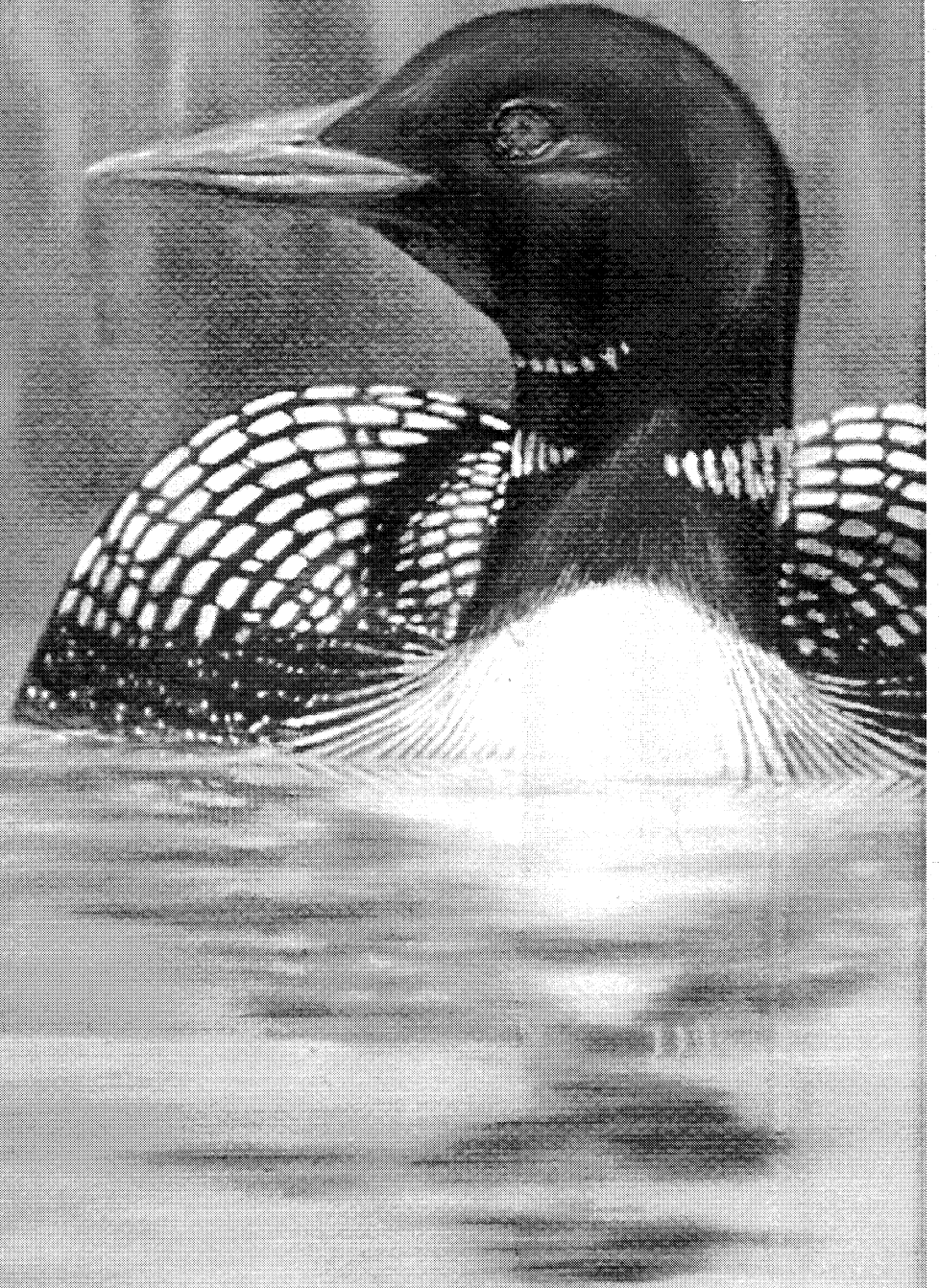


Nova Scotia Birds

A Quarterly Publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society



Winter 2003
(The Birds of Autumn)

Fullerton



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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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Reporting Deadlines

Winter 2004 issue: Dec. 7, 2003

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Summer 2003 issue: June 7, 2003

Fall 2003 issue: Aug. 7, 2003

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- Piping Plover Update
- Puffin of the Year
- Le Conte's Sparrow
- Birdscaping
- Autumn Seasonal Reports
- Trip Reports
- Book Reviews

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WINTER 2003

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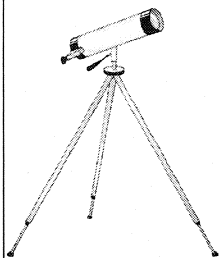
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The Spotting Scope



All for the sake of a paltry 23.5° tilt of our small planet...we have *seasons* where otherwise we wouldn't. Somehow I think that life without seasons...birding without seasons...would somehow be less exciting. There would be no (tearful?) send-offs for our oystercatchers, no hawkwatches with birders waving, and letting out a mighty, "Y'all come back now, y'hear!" There would be no exclamations of joy when the first flycatchers, martins, terns and thrushes return, for in a land of no seasons, they would never leave.

Currently, we are in a season of many faces – winter. I love winter with both its challenges and blessings. Well, to be blunt, I don't really like the challenge of driving in winter, but I do like winter birding, a lot. The winter birds, whether they are visitors to my feeders, residents of the hinterland, or a vivacious *Kon-Tiki* on the sea, all seem to snub their beaks at our complaints of "it's cold out there!" If a ten gram chickadee can take the cold, well so can I!

The highlight of *winter* birding for many folks, perhaps the highlight of *all* birding, comes during the Christmas Bird Count season. The counts are now two months in the past, and the sightings are being tallied...in the next issue we'll bring you the results. FeederWatchers came through again for many of the counts, (especially by tallying those finches that seemed to be *nowhere* this year) even though many observers claimed "There wasn't much at the feeder this year." I think FeederWatchers (and other birders) say that every year in December, since they are fondly remembering the previous year's mid-winter numbers that caused them to fill the feeders twice per day at *that* time of year. CBCs occur in early winter, when wild food is still plentiful, some migrants may not have arrived, and local wild birds may have not yet found the treasure troves of niger, sunflower and suet that we've provided.

Project FeederWatch, a venture run by Bird Studies Canada, helps people track the numbers at their feeders through the cold season, and helps ornithologists monitor these birds countrywide. Project FeederWatch has a much lower participation rate than the CBCs, yet I wonder why that should be. Project FeederWatch can be run from the comfort of your own home, so you don't have to get raked by freezing rain, sink into a marsh ("I really thought the ice was thicker than that!"), or heaven forbid, get *cold* to participate. Consider participating next year!

This weekend, as I tap out these words, I find myself surrounded by gardening magazines, seed catalogues and a book on perennials. The gardening season looms (distantly, but at least it looms), and with it, the promise of creating a bird- and bug- and toad- and snake-friendly garden, from scratch...organically of course. To help in your planning for a bird-friendly (critter-friendly!) garden, this issue offers you both an article and book review on the topic.

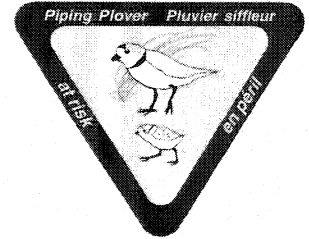
Nesting season is just around the corner for our earliest species such as the Common Raven. The first nesting of Sedge Wren in Nova Scotia is reported in this issue (page 27) ...will we get another new nester this year? Surely we are due for Turkey Vulture or Ring-billed Gull? Or, as an outside chance, maybe the Loggerhead Shrike will sneak back into the Province and nest once again? Be on the look-out, for in the next issue, we'll tell you about how your observations of nesting birds can be put to great use. Until then...

Good Birding!

Randy

News from the Nova Scotia Coastal Guardian Program

By Anna McCarron
Program Co-ordinator



As we look back at our accomplishments and look forward to a new year, Piping Plovers are busy foraging in the warmer climes of the continent and are getting ready for their flight north.

The accompanying photo of the Piping Plover was taken by Sid Maddock, in North Carolina on November 22, 2002. The exciting thing about this PIPL was that it was banded on Cherry Hill Beach as a chick when it was five days old on 17 June 2002! The grey US Geological Survey band on the left leg bears a unique number combination; if the bird is recaptured we will know exactly when, where and who banded this it. The coloured bands tell us the area where the bird was banded and helps those only equipped with binoculars and scopes to report significant information. Although the colour does not shown in the photo, the original shows a red over black band on the right leg indicating that it was banded as a chick in Nova Scotia. All bands are placed on the lower legs, birds banded as adults have colour bands on the left leg, birds banded as juveniles have colour bands on the right leg. More details on the banding scheme, as described by the Canadian Wildlife Service, is as follows:

Nova Scotia - red/black (bicolour band)
New Brunswick - dark blue/green (bicolour band)
Newfoundland - red/dark blue (bicolour band)
Prince Edward Island - red/dark green (bicolour band)
Quebec - blue/purple (bicolour band)

The 2003 season will be the last one for banding. Subsequent years will involve monitoring the currently-banded birds. You can help keep track of these birds, so keep your binoculars and scopes ready while you are on an eastern coastal beach down south in the winter or on Nova Scotia's beaches in the spring as Piping Plovers migrate north again in March and April. If you spot any banded birds at any time, please report band sightings with as much detail (date, location, band colour, nesting status, etc.) as possible to: Diane Amirault, Canadian Wildlife Service P.O. Box 6227, Sackville, N.B. E4L 1G6.

In the last issue of *NS Birds*, the final tally of Piping Plovers and their productivity was not available. The official numbers are now as follows:

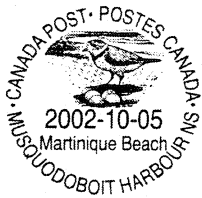
| regions | singles | pairs | Total adults | pairs monitored | eggs | young hatched | young fledged | P* |
|----------------------|---------|-------|--------------|-----------------|-------|---------------|---------------|------|
| Antigonish | 0 | 6 | 12 | 6 | 22 | 15 | 15 | 2.50 |
| Pictou | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 + | 3 + | ? | ? |
| Halifax | 0 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 12 | 10 | 8 | 2.67 |
| Victoria | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 + | 3 + | 3 | 3.00 |
| Lunenburg | 1 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 2.00 |
| Queens | 1 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 20 | 2 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Keji Seaside Adjunct | 0 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 16 | 8 | 7 | 1.75 |
| Shelburne | 1 | 28 | 57 | 28 | 174 | 38 | 20 | 0.71 |
| NS Totals | 3 | 51 | 105 | 50 | 262 + | 85 + | 59 | 1.18 |

* The fledging success rate goal as set by the Piping Plover Recovery Team is 1.5 chicks per pair.

Terry Crowell found the first reported Piping Plover at Daniels Head Beach at 7:30 on Sunday, March 31. The last bird to be reported on Nova Scotia beaches in 2002 was by Joan Czupalay on October 2 at Conrads beach. Here is Joan's account: "There were about thirty-five shorebirds present at Conrads Beach when Aileen Smith and I visited there at noon. I was surprised to see one Piping Plover still there." Earlier in the season, but late for Piping Plover even then, Joan took her keen-eyed grandson, David, to Conrads beach on September 6. Joan described their sighting; "very near to us, a single Piping Plover... was feeding about. David was quite thrilled to see what he told his folks were an "endangered lover". It's exciting to know that Conrads is still supporting Piping Plovers at all, let alone that late in the season. I wonder, with so many reports of Piping Plover on Conrads so late in the season whether there may have been a nesting pair. We know, at least, that it was a popular foraging

ground through August, September and even early October. Now, if we can only keep those dogs on leashes, the ATVs off the dunes and beach, people walking below the high water mark, and garbage off the beach – leaving nothing to attract predators, Piping Plovers may have a fighting chance to nest at Conrads Beach and elsewhere.

If you are interested in helping to protect the Piping plover, watch for a Guardian Gathering coming to your Piping Plover Community sometime in March or April. We can always use your help to talk to people on the beaches, and/or pick up garbage on the beach, and/or keep track of the prevalence of predators (crows, gulls, foxes, mink, raccoons, etc.) in the area and what you think may be attracting them, and/or report violations of illegal ATV activity on beaches i.e. driving on crown land, or on private property without permission or in any area where Piping Plovers are known to be nesting. If you are a landowner adjacent to Piping Plover beaches we need your help too.

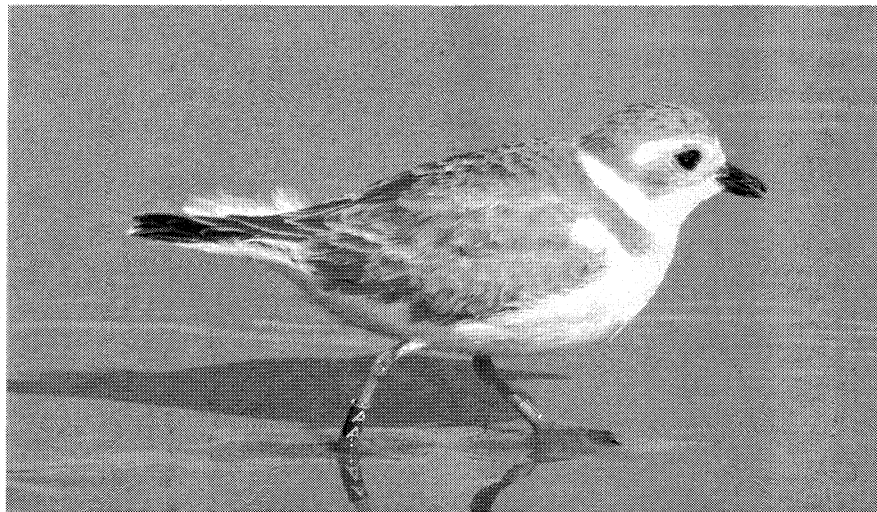


Speaking of Piping Plover communities, this Endangered Species is attaining prominent standing in many areas of Nova Scotia lately. The Musquodoboit Harbour community must be commended for choosing the image of the Piping Plover as the cancellation stamp of choice (among many other ideas) in their local Canada Post Office. Gail Geddes, the Nova Scotia Natural Resources Park caretaker at Martinique Beach, also deserves credit for pushing the cancellation stamp idea so the Piping Plover may be recognized – helping to raise awareness of its plight. To get your letters cancelled with the stamp depicted here, visit or mail your letters to the Musquodoboit Harbour post office and request the stamp.

The Truro community, more specifically, the Colchester Historical Museum at 29 Young Street, Truro, will be hosting a display entitled "People Looking After Wildlife" from January 18 to April 5. The Coastal Guardian program and the NS Bird Society will have submissions along with many other groups. A wall has been set aside for poster-type materials and wall-mounted display material and the floor area will have cabinet and other displays some of which are interactive and hands on for the visiting school classes. I will be making a presentation on how the Guardian Program participates in looking after wildlife on March 8. Perhaps I will see you there!

As this 2002-2003 season draws to a close, I want to give a special thank you to this year's core supporters of Species at Risk preservation through the Nova Scotia Coastal Guardian Program. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support from the Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, the World Wildlife Fund and Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada through the Endangered Species Recovery Fund, and the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund of Bird Studies Canada. We also acknowledge the generous in-kind support from the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, The Cape Sable Important Bird Area, MTT an Aliant Company, Clean Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Lifeguard Association, the Nova Scotia Bird Society, and especially to all Nova Scotia Coastal Guardians and others who spent over 1,000 hours patrolling 21 beaches educating hundreds of people about protecting this special bird. With continued support from these and other sources, the Piping Plover may no longer need to be listed as a Species at Risk. Until then, please contact me if you are interested in helping out with any aspect of the Guardian program.

If you have any questions or know of a school class, community group or organization that is interested in a presentation about the Piping Plover and Species at Risk please call (902) 860-1263 or email: plover@istar.ca. – we have a contingent of guardians who are interested in educating people about the Piping Plover. Keep your binoculars and scopes at the ready for those banded or other Piping Plovers on your treks out on the beach come March! And see you on the beaches! ☼



This Nova Scotia-banded Piping Plover was relocated on a beach in North Carolina.
[Photo Sidney Maddock, Center for Biological Diversity]

Special Spring Talk Series At The Museum: What Do Birds Eat?

This spring, the Bird Society, in addition to its usual monthly meetings, is co-hosting a series of public talks with the NS Museum of Natural History, entitled *What Do Birds Eat?* All the talks are at 7:30 pm Wednesday evenings, in our usual meeting place in the auditorium. It's a terrific line-up of especially interesting topics and good speakers, so do try to make it to as many as you can.

April 2 - Dinner with the Corvids

Patricia Cole, Comparative Psychologist, Dalhousie University

If you think crows and ravens are smart, you're right. Competition for food is fierce, and corvids have evolved behaviours that allow them to exploit all sorts of food sources. Patricia will tell you about corvid feeding strategies, and her research with her tool-using crow, Loki, which is opening new windows onto the surprising abilities of these jacks-of-all-trades.

April 23 - Diets and Birds: Their Ups and Downs

Dave McCorquodale, Biologist, University College of Cape Breton

Are there fewer birds around this year? Are they running out of food? Dave tries to answer such questions as he and other birdwatchers across the continent track the ups and downs of bird numbers and their food supplies.

April 30 - Nutrition and Rehabilitating Baby Birds: Why Mother and Father Know Best

Hope Swinimer, Founder, Eastern Shore Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre

Spring's on the way, and those "orphaned" baby birds won't be far behind. Hope explains how she chooses a diet for these finicky eaters. It's second best to their parents', but still clears them for take-off.

May 7 - Mice on the Menu: An Inside Look at the Diets of Owls

Randy Lauff, Biologist, St. Francis Xavier University

Owls aren't your everyday bird at the bird feeder, but Randy's got them nesting in boxes, where he can peek into their lives. He'll share what he's learned about their diet, lifestyle, and conservation. ♪

Looking for volunteers!

On Saturday March 29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Bird Society is co-sponsoring a family workshop event for children in the foyer of the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. We are looking for volunteers to provide expert advice on everything from bird feeders to field guides, recording bird songs, and doing backyard "citizen science". If you are interested in helping out, or responding to questions from beginner bird watchers, please contact Mary McLaren at 830-5616.

Spring North American Migration Count - 10 May 2003

To all birders, feeder watchers and anyone interesting in counting birds:

Yes, it's that time again...time to remind you that the twelfth annual NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT (NAMC) gets underway with the spring count on Saturday, 10 May 2003. This is, as always, the *second* Saturday in May.

Those wishing to participate in this year's Count are reminded to keep this day open on their calendars! While you may be looking at a wintry outdoors as you read this, keep in mind Spring is only a few months away (such a comforting thought). Start planning for NAMC 2003 now. Circle May 10 on your calendar!

Please contact your local county co-ordinator, area representative, or me, the provincial co-ordinator, for more information if needed. All are welcome, no fee is involved. (See list of coordinators on page 9.)

Judy Tufts (902) 542-7800; tandove@ns.sympatico.ca
N.S. Co-ordinator for NAMC

2002 Puffin of the Year Award

By Andy Horn

One of the perks of my exalted position is being able to choose the recipient of the Puffin of the Year Award.

