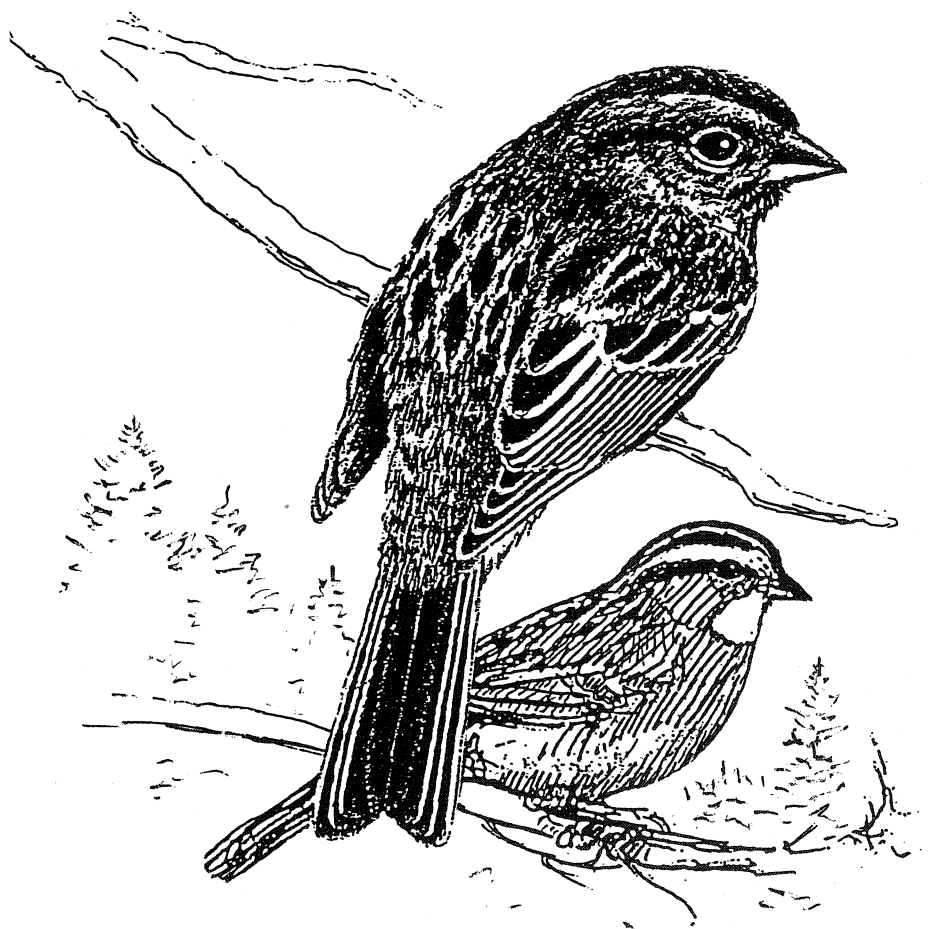


# Nova Scotia Birds

## Summer 1998



Acorn  
1998

# NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS

A Publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society

---

Volume 40 Number 3

Summer 1998

---

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor	Marion Allsebrook
Associate Editor	Paul Quinn
Records Compiler	Karl Tay
Photographs	Ian McLaren
Seasonal Bird Reports	Fred Dobson Sylvia Fullerton Andy Horn Blake Maybank David McCorquodale Ian McLaren Eric Mills

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: "Tree Sparrow and White-throated Sparrow" by Azor Vienneau

ISSN 0383-9537

Publications Mail  
Reg. No. 4628

Published four times a year

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

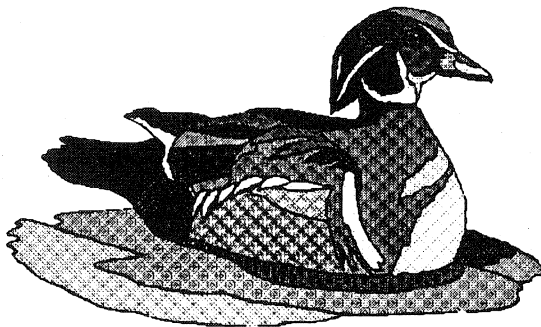


The next issue will be the Fall Flyer. It will not be a full-scale issue, but will contain the seasonal bird reports for the summer season June–July, i.e. the breeding season. This used to be merged with the fall reports in the January issue. Hopefully this will encourage you to submit more bird reports and a better picture of the breeding season will be available, e.g. to the Maritime Nest Records Scheme (see letter to editor in Spring 1998 issue). The Fall Flyer is expected to reach you in September/October, so announcements regarding the AGM are published in this issue, to ensure the announcement and nominations reach the members before the AGM.

In answer to your questions, we spell place names according to the *Gazetteer of Canada - Nova Scotia*. You may be surprised by some of them, e.g. the correct spelling for Hartlen Pt., Conrad Beach and Daniel Head does not have an “s”; apostrophes are normally not used in place names.

I would like to welcome Paul Quinn to the Editorial Board as Associate Editor. He has been critical to the production of the magazine since I became Editor, and has taken on an increasing portion of the Editor's tasks. Next year, we will switch positions — he will become the Editor in Chief of Nova Scotia Birds, and I will be assisting, as required. He is now familiar to the executive and editorial board, as well as many other members.

We continue to investigate ways of improving the magazine, both in what you see, and how it is done. At the same time we are trying to reduce costs — always a quandary. We need your ideas and assistance in producing the best magazine possible. Anyone wishing to help with the production or editorial content of the magazine should let us know. In particular, this issue is the last as Records Compiler for Karl Tay and we'll be looking for help in that area. If you feel you may have something to contribute, please contact us at the address shown elsewhere in this issue.



## MEMBER ISSUES

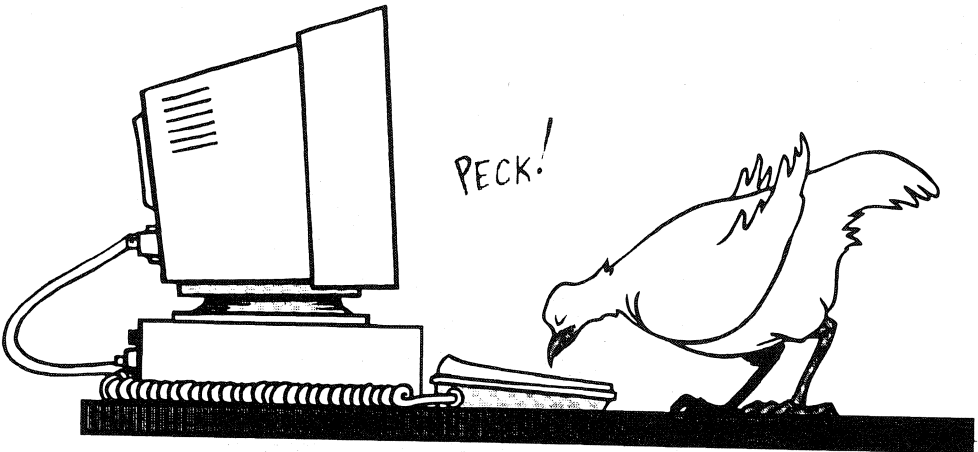
The increasing costs of the production and printing of Nova Scotia Birds has generated lively discussion at recent meetings of your executive. One suggestion has been that we accept advertising to generate revenue to help the magazine costs. There are many commercial naturalist businesses that would benefit by advertising and reaching target users such as our membership. Nova Scotia Birds is already subsidised by the Nova Scotia Museum. Given the state of government funding the executive feels we should not always count on this support.

Do you agree that advertising should be used in Nova Scotia Birds to help support the cost of the magazine? Please mail your comments to:

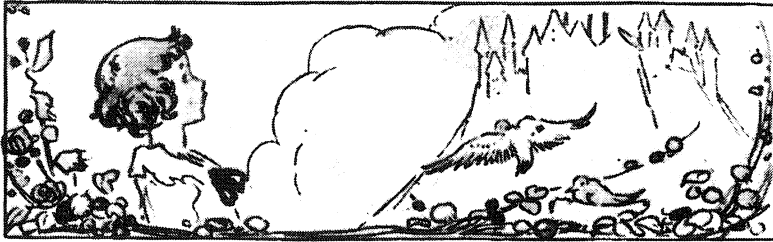
Joan Waldron, Secretary,  
NS Bird Society,  
3 Alderwood Drive,  
Halifax,  
B3N 1S6

Or e-mail:

waldrojo@nsm.ednet.ns.ca



# SPRING BIRD REPORTS 1997-1998



## SEASONAL WEATHER REPORT

By Larry Bogan

The table below summarises the weather at Kentville for the months of April and May 1998. The numbers for the mean temperatures remind us of the warm spring that we enjoyed. This resulted in early migratory bird arrivals and plant blossoming. The other dramatic departure from "normal" weather was the dry spell that started in May and continued through June. April, by contrast, had above average rainfall but not enough to make up for the deficit in May so the two month period had only 84% of the expected amounts.

Notice that the monthly average minimum temperatures deviate more from the norms than the average maximum. This means that the warm weather was due more to the lack of colder days rather than an abundance of warmer days. There was no snowfall during the period because of the lack of cold days. Normally April has 19 cm of snow while on average, May gets 2 cm.

The increased precipitation almost always correlates with decreased bright sunshine hours and this spring's weather agrees; April's sunshine was lower because of the increase rainfall while May's was higher in that dry month.

Wind speed is usually ignored in weather reports but is very important for anything or anyone that flies. I am a glider pilot and we like low wind days to fly; when wind speeds get up above 15 knots (28 km/hr) it is more difficult and less enjoyable. April was average for the season with wind speeds of 6.3 to 21.3 km/hr. In contrast, May was relatively calm with speeds from zero to 14 km/hr.

Wind and sun can effect the migration of birds. Some migratory birds such as Red-tailed and Broadwing Hawks use rising air in thermals to move north in spring. If the winds are too strong, these thermals are disrupted too much to use. The low wind in May plus the sunnier conditions would have produced more thermals and probably made for an easier migration north this year.

## 1998 Spring Weather Statistics Agriculture Centre, Kentville, N.S.

	Temperature			Rain (mm)	Sunshine (Hours)	Wind Speed (km/h)
	Max. (C)	Min. (C)	Ave. (C)			
<b>April 1998</b>	10.0	1.5	5.9	108	144	11.7
<b>April Ave.</b>	9.1	-0.2	4.5	82	155	--
<b>Difference</b>	0.8	1.7	1.4			
<b>May 1998</b>	18.5	7.4	13.0	29	220	6.5
<b>May Ave.</b>	16.1	4.7	10.4	81	200	--
<b>Difference</b>	2.7	2.6				
<b>April &amp; May</b>	4.5	9.5		137	364	9.1
<b>2 Mo. Ave.</b>	2.3	7.5		163	355	--
<b>Difference</b>	2.2	2.0				

### LOONS THROUGH GREBES

By Ian McLaren

Given the lack of winter reports, a RED-THROATED LOON off Sambro Mar. 22 (IAM) may have been a migrant. Four more, plus seven on the May 9 NAMC, were the only others reported. COMMON LOONS turned up on lakes as usual in April, but one Apr. 24 on the Saxon St. pond, Kings Co., was "a weird sight" (JWW).

Wintering PIED-BILLED GREBES remained in Yarmouth Hbr. until at least Mar. 7 (ELM) and on Sullivans Pond, Dartmouth until at least Apr. 11 (IAM). One at Sheffield Mills, Kings Co., Mar. 19 (JCT) could have been a migrant. They then appeared in the usual places beginning with one 9 Apr. at Roberts I., Yar. Co. (SJF). Up to 80 HORNED GREBES were off Graves I., Lun. Co., Mar. 29 (CJF). One off Digby Mar. 31 was in full breeding array (RBS). Even more impressive were 180 RED-NECKEDS off Blanche Pen. Mar. 28 (DOE *et al.*). Although we know that a few of both northern species stay into summer, no later ones were reported.

### TUBENOSES THROUGH CORMORANTS

By Blake Maybank

The first shearwaters were reported just before the end of the period, although it's likely they had arrived earlier. CAM reported several GREATER and SOOTY SHEARWATERS off E. Cape Breton May 30, and five Sooty Shearwaters were seen flying south past Cape Sable May 31 (BLM, MUN, WIA), during calm weather. No one reported either Wilson's or Leach's Storm-Petrels, but the latter were settled into their island colonies well before the end of May.

Few observers chose to comment on NORTHERN GANNETS and birds were establishing nesting territories on their Newfoundland colonies before the first migrant

birds were called into the Bird Line. Four were seen near Gannet Rock Apr. 12 by *TCD et al.*, but they apparently resisted the lure of the 51 gannet decoys placed on the rock in an attempt to re-establish the colony there. I have almost no data from which to summarise the spring movements of cormorants. DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS were certainly at their Pictou Causeway colony before the end of March, and SUM concluded that 10 GREAT CORMORANTS in Louisbourg Mar. 20 were spring arrivals. There were several reports of early single Double-crested Cormorants. These included Mar. 2 at Daniel Head, CSI (JCZ) (possibly a wintering bird); Apr. 5 in a quarry at North R., Col. Co. (JBO); Apr. 7 at the mouth of the Gaspereau R. (JWW); and Apr. 13 at the Apple R. DU ponds (KFS).

## HERONS THROUGH VULTURES

By Ian McLaren

The earliest reported AM. BITTERN was calling at Van Nostrands Pond, Kings Co., Apr. 29 (EDL), though doubtless some were here earlier. Seven May reports were about as usual, and the NAMC produced a goodly 20 birds. Given early arrivals of other species this spring, can we assume that any of three GREAT BLUE HERONS Mar. 1 (one each near Chebogue, Shag Hbr., and CSI (JCZ *et al.*)) were newly arrived? Four near Sydney Mar. 24 (JAC) were curiously ahead of the next mainland reports, in Hfx. Co. Mar. 30 (Barbara Hinds' column) and Cumb. Co. Apr. 1 (KFS). A GREAT EGRET on May 22 at Hemeons Head, Shel. Co. (DHY) and another on CSI May 28 (*fide* MUN) were nice finds. A LITTLE EGRET, possibly the same one present last spring near Louisbourg, frequented first Port Morien and then Dominion Beach, May 2–14 (var. obs., *fide* DBM). An early SNOWY EGRET was in Yarmouth Hbr. Mar. 28–Apr. 5 (MUN *et al.*), another at Daniel Head, CSI, May 18 (JON *et al.*), and a third at Grand Desert, Hfx. Co., May 20 (FLL); the two NAMC birds were in CB and Lun. Cos. An ad. LITTLE BLUE HERON found Apr. 8 at Seaforth, Hfx. Co. (JCZ, JOW) was quite co-operative, remaining for NSBS field trippers Apr. 11. Others, both in C.B. Co., were an imm. at Schooner Pond May 25 (G. Crowell) and another at Homeville R. May 30 (DBM *et al.*). A TRICOLORED HERON May 2 at The Hawk, CSI (JON *et al.*) could have been the same bird seen at Daniel Head May 26–31 (var. obs.). Certainly one on Seal I. May 25–27 (SJF *et al.*) must have been yet another. Finally, one May 20 at Grand Desert, Hfx. Co. (FLL), completed a good showing of this traditionally least common of the "regular" southern herons. The only spring GREEN HERON was found May 9 on the NAMC. The earliest BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON was an adult Apr. 11 at Daniel Head, CSI (JON *et al.*), where they were as usual regular thereafter. At least one was on Seal I. May 25–27 (SJF *et al.*)

The Yarmouth TURKEY VULTURES undoubtedly had a good winter, as six–eight were noted there Mar. 7 (ELM, IAM). When did they spread out? There were three near New Salem, Cum. Co., Apr. 25 (KFS), seven over Brier I. May 9 (RBS), a number of reports of ones and twos in Kings Co. from May 9–31 (var. obs., *fide* JCT), and one near Bridgetown, Anna. Co., May 30 (RBS). The 17 during the NAMC were tallied along the Fundy coast, Brier I. to Kings Co.

The season's most startling anatic, although its status remains debatable, was a **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** of the northern subspecies at Pointe d'Église, Digby Co. Birders learned about it at the beginning of July, but according to Gustave Thibodeau it had frequented his backyard pond for nine weeks — i.e., since late April. Although this timing is in keeping with migratory movements of these birds in mid-April, and although the bird was wary at first (only later coming to be fed with wild Black Ducks on the Thibodeaus' back lawn), the species is widely kept in waterfowl collections. This is especially true of the northern race per Jean Delacour's "*Waterfowl of the World*". A full account, photo, and assessment of origin will be in the next issue. The mystery swan at Bartletts R. Pond, Digby Co., as described in the last issue, was not found after Mar. 6. Another swan, seen well enough only to rule out MUTE SWAN, was seen flying over Sackville Mar. 18 (LPP). The Mute Swan family at the mouth of the Sackville R., of which the cob had died, became newsworthy after attempts in March to capture and sterilise them — viewed as necessary because of perceived impacts of a developing feral population (they destroy marshes and are aggressive towards native waterfowl). Unfortunately, one died and others scattered, including one that spent Mar. 30 to mid-May at the New Minas sewage pond and the nearby mouth of the Cornwallis R. (JCT). Life goes on, and a courting pair (mother and son?) was still in Bedford Apr. 19 (JWW).

The 19 SNOW GEESE of the NAMC were found around Economy. The population of BRANTS on CSI built up to an impressive ~4000 Mar. 1 (JCZ), beside which the 35+ at Brier I. Mar. 31 (RBS) seem paltry. Two lingered at the mouth of the Cornwallis R., Kings Co., Apr. 24 (JWW). There were still ~1000 CANADA GEESE in Kings Co. Apr. 3 (JCT), but only 60 remained between Martinique Beach and Cole Hbr. during the NSBS field trip Apr. 11. These days they nest widely in the province, perhaps dating from releases during the 1960s. In Kings Co., one pair was at a nest at Lockhartville May 9 (JWW), and another later successfully brought off young near Sheffield Mills (JCT).

