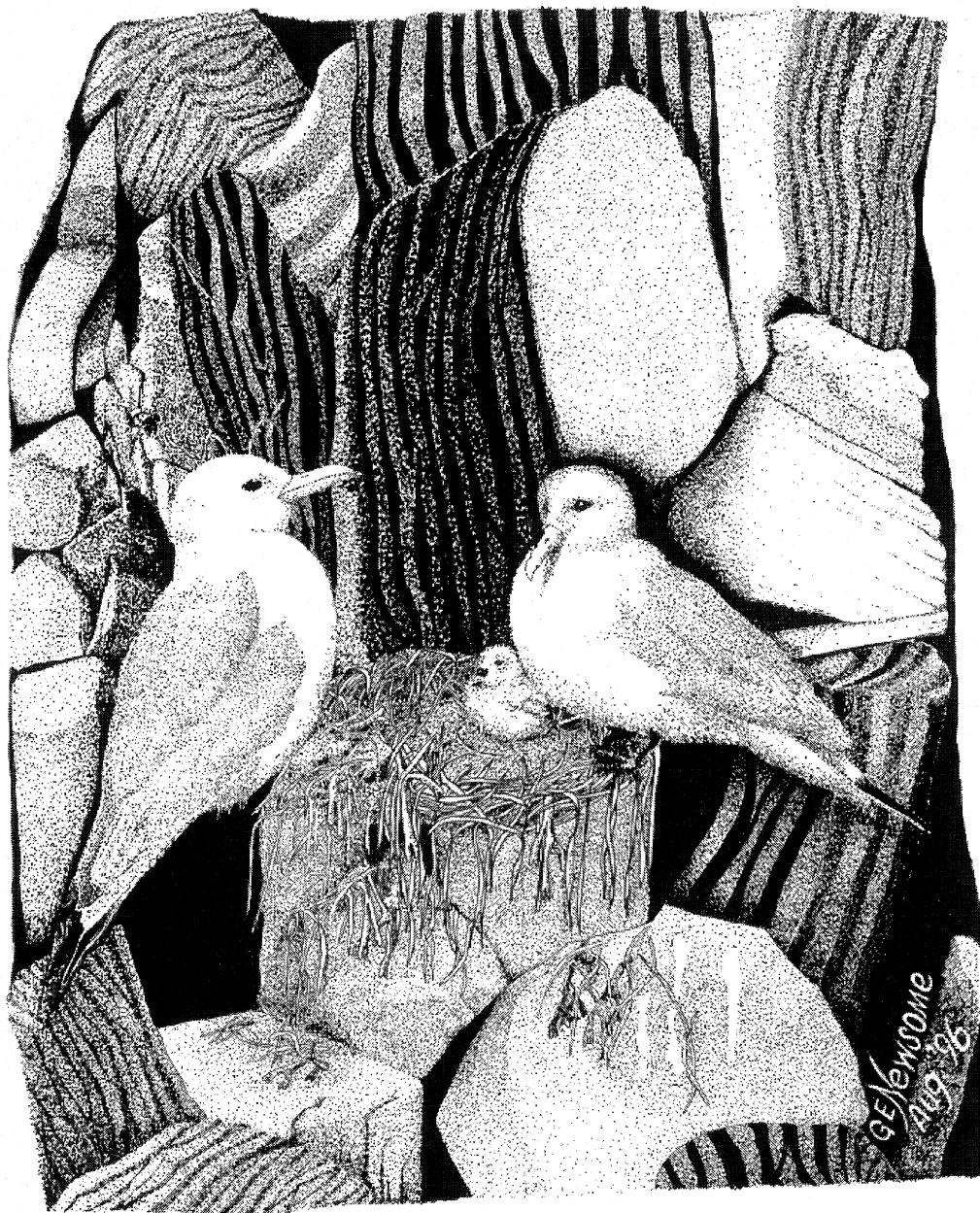


Nova Scotia Birds

A Quarterly Publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society



Summer 2000

(The Birds of Spring)



NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

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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.

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Reporting Deadlines

Winter 2000 issue: Dec. 7, 1999

Spring 2000 issue: Mar. 7, 2000

Summer 2000 issue: June 7, 2000

Fall 2000 issue: Aug. 7, 2000

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- September Meeting - Brier Island
- Southern Heron Invasion
- Spring Seasonal Reports
- North American Migration Counts
- Readership Survey Results
- Book Reviews
- Trip Reports

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Cover Artwork: Gulls - by G. E. Newsome

NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS
SUMMER 2000

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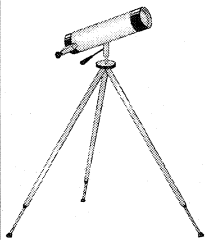
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The Spotting Scope



What does birdwatching mean to you? What characteristics define you as a birdwatcher? There are many definitions of 'birdwatcher', and some would say that 'birder' means something quite different. However you appreciate birds, here are a few thoughts on diversifying the scope of your interests.

Teaching. As bird watchers, many of us are called upon "to identify this bird at my feeder." What a privilege it is to be able to help out a grandchild, neighbour, colleague or stranger. Congratulations to those of you who take this a step further and give presentations to different groups, especially to children! By actively generating an interest in birds, an appreciation for all living things (even Spruce Budworm!) will be generated.

Teaching is often accomplished on field trips...where the more experienced birders often lend an eye (or an ear) to those just starting out, or to those who need to brush up on the finer points of some tricky identification. For example, after a recent field trip, the sun finally decided to come out so the group stopped at a marsh to see what could be seen. Do you remember a time when you didn't know what a warbler was? I do, and the novice on the trip was at that state. A Common Yellowthroat was heard, then pished in...it perched in the sun such that its yellow feathers didn't just light up, they radiated! The novice finally lined up the bird in his compact binoculars and his jaw dropped..."wwwwoooooowwww!" That Common Yellowthroat was easily the best bird of the day!

Learning. Learning is a large part of what keeps birding interesting for me. I may never be able to distinguish the songs of the Magnolia and Chestnut-sided Warblers, or the trills of the Swamp Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Chipping Sparrows, but I'm trying...really. Recently, some members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society attended the Annual Conference of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists (in which we hold membership)...what an opportunity that was to learn from some of the Annapolis Valley's finest birders (thanks folks!). Not only was it an opportunity to learn bird identification, but it was an opportunity to learn new birding sites, local history, environmental issues, botany and more. Next year, the conference will be held on the South Shore - consider attending, as these conferences are wonderfully easy places to learn about birds (and so much more!).

Contributing. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has several programs that use 'citizen scientists'. Many of us participate in one of the Lab's programs, or other fine programs in which bird watchers collect data; we act as citizen scientists because we know that doing so makes a difference (and it's usually fun, too). This past May, the North American Migration Count took place and hundreds of birders from across the Province participated (see details in this issue!). In addition, about one quarter of our membership contributes bird sightings to each issue of *Nova Scotia Birds* - this journal that you know hold is a repository of bird life in this province and will be looked upon in future years as a source of information.¹ Whether you take part in the NA Migration Count, the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, or just send us your sightings, you are contributing to the knowledge of bird life in Nova Scotia, and for that you can be justly proud.

Bird watching can be done at many levels. But birding isn't just about watching birds, creating lists and personal satisfaction. Birding can also be about learning, teaching, and contributing...and may you get wonderful sightings, huge lists and immense satisfaction while doing so!

Good Birding,

Randy

¹ And this is why we ask for details about unusual sightings - we want your records to withstand the tests of time...please don't be insulted if we ask you for these details!

Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor,

We are enjoying the *NS Birds* and your section, "The Spotting Scope"; it prompts me to send in - not an article, as you suggest - but just a note in case you might have room for such.

A small but steady and lively stream of customers at the yard bird feeders over winter 1999-2000 brightened our mealtimes, as they are all in sight from the dining table. A flicker was the first visitor at a new one put up by the window: fell off and didn't try again. We have five feeders in all, plus peanut butter and suet cones, plus seeds on the ground, but still skirmishes break out from time to time; a Song Sparrow seemed to be the most aggressive. From mid-January to late April, one, then two, Boreal Chickadees came regularly; perhaps a pair; they were very pleasing to watch, with their soft colouring and gentle manners.

Since May came in, the number of feeder birds has dropped, and we are a bit concerned because a noticeable change coincided with the arrival to the property of a pair of Merlin which, a friend observed, are "honeymooning"; this wouldn't dull their taste for little birds! We hope they settle somewhere else.

At South Side beach, Cape Sable Island, Willet-like calls above the surf heralded the landing of three American Oystercatchers a short distance ahead of us; we got a good look at them and detoured inland, not to disturb them; for awhile, two stood side by side and then sat down on the warm, dry sand - with such long legs, that is quite a trick. The same day we saw there our first for the season Common Tern; May 8.

Looking forward to the Spring issue of *Nova Scotia Birds* and wishing you happy birding! (Readers too.)

Sincerely,
Betty June and Sidney Smith

NSBS Meeting

NSBS September Meeting
Westport, Brier Island
Brier Island Lodge
Friday 22 September, 7:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker
Richard Stern, "Birding Brier Island."

Field trips are scheduled on Saturday, 23 Sept. including the annual "Pelagic trip-Bay of Fundy and Whitehead Island, New Brunswick" (storm date 24 Sept.).

There will also be 3-5 hr. whale and seabird trips available for those who don't want to spend the whole day on the water.

Contact: Carl Haycock (902) 839-2960
Booking: Mariner Cruises 1-800-239-2189

Nominating Committee Report

By Sylvia Fullerton, Committee Chair

The following have agreed to serve on the Executive, if elected at the Annual General Meeting, for 2000-2001:

President	Gisele d'Entremont
Vice President	David Curry
Past President	Lisë Bell
Treasurer	Bernice Moores
Secretary	Peter Ackerman
Membership Secretary	
Director	Joan Czapalay
Director	Barbara Hinds
Director	Peter Richard

The following have agreed to serve for 2000-2001, if appointed at the AGM:

Honorary Solicitor	Tony Robinson
Honorary Auditor	James C. Morrow

NSBS Members Visit Cuba



Nova Scotia Bird Society participants on this April's trip to Cuba, led by Blake Maybank, will be recognized by many members. Fourth from the left is Ricardo Sierra Sosa, excellent local naturalist, birder, and musician. (Richard Stern Photo)

Weather Report

By Larry Bogan

Mean Monthly Weather Statistics from Agriculture Centre at Kentville, Nova Scotia. The 39 year average appears parenthetically beside the current values

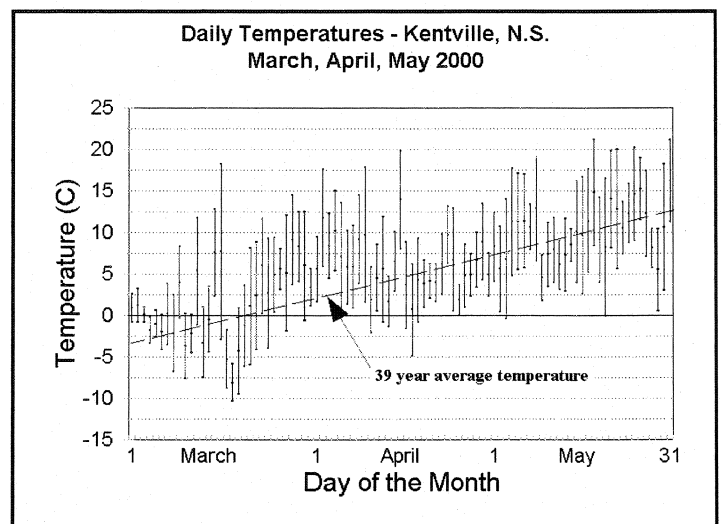
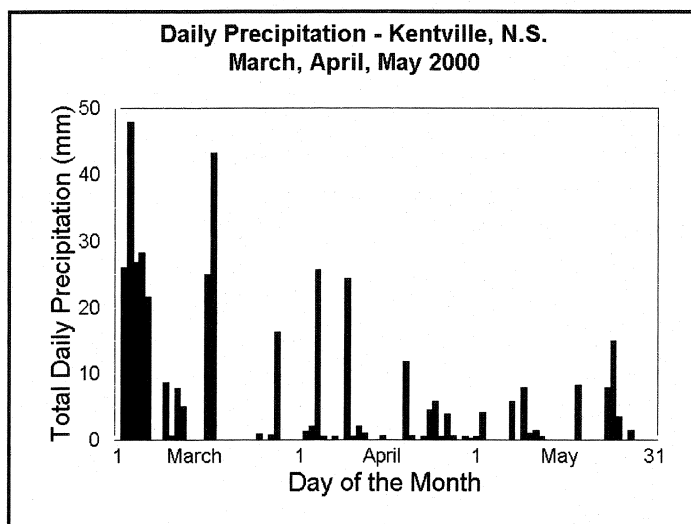
	March	April	May	Season
Mean Temp (°C)	1.5 (-1.0)	6.1 (4.5)	10.1 (10.6)	5.9 (4.7)
Total Precip. (mm)	259 (106)	89 (83)	58 (78)	406 (267)
Total Bright Sun (h)	139 (133)	116 (152)	178 (202)	433 (487)
Snow Fall (cm)	83 (45)	0 (15)	0 (2)	83 (62)

What an interesting season of contrast. Really, it was a gradual progression from a very wet and warm March to a dry but cooler May. If you look at the graph of daily precipitation, you will notice the dramatic decrease in the frequency and amount of rainfall from March to the end of May. The dryness continues now in June as I write this. March had more than normal snow fall, all of which occurred in the first half of the month (remember the snows of the winter had melted completely at the end of February). There was 27 cm on the ground during the first week and shortly after that melted there was another 17 cm fall which was gone within the week.

The cloudiness does not agree with the precipitation. While March had the normal amount of sunshine, it had nearly 2.5 times the average rainfall and May had 88% of the usual sunshine hours with 3/4 of the average rainfall. Usually we expect less sunshine when there is more rain or snow falling.

There was a definite progression of temperatures through the spring season. I remember the early spring actually being more pleasant than later spring. That is partly because March was 2.5 °C above average, April was 1.5 °C above and May was 1/2 °C below average temperature. The decrease in sunshine hours in April (3/4 of the normal) contributed to the depression.

I have include a graph of temperatures for the season with a line indicating the average long term normal temperatures. Note that after the snowfalls in early March the temperature increased above the mean by 5 °C until the middle of April. It is this period that swung the mean temperatures for those two months to above average. After that period the mean temperature follows the norms quite well for the second half of the season (except that it was slightly cooler than normal by a degree or so in late April). Those warm temperatures of late March and early April kick started the growing season and trees started to form leaves, however when the cold spell of the second half of April hit, it was nearly a month before the temperature rose back to those highs. As a result, the trees in the Valley stopped growing and were not fully leafed out until the end of May.



Southern Herons

By Ian McLaren



Carl Haycock

1



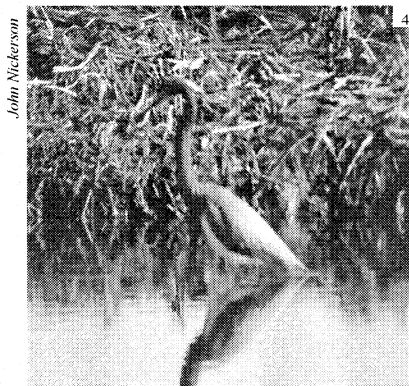
Peter Richard

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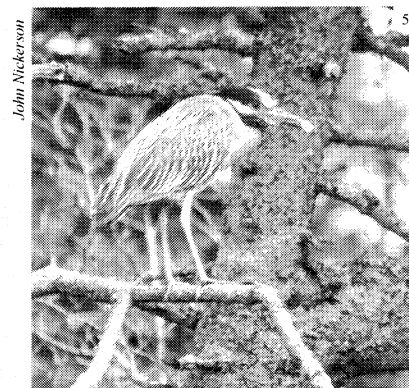
John Nickerson

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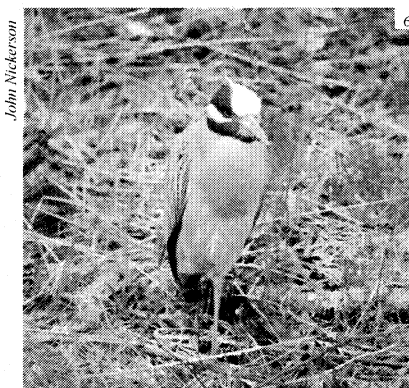
John Nickerson

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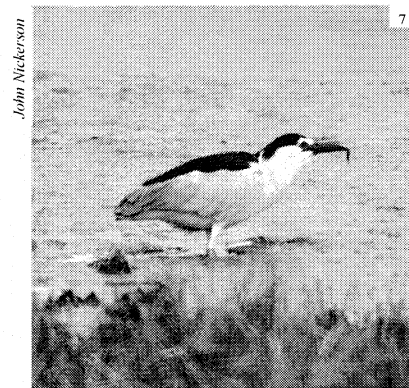
John Nickerson

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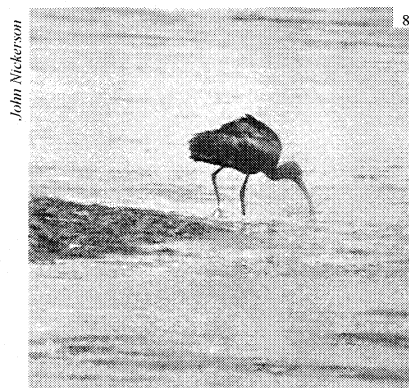
John Nickerson

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John Nickerson

7



John Nickerson

8

This spring saw perhaps the largest flight ever of "overshooting" herons to Nova Scotia. Many of them lingered to be seen by numerous observers before the birds drifted back to their normal ranges to the south. Photographs of a few of these birds are, by row, left to right:

1. A GREAT EGRET found by CAH on Brier I. in April, with its prey half way down its lengthy throat.

2. Another GREAT EGRET, one of three or more at Conrad Beach, HRM, caught in flight by PER.

3. A LITTLE BLUE HERON photographed by JON in late April at Atwoods Brook, Shel. Co.

4. A TRICOLORED HERON photographed by JON at Daniel Head, CSI, 1 May.

5. A YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON on Brier I. found and photographed by CAH during April.

6. Another YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON photographed by JON on E. Baccaro Pen., Shel. Co., during its stay from later April to mid-May.

7. Twenty-five years ago BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS were strays to the province, but now nest around CSI.

8. A lone GLOSSY IBIS that stayed from late April to late May on Baccaro Pen., Shel. Co., was seen by many.

Seasonal Reports

Thanks once again for responding to our survey. In the area which was provided for additional comments, several people wrote about reporting birds. In every issue, the deadlines for the upcoming year's worth of issues are given, but perhaps we should add that these dates will be the same every year (if it changes, we'll let you know). Many people contribute their sightings by regular mail, just as they have for many years. This is not only perfectly acceptable, but some of our Seasonal Editors prefer this method. As a reminder, the deadlines (for *every* year) and destination of your bird sightings are:

Lance Laviolette

RR #1

Glen Robertson, On K0B1H0

Summer Issues August 7th

Autumn Issues December 7th

Winter Issues March 7th

Spring Issues June 7th

Here is a reminder of what we need you to include in your reports. If you're sending in your sightings electronically, send them as an attachment to your email (not in the body if at all possible). Using your word processor, send us these pieces of information (each separated by one tab and nothing else): species <tab> month/day <tab> numbers/sex <tab> location (including COUNTY) <tab> observers; <tab> notes.

If you're sending your sightings by the postal service, we still need the same information, though each sighting goes on a separate piece of paper. The cards we used to send out look like the figure on the right. I still have several packets of these cards, if you want some, let me know. You are welcome to make up your own as well; they needn't be fancy, but please include all the information you have.

In addition, one reader asked why issues are entitled for the season in which they are received, as opposed to the season which they cover. A very good question, I think. After all, if you wanted to plan a trip somewhere in the Autumn to look for stray Ruddy Ducks, shouldn't you go to your bookshelf and pick up an Autumn issue? To start renaming the issues now would result in discontinuity with your back issues, therefore, we will be adding a subtitle to each issue that will help you find the back issue you need. □

Species
Month/Day
Numbers/Sex
Notes, continue on the back if necessary.
Observers

Loons and Grebes

By Fred Dobson

Oddly there were no March reports of the RED-THROATED LOON. Almost all the spring reports were from the Fundy Shore; the last report was of two in early May at Kingsport, Kings Co. (JCT). The NAMC total was eight with three in both Anna. and Lun. Cos. The COM. LOON was ubiquitous as always. Typical reports were, "Occasional all winter and spring, one to four, Maders Cove, Lun. Co." (JBM) and in early March "individuals - small groups along the Eastern Shore, in most harbours/offshore" (RFL, MZG). A female had begun her nesting at the Head of St. Margarets Bay, Hfx. Co. by early May. The NAMC total was 282, distributed throughout, with 66 in Hfx. Co. and 62 in CB Co. There were late May reports of several non-breeders in the waters off

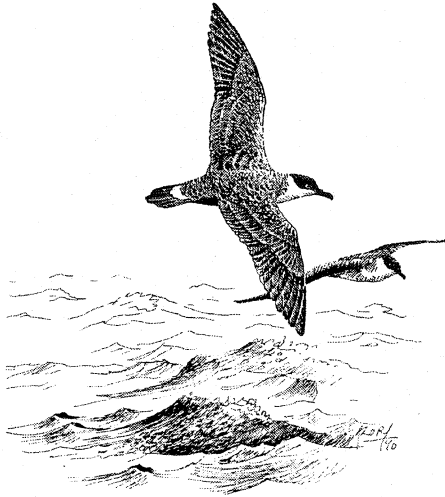
Brier I. (RBS) and Schooner Pond [CB Co.] (DBM).

