

Nova Scotia Birds

January 1998



NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS

A Publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society

Volume 40 Number 1

January 1998

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor	Marion Allsebrook
Records Compiler	Wendie Tay
Photographs	Ian McLaren
Christmas Counts	David Currie Francis Spalding
Seasonal Bird Reports	David Currie Shirley Cohrs Fred Dobson Sylvia Fullerton Keith Keddy Blake Maybank Ian McLaren Richard Stern

Use of any material from NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS
requires written permission from the Editor.

Cost of the publication of this periodical is partially borne by the Nova Scotia Museum.

Cover: "Purple Finches" by Azor Vienneau

ISSN 0383-9537

Publications Mail
Reg. No. 4628

Published four times a year

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

As you may already know, Shirley Cohrs has stepped down as Editor in Chief, and I have agreed to take on the position. Shirley was the editor for the magazine for 22 years, and responsible for more than half of the issues. I would like to personally thank Shirley for her many years of hard work and invaluable contribution to making this a successful publication.

This is my first issue, initially thwarted first by the possibility, and then the reality, of a postal strike. Many contributors did not send in their reports to the Reports Editor, due to the uncertainty. Some of the packages of sorted reports going to the Seasonal Report Editors were also held up. It was decided that, since this is a key part of the magazine, it was better to have a late magazine than an incomplete one. Information on sightings from the Bird Line was also incorporated where possible. This can make reporting uneven, but does mean that the seasonal reports contain more information than was available via the submitted reports, particularly since contributors often do not bother to submit reports to both the magazine and the Bird Line.

The titles of the members of the Editorial Board have been changed. The Records Editor and Seasonal Report Editors are really writers, and will now be known as Records Compiler and Seasonal Report Compilers. Similarly our Photographic Editor will now be referred to as the Photographic Compiler. This makes me simply the Editor, rather than "Editor in Chief", always a mouthful.

We are aiming for electronic submission of articles, letters and reports, etc. to make it easier to produce the magazine and reduce costs. Any changes will be made with due consideration and consultation; in the beginning you may not notice many major changes. We would also like to move toward having bird sightings submitted electronically in the future, but will consult with observers and report editors to obtain an agreement on format etc. Paper copy will still be accepted, but soft copy will be preferred.

This issue is organised a little differently from previous years — all the reports that were part of the AGM are located following the AGM minutes. You should still be able to find these reports easily using the table of contents.

There is also a summary of the latest AOU changes. We will have a checklist based on the American Ornithologists' Union 7th edition (to be published early 1998) in the next issue of Nova Scotia Birds. You can then use this checklist to rename and sequence your lists, especially for submitting reports and articles to Nova Scotia Birds.

I would like to thank those people who helped me with this issue, and everyone for their encouragement in taking on this task. In particular, I want to thank Blake Maybank, Ian McLaren and Paul Quinn. Special thanks go also to Azor Vienneau for providing illustrations for use in this and future NSBS magazines.

SUMMER/FALL BIRD REPORTS 1997

Editor's Note - Due to ill health, Wendie Tay was unable to perform the duties of the Records Compiler for this issue. We thank Karl Tay for stepping in to help out, and for offering to see us through at least one more issue. We are saddened to have to report that Wendie passed away on 10 December 1997. Our condolences and sympathy go to Karl, and the rest of Wendie's family.

LOONS TO GREBES

Compiled by Blake Maybank

True to form, the main RED-THROATED LOON autumn movement was in Oct., but the earliest sighting was Aug. 22, at Economy (FLS, EPS), followed by a mid-Sept. occurrence along the Northumberland shore, where expected; KJM saw two at Waterside P.P. Sept. 14. The bulk of Oct. observations were also along our banana belt, with the high count of 100+ at Waterside P.P. Oct. 27 (KJM, STV). Others were noted in ones and twos from various quarters. Among the more interesting locations: one, Kingsport, Oct. 13 (JCT); one, Parkers Cove, Anna. Co., Oct. 20 (JLC, JSC); one, Advocate Hbr., Oct. 28 (JRM); one, W. Apple R., Nov. 3 (KFS), and 12 off the Cow Bay church Oct. 25 (RAF, ANF). COMMON LOONS are apparently too common to elicit much comment from reporters. We would benefit from a thorough survey of their breeding sites to try to determine if they are exhibiting a decline in breeding success elsewhere than the Kejimikujik N.P. area. Two breeding reports were received, each a pair with two young, one on Lumsden L., Kings Co. for the first time in 7 years (DAS, *fide* JCT), and Robertson L., Queens Co. (RDS). The only non-breeding season count of note was ~30 birds between Sober I. and Sherbrooke Nov. 11 (KJM, STV).

PIED-BILLED GREBES are apparently expanding across the province, helped in good part by D.U. impoundments. Away from the stronghold of the Amherst marshes they were noted in season at Apple R. marsh, Goose Creek Marsh (Roberts I.), and in ponds along the Digby Neck and Long I. Post breeding season they now turn up almost anywhere, with too many sites to list. Interesting locales included four on Sable I. Sept. 28 (ZOL), one on Seal I. in early Oct. (var. obs.), one on the Havenside Barrachois, Louisbourg, Nov. 9 (HOS), and one on Publicover L., Lun. Co. (LAB). They were only a couple of HORNED GREBE reports, perhaps because our eyes are more on the forest than the sea in early autumn. The first reports were from Green Bay, with two on Oct. 19, building to eight two days later (JSC). A notable concentration of 50 was seen off Big I. Nov. 2 (KJM). There were only a few more reports of RED-NECKED GREBES. An unseasonably early bird, in full breeding attire, was off the Pictou Causeway Aug. 23 (KJM, MAW). Next were two at Pond Cove, Brier I., Oct. 1 (RBS), with five at the same spot Oct. 23-25 (IAM). Singles were off Kingsport Oct. 13 (JCT) and Green Bay Oct. 19 (JSC), with the largest number 20 near Big I. Nov. 2 (KJM).

A few NORTHERN FULMARS lingered in the Bay of Fundy until late June (CAH), e.g. 60 on June 12 (incl. one dark phase), and the first for autumn was one on Aug. 20 (PLC). Canada's first **FEA'S PETREL** was seen and photographed from a research vessel in The Gully off Sable I. July 7. This event has been fully documented elsewhere, and photos and a brief account are found elsewhere in this issue. Tens of thousands of GREATER SHEARWATERS congregated in the Bay of Fundy in July through late Oct. (var. obs.). The large numbers either indicate an increase, or improved coverage provided by whale-watching boats making longer forays in search of Right Whales. It wasn't necessary to risk mal de mer to view this spectacle; 20,000+ Greaters were seen off W. Light in two hours Oct. 1st (RBS, *et al.*). Perhaps due to the concentrations in the Bay of Fundy, Greaters were less numerous elsewhere, with IAM reporting scattered flocks of dozens in the Western Band Region Sept. 16-26. JUM was impressed by hundreds of Greater Shearwaters fishing in the shallow near-shore waters just off the Glace Bay Sanctuary Sept. 4, in pursuit of herring. It's rare to see so many shearwaters close to shore in the absence of storm winds. The story was quite different for SOOTY SHEARWATERS, previously reasonably abundant wherever shearwaters gather in our waters, sometimes nearing Greaters in number. This year the typical daily count in the Bay of Fundy was only a few dozen, except for 400+ seen Aug. 31 (BLM, *et al.*) and up to 500 seen off Brier I. Oct. 1 (FLL, AAM). Only 10 were seen during the Sept. 16-26 observation period in the Western Bank region (IAM), with 30+ off the E. tip of Sable Sept. 15 (ZOL). Peculiar though, was the presence of Sooties in modest numbers off the SW coast between June and Aug. There were 20+ off The Hawk Jun. 20 (RBS, *et al.*), "100's" off Baccaro and The Hawk July 12 (MUN), just three 14 miles off Brooklyn, Queens, June 12 (RDS), 75 off Baccaro Aug. 13 (PEY), and 20 off Baccaro Point Aug. 17 (IAM *et al.*).

MANX SHEARWATERS are increasingly reliable on the Bay of Fundy and elsewhere. Some apparent provincial high counts were noted: 100+ on a whale cruise Aug. 22 (CAH), 40+ off W. Light Oct. 1st (RBS, *et al.*), 45 from a whale-cruise Aug. 31 (BLM, *et al.*), and 50+ mixed in with other shearwaters off the E. tip of Sable 15 Sept. (ZOL). Prospective Manx watchers should note that the first Fundy sightings were two on 12 June followed by five June 29 (CAH). A possible CORY'S SHEARWATER was noted on a whale-watching trip Aug. 31 (BLM, *et al.*), and a fresh late "late" bird was found on the beach of Cape Sable Oct. 31 (MUN). As with Greater Shearwaters, so with WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS, as thousands coursed the deeper waters of the middle Bay of Fundy from June through Oct. (var. obs.), e.g. 5000+ on June 12 (CAH), occasionally being seen from shore (W. Light, Oct. 1, thousands seen, RBS *et al.*). Elsewhere they were less common (40+ 14 miles off Brooklyn Anchorage June 3, RDS), but lingered late, with 100+ seen off the Canso Causeway Oct. 23 (GED). Typically, LEACH'S STORM-PETRELS were little noted away from their breeding colonies, although a few were regularly encountered in the Bay of Fundy (var. obs.). JKD, TCD, and RSD checked Mud I. June 2, and estimated a few thousand nests present, suggestive of the colonies that once existed on Seal I. GKG and PEB visited the Society's Indian I. in Green Bay, and estimated 50 to 100 nests, but also found feathers and pellets of an

apparent resident owl.

I can conclude little concerning NORTHERN GANNETS from the few reports received; a strong passage past W. Light was noted Oct. 1, but no estimate of numbers made. In light of the continued expansion of the major colonies, it isn't surprising that more immature birds spend the summer off our shores, such as 40 or so seen in Green Bay July 18 (JSC). Both species of cormorant went almost unreported, and there is little to comment upon, except a sense that the DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT migration was either a bit later than usual, or that with few days of strong NW winds in Oct. the birds filtered out gradually, rather than in spectacular flights.

HERONS AND RELATIVES

Compiled by Ian McLaren

Summering AM. BITTERNs were reported from Yar., Digby, and Hants Cos., and 3+ remained at the sanctuary on Roberts I., Yar. Co., into late Sept. (var. obs.). Fall birds were certainly under-reported; the latest of four was at Cole Hbr. Oct. 22 (FLL). Two LEAST BITTERNs were twice as many as usually reported. A late spring migrant was at Little Hbr. June 6 (DHY), and a fall bird appeared at a pond on The Hawk, Cape Sable I., in late Sept. (CWS, *fide* MUN). Scattered reports of GREAT BLUE HERONS were unremarkable. Only JAC commented on numbers, that they were "down" in the Sydney Hbr. area. "Concentrations" are site-relative; seven on Canard Pond, Kings Co., Aug. 8 (JCT) were unusual, whereas 55 at Powell Pt. Park, Pic. Co., Oct. 5 (KJM) were routine. A GREAT EGRET was at New Hbr., Guys. Co. in early July (Bird Line). One in New Minas July 16 (ELB) was found Aug. 1 near Avonport (JCT). One at Port La Tour, Shel. Co. Sept. 28 (BLM) was at nearby Blanche Penin. Oct. 5 (MUN). A late visitor at Conrads Beach, Hfx. Co, Nov. 12 (JWT) was still there near month's end (var. obs.). A SNOWY EGRET on the French Shore June 8 (Bird Line) was presumably a spring overshoot. No summer-fall appearances were reported. A weeks-dead imm. LITTLE BLUE HERON was found on Sable I. in late May (ZOL). Later ads. were on Brier I. Sept. 1-10 (var. obs.) and at Lockeport Sept. 11 (*fide* DJC), and imms. were at Spectacle L., Dartmouth, Sept. 11-21 (MIC *et al.*), and at Louisbourg Nov. 6-11 (HOS *et al.*). A breeding-plumaged TRICOLORED HERON was spotted from the Caribou I. causeway July 23 (CWH). Another was on CSI Aug.16-20 (JON *et al.*). Characteristically late CATTLE EGRETS were at Pubnico Pt. Nov. 15-22 (TCD *et al.*) and at R. Bourgeois, Rich. Co., Nov. 16 (GED). Single GREEN HERONS were at Mud I., Yar. Co., June 2, and near Lockeport June 11-12 (DJC). The latter "flew up and teetered briefly on wires above the pond like a kingfisher!" (DJC). BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS were, as usual, routine on CSI, with up to 17 ads. and young there in late summer (var. obs.). Others included an ad. at Mud I., Yar. Co., June 2 (JKD), and juvs. at Lockeport Aug. 3-5 (DJC) and on Brier I. Aug. 12 (RBS). There were no fall reports from CSI after Sept. 28, though they doubtless lingered later. YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS were the most frequent of the "southern" herons. An ad. was at Hartlen Pt. June 12 (*fide* CLS), and juvs. were reported at Broad Cove Aug. 5 (SJF), Three-Fathom-Hbr. Sept. 10 (FLL), at Timberlea, Hfx. Co., during early Sept. (nicely photographed by its "owners", the Wiles), and at two other near-metro locations in early Sept. (second-hand rpts.). On Sable I.,

single juvs. Aug. 16 and Aug. 30-31 were followed by an ad. Sept. 6 (ZOL). The Glace Bay GLOSSY IBIS, reported in the last issue, remained until at least June 2 (Bird Line). The only other report was of one in flight near Port Williams Oct. 24 (LLD, *fide* BLF).

NEW WORLD VULTURES

Compiled by Ian McLaren

The New World vultures have been convincingly demonstrated as being most closely related to the storks, not to the hawks and eagles. So, from now on TURKEY VULTURES follow the herons and relatives on these pages. High counts on Brier I. were 15 on Oct. 11 (Bird Line), nine on Oct. 13 (RBS) and 10 on Oct. 23 (IAM). They are sometimes seen flying over St. Marys Bay from the island, which may be the source of six at Yarmouth Oct. 17 (MEG) and seven there Nov. 23 (Bird Line). Five wandered up Long I., Dig. Co., Sept. 28 (SJF). One was around Apple R. in June (KFS), five near Bridgetown, Anna. Co., June 24 (JWT), and three at Annapolis Royal Sept. 1 (Bird Line); are they exploring new nest sites up the Valley? Other extralimitals included up to three on CSI from Sept. 28 to Oct. 7 (var. obs.).

WATERFOWL

Compiled by Blake Maybank

A TUNDRA SWAN made a one-day appearance along the Barrington R. Nov. 19 (LIP, no details to separate other possible swan species). A few SNOW GEESE are expected each autumn, but six flying along Long I. Oct. 13 (KJM, FLL *et al.*) was a good-sized flock, perhaps a family group? A single immature was noted near Wallace Bay Bridge Nov. 3 (KJM, STV). CANADA GEESE are doubtless increasing as breeders in the province, and JCT reported on nesting at Hennigars Marsh, Kings Co., and Lockhartville, Hants Co. Reports of various V's of Canada Geese in migration reveal little, but the numbers are apparently growing, as flocks are seeking out new feeding areas. More than 200 were noted in Advocate Hbr. Oct. 1 (JRM), and 80+ frequently fed at the head of Prospect Bay (BLM), a site used for the first time only last year.

WOOD DUCKS continue to do well in the province. Among the many breeding season reports a few caught my eye; four males in the Apple R. marsh through the summer (KFS), two eclipse males on Sable I. June 30 (ZOL), and BLF's report of three successful nesting in Kings Co., one in a Barred Owl nest box. Post breeding reports of interest include: up to a hundred birds at the Goose Creek marsh on Roberts I. Aug. 3 (MUN); nine males and nine females in Woolavers Pond SW of Brooklyn, Hants Co. Oct. 30 (JWW); and the pair in Sullivans Pond returning before the end of Oct. (var. obs.). GREEN-WINGED TEAL are not in short supply. Post-breeding high counts from different counties of the province include: 600+ in Goose Creek Marsh, Roberts I. (JKD); 150 at Cape John, Pictou, Sept 12 (KJM); 120 at Rushton Beach P.P. Oct. 18 (KJM); 125 at Canard Poultry Pond, Kings, Oct. 25 (JCT); 60 in the Salmon R. at Truro, Oct. 3 (CWH); and 21 at Little Hbr., Shelburne, Oct. 8 (DHY). The only EURASIAN GREEN-WINGED TEAL reported was a male at Canard Poultry Pond, Oct. 31 (JCT). From numerous AMERICAN BLACK DUCK reports, especially the thorough breeding season

notes from JCT in Kings Co., it's apparent the species is easily resisting the threat of genetic swamping from Mallards. A sampling of large autumn concentrations includes 1000+ in the Cannings/Kingsport area Oct. 13 (JCT); 350+ at Crescent Beach Nov. 11 (JSC); 800+ on Melbourne L. Oct. 19 (JSC); and 400+ in Glenwood Oct. 19 (JKD). The highest MALLARD count away from city food-bank ponds was 70 in the New Minas Sewage Ponds June 6 (JCT). NORTHERN PINTAIL are not exploding their numbers, and there were but seven reports of 24 birds, including five at Daniel Head Sept. 30 (JON, SAN), and three at Cape John Oct. 19 (RFL). BLUE-WINGED TEAL are surely doing better than sightings indicate, with but six reports of 37 birds. NORTHERN SHOVELER breed regularly only in the Amherst area, and sightings away from there, even in migration, are always notable. A prospecting (?) male was on Mud I. June 2 (JKD), with another on nearby Seal I. May 26-30 (SJF), while in autumn a female and an immature male lingered on Harris' Pond, Kings, from Oct. 14-31, and one bird was at the Melbourne Sanctuary, Yar., Oct. 19 (JSC). Two out-of-range GADWALL were on Mud I. June 2 (JKD, TCD), and up to five were seen occasionally on Sullivans Pond in Oct. (FLL, *et al.*).

AMERICAN WIGEON find Nova Scotia to their liking, and continue to increase. New breeding season locales include two pair on Apple R. with at least one brood (KFS), and two pair on Mud I. June 2 (JKD, TCD). The largest autumn flock reported was 60 at Antigonish Landing Nov. 8 (KJM, STV). EURASIAN WIGEON included a male on McNabs I. Oct. 19 (ANH), and the returning pair at Sullivans Pond Nov. 16 to the end of the month (var. obs.). There were too few significant reports on RING-NECKED DUCKS to draw any conclusions. Two male REDHEAD were sporadically sighted in Bisset L. in Nov. (FLL, *et al.*). GREATER SCAUP regularly build up impressive numbers off the Pictou Causeway in autumn, but judging from reports this year post-breeding males arrive before the end of June (15, June 26, KJM *et al.*), with numbers building through July (160, July 13, KJM, *et al.*). These may arrive from breeding sites in northern New Brunswick, Magdalene Is., or Newfoundland. A female Greater Scaup at the Pictou causeway Sept. 14 bore nasal tags, yellow both sides (KJM, STV). Autumn LESSER SCAUP were evident in Kings Co., with females noted on Canard Pond Oct. 31 - Nov. 7 (JCT), New Minas Sewage Pond Oct. 26 - Nov. 3 (var. obs), and Port Williams Sewage Pond Nov. 5 (JWW). At least 13 Lesser Scaup were counted on Bisset L. through the end of Nov. (FLL). The only TUFTED DUCKS were an eclipse male at First L. Sept. 27-28 (PEL), and an immature male with short tuft at the Pictou Causeway Oct. 26 (KJM). It was a mixed report regarding COMMON EIDER nesting success. The overall decline in gull numbers must help, but local gull populations may have experienced a temporary increase as the Sackville Landfill crowd dispersed across the province with the landfill's closing last winter. Crèches in Green Bay were said to be smaller than normal (GKG), but success was considered good on Mud I., and large numbers of loafing males were noted along Queens and Shel. Cos. (e.g., 1000+ off Western Head, mainly males, 29 Aug. (RDS). A female KING EIDER was at E. Ferry Nov. 29 (DEH, *et al.*).

OLDSQUAW and scoters arrived on schedule, and were mostly reported in unimpressive numbers and at the usual locales, but 150+ SURF SCOTER off Big I. Oct. 5 were notable (KJM), and a male Surf Scoter on the Apple R. The D.U. pond must have been an

unexpected sight (KFS). BUFFLEHEAD and COMMON GOLDENEYE trickled back after the middle of Oct., but no reports stand out. Two male BARROW'S GOLDENEYE were seen in Sydney Hbr. Nov. 9 (PHT). HARLEQUIN DUCKS (18+) returned to the Indian Head, Prospect shore in Nov. Elsewhere singles were noted off Sober I. Nov. 11 (KJM, STV), Cape Sable I. Sept. 30 (IAM), and Seal I. Oct. 13 (ABM, JCZ), while up to four birds were seen by various observers around Brier I. this autumn. Everyone loves to look at and report HOODED MERGANSERS; there were a dozen or so breeding season mentions, including a nest in a Barred Owl box that contained eight Hooded Merganser eggs and one Common Merganser egg (BLF). Notable Oct. concentrations included eight at Saxon Pond on the 18th (JCT), 10 at the Glace Bay Sanctuary through the month (JUM), a dozen or more in Whynaughts Cove (AZV), and 30+ in Antigonish Hbr. (RFL). COMMON MERGANSERS were under-reported, but hundreds in the Middle and West R.s of Pictou Nov. 10 were impressive (KJM). The sole RED-BREASTED MERGANSER report was a large grouping of 1200 off Big I. Nov. 3 (KJM, STV). A maximum of three RUDDY DUCKS gathered on Bisset L. by the end of Nov. (FLL, *et al.*), while a single bird at Carters Beach, Port Mouton, Sept. 2, appeared injured (RSC, *fide* RDS).

DIURNAL RAPTORS

Compiled by Ian McLaren

We have only a handful of reports of OSPREY, but not much seems to change with them. It is unlikely that the latest reported, Oct. 12 on Seal I. (BLM), was the last seen. Again, sightings of scattered BALD EAGLES were mostly unrevealing. BLF reported that three young fledged in mid-July from his nest platform in Gaspereau. Only JAC suggested a trend: that they were "very abundant this fall" in C.B. Co. No trends were noted for N. HARRIER, and the only reference to breeding was by DHY who found three fledglings with a fem. July 27 at Hemeons Head. The only documented migratory movement consisted of 12+ on Brier I. Sept. 4 (JLC, JSC, DWP, JAP). An imm. that harassed some Green-winged Teal on the Canard poultry pond Oct. 25 was thwarted when the cunning teal found protection in a tight group of Black Ducks (JCT). Finally, a curious event is reported by DJC. Her friend Christine Currie of Louis Head, Shel. Co., was bent over picking tomatoes in mid-Sept. when she felt a weight upon her back. When she stood up, a harrier flew off! Presumably she was being used as perch, not prey.

The largest reported flight of SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS was an estimated 60+ at The Hawk, CSI, Oct. 7 (JKD). Other movements were of 30+ on Brier I. Oct. 2-3, 15 there Oct. 26 (IAM), and 10 at Cape Forchu, Yarmouth, Nov. 7 (MEG). A closely studied COOPER'S HAWK was reported from Bon Portage I. Oct. 4-5 (PJA). A particularly fierce N. GOSHAWK was defending a territory at Onslow Mt. mid-June (BLM, JOW). There was a good show of migrant Goshawks: up to 21 birds reported by eight observers, the latest on Brier I. at Chebogue Pt., Yar. Co., Nov. 23 (Bird Line). Nesting-season BROAD-WINGED HAWKS are often elusive. One was observed June 11 in Pic. Co. by KJM (from up hill) as it lined its nest with white feathers. Another was seen June 30 in futile pursuit of a smaller bird through a beech woods behind Bedford (PLC); they should stick to frogs and beetles. The only significant migrations reported from Brier I. were of

200+ on Sept. 12 (DAM) and again Oct. 4 (MUN), 400+ on Oct. 11 (Bird Line), and 100+ on Oct. 13 (RBS). About 12 were at The Hawk, CSI, Oct. 7 (JKD). Of interest was an albino on CSI 5 and Oct. 11 (MUN *et al.*). No one reported major concentrations or movements of RED-TAILED HAWKS. A "partial albino (80%)" was found Nov. 7 near Kingston (JCT *et al.*). The earliest reported ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was on Brier I. Oct. 2 (FLL). The few later reports included four in coastal Pic. Co., Nov. 8 (KJM). An ad. GOLDEN EAGLE was seen Sept. 9 by Peter Serwylo, the well-known falconer, near the Halifax Int'l. Airport.

