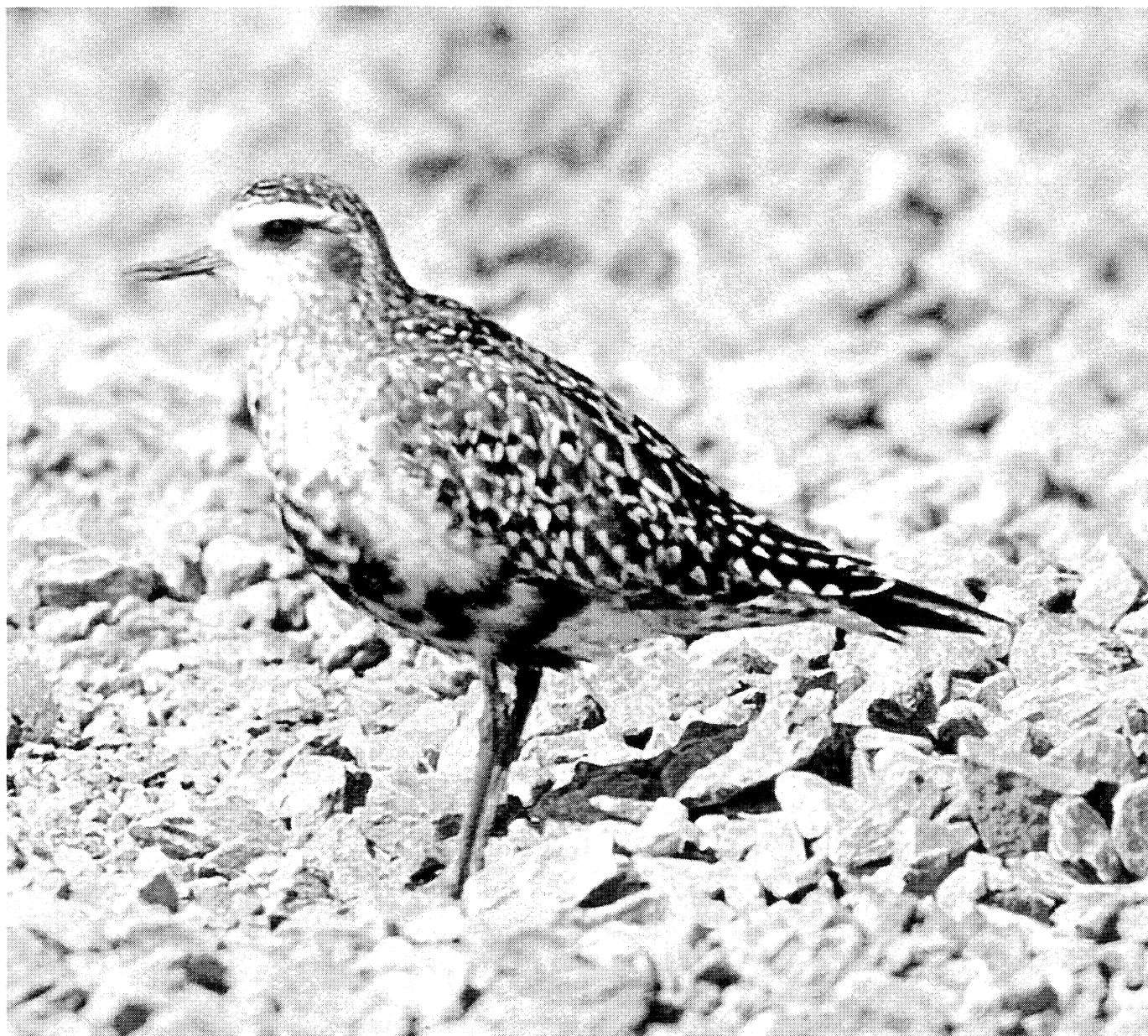


Nova Scotia Birds

A Quarterly Publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society



Winter 2001
(The Birds of Autumn)



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 2001 issue: Dec. 7, 2000

Spring 2001 issue: Mar. 7, 2001

Summer 2001 issue: June 7, 2001

Fall 2001 issue: Aug. 7, 2001

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- North American Migration Count
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Cover Photo: This AM. GOLDEN PLOVER in mid-September at Rainbow Haven, Cole Hbr., had pale flanks (due to feather replacement) in the manner of the Pacific Golden Plover, which may someday occur here. However, its long primaries, extending well beyond the tertials, give away its more mundane identity. [Photo Ian McLaren]

NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS
WINTER 2001

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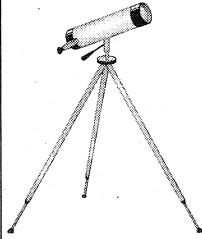
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The Spotting Scope



Everybody's talking about it. Yup, it's finally here. After what has it been...five, six, seven years? Do you recognize it? A REAL WINTER! I love winter! That slushy, rainy stuff we've been having over the last few years couldn't be called *winter*...this snow, these crisper temperatures, *this* is winter!

Despite my enjoyment of this season, the birds have to survive the problems that winter brings, and for most of them, the challenge isn't the cold, it's the pursuit of food. Last year, the winter was mild, but the wild food availability, particularly berries, was below average. Robins were almost non-existent. This year, the weather is colder, the snow is deeper, but the Mountain Ashes gleam with orange, enough so to persuade many robins to hang around and perhaps take in a Winter Fest or two. Robins are overwintering in such high numbers that even non-birders are noticing them. "Isn't it early for me to be seeing my first robin?" is the question I've heard on the news, on open line radio shows, and on internet discussion groups.

Snow is a mixed blessing for the birds. For some, it makes finding food a lot tougher. There is a contrast between our two jays in Nova Scotia. Blue Jays make caches of food under the leaf litter – relocating these caches will make for quite a dig right now. Their nearest relative here, the Gray Jay, like its Old World counterpart the Siberian Jay, combines mucus with its food prior to caching it...the trick with these two northerners is that they place these sticky balls of food in the trees, such that they will be available no matter how much snow falls.

The Northern Saw-whet Owls are having a tough go at surviving this year. We are hearing reports of these owls in urban environments, and reports of them being found starving or dead. The biologist in me fights with the bird watcher within me (yes...it's painful to be me sometimes) about the situation. The biologist argues that these episodes of tough times have been going on for millennia, the species will rebound and in two years we'll be counting record numbers again. The bird watcher in me argues (more passionately) that this is not how I want to see these birds, this has got to be wrong. Alas, my biological self usually wins out and I look forward to hearing of the nesting successes from my friends who have erected nest boxes.

Winter also brings us tantalizations of common or uncommon winter visitors. Cape Sable has its Snowies again this year, Cumberland County is graced with a Hawk Owl, Bohemian Waxwings have finally arrived, many of the winter finches are at feeders. Your next issue, with bird records from this season, will be arriving at your homes in late Spring. Have we yet to see the highlight of the Winter? Will any species overshoot in such uncharacteristically high numbers as the Great Egrets did last spring? This unpredictability is one of the highlights of being a bird watcher. Revel in this unpredictability with me as we finish off another winter of birding and look forward to a sonorous spring full of birds!

By the way, it's not too late to give a gift membership to a friend, a library, a high school or a senior's home. Thanks to those of you who already have! And finally a welcome to Joe Nocera, a new Seasonal Editor for this issue. Thanks Joe!

Good Birding,

Randy

Piping Plover Guardian Program

In partnership with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, the Nova Scotia Bird Society has agreed to manage a Nova Scotia beach guardian/habitat stewardship program in the year 2001. This project will extend and expand the activities of the original beach guardian and Piping Plover guardian programs.

The project is federally funded, for the most part, and it is hoped that its life will continue beyond the current fiscal year. Anna McCarron has been hired as project co-ordinator. She will evaluate current efforts and develop plans for future efforts regarding protection of our Piping Plovers in particular, and our beach habitats, in general. Anna will work with the steering committee formed by the NSBS executive, and will report directly to the NSBS.

The goal of this undertaking, from the society's point of view, is simply to work for the benefit of the plovers and the beaches. Although Guardians are needed in all regions of the province, the areas which are particularly lacking are Shelburne, Queens, Bridgewater, Antigonish and Pictou.

The primary role of the Piping Plover Guardian is to raise awareness of the plight of the Piping Plover and their habitat - as educator. The role of a Nova Scotia Piping Plover Guardian is to:

- hand out pamphlets to people who are interested in more details about the Piping Plover and their habitat needs;
- speak to people on the beach about general beach areas to avoid with respect to the Piping Plover nesting and fledging areas;
- speak to people about why these areas should be avoided i.e. that fledglings "freeze" their feeding activities when perceived predators are close by and at such times do not eat the amount they need to become strong enough to resist predators and to migrate;
- speak to people about what the risks are for piping plovers such as garbage left on the beach, predation, pet problems, interference, natural stresses i.e. storms and weather;
- for those interested, some guardians may be invited to make presentations to community and school groups;
- in cases where there is inappropriate activities, guardians report to designated authorities.

Anna is looking for volunteer Piping Plover guardians, she can be reached at amcarron@istar.ca or at (902) 860-1263. Existing guardians should also contact Anna, just to make sure the transition to a new co-ordinator goes smoothly. □

Notice of Resolution

At its Nov. 20, 2000 meeting, the NSBS executive approved the following policy resolution regarding travel trips, effective immediately:

Be it resolved:

1. That the Nova Scotia Bird Society will not be a sponsoring body for travel trips without the express written consent of the Executive and shall not lend the Society's name to any company, group or individual whereby sponsorship or endorsement would be implied.
2. The foregoing will not preclude the Society, on the Executive's recommendation, from making the membership aware of upcoming trips or tours that may be of interest to members or from accepting advertising from travel organizations.
3. Upon acceptance, this resolution shall replace and supersede any previous resolution(s) dealing with this subject matter.

North American Migration Count

May 12, 2001

The tenth annual spring North American Migration Count will be taking place again in only a few months. Please remember to keep **May 12th** (*always* the second Saturday in May) free if you wish to participate. Any amount of time counting is worthwhile and productive whether as a feeder watcher, or by foot boat, bicycle, or other vehicle...just as long as you are tallying birds; no fee is required.

The choice of the second Saturday in May has been made to try to find the peaks of movements of neotropical species while they are still where most of the birders are located. The migration will not peak everywhere; the northern states of the USA and the Canadian provinces will just be getting the first glimmer of spring while the deep south will be in the early breeding season, but the overall goal is of importance to everyone.

If you are interested in participating, please contact the county co-ordinator or area representative to prevent overlaps of survey areas, and to help the coverage be as widespread and thorough as possible. Should you not know who your co-ordinators/area reps are, or you wish to count in other counties than the one in which you reside, please contact me. The important thing is to get outdoors and count the birds while having fun communing with nature. What better excuse do you need for a spring day!!

Judy Tufts

NAMC Provincial Co-ordinator

Tel: (902) 542-7800

PO Box 1313 Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

tandove@ns.sympatico.ca

Notice of Manitoba Birding Tour

You may recall that the April 2000 Cuba birding tour was very successful. Nature Travel Holidays is organizing a June 2001 birding tour to Manitoba.

Exploration of southern Manitoba is planned for June 8 to 16 and will include Oak Hammock Marsh, the boreal forests east of Winnipeg, the grasslands around Brandon, and Riding Mountain National Park. Then north to bird Churchill from June 17 and 21. It's possible to take either the southern Manitoba, or the Churchill portion if you so desire.

The tour is limited to a maximum of 12 participants.

The Nova Scotia Bird Society will benefit by receiving \$200.00 from Nature Travel Holidays for each Society member who participates in the southern Manitoba portion of the tour.

If you are interested in learning more about this event, contact Blake Maybank at maybank@ns.sympatico.ca or 852-2077. ☐

NSBS Field Checklist

The Society has printed a new supply of field checklists. The new list reflects some recent name changes and has been arranged in AOU taxonomic order. Although the cost of printing has increased we are able to hold the price at \$1.00 for four copies. They are available at all meetings. For current members, a sample checklist has been included with this issue of NS Birds. ☐

Preserving Birds Here and There

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative

This series of illustrated talks, presented each Wednesday from March 21 - May 2, 2001 is co-hosted by the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Nova Scotia Bird Society. We will learn how the birds we love and list are doing in Nova Scotia and in other parts of the world. The North American Bird Conservation Initiative website is located at <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/nabci.html>. All talks will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Halifax.

What is NABCI: Who Are The Players?

Richard Elliot
March 21, 2001.

The life cycle of birds is often not a simple one. A shorebird may breed in the high Arctic, fatten up in other locations on its way to another part of the world for a few months, fly back to the North and then start the cycle all over again. Certain conditions must exist so the bird can survive. The North American Bird Conservation Initiative recognises that efforts have to be co-ordinated between nations, across conservation programs and between public and private sectors. Richard Elliot of CWS tells us how the Atlantic provinces are involved in this challenging program.

Shorebird Connections

Peter Hicklin
March 28, 2001.

The lively birds we see on our beaches and tidal areas particularly in late summer and fall, feeding and flying in almost dance-like formation are very special. Most breed in the high arctic and spend winters in north, central and South America. To survive this long distance living, the birds must have food and habitat in all their stopping places. On the way they must survive the hazards of pollution, habitat loss and human competition. Peter Hicklin of the CWS shares with us the work and studies being done to preserve these birds and their complex lifestyle.

Bicknell's Thrush: One of Our Rarest and Least Known Songbirds

Dan Busby
April 4, 2001.

The breeding range of this rare bird, first described by an amateur ornithologist in

1881 and finally given species status in 1995, includes parts of Quebec, New Brunswick, the New England States and Nova Scotia - chiefly in Northern Cape Breton. Its wintering grounds include the Dominican Republic and Cuba. Researchers from Canada, the United States and other countries are working together to learn more about this bird, its genetic background and habitat and feeding preferences. Dan Busby of CWS will bring us up to date on the mysteries of this rare songbird.

Sea Ducks: A Joint Venture

Keith McAloney
April 11, 2001.

Throughout the history of the Atlantic provinces, waterfowl have of necessity been part of the human diet and the once abundant habitats and bird populations supported that need. More recently, population growth and invasive and destructive human and industrial needs and possibly climate change have threatened the once abundant wildfowl populations. Keith McAloney of the CWS will focus on work being done on these populations, particularly those of the sea ducks.

The Hidden Species of Coastal Marshes

Al Hanson
April 18, 2001.

Along with the thousands of kilometres of coastline in the Atlantic provinces there are extensive coastal marshes, headlands and barrens. There were even more before human needs and settlement claimed them. Coastal marshes, besides being complex support systems, are also breeding and feeding areas for some very special bird species such as the showy Willet and the 'fat in a hot pan' sounding Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Al Hanson of the CWS works with scientists and researchers in Canada and the United States to learn how the birds of coastal marshes are doing in all aspects of their life cycle

Terns: How Are They Doing This Year?

Andrew Boyne & Ted D'Eon
April 25, 2001.

Of the terns that breed in the Atlantic Provinces, the Roseate is the species about which we are most concerned. Andrew Boyne of CWS will bring us up to date on how the species are doing both here and in their southern wintering grounds. Ted D'Eon of West Pubnico is Nova Scotia's own special volunteer who has the restoration of the endangered Roseate tern in southwestern Nova Scotia as his personal goal. Ted brings us up to date on his work.

The Piping Plover: Needs All the Help We can Give

Diane Amirault
May 2, 2001.

The piping plover needs all the help it can get in order to survive. This tiny endangered bird has already returned from its southern wintering place to nest on our beaches. It must compete with humans, their dogs, horses and vehicles and whatever nature throws in the way. International efforts to save this bird are extensive. In 1991, ten countries took part in an international census and in 1996 eight countries took part. This year the Nova Scotia Bird Society takes over the guardianship program for the province to join in this international effort. Diane Amirault of CWS tells us who is doing what and where. □

Cape Breton Nocturnal Owl Survey

Progress Report: 2000

By Susann Myers

INTRODUCTION

Owls are secretive, nocturnal birds whose population status is difficult to study, except through nocturnal surveys. These surveys are based on the territorial behaviour of owls; that is, during the breeding season, owls call at night to define their territorial boundaries, as well as to maintain contact with their mates. Calling by owls can be promoted by playback of taped owl calls, which stimulate defensive calling and possible flying-in by owls attempting to chase off intruders.

In February, 2000, a group of Cape Breton birders met to organise the first extensive survey of nocturnal owls on Cape Breton Island since the Breeding Bird Atlas surveys of the late 1980s. Our objective was to develop an annual survey to collect data on population densities and fluctuations, distribution and habitat preferences. The year 2000 was intended as a trial year, in order to test survey dates and methods, and investigate routes. The survey has been organized and conducted entirely by volunteers.

Several other regions of Canada have established ongoing nocturnal owl monitoring programs using roadside surveys of breeding owls by volunteers. Information from surveys in Manitoba and Ontario was helpful to us in selecting survey methods, as was the draft document "A Recommended Standard Protocol," developed as the result of a Canadian national workshop on nocturnal owl monitoring held in Winnipeg in September, 1999.

METHODS

Eleven routes were surveyed in 2000 (Table 1) and an additional three routes were thoroughly scouted in preparation for surveying in 2001. All were in eastern or northern Cape Breton Island, in Richmond, Cape Breton and Victoria Counties. Twenty-one participants were involved in conducting surveys; all but one team of surveyors had at least two participants.

Surveys were conducted between March 17 and May 7; the initial survey envelope of March 17 - April 17 was extended twice due to poor weather. Participants were provided with an instructional tape of owl calls and other night sounds, survey instructions, data reporting forms and a survey tape for playback at each stop. Although playback of taped owl calls is not recommended for recreational birding, because of disturbance to owls, it was decided that use of limited playback was acceptable for the purposes of this study, to stimulate owl calling. The survey tape was as follows: an initial beep, two minutes of silence, 20 seconds of Boreal Owl calls, one minute of silence, 20 seconds of Barred Owl calls, two minutes of silence, another 20 seconds of Barred calls, two minutes of silence and a final beep. The full survey protocol for each stop lasted eight minutes. Territorial calls were used on the tape for Boreal Owls and the "monkey-like" greeting calls between a pair were selected for Barred Owls, to try to promote response by both males and females.

Surveys began approximately one-half hour after sunset. Each route consisted of 10 stops, spaced 1.6 kms apart. Routes were located on quiet secondary roads with as few houses and other noise sources as possible. Volunteers chose and scouted their own routes. Information was gathered on route location and habitat, date and time of survey, weather conditions (at start and finish), survey stop locations, traffic and other noises, the intervals in which each owl was heard to call, and non-owl species detected (e.g. frogs, woodcock), and entered on survey forms. Each route was surveyed once; however, poor weather sometimes made a further survey necessary. One route was surveyed three times, to test the survey window (Salmon River Road: March 22, April 1 and May 5).

RESULTS

Numbers of owls detected per route, as shown in Table 1, all reflect a single survey date; results from multiple surveys on one route have not been added. The data from multiple surveys have been used, however, for non-owl species (Table 2). Multiple counts of owls detected at more than one stop have been eliminated.

In this trial year, we learned that nights with weather conditions suitable for hearing owl calls are limited in Cape Breton during March and April. Between March 17 and April 17, the dates originally selected for the survey window, surveyors in Cape Breton County experienced only four nights without strong winds and/or precipitation. Fortunately, several calm, balmy nights occurred between April 28 and May 7, allowing additional routes to be successfully surveyed or re-surveyed.

We also began to investigate the limited number of suitable survey routes on Cape Breton Island, which is 10,168 square kms in area. We found that routes within about three kms of the sea are generally not suitable for surveying, because of background noise

Table 1: The owling routes, dates and results of the first CBI Owl Survey, 2000.

Route	Date	Owls Detected*					Weather
		BARR	GHOW	NSWO	LEOW	OWL?	
Broughton/Backland	1 Apr	4	1	1	1		+4° to +2°C, wind 1-2, mostly overcast, no precipitation.
Upper Grand Mira/Walkers Hill	6 May	10	9	8			0 to -1°C, wind 1-0, mostly clear, no precipitation.
Salmon River Road	5 May	8	17			2	+5.5° to +2°C, wind 0, mostly overcast to mostly clear, no precipitation
Stirling Road	28 Apr	15	7			2	+4° to +0.5°C, wind 1, mostly to partly overcast, no precipitation.
Beechmount Road	3 Apr	5	1	1			+2° to -2°C, wind 1 to 0, partly overcast to mostly clear, no precipitation
North Aspy Valley	7 Apr			1		1	+4° to +1°C, wind 1 to 2, mostly clear, no precipitation.
Oban Road	13 Apr		2	1			-3° to -2°C, wind 3 to 2, mostly clear, snowing part of time.
Grand River Falls	29 Apr	1	1	2			+6° to +5°C, wind 1 to 2, partly to mostly overcast, partly rainy.
Sporting Mountain	6 May	1	1	1			+4° to 0°C, wind 1 to 2, mostly clear, no precipitation.
Framboise	6 Apr		1	1			+4° to -2°C, wind 2, mostly clear to mostly overcast, no precipitation
Cape North - Bay St. Lawrence	3 May	2		2		2	+2°C, wind 1 to 3, mostly overcast to mostly clear, no precipitation.
Total Owls per Species		46	40	18	1	7	

*Barr, Barred Owl; GHOW, Great-horned Owl; NSWO, Northern Saw-whet Owl; LEOW, Long-eared Owl; OWL?, undetermined species.

from surf. Three of the 11 routes surveyed this year were found to be unsuitable for surveying in future, due to excessive noise from surf, brooks and waterfalls, car traffic, etc. Jet aircraft and frogs were also found to present noise problems on most routes, but owls could generally be heard in spite of them. Some additional routes require further surveying to determine whether they will be suitable in the long term.

In total, 105 owls of four species were detected on the 11 routes: 46 Barred, 40 Great Horned, 18 Northern Saw-whet and one Long-eared (Table 1). (One additional Long-eared Owl was heard on an earlier survey of another route, March 22.) The greatest densities of owls were detected on three routes in the area between the Mira River and Loch Lomond, where between 22 and 27 owls were heard on each route. These routes were all on gravel roads with few houses and included large tracts of Crown land with good remaining areas of mature forest.

Few Northern Saw-whet Owls were detected this spring, compared to informal owling results of recent years on some of the same routes. Saw-whets also seemed comparatively late in arriving in Cape Breton this spring. These findings may be related to fluctuations in prey populations; meadow vole populations are believed to have crashed in Nova Scotia in the summer of 1999, after unusually high numbers in 1998-9 (Harry Brennan, *pers. comm.*).

Participants in the year 2000 were: Gwen Aucoin, Barc Cunningham, Billy Digout, George Digout, Sharon Digout, Ken Donovan, Lynn Ellis, Sam Gallagher, Ethel Kipp, Richard Knapton, John W. MacInnis, David McCorquodale, Fritz McEvoy, Bernie McIntyre, Valery Monohan, Allan Murrant, Cathy Murrant, Susann Myers, Terry Power, Derek Quann and Trevor Wilkie.

Table 2: Other species found on the first CBI owl survey, 2000.

Route	Date	Number Reported on Route			Number of Survey Stops Where Reported					
		American Woodcock	Com. Snipe	Com. Loon	Spring Peeper	Wood Frog	American Toad	Green Frog	Coyote	Red Fox
Broughton/Backland	1 Apr				1					
Upper Grand Mira/ Walkers Hill	8 Apr				3	1				
	6 May			3	10	1	2		1	
	22 Mar	1							1	
Salmon River Road	1 Apr	1			1					
	5 May	1	3		10	2	1			
Stirling Road	15 Apr	1		2	9	5				
	28 Apr			4	9	3				
Beechmount Road	3 Apr	1			3	3				
North Aspy Valley	7 Apr	1								
Oban Road	13 Apr	3								
Sporting Mountain	6 May	4	4		10			3		
Cape North/ Bay St. Lawrence	7 Apr	1				1				
	3 May	1	3		6	3				2
Totals	15	10	9		62	19	3	3	2	2

It is hoped that this initial survey in Cape Breton will expand into a province-wide owl survey over the next few years. If you are interested in surveying a route in April-May 2001, please contact: Susann Myers, 41 Upper Warren Street, Louisbourg, N.S. B1C 1M9 Tel. (902) 733-2805 e-mail: susann_myers@pch.gc.ca. □



NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL [Photo Richard Stern]

Puffin of the Year Award

By Gisèle d'Entremont

One of the most pleasant duties of the President is to present the "Puffin of the Year" to one of our members who has made a significant contribution to our Society and to the furthering of its goals.

This year's recipient was always interested in birds but began birding in earnest in the mid 80's when he volunteered with the Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas. About this same time, he remembers noticing a bird outside his office window on the grounds of the Museum that he accurately identified as a House Wren. He also remembers first identifying the song of a Red-eyed Vireo while he was on a ladder painting his house. These experiences opened up a world of marvelous learning and challenges. He became dedicated to the Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas Project, completed his own assigned squares, and went on to help others complete theirs.

This man worked as a staff artist at the Nova Scotia Museum for 32 years. He was involved with and contributed to several dioramas and carvings many of which were of birds which now make up the displays at both the Maritime Museum and the Museum of Natural History. His bird drawings can be seen throughout the *Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces*.

This person has been involved in Breeding Bird Surveys and has covered the same route around Peggys Cove for the past 10 years. He participates yearly in a number of Christmas Bird Counts and can be counted on to help with The North American Migration Count.

He has volunteered his time with the mailing of our publication and most significantly, his drawings of birds are frequently used in *Nova Scotia Birds*.

He was involved in the first year of the Piping Plover Guardianship Program where he made himself available to help educate beach-goers about these sensitive areas.

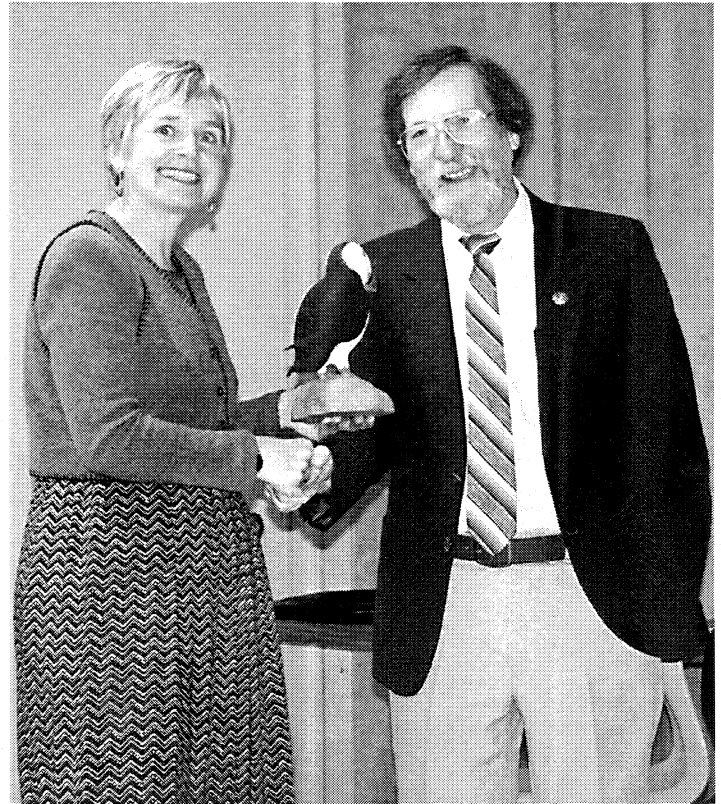
He fostered an excellent working relationship with Bowater Forest Products and our Society to protect a sensitive Bank Swallow breeding site. He has taken part for years in The Loon Watch program at Kejimikujik National Park. He is an accomplished photographer and has donated his bird photographs to the Museum of Natural History.

In the past several years, he has led a very popular Parks Are For People field trip for the Museum. His "Songs of Nature" outing starts in the early morning hours at Uniacke House.

This person is very generous in donating his artwork in support of programs focused on protecting habitats and our environment. He is presently completing work on an illustration which will be part of an interpretive panel looking out to Brothers Islands in southwestern Nova Scotia.

The Bird Society is far from being the only group that has benefited from this man's generosity of spirit, but it is this group that is privileged to honour him this evening.

It is a great pleasure to present this year's "Puffin of the Year" Award to Azor Vienneau. □



Azor receiving the award from NSBS President Gisèle d'Entremont.
[Photo Peter Payzant]

Bird-feeding Enthusiasts and Cornell Researchers Track Changes in Feeder Bird Populations

ITHACA, N.Y. — Last winter was the warmest on record in 105 years. What did this mean for the birds? A continentwide network of "citizen scientists" helped researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology find out. Now they're gearing up to find out what the birds will tell them this winter.

These "citizen scientists" are participating in Project FeederWatch, a winter-long (November through April) survey of birds that visit feeders throughout North America, sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in partnership with Bird Studies Canada, National Audubon, and the Canadian Nature Federation. Started in 1987, the project has grown to more than 15,000 participants in the United States and Canada.

