

Nova Scotia Birds

A Quarterly Publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society



Summer 1999

NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS

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



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

Bird Line: 902-852-CHAT (2428)
Email: ip-bird@chebucto.ns.ca

We're on the Web!
[Http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc](http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc)

Executive 1998-1999

President	Gisèle d'Entremont
Vice President	Chris Field
Past President	Lisè Bell
Treasurer	Bernice Moores
Secretary	Joan Waldron
Membership Secretary	Joan Czapalay
Editor	Paul Quinn
Director	Barbara Hinds
Director	Doug Roy
Director	Peter LeBlanc
Solicitor	Tony Robinson
Auditor	James C. Morrow

NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS

Nova Scotia Birds is a quarterly publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

EDITORIAL BOARD

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

Cover: "Yellow Warbler on Nest" by Azor Vienneau

Reporting Deadlines

Fall 1999 issue:	Aug. 7, 1999
Winter 2000 issue:	Dec. 7, 1999
Spring 2000 issue:	Mar. 7, 2000
Summer 2000 issue:	June 7, 2000

Bird Reports to:

Randy Lauff
Department of Biology
St. Francis Xavier University
P.O. Box 5000
Antigonish, NS
B2G 2W5

E-mail: rlauff@juliet.stfx.ca
Ph: 902-867-2471
Fax: 902-867-2389

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. ISSN 0383-9537. Publications Mail Reg. No. 4628. Published four times a year.

Trust Announces First Annual Birdathon

BY PAUL QUINN

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust has announced plans for a first annual birdathon, to be known as "Counting for Conservation". The program will include both a one-day birdathon and a special birding program for children. The event is intended to raise awareness about and interest in wildlife habitat conservation, provide pleasure for birders of all ages, and raise funds to preserve critical bird habitat.

"All levels of birders are welcome to participate in the birdathon – experts and novices alike," explained Dr. Ian McLaren, past president of the Nature Trust. "It will be a fun day of birding and sharing, with awards for all participants, and special prizes for individuals or teams spotting the most species and rais-

ing most funds." Other plans include prizes for such achievements as spotting the



most unusual and exciting birds, participating without using a car and others as yet to be determined. All participants will also be invited to a celebratory event to share

results, recognize their efforts, enjoy refreshments, and qualify for a chance to win door prizes.

The birdathon is being sponsored by the Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Community Fund, and is supported by both the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History and the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

As part of "Counting for Conservation", the Nature Trust is also planning to conduct a birding program for children in Grades Four and Five, and is currently looking for volunteers to share some time helping young aspiring birders. The program will provide children an opportunity to learn about birds and bird habitat conservation, and then participate in a mini-

birdathon to raise funds for conservation. Classes that participate will also receive a certificate recognizing their contribution to preserving bird habitat.

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust is a non-government conservation charity dedicated to preserving ecologically significant natural areas on private lands through donations, purchase, or conservation easements, throughout the province. For additional information on the birdathon, or the entire "Counting for Conservation" program, or to participate or volunteer, contact Bonnie Sutherland (425-5263, nature@edm.ca, The Nova Scotia Nature Trust, PO Box 2202, Halifax, B3J 3C4).

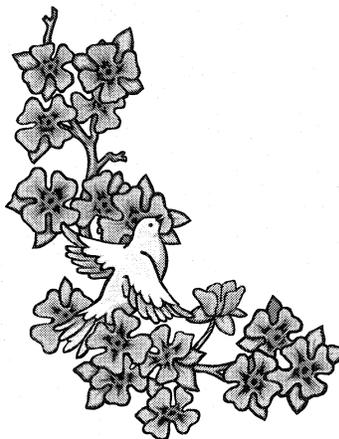
North American Migration Count – Spring 1999

BY JUDY TUFTS

Many thanks to all of you who participated in the NAMC on May 8 for your wonderful efforts in ensuring this day was a great success. Your time, energy and dedication are greatly valued. I am more than pleased to add that every county was well represented – a great credit to all county-coordinators and area-reps who coordinated so many participants – thanks especially to CB Co.'s Susann Myers' outstanding effort with 118 volunteers. Please convey my appreciation to all 'who served' in every county. I also wish to thank new coordinators to

this year's project, Len Macdonald in Queens Co. North, and Dave Lawley in Vic. Co. for their remarkable results.

May 8th weather report read "Mainly sunny with coastal fog lingering, patchy coastal drizzle. Light breezes. Temps: Highs: 18-24 C. (cooler on coast), Lows: 8-10 C. High tides 0702 and 1933 hrs." What a difference weather can make to a NAMC! For most participants this one was the best since these counts began, along with the fact many migrants were returning earlier than usual. The results certainly



reflect that. Let us compare last year's count with this one. In 1998 there were 189 species tallied with a total of 79,252 counted birds. In

1999 there were 191 species with 92,176 birds counted. Almost six hundred volunteers were involved in both counts. Among the county tallies in 1999, CB Co. led with 123 species, Kings counted 119 and six other counties registered around the 100 mark! Quite an accomplishment!

Some of the highlights this year included a wonderful, mixed 'kettle' of birds of prey over Brier I., consisting of 12 Turkey Vultures, eight Sharp-shinned, and a single Cooper's, Red-shouldered, Red-tailed and Broad-winged

Hawks. Then there were the 250 Bufflehead in the Belleisle Marsh area, Anna Co. On CSI – which often yields unexpected treasures – not only were there many shorebirds (12 species), but the rare Am. Oystercatcher pair had returned early, 805 Brant lingered and a local fisherman counted 200 Red Phalaropes, a skua sp., a Parasitic Jaeger and three N. Fulmar from his boat! At the opposite end of the province in Vic. Co., boat trips produced 200 Razorbills and 200 Atlantic Puffins. But perhaps the most unusual observation in Cape Breton came from the Mira R.! An immature Brown Pelican was found sitting on a log in shallow water – possibly the same bird seen around Shel. Co. earlier this spring? Other notable sightings include a Snowy Egret (Lun. Co.- there seems to be one each spring in the provincial count), Peregrine Falcon (Vic. Co. - they also recorded Am. Kestrel and Merlin), Virginia Rail (Pictou -2nd year in a row), an Am. Coot in APBS (Cumb. Co.), one first-year Lesser Black-backed Gull (Kings Co.), a Bicknell's Thrush (Halifax), an E. Towhee (Yar. Co.), while CB Co. recorded a high of 72 Com. Loons!

Did the mild winter weather have an influence on the number of birds around for this year's count? Did more birds remain in the province surviving as a result of the more open winter? Did the early warm spring affect the migration movement, setting it in motion almost two weeks earlier than usual? Although Am. Goldfinches had a bonanza crop (60% increase over last year); the Com.

What is NAMC?

The North American Migration Count (NAMC) is a one day event taking place on International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), the second Saturday in May. The NAMC is an event not affiliated with any particular organization. Partners in Flight, the American Birding Association, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society, and numerous state, provincial and local naturalist and bird clubs provide support by increasing awareness of this activity. There is no fee to participate.

At the core of the NAMC is the attempt to learn more about bird migration and increase public involvement and awareness of birds and bird monitoring. The NAMC is patterned after the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), but the methods of the two counts are different.

The Area of a Count is not a circle as with the CBC, but instead includes the entire Rural Municipality, Local Government District, city, or where these are lacking, any shape or size of area that is convenient. The idea is to ultimately have a contiguous interlocking set of non-overlapping count areas with no gaps.

The Timing of the Count is designed to take a "snapshot" of migration. The date of the NAMC (second Saturday in May) has been chosen to capture as many migrants as possible before they reach their final destination. It will not be peak migration everywhere. The southern areas will have the lingerers and the northern areas will still await many of the migrants.

Snipe, Mourning Doves, Blue Jays, both chickadee species, wrens and kinglets, thrushes, Song and White-throated Sparrows, crossbills and Pine Siskins, were among species registering a 30-45% increase over last year's figures. So too were the combined numbers of woodpeckers. Nearly three times the number of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers recorded in 1998 were seen on this count. However among the finch family, Purple Finch and Evening Grosbeak numbers had dropped significantly. It is interesting to note there were fewer

Red-necked Grebes but many more Horned and Pied-billed Grebes than usual; considerably larger numbers of N. Gannet and Great Cormorants arrived early. Tree Swallows and Yellow-rumped Warblers (Myrtle) were down about 15%, but Pine Warblers were almost double their 1998 tally, and so the list goes on... Most of the species had greater numbers tallied in 1999, some more so than others, but obviously this was a great count!

NAMC Spring 1999 Summary

Red-throated Loon	7	Am. Bittern	29	Blue-winged Teal	60
Com. Loon	239	Great Blue Heron	410	N. Shoveler	8
Pied-billed Grebe	35	Snowy Egret	1	N. Pintail	25
Horned Grebe	21	Turkey Vulture	23	Green-winged Teal	150
Red-necked Grebe	5	Canada Goose	405	Ring-necked Duck	448
N. Fulmar	3	Brant	961	Greater Scaup	61
Leach's Storm-Petrel	2	Wood Duck	56	Lesser Scaup	6
N. Gannet	434	Gadwall	7	Scaup sp.	12
Brown Pelican	1	Am. Wigeon	95	Com. Eider	2962
Double-crested Cormorant	2201	Am. Black Duck	1849	Surf Scoter	566
Great Cormorant	328	Mallard	480	White-winged Scoter	336
Cormorant sp.	95	Mallard x Am. Black Duck hybrid	20	Black Scoter	187

Scoter sp.	54	Bonaparte's Gull	5	White-breasted Nuthatch	32
Bufflehead	312	Black-tailed Gull	174	Brown Creeper	29
Com. Goldeneye	16	Herring Gull	8398	Winter Wren	222
Hooded Merganser	6	Iceland Gull	84	Golden-crowned Kinglet	489
Com. Merganser	181	Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1328
Red-breasted Merganser	626	Glaucous Gull	4	Veery	20
Duck sp.	12	Great Black-backed Gull	5167	Bicknell's Thrush	1
Osprey	112	Black-legged Kittiwake	1331	Swainson's Thrush	15
Bald Eagle	179	Gull sp.	308	Hermit Thrush	967
adult	143	Com. Tern	51	Am. Robin	5883
imm.	32	Arctic Tern	15	Thrush sp.	8
age?	4	Sterna sp.	2	Gray Catbird	12
N. Harrier	61	Razorbill	201	N. Mockingbird	15
Sharp-shinned Hawk	39	Black Guillemot	271	Eur. Starling	4418
Cooper's Hawk	1	Atlantic Puffin	207	Am. Pipit	5
N. Goshawk	14	Alcid sp.	25	Cedar Waxwing	190
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	Rock Dove	1392	Tennessee Warbler	4
Broad-winged Hawk	10	Mourning Dove	1438	Nashville Warbler	7
Red-tailed Hawk	98	Great Horned Owl	39	N. Parula	18
Rough-legged Hawk	1	Barred Owl	153	Yellow Warbler	22
Buteo sp	2	Long-eared Owl	2	Chestnut-sided Warbler	2
Hawk sp.	1	N. Saw-whet Owl	79	Magnolia Warbler	2
Am. Kestrel	57	Com. Nighthawk	7	Cape May Warbler	1
Merlin	24	Chimney Swift	4	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1846
Peregrine Falcon	1	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	9	Black-throated Green Warbler	32
Gray Partridge	2	Belted Kingfisher	196	Palm Warbler	220
Ring-necked Pheasant	598	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	120	E. Palm Warbler	163
Ruffed Grouse	176	Downy Woodpecker	336	Blackpoll Warbler	5
Spruce Grouse	14	Hairy Woodpecker	201	Black-and-white Warbler	33
Virginia Rail	1	Black-backed Woodpecker	6	Am. Redstart	3
Sora	8	N. Flicker	971	Ovenbird	28
Am. Coot	1	Pileated Woodpecker	74	N. Waterthrush	18
Black-bellied Plover	41	Woodpecker sp.	9	Com. Yellowthroat	1
Am. Golden-Plover	1	E. Wood-Pewee	3	Canada Warbler	1
Semipalmated Plover	2	Alder Flycatcher	7	E. Towhee	1
Piping Plover	9	Least Flycatcher	10	Am. Tree Sparrow	37
Killdeer	138	Empidonax sp.	1	Chipping Sparrow	204
Am. Oystercatcher	2	E. Phoebe	17	Savannah Sparrow	998
Greater Yellowlegs	104	E. Kingbird	2	Fox Sparrow	12
Lesser Yellowlegs	6	Blue-headed Vireo	142	Song Sparrow	3068
Willet	269	Red-eyed Vireo	17	Lincoln's Sparrow	2
Spotted Sandpiper	17	Vireo sp.	1	Swamp Sparrow	358
Whimbrel	1	Gray Jay	114	White-throated Sparrow	2276
Ruddy Turnstone	8	Blue Jay	2056	Harris's Sparrow	1
Red Knot	21	Am. Crow	5661	Dark-eyed Junco	1985
Sanderling	90	Com. Raven	826	Sparrow sp.	1
Least Sandpiper	2	Horned Lark	24	N. Cardinal	14
Purple Sandpiper	203	Tree Swallow	1611	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1
Dunlin	42	Bank Swallow	1	Indigo Bunting	1
Short-billed Dowitcher	1	Cliff Swallow	14	Bobolink	8
Com. Snipe	206	Barn Swallow	236	Red-winged Blackbird	1615
Am. Woodcock	145	Swallow sp.	6	Rusty Blackbird	44
Red Phalarope	200	Black-capped Chickadee	2562	Com. Grackle	4245
Skua sp.	1	Boreal Chickadee	139	Brown-headed Cowbird	155
Parasitic Jaeger	1	Chickadee sp.	7	Blackbird sp.	14
Black-headed Gull	12	Red-breasted Nuthatch	318	Orchard Oriole	1

Baltimore Oriole	1	Parties	30	Observers	302
Pine Grosbeak	84	Observers	41	STATNRY -hrs	81
Purple Finch	841	REG. - hrs foot	513	Parties	38
House Finch	14	hrs car	456	Observers	68
Red Crossbill	121	hrs boat	29	FEEDERS -hrs	707
White-winged Crossbill	458	hrs bike	14	Watchers	290
Pine Siskin	1447	hrs horse	1	F. Stns	239
Am. Goldfinch	4071	REG -kms foot	684	TOTAL SPECIES	191
Evening Grosbeak	961	-kms car	5564	TOTAL BIRDS	92176
House Sparrow	1384	-kms boat	148		
		-kms bike	131		
OWLING - hrs	37	Parties	198		
kms	186				

From The Editor's Desk

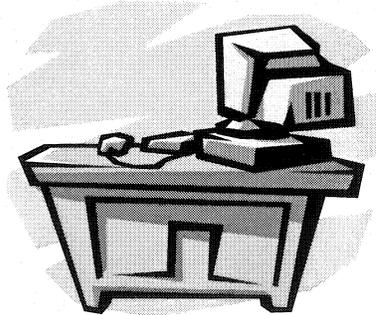
BY PAUL QUINN

Hello, is anybody out there? We keep soliciting articles, photographs, drawings, assistance with the magazine, etc., but as my father says "the pickin's have been mighty slim."

Nova Scotia Birds is your magazine. A relatively small group of volunteers put together each and every issue. We'd like more people to help, but we understand that some people are not able to make the kind of commitment they might like in getting involved with the publication. We appreciate that not everyone has

hours and hours to commit to making *Nova Scotia Birds* a better publication, but you, too, can help in some small way. If every member of the Society

sent in a photograph of their favourite bird, wrote a brief article, or contributed some other material, our jobs would be much easier. See Randy Lauff's call for submissions elsewhere in this issue.



On the topic of *Nova Scotia Birds*, if you are missing issues or would like back issues from previous years, they may still be available. Contact the Membership Secretary for more information. You may want to send in your request along with your membership renewal.

Brown Pelican at CSI



John Nickerson

Among the few to see this spring's BROWN PELICAN(S) were the birders of Cape Sable Island, where JON photographed the rare visitor at Daniel Head, Apr. 11.

Spring Seasonal Reports

Introduction

BY RANDY LAUFF

The spring migration of birds was looked upon with great expectation from birders. More birders reported their regular sightings than in the winter (up 25% from the last issue) and more species were found (up 27% from last issue); which is the cause and which the effect is something to ponder, I think! The North American Migration Count (NAMC) is referred to frequently in the following reports; it was held on May 8 and included the participation from over 300 birdwatchers. Thanks to provincial co-ordinator Judy Tufts, the county compilers and all observers for the work! You will read the impact of this event in the following reports.

Help Wanted: Every so often, we are in need of a new (permanent or temporary) Seasonal Editor. If you have considered writing for NS Birds, let me know the bird groups that you would be comfortable with. If the need arises, I will get in touch with you. We currently have no need, but I'd rather be prepared than have to scramble when the time arises. With this issue, Richard Knapton joins us as editor on several non-passerine groups.

With each issue, we are getting more and more submission of sightings. This of course is great news, since the more records we have, the better the Seasonal Editors can provide you with the summaries of Nova Scotia's bird life. As with all new things, the bugs must be worked out. (And being an entomology

buff, I can't believe I still use that expression!) Email submissions were supposed to save us time. For this issue, over 15 hours was spent reformatting submissions prior to disbursing them to the Seasonal Editors. Compare this with the good old days (one year ago) when everyone sent in slips of paper and sorting was much more straightforward. Cards or slips of paper are still most welcome!

The reason that we wish electronic sightings to be uniformly formatted is to cut down the amount of time the Seasonal Editors (all of whom are volunteers) need to review, interpret and incorporate your sightings into an easy to read, informative report. Most of the problems that have arisen deal with the interplay between computer and software formats. However, there are ways to minimise these problems. Here are some revised guidelines:

1. A word processor should be used – I originally wrote that a spreadsheet program would work, but it turns out that there were more problems there than I expected. It probably doesn't matter which word processor you use, if mine can't translate yours, I will let you know. However, if you can save your file in Word (which I am forced to use), great.
2. Within each sighting, please list the information as shown in Figure 1. (More extensive notes on unusual sightings should be sent separately.) Note that **one tab** should separate each category, no spaces or hard returns. This helps immensely! I dissect all observers' lists of sightings into packages for each Seasonal Editor. Having all the dates, numbers, etc. line up makes for very easy interpretation by the Seasonal Editors. And please (I'm on my knees here...), include the county from which the sighting came...we have four Brooklyns in Nova Scotia, five Big Islands, nine Beaver Lakes, fourteen Black Points, and a whopping 29 Rocky Lakes!
3. Finally, send your sightings as an attachment, not in the body of the email. All formatting gets lost if you cut and paste your file into the body.

Thanks to the more than 125 contributors who tallied 251 species for this issue. Keep those cards and formatted electronic submissions coming. We love hearing from you! Please note that the deadline for the Winter issue is December 7th, which means that cards should be in the mail by December 3rd.