Four young AM. KESTRELS fledged from one of BLF's nest boxes near Lumsden Pond, Kings Co. Few migrants were reported from most other places, including Brier I. However, a notable peak of 80+ was caught Oct. 7 at The Hawk, CSI, by JKD. One kestrel on Sable I. Sept. 10 was chased and struck, but not killed, by a cheeky MERLIN. Nesting season Merlins were reported from Wolfville and Lockeport, and FLS reported on two nests near Economy, the fledglings dispersing from one in mid-Aug. and from the other (four young) in late Aug. They nowadays usually outnumber kestrels in migration, but our half-dozen reports, with a maximum of six on Brier I. Sept. 4 (IAM), don't reflect this. JRM offered circumstantial evidence for nesting by PEREGRINE FALCON on the cliffs of Isle Haute. Unusual were two-three (age?) on Brier I. July 11 (RBS). We had good reports of 35+ fall migrants (max. 7+ on Brier I. Oct. 11-13; NSBS trip); apparently their glamour hasn't worn off. Two different GYRFALCONS appeared on CSI, usually at The Hawk. One dark bird was present Oct. 4 to nearly the end of the month, after which a paler, greyer bird was seen into early Nov. (JON, MUN *et al.*). Another dark bird turned up at Sydney airport in early Nov. (ALM, CAM) and a white morph was reported along Rte. 2, Cum. Co., Nov. 15 (JCZ, JOW).

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

Compiled by Ian McLaren

Seven GRAY PARTRIDGE Sept. 9 at Starrs Pt., Kings Co. (PAM), and two in Nov. on dykes near Truro (Bird Line) were the only ones reported. A CHUKAR June 30 near Mira, C.B. Co. (HOS), was another (illegal?) release. People seem bored with our most successful import, the RING-NECKED PHEASANT. We had reports of a few at Sydney R. (JAC) and of 11 on Brier I. Sept. 4-5 (JSC *et al.*), but not from elsewhere. A SPRUCE GROUSE family with several half-grown young was seen July 23 near Black R. L., Kings Co. (BLF). On Oct. 27, two of each sex were in woods near KFS's house in Apple R. in Cumb. Co., where she sees them "along roads quite often". Another roadside bird July 30 in Kings Co. "was nearly hit by the car" (JCT *et al.*). There were seven reports of about a dozen RUFFED GROUSE, plus a family of nine at Cape D'Or, Cumb. Co., July 9 (JWT). A window kill in Wolfville Oct. 26 (IVT) was probably a young bird, displaced by betters from its territory, as is traditional in fall.

During his breeding bird survey June 8, AZV encountered a strange, “ticking” bird sound at a stop near a sedge marsh at Glen Margaret, Hfx. Co. When he listened to recordings at home, he realised that the mystery bird was **YELLOW RAIL**. It stayed until June 10, giving only a handful of other birders a chance to hear its unmistakable song.

Ordinarily, a Yellow Rail would be rarity enough. But, on Aug. 21, ZOL flushed a small, dark bird from thick stands of beach pea and marram grass on a dune on Sable I. “I had good looks at it [in] clear light with the sun at my back. It flew out of the grass a few metres ahead of me and settled about five metres away. I went directly to that spot and flushed the rail a second time, getting another good view, but couldn't flush the bird a third time. My first impression ... when it flushed was of an injured adult starling, because of the overall darkness ... with white speckles, but when it was still in the air I noticed the short tail, the dangling legs, and the Sora-like flight ... and the speckles did not seem as bright as those of an adult starling. Then I noticed the dark bill and chocolate-chestnut colour. I did not notice that the latter was particularly on the nape - rather the chestnut seemed to be distributed on the upper parts amongst the black (as if some of the feathers were edged with chestnut). The chestnut was not rust-reddish, it was dark.” ZOL adds, pointedly, “I wasn't unduly influenced by bird guides, as I didn't have [any] with me at the time. The above description was in my head when I finally had a chance to look at a guide a few hours later.” This is, of course, a convincing account of a vagrant **BLACK RAIL**, only the second sighting in the province of a species that has yet to be confirmed by specimen or photos.

Even more exciting was the **CORN CRAKE** that materialised on David and Joan Young's property at Little R., Shel. Co. (What a “yard bird”!) At first Joan had it all to herself when it wandered about the lawn during afternoon Nov. 28, when David was away from the house. She was able to watch it for some time and, with the aid of a European field guide, convince herself of its identity. Before it was chased into cover by a Sharp-shin, she had the presence of mind to take photos. Next day, when the weather deteriorated, the bird failed to show. But sunshine brought it out to the lawn on the last day of Nov., allowing both Youngs, along with lucky MUN (who phoned from nearby on his way home from “ticking” the Brown Shrike), ample opportunity for study and for more revealing photos (which see). Alas, that appeared to be the end of the story, and the bird was not seen subsequently by many hopeful birders. Its rarity can be gauged by the fact that, since 1928 there have been only two reports for N. America: a bird shot on St. Pierre-et-Miquelon in Oct. 1989, and our single-observer sighting on Brier I. in May 1993.

More routine rallids included migrant VIRGINIA RAILS Aug. 30 at Hartlen Pt. (IAM), Sept. 27 on CSI (MUN), Oct. 10 on Seal I. (SJF), and Oct. 14 at The Hawk, CSI (JON *et al.*). Two young SORAS July 23 at Harris Pond, Canning, were evidently from different broods (JCT). The only reported migrants were two at Broad Cove Sept. 24 (SJF); probably others were flushed during autumn tramps through our wetlands. Individual COM. MOORHENS were on Sable I. Oct. 3 (ZOL), on Seal I. Oct. 10-11 (SJF *et al.*),

and at Canning Oct. 10-14 (MEG *et al.*). As usual, AM. COOTS were more widespread. Three on Bissett L., Cole Hbr., Oct. 22 (var. obs.) increased to six by late Nov. (FLL *et al.*), and eight other individuals were discovered at widely scattered mainland localities from Nov. 3 to month's end.

SHOREBIRDS

Compiled by Sylvia Fullerton

Changes in shorebird populations are difficult to gauge by random reports of birds pausing here during migration, but it is obvious some species are faring better than others, as we shall see from the reports. Weather was not the problem this spring as Peter Hicklin, CWS, has passed on information that biologists working on shorebirds in the eastern and central Arctic found the weather "quite normal" and breeding success good even though laying dates were slightly later, but not significantly so. Summer and fall were certainly welcoming in the Maritimes. Reporting numbers from regularly visited habitats does help over time to show trends and to understand what is happening and I encourage you all to do so. It would be helpful, as well, for comparative purposes, if those who contribute to the Maritimes Shorebird Survey would send along copies of their summary sheets.

Northbound to the Arctic tundra BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS were little noticed, except for sizeable flocks May 30: 170 at the Windsor causeway and 300 at Avonport Beach (JCT). Twenty-eight were still at Cherry Hill June 2. The fall migration produced alarmingly low numbers. Earliest were two at Cherry Hill July 22 and 18 at Crescent Beach July 31 (SJF, JSC). Peaks were: 71 at Cherry Hill Aug. 17, 100 at Quarry L., near Cheverie and 100 at CSI both on Aug. 21 (JCT, BLM); eight on Big I., Pic. Co., Aug. 22 (KJM); only 100 at the Windsor causeway Aug. 24 (RBS); 75 at Crescent Aug. 29 (JSC). These numbers are a far cry from the hundreds of birds previously reported from Grand Pré, Economy, etc. Forty-eight lingered at Cherry Hill Oct. 26, down to nine on Nov. 1 (JSC); two at W. Apple R. Nov. 3 (KFS); eight at NW Arm, C.B. Nov. 12 (JAC). Small numbers of the less common AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER stop here on their migration southward before departing directly across the Atlantic to northern S. America. The first appeared on schedule Aug. 17 on The Cape, CSI (MLL, JON *et al.*). A favourite jumping-off spot is Sable I. where 250, in groups of 10-60, were counted Sept. 4 (ZOL). Smaller concentrations were: 15 at Cape John Sept. 12 (KJM); 60 at Sydney Airport Sept. 14 (ALM, CAM); 10 at Cherry Hill Sept. 16, down to one on Oct. 15; ones and twos at Caribou I., Merigomish and Brier I. at the end of Sept.; five lingered until Oct. 5 at CSI (JON *et al.*) Other than the Sable birds numbers were down.

Two reports of the seldom seen WILSON'S PLOVER come via the Bird Line. The first was an imm. seen Sept. 1 at Aulds Cove, Ant. Co. by SAM. Well described, she notes, the heavy dark bill, wide single band across the chest, white line across forehead continuing over and behind the eye ... and the legs not bright orange." Another, or the same imm. bird, appeared Sept. 5 at Schooner Pond, C. B., described by JUM and GUM. Presumably this was a disorientated migrant from the eastern population that occurs on the Gulf and Atlantic coasts as far north as New Jersey. No follow-up reports of the

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER'S local breeding success were received, but a new breeding site was found on CSI where a pair nested and at least one, perhaps three, young were hatched" (JON, BLM). Migrants were well in evidence. A single bird was seen at S. Bar, Sydney Hbr. June 30 by DBM, perhaps one of our breeding population. On schedule were nine birds July 9 at Crescent, peaking to 1120 by Aug. 8 (JSC); Cherry Hill's peak was only 364 on Aug. 13, down from previous years. At Eagle Head Beach, Queens Co., there were 150 on Aug. 19, "a very active beach that day" (RDS), and one to be monitored, I would suggest. At Quarry L. there were 600+ on Aug. 21, "part of a mixed high-tide roost" (JCT). CSI hosted 750 on Aug. 21 (BLM). Only 30 were seen on Big I. Aug. 22 (KJM). At Pt. Michaud 125 were present Sept. 7 (BLM). Unusual on Oct. 4 were 10 birds roosting on semi-floating vegetation in the middle of Publicover L." (JSC). Lastly, 29 were still at Cherry Hill Oct. 15, one at Crescent Oct. 31 and 50 at W. Apple R. Nov. 3 (KFS). Only two reports were received on PIPING PLOVER nesting success, which, I trust, is not indicative of the general situation around the Province. DJC *et al.* report with some excitement on the first nesting pair at Lockeport's Crescent Beach. The birds appeared June 14, four eggs produced four young but by Aug. 3 only one ad. and one juv. were still present; the juv. lingered until Sept. 17, hanging out with Semipalmated Plovers. Likewise a pair was at Cherry Hill June 25, four juv. July 25, three still present on Aug. 25. KILLDEER, as well, were under reported. On June 29, at Greenwich Ridge, CAS and JCT watched two very vocal ad. trying to shepherd two plus fledglings across a ditch away from harassing crows and a domestic cat. To help them along these intrepid birders had the cat removed and taken indoors. Singles were reported at Cherry Hill Aug.-Nov. and at Conrads Beach Nov. 13 (JWT).



John Nickerson

This photo of an American Oystercatcher nest on Cape Sable, June 24, shows a clutch with the characteristic three eggs. Most of our shorebirds lay four. They were quite well disguised amongst the beach pebbles.



Wilfred (Skipper) Atwood

The story of Canada's first nesting of American Oystercatchers begins in 1995, when two birds visited The Hawk, Cape Sable Island in May and July. The photo at left documents that event.

Last year, of course, they became big news. The photo at right shows one of these unmistakable birds in flight, with Clarks Harbour in the background.



Blake Maybank

The excitement of the year is, of course, the first confirmed nesting record of the **AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** for Canada in this century. In June of 1996 two appeared at CSI for a two-week period but breeding was not detected. On May 24 of this year two individuals were spotted there and were joined by two others June 24 (JON, MUN, RDS *et al.*). A nest with three eggs was discovered by FGN on The Cape June 24, and photographed and monitored by JON and MUN (See photos on the next page). Although MUN says the eggs were close to hatching, no fledglings were seen and their fate remains unknown. By Aug. 10 a fifth ad. had appeared, unwelcome by the others. Four ads. were seen up to Sept. 9, last one noted Sept. 28. We await next year!

GREATER YELLOWLEGS breed in the boreal-forest zone all across N. America and

are known breeders in the CBHNP. A nesting pair was found there in typical habitat on the Bog Trail June 29 (ABM *et al.*). Southward migrants first appeared July 23 with 21 at Harris Pond, Canning (JCT), but the bulk of the migration did not occur until Aug. and later. One was heard calling overhead the night of Aug. 17 in central Halifax, "not a bird I expected to have on my yard list," says PLC. On Aug. 20, 51 yellowlegs, mostly Greater, were roosting at Canard Pond (JCT); 10 at Cherry Hill Aug. 17; 19 at Crescent Aug. 29 (JSC). Numbers stayed low through Oct.: 24 at Cape John Oct. 18 (KJM); 38 at Van Nostrands Pond, Starrs Pt. (EDL). By end of month only ones and twos were reported. Last were two at Apple R. Nov. 3 (KFS) and one at Lingan Bay, C.B., Nov. 6 (JAC). The LESSER YELLOWLEGS nests further north than does the Greater and migrates further south, hence most have gone through by late Sept. The first was at Crescent July 9 (JSC); 30 at Munroes I., Pic. Co. July 18 (KJM, CGB); one at Little Hbr., Shel. Co. July 22 (DHY); two at Harris Pond July 23; two at Cherry Hill July 25; four Crescent July 31; four at Windsor sewage ponds Aug. 19; two at Canard Aug. 20 (JCT); 40 at Big I. Aug. 22 (KJM); 15 at Brier I. Sept. 4 (JLS, JSC, DWP, JAP); 25 at Boat Hbr. Sept. 19 (BLM). Finally completing the dismal picture a late bird was at New Minas D.U. Pond Oct. 13 (JCT).

The much-desired Old World species, the **SPOTTED REDSHANK**, is becoming almost an annual occurrence, but always stays a tantalisingly short time, at least not long enough to be photographed. An imm., perhaps the 7th record, was at CSI Sept. 14 seen by MUN and WIA. Two Stilt Sandpipers and several Lesser Yellowlegs accompanied it. Red legs were noted as well as red colour to the basal half of the bill. The hawk migration was underway and the bird did not linger.

The SOLITARY SANDPIPER was much in evidence all over, perhaps because it seems to prefer muddy ponds that dry up in summer and we had plenty of those. Earliest was at MacLellans Brook, Pic. Co., July 19 (KJM, CGB); perhaps an attempted nester?. Others were one at Annapolis Royal Aug. 4 (JSC, LAB); one at Meaghers Grant Aug. 5 (GCG); two at Charlesville, Shel. Co. Aug. 16, one remaining until Sept. 17 (JKD); one at CSI Aug. 23 (BLM); one at Upper Falmouth Aug. 25 (BLF); four at Lower Barneys R. Sept. 7 (KJM); one at CSI Sept. 5-6, 16 (MUN, DAM, CRM); one at Morien Bay, C.B. Sept. 6 (BLM); one in Yarmouth Sept. 29-Oct.4 (JOS). Seven not-so-solitary birds visited a pond in Broad Cove, where they appear every year, from Aug. 29 to Oct. 6 when the last was seen (SJF, BAH).

WILLETS assembled unusually early at CSI, 150 on July 8 (BLM). Otherwise they were present in usual numbers but not much noticed until late July/early Aug. when they were gathering to leave: 26 at Crescent; 30 at Cherry Hill; 25 at Lockeport (JSC, DJC); 30 each at Wolfville Hbr. and Windsor causeway (JCT); 50 at Brier I. (RBS). A noisy group of 11 was on Sable I. Aug. 26, "probably eastern birds," (ZOL). Birds seen here in Sept. and Oct. are most likely the western subspecies; five tired westerns (3 ad. and 2 juv.; see photo), showed up on Brier Sept. 4-5 (IAM, JLC, JSC, DWP, JAP). The once ubiquitous SPOTTED SANDPIPER must be too common to report, or is it, too, declining? Only JCT noted three at Canard Pond June 6.

The scarce UPLAND SANDPIPER was seen three times: at Sable I. June 4 (ZOL); at CSI July 8 (BLM, MUN); at Grand Pré Sept. 2 (BBT). The first WHIMBREL appeared July 5 on Sable I. (ZOL); seven were at CSI July 8 (BLM); three were at Little Hbr., Shel. Co. July 20 (DHY); and two each at Crescent and Cherry Hill on July 31 (JSC). Other areas had sizeable flocks: 75+ at Baccaro July 29-Aug. 13 (KJM, STV, PEY); 100 at CSI Aug. 10-17 (MUN); 10 at Big. I. Aug. 22 (KJM); 19 at Prospect Sept. 6, some feeding on crowberries (PLC, JCZ); six at Schooner Pond Sept. 6 (BLM); three at Hartlen Pt. Sept. 21 (PLC, JEH); 40+ during the fall, latest being one on Oct. 3, at Sable I. (ZOL).

An early HUDSONIAN GODWIT June 29 at CSI may have been a non-breeder. Twenty-five turned up there July 27, with 35 by Aug. 17 (RSD, JKD, MUN). Three or four were at the Windsor causeway Aug. 2 (JCT). Only four were at Matthews L. Aug. 23, an unusually low number for this area (DHY) and 10 appeared there Aug. 26 (BLM). One was at Pt. Michaud Sept. 7 (BLM). Late birds were three at CSI Oct. 24 (JON, CLS); an imm. at Three Fathom Hbr. Oct. 25 (ANF, RAF); one at Cape John Nov. 3 (KJM, STV). PPD and RDS studied a godwit at Beach Meadows, Queens Co. Oct. 13, which they believe was a Marbled, having looked closely at the Hudsonians at CSI. Compared to them this bird had a different shape, was more washed out and had unbarred under parts. Unfortunately, it is a difficult call as they did not see the bird in flight and did not see the diagnostic rufous axillars. The rare **BAR-TAILED GODWIT** put in another appearance at CSI Nov. 10 and was still present at deadline time. There had been a confirmed sighting there in Oct. 1994 and one appeared for four days last year (JON, WIA, BLM). This year's bird was found once again by JON and SAN and seen by var. obs. and it is the 4th record for N. S. It was an ad. in alternate plumage; white underwing linings, very fine barring on tail and whitish rump were all noted, thus identifying it as the European subspecies, *lapponica*.

The RUDDY TURNSTONE is a favoured shorebird by many but few reported seeing it. Fifteen early birds were at Cherry Hill July 5. Peak numbers were low: 11 at Crescent Aug. 21 (JSC); 28 at Sand Beach Rd., Western Head (RDS); 26 at Cherry Hill Aug. 25; 40 at Brier I. Sept. 4 (JLC, JSC, DWP, JAP); and 16 at Caribou I. Sept. 29 (KJM). Does no one ever check that great staging area at Cheverie?

The RED KNOT continues to decline and only five reports were received. Four birds in basic plumage at Cherry Hill June 2 were probably first-yr., non-breeding birds. JSC saw but one individual all season at Crescent. Cherry Hill fared better, three arrived July 27, 20 were there by Sept. 10, last were 13 on Sept. 16 (SJF). Eight were at CSI Aug. 22 (BLM); 12 were at Powell Pt. Park Sept. 13-19 (KJM, STV, BLM). The SANDERLING, a high-Arctic breeder, takes its time dispersing over the world's coasts and arrives late in N.S. An exception was an early arrival at Crescent July 9 where a peak of only 72 was reached Oct. 12-25 (JSC); only 108 were at Cherry Hill Sept. 16. Up to 400 were on Sable I. Aug. 3-4 (ZOL); 110 at Pt. Michaud Sept. 7 (BLM); 150 at CSI Oct. 24 (JKD) and 80 at W. Apple R. Nov. 3 (KFS). DJC says they continued to be scarce around Lockeport with only a few birds through Aug. and early Sept. Ten SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS arrived on schedule at Cherry Hill July 16. There were 8000 at Penney Beach, Avonport July 29 and 400-500 at Wolfville Hbr. Aug. 2. The good news is that on

the same day, at high tide, an estimated 20,000 were at the Windsor causeway and "10's of 1000's" were north of the causeway, around the mouth of the Avon R., "rising and falling like smoke over trees," (JCT). Other peaks were 1500 at CSI Aug. 21 (BLM); 300 at Sand Beach Rd., Western Head Aug. 25 (RDS); and 350 at Crescent Aug. 29 (JSC). Latest reported were two at Cherry Hill Oct. 15. JCT describes an interesting partial albino in the above flock at Penney Beach: "dark head, tail, primaries and secondaries, but body and back mostly white, with a bold 'V' running from its shoulders down its back." No doubt its fate will be supper for a Merlin.

A juv. **WESTERN SANDPIPER** was reported from CSI Aug. 22 by JON *et al.* It was studied in company with four Semipalmated Sandpipers and well described: long, thin bill, slightly drooped at tip; fine streaking on sides of breast; rufous on shoulders and crown."

A **LITTLE STINT** was reported on Brier I. Aug. 21-24 by DUM, an Ontario birding-tour leader. We are awaiting the photos that would make it the second confirmed N.S. record. In the meantime, RAF, who also studied this ad. bird gives a model description which, as well, distinguishes it from the Rufous-necked. I include it for the record: "Head all pale orange except for fine dark streaking on crown; orange down sides of neck and breast, blackish, sharp streakings within orange area at side of breast, but no streaking across breast or in white area below orange area; chestnut-red scapulars, lower coverts dark, similar in basic colour to mantle; bill black with fine tip slightly downcurved; black legs quite long; body did not have sleek, elongated appearance; no obvious white 'V' on back."

The **LEAST SANDPIPER** is maintaining its foothold on Sable I. and was nesting there in June in usual numbers; 23 pairs were there in 94. (IAM *et al.*). The migrants made a poor showing. They had practically disappeared from Crescent, eight being the maximum Aug. 21 (JSC). Three arrived at Cherry Hill July 11, peaked to 40 Sept. 10, last were three Oct. 7. JCT did better at Quarry L. Aug. 21 where 150 were roosting.

The **WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** is a late migrant to our shores and this year it was not only late but very scarce indeed. Only two reports were received: Crescent produced birds on only four occasions, maximum being 5 July 31 (JSC); Cherry Hill had small numbers from July 27 on, with 12 on Sept. 10 and four still present Oct. 26. Juv. **BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS** are regular in fall and 13 made a good showing. Four were on Brier I. Aug. 21-24 (DUM *et al.*); two or the same were there Sept. 4-7 (JLC, JSC, DWP, JAP, IAM, GWT); one, somewhat late, was there Oct. 2 (FLL); one at Pt. Michaud, C.B. (CHT, *fide* DBM); one at Grand Desert Aug. 24 (DAM, CRM); three at Seal I. Sept. 2 (MEM); one on Sable I. Sept. 6 (ZOL); one at CSI Sept. 14 (MUN); one at Schooner Pond, C.B. (ALM, CAM); one at Hartlen Pt. Oct. 2 (FLL, EDL).

With one exception, **PECTORALS** were few in the marshes or on the flats: one was at Cherry Hill Aug. 10, nine there Oct. 7, last one on Oct. 11 (JLC, JSC); 25 appeared at CSI Oct. 5 (JON *et al.*); three at Brier Oct. 12 (RBS); one at Starrs Pt. Oct. 21 (EDL). Only one report of **PURPLE SANDPIPERS** was received, three on schedule Oct. 25 on

the usual rocks at Crescent (SJF, BAH). DUNLIN moult on the breeding grounds and are in alternate plumage when they arrive here on the late side. Earliest were two on Sept. 5 at Cherry Hill, 40 there Oct. 11, 23 Oct. 26 (SJF, JSC); one was on Brier Sept. 5-7 (IAM); six at Grand Pré Oct. 17; 15 at Crescent Nov. 1. All is not lost, however, as there were 100+ on the Eastern Shore, Hfx. region Oct. 22 (FLL) and 4000 at CSI Nov. 9, probably the highest count in recent memory (MUN, via Bird Line).

STILT SANDPIPERS turned up along their favourite marshy edges, about nine in all. Earliest were two at Brier July 25 (RBS); one at Blanche Aug. 13 (PEY); one at Chezzetcook Inlet Aug. 24 (DAM, CRM); one at CSI Aug. 28, two Sept. 14 (MUN, WIA); two at Hartlen Pt. Sept. 20 (FLL, EDL); one at Three-Fathom Hbr. Oct. 19 (PEO, *vide* FLL).

It is always a pleasure to see the uncommon BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER daintily foraging high on a sandy beach. None was seen at Cherry Hill, where it is normally regular, but about six showed elsewhere: one at Grand Pré, Sept. 4-6 (BBT, JCT); one at The Cape, CSI, Sept. 13 (JON *et al*); one at Hartlen Pt., Sept. 9 (JWT, MIH); one at the Sydney Airport, Sept. 13 (JUM); and two at Hartlen Pt., Sept. 20 (FLL, EDL).

