all left in the first week in April. The first DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS arrived at the beginning of April, and their numbers built up during April-May. Blake Maybank and Jim Taylor saw about 25 Greats off Cape Sable Island on March 15, heading north into the wind in small groups. The return of the Double-crested Cormorants became a flood at the beginning of May. Blake Maybank and Roger Foxall saw "hundreds" heading north past Three Fathom Harbour on May 2, while Ken McKenna estimated at least 800 birds off Pictou Causeway on May 8.

Finally, Raymond d'Entremont found a dead BROWN PELICAN on the beach at Meteghan on March 25.

RGBB, ed.

HERONS AND RELATIVES

The season's first AM. BITTERN was nearly on schedule at Maccan on Apr. 20 (KFS). Five more sightings in the first week of May suggest a peak of arrivals, and another 6 were reported through late May. The first GREAT BLUE HERONS were seen on March 28--2 in Lun. Co. (LAC) and another at Canard (BDS et al.). Two were near Yarmouth next day (JKD) and 5 reached Cape Sable Is. by Apr. 1 (JOC). Others wrote of first arrivals in early April, and migratory movements continued through the month. Southern herons put on an exceptional show this spring. A GREAT EGRET, precipitated by the big storm, supplied the earliest record for the province on Mar. 23 at Freeport, Digby Co. (DET). Other individuals were on May 8 at Matthew's L. (DHY), May 9 at Lr. W. Pubnico (LSD), May 18 near Eastern Passage (WGC), May 20, Port Morien (AMU et al.), and May 29 on Cape Sable Is. (IAM). The now-famous LITTLE EGRET of Bon Portage Is. was found for the fifth year accompanied by 2-3 SNOWY EGRETS on May 24 (NSBS field trip). Other Snowy Egrets included at least 2 in Lun. Co. from Apr. 25 (var. obs.), 1 May 1-8 at Three Fathom Hbr. (v.o.), 1 May 2 on Sable Is. (ZOL), and a slate-streaked subad. was at L. Echo, Hfx. Co., May 20-22 (JWT). A half-dozen adult

TRICOLORED HERONS were a record number of this scarcest among the "regular" southern herons. The first appeared on Seal Is., Apr. 23 and stayed through May (ETM et al.), a second was at Sambro Head, Apr. 25-26 (AJV et al.), another (?) was at Lockeport, Apr. 30--May 2 (DJC et al.), 1 was at Port Morien, May 20 (AMU et al.), and different individuals were on Sable Is., May 2 and May 25-28 (ZOL). [A Reddish Egret reported without details was out-of-habitat on a lake, did not exhibit the distinctive behaviour of this species, and was probably a high-plumaged Little Blue Heron.] Only 2 CATLE EGRETS materialized--one in breeding plumage around Lockeport, Apr. 26 to early May (DJC et al.) and another at Ingomar, Apr. 29 (BJS). A dessicated corpse on Sable Is., May 10 (ZOL) presumably derived from a much earlier arrival. Individual GREEN-BACKED HERONS were around Ketch Hbr., Apr. 15-May 8 (FLL et al.), at Cranberry Pond, Port Morien, May 2 (AMU), on Sable Is., May 5-18 (ZOL), on Seal Is., May 16-25 (ETM et al.), and at Lr. W. Pubnico from May 18 to month's end (RSD). The usual BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS were around Cape Sable Is. (up to 3) from May 2 (AJV et al.), on Seal Is. (2) from May 10 (ETM,) and on Bon Portage Is. May 24 (up to 3; NSBS field trip). Wanderers included a subad. at Three Fathom Hbr., May 1-15 (CHC,KET; same bird as last year's?) an adult at Ketch Hbr., May 2 (AJV), and 2 ads. at Oak Park, Shel. Co., May 20 (BLM).

IAM, ed.

GEESE AND DUCKS

It's been a while--seven years or so--but 3 TUNDRA SWANS strayed to Nova Scotia in March. The first was discovered sitting on ice floes that jammed Ketch Harbour on Mar. 15 (BDS,PML). The black bill and small fleck of yellow in front of the eye were clearly visible. However, time and tide wait for no man (or woman) and birders who arrived within an hour were dismayed to see that the tide had turned, carrying the ice floes out of the harbour. The swan couldn't be relocated. Two days later PML and DAM saw 2 fly over at Causeway Road. These swans were no doubt shifted east of their normal migration route by the big storm the previous weekend.

For anyone who is interested, the escaped Mute Swan in Bedford Basin seems to have made it through the winter--it was at the mouth of the Sackville River on Apr. 1 (DHH). (likely trying to play a cruel April Fool's joke on some poor, innocent birders--ed.)

Continuing with "large white birds", this spring produced an unprecedented flight of SNOW GEESE. Sometime about Apr. 18, Pat Giffin counted over 100 birds flying over Connors Brook, Ann. Co (fide PML). The next day a single flock of 22 were at Kingsport (KEH,DAT).

First reported on Feb. 27 when 25+ were at Brier Is. (RBS), BRANT in this location numbered 2-300 in mid-April (HGH&HJH) and 375 by mid-May (PML). Although The Hawk has attracted much greater numbers in past years, the 900 Brant assembled in mid-March (BLM,JWT,BJA&RSD) are still the largest flock reported this spring. Smaller counts include: 40 at the mouth of the Cornwallis River, Apr. 24 (JWW), and, from the Northumberland shore, 77 on May 10 at Linden and 40 at Northport May 16 (KJM,CGB). David Young comments that Brant peaked at only 24 birds on Apr. 9 at Little Harbour where the previous low peak had been 100.

CANADA GEESE are such a welcome sign of spring that it is no wonder we received so many reports of this species. On Mar. 20 IAM & PML estimated 10,000 at Three Fathom Hbr/Chezzetcook--"both moderately open for grazing on eel grass". These dispersed quickly, as a week later only 1500 remained. Four hundred geese were at the Trenton Power Plant on Mar. 4 (AJV) and up to 450 were at the mouth of the Canard River by month's end (BLF,RAM,JGT). One thousand in the bay at Port Morien on Apr. 9 (AMU,CMU) are indicative of the northward push through April, although smaller numbers continued to be reported on mainland N.S. The traditional breeding location at Meagher's Grant had a pair on May 29 (HBD,RBD). Earlier in May an evidently wild bird was sitting a nest on a small islet near McGrath's Cove, Hfx. Co. (BDS,GEM).

Fifteen reports tallying 34 WOOD DUCKS are more than usual for this species. Most reports were of single birds, usually the colourful males, but JGT saw 2 pairs near Canning, Apr. 23, and on May 1, 6 males and 1 female were at the Ferry Rd, Pic. Co. (KJM,CGB). The Sackville River Assoc. has enlisted the help of the Second Sackville Boy Scout Troop in a project to build Wood Duck nesting boxes with materials kindly donated by Nova Scotia Power Corporation. The boxes will be installed in suitable habitat in the Sackville River watershed area so people in that area should be on the lookout for families of Wood Ducks.

At least 3 GREEN-WINGED TEAL successfully over-wintered at Sullivan's Pond. Two males at Trenton Power Plant on Mar. 13 (KJM) were possibly spring migrants but numbers didn't pick up until the rather late date of Apr. 10, when JWW found 13 in the Sheffield Mills and Canning areas, followed closely by 10 at Apple River on the 15th (KFS) and 20+ at the DU Pond in Annapolis Royal five days later (RBS). By May 2, 12 had reached Port Morien (AMU,CMU) but the bulk of reports continued to be from King's Co.--for instance, 40 (37m, 3f.) at Port Williams on May 7 (JGT).

BLACK DUCKS were under reported. The largest flock noted was at Eel Brook, Yar. Co., where 400 on Mar. 1 (RSD) had dwindled to 100 by month's end (JKD). This dispersal continued through Apr./May as flock sizes went from the 50-60 range early in this period down to 10-15 later on. The only brood reported was 9 ducklings with "mom" at Lake Echo on May 20 (JWT).

MALLARDS were thinly spread in groups of 1-7 birds stretching from Eel Brook, Yar. Co., all the way to Schooner Pond in Cape Breton. The only large flock was 80 at Irwin Hublely Rd. on St. Margaret's Bay, through late winter and into spring (ATV). Hopefully the pair on Sable Island, May 27 (ZOL) were just passing through.

The NORTHERN PINTAIL migration was behind schedule with no reports until Apr. 4 when 5 elegant drakes were at Lawrencetown Lake (DHH). A dozen more April reports account for 35 birds including: 4 at Up. Falmouth, 9 at Apple River and 7 near Canning. May brought 4 to Port Morien and during the last week of the month 1 tended 9 ducklings on Sable Island (ZOL).

The first BLUE-WINGED TEAL, also later than usual, was at Glenwood, Yar. Co., on Apr. 9 (RSD). Most of the remaining 14 reports mention "a pair" but 3 pairs were at Tiddville on Digby Neck (BJA) and at Belleisle Marsh (JWW). The Amherst area marshes hosted numbers low for the location: 6 birds at APBS Apr. 24 (BLM,ALC) and 4 at John Lusby Marsh, May 29 (BLM,ROF).

Sixteen NORTHERN SHOVELLERS showed up this spring. JWT saw 1 fly over a Kings Co. section of Hwy #103 and another singleton was on Seal Island, May 25 (ELM). There was a pair at Big Island, Pictou, on May 15 (CGB, KJM). Twelve drakes were in the Amherst area marshes May 29 (BLM,ROF)--dare we hope that an equal number of females were sitting on well-hidden nests?

An over-wintering female GADWALL remained at the Trenton Power Plant until Mar. 21 (KJM,CGB). Our first spring report was a pair on Apr. 15 at the Canning Aboiteau (JWW); the only other "pair report" was from Pembrock, Yar. Co. on May 6 (BJA). In Nova Scotia Gadwall favour Cumb. Co., especially the Amherst marshes were 24 were seen on Apr. 24 (BLM,ALC); but a day later Linden Marsh also had 9 (KJM,CGB).

Nearly half of the 40 AMERICAN WIGEONS were in Cumb. Co.--12 at Amherst marshes (BLM,ALC,ROF) and 5 at Apple River (KFS). Our three March reports were all of single birds in Hfx. Co. Numbers picked up Apr. 9, when 9 showed up on the East River of Pictou (KJM). Other observers mentioned 1-3 birds at W. Lawrencetown, Canard Pond and near Canning. Two also reached Cape Breton.

After the arrival of 4 RING-NECKED DUCKS in the Fall River/Waverley area on Mar. 19 (BJA), reports were frequent and widespread on the mainland. Best counts are just slightly lower than other years: 32 Apr. 15 on Rocky Lake, Waverley (JGT), 8 pairs at Annapolis Royal, Apr. 20 (RBS); 15 on Apr. 21 at Drain Lake (BJA) and only 70 in the Amherst marshes, Apr. 24 (BLM,ALC). However, by May 7, Publicover Lake, Lun. Co. held 10 pairs--"best number in years" (JSC).

A dapper male TUFTED DUCK, discovered on Lake Thomas, Waverley Mar. 21 (CHC, KLT), remained for more than 3 weeks, mostly at nearby Rocky Lake, to the delight of many obs.--unlike the female reported in the April issue, there was no problem picking out this bird from the crowd.

All counts of GREATER SCAUP pale in comparison with the one at West River, Pic. Co., where 1000 on May 1 had all but disappeared a week later when 62 remained (KJM, CGB). The Cohrs counted 125 near Bush Island, Mar. 20 and flocks of 25-30 were at Eel Brook (LKD) and Hartlen's Point (DHH). Several other reports mentioned 1-6 birds each. A ♀ LESSER SCAUP was at Ketch Harbour during the last week of Feb. (IAM) and another lingered at the Pictou Causeway until Mar. 15 (KJM). Lastly, an imm. male kept company with the Tufted and 3 Ring-necked Ducks in Waverley (sev. obs.)

Since winter reports of COMMON EIDER were rather low, it is worth a belated note that 1000+ were off Tiverton (Dig. Co.) on Feb. 8 (RBS). The adult males were slower in arriving but by Apr. 7 a mixed flock of 3500+ had congregated in the Halifax Harbour approaches (BDS,PML). At the same time 2000 Eiders were equally divided between Pennant and Prospect Bays (BDS). While this is a big improvement over last year, it is still a low number for the Halifax area. RBS and JGT counted 308 along the Fundy shore on Apr. 19, mostly at Margaretsville. Three hundred remained at Brier Island on the Victoria Day Weekend (BLM,KMA). A mixed flock numbering 50+ near Spencer's Island on May 22 winds up the Common Eider report.

In the April issue, I neglected to record an ad. m. KING EIDER that flew past Chebucto Head, Feb. 11 (BDS, PML). The only spring report was "an imm. f. in very unkept plumage, seen well only 10 m away" at Stoney Island (Cape Sable Island) on Mar. 15 (BLM,JWT,BJA).

HARLEQUIN DUCKS were at three locations. The 5 last reported at Prospect increased to 7 on Mar. 17 (BDS--2 ad. m., 1 imm. m., 4 f.). On Apr. 14, there were 4 at Little Port Hebert (DHY). The final report is from Brier Island where 7 lingered from the last week of April until at least May 8 (PML).

After sifting through 27 reports of OLDSQUAW, it occurred to me that this would be a good time to thank so many of you for responding to the plea for reports on some of the more common species. Most observations involved fewer than 25 birds each. Several exceptions were : 100+ in scattered flocks in Digby Harbour on Feb. 18 (RBS); 450 Mar. 18 at Caribou Island (KJM); and off Bush Island Mar. 20 there was a noisy flock of 250 (JLC,JSC).

In April, scoters were almost non-existent on the South Shore from Cherry Hill to Crescent Beach, an area that has hosted 100s, or even 1000s in the past. The Cohrs say that local people have remarked on this, and that Ken Gregoire has also noted very few while on flights along the coast. There were some BLACK SCOTERS around, mostly in the Halifax area: 100 at Tribune Head Mar. 14 (AJV,PML), and 200+ at Hartlen's Point, Apr. 12 (DHH). Ten were at Margaretsville, Apr. 19 (RBS,JGT) and on May 9 Cherry Hill Beach had 36 (JGT). Very few SURF SCOTERS were reported: 10 mixed in with C. Eiders off Chebucto Head, Apr. 7 (BDS,PML); 36 at Morden on the Fundy Shore of King's Co. on Apr. 19 (RBS,JGT); and on May 22, 9 had arrived at Economy (FLS).

In half a dozen reports of WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS there was only one mention of more than 3 birds, granted it was a lot more than 3. About 500 were at Tribune Head on Mar. 14 (AJV,PML)--these remained for several weeks. Still, it was a dismal showing for all scoters this spring.

COMMON GOLDENEYE were widespread (from Yarmouth to Sydney). Most observations yielded fewer than 15 individuals but 30 were still in the Bedford Basin on Apr. 1 (DHH,JGT) and a flock off Crescent Beach built to 350+ birds by Apr. 5 (JLC,JSC). The last report was of a lone male on May 23 at Brier Island (BLM,KMA). A pair of BARROW'S GOLDENEYE were still at the Pictou Causeway on Mar. 15 and on Mar. 27 a male was with 3 females on the East River of Pictou (KJM,CGB). Other reports included 2 at Sydney River, Feb. 27 (AMU,CMU), 5 on Mar. 22 at Pugwash (KJM) and lastly, a drake at North Sydney on Apr. 4 (DBM).

In March BUFFLEHEAD were mainly along the Atlantic coast--4 at Glace Bay Lake on the 17th (AMU,CMU), 10 on the 21st at the mouth of the LaHave River (WGC,CMR); 20 at Risser's Beach on the 27th (JGT), and on the same day, 15 at Three Fathom Harbour (BDS,PML). Twenty-four birds were counted in April, fully half of which were at the Belleisle Marsh, Apr. 24 (JGT). Ten were still in the Petite Riviere estuary on May 8--"a month later than usual" (JSC).

A pair of HOODED MERGANSERS at Pleasant Lake, Mar. 25 (JKD) could be the same pair spotted there on Feb. 28 by the Halls. Half a dozen single birds were uncovered through April/May and a pair was at each of the following locations: Whynachts Cove (AJV); Three Brooks (Pic.) (CGB); a pond at the Forties, west of New Ross (WGC,CMR) and at Drain Lake (many obs.).

COMMON and RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS were each reported about 20 times. Both species were spread from one end of the province to the other, but with the Red-breasted in somewhat greater numbers. Most people reported 2-8 Common Mergansers. The highest counts were 23 at Conrad's Beach on Apr. 4 (DHH) and 34 on Apr. 10 on the LaHave River (BLM,ELM). Both flocks were 65% males. Most Red-breasted Mergansers were in groups of 8-12 but the Yarmouth Harbour flock peaked at 35 (LKD) and on Mar. 15 25 were at Cape Sable Island (BLM,JWT,BJA). Although they weren't reported, there must have been some "Mergs" in the Pictou area where several hundred sometimes gather.

BDS, ed.



In the midst of our snowbound March, some Great Blue Herons returned to Crescent Beach. Here surrounded by vast wastes of snow, is the first.

-photo by Elizabeth Irving

DIURNAL RAPTORS

Although I concluded (last issue) that no TURKEY VULTURES had wintered, there were 3 on Brier Is., Feb. 27 (RBS,) and locals reported that more were about. Up to 4 were there Apr. 22 (ELM et al.), but only singles were reported in May. Several wanderers included 3 at Advocate on Apr. 11, 1 until the 14th (KAC,KFS et al.), 1 at Grand Pré, Apr. 17 (CHC,KET), another north of Trafalgar, May 8 (HJB), 4 on Cape Sable Is., May 20 (BJA,AJV) and 1 still there May 24 (ELM). Alas, last winter's captured BLACK VULTURE died of unknown causes Mar. 4, before it could be released in the wild.

The first OSPREYS were somewhat late on Apr. 16, although 2 of the 4 seen (BDS, PLM) were at a nest. Six more were reported for the period Apr. 18-21, and thereafter they were widely evident. One was still on the move on Sable Is., May 27 (ZOL).

Last autumn's brief sighting of a MISSISSIPPI KITE was resoundingly seconded May 15 on Brier Is. (PLM,RBS). The full description and photo of a beautiful adult by RBS (and video, with photos to come, by PLM) clinch the record. The bird eluded most hopeful tickers that day and later, but was seen again by PLM and some visitors from Maine on May 20. It should be stressed again that this species was overdue here as a stray, as there have been several records of late in New England, s. Quebec and Ontario, mostly in May; so keep your eyes on the skies.

Among the usual reports of BALD EAGLES, a few are noteworthy. A total of 24, mostly imm., made a good day's count in Pictou Co., Mar. 20 (CGB,KJM). A like number were gathered on the ice off Whycocomagh, Mar. 28, seeking scraps from ice fishermen (SLH). Two immatures and an adult Mar. 20 at the end of Bush Is., Lun. Co., were "most unusual" for that area (JSC). The Greenwich adult was apparently incubating on Mar. 21 (JWW), and a pair was using an old Osprey nest on a pylon in A.P.B.S. Apr. 24 (BLM). Few NORTHERN HARRIERS wintered (see last issue), and they arrived somewhat late, with a first probable migrant on Apr. 8 near Middleton (RBS). Only 4 more were noted up to Apr. 20, and they seemed somewhat underreported thereafter. SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS get good notice in winter, but tend to blend in by spring. Migration was hardly evident, although 1 over Grand Pré dykeland on Apr. 21 (JWT) and 5 along the coast of Hfx. Co., May 2 (BLM,ROF), were presumable on the move. Although no details were submitted on an ad. fe. COOPER'S HAWK May 9-10 on Brier Is. (PLM), this is the most unmistakable form of this occasional visitor. Reports of 10 N. GOSHAWKS late February through May were more than usual, and included an account of a spectacular duel between an imm. fe. and N. Ravens, May 16 on Brier Is. (BLM et al.). Our only RED-SHOULDERED HAWK this spring was on Brier Is., May 9-10 (PLM). The first BROAD-WINGED HAWKS were seen widely on Apr. 24: 5 at Marshalltown, Digby Co. (BJA), 1 in Cumb. Co. (BLM), and 2 in Pic. Co. (CGB). Only a few later sightings were reported, some in nesting areas. A feather-by-feather description of the partial albino (dark eyes, hint of pink in tail) RED-TAILED HAWK of Sheffield Mills by JWW (last reported Mar. 20) should assure re-identification of this bird if it turns up for the 4th (or 5th?) winter. A dozen reports of some 18 spring Red-tails did not signify any trends; they really are quite regular roadside birds. We can add 4 winter sightings of ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS to the sum in the last issue. Only 2-3 were present through March at Grand Pré, so that 4-6 there on Apr. 17 (JGT) suggested a movement.

There was a heartening show of AM. KESTRELS this spring. The first were on Apr. 6, a male along Hwy 104 (KJM) and a pair at Wolfville (PCS). Another on Apr. 9 (AJV) was followed by a scattered 8+ on Apr. 18-19. Later reports of some 26 birds included several settled pairs. An unusual (imm.?) male Apr. 17 at Grand Pré, with bright red feet, pale pinkish breast wash, and little spotting, was otherwise clearly of this species (JGT), and certainly did not from the description, fit any other exotic small falcon. Reports of some 10 MERLINS were about average. Two pairs were nesting in Wolfville (fide JWW), one clutch predated by a raccoon in mid-May, and a pair apparently again nested at Maders Cove, Lun. Co. (JBM). Migrant PEREGRINE FALCONS were at Apple R., Apr. 30 (KFS) and on Seal Is., May 23-24 (IAM et al.), but 2 at Cape Split, May 16 (BLF,JWW) may well have been nesting in the area. A gray phase GYRFALCON, Apr. 9 at Cape Smokey, was a surprise for BRD.