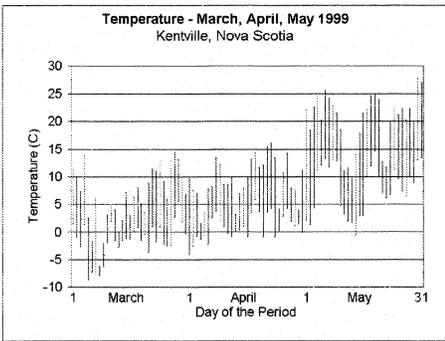
Species	month/day	number/sex	location (including county!)	Observers	brief notes
---------	-----------	------------	---------------------------------	-----------	-------------

Figure 1 – Reporting Format

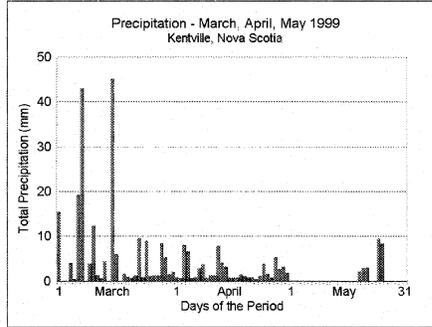
Weather Report

BY LARRY BOGAN

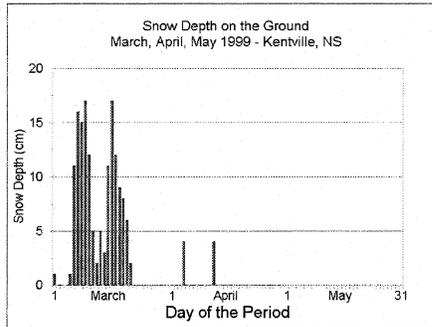
At the present time (approaching the end of June) we are in a very sunny, dry period. Oh, how we forget what spring was like. Looking at Table 1, we see that for the period of March, April and May, the precipitation was above the long term average by 11% but only because March had twice its usual rainfall. Every month this spring the mean temperature has been above average for the month. This made the whole period 2.7 C above the average. If you examine the day-to-day temperature graph,



you will see that after the middle of April the minimum temperature only dipped below zero a few times and only once in mid-May. The precipitation, which was frequent during the first two months of the period, disappears in May except for a week with five rain falls of less than a centimeter.



Although spring starts astronomically on March 21, I consider it part of winter. We did have snow on the ground (up to 15 cm) with some cold temperatures. However, it was a very warm March with the mean temperature 3.6 C above the long term average. As has been typical in last few years, our spring snows have been far below the long term average for the period.



April was the most “normal” month of the period because it had an average amount of sunshine, was only 0.6 C above average in temperature and the precipitation deviated from the norm by 18%.

Only 1/3 of the usual rain fell in May and the drought has continued into the present month (June). This has been made worse by the fact that the temperature was 3.6 C above normal which increased evaporation. Of course all this was a result of the lack of cloudy days as reflected in the 1/3 more bright sunshine hours for the month. All of this was a result of the jet stream moving north of Nova Scotia and staying there to allow warm systems up from the south. The few cool days occurred when the jet stream briefly moved south of us.

I was amazed at the compression of the blooming of flowers this year. The Mayflowers were out in mid-april in the Valley and we had bunchberry, clintonia, mocassin-flowers, lupine and blueberry all blooming within a few weeks. Dogbane is now blooming and I expect that much later in the summer. What will the weather for the rest of the summer be like?

	Mean Temp. (C)	Monthly Precip. (mm)	Monthly Snow (cm.)	Bright Sun- shine (hrs.)
March	2.5	200	34	132
38 yr avg	-1.1	103	46	133
April	5.1	68	9	143
38 yr avg	4.5	83	15	143
May	14.1	26	0	267
38 yr avg	10.5	79	2	200
Season	7.3	293	43	542
38 yr avg	4.6	265	63	476
Difference	+2.7	111%	68%	114%

Table 1 – Historical Comparison

Loons Through Grebes

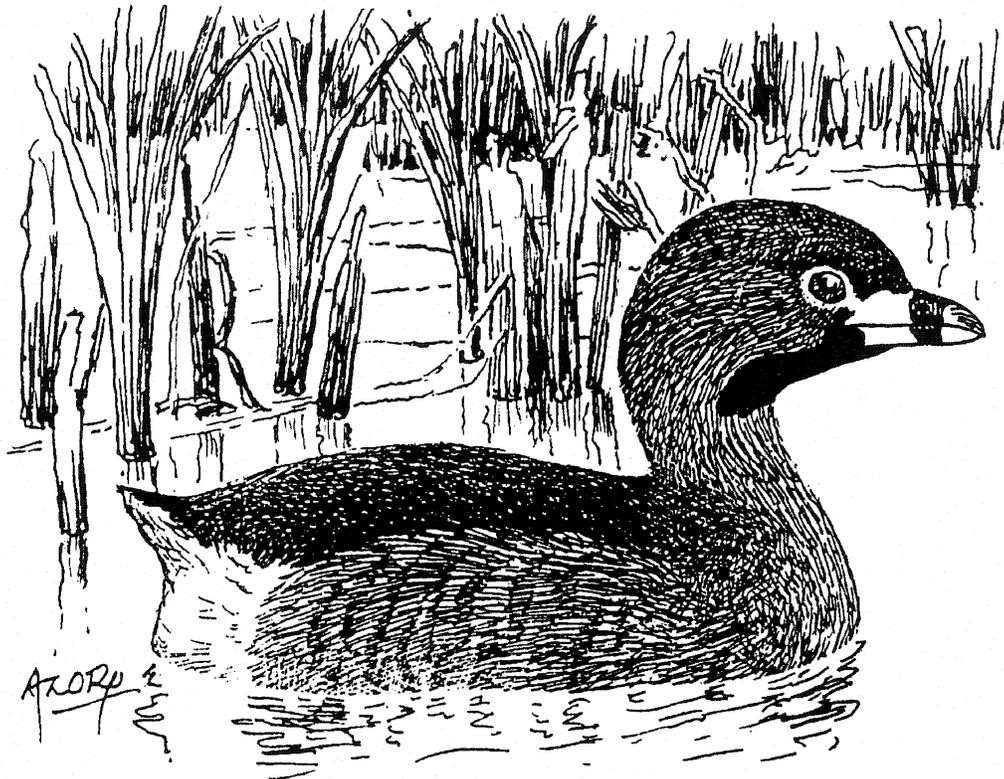
BY FRED DOBSON

RED-THROATED LOONS were present in the waters off CB until May 8, when a single individual was seen at Alder Pt., CB Co., on the NAMC (DBM). The NAMC total for the province was seven, with a high of five in Cum. Co. COM. LOONS were still on salt water until the beginning of April – at least in the northeast. RFL writes of a Mar 21 sighting of 11 at Isaacs Hbr., Guys. Co. “The loons would dive, then bring up a crab. Before swallowing, the loon often thwacked the crab on the surface, presumably to remove the claws.” DBM & RWK note that eight in Fourchu, Rich. Co. were “all winter plumage, most in harbour”. The NAMC total was 239 with a high of 72 in CB Co. and a widespread distribution. The first inland record was Apr. 9 from Murphy L., Kings Co. (MAT) “Overnight the first call of the year was heard” – one is calling now from our lake, as I write this report, and it still excites the ear. By

Apr. 30 two were seen at MacAdams L., CB Co. (DBM, RWK). The loons returned to McGrath L., HRM in early May, and by mid-May the female was on her accustomed nest at the head of St. Margarets Bay (beside Rte 103) (FED). RES observed a chick in early May at Port Mouton, Lun. Co.; “unusual to see a chick in salt water”.

The earliest PIED-BILLED GREBE was sighted Apr. 11 at the Goose Bay dyke lands, Roberts I., Yar. Co. (MUN, ETM, JUG). Six-eight were seen May 1 - 2 at the APBS (JBO, TEP). The NAMC total for the province was 25 with a high of 13 in Cum. Co. and a wide distribution. Single birds have been reported since from all areas of the province. Reports of the HORNED GREBE were from Mar. 21 – two at New Hbr., Guys. Co. (RFL, MZG) and three at Port George,

Anna. Co. (GWT, JCT). None showed up on the NAMC. Three RED-NECKED GREBES were still at Margaretsville, Anna. Co. Mar. 19 (BBT, JET). Seven were reported Apr. 22 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. (JAH). The NAMC total for the province was five with a high of three in Kings Co.



Tubenoses Through Cormorants

BY BLAKE MAYBANK

With the early spring, waters warmed up ahead of schedule, especially off the south coast, where the first tubenoses were reported. Fifteen NORTHERN FULMARS were seen by fishermen off CSI May 6 and three off Brier I. May 8 (both *fide* MUN), while CAH saw two from Gull Rock May 10. RSD, as usual, had the first GREATER SHEARWATERS, dozens on the LaHave Basin May 23, and he also had an extremely early SOOTY SHEARWATER on Georges Bank Apr. 16. Later in May, a few Sooties were seen from the south shore, with six off Cherry Hill Beach May 30 (ELM), and two off Daniels Head, CSI, May 31 (MUN). A WILSON'S STORM-PETREL on Georges

Bank Apr. 15 was early, but not the earliest on record (RSD).

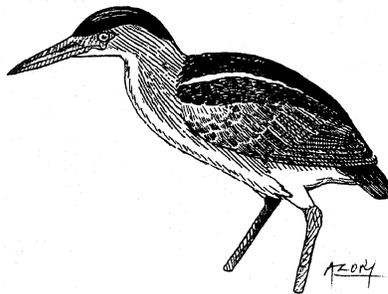
The March arrival of NORTHERN GANNETS escaped notice, with the first birds reported being three at Hartlen Pt. Apr. 3 (TIA) and five off Baccharo Pt. the following day (MUN). One or more BROWN PELICANS made a surprising showing this spring. Earl Meister, a fisherman in Stonehurst, Lun. Co., reported a single bird Apr. 6, and this may have been the same bird that appeared in Gunning Cove, Shel. Co., on three consecutive mornings, Apr. 10-12 (DOE), and at Daniels Head, CSI, Apr. 11, where JON photographed it (making it the first documented provin-

cial record since 1983). Jean Morse then reported a bird from Maders Cove, Lun. Co., Apr. 15, which could still have been the same individual. Another bird was reported from inland Cape Breton in early May, but one of the two observers was skeptical of the ID, and the description provided was inconclusive. A DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT Mar. 11 at Maders Cove, Lun. Co., was thought to be a spring arrival (JBM). RFL checked the GREAT CORMORANT colony at Crystal Cliffs, Ant. Co., Apr. 14, and counted 35+ adults, eight visible nests, and several clutches of eggs. The NAMC tallied 2201 Double-crested Cormorants and 328 Great Cormorants.

Hérons Through Vultures

BY RICHARD KNAPTON

A remarkably early AM. BITTERN Mar. 21 at Fox R. marsh, Cum. Co. (JCZ) was a month earlier than the next report, Apr. 25 at Churchill, Pict. Co. (Gary Murray). Thereafter, eighteen more were noted, from Cape Breton to the southern shoreline, including an impressive six in central Cape Breton May 8 (DBM). A male LEAST BITTERN on Brier I., first found May 19 (GWT, JCT), stayed until the end of the period, allowing many observers to see it. A GREAT BLUE HERON Mar. 22 at Pt. Edward, CB Co., was the first presumed migrant (*fide* JAC) as was one Mar. 26 at Canning, Kings Co. (JCT); however, most observers did not report Great Blue Herons until Apr. 2-3 on the mainland and not until Apr. 8-9 in CB Co., in spite of the warm spring, and the species was not particularly numerous until mid-April. This was an excellent spring for GREAT EGRETS. As many as 13 were noted, mostly from the southwestern counties [however three turned up at Sable I. (ZOL) and one each from Big I., Pict. Co. (KJM) and Dominion Beach, CB Co. (DBM *et al.*)] from Apr. 4 through May 30 (var. obs.).



Both Snowy Egrets and Little Blue Herons made a good showing this spring. The annual scatter of reports of SNOWY EGRETS started Apr. 13 at Barrington Cove, Shel. Co. (JON), followed by seven others in the southwest through May (var. obs.). Perhaps the most intriguing report was of a pair seen for several weeks at Pembroke Dyke Pond, Yar. Co. (*fide* PLC). A LITTLE BLUE HERON stayed at Port Joli Hbr. Queens Co. from Mar. 24-28 (AND). Subsequent reports came from Meaghers Grant, Hfx. Co. Apr. 24 (HFN), Beach Meadows, Queens Co. May 25 (AND), Sable I. May 27-28 (ZOL), Beaverbank L., Hfx. Co.

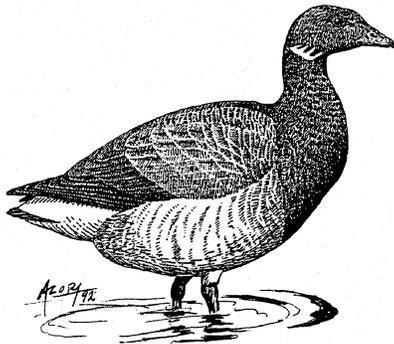
(DAC) and Lawrencetown L., Hfx. Co. (Peter Richard), both May 30. Interestingly, there were no reports of either Tricolored Herons or Cattle Egrets this spring. Individual GREEN HERONS were at Westport, Brier I. Apr. 25 (CAH), and on CSI May 23 (Jennifer Jones). A BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON was found on Cape Sable I. Apr. 9 (JON), followed by two Apr. 18 (MUN), and thereafter the usual few were noted on the island during May (var. obs.). The only GLOSSY IBIS noted were two individuals at Ingonish from Apr. 19-23 (Doug Jackson, JBR).

It seems somewhat anomalous to report on vultures here, but we now know that they are indeed closely related to Storks. The number of TURKEY VULTURES reported this spring was impressive. The 15 that overwintered around Brier I. were seen until mid-April (var. obs.) and there were still 12 there May 8 (RBS, AAM). There were frequent sightings of ones and twos from many counties during April and May. Clearly this species is undergoing a general increase within the province.

Waterfowl

BY FRED DOBSON

The water bird reports for the Loons and Grebes were normal, as might be expected – their saltwater domain was affected little by the extraordinarily beautiful weather of this spring in the Maritimes. The Geese and Ducks are another matter. Our Redheads have tarried at the Pictou Causeway and the Tufted Duck continued to inhabit Sullivans Pond in Dartmouth. Our duck spotters have the eyes of eagles, and came up with some wonderful rarities – the best being a Garganey in the valley, but also a Western Black Brant among the thousands of Brant at Cape Sable. Read on for the details of these and other rarities, as well as the regular reports from an excellent “duck spring”. It was far from being the proverbial “good weather for ducks” – but ducks pay little heed to our proverbs.



Reports of the CANADA GOOSE are voluminous and cover the province from end to end. There were flocks of up to a thousand in the Valley in early May (JCT, JWW) – one “had a white plastic neck collar” (JCT). Smaller numbers (up to 300 at Port Morien) were seen throughout the spring in CB Co. (JOK, JAC, *et al.*). The NAMC total for the province was 405, the high being 124 in Hants Co. but distributed throughout. A pair with five goslings was observed May 17 at Sheffield Mills, Kings Co. by Mike Brylinsky, and more young were seen Apr. 30 at Hennigars Marsh, Kings Co. (JCT) and June 1 at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. (JWW). The BRANT were present in large numbers in the

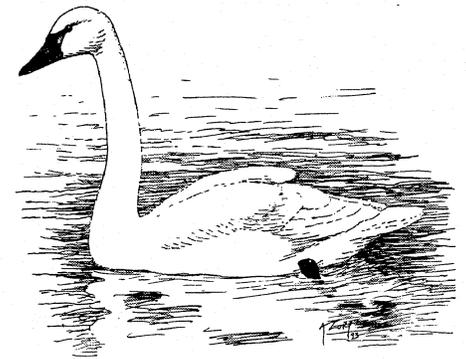
south of the province this spring – primarily at The Hawk, CSI (4,000 individuals, MUN) and Brier I. (400+ individuals, var. obs.). Of five seen at Little Hbr., Shel. Co. Apr. 16 DHY comments “These are (the) first spring Brant here in three or four years – we have had up to 355 in earlier years”. The NAMC provincial total was 961 with a high of 805 in Shel. Co. Other observations were of 50 Apr. 18 at Linden, Cumb. Co. (KJM) and 50+ May 8 & 12 in Kings Co. (JET, BBT).

A **BLACK BRANT** (W. subspecies) was first seen Apr. 29 at Pond Cove, Brier I. (ELM, IAM). Of this sighting ELM writes,

*“Accompanying flock of ca. 20 pale-bellied Brant on beach. Stood out as larger, heavier and much darker and with a more projecting profile and different head shape. White neck patch very conspicuous. On close examination noted “block-like” head and larger bill; striking neck patches met in front as a narrow white collar; whitish sides with some dark feather-edging contrasted markedly with blackish back and underparts; black of breast merged smoothly into blackish lower breast, sides and belly; undertail and vent area white, contrasting with black of rest of bird. In flight its dark colour and especially the black underparts stood out strikingly in good light. This is apparently the first “Black” Brant recorded in the province since 1970 (Cape Sable record by Sid and Betty June Smith). British and Dutch field ornithologists have separated the Light-Bellied Brant (*Branta bernicla*) Black Brant (*Branta nigricans*) and Pale-bellied Brant (*Branta hrota*), the latter our familiar Brant, as three*

species.”

There was a single report Apr. 19 (GIL, *fide* JAC) of a SWAN sp. “flying very high over Pt. Edward, CB Co. heading north” with the following details: “All white, legs not trailing; neck stretched out – thicker & larger than a heron; too big for a Snow Goose.”

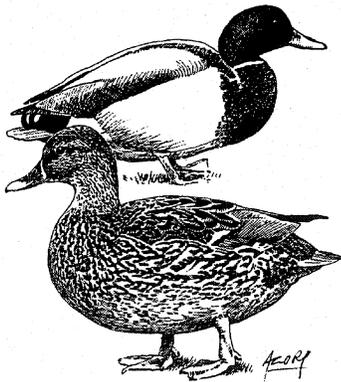


The WOOD DUCK has done well in NS this spring. The many reports come from one end of the province to the other. The NAMC provincial total was 56 with a high count of 22 in Pict. Co. There were 20+ May 29 at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. (RBS, BLF, AAM), and a fem. with six young were seen May 30 at Kemptville, Yar. Co. (JKD). The last report is June 1 at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. (JWW) “8-10 drakes seen, and one fem. with a brood of 13 very young ducklings one-two days old”.

The GADWALL was reported only in April. The three reports were two males, one fem. Apr. 12-18 at W. Lawrence-town, Hfx. Co. (JOW, JCZ, IAM), a single bird Apr. 18 & 19 at Wallace Bay, Cum. Co. and one male, two fem. at Big I., Pict. Co. (KJM). The NAMC yielded a total of seven – six in Cum. Co. and one in Kings Co.

Reports of the AMERICAN WIGEON covered the province for the entire period; the individual reports were invariably of a few or single birds. The earliest

report is of three or four ind. Mar. 6-14 at Sullivans Pond, Dartmouth, Hfx Co. (MEA, PWQ). There was a pair Apr. 1-21 in Canard Pond, Kings Co. (JCT, JWW). DHY reported a pair May 11 at Round Bay, Shel. Co. "likely breeding". The NAMC provincial total was 95, the most being 46 in Cum. Co. and a widespread distribution. The latest record was five-six June 1 at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. "mostly males" (JWW). The EURASIAN WIGEON is one of our most beautiful rarities. There are three sightings, all separate as far as can be told. A single male stayed Mar. 15-29 in a cove of the East R., Abercrombie, Pict. Co. (KJM), and single males were found Apr. 10 at Glace Bay Sanctuary, CB Co. (ALM, CAM) and Apr. 18 at Linden, Cumb. Co. (KJM).



How can we do this better? The AM. BLACK DUCK, our most common resident duck, was reported but four (4) times?! We all know they breed throughout our region, but don't bother reporting them – why, they're treated like starlings! At least two full broods were seen emerging late May in the ponds at Petite Riviere, Lun. Co (FED). The best individual record we have is a laconic "lots – broods of various ages" June 1 at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. (JWW). The provincial NAMC total, our best indicator, was 1798 with a high count of 452 in CB Co. and sightings in every county but Guysborough. We certainly do need more than we are getting to form an impression of how these hardy birds are faring in our changing environment. There are two reports of the BLACK DUCK-MALLARD HYBRID – one bird Mar. 20 at Pomquet Hbr., Ant. Co. (RFL, MZG) and May 8

at N. Sydney, CB Co. (DBM reports "lots (20-40) of hybrids in North Sydney and Sydney throughout period"). Are there more in the area? The MALLARD numbers, poorly reported as were the Black Duck numbers, are best characterized by the NAMC reports - 466 for the province with a high of 452 in CB Co. and widely distributed. Most of the individual reports were from CBI. PAM, JWW reported "two very large broods of 13 and 14, perhaps 10-14 days old" May 23 at Port Williams sewage ponds.