The only RUFF, actually a reeve, to turn up was at Cherry Hill Aug. 10. It was still in alternate plumage, "with black splotches on sides and breast; white ovals very prominent in flight." (JLC, JSC, LAB).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS arrive in early July, peak in late July and are well gone by end of Sept. Although timing of the migration was normal, numbers were abysmally low, with one exception, that of 400 at CSI on the early side, July 8 (BLM). Two early birds were at S. Bar, Sydney Hbr. June 30 (DBM). Three were at Cherry Hill July 3, 51 July 22, slowly declining to one by Sept. 22; 42 were at Crescent July 31-Aug. 29, seven being the last there Sept. 13 (JSC). Low numbers were also noted at Lockeport, 14-65 counted there July 14-31, where DJC used to see hundreds; three were at Munroes I. July 18 (KJM, CGB); 75 at Wolfville Hbr. and 300 at the Windsor causeway Aug. 2; 12 were roosting at Quarry L. Aug. 21 (JCT). Dowitchers seen after late Sept. all need to be scrutinized, as most will turn out to be LONG-BILLED. FLL, ever alert, saw and heard two imm. at Cole Hbr. Oct. 22.

The COMMON SNIPE was not noticed in summer and only fall reports were received. Four were at Hennigers Marsh, Sheffield Mills Oct. 14 (JCT); one at Cape John Oct. 19 (KJM, RFL); one at Starrs Pt. Oct. 31; one at MacLellan Marsh, Pic. Co., Nov. 1 (KJM, ROR). I've seen few AMERICAN WOODCOCK in N.S. and I envy those who come upon these secretive birds. MSM had two family groups July 7, an ad. and three or four juv. in each, at Cape Chignecto and Yarmouth Mt., near Advocate. RBS saw one Aug. 12 at the top of Pond Cove Lane, Brier I., "sitting on the road at dusk," and GWT saw two at Wallbrook, Kings Co. Oct. 26.

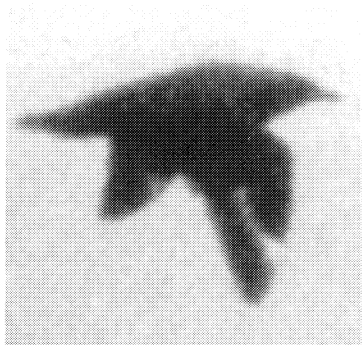
WILSON'S PHALAROPES have become scarce in the last couple of years, despite an increase in the breeding numbers in New Brunswick. The only spring report we have is one first-spring bird (sex indistinguishable) on Mud I. June 2 (TCD, RSD), while autumn sightings include one at Pt. Michaud Aug. 23 (BID, *vide* DBM), and a pelagic sighting of an immature in the Bay of Fundy Aug. 31 (ELM). RED-NECKED and RED PHALAROPES were reported only from the Bay of Fundy, with Red-necked more common by a factor of 20 in Aug., increasing to 100 in Oct. No huge concentrations were described, although several thousands birds were noted on some days in Aug. It seemed a good "jaeger fall". POMARINE JAEGERS were particularly noticeable in Sept., with 9+ adults around the Western Bank during the 16-26 (IAM), and one on Sable Sept. 28 (ZOL). They were also noted on most autumn trips in the Bay of Fundy, with a high count of seven adults on Oct. 3 (FLL *et al.*), and some immatures were identified as this species. PARASITIC JAEGERS were even more numerous, with 20+ individuals on a Fundy trip Oct. 3 (FLL, *et al.*), 10 on the Western Bank 16-26 Sept. (IAM), and five or more birds on Sable between June 17 and Oct. 4 (ZOL). Along the south shore in July and Aug., a few Parasitic Jaegers were noted inshore, harassing the large build-up of migrating terns; singles were seen off Hemeons Head Aug. 23 (JKD, RSD), and near The Hawk (MUN, RBS, *et al.*). The only LONG-TAILED JAEGER was a well-described dark phase at E. Spit, Sable I., Oct. 2 (ZOL). CAH reported SOUTH POLAR SKUA from his whale-watching trips, the first June 29, with several subsequent sightings through the summer; two different birds were seen and photographed on the Aug. 31 trip (BLM, RBS, *et al.*). A skua seen from W. Head, Lockeport, Aug. 24 (ELM, AHM) was thought likely to be a South Polar Skua. IAM, during his 16-25 Sept. cruise of Western Bank, observed at least 12 South Polar Skua, two GREAT SKUA, and several skua unidentified to species.

With American Oystercatchers now breeding in the province, can it be long before LAUGHING GULLS re-establish a breeding presence? There were at least three adults on Sable I. June/July (ZOL), and up to three adults and one sub-adult on Cape Sable I. through the summer (MUN, BLM, var. obs.), with sightings until early Oct. (SJF, DHY). Another late spring individual was on Seal I. May 26-30 (SJF). Another Laughing Gull was in Shag Hbr. Sept. 29 (AAM, *et al.*). A BLACK-HEADED GULL was first noted in Cole Hbr. Aug. 18 (REM), with five there on Aug. 24 (IAM), and they likely represent birds that breed in N. America. One made its way to Cape Sable I. Aug. 28 (MUN). Birds presumably from Iceland start arriving in Oct. Sightings away from traditional sites include an immature at Pond Cove, Brier I., 23-25 Oct. (IAM), and six on Cape Sable I. Oct. 12 (MUN). The only LITTLE GULL was an unseasonable immature on the W. tip of Sable I. June 24-25 (ZOL). Bonaparte's Gulls were present, typically, in good numbers along the Northumberland shore, with a few birds through June, but numbers quickly building up in July, and continuing into autumn. The occurrence of a few birds along the eastern and southern shores was expected, and generally not remarkable, save for 12 at Hunts Pt. Beach, Queens, Sept. 27 (RDS). The BLACK-TAILED GULL on Sable I., first found in May, continued to be seen intermittently through Aug. 2 (ZOL), except for those periods when IAM was on the island; see the photo elsewhere in this issue. Later in

the autumn a Black-tailed Gull reappeared in Rhode I., where one spent the previous winter; this may be the Sable I. individual. An adult MEW GULL was on Brier I. Sept. 4 (JSC, DWP, JAP). The written report from JSC describes: "A small gull — slightly smaller than a Ring-billed, flying with Herring Gulls. Small thin plover-like all yellow bill, large dark eye, rounded head, black-tipped primaries. This bird was an easy Mew — right out of the box. Pristine adult (breeding?) plumage." All previous Mew Gulls identified in Nova Scotia to subspecies have referred to the European "Common" Gull, although from this description it is not possible to ascertain which subspecies is involved. A second-winter Mew "Common" Gull was reported from Yarmouth Hbr. through much of Nov., but no report by any of the various observers has been received (JUG, *et al.*). RING-BILLED GULLS are so routine that few observers comment, but one at Advocate Hbr. Oct. 10 was rare locally (JRM), and 32 at Eel Brook, Yarmouth, Oct. 25 (JKD), seems a high count for the south shore. There is nothing meaningful to say concerning HERRING GULLS, so I'll move on to ICELAND GULLS; a few immatures over-summered on Sable I., a recurrence, according to ZOL. The first autumn report was two birds in Sydney, Oct. 26 (DBM). Western N.S. grabbed three of the four LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL sightings: a *graelisii* adult near Windsor on the "early" date of Aug. 17-23 (IAM, RBS), and so perhaps originating on this side of the Atlantic; a streak-headed winter adult at Ridge Stile Park near Wolfville, Nov. 9, (BLF, *et al.*); and a second year bird in Yarmouth Hbr. Sept 29 (AAM, *et al.*). The other LBBG was an adult in Sydney Oct. 17 (DBM). The Bay of Fundy offered up two SABINE'S GULLS this year. The first (well-described verbally) was an immature seen by CAH and DAM during a whale-watching excursion Sept. 10, while the second was an immature seen off W. Light, Brier I., Oct. 1 (AAM, *et al.*, no report). BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES continue to expand their known colonies, as well as investigate new options (ZOL). Twelve nests were established on a sand cliff on Sable I., thus constituting, however briefly, the southernmost colony in the Western N. Atlantic. Not surprisingly, given the quality of the substrate, the nests collapsed during the summer. In the autumn, large numbers appeared in the Bay of Fundy, and more than 10,000 birds were estimated flying by W. Light on Brier on Oct. 1 (RBS).

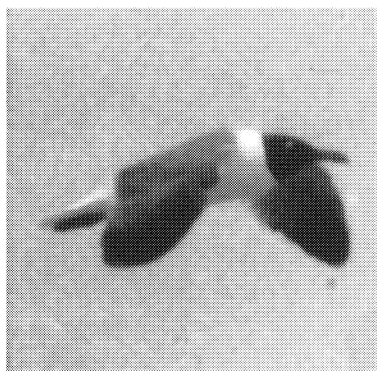
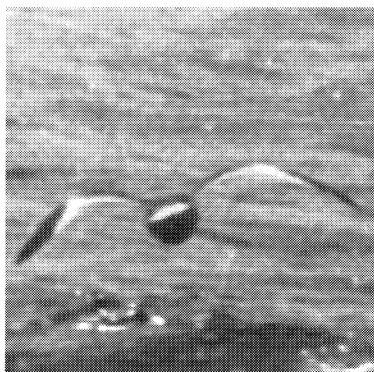
We received three autumn CASPIAN TERN reports, the first an immature at Amherst Pt. 13 Sept. (SJF, BAH), followed by a fly-by at Sable Sept. 18 (ZOL), and the third at The Hawk Oct. 3 (JON, CLS). The ROSEATE TERNS on The Brothers apparently fared well this summer (35+ successful nests), which is more than can be said for the once thriving colony on Sable I., reduced now to just one or two pairs, and likely destined for extirpation locally (IAM). Equally disastrously, the Roseate Tern colony on Country I., Guys. Co., was abandoned this year for unknown reasons, although in consolation a few pair nested on nearby unnamed Eastern Shore islands. If not for the sterling work of TCD and other Pubnico area enthusiasts on The Brothers, Roseate Terns would likely disappear from Nova Scotia. COMMON TERNS, by contrast, particularly along the eastern and southern shores, seem to be on the comeback trail. SJF in Lun. Co., and DJC in Shel., both suggest Aug./Sept. numbers to be above levels in recent years. This increase is partly reflected in the extraordinary build-up of terns along the south shore in late Aug. During that time, from headlands such as Blanche, Baccaro, Hemeons Head, or Western Head, huge flocks of terns could be seen feeding within a few kilometres of

SUMMER SEABIRDS



Although rather distant, this South Polar Skua off Brier Island is in the dark phase that has proved to predominate among birds in our waters. The blackish underwing (left wing) is a characteristic field mark of this species, light or dark phase. Note that there is virtually no evidence of a pale "collar". Few of our dark birds show this. Photo by Blake Maybank.

This photo taken by Carl Haycock, on one of his offshore Whale and Seabird cruises, shows all the diagnostic features of a Sabine's Gull, only the second to be confirmed (by the photo) in the province.



One of up to four Laughing Gulls that summered on Cape Sable Island was snapped by Blake Maybank. When will these charming gulls again nest in the province?

shore (e.g., 3000+ from the tip of Blanche on Aug. (BLM, JOW). Surely many of these turns came from colonies outside the province, as the Black Tern sightings below also suggest. A few Common Terns always seem to lag in migration, and this year there were 15 near Big I. Oct. 19 (KJM), and 12 in Lingan Bay of C.B. Nov. 6 (JAC, WAM). A larger than usual number of the "Portlandia" ARCTIC TERNS, at least 950, were noted on the beaches of Sable I. June 11-20 (IAM), perhaps an indication of improved breeding success among this hard-pressed species. Mixed in with large concentrations of Common and Arctic Terns along the eastern and southern shore in late Aug. and early Sept. were a number of BLACK TERNS. Single birds were noted off Cherry Hill Beach Aug. 10 (JSC, LAB), Blanche Aug. 11 (PEY, BLM, JOW), Matthews L. Aug. 23-27 (DHY, *et al.*), and Martinique Beach in late Aug. (RAF). Sept. Black Terns included two at Bon Portage I. Sept. 2 (JCZ, *et al.*), two at Conrads Beach Sept. 6 (RAF, ANF), and a remarkable 15+ birds off The Hawk on Cape Sable I. Sept. 10, with seven still present the next day (WIA). Some of the Black Terns were discovered by birders seeking to relocate a SOOTY TERN reported by JKD and RSD at Matthews L. Aug. 23 — their full written report follows. Up to 1986 there were but five occurrences of Sooty Tern in the province, and this is the first to be documented since then.

A Sooty Tern at Matthews L., Shel. Co.

Aug. 23, 1997

Raymond D'Entremont and I were walking towards Matthews L. when a few terns flew over our heads. I told Raymond one of the terns was a lot darker than the others, but about the same size. We watched it for a few minutes as it flew away from us. Then we kept walking toward Matthews L. I thought it was a Black Tern, but Raymond said a Black Tern was much smaller. When we arrived at Matthews L. we looked where all the terns were, about 100, and we spotted it. We watched it from a fair distance with field glasses and a telescope, for 5 to 10 minutes.

The tern was dark (greyish) above the head, wings, and tail, and light whitish under the head, breast, wings and tail. It appeared a little light on the forehead. What amazed us was the acrobatics it did. It would fly like any other tern and then turn sideways and go straight down, and turn while going down. It did this a few times, going up and down. We were hoping it would land so we could see it at rest, but it would just go to the surface of the water and then go up again. It kept doing that over and over again. It seemed like it was feeding but it was not diving like the other terns. While feeding it would not fly very high in the air, only five to six feet, and then dip down to the surface. The tern never landed, so we had a moving target at all times.

The tide was coming up and all the terns flew away including this tern. We watched it for the last time as it flew away with all the other terns. You could clearly pick it out among all the terns.

When we got home we started looking in different books to identify our tern. One book said that the only tern with black on top and white on the bottom in this area was a Sooty Tern. Another book said that the Sooty Tern would not dive in the water when feeding, but catch surface fish in flight. I believe that the tern Raymond and I saw was a Sooty Tern.

Jerome K. D'Eon

Compiler's note: winter-plumaged and some immature Black Terns are essentially pale below and dark above, although the pattern on the underwings is different than that for Sooty Tern. Unfortunately, the observers did not note the underwing pattern of the bird. The observers are correct in noting that Sooty Terns do not dive to feed, but neither do Black Terns and the feeding behaviour as described would also apply to that species. The size of the bird they describe, however, similar to that of the adjacent Common Terns, is more suggestive of Sooty Tern, which averages slightly larger than Common Tern, than Black Terns, which are noticeably smaller than Common Terns.

There was a brief sighting of a BLACK SKIMMER off the Cape Sable I. causeway July 6 (WLC, *fide* MUN). Subsequent searches were fruitless. Although no report was supplied, the skimming feeding behaviour is reasonably unequivocal.

GCG, British birders, were surprised to see a DOVEKIE on a Aug. 20 whale-cruise out of Brier — summer sightings of this winter visitor are not unprecedented, but are extremely rare. On a July 25 whale-watching trip out of Brier I., RBS and CAH observed an adult COMMON MURRE with a grown chick, followed by an adult RAZORBILL with a chick. These birds almost certainly came from the small colony on Murre Ledge, off Grand Manan I., N.B. Two Common Murre just off the Glace Bay Sanctuary Sept. 4, mixed in with frantically feeding Greater Shearwaters, were out of place and season (JUM). Razorbills were seen in very small numbers on many whale-watching trips in summer and autumn. ATLANTIC PUFFINS were more numerous on such trips, and were seen daily (*var. obs.*), with a high count of 100+ on Aug. 22 (CAH), followed by 50 reported Aug. 31 (BLM, *et al.*) + Oct. 3, (FLL, AAM, *et al.*). Ten puffins were seen around Noddy I., Yar. Co., June 2 (TCD, RSD, JKD), suggestive of local breeding. A census of the Society's Indian I. in Green Bay turned up about 100 Black Guillemots, and careful searching resulted in the discovery of three nests, with two eggs in each (GKG, PEB).

DOVES TO KINGFISHER

Compiled by Ian McLaren

ROCK DOVES are always with us, but two wanderers on Seal I. Oct. 13 (JUM) were a little far afield. We have come to expect **WHITE-WINGED DOVES** almost annually. This year's (the 14th recorded here) appeared Oct. 15 in W. Pubnico at the feeder of Reginald and Marie D'Eon and stayed to be seen by many until at least Oct. 23. It

appeared to be of the SW U.S. race. It also frequented the nearby feeder of their daughter, Lisette D'Entremont. Amazingly, she had a White-winged Dove stay at her feeder at another house in W. Pubnico in early July 1990. A report concerning **EUR. TURTLE-DOVE** (from JAB, via Bird Line; photos may follow) bears documenting. Apparently two of this species, along with a Eur. Nightjar, numerous (Eur.) Barn Swallows and House Martins, two Eur. Kestrels and two Eur. Hobbies, were blown aboard a research vessel several hundred km off Portugal. The nightjar, swallows and martins either succumbed or were eaten, and the falcons left. The doves (one now missing its tail) remained and were unrestrained, but fed by the crew, as the ship sailed for Halifax, where they disembarked. According to the arcane rules of bird listing, they might have been countable; but fortunately, no local birders saw them, so no moral debates ensued. **MOURNING DOVES**, which can be seen in hundreds per day during wide-ranging car trips, now seldom get reported, but events are always of interest. For example, JSC put out some millet at Green Bay on the night of Oct. 17 and was greeted next day by 27 feasting doves. Were they migrating then? Certainly they begin earlier as one appeared on Sable I. July 15 (ZOL).

A singing **BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** near Willard Fraser Dam, Pic. Co., July 19 (KJM), led to the July 24 discovery of its nest by STV. On Aug. 13, it contained a nestling and an egg, but a few days later the nestling was found dead and the egg unhatched. The "adult may have been taken by a Merlin or just abandoned the nest" (KJM). A migrant was on CSI Oct. 12 (MUN), and a late imm. ("golden eyering") was at Green Bay 7 Nov. (JSC). As usual, there were reverse-migrant **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS**, with four individuals Oct. 1-5 (including a window-kill in Lockeport, Oct. 4, DJC).

A total of six or more scattered **GREAT HORNED OWLS** were reported by three observers; not enough to assess status. **SNOWY OWLS** always get more attention. An ad. lingered May 31 on Isle Haute (EDM, JRM *et al.*), which is not too unusual in view of past summering. An early migrant appeared Sept. 30 at Louisbourg (AND), and two more were on Cape Sable proper from Nov. 2 (MUN *et al.*). It's too soon to predict their winter status. A report by BLF on his nest-box **BARRED OWLS** in the Wolfville area was disheartening. "Seven pairs laid 18 eggs . . . racoons got three nests. Although the remaining females incubated well past the required time, most of their eggs failed to hatch. Only two young fledged, the lowest fledging success in the 20 years of my Barred Owl nest box project." Four were heard hooting during an Oct. 19 outing of the Pic. Co. Naturalists' Club (RFL), and there were four other reports of ones and twos. As usual, at least one pair of **LONG-EARED OWLS** preyed on storm-petrels on Bon Portage I. (var. obs.). A calling pair at McGill L., Yar. Co. (DHY), supplied a new breeding-season locality (cf. atlas). A migrant was hooting on Brier I. Oct. 12 (RBS *et al.*). As usual, **SHORT-EARED OWLS** were more widely reported. Summer records came from Hemeons Head, Shel. Co., July 23 (DHY *et al.*), and CSI, Aug. 21 (BLM *et al.*). There were single migrants on CSI (MUN) and Brier I. (AAM) Oct. 16-17, two on an islet off CSI Nov. 2 (MUN *et al.*), and a bird at Hartlen Pt. Nov. 15-16 (FLL). A wing of a **BOREAL OWL** found on Sable I. during June (IAM), presumably dated from fall or winter. An early fledging **SAW-WHET OWL** was found June 1 at Little Hbr., Shel. Co.

(DHY). The only other reports were of one heard in Apple R. Sept. 29 (KFS), and a road-kill near Little Hbr., Shel. Co., in late Nov. (*vide* DHY).

Migrating COM. NIGHTHAWKS seemed a poor show, I hope due to under-reporting. The earliest gathering was of four at Kemptville, Yar. Co., July 12 (JKD), and there were six at Liverpool July 22 (RBS). The biggest reported flock was of 15+ over Apple R. Aug. 25 (KFS). The latest was six over the Mushamush R. Sept. 1 (PLC). Other reports were of scattered ones or twos. A singing WHIP-POOR-WILL was at its traditional territory at Long Pond, Herring Cove, June 12 and 27 (AAM, PLC). One was at a new site, Port Wade, Anna. Co., July 15 (JKD). We had no reports on the Tufts Centre CHIMNEY SWIFTS of Wolfville, but minima of 200 and 150 entered the Temperance St. chimney in New Glasgow June 16 and July 16 respectively (KJM). The traditional stump-nest at Black R. L. had four young 26 July (BLF). Again this year, a few twittered around a chimney of Kings College, Halifax (PLC), but their achievements were uncertain. The latest reported were two over Brier I. Sept. 2 (JSC *et al.*). A nest of RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS June 27 at W. Pubnico contained one young and one egg (JKD, RSD). Last garden visitors were at Wolfville Sept. 11 (JCT) and at Apple R. Sept. 14 (KFS), but a fem. believed to be this species was sampling flowers on Brier I. Oct. 2 (IAM). A paucity of reports of BELTED KINGFISHER is compensated by JSC's assessments: Aug. 20-28, "after very few all summer ... they have been all over the place". She also estimated that a healthy 25+ moved through Brier I. Sept. 3-5.

WOODPECKERS

Compiled by Ian McLaren

Reverse-migrant RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS have become routine in fall. This year, individuals appeared beginning Oct. 24 at Kingston, Kings Co. (PBG), Nov. 3 in Economy (FLS), and Nov. 20 in Liverpool. Some or all may stay. An early RED-HEADED WOODPECKER was spotted Aug. 24 as it flew by their vehicle by AHM and ELM near Little Hbr., Shel. Co., and a more seasonal young bird was found Oct. 9 on Brier I. by DAM and CRM. The only reports of breeding season YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER were of one near Debert June 15 (JCZ) and another in Keji. N.P. June 18 (RDS). The latest among five reports of 12 migrants was a bird on Brier I. Oct. 24 (IAM). Reports of two summering pairs of DOWNY WOODPECKERS and a feeder bird in Nov. were clearly unrepresentative, as were a mere two reports of a few HAIRY WOODPECKERS. BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS got more attention, with individuals spotted near Mill Village Aug. 22 (SJF), on Wolfville Ridge 9 and Sept. 25 (JCT), Ketch Hbr. Oct. 12 (AZV *et al.*), and Sunken L., Kings Co., Oct. 29 (MEG). A pair of N. FLICKERS chose the rather boreal habitat of Taylor Head P.P., where their noisy nestlings were noted by PLC July 5. We received NO reports of migrant concentrations, except for "many" on Brier I. Oct. 1-3 (var. obs.); four reached Sable I. Sept. 18 - Oct. 5 (ZOL). Reports of nine PILEATED WOODPECKERS from four observers also don't reflect their real abundance nowadays.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS were present as expected (with their “Quick, three beers”) in the more remote woods around the Butler Road and New Ross areas during the breeding season (RBS). No doubt they were present elsewhere in suitable habitat, which seems to be falling to the logging saws in ever increasing amounts these days. One was in a rather unusual position on the top of a power pole in Coldbrook on Aug. 23 (JWW). There were no reports of fall migrants. EASTERN WOOD-PEWEES often sing later (both in the day and in the year) than many other songbirds, but Sept. 15 is late even for this species (one singing Wolfville Ridge, JCT). An adult was feeding three open-mouthed young on Cottage Lane, Brier I. on the equally late date for this activity of Sept. 4 (JSC *et al.*).

As often happens, Empidonax flycatchers with yellow bellies are rather widely reported during fall migration. We should remember that most species in this genus show yellowish bellies when freshly moulted, and the YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER is the only one in which the throat is as yellow as the belly, somewhat belying its name. A definite example of this species, however, was a nest with three newly hatched young on a ledge of a slate wall above a brook near Brooklyn (BLF). He mentions that this site has been used for years. A few ALDER FLYCATCHERS lingered in their usual habitat into the fall as expected, for example eight on Brier I. Sept. 5 (IAM). A very small population of WILLOW FLYCATCHERS has been established in Nova Scotia for several years now, and JSC and JLC had one singing near Petite Rivière on July 7, in the same spot that they had one in June 1995 — no mention of a second bird, or nesting, however. IAM noted a “small peak” of 10 LEAST FLYCATCHERS on Brier I. Sept. 5, and ZOL had two on Sable I. the following day, the last noted.