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

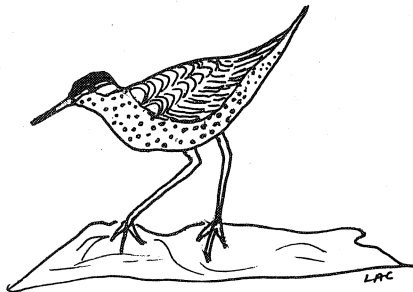
Sightings of GRAY PARTRIDGES were reassuring. In addition to repeat sightings around Starrs Pt. and Canard (see last issue), there were 10 in Windsor on Mar. 10 (fide JWW), where they were not reported last winter, and trios Apr. 3 at Economy (FJS) and Apr. 5 at Upper Falmouth (BJA,JWT). RING-NECKED PHEASANTS were widely recorded, with indications that they have "taken hold", for example, around Green Bay and on Seal and Brier Islands. Six reports of 8 SPRUCE GROUSE were about average, while 17 reports of some 45 RUFFED GROUSE were well above the usual.

RALLIDS

Surely one of the most remarkable records of recent years was the CORN CRAKE found by Peter MacLeod on Brier Is. The last North American record of this increasingly scarce Old-world species was apparently in Newfoundland during Sept. 1928, although I have heard rumours of one in the early 1980s. All but one of several earlier records were for fall or winter. It is important to document the details here. The bird was first heard at some distance, calling loudly ("a two-syllable call...best described as similar to the sound of a stick dragged over a comb") late in the day from a grassy, brushy strip between the forest and the northwest margin of Pond Cove. After trying to approach the caller without success, Peter settled down quietly and finally it walked out into the open to be studied for about two minutes with 8 x 42 B&L "Elites" at ranges as close as 3-5 m. It appeared "slightly larger than a Virginia Rail", its "shortish bill was brownish yellow; [it had a] grayish cast around white throat and gray extended over the eye. The back [was] sort of buffy [with] dark stripes. The sides were light with chestnut barring [and] it had noticeable large chestnut wing patches that showed up very well. In all, I would say it was not a brightly buffy bird, but it was buffy." Although Peter spread the word that evening and heard the bird (without approaching it) at 4 a.m. next morning, he and others failed to locate it later that morning and thereafter. (It became miserably cold and foggy, and a N. Harrier was seen coursing the area.) Nevertheless, Peter's single-observer account seems to leave little doubt of the bird's identity.

A migrant VIRGINIA RAIL was at Green Bay, Apr. 28-May 1 (LAC,JSC). Individuals calling May 8 at Hopewell Marsh, Pic. Co., and May 16 at Wallace Bay Sanc. (CGB,KJM) were presumably on territory. SORAS appeared May 15 at Apple R.(KFS) and Ferry Rd., Pic. Co. (CGB,KJM). A good impression of their numbers near the New Brunswick border was obtained May 29 by BLM and ROF, who heard some 20 individuals in four of the major marshes in Cumb. Co. Two AM. COOTS were at A.P.B.S. May 10 (KJM), and doubtless more were about.

IAM, ed.



SHOREBIRDS

An early BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER was at Pond Cove, "whistling loudly", on Apr. 16 (HGH&HJH). Another April arrival was at Cherry Hill on the 24th (SJF). There were a dozen reports for the latter half of May, 3 from the North Shore (Sand Point and Caribou Is.--BLM,ROF,KJM,CGB), 1 each from the Border Region (Lusby-BLM,ROF), the Minas Basin (Economy-FLS) and Brier (BLM et al.), 3 each from the Halifax area (DHH,BDS,BLM,ROF) and the South Shore (Cape Sable Is.-IAM, Eel Brook - RSK, Lockeport-DJC). The only large flocks were 55 at Cape Sable and 35 at Lusby, both on the 29th.

A surprising 13 LESSER GOLDEN PLOVER stopped over this spring - 3 on Brier, May 15 (PML) and 10 at Lusby, May 29 (BLM,ROF). A pair of SEMIPALMATED PLOVER were on Sable Is., May 11 (ZOL); 5 migrants were in the Canning area, May 14 (PHF) and 1 at Sand Pt., May 29 (BLM,ROF), where, as on Sable, it has bred. Reports of the PIPING PLOVER come from Cherry Hill from Apr. 12 (PLM,AJV) onward, with one pair nesting, another possibly present (SJF,GJT). Elsewhere, 3 were noted in Pic. Co. at Black Pt. and on Caribou Is. (KJM,CGB), all in early May, and 2 apparently in passage, at Lockeport (DJC,HGH,HJH). The latter observers witnessed the following interesting behaviour: "...patted its right foot on the wet sand--which made it even wetter--to bring up the sand fleas". The only other report was of the notorious plover at Summerville Beach on CBC and ATV, reporting that the authorities closed the road to the beach to protect a bird in the nest (scrape) bang in the middle of a parking area.

The earliest reports of KILLDEER came, surprisingly, from Pic. Co, with 1 at Glencoe, Mar. 13 (CGB,HJB) and another at Stellarton next day (KJM). Six migrants were on Cape Sable Is., Mar. 15 (BLM et al.) and 2 at Cape Forchu, Mar. 17 (HGH,HJH). Two were on Sable Is. Mar. 27 (ZOL). JGT reports on one persistent nester on Wolfville Ridge whose Apr. 18 nest lost its eggs to an unknown predator, whose second nest had one egg Apr. 27, when six inches of snow fell, after which the female was unable to find it again and so gave it up; her third nest had one egg May 1, four, May 5, on which, at last report, she was sitting tight. It's small wonder the species is thriving.

By Apr. 20 single GREATER YELLOWLEGS were at Annapolis Royal (RBS) and, much farther along, at Glace Bay (AMU,CMU); 16 more were seen in April, 7 of them at Lawrencetown on the 28th (AJV). No less than 56 were noted in the first week of May, including 31 at Crescent Beach (JSC). There were still 18 on Seal Is., May 24 (IAM et al.). The only LESSER YELLOWLEGS noted was at Lawrencetown, with the Greater presumably, Apr. 28 (AJV).

The first of 6 April "pairs" of WILLETS appeared at Lr. W. Pubnico on the 20th (JKD); by May 2 along the Hfx. Co. shore about 100 were counted (BLM,ROF), with many other reports suggesting a normal spring province-wide. An early SPOTTED SANDPIPER was on Seal, Apr. 23 (ETM), but most records are for the third week in May, with 4 at Harrietsfield (BDS,GEM) May 26 and 7 at Pond Cove, Brier Is. (BDS,PLM) indicating a generally late migration.

Three UPLAND SANDPIPERS appeared this spring: 1 at Little Hbr., Shel. Co., Apr. 22 (DHY), 1 at Terence Bay, Hfx. Co., Apr. 24-Apr. 27 (BDS,CLS,BLM), and another at Lr. W. Pubnico, May 3 (JKD). A lone WHIMBREL was at Matthew's Lake, Apr. 24 (CHC&KLT). An above average number of 50 RUDDY TURNSTONES stopped this spring: 5 were on Brier, Apr. 22 (ELM), all the rest were noted in the second half of May, most of them on Brier and the southwest, but also at Cherry Hill (SJF) and Lusby (BLM).

Seven SANDERLINGS overwintered at Cherry Hill, not seen after Mar. 27 (SJF). On Sable Is. 100+ migrants appeared Mar. 30-31, with further flocks of about 150, May 3-11 (ZOL). The only mainland sighting was of a small flock on Brier, May 6 (RBS,PLM). A single SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER was at Lockeport, Apr. 25 (DJC), the few others, 13 in all, passing in the period May 16-25.

Somewhere here should go the "peeps" sighted Mar. 15 on Cape Sable Is. in the aftermath of the great storm (BLM,JWT). At Sheffield Mills there were 21 LEAST SANDPIPERS May 12 (JGT), with a further 100+ at Rushton's Beach, Pic. Co. and 30 at Linden, Cumb. Co. May 16 (KJM, CGB). One lingered at Cherry Hill May 22-29 (SJF). Uncommon in spring were a WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER on Seal Is., May 23 (IAM,JWT) and 4 PECTORAL SANDPIPERS on Peter's Is., Brier, May 27 (PLM). All but 2 of 30 PURPLE SANDPIPERS left Seal by Apr. 2 (ETM), but there were still 22 at Duncan's Cove on the 22nd (ROJ). On Cape Breton there were still 18 at North Sydney, May 1 (DBM). The only DUNLIN seen was at Cherry Hill on Apr. 24 (SJF).

A black RUFF was at Pond Cove, Brier, Apr. 29-30 (PLM). SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS, all singles, were at Cherry Hill (SJF), Seal (JMM) and Sable (ZOL) in the third week of May. No COMMON SNIPE were noted until 2 at the Western Light, Brier on Apr. 16 (HGH&HJH). They were heard at Wolfville (JGT) and Apple River (KFS) Apr. 21-22; by May 8 there were "several" at New Ross (KNK) and 3 on the Beaverbank Rd., Hants Co. (BLM,JOW). An early AMERICAN WOODCOCK at Barrington, Mar. 17 had snow to cope with (RSD). Apr. 8-9 saw 2 at Lr. W. Pubnico (JKD), 1 at Apple River (KFS). Six May records of this secretive species are doubtless understate its widespread occurrence.

FS, ed.



This KILLDEER, squatting on the snow-dusted beach of Cape Sable Island, seemed to be another somewhat battered victim of the mid-March storm. Photo--Blake Maybank

JAEGERS TO AUKS

We have only one jaeger report: the adult POMARINE JAEGER that Raymond d'Entremont saw on Georges Bank on Apr. 27.

HERRING and GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULLS were common, as usual. The only LESSER BLACK-BACK was Donna Crosby's bird at Crescent Beach.* It arrived in September and stayed until Jan. 26, when drift-ice came in. However, it came back on Mar. 8, after the ice broke up, and stayed until Apr. 21. Gordon Tufts saw 2 GLAUCOUS GULLS near the Canard poultry farm on Feb. 1. D. McCorquodale saw a subadult in Glace Bay Harbour, May 10, and Zoe Lucas saw an immature on Sable Island on May 12, and an immature ICELAND GULL there at the end of May. Blake Maybank and Roger Foxall note that Iceland Gulls were still present in Halifax Harbour on May 2. Other late birds include D. McCorquodale's at Glace Bay on May 8 and Calvin Brennan's immature at Caribou Island on May 15. Eric Mills' Iceland on Brier on Apr. 22 was late for a 'white-wing' gull to be so far south.

We've had a good crop of the smaller gulls. D. McCorquodale and others saw 40 adult RING-BILLED GULLS at Wentworth Park, Sydney on Apr. 22 and 8 in Glace Bay on Apr. 9, Cathleen Spicer saw 8 at Apple River on Apr. 17, Dennis Hippern saw at least 4 at Conrad's Beach on Apr. 4, Francis Spalding saw 3 at Economy on Apr. 3, and Jerome d'Eon reports 6 at Eel Brook on Mar. 25. Blake Maybank and others, at The Hawk on Mar. 15, saw 2 "ragged adult" LAUGHING GULLS on Mar. 15, the day after the "Storm of the Century" came through. These were not our only ones. Bev. Sarty's group saw one on Brier Island on May 24, and Donna Crosby found a fresh corpse on the beach at Lockeport on Mar. 16. Raymond D'Entremont saw a BLACK-HEADED GULL in spring plumage at Lr. W. Pubnico on Mar. 7, and 5 at Eel Brook on Apr. 9. David Young saw one at Little Harbour, Shel. Co., Apr. 14, but notes that it was his first since early winter; he usually sees up to 20 of them at this season. Ian McLaren saw "the usual adult" MEW GULL in Dartmouth Cove on Mar. 7--his last sighting of this winter.

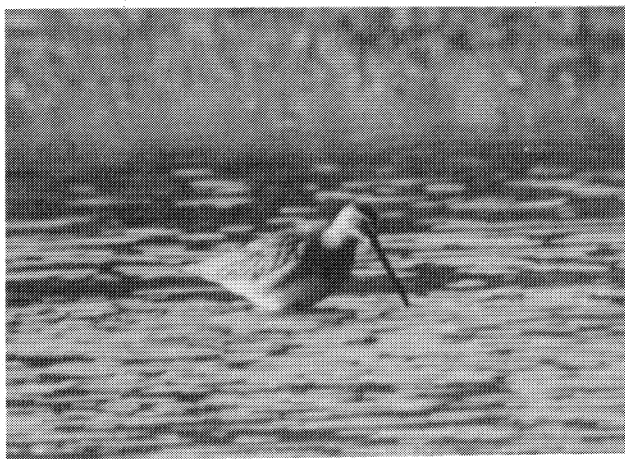
Among several reports of BONAPARTE'S GULLS, Dennis Hippern saw one at Conrad's Beach on Apr. 4, Ken McKenna saw 2 from the Pictou Causeway on Apr. 25, and the Halls saw 4 in breeding plumage at Black's Harbour on Apr. 9. All these were in breeding plumage. Ben Doane saw a LITTLE GULL in breeding plumage on Cape Sable Island on Mar. 27, and Peter MacLeod saw an adult IVORY GULL from Chebucto Head on Jan. 22. BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES round off the list. Illegible (sorry!) saw 10 off Point Morien on Mar. 23, and Hubert Hall saw 2 off Brier on Mar. 26.

We don't expect too much in the way of terns at this season, but the storms have brought some exotics, along with our regular summer migrants. The first COMMON/ARCTIC TERNS were the 3 birds that Franklyn d'Entremont saw on the Mud Islands on May 3. Ken McKenna and Calvin Brennan saw 36 Common and Arctic Terns on the Society's reserve on Peter's Island, off Brier Island, May 15. I hope our new conservation strategy there will give the colony an edge against the all-consuming gulls. Lorne McKenna had a good view of a CASPIAN TERN near River John, Pic. Co., May 8. It stayed there at least until May 17. Ken McKenna saw a BLACK TERN at Eddy Marsh on May 10. Zoe Lucas found the corpse of a BLACK SKIMMER, recently dead, on Sable Island on Mar. 25. David Young found one, still alive, beside the road in Liverpool on Mar. 15. Bonnie Muise took care of it and arranged to have it sent by sea back to the Carolinas.

*Crescent Beach, near Lockeport--not the one in Lunenburg Co.

DOVEKIES are notorious for being "wrecked" by winter gales, but I was surprised to see how few reports we have had from last winter. Off Lockeport, Donna J. Crosby saw only one this winter, on Feb. 18. Blake Maybank and his parties saw one feeding off Baccaro Point on Mar. 15, and another off The Ovens on Apr. 10. Bill Caudle and Christine Ross saw a Dovekie in Liverpool Harbour on Mar. 21. Since the storm tracks came from the SW, I'd guess that they blew the birds offshore instead of stranding them ashore. BLACK GUILLEMOTS, the inshore auks, were reported around the province as usual. The larger concentrations include the 39 birds that Richard Stern saw in the Margaretsville section of Fundy on Apr. 19, and 20 at Cape Sable and 15 at Western Head, seen by Blake Maybank's party on Mar. 15. Blake also saw a bird in full breeding plumage off Brier Island on May 22. So were the 3 that Bev Sarty and Peter MacLeod saw off Chebucto Head. However, a guillemot off Eel Brook on Mar. 20 was still in winter plumage. As usual, all our identified murrees were THICK-BILLED MURREES. Bev Sarty saw one off Indian Harbour on Mar. 14, "seeking shelter from the high seas a day after the "storm of the century". John Cohrs, at Crescent Beach on Mar. 17, saw one in a different kind of predicament. It was stranded on the ice, harried by a couple of Great Blackbacks. On Mar. 15, Blake Maybank saw 25 murrees off Cape Sable Island and 10 off Baccaro Point. In addition, Don MacNeill saw a murre off Ketch Harbour on Mar. 18 and BJA saw a Thick-billed Murre off Point Pleasant Park on Mar. 17. Finally, we come to our Official Bird the ATLANTIC PUFFIN. Dave Currie saw one from the Long Island ferry on Apr. 25; Peter MacLeod saw 2 off Brier Island on May 8. Ian McLaren and Eric Mills saw 2 puffins off Seal Island on May 26. The local fishermen believe that they're nesting there or nearby. I wish them every kind of luck!

RGBB, ed.



The extremely long bill of this, presumably female, LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER, almost in itself served to identify the species. Other marks, including the dark-centred tertials, were evident in the field. Photo--Blake Maybank, Conrad's Beach, Oct. 18, 1992.

DOVES, OWLS

The few reports of ROCK DOVES included no unusual information. Our 11th WHITE-WINGED DOVE turned up at a feeder on Cape Sable Is. for three days around May 8 (W. Atwood et al., per Bird Info. Line). I hope people can obtain colour-true photos of these visitors so we may ascertain their origin, from the Caribbean or the American Southwest. Some movement of MOURNING DOVES were evident at feeders in March, after which sightings tapered off. "Singing" was noted Apr. 10 (JWW) and 2 young appeared at Lewis L., Hfx. Co., on May 26 (AJV).

About 9 scattered GREAT HORNED OWLS were reported, including a pair hooting on CKC's nest platform at Gaspereau, Feb. 14-15. Only 6 BARRED OWLS were reported, although doubtless more were seen or heard. A LONG-EARED OWL was calling near Lewis Mills, Hants Co., May 8 (BLM,JOW), and "possibly 2-3" SHORT-EARED OWLS were still at Grand Pré, Mar. 28, the latest there on Apr. 6 (JGT). Two N. SAW-WHET OWLS were observed during March, and 1 frequenting the Tufts' backyard on Wolfville Ridge, Mar. 30-Apr. 19, may have been eliminated by a Great Horned Owl. There were other reports of some 11 birds "tooting" (or "bopping") in scattered localities in Cumb., Hfx., and Pic. Co.

GOATSUCKERS, SWIFT, HUMMINGBIRD, KINGFISHER

Last year's WHIP-POOR-WILL at Long Pond, Herring Cove, was found in early June, but not looked for earlier. A "probable" COM. NIGHTHAWK was seen at Keji N.P., May 15 (JWW), and 4 scattered birds appeared May 24-27.

The first CHIMNEY SWIFT appeared May 3 at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre (RTNC) in Wolfville (Jake MacDonald), and 6 were present during the next few days. Another early bird was at APBS May 5 (BRD). Numbers at the RTNC increased from 55 on May 8 to 200+ thereafter (max. 372 May 15). Another spectacular was 515 entering the Temperance St. School chimney in New Glasgow, May 18 (anon.). Other sightings were of 1-10 birds on dates between May 11-28. An early male RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, May 8 at Overton (HGH) was followed next day by 2 at Wolfville (**file** JWW) and another at Economy (FJS). About 16 appeared during the next week or so, to brighten our summer days. After noting them investigating spots where feeders had hung in previous years, the Payzants marveled the homing skills of these tiny creatures.

A BELTED KINGFISHER, Feb. 28 at the mouth of the LaHave R. (WGC) might be added to the few that probably survived winter. Another Mar. 21 at Homeville, C.B. Co. (AMU) was problematic, but on Mar. 28 at Yarmouth (HGH) was more likely a spring migrant. Then there was a gap in sightings, with only ca. 10 birds reported Apr. 22 to month's end and a few noted as first seen in early May.

WOODPECKERS

The RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER that wintered at Canning disappeared sometime after May 4 (MG). Two other individuals were reported to the Bird Info. Line--May 10 at a feeder 10 km east of Weymouth and May 17 at Victoria Beach, Ann. Co. The RED-HEADED WOODPECKER that wintered in Yarmouth had acquired adult plumage by Mar. 23 (BJA). Two that turned up Apr. 29 near N. Alton (JDM) were unusual for this season. The first YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER was on schedule Apr. 20 on Pubnico Head (LSD). Another 11 were reported May 2-14. There were 16 reports of some 40 DOWNY WOODPECKERS but only four mentions of 9 HAIRY WOODPECKERS, most of both species at feeders. These are doubtless fractions of the numbers actually seen, but the four reports of 6 BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS are probably more complete. Seven scattered N. FLICKERS during February and March were undoubtedly wintering, and individuals, Apr. 8, at Petersfield Prov. Pk. (JAC), Apr. 9 at Crescent Beach (SJF), and Apr. 11 at Port Morien (ACM) might stand as our first migrants. A number of sightings from Apr. 20, including "a large movement" Apr. 26-28 around Petite Riviere (Cohrs), seem to imply a late season for the species this year. A dozen reports of 17 PILEATED WOODPECKERS were slightly more than usual.

FLYCATCHERS TO SWALLOWS

Scattered OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS were seen as usual in appropriate locations (CGB,IAM,etc.), with no large numbers or major movements reported. EASTERN WOODPEWEES were present on our south-westerly islands during the third week of May (KMA,ELM,KJM, etc.), and had arrived in their woodland territories by the 29th (BLM,RBS).