The BLUE-WINGED TEAL appears to have had a successful spring in Nova Scotia. A report from JAH details a late winter male Feb. 20 at Kingsburg, Lun. Co. A pair at Hennigars Marsh Apr. 24 had by June 4 become a nesting pair and another pair was on the Port Williams sewage ponds, Kings Co. May 18 (JCT). On the same day a bird on a nest with nine eggs was found at Goose Cr. Marsh, Yar. Co. (JKD). The high count was 25 June 1 at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. (JWW). The NAMC produced a total of 54 in the province, a sparse but general distribution with a high of 12 in Cum. Co.

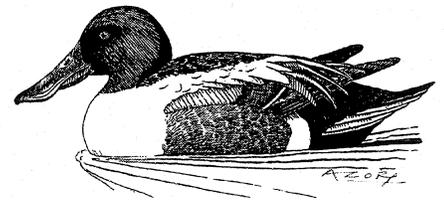
The prize of the duck reports this spring was a male GARGANEY found by Eric and Barbara Ruff May 22 at Belleisle Marsh near Bridgetown, Anna. Co. They informed GWT and JCT, who publicized its presence and next day observed it as it "attempted unsuccessfully to entice (fem.) Blue-wing away from vigilant male escort!" IAM writes:

"North American records have been scrutinized by Spear et al. (1988, Am. Birds 42: 385-392). They conclude that the pattern of occurrences indicates genuine vagrancy of this long-distance migrant. They believe that E. Coast and Central N. Am. birds have come originally as overshoots to Africa from Asia, as there are Caribbean and Central Am. records. These birds then become entrained in Blue-winged Teal migrations from those parts. Ours fits the pattern in timing."

A May 25 sighting (ELM) produced the

following comments:

"Watched the bird found on 22 May in Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. for more than half an hour as it fed, walked, preened, and eventually slept. Throughout it was extremely wary, markedly more so than the pair of Blue-winged Teal that it accompanied. Even though I was at a range of at least 30 m, under cover and not moving, it kept an eye on me, even while it "slept". On this basis, very likely to be a wild bird. A drake Garganey was found in Thomaston, Maine on 4 Apr. It had apparently disappeared by the time our bird was found. It will be interesting to see if there are other records in the area this spring."



The NORTHERN SHOVELER was reported in small numbers, mostly from the Valley. The NAMC provincial total was eight, the high count being four in Cum. Co. The first sighting was of one Mar. 3 at Abercrombie, Pict. Co. (KJM). Pairs were seen Apr. 18 at Linden, Cum. Co. (KJM) and May 8-18 at the Port Williams sewage ponds, Kings Co. (JCT, JWW). The NORTHERN PINTAIL was widely reported, mostly in CBI, invariably in small numbers. The earliest reports are of one male, one fem. at Wiers Gut, Pict. Co. seen there until Mar. 6 (KJM) and 1 male Mar. 3 at N. Sydney, CB Co. (DBM). Four were seen Mar. 27 at Rushton's Beach P. P., Pict. Co. (KJM), two males, 1 fem. Mar. 27 at Antigonish Landing, (RFL) and four males Apr. 22 at Saxon St. Pond, Kings Co. The latest report was of a pair May 2 at Hemeons Hd., Shel. Co. (DHY). The NAMC provincial total was 25 with the high count being 23 in Cum. Co.

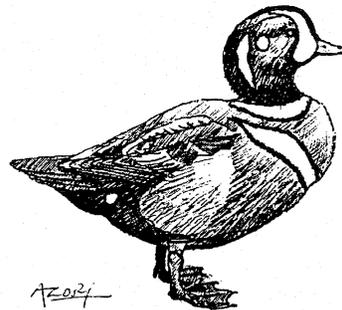
Reports of the GREEN-WINGED TEAL were predominantly from the Valley (JCT, JWW) and from CB Co. (DBM, SEM). The NAMC provincial total was 150 with a high of 33 in Cum. Co. and a wide distribution. High counts for the Valley were 30 Apr. 11 at Sheffield Mills, Kings Co (JCT) and for CB Co. 50 Apr. 10 at Pt. Edward (DBM). DHY noted a pair May 11 "likely breeding" at Round Bay, Shel. Co. There were two sightings this spring of the uncommon "EURASIAN" GREEN-WINGED TEAL - one male Apr. 10 at Glace Bay Sanctuary, CB Co. (ALM, CAM) and another male seen Apr. 10-12 at Saxon St. Pond and May 7 (presumably the same bird) at Canard pond, Kings Co. (MLH, ALK, JCT)

The three REDHEADS at Pictou Causeway were reported until Apr. 24 (JBO, KJM, MAB). Spring reports of the RING-NECKED DUCK indicate they have had a good year. The earliest arrival noted was two ad. males Mar. 28 at Broad Cove, Lun. Co. (JAH) and there were up to 25 from Apr. 5 at Canard Pond, Kings Co. (JCT, RBS, JWW). ELM had three pairs Apr. 10 at Masons Beach Pond. There were numerous reports in Apr. & May from the Valley and Lun. Co. DHY reported 14 pairs Apr. 26 at Peters Stillwater, Upper Lahaive R., Lun. Co. and JBO observed 26 males, 24 fem. May 2 at the APBS. The NAMC provincial total was 448 with the high count of 100 in CB Co. and a widespread distribution. JWW noted May 26 "NONE seen on Drain L. from hwy. (near Sackville, Hfx. Co.) - did the twinning a few years ago seriously reduce the numbers of waterfowl there?" The last report is 12 June 1 at Belleville Marsh, Anna. Co. (JWW).

Our TUFTED DUCK records did not stop with the passage of winter. The male "alternating between Sullivans Pond and Dartmouth Cove", Hfx. Co. remained until mid-April (var. obs.), while a female was seen until Apr. 4 at Pictou Causeway and a male Mar. 15 at Trenton Gut Bridge, Pict. Co. (KJM, MAB). All but one of the reports of the GREATER SCAUP were from CB Co. (DBM, RWK) - mostly from Florence. The highest number was 125 Mar. 25.

The only other report is of 50 Mar. 28 at Port Joli, Queens Co. (JAH). The NAMC provincial total was 61, of which 52 were seen in Pict. Co. The LESSER SCAUP is never common and this spring was no exception. A single imm. male was in Sullivans Pond, HRM until Mar. 28 (var. obs.). DBM & RWK report up to eight individuals in the Glace Bay area until May 8. An interesting report of a pair Apr. 4 at Bissett L., Hfx. Co. was provided by TIA. The last report is of a pair May 8 on Brier I. (RBS, AAM). The NAMC provincial total was six with a high of two in both CB and Anna. Co.

The COMMON EIDER distribution and numbers are best characterized in the NAMC report: a provincial total of 2962 with counts over 500 in Rich., Shel. and Digby Co. Over 120 were seen Mar. 21 at Margaretsville, Anna. Co. (GWT, JCT). A fem. with two ducklings was seen May 26 at Lower W. Pubnico, Yar. Co. (RSD) and on May 2 DHY reported 100+ "... in a large group (having a party?) - why weren't they tending nest?" at Hemeons Hd., Shel. Co. The last report is of "very young downy chicks with adults" May 30 at Cherry Hill & Crescent Beach, Lun. Co. (ELM).



The HARLEQUIN DUCK was reported four times - they are all worth noting, since the western N Atlantic population bird is on the endangered list, since it is such a fascinating creature, and since, in the West, by this time of year they are all on the inland rivers. The first is really a late winter report - one male, two fem. Feb. 28 at Tribune Hd., Hfx. Co. (JBO). A male, fem. and

two imm. were seen Mar. 15-23 at Port George, Anna. Co. (var. obs.) There were 19 Mar. 28 at Cape Light, CSI (MUN) and one fem. Apr. 13 in Digby Hbr.

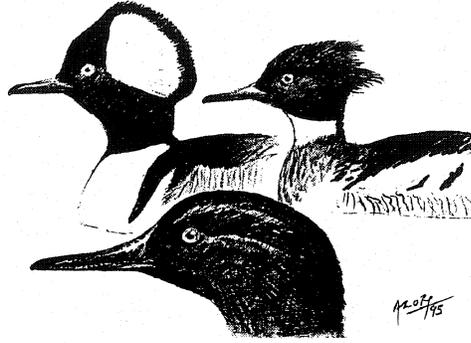
The SURF SCOTER reports were from CB or Guys. Co. The NAMC provincial total was 566 of which 453 were in Lun. Co. (where are the individual reports?); the vast majority on this count were from non-CB areas. The highest reports not from the NAMC were both from May 30 -150 at Port Morien and 100 at the S. Bar, Sydney Hbr., CB Co. (DBM, RWK, GEL). This species report, better than any other, demonstrates the risks of relying on few observations to deduce the range and occurrence of our birds. Reports of WHITE-WINGED SCOTER came almost entirely from the N of the province. The latest reported were 50 May 30 at Port Morien and the same number at Sydney Hbr., S Bar (DBM, RWK, GEL). The NAMC provincial total was 336 with 311 in CB Co.; the only non-CB entries were five in Digby Co. & one in Shel. Co. Individual reports of the BLACK SCOTER were sparse this spring, and all but one from CB. The first was one Apr. 3 at Fourchu, Rich. Co. (DBM, RWK). There were two seen May 8 at Sandford, Yar. Co. (JKD). The NAMC provincial total was 187 with a high count of 80 in Kings Co. (why no individual reports from this area?). The last report was six May 30 in Sydney Hbr., CB Co. The OLDSQUAW reports ended Apr. 30. With the exception of 100 Mar. 11 and four Mar. 25 at Maders Cove, Lun. Co. (JBM) all were from CB or Guys. Co. The highest there was 60 Apr. 3 at Fourchu, Rich. Co. (DBM, RWK). None were reported on the NAMC.

The BUFFLEHEAD was reported in normal numbers. There were 80-90 Mar. 26 at the Glace Bay Water Preserve (DBM) and 23 Apr. 23 at Petite Riviere, Lun. Co. (JAH). The largest numbers were 102 Apr. 30 at the Glace Bay Tower Rd. lagoon (DBM, RWK) and 106 May 2 in the Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. (AAM, BLF). One or two individuals lingered in these locations up to the beginning of June. The NAMC provincial total was 318 with a high

counts of 250 in Anna. Co. and 56 in CB Co. First reports of the COMMON GOLDENEYE were of seven males, three fem. Mar. 5-16 in the New Minas sewage ponds, Kings Co. (JCT, JWW), and nine Mar. 11 into Apr. at Maders Cove, Lun. Co. (JBM). A flock of 125 was seen Mar 19 at St. Anns, Vic. Co. The reports end Apr. 30; most of those in Apr. come from CB with numbers from 1-50 at a variety of locations (DBM, JAC, RWK). The NAMC provincial total was 16 with a high of 10 in Pict. Co. All this indicates a strong preference of this species for the N, at least in the spring. There were only two clearly separable reports of the elegant but uncommon BARROW'S GOLDENEYE. KJM sighted a male on Mar. 15, a male & fem. Mar. 21 near Pictou Causeway, and a male Apr. 4 on the West R., Pict. Co. The only other sighting was of two Mar. 21 at Eel L., Yar. Co. (MUN).

The HOODED MERGANSER was reported mostly from Pict. and Kings Co., always in small numbers. The earliest reported was a male Mar. 18 at Parrsboro, Cum. Co. (JRM) and the latest a pair Apr. 28 at Drain L., Hfx. Co.

(JCT). The NAMC provincial total was six: three each in Pict. and Kings Co.'s. The reports of the RED-BREASTED MERGANSER came almost exclusively from the N of the province. That having been said, the earliest report was 23 Mar. 11-27 at Maders Cove, Lun. Co. (JBM). A few dozen were at St. Anns &



Capstick, Vic. Co. "small groups scattered along coast, males displaying" (DBM) and there were 1000+ seen Mar. 28 at Crystal Cliffs, Ant. Co. (RFL, MZG). The NAMC provincial total was 626 with a high count of 513 in Pict. Co.; the reports were widely distributed throughout the province. The latest record was of a pair May 30 at Catalone Gut, CB Co. (DBM, RWK, GEL). The COMMON MERGANSER

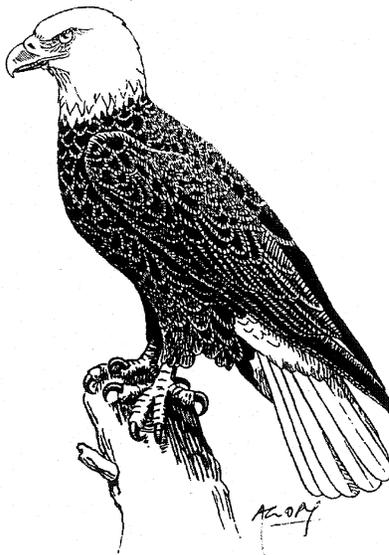
was indeed common in the province this spring. The first report was four males, two fem. Mar. 5 at Saxon St. Pond, Kings Co. (JCT). Most of the March reports were from the Valley, of small numbers (one to four) of individuals. The CB reports begin Mar. 21 with six at Pipers Cove, Vic. Co. (DBM). In early April numbers between 50 and 65 were reported from Florence, Framboise and Pt. Edward, CBI (DBM). The breeding season was underway Apr. 26 when DHY reported six pairs "appear to be breeders" at Peters Stillwater, Upper Lahave R., Lun. Co. JCT reported three males, six fem. + imms. Apr. 28 in a pond E of Windsor near Hwy. 101, Hants Co. and three males, eight fem + imms. at Drain L., Hwy. 101 near Sackville, Hfx. Co. The NAMC provincial total was 181 with a high count of 40 in Pict. Co.; small numbers were reported for this count from all but a few counties.

There was but a single report this spring of the RUDDY DUCK: a May 23 sighting of a single male at Belleisle marsh, Anna. Co. (GWT, JCT).

Diurnal Raptors Through Rallids

BY RICHARD KNAPTON

Considering the warm balmy weather of early spring this year, it was not surprising that we should have sightings of OSPREYS in March. They started with a couple of very early birds, one at Pt. Edward, CB Co., Mar. 12 (*fide* JAM) and a pair at Troy, Inv. Co., Mar. 23 (Rob Waldron), that were observed copulating, which seems a bit early for nesting behaviour. Thereafter, there were 14 reports in April, including adults at two nests at St. Margarets Bay, Hfx. Co. (birdline), at a nest at Bridge-water Reservoir, Lun. Co. (Harold Dobson), and at a nest at Pt. Aconi, CB Co. (DBM). Worth mentioning are comments from a couple of observers who felt that there are fewer Ospreys now than 10 years ago. No one reported fewer BALD EAGLES, however, and in



fact most reports were of individuals at nests. Incubating birds were noted Mar. 12 at Greenwich, Mar. 20 at White Rock, and Mar. 21 at Wallbrook, all in Kings Co. (JWW). The Greenwich nest held at least one nestling May 17, and the White Rock nest held two nestlings May 19 (JWW). Adults attending nests in CB Co. were recorded at Ben Eoin Apr. 30 and at Sydney R. May 30 (DBM, RWK, GEL), and adults were at a nest at Amherst Pt. May 1 (TEP). A couple of notable groups were 17 in the Sheffield Mills area Mar. 18 (JWW) and a surprising total of eight soaring together near New Campbellton, Vic. Co., May 13 (DBM). Perhaps the most tantalizing report was of a first-year bird from May 13-30 on Sable I. (ZOL) - one wonders about the very real possi-

bility of a White-tailed Eagle at such a location.

There were few reports of N. HARRIERS this spring, and no reports of notable concentrations. Of 12 reports, eight came from Cape Breton I. A male at Grand Pré, Kings Co., Apr. 2 (birdline) and a female at Brier I. Apr. 3 (JCZ *et al.*) may have signaled the arrival of migrants. One was reported from Sable I. May 25 (ZOL). SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS have been fairly scarce for a few years; this year was no exception to that trend. Only nine reports were received, six of which came from Cape Breton I. Eight over Brier I. May 8 (AAM, RBS, JOW) was the only multiple sighting. On the other hand, there appear to be more COOPER'S HAWKS being seen, or at least reported. Four this spring began with one at Greenwich, Kings Co., Mar. 11 (MLH), followed by one at Port Clyde/Thomasville Marsh, Shel. Co. Mar. 17 (Sam & Sandy Hiltz), one at Blanch, Shel. Co. Mar. 21 (MUN), and the fourth over Brier I. May 8, the day the eight Sharp-shins were seen there (AAM, RBS, JOW). There were about as many N. GOSHAWK reports as there were of Sharp-shins. Several reports came from Cape Breton I., including an adult male seen frequently during April at Sand L., CB Co. (ALM, CAM, RWK). BLF noted two nests of Goshawks, one with an adult in attendance in mid-April at Black R. Lake, Kings Co., and one with 3 young near Newtonville, Kings Co., June 6.

A RED-SHOULDERED HAWK May 8 over Brier I. (AAW, RBS, JOW) was an excellent sighting; this species appears to be occurring with increasing frequency nowadays. The first BROAD-WINGED HAWK was of a very early bird at Musquodoboit Hbr., Hfx. Co. Apr. 2 (PEL). This was followed by more seasonal reports of two near Halifax Apr. 23 (MUN, WIA) and one near Springhill, Cum. Co., May 1 (JBO), with the first for CB Co. at Coxheath May 4 (DBM). There were six reports thereafter, including 2-3 over Brier I. May 23 (GWT, JCT). Few reports of RED-TAILED HAWKS were received, most (seven) coming from Cape Breton

I. (DBM *et al.*). On Mar. 25, four nests in Kings Co. (Acadia University, Wolfville, Canard Pond, and Jawbone Corner in the Canard Valley) all had one adult bird in attendance, likely incubating (JWW). The Acadia U. nest held three large nestlings May 23, and were fed a largish bird, probably a Rock Dove (JWW). Twelve ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were seen this spring; one at Sand L., CB Co., Apr. 1 (ALM, CAM), one at Carleton, Yar. Co., Apr. 25 (MUN), and a very impressive 10 at Minudie Marsh, Col. Co., May 1 (FLL). An immature GOLDEN EAGLE was reported between the airport and the truck scale, Hfx. Co., along Hwy. 102 May 29 (F. C. Gregg), and another was reported at Western Shore, Lun. Co., in April (Rosemary Gallinger).



The first report of an AM. KESTREL was of a female near Louisdale, Rich. Co., Mar. 13 (RFL, KJM, CHM). Thereafter there were only sporadic reports, and only in April; clearly the species was underreported. A pair was observed copulating at Nictaux West, Anna. Co., Apr. 17 (SLH), a pair was found nesting in an old N. Flicker hole overhanging a beaver Pond near Churchville, Pict. Co., Apr. 24 (KJM), and a pair nested in RFL's yard near Antigonish. MERLINS, on the other hand, were widely reported throughout the province, from Cape Breton to the southwest shores. Three together on Mar. 15-16 at Wolfville behaved as a group, preying on Bohemian Waxwings - JWW surmised that they were

perhaps all siblings from one of the two nestings in Wolfville last year. A pair copulating at Caribou I., Pict. Co., Apr. 3 seemed a little early for nesting behaviour (KJM). The occurrence of two on Sable I. May 2 (ZOL) is an interesting record. The only report of GYRFALCON came from Col. Co., where a white-phase bird was seen near Bible Hill, Mar. 10 (Bernard Jackson) and near Salmon R., Mar. 21 (ALE), presumably the same bird. In keeping with past years, few PEREGRINE FALCONS are reported in spring. This year, there were three, possibly four birds. An adult, plus possibly a subadult, were observed Mar. 18-30 at Blomidon, Kings Co. (birdline), one was seen near Sydney, CB Co., Apr. 19 (*vide* JAC), and an individual with an all white forehead and breast, perhaps of the *tundrius* subspecies, at Sable I., Apr. 24 - May 3 (ZOL).