Two broods of the EASTERN PHOEBE hatched from a nest under the footbridge at White Rock, a traditional site, this year (BLF). The first was in late June and the second was in mid-Aug., with four young. Small numbers of fall migrants were noted on Brier I. Sept. 3 (JSC *et al.*), Sept. 28 (SJF, BAH), and Oct. 3 (AAM, IAM). A SAY'S PHOEBE (see photo), now an almost expected annual occurrence, was seen by several observers on Brier I. in early Sept. Just five migrant GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHERS were observed this fall — all singles, on Sable I. (ZOL), Schooner Pond (CAM), Seal I. (RBA) and at Lr. W. Pubnico (JKD). I get the impression that the Nova Scotia population, never very numerous, has declined further recently, but would be happy to be proven wrong. A SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER was at Schooner Pond, C.B. Co., found and reported to the Bird Line (JUM, GEM) on Oct. 4, and another one (!) was in R. Bourgeois, Richmond Co., an immature, on Nov. 16 (GED) — both far from their Texan home and two of about a dozen provincial records to date.

A few WESTERN KINGBIRDS always seem to show up every fall (often after a period of westerly winds) and this year there were three reports. Two were from the SW tip of the province — one from Freeport on Oct. 3 (AAM, IAM *et al.*), and one the following day from Middle W. Pubnico (JKD, RSD). A later one came in from the S end of Halifax on 8 Nov. (JJM). EASTERN KINGBIRDS, however, often appear relatively early in fall

in small loose flocks — e.g. nine at Lr. W. Pubnico and five at nearby Woods Hbr. Aug. 22 (JKD) and 15 on Brier I. Sept. 4 (JSC *et al.*). The latest were two on CSI Sept. 27 (var. obs.). There were reports of a **TROPICAL** or **COUCH'S KINGBIRD** from The Hawk, CSI, for one day only, Oct. 16 (JON *et al.*). Unfortunately these two are almost impossible to distinguish except vocally. Although recordings for confirmation could not be obtained, the bird was heard giving typical Couch's vocalisations late in the day by LIP and Edna and Terry Crowell. WIA also took photographs, and we may be able to say more about this find in a later issue.

The first report of **HORNED LARK** this Fall was of about 200 at Big I., Pictou Co. on Oct. 19 (KJM), and rather surprisingly there was only one other, of just six birds on 6 Nov. at Apple R. (KFS). Perhaps the early snowfall in Dec. will bring more flocks out into accessible areas in time for the next report.

Just one **PURPLE MARTIN**, a female, was reported, from Sable I. 13-14 June. Did anyone check the Oxford colony this summer? Some of the more noteworthy **TREE SWALLOW** sightings were: two adults with five eggs at JCT's residence in Wolfville in June (with both adults banded); five active nest boxes at Apple R. (JCT); one with a dyed yellow patch at the upper side at the elbow of each wing, at the Hants Co. end of Black R. L. (BLF) on July 20; and one that landed on a ship on Western Bank on Sept. 18 (IAM). There were no reports of any large **BANK SWALLOW** colonies, but JSC *et al.* made note of 50+ at Annapolis Royal on 4 Aug. and a 40+ colony of **CLIFF SWALLOW** in the same area the same day. As always, DHH has given us a detailed account of the colony of the latter species on the Air Canada hangar at Halifax International Airport. The first few birds arrived May 15, and about 60 pairs nested, with another 10-15 pairs nesting on a nearby equipment shed. All had departed by the end of July, and this year there were thankfully no efforts to prevent them nesting. Finally, JSC *et al.* saw 50+ on Brier I. Sept. 4, presumably on their way south. I also get the impression that **BARN SWALLOWS** are either down in numbers or under-reported, given for the last few years (including 1997) just a few reports of a few individuals. The latest was at Daniel Head, CSI, Nov. 5 (Bird Line). A single **NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** was reported to the Bird Line from Conrads Beach 8 July, by DUM, a bird tour leader (no details).

CORVIDS TO WHEATEARS

Compiled by Richard Stern

As expected some **GRAY JAYS** were present throughout the season. Several people mention the presence of adults and juveniles together - very noticeable, as the juveniles are much darker with less white, and almost look like different species. PLC noticed a family feeding on red elderberries near Margaretsville, and another group at Taylor Head P. P. hanging around picnic tables hoping for handouts. **BLUE JAYS** as usual started appearing out of the woods as soon as the air felt like fall, and started appearing at those feeders that had been filled early enough in the season. JAC felt that they were "more plentiful than fall/winter 1996-7", but the only large flock that was specifically mentioned was of 100+ near Port Williams Oct. 1 (GWT).

Flocking AMERICAN CROWS numbered 120+ on Brier I. Oct. 23 (IAM) and 70+ around E. Pubnico three days later (JKD). It would be interesting to speculate if they were attracted to a specific food source (e.g. grain, or a fish plant) or whether this is some form of local migration phenomenon. The well-known Kentville flock has started to build up again at the time of writing, and several thousand can again be seen streaming into town at dusk. COMMON RAVENS are less numerous, but still ubiquitous and prominent, although more so in late winter when they start to display. BLF found a nest in Melanson, which fledged four young in late May in the roof of a damaged barn, even though there were plenty of trees nearby. JSC found a high of 20 along her BBS route in Shel. Co. in June, and JWW found two separate pairs at Grand Pré in Oct., in which one member of the pair was preening the other!

To my mind every time I go for a stroll, or go birding, and there are any trees, shrubs or bushes anywhere in the province, there are always at least some BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES around. JSC felt that numbers were 50% down on last year on her BBS in Shel. Co., but JAC found "hundreds" at Pt. Edward in the fall. JCT had a nest with 6 eggs on her property in Wolfville. I think it will take careful analysis of Christmas Counts and BBSs over several years to ascertain whether our population is truly stable. As usual, there are scattered reports of BOREAL CHICKADEE, and RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH throughout the fall. The latter seemed particularly abundant in woods in Kings Co. in early Sept. and IAM mentions a "small movement" of 25 on Brier I. Oct. 2. A few WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were also found, e.g. Wolfville (JCT), Westmount (JAC) and Kentville (RBS). Although they tend to stay out of the woods and are more suburban and less common than the previous species in Nova Scotia, the reverse is the case farther south than the main boreal forest habitat in N. America.

Two WINTER WRENS were seen in Oct. 1, one in Apple R. (MSM) and one on Seal I. (SJF), while two more were noted Oct. 2 on Brier I. (var. obs.). A HOUSE WREN was on Brier I. Oct. 2 (FLL), another, not surprisingly, on Seal I. in early Oct. (AAM), and a third occurred in the usually very productive pond and shrubbery behind Harold Forsyth's house in Greenwich in Nov. EDL *et al.* found a **SEDGE WREN** in six-inch high raspberry canes by the W Light on Brier I. on Oct. 1. It skulked so it was hard to see even though three observers surrounded the small patch and watched closely. But it did eventually show itself long enough to note the brownish-grey buff undersides, streaking all down the back, faint buff eyebrow and diagnostic call note (FLL), which separated it from the more common vagrant Marsh Wren. A **CAROLINA WREN**, now becoming at least an annual visitor (probably due to its known range expansion northwards), was reported at Schooner Pond by the Metcalfes the same day as they saw the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Great day's birding! A second bird was seen in Ketch Hbr. by DAC and AZV in late Oct. and stayed around till at least Nov. 11.

Few GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS were reported apart from two big movements on Brier I. on Oct. 2 and 24 (AAM, IAM). The Oct. 24 flock also contained a number of RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS and, as expected, migration of this species was noted throughout Oct. around the province by several observers. BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS were present on Brier I. Sept. 1 (BLF), and at Schooner Pond a few

days later (CAM) and again in early Oct.

Single NORTHERN WHEATEARS were present on Sable I. June 15 (IAM *et al.*; a singing male!) and Sept. 28 (ZOL; an individual with very pale under parts, pale buff-grey upper parts and a pale buff ear-patch. Western race?), at W. Pubnico in Sept. (JON *et al.*), and at Cherry Hill Beach Oct. 26 (JLC, JSC). Another was on Bon Portage on the same day, and photographed (Rina Nichols). Considering they breed in northern Canada and along the Labrador coast and migrate east to W. Europe for the winter, it is not surprising that we have been seeing more of them in Nova Scotia.

BLUEBIRDS TO STARLINGS

Compiled by Richard Stern

There were several reports of EASTERN BLUEBIRDS this Fall - one at Black R. L. Sept. 18-19, a bright male but with a grey patch on the sides of the face, and still singing at that date (JCT, BLF), and a group of four at Fraserville, Cum. Co. Oct. 12 (MSM). Six were on Brier I. (FLL) and seven were at Chebogue Pt. (JOS) on Oct. 19. These sightings are typical of this species, which seems to migrate, or over-winter here, in small flocks or family groups.

There were no VEERY reports after July 15, when PLC had a few singing at dawn near Margaretsville. A GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH was found dead on Sable I. June 12, and could be carefully examined and measured. The wing chord of 97 mm. indicated a *Catharus m. minimus*, which nests in Newfoundland. Another live bird in the same spot nine days later appeared to be of the same race (IAM). The latter observer also saw a Gray-cheeked on Brier I. Oct. 2. A contingent of birders from the NSBS went up to the CBHNP on June 22 to search for BICKNELL'S THRUSH, and found several, identifiable by song and call, along the Bog and Benjies L. trails north of Cheticamp. A migrant SWAINSON'S THRUSH was on Sable I. Sept. 28 (ZOL). HERMIT THRUSH is the longest staying local member of the *Catharus* genus, and small migratory movements were noted in Greenwich and Kentville in Oct. (RBS) and one on Cape Chignecto Oct. 26 (MSM). JSC felt that they were singing much later in the season this year than previously, possibly because the cold wet spring got them off to a late start. PLC found a juv. being fed by a parent in a low softwood thicket near Bedford in July. There was a single **WOOD THRUSH** on Sable I. June 21 (IAM) as part of a small wave of late migrants.

An AMERICAN ROBIN that apparently lacked any brown pigmentation was seen by CWH in Pic. Co., near Caribou R., twice in mid-June. The head and back were pale yellow but the breast was a normal red. The only large movements noted were 200+ at Lr. W. Pubnico Oct. 12 (JKD) and two-three dozen in Petersfield P.P. in C. B. Nov. 5-7 (JAC). The usual large flocks in the orchards and blueberry fields of the Valley did not seem evident to me, so I wonder if many birds slipped quietly away during the fine fall

nights.

Quite a few GRAY CATBIRDS were seen around the Province, the latest reported on Oct. 5 on Sable I. (ZOL). NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS are showy, noisy and noticeable, and therefore I suspect the number reported is a much higher proportion of the true numbers in the Province than, say, Black-capped Chickadees or Red-breasted Nuthatches. This summer/fall at least a pair and possibly more hung around Port Williams and Starrs Pt. (EDL, JCT) and an adult and a juvenile were together at the site of last year's nest at Grand Pré (JWW). Another family had been present earlier at DeWolfe Park, Bedford in early July (PLC). Probable migrants were present at Blanche (JON, SAN), Argyll (IAM) and Sable I. (ZOL) in late Sept. BROWN THRASHERS were present as expected in smaller numbers — one was on Sable I. May 15-30, and another was there Oct. 4 (ZOL). Brier I. hosted one on Sept. 28-30 (IAM *et al.*), and Schooner Pond on Oct. 5 (CAM). Finally, one was found on Brier I. Oct. 31 (BLM, MUN).

There were lots of reports of AMERICAN PIPIT, with flocks building up in the Cape Sable and Charlesville area to 150 by Oct. 5 (JON *et al.*), 50 on farm fields in Port Williams Oct. 1 (GWT), 25-50 at Grand Pré in early Oct. (BLF, JCT, JWW), large flocks at Matthews L. (DJC) and up to 40 on Brier I. in late Oct. (IAM).

It looks all set to be another good winter for BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS, with 350 seen by KJM and STV in Merrigomish Nov. 8, and at the time of writing (early Dec.), large flocks roaming around Kentville (RBS). ZOL noted one that didn't leave Sable I. until April 29, and I wonder if it won't be all that long before this species becomes a year round resident. CEDAR WAXWINGS continue to be common and well-reported in small flocks all over the province, mainly in late summer and fall, but flock sizes are more typically 10-30, unlike their slightly larger and more colourful cousins (reported by PLC, JCT, ZOL, IAM, AAM, KFS).

There were two Bird Line reports of NORTHERN SHRIKE, both at the end of Oct. - beginning of Nov. What probably qualifies as "The" Bird of 1997, and one of Nova Scotia's best sightings ever, turned up just around deadline time. A **BROWN SHRIKE** was first seen by Roger Foxall Nov. 23 near the container terminal at Fairview, and subsequently "twitched" by visitors from as far away as Pennsylvania, and featured on the ATV Evening News. Detailed descriptions and photos have so far been widely circulated on the Internet, and will be forthcoming in the next issue and elsewhere. (See also central photo pages). The bird breeds in eastern Asia north to Siberia, winters in central and SE Asia, and while there are four records for Alaska and two for California, this is a Canadian first. Hopefully it wasn't just a stowaway on a nearby ship!

The generally scorned EUROPEAN STARLING continues to thrive, with thousands at Pt. Edward (JAC) and in the Valley (Port Williams, N. Canning, etc.) (RBS).

A **WHITE-EYED VIREO** on Brier I. Oct. 2 was reported by AAM *et al.*, who noted the yellow spectacles and white eye. Another was at Schooner Pond, C.B.Co., Oct. 5 (CAM, ALM). Spring and summer **SOLITARY VIREOS** were "most plentiful" in south-western Lun. Co. (JSC), while 12 were counted on the Londonderry BBS on Jun. 15 (BLM). Our few reports of migrants were of "mini-waves" passing through Wolfville Ridge, Kings Co., Sept. 13-21 (JCT), one on Brier I. Oct. 25 (IAM) and a late bird at Barrington, Shel. Co., on Nov. 11 (Bird Line). It should be noted that the AOU has split the Solitary Vireo into three species: the **BLUE-HEADED VIREO**, and the western **CASSIN'S** and **PLUMBEOUS VIREOS**, and has also re-organised its checklist, so some rearrangements can be expected in future issues. There were two reports of **YELLOW-THROATED VIREOS**, one at First L., Hfx. Co., Sept. 28 (PLB), and one at Schooner Pond, C.B. Co., Oct. 4 (JUM, GEM). An undescribed **WARBLING VIREO** was found at Starrs Pt., Kings Co., June 14-15 (JCT), and one was identified by voice on Aug. 22 and 28 at Green Bay (JSC, JLC). One on Brier I. Sept. 4 (IAM) was identified by its "blank" lores, etc., while one on Sable I. Sept. 14 (ZOL) was well described: "no wing bars, greyish upperparts, whitish underparts with slight wash [of] lemon-yellow on flanks, white eyebrow and whitish undereye, dusky eyeline; larger and chunkier than Wilson's Warbler". An imm. Warbling Vireo at Hartlen Pt. on Sept. 14, and another imm. on the Blanche Peninsula, Shel. Co., on Sept. 28, were reported by BLM. Bird Line transcripts contained news of a summer **PHILADELPHIA VIREO** at Shubenacadie Park, Hfx. Co., on June 8. At least two were on Bon Portage I. Aug. 30 - Sept. 3 (KJM, NSBS), while two were found on Brier I. Sept. 4 (IAM, JLC, JSC, DWP, JAP). Oct. singles were observed on Brier I. Oct. 1-2 (var. obs.), and at Schooner Pond Oct. 4 (JUM, GEM). JSC felt that **RED-EYED VIREO** breeding numbers were unusually low in SW Lun. Co., though PLC regularly heard the Red-eye's song in central Halifax, and discovered a nest there for the second consecutive year. There was a migratory movement through Wolfville Ridge Sept. 13-21 (JCT). One remained on Sable I. to at least Sept. 25 (ZOL). There were two at Apple R., Cumb. Co., Sept. 27 (MSM) and one in Barrington Oct. 10 (JKD). Two sightings capped our Red-eye records: one at Louisbourg, C.B. Co., on Nov. 9 (HOS) and one at Duncans Cove, Hfx. Co., Nov. 11 (DAC, AZV).

A **BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** at Sand L., C.B. Co., Sept. 3 (CMU), and another at Duncans Cove on Oct. 5 (DAC, AZV) were both reported to the Bird Line. A **GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** at Gaspereau from May 31 to Jun. 12 (var. obs.) was seen on Jun. 1 by RBS, who remarked "well seen and all field marks including song . . . golden crown and wing patches, black chin, etc.". Twelve **TENNESSEE WARBLERS** were counted on the Londonderry BBS Jun. 15, and nine were observed along the Herbert R. trail, Hants Co., Jun. 21 (both BLM), but Tennessees were otherwise unreported. About 14 **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS** were reported (most through Bird Line): one on Aug. 17 on Cape Sable I. (JON, *et al.*), four in Sept. (one each from Long I. Co., Kentville, Schooner Pond, and Cape Sable I.) (Ted Brown, AMC, JUM, MUN), four in Oct. (three on Brier I. and one at Green Bay) (FLL, IAM, JSC) and five in Nov. (one from Nov. 11 through the Nov. 15 deadline at Portuguese Cove, Hfx. Co.) (DAC, AZV), and four through the deadline period at Sullivans Pond, Dartmouth (var. obs.). Three

NASHVILLE WARBLERS were reported along the Herbert R. trail, Hants Co. Jun. 21 (BLM). No reports of Nashvilles on the move came until Sept. 5, with four at Hartlen Pt. (BLM). There was one at Apple R. Sept. 28 (MSM), while "several" were on Brier I. Oct. 2 (var. obs.) and one on Sable I. Oct. 5 (ZOL). These figures paled in comparison to the unheard of number of 300+ Nashvilles migrating through Brier I. Oct. 11-13 (NSBS field trip).

Good NORTHERN PARULA numbers were reported during the breeding season from Londonderry and Windsor (BLM). "Several" fall Parulas were found on Brier I. Oct. 2 (var. obs.), while on Nov. 11 singletons were at Antigonish Landing (CGB *et al.*) and Duncans Cove (DAC, AZV).

Nine YELLOW WARBLERS counted on Sable I. between Aug. 1 and Sept. 15 (ZOL), and two imm. on Brier I. Oct. 12 (FLL) were all the Yellows reported, after a bumper spring migration. Ten CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS were on territory along the Herbert R. trail June 21 (BLM), while a late spring migrating male was on Sable I. Jun. 25 (ZOL). The only fall migrant reported was one at Hartlen Pt. Sept. 5 (BLM). JSC felt that MAGNOLIA WARBLERS were down in number, particularly on the Shelburne BBS June 17, where she counted 12 instead of the usual 18-25. There were 14 on the Londonderry BBS June 15 (BLM). Otherwise, only four near Antigonish Sept. 20 (BLM) and "several" on Brier I. Oct. 2 (var. obs.) were noted. The CAPE MAY WARBLER was mentioned during May at Port Joli (RDS), and two were found on the Londonderry BBS June 15 (BLM). No fall migrants were reported. The BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER was also noted in May at Port Joli (RDS), and a pair was observed during June near Bedford (PLC). Solitary male migrants appeared on Sable I. Sept. 28 (ZOL) and on Brier I. Oct. 25-28 (IAM).

Other than a quick early fallout in May, the YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER had diminished numbers in Lun. Co., and on the Shelburne BBS, where only seven were heard in contrast to a 21-year average of 22. JSC was quick to reassure me that she has her hearing tested every year! However, whether such apparent crashes represent real trends, or are merely the result of natural spatial or temporal variation, it is difficult to say. Some decent numbers *were* noted during the fall migration, with 30 at Hartlen Pt. Sept. 5 (BLM), a wave of 300++ at Green Bay Oct. 1 (JSC), 60+ at Lr. W. Pubnico Oct. 13 (JKD), 300+ on Seal I. Oct. 12-13 (BLM *et al.*) and 3000+ on Brier I. Oct. 11-13 (FLL, NSBS field trip).

The BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER was alive and well on the Londonderry BBS June 15, where 12 were counted. "Mini-waves" passed through Wolfville Ridge during the last half of Sept. (JCT), while "many" moved through Brier I. on Oct. 2 (AAM, IAM). Late spring and summer reports of the BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, amounting to 10 individuals, came in from Kemptville, Yar. Co., Londonderry and Laurie Park (JKD, BLM). Just two migrants, one on Sable I. Sept. 14 (ZOL) and one at Caribou I., Pict. Co., Sept. 19 (BLM), were listed.

Three or four **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLERS** stopped off at Sable I., one at a

time, between Aug. 28 and Oct. 4 (ZOL), one yellow-lored, the others white-lored. There was also one on Seal I. Aug. 31 (MEM), and an ad. at Hartlen Pt. Sept. 19 (DAM, CRM), the latter "seen well three times (yellow bib, white below, stripes on side, black eye patch)". A **PINE WARBLER** was at The Hawk Aug. 28 (MUN), while an ad. male and an imm. male were at Hartlen Pt. Sept. 5 (BLM *et al.*). The final early fall report was of one at Three Fathom Hbr. Sept. 7 (PLC *et al.*). There was then quite a gap in Pine Warbler reports until late Nov., when more arrived. These included: at least two in Birch Cove Park, Dartmouth, Nov. 23-30 (var. obs., Bird Line); an immature female in the Fairview Cemetery Nov. 24-30 (DAC, *et al.*); one in the town of Antigonish Nov. 30 (RFL); and one in Bedford Nov. 30 (DAC, AZV). The total of nine Pine Warblers was just under average for the past few years, but considerably off the blistering pace set in the late 1980's and early 1990's (average of 14 per year, 1988-92). **PRAIRIE WARBLER** numbers (at least 17) remain high. Aug. Prairies were reported from Sable I., Schooner Pond, Seal, Cape Sable and Brier I. Sept. reports came in from Sable and Brier, Schooner Pond and Blanche Peninsula. Oct. birds were found on Brier I., Broad Cove, Duncans Cove, Hartlen Pt., Cape Sable and Seal I. (ZOL, SJF, AAM, IAM, BLM *et al.*), as well as at Browns Pt., Pic. Co., where the latest, an imm., was found Oct. 28 (STV). Only a handful of Prairies have been recorded in the province later than Oct.

The **PALM WARBLER** was on the move in late Sept., with six on Wolfville Ridge Sept. 24 (GWT), and 10 at Apple R. (MSM) and 20 at Trafalgar, Guys. Co. (KJM, STV), Sept. 28. A flight of 135+ came through Sable I. Sept. 29 (ZOL). Brier I. was the Oct. hot spot for Palms, with "many" on Oct. 2 (var. obs.), and **1000+** Oct. 11-13 (FLL, NSBS field trip), but by Oct. 25, they had tapered off to nine, five "western" and four "eastern" (IAM). More than 300 funnelled through Seal I. Oct. 12-13 (BLM *et al.*). Nov. reports included: one at Sullivans Pond on Nov. 9 (Bird Line); one at Duncans Cove on Nov. 16 (DAC, AZV); a "western" at the end of Evans Avenue, Nov. 25-27 (var. obs.); and one along Vimy Avenue, Nov. 30 (DAC, AZV). June **BAY-BREASTED WARBLERS** were noted on Sable I. (a late migrant June 14; ZOL), and by BLM on the Londonderry BBS (two) and the Herbert R. trail (two). Only one fall migrant, near Pictou on Sept. 19, was observed (BLM). Two late **BLACKPOLL WARBLER** spring migrants were observed in Central Halifax to Jun. 6 (PLC), and on Sable I., a female, June 19-20 (IAM). PLC found Blackpolls "abundant" at Taylor Head P.P., Hfx. Co., July 5, where a downy young was begging for food. During migration, BLM counted 10 at Hartlen Pt. Sept. 14, and three near Antigonish Sept. 20. Several" were on Brier I. Oct. 2, but numbers increased there to **400+** Oct. 11-13 (FLL, NSBS field trip). Two **CERULEAN WARBLERS** were reported to the Bird Line: a female at Three Fathom Hbr. Sept. 19, and a male on Cape Sable I. Oct. 1. DAM and CRM supplied notes for the first sighting: "Seen from 15 ft. with binoculars. Uniform unmarked light grey face, bib, belly and undertail coverts almost like Gray Catbird but lighter. Strange green patch on top of head separated from eye by broad band of grey. Patch ran into greenish back. Light wing bars."