Two early YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHERS were seen May 8, in Lockeport (DJC) and in Stellarton (KJM), with others being seen two weeks later. ALDER FLYCATCHERS are one of our latest regular spring arrivals, and this year the earliest report was on May 17, near Smiley's Park, Hants. Co. (JWT). An individual of the visually identical but aurally distinct and much rarer WILLOW FLYCATCHER was seen, and more importantly heard, by PML on Brier Is., May 23. An early pair of LEAST FLYCATCHERS was along Butler Rd., King's Co., May 8 (JGT), and by the 13th they were reported as "very common" in the Canaan, Yarmouth area (HGH). Some were however, still moving through Seal Island on May 24 (IAM), but many were already singing on territory in and around Kentville by this date (RBS).

The first EASTERN PHOEBE was seen on Apr. 16 on Seal Is. (ETM), with 2 more there four days later. By May 8, 1 was present at its traditional nest site under the White Rock Bridge, King's Co. (JGT). There are only 3 other reports, all of probable migrants. Are the numbers down? There were 3 independent reports of a GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER around Powder Mill Lake, Waverley (BJA,AJV,JOC) May 25-26, but so far no others. The EASTERN KINGBIRD is normally a late migrant, but bucking the general trend this year were April sightings on Seal Island (20th and 28th, ETM) and at Apple River (24th, KFS). The main migration on Seal, however, was more expected with 25 being seen there May 24 (IAM, etc.). Several people reported 1s and 2s around the province, including northern Cape Breton (AMU) by late May.

True to form, small roaming flocks of HORNED LARKS were gathering during March and April, and were widely reported (KFS,JGT,CMU, etc.). No apparent nesting pairs have been noted.

An extra-ordinary finding was of a PURPLE MARTIN alive in a snowbank in N. Alton, near Kentville, on March 15, the day after the "storm of the century" with fierce southerly winds and heavy snow (JWW). By plumage it was thought to be an imm. female. It was taken to Acadia University, but died later that evening, despite rescue attempts. Interestingly, the sex could not be determined even at autopsy, although it was an immature-plumaged bird. Another early bird was flying over George's Bank, April 24 (RSD), but it never landed on his boat. More seasonal, and hopefully luckier sightings, were as expected at the Oxford site in May, with 15+ at the Dept. of Natural Resources nest boxes, May 30(JWT).

THIRTY reports of TREE SWALLOW were received. The earliest was on the very early date of Apr. 9, at Argyle Head (RSD), and other scattered individuals were seen over the next ten days or so. There were 800+ at APBS on Apr. 24 (BLM,ALC) and they had reached Port Morien by May 3 (AMU,CMU). Other large flocks included 300+ over the Annapolis Royal Ponds on May 20 (BLM) and 75+ at Kentville, May 23 (PAM). Pairs were already investigating nest boxes in New Ross on Apr. 19 (CMR). There are also a few BANK SWALLOW sightings, but so far no large nesting colony reports. An early migrant was on Sable Is., May 9 (ZOL). ZOL also saw a NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW there on May 29, and other sightings of this rarity were of 1 at Annapolis Royal May 20 (BLM) in with a large flock of Tree Swallows, and 3 with some Cliff Swallows on Brier Is., May 26 (PML).

CLIFF SWALLOWS were back as usual around mid-May, although a pair was already nesting near New Ross by the 8th (WGC,CMR). Larger colonies included 20+ at the Annapolis Royal site, observed by BLM, and 15+ at Pugwash nesting under the eaves of a chicken barn (JWT). A bird on Sable Island, observed by ZOL from May 9-12, had a chestnut coloured forehead, and she felt it was one of the south-western race, although

definitely not a Cave Swallow. Early BARN SWALLOW arrivals included 1, Apr. 22 on Seal Is. and several on the 25th in both Canning and Lun. Co. Reported numbers seemed much as usual after that.

JAYS TO GNATCATCHERS

There were 10 reports of GRAY JAY, usually in 1s and 2s, throughout the province, and throughout the reporting period (BDS,GEM,JKD,LKD,etc.). Four were coming to KFS's feeder in Apple River in March. BLUE JAYS seem well reported, with several sightings at feeders as expected. A "large movement" was observed by JGT throughout King's Co. on March 27.

Several observers reported AMERICAN CROWS. JDG had up to 6 coming to feeders in the Sydney area during more severe spring weather. GAN found an adult on a nest in Wolfville, May 3. DHH noted their generally continuous abundance, and they are certainly common in the Valley, with ongoing remnants of the large Kentville winter roost continuing into early summer (RBS).

Several observers noted COMMON RAVENS. JWW in particular sent in details of some nesting activity in the Valley. March 20 1 was presumably incubating on a large stick nest at Starr's Point. In early April a pair built a nest under the roof of University Hall, on the Acadia campus, but later the nest was abandoned and taken over by Rock Doves! RBS observed several spectacularly displaying pairs in the Kentville area throughout spring. GAN saw one pull a Rock Dove out of a shallow nest hole in a tree trunk, repeatedly peck it, and then kill it on the ground.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES were widely reported, mostly at feeders, throughout the province. There was a single flock of 14 on Brier Is., May 16 (BLM, etc.). HGH and HJH observed a pair excavating a nest hole in a tree in their front yard in Overton, and JSC had a pair in a nest box at Green Bay, May 8. It seems that BOREAL CHICKADEES are also being seen more at feeders, with reports of visits by JDG in Westmount, LKD in W. Pubnico, the Murrants in Port Morien, etc., involving at least 9 birds. Others were seen in small numbers as expected around the province.

Also par for the course were the number of reports of RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, again frequently at feeders (RBS,AJV,PAM,WGC, etc.). Some presumed migrants included 5 on Sable Is., May 7 (ZOL). IAM observed 40+ on Seal Is., May 24, but he felt they were mostly resident rather than migrant birds. There were however, only 2 WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH reports, much as last year, from KJM in New Glasgow, and BLM and JOW in Hants. Co. There were 7 reports of BROWN CREEPER, much as usual. Twelve WINTER WRENS were seen around the province. IAM felt that migrant numbers on Seal Is. were less than expected, with just 3 on May 24. LPP saw 1 gathering nesting material near Kearney Lake Road on May 2.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET numbers have remained down since the massive irruption of a few years ago. The largest flock reported this spring was of just 6 birds, at Apple River, May 8 (KFS). RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS, however, were very obvious in the woods everywhere, mostly by song, by the 3rd week in May (RBS,BLM, etc.) One of very few individuals known to successfully over-winter in the province was still coming to a feeder in Colby Village, Mar. 11, and what was more usual, an early migrant was seen at Marion Bridge, Apr. 26 (DBM)-a little odd that it reached Cape Breton before any sightings from farther south and west.

There was a BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER on Seal Is., May 24 (IAM,ELM,JWT).

BLUEBIRDS TO STARLINGS

Three groups of EASTERN BLUEBIRD have been reported this spring. A pair have nested in Tree Swallow boxes in Woodside, near Canning, after several initial failed attempts and switching around between boxes (JWW etc). This has been both a wintering and nesting site for the last few years. So far though, there has been no sign of activity at the other nearby site used last year, although birds prospected there in March. A second site is also by now "traditional" for this species--namely the cemetery on Brier Is., where once again there has been at least 1 pair, and sometimes "extra" birds, all spring (PML,RBS,etc.). Finally, a single male has been seen in late May in Apple River (KFS), another known breeding site.

There are just 9 reports of VEERY, all of single birds! All are during May, and scattered around the province. The SWAINSON'S THRUSH situation is almost identical, but with interesting reports of a very late bird last fall, Nov. 8, in Halifax (JOC) and a very early one this spring--Apr. 18, on Seal Is. (ETM). The HERMIT THRUSH is a little better reported, with 17 reports altogether, again mostly single birds, but with 7 noted in King's Co., May 8 (JGT) and 15 in West Hants the same day (BLM,JOW).

AMERICAN ROBINS as usual seem plentiful and well reported. An early migratory movement of a few birds was noted on Mar. 27-8 by KJM in Pic. Co. and FLS in Economy. Much larger numbers were seen a little later,--for example--"thousands" between Dartmouth and River John, Apr. 7 (SLH), "thousands" along Digby Neck, Apr. 15-16 (HGH,HJH), and "hundreds" the same weekend around Economy (FLS).

There are 16 individual reports of GRAY CATBIRD, mostly of single and migrating birds, mostly throughout May. However, an early individual was rather unusually eating cracked corn from RSD's feeder in Lr. W. Pubnico, Apr. 18; 8+ were on Brier Is. May 22 (BDS,PML). Eleven NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD reports seems fairly standard these days, although 4 in Waverley, Apr. 3 (AJV) seems a pretty good number for one day. Several were noted to be noisily vocalising (HJH,JOC, etc.). An over-wintering BROWN THRASHER was still present in Falmouth up to Apr. 5 (sev. obs.), 1 was on Brier Is., May 2 and 3 were on Seal Is. May 24. They never seem to get as common as Mockingbirds or Catbirds.

The last AMERICAN PIPITS seen were 2 on Seal Is. May 24-26 (IAM, etc.), after a few other April stragglers had left.

After some large winter flocks of BOHEMIAN WAXWING had presumably flown off to the north and west for the spring, there were still 3 in Windsor, Apr. 5 and Falmouth on the 6th. A most unusual date was of an exhausted bird on Seal Is. on May 24 (*vide* IAM). Flocks of up to 60 CEDAR WAXWINGS were reported as expected through March, April and May from many parts of the province, including Sable Is., but not from Cape Breton.

After hardly any NORTHERN SHRIKES this winter, 5 were seen this spring, all of course singly, from Pic. Co. (KJMO), Westmount (JAC), Gaspereau (JGT), and 2 separately in Apple River (KFS).

Only a few people bother to report the EUROPEAN STARLING. There are no reports this spring of huge flocks, unusual behaviour, etc. RBS did find a pair ousting a pair of Flickers from their nest hole, and observed large numbers of young on lawns and in fields up and down the Valley in early June.

VIREOS AND WARBLERS

Two WHITE-EYED VIREOS, the first spring sightings since 1988, were found this year: 1 on Brier Is., May 16 (PML) and 1 at Hartlen's Pt., May 24 (CHE). More reports of our breeding SOLITARY VIREO were received than in recent years. Earliest activity was noted in the Wolfville-Kentville area, where JGJ found a solitary Solitary on Apr. 30, and RBS had an apparent pair on territory May 3. Most birders recorded their first migrants in the May 5-8 period, with province-wide coverage. Great job! BDS came up with a WARBLING VIREO at Terence Bay, Hfx. Co., on May 29; and 3 PHILADELPHIA VIREOS were observed: 1 on Brier Is., May 15 (PML), 1 at Lake Rd., Lun. Co., May 22 (Cohrs) and 1 on Seal Is., May 24 (IAM et al.). A trickle of RED-EYED VIREO reports, mostly over the western half of the province, began with 1 on Sable Is., May 15 (ZOL), and 1 at Cape Split, King's Co., May 16 (BLF,JWW). Red-eyes "Peaked" at 3 on Seal Is., May 24.

"Best migration I have seen in a long time" was PML's comment on the 1500+ warblers which departed Brier Is. for the mainland on May 15. This is welcome news indeed, and Peter's observation is borne out by the reports, with nearly all counts up from last year.

PML and RBS listed a male GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER on Brier Is. on May 6. Scattered reports of the TENNESSEE WARBLER were received, beginning with 1 at Economy on May 17 (FLS). All but 2 of the remaining dozen birds were seen on our island hot spots, with a peak of 6 on Seal Is., May 24. PML had the only spring ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER on Brier Is., on May 15 and 16. First coming into the Cohrs' field of view on May 7 (3 at Dagley Rd., Lun. Co.) and May 8 (3 at Broad Cove), the NASHVILLE WARBLER was quite well-reported. Though 2 had reached Caribou, Pic. Co., by May 9 (KJM), no news was received from Cape Breton.

More NORTHERN PARULAS were reported than in recent years, with the first, a male, on Seal Is., May 2 (ETM). With the excellent coverage, first dates suggest that Parulas arrived via the Gulf of Maine and Bay of Fundy (Riverport, Lun. Co., May 3; Kentville on May 7), spreading northward and eastward to reach Pic. Co. by May 10, Hfx. Co. by May 14 and C.B. Co. by May 18.

The YELLOW WARBLER, also well-reported, was first seen in Lr. LaHave, Lun. Co., May 1 (NCD), more than two weeks earlier than last year. KFS added 1 at New Salem, Cumb. Co., a week later, as did ETM on Seal Is.; but most observers recorded their first around mid-month. "Many" were found at Lockeport, Shel. Co., and Mader's Cove, Lun. Co. (DJC,JBM). A CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER appeared in West Hants on May 8 (BLM,JOW), but the species was not reported again until May 18, when BDS found 4 off the Hammond's Plains Rd., Hfx. Co. Scattered reports of 1-4 individuals came in thereafter. Ten MAGNOLIA WARBLERS materialized on May 10: 1 near Drain Lake, Hfx. Co. (AJV), 2 at Broad Cove (SJF) and 7 at Meisner's Meadows, Hants Co. (BLM et al.). Subsequent reports covered only western portions of the province. A "nice peak" of 125 occurred on Seal Is., May 24 (IAM). SJF found 5 or more CAPE MAY WARBLERS in Broad Cove on May 15. Though IAM had only 2 on Seal Is., May 24, a reasonable number of reports was received from western regions and from Cumb. Co. The much-sought BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER first showed up at Round Mountain, Hants Co., on May 8 (BLM), with sporadic sightings of 1 or 2 to deadline.

A few hardy YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS may have survived the harsh winter, with 1 reported at a W. Pubnico suet feeder to Feb. 19 (LKD), 8 at Rainbow Haven, Hfx. Co., Feb. 25, and 1 at Cherry Hill on Mar. 20. Two on Sable Is., Mar 25-28 could have overwintered, while 1 at Economy, Mar. 30, may have moved up from the South Shore. The true migration got under way on Apr. 25, with a bright-plumaged bird at Kentville, and 5 at Apple River, Cumb. Co. (RBS,KFS). Pretty much province-wide coverage was achieved by early May. Highlights of the migration were an "Audubon's" race bird on Brier Is. in early May (PML), 100-150 Yellow-rumps at Glenwood, Yar. Co., on May 2 (JKD), 160++ in Laurie Park on May 14 (Cohrs), and birds "seen in every tree and bush in King's and Lunenburg Counties" on May 15 (WGC,CMR).

The first few BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS reported were in the Pubnicos on May 4 (JKD,LKD), with most spring firsts noted by May 12, Hfx., Col., Cumb. Cos. and west. By May 22, larger numbers were being reported on territory. BLM and JOW bagged the first BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER on May 8 in Hants Co., at a place with the interesting name of Froth Hole Hill. Otherwise, sightings of ones and twos occurred from May 14 to deadline, with most reports clustered in the May 20-23 area. The only C.B. report was of a bird lost in the fog $\frac{1}{2}$ mile northeast of Flint Is., on May 17 (AMU).

No PINE WARBLERS were reported in the spring period, but there was a thick sheaf of cards bearing news of their more common cousin, the PALM WARBLER. The first Palm, a male, was seen at Riverport on Apr. 19 (NCD), with April reports also received from Hfx., Hants, Cumb. and Pic. Cos. Larger numbers arrived through early May, and a female carrying nesting material was seen at Stanley Airport, Hants Co., May 17 (JWT). First seen on Seal Is. on May 14 (6), only a few BAY-BREASTED WARBLERS were noted on the mainland, plus a female on Sable Is., May 20-22. The count peaked at 30, however, on Seal Is., on May 24 (IAM, et al.). DHY got the first BLACKPOLL WARBLER at Little Harbour, Shel. Co., May 9. There were a half dozen reports around mid-month, including 10+ (not yet on territory) in southern Lun. Co. on May 16 (JSC), and 1 on Brown's Bank, May 17 (RSD). The first Blackpoll report from Cape Breton was of 1 at Sand Lake, on May 21 (DBM).

First seen (1) on Seal Is. on May 2 (ETM), the BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER arrived at Pubnico (1) on May 4 (JKD). Reports from the South Shore, Valley and Hfx. Co. were quick to follow, with singletons noted at Caribou, and at Dolem Lake Provincial Park, C.B., on May 8 (KJM,LRM,DBM). KFS et al. found 20+ in woods between Advocate and Spencer's Is., Cumb. Co., on May 22. Earliest AMERICAN REDSTART sightings were singles in Middleton, Ann. Co. (JWT), and near New Ross, Lun. Co (JGT), on May 8. The migration was slow and gradual, but 12 on Brier Is., and 10 around Advocate, on May 22; and a total of 55 in a swing through Pic. and Cumb. Cos. during the "May Big Day" on May 29 (BLM et al.), indicated all was well with this species.

PML found a total of 7 PROTHONOTARY WARBLERS on Brier Is. between Apr. 26 and May 15, including 4 seen at once! Two widely-separated WORM-EATING WARBLERS were reported on Apr. 24: 1 at Three Fathom Harbour (fide LIC) and 1 at Port Morien, C.B. (CMU).

An early OVENBIRD singing at Wolfville on Apr. 26 (fide JGT) was the only record until May 8, when 1 was reported at Caribou, and 3 at Coldbrook, Kings Co. By May 13, Ovenbirds were "common" at Canaan, Yar. Co. (HGH), although elsewhere no more than 3 at a time were reported until May 29. The only Cape Breton report came from Broughton, a single on May 23 (CMU). An impressive total of 26 NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH individuals were reported, beginning with 1 on Sable Is., May 4 (ZOL); and concluding with 1 on Seal Is., May 24 (IAM). In the interim, observations were made in Lun., Kings, Hants, Hfx., Pic., Ann. and C.B. Cos., with Hfx. Co. leading the pack with 7 birds.

A spring KENTUCKY WARBLER was reported for the second consecutive year, this one an adult female seen on Little Flat Is., Shel. Co., on May 20 (MUN,WAA). A trio of MOURNING WARBLERS made our deadline; the first, a male, in Kings Co (location unspecified) on May 15; and 2 on May 20--1 was at Oak Park, Shel. Co., and 1 at Mud Lake, Yar. Co.

A male COMMON YELLOWTHROAT at Pubnico Point on May 1 was the earliest ever for RSD. Indeed, no more were mentioned until May 14, when a female was ogled at Overton, and several males were romping at Riverport. Most subsequent reports came from Hfx. and Cumb. Cos., but greatest numbers were reported on Brier Is. on May 22 (45), and on Seal Is. on May 24 (40). Wallace Bay Bird Sanctuary, Cumb. Co., offered up the first WILSON'S WARBLER (a male) on May 16, with subsequent reports from Sable Is. (1), Cumb. Co. (2) and Hfx. Co. (1). The peak count on Seal Is. was 15, May 24. Besides the peak of 8 CANADA WARBLERS on Seal Is. May 24, 7 in Cumb and Pic. Cos. during the May Big Day on May 29 accounted for all our reports.

TANAGERS TO TOWHEE

Weather during late April no doubt contributed to the number of strays that graced our province during that period. A total of 9 SUMMER TANAGERS were discovered between April 20 and May 29. All but two were males. These brilliantly red birds were seen at Bear Point, Shel. Co. Apr. 20 (JKD); Halifax, Apr. 23; West Lawrencetown, Apr. 24 (LIC); Marion Bridge, Apr. 27 (GEB); Clyde River, May 1 (DHY); females were seen at Brier Island, May 14 and Cape Sable Island on May 17 (MUN); and finally, males were found on Brier and Sable Islands on May 29 (PML,ZOL). With the Summer Tanagers came SCARLET TANAGERS at the same time. About 12 sightings of mostly males were documented. The first was a female at Little Harbour on April 22 (DHY) with several more being seen scattered throughout the province with the majority of sightings occurring in mid-May.

The only record of NORTHERN CARDINAL was one female lingering until Apr. 9 in Waverley, Hfx. Co (JWT). It was surprising that there was no mention of these birds in the Yarmouth area this spring.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS came in on the same winds as the tanagers, arriving by Apr. 19 in Yar. Co. (LKD) and making a tremendous impact on the rest of the province by mid-May. In total over 56 birds were reported which is an above-normal number compared to other years. The largest number found at one time was 15 seen on Seal Island on May 24 (ETM). BLUE GROSBEAKS were once again found regularly during late April and early May. About 16 individuals were spotted and all were at feeders. Andrea McIver entertained 5 at her feeders in Portuguese Cove, two females, two adult males and one immature male from Apr. 25 until at least May 5. Each year we get a smattering of little birds, the most abundant of which are INDIGO BUNTINGS. Over 50 individual birds were found from Yarmouth to Cape Breton. The arrival dates matched exactly those of the Blue Grosbeaks and the tanagers with the earliest record being Apr. 18 at Lr. W. Pubnico. (RSD) Most records were of one or two individuals at feeders with exceptions of 5 at Seal Island during late April (ETM) and about 6 in the Lockport area from Apr. 23 until early May.

There were only 2 spring sightings of DICKCISSELS and both were in the southern portion of the province. The first was a male coming to a feeder in Yarmouth during the week of Apr. 4 (BAP) and the second was a male as well, at Little Harbour, Shel. Co. May 11 and 15 (DHY).

A late winter record of RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE came from the Glace Bay area. A female was found at the Spencer's feeder on Feb. 26 (CMU,AMU). Just 2 spring records were filed. The first was one located in Dartmouth on Apr. 3 and the second was a female at Brier Island on Apr. 26 (PML).