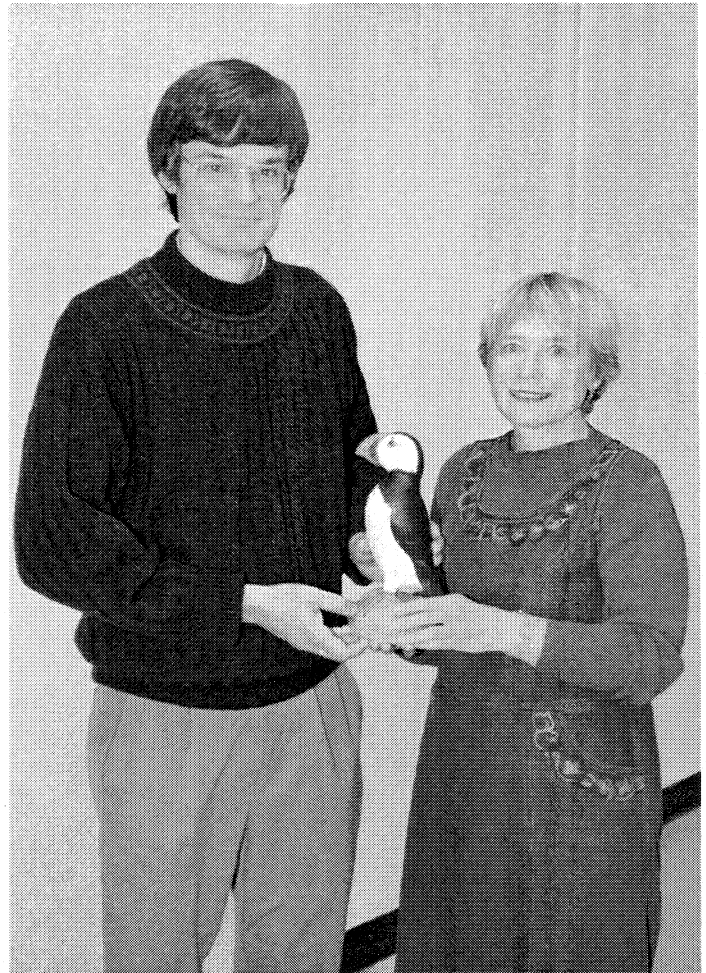
As you all know, the Puffin has been presented every year to someone who has made an outstanding contribution to the Society or to birds in general over the past year.

As you also know, but as I only began to fully appreciate when I became president, our province is full of members who quietly make outstanding contributions to the appreciation, enjoyment, and conservation of birds every year. Some make small contributions (Dovekies?). Others make tremendously large ones (Great Auks?). But this year, it's time to honour one who has been amazingly effective at activating the contributions of all our many different members. And what better an award for such a multi-coloured and variegated contribution than – a Puffin?

This year's recipient has a particular talent for getting the most out of all the volunteerism our members show, right across the province. Any time there is a field trip or special occasion, no matter where it is in the province, this person is there, and at every organizational meeting this person supports anyone with energy and a good idea, and tactfully sorts out any difference of opinion, to find common ground.

These particular talents were largely responsible for seeing the society through some difficult times, for example our search for an editor and our reversal of declining memberships in the late 1990s. New directions, like our involvement with the Important Bird Areas program and the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists, started and continue to grow largely thanks to her encouragement.

She has given so much to the society, from little chocolate bars to Puffin awards, that it is high time that Gisèle d'Entremont should come up and receive *her* Puffin. ☘



NSBS President Andy Horn presenting Gisèle with her Puffin.
[Photo S. Levy]

Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists Conference & Annual General Meeting

University College of Cape Breton, Sydney
June 13 - 15, 2003

The FNSN 2003 Conference will be hosted by The Cape Breton Natural History Society on June 13 - 15. We will be using the facilities at the University College of Cape Breton (UCCB). The usual full weekend program of speakers, displays and field trips are being planned. Reasonably priced accommodations will be available at campus residences.

This event will be of interest to birders and other naturalists. Mid-June is an excellent time to enjoy Nature in Cape Breton so mark your calendars.

More information will be available soon on the FNSN Web site: <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Environment/FNSN/agsm2003.html>

Birdscaping

By Carol Matthews

Birds are always a welcome addition to any garden. Their beauty, their songs, not to mention their control of insects, makes them popular with everyone. If you want more than just chance encounters with these feathered beauties in your garden, you have to analyze your yard from a bird's eye view.

Does your property have a variety of plantings – trees, shrubs, grasses, flowers? Is there sufficient cover and protection from predators? Is there food available all year round? Is there a source of water? These are all necessary for birds to call your backyard home.

A varied selection of trees, plants and shrubs will appeal to the widest variety of birds. Diversity also offers different blooming and fruiting times to make food available for longer periods. Open, dense, thorny, tall, low-growing – a mixture of these types of trees and shrubs will provide necessary protection for nesting and roosting. All these combined with ready access to water will make the decision easy for birds to choose your yard.

The following bird-luring tips will apply whether you are already a confirmed birder, or just want to attract more feathered activity to your garden. You can use them in any sized yard, in new or established gardens, in city or country.

Trees

One of the most versatile trees is the Hawthorne. At under seven metres, it offers both food and thorny protection for birds, and beautiful spring flowers, fall leaf colour, and winter interest for humans. The small white or pink clusters of flowers in late May and June are followed by red berries in the autumn which attract American Robins, Grosbeaks, Cedar Waxwings, Cardinals, warblers, sparrows, and American Goldfinches. Warblers often nest in Hawthorne trees.

American Mountain Ash, Sumac and Crab Apple trees double as ornamentals

and bird feeders as well. The long-lasting fruit of Sumac and Crab Apple trees help spring migrating birds through the last snowfalls and frosts. Whether White, Red, or Blue, the Spruce tree provides protective foliage for Mourning Doves, Robins, Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, Chickadees and Kinglets. Spruce trees are often home to nesting Song Sparrows.

Atlantic Canada's beautiful maple trees are favourites of Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, and Song Sparrows who eat the winged seeds. Robins, Red-eyed Vireos, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks will nest in your maples. Cherry trees, either wild or cultivated, provide a summer treat for bird parents and their young. If you watch carefully you will be rewarded with the sight of a Cedar Waxwing or Evening Grosbeak feeding cherries to a fledgling.

Another tree popular with many birds is a dead tree. Though seldom considered an ornamental in most yards, it can be used to hang birdfeeders or support flowering vines. Nuthatches and Woodpeckers will use its cavities for nesting, and chickadees and sparrows, along with the nuthatches and woodpeckers, will eat its insect population for lunch.

Shrubs

An understory of shrubs will provide further safety from predators and both shelter birds at night and provide protection from harsh weather. A dense planting of a variety of shrubs, sometimes called a hedgerow, will tempt an assortment of birds to your yard for food and cover.

The Serviceberry or Shadbush is a hardy native shrub, which blooms in spring and provides fruit for numerous bird species in the autumn. Holly, with its bright red winter berries attract Cedar Waxwings, finches, mockingbirds, thrushes and woodpeckers. The rose is another shrub that doubles as an ornamental and a bird-friendly bush. Roses can offer

prickly protection from predators and the hips are a winter food source for songbirds. High bush cranberries provide fruit for Pine and Evening Grosbeaks and Cedar Waxwings from fall through winter, even into early spring.

Ground Hemlock, also known as dwarf yew, is excellent under large deciduous trees and offers shelter to Juncos, White-throated Sparrows and Am. Tree Sparrows. Birds that like to nest in early spring, before deciduous trees have leafed out, will choose this shrub for their home. Also a source for food, Hemlock berries ripen in early summer and make a lovely red contrast against the dark green foliage.

Brambles and Berries

These thorny shrubs provide food through summer and fall, and their prickly, dense growth provides protection and nesting places for Song Sparrows who prefer to build their nests close to food sources. Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, thrushes and all species of Woodpeckers bring their young to brambles for their first lessons in fruit picking.

A hedge made up of a variety of raspberries, blackberries, wild roses, loganberries, and boysenberries planted in full sun, with a patch of currants and gooseberries on the shady side, will be a four-star attraction for birds all summer long. While you may be willing to share the fruit of those prickly plants with the birds, it's often harder to yield strawberries and blueberries as gracefully. The birds will not be sensitive to your feelings so you might as well plant a few extra patches to share.

Annuals and Perennials

Ground birds love to scratch among the flowers for insects and grubs, and while there, they also find seeds from last year's flowers to add to their menu. Annuals and perennials add to our

garden enjoyment and provide food for the feathered species at the same time. Hummingbirds and butterflies find the nectar of many trumpet-shaped flowers irresistible.

Perennials that are particularly attractive to seed eating birds include Forget-me-nots with tiny blue flowers that bloom most of the summer, along with Bee Balm and Purple and Yellow Coneflowers. Lupins, Campanula, and Globe Thistle also attract granivorous birds such as Song Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, Juncos, Thrushes, Mourning Doves, and Purple Finches. American Goldfinches will pluck the seeds from *Liatris* once it has bloomed to feed to their young.

Annuals provide bursts of colour in our gardens all summer long and attract birds as well. Ten reliable favorites of people and birds alike include Love Lies Bleeding, Bachelor's Buttons, Cosmos, Purslane – sometimes considered a weed, it produces seed much sought after by birds, Four O'Clocks, Scabiosa, Marigolds, Verbena, Zinnias, and Larkspur – which is very attractive to Hummingbirds. Let the flowers go to seed, letting the seeds lie until spring when the birds will eat them.

Sunflowers

Anyone wishing to attract birds to their yard should include an island or border or clump of annual sunflowers in their garden plans. Numerous small birds will visit to search out the insects that are exploring the flower heads, Flickers feed on the ants that travel the stalks, Grosbeaks are some of the first birds to crack open the ripe seeds and the American Goldfinches bring their young to teach them how to husk the seeds. These are followed by the Downy Woodpeckers and Chickadees that consume the rest of the seeds throughout the winter months.

Vines

Vines are common plants used to add height, and camouflage less than pretty spots in the garden. But they are far more than that to birds. Besides food, vines often provide nesting materials for

Vireos and Warblers, a privacy screen for mating, and secure shelter for songbirds when night falls.

The Virginia Creeper is a fast growing perennial vine with lush green foliage that turns crimson in the fall. Its clusters of fruit seems to go unnoticed by the birds until the leaves blow off and then it provides food throughout the winter. Climbing Honeysuckle is another perennial vine that provides fragrant beauty and will attract every Hummingbird in the neighbourhood. Quick growing annual vines that lure Hummingbirds include Morning Glory and Trumpet vine.

Water

If you have already included a water feature in your garden you will have noticed an increase in the number of feathered visitors. If you haven't, here is one more reason to take the plunge. Water is necessary for all wildlife, especially during dry summers and frozen winters. The presentation does not need to be elaborate, it can be as simple and as effective as a planter saucer placed on the top of a tomato ring, with a large rock added to keep the saucer from blowing away. Several of these can be placed throughout your borders and plantings, the greenery soon fills in around the cage and the bird baths become an integrated part of your garden.

A garden pond brings a myriad of wildlife to your garden – skippers, dragonflies, butterflies, frogs, and birds. If you add goldfish to your pond you may even get a visit from a heron.

The sound of water running or dripping is a strong lure for birds. You can use a regular garden sprinkler or invest in an intricate waterfall or fountain. Birds will visit to drink, to bathe, or sometimes simply to flit about and play in the shower of water droplets.

Birdfeeders and Birdhouses

Birds are a very amiable species. If we fill birdfeeders they will visit for lunch, if we hang birdhouses suited to their needs they will often take possession. Once a bird chooses your yard as its territory it could return there year after year. The combination of feeders, birdhouses, water, a variety of trees, shrubs, and plants will make your yard practically irresistible.

Garden Style

In order for the bird population to flourish in your area there needs to be a balance of plants, mammals, birds, and insects. Each will prey on or feed the other. The use of pesticides and herbicides upsets this equilibrium by removing one or more of the necessary elements in the balance.

Birds are not drawn to tidy flower beds and lush green lawns. Most birds would prefer a patch of dirt where they can scratch and dust-bathe than a strip of mowed grass any day. Give them a brush pile, a piece of lawn overgrown with weeds and wildflowers, or a burgeoning thicket of alders and wild cherries. If you wish to invite birds into your garden you may have to choose a style of graceful neglect over the pristine perfection of weedless lawns and flower beds. ☞



A concrete birdbath will attract lots of birds, especially in hot weather. [Photo S. Levy]

A Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus lecontii*) on Bon Portage Island

By Alexander C. Lees, Trina M. Fitzgerald, Michael L. Peckford



Le Conte's Sparrow photographed by the authors on Bon Portage Island, NS. September 2002

The autumn of 2002 will be remembered as one of the poorest on record for both migrant and vagrant landbirds in Nova Scotia owing to the preponderance of easterlies. The Atlantic Bird Observatory has run banding stations on Bon Portage and Seal Islands for the past seven years and intensive daily census and banding effort have helped to re-evaluate the status of many species formerly considered scarce or rare. 2002 was no exception; with four White-eyed Vireos (*Vireo griseus*) logged in what was a poor autumn for southern vagrants, how many hundreds pass unnoticed?

The days prior to September 13 were marked by the passage of Hurricane Gustave. Winds switched overnight on the 12th to WSW, bringing in a moderate arrival of migrants overnight including the first Mourning Warbler (*Oporonis philadelphia*) of the fall. At 12:40 p.m. on the 13th, ACL extracted a small *Ammodramus* sparrow from one of the shore nets with which he was not familiar. Returning to base he presented the bird to TMF, who first aged the bird as a first year by skull ossification. Grasshopper (*A. savannarum*), Baird's (*A. bairdii*), and Nelson's Sharp-tailed (*A. nelsoni*) sparrows were all eliminated on wing length (51 mm) or plumage characteristics or both. Having seen many Grasshopper sparrows before, we were struck by the bird's small size, which left only Henslow's (*A. henslowii*) and Le Conte's (*A. lecontii*) sparrows as possible candidates. All characteristics

seemed to point to the identification as a Le Conte's Sparrow, but there remained some doubt as to the extent of variation in mantle streaking on Henslow's Sparrow. Because of this doubt and the constraints of time (other birds to be processed), the decision was taken not to band the bird. The bird was photographed by MLP and ACL and then released; unsurprisingly, considering the species' cryptic habits, it was not seen again.

Photographs confirm the bird's identity as a juvenile Le Conte's Sparrow. These show (see photos above) the bird's overall slender appearance and small, slender bill, very unlike the thick bill of Henslow's, and matched perhaps only by that of inland races of Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow. The bold black and buff mantle streaking are characteristic of juvenal plumage of this species; The backs of Grasshopper, Baird's, and Henslow's are more "scaly." The face is rather blank, except for the dark post-ocular eyeline; the other *Ammodramus* have darker auriculars ("ear patches") and various combinations of eyelines, post auricular marks, moustache stripes, and throat stripes on their faces. Also evident in the hand were its striking white median crown stripe bordered by two parallel black crown stripes, buffy, weakly streaked nape (gray with mauve-brown streaks in later plumages), and tertials edged buffy-white with dark centres (rufous in Henslow's Sparrow).

This bird breeds across the Prairies as close as eastern Quebec and winters in a broad band from South Carolina to Texas. Like Baird's, Grasshopper, and Henslow's, but not Seaside and Sharp-tailed sparrows, Le Conte's Sparrows can migrate as juveniles. (This is discussed in Pyle and Sibley 1992, *Birding*, 24: 70-76, who offer excellent illustrations of their plumages, as does Sibley's *Guide to the Birds*.) The first Le Conte's Sparrow in Nova Scotia, on Seal I. Oct. 6, 1974, was

from the description (1975, *NS Bird Soc. Newsletter*, 17(1), p. 27), in juvenal plumage. The next, on Seal I. Oct 9, 1974, was apparently in first basic (first winter) plumage (*NS Birds* 36(2), p. 28), as was a third found 25 Dec. 1997 at Wolfville (B. Forsythe, 1998, *Birders Journal* 7, p. 97-98). Considering its skulking habits, the species may occur more frequently in the province than our few records suggest. ☒

NS County Coordinators & Area Reps for NAMC

The first person listed for each county is the County Coordinator. The other contacts are the area representatives within the county.

| County | Contact | Area | Phone |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Annapolis | Sharon Hawboldt | Belleisle | 665-4105 |
| | Sheila Hulford | Middleton | 765-4023 |
| | Gini Proulx | Clementsvale | 467-3235 |
| Antigonish | Harriet MacMillan | | 783-2646 |
| Cape Breton | Bill Bussey | Louisbourg | 733-2799 |
| | Barc Cunningham | Sydney River & Coxheath | 564-6063 |
| | Lynn Ellis | Sydney | 539-2392 |
| | Carmie MacMillan | Grand Mira S | 727-2549 |
| | Pauline Siteman | Big Pond | 562-6501 |
| Colchester | Fran Spalding | | 647-2837 |
| Cumberland | Kathleen Spicer | Apple River | 392-2815 |
| | Jeff Ogden | APBS | 895-0761 |
| Digby | Richard Stern | Brier I. | 678-1975 |
| | Eric Mills | Brier I. | 766-4606 |
| | Rebecca Ellis | Digby | 245-2340 |
| Guysborough | Tom Kavanaugh | | 366-3476 |
| Halifax | Bob McDonald | | 443-5051 |
| Hants | Roslyn MacPhee | Hants East | 758-3265 |
| | Bev Shanks | Hants West | 798-2617 |
| Inverness | Frances Hart | | 248-2433 |
| Kings | Judy Tufts | Wolfville, east | 542-7800 |
| | Sheila Hulford | Kingston, west | 765-4023 |
| Lunenburg | Sylvia Fullerton | | 423-2254 |
| Pictou | Ken McKenna | | 752-7644 |
| Queens | Leslie Rogers | | 682-2145 |
| Richmond | George Digout | | 535-3516 |
| Shelburne | Donna Ensor | Shelburne | 875-4269 |
| | Murray Newell | CSI | 745-3340 |
| Victoria | Fritz McEvoy | | 383-2063 |
| Yarmouth | Jerome D'Eon | | 762-2987 |

Autumn Weather Summary for 2002

By Larry Bogan

What a wet, cool autumn we have had! Throughout the whole season there was not a week when it did not rain or snow at least once.

In my last two weather reports, you may remember that we had near normal precipitation in the spring (260 mm), and a below normal rain during the summer (163 mm). The precipitation we received in September, October and November, adds up to more than the total for those two seasons (473 versus 423 mm). Although September was wet, November was wetter and the result was that we had 50% more rain than usual this autumn. During the season we had four days with more than 50 mm of precipitation and two of those deposited 75 mm or more rain. In the period from 10th through 13th of November, it rained every day and we received a month's worth of rain (nearly 100 mm). Within the next week, we received another 60 mm. The other major 'wet' period was the snow of November 6th that coated the Annapolis Valley with 33 cm of the white stuff. A few more centimetres of snow at the beginning and end of the month contributed to an amount that was triple the snowfall expected for the month.

Table 1. Weather Statistics for autumn 2002 with the 40 year average in parentheses – Kentville, Nova Scotia.

| | Mean Temp (°C) | Precipitation (mm) | Snow (cm) | Heating Degree Days* | Bright Sunshine (h) |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|---------------------|
| September | 16.6 (14.6) | 175 (93) | 0 (0) | 80 (117) | 190 (165) |
| October | 7.4 (9.2) | 87 (107) | 0 (0) | 333 (275) | 154 (140) |
| November | 3.1 (3.9) | 211 (116) | 46 (12) | 447 (424) | 72 (81) |
| Season Average | 9.02 (9.23) | 473 (316) | 46 (12) | 860 (816) | 416 (386) |

Although November was abnormal with respect to precipitation, October and September were the months with more extreme temperatures. September was 2.0 °C warmer than usual and October was 1.8 °C colder than normal. November was only 0.8 °C below normal. September stayed around 15-20 °C but then as soon as October started, the temperature dropped continuously during that month (Fig. 1). As a result it was cold enough to snow at the first of November. This latter month however recovered and jumped up and down in temperature all month. It was up during rains and down during snows. The season as a whole was colder than average by only 0.2 °C.