The earliest reports of the PIED-BILLED GREBE were in mid-April from the Amherst area (Goose Creek Marsh, APBS [JBO, RSD]). The first reports from Yar. and Ant. Cos. were in early May (RSD, RFL). The NAMC total was 34 of which 21 were in Cum. Co. All the spring reports of the HORNED GREBE were from the S. Shore (JAH, ELM). The largest and latest report was of 50 in mid-April "off Petite Rivière, Lun. Co." (ELM). None were found on the NAMC survey. All the RED-NECKED GREBE reports (Mar. 5 – Apr. 30) were from either the N of the province or the S. Shore. The NAMC total was nine: five in Hfx. and four in Anna. Co. The

following is helpful (all seen by SEM at Kennington Cove, CB Co.): "I set out to monitor the arrival and departure dates of Red-necked Grebes in the fall and winter of 1999/2000, by studying them at Kennington Cove where they congregate each winter. The flock of 25-30 birds ... seen by various observers through the fall and early winter at Kennington Cove was forced out of the inner Cove in February by a build-up of slushy ice; at that time the number that stayed at Kennington Cove seemed to be reduced (to a group of 13-15 seen in good weather). A build-up in mid-April to 35 birds in breeding plumage I took to be a sign of flocks passing through on migration. No Red-necked Grebes were seen after Apr. 30." □

Tubenoses Through Cormorants

By Blake Maybank



An excellent count of NORTHERN FULMAR occurred from the Newfoundland ferry, May 21, when RWK noted 980 birds. Forty-nine were tallied on the NAMC, 45 offshore in

Shel. Co. RSD noted his second-ever earliest SOOTY SHEARWATER on Georges Bank, Mar. 31, just two days off the record. IAM, LAL, *et al.*, while en route to Seal I., Yar. Co., May 28, had a remarkable count of 150 Sooties, unprecedented for the time and place, and perhaps lured inshore by a heavy squid run. They also had three MANX SHEARWATERS. RSD reported the first Manx of the season, May 12, on Banquereau Bank. RWK had the high count of LEACH'S STORM-PETREL from the Nfld. Ferry, May 21, with 28 birds. Twenty-seven were counted on the NAMC, all off-shore in Shel. Co.

The first reported heavy movement of NORTHERN GANNETS was Mar. 30 when DBM watched large numbers off of Green Cove, Vic. Co. Numbers peaked at 1,000 birds an hour. Also in CB, RWK noted 500+ in a good

movement offshore of Louisbourg, Apr. 29. There were otherwise many typical reports of offshore birds, with proportionately more immatures, from around the province, during onshore winds. Six hundred were counted province wide on the NAMC, with 13 counties having some. The first DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS returned to the Pictou Causeway colony, Mar. 26, while the first noted by ZOL on Sable I. was Apr. 7. RFL counted 60+ at Pomquet I., Apr. 1. More than 3,000 were counted on the NAMC, up more than 800 from last year's total. I could make no inferences regarding GREAT CORMORANT movements from the submitted sightings, although RFL counted 25, May 13 at the Ant. Co. Crystal Cliffs colony, part of the 474 noted on the NAMC, almost 150 more than last year. □

Hérons and Vultures

By Richard Knapton

Are AM. BITTERNS declining in Nova Scotia? Reports this spring gave mixed messages about the species' status in the province. Not counting the results from the NAMC, there were certainly fewer records this spring than in spring 1999. After the first sighting, Apr. 30 at Goose Flats, Yar. Co. (HHH), there were only 12 reported, scattered from Schooner Pond, CB Co. to the southern shoreline of Yar. Co. (var. obs.). However, a very respectable 27 were tallied during the NAMC, with five coming from each of Anna. and Cum. Cos. This is a species that should be watched fairly closely in case it is indeed losing ground in the province. Single GREAT BLUE HERONS at Barrington and Port La Tour, Shel. Co., on Mar. 5 could have been overwinterers or early migrants (*fide* MUN). Most birds did not arrive until late March, when individuals were reported across the province. The species made landfall on Mar. 26 along the southern shore, with nine on the ledges at

The Hawk, CSI, and six at Doctors Cove, Shel. Co. (MUN, T. Hall), and five near Pembroke, Yar. Co. (PRG, Jacqueline d'Entremont). The species also reached CB by Mar. 26, with one at Glace Bay and five at Homeville, CB Co. (CAM). Thereafter, Great Blue Herons were widely reported in good numbers, with 409 counted on the NAMC. Six on Sable I., Apr. 11 - May 15, is an intriguing record (ZOL).

This was a fantastic spring for GREAT EGRETS. The first individual was seen Mar. 27 on the Shore Rd., Chezzetcook, Hfx. Co. (S. Hughes, B. Bayers), and this presaged an amazing and unprecedented invasion of the province by this spectacular species. Two more individuals turned up in March, at Lower Clarks Hbr., CSI (CST *et al.*) and on Brier I. (CAH), Mar. 30, but April records came from virtually the whole of the province, including as far northeast as CB Co., where the first was one at

Morien Bar, Apr. 5 (CAM, RWK), and one on Sable I. which stayed Apr. 4 - May 4 (ZOL). How many birds were involved will never be known. It seems as if totals peaked in mid-April; there were at least 45 individuals reported on Apr. 20, and the species continued to be seen until the end of May, albeit in lesser numbers. Most localities held just one individual, but there were several sightings of more than one bird, of which the following is a sample. There were three at Northeast Hbr., Shel. Co., Apr. 2 (Stephen Hiltz), five near Port Joli, Queens Co., Apr. 8 and two there May 10 (AND), three on the Mavillette Marsh, Digby Co., Apr. 8 - 22 (*fide* MUN), two at Conrad Beach, HRM, Apr. 3 and four there Apr. 5-15 (var. obs.), three near the Canso Causeway, Guys. Co. in early April (June Jarvis), three at Amiraults Hill, Yar. Co., Apr. 17 (*fide* MUN), four at Lower West Pubnico, Yar. Co., Apr. 18-19 (RSD, PRG), and three on Seal I., Apr. 20 (C.

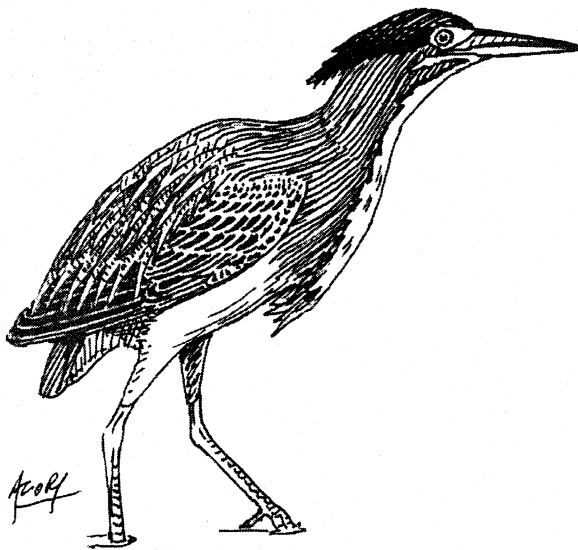
Kenney *et al.*) and two there May 7 (TMF, JJN). Clearly this was one of the major birding events of the spring.

Other southern herons also put on a good show this spring. There is usually an annual scatter of SNOWY EGRETS across the province, and this year was no exception, with most individuals staying for extended periods. The first report came from Conrad Beach, HRM, where one stayed Apr. 3-15 (DOU, JEH, NSBS). This was followed by singles at the Havenside Barrachois, Louisbourg, Apr. 16-29 (SEM *et al.*), Sable I., Apr. 27 - May 10 (ZOL), Clam Hbr., Boylston, Guys. Co., May 4 (KEM), Back Hbr., Lun. Co., May 7-15 (JAH), and six others in the southwest through May (var. obs.). Likewise LITTLE BLUE HERONS were scattered across the province. The first was an ad. at Centreville, CSI, Mar. 30 (CST *et al.*), followed by five other ads. along the southern shore and Seal I. (var. obs.). Away from the southwest, one was at Pentz, Lun. Co., Apr. 15 (JAH), an ad. at Apple R., Cum. Co., Apr. 29 (KFS, Cindy Spicer), and an ad. at Tangier,

CB Co., Apr. 8-15 (CAM *et al.*), followed by one at The Hawk, CSI, Apr. 13-15 (MUN, D. MacLaughlin) and one at Seal I., Apr. 20 (C. Kenney *et al.*). CATTLE EGRETS are not often seen in spring, they are much more frequently reported in the fall, therefore this spring's total of four is a respectable showing. The first one was on St. Mary's University campus, Mar. 31, a bird in poor condition which was rescued by AGH and C. Barber, one Apr. 5-6, Pubnico (*vide* MUN), one Apr. 19 at Camperdown, Lun. Co., which had been there for a week (*vide* JAH), and one on Seal I., Apr. 20 (C. Kenney *et al.*). GREEN HERONS were well represented along the south shore this spring. One turned up Apr. 1-4 at South Side, CSI (MUN, CST), followed by three at The Hawk, CSI, Apr. 8, building to four there Apr. 12 (*vide* MUN), and declining to two by May 2. Other Shel. Co. records included singles at Baccaro perched on a phone wire May 6 (IAM *et al.*), at Cape Light, May 7 (*vide* MUN), and at The Hawk bridge, CSI, May 26 (CST), and three during the NAMC. One was at Port Joli, Queens Co., May 15 (AND), one

the traditional localities on CSI during the period, with five there Apr. 7 (*vide* MUN). One was reported from Mud I., Lun. Co., May 13 (PRG *et al.*), four in Yar. Co., May 13 (NAMC), and two on Seal I., May 22 (SJF, JUG). This spring was a good one for YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS. One was reported on Northwest Arm, Halifax, Mar. 30 (Regina Maas, *vide* ABM), an ad. was at the pond behind DAP's house on Brier I., Apr. 2 (*vide* ELM) and stayed until Apr. 29 (CAH), one was in Centreville, CSI, Apr. 9 (*vide* MUN), an ad. feeding on lawns in Baccaro, Apr. 22 - May 13 (*vide* MUN), and finally an ad. on Seal I., May 22 (SJF, JUG).

In keeping with the influx of southern herons into the province, GLOSSY IBIS were also well represented this spring. The first was an elusive ad. N of Canning, Kings Co., Apr. 14 - 18, found by MAG and seen subsequently by var. obs. Possibly the same bird was seen at Economy, Col. Co., flying east, being mobbed by crows Apr. 21 (FLS). In Shel. Co., two turned up at Lyles Bay, Port Clyde, Apr. 29 (DOE) and one was seen the same day at East Baccaro (*vide* MUN), two at West Baccaro, May 2 (GRM) and one in Baccaro, May 13 (*vide* MUN); in Yar. Co., one was in a pond along Port Maitland Shore Rd., May 2 (HHH).



Hfx. Co., May 13 (DAM, CRM). Much scarcer in spring than either Snowy Egret or Little Blue Heron is TRICOLORED HERON. This spring there were three records, with the first at Schooner Pond,

was at Masons Bridge, Lun. Co., May 16 (JAH), two were on Seal I., May 22-27 (SFG, JUG), and finally one on Sable I., May 31 (ZOL). BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON reports came in from

There were surprisingly few reports of TURKEY VULTURES this spring, at least compared with the last few years. Sightings came in from Yar. Co., two Apr. 13 at Pembroke and four at Tusket, Apr. 18 (PRG), from Shel. Co., three at Lower Clarks Hbr. (MUN), and from Digby Co., seven Apr. 8 on Brier I. (MUN), two Apr. 15 at Long I. (AND) and eight during the NAMC (var. obs.). Migrant birds included seven soaring with two Broad-winged Hawks, two N. Harriers, an Am. Kestrel and an ad. Bald Eagle above the road to Western Light, Lun. Co., May 14 (ELM, AHM), and one, possibly two, at Yarmouth Mt. and Advocate Hbr., Cum. Co., May 18-21 (MSM, JAF). □

Geese, Swans and Ducks

By Fred Dobson

The weather was warm and wet in early spring, but then normal for NS (cool, cloudy) for the remainder of the season. The migrants arrived perhaps a week ahead of average; most breeding ducks had returned by the end of April. The best description is, "a normal spring". There were no extraordinary sightings, although the six Canvasbacks in Hfx. Co. and the possibility of Tufted Duck breeders were notable. The NAMC counts were held on May 13. We are very thankful to Judy Tufts for the loving care she has put into the compilation; these records provide *the* best indicator of species abundance and distribution in the spring, particularly of our common species (e.g. Am. Black Duck, Com. Eider).

There was one confirmed SNOW GOOSE sighting: Apr. 15-17, "One adult white-morph at Canning with many Canadas" and "This individual was banded." (RBS, BLF, AAM, G. Forsyth). Two were later reported [*but never confirmed* – Ed.] reported later, *but never confirmed* - Editor. Reports of the CANADA GOOSE were legion, and give a good impression of its wide and abundant distribution in the province. In mid-March there were 150, down to 40 by early April in Conrad Marsh, Hfx. Co. (DMW). From March-May there were variable numbers, from two to over sixty in the Apple R., and smaller numbers at other locations in Kings Co. (KFS, JCT). The NAMC had reports from all counties except Guys., Queens and Vic.; the total count was 411 of which 140 were in Hants Co. The latest report, from JCT, is typical and worth a quote: "May 31, eight to nine, Hennigars Marsh, Sheffield Mills, Kings Co. Two families: two adults with three to four well-developed young (same family we first discovered here on May 23) resting on grassy bank on western side of marsh; second pair protecting a single golden, fuzzy baby gosling out for a swim on east side of marsh." The main flock of BRANT numbered **5,000** on Mar. 19 (*fide* MUN). By May 7 it had largely dispersed; there were a few tens of stragglers to be found

on the nearby islands and 80+ on Brier I. (*fide* MUN, JJN, CAH). Only eight remained at CSI by May 22 (RBS). The NAMC total was 419, with 270 in Digby Co. and 110 in Yar. Co. There was a single bird at West Lawrencetown Marsh in late Mar. (PLC) and 23 in mid-April at Linden, Cum. Co. (ROH). GRM reported "May 19-25, a possible one at Shag Hbr. Bridge - also reported from some of the smaller SW islands, Guys. Co." The **MUTE SWAN** appears to have "made it" into the wild in NS. PLC reported: "May 5, one of the feral swans on her nest at Parkers Brook, Shore Drive, Bedford, HRM. I think this is the original female, with a son."

The single male WOOD DUCK that wintered at Sullivans Pond (var. obs.), although not always present, stayed on into the spring season. The first new report was of a single male, Mar. 22, at Canard Pond, Kings Co. "in large patches of open water" (JCT). Single males and females were seen in the Lawrencetown area, HRM in late March and early April (PLC, JAH, FLL) as well as in Kings Co. (*fide* JCT) where they were "Now on nesting ponds in small numbers" (JBO). The reports from Ant. Co. (RFL) and Lun. Co. (JAH) came later in April. The NAMC total was 37, distributed widely but sparsely (eight in Anna. Co., seven in Cum. Co.). In spite of this, from the end of April to the end of May all reports were from Ant. or CB Cos. (RFL, DBM, RWK). The natty but quietly coloured GADWALL is always special to see. The NAMC total was 10; there were five in Cum. Co. and four (two pairs) in Ant. Co. (the other was in Pict. Co., where a pair overwintered at the Trenton NSPC plant – KJM). A single bird also overwintered at Smeltbrook, N. Sydney, Smelt Brook, CB Co. (DBM, RWK). Most reports this season were from the N of the province, although there were two sightings on "special islands": Sable (during May but left at the end of the month – ZOL) and Seal (end of May "with assorted other ducks" - SJF, JUG). There were three pairs in late May at Belleisle Marsh,

Anna. Co. (AAM). The **EUR. WIGEON** is particularly beautiful in the spring. It is notable that all the reports are of birds that "hung around" for relatively long times at one location – perhaps because their observers liked so much to keep tabs on them! One overwintered at Sullivans Pond and Tufts Cove, HRM "Very elusive!" (*fide* AAM) and another (a male) at NSPC Trenton, Pict. Co. (KJM). One was seen regularly during April in Glace Bay, CB Co. by the Murrants and the Crowells, and one (perhaps the same bird seen at Sullivans Pond) spent April at West Lawrencetown Marsh (PLC, E. Bradley). ZOL reported a "Rufous morph female: distinctly all-reddish head-neck" on Sable I. in mid- to late April. RFL reported a single drake at Antigonish Landing during the latter half of April. None were seen on the NAMC. The first reports of the AM. WIGEON were from Mar. 20 on from the Valley (Col. and Kings Cos.). JBO reported that "four overwintered" at the Kiwanis Pond, Truro, Col. Co.; other reports were from Canard Pond and Apple R., Kings Co. (RBS, KFS). Two pairs seemed to be settled on Sable I. during April (IAM, ZOL). The NAMC total was 87, distributed fairly widely with 27 in Cum. Co. They were found in relatively large numbers in CB in May.

The AM. BLACK DUCK was found in usual numbers this spring; these hardy birds began their pairing activities while the snow still flew. The NAMC total was 2,671, distributed throughout the province. In early April, RFL counted 800 at Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co. and DMW reported "Maximum of 66 in Conrad Marsh, Hfx. Co. - approximately 16 nesting in marsh in May." The MALLARD continues to flourish in the province. The NAMC total was the best indicator of abundance (common) and distribution (wide); the total count was 581. Most reports were of a few birds, from Yar. Co. (PRG, Jacqueline d'Entremont), Ant. and Guys. Cos. (RFL, MZG) and Kings Co. (KFS). The MALLARD- BLACK DUCK CROSS was only reported on the NAMC; the

total was 70 with 50 in Hfx. Co. and 19 in CB Co. The BLUE-WINGED TEAL arrived in Lun. Co. and the Valley in mid-April. The NAMC total was the best indicator of abundance: 78, distributed widely but sparsely. From late April to late May a "pair seem resident on Harris Pond, Kings Co." (RBS, JCT, JET) and in mid-May another pair was at Little Bras d'Or, CB Co. (DBM). The N. SHOVELER arrived in early April in small numbers at Lusbys Marsh, Amherst, Cum. Co. (JBO). There were a male and female through mid-May at W. Pond, Sable I. (ZOL). The NAMC total was three, with singles in CB, Kings, and Shel. Cos. Other reports, all in May, came from Ant. (ELM, AHM), Kings (JCT, JET), Anna. (AAM) and CB Cos. (DBM, RWK). The N. PINTAIL was distributed widely from early March onwards. The NAMC counts were the best indicator of distribution in the province: the birds were found in Cum, Pict. and Shel. Cos. only; the total was 23. The individual reports came in

report was a pair in early May at Antigonish Landing, Ant. Co. (RFL). The NAMC was the best indicator of the general abundance of the GREEN-WINGED TEAL. The total count was 465 with a wide distribution. Reports came mostly from the Valley and CB and Ant. Cos. Notable was a report of 39 "by May 3 at Antigonish Landing, Ant. Co." (RFL) and in early May "widespread in CB Co." (DBM). The male of the "EURASIAN" subspecies of the Green-winged Teal is unmistakable in full breeding plumage. Both reports are of single individuals, seen in widely separate places, in early April: one Mar. 30 – Apr. 8 at Daniels Hd., CSI (MUN *et al.*) and one Apr. 2 at Saxon St. Pond, Kings Co. (Mike McCall).