SPARROWS

TREE SPARROWS normally move northward by Apr. 1 and few are found in the province after mid-April. Late records included 8 at Apple River on Apr. 21 (KFS) and a male was found singing in Elgin, Pic. Co. on May 3. A certain number of CHIPPING SPARROWS successfully over-winter each year which makes it a bit difficult to determine the first or earliest spring migrant. Generally they arrive in small numbers with one or two taking advantage of the ever-increasing feeders. Most records were for early May with a few birds found in southern areas from Apr. 16-27.

FIELD SPARROWS were identified at three locations, Apple River, Seal Island and Halifax, during March, April and May. The first reported was 1 seen at Halifax on Mar. 2 (CJF). Next was 1 on Seal Island on Apr. 21 (ETM) and apparently a second bird there on May 23-25 (IAM). Two different birds were frequenting the Spicer's feeder in Apple River, 1 from Apr. 22-23 and 1 during May 12-14. VESPER SPARROWS are a relatively difficult species to find here, but Ken McKenna and Calvin Brennan located two, 1 on Apr. 25 at Toney River, Pic. Co. and 1 at Bridgeville in the blueberry barrens on May 8. A third bird was discovered at Green Bay on May 23 (LAC,JSC). A LARK SPARROW arrived at a feeder in W. Pubnico during February and was last seen on Mar. 11 (LKD). A second and only other report of this species was of 1 found at Sable Island during May 17-18 (ZOL).

Early arrivals of SAVANNAH SPARROWS were noted on Apr. 8 at Cape Forchu (HGH,HJH) but it was a spectacular invasion which occurred on May 2 that brought these birds into the province in huge numbers. Ethelda Murphy recorded hundreds on Seal Island that day and Peter MacLeod estimated at least 2,000 in the village of Westport the same day. There were very few SAVANNAH "IPSWICH" SPARROWS noted. A total of 8 birds were found from Apr. 5 through May 17. The largest number was 3 seen at Cherry Hill Beach on Apr. 25 (JSC). Although SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS are not always co-operative to appear before June, a single bird was found at Sand Point, Col. Co. on May 29 (ROF,BLM). A second report was 1 seen at the Glace Bay Sanctuary on Apr. 24. This bird was likely successful in over-wintering in that area (CMU). There was a rumour(?) that a SEASIDE SPARROW was seen this spring on Cape Sable Island but a report was not submitted. This would not be surprising as this area has regularly produced members of this species over the last few years.

One of a very few records of HARRIS' SPARROW occurred at Cape Sable Island at Gary and Betty Atwood's feeder on May 15. This bird was a regular visitor affording many people favourable looks at this western stray. It was last seen on May 22. One of the most welcomed and earliest spring migrants is the FOX SPARROW. The wonderful song and bold rusty plumage gives us the needed encouragement to remain patient awaiting the warmer weather. The first records were 3 at Broad Cove on Mar. 27 (SJF), and 1 at Waverley on Mar. 28 (LAP). There were several more sightings during the first few days of April. However, 80% of all reports were during Apr. 7, 8 and 9th. Judging from the numerous sightings and the number of birds seen at one time, these birds arrived in very good numbers. Cape Breton's first was on Apr. 19, near Sydney (JDG). As is usual, several SONG SPARROWS manage to make it through our winter and begin their rather awkward first attempts at singing during late February. This spring these birds gradually built up in numbers with really no significant one or two day period that could be identified as a "wave". On Mar. 27, there were many singing at Mader's Cove, Lun. Co. (JBM), suddenly several singing near Wolfville on Apr. 8 and about 40 seen and/or heard at Rose Bay, Lun. Co. on Apr. 10. Other first migrants were noted on any day between Mar. 23 through Apr. 15.

It appears that the LINCOLN'S SPARROW which was discovered in West Pennant, Hfx. Co., during December successfully made it through the winter. This is the first time to my knowledge, that a member of this species has accomplished this. The last date it was observed was Apr. 20. This species is generally one of the later sparrows to arrive and is evidenced by the observations received. The first was one in Pic. Co. on May 16 (KJM) and then one on Seal Is., May 22, followed by 10 there on May 24 (IAM). Other reports included single birds in Hfx. Co., Col. and Cumb. Cos. during late May. Very few SWAMP SPARROWS were found during the winter months but at least one at Gerald Crosby's feeder in Lockeport made it through until it was last seen in late May. Sightings of this species were relatively few and first spring birds were scattered throughout April and May with no noticeable pattern to their arrival. Could we be seeing a decline?

WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS were found far more commonly throughout the winter and staying near feeders well into spring. Although the groups of birds seldom were greater in number than 3-4, it is uncommon to have very many more. Spring arrivals were first found during mid to late April becoming more prevalent by mid-May. WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS were very common this spring with almost 40 individuals seen in 8 different locations. Seal Island hosted up to 10 birds during May 10-24. At least 4 were found on Brier Island and still others were seen at Clark's Harbour, Bon Portage Island, Economy, Apple River, Plymouth and Cape Sable Is. DARK-EYED JUNCOS were well represented being quite abundant throughout the winter becoming less noticeable at feeders as spring progressed. Flocks from 4 to 60 were noted, largest influxes occurring during the first and second weeks of May. Higher numbers were found on Seal Island (60) on May 7, White's Lake (55) on Apr. 12, Lewis Lake (40) Apr. 16. A very well marked female bird of the "OREGON" race was discovered on Seal Island on May 23 (IAM,ELM,JWT).

There were just 3 LAPLAND LONGSPURS found during this period. The first was one seen at Big Island, Pic. Co. on Mar. 13 (KJM). One was found at Apple River on Mar. 18 (KFS) and the last was one spotted at Conrad's Beach on Apr. 1 (JWT). SNOW BUNTINGS were regularly found in small flocks seldom exceeding 100 birds during February and March. Two flocks totaling 120 birds were found at Grand Pre, 100 or more at Apple River and 100 at Starr's Point, King's Co. The last straggler was seen at Sable Island on May 16.

ITERIDS

Blackbirds keep to a defined schedule when migrating which means that within a short window of time they can be found in most areas of the province. BOBOLINKS are no exception except that they are later than most. The first were seen at Upper Granville and Seal Island on May 8 and by May 12 there were numbers of males found throughout the province. Of note were 35 on Brier Island on May 11. (PML). The first RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD was one seen at Baccaro Point, Shel. Co., Mar. 15 (JWT,BAM). Most birds were later than this with an average date of Apr. 7. There were 3 individual EASTERN MEADOWLARKS located. The first arrival was one singing on Mar. 28! (ZOL). Others were one at Conrad's Beach on Apr. 8 (PML) and one at Brier Island on May 22 (IAM,ELM).

RUSTY BLACKBIRDS were very well reported this period. These sleek, glossy and vocal birds began their arrival during the second week of April; however, an early migrant was seen at Pubnico Point, Yar. Co., Mar. 10 (RSD). Notable were 23 seen at Bridgeville, Pic. Co., Apr. 15 (CGB) and although late, 10 at Central Caribou on May 1 (KJM). COMMON GRACKLES as usual were abundant spring migrants arriving during the last days of March. Generally these birds avoid crossing water during their trips north and south. First sightings thus came from Cumb. and Col. Cos. There were 2 seen at Economy on Mar. 28 and 4 at Apple River on Mar. 29. By Apr. 6-7, first arrivals were being noted throughout the province as noted with the report of over 80 in one flock at Apple River on Apr. 7 (KFS). As with the preceding species, BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS like to follow land during migration and the earliest date comes from Apple River where 3 males arrived at a feeder there in late March. By early April most areas had small numbers and generally quite content to fill up at feeding stations. The first arrivals in Cape Breton were 2 at Westmount on Apr. 10.

ORCHARD ORIOLES were found in three locations, Seal Island, Brier Island and Three Fathom Hbr., Hfx. Co. A first year male was found on Seal Island, Apr. 21 (ETM), and another male was found there on May 24-25 (IAM). A female was found at Three Fathom Hbr, May 8 (KLT,CHC,FLL) and at least 2, one of each gender were found at Brier Island from May 15-22 (PML,BAS). NORTHERN ORIOLES seemed to miss this province altogether in migration. There were only seven reports of 21 birds of which all but three occurred on islands. The largest number occurred at Seal Is., May 23-24, when 15 were counted (IAM).

Once again a COMMON CHAFFINCH has been confirmed in Nova Scotia. The increasing backyard bird feeding has played a big role in sustaining not only local bird life but vagrants as well through times of low food supply and harsh temperatures. On Apr. 13-15, an adult male Chaffinch was observed at Elgin, Pic. Co., at the home of Fraser MacLean. This bird enabled at least several of the local and a few of the not-so-local birders ample opportunity to add this bird to their Nova Scotia list.

PINE GROSBEAKS were very well recorded throughout the period. There were several hundred reported. As usual most sightings were small family groups of 5-9 birds. However, a very uncharacteristic 100 birds were found at Wolfville Ridge on Feb. 1 (GBT).

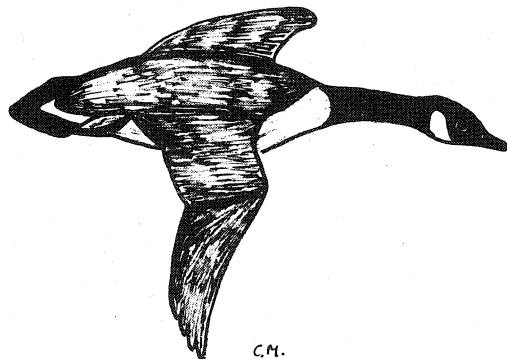
HOUSE FINCHES continue to be reported on a regular basis each season. A pair, apparently on a honeymoon, were found singing from the rooftop of the Colony Inn Motel in Yarmouth on Apr. 10. New indications of these birds spreading into the province come from Cumb. Co., where a female was found at Apple River on Apr. 12, and 2 males were seen at Amherst in late May, plus an additional sighting at Economy on Apr. 24. Other records were of up to 2 males on Seal Island, during Apr. 25-26 and May 1.

PURPLE FINCHES, although almost non-existent in Nova Scotia throughout the winter, made up for lost time when by mid to late April birds were returning to feeders. By May most areas were reporting several dozen to well over 100 at a time. The largest flock was over 100 seen near Stewiacke on May 11 (AJV). RED CROSSBILLS were evident with their presence noted from many locations where flocks as large as 70 were noted. Of note were about 50 at Lockeport on Apr. 26 (HGH,HJH) and 60-70 at Bell's Island, Lun. Co., Apr. 12 and May 2 (AJV,PML,Cohrs). WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS were notably absent with just three sightings. The first was of 4 seen at Bush Island, Lun. Co. on Mar. 20 (Cohrs); 12 at Crescent Beach on Apr. 12 (AJV,PML) and 8 at Bell's Island, Lun. Co. on May 2 (Cohrs).

Two single COMMON REDPOLLS were found, 1 at Apple River, during Mar. 4-6 (KFS) and 1 at Avonport on Mar. 28. It seems that PINE SISKINS were found in relatively small numbers. Most reporters began seeing these birds at feeders by mid-April lingering on at the food supply well into May. The flocks however, were small, seldom exceeding 20 individuals. It is fair to say that AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES were abundant throughout the period. Many observers noted much larger numbers than usual. Most feeders had at least 25 birds with several with 150 or more. It was one of the few years that they arrived and stayed to show the transition from the drab winter plumage to the glorious yellow and black. Higher numbers were found at Stewiacke (150) on May 11 (AJV); Apple River (60) during March, April and May (KFS).

EVENING GROSBEAKS were limited to only a few pocket areas in the province this year. Most observers felt it was a poor winter for them but others managed to attract up to 60 individuals on a regular basis. The best places to have looked for them were New Ross, Apple River, Upper Sackville and Port Morien during March. During April and May only small groups of 10 or less could be found. The largest flock was 100 seen at Upper Sackville on Mar. 22 (BJA). It is the first time in several years that observers did not say the HOUSE SPARROWS seem to be diminishing. Several said they appear to be returning to areas where they have been absent and the population is building. These resident birds seem to take large losses through the winters and do not seem to compete well with the more aggressive starling in the breeding season. Fledged young were noted as early as May 24 in Economy (FLS).

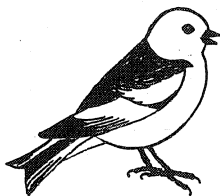
DAC, ed.



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 Pre, White Rock, Starr's Pt., Lumsden Reservoir
Cumberland Co. (Cumb. Co.)	Lusby Marsh, APBS*, Lorneville, Linden, Port Howe
Hants Co.	Shubenacadie, Noel Shore
Digby Co.	Brier Island
Guysborough Co. (Guys. Co.)	Hazel Hill
Cape Breton (C.B.)	Big Pond, C.B. Highland National Park (C.B.H.N.P.)

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



CONTRIBUTORS

<u>2 Last Name</u>	<u>1 First name</u>	<u>3 Initials</u>
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Armstrong	Sharon	SHA
Attwood	W.	WAA
Baker	Ross	ROB
Bartlett	C.M.	CMB
Bateman	Alan	ALB
Betts	Gertrude	GEB
Bonrup Nielson	Soren	SBN
Brennan	Calvin	CGB
	Harry/Jean	HJB
	Jean	JEB
Bryson	Phyllis	PHB
Burns	Gary	GAB
	Helene	HEB
Carpenter	Carol	CAC
Caudle	Bill	WGC
Cohrs	John	JLC
	Lisë	LAC
	Shirley	JSC
Cola	Karl	KAC
Coldwell	Cyril	CKC
Conrad	Linda	LIC
Cornell	Christine	CHC
Covert	Alan	ALC
Crathorne	Ethel	ETC
Cretien	Jackie	JAC
Crosby	Donna	DJC
Crossland	Donna	DOC
Czapalay	Joan	JOC
Dalfour	Susan	SUD
Dalzell	Brian	BRD
Daud	Nancy/Connie	NCD
D'Entremont	Lisette	LKD
	Raymond	RSD
D'Eon	Jerome	JKD
DeVries	Maria	MDV
Dickie	Bob	RBD
	Helen	HBD
Diggins	Clair	CLD
Doane	Ben	BED
Dufresne	M.	MAD
Eddy	Allan	ALE
Ellingwood	Chris	CJF
Field	Chris	CJF
Fisher	Phillip	PHF
Forsyth	George	GEF
Forsythe	Bernard	BLF
Foxall	Roger	ROF
Fullerton	Sylvia	SJF
Gates	Joy	JDG
Gibson	Meritt	MEG
	Wilma	WIG
Gollan	Muriel	MUG
Hall	Helen	HJH
	Hubert	HGH
Hill	Sue	SLH
Hippern	Dennis	DHH
Hobson	Keith	KEH

Jackson	Dougie	DOJ
John	Roy	ROJ
Jones	Dave	DAJ
Keddy	Keith	KNK
Kenny	Margaret	MAK
Lavender	Fulton	FLL
Lucas	Zoe	ZOL
MacDonald	Andrew	ANM
	Bob	ROM
	Gwen	GEM
	Paul	PAM
MacKay	John	JOM
MacKinnon	Walter	WEM
MacLeod	Peter	PML
MacNeill	Don	DAM
MacPherson	Jim/Donna	JDM
Maybank	Blake	BLM
Mayer	Jane	JAM
McConnell	Jane	JNM
McKenna	Ken	KLM
	Lorne	LRM
McLaren	Ian	IAM
	James	JMM
McCorquodale	D.B.	DBM
Mills	Eric	ELM
	Jane	JRM
	Maureen	MSM
Milton	Randy	RAM
Morse	Jean/Bill	JBM
Murphy	Etheld	ETM
	Richard	RIM
	Terry	TEM
Murrant	Allan	AMU
	Cathy	CMU
Myers	Susan	SUM
Ness	Gary	GAN
Newell	M.	MUN
Payzant	Linda/Peter	LPP
Pond	Catherine	CAP
Porter	Arthur	BAP
Raymond	Kelsey	KER
Roberts	Sheila	SHR
Ross	Christine	CMR
Ruff	Barbara	BAR
	Eric	ERR
Sandford	Geneva	GES
Sarty	Bev	BDS
Shanks	Bev	BES
Smith	Betty	BJS
	Peter	PCS
Spalding	Francis	FLS
Spicer	Blaine	BAS
	Cindy	CDS
	Kathleen	KFS

Stern	Richard	RBS
Stevens	Clarence	CLS
Taboski	Bob	BOT
Taylor	Jim	JWT
Thexton	Brenda/Bill	BBT
Thompson	C.E.	CET
Tobin	Deborah	DET
Toews	Dan	DAT
Tufts	Judy/Gordon	JGT
Urban	Deanna	DEU
	Eva	EVU
Vienneau	Azor	AJV
Waldron	Joan	JOW
Williams	Sherman	SHW
Wolford	Jim	JWW
Young	David	DHY

Total count: 130

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF REPORTS

for

the **January, 1994** issue

November 15 , 1993

Bird Reports to the RECORDS EDITOR

Mr. Bob Dickle,
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

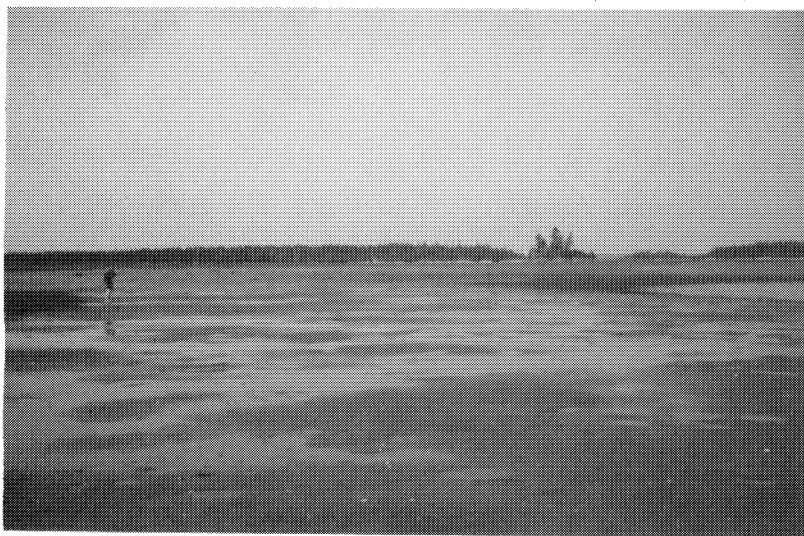
Photographs to

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

The Maritimes Shorebird Survey scheme: shorebird conservation
and population trends 1974-1991

R. I. G. Morrison

Canadian Wildlife Service
National Wildlife Research Centre
100 Gamelin Boulevard
Hull Quebec
Canada K1A 0H3



Introduction

As a group, shorebirds undertake some of the most spectacular migrations in the animal world. Amongst North American populations, some species move between breeding grounds in the Canadian Arctic and wintering areas in Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South America (Morrison 1984). A feature that has emerged about these migration systems over the past decade is that many species concentrate to a marked degree in coastal wetlands both during migration and on the wintering grounds, with large proportions of the population occurring at only a restricted number of sites (Morrison and Ross 1989, Morrison 1991). This makes the birds especially vulnerable to loss or degradation of habitat in such areas (Myers *et al.*, 1987), since large percentages of the population could be affected at one time and one place. We know that extensive loss of wetlands has occurred in North America during the past and present centuries (Senner and Howe 1984), and coastal and other habitats used by shorebirds throughout their ranges in other parts of the Western Hemisphere are also increasingly threatened by a variety of developments, both industrial and recreational. It is particularly important therefore, that the sites that form the key links in the chain of areas used by the birds during their annual travels are protected, since removal of one link can damage the entire system. It was this realisation that led first to the concept and then to the formation of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), which is designed to preserve the integrity of the system of sites on which shorebirds depend in order to complete their migrations. WHSRN has grown from an idea to an established non-government organisation, currently based at the Manomet Bird Observatory in Massachusetts; in fact, it has been so successful and grown to such an extent that it was recently renamed "Wetlands for the Americas" (WA) in order to expand the scope of its activities in conserving wetlands in South America. WHSRN remains a very active part of the overall WA program, and its efforts to preserve shorebird habitats have led

to the establishment of some twenty-one reserves in six countries throughout North and South America, serving to help conserve an estimated thirty million shorebirds.

The contribution of the Maritimes Shorebird Survey to the development of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network

Volunteer shorebird survey operations have played a very important role in the development of the information base that led to the creation of WHSRN. The Maritimes Shorebird Survey (MSS), which has been organised since 1974 on the Atlantic seaboard of Canada, has provided key information to identify sites of international importance in the Atlantic Provinces. Data from the MSS, for instance, in conjunction with other CWS work, has shown that the upper Bay of Fundy is one of the most important areas for Semipalmated Sandpipers on the east coast of North America (Morrison and Harrington 1979, Morrison 1983, Hicklin 1987), and this led to the creation and dedication of the first WHSRN Hemispheric Reserve in Canada, at Mary's Point, N.B., in 1987 (1988a), with the second element of the "Upper Bay of Fundy Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve", the Minas Basin, being added in 1988 at a ceremony near Wolfville, N.S. (Hicklin 1988b). MSS data has also been used to identify other potential WHSRN sites in the Atlantic Provinces (Morrison *et al.* 1991).