Reports of GRAY PARTRIDGES came in from Col., Hants and Kings Co.'s., mainly during March before the winter coveys broke up and breeding started. The largest group was one of 12 birds coming to a feeder at John Crosby's house in Cambridge all winter through April (AAM). There was a scattering of RING-NECKED PHEASANT reports, indicating the bird is widespread and fairly numerous in the province. The highest counts were of seven birds (three males, four females) at Westmount, CB Co. in early April (JAC) and 11, mainly males, in the Wolfville area May 8 (JWW). An escaped Golden Pheasant at Conrads Beach, Kings Co., added a touch of the exotic (birdline).

Most SPRUCE GROUSE reports were from Cape Breton (DBM *et al.*). A male found flutter-jumping Apr. 30 near Big Pond, CB Co., was relocated May 30 in the same patch of forest (DBM, RWK, GEL), also flutter-jumping, which seems somewhat late for such courtship behaviour. RUFFED GROUSE numbers appear to be fairly high, with 12 reports covering much of the province, although there were no reports of large counts this spring. Reports of N. BOBWHITE came in from Smileys Park, Halifax in April (*vide* PLC) and from Barrington Passage, Shel. Co., in May (Marg Do-

ane).

It was not a particularly good spring for VIRGINIA RAILS. Only two were reported, one Apr. 22 at Freshwater L., Vic. Co. (Tim Reynolds), and the other in Westville, Pict. Co., Apr. 24 (MAB, KJM) that had been found a few days earlier by STV in the same little marsh as last year. However, there was no Vir-

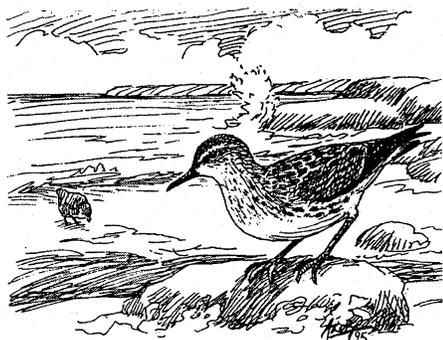
ginia Rail at Van Ostrums Pond, Kings Co., this year where one had been present last year (AAM). There were five reports of about 12 SORAS, with the earliest on the rather late date of May 15 at Harris' Pond, Canning, Kings Co. (GWT, JCT). A count of at least five birds at Amherst Pt., May 30 (JBO) was the maximum. Two C. MOORHENS were present at the Hawk, CSI, May 14-

15 (JON, MUN), with one staying until at least May 23 (var. obs.). One wintering AM. COOT at Sullivans Pond, HRM, was seen until at least Apr. 17 (var. obs.); there were no other Am. Coots reported this spring.



Shorebirds

BY SYLVIA FULLERTON

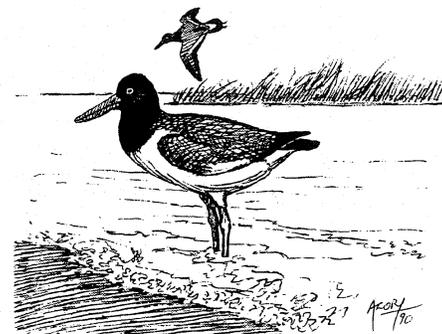


Another warm and benign spring, following a mild winter, may have accounted for the large number of overwintering shorebirds still in residence during the spring period. The migration overall was lackluster and the only highlight of the season, a bright Curlew Sandpiper, chose to set down on inaccessible Sable I. where it could be enjoyed only by our resident observer, Zoe Lucas.

A BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER in basic plumage at Martinique Beach, HRM Apr. 10 presumably overwintered (IAM) and up to 18 were still present at CSI Apr. 18 (MUN, JON). By May 2 there were 50 at CSI, whether winter birds, spring migrants or a mix is difficult to say. The few migrants we see usually peak in mid to late May and this year numbers were average: 13 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. and 10 at Oxners Beach, Lower Lahave, Lun. Co. May 30 (ELM); 43 at Windsor causeway May 16 increased to a high count of 140 by May 27 (JCT, JWW). Eight were at Morien Bar, CB Co. May 30 (DBM, RWK, GEL). This is the first spring report from this area, probably

reflecting lack of observers in previous years rather than absence of birds. Many spring Black-bellies arrive here in basic plumage and are probably first-year birds, as were most of the birds at Cherry Hill. As it adds to the knowledge of the status of our spring migrants I encourage all of you to note plumages whenever possible. The AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER is scarce in spring, so four birds provided a respectable showing. One, in basic plumage, probably a yearling, was in a salt marsh at Hortonville, Kings Co. May 2 (PAM, JWW). The next day two were seen at Cherry Hill Beach, also in basic plumage (SJF). One was spotted at CSI during the NAMC. No reports of SEMIPALMATED PLOVER in passage were received but for the fourth year a breeding pair nested successfully at Cape Light, CSI; three fledglings were seen June 6 (MUN, JON). The first PIPING PLOVER appeared at Sand Hills Beach, Shel. Co. Apr. 1 (ETM). One pair at Cherry Hill Beach arrived Apr. 11 and has since re-nested following nest predation (JAH). A single bird was seen at Matthews L., Shel. Co. May 15, but apparently no activity has been seen since (DHY). Overall there is encouraging news on the viability of this species. Peter MacDonald of DNR says that in Shel. Co. there has been an increase in nesting pairs over the last two years. This year there are 16 active nests and birds have been seen at three other beaches. The six pairs at CSI have been faithfully monitored by CST, JON and SAN. Norman Wentzell, Parks Canada, reported five pairs at Keji Seaside Adjunct and John Mills, DNR, re-

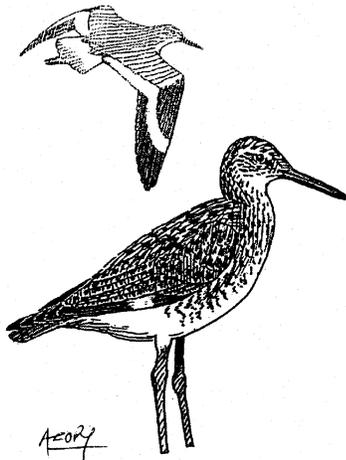
ported five pairs from Queens and Lun. Co.'s. KILLDEER were generally under-reported. One, returning on schedule, was seen in the parking lot at Pt. Pleasant Park, HMR Mar. 7 (Phil Bryson). On Apr. 5 seven were at Saxon St. pond, Kings Co. and by Apr. 20 two pairs had formed (JCT, JWW). Cape Breton birds were first noted Apr. 25 with two at Westmount, CB (JAC, JOK), soon followed by five Apr. 30 at Schooner Pond, CB Co. (DBM, RWK, GEL). On NAMC day, a total of 138 represented a high spring count.



The AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHERS have returned for the fourth spring to Cape Light, CSI, their northernmost known breeding site in North America. Two birds have been present from Apr. 9 through the period, joined by a third June 5 (MUN, JON). We have hopes that this year there will be news of successful breeding. Another, pressing northward, was sighted at South Hbr., Vic. Co., CB June 8 (DBM).

The first GREATER YELLOWLEGS to be reported was one at Roberts I., Yar. Co. Apr. 11 (MUN, ETM, JUG). By Apr. 18 three were at Seaforth, HRM

and an apparent pair was on Big I., Pict. Co. Apr. 19 (IAM, KJM). The largest count was of nine at Brier I. Apr. 30, followed by six at CSI May 2 (ELM, IAM, MUN). Among those seen in CB were four at Homeville and three at Bras d'Or Apr. 30 (DBM, RWK). Only one turned up at the New Minas sewage ponds May 6 (JCT). Although the reports indicated they were present in low numbers NAMC counters tallied a total of 104, 55 being from Cape Breton. Typically there were few LESSER YELLOWLEGS reported: one at Schooner Pond, CB Co. May 1 (DBM, RWK, GEL) and three on the NAMC, all in the northern part of the Province. A single SOLITARY SANDPIPER appeared at Broad Cove, Lun. Co. May 14-15 at the same pond which seems to



attract them every fall (SJF). The first WILLET was on schedule at CSI Apr. 17 (MUN). Arrivals were tardy, however, and not reported again until the end of the month when singles were seen at Brier I., Canning, Grand Pré, and Port Clyde (var. obs.). They were not heard until May 7 at Lower Rose Bay, late for the area, but next day they arrived in numbers and up to 20+ were counted in the area (ELM, AHM). Similarly, RES did not see a pair at Port Mouton until May 8. Only seven to eight have been heard/seen at Cherry Hill Beach which is about half of the previous years' totals. Northward, six were at Morien Bar, CB Co. May 30 (DBM, RWK, GEL). They were doing well elsewhere, however, as 269 were tallied on the NAMC. An early SPOTTED SANDPIPER was at Drain L.,

HRM May 1 (JCT). Usually Spotties arrive the second week of May, but only two were noted: JWW saw a single bird at Canard Pond, Kings Co. May 8 and SLH heard one calling at Keji N. P. May 15. A notable concentration of 18 birds was at Sydney Hbr., South Bar May 30 (DBM, RWK, GEL).

The occurrence in spring of one or two UPLAND SANDPIPERS is now routine, but other than the nesting bird in Pict. Co. several years ago no further nesting sites have been found. Three single birds were noted: CSI Apr. 19 (MUN); Sable I. Apr. 24 (ZOL); Matthews L., Shel. Co. May 15 (DHY). It is unusual to see WHIMBREL in spring but they are almost annual on CSI where one has been seen from Apr. 8 to dead-line (JON, MUN).

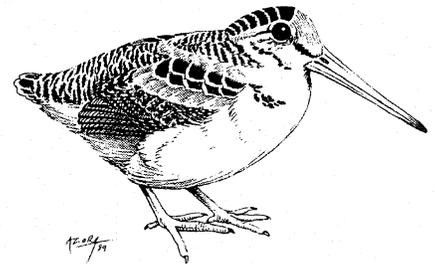
Two RUDDY TURNSTONES at CSI Mar. 28 had probably overwintered but the 20 seen there May 2 were undoubtedly migrants (MUN).

An above-average number of RED KNOTS overwintered at CSI and up to 37 were counted Mar. 13. By May 2 the 35 seen there were in bright alternate plumage, and it is thought these were the wintering birds (MUN, JON). Overwintering SANDERLINGS were present in better-than-average concentrations and it was uncertain if any fresh migrants passed through. At least 125 were at CSI Mar. 13 and 155 were counted by May 2, perhaps augmented by a few migrants (JON, MUN). ZOL tallied 120+ around Sable I. Mar. 24 and 50+ fresh migrants May 24. Up to 30 overwintered at Cherry Hill Beach (Bob Steele). The 45+ individuals at Martinique Beach, HRM Apr. 2 & 10 were also thought to have wintered locally (IAM, ULH). On time was a LEAST SANDPIPER at Sable I. May 13 (ZOL). The only other report was of 40, a good number, at the Port Williams sewage ponds May 15 (GWT, JCT). Most PURPLE SANDPIPERS were noted in March: 25 at Cap Auget Light, Rich. Co. Mar. 13 (RFL, CHM, KJM); 18 at Blue Rocks, Lun. Co. Mar. 14 (PLC *et al.*); 50+ at Port George, Anna. Co. Mar. 23 (JJN, TMF); one or two at both Cherry Hill Beach and Margaretsville, Anna. Co. Mar. 14 & 21 (JAH, JCT). Latest report was of 200, proba-

bly migrants, at Brier I. May 8. The 20+ DUNLIN at CSI on Mar. 13 & 28 were probably wintering birds, whereas the 80 counted there May 2 undoubtedly contained some migrants (JON, MUN). This represents an unusually high count for the season. IAM and ELM found 20 at Brier I. Apr. 29. The only SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER reported was from Shel. Co. during NAMC May 8.

A CURLEW SANDPIPER on Sable I. May 16 furnished the first spring record for the province, the earliest previous record being July 2. It must have brightened the day for ZOL who described it as being in "near breeding plumage ... head, neck, and upper breast rich rusty red; mottled upper parts; white rump; longish, decurved bill."

A COMMON SNIBE in Westmount, CB Co. Mar. 19 and one in the River John area Pict. Co. Mar. 25 may have been



early migrants (JAC, JUM). Among other reports of single birds were: Bissett L., Hfx. Co. Apr. 3 (TIA); Centreville, Kings Co. Apr. 12 (RBS); Methals L., Kings Co. Apr. 17 (BLF); Hennigars Marsh, Kings Co. May 6 (JCT); Goose Creek Marsh, Yar. Co. May 30 (JKD). Up to six were noted on Beechmount Rd. and Westmount, CB Co. Apr. 20 & 30 (JAC, DBM, RWK). They were certainly in evidence during the NAMC when the grand total reached 206. The first AMERICAN WOODCOCK was at Port Joli, Queens Co. Mar. 25 (AND). Several were reported Mar. 27: one at Irish Mt. and three on the way to Caribou, Pict. Co. (KJM); two in the Loch Lomond area, CB Co. (JWM, SEM). They were plentiful in other parts of CB Co. and four were heard/seen at Frenchvale and several at Beechmount CB Co. through April and early May (DBM, RWK, SEM). Three males were "courting in old pasture land" at

Greenfield, Col. Co. May 12 (JBO) and they were also seen displaying at Pomquet and South Side Hbr., Ant. Co. through April and May (RFL, MZG). Obviously plentiful in other parts of the Province, 145 were tallied on the NAMC.

An uncommon spring vagrant, an alternate-plumaged WILSON'S PHALAROPE, was on Sable I. May 23 (ZOL). This seemed to be a good spring for other phalaropes if one was lucky enough to be out at sea. MUN has reported that a "fisherman birder" identi-

fied at least 200 RED PHALAROPES south of NS May 8, and on May 11, ten miles off Clarks Hbr., he "could see thousands of phalaropes as far as the eye could see." They were still being seen May 24, assembling, no doubt, for the long flight to the high Arctic.

Gulls Through Alcids

BY BLAKE MAYBANK

A GREAT SKUA was reported from the LaHave Basin May 24 (RSD), a rather late date, and no description was provided to rule out the more expected (for that time of year) SOUTH POLAR SKUA. A dead individual of the latter was found on the beach at Sable I. May 28 (photographed and specimen kept). ZOL's description is convincing: "Cold dark brown all over, with no rufous colour; underparts all a uniform cold, gray-brown; pale yellow streaks on head and forehead." A single POMARINE JAEGER was sighted, May 3 on the Georges Bank, and RSD thought that there should normally have been many more in evidence. RSD also had the only PARASITIC JAEGER of the spring, but not out on the fishing banks as one might expect, but inshore at Port Mouton, Queens Co., May 25, where the bird picked up scraps as they were unloading their fishing boat.

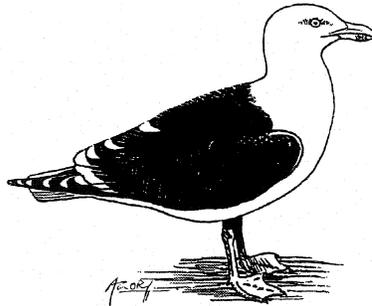
The only LAUGHING GULL report was a group of three birds, one an adult, at Cherry Hill Beach May 30 (ELM). There are no details regarding a LITTLE GULL reportedly first seen in December, and then for several days in early March, on First Peninsula, Lun. Co. (*fide* JAH). Away from Halifax, a count of 50+ BLACK-HEADED GULLS was notable at Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co. Mar. 28 (RFL, MZG). At Shannon Park, in Halifax, IAM counted 22 mostly immature birds lingering on Apr. 18, but two immatures at Upper Blue Rocks Marsh, Lun. Co., May 30, were extraordinarily tardy (ELM). Our BLACK-TAILED GULL returned to Sable I. for a third year, where ZOL saw it Apr. 12. She believes it spends long periods at sea feeding, and only occa-

sionally visits Sable. The NAMC counted only 174 RING-BILLED GULLS, but RFL noted hundreds at Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co., Apr. 14. JAC thought that numbers of both HERRING GULLS and GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS were down substantially in Sydney Hbr. -- she counted only a "handful", where she would normally expect hundreds. ZOL mentioned good numbers of ICELAND GULLS on Sable I. in April, with a maximum of 250+ Apr. 15, and three lingering to May 25. LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS were widely found, with unaged individuals at Haliburton Gut, Pict. Co., Apr. 2 (KJM) and Glace Bay Apr. 21 (CAM, ALM), an adult *graellsii* around Canning, Kings Co., Apr. 12-17 (ELM, AHM, RBS), and a first-winter bird at Grand Pré May 8 (MLH, ALK, JWW). After a winter in which there seemed to be fewer GLAUCOUS GULLS than normal, I've decided to list all the late spring records, which were all immature birds: two in North Sydney Apr. 11 (DBM), one in Port Williams, Kings Co. Apr. 17 (ELM, AHM), one at Sandy Cove, Digby Co., Apr. 17 (RBS), one at Lilydale, Lun. Co., Apr. 28 - May 8 (ELM), and two on Sable I. May 5 (ZOL). I was unaware that BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES had colo-

nized the cliffs at the south end of Cheticamp I., Inv. Co., but according to David Lawley a few pair have been breeding there for five years now.

A group of three CASPIAN TERNS was discovered May 1 at Mavillette Beach, Yar. Co. (MUN, *et al.*). ELM & AHM reported the first COMMON TERN, May 8, in Lunenburg Hbr., although observers tallied 51 across the province the same day on the NAMC, during which time 15 ARCTIC TERNS were also counted. The first BLACK TERNS at the APBS were seen May 29 (TEP).

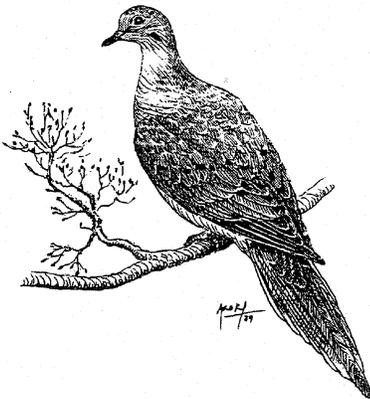
The last DOVEKIES were off Brier I. Mar. 20 (PHT), and CSI Mar. 21 (MUN). A COMMON MURRE Mar. 14 at Arichat, Rich. Co. (KJM, RFL, CHM), was the only report for the period. THICK-BILLED MURREs were seen into late March, with eight birds in Rich. Co. Mar. 14 (RFL, CHM, KJM), four in outer Halifax Hbr. Mar. 20 (NSBS field trip), and one in Louisbourg Hbr., Mar. 21 (SEM). An apparently uninjured and non-oiled RAZORBILL flushed from the beach at Sable I. May 16, flew off, circled, and landed again on the beach (ZOL).



Doves Through Woodpeckers

BY IAN MCLAREN

At Crystal Cliffs, Ant. Co., ROCK DOVES have reverted to their ancestral cliff-nesting habits. Return to the wild is not without dangers, as 10+ masses of feathers in nearby woods May 7 were evidently Goshawk victims. (RFL was shown by Liz Gillis how to distinguish these from Great Horned Owl kills – “it’s all in the guano.”) A Mar. 7 count of 140 MOURNING DOVES at feeders in Avonport, Kings Co., seemed exceptional (EVU). One migrant reached Sable I. Apr. 3 (ZOL). By May 8, one was incubating three eggs at L.W. Pubnico (JKD). On the same day, they slightly outnumbered Rock Doves (by 1438 to 1392) in NAMC totals. Have they stabilized? Have our observers noted any recent trends?