Halifax was visited by the lordly CANVASBACK in good numbers this spring. A pair was seen Mar. 22 (but never again) in the back ponds at Conrad Beach, HRM (JOW *et al.*). The NAMC

DUCK; it was reported from all but Digby, Shel., and Queens Cos. The total was 460, widely distributed in good numbers, with 144 in CB Co. The earliest reports were in late March from Lun. Co. (Nellie Snyder, *vide* JAH) and Kings Co. (ELM, RBS, JCT, KFS). There was an interesting report at the beginning of May by RFL of two pairs, the females 'gurgle woofing' (calling) in Frasers Marsh, Ant. Co. In general the first reports from the N of the province were near the beginning of May; by May 11 they were "widespread in CB Co." (DBM). They were seen on Sable I. in singles and small groups from mid-April until end of May (ZOL). There were two reports of the TUFTED DUCK this breeding season. One male and two fems. were "usually at Sullivans Pond but sometimes at Dartmouth Cove, HRM" until Mar.19 (ROG), and one fem. at Harris' Pond, Kings Co. from Apr. 15-20 (JWW, AAM, RBS). It is possible this fem. was one of the HRM "flock". Did they breed this year in NS – has no one any indications? The first spring report of the GREATER SCAUP was Mar. 2 – an individual in Conrad Marsh, Hfx. Co. (DMW). They were seen up until the end of March in CB (DBM, RWK) and Yar. Cos. (PRG, Jacqueline d'Entremont). The last report (other than the NAMC) was Apr. 1 – 100 at Bissett L., Hfx. Co. (JAH, FLL). The NAMC total was 398 of which 373 were in Pict. Co. The LESSER SCAUP was reported first at the end of March in CB Co. (DBM, RWK), and the beginning of April at Bissett L., Hfx. Co. (JAH, FLL). By Apr. 13 there were two pairs at Belle Isle Marsh, Anna. Co. (RBS). Other reports were of singles from mid-April to late May in Hfx. Co. (DMW), Yar. Co., (PRG) and CB Co. (DBM). The NAMC total was 13 of which eight were in CB Co. and four in Pict. Co.

The earliest report of the COM. EIDER was of 800, Mar. 19, at Baccaro Pt., Shel. Co. (BLM); the first report from CB was of eight at the end of March at Green Cove, CBHNP, Vic. Co. (DBM). IAM writes: "It might be of interest for the record to note my eider counts May 29-30 on Seal I.; I've done these over the years. There were this year 253 males and 208 females around the island. Some females were clearly sitting, but,

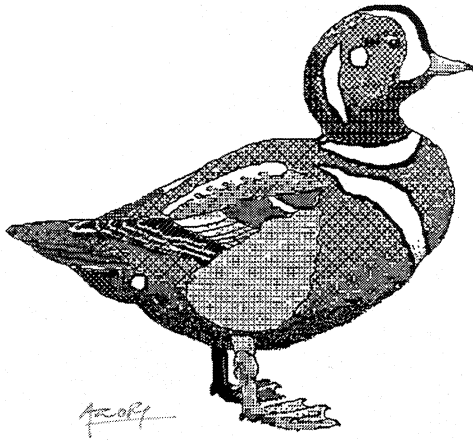


John McInnis's amusing photo of a female GREENWINGED TEAL among wintering wildfowl in Sydney shows it strutting confidently alongside an AM. BLACK DUCK.

March from the S. Shore and the Valley (e. g. Apr. 2, 100+ at Lusbys Marsh, Amherst, Cum. Co. - JBO); the latest

total was six, all in Hfx. Co. The NAMC total was a good indicator of the distribution of the RING-NECKED

remarkably, there was also a hatchling with one group. Very, very early, I



should think." It was an interesting spring for sightings of the HARLEQUIN DUCK. MUN reported 75 down to 22 in mid-to-late March at Port l'Hebert, QueensL'Hebert, Shel. Co. There were none seen on the NAMC. The most interesting report comes from the E Shore: on May 24 where there were 65 at Inner Bird I., (JJN *et al.*). "This would normally be considered a 'winter' bird but ...? Such a large group has only been matched or exceeded by the numbers at The Wolves, part of the Grand Manan archipelago, during the winter months." Earliest reports of the SURF SCOTER (all in March) were from CB Co. (RFL, MGZ, DBM, Ant. (RFL, MZG), CB (DBM, RWK) and Yar. Cos. (PRG, Jacqueline d'Entremont). Notable numbers were 200 in mid-April off of Petite Riviere, Riviere, Lun. Co. (ELM), 250 in late April at Simon Pt., Louisbourg, CB Co. (RWK) and 40+ in early May at Kingsport, Kings Co. "in mixed 'rafts' of scoters seen here and off Porter Pt (100+)" (JCT). The NAMC total was 2,175 of which 1,500 were in Lun. Co. Up to 300 were seen in CB Co. in late May (DBM, RWK). The latest report came from IAM *et al.* "As usual, scoters hung back and three Surfs [were seen] off Seal, May 29." The first reports of the WHITE-WINGED SCOTER were in early March from Guys. Co. (RFL, MZG), and CB. Co. (ALM, CAM). By mid-March there were up to 125 at various locations in Anna. Co. (BLM). The NAMC total was 436 of which 382 were in Vic. Co. In mid-May there was a "flock of 30 in the ocean off Conrad Beach, HRM" (DMW) and in late May

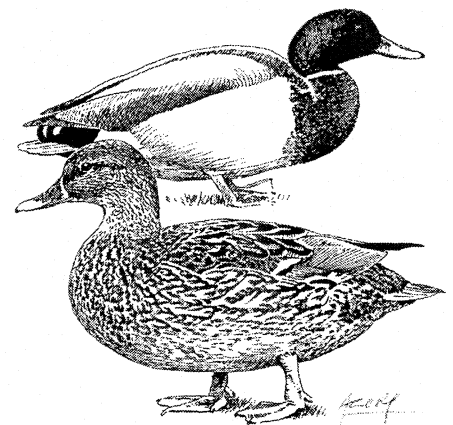
there were some tens at various sites in CB Co. (DBM, RWK). The BLACK SCOTER distribution this spring was widespread but sparse. The earliest reports were at the end of May in Yar. Co. (PRG, Jacqueline d'Entremont, BLM). The NAMC total was 1,750 of which 944 were in Hfx. Co. and 320 in Shel. Co. "There were about 25 Blacks off Cape Sable, May 31" (IAM *et al.*). The last report was June 1: a single bird at Pubnico Pt., Yar. Co. "injured?" (RSD)

The OLDSQUAW was seen in flocks of 50-100 in late March in Mahone Bay, Lun. Co. (JBM, *fide* George Escher) and Digby Hbr., "making a tremendous din with constant calling" (RBS). They were "present up to May 13 in Lun. Co." (SJF) and were seen "off Seal May 29" (IAM). The NAMC total was five of which four were in Pict. Co. As usual the BUFFLEHEAD was common and widespread. They were observed in good numbers until mid-April at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. (RBS). The NAMC total was 100, mostly in CB, Anna. and Shel. Cos. The last reports were in late May from CB Co. (DBM, RWK). The reports of the COM. GOLDENEYE were all from the N of the province. The earliest reports were in mid-March from Guys. Co. and Ant. Co.; RFL and MGZ reported 110 courting at Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co. That must have been a sight! The NAMC total was 121, almost all from CB and Ant. Pict. Cos. The BARROW'S GOLDENEYE was seen in singles and pairs through March and April in Shel. Co. (BLM, IAM, Larry De March) and the N of the province (RFL *et al.*) They were not reported on the NAMC. JAH reported six in early March at Dayspring, Lun. Co.: Co., "There were three males and three females. It was snowing and the birds were really close to the road and shoreline by the boat launch. I was able to get an excellent look."

The earliest report of the HOODED MERGANSER was mid-March in Yar. Co. (PRG, RSD). The NAMC total was 20, distributed sparsely throughout the area. Other mid to late May reports include Mud L. Bog, Kings Co. "Nest with 11 eggs in nestbox" (BLF) and W. Pond, Sable I. "fem. or first spring

male?" (ZOL). The last report was of two pair at the end of May at UCCB Lagoon, Sydney, CB Co. (DBM, RWK). The COM. MERGANSER was first reported at the beginning of March and again Apr. 7 at Conrad Marsh, Hfx. Co. (DMW). The NAMC indicated a wide and even distribution: the total count was 263. In mid-March notable numbers of individuals were: 150 at Antigonish Landing and 200 at Pomquet Cove, Ant. Co. (RFL). There were several reports in late March and early April of singles and pairs from the Valley (JCT, KFS) and the CBHNP (DBM). From Apr. 22 – May 1 a single male was seen at the W. Pond on Sable I. (ZOL). Notable from the Valley was a report in early May of a "nest with 15 eggs in nestbox, Gaspereau R. Kings Co." (BLF). The RED-BREASTED MERGANSER was first reported in early March: "several to dozens in every harbour/offshore, Eastern Shore", Guys. Co. and in mid-March "one in Ogdens "one, Pond (Ant. Co.), but thousands off shore" at Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co. (RFL, MGZ). There were reports from the Valley all through March and April. The NAMC was representative of the expected distribution: common and widespread; the total was 1,224 with a preponderance in Pict. Co. The last reports, all near the end of May, were from CB Co. (DBM, RWK).

Two RUDDY DUCKS (in female-like plumage) were seen regularly all spring at the NSPC Plant, Trenton, Pict. Co. (KJM) [*Plumage? ... Ed.*](KJM). □



Diurnal Raptors, Galliforms, Rails and Cranes

By Richard Knapton

OSPREYS primarily arrive in April in the province, but there are usually a handful that turn up in late March each year. There were two reports on Mar. 25; JAH reported one near the western limits of Halifax, and S. Hawboldt saw one at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. On Mar. 30, ALK had one at N. Alton, Kings Co. Thereafter there were 18 reports in April, many of birds returning to traditional nesting sites. The NAMC provincial total was an impressive 163, with 54 coming from Hfx. Co. alone. Unlike last spring, there were no comments this spring from observers that there are fewer Ospreys now than in past years. BALD EAGLE reports mainly concerned nesting birds. One was watched carrying nesting material near Westville, Pict. Co., Mar. 1 (JAF), and many others showed nesting behaviour during the first half of March. At least nine, and probably ten, nests were occupied in eastern Kings Co. this spring (JWW), of which two have been occupied for decades, a couple for about a decade, four since last year and two this year. Two of the recent nests are both take-overs from Red-tailed Hawks. The remarkable nest at Ben Eoin, CB Co., was once again occupied this year; this nest is along the Bras d'Or Lakes near Big Pond in a heavily-used campground, and the birds seem to be remarkably tolerant of human activities so close to the nest site. The NAMC total was impressive: 283 birds of which 217 were ads. and 59 imm. (and seven of unreported age). Two imm. pursued 10 N. Pintails near Homeville, CB Co., Mar. 26 (CAM), and an imm. was reported attacking a loon, Mar. 20, near Maitland, Lun. Co. (JBM).

N. HARRIERS were reported at a few localities and in low numbers, although the species appears to be doing fairly well (the NAMC total was 83). Of 18 sightings, ten came from CBI. A female at Chegoggin Dyke, Yar. Co., on Apr. 11 may have been a migrant (PRG, Jacqueline d'Entremont). Possible nesting pairs were reported from CB Co., Lun. Co., Yar. Co. and Kings Co. (var. obs.). The scarcity of SHARP-

SHINNED HAWKS appears to be continuing. There were only a meager eight reports received, although the NAMC total was an encouraging 55 birds, of which 16 came from CBI. There were a couple of reports of Sharp-shins catching Am. Robins, certainly a fair sized prey, at least for a male. In contrast with last year, there were no COOPER'S HAWKS reported this year. There were eight N. GOSHAWK reports this spring from across the province, from CB Co. to Seal I., plus an impressive 12 totaled during the NAMC. Potential breeding pairs were located at Greenfield, Kings Co. (JJN), Port Greville, Cum. Co. (ULH), and at Sand L., CB Co. (CAM), as well as possible pairs on Seal I. (IAM *et al.*) and near Louisbourg, CB Co. (RWK).

No RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS were reported this spring. The first BROAD-WINGED HAWK was a seasonal report on May 1 in New Glasgow, Pict. Co. (MAB), followed thereafter by five other reports, plus 23 on the NAMC including two on CBI. Two were circling with Turkey Vultures and other raptors May 14 near Western Light (ELM, AHM), and a late bird was over Seal I., May 30 (IAM). A possible imm. SWAINSON'S HAWK was seen heading north over Sand L., CB Co. on May 11 (CAM). Few RED-TAILED HAWK records were received, most involving nesting birds. However, results from the NAMC show that this species is the second most numerous raptor reported (134 birds) after Bald Eagle. Occupied nests in Kings Co. included those at Wolfville, and at Acadia University where the pair likes to build a new nest every year; since the ledge on the building was cleaned off last summer, it is no surprise they opted to go back to that site (JWW). Two nests in Kings Co. have been recently occupied by Bald Eagles, and last year's nest at Canard Pond was tipped and not in use (JWW). Several ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were reported this spring. Eastern Kings Co. was clearly a hotspot for this species during March and April; how many birds

were present is difficult to determine, but these included three different light-phase birds along the Grand Pré dykelands, Mar. 1 and one dark-phase, Mar. 14, at Lower Canard (JWW), a light-phase at Port Williams, Mar. 21-22 (JWW, JCT), two at Grand Pré, Mar. 26 (JOW, SJF), a light phase in upper Canard Valley, Apr. 21 (JWW), and a light phase that liked to perch on power lines rather than poles, Grand Pré, Apr. 29 (JWW *et al.*). Elsewhere, there was a dark phase near Antigonish, Mar. 5 (RFL), a dark-phase at Louisbourg, Mar. 21-24 (SEM), one at Hartlen Pt., Apr. 3 (DOU), one over Walter I., Pict. Co., Apr. 23 (KJM, Polly Szantor), one near Oxford, Cum. Co., Apr. 25 (D. MacLaughlin), and a dark phase along Highway 103, Hfx. Co., Apr. 29 (JAH). One that had caught a muskrat at Lawrencetown Beach, Hfx. Co., Apr. 9 evidently had a great deal of difficulty subduing the prey (D. MacLaughlin). A possible ad. GOLDEN EAGLE was reported near Canning, Kings Co., Apr. 17 (DOU), and an imm. was seen at the base of North Mt., Kings Co., Apr. 19 (BST).

Likely overwintering A. KESTRELS were seen at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Mar. 4 and possibly the same bird at Dublin Shore, Lun. Co., Mar. 5 (LAB, JAH), and a male was near Donkin, CB Co., Mar. 1 - 11 (CAM, RWK). Thereafter there were only sporadic reports until the end of May, although the NAMC totals (132 birds from 15 counties) reflect its widespread and numerous status. A pair returned to the nestbox in RFL's yard in late March, but eventually chose to breed elsewhere (or perhaps not at all), and a male was in display flight over the LaHave R., Lun. Co. in late April (JAH). In contrast to Kestrels, MERLINS were widely reported throughout the province, from CBI to the southwest shores. They appear to be nesting in west Halifax, in an urban setting and preying perhaps on Starlings and House Sparrows (IAM). One was seen to catch a migrating Yellow Warbler at South Side, Shel. Co. as the warbler flew in over the water on

May 7 (Aileen Smith). There were a few more reports of PEREGRINES this spring than usual - many more Peregrines are seen in the fall. The first was Starrs Pt., Kings Co., Mar. 11 (JWW), followed by several reports in April - singles in Kings Co. at the Windsor Causeway and at Gaspereau, Apr. 19 (AGH), at Cape d'Or, Cum. Co., Apr. 22 (JAF), and at Port Howe, Cum. Co., Apr. 30 (*vide* KJM) - and in May, there were three birds reported on May 7, singles on CSI (*vide* MUN), an imm. at Grand Pré, Kings Co. (BLF), and an ad. along Saxon St., Canning, Kings Co. (BBT), one that dove after yellowlegs and ducks at Port Howe, Cum. Co., May 1 (KJM, G. Murray), three during the NAMC also in Cum. Co., and finally an ad. at Cape Split, Kings Co., May 27 (JWW).

The only report of GRAY PARTRIDGE came from Kings Co.; 15 were at Pat Martell's feeder at Starrs Pt., Mar. 4 (*vide* JWW). There was a scattering of RINGNECKED PHEASANT reports across the province, from CBI to the southwest counties. The species is clearly common and widespread across the province; 458 from 14 counties during the NAMC underscores its status here. RUFFED GROUSE reports were few and far between; however, once again totals from the NAMC reflect its status within the province, 114 birds in 17 counties. There were a handful of records of SPRUCE GROUSE this spring; a pair at Doctors Cove, Shel. Co., Mar. 19 (MUN), a male Mar. 25 and two males and a fem., Apr. 29 at Taylors Hd. PP (TEP), a fem. near Perch L. Rd., Apr. 24 and a male at Whitehill, Apr. 26, Pict. Co. (MAB), and a male near Big Pond, CB Co., May 29 (DBM, RWK). WILD TURKEYS continue to flourish. TOB reports that near Torbrook, Anna. Co., the flock of turkeys numbers 10 birds, seven fems. and three males, which contain newly added birds this spring, and he also found a nest with nine eggs in late April. LAL *et al.* report "numerous" Wild Turkeys on Seal I. in late May with broods containing both 'wild' and 'domestic' coloured young.

Perhaps the bird of the spring was a **BLACK RAIL** that turned up during late April on Seal I. (C. Kenney *et al.*).



The observers had this bird under scrutiny for about a week starting Apr. 20. It was flushed several times from a small sedge-rimmed pond, occasionally flying into nearby spruces! Sometimes the bird came out into the open, where it could be seen closely in full view. The description is convincing: a small black "tail-less" bird with dangling legs, white spotting on the black plumage, even noting the chestnut nape (*vide* IAM). An exceptional record of a very difficult bird to find!

VIRGINIA RAILS were reported from two localities this spring. The first bird returned to Campbells Rd. marsh, Westville, Pict. Co., Apr. 11 (STV), and was heard thereafter until the end of May (KJM *et al.*). This was followed by up to two individuals calling from a marsh at the end of Oak Rd., Wolfville, May 8 - 31 (RBS *et al.*). There were many reports of SORAS this spring. The first was an early migrant, at Little Clarks Hbr., Shel. Co., Mar. 30 - Apr. 8 (CST *et al.*). This

was followed by reports from five counties involving 20 birds (var. obs.). Ten were reported in Pict. Co. during the NAMC. Another exceptional record this spring was a superb PURPLE GALLINULE seen on Gorsebrook Rd., Halifax, near the campus of St. Mary's University, May 30, and present into June. First found by Sonia and Basil Grogono, it was subsequently seen by many others. The only report of COM. MOORHEN came from Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co., one bird, May 18 (JAF). It was a fairly good spring for AM. COOTS. There were singles in Yar. Co. at Pembroke, Apr. 7- May 5 (PRG, MUN) and Melbourne, Apr. 12 (PRG, Jacqueline d'Entremont), on a pond in New Minas, Kings Co. (M. McCall) and at Conrad Beach, HRM (NSBS), both Apr. 15, near Blanch, Shel. Co., Apr. 23 (MUN), in Glace Bay, CB Co., May 21-26 (A. LeForte, G. Crowell), and finally on Sable I., May 1 and 31 (ZOL). □

The Shorebirds

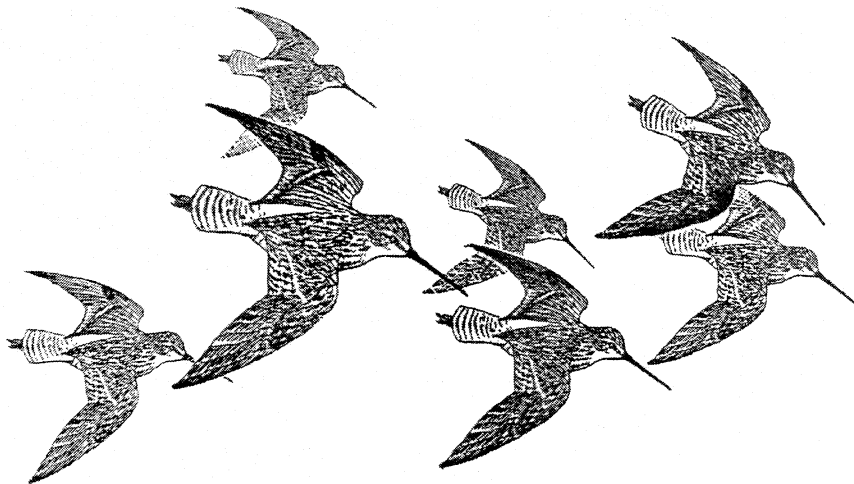
By Sylvia Fullerton

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER seen in March and early April were no doubt hold-overs from the winter, such as the 11 at Cape Light, CSI, Mar. 11 (MUN), and the single bird at Martinique Beach, HRM, Mar. 11 & Apr. 15 (TEP, IAM). The 40 at CSI, Apr. 20 were problematic, but could have included early migrants. Elsewhere our limited migration was on schedule. The May 13 NAMC total was 86, including 40 in Shel. Co., 20 in Lun. Co., and 11 in Cum. Co. A seasonal high, 200 were at the Windsor Causeway, May 24 (JCT). Only a single bird appeared at Louisbourg Hbr., May 29 (SEM), and four were at Morien Bar, CB May 29 (DBM, RWK). Seldom have they been reported from Sable I. in spring but one showed up there May 27 (ZOL). Always notable in spring, the only AM. GOLDEN PLOVER report received was one at Louisbourg Hbr., May 24 (SEM). A pair of SEMIPALMATED PLOVER returned to CSI and at the end of May were still engaged in nesting activity (MUN, JON). The PIPING PLOVER returned on schedule to their favorite beaches. Earliest was one at Baccaro, Shel. Co., Apr. 1, followed by five at CSI, Apr. 2 (CST). Peter MacDonald, DNR, reported that the high tides early in May and June wiped out several nests in the SW portion of the Province, but most pairs

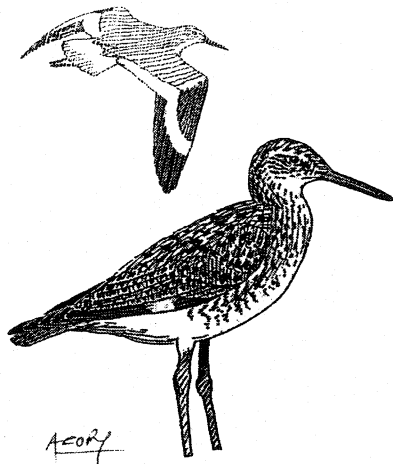
have re-nested. About 24 active pairs have been observed from Queens, Shel. and Lun. Cos. Unfortunately, he points out, late nesting means chicks will still be on the beaches in August when there will be greater threats to their survival. KILLDEER were widespread and abundant, with evidence of breeding from Yar. Co., including Mud and Seal Is., to Cum. Co. A total of 101 was tallied on the NAMC, an impressive number. At least two pairs have returned to the graveled driveway on Wolfville Ridge where they have been nesting successfully for 15 years. The first chicks appeared May 10, about a week earlier than average (JCT). Seven were at Saxon St. Pond, Kings Co., Mar. 27, which seems to be a favorite assembly point spring and fall (RBS). In spite of the influx of birds in late January in the N part of the Province, few breeding birds were reported. DBM and RWK tallied only six May 19-29 in CB Co. and noted that they were very local.