The **BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** was mentioned for the breeding season only at Londonderry and the Herbert R. trail, and few were observed during migration. Two near Pictou Sept. 19 (BLM), one at Apple R. Sept. 27 (MSM) and "several" on Brier I. Oct. 2 were the lot. A late migrating young male **AMERICAN REDSTART** moved through

Sable I. Jun. 10-12 (IAM), while good June breeding numbers were observed at Londonderry and the Herbert R. trail. Twelve or more were on Sable Aug. 16 - Sept. 26 (ZOL). One was at Apple R. on Sept. 27 (MSM), and on Oct. 2 "several" were on Brier I. and a female on Bells I., Lun. Co. (JSC, JLC). A **PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** was on Sable I. Aug. 6-7, and a **WORM-EATING WARBLER** was closely observed there on Sept. 19 (both ZOL).

The ringing voice of the OVENBIRD was heard during June on the Shelburne BBS, Londonderry BBS and on the Herbert R. trail, indicating "healthy numbers" (JSC, BLM). In July, PLC found the Ovenbird near Bedford, and "particularly abundant" at Margaretsville, Anna. Co., while JKD found a nest containing 3 young at Kemptville on July 12. As usual, the fall migration was a mere trickle, with one bird on Brier I. Aug. 30 (BLM) and another on Sable Oct. 3 (ZOL). Four NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH appeared on Sable I. between Aug. 6 and Sept. 22 (ZOL), and one was found at Apple R. Sept. 27 (MSM).

A **CONNECTICUT WARBLER** (perhaps two) was observed on Cape Sable I. Aug. 26 and 28 (Bird Line; no details). Another on Seal I. Sept. 14 was reportedly banded and photographed (MEM). Spring MOURNING WARBLER migrants (6+) finally showed on June 10 at Blomidon P.P. (GWT, JCT), and on June 14 (one fem.) on Sable I. (IAM). During the fall migration, an imm. on Brier I. Sept. 4 (IAM) was our only observation.

Seventeen COMMON YELLOWTHROATS were counted on the Londonderry BBS, and 16 on the Shelburne BBS (BLM, JSC). JSC reported something of a trend at Shelburne, where average BBS numbers have nearly been halved from 1978-88 (32) to 1989-97 (17). Ten on Brier I. Aug. 31 (BLM) may still have been on territory. Sept. sightings included 25 at Hartlen Pt. Sept. 5, and a few noted later in the month. "Many" were reported on Brier I. (var. obs.) Oct. 2, near the normal migration peak date. ZOL reported two or three **HOODED WARBLERS** on Sable I.: a male Aug. 26 - Sept. 6, a male Sept. 14 (perhaps the same bird) and a different male Oct. 4.

WILSON'S WARBLER fared quite well, with nine on Sable I. between Aug. 31 and Oct. 5 (ZOL), one on Brier I. Sept. 5 (JLC, JSC, DWP, JAP), a male in Bedford Sept. 7 (PLC), a male on Sober I. Sept. 28 (KJM, STV), one at Sullivans Pond from Nov. 9-16 (var. obs.), and a fem. in Fairview Cementary Nov. 23-26 (DAC, *et al.*). A summer CANADA WARBLER (fem.) was in mixed forest at Margaretsville on July 15 (PLC), and a lone fall migrant was on Brier I. Oct. 2. It was a great fall for the YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT, with about 22 individuals reported to deadline (IAM, KJM, RBS, CMU, DAC, AZV, Bird Line), matching the highest fall total in at least 10 years. This included three in Sept. (one each on Cape Sable, Seal and Brier I.), nine in Oct. (six on these same islands, two in Hfx. Co. and one in New Glasgow), and 10 in Nov. (seven in the Halifax area, two on C.B. I. and one in Barrington).

TANAGERS TO TOWHEE

Compiled by Dave Currie

Brier I. held the only two SCARLET TANAGERS reported this fall on Oct. 2. Various observers saw these birds that day.

NORTHERN CARDINALS continue to be well reported. Even with the limited number of sightings submitted this issue, there was a male at Lower W. Pubnico on Oct. 15 (JKD), a female at Brier I. on Oct. 24 (*fide* IAM), a male at Lower Clarks Hbr. on Oct. 2 (JON,SAN) and five at a single feeder in Dartmouth all summer and fall (JWT).

There were two ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS sighted at Brier I. on Sep. 4 (JLC, JSC, DWP, JAP) and three were found on Sable I. from Sep. 17-30 (ZOL). The first BLUE GROSBEAK of the season was one on Sable I. on Sep. 20. (ZOL) This was followed by a bright, first fall male on Seal I. on Oct. 10 (SJF). The last was an adult male at Cape Sable on Oct. 19 (JLC, JSC). INDIGO BUNTINGS numbered four in total. The first was an immature or female on Sable I. Sep. 25-Oct. 1 (ZOL). One was found at Little Hbr., Shel. Co. on Sep. 27 (DHY) and on Oct. 11 there was one female or immature at both Seal I. and Green Bay (SJF, JSC).

The first DICKCISSEL was recorded on Sable I. on Aug. 26. Three more were seen there until Oct. 5 (ZOL). A single bird was found at The Hawk on Sep 28 (JON, SAN *et al*), then two days later there were two found in the same location (AAM, IAM).

EASTERN TOWHEES numbered three in this period. Two of those were spotted on Oct. 18, both were female birds at Little Hbr., Shel. Co. (DHY) and Lower Clarks Hbr. (JON, SAN *et al*)

SPARROWS

Compiled by Dave Currie

The earliest TREE SPARROW recorded was one at Port Williams on Oct. 2 (GWT). It wasn't until Oct. 27 that more were found. One was at Central Caribou, Pic. Co. (KJM) and one at Apple R. on that date (KFS). CHIPPING SPARROWS arrived in respectable numbers by mid-Oct. during their fall flights. First were two at Liverpool (RDS) which were followed by four to five individuals which were reported at Apple R. on Oct. 13 and 16 (MSM, KFS). Oct. 14 brought eight to W. Pubnico (JKD) and the largest were of approximately 35 at Brier I. on Oct. 24 dwindling to 20 there by Oct. 26 (IAM). Rare CLAY-COLOURED SPARROWS were discovered at Little Hbr. during Sept. 27-30 (DHY) and an adult found at Broad Cove on Oct. 3 (SJF).

Fall records of VESPER SPARROW included about eight at Brier I. on Sept. 4 (JLC, JSC, DWP, JAP). Single birds were found at Cape Sable I. on Oct. 2 (DHY, SJF) and one at Daniel Head on Oct. 19 (JKD, JON). A summer record of one bird came from the Liverpool area on July 4 (RDS). A single FIELD SPARROW was discovered at Brier I. on Oct. 2 (*fide* IAM). A LARK SPARROW was sighted at each of two locations. The first was on Sable I. from Sept. 25 to 28. (ZOL) The second bird was one at Lower Clarks

Hbr. on Sept. 30. (JON, SAN, FLL)

Seems by all reports, SAVANNAH SPARROWS were rather common throughout the summer. Two notable fall records were one found aboard ship on Western Bank which was an apparent *labrorensis* by its description. The latest were three still lingering at Conrads Beach on Nov. 13 (JWT). There were three GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS reported. The first was one at Daniel Head, Shel. Co. on Sept. 5 (JON, SAN). It wasn't until Nov. 2 that the second occurred, that at The Hawk on Nov. 2 (JON, SAN *et al*). The last was one discovered at Fairview Cemetery, Halifax on Nov. 30 (DAC, AJV). NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW populated the Cherry Hill Beach area with up to 20 pairs and about 16 were counted at MacMillan Marsh in New Glasgow through the summer months. A very ochre coloured bird was found at Cherry Hill on Oct. 7, this most likely one of the western subspecies, presumably *alterus* (SJF).

FOX SPARROWS seemed scarce in their fall movements. Records begin with three on Sable I. from Sep. 28 - Oct. 1 (ZOL). One was at Black R. on Oct. 17 and two at Wolfville Ridge on Oct. 25 (BLF). One frequented feeders at Advocate on Oct. 21-23 (JRM) and Apple R. on Oct. 21 (KFS). Lastly, up to three were coming to a feeder in Falmouth from Oct. 24-26 (JMC). It appears that SONG SPARROWS had a great year. Reporters commented on the abundance of this bird, seemingly much better than recent years. One migrating group of 25 were counted at Caribou I. on Sept. 29 (KJM). LINCOLN'S SPARROWS were well reported with all considered. A nest with four young was found only 20 meters from a nest used the previous year at Methals L. Bog, Kings Co. on July 12 (BLF). Fall records one at Brier I. on Sept. 4; three at Sable I., Sept. 27-28; three at Cape George on Sept. 27; several on Brier I. Oct. 2; and one at Hartlen Pt. on Oct. 12. SWAMP SPARROWS were relatively common through the fall migration. One report was over 20 on Seal I. on Oct. 12. (SJF).

WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS appeared to be fairly common during migration in Sept. and Oct. As usual small groups of three to six can be found in shrubby, sheltered areas near feeders almost anywhere in the province this fall. Six were evident at Lower W. Pubnico on Oct. 16 (JKD); one at Apple R. on Nov. 1 (KFS) and a large flock of about 50 were observed at Big I., Cape George on Sep 27 (KJM). WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS were well reported. There were five on Sable I. between Sept. 18 and Oct. 5. A bird there on Oct. 5 was of the *gambelli* race (ZOL). Individual birds were found at Apple R., Little Hbr. and Wolfville Ridge during the period between Sept. 28 - Oct. 5 (KFS, DHY, BLF). The largest number was of about 20 on Seal I. Oct. 20 (SJF).

DARK-EYED JUNCOS were very common during Sept. and Oct. Large flocks could be found along roadsides and invading feeding stations during this period. Hundreds if not thousands were estimated from Middleton to Bridgewater on Oct. 20 (JLC, JSC). Over 120 were counted at Lower Argyle on Oct. 26 (JKD).

Nine early LAPLAND LONGSPURS were on Sable I. on Sept. 19 (ZOL). Eight were at Cherry Hill Oct. 10, a single was at The Hawk on the Oct. 18th (JLC, JSC, JKD, RDS), and 12 were noted at Conrads Beach Oct. 25 (RAF, ANF). JLC and JSC saw the first SNOW BUNTING at Mavillette Beach, Dig. Co. on Oct. 10 - a single bird. By Oct. 29 MSM had twelve at Cape Chignecto, near Advocate, and by early Nov. they became more widespread: 60 at Big I. and 15 at Grand Pré on Nov. 2, 15 at Economy on Nov. 3rd, and 10 at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., by Nov. 9 (KJM, RBS, FLS, LAB).

There were a few BOBOLINK reports in the summer months from scattered locations, but mostly in ones and twos - nothing like the fields of nesting birds there once were, although BLM and JCZ counted at least 12 birds on their Debert area Breeding Bird Survey. The other exception was in a note from CWH to the effect that, after being scarce for several years, they were "abundant" again in Pictou Co. Late reports were 14 at L. W. Pubnico on Aug. 31, eight still there Sept. 3, and a single lingering in Lockeport Sept. 4 (JKD, DJC). The only reports of RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS were of good-sized migrations on Oct. 13. JCT saw 350 - 400 males at Saxon St. near Sheffield Mills on Oct. 26. KFS had 80+ at W. Apple R. A single EASTERN MEADOWLARK was seen at Cherry Hill by SJF on Oct. 15; she noted particularly that it was silent. Another was on Cape Sable Nov. 20 (JON, *vide* MUN). Five YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS were noted, the first Sept. 14 at Sable I. (ZOL). The remainder were feeder birds; Lockeport Sept. 29-30; R. Bourgeois Oct. 11; New Salem on Nov. 9; and W. Pubnico Nov. 18-19. All were female except for the New Salem bird, which was an immature male (ZOL, DJC *et al.*, GED, KFS, MSM, Ethelda Murphy). RUSTY BLACKBIRDS were few and far between. IAM is of the opinion that they have "crashed" in recent years and this editor tends to agree with him as she saw none at all this fall in their usual haunts; at least 10 individuals were noted on Seal I. Oct. 11-13 (BLM, *et al.*). A nest with five eggs was found at Black R. L. on June 28, the other two reports being for fall - i.e. six birds on Sable I. between Sept. 13 and Oct. 4, and six at Ferry Road, Pic. Co. on Sept. 29 (ZOL, KJM).

The departure of COMMON GRACKLES was well documented between late Sept. and early Nov. An impressive flock of 3000+ created an enormous cacophony along the new Fairmont Ridge hiking trail, Ant. Co., Sept. 20 (BLM, Martine Dufresne). 35 were at L. W. Pubnico on Oct. 1, 500++ flocked at Grand Pré on Oct. 13, and 100 were at Wallbrook, Kings Co. Oct. 25 (JKD, JWW, GWT). KFS writes of 100+ at Apple R. on Oct. 27 and notes that there were large flocks around through early Nov. The latest C.B. grackle was one on Nov. 2 at Westmount (JAC). The once more-than-plentiful BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD has dwindled drastically of late. Four summer (and no fall) reports came in. A single male at a feeder in Apple R. June 10, a male along the Herbert R. trail in Hants Co. June 21 (BLM), a single female on Sable I. July 18, and one young fledged from the nest of a Chestnut-sided Warbler on Wolfville Ridge July 27 was the sum total. With the damaging proclivities of this species perhaps it is not a bad thing!

A late report from May 24 was recorded from RDS of a male ORCHARD ORIOLE on CSI. The participants in the NSBS Field Trip were treated to another, a female, at Little Hbr. on 23 Aug. (DHY). Summer BALTIMORE ORIOLES (as the N. Orioles are now named) were at Mud I., Yar. Co. on June 2 (one female bird) (TCD), and near Debert June 15 (BLM, JCZ). The first autumn bird was on Sable I., followed by an autumn flood of reports totalling at least 60 individuals. Notable concentrations included: ca. 20 between Aug. 31 and Oct. 5 on Cape Sable I. (var. obs.); 10 at Schooner Pond, C.B. (JUM, GEM); nine on Seal I. Oct. 11 (BLM, *et al.*); and nine at a feeder in Glace Bay Oct. 13-16 (JUM). A **BULLOCKS ORIOLE** was reported at the Hawk CSI on May 24 (RDS) (no details).

Although after the deadline for this issue PINE GROSBEAKS became quite numerous, only a few were reported before Nov. 15; three at Tracadie Hbr., Ant. Co., Sept. 5 (BLM), one on Brier I. Sept. 4, and one Nov. 6 at W. Apple R. (JLC, JSC, DWP, JAP, KFS). PURPLE FINCHES were few. There were eight singing males along BLM's Breeding Bird Survey route through Debert, JSC had 10 at the feeder in Green Bay in Sept., the highest number reported. The Tays had a steady group of four from Aug. to Oct. at Mooseland, but all the other reports were of one to three birds in scattered localities. Away from the expected Halifax and Yarmouth haunts, PLC saw two HOUSE FINCHES (a male, one female) at Spa Springs in July. She wrote that the homeowners there had the pair "in residence" for a year or more. Another two were at Portuguese Cove Oct. 12 (AZV, DAC), and one was at a feeder in Lower Sackville Oct. 17 (Pat Miller).

There were 30-40 RED CROSSBILLS at the Cohrs feeder in Green Bay 18 July. JSC writes "I am now familiar with all possible ages and plumages for Red Crossbills — they have been around most of June and all of July, up to now — male, female, immature and downy young — the lot." Other reports were of smaller numbers. In Aug. there were 12 at Merigonish on the 5th, four at Cape Chignecto on the 8th, with six at Canard Pond the same day (KJM, MSM, JCT). Reports skipped Sept. and in early Oct. only six were seen (no date) at Canning (JCT).

IAM was guilty of an understatement when he noted that WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS were plentiful this fall! They were heavily reported from July to Nov. from Yar. Co. to C.B. There were lots in Pic. and Ant. Cos. and many were seen in the Lockeport area of Shel. Co. (KJM, DJC). RDS saw his first ever in Queens Co. and 40+ were steady from Aug. to Nov. in Cape Chignecto (MSM). Among the largest concentrations were 70 at Schooner Pond Sept. 9 (BLM); 220+ along Fairmont Ridge, Ant. Co., Sept. 20 (BLM); 500+ on Big I., Pic. Co., Sept. 27; 300+ on Seal I. Oct. 12 (BLM, *et al.*); hundreds moving through Brier I. Oct. 11-13 (var. obs.); and 200-300 at Kingston Nov. 7. They finally came back to the La Have I. (where they were once regular but of late have been few or none) on Nov. 9 (JCT, LAB). Last noted were 26 at Conrads Beach on 13 Nov. (GWT).

Perhaps this will prove to be a COMMON REDPOLL winter. On Oct. 12 SJF saw two on Seal I., but on Nov. 8 there were 80 at Merigonish, 200 at Livingstone Cove, and 100 at Jimtown (all Ant. Co) (KJM and STV), while flocks totalling 700+ were noted in Shel. and Yar. Cos. Nov. 16 (BLM, MUN).

Ten PINE SISKINS, including some immatures, tended a feeder at Green Bay July 20. Twelve were at Apple R. Aug. 31. These were the only summer reports and although flocks came in after the deadline (see next issue!) there were few in the fall - six at Glenwood Oct. 26, eight at Advocate Hbr. Nov. 7, and a couple at Apple R. the same day (JSC, KFS, JKD, JRM). Margaret Ellis entertained half a dozen AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES at her feeder in Middle Sackville all summer and fall. "Hundreds" passed through Brier I. Sept 4-5 — "a huge migration" (JLC, JSC, DWP, JAP). Otherwise they seemed normal in number throughout the fall.

There were some interesting summer sightings of EVENING GROSBEAKS. At Apple R. one to six tended the feeder from May to Aug., and an adult was observed feeding young on Aug. 13. Seventeen were along BLM's Debert BBS, while he counted eight birds along the Herbert R. trail, Hants Co., June 21. In addition, a pair was at Green Bay for a week in July, and in late Aug. RBS noted several recently fledged juveniles in the Kentville area. Flocks began to be evident in Oct. — 42 were at the Pubnicos on 24th, and RDS had 40 at Liverpool on 27th — he noted that this was the largest flock he had seen in three years. The Apple R. grosbeaks had swelled to 25 by Oct. and 85+ by Nov. Meanwhile at Sidney R. there were about 50 birds on Oct. 17. 1996 was a poor winter showing for this species, this year promises to be an improvement.

The only HOUSE SPARROW report was definitely a negative one. JSC wrote that the Petitie Rivière flock of 25-50 birds that has resided in the same place on the village corner for thirty years has suddenly vanished completely! No comment.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Thanks to all of our contributors, including:

Atwood, Wilford (Skipper)	WIA	Crowell, Mike	MIC
Austin-Smith, P.J.	PJA	Crowell, Wesley	WLC
Beard, James	JAB	Czapalay, Joan	JCZ
Bell, Lisë (Cohrs)	LAB	Davies, P.	PPD
Bell, Peter	PEB	Digout, Billy	BID
Brennan, Calvin	CGB	Digout, George	GED
Chalmers, Patricia L.	PLC	Duncanson, Lloyd	LLD
Chivers, Bobby	RSC	D'Entremont, André	AND
Cohrs, John	JLC	D'Entremont, Raymond	RSD
Cohrs, Shirley	JSC	D'Eon, Jerome K.	JKD
Cretien, Jacqueline	JAC	D'Eon, Ted	TCD
Crosby, Donna	DJC	Forsythe, Bernard	BLF

Foxall, Andrew	ANF	Nickerson, Felton & Gerald	FGN
Foxall, Roger	RAF	Nickerson, Johnnie	JON
Fullerton, Sylvia	SJF	Nickerson, Sandra	SAN
Gibson, Merritt	MEG	Oickle, Peter	PEO
Giffin, Patrick & Barbara	PBG	O'Shea, Helen	HOS
Goodall, Graham & Carla	GCG	Perry, Lillian	LIP
Graves, June	JUG	Purchase, Don	DWP
Gregoire, Ken	GKG	Purchase, Joyce	JAP
Hartley, Jean	JEH	Reid, Tom	ROR
Haycock, Carl	CAH	Sigston, Ron	RDS
Heaney, Mike	MIH	Simms, Dave	DAS
Helleiner, Chris	CWH	Smith, Caroline & Wayne	CWS
Hinds, Barbara	BAH	Sollows, John	JOS
Hoffman, Deuane	DEH	Spalding, Edgar	EPS
Horne, Andy	ANH	Spalding, Francis	FLS
Lauff, Randolph	RFL	Spicer, Kathleen	KFS
Lavender, Fulton	FLL	Stern, Richard	RBS
LeBlanc, Ed	EDL	Stewart, Cathy	CAS
LeBlanc, Peter	PEL	Stoddard, Clyde	CLS
Libby, Mark L.	MLL	Taylor, James	JWT
Lucas, Zoe	ZOL	Taylor, Phil	PHT
MacFarlane, Sandra	SAM	Thexton, Bill & Brenda	BBT
MacKinnon, Walter	WAM	Thomson, Chris	CHT
MacNeill, Don	DAM	Tomek, Ivan	IVT
MacNeill, Carol	CRM	Tufts, Gordon	GWT
MacRae, Doug	DUM	Tufts, Judy	JCT
Martin, Pat	PAM	Vienneau, Azor	AZV
Massare, Melanie	MEM	Vines, Steve	STV
Matteau, Renee	RAM	Waldron, Joan	JOW
Maybank, Blake	BLM	Weingartshofer, Marie	MAW
McCorquodale, Dave	DBM	Wolford, Jim	JWW
McKenna, Ken	KJM	Yaukey, Peter	PEY
McLachlan, J.	JJM	Young, David	DHY
McLaren, Ian	IAM		
McLean, Angus	AAM		
Metcalfe, Geraldine	GEM		
Metcalfe, Junior	JUM		
Mills, Ann	AHM		
Mills, Edwin	EDM		
Mills, Eric	ELM		
Mills, Jane	JRM		
Mills, Maureen	MSM		
Moores, Bernice	ABM		
Murrant, Allan	ALM		
Murrant, Cathy	CAM		
Newell, Murray	MUN		

BIRDING AREAS

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:

Annapolis Co. (Anna. Co.)	Annapolis Royal, Clementsport
Antigonish Co. (Ant. Co.)	Aulds Cove, Fairmont Ridge, Merigonish, Livingstone Cove, Jimtown
Cape Breton Island (C.B.)	Big Pond, C.B. Highland National Park (CBHNP), Westmount
Colchester Co. (Col. Co.)	Economy, Glenholme
Cumberland Co. (Cum. Co.)	Lusby Marsh, APBS*, Linden, Port Howe
Digby Co.	Westport (Brier Island), Brier Island
Guysborough Co. (Guys. Co.)	New Hbr., County I., Trafalgar
Halifax Co. (Hfx. Co.)	Three Fathom Hbr., Conrads Beach, Lawrencetown, Cole Hbr., Martinique Beach, Hartlen Point, Laurie Park, Powder Mill Park, Chezzetcook, Mooseland.
Hants Co.	Shubenacadie, Noel Shore
Kings Co.	Wolfville, Greenfield, Canard, Black R. Lake, Gaspereau, Grand Pré, White Rock, Starrs Pt., Lumsden Reservoir
Lunenburg Co. (Lun. Co.)	Cherry Hill, Broad Cove, Petite Rivière, Green Bay, Crousetown, Crescent Beach, Publicover Lake
Queens Co.	Port Joli, Port L'Hebert E.
Shelburne Co. (Shel. Co.)	Cape Sable I. (CSI**), Cape Sable, Matthews Lake, Lower Ohio, The Hawk, Seal I., Little Harbour, Port L'Hebert W.
Yarmouth Co. (Yar. Co.)	Arcadia, Pinkneys Point, Tusket, Eel Brook, Melbourne, Overton, all the Pubnicos.

Abbreviations

*APBS - Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary
**CSI - Cape Sable Island

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF BIRD REPORTS

For the **April 1998** issue: **7 March 1998**

Bird Reports to: Karl Tay
5 Berwick Street,
Dartmouth, N.S.
B2Y 3B6

As an experiment, the deadline for bird reports has been changed from previous years in order to align the reporting period with the December to end-of-February winter season. **NOTE:** The deadline for other submissions remains unchanged. Please use the AOU checklist for bird names and sequences if possible.

DEADLINE FOR OTHER SUBMISSIONS

For the **April 1998** issue: **15 February 1998**

Nova Scotia Birds welcomes for publication contributions of original articles, photographs, artwork, field notes and field studies. The activities of the society are centred on the observation and study of the bird life of this province and the preservation of habitat. However, our readers are always interested in areas and birds outside our province. Please send articles or other suggestions to:

Email: allsebro@atl.sofkin.ca
Mail: Marion Allsebrook
45 Lexington Ave,
Fall River, NS
B2T 1E7

Electronic submission is preferred, if possible (e.g. WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, ASCII text); an IBM-compatible diskette containing the article is acceptable.

Photographs to: Ian McLaren
1755 Cambridge Street,
Halifax, N.S.
B3H 4A8

Note: Black-and-white photographs are best; colour photographs need contrast.