As noted in the last issue, there seems to be more enthusiasm for owling. The NAMC May 8 turned up 59 GREAT HORNED OWLS, including 14 from both CB and Pict. Co.’s. Another dozen were noted elsewhere around the province on other dates. A fem. was incubating Apr. 24 at Newtown, Guys. Co. (RFL) and on the same day another was sitting on an old N. Goshawk nest in Pict. Co. (HAB *et al.*). There were young in a nest at Pomquet Pt., Ant. Co., during May (RFL, MZG), and two adults and an early fledgling at APBS May 2 (JBO). As usual, BARRED OWLS were the most commonly reported of our owls, with an astonishing NAMC total of 153, including 77 in Kings Co., 22 in Pict. Co., and 17 on CBI. On other dates there were 16 re-

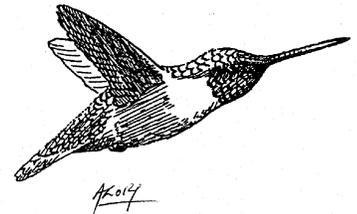
ports of one to three hooters making an impressive total of 34 birds. BLF reports that 16 pairs laid eggs in his Kings Co. nest boxes this year, and that 35 young were banded in early June. The winter roost of a dozen LONG-EARED OWLS in Kings Co. scattered in spring, and a pair did not remain to nest, as they had done in 1997 and 1998 (*fide* JWW). BLF found a pair roosting during March and April near his nest platform in a small woodlot at Port Williams, Kings Co. After a GREAT HORNED OWL took up residence, only one could be found May 6, and none thereafter. One hopes they were not eaten. One was noted May 1 at the John Lumbsy Marsh, Amherst (FLL). On Mar. 14, a SHORT-EARED OWL (a returnee?) was hunting over the dunes of Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. (JAH). Two Apr. 4 on Big I., Pict. Co. (KJM) and two at Grand Pré, Apr. 17 (BBT) were in the vicinity of birds that had wintered. Reports of N. SAW-WHET OWLS usually run a close second to those of Barred Owls; this spring 79 were ticked on NAMC day, almost all (58) in Pict. Co. There were only eight reports of 13 birds on other days. A nest box with five young and an unhatched egg was shown by HAB to WIA *et al.* Pict. Co. Apr. 24.

The first COMMON NIGHTHAWK, rather early, was heard by AAM May 7 at Coldbrook, Kings Co. Seven more were noted during the NAMC next day; I assume that none of these was a calling woodcock, as others were not reported until month’s end (AAM, DBM, *et al.*). Normally our very few breeding WHIPPOOR-WILLS are not noted until they sing in late May, so one banded on BPI May 6 (JJN, TMF) was presumably an early “overshoot.”

Earliest CHIMNEY SWIFTS were two May 7-8 at the Robie Tufts Centre in Wolfville, where there were up to 25 by May 10 (JCT, JET), 78 May 13 (JCT), 90 next night (JWW), and 150+ May 23-26 (JWW). In New Glasgow, the Temperance St. chimney received 35 May 12, 160 on the 26th and 90 on the

31st (KJM). Some 65 entered a chimney at the Agricultural College, Truro, May 22 (ROH). Numerically, these sites were outclassed by counts of 433 entering the Middleton, Anna. Co., Chimney May 17 (Nancy Duffy), by 541+ there May 24 (BBT, JET), and by 400 at the Oakdene School, Bear River, Digby Co., May 22. There were reports of 1-20 individuals from other localities.

The earliest RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD was at Sand L., CB Co., May 7 (GEM, JUM), and nine individuals were seen next day during the NAMC from Queens Co. to CB Co. They became widely reported during the next few days (*var. obs.*). An early nest was found in Laurie Park, HRM, May 29 (PWQ, MEA).



A BELTED KINGFISHER at Groves Pt., CB Co., Mar. 1 and another at the Trenton power plant Mar. 29 (MAB) had clearly wintered, but some of the individuals found at Three Fathom Hbr., Hfx. Co., Mar. 26 (JEH) and Lakevale, Ant. Co., Mar. 28 (RFL, MZG), could have been new arrivals. Three others appeared Apr. 3-4, and they were widely reported thereafter. One reached Sable I. May 13 (ZOL). The NAMC surveys May 8 produced 196 birds, with 20-odd in each of Hfx., Pict., and Rich. Co.’s.

The first YELLOW-BELLIED SAP-SUCKER of the year was ahead of schedule at The Hawk, CSI, Apr. 9 (JON). The next was reported from Sand L., CB Co., Apr. 28. They were widely reported thereafter, including 120 on the NAMC, with an impressive

45 from Hants and 30 from Pict. Co. A female on Sable I. May 5 (ZOL) shows that migration was still ongoing. Mating behaviour was observed by SLH at Tremont, Kings Co., May 18; doubtless some were on eggs by then. Our regular woodpeckers are generally under-reported, so we welcome the NAMC surveys, on which there were 336 DOWNY and 201 HAIRY WOODPECKERS. Compare these with seven other reports of 20 of the former and five reports of seven of the latter. BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS tend to be more fully reported: six were noted on the NAMC, and other individuals were near Tantallon, Hfx. Co., Apr. 5 (AZV), near Ostrea L., Hfx. Co. May 8 (NAMC), near Kempton, Col. Co., May 27 (JBO), and most unexpectedly on the Mt. St. Vincent University campus



May 5 (Bob MacDonald). It's often hard to tell when the first N. FLICKERS arrive. Individuals found through March could have wintered, but one on Sable I. Mar. 27 (ZOL) was certainly on the move. They were noted widely in April, but no trends were reported. The NAMC total of 971 sets a baseline for future analyses. Among a dozen reports of some 21 PILEATED WOODPECKERS (more than usual), one in the S. end of Halifax in early April (*vide* DOU) was unexpected. The NAMC total of 74 included 22 in Hants Co.

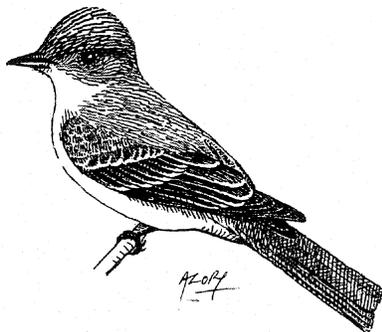


Flycatchers Through Vireos

BY ERIC MILLS

Always late arriving, OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS were reported only twice, single birds at Enon, CB Co. May 30 (DBM, RWK, GEL) and Wolfville Ridge, Kings Co. June 1 (GWT). Early E. WOOD PEWEES were reported in CB Co. (two) and Queens Co. (one) during the NAMC May 8 (*vide* JCT). Another was on Sable I. May 14 (ZOL); other records come from the last 10 days of May, mainly from E Kings Co., where the first was heard calling on territory in Kentville May 27 (RBS). Normally among the late arriving tyrannids, an unusually early YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER was on Brier I. May 18 (AAM). Thereafter, most records clustered May 28-30, including DHY's first ever in his yard at Little Hbr., Shel. Co., May 28, and about 20, noted as unusually abundant for the date, near Enon, CB Co., May 30 (DBM, RWK, GEL). An exceptionally early ALDER FLYCATCHER was reported from Mt. Pleasant, Lun. Co. Apr. 30 (JAH). JKD, in reporting one May 24, noted that during the past 10 years in the Pubnico area his previous earliest dates were May 31 and June 1. Most Alder Flycatchers arrived on and after May 25 and were abundant throughout the province, including CBI, by May 30 (var. obs.) with the exception of NAMC reports

May 8 (one in CB Co., two in Cum. Co., and four in Kings Co.) and one N of Auburn, Kings Co., May 9 (SLH). Arriving migrant LEAST FLYCATCHERS were seen on the Wolfville Ridge, along with some other NAMC locations throughout the province (JCT); in E Kings Co. May 15 (AAM); and in Kejimikujik NP May 15 (SLH). By month's end they had spread through-



out the province. By early May E. PHOEBES were resident in their usual breeding areas in Kings Co., Pict. Co., and SW Nova Scotia. The first arrived on Brier I. Apr. 2 (CAH *et al.*); others included one Apr. 10 on the Wolfville Ridge (JCT), one Apr. 14-19 on CSI (CST, MUN), two Apr. 19 at MacLellans Brook, Pict. Co. (KJM), and one Apr. 30 on Sable I. (ZOL). There was only one GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER report: a pair at Coldbrook,

Kings Co., May 24 (AAM). The season's first E. KINGBIRD was along Hwy 101 near Avonport, Kings Co., May 1 (JCT); the next two in Cum. And Queens Co.'s. on the NAMC May 8; and the third on Sable I. May 14 (ZOL). SJF found 12 on Seal I. May 24-26, and by May 28 one was in the Sydney River area, CB Co. (DBM, RWK, GEL).

Never abundant during the past winter, NORTHERN SHRIKES were last seen at Pomquet Pt., Ant. Co., Mar. 20 and South Side Hbr, Ant. Co., Mar. 21 (RFL, MZG); these sightings could well have been of the same bird.

Single BLUE-HEADED VIREOS were at Methals L. and White Rock, Kings Co., May 1 (BLF). Records thereafter were evenly spaced in time until month's end, from Pict. Co., SW NS, and CBI. RSD commented that this species was more common than usual in The Pubnicos area, Yar. Co., this spring. Despite the report of a very early RED-EYED VIREO Apr. 19 at Petersfield PP, CB Co. (JAC), reports were scanty. By May 30 Red-eyes were reported from widely separated locations: several on CBI (noted as still arriving) (DBM, RWK, GEL) and two at Maders Cove, Lun. Co. (JBM).

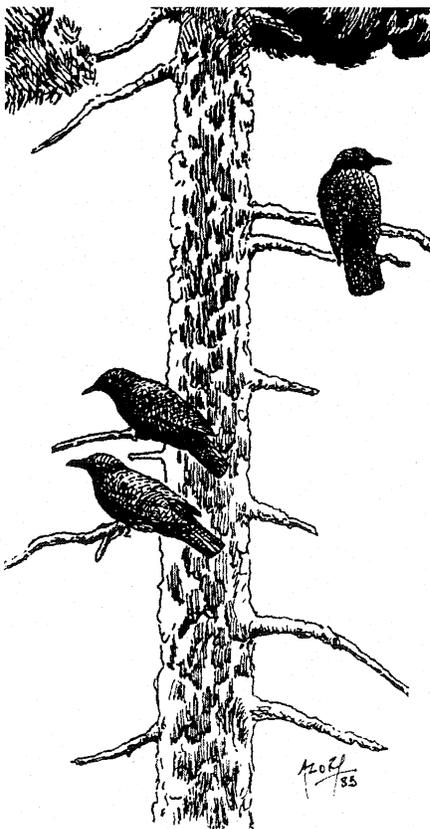
Corvids Through Thrushes

BY ERIC MILLS

Among the corvids, no unusual or noteworthy reports appeared of GRAY JAYS, BLUE JAYS or AM. CROWS. However, a EUR. JACK-DAW reported from Grand Desert, Hfx Co. Apr. 11 (CLS, SCY), not located thereafter, was decidedly noteworthy, as was a C. RAVEN on Sable I. Apr. 27-May 4 (ZOL).

The season's first PURPLE MARTIN visited Sable I. May 12 (ZOL). The only other report came from their provincial stronghold, 20+ at Amherst, Cum. Co., May 30 (JBO). TREE SWALLOW arrivals peaked during the second week of April, but abundant records indicate that birds were still arriving into early May. Two were at E Kemptville, Yar. Co., Mar. 28 (MUN); one at Port Mouton, Queens Co., Apr. 1 (RES); 15 at Roberts I., Yar. Co., Apr. 2 (ETM); two newly arrived at Masons Beach, Lun. Co., Apr. 11 (ELM); and 20 over the bayberries at Round Bay, Shel. Co., Apr. 14 (ELM), after which they became increasingly common around nest boxes. On CBI, arrivals seem to have been mainly during the first week of May (var. obs.). Scarce at any time of year, and unusually early, was a N. ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW at Pembroke, Yar. Co., May 2 (MUN). The first BANK SWALLOW of the season was in Kings Co. on the NAMC, May 8 (*vide* JCT). There were two on Sable I. May 12 (ZOL). Despite few reports after that, by May 30 they were abundant among foraging swallow flocks throughout the province (var. obs.). A few BARN SWALLOWS appeared in early April: one at Herring Cove, Hfx Co., on the 2nd (TIA); two at Brier I. on the 9th (CAH); and four at Roberts I., Yar. Co. on the 11th (ETM, JUG). Arrivals continued into May, and RSD noted occupied nests at Quinan, Yar. Co., May 16. Although a few very early CLIFF SWALLOWS accompany the April Tree Swallow flocks, the first were reported this year May 18 in Carleton, Yar. Co. (JKD), followed by

records of birds already in their nesting areas in Anna. and CB Co.'s. during the last week of the month (var. obs.). The universe of BLACK-CAPPED and BOREAL CHICKADEES appears to have unfolded as it should during the spring period. DBM's and RFL's records of Boreal Chickadees in CBI areas in Mar. and Apr. reveal widespread occurrences if not abundance. RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES, nearly absent in NS throughout the winter, reappeared, al-



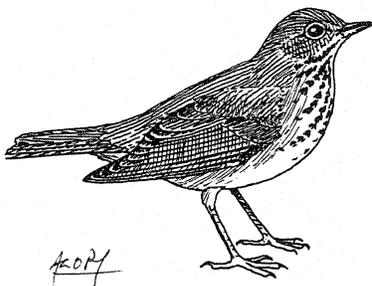
beit in small numbers this spring, to be reported widely during the NAMC (*vide* JCT). JBM's comment that the species was scarce at Maders Cove, Lun. Co., was borne out nearly everywhere in other records. Four were at Wolfville, Kings Co., Apr. 12 (DIT); only two during 14 hours birding in S Lun. Co. May 8 (ELM, AHM); and two at Ben Eoin, CB Co. May 30 (DBM *et al.*). Always scarce, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were reported from CB, Hfx., Hants, Kings (where there were 22), and Queens Co.'s. during the

NAMC. At other times there were one or two in Irish Cove, Rich. Co., Mar. 27 (Pixie Williams) and a probable migrant in S end Halifax Apr. 7-9 (ELM). BLF noted a singing BROWN CREEPER in Kentville Ravine, Mar. 14, commenting that "many spruce woodlots in Kings Co. with dead trees killed by bark beetles have Brown Creepers this year." However, this surreptitious species was sparsely reported despite its likely abundance.

WINTER WREN records span early April to early May. During the NAMC, AZV found 10 along the Mersey Road, Hfx Co., and DHY established his "best one day count", eight, in N. Lun. Co. Residents such as at South Side Hbr. Apr. 19 and Frasers Marsh, Ant. Co., May 2 (RFL, MZG) and Kentville, Apr. 20-May 2 (RBS) appear to have been nearly everywhere in usual to slightly above usual numbers. A very early and well-documented MARSH WREN was found by AJE at APBS Apr. 10, long before the spring arrival, which had taken place by May 30 according to JBO, who found three there on that date. GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS were reported mainly from CBI in March-April, when singing males were in evidence (JAC, DBM *et al.*), although no doubt they were abundant elsewhere. There seems to have been a migratory arrival of RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS between about Apr. 17 and May 5, peaking about Apr. 30 when singing birds became noticeable throughout the province (var. obs.). By the time of the NAMC, they could hardly be missed anywhere.

Typically, a pair of E. BLUEBIRDS appeared on Brier I. Apr. 2 (CAH), but apparently did not stay, despite nesting records in previous years. Another was at Lochaber, Ant. Co., Apr. 4 (Harriet McMillan) but it did not return after a storm. Localized, but far from uncommon in the right habitat, VEERIES were reported in low numbers: a pair May 8, Maitland, Lun. Co. (JBM); one on Butler Rd., Kings Co. May 16 and several nearby May 20 (RBS, AAM); one, Seal

I., and one, Sable I., May 24 (SJF, ZOL); and one to three May 30, South Bar and Frenchvale, CB Co., (where it is "not a common bird" according to DBM, RWK, GEL). A GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH was reported without comment (was Bicknell's considered?) May 13 at Mt. Uniacke Estates, Hants Co. (B. Bursey). Only one BICKNELL'S THRUSH was reported, from Halifax during the NAMC May 8 (*vide* JCT). Apparently late arriving this year (ELM and AHM found none in suitable habitat during 14 hours of birding during the NAMC), SWAINSON'S THRUSHES were reported "common" in Kings Co. by May 20 (RBS). One arrived on Sable I. May 20 (ZOL), and several were on territory around Loch Lomond, CB Co., by May 30 (DBM, RWK, GEL). The first apparent migrant



HERMIT THRUSH was found by BLF at Starrs Pt., Kings Co., Apr. 9. GWT and JCT reported a Hermit Thrush "singing its golden song throughout the woods" of the Wolfville Ridge, Kings Co., May 3. ELM heard the first in song around Rose Bay, Lun. Co., May 7, stating that they were late arriving, although RSD had heard song farther SW at Pubnico Pt.,

Yar. Co., about Apr. 28. Significant arrivals appear to have been from Apr. 24-30 throughout the province (var. obs.). Detecting the arrival of migrant AM. ROBINS after their superabundance throughout the winter in many areas posed some problems. Many records indicate spring arrivals between mid-March and the end of the first week of April in mainland NS, later in CBI according to Judy MacArthur (*vide* JAC), who noted "80-100s++", a wave of them covering a large field" in Westmount, CB Co., Apr. 19. Two weeks later hardly a hectare of the province lacked singing robins on territory, drowning out the more genteel *Catharus* thrushes.



Mimic Thrushes Through Waxwings

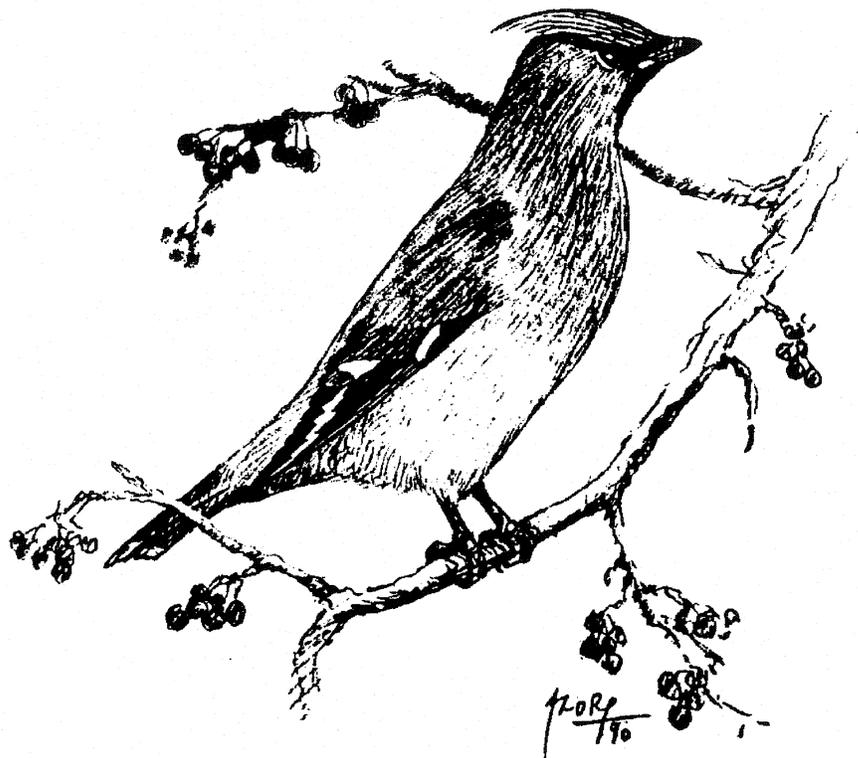
BY ANDY HORN

If GRAY CATBIRDS at Lower W Pubnico, Yar. Co., Mar. 1 and Leitches Creek, CB Co., Apr. 12 (JAC) were overwintering birds, one seen May 2 on Brier I. (AAM, BLF) was the earliest migrant recorded, well before the flood of reports in late May. NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS overwintered and then nested successfully at Grand Pré, Kings Co. (JWW, BBT, PAM), contributing to the 11 seen in Kings Co. during the NAMC, i.e., the lion's share of the 15 seen province-wide then. The remaining May sightings were scattered through five other counties (Bob MacDonald, JAC, NAMC). Not surprisingly, only two reports of BROWN THRASHER were received, one from Halifax, Mar. 14 (anon.) and another from CSI, Mar. 21.