A faithful AM. OYSTERCATCHER arrived on CSI, Apr. 7, a day earlier than last year, but a second was not noticed until Apr. 29, followed soon after by a third (MUN, CST *et al.*). A pair has formed and nesting activity is being monitored.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS were widespread and plentiful with over 392 individuals reported on the NAMC, an all time high. First back was one at Eel L., Yar. Co., Apr. 23 (MUN), but most arrived from Apr. 28 on. Highest counts on the NAMC were: 83 in Pict. Co.; 45 in CB Co.; 98 in Cum. Co. One hopes that the two calling from a bog at Big Pond, CB, May 16 were attempting to nest (DBM, Sean Roach). RFL watched 10 foraging Yellowlegs sp. at Antigonish Landing May 4, at 200 m distance, "darting around in the mud, not wading." Greaters commonly dash about searching for prey, but usually in several inches of water. This characteristic behaviour is not seen so often in Lessers, which also prefer shallower water, but there is overlap, so it's not easy to identify them by behaviour alone. The probability is that these were Greaters. Usually only one or two LESSER YELLOWLEGS are noted in spring. Six were reported at Sweeneys Pond, Yar. Co., Apr. 30 (PRG, Jacqueline d'Entremont) and two at Martinique Beach, HRM May 6 (Matt Hebb). Participants on the NAMC counted 25, a high number. Presumably these were identified by their typical two-note calls, slender, straight bills, and other field marks. I often find it difficult to separate these two species when they occur alone unless I hear them call or can study them through a scope. The only SOLITARY SANDPIPERS reported were two on the NAMC, from Rich. Co.



Our most visible and audible shorebird, the WILLET, arrived on schedule and was reported all around the coast. An early outlier was at CSI, Mar. 15 (MUN), but most birds did not arrive until Apr. 28; by mid-May most were on territory. The first arrival at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Apr. 28 was the earliest record for that beach (JSC). An astonishing 546 were recorded on the NAMC, 134 of which were in Shel. Co., and 128 in HRM. A notable concentration of 36 birds was at Morien Bar, CB as late as May 23 (DBM). An early SPOTTED SANDPIPER was at Taylor Hd. PP, Apr. 29 (TEP). Four were on Sable I. from May 3 on (ZOL), and ten pairs were



reported on the mainland in scattered locations by mid-May. A total of 59 was counted during the NAMC. Up to 11 were at South Bar, CB by May 29 (DBM, RWK).

Now regular in spring, at least two UPLAND SANDPIPERS were reported. One was at R. Bourgeois, CB, Apr. 5-8, discovered by George and Sharon Digout, and seen by other observers. Another, or the same wandering bird, was on Ligan Rd., CB, May 13 (CSM, TMM). On the same day one was located at CSI and was still there at the end of May (MUN). The annual spring sighting of WHIMBREL occurred as usual at our premier shorebird location, CSI, where there were up to three May 11 & 28 (MUN, ETM).

The RUDDY TURNSTONE at Martinique Beach, HRM, Mar. 11 had no doubt overwintered (TEP), whereas the ten, in bright alternate/breeding plumage, on CSI, Apr. 20, were probably early migrants (MUN). RED KNOTS overwintered in good numbers: 50 were still at CSI Mar. 25, and 14 seemed to divide their time between Crescent and Cherry Hill Beaches, Lun. Co. up to Mar. 9 (var. obs.). By Apr. 30 there were 80 at CSI, some in alternate/breeding plumage, perhaps a mix of wintering birds and new migrants (JON, MUN). Six were at Martinique Beach, HRM, Apr. 15 (IAM, NSBS). The report of two at Morien Bar, CB, May 29 may be the first spring record for that area (DBM, RWK).

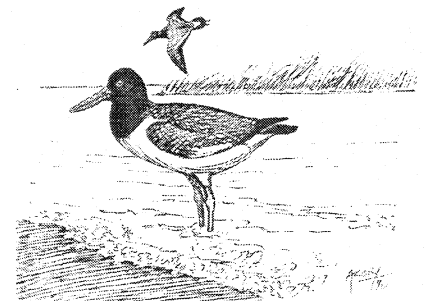
Late winter SANDERLING were confined to CSI where there were 125 Mar. 11 (MUN). On Sable I. there were 300+ Apr. 9 & May 17. How many in this mix were overwinterers or migrants is difficult to say (ZOL). Otherwise, migrants were absent from our beaches, except for the 80 counted in Shel. Co. during the NAMC. Fifteen SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS were counted in Hants Co. during the NAMC, a good number for spring. Two were carefully studied on Seal I., May 27 (JUG, SJF). LEAST SANDPIPERS were underreported except for the NAMC where 69 were tallied, 29 in Cum. Co. and 26 in Pict. Co. There was no evidence of breeding activity. Three early birds appeared in Merigomish, Pict. Co., May 5 (KJM). Only a singleton showed up at the Port Williams sewage pond, May 23 (JCT, JET); two were on Seal I., May 25-26; three were at South Bar and Ingonish, CB, May 29 & 30 (DBM, RWK).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS are uncommon in spring and only one was reported, at South Bar, May 29, the third late-May record DBM has had in CB. A sizable flock of 100 PURPLE SANDPIPERS were still wintering at White Hd., Guys. Co., Mar. 6 (RFL, MZG), and smaller flocks were seen around the province into early April. Late lingerers were 60 at Gull Rock, Brier I. May 13 (BLM *et al.*), and five at South Bar, CB, May 29 (DBM, RWK). Forty-five DUNLIN were still at CSI, Mar. 11 and by Apr. 22 were showing "a lot of black on their bellies" (MUN, JON). Sixteen stayed around to be counted on the NAMC. Fourteen at Martinique Beach, HRM, Apr. 15 had probably wintered locally (IAM, NSBS). A single bird in partial alternate plumage was at River John, Pict. Co., May 1 (KJM, Gary Murray), and another was on Sable I., May 16 (ZOL).

STILT SANDPIPERS are rarely found here in spring as they are thought to migrate NW long before they reach our shores, so the one in alternate/breeding plumage at Cape Light, CSI, May 7 was a noteworthy find (MUN). Only two SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS were reported, both in HRM, on the NAMC.

COM. SNIPE are considered locally common, but reports seem to have dwindled to a handful. Tony Bidwell, in Middleboro, near Wallace, Cum. Co. notes that birds that used "to nest yearly in a draw nearby" have not appeared for three years. Most sightings were from the N part of the province. Early was one spotted at Sydney R., Mar. 26 (DBM). MAB heard them winnowing in his back yard in Pict. Co., Apr. 8. RFL saw one each at Crystal Cliffs and Frasers Marsh, Ant. Co., Apr. 29 & May 1. A total of 120 were tallied on the NAMC, 23 in CB, Co., 25 in Hants, and 30 in Pict. AM. WOODCOCK were widely reported, perhaps because the early arrivals were more visible as they searched for food during the cold spell that occurred in mid-March. Earliest to be reported was one at Halls Hbr., Kings Co., Mar. 15 (M. McCall). Another heard "peenting" at South Side Hbr., Ant. Co., Mar. 22 was the earliest date RFL recorded for that area. One even ventured onto a frozen city lawn at Sherwood P., HRM, Mar. 20 (JEH). An ailing bird was brought to KFS at Apple R., Cum. Co., Mar. 20, but it succumbed, perhaps as a result of the cold. At least 100 survived to be counted on the NAMC, 34 from Pict. Co., and 22 from Hants.

Only a few RED-NECKED PHALAROPE were reported, which probably reflects the fact that there were few observers offshore. MUN *et al.* identified 25 or so off CSI, May 4. About 300 unidentified phalaropes were counted offshore May 5 (Craig Nickerson *vide* MUN). RED PHALAROPE reported were all storm-driven: one at CSI, May 6 & 13 (MUN *et al.*); one in partial breeding plumage on Sable I. May 22 (ZOL); a beautiful alternate-plumaged bird which spent May 22-30 in the Big Pond on Seal I. (SJF, JUG, IAM). □



Gulls Through Alcids

By Blake Maybank

The only jaegers reported were two POMARINE JAEGERs on Georges Bank, Apr. 28 (RSD). LAUGHING GULLS continue to be scarce, and all appeared in late May. MUN saw an adult on CSI, May 28, and on the same day ALM & CAM had two at Port Morien. One was seen the following day at Catalone Gut (RWK, DBM). BLACK-HEADED GULLS have sex appeal so people notice them. Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co., holds appeal for these gulls, along with many other larids: RFL counted 110, Mar. 25, up from 80 two weeks earlier. The pond still held six by mid-April (ELM, *et al.*), and one until May 7 (ELM, AHM). Many moved through eastern HRM in early April (20 at Conrad Beach, Apr. 1, JAH, FLL). In CB, Glace Bay still held 14 at the end of April (RWK, CAM), while on the mainland JAH had a single very late bird on the First Peninsula, Lun. Co., May 13. There were few significant BONAPARTE'S GULL reports, but the famous Ogdens Pond lured up to 50 birds there May 7, and 76 were noted on the NAMC, all but two from the Northumberland shore. In mid-April PRG counted up to 13 Bonaparte's at Sweeneys Pond, Yar. Co., a good number for such a southerly locale. The NAMC total for RING-BILLED GULLS was 355, from 18 counties, so reporters must excuse me for not listing reports of a few birds here and there. At the Ogdens Pond feeding frenzy ELM counted 150 Ring-billeds Apr. 14, the highest single count noted. KFS had five at the Apple R. impoundment, May 13; the birds remain scarce along that part of the province's coast. The NAMC posted a HERRING GULL total of more than 15,000 birds, spread out across the province, but RFL noted "thousands" at Ogdens Pond, Apr. 11. ICELAND GULL numbers dropped in April, as is normal, so a count of 100 in Glace Bay Hbr., Apr. 30 (RWK, CAM), was noteworthy. ZOL had 255 on Sable in mid-April, with 50+ still present on May 14. A few lingered until the end of May in CB, with most harbours holding one or two (fide DBM). May Iceland Gull records from the mainland are more

unusual, notwithstanding the 154 birds reported from the HRM on the NAMC, a figure that should have been substantiated (and I believe might be in error) -- RFL had one at Ogdens Pond on the NAMC, and three were reported from each of Pict. and Yar. Cos. BLM had a single bird at Freeport on Long I., May 14, most unusual for the place and time. At least six adult LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS were noted in the period, all in April. Two (or more) were seen in Kings Co. Apr. 6-15 (DOU, RBS, JLN, TMF), while singles were at Waterside PP, Apr. 14 (KNK), and at Conrad Beach, Apr. 4 (Don MacLaughlin). The most intriguing sighting was of two ads., Apr. 2, at Petite Rivière, Lun. Co., by ELM -- one bird was of the expected race, *L.f. graelsii*, while the other was apparently *L.f. intermedius* (the first reported from Nova Scotia), and his notes certainly do suggest that form, which has previously occurred in Newfoundland. I trust everyone is carefully separating late immature GLAUCOUS GULLS from Iceland Gulls. The NAMC noted 24, most in CB, but three were in Yar. and Pict. Cos. The Ogdens Pond feeding frenzy held 30 birds, Apr. 14 (ELM), with the last present Apr. 26. The last two in Digby Co. were at Short Beach, Apr. 24 (KAA). The latest, on CB, was at Glace Bay, May 27 (DBM, *et al.*). More than 6,600 GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS were tallied on the NAMC, from every county. Although this is many fewer than are actually extant, it is still too high a number for our nesting terns and eiders. On the NAMC there were 1,440 BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES, all but two in CB Co., where there are several breeding colonies. The singles were on Brier I. (BLM, ELM), and in Inv. Co.

CASPIAN TERN sightings were nicely spaced out -- MSM and JAF had one at Parrsboro, Apr. 28, while KNK followed up with two at Lower Barneys R., Pict. Co., Apr. 29, and one at Lyons Brook, Pict. Co., May 5. Finally, SJF and JUG, on May 27, a half hour out of Seal I. en route for Clarks Hbr., put up a flock of

six that had been resting on the water. RSD, TSD, *et al.*, had the first returning ROSEATE TERNS at Lower West Pubnico, May 13. The first mainland COMMON TERNS were off Brier I., May 2 (RBS), while the first for CB were May 10, at South Bar of Sydney Hbr. (DBM). The first ARCTIC TERNS were reported from Round I., May 13 -- but which Round I.? There are five such islands, and one village, in Nova Scotia. BLM had a single bird off Freeport, Long I., May 14.

Late, oiled COMMON MURRES were at West Pubnico, Apr. 15-22 (MUN), and at the Morien Bar, CB (RWK, CAM, ALM). RWK counted 28 from the Newfoundland ferry, May 21. Five late, single, THICK-BILLED MURRES were seen in March (two in CB, and two on CSI), and TIA had two in the Northwest Arm of Halifax Hbr., Apr. 2. There were three Razorbill seen from the Newfoundland ferry, May 21 (RWK), and JWM found a single bird at East Bay of the Bras d'Or Lakes, fishing under the bridge, floating down river and then flying back up. The bird repeated these antics for DBM on May 22.

BLACK GUILLEMOTS breed on many cliffs and islands around the province, so reports of a few birds from here or there don't relay much information. However, IAM did a traditional count of the breeding birds on Seal I., and found 103, May 29, while on nearby Round and Noddy Is., TCD counted 31 on May 13. On his ferry crossing to Newfoundland May 21, RWK had but three ATLANTIC PUFFINS. More significantly, with respect to the potential for recolonizing old haunts, TCD *et al.* counted 32 around Round and Noddy Is., in the outer Tuskets, May 13. □

"Note:

The photo of the Thayer's Gull in the last issue was quite underexposed (though the original is reliable), so the very dark charcoal gray (near black) primaries came out as medium gray, and the back was almost white. Unfortunately, this made the bird look like a very pale Kumlien's" Gull instead of a bona fide Thayer's."

Doves Through Woodpeckers

By Ian McLaren

This year, ROCK DOVES (2,001) and MOURNING DOVES (1,996) were almost equally represented on the NAMC, the latter species probably relatively more prevalent in birders' haunts. In downtown Metro, the former begin nesting in February or earlier, but may be later in "wilder" habitats; TOB found ten eggs in nests on the highway overpass near Minesville, Hfx. Co., Apr. 1. No one reported on breeding Mourning Doves this spring. We don't always get reports of BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS until summer, but this year one turned up on Sable I. 19 May (ZOL).

During late March through mid-May Susann Myers organized a series of standardized owl counts along three

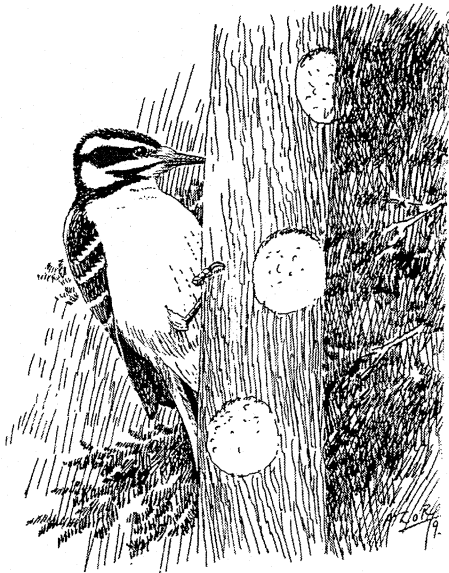
quiet dirt roads on CBI that we hope will become a good index of population changes in the future. Here I report only the maxima for each species on each route surveyed. These included seven GREAT HORNED OWLS along Stirling Rd., Rich. Co., Apr. 28, 17(!) along Salmon R. Rd., CB Co., May 5, and nine in the Grand Mira area, May 6. In addition there were 35 NAMC birds May 13 (down from last year's, but probably reflecting nocturnal effort) and reports of about 10 others from scattered locations, including one probably on the move on CSI, Apr. 26 (J. Atkinson). Clearly these big predators are doing well. The three SNOWY OWLS wintering on Cape Sable and around The Hawk, CSI, were joined by a fourth, Mar. 25, and two

were still there at least until Apr. 12 (*fide* MUN). According to BLF, although most of his Kings Co. nest boxes were occupied by BARRED OWLS, eggs were only laid in six of them, "probably due to a drop in food supply." First to fledge were two from his backyard nest, May 22. The censuses by SEM *et al.* on CBI produced maxima of 15 along Stirling Rd., Apr. 28, nine along Salmon R. Rd., May 5, and 10 in the Grand Mira area, May 6. Along with 96 tallied on the NAMC (again down from last year's total), about 20 were reported from around the province. One of these was munching a snake in Keji. NP, May 21 (Matt Hebb). It is gratifying to have word of a LONG-EARED OWL along the Salmon R. Rd., CB Co., Mar. 22, another at an unreported location during the CB owl survey (SEM *et al.*), and a third in Shel. Co. during the NAMC. Five to seven SHORT-EARED OWLS were along dykes N of Avonport in mid-March (*fide* JWW), and up to two in Kings Co. until late March (var. obs.). The trio wintering on Cape Sable and The Hawk, CSI, became four by Mar. 25 (MUN). Other apparent migrants appeared on Big I., Pict. Co., Mar. 23-25 (DOU, KJM), and at Louisbourg, Mar. 20-24. Breeding season birds were noted at Bay St. Lawrence, Vic. Co., May 5 (ELM) and in Inv. Co., during the NAMC. The earliest calling N. SAW-WHET OWLS reported were in Wolfville 21 Mar. and near Elgin, Pict. Co., 23 Mar. (KJM), but on the next day, eight were found in Queens Co. (JAH). The six NAMC birds were outclassed by eight in the Upper Grand Mira area during SEM's (with CAM, ALM) CB owl survey 5 May. Otherwise there were a dozen reports totaling some 18 birds around the province. Somewhat disappointing was one Saw-whet occupying a nest box set by RFL for BOREAL OWL at Cape St. Lawrence Trail, Inv. Co. None of these elusive birds turned up on his surveys in Guys. Co. and the CB Highlands this spring (RFL *et al.*). However, a migrant appeared on Sable I., Apr. 29 – May 2, supplying the third record there. ZOL found it on the first morning perched in a



propane shed and grasping a dead Leach's Storm-Petrel which had begun to nest there. After dark, both it and its prey were gone. This was repeated for the next three days. This occurrence makes more plausible an undocumented migrant (?) said to have been heard calling from dense spruce between Granville Ferry and Port Royal, Anna. Co., in early April (D. Tinker).