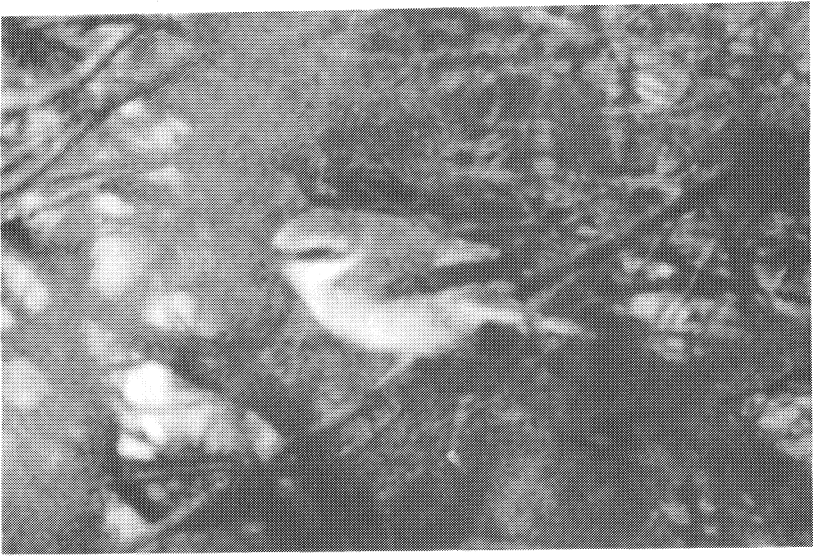
PICTURES OF THE YEAR

Once a year we have traditionally included photos printed on more glossy paper. These are chosen for a number of reasons: they may be fine portraits of, sometimes commonplace, birds; they may tell a story, or show aspect of bird behaviour; they may highlight some finer points of bird identification; or they may be extreme rarities that deserve the best treatment, even if not always portrait quality.

The first two birds were such extreme rarities that, even in great enlargement from slightly soft negatives, they deserve to be featured on the opening page. The photo of the Halifax **BROWN SHRIKE** was among many taken of this bird, but AZV's photo (taken in late Nov.) shows some essential characteristics. Unlike our native shrikes, this one was a skulker, preferring the low trees and tangles of its favoured hilltop garden in Fairview. It was also a smaller, rather more bull-headed, shrike than ours. You can see that dorsally it is even-toned (brown in the original, with more rufous upper tail coverts and tail, and greyer, rufous-tinged forecrown). The breast and flanks, off-white here, were actually strongly buff, somewhat more rufous on the sides. We have more work to do on field notes and photos to pin down the subspecies: either the nominate form *cristatus*, which ranges from China into Siberia, or the somewhat more southerly *confusus*. A full account of this first Canadian occurrence, with colour pictures, is being prepared for publication elsewhere by RAF, its very lucky (and very perceptive) finder.

The next bird, the **CORN CRAKE** at Little Hbr., was also a coup for its discoverer, Joan Young. Although she wisely took some photos, DHY, who missed it on its first day, used a longer lens to secure this photo when it reappeared two days later, Nov. 30. It was taken through a window, as the bird methodically foraged along the boundary between their lawn and the tangle of blackberry and shrubs beyond. Even in this black-and-white version, the bird can clearly be identified as a Corn Crake from its stubby bill, black-centered back and scapular feathers, and its thickish legs (our smaller crakes, the Yellow Rail and Sora, would have more spindly ones). The rufous side-barring (not evident here) is also not shared by our rallids. It is doubtful that any of us will see one again in the province, as the bird has become scarcer, even threatened, due to modern agricultural practices in its Western European range.

The next two birds are just as extraordinary. But because they are seabirds that turned up at two relatively inaccessible frontiers, they perhaps justifiably follow the shrike and crake. Canada's first **FEA'S PETREL**, takes three photos to be properly pinned down - but what photos! Sascha Hooker took them July 7 when she was skippering the *Balaena* out of Hal Whitehead's lab at Dalhousie. They were doing research on Bottlenose Whales at The Gully, NE of Sable I. Sasha Hooker, with Robin Baird who also studied and photographed the bird, wrote a clinching account in *Birders Journal* (1997, Vol. 6:245-248) as a record of Canada-wide significance. They first identified it at sea, using Harrison's well-known guide to seabirds, as a Soft-plumaged Petrel. But two N. Atlantic representatives of this species group have been recently split off as the exceedingly rare Zino's Petrel and the more common Fea's Petrel. The former nests only on Madeira, and the latter on Bugio I. off Madeira, and on the Cape Verde Is. The



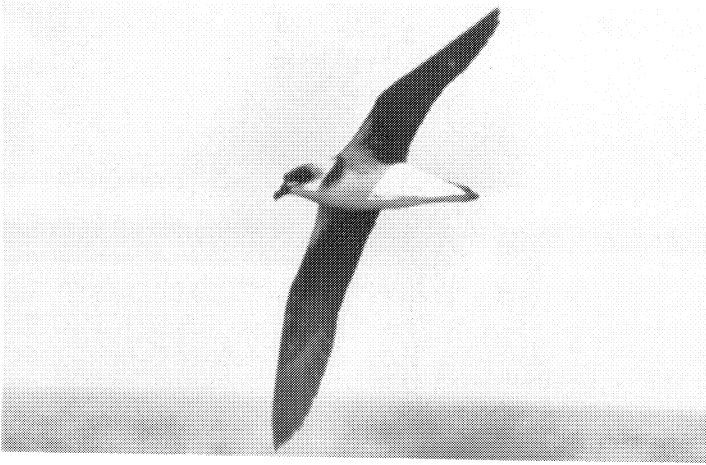
BROWN SHRIKE

(Azor Vienneau)



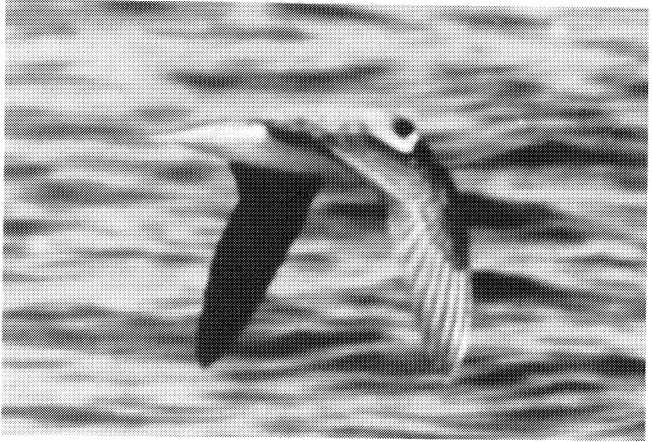
CORN CRAKE

(David Young)



FEA'S PETREL

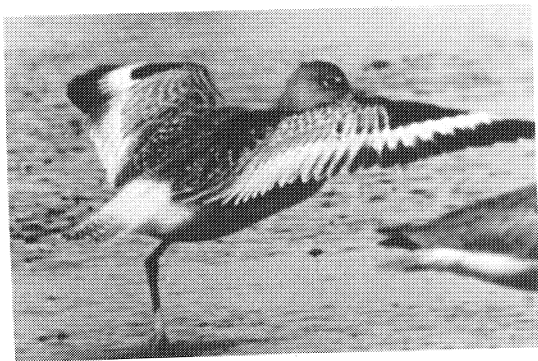
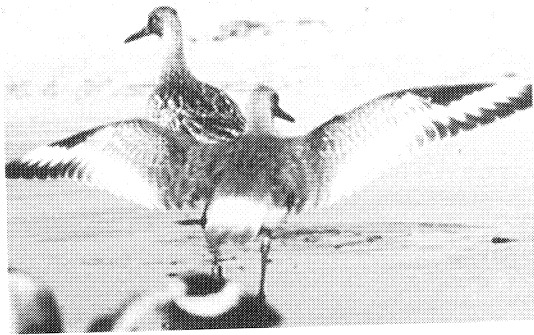
(Sascha Hooker)





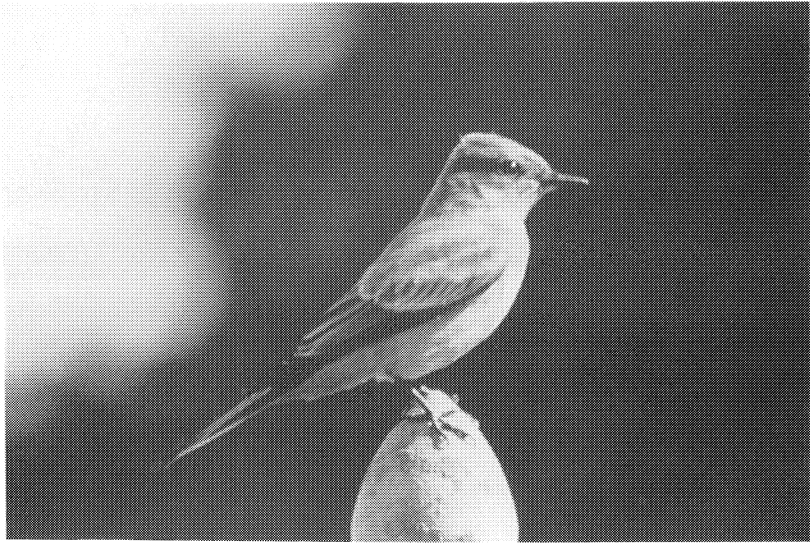
BLACK-TAILED GULL

(Zoe Lucas)



"WESTERN" WILLETS

(Ian McLaren)



SAY'S PHOEBE (Ian McLaren)



GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (Azor Vienneau)

first and second photo show that the bird is not a Soft-plumaged Petrel from the Southern Ocean, which would have a complete upper breast band and a rump and tail that are not near-white, but grey like the back. The last picture seems to eliminate the very similar, but smaller, Zeno's Petrel, which has a relatively small bill. This one has a stout, fulmar-like bill.

At the top of the next page is a **BLACK-TAILED GULL** photographed June 30 by ZOL over the dunes of Sable I. It too, was a Canadian first record, and was written up with colour photos in *Birders Journal* (1997, Vol. 6: 205-207). ZOL phoned me from Sable I. after seeing the bird, opening with "I know you won't believe this, but...." In fact, her sighting of this native of Japan, Korea, and coastal China, was quite believable in view of its occurrences in recent years in N. America, including one or two birds on the U.S. East Coast. The bird is roughly the size of a Ring-billed Gull, dark mantled, with black and red bands on its relatively stout bill, yellow legs, and with its hallmark black-tipped tail. One has returned three years running to winter in Rhode I., so maybe this one will come to again to Sable I. so more of us might see it.

Beneath the fabulous gull are two individuals of a familiar species, the WILLET. I snapped them Sept. 4 on Brier I. as they prepared for takeoff, because I was curious about their tails. On other criteria these were not our "ordinary" Willets. They were a party of three adults and two young that seemed rather tame and droopy, as though they had come a long way. They were large, long-legged, long-billed, and the three adults (upper photo) were quite pallid, largely unmarked grey. These are marks of the subspecies *inornatus* that nests on the prairies, and migrates down the East Coast, usually arriving somewhat later and further south. But, we do see them here. Some publications suggest that western Willets lack barring on the tail, and this seems true of most (all?) fall adults we see here. But others (especially juvs. like the one in the lower photo) do have barring, which I think is (always?) fainter than that found on our local birds, which are certainly darker and more heavily marked in general. So, keep your eyes open next summer and fall, and let us know what you can find out.

The last page has two more routine autumn rarities. The upper one is now an annual vagrant here from its western breeding range. Most SAY'S PHOEBES appear here rather later in the fall than this one, which was spotted by Peter Burke and me Sept. 6 as it flitted among the tombstones of the cemetery on Brier I. This stray stayed around for a few more days, giving others an opportunity to savour it.

DAC and AZV discovered this GRASSHOPPER SPARROW lurking in the brambles of Fairview cemetery in Halifax on Nov. 30. They alerted the birding community, several of whom had been seeking the Brown Shrike nearby, and they and others, including myself, were able to get good views of the bird. It was quite tame, but rather mouse-like in its movements through the thickets, so that Azor had to be quite persistent in order get some good photos. The bird appeared to be in its first winter (with remnant breast streaking), and its rather pale, ashy grey tones seemed to suggest descriptions of the western subspecies *perpallidus*. Certainly a western subspecies should be no more surprising than the many vagrant western species that turn up here in late fall.

AOU CHANGES, SUMMER 1997

Here is a quick summary of the AOU changes that affect Nova Scotia, including genus, family, sequence, etc.

SPLITS

- Solitary Vireo split into Blue-headed Vireo (*V. solitarius*), Cassin's Vireo (*V. cassinii*) and Plumbeous Vireo (*V. plumbeus*)

SCIENTIFIC NAME CHANGES

- Yellow-nosed and Black-browed albatrosses are now in *Thalassarche*
- The Latin name of Spruce Grouse is now *Falcapennis canadensis*
- The Latin name of American Golden-Plover is corrected to *Pluvialis dominica*
- The Latin name of Olive-sided Flycatcher is now *Contopus cooperi*
- Cliff and Cave swallows return to the genus *Petrochelidon*
- Chickadees are now in the genus *Poecile*
- The common name of Cape Verde Islands Petrel is changed to Fea's Petrel (*Pterodroma feae*)

OTHER CHANGES

- New World Vultures (Cathartidae) now in Order Ciconiiformes, following the storks (Ciconiidae)
- New World Quail now in own family, Odontophoridae
- *Catharacta* (*skuas*) and *Stercorarius* (*jaegers*) now reversed (i.e. jaegers follow skuas on the list)
- "Oscine" passerines will commence with shrikes, then vireos, then corvids - for ABA Checklist area
- Kinglets are now in family Regulidae

- Subfamilies of Emberizidae again elevated to family rank

SPRING NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT

The SEVENTH annual North American Migration Count (NAMC) year of operation gets underway with the Spring count on Saturday, 9 May 1998. Those wishing to participate in this migratory bird project are asked to mark it on their calendar now (if a Fall '98 NAMC takes place it will be held on 19 Sept. 1998). Contact your local county co-ordinator, area representative, or provincial co-ordinator, for more information if needed.

I wish to thank all those enthusiastic birding participants who gave up so much of their time, for the NAMC on May 10, 1997. It was greatly appreciated. The results have shown dedication and a keenness that has proven most rewarding.

A brief summary of that day for those who may be interested:

“Spring” was a misnomer on May 10th as sleet and snow swept a path through central N.S. after dawn and up through Cape Breton counties by mid-morning, causing poor visibility and near freezing conditions for many. Coastal fog hampered efforts, rain fell on some islands in the Bay of Fundy; temperatures varied from -1 to 14 C — almost an inch of snow fell on one unfortunate birder who had to curtail his activities on the S. Mountain in Gaspereau Valley. Amid these rather appalling weather conditions 357 individuals (198 “in the field”) persevered to gather information for the Spring count, while at 178 Feeder-stations 235 feeder-watchers observed birds. As to be expected due to the cold, wet spring, species numbers seen were down (182 — though only five fewer than last year) but total numbers of birds seen (80,000) were approximately the same.

Some of the interesting highlights:

One of the most unusual — a Sandhill Crane — flew out of a gully (probably its night-roost) behind a shopping centre in Elmsdale, Hants. Co. A Junco of the “Oregon” race was seen on Seal I., and a single Snow Goose flew with Canada Geese near Canning. Some 21 American Bitterns were recorded around the province. The productive APBS yielded 20 species of waterfowl, while Cape Sable Island led with variety and surprises — 12 species of shorebirds, four Black-crowned Night Herons, one Cattle Egret, a Great Egret and a Snowy Owl! An observer near Caledonia, Queens Co., found five Broadwings riding the thermals, while a young birder was happily surprised to find two Eastern Bluebirds on the outskirts of Halifax. Provincially 12 Northern Mockingbirds were noted. The prize for exotic warbler this

year goes to a Prothonotary found on Brier I.; Yellow-rumps (formerly Myrtles) (1800) and Palm (196) were widespread — 17 warbler species were registered. Adding colour to the list were four Orchard and 11 Baltimore Orioles, one Blue Grosbeak and seven Indigo Buntings.

Excluding gull species, crows and starlings, the leading species were:

Dark-eyed Junco	5011	Black-capped Chickadee	1805
Common Grackle	4987	Common Eider	1717
American Robin	4432	Redwing Blackbird	1698
Tree Swallow	2840	American Goldfinch	1546
Double-crested Cormorant	2232	Black Duck	1439
Purple Finch	2004	Song Sparrow	1426
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1806	Blue Jay	1132

Judy Tufts (902) 542-7800
N.S. Co-ordinator for NAMC

SCIENTISTS AND INNOVATORS IN THE SCHOOLS

Are you keen to share your interest in birding? Do you enjoy the energy and curiosity of school children? You could be just the volunteer we're looking for!

"Scientists and Innovators in the Schools" is a non-profit society devoted to the promotion and awareness of science and technology among Nova Scotia school students.

We provide teachers with volunteers who give classroom presentations, lead field trips, judge at science fairs, attend career days and assist with resources.

We need **YOUR** help to share the excitement that science offers! We are always looking for new volunteers who can lend a helping hand in their community by giving presentations or by helping teachers with activities. Commitment is flexible. Our volunteers accept or decline requests **as often as they like**. To become a SITS volunteer, simply call our offices. You will be part of an exciting program that provides role models and helps shape students' perceptions of careers in science and technology.

All questions or comments can be directed to our office via phone (494-2831 or 1-800-565-7487), fax (494-3877), mail or e-mail (sits@is.dal.ca).

We hope to hear from you soon!

SITS
Centre for Marine Geology
Dalhousie University
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3J5

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

24 May 1997 - Southwest Nova Birders Field Trip

Joan Czapalay

A group of birdwatchers met early on May 24, to visit the birding hot spots on Cape Sable I. Members of the Southwest Nova Birders provided maps of the island, helped organise car-pooling, and led the convoy across the Causeway for an exciting day filled with stray migratory birds and returning breeders.

The first noteworthy bird of the day was a Chimney Swift at NE Point. A number of returning warblers at McCoys Point were admired for their bright colours and cheerful songs. At Clam Point, Baltimore Orioles, a first year male Orchard Oriole and a Summer Tanager all appeared as anticipated at a feeder tree.

While we were admiring these beautiful birds, two birders arrived to tell us the oystercatchers were back at Daniel Head. Everyone rushed to the cars and drove straight there, only to find the oystercatchers had moved on. Then we sought six Piping Plovers that had been seen earlier, but were nowhere to be found. Many people in our group had never seen these once-common birds or heard their piping cry. The S. Side marshes are feeding grounds for the elegant Black-crowned Night Herons, of which we saw six. Some of us saw a Great Egret here, a regular rarity in these parts.

Our group next proceeded to Hawk Point Rd., where we added a Scarlet Tanager female. Our hosts, the Cunninghams, have the trees and bushes behind their house decked with oranges and various bird feeders. While we were enjoying their hospitality, a strange looking oriole flew in. Johnny Nickerson had noted its differences and Ian McLaren later suggested it might be a hybrid between the familiar Baltimore and less well-known Bullock's Oriole. Next seen was a Purple Martin sitting on a wire.

At noon some of us enjoyed a picnic on Hawk Knoll, where we were visited by an Eastern Kingbird. After several trips between the lobster pound, Felton Nickerson's feeders and Daniel Head we saw the oystercatchers! Our day closed with a beautiful white Snowy Egret and a Tricolored Heron, spotted by Murray as they landed on the S. Side marsh. Many thanks to all that joined us. We were assisted by Ethelda Murphy from Pubnico, June Graves from Yarmouth, and Murray Newell from Newellton who travelled about looking for rarities for us. Birders Johnny and Sandra Nickerson provided pre-trip information. We encourage everyone who is interested to phone any of us or write to Southwest Nova Birders, c/o Box 146, Barrington Passage, NS, B0W 1G0. All of us enjoyed the birds, the sunshine and the beautiful Cape Sable I.

14 June 1997 - Birds of Kings County

Angus MacLean

The day could not have been better, with a light overcast sky and the temperature warming up nicely. As usual some of the 14 participants came from distant points,

always encouraging for the leader. There were experienced birders in the group who aided me in helping the novices with the songs and identification of the common birds.

This was one of those mornings when certain birds, for whatever reason, were not in a vocal mood. For example, although there are many Alder Flycatchers along Butler Rd., none were heard!! However the group managed to see Yellow-bellied and Olive-sided Flycatchers which are always a highlight of this outing. Canada and Black-throated Blue Warblers, two of the rarer warblers in the area, sang with enthusiasm and the group was able to study their songs and hopefully remember them for another time.

I find it pleasurable to bird Butler Rd. since it offers such a wide range of species. When a like-minded group is able to join me, it adds immeasurably to the experience.

21 June 1997 - Cumberland County

Fulton L. Lavender

On June 21 a group of about a dozen eager birders met at Wentworth Park to start another Cumberland County field trip. What a difference a year makes! Last year early morning temperatures hovered around the freezing point. This year we enjoyed temperatures in the low teens. It was a warm dry day throughout, but windy by noon, which turned out to be a blessing on the bug-infested Amherst dykes.

We totalled up a list of 105 species, five less than last year. Highlights included most of the expected hawks, ducks and marsh birds and a list of 17 species of warblers. Super looks at Cliff Swallow, Purple Martin, Vesper Sparrow, Sora, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and an Eastern Wood Pewee building its nest, left us hungry for next year's trip. Participation was up from last year.

In 1998 we will be meeting at the Masstown Market - come and join us.

20 July 1997 - Wallace Bay

Jim Taylor

Birders from a variety of areas of Nova Scotia once again flocked to the Northumberland shore for another great day of birding. This year we saw nothing out of the ordinary but as usual everyone enjoyed seeing new areas to enhance their birding and meeting new friends and old.

Our usual variety of shorebirds appeared to be down somewhat from other years, but the Wallace Bay Wildlife Area was well stocked with ducks and perching birds. A good day was enjoyed by all and I hope to see you again in 1998.

9 Aug 1997 - Shorebird Walk, Yarmouth

Eric Ruff

Six of us gathered at the Wendy/Tim Horton's parking lot at 8:30 a.m. The weather was

overcast and threatening. We decided to bird Yarmouth Harbour to fill in time before proceeding to Cooks Beach near Pinkneys Point in the afternoon. Many more shorebirds than usual were present — likely due to the new sewage plant that has meant a cleaner harbour (Halifax, take note!). Within a half-hour 19 species were spotted (shorebirds included Greater Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitcher, Willet, Ruddy Turnstones, Spotted Sandpiper and Killdeer.) Then the rain started in earnest and didn't appear to be ending so the trip came to a sudden end. Hours later it stopped and allowed Barb and I to visit the Melbourne Sanctuary and Cooks Beach where we added five additional species: Semipalmated Plovers and Sandpipers, White-rumped Sandpipers, Black-bellied Plovers and Lesser Yellowlegs.

9 Aug 1997 - Pictou County - CANCELLED

16 Aug 1997 - Crescent and Cherry Hill Beaches, Lun. Co.

Lisë Bell

The day started with an overcast sky, but a sunny group. Twenty keen birders arrived to unfolding mudflats at Crescent Beach. Several members of the South Shore Naturalist Club arrived for the field trip. Close sightings of the more common shorebirds such as Semipalmated Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, Least Sandpiper, Willets, and Short-billed Dowitchers, were had by all. Overhead a Northern Gannet flew to within 15' above our heads, a lovely adult bird still in breeding plumage. One of our resident Bald Eagles made its regal presence known. Ruddy Turnstones were sighted on the mudflat and sandy beach side. At the upper ends of the beach several people observed, through the telescope, a singing Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Black Guillemots played in the surf while Common Eiders and Double-crested Cormorants looked on. Lunch was at Rissers Beach P.P. Some of the participants braved the walk up Cherry Hill beach in the afternoon. The numbers of shorebirds were down from the previous week and we looked for a Black Tern which had been seen a week before. A calling Whimbrel flew in and settled on the flats for a picture perfect view. All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable trip, with 42 species.

23 Aug 1997 - Point Michaud, Cape Breton

George Digout

Wind and heavy rain greeted 23 eager birders and leaders Billy and George Digout at 8 a.m. Weather did not stop the birds however, as a total of 60 species were seen including 17 species of shorebirds. The morning was spent mainly at Point Michaud Beach where shorebirds included Wilson's Phalarope, Baird's Sandpiper, American Golden-Plover and White-Rumped Sandpiper — firsts for a number of birders. Nine different ducks were seen, including a White-winged Scoter and an Old Squaw.

Everyone gathered for lunch in R. Bourgeois and in the afternoon a few birders found 14 more species in the local area. Of note were Northern Gannet and Black-legged Kittiwake. Land birds were rare and only one warbler, a Magnolia, was seen.