WOOD DUCKS usually get good coverage, but we had few reports. Three males in Sydney Mar. 14–16 (DBM, CUM) could have been early migrants. Seven Apr. 9 at Roberts I. Sanctuary, Yar. Co. (SJF, DHY) were the largest group noted, and a male on Sable I. May 15–18 (ZOL) the most far-flung. The several GADWALLS that wintered around metro and at the Trenton power plant complicated determination of spring arrivals. Presumably the male at APBS Apr. 11 (JBO) was one of these. The pair of EUR. WIGEONS wintering in Dartmouth was noted until at least Mar. 18 (var. obs.). Migrant males reached Sable I. Mar. 8 (ZOL), Parrsboro Apr. 4 (JCZ, JOW), and APBS May 3 (NSBS trip). More surprisingly, two lingered at W. Lawrencetown until at least the end of May (var. obs.). Along with the usual wintering AM. WIGEONS, five at Apple R. Apr. 8 (KFS) were presumably migrants. Other scattered reports do not match the 100+ at APBS Apr. 11 (JEO). Nothing startling was reported on AM. BLACK DUCK, whose broods were widely evident in May. Although they predominate in salt marshes and acid lakes, they share the more enriched Valley ponds with MALLARDS. In the New Minas sewage ponds the latter (30-50, mostly drakes) outnumbered the former (~20) during mid-May (var. obs.). The overall NAMC counts (21%



Mallards) remain reassuring. BLUE-WINGED TEAL almost never winter and a male Mar. 27 at Sheffield Mills, Kings Co. (JCT, RBS) had certainly come from afar. Apart from the NAMC tally, there were only five reports of scattered individuals and pairs. The N. SHOVELER is more exotic here, although regular at APBS from which we have no reports. This spring saw a more widespread Maritimes-Newfoundland incursion. In Kings Co. sewage ponds during May, there was a pair at Canning and up to three pairs at New Minas (var. obs.). In late May, a pair was at Conrad Beach (var. obs.) and several (HHH) at Overton, Yar. Co. GREEN-WINGED TEAL winter in small numbers, but eight Mar. 16 at Greenwich, Kings Co. (JWW) may have been migrants. They were more widely reported in April, with an excellent showing of 200+ at APBS Apr. 11 (JBO). Similarly, a few N. PINTAIL winter, but two males and a fem. at Greenwich Mar. 16 (JWW), the same at CSI next day (JON, SAN), and a pair at Milford, Anna. Co. Mar. 18 (JAP) presumably marked the first spring arrivals. An estimated 100+ were at APBS Apr. 11 (JBO).

RING-NECKED DUCKS seemed to attract interest. On Mar. 30, three males on Canard Pond, Kings Co. (RBS) and three more at Drain L., HMR (JCT), may have just arrived; 100+ were at APBS Apr. 11 (JBO). Several commented on high male/fem. ratios during April: 12/0 at Black R., Kings Co., Apr. 8 (BLF), 19/5 at Canard Pond Apr. 28 (NSBS trip), 12/3 at Apple River, Cum. Co., Apr. 11 (KFS), and 21/3 at Beach Meadows, Queens Co., Apr. 16 (RDS). The two male TUFTED DUCKS at the Trenton Power Plant were last reported Mar. 7 (KJM). More surprising were a male and its debatable mate that appeared at a barrachois pond near Louisbourg Fortress May 30 (DBM). The female had features that suggested both Tufted Duck and GREATER SCAUP; they stayed into June, and we will detail them in the next issue. At least 3000 Greaters lingered at the Trenton Power Plant into mid-March (KJM), but there was only a handful of other reports. A lingering fem. LESSER SCAUP was at Roberts I. Marsh, Yar. Co., Apr. 9 (SJF, DHY), and another at Bayport, Lun. Co., Apr. 11 (ELM); a suggestive pair was on the Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co., Apr. 17 (AAM). The usual spring gatherings of COM. EIDERS included 1000+ between Herring Cove and Chebucto Head, HRM, Mar. 7 (PLC). In May there were 200+ breeders around both Brier I. (RBS) and Bon Portage I. (PLC). Up to two male and three fem. HARLEQUIN DUCKS were off Baccaro Pt., Shel. Co., Mar. 2-18 (CJZ, JON, SAN). All three scoters lingered through May. Good counts included 20+ SURFS off Edgetts Beach, Cum. Co., May 9 (KFS), 19 WHITE-WINGEDS off Grand Pré May 31 (JCT), 110 BLACKS off Hartlen Pt. Apr. 5 (IAM) and 40+ off Edgetts Beach May 9 (KFS). A drake OLD SQUAW was moulting into breeding plumage Apr. 3 at Canard Pond, Kings Co. (JCT) and a pair at Eagle Head, Queens Co., was in full summer dress Apr. 14 (RDS). The latest one reported was off Apple R. May 6 (KFS), although of course a few actually summer here. The usual spring build-up of BUFFLEHEADS included 30 off Petite Rivière Apr. 12 (ELM) and 80 at Belleisle Marsh Apr. 17 (AAM). One lingered at Louisbourg May 30 (DBM). Very paltry reporting of COM. GOLDENEYES included only one for April: a pair at Apple R. on the 4th (KFS). Wintering male BARROW'S GOLDENEYES stayed until at least Mar. 3 in Bedford Basin (BLM) and Mar. 7 at Sydney R. (var. obs.). Everyone loves HOODED MERGANSERS, so we have a dozen reports in addition to the good numbers on the NAMC. Of interest were a male that reached Sable I. May 5 (ZOL) and a nest at Black R., Kings Co., where the fem. entered the cavity Mar. 31, had three eggs Apr. 8, but lost her

clutch to racoons by Apr. 20 (BLF). Both RED-BREASTED and COM. MERGANSERS were widely reported, but no patterns or peculiarities were noted. Bernard Forsythe notes that a fem. of the latter nesting in one of his owl boxes, 10 m up in a hemlock, had two eggs Apr. 21 and brought out 10 young by early June. He comments, "there is a shortage of cavities for large tree-nesting birds."

## DIURNAL RAPTORS THROUGH RALLIDS

By Ian McLaren

As an addendum to the report of a SWALLOW TAILED KITE in C.B. Co. last April, we are reminded by Roger Etcheverry of St. Pierre and Miquelon of a single-observer sighting there in August 1992, the only other known recent report from the general region.

First OSPREYS were early on Mar. 29 over St. Marys Bay, Digby Co. (JCZ) and Mar. 30 at Enfield, HRM (JAP). They were widely reported in April, with several at nests after mid-month, including the urban pioneers near the Halifax Public Gardens. There were no comments on trends. In addition to the usual reports of scattered BALD EAGLES, were some comments of interest from Kings Co. The risky replacement nest on the branch-free stump at White Rock (following January's ice storm) seemed fairly complete by Mar. 15 (BLF). On that date, another nest at Greenwich had a brooding bird, and by May 9 there were two young (JWW). Two imm. birds at Grand Pré Apr. 7 were evidently "going through aerial courtship [for] practice?" (JWW). Also of interest was a report (KFS) of an adult that apparently surprised and killed a Great Blue Heron in a ditch at Apple R., Apr. 4. Six or more N. HARRIERS around Yarmouth Mar. 7 (ELM, IAM) highlighted the problem of detecting spring arrivals, but a fem. Mar. 30 and a male Apr. 4, both at Apple R., may qualify (KFS). There were no evident trends in eight reports for mid-April through May. SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS evoked little interest, with eight reports of individuals, including reports of attacks or kills on such prey as junco (SLH), Bohemian Waxwing (JWW) and even a flying bat (Matt Holder). But the prize goes to a Sharp-shinned that was found mantling a Rock Dove by a busy road in Wolfville, Mar. 5 (JWW *et al.*). The victim escaped when approached within a metre, and set off hotly pursued into an open garage. The hawk later emerged without prey and sat glaring in a nearby tree, but the drama's dénouement was not observed. The only submitted report of N. GOSHAWK was of a pair in late April at Bayfield, Ant. Co. (KJM, RFL). The 13 on the NAMC suggest that we needn't worry about the absence this spring of a regular resident (for 3+ years, RBS) from Kentville.

A RED-SHOULDERED HAWK May 30 on CSI (MUN), and two days later at the Barrington dump (WIA), was late for an overshooting migrant. The first BROAD-WINGED HAWKS were individuals Apr. 16 in Hants Co. (JAP) and at Black R., Kings Co. (BLF), and next day at Glace Bay (CAM). There were nine reports of later birds, some seemingly on territory. Among the usual reports of scattered RED-TAILED HAWKS (including an albino near Meiklefield, Pict. Co., May 30; J. MacLennan) were updates on the pair that nested last year on University Hall, Acadia University; evidently eggs were being incubated or young brooded Apr. 8 (JWW). Some may have seen recent TV coverage of the even more dramatic nesting on a building adjacent to Central Park, Manhattan. A trend? Latest

reported ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were at Grand Pré Apr. 12 and N. Sydney Apr. 23 (JAC). AM. KESTRELS at Apple River Apr. 2 and near River Hebert Apr. 6 (both KFS) were presumably new arrivals, but they were not reported elsewhere until Apr. 11-15 (4 birds, var. obs.). A nest box at Lumsden Pond, Kings Co., held five eggs by the third week of May (BLF). There were more reports on the dashing MERLIN, even though it was half as common as the kestrel on the more representative NAMC. One in Kings Co. Apr. 3 and two at Westmount, C.B. Co., Apr. 8 (JAC) could have wintered, whereas three Brier I. May 23 were clearly still on the move. Another half-dozen migrants were reported between those dates. From Apr. 27 the pair that nested last year near the Gaspereau Ave. Cemetery, Wolfville, called repeatedly, but their nest site was not discovered (JWW *et al.*). Another noisy pair was in Kentville during May (RBS). An even more urban bird was seen twice during May chasing starlings along Quinpool Ave., Halifax (IAM). Reports of PEREGRINE FALCONS are always welcome. An adult on Sable I. Mar. 17–May 15 stooped at potential victims ranging in size from kingfisher to waterfowl (ZOL). Other individuals were at The Hawk, CSI, Apr. 27 (JON), Glace Bay Apr. 29 (JUM), and Seal I. May 26 (a *tundrius* male; RAF).

As usual, GRAY PARTRIDGE were reported only from Kings Co. (two at Starrs Pt. Apr. 30, EDL) and the Truro dykelands, where JBO found only two, Mar. 23-Apr. 9, since the major spring flood. We received only one report on RING-NECKED PHEASANTS, although 426 were on the NAMC; boring, I guess. The only report of a SPRUCE GROUSE was a fem. in KFS's yard at Apple R. Apr. 26, but again the NAMC succeeded in turning up more. It is likewise chancy to infer status from only three reports of RUFFED GROUSE, but the NAMC estimate of 149 suggests a healthy population.

A VIRGINIA RAIL at Westville Apr. 25 (STV) was probably about on time, although they are often not noted until later, like one at Campbell Rd. Marsh, Pict. Co. in late May (KJM). The SORA appearing Mar. 12 at Fortress Louisbourg after s.w. gales appeared healthy (SUM); such early "overshoots" in the past have often been found dead or moribund. Seasonable individuals were calling at Van Nostrand's Pond, Kings Co., May 4 & 19 (EDL, BBT), during the NAMC May 9 (17 tallied), and at Akon Marsh, Pict. Co., May 23 (PLC). The only COM. MOORHEN noted was at Tangier, Hfx. Co., May 9 (DAM). Wintering AM. COOTS stayed at Sullivans Pond, Dartmouth to Mar. 28 (var. obs.), and until at least mid-April at Glace Bay (JUM).

## SHOREBIRDS

By Sylvia Fullerton

An early and temperate spring may have been partially responsible for the uneventful shorebird migration. Those birds which breed here were generally on schedule but well below usual numbers were reported; migrants en route further north put on a poor show and only one vagrant, a spectacular Bar-tailed Godwit, added spice to the season.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS appeared in concentrations at the usual sites: 85 at CSI May 9 & 15 (MUN, PLC) and 100 at the Windsor causeway May 29; 35 or so were at

both Long I., Grand Pré and Avonport Beach May 31 (JCT). A continental migrant, the AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER is noteworthy in spring. One put in an appearance April 28 at CSI and three were there May 3 & 27 (JON, MUN, IAM). Two SEMI-PALMATED PLOVERS were in "a small mixed shorebird flock" May 31 on Long I., Grand Pré (JCT). For at least the third year in a row a pair nested successfully on The Cape, CSI where three fledglings have been seen (JON, SAN). PIPING PLOVERS are still trying to maintain a viable population, albeit a tenuous one. Single birds were seen at CSI Mar. 27 and at Pomquet Beach Mar. 29 (CLS, TOM, RFL); one pair only has nested at Cherry Hill. Peter MacDonald of DNR, who has been monitoring the southwestern region, reports that a number of beaches where there were single pairs last year are empty. Overall numbers of pairs, however, are comparable: four on South Side, CSI; four at Crow's Nest, Baccaro; single pairs were at Johnstons Beach, Sand Hills, and Louis Head. Ten chicks have fledged to date. The KILLDEER's call is a welcome portent of spring and it was heard early this year: one near Canning Mar. 2 (MAG), one at Port Clyde Mar. 8 (DOE), and several in the Shubenacadie area Mar. 7 (RCM). As many as seven were at Sheffield Mills Mar. 26 (JCT) and from then on they appeared all over in ones and twos. Evelyn Andrews reported nesting success on her property on Wolfville Ridge for the fifteenth year in a row; a pair with four fledglings was seen May 10.

Whether or not the AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER will be successful in establishing a breeding site on The Cape, CSI still remains to be seen. This is the third spring they've been pioneering and so far have failed to fledge young. A single bird was first spotted Apr. 11 and a nesting pair Apr. 25. Once again there has been no sign of nesting success (JON, MUN).

A GREATER YELLOWLEGS, whether overwintering or an early migrant (as previously reported), was still present at Blanche Mar. 18 & 28 (DOE, SAN, JON). Reports were few and numbers well below average: one was at Habitant R., Canning Apr. 26 (JWW); two at New Hbr. Apr. 28 (RFL); four at Apple R. May 4 (KFS) and three each at Brier I. and Cherry Hill May 17 (BLF, Tufts). Two LESSER YELLOWLEGS appeared on Sable I. Apr. 29, the one location where they may reliably be seen in spring (ZOL). Uncommon in spring, a SOLITARY SANDPIPER was watched as it probed in boggy ponds on Seal I. May 25-27 (SJF *et al*). The noisy and conspicuous WILLET arrived on schedule at Sherose I. and Barrington Apr. 24 (JCZ, GEF). They were generally widespread by the first week of May and defending nesting sites by the last week of May. The ubiquitous SPOTTED SANDPIPER was late arriving or just too common to be reported. Single birds were at N. Branch Lahave R. and in Lapland May 9 and not noted again until May 22 when four were seen at the New Minas sewage ponds (DHY, JCT, JWW). An UPLAND SANDPIPER, a spring regular, was at CSI May 9 (JON *et al*) and another at Big I., Pict. Co., May 31 where a pair had nested several years ago (KJM).

Scarce in spring, two WHIMBREL appeared at CSI Apr. 24, with three reported there May 9 (JON, MUN). Two were at the Windsor causeway May 29 (JCT).

An adult BAR-TAILED GODWIT at Cherry Hill June 8 in alternate plumage (i.e. in full

summer regalia), provided the second spring record and perhaps the fifth record overall for the Province (SJF). In stunning plumage, it was chestnut-red from head to under-tail, with no barring on sides and a little white flecking on lower belly. Scapulars and mantle were fringed with rufous and coverts were greyish-white. Seen in flight later in the day by the Cohrs it was identified as the *lapponica* subspecies by its white rump and lower back. It delighted various observers to at least June 13.

An overwintering RUDDY TURNSTONE was on Sable I. Mar. 5 (ZOL). Only one migrant report was received, of one at Cherry Hill May 24. An early RED KNOT was at CSI May 3 and 50 were present by May 9, an unusually high number for spring (MUN). Singles were at Mavillette, Dig. Co. and Cherry Hill May 24 (JUG). There were no reports of overwintering SANDERLINGS and only one report of migrants, three at Cherry Hill May 18 & 24. Also scarce was the SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPER, the only report being of 20 at Long I., Grand Pré May 31 (JCT). The LEAST SANDPIPER was not noticed except for the seven that appeared at the New Minas sewage pond May 19 (Thextons *et al*) and a single bird at Cherry Hill May 24. Twenty PURPLE SANDPIPERS were at Scotts Bay May 9 (JCT) and one was at South Bar, CB as late as May 30 (DBM). One DUNLIN, presumably overwintering, was on Sable I. Mar. 14 (ZOL) and one migrant stopped off at Long I., Grand Pré May 31 (JCT).

A COMMON SNIPE arrived on schedule at Westmount, CB Apr. 18 (TES, JAC) and two at Sheffield Mills Apr. 25 (JET, JCT). From then on they were seen and heard “winnowing” throughout Kings and Lun. Cos. AMERICAN WOODCOCK must have all arrived on the same night-flight. They were heard and seen in Cum., Hfx., Ant., and Yar. Cos. Mar. 28-29. They were noisily “buzzing and twittering” at APBS Apr. 11 and in New Ross May 9 (JBO, KNK).

Phalaropes, if indeed present, went unreported.

## GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS

By Blake Maybank

There were two spring Pomarine Jaeger sightings, one adult May 8 on Sable I. (ZOL), a typical location, but the other an unexpected find on the inner side of Cherry Hill Beach May 9. This latter bird was a light-phase adult in breeding plumage that permitted a close approach, although not because of any evident ill health, as it frequently sallied forth to harass gulls (SJF).

Last year's **BLACK-TAILED GULL** returned for another frustrating (at least for mainland birders) visit to Sable I., where it lingered from Apr. 23 – May 20 (ZOL). We all wish it would pay a visit to the rest of Nova Scotia. There were seven LAUGHING GULLS seen this spring. Six of them were reported on Sable I. by ZOL, including two adults May 14, two adults May 26 and two immature birds May 28. The other bird was an adult on CSI May 24–26 (IAM *et al.*). Remarkably, there were three sightings of **FRANKLIN'S GULLS** in the province this spring. The first, a moulting adult on Sable I.

Mar. 31, was very well described by ZOL. Tellingly, on the same day, Peter Davies and Gary Hartlen found another adult on the Eagle Head Beach breakwater in Queens Co. Their description over the phone, and the follow-up written report by RDS, were entirely convincing; the black hood riding higher on the nape, the thinner bill, a rosy breast, the white primary tips, and the white separating the black on the primaries from the grey mantle. There have been only six records of Franklin's Gull up to 1986, and I can only find two good sightings since then, so these are the ninth and tenth records for the province. The third sighting, of an individual in Wentworth Park, Sydney on Apr. 12 (Shirley Holliday & Roz MacLeod, *vide* JAC) was not accompanied by any details.