In order to assess shorebirds' requirements throughout their migration ranges, it has been necessary to assemble and coordinate information from a number of different survey operations on an international scale. Information from remote areas in the north of Canada, such as James Bay, has come from aerial surveys conducted by the Canadian Wildlife Service; in eastern Canada, the St. Lawrence estuary has been covered by CWS ground and aerial surveys (Morrison and Harrington 1979, Morrison 1983). The International Shorebird Survey, which is another volunteer survey network organised by the Manomet Bird Observatory, Massachusetts, has provided coverage of the eastern seaboard of the United States and areas as far west as the prairies. One of the most extensive aerial survey projects to have occurred in recent years was the South American Shorebird Atlas Project conducted by the Canadian Wildlife Service as part of its Latin American Program: this five year project resulted in coverage of some 28,000km of the coastline of South America, including all areas thought likely to hold significant shorebird habitat, during which almost three million shorebirds were counted (Morrison and Ross (1989). Results from this project were instrumental in the emergence of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. In more recent years, further "Atlas" projects have been undertaken in Mexico and in Panama to document important wintering areas used by shorebirds and to contribute to the continuing development of the network (Morrison *et al.* 1992, 1993).

While the results from this wide-ranging series of international studies have laid the groundwork for the major conservational initiative--and will continue to be important in tracking whether any distributional changes may occur in response to changing habitat conditions in the future--there is another important use to which results from the volunteer surveys schemes may be put, and that is in monitoring shorebird numbers. Although it is recognized that habitat loss and other factors may threaten shorebird populations, little information is currently available with which to judge how shorebird populations are actually being affected, either on a local scale or on a wider population level. Analysis of International Shorebird Survey data collected in the eastern United States between 1974 and 1982-83 indicated that three of the twelve species analysed had declined significantly, with six of the remaining nine species showing declines, which although not statistically significant were substantial in terms of annual (3-12%) or cumulative (up to 75%) changes (Howe *et al.* 1989). Some indications of declines in shorebird numbers have also been suggested by data from James Bay and the St. Lawrence River system (Morrison 1991, Morrison *et al.* 1991). This article summarizes the results of some recent analyses using data from the Maritimes Shorebird Survey to assess changes in shorebird numbers at sites in eastern Canada during the period 1974-1991: a fuller statistical analysis of the data is presented in Morrison *et al.* (1993a,b).

Methods

The Maritimes Shorebird Survey, organised annually by the Canadian Wildlife Service since 1974, involves a network of volunteers who are asked to adopt a clearly defined study area and to count shorebirds in a consistent manner every second weekend

during the period of southward migration from late July to late October. Participants are encouraged to conduct extra surveys wherever possible to provide additional counts and information on shorebird usage of their area. Emphasis is placed on making counts at similar tidal levels on each survey, either at high tide, to count flocks of roosting shorebirds, or at intermediate tidal levels, when shorebirds are concentrated on feeding areas. Direct counts are encouraged whenever possible, though estimates are necessary for larger numbers. Volunteers are provided with forms and instructions for carrying out counts. Additional notes are made on weather conditions, habitat use, age/plumage of birds, colour-marked birds and disturbances. Emphasis is also placed on obtaining reliable counts of the more common species of shorebirds. Methods and results have been summarised in the Maritimes Shorebird Survey Preliminary Report Series published annually between 1974 and 1987 (listed in Morrison and Campbell 1990).

Some 276 sites were censused during the eighteen years of the survey period 1974-1991. Many, however, received only limited coverage, and effective sample sizes of sites available for population trend analyses for the different species generally fell in the range 30-80. Initial analyses (Morrison *et al.* 1993a) were carried out on results from fifteen sites which had received coverage in at least eight of the possible seventeen years during the period 1974-1990 (Table 1). Thirteen species of shorebirds were selected for analysis—they were species considered to have an ecological preference for coastal stopover sites and thus likely to use MSS sites on a regular as opposed to an opportunistic basis.

Population trends were investigated using an annual index of abundance consisting of the average number of adults of each species occurring at each site during the peak migration period for adults in a given year. A summary of results from route regression analyses are presented in this article to assess changes in shorebird abundance. In the route regression procedure, the slope of the trend line is first calculated for individual sites, and these are then combined to calculate an overall trend for all sites during the period of analysis (Howe *et al.* 1989, Morrison *et al.* 1993b).

Results

Route regression analysis indicated fairly widespread declines in shorebird populations, with ten of the thirteen species showing negative trends over the study period, a significant general tendency towards declines across species (Wilcoxon signed test, $p < 0.05$) (Table 2). Trends for Semipalmated Sandpipers, Least Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitchers were all statistically significant, and a substantial though not statistically significant rate of decline ($-5.2\%/year$) was noted for Red Knots.

Trends were calculated for the period 1974-1983 (Table 3) to enable comparison with results reported for ISS data for approximately the same period by Howe *et al.* (1989). For the MSS data, ten of the thirteen species analysed had negative trends ranging from $-2.8\%/year$ for the Willet to $-25.9\%/year$ for the Red Knot. The strong overall negative trend across species was significant using a two-tail Wilcoxon signed rank test ($p < .01$). Trend estimates derived by Howe *et al.* (1989) were similar to those calculated from MSS data (Table 3). A borderline significant negative trend was noted for Black-bellied Plovers in both studies. The significantly negative trends found for Whimbrel, Sanderling and Short-billed Dowitchers were also negative though not significantly so in the present study. Four of the trend estimates differed in sign, though the differences did not reach statistical significance. Eight of the ten species common to both studies showed declines in Howe *et al.*'s results, a significant trend across species ($p < .01$, Wilcoxon signed rank test).

Further statistical analysis of the data using Theil's non-parametric slope test and using *t*-tests to compare abundances of the birds at different phases of the study period generally confirm the above results, and suggest that declines were particularly evident during the early parts of the project during the 1970s (Morrison *et al.* 1993b)

Route-regression analysis of trends during early, mid and recent years of the study period

Route regression analysis of the data from the early, mid and recent subsets of years of the study period indicated that changes in shorebird numbers varied in both rate

and direction during the overall study period (Table 4). During the early period, eleven of the thirteen species declined, a significant trend across species (Wilcoxon signed rank test, $p < 0.05$), four of the declines being of borderline statistical significance. In contrast, nine of the thirteen species increased during the mid period, also a significant tendency across species (Wilcoxon signed rank test, $p = 0.02$), with one positive trend being statistically significant. Although nine of the thirteen species registered negative trends during recent years, none of the trends or the tendency across species was statistically significant.

Discussion

Statistical analysis of Maritimes Shorebird Survey data indicated declines in shorebird populations in eastern Canada during the period 1974-1991. The species for which declines were most consistently recorded were the Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Short-billed Dowitcher, and decreases for Red Knot and Black-bellied Plover approached statistical significance in some analyses. The general trend towards declines across the thirteen species analyses were often significant.

One of the interesting points to emerge was that population trends appeared to be consistently different at different phases of the study period. Declines were particularly evident during the latter part of the 1970s. In contrast, many species increased during the first half of the 1980s, and recent population changes do not appear to have been as marked in either direction.

Causes of declines in shorebird populations may occur at many points during the annual cycle of the birds. Those species showing the greatest declines in the present study did not appear to share any features of distribution across their annual migration cycles which might suggest that they faced common problems in a localised part of their range. Apparent decreases or increases in shorebird populations in one area might result from shifts in distribution of shorebirds on a broader scale over the eastern seaboard of North America. However, the consistent patterns of declines in shorebird populations in the Maritime Provinces in Canada (present results) and for sites on the eastern seaboard of the USA (Howe *et al.* 1989) during the 1970s suggest that population declines were widespread and not restricted to one geographical area during that period.

Local changes may, however, bring about increases or decreases in shorebird numbers using a particular site. Shorebird numbers at Crescent Beach, N.S., declined consistently during the study period (unpubl. results), possibly as a result of increasing disturbance levels over the years (S. Cohrs, pers. commun.). In Europe, increased levels of disturbance were thought to be the principal cause of major declines in numbers of shorebirds roosting on the Dee Estuary (Michell *et al.* 1988), and around the Firth of Forth (Furness 1973). Shorebirds on migration are particularly vulnerable to such changes owing to the need to store fat reserves for long onward flights and/or to accumulate sufficient energy reserves for survival at the destination (Morrison and Davidson 1990, Evans 1991), especially species making very long distance movements (Evans *et al.* 1991). MSS data can be especially important and effective in addressing conservation issues at sites such as Crescent Beach. In contrast, numbers of shorebirds at Cherry Hill, N.S., consistently increased during the study (unpubl. results), though whether there is any link between the trends at the two sites is not known.

Declines noted in some of the analyses for Semipalmated Sandpipers may also have been caused at least partly by shifts in distribution within the Maritime Provinces. Consistent declines appeared to take place to Mary's Point, N.B., one of the most important sites in the Upper Bay of Fundy, and this site tended to have a heavy influence on results because of the high numbers it supported. There are some indications that shorebirds may have shifted to, or at least built up at, other important sites in the Upper Bay of Fundy which were not covered during the MSS operation: numbers have apparently increased at Dorchester Cape, N.B. (not far from Mary's Point), and also at sites such as Evangeline Beach, N.S. (P. Hicklin, Pers. commun.). However, the analytical procedures used during route regression analysis were considered to give broad influence to many types of sites with widely differing numbers of birds and these tended to indicate that losses had occurred across a broad spectrum of sites. Further analyses would be necessary to clarify this issue.

Climate is another factor that might influence breeding success and hence population levels of shorebirds, and there are some indications that a series of poor breeding years in the Canadian Arctic during the 1970s (1972,1974,1978) may well have led to the general decreases in populations of adult shorebirds observed during the latter part of the 1970s. Boyd (1993) noted that particularly cool mean June temperatures in the eastern Canadian High Arctic were linked to a decline in numbers of knots from these breeding areas wintering in the U.K.. Severe weather led to widespread mortality among shorebirds in the eastern High Arctic in 1974 (Morrison 1975). If similar climatic trends occurred in those parts of the Arctic from which shorebird populations passing through the eastern seaboard of North America derive, poor breeding success as well as adult mortality on the breeding grounds could also account for the declines recorded during the latter half of the 1970s in the Maritime Provinces and eastern United States. There is some indication that populations recovered during the first half of the 1980s, with no overall trend evident across species in more recent years, and it is thought that there were fewer poor breeding years in the Arctic during those periods than during the 1970s.

Shorebirds face threats from a variety of sources throughout their migration ranges (Morrison 1991). Possible causes of increased annual mortality include loss of critically important habitat, which may result from man-induced or natural causes, pollution, weather, and disturbance, whether from industrial or recreational sources. The shorebird species analysed in the present paper are mostly dependent on coastal wetlands, and in view of the concerns expressed in recent years concerning loss of such habitats in North America and elsewhere, further work is needed both to ensure conservation of known key wetland habitats and to identify reasons for the apparent declines in the populations involved. Continuation of the Maritimes Shorebird Survey scheme can make an ongoing and important contribution to shorebird conservation, both in providing information on shifts in shorebird distribution in response to habitat changes and other factors, and to tracking future population trends.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many volunteers who have contributed data to the Maritimes Shorebird Survey scheme, especially those who covered survey sites faithfully for many years during the period 1974-1991. Contributors at sites used in the trend analysis which had been covered for a least eight of the seventeen years from 1974 to 1990 included Roger Burrows, David Christie, Shirley Cohrs, Brian Dalzell, Peter de Marsh, Henk Deichmann, Sylvia Fullerton, Marion Hilton, Clive MacDonald, Mary Majka, Peter Pearce, Ulysse Robichaud, Eric and Barbara Ruff, Sid and Betty Smith, Francis and Eric Spalding, Harry Walker, Mary Willms, and David Young. Special thanks to Barbara Campbell for her many contributions with the administration and organisation of the surveys and analysis of data. We thank Hugh Boyd for his continued encouragement for the work and support of the need for long term studies. I thank Connie Downes and Brian Collins for extensive help with analysis of the data.

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Table 1. Sites which were covered for at least eight out of the possible seventeen years during Maritimes Shorebird Survey operations in Atlantic Canada, 1974-1990.

Site	Latitude/Longitude	No. years coverage
<u>New Brunswick</u>		
Mal Bay South	47 ⁰ 57'N 64 ⁰ 29'W	13
Strawberry Marsh	46 ⁰ 59'N 65 ⁰ 34'W	12
Point au Quart	47 ⁰ 05'N 65 ⁰ 13'W	15
South Kouchibouguac Dune (Kouchibouguac National Park)	46 ⁰ 50'N 64 ⁰ 55'W	9
Castalia Marsh	44 ⁰ 45'N 66 ⁰ 45'W	13
Grand Manan Island		
Mary's Point	45 ⁰ 44'W 64 ⁰ 40'W	16
<u>Prince Edward Island</u>		
Rustico Island	46 ⁰ 27'N 63 ⁰ 15'W	8
<u>Nova Scotia</u>		
Lingan Bay	46 ⁰ 13'N 60 ⁰ 02'W	8
Crescent Beach	44 ⁰ 14'N 64 ⁰ 29'W	15
Cherry Hill	44 ⁰ 08'N 64 ⁰ 31'W	17
Matthew's Lake	43 ⁰ 42'N 65 ⁰ 03'W	10
Cape Sable	43 ⁰ 23'N 65 ⁰ 38'W	15
Sunday Point	43 ⁰ 47'N 66 ⁰ 08'W	16
Economy	45 ⁰ 22'N 65 ⁰ 56'W	8
<u>Newfoundland</u>		
Inner Newman Sound (Terra Nova National Park)	48 ⁰ 36'N 53 ⁰ 47'W	8

SOME WINNERS AND SOME OTHERS

Accumulation of portrait-class photos for our annual display in the central pages had been slow, but received a boost from winning slides in our photo contest. These were listed on page 22 of the last issue. Here you see a trio of herons and a hummingbird from the "open" category, for birds that occur in Nova Scotia, but which could have been photographed elsewhere.

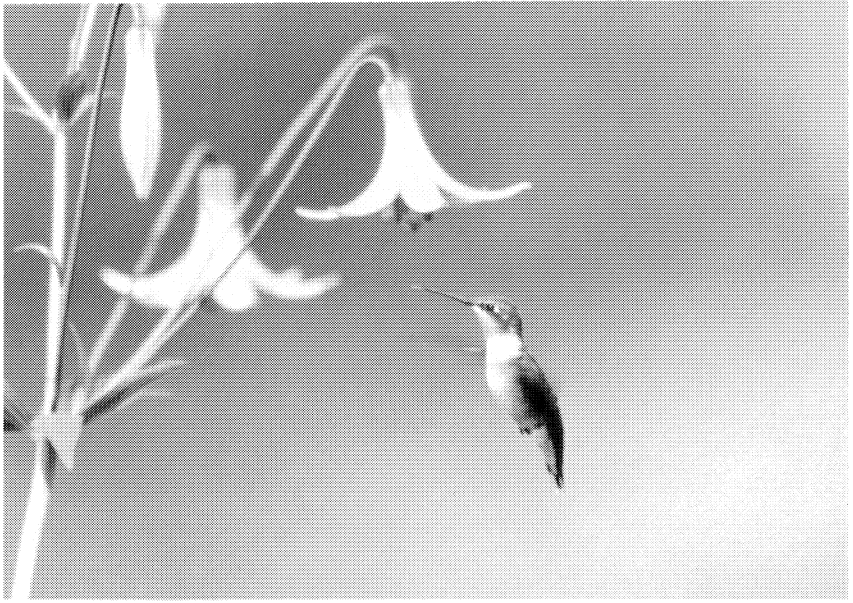
Alan Covert's RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, hovering at some yellow lillies, was judged best in the "open" category. We've published several hummingbird photos over the years, but none so elegant as this one. His high-scoring slide of a GREAT BLUE HERON brings out the sculptured strength and dignity of this truly great bird.

Richard Stern's portraits are of two lesser herons at "home", unlike those that turn up in Nova Scotia on blustery spring days. His SNOWY EGRET is whiter-than-white against dark storm clouds, while his adult LITTLE BLUE HERON reverses the contrast. His Snowy Egret won second prize in the "open" category.

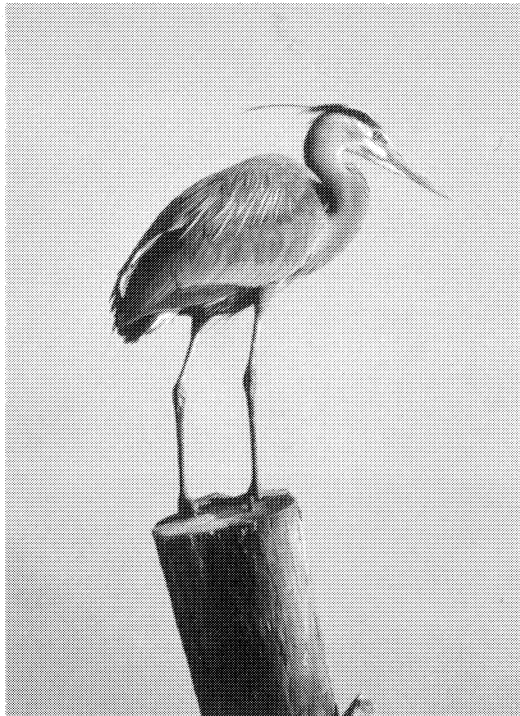
Peter Payzant's slide of a CAPE MAY WARBLER, also taken in more salubrious climes, was winner in the "warbler/vireo" category--a grouping that rewarded both beauty and elusiveness.

The remaining photos were not contest entries. Understand that both Ken McKenna's NORTHERN SHRIKE and the gentler songbird above it, are predators. It's just that the shrike tackles larger prey. And I'm not sure that an inchworm ranks lower than a House Sparrow in the scheme of things.

Two uncommon gull species make up the last page. Blake Maybank photographed two exhausted LAUGHING GULLS on a snowy beach on Cape Sable Island after "the storm of the century" on March 15. Although this storm didn't live up to the media hype in Nova Scotia, these gulls may have thought so. I promise I won't inflict any more photos of MEW (COMMON) GULLS on you; I think this is my fourth in **Nova Scotia Birds**. However, the slide taken on March 7 of the (only?) individual around Halifax Harbour last winter, showed so well the strikingly large wingtip "windows", an excellent field mark by which it could be picked out at great distance among the commonplace Ring-bills.



RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - ALAN COVERT



GREAT BLUE HERON - ALAN COVERT



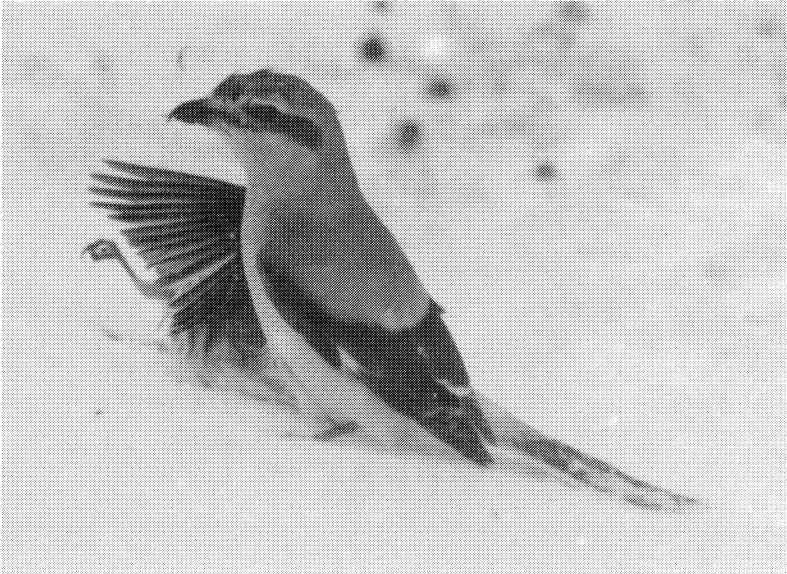
SNOWY EGRET - RICHARD STERN



LITTLE BLUE HERON - RICHARD STERN



CAPE MAY WARBLER - PETER PAYZANT



NORTHERN SHRIKE - KEN MCKENNA



LAUGHING GULLS - BLAKE MAYBANK



MEW (COMMON) GULL - IAN McLAREN

PHOTO CONTEST

Members of N.S.B.S. will soon have a third opportunity to compete for the Chickadee Trophy. I suspect that part of the reason we received fewer entries than hoped for in last year's competition is that many of you are using print film. To rectify that situation we are introducing a category for prints. So remember to carry your camera in the coming months and help build up our slide collection by entering the contest. This year's categories are:

1. OPEN: As the name suggests, anything goes.
2. BACKYARD: Birds at feeders, birdbaths, nest boxes or anything else used to encourage birds to visit our backyards. What could be easier--you don't even have to leave home for this one.
3. BEST RARITY: For any bird considered rare in Nova Scotia. Rarity will be a factor in the judging but at least some of the identifying field marks should be apparent. Photo must have been taken in NOVA SCOTIA.
4. BEST SHOREBIRD: No one entered this category last time but I'm sure there must be some good shorebird photos out there. We'll try this category one more time.
5. PRINT: I know for a fact that some of you have some great prints--I've seen them being passed around on field trips. Now there's no hassle of converting prints to slides so please enter.