This year's summary of results contrasted bird abundances in the winter of 1999-2000 with the prior winter. Last winter, "FeederWatchers" reported an increase in irruptive species (birds that typically spend the winter in the North but periodically "irrupt" into more southerly regions, probably in response to low food availability farther north) east of the Rockies. Common Redpolls appeared in larger-than-average numbers even for an irruption year—larger than in any winter since 1994. They were especially abundant in a band stretching from the Northern Rockies to the North Atlantic region. FeederWatch data also show that Northern Shrikes invaded feeding stations across the northern tier last winter. Nicknamed "butcher birds" for their technique of impaling their prey on thorns and branches, shrikes showed up at many feeding stations to catch songbirds, presumably because of lower numbers of small rodents in the fields where they typically hunt. Last winter's FeederWatch data also indicated a scarcity in ground-feeding birds such as Harris's Sparrows. The lower abundances were especially notable in the Mid- and South-Central regions, where it may be related to drought. Most ground-feeding species rely on seeds produced by smaller plants (grasses and forbes); production of these seeds can be easily affected by rainfall-or a lack of it.

FeederWatchers have also helped make some interesting discoveries based on the long-term data. Findings published in the *Canadian Journal of Zoology* documented for the first time the cyclical changes in Varied Thrush abundance. FeederWatch data revealed that, on average, this species peaks in abundance every second year, perhaps in response to acorn availability in winter. Another discovery appeared in *The Condor*, a journal published by the Cooper Ornithological Society. The data showed that although the Common Redpoll is an irruptive migrant probably forced south by lack of food, the redpolls' movements are like those of any other winter migrant when the birds irrupt southward. Findings such as these help scientists better understand the lives of bird species that would otherwise be a mystery because they live far to the north, in regions not typically covered by other monitoring programs.

FeederWatchers also play a critical role in tracking outbreaks of avian diseases. In 1994, Cornell Lab researchers asked FeederWatchers to help track the spread of a disease previously almost unknown in wild birds. This disease, called mycoplasmal conjunctivitis (often referred to as House Finch eye disease because it primarily hits House Finches) is manifested by symptoms including swollen, crusty eyes, which frequently lead to blindness and eventually death as the birds are caught by predators or eventually starve. In the prestigious *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Lab researchers recently published a landmark paper about how this disease may have become the main factor regulating the abundance of House Finches. Starting this winter, Lab researchers are asking FeederWatchers to help with a newly expanded House Finch Disease Survey through which they hope to learn whether the disease has successfully crossed the Great Plains and started to infect House Finches in western North America.

"FeederWatchers are the eyes and ears for scientists studying North American feeder bird populations," says Wesley Hochachka, assistant director of the Cornell Lab's Bird Population Studies program and a co-author of many FeederWatch-related scientific papers. "There's simply no other way to acquire data about continent wide populations throughout the entire winter. These data are critical in helping us understand both long- and short-term changes in bird populations and their environments."

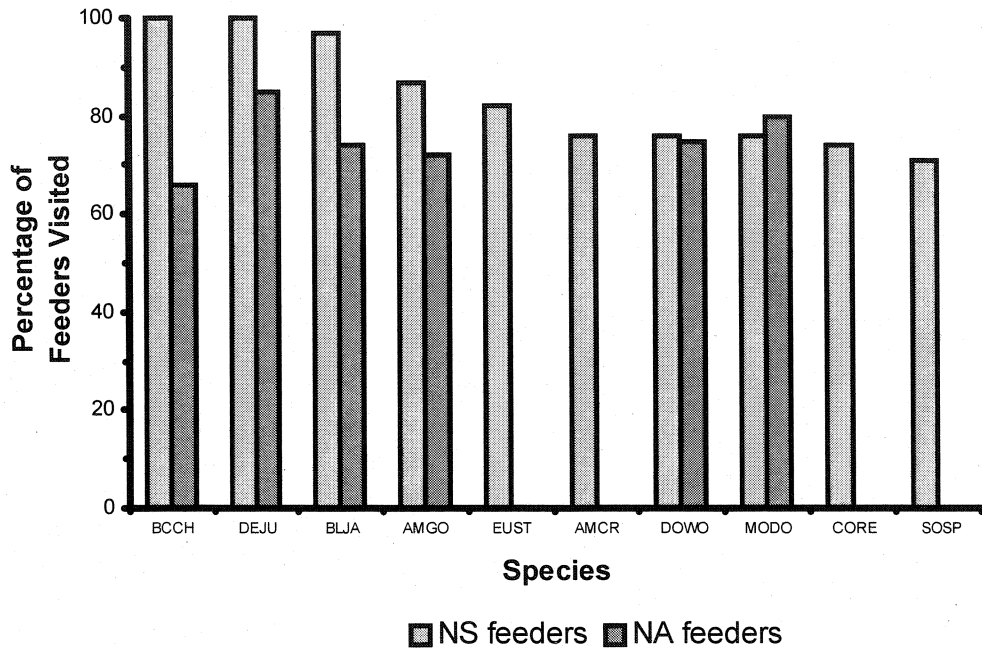
One reason Project FeederWatch has been so successful is because it was designed with all of that in mind. "FeederWatch undergoes continuous evaluation and refinement by our staff scientists, some of whom are leaders in their fields," says Laura Kammermeier, FeederWatch project leader. "The materials are developed to educate participants before they even begin, and the data forms are carefully developed to prevent reporting errors and identification mistakes."

Another reason the project is a success, says Kammermeier, is because it's enjoyable, and participants learn a lot about the birds they so enjoy. "Although the protocol is scientifically rigorous, we've made it very easy for people of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels to participate," she says. Many home schoolers use FeederWatch as an educational tool, and nature centers and bird clubs find that it is a great outreach vehicle.

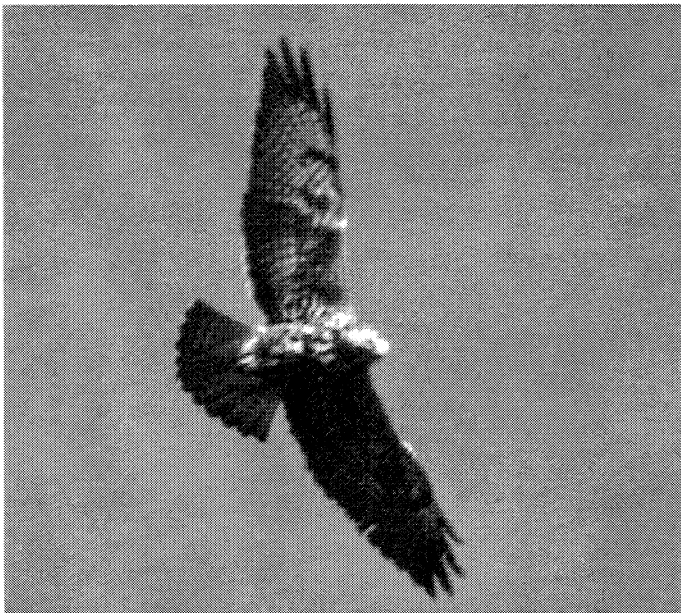
In Nova Scotia, 38 birders participated in Project FeederWatch in 1999/2000. The ten most often reported birds (along with how they ranked against the top ten across North America) are shown in the graph.

To sign up for Project FeederWatch, call Bird Studies Canada at 1 (888) 448-2473. You can also sign up over the Web at <<http://birds.cornell.edu/pfw/>>.

Editor's note: Though we're halfway through the FeederWatch cycle for this year, according to Allison Wells, "People who sign up then get the remainder of that season (through April) plus the following year for the same fee." So don't hesitate to sign up now, all data are valuable, even those from half a season! ☐



Nova Scotia FeederWatcher results compared with North American results on the whole. BCCH = Black-capped Chickadee; DEJU = Dark-eyed Junco; BLJA = Blue Jay; AMGO = American Goldfinch; EUST = European Starling; AMCR = American Crow; DOWO = Downy Woodpecker; MODO = Mourning Dove; CORE = Common Redpoll; SOSP = Song Sparrow.



Although both these very rare species have been documented in previous issues, Cathy Murrant's great flight shots deserve a reprise. The **SWAINSON'S HAWK** photographed Sept 13, 1998, was one of several that appeared in easternmost Cape Breton that fall, and the **BLACK-TAILED GULL** caused much excitement in late Oct. 1999.

Fall Warblers

By Ian McLaren



Some warblers begin their fall movements quite early. This male BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER appeared July 30 on Seal I., where none had been seen for days. [Photo Ian McLaren]



Later in the autumn, we often see "WESTERN PALM WARBLERS," like this one photographed in late September. They are distinguished by their lack of yellow on the breast, although some may have a little extending to the belly area. [Photo Ian McLaren]

Autumn Weather - Annapolis Valley - 2000

By Larry Bogan

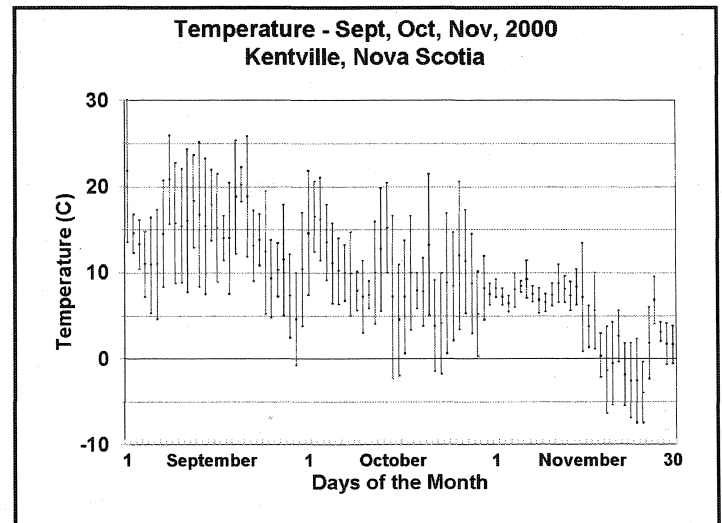
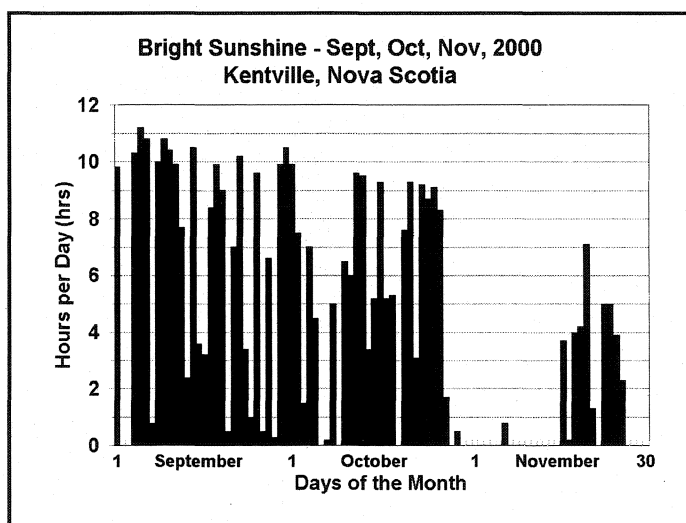
The autumn of 2000 started very pleasantly with a dry and sunny September. Both of those climatic variables differed from the 39 year averages by about 25%. The weather changed in October, when the rains come down heavily and provide the month with twice the usual rainfall. At the end of October the rains were accompanied by an unusually cloudy period that lasted for 19 days into the middle of November. For over 35 days (Oct. 9 - Nov. 15) the mean daily temperature remained nearly constant at about 8 °C. Although the first frost of the season occurred on September 29, and there were four more frost in mid-October, no heavy freeze occurred until after November 19. The temperature quickly dropped for a week and 13 cm of snow fell in that period.

Table 1. Weather statistics from the Kentville Agriculture Center. Data for the current season are followed by the 39 year average.

	Mean Daily Temp. (°C)		Rainfall (mm)		Bright Sunshine Hours (h)	
	Current	Average	Current	Average	Current	Average
September	14.2	14.5	69	94	198	162
October	9.6	9.1	201	103	153	138
November	4.3	3.9	99	117	38	83
Season	9.4	9.1	369	314	389	383

Overall, the mean temperature of the period was only slightly warmer than average. Because of October's high precipitation, the whole period had above average rainfall by 15%. Despite the long cloudy period at the end of the season, the overall bright sunshine hours were average. The sunny months of September and October compensate for the fact that 'dark' November had only 38 bright sunshine hours.

Mean daily wind speeds are recorded at Kentville. We had two days of excessive winds, the first on October 11 and the second on November 15. The first, I remember distinctly because the same winds over the Green Mountains in Vermont were lifting me in my sailplane to heights that I never been before. The second caused damage in the area and both occurred when low pressure areas entered the Maritimes carrying heavy rains with them. ☐



Seasonal Reports

Loons and Grebes

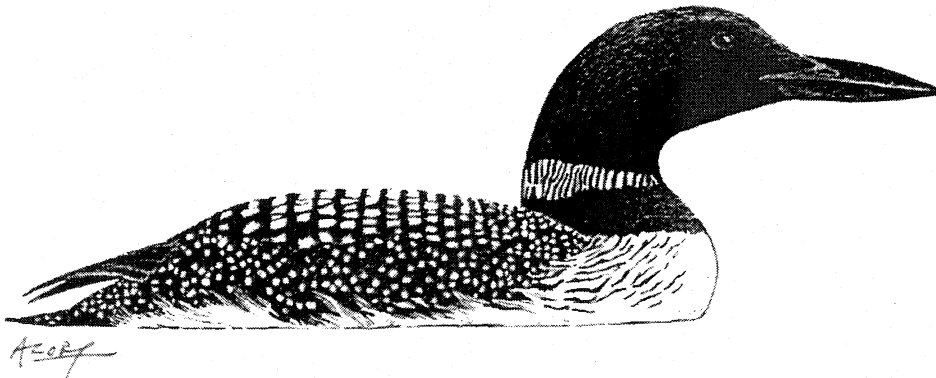
By Joe Nocera

The RED-THROATED LOON was widely observed this fall, starting with an individual still in breeding plumage at Grand Pré, Kings Co., Sept. 24 (BLF). Sightings continued to increase, primarily in Kings and Pict. Co., where a high of 90 were seen Oct. 14 at Waterside PP, Pict. Co. (KJM), increasing from a count of 18 on Oct. 6 (KJM). Single birds, and small groups, were then regularly seen throughout Kings Co.: at Evangeline Beach, Oct. 12 & 16 (JCT), Kingsport, Oct. 17 (JCT) and Grand Pré, Oct. 21 (BLF). By late October, many small groups were seen

Sept. 17 (DBM, Eric McCorquodale), eight at Gabarus, Aug. 5 (DBM, RWK), and regular reports from Kennington Cove (SEM, DBM). Sightings were sparse from the mainland, with individuals only being reported from Kings Co.: Scots Bay, Aug. 11 (BLM), Aylesford L., Sept. 12 (RBS); and Yar. Co.: Oct. 7 at Seal I. (var. obs. fide BLM), Oct. 29 at Cooks Beach (PRG, RSD) and Nov. 5 at Rocco Pt. (PRG). Digby Co., was the only other county with reports, that of 15 birds at Brier I., Nov. 12 (ELM, AHM).

Louisbourg was made Dec. 4, but sadly, by Dec. 8 the bird had perished.

HORNED GREBE was generally not well reported. Are they declining? The first seasonal record came from Chester, Lun. Co., Sept. 30 (Bill Nauss *fide* JAH). No further observations were made until Oct. 21, when BLF reported two at Grand Pré, Kings Co. Reports increased after this time starting with a bird seen at Oct. 22 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. (JAH). Small groups were reported regularly from Mira Bay, CB Co., Oct. 29 & 30 and Nov. 26 (SEM). Pinkneys Pt., Yar. Co., had two birds Nov. 4 (PRG, RSD). RWK and SEM reported three birds at Kennington Cove, CB Co., Nov. 19. Four were seen at Gilberts Cove, Digby Co., Nov. 29 (PRG) and DOU observed two at Purcells Cove, Hfx. Co., Dec. 2. Two birds were seen at both Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co., Nov. 18 (NSBS) and at CSI, Dec. 3 (NSBS).



throughout the province, with a number of sightings in CB Co. (SEM, RWK): two at Kennington Cove, Oct 28, Nov. 12 & 19, two at Morien Bar, Oct. 29, one at Mira Gut, Oct. 30 and Main-a-Dieu, Nov. 26. In other counties, small groups were reported from Pinkneys Pt., Yar. Co., Nov. 26 (PRG, RSD), Devils I., Hfx. Co., Dec. 2 (BLM, JOW), and a high count of about 10 on Brier I., Digby Co., Dec. 3 (IAM, ELM, AHM).

COMMON LOONS were reported in relatively small numbers, compared to the number that actually reside in the province. The only report of a pair still with young was from Blacketts L., CB Co. in August (Barc Cunningham). Post-breeding season observations were mainly of social groups and individuals "on-the-move" with a number of reports from CB Co.: Georges R., Aug. 3 &

The PIED-BILLED GREBE was reported in scattered locations throughout the province this season. BLM observed two at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co., Aug. 10. JCT reports five adults at Canard Pond, Kings Co., Aug. 24 and an imm. bird at Harris Pond, Kings Co., Oct. 17. Several were reported from Yar. Co.: two at Seal I., Oct. 8 (BLM), one at Tusket Falls, Sept. 24 (PRG), and one at Melbourne from Sept. to Nov. (PRG). RFL and KJM reported two from Antigonish Landing, Oct. 2. Big Pond, Florence, CB Co., had at least one bird from Sept. 1 to Oct. 21 (DBM, Bruce McCorquodale). ELM observed a single bird at Masons Beach Pond, Lun. Co., Oct. 11. Following very few sightings in November, Bissett L., HRM, had one bird on Dec. 2 & 3 (BLM *et al.*). An observation by SEM of a single bird on pond behind King's Bastion, Fortress of

RED-NECKED GREBE were seen in expected numbers, with an unusually early report of five individuals at Sober I., Hfx. Co., Aug. 21 (KJM). Subsequently, three were seen at Kennington Cove, CB Co., Aug. 27, with further observations there throughout the fall, reaching a high count of 96 on Nov. 12 (SEM). A "few" were observed at Big I., Hfx. Co., Aug. 28 (DOU). Several were observed at Brier I. and Westport Hbr., Digby Co. on Sept. 23 and Oct. 15 (RBS). JAH reported two at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Oct. 22, and one was seen at Jimtown, Ant. Co., Oct. 29 (RFL, MZG). PRG and RSD observed several at Cooks Beach, Yar. Co., Oct. 29 & Nov. 4 and three were seen at Short Beach, Yar. Co., Nov. 13 (PRG, JDE). Early winter reports consisted of eight at Gilberts Cove, Digby Co., Nov. 29 (PRG), a very large group of 150 at Summerville, Queens Co. (AND), and one at Purcells Cove, Hfx. Co., Dec. 2 (DOU). One was observed at Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co., Nov. 18 (NSBS) and one was also seen at CSI, Dec. 3 (NSBS). □

Tubenoses Through Cormorants

By Blake Maybank

An early NORTHERN FULMAR was seen from Brier I. Sept. 1 (PAC) during a strong near-shore pelagic movement occasioned by westerly winds and thick fog. DBM commented that none were seen in Nova Scotia waters on a crossing of the Cabot Strait Aug. 8 & 19. They must have arrived in numbers in the Bay of Fundy later in the period, but the only other reports were four from the Cabot Strait ferry near St. Pauls Island Nov. 12 (RWK), and several hundred on Browns Bank Nov. 21 (RSD). For the first time in several years, there were no reports of Cory's Shearwater. On two August crossings of the Cabot Strait DBM could scarcely manage to push his GREATER SHEARWATER numbers into the double digits. The Bay of Fundy offered more Greaters, with 500+ on Aug. 9 (BLM) and 150 Sept. 23, both from Westport whale watch trips, and 2,000 during the aforementioned seabird flight Sept. 1 at Brier I. (LAL, PAC, GEL). Despite these totals, the Bay of Fundy numbers were lower than in recent years. ELM had 20+ from Brier I. Oct. 8, and later sightings included 13 from the Cabot Strait ferry Nov. 12 (RWK, DBM), and 300 "gliding around in a hail storm" on Browns Bank Nov. 21 (RSD). DBM had but one SOOTY SHEARWATER on each of two Cabot Strait crossings in August, but later found wings from two different Sooties on the shore at Cape Percé. The only mainland sighting was from Medway Hd., Queens Co., Aug. 13 (ELM, IAM).

The remainder of the reports were from Brier I., with Westport whale watching trips producing counts of 100 Aug. 9 and ten Sept. 23 (both BLM), with the latest report a single bird Oct. 8 (ELM). MANX SHEARWATERS were scarce this year, with DBM reporting a single from the Cabot Strait ferry Aug. 8, and five off Brier I. during the Sept. 1 fly-by (LAL, PAC, GEL). For the first time in many years of Bay of Fundy whale watching trips, I failed to record a single Manx. While CAH reported that WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS were common in the deeper waters of the Bay of Fundy, the only submitted count was 150 Aug. 9, from one of CAH's trip. LEACH'S STORM-PETREL were also lightly reported, with DBM having low numbers in Cabot Strait waters in August, his best count being 100 Aug. 19 from the Argentia ferry. BLM reported but two on a Westport whale watch trip Sept. 23.

Various observers noted low numbers of NORTHERN GANNETS off Cape Breton in August and September, with the highest August count only 10, in Ingonish Bay Aug. 13 (BLM). Numbers rose slightly in September with "dozens" off Cape Percé Sept. 9 (DBM), while by Oct. 15 100+ were noted at the same location (DBM, RWK). Sixty-five birds were counted from the Cabot Strait ferry Nov. 12 (RWK, DBM). On the mainland sightings were fewer, as is typical. Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co., held only a few

birds this autumn, and they didn't stay as late -- the last sighting was two Nov. 18 (NSBS). The Bay of Fundy always has gannets on offer in the autumn. BLM counted 30 Aug. 9 on a pelagic outing, LAL, PAC & GEL counted 150 Sept. 1 from Brier I., and ELM noted hundreds around Brier I. in the first week of October, and he counted 50+ from there in mid-November. Even with numerous reports, it's difficult to get a handle on the DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT migration. In Cape Breton County, DBM had 200+ Aug. 28 (Louisbourg), several dozen Oct. 18 (South Bar), and the last two Nov. 12 (Sydney Harbour). BLM noted 200+ in migration past Seal I. Sept. 3, and 50 flying past Hartlen Point Sept. 30. DMW noted them regularly through mid-October at Conrads Beach, with a maximum of 21 Sept. 9. There were 100+ on Seal I. Oct. 8 (BLM), while PLC had 100+ over the Northwest Arm of Halifax Harbour Oct. 23. By mid-November most cormorants were Greats, with but a few lingering Double-crests, most of which would likely try to overwinter, including a few at the Pictou Causeway (KJM), two on Brier I. (ELM), and one at Harris' Pond, Kings Co. (JCT). The best picture of GREAT CORMORANT arrival was from ELM on Brier I., who noted 20 Oct. 4, followed by 100+ Nov. 13. Elsewhere, no pattern could be discerned from the scattered reports received. □

Hérons and Vultures

By Richard Knapton

Seven AM. BITTERNs at APBS, Aug. 4 was an excellent number (DOM). Thereafter there were about a dozen reports from scattered locations in the province from Pict. Co. S and W, mostly involving single birds. One was watched Aug. 25 wading in water and foraging like a Great Blue Heron at Grand Pré, Kings Co. (GWT, JCT). Three, Sept. 29, Kejimikujik N.P. Seaside Adjunct (*fide*

JAH), was a good total. The last report was one, Oct. 14, Big Pond, Brier I. (RBS). A LEAST BITTERN was reported at the Hawk, CSI, Nov. 12 (*fide* MUN). GREAT BLUE HERONS were reported widely throughout the province and throughout the season, with most of the latest records at the end of November coming from the south shore. Like last fall, there were reports of visible

migration of herons leaving the province; ELM saw four appear low over Whipple Pt., Brier I., Nov. 13 circle at least a dozen times offshore before gaining altitude and disappear into the mist going SW. As in previous years, significant concentrations occurred at several locations in the province. Some notable gatherings included 23 at Dominion, CB Co., Sept. 7 (RWK), 50+ at Big I., Pict.

Co., Sept. 30 (KJM) and 25 there Oct. 21 (TEP), 13 on CSI, Nov. 3, increasing to 36, Nov. 11, 16, Nov. 24 and an impressive 20, Nov. 26 (MUN *et al.*), 15 at Glace Bay Sanctuary, CB Co., Oct. 1 (DBM, RWK), 16 at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Oct. 21 (DOM), and eight and 10 at Powell Pt. PP. and Sinclair I., Pict. Co., respectively, Nov. 6 (KJM). There was still one at Advocate Hbr., Cum. Co., Nov. 29 (JAF).

It was a fairly good season for southern herons. Some of the GREAT EGRETS reported this fall were likely a carry-over from the fantastic spring we had for this species. One reported from Conrads Beach, HRM up to Aug. 12 (AAM) could have been the one reported there in July. Similarly, one seen several times in August and September at Dominion, CB Co., (var. obs.) and last seen on Oct. 1 (DBM, RWK) was probably a lingerer from the summer. One at MacLeans Pt. near Pugwash, Cum. Co., Aug. 27 (BLF), was possibly the same bird present at Linden Marsh, Cum. Co., during September, last seen Sept. 22 (HAB, JEB). Elsewhere, singles were at Oxners Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 13 (IAM, ELM), at Mavillette Beach, Sept. 8 (R. Toochin), and finally in Bells Cove, Shel. Co., Nov. 9 (DOE). The ad. LITTLE BLUE HERON from the summer was last reported at Daniels Hd., CSI, Aug. 25 (MUN *et al.*), and probably a second ad. was present at Pembroke, Yar. Co., Aug. 9 (PRG). A TRICOLORED HERON was at Cape Light, CSI, during the first half of August, and was last seen Aug. 16 (var. obs.). It is not unusual for CATTLE EGRETS to turn up in the late fall in the province and this year was no exception. On Nov. 4, one was found at Port Clyde, Shel. Co. (JAH) and there were two there the next day (MUN). On Nov. 6 another turned up at Clarks Hbr., Shel. Co. and two were present in the Clarks Hbr. Area, Nov. 13 (MUN). There were certainly three and probably four Cattle Egrets in and around CSI between Nov. 4 - 13. One was reported from Northwest, Lun. Co., during late November (*fide* JAH). A possible GREEN HERON was reported Sept. 5 from Frog Pond, Jollimore, HRM (PLC).

As usual, reports of BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS were almost all from CSI, with a maximum of three at Daniels Hd., Aug. 11 (MUN). The latest was one there on Oct. 8 (NSBS). Away from the southern shore, Black-crowned Night-herons are distinctly rare in the province, therefore the occurrence of an imm. at Glace Bay Sanctuary, CB Co., from Sept. 19 to Oct. 2 (CAM, SEM) is especially noteworthy. There were maybe two YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS on CSI, Aug. 18 (MUN, JON). A very good record for CB was an imm., Sept. 17 - 22, River Bourgeois, Rich. Co. (G. & S. Digout, SEM, DBM).

A GLOSSY IBIS found at Schooner Pond, CB Co., Oct. 13 (CAM) and seen the next day (RWK, SEM), was another exceptional record for the fall. On Oct. 13, a Peregrine Falcon dove at the bird,

then landed close by in a tree 10 meters away. The ibis stood for about five minutes, before taking flight heading west and flying high and out of sight. Fortunately the bird returned later, to be seen the next day, but not thereafter despite repeated searches.

Numbers of TURKEY VULTURES reported were below last year's impressive tallies. There were eight along Digby Neck, Sept. 22 (RBS). As usual, Brier I. provided most of the sightings. There were five there Aug. 22 (LAL, PAC, ADL), followed by six with many migrating raptors, Sept. 30 and Oct. 2 (ELM). Up to 12 were there, Oct. 3 - 8 (ELM), 20, Oct. 14 - 15 (RBS), 18 together at Pond Cove on Oct. 22 (TEP), 16-20, Nov. 12 and 13, Nov. 13 (ELM). Finally, one was seen at Advocate Hbr., Cum. Co., Nov. 24 (MSM, JAF). □



Geese, Swans and Ducks

By Joe Nocera

There was an imm. GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE seen on several occasions in Lanark, Ant. Co., first reported Oct. 10 by RFL. This individual was of the Taiga race (*A. a. elgasi*), a bird that is larger, darker, and has less barring than the more 'common' Arctic race. It was last reported Oct. 29 in Lanark (RFL). This is the second time in as many years that the occurrence of this vagrant species has graced Ant. Co.

SNOW GEESE were reported regularly from across the province, with the first sighting of the period on Sept. 2 of four at Louisbourg, CB Co. (HOS), which is very early for this rare but regular fall to spring visitor. Two reports came in early Oct., with 12 imms. (white phase) seen at Grand Pré, Kings Co., (BLF), and one bird at Gull Bay, Queens Co. (A. MacFarlane *et al.*). One ad. and an imm. were seen at the Black Rock area, Fortress of Louisbourg (SEM *et al.*), Oct 17-27. One individual was reported Nov. 11 at the Windsor causeway (Jake MacDonald *vide* JWW). Three imms. were reported from Cape Light, CSI, Nov. 21 (*vide* MUN).

CANADA GEESE were well reported in this period with large flocks starting to occur in Sept. to early Nov., especially near Shubenacadie "in corn fields until hunting season opened, then flocks were scattered" (RCM). A group of 100 was reported from Apple R., Cum. Co., Sept. 25 (KFS). By late October large flocks were seen in the southern end of the province with 150 at Lower Eel Brook, Yar. Co. (PRG) and approx. 500 at the Melbourne Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Yar. Co., Nov. 4 (PRG, RSD). Increased movement as the season progressed was evident by 50 birds reported in Lanark, Ant. Co., Oct. 2, followed by subsequent observations of greater numbers tapering off at a steady presence of 200 by the end of Nov. (RFL, NSBS). The largest group reported was of approx. 1,500 at Port Joli Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Queens Co., Nov. 24 (PRG), portending the annual mass winter assemblage there.