AMERICAN PIPITS wintered, as usual, at Pubnico Pt. (RSD) and the Kings Co. dykelands (JET, JWW); nine seen on Brier I., Apr. 30 (IAM, ELM) may have been migrants. BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS appeared in Kings, Hfx., and CB Co.'s. in March, with flock sizes moderate for this species, i.e. 15-80 individuals. In many cases they were outnumbered by the CEDAR WAXWINGS

that accompanied them, with 220 to the Bohemians' 80 in Canning, Kings Co., Apr. 5 (MAG) and 300 to the Bohemians'

25 plus in Wolfville, Mar. 15 (JWW).

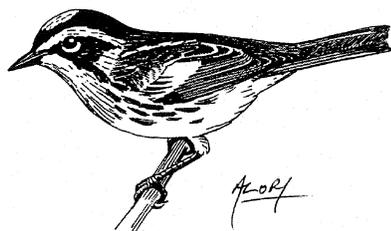


Warblers

BY ANDY HORN

In contrast to last year, warblers were well reported this year. Since reports were synchronous within species, it was easy to see the differences in arrivals among species. Nonetheless, no rarities were reported, perhaps as Nature's compensation for the unusual sightings of last fall.

With the exception of four records from Hants and CB Co. during the NAMC, TENNESSEE WARBLERS reports started in the last week of May, as expected, well after NASHVILLE WARBLERS appeared throughout the province, around May 11. NORTHERN PARULAS first appear in the NAMC totals, with 18 in the province, nearly half the number reported last year (NAMC). The earliest report of YELLOW WARBLER was May 2, at Blanche, Shel. Co. (CST), and one was waylaid on a fishing boat near CSI, May 9 (*fide* MUN). CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER and MAGNOLIA WARBLER reports all came within a few days of May 15, barring the two of each species seen during the NAMC. Unusually, CAPE MAY



WARBLERS were well reported, despite their weak, high song. Except for one report in Digby Co. (NAMC), all records fell in the last five days of May. Surprisingly, no BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLERS were reported, hopefully not because they are absent but because their local nesting spots haven't been thoroughly searched yet.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS were in large numbers throughout the province by the first week in May, yielding a total of 1846 for the NAMC. A BLACK-THROATED GREEN

WARBLER in Habitant, Kings Co., Mar. 16 (JJN) may have overwintered, since it was seen well before the next earliest date -- May 4 in Tantallon (AZV) -- and before the flood of reports began around May 10. It was heartening to receive many reports of BLACK-BURNIAN WARBLERS, an easily overlooked habitat specialist that yielded few reports in the previous two years; this year all were within a few

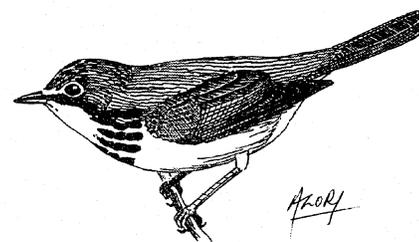


days of May 15. PINE WARBLERS overwintered in Louisbourg (SEM), Hantsport, (anon.), and Shel. Co. (NSBS trip), although an Apr. 23 report from Kejimikujik Park is late enough that it might represent a prospective breeder (Patrick Kelly).

A trickle of PALM WARBLERS at various locations in mid-April became a flood by the first of May. Their arrival in CB Co. Apr. 15 was "very early for the first of the year" (DBM). Receipt of only one BAY-BREASTED WARBLER report, from Louisbourg May 30 (DBM, RWK, GEL), presumably reflects this species' faint song and arrival near deadline, rather than its rarity, though the June reports will clinch whether this is indeed a "bust" year for this boom-and-bust species. Five reports of BLACKPOLL WARBLERS from as many counties (NAMC) were the vanguard of the numerous mid-May reports from throughout the province. BLACK AND WHITE WARBLERS produced 33 reports across the province on the NAMC, although this figure was well below the 87 seen last year. AM. RED-STARTS were first sighted May 8 in Kings Co. (two records) and Shel. Co. (one record, NAMC); otherwise most

sightings were between May 11 and May 16.

A single PROTHONOTARY WARBLER from the BPI banding station, May 5 provided our only real rarity this season. During the NAMC, OVENBIRDS appeared in nearly twice the numbers they have shown in the previous two years: 28 individuals in 1999 versus 15 in the other years. First records, as usual, were single reports in late April: in HRM, Apr. 25 (Fred Gregg) and Publicover L., Lun. Co., Apr. 30 (Nellie Snyder). NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES appeared right on schedule during the first week of May, first at Palmeteer Woods, Kings Co., May 2 (JCT), then across the province May 8. The provincial total of 18 was well below last year's 48, but up from the 10 seen in 1997. MOURNING WARBLER reports began, as usual, at the end of May, in this case from Blomidon, Kings Co., May 26 (GWT) and Greenfield, Col. Co., May 30 (JBO). Sightings of COM. YELLOWTHROAT began with two reports from May 8: one



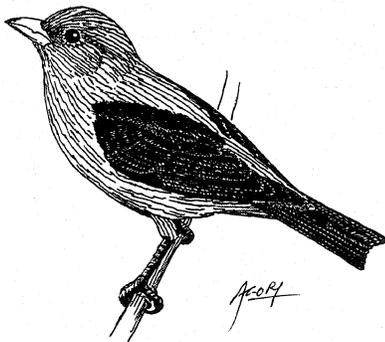
in Port Mouton, Queens Co. (RES) and another in Cumb. Co. (NAMC). The paucity of early sightings compared to last year (one on this year's NAMC, 13 on last year's) may indicate a later arrival in the province. Both of our *Wilsonia* warblers apparently arrived in mid-May; the first WILSON'S WARBLER record was from Amherst Pt., Cumb. Co., May 15 (TEP), and the first CANADA WARBLER was from Butler Rd., Kings Co., May 16 (AAM, RBS).



Tanagers Through House Sparrow

BY DAVE MCCORQUODALE

Many more sparrows and blackbirds attempt to overwinter than actually succeed. The mild winter allowed some of the hardy sparrows and blackbirds to survive until spring, most of them at feeders. Looking at the list of sparrows from early March, you would think it was late spring, summer or fall, not the tail end of winter. This year White-throated, Swamp, Vesper, Song, Fox, Chipping, Nelson's Sharp-tailed, and Savannah all successfully overwintered. During the warm sunny spells in March many started singing. Many were brought back to reality, and to the feeders, by the storms in March and early April. It was then difficult to distinguish the true spring migrants from the increasingly active and vocal birds that spent the winter locally.



In the last two springs there have been fewer SUMMER TANAGERS than the two springs before that. This year there were three, all at The Hawk, CSI 15-16 May (var. obs.). An exceptionally early, but undetailed, SCARLET TANAGER Mar. 31 was found in Clarence, Anna Co. (Donna Morrison). Even the next pair, Apr. 18 was early. Six sightings in five different counties in May included at least three males singing in suitable breeding habitat.

An E. TOWHEE lingered for more than a week in late May in Halifax (PLC). The only other sighting was one on the NAMC in Yar. Co. AM. TREE SPARROWS are usually common and conspicuous migrants in early spring. This year there were relatively few reports,

all of small flocks (max of eight), in April. During the NAMC small flocks were found in six different counties.

With the mild winter several sparrows managed to survive, especially at feeders. For the second year in a row a CHIPPING SPARROW overwintered in Cape Breton, this time at the Williams' feeder in Homeville; in fact, it stayed right into May. At least three others overwintered, in Lower W Pubnico, Sable I. and Broad Cove, Lun Co. (RSD, SJF). It is often difficult to discern the first migrants from those that overwintered locally. The first migrant was probably one at a feeder Apr. 8 in Tremont, Kings Co. (SLH). By the end of April only a handful more had been found. However, the first two days of May brought sightings from one end of the province to the other. For the second year in a row the only FIELD SPARROW was on Brier I., May 17-18 (var. obs.). Two VESPER SPARROWS spent the latter part of the winter and early spring in the southern part of the province, Italy Cross, Lun. Co. and Oak Park, CSI. The latter stayed into early April. May 1 there was one in Wolfville and there were two near Middleton, May 19 (BBT, JCT).

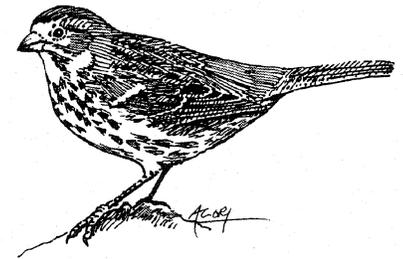
SAVANNAH SPARROWS seen in early March are undoubtedly birds that overwintered locally, this spring mainly in Kings Co. A major wave of migrants reached Nova Scotia Apr. 24 and by the end of the month they were common and widespread. The first Ipswich Sparrow arrived Mar. 27 and through April there were sightings along the coast from Brier I. to Halifax. Savannahs of another race, *labradorius* migrate through. They are very similar to our nesting birds, but sometimes they can be distinguished by their larger size and more pronounced dark markings. In early May DHY noticed such a bird in Little Hbr., Shel. Co.

NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS are very late migrants, most arriving the first week of June. However, the occasional bird shows up in April,

probably having overwintered locally, as the one found Apr. 16 at Conrads Beach did (FLL). The first migrants were four at Cherry Hill Beach May 30 (ELM).

A few FOX SPARROWS also overwintered, a couple in Kings Co and singles in Lun. and Hfx. Co.'s. Many fewer migrants were noticed this spring. Migrants were both later appearing, not until Apr. 4, and in smaller groups, most only 1-5, than in past years. The lack of snow and warm weather probably kept them moving north, rather than lingering with us. By early May males were singing on territory near Louisbourg and in northern Cape Breton (SEM).

It was very difficult to notice the early migrant SONG SPARROWS among the

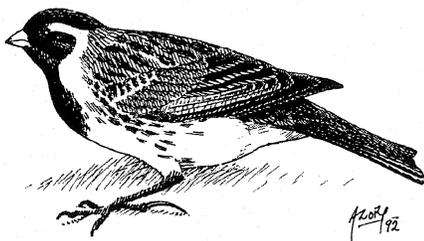


ones that overwintered in many places, from Wolfville to Louisbourg to South Sonora, Guys Co. In the warmer breaks between the snows of early March the strains of singing sparrows were heard. There was a major influx Mar. 20 near Stellarton (KJM) and within a few days most reports were of many rather than just one or two. A very early LINCOLN'S SPARROW was at Waddens Cove, CB Co. Apr. 18, almost a month before the next one, May 13 in Kentville (SEM, Nancy Duffy). By the third week of May they were widespread across the province.

SWAMP SPARROWS overwintered in Cole Hbr. and at Three-fathom Hbr., Hfx Co. (FLL). An early arrival, or another that overwintered, was at Bissett L. 3 Apr. Good numbers moved into the province during the second week of

April. By late April and through May they were seen and heard in most wetlands. **WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS** overwintered in a few places, including one in Louisbourg (SEM). This male started to sing 2 Apr. and a week later it was hard to tell from the recently arrived migrants. The snow on 5 Apr. brought many of the early migrants to feeders. There were a couple of early **WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS**, one Apr. 28 on CSI and another in Rich. Co. on the NAMC. Most sightings were concentrated in the week starting May 12. The latest was one on Brier I. May 24 (SJF). An intriguing and very early sighting comes from Sable I. Mar. 24 meaning it had wintered on the island (ZOL). At first it was in immature plumage and then through April the crown and head pattern developed and it became clear it was a Gambell's White-crown which breeds from Hudsons Bay west to Alaska.

DARK-EYED JUNCOS were common and widespread from early March until the end of May. Two early nests were found on Apr. 29, one in Coldbrook and the other in Fall River (AAM, MEA, PWQ). The one in Fall River was in an interesting location, a Christmas wreath on a porch. It proved to be a useful location for a nest as the first young fledged May 22 and the other two May 24. I have found another reason not to take the Christmas decorations down.

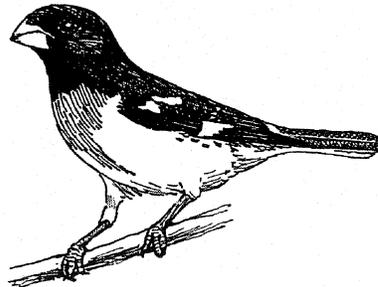


Numbers of **LAPLAND LONGSPURS** do fluctuate from year to year, but it was still surprising that no reports were received. The snowstorm Apr. 4-6 brought **SNOW BUNTINGS** to at least four different feeders in CB Co., including 70 in Cape North and 35 at Don Dunbar's feeder on Boularderie I. In all his years of feeding this was a first. A flock of eight was at a more typical location, Cherry Hill Beach Mar. 14

(JAH, Jill Comolli) and the latest was one on Sable I. Apr. 20 (ZOL).

N. CARDINALS seem to be holding their own in the Halifax area, Wolfville, Yar. Co. and Anna. Co. Away from these places stragglers were in Brooklyn, CSI and Truro. A nest in Wolfville provided lots of drama. It was found with three nestlings in it May 2 beside the Community Health Centre (SHM). A couple of days later a branch beside the nest was broken and the nest was empty. It is presumed a predator, probably a raccoon, found dinner. A few days later a male was singing nearby (PES), prompting some hope of renesting.

In the last half of May many people on



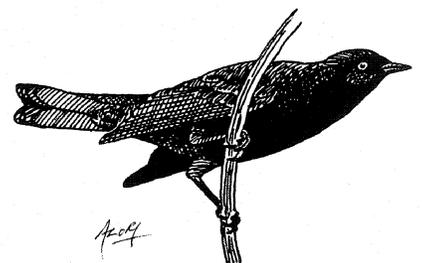
the mainland got to see brilliant **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS**. Before that there was an early male Apr. 21 at Little Hbr., Shel. Co. (DHY) and another Apr. 29 until May 6 on Sable I. (ZOL). Only one was on the NAMC, that in Vic. Co. and it was the only report from CB. However within a few days there were reports from across the mainland. The rarity of the winter, the **BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK**, stayed at the Buckland-Nicks' feeder just outside of Antigonish until Apr. 12, a stay of just more than two months. Many were able to study it closely, and few were frustrated.

The last half of May brought a few **BLUE GROSBEAKS**, all males. The first was at Little Hbr., Shel. Co. May 15. The most surprising was a male at a feeder in Pt. Edward, CB Co. for three days, May 22-24 (Bea, Sid and Heather Grant, DBM). A fairly cooperative young male spent a few days at Fairview Cemetery, Halifax (Rosemary Gallinger) and the latest was on CSI May 28 (MUN). The earliest of the

spring was a male Apr. 17 on Sable I. (ZOL). As expected there were more **INDIGO BUNTINGS**, than Blue Grosbeaks. The earliest was Apr. 24 on Brier I. (CAH, David Pugh). Starting May 8 there were sightings through the rest of May spanning the province from Yar. and Digby Co.'s. to Cum. and CB Co.'s, in all more than 15 individuals.

DICKCISSELS are much more frequent in the fall than the spring. Early spring birds may have overwintered in the province. This spring there was one Mar. 1 in Lower W Pubnico and a pair in Petite Riviere, Lun. Co. Mar. 14 (RSD, JAH). The first **BOBOLINKS** of the spring were found on the NAMC near Port Williams (Lana Churchill). New arrivals were noticed in the next few days and by the middle of the month they were widespread. They depend on fields for nesting. In CB Co. one observer noticed more this year than in the past few (JAC). Because of the early spring, haying started early, which could be hard on field-nesting birds such as Bobolinks (JWW).

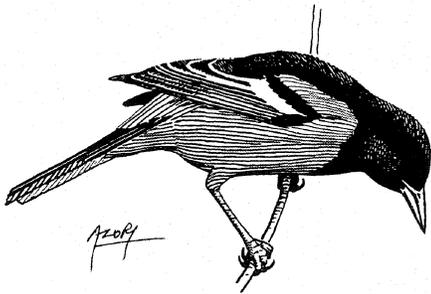
The scattered overwintering **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS** were joined by early migrants, probably very early in March. Starting Mar. 21 there was a definite, but small influx of migrants. By the end of the month they were widespread in nesting habitat on the mainland. One early **RUSTY BLACK-**



BIRD was at a feeder in Berwick Mar. 10 (AAM, Bob and Connie MacMahon). Many migrants were noticed the last few days of March and through April and May residents were found in nesting habitat near Louisbourg, Lower Thirty L., Anna. Co., in Kings Co. and Pict. Co. A single female **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** spent May 20 on Sable I. (ZOL). The bird was carefully described and most characters of this west-

ern species were noted. For COMMON GRACKLES, the vanguard of spring migrants arrived before the beginning of March. Another major influx started Mar. 20 and after that they were everywhere, with more than 4,000 counted on the NAMC. BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS were widespread on the NAMC, in 12 of the 18 counties. They were not common anywhere, with the 38 in Kings being the maximum in any county.

Both BALTIMORE and ORCHARD ORIOLES were found on the NAMC, a Baltimore near Sand L., CB Co. (JUM) and an Orchard on CSI where it spent from at least May 5 - 15 and was joined by another May 15. Other Orchards were on Brier I. with a fem. from May 11 - 15 and again joined by a second May 15 (CAH, Nancy Duffy). There were also two on Sable I., both imm. males, one May 2 and another May 25 (ZOL). As expected there were more Baltimores. There was an early bird

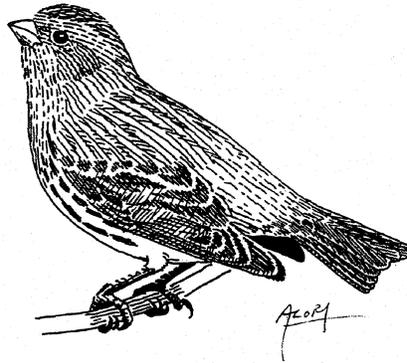


Apr. 29 CSI (MUN), the one on the NAMC and then starting May 14 there were many sightings across the mainland, especially south of a line between Halifax and Wolfville.

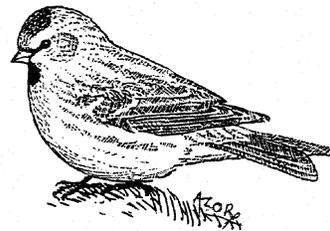
There were more than three times as many PINE GROSBEAKS on the NAMC this year (84) as last year, including 51 in Hants Co. Nine other reports included a young male singing Mar. 6 near Greenfield, Kings Co., two May 15 at Whitehill, Pict. Co. and several small flocks on North Mountain, CBHNP (var. obs.). As expected there were many more PURPLE FINCHES on the NAMC, in fact about ten times as many. They frequented feeders in most areas from the beginning of March well into May. HOUSE FINCHES were counted in both Yar. And Hfx. Co.'s. on the NAMC. They are thriving around the Tupper Building and Studley Cam-

pus at Dalhousie University and along Tower Rd. beside Saint Mary's University.