I have a solar-heated home and autumn is the season in which it works best. Usually, the wood stove (my backup heating) is not needed until late October. This year the wood stove was used more than usual. The reason is that the heating degree days* for October and November were up 11% from normal and the bright sunshine hours were down by 11% in November which is usually a cloudy month anyway.

When I compare current weather with climate norms, I use the 40 year averages of temperature, precipitation and sunshine. In this era of global warming, it is of interest to look at the weather we have had more recently (Table 2).

Table 2. Weather Statistics for the last five years from Kentville, N.S. The forty year average appears in parentheses.

| | Mean Temp (°C) | Precipitation (mm) | Bright Sunshine (h) |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| September | 15.9 (14.6) | 109 (93) | 185 (165) |
| October | 8.9 (9.2) | 134 (107) | 161 (140) |
| November | 3.9 (3.9) | 72 (116) | 68 (81) |
| Season Average | 9.6 (9.2) | 315 (316) | 414 (386) |

It appears that recently the early season is getting warmer, wetter, and sunnier at the expense of the latter part of the season. Overall the season in the last five years is slightly warmer by 0.3 °C with about the same precipitation and less cloudiness. Only November has fewer bright sunshine hours.

"Note: Heating degree days for the month is a measure of the heat need for building heating; it is the sum of the amount that each day was below 18 °C throughout the month. ☐

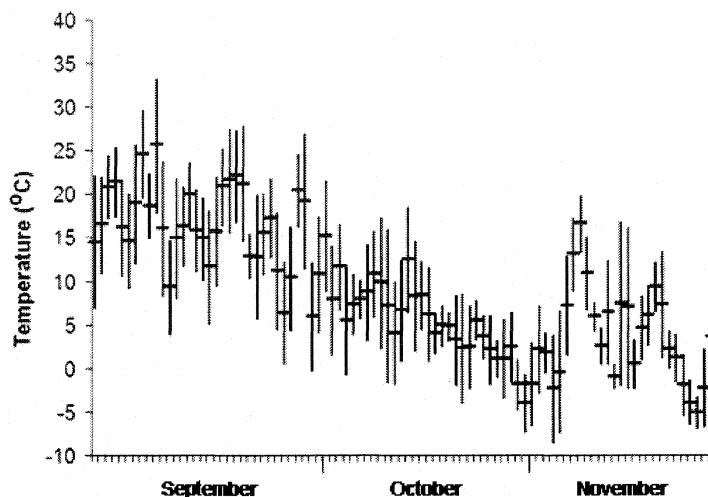


Fig. 1. Mean daily temperatures at Kentville, NS for the season. Vertical bars indicate the daily range.

Seasonal Reports

Loons through Grebes

By Fred Dobson

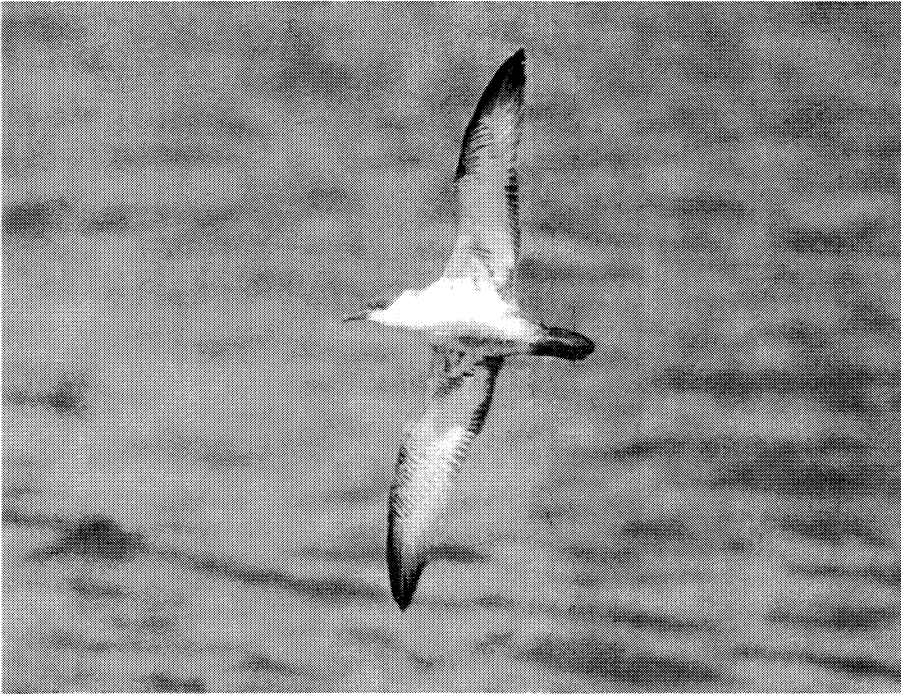
RED-THROATED LOONS were seen throughout the period in their saltwater habitat; a few birders were lucky enough to see the loons' breeding plumage. The largest counts were 85, Oct. 26 at Waterside PP, Pict. Co. (KJM) and about 11, Nov. 15 at Margaretsville, Anna. Co. (RBS). In early August, COM. LOONS left their freshwater breeding grounds for the open sea, and their wild calls became a memory for another year. Typical reports were: 24-25, Aug. 30 at Little River L., Kings Co. "Coming into lake in small groups over weekend – large and smaller-sized birds, suggesting family groups. Resident pair raised one chick this year" (Bob Comeau *fide* JCT); and 12, Oct. 18 at Kennington Cove, CB Co. "This was the last concentration of loons I have seen this fall. Other sightings have been of one to three birds." (SEM). The nesting season was a successful one.

The PIED-BILLED GREBE has demonstrated its hardiness this fall, lasting out the cold days of mid-November. Immatures were in evidence from the end of the breeding season to well into October. Other sightings include Aug. 24 & 25 at Saxon St. pond, Kings Co., "Heavily striped imms. ... a family unit?" (JCT); one Sept. 2 at Big Pond, Florence, CB Co. (DBM); and one imm., Oct. 17 at Saxon St. pond, Kings Co. (JCT). The latest report was of one, Dec. 1 at Roberts I., Yar. Co. (MUN). A few, "... the first ones", diminutive HORNED GREBES were seen relatively early: Aug. 24 at Taylor Head Bay, Hfx. Co.; by mid-September there were two ads. and five – six imms. there (TEP). By Oct. 13 there were 18 at Mira Gut, CB Co.; there were still six there, Nov. 9 (SEM). There was an individual, Oct. 13 at Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co. "Sitting on a rock but did not look well. The incoming tide washed it off the rock and onto the

beach where it soon died. Its feathers were not oiled." (BLF). ELM reported 30, Oct. 27 "in a group, actively feeding close to shore" just S of East R., Lun. Co. There were two reports from CB in November: one, Nov. 21 at Gabarus, CB Co. (DBM) and two, Nov. 28 at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co. (Weldon MacPhail *fide* GED). The latest report was of two, Dec. 1 at Maders Cove, Lun. Co. (JBM). The earliest report of RED-NECKED GREBES was Aug. 24, two ads. at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co. (var. obs., NSBS). A fortunate Mike Wilson saw three "including one summer-plumage bird", Sept. 3, from Port Shoreham beach on Chedabucto Bay, Guys. Co. In November all but one sighting were from CB: ELM saw three, Nov. 9 at Pond Cove, Brier I., and from Nov. 9-21 SEM reported one at Mira Gut and up to nine at Kennington Cove, CB Co. The latest sighting was two, Nov. 28 at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co. (Weldon MacPhail *fide* GED). ☐

Tubenoses Through Frigatebirds

By Blake Maybank



This GREATER SHEARWATER was dipping and soaring effortlessly in brisk winds off Brier Island October 19. [Photo Ian McLaren]

The first N. FULMAR reported were the three on Emerald Basin off HRM, Sept. 10 (BLM). The only other reports were from ELM off Brier in October, with six, Oct. 1 and four, Oct. 12.

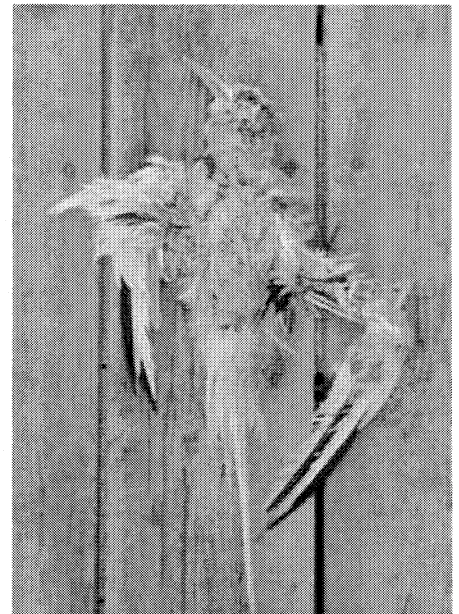
CORY'S SHEARWATERS were reasonably close to the Province's Atlantic shore, with observations from two different vessels in passage. IAM, from the CFAV "Quest", had two birds, Sept. 9, while BLM on the "Clipper Adventurer" had a single along the western edge of the Emerald Basin the following day. Many observers sent in sightings of GREATER SHEARWATERS from the Bay of Fundy, with the species' status best summarised by ELM: "There were thousands to tens of thousands, NW and W of Brier I. from August through mid-October, associated with abundance of Fin and Hump-backed Whales. Often easily visible from Western Light and North Pt." They were very visible as well from whale-watching boats. Off the Atlantic Coast the only

sizable count of Greaters was 1,000 on the Emerald Basin, Sept. 12 (BLM). As is typical of recent years, SOOTY SHEARWATERS were much less common than Greaters at the eastern side of the Bay of Fundy, with the highest estimate being 10% as common (ELM), although most observers saw many fewer than that. AAM, when watching a tubenose feeding frenzy near Brier's Western Light, Sept. 9, noted that Sooties seemed more inclined to fly closer to shore than Greaters. On the Emerald Basin fewer than 1% of the shearwaters were Sooties (BLM). MANX SHEARWATERS were scarce, with daily counts of three or fewer from numerous observers in the Bay of Fundy, while BLM had six on the Emerald Basin, Sept. 10.

On Sept. 12, the day following Hurricane Gustav's passage, Alex Lees observed a **Gadfly Petrel** flying NW at great speed past the S tip of BPI, just before ten in the

morning; only one other tubenose was seen, a Sooty Shearwater. Later that same day, at about two in the afternoon, BLM was watching from the bridge of the "Clipper Adventurer" situated 30 miles southeast of Halifax, and noted a gadfly petrel passing quickly north (hundreds of Greater Shearwaters were also seen, almost all flying south). Both petrel observations were brief, and at some distance, preventing specific identification, but the reports (to be printed in the next issue) suggest "Soft-plumaged Petrel." There is one previous provincial record each for both Fea's Petrel and Black-capped Petrel.

Whale-watchers and others in the Bay of Fundy noted that **WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS** were more common than usual, with hundreds noted daily,



This dead **WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD**, appeared on the south beach of Sable Island, shortly after Hurricane Gustav in early October. This extreme rarity follows only ten other occurrences in Nova Scotia, all prior to the mid-1960s (Tufts). [Photo Zoe Lucas]

apparently due to an abundance of surface-swarming copepods. LEACH'S STORM-PETRELS were seen offshore only in ones and twos (Mike Wilson, Wayne R. Petersen, ELM, NSBS). Sept. 10 was a magic day for tubenoses on the Emerald Bank, with fulmar, four species of shearwater, and both storm-petrels seen (BLM).

In early October, ZOL found the carcass of a **WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD** on the south beach of Sable I. "Although not fresh, the condition of the carcass suggested that the bird had died in September on the island, or in waters very near the island. It may have been carried into this region by Hurricane Gustav." Although there are ten previous records of this species in NS, this is the first since 1964.

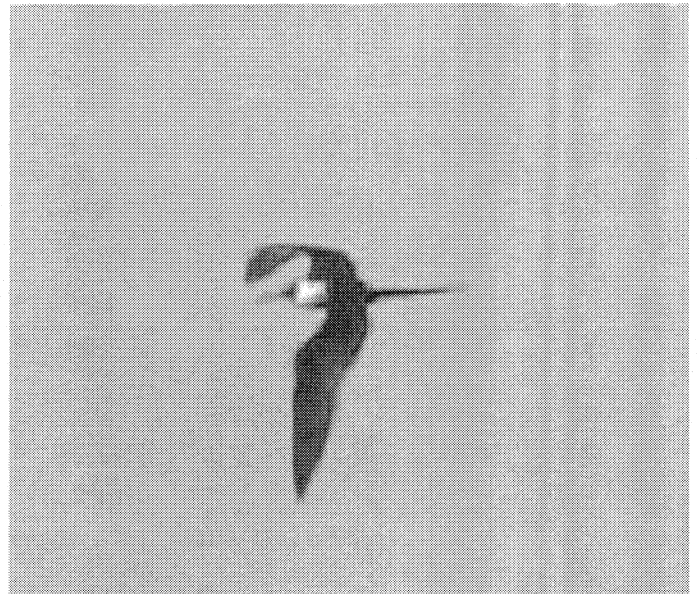
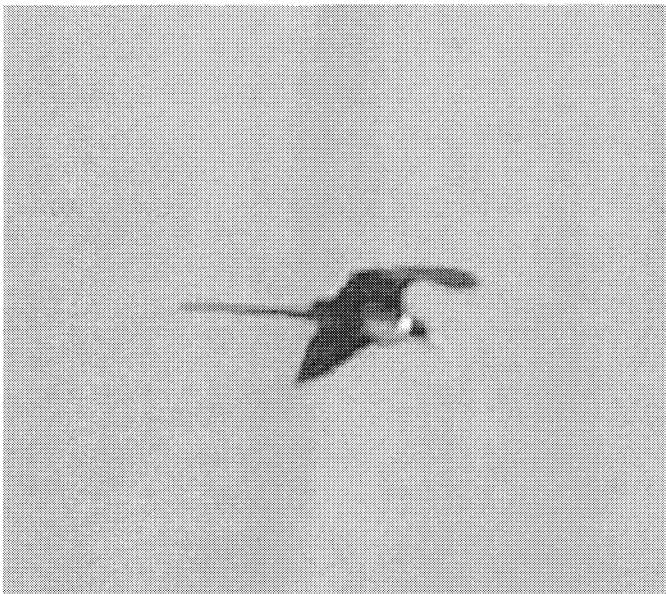
A cornucopia of N. GANNET sightings lies before me, and few patterns emerge from the data, save that it was a productive nesting season as many young-of-the-year were observed. Sightings from late in the season are most telling. On Oct. 26, Angela Nettleship noted an imm. gannet in an unlikely spot, in the furthest inner reaches of St. Margarets Bay, at Head Hbr. Angela's husband speculated the

bird might have been blown in during the strong winds on Oct. 26. By Nov. 4 she had five gannets in view, including two ads. It turned out this wasn't a local phenomenon. Another 10 gannets were at East Chester (with one dead bird washed ashore), and in the town of Canso, Steve Bushell reported hundreds in the inner harbour, Nov. 3, with 1,000 more just outside. The same day RFL, in Ant. Co., found 50 gannets fishing for Atlantic Silversides inside the breakwater at Ballantynes Cove. DJC had some within a "stone's throw" of Lockeport's Crescent Beach, Nov. 3. JAP had an ad., Nov. 6, feeding in the Rainbow Haven estuary channel, and RSD noted Nov. 3 that "I have never seen more gannets inshore." By mid-November there were still many near-shore sightings, such as seven in Kennington Cove, Nov. 11 (SEM) and four at Rainbow Haven, Nov. 16 (R.H. Lindsay). Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co., hosted its annual late-November gannet buffet, with 300+ imms. feeding in the pond, Nov. 23 (NSBS).

I received several dozen reports of **D O U B L E - C R E S T E D CORMORANTS**, but even so was

unable to gather any sense of the migration, as no significant flights were noted. JCT noted a few lone birds inland on ponds in Kings Co. The only sizable count was 200 going by Seal Oct. 11 (BLM), although TEP noted a "large number" staging off Taylors Hd., Aug. 24. **GREAT CORMORANTS** elicited little comment away from Brier, where ELM counted 100, Nov. 9.

A M A G N I F I C E N T FRIGATEBIRD teased birders in August as it revealed itself only to fishermen and tour operators. The first sighting was Aug. 10 at Southwest Cove in St. Margarets Bay, when Peter Stow photographed it near his tour boat. The following day Gail and Jerome Bruhm saw it soaring above the Swiss Air 111 memorial near Peggys Cove. Possibly the same bird then fed upon scraps tossed its way by three fishing boats in Green Bay, Lun. Co., Aug. 28 (*vide* JSC), which is not far to the south as the frigatebird flies. This is the first report since 1998 (when promised photos did not materialise); the next earlier report was 1994. ☒



A rare **MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD** was an unanticipated bonus thrill during a rather rough and foggy boat tour on St. Margarets Bay, Oct. 11. [Photo Peter Stowe]

Herons Through Vultures

By Ulli Höger

On Sept. 21 we had two sightings of AM. BITTERNs, one in West Berlin, Queens Co. (JAH), the second was reported by G. Proulx from Cape St. Marys, Digby Co. On the first day in October R. H. Lindsay found a third bird on Russell L., Dartmouth, and on Oct. 31, PRG reported a sighting from Pembroke, Yar. Co.

Reports of GREAT BLUE HERON sightings were plenty, and came in from all over the province. A juv. spent a long time hunting for grasshoppers in the dunes on Brier I., Oct. 10 (ELM). On Nov. 3, SEM noted the absence of Great Blue Herons on Morien Bar, CB Co., after reporting them previously throughout the period from this location. Migration time! In other parts of NS, individual birds were found and reported until the end of fall and into the winter season. The number of reports diminished towards the end of the period.

After TEP's Aug. 25 report of a GREAT EGRET from W Lawrencetown Marsh, sightings of this species became more frequent in October and November. They were spotted on Harris Pond, Kings Co., Oct. 2 (JCT), Seal I., Oct. 17 (Alex Lees), and Dominion Beach, CB Co., Oct. 31 –

Nov. 3 (SEM). One bird even made it as far east as Sable I., and stayed there from Oct. 18 – 24 (ZOL). In total, 21 sightings of this species, mostly single birds, were reported in October and November, covering most counties of NS. Into this egret peak period fit the reports of SNOWY EGRETS. They were seen on Heckmans I., Lun. Co., Oct. 30 (JAH) and in Louisbourg. The Louisbourg observations by SEM, in the period Oct. 15 – Nov. 2, could have been the same bird reported to be in the area Nov. 7 (*vide* Tom Fudge). A Snowy Egret was reported on Sable I., Oct. 21 – 24, and a second sighting, Nov. 5, could have been the same individual (ZOL).