An early COM. NIGHTHAWK reported as heard over a field at Yarmouth, Apr. 28, was not unprecedented. Nevertheless, care must be taken to ensure that such early birds are not the similar-sounding Am. Woodcock. The next was a NAMC bird on Brier I., May 13 (var. obs.). The next reports were of individuals May 29 at New Glasgow (KJM), Boularderie, Vic. Co. (KJM), and Frenchvale, CB Co. (DBM). One the next day at the Robie Tufts Centre was chased away by the Merlin-wary swifts. Although WHIPPOOR-WILL was not reported this spring, I have heard that one was singing as usual in Spryfield by early June. Much the earliest CHIMNEY SWIFT ever in Nova Scotia was at Schooner Pond, CB Co., Apr. 8 (CAM, AAM), when it ought to have been no closer than SE US. The bird appeared too large and dark for an earlier-migrating, but much less plausible, Vaux's Swift from the far west



(CAM). The next swifts were a timely eight entering the Temperance St. Chimney, New Glasgow, May 5 (KJM), and 41 at the Robie Tufts Centre, Wolfville, May 8 (fide JWW). Scattered

migrants were noted through late May, and the usual roosting concentrations occurred: up to 175 at the Robie Tufts Centre, Wolfville, May 18, as usual being harassed by a Merlin and 650-700 at the Temperance St. chimney, May 30 (KJM). An extremely early male RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, not entirely unprecedented (see Tufts), appeared at Bedford, Apr. 18 (Joyce Chalmers, *fide* PLC). More timely males were one at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., May 2 (the Welches) and seven in various localities, May 5-7. The first reported female was again by Joyce Chalmers at Bedford, May 9, and their later migration is evident in four on Seal I., May 25-27 (SJF, JUG). At month's end, Phil Forman was able to approach within a foot or so of a totally absorbed female that was being swooped at in aerial displays by a couple of males. The later NAMC date this year is probably responsible for the total of 124 hummers, compared with only nine last year.

In the last issue there was a suggestion that BELTED KINGFISHERS suffered in late February. The only ones reported to have wintered throughout were at Antigonish Landing (KJM) and Conrad Beach (PLC), although doubtless more did so. One, Mar. 22, at Saxon Pond, Kings Co. (JCT), had certainly not wintered in the immediate vicinity, although one at Lawrencetown, Mar. 27 (DMW) could have. The "first in CB" was not until Apr. 4 (CAM) when one also appeared on Sable I. (ZOL). Thereafter the NAMC gives the best fix on numbers; would one have believed that the 286 noted (190 last year) made them one-seventh as common as Mourning Doves?

The overwintering **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** in Wolfville was last seen at the Herbin's feeder briefly in early May. An "overshooting" male was on Brier I., May 10-20 (CAH) and, more surprisingly, one bird was reported from Clayton Park, Halifax, May 29 (SCY et al.). Individual **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS** first appeared early and synchronously: Apr. 3-6 on CSI (MUN et al.); Apr. 4 on Brier I. (CAH), Sable I. (ZOL) and at Coldbrook, Kings Co. (AAM); Apr. 5 at Woods Hbr., Shel. Co. (CST). All other reports were for May,

including 50 on the NAMC, May 13, less than half last year's 120. A bird in "juvenile plumage" on Wolfville Ridge,



Apr. 22, was the first spring example ever seen by BLF. The bander's "bible" by Pyle indicates that mixed juv. plumage is "occasionally" retained into the second year. **DOWNY WOODPECKERS** (376) as expected outnumbered **HAIRY WOODPECKERS** (200) on the NAMC, both quite close to last year's scores. Other scattered sightings add little; a Downy nest at Bear Pt., Shel. Co., May 14 (GRM), and early (?) copulation of Hairys at Wolfville, Mar. 22 (BLF), and a nest, May 25, in Rich. Co. (DBM), were the only reported signs of breeding. A fem. **BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER** was in classical habitat at Taylor Hd. PP, Mar. 25 (TEP). Birds on the NAMC included singles in Cum., Hfx., and Pict. Cos., and three in Hants Co. A nest discovered May 6 at Mt. Uniake by field trippers (led by the Payzants) was still active May 28 (TEP). Surely many more than the three N. **FLICKERS** noted in March had overwintered. One on Brier I., Apr. 14 supplied our first rather late, undoubted spring arrival, and several appeared elsewhere Apr. 16. The 676 on the NAMC were about two thirds of last year's total. The 71 **PILEATED WOODPECKERS** on the NAMC were almost the same as last year's total, as were the 14 reports of 21 scattered individuals on other dates. Among them, a bird on central Long I., May 22 was further down Digby Neck than CAH had ever noted. □

Flycatchers Through Thrushes

By Eric L. Mills

In contrast to last year, reports of migrant and resident tyrant flycatchers were abundant, revealing interesting patterns of arrival. The first OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER was at Polsons Brook, Ant. Co., May 21 (RFL, MZG), and the second in Apple R., Cum. Co. May 26-29 (KFS). In early June they were widespread but sparse in most suitable habitat. AAM and JCT commented that E. WOOD-PEWEEES were late arriving, an observation borne out by reports: only two on the NAMC, May 13 (in Yar. and Kings Cos.); one heard, Coldbrook, Kings Co., and Deerfield, Queens Co., May 22 (AAM, PRG); one, Wolfville Ridge, Kings Co., May 26 (JCT); three on Seal I., Yar. Co., May 26-27 (JUG, SJF); and two on Sable I. May 27, followed by others, June 2 (ZOL). Typically late migrants among the empids, there was an early YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER at Coldbrook, Kings Co., May 13 (AAM) (also one in HRM the same day on the NAMC), and early arrivals for CBI at Irish Cove, Rich. Co., 25-29 May and Ben Eoin, CB Co., May 29 (DBM, RWK). One was on Seal I., Yar. Co. May 26-27 (JUG, SJF). By May 27 there were 10+ singing birds in the SW in the Mickey Hill Wilderness area, Anna. Co. (NSBS, *fide* AAM). ALDER FLYCATCHERS were sparsely reported, the first ones and twos during the NAMC, May 13, in Yar., Anna. and Kings Cos., then at Apple R., Cum. Co., May 22, followed by numbers in Margaretsville, Anna. Co., May 27-28 (PLC) and Kentville, Kings Co., May 28 (RBS). As late as May 29, DBM and RWK found none on a Big Day count in CB Co. About on schedule, the first LEAST FLYCATCHER was at Newtonville, Kings Co., May 6 (BLF), and at Kentville, Kings Co., May 8, where they were common by the third week of the month (AAM). Much farther to the NE, DBM and RWK found none on their Big Day in CB Co., May 29. An E. PHOEBE arrived in Halifax, Apr. 3 (TIA), followed by individuals on Sable I., Apr. 11, 13, 17-18, 24 & 29 (ZOL). Elsewhere, there were migrants at Port

Joli and Mitchells Brook, Queens Co., Apr. 8 (JAH); Steam Mill, Kings Co., Apr. 13 (AAM); Brier I. Apr. 14 and May 20 (CAH, PLC); The Hawk, CSI (3), Apr. 15 (MUN); Whites L., HRM, May 20 (MAD, BLM) and Seal I., Yar. Co., May 24-27 (JUG, SJF), an interestingly broad range of dates. Summer residents at White Rock, Kings Co., were back by Apr. 14 and nesting



by the end of May (BLF). The first GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER of the year was on The Hawk, CSI, May 17 (MUN), and AAM detected a resident pair at Coldbrook, Kings Co., May 18, still present at the end of the month. Still on the move, one was found by MUN on Brier I., May 30. The earliest E. KINGBIRDS were at Brier I., May 13 (BLM, ELM) and elsewhere in the SW the same day on the NAMC; Apple R., Cum. Co., May 15 (KFS); and Sable I., May 16 (ZOL). Thereafter, records clustered from May 19-27, with indications of arrivals in CBI, May 21

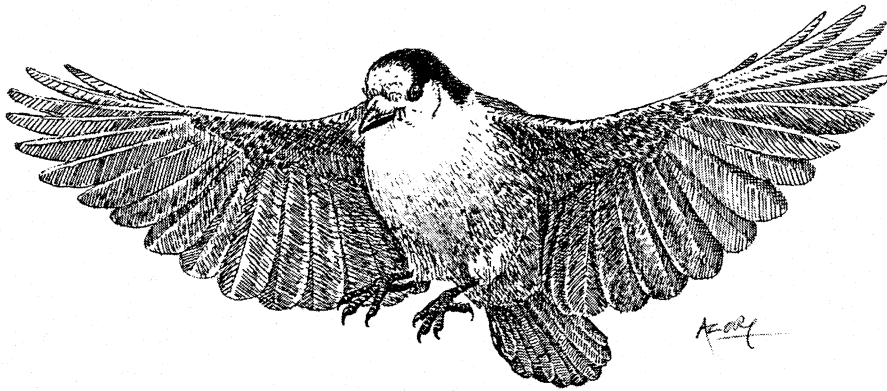
(individuals at Glace Bay and Schooner Pond, CB Co., RWK); 11 on Seal I., Yar. Co., May 22-27 (JUG, SJF); one at Taylor Hd., HRM, May 29-30 (TEP) and 12 on Seal I., Yar. Co., (IAM *et al.*). Interestingly, despite the abundance of migrants, Tony Bidwell notes that near Wallace, Cum. Co., the usual six to eight pairs of residents have not returned for the past three years.

The winter abundance of NORTHERN SHRIKES spilled well over into spring. There were 14 reports in March throughout the province from Yar. Co. to CB Co., six in April (including one singing Apr. 8 at Whitehill, Pict. Co, MAB), ranging from Lun. Co. in the SW to CB Co. in the NE, and, surprisingly, some in May: individuals at Yarmouth Mt. and W Apple R., Cum. Co., May 1 (MSM) and Sand L., CB Co., May 5 (CAM, ALM).

Vireos began to arrive with the warblers during the first 10 days of May, as GWT and JCT noted in Kings Co. A pleasant surprise at any time, there were single WHITE-EYED VIREOS, May 5 in Broad Cove, Lun. Co. (SJF, Eileen Morrison); Clam Point, CSI, May 8 (GRM); in Shel. Co. during the NAMC, May 13; and banded on BPI, Shel. Co., May 14 (TMF). This would be an unusual number of this rare southerner any year. Two YELLOW-THROATED VIREOS were noted Apr. 30: one banded on BPI, Shel. Co. (TMF); and the other, reported without documentation, singing N of Chester, Lun. Co. . An early BLUE-HEADED VIREO at Baccaro, Shel. Co., Apr. 30 (CST, MUN, ELM) preceded the main arrivals from May 5-19 which ranged from Yar. Co. to CB Co. First arrivals in the Kentville area, Kings Co., were May 5 (AAM); around Apple R., Cum. Co., May 13 (KFS); on Brier I., Digby Co., May 13 (BLM, ELM); and in CB Co. May 16 (DBM, Sean Roach). RWK and DBM reported the only PHILADELPHIA VIREO, May 19 at Schooner Pond, CB Co. Despite their abundance as breeders and omnipresent songsters of the hot summer

days, RED-EYED VIREOS were late and little-recorded: the first at Apple R. (KFS) and the John Lusby Marsh, Cum. Co. (JBO) May 13, along with other NAMC locations S and W from Cum. Co.; one in Middleton, Kings Co., May 19 (RBS); two in Maccan, Cum. Co., May 22 (KFS); and two at Big Pond, CB Co., May 29 were the first of the year (DBM, RWK).

HORNED LARKS, presumably all migrants, were seen from early March through the middle of May, representative records being small flocks (three to 20+) in the Canard-Grand Pré areas, Kings Co., Mar. 7-18 (RBS, JCT, JET, JWW); seven to eight on CSI, Shel. Co., Mar. 16 (JCZ); two in Glace Bay Sanctuary, CB Co., Apr. 26 (CAM, ALM); three at Morien Sandbar, CB Co., Apr. 4 (CAM, ALM); four on Sable I.



KFS's notes indicate the breeding time of GRAY JAYS in the Apple R., Cum. Co., area: four coming to her feeder in March disappeared at the end of the month, to reappear May 13 and thereafter. At Sunken L., Kings Co., June 4, BLF noted a pair with three young, but the few other reports from CBI, Lun. and Guys. Cos. were of ones and twos only. BLUE JAYS sprang into prominence at the end of March. As RBS commented of the Kings Co. area then, "woods and bushes... seem to be full of pairs and small flocks... migrant influx?" Other comments indicate widespread abundance throughout the province in April and May. Nesting activities by AM. CROWS, including branch-breaking and actual nest building, were observed by KFS in Apple R., Cum. Co., beginning Mar. 25 and continuing until mid-April in Halifax (PLC), and in Georges R., CB Co., Apr. 7 (DBM). C. RAVENS "cavorting above campus" at UCCB, Sydney, CB Co. and elsewhere Mar. 10 and 20 (DBM) undoubtedly indicated courtship, and May 6 at Cape St. Lawrence, Inv. Co., one was vigorously chasing an adult Bald Eagle that had apparently captured a nestling (RFL, ELM *et al.*).

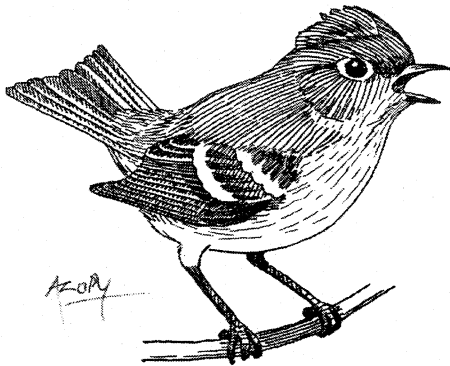
Apr. 8 and again on the 22nd (ZOL); and one on South Bar, CB Co., May 13 (DBM, David Forrester).

Although PURPLE MARTINS were at their breeding sites in Amherst and Oxford, Cum. Co., by mid-summer, the first migrants were at Daniels Hd., CSI, as early as Apr. 7 and at Pembroke, Yar. Co., Apr. 12 (MUN). CAH noted of another early Martin, on Brier I., Apr. 29, that it was "sadly, much too early." Three were among commoner hirundines in the Medford area, Kings Co., May 20-21 (*vide* JCT). Two TREE SWALLOWS at Roberts I., Yar. Co., Mar. 30 (MUN) and five at Sand L., CB Co., Apr. 5 (CAM, ALM), were soon followed by the real influx, 50 at Roberts I., Apr. 8 (MUN). Throughout the rest of April, Tree Swallows were increasingly abundant. Forty with other swallow species at McKays Pond, Inv. Co., May 5 (ELM, AHM) (just before the first arrivals in Newfoundland, May 8, *vide* Todd Boland); 15+ in New Salem, Cum. Co., May 9 (KFS); 80 on Brier I., Digby Co., May 13 (BLM, ELM); and two on Sable I., May 18 (ZOL), indicated that birds were still passing through that late. Another on Sable I., May 30 seems likely to have been just a non-breeding

wanderer. In some areas, notably Maders Cove, Lun. Co., nesting had begun by May 6 (JBM). Lone BANK SWALLOWS occurred May 5 on Sable I. (ZOL) and with Tree Swallows and others over McKays Pond, Inv. Co. (ELM, AHM) the same day that the vanguard reached Newfoundland, May 8 (*vide* Todd Boland). This species was not back in numbers at Sydney, CB Co., until May 26 however (DBM). Sixteen arrived May 29 on Seal I., Yar. Co. (IAM *et al.*), indicating that migration was not complete on that date. One CLIFF SWALLOW was among numerous Tree Swallows and others over McKays Pond (near Judique), Inv. Co., May 5 (ELM, AHM), precursor of 20+ reported from APBS, Cum. Co., May 13 (JBO) and from many other areas the same day during the NAMC. The first in the Advocate area, Cum. Co., were seen May 18 and 29 (KFS). Nesting had begun in Big Pond, CB Co., by May 29 (DBM, RWK). No strong pattern of BARN SWALLOW migration emerges after the first, on CSI, Apr. 1 (MUN), although ZOL's records from Sable I. (two Apr. 27, five May 6, and four May 30) and one with other migrant swallows over McKays Pond, Inv. Co., May 5 (ELM, AHM), indicate a protracted migration. DBM found Barn Swallows "widespread" by May 23 in CB Co. In Apple R., Cum. Co., resident birds arrived May 1-5 and had nests by June 1 (KFS).

"Widespread and common" throughout the reporting period, as DBM said of BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES in CB Co., appears to apply everywhere. KFS's note that 12+ at her feeder in Apple R., Cum. Co., in March and April had declined to two to four in May corresponds with the increase of natural food available and with the breeding of this attractive common species. Scanty records of BOREAL CHICKADEE, deemed "widespread" in CB Co. in mid May (DBM), and widespread also on the NAMC, May 13, indicate only that this attractive but unostentatious species was about as normal. The Morses (JBM) at Maders Cove, Lun. Co., bear out my impression that at least on the South Shore RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES have increased in abundance since their low point last year,

although in mid May in CB Co. DBM found them "widespread but not very common" after a mid March low. A resident **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** was in Petite Rivière, Lun. Co., Mar. 5 (JAH). In Apple R., Cum.



Co., KFS had a male at her feeder Apr. 8-10 (corresponding with a number of reports in southern NB - *fide* BRD) and a female Apr. 29-30. Elsewhere, one reappeared on the Wolfville Ridge, Mar. 26 (JCT); one was at Lower W Pubnico, Yar. Co., Apr. 11 (RSD); one in Louisburg, CB Co., May 6 (SEM); several throughout the province on the NAMC, May 13; one in Blomidon PP, May 21 (BLM); and one in Irish Cove, Rich. Co., May 25 (EMS, DBM, Sean Roach). PLC suggests that this species is more abundant now than in recent years in South End Halifax. **BROWN CREEPER** reports were few, mainly in March in HRM, Lun., and Kings Cos., but two on Mud I., Shel. Co., May 13 are likely to have been migrants. A Creeper "singing in hemlocks" in Ben Eoin, CB Co., May 22 (DBM) no doubt was on territory.

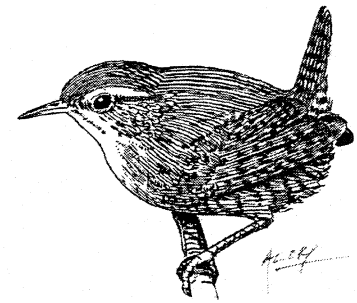
Only two species of wrens were reported this spring (what! No Marsh Wrens at APBS?). A **CAROLINA WREN** appears to have spent at least Mar. 22 in Whites L., HRM (Gwen MacDonald), but details are scanty. A migrant **WINTER WREN** at Daniels Hd., CSI, Apr. 5, preceded the arrival of most residents by about two weeks but was in accordance with arrivals in NB, Apr. 4-14 (*fide* BRD). May abundance in CB Co. were below previous years (DBM), and IAM noted fewer than average on Seal I., Yar. Co., May 29-30. Numbers on the NAMC, May 13, seemed low: only 114 reported throughout the

province and nowhere really abundant.

A **GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET** on Sable I., May 6 (ZOL) suggests migration, but despite other reports from Cum. Co. in March/April (KFS) and the abundance of Golden-crowns in CB Co. late in May (DBM), details of this species' movements are lacking. April saw the arrival of **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS**, the first on CSI, Apr. 12 (MUN), followed by a singing male on the Wolfville Ridge, Apr. 16 (BLF). By early May they were singing loudly throughout the province, although migrants continued to come in, as indicated by two on Sable I., May 5 (another there May 24; ZOL) and four at Sand L., CB Co., May 8 (CAM, ALM). "Downstream" of us, at least in spring, Newfoundland Ruby-crowns were first noted May 4, quite close in time to CBI (*fide* Todd Boland).