The only sightings of BRANT this autumn were from CSI. Eleven birds were spotted there Oct. 7., remaining until Oct. 11 (*vide* MUN). By Nov. 23, the numbers had decreased slightly to three seen at Daniels Hd., Nov. 23 (MUN), followed by a sighting of one at the same spot Nov. 26 (JON). The birds maintained a presence near CSI into December, where they were observed Dec. 3 (NSBS).

The numbers of reports of WOOD DUCK were up from this period last year. A good number of these sightings were from CB, where DBM noted two at Sydney Mines, CB Co., Aug. 7, with three to four being seen regularly there until Sept. 16. Other birds in CB Co. were one at North Sydney, Aug. 22 (DBM), three to six at Florence, Big Pond from August to September, and an 'urban' group of five at the UCCB lagoon in Sydney, Oct. 1 (DBM, RWK). Ten birds were reported from Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co., Aug. 10 (BLM). In Kings Co., one was reported from Harris Pond in Canning, and five to six outside Canning, Aug. 13 (RBS), two ads. and three imms., Saxon St. Pond, Aug. 24 (JCT). A group of seven was reported from Masons Beach Pond, Lun. Co. (ELM)

An apparent scarcity of GADWALL resulted in only one sighting being submitted for the reporting period. One at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co., Aug. 10 (BLM). Were numbers really down this past autumn, or has 'reportability' decreased?

EURASIAN WIGEON, becoming less of a rarity these days, were widespread. RLF reported the first of this period, Oct. 14, with one at Williams Pt., Ant. Co., seen again Nov. 18 (NSBS). RLF and KJM saw a male at Antigonish Landing, Oct. 29. Canard Pond, Kings Co., held one male on Oct. 18 (JCT, JET). Sullivans Pond, an annually reliable spot to see this species, finally had one reported on Nov. 26 (PER), seen by many after that until the end of the

reporting period. The only CB sightings were three at Beacon St. Dam, Glace Bay, that remained for over four weeks in late Oct. to Nov. (ALM, CAM). AM. WIGEON were reported in large numbers across the province, with an especially heavy presence in Kings Co., where they were observed regularly at Harris Pond, Canning throughout the period in groups as large as 18, Oct. 5, 18 & 27 (JCT, JET). Canard Pond, Kings Co., likewise reliably held smaller groups throughout the autumn, reaching a maximum of 25 on Oct. 5 (JCT). Antigonish Landing was another reliable spot for this species, having reported small groups in October and November (RFL, NSBS). Yar. Co. had some observations: on Seal I. of 11 on Sept. 2, decreasing to four by Oct. 7 (var. obs. *vide* BLM), two males at Cooks Beach Nov. 26 (PRG, RSD). Two large groups were reported from Hfx. Co. where 20 were seen at Sullivans Pond, Oct 31 (with smaller numbers residing there until the end of the reporting period). Only one report came from CB, a group of three at Big Pond, CB Co., Oct. 9 (DBM, Bruce McCorquodale).

Considering how ubiquitous AM. BLACK DUCK are across the province, I received relatively few reports. Several reports of sizeable groups came from CB, where DBM observed a few hundred at Wentworth Park, Sydney, Aug. 20 "still in eclipse plumage". Approx. 150 in eclipse plumage were at North Sydney two days later (DBM). Smaller congregations were seen across the province throughout the reporting period, especially in Ant. and Kings Cos. where RFL, JCT and JWW provided numerous observations in many locales.

MALLARD reports were likewise sparse, however a pattern of distribution is still apparent with concentrations in CB, Kings and Ant. Cos. DBM reports a "couple of hundred...still in eclipse" at Wentworth Park, Sydney on Aug. 20, followed by an observation of 75-100 in N. Sydney Aug. 22. Other large groups reported were of 150+ seen Nov. 27 at

the Acadia University Arena soccer fields' parking lot, and 200 at Kiwanis Park pond in Truro (JWW). Otherwise, reports of small groups and individuals were submitted that further support concentrations, but large centres such as Sullivans Pond, Hfx. Co. shouldn't be forgotten.

Reports of BLUE-WINGED TEAL were up very slightly from this time last year. The first sighting of the period was of six at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. Aug. 10 (BLM). The majority of reports were from Kings Co., beginning with eight seen in Canning, Aug. 13 (RBS). From late September to November groups of blue-wings were seen at both Saxon St. and Canard Ponds, Kings Co. (RBS *et al.*). The only other areas of the province reporting were CB Co., where DBM saw

Only two sightings of N. SHOVELER were reported this past fall. A single ad. male was seen at Canard Pond, Aug. 19 (RBS) and, presumably, the same individual was seen there Oct. 5 "going into eclipse plumage" (JCT). A single fem. at Cherry Hill, Lun. Co. was spotted Nov. 10 (SJF, JSC) providing the only other observation of this relatively scarce species.

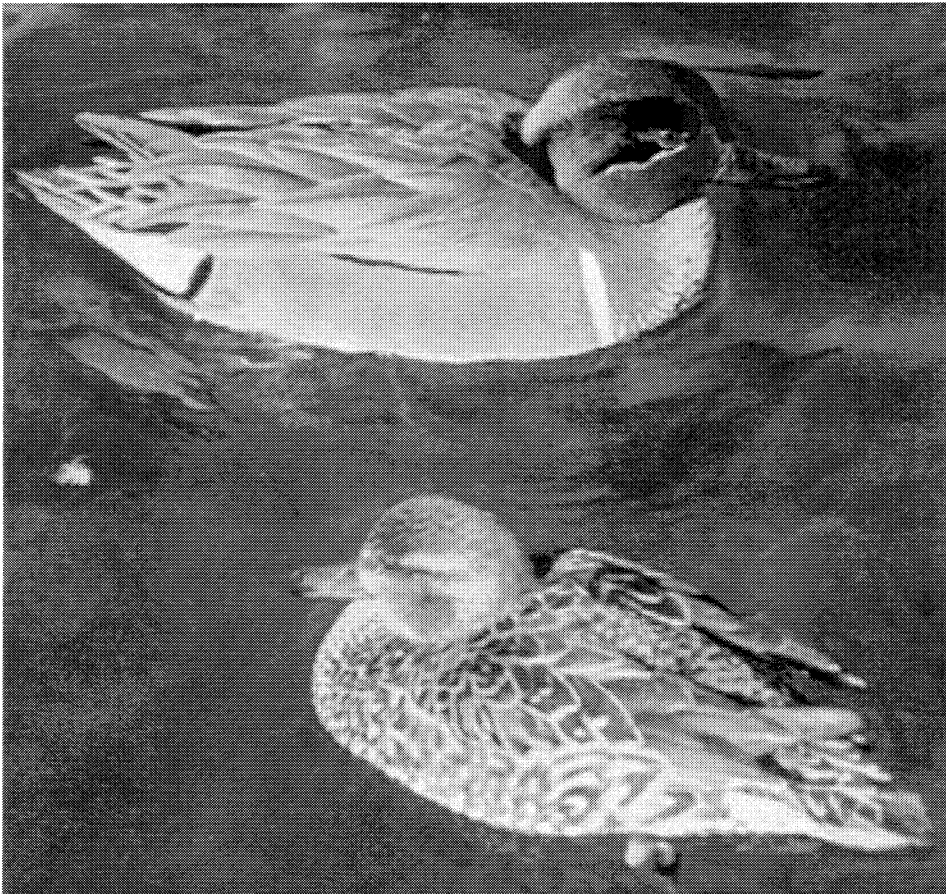
N. PINTAIL were not reported in the province until mid-October in Lun. Co. when JAH spotted one fem. at Corkums I., Oct. 12, later discovering one male and two fems. Oct. 17 at Masons Pond. Kings Co. was again a stronghold for the species this fall with reports from Harris' Pond (JCT), New Minas Sewage ponds (RBS), mud flats off Wolfville Hbr. (RBS, BLF), and Habitant R. in Canning

period, and were well represented across the province. The largest group reported was of 200 at Canard Pond, Nov. 9 (JCT). This pond, as usual, held very large groups throughout the reporting period, as did Saxon St. Pond, Kings Co. Elsewhere in the province, large assemblages were seen at Melbourne, Yar. Co. with 100 on Sept. 3 (PRG), 120 at Port Joli Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Queens Co. on Nov. 16 (PRG), and 150+ at the New Minas Sewage Pond, Kings Co. on Sept. 22 (JCT).

RING-NECKED DUCK were well reported, with over 30 records submitted. Significant numbers were seen Aug. 5 in CB Co. with 65 in L'Archeveque and 30+ at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co. (DBM, RWK) where several dozen were still present by Aug. 26 (DBM, NSBS). Aug. 7, 69 were observed at Big Pond, CB Co., with good numbers still present there at the end of August (DBM). BLF reported 35 at Sunken L., Kings Co., Oct. 12, followed by a sighting of 41 at Georges R., Scotch L., CB Co. on Oct. 28 (DBM). Into early December large groups were still being seen.

Only one TUFTED DUCK was reported in the period, a first winter male at Settle L., Cole Hbr, Hfx. Co., on Oct. 21 (DHH). Perhaps we have been spoiled by the seeming increase in sightings of this rare visitor these past years. No sightings of GREATER SCAUP were reported in Aug. or Sept., but on Oct. 7, 32 were observed at Midway L., Digby Co., (GWT, JCT). ELM reported 30 at Kingsburg Pond, Lun. Co. on Oct. 29. The NSBS trip on Nov. 18 to Ant. Co. saw "a dozen or so, maybe a Lesser, too?" at Lanark (RFL). No LESSER SCAUP were reported for the sighting period.

COMMON EIDER was surely under-reported for the period, with only five observations sent in. However, the sightings represent the coastal wide distribution of the species with reports of six imms. at Petite Rivière, Lun. Co. on Aug. 20 (FED). Fifty were reported from Seal I., Yar. Co. on Sept. 2 (var. obs. Fide BLM). JCT reported three off Kingsport bluff, Kings Co., Oct. 17, as did the NSBS trip to Ant. Co. on Nov. 18 at Jimtown. Sightings of HARLEQUIN



A pair of GREEN-WINGED TEAL. [Photo Cathy Murrant]

four at Richmond, Aug. 26, three at Schooner Pond, Sept. 27, and four at Florence, Big Pond, Oct. 9 (Bruce McCorquodale). Seal I., Yar. Co., had one to two from September to October (var. obs. *fide* BLM).

(JWW). A sizeable group of 15 was seen at the Port Joli Migratory Bird Sanctuary on Nov. 24 (PRG).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL were quite numerous throughout the reporting

DUCK began in early November with one fem. at Cherry Hill, Lun. Co. (SJF, JSC). In Anna. Co., on Nov. 17, PBG reported two males, one fem. at Margaretsville and four males, two fems. at Port George (that were seen into late November (BBT)). MUN reported the last sighting of the season, a male at Mavillette Beach, Digby Co., Nov. 26.

All three E. Canadian scoters were well reported. SURF SCOTER was most widespread. The largest group was a mixed flock (200+ Surf and White-winged) at Main-à-Dieu, CB Co., Nov. 26 (SEM). Another significant flock was 30+ at the mouth of LaHave R., Lun. Co., Oct. 29 (ELM). A group of 450+ WHITE-WINGED SCOTER, the largest reported this year, was observed from the ferry in Sydney Hbr., CB Co. on Nov. 12 (DBM, RWK). The largest flocks were likewise seen in CB Co., with 48 at Florence on Sept. 16, 85 at South Bar Oct. 14, with 120 there four days later (DBM, Bruce McCorquodale). Outside of CB, the largest group was 52 seen Nov. 29 at Gilberts Cove, Digby Co. (PRG). BLACK SCOTER was recorded in August at Pinkneys Pt., Yar. Co., "the first Black Scoter I've seen in summer" (RSD). Followed by an individual at Brier I, Digby Co., later that month (LAL,ADL, PAC). A few probable blacks were in a group of scoters at Tor Bay PP, Guys. Co., Sept. 17 (RFL). BLM noted two at Pennant Pt., HRM, Sept. 17.

Precious few LONG-TAILED DUCK (*nee* Oldsquaw) were reported this period, not being observed until Oct. 15 with two ads. at Kennington Cove, CB Co. (SEM). DBM noted four in N. Sydney, CB Co., Nov. 4. A lone male was then noted in Advocate Hbr., Cum. Co., Nov. 23 (JAF).

BUFFLEHEAD was seen throughout the province, with some larger groups (30 - 50) being seen at Melbourne Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Yar. Co. in late October and early November (PRG, RSD). Flocks of ten or more were observed in late November at Lanark, Ant. Co. (RFL), Grand Desert and Fishermans Beach, Hfx. Co. (DOU). Seen in lesser numbers during the reporting period was COM. GOLDENEYE. Two were seen at Ingonish Bay, CBHNP, Aug. 13 (BLM). The next report is from more than a month later, with an individual at Florence, Big Pond, CB Co., Sept. 16. (DBM). In Barrington Passage, Yar. Co., JAH observed six on Nov. 4, followed by a late November sighting of 12 at Lanark, Ant. Co. (RFL). BARROW'S GOLDENEYE went unreported for the period.

HOODED MERGANSER were literally seen everywhere. Throughout October and November they were repeatedly observed in Ant. Co., in groups from two - twenty observed at Antigonish Landing, Lanark, and Williams Pt. (RFL, NSBS). The NSBS trip to CB Co. Aug.

26, observed a bird that sparked a debate as to whether an imm. red-breasted may be the bird in question, with "yellow on bill, size, dark sides, placement of white on wing and tail cocking, suggest Hooded to me" (DBM). Lun. Co., had a goodly number of birds observed at Parks Creek, First South, Bridgewater, and Lower S. Cove (JAH, ELM). The largest group reported was an impressive flock of 50 at Haliburton Gut, Pict. Co. (KJM). COM. MERGANSER were reported from Kings Co. late in the period, where JCT observed them at White Rock, and JWW along the Habitant R. in Canning. Two impressive assemblages were seen, one at N Branch LaHave R., Lun. Co., held 32 birds on Oct. 7 (DHY), and MUN noted over 175 at Argyle, Yar. Co., on Nov. 26. RED-BREASTED MERGANSER was less widespread. A large number of sightings were reported from CB Co., particularly in the Sydney area (DBM, RWK) and the largest group reported here was of 15 at Louisbourg, Kennington Cove, on Nov. 12 (SEM).

RUDDY DUCK was once again noted this fall, and the lucky residents of Lanark, Ant. Co., were privileged to have five fems. and one male there on Oct. 23 that were discovered by Anne Camozzi and Peter Jackson (*fide* RFL). As of Nov. 18, three remained in Lanark to be ticked by the NSBS field trip. This western species has become a welcome regular rarity in fall and winter here. □



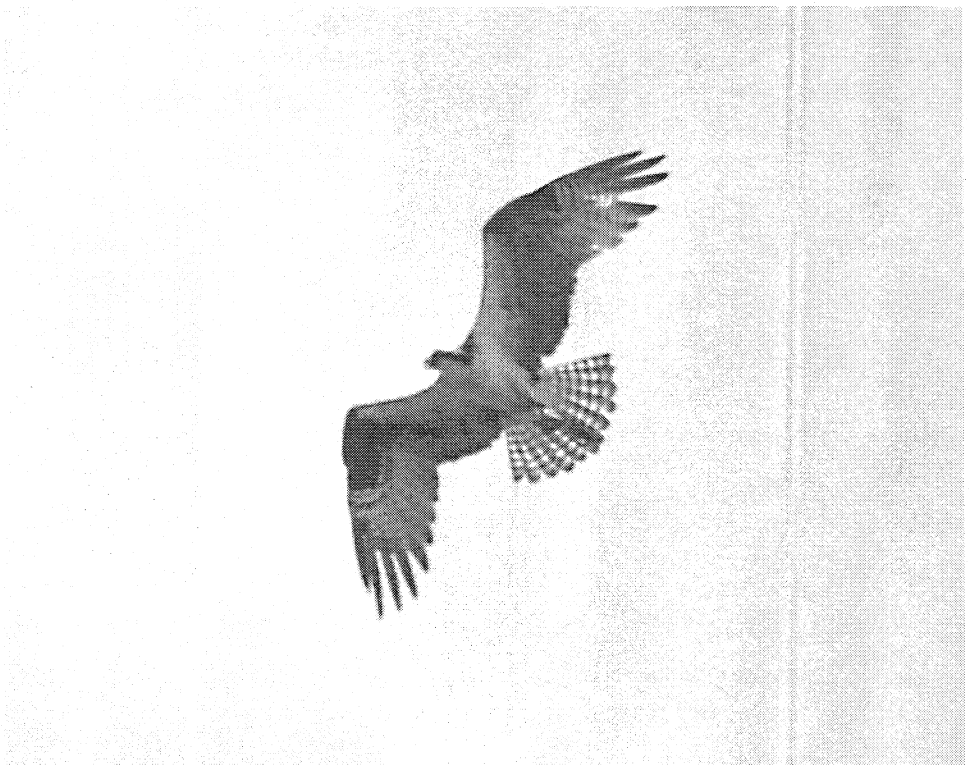
This lovely male WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL, hanging around with a mixed flock of wild and tame ducks at Clark's Hbr., CSI, was known to have been a local escapee from captivity. But it was a thing of beauty nonetheless. The tilted head, showing off the white cheek, is a typical display position in this species. [Photo David Currie]

Diurnal Raptors, Galliforms, Rails and Cranes

By Richard Knapton

Reports of OSPREYS came in from throughout the province, from CB to the south shore. There were 25 reports, mostly single birds and mainly in August and September. Four together at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co., Aug. 5, probably represented a family party (DBM, RWK). October records included two over the Bedford Basin, HRM, Oct. 7 (DOM), one at CSI, Oct. 8 (NSBS), one at Lower LaHave and two at East LaHave, Oct. 11 (JAH), and one at Schooner Pond, CB Co., Oct. 12 (CAM).

Certainly, one of the birds of the season was the imm. **MISSISSIPPI KITE** on Brier I., first seen Sept. 23 in a kettle of Broad-winged Hawks (RBS, NSBS) and likely the same bird seen on Oct. 2 (ELM). ELM's notes on the bird are well worth posting. "October 2 - 1 imm. in course of large migration of Sharp-shinned Hawks past Lighthouse Hill, Brier I. Noted first as a dark smallish (as compared to Harriers and Turkey Vultures in area) falcon-like bird gliding in from the NW off the sea, pestered by Sharp-shinned Hawks, giving a size comparison. Initially I took it for a large Merlin or a small Peregrine, but then it became clear that it had a very unusual shape: long, angled wings with a rounded-sharp tip and a very short first primary, and a very long tail that even from the side (the bird was at my eye level) was clearly noticeably expanded at the tip. Seen mostly in silhouette, it showed no sign of any light colour above or below, indicating an immature. The shape was pure kite (I am familiar with White-tailed Kite) - extremely slender; wings long, angled and pointed; first primary strikingly short; tail long and expanded at the tip. Unfortunately because of the light I could not see details of the tail pattern (notably the tail banding). Within a few seconds the bird passed me and rapidly glided away to the E over St. Marys Bay and toward the mainland. The simplest conclusion is that this may have been the same bird seen nearby by Richard Stern and Murray Newell a couple of weeks before - but who knows?"



An OSPREY at the new nesting site at Hartlen Point. [Photo Ian McLaren]

Most of the 26 reports of **BALD EAGLES** came from CB (DBM *et al.*) and Ant. Co. (RFL *et al.*). An ad. frequenting Flint I., off Pt. Morien, CB Co., Sept. 27, chased a gull that had caught a mackerel, forcing it to drop the fish which it picked up, and flew back to the island to eat (CAM). Instances of eagles migrating are most evident on the southern islands. There were seven reports from Brier I., starting with an imm. Aug. 13 (PLC) and singles seen through the fall up to mid-November, an ad. Nov. 12 (ELM, AHM). TEP saw an imm. with other migrating raptors on Long I., Oct. 2. One was watched at South Side Hbr., Ant. Co., Nov. 26, perched in a tree eating a possible deer foot (RFL, MZG). There were no reports of significant pre-winter gatherings in the traditional wintering sites. Reports of **N. HARRIERS** came from throughout the province, and throughout the season, although most records came from CB (DBM, CAM) and Kings Co. (var. obs.). Evidence of migration came from Brier I., where 10 were counted there Oct. 1

(ELM, AHM), three Oct. 2 and Oct. 23 (TEP), three Nov. 12 (PLC), and four on Nov. 13, two of which (ad. male and fem.) soared high over the ocean, circled several times, and headed SW across the Gulf of Maine (ELM, AHM). Other multiple sightings include 10 between Yarmouth and CSI, Sept. 18 (RWK, Peter Burke), an ad. fem. and three imms. at Grand Pré, Kings Co., Oct. 1 (RBS), three between Schooner Pond and Morien Bar, CB Co., Oct. 13 (CAM), and three between New Glasgow and Linden, Pict.-Col. Cos., Oct. 22 (HAB, JEB).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS figured prominently in the raptor migrations off the southern islands. At Brier I., there were 30 Sept. 21 & 22 (RWK, Peter Burke), 200+ Sept. 24 (MUN *et al.*), and 50 the next day (KJM). October numbers at Brier I. were impressive. Some totals include the following: 500+ Oct. 2 on light SE winds, representing a constant passage of birds from NE to SW past Lighthouse Hill toward Whipple Pt.,

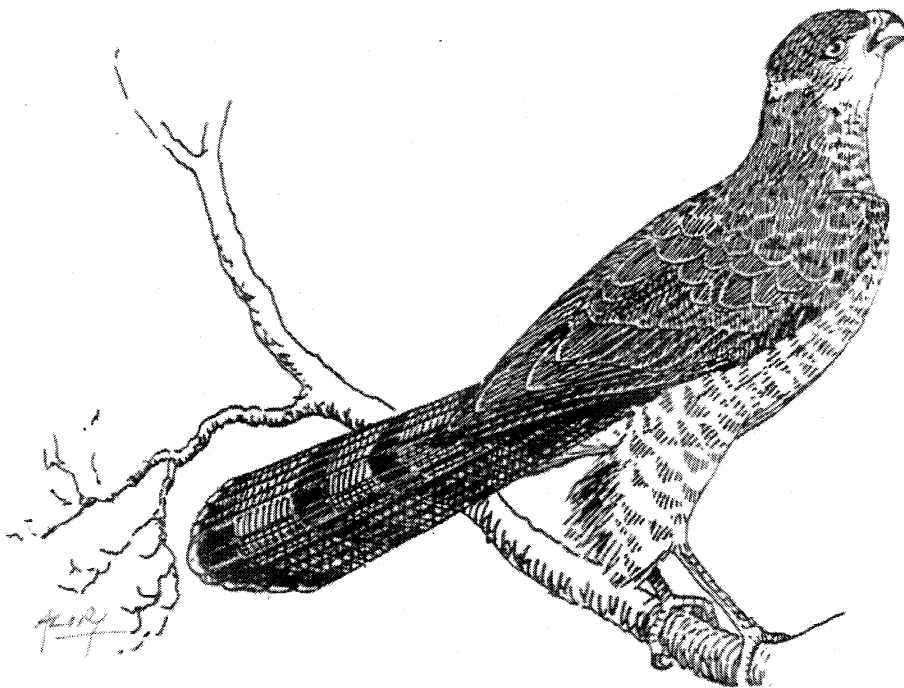
beginning about 1100 and ending by 1630 (ELM); 150+ Oct. 5, under a stiff north breeze, beginning about 1100 from the south, apparently because birds were passing the island to the west and returning toward it (ELM); 50+ Oct. 7 (ELM); hundreds Oct. 14-15 (RBS), and 40 Oct. 23 (TEP). Migration was still evident into November, with 50+ Nov. 12, and 100 Nov. 13 with 35 in the air at once at Western Light and many leaving to SW in strong N winds toward Maine (ELM, AHM). There were three Sept. 5 at CSI (ELM), followed by 10 Sept. 18 (RWK, Peter Burke). Three over the Marconi Picnic Grounds, Louisbourg, CB Co., on the early date of Aug. 25 (DBM) may have been a family group. By the end of the season, Sharp-shinned Hawks once again were making their sometimes unwelcome presence felt at feeders at several spots around the province. Last year several COOPER'S HAWKS were reported with no indication of sex or age; to reiterate the caution for all three accipiters, it is important to be aware of molt patterns, especially of tail feathers and particularly in the early fall. This year, Cooper's Hawks were reported from Martinique Beach, HRM, Aug. 12 (*vide* DOM), and Big I., Pict. Co., Aug. 21 (ALD), with no indication of sex or age. An ad. was seen Oct. 5 from Brier I. (ELM), possibly the same bird reported there on the same day

(DHY), and one described from Brier I., Oct. 14 (RBS) was a probable fem. The excellent showing of N. GOSHAWKS during fall 1999 was not repeated this year; however, at Brier I. during hawk flights, there were remarkable tallies of six Sept. 23 and 12 Sept. 24 (RBS, MUN *et al.*). An ad. was on Brier I., Oct. 5 (ELM). Elsewhere, singles were at Schooner Pond, CB Co., an ad. male Oct. 1 (DBM, RWK), at Sand L., CB Co., Oct. 18 and Nov. 23 (CAM), at Broad Cove, Lun. Co., a fem. Nov. 15 (SJF), at Fraserville, Cum. Co., Nov. 20 (JAF), and at Lunenburg, Nov. 28 (JAH). An ad. at Wolfville Ridge, attempted but failed to catch an Am. Robin, Aug. 11 (BLF).

There was one report of RED-SHOULDERED HAWK, a convincingly described imm. circling over the Cornwallis R., Kentville, Aug. 28 (RBS). Most reports of BROAD-WINGED HAWKS came from Brier I. (var. obs.). The first report was of one Sept. 1 (LAL, PAC, ADL). Migration started in earnest on Sept. 22, with 120 birds in several kettles, the largest being 40 (RBS), followed by 300 the next day in one kettle (RBS). There were over 400 on Sept. 24 with the largest kettle at 256 birds (MUN), 350 birds in one kettle on Sept. 25 (KJM), one only, Oct. 2, during a very large movement of Sharp-shinned

Hawks on light SE winds (ELM), and finally a few Oct. 15 (RBS). Elsewhere, there were 10 Oct. 2 over Long I. (TEP), one Aug. 25 (MUN) and an imm. in a mini-hawk flight on Sept. 5 at CSI (ELM), and one at Milipsigate L., Lun. Co., Aug. 26 (JAH). A Broad-winged Hawk at Baccaro, Shel. Co., Aug. 20, seen by var. obs. (NSBS), had a red band on its right leg; so far, attempts to trace the banding location have not been successful (*vide* JAH). RED-TAILED HAWKS are under-reported during all seasons; this fall, there were only sixteen reports. Birds that were likely migrating over Brier I. include one Sept. 22 (RBS), four Sept. 25 (KJM), four Oct. 5 and four Nov. 12-13 (ELM, AHM), and two over Long I., Oct. 2 (TEP). RBS reports that they were abundant as usual in early November in the Annapolis Valley, with at least 12 at Grand Pré, Nov. 19. A few ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS have been reported this fall. A light phase juv. or fem., was at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Oct. 21 (RBS), a light phase fem. or imm. at Grand Pré, Nov. 11 and a dark-phase bird in fields N. of Kentville, Nov. 19 (RBS). Elsewhere, singles were reported between New Glasgow and Linden, Pict. and Col. Cos., Oct. 26 (HAB, JEB), at Sandford Nov. 4 and at Pinkneys Pt. Nov. 20 in Yar. Co. (PRG, RSD) and at Bridgewater, Lun. Co., Nov. 29 (JAH). A multiple sighting was of three around CSI, Nov. 26 (MUN). The only report of GOLDEN EAGLE was of three soaring together at Hortonville, Kings Co., Oct. 20 (Soren Bondrup-Nielsen), riding thermals in the late morning as they drifted NW over Grand Pré.

AMERICAN KESTRELS were still nesting when the fall season started. MAB writes from Whitehill, Pict. Co. "One of my Kestrel boxes fledged two young in the past few days. So that makes a total of at least seven young kestrels fledged from three boxes this year. Inside the box was quite a mess! Lots of insect legs (red ones!), large dragonfly wings and a few bones and bits of fur. A very strong ammonia smell". Three were in family group at Ferguson L., Rich. Co., Aug. 5 (DBM, RWK). Migration was evident on the southern islands, mostly reports of ones and twos (var. obs.). There were three in a mini-hawk flight at CSI, Sept. 5 (ELM,



AHM) and five there Sept. 18 (RWK, Peter Burke). Fifteen were at Brier I., Oct. 2 and about 50 there Oct. 5 (ELM, AHM). These totals pale in comparison with the very impressive total of 352 counted by banders on BPI, Sept. 23. There were still five around Antigonish, Nov. 18-19 (RFL, NSBS). MERLINS were widely reported throughout the province, from CB to the southern islands, and throughout the season. Like Kestrels, Merlins were still nesting when the fall season started. There was a family party of five near Advocate Hbr., Cum. Co., on Aug. 7 (JAF). Shorebirds seemed to be the main target for hunting Merlins this fall. Singles were watched chasing shorebirds at Evangeline Beach, Kings Co., Aug. 11 (BBT), at Grand Pré, Aug. 25 (JCT), at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 25 (JAH), and at Florence, CB Co., Oct. 9 (DBM, Bruce McCorquodale). An imm. caught and ate a Semipalmated Sandpiper at CSI, Sept. 19 (RWK, Peter Burke) and one tried to catch, but just missed, one of five Red-necked Phalaropes feeding and chasing each other in a sheltered cove on the west side of the peninsula at Taylor Hd. PP, Hfx. Co., Oct. 14 (TEP). There were a few significant totals reported from the hawk flights along the southern islands. On Brier I., there were six Sept. 21 and 22 (RWK, Peter Burke) and 20 Oct. 2 and Oct. 5 (ELM). On Seal I. there were 10 Oct. 7 (var. obs., *fide* BLM). There was one record of GYRFALCON this fall, a dark-phase bird at CSI, Nov. 26 (MUN). PEREGRINE FALCONS received good coverage throughout the province. In CB Co., as many as seven individuals were seen between Sept. 29 and Oct. 18. around Schooner Pond and Morien Bar (CAM). The first was an imm. at Schooner Pond on Sept. 29 (CAM) staying in the area until Oct. 13, when it was joined by a second bird until Oct. 15 (CAM, DBM, RWK). There were also two different birds at Morien Bar, Oct. 13 (CAM), and three others were seen up to Oct. 18. One of the birds at Schooner Pond, Oct. 13, dove at the Glossy Ibis present in the pond, landing in a tree about 10 metres away (CAM). The ibis was not peregrine food this day, as it was present in the pond on Oct. 14. Peregrines were frequently reported from Grand Pré, and from the Advocate Hbr.

and Diligent R. area, Cum. Co. (14 reports, var. obs.), mainly in August and September and often chasing shorebirds. One at Grand Pré, Sept. 3 was interacting with an imm. Northern Harrier, each bird mutually diving at each other (RBS). An imm. was seen chasing Killdeer in a field near Black R., Kings Co., Oct. 11 (BLF). There were two ads. at Evangeline Beach, Kings Co., Oct. 12 (JCT) and one late bird, an ad., at Advocate Hbr., Nov. 23 (JAF). Migrating birds were reported often from the southern islands. Eight Oct. 7 at Seal I. is a good total (var. obs. *fide* BLM). On Brier I., there were 15 reports between Sept. 24 and Oct. 23 (var. obs.), with three Sept. 24 (MUN) and three Oct. 2, an ad. *tundrius* and two dark and *anatum*-like individuals (ELM, AHM). A bird on Oct 10 interacted with crows, all birds hovering and diving on one another in mock battles in the strong onshore breeze (TEP). At CSI, there were two Oct. 4 (MUN), three on Oct. 5 (MUN), and five on Oct. 8 (NSBS). One came ashore at Dublin Shore, Lun. Co., Oct. 22, and was probably the same bird at Fauxburg the next day (JAH).

There were no reports of GRAY PARTRIDGE and few reports of RING-NECKED PHEASANTS. A male on Brookside St., Glace Bay, CB Co., Sept. 26 (CAM) made for an unusual record. Twelve (including four ad. males) at Grand Pré, Nov. 5 (*fide* JWW) was the largest flock reported. Two fems. visited EBB's feeder at Little Salmon R., Hfx. Co., Nov. 12-17, being joined by a male Nov. 18. RCM had five Oct. 29 eating seeds from wild cucumber vines at his home in Shubenacadie. RUFFED GROUSE barely received a mention from most observers; is the population at a low ebb? One-two were at Georges R., CB Co. during October and November, two being flushed out of an apple tree Nov. 15 (DBM, Bruce McCorquodale), and a male visiting EBB's feeder, Little Salmon R., Hfx. Co., Nov. 12 -17, was watched eating blueberries. Elsewhere, two were along Blois Rd., Shubenacadie, Oct. 26, one near Apple R., Cum. Co., Oct. 27 (KFS), two at Pt. Mouton, Queens Co., Nov. 13 (RES), and two at South Side Hbr., Ant. Co., Nov. 26 (RFL). There were more reports of SPRUCE GROUSE than Ruffed Grouse

this fall. There were up to three, a male and two fems., at Cape Chignecto PP, Cum. Co., during September and October (MSM, JAF) and three at Taylor Hd. PP, Hfx. Co. in October (TEP). Other reports came from CB Co., at Big Pond (JAM) and Gabarus (Lee Anne Reeves), from Cum. Co., at Eatonville (KFS) and Apple R. (KFS), and from Pict. Co. (MAB), in October or November. Apparently, WILD TURKEYS continue to prosper; there were three fems. and 14 imms. at Torbrook, Anna. Co., Sept. 11 (TOB).

Yet another exceptional record occurred in CB this fall. A large rail hit a window in Glace Bay, CB Co., Oct. 23, and was taken to the DNR for identification. It was subsequently identified at the N.S. Museum of Natural History as an imm. KING RAIL (IAM, DBM, RWK), the first for CB. There were no reports of VIRGINIA RAILS, perhaps not too surprising considering the lack of reports from the summer and only two of SORAS, from Harris Pond, Canning, Kings Co., Aug. 13 (RBS) and Aug. 25 (JCT). Two COM. MOORHENS were at APBS, Sept. 9 (TEP). AMERICAN COOTS are showing a clear trend of late fall occurrence in the province. Like last year, most reports are in late October and November - this poses the question, where are these birds coming from? The answer will likely be very surprising. The first report was one at Antigonish Landing, Oct. 14 (RFL), followed by one at Masons Pond, Lun. Co., Oct. 20 - 29 (JAH), two Oct. 26 - 29 at Bissett L., HRM (Barry Boehner, DOM, PLC), one -two Nov. 3 - 12, CSI (MUN, CST, JON) and one Nov. 29, Glace Bay, CB Co. (CAM).

Again, the fall in Ant. Co. was enlivened by the return (or at least occurrence) of a SANDHILL CRANE. An ad. present probably since Oct. 1 (*fide* RFL) was located near Lanark by RFL on Oct. 6 and was seen up to Oct. 14. Thereafter, it remained elusive until Nov. 29, when it or another was located at Seabright, Ant. Co., in the same general area (RFL). Another was present at Shubenacadie, Hants Co., during October and may have been present there since mid-June (RCM, DOM, Paul Ettinger). ☐

The Shorebirds

By Sylvia Fullerton

Many shorebirds arrived in higher than average numbers late in the season, perhaps as a result of late-breeding in the Arctic, and concentrated at CSI. Several seasonal record-highs were reestablished for this area, but Richard Stern and Judy Tufts felt that numbers were down in the staging areas in the Minas Basin. About 20,000 were at the Windsor Causeway, Aug. 7 and 7,000+ at Grand Pré, Sept. 9, a fraction of previous records. Murray Newell estimated 20,000 on CSI, Aug. 4, continuing a high for that area.

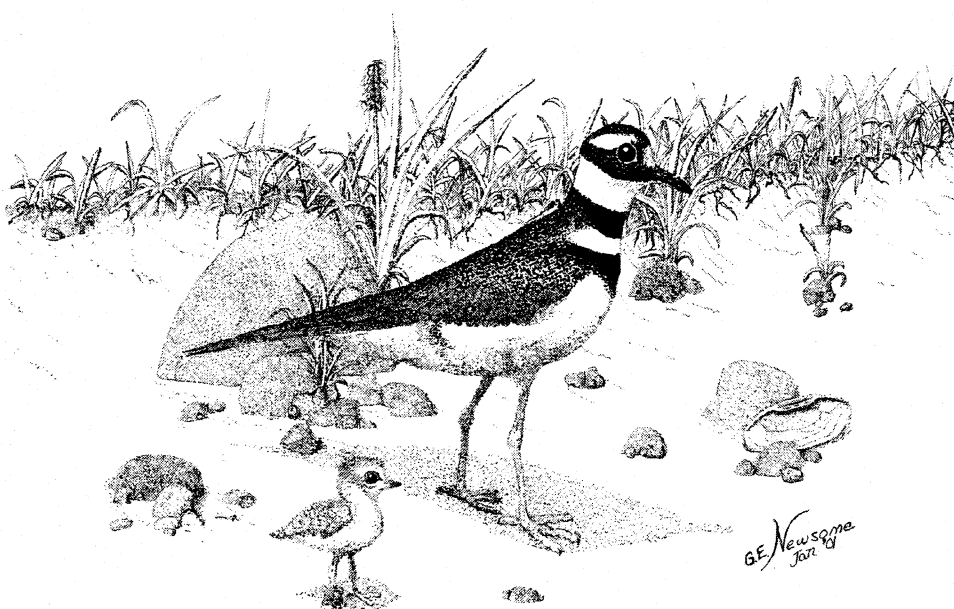
BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS passed through in average numbers and at least three peaks were apparent. Early flocks, mostly of adults, were represented by 200 at CSI, Aug. 4 (MUN). As the season progressed a greater proportion of juveniles appeared: 250-300 at Grand Pré dykelands, Aug. 14-Sept. 6 (BBT, BLF) and 300 at the Windsor Causeway, Aug. 14 (JWW). Peaks were average at two other traditional stop-over sites: 55 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 22 and 65 at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 26 (SJF, JSC). Highest numbers for the N part of the Province were represented by : 47 at the Sydney Airport (DBM, RWK); 23 at Apple R. Bar, Cum. Co., Sept. 16 (JAF); 13 at Antigonish

Landing, Oct. 2 (RFL). Newly-arrived late flocks often contain birds which have molted before leaving the Arctic, such as: 35 at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Oct. 21 (Mitch Meredith); 25 at the Brule Gold Course, Cum. Co., Nov. 5; and the unprecedented seasonal high of 430 on The Cape, CSI, Nov. 9 (Betty June & Sid Smith). Elsewhere, smaller numbers were reported along the coast, diminishing in numbers to 11 at Morien Bar, CB Co. and 23 at CSI by Nov. 26 (SEM, JON). The elegant AM. GOLDEN PLOVER made a poor showing in all areas but CB, continuing last year's trend. Twenty-one first appeared at South Bar, CB Co., Aug. 20 and peaked at 40 at Sydney Airport, Oct. 15 (DBM). Peaks at traditional sites were low: 12 at Grand Pré, Sept. 6 (BLF); 3 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Sept. 18 & 21; 10 at CSI, Sept. 18 (Betty June & Sid Smith). On the other hand birds were noted in areas where they have not been reported in recent years: one at Pinkneys Pt., Yar. Co. (PRG, RSD); three on Brier I., Oct. 3-6 (ELM); three at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Oct. 22 (JAH); 10 at R. Philip, Cum. Co., Oct. 26 (HAB, JEB). Among singles scattered about, the last was exceptionally tardy at CSI, Nov. 12 (CST, JON).

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, as usual, peaked in mid-August, and numbers remained high through September. Betty June & Sid Smith, during their Maritime Shorebird Survey, counted 2,930 on The Cape, CSI, Aug. 17, and 1,974 Sept. 22. Maxima at other sites were: 300 at Brier I., Aug. 9 & 20 (BLM, LAL *et al.*); 610 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 20 (SJF); 1,100 at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 26 (JSC); 800+ at Evangeline Beach, Kings Co., Sept. 9 (JCT, JET). Lower numbers were widely reported from most of the favorite coastal haunts. To the N a high count of 113 was attained at Framboise, Rich. Co., Aug. 5 (DBM, RWK) and 75 were at Apple R. Bar, Cum. Co., Sept. 16 (JAF). A solitary bird at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Nov. 19 was the last to be reported (SJF). The final tally of the PIPING PLOVER breeding season shows a decline from last year: 41 breeding pairs, 69 young fledged, down from 48 pairs and 79 young fledged in 1999 (*Piping Plover Guardian Newsletter, issue # 8, Nov. 2000*). Two stragglers were at CSI, Sept. 7 (MUN *et al.*), and another juvenile lingered at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. until Sept. 21 (SJF).

A few single KILLDEER were seen in late August, but generally reports were of post-breeding groups. Whatever their migratory route, 15 had assembled on Seal I., Sept. 3 (var. obs. *vide* BLM). The usual 20 were tallied at the Sydney Airport, Sept. 9 (DBM, RWK). BLF counted 30-35 roosting in ploughed fields in the Sunken L./Black R. area, Kings Co. from late September to early October. Six were still at a farm pond in Hortonville, Kings Co., Oct. 16 (JCT).

The toe-hold of the AM. OYSTERCATCHER on CSI continued to strengthen. Of the six ads. present this season, one pair fledged one young and the family group left in early September; one pair raised two young and the four wisely departed Sept. 29, two days before duck-hunting season (MUN, JON *et al.*); the third pair did not nest. As MUN says, "maybe next year a flock?" Two were seen at Advocate Hbr., Cum.



Co., Oct. 21, perhaps the failed nesters from CSI (*fide* JAF).

A post-breeding **AM. AVOCET**, a vagrant from the W, was an exciting find at Hemeons Hd., Shel. Co., Aug. 13-16 (DEF, DHY); its occurrence is becoming almost annual.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS were widely reported and numbers were respectable. Peaks included: 50-60 at Harris Pond, Canning, Kings Co., Aug. 13-Sept. 15 (RBS, JCT); 30 at Conrads Beach, HRM, Aug. 11 (AAM); 21 at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 26 (JSC); 72 at CSI, Sept. 7 (Betty June & Sid Smith). Away from the coast three were spotted at Rines Creek, near Shubenacadie, Hants Co., Sept. 14 (RCM, JPE). Numbers peaked early in the N: 34 at Framboise, Rich. Co., Aug. 5 (DBM, RWK); 30 at Morien Bar, CB Co., Aug. 7 (SEM). At Apple R., Cum., Co. 18 paused in their journey Oct. 15 (JAF). Elsewhere, from Brier I. to Seal I., from Antigonish Landing to Lower Eel Brook, Yar. Co. numbers were mostly in the ones and twos. Last of the season was one at Morien Bar, CB Co., Nov. 26 (SEM).

The bulk of migrating **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** go through by late July/early August. The only notable concentration was the 120 at Framboise, Rich. Co., Aug. 5 (DBM, RWK). BLM tallied 20 at Belliveau Cove, Digby Co., Aug. 8. Only four were at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 12. Six visited Brier I. & Seal I., Sept. 1 & 2 respectively (LAL *et al.*, BLM). Unusually late were 40 at CSI, Oct. 27 (MUN) and the single at Northport, Cum. Co., Nov. 5 (KJM).

This was a good year for **SOLITARY SANDPIPERS**, with up to 28 individuals reported. Earliest was one on Brier I., Aug. 9 (BLM). Up to five were at a pond on Wolfville Ridge, Aug. 26-Sept. 2 (GWT) and six at Rines Creek, near Shubenacadie, Hants Co., Sept. 14 (RCM, JPE). Ones and twos were seen at Sydney, Fortress of Louisbourg, Lower Barneys R., Baccaro, CSI, and Pubnico. Two were late lingerers on Seal I., Oct. 7 (BLM).

Peak counts of post-breeding mixed flocks of **WILLETS** included 40 at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co. and 43 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. both July 29 (SJF, JSC). At Framboise, Rich. Co., 37

were counted Aug. 5 (DBM, RWK). Over 100 were at CSI, Aug. 4 (MUN); by Aug. 17 Betty June & Sid Smith still had 75 on The Cape, CSI, and noted two flocks of 50 each departing in a SE direction as the fog broke up. Ten were still at Big I., Pict. Co., Aug. 23 (DOU). One juv. tarried at Cherry Hill Beach until Sept. 13 and three at Wolfville Hbr., Sept. 11-14 (JWW).

SPOTTED SANDPIPERS traditionally gather in groups in favorite coastal areas before migrating. Seal I. seems to be one of these where BLM counted 15 Sept. 3. Three juvs. lingered at Broad Cove, Lun. Co. until Sept. 30 (SJF, BAH), with one still there at the record-late date of Oct. 28 (JAH). Late birds were also at Caribou I., Pict. Co., Oct. 14 (KJM, JEB) and Cape Chignecto PP, Oct. 20 (JAF). The only **UPLAND SANDPIPER** visiting this season was at Cape St. Marys, Digby Co., Oct. 15 (KAA).

WHIMBREL appeared in good-sized flocks in some stop-over areas but sightings were scanty. Twelve were at Baccaro Pt., Shel. Co., Aug. 1 (DHY) and across the water at The Cape, CSI the peak count stood at 43, Aug. 17 (Betty June & Sid Smith). At Wine Hbr., Guys. Co., KJM tallied 45 on a headland Aug. 21. CB, however, captured most of the migrants: 30 at Glace Bay Sanctuary, Aug. 17 (ALM, CAM); 55 at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co., Aug. 5; 43 at the Sydney Airport and 25 at Reserve Mines, CB Co., Sept. 9 (DBM, RWK). Only a single bird was reported at Brier I., Aug. 24 (LAL, PAC, ADL) and one at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Sept. 30 (BLM). Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. produced a low of five, Sept. 3. Low numbers for these areas may have been due to the lack of rain and onshore winds which often drive these coastal migrants onshore.

Another maritime migrant, the **HUDSONIAN GODWIT**, made a poor showing. BLM counted 38 at CSI, Aug. 7, but these could have been the same birds seen there in July, not new migrants. Two tarried at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., July 29-Aug. 20 (SJF *et al.*). A single bird appeared on Brier I., Aug. 9, rare in recent years (BLM). To the N, ten were at Morien Bar, CB Co., Aug. 7, also possible hold-overs from



“Western” **WILLETS**, normally migrate from their prairies breeding range to hit the Atlantic coast south of Nova Scotia, but a few can be found here in later fall. This one, conspicuously long-billed and long-shanked, was found Oct. 15 at Rainbow Haven. [Photo Ian McLaren]

July (SEM). One lingered at Port Morien until Sept. 13 (ALM, CAM). Last was one at Grand Pré, Sept. 30 (RBS).

Once again the premier shorebird of the season appeared at CSI, where sharp-eyed JON spotted an ad. **BAR-TAILED GODWIT** at The Hawk, Sept. 27. Unlike the four previously reported in the Province this was considered to be of the Siberian subspecies *baueri*, which is a vagrant on the W coast of NA, and which lacks the white rump and underwings of the European *lapponica* subspecies. It lingered until Oct. 8 allowing var. obs. good looks, but no photographs.

RUDDY TURNSTONES seem to have rebounded from the lows of last year, but have never recovered to the levels of the mid-1990s. BLM saw a total of only 35 at Cheverie and Walton, Hants Co., Aug. 12 and BLF found no more than 30+ at Walton, Sept. 10, where in previous years numbers used to be in the hundreds. Maxima included: 22 at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co., Aug. 5 (DBM, RWK); 41 at CSI, Aug. 17 (Betty June & Sid Smith); 38 at Brier I., Aug. 24 (LAL, PAC, ADL); 12 at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Aug. 27 (JEH, PLC); 40 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 28 (ELM, AHM). Exceptionally late for a seasonal high were 125 at CSI, Oct. 27 (MUN). Smaller numbers of these frenetic birds were active from Brule Pt., Col. Co. to Cooks Beach, Yar. Co. up to the end of the period. BLF, ever alert, spotted a colour-banded individual at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 7, and has since discovered that it was banded at Chesapeake Bay, May 25.

RED KNOT numbers improved over last year's abysmal showing. Thirty were at Sand Hills PP, Shel. Co., Aug. 1 (DHY). Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. reached a total of 32, Sept. 3, a good number for this beach. Unprecedented in numbers and lateness were 350 at CSI, Oct. 27 (MUN); 60 were still present Nov. 26 (JON). In the N, flocks of up to ten were at Morien Bar, Florence, and Dominion Beach, CB Co. from Aug. 7-Sept. 13. Brule Pt., Col. Co. hosted 8, Oct. 28 (KJM).

Better than average concentrations of **SANDERLING** were widely reported,

peaking in early September and numbers staying high to late October. Among maxima numbers were: 250-300 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Sept. 1-3 (var. obs.); 100 at Seal I., Sept. 2-3 (BLM); 350+ at Evangeline Beach, Kings Co., Sept. 9 (JCT, JET); 100 on Conrads Beach, HRM, Sept. 11 (DMW). A record-high was set at CSI with 3,345 being tallied Sept. 18, and a similar high Oct. 27 (Betty June & Sid Smith, MUN). Crescent Beach, Lun. Co. hosted 650 Sept. 26, its highest count on record (JSC). In the N numbers were relatively high: 75 at Schooner Pond, Sept. 27; 80 at Florence, CB Co., Oct. 9 (DBM); 85 at Caribou I., Pict. Co., Oct. 22 (KJM). Hundreds of birds in smaller flocks were scattered all along our coastal beaches.

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPERS were in better than average concentrations on some beaches and abysmally low on others, perhaps reflecting shifting populations and not declines. At the prime staging area at Grand Pré only 500 were tallied Aug. 11 and 750 at nearby Cheverie, Hants Co. (BLM). Later counts netted only 25 or so at Evangeline Beach and Grand Pré, Sept. 9 (JCT). The situation was a little brighter at the Windsor Causeway where JWW estimated 20,000+, Aug. 14. Average counts were attained at Brier I. with 400-500, Aug. 9 & Sept. 1 (BLM, LAL, PAC, ADL). An unusually high count was had at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co. with 400, Sept. 10 (JSC). Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. had 1,000+, Aug. 28, a four-fold increase over the average high (ELM, AHM). An exceptional high was the 3,590 on The Cape, CSI, Aug. 17, 460 staying until Nov. 9 (Betty June & Sid Smith). Smaller numbers were seen elsewhere: 66 at Framboise, CB Co., Aug. 5 (DBM); 100+ at Apple R. Bar, Cum. Co., Sept. 16 (JAF); 50+ at Big I., Pict. Co., Aug. 23 (DOU). Tardy were two at Morien Bar, CB Co. (SEM) and three at CSI (JON), both on Nov. 26.

Those who take the time to carefully study shorebirds are often rewarded and this year three, if not four, W. SANDPIPERS were discovered. Two were reported by a visiting birder, Rick Tootchin (*fide* IAM): an ad. on Brier I., Aug. 4 and a juv. on BPI, Aug. 22, neither supported with notes. ELM

studied a juv. at close range at The Hawk, CSI, Sept. 5 and his exemplary notes should be useful to those of us who struggle with identifying these birds: "noticeably long-legged and long-bodied compared to nearby Semipalmated, with long down-curved bill; scapulars not as strikingly reddish as on most Western juvs. seen, but still contrasting; especially noteworthy was 'the blank-faced' look of the bird, caused by lack of contrast on face, very characteristic of Western." AAM and Stella MacLean saw another at Brier I., Sept. 18 with three Semipalmated, but were only afforded a quick study before birds were flushed by a Merlin.

LEAST SANDPIPERS, often heard before being seen, as they are flushed from the marshes, were reported in average numbers. Peak counts were: 276 at CSI, Aug. 5 (Betty June & Sid Smith); 150+ on Brier I., Aug. 20 (LAL, PAC, ADL); 100 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 28 (ELM, AHM). In CB a high of 46 was reached at South Bar, CB Co., Aug. 20 with only handfuls elsewhere (DBM). The 200 counted at Apple R. Bar, Cum. Co., Sept. 17, as they foraged in the seaweed, made a good showing for this area (JAF). The record-high, however, had to be the 5,000+ at Evangeline Beach, Sept. 9 (JCT, JET). Very late, one showed up at Cherry Hill Beach, Nov. 19 (SJF).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS were on the low side and sparsely reported. First to appear were four at CSI, Aug. 5, reaching a peak of only 80, Sept. 7 (Betty June & Sid Smith, MUN). A good count for Cherry Hill Beach was the 100 or so seen there Aug. 13 & 22 (var. obs.), whereas only a few were at nearby Crescent Beach, Lun. Co. The peak seasonal count was 120+ at Evangeline Beach, Sept. 9 (JCT, JET). With the exception of the 72 at South Bar, CB Co., Oct. 18, only twos and threes were noted in CB (DBM). The last were 40 at Brule, Col. Co., Nov. 5 (KJM) and six at CSI, Nov. 26 (JON).

Ten **BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS**, an average number, were at their favourite sites. One was at CSI, Aug. 12, Sept 2 & 29, perhaps the same bird, perhaps not (JON, MUN). The one on Brier I., Aug.

30 (LAL, PAC, ADL) may also have been the same one seen later, Sept. 23-24 (NSBS). Three were at Schooner Pond, CB Co., Sept. 1 (ALM, CAM). One was at Conrads Beach, HRM, Sept. 9, where there has not been a report for some time (DMW). The BPI field trip produced two, Sept. 9-11 (JCZ). Finally, one was seen in bright sunshine at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Oct. 21 & 24 (RBS, M. Meredith, BLM).

Numbers of PECTORAL SANDPIPERS plummeted compared to the highs of last year. The best CSI could muster was 32, Oct. 6 (MUN) and Cherry Hill Beach produced only a skimpy high of 14, Oct. 4 (SJF). They did gather at Sydney Airport from early September on, reaching a peak of 75, Nov. 11 (ALM, CAM, DBM). Ten were at Brier I., Oct. 3-6 (ELM). Hartlen Pt., HRM hosted one or two Oct. 13-24.

The first PURPLE SANDPIPER appeared at Big I., Pict. Co., Oct. 29 (KJM). CSI's winter residents, 17 of them, arrived on The Cape, Nov. 9 (Betty June & Sid Smith). Crescent Beach, always a reliable spot, produced 12, Dec. 1 (SJF).

Although not unprecedented, an extremely early DUNLIN was on Brier I., Aug. 9 (BLM). Another was seen there Sept. 1, it was an ad. in breeding/alternate plumage...unusual, as most Dunlin molt before migrating (ELM). Peak counts were: 100 at Evangeline Beach, Oct. 12 (JCT); a staggering 800 at CSI, Oct. 27 (MUN). Respectable for other areas were: 37 at both Matthews L., Shel. Co., Oct. 22 (DHY) and at Cherry Hill Beach, Oct. 24; 56+ at Morien Bar, CB Co., Nov. 11 (ALM, CAM). In a small flock of 15 at Crescent Beach, Nov. 7 a rather bright, unmolted juv. stood out from the rest. About two-thirds the size of the others, it had a shorter bill, dark belly spots, buffy above with rusty scapulars and white scapular lines. My conjecture is that it was one of the Greenland subspecies (SJF, JSC). SEM and JON had the last sightings as usual: two at Morien Bar and 75 at CSI, both Nov. 26.

A juvenile CURLEW SANDPIPER was carefully studied at Hartlen Pt.,

HRM, Oct. 17 by DOM and the next day by JOW *et al.* Among convincing field marks observed were the long curved bill, white rump, and projecting feet as it flew. JOW also noted its "chunky appearance," a "buffy glow in the throat area," and the white rump. Three birds made an appearance last fall, one being at Hartlen.

About 15 BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS graced our shores, all in September. Two were at Baccaro, Shel. Co., Sept. 2 (MUN) and one at BPI, Sept. 9-11 (JCZ). Eight were on The Cape, CSI, Sept. 11, the most MUN has ever seen at once. Three were at the Sydney Airport, Sept. 9 (DBM, RWK), and lastly, one was at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Sept. 13 (SJF).

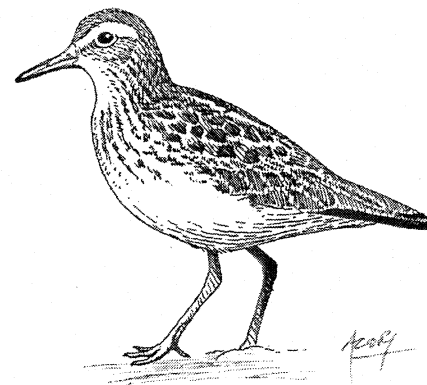
Always exciting to see, the only RUFF of the season was at Melbourne, Yar. Co., Sept. 20 (PRG). It was a buffy juv., standing out as it fed among Greater Yellowlegs and dowitchers.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS were back in good numbers. A record-high of 6,715 was tallied at CSI, Aug. 5 (Betty June & Sid Smith). Other peaks were: 90 at Brier I., Aug. 20 (LAL, PAC, ADL); 65 at Crescent Beach, Aug. 26 (JSC); 60 or so at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 24 & 28 (Jill Comolli, JAH, ELM). Numbers were low on the Minas shore, only 46 at Wolfville Hbr., Sept. 8 (JCT). Traditionally, dowitchers are in short supply in the N part of the Province and few have been reported from there. Only five were seen at Morien Bar, CB Co., Aug. 7 (SEM), and seven each at Browns Beach, Ant. Co. and New Hbr., Guys. Co., Aug. 27 & Sept. 17 (RFL, MZG). A good count for Big I., Pict. Co. was 20+, Aug. 23 (DOU). Late lingering for a Short-billed was one at CSI, Nov. 12 (CST, JON).

About 17 COM. SNIPE were reported from CB to CSI, mostly in October. Only two were spotted in CB, seven in HRM, one in Shubenacadie, Hants Co., and five from Lun. Co. The latter included one at Cherry Hill Beach, Sept. 27 & Oct. 22, an uncommon bird for this marsh (JAH). The last of the two CSI birds was seen Nov. 5. There were two concentrations of AM. WOODCOCK, six at Coxheath,

CB Co., Sept. 18 (DBM) and four at Masons Pond, Lun. Co., Oct. 29 (JAH, STH). Otherwise, about ten birds were reported from Sand L., CB Co. to the Yarmouth Airport, up to Nov. 19.

The only WILSON'S PHALAROPE to reach us from the W was an juv. at Mavillette Beach, Digby Co., Sept. 4 (R. Toochin *vide* IAM). RED-NECKED PHALAROPE were in "the thousands" on one of CAH's whale- and birdwatching-excursions off Brier I., Aug. 1 (GRM). Otherwise, most reports were of storm-driven birds after the strong onshore winds of Oct. 13: four at Schooner Pond, CB Co. (CAM, ALM); one at Hartlen Pt., HRM (Shirley Hughes); five at Taylor Hd., HRM Oct. 14 (TEP); one at Matthews L., Shel. Co., Oct. 22 (DHY). Two were at The Cape, CSI, Nov. 9 (Betty June & Sid Smith). Phalaropes were also in the Northumberland Strait, where, from the PEI ferry, KJM & Rob Reid saw 20, not identified to species, off Caribou, Aug. 9. Mixed in with the 200 Red-necked off Brier I., Aug. 9 were 50 RED PHALAROPE, a high proportionate number (BLM). A single storm-driven Red was admired by var. obs. at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Oct. 22-24. It is good to have an offshore report from RSD once again. He counted up to 100 in Crowell Basin, Gulf of Maine, Nov. 10, the latest he has on record. □



Skuas Through Alcids

By Blake Maybank

A GREAT SKUA was reported from Brier Island Sept. 16, but without any details. The date is a bit early, but not unprecedented. A late SOUTH POLAR SKUA off Brier I. Oct. 7 (NSBS) was also without documentation. This was a remarkable autumn for POMARINE JAEGERS. The earliest was Aug. 19, a single bird from the Argentia ferry (DBM). Participants on the NSBS field trip across the Bay of Fundy were entertained by more than 30 birds, including five or six immatures that followed the boat for more than two hours, catching pieces of herring tossed into the air. Visiting birders Keith & Pat Taylor had 30+ birds on the Argentia ferry Sept. 23. There was a single bird seen from a boat en route to Seal Island Oct. 6 (BLM, et al), and the last report was six+ off the Western Light on Brier I. Oct. 7 (ELM). PARASITIC JAEGERS were scarce by contrast, with but three reports, singles off Brier I. Aug. 9 (BLM) and Sept 1 (LAL, PAC, GEL), and one on Browns Bank Nov. 21 (RSD).

The only LAUGHING GULL was at Big I., Pict. Co., Aug. 10 (KJM). The first BLACK-HEADED GULLS on Cape Breton were two noted at Glace Bay Aug. 20 (CAM), but the mainland arrival went almost unremarked, save for a single bird Aug. 22 at Mavillette Beach, Digby Co. (KAA, TMF, JJJ). The Glace Bay count rose to eight Sept. 19, and 25 Oct. 8 (CAM). HRM birds were apparently unmonitored, but in Lun. Co. JAH reported a single bird in Lunenburg Harbour Oct. 16, and by Oct. 29 the number had risen to eight (ELM). Almost no data were received regarding BONAPARTE'S GULL along the Northumberland Strait, save for six at Ogdens Pond Aug. 15 (BLM), and elsewhere only ones and twos were reported for the most part. Among these a few odd locations caught my eye, including one at Middle Harbour, Vic. Co., Aug. 4 (Tom Sherry), two at Little Pond, CB Co., Nov. 17 (DBM), and one to three birds at Lunenburg Oct. 22 - Nov. 5 (JAH). The only high count was 30+ birds in Digby Harbour Nov. 7 (RBS). RING-BILLED GULLS were

widely reported, and I was especially impressed by their presence in Cape Breton. Some sightings from the big island: one at Middle Harbour, Vic. Co., Aug. 4 (Tom Sherry); one at Lakies Head, CBHNP, Aug. 14 (BLM); 90 at the Coxheath Running Track Sept. 18 (DBM), and 60 at Sydney's Wentworth Park Oct. 16 (DBM). The only high count from the mainland was 50+ at the Wolfville Sewage Plant Sept. 30 (RBS).

Was I the only one to spend time counting HERRING GULLS? Here are some island counts - 2,000 on Brier I. Aug. 9, 350 on Seal Island Sept. 2, and 100 on Big Tancook I. Sept. 10. From my own records, the Seal I. count is unremarkable, neither high nor low. The only GLAUOUS GULLS noted during the period were two at Glace Bay Nov. 11 (CAM). LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS are actively looked for, and so the number of sightings this past autumn should not be surprising. There were enough to fill a table (Table I) - it's entirely possible the odd bird moved about, and was counted more than once.

Table I - LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL Reports

DATE	NUMBER (all adults)	LOCATION	OBSERVERS
Aug. 1-23	1	Glace Bay	CAM
Aug 8 - Sept. 30	1	Big I., Pict. Co.	KJM
Sept. 13	1	Canard Pond, Kings Co.	RBS
Sept. 14	1	Mavillette Beach, Digby Co.	MUN
Sept. 25	1	Cow Bay, HRM	Mitch Meredith
Sept. 23-30	1	Waterside PP, Pict. Co.	KJM
Oct 8 - Nov. 11	≤ 3	Grand Pré	BLF, JCT, RBS
early Nov.	1	Fred Thomas Rd, Kings Co.	RBS
Nov. 3	1	Port Williams	DOU
Nov. 30	1	New Minas sewage ponds	RBS

The first ICELAND GULLS were in Cape Breton, with birds in Sydney Harbour Oct. 18 & 29. There were no other reports. The only careful counts of GREAT BLACK-

BACKED GULLS were 500 on Seal I. Sept 2 (BLM) and 150 in North Sydney Oct. 18 (DBM). DBM reported locally breeding BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES

were gone from SE Cape Breton by Aug. 28. About the same time, some started showing up in the Bay of Fundy, as 11 were seen in Brier Island's Grand Passage

Aug. 30 (LAL, PAC, ADL). Twenty were counted from the NSBS Bay of Fundy pelagic Sept. 23 (BLM). By Nov. 12 they were abundant in the Bay, as ELM noted

hundreds from Brier, including a steady stream through Grand Passage. On the same date RWK & DBM had 20 from the Cabot Strait ferry.

As I did a year ago, I'm showing the CASPIAN TERN results in tabular form, (Table II) as numbers were about as plentiful as 1999.

BLM counted 40 COMMON TERNS in the innermost reaches of Mahone Bay Aug. 4, suggesting the colonies in the harbour are at least hanging on. The only

Table II—CASPIAN TERN Reports

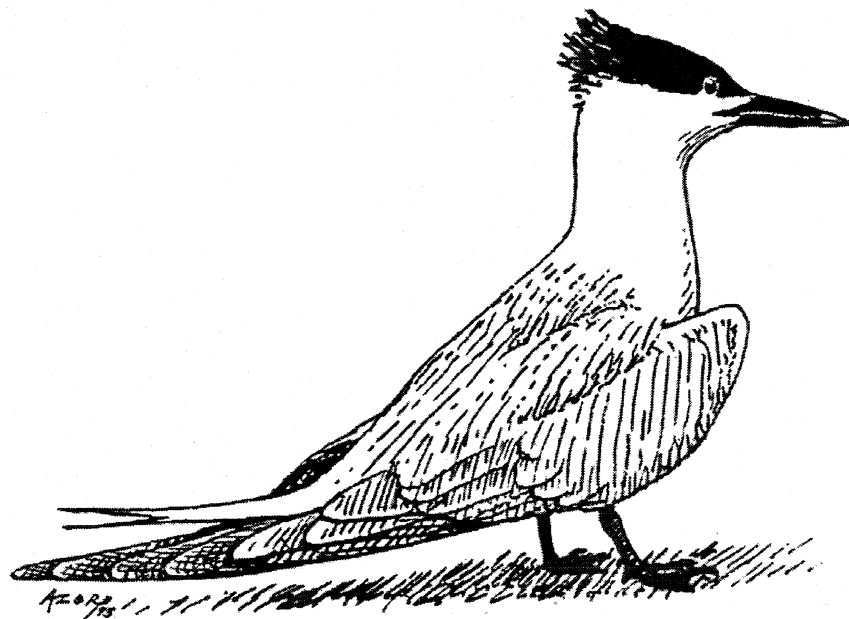
DATE	#	LOCATION	OBSERVERS
Aug. 22	2	Big I., Pict. Co.	DOU
Sept 3	3	Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co.	SJF
Sept. 17	1	Big I., Pict. Co.	KJM, DOU
Sept 23	1	Port Joli, Queens Co.	AND
Sept 23	3	Brier I.	NSBS
Sept 23	1	Amherst Point MBS	KFS, <i>et al.</i>
Oct. 8	1	Baccaro Point, Shel. Co.	JAH

other interesting trend was the number of lingering Common Terns along the Northumberland shore. KJM counted 40 at Caribou I. Oct. 14, with a few still present Oct. 23. On Oct. 29 he had one each at River Philip and Port Howe, and four were at Caribou Landing Nov. 5. The final sighting was of single birds at Ogdens Pond and Lakevale Nov. 12. The latest ARCTIC TERNS seen were two at Big I., Pict. Co., Sept. 30 (KJM), late indeed for this species (the latest-ever record is Oct. 1). A **FORSTER'S**

TERN showed up in Pembroke, Yar. Co., as late in the season as it could, Nov. 30, typical timing for this species. MUN accurately identified the bird, and it lingered until Dec. 4. The only **BLACK TERN** reported was an immature at Big I. Sept. 30 (KJM).

The only **DOVEKIES** appeared during a very short time window, Nov. 12, a windy day. RWK and DBM tallied 90 off northern CBI from the Cabot Strait ferry, but a few were also seen from

shore: one in Louisbourg Harbour (PLC); two in Brier Island's Grand Passage (PLC); and one flying out of Big Meadow, Brier I., trying to get back to sea (ELM). On the same day, and with the same strong winds, ELM noted 30 murrelets off Brier's Western Light, but could not pin down the species, although Thick-billed is the more likely. He did see a single Thick-billed off Brier I. Nov. 13. A day earlier RWK had four from the Cabot Strait ferry. DBM and SEM had an unusual encounter with a **RAZORBILL** on Aug. 26 – they watched it flying among the water-skiers off the East Bay sandbar in the Bras d'Or Lakes. The species was scarce on the Bay of Fundy in the early part of the season, with but a single bird noted on a Westport whale watch Sept. 4 off Brier I. (BLM). The only other report came from Kennington Cove, Cape Breton, where SEM had up to three birds Nov. 18-20. Few observers noted or reported **BLACK GUILLEMOTS**. ELM noted that on Brier I. Nov. 12 the summer resident breeding birds had departed, and the winter birds from further north had not yet arrived. The Bay of Fundy was **ATLANTIC PUFFIN** central this period. On Westport Whale watch trips BLM counted 150 Aug. 9 and 15 Sept. 23, the latter a low number. Elsewhere PRG had a single near Digby Oct. 22, and RWK had one bird from the Cabot Strait ferry Nov. 12. □



Doves Through Woodpeckers

By Ian McLaren

Two **WHITE-WINGED DOVES** favoured CB this autumn. This assumes it is very unlikely that the first, found and photographed Sept. 2-8 at Cape North, Vic. Co. (Dave Algar, Fritz McEvoy) was the same as the one present Oct 7-15. at Urban's feeder in Sydney (CAM, DBM *et al.*). These two complete an astonishing 20 records to date of this stray in Nova Scotia. Late, but noteworthy, is BLF's report of an early **MOURNING DOVE** nest April 24 at Starrs Pt., Kings Co. At the other extreme he found a nest with a piped egg and a newly hatched young Aug. 6 at Beach Meadows, Queens Co. The first major gathering of doves was of about 30 on Blanche Peninsula, Shel. Co., Aug 7. (BLM). Smaller counts were more widely reported after the end of August, and give an impression that there were fewer than usual on the move this autumn. Readers might summarize their impressions of numbers at feeders this winter.

It was not a big cuckoo autumn. In fact, only two each of **BLACK-BILLED** and **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS** were reported. One of the former was seen by Rich Toochin on Brier I., Sept. 7, and another was in Halifax, 17 Oct. (TIA). Even more surprising was the poor show of Yellow-billed: one in ALM and CAM's backyard at Sand L., CB Co., Aug. 18, another at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Oct. 9 (TEP) and probably the same one there Oct. 13 (Shirley Hughes).

Among a half dozen reports of scattered **GREAT HORNED OWLS** is frequent mention of a pair on Brier I. (var. obs.). They evidently nested successfully, judging from begging calls heard during October (ELM). The season's first **SNOWY OWL** was at South Hbr., Vic. Co., Nov. 28 (Virginia Briand). RFL reported a shortage of rodents in eastern mainland NS. Certainly BLF's backyard pair of **BARRED OWLS** came to his feeder as soon as it had been stocked on Nov. 16. Others did not think there was a shortage elsewhere in the province. Only a few other Barred Owls were reported. One being mobbed by two Hermit

Thrushes, Oct. 2, Lower Sackville (TEP), was probably on the move. A **LONG-EARED OWL** on Boularderie I., CB, was a surprise (CAM, AAM). Less so was another that flew across the road at Coldbrook, Kings Co., Nov. 30 (AAM). A **SHORT-EARED OWL** at Pubnico Pt., Nov. 1 behaved strangely, diving at RSD four times, uttering its raspy call as though defending its nest site. Another on Cape Sable, 15 Oct. (JON) could have been one that had nested there. Banders on the U.S. East Coast report a "low" year for **N. SAW-WHET OWLS**, and our records were not contradictory: only five reports of six scattered birds.



A sustained e-mail "thread" (NatureNS) on a possible decline in numbers of **COM. NIGHTHAWKS** followed BID's comment that 14 over Louisdale, Rich. Co., Aug. 12 were his first for a few years. This produced a good picture of an evidently healthy, migration. The ever-mobile TEP summarized his findings at the end of August as: "for the last three weeks movements of three -100 Com. Nighthawks were seen from Cape Breton to Halifax." Other flocks of 12 to "many" were noted widely from Aug 6-30. Although there appeared to be a slight peak in mid-month, a late whirl of about

30 was over Summerville, Queens Co., Aug. 27 (AND). A straggler was flushed on Seal I., Oct. 7 (var. obs.).

There was evidently less harassment of **CHIMNEY SWIFTS** by Merlins at the Robie Tufts Centre in Wolfville last summer, but numbers dwindled to fewer than 10 by Aug. 8 and to one Aug. 12 (JWW). This contrasts with 25 still at the Temperance St. chimney in New Glasgow, Aug. 10 (KJM), and fully 6-700 still at the high school in Middleton, Anna. Co., Aug. 6 (TOB). A few were at Mahone Bay in early August (JAH). Three in West-end Halifax, Aug. 21 and 30 (PLC), were presumably migrants. Yet apparent young were calling loudly in their nest site at Greenwich, Kings Co., Aug. 26-27 (G. Forsythe *vide* JWW).

Several observed their last **RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS** in late August and early September at feeders where hummers summered. At the same time, prominent movements were noted. For example, there were: "lots, all over" Brier I., Aug. 26-27 (RBS) and 12 there Sept. 2 (LAL, PAC, ADL); 15+ on CSI, 28 Aug. (MUN *et al.*); 10 at inland Hectanooga, Digby Co. (MUN), and "numbers" at Hartlen Pt., HRM (TEP), on a drizzly Sept. 4. The latest reported was one seen briefly at garden flowers Sept. 14, Wolfville Ridge (GWT).

Eight reports of scattered **BELTED KINGFISHERS**, including a thorough CB listing by DBM, did not signal any trends.

No details were given on a **RED-HEADED WOODPECKER** in "the Valley area", Sept. 10 (MUN). A fuller accounting of our **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS** will follow the winter report. Individuals appearing in our reporting season were: in DHH's backyard in Cole Hbr., HRM, from 13 Nov.; in south-end Halifax from 19 Nov. (AZV *et al.*); at Bill Cox's Shelburne property from late November (*vide* DOE); and in Yarmouth, 13 Nov. (*vide* MUN). A family of three – four fledgling

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS at Black River L., Kings Co., July 19 were attended by an aberrant female with a wholly black crown (BLF). At least three pairs were thought to have nested in the Shubenacadie area (RCM, JPE). A mini-wave of migrants occurred in early October. One was at Cole Hbr., HRM, Oct. 4-5; one on CSI, Oct. 7 (var. obs.); two on Seal I., Oct. 7-8 (var. obs.); one on Brier I., Oct. 7, where three more arrived at North Pt. next day (ELM); and one in Queens Co., Oct. 11 (fide JAH). Eleven reports of some 17 DOWNY and nine reports of a dozen HAIRY WOODPECKERS were about as usual. A fem. **THREE-TOED WOODPECKER** was a very rare encounter for lucky BLM along Benjies L. Trail, CB Highlands NP, Aug. 13. Although they may nest in the park wilderness, they have seldom been seen there. The male of Mt. Uniacke's regular pair of **BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS** was seen Sept. 30 (Pam Bower), but no others were reported. No movement of N. FLICKERS was evident in the few mainland and CB reports, but a peak was obvious on our southern headlands and islands. There were 15 on Pubnico Pt., Sept. 26 (RSD). "Dozens" were noted on Brier I. Sept. 30 (PLC), about 10 there Oct. 2 (TEP) and up to 30 there Oct. 7-8 (ELM). Some 15 were on Seal I., Oct. 7 and about 30 the next day (var. obs.).



PILEATED WOODPECKERS, like this pair on a Bedford power pole, are increasingly suburban. [Photo G.S. Chalmers]

Twelve reports of about 15 PILEATED WOODPECKERS reflect the continuing well-being of this fine species. One in full flight made a near miss (thankfully)

of James Simpson's head as he emerged from behind a large oak. James remarked that he "could hear the wind in its feathers as it whipped past." □

Flycatchers Through Thrushes

By Eric L. Mills

The burgeoning number of birders in the province seems to be increasing the records of the groups I review - but not necessarily the documentation of semi-rare to rare species. Even the relatively uncommon, though not rare, species often deserve a few brief field notes to help out the compiler (and future reviewers of our avifauna) - for example, on potentially confusable species like fall Philadelphia and Warbling Vireos, some of the *Empidonax* flycatchers, and early Shrikes. That aside, the autumn was interesting, varied, and fun to review.

As late as August 26, an OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER was still singing and

calling at Irish Cove, Rich. Co. (DBM, SEM). The only other reported was in the Sydney area, Sept. 7 (DBM). Four migrant EASTERN WOOD-PEWEES were at Second L., HRM on Sept. 6 (BLM) and RBS found two in woods at Kentville, Sept. 10, presumably also part of the main migration. At Brier I., LAL, PAC, ADL and GEL noted that the migration of YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHERS was about two weeks later than usual: they recorded eight Aug. 29 and six Sept. 2. Rarest of the rare among empidonaxes, especially in fall, **ACADIAN FLYCATCHERS** were reported, undocumented, from BPI, Aug. 20 and CSI, Shel. Co., Sept. 2 (R.

Toochin). Again later than usual by about two weeks, LAL, PAC, ADL, and GEL recorded 26 ALDER FLYCATCHERS, Aug. 29 on Brier I. Two days earlier, one of these, or perhaps a lingering resident, was still calling near Pond Cove on the same island (RBS). DBM's meticulous records from CBI show birds on territory, or at least at home enough to sing, in a variety of places in CB, Vic. and Rich. Cos. from Aug. 5-24 (DBM, RWK, Tom Sherry). All our LEAST FLYCATCHER reports came from a few days in late August and early September: a peak of four in Brier I., Aug. 29 (LAL, PAC, ADL, GEL); five on Seal I., Sept. 3 (fide

BLM); and one at Schooner Pond, CB Co., Sept. 9 (DBM, RWK).

Only two EASTERN PHOEBES were reported: one at Bear R., Anna. Co., Sept. 17 (JET) and one on Brier I. Oct. 3-5 (ELM). One of its rare relatives, a SAY'S PHOEBE, was at The Hawk, CSI, Sept. 23 (JON, SAN, CST). A GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER was on BPI, Shel. Co., Aug. 25 (R. Toochin) and another at Argyle Hd., Yar. Co., Sept. 17 (MUN). An early W. KINGBIRD appeared at Sand L., CB Co., Aug. 29 (CAM, ALM). Others were near White Rock, Kings Co., Sept. 15-16 (BLF); Shunacadie, CB Co., Oct. 4 (Mike MacNeill, JWM *fide* DBM); and Brier I., Oct. 14-15 (RBS). No doubt we missed some late occurrences, for W. Kingbirds continued to appear in E Newfoundland through mid-November (*fide* BRD). E. KINGBIRD records cluster between Aug. 20 and Sept. 24: three at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Aug. 20 (Ann Wetmore, PLC); two at Milipsigate, Lun. Co., Aug. 26 (Nellie Snyder *fide* JAH); seven on Seal I. (*fide* BLM) and two at Melbourne, Yar. Co., Sept. 3 & 24 (PRG); and one at the last location Sept. 24 (PRG). Finally, among the tyrannids, a beautiful **FORK-TAILED**

FLYCATCHER (see photo below) spent an hour at Economy, Col. Co., under examination by FLS, Oct. 20.

The first N. SHRIKES of the season were at Wallace Bay Sanctuary, Cum. Co., Oct. 10 (HAB, JEB), Port l'Hebert, Shel. Co., Oct. 14 (JAF *et al.*), Schooner Pond, CB Co., Oct. 15 (RWK, DBM), and in the Glace Bay region, Oct. 23-24 (CAM, ALM), nicely synchronised with the arrival of the species in Newfoundland (*fide* BRD). A second peak appears to have occurred in mid to late November: two at the Fortress of Louisbourg, CB Co., Nov. 19 (RWK, SEM); one or more at Apple R., Cum. Co., Nov. 14-30 (KFS); one at Fraserville, Cum. Co., Nov. 25 and after (JAF); one at Wild Cove, CB Co., Nov. 26 (SEM); and one at Pembroke, Yar. Co., Nov. 30 (PRG). SEM noted that "usually by mid-November a shrike has taken up winter residence at the Fortress of Louisbourg and can be observed regularly. This year I have not been having repeated sightings. They seem to have kept moving through, possibly due to low populations of small rodents."

An exceptionally early **WHITE-EYED VIREO** was reported from W. Baccaro,

Aug. 9 (R. Toochin). Others were at Brier I., Sept. 23 (NSBS), Hartlen Pt., HRM, Sept. 25 (Mitch Meredith, R. Toochin), and The Hawk, CSI, Oct. 13 (MUN). Two **YELLOW-THROATED VIREOS**, always an event and unusual for number, were at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Oct. 12 (IAM). Resident **BLUE-HEADED VIREOS** were still in their breeding areas through mid-August in CB and Vic. Cos. (DBM, Tom Sherry). By early September they were evident in flocks of migrant warblers, peaking around Sept. 23 with "lots" on Brier I. (RBS), but well reported through the first week of October from one end of the province to the other (var. obs.). A late individual was at Broad Cove, Lun. Co., Nov. 20 (SJF). Frequently a late-lingerer, we can expect more early winter records in the next reporting period. **WARBLING VIREOS**, scarce migrants at best, seemed to be unusually abundant this fall, beginning with an exceptionally early report from Digby Neck, Aug. 4 (R. Toochin). After one banded on BPI, Shel. Co., Aug. 28 (M. Peckford *et al.*), five individuals were reported Sept. 4-29 from locations as widely separated as CSI and Schooner Pond, CB Co. (var. obs.). The last report of the year comes from Hartlen Pt., HRM, a singing



Francis Spalding's photo of last fall's (October 20) **FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER** documents one of the few of this South American wanderer that have appeared here in recent years.

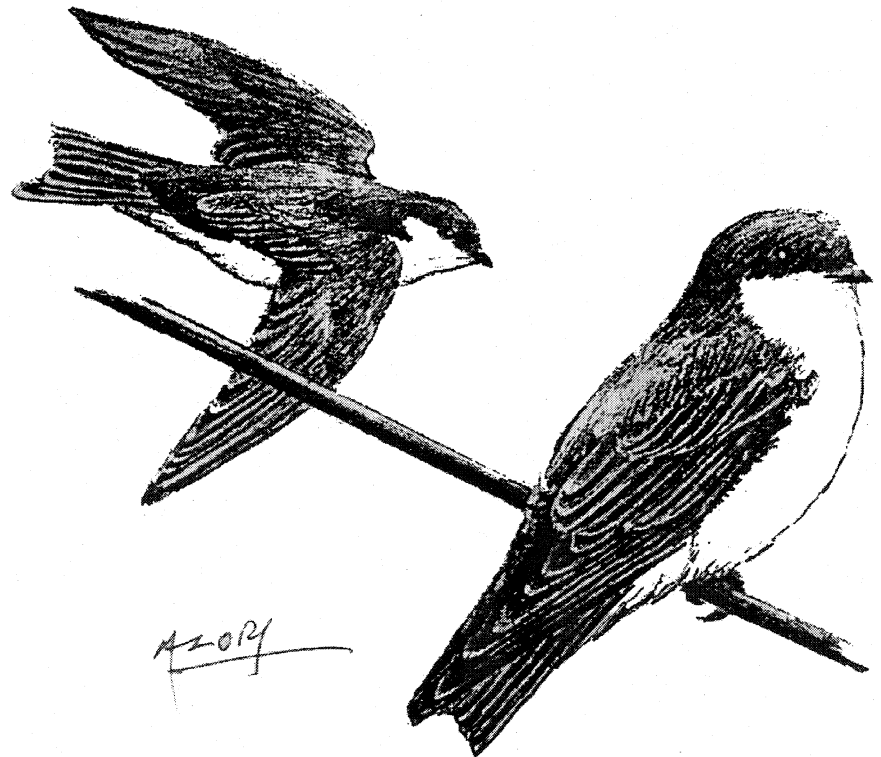
individual (IAM, Mitch Meredith), Oct. 12-15. At least 16 PHILADELPHIA VIREOS were reported, the first at Seal I., Yar. Co., Sept. 3 (*fide* BLM), and the last at Hartlen Pt., HRM (GDE) Oct. 15. Unsurprisingly, most were in mid to late September in CB Co., a few RED-EYED VIREOS were still singing as late as Sept. 5 (DBM). Ten early migrants were on Seal I., Yar. Co., Sept. 3 and eight there Oct. 8 (*fide* BLM); the peak of migration was apparently about Sept. 14-23 on the mainland (BLM *et al.*) and at Brier I. (RBS). Late-migrating individuals were at Hartlen Pt., Oct. 13 and in Dartmouth, HRM, Oct. 31 (BLM).

Two family groups of GRAY JAYS, one with three young, the other with one, were along the Admiral's Lake Trail, Lower Musquodoboit R., HRM, Aug. 26 (BLM). Others were noted mainly in ones and twos (maximum four) from Yar. to CB Cos. between Aug. 27 and Nov. 16 (PRG *et al.*). KFS noted that Gray Jays were beginning to return to her feeder beginning Sept. 26. DBM's records show small numbers of BLUE JAYS but regular occurrences in CBI from early August through mid October. Twenty on Big Tancook I., Lun. Co., Sept. 10 must have been migrants, while 30 on Brier I. on Oct. 2 and 20 arriving at Northern Pt., Brier I., Oct. 7 were on the move from the north (ELM). At the end of the reporting period, Blue Jays were all too evident at feeders throughout the province. Only systematically reported from CBI, where they were abundant in foraging groups and at roosts around CB Co. from August through September (DBM), AM. CROWS peaked at 200+ on Brier I. Nov. 13, of which ELM noted "many apparently migrants. A flock of 25 milled around in trees near Western Light, then circled in a ragged flock over the meadow, circled to gain altitude, then flew off to the SW toward Maine" (see a more detailed account elsewhere in this issue). COM. RAVENS came into their own during the November deer hunting season, following the hunt to feed on entrails wherever deer were taken. Regular and widespread in CBI in low numbers throughout August and September, a flock of 50 at Big Pond, CB Co., Sept. 16 was unusual (DBM). Very large numbers build up on the

agricultural lands of Kings Co. in early winter, but were unreported.

The season's first migrant HORNED LARKS appeared at Merigomish Big I., Pict. Co., Sept. 30 (KJM) and Schooner Pond, CB Co., Oct. 1 (DBM, RWK). By Oct. 12, 50 were at Grand Pré, Kings Co. (JCT), and small numbers elsewhere. A flock of 12 at Cooks Beach, Yar. Co., Oct. 29 - Nov. 4 increased to 35 on Nov. 12 and 40 two weeks later (PRG, JDE); there were 40 in Pond Cove, Brier I., Nov. 12 (ELM, AHM).

late, but not unprecedented, were two at W. Baccaro Oct. 15 and one at Clarks Hbr., CSI, Nov. 6 (MUN). A fem. (or possibly imm.) VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW was reported, with supporting notes, by birders from British Columbia at CSI, Shel. Co., Aug. 8 (R. Toochin). A N. ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW, the only one reported this season, was at CSI, Shel. Co., Sept. 9-10 (R. Toochin). Apart from residents still present in CB and Rich. Cos. in early August (DBM), the only other report of BANK SWALLOWS was of a pre-migratory build-up of 40 at Grand Pré, Kings Co., Aug. 11 (BLM). CLIFF



PURPLE MARTINS were not reported as migrants, but there was news on our sparse, and cherished, breeding population. Keith Black of the provincial DNR reported of the breeding group at Oxford, Cum. Co., that "Purple Martins left on Aug. 18. A 'good count' was not successful before departure, but removal and cleaning of houses revealed 15 nests were used and only one unhatched egg was found. An increase from last year's breeding season" (*fide* JCT). Many TREE SWALLOWS seemed to have left abruptly and unrecorded in late August - early September, however there were 30 at North Pt., Brier I., Aug. 24 (LAL, PAC, ADL), indicating the exodus. Very

SWALLOWS drifted away unreported, although DBM found nests at Gabarus L., CB Co., as late as Aug. 5, and storm-driven birds appeared in St. John's, Nfld, Oct. 19 (*fide* BRD). Just when one gives up hope for swallows, even the rare ones, a well-documented CAVE SWALLOW, apparently from a southwestern population, spent an hour or so in and around a flock of Starlings (they are good for something after all!) at Seaforth, HRM, Nov. 22 (CLS, CSS). Cold and blustery weather may have done it in; at any rate, it was not found again. Staging for migration, there were 60 BARN SWALLOWS at L'Archeveque, Rich. Co., Aug. 5 (DBM,

RWK). Twenty migrants reached Hartlen Pt., HRM, Aug. 20 (Ann Wetmore, PLC) and a similar number was at Pond Cove, Brier I., Aug. 24 (LAL, PAC, ADL). Four late migrants appeared at CSI, Oct. 8 (GWT, JCT, *fide* MUN), and a pair lingered at Schooner Pond, CB Co., Oct. 16-21 (CAM, ALM). Two Barn Swallows lingering around farm buildings at Seaforth, HRM, were discovered Nov. 26 (*fide* CLS) by searchers for the Cave Swallow.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE and BOREAL CHICKADEE fall movements were not evident until Oct. 8, when six of the former and two of the latter appeared on Brier I., part of a big arrival of warblers and other passerines. DBM's records show regular but not high numbers of both in CBI from August through November, and Black-cap adults with fledged young were at RBS's feeder in Kentville, Kings Co., Aug. 11-12. Thirty Black-caps and 15 Boreals in Uniacke Estate Park, Hants Co., Aug. 20 (BLM) appear to have been post-breeding flocks. Significant numbers of Boreals on islands, for example 30 on Seal I., Sept. 3 (NSBS *fide* BLM) and 35 on Big Tancook I, Lun. Co., Sept. 10 (BLM) are hard to interpret, but may have been migrants, or at least post-breeding groups from the mainland. In late summer and early fall, Black-caps were few at feeders, but as KFS noted, in Apple R., Cum. Co., they began to reappear in mid November. RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were sparse. LAL, PAC and ADL on Brier I., Aug. 21-Sept. 2, reported that only one bird was detected on the island during the entire time they were there. Definitely at a low point in their population cycle." Apart from a few reports of small numbers from feeders, the only other records were of eight in Kejimikujik NP, Aug.6 (BLM), 8 on Seal I., Sept. 2 (NSBS *fide* BLM), and one on Seal I., Oct. 7-8 (NSBS *fide* BLM). RBS recorded WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES in ones and twos in Kentville from mid August (a juvenile at his feeder) through October. In south end Halifax, PLC found them to be "more common in this area than in recent years." The only other records were of two individuals in Kejimikujik NP, Aug. 5, one in Wolfville, Aug.11 (BLM) and three in the same town Nov. 5 (BLF).

Few BROWN CREEPERS were reported from August through November, the only probable migrants were four on Seal I., Sept. 3 (NSBS *fide* BLM).

HOUSE WREN records clustered in mid-September: one at CSI, Sept. 14-15 (*fide* MUN) and one at Church Pt., Digby Co., Sept. 18 (R. Toochin). Even WINTER WRENS were seen or heard infrequently: one in Middle Hbr., Vic. Co., Aug. 4 (Tom Sherry); 10 on Seal I., Yar. Co., Sept. 3 and three Oct. 8 (NSBS, *fide* BLM); and one at Pubnico, Yar. Co., Nov. 4 (JAH). A lone SEDGE WREN, undocumented, was reported from Mavillette Beach, Digby Co., Sept. 6 (R. Toochin). A long-staying MARSH WREN inhabited the reeds at the Wolfville, sewage ponds from about Nov. 19 through at least Dec. 2 (RBS, BLF *et al.*). Peak numbers of GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS in migration were 300 on Seal I., Sept. 3 and 150 there Oct. 7 (NSBS *fide* BLM), "large numbers" Oct. 1 (CAM, ALM) and about 20, Oct. 15 (DBM, RWK) at Schooner Pond, CB Co., and 15 at North Pt., Brier I., among other migrants, Oct. 8 (ELM *et al.*). Some observers commented on the abundance of this species during the early fall, but by December nearly all seem to have left the province. As late as Nov. 16 a RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET lingered at a feeder in Dartmouth, HRM (Pat McKay), and one was still in KFS's yard in Apple R., Cum. Co., Nov. 30. Migrants peaked in early October: "several" to "large numbers" at Schooner Pond, CB Co., Oct. 1 and about 20 on the Oct. 15 (DBM, RWK, CAM, ALM); arrivals of up to 30 on Brier I., Oct. 7-8 (ELM); and 10 on Seal I., Oct. 8 (NSBS *fide* BLM) were observed. At least 11 BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS were reported, beginning with up to four at Schooner Pond, CB Co., Sept. 4-9 (DBM, RWK, CAM, ALM), where others, perhaps three in all, were present through Oct. 21 (CAM *et al.*). There were individuals at Mavillette Beach, Digby Co., (R. Toochin) and BPI, (S. Lerman *et al.*) Sept. 14. A pair was at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Sept. 25 (Mitch Meredith, R. Toochin). Despite the presence of gnatcatchers in Newfoundland well into November (*fide* BRD), they seem to have bypassed NS

late in the season or were missed after the third week of October.

A N. WHEATEAR, well documented, surprised TEP at Second Lake Park Reserve, HRM, Oct. 24, but could not be found again. Resident SWAINSON'S THRUSHES were still present in Middle Hbr., Vic. Co., Aug. 4 (Tom Sherry) and Gabarus, CB Co., Aug. 5 (DBM, RWK), but by late in the month migrants were on their way south; LAL, PAC and ADL on Brier I. found five very young birds, Aug. 21. The only others were individuals at W. Lawrencetown, HRM, Sept. 3 (PLC) and near Schooner Pond, CB Co., Sept. 28 (ALM). Singing HERMIT THRUSHES were still on territory in CB and Vic. Cos., CBI, Aug. 4-5 (DBM, RWK, Tom Sherry). Thereafter, records of this late-lingering species were few: one at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Aug. 20 (Ann Wetmore, PLC); one in Bedford, HRM, Sept. 17; one in Port Mouton, Queens Co., Sept. 23 (RES); one near Schooner Pond, CB Co., Sept. 28 (ALM); one in Kejimikujik NP, Oct. 18 (RES); and one in South End Halifax Oct. 23 (ALD *fide* DOU). A large flock (100+) of AM. ROBINS feeding on Mountain Ash near Halls Hbr., Kings Co., Aug. 29 (RBS) was the forerunner of large flocks, totalling many thousands of birds, that began to appear throughout the province during the last week of October. On Oct. 26, CAM and ALM reported two "seen making the crossing from Nfld, 7 miles from Port Morien, CB Co., east of Flint I. One was flying high, heading for Cape Percé and one was low over the water. When pursued by gulls it climbed to a safe height," and the following day ELM noted the arrival of large flocks in the Lunenburg-Rose Bay areas, an observation borne out by others in N NS between Oct. 29 and mid November (JCZ, KFS). Nov. 12-13, ELM observed flocks still arriving constantly on Brier I., but rapidly moving on to the SW across the Gulf of Maine. On Grand Manan, NB, a "notable flight" of 2500 occurred Nov. 14 (BRD). By the end of November, Robins could still be found without much trouble, but numbers had diminished markedly. Despite this, they were still on the move in E Nfld in the last week of the month (*fide* BRD), suggesting that migrants could still be finding their way to NS then. □

Mimics Through Warblers

By Ken McKenna

GRAY CATBIRDS were reported as probable migrants Aug. 27, Wilsons L., Yar. Co. (PRG, JDE) and five were moving through Seal I., Sept. 3 (BLM *et al.*). CAM provided the latest record, Oct. 9, from Schooner Pond, CB Co. NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD reports were widespread with about 15 reports from Shel., Kings, Yar., Hfx., and CB Cos. On the other hand, I received just two reports of BROWN THRASHER. The first was outside Yarmouth by Rick Toochin, a visitor from B.C., Sept. 26. The report of a one, Oct. 9 at Schooner Pond (CAM) is interesting in that the date was very close to her observation of one nearby at Sand L. in 1999 which stayed a week from Oct. 8 and one from 1998, Oct. 10 at Schooner Pond again.

Autumn is a time when large flocks of EUR. STARLINGS can be seen flying in group formation. A flock of 600 birds was seen in Petite Rivière, Lun. Co., Aug. 25 (JAH). A lawn-feeding flock of 500 was noted in N. Sydney, by DBM, Sept. 4. BLM had some reports from a couple of offshore islands and headlands – 100 on Big Tancook I., Sept. 10, 37 on Seal I., Oct. 7 and 700 on Hartlen Pt., Oct. 13. The latest report was 125 at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., Oct. 18 (DMW).

A field trip by some members of the Pict. Co. Naturalists, Sept. 10 resulted in everyone getting great looks at four AMERICAN PIPITS at Big I., Pict. Co. (KJM). This was followed by more Northumberland shore observations of 13 at Cape John, Sept. 18. More southerly parts of the province noted Am. Pipits a little later with five at Hartlen Pt., Sept. 30, (BLM). Six on Brier I., Oct. 3 grew quickly to 35 by Oct. 7, (ELM). A similar number were noted, Nov. 12 at Brier I. (ELM and AHM). Despite a good fruit supply this fall, there were no reports received of BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS. To fill the void, CEDAR WAXWINGS remained in good numbers. On Aug. 22, dozens of Cedars were found feeding on Tipulids (crane flies) in BID's yard in St. Peters, Rich. Co. (DBM). Good-sized flocks

were noted by KFS in Apple R., Cum. Co., Sept. 14 and 100+ were at Egerton, Pict. Co., Oct. 4 (KJM). A flock of 150+ near Wolfville, Nov. 5 was searched by BLF for Bohemians but all present were Cedars. Christmas Bird Counts will reveal if any Bohemians are around during the coming December period, but I suspect the numbers will be low.

My impressions of the fall warbler season was that it was a very ordinary one until I assembled all the reports and changed my mind to a very interesting fall season capped with the first documented record of MacGillivray's Warbler for the province squeaking in at the end of the reporting period. Many of the other exceptional warbler sightings were not accompanied by such details, but all sightings have been included in this report.

There were an amazing seven reports of **BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** beginning on Aug. 23 when one was banded by the team on BPI (M. Peckford *et al.*). Other sightings were as follows: Sept. 1, Church Pt., Digby Co., *fide* MUN; Labour Day weekend, BPI, (JCZ); Sept. 11, Sand L., CB Co., (CAM); Sept. 15, South Hd., Port Morien, CB Co. (CAM); Sept. 16, The Hawk, CSI, (Rick Toochin); Sept. 29, Pond Cove, Brier I. (MUN). Although **GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLERS** are declining in numbers, there were three reports this fall. SEM and CAM discovered one at Schooner Pond, CB Co., Sept. 17. A female was seen by SJF, DHY and DOE at The Hawk, CSI, Sept. 29.

A single TENNESSEE WARBLER was reported by LAL, PAC, and ADL at the North Pt. of Brier I., Sept. 2. **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS** on the other hand were reported ten times with a whopping eight seen, Oct. 9 at Schooner Pond, (CAM). Between Nov. 17-19, Orange-crowns were found on Hartlen Pt., Cow Bay, Portuguese Cove and Duncans Cove, all in Hfx. Co.; CSI; Donkin, CB Co.; and the NSBS field trip at Williams Pt, Ant. Co. Being an

entomologist, DBM often observes what the warblers are feeding on and he noted a NASHVILLE WARBLER feeding on Birch Skeletonizer at his home in Georges R., CB Co., Aug. 30. Single birds were recorded on Brier I., late August and early September, (LAL, PAC, and ADL). On Sept. 30, BLM described a quite bright Nashville at Hartlen Pt. that "constantly pumped its tail" and felt it might have been a western race. He also had the latest report of Nashville at Hartlen Pt., Oct. 13.

All N. PARULA reports were before mid-September. On Aug. 20, four were at the Uniacke Estate Park (BLM) and two on Brier I., Aug. 29 (LAL, PAC, ADL). Early morning on Brier I., Oct. 8 yielded three N. Parula in a mixed flock (ELM, FLL, TEP, and PEL) and represent the latest reported. **YELLOW WARBLERS** moved out early as indicated by 11 on Brier I., Aug. 29 (LAL, PAC, ADL) and 20 on Seal I., Sept. 3 (BLM *et al.*). As with Parulas, there were no reports after mid-September. **CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS** also left the province early. The only report after the mid-September mark was that of a first fall male killed by a cat in Kentville, Nov. 30 (MRH).

Twelve **MAGNOLIA WARBLERS** were tallied on Brier I., Aug. 29 (LAL, PAC, ADL). Although PLC recorded six in Shubenacadie Park, Dartmouth, Aug. 26, most sightings of this commonly reported warbler were of fewer than five birds. They originated from CB Co. to Hfx. Co. The latest report was of two at Hartlen Pt., Oct. 13 (BLM). DBM had a fem. **CAPE MAY WARBLER** feeding on birches at his home in Georges R., CB Co. There were five other reports of Cape Mays from mid-August to early September with the latest sighting being four on Seal I., Sept. 3 (BLM *et al.*) indicating early departure to their wintering grounds in the Caribbean Islands, particularly the Bahamas, as well as Yucatan, Mexico and Honduras. Sightings of **BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLERS** occurred

throughout the province in late August and mid-September. The first CB sighting for RWK was Sept. 9 at Schooner Pond. On Sept. 23, a male at Frog Pond, Jollimore, Hfx. Co. (PLC) provided the latest record sent. **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS**, as usual, were the most numerous warbler reported. Thirteen reports ranging from a few to 150 birds were reported until late September, then seemingly reaching a peak in early October when 300+ were part of an early morning arrival to the North Pt. of Brier I. (ELM) and 50+ at Schooner Pond, CB Co., Oct. 15 (DBM, RWK). Very large flocks of **BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS** were not reported this year. Of 15 reports, only three were of more than one bird. Sixteen were reported Aug. 29, Brier I. (LAL, PAC, ADL), four were at Second L., Hfx. Co., Sept. 6 and three Oct. 3 at Schooner Pond, CB Co. (DBM, RWK). There were five reports of **BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** with three seen Aug. 20, Uniacke Estate Park (BLM) and at Seal I., Sept. 3, (BLM *et al.*). ELM reports the latest at Brier I., Oct. 5.

A **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** was present on BPI from Aug. 22-25 (var. obs.). **PINE WARBLERS** were seen in Lun. Co. at Long Hill, Aug. 5 (NSBS) and in Petite Rivière, Aug. 19, (JAH). Rick Toochin reported an imm. Pine at Church Pt., Digby Co., Sept. 18. Another was turned up at Williams Pt., Ant. Co., Nov. 18 (NSBS). The latest sighting was Nov. 25 at West Baccaro, Shel. CO. (MUN) but no doubt, overwintering birds will start showing up in December. **PRAIRIE WARBLERS** take the prize this fall for the most sightings with Rick Toochin reporting 11, mostly on BPI from Aug. 15-27, but also a first fall male at Church Pt., Digby Co., Sept. 1. Prairies were noted, Aug. 23 from Brier I. (AAM) and from Schooner Pond, CB Co. (CAM). Prairies were banded on BPI, Sept. 2 & 3 (TMF), seen at Amherst Pt., Cum. Co., Sept. 9 (TEP), Cape Light, Shel. Co., Sept. 11 (MUN) and two at the Hawk, CSI, Sept. 29 (DHY). TEP reported a Prairie on Brier I. the first weekend of October as "a vividly coloured male, but surrounding the black facial markings was a light bluish cast". MUN saw a similarly marked bird at The

Hawk in October At Schooner Pond, CB Co., CAM had the latest Prairie, Oct. 27. At Quinan, Yar. Co., dozens of **PALM WARBLERS** were seen by RSD, Sept. 10. "Everywhere you looked there was a bird pumping its tail up and down." A group of 100+ migrant Palms made their way to the North Pt., Brier I., Oct. 8 (ELM). Schooner Pond, CB Co. had 10, Oct. 15 (RWK, DBM) and a Western Palm, Oct. 27 (CAM).

The few **BAY-BREASTED WARBLER** reports received were clustered early in the season with three Aug. 29, Brier I. (LAL, PAC, ADL), and singles Sept. 3, Seal I. (BLM) and Second L., Hfx. Co., Sept. 16, (BLM). The number of **BLACKPOLL WARBLERS** recorded seemed low this fall, fewer than 100 birds. The largest group was 20, Sept. 3, Seal I. (BLM *et al.*). Only five were noted on Sober I., Hfx. Co., Oct. 1 (KJM, RFL), where large numbers had been recorded in past falls. ELM described early October sightings on Brier as "sparse". **BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER** numbers peaked early with five at the Sydney Mines settling pond, Aug. 24 (DBM); eight at North Pt., Brier I., Aug. 29 (LAL, PAC, ADL); four Aug. 26 at Frog Pond, Jollimore, Hfx. Co. (PLC); and 25, Seal I., Sept. 3 (BLM *et al.*). No reports were received after the end of September. **AMERICAN REDSTARTS** were still feeding young in Middle R., Vic. Co., Aug 4 (Tom Sherry) but migrant birds seven to eight per day were seen on Brier I. in late August (LAL, PAC, ADL). The group on Seal I. had 15, Sept. 3. A partial albino seen by BLF on Brier I. was described as having "bill and around eyes black, but head, neck and undersides pure white, wings and sides creamy orange, tail black and white patches with creamy orange in the middle. The bird fanned and spread its wings like a Redstart." Photos were attempted but were not successful. A fem. **PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** was detected with three Yellow Warblers at The Hawk, CSI, Sept. 1 (BLM, JOW). A second bird was reported landing on a ship hoist on a fishing trip to Georges Bank in late Sept., *fide* MUN.

There were not many **OVENBIRD** reports. RES noted a pair at Port Mouton, Queens Co., Aug. 5. The same

day, BLM found four on Peters Pt. Trail, Kejimikujik NP. KJM found a dead Ovenbird in his Plymouth, Pict. Co. yard, Aug. 23, noteworthy in that the property is not very close to a woods. For the most part, **N. WATERTHRUSH** depart early with eight at North Pt., Brier I., Aug. 29 (LAL, PAC, ADL), three on CSI, Sept. 1 (BLM) and four Sept. 2-3, Seal I. (BLM *et al.*). A **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** was discovered on BPI, Aug. 29, but no details were provided. Another rarity, a **KENTUCKY WARBLER**, was banded on BPI, Sept. 4 (TMF). A patch of alder at Daniels Hd., CSI yielded another for JON, Oct. 2. A **MOURNING WARBLER** was seen on Seal I., Sept. 4 (KJM), but I am sure more of these under-reported warblers were seen this fall. An *Oporornis* warbler, observed in detail, Nov. 20 at the St. Marys Boat Club off Jubilee Rd. (DOU), was described by her as "having a bright yellow breast all the way to the undertail with a little subtle streaking, broken eye-ring, tan throat, olive-green back and had a habit of flicking its tail". Her differential diagnosis included Connecticut and Mourning but she could not rule out Orange-crowned. With help from TEP and finally BLM the mystery warbler was identified as a **MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** which is more likely to be seen on the east coast in winter than Mourning Warbler (**WARBLERS** by Dunn and Garrett). The warbler was photographed, Dec. 4 (Christopher Majka) and posted to his website. The photos show the bright and broken eye-ring, grey throat with no visible yellow, and a distinct breast band. The long tail and extension past the undertail coverts were noted by AAM. The bird repeated a sharp and penetrating "ticking" call note quite unlike a Mourning warbler. This sighting represents the first documented record of this species in N.S.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT were frequently reported during migration in late August and September. Of particular note was a report of disoriented and tired passerines hitting the lighthouses on Brier I. in the fog after dark, Sept. 21 and even landing on the observers RWK and Peter Burke. Many of these birds were Com. Yellowthroats. Rick Toochin

observed an amazing three HOODED WARBLERS, a male at The Hole, CSI, Sept. 16, an imm. fem. at Mavillette Beach, Digby Co., Sept. 17 and another imm. fem. at Hartlen Pt., Sept. 23. Single WILSON'S WARBLERS graced Seal I., Sept. 2 & 3 (BLM *et al.*), and MUN reported "lots" in a wave of birds at Hectanooga, Digby Co., Sept. 4. On Brier I., Sept. 4, BLF reported Wilson's

Warbler as common everywhere. Three birds were on Sober I., Sept. 30 (KJM, RFL) and the latest was a first fall fem., Nov. 27, Fairview Cemetery, Hfx. Co. (CLS). There were five reports of CANADA WARBLER all in the last week of August and the first half of September. YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS were seen first on BPI, Aug. 23 where one was banded (M. Peckford *et*

al.). This was followed by sightings, Aug. 30, Sand L. (CAM) and Hartlen Pt. (TIA). There were a number of other September sightings and then in Nov. 18, TEP observed one eating berries at Sullivans Pond being chased by a Cardinal and Blue Jays, "a nice avian display". □

Tanagers Through House Sparrows

By David McCorquodale

The southward sparrow migration in mid-October was impressive for its numbers of common species and the spice of a few of the rarer vagrants. This fall had its fair share of rare vagrants, such as Grasshopper Sparrows and Bullock's Oriole and regular vagrants such as Dickcissels and Blue Grosbeaks. Highlights from the irregular movements of boreal finches were the plethora of White-winged Crossbills and the dearth of Common Redpolls.

Two species of tanagers were found this fall. There was an imm. SUMMER TANAGER near Church Pt., Digby Co. in early October (MUN, Rick Toochin). As expected there were more SCARLET TANAGERS with the earliest the third week of September at Mavillette Beach, Digby Co. and the latest the end of the second week of October at Hartlen Pt. (Rick Toochin, GDE, Judy O'Brien). In between there were at least three others in Shel. and Digby Cos.

EASTERN TOWHEES most frequently arrive in October and a few of these linger into the winter. This is exactly what happened this fall. In mid-October four individuals, one at Schooner Pond, CBI (ALM, CAM), two in the Halifax area (TEP, G. Patterson) and one at The Hawk, CSI (MUN) arrived. In late November a couple lingered in the Halifax area and may attempt to overwinter. Exceptionally early were four others on BPI in mid-August (JJN).

AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS arrived as expected at the beginning of the second week of October, the first at Schooner Pond, CBI (ALM, CAM). A

few others were seen on CBI before the first were found on the mainland, at Centreville, Kings Co. and Brule, Col. Co. (KJM) near the end of the month. Throughout November small flocks were seen in many locations, including one flock at feeders in Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS). An outbreak of the small caterpillar, the Birch Skeletonizer, provided abundant food for a family of CHIPPING SPARROWS as well as several warblers, juncos and Purple Finches at Georges R., CB Co. (DBM). The largest movement of southbound migrants was during the third week of October, especially on Brier I. (RBS, TEP). Numbers dwindled dramatically by late November everywhere. For the third year in a row there were more CLAY-COLOURED SPARROWS than average. There were two on CBI (DBM *et al.*), one on Seal I (IAM, Mitch Meredith), one in Queens Co. (RSC) and one at Broad Cove, Lun. Co. (SJF) and at least two on CSI (SJF, BAH, MUN), including the latest during a significant migration of sparrows Oct. 12. Most of the half a dozen FIELD SPARROWS were found in October on the southern islands. However for the second year in a row at least one visited CBI (SEM, ALM, CAM).

In mid-October CSI hosted most of this fall's VESPER SPARROWS, including three on October 14 (MUN). The only others were during the third week of September at that vagrant hotspot, Schooner Pond, CBI and during the first week of November in Halifax (ALM, CAM, DAC). Often the first LARK SPARROWS arrive in late August and this year was no exception. Two were

found Aug. 25, at opposite ends of the province, one on Brier I. and one in Louisbourg (Clark Sollows *et al.*, DBM). Late in September there were three at Schooner Pond, CBI (ALM, CAM), one in Port Mouton, Queens Co. (RSC, Nellie Snyder) and the latest of the fall was on Seal I. on Thanksgiving weekend (Mitch Meredith, IAM).

In early August many SAVANNAH SPARROWS were still in song, by late November they were quiet, but still skulking around on beaches. The first fall migrant Ipswich Sparrows were on beaches in the Halifax area in late September (BLM, Mitch Meredith). In October others were spotted at Schooner Pond, CBI and on CSI (ALM, CAM, MUN).

In mid-October two GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS were found, one in Halifax and the other on CSI (CLS, MUN). The number and timing of these vagrants are about typical of the recent past. The husky songs of NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS were heard in salt marshes well into the third week of August. Once they stop singing, they can be tough to find. However intrepid birders found many, including at least 25 at Rainbow Haven in Cole Hbr. at the end of September (BLM, Mitch Meredith), more than five at each of three locations in Lun. Co. in mid-October (JAH) and some at Hartlen Pt., Oct. 29 (TEP). Most unusual was one visiting a backyard in Dartmouth, Nov. 4-6 (Pat MacKay, CLS).

Many of us only see FOX SPARROWS on their way north in the spring. However, many nest in the province, as

indicated by males still (or practising for next spring) singing on BPI in early September (JCZ). During the rest of the fall, individuals and small groups frequented feeders and coastal areas on their journey south. A couple lingered until the last days of November at a feeder in Advocate Hbr., Cum. Co. (JAF). Singing SONG SPARROWS are welcome signs of spring in late winter and a reminder of summer past when they continue to sing into late August. Several people noticed unusual songs, probably young males trying to actually sing the song they heard during the summer. These practice songs in the fall are often confusing for birders, but an integral part of song learning for the young males. A significant southward movement was noticed during the second and third weeks of October around the province. Numbers dwindled in November, yet a few were still frequenting feeders and lobster traps around wharves throughout the province at the end of the month. Most reports of LINCOLN'S SPARROW come from the eastern counties, from CB to Shel. The latest were part of a major sparrow migration in the middle of October on both CSI and CBI, and near Halifax (MUN, ALM, CAM, TEP). A few SWAMP SPARROWS were still singing on territory on CBI during the first week of August (Tom Sherry, DBM) and even on the late date of Sept. 22 near Wolfville (JCT, JET). A small migratory movement went through Brier I., Oct. 7. A week later much larger numbers moved through Hartlen Pt. (Mitch Meredith). That night brought a major movement to Schooner Pond, CBI (RWK, DBM) and even more a couple of days later (ALM, CAM). Numbers did dwindle through November, but as expected there were still hardy birds in wet meadows in many locations late in the month.

In early August a few male WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS were still singing. At the end of the month a few were still feeding young and then in the first few days of September the first wave of southbound migrants reached Seal I (*vide* BLM). Many more moved through the last two weeks of October. An interesting concentration was more than 60 at Cape Chignecto PP, Oct. 20

(MSM). Numbers did dwindle in November, but there were still many locations with half a dozen or more, suggesting that many will attempt to overwinter. The first WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS of the fall showed up Sept. 30 at either end of the province, at Schooner Pond, CBI and on CSI (ALM, CAM, MUN). The bulk of this year's fall migrants were part of a large sparrow migration from Oct. 12 to 22. A large group of 75 were on CSI, Oct. 14 (MUN). There were stragglers at Sand L., CB Co. in late October and another at Port Williams, Kings Co. late in November (ALM, CAM, GWT).

Like many of our sparrows, DARK-EYED JUNCOS continue singing well into August and a few were still feeding young, like the one found at Shubenacadie Park, Dartmouth, late in August. (PLC). Small migratory movements were noted Oct. 1 on Big I., Pict. Co., Sober I., HRM and on CBI (KJM, RFL, DBM, RWK) and on Brier I., Nov. 11 (ELM). The first southbound migrant LAPLAND LONGSPUR arrived on time, the last day of September at Schooner Pond, CBI (ALM, CAM). However it was three weeks later before any were found on the mainland. Two-thirds of all reports this fall are from CBI, including the largest flock, 40 at Morien Bar, Oct. 28 (RWK). At the same time as the second wave of longspurs arrived, the first wave of SNOW BUNTINGS came. The first were six on South Bar, Sydney Hbr., Oct. 20. Within a week they were being seen from CSI to Kings Co. to Cum. Co. However, there was not a repeat of the massive fallout of last year at Halloween. As an example only three were seen during three days on Brier I. starting Nov. 11 this year. I doubt there was a coastal location where only three would have been seen in a half day last year at the same time. This year, the largest concentrations were 200 at Brule, Col. Co., Nov. 4 (KJM) and more than 100 on CSI, Nov. 18 (MUN).

NORTHERN CARDINALS continue to thrive in metro Halifax, a few places in Shel. and Yar. Cos. and Wolfville. Elsewhere a pair was found at Mahone Bay, Aug. (NSBS *vide* JAH) and a possible imm. fem. spent a day at a

feeder in Apple R. (*vide* JAF). On the same NSBS trip near Mahone Bay a fem. ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK was found. Only a few others were reported: one in Bridgewater, Aug. 8 (JAH), a young male at Schooner Pond, CBI, Sept 26 (ALM, CAM), one at Lower Rose Bay, Lun. Co. the next day (Jill Comolli) and finally one at Hartlen Pt., Oct. 14 (GDE, Judy O'Brien, Mitch Meredith). Two BLUE GROSBEAKS were found in expected locations at expected times. The first was on Brier I., Oct. 5 and the other was at Annie Penney's feeder on CSI, Oct. 6 (MUN, ELM). About 25 INDIGO BUNTINGS were reported this fall, the majority from the southern islands between mid-September and mid-October. Elsewhere there were three at Port Mouton, Queens Co., Sept. 29 (RSC), one at Taylor Hd. PP, Oct. 14 (TEP) and at least four in eastern CBI, including the latest, a fem. that lingered at the Murrants' feeder until Nov. 5.

The number of vagrant DICKCISSELS has been remarkably consistent at about 15 for the past three autumns. This year there were at least 14, mostly in Digby and Shel. Cos. with the earliest the first week of September as is typical. Elsewhere, there was one at Rose Bay, Lun. Co., Sept. 28 (ELM), at least three in eastern CB Co., including two lingering in Louisbourg towards the end of November (SEM, ALM, CAM) and the only one away from the Atlantic coast was at a feeder in Economy, Col. Co., Nov. 20 (FLS).

Groups of BOBOLINKS were congregating in preparation for migration, such as the 30 on Big I. and 40 at Elgin-Lorne, Pict. Co. (KJM) during the third week of August. During the last few days of August and the first few of September southbound migrants were staging on Brier and Seal Is. (LAL, PAC, ADL, *vide* BLM). Numbers dwindled after mid-September. However there were still three lingering at Schooner Pond, CBI in mid-October (RWK, DBM, ALM, CAM) and the latest was at Pubnico, Yar. Co., Nov. 11 (MUN).

Large flocks, roosts and migratory movements of blackbirds were noted from several locations. Large mixed

roosts or feeding flocks of RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS and COMMON GRACKLES included more than 500 at Coxheath, CB Co. in early August (DBM), hundreds in cornfields near Shubenacadie from September through into early November (RCM), at least 3,000 in a few flocks around the Bedford Basin in late October (RSM, PEL) and more than 800, mostly grackles, at Apple R., Cum. Co. in early November (KFS). In mid-November, both Red-winged Blackbirds and grackles headed southwest from Brier I. to warmer climes for the winter (ELM, AHM, PLC). Numbers did dwindle by late November but still reports from several areas of flocks of a couple of dozen late in the month. Two rarer icterids were found. YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD was typically early, Sept. 4 on CSI with a flock of starlings (MUN) and another visited a feeder in Apple River, Nov. 16 (KFS). This is the same place that the large flock of grackles was frequenting and the same feeder one visited almost two years ago to the day. Typically vagrant, EASTERN MEADOWLARKS arrive later in the fall, often in mid-October. A visitor from Maine, Mark Libby, found one on CSI, Oct. 13 and later showed it to several other birders (MUN). Only five RUSTY BLACKBIRDS were reported: one Aug. 22 on Brier I. (LAL, PAC, ADL), two on Wilson Rd., Yar. Co., Oct. 1 (MUN), one on Seal I. a week later (*vide* BLM) and one visiting a feeder in Apple R., Cum. Co. for two days in early November (KFS).

A cowbird found dead in Dartmouth, July 8 by Sylvia Harvey was frozen by the Harveys and later taken to the Nova Scotia Museum where Andrew Hebda recognized that it was worth a serious look. IAM identified it as a **BRONZED COWBIRD** and from measurements of the tail concluded that it was of the subspecies that breeds in southern New Mexico, Arizona and California south into western Mexico. This is the first specimen for Canada. However there are two plausible sight records from NS. Andrew Hebda and IAM will be publishing a more complete account of this fascinating find. Most of the BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS were in the extreme south, on CSI and nearby

parts of Yar. Co. Others were found with the larger flocks of grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds near Shubenacadie (RCM) and in Apple R. and Advocate Hbr., Cum. Co. (KFS, MSM). Cowbirds are a rarity on CBI in the fall. One in a yard in Louisbourg was almost exactly four years later than another sighting in the same place (SEM).

A young male BULLOCK'S ORIOLE was with several Baltimores at a feeder in Halifax on the last day of November (Fred Grigg, IAM, FLL). This is the western species that until recently was lumped with the Baltimore as Northern Oriole. Females can be very difficult to distinguish, however males are much easier. This is about the third to be photographed in the province, although there are many more sight records. With tricky identifications like these orioles, especially the females, a photograph is always desirable. The annual influx of BALTIMORE ORIOLES started in late August at Wilson Rd., Yar. Co. and on eastern CBI (MUN, ALM, CAM). By mid-September there were numerous birds on CBI, in the Halifax area and in Shel., Digby, Lun. and Yar. Cos. Despite the number of reports there were none away from this strip along the Atlantic coast. As usual by late November many of orioles had found feeders well stocked with oranges and grapes and appeared to be settling in for an attempt to overwinter.

A few PINE GROSBEAKS were reported from coniferous woods from ten counties around the province, many locations where they breed. PURPLE FINCHES were also widespread, without being really abundant in any one place. Some commented that there were few at feeders while others saw them regularly through the fall. HOUSE FINCHES continue to do well in a few communities in Yar. Co. and in Halifax. However unlike the past few autumns there were no reports of explorers or stragglers or vagrants away from these established populations.

The family of RED CROSSBILLS at a feeder in Louisbourg was last seen Aug. 20 (SEM). Unlike last fall, there were no other Red Crossbills at feeders. A few were found in coniferous woods, at

Kejimikujik NP in early August (BLM), on Sober I., HRM in late August (KJM), singing on BPI in early September (JCZ) and on Big Tancook I. Lun. Co. in September (BLM). The significant cone crop on Balsam Fir and spruces attracted WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS, especially to CBI and northern NS. Many were singing in late August, however numbers declined through October and relatively few were around in November. Perhaps the 300 on Seal I. in early September were the start of an emigration from the province. We normally associate crossbills with the cones of conifers. At Port Mouton, RES has noticed that they have a fondness for the wind-blown eelgrass along the coast. She speculates that it is an interest in the salt that attracts them.

There was no repeat of the invasion of COMMON REDPOLLS of last fall and winter. Only four reports totalling fewer than 50 individuals were received. The earliest were six at Schooner Pond, CBI, Oct. 8 (ALM, CAM), the largest flock of the fall, 30, was at Arisaig, Ant. Co., Oct. 24 (KJM), nine at Cape Chignecto PP, Oct. 25 (MSM) and then one at Whites L., HRM, Nov. 21 (BLM). PINE SISKINS were also scarce this fall. About half the reports were from CBI, including 100 on Oct. 21 at Schooner Pond (ALM, CAM). Most of the rest were from islands along the Atlantic coast from Sober, HRM around to Brier. The only others were at Amherst Pt., Cum. Co. and Fairview, Ant. Co. in November. (TEP, RFL). Am. GOLDFINCH frequented feeders throughout the province from early in August right through to the end of November. EVENING GROSBEAK numbers were sparse, however they were widespread. Adults brought young to a feeder in Kentville early in August (RBS). They were regular at a feeder in Ohio, Yar. Co. through the fall (DOE). Elsewhere, such as in Apple R., Cum. Co. they were sporadic visitors to feeders (KFS).

Birders dutifully ignored HOUSE SPARROWS across the province. □

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Black, Elaine	EBB	Speirs, Robert J. N.	RJS	McKiel, Jean
Mills, Eric L.	ELM	Chivers, Bobby	RSC	Meredith, Mitch
Stern, Elizabeth	ELS	d'Entremont, Raymond	RSD	Moores, Jennifer
Dobson, Fred and Evelyn	FED	McDonald, Robert S.	RSM	Nauss, Bill
Lavender, Fulton L.	FLL	Knaption, Richard	RWK	O'Brien, Judy
Spalding, Francis	FLS	Nickerson, Sandra	SAN	Patterson, G.
d'Entremont, Giselle	GDE	Myers, Susann	SEM	Peckford, M.
Digout, George	GED	Fullerton, Sylvia	SJF	Penney, Annie
Lunn, Gerry	GEL	Hulford, Sheila	SLH	Reeves, Lee Anne
Milroy, Grant	GRM	Hiltz, Stephen	STH	Seymour, Norm
Tufts, Gordon	GWT	Pacquet, Terry	TEP	Sherry, Tom
Brennan, Harry	HAB	Allison, Tim	TIA	Simpson, James
Halifax Field Naturalists	HFN	Fitzgerald, Trina	TMF	Smith, Sid
O'Shea, Helen	HOS	Bezanson, Tony	TOB	Snyder, Nellie
McLaren, Ian	IAM	Urban, Eva, Deanna & Walter	URB	Sollows, Clark H.
Fletcher, Jane	JAF			Spicer, Cindy D.
Hirtle, James	JAH	Algar, Dave		Taylor, Keith
Tufts, Judy	JCT	Black, Keith		Toochin, Rick
Czapaly, Joan	JCZ	Boehner, Barry		Wardrope, Roger
d'Entremont, Jacqueline	JDE	Bondrup-Nielsen, Soren		Watson, Dave
Brennan, Jean	JEB	Bower, Pam		Wetmore, Ann
Hartley, Jean	JEH	Briand, Virginia		Woodcock, Gary
Timpa, Jean	JET	Burke, Peter		

□□□

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

New Books

The Nova Scotia Bird Society occasionally receives books from publishers for review purposes. We require a review of about a few hundred words (or less for smaller books) which will be printed in *Nova Scotia Birds*; the reviewer gets to keep the book. Reviewers should have some experience in the topic of the book so a critical review can be written. Reviewers should be able to write clearly and concisely and must be current members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

The following books are available for review. The review is due one month after receiving the book and will be subject to editing.

These two book covers British Birds, so should be reviewed by someone who has experience birding with the Queen (or her immediate neighbours).

Garden Bird Songs and Calls by G. Sample. Collins.

Gardening for Birds by S. Moss, G. Tomblin. Collins.

Another of the long-awaited guides:

The Sibley Guide to Birds by D.A. Sibley. National Audubon Society.

The complete Backyard Birdwatcher's Home Companion by D.S. Heintzelman. Rocky Mountain Press.

Watching Birds – Reflections on the wing by A. Taylor. Rocky Mountain Press.

Gardening for the Birds by T.G. Barnes. University of Kentucky Press

Birds, Birds, Birds by the National Wildlife Federation. McGraw Hill.

The FeederWatcher's Guide to Bird Feeding by M.A. Barker and J. Griggs. Harper Collins.

Building Backyard Bird Habitat by S. Shalaway. Stackpole Books.

Red-tailed Hawk by C.R. Preston. Stackpole Books.

Given the great discrepancy in communication speeds of the postal service and email, all replies will be pooled for three weeks after delivery of this issue of *Nova Scotia Birds*. A lottery system will be used to choose the books' recipients if necessary.

If you are interested please contact:

Randy F. Lauff
 Editor, *NS Birds*
 Biology Department
 St. Francis Xavier University
 Antigonish, NS B2G2W5
 rlauff@stfx.ca

□□□

Field Trip Reports

Point Michaud Beach

26 August , Leaders: Billy and George Digout

Eighteen birders met at the Department of Transportation building in St. Peters and followed the coastal route through l'Ardoise to the beach area. Due to two major storms this year our usual access to the mud flats was changed, so we had a much longer walk than other years. The weather was gorgeous (22 °C) so I don't think anyone minded too much. This year, birders from the mainland and one from Texas joined us for the first time. I have compiled my list from three different submitted lists; as people got split up, sightings varied somewhat. Thirteen species of shorebirds were seen including Black-bellied Plovers, Least and White-rumped Sandpipers and a Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs in the same lens. We had a lively discussion whether a sandpiper was a Pectoral or Solitary, but I'm still not sure if a consensus was reached. We had only eight species of ducks but did have the three Scoters: Surf, White-winged and Black. A duck in the distance provided further discussion as to its identity, but it was either an immature Hooded or Red-breasted Merganser. We also had both Tree and Barn Swallows and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird chasing a Belted Kingfisher. All of us had lunch in River Bourgeois and everyone appeared to enjoy the day. ☐



Brier Island, September 22 - 24, 2000: The Society's September meeting was held at Brier Island Lodge, Westport and was a great success. Activities included land-based and pelagic field trips. [Photos Gisèle d'Entremont]



Cape Sable Island, October 8, 2000: (Left) Participants checking out a WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL escapee. (Right) A 'field review' of the new Sibley Guide. [Photos Gisèle d'Entremont]

Pubnico

4 November 2000, Leader: Gisèle d'Entremont

Twelve birders gathered at 9 a.m. in the parking lot of the Red Cap Restaurant in Middle West Pubnico. It was a lovely morning, 7°C, and the temperature climbed to around 15°C in the afternoon. We started our day walking along Rock Road, and then drove to the end of Pond Road, looking out at the Brothers Islands, in Lobster Bay.

Ted d'Eon showed us the site where an interpretive panel on the Roseate Terns will be installed by the Spring of 2001. A number of Northern Gannets could be seen flying by off shore. Also on the horizon, further out from the Brothers, we could identify the five Bald Islands. Four of these islands are owned by the NSBS. The remainder of the morning was spent walking the Pubnico Point Road.

In the afternoon, we waited patiently at Darryl Amirault's feeder in Lower West Pubnico, until everyone in the group got a good view of a female Dickcissel. It was with a large flock of House Sparrows and five Brown-headed Cowbirds. While we were there, an Eastern Phoebe perched on a branch of a tree behind the feeder. Darryl also reported having seen a male Northern Cardinal in the morning.

We had several other stops during the afternoon and were treated to two Baltimore Orioles at our last stop in Reginald d'Eon's yard in West Pubnico.

In total, we saw 50 species for the day; including hundreds of American Robins; three species of hawks (Am. Kestrel, Northern Harrier, and Sharp-shinned hawk); two male Northern Cardinals, one Northern Mockingbird; and an Ipswich Sparrow, to name a few.

Thank you to the Pubnico birders for their help: Jerome, Benjamin, and Ted d'Eon, and Ethelda Murphy. □

Antigonish Coastal Waters

18 November, Leader: Randy Lauff

A blustery day on the shore was the setting for this second annual trip in Antigonish County. Eighteen people (from New Brunswick and five Nova Scotia counties) went in pursuit of several rarities that had shown up over the past few weeks; some were found, some new ones discovered.

The first stop was the local sewage treatment plant (our idea of a sewer stroll is to walk *around* our only treatment plant). Black-headed Gulls are often found here earlier than anywhere else in the county, and we weren't disappointed. However, the dozens at the Antigonish Landing were quite spectacular. Bonaparte's Gulls were there in lesser numbers than Black-headed, but Ogdens Pond and Lanark, with almost 2,000 Bonies between them, was wonderful to see. Unfortunately, the Little Gull, which had been found a week earlier, wasn't among any of them. (Last year, two Little Gulls were found on this trip.) The only other Larid of note was a tern, undetermined to species, at Ogdens Pond. Gannets are reliably at this location at this time of year and were plunging into the waters only 100 meters away.

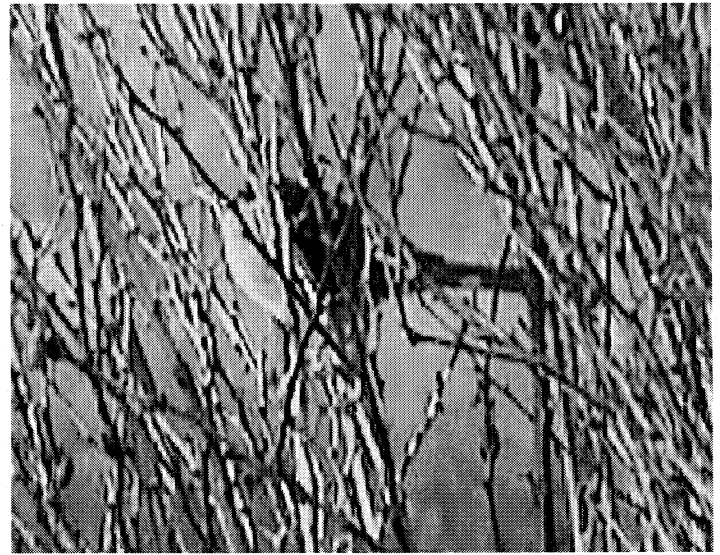
We only spent a small amount of time directly on the shores of the Northumberland as the wind, though not fierce, was annoying. Both loons and both seafaring grebes were found in small numbers, a few eiders, Surf Scoters and Red-breasted Mergansers were all we found off shore. A fly-by of a Northern Pintail was quite unexpected, and enlivening for the group. On the way back to town, a stop in Lakevale provided us with Bufflehead, Greater (and Lesser?) Scaup, and three Ruddy Ducks (down from the six that had been there earlier).

After the mandatory stop at Tim's, we went to Williams Point to walk down the railway track. This provides a good vantage point over the salt marsh at the upper end of Antigonish Harbour. We had a merganser slam here, with the highlight being several dozen Hoodies. Previous to this however, we found both a Pine and an Orange-crowned Warbler together in some alders. A third, unidentified (but different) warbler was seen on the return to the vehicles. This leg of the trip ended with us finding the drake Eurasian Wigeon, one of the birds staked out for this trip. A late Red-winged Blackbird was seen by a patient few.

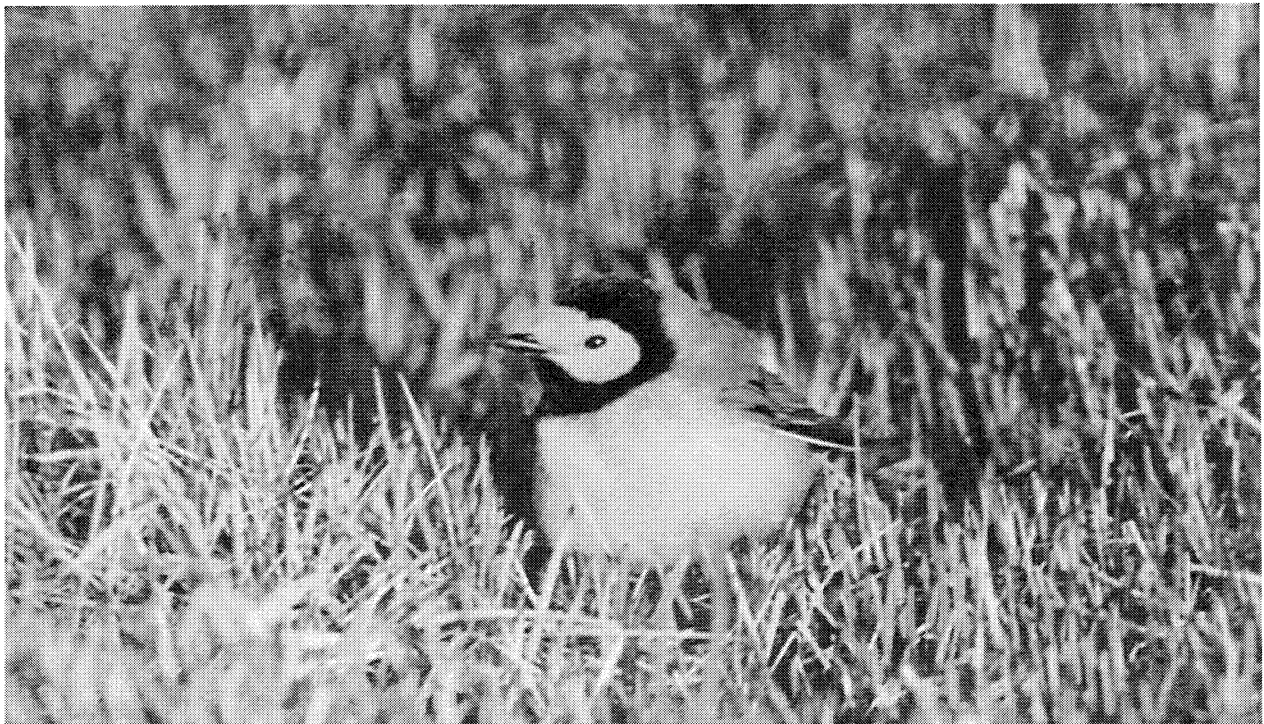
Overall, we had a fun trip with several people getting lifers, and a total of almost 50 species. □

Nova Scotian Rarities

By Ian McLaren



These two photos taken Dec. 4 as “video grabs” by Chris Majka, properly belonging in the next issue, covering the winter’s delights. However, the bird had been present for some time previously, although only identified that day by Blake Maybank as Nova Scotia’s first **MACGILLVRAY’S WARBLER**.



John Nickerson’s astonishingly early **HOODED WARBLER**, 29 March on The Hawk, CSI, last spring, was nicely photographed for the record.

Presidents Report

By Gisèle d'Entremont

I decided to organize this year's Annual Report under the two broad headings: Activities of the Executive and Activities of the Society as a whole. Because details of Executive meetings are not widely disseminated, it is important for members to receive an annual update, at least.

This year has been a busy, productive, and exciting year for our Executive.

Working with Ted D'Eon, we secured a \$4,000 grant from the Important Bird Areas (IBA) Community Action Fund to raise awareness of the endangered Roseate Terns, nesting on the Brothers Islands, off West Pubnico, in southwestern Nova Scotia. The project includes the installation of an interpretive panel on the mainland as well as school and community presentations about the importance of protecting this endangered species. The landowner, Richard Cunningham, has generously given permission for the use of the land, the access road, and the parking area. This project should be completed by the spring of 2001.

We have also participated in the development of IBA Conservation Plans for the Brothers Islands and the two Bird Islands, Ciboux and Hertford in Cape Breton. Ciboux is owned by the Province and Hertford is owned by our Society. The Bird Islands Conservation Plan has required continuing discussion with the Department of Natural Resources in regards to the value and ramifications of designating Hertford Island as part of a Wildlife Management Area. We have no resolution as yet but we continue to work on it.

In all these areas, we have been very fortunate to work with Roland Chiasson and Sabine Dietz, the Maritime IBA Community Conservation Planners, and look forward to our ongoing partnership.

The Executive has agreed to take on the leadership of a province-wide Piping Plover Guardianship Initiative. We have met with Etta Parker, Coordinator of the

Guardianship Program for many years; with Mark Elderkin, Department of Natural Resources; and with Diane Amirault and Andrew Boyne, Canadian Wildlife Service. We look forward to working closely with these individuals as well as with the network of guardians across the province. We will be establishing a committee to oversee this project and to explore accessing funds and resources to coordinate this effort.

In a more administrative vein, the Executive is exploring the possibility of developing an advertising policy for our magazine. Approximately 20% of our members responded to a questionnaire that appeared in the Spring issue of *Nova Scotia Birds*. Some 90% of the people who responded did not object to advertising. A number of people suggested that the advertising should be restricted to natural history themes. We are interested in feedback from our membership and will continue to inform you of our progress.

To get away from the Executive for a bit it is always interesting to review some of the many Society activities and key players in the past year. Our September meeting was on Brier Island. Richard Stern did a very interesting presentation on "Birding Brier Island". Carl Haycock organized this event as well as several field trip options. It was an enjoyable weekend of birding, connecting with friends and Society members. A special word of appreciation to Virginia and Ray Tudor of Brier Island Lodge for having generously offered the Society the use of the Lodge for our meeting. We will be looking for suggestions for another meeting place for next year.

The Society will once again co-sponsor a lecture series with the Museum of Natural History during the winter months of 2001. Joan Waldron, who did such a fine job last year, has continued to be our liaison with the Museum. Last year's series, "Seabirds of the Atlantic Provinces", was extremely well attended and provided a marvelous learning opportunity for our members and the

community. Look for a notice of this series in an upcoming issue of *Nova Scotia Birds* and in *Museum News*.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Nova Scotia Museum for their support to our Society over the years. We have again received a grant of \$2,000 to help with the publication of *Nova Scotia Birds*. We also benefit from other services that the Museum provides to support organizations interested in natural history. We look forward to our continued partnership in promoting the knowledge and conservation of birds within our province.

Field trips are a very important part of our Society's activities, educating new birders, introducing members to new birding areas, and facilitating networking and friendship within our membership. About 23 Society sponsored field trips were held throughout the province. A number of these were joint field trips with other naturalists groups; including Halifax Field Naturalists, South Shore Naturalists Club, Wild Flora Society, and the Blomidon Naturalists' Society. A word of appreciation to Fulton Lavender who has been our Field Trip Coordinator for the past two years. Peter Richard has agreed to take on this responsibility and has already organized the field trips for the upcoming winter months.

The Nature Travel Holidays birding tour to Cuba in April, 2000, with Blake Maybank as group leader, was very successful with wonderful accounts from our members who participated as well as a financial benefit to our organization. In 2001, Nature Travel Holidays is organizing a one-week trip to southern Manitoba, followed by an optional extension side trip to Churchill. There will be a notice in Autumn issue of *Nova Scotia Birds*.

Randy Lauff and his editorial team, together with Sterling Levy, have to be commended for their excellent work this year on our magazine. Randy is committed to the production of a

magazine that reflects the interests of our membership. In the spring, he took the initiative to send a questionnaire to members to determine readers' interests and suggestions. He is committed to having book reviews as a regular feature. We realize that there is a tremendous volunteer effort in the production of our publication, starting with individual member's bird sighting reports.

Each year, the Society presents a trophy to a member of the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia who wins the competition on bird photography. Lorris Keizer's slide of the Yellow Warbler, took first place. The slides from this competition are donated to our slide collection, which will be shown at Members' Slide Night in January. Thank you to Allan Covert for having been our representative on the selection panel for this competition.

Several individuals provide essential links to members as well as to the larger community. Marie Moverly maintains our membership list, and provides labels for our mailings. Marina and Peter LeBlanc looked after our Computer Bird Information Line last autumn, and Angus MacLean has taken over this responsibility since January, 2000. Joan Waldron and Peter Payzant have been responsible for answering email requests and inquiries over the year. Peter has continued to maintain our web page, and is our photographer for this evening.

There have been problems for a large part of this year with our Telephone Bird Information Line. This has been a major issue for our members, particularly for those members who do not rely on a computer. Recently this has been sorted out and a better service should be available this coming year. Shirley Cohrs has graciously offered to take on the re-establishment of the Rare Bird Alert. This is fitting since I understand that Shirley was the person who originally set up the Rare Bird Alert.

Andy Horn, our Vice President left in August with his family for a year's sabbatical in Australia. We value his contribution and look forward to his return and continued involvement on the Executive. Joan Czapalay has continued her good work as Membership Secretary. She is stepping down from this position but has agreed to stay on as Director. This will provide a helpful transition for the new Membership Secretary. Joan has been an effective liaison between our Society and the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists. Thank you to all these members.

I would like to express our appreciation to the Directors of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund; Ken Gregoire, David Currie, Shirley Cohrs, and Peter Bell for their involvement on this committee. David Currie has attended a number of our Executive meetings this

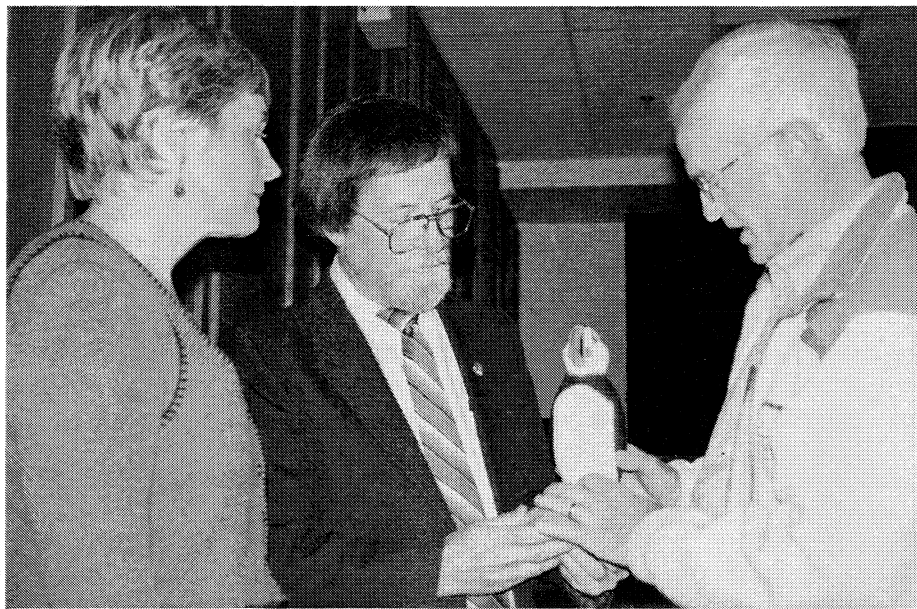
year and has been a very helpful link between the two committees as well as being a valuable resource to the Executive.

Also, David Currie and Judy Tufts have to be commended for their work in coordinating the Christmas Bird Counts and the North American Migration Count, respectively.

With the update complete, I want to thank some other individuals before we all head for the refreshments. I would like to express our sincere appreciation to our Honorary Solicitor, Mr. Tony Robinson and our Honorary Auditor, Mr. James Morrow. Many thanks to Chris Field for facilitating our monthly meetings; Ralph MacLean for carving the Puffin of the Year; Joan Waldron for looking after our slide collection; Peter Leblanc for looking after our mailings; Sylvia Fullerton for chairing our Nominating Committee; and Inez Roberts and her helpers for providing refreshments at our meetings.

I would personally like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the members of the Executive for their hard work and for their support over the past year.

Finally, I would like to thank Doug Roy and Eileen Billington for organizing tonight's Wine and Cheese. ☺



Gisèle d'Entremont, Azor Vienneau and Ralph MacLean (carver) admiring this year's Puffin carving. [Photo Peter Payzant]

NSBS Annual General Meeting - Minutes

October 26, 2000

By Peter Ackerman

President Gisèle d'Entremont called the meeting to order. After making one shift in the order of agenda items, she called for and received approval for the 1999 minutes (Peter Richard, Joan Waldron).

Business Arising

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Bernice Moores tabled the balance sheet and the income statement for the year ending Sept. 30, 2000.

Highlights included the welcome news that \$2,100 has been set aside for as yet undetermined special activities associated with the NSBS's 50th anniversary, and the determination that the costs of publication for our magazine have not changed significantly since the shift was made to the new format. The treasurer's report was adopted as presented (Peter Payzant, Linda Payzant).

Membership Report

Joan Czapalay reported September 30, 2000 totals of : Single – 269; Family – 112; Institution – 12; Exchange – 7; Total – 400. Overall, these figures confirm a drop of 22 from last year's total. With personal regret, and much to the regret of her colleagues, Joan announced her resignation as membership secretary.

Puffin of the Year Award

Gisèle presented this year's award to Azor Vienneau - a distinguished recipient to be sure - for many years of exceptional artistry and service.

NSBS Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund report

Ken Gregoire commented on the generally positive aspects of the year just gone. He underscored the increased awareness of SSTF activity in the Port Jolie area, the potential value of collaborating with DNR on a management plan for Hertford Island, and the mainly encouraging reports on bird populations directly related to SSTF holdings.

David Currie tabled the SSTF's financial statement for the year ending September 30, 2000. His report was accepted as tabled. (David Currie, Bernice Moores)

President's Report

Gisèle's detailed, comprehensive report covered a wide range of topics. It is reprinted in full elsewhere in this issue.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Sylvia Fullerton tabled the following slate of nominees for the 2001 NSBS Executive:



NSBS 2001 Executive: (L to R) Back row; David Currie, Peter Ackerman, Centre row; Joan Czapalay, Bernice Moores Front row; Peter Richard, Gisèle d'Entremont, Barbara Hinds. [Photo Peter Payzant]

President - Gisèle d'Entremont
 Vice-President - David Currie
 Treasurer - Bernice Moores
 Secretary - Peter Ackerman
 Membership Secretary - Mary McLaren
 Past President - Lise Bell
 Directors - Barbara Hinds, Peter Richard, Joan Czapalay
 Editor - Randy Lauff

Moved by Sylvia, seconded by Chris Field, nominations were approved.

New Business

Joan Waldron outlined the coming winter's lecture series at the NS Museum. Blake Maybank reported on last year's successful trip to Cuba.

Meeting adjourned. □

2000 Membership Report

By Joan Czapalay

Thank you all who have helped me with the task of being Membership Secretary. I offer my resignation with regret, as I have taken on other volunteer tasks which will require a great deal of time over the next couple of years. I especially thank Gisèle d'Entremont, our president for her encouragement and understanding; Marie Moverley, for her help in keeping the computer records updated; Peter LeBlanc for the mailing and keeping me supplied with issues to fill late renewals and Bernice Moores, our treasurer, who taught me many things about record keeping and who helped me keep the records balanced on a monthly basis. Our membership is down again for 2000, after a fairly good year in 1999. Our totals follow. I regret that we have been unable to recruit enough new members to balance the losses. All of us need to encourage interested people and feeder watchers to join us. We have been able to keep from increasing our fees in spite of rising costs, but we need more members, and we encourage our present members to renew as soon as possible.

Single	269
Family	112
Institutional	12
Exchange	<u>7</u>
Total	400

Once again it has been an honour for me to represent the NSBS on the Board of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists. I have accepted the position of vice-president for the coming year. All of us working together for protection of habitat and conservation can only benefit the birds. My best wishes to the new membership secretary, and once again thank you to all. □

Financial Reports

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

For the year ended September 30, 2000

(With comparative figures for the year ended September 30, 1999)

	<u>1999/00</u>	<u>1998/99</u>
Receipts		
Memberships	6,692	8,072
Sale of publications, etc.	343	1,178
Nova Scotia Museum grant	2,000	
Interest	984	649
Foreign exchange	214	383
Miscellaneous income	<u>138</u>	<u>2</u>
Total revenue	10,371	10,284
Disbursements		
Cost of publications and other items for sale	-	102
<i>Nova Scotia Birds</i>	5,781	5,636
Committees	561	661
Printing and stationery	64	60
Promotion	912	829
Insurance	250	250
Amortization	144	-
Miscellaneous expense	<u>62</u>	<u>78</u>
Total disbursements	7,774	7,616
Excess receipts over disbursements	2,597	2,668

Financial Reports

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET

As at September 30, 2000

(With comparative figures for the year ended September 30, 1999)

	<u>1999/00</u>	<u>1998/99</u>
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Bank accounts	1,856	814
Term deposits	25,000	18,000
Total cash	26,856	18,814
Accounts receivable	652	748
Prepaid expense	<u>331</u>	<u>172</u>
	983	920
Total current assets	27,839	19,734
Fixed assets		
Office equipment	<u>286</u>	<u>430</u>
Total assets	28,125	20,164
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable	1,312	1,648
CNF-IBA - Brother's Islands sign	<u>3,600</u>	<u> </u>
Total liabilities	4,912	1,648
Reserve	2,100	-
Members' equity		
Opening balance	18,516	15,848
Excess receipts over disbursements	<u>2,597</u>	<u>2,668</u>
Total members' equity	21,113	18,516
Liabilities and equity	28,125	20,164

G. d'Entremont, President

B. Moores, Treasurer

J. Morrow, Auditor

Book Review

By Joan Czapzlay

Birds of North America

Kenn Kaufman (with Rick Bowers, Nora Bowers and Lynn Hassler Kaufman)

Houghton Mifflin

Size matters. This smaller than most, modern field guide has a lot of information, "essential key points", and 2000 images in an easily portable book. Not many bird guidebooks can easily be carried in your pocket, but there are many available on North American birds. I wanted to ask, "Who is the intended audience of this compact guide, and does the book fulfil the needs of that audience?"

I had met Kenn and gone birding with him in southern Arizona, and knew him as a committed naturalist and willing teacher. In an article he wrote for *Birders' Digest* (July/August 2000) he explained that he wrote this field book to encourage people with a general interest in birds to learn more about them, so they would then "focus their attention on protecting habitat." Kenn Kaufman knows that there are a lot of excellent books available including his own *Advanced Birding* for those who wish to identify the *Empidonax* flycatchers by the differences in the bill shape. It is a reflection on the author's commitment to conservation that he wrote this book for the millions of hobby birders in the hope that it will help them connect species and habitat.

With audience in mind, I took the guide with me on several field trips this month. This guide does not follow taxonomic order. By turning my thoughts back twenty years, I remember how puzzling this biological organisation was to me. "Why weren't hawks and owls together?" Well here they are: "Birds of Prey". And there is a great little summary before each group of birds. Once a House Sparrow was a mystery bird for me. I could have checked to see where it fit. And there it is = just in front of North American sparrows. The grebes ("What are those things, anyway?"), alcids ("little penguins") and cormorants are called "Other Swimming Birds", and follow "Ducks, Geese and Swans". That makes sense. I would have especially liked the notes on the shorebirds with the illustrations on pages 156 and 157. Learning the relative sizes and shapes would have been very helpful then, and is so now. I like seeing the range maps (logically colour-coded: red for summer, blue for winter, purple for all year) on the same page as the write-ups, and facing the illustrations.

Many readers will prefer traditional illustrations, as in Peterson's (both Eastern and Western), National Geographic and the excellent new Sibley's Guides - four basic field guides which I think every birder will find useful. Some birders like photographs, such as in the Audubon Society Guides, and some seek out bird books with beautiful print illustrations, such as those by Fuyes, Pairpoint and Lansdowne. Some of Kaufman's digitally enhanced photographs irritated me. The differences between House Finch, Purple Finch and Cassin's Finch were minimalised; some warbler pages were too crowded; some shapes seemed distorted (such as the Bullock's Oriole). It is essential to read the text. Kenn Kaufman is careful...Greg Butcher, editor of *Birders' World* says, "[Kaufman] knows more about bird identification than almost anyone on the planet" (Dec. 2000). Read the notes on the Bay-breasted and Blackpoll Warblers for example, "...some fall Blackpolls have yellow legs." Useful to remember, as is much in this new guide.

The price is right, and so is the size. I recommend it to beginning birders and think all birders would find it a useful addition to their collection. □

1173 Beaufort Ave.
Halifax, NS B3H3Y3
joancz@ns.sympatico.ca

Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held in Lunenburg June 1-3, 2000. The program will include coastal birdwalks, presentations on protecting special places (Gaff Point at Kingsburg, the proposed South West Nova Biosphere Reserve), gold mining, and cold water corals. The meeting will be hosted by the South Shore Naturalists. More information will be available in the next issue. □

Country Island 2000

In the summer of 2000, I was lucky enough to be one of the researchers working for the Canadian Wildlife Service on Country Island! The island is located about 6 km southeast of Drumhead, Guysborough County and is a breeding ground for Roseate, Arctic and Common Terns, as well as Leach's Storm-Petrels, Common Eiders, Willets, Red-breasted Mergansers, Spotted Sandpipers, Savannah Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Tree Swallows and Barn Swallows. After looking under what seemed like hundreds of boulders on a very rocky shore, I was able to add Black Guillemots to the list!



A newly hatched Common Tern chick. Nearby, sibling is pipping (about to hatch).



An adult Great Black-backed Gull soon to have its bill measured.
[Photos by Author]

The island is one of three main breeding sites in Canada for the endangered Roseate Tern. In 1996, depredation by gulls and corvids resulted in nearly complete breeding failure of 45 Roseate Terns. The following year, only one pair of Roseates and fewer than half of the 460 pairs of Common and Arctic Terns attempted to breed on the island. The Canadian Wildlife Service, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and researchers from Dalhousie University have been operating a tern restoration program on the island since 1998 to decrease predation and increase tern numbers. Non-lethal methods are used to deter predators from nesting on the island and so far the program seems to be working! I am happy to report that in 2000, 957 tern nests were found, including 53 Roseate nests! Common Eiders also seemed to have benefited from the program since at least 80 nests were found in 2000, and more ducklings were seen than in any previous year!

Predator control on Country Island has decreased gull numbers dramatically; however, gulls took more chicks in 2000 than in the two previous years of gull control. The increased level of predation may be due to more foggy days than in previous years. Gulls will often take advantage of foggy weather to enter tern colonies and much of the predation observed on the island was on days such as these. However, given that there were almost twice as many nests this year than last, the impact of extra predation is likely small.

Aside from predator control, research on Country Island included monitoring tern nesting success and tern chick feeding rates. Hatching success and productivity exceeded pre-control levels. For Arctic, Common and Roseate Terns, hatching success was 1.6, 1.9 and 1.3 eggs per nest, while productivity was 1.3, 1.1 and 1.0 chicks fledged per nest, respectively.

Principal diet for all terns was White Hake and American Sandlance. Atlantic Herring, Three-spined Stickleback, Pollock and Euphausiids were also consumed. Feedings per chick per hour were 1.12 for Arctic Terns, 0.80 for Common Terns and 1.00 for Roseate Terns.

On a different note, my time spent on Country Island was rather interesting. I lived in a house with no electricity or running water. It was therefore necessary to use an outhouse. This was wonderful in the daytime when a great view of the ocean could be seen from your bathroom, but at night it was a downright scary event! You see, an estimated 30,000 pairs of Leach's Storm-Petrels nest on Country Island. These birds spend their days at sea feeding and return to their burrows late in the evening. Petrels are the sweetest little birds, but utterly clumsy! All you could hear at night, besides their hyena-like sounds, is *Kerplunk Boooooom!* The poor little fellas would fly smack into the trees, fall to the ground and wobble to their burrows! Needless to say, it was quite the adventure getting to the outhouse at night. For some reason, cute as they are, I couldn't help being weirded out by the sounds they make!

The terns, Willets and Savannah Sparrows were also quite the characters! I couldn't walk into the tern colony without wearing a hard helmet for fear of being knocked out! I was continuously heckled by those noisy Willets and, whichever way I looked, the Savannah Sparrows were engaged in ferocious battle! At least the eiders were quite docile!



A fifteen day old tern chick who believes he is hiding from predators (Me in that case!)

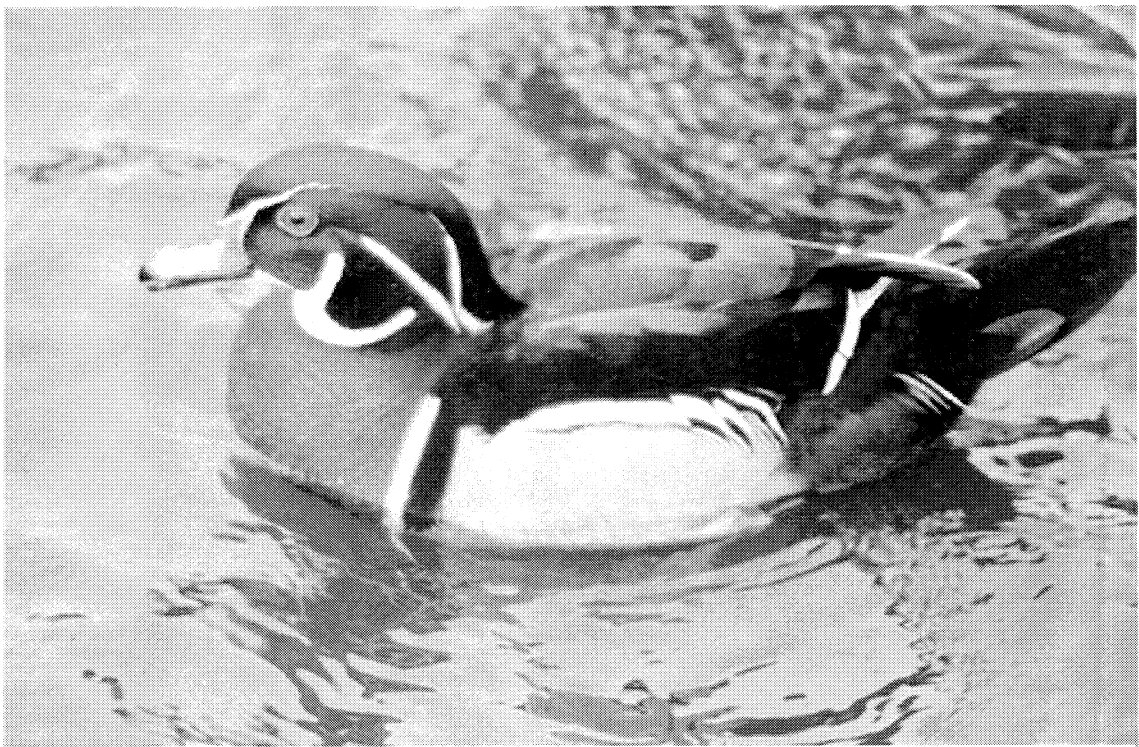


Terns "dreading" (practicing for migration) at sunset. [Photos by Author]

The terns invaded my sanity in more ways than one. Many nights I would awaken in fear that I would roll over and injure one of the terns that were nesting in my bed. It would take me nearly a minute to realize that I was on the second story of a house and that this was just not possible!

I am delighted that I was given the opportunity to work on Country Island, and for such a great cause! Not everyone gets a chance to say that they were involved in enhancing the breeding success of an endangered species! It seems like only yesterday that I left the island and, in a few months, my little bird friends will be returning to nest. I wonder how they will do in 2001? ☐

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WOODDUCK [Photo John MacInnis]

Visible Migration - A View From Brier Island

By Eric Mills

The long weekend of November 10th to 13th, 2000 was very stormy on Brier Island, with constant strong to gale force winds out of due north and patchy drizzle and mist. There were no rarities, but instead a very impressive movement of a few land bird species, notably Robins, Grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds and Sharp-shinned Hawks (how can eastern Canada hold so many? - it seems to be Brier Island's most common migrant). Small flocks of the passerine species were in constant movement, especially in the early morning, appearing from the north or northeast at Northern Point and apparently leaving the island, to be replaced by others within a few minutes. Frequent habitués of Brier and Seal Island will be familiar with such days in late fall, when the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland appear to be emptying themselves of common breeding species.

On the sea too, birds were on the move. Loons, both Red-throated and Common, went by, in ones and twos, and Gannets, nearly all adults, were very active offshore in the high winds. Kittiwakes were even more abundant, even going through Grand Passage in small groups and feeding just off the ferry wharf. There were not many alcids - the winter population of Black Guillemots had not arrived yet, and Murres were scarce - but a lone Dovekie startled me by shooting like a bullet out of the interior of the island trying to regain the sea in Grand Passage.

The most dramatic and noteworthy happenings took place on Monday morning the 13th between about 1030 and 1200 while I was seawatching at Western Light. After a few minutes of watching Gannets and Kittiwakes, I became aware that all the action was behind me, over the land. Sharp-shinned Hawks began to build up over the area between Lighthouse Hill (known to some informally as "Hawk Hill") and Whipple Point, along with four Red-tailed Hawks, ten Turkey Vultures, and four Harriers. Although some of the Sharp-shins stayed, significant numbers began to drift off by ones and twos to the southwest, over the sea, until they disappeared into the mist and low cloud. At one time there were 35 Sharp-shins in the air at once, although I had seen none on the island earlier in the morning; they were arriving from the NE, apparently down Digby Neck and Long Island, following the island, and then faced the problem of leaving over water or staying on the island. Many chose to leave, on a course that, combining wind-drift and flight direction, would take them to southern Maine, or possibly to Cape Cod.

Smaller birds were on the move too. Two large flocks of blackbirds, mainly Grackles and a few Red-wings, circled over the meadow near the lighthouse, gained altitude, and headed off to the southwest. As I watched them, a pair of Harriers (adult male and female) soared out over the ocean from just south of the lighthouse, circled several times, and headed southwest across the Gulf of Maine. Then, four Great Blue Herons appeared low over Whipple Point, as though they had just taken off from the Pond Cove area, circled at least a dozen times just offshore gaining altitude, and disappeared high into the mist, also going southwest. And finally, a flock of 25 Crows flew down the island, settled restlessly in the trees at the base of Lighthouse Hill, got up after a few minutes, circled in a ragged flock over the meadow south of the lighthouse, gained altitude, and headed resolutely for Maine. Throughout, small flocks of Robins (10 to 30 birds) were passing over going the same way.

This dramatic diurnal migration took a while to build up, apparently because the birds had taken a while to reach Brier Island. Nothing like the numbers I saw in late morning had been evident earlier. And although I had seen a flock of Robins arrive on the island from the northwest a couple of days before, there was no evidence of any migrants coming from that direction on the 13th. Instead, they appeared to be coming from the northeast, along the Nova Scotian mainland, until they reached the sea at the south end of Brier Island. From there, many just kept going into the mist and cloud across the water, and all on the same course toward the U.S. mainland. Throughout, the wind was from the north, an unusual situation for such an extended period, rather than the cycle we normally expect in fall of a northeaster followed by northwest winds and clearing. This was a stable, albeit unusual, wind direction, and clearly birds in very large numbers were taking advantage of it.

Most of us are accustomed to seeing the results of migration - the arrival overnight of new species or enhanced numbers of common residents. Our offshore islands periodically give us the opportunity for new kinds of observations, notably the arrivals and departures in daylight of a wide range of species. In more than thirty years of birding in this province, the events on Brier Island were the most dramatic evidence of diurnal migration that I have seen. But events like this can't be all that rare; they depend on the combination of the right weather conditions and the presence of a birder. Southwestern Nova Scotian islands prove, once again, to be the right place for nature to provide an impressive spectacle and for us to document bird migration. □

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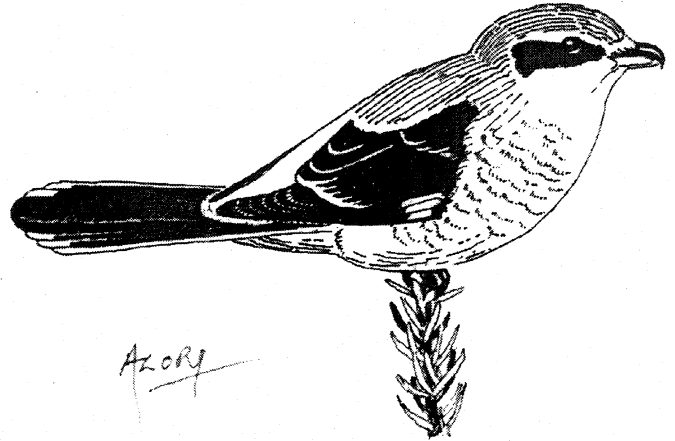
Book Review

SHRIKES AND BUSH-SHRIKES

By Tony Harris, Illustrated by Kim Franklin.

Princeton University Press.

Ever since learning about shrikes, I've always had just a bit more than a passing interest in them. My beginning years as a birder were spent in Alberta where two species live; here in Nova Scotia, we wait with anticipation for our one winter visitor, the Northern Shrike (known to the rest of the Anglophone world as the Great Grey Shrike). One of the first things learned when this book is opened is that shrike diversity explodes in the old world (though interestingly, none are in Australia, one of the alleged evolutionary homes of this family). In fact, of the 114 species covered in this book (including both True Shrikes, family Laniidae and Bush-Shrikes, family Malaconotidae), only one (the Loggerhead Shrike) is endemic to North America.



In 1997, Yale University Press published *Shrikes: A Guide to Shrikes of the World* by Norbert Lefranc, illustrated by Tim Worfolk. Since I had access to this book, I thought comparing the two in this review would be quite useful. The scope of Lefranc's book is more limited, it only covers the 31 species of the True Shrikes.

Both books are set up similarly, that is after an introductory section, a series of colour plates is used to present paintings of each species; following the plates is the text section. While this approach does not work well with field guides, it does work well for in-house books and has been adopted in many publications, from Harrison's *Seabirds: An Identification Guide* (Houghton Mifflin, 1985) to Madge and Burn's *Crows and Jays* (Helm, 1994). The basic difference in the layout of the section between the two shrike books is the position of the maps. In Harris' book, small colour maps are on the facing page to each plate; Lefranc has medium to large black and white maps incorporated into the text. I did not find the lack of colour in the latter's maps a bother at all.

Both books include a diagram illustrating the topography of a shrike. Rarely are these done well in any book, and neither of these is an exception. Both fall into the same trap of using pointers to label an area. There is never any definition of where two areas meet. Use a Sibley guide for this purpose, it has the only well labelled topographical diagrams that I've seen.

The paintings tend to be larger in Lefranc's book, but not as realistic as what one sees in Harris'. In addition, the inclusion of habitat with some of the species makes for more aesthetically pleasing plates in Harris' book. Multiple plumages are frequently shown in both books, though a higher proportion of species in Lefranc's book are shown in flight.

The text is very thorough in both books, with about 10 subheadings ranging from *Identification* to *Breeding Biology* addressed for each species. Harris' is better organized and covers behaviours, especially vocalisations, in greater detail. Lefranc's text is supplemented with line drawings of the birds or plumage details. An interesting note about Harris' book is that it includes a bird called the Bulu Burti Boubou (that *is* its common name!). This species is known from only one specimen (released) of unknown sex.

Both of these are really quite good books. If you really like shrikes, you may lean towards Harris' book because it covers more species, has better paintings and covers behaviour more thoroughly. Lefranc's book is two-thirds the cost, has better maps, and larger paintings. □

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NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
Membership Application/Renewal Form

Membership in the Nova Scotia Bird Society is open to all. The membership fee includes a subscription to *Nova Scotia Birds*. Application for membership assumes that you have read and agreed to the waiver below. Membership runs from January to December. Rates are:

Individual: \$15/year, for _____ years \$ _____
 Family: \$18/year, for _____ years \$ _____
 Institutional: \$25/year, for _____ years \$ _____
 Life: \$375 \$ _____
 Additional for Foreign Addresses:
 \$2/year, for _____ years \$ _____
 Fed. of NS Naturalists:
 \$5/year, for _____ years \$ _____
Membership Total: \$ _____

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

Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund Donation: \$ _____

NSBS Supplies
 The following items are available to members:

Gift Memberships:
 An excellent way to mark a special occasion! List recipient's name and mailing address on a separate sheet or on the back of this form.

NSBS crests @ \$4 each \$ _____
 NSBS decals @ \$1 each \$ _____
 Bird Checklist @ Four for \$1 \$ _____
 Birding Nova Scotia @ \$5 each \$ _____

Number of Gift Memberships: _____

Gift Memberships Total: \$ _____

Supplies Total: \$ _____

Total Enclosed: (Make cheque payable to N. S. Bird Society) \$ _____

Name: _____
 First Name Mid. Initial(s) Last Name

Renewal

Additional Name(s): _____

Address: _____

 _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

I WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP WITH: Leading Bird Walks
 Hospitality Magazine Publicity Leading School Group
 Conservation Other _____

In signing this membership application I/we hereby waive and release the Nova Scotia Bird Society, its executive committee and members from all claims for injury and/or damage suffered at any function or field trip organized by the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

Signature: _____

Mail to:

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

Upcoming Events



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

Ideas and suggestions for future trips are welcome. You do not need to be an expert to lead a field trip, and the trip does not need to last all day; you just need to share your favourite birding spots. Any questions, comments or suggestions should be directed to the Events Editor, Peter Richard 221-5366. Email: prichard@ns.sympatico.ca

Thu 22 Feb. 2001. Regular Meeting

NSMNH, Summer St., Halifax, 7:30 p.m.

"Dancing in mud: ecology and conservation of shorebirds in the Bay of Fundy." Guest speaker: Dr. J. Sherman Boates, Manager, Biodiversity, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources

Thu 22 Mar. 2001. Regular Meeting

NSMNH, Summer St., Halifax, 7:30 p.m.

"The history and current status of the Peregrine Falcon Recovery program in the Bay of Fundy." Guest speaker: Diane Amirault, Lead biologist for the Canadian Wildlife Service's Species at Risk Program in Atlantic Canada.

Sat 31 Mar. 2001 - Baccaro and Blanche Peninsula.

Leader: Donna Ensor 875-4269. Email: ensorg@auracom.com

Early Spring birding with Donna. Rarities have shown up here quite often at this time of year. Dress warmly and bring a lunch. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot opposite the exit to Port Clyde. Rain date: Sunday, 1 Apr.

Sat 14 Apr. 2001 - Martinique Beach.

Leader: Ian McLaren 429-7024. Email: iamclar@is.dal.ca

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Scotia Bank parking lot, Bridge Plaza, Dartmouth. Look for early migrants as well as possible rarities. Bring a lunch. Note: This trip is always the first Saturday after Easter.

Thu 26 Apr. 2001. Regular Meeting

NSMNH, Summer St., Halifax, 7:30 p.m.

"The Canadian Lakes Loon Survey: an Atlantic Canada Perspective." Becky Whittam, Atlantic Canada Program Manager, Bird Studies Canada/Etudes d'Oiseaux Canada, Sackville, NB

Sun 29 Apr. 2001 - Wolfville Area

Leader: Jim Wolford 542-7650

Email: jww.triv@ns.sympatico.ca

Pond hopping for ducks and early migrants. Meet at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre, Front St., Wolfville, at 10 a.m. This will be a joint field trip with the Blomidon Naturalists Society. No registration necessary. Bring a lunch.

Sat 5 May 2001 - Cape Sable Island

Murray Newell 745-3340. Email: murcar@klis.com

Meet at the Tim Horton's in Barrington Passage at 8:00 a.m. Murray Newell will lead a field trip birding Cape Sable Island for migrants. Bring proper footwear and a lunch if you wish.

12 May 2001. North American Migration Count.

Judy Tufts 542-7800. Email: tandove@ns.sympatico.ca

See information elsewhere in this issue.

19 May 2001 - Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary.

Leaders: Terry Paquet. Email terrypaquet@hotmail.com

Andrew MacFarlane (506) 364-9188

Email andrew.macfarlane@ec.gc.ca

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the APBS parking lot. Take exit 3 from the TCH 104 at the Wandlyn Inn and proceed a few km toward Nappan. The entrance is on the left. Wear appropriate footwear for wet conditions and bring a lunch.

Thu 24 May 2001. Regular Meeting

NSMNH, Summer St., Halifax, 7:30 p.m.

"Ecotouring and Birding in Costa Rica and Trinidad"

Guest speaker: Jim Wolford.

*- Ken McAdama
Cuba.*

26 May 2001- Annapolis Royal/Belleisle

Leader: Sharon Hawboldt 665-4105.

Email: s.hawboldt@ns.sympatico.ca

Meet at the Tidal Power parking lot at 7:30 a.m. to tour the Mickey Hill Pocket Wilderness, have lunch at my place in Belleisle, and hike the marsh in the afternoon. Anyone wishing to come for the afternoon only could meet the group in the parking lot at the Belleisle Marsh. Bring lunch, fly repellent, and wear appropriate footwear

27 May 2001- Shubenacadie Area

Leader: Roslyn McPhee (902) 758-3265.

Meet at Miller's Restaurant in Shubenacadie at 7 a.m. Bring a lunch and insect repellent. Warblers and woodpeckers are common on this trip. □