Rules

1. This contest is open only to members of N.S.B.S.
2. Up to 5 colour slides/prints may be submitted by each entrant. If an original slide/print is entered and the maker wishes it to be returned, we will do so provided that a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage is included with entry.
3. It isn't required that the bird be photographed in N.S. (except as noted in the "Rarity" category); however, it must be a species that had occurred in Nova Scotia. The bird must have been in the wild and not caged or otherwise restrained when photographed.
4. Species winning in previous years are not eligible for the trophy. (Northern Flicker and Ruby-throated Hummingbird)
5. Photos mustn't have been submitted to this contest in previous years.
6. N.S.B.S. may copy all entries and use them for education purposes, publish them in **Nova Scotia Birds** and display them at Society meetings, with credit to the photographer. Copyright remains with the photographer.
7. Name and address of maker must be on each slide mount or on the back of prints, along with name of species in photo. Please include a list indicating in which category each photo is to be entered.
8. All entries are submitted at the photographer's risk.
9. Deadline for entries is November 30, 1993. Entries may be hand-delivered at regular monthly meetings or mailed to: Bev Sarty, Site 14A, Box 60, R. R. #4, Armdale, N. S. B3L 4J4.
10. Winners of individual categories will receive a one-year membership in N.S.B.S. All entries will automatically be considered for the BEST IN SHOW AWARD, the winner of which will hold the Chickadee Trophy for one year. Slides will be shown and prints displayed at Member's Slide Night in January at which time the winners' names will be announced. Good luck!

Table 2. Population trends calculated using route regression methods for selected shorebird species during the period 1974-1991 based on mean counts during peak adult migration periods. (Sites weighted by precision of estimate only.)

Species	No. Sites	Annual % change	Statistical significance
Black-bellied Plover	85	+0.9	
Lesser Golden Plover	27	-0.6	
Semipalmated Plover	82	-2.8	
Willet	38	-0.02	
Whimbrel	33	-0.1	
Ruddy Turnstone	66	+0.4	
Red Knot	37	-5.2	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	77	-8.1	**
Least Sandpiper	71	-7.4	**
White-rumped Sandpiper	57	-0.03	
Dunlin	40	-0.5	
Short-billed Dowitcher	55	-6.5	*

**significant at $p < .01$, * significant at $p < .05$

Table 3. Population trends calculated using route regression methods for selected shorebird species during the period 1974-1983 based on mean counts during peak adult migration periods. (Sites are weighted by precision of slope estimate and by geometric means of mean counts of birds at that site.)

Species	No. Sites	Annual p % change	Ann. % change & p (Howe et al. 1989)
Black-bellied Plover	54	-8.5 (*)	-5.4(*)
Lesser Golden Plover	18	+0.1	
Semipalmated Plover	57	+2.8	-9.5
Willet	33	-2.8	+0.2
Whimbrel	26	-15.4	-8.3**
Ruddy Turnstone	46	+4.7	-8.5
Red Knot	31	-25.9	-11.7
Sanderling	39	-4.4	-13.7**
Semipalmated Sandpiper	57	-9.6	-6.7
Least Sandpiper	51	-14.7	+2.9
White-rumped Sandpiper	32	-16.2	
Dunlin	26	-12.2	
Short-billed Dowitcher	45	-7.80	-5.5*

(*) significant at $.1 > p > .05$

* significant at $p < .05$

** significant at $p < .01$

Table 4 Shorebird population trends calculated using route regression analysis during early (1974-1979), mid (1980-1985) and recent (1986-1991) subsets of years for counts obtained at Maritimes Shorebird Survey sites during the period 1974-1991. (Sites were weighted by precision of estimate.)

Species	1974-1979			1980-1985			1986-1991		
	n	% annual change	p	n	% annual change	p	n	% annual change	p
BBPL	42	-15.9	(*)	25	+19.0		31	+1.4	
LGPL	12	-1.4		8	-7.5		12	-16.9	
SEPL	46	-16.8	(*)	24	+10.5		35	+1.9	
WILL	28	-10.1		12	+22.8		12	-3.7	
WHIM	21	+12.0		12	-1.1		14	-16.4	
RUTU	38	-4.0		20	+30.4	*	27	+9.5	
REKN	24	+8.4		13	+4.7		14	-0.7	
SAND	31	-16.2	(*)	23	+17.3		17	-3.7	
SESA	44	-23.6	(*)	23	+6.9		31	-14.2	
LESA	40	-12.0		21	+13.1		30	-6.9	
WRSA	27	4.2		19	+14.8		26	-3.2	
DUNL	24	-7.9		9	-3.6		15	-7.1	
SBDO	39	-4.6		17	-1.0		17	+22.4	

n= number of sites used to calculate trend;
p, statistical significance: * $p < .05$, (*) $.1 > p > .05$

BBPL= Black-bellied Plover, LGPL=Lesser Golden Plover, SEPL=Semipalmated Plover, WILL=Willet, WHIM=Whimbrel, RUTU=Ruddy Turnstone, REKN= Red Knot, SAND=Sanderling, SESA=Semipalmated Sandpiper, LESA=Least Sandpiper, WRSA=White-rumped Sandpiper, DUNL=Dunlin, SBDO=Short-billed Dowitcher.



PIPING PLOVER GUARDIAN PROGRAM

The Piping Plover Guardian Program is running for the second year now. Due to the great success we had last year, this year we have expanded to all of Atlantic Canada, and doubled the number of beaches monitored in Nova Scotia.

A big thank you is extended to all Nova Scotia Bird Society members who participated in the program in '92, and to those who have volunteered for '93!

The Piping Plover Guardian Program has also undertaken to collect data on the history of the "Piper" in Nova Scotia: sightings, nest reports, anything of interest that birders have noted in the past. We are hoping that birders have kept their old records and lists, and can help us out. If you have any information, please contact me, Cathy Strugnell, at 835-8289, or write to me at #3--80 Rocky Lake Dr., Bedford, N. S. B4A 2T1.

We are still actively searching for volunteers in Nova Scotia, particularly in the Shelburne County area, where coverage is minimal at this time. Anyone willing to spend some time on our beaches, perhaps next summer, is encouraged to call me or write to the Halifax Field Naturalists, c/o the Nova Scotia Museum.

We need people for Shelburne County, the North Shore, the South Shore, and the Sydney area of Cape Breton.

Cathy Strugnell

SANCTUARY AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND DONATIONS

May 1992 to May 1993

Jean Wight-Rosahn	Barbara Jones
Claire Hilchie	Stephen Hilchie
Darlene Hart	Gail Godwin
Carolyn Walsh	Gerald Edsall
Sylvia Fullerton	Giselle d'Entremont
Ruth McDougall	Ruth Hebb
Cynthia Murphy	Marjorie Dickie
Thomas Parsons	James Wolford
Beverly Jackson	Alexander Leighton
Evelyn Coates	Mary Ellen Hebb
Patricia Steele	Co-operators Group
Ian McLaren	Gillian Rose
M. Anketell-Jones	Nancy Peters
William Foote	S. E. Lewis
Cecil Day	Currie McCarthy
Jennifer d'Entremont	Tina Harriott
Estate of Clara Hamilton	Shirley Cohrs

THE BEGINNING

In January 1955, the Nova Scotia Bird Society was formed. Not many of the original members still keep up their membership. Of those who do, several (at the Editor's request) have written about their early birding days and how they became part of the new venture. We hope that readers will enjoy their recollections.



"Cooling off", after Dr. Lewis' woods hike. In foreground Mrs. Coffill, Ethel Crathorne, and Ward Hemeon. Photo Phyllis Hemeon

Ethel Crathorne, Dartmouth

I can vividly remember the first time I became interested in birdwatching: I was on vacation in the country in the early 50's, lying reading under a pear tree in full bloom when I noticed a little orange and black bird flitting among the blossoms. No one at the house had any idea what it was called. So the next morning I was up before dawn, caught the milk train into Halifax and bought a Peterson bird guide. I was quite excited when I thought I recognized my bird as a Redstart. That was the start of a lifelong special hobby. From then on I started to notice birds more closely, and I may say that I am glad I started birding forty years ago when they were more numerous and so many of the "good" spots were unspoiled.

When I heard that there was to be a meeting of people interested in forming a bird society, I went to that meeting. Charlie Allen, Willett Mills, Robie Tufts, Harrison Lewis were there and a good turnout. It was a very satisfactory meeting in that the society practically got off the ground at that time. A few of us offered to do typing, mailing, etc., the usual jobs and that was my beginning in the N.S.B.S. As I had been membership secretary in other groups, Willett asked me to look after the membership; that lasted for some twenty years.

My first Bird Society field trip was on April 16, 1955, led by Charlie Allen, to Kearney Lake, Bedford and Waverley, and we saw Robins, Flickers, Bluejays and Grackles. The first Christmas Count I took part in was December 31, 1955, at Port Wallis, with the late Frank and Florrie White: we had 13 species, 128 individuals, plus an unidentified hawk.

Over the years my membership in the NSBS has been a prized possession—I have enjoyed great friendships, and the field trips, even the miserables ones.

Roswell and Connie Gallagher, Mass., U.S. and Shelburne County

Fortunately both Connie's and my parents answered and encouraged our early questions about our Connecticut birds, and later when we were given the choice on Sunday afternoons between reading and walking in a nearby park we usually set off in search of whatever flew, swam or nested, or scuttled through the bushes or trees. Years later (1935) when we first arrived at the summer house we had bought in Nova Scotia, we were delighted to be greeted by swallows and warblers: our cat was not as happy with the screeching, dive-bombing Willets!

Subsequently we combined our canoeing, fly-fishing and sailing with bird-watching; serious writing had to wait for rainy days. Then gradually we came to make new friends with people who had kindred interests: Marion Robertson, the Richardsons, Benjamin Smith and the Tom Scotts—people who liked to share "bird-talk". So we ventured further afield.

Years later we were delighted when we heard rumors that there would be a Nova Scotia Bird Society and that it would publish a journal. Being summer visitors we would have little opportunity to participate in the Society, but we could support its efforts and we looked forward to receiving its journal and to learn what had been seen and where, not only in the summer months, but also what had been seen and by whom in the winter, spring and fall, what Charlie and Phyllis had seen in Overton, and Dave and Jean in Little Harbour and what rarity had blown into Halifax.



Field Day, June 30, 1962, Nuttby Mtn. area Colchester Co. From left, Phyllis Dobson, Ward Hemeon, Fran Cook, Doug. Godsoe, Lloyd MacPherson, Charlie Allen, Cecily Todd, Ethel Crathorne, Marg. Kenney, Gertrude Gilbert.—Photo Phyllis Hemeon.

Ward and Phyllis Hemeon, formerly of Halifax, now of Bass River.

When our Editor, Shirley Cohrs, indicated that she was asking some of the early members of the Society for impressions of their birding experiences, we wondered if we could recall anything that might prove interesting. However, on further thought, we felt that with the passing of so many early members, it is up to those of us still active, to set down some of the events of those very interesting early years.

Phyllis, being brought up on a farm, knew the common birds. She does say though that it was not until she was able to look at them through binoculars, that she realized that more than one kind of sparrow inhabited the hay fields. In later years, an older sister, member of the Mass. Audubon Society, while home on vacation, showed how many species could be found in a relatively small area around the farm.

My first real memory of birds goes back to the day that an eight year old boy gained the wish of his dreams, a "Daisy" air rifle. Being bored with peppering the barn door, he took his new prize across the road to a small pasture. There a little bird sang, perched at eyelevel. With a careful aim the little songster dropped. I hadn't expected to even hit it, much less kill it! Years later, but before 1955, we acquired our first field guide, a Tavener, and from that was able to identify my early victim as a Song Sparrow.

Some may remember the late Anna Dexter broadcasting from CHNS and describing the many birds she saw in her garden. She relied on Tavener, years before Peterson brought out his first field guide. For years the area around Anna's house and garden was a favourite stop on the Halifax West Christmas Counts.

In January 1955, a notice in the Halifax newspapers invited all those interested in forming an organization to study the birds of Nova Scotia to attend a meeting in the auditorium of the Technical College on Spring Garden Road.

That date of January 26, 1955, is a red letter day for all those interested in the birds of Nova Scotia. Robie Tufts, Dr. Harrison Lewis, and others, explained the purpose of the the gathering, and pointed out the very evident need of a province-wide organization which would bring together all those interested in birds and related nature study.

Among those present were C.R.K. Allen, Willett Mills, and Harding Moffatt, who had earlier pressed for such an organization. So much interest was generated that first night that shortly the NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY was formed. Robie Tufts President, Willett Mills Sec. Treas. and Harrison Lewis Editor. It was to assist Willett that Ethel Crathorne and Phyllis Hemeon were first conscripted. Within a few years Phyllis was appointed Secretary, and Ethel began her long tenure as Membership Secretary.

The Society's first field day was held at Mount Uniacke on June 17, 1956. A fine sunny day was enjoyed by all attending. Robie had brought with him his junior group from Wolfville. Also attending were Mary Stirling, Fran. Cook, Ethel Crathorne, Captain and Mrs. Monies, Fred Lane and many others. Phyllis and I often recall our highlight of the day. We found that two people cannot successfully share a single pair of binoculars. A fine view of an American Bittern, at quite close range, was essentially lost to both of us, when it was necessary to transfer the glasses. The Bittern did not co-operate, and the second person, on checking the marsh, saw only the waving reeds. Needless to say, obtaining a second pair became a priority. That first pair, 7 x 50, are still in use after forty years, by visitors at our cottage.

Robie Tufts was president for two years, followed by C.R.K. "Charlie" Allen. Then Dr. Harrison Lewis held office for a four year term. Dr. Lewis, the former head of the Canadian Wildlife Service, had retired to Shelburne County. We both recall with pleasure the 1961 weekend field trip led by Dr. Lewis at the old Kejimikujik Lodge. (in 1961 the NATIONAL PARK had not been established.)

As there was no access to the Lodge by road, it was necessary to park at the "Landing", and to proceed to the grounds by boat. We stayed in the log cabins on the lake shore, and walked up to the main Lodge for meals. Dr. Lewis had chosen a number of areas that he felt would be good birding. He would lead the group on trails which usually required everyone to follow him in single file. Dr. Lewis, though then retired for a number of years, could set a pretty torrid pace through the woods. About every quarter of an hour he would stop to allow the laggards to catch up, then start off again at high speed. Needless to say the latecomers never had a chance to catch their breath. It was on one of these trips that we had our first introduction to the WOOD TICK, at that time it had just reached Queens County on its slow pilgrimage across Nova Scotia. After one of the ladies discovered one embedded on her ..., everyone made regular inspections after a trip through the bush. We remember the lecture the late Fred Lane gave the waitress on the right way to prepare his scrambled eggs. Also, the memory still remains with us of sitting by the cabin at nightfall and listening to the loons' weird calls echoing across the lake.

It would have been about this time that the Society began to produce its own newsletter. A small but loyal group of volunteers gathered to put the pages together, and to pack them into bundles for mailing. At the end of the session they had to be transported down to the old Post Office on Upper Water Street. During the evening most of the group took the opportunity to discuss their recent birding trips, and discovered what rarities had been seen. The RARE BIRD ALERT plan was far off in the future.

Many of the field trips held during the 1950s and 60s were led by "Charlie" Allen. Those of us who needed a great deal of help in identification surely count ourselves fortunate in having him for a mentor. He realized that what to him was a common species, may have been a "lifer" for others. His patience in pointing out the elusive songster, and his knack in ensuring that as many as possible saw it, will be long remembered. Thanks Charlie!

On looking back, it was some twenty-five years ago that Harry Brennan began leading us up some of those steep Pictou County hillsides to show some of his previously located hawk and owl nesting sites. Harry has certainly given a great deal of enjoyment to many birders over these years. His records of his area are surely valuable and must be preserved.

Many memories crowd our minds as we look back over the past thirty-eight years. The outstanding ones are of the many friends we have made through the Bird Society. Many have now passed on, but many still remain; it is hoped that we may have the opportunity to get together again this year to search for that most elusive "lifer".



View of the old Kedge Lodge, June 30, 1961. Photo Ward Hemeon.



Weekend trip of Society June 30, 1961, to Old Kedge Lodge, Queens County. Dr. Lewis in plaid shirt, third row. Photo Phyllis Hemeon.

Margaret Kenny, Springville, N.S.

My first memory of watching birds was in Springville, Nova Scotia, before I started school. We lived in a farmhouse up on a small hill, and when it rained hard a pond formed at the bottom of the hill. I remember leaning on the window sill many times and watching the Barn Swallows skimming over the pond. I imagined they were trying to see how near the water they could fly without getting wet, and all kinds of other absurd fancies about them. Where are the Barn Swallows now? They seem to be very few in comparison with those days. The old wooden barns are mostly all gone too.

I always noted or watched whatever I saw, and I can't remember ever talking to anyone about birds, or knowing any other children who were interested. When I was about ten years old someone told me that the Hermit Thrush had the most beautiful song in the world. I immediately gave its name to a bird I knew with a beautiful song. Time passed, maybe a couple of years, and my aunt sent me a bird guide. It was Chester Reed's pocket guide. What a disappointment it was to find out my beautiful singer was a White-throated Sparrow and not a Hermit Thrush. A sparrow--not a thrush! However, I still love to hear the White-throat sing and I wait for him every spring, because for years I thought he had the most beautiful song in the world.

Life marched on, I grew up, left home, studied in a city, and all the time I noted the birds I saw, learned a little bit more about them, still never meeting anyone with like interests.

Then along came the man who was to be my life partner for the rest of his life. Early on I said "Do you know the birds?" He said, "I know a Robin--if it is coming frontwards." Soon he came and said, "I just saw a beautiful tiny bird, all yellow with black wings, what is it?"--and so our hobby took off. A great deal of our courting days were spent walking in the woods and fields while he was getting to know the birds. At that time, back in the forties, our friends found this very amusing, and nick-named us Mr. and Mrs. Waxwing, even to the point of sending wedding gifts in that name.

Birding truly is the most wonderful hobby, and now it is respectable and even useful. Everyone knows about the canary that miners took down the mine to indicate lethal gases. Now scientists use our lists and records in their environmental studies.

We moved back to Nova Scotia and one night my husband came home with the **Halifax Herald** and said, "Guess what! Some people in Halifax are forming a Bird Society. You must join." And so in early 1955, I became a charter member of the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

Birding became truly interesting and over the years we learned much more. The arrival of every Newsletter was an event. We enjoyed the Christmas Counts, the field trips the Breeding Bird Survey for many years, and I think most of all atlassing for the **Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces** and much, much more.

I must mention the people we've met, our birding friends, many of them we should never have known if not for the Bird Society. We found birders amiable in personality and fun to be with, and such a pleasure to share our news and theirs.

I would like to urge all young birders, in fact all birders, to keep records of what you see and what interests you. How I regret that I do not know when, in Pictou County, I saw the first Evening Grosbeak, or the last Gray Partridge, or when hummingbirds started to use feeders and so many other things.

Oh! Birding! What a hobby!



Smiley's Interval. May 29, 1971. Hazel Carmichael, Ward Hemeon, Shirley Brothers, Frank Himsl

Jim Morrow, Halifax, N.S.

My interest in birds began at a very early age. I think it was partly inherited and partly due to having a friend of about my own age who was both very keen and extremely knowledgeable. I inherited my grandfather's copy of **Birds of Eastern North America** by Frank M. Chapman and a wonderful collection of sepia tone photographs by noted bird photographer Herbert K. Job and L. M. Terrill from my great aunt. Frank Chapman's book was rather dull for a young boy as it had few pictures of any kind and the frontispiece was the only coloured plate. Thus my parents bought me a pocket-size bird guide amply illustrated in colour by an artist named Chester A. Reed. This guide was devoted to land birds only. I never had the companion volume on water birds and as a consequence I have never been as good at recognition of shorebirds, ducks, gulls and terns, etc., as with the more familiar land birds. I used to collect the wonderful bird cards illustrated by Allan Brooks and F. C. Hennessey put out by the tobacco companies in the 1930's and appearing in every package of cigarettes. These are the exact same illustrations as will be found in the 1934 edition of **Birds of Canada** by P. A. Taverner and published by the National Museum of Canada.

Another source of excellent bird cards was Cow Brand baking soda put out by a firm called Church and Dwight. You didn't have to wait to collect the cards at the agonizingly slow pace that your mother used baking soda—you could send to the company for the complete set of thirty and there were four or five different sets—all of which I had.

I lived in the Annapolis Valley (Windsor) in my youth and I knew Robie Tufts for many years before there was any Nova Scotia Bird Society. As a matter of fact, my brother and I used to do the Christmas Bird Count in the Windsor area (on foot I might add!) in the early and mid- 1940s. I would compile our very modest list and send it to Robie Tufts who would forward it along with other lists from Nova Scotia to Ottawa for publication in the **Ottawa Field Naturalist**. I have no idea if this publication still exists. Whenever I encountered a "problem bird" I used to write to Robie Tufts. He invariably answered my letters and I still have a few of them in my possession. Thus, he was no stranger to me when the Nova Scotia Bird Society came into being with him as its first president.