EASTERN BLUEBIRDS continue to hang on in the Cape D'Or area, Cum. Co., where first a male appeared in the West Advocate area, May 11, joined by a female later (MSM, JAF). The pair was still present at the end of the month (ELM, BLM). Another was in Woods Hbr., Shel. Co., May 30 (*fide* TCD). A **VEERY** appeared on Sable I., May 2 and was found dead the next day (ZOL). On the mainland, AAM heard his first near Kentville, Kings Co., May 8, but no more until May 18. During the NAMC, May 13, a few were reported as far N as CB, Inv. and Rich. Cos. By May 22 "many" were present in Kings Co. (AAM). Only a day earlier, May 21, RFL and MZG found their first in Beauville, Ant. Co., and in Margaretsville, Anna. Co., PLC heard several May 27-28, suggesting birds fully on territory. Five **GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSHES**, none referable to our breeding species, Bicknell's Thrush, were reported, the first at Sable I., Apr. 27 and another bird there the next day (ZOL). Also on Apr. 28 one was at CSI, Shel. Co. (ETM) and another was banded at BPI (TMF). Two weeks later, AAM carefully examined one in Coldbrook, Kings Co. Always later arriving than we expect, **SWAINSON'S THRUSHES** were just coming up to numbers by the end of May. The first were in HRM and Kings Co. on the NAMC. One appeared at

Sable I., May 18 (ZOL), followed in CB Co. by two at Homeville, May 23 (DBM) and one at Ben Eoin, May 29 (DBM, RWK). **HERMIT THRUSHES** began to push into the province in mid April, the first on Sable I., Apr. 15 (another there May 6; ZOL); one at Five Houses, Lun. Co., Apr. 17; and one at Bear Point, Shel. Co., Apr. 18 (GRM). By May 3, RBS reported that the "woods around White Rock, Kings Co., were full of their song," although others noted absences compared with past years, for example in Bedford, HRM, where PLC found none May 13 during the NAMC (they were abundant in other places that day). Always noteworthy, single **WOOD THRUSHES** appeared on Sable I., May 5-9, 14, & 15-17 (ZOL) and were reported from HRM and Shel. Co. during the NAMC, May 13. Many **AM. ROBINS** arrived to supplement or replace the wintering populations between Mar. 15-31 on the mainland and probably from 2-30 Apr. in CBI (CAM *et al.*) and on Sable I. (ZOL). BRD's reports from Grand Manan, NB, indicate significant numbers by Mar. 10, earlier than in Nova Scotia, but that throughout southern NB, the main early arrival was



Mar. 26-27, roughly corresponding with first arrivals in Newfoundland (*fide* Todd Boland). Finally, to end on a high note, a **VARIED THRUSH** first seen in Lower Sackville, HRM, about Jan. 23 eventually disappeared and may have been the bird seen Mar. 24-25 along the East Uniacke Rd., Hants Co. (Pam Bower). Is it significant that during the same period of time, Varied Thrushes that had wintered in NB and Newfoundland also began to move around (*fide* BRD, Todd Boland)? ☐

Mimics Through Waxwings

By Andy Horn

Most GRAY CATBIRDS arrived in mid-May, peaking around May 20 (JAF, AAM, PLC). NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD reports started with apparent winter residents lingering in Lun., Hfx., and of course Kings Cos. (JAH, PLC, JCT). Late May records may have included prospective breeders outside the Kings Co. stronghold, in Cum., Ant., and Digby Co. (JAF, BLM, RFL). The usual smattering of BROWN THRASHERS appeared, this year in W. Pubnico, Yar. Co., Apr. 12 (RSD), on the Shel. Co. NAMC, May 13, and on Seal

I., May 26-27; the latter bird was "in full song and in full view" (JUG, SJF). EUR. STARLINGS confounded some of us as usual in early spring with their phantom Eastern Meadowlarks and Killdeers; one gave "an excellent rendition of an Eastern Wood Pewee and then followed it with a Red-tailed Hawk's scream" (AAM). They did not yield "mad mobs this spring" in Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (DMW), yet were starting second broods already by late May in Halifax (ABM).

A flock of AMERICAN PIPITS in the last week of May at Pubnico Pt. (RSD) could have been lingering winter residents or migrants. The last flocks of BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS from the winter appeared at widespread locations across the province, right up to the NAMC, when 31 were seen May 13, 21 of those in CB Co. Four in Apple R., Cum. Co., lingered until May 24 (KFS). CEDAR WAXWINGS suddenly appeared everywhere in good numbers during the last week in May (RFL, MZG, PLC). □

Warblers

By Andy Horn

Few birding experiences are more satisfying than specious waves of warblers, which were widely reported in the second week of May. Some species may have been slightly late this year, and few rarities were reported.

TENNESSEE WARBLERS first appeared during the NAMC, with five across the province May 13. They were only sparsely reported thereafter. A spring record of ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, such as the one from CSI, Apr. 30 (MUN), is always a nice surprise. NASHVILLE WARBLERS were widely reported in the second week of May, after early dates of May 6 in Kentville, Kings Co. (RBS) and May 8 at Spencers I., Cum. Co. (JAF, MSM) and near Conquerall Mills, Lun. Co. (SJF). NORTHERN PARULAS first appeared at the southern tip of the province, on BPI, Apr. 26 (TMF) and CSI, Shel. Co., May 3 (MUN), and were widespread by the following week. The earliest YELLOW WARBLERS reported included one at Pubnico Pt., May 8 (RSD), an early date for that location, and 10 in Wolfville (RBS); large numbers were present throughout by mid-month. CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS were first reported May 9 at Hermans I., Lun. Co. (JBM). One observer noted an increase in the Kentville, Kings Co. area in the past few

years (AAM). MAGNOLIA WARBLERS first appeared on CSI (MUN) and Advocate Hbr., Cum. Co.

WARBLERS, eight from Guys. Co. alone, although reports were more characteristically scarce thereafter.



Johnny Nickerson found this beautiful Prothonotary Warbler lurking in the tiny "forest" on Cape Sable Island in the Spring of 1999.

(JAF, MSM), May 8. The NAMC yielded an impressive total of 14 BLACK-THROATED BLUE

Flocks of YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS swelled to numbers in late March that could no longer be attributed

to wintering birds, particularly a flock of 300 near CSI, Mar. 25 (MUN). The first BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER reports came from three counties, Yar., Cum., and Kings, May 3-5 (RSD, BLF, MUN); they were abundant by mid-May. An early BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER sang north of Chester, Lun. Co., Apr. 4 (TIA); the remaining reports were, more characteristically, concentrated in the last week of May. PINE WARBLERS persisted until Mar. 27 in Halifax (Pat McKay) and Apr. 22 in Dartmouth (PLC); two on Seal I., May 30 were likely migrants (IAM *et al.*).

A PALM WARBLER, Mar. 29 near Barrington, Shel. Co. (MUN), was by far the earliest; by mid-April reports were commonplace. The only reports of BAY-BREASTED WARBLERS came May 13 from Halifax (NAMC), May 16 on CSI (MUN) and May 22 at Methals L., Kings Co. (BLF). BLACKPOLL WARBLERS

appeared at several locations in mid-May, with 15 seen during the NAMC. Most sightings were, as usual, in the last week of May, though Birdline reports were generally down (AAM). BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS first appeared May 3 at CSI (MUN) and May 5 in Kentville, (AAM). AM. REDSTARTS were first reported on the May 13 NAMC, when 13 were seen. Most other sightings came from the last week of May, perhaps a week later than usual.

The earliest OVENBIRD was, not surprisingly, at CSI, Apr. 24 (The Ruffs); by mid-May they were sighted just about everywhere. NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES singing at Sunken L., Kings Co., Apr. 29 (BLF) and north of Chester, Lun. Co., Apr. 30 (TIA) edged out the usual early May birds by a few days. A MOURNING WARBLER from the Anna. Co. NAMC, May 13, was much earlier than the usual arrivals

at the end of the month. COM. YELLOWTHROATS made their first appearance May 4 at Port Mouton, Queens Co. (RES), and then were seen at numerous locations during the NAMC, May 13. HOODED WARBLERS made a good showing this spring; perhaps some rode on the backs of those southern herons. The earliest bird patrolled the beach at The Hawk, CSI, Mar. 29 (var. obs.), eating spiders and tolerating close photography. Two more appeared on the Vic. and Yar. Cos. NAMC, May 13, and a fourth was at Schooner Pond, CB Co. May 25 (CAM). The usual half dozen or so reports of WILSON'S WARBLER all fell between May 13 and 20, the high count being 3 from Sable I., May 18 (ZOL). After three CANADA WARBLERS were seen on the Kings Co. NAMC, May 13, the next reports weren't until May 27, when several were reported from Cum. Co. (JAF) and Anna. Co. (NSBS). □

Tanagers Through House Sparrow

By David McCorquodale

Four SUMMER TANAGERS were found this spring, the earliest May 10 was also the furthest north at the Marshall's in Bridgeville, Pict. Co. (KJM, HAB). During the last 10 days of May individuals were on Seal, Cape Sable, and Brier Is. (IAM, CST, CAH). The earliest SCARLET TANAGER was also the furthest north, on the wharf in Port Morien, CB Co., fly catching on Apr. 28 (Jimmy Murrant). The others were on islands, CSI in early May (MUN) and Brier and Seal Is. later in the month (MUN, IAM), locations where tanagers pass through, rather than nest.

More E. TOWHEES were reported this spring than the past two. Of the two at feeders in late February, at least the one in Bedford was still thriving in late March (ROG). Spring arrivals included three different males and a fem. on CSI, the earliest Apr. 30 (JON, MUN). At the other end of the province a fem. made a welcome appearance in Gwen Lunn's yard in Louisbourg, May 3 (SEM). In mid-May there were still two on CSI and another in Yar. Co. for the NAMC. Throughout March and most of April,

small groups of AM. TREE SPARROWS were found on roadsides, more frequently in Kings and CB Cos. than elsewhere. Numbers dwindled towards the end of April, although in the first two weeks of May individuals or small parties were still being seen from Sable I. to Antigonish to Brier I. A pair were inspecting possible nest sites and even starting to build near Greenfield, Kings Co. in mid-May, staying until May 27 -- intriguing (JJN, TMF).

A CHIPPING SPARROW overwintered in Kingsport, Kings Co. (RBS). The first spring arrivals were at Donkin, CB Co., Apr. 8, CSI, Apr. 15 and the next day in Pict. Co. (DBM, MUN, KJM). However, not until the last several days of April were they widespread. For the third year in a row, Digby Co. hosted a FIELD SPARROW, this year a pair in Mavillette, Apr. 21 (KAA). For the past two springs the only reports have been from Brier I. This spring there were four others, the earliest May 7 on CSI (MUN), in Lun. Co. (Stephen Hiltz *vide* JAH), Seal I. (JJN, TMF) and, the latest, May 21 at Schooner Pond, CB Co.

(CAM, ALM). The latter is one of the very few records for Field Sparrow on CBI. A lone VESPER SPARROW was reported, from CSI, May 6 (MUN). It would be interesting to know when they return to their nesting areas in the blueberry fields of Cum. Co.

Sable I. is known for its spectacular vagrants. This spring produced one of them, a striking black and white bird, a male LARK BUNTING, May 27 (ZOL). More mundane, was the arrival of SAVANNAH SPARROWS. A few overwintering individuals lingered on beaches into March. The first arrivals from the south were probably those at Conrad Beach, Apr. 7 (JCZ). By the middle of the month there were only a few more. It wasn't until the last few days of April that numbers were reported from most locations. A major wave arrived on Apr. 30, with more than 200 on lawns on Brier I. (CAH). The endemic race, the "Ipswich" Sparrow, arrived a month earlier, in mid-March as expected. They were found on beaches from CSI east to HRM until late April, about the time the mainland Savannahs

arrived in numbers. Most nest on Sable I., however two may have been on territory near Round Bay, Shel. Co., in May (IAM).

The last few days of May brought the first NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED

difficult to discern from those that overwintered. A major wave of migrants did arrive Mar. 25-26. After that they were singing along roadsides everywhere. The first young were in nests by the end of May (TOB). The first LINCOLN'S SPARROW arrived about

Sable I. (CAH, MUN, ZOL). The first WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW were seen May 3, a maximum count of five, May 12, and the latest report of the spring, May 24; all came from Sable I. (ZOL). The NAMC coincided with a major movement through the province. Almost 80 were tallied compared to a single bird last year. Last winter's excitement, the GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW, stayed at feeders in Halifax until early April. Patricia L. Chalmers checked on her find at least weekly. She reports the last sighting, Apr. 2, was by Don McLaughlin and no luck at finding it for three weeks after that.



This Swamp Sparrow was easily photographed after being pished in at Frasers Marsh, Ant. Co. (Randy Lauff Photo)

Singing DARK-EYED JUNCOS during the second week of March provided welcome relief to the winter blues. Migrants from the south were widespread at the end of March, even more so the first week of April and again in the middle of the month. The first nests must have been active in late April as there were fledglings by May 13 (JCZ). Over the last three years the average number of spring records of LAPLAND LONGSPUR is one. This year there was one male at Mahoneys Beach, Ant. Co., Apr. 14 (ELM) and earlier, five near Truro, Mar. 20 (JBO). In contrast to the paucity of reports of longspurs, there were numerous sightings of SNOW BUNTINGS. In March they were widespread and after the middle of April most sightings were from east of Pictou. The latest were on the NAMC along the Northumberland Shore in Cum. Co. and on CBI.

Warm days in March and April saw N. CARDINALS defending their territories in the metro Halifax area and several coastal locations from Port Mouton to the valley. Away from the places where N. Cardinals have attempted to nest in the past few years, there was a male at a feeder in Braeshore, Pict. Co. in early March (C. Parker). More than 30 were counted from six different counties in the southern half of the province on the NAMC in mid-May.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS arrived early this year, the first Apr. 10 at Hemeons Hd., Shel. Co. (DHY). A surprising nine more, most in Shel. Co. but also on Sable I., Brier I. and in Lun.

SPARROWS to salt marshes near Wolfville, Belleisle Marsh and Seal I. (JET, SJF, JUG). However most had not returned by the end of the month, as many places which will host them later in the summer were still unoccupied. FOX SPARROWS are early migrants, this year earlier than usual. There were two in Broad Cove, Lun. Co. one in Louisbourg and another at Salt Springs, Pict. Co., on the early date of Mar. 17 (var. obs.). Within a few days they were being seen at feeders from CSI to CBI. More than a dozen reports precede the earliest migrants of the past two years. A comment by W. Kettelson of Truro, sums up the migration this year, earlier than usual and fewer than in recent years. Again the lack of snow and mild weather through April seems to have kept them away from feeders. Late in May singing males in suitable nesting habitat were found in Shel. Co. and on CBI.

Singing male SONG SPARROWS brightened up some dull days in early March. The first spring arrivals were

on time May 10 at Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS). A few days later there were still only a few, but from widely separate locations, from Apple R. to Kings Co. to CB Co. There was a migratory movement May 19-21 with two on Sable I. and another at Advocate Hbr., Cum. Co. (ZOL, JAF). It wasn't until the last 10 days of May that they were vocal on their nesting grounds. The first SWAMP SPARROW arrived Apr. 8 at Bishop Pond, Kings Co. and within a week they were widespread in suitable nesting habitat. Of interest were two out of place individuals on Sable I., May 3-7 and May 16 (ZOL).

Several WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS overwintered in the south end of the province and the HRM and there were scattered individuals elsewhere. By the end of March some males were tuning up, but not necessarily in tune (PLC). A wave of migrants was obvious Apr. 14 on CSI (MUN). The largest wave produced spectacular fallouts May 2-4 on Brier I., CSI and

Co., were found later in April. Throughout May, new arrivals were noted from across the province. Besides being early, there were lots of them. The NAMC tallied more than 100, compared to just one in 1999. Typical of the past few springs, there were four reports of BLUE GROSBEAKS. The earliest was a male at Ronald O'Handley's feeder in Sydney Mines, May 3. A first year male was found during the NAMC on Brier I. and the latest was a fem. on Seal I. at the end of the month (IAM *et al.*). As expected, there were far more INDIGO BUNTINGS than Blue Grosbeaks. Less expected was how early and where the first one arrived, at Pearl Magee's feeder in Louisbourg (*fide* SEM), Mar. 29. Two days later the first for the mainland was at a feeder in Rockland, Shel. Co. (DHY). More than 30 others were found, mainly at feeders, through April and May. For the second year in a row a spring male PAINTED BUNTING was reported. Unfortunately for birders, it was found by non-birders, Marv and Linda Norden, and it did not return to their Kings Co. yard after the initial sighting May 21. Interestingly about 10 days later one showed up along the Fundy coast of New Brunswick.

In addition to the DICKCISSEL in Pubnico in late February, another overwintered in Upper LaHave, Lun. Co., last seen in early March (Dorothy Rudolf *fide* JAH). Another, potentially a misdirected spring migrant, was in New Waterford, CB Co., for the NAMC (CSM, TMM). The first BOBOLINKS were seen on the Fairmont Trail, Ant. Co., as expected at the start of the second week of May. A major movement was obvious May 16 on Brier I. (CAH). Later in the month they were back in most of the fields where they nest from the Valley to CBI. The NAMC tallied more than 100, about half in Kings Co., and other concentrations in Anna. and Cum. Cos. Again this year a dearth of breeding birds was noticed in some places, especially in the Wallace area, Cum. Co. (Tim Didwell).

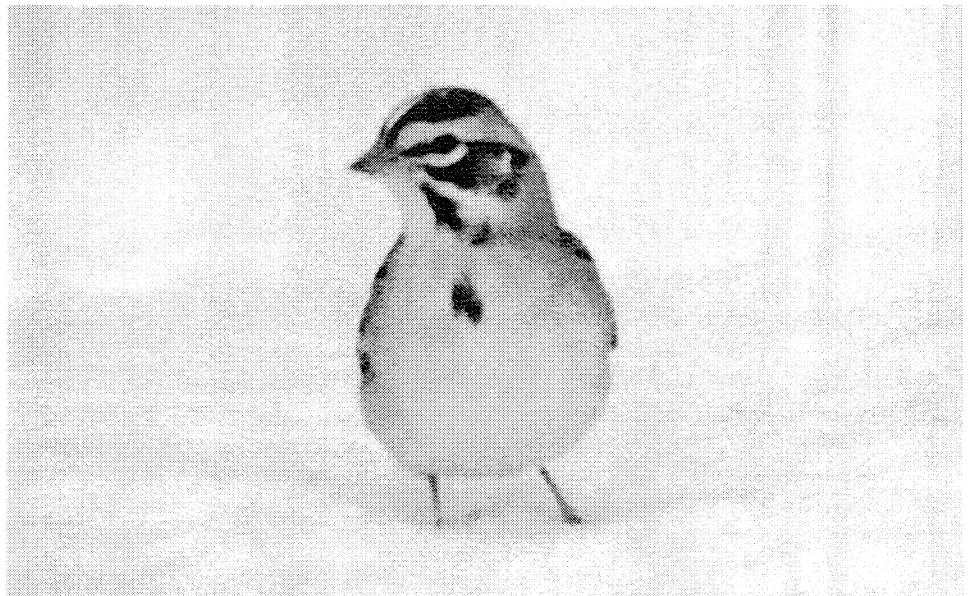
In early March there were a few wandering RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS with the mixed blackbird flocks, especially in the south. March 8-9 brought more returning migrants. The

first made it to CBI, Mar. 16 and an influx Mar. 25 meant males were widespread and conspicuous across the province. Two meadowlarks were reported this spring, one near Grand Pré, Apr. 8 (JCZ) and an E. MEADOWLARK, Mar. 28 at Schooner Pond, CB Co. (George Crowell, BES). Both reports coincide with spring migration into central Canada.

Few reports of RUSTY BLACKBIRDS were received, however the NAMC result was similar to last year's. The first was Mar. 24 in Hopewell, Pict. Co. at the Brennan's feeder and the latest, a lone male on Seal I. at the end of May (IAM *et al.*). A few COMMON GRACKLES overwintered and the vanguard of the spring migration arrived before the beginning of March. A small wave of spring migrants was obvious Mar. 15-17 and then another wave Mar. 25-27. After that they were conspicuous, with more than 6,000 on the NAMC. About 150 BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS were tallied on the NAMC, which is about the same number as last year and on the 1999 CBC. They were scarce in March and then a wave at the end of the second week of April brought new arrivals to

along with three BALTIMORE ORIOLES (CAH). At least two hardy Baltimore Orioles survived the winter at feeders. The one at JAM's in Big Pond, CB Co., was still thriving at the end of April when the first spring migrants arrived on CSI (MUN). Through May, Baltimores were widespread on the mainland, with several new arrivals noted May 10 and May 18-20 in southern and western areas. Twenty were counted on the NAMC, up from just one last year. They are much less common in spring on CBI than they are in the fall so it is interesting that Gertie Betts had her first visit from one at her feeder May 28, the same day several others were reported on CBI. Another island visitor is also noteworthy: a male spent May 6-22 on Sable I. (ZOL).

PINE GROSBEAKS were scarce this spring. They were reported from only seven counties on the NAMC, with a maximum of eight in Hants. PURPLE FINCHES were widespread, yet not numerous through March and April. There was an influx the middle of the first week of May. By mid-May they were both widespread and common with



John MacInnis' photo serves to document a rare winter occurrence of LARK SPARROW. This one stayed December 1998 - January 1999 around Jack MacNeil's feeder in Big Pond, CB Co.

Lun., Shel., Digby and Yar. Cos. and all the way north to CBI.

The only report of an ORCHARD ORIOLE was of a first year male which spent part of May 24 in a tree on Brier I.

more than 2,700 on the NAMC, with a minimum of 16 for a county. Feeders in Port Mouton, Queens, Apple R., Cum. Co. and Salmon R., CB Co. all hosted more than 25 at the end of May (RES, KFS, DBM, RWK). HOUSE FINCHES

are holding their own in Halifax and Yarmouth. Wanderers were also found in Shel., Pict. and CB Cos. in May (GRM, JWM, DBM).