The over-wintering adult **LITTLE GULL** at Ste. Anne du Ruisseau (Yar. Co.) was seen by a number of observers up until at least Apr. 11, by which time it had acquired a complete hood (*vide* MUN). **BLACK-HEADED GULLS** were still hanging around their wintering sites in late March (e.g. 20 at Antigonish Landing Mar. 29, and 20 at Ogden Pond Apr. 5, both RFL & MAG). As April progressed they were on the move, and IAM *et al.* were fortunate to witness a northerly migration of about 35 birds, flying past Conrods Beach and Three Fathom Hbr. on Apr. 11. Lingering birds included three at Dominion Beach, CB Co. May 14 (DBM), and a single immature at the Halifax harbour Volvo Plant May 23 (IAM). **BONAPARTE'S GULLS**, away from their Northumberland shore stronghold, popped up in a few less expected locales. There were six at Bartletts R. Beach, Digby Co. Mar. 7 (ELM, *et al.*); one at West Berlin Apr. 5 (RDS); six at Little Hbr. Apr. 6 (DHY); two at the Wolfville sewage ponds Apr. 21 (JWW, *et al.*); two in Freeport harbour May 9 (BLM, JOW); and one at Cherry Hill May 18 (SJF).

The over-wintering Yarmouth **MEW (COMMON) GULL** was seen through Mar. 22 (*vide* MUN). Two discernibly different adult Common Gulls were found in Pict. Co. The first at the East R. Pollution Control Plant Mar. 25–26, and the other at Merigomish Apr. 4 (KJM, CGB). At least one of the birds was photographed, but no written details were received for either sighting. Our only **RING-BILLED GULL** report comes from W. Apple R., where KFS counted 130+ birds on the sandbar at the river mouth on Apr. 1 with 30 still present Apr. 9. This is a notable sighting in that it seems to represent a migration stopover for the species, which still has not been confirmed as breeding in the province. There is little to report with respect to **HERRING** or **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS**. JAC thought their numbers to be down by half in Sydney Hbr., and those that were present seemed especially hungry, further evidence that the decline of the fishery and the closing or restructuring of landfills is having an effect. Anyone who has recently suffered from having their garbage bags ripped open by desperate gulls can also attest to this result.

Not content with Common Gulls, KJM & CGB also found a second winter **THAYER'S GULL** on Mar. 7 at the Trenton Power Plant, Pict. Co. (no written details yet, but photos apparently taken). Debate continues whether Thayer's Gull represent a legitimate species, although I see no reason yet to dispute the conclusion of Godfrey (in '*Birds of Canada*') that the birds called Thayer's Gulls are really the dark extreme of the North American race of Iceland Gull (the subspecies known as Kumlien's Gull). There is only one

guarantee — gull taxonomy will give anyone a migraine. In contrast to most observers' antipathy towards Herring Gulls, ICELAND GULLS are a popular feature of a day's outing, especially as spring progresses towards summer. Our adults leave before the end of March, but there were still more than 100 birds in Yarmouth Hbr. Mar. 7 (ELM, *et al.*), and ~80 individuals at the Point Pleasant Park sewer outfall Mar. 15 (IAM). By the end of April there were still 6 immatures at Eastern Passage (JCZ), a typical spot for the last Iceland Gulls of spring in the Halifax area. Further north, there were still 12+ birds at the LaPlanche R. in Cum. Co. Apr. 11 (JBO). In Kings Co. four or five birds lingered at the Wolfville sewage ponds through April, with one immature still present May 11 (JWW). Another immature was a fly-by at Morden, Kings Co., May 9 (Shirley L. Hulford). The latest Iceland Gulls in the province are typically in Cape Breton, and DBM counted 12 in Glace Bay Hbr. May 17, with three still present at month's end.

With the province's reliable LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS no longer extant, we must rely on serendipity. We were graced with three such sightings this spring, two on Apr. 22 at Gaspereau (Matt Holder), one a second summer, the other a third summer, and an adult Apr. 27 in a field at the junction of the Brule Shore and Brule Point Roads in Colchester Co. (KJM). It's as much fun to seek out GLAUCOUS GULLS as Iceland Gulls. There were scattered reports of mostly single immature birds across the province. These included Yarmouth Hbr. Mar. 7 (ELM); Baccaro Pt. Mar. 28 (JCZ, *et al.*); Wolfville sewage lagoon Apr. 19 – May 11 (JWW); Dartmouth Apr. 28 (FLL); Parrsboro May 16 (GDE); Glace Bay May 15-30 (DBM); and three on Sable I. up to May 25 (ZOL).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES returned to their colonies in Cape Breton in May, and they were also regularly sighted in the Bay of Fundy and approaches. And to round out the gull report, a remarkable "yard bird" — an adult IVORY GULL — briefly alighted in JUM's back yard (which borders Renrick Brook in Glace Bay) on Mar. 19, following a storm. The bird then flew further upstream, and was not relocated. This is the third sighting this winter, following the one on the Canso Straight CBC and the dead individual found in Pict. Co.

The only CASPIAN TERN this spring was at Catalone Gut, CB Co., May 9-10 (SUM). TCD's survey of the ROSEATE TERN colony on The Brothers turned up 38 nests, 35 on North Brother, and three on South Brother, an encouraging number for this nationally endangered species. The only DOVEKIE that was reported for the period (following a winter with numerous sightings) was a moribund bird Mar. 5 at Point Pleasant Park (observer not noted). The long-term prognosis was likely not good for six THICK-BILLED MURREs off Black Rock Beach in Point Pleasant Park, present for the last three weeks of March (JEH, PLC). Two were quite moribund, and all allowed close approach. BLACK GUILLEMOTS were little reported, and the only odd sighting was two off Eatonville, Cum. Co., May 17 (KFS), which are likely part of the group that breed on Isle Haute.

Some day we may remove the **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** from the list of birds that need boldface type. Late in the day May 31, one appeared at the feeders of Brian and Minnie MacLeod of Louisbourg (a seeming magnet for strays), where their identification was quickly confirmed by HOS. It was the province's 15th. Among six reports of **MOURNING DOVES**, only KNK's included an opinion on trends - that they have become more common of late in the Hammonds Plains, HRM, area. A "singing" **BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** was a treat for birdathoners near Lr. Meaghers Grant, Hfx Co., May 30 (IAM *et al.*). Less usual in spring was a **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO** at The Hawk, CSI, May 15-18 (JON, Wayne Neily).

The impressive counts of owls during the May 9 NAMC shows that our few other reports don't reflect true numbers or distributions. Two young **GREAT HORNED OWLS** on a nest at Little Hbr., Shel. Co., had apparently left for good May 21 (DHY). There were still three **SNOWY OWLS** around CSI until at least Mar. 22 (var. obs., *fide* MUN). Another was at Baccaro, Shel. Co., Mar. 18 (JON, SAN), and a straggler lingered in the Musquodoboit Valley Apr. 24 (K. Jensen). The usual numbers of **BARRED OWLS**, our most frequently heard owl, were calling around the province. BLF reports that 11 pairs laid 29 eggs, beginning Mar. 14, in his nest boxes in the Wolfville area this year. Up to seven **SHORT-EARED OWLS** were found along the Grand Pré dykes during March by Sheila McCurdy (*fide* JCT). Other individuals were noted Apr. 4 on Big I., Pict. Co. (KJM), Apr. 11 at Martinique Beach (NSBS trip), and 21 Apr. near the Shubenacadie Wildlife Pk. (JBO). Six **SAW-WHET OWLS** were calling at widely separate locations from early March to the end of May.

Karel Allard found an exceptionally early **COM. NIGHTHAWK** moping on Martinique Beach on a cold, foggy Apr. 18. Given the remote possibility of some southern, earlier-migrating nighthawk species, it was double-checked and photographed (FLL, IAM). Others were on schedule beginning with the three on the NAMC May 9. A gathering of "many" May 30 at Upper Clyde, Shel. Co. (JCZ) suggests that migration was still underway. Three early **CHIMNEY SWIFTS** were flying over the Cobequid Pass May 5 (ABM). More timely birds first appeared May 16, when 35+ entered the chimney at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre (JET). Next day, 85 entered the unused chimney at the NS Agricultural College (Ross Hall), and up to 185 entered the Wolfville Chimney May 25. A record 400+ entered the traditional Temperance St. chimney in New Glasgow, May 30 (KJM). A scattered few were noted elsewhere. The May 9 NAMC produced the earliest **RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS**, nine in all. Others were not noted until mid-May. Four at widely separate locations suggests that a migratory wave occurred May 18. Since it was not reported by KFS during winter, I assume that her **BELTED KINGFISHER** along the Apple R. Mar. 27 was a new arrival. The next, Apr. 12 at East Bay, C.B. Co. (*fide* JAC), surely was. Thereafter they were widely noted.

The wintering **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** was still at Kingston in late March (the Griffiths), and the **RED-HEADED WOODPECKER** still in Shelburne up to Apr. 28 (MUN



*et al.*). Two spring Red-heads appeared at unexpected locations: one Apr. 9 at Grand Pré (E. Goodstine, *vide* RBS), and the other photographed during May at Oban, Rich. Co. (CAM). An early YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER was on CSI Mar. 29–Apr. 5 (MUN *et al.*). The next birds were at Port Maitland, Yar. Co., Apr. 2 (Barbara Hinds' column) and Mahoneys Beach, Ant. Co., Apr. 12 (RFL). Six scattered individuals Apr. 18 near Greenfield, Kings Co. and 45 during the NAMC May 9, suggest that good numbers returned to nest. As usual, the few reports of DOWNY and HAIRY WOODPECKERS were uninformative about trends. Although PLC heard fewer Downys drumming in Halifax this spring, she suggests that this may be because the winter's ice storm brought down favoured drumming limbs. During May, Hairys were feeding young in a nest in a poplar in RBS's yard in Kentville. It's hard to be sure about arrivals of N. FLICKERS. Three at a Wolfville feeder Mar. 14 (BBT) were doubtful, but one at APBS Mar. 28 (JEO), 4 at Apple River Apr. 8 (KFS) and certainly 3 At Westmount, C.B. Co., Apr. 12, were all plausible migrants. They were widely seen thereafter. The half-dozen reports of single PILEATED WOODPECKERS were about as usual; is it surprising that they were more than half as common as Hairys during the NAMC?

## FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SHRIKES

By Eric Mills

All the flycatchers, including the notorious “empids”, were sparsely reported, partly, according to my observations, because most were late arriving, held back from our area by consistently northerly winds through May. All our records of OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER come from Kings Co., beginning with two May 30 along Butler Rd. (off the New Ross Rd.). An early E. WOOD PEWEE was in the Kentville Ravine, Kings Co., May 9 (Stan Riggs, *vide* JCT). Thereafter, there was one on Sable I. May 24 (ZOL), two NSBS parties on Seal I. May 25–28 reported three to six daily, and one or two were reported from the Gaspereau-Wolfville Ridge areas May 31 (GWT, JCT), where one observer noted that Pewees were 10 days late arriving.

The small flycatchers also arrived late. GWT and JCT heard the first ALDER FLYCATCHER at Blomidon P.P., Kings Co., May 28, when they were also first heard in song at Lower Rose Bay, Lun. Co. (ELM). An early LEAST FLYCATCHER was in the Kentville Migratory Bird Sanctuary May 9 (SYA, JCT), and there were nine elsewhere in the province the same day on the NAMC. Our only other records are of two migrants on Seal I., Yar. Co., May 25 (ELM *et al.*) and two on Little Flat I., off CSI, May 27 (ELM *et al.*).

E. PHOEBES do arrive early, but a delayed report, unaccompanied by identification details, tells of a Phoebe in Reynardton, Yar. Co. yard between Christmas and Feb. 20 (Joyce Borchert, *vide* CJZ). The first migrant was at Blanche, Shel. Co., Mar. 28 (DOE). There were also Phoebes on Brier I. Mar. 28 (MUN, CAH, DAP) and 31 (RBS), followed by one at Greenwich, Kings Co., Apr. 4 (GEF) and a pair at Apple River, Cum. Co., Apr. 9 (KFS). By May 7, BLF found the first nest with eggs in White Rock, Kings Co. Nine were reported throughout the province during the NAMC, May 9. Another regular but

uncommon resident, the GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER, was reported only twice: one at Port Mouton, Queens Co., May 24 (RES) and two on Seal I. May 25 (SJF *et al.*).

Rare in spring, a W. KINGBIRD was identified at Apple R., Cum. Co. May 31 by Doug and Donna Barber, and seen by KFS, MSM and JRM the following day (good substantiating notes and a photograph). Its local relative, E. KINGBIRD, arrived in numbers late in May: 30+ on Seal I. May 25–26 (in one small area every bush had its Kingbird), smaller numbers there thereafter, including one near Margaretsville, Anna. Co., May 31 (PLC). An exceptionally early bird was on Brier I., Digby Co., Apr. 18 (CAH).

A lingering N. SHRIKE was in Apple R., Cum. Co., Mar. 6 (KFS) and two were on Brier I., Digby Co., Mar. 29 (DAP, *fide* CAH). The year's first LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE, a species now rare and endangered in eastern North America, was on Sable I. Apr. 29–May 1, substantiated by ZOL's notes.

## VIREOS

By Andy Horn

A vireo sp. opened the spring season May 2 on Wolfville Ridge, Kings Co. (GWT, JCT). One **WARBLING VIREO** May 23 at Brier I. (BLF) was the only report. First reports of SOLITARY VIREOs from Kings Co. (var. obs.) to Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS) fell between May 4 and May 9, when the NAMC total was 100. The NAMC sum of 15 RED-EYED VIREOS May 9 beats all other reports by a wide margin, including Wolfville Ridge May 20 (BLF), Advocate, Cum. Co. May 24 (KFS) and Sydney, CB Co. May 29 (DBM, JWM).

## CORVIDS THROUGH WAXWINGS

By Eric Mills

Always with us, but seldom very conspicuous, GRAY JAYS were little noted. Three regulars at KFS's feeder in Apple R., Cum. Co., disappeared after Mar. 24; one returned only on June 6, bringing young. Mercifully, BLUE JAY-free Lwr. Rose Bay, Lun. Co. was reinvaded around Mar. 28 (ELM, AHM), presumably by migrants and wintering birds redistributing themselves from concentrations in other areas. I would appreciate information on this subject. Feeder watchers reported business as usual through May. Are AM. CROW and COM. RAVEN numbers increasing? JAC suggests a dramatic increase in the Sydneys area, CB. Thirty plus crows over Apple R., Cum. Co., Mar. 5 were apparently migrants (KFS), while nesting was beginning in Halifax by Mar. 23 (PLC). Flocking ravens (18 and 53) in the Port Williams/Canard area, Kings Co., were noted on May 9 (JWW), while nesting was going on nearby, with four large young seen on the nest in Canning May 14 (MAG).

Twenty-six HORNED LARKS in the Marshland Drive marsh, Truro, Col. Co., Mar. 23 (JBO) and six at Morien Bar, CB Co., Apr. 15 (CAM) were the only late migrants

reported.

Swallows were delayed by unfavourable weather, especially in April and early May, but the records span the normal migration period. As late as June 5, ~1000 Bank, Barn and Tree swallows were feeding over the New Minas sewage ponds, Kings Co., in cool weather (JCT). A female PURPLE MARTIN was reported from sea, 65 miles SE of Seal I., Yar. Co., Apr. 3 (George Surette), another was on Seal I. for a few days before May 24 (resident obs.), one inhabited Lwr. Clarks Hbr, CSI, around May 26 (MUN), and one reached Sable I. May 30 (ZOL). TREE SWALLOW records cluster between Apr. 16 and 26, when the majority of birds arrived throughout the province. Two at Mooseland, Hfx Co., Apr. 4 (KAT), plus one at Waterville, Kings Co., Apr. 9 (Mark Elderkin, *fide* JCT), two at Roberts I., Yar. Co., the same day (SJF, DHY), and one Apr. 18 at Westmount, CB Co., (JOK, *fide* JAC) were the vanguard. The birds feeding over the Saxon St. pond, Sheffield Mills, Kings Co., increased from 16 Apr. 17 to 50+ on the 24th and ca. 200 on the 26th (JCT, JWW). More than 200 were feeding over the Amherst Point marsh, Cum. Co., Apr. 27 (JBO). One N. ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW was on Seal I., Yar. Co., from at least May 25–27 (RAF, SJF *et al.*), among Tree, Barn and a few BANK SWALLOWS, 300-400 of which were at the Port Williams sewage ponds, Kings Co., May 22. Three early Bank Swallows were included in the NAMC May 9 (JCT). BARN SWALLOWS were under-reported. The first was at Sable I. Apr. 22 (ZOL), regular after that in low numbers in western and northern Nova Scotia through early May. An early CLIFF SWALLOW appeared on Sable I. April 20 (ZOL), but despite 11 throughout the province during the NAMC May 11, no other records reached me.

In CB Co., BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES appear to have been less common than usual this winter (JAC), but elsewhere much as usual. Nesting activities were noted in Halifax Apr. 16 and May 4 (PLC) and in Canning, Kings Co., Apr. 26 (JWW). A resident RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH was preparing a nest hole in the Kentville Ravine, Kings Co., Apr. 8 (John Pickwell, *fide* JWW). Elsewhere, migrants were seen on Sable I. (one) Apr. 23 (ZOL), and in what JCT termed a “mini-wave” in the Kentville Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Kings Co., May 1. Assiduous birding revealed only one on Seal I., Yar. Co., May 25, when several to many might have been expected (ELM *et al.*). An unusual influx of WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES was reported beginning March 28-29 from the Gaspé and N. New Brunswick, where some birds stayed until mid-April (Brian Dalzell, *fide* BLM). Numbers were lower in N.S., but the following may reflect what happened farther N.: one on Brier I., Digby Co., Mar. 29 (CAH); 20+ at feeders in coastal Shel. Co. beginning about Apr. 5 (including six on CSI, four of which were at one feeder) (MUN); one at KFS's feeder in Apple R., Cum. Co., from April 10-21; and one at Grand Pré, Kings Co., Apr. 12 (BLF). The earliest, one at Tusket Falls, Yar. Co., Mar. 1 (JCZ), was too early to be part of the remarkable “wave” in late March.