On Aug. 21, an ad. LITTLE BLUE HERON was found by JAH in the Oler Farm Marsh, Lun. Co. Later in the fall, two were reported from CB Co. One from Dominion Beach, Oct. 24 – Nov. 3, (*vide* SEM), and an imm. bird in Gardiner Mines was seen daily by Tom Boutilier, Oct. 24 – early November (*vide* SEM). From Oct. 21 – 24 an imm. Little Blue Heron visited Sable I. (ZOL).

In mid-November CATTLE EGRETS were seen in a number of places. From Nov. 15 – 23 one was reported from

Lilydale, Lun. Co. (JAH), and on Nov. 21 word of a single bird came in from Parkers Cove, Anna. Co. (RBS). Steve Bushell had a Cattle Egret in Canso, Nov. 24 – 25, which perished soon after; the bird was recovered and has been deposited in the collection at St. Francis Xavier University. On the same weekend, IAM *et al.* spotted one in Clyde R., Shel. Co., and JUS added one to Brier I.'s fall list.

A BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON was reported from Westport, Brier I. The juv. bird was seen on Aug. 1 by ELM, and could have been the same seen a day earlier by DAP. On Oct. 17 an imm. YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON was found on Sable I. by ZOL.

In some parts of our province TURKEY VULTURES are a common sight in fall. With very few around during summer and early fall, numbers increased in September and October. More than 50 were circling in the afternoon sun over North Pt., Brier I., Oct. 12 (ELM). On the NSBS Thanksgiving fieldtrip to Brier I., TVs were a common sight, outnumbered only by Sharp-shinned Hawks. ☐

Geese, Swans and Ducks

By Fred Dobson

It was an interesting fall for the waterfowl – interesting in the Confucian sense. The weather was by times frigid and balmy, dry and inundated with heavy rains. The most noteworthy weather pattern, perhaps a result of a weak “El Nino” in the tropical Pacific, was a very early outbreak of Arctic air, that flooded the province in mid-November and caused an early freeze-up of most of the still, fresh water in the Province. Both before and after the early freeze there were some notable wind and rainstorms – but none that

would have bothered a loon, a grebe or a duck, and most stayed on right into December in spite of the still-frozen lakes. A special thanks to Mike Wilson, a visitor from the United Kingdom, who provided detailed records of his avian peregrinations during August and September. There were several reports of ‘special’ geese, and Cinnamon Teal, Canvasback and Tufted Duck were also reported (although no documentation was provided). This fall was another excellent one for the Hooded Merganser in NS. The time is clearly upon us to

assert that the distribution maps need updating (*e.g.* those in *Palmer's Handbook* Vol. 3, *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, and *The National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, all of which differ). The Hoodeds are now spending a substantial part of, if not the entire winter (*e.g.* last year's fall & spring reports) well to the north of Cape Cod. There are still very few found in the breeding season, so the NS birds are post-breeding migrants that love to fish here. This poleward extension of wintering range is the

response of our avian populations to a decade of winters warm enough to provide continuous open water – a reliable sign of the beginnings of global warming.

There were three separate sightings of GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE. The earliest was from Silver L., Kings Co. (JCT, JWW, RBS) and “with 500 Canada Geese” near Windsor, Hants Co. (JCT, BBT, DOU) from early October until late November. An individual was seen Nov. 17, “... still in Pembroke Pond”, Yar. Co. (MUN) “... it tends (to be) there alone”. A SNOW GOOSE hung out with five Canadas on Sable Island in late October (ZOL) and another was at Bissett L., HRM Dec. 1, (DOU). CANADA GEESE were observed in normal numbers throughout the province. There were regular sightings of 500 – 600 in the Windsor area (JCT), several hundred in late October at Morien Bar, CB Co. (SEM), and another several hundred at Merigomish Hbr., Pict. Co. (KJM). In late November there were “thousands” and there were still 700+ in early Dec. at Bissett L., HRM (DOU). In CB there were 100+, Nov. 22 at Waycobah, Inv. Co. (DBM). There were two early sightings of BRANT: one, Sept. 30 at Pond Cove, Brier I. (ELM), and 30, Nov. 1 at The Hawk, “first of the new season” (MUN).

WOOD DUCKS were well-reported throughout the period. The earliest reports were Aug. 25, five males and three fems. at Saxon St. Pond, Kings Co. (JCT) and “Noted on seven dates, Sept. 2-22, with about 12 on Sept. 15 at Harmony L. ... near Caledonia, Queens Co. being the highest count” (Mike Wilson). In early September, Wayne R. Petersen reported one at Brier I., “headed out to sea”. There were 13, Sept. 1 at Meadowbank Lagoon, Sydney Mines and seven at Big Pond, Florence, CB Co. (DBM). The latest report was one fem., Dec. 1, at Stellarton, Pict. Co. (KJM).

GADWALLS were reported only once: Sept. 5 small numbers were seen at the APBS, Cum. Co. (Mike Wilson). The beautiful EURASIAN WIGEON was reported from three separate locations: Sept. 7- Nov. 25 two males, W



This handsome SNOW GOOSE, from its relative size evidently of the expected “Greater” subspecies, came in regularly to Bissett L., with the Canadas from Cole Hbr., in late November. [Photo Richard Stern]

Lawrencetown Marsh, HRM (TEP *et al.*), Oct. 9 - Nov. 30, one at Sullivans Pond, Dartmouth, HRM (Maia Reece, SJF, DHH) and Nov. 25 - Dec. 5, one in Yarmouth Hbr. (MUN, PRG). AMERICAN WIGEONS were reported throughout the fall, mostly from the Annapolis Valley, HRM and Yarmouth County. High counts were 28, Aug. 12 at Three Fathom Hbr. pond, HRM (BLM), 16, Oct. 2-5 at Harris Pond, Canning, Kings Co. (JCT) and seven, Nov. 23 at Monks Head Pond, Ant. Co. (RFL).

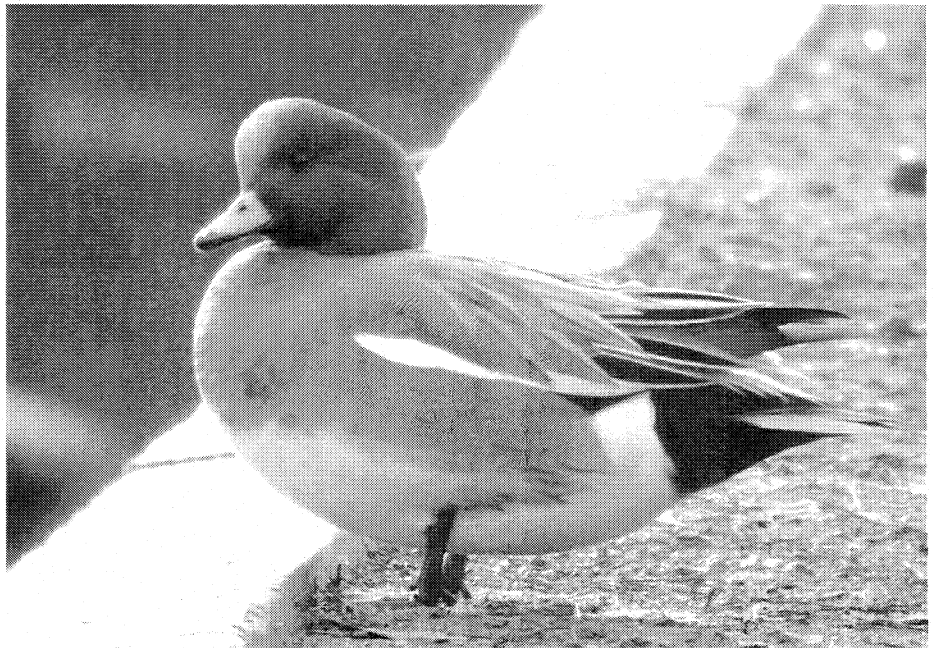
The AM. BLACK DUCK was, as always, ubiquitous. RFL regularly saw 200-300 at Lanark, Ant. Co., and JCT saw similar numbers at various sites in Kings Co. SEM reported 120, Nov. 17 at Morien Bar, CB Co. “Numbers congregating here built steadily through fall months.” The latest reports were 28, Nov. 5 at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co. (Weldon MacPhail *fide* GED) and one, Dec. 4, in the inner harbour, Port Mouton, Queens Co. (RES). MALLARDS were, like the Am. Black Duck, reported from all parts of the Province’s mainland. The majority of the reports were from the Annapolis Valley (JCT, GWT), but there were also lots from HRM (Penhorn L., Bissett L., Conrads Beach – R. H. Lindsay, DMW) and Ant. Co. (RFL). The large population in Lun. Co. was missed this fall, but doubtless was there. The latest

report was of one male, Nov. 25 at The Hawk, (JCZ) “attempting to mate with a Black/Mallard hybrid of undetermined sex.” The BLACK/MALLARD HYBRID has begun to appear regularly in our observations. Although these combinations of our most common local with the elegant newcomer may seem laughable, they are of great interest because they are living examples of how biological species diversify. Three such hybrid sightings were reported (of how many observed?) – Sept. 14, one at Lanark; two, Sept. 22 at Antigonish Landing, (RFL); and one, Nov. 25 at The Hawk (JCZ).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL were well reported, mostly from the Annapolis Valley (Canard, Saxon St. and Windsor Sewage Ponds - JCT), the APBS in Cum. Co. (Mike Wilson) and Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co. (RFL). There were a few seen in early September in CB Co. (DBM), and a few reports from Brier I. (ELM) and HRM (R. H. Lindsay, TEP, SHU). The most interesting report was of 16 seen Sept. 22 at Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co. “some were diving” (RFL). One CINNAMON TEAL was reported shot Oct 12 or 13 at CSI, (*fide* BLM). What more can be said? The handsome N. SHOVELER was reported twice: three, Sept. 5 at the APBS, Cum. Co. (Mike Wilson) and four fems., Dec. 1 at Canard Pond, Kings Co. (RBS, AAM). All the reports of N. PINTAILS were

from the S of the province, HRM and the Annapolis Valley. The earliest, from the Sept. 11-15 period, was "one fem. flying with scoters" off Digby Neck, Anna. Co. (Wayne R. Petersen). From the end of September to mid-October ELM *et al.* reported up to four fems. on Brier I. Most of the later reports were from Bissett L., HRM (TEP, DOU, DHH). The highest number was 30, Nov. 11 at Daniels Hd., CSI (MUN). GREEN-WINGED TEAL were reported in their usual numbers from freshwater locations across the province. In early August there were six in Pond Cove, Brier I., "increased to about 150 by Oct.10-15, then decreased to only three by Nov. 9" (ELM, *et al.*). There were 18, Sept. 3 at Tower Rd. Lagoon (DBM) and 49, Oct. 6 at Morien Bar in CB Co., (SEM) "peak number that I saw here this season" and 30, Oct. 10 at Seal I., Yar. Co. (BLM *et al.*). There were 15, Oct. 28 at Melbourne Sanctuary (MUN) and 29 still present Nov.3 at Pinkneys Pt., Yar. Co. (PRG, RSD). From opposite end of the province there were reports of two, Nov. 11 at Meadowbank Lagoon, Sydney Mines (DBM) and 30, Nov. 30 at Daniels Hd., CSI (MUN). They were still being reported in early December: 15 at Melbourne Sanctuary, Yar. Co. (MUN), "lots" at Canard Pond (RBS, AAM), six at Chegoggin Dyke, Yar. Co. (PRG) and two at W Chezsetcook Marsh, HRM (DOU).

The single report of a CANVASBACK, Oct. 28 at The Guzzle, CSI came with no verifying details and is problematic. Pending more information it will be classified as a "possible" sighting. The earliest reports of RING-NECKED DUCKS were in late August: 50 at Three Fathom Hbr. pond, HRM (BLM, Alex Lees), 39 at Cape Pond, Ant. Co. (RFL). 30 were reported Sept. 1 at Big Pond, Florence, CB Co. (DBM). There were 70, Sept. 28 at Smelly Cove, HRM (R. H. Lindsay). They were seen up to the end of the period in the S of the province in numbers between five and 10 in Kings Co. (JCT, RBS, AAM), HRM (R. H. Lindsay, DOU), Brier I. (ELM) and Yar. Co. (MUN, PRG). There was a single report of a TUFTED DUCK, Nov. 26 at Pembroke L., Yar. Co. No verifying details were provided and so, like the Canvasback record, this



At least two EURASIAN WIGEONS had appeared among the American Wigeons in Metro Halifax-Dartmouth by late fall, including this spanking male at Sullivan's Pond. [Photo Richard Stern]

will be treated as a "possible" sighting. KJM & MAB reported 2,000 SCAUP sp. Nov. 17 in the East R. near the Abercrombie trailer court, Pict. Co. There were 71 GREATER SCAUP, Oct. 28 at Bissett L., HRM (R H Lindsay). For the remainder of the period they were seen in the tens at Pond Cove, Brier I. (ELM), Pembroke, Yar. Co. (MUN), Big Pond, Florence, CB Co. (DBM) and Bissett L., HRM (DOU). 150 were at Pomquet Hbr., Ant. Co. (RFL) and 60, with 30 Lessers, were in Kingsburg Pond, Lun. Co. (ELM, RBS). LESSER SCAUP were normally seen in the company of Greater (making the identifications surer). The sightings cover the same time period: the end of October to early December. There were "several" seen Nov. 9 at Cranberry Hd., Yar. Co. and 30 (as noted above), Nov. 24 at Kingsburg Pond, Kings Co. (ELM). MUN reported 20, Nov. 24 at Pembroke Pond, Yar. Co. and there was at least one, Nov. 26-Dec. 2 at Bissett L., HRM (DOU).

COMMON EIDER were "seen on twelve dates, Aug. 28 to Sept. 26, at coastal locations in reasonable numbers ..." (Mike Wilson). There were 120, Aug. 20, and many were seen until mid-September at the W Light, Brier I. and Cape St. Marys, Digby Co. (var. obs.).

For the rest of the period the observations were of small numbers scattered from nine at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co., Nov. 25-28 (Weldon MacPhail) to nine at Daniels Hd., CSI, Nov. 25 (JCZ). There were 50, Nov. 25 at Wolfville Ridge, (BLF) "Flying SW from Minas Basin; most were males."

There were numerous sightings, mostly in November, of the sprightly and hardy HARLEQUIN DUCK. The first record was of one fem., Oct. 26 at Rainbow Haven, HRM (DWP, JAP) "... odd place for this duck"; it was still there Nov. 16 (R. H. Lindsay). A group of six (four males, two fems.) were seen Nov. 9-24 at Parkers Cove and Pt. George, Anna. Co. (RBS), and one male and two fems. at Daniels Hd., CSI (MUN, JCZ). The latest sighting was Nov. 25-28, 12 (three males, nine fems.) at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co. (Weldon MacPhail *vide* GED).

There were two reports of SCOTER sp. The first was Sept. 14 "Loose raft of white-winged, surf and black scoter coming ashore much earlier than usual; 125 birds+ counted," St. Anns Bay at Englishtown, Vic. Co. (BSK). Also "Some scoters were seen flying" Oct. 28 over Merigomish Hbr. (KJM) "... and no doubt a good-sized flock was hiding

in the rough waters of the Strait." There were two fem. SURF SCOTERS seen Aug. 18 "with four female Black Scoters flying through Petite Passage", Digby Neck, Digby Co. (ELM). Mike Wilson reported they were "seen on six dates, Aug. 28 to Sept. 26, at coastal locations with the highest numbers being about 350 off Hampton, Anna. Co., Sept. 20th (with about 350 Black Scoters) & about 30 off Cabots Landing, CB Co., Sept. 8" There was a resident flock Sept. 11 – Oct. 10 in the vicinity of Brier I. (var. obs.). In the various bays and inlets of CB Co. (Morien, Mira, St. Anns, Gabarus) SEM, BSK, DBM and EMC reported large flocks mid-October – late November. The latest report was from Nov. 24 at Daniels Hd., CSI (MUN). The first report of WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS was of about 200, Aug. 20 on Aspy Bay, N Vic. Co. (AAM); the flock was down to 10-15 by mid-September. There were a few Sept. 2 in Green Bay, Lun. Co. (Mike Wilson), and two, Oct. 1 at W Light, Brier I., (LAL, PAC). DBM *et al.* reported flocks of 20-100 up until Nov. 28 in various bays in CB Co., and these flocks represented the majority of the birds seen. There were five, Oct. 20 at Pinkneys Pt., Yar. Co. (PRG), and a few Nov. 24-28 at Daniels Hd., CSI (MUN, JCZ). BLACK SCOTERS were not reported as frequently as the other two scoter species. There was one, Aug. 15 at Brier I. (LAL, PAC). There were 100, Sept. 2 in Green Bay, Lun. Co. and 350, Sept. 20 "off Hampton, Anna. Co. with Surf Scoter" (Mike Wilson). One was seen Oct. 27 at Cow Bay, HRM (R. H. Lindsay), 11, Nov. 12 in St. Anns Bay, Vic. Co. (BSK) and one, Nov. 24 at Daniels Hd., CSI, Shel. Co. (MUN).

LONG-TAILED DUCK reports began to arrive at the end of October. The first was of one bird, Oct. 26 at Caribou I. Light, Pict. Co. (KJM) followed by nine, Nov. 6 at Morien Bar and 20 at Mira Gut, CB Co. (SEM). JBM reported 12, Nov. 10 at Maders Cove, Lun. Co. and DJC saw two pairs at Ginger Hill, Lockeport, Shel. Co. There were 25, Nov. 21 at Gabarus, CB Co. (DBM, EMC) and 13, Nov. 25-28 at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co. (Weldon MacPhail). A pair was seen Nov. 25 at

Daniels Hd., CSI, Shel. Co. (JCZ) and four, Dec. 6 at Pembroke, Yar. Co. (PRG). Reports of BUFFLEHEADS began surprisingly late. The first report, from CB, was not until Oct. 10: nine (five males, 4 fems.), at the Tower Rd. settling pond, Glace Bay, CB Co. (SEM). The next sightings were from the opposite end of the province: 30 then 200, Oct. 27-28 at Melbourne, Yar. Co. (PRG, RSD, MUN). The subsequent reports covered the province: six, Oct. 31 at the Fortress of Louisbourg (SEM), 14, Nov. 12 at Martinique Beach, HRM (R. H. Lindsay) and so on. The latest report was 200, Dec. 1 at Melbourne Sanctuary, Yar. Co. (MUN). The first report of COM. GOLDENEYES was one fem., Oct. 30 at Broad Cove, Lun. Co. (SJF, BAH). Why so late? RFL found 30, Nov. 3 at Ogdens Pond, Ant. Co. and DBM reported 110+, Nov. 9 from Sydney Mines to North Sydney. R. H. Lindsay saw 10, Nov. 12 at Martinique Beach, HRM and PRG & MUN saw three, Nov. 12-17 at Pembroke, Yar. Co. There were 150 "crisp, bright males", Nov. 17 at the Pictou Causeway (KJM, MAB) and 60+, Nov. 23 at Ogdens Pond (RFL). The latest report was one, Dec. 5 in Yarmouth Hbr., Yar. Co. (PRG).