The number of crossbills has declined over the past year. The number of RED CROSSBILLS has not changed much at all, the decline is largely because of many fewer WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS. They are still widespread, but not nearly as abundant as



they were through last summer and fall. Still there were more than 400 on the NAMC, almost four times the number of Reds. Red Crossbills were at bird feeders in several locations including a family group at Whites Lake, Hfx. Co., a pair in Port Joli and a female in Wolfville (AND, SHM). Normally crossbills feed in trees. There were two interesting observations of ground feeding by Red Crossbills. The first is easily understandable. On Heckmans I., Lun. Co. they were feeding on pine seeds,



extracting them from fallen cones (ELM, AHM). The second is much stranger, a pair at Port Mouton were finding insects in eelgrass washed up on shore (RES).

This was not a redpoll winter nor spring. The only two reports of COMMON REDPOLLS were from CB, one Mar. 21 and the other Apr. 7. Normally

HOARY REDPOLLS are found when there are lots of Commons, as they were in the winter of 97-98. However, along with the 15 Commons Mar. 21 at Schooner Pond, CB Co., there were two Hoaries (ALM, CAM, RWK).

Both PINE SISKINS and AM. GOLDFINCHES were common and widespread, especially at feeders from March through May. More than 1000 siskins and 4000 goldfinches were found on the NAMC, with goldfinches being found in all counties and siskins in all except Yar. By early April male goldfinches were changing to their bright yellow summer plumage and by the beginning of May most were changed. Almost 1000 EVENING GROSBEAKS were found May 8 on the NAMC, with only two counties failing to find some. A drive through Hants Co. in mid-March revealed grosbeaks at many feeders and the 288 on the NAMC shows that many stayed.



HOUSE SPARROWS were found in all counties with more than 1300 in total on the NAMC. Otherwise birders tried hard to ignore them, with only three reports filed, two of them from Stellarton, the other reporting fledglings during the last week of May in CB Co. (KJM, RFL, JAC).



List of Contributors

Thanks to all of our contributors, including:

Allison, Tim	TIA	Haycock, Carl	CAH	Metcalf, Hugh "Junior"	JUM
Allsebrook, Marion	MEA	Hiltz, Sam & Sandy		Mills, Anne	AHM
Atwood, Skipper (Wilfred)	WIA	Hirtle, James	JAH	Mills, Eric L.	ELM
Brennan, Harry	HAB	Hoeger, Ulli	ULH	Mills, John	
Brennan, Mark	MAB	Holder, Matthew	MLH	Morrison, Donna	
Bridgland, James	JBR	Horn, Andy	AGH	Morse, Jean & Bill	JBW
Brylinsky, Mike		Hurlford, Sheila	SLH	Murphy, Thelda	ETM
Bryson, Phil		Jackson, Bernard		Murrant, Allan	ALM
Buckland-Nicks, John and Leslie		Jackson, Doug		Murrant, Cathy	CAM
Burse, B.		Jones, Jennifer		Murray, Garry	
Chalmers, Patricia L.	PLC	Kelly, Patrick		Myers, Susann	SEM
Churchill, Lana		Kingsley, Andrea	ALK	Newell, Murray	MUN
Comolli, Jill		Klemka, Joe	JOK	Nickerson, Johnnie	JON
Cretien, Jacqueline	JAC	Knapton, Richard	RWK	Nickerson, Sandra	SAN
Crosby, John		Lauff, Randy F.	RFL	Nocera, Joe	JJN
Currie, David	DAC	Lavender, Fulton L.	FLL	Ogden, Jeff	JBO
Czapaly, Joan	JCZ	Lawley, David		Pacquet, Terry	TEP
Dean, Andy	AND	LeBlanc, Peter	PEL	Pugh, David	DAP
d'Entremont, Raymond	RSD	Lewis, Gilbert	GIL	Quinn, Paul	PWQ
d'Eon, Jerome K.	JKD	Lucas, Zoe	ZOL	Reynolds, Tim	
Doane, Marg		Lunn, Gerry	GEL	Richard, Peter	
Dobson, Fred and Evelyn	FED	MacArthur, Judy		Smith, Peter C.	PES
Dobson, Harold		MacDonald, Peter		Smith, Ruth E.	RES
Doull, Elizabeth	DOU	MacDonald, Robert		Snyder, Nellie	
Duffy, Nancy		MacLean, Angus	AAM	Steele, Bob	
Dunbar, Don		MacMahon, Bob and Connie		Stern, Richard	RBS
Eddy, Alan	ALE	MacNeil, Jack	JAM	Stevens, Clarence, Jr.	CLS
Ensor, Donna	DOE	Marchand, Chris	CHM	Stoddard, Clyde	CST
Erskine, Anthony J.	AJE	Martin, Pat	PAM	Tams, Miriam	MAT
Fitzgerald, Trina	TMF	McCorquodale, Dave	DBM	Taylor, Phil	PHT
Forsythe, Bernard	BLF	McCurdy, Sheila	SHM	Thexton, Brenda & Bill	BBT
Fullerton, Sylvia	SJF	McInnis, John W.	JWM	Thorpe, Dianne	DIT
Gallinger, Rosemary		McKenna, Ken, J	KJM	Timpa, Jean	JET
Gibson, Merritt	MAG	McLaren, Ian	IAM	Tufts, Gordon	GWT
Gillis, Elizabeth		McMillan, Harriet		Tufts, Judy	JCT
Goring, May	MZG	Meister, Earl		Urban, Eva	EVU
Grant, Bea, Sid and Heather		Metcalf, Geraldine	GEM	Vienneau, Azor	AZV
Graves, June	JUG			Vines, Steve	STV
Gregg, Fred C.				Waldron, Joan	JOW
Halifax Field Naturalists	HFN			Waldron, Rob	
Hall, Ross	ROH			Wenzell, Norman	
Hartley, Jean	JEH			Williams, Pixie	
				Wolford, Jim	JWW
				Yetman, Scott	SCY
				Young, David	DHY



Abbreviations

ABBREVIATIONS IN PLACE NAMES

APBS	Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary
CB	Cape Breton
CBHNP	CB Highland National Park
CSI	Cape Sable I.
Hbr.	Harbour
Hd.	Head
HRM	Halifax Regiona 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.	Peninsula
Pt.	Point, not Port
R.	River

ABBREVIATIONS IN BIRD NAMES

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

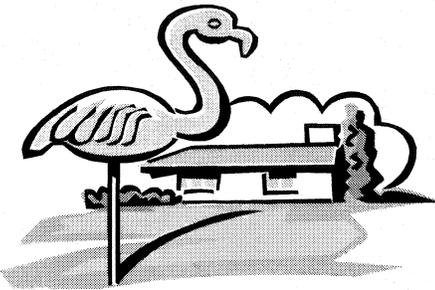
OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

ad.	adult
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey
ca.	circa (about, approximately)
CBC	Christmas Bird Count
fem.	female
imm.	immature
juv.	juvenile
male	(no abbreviation)
MNRS	Maritimes Nest Records Scheme
var. obs.	various observers

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

NSBS Rare Bird Alert



Members who are part of the Rare Bird Alert are notified of rare bird sightings in the province by telephone as soon as possible.

Any member of the Society may be on the Rare Bird Alert. Participants must be willing to assume responsibility for passing the message **IMMEDIATELY** to those members who are next to them on the list. This may mean leaving messages or calling back (sometimes several times) when contacts are difficult to make. When it is necessary to leave a message you must call that person's contact(s).

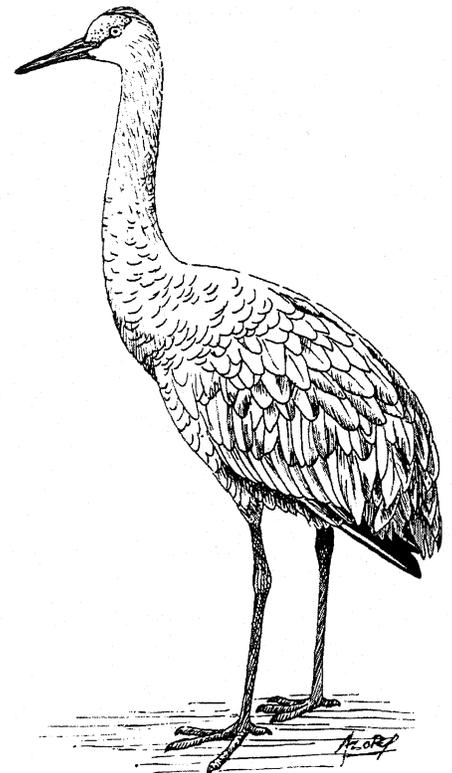
All participants must be willing to accept collect calls when rare birds are reported from outside their local calling areas.

If you wish to be on the Rare Bird Alert, please send your name, your work and/or home numbers and a stamped self-addressed envelope to:

RARE BIRD ALERT
Nova Scotia Bird Society
c/o NS Museum of Natural History
1747 Summer Street,
Halifax, NS
B3H 3A6

Deadline: Your application must be received at the Museum by October 31, 1999.

Note: All rare bird sightings should be reported to Fulton Lavender, Coordinator, at 455-4966.



Meeting Times and Cancellation Policy



The Museum of Natural History has asked that we start our monthly meetings at 7:30 p.m. so that we can finish earlier. Members attending several monthly meetings were consulted – a show of hands clearly supported this new time. The Executive has decided that **meetings will begin at 7:30 p.m., starting with the January 2000 Members' Slide Night.**

The President will make the final decision, in conjunction with the speaker(s), and inform the Museum, who in turn will inform callers. The cancellation will also be announced via the Bird Line and on Nature NS.

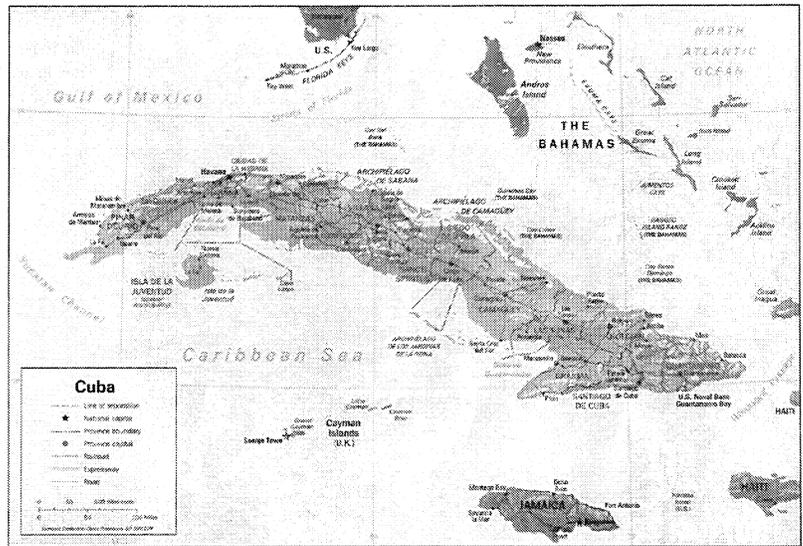
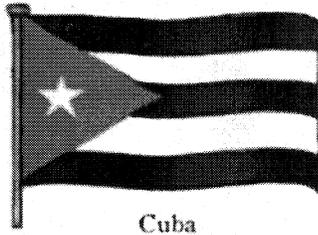


In response to a number of inquiries about the cancellation policy for monthly meetings, the Executive wishes to provide the following guidelines.

As a general guideline, if evening Continuing Education sessions are cancelled at HRM schools due to inclement weather, the NSBS meeting is cancelled.



NSBS Field Trip to Cuba



The Nova Scotia Bird Society, through the auspices of Nature Travel Holidays, has agreed to sponsor a tour for society members. The chosen destination for this trip is Cuba. Plans are currently underway for a relaxed two-week birding in eastern Cuba, likely during February 2000. The itinerary is still being worked on (the Cuban bureaucracy is slow), but should involve five or six days based in a four-star resort hotel in Guardalavaca, as well as an eight-day trip through the mountains of eastern Cuba. A non-birder may also enjoy the trip relaxing in the resort.

The final price has also not been determined, but efforts are being made to keep the price below \$3000 per person,

all inclusive from Halifax (and including the direct flight from Halifax to Cuba). Note that because this is an international trip, there is no HST to pay.

As another incentive, The Nova Scotia Bird Society will receive \$200 from Nature Travel Holidays for each Bird Soci-

ety member who goes on the trip.

If you are interested in being kept apprised of the trip's planning, please contact Blake Maybank, (902) 852-2077, or e-mail maybank@ns.sympatico.ca.

Photos

Gus Mertens



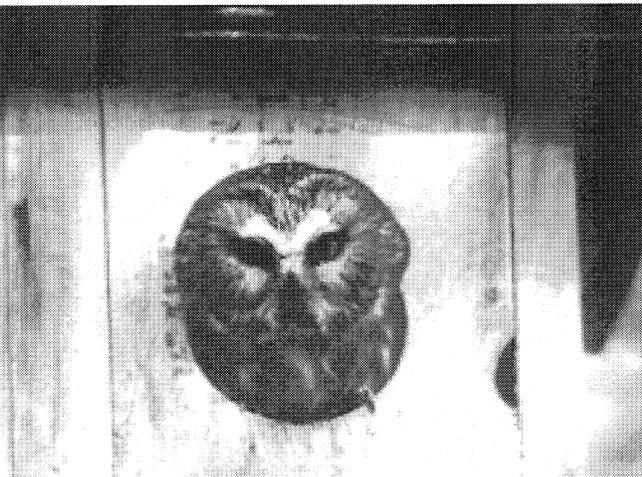
BLACK GUILLEMOTS, like this one in Lunenburg Hbr. March 11, are confusingly patchy in late winter, and not always well illustrated in field guides.

PILEATED WOODPECKERS seem to have become more common in recent years. They now occur routinely in urban areas, like this one in Harold Dobson's backyard in Liverpool last winter.

Harold Dobson

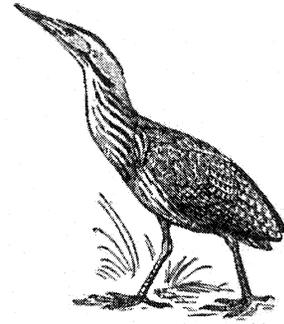


Allan Eaddy



For years, many SAW-WHET OWLS have reared their families in nest boxes maintained by Harry Brennan in the Hopewell, Pic. Co., area. This one peered out for its portrait March 23.

Richard Stern



Only one of these three herons can be rated as rare, but the other two were in their own ways unusual. The rarity, a LEAST BITTERN found at a roadside pond on Brier I. May 19 stayed put for many lucky observers in the next week or so. Every winter, a few GREAT BLUE HERONS try to winter in the province. This disconsolate first-winter bird was slouched by the Gaspereau R., Kings Co., last winter, Jan. 28. If you come across an AM. BITTERN out-of-place, like this one found last fall, Sep. 28, in the deep grass on Cape Sable, they often put on an astonishing display. It wouldn't be wise to get too close to that wicked beak.

Peter Herschorn



Carol Mark

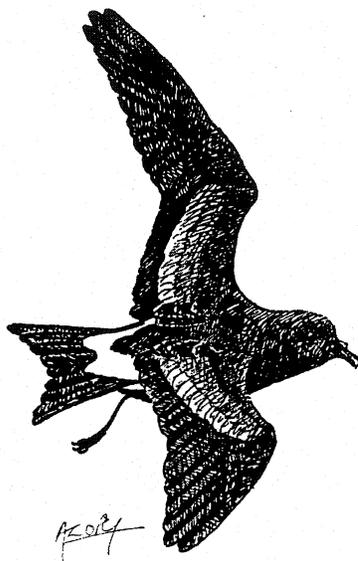


Slaughter at West Head

BY JANE ATKINSON

During a recent (21 October 1998) birdwatching expedition in southeast Nova Scotia, our group came across an unusual sight. We were on a rocky headland near Shelburne, with the sea on both sides of us. A mossy area, about 10 metres square, was covered with dark brown bird wings. There were no other bird parts such as legs, feet or bones – just wings. Our leader, Joan Czapalay, picked up a wing and smelt it, and identified it as a petrel wing, probably Leach's Storm Petrel. The smell was like smoky oil and was quite strong. I later learned that the skin odour will last for up to ten years. Who was the predator?

These petrels belong to the same family as albatrosses though the difference in size is considerable. Leach's Storm Petrels are the size of a swallow and fly with the same fast fluid speed, but unlike swallows, storm petrels hover over the waves feeding on surface detritus. During nesting season, they return to their burrow (only at night), and change places with the incubating parent or, if the egg has hatched they regurgitate the



food for their single chick. The narrow burrows are up to a metre long with a wider chamber at the end. Unlike many birds, if the single egg is removed, they do not lay another egg that year. They nest in the same burrow every year, only on islands in both the North Pa-

cific and Atlantic, and spend the other ten months of the year at sea. Their bodies are so oily that ancient sailors used to put a cotton wick down the throat of a dead bird and use them as lamps. Sailors call them "Mother Carey's Chickens".

Our leader had once seen a Great Horned Owl catching storm petrels, in the air and at night, as they flew over an area near their colony. The other birds known to prey on storm petrels on moonlit nights are Herring and Greater Black-backed Gulls – the "Pirates". West Head is not on an island, but there is a Leach's Storm Petrel colony on Bon Portage Island, not far offshore, so probably an owl or gull intercepted the petrels on their way back to this colony. There were about two to three hundred wings spread around the area, and there must have been some hungry young chicks on the nights the killers were working.



Nova Scotia's Birding Spots

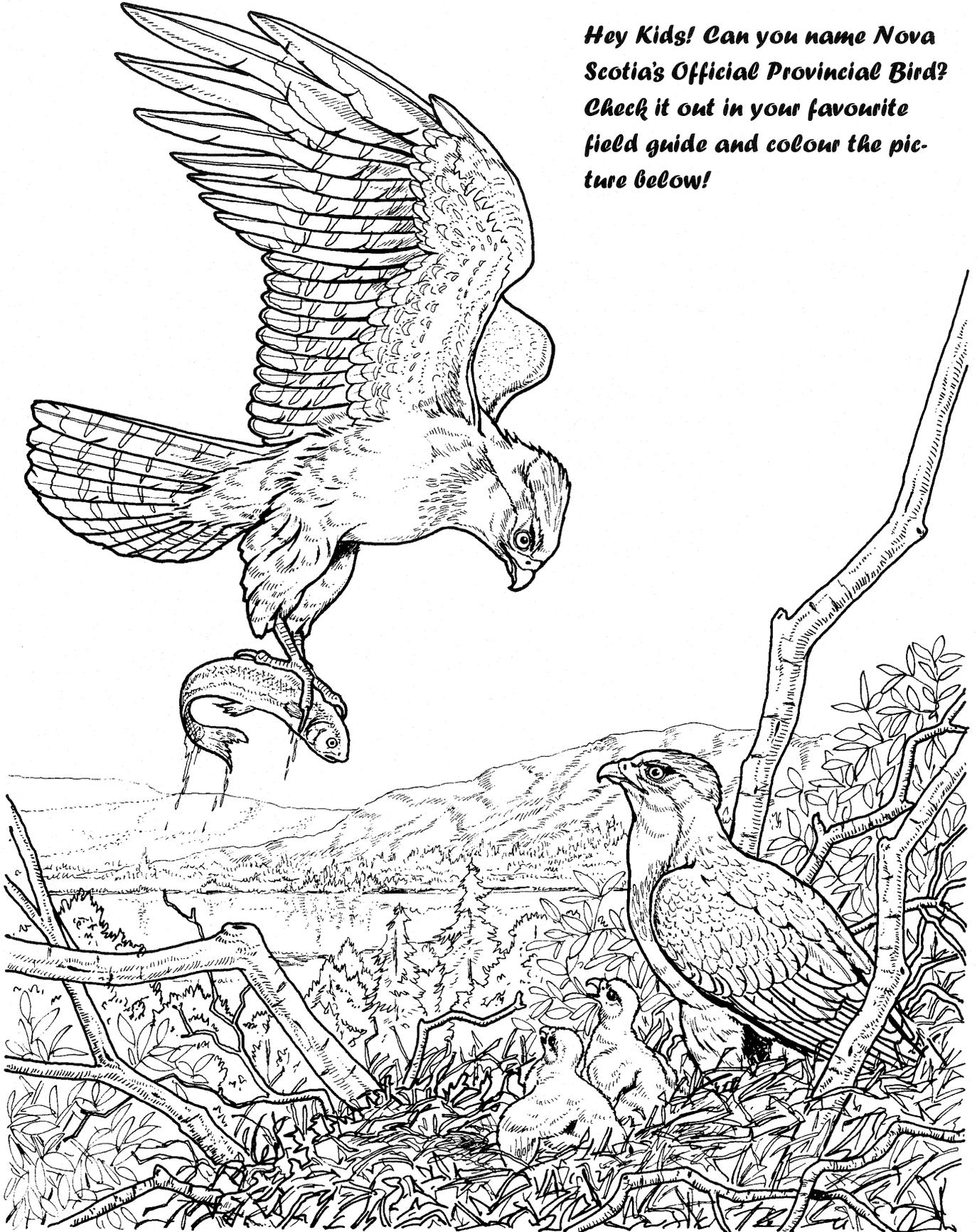
Starting in the next issue, we will start running a column which deals with the places we frequent to watch the birds. Each article will deal with one spot, or a series of spots, that could make up a birding trip. The article will of course feature the birding highlights, but will also have a description of the habitats and just as importantly, a map on how to get there, and if pertinent, how to get around once you're there. We foresee the articles being about two pages long and written by a variety of people. Clearly, no one author can be authoritative on every birding site, so we are opening this column to anyone whom would like to share a birding site with the rest of the NSBS community. Photos and maps would be beneficial, but are not necessarily the responsibility of the author.