With virtually no cone crop on conifers last year it was expected there would be few crossbills around. In these 'off' years we also expect relatively more RED CROSSBILLS than WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS. This is exactly what we saw this spring. In March there were some Reds in the HRM, some at feeders and some feeding on buds of deciduous trees. Through April and May most of the Reds were at feeders, eating niger or Black Oil sunflowers seeds. On the NAMC most were concentrated in CB and Shel. Cos., with only a few in Pict. and Lun. Cos. Fewer than 30 White-wings were found on the NAMC, with half in Cum. Co. Elsewhere they continued to frequent feeders in the

Louisbourg area throughout the spring (SEM, RWK, DBM).

The invasion of COMMON REDPOLLS continued into the spring, with many feeders across the province hosting a few dozen. Feeders in Apple R., Cum. Co. and in Kings Co. hosted more than 100, sometimes twice that many on some days in March (KFS, AAM, RBS). Numbers did start to decline in late March and continued to do so through April. In early May a couple of dozen was a large group at a feeder. By the NAMC just under 200 were counted across the province, with the vast majority being in Vic., CB and Pict. Cos. Lingering individuals were at feeders in Sydney Mines until May 20 and Canard, Kings Co. until May 26 (Paul McInnis, Tom Regan). Through March and April, redpolls vastly outnumbered PINE SISKINS, with only a handful of

sightings of siskins. In early May things changed. A lone siskin was on Sable I. and a pair in Apple R., Cum. Co. May 3. Then in the next week they arrived in numbers. Close to 1,000 were tallied on the NAMC, with significant concentrations in CB and Pict. Cos. AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES were widespread and reasonably common from early March right through until the end of May. The NAMC tally was down to just more than 2,500 from more than 4,000 last year. EVENING GROSBEAKS were also widespread and reasonably common and welcome additions to feeders. Numbers on the NAMC increased from last year, to more than 1,300. There were HOUSE SPARROWS in all counties, as expected, on the NAMC. The prize for the fewest goes to Vic. Co. □

Abbreviations

Place Names		Bird Names		Counties	
APBS	Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary	Am.	American	Anna. Co.	Annapolis
CB	Cape Breton	Com.	Common	Ant. Co.	Antigonish
CBHNP	CB Highlands National Park	E.	Eastern	CB Co.	Cape Breton
CSI	Cape Sable I.	Eur.	European, Eurasian	Col. Co.	Colchester
Hbr.	Harbour	Mt.	Mountain	Cum. Co.	Cumberland
Hd.	Head	N.	Northern	Digby Co.	Digby
HRM	Halifax Regional Municipality	S.	Southern	Guys. Co.	Guysborough
I.	Island, Isle	W.	Western	Hfx. Co.	Halifax
Is.	Islands, Isles		Other	Hants Co.	Hants
L.	Lake	ad.	adult	Inv. Co.	Inverness
Lwr.	Lower	BBS	Breeding Bird Survey	Kings Co.	Kings
Mt.	Mountain, Mount	ca.	circa (about, approximately)	Lun. Co.	Lunenburg
Mts.	Mountains	CBC	Christmas Bird Count	Pict. Co.	Pictou
N.P.	National Park	fem.	female	Queens Co.	Queens
P.P.	Provincial Park	imm.	immature	Rich. Co.	Richmond
Pen.	Peninsula	juv.	juvenile	Shel. Co.	Shelburne
Pt.	Point, not Port	male	(no abbreviation)	Vic. Co.	Victoria
R.	River	MNRS	Maritimes Nest Records Scheme	Yar. Co.	Yarmouth
		var. obs.	various observers		



List of Contributors

Thanks to all of our contributors, including:

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North American Migration Count - Nova Scotia

Saturday May 13, 2000

By Judy Tufts, NS Coordinator for NAMC

A heartfelt thank you! goes out to everyone who participated in the N.A. Migration Count this year. Your contribution to this project is invaluable and made this year's spring bird count another great success. Your enthusiasm, time and energy, play a large part in this success.

Once again, every county in N.S. was well represented - great credit belongs to the county-coordinators and area-reps who coordinated so many participants and without whom I could not manage such a Count.. To them I ask they convey my appreciation to those who contributed in 'their' county. It was a wonderful effort.

A salute of extra-special thanks goes to Cape Breton County's Coordinator Susann Myers for her outstanding effort of marshalling 140 volunteers - a feat in itself!! Also, I wish to thank and welcome this year's new coordinator for Victoria Co. - Fritz McEvoy from Dingwall - for his fine effort.

The weather turned out to be quite favorable for this Count though it started out as a bit too cold (0-5°C) but warmed up to highs of 10-15°C. The northerly winds were light to moderate. The sun came out by late morning, and it was mostly sunny in the afternoon. There was some coastal fog.

In Cape Breton, there was fog and drizzle around coastal areas, with generally cooler temperatures. There were clouds along the Fundy and Northumberland Straight coastal areas, bringing in cooler air. The lows overnight ranged from 2-5°C.

This year, the fact that the NAMC date happened to fall on the latest possible date (for a second Saturday in May) has obviously played a major factor in the numbers of both species located and numbers of individual birds tallied, as

will be evident as you read through this summary. Comparisons with last year's count have also been made.

Of the 300 Com. Loons seen on Count Day, CB and Hfx. counties each tallied 60; Pictou Co. held 21 of the 34 Pied-billed Grebes. N. Gannets were still moving northwards, notably along Shelburne(184), Digby (100), Pictou (94) and Halifax (81) coastlines. Both Cormorants species were up by 33% over last year. Among wading birds, concentrations of 50+ Great Blue Herons were found in CB, Hfx., Lun. and Pict. Cos., while the mini-invasion of Great Egrets into NS in April had all but evaporated to only four birds by Count Day, with Richmond having two of them. Lunenburg Co. had the distinction of enjoying not only one of the Great Egrets but also a Snowy! A rarer member of the heron family, the Little Blue, was found near Tangier. The SW end of the province enjoyed the unusual presence of **five** Green Herons: Shelburne - three, Yarmouth - two. A rare vagrant to our shores, a **Glossy Ibis** lingered to be counted on Cape Sable I.

Concentrations of Brant were to be found on Brier I. (270), and around Yarmouth (110). Twenty-three species of duck were tallied. Seen in greater numbers this year as compared with last year were: Green-winged Teal up 200%, Com. Eider and Am. Black Duck up 50%, Mallards and Blue-winged Teal up 20%. More Mallard/Black Duck hybrids were found (70, up from 20 in 1999). A total of 373 Greater Scaup were in Pict. Co. Not only were all three scoter species slower than usual in departing our coastal waters, but there were nearly five thousand of them! Of special note: Surf Scoters: Lun. Co. - 1,500, Hfx. Co. - 1,000; Black Scoter: Hfx. Co. - 944; White-winged Scoter: Vic. Co. - 382; Shel. Co. had 500 in 'mixed' flocks. An impressive 800 Red-breasted Mergansers remained in Pict. Co. Lucky was the birder who found six

Canvasback, rare eastern visitors, just north of Sheet Hbr., along a river near a favourite fishing spot that day! A great find. He also spotted another rarity there... a Wood Thrush!

Only eight Turkey Vultures were found this year (down from a high of 23 in 1999 on Brier I.), and they were located... you guessed it... on Brier I.! The number of raptors recorded this year was up by 50% over 1999 in nearly every species. The fact that four Rough-legged Hawks still lingered was intriguing; a mini-invasion of Broad-winged Hawks (23) drifted through the central part of the mainland - mostly over Kings, Hants and Hfx. Cos. While the Annapolis Valley still held most of the Red-tailed Hawks - Kings (41) and Hants (17), Am. Kestrels were active in Hants (32) and Pictou (25). 142 Bald Eagles were located in Cape Breton; the only other sizable gathering of this majestic bird was of 45 in Hants Co. Grouse and allies were down by 30% with the bulk still being found in Hants and Kings. Among the rallids, Pictou came through with 10 Soras and three Virginia Rails. The two Virginia Rails and two Soras found in the same little marsh on the outskirts of Wolfville obligingly remained to take up residence. An Am. Coot was observed in Kings Co.

Once again Shel. Co. holds the Spring count for shorebird diversity, with 14 species. The rare **Am. Oystercatchers** (three) returned again this year to CSI in time for the Count, much to the delight of local birders - and those around the province - providing them with the pleasure of viewing this species as it expands its breeding range. Birders on CSI also recorded an Upland Sandpiper and a Whimbrel among the shorebirds. A major movement of Greater Yellowlegs (392) was noted. While every county tallied this species, Cum. and Pict. Cos. each registered 25% of the total. Strong showings of Willets were found in Hfx.

(128) and Shel. (134) Cos. Purple Sandpipers were again on Brier I. (60), Hfx. Co (35), and a singleton up in CB Co. The majority of Com. Snipe and Am. Woodcock were in Hants, Pict. and CB Cos. but overall were down 30%. Shelburne recorded 125 each of Red and Red-necked Phalaropes.

All but three of the 1,440 Black-legged Kittiwakes were in CB Co., where seven gull species were recorded. Twelve Roseate Terns had returned to their breeding grounds in the Yarmouth area; this was the first time this species has been recorded on the NAMC in NS. Black Terns were found (unsurprisingly) only in Cum. Co. Large flocks of Common Terns were found in Shel. (250), Hfx. (144) and Pict. (136) Cos. which represents a huge increase in this species overall: there were 635 recorded in 2000 while only 51 were recorded in 1999! Even the Arctic Terns had a major increase in their numbers. Among the alcids, large numbers of Guillemots were still offshore around Yar. (267) and CB (112) Cos. Mourning Doves seem to be thriving; an increase of 33% was noted over 1999's tally. Five owl species were observed with one lingering Short-eared Owl in Inv. Co., adding another new species to the list. The great owl breeding successes in 1999 were not repeated this year. A dramatic drop occurred in the number of Barred and Saw-Whet owls counted this year, no doubt affected by the lack of enough food to raise families.

The later date for this count would also probably account for the 242 Chimney Swifts that had already arrived, the 50% increase in Belted Kingfishers, and the 124 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, which were widespread around the province (Kings had a high of 29). The average number of hummers for Spring

counts in NS is only nine!! One **Red-bellied Woodpecker** was a pleasant surprise for Brier I. counters.

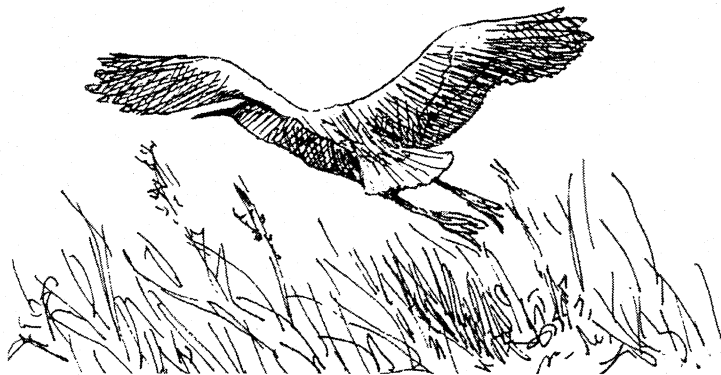
Except for the Eastern Kingbird and the Least Flycatcher, all other species in this family appeared reluctant to take advantage of the mild spring and migrate earlier. Questions are being asked as to where are all the swallows have gone. According to this count, numbers appeared to be fairly good with almost 5,000 swallows being counted, 300% increase over last year but of course nearly a week later by the calendar. However, another bird family did show a marked drop of 50% - the Kinglets. Of the thrushes, only the Am. Robin held its own. The Hermit and Swainson's had depressingly low figures, whereas there were two **Wood Thrushes** recorded, one at Bon Portage I. and another in Hfx. Co. Figures were up for Gray Catbirds (Shel. Co. had 12) while Mockingbirds have become entrenched in Kings with 15 of the 21 recorded from the Wolfville area. The appearance of two Brown Thrashers in Shel. Co. was timely. Waxwings were almost non-existent.

Among the Vireos and Warblers there were some gems. One **White-eyed Vireo** was banded on Bon Portage I., a **Hooded Warbler** was tallied on Seal I., and a **Pine Warbler** was coming to a feeder in Dartmouth. Twice as many Blue-headed Vireos were found compared to last year. **Twenty-four** species of warblers were counted. Fewer Palm Warblers were recorded, but other species were well represented. Although Yellow-rumps were the common warbler, waves of migrating N. Parula, Yellow, Black-throated Green, Black-and-White Warblers and Ovenbirds, also reached the mainland but few made it to CBI. A **Summer Tanager** was a wonderful find

in Pict. Co., coming to a feeder near Pictou. The number of Cardinals in NS is steadily climbing. No longer confined to Hfx and Yar. counties, they are beginning to get a toe-hold, fragile though it may be, in Kings and Anna. Cos. as well.

The first major wave of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks was felt throughout the Annapolis Valley. One Blue Grosbeak (Brier I.), five Indigo Buntings (three in Shel., one each in CB and Yar. Cos.), one female **Dickcissel** (CB Co.), three E. Towhees (two in Shel., one in Lun. Co.) and one **Field Sparrow** (Shel. Co.) added an extra lift to the Count. Sixteen members of the sparrow family made it, with Dark-eyed Junco leading the list with 2,949, followed by Song (2,312) and White-throated Sparrows (1,492). Brown-headed Cowbirds had a drop in their numbers, too. Could we be so lucky to see this as a trend? While House Finches (26) have nearly doubled since 1999, spreading from Hfx., Yar., and Shel. Cos. to Pict. Co. as well, the Purple Finch (2,739) was more than well represented around the province. Finally of note, a surprising number (187) of **Com. Redpolls** - our cheery, and unpredictable, wandering winter visitors - were still around in the central and northern area of the province. The results of this count were exceptionally good and indicative of all the hard work put into it by the participants.

Totals : 215 species with 120,647 individual birds were counted. The Ipswich Sparrow is included as a separate species in this tally as it is listed as such in the official NAMC species form. This compares to the 192 species and 92,179 birds tallied in 1999. □



North American Migration Count - Nova Scotia

Saturday May 13, 2000 - Species List

By Judy Tufts, NS Coordinator for NAMC

Red-throated Loon	8	Sharp-shinned Hawk	55
Com. Loon	282	N. Goshawk	12
Pied-billed Grebe	34	Broad-winged Hawk	23
Red-necked Grebe	9	Red-tailed Hawk	134
N. Fulmar	49	Rough-legged Hawk	4
Shearwater sp.	5	Buteo sp.*	5
Leach's Storm-Petrel	27	Am. Kestrel	132
N. Gannet	600	Merlin	35
Double-crested Cormorant	3,016	Peregrine Falcon	3
Great Cormorant	474	Ring-necked Pheasant	458
Cormorant sp.*	70	Ruffed Grouse	114
Am. Bittern	27	Spruce Grouse	5
Great Blue Heron	409	Virginia Rail	5
Great Egret	4	Sora	20
Snowy Egret	1	Am. Coot	1
Little Blue Heron**	1	Black-bellied Plover	86
Green Heron***	5	Piping Plover	11
Black-cr. Night-Heron	7	Killdeer	101
Glossy Ibis***	1	Am. Oystercatcher***	3
Turkey Vulture	8	Greater Yellowlegs	392
Canada Goose	411	Lesser Yellowlegs	25
Brant	419	Solitary Sandpiper	2
Wood Duck	37	Willet	546
Gadwall	10	Spotted Sandpiper	59
Am. Wigeon	87	Upland Sandpiper**	2
Am. Black Duck	2,671	Whimbrel	1
Mallard	581	Ruddy Turnstone	1
Mallard x Am. Black Duck hybrid*	70	Red Knot	52
Blue-winged Teal	78	Sanderling	80
N. Shoveler	3	Semi-palmated Sandpiper	15
N. Pintail	23	Least Sandpiper	69
Green-winged Teal	465	Purple Sandpiper	96
Canvasback***	6	Dunlin	16
Ring-necked Duck	460	Peep sp.*	38
Greater Scaup	398	Short-billed Dowitcher	2
Lesser Scaup**	13	Com. Snipe	120
Com. Eider	4,611	Am. Woodcock	100
Oldsquaw	5	Red-necked Phalarope	125
Surf Scoter	2,175	Red Phalarope	125
Black Scoter	1,750	Black-headed Gull	2
White-wing Scoter	436	Bonaparte's Gull	76
Scoter sp*	316	Ring-billed Gull	355
Bufflehead	100	Herring Gull	15,577
Com. Goldeneye	121	Iceland Gull	274
Hooded Merganser	20	Glaucous Gull	24
Com. Merganser	263	Great Black-backed Gull	6,653
Red-breasted Merganser	1,224	Black-legged Kittiwake	1,440
Osprey	163	Gull sp.*	272
Bald Eagle -adult	217	Roseate Tern	12
imm.*	59	Com. Tern	635
age?*	7	Arctic Tern	166
N. Harrier	83	Black Tern	14

Sterna sp.*	73	Am. Pipit	1
Razorbill	1	Bohemian Waxwing	31
Black Guillemot	467	Cedar Waxwing	2
Atlantic Puffin	24	Tennessee Warbler	5
Rock Dove	2,001	Nashville Warbler	79
Mourning Dove	1,992	N. Parula	188
Great Horned Owl	35	Yellow Warbler	183
Barred Owl	96	Chestnut-sided Warbler	21
Long-eared Owl**	1	Magnolia Warbler	97
Short-eared Owl	1	Cape May Warbler	5
N. Saw-whet Owl	6	Black-throated Blue Warbler	14
Com. Nighthawk	9	Yellow-rumped Warbler	2,119
Chimney Swift	242	Black-throated Green Warbler	438
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	124	Blackburnian Warbler	14
Belted Kingfisher	281	Pine Warbler	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	50	Palm Warbler	174
Downy Woodpecker	376	E. Palm Warbler*	56
Hairy Woodpecker	200	Bay-breasted	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker ***	1	Blackpoll Warbler	15
Black-backed Woodpecker	6	Black-and-white Warbler	262
N. Flicker	676	Am. Redstart	13
Pileated Woodpecker	71	Ovenbird	191
E. Wood-Pewee	2	N. Waterthrush	60
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	3	Mourning Warbler	2
Alder Flycatcher	4	Com. Yellowthroat	71
Least Flycatcher	16	Hooded Warbler***	1
Empidonax sp.*	2	Wilson's Warbler	1
E. Phoebe	11	Canada Warbler	3
E. Kingbird	39	Warbler sp.*	4
White-eyed Vireo***	1	E. Towhee	3
Blue-headed Vireo	292	Am. Tree Sparrow	60
Red-eyed Vireo	40	Chipping Sparrow	312
Vireo sp.*	13	Field Sparrow***	1
Gray Jay	67	Savannah Sparrow	559
Blue Jay	2014	Ipswich Sparrow	1
Am. Crow	6,248	Fox Sparrow	47
Com. Raven	871	Song Sparrow	2,312
Horned Lark	4	Lincoln's Sparrow	3
Tree Swallow	3,505	Swamp Sparrow	144
Bank Swallow	137	White-throated Sparrow	1,492
Cliff Swallow	199	White-crowned Sparrow	79
Barn Swallow	1,051	Dark-eyed Junco	2,949
Black-capped Chickadee	2,985	Sparrow sp.*	14
Boreal Chickadee	165	Summer Tanager***	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	350	N. Cardinal	32
White-breasted Nuthatch	62	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	107
Brown Creeper	19	Blue Grosbeak	1
Winter Wren	114	Indigo Bunting	5
Golden-crowned Kinglet	225	Dickcissel**	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	762	Bobolink	118
Veery	11	Red-winged Blackbird	2,318
Swainson's Thrush	3	Rusty Blackbird	51
Hermit Thrush	284	Com. Grackle	6,131
Wood Thrush***	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	137
Am. Robin	5,772	Blackbird sp.*	12
Gray Catbird	35	Baltimore Oriole	20
Brown Thrasher	2	Pine Grosbeak	31
N. Mockingbird	21	Purple Finch	2,739
Eur. Starling	7,554	House Finch**	26

Red Crossbill	57
White-winged Crossbill	28
Common Redpoll	187
Pine Siskin	892
Am. Goldfinch	2,552

Evening Grosbeak	1,348
House Sparrow	1,311

* unidentified or sub-species
 ** rarely seen native species
 *** rare or uncommon stray species

Time Start : 0400 h
 Time Stop : 2230 h

OWLING -

-hrs 21.25
 -kms 162
 # Parties 22
 # Observers 28

REGULAR BIRDING

- hrs foot 736
 -hrs car 531
 -hrs boat 65.5
 -hrs bike 8.5
 -hrs ATV 1

REGULAR BIRDING

- kms foot 954.5
 -kms car 7882
 -kms boat 167.5
 -kms bike 72
 -kms ATV 3
 # Parties 254
 # Observers 389

STATIONARY -hrs 61.25
 # Parties 29
 # Observers 45

FEEDERS -hrs 921.25
 # Watchers 406
 # Stations 316

TOTAL SPECIES: 215
 TOTAL BIRDS: 120,647

Field Trip Report

Morning Warbler Walk, Prospect Road (Old NS Power Road to Big Indian Lake) Wednesday, 17 May 2000

Leader: Fred Dobson

The Ovenbird was a good sign. He was singing at the parking lot where the bleary but excited twelve of us gathered on a cool but magnificent day, the sun having just risen in a blaze of delicate pink.