HOODED MERGANSERS were heavily reported, starting in mid-September, from all parts of the province (see introduction). The first reports were in early September: three fems. (first winter birds) at Dingwall, CB Co. "on the lagoon behind the beach to the S of Markland Resort" (Mike Wilson); one imm. at Pond Cove, Brier I. (Wayne R. Petersen); eight at Antigonish Landing (RFL). In mid-September there were 12-14 at the Ducks Unlimited pond, New Minas, Kings Co. (JCT). There were 125, Oct. 26 in Haliburton Gut and several at Waterside PP, Pict. Co. (KJM) "in nice fresh plumage with the males performing courtship with full crests." On Nov. 9 there were 49 in Eel L., Yar. Co. (PRG) and 40 were still there Dec. 2 (RSD) "This bird has really increased in recent years." RFL encountered 200+, Nov. 23 at Lanark, Ant. Co. Throughout the period there were reports of a few birds from ponds in

many parts of the province. COMMON MERGANSER records were mostly from the N, and as far S as HRM. The earliest report was of eight, Aug. 19 at Baddeck Inlet, Vic. Co. (DBM). Typical was "Aug. 28, Oct. 28, Nov. 27, respectively: 19 imms., 11, and 40 including four males in Conrad Marsh, Lawrencetown, HRM" (DMW). RFL reported numbers from one to 30 at various sites in Ant. Co. DBM and EMC reported the most significant movement, in November in CB: 230, Nov. 9 at Caribou Marsh. Ron MacDonald (reported) "still 100+ on Nov. 10", 90, Nov. 11 at Pottles L., N. Sydney and 75 "mostly males", Nov. 21 at French Rd., all in CB Co. The highest numbers of RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS were in the N of the province. The earliest reports were at the end of August, of small numbers at Conrads Beach, HRM (R. H. Lindsay) and Brier I. (Mike Wilson). In late September RFL reported seven at Ogdens Pond and 120 at Antigonish Landing. JAH counted 46 (all fems.) "at the mouth of the Mush-a-mush R.", Lun. Co. In mid-October BSK reported eight at Jersey Cove, Vic. Co. and SEM counted 30 in Mira Bay and 25 at Morien Bar, CB Co. There were "hundreds", Oct. 26 at Waterside PP, Pict. Co. (KJM) and there were 25, Oct. 27 "with Horned & Red-necked Grebes feeding actively near the shore" just S of East R., Lun. Co. (ELM). Oct. 28 there was one flock of 700 in Merigomish Hbr., CB Co. "flew from the harbour to the strait along the causeway to the big marsh" (KJM). In November there were two to nine at Conrads Beach, HRM, eight at Gabarus, CB Co. (DBM, EMC) and 10 in Pomquet Hbr., Ant. Co. (RFL).

All reports of RUDDY DUCKS were from HRM and south, and most in November. There were two, Sept. 29 at Tangier Hbr., HRM (HAB, JEB *vide* BLM). There was one, Nov. 9-24 at Cranberry Hd., Cum. Co. (RSD) "It was in company with several Lesser Scaup". One was at Pembroke and one at Yarmouth (MUN), in Yar. Co. The rest of the sightings were Nov. 25- Dec. 2, up to four at Bissett L., HRM (var. obs.). ☒

Diurnal Raptors Through Cranes

By Ulli Hoeger

An accumulation and movement of predatory birds often accompanies large numbers of migrating songbirds in late summer and fall. Some raptors follow narrow migration pathways and appear in narrow time windows in large numbers along those routes; it's hawkwatch time on Brier Island.

The OSPREY, our provincial bird, is common over much of the province during spring and summer. However, being a migratory species, sightings in late fall are of special interest. Still abundant in September, sightings and reports get fewer towards the end of the month. Late individuals were seen Oct. 22 from The Lookoff, Kings Co. (ULH), as well as on Brier I. (TEP).

BALD EAGLES were reported from all counties throughout the period. Several observations of sub-ad. and ad. Bald Eagles coming from Brier I. and Cape Sable, Yar. Co. (MUN) during October may have represented migrating individuals.

Most reports of N. HARRIERS describe imm. and fem. coloured (i.e. brown) individuals. The only "gray ghosts", males, were reported from Rainbow Haven, Hfx. Co., Aug. 30 (DWP, JAP), and Little Hbr., Shel. Co., Nov. 28 (DHY). In September, JCT and other birders observed harriers flushing shorebirds on the Minas Basin beaches in Kings Co.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS are found year-round in NS, but a good portion of the population is migratory. The following observations describe the significance of Brier I. as a hawkwatch location. On Sept. 8 JUS reported three individuals, ten days later they were all over the place. On Oct. 10 Wayne R. Petersen estimated 70 arriving on the island from Digby Neck. The following two days ELM counted another 120 arriving from the E. During the NSBS Thanksgiving weekend field trip several

dozen patrolled the island, forcing passerines to keep a low profile. COOPER'S HAWKS were also reported from Brier I., Sept. 11-15, Wayne R. Petersen noted a migrating individual, and Oct. 15, ELM found a juv. hovering over Pond Cove. NORTHERN GOSHAWK sightings from the Brier I. area include, Sept. 18 (JUS), Sept. 22 (JAH), Sept. 27 (ELM), and Oct. 6 (RBS). On Oct. 11 EBB's feeder in Westphal, Hfx. Co. was visited by a juv. N. Goshawk

Mid-August individual BROAD-WINGED HAWKS were seen on BPI (JCZ). On Sept. 18 JUS reported more than 1,000 from our migration hotspot Brier I., an observation confirmed by Mike Wilson's count. RED-TAILED HAWKS are common sightings in the province. On Nov. 30 PLC, Suzanne Borkowski, and RSM were witnesses when two Black-capped Chickadees near Centre, Lun. Co. mobbed one. A RED-SHOULDERED HAWK was the only unusual raptor noted on Seal I. by Alex Lees *et al.* This report from Sept. 18 was the only fall report for the province. The first ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS for the season were reported Oct. 14 from Brier I. In November, reports from Crystal Crescent Beach and Island Rock Hd., both Hfx. Co. (HAT), Grand Pré (RBS), Pembroke (MUN), and Hartlen Pt. (TEP), announced the approaching winter birding season. On Sept. 26 AAM had the pleasure to observe an ad. GOLDEN EAGLE on South Mt. near South Hbr., Vic. Co.

Fall migration also brought AM. KESTRELS. Several were reported from Yar. Co., Sept. 8 (MUN). Brier I. had them (of course!), with a peak in early October (NSBS). Late reports came in from W Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., Nov. 3 (TEP), and Pembroke, Yar. Co., Nov. 9 (MUN). When there are flocks of migrating shorebirds, Merlins and Peregrine Falcons are usually not

far. In September these falcons were common sightings on beaches and over marshes. MERLINS were abundant on Brier I. during the annual NSBS Thanksgiving trip in early October, but their peak on the island was Sept. 22 when JAH reported well over 30 of these small falcons. MUN reported the only confirmed GYRFALCON sightings for the period. One was resting on CSI, Oct. 27, and he spotted another one in Pembroke, Yar. Co., Nov. 11. On Oct. 7 TEP reported three hunting PEREGRINE FALCONS on the Eastern shore at Hartlen Pt., Conrad Beach, and Three Fathom Harbour.

RING-NECKED PHEASANTS are still a common species in NS with many reports from all areas. On Sept. 16 a RUFFED GROUSE was drumming in the woods of Pict. Co. (KJM), and Nov. 27 KFS met one in Apple R., Cum. Co. SEM had the impression that they were numerous this fall. TEP reported a SPRUCE GROUSE from Taylor Hd., Hfx. Co., Sept. 18.

During the September NSBS meeting Jon Stone mentioned that a day earlier, on Sept. 25, an exhausted KING RAIL was dropped off at the Rehab Centre in Dartmouth, likely brought up to NS by one of the season's hurricanes. VIRGINIA RAILS and a SORA were reported from the Goose Creek Marsh on Roberts I., Yar. Co., Sept. 8 by MUN, and Sept. 21 JCT found a Sora near Port Williams, Kings Co. The only, lonely COM. MOORHEN for the fall season was found by TEP at APBS, Cum. Co., Sept. 17. Rails live a very elusive life, but they were seen and heard over the season.

On Aug. 24 a SANDHILL CRANE was seen in a field close to Aylesford, Kings Co. from Hwy. 11 by Mike Boudreau (*vide* JWW). Another individual spent time in Yar. Co. at the end of October (*vide* MUN). ☐

The Shorebirds

By Sylvia Fullerton

Relatively benign weather this season may have contributed to the impressive number of shorebirds reported. In an aerial survey of the Minas Basin shoreline and another on land, at E Long I., Grand Pré, Aug. 8-9, Donald Sam estimated 200,000+ shorebirds roosting and many thousands more in the air, probably disturbed by the ever present Peregrines and Merlins. I applaud JCT and JWW for their efforts throughout the season to provide estimates and individual species counts, an almost impossible task. SAW also contributed to the shorebird picture by noting restlessness and significant movements of groups of peeps at Horton Bluff, Kings Co., Aug. 7, 9, 10 and 20. These were all clear evenings with a NW airflow and birds were moving in an ESE/SE direction. JCT counted about 43,000+ still refuelling at Grand Pré, Aug. 22. The scene was similar at CSI where MUN reported that many birds had left at the end of August. Nonetheless, BJS and SIS tallied 8,000+ on The Cape, Sept. 23, with 2,000 still in residence Nov. 15.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS were found in average numbers at favoured stopover sites. Early peaks were: 100, Brier I., Aug. 2 (ELM); 300, Windsor Causeway, Aug. 9 (JWW); 72, Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 18 (JSC); 54, Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 20; 200+, Grand Pré, Aug. 22 (JCT). The CB seasonal high was 305, Morien Bar, Aug. 27 (SEM). CSI's peak was low, 200, Sept. 1, but 130 were still lingering there Oct. 31 (BJS, SIS). HRM was represented by 100+, Cole Hbr. Salt Marsh Trail, Aug. 13 (HAT). Judging by the variety and numbers of species seen along this Trail on this excursion, and an earlier one by IAM, I would hope that it could be surveyed on a regular basis. Numbers from all other beaches were unusually low. Last to be noted were four, Cherry Hill Beach, Nov. 21. AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVERS can be seen in either dry, short grass or beach/mudflat habitat during migration, two representative staging areas being Sydney Airport and

Sable I. Numbers were lower in both areas than in previous years. Up to 100 were on the beaches of Sable, Aug. 27-Oct. 25, sometimes in groups of 30. Thirty or so were at Sydney Airport, Sept. 8 (DBM, SEM). Earliest migrant was at Morien Bar, Aug. 11 (SEM), followed by two, South Hbr., Vic. Co., Aug. 20 (AAM). From then on only ones and twos were scattered about on eight beaches, the last being late birds at Pinkneys Pt., Yar. Co., Oct. 27 (PRG, RSD) and Conrads Beach, HRN, Nov. 15 (FLL).

Record-high counts of SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS reflected another successful breeding season. Brier I. hosted 100, Aug. 2 (ELM) and birds continued "common and widespread" until late September (Wayne Petersen, Mike Wilson). Record-highs were established: 3,850, The Cape, Aug. 11 (BJS, SIS); 570, Morien Bar, Aug. 18 (SEM); 2850, Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Aug. 18 (JSC). The high count for Long I., Grand Pré, was a low 400, Aug. 22 (JCT), but the many disturbances at this site would make a complete count almost impossible. Respectable counts reached elsewhere: 525, Cherry Hill Beach, Aug. 25; 100, Three Fathom Hbr., HRM (DMW); 100+, Crescent Beach, Lockeport, mid-September (DJC); 800+, Conrads Beach, HRM, Sept. 25 (DWP, JAP). Many newly surveyed beaches also had good numbers: 500, Sandhills PP, Villagedale, Shel. Co., Aug. 2 (JON, SAN); 3,000+, Cole Hbr. Salt Marsh Trail (HAT); 1,000+, Martinique Beach, HRM, Aug. 29 (HAT). Surprisingly, only handfuls were seen elsewhere. Late lingering were: one each, Crescent & Cherry Hill Beaches, Lun. Co., Nov. 11 (LAC, SJF); one, Hartlen Pt., HRM, Nov. 23 (TEP). The late nesting PIPING PLOVER pair with three juvs. at Crescent Beach, Lockeport, Aug. 1, reported in the last issue of *Nova Scotia Birds*, were carefully watched by DJC and her tale illustrates the precarious lives of these birds. DJC notes that these were actually newly hatched chicks, not

juvs., and by Aug. 2 one of the ads. had disappeared, probably the fem.; by Aug. 7, only one chick of three remained; the remaining ad. was last seen, Aug. 28, and the now fledged juv. was last spotted Sept. 11, just before Hurricane Gustav brushed by. We can only wonder if it made it. Another late-nesting pair was at Cherry Hill Beach with two chicks, Aug. 5. Two juvs. were seen off and on until only one remained, Sept. 28, perhaps a surviving juv. or one from another beach (JAH). One, not aged, was at Pomquet Beach PP, Ant. Co., Aug. 9 (RFL). Five KILLDEER spent two weeks at Cherry Hill Beach in August, and five were tallied on the Cole Hbr. Salt Marsh Trail, Aug. 13. The only other gathering was of seven, Pond Cove, Brier I., Oct. 13-16, perhaps young of the two pair that had nested there (ELM). Three were still in attendance, Nov. 25 (JUS).

CSI's three juv. AM. OYSTERCATCHERS became "airborne" Aug. 24, but it was a sad day when one died in rehabilitation, after having lost a wing, Oct. 1. MUN conjectured that it might have struck an overhead wire. The remaining two juvs. lingered later than usual; the last one was seen Oct. 6 (JON, MUN).

GREATER YELLOWLEGS were ubiquitous but with a few exceptions occurred in no more than single digits. Peaks for the major areas were: 250, Cole Hbr. Salt Marsh Trail, Aug. 2 (IAM); 349, surpassing last year's high, Morien Bar, Aug. 18 (SEM); 38, Fullers Bridge, Rich. Co., Aug. 31 (DBM, SEM); 48, The Cape, Sept. 26 (BJS, SIS); 32, Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Sept. 4 (JSC). Yellowlegs are always fun to watch as they dart about searching for food. SEM *et al.* watched 55 in a feeding frenzy, together with Willets and Black-headed Gulls, Morien Bar, Sept. 8, as they fed on small fish trapped in shallow water as the tide receded. JWW also watched three at the New Minas Ducks Unlimited pond, Sept. 20, swimming about and pecking at prey on the water surface. A single

bird, feeding in Grays Brook, Vic. Co., Oct. 10, may have been a lingering local juv. (FMC). Lingering were: nine, Pinkneys Pt., Yar. Co., Nov. 5 (PRG); three, Jersey Cove, Vic. Co., Nov. 12 (BSK); two, Rainbow Haven, HRM, Nov. 13 (R. H. Lindsay). LESSER YELLOWLEGS have usually left by early August and only a few linger into late September, but this year was an exception. The Cole Hbr. Salt Marsh Trail produced an excellent seasonal high of 200+, Aug. 2 & 21 (IAM, HAT). A good-sized flock of 14 was still at Brier I., Aug. 17 (LAL, PAC, ADL) and 20 were tallied at CSI, Sept. 6 (MUN). Birds had peaked at Morien Bar in late July, but 50 were still present Aug. 3 (SEM). JCT estimated that in a mixed flock of 70-80 yellowlegs at the Windsor sewage ponds, Sept. 5, more than half were Lessers. Last to be reported were two, Dominion Beach, CB Co., Oct. 12 (LEL). About 20 SOLITARY SANDPIPERS, an average number, appeared at select freshwater ponds. First to appear was one, Pubnico Pt., Yar. Co., Aug. 23 (RSD). Two were at Saxon St. Pond, Sheffield Mills, Kings Co., a traditional stopover, Aug. 25 (JCT). Two visited Frog Pond, HRM, Aug. 27 (PLC). One managed to find sustenance at a wading pool at Willow Park, Wolfville, Sept. 16-17 (Neil Cloghessy, JCT). Stronach Park, Kingston hosted two or three, Sept. 21 (SLH). Two were at Black L., near Cape North, Vic. Co., Sept. 21, a repeat of a sighting at the same time last year, raising the question whether they could have been local breeders (FMC, AAM). Singles were scattered from Dingwall to Brier I., with a tardy two at CSI, Oct. 5 (JON, MUN).

A late ad. WILLET and chick were at West Hd., near Clarks Hbr, CSI, Aug. 12 (MUN). A post-breeding flock of 300+, an exceptionally high number, was at Cole Hbr. Salt Marsh Trail, Aug. 13 (HAT). Sixty-three juvs. were still hanging out at Morien Bar, Aug. 18, and one remained until Oct. 19 (SEM).

Up to 14 SPOTTED SANDPIPERS were tallied along the shore of the NW Arm, HRM, Aug. 28 (ULH). About 20 others were noted around the Province from mid-August to late September, the



One SOLITARY SANDPIPER in Canso this fall developed an odd habit of foraging on a lawn. Has anyone else seen such behaviour? [Photo Steve Bushell]

last being one at Silver L., Kings Co., Oct. 20 (BLF).

UPLAND SANDPIPERS usually turn up on offshore islands or grassy headlands. One did just that, albeit on the late side for an early migrant, at The Hawk, Sept. 26-28 (MUN *et al.*).

Respectable numbers of WHIMBREL touched down at traditional coastal headlands and singles were scattered elsewhere. Selected peak counts were: 45, Fortress of Louisbourg, Aug. 13 (SEM); 36, Crystal Crescent PP, Aug. 17 (HAT); 58, The Cape, Aug. 21 (BJS, SIS); 30+, Sydney Airport, Sept. 8 (DBM, SEM *et al.*). Last were 12, Hartlen Pt., Sept. 21 (PLC, JEH, RBS).

HUDSONIAN GODWITS made a good showing, beginning with four, Cole Hbr. Salt Marsh Trail, Aug. 2 (IAM). Peaks were: 26, Morien Bar, Aug. 18 (SEM) and 27, The Cape, Aug. 11 (JON, SAN). Singles were at Windsor sewage pond and Conrads Beach, HRM and two were on Seal I., Sept. 24, "the first there in several years" (Alex Lees). Lingering were two juvs., Morien Bar, Oct. 26 and four, CSI, Oct. 27 (JON, TEC).

Few reports were received of RUDDY TURNSTONES and numbers were low.

The seasonal high was 69, The Cape, Aug. 8 (BJS, SIS). Low maxima at other sites were represented by: 9, Morien Bar, Aug. 3 (SEM); 14, Cherry Hill Beach, Aug. 7; 12, Brier I., Aug. 20 (LAL, ADL, PAC); 30+, Martinique Beach, Aug. 29 (HAT). A colour-banded ad., Morien Bar, Aug. 18, was found to have been banded at Delaware Bay, May 2002 (SEM). This is the second time a Ruddy, banded at Delaware Bay, has turned up in NS, the previous one being at Cherry Hill Beach in August 2000. Last was one, Jersey Cove, Vic. Co., Nov. 12 (BSK).