An unusual sighting in the morning on the back part of the beach was a family of four kittens and their mom who had obviously been abandoned. The youngest members of the group, Eric and Megan McCorquodale quickly came to the rescue and provided milk (part of their lunch) to the hungry family. The family was transported in the back of a truck to lunch and from R. Bourgeois to Sydney. Who said cats and birds don't mix?

23 Aug 1997 - Matthews Lake, Shelburne Co.

Dave Young

This year's trip was on August 23 and started under duress, as the published time was three hours later than the actual start due to the fact that there was no consultation with the leader. However, efforts at correcting the mistake led to 12 birders showing up at the right time and five at the later time.

Weather was good and some 900 plus individuals of 11 species of shorebirds were seen. Four Hudsonian Godwits were probably the best sighting, followed by 40 White-rumped Sandpipers. A Merlin or two, a Kestrel and a Peregrine were also present and back at our house an Orchard Oriole and four or five Greater Shearwaters were spotted.

Raymond D'Entremont and Jerome d'Eon were in the later group and reported the bird of the day - a Sooty Tern. This was well described and reported by Clarence Stevens the following day. Five birders went back after two days and saw a Black Tern. It appears to me that there have been many more Terns, mostly Commons, present the last two years and I wonder if this is due to a drop in the gull population.

This year's trip included a family from the Toronto area and two birders from Pennsylvania and I believe all had a mostly good time!

29 Aug - 1 Sept - Bon Portage Island

Joan Czapalay

A field trip was a great excuse for me to spend a couple of extra days on Bon Portage, or Outer Island as it is known locally. On Thursday and Friday I tried to persuade the Prairie Warblers (at least two) to wait for the official trip, to no avail. However, it was a weekend of beautiful sunny weather with migrating warblers trickling in, and a compatible group of eight birders to enjoy them. All arrived on the island via Spin's boat "Little Jordan."

Our group enjoyed a midnight stroll to the west side of the island. Randy Lauff called in a Saw-whet Owl, which was a lifer for some in our group. We had 17 species of warblers on Saturday and Sunday, including a beautiful male Black-throated Blue in the regular stopping off spot near the Gunning Camp. An immature Bonaparte's Gull lingered along the eastern coast from Thursday to Monday. Mark Button, the island manager, did a great job making us welcome at the house and the big camp. Ken McKenna and Ed Leblanc were especially helpful in identifying fall warblers and migrating flycatchers. Along with the difficult empids, we had two Eastern Kingbirds and an Eastern Wood-

Pewee. A Winter Wren and a Swainson's Thrush were present, but not a single Robin or Black-capped Chickadee. Three Northern Orioles stayed near the camps, and the small groups of shorebirds at Kelp Cove entertained us. The weather was pleasant, as was the company. But where were the big numbers of birds? Only one Black-crowned Night Heron! (Has the colony moved to Cape Island? We have seen more and more each year at Daniel Head.) Three Great Horned Owls were noted as were two Ruffed Grouse and the usual raptors — one Osprey, six Northern Harriers, six Sharp-shinned Hawks, two Am. Kestrels and five Merlins. Our total was 92 species; Bon Portage is still a good bet for Labour Day weekend.

6 Sept 1997 - Hartlen Point - Eastern Shore, Hfx. Co. - NO REPORT

13 Sept 1997 - Minas Basin, Ponds and Woods, Kings Co. - CANCELLED

14 Sept 1997 - Northumberland Shore, Cum. Co. - NO REPORT

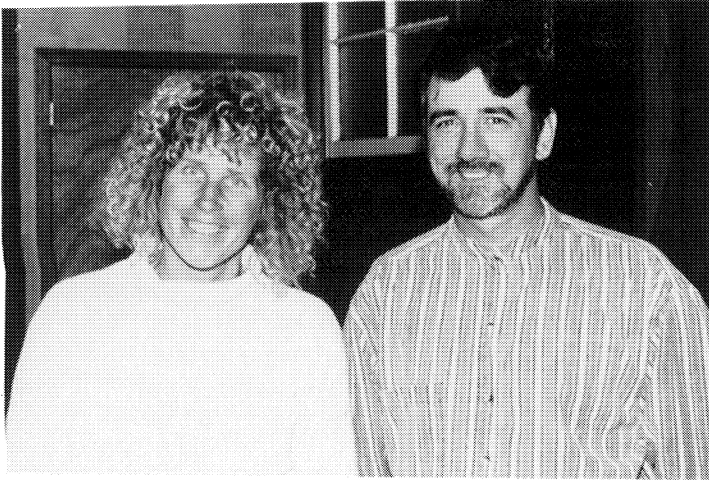
19 - 20 Sept 1997 - Pictou Co. Meeting and Field Trip

Ken McKenna

The September meeting of the Nova Scotia Bird Society was co-hosted by the Pictou County Naturalists Club on Friday Sept. 19 at St. Gregory's Church hall in New Glasgow. Between 50-60 people from many corners of the province were on hand as Richard Murphy delivered an excellent slide presentation depicting the life cycles of the local hawks, owls and falcons of Pictou County. Richard's slides illustrated the habitat, type of nest tree, number and colour of eggs, and the development of the young birds from nestlings to fledglings and included a series on a Sharp-shinned Hawk female returning to the nest to sit on the eggs while the short photography session took place.

At the end of his presentation, Richard paid a tribute to his mentors, Harry and Jean Brennan. Their sequence of slides showed how he and Harry were able to get their fine snaps by either climbing adjacent trees or by constructing a ladder on site. Some of the nests were at dizzying heights. Richard commented on how influential the Brennans have been in sparking his interest in being a naturalist. Unfortunately, because of ill health, Harry was not able to be present for the presentation.

Following the slide show, a presentation was made on behalf of the Naturalists Club to Margaret Kenney, a charter member of the NSBS. Margaret was instrumental in starting and compiling the Springville Christmas Bird Count in the late 1950's and still participates after over 40 years. Margaret also did a great deal of fieldwork in Pictou County for the Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces. Over the years, Margaret has led field trips for the NSBS and has helped a number of people develop an interest in observing our feathered friends.



Steve Vines

Lisë Bell and guest speaker Richard Murphy.

After field trip planning, refreshments and adjournment of the meeting, Randy Lauff led a contingent out for some owling; all to no avail as the owls did not respond that night.

On Saturday about 25 people showed for the field trip to various Pictou County spots. The first stop was Powells Point P.P., which provides a beautiful view of the Northumberland Strait. A single Black-headed Gull was compared to adjacent Bonaparte's gulls. Among the sprinkling of shorebirds present was a group of Red Knot. At a quick stop at the end of the Marshalls Crossing road, kinglets, chickadees and some of the common warblers and sparrows were pished out for a view. Further down the shore, many of the participants had their first visit to the infamous Boat Harbour outflow from the local pulp mill to the Northumberland Strait. Greeting us as we walked down to the small cove, were a nice flock of Wood Ducks. The woodies seem to like this area, as often a flock of 30 birds will be flushed from it. Shorebirds present here were Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted, Least, and Semipalmated Sandpiper, and Killdeer.

The pond in the Abercrombie Management Area at the Granton turnoff from the 106 was the scene of a delicate operation as one of the group extracted the breast of a fresh road-killed Black Duck. Further along the Pictou Causeway, the large raft of Greater Scaup was closely examined and as a result, a Red-necked Grebe and a female Common Goldeneye were placed on the day list. Along the ferry road, a flock of Common Grackles was feeding along the road. Close detective work by Steve Vines showed that the icteridas were taking advantage of grain seed probably spilled from a passing truck coming from the Caribou ferry.

Hunger pangs led the group to a very civilised picnic at Waterside P.P. Someone

produced a large pepper mill to add just the right taste to the fresh garden tomatoes that popped out of many of the lunch containers. While we ate, a Northern Harrier cruised by producing what Junior Metcalfe coined a "crowmotion". A Black Scoter and a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow were additions from the park. Those who stayed on after lunch saw a few more warblers on the drive to the Caribou Island lighthouse and Northern Gannet and Common Eider were spotted from the light. On the way back to Pictou, a visit was made to a quiet little nature preserve on the Murray Road. By this time the forecasted showers had started and the trip finished with a tally of 68 species.

4 October 1997 - Hartlen Point - NO REPORT

11 - 13 October 1997 - Brier Island

Fulton L. Lavender

With more than thirty participants, we enjoyed one of the most successful Thanksgiving Brier Island weekends ever. Participants varied from local attendees to a birder visiting all the way from British Columbia.

The weekend list topped out at 120, but more impressive than that was the balanced birding produced by all three days. Passerine flights, hawk flights, and seabird passages were all observed with minimum effort and maximum enjoyment.

Birding highlights included: 19 Turkey Vultures, 10 Northern Goshawks, 200 Broad-winged Hawks (one of which was a light tan-white, albinistic-type bird), two Peregrine Falcons, 12 Red-tailed Hawks, four Pomarine Jaegers, Manx Shearwater, Leach's Storm-Petrel, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Razorbill, Atlantic Puffin, Long-eared Owl, Lark Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Eastern Phoebe, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Eastern Bluebird.

For me however, these outings are made by very special moments. One such moment occurred on Saturday morning when I had the pleasure and privilege of assisting two couples from the Cape Island area in adding Wilson's Storm-Petrel and Pomarine Jaeger to their Nova Scotia lists. Next year let's hope everyone gets a lifer.

18 October 1997 - Changing of the Yard, Cape Breton - NO REPORT

8 November 1997 - North Head, Cape Breton

Cathy and Allan Murrant

We met at the site of the former Heavy Water Plant, located along the highway from Glace Bay to Port Morien. It is a five-minute drive from Glace Bay. The weather was overcast and light winds. Six birders took part on the trip. Our first stop was at our feeder in Sand Lake to observe the two Baltimore Orioles that were eating red grapes here. We did not see the Yellow-breasted Chat that is still coming to our feeder at the time of

writing this report.

Our next stop was at the Glace Bay Bird Sanctuary. Highlights of our stop were 11 Hooded Mergansers, one male Northern Pintail, a large flock of Bufflehead, one Great Blue Heron, and six Green-winged Teal.

We moved on to Schooner Pond - this is where the trail to North Head starts. Highlights here were 1000+ Redpolls. An immature Northern Goshawk was seen along the road to the mine. Bohemian Waxwings flew over in a few small flocks. White-winged Crossbills that we have been hearing all fall were kind enough to land nearby for a good look. Seabirds were hard to find because of some hunters that were seen travelling ahead on the trail. Only a few Common Eider, Oldsquaw, and White-winged Scoter were seen. Also seen were a White-rumped Sandpiper and two Brown Creepers. At 1:00 p.m. the rain caused us to call it quits. The total species for the day was 43.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Ideas and suggestions for future trips are welcome. You do not need to be an expert to lead a field trip; you just need to share your favourite birding hotspots. Any questions or suggestions should be directed to the Field Trip Co-ordinator, Joan Czapalay at (902) 348-2803, Port Greville NS B0M 1T0 or telephone (902) 455-9892, 2720 Northwood Terrace, Halifax NS B3K 3S8.

Field trips are open to non-members as well as members. Please phone the field trip leader or contact person ahead of time to register for the trip and obtain further information (e.g. directions). In this way no trip is oversubscribed, and you can be contacted in case of cancellation. Field trips range from early morning warbler walks to all day outings, to overnight expeditions to offshore islands. The area code for N.S. is 902.

Sat 10 Jan Sewer Stroll I, Halifax/Dartmouth area

Leader: Fulton Lavender 455-4966. Meet at Hartlen Point at 8:00 a.m. to look for rare birds and regular winter visitors. Fulton Lavender will lead this all-day trip which will end at Herring Cove via Bedford. Dress for outdoor weather and bring a lunch. Plan to car pool as much as possible. Please register in advance. Storm date Sunday, January 11.

Sat 24 Jan Prospect Point Winter Watch

Leader: t.b.a. No registration is necessary. Join members of the NSBS to observe sea ducks and look for winter strays between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Beginners welcome!

Sat 1 Feb Harbour Hop, Cape Breton

Leader: Cathy Murrant 737-2684. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Renwick Park (Brookside and Commercial St.), Glace Bay. Winter rarities are a good possibility on this walk.

Sat 7 Feb Sewer Stroll II, Halifax/Dartmouth area

As above (see Sat 10 Jan). Storm date Sun 8 Feb.

Sat 28 Feb Barrington - Cape Sable Island

Leaders: Johnny and Sandra Nickerson 745- 2958. Join Joan Czapalay, Johnny Nickerson and other members of the Southwest Nova Birders to top up your winter list. Snowy Owl, Turkey Vulture, Dovekies, Harlequin Ducks, King Eider, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls are all likely, as well as a variety of sparrows and winter regulars. Meet at Tim Horton's in Barrington Passage at 8:00 a.m. Bring a lunch.

Sat 7 Mar Owl Prowl - Pictou and Antigonish Cos.

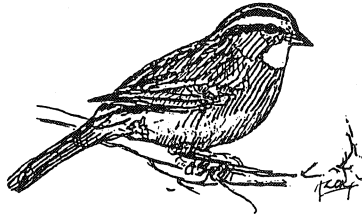
Possible leaders: Calvin Brennan, Randy Lauff, Ken McKenna 752-0044 (w), 752-7644 (h). Listen to the Bird Line (852-CHAT) in February for confirmation of this trip.

Sat 21 Mar Chebucto Head to Pennant Point

Possible leader: Blake Maybank. End of winter seabird watch. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Duncans Cove parking area. From Halifax, take Rt. 349 to Herring Cove. After approx. 7.5 km, the road to Duncans Cove is on the left. The parking area is 1.6 km down this road. No registration is necessary. Storm date: March 22.

Sat 28 Mar Baccaro and Blanche Peninsula

Leader: Donna Ensor 875-4269. Early spring birding with Donna. Rarities have shown up here quite often at this time of year. Dress warmly and bring a lunch. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Irving Station in Port Clyde.



Sat 4 Apr Getting Ready for the Birds, Halifax

10 a.m. to 12 noon, Museum of Natural History, Summer St. Bring your family and friends and join members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society and learn how they enjoy birding. Some species of birds have already arrived back from their wintering places and are already raising families. Soon the woods will be filled with brightly coloured wood warblers. Learn to use binoculars and spotting scopes; what field guides are most useful; learn how to recognise different birdcalls and see some museum specimens of the kinds of birds you might see in various habitats throughout Nova Scotia.

Sat 11 Apr Martinique Beach

Leader: Ian McLaren 429-7024. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Scotia Bank parking lot, Bridge Plaza, Dartmouth. Look for early migrants such as Piping Plover and Ipswich Sparrow as well as possible rarities. Bring a lunch.

Sat 25 Apr The Hawk

Leader: Johnny Nickerson 745-2958. Meet at Tim Horton's in Barrington Passage at 7:00 a.m. for a full day of spring birding with Johnny Nickerson on Cape Sable Island. The local B&Bs and restaurants will cater to members of the NSBS. April on Cape Island is becoming well known for interesting birds. Please register in advance.

Sun 26 Apr Wolfville Area

Leader: Jim Wolford 542-7650. Pond hopping for ducks and early migrants. Meet at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre, Front St., Wolfville at 10 a.m. This will be a joint field trip with the Blomidon Field Naturalists.

Sun 3 May Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary

Leader: Alan Smith 506-536-0164 (h) or 506- 364-5038 (w). Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the APBS parking lot. Take exit 3 from TCH 104 at the Wandlyn Inn and proceed a few km toward Nappan; the entrance is on the left. Wear appropriate footwear for wet conditions and bring a lunch. Enjoy a day of observing waterfowl, shorebirds and early migrants.

Fri 15 May - Mon 18 May Bon Portage Island

Leader: Claire Diggins 825-6152. **PRE-REGISTRATION IS NECESSARY!** Depart late afternoon or early evening on Friday from Prospect Point Wharf. Bring food, drinking water, warm clothing and footwear suitable for rough (sometimes wet) terrain, a flashlight, mattress sheet and sleeping bag. Carry gear in waterproof bags or containers. Field guides are available on the island,

as are cooking pans, dishes and utensils. There is a charge of \$45 to NSBS members for three nights accommodation, as well as a boat trip donation.

Wed 20 May Halifax Co. Early Morning Warbler Walk

Leader: Fred Dobson 852-3042. Meet at 6:00 a.m. at the parking lot at the junction of Prospect Rd. Rte. 333 and St. Margarets Bay Rd. Duration: 2 to 3 hours.

Sat 23 May Hopewell, Pictou Co., For Owls and Warblers

Details in April issue of NS Birds.

Sat 23 May Warbler Walk, Yarmouth Co.

Details in April issue of NS Birds.

Sun 24 May Blomidon Warbler Walk

Details in April issue of NS Birds.

Sat 30 May Hawk Picnic Day

Lillian Scott Perry 637-2844. Bird Cape Sable Island with the Southwest Nova Birders and enjoy a picnic lunch on our own Hawk Hill. This is a good day for beginners and out-of-towners to visit our favourite hot spots. No registration is necessary. Meet at Tim Horton's in Barrington Passage at 7:00 a.m. Plan to have supper and spend night at an old farm homestead in Upper Clyde. Bring sleeping bags, picnic food, and insect repellent. Lots of space for tenting by the Clyde R. Take the early morning warbler walk Sunday, May 31st.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Thu 22 Jan 1998 - Member's Slide Night

Thu 26 Feb 1998 - "Birding in Manitoba" - Richard Stern and Ken McKenna

Thu 26 Mar 1998 - "The Seabird Challenge" - Fulton Lavender

Thu 23 Apr 1998 - "Identifying Bird Songs" - Cindy Staicer

The above meetings are held in the Auditorium, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax at 8:00 p.m. Meetings are held the **fourth Thursday** in the month. Non-members are welcome.

Note: In case of poor winter road conditions, since the February speakers are both from outside the Halifax area, there may be a last minute change in the programs, with Fulton Lavender presenting in February, and Richard Stern and Ken McKenna presenting in March.

Updates to the schedule may be found on the NSBS Bird Line and Web-site.

The Society attempts to have one meeting a year outside the Halifax area. This year we are planning to have our September 1998 meeting in Cape Breton. The meeting will be held in the Industrial Cape Breton area towards the end of September. The plan is to have the meeting on the Friday evening with Field Trip(s) on the Saturday. This will be an interesting time of the year to see migrating birds, as well as a lovely time of year to visit Cape Breton. More details will be made available in the upcoming issues of "Nova Scotia Birds". The contact persons for this event are Hugh Metcalf, Jr. (902) 849-5054 and David McCorquodale (902) 794-2172.

Ideas and suggestions for future programs are welcome. Any suggestions or questions should be directed to Gisèle d'Entremont, 1325 Dresden Row, Apt. 9, Halifax, N.S. B3J 2J9 or call (902) 422-7739.

NSBS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 1997

MINUTES OF MEETING

With approximately 53 members present, the President Lisè Bell, opened the meeting at 8.03 p.m., 23 October 1997.

1. APPROVAL OF LAST YEAR'S MINUTES

These minutes had been published in the January 1997 issue of Nova Scotia Birds which, together with copies of other reports, had been distributed around the room. There being no amendments or omissions, approval of the minutes was moved by Peggy Wells and seconded by Clarence Stevens Sr. Motion CARRIED.

2. BUSINESS ARISING

None.

3. REPORTS

3.1 Treasurer's Report

A copy is in this issue. Acceptance was moved by Bill Caudle; seconded by Shirley Cohrs. Motion CARRIED.

3.2 Membership Report

	1996	1997
Single	352	322
Family	151	141
Institutions	16	15
Life	18	17
Exchange	7	7
Total	544	502

This represents a drop of 9 %. This may not seem too serious, BUT it has been going on for some years now.

Acceptance was moved by Christine Ross and seconded by Ruth Ballam. Motion CARRIED.

3.3 Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund (SSTF) Report

Ken Gregoire presented this report. A copy follows.

3.4 SSTF financial Report

A copy is in this issue. Acceptance moved by David Currie. Seconded by John Cohrs. Motion CARRIED.

3.5 President's Report

The President then gave her report and awarded the Puffin of the Year. Both reports are in this issue.

3.6 Report of the Nominating Committee

Sylvia Fullerton gave the report of the Nominating Committee, which consisted of herself, Bob Dickie, and Ian McLaren. After calling for further nominations three times, the President moved its adoption. Don McNeill seconded the motion. Motion CARRIED.

The Executive for 1997-1998 is:

President	Ms. Gisèle d'Entremont
Vice President	Mr. Chris Field
Past President	Mrs. Lisë Bell
Editor in Chief	Dr. Marion Allsebrook
Secretary	Mrs. Joan Waldron

Membership
Treasurer
Directors

Mrs. Joan Czapalay
Mrs. Bernice Moores
Ms. Shirley Brothers
Dr. Douglas Roy
Ms. Angela Thibodeau
Mr. Tony Robinson
Mr. James C. Morrow

Solicitor
Auditor

The Editor in Chief is a member of the Executive but is appointed by the Executive on an annual basis. The Solicitor and Auditor positions are honorary.



Don Purchase

YOUR 1997-98 EXECUTIVE (Left to right): Douglas Roy, Lisë Bell, Bernice Moores, Angela Thibodeau, Joan Waldron, Chris Field, Joan Czapalay, Gisèle d'Entremont. Absent: Shirley Brothers, Marion Allsebrook

4. NEW BUSINESS

- 4.1 Barbara Hinds suggested a committee be set up to approach owners of high-rise buildings and request that they extinguish the lights in these buildings during the migration periods. They would save energy costs and also save birds who might crash into them. Lisë Bell stated that she would be willing to serve on such a committee.

- 4.2 It was also suggested that we should contact owners of sawmills and ask them to not allow all terrain vehicles from using the sawdust hills as they kill nesting swallows.
- 4.3 The field trip co-ordinator should set up some trips aimed at beginning birders. Leaders should also have membership application forms and other brochures available for distribution. If someone wishes to join on the spot the leader must be willing to accept their money and pass it on to the membership director.
- 4.4 Joyce Purchase then made a presentation of a painting to Shirley Cohrs to mark her retirement as Editor in Chief after serving 22 years.



Don Purchase

Joyce Purchase presents painting to Shirley Cohrs.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

A wine and cheese party followed.

Respectfully submitted,

William G. Caudle
Acting Secretary

NSBS TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to present the financial report for 1997. This is the third year I have done so but it does not get any easier. I will go over the significant points and then try to answer any questions.

This year has seen changes since last year. We had an excess of receipts over disbursements of \$1470.20 compared to an excess last year of \$731.80.

Membership - the money is down but I don't think we can cover it off by stating that some people may have paid for more than one year. This year the figure is \$8247, last year it was \$8373; now compare those figures with 1995, when we received \$10,000. No, my impression is that membership is dropping.

Sales are also down, \$2465 last year compared to \$3500 the year before.

Chat line advertisements have not been too bad this year, every little bit helps defray the cost of the telephone line.

At the boat show in February we spent \$25.97 more than we brought in — a very minor cost but we are not in it to make money but to make ourselves known to the public. A very commendable effort.

Exchange on US funds is a result of the low Canadian dollar compared to the American dollar.

The cost of printing N.S. Birds is up but that is only inflation. Typing the magazine is the same.

Other printing is way up. We were getting low on Birding Nova Scotia, this has always a good seller especially with the American tourists; they quite happily pay \$12 US for a copy. The printer had made the plates for our last print job a few years ago and offered to re-print us 2000 copies for \$5350. Since we sell them for more than that, (our printing costs plus packaging and postage), we cashed in one of our GIC's and took advantage of the offer, so we now have about 1500 copies on hand.

Postage is down, I prepay a large sum to the post office for mailing Nova Scotia Birds and when their accounts show a low balance I send them another cheque. They may owe us money but that will go towards mailing the January issue.

The figure for insurance looks to be about double what it should be. That is because I have paid in advance for 1998. The report covers two years.

The editors' expenses are down, I think there was a photographic award buried in last year's figure.

The AGM figure was to pay for last year's meeting; I did not get a request for an advance this time around.

Usually I don't show the money sent in with membership renewals for the SSTF separately, it just cycles through. This time the amounts are shown differently - at the September meeting of the executive, we voted to donate \$50 to the SSTF as a memorial for the late Dr. Phyllis Dobson.

That I think covers all of the salient points, are there any questions?

I now move adoption of the report.