However, it was through the Society that I became acquainted with such eminent ornithologists and birders as Dr. Harrison Lewis, Charles R. K. Allen, Willett J. Mills, Dr. Lloyd MacPherson and many others. Of this august group only the remarkable Charlie Allen survives. Succeeding these founding members of the Society are new names, new faces, many of whom have achieved national and international status in the ornithological field. Our Society publication **Nova Scotia Birds** which appears three times annually (as well as its fourth quarterly **Fall Flyer**) is widely recognized as one of the highest quality journals of its kind in North America.

The Nova Scotia Bird Society owes its strength and its vitality today to its obvious appeal to persons of all ages, both sexes and from all walks of life.

Nellie Snyder, Lunenburg County

I have just had a few days visit with old times. I've been reviewing my old Bird Society correspondence. I've found the receipt for \$1 which gave me Charter Member status in the society. I found out about this Society's beginnings through a **Halifax Herald** clipping of "Wood, Water and Sky" by Robie Tufts. Yes! I've got that clipping together with my letter of application and my Charter N.S.B.S. membership card, 1955.

The next exciting happening was on December 15, 1956, when I received the announcement of coming second in an essay contest--"My Most Interesting Wild Bird Experience". My article was about a Robin with only one leg. James C. Morrow came in first and Dorothy Shields was third. My prize was the book **Audubon Water Bird Guide**.

At first the N.S.B.S.'s newsletter was included in the Nova Scotia Museum of Science's newsletter. In 1959 (July) we received our first hand-typewritten legal size sheet mimeographed newsletter. I remember looking forward to getting this birding news. In 1964 our newsletter came out in the format that is still used today. I have a copy of all literature received. It is fun to review all these antique records.

The July 1965's Newsletter contained an article "Diary of a Birdwatcher" by me. I've just reread this article and I know I'd never find that many birds in those areas today.

If it were not for Phyllis Dobson I would have dropped out of the Bird Society. I was able to blow off steam to her and she (God bless her) was able to pacify me and absorb my complaints. She was like our old family doctor who always gave us all so much attention. I did feel constructive criticism from members was not such a terrible thing. I still have a few pet peeves which have come down through the years.

Birdwatching has always been one of my hobbies and the Nova Scotia Bird Society has been my main instrument of learning for most of these years.

I enjoy my friendship with so many of the members. Through my Bird Notes I am in contact with many people. I pass along information as to how to become a member. I speak to many different groups each year and I also answer queries about birds every day by phone. I feel I am an active member of my society. We can all contribute to this our organization. Become an active member too, it is a good feeling.

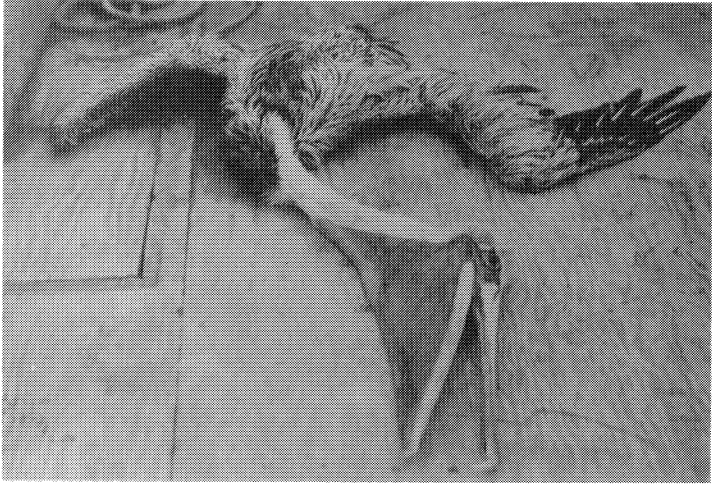


Caribou Island, Pictou Co., Sept. 13, 1969. Included in group are Ethel Crathorne, Frank Himsl, Fren Kenney, Hazel Carmichael, Marg. Kenney, Molly Clayden. Photo Ward Hemeon.

I would like to thank all the contributors to this feature for taking the time to give us their memories. -- JSC, ed.

FOR THE RECORD

This photo of a dead BROWN PELICAN is not a pretty sight, but is valuable as documentation of one of the few occurrences in our province. It was found on the shore near Meteghan, a victim of the big mid-March storm. Photo--Jerome K. D'Eon.



The adult MISSISSIPPI KITE on Brier Island this spring was a cause of much excitement. This distant, but diagnostic, view shows the pale body, paler head, blackish wing tips and tail, all quite adequate field marks for identifying this wanderer. Photo--Richard Stern, May 15, 1993.

BOOK REVIEW

TITLE: A Natural History of King's County

AUTHOR: The Blomidon Naturalist Society

PUBLISHER: Acadia University 1992

NUMBER OF PAGES: 196

PRICE: \$16.50 (soft cover only)

For several recent years the small talk before and after the Blomidon Naturalist Society's Monday evening meetings has been that this long awaited project was at last nearing completion. And it has been well worth waiting for! The 196 page book has been prepared, written, illustrated and edited by various King's County naturalists, all members of the BNS. This active group has regular meetings and field trips in the Valley area, and has become very active in conservation projects such as the well-known "Swift Chimney" in Wolfville.

The book acknowledges the unique natural diversity of King's County, and is dedicated to Rachel and John Erskine, two of its best-known naturalists. It is divided into sections on Geography (including physiography, geology, astronomy, tides, etc.), History (native peoples, Acadian history and up to the present), Habitats (Bay of Fundy Coast, Minas Basin Coast, Streams, Ponds, Forest, Agricultural lands, etc.) and two appendices. The chapters on the geology, physiography and history of the area make for an informative background to the more traditional natural history, and the chapter on "The Sky" is a simple introduction to general observational astronomy.

The bulk of the book consists of very readable narrative about the natural history of King's County, basically by habitat. For example, the chapter on "Forested Lands" describes the general ecology of the county's (and the province's) forests, the types of forests, the trees, wildflowers and fungi, lichens, mosses, insects, birds and mammals, and their relationships. For the particular information of members of the NSBS, birds feature quite prominently, and are discussed mainly as they relate to the different habitats, with some description of the more interesting breeding, feeding and other activities of selected species. There are no detailed guides to identification, or to species distribution or "where to find it".

One appendix gives short descriptions of twelve interesting walks in the area; and the other lists, complete with age, profession and area of interest, ninety one past and present naturalists who have lived in the county and contributed their interest to its cultural life. Fascinating trivia!

For the reader looking for a quick or detailed guide to where to go birding in King's County there are other alternatives, but for the reader who wants a detailed human and natural history of a fascinating area of the province I highly recommend it. For the resident of, or frequent visitor to King's County at all interested in any aspect of natural history it should not be missed!

R. B. Stern

FINANCES OF THE SOCIETY

Don MacNeill--Treasurer

Your executive has analyzed the Society's finances and has found that our income from operations is declining. If sales, life membership transactions, and non-recurring items are removed from our financial statements, the result is that we lost \$2,300.00 on operations in 1992 and can expect to have a higher operational loss in 1993. Our cash surplus will be used up in the next three years if this continues and this is required to be maintained for unexpected areas such as computer replacement, etc. Therefore, a number of decisions have been made to improve our financial position.

In 1986 we sent a questionnaire to members who overwhelmingly stated that we should maintain the quality of **Nova Scotia Birds**, which represents 75% of our operating costs, and instead raise dues to keep up with costs. Dues were accordingly raised in 1987 and have been unchanged for the past seven years. The newsletter has increased from \$7,300 in 1987 to an estimated \$9,500 in 1993 (an average of 5% per year) due to rising printing and postage costs. It is the intention of your executive to maintain the newsletter quality but we have decided to make the following changes to other items to increase our income for the 1994 and subsequent years:

<u>Dues increase</u>	From	To
Single	\$ 12	\$ 15
Family	\$ 15	\$ 18
Institutional	\$ 20	\$ 25
Out of country postage	\$ 1	\$ 2

Other increase

Birding Nova Scotia	\$ 10	\$ 12
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The effect of the above should be to increase revenues by \$2,000 per year. In addition, your executive will be attempting to increase the number of members by at least 100 for another \$1,500 per year. Various ideas are being considered in this regard and a recent questionnaire sent to members will assist us in this.

The last time the Museum increased our \$2000 grant towards newsletter costs was before 1978 and we will be asking it to consider providing us with a higher amount. Various expenses are being examined to ascertain if they can be reduced. The Bird Information Line which is not being used by all members is being reviewed to determine if we can expand it to the whole province and on what basis it can be separately funded. At the same time we are becoming more involved in conservational matters and additional costs such as telephone and postage will be incurred.

The above changes will place us in a strong financial position and enable us to operate for a few more years without a further dues increase.



WINNER OF THE PUFFIN TROPHY IN 1993
Lorris Keizer's Common Flicker

MUTED SPRING

Reprinted from **the Globe and Mail**, April 24, 1993

"It was a spring without voices. On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens and scores of other bird voices there was no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh."

As millions of birds flood north to Canada in their annual spring migration, filling the air with heart-lifting song, Rachel Carson's 1962 warning about a Silent Spring seems distant indeed. Yet evidence is mounting that Canada's woodlands, if not falling silent, are at least growing quieter. Some studies show that populations have declined in three-quarters of the species of long-distance, forest-dwelling migrants found in eastern Canada and the United States. Among this group are some of Canada's best loved birds: the vivid orioles and tanagers, the liquid-voiced thrushes and the tiny, colourful warblers that delight birdwatchers each May.

The reasons for the decline are just beginning to be understood. Pesticides, the focus of Ms. Carson's study, are no longer considered the chief culprit. Although misuse of pesticides is still a serious threat to some birds, the banning of DDT was an enormous advance which saved several species from extinction, including the osprey and the peregrine falcon. Scientists now see the main threat as the loss of forest land, in both North and South America.

Deforestation in the tropics has long been considered the greater problem. More than 250 of the 800 species found in Canada and the United States winter (sensibly) in Latin America and the Caribbean. As their habitat dwindles, these birds are bound to decline as well. But recent evidence suggests that an equal threat may come from the fragmentation of North American forests. Ornithologists have found that while migratory songbirds continue to thrive in large, continuous tracts of forest, they fare poorly in smaller, more isolated woodlands. These smaller woods host large numbers of egg-devouring predators such as raccoons, opossums and blue jays. Worse, they can be penetrated by the cowbird, a parasite which lays its eggs in the nests of other species. Once hatched, the cowbird nestlings, raised by the host birds as their own, crowd out the other young and leave them to starve.

If forest fragmentation is indeed the problem, the answer is clearly not to preserve islands of forests by establishing small parks and conservation areas. Efforts should focus instead on preserving large areas of forest. Given the inexorable spread of human development and the needs of the forest industry, this is obviously difficult, but it can be done. In Texas, forest companies are learning to manage their harvest to avoid fragmentating the habitat of the numerous migrants that breed in the state. In southern California, where conservationists have rallied to save the endangered California gnatcatcher, authorities are seeking compromise that would allow developers to destroy a certain portion of the bird's habitat—coastal sage scrub—if they agree to set aside a tract of land large enough to sustain the bird. This has the merit of protecting not just the gnatcatcher, but all the other plants and animals that live in the ecosystem.

With methods such as these we need never have a spring without voices.

ANOTHER SILENT SPRING?

by Rich Stallcup

Reprinted with permission from **Observer**, quarterly journal of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Spring, 1993. Rich Stallcup, an outstanding North American field ornithologist and educator, writes a regular column on bird appreciation and identification in **Observer**, which is mailed to PRBO's members.

For about ten years now, birders in the eastern United States have been discouraged by obvious, ongoing declines in migratory songbirds. In places where, not long ago, wave after wave of migrant warblers, vireos, thrushes, and flycatchers passed in the hundreds or thousands, today there are only irregular trickles of birds in ones or tens; there are fewer every year.

In the spring of 1992, ornithologists who for years have been radar-tracking songbird migration over the Gulf of Mexico stared at empty screens day after day, night after night. In the late fall of 1992, our colleagues in southern California (some of the most competent and thorough observers anywhere) sadly spoke of "virtually no migrants" and said, "Not only were there few rarities, there were no groups of regular species...."

Popular belief has it that these abrupt declines result from large-scale disturbances like the clear-cutting of tropical rainforest, fragmentation of domestic woodland, or global warming. But what if our native songbirds were disappearing because something right under our noses is causing them near-total reproductive failure? What if we could do something right now (the only chance, in fact) to return to Musical Springs?

There is such an option. The culprit this time is not pesticides, as it was when Rachel Carson wrote, but a North American bird species whose range and population have expanded explosively, thanks to massive habitat changes that humans have made to this continent during the last century. The bird is the Brown-headed Cowbird.

Parasites Unchecked

Cowbirds have an unusual (and extremely successful) reproductive strategy. Called "brood-parasitism", it enables them to propagate their species without the fuss and bother of raising young. Copulation is like that of any other perching bird, but no territory is established and no nest is built (for this reason, cowbirds are highly nomadic and able to rapidly expand their range as opportunities arise). Instead, egg-carrying females simply locate the nest of some other bird (they are **very** good at this) and dump an egg in it. The cowbird may also "toss" the eggs or small young of the foster species out of the nest. With an 11- to 12-day incubation period, the cowbird chick will hatch before, or at least with, those of the host. Cowbird nestlings are usually bigger than their step-siblings and are **always** louder--insatiably squealing for, and usually getting, all nourishment brought in by the parent birds. The young of small host species (warblers, vireos, flycatchers, etc.) are squeezed out of the competition and none usually fledge. For larger host species (towhees, grosbeaks, tanagers), one or two natural young may survive along with the cowbird chick.

Evidence has been published that each female Brown-headed Cowbird lays ten to twelve viable eggs per season, one each in different foster nests whose unmolested clutch size is three or four eggs. In other words, each female cowbird may be responsible for as many as 48 missing native songbirds per season.

There are millions of cowbirds in North America. An astounding concentration was reported on the 1984 Christmas count at Pine Prairie, Louisiana--over 30 million at communal roosts! While numbers like this are exceptional, large groups winter together throughout the southern U.S. and northern Mexico. Cowbird numbers have ballooned in the last two decades. During the spring, cowbirds now exploit every terrestrial niche--coast to coast, from lowest desert to highest mountains--south of Alaska and arctic Canada. Though obnoxiously obvious in their winter flocks, nest-hunting females in spring are cryptic both in plumage and voice. They invade habitats almost invisibly, and often the only proof that cowbirds have been present (even in watched places) is the sight of native local songbirds feeding ravenous cowbird young.

Any parasite requires natural checks on its population, or else it will wipe out its hosts and soon face its own demise. Historically, cowbirds were checked by habitat restrictions, but those restrictions literally fell by the wayside as European Americans tamed the continent. Once there were thousands of square miles of deciduous woodlands in the east, and of coniferous forest farther north and west, unbroken by anything wider than deer trails. Once there were deserts--the Mojave, Coloradan, Sonoran, and Great Basin--never greened by irrigation or creased by plow. The edges of these habitats, along with northern winters, were barriers that contained cowbirds in the southern Great Plains. As humans opened up the frontier, cowbirds with their unrooted lifestyle were quick to follow. As domestic grazing animals and patches of open ground for homesteads appeared in the forests, so did cowbirds. As forbidding deserts were changed to inviting farmlands, cowbirds soon accepted the invitation.

Through persistence, they have now become established across the continent. Today their populations are increasing geometrically every year, as those of other perching birds plummet downward. It's a surprise that **any** songbirds are able to persist--and without our help, they may **not** much longer.

Cowbirds are known to parasitize virtually every cup-nesting species in North America and, here in California, are fully responsible for the exirpation of Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Bell's Vireo. No cup-nester is safe, and if cowbirds are allowed to magnify their presence, they may well eliminate nearly all other songbirds with a few years.

What Can Be Done?

This is a real threat. We need to wake up and reverse the biggest wildlife disaster since the invention of guns. Humans are directly responsible for cowbirds' spread, and to rebalance avian diversity, we can justify intercepting their take-over.

Some local cowbird-trapping programs are succeeding in increasing breeding populations of endangered songbirds. Kirtland's Warbler would no doubt be extinct by now if such an operation hadn't started several years ago in Michigan, and Bell's Vireos hang on in California because cowbirds are removed from specific vireo nesting spots.

These projects, while worthy, are like putting a band-aid on a stroke. The only real cure will be to take out cowbirds in large numbers where they winter in nearly homogeneous flocks. Because the theme here is saving a huge part of our entire avian national wildlife heritage, shouldn't government agencies become involved? (In your own neighborhood, wouldn't you trade one cowbird for 30 or 40 warblers and tanagers?)

If you favor a diverse avifauna with brightly colored songbirds, talk to others about this issue, and help think of ways we can reverse this impending Silent Spring.

CATS DON'T BELONG IN THE WILD

by Tony Rodgers
Executive Director, Nova Scotia Wildlife Federation

The punishment of dogs that destroy wildlife is absolute. Any person may lawfully destroy a dog that is attacking a moose, deer or bear according to the Nova Scotia Wildlife Act.

Dogs allowed to run at large in wildlife habitat, can also be destroyed by a conservation officer after a reasonable inquiry to discover who owns such a dog, but the damage to game species by dogs is only "chicken feed" compared to the destruction of other wildlife by domestic cats.

Yes, cats--those warm, cute cuddly creatures we all know and love.

A study in Britain, by researchers in the Community Ecology Department of the University of London, has discovered that Britain's five million house cats wreck a yearly total of some seventy million animals and birds.

To reach this conclusion the researchers chose a small village as a test site. They conducted a feline census and found that 173 cats resided in 78 houses. Each owner was given a supply of consecutively numbered plastic bags, labelled with a code number for each cat, and they were asked to store whatever was left of any prey the pet brought home.

For a year the researchers made weekly rounds of the village, collecting bags and identifying the remains. If the cat had consumed the entire catch, the victim was simply recorded as an "unknown". The identification process was simple. The researchers report that although the study began in the summer months and was a smelly task, they were surprised to note that the villagers were much less squeamish than they had expected. In fact, some went about their task with great gusto, placing their cats' kills in the freezer to await collection.

Counting and checking their data at the end of the year, the investigators found that the cats had claimed almost 1,100 items of prey, 64% consisting of small mammals: mostly wood mice, field voles and common shrews as well as the occasional rabbit or weasel. The remaining victims, all birds, included sparrows, song thrushes, blackbirds and robins.

Looking further into the sparrow total, which accounted for 16% of the feline catch, the researchers concluded that from 1/3 to 1/2 of all sparrow deaths were attributable to cats. They estimated that cats killed at least twenty million birds a year in Britain.

I'm sure some of you may look at your cat in a different light when you consider this evidence. There are approximately eighty-six million cats in the United States alone. I wasn't able to get Canadian cat population figures, but our human population is 10% of the United States, so a safe guess would be to say it is the same for cats.

One American study indicated that house cats bring only about half their victims home.

So what's my point? Cats are only doing what comes naturally and that's hunt, right? Okay, but what food source are they hunting? The small animals and birds that cats take as dessert after a meal from a can is the sustenance for birds of prey like owls and hawks and other predators like foxes, bobcats and coyotes. When that food is taken from the wild it is not replaced easily. Cat owners will not like the idea that their cats should be treated exactly like dogs, in respect to wildlife management. Should we shoot them like we shoot dogs chasing deer? You tell me!

There are ways to prevent this feral harvest by cats. Cats should be spayed or neutered in an attempt to reduce their future numbers. Responsible pet owners already do this and should encourage others to comply. Owners should further house train their cats and keep them inside. If the cat wants to go outside, it should be controlled on a leash. This is a tough assignment but must be done in order to lower the carnage. Unlike human hunters, cats are not regulated with bag limits and type of species they are allowed to hunt. In rural areas, everything possible should be looked at to prevent unwanted cats from running wild. Unwanted cats should be taken to the S.P.C.A. where they will be fixed and new homes found for them or put down. Cats are an unwanted introduced species in the wild.

Another positive option would be to urge our local governments to enact legislation and by-laws for the control of cats. A very good example of this is the City of Nepean, Ontario. By-law No. 78-89 "Being a by-law respecting the management and protection of cats." The by-law prevents cat owners from letting their pets run at large. I believe the time has come for such legislation in this region. Every cat should be licensed. The money collected could be used for their control.

It is two-faced to complain about what others do to wildlife and its habitat and allow a wildlife terrorist to run loose.

"Isn't that cute--the cat caught a bird!" is a statement I've heard in the past and I'm sure you have too. I wonder if the same person would feel the same if the situation were reversed--Isn't that cute, a coyote caught the cat."

Let's get control of all our pets, for the sake of the wildlife, especially the birds and also for the protection of the cats.

COMMENTS BY MEMBERS ARE INVITED--Ed.



Can you identify this "mystery bird"? It was photographed on Seal Island, where many unexpected birds are expected. We'll identify it in the next issue.

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.

AUGUST

- Sat. 7 Economy Area. Leader: Francis Spalding (1-647-2837). Meet at the general store at 9:00 a.m. Returning shorebirds and birds of the area. Great scenery and lots of back roads.
- Sat. 14 Fuller's Bridge--Belfry Beach, C.B. Leader: Dave McCorquodale (794-2172). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Marion Bridge
- Sat. 14 Yarmouth Area. Leader: Eric Ruff (H-1-742-8145) (W-1-742-5539). Meet at the CPR Station at 8:30 a.m. Bring a lunch and suitable footwear for rocky and wet walking.
- Sun. 22 Eastern Shore--President's Field trip. Leader: Carol MacNeill (454-5337). Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Martinique Beach, first parking lot. Bring lunch and boots for some wet walking.