RED KNOTS were in good numbers at Morien Bar and CSI, but abysmally low elsewhere. Separate waves were recorded at Morien Bar: 45 juvs., Sept. 2 and 45 birds, most in basic plumage, Sept. 21, showing how instructive aging birds can be. Up to 35 juvs. were still on the move there, Oct. 13 (SEM), with another 35 at Dominion Beach, CB Co. on the same day (LEL). CSI hosted 100, Sept. 29 (MUN). Cherry Hill Beach supported only seven, Sept. 1 and nearby Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., managed to have but two, Sept. 17 (JSC). Last was one, foraging with Sanderlings, Crescent Beach, Lockport, Nov. 16 (DJC). SANDERLING are intriguing and rove widely in search of ideal conditions, hence some beaches support high numbers and others are deserted. Record-breaking highs were 4,500, CSI, Sept. 26 & Oct. 27 (JON, TEC). Good numbers elsewhere were: 400+. Sable I., September through November (ZOL); 400+, Martinique Beach, HRM, Sept. 6 (HAT); 700, Crescent Beach, Lun. Co., Sept. 17 (JSC); 500+, Conrads Beach, HRM, Sept. 25 (DWP, JAP). Keji Seaside Adjunct, Queens Co. supported 95, Sept. 30 (JAH) and nearby Crescent Beach, Lockport, 115, Oct. 22 (BLM, DJC). Grand Pré's high was 100, Sept. 17 (JCT). Numbers scarcely reached 50 at other beaches.

Once again there were high counts of SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS at their major staging areas in the Minas Basin. JCT saw "several tens of thousands" near Boot I., Kings Co., Aug. 2 and, together with CTO and SAW, estimated 30,000+, Long I., Grand Pré, Aug. 7. ELM watched 700

set down at Pond Cove, Brier I., Aug. 2 and 300, Aug. 20, including the first juvs. High counts at CSI were: 4500, Aug. 11 (JON, SAN) and 2,400, Sept. 13 (BJS, SIS). Good numbers were 1,000+, Martinique Beach and 2,000+, Cole Hbr. Salt Marsh Trail in August (HAT). Best count for CB was 172, Morien Bar, Aug. 27 (SEM). Among smaller numbers distributed elsewhere, six were late at Conrads Beach, HRM, Nov. 9 (Rob Woods). A W. SANDPIPER stood out at The Hawk, Oct. 27, particularly noticeable being the "droop at the end of the bill" (MUN, JON, TEC). LEAST SANDPIPERS were in average numbers, but I suspect they were under-reported. Almost 40, a high number for this beach, were at Broad Cove, Lun. Co., Aug. 5 (JAH, CLS). One hundred, including many juvs., were at Pond Cove, Brier I., Aug. 20 (ELM). JCT estimated 300+ roosting, Long I., Grand Pré, Sept. 17. Highest count for CB was 66, Morien Bar, Aug. 27 (SEM). CSI produced the seasonal high of 612, Sept. 13; seven of these lingered until Oct. 31 (BJS, SIS).

This was a banner year for WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS, producing record-high counts. The season began with ten ads., Pond Cove, Brier I., Aug. 1, increasing to 30 by Aug. 20; first juvs. appeared Sept. 30 (ELM). Record-breaking peaks were: 750, Morien Bar, Aug. 27 (SEM); 500, CSI, Aug. 11 (JON, SAN). Other beaches seemed deserted in comparison: 20, Cherry Hill Beach, Aug. 20; 50+, Martinique Beach, Sept. 6 (HAT); 20+ Long I., Grand Pré, Sept. 17 (JCT); single digits at most other beaches. Twelve were at Hartlen Pt. until Nov. 23 (TEP). BAIRD'S SANDPIPER was another of the larger peeps present in above average numbers from mid-August to late September. About 32 were reported, many in groups: seven were at Pond Cove, Brier I, Aug. 22-26, with two still feeding among pipits and larks, Sept. 29 (ELM, var. obs.). Other groups included: eight, Daniels Hd., CSI, Aug. 23 with two remaining until Sept. 29 (MUN, JON); five, Crescent Beach, Lockeport, Aug. 27 (DJC); five, Seal I., Sept. 2 (BLM *et al.*). Singles were at Schooner Pond, CB Co., W Lawrencetown Marsh, HRM, Cherry Hill Beach, and Broad Cove, Lun. Co.

PECTORAL SANDPIPERS were widespread, but in very low numbers. Other than the seasonal high of 70 at The Cape, Sept. 26 (BJS, SIS), peaks were low: 5, Morien Bar, Oct. 6 (SEM); 14, Pond Cove, Brier I., Nov. 14 (JUS); 13, Hartlen Pt., Oct. 19 (R. H. Lindsay); 6, Seal I., Oct. 10-11 (BLM, RBS *et al.*). Traditional areas, which usually support good numbers in the fall, also had few: 22, Big I., Pict. Co., Sept. 16 (KJM); four, Sydney Airport, Sept. 3 (DBM). SEM observed a late bird, Fortress of Louisbourg, Nov. 6, "walking about unconcernedly in the midst of a busy construction site, or on the run, feeding in the grass within two meters of humans." This is odd behaviour for what are normally skittish birds, almost Ruff-like behaviour, but SEM did examine the bird critically, noting particularly the abrupt cut-off of the heavy breast streaking, so it was no doubt a Pectoral exhibiting uncharacteristic behaviour.

A few PURPLE SANDPIPERS made the deadline by showing up in November: six, Pond Cove, Brier I., Nov. 9, three of which were bathing with other waders in the "big pond" (ELM). Fresh-water Purples were new to ELM and to the rest of us, I'm sure, although stragglers have been reported in central Canada. Two were at Pt. Michaud Beach, Rich. Co. and singles appeared at Lower Prospect, HRM and Waterside PP, Pict. Co. later in the month.

The few DUNLIN appearing here in August are usually single birds in alternate (breeding) plumage, not having moulted before migration, as is the norm. BLF spotted one of these early birds at Grand Pré, Aug. 18, with a mixed flock of shorebirds. Numbers were respectable with the highest tally of 500 at CSI, Oct. 27 (JON, TEC). Morien Bar hosted 228, Oct. 13, a high count for this location (SEM). Up to 200 were at the Windsor sewage ponds, Oct. 20 & 22 (JCT, RBS). Numbers were lower elsewhere: 50+, Grand Pré, Sept. 25 (RBS); 33, Cherry Hill Beach, Oct. 4; 18, Big I., Pict. Co., Sept. 30 (KJM); 15, Pond Cove, Brier I., Nov. 9 (ELM). Only a scattering chose the beaches of Yar. Co. and HRM. Perhaps

the premier bird of the season was the ad. CURLEW SANDPIPER which turned up briefly at Daniels Hd., CSI, Aug. 1, still bearing a suffusion of red on the under parts (JON *et al.*). A second sighting, which MUN believes was a different bird as "it had more red on it," was made in the same area, Sept. 14, and again the bird did not linger. A total of 17 STILT SANDPIPERS made an excellent showing. One, previously reported in July was still present on Brier I., Aug. 1 & 11 (ELM, LAL *et al.*). MUN tallied up to eight, "in one bunch," Daniels Hd., CSI, Sept. 5 & 14; one staying until Oct. 5. Most other reports were of singles: Cole Hbr. Salt Marsh Trail, Aug. 2 & 21 (IAM, HAT); W. Chezzetcook, Sept. 10, (DAM); two, Jersey Cove, Vic. Co., Sept. 14 (BSK); Cape John, Pict. Co., Sept. 19, a lifer for HAB & JEB; BPI, Sept. 1 (JCZ); Seal I., Sept. 26 (Alex Lees)

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS were in average numbers, all occurring within a very narrow time frame, Aug. 21-Sept. 3. CSI had three or four, Aug. 21 & 29 (BJS, SIS, JON *et al.*). One was new for Fishermans Cove, HRM, Sept. 2 (ACZ). One spent a few days at Pond Cove, Brier I., Aug. 26 & Sept. 1 (RBS, PLC); three graced Sydney Airport, Sept. 3 (DBM). Morien Bar was not left out, hosting one, Sept. 2-8 (SEM). Two RUFF were good finds this season. One was at Daniels Hd., CSI, Aug. 8 (JON) and the second, a very cooperative bird, at Sullivans Pond, HRM, Nov. 23-30 (BAH, SJF). Easy to locate and study, the latter provided a life bird for many and elicited much discussion on its age and sex. It was generally agreed that it was a fem., i.e. a Reeve, being intermediate in size to Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. It was a first-year bird, having almost completed moult into first-winter plumage, shown by its dark-centred feathers with buffy margins, white mantle lines, and buffy under parts. It still retained worn juv. wing coverts and tertials, which are not moulted, it's reported, until spring. IAM, who has contributed much to this discussion, forwarded photos to a colleague, David Lank, "world specialist on Ruff," and he has confirmed our consensus. Two or three previous records exist for

November.

High counts of SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS were attained at some locales, but were miniscule at others. The CSI peak was an impressive 6,125 on July 31 (BJS, SIS). ELM estimated 135, Pond Cove, Brier I., Aug. 2. Up to 130 were at Windsor Causeway, Aug. 9 (JWW). Cole Hbr. Salt Marsh Trail produced 1,000+, Aug. 13 (HAT). Morien Bar's peak had been reached in July, but 70 were still in residence, Aug. 3 (SEM). One cannot help but wonder why one sees so few now at former traditional sites in HRM, Lun., and Queens Co. Unless the diagnostic call of the LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER is heard, an observer must be sharp to identify this species. Look for them at CSI, Brier I., and Morien Bar, where they are becoming almost annual. One was at CSI, Sept. 1, and three, Sept. 26 (JON, MUN). A "classic juv." at Pond Cove, Brier I., Sept. 30 was exceptionally well described, and photographed (ELM, AHM, LAL, PAC). Two at Morien Bar, Oct. 13, had their identity confirmed by calls (SEM). All late dowitchers should be carefully examined, as most are likely to be Long-billed.

WILSON'S SNIPE were dotted about in ones and twos in their favourite haunts at APBS, Brier I., and Pt. Michaud. EIM and Ken Morrison had one puddling around, almost daily, on a

flooded-lawn-pond, Broad Cove, Lun. Co., Oct. 31 to mid-November. Five were on Seal I., Oct. 13 (BLM *et al.*) and four at Hartlen Pt., Nov. 16 (R. H. Lindsay). Only one AM. WOODCOCK was reported, North Pt., Brier I., Aug. 12 (LAL). There were no summer reports and one wonders where these birds are, or are they simply not being reported?

Many WILSON'S PHALAROPES, particularly juvs., take the Atlantic coastal route to southern South America in the fall, but few set down here. This year at least six were reported, three of them perhaps having arrived via the same weather system: CSI, Aug. 23-24 (MUN, JON); Sable I., Aug. 24-25 (ZOL); Seal I., Aug. 26 (Alex Lees). RBS & AAM found one in basic plumage, W Lawrencetown marsh, Sept. 14. Two were moulting juvs., Windsor sewage ponds, Oct. 20 (JCT). The proportion of RED-NECKED PHALAROPE to RED PHALAROPE

in the Bay of Fundy has been shifting in the last few years, in favour of greater numbers of Reds, as was the case in the eighties. Two surveys by John Chardine *et al.* of CWS, and several pelagic trips off Brier I., confirm this, but there are always other trips which do not, such as one made by BLM further down the Bay. All of this means we still have much to learn about what goes on in this body of water. Cliff Cook, a birder from MA, estimated up to 5,000 Phalarope sp. from the Yarmouth/Bar Hbr. ferry, Sept. 7, about 45 minutes before reaching Yarmouth. The birds he had been able to ID up to that point had all been Reds, but because of speed and distance he could not make a firm ID of the 5,000. Hartlen Pt. often hosts storm-driven Red Phalarope in the fall. Bill Hughes & SHU discovered one there, Sept. 5, for the second year in a row. Three Reds on St. Anns Bay, off Englishtown, Vic. Co., Sept. 14 made a happy sighting for BSK, providing her with a life-bird. ☞

| | Red-necked | Red | Observers |
|-------------|------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| Aug. 22 | 150 | 2,000 | ELM, LAL, PAC |
| Sept. 4 | 78 | 396 | John Chardine <i>et al.</i> |
| Sept. 5 | 307 | 777 | John Chardine <i>et al.</i> |
| Sept. 11-15 | Few | 100s | Wayne Petersen |
| Sept. 13 | 3,000 | 17 | BLM |
| Sept. 17 | None | 100 | Mike Wilson |

Skuas Through Alcids

By Blake Maybank

There were two GREAT SKUA reports, neither accompanied by any details; one seen between Sept. 11-15 off Brier I. (Wayne R. Petersen), and two, Sept. 4, off Brier I. (John Chardine and CWS survey team). No S. POLAR SKUA sightings were specifically noted, but I've heard indirectly that a few were seen on whale-watching trips in the Bay of Fundy. "Good numbers" of POMARINE JAEGERs were noted in the Bay of Fundy and approaches in September through mid-October (var. obs.), with Alex Lees counting four off Seal I., Oct. 14. The only PARASITIC

JAEGERs seen were two flying past Western Light, Brier I., Nov. 9 (ELM).

Mike Wilson noted a 2nd winter LAUGHING GULL in the entrance to Brier's Grand Passage from a whale-watching cruise Sept. 17, and ZOL had a 1st winter bird on Sable I., Sept. 29. There were no August reports of BLACK-HEADED GULL, and the first birds noted were 14 at the Antigonish sewage ponds Sept. 22 (RFL), but I'd be surprised if there weren't birds around before that date. Subsequently there were numerous reports from the usual

locales, included Lun. Co., Pt. Michaud, Eel Brook, Halifax Hbr. and the Eastern Shore, Glace Bay, and Antigonish (var. obs.). An imm. bird at Lower Prospect, Oct. 20 was apparently just passing by, and was the first local record (BLM). There were many, many reports of BONAPARTE'S GULLS, with most of the birds in Ant. Co., but there were numerous sightings elsewhere of individuals and small flocks, many more than in recent years. For example, R. H. Lindsay had 12 at Conrads Beach, Nov. 12, ELM counted six among 150+ Ring-billed Gulls at Pond Cove on Brier

I., Nov. 9. Weldon MacPhail saw three at Pt. Michaud Nov. 25, and DJC had up to eight at Lockeport's Crescent Beach, Oct. 29-Nov. 26. One or two imms. even reached Sable I., Sept. 29-Oct. 12 (ZOL). The mother lode of Bonaparte's Gulls was once again Ogdens Pond, with thousands estimated, Nov. 23 (RLF). An ad. MEW (COMMON) GULL was found in Barrington Passage, Nov. 2-3, and seen intermittently thereafter, perhaps the same bird noted in the village last year (MUN, JON). There is still no evidence of breeding RING-BILLED GULLS in NS, but the large number of sightings this autumn suggests that the first nesting cannot be too far off. Many contributors sent in sightings, and I can only highlight a couple: ELM counted 150+ feeding at Pond Cove on Brier I., Nov. 9, with more flying by the island ("unusually abundant") and JAP had 80+ at Rainbow Haven, Aug. 30. At the other end of the province there were eight at the South Gut of St. Anns, Vic. Co., Nov. 20 (BSK). HERRING GULLS – enough said. SEM snagged the first ICELAND GULLS of the season, six at Sydney Hbr., Nov. 3. The first mainland report was from Broad Cove, Nov. 5, a single imm. (SJF), while an ad. at Lockeport's Crescent Beach, Nov. 26 was the first that DJC had had "for years."

Fourteen or more LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS were found across the province during the period. Five or more ad. birds were in Kings Co. from September – November typically at Grand Pré, Lower Canard, and Buckleys Corner, Kings Co. (var. obs.). Two ads. were seen on Brier I. in September (var. obs.), and KJM had two ads. and a 3rd year bird at various spots in Pict. Co. An ad. "*graellsii*" lingered Nov. 24-30 at Lilydale, Lun. Co. (ELM, var. obs.). LEL noted an ad. at Schooner Pond, Nov. 29, and MUN had a bird along Digby's French Shore Sept. 29. An ad. on Seal I., Oct. 11 (KJM, photo RBS) was a first for the island, while there was precedent for an ad. bird on Sable I. Sept. 30 (ZOL). No Glaucous Gulls were reported during the period. GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS



CASPIAN TERNS are uncommon in Nova Scotia, but migrants, perhaps from colonies in the northern Gulf of St. Lawrence, are most often seen along the Northumberland Strait and Bay of Fundy. This one, easily identified by its massive red bill, was on Brier Island in September. [Photo Anne Mills]

were noted as common by almost everyone. Small numbers of BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES appeared in the Bay of Fundy and off the Atlantic Coast by mid-September (var. obs.), with larger numbers not noted until November, when ELM counted 100+ going past Brier I., Nov. 9.

A CASPIAN TERN, Aug. 31 at Amherst Pt. (TEP), was at a typical locale, unlike two birds, Sept. 18-29 at Conrads Beach (var. obs.). Two ads. were on Brier I. in mid-September (Wayne Peterson), and perhaps a different bird was photographed there Oct. 10 (ELM, AHM). A few COM. TERN reports were received, but none noteworthy. Three winter plumaged ARCTIC TERNS at South Harbour Beach, Vic. Co., Sept. 25 were unusually late, perhaps offshore migrants blown to the nearshore (AAM), as locally breeding CB birds had departed by Sept. 7 (SEM). Ten Arctic Terns flying south in the middle of the Bay of Fundy, Sept. 13, were less surprising (BLM). TEP found two FORSTER'S TERNS at Conrads Beach, Nov. 25, and these remained through the end of the period.

The first DOVEKIES of the winter appeared in CB, as expected. SEM found one at Wild Cove, Nov. 20, and Weldon MacPhail had one at Pt. Michaud five days later. Several observers reported COM. MURREs in the Bay of Fundy, birds from the nearby NB breeding colonies. The first (and only) THICK-BILLED MURRE was from Kennington Cove on CB, seen by SEM, Nov. 21. Several observers reported RAZORBILLS near or off Brier I. in August and September, often adults with attending young, certainly birds from NB breeding colonies (BLF, ELM, Wayne Peterson, Mike Wilson). There were numerous reports of BLACK GUILLEMOTS from the usual haunts, with no counts of more than 20 birds. All the ATLANTIC PUFFIN reports were from the Bay of Fundy, with some observers reporting hundreds a day, which reflects well on the species' improvement in breeding success in the Bay. Mike Wilson estimated 200, Sept. 17, and John Chardine and a CWS survey crew methodically counted 321 birds, Sept. 4. ☐

Doves Through Woodpeckers

By Ian McLaren

As usual, there was little said about ROCK DOVES, which were simply reported as "common" in some locations from Brier I. to Sydney. A RINGED TURTLE DOVE in Lun. Co. was briefly reported as a possible Eurasian Collared Dove, which is expected here one day as it spreads through the temperate North America, as it has in Europe. Later, ELM correctly identified it Oct. 8, finding it "very wild," but noting that, as a popular cage bird, it is not a countable species. MOURNING DOVES were beginning to form larger flocks and sticking close to feeders by mid-September, with flocks of 20-60 widely reported.

The few Black-billed Cuckoos nesting in NS evidently slipped away unnoticed as none were reported. A very early YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO at Newellton, CSI, Aug. 4 was followed closely by one on Sable I., Aug. 10 (ZOL). The next were not noted until Sept. 22 at Hartlen Pt., HRM, and Green Bay, Lun. Co. Following this, 32 more were reported during October, well above totals for the previous two autumns, but not up to the 1999 record. The latest were two at Hartlen Pt., 26 Oct. (var. obs.).