Singing WINTER WRENS were recorded throughout the province into June, beginning Apr. 19 in Bible Hill, Col. Co. (JBO, PLC, KFS, GWT), including at least 40 in Hfx. Co. alone during the North American Migration Count on May 9 (JCT) and at least four on Seal I., Yar. Co., May 24–26 (ELM *et al.*). An individual on Sambro I., Hfx. Co., Apr. 6

(SEB) was likely a migrant. Apparently this lovely resident continues to recover from its decimation by a spring ice storm about two decades ago. A fledgling GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET in Halifax May 30 (PLC) indicates that business went on as usual in this common woodland species. A lone male RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET at 15 Crestview, Halifax from Mar. 17–19 probably over-wintered (Jerry Edsell), but 20 on Brier I., Digby Co., Apr. 15 (CAH) were undoubtedly migrants.

A male E. BLUEBIRD that arrived on Seal I., Yar. Co., May 26 stayed at least three days. An early pair arrived on Brier I. Mar. 29 (DAP, *fide* CAH), and a male was at Stoney I., Shel. Co., Apr. 4–5 (FA, MUN, JON, SAN). A pair visited Apple R., Cum. Co., May 30, and as this report is being written a nesting pair is present near the north end of the Clyde R. loop, Shel. Co. (MUN, JON). Two nesting pairs were found at Lochaber, Ant. Co., May 29 (Harriet MacMillan, *fide* RFL), an encouraging sign, as was the pair at Apple R., Cum. Co., June 1 (MSM). A lone female was atop Eigg Mountain, Ant. Co., May 24 (KJM). Although a VEERY nest was found May 13 on the Wolfville Ridge, Kings Co. (BLF), migrants continued to pass through from the first sighting May 1 in Kentville (JCT) through the end of the month. These included seven during the NAMC May 9 (JCT), one at Brier I., Digby Co., May 17 (ELM), one on Sable I. May 19 (ZOL) and two on Seal I., Yar. Co., May 25 (SJF *et al.*). A very early GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH found Apr. 25 on Sable I., the only one reported this season, may actually have been our local species, BICKNELL'S THRUSH (ZOL, *fide* IAM). Many migrants passed over us without stopping, including, apparently, SWAINSON'S THRUSH, which was recorded only during the NAMC May 9 (nine) (JCT), at Sable I. (one) May 19–20 (ZOL) and on Seal I., Yar. Co., May 25 (the only thrush in two days' birding) (ELM *et al.*). By month's end, our resident Swainson's were singing in every wooded area. About on time, the first migrant HERMIT THRUSHES of the year were found at Mooseland, Hfx. Co., Apr. 4 (KAT) and at Head of St Margaret's Bay, Hfx Co., Apr. 11 (AZV). But numbers were low until the period Apr. 18–27, when they were widely reported. A nest with eggs was found near Sunken L., Kings Co., May 14 (BLF). Rarest among the regulars, a lone WOOD THRUSH was seen on Sable I. May 24 (ZOL), coinciding with thrush arrivals on the mainland. AM. ROBINS were still arriving in Advocate, Cum. Co., Mar. 24, when KFS saw 30+, but by the end of March they were singing conspicuously nearly everywhere in the province, except perhaps in Cape Breton. JAC reported from 40–80+ in the Point Edward area, CB Co., between Mar. 31 and Apr. 3 and "hundreds" by Apr. 7.

A very early GRAY CATBIRD showed up on Sable I. Apr. 20 (ZOL). Despite three on the NAMC May 9 (JCT), the remaining records indicate arrivals between May 17 and 26 at Brier I., Digby Co., (BLF, GWT, JCT) and Seal I., Yar. Co., where there were 10 on May 25 (ELM, SJF *et al.*). More frequently reported than Catbirds, N. MOCKING-BIRDS had a strong presence in the province, especially in the eastern Annapolis Valley region around Wolfville/Port Williams/Kentville, and along the South Shore, judging by many records between Mar. 21 and the end of May (PAM, JWW, JCT, BBT). There was one at Shelburne Mar. 7 (ELM, FLL, IAM), and individuals at Argyle and Chebogue Point, Yar. Co., Mar. 28. A pair at Wolf Park, Bedford, Hfx Co., in April was in last year's breeding location (JEH). Elsewhere, many remained in the locations mentioned in

the previous season's report. One on Sable I. May 28 was definitely a wanderer (ZOL). Unusually early, a BROWN THRASHER was at The Hawk, CSI, Shel. Co., Apr. 21 (SAN, JON, CS), followed by another there May 15 (PL, PLC). The only other was one at Melanson Mt., Kings Co., May 26 (BLF).

A flock of 15 AM. PIPITS was at Hartlen Pt., Hfx Co., Mar. 29, and the same or others in diminishing numbers (10, 8) were there Apr. 5 and 12 (IAM). Ten or more were at Pond Cove, Brier I., Digby Co., Mar. 31 (RBS), and a flock of 20 on Seal I., Yar. Co., May 4 diminished to four the next day (ELM, FLL). Five lingered at South Bar, CB Co., May 23 (DBM, JWM).

How could a Waxwing winter of such magnitude not spill over into the spring? Indeed it did, for both species remained in view throughout the migration period. Significant numbers of BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS were still being seen through March all over the province, for example, flocks of 50 and 150 near Shelburne, Shel. Co., Mar. 7 (ELM, FLL, IAM, Sandy Hiltz), and Mar. 16 thirty in Halifax (PLC), 35+ in Apple R., Cum. Co., and 100+ with Cedar Waxwings in Wolfville, Kings Co. (JWW). On Mar. 26 JAC saw "at times hundreds" in the Sydneys/Point Edward area, CB Co., where there were still over 100 Apr. 7. The last reports of this north-western eruptive species were of small flocks at Medway Head and West Berlin, Queens Co, Apr. 12 (ELM, AHM) and of 30 at White Rock, Kings Co., Apr. 16 (BLF), and, unusually late, 10 during the NAMC May 9 (JCT). CEDAR WAXWING numbers too remained significant throughout March: ca. 40 in Halifax on the 14th (IAM); 17 in Wolfville on the 20th; and 12 in Halifax on the 22nd. But nowhere else matches the 100+ reported from Point Edward, CB Co., Apr. 6 by Walter MacKinnon (*vide* JAC). Thereafter, records were few and of little note, except for three on Sable I. May 26, followed by 42+ on the 30th (ZOL). Were they coming, going, or just wandering?

## WARBLERS

By Andy Horn

The concentrated efforts of the NAMC provided reports of warblers that, for many species, preceded conventional reports by two weeks or more. The NAMC also allowed some comparison of numbers between this year and last; most species showed increases, probably indicating increased effort or perhaps earlier movements rather than population trends. Otherwise, relatively few reports were received, making it hard to track migration across the province or to comment on abundance.

A **GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** at East Port Medway, Queens Co. Apr. 26 (Nancy Geffken and Peter Kelleher, via JSC and KAT) kick starts the warbler report rather nicely. The bird was in view only 10 minutes, and the observers candidly confessed they were "not experienced bird-watchers." With binoculars at 20 feet, however, the brief encounter was enough to see "black mask ... black smears on the chest, a bright yellow cap and ... yellow shoulders." Apart from the smears rather than a well-demarcated bib, the description seems to fit; its chickadee-like "giz" was also mentioned.

Only three reports of TENNESSEE WARBLER are enough to show they arrived on average dates, reaching Greenwich, Kings Co. by May 20 (BLF) and Sydney, CB Co. by May 25 (DBM). Two **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS** lingered through winter and beyond in CB Co.: one in Louisbourg to Apr. 12 (SUM, JUM) and another, an imm. fem., at Sand Lake to 15 Apr. (CUM). The NAMC yielded 45 NASHVILLE WARBLERS May 9, up from only one in last year's count and the earliest report for this year (JCT). Well, almost the earliest — the hardy Yarmouth bird cheated migrants out of that honour by wintering successfully to at least Apr. 18 (Ruffs). The only other report was much later — May 27 at Sandfield, CB Co. (DBM).

NORTHERN PARULAS first appear in the NAMC totals May 9, with 37 in the province, up from the five reported last year (JCT). The first reports of YELLOW WARBLERS came quite early from Kings Co.: two at Wolfville Apr. 18 (Jim and Betty Morrow, *vide* JCT) and one at Sheffield Mills Apr. 25 (JET, JCT); 20 were found province-wide all the way to CB Co. on the NAMC May 9 (JCT). Besides two early CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS May 9 in Kings and Lun. Co. (NAMC), the only two reports were from the last week in May, from New Ross, Lun. Co. (KNK) and Maccan, Cum. Co. (KFS). The NAMC also produced the first MAGNOLIA WARBLER on May 9; the next earliest reports were from Kings Co., May 18 (JCT) and CB Co. May 20 (JAC, Nancy Moor). The first and only report of CAPE MAY WARBLER was early at Halls Hbr., Kings Co. May 9 (Mike McCall, *vide* JCT). BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLERS are spottily distributed, so in any year only two reports would not be disappointing; this year one was at Kentville Ravine, Kings Co. May 9 (Stan Riggs to JCT) and another, singing on territory, was on Butler Rd. May 27 (RBS).

Distinguishing migrant YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS from lingering winter residents is always tricky, but by Apr. 18 the 12-15 at Rainbow Haven were in bright plumage (PLC), and by the end of the month many were present at Apple R. (KFS). Certainly many of the 2160 seen across the province on May 9 (NAMC) were already on territory. The 36 BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS seen in Nova Scotia on May 9 is over 10 times the number seen last year at the same time (NAMC). Distinctive songs by some males on McNabs I., Hfx. Co. on that date suggest that at least some of these were already defending their old territories. By May 30 they were "all over" Brier I. (RBS). BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, as usual, took slightly longer to be noticed, first at Seal I. May 25 (IAM *et al.*), and several around Halifax by May 30 (IAM *et al.*). Two **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLERS** were reported, one of the *dominica* subspecies from Cape d'Or, Cumb. Co. Apr. 21 (JRM, MSM; see photo) and another undescribed individual from CSI, Shel. Co. May 18 (MUN). A remarkable total of seven **PINE WARBLERS** successfully overwintered in Louisbourg, CB Co. (two birds to Mar. 28 and one more to Apr. 5; SUM, HOS), Coxheath, CB Co. (one to early Mar.), Halifax (two to Mar. 26, FLL), and McGillis Pt., Shel. Co. (DOE).

Several PALM WARBLERS at Brier I. Apr. 17 (Carl Haycock) were followed within the next week by individuals in Cum. Co. (Apple R., KFS), Kings Co. (Starrs Pt., EDL to JCT), and Sable I. (ZOL). By May 9 they were being seen throughout the province, with

20 of the nearly 200 individuals on the NAMC attributed to the eastern race (JCT). A BAY-BREASTED WARBLER reported from Lun. Co. May 9 (NAMC) was notably early. The succeeding reports were more to be expected: Brier I. May 23 (RDS, Len McDonald) and Seal I. May 25–26 (IAM *et al.*). A BLACKPOLL seen on the NAMC in Shel. Co. also beat this year's other first reports by at least two weeks: Sable I. May 18 (ZOL) and Wolfville, Kings Co. May 19. On Seal I. 22 Blackpolls made this the most common warbler May 25–26, which is perhaps more indicative of their migration's peak (IAM *et al.*).

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLERS were well represented by 87 reports across the province on May 9 (NAMC), although the earliest report was May 7 in Greenwich, Kings Co. (BLF). The first report of AM. REDSTART this year was from Kings Co. May 9 (NAMC), the same date as last year (JCT). The poor showing of later reports make it hard to picture their migration, although "several" at Enon, CB Co., May 27 (DBM) and eight or more in Maccan, Cum. Co. May 30 (KFS) show that they were well in place by then.

Late April frequently yields one or two **WORM-EATING WARBLERS**; this year one was found at Daniel's Head, CSI Apr. 21 (var. obs.; see photo). A second bird was observed on CSI from Apr. 25–28 (var. obs., ph.). An eager OVENBIRD on Sable I. Apr. 25 (ZOL) was just over a week before the first mainland record of three in New Ross, Lun. Co. (KNK). By the NAMC May 9 only 15 — the same number as last year (JCT) — were seen in scattered numbers across three counties (Lun., Kings, Pict.), and they were not regular elsewhere until the third week in May. NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES gave a good showing on the NAMC, up to 48 from 10 in 1997. Most reports were from the well-covered centre of the province, although four were seen in Pict. Co. and one in CB Co. (JCT). The first MOURNING WARBLER reports were as usual, just in the nick of time for this report, with one at Coxheath, CB Co. May 30 (DBM, Gerry Lunn), two at Refugee Cove, Cum. Co. (KFS) and six or more at Cape Chignecto (JCZ *et al.*). A respectable 13 COMM. YELLOWTHROATS were scattered throughout the province for the NAMC May 9, including three in CB Co. (JCT). By the third week in May, they were common, at least in Lun. Co. (KNK). Sable I. celebrated May Day in style, with a fem. **HOODED WARBLER**, well described (ZOL). **WILSON'S WARBLERS** were only represented by two from Sable I. May 27 (ZOL), but they are easily overlooked, as are **CANADA WARBLERS**, which had only three reports: from Kings and Anna. Co. May 9 (NAMC) and Homeville, CB Co. May 30 (DBM, Gerry Lunn).

## **TANAGERS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW**

By Dave McCorquodale

Two **SUMMER TANAGERS** were reported this spring, down from six in each of the past two springs. The first was a male on Brier I. Apr. 30 – May 6, the other on CSI May 14 (CAH, Jennifer Jones). Two **SCARLET TANAGERS** were found on the NAMC May 9. An early bird, a male, was seen on CSI on Apr. 11 (MUN, JON, SAN). In early June there was one near Coldbrook (AAM).

Three of the five reports of E. TOWHEE come from CSI, including the earliest, Apr. 25, and the latest, May 31 (MUN *et al.*). Only one was found on the NAMC.

AM. TREE SPARROWS frequented feeders in Apple R., Cum. Co., Avonport, Bible Hill and Edwardsville in March and April (KFS, Urbans, René Gould, JAC). Nine were reported May 9 on the NAMC and the latest sighting was of one in Edwardsville, CB Co. May 17 (JAC).

A hardy CHIPPING SPARROW spent the winter at feeders in Louisbourg and was still there in late April (HOS). The first spring migrants were found on Apr. 6 in Pict. Co. (Elwin Hemphill). By Apr. 25 they were as far north as Albert Bridge, CB Co. (SUM). A couple of weeks later, there were 139 on the NAMC. CLAY-COLOURED SPARROW is a rare bird at any time of year, with most being found in the fall on the southern islands. One May 18 on Little Flat I., CSI (MUN) provided one of the few spring records for the province.

FIELD SPARROWS are found most springs in Nova Scotia, usually in late April or early May. This year the only report was of an early bird, at feeders on Brier I. Mar.30–31 (CAH), besting the earliest ever record of Apr. 7. No reports of migrating VESPER SPARROWS or of the breeding birds from Cum. Co. were received.

A few SAVANNAH SPARROWS overwinter in Nova Scotia. This year at least one did at feeders in Avonport (Urbans). Mainland birds typically return in mid-April. Six early birds were at Hartlen Pt. Mar. 22 (IAM). The next week only one was still there, suggesting that the six had overshot their mark and moved back south. As expected the first reports from many locations were between Apr. 15 and the end of the month. CAH noted a significant migration, more than 200, on Brier I. Apr. 30. The first migrant “IPSWICH SPARROWS” were found Mar. 22 at Hartlen Pt. (IAM). Other individuals and groups of up to 12 were found in Digby Co., Shel. Co., Queens Co. and Halifax area from late March until Apr. 20.

The LE CONTE’S SPARROW that created so much excitement at the Wolfville sewage ponds last winter found the area to its liking. It successfully overwintered and was last reported Mar. 8. NELSON’S SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS typically do not arrive until the beginning of June. This year there was an early bird at Cherry Hill May 24 (SJF).

A FOX SPARROW overwintered at feeders in Avonport (Urbans). The first migrants usually arrive in late March. This year the first reports were from Homeville CB Co. and Halifax Mar. 25 (Tim Allison, Pixie Williams). By the end of the month they were at feeders and in yards across the province. The high count was of 45 at two feeders in Louisbourg, Apr. 2 (HOS). Nearing the end of their migration, the NAMC on May 9 totalled 23 in the province. SONG SPARROWS overwintered in several places making detection of spring migrants difficult. Late March tallies of 15+ at several locations were definitely attributable to arriving migrants. In May the NAMC totalled 2299 up from just over 1400 in 1997.

LINCOLN’S SPARROWS usually arrive by mid-May, rarely by the end of April. The NAMC May 9 produced only one individual. First reports from many locations (Sable I.,



New Ross, Wolfville, Shubenacadie, and Pict. Co.) were between May 21–24 (KNK, ZOL, GWT, JCT). By the end of the month they were widespread in eastern Cape Breton (SUM, DBM, GEL, Chris Thomson).

A SWAMP SPARROW successfully overwintered on CSI (JCZ). The first spring migrant was found Apr. 12 in West Berlin, Queens Co. (ELM). By May 9 for the NAMC 187 were counted.

At least two WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS overwintered in Bedford, with another two in Avonport (PLC, Urbans). Two more joined the latter Mar. 4 and presumably also overwintered in the area. Our first spring arrivals were probably those on Brier I. Mar. 28 (CAH). Further north and east, first arrivals were noted Apr. 16 in Apple R., Cum. Co., Apr. 17 in Louisbourg and more than 50 Apr. 22 on Sable I. (KFS, SUM, ZOL). The total found on the NAMC May 9 (1717) was almost double that of last year's count.

As expected WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS turned up in early May. The first was May 3 on CSI (MUN). However there was an earlier bird Mar. 21 at Long I., Kings Co., presumably it overwintered in the area (BLF). By May 9 there were seven found on the NAMC, with five of these in CB Co. The latest sighting was of one on Brier I. May 24 (CAH).

Many DARK-EYED JUNCOS overwintered at feeders. Numbers built up through late March and early April, when several observers noted their abundance along rural roads. More than 2000 were counted on May 9 from all regions of the province on the NAMC. This is a drop from last year's total and significantly less than the total for last year's CBCs.