SEPTEMBER

- Sept.4-6 Bon Portage Island (Labour Day Weekend). Leader: Joan Czapalay (455-9892 until Aug. 28) Barrington High School (1-637-2116 leave a message after Aug. 28) Arrive at Prospect Point Wharf, Shag Hbr. for a Sat. 12 noon crossing. Depart Island about 3:00 p.m. Monday. There is a fee for accommodation and transportation. Bring your own food, drinking water, sleeping gear, clothing, flashlight and a sheet for the mattress.
- Sat. 11 Cheticamp, C.B. Leader: Cheryl Bray (562-0012). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Lake O'Law Park, on the Cabot Trail between Middle River and N.E. Margaree. Come prepared for a long day.
- Sat. 11 Matthew's Lake Leader: David Young (656-2225). Meet at parking lot at Hemeon's Head at 10:30 a.m. To get there, proceed down Hwy 103 to Exit 23 Go south for 2 miles until "Lighthouse Route" turns left at Little Hbr. Proceed down this road for approximately 2 1/4 miles until end of road is reached at Hemeon's Head (Approx. 2 1/2 hrs. from Halifax). Wear water-proof boots or be prepared to wade barefoot for a short distance if tide is not completely out. Walking distance is about 5-6 miles in 3-4 hrs.
- Sun. 19 Tidnish Crossroads and Northumberland Strait Leader: Stuart Tingley. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Tidnish Bridge on Hwy 366. Fall migration of Loons, grebes, Caspian Tern and Gannets, etc. Bring a lunch.

OCTOBER

- Sat. 2 Hartlen's Point and Eastern Shore Leader: Fulton Lavender (477-7808). Meet at old entrance to Hartlen's Point Golf Course at 8:00 a.m.

Sun. 3 Wolfville area Fall Birds. Leader: Jim Wolford (542-7650). Meet at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre, Front St., Wolfville (Chimney Swift Chimney) at 10:00 a.m. Outing to be shared with Blomidon Field Naturalists. No need to register.

Oct. 8-11 Bon Portage Island (Thanksgiving Weekend) Leader: Bernice Moores (422-5292). Meet at Prospect Point Wharf at 6:30 p.m., Oct. 8. There will be a charge for accommodation and Transportation. Bring food, bedding, drinking water, flashlight and a sheet to cover the mattress. Pre-registration is necessary. We will leave island at approximately 3:00 p.m. on Monday.

Sat. 16 Belfrey Beach Cape Breton Late Shorebirds and Sparrows. Leader: John Willie MacInnis (828-2695) meet at 8:00 a.m. at Marion Bridge.

NOVEMBER

Sat. 13 Northern Head Cape Breton Leader: Alan Murrant (737-2684). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the site of the old heavy water plant, Glace Bay. Be prepared for a 1 1/2 hour rugged hike--dress warmly, good footwear.

JANUARY

Sat. 15 Sewer Stroll I (rain day 16th) Leader: Fulton Lavender (477-7808) This is an all day trip. Meet at Hartlen's Point at 8:00 a.m. We will work around to Herring Cove via Bedford.

Sun. 18 Riverside Eagles Leader: Ross Hall (893-9665) meet at the Kentucky Fried Chicken at Exit 11 (Stewiacke) on Hwy 102 at 9:30 a.m. A visit to Berfelo's Farm and an eagle nest near the Gosse Bridge--about 3-4 hours. Great for the family.

FEBRUARY

Sat. 12 Sewer Stroll II (rain day Feb. 13) Leader: Fulton Lavender (477-7808). Meet at Hartlen's Point at 8:00 a.m. This is an all day trip and ends at Herring Cove via Bedford.

I would like to thank all the leaders who ran trips in 1993 and especially all those who attended those Field Trips and supported the leaders so well.

Good Birding,
James Taylor
Field Trip Coordinator.

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.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

March 28 - Eastern Shore

The calendar said "Spring" and the thermometer reached 12⁰C in the morning with the sun shining warmly but the spring migrants were scarce to absent in our final tally.

However, at Sullivan's Pond, among the usual Black Ducks, Mallards, etc., there were pairs of American Wigeon, Wood Duck and Green-winged Teal and the Black-headed Gulls were sporting immaculate breeding plumage. At Dartmouth Cove, we found the only Pintail of the day (a female) and Iceland Gulls were still present.

We stopped at our home on Ross Road for a coffee break and we really should have put the chairs out on the back verandah--it felt just like summer--but the feeders attracted only the birds that had been there all winter except for the singing Song Sparrow. It was not until the following day that the Red-winged Blackbird and Common Grackle appeared.

The farther we drove along the shore, the more the grip of winter was in evidence: most of the salt-water bays, to say nothing of the lakes, were covered with thick ice. Only a few runs had opened and, although Canada Geese and most of the expected species of ducks were present, the numbers were comparatively few excepting Common Mergansers and Oldsquaw which were everywhere. While we were staring at the water, a Great Blue Heron flew over and a Merlin was seen by most, but no other hawks were seen. On the way back, our car party spotted a Bald Eagle.

Our route this year took us all the way to the end of the road at East Chezzetcook and, by this time, the wind was discouragingly cold (we had been forced to eat our lunches in the cars) and no birds were moving, so our dozen birders ended the day with a count of 45--mostly over-wintering species.

Joyce Purchase

April 24 - Cape Breton Field Trip --Lingering Winter Birds

It was a sunny day; the air was warmer than usual due to the absence of drift ice. This reduced our sea duck sightings, but made for other interesting birds.

On our way to the first stop, we spotted a Belted Kingfisher, a Yellow-shafted Flicker, two Ruffed Grouse and many Robins (there seems to be a large population of Robins this year).

Our first stop, Glace Bay beach sanctuary, was very fruitful, including a pod of Pilot Whales passing relatively close to shore: Great Blue Herons, Black Ducks, Mallards, 12 Green-winged Teal, Great Black-backed Gulls, Herring Gulls, Sharp-tailed Sparrows, Savannah Sparrows, five Horned Larks and at the far end of the sand bar, flying low over the field, behind the beach, a Short-eared Owl (9:30 a.m.).

The next stop was Schooner Pond, always an interesting spot and especially today. There were Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, Rusty Blackbirds, Song Sparrows, Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, Yellow-shafted Flickers, American Crows, Starlings, Common Snipe, American Kestrel, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Harrier, Killdeer, and the exciting find of the day, a Worm-eating Warbler, looking for worms under the alders. After many attempts to get a clear photograph we reluctantly moved on.

At the Port Morien wharf we spotted White-winged Scoter, Double-crested Cormorants and the regular show of the Purple Sandpiper (6).

On our way to Black Brook Cemetery we spotted six Common Mergansers. It was very quiet at the Cemetery except for the call of Flickers that nest there every year.

At the Homeville Bridge we saw thirteen Great Blue Herons, a Song Sparrow and six Green-winged Teal.

At our final stop, sitting on the breakwater overlooking Mira Gut, was a Bald Eagle, our first and only for the day. This is unusual since the population of Bald Eagles on Cape Breton Island has been gathering great momentum over the last few years.

Andrew Gingell

April 25 - Wolfville Area

In hindsight (always 20/20) I failed badly as leader. In looking at the tide times (dead low at mid morning), I should have ended the day with Wolfville/Grand Pré dykes and started with the Canning area.

I'll begin my report by explaining that Bain's Road, NW of Canning has been a great spot for spring geese and ducks for several years. There, just yesterday, I saw one hundred ninety Canada Geese plus lots of ducks: Wood Ducks, Pintails, Am. Wigeons, Mallards, Black Ducks and Green-winged Teal. However, today, bad luck dealt us a farmer working his field adjacent to our hot spot, so in late afternoon there were only gulls! Humph...

Our day was beautifully sunny and warm until mid-afternoon, when it became cool and overcast. About thirty-five people in sixteen cars made up our starting caravan. Inside the Wolfville Nature Centre, there were four active pigeon nests under the canopy. The Wolfville wharf failed to produce an early Willet (seen previous years).

I led everyone over the dykeland to the Wolfville sewage ponds. There in the mouth of the Cornwallis River I saw at least forty Brant YESTERDAY--but none were there at low tide.

Then we were fortunate in something quite unplanned--Mike Hawkswood led us to his yard in Wolfville, where we saw three Red Crossbills, two courting Flickers, three Cedar Waxwings, and a male House Sparrow, carrying nest material into a hole in a willow trunk.

At a pond on Starr's Point, we saw a distant Killdeer, Red-winged Blackbird, and Red-tailed Hawk (several seen today).

At the mouth of the Habitant River, Canning, we spotted a soaring immature Bald Eagle (and one or two more, very distantly). At the Canning Aboiteau, there were three Buffleheads, an American Wigeon, at least twenty Canada Geese, and two Kestrels together (someone very sharp-eyed spied the distant Kestrels, as for the Killdeer earlier).

We had a leisurely lunch in the new small river park on the east edge of Canning. My scope gave us a good view of a feeding muskrat on the river bank.

Then we caravanned to Harris' Pond (still in Canning). In addition to lots of loafing gulls, we found several basking painted turtles, a Tree Swallow and a Barn Swallow, a female Kingfisher, two cock Pheasants, two Black Ducks and several Grackles plus Red-wings.

At Canard Pond (formerly Canard Poultry, then Canada Packers, now The Poultry Company), there were four male Ring-necked Ducks (seen by few because they flushed immediately and left), twenty plus Green-winged Teal, four Black Ducks, three female Red-winged Blackbirds together (newly arrived), and a drumming male Downy Woodpecker.

Next was Sheffield Mills, where luck dealt us a fourth year Bald Eagle that sat tight for close views, then also gave us a good flight display. Also, we had good looks at lots of Ravens.

In a cattail marsh along a stream, NW of Sheffield Mills, a Snipe flushed and was seen flying by most of us. Also another Barn Swallow appeared.

The weather had turned bad by the time we got to the Bain's Road site with no ducks nor geese.

Finally, and I should have done this in the morning, I showed the remaining participants (few) the eagle nest at Greenwich, where the attendant adult acted as if she(?) had small nestlings.

Jim Wolford

May 15 - Yarmouth County Warbler Walk

The morning promised a fine day for the start of our annual "Warbler Walk" from our gathering point at Carleton School; warm, but not too hot and the promise of active bird life along our intended route.

The dozen people who gathered for the walk had come from Halifax, Lunenburg County and various parts of Yarmouth County, and all except two had been on the walk previously. The oldest participant was 86!

As leader of the group, I kept a list of all the species sighted during the walk and started this list at the gathering point. While at the schoolyard, we saw several species, none being warblers. These were: Blue Jays, Killdeer making a lot of noise because of apparent nesting activity near the school--a dubious choice for a nesting site, Tree Swallows, Grackles, Herring Gulls, a Great Blue Heron winging over towards some nearby lake, Purple Finches at a nearby feeder and last, but not least, the ever present Starlings.

Our first stop was at the Carleton bridge to view the Tree and Cliff swallows feeding around the river. Two days before the walk, there were literally hundreds of swallows there, but this day they had dispersed to other areas, leaving only a few Trees Barns and Cliffs. However, in the alders near the river we had good views of Yellow Warblers, American Redstarts, Song Sparrows and even a Double-crested Cormorant flying over. There was also a mother Black Duck and her brood swimming silently across the lake below the bridge.

Our next stop was on the Canaan Road, where we left our cars to walk a private road through mixed woodland of hard and softwood trees. I had previously contacted the property owner who was pleased to have us use his road for this purpose, even generously offering the use of his hunting camp at the end of the road, which I declined with thanks. The camp is located in an idyllic setting on a small rise overlooking a meadow with a small stream meandering through it.

Along this road we saw several species of warblers, including Magnolia, Black and White, Yellowthroat, the noisy but usually elusive Ovenbird, Parula, probably the smallest of the warblers we have in Nova Scotia and the abundant Yellow-rumped Warbler (formerly the much nicer-sounding Myrtle). Also seen along the road was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, which is actually a woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadees, and a pair of Hermit Thrushes which stared back at us with fawnlike eyes.

While resting at the hunting camp we spotted Dark-eyed Juncos, Red-breasted Nuthatches, a Hairy Woodpecker; a Solitary Vireo treated us to more song before we finished that part of the walk. A short stop on the way to lunch treated us to a brief glimpse of the colourful Blackburnian Warbler, resplendent with his bright yellow-orange breast.

Lunch in the cool serenity of a friend's home on Mink Lake was a welcome break from the somewhat nagging presence of a moderate number of black flies.

After lunch a walk through a formerly productive stand of mature hardwood trees, which have been practically all cut, provided a contrast in the amount of wildlife found in a cut-over area. It was very dead! Except for a distant Red-tailed Hawk soaring in the thermals, we saw practically no bird life.

The member of the group from Lunenburg County, a well-known newspaper columnist, botanist and ornithologist was especially interested in a small pond with a large population of bullfrogs. In the clear water they could be seen hiding on the bottom after being frightened from their sunny perches on the edge of the pond. Apparently in other areas of the province bullfrogs are not common in similar ponds.

We then drove to an active feeding station on the Kelly Road to see the Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, American Goldfinches and Pine Siskins, much to our delight. The owners of the feeder reported that a Pileated Woodpecker had visited them earlier in the day, but unfortunately was not there during our visit.

A Ruby-crowned Kinglet singing heartily from a nearby spruce tree-top proved almost impossible to spot. We only caught brief glimpses of it as it flew from one lofty perch to another.

Among the birds heard, but not seen was the elusive Winter Wren. This tiny bird treated and tantalized us with its bubbling, rolling song several times. The Black-throated Blue Warbler, a treat to see, also proved elusive and we had to be content with its song only. A Barred Owl heard hooting in the distance was another "not seen".

One warbler that I neglected to mention earlier was the Black-throated Green, which is one of the more common, but colourful warblers of this area.

We saw a total of forty species for the day, which included ten species of warbler. There are several other warbler species that could be seen in this area, such as Blackpoll, Chestnut-sided and Bay-breasted, to mention a few. A special thanks to Lloyd Prosser for providing a most welcome "lunch stop" and some great tea as well as excellent close-up views of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Downy Woodpeckers and Red-breasted Nuthatches at his feeders.

A very special "THANK YOU" also to those who provided me with transportation for different parts of the route and especially to those who went out of their way to drive me home.

Hubert Hall.

May 26 - Kearney Lake Warbler Walk

Every year it surprises me to see so many people willing to meet at 6:00 in the morning regardless of the weather. The morning started with twelve keeners, very foggy conditions, poor light and a brief, hardly noticed shower.

The skies never completely cleared, although it brightened and we managed to get birds...lots of birds, about forty-eight species in all. This trail over the years has been noted for the variety of woodland birds especially in spring and this day showed its worth.

To start, we had species of warblers, including great looks at Parula, Yellow-rumped, Bay-breasted, Palm, Chestnut-sided, Ovenbird, Yellowthroat, Magnolia, Black and White, Blackburnian, Black-throated Green and Black-throated Blue, the latter species performing both common song repertoires. Solitary and Red-eyed Vireos were either seen or heard to round out this group of related woodland residents.

At least four Pileated Woodpeckers were seen, plus Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers. The Great Horned Owls that took over the Osprey nest last year had not returned, but the Ospreys have taken up residence in a new nest farther along the utility line.

Probably the most impressive sight for each of us was a pair of Pine Grosbeaks gathering bits of fine grasses along the roadside not more than ten feet from us. Their tame nature allowed everyone to watch them leisurely. I heard several comments that at least these birds were appreciative of the fact that we had had enough of lining-up binoculars on fleeting glimpses of their smaller relatives.

Thanks to everyone for a very worthwhile and enjoyable morning.

David Currie

May 29 - Hants County Field Trip

The weather forecast was not promising but the eighteen birders who gathered at the Mount Uniacke crossing did so in sunshine. The skies did become overcast as the day progressed; of course we were pestered by black flies and mosquitoes, but weather conditions were very comfortable without intense heat. The rain obligingly held off until later in the day after we had dispersed.



Standing--left to right: Marion and Keith Allesbrook, Audrey Tyler, Sheila Roberts, Eleanor Curry, John Cohrs, Millie Laurence, Lorne Tyler.

At the table--left to right: Helen Gibson, Margaret Clark, Shirley Cohrs, Bev Shanks Marjorie Dickie, Ethel Crathorne.

Those who come on the Hants County Field Trip on a regular basis know most of the stops and what is expected to be seen, hence we found in our first two stops the Common Loon, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, both Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers and a few Warblers on and near the Uniacke grounds. We were greeted by more songs at the third stop: the "witchity-witchity" of the Common Yellowthroat as we got out of our cars. American Redstarts seemed to be the bird designated for the "Oh, just another" category. There is always the unexpected to be seen at this stop and this year it was a male

Rose-breasted Grosbeak singing and moving among the trees for all to see.

Pileated Woodpeckers were seen in two different areas: first one in the Uniacke grounds where a nest was spotted as well, and in the Elliott Road area where one flew back and forth over our heads, lighting near the top of a tree for easy viewing. In the same area, the Northern Waterthrush sang from the top of the same spruce tree as it did last year. Same tree? Yes! Same bird? I'd like to think so--but if that were the same bird, why weren't other species returning to their same habitat? Of the warblers recorded for May 29, I have a strong feeling that more were identified by song than by sight!

The Bobolinks were scarce; one or two were seen and very few heard. I missed driving those Hants County roads with car windows down and seeing or hearing the distinct song of Bobolinks coming from the fields. The Hermit Thrush was seen by some and heard by all at most stops.

The day ended in early afternoon at the Salmon Hole Dam in Ste. Croix where a Spotted Sandpiper was seen, a Red-tailed Hawk flew over and twittering Chimney Swifts flew over our heads. A final stop revealed the huge nest of a Bald Eagle in a pine tree where one adult could be seen tending an egg or a newly hatched addition to the eagle population.

A total of 65 species was recorded for the day.

Margaret A. Clark

May 30--Shubenacadie

May 30 turned out to be a rainy, cold morning. Nevertheless, six avid birders set out at six o'clock in the morning to view whatever birds might present themselves.

The weather notwithstanding, the birds were unable to stay entirely hidden. "Singing in the rain" described many of the 61 species detected. From the American Bittern through Pileated Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Bay-breasted Warblers, Northern Waterthrushes, Olive-sided Flycatcher, to the Boreal Chickadees, the morning was passed in wet but interesting observation.

When the birders left the field at the end of the morning, it was with a feeling of satisfaction that they had overcome heavy odds to acquire further knowledge of nature.

Roslyn MacPhee



June 6 --N.S.B.S/BNS Kentville Field Trip

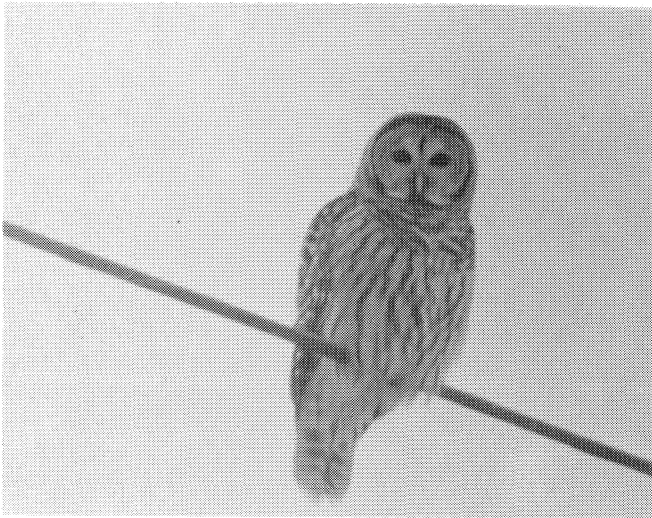
Twelve adults and three children met at the Cornwallis Inn parking lot in Kentville at 8:00 a.m. in warm sunshine for the traditional Kentville trip. Some Chimney Swifts were overhead as we waited. We headed straight for "Camelot Woods" where there were singing Least Flycatchers and Red-eyed Vireos and the main purpose of the visit, a noisy Northern Goshawk, was soon located. The goshawk was clearly nesting, so we did not stay too long to disturb her, but did note the complete lack of warblers and thrushes in what used to be bird-filled woods.

After a quick look at a beautiful male Northern Oriole in a tree by the ballfield we went to the woods along the Cornwallis River sanctuary, where again we were disappointed by the lack of birds. We did pick up single Redstart, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, etc. During lunch in Coldbrook Park the weather turned decidedly cold and nasty, but we continued anyway and the rain held off.

In the afternoon we toured some of the Valley floor fields, dykes and ponds, and saw the two best birds of the day--a Vesper Sparrow on a fence near Blueberry Acres, and a very late light phase Rough-legged Hawk flying over Saxon St.--a rather odd location. We visited Port Williams Sewage Pond, where there was a nice pair of Shoveller, as well as Mallard and Blue-winged Teal, and our final good look was of a Bald Eagle's nest with adult and at least one large chick--a special treat for the children in the group, who all had good looks through the 'scope.

Although the final tally was a surprising 60 species, most birds were only present in ones or twos and the general impression was of a lack of birds overall.

--Richard Stern



Karen Casselman's BARRED OWL at Chevarie was something of an oddity, frequenting her backyard and perching by day on telephone poles and wires. Photo--Blake Maybank, Jan. 3, 1993.

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