Articles can be submitted to:

Randy Lauff
 Department of Biology
 St. Francis Xavier University
 P.O. Box 5000
 Antigonish, NS
 B2G 2W5

E-mail: rlauff@juliet.stfx.ca

Hey Kids! Can you name Nova Scotia's Official Provincial Bird? Check it out in your favourite field guide and colour the picture below!

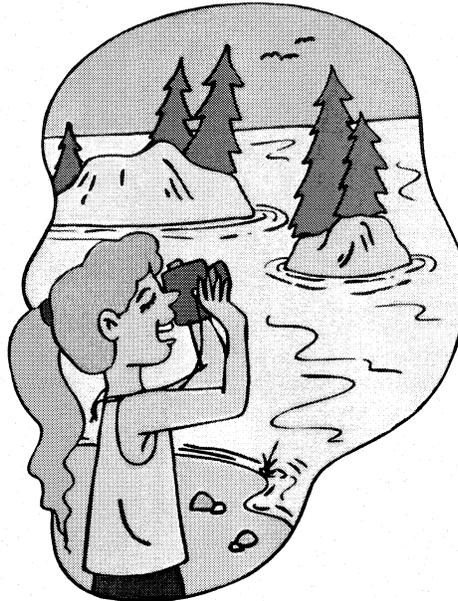


Cape d'Or – Cape Chignecto

BY JANE AND MAUREEN MILLS

About 18 people took part in two days of birding and plant identification as part of the joint field trip with the Halifax Field Naturalists and the NS Wild Flora Society on May 15th and 16th. They came from Port Williams, HRM, Advocate and places in between. The group made stops at scenic Cape d'Or, Eatonville Harbour, Spicers Cove, and the Apple River duck ponds.

The big sighting in Advocate was an Orchard Oriole. At the duck pond in Apple River a Turkey Vulture sailed slowly overhead, giving those present a close view but not as close as Charles had of his handful of hummingbird. Sightings of flycatchers, warblers, Cliff



Swallows, N. Gannets, shorebirds, Broad-winged Hawks, and other species made for two days of good birding.

Many of the woodland plants were blooming early this year and we were fortunate to see nodding trillium, red trillium, tooth wort, astregalus/robinsi along with other interesting and lovely flora.

Good weather, beautiful flowers, exciting birds, and a great group of people who truly appreciate the natural beauty of the Advocate area made for two days of fun and excitement. Thank you to all who took part.



Clapper Rail on Brier Island

During September 1998, a largish bird frequented the ground under David Pugh's feeders on Brier Island. His photos reveal it as a CLAPPER RAIL with plumage features suggesting, as expected, a U.S. E coast origin. Why a such saltmarsh species wandered to the middle of the island is a mystery. I believe this only the third to have been photographically confirmed in the province.



*Hope is the thing with feathers,
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words
and never stops at all.*

Emily Dickinson

Hopewell, Pictou County

BY KEN MCKENNA

About 15 birders were on hand at the Elgin church parking lot on a damp and cool morning. On my way to the meeting place, I passed through Eureka village and was startled to discover a male Scarlet Tanager and a male Cerulean Warbler in the same bush as a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. I tore off to the meeting place with the dilemma of mentioning this and disrupting the trip. Trip Leader Harry Brennan could tell from my grin that something was up and a delegation of about half the group went in pursuit. We spent about 15min. looking in vain and then rejoined the rest of the group who were at the big marsh in Lorne Station.

The usual marsh birds like Com. Snipe, Swamp Sparrow, and Am. Bittern were noted as well as Alder Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler and Com. Yellowthroat. On the way back to the main road, a curious thing happened when two vehicles ended up with keys looked inside at the same time. While the owners were working on solving this problem, the

rest of us were content to watch Chestnut-sided Warbler and listen to the first of many Least Flycatchers in the interval of the west branch of the East R.

Back on track, our next stop was a memorable visit to a N. Saw-whet Owl nesting box off the Mill Rd. where Harry took one of the unfledged owls out for all to see. One of the six owls had fledged previous to this and most of the group climbed a ladder to peer at the five remaining owlets. This was an extremely good year for Saw-whets in Pictou Co. this spring. A Blackburnian Warbler was quite co-operative in this area giving all a good view of that vivid orange-black colouration.

Before breaking for lunch, a trip to Grant Lake produced Com. Loon, Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireo, and a squeal from a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. After lunch along the river, where we saw Spotted Sandpiper, we worked our way out the Lorne-Trafalgar Rd. Highlights here were Bay-breasted Warbler seen by all, a pair of Canada Geese with five goslings

(we also saw eight other Canada Geese over the day), a very active roadside weasel, Red Crossbills with young, Osprey at Trafalgar and a Ring-necked Pheasant calling as we looked at bluets at the county border with Guysborough Co.

We made a loop back via the Perch L. and Maple L. Rds. The former had a pair of Com. Loon and the latter area provided excellent looks at Rusty Blackbirds and 2 male Black-throated Blue Warblers. We went Centredale via the road through a blueberry field that usually has Vesper sparrow, but we were not in luck finding this species. Our final stop in the Centredale area was to a Barred Owl box where we had a good look at a female on the nest. A great way to end a great day with the Brennan's who are always so willing to share the knowledge of the natural world. In all we tallied 80 species of which 18 warbler species were noted. Thanks very much Harry.



Wolfville

BY JIM WOLFORD

Ailing, I enlisted Judy Tufts to lead the joint NSBS/Blomidon Naturalists Society field trip for spring birds in the Wolfville Area on April 25th. I recovered enough to attend, co-lead, and enjoy it myself. Our partly sunny day with a cold north breeze saw 13 participants.

Chronologically, we caravanned to the Wolfville Wharf, NE Grand Pré/The Guzzle, Acadia's Univ. Hall, Greenwich, Canard Pond, Saxon St. Pond, Hennigars Marsh (w. of Sheffield Mills), Harris' Pond/Habitant River/Aboiteau at Canning, and Van Nostrands Pond (Starrs Point).

Waterfowl seen included single Red-throated & Com. Loons, Double-crested Cormorants, Great Blue Herons, both nesting and migrant Canada Geese (among 150 of latter was one with a white plastic neck-collar - Judy saw and

read several collars there at Canning this Spring), Green-Winged Teal, Mallards, Am. Black Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, and a Red-breasted Merganser.

At Greenwich the huge Bald Eagle nest had an adult sitting quite high, and there may have been tiny eaglets present. At Acadia's University Hall, the pair of Red-tailed Hawks nesting for the third year built this year in a planted fir tree just NW of the building. While viewing the nest, we got lucky, since the male? flew in with a small mammal (vole or big shrew). Both adults stood on the nest, showed their red tails, then the female? flew off with the mammal, leaving the male? to settle down and take a turn on the eggs? - incubation began about March 25. While there we also saw a calling Merlin and 10 Cedar Wax-wings.

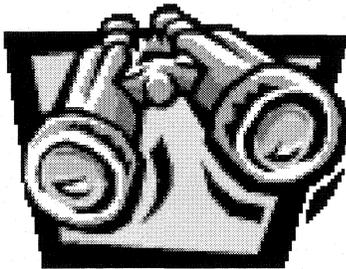
Elsewhere we saw Killdeer, Ring-



necked Pheasant, Tree Swallows, Com. Grackles & Red-winged Blackbirds in the cattails, single Yellow-rumped & Palm Warblers, a late Tree Sparrow, plus muskrats, and we heard the long snore-call of a leopard frog. Judy's birdlist had 38 species, while I had 34.



The Hawk, Cape Sable Island



BY JOAN CZAPALAY

The early birders who travelled to CSI on Friday, April 23 had lovely spring weather and great looks at several Ipswich Sparrows as well as the usual Savannah Sparrows on the Hawk beach. Saturday's weather would have been a disappointment for many trips with cold, damp air and bitter wind from the NW. The start time went out as 7 a.m. instead

of the usual 8 a.m. at this time of year, nevertheless birders came from Halifax, Pubnico, Lun. Co., and Queens Co. for the trip. Johnny and Sandra Nickerson, group leaders, took us first to Terry and Edna Crowell's to see their "resident" Brown Thrasher in Doctor's Cove. The feeders here are always well stocked, and there have been some interesting bird (and birder) visitors. While there, Fulton's sharp ears heard a Hermit Thrush, which for many of us was the first of the spring. We found the N. Mockingbird behind the Royal Bank in the village, but not the N. Cardinals. En route to see the shore birds at the Hawk, we had a good look at a Broad-winged Hawk and a Turkey Vulture. As the tide goes down, the area near the lobster pound is a wonderful place to see shore birds. Black-bellied Plover, Red Knots,

Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings, Dunlin were on the sand bar. Willets were in Barrington Bay, and Greater Yellowlegs at South Side. By late morning the tide was down enough to provide good feed for the day's main attraction: Am. Oystercatchers ! - A pair feeding together at Daniel Head. Let's hope they will be able to nest in our area undisturbed. Sidney and Betty June Smith met with our group in time to share the viewing. Brant were still present in the area in good numbers. By noon our group went off in different directions, since the weather showed no sign of improvement. Even on such a day as this CSI is a wonderful place to bird.



Field Trip Reports

Eastern Shore

BY IAN MCLAREN

Sixteen birders turned up on April 10th, a day after the return of somewhat wintry weather. We started at Martinique Beach, confirming what we had read – the beach had been breached by winter storms, with the high tide flooding through about half-way to the end. We saw little during our brisk, truncated stroll, but for the usual waterfowl, a Bald Eagle, N. Harrier, a distant Short-eared Owl (missed by most), and eight spanking (?) Ipswich Sparrows (six added elsewhere).

The rest of the morning was spent working our way back along the shore road. A lifer for some was the previously discovered ad. Little Blue Heron at Seaforth. Thereafter we saw nothing unseasonal among the the usual selection of spring land birds and waterfowl. Of interest was an apparent movement of Black-headed Gulls, with 35+ at Three-Fathom Hbr. and Conrad Beach. A remnant threesome added a couple of Killdeer at Hartlen Pt. and the overwintered Pied-Billed Grebe on Sullivans Pond to round off a trip-list of 48 species.



Halifax County Early Morning Warbler Walk

BY FRED DOBSON

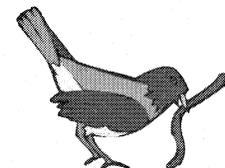
The spring warbler walk on May 19th was as good as they get in Halifax Co. The weather was warm, the sun shone brightly, the air was still, and the Black Flies were (for them) polite. About 18 of us set out down the old NSLP road at 6AM, quickly leaving the Prospect Road traffic noise behind, and soon discovered the quality of the day. All the birds were out, flying busily with nesting material if they were locals, or sitting high in the trees, singing their spring songs, if they were migrants. There were Tree Swallows but no Barn Swallows in the field near the start. But N. Parula and Yellow-rumped and Magnolia Warblers were in the trees with the Song Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows, looking as beautiful as they can in the brilliant sunlight. Everyone got to see almost all the spring warblers we encountered; they seemed intent on showing their gorgeous clothes and liquid voices to our marveling senses. The Black-throated Green Warblers appeared as we reached the woods, and Winter Wrens sang every hundred feet. A Ruffed Grouse drummed, and to our great delight, a magnificent Pileated Woodpecker flew directly over our

heads. More than one said they had seen the flight before, but the bird had been too far away to identify – never again.

The deeper woods yielded Boreal and Black-capped Chickadees, Purple Finches, and both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets. Then a Bay-breasted Warbler appeared, staying around just long enough for a small fraction of us to get a good look at him. The road to Big Indian L. held some lovely surprises: no less than two Blackburnian Warblers (they fooled the intrepid leader with their rather uncomplicated song), an extremely querulous Blue-headed Vireo, both Hermit and Swainson's Thrushes, and an Ovenbird. The lake was like a mirror - reflections were so perfect it was hard to tell up from down. Am. Goldfinches, Dark-eyed Juncos, Pine Siskins, Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-winged Crossbills frolicked at the edge, a Com. Flicker flew in, a N. Raven croaked in the misted distance. On the way back up from the lake we swished, and immediately were surrounded with birds – Yellow-rumped Warblers, kinglets, chickadees, thrushes (in the background, "chucking"), Pine Siskins.

The upper road through the bog was equally productive. We saw thrushes hopping on the road ahead of us, and saw and heard Magnolia Warblers everywhere – and Whitethroats about every 50 feet. Further up, where the road is cut by a pond, we saw a bullfrog, we heard peepers, saw lots of Palm Warblers, and heard a Com. Yellowthroat or two. Killdeers cried in the distance, and a Am. Black Duck flew over her pond out in the bog. We had some keen botanists along, and the find of the day was Bog Rosemary, its delicate pink bells showing nicely against the green of the sphagnum moss. The Rhodora was in full bloom, as were the Indian Pear, so our world was filled with lace and carpeted with elegant purple. The return journey yielded another Grouse (drumming), some Boreal Chickadees, the same groups of warblers, and, finally for tired feet, the comfort of our cars.

A wonderful time was had by all, with a total of 41 species.



Thu 28 Oct – 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.

Sat 6 Nov – The Pubnicos (President's Field Trip)

Leader: Gisèle d'Entremont 422-7739

Enjoy autumn birding. Meet 9 a.m. at the Red Cap Motel & Restaurant, Middle West Pubnico, Yarmouth County. If people expressed interest, we could have another trip for the following day. Rain date Sun, Nov 7.

Thu 25 Nov – The Breeding Cycles of Owls

Bernard Forsythe will be the speaker at the NSBS meeting to be held in the Auditorium, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, at 8 p.m.

Sat 27 Nov – Late Fall Roundup

Leader: Fulton Lavender 455-4966
Meet at the golf club parking lot a Hartlen Point at 8 a.m. for a day of late fall birding. Rain date Sun Nov 28.

Thu 27 Jan – Members' Slide Night

The annual members' slide night

will be held in the Auditorium, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, at 7:30 p.m. Members are invited to bring along 10 to 15 of their most interesting slides that relate to birds and birding. These may include portraits of common birds, rarities, as well as unusual and amusing sightings. See you there!

Thu 24 Feb – NSBS Meeting

The monthly NSBS meeting will be held in the Auditorium, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, at 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker will be Carl Haycock, speaking on whales and seabirds.

NSBS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Nova Scotia Birds Society Annual General Meeting will be held in the Auditorium, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, at 8 p.m., 28 October 1999. Wine and cheese will follow the meeting.

Report of the Nominating Committee

The following have agreed to serve on the Executive, if elected, at the AGM for 1999-2000:

President	Gisèle d'Entremont
Vice President	Andy Horn
Past President	Lisè Bell
Treasurer	Bernice Moores
Secretary	Peter Ackerman
Membership Secretary	Joan Czapalay
Director	Barbara Hinds
Director	Peter LeBlanc
Director	Joan Waldron

The following have agreed to serve for 1999-2000, if appointed at the AGM:

Honourary Solicitor	Tony Robinson
Honourary Auditor	James C. Morrow

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.

Inside this issue:

Special points of interest:

- NS Nature Trust Birdathon
- NAMC Spring 1999 Results
- Cuba Field Trip
- New Feature – Kids' Colouring Page

Trust Announces First Annual Birdathon	1
North American Migration Count – Spring 1999	1
Spring Seasonal Reports	5
List of Contributors	25
NSBS Rare Bird Alert	26
Meeting Times and Cancellation Policy	27
NSBS Field Trip to Cuba	27
Photos	28
Nova Scotia's Birding Spots	30
Kids' Colouring Page	31
Field Trip Reports	35
Membership Application/Renewal Form	36
Upcoming Events	Back Cover

Upcoming Events



Fri 03 Sep-Mon 06 Sep – Bon Portage Island

Leader: Joan Czapalay 422-6858 or 348-2803(July to mid-Aug)
PRE-REGISTRATION IS NECESSARY! Depart late afternoon or early evening Fri. from Prospect Point in Shag Harbour. Bring food, drinking water, change of clothing, sturdy and/or waterproof footwear, flashlight, old sheet for a mattress cover and sleeping bag. Carry gear in waterproof bags or containers. Field guides, cooking pans, dishes and utensils are available on the island. There is a charge of \$45.00 to NSBS members for accommodation, as well as a boat trip donation. In the event of bad weather the weekend will be spent birding Cape Sable Island and other Shelburne County hot spots.

Fri 17 Sep – Joint meeting of NSBS and the Blomidon Naturalists Society

Room 244, Beveridge Arts Centre, Acadia University, WOLFVILLE, N.S. at 7:30 p.m. The speaker will be Dr. Ian

Jones, Associate Chair of the Atlantic Canada Wildlife Ecology Research Network at Memorial University, Newfoundland. Dr. Jones will be speaking about his work on seabirds along the coast of Labrador and British Columbia.

Sat 18 Sep – Wolfville and area

Field Trip(s) follow the joint meeting of NSBS and Blomidon Naturalists Society. Details to be announced at a later date. Contact persons: Randy Milton 542-1761, Phil Taylor 542-0437, or Gisèle d'Entremont 422-7739.

Sat 25 Sep – Changing of the Yard, Cape Breton

Leader: Junior Metcalf 849-5054
 Meet 8 a.m. at the former heavy water plant in Glace Bay.

Sat 2 Oct – Birdathon '99 – Counting for Conservation

Nova Scotia Nature Trust – contact person: Bonnie Sutherland 425-5263. Rain date Sun 3 Oct. All birders and birders-

to-be are welcome to join in the fun. Enjoy a day of birding and a post-birding celebration with prizes and sharing of results. Help raise funds to preserve critical bird habitat too! Volunteers are also welcome to help with the school program throughout September and October.

Sat 9 Oct – Mon 11 Oct – Brier Island

Leader: Fulton Lavender 455-4966
 Meet at the parking lot of Brier Lodge on Saturday at 7 am. Enjoy a complete package of fall migration, highlighted by hawk flights. There will be a boat trip, weather permitting, on one of the days if at least 10 people register in advance.

Sun 10 Oct – Cape Sable Island

Leader: Murray Newell 745-3340
 Meet 8 a.m. at Tim Horton's, Barrington Passage. See late migrants and shorebirds.