William G. Caudle
Treasurer

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended September 30, 1997
(With comparative figures for the year ended September 30, 1996)

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

Receipts	1997	1996
Membership dues	\$8,247.00	\$8,373.40
Sale of publications, etc.	\$1,663.34	\$2,465.80
Nova Scotia Museum Grant	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Interest, G.I.C.'s Net	\$271.52	\$710.03
Bank	\$17.17	\$8.14
Sold GIC	\$6,788.07	\$0.00
Miscellaneous income	\$5.81	\$31.77
Chatline adverts	\$200.00	\$50.00
Boat Show	\$0.00	\$258.25
Exchange on US funds	\$233.20	\$190.13
Received for SSTF	\$949.00	\$0.00
Total receipts	\$20,400.11	\$14,087.52

Disbursements	1997	1996
Nova Scotia Birds & Fall Flyer	\$7,428.37	\$8,551.55
Typing N.S. Birds	\$961.50	\$961.60
Printing and Stationery	\$6,309.40	\$330.14
Postage	\$991.15	\$1,375.20
Bird information line	\$504.81	\$434.54
Editor's expenses	\$180.22	\$377.70
Insurance	\$772.00	\$368.00
Cost of things, etc. for sale	\$0.00	\$75.00
Slide Collection	\$32.68	\$0.00
Environmental Network	\$0.00	\$10.00
Records editor's expenses	\$0.00	\$281.33
Honorariums	\$100.00	\$50.00

Field trip co-ordinator's expenses	\$0.00	\$22.20
Exhibition Expenses	\$25.97	\$251.38
CNF Membership	\$0.00	\$40.00
Bank charges	\$50.85	\$0.00
Registry of Joint Stocks	\$60.00	\$0.00
Puffin wood & other awards	\$4.60	\$55.94
Annual General Meeting expenses	\$346.41	\$59.49
Telephone	\$102.95	\$38.83
Monthly meeting expenses	\$35.00	\$72.82
Paid to SSTF	\$999.00	\$0.00
Total Disbursements	\$18,429.91	\$13,355.72

Excess receipts over disbursements	\$1,470.20	\$731.80
---	-------------------	-----------------

BALANCE SHEET

Assets	1997	1996
Electric Typewriter (cost \$296.45)		\$1.00
Steel filing cabinet (cost \$99.96)		\$1.00
Steel filing cabinet (cost \$98.99)		\$1.00
Computer and printer (cost \$1034.22)		\$122.50
Subtotal		\$125.50

Guaranteed Investment Certificates	\$6,275.80	\$12,681.84
Bank balance	\$4,907.95	\$3,465.37

Total Assets and Members' Equity	\$11,183.75	\$16,272.71
---	--------------------	--------------------

STATEMENT OF MEMBERS' EQUITY

Opening balance	\$16,272.71
Excess receipts over disbursements	\$1,470.20
Plus Interest	\$460.98
Less: depreciation	(\$125.50)
Less: Sold GIC	(\$6,788.07)
Less: Cheque#180 from 1996	(\$56.70)
Less: Donation to SSTF In Memory of Phyllis Dobson	(\$50.00)
Closing balance	\$11,183.75

Original signed by: Lisë Bell, President; W. G. Caudle, Treasurer; J. Morrow, Auditor. Audited and found correct according to the books.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I give my report for 1996–1997, I would like to remind you that this was the forty-second year of the existence of the Nova Scotia Bird Society. Through the years a wide divergence of members has come and gone each contributing their individual enthusiasm and talents.

We had some downs and some ups this year. Early this year we were sorry that Wendie Tay was unable to continue as Secretary due to ill health, but grateful that together with her husband Karl, she continued to be our Records Editor. We were not able to find a new secretary, but the stalwart executive shared the duties, helped out from time to time by Jim Taylor.

The death of Brad Amirault was a great blow — not only did we lose our magazine mailer, but also lost a keen, enthusiastic birder and volunteer. He was a member who gave much to the Society and to birds. However, the mailing did have to be done and Shirley Brothers came to our assistance. She has done a commendable job.

In addition this year we lost an early member, a previous editor and a true friend to both the Society and to birds, Phyllis Dobson. She was our second Newsletter editor and really was the pioneer in getting it rolling.

On the up side the executive was tremendous — all performing their respective positions effectively and efficiently and I thank them all most sincerely.

As last year, membership is down. I would like to see this trend change over the next few years with the retirement of many baby boomers. Birdwatching and gardening are two of the most popular hobbies for retiring people. Thanks go to Peter Payzant for keeping our database current and making our mailing labels. Thanks to Christine Ross for all her hard work this past year.

Although they are not here this evening, Christine Cornell and Kevin Tutt have done a marvelous job of providing us with interesting trips. Unfortunately they relinquished this job to move to New Brunswick where a new job awaited Christine. Thankfully Joan Czapalay had agreed to take over this position.

As in past seasons, Blake Maybank religiously has looked after our Bird Line — updating it regularly and providing its users with current announcements and bird sightings. Thank you Blake.

Our editor Shirley Cohrs has done a wonderful job again this year, providing a full and interesting Newsletter. After much thought, and after 22 years, Shirley has decided to step down as Editor and pursue new and interesting birding areas.

Again this year we showed the flag at the Boat Show in February. While it does not make a profit for us, it certainly makes our existence better known. Thanks go out to Dr. Doug Roy who organises and co-ordinates our booth at this show. We participated in the Parks are for People program and Society Field Trips took place from one end of the province to the other. No “big” environmental issues affecting birds were raised to the executive, although we maintain a watchful eye on the possibility of the development of Hartlen Point.

In September of this year, we again made an effort to hold a Bird Society meeting outside the Metro area. This year the meeting was held in New Glasgow. The meeting was hosted by Ken McKenna, co-ordinated by Gisèle d'Entremont (our Program Director) and attended by about 50 people. The speaker was Richard Murphy and his talk was about nesting raptors and owls. The pictures he showed were fantastic and the talk well received. That night there was an owl prowl and Ken McKenna led a Field Trip the next day. A good time was had by all that attended. I was most impressed at the turnout, and the presence of many members of the executive. These out of town meetings are most beneficial to the Society which is, after all, a province-wide one, and should be continued as much as possible.

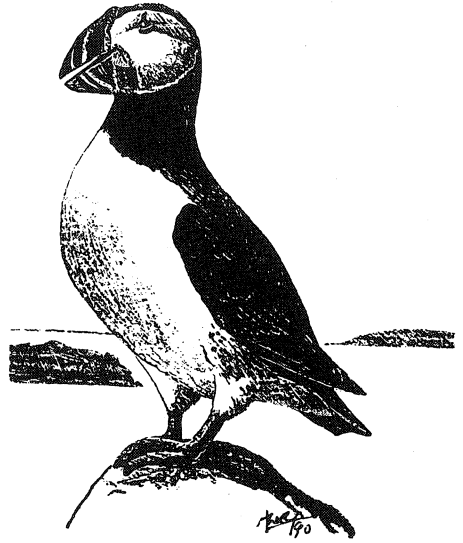
It remains now for me to thank those who have enabled the Society to operate this year. I have already mentioned the executive, but special mention must be made to two long serving members who are retiring: our Treasurer, Mr. Bill Caudle, and our Membership Secretary, Mrs. Christine Ross. They have given untold hours of their time and effort to the Society - at meetings, field trips, executive meetings, trade shows, and outside engagements. Thank you both.

Many thanks go out to Christine Cornell and Kevin Tutt - Field Trip Co-ordinators; Blake Maybank for the Chat Line; all the sub-editors of Nova Scotia Birds; Gisèle d'Entremont as Program Director; John Cohrs (whom I know quite well) for chairing the meetings and looking after the Slide Collection; Peter Payzant for looking after the Internet page and our mailing needs; Bob Dickie for picking up the mail weekly and distributing it to its respective homes and for housing the stationery of the Bird Society; the Directors of the

Sanctuary and the Scholarship Trust Fund - Ken Gregoire, David Currie, Eric Cooke and Shirley Cohrs; Inez Roberts for providing us with refreshments at our meetings; and Shirley Brothers for doing our mailings. My sincere thanks go to Mr. Tony Robinson, our Honorary Solicitor and Mr. James Morrow, our Honorary Auditor. Thanks to Doug Roy and Gisèle d'Entremont for providing the wine and cheese after the meeting. With the wine and cheese in mind, I will bring this report to a fast close. Thank you for having me as your President for the past three years. My best wishes go to our new President and Executive.

PUFFIN OF THE YEAR AWARD

This is my favourite part of being the President. The recipient of this year's Puffin has had a keen interest in birds since he was a boy. He enjoyed watching bird behaviour and nesting habits. As time passed, he understood their habits and habitats, continually enlightening friends and acquaintances alike. His partner in life shares his interest, as do their children, all true friends to the birds. Their property provides food and sanctuary year round. He had given unselfishly of his time to show local birders and society members his special places. He is an enthusiastic photographer and enjoys giving slide shows to school children, friends, and other organisations. His slides are of birds, wildflowers and all nature and are highly regarded by many. For many years now he has acted as house finder and landlord to a number of our more stressed birds - hawks and owls. Just when you think you are a very active birder, wandering 4 miles up a logging road and half a mile into a bog you are likely to encounter him carrying a twelve-foot ladder through the brush. It is my pleasure to select someone who has done something worthwhile to further the cause of the Bird Society. Harry Brennan is such a person. I am honoured to be able to have him as this year's recipient of the Puffin of the Year Award. Janet Baker will be accepting the award on his behalf due to ill health.





Don Purchase

Lisë Bell presents 'Puffin of the Year' award to Janet Baker, accepting on behalf of Harry Brennan.

SANCTUARY AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND REPORT

The summer of 1997 provided perfect conditions for the Terns breeding in Southwest Nova Scotia. The ideal weather, coupled with a generous food supply, resulted in one of the most successful years in recent times.

In Mahone Bay, Westhavers Island had 168 pairs along with a stable population on Grassy Island. In early spring we visited Grassy Island to clean up and place Roseate Tern nesting shelters. We returned in the fall to relocate and ballast these shelters to survive winter storms when the island goes awash.

Ted d'Eon reported 756 pairs on the Brothers Islands near Pubnico, with 126 of these nesting on Southern Brothers. This increase on Brothers may well be the result of Terns abandoning marginal colonies like that on Peters Island. This is the second year in a row that we have not had any Tern success on Peters Island. The main problem is Gull predation, with the Gull population doing rather well between the spring lobster fishery and the fish plant in Westport. We hope that in two years when this year's Terns return we can get them to nest on Peters Island. Many thanks go to Robert MacDormand for his help on Peters Island.

Indian Island had another great year of Eider production, and there were 78 Guillemots with three nests. This is a very difficult island to access, which is going to be its salvation from human disturbance. One bright note was that in the spring of 1996 we placed a Tree Swallow house here, and returned to find a pair of Tree Swallows and four chicks. I would like to thank Peter Bell for providing transportation to the island — another example of the importance of local involvement.

For the third year we have maintained a position on the Mahone Bay RADAC committee. We think it is important to sustain a contact with the aquaculture industry with regards to their predator control of ducks. The number of sites of suspended blue mussels is increasing in areas where Scoters frequently winter.

On the recommendation of Sheila Van Schaick of Bird Island Tours, we placed a donation box in their office.

The youth field trip was cancelled this fall on the recommendation of the organisers. This trip is difficult to plan with tide and weather and the group thought that student interest was declining.

In 1998 we will welcome members' ideas and continue to exert positive stewardship on our islands. By improving nesting habitat with use of nest boxes and hopefully Osprey towers, we may make 1998 a productive year on these rare islands.

In closing, I would like to thank most sincerely the executive of Shirley Cohrs, Eric Cooke and Dave Currie for all their help. On behalf of the executive I would like to thank Shirley Cohrs for her hospitality provided for our meetings during the year. After many years of great service to the Fund, Eric Cooke has retired. We would like to welcome Peter Bell as a new director of the Sanctuary and Trust Fund.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ken Gregoire

**NSBS SSTF Financial Statements to September 30, 1997
(with comparison for the 12 months ended September 30, 1996)**

Receipts	1997	1996
Contributions	\$994.00	\$1,226.30
G.I.C. Interest	\$1,246.80	\$1,437.81
Bank Interest	\$9.97	\$40.50
Total receipts	\$2,250.77	\$2,704.61

Disbursements	1997	1996
Bank charges	\$64.53	\$118.04
Taxes	\$1,337.96	\$611.64
Raptor Rehabilitation Program	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Youth Field Trip	\$75.20	\$135.52
Photo Guild Competition	\$0.00	\$34.29
Tern Project	\$0.00	\$650.75
Christmas Bird Counts	\$32.74	\$42.69
G.I.C. Purchase	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Miscellaneous	\$35.65	\$300.00
Total Disbursements	\$2,546.08	\$6,892.93

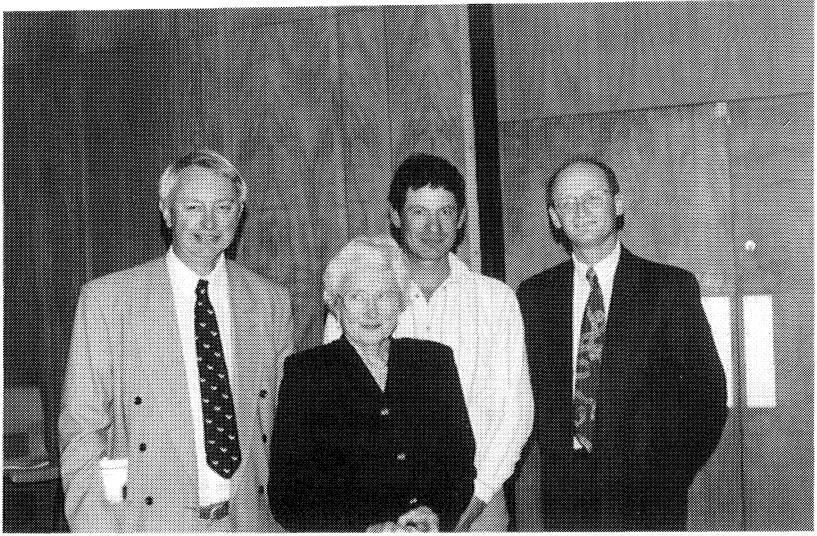
Excess – Receipts over Disbursements	(\$295.31)	(\$4,188.32)
Opening Bank Balance	\$3,527.15	\$7,715.47
Closing Bank Balance	\$3,231.84	\$3,527.15

BALANCE SHEET

Assets	1997	1996
Guaranteed Investment Certificates	\$26,400.00	\$26,400.00
Bald Islands	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Hertford Island	\$160.00	\$160.00
Indian Island	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00
N. Kemptville Property	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Peter Island	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Port Joli Property	\$13,000.00	\$13,000.00
Bank Balance	\$3,231.84	\$3,527.15
Total Assets	\$77,291.84	\$77,587.15

STATEMENT OF SURPLUS

	1997	1996
Opening balance	\$77,587.15	\$76,775.47
Excess Receipts over Disbursements	(\$295.31)	(\$4,188.32)
Inc./Dec. in G.I.C.	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Closing balance	\$77,291.84	\$77,587.15



Don Purchase

SSTF Directors Ken Gregoire, Shirley Cohrs, Peter Bell, and Dave Currie

GENERAL INFORMATION

This is a collection of information that will be published from time to time. It is useful for those new to the NSBS, and a reminder/refresher to others. When information is not published in detail, a reference will be given to a previous issue, so you can easily look it up.

A. The NSBS

Formed in 1955, the Nova Scotia Bird Society is directly affiliated with the Canadian Nature Federation. The activities of the society are centred on the observation and study of the bird life of this province and the preservation of habitat.

B. NSBS Bird Line

The Nova Scotia Bird Society maintains a telephone hot line for reporting sightings and finding out what's around. The number is (902) 852-CHAT (2428). This is a local call from the Halifax-Dartmouth area.

The hot line includes the following information:

Highlights

Reports/Observations
Upcoming Field Trips
Contact people for information on birds throughout Nova Scotia.

A transcript is also available - to receive an email copy of transcripts, contact Blake Maybank <Blake_Maybank@pch.gc.ca> or (902) 852-2077. The transcript is also posted on the NSBS Web-site.

C. NSBS Web-site

The Nova Scotia Bird Society maintains a Web-site. Information is available on-line on the following subjects:

- Upcoming Meetings
- Upcoming Field Trips
- Telephone Information Line
- Information for Visitors
- Latest Issue of Nova Scotia Birds
- Joining the Society
- Birding Supplies
- The "rec.birds" Frequently-asked Questions
- The "Optics for Birding" home page
- Links to other Web birding sites

The URL is: <http://cfn.cs.dal.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc/nsbsmain.html>

D. REGIONAL CONTACTS

Here are the contact people for information on birds throughout Nova Scotia (code 902).

PROVINCE-WIDE:

Blake Maybank - 852-2077 (bilingue) <Blake_Maybank@pch.gc.ca>, or
Ian McLaren - 429-7024.

PROVINCIAL REGIONS

Amherst region	Con Desplanques - 667-3790
Annapolis Valley	Richard Stern - 678-1975
Antigonish County	Randy Lauff - 867-1115
Brier Island	Carl Haycock - 839-2960
Cape Breton Island	Cathy Murrant - 737-2684 or Dave MacCorquodale - 794-2172
Halifax Regional	Blake Maybank - 852-2077

Municipality
Pictou County
Shelburne and
Yarmouth Counties
(incl. Cape Sable
Island)

Ken McKenna - 752-7644
Murray Newell - 745-3340

Practice common courtesies in contacts with other people; for instance, when telephoning for information, restrict calling times to reasonable hours of the day (e.g. 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.). If you have to leave a message, and are calling long distance, then the return call may be call collect.

If you are willing to be a contact, e-mail or write the Editor, and the list will be updated in the next magazine.

E. Membership and the magazine

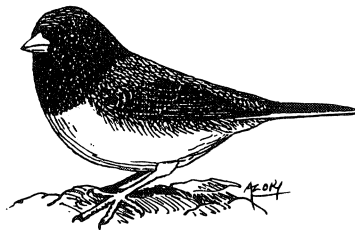
Membership in the Nova Scotia Bird Society runs from January 1 to December 31 each year. The January issues of Nova Scotia Birds will be mailed only to members in good standing at the time of mailing. Others will receive a second reminder. On receipt of their membership dues, late joiners will receive the January issue, **BUT NOT IMMEDIATELY**. Because of the prohibitive cost of mailing single copies by first class mail, we wait until we have enough copies on hand for a second class mailing. Payment of dues prior to December 31 is the best way to ensure your receipt of Nova Scotia Birds on time.

F. About Field Trip Reports

See Volume 36, No. 1, January 1994 for guidelines on writing Field Trip Reports.

G. Bird Reports - What to Report

Please see Volume 31, No. 1, January 1989 page 4. See also Volume 38, No. 21, April 1996 "Rare and Difficult Bird Report Form".



NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
Membership Application/Renewal Form

Membership in the Nova Scotia Bird Society is open to all. The membership fee includes a subscription to our journal Nova Scotia Birds. The membership runs from January to December each year. Rates are:

Individual:	\$15/year, for	_____	years	\$	_____
Family:	\$18/year, for	_____	years	\$	_____
Institutional:	\$25/year, for	_____	years	\$	_____
Life:	\$375			\$	_____
Additional for addresses outside of Canada:					
	\$2/year, for	_____	years	\$	_____

Membership Total: \$ _____

The following items are also available:

_____	NSBS crests, \$4 each	\$	_____
_____	NSBS decals, \$1 each	\$	_____
_____	Bird Checklist, four for \$1	\$	_____
_____	Birding Nova Scotia, \$12	\$	_____
Supplies Total:			\$ _____

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to our Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund. Annual report published yearly.

Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund Donation: \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Name: _____

Renewal

Address: _____

You already have my correct address

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

e-mail: _____

I WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP WITH:

<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality	<input type="checkbox"/> Magazine	<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Leading Bird Walks
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Leading School Group

Please mail to the Membership Secretary: Joan Czapalay,
 2720 Northwood Terrace,
 Halifax, N.S. B3K 3S8

OBITUARIES

BRADFORD J. AMIRAUT (1936-1997)

by Jim Taylor

A hard worker for the NSBS, Bradford Amirault died at the age of 61 in Upper Sackville, N.S., on 22 April 1997. He had a previous bout with cancer some 10 years ago before, which unfortunately returned during the summer of 1996. He was a retired sailor and is survived by his wife Joan, a son, a daughter and two grandchildren.

A latecomer to the birding fraternity, Brad plunged into learning his birds and songs fast. I first met him by Highway 100 at Drain Lake to stop to see what he was looking at, and we changed each other's lives forever. He enjoyed the field trips, seemed to know everyone in N.S., but met many new friends on these outings and enjoyed meeting them again each time, going over old times and looking at birds on the side. Birding was a way for him to get out and enjoy life and whatever nature had to offer. He became very knowledgeable in gulls and shorebirds quite rapidly. He was a great joy to be with on casual birding days with Mike Heaney and I. He really had to see a bird to believe what it was and we had many a long discussion on getting a bird identified, but we learned something at the same time. He liked gardening and had a great feeder section in his backyard, attracting the odd rare species for the rest of us to come and see. He was a great cook and I had many a lunch with him after a morning of birding. His last good bird was a Eurasian Green-winged Teal at Chezzetcook with Mike and I.

He took part in several Christmas Bird Counts every winter, and in his last spring did a Breeding Bird Survey in the Beaverbank area. He was a member of several societies, and President of the Colostomy Society, but despite his busy schedule, looked after the mailing of the NSBS newsletter for the past several years in a very responsible manner.

We will all miss him — he was a good personal friend and a joy to all fellow birders.

WENDIE ANN TAY (1944 -1997)

by J. Shirley Cohrs

Wendie, our bubbling and enthusiastic Records Editor died on 10 December 1997 after a long travail. The hearts of everyone who knew her will be greatly saddened.

Wendie loved birds, and she loved people, especially enjoying birding people. She delighted in Field Trips and Christmas Counts accompanied by her husband Karl, and her children Derek and Julie who had become keen birders, swept along by her zeal.

In her last few years, as well as taking on the job as Secretary to our Society, she threw herself into the position of Records Editor with her characteristic keenness and verve, being full of new and useful ideas. Her patience and courage throughout her long illness was an inspiration and example to all of us who witnessed it.

We will miss you Wendie, very much indeed, and for a long time.

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

EXECUTIVE 1997-1998

President	Gisèle d'Entremont
Vice President	Chris Field
Past President	Lisè Bell
Treasurer	Bernice Moores
Secretary	Joan Waldron
Membership Secretary	Joan Czapalay
Editor	Marion Allsebrook
Director	Shirley Brothers
Director	Doug Roy
Director	Angela Thibodeau
Solicitor	Tony Robinson
Auditor	James C. Morrow

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Life Membership	\$375
Single Membership	\$15
Family Membership	\$18
Institutional Membership	\$25

Note: Outside Canada please add \$2.

NSBS Web Site: <http://cfn.cs.dal.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc/nsbsmain.html>

NSBS e-mail: ip-bird@chebucto.ns.ca

NSBS Bird Line: (902) 852-CHAT or (902) 852-2428

Table of Contents

From the Editor's Desk	2
Summer/Fall Bird Reports 1997	3
LOONS TO GREBES	3
TUBENOSES TO GANNETS	4
HERONS AND RELATIVES	5
NEW WORLD VULTURES	6
WATERFOWL	6
DIURNAL RAPTORS	8
GALLINACEOUS BIRDS	9
RALLIDS	10
SHOREBIRDS	11
PHALAROPES TO AUKS	18
DOVES TO KINGFISHER	22
WOODPECKERS	24
FLYCATCHERS TO SWALLOWS	25
CORVIDS TO WHEATEARS	26
BLUEBIRDS TO STARLINGS	28
VIREOS AND WARBLERS	30
TANAGERS TO TOWHEE	34
SPARROWS	34
LAPLAND LONGSPUR TO COWBIRD	36
ORIOLES TO HOUSE SPARROW	37
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS	38
BIRDING AREAS	40
DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF BIRD REPORTS	41
DEADLINE FOR OTHER SUBMISSIONS	41
Pictures of the Year	42
AOU Changes, Summer 1997	48
SPLITS	48
SCIENTIFIC NAME CHANGES	48
OTHER CHANGES	48
Spring North American Migration Count	49
Scientists and Innovators In the Schools	50
Field Trip Reports	51
Upcoming Field Trips and Special Events	58
Upcoming Meetings	61
NSBS Annual General Meeting - 1997	62
MINUTES OF MEETING	62
NSBS TREASURER'S REPORT	66
PRESIDENT'S REPORT	69
PUFFIN OF THE YEAR AWARD	71
SANCTUARY AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND REPORT	72
General Information	75
Obituaries	79
Bradford J. Amirault (1936-1997)	79
Wendie Ann Tay (1944 -1997)	79