There were 13 reports of GREAT HORNED OWLS, including a pair with young heard by several through much of the period on Brier I. One unidentified large owl (but surely a Great Horned) was reported to JAH as having porcupine quills above one eye. As he couldn't relocate it, he concluded that it was mobile and hunting – tough bird! SNOWY OWLS appeared only in Anna. Co., Nov. 20 (PBG), at Gabarus, CB Co., Nov. 23 (*fide* DBM), and on CSI, Nov. 30 (var. obs.), heralding a poor winter for them. BRD forwarded a fascinating account of one Snowy Owl. It had been satellite-tagged in Massachusetts in spring 2001, summered in the Torgat Mts., N Labrador, and returned to Cape Sable to spend last winter. In spring, it flew north to Schefferville, QC, where radio

contact was lost. BLF reported that for their 12th year, BARRED OWLS returned to his backyard feeder on Wolfville Ridge, where "they enjoy dead chicken as much as do the valley Bald Eagles." A meagre four Barred Owls were reported for the whole period. Were they really scarce?

The only LONG-EARED OWL turned up newly dead on Sable I., Nov. 9 (ZOL). A resident (?) SHORT-EARED OWL was at Canning, Aug. 12 (DOM). Others were on Cape Sable from Oct. 31 (var. obs.), at Pt. Michaud, Rich. Co., Nov. 10 (W. MacPhail), and Hartlen Pt., HRM, Nov. 30 (DOU).

A BOREAL OWL was found dead, under a deck in Soldiers Cove, Rich. Co. in mid-November. (Donnie Sutherland *fide* BID). The bird has been deposited at the NS Museum of Natural History. Only two N. SAW-WHET OWLS were reported; one was called in at Fairmont, Ant. Co., Nov. 1 (RFL), and another window-killed in Halifax, Nov. 2 (*fide* M. Fraser). Banders reported that 51% of 191 Saw-whets banded in Maine through the season were second-year or older, although in previous years, this age group typically makes up only about 20% of captures. This may relate to their scarcity here this summer and fall.

Where are the COM. NIGHTHAWKS of yesteryear? Large flocks, often of 100+ along highways, were once a feature in late July through mid-August, but few were seen this year in July (last issue) and only four largish flocks were subsequently noted: 25, Aug. 11 at Lower Sackville, HRM (TEP), 22, Aug. 12 at Blockhouse, Lun. Co. (JAH), 40+, Aug. 20 at Bear R., Ann. Co. (KFS), and 20-25, Brier I. in late August (RBS). Otherwise, 15 sightings of one to 17 birds were reported from Aug. 1 through Oct. 9. An unusually late bird was briefly overhead near New Glasgow, Nov. 6 (AAM and Stella MacLean). Given his brief view, AAM couldn't exclude the remote possibility that it might have been an errant Lesser

Nighthawk, which just might turn up here one day as a vagrant from the US Southwest.

Virtually nothing came on departing or late migrant CHIMNEY SWIFTS, although we may get later updates. They were thought to have abandoned The University of Kings College nesting site in late July, although on Aug. 18 PLC did see eight to 10 over downtown Halifax. John Belbin thought that "the swift tenancy of the chimney at the Middleton High School appear[ed] to be over" Aug. 23, when only three circled the area.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS ever fascinate, and were well reported. By late July, numbers were swelled by juvs. at MCN's feeders in W Springhill, Anna. Co. On Aug. 9, RLF observed one coming in over the water at Pomquet Beach, Ant. Co. – clearly a migrant. A hint of a peak movement might be the five on Seal I., Sept. 1 (var. obs.). These were followed by 18 reports for September, including a suggestion by JAH of another peak movement Sep. 19. The latest were two at Sandy Cove, Digby Co., Oct. 2 (Chip and Rob Inkster). Hans Toom described an Aug. 2 encounter in which a male grabbed a female-plumaged bird in mid air, dragged it to the ground and held it until it stopped moving, when Hans intervened. Hummers are among the most aggressive birds in defence of their feeding patches, but this seems a little thuggish. A possible RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD was reported to JAH from Riverport, Lun. Co., in mid-September, but was not found by him. It is worth noting that a Black-chinned Hummingbird, much rarer in the East, was well documented at Marys Pt., NB, Oct. 31 (David Christie).

We received plenty of reports of BELTED KINGFISHERS in ones and twos and threes through the reporting period, but no indications of local or widespread change in status. Some settled in for a cold winter.

The small influx of "southern" woodpeckers, Red-bellied and Red-headed, expected at this time of year, did not materialize. Five of six presumably migrant YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS in September-October were noted as juvs., three of them on Brier I. One juv. was still in Halifax, Nov. 17 (IAM).

Fifteen reports of 23 DOWNY and ten reports of 13 HAIRY WOODPECKERS, were about as usual, although doubtless many more were seen. More exciting was a sighting of

the province's rarest resident woodpecker, a male **THREE-TOED WOODPECKER** found by Carole Donovan and DAA on the Acadian Trail in CBHNP. There were no reports of Black-backed Woodpeckers, even the reliable ones at Uniake Estate.

As usual, the conspicuous N. FLICKERS were well reported. Again, our S islands best revealed their migratory fluxes. Seal I. (var. obs.) had nine on Sept. 1, 50-60 on Sept. 25-29, and 12-15 on Oct 9-12. On Brier I., there was only a single bird Sept. 11-15

(W. Petersen), a peak of about 40, Sep. 19 (Mike Wilson), decreasing soon after (ELM), and only seven on Oct. 4 (PLC). Numbers stayed around as usual to the end of the reporting period. PILEATED WOODPECKERS were well represented by 16 reports of some 21 individuals. Warren Ervine watched three "knocking themselves out against some large trees" at Uniake Estate. He "at first only heard them [sounding] like a distant battle played out with machine guns." This charismatic species does tend to stir the blood! ☘

Flycatchers Through Thrushes

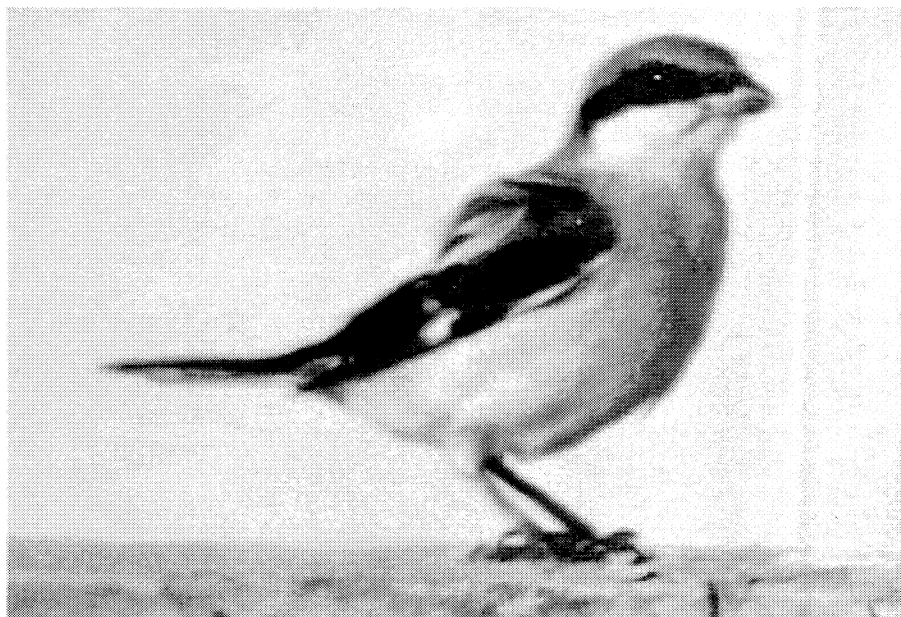
By Andy Horn

After the trickle of submissions for our last issue, a flood of information on fall sightings was a little overwhelming, but much appreciated. It shows a well-rounded fall, short on impressive movements or outstanding rarities, but well stocked on regular vagrants, unusual vireos in particular.

Contopus flycatchers are usually seen in ones and twos, and reports tail off gradually after the breeding season, so their mainly late August migration is hard to pick out of the records. Late dates, though, are easy to spot; this year these included Sept. 11-15, at Brier I., for OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS and Oct. 6, CSI (MUN), for E. WOODPEWEES.

Empidonax flycatchers sometimes show up in bigger numbers, but apparently not this year. Notably late birds include two YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHERS at Schooner Pd., CB Co., Oct. 12 (LEL, George Crowell, Beverly Crowell), and two LEAST FLYCATCHERS banded at BPI, Oct. 19 and 24 (ABO *fide* BLM). The usual smattering of E. PHOEBES included likely migrants at Sambro Hd., Hfx. Co., Oct. 2 (HAT), at Broad Cove, Lun. Co. Oct. 4 (SJF), in Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., Oct. 10 (Mike Russell), and on Brier I., Oct. 20-21 (KJM).

A sole GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER report, par for fall



Although there have been a number of sightings over the years, this vagrant **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** on CSI Sept. 19 was apparently only the second to be photographically confirmed since they lasted nested in the province in the late 1960s. [Photo John Nickerson]

submissions, was from Halifax, Sept. 16 (FCG *fide* JOW). Fun never lasts, so too the Year of the Flycatcher (see last year's Autumn issue). Nevertheless two **W. KINGBIRDS** did appear to serve as this issue's vagrant flycatchers, one at BPI in the last week of August (*fide* J CZ), and another at Harrigan Cove, Hfx. Co., Sept. 22 (HAB, JEB). Numbers of the common E. KINGBIRD were also not especially high, but were well distributed throughout the province. One, Nov. 12, in Ketch Hbr.,

Hfx. Co. (Laura Elliott), was particularly late.

Remarkable was a **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** photographed at Daniels Hd., CSI, Sept. 19 (JON *et al.*). **NORTHERN SHRIKES** were reasonably well represented. Sightings included: one, Oct. 23, at New Salem, Cum. Co. (KFS), two, Oct. 24, on Sable I. (ZOL), one, Nov. 12, at Bear R. (JET), and one, Nov 26, in W. Chezzetcook, Hfx. Co. (DOU).

Four WHITE-EYED VIREOS is an impressive total for any fall and worth listing in full: one of unspecified age on Seal I., Oct. 1 (Alex Lees *et al.*), the remaining were immatures and were found on Brier I., Oct. 19 (TEP), East Ferry, Digby Co., Oct. 20 (TEP), and one banded and photographed at BPI, Oct. 23 (ABO). BLUE-HEADED VIREOS were on most field trip lists through late summer and early fall, as expected. In contrast to last year however, they seemed to disappear early, by Oct. 4 at Brier I. (LAL, PAC) and Oct. 19 at CSI (MUN). WARBLING VIREOS were also well represented, with two at Hartlen, Sept. 18-21 (TEP, FLL, CLS), and single birds at Brier I., Sept. 11 (Linden Thurber); Pennant Pt., Hfx. Co., Oct. 4 (FLL, IAM); Seal I., Oct. 10 (Alex Lees); and Sober I., Hfx. Co., Oct. 20 (KJM). PHILADELPHIA VIREOS, bird guide range maps notwithstanding, are rarely sighted, so all the reported sightings are notable: Wykes Corner, Hfx. Co., Aug. 28 (BLM, Alex Lees); Three Fathom Hbr., Hfx. Co., Sept. 7-8 (TEP); Brier I., Sept. 11 (Linden Thurber) and a well described bird in Halifax, Sept. 24 (Suzanne Borkowski). As for RED-EYED VIREOS, just echo what was written for Blue-headed Vireos, replacing the late dates with Oct. 20, CSI (MUN) and Oct. 21, Sheet Hbr., Hfx. Co. (KJM), and perhaps adding the odd sight of one in Halifax in an "altercation" with a hummingbird, Sept. 16 (PLC).

Most talk of corvids should perhaps be deferred until after CBCs give us a better feel for numbers. In the meantime though, a few highlights are worth mentioning. While GRAY JAYS were better reported than usual, BLUE JAYS were not reported in anywhere near the impressive numbers noted last year. A flock of 11 arriving at the north end of Brier I., Oct. 15 (ELM), were clearly migrants. In contrast, a group of 65 at Sunken L., Kings Co., Nov. 26, where the usual group size runs from eight – twelve individuals (BLF), was particularly large for such a late date, though this species is a bit erratic in its movements. Like other corvids, it is somewhat erratic in its coloration, too: a white individual with blue in the wing



You don't look for white eyes on all of the WHITE-EYED VIREOS that occur here on occasion in fall. Like this one, banded Sept. 19 on BPI, many are young birds with dark eyes. [Photo Alex Lees]

was seen in Upper Northfield, Lun. Co., Nov. 9, having been reported previously in Lunenburg (JAH). A white-winged AM. CROW at Pt. Hawkesbury, Inv. Co., Sept. 22, perhaps the same bird seen previously in Sydney, CB Co. (BID), also drew some interest.

HORNED LARKS displayed a textbook migration, growing from regular sightings through October to a flood by early November, mainly at the usual coastal locations. The high count was 285 at CSI, Oct. 31 (SIS, BJS).

The breeding season report from our most reliable PURPLE MARTIN breeding site, on DNR lands in Oxford, Cum. Co., reported 24 nests with an average productivity of three young per nest (KBL and Mark Elderkin *vide* JCT). TREE SWALLOWS proved that they're our most cold-tolerant species by

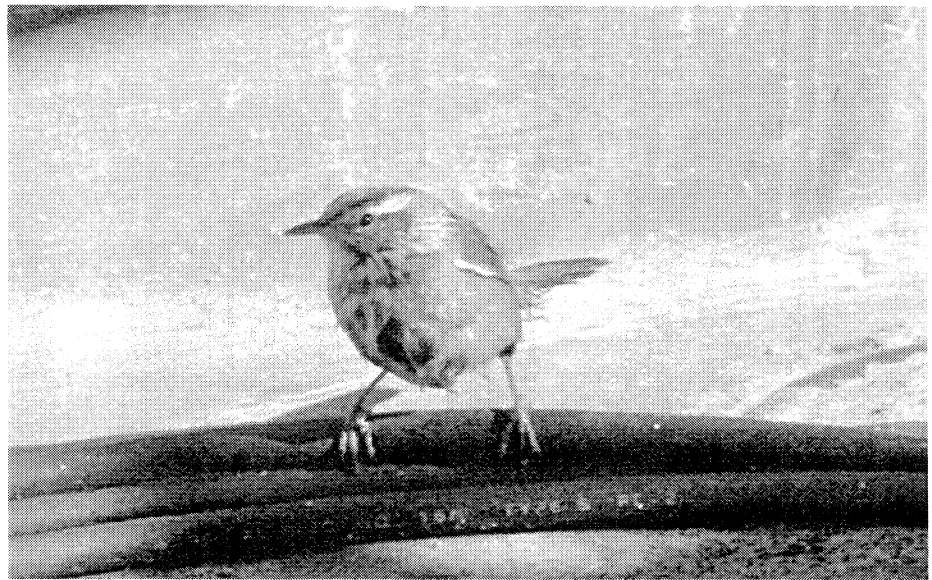
appearing in flocks of 30, Nov. 15, at both CSI (MUN) and Pennant Pt., Hfx. Co. (HAT), many of the latter group lingering until Nov. 19. Even as late as Nov. 30, two were still in Pembroke, Yar. Co. (MUN), and three at Rainbow Haven, Hfx. Co. (Bob Lindsay). One N. ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW was a treat for Dave Shutler and JCZ at BPI, Aug. 16. The sad story of the CLIFF SWALLOWS at Halifax International Airport (see last issue) continued as nesting attempts continued well into August (DHH). I suspect they were not successful because all birds were gone by early September (DHH). Late BARN SWALLOWS were seen Oct. 10 on Brier I. (ELM) and Oct. 27 in Pembroke, Yar. Co. (MUN),

In many autumns, big movements of BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES betray poorly understood migrations of

this otherwise resident species, but not this year. Instead, the standout sighting goes to a single bird, an almost complete albino, present for at least a year at Jeddore Oyster Ponds, Hfx. Co. (Russell Arnold, *vide* BLM). Many observers throughout the province reported small numbers of BOREAL CHICKADEES, but two observers are to be commended in discerning what might be closer to the true abundance of our more cryptic chickadee: BSK, with 11 at S. Gut near St. Anns, Vic. Co., Nov. 20 and HAT, with at least 12 throughout the fall at Pennant Pt., Hfx. Co.

As with corvids, discussion of nuthatches is perhaps best deferred until CBC totals are in. The results will be interesting, since several observers thought RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were scarce. No big movements of either species were noted, though PLC's comment that one WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, seen Sept. 20, was the "first in a few months" suggests that the many records received from expected locations could include both breeders and winter birds returning to favourite feeders.

One CAROLINA WREN reported from Maders Cove, Lun. Co., in late August and again in early October (JBM), was destined to re-appear yet again, so stay tuned for next issue. One HOUSE WREN, about all one should



This somewhat bedraggled MARSH WREN spent Sept. 18 aboard CNAV "Quest" during a whale-research cruise in the middle of the Bay of Fundy. Its brownish flanks and other features suggested that it was from the regionally-breeding population rather than a stray from afar. [Photo Ian McLaren]

hope for, was at BPI, Oct. 23 (Alex Lees), to round out our vagrant wrens. As always, single WINTER WRENS encountered sporadically throughout our area must surely underestimate their true abundance, though one individual poking about a Halifax back porch, Nov. 1-10 (ABM) and another, a particularly warm rusty brown bird at a Halifax park (Frog Pond), Nov. 25 (PLC), were notable for their late dates and semi-urban locations. MARSH WRENS might elude us at marshes where they may be regular. This fall

they did not escape detection at Roberts I., Yar. Co., where a family was seen Sept. 10 (MUN, GRM), and others were noted at West Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., Oct. 13 (Bob Lindsay), Goose Creek, Sept. 22 (TEC *vide* MUN), and BPI, Oct. 24 (Alex Lees).

Both kinglets were seen on many field trips in expected numbers on expected dates, although there's no doubting that the high count of 200 GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS at Seal I., Oct. 11 (BLM) is a lot. This year, our

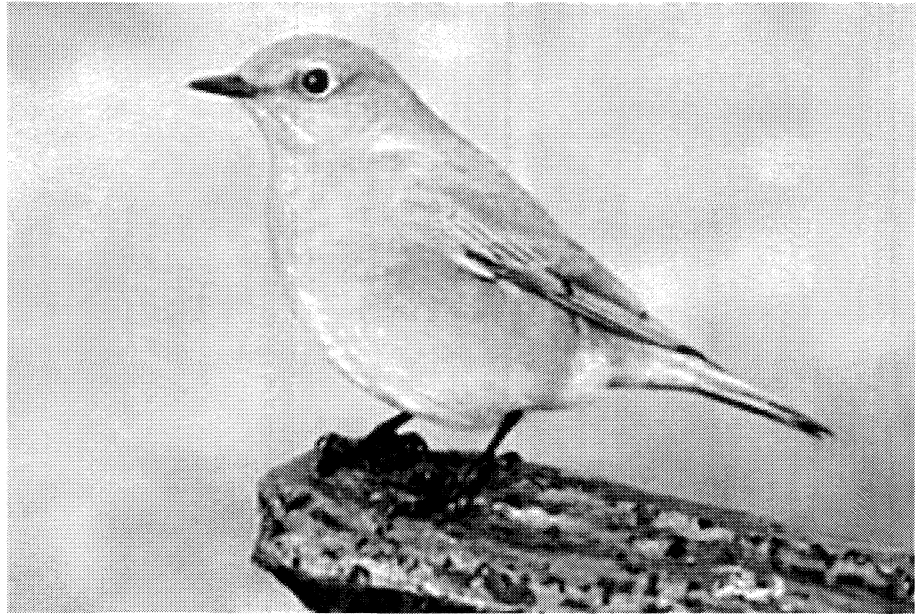


SEDGE WRENS are decidedly uncommon as strays to the province. Thus it was surprising when the NSBS party (FLL *et al.*) on Seal I. Discovered two agitated adults and two juveniles in sedge habitat on Seal I. Aug. 31. They had clearly nested there. Almost a month later in the same patch, another Sedge Wren was probably one of these. Although the Maritimes "Atlas of Breeding Birds . . ." maps three "probable" nestings in New Brunswick, there are no previous records of this in Nova Scotia. [Photos (L) Don MacNeil, (R) Alex Lees]

annually scant **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS** included single birds on Brier I., Sept. 1 and Sept. 29 (BLF), at Caribou I., Oct. 8 (KJM) and two (!) on Seal I., Oct. 24 (Alex Lees).