As we wended our way away from the noise of the Prospect Road traffic it quickly became clear that the warblers were out and singing. Magnolias predominated, with Black-throated Greens next and the odd Myrtle. A Blue-headed Vireo greeted us with "Name? Like it? It's new - this year!", and a Pileated Woodpecker gave his stentorian whicker from a snag nearby. We found Purple Finches burbling and Pine Siskins and Goldfinches chattering. Young Ravens squawked (it's the only word that begins to describe that indescribable noise), and a pair of Common Loons sang their mating arias from the Lake. There were no really good warbler sightings (they were mostly too much to sunward) until we turned down the road to the lake. Almost immediately high chatterings and songs were evident. We were sure we had a Blackpoll until our eyes were drawn to a newly blooming small Maple at the roadside, in which was perched, in the full shine of the morning sun, a Blackburnian Warbler, lifting his reedy voice to the heavens. He stayed there, literally glowing, for as long as everyone needed for a good look, and then flew back into the undergrowth, not to be seen again. Down at the lake, we watched a big loon on its mirror surface, then saw the mate coming in too. It was a glide that lasted at least 300 meters, and ended with a smooth skate along the mirror surface, head outstretched. A Green Frog gargled along the lake shore, and a White-breasted Nuthatch appeared. Back up the road, a party foraged through the woods when the Winter Wrens began to sing - and found him, singing with full voice, at the back of a high spruce overlooking a wet area. A Redstart was seen, and, up the path towards the bog, Hermit Thrushes and Whitethroats by the roadside and Palm and Yellowthroat Warblers among the Magnolias and Black-throated Greens.

There was a Bakeapple in flower in the bog. Postscript: One of the party, alone for a few moments at the edge of the bog, heard a rich, undulating warble. The bird was never seen and had stopped singing by the time others returned, but a subsequent session with the tape recorder at home yielded only one match: a Lincoln's Sparrow. The species is known to the area in springtime, and the habitat was right. □

Field Trip Reports

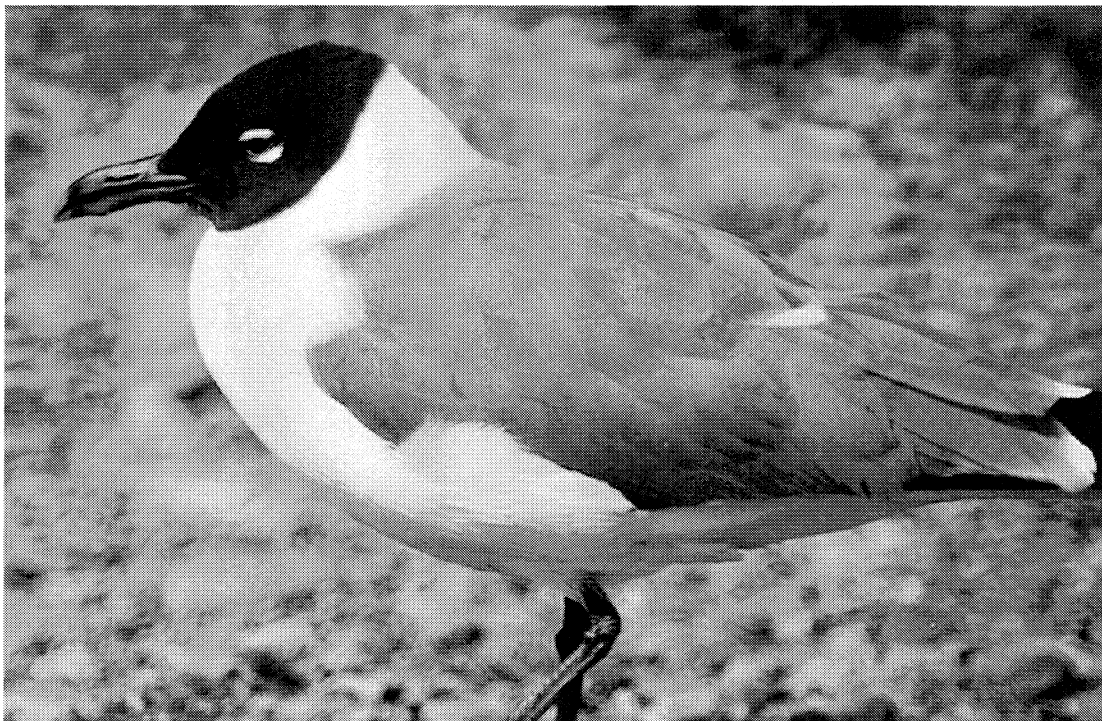
Mickey Hill and Belleisle Marsh, May 27, Leader: Sharon Hawboldt

After a week of cold rainy days, the fourteen participants who met for this Annapolis Co. trip enjoyed fair weather and seasonable temperatures. We gathered at the Tidal Power Plant in Annapolis Royal, then drove a short distance to the Mickey Hill Picket Wilderness for a morning warbler walk. Highlights there included several Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, a family of Gray Jays and a good variety of warblers, including a few Canada Warblers. The habitat was mixed woods with a river, small lakes and swampy areas.

We enjoyed lunch at the Hawboldt's home in Belleisle watching the feeders and surveying the marsh as we ate. The afternoon was spent on the marsh checking all four ponds. Our list of ducks seen included several Wood Ducks and Northern Shovelers and an abundance of Ring-necked and Am. Black Ducks. We also watched Am. Bittern and Sora at close range, the Sora actually swimming some distance across one pond. We were pleased to see a pair of Osprey on the nesting platform which had been erected five years ago and had previously gone unused. The cattails were full of Red-winged Blackbirds and the skies were alive with the songs of Tree Swallows and Bobolinks. The total species count for the day was 76. □

Eastern Shore 15 April, Leader: Ian McLaren

Seventeen birders rendezvoused in Dartmouth, and set out for the traditional 7 km round trip the length of Martinique Beach. The most amusing bird en route was an eagle toting a branch at least twice as long as its wingspan. On the beach about 15 Ipswich Sparrows, some offering good study, were about as usual. We wondered if a distant group of 14 Dunlin, 6 Red Knot, and a Black-bellied Plover, had wintered locally. A forlorn Piping Plover was looking for love at the overwash section of the beach. Rough seas off Flying Head made sea-fowl spotting a little difficult; we had to be content with two Red-necked Grebes and handfuls of Oldsquaw and the usual eiders and scoters. Safari birding was a bit dull on the way back until we got to Conrad Beach, where we found Patricia Chalmers admiring a Great Egret hunkered in a spruce. It was shortly joined by another. Then we found Peter Richard and friends at the ponds behind the west end of the beach. They showed us a number of goodies, including another Great Egret and an Am. Coot. Our last find of note was a spanking male Wood Duck (amorously?) tagging a fem. Mallard. The day produced a mere 49 species, but was fun for all, I think. □



LAUGHING GULLS, like this one photographed by John Nickerson in Yarmouth this spring, are becoming almost routine in southern Nova Scotia.

Book Review

By Joe Nocera

DUCKS

David Jones,

Whitecap Books, Vancouver/Toronto, 1998

Hard Cover. 110 pages. \$24.95

ISBN # 1-55110-781-3

The first thing any reader will notice about *Ducks*, is that it contains some of the most visually stunning photographs of waterfowl ever published. These photographs are a compilation of work from thirteen well-known wildlife photographers, and the quality of these photos represent some of their very best efforts. From some superb stills of Harlequins to unique pictures of predation in action, the photography covers all bases.

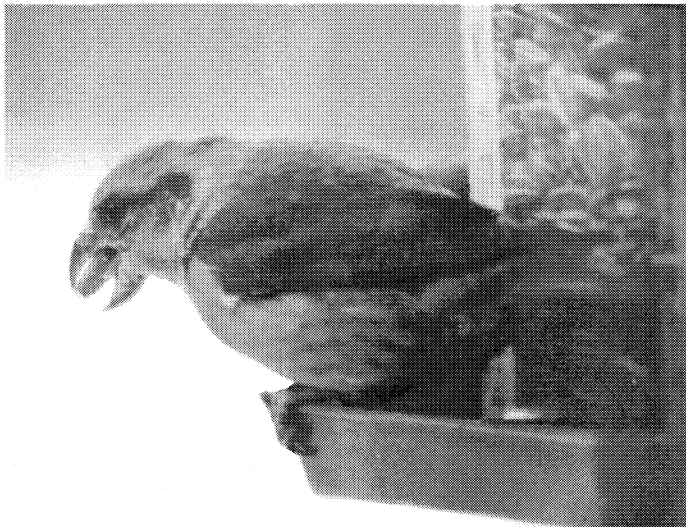
With this knowledge, does the text compare? Does the author bring this book out of the “coffee table” realm? The answers to these questions depend upon the reader’s expectations. If someone is looking for hard scientific discussion, do not get this book. However, if the goal is lighter reading that will still serve to enlighten a reader on some aspects of waterfowl ecology, this book is a great candidate.

Beginning with a chapter on select unique aspects of what makes a duck a duck, the author sets his pace by presenting some general knowledge and interesting trivia in a way that is very reader-friendly. However, of all the chapters herein, this one is perhaps the most scattered, almost indicating it was written last as the author did not know where to put these odds-and-ends of information.

The remainder of the book flows well, starting with the arrival of waterfowl on their breeding grounds in early spring, followed by subsequent chapters devoted to reproduction, nesting, and finally, fledging of the young. Each of these chapters manages to accomplish a unique feat: amalgamating the life history of many waterfowl species into a coherent story. With so many different evolutionary strategies exhibited by waterfowl in North America, I, for one, would find it difficult to discuss the feeding habits of King Eiders and Mallards at the same time.

The overall effect of this book is, of course, tempered almost solely by the photography. I found myself turning pages with anticipation of the next photograph, not for the next bit of text. However, the author does manage to entertain the reader with his words, and at the same time manages to inform even an avid waterfowl enthusiast a fact or two he/she did not know. This book certainly deserves a spot on any coffee table or bedstand, but perhaps not on scientific/technical reference shelves.

**N.S. Dept. Natural Resources, Wildlife Division,
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Nova Scotia, B4N 4E5
nocerajj@gov.ns.ca or j.nocera@ns.sympatico.ca**



This RED CROSSBILL at a feeder, photographed by John MacInnis, Big Pond, CB Co., appears to be one of the large-billed forms that are known to occur in the province

Book Review

By Ulli Höger

BIRDS OF EUROPE

**K. Mullarney, L. Svensson, D. Zetterström, and P.J. Grant,
Princeton University Press, May 2000.**

A review of a European field guide in *Nova Scotia Birds*, what's that supposed to be good for? Feathered visitors from the old world to the Maritimes, as well as the attention some local and migrant species get in European field guides are good reasons to read this review. Also many birders like to spread their wings once in a while and take off to foreign places. I used to recommend "Birds of Britain and Europe" by Heinzel *et al.*, or Jonsson's "Bird of Europe" as European field guides. Now I will add "Birds of Europe" by Mullarney *et al.* to my field guide hit list, maybe retiring the aged Heinzel *et al.*.

This paperback field guide is just right to carry in the field, its size and weight are good to handle. The book covers all of Europe, parts of North Africa, and the Middle East. More than 750 European bird species are shown in over 3,500 illustrations. Add a lot of written information, fit all this somehow on 400 pages, and you get one of the best field guides I have seen so far.

The excellent illustrations by Killian Mullarney and Dan Zetterström show each species in geographical, seasonal and/or age related plumage. The authors adopted the "Peterson marker" to point out important field marks in the pictures. Frequent characteristic behaviour is illustrated, providing additional identification help for a number of species. I always appreciated this kind of information given by mentors in the field, and missed it too often in field guides. The layout of the figure plates is straightforward. Thin lines separate illustrations for one species from those of other species. Since all illustrations are organized in the same arrangement, one knows instantly where to look on the page to find, for example, the bird in its juvenile plumage. No confusing hide and seek games à la Hayman, Marchant, and Prater's "Shorebirds".

The text, written by Lars Svensson and Peter J. Grant (translated by David Christie), and the distribution maps for each species are facing the corresponding illustrations. This page arrangement is an appreciated standard in modern field guides, and eliminates annoying page flipping à la Peterson. Each species section gives the common English name, the scientific name, metric size measures, a short description of the preferred habitat, and the diet. The identification part is a well-written characterization of the bird, with the important *key field marks pointed out in italics*. Calls and songs (*tschirrr drip drip dip*) complete each species description. Additional chapters give valuable tips and tricks for use in the field. There are chapters like "Watching seabirds", and "How to identify waders". Other chapters are dedicated to gull identification and those tricky duck hybrids. However, printed in an unusual small font size, the text will be hard to read for some people's eyes.

Given such a well-organized information package, I was surprised to find a feature missing I appreciated so much in my old Jonsson field guide. Common bird names are in English only, and not also in other languages. Knowing common names in a local language has proven invaluable to me for easy communication with local birders or folks. In a future, revised edition I would like to see this feature added.

Is this now the ultimate European field guide? It is for sure an excellent and up to date field guide. But since personal preferences vary, and one birders "bible" is another one's "No good" I suggest to check out at least Jonsson's field guide as well. Then get both, book a flight, head east to the Old World, and enjoy the ultimate test, a field trial.

uhogger@is.dal.ca



Readership Survey Results

By Randy Lauff

Thanks to the 80 of you who returned the readership survey to me. Seventy-six responses¹ represents 20% of the current membership, a high response rate and one that we can use to chart the course of *Nova Scotia Birds*. Some of the answers surprised me, usually for the better. I have decided to postpone presenting the results of question 12 until a later date. That question dealt with topics that you wish to see covered in *Nova Scotia Birds*. The options were printed on the page in a somewhat confusing manner and the subsequent responses left me with some doubt as to whether everyone was interpreting the options correctly. There will likely be a general survey in the future that deals with the Nova Scotia Bird Society as a whole. I will reprint the question there in its correct format.

Not everyone answered each question, though the number of omitted questions was quite low. In the results below, the total percentages are based on the number of responses to each particular question.

Just over half of respondents have been with us for more than 10 years, 7.9% were new subscribers; the remaining respondents were split almost evenly between those subscribing for two to five years and six to ten years. As expected, more than 90% of you feed the birds and almost as many travel within Nova Scotia to bird; just over half of you travel elsewhere in the Maritimes to bird.

Approximately three-quarters of you think we should be using recycled paper, with a few of you commenting that I shouldn't have even put this to a vote! Of the remaining respondents to this question, the vast majority are content to try recycled paper for one issue; the reticence, including that from the few who did not want us to even try recycled paper, was based on the lower quality of photographs that may result.

The last time readers were asked to comment on advertising, only two responses were generated, one pro, one

against. In this survey, 89.5% of you would not object to advertising, thought many of you expressed that the advertising should be somehow related to birds specifically, or nature in general.

Content: Seasonal reports of our bird life often take up half the magazine. Just over half of you read them in their entirety, with only 2.6% not reading them at all. Three-quarters of respondents thought that the reports should cover all birds in the wild (as we currently do). An identical number thought that the detail in the reports was just right, with almost everyone else thinking them too detailed. Even though the amount of detail was determined to be just right for most, over one third thought that the proportion of the magazine occupied by the Seasonal Reports was too much...this implies that you want a bigger magazine.

Three quarters of respondents read the weather summary, either in its entirety or just the graphs; most of those who didn't still deemed that the weather was important in understanding bird activities.

No one thought we had too many photos or pieces of artwork; only about 60% of you were content with the amount we had (so please...send us your photos... we will return them promptly). People were generally satisfied with the quality, but we clearly have room for improvement in this area. We *know* that many of you take pictures...we'd love to print your good quality shots of commoner birds, or even your somewhat blurry shots of rarities.

All but a couple of you read at least some of the trip reports and just about two-thirds of you have gone birding somewhere in this province based on one of our trip reports.

And our overall score? No one thought we were doing a poor or fair job (whew!). Twelve percent thought *Nova Scotia Birds* was average, 51% thought

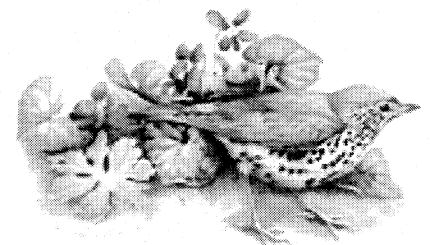
we were doing a good job and 37% thought we were excellent.

So, what does this all mean? We will be looking in to using recycled paper and into advertising strategies as well. I, for one, have no idea what we should charge for advertising. Does anyone want to deal with soliciting advertising for our magazine? The answers you provided to some of the preliminary questions will help us sell advertising to businesses which cater to birders and other naturalists. Since the majority of you are content with the way we are doing the Seasonal Reports, Weather Report and Trip Reports, they will remain essentially constant.

It's unfortunate that the question dealing with potential article topics was misaligned on the survey. Perhaps readers did correctly interpreted the boxes, but it turned out that more people wanted articles on environmental topics than on bird identification...I would have predicted the opposite. However, when we do get a response back that is reliable, the question then becomes, how do I interpret the results? Is there a threshold percentage that must be reached before I consider printing an article on the topic? For instance, if 25% of respondents want articles on photography, is that too low to print articles on photography at all, or will the other 75% of you tolerate an article on photography in 25% of issues?

As always, I welcome your feedback!

¹ The others were too late to be included in the analysis.



Upcoming Events



Field trips are open to non-members as well as members. Please phone the field trip leader or contact person ahead of time to register for the trip and obtain further information (e.g. directions). In this way no trip is oversubscribed, and you can be contacted in case of cancellation. Field trips range from early morning warbler walks to all day outings, and overnight expeditions to offshore islands. The area code for N.S. is 902. NSMNH = The Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St. Halifax.

Fri 1 Sept – Mon 4 Sept – Bon Portage Island

Contact: Joan Czupalay 422-6858 or 348-2803 (July to mid-Aug); joancz@ns.sympatico.ca

Pre-registration is necessary!

Meet late afternoon or early evening on Friday at Prospect Point Wharf in Shag Harbour. Bring food, drinking water, change of clothing, sturdy and/or waterproof footwear, flashlight, mattress sheet, 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 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 22 Sept – NSBS monthly meeting – Brier Island

Contact: Carl Haycock 839-2960

Meeting will be held on Friday evening, followed by field trip (s) on Saturday. (See notice in this issue)

Sat 23 September – Fundy Pelagic Trip

Contact: Carl Haycock 839-2960

BIOS Fundraiser in conjunction with the NSBS September meeting on Brier I.

Sat 30 Sept – Changing of the Yard, Cape Breton

Leader: Junior Metcalfe 849-5054

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the former heavy water plant in Glace Bay.

Sun 1 Oct - Port Joli Property Keji Seaside Adjunct Park.

Leader: Clarence Stevens, Jr. 902-835-0098

Pre-registration is necessary!

Joint Field Trip with the South Shore Naturalists Club. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot of Keji Seaside Adjunct Park to see what birds there are in the park and in the NSBS property nearby. Bring a lunch.

Sat 7 Oct - Mon 9 Oct - Brier Island

Leader: Fulton Lavender 902-455-4966

Meet at the parking lot of the Brier Island Lodge on Saturday at 8 a.m. 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 8 Oct - Cape Sable Island

Leader: Murray Newell 902-745-3340

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Tim Horton's in Barrington Passage. See late migrants and shorebirds.

Thu 26 Oct - NSBS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Auditorium, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, at 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be followed by WINE AND CHEESE.

Sat 4 Nov - The Pubnicos

Leader: Gisèle d'Entremont 902-422-7739 (Halifax)
902-762- 2439 (Pubnico)

Enjoy autumn birding. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Red Cap Motel & Restaurant, Middle West Pubnico, Yarmouth County. If people express interest, we could have another trip for the following day. Rain date Sun. Nov 5.

Sat 18 Nov - Antigonish Coastal Waters

Leader: Randy Lauff 867-2471

This trip covers the waters of St. Georges Bay and the Harbours of Antigonish County; we'll end the day at Ogdens Pond, a very active place at this time of year. Meet at Uncle Ron's Coffee Shop on the TCH just east of exit 35 (Lower South River). Rain date: Sun 19 Nov.

Thu 23 Nov - NSBS Meeting

Auditorium, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Zoë Lucas on Sable Island Birds.

Sat 2 Dec - Cape Sable Island

Leader: Murray Newell 902- 745-3340

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Tim Horton's in Barrington Passage. This is an opportunity to have a great start to your winter list. □