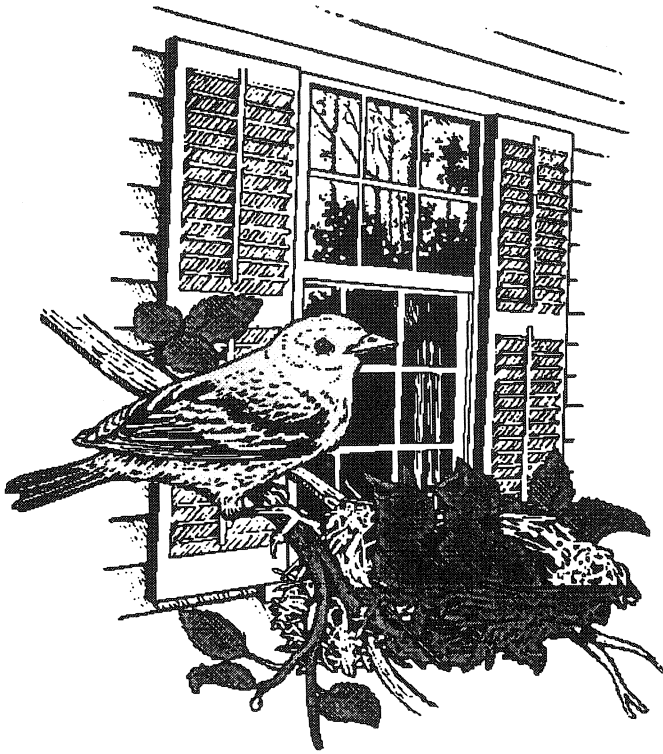
A few LAPLAND LONGSPURS often overwinter and spring migrants generally linger into late April. There were only two reports this spring both from late March, Mar. 29 Hartlen Pt. and three males Mar. 23 near Truro (IAM, JBO). After many reports through the winter, we have few reports of SNOW BUNTINGS this spring. A few were in the Grand Pre area in late March, a sizeable flock of more than 50 was on Sable I. Mar. 7. Lingering birds were found May 18 on Sable I. and an extremely late pair May 23 in Little Hbr., Shel. Co. (ZOL, DHY).

Fewer reports of N. CARDINALS were received this spring than in the past couple of years. Also fewer were seen on the NAMC than on the CBCs last winter (16 vs. 26). However the reports do suggest that they are still widespread from the Halifax area to Queens Co. to Digby Co. to Kings Co. to Pict. Co. With a conspicuous bird like this we have an opportunity to either document its establishment as a regular breeding species or to document another decline in its numbers in Nova Scotia.

An extremely early male ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK was found in Dartmouth Apr. 3 (Arnold Langille *vide* JWT). More typical were 3 males Apr. 18 on Brier I. and one male Apr. 19 at Barrington, Shel. Co. (CAH, MUN). The NAMC tallied 11 birds on May 9. Notice that fewer grosbeaks than cardinals were found on the count. Many of our reports come from feeders. In Cape Breton, this species is most frequently found at feeders during the last week of May, like the three observed by Megan McCorquodale in

Georges R. May 28.

This was not a banner year for BLUE GROSBEAKS with only four reports. However one of the earliest arrivals ever is included. An imm. male spent Mar. 15–27 in the vicinity of the Halifax Horseshoe Club (Tim Allison). More typically there was a male at Port Joli, Queens Co., Apr. 13 and one in West Pennant, Apr. 22 (Andy and Lelia Dean, Gary Burns). A late bird was lingering at Baccaro June 5 (Terry Crowell, Clyde Stoddart). About 20 individual INDIGO BUNTINGS were reported this spring and 16 were counted May 9 on the NAMC. As expected they spanned the province from Sable I. to Brier I. to Cape Breton I. The earliest two were Apr. 18 in Donkin, CB Co. and Apr. 19 in Tremont, Kings Co. and the latest was a male on Sable I. May 30 (Ann MacKinnon, SLH, ZOL).



## LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Thanks to all of our contributors, including:

Allison, Tim		Hulford, Sheila	SLH
Amey, Sylvia	SYA	Jones, Jennifer	
Atkinson, Fawn	FAA	Keddy, Keith	KNK
Atwood, Wilfred (Skipper)	WIA	Kelleher, Peter	
Bagnell, Warren		Kempton, Sandy	
Ballard, Rick		Klemka, Joe	JOK
Barber, Doug & Donna	DDB	Lancelot, Ann	
Barbour, Stephen E.	SEB	Langhill, Arnold	
Bezanson, Tony	TOB	Lauff, Randolph	RFL
Borcherdt, Joyce		Lavender, Fulton	FLL
Brennan, Calvin	CGB	Learmonth, Don & Isobel	
Brennan, Harry	HAB	Leblanc, Ed	EDL
Brennan, Mark		Leblanc, Peter	PEL
Burns, Gary		Lucas, Zoe	ZOL
Chalmers, Patricia L.	PLC	Lunn, Gerry	GEL
Chretien, Jacqueline	JAC	MacDonald, Peter	
Cohrs, Shirley	JSC	MacKinnon, Walter	
Czupalay, Joan	JCZ	MacLean, Angus	AAM
d'Entremont, Gisèle	GDE	MacLeod, Mona & Harvey	
d'Eon, Andrew		MacMillan, Harriet	
d'Eon, Nigel		MacPhee, Roslyn C.	RCM
d'Eon, Ted	TCD	Magee, Pearl	
Edsell, Jerry		Martin, Pat	PAM
Elderkin, Mark		Maybank, Blake	BLM
Ensor, Donna	DOE	McCall, Mike	
Field, Chris	CJF	McCorquodale, Dave	DBM
Forman, Maria		McCorquodale, Megan	
Forsythe, Bernard	BLF	McDonald, Len	
Forsythe, George	GEF	McKenna, Kenneth J.	KJM
Foxall, Roger	RAF	McLaren, Ian	IAM
Freedman, Bill		Metcalfe, Geraldine	GEM
Fullerton, Sylvia	SJF	Metcalfe, Junior	JUM
Geffen, Nancy		Miller, Tony	TOM
Gibson, Merritt	MAG	Mills, Anne H.	AHM
Goring, May	MZG	Mills, Eric L.	ELM
Gould, René		Mills, Jane	JRM
Graves, June	JUG	Mills, Maureen	MSM
Hall, Hubert and Helen	HHH	Moor, Nancy	
Haycock, Carl	CAH	Murrant, Cathy	CAM
Hemphill, Elwin		Myers, Susann	SUM
Hiltz, Sandy		Newell, Murray	MUN

Nickerson, Johnnie	JON	Stevens, Clarence Jr.	CLS
Nickerson, Sandra	SAN	Stoddart, Clyde	
Nocera, Joe		Surette, George	
Ogden, Jeff	JBO	Tams, Miriam	
Oickle, Peter	PEO	Tay, Karl	KAT
O'Shea, Helen	HOS	Taylor, James	JWT
Patterson, Ian		Thexton, Brenda & Bill	BBT
Payzant, Linda & Peter	LPP	Timpa, Jean	JET
Perron, Jacques	JAP	Trueman, Gerry	
Pickwell, John		Tufts, Gordon	GWT
Randall, Frank		Tufts, Judy	JCT
Reeves, Leanne		Turner, Joanne	
Riggs, Stan		Urban, Eva, Deanna & Walter	Urbans
Robb, Freda & Donald		Vienneau, Azor	AZV
Ross, Oliver		Waldron, Joan	JOW
Scalan, Terry	TES	Williams, Pixie	
Sigston, Ronald D.	RDS	Williams, Sherman	SAW
Smith, Peter C.		Wilson-Hammond, Thea	
Smith, Ruth E.	RES	Wolford, Jim	JWW
Spicer, Kathleen	KFS	Young, David	DHY
Stern, Richard	RBS		

Editor's note: Contributor's acronyms are assigned using the best information available — if we know your actual initials, we will use them unless they conflict with a pre-existing assignment. Otherwise we use the first and second letter of your first name, and the first letter of your last name (unless used for someone else, etc.). So if you would like us to use your initials, please make sure they are included on your observation records.

## 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 will occasionally publish a list of references and standard abbreviations. Please see the January 1998 issue for the latest version of the list.

## ABBREVIATIONS

### Abbreviations in Place Names

APBS	Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary
CB	Cape Breton
CBHNP	C.B. Highland National Park
CSI	Cape Sable I.
Hbr.	Harbour
Hd.	Head

HRM	Halifax Regional Municipality
I.	Island, Isle
Is.	Islands, Isles
L.	Lake
Lwr.	Lower
Mt.	Mountain, Mount
Mts.	Mountains

N.P. National Park  
 P.P. Provincial Park  
 Pen. Peninsular  
 Pt. Point, not Port  
 R. River

male (no abbreviation)  
 MNRS Maritimes Nest Records Scheme  
 var. obs. various observers

**Abbreviations in Bird Names**

Am. American  
 Com. Common  
 E. East, Eastern  
 Eur. European, Eurasian  
 Mt. Mountain  
 N. North, Northern  
 S. South, Southern  
 W. West, Western

**Other Abbreviations and Symbols**

ad. adult  
 BBS Breeding Bird Survey  
 ca. circa (about, approximately)  
 CBC Christmas Bird Count  
 fem. female  
 imm. immature  
 juv. juvenile

**Counties/Areas**

Anna. Co. Annapolis County  
 Ant. Co. Antigonish County  
 CB Co. Cape Breton County  
 Col. Co. Colchester County  
 Cum. Co. Cumberland County  
 Digby Co. Digby County  
 Guys. Co. Guysborough County  
 Hfx. Co. Halifax County  
 Hants Co. Hants County  
 Inv. Co. Inverness County  
 Kings Co. Kings County  
 Lun. Co. Lunenburg County  
 Pict. Co. Pictou County  
 Queens Co. Queens County  
 Rich. Co. Richmond County  
 Shel. Co. Shelburne County  
 Vic. Co. Victoria County  
 Yar. Co. Yarmouth County

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF BIRD REPORTS**

For the **Fall 1998** issue: **August 7, 1998**  
 For the **Winter 1998** issue: **December 7, 1998**  
 For the **Spring 1999** issue: **March 7, 1999**  
 For the **Summer 1999** issue: **June 7, 1999**

**Bird Reports to:** Records Compiler,  
 NSBS

*Address to be announced in Fall Flyer*

We thank Karl Tay for being our Records Compiler, and are sorry that he is unable to continue.

As an experiment, the deadline for bird reports has been changed from previous years in order to align the reporting periods with the June to July breeding season and the August

to November Fall migration season. **NOTE:** The deadline for other submissions remains unchanged. Please use the AOU checklist for bird names and sequences if possible. Please also use the abbreviations listed in this issue.

## DEADLINE FOR OTHER SUBMISSIONS

For the <b>Fall 1998</b> issue:	<b>July 15, 1998</b>
For the <b>Winter 1998</b> issue:	<b>November 15, 1998</b>
For the <b>Spring 1999</b> issue:	<b>February 15, 1999</b>
For the <b>Summer 1999</b> issue:	<b>May 15, 1999</b>

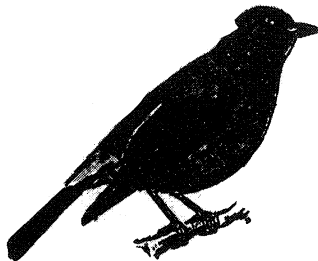
Nova Scotia Birds welcomes for publication contributions of original articles, photographs, artwork, field notes and field studies. The activities of the society are centred on the observation and study of the bird life of this province and the preservation of habitat. However, our readers are always 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: Colour slides or original negatives are preferred. Large format colour prints with sufficient contrast are acceptable.



## NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT MAY 9, 1998

Overnight cool, foggy conditions moving inland under mostly cloudy skies kept the fog hanging around coastal waters until mid-morning, hampering efforts by NAMC participants to count birds in coastal areas especially seabirds and waterfowl offshore. By noon the last of the fog had dissipated, sunshine began to peak through in many areas. Temps rose through the afternoon by 10–15 degrees Celsius, SW breezes in the a.m. switched to NE by late afternoon, bringing light showers to southern regions by evening. However while some participants coped with the fog others enjoyed a wonderful spring day under ideal conditions.

Highlights: Both Little and Snowy Egrets were seen in Cape Breton Co. again, just as in 1996, while a second Snowy was located in Lunenburg Co. 2 male Eur. Wigeon were found in the W. Lawrencetown Marsh among half a dozen of their North American counterparts — the Am. Wigeon — possibly being the same two which overwintered in Dartmouth's Sullivan pond? A Com. Moorhen was spotted swimming in a pond in Tangier; a Pomarine Jaeger was discovered resting on the mudflats on Cherry Hill Beach, and a Caspian Tern turned up in CB.

While 19 Snow Geese were being observed around Economy; several hundred Brant were moving through Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth counties, and nearly 3400 Com. Eiders — twice as many as the same time last year — were tallied around the province with an impressive 2000 of them resting offshore in the Shel. and Yar. counties alone. 17 Turkey Vultures were tallied by various observers riding the thermals along the Fundy shoreline from Brier Island to Scots Bay — one suspects some of these may have been counted more than once as they drifted along Digby Neck and the N. Mt. ... but this species is certainly becoming more widespread. Hants and Kings counties remain the strongholds for Ring-necked Pheasant with nearly 300 registered; Ruffed Grouse were busy drumming — 149 were heard throughout the province, CB leading the way with 29.

Nine Ruby-throated Hummingbirds managed to make an appearance for this date (up from only 4 in 1997), while 214 Belted Kingfishers and 626 Com. Flickers were nearly 50% more than in 1997. Concern for possible decline in Tree Swallows populations may be justified, their numbers were definitely down this year for the Count, only 1,796 vs. 2,840 in 1997 but Barn Swallow numbers were also down. However because of the unusual early spring-like weather some species were more than well represented this year. Ruby-crowned Kinglets had quadrupled (or more) their numbers over last year's, as had Winter Wrens, Hermit Thrushes and Vireos. Over 500 more warblers were tallied this year than in 1997, with 2,160 Yellow-rumps and 198 Palm leading the warbler parade.

Sparrow numbers were impressive with their marked early arrivals: 2,299 Song Sparrows (1,426 in 1997), 1,717 White-throateds (967 in 1997), and 680 Savannahs (440 in 1997) whereas Juncos, Grackles, Blackbirds and Cowbird numbers were well down from last year's tally. Curiously in 1997 we saw nearly the same number of birds (79,840) as this year (79,252), but seven more species were counted in 1998.

I wish to thank everyone — there were over a hundred additional participants taking part in the spring count this year — for their enthusiasm and energy as they persevered through fog, overcast skies or sunshine, to come up with another rewarding effort. Special kudos to the county coordinators/area reps. who make my job so much easier with their organization, and without whose help this project would be most difficult.

Judy Tufts  
N.S. Coordinator for NAMC

## Tally Spreadsheet

North American Migration Count - May 9, 1998

NOVA SCOTIA

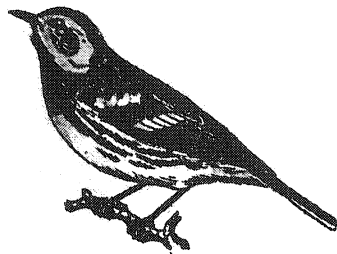
Total Species Counted           189  
Total Birds Counted               79,252

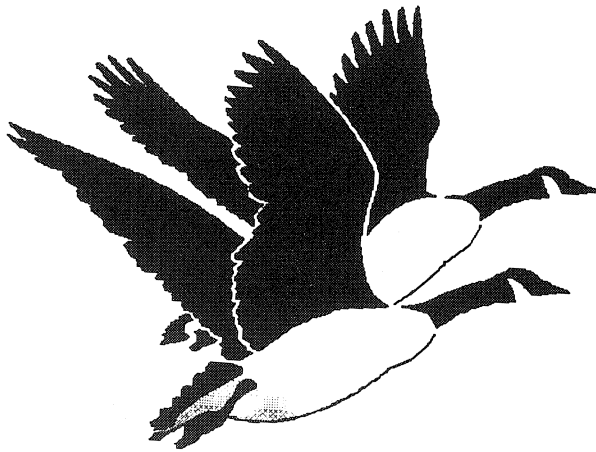
<b>Species</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Total</b>
Red-throated Loon	7	Greater Scaup	47
Com. Loon	219	Com. Eider	3,381
Pied-billed Grebe	15	Oldsquaw	5
Red-necked Grebe	13	Black Scoter	123
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	3	Surf Scoter	455
Leach's Storm-Petrel	189	White-winged Scoter	103
N. Gannet	109	Com. Goldeneye	42
Great Cormorant	188	Bufflehead	73
Double-crested Cormorant	2,389	Hooded Merganser	33
Am. Bittern	20	Com. Merganser	71
Gt. Blue Heron	333	Red-Breasted Merganser	295
Snowy Egret	2	Turkey Vulture	17
Green Heron	1	Osprey	120
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1	Bald Eagle adult	108
Snow Goose	19	Bald Eagle imm *	23
Brant	418	Bald Eagle age? *	1
Canada Goose	196	N. Harrier	42
Wood Duck	31	Sharp-Shinned Hawk	20
Green-winged Teal	128	N. Goshawk	17
Am. Black Duck	1,509	Broad-winged Hawk	13
Mallard	410	Red-tailed Hawk	67
Northern Pintail	8	Buteo sp *	9
Blue-winged Teal	71	Am. Kestrel	51
N. Shoveler	3	Merlin	22
Gadwall	5	Gray Partridge	1
Am. Wigeon	68	Ring-necked Pheasant	426
Ring-necked Duck	318	Spruce Grouse	16



<b>Species</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Total</b>
Ruffed Grouse	149	Com. Nighthawk	3
Virginia Rail	1	Chimney Swift	1
Sora	17	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	9
Com. Moorhen	1	Belted Kingfisher	214
Black-Bellied Plover	76	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	45
Am. Golden Plover	3	Downy Woodpecker	271
Piping Plover	7	Hairy Woodpecker	131
Killdeer	133	Black-backed Woodpecker	3
Greater Yellowlegs	99	N. Flicker	626
Lesser Yellowlegs	14	Pileated Woodpecker	72
Solitary Sandpiper	1	E. Wood Pewee	1
Eastern Willet	373	Least Flycatcher	9
Spotted Sandpiper	31	Eastern Phoebe	12
Upland Sandpiper	1	Tree Swallow	1,796
Whimbrel	3	Bank Swallow	3
Ruddy Turnstone	11	Cliff Swallow	7
Red Knot	59	Barn Swallow	188
Sanderling	64	Gray Jay	60
Least Sandpiper	2	Blue Jay	1,583
Purple Sandpiper	21	Am. Crow	4,327
Dunlin	32	Com. Raven	703
Com. Snipe	137	Black-capped Chickadee	1,806
Am. Woodcock	62	Boreal Chickadee	96
Pomarine Jaeger	1	Chickadee sp *	10
Black-headed Gull	14	Red-breasted Nuthatch	276
Bonaparte's Gull	5	White-breasted Nuthatch	36
Ring-Billed Gull	151	Brown Creeper	23
Herring Gull	9,157	Winter Wren	144
Iceland Gull	36	Golden-crowned Kinglet	353
Glaucous Gull	11	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1,299
Great Black-backed Gull	5,108	E. Bluebird	2
Black-legged Kittiwake	433	Veery	7
Gull sp *	394	Swainson's Thrush	9
Caspian Tern	1	Hermit Thrush	637
Com. Tern	64	Am. Robin	4,716
Arctic Tern	1	Gray Catbird	3
Sterna sp *	180	N. Mockingbird	9
Black Tern	5	American Pipit	8
Black Guillemot	695	Bohemian Waxwing	10
Atlantic Puffin	8	Cedar Waxwing	18
Rock Dove	1,325	Eur. Starling	4,578
Mourning Dove	1,159	Solitary Vireo	100
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	Red-eyed Vireo	15
Great Horned Owl	27	Vireo sp *	6
Barred Owl	76	Nashville Warbler	45
N. Saw-whet Owl	24	N. Parula	37

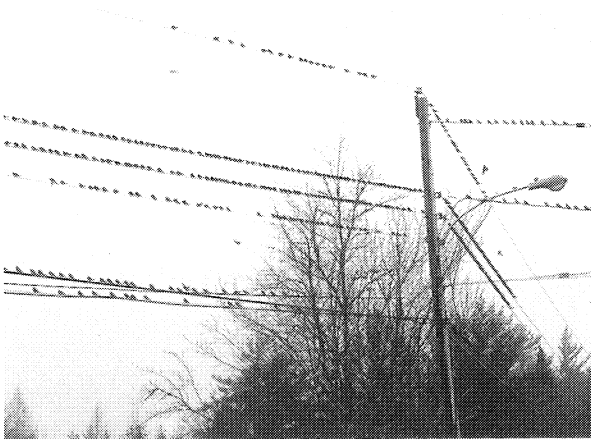
<b>Species</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yellow Warbler	20	White-crowned Sparrow	7
Chestnut-sided Warbler	2	Dark-eyed Junco	2,085
Magnolia Warbler	1	Bobolink	4
Cape May Warbler	1	Red-winged Blackbird	1,310
Myrtle Warbler	2,160	Rusty Blackbird	78
Black-throated Green Warbler	36	Com. Grackle	4,204
Palm Warbler	178	Brown-headed Cowbird	136
East Palm *	20	Blackbird sp *	23
Bay-breasted Warbler	1	Orchard Oriole	1
Blackpoll Warbler	1	Baltimore Oriole	6
Black-and-white Warbler	87	Pine Grosbeak	26
Am. Redstart	1	Purple Finch	1,398
Ovenbird	15	House Finch	12
N. Waterthrush	48	Red Crossbill	59
Com. Yellowthroat	13	White-winged Crossbill	16
Canada Warbler	2	Com. Redpoll	21
Scarlet Tanager	2	Pine Siskin	1,129
N. Cardinal	16	Am. Goldfinch	1,772
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	11	Evening Grosbeak	1,575
Indigo Bunting	16	House Sparrow	899
Rufous-sided Towhee	1		
Am. Tree Sparrow	17	Horned Grebe	1
Chipping Sparrow	139	Little Egret	1
Savannah Sparrow	680	Cormorant sp *	31
Fox Sparrow	23	Woodpecker sp *	3
Song Sparrow	2,299	*** Eurasian Wigeon	2
Lincoln's Spar.	1	Sparrow sp*	24
Swamp Sparrow	187	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>79,252</b>
White-throated Sparrow	1,717		



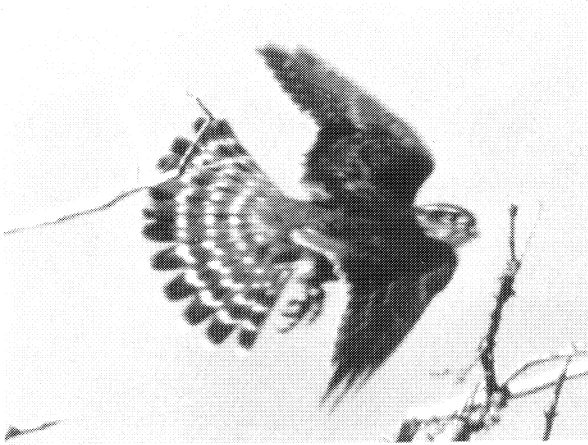


## FROM OUR FILES

Members sometimes send us interesting photographs that never seem to fit into our regular publication scheme. From time to time we will try to bring you a sampling of these shots, as time and editorial space permits.



Nellie Snyder sent us her photo of part of a huge gathering of Tree Swallows at Greenfield, Queens Co., on May 1, 1996. She judged that there were about 10,000 of them perched or skimming black flies from the nearby Medway R. She also saw many thousands in that area May 20, 1992. She wonders how regular these massive gatherings are in that area; truly a phenomenon that should be monitored.



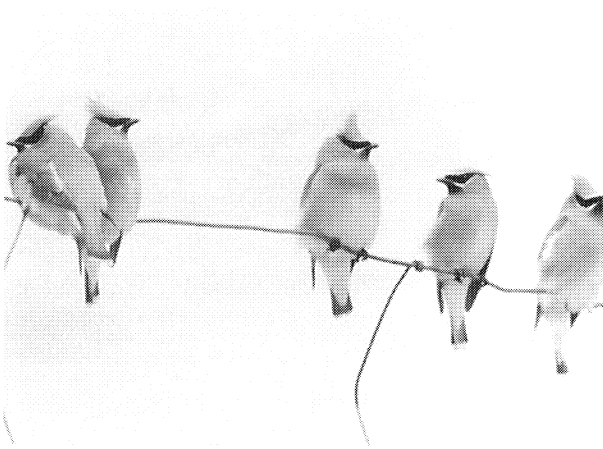
Blake Maybank caught this young Merlin just as it left its perch on a Seal Island snag in autumn 1996. It's not often that you can see a Merlin's tail as a prettily patterned fan.



Last year, on June 17, 1996 Ian McLaren found and photographed the southernmost colony of Black-legged Kittiwakes in Eastern Canada, near the East Light on Sable Island. The larger colony on The Wolves Islands, New Brunswick is almost as far south, and much more successful. The Sable Island colony (12 nests, 10 shown here) was (literally) a mere beachhead, and apparently doomed to failure. Last summer's unsuccessful attempt by Black-legged Kittiwakes to breed on Sable Island was only repeated by a couple of pairs this year.



This photograph of a Sharp-shinned hawk is from Con Desplanque, presumably taken last winter at his back yard feeder in Amherst.



Cedar Waxwings are late nesters, and flocks of adults, like these snapped by Ian McLaren on Sable Island, June 18, 1997, often roam widely in early summer.

# IDENTIFYING JUVENILE COMMON RINGED PLOVERS

By Ian McLaren

Some years ago, four of us (McLaren *et al.* 1990) wrote an account of a plover found on Seal I. 7 Oct. 1989 that we believed was the first fully documented Com. Ringed Plover for Nova Scotia. We were lucky enough to see the diagnostic lack of webbing between the middle and inner toes, and outlined other features that seemed to support our identification, despite the fact that the bird did not give the mellow call typical of this species. Without seeing foot webbing or hearing calls, separation of Ringed from Semipalmated Plover remains a difficult challenge. Other field marks mentioned in existing field guides and even in specialised books on shorebirds are suggestive, but not conclusive. Since our 1989 bird, two articles have addressed the issue. The most recent (Dunn 1993) is excellent, but has two features that make it less useful for Nova Scotia birders:

- 1) It deals almost exclusively with distinguishing adults, which may be less likely here than autumn juveniles; and
- 2) It is biased in text and photos towards identifying Ringed Plovers in Alaska. Those belong to the smaller, darker-backed, shorter-billed subspecies *tundriae*. The expected subspecies here is *hiaticula*, which nests in the Canadian High Arctic, and is less similar to the Semipalmated Plover.

An article by Mullarney (1991) proposed a novel means of separating juveniles of the two species: "In juvenile Ringed Plover, the lower edge of the dark lore area meets the bill at the gape ... juvenile Semipalmated [has] ... a more-or-less obvious wedge of white between the lore stripe and the gape." Mullarney illustrated this difference with several photographs, including one of a Ringed Plover that had an "atypical lore pattern resembling Semipalmated," although without a clear white wedge above the gape. This "wedge of white" does not seem to occur in ad. Semipalmateds.

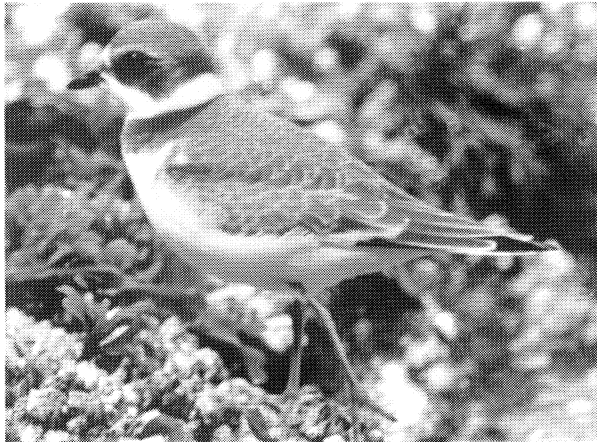
Naturally, I re-examined photos of the Nova Scotia bird (one printed in McLaren *et al.* 1990), and was mildly perturbed to find that its lores had some paler feathering suggestive of Semipalmated. Since then I have looked at hundreds of Semipalmated Plovers in North America and scores of Ringed Plovers during trips to Britain and Holland, and have obtained some photographs of each. The following photos add to the evidence (see McLaren *et al.* 1990) that the Nova Scotia bird fits Ringed, rather than Semipalmated Plover.

## References

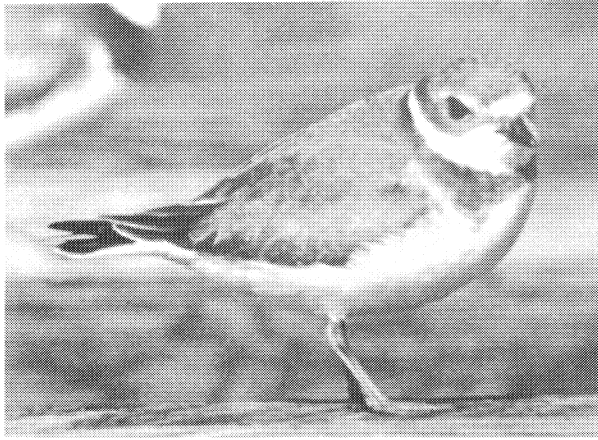
Dunn, Jon. 1993. *The identification of Semipalmated and Common Ringed Plovers in alternate plumage*. *Birding* 25(4):238-243.

McLaren, I., E. Mills, F. Lavender, and B. Maybank. 1990. *A Common Ringed Plover in Nova Scotia*. *N.S. Birds* 32(2):19-22.

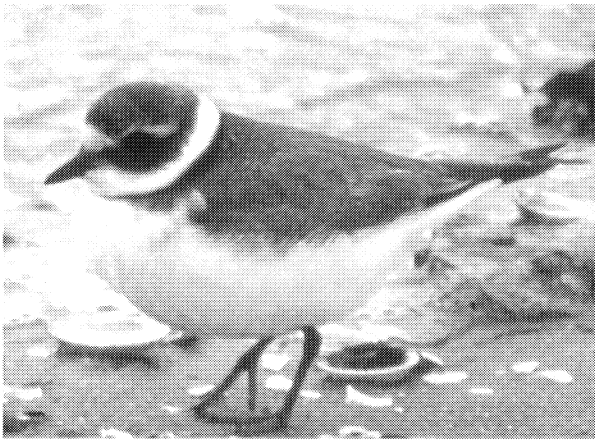
Mullarney, K. 1991. *Identification of Semipalmated Plover: a new feature*. *Birding World* 7:254-258. [Photocopied.]



**Figure 1.** A juv. Semipalmated Plover, still showing pale edgings to back feathers. Note the clear wedge of white above the gape of the bill. Note also that the low point of the dark face patch falls behind the eye and that the bill is stubby with a swept up mandible. Photo IAM, Bamfield, BC, 18 Aug. 1990.



**Figure 2.** A juv. Semipalmated Plover again showing the clear white wedge above the gape. Note that the bill appears blunt from this angle. Photo IAM, Seal I., NS, 8 Oct. 1990.



**Figure 3.** A typical juv. Com. Ringed Plover showing the dark lores meeting the bill at the gape. Note also that the low point of the face patch is under the eye. The breast band, sometimes touted as broader in Com. Ringed than in Semipalmated, is very much influenced by posture, as this photo shows. Photo courtesy of Andrew McGeehan, Bangor, Co. Down.





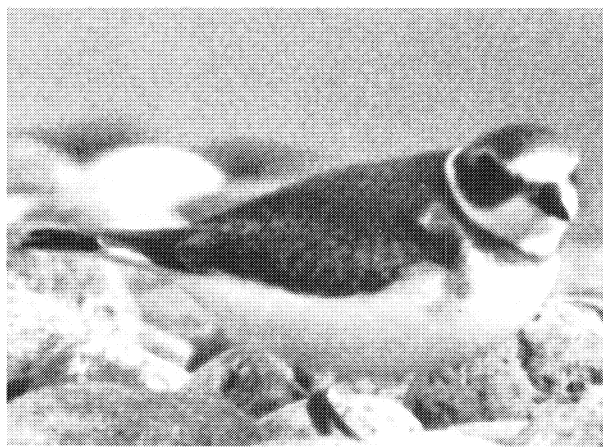
**Figure 4.** A juv. Com. Ringed Plover with whitish feathers in the narrower lores. However, these do not constitute a clear white wedge above the gape. Photo, IAM, Prawle Pt., Devon, 20 Aug. 1990.



**Figure 5.** A frontal view of a juv. Com. Ringed Plover showing the thin, pointed bill, in contrast with Fig. 2. Photo IAM, Prawle Pt., Devon, 20 Aug. 1990.



**Figure 6.** The Nova Scotia plover. Note that the narrow dark lores appear “messy”, but there is no sharply demarcated white wedge above the gape. The low point of the dark facial patch lies under the eye. Photo IAM, Seal I., NS, 7 Oct. 1989.



**Figure 7.** The Nova Scotia plover. Note that there is no white wedge above the lores, and that the bill is decidedly pointed. Photo IAM, Seal I., NS, 7 Oct. 1989.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

**07 Mar 1998 - Owlprowl Pictou and Antigonish Counties**

Ken McKenna

Attendees got more than they bargained for as we met early to check out the lingering winter birds of the county. We met at my house where over 100 Com. Redpolls were at my feeder. At our first stop, overlooking the MacLellan Marsh, some spring migrant Ring-billed Gulls were found with Herring and Greater Black-backed Gulls and Common Mergansers. At the East R. Pollution Control Plant, we saw a gull fitting the description of a 2nd winter Thayer's Gull. We were able to compare it to adjacent Iceland Gulls and note the differences. A good-sized flock of Am. Robins was found in Trenton, under an apple tree feasting on the leftover fruit. Other robins brought the total for the day to over 100. At the Trenton Gut Bridge, two male Tufted Ducks and a handful of Lesser Scaup were scoped out of a large group of Greater Scaup. We then shifted our focus to the Abercrombie side of the East R. to observe the bountiful Greater Scaup, Com. Goldeneye, Canada Geese, and Com. and Red-breasted Mergansers. Many of the ducks were in courtship displays, with the mergansers providing much entertainment for the human voyeurs. The Pictou Causeway area was also filled with ducks, including a single male Surf Scoter. In the town of Pictou, more robins, 20 Cedar Waxwings and a handful of Brown-headed Cowbirds and the usual pair of Bald Eagles on the trees near the Oddfellows' Hall were noted.

Back at the house, we enjoyed a potluck supper and at 7:00 p.m. went hunting for owls. Steve Vines led us down a trail on the Middle R. interval and within a short time, Steve picked out the outline of a Barred Owl about 30 m. from us. It stayed near us for about 10 min. and then quietly flew away. This put us in a happy mood as we moved on to the Elgin-Millstream area. There we were treated to a repertoire of toots and meows from two Saw-whet Owls, much to the delight of all. At 10:00 p.m., content with our success, we made for the fireplace and refreshments at my place to celebrate.

The next morning was sunny as we continued our field trip. We saw a Belted Kingfisher, a Red-tailed Hawk and three Hooded Mergansers. We then made our way to Richard Murphy's place in the Saltsprings area. Richard led us on a walk and we saw a small group of Red Crossbills, a Pileated Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadees and Tree Sparrows. Richard and Bev provided tea and cookies as we observed Evening Grosbeaks and Red-breasted Nuthatches at their feeder from the kitchen window. In total the ten participants tallied 45 species of birds.

**21 March - Duncans Cove/West Pennant**

Fulton L. Lavender

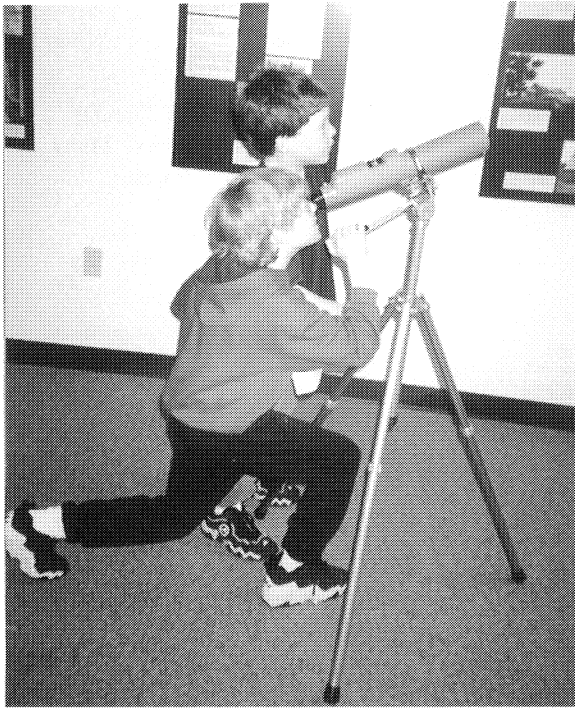
The threat of an impending storm stayed the faithful class on this windy day in March. Just a hardy trio braved the walk to Duncans Head. Though birds were few, we shared the sun and pristine scene high atop a lofty perch.

A pair of robins wished us well as we left our rock and traveled on to search the Pennant

shore. En route a Red-winged Blackbird sang a raspy trill, a Com. Grackle shrieked, and a lone Fox Sparrow cheered.

At the harbour's west side first we saw a band of brash chickadees — both wheezy and sneezy, stealthy and easy — with kinglets and creeper in tow.

While a waxwing crowd both busy and loud attacked a thorny bush, a Red-tailed Hawk led us home from our walk with a wave from his tail to our crew.



*"Getting Ready for the Birds"* - participants at the Museum of Natural History, Halifax - Apr 4, 1998.

**Sat 25 Apr - The Hawk - NO REPORT**

**Sun 26 Apr- Wolfville Area**

Jim Wolford

Overcast skies and chilly winds didn't deter about 25 participants, in 10 cars, from Halifax, Bridgewater, Annapolis, Kingston, Coldbrook and elsewhere. First we had a

short warm-up walk to Wolfville Harbour, where expected Willets still had not arrived. Then we drove to the Acadia campus to view a Red-Tailed Hawk incubating on the larger nest on the same Univ. Hall ledge that was successfully used last year. (For anyone who wants to see this year's youngsters, the date of fledging last year was June 29.)

Next stop was Noggin's Farm at Greenwich, where a very large nest with a Bald Eagle incubating is visible from Highway #1. Since its inception in 1990, this nest has produced youngsters every year. We then proceeded to the New Minas Sewage Ponds, where we had another cold walk to view a single Mute Swan — presumably the one that couldn't be caught in March in Bedford Basin, this bird has been at New Minas since April 5 — and 3 Iceland Gulls (two adults, one imm.).

Next, by popular demand, we had a "pit-stop" at Burger King/Tim Horton's in New Minas. Then we headed north on Middle Dyke Rd. to a pond just south of Chipman's Corner, where there was a Great Blue Heron, three Tree Swallows, and a female Red-Winged Blackbird (plus two painted turtles).

At Canard Pond we huddled in our cars and ate our lunches, while viewing 24 Ring-Necked Ducks (19 males, five females), several Green-Winged Teal, a few Black Ducks, and a perched adult Bald Eagle. North of there we stopped the caravan for several Ravens that were aerially interacting in pairs (immature learning courtship antics?) plus lots of gulls soaring in the stiff, cold wind.

At Saxon St. Pond (west of Sheffield Mills) there was a large flock of perhaps 200 Tree Swallows, feeding presumably on a "hatch" of midges from pupae. I couldn't spot any Barn Swallows among them, but I'll bet at least one was there (and the next day one appeared at Port Williams).

North of there at Hennigar's Marsh, a cattail-lined stream, we spotted three Blue-Winged Teal (a pair and a lone male) and a Belted Kingfisher. In Canning, we found nothing in Harris' Pond, but there were three nice highlights along its edge. A Black-Capped Chickadee was oblivious to us as it cleaned out a nest-cavity in a stump; a beautiful male Yellow-Rumped/Myrtle Warbler appeared; and, very uncharacteristically, a Swamp Sparrow conspicuously posed for us for several minutes on top of a cattail fruiting stalk! Also we saw two muskrat in the pond.

Our last stop was at the new Riverside Park just east of downtown Canning, where we had a close look at a posing Greater Yellowlegs, presumably just arrived, and a more distant look at more than 110 Canada Geese on the riverbank — these geese will probably be leaving very soon. Also I saw two Com. Mergansers.

After disbanding the trip in mid-afternoon (without attempting a "trip-list" of species seen), four of us found two interesting large stick-nests in the Canard area. One had an incubating Red-tailed Hawk on it, and the other seemed to have a possible Barred Owl incubating (our view was too poor to be sure).

However, a couple of days later I told Bernard Forsythe about the latter nest. He promptly visited it, and a Red-tailed Hawk flushed from it. Bernard told me that in 1997 that same woodlot contained a Red-tailed Hawk nest elsewhere, and that the presently occupied nest had just been built this year, curiously in a dead larch among many other dead trees.

P.S. Another highlight for me came in mid-May, when I was delighted to receive a thank-you note from a grateful participant. The note contained an update on the Bedford Mute Swans. Two of them have a nest and eggs (presumably infertile) now, and the other two are often nearby. As of this writing on June 3, the remaining fifth swan continues to live at the New Minas sewage ponds or in the river-mouth at Port Williams.

**Sun 3 May - Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary - NO REPORT**

**Sat 9 May - North American Migration Count**

See information elsewhere in this issue.

**Wed 13 May - Spring Arrivals, Cape Breton - NO REPORT**

**Fri 15 May - Mon 18 May - Bon Portage Island**

Claire Diggins

The annual May weekend trip to Bon Portage Island presented 10 participants with beautiful weather conditions, a friendly environment, and enough species of birds to hold each one's interest and provide enjoyment; 51 species in all.

Highlights of the weekend were the close study of several Black-crowned Night Herons and, also, several singing Winter wrens.

The number of warblers was lower than previous years at this date but the following were sighted: Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and other more abundant ones. The near absence of shorebirds was noted.

The visitors took special interest in the Leach's Storm Petrels and their activities at this season of the year.

The group consisted of: Terry Paquet, Wayne Paquet, Pat Chalmers, Helen Opie, Peter LeBlanc, Jill McLean, Fran Burchell, Janet McGinity, Hazel Stos, and Claire Diggins.

**Wed 20 May - Halifax Co. Early Morning Warbler Walk 6-9 AM** Fred Dobson

Weather: Sunny, cool (4 C); few blackflies.  
Party number: 11

Many of us forgot our gloves and regretted it. But fly repellent wasn't needed, and the sun shone brightly on the Yellow-rumped and Black-throated Green Warblers sitting and singing on many of the conifers we passed. We saw the swallows at the start of the walk, at houses set up by the locals and already spoken for. The Song Sparrow and the White-throated were in every thicket from beginning to end. The same applied to the Solitary Vireos: they were in supernormal abundance. We heard Purple Finches and Ruby-crowned Kinglets burbling and Winter Wrens tinkling and the gorgeous antiphonal bells of the thrushes: the woods were alive with song. The best warbler sightings were the aforementioned Black-throated Greens, Palms and a Yellowthroat and a Blackpoll.in the swamp. The most enjoyable sights were the Hermit and Swainson's Thrushes on the road, hopping in the grass like dainty robins. The sounds were spectacular. The robust call of a Pileated Woodpecker in a nearby tree; the muffled drumming of a Ruffed Grouse, and a clear (but, alas, across the swamp), thrilling call that HAD to be a Gray-cheeked Thrush (not a Hermit, nor a Robin nor a Swainson's; not a Wood and not a Veery — what's left?). And, yes, the Spring Peepers were in full voice still at 9AM ... although we never SAW one.

As always, it was just beautiful to be there in the early morning air, filled with sparkling sunshine and alive with Spring, walking down soft paths, stopping to hear and then to see. Big Indian Lake didn't yield its normal pair of loons, but it was still magical, still as a mirror in the mist, and a grouse whirred away as we approached its shores. Well, OK, there were a few flies near the end, but by that time we were on our way back into our busy lives, carefully storing the memories until next time.

The day's list:

Herring Gull	Raven
Great Black-backed Gull	Robin
Pileated Woodpecker (heard)	Hermit Thrush
Com. Flicker (heard)	Swainson's Thrush
Ruffed Grouse (departing, drumming)	Gray-cheeked Thrush (heard)
Tree Swallow	Winter Wren (heard)
Barn Swallow	Solitary Vireo
Black-capped Chickadee	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Boreal Chickadee	Palm Warbler
Gold-crowned Kinglet	Black-throated Green Warbler
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Blackpoll Warbler
Com. Grackle	Black-and-white Warbler
Starling	Com. Yellowthroat
Am. Crow	Magnolia Warbler (heard)

Purple Finch  
Am. Goldfinch  
Pine Siskin  
Song Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow

White-crowned Sparrow  
House Sparrow  
  
Spring Peeper

### **Wed 20 May - Pt. Edward, Westmount, Cape Breton**

Nancy More

It was unfortunate that the trip along Sydney Harbour on May 20 was not advertised in the "Bulletin" in time for more members to come, but the pair of us that met on Keltic Drive at the Eastern Co-op (the bird seed people) were lucky to start out on a beautiful sunny day with light north-east winds, and the sight of an eagle overhead.

We first explored the woods behind the buildings and then drove off the main highway to walk along a number of gravel roads. The early spring had produced unusually thick foliage for the time of year, so finding the birds was a little difficult. The abundance of identifiable birdsong was a delight. We encountered all our common species, including robins, flocks of Blue Jays, juncos, Am. Goldfinches, Black-capped Chickadees, and a Golden-crowned Kinglet. A very large number of Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers was feeding on the larch buds, while White-throated Sparrows scratched for food on the ground. Stopping behind the CBC transmission tower to walk through open ground bordered by woods, we saw a Magnolia Warbler, and a Broad-winged Hawk that perched briefly on the top of a spruce tree.

At Charles and Sharon MacDonald's farm, where Highland cattle are reared and a trio of donkeys mingles with these beasts, we added Song and Savannah Sparrows to our list, and a female pheasant. On Campbells Hill, a pair of Mallards was spotted. There was nothing visible at Watsons Creek. Further along the Northwest Arm, the usual contingent of birds included Great Black-backed Gulls, Cormorants, and Common Terns. A pair of loons was diving not far off shore. In Rudderham Creek we were surprised to see a single Greater Yellow-legs.

Point Edward yielded Tree Swallows, a kingfisher, and a Downy Woodpecker, while further along the shore road we watched an array of birds on a garden feeder: Pine Siskins, Purple Finches, juncos, chickadees, and goldfinches.

A week earlier, on May 13, we had taken an evening walk along the shore of Grand Lake. There were a number of fishermen on this fairly extensive lake, so we investigated the various inlets. We saw the same common birds that we were to observe a week later, but were also lucky enough to see eight pairs of Ring-necked Ducks, each clearly attached to one other, and quite skitterish as they came together from time to time. It was a wonderful opportunity to observe mated pairs and the distinctive male/female plumage. We saw a large beaver swimming purposefully along the bank of the wide roadside ditch, and clearly heard the distinctive call of a Long-eared Owl in the distant woods. We were



delighted with our two May walks.

**Sat 23 May - Warbler Walk, Yarmouth Co.**

CANCELLED

**Sat 23 May - Hants County Day - NO REPORT**

**Sun 17 May - Hopewell, Pictou Co.**

Ken McKenna

The group was small, but we were treated to a very enjoyable field trip led by Harry Brennan to some of his favourite Hopewell, Pictou County area birding spots. Both Killdeer and Northern Waterthrush were highlights of the meeting area. At our first stop on the Mill Rd. we were rewarded with a view of a young Great Horned Owl which had moved out of the nest (probably an old Red-tailed Hawk nest) which was in a spruce tree. Randy Lauff was treated to a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker call he had not heard before.

Down the road, Harry showed us a N. Saw-whet Owl mom that came to the entrance hole of a box Harry had constructed. He said there were five young in the box. Not far from the nest, four Hermit Thrushes were busy doing some sort of a courtship/territorial performance. They did not seem to notice our presence at all. A Cape May Warbler was picked out of a myriad of sounds at this stop.

A quick look at a river intervale produced a Black-and-White Warbler that sang only a metre from our heads. Harry remarked that it was so close that even his ears could pick up the sound, a range that over the past few years has eluded his hearing. At the big marsh in Lorne Station some of the familiar birds were back, but alas, the Northern Harriers did not return to nest in the locale they had used for many years. As of that date, Yellow Warblers and Common Yellow-throats had not returned either.

At this time we took our lunch break, a hot meal provided by Jean Brennan. After eating we had a look at the Ivory Gull specimen that Harry had picked up the past winter as a road kill in the Trafalgar area and was now temporarily at home in his deep-freeze awaiting a trip to one of the museum collections.

Jean joined us for the afternoon birding during which we had good looks at Ovenbird and Nashville Warbler. While exploring the Lorne-Trafalgar area we saw birds such as Canada Goose, Palm Warbler, Rusty Blackbird, Spruce Grouse, Com. Loon and heard a Black-backed Woodpecker. We concluded the day at about 4:30 with just over 60 species. Thanks Harry and Jean for your kindness and hospitality. We had a wonderful day.

*Editor:* There was some confusion over the date of this field trip — it is **always** on the Victoria Day long weekend.

**Sun 24 May - Blomidon Warbler Walk - CANCELLED**

## **Sun 24 May - Shubenacadie Area - NO REPORT**

*Editor:* There was some confusion over the date of this field trip — it **usually** is on the last weekend of May. A participant reported that 80 species were seen.

## **Sat 30 May - The Hawk Picnic Day**

Lillian Scott Perry

The Hawk Picnic Day was a wonderful day with a number of new birders and some members of the So-West Nova Birders getting together to look for and to enjoy many species of birds. In spite of the offshore fog and the scarcity of raptors, most of us saw over sixty species. The Great-crested Flycatcher was in the area, but proved elusive to all but the Milsom trio. Johnny and Sandra Nickerson tracked down warblers for us and showed us around the beautiful Cape Island. There were three Am. Oystercatchers on Cape Light, but the tides were not good for viewing them at their Daniel Head feeding spot. Most enjoyed were the Black Crowned Night Herons.

## **Sat 31 May - Upper Clyde Warbler Walk**

Lillian Scott Perry

Lillian Perry welcomed a group of hungry birders to the farm of her brother, Stan Scott, on the bank of the beautiful Clyde River after the Hawk Picnic walk. We walked along the woods roads, went looking for owls, and watched the swifts, swallows and nighthawks from the doorstep. The most unusual sighting was Lillian's sister Patty Hudson, who arrived in a colourful chicken costume. Vireos, Eastern Kingbirds, Black-throated Green Warblers and Redstarts were abundant.

## **Sat 6 June – Sun 7 June - Cape d'Or and Cape Chignecto**

Joan Czapaly

The Wild Flora Society and the Halifax Field Naturalists were represented at our newest provincial park for a weekend outing with the Nova Scotia Bird Society. We didn't know whether to look up at the birds, down at the plants, or around at the spectacular rock formations. Although we did not find Mourning Warblers on Cape d'Or on Saturday, we had several sightings on Sunday at Cape Chignecto. At Cape d'Or we did have a lovely song from and some great views of a Lincoln Sparrow. There were many highlights of the trip, including the beautiful male Blackburnian Warbler, the nesting Hairy Woodpeckers, and the Peregrine Falcon which flew towards our look-off for a look of her own (it was a very large Peregrine). There were fourteen in our group and we saw over eighty species of birds, many plants and Nova Scotia's largest mammal, a moose, which was at West Apple River. We hope to make this an annual event. Thanks to all who took part and especially to Maureen Mills of the Park staff.

## **Sat 6 June - Warbler Walk, Cape Breton - NO REPORT**

## **Sat 13 June - Birds of Kings County - NO REPORT**

## 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 (summer address) and 1173 Beaufort Ave., Halifax, N.S. B3H 3Y3 (fall, winter and spring address - please note this new address).

The latest schedule for Field Trips is announced on the NSBS Bird Line (phone line and transcripts) and on the NSBS Web-site.

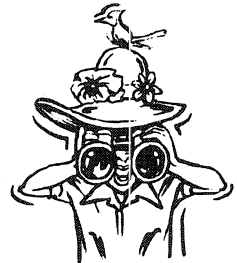
Please note that Spring 1999 Field Trip Announcements should be available for the Winter 1998 issue - the deadline is Nov. 15, 1998.

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 or changes. 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.

Leaders are asked to submit a brief (250-word maximum) field trip report as soon as possible after the trip. Please send reports to:

Marion Allsebrook  
45 Lexington Ave.  
Fall River, N.S. B2T 1E7

e-mail: [marion.allsebrook@atl.sofkin.ca](mailto:marion.allsebrook@atl.sofkin.ca)  
Fax: (902) 468-3679



**Thu 6 Aug – Sun 9 Aug**

**1998 CFN Annual Conference, Sackville, New Brunswick**

The Canadian Field Naturalists Annual Conference will be hosted by Chignecto Naturalists' Club. Further details are available on the World Wide Web at <http://personal.nbnet.nb.ca/maryspt/CNF/>.

**Sat 8 Aug Conrad Beach and Eastern Shore**

Not confirmed at press time. Listen to the Bird Information Line (852-2428) or e-mail [ip-bird@chebucto.ns.ca](mailto:ip-bird@chebucto.ns.ca).

**Sat 15 Aug      Matthews Lake**

Leader: Dave Young 902-656-2225. Meet at parking lot at end of road at Hemeons Head. Take Highway 103 to exit 23 and turn south on "Lighthouse" route for about 4 km. Then turn left on road marked "West Middle Sable, Louis Head, Little Harbour." Follow this road about 11 km to a stop sign at Little Harbour. Go straight through the stop sign on road to "Arnolds", which turns to gravel soon after the stop sign. Proceed to end of road, about 3.25 km, to parking area. Meeting time will be 11 a.m. and the trip will take 3-4 hours, walking distance is about 8 km. and ankle to calf high water will be encountered. This area is about 2 ½ hours from Halifax. We will mostly be studying shorebirds.

**Sat 22 Aug      The Hawk**

Leader: Murray Newell 745-3340. Meet 7:30 a.m. at Tim Horton's and spend the day on Cape Sable Island. See the migrating shorebirds between the Hawk and Cape Light, and look for rarities such as American Oystercatchers.

**Sun Aug 23      Bass River**

Leader: Fran Spalding 647-2837. Meet at the Post Office, at 9 a.m. Bring a lunch. Look for early migrating passerines and shorebirds.

**Sat Aug 22      Point Michaud, Cape Breton**

Leaders: George Digout (535-3516), Billy Digout (535-2513) PLEASE CALL IN ADVANCE. Meet 9 a.m. at Dept. of Transportation, Highway 4 and Point Michaud turnoff, St. Peters. Wear boots if rainy. Lunch at the Digout's.

**4 - 7 Sep      Bon Portage Island**

Leader: Joan Czapalay, Port Greville, N.S. B0M 1G0 (summer address) and 1173 Beaufort Ave., Halifax, N.S. B3H 3Y3 (fall, winter and spring address - please note this new address).

On Labour Day weekend many rare and interesting species will be heading for Bon Portage Island. PLEASE CONFIRM THAT YOU WILL BE JOINING US. Meet at 6 p.m. on Friday at Prospect Point Wharf in Shag Harbour. Please compact your gear in waterproof bags for ease of transportation. A chowder supper will be ready for you, after which you will be responsible for your own meals. Here is a list of what you will need:

1. jug of drinking water
2. food for 3 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners, plus snacks
3. waterproof footwear

4. sleeping bag and sheet (to cover foam pad)
5. flashlight
6. rain gear and change of clothes (long pants recommended)
7. binoculars
8. money for trip (\$20), accommodations (\$45) and Friday supper (\$3)
9. soap, towel, etc.

Optional are field guides (as several are available on the island), 'scope, camera, spare footwear.

In the event of a hurricane the trip will not be cancelled, but will take place on Cape Sable Island and surrounding Shelburne County. Reasonable accommodation will be arranged. Bon Portage has provided many rare and unusual species at this time of year, as well as trapping many regular migrants. It is a great place to study shorebirds and practice identification of fall warblers. Please confirm by calling 348-2803 (until August 27) or Bon Portage Island (637-7699) if it is necessary to book or cancel at the last minute.

**Sat 26 Sept. Field Trips follow the NSBS Sept. meeting at UCCB.**

**Sat 3 Oct Hartlen Point**

Not confirmed at press time. Listen to the Bird Information Line (852-2428) or e-mail ip-bird@chebucto.ns.ca.

**9 - 12 Oct Brier Island**

Leader: Fulton Lavender 455-4966. Meet at the parking lot of Brier Lodge on Saturday at 7 a.m. Enjoy fall migrants, hawk watching and owling if weather permits.

**Sat 17 Oct The Pubnicos (President's Field Trip)**

Leader: Gisèle d'Entremont 422-7739. This is a wonderful part of the province for autumn birding.

**Sat 24 Oct Changing of the Yard, Cape Breton**

Leader: Junior Metcalfe 849-5054.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Fri 25 Sep 1998**

“Are Bird Numbers Declining on Cape Breton Island?: The Changing Bird Life of Cape Breton” - David McCorquodale

The September meeting of the Nova Scotia Bird Society will be held at the University College of Cape Breton starting at 8:00 p.m., in the Royal Bank Lecture Theatre, UCCB, Grand Lake Road, Sydney, NS.

Media publicity about declining numbers of birds in eastern North America has many people wondering what the situation is in Nova Scotia. During the past 40 years dedicated volunteers have counted birds during the breeding season, during migration and at Christmas time on Cape Breton. They have frozen fingers and toes, donated blood to countless mosquitoes and blackflies, travelled thousands of kilometres by foot and car and seen many spectacular birds from Bald Eagles to Northern Gannets to Evening Grosbeaks. Their counts give us some information to start answering the questions: Are birds disappearing from our forests? Are populations declining? Are as many Common Loons nesting on our lakes? Counts, such as the Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys, do not give the whole story, but they are an excellent way to start answering the questions. This talk will review some of the species that have declined, some species that have become more common, the birders who count and most importantly it will have lots of colourful slides of the birds of Cape Breton Island.

On Saturday, 26 Sept. 1998, there will be field trips to see fall migrants and vagrants. Probable destinations include Glace Bay Sanctuary, Schooner Pond, Morien Bar, Framboise and South Bar.

Leaders will be Cape Breton NS Bird Society Members: Hugh (Junior) Metcalfe, David McCorquodale and others. A great chance to find out about some of the superb birding locales in eastern Cape Breton.

The University College of Cape Breton is located on the Sydney-Glace Bay Highway/Grand Lake Road. Coming from Halifax take Highway 125 to the T-junction with Grand Lake Road at the Mayflower Mall. Turn right and continue about 5km to a stop light at the edge of campus. Turn right and almost immediately you will see the main entrance of the new Student, Culture and Heritage Building, on your left. The Royal Bank Lecture Theatre is through this entrance and at the far end of the Great Hall. Plenty of parking is available in front of the building (\$1/day).

For those travelling from the mainland there are plenty of accommodations available in the industrial area. The area has a full range of hotels, motels, Bed and Breakfasts and campsites. For more information call 1-800-565-0000 or visit a Cape Breton Web site, <http://www.cbisland.com>.

For more information about the meeting and field trips contact either Junior Metcalfe (902) 849-5054 in Glace Bay or David McCorquodale (902) 563-1260 or 794-2172, in Georges River.

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

**Thu Oct 22 1998            NSBS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The AGM will be held in the Auditorium, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, at 8 p.m. The meeting will be followed by WINE AND CHEESE.

**Thu 26 Nov 1998            Soaring with Eagles**

Larry Bogan, glider pilot, will discuss aspects of soaring as related to cloud, air currents, and waves in the atmosphere. A major part will be bird flight and the use of soaring by raptors and other birds during long distance flights.

**Thu 26 Jan 1999            Members Slide Night**



# NSBS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Nova Scotia Birds Society Annual General Meeting - 1998 will be held in the Auditorium, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, at 8 p.m. Thursday, 22 October 1998. Wine and cheese will follow the meeting.

## ELECTIONS 1998-1999

The Executive Committee for 1998-1999 will be elected at the NSBS AGM - 1998.

### Report of the Nominating Committee

President	Ms. Gisèle d'Entremont
Vice President	Mr. Chris Field
Past President	Mrs. Lisë Bell
Secretary	Mrs. Joan Waldron
Membership	Mrs. Joan Czapalay
Treasurer	Mrs. Bernice Moores
Directors	Dr. Douglas Roy
	Vacant
	Vacant

Note - There are currently two vacant Director positions.

The Editor in Chief of *Nova Scotia Birds* (appointed by the Executive Committee) is a *de facto* member of the Executive Committee.

Further nominations from the floor will be accepted at the AGM. It is suggested that the Directors be willing to serve for several years in order to gain experience and move on to other positions.



## 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.

A transcript is also available - to receive an email copy of transcripts, contact Blake Maybank <maybank@ns.sympatico.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. The URL is:

<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc>

### D. REGIONAL CONTACTS

Please see the January 1998 issue for a list of current regional contacts.

### E. Membership and the magazine

Membership in the Nova Scotia Bird Society runs from January 1 to December 31 each year. Each issue of *Nova Scotia Birds* includes a membership renewal form. The timing of your renewal can coincide with the Christmas mail rush and the mailing of the January issue of the magazine so the process is more complicated than at other times of the year. The membership secretary receives your renewal, purchase requests and donations. Each of these must be processed separately so that all the legal accounting rules are followed. Donations and the information associated with them are forwarded to the Scholarship and Trust Fund. The renewal lists then go to Peter Payzant who works miracles with the Bird Society's mediaeval computer and software to separate the addresses of the paid from the

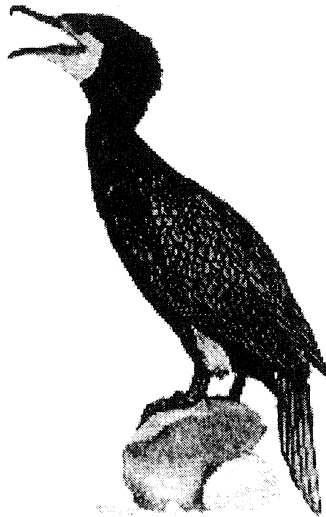
unpaid. The labels also have to be sorted according to Canada Post regulations so that the Society is eligible for a reduced postal rate. The mailing labels then go to Shirley Brothers and her helpers who stuff and bag the magazines in the proscribed manner. And the next stop is you. We share this with you because this process becomes less complicated if you renew your membership before the end of the year. Otherwise the late renewal's magazines must be stacked until there are enough to send at the reduced rate. Just when you need your copy of *Nova Scotia Birds* to check the date of a field trip, you find it hasn't arrived. Please remember to renew as early as possible to avoid any delays in getting your first magazine of the New 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. Leaders are asked to submit a brief (250-word maximum) field trip report as soon as possible after the trip.

#### **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 *Nova Scotia Birds*. Membership runs from Jan. to Dec. 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	\$ _____
<b>Supplies Total:</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to our Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund.

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:

Leading Bird Walks

Hospitality

Magazine

Publicity

Leading School Group

Conservation

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to the Membership Secretary:

Joan Czapalay,  
 Nova Scotia Bird Society,  
 c/o Nova Scotia Museum,  
 1747 Summer Street,  
 Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6

## OBITUARY

Charles R. K. Allen 1908-1998

By Fred Dobson and Joan Waldron



Going on a field trip with Charlie Allen was like falling into the arms of nature herself. He urged us all to use all our senses. His hearing was never good, so he surrounded himself with “good ears”. He taught us to look around us, to take in the scene first in general terms, and only then to focus on the particular. Watch the road, watch the ditches, and watch the fields beyond. Look into the centre of the tree for movements, and view the top for pole sitters. Scan the skies for movement.

From Charlie’s hunting days he knew the flight characteristics of every duck and most of the seabirds and raptors. He always carried a pocket-knife and used it to investigate the plants he encountered, cutting them so we could smell and taste as well as see. Most of all he was attentive to everyone else’s observations as he was of his own. When with Charlie all of us felt a little more important. And “all of us” have become a legion of nature

observers. He was our father when it came to appreciation of the natural world. Many of us carry on his tradition, leading field trips and doing what we can to imbue newcomers with our enthusiasm — his enthusiasm. Charlie's example remains the standard against which we judge our success. We will miss him — but his spirit we will find in every spring flower, in every fall field mouse making her nest for the winter, in every brilliant warbler singing in the sunshine.

We knew CRK ALLEN as Charlie. He died April 18, 1998 at the Yarmouth hospital at the age of 90. He was a native of Yarmouth, the elder son of the well-known naturalist and author E. Chesley Allen.

As well as being a superb naturalist and an environmental educator (even before that term was coined), Charlie was an enthusiastic woodsman, hunter and fisherman, well known to most of the local guides. He was very much in awe of his father as a boy, and as he grew he patterned himself after him. He learned his field biology at first hand while still a boy, then learned it again, systematically, at university. He graduated from Dalhousie University in the late 1920s with a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Biology. First at Yarmouth Academy and later at Halifax Academy he was schooled in Greek and Latin. From his Mi'kmaq guides he learned the names of most of the common plants and animals in their language. Above all, Charlie loved English and wrote with great expressiveness. His first article on Nature was published by *MacLean's Magazine* in 1956.

Of Indian Summer he wrote (*Yarmouth "Arts Tab", V. 1 No. 4 - November 1980*):

*"The air is bland and warm but the scene is one of impending winter. Colours are muted - the soft smoky purple of the Alder thickets and the grey-brown of the hardwood trees against the black-green of the conifers. There are, however, here and there accents of brilliance like the jewels at a woman's ears and fingers: in the drab thickets a Canada hollybush ablaze with coral berries, vermilion haws on the wild thorns, the velvety dark wine spires of sumac and silver bayberries crowding their twigs in the old pastures."*

His wonderful description of the marshes at the estuaries of the Chebogue and Tusket rivers in south-western Nova Scotia, *Mskegooakade - Marshlands* was published in *Nova Scotia Birds Vol. 19, No. 2, May 1977*, reprinted in the *Journal of Education Vol. 7, No.1, Jan. 1981*, and later published in pamphlet form by the Nova Scotia Museum. It can be found in every school library in the province and is probably used by most educators to teach the biodiversity of marshes to students.

*"... Then, as sunset fades to gloaming, there can be heard the calls of other true marsh dwellers, the gurgling thump of the stake-driver, the thunder-pumper, the Bittern. The calls of some birds so closely resemble those of other species that novice bird-watchers are confused and discouraged. No such difficulty arises with the lovelorn bittern; as*

*a vocalist, he stands alone. Those uncouth strangled gulps — like bubbles rising from the muck — are the true and fitting voice of the ancient marsh. Perhaps a pterodactyl once sang thus and bequeathed its melody to this distant descendant...*

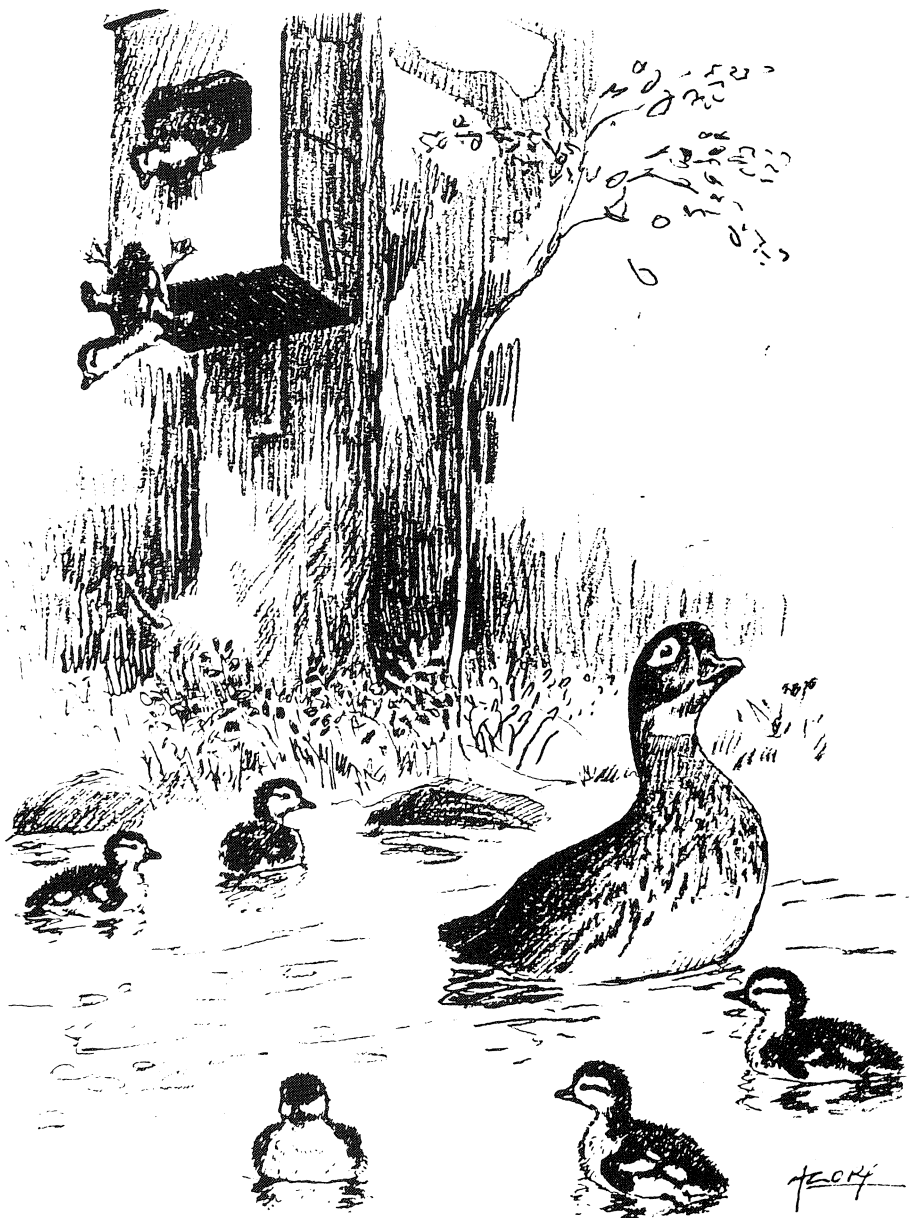
Always a leader, Charlie did it not by force of will but with boundless enthusiasm and profound understanding of the natural world. He was for many years a member of the Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia Museum. He taught English history and biology in the '30s and early '40s, first at Chebucto High, during the war at the Halifax Academy, and finally at Queen Elizabeth High School. In 1941 he was "recruited" by the army and taught survival in the outdoors to the soldiers of Camp Aldershot during the summers of the war years. In 1946 he took over as head of the School for the Blind in Halifax. He remained in that position for 26 years, retiring in 1972. By that time he had been teaching for over forty years.

He then moved back to his beloved Yarmouth County, settling in a beautiful home in Tusket, surrounded by the collection of antiques he and his wife Margaret (Bunny to her friends) had accumulated with acumen and good taste. After his retirement he taught adult education courses for many years for the Extension Department of the Universite Ste.-Anne. He worked with Dr. A. E. Roland and his wife and students in cataloguing and mapping the distributions of the plants of Nova Scotia for *The Flora of Nova Scotia, NS Museum* (presently being re-published). There is a small nature preserve in Yarmouth County, donated in 1995 by Bowater Mersey to the Tusket River Environmental Protection Association that bears his name. In the preserve may be found the Plymouth Gentian and several other rare plant species. He was an active participant in the preparation by the Nova Scotia Museum of the third edition of Robie Tufts' *Birds of Nova Scotia*.

In 1955 Charlie, together with a small but enthusiastic group of naturalists, both amateur and professional (such names as Willet Mills, Tom Morland, Lloyd and Ian MacPherson, Harrison Lewis and Robie Tufts come to mind) founded the Nova Scotia Bird Society. His enthusiasm for the NSBS and birding in general has only increased over the years. Charlie and his birding colleagues established most of the now well travelled "circuits" and "hot spots" in the Province. He was leading field trips for his beloved Society well into his eighties.

Earlier this year Mrs Betty Russell, who had cared for Charlie so well for the past ten years in Port Maitland, took him at his urgent request to see the Tundra Swan (which birders had been visiting and debating about) at nearby Bartletts Beach. Charlie was keen — as ever — to see this rare visitor. A few days later Charlie was taken to the hospital for the last time. It was his swan song.

Charlie Allen was a rare person.



# NOTES



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://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc>

NSBS e-mail: [ip-bird@chebucto.ns.ca](mailto:ip-bird@chebucto.ns.ca)

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