Three sightings of **N. WHEATEARS**, while not unprecedented, is a fine record for any fall, so one at Sober I., Hfx. Co., Sept. 23 (KJM), another at Shag Hbr., Shel. Co., Nov. 13-15 (TEC *et al.*), and a third at Crystal Crescent Beach, Hfx. Co., Nov. 24 (HAT), were much appreciated. We've all got a soft spot for **E. BLUEBIRDS**. It's something about their soft manner and family values, I guess, but the northernmost family at Cape North, Vic. Co., are especially endearing, three juvs. persisting this year up to at least Sept. 18, a mile from where they fledged (FMC). Other sightings included one at Brier I., Oct. 12 (MUN) and three on Brier I., Oct. 29 (JUS). Particularly outstanding, though, was a fem. **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD**, at CSI, Nov. 14-15 (JON *et al.*), well photographed and only our fourth provincial record.

"Where are the thrushes?" some ask, at least of the woodland species. Thank goodness for carefully planned monitoring programs, like Birds in Forested Landscapes, H.E.L.P. (see last issue), and of course, CBC's and the NAMC, because submissions of *Catharus* thrush sightings often are quite sparse. The only report of **VEERY** that clearly involved migrants was of two at CSI, Sept. 6 (MUN). All reports



A female **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD**, a very rare vagrant from the West, spent a couple of days on CSI in mid-November. [Photo Grant Milroy]

of **GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSHES** came from far-flung Sable I., where at least six appeared between Sept. 30 and Oct. 22 (ZOL; most there are *aliciae*, IAM). **SWAINSON'S THRUSH** reports were also modest. The latest reported sightings were of single birds at Cape North, Vic. Co., Oct. 13 (FMC), and at Hunters Mtn., Vic. Co., Oct. 23 (Burland Murphy *vide* BSK). At least nine individuals, some weak or even dead, found between Oct. 4-25 on Sable I. (ZOL), probably had had other plans. **HERMIT THRUSHES**, while seen all over throughout the fall, were nowhere seen in numbers. Thankfully, **AM. ROBIN** numbers are always less worrisome. Even without any staggering

totals, their build-up was noted everywhere through October. The 100 seen heading west along the Bay of Fundy near Hampton, Anna. Co., Oct. 24 (RBS), were obvious migrants, as was the increase of hundreds, Nov. 3 at CSI, over what were already present the day before (MUN). Hundreds that were on Brier I., Nov. 1-2, were gone Nov. 3 (ELM). Flocks of 50 or more were seen in many spots through November, the record-taker being 200 at Riverport, Lun. Co., Nov. 22 (ELM). Noticeable waves in Maders Cove, Lun. Co. occurred Oct. 5, Oct. 22, Nov. 12, and, in smaller numbers, Nov. 29 (JBM); fitting this pattern of movements to weather patterns is left as an exercise to the reader. ☒

Starlings Through Warblers

By Ken McKenna

Many observers took the time to report **EUR. STARLINGS** this period. Sightings ranged from a few birds coming to feeders, to common groups of 100-500 birds from Hfx. and Lun. Cos., to a flock of several thousand between exits 9 & 10 outside Grand Pré. This was subsequently described by RBS as being a well-known and long-standing roost.

At Apple R., KFS located a second nest of **GRAY CATBIRD**, Aug. 7-16, about

7.5 m from one discovered in July. An ad. pair tended the three nestlings. Another family group (two ads. & one imm.) was noted as nesting at Brier I. (LAL, PAC), Aug. 13-22. Post-September sightings were reported rarely with TEP finding a singleton at Martinique, Oct. 6. Juvenile **N. MOCKINGBIRDS** were described by SJF from Broad Cove, Lun. Co., Oct. 3-4 with two to three ads. and at Duncans Cove, Sept. 23, (DOU). Other mockingbirds were noted in Dartmouth,

(Robert Woods), Brier I. (JUS, TEP), Indian Pt., Lun. Co. (JAH), Port Williams, Kings Co. (AAM, RBS) and a bird in Kentville that daily woke RBS in mid-November with its chattering. One wonders if the **BROWN THRASHER** seen Sept. 9 on Brier I. along the North Light Rd. (AAM) might be the same bird in that area Oct. 1 (LAL, PAC). Alex Lees *et al.* on Seal I., Sept. 19, also noted a single Brown Thrasher.



A PINE WARBLER Nov. 20 at a feeder near Cape North, Vic. Co., was already facing up to the impending winter. [Photo Fritz McEvoy]

The first two AM. PIPITS for the season were spotted by the NSBS group on BPI for the Labour Day weekend. They were followed by two, Sept. 15 at Cape John, Pict. Co. (KJM). A nice flock of 120 was observed at Pond Cove, Brier I., Sept. 27 (ELM). Most of the remaining pipit sightings were from seaside locations such as Pt. Michaud, Conrads Beach, Hartlen Pt., Morien Bar, Pennant Peninsula and Hawk Pt. An exception was a group of 50 in a field across the road from the Green Hill PP in Pict. Co., Oct. 6 (KJM). At The Hawk, TEC & JON noted a flock of 225, Oct. 27.

So far, this seems to be a no-show autumn for BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS. I garnered one report of 30+ Bohemians at Crystal Crescent Beach, Nov. 11 by HAT who described the bird as "surely our most elegant passerine". CEDAR WAXWINGS seemed to hang around with the fruit supply being plentiful. Early migrants at Brier I. were approximately 45 in three flocks, Aug. 21 (ELM). Mike Wilson noted Cedar Waxwings on 18 dates between Aug. 28- Sept. 26 with a high count of 300, Sept. 18 at Brier. I. KFS had 80+ eating mountain ash berries in her yard in Apple R., Cum. Co., Oct. 8. Late sightings were of nine, Nov. 9 in the yard of BLF Wolfville Ridge and 30-35, Nov. 30 at River Bourgeois, Rich. Co. (GED, SDI).

Some dates stand out from the submitted sightings as busy warbler migration days: Aug. 24, Big I., Pict. Co., 14 species for KJM; Aug. 24, Quinan, Yar. Co., 15 species for MUN & CST; Sept. 15, Hartlen Pt., 15 species for TEP, FLL and CSS; Sept. 18, Hartlen Pt., 12 species for TEP; Sept. 18, Brier I., good migration for both JUS & Mike Wilson; Oct. 4, a big morning push of warblers up the hill at Crystal Crescent Beach for IAM & FLL; and Oct. 19, a succession of nice warblers at the Back Cove, Hartlen Pt. after the previous night's west and north-west winds.

Once again this fall, TENNESSEE WARBLER migration had a short reported window with sightings of single birds at Baccaro, Aug. 25 (NSBS), Cape North, Vic. Co., Sept. 3 (FMC), Hartlen Pt., Sept. 19 and two at Caribou I., Pict. Co., Sept. 15. Above average numbers of ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS were noted with the first sightings, Oct. 3 & 18 at Seal I. (Alex Lees) and near Sheet Hbr., Hfx. Co., Oct. 20 (KJM). Most of the remaining dozen or so sightings were in the Halifax-Dartmouth area with the exception of one, Nov. 3 at W. Lawrencetown Marsh (TEP). NASHVILLE WARBLER sightings were few this year. In Pict. Co. at Big I., KJM noted three, Aug. 26 and five at

Caribou, Sept. 15. Late reports from Hfx. Co. were Oct. 2, Pennant Pt. (HAT) and Oct. 19 at Hartlen Pt. (IAM). The latter was a tail-wagging possible *ridgwayi*.

Eight N. PARULA were seen from both Big I., Aug. 26 and Caribou I., Pict. Co. Sept. 15 (KJM). At Hartlen Pt. PLC & JEH were treated to a chorus of four males still buzzily singing, Sept. 21. Mike Wilson recorded Parula on 12 dates between Aug. 28 – Sept. 26. The latest record was Oct. 11 at North Pt., Brier I. (ELM). Early migration of YELLOW WARBLERS was seen on Brier I., Aug. 21 with ELM noting the arrival of eleven. Jean Morse from Maders Cove, Lun. Co. had one visit her feeder for the first time in September. She did not elaborate on whether it consumed anything or just dropped in. The latest report was of four imms. at Crystal Crescent Beach, Oct. 15 (HAT). Only a couple of sightings of CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER were received. Of interest was an ad. fem. feeding two juvs. in alder scrub at Indian Pt., Mahone Bay, Sept. 30 (Mike Wilson). The latest sighting was Oct. 4 at Pennant Pt. (IAM, FLL). MAGNOLIA WARBLER numbers seemed to peak in late August with eight at Big I., Pict. Co., Aug. 26 (KJM) and five on the Mines Rd., Hfx. Co., Aug. 28 (BLM, Alex Lees). Late sightings were two at Fairmont, Ant. Co. (RFL), Oct. 31 and a very late report from Canso Town, Guys. Co., Nov. 26 (Tom Kavanaugh). ELM comments that CAPE MAY WARBLERS are now very scarce in fall migration unlike the abundance in the 70's and 80's. He saw his first of the season Aug. 24 at North Pt., Brier I. Only two other reports were received: BPI on Labour Day weekend (NSBS *fide* JCZ) and at Jollimore, Hfx. Co., Sept. 16 (FCG). Male BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLERS were noted in late August in the NE mainland with one, Aug. 23, Fairmont (RFL, MZG) and one at Big I., Aug. 26, (KJM). Both these birds are not far from suitable breeding grounds. Mike Wilson had a nice observation of a fem. in the hand at APBS, Sept. 6, during a banding operation by CWS. TEP had the late report, Oct. 18, from Brier I.

A number of observations gave a picture of YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER migration from Brier I. Wayne Petersen saw small numbers Sept. 11-15, but by mid-October numbers picked up with ELM reporting about 100, Oct. 11 and 200+, Oct. 12 & 13. In mid-October an observer saw a mass movement of 'Myrtles' through the Paradise/Lawrencetown region but no sign of even one, Oct. 19. RMC, BLM and IAM note 60-100 birds in areas of Shel. Co., Oct. 21 & 22. There were still good numbers in this area, Nov. 11, with MUN reporting 80-100 at Stoney I. Beach. ELM observed the arrival of 10 BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS to Brier I., Aug. 21, and KJM saw five on Big I., Aug. 26. ELM had the late sighting in Westport, Brier I., Nov. 11. An ad. BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER was seen feeding one young at Fauxburg, Lun. Co., Aug. 3 (NSBS). Five Blackburnians on Big I., Aug. 26, were likely getting ready to leave the area. There were about nine Blackburnians reported in September with the three seen by ELM at North Pt., Brier I., Sept. 29, the latest noted.

Linden Thurber discovered an early PINE WARBLER on Brier I., Labour Day weekend. The next flurry of observations clustered around Oct. 18-22 with one on Seal I., Oct. 18 (Alex Lees) and three on BPI, Oct. 21 (Alex Lees). One of the latter birds was banded. On Oct. 10, PLC had a Pine near the Halifax Public Gardens. Suet at the feeder of KJM in Plymouth, Pict. Co., Nov. 4, attracted a Pine for only a day, but a male that arrived at Cape North, Vic. Co., Nov. 20, stayed beyond the reporting period (FMC). Michael Wilson and JAH at Blanche, Shel. Co., spotted an imm. fem. PRAIRIE WARBLER, Sept. 1. There were about six other sightings of this warbler in the HRM area mostly by TEP and HAT in mid-September. Other Prairies were at Schooner Pond, Sept. 11 (DBM) but the place to see Prairies was probably BPI with four to five birds observed from Sept. 15 – Oct. 5, two of which were banded. By the second week of September, PALM WARBLERS were starting to be seen to move out of their breeding bogs and barrens. In a trip



One of this fall's HOODED WARBLERS, a regular stray from the southwest, was banded on BPI Oct. 22. [Photo Alex Lees]

through the Liscomb Game Sanctuary, Sept. 8, KJM saw 22 along the main road. One can get a glimpse of Palm migration through Brier I. with the following observations: Sept. 19, 10 in one flock (Michael Wilson); Sept. 29, 10; Oct. 12, 20; Oct. 13, 40; Oct. 15, 20 (all ELM). In CB, late observations of Palms were Oct. 5, near Cape North (FMC) and Oct. 12, at the Fortress of Louisbourg, (SEM), her last sighting for the season. Individuals of the western subspecies of Palm Warbler were seen on Brier I., Oct. 4 (LAL) and Nov. 9 (ELM), and a dozen on Seal I., Oct. 18 (Alex Lees).

At Big I., Pict. Co., KJM spotted five BAY-BREADED WARBLERS, Aug. 24. During the last week of August, RBS noted small numbers of this warbler and JCZ noted one on BPI, Labour Day (NSBS). Three were sighted on Caribou I., Sept. 10 and a single by Wayne Petersen on Brier I., Sept. 11-15, was the last noted for the

season. BLACKPOLL WARBLERS were migrating through Pict. Co., Sept. 15, when three were seen at Cape John and six at Caribou I. Although slightly increased numbers were observed Sept. 20 when 12+ were spotted at Pennant Peninsula (HAT), the numbers reported seemed to be way down from previous years when good numbers built up along the Atlantic shores for the long journey to the wintering grounds in South America. There were early October sightings of handfuls with the late report going to MUN on the NSBS field trip, Oct. 13.

Late August seemed to bring on a movement of BLACK AND WHITE WARBLERS with ELM describing five arrivals to Brier I., Aug. 24, and KJM noting a dozen on Big I., Aug. 26. In September and early October, there were scattered reports of one to three of these striped warblers and a nice late discovery of one posing for DAC in the Fairview Cemetery, Nov. 24. There were only a few observations of AM.

REDSTART this fall. Aug. 26, KJM had three on Big I. and Aug. 31, PLC saw two to three at Coldbrook PP., Kings Co. Bill Hughes and SHU had the late sighting of a fem. at Hartlen Pt., Oct. 21. A **PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** was noted by JCZ at BPI, Aug. 18.

Most of the few OVENBIRD sightings were solitary birds. Mike Wilson got to view one in the hand while it was being banded at APBS, Sept. 6. None were reported after Sept. 28 when JAH and Michael Wilson saw one at Green Bay, Lun. Co. **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES** nearly slipped out of the province virtually undetected. A single bird at North Pt., Brier I., Aug. 1 was thought to have lingered alone for two weeks (ELM). Also at Brier I., four were noted Aug. 22 (LAL *et al.*) and a single banded on Sept. 30, *vide* JUS.

A **CONNECTICUT WARBLER** was spied in an alder bush at Daniels Hd.,

CSI, Oct. 3 (JON, SAN). Only four reports were received for **MOURNING WARBLER**, all in September. Michael Wilson noted a "superb male" in alder scrub near the Markland Resort in Dingwall, Vic. Co., Sept. 8 and RBS claims the latest report, an imm. at Kenny Rd., CSI, Sept. 22.

COMMON YELLOWTHROATS were reported widely with a couple of late November records: Aileen Smith on Nov. 23 at Barrington Passage (*vide* JCZ) and KJM on Nov. 29 in Trenton, Pict. Co. Five **HOODED WARBLER** reports were received. On Sept. 12 Linden Thurber had one at Brier I. TEP spotted a first year bird at Hartlen Pt., Sept. 21, which had a constant tail-flick. On Oct. 13 an imm./fem. was noted on the NSBS field trip led by MUN. IAM had a male at Hartlen Pt. that lingered until Oct. 21 for SHU and Bill Hughes to get "lifer" looks. A male was banded on BPI, Oct. 22 (Alex Lees).

WILSON'S WARBLERS arrived at Brier I. in the last week of August. ELM reported one, Aug. 22, but six Aug. 24. There were six reports of nine birds in September and one report, Oct. 11, at Pennant Peninsula (HAT). TEP provided the late report of a male, Nov. 23, at Sullivans Pond, Dartmouth. A dozen **CANADA WARBLERS** were described in seven reports. ELM reported two arriving on Brier I., Aug 21, and on Aug. 24. MUN noted three together, looking like a family group, on a birding trip through Yar. Co., Sept. 8. There were greater than 20 reports of **YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS**. On Aug. 21, MUN reported an early Chat at Daniels Hd., CSI. Other sightings were from Halifax-Dartmouth, Margaretsville, Lawrencetown, Louisbourg, Pubnico, Seal I. and BPI. Most of the sightings, other than those from the islands, were from November and some of these birds will likely make it to the CBCs. ☐

Tanagers Through House Sparrows

By David McCorquodale

After the invasion of Common Redpolls last fall and winter and having White-winged Crossbills around for two years, these two species were notable for their scarcity. This scarcity was not unexpected given the irruptive nature of their populations. Through the fall, searching for, finding and showing off vagrants takes up much of a birders time. As usual there were a smattering of rarities such as a Grasshopper Sparrow in West Pubnico, a Golden-crowned Sparrow in Little Harbour, a LeConte's Sparrow banded on Bon Portage Island, but the highlight for most will have been the Painted Bunting. It obligingly showed up at a feeder on Cape Sable Island, a feeder in the yard of very hospitable hosts and near birders who took delight in making it easy for others to see. The result was many happy birders after seeing a spectacular bird and satisfied Cape Sable Island birders who were able to show off, once again, their corner of the province.

There was no repeat of the tanager invasion in Canso of last fall or the spectacular fallout on the S islands of 1998. However there were several tanagers found. A **SUMMER TANAGER** was banded on BPI, Oct. 14 (ABO *vide* BLM). Four reports of **SCARLET TANAGERS**, typical for the fall, were received with the first two on Seal I, Sept. 30 and Oct. 18., another Oct. 27 at Taylor Hd. PP, HRM, and a late bird the last day of November at the St. Marys Boat Club in Halifax (Alex Lees, TEP, EBB).

An E. **TOWHEE** arrived at the expected time, in mid-October, and spent a few days at a feeder in south end Halifax (Joan Dawson *vide* PLC). What was unusual was that it was the only report of the autumn, more typically there are three or four sightings.

The earliest AM. **TREE SPARROW** was Oct. 9 at Portuguese Cove, HRM (HAT), then the second two weeks later in Antigonish (RFL). These arrival times are typical. In some years, for

example 1998 and 1999, the first reports were in the last few days of September, others the first two weeks of October. The bulk of the sightings this year are from November when numbers usually build up. This is shown by the progressively higher counts at a feeder in Apple R., Cum. Co., starting with two, Nov. 4, then seven later in the month (KFS). There was widespread movement of sparrows during the third week of October. Included in this movement were **CHIPPING SPARROWS**, with four at Apple R., Cum. Co., Oct. 23 (KFS) and at least 25 a few days later in Deerfield, Yar. Co. (MUN). Sightings of Chipping Sparrows dwindled dramatically by early November. