

Nova Scotia Birds

A Quarterly Publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society



Summer 2002
(The Birds of Spring)



NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

Executive 2002-2003

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Formed in 1955, the Nova Scotia Bird Society is a member of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists and 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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Winter 2003 issue: Dec. 7, 2002

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Summer 2003 issue: June 7, 2003

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- Atlantic Bird Observatory
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Cover Photo: RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD. An entry in the 1993 PGNS / NSBS Slide Competition [Photo Alan Covert]

NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS
SUMMER 2002

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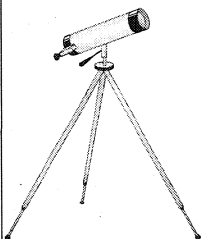
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The Spotting Scope



An explosion of lemons! That was my impression when I chanced to look at my feeder from the dining room window and saw American Goldfinches flying in all directions. Undoubtedly, the reason was another unsuccessful attack by the local Sharp-shinned Hawk. I don't mind the hawk at all...I don't necessarily *like* seeing a kill made at my feeder (which has only been twice in ten years), but I do realize that this wonderful bird must also eat, and raise its family. Many questions arise from this incident...was this the same Sharpie that was around all winter, which was then adorned in juvenile plumage? How does its plumage change throughout the year, and throughout the years? What route did it take to migrate, and where did it spend its winter? Was it originally from here?

Although to some, banding is considered an unnecessary part of ornithology, the answers derived from banding birds can clarify conservation issues, teach us basics about bird biology, and yes, make us better birders. Banders work long hours, often as volunteers, and may band hundreds of birds in a season. I imagine that the excitement that erupts when a mega-tick is collected from the nets is akin to the excitement of discovering a rarity during a day's birding. Michael Peckford of the Atlantic Bird Observatory had such a day this spring when he retrieved Nova Scotia's second-ever Swainson's Warbler. His account of this event is in this issue.

Although rarities are wonderful events at the Atlantic Bird Observatory, they are of similar importance as rarities on Christmas Bird Counts, exciting in and of themselves... but not nearly as useful as the trends observed in the more common species. Trina Fitzgerald has provided us with a panoramic view of the roles of the Atlantic Bird Observatory, and how the data, on these mostly common species, are both gathered and used.

Something has always bothered me about banding operations...if the whole point of the matter is to *catch* the birds, why do they use *mist* nets?

Good Birding!

Good Birding!

Randy

P.S. With this issue we see the last contribution of Peter Richard as Events Editor. I'd like to thank him for his work, and invite anyone interested in working on this magazine to the task. In the meantime, please send your trip and event announcements and trip reports to me directly (if you post your trip report to the internet, please forward me a copy as well). I'd also like to thank Richard Stern for twice now coming to our aid when one of our regular Seasonal Editors had to take leave. Again, I'm always looking for people who are interested in writing Seasonal Reports for us, if you're up for the task, please let me know!

P.S.S. I'm still backlogged with book reviews - if you've submitted one, please be patient... it will be published.

News from the Nova Scotia Coastal Guardian Program

By Anna McCarron
Program Co-ordinator



Piping Plovers are having a difficult time this year, especially on the South Shore. The recovery of this species depends on a successful nesting season. So far, it hasn't been very productive in this area. These birds began nesting on our Nova Scotia beaches in April and May. Of 61 nests found and monitored (monitoring is allowed only for those issued permits from the Canadian Wildlife Service) throughout Nova Scotia, at least 31 have been lost, mostly from the Shelburne area! Most of these nest losses have been due to predators such as crows and rodents or by high storm tides that have washed out their nests. But because Piping Plovers may nest a second or even a third time, all is not lost! The good news is, as I write, there are chicks in many areas of the province, even in Shelburne County where most of the nest losses have taken place. Based on reports from the monitoring crew of the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, Parks Canada and Nova Scotia Coastal Guardians, I have included an unofficial tally of Piping Plover numbers in Nova Scotia. However, due to the high instance of bird movement from beach to beach this season, some of the birds included in this tally may have been counted twice.

Pairs	Adults	Nests	Nests Lost	Nesting Success (# nests hatched out)	Chicks
52	120	61	31	17	54

Although many of the birds are on their second or third nesting attempt, the later the nesting season goes, the less likelihood for success. Therefore, Piping Plovers need our help more than ever this season. Here's how we can all help:

If you are going to a Piping Plover beach (which are well-marked with signs) in June, July, and August, please remember:

- Walk below the high water line (indicated by seaweed lining the shore) close to the water.
- Please do not walk along or in the dunes.
- Please respect the posted signs and keep away from nesting and feeding areas. Do not succumb to curiosity and peek into fenced areas or enclosures. This not only *extremely* disturbs the birds, but “smart” predators may follow human scents to these areas looking for an opportunistic meal. By walking below the high water mark, predators are not attracted to critical nesting areas. Viewing the birds from a tolerable distance with a binocular or scope can be very rewarding. Nest exchanges, interesting feeding behaviours and copulation are common sights, but only when the birds are left undisturbed.
- Please, please keep your dog on a leash and out of the areas indicated above. Plovers view dogs (and humans) as predators. They will leave their nests when predators are near (exposing the eggs), and chicks will stop feeding until they are long gone (losing valuable feeding time before they fly south in August and September).
- Please do not drive vehicles on the beach. Obviously vehicles can crush nests and chicks, but vehicle noise causes plovers to react the way they do for predators.
- Put your own and others' litter in its place – in a trash or recycling can. Litter attracts crows, gulls, racoons and other predators to where Piping Plovers nest, contributing to egg and chick loss.

- **Report any deliberate harassment or harm caused to this endangered species or its habitat to 1-800-565-2224. The more reports received, the more enforcement officers will be directed to the problem areas.**

If you observe an adult Piping Plover that is behaving as if it has a broken wing, displaying head bobbing or vocalizing, you are likely very near a nest or young chicks. Move to the water's edge and observe Piping Plovers through binoculars. By working together we can help recover this species.

On that note, I would like to welcome aboard all the new guardians who have joined the effort this season! Through the Guardian gatherings held in May, and this magazine, over a dozen new guardians have signed up this season. Their dedication and effort to help protect the Piping Plover is greatly appreciated!

With so much beach ground to cover in the Shelburne area, the six volunteer guardians and four part-time Cape Sable Island Coastal Guardian staff, Emma Nickerson, Joyce Milroy, Rachel Cossaboom, and Tiffany Comley are very busy trying to keep up with the numbers of plovers that need protection there. If you are in the area, please take a moment to visit the Welcome Centre, in the Little Red Schoolhouse, on the corner of The Hawk and the Lower Clarks Harbour roads. The centre's knowledgeable staff and the descriptive material found there will provide you with all sorts of information about the variety of birds found in the area. If you would like to lend a hand to help protect the Piping Plover and its habitat, the Welcome Centre staff would be very willing to outfit and train you to help.

Wherever you are, if you are interested in being a Coastal Guardian please contact me at (902) 860-1263 or email: plover@istar.ca, or write to 19 Thompson Drive, Wellington, NS B2T 1J4. Thank you for taking care this summer and by doing your part to help protect the Piping Plover! ☺

Etta Parker Honoured



At this year's Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists Conference, Etta Parker was honoured for her years of service to the Piping Plover Guardian Program. She was presented with a piping plover carving by Dianne Amirault of Canadian Wildlife Services and a Certificate of Appreciation by the Nova Scotia Bird Society. From left to right Anna McCarron Program Coordinator for the Nova Scotia Coastal Guardian Program, Etta Parker, Joan Czupalay FNSN Chair. [Photo S. Levy]

Wanted: Editor for *Nova Scotia Birds*

It has been my great pleasure to serve as Editor of *Nova Scotia Birds* over the past few years. However, the time has come for me to step down from the position, and pursue other interests. I intend to stay involved with the magazine, albeit in a much lower capacity.

Now though, the Society must find a new person or persons to take on the task, to start sometime within the next few issues. I will be available for consultation with the new editor. The ideal person would have great interpersonal skills (you will be working with a wonderful team of about a dozen volunteers), basic computer skills (email and word processing) and be able to maintain a schedule.

Interested people are requested to send a notice of interest to the Society's president, Andy Horn at: aghorn@is.dal.ca or 846 Bridges St., Halifax, N.S. B3H 2Z7. Any questions regarding the position can be directed to me at: rlauff@stfx.ca or (902) 867-2471.

Randy

Report of the Nominating Committee

The following have agreed to serve on the Executive for 2002-2003, if elected at the NSBS Annual General Meeting on Thursday, October 24, 2002:

President	Andy Horn	The following have agreed to serve for 2002-2003, if appointed at the NSBS AGM :	
Vice President	David Currie	Honorary Solicitor	Tony Robinson
Past President	Gisèle d'Entremont	Honorary Auditor	Harold Forsyth
Treasurer	Bernice Moores	The Editor in Chief of <i>Nova Scotia Birds</i> (appointed by the Executive) is a de facto member of the Executive.	
Secretary	Mary McLaren	Further nominations from the floor will be accepted at the AGM.	
Membership Secretary	Eileen and Bill Billington		
Director	Joan Czupalay		
Director	Barbara Hinds		
Director	Suzanne Borkowski		

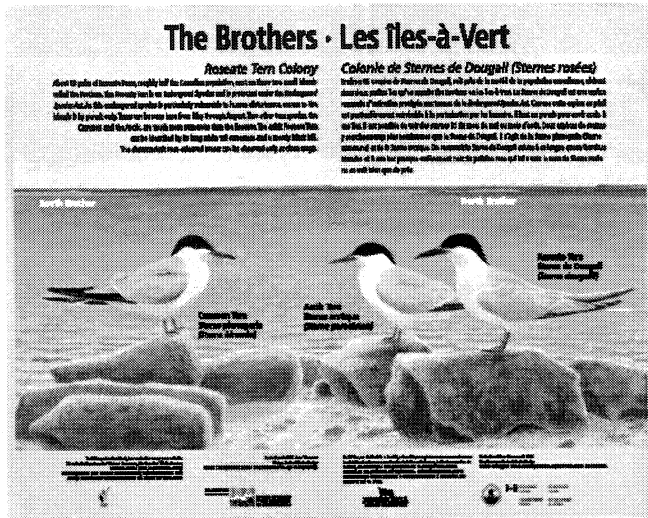
Gisèle d'Entremont - Chair

Executive Seeks Feedback on Your Educational Work

One of the main purposes of the Nova Scotia Bird Society is education. To improve the society's efforts on that front, the executive would like to hear from any members who have given talks, led walks, or done any similar educational activities about birds over the past year, outside of our usual slate of monthly meetings and field trips. Not only would we like to have a better feel for who's out there doing such work, but we'd also like suggestions for how we can help such efforts, for example through providing resources, like bird books, demo feeders, and the like, or by offering some other kind of logistical help. You can relay the information through any member of the executive, by writing to the Society's address at the museum, or by sending an email to aghorn@is.dal.ca or a note to Andy Horn, 846 Bridges St., Halifax, N.S. B3H 2Z7. Thanks!

The Brothers' New Sign

By Ted d'Eon



The Brothers sign.

On Sunday, April 28, the long-awaited interpretive panel for the tern colony of The Brothers was officially unveiled. The undertaking of the project occurred through the sponsorship of the Important Bird Area (IBA) with sub-sponsorship by the Nova Scotia Bird Society. Many people have volunteered their time and expertise in helping us with the project which proved to be a much greater undertaking than I had foreseen.

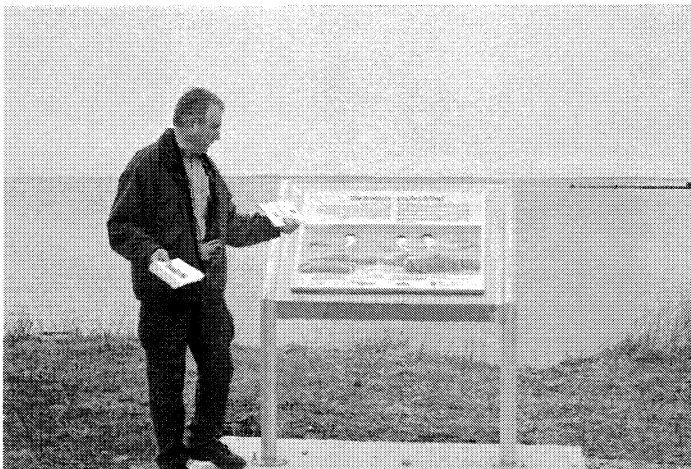
First and foremost, the illustration was painted by the well-known Nova Scotia artist, Azor Vienneau; Azor donated his artwork to the NSBS for the project. The panel depicts the three tern species in its foreground with The Brothers in the background. Members of the NSBS, Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (NSDNR) donated their time to help me with the text which was then translated into French by the CWS. The graphic layout was by Burke and Burke Graphic Design of Halifax with feedback from Gisèle d'Entremont and Peter Richard of the NSBS, and myself; Burke and Burke also donated their time and expertise.

The funds from IBA covered the expenses for having the illustration digitally scanned for use by Burke and Burke, the construction of the panel by Atlantex Creative Works, the aluminum stand and the concrete base upon which it has been attached, and the fill required to improve the access road and parking area.

The IBA program is an international initiative co-ordinated by Bird Life International, a partnership of member-based organizations in over 100 countries seeking to identify and conserve sites important to all bird species world-wide. Through the protection of birds and habitats, they also promote the conservation of the world's biodiversity. There are currently IBA programs in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas.

The Canadian Bird Life International co-partners are the Canadian Nature Federation and Bird Studies Canada. The Canadian IBA program is part of the Americas IBA program which includes the United States, Mexico, and 17 countries in Central and South America. In the Maritimes, the partners are the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists, the Nova Scotia Federation of Naturalists and the Prince Edward Island Natural History Society.

The Brothers have the largest population of Roseate Terns (*Sterna dougallii*) in Canada. The islands are also home to Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) and Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*); many biologist believe they also need further protection because of their declining numbers. In 1998, the Roseate Tern was declared an Endangered Species by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada (COSEWIC).



(L) Ted D'Eon after the unveiling. (R) With Azor Vienneau and the original artwork used for the sign. [Photos Judy O'Brien]

Roseate Tern nest numbers have increased from 20 in 1991 to 86 in 2000. In 2001 the number had decreased to 70 even though the total number of tern nests (all three species) had increased to almost 900. See the websites below for more detailed information. The Brothers still have, by far, the most stable and largest Roseate Tern Colony in Canada, and this year, the numbers so far are 83 nests with at least 39 chicks.

I have personally been involved for over 20 years as a self-appointed steward of these islands' tern colony. Working under the direction of CWS and the wildlife division of the NSDNR, I have been conducting nest and chick counts as well as general tern observation. In 1982, Roseate Terns were first identified as nesting on The Brothers. I was asked to join the Roseate Tern Recovery Team in the late 1980's. Since then, I have been placing Roseate Tern nesting shelters on the islands and monitoring their use.

This is a good time to mention a bit of the history about The Brothers and their local name, les îles-à-Vert. Marine charts for over 200 years referred to these islands as the "Twin Islands". The recent charts list them as "The Brothers". One or both of these tiny islands about a kilometre to the west of Lower West Pubnico were at one time owned by a Mr. Bradford Greene. People being people, and the colour green being easily translated into French with the word "vert", the islands soon became known as "les îles-à-Vert", meaning essentially, "the islands belonging to Mr. Greene". This was in the 1700's and it still remains today to most of the villagers of West Pubnico.

Aside from the inevitable awareness and education of the locals and tourists alike to the terns and to the tern colony of The Brothers, it is my hope that the panel will complement the other tourist attractions of the area as a destination point. These include Le Village historique acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse (Historical Acadian Village of Nova Scotia), the Musée Acadien, the local wharves and other tourist attractions of the Pubnico area including the local people.

ted@ns.sympatico.ca

<http://pages.ca.inter.net/~deonted/tern01.html>

<http://pages.ca.inter.net/~deonted/tern02.html>

Editor's note: For his tireless work in education, research and conservation of the Roseate Terns, Ted d'Eon was awarded the Puffin of the Year Award in 1996. ☘



This fine portrait of a PURPLE SANDPIPER, wintering at Port George, Ann. Co., on the Fundy coast, was secured Mar. 1 by "digiscoping," which seems certain to produce great photos for this journal in coming years. [Photo Richard Stern]

Monitoring Migration in Atlantic Canada: A Profile of the Atlantic Bird Observatory

By: Trina M. Fitzgerald¹

Population declines of many landbird species over the past thirty years have caused concern that numbers of some species are becoming critically low. Several research programs and surveys are dedicated to monitoring populations of these birds, but there are critical limitations to what they address. For example, many surveys do not adequately monitor populations of species that nest in roadless areas. In response to these shortfalls, the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network was established by Bird Studies Canada to be a nationwide program that aims to expand knowledge of the status of Canadian landbirds by monitoring their populations during migration. The network consists of field stations, from selected locations across Canada, which simultaneously monitor migratory bird species.

The Atlantic Bird Observatory was established in 1995, in part, from a recognised need to establish a long-term migration-monitoring site for the Canadian Atlantic coast. Before 1995, there was only limited (temporally), long-term effort directed towards monitoring our populations of migratory landbirds in the Atlantic region. After a successful pilot project in 1995, the Atlantic Bird Observatory (ABO) established two field stations; one on Seal Island (SI) and one on Bon Portage Island (BP) in southwestern Nova Scotia.

The ABO employs a standardised monitoring methodology consisting of regular netting, 90-minute fixed-route censuses and casual observations. Having multiple means of gathering data is extremely important because the combined effort provides the clearest picture of the number of individuals which are passing through a monitoring station at any given time. Certain species, such as thrushes, are very secretive by nature; relying solely on visually observing individuals to provide an estimate of their numbers in the area gives inaccurate results. Netting will often detect these secretive species. Conversely, species such as White-winged Crossbills feed in the canopy and American Pipits feed along the shoreline and methods other than regular netting must be used to monitor such species.

The main goal of the ABO is to contribute to the nation-wide dataset that aims to monitor overall trends of migratory landbirds. In addition, we collate data on timing of migration including species-specific patterns. In conjunction with regular migration monitoring, we also undertake research projects to gain a better understanding of the ecology of bird migration, and of our ability to monitor population of select species. For example, we are exploring the relationship between weather and migration patterns, and our operation of dual field stations allows us to compare migratory patterns on a local scale. Our data demonstrate that during some years an equal number of species occurs on both islands, possibly indicating that we are monitoring migratory movement over a broad area. During other years, however, there are periods where higher numbers are detected on one island. Such was the case during the fall of 1998. On October 12 for example, approximately 70 species were observed on Seal Island, while on BP, only 35 species were found, demonstrating that migratory differences can be detected at a smaller scale as well. Species-specific differences are also observed. During fall of 1996 and also 2001, hundreds of Blue Jays were observed at our SI site. Interestingly, BP did not detect these individuals during the same years.

Establishment of a long-term station allows opportunities to detect changes that may occur over a period of years as with the case of a unique irruption of Black-capped Chickadees during the fall of 2001. This is a species that rarely visits BP, even though the island is only three km from the mainland. During a span of two weeks, hundreds of these birds moved through the station. Sudden irruptions of these typically non-migratory birds are somewhat uncommon, and their occurrences are unpredictable. Prior to fall 2001, an irruption such as this one had not been detected at the ABO.

One of the most unique features of the ABO is that both islands are well known vagrant traps. Vagrants are birds that do not typically breed in or migrate through NS and excite most serious birders. During our short period of operation, over 50 vagrant landbird species have been detected. Occasionally, an individual vagrant will be spotted or banded such as Worm-eating Warbler (fall 1996), Cerulean Warbler (fall 2000), Hooded Warbler (spring 2001), Kentucky Warbler (fall 2001), and Swainson's Warbler (spring 2002). However, what may be more exciting are vagrant individuals that occur on a 'regular' basis. For example, during a five-year period, over 50 Yellow-breasted Chats were banded and many more spotted. This is a significantly higher number than has ever been described in the province (Tufts 1979, Erskine 1992). Determining why such regular vagrants occur, and exactly what they are 'doing', is part of the ongoing research at the ABO.

Banding plays an important role in our operation, and captures of previously banded individuals provide interesting and useful data. Capturing birds previously banded at the ABO allows assessment of seasonal stopover duration or longevity. To date, the ABO has never caught a bird from another banding station. However, a colour-banded Savannah Sparrow was spotted during the census and we suspect that the individual came from Kent Island, an island off Grand Manan, and the closest location where

colour banding of Savannah Sparrows is occurring. We have also observed inter-island movement. In spring 2001, a Yellow-rumped Warbler originally banded on BP was retrapped on SI twelve days later. Many of our banded birds return in following years. The oldest individuals are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Record ages of some ABO recaptured birds.

Species	Banding Year	Age at Recapture
Leach's Storm-Petrel	1994	6 yrs, 10 months
Fox Sparrow	1993	5 yrs, 7 months
Yellow Warbler	1995	5 yrs, 5 months

Very few banded birds are ever found elsewhere, but when one is detected it can be very exciting. Even though the ABO has not been operating for a long time, several of our BP-banded birds have turned up elsewhere (Table 2).

Table 2. Recaptures of ABO-banded birds outside of NS.

Species	Banding Date	Recapture Date	Recapture Locale
Yellow-rumped Warbler	10 Oct. 99	25 Oct. 99	Virginia
Sharp-shinned Hawk	05 Sept. 96	28 Sept. 96	Virginia
Sharp-shinned Hawk	08 Oct. 99	09 Nov. 99	Cape May, New Jersey
Gray Catbird	02 Oct. 96	21 May 97	Cape May, New Jersey
Northern Waterthrush	15 Sept. 97	26 Sept. 97	Grand Manan Island, NB

The ABO is more than a migration monitoring station. Our program allows us to work collaboratively with other researchers. For several years, we have participated in a tick collection program organized through the Lyme Disease Association of Ontario. We collected a tick from a Common Yellowthroat during spring of 1999 that tested positive for the bacteria that causes Lyme Disease. At the time, this was the first known case of a migratory bird carrying the Lyme Disease spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi* in Canada. Another collaborative project, organized through the Canadian Wildlife Service, examined stable isotopes ratios in feathers as a means of identifying the breeding origins of birds migrating through several regions of Canada. Understanding which breeding populations each station samples will help direct conservation efforts. Preliminary results indicate that the ABO is capturing birds from a broad area, not simply from a small region close to the banding stations. Importantly, this supports the notion that migration monitoring trends represent regional, rather than local bird populations.

Our efforts have also opened the doors for student research. Graduate-level research exploring the orientation abilities of migratory and vagrant landbirds in the Atlantic region has been conducted during the past two years. In addition, a project incorporating the use of radar and acoustic technology as a complimentary means of monitoring our migratory landbirds is being explored and will continue for two more years.

As you can see, we are extremely busy at the ABO and this article has only touched on some of the main highlights of our research facility. We do not conduct this research on our own; we rely on the dedication of many volunteers. If you are interested in becoming involved with our efforts or learning more about the ABO, please contact Trina Fitzgerald at abo@acadiau.ca or 1-902-585-1313 or visit our web site: <http://landscape.acadiau.ca/acwern/field/FIELD-AU.html>

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Book Review

By Catherine Earley

The Complete Backyard Birdwatcher's Home Companion

By Donald S. Heintzelman Paperback - 309 pages, 1st edition (October 6, 2000)

McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing; ISBN: 0071345205

The Complete Backyard Birdwatcher 's Home Companion is written by Donald S. Heintzelman, a preeminent ornithologist and nature photographer with over 40 years of birding experience. His knowledge and expertise clearly show through the well written, informative and up to date pages of this book.

As Heintzelman indicates by the title, the book is complete. It covers much more than simply creating an optimal habitat for birds. It covers topics such as: basics on bird watching, bird evolution, bird behavior, bird guides, optics, organizations, retailers, helpful internet sites, pest and predators, parasites and disease, window kills, birding with children, bird songs and calls and of course a guide to creating a bird habitat, with plants, food, shelter, water, bird feeders & nesting boxes. As well, the book is packed full with other interesting tidbits such as listing the life spans of certain birds, diagrams of the major North American Migration routes and brief profiles on specific birds like the ivory Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

I especially liked the fact that it incorporates a section on environmental considerations, and takes an environmental angle throughout the book, by including such things as the birding code of ethics. It also concentrates heavily on gardening with native plants that produce food that birds like to eat. Many bird feeding books focus on buying or making food to feed to birds, which doesn't do nearly as much for the environment.

The book does not supply many colour pictures but does include three colour, model backyard landscapes and quick-reference charts to match birds and their favorite plants. The selection of pictures was actually rather refreshing, showing a number of everyday looking birds with badly ruffled feathers.

The book is priced at about \$35. It ranks slightly higher in price than some other similar books on the market, but it's worth the price for the amount of material it provides.

The downside of this book for Canadian and especially Nova Scotian birders is that the book is geared towards American birders. The maps, references, retailers and organizations are predominately American. As well, some of the plants and planting times listed do not correspond to our northern boreal climate. In fact, the only Canadian locations mentioned are Ontario & a couple of the prairie provinces.

I believe beginners could definitely benefit from this book. However because it doesn't go into a lot of detail about the birds they refer to, a beginner may want a field guide to refer to as well. Intermediate and expert birders might find some areas such as the evolution of birds, repetitive but it would certainly be helpful when transforming your backyard into an avian retreat. ☒

SWAINSON'S WARBLER on Bon Portage

Second record for Nova Scotia

By Mike Peckford

In 2002, the Atlantic Bird Observatory monitored spring migration from 24 April until 28 May. 109 species were observed, and 335 individuals, comprising 44 species, were banded. On May 22, at 1120 hours, during the last net run for the day, the station trapped a Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*). Prior to May 22, skies were clear and winds were primarily light northwest, shifting to the west on the 22nd. Migratory activity for this period was average without prevalent fallouts or other southern species observed. Its long bill, brown crown, distinct surpercilium, dull underparts, and brown unmarked wings and tail identified the warbler. It weighed 16.9 grams and had a moderate level of fat. Several diagnostic photographs were taken. We were unable to determine the sex and age of the bird. The vegetation in the area where the individual was caught is predominantly Wild Raisin (*Virburnum nudum*) and Black Spruce (*Picea Mariana*).

The northern extent of the breeding range of Swainson's Warbler reaches North Carolina. Migrants commonly arrive at this part of their range during the third week of April. It is a very secretive warbler, and uncommon even within its range. There is one previous record for Nova Scotia, a "weakened individual" captured by Ian McLaren on Seal Island in October 1972. We were all very excited to have captured this vagrant, even more so when we found out that it was only the second record for Nova Scotia. ☒

Weather for Spring 2002

By Larry Bogan

Table 1. Weather data from the Atlantic Food & Horticulture Research Centre, Kentville, NS. This season's values are followed by the 41 year average in parentheses.

Month	Mean Temperature (°C)	Total Precipitation (mm)	Bright Sunshine (h)	Snowfall (cm)
March	-0.2 (-0.9)	78 (109)	131 (133)	37 (46)
April	5.6 (4.5)	97 (83)	142 (115)	3 (15)
May	11.3 (10.6)	85 (79)	274 (202)	0.4 (2.2)
Season	5.6 (4.7)	260 (271)	547 (450)	40 (63)

Our warm weather of winter continued into the spring. This is indicated by the season's mean temperature being nearly 1 °C above the 41 year average. Actually, I thought the spring cool, but I am sure that I am remembering last year when we had an unusually warm and early spring. March was uniformly below freezing until late in the month when the average temperature jumped up almost 10 °C and stayed that way through April (Figure 1). The first of May saw a smaller jump but then at mid-month the temperatures climbed continuously until we had high 20's by the end of the Month. These high temperatures did not continue as reflected in the frost on June 7-8 when many gardens, as well as mine, showed the result. Typical last frost in the Annapolis Valley is usually mid-May.

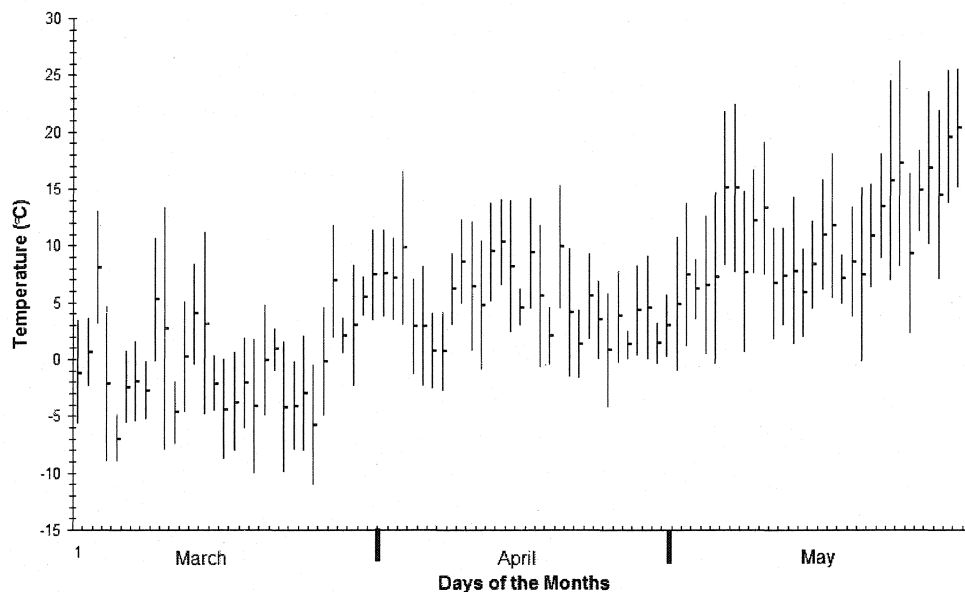


Figure 1. Spring temperatures from the Atlantic Food & Horticulture Research Centre, Kentville, NS. Daily means and ranges are shown.

Precipitation this spring was near normal. There was some variation but in general the precipitation was evenly distributed over the season. In April, rainfall was 16% above average while that of March was 71% of the norm. Snowfall was present in every month but we had 2/3 of the usual amount. Snow lay on the ground only from March 20 – 27, with a tiny bit at the end of April. The only snow in May was a trace on the first of the month.

It was a sunny, cheerful spring. Every month was average or above in its bright sunshine hours, with May being the brightest month. In May, there were only two days when we had fewer than four bright sunshine hours and 14 days with more than 10 bright sunshine hours.

The North American Migratory Bird Count occurred on the May 11 this year. If you were out that day, you will remember the sunshine, wind and cool temperatures. On my count, I found a few warblers, but the bulk of them arrived the next week when the temperatures started rising.

The spring winds are worthy of comment. Note that the mean wind speed for the months do not change but only the maximum wind speed decreases as the season advances (Table 2). On May 11, the mean wind speed had been 19.3 kph, the second highest for the month.

Table 2: Weather data from the Atlantic Food & Horticulture Research Centre, Kentville, NS.

Month	Mean Wind Speed (kph)	Max Wind Speed (kph)
March	11.4	26.1
April	12.2	22.2
May	12.2	19.7

A Bird's Eye View of the Future



More than 600 ornithologists, biologists, and conservationists gathered in Monterey, CA for the Third International Partners in Flight Conference. Participants came from throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Latin America to discuss the progress made in landbird monitoring, research, and education. For more than a decade, Partners in Flight (PIF) has worked to address the decline of landbirds, notably neotropical migrants.

Participants at this unprecedented gathering attended sessions that focused on the most recent advances in design and implementation of PIF Bird Conservation Plans for landbirds, and the research, monitoring and conceptual advances that have shaped these plans.

According to Terry Rich, Partners In Flight National Co-ordinator, "Begun only in 1990, Partners In Flight has grown at a fast pace to become one of the premier conservation movements on the planet. Birds improve the quality of life for millions of people and those people

are increasingly taking conservation action to ensure that hundreds of species and their habitats will be healthy far into the future."

The conference also focused on future directions and the integration of bird conservation actions. Keynote speakers included Dr. John Fitzpatrick, Director, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Martin Cody, UCLA, Eduardo Santana, Sierra de Manantlan Biosphere Reserve, Mexico, and David Bracket, Director General of the Canadian Wildlife Service. They addressed the importance of integrating bird conservation efforts from landbird, waterfowl, shorebirds, and waterbird conservation initiatives. A proceedings of this important event also will be published.

PIF draws together the many groups and individuals working on bird conservation in North America, Mesoamerica, the Caribbean, and South America to combine their resources, knowledge, and people to jointly protect the tremendous natural diversity of the hemisphere. A diverse array of more than 300 partners from federal and state agencies, non-profits, forest products companies, and academia participate in Partners in Flight (www.PartnersInFlight.org). ☐

Seasonal Reports

Editor's Note: Many records, especially for the more regular species, were derived from the North American Migration Count (NAMC), which this year occurred on May 11. My thanks to Judy Tufts for once again coordinating all the people and the data for this valuable survey.

Loons through Grebes

By Fred Dobson

There were reports of RED-THROATED LOONS well into May – their migration to their northern breeding grounds was obviously delayed by the cold weather. Although none were seen on the NAMC, there was still one May 19 at North Pt., Brier I. (ELM, IAM). A few remained in CB and Rich. Cos. up until May 20 (DBM, SEM) “mostly in winter plumage, and moulting into summer. A sizeable group for this time of year.” COMMON LOONS waited at sea until the ice left. In most localities that was near the beginning of April. All through April they called, and by the NAMC they were seen in all counties but Colchester (total 162, high count 44 in CB Co.)

The first two juvs. were reported with ads. May 22 at St. Anns Bay, Vic. Co. (BSK).

PIED-BILLED GREBES were first reported May 5 – 20 at the APBS (NSBS). There were a total of six seen on the NAMC, with the high count of three in Cum. Co. There was an individual May 30 at Schooner Pond, CB Co. (DBM, RWK). HORNED GREBES were seen on salt water in small numbers throughout the period. There were five Mar. 2 off Hawk Beach, CSI. (ELM, IAM), three Mar. 17 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. (JAH) and two Mar. 31 at Mira Gut, CB Co. (SEM) “My last sighting of the season.”

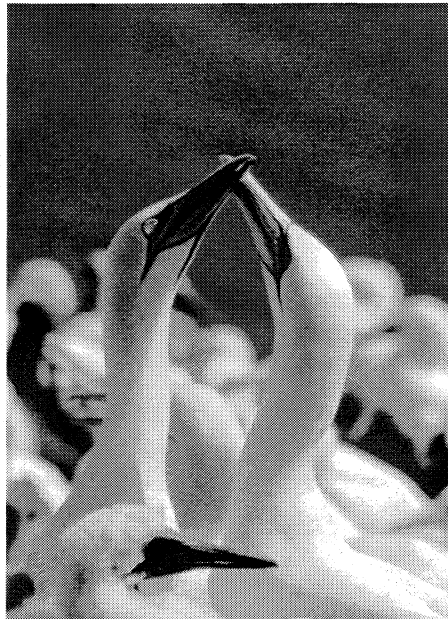
ELM reported a surprising “10 in breeding plumage” Apr. 21 in Green Bay, Lun. Co.; individuals, also in breeding plumage, were seen until the end of the period in CB Co. and Brier I. (DBM, RWK; ELM, IAM *et al.*). RED-NECKED GREBES, like the Red-throated Loon, left the province late. The March and early April sightings were in the south, *e.g.* Apr. 7, Brier I., “a few on ocean, Brier. Coming into alternate plumage” (RBS). Late in April there were four at Kennington Cove, CB Co. (SEM) “My last sighting of the season” and two in alternate plumage at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. (SJF). The NAMC report tallied a total of four, high count three in Queens Co. ☘

Tubenoses Through Cormorants

By Blake Maybank

Were it not for the May 11 NAMC there would be little to report in this section. The NAMC produced the only N. FULMAR (20 off Shel. Co., two from Brier (ELM) and another off CB), the only shearwaters (five SOOTY SHEARWATERS off Shel. Co.), and all the LEACH'S STORM-PETRELS (100 off Shel. Co., and a lone bird off Simon Pt., Fortress of Louisbourg [SEM]).

NORTHERN GANNETS were first reported Mar. 30 off Schooner Pond, CB, and there were but four noted (DBM). Many more returned in April, of course, and ELM counted hundreds, mainly ads., off Brier on Apr. 27. On the NAMC there was a fine movement, perhaps the result of the stormy conditions of the day. More than 2,260 were counted from 12 counties, with Shel. (1,200+) and CB (450+) having



N. GANNET family portrait. [Photographer not recorded - NSBS Library]

the lion's share, but ELM noted 218+ off Brier in just one hour. After mid-May most large counts are typically from CB, as adults can range that far from the colonies in Bonaventure and southern Newfoundland. RFL, MZG, and Ivan Cozzi estimated 2,000 – 3,000 off Inverness May 19 and May 27.

The same conditions that raised gannet numbers on the NAMC likely depressed the cormorant count, with but 2,795 DOUBLE-CRESTED and 386 GREATS, both totals down from recent years. Two Double-crested on CSI, Mar. 2, may have over-wintered (ELM, IAM), but migrants spread across the province by month's end. ELM visited Brier several times through April and May, and noted the number of Great Cormorants dwindle away as spring progressed, until only 20 were counted on the NAMC. ☘

Herons through New World Vultures

By Richard Stern

An AM. BITTERN was heard "pumping" at a small marsh in Westville on the early date of Mar. 31 (STV). Two were at Wallace Bay, Apr. 24 (HAT), and after that there were a few more seasonal reports from May from several locations.

The earliest reported GREAT BLUE HERON for the spring season was Mar. 17 at Crescent Beach, but the observer, JAH, felt it was most likely an overwintering bird. However, six in Yarmouth Hbr., Mar. 24 (MUN), were presumably the vanguard of the spring migration. Three other sightings just "snuck in" before April: Mar. 30 at Corkums I. (two - JAH) and Rainbow Haven (one - DOU); Mar. 31 at The Hawk, CSI (five - MUN *et al.*). Sizeable concentrations of 11 in a small tidal pool at Kingsport, Apr. 19 (JCT), and 15 at The Hawk, Apr. 18 (MUN) were noted. The northeastward march of migration for this species was well documented, with later first dates for CB: Apr. 23 at L'Ardoise (DBM), Apr. 26 Glace Bay, (DBM *et al.*) and several others. On May 5, DBM and Terry Laffin saw a pair copulating amongst some 15+ nests in a spruce grove at



GREAT BLUE HERON. [Photo uncredited - NSBS Library]

Alder Pt., CB Co. Seven flying in from the north, North Pt., Brier I., May 20 (ELM) were presumably late arriving migrants, but throughout May there were, as expected, numerous reports from around the province.

A well-described GLOSSY IBIS was reported to FLL at Hartlen Pt., Apr. 4. Another was seen by BLF and Sandra Forsythe at BelleIsle Marsh, Apr. 28.



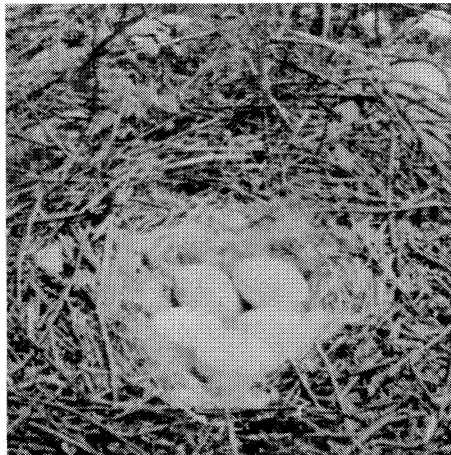
BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS returned to their usual haunts on Cape Sable Island this spring. This one was the first of the season on Apr. 6. [Photo John Nickerson]

For the last two years vagrant southern herons and egrets in early spring have been fairly numerous, but numbers seem to have been down this spring. A SNOWY EGRET was present at Daniels Hd., CSI, Apr. 6 (MUN), but it was seen to take off and leave Apr. 11. However, it, or another, re-appeared Apr. 14. DOC saw one at nearby Upper Woods Harbour, Apr. 11-18. One was on Brier I. a month later (ELM, AHM). A rarer TRICOLORED HERON was reported from the area around Fort Anne, Annapolis Royal by several observers in mid-April, but it proved elusive and hard to find. Another was at Hemeons Hd., Shel. Co., May 5 (DEF, DHY). BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS were seen as expected at Daniels Hd. Marsh, CSI, where they are regular summer residents. Another was at Mahone Bay, Apr. 14 (JAH).

The status of the TURKEY VULTURE has been slowly expanding in recent years, with a reliable population on Digby Neck and Long and Brier Is. There have been occasional, but increasing, sightings elsewhere in the province, mainly the southwest. The maximum number reported this spring from Brier was five (ELM, RBS) in both March and May. "Extra-limital" records included two at Advocate, Apr. 24 (KFS), one at Tusket, Mar. 29 (MUN), one at Southampton, Apr. 21 (JCZ) and one near Halls Harbour, Kings Co., Apr. 20 (Mike McCall). More notable sightings were one seen and well described by DOU soaring over the south end of Halifax, Apr. 11, at one point harassed by a Crow, and one (the same?) over Bedford, Apr. 25 (*vide* PLC). ☒

Geese, Swans and Ducks

By Fred Dobson



Two decades ago, CANADA GEESE nested only occasionally and locally in the province (See Tufts, third edition). Now they can be found almost anywhere, like this one on Bon Portage I. in late May 1997. [Photo Joan Czapalay]

The weather was cooler than normal throughout the season – downright bitter, some said. The migrants arrived late, mostly due to the lack of open water until late March in most localities. The most notable sighting was the continued presence of a White-fronted Goose in the Canning area. I am again very thankful to Judy Tufts for the compilation of these records; they remain the best indicator we have of species abundance and distribution, particularly of our common species (*e.g.* Canada Goose, Am. Black Duck, Mallard, Common Eider).

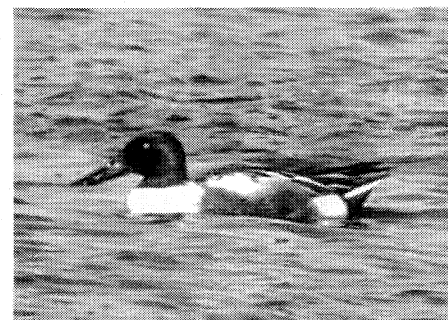
A **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** in Kings Co. is presumed to be the same individual mentioned in the Winter 2001 – Spring 2002 Report. It was seen Apr. 7-22 by numerous observers, including JCT, and photographed (RBS). There were two reports of **SNOW GEESE**. Single birds were seen Apr. 7 in Canning, Kings Co. (JCT) “Snoozing on grass field, along with ~200 Canada Geese, across the Habitant R. from Canning” and Apr. 17 near Advocate, Cum. Co. (KFS). CANADA GEESE were reported in normal numbers throughout the period, from all areas of the province. A notable number of 800 was counted Mar. 9 at

Crescent Beach, Lun. Co. (JAH); “There were more beyond in the fog, but not sure how many” and 1,400 and 1,200 Mar. 29 and 30 at Lingan and Morien Bays, CB Co. (RWK, DBM, SEM). The NAMC, although indicating a wide distribution, was surprisingly low: total 472, high count 73 Anna. Co. Most of the late (*i.e.* May) reports are from CB Co., and the last is interesting: 30 May 6, Glace Bay Sanctuary, CB Co. (DBM, RWK), “several small flocks hanging around places like East Bay, Blacketts L. and Glace Bay. My impression is more than were around 5-10 years ago.” BRANT remained in the vicinity of Brier I. and CSI (ELM, AHM, IAM) until at least the NAMC which totalled 197 – 132 in Digby Co. and 65 in Shel. Co.

Seven pairs of **WOOD DUCKS** were reported Apr. 5-17 at the Black River L. residence of Murray Porter in Kings Co. (*fide* JCT) “They come to feed on his lawn.” The species seems to have done well – there are reports of nesting pairs, actual and assumed, and a wide distribution in the province. A pair was reported May 4-11 at Palmeters Woods Bird Sanctuary (JET, JCT) “A nest box is in vicinity so possibly a breeding pair?” The NAMC indicates a fairly wide distribution with a total of 61 and high counts of 14 in CB Co. and 12 in Inv. Co. A pair was reported May 22 at Blacketts L., CB Co. (BCU *fide* DBM) “nesting in one of his boxes.”

GADWALL appeared in small numbers at a variety of locations. Two fems. were seen Mar. 24 “with 50+ feral Mallards, Woodland Natural Park, Bridgewater (at least one still present in early June)” (ELM). A single male was reported on Pond Cove, Brier I. “My first on Brier ...” (ELM), and another male May 5 at Big Pond, Florence, CB Co. (DBM, Terry Laffin). The NAMC total was five with a high count of four in Cum. Co. The lovely EUR. WIGEON was found in two locations: one to two males Mar. 5-30 in Glace Bay Harbour (DBM, SEM, RWK) and one in Hfx. Co. for the NAMC. AM. WIGEONS

were reported from many locations throughout the province. Reported early in March from the N of the province, they didn’t show up in the Valley until mid-April. Pairs were seen in May in CB Co. (BSK, DBM), the APBS (NSBS), May 27 at Seal I. (SJF) “Suspect they are breeding”, and May 31 at Wagmatook, Vic. Co. (DBM). The NAMC indicated a wide distribution, total 102 with high counts of 27 and 24 in Pict. and Cum. Cos. AMERICAN BLACK DUCKS were a good month behind in their nesting time. They were widely reported, but as noted by DMW, at Conrad Marsh, Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., “The flock split up in late April.” There were 150 Mar. 9 at E Port Medway, Queens Co. (JAH). The NAMC got reports from all counties; the total was 2,272 with a high of 474 in Pict. Co. Two MALLARDS were “seen almost daily throughout reporting period” at St. Anns Gut, Vic. Co. (BSK). There were 40 Mar. 15 in the Port Williams Sewage Ponds, Kings Co. “Wherever open water in local area ...”(JCT). “Several pairs” were reported May 5 at the APBS (NSBS). The NAMC indicated a wide distribution in the province, total 598 with the high count 145 in Lun. Co. MALLARD x AM. BLACK DUCK hybrids were well reported on the NAMC – total 38, high count 22 in Yar. Co. BLUE-WINGED TEAL were well reported, but all reports were for sightings relatively late in the period. The first was a pair Apr. 27 and May 12 “near cemetery, Brier I.” (ELM). There



This fine male N. SHOVERER on Apr. 20 had chosen the not-so-refined habitat of the sewage pond at Port Williams, Kings Co. [Photo Richard Stern]

was another pair May 5 at APBS (NSBS). RBS took a photo May 5 of "two pairs +" that resided "all spring" at a small pond in Canning, Kings Co. The NAMC showed a fairly wide distribution – total 85, high count 40 in Cum. Co. Pairs were reported May 12 at Wolfe Gut, Lun. Co. (SJF), May 20 at Fullers Bridge, Rich. Co., and May 30 at Tower Rd. and Schooner Pond, CB Co. (DBM, SEM, RWK). NORTHERN SHOVELER reports were all from mid-province – Kings, Hants and Cum. Cos. The earliest was a pair Apr. 18 (and the latest Jun. 2) in the Port Williams Sewage Ponds, Kings Co. (JCT), and a "dozen or more" were seen May 5 by the at APBS (NSBS). The NAMC total was 30 with a high of 20 in Cum. Co. (a few reported in Hfx. and Anna. Cos.). NORTHERN PINTAILS were sparsely reported from CB, the Lunenburg and Halifax areas, and the Valley. The earliest reports were of one male Mar. 2, Sydney Mines, CB Co. (DBM, RWK) and one pair Mar. 4, Conrad Marsh, Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (DMW). Small numbers were reported from Crescent Beach, Back Oler Marsh and Rose Bay, Lun. Co. in mid to late March (JAH). It is assumed all the foregoing were on salt water, since the ice still held all fresh water in its grip at that point. There were "a few dozen" May 5 at the John Lusby Marsh, Cum. Co. (NSBS). The NAMC totalled 24, high count 14 in Cum. Co. A pair was reported May 20 at Morrisons Beach, Rich. Co. (DBM, SEM). GREEN-WINGED TEAL arrived first in the salt water, then moved to the fresh water as it became available from old man winter. The earliest reports, Mar. 19 & 23 at separate locations near Lunenburg (JAH, ELM), may have been the same three birds. They began to move to fresh water in early April. Males were reported Apr. 7 at three Kings Co. locations (JCT). By Apr. 16 a male was seen at Havenside barachois, Louisbourg, CB Co. (SEM) "first seen this season". There were 60 Apr. 28 at Homeville (DBM, RWK) and 39 Apr. 30 at Morien Bar, CB Co. (SEM) "seasonal high". The NSBS saw "loads" May 5 at the APBS, Cum. Co. The NAMC reports indicated a wide distribution; total 208, high count 82 Cum. Co. The latest report was three

May 18 at Pond Cove, Brier I., Digby Co. (ELM).

There was a single male **CANVASBACK** seen Mar. 2 at Clearwater, N Sydney (DBM, RWK). The earliest reports of **RING-NECKED DUCKS** were late this year – one Mar. 15 at Bridgewater (JAH) and three males and a male, one fem. Apr. 7 at Van Nostrands Pond, Starrs Pt., and Harris' Pond, Kings Co. (JCT). The numbers built in mid-province until "dozens" were seen May 5 at the APBS (NSBS). They first appeared in CB Apr. 23, nine at L'Ardoise, Rich. Co., and then 11 Apr. 26 at Schooner Pond, CB Co. (DBM, GED). The NAMC showed a wide distribution with a total of 583, high count 120 in Cum. Co. All the reports after mid-May came from CB. Notable were: May 14, 40 at East Bay and 12 at Lingan Bay, CB Co. (DBM, RWK). The latest report was a pair May 30 at Meadows Rd., CB Co. All the reports of **GREATER SCAUPS** were from the N of the province, and the numbers were large. Notable were reports of 110 Mar. 3 at South Bar, 600 Mar. 29 at Lingan Bay and 225 Apr. 26 at Dominion, CB Co. (DBM, RWK, SEM, Lynn Ellis). The NAMC total was 148 with high counts of 66 in CB Co. and 65 in Pict. Co. The latest report was 25 May 14 at Lingan Bay, CB Co. (DBM). Reports of **LESSER SCAUPS** were from the South Shore and CB. A single fem. was seen the first half of March at Bridgewater (JAH), and a male Mar. 24. at Bayport, Lun. Co. (ELM). At least two were seen from late March to mid-May in CB Co. (RWK, DBM). The only one seen on the NAMC was in Pict. Co.

COMMON EIDERS, although widely distributed from the NAMC, didn't show up on any lists except those from CB and the South Shore. The earliest report was 50 (including eight adult males) Mar. 4 at Wild Cove, CB Co. (SEM). Notable were 600 at Lighthouse Cove, Louisbourg (SEM) "large raft settled for night", 45 Apr. 26 at Cape Perce, CB Co. (DBM, RWK, Lynn Ellis) "because of lack of lobster fishing in this area" and 3,000+ May 20 at Morrison Beach, Framboise, Rich. Co. (DBM, SEM) "three large flocks, some

males. A few at Fourchu." The NAMC reports indicated a wide distribution; total 2,369, high counts 699 CB Co., 677 Shel. Co. There were 15 May 20 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. (JAH) "(ducklings), two males still with females which is odd." The latest report was six May 27 at Cape St. Lawrence, Inv. Co. (RFL, Ivan Cozzi).

There were only three sightings of the sprightly **HARLEQUIN DUCK**. An individual was seen Mar. 2 at Little Port l'Hebert (DHY, SJF), and pairs were seen Mar. 11 at the Prospect Barrens (BLM) and Apr. 26-28 in Lighthouse Cove, Brier I. (ELM, JUS, DOE).

There are two notable reports of **SCOTER** sp. "A magnificent flock ... first noted by ... JSC a few days earlier in Green Bay, Lun. Co. was composed (21 Apr.) of ca. 2,200 Surfs, 1,800 Blacks, and 20 White-wings (ELM)." The NAMC count was 480, comprised of 400 from CB Co. and 80 from Pict. Co. The large flock of **SURF SCOTERS** in Lun. Co. was reported above in "Scoter Sp." The earliest reports were "approx. 20" off Parkers Cove, Anna. Co. (RBS) and 27 Mar. 7 at East LaHave, Lun. Co. (JAH). Almost all the remaining reports came from CB Co. There were 50 Apr. 28 at Kennington Cove, 60 at Catalone Gut, and 10 in Morien Bay, CB Co. (DBM, RWK, SEM). The NAMC showed a wide distribution in salt water: total 1237, high count 1,100 in Lun. Co. An individual "with Black Scoters" was seen May 11-18 at Pond Cove, Brier I. (ELM). The latest report was of 130 May 20 at Gabarus, CB Co. (DBM, SEM). **WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS** were observed mainly in CB. Besides the 20 in Lun. Co. mentioned above under "Scoter Sp.", the only other report from the mainland was "about 50" Mar. 5 off Parkers Cove, Anna. Co. (RBS). There were 500+ Mar. 2 "seen from Belfry Cove Beach, Rich. Co. (Lynn Ellis, SEM). From Mar. 17 to May 30 they were seen in groups of a few tens at Gabarus, Morien Bay, Wild Cove, Main-a-Dieu, Big Pond and Florence, CB Co. (DBM, RWK, SEM). The NAMC total was 148 – high count 66 in Vic. Co. Reports of **BLACK SCOTERS** were more sparse than the NAMC

distribution indicated. There were "about 150" Apr. 16 at Pt. George, Anna. Co. (RBS). The NAMC reports show a fairly wide distribution on the salt water – total 218, high count 70 in Hfx. Co. There were 10 May 11-18 at Pond Cove, Brier I. (ELM, IAM), and 85 May 20 at Morrisons Beach, Rich. Co. (DBM, SEM).

As with many of the sea ducks, LONG-TAILED DUCKS were reported only from CB Co. and the South Shore. Up until Mar. 26 there was a "flock" off Maders Cove, Lun. Co. (JBM). There were 12 Mar. 15 at Wild Cove, 30 Apr. 4 at Homeville and two Apr. 8 at Lighthouse Cove "last I saw for the season", Louisbourg, CB Co. (SEM). A single individual was spotted May 6 in Broad Cove, Lun. Co. (JAH). The NAMC total was five; high count four in CB Co.

Reports of BUFFLEHEADS came from CB Co. and Lun. Co. The earliest were two Mar. 2 at Wentworth Park, Sydney, 47 Mar. 5 at Glace Bay, CB Co. (DBM, RWK, SEM). JAH reported eight Mar. 9 at Petite Rivière, Lun. Co. From March until mid-May they were seen regularly in groups of a few up to 30 at a variety of locations in CB Co. (DBM, RWK, SEM). The NAMC totalled 109; high counts 55

in Anna. Co, 52 in CB Co. The latest report was 15 May 24 at Indian Pt., Lun. Co. (JAH) "two males and the rest were females". COM. GOLDENEYES were reported mainly from CB. The first reports were a male Apr. 7-17 at Van Nostrands Pond, Starrs Pt., Kings Co. (JCT) and a pair Apr. 17 at Nyanza, Vic. Co. (BSK). Small numbers (four, seven) were found in early May in Lingan and Florence, CB Co. (DBM, Terry Laffin). The NAMC totalled 69 with 60 in Vic. Co. Smaller numbers were found in CB Co. in mid-to-late May at Lingan Bay, South Bar and Gabarus, and a pair was observed May 20 at Fullers Bridge, Rich. Co. (DBM, SEM, Lynn Ellis). The elegant BARROW'S GOLDENEYE was reported three times, all in March – first, two pairs Mar. 3 at South Bar, CB Co. (RWK, DBM) and then twice by JAH in Lun. Co. – a male Mar. 24 in Mahone Bay and one male and one fem. Mar. 30 at Corkums I.

There were surprisingly few reports of HOODED MERGANSERS. There were 36 Mar. 7 in the LaHave R., Lun. Co. (JAH) and a male and a fem. Apr. 17 at Old Mill Pond, Black River L., Kings Co. (Murray Porter *vide* JCT). The NAMC totalled 34 with a high count of 24 in Pict. Co. A fem. was reported May 20 at Gabarus, CB Co. (DBM, SEM) "with three Com. Goldeneye in little

pond." COMMON MERGANSERS were widely reported. There were five Mar. 1-4 at Conrad Marsh, Hfx. Co. (DMW) and 18 Mar. 6 at Eel L., Yar. Co. (PRG). There were 29 Mar. 7 at Corkums I. and five in the LaHave R. near Upper LaHave, Lun. Co. (JAH). Throughout March and April reports were scattered widely; notable were 17 of mixed ages Apr. 6 at St. Anns Harbour, Vic. Co. (BSK), 15 Apr. 7 at Indian Path, Lun. Co. (JAH), 25 of mixed ages Apr. 17 and again on May 11 at River Bennett, Vic. Co. (BSK), and "a dozen +" May 5 at APBS (NSBS). The NAMC indicated a wide distribution; the total was 254, high count 91 in Vic. Co. All reports after mid-May came from CB – Vic., Rich. and CB Cos. (BSK, DBM, RWK, SEM). All but one of the RED-BREASTED MERGANSER reports came from CB. In March and April "up to 20" were to be found at the Conrad Marsh, Hfx. Co. (DMW). The NAMC totalled 527; the high count was 331 in Pict. Co. There were 30 May 14 at Lingan Bay and five May 15 at South Bar, CB Co. (DBM, Lynn Ellis). A few individuals were reported throughout May at several locations in Rich. and CB Cos. (DBM, SEM, RWK). ☒

Diurnal Raptors, Galliforms, Rails and Cranes

By Richard Stern

The first OSPREY of the spring was right on queue, Apr. 3, Mahone Bay (Paul MacDonald). Two were at Doctors Cove, Apr. 10 (MUN *et al.*), and thereafter they were, as expected, more widely reported. One was forced to drop a fish it had caught, by a Great Black-backed Gull, over Mahone Bay, Apr. 11 (JAH). They were present at two nesting platforms in Abercrombie, Apr. 11 (KJM). They did not appear to reach CB until Apr. 23 at Portage (DBM), and were also widely reported there after that date. Nobody has reported any nesting progress, but I have been following with interest the regular commentary on a nesting pair in downtown metro Halifax, on CBC's Information Morning.

BALD EAGLES used to be a summer phenomenon in CB and a winter one in E Kings Co., but in the last few years this status has begun to change, with more and more birds staying to nest in Kings Co., and elsewhere in the province. Plenty of birds had arrived in CB by early March (Dominion: Lynn Ellis; Ben Eoin: DBM, etc.). The APBS nest was occupied by May 5, with two other imm. birds in the area (NSBS). JWW has extensively documented the birds nesting in E Kings Co. – by the end of May there were five active nests with eight nestlings visible from roads (Walbrook, Starrs Pt. etc.) and a few others more inaccessible, necessitating some tramping through the woods (e.g. Kentville Ravine, BLF). None of these

existed a few years ago, but once established, the nests, like those of Ospreys', tend to be built upon, and thus get bigger and more visible.

The beautiful silvery-grey males of the N. HARRIER tend to return sooner than the females, probably to establish territories. There were 17 reports of this species from various areas - five male, two fem. and the rest unspecified. Some of the early ones (e.g. Mar. 13, Dominion, Lynne Ellis) might have been over-winterers.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS are regularly seen as individuals, usually harassing birds at feeders, or simply passing by. There were 12 reports from



Roland McCormick's backyard in Barrington, Shel. Co., was visited by this large female SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, where it caused less havoc than the local cats. It was a large individual and he wondered how it might be distinguished from the regionally rare Cooper's Hawk, which has never been confirmed by photo or specimen in Nova Scotia. The photo showing its relatively small head, without notably pale nape, and its rather short tail, without the layered appearance and white tips of a Cooper's tail, are enough to eliminate that rarer accipiter. [Photo Roland McCormick]

diverse locations. One at Fairmont, Ant. Co. unsuccessfully attacked a Mourning Dove (RFL) and one hung around KFS's Apple R. feeder during early April. A N. GOSHAWK being harassed by Am. Crows was watched by a field school class, May 15 on Eigg Mt., Ant. Co. and another, presumably a spring migrant, was at The Hawk, CSI, Apr. 22 (JON). Potentially, nesting birds should be incubating by that date. I was privileged to experience one at a nest site this spring (it's a total experience, not just a sighting - you hear it screeching first, then see it heading straight for your head, then feel its wings brushing over you as you duck, then feel the activity in your autonomic nervous system as you rapidly escape from the vicinity!).

The staff at Blomidon PP reported a BROAD-WINGED HAWK perched

just inside the park boundary, Apr. 18. Other individuals were over N Sydney (DBM), Green Bay, Lun. Co. (ELM), Brier I. (ELM, IAM) and Sandy Bottom L., Anna. Co. (MCN). There were no large concentrations or obvious nesting reported. As expected, RED-TAILED HAWKS were widely reported, usually in singles and pairs, although there were four at BelleIsle Marsh, Apr. 14 (MUN *et al.*). There was a nest at Grand Pré (JWW) and another on the University Hall building at Acadia (JWW *et al.*) although the latter was a new one from those of the last few years - possibly attended by three ads. We do not yet know the final success or otherwise of these nests. Lingering ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were at Eastport, Mar. 31 (IAM), Port Williams, Kings Co., Apr. 6 (JWW), and Schooner Pond, CB Co., Apr. 21 (RWK), all light phase except one of the Scooner Pond birds, and Blockhouse, May 28 (JAH, STH) - a rather late date but not unprecedented. An ad. GOLDEN EAGLE was sighted Apr. 27 & 30 at South Haven, Vic. Co., near Baddeck. The absence of any white or pale grey feathering, and the tawny/buff wash on the nape and back of head, were noted (BSK). In retrospect the same bird or species was seen there two years ago too.

Small numbers of AM. KESTREL appeared, most reports being from CB (DBM, Lynn Ellis, RWK *et al.*) but also from CSI (three Apr. 10 - JCZ) and Kings Co. There were 19 reports altogether. One was nesting in an owl box at Paquets L., CBHNP, May 26, probably incubating two eggs, though five eggs were noted at a later date (RFL, Sheldon Lambert). There were 14 reports of MERLIN, including pairs behaving territorially on Wolfville Ridge, Apr. 17 (JCT), Kentville on and off during May (RBS), and North Pt., Brier I. late May (ELM). JAH reported a possible white-phased GYRFALCON at Lower LaHave, May 3. He also found the only Spring PEREGRINE FALCONS reported, both in Lun. Co. in early May.

Several people reported RING-NECKED PHEASANTS, often coming to ground-based feeders. EBB had up to nine (six fems., three males) at Westphal. RBS (Kentville) had several all spring, including a recognizable male with one white, outer tail feather, usually accompanied by two fems. He also noted the frequent clucking of this species in many orchards and open areas all over the Kentville/ Wolfville area and elsewhere in the Valley. DBM and DAH made note of the species at McDonald's, Coxheath (hopefully outside, rather than in nugget or burger form!).

RUFFED GROUSE seem to be fairly widespread, but this spring there were only about a dozen reports, more often heard drumming than seen. ELM and AHM noted one to two regularly on Brier I. "part of the burgeoning population". A fem. was found sitting on 13 eggs at Crystal Cliffs, Ant. Co., May 13 and was still there two weeks later. The only reports of the rather elusive SPRUCE GROUSE were from the northern half of the province - e.g. Rich. Co. (DBM, SEM), Big Pond (DBM), Guys. Co., a pair in the woods (RFL, Steve Bushell), at Apple R. (KFS) and one fem. at Paquets L., CBHNP (RFL *et al.*).

A VIRGINIA RAIL was heard by JCZ in a small pond by Roseway Beach, Mar. 29, but as is so often the case with this species, an actual sighting proved elusive. A traditional spot in the past in Westville has not had any either of the last two years (KJM). SORAS were noted at several of their traditional spots, e.g. Oak Ave. marsh, Wolfville (JET, JCT), Port Williams Sewage Plant (JCT, RBS) and APBS (NSBS), of course usually heard rather than seen. The most unusual rallid sighting, though, was of a PURPLE GALLINULE, which was found exhausted in Joey Nickerson's back yard on CSI, May 17. It was closely observed, examined and released, but not subsequently seen again. ☘

The Shorebirds

By Sylvia Fullerton



Last winter's SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, photographed Jan. 11, is worth illustrating as the latest on record for the province. [Photo John Nickerson]

Cape Sable Island maintained its reputation as the shorebird Mecca of Nova Scotia when Murray Newell estimated 1,000 individuals at The Hawk, May 13. Included in these were no doubt many of the 600 that had wintered, as well as newly arrived migrants. Elsewhere, with the exception of the Eurasian Whimbrel and the Wilson's Phalarope, there was only a routine scattering of off-course migrants.

Thirty-five BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER at The Hawk, CSI, Apr. 18 (MUN), were probably overwinterers, whereas the single bird which turned up on the mud flats at Advocate, Cum. Co., Apr. 24, was more likely a newly arrived migrant, as were four on Brier I., May 4 (ELM, IAM). Of the 158 tallied on the NAMC, 156 were in Shel. Co., no doubt at CSI. Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., hosted 48, in mixed plumages, May 18 (SJF), an exceptionally high count for this beach. Only two reached Sable I., May 23 (ZOL). Ones and twos were noted at traditional sites in CB in late May, with a peak of 12 at Morien Bar, CB Co., May 26 (DBM, RWK, SEM). Spring occurrences of AM. GOLDEN

PLOVER are uncommon, but one appeared at Daniels Hd., CSI, Apr. 28 (MUN), and lingered to be tallied on the NAMC. In fact, the last spring sighting was also at CSI, in May 1998.

Spring reports of SEMIPALMATED PLOVER have dwindled in the last few years and it appears that only one breeding site is still active, unless in the next season's reports we hear good news from ZOL, our monitor on Sable I. Four returned to The Cape, CSI, where they appear to be nesting in the same area as last year and are already engaged in "broken-wing" displays, May 30 (MUN). The first PIPING PLOVER to be spotted was at Daniels Hd., CSI, Mar. 31 (TEC), followed by two at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Apr. 2 (JIC). Early nesting reports were encouraging, but several sites have since suffered from high tides and various depredations. See the spring report in this issue from Anna McCarron, the Co-ordinator of the NS Piping Plover Guardian Program.

Overwintering KILLDEER are not that common, but one stayed at Yarmouth Hbr. until at least Mar. 23 (MUN). One of a pair returned to its Wolfville Ridge site of 17 years, Mar. 25, joined by a second, Mar. 29, when courtship began (JCT). Many birds must have come in on a flight at this time, judging by the many reports received. The first report from CB was early, Apr. 20, at L'Ardoise, Rich. Co. (GED). The NAMC registered 100, an average number, of which 33 were in Hants Co. and 19 in CB.

The first returning AM. OYSTERCATCHER was spotted by JON and SAN at CSI, Apr. 3; two by Apr. 13, and three May 13 (MUN). It appears that MUN's dream of seeing all the young return hasn't happened this season, but there is always hope for next year. MUN feels quite confident that two of the above are the same faithful pair as last year, by their behaviour and by the special areas in which they prefer to feed.

Earliest report of GREATER YELLOWLEGS from CB was one at L'Ardoise, Rich. Co., Apr. 23 (GED), and from Apr. 25 on they were abundant in CB Co. where DBM and RWK tallied up to 40 at three locations. Fifty-six was the peak count of the season at Morien Bar, May 12 (SEM). On the mainland an early sighting was at Lr. Clarks Hbr., CSI, Apr. 10 (MUN). Noteworthy was a mini-fallout of 46 which JAH watched at Oxners Beach marsh, Lun. Co., May 3; 30 were still nearby May 5 (ELM). From then on they were widespread and it is obvious they continue to thrive. Of the 358 tallied on the NAMC, 104 were in CB Co. and 32 in Vic. Co. LESSER YELLOWLEGS appeared in average numbers. Earliest was an ad. in alternate/breeding plumage at Lovett Bridge, Coldbrook, Kings Co., Apr. 25 (RBS). A singleton was at Oxners Beach marsh with the Greater, May 5 (ELM). The NAMC total of 61 was an exceptionally high count, and observers are cautioned to use care when identifying yellowlegs, as it is not always easy to distinguish the two if they are not side by side. Much less common in CB, only two were reported: Dominion, CB Co., May 30 (DBM, RWK); Englishtown, Vic. Co., May 11 (BSK).

SOLITARY SANDPIPERS have not appeared in spring since 1998, but three graced the region this year: a bright breeding-plumaged bird, Brier I., May 11 (ELM, AHM); Lower Rose Bay, Lun. Co., May 11 (*fide* JIC); at the edge of a backyard pond, Centre, Lun. Co., May 18 (STH, JAH). It is not inconceivable that the latter might have been the same bird seen at Rose Bay.

The overwintering WILLET, of the western race, was still at Daniels Hd., CSI, May 9 (MUN). One wonders if it will summer. The first two of our breeding birds arrived at L. Clarks Hbr., CSI, Apr. 27 (MUN), followed by three at W. Chezzetcook marsh (TEP), and two at Morien Bar (DBM, RWK), both Apr. 28. Early May saw a significant

build-up and by late May calls were heard from almost every marshy area. The NAMC tallied 535, continuing the high of last year, with peaks of 109 in Halifax, 122 in Lun., and 84 in Shel. Cos. Only Annapolis failed to produce a single bird. The usual two reached Sable I., May 20 (ZOL). The peak count, although incomplete due to inclement weather, was a high of 92 at Morien Bar, May 18 (SEM).

There were no reports of SPOTTED SANDPIPERS until the NAMC and numbers were down, only 38 tallied from eight counties. Of these, 13 were in Kings, eight in Hants, and 10 in Pict. One was not seen on Brier I. until May 17 (ELM). They became more visible in late May and early June when nesting was underway. They were particularly noticed in CB where nine were counted in Vic. and CB Cos. and seven at Mabou, Inv. Co. (DBM, RWK, BSK). DOU saw three at Hardwood Lands, Hants Co. and MUN noted four at W. Head Pond, CSI.

The declining UPLAND SANDPIPER is always a welcome sight. Sharp-eyed BBA spotted one at the cemetery at Daniels Hd., CSI, May 4, after most of the participants of the NSBS field trip had driven by and left for home. ZOL watched one, typically "lifting its wings before takeoff," on Sable I., May 7. RBS identified one in flight past his backyard in Kentville, May 24. It afforded only a quick look, but he managed to see its pale belly, long legs and tail, and short pale bill.

A WHIMBREL of the Eur. subspecies *phaeopus* was spotted at Morien Bar, Apr. 28, and displayed its white rump and lower back, and whitish wing-linings (RWK, DBM). It was last seen May 12 by SEM, who wondered if it might have been the same bird which visited Morien Bar last year, May 10-13. On the same day five of our subspecies *hudsonicus* dropped in at Schooner Pond, CB Co. (JUM).

Thirty RUDDY TURNSTONES were still in residence at CSI, May 1, presumably mostly winterers. Four of these presented themselves to be counted on the NAMC. Everything

seemed to be in two's on Sable I., and two were there Apr. 2, with one lingering until May 23. Morien Bar produced one, May 30 (DBM, RWK). The overwintering RED KNOT at Lockeport, Shel. Co. stayed until May 14 (DJC). Forty, again a mix, were at The Hawk, CSI, May 1, and 25 or so were tabulated on the NAMC. A single bird was out on Sable I., May 21 (ZOL) and two, in alternate/breeding plumage, were at Morien Bar, May 26 (SEM).

Overwintering SANDERLING were still in substantial numbers in March. A group of 17 or so divided their time between Cherry Hill Beach and Crescent Beach, Lun. Co. up to Mar. 16. A gathering of 250+ at Sable I., always a popular spot, dwindled to 150+ by May 31 (ZOL). Only three held on at Martinique Beach, HRM until March 30 (TEP). An exceptional tally of 408 at The Hawk, CSI, May 1, represented a record-high for spring, no matter what their status (MUN). A single bird was still present at Cherry Hill Beach at the end of the period.

I hope that the lack of reports of SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER is not indicative of a faster decline of this species than is already taking place. Perhaps this year they were simply overlooked, as we generally see 20 or so birds in spring. LEAST SANDPIPERS were first reported from L. LaHave, Lun. Co., May 5, "sleeping on flats as though newly arrived" (ELM). On schedule, five were at Freeport Hbr., Digby Co., May 9 (ELM). The NAMC total of 20 was low. Thirty-five, a high-count, were at Morien Bar, May 12 and 39 (some of the above?), at Fullers Bridge, Framboise, Rich. Co., May 20 (SEM, DBM). Handfuls were seen on Seal I. and Englishtown, Vic. Co., in late May (SJF, BSK), but none reported elsewhere.

Wintering PURPLE SANDPIPERS were much in evidence. MUN counted 30 at Cape Forchu, Yar. Co., Mar. 10. A reliable flock of ten or so hung out on the rocks at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., through March (var. obs.). SEM managed to count up to 80, still active in spite of "tremendous surf," at Rochefort Pt., CB Co., Mar. 22. Greater

numbers seem to be lingering later into May: 30, Peter I., Brier I., May 9 (ELM); 30, Little Hbr., Shel. Co., May 11; 17, South Bar, CB Co., May 15 (DBM, Lynn Ellis)

Most of the earlier wintering DUNLIN had disappeared by March 1, but 25 held on at Martinique Beach, HRM, until Mar. 30 (TEP). However, the best show was at The Hawk, CSI, May 6, where there was an extraordinary concentration of 300+, several in alternate/breeding plumage (var. obs.). There is no question that this furnished a record-high count for the season. Also establishing a spring record for CB were two at Morien Bar, May 26 (SEM).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS have been unusual in spring, but if they are to appear, where else but at CSI? Two were at Daniels Hd., May 25 (MUN), which may or may not have been part of the contingent of eight seen there in February.

The first COM. SNIPE appeared at Hartlen Pt., HRM, Mar. 24 (TEP). No more were reported until JCT found singles at Wolfville Ridge and Saxon St. Pond, Kings Co., Apr. 17 & 18, both winnowing and displaying. There are other rewards from running the BSC owl surveys than finding owls; RFL and MZG also heard a snipe on their route in Fairmont, Ant. Co., Apr. 22. Two



At least three AM. OYSTERCATCHERS, including this one Apr. 5 near the lobster pound at The Hawk, had returned to CSI this spring. Over the years, many birders from all over Canada have come to add the species to their lists. [Photo Ian McLaren]

were seen S of Greenwood, May 6 (SLH) and from then on they were heard and seen throughout. The NAMC tallied 113, of which the highs were 39 in Kings Co., 24 in Pict. Co., and 21 in CB.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK were tardy this spring, and not reported until Mar. 29, when SHA and SLH heard two beeping and watched their "courtship flights in moonlight; a wonderful start to spring." On Mar. 31 one was heard at Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS) and another seen at Blockhouse, Lun. Co. (JAH). One was "peenting" Apr. 6 and by Apr. 22 up to four were heard along the BSC Owl Route in Fairmount, Ant. Co. (RFG, MZG). RFL reports that birds



Occasionally N. PHALAROPES forsake their offshore habitats in storms, or when otherwise stressed, and are found in coastal ponds, like this one on CSI. [Photo John Nickerson]

were still displaying along this route into early June. Single birds reached Sable I., May 4 (ZOL) and Brier I., May 11 (ELM). The NAMC produced a somewhat low 73, with 17 in CB, 24 in Hants Co. and 17 in Pict. Co.

According to the CWS's Canadian Shorebird Conservation Plan, WILSON'S PHALAROPE is a species of high concern, with the population in decline. They are seldom seen here now, but not too long ago they were almost regular. It must have been "remembrance of things past" for JCT and RBS when they saw a bright fem. in alternate plumage at Port Williams Sewage Ponds, June 2. ☐

Skuas Through Alcids

By Blake Maybank

Neither skuas nor jaegers were reported this spring. KJM found a second summer LITTLE GULL with Bonaparte's Gulls off the Pictou Causeway, May 6-11. Seven BLACK-HEADED GULLS lingered to be counted on the NAMC; the two in CB and three in Hfx. Co. were not unexpected, but two in Yar. Co. certainly were. Most other sightings were in March and early April from traditional locales, but a second-year on Brier, Mar. 29, was notable (ELM). As expected Pict. Co. (with 11) and Ant.

Co. (with 21) held almost all the BONAPARTE'S GULLS on the NAMC, with Yar. Co. having the only other bird seen. Between Mar. 30 and Apr. 21 counts of Bonaparte's in Lun. Co. varied between 10 and 12 (JAH, ELM). Ten were at Conrads Beach, Apr. 5 (DMW), and seven were counted at Nyanza, Vic. Co., May 8 (BSK). I had to search for Nyanza on the map - Nyanza Bay is on the St. Patricks Channel of the Bras d'Or Lakes, where Middle R. enters the lake, just west of Baddeck. Another CB Bonaparte's was at L'Ardoise, Rich. Co., Apr. 23 (GED).

GULLS lingering until the NAMC. The counties in which they occurred were as expected: CB (65), Pict. (18), and Inv. (9). One on Brier was unusual for the date (ELM). The three LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS were a modest showing, with ads. Apr. 26 in Kings Co. (RBS) and Cape John, Pict. Co. (KJM) and a second summer bird at Glace Bay, Apr. 6 (RWK).

Next, an educational tale. On Mar. 2, several observers (including GEM, JUM) noted an unusual ad. gull at Glace Bay. It was identified by some as a Slaty-backed Gull which would have been an Atlantic Canada first. Other local observers saw the bird and concurred with the initial identification (DBM, RKN) and some of us rushed up to see the bird ourselves. We all drove away thinking we had seen our first Slaty-backed Gull for Nova Scotia. However, comments were requested from out-of-province gull experts, since the identity of this bird remained questioned by some. These experts politely, firmly and convincingly told us that the bird was a hybrid, possibly Herring x Great Black-backed Gull. This tricky bird lingered most of the month in Glace Bay and the tale is a warning to all birders to not let excitement dull critical examination.



The alert posture of these gulls, including the first-winter GLAUCOUS GULL that frequented Black Rock Beach in Halifax's Pt. Pleasant Park into spring, might suggest danger - a passing eagle, perhaps. But the photographer tells us that they had simply perked up when somebody approached with a handout of bread. [Photo Azor Vienneau]

JAH reported a first winter MEW "COMMON" GULL from Lun. Co., Mar. 7. His extensive description is somewhat convincing, and he saw the bird beside two Ring-billed Gulls. Speaking of RING-BILLED GULLS, 662 were on the NAMC, a big bump up from last year, helped along by triple-digit counts from Ant., Hants, and Pict. Cos.

HERRING GULL numbers on the NAMC bounced back up from last year to 15,155. This is but a fraction of the number that is truly about, as many are ignored or overlooked, and counting fatigue can also set in. The cool spring perhaps explains the 85 ICELAND

All the late GLAUCOUS GULLS were in CB where three of four counties shared 21 birds on the NAMC. Only Rich. Co. was shut out. The latest sighting was at Sydney, May 15, of two birds (DBM, Lynn Ellis). A total of over 5,500 GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS was slightly lower than on the NAMC last year, but there are still plenty to go around.

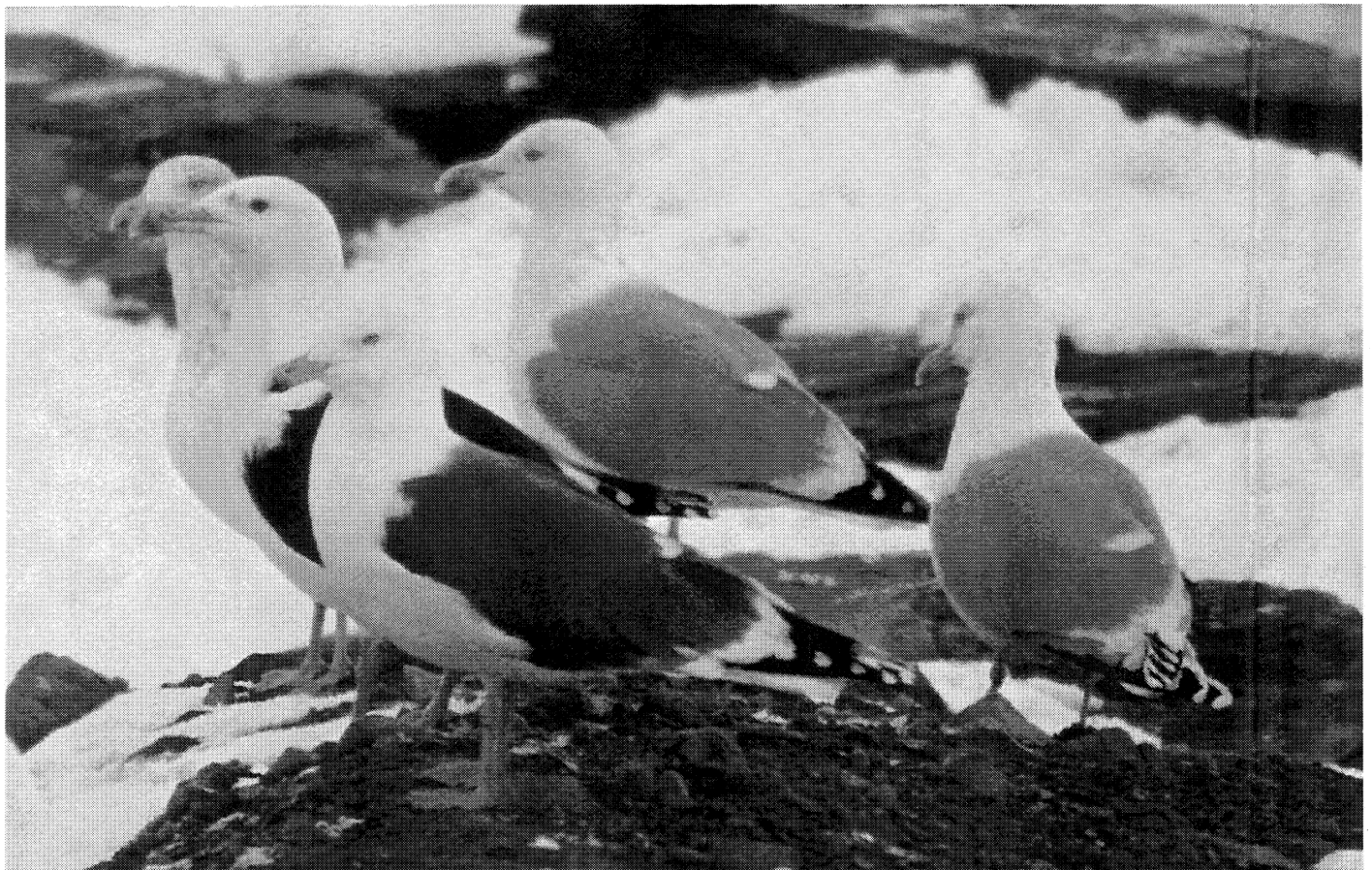
The only BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES were on the NAMC, with 815 counted from CB where they breed, although the count is half of what it was a year ago. I expect the foul weather on count day was to blame.

The lone CASPIAN TERN this spring was at Linden, Cum. Co., Apr. 20 (HAB). From Ted d'Eon's ROSEATE TERN page [<http://pages.ca.inter.net/~deonted/ternrep.html>] comes the news that the first Roseates were seen May 22. There is little to comment on the arrival of COMMON and ARCTIC TERNS, as too few reports were submitted to suggest any trends. On the NAMC there were 271 Commons from across NS, while the six Arctic Terns were all from Yarmouth. JCT noted two Arctic Terns circling over Drain L., on Hwy 101, before they headed towards Sackville. She's seen this in earlier years and presumes they are migrants, since they don't breed inland in NS.

Further north on CB, the first Arctic Terns were not seen until the last day of May. The only BLACK TERNS were the eight on the NAMC, from their small colony at the APBS.

A six-pack of RAZORBILL flew past Schooner Pond Beach, CB Co., Mar. 30 (DBM, RWK, SEM). Thereafter they were reported only from near their CB breeding colonies. Eighty-four BLACK GUILLEMOTS were on the NAMC, most off CB as expected, but a total much lower than last year's. The only ATLANTIC PUFFIN sighting of note was 16 flying past Brier, Apr. 27 (ELM). ☒

A Challenging Gull Identification



This gull, found in Glace Bay this spring (this photo Mar. 7) was enthusiastically identified as a Slaty-backed Gull, a visitor from Siberia or Japan, which has occurred in eastern North America. It certainly had the right back tone, intermediate between those of Herring and Great-black-backed, and the general size and comportment of this exotic species. Some things were troublesome to observers in the field, and resembled features of both Herring and Great Black-backed gulls, but not Slaty-backed. These were its lack of deep pink legs and the rather extensive "window" in its outer primaries (here evident on the underside of the opposite wing peaking over the nearer wingtip). Scrutiny by experts supported the conclusion that this interesting gull was most probably a rare hybrid offspring of Great-black-backed and Herring gull parents, although with gulls sometimes nothing seems certain. [Photo Ian McLaren]

Doves Through Woodpeckers

By Ian McLaren

Numbers of individual of all species combined in this section were down by close to 20% on the NAMC this year compared to last year, probably reflecting the less than ideal weather (JCT). This might be a rough criterion for inferring "real" declines or increases. Thus, for example, numbers of ROCK DOVES declined this year by about 23%, reflecting little if any change in this widespread, well-established species. On the other hand, counts of MOURNING DOVE decreased by only about 12%, which might actually mean that they were a little more common this year. Many stay through winter, but three that reached Sable I., Apr. 4 (ZOL), were clearly on the move. No cuckoos were reported this spring before the deadline date; we'll expect Black-billed in June.

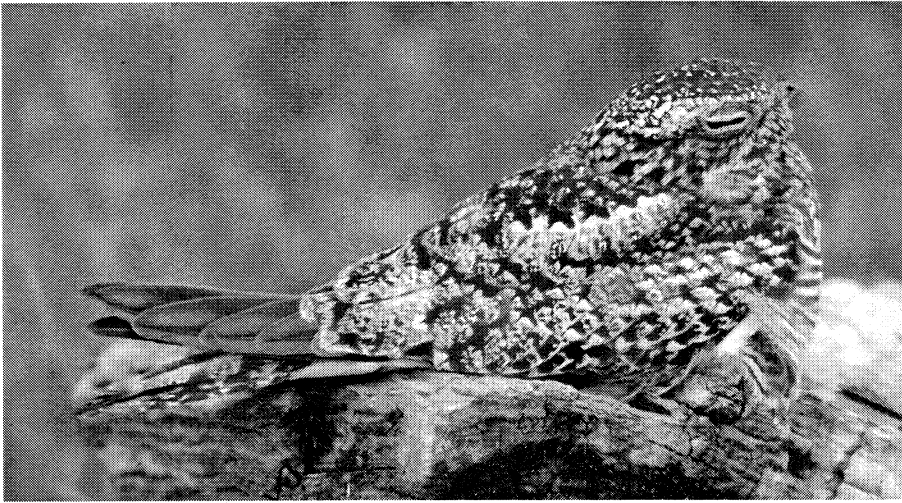
There were indications in e-mailings to NatureNS of good numbers of some owls on the standardized surveys carried out by several Society members for Bird Studies Canada. The fragmentary reports would be misleading here, but we look forward to solid information on numbers, distributions and trends when the overall results are analysed. Weather may have inhibited owling on the NAMC, but the fact that, compared with last year's total, there were only about half as many GREAT HORNED OWLS is suggestive. One was found feasting on a Snowshoe Hare in Yar. Co., May 12 (MUN). BLF notes that hare numbers have been down for many years in the Wolfville area and that the few remaining Great Horned Owls nest near farms where they feed on barn rats, Rock Doves, etc. One such pair was using a former Red-tailed Hawk nest in a large pine at Prescott House, Starrs Pt., but "alas, the pine blew down in one of this spring's fierce blows" (JWW). The winter's unusual numbers of SNOWY OWLS carried over into spring, with at least six lingering well into April. Individuals on Sable I., May 4 (ZOL) and a long-resident bird at Hartlen Pt., May 5 (DBR) were the latest reported. A N. HAWK OWL, was reported in early April from the



LONG-EARED OWL, Dartmouth NS, February 10, 1985. [Photo Eric Ruff - NSBS Library]

Sand L., CB Co., area (Anon). BARRED OWL numbers on this year's NAMC matched last year's, in contrast to those of Great Horneds. Barred Owls were late in laying this spring (BLF). The only reported LONG-EARED OWL was of one calling in Lun. Co., May 13 (CLS), although doubtless others will have turned up in the owl surveys. The diurnal SHORT-EARED OWL did seem scarce, with a mere single on the NAMC and only four reports of five other birds. Although, again, it may be too soon to interpret the incomplete casual owl survey reports, several surveyors thought that N. SAW-

WHET OWLS were scarcer and there were fewer than half as many on the NAMC compared to last year. One apparent victim of a collision with power lines near Kentville failed to survive for rehabilitation (*fide* JCT). Of course rehabilitation has many humane and educational virtues, but is probably irrelevant to maintenance of our raptor populations; if Saw-whets are down, they'll bounce back. Finally, the following request was posted via JWW on NatureNS. Stephen Peterson of Acadia University is studying distribution of shrews through owl pellet examination. If you find some,



COMMON NIGHTHAWK. [Photo Clive MacDonald - NSBS Library]

he'd appreciate them mailed in a ziplock bag (wash your hands afterwards!), with information on date and place, to: Owl Pellets, c/o Stephen Peterson, Dept. of Biology, Acadia University, Wolfville, NS B0P 1X0.

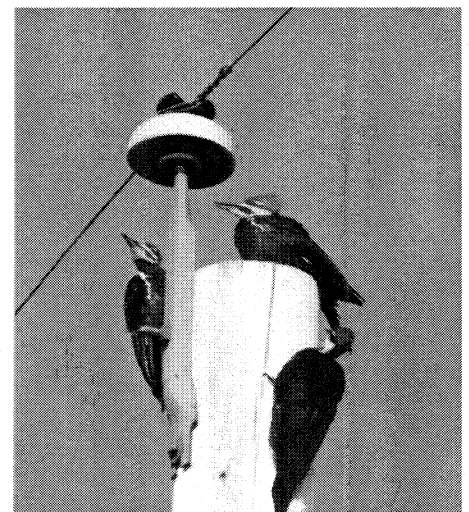
The NAMC total of two COM. NIGHTHAWKS in Guys. Co. and two in Ant. Co. was not a match for last year's 15. Remarkably, the only other report this spring was of single bird near Dagger Woods, Ant. Co., May 27 (RFL, Ivan Cozzi). I hope this isn't yet another indication of trouble for a species that has shown widespread declines. By contrast, there were some good counts of roosting CHIMNEY SWIFTS, despite the low NAMC total and evidence of widespread decline from breeding bird surveys, etc. The first were a single over CSI (MUN) and 16+ at the Robie Tufts Centre, Wolfville, May 7, the latter thwarted from entering the chimney by an attendant Merlin (JWW). They were widely reported in the next few days. The traditional Wolfville gathering peaked May 24 at about 250 and were again harassed by a Merlin that perched on the chimney (BBT). Otherwise, most reports at that site were of fewer than 100 individuals. Good peak numbers were also reported at other chimney roosts: 45 at Temperance St., New Glasgow, May 9 (KJM); 252 at the Middleton High School, May 23 (SLH); and 100 at the NS Agricultural College, Truro, May 30 (BBA). RFL pondered the meaning of these large gatherings, which can't be of breeding birds. They do nest widely in

the province, but with fewer forest snags, etc., for nesting, their populations may be diminishing here and need help. For those interested, JWW gave us a Web site (with links) describing the building of nesting "towers" for swifts: <http://www.comcentric.net~Dwa>. DHH alerted us via NatureNS to the northward movement in S. Virginia of R U B Y - T H R O A T E D HUMMINGBIRDS, Mar. 25, but none reached us until Apr. 30, when an early five were reported to JAH to be at feeders near Maplewood, Lun. Co. The next were not noted until May 7 near Tremont (SLH), and by the NAMC May 12, numbers were only 17% below last year's (i.e., relatively about as common). On that day, there seemed to be a "wave" of arrivals (JCT). As usual, males were seen first; the first female reported was on Brier I., May 19 (ELM, IAM).

Of course, some BELTED KINGFISHERS winter here: the 25 on the last CBC vs. 238 on the NAMC might hint at the fraction that had chosen not to emigrate. Possibly, one heard near Saxon Pond, Mar. 15 (JCT), had wandered from some provincial wintering site, but individuals Mar. 24, Roberts I., Yar. Co. (MUN) and Indian Pt., Lun. Co. (JAH) had probably come from afar. They were seen more widely thereafter.

Presumably a **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** noted Apr. 29 near Schooner Pond, CB Co. (GEM, JUM) was a miscalculating spring migrant.

Another in Yar. Co. during the May 11 NAMC also hadn't been reported there during winter. Brier I. hosted the season's first **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** Apr. 7 (Laura Titus). The next was found Apr. 18 at Fairmont, Ant. Co. (RFL), after which they became more widely reported with a peak of four on CSI, Apr. 27 (MUN *et al.*). There were perhaps fewer on this year's NAMC (i.e. down by 28%). By contrast, **DOWNY** (down only by 5%) and **HAIRY WOODPECKERS** (down by 15%), especially the former, seemed to be holding their own. There were **four BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS** on this year's NAMC, compared with eight last year, with no other reports, except for "signs of a probable" (i.e. characteristic bark flaking) in Blomidon Park, May 25 (JWW). Bearing in mind that the good numbers of N. **FLICKERS** last winter, it seems impossible to discern what might have been arriving migrants; they held their own (i.e. down by 19% on this year's NAMC). RLF was pleased with his first sighting of a flicker, May 27, on the very boreal Cape St. Lawrence Trail, Inv. Co., where their cavities would be welcomed by small owls. **PILEATED WOODPECKERS** were down by 27% compared with last year's NAMC, but there were otherwise the usual few reports. One unusual one was on the Halifax Commons, Apr. 14 (DOM). ☞



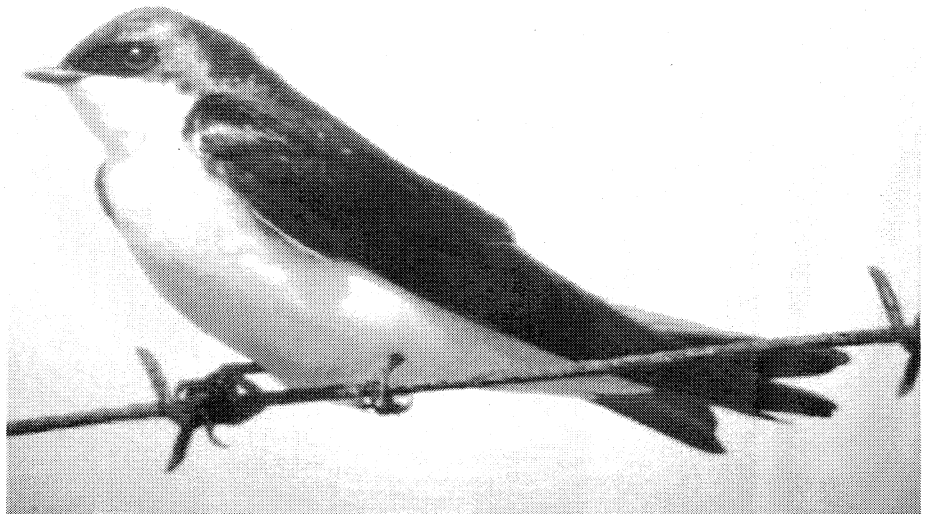
A pair of **PILEATED WOODPECKERS** and their fully fledged young were flamboyantly evident last summer on Big I., Pic. Co. [Photo Elizabeth Doull]

Flycatchers Through Thrushes

By Andy Horn

Early reports of OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS included one May 17 near Italy Cross, Lun. Co. (SJF), and individuals at Beechmont, Enon, and Louisbourg, CB Co., May 30 (DBM, RWK). EASTERN WOOD-PEWEES apparently had a "late arrival this year" (JCT). Reports peaked in late May, with one May 15, CSI (MUN), and four separate, widely scattered reports May 27-30 (MCN, JAH, STH, JCT), including six or more on Seal I., May 27-29 (SJF). *Empidonax* flycatchers may have been a tad late, too: only one YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER was seen on the NAMC, though it was all the way up in Vic. Co., and the next report wasn't until May 30, at Big Pond, CB Co. (DBM, RWK). Similarly, ALDER FLYCATCHER reports on the NAMC were from Ant. and Vic. Co., then ceased until a May 28 sighting at Blockhouse, Lun. Co. (JAH, STH), and one May 30 from Beechmont, CB Co. (DBM, RWK). LEAST FLYCATCHERS, as usual, were earlier than their congeners, but the NAMC recorded only 33 compared to 90 last year. Early dates included May 6, Kejimkujik NP (HAT), and May 9, Kentville; when five were seen (JCT). Summer residents were well in place beginning in mid-May. On May 13, for example, Kejimkujik Park was "loaded with them, everywhere" (HAT). Enough with the "chebek" already!

EASTERN PHOEBES first appeared Apr. 5 at Little Hbr., Shel. Co. (DHY), Apr. 11 Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS), and in a wave of a dozen at Brier I., Apr. 16 (CAH). Then, Apr. 26, there was a burst of arrivals across the province: Little Hbr., Shel. Co. (DHY), Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS), and Brier I. (ELM). Reports of GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER were limited to Kings Co., May 11 (NAMC) and May 13 (AAM). Remarkably few E. KINGBIRDS were seen on the NAMC -- only five -- but within the following week widespread sightings became too numerous to list. Certainly the highlight of this portion of



TREE SWALLOWS are always a welcome sight in spring. This one was photographed 20 Apr. near Port Williams, Kings Co. [Photo Richard Stern]

the reports was the **SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER**, seen May 26-31, in a pasture at Petite Rivière, Lun. Co. (SJF), ultimately by many observers. Its tail seemed "about a third shorter than usual," perhaps indicating a fem. or young bird.

Oddly enough, N. SHRIKE reports were at least as numerous in the spring as in the winter, with individuals reported from Fairmount, Ant. Co., Apr. 20 and Mar. 31 (RFL, MZG), HRM, Mar. 23 (BBA), and Apple R., Cum. Co., Mar. 25 (KFS).

BLUE-HEADED VIREOS were first seen May 4 in Kentville (JET, JCT), then all over the southern part of the province in the next two days, including CSI (MUN), HRM (TEP), and Kejimkujik NP (HAT), although not in CB until May 18 (DBM). This year, the typically scarce reports of WARBLING VIREO came from CSI, May 4 (NSBS) and May 19 (MUN), although one was probably heard May 21 on BPI (JCZ). PHILADELPHIA VIREOS are also typically hard to come by. This year they were seen on Brier I., May 17 (ELM) and BPI, May 21 (NSBS). Eight RED-EYED VIREOS were reported

near N Gut St. Anns, Vic. Co. (BSK) as early as May 4, and 22 were seen on the NAMC, May 11.

Let's give corvids high marks for consistency: NAMC totals of GRAY JAY (72), BLUE JAY (2,153), AMERICAN CROW (6,065), and COM. RAVEN (909) were all within a few percent of their 2001 figures.

The half dozen or so reports of HORNED LARKS at various coastal locations surely reflects our reporting bias rather than their scarcity; hopefully they're just being overlooked.

PURPLE MARTINS were seen Apr. 6 at CSI (MUN) and May 5 at Amherst Pt. (TEP). The first arrivals at their toehold in this province, Oxford, Col. Co., were three males and two fems. that appeared May 7 (Keith Black *vide* JCT). The first TREE SWALLOW reports were of two at CSI, Mar. 30 (MUN) and one at Port Williams, Kings Co., Mar. 31 (AGH). A week later they were seen throughout in numbers, although a pulse of widespread, mid-week reports Apr. 11 and one of clearly new birds in Canso, May 9 (Tom Crane) suggested a wave of additional arrivals

(var. obs.). An Apr. 21 arrival at Half I. Cove, Guys. Co. was one observer's earliest record for the area (Steve Bushell, RFL). A flock of this species that also included BANK, CLIFF, and BARN SWALLOWS over the sea just off Brier I. appeared to be new arrivals, at least for the latter three species, as late as May 19 (ELM, IAM). The earliest Cliff Swallow report was from Apr. 18 at Port Williams, Kings Co. (JCT), well before the arrival date of the well-monitored colony at the Halifax Airport, May 11 (DHH). AAM suggested that this species is becoming increasingly rare in Kings Co. The earliest Barn Swallow report was Apr. 6 at Port Clyde, Shel. Co. (MUN), although they were in numbers at various locations by the third week in Apr. (var. obs.).

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES, not your typical migrant bird, in concentration of over 50 at the north end of Brier I., May 11, were "clearly migrants" (ELM, AHM). One with a white tail appeared at Bonnet L. Barrens, Guys. Co., Apr. 21, (Steve Bushell, RFL) and, not a week later, another (dare we speculate the same one?) appeared at two feeders in Ant. Co. (RFL, MZG). BOREAL CHICKADEES, not the easiest birds to attract to feeders, did come to a peanut butter and fat mixture smeared on an apple tree in Westphal, Hfx. Co. (EBB). A crowd of 10 at the north end of Brier I. accompanied a warbler wave and seemed to be migrants (ELM).

The numerous reports of WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH and their NAMC total of 76, i.e. double the 2001 total, suggests they are increasing. A particularly big arrival at Brier I. about Apr. 17 was down to five by Apr. 27-28 and down to one by May 11 (ELM, AHM).

The CAROLINA WREN in south end Halifax persisted to at least Apr. 12 (AGH), while the location and timing of another, videotaped sighting, in Dartmouth, Apr. 22, was such that it was likely the same bird reported from Dartmouth in our last issue. HOUSE WRENS are scarce in this province, so one seen Apr. 24 at Wallace Bay, Col.

Co. (HAT), was well worth reporting. WINTER WRENS are our commonest wren, and were reported from all over the province as they entered their singing season, mainly in the last week of April and first week of May (var. obs.).

GOLDEN-CROWNED and RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS had similar NAMC totals to last year: 311 and 840. First arrivals of the latter species were approximately on schedule: Apr. 21 at N Interval, Guys. Co. (RFL), and Apr. 23 at Advocate, Cum. Co. (KFS) and Orchard Heights (RBS).

The earliest arrival dates for E. BLUEBIRDS were May 4 at Brier I. (Laura Titus, CAH, JUS) and May 19 at CSI (MUN). Remarkably, they tried to breed about as far north as they could, at Cape North, Vic. Co., for at least the second year that one was present. The male arrived May 25, and the fem. was first seen June 5 (Fritz McEvoy *vide* DBM). Other arrivals were May 25 near Berwick, Kings Co. (PBG) and a prospecting pair in Wolfville May 23 (GWT, JCT), which were evicted by Tree Swallows and may have been the same pair that ended up near Gaspereau, Kings Co., three days later (Sherman Boates *vide* JCT)

Ten VEERIES were seen on the NAMC, though most reports were after the third week in May. A GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH at CSI, Apr. 16

(MUN) and two heard at St. Anns, Vic. Co., May 29 (BSK) were the only reports of a species that, together with the endangered Bicknell's Thrush, deserves our full attention. The six SWAINSON'S THRUSHES seen on the NAMC were half the number seen last year. A pulse of reports north to CB, May 27-May 30 (var. obs.), suggested a later wave of arrivals. Six HERMIT THRUSHES on CSI, Apr. 16 (MUN) led the pack, followed by single birds in Halifax, Apr. 17 (ALD *vide* DOU) and Wolfville, Kings Co. Apr. 18 (BLF *vide* JCT). On Brier I., Apr. 26-27, there were some calling, but not singing (ELM), and by May 2 two were singing and more were still arriving (ELM, IAM). JCT reported that "one tuned up its spring song within 20 ft, and in sight, of me! What a delight." A close second to that delight must have been the WOOD THRUSH singing and calling at Brier I., May 20 (ELM). AM. ROBINS showed an early wave Mar. 23, with 15 at one feeder at Wolfville (Judy Amos *vide* JET), and 30 in Port Williams working over holly berries (JSI). These built up to 13 at one house near Mahone Bay, Lun. Co., Mar. 24 (JAH), "lots" Mar. 28 on CSI (MUN), and 100+ Mar. 30 (ELM, IAM). By Apr. 2 one was singing at Sandy Bottom L. (MCN), and by Apr. 7 they were "all over lawns and edge of ocean" on Brier I. (RBS). The biggest gathering seen was 200+ in a field in S Lun. Co., Apr. 21 (ELM). Nothing beats spring. ☞



Many were able to trace the long-staying CAROLINA WREN in south end Halifax through its loud singing, even in winter. Its bulging throat and parting of feathers (dark spot) on the side of its vibrating neck are indications of its exuberant spring performance on March 20. [Photo I. McLaren]

Mimics Through Warblers

By Ken McKenna

A couple of people sent in reports of EUR. STARLINGS at feeders. DBM reported 250 Mar. 3 at Whitney Pier and 650 at the Hub fields, both in CB Co. The total of 7,200 on the NAMC is just shy of the number on the 2000 count, but is an increase of 900 from last year. JCT heard a GRAY CATBIRD from Palmeto Woods, Kings Co., May 9. The 14 on the NAMC were down from 35 on the 2000 count and 21 last year and probably reflect the date of the count getting earlier each year. On Brier I., ELM reported numbers from five to eight May 17-20. A Catbird seen May 27 in the yard of June Jarvis in Canso was noteworthy as they are not seen frequently in that area of the province. Various observers sent in updates on wintering N. MOCKINGBIRDS surviving into spring (Wolfville, JWW; Louisbourg, SEM; New Glasgow, KJM and Freeport, Andy Moir and Christine Callaghan). The Portuguese Cove, Hfx. Co. mockingbird shared a tree with a N. Cardinal and in early April was eating up to 15 "fat red grapes per day" (HAT). Reports received in late April from Westport, Digby Co. (ELM) and Lockeport (DJC) might be of a migrant, but with the number of overwintering birds it is very hard to tell. The 33 on the NAMC were up considerably from the last few years with 24 of these from Kings Co. alone. A BROWN THRASHER over-wintered in the town of Pictou and was seen in early May by Jayne MacCarthy. On May 12 three were sighted in Shel. Co., two at house #38, The Hawk and one at the yard of TEC. MUN felt the pair at The Hawk were nesting by the end of May near the same spot as the first documented nesting for N.S. last year. A final Brown Thrasher was noted in the potato patch at the cottage of RBS on Brier I., May 20.

There were single sightings of AM. PIPIT at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Mar. 4 (SJF, EIM) and Mar. 31 at Martinique, Hfx. Co. (TEP). Hartlen Pt. had 12, Mar. 24 (David and Janey Hughes) and Pond Cove, Brier I. had 20, Apr. 2 (Paul MacDonald). JUS

reported small numbers at the latter location until mid-April. The nine on the NAMC was down from 25 last year. In general, waxwings cleaned up their food early this year. In March, PMC had 40 BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS in Dartmouth near Sullivans Pond, JSI saw 69 eating privet hedge berries in Hantsport and JCT saw 120 in Wolfville. Large flocks on Brier I. the week before had dwindled to one bird Mar. 30 (CAH *fide* AHM). A single bird seen on the NAMC was likely the same bird seen by HAF in Greenwich feeding on grounded apples the day before with 50 CEDAR WAXWINGS (*fide* JWW). A total of 72 Cedars Waxwings were seen on the NAMC. The 35 seen on Brier I., May 19-20 (ELM, AHM) were likely spring migrants and, by the last week of May, reports indicated widespread return.

The spring warbler report contains 29 species including several rarities from the southern end of the province. TENNESSEE WARBLERS were not often encountered but KJM reported one with 15 species of warbler on the trail by the Museum of Industry in Stellarton, May 25 and five singing males the next day along the Gusset Rd. near Lismore, Pict. Co. A single from Silver Mines, CB Co., May 30 (DBM, RWK) rounded out the reported Tennessees. Surprisingly, three ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS outnumbered the two Tennessee Warblers on the NAMC. Laura Titus reported a possible Orange-crowned on Brier I., Apr. 2. She also reported one, of the eastern race, in Westport, Apr. 26 and it was subsequently noted by ELM & DOE two days later. The NASHVILLE WARBLER was the most common *Vermivora*. By May 11, 57 were tallied on the NAMC, only about half the number from the previous year. Similarly, the 109 N. PARULAS on the NAMC were about 30% of last year's number. The earliest reported was at Goose Creek marsh, Shel. Co., May 5 by MUN. On Brier I., a peak of six was noted May 18 on a several day visit by ELM.

Early male YELLOW WARBLERS were noted by CAH on Brier I., May 4 and the next day a single was found at APBS (NSBS). Of the 88 seen on the NAMC, 34 were from Kings Co. RBS noted the first CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER this spring from Kings Co. and commented that this warbler seemed more abundant than usual this spring. This was not supported by the NAMC as only six were noted. The first MAGNOLIA WARBLER was identified May 5 by CAH on Brier I. and the next day, BSK had two at South Haven, Vic. Co. By NAMC day, a respectable 86 were tallied mostly from Hfx., CB and Vic. Cos. Very few reports of CAPE MAY WARBLER were received, with SJF observing one at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., May 10. On May 18, all observers on the NSBS field trip to APBS had excellent views of a singing male and Fritz McEvoy had one at Cape North, Vic. Co., May 19-22. With only one seen on the NAMC this warbler seems to be at a low ebb. Four BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLERS made the NAMC list. By the end of May, four reports of five birds were noted from N. Gut St. Anns, Vic. Co. (BSK); APBS (NSBS); Lewis L. PP (BBA) and two from Blomidon PP (*fide* JWW).

There appeared to be a major movement of YELLOW-RUMPED (MYRTLE) WARBLERS Apr. 16 on Brier I. Both CAH and JUS noted them feeding on insects all over the island as the fog lifted. ELM & AHM spotted an impressive 120 on Brier I., May 11. All counties reported Myrtles on NAMC with the grand total of 2,570 a little shy of the 2,900 reported in 2001. On May 6, BSK noted a likely YELLOW-RUMPED (AUDUBON'S) WARBLER at her South Haven, Vic. Co. maple tree. She described it as a male with a yellow crown, chin and side patches, black chest, pale under parts and lacking any black necklace. The first BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS were noted May 5 at Goose Creek marsh, Shel. Co. (MUN), and at Second L. Park Reserve, Hfx. Co.

(TEP). This warbler was nudged out of second place on the NAMC with 383, down from 650 in 2001. There was a possible wave of this species on May 17 with ten on Brier I. (ELM, AHM) and five at Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS). BLACKBURNIAN WARBLERS are in the middle group of returning warblers and only five were on the NAMC. Four were observed from Brier I., May 17 (ELM), one at Apple R., Cum. Co., May 17 (KFS), and four at Palmetter Woods, Kings. Co., May 20 (DOU). BSK noted the arrival of her first four at N. Gut St. Anns, Vic. Co., May 28.

The two PINE WARBLER reports are likely winter survivors with Linda Hall noting her winter Pine making it through to Mar. 30. Survival was helped by taking cues from chickadees that found suet hidden under the feeder roof out of the way of Starlings. A second Pine Warbler was noted Apr. 6-11 at the feeder of KFS, Apple R., Cum. Co. PALM WARBLERS were quite common this spring. First reports came with the wave of Myrtles on Brier I., Apr. 16. By the next day, Palms were outnumbering the Myrtles on Brier I. by 2:1 (CAH, JUS) and were also showing up at Molega L., Queens Co. (JAH), Second L. Park Reserve (TEP), and Advocate, Cum. Co. (KFS). This species was the second most common warbler on the NAMC with 25% of the 394 reported from CB Co. A single BAY-BREASTED WARBLER was reported on the NAMC. Later reports were from Brier I. (ELM) and Fleming Park, Hfx. Co. (PLC), May 17 and at Mt. Uniacke, Hants Co. (HAT), May 24. BLACKPOLL WARBLERS were a little later arriving this year with none on the NAMC. HAT sent in the first report May 13 from Kejimkujik NP followed by one on Brier I., May 17 (ELM) and peaking there May 19 with ten. One was seen at APBS, May 18 (NSBS), and May 20, PLC noted "throngs" (20-30) on a walk through Fleming Park. An ad. fem. CERULEAN WARBLER was found at house # 38, The Hawk, Shel. Co. by JON, May 8 (*fide* MUN). An early BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER was noted by JCZ *et al.* Apr. 23 at Rainbow Haven, Hfx. Co. On May 6, HAT at



BAY-BREASTED WARBLER. [Photo Ian McLaren]

Kejimkujik NP and KJM at Scotsburn, Pict. Co., spotted their first for the year. About 300 were noted on the NAMC about half last year's total, but more than in 2000. AMERICAN REDSTART numbered seven on the NAMC, the same total as 2001. ELM & AHM reported a peak of seven May 18 at Brier I. and KFS had eight at Maccan, Cum. Co., May 25.

A WORM-EATING WARBLER was noted Apr. 18 from The Hawk, Shel. Co. at Craig and Emma Nickerson's yard by CST. The most exciting warbler find of the spring was a SWAINSON'S WARBLER photographed and banded on BPI, Shel. Co. by Mike Peckford, a student at Acadia University. According to Tuft's Birds of Nova Scotia, 1986, this is only the second record of this species in the province. Little wonder as from my experience in spring in Florida, one had to get down on hands and knees and crawl through suitable mangrove leaf litter to see this species in migration. The most northern breeding range in the east coast for the Swainson's Warbler is the Carolinas and indeed Canadian records are very few. OVENBIRDS were under-reported, but 69 were tallied on the NAMC, down substantially from 239 in 2001 and 191 in 2000. The first report for the spring was May 6 in Kejimkujik NP (HAT). A N. WATERTHRUSH was noted at Second L. Park Reserve May 5 (TEP). Like the Ovenbird, this

species was also down in numbers from the last couple of spring counts, which were in the 60 range. A CONNECTICUT WARBLER was found in an alder patch at Daniels Hd., Shel. Co., May 20 by JON and subsequently seen by others (*fide* MUN). A couple of very early MOURNING WARBLERS were found May 11 at River Bennett, Vic. Co. (BSK) and constituted the only two seen on the NAMC that day. No other reports were received of this normally late returning warbler to the end of this spring reporting period.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT numbers were less than 25% of last year's total on the NAMC with only 15 reported. An early yellowthroat was seen by MUN at Goose Creek marsh, Shel. Co., May 5. On Brier I., ELM & IAM had six May 18 and ten May 20 indicating a mid-May movement of these birds to breeding territories. A male HOODED WARBLER was found under a transport truck at Daniels Hd., Shel. Co., Apr. 20 but was gone the next day (*fide* MUN). The WILSON'S WARBLER reported over-wintering at the yard of S. Borkowski in the last issue made it to spring by eating up to 50 mealworms per day. By Apr. 16 it was down to 20 worms and was last seen on that day. No Wilson's Warblers made the NAMC report, but a mid-May migration was noted when KFS had a pair May 17 in Apple R., Cum. Co.; at APBS May 18 (NSBS); and May 20 when ten were noted by BBA in a day of birding at APBS and Waverly Arm, Hfx. Co. A single CANADA WARBLER was reported from Rich. Co. on the NAMC, the only one for the province. The NSBS field trip to APBS had one pose nicely in the shrubbery around the parking lot May 18. A YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT at 6030 South St., Halifax, made it through winter more often than not by foraging on its own rather than being dependent on the feeder. It was seen May 1 (*fide* PLC). A single was noted from Shel. Co. on the NAMC and BBA reported one at APBS May 20. Spring reports of this bird are unusual so this was an exceptional year in this respect. ☐

Tanagers Through House Sparrows

By David McCorquodale

There was always something to attract and keep a birder's interest this spring, with rarities, colour and change. Two spectacular rarities, Canada's first Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow and a Chestnut-collared Longspur were found on southern islands. Late in May numbers of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and orioles provided a colourful treat. Both House Finches and Northern Cardinals continue to thrive and nest in several locations reminding us of the continual changes occurring.

Despite no tanagers being found on the NAMC, there were some very interesting sightings this spring. A very early SUMMER TANAGER spent almost three weeks in East Bay, from the first few days of April until about Apr. 24. This bird enjoyed a little notoriety, being the subject of a short expose on vagrant birds on CBC Radio by its finder, Steve Sutherland of Maritime Noon. Later, in mid-May, three more Summer tanagers appeared, one in Lockeport, Shel. Co. (Andre Fiske *vide* JOW), BPI (JCZ), another in Riverport, Lun. Co. (JAH, CLS, JIC), and one picked up dead in Dartmouth (JOW). SCARLET TANAGERS arrived during the second half of May, with at least nine sightings. Two of the more interesting were near Kentville (DOU) and Branch L., Anna. Co. (MCN) both places where there is reasonable nesting habitat. The others were on southern



Although routine at feeders through winter, this WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, this portrait of a beautiful "white-morph" bird, at the Kavanaugh's feeder in Canso town this spring, deserves a showing [Photo Tom Kavanaugh]

islands, CSI, BPI and Brier, undoubtedly just passing through. One of the amazing tanagers from last winter, the WESTERN at PEL's in Lower Sackville, started to show brighter colours in March and was last seen March 30, after livening up the yard for two months.

Only one E. TOWHEE, a fem. at the famous House 38 at The Hawk, CSI (MUN), was reported. AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS were widespread, if not numerous, in March and early April. Sightings peaked slightly in the last half of April with the largest flock, 40, at Wallace Bay, Cum. Co. (HAT), Apr. 24 and the highest of the careful counts at a feeder in Apple R., Cum., Co., the week before (KFS). The NAMC caught the tail end of the northward migration, with a dozen counties tallying some, but only two, Anna. and Hants, with more than 10. Within a few days they were gone, the last two sightings were two at South Haven, Vic. Co., May 16 (BSK), and then a few in Canso, Guys. Co., two days later (Tom Kavanaugh).

The first migrant CHIPPING SPARROWS arrived on Brier I. and at Wolfville Ridge, Apr. 19 (JUS, JCT) and within a few days the first on CBI was at River Bourgeois, Rich. Co. (GED, SDI). By the middle of May they were widespread for the NAMC, with well over half being counted in four counties, Kings, Pict., Hants and CB. There were more CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS than is typical for spring. The one found in early January at Garden Lots, Lun. Co. stayed through the winter and was last seen Apr. 4. One made an appearance for the NAMC in CB Co. (Anon). The last were two in Shel. Co. One was at a feeder on CSI, May 20 (MUN), and the other was on Seal I., May 27-28 (SJF).

A migrant VESPER SPARROW was at Digby, Apr. 28 (ELM) and in early May, a pair near Mt. Thom, Col. Co. was seen in reasonable nesting habitat (KJM). The only LARK SPARROW of spring was first seen on the NAMC near



FOX SPARROW. [Photo Randy Lauff]

Cape North and then was videoed a week later (Fritz McEvoy). The first big pulse of spring migrant SAVANNAH SPARROWS started Apr. 17 on Brier I. (CAH) and was noticeable in Kings Co. a few days later. However it was not until the end of the month that they were both widespread and common in suitable nesting habitat across the province. There was a good showing of Ipswich subspecies this spring, with the first Mar. 19 on CSI (SIS, BJS). Peak counts were 20 at Martinique, Mar. 30 (TEP) and another 20 at Hartlen Pt., Apr. 1 (DOU). Both the earliest arrivals and the timing of the migration peak is a bit earlier than that found by Wayne Stobo and IAM during their studies of Ipswich Sparrows in the early 1970s. Numbers on the mainland dwindled as they continued the journey to the nesting grounds on Sable I. The last stragglers were two at Canso, Guys. Co., May 18 (Tom Kavanaugh), and another on BPI the next day (JCZ, NSBS).

Spectacular concentrations of sparrows at Daniels Hd., CSI continued into the spring, after the amazing finds of late winter. NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS continued to be found in the area until the last week of May, part of the group first found in February. Estimates of at least eight in mid-April, with about half of these being the western, Hudson's Bay race, and the rest the local race that breeds in the Maritimes. Our nesting birds do not usually arrive on the nesting grounds until at least the first week of June, if not later, so it is fascinating that such a group survived the rigours of winter in a saltmarsh. Careful examination of the concentration of sparrows produced a

Canadian first. A **SALTMARSH SHARP-TAILED SPARROW** was in the same group along with the Nelson's and a **SEASIDE SPARROW** reported on in our winter issue and last seen Apr. 6 (MUN). Saltmarsh Sharp-tail nesting areas are found in Maine and further south along the east coast of the USA. Recently it was split from the Nelson's. This bird was identified Apr. 5 and then seen until at least May 25 (MUN), although it was likely present late in the winter. The key characters used to separate Nelson's from Saltmarsh are difficult to see on skulky birds (see photograph on page 33). More details of this sighting and characters used in the identification will be published in *Birders Journal* (IAM).

A couple of reports of **FOX SPARROWS** in early March were thought to be overwintering birds. The earliest migrant may have been the singing male at Broad Cove, Lun. Co., Mar. 15 (SJF) or the one in Halifax, Mar. 23 (BBA). In the next week scattered individuals were seen from Five Houses, Col. Co. (Ina Major) to CSI (MUN) to Tremont, Kings Co. (SLH) to Port Hawkesbury (DBM). Several observers noted fewer at their feeders and in their yards than other springs. The number on the NAMC was functionally the same as last year's, with most of them concentrated in CB and Shel. Cos. On sunny days in very early March some of the overwintering **SONG SPARROWS** started to sing. The first influx of new migrants was Mar. 24 on Brier I. and then a week later a more substantial movement was noticed (ELM). As expected in mid-May it was the most frequently encountered sparrow on the NAMC. The first **LINCOLN'S SPARROWS** of the year were found during the NAMC in HRM, Kings, Pict, Rich. and Yar. Cos., for a total of seven individuals. Late in May many were found in a day's birding in CB Co. (RWK, DBM). A **SWAMP SPARROW** at Lahave, Lun. Co., Mar. 17, was probably a lingering bird that overwintered. Another, Apr. 4 at Annapolis Royal (SEM), could have been an early spring migrant. The first major pulse of migrants resulted in singing males Apr. 17 at Wallace Bay, Cum. Co. (HAT) and Ohio, Shel. Co.



This beautiful and totally self-identifying male **CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR**, confirming one of seven provincial records (oddly, six in spring) was photographed at Tiverton, Digby Co., May 21. [Photo Richard Stern]

(DOE). They were widespread by mid-May for the NAMC, with Hants and Pict. Cos. accounting for more than half of all sightings.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS overwintered at feeders, especially in the southern half of the province. Some of these birds began singing in mid-April, about the time the first of wave of migrants appeared on Brier I., Apr. 17 (CAH). In the next few days many observers recorded the first of the spring for their areas. On Brier I. another pulse of migrants went through around the NAMC, May 11. This was the second most frequently found sparrow on the count, with two counties, Pict. and CB tallying more than 300 each. The last few days of April brought **WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS** to a couple of northern localities: Fairmont, Ant. Co. (RFL) and River Bourgeois, Rich. Co. (SDI, GED). During the first week of May they were widespread, perhaps a few more individuals in the southern regions, than northern. A significant movement through Brier I., middle of May, peaked with 20 per day May 17-19 (ELM). Both CB and Vic. Cos. tallied more than 25 on the NAMC, reflecting both the effort put into the count and the good number of White-crowns around this spring. One lingered at Cape North, Vic. Co. into the first days of June (Fritz McEvoy). Earlier an individual of the western race, *gambeli*, overwintered in Plymouth, Pict. Co., and stayed into April.

DARK-EYED JUNCOS sang sporadically through March and then really got going as the first major wave of migrants arrived the last couple of

days of the month. The NAMC showed that they are widespread and very common, with more than 4,200 counted. This is close to twice the tally of last year, perhaps because the count coincided with another migratory wave.

LAPLAND LONGSPURS are frequently encountered, but with only four reports received this spring, they appear to have been scarce. In late March there were still half a dozen lingering at Grand Pré (JCZ), one at Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Apr. 21 (JAH), three at Morien Bar, CB Co., May 5 (SEM), and the latest, one May 18 on BPI (Rebecca Goreham, Whitmans). The fifth longspur report was of a **CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR**, a bird that nests on the prairies of southern Alta. and Sask. Needless to say this is a very rare vagrant, five others having shown up in NS in the spring. Laurence Outhouse found the Chestnut-collared Longspur in his yard in Tiverton, Digby Co. about May 12. At first he was not sure what it was, not really surprising considering its rarity, but he was able to correctly identify it a few days later, alert the birding community and welcome several fortunate birders to study the bird in his yard. Some excellent photos were taken May 19, the last day of its visit. **SNOW BUNTINGS** too were inconspicuous this spring. Only a handful, from Grand Pré and CB Co. were noted in March. The latest were three Apr. 27 at Wild Cove, CB Co. (SEM) and then a couple more the next day at Morien Bar, CB Co. (DBM, RWK).

NORTHERN CARDINALS continue to thrive in the southern half of the province. Singing males or pairs were regular in places such as Dartmouth, Lockeport, Barrington, and Westport throughout the spring. The total for the NAMC was almost three times higher than last year, 34 versus 12, largely because of the 17 in Yarmouth. A pair on Seal I., May 27-29 (SJF) was unusual. There were no reports from the northeast half of the province. The first **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK** was found Apr. 22 on CSI (Craig and Emma Nickerson *fide* MUN) and then there was a pair the next day (MUN). This is



This sprightly male DICKCISSEL was nurtured through winter by the Kavanugh's at Canso town, Guys. Co., and was photographed in full spring garb around May 11. [Photo Tom Kavanaugh]

five days later than the first for the province and CSI last year. By mid-May for the NAMC they were widespread, being found in 14 counties, with Shel. and Digby tallying more than 10. About a week later large numbers, more than 20 for a few days, were on Brier I. (ELM, IAM, MUN), and the wave was picked up at many locations across the province late in the third week of May. Rare at any time of year, but especially so in the spring, was a male BLACK-HEADED GROSBEEK in Amherst, May 13 or 14 (Con Desplanque).

There was a dearth of BLUE GROSBEEKS this spring, with only one reported at Blanche, Shel. Co., Apr. 22 (*fide* MUN). There was a better showing of INDIGO BUNTINGS, but

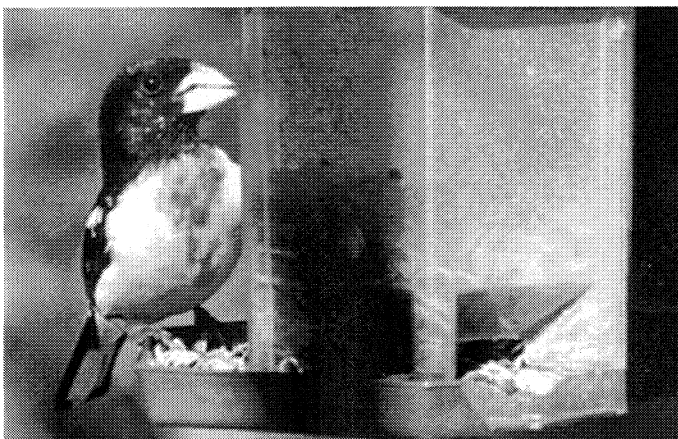
no influx in late April as we sometimes get. There were only two April reports: one on the NAMC, in Lun. Co. and one Apr. 18 on Brier I. (JUS). Later in May about 15 were reported from Digby along the east coast all the way to CB Co. On Brier I. a male Indigo Bunting is interesting, but not unexpected. One male Indigo on Brier I., May 17 did rate a few long looks, mostly because it was feeding within a meter of three male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and eight Baltimore Orioles (ELM). DICKSISSELS overwintered in both Louisbourg and Canso (Tom Kavanaugh), which is unusual enough in itself. Even more surprising, they lingered through April and well into May and made appearances for the NAMC in mid-May.

For the second year in a row there was an exceptionally early BOBOLINK, this year Apr. 13 on Brier I (CAH). The next was a more expected date, May 9 on CSI (CST), and then the NAMC caught the first major influx into the province. It was not until a week or so later that they were widespread, especially in the northern half of the province. During the first week of March the first RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS made their way north and mingled with the flocks that had successfully overwintered. The E. MEADOWLARKS found during the winter on CSI lingered into mid-March (MUN).

Early RUSTY BLACKBIRDS, Mar. 23 in Yarmouth (MUN) and Mar. 26 in

Port Hawkesbury (DBM), had probably overwintered. In mid-May, Kings Co. had the largest number on the NAMC, 17, although this was well down on last year's count for the county. They were found in 10 other counties, with nine in CB being the next highest count. In contrast COM. GRACKLES were both numerous and widespread, with just about 6,000 counted across the province on the NAMC. Earlier the first spring migrants were noted Mar. 14 at Maders Cove, Lun. Co. (JBM), Mar 15 in Barrington (RMC), the next day in Halifax (DAM) and then a couple of days later in Voglers Cove (JAH). It wasn't until the last few days of March that they were widespread. Earlier there was still the odd flock of those that overwintered, including about 75 at Mill Village, Queens Co., Mar. 8 (SJF). In the same overwintering flock were eight BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS and some Red-winged Blackbirds. One of the first apparent migrant cowbirds was a male in Barrington, Mar. 16 (RMC). No major influx was noticed, but numbers did swell during the third week of April. On the NAMC in mid-May they were found in all but two of the 18 counties, with a high of 53 in Shel. Co.

Starting May 15, there was an influx of ORCHARD ORIOLES. This was 10 days later than last spring's remarkable influx. Up to four were on CSI until the last few days of May (MUN, var. obs.), two in Canso (Tom Kavanaugh) and two fems. on Brier I. (ELM, SJF, DOE, DHY). The three BALTIMORE



For many of us, the best, and sometimes the only, chance to study the striking male ROSE-BREADED GROSBEEK is when early migrants pause at feeders to stock up at on easy meals. This one graced a back yard in Hammonds Plains, HRM, May 2. [Photo Tracy Lutz-Noel]



The INDIGO BUNTING is another beautiful stranger that turns up at our feeders in spring. First-spring males (like this one with its extensive buffy wing edgings) seem to be most prone to wander, as older adults tend to return to past breeding sites. This one was photographed in Hammonds Plains, HRM, in June. [Photo Terry Lutz]

ORIOLES in Yarmouth, Mar. 23 (MUN), and a couple at Dawn MacKenzie's on Brier I. (*vide* CAH), overwintered. Spring arrivals started May 4 on CSI (NSBS) and then they kept on coming throughout May, with impressive counts late in the month. More than twice as many were found on the NAMC in 2002 as 2001, and the distribution was interesting. The 55 were tallied in 7 counties, with about 80% of them in Shel. and Digby. The next highest count was four in Guysborough. Numbers built up after the count, with more than 35 on CSI, May 12 (MUN), about 40, including 13 in one rose bush, on Brier I., May 17 (ELM) and 10 in Canso, May 27 (Tom Kavanaugh).

After the invasion of last fall and the high counts at Christmas, there was a dearth of PINE GROSBEAKS this spring. They were found in only five counties on the NAMC, with the highest total only eight in Inverness. The picture for PURPLE FINCHES is almost a mirror image. They were scarce through the fall and winter and then late this spring they were everywhere. Towards the end of the second week of April they started showing up at feeders and by the end of the month they were widespread and common. More than

3,000 were counted on the NAMC, with both Vic. and CB tallying more than 400 and Hants and Pict. more than 300. HOUSE FINCHES are still thriving in Halifax with other reports for the NAMC from Shel., Yar. and Anna. Cos.

Most of the RED CROSSBILLS reported were at feeders, including up to 15 through March at Maders Cove, Lun. Co. (JBM). They were found in only five counties on the NAMC, with the highest total, 13, in CB Co. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS continued to frequent feeders at which they had never been seen before through the early spring. They were found in about half the counties on the NAMC, with three, Pict., Guys. and CB, tallying more than 20, suggesting they were more common in the northern half of the province late in the spring.

Through March and early April, many feeders hosted COM. REDPOLLS, a dozen or two was a typical flock size. However there were some larger groups in Kings Co., more than 100 in Margaretsville, Mar. 10 (JWW), 100 at Greenwich, Mar. 25 (JCT), about 100 in New Minas, Mar. 25 (JCT), and a flock of 92 in Blockhouse, Lun. Co., Mar. 7 (JAH). Numbers dropped dramatically after the first week of April and by the

end of the month they were scarce in the south. By mid-May for the NAMC only 42 were tallied on the mainland, including 29 in Pict. Co. On CBI there were still a few large flocks for the NAMC, including one of 70 in North Sydney. Almost 300 were tallied on CBI, including more than 100 in both Vic. and CB Cos. Here is an example of the NAMC showing differences of timing of migration across the province. A few lingered later in May with singles at two different feeders in Cape North, Vic., May 22 and 23 (Dave Algar, Fritz McEvoy). PINE SISKINS overwintered and spent much of March at feeders from Barrington (RMC) to Portuguese Cove, HRM (HAT) to Georges R., CB Co. (CET). In mid-May they were found in all 18 counties with the two highest counts, and almost half the total, on CBI. More than four times as many AM. GOLDFINCHES were on the NAMC, with the highest counts in Kings and Hants Cos. EVENING GROSBEAKS were found in all but one county on the NAMC, without being really numerous in any one. The highest tally was just more than 200 in Hants. Later in May, an impressive flock of more than 150 was in Canso (Tom Kavanaugh).

HOUSE SPARROWS were found in all counties during the NAMC. ✕

SALTMARSH SHARP-TAILED SPARROW

One of the winter's best finds was this SALTMARSH SHARP-TAILED SPARROW on CSI Apr. 5, a first for Canada. Based on thorough morphological and genetic research in the early 1990s, recent revisions of the A.O.U. Checklist (the birders' bible for life lists) have split the former Sharp-tailed Sparrow. The Nelson's Sharp-tailed includes, in addition to the rather dull, olive-gray "Acadian" subspecies of our coastal marshes, two brighter, buffier subspecies nesting on the prairies and around James Bay. The Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow breeds along the U.S. coast from the Delmarva Peninsula to S. Maine. It overlaps but only rarely hybridizes with the "Acadian" subspecies in the latter locality. Although several birders had almost certainly seen the CSI bird during February and March, it was not identified as such until IAM obtained a more compelling view on Apr. 5. Fortunately, earlier that day he had hastily obtained some photographs. The i.d. has been confirmed by experts: Drs. James Rising of the University of Toronto, co-author of the two excellent books on sparrows, including a recent photographic guide, and Jon Greenlaw, who has studied the Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow extensively and, with Rising, wrote the definitive account in "The Birds of North America" series. This black-and-white photo cannot capture some diagnostic features of the bird, particularly the sharp contrast between the whitish throat and breast and the rich buffy triangle surrounding the rather dark-gray auricular area. However, it does show the characteristically elongate bill of this species, and the extensive dark streaking along the flanks, extending as narrower streaks across the breast. Although the species is often described and illustrated as having narrow streaks on the side, these are more often quite broad, as on this bird. By contrast, birds of the prairie subspecies, which is occasional here in winter, often do have quite narrow and blackish flank streaking. A complete account of this bird will appear in "Birders Journal," a fine Canadian publication that will have colour illustrations. [Photo I. McLaren]



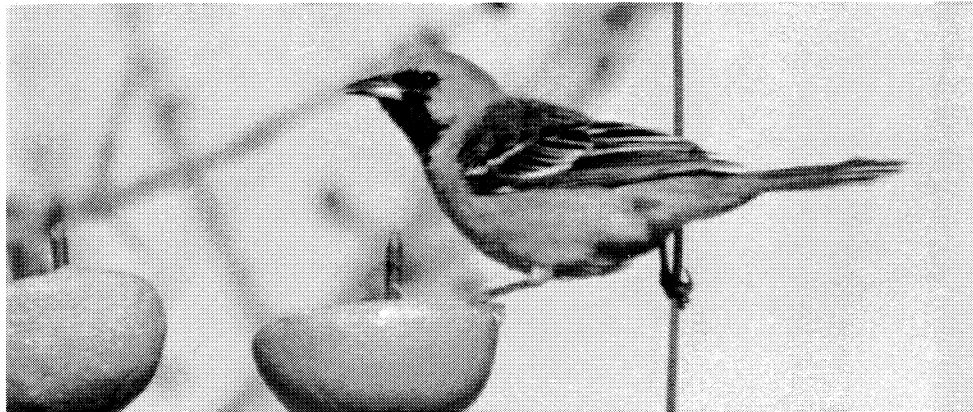
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Thanks to all of our contributors, including:

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Sarty, Bev	BES	Simpson, James	JSI	Desplanque, Con
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Forsythe, Bernard	BLF	Swift, June	JUS	Fiske, Andre
Maybank, Blake	BLM	Wolford, Jim	JWW	Goreham, Rebecca
Kent, Bethsheila	BSK	Spicer, Kathleen	KFS	Hall, Linda
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Thomson, Chris	CET	Nickerson, Maggie	MCN	Hughes, Janey
Stevens, Clarence, Jr.	CLS	Newell, Murray	MUN	Jarvis, June
Stoddard, Clyde	CST	Goring, May	MZG	Kavanaugh, Tom
Harris, Dave	DAH	NA Migration Count	NAMC	Laffin, Terry
MacNeill, Don	DAM	NS Bird Society Field Trip	NSBS	MacDonald, Paul
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MacLaughlin, Don	DOM	Knapton, Richard	RWK	Nickerson, Emma
Doull, Elizabeth	DOU	Nickerson, Sandra	SAN	Nickerson, Joey
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Toom, Hans	HAT	Paquet, Terry	TEP	Whitmans, The
McLaren, Ian	IAM	Lucas, Zoe	ZOL	

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Whereas Baltimore Orioles have become routine at suitably stocked feeders in spring, "overshooting" ORCHARD ORIOLES, like this first-year male 16 May in Canso, Guys. Co., are much less so. [Photo Tom Kavanaugh]

Book Review

By Richard Stern

Living on the Wind (Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds)

by Scott Weidensaul. Paperback- 401 pages (1999)

North Point Press

I saw this book recently in a bookstore and had never heard of it, even though I try and keep up with the birding literature. I started browsing, was intrigued, and bought it. As the author states in the preface, at any moment, day or night, there are birds aloft in the skies of the Western Hemisphere, migrating. This book is an account of that migration, written in a narrative style, for the interested lay-person with an interest in birds, migration, and conservation. Some of the book is written from a personal perspective, where Weidensaul describes his own experience observing the birds, or places, reading almost like a travelogue, evoking mental pictures for me of places I have been, or would like to go. For example, the book starts with an account of bird migration from the Beringia region of the NW tip of the continent, "Mist clouded my glasses and a breeze lashed the long, coarse grass on the steep bluff where I sat...Fifty or sixty feet below me, waves washed on a cobbled beach of round black rocks... through the fog came a sound, a creaky three note honk...a small flock of Emperor geese broke into clear air... rowing against the wind." Or another, later account of High Island on the Texas Coast in Spring, "It is internationally famous in birding circles...almost all the visitors are committed to their hobby – people with thousand dollar binoculars and field guides worn in holster-like pouches riding low on their hips."

The book frequently makes the point that the more migration is studied, the more complex it seems to become, and he describes long distance migration, east to west migration (e.g. Wheatears that go from N. Labrador to Europe) and short distance migration (e.g. Blue Grouse that walk each fall from the deciduous lowlands up into the Rockies). He also makes the point that the purpose of bird migration seems to always be related to obtaining optimal food supplies, not to get away from the cold. There are plenty of theories about how bird migration takes place, and how the birds know how to get to and from where they need to go, and Weidensaul describes these at some length, together with various experiments that have been done over the years, such as the Emlen Funnel apparatus that can be programmed to simulate different seasons, day and night, etc. There are also good accounts of methods of study of migration, such as radar, satellite tracking, banding etc. and also detailed accounts of feeding and metabolic adaptation, weather-related difficulties, and other aspects of migration. At times the book reads more like a detective story, e.g. in its account of the search for the wintering grounds of the Swainson's Hawk and the reasons large numbers were dying from eating grasshoppers that were themselves ingesting pesticides. Other specific phenomena covered in depth include the huge raptor migration through Veracruz, Mexico, in Fall, the wintering ecology of our own warblers in Jamaica, the problems related to the proliferation of Snow Geese, the spring passerine migration on the Gulf Coast, theories as to what constitutes a species, and many others.

Unfortunately there is a theme of urgent despondency that runs through the book – namely the constant threat to habitat, at all points of migration, that is decimating many species, e.g. the replacement of Gulf Coast live-oak woodlands with marinas and casinos, the poisoning of the Salton Sea with selenium, the deforestation of Central America, etc. etc. etc. Reading this book alone should spur us all into being active conservationists! But there are also some bright spots - he mentions, e.g. the co-operation of many different organisations in both northern and southern hemispheres to stop the pesticides that were killing the Swainson's Hawks, the saving of Dauphin Island, Alabama, from development, and the increasing awareness that there are big bucks to be made out of people like us, going places to watch birds, as long as there are birds to be watched.

Overall I am delighted I found this book, and can highly recommend it as a good read to anyone interested in birds, mysteries, science and the natural environment. There is a comprehensive bibliography, and excellent index. Good reading!

Kentville, NS

Field Trip Reports

Bon Portage Island

18 May 2002, Leader: Claire Diggins

Six birders beat it to Bon Portage Island on Friday, May 18th in two outboards. On our arrival the group leader had to get tough and yell for everyone to help unload the gear as all hands began running off to chase Scarlet Tanagers, orioles, and White-crowned Sparrows. We had spotted a small rainbow on the way over, a good omen.

During the iffy weekend our small group worked hard to spot and identify over 70 species. Highlights were: Indigo Buntings, many warblers-Nashville, N. Parula, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Magnolia, Blackpoll, Black and White, Common Yellowthroat, N. Waterthrush. We saw a Greater Shearwater, a Gannet, Surf and Black Scoters. There ten Canada Geese, lots of Eiders, a Greater Yellowlegs, and a Willet. There were thrushes all around us- Swainson's, Hermit, Robin, Veery and Wood! A flock of Eastern Kingbirds fed on the rack with over 20 Baltimore Orioles. We spotted sparrows – Fox, Song, Ipswich, Chipping, Lincoln's, Swamp, and many White-Crowned. Great Blue Herons travelled back and forth from the water to the thickets. There was a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, a Lapland Longspur, many Grey Catbirds and a Northern Cardinal. There were Bobolinks, Bank Swallows and Tree Swallows. Judy spotted a Merlin. We found a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and a Hairy Woodpecker. It was a wonderful weekend, highlighted by the presence of thousands of Leach's Storm Petrels.

Annapolis Royal / Belleisle

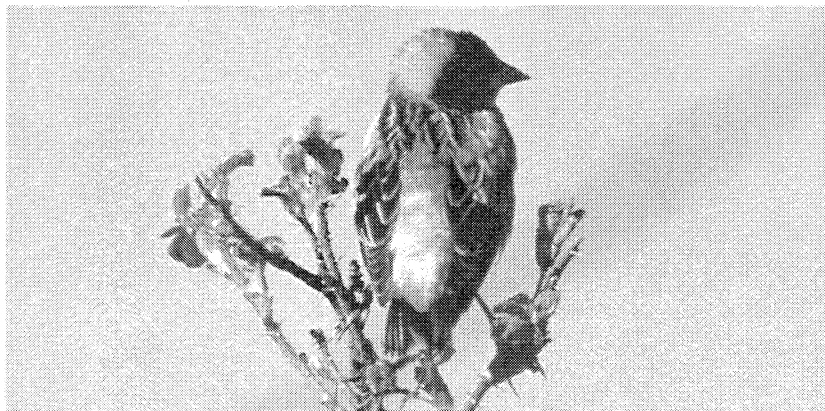
25 May 2002, Leader: Sharon Hawboldt

A small, but enthusiastic group of birders from Yarmouth to Windsor to Cape Sable Island met in Annapolis Royal under sunny skies. We started the day with a close study of the Cliff Swallows nesting at the tidal power plant. From there we drove to Mickey Hill Pocket Wilderness doing a shorter hike than in previous years through the woods to Lambs Lake.

By mid-morning we were on our way to more isolated haunts on the North Mountain. We hiked two logging roads off Youngs Mountain Road in Belleisle, one overlooking the Bay of Fundy and the other the Annapolis Basin. On the first road we were delighted to watch a Winter Wren and listen to his long serenades. On the second we found many warblers and observed their flashy spring colours against a clear blue sky. We reluctantly turned back after watching a Northern Waterthrush in full song and a Barred Owl fly across the road.

We stopped for lunch in Belleisle and then spent the afternoon hiking the dyke tops and Belleisle Marsh, seeing many ducks and marsh birds. The Bobolinks were giving their bubbly cheerful songs in several locations.

We all agreed that it had been a long, but wonderful day of spring birding, with 72 species to show for our efforts. ☘



Returning BOBLINKS often linger in unexpected setting, like this male that sang its bubbly song around small, shrub-lined lawns in Westport, Brier Island, May 19-22. [Photo Ian McLaren]

Book Review

By Joan Czapalay

Birds, Birds, Birds

A Ranger Rick's NatureScope book

by the National Wildlife Federation, 1998. McGraw-Hill

Backyard Birds (0-395-95210-7) and Bizarre Birds (0-395-95213-1).

Both by Jonathan P. Latimer and Karen Stray Nolting; illustrated by Roger Tory Peterson.

Hardcover - both 48 pages, (1999) Houghton Mifflin

Children are exacting critics, so when the Peterson books came up for review, I asked a couple of very young birders to look them over and share their thoughts. Right away the attractive book covers caught their attention. Large print and clear illustrations of our familiar Robins (juvenile, female and male), as well as a photograph inset of a single adult male, invited the six year old reviewer into *Backyard Birds*, and she was not disappointed.

The book sections are organized by colour- red birds, blue birds, etc., and all but a few birds are common to our area. The first section "How to Watch the Birds" contains a lot of useful tips on size, shape, field marks, behaviour and sound. The eight year old child liked this section, but the younger one most enjoyed the illustrations with the arrows pointing to field marks, just like in the Peterson's Eastern Birds which we have used together. Habitat is given for each bird, and several interesting facts about each are presented in bullet form. The children like this quick and snappy way to get information. We all liked the grouping of the similar birds on one page (Red- and White-breasted Nuthatches, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers). I liked the addition of a photograph for most of the species. The photographs were especially helpful in *Bizarre Birds*. The grouping here was by unusual features ("Odd Bills" and "Strange Hunters" for example). The photograph of the Red Crossbill shows the bill clearly. The text is even more interesting than in *Backyard Birds*. I learned that "The bill of a young crossbill is straight until after it has left the nest. Then it can cross either to the right or the left." Did you know that? Both books have hard cover, are about one half the size of a page of *Nova Scotia Birds* and contain fewer than fifty pages each. Well worth the \$15.00 if you want a gift for a budding birder.

Most elementary school teachers (and families and friends of young naturalists) will enjoy using *Birds, Birds, Birds*. It is teacher friendly, with lots of suggestions for hands-on activities and reproducible pages. Many of the Science, Mathematics and Language Arts lessons would fit well within the learning outcomes for Nova Scotia Grade Four curriculum. I found some of the text unnecessary: "It was 5:00 a.m. and George was wide awake." Children do not need "George" to get them to learn about nature, and the teachers don't need it either. A small criticism for a very useful book. My favourite section was "Homing in on Habitat". If each teacher in the province would use just that section, it could make a positive difference for the environment. It is intended for a wide geographical area so do not be surprised that migration data for the Osprey (our provincial bird) is for its journey from Oregon to Bolivia! ☞



GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE at Canning 01 April 2002. [Photo Richard Stern]

North American Migration Count - May 11, 2002

By Judy Tufts, Nova Scotia Coordinator for NAMC

My deep appreciation goes out to all those generous participants who once again, gave much time and effort, into making this year's Spring North American Migration Count another special day in spite of some contrary weather. No doubt the outcome of the day's count was influenced by the strong, gusty winds in many areas. Many thanks go out to the invaluable, hard work put in by many county coordinators, and area representatives; these people put in countless hours assigning areas behind the scenes, cajoling friends to participate, phoning many people, and then gathering all the reams of tally numbers to be coaxed into columns following the big day... and then making *more* phone calls... ! They are to be given much credit for their contribution. I am most pleased to add that *all* our eighteen counties came through this year.

Weather picture: Sunny with cloudy periods. Wind increasing to 40 kph with gusts 60-70 kph from the west. LOW: 2 °C. HIGH: 12-16 °C. Isolated showers in the N.E. (There were even some light flurries in Vic. Co.!) Evening: Mainly clear. Wind 40 kph NW with gusts to 60 kph W diminishing to NW 20-30 kph overnight. LOW: 1-3 °C.

Here is a brief summary of the day's results with some of the memorable highlights: 206 species were counted - down a few from the past two years. We added *four* new species to our provincial NAMC listing: Black Vulture (Hants E), Tufted Duck and Little Gull (Pict. Co.), Clay-colored Sparrow (CB).

For the second year in a row a Eurasian Whimbrel has turned up for the count in CB - possibly the same bird that was counted last year? Other possible returnees included a male Great-crested Flycatcher to Kings Co., a pair of Brown Thrashers and one Am. Oystercatcher to Cape Sable I.

Summary:

Total Species: 206 Total Birds: 113,665

Participation	Regular Birding	Owling	Stationary	At Feeders
Parties	318	18	32	370
Observers	462	28	41	435

Regular Birding	Hours	Kilometres
Foot	652	956.75
Car	520.5	8,235.5
Boat	48.75	124
Bike	23.5	64
Other	20.5	8

Three species of Egrets visited our shores: one Great (Hfx. Co.), two Snowy (CB and Digby Cos.) and one Little (CB Co.). With Turkey Vultures being noted this year in *nine* counties - though some may have crossed boundaries to be tallied in more than one county - evidence of this species spreading throughout our province is increasing each year. N Gannets had not yet dispersed to their breeding grounds; over 2,000 were seen, mostly in Shel. and CB counties. Gray Partridge were not tallied in the Truro area this year but a single bird was spotted in Hants East. There was a Eurasian Widgeon in Hfx. Co., five Dickcissel came to various county feeders, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher made it to CB Co., and one N. Shrike lingered on Long I., Digby Co.

Large increases in some species were noted this year: 33 Mockingbirds (24 of which were found in the Mockingbird hotspot of the Kentville/Wolfville area), up from 25 in 2001; 34 Cardinals (of which 25 were in Shel. and Yar. Cos.), up from 12 in 2001; 55 N. Orioles this spring were up from the 2001 tally of 22 birds.

Finally two Mandarin Ducks surprised a pair of birders checking out a field in Shubenacadie. They realized that these birds must have escaped from the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park where some have been residing in recent years.

My special thanks to Sherman Williams who has very graciously made the NAMC 2002 provincial county results available through his web-site for all to see. His website can be found at: <http://www.glinx.com/~sherm/>.

Thank you everyone! ☺

Owling	Hours	Kilometres
Hours	21	
Kilometres	144	
Other Hours		
Stationary	66	

Species	Total	Species	Total
Common Loon	162	Rough-legged Hawk	1
Pied-billed Grebe	6	<i>Buteo</i> sp.	14
Red-necked Grebe	4	American Kestrel	104
Northern Fulmar	23	Merlin	48
Sooty Shearwater	5	Peregrine Falcon	1
Leach's Storm-Petrel	101	Gray Partridge	1
Northern Gannet	2,265	Ring-necked Pheasant	393
Double-crested Cormorant	2,795	Ruffed Grouse	182
Great Cormorant	386	Spruce Grouse	12
Cormorant sp.	61	Sora	17
American Bittern	33	American Coot	1
Great Blue Heron	363	Black-bellied Plover	159
Great Egret	1	American Golden-Plover	1
Little Egret	1	Piping Plover	23
Snowy Egret	2	Killdeer	100
Black-crowned Night-heron	2	American Oystercatcher	1
Black Vulture	1	Greater Yellowlegs	358
Turkey Vulture	18	Lesser Yellowlegs	61
Canada Goose	472	Solitary Sandpiper	2
Brant	197	Willet	535
Wood Duck	61	Spotted Sandpiper	38
Gadwall	5	Whimbrel	7
Eurasian Wigeon	1	Eurasian Whimbrel	1
American Wigeon	102	Ruddy Turnstone	4
American Black Duck	2,272	Red Knot	27
Mallard	598	Sanderling	131
Mallard x Am. Black Duck	38	Least Sandpiper	20
Blue-winged Teal	85	Purple Sandpiper	51
Northern Shoveler	30	Dunlin	36
Northern Pintail	24	Peep sp.	45
Green-winged Teal	208	Common Snipe	113
Ring-necked Duck	583	American Woodcock	73
Tufted Duck	1	Little Gull	1
Greater Scaup	148	Black-headed Gull	7
Lesser Scaup	1	Bonaparte's Gull	33
Scaup sp.	3	Ring-billed Gull	662
Common Eider	2,369	Herring Gull	15,155
Surf Scoter	1,237	Iceland Gull	85
White-winged Scoter	148	Glaucous Gull	21
Black Scoter	218	Great Black-backed Gull	5,578
Scoter sp.	480	Black-legged Kittiwake	823
Long-tailed Duck	5	Gull sp.	291
Bufflehead	109	Common Tern	271
Common Goldeneye	69	Arctic Tern	7
Hooded Merganser	34	Black Tern	8
Common Merganser	254	Razorbill	3
Red-breasted Merganser	527	Black Guillemot	84
Duck sp.	9	Atlantic Puffin	1
Osprey	150	Alcid sp.	4
Bald Eagle adult	283	Rock Dove	1,446
Bald Eagle immature	49	Mourning Dove	2,152
Bald Eagle unaged	17	Great Horned Owl	13
Northern Harrier	104	Barred Owl	65
Sharp-shinned Hawk	89	Short-eared Owl	1
Northern Goshawk	9	Northern Saw-whet Owl	10
<i>Accipiter</i> sp.	1	Owl sp.	1
Broad-wing Hawk	12	Common Nighthawk	4
Red-Tailed Hawk	113	Chimney Swift	161

Species	Total	Species	Total
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	122	Northern Parula	109
Belted Kingfisher	238	Yellow Warbler	85
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	62	Chestnut-sided Warbler	6
Downy Woodpecker	434	Magnolia Warbler	86
Hairy Woodpecker	229	Cape May Warbler	1
Black-backed Woodpecker	4	Black-throated Blue Warbler	4
Northern Flicker	716	Yellow-rumped Warbler	2,570
Pileated Woodpecker	63	Black-throated Green Warbler	383
Woodpecker sp.	7	Blackburnian Warbler	5
Eastern Wood-Pewee	1	Palm Warbler	394
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1	Bay-breasted Warbler	1
Alder Flycatcher	2	Black-and-white Warbler	299
Least Flycatcher	33	American Redstart	7
<i>Empidonax</i> sp.	6	Ovenbird	69
Eastern Phoebe	20	Northern Waterthrush	39
Great Crested Flycatcher	1	Mourning Warbler	2
Eastern Kingbird	5	Common Yellowthroat	15
Northern Shrike	1	Canada Warbler	1
Blue-headed Vireo	305	Yellow-breasted Chat	1
Red-eyed Vireo	22	Warbler sp.	9
Vireo sp.	13	American Tree Sparrow	70
Gray Jay	72	Chipping Sparrow	342
Blue Jay	2,153	Clay-coloured Sparrow	1
American Crow	6,065	Vesper Sparrow	9
Common Raven	909	Savannah Sparrow	517
Purple Martin	5	Ipswich Sparrow	3
Tree Swallow	3,014	Fox Sparrow	82
Bank Swallow	25	Song Sparrow	2,313
Cliff Swallow	76	Lincoln's Sparrow	7
Barn Swallow	643	Swamp Sparrow	176
Swallow sp.	2	White-throated Sparrow	1,995
Black-capped Chickadee	3,452	White-crowned Sparrow	148
Boreal Chickadee	178	Dark-eyed Junco	4,207
Chickadee sp.	9	Lark Sparrow	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	454	Sparrow sp.	20
White-breasted Nuthatch	72	Northern Cardinal	34
Brown Creeper	44	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	77
Winter Wren	94	Indigo Bunting	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	311	Dickcissel	5
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	840	Bobolink	26
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1	Red-winged Blackbird	2,007
Veery	10	Rusty Blackbird	56
Swainson's Thrush	6	Common Grackle	5,995
Hermit Thrush	401	Brown-headed Cowbird	289
American Robin	5,633	Blackbird sp.	80
Thrush sp.	3	Baltimore Oriole	55
Gray Catbird	14	Pine Grosbeak	26
Northern Mockingbird	33	Purple Finch	3,123
Brown Thrasher	2	House Finch	10
European Starling	7,259	Red Crossbill	20
American Pipit	9	White-winged Crossbill	96
Bohemian Waxwing	1	Common Redpoll	328
Cedar Waxwing	72	Pine Siskin	823
Tennessee Warbler	2	American Goldfinch	3,576
Orange-crowned Warbler	3	Evening Grosbeak	965
Nashville Warbler	57	House Sparrow	1,094

(Continued from back cover4)

Thu 26 Oct 2002 - NSBS Annual General Meeting

NSMNH, Summer St., Halifax, 8 p.m.

As usual, the AGM will be followed by a wine and cheese reception, a great opportunity to meet and mingle.

Sat. 23 Nov. 2002. - Antigonish Coastal Waters

Leader: Randy Lauff 867-2471, Email rlauff@stfx.ca

This trip covers the waters of St. Georges Bay and the Antigonish Harbour; we'll end the day at Ogdens Pond, which has hosted thousands of gulls, ducks and in some years, "inland" Gannets. Meet at Uncle Ron's Coffee Shop on the TCH just east of Exit 35 (Lower South River). Rain date: Sun. Nov. 24.

Thu 28 Nov 2002 - Regular Meeting

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

"Hot and Dangerous: Paraguay and its Birds." Guest Speaker: Kristina Cockle.

Sat 2 Dec 2002 - Cape Sable Island

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

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

Sat 4 Jan 2003 - Sewer Stroll I, Halifax/Dartmouth Area

Leader: Terry Paquet 452-3622. Email terrypaquet@hotmail.com

Meet at Hartlen Pt. at 8:00 a.m. to look for rare birds and regular winter visitors. Dress for cold weather and bring a lunch. Plan to carpool as much as possible. Storm date: Sun. Jan. 5.

Sat 18 Jan 2003 - Halifax Field Naturalists Sewer Stroll, Halifax/Dartmouth Area

Leaders: Linda and Peter Payzant. 861-1607 (evenings).

Email aa095@chebucto.ns.ca

Dress warmly and bring a lunch, binoculars, field guides and telescope (if you have one). 9:15 a.m. at the Boondock Restaurant in Eastern Passage. Rain Date: 9:15 a.m., Sunday January 19. ☼

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 (i. e. the only cost to the reviewer is the written review). Reviewers should have some experience in the topic of the book so a critical review can be written; children's books should be reviewed in conjunction with a child. 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.

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

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

Raven's End A Tale from the Canadian Rockies. by B. Gadd. McLelland and Stewart. Suitable for older children, but a darn good read for adults, too.

Exploring Alaska's Birds. Ed. P. Rennick. Alaska Geographic Society.

Field Guide to Advanced Birding by K. Kaufman. Houghton Mifflin. Yes, it's available again!

Hawks of North America by W.S. Clark and B.K. Wheeler. Houghton Mifflin.

A Passion for Birds – American Ornithology after Audubon by M.V. Barrow, Jr. Princeton.

Finches and Sparrows by P. Clement. Princeton.

The Complete Guide to the Birds of Europe by K. Mullarney, L. Svensson, D. Zetterström, P.J. Grant. Princeton.

Pheasants, Partridges, & Grouse by S. Madge and P. McGowan.

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:

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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 Editor until a new Field Trip Coordinator is found.

Sat 24 Aug 2002. Point Michaud, Cape Breton

Leaders: George Digout 535-3516
Email george.digout@ns.sympatico.ca
Billy Digout 535-2513

Meet at 9:00 am at the Dept. of Transport building, Hwy. 4 and Point Michaud turnoff, St. Peters. It is a good idea to wear boots if it is rainy. Lunch at George and Sharon Digout's home. Rain date Sun 25 August.

Sun 25 Aug 2002. - The Hawk

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

Meet at the Tim Horton's in Barrington Passage at 8:00 am See the migrating shorebirds between the Hawk and Cape Light and look for rarities. Bring proper footwear and a lunch if you wish.

Sat 31 Aug to Mon 02 Sep 2002. - Bon Portage Island

Leader: Joan Czapalay 422-6858
Email joancz@ns.sympatico.ca
Pre-Registration is necessary!

Depart late afternoon or early evening on Friday from Prospect Point Wharf, Shelburne Co. Bring food, drinking water, warm clothing and footwear suitable for rough (sometimes wet) terrain, a flashlight, mattress, sheet, and sleeping bag. Carry gear in waterproof bags or containers. Field guides are available on the island, as are cooking pans, dishes, and utensils. There is a charge of \$45 for NSBS members for three nights accommodation, as well as a boat trip donation.

Sat 14 Sep 2002 - Eastern Shore

Leader: Bob Lindsay 434-3438
Email rhlindsay@accesswave.ca

Meet at 7:30 in the Zeller's Parking Lot in Colby Plaza, just behind the Esso Station on Cole Harbour Road. Visit several sites along the Eastern Shore from Dartmouth to Lawrencetown - one of the best areas around for seeing migrating shorebirds. Bring proper footwear and a lunch. Rain date: Sun 15 Sep 2002.

Mon 16 Sep 2002 - Baddeck and Area

Leader: Bethsheila Kent (902) 295-1749
Email: floydo@ns.sympatico.ca

Meet at the parking lot of the Gaelic College in St. Ann's at 7 am to spend a half-day exploring the area around the college as well as an unused road that leads up Lewis' Mountain. Rain date: Tue 17 Sep 2002.

Sat 28 Sep 2002 - Eastern Shore

Leader: Peter Richard 463-5612
Email: Prichard@ns.sympatico.ca

Meet at Lower East Chezzetcook at the end of Storey's Head Road at 8 am. (Keep going on the East Chezzetcook. Road until the pavement ends, then turn right at the next intersection.) This trip will cover the common birding hot spots from Lower East Chezzetcook towards Dartmouth. Please plan to carpool as much as possible since many of the stops have a limited parking area.

Thu 26 Sep 2002 - Regular Meeting

NSMNH, Summer St., Halifax, 7:30 p.m.
"Oiled Birds Update." Guest Speaker: Jon Stone, Canadian Wildlife Service.

Sat 12 to Mon 14 Oct 2002 - Brier Island

Leader: Fulton Lavender 455-4966

Meet at the parking lot of the Brier Island Lodge on Saturday at 8 am. Enjoy a complete package of fall migration, highlighted by hawk flights. Weather permitting, there will be a boat trip on one of the days if at least 10 people register in advance.

Sun 13 Oct 2002 - Cape Sable Island

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

Meet at the Tim Horton's in Barrington Passage at 8:00 am See late migrants and shorebirds. Bring proper footwear and a lunch if you wish.

(Continued on inside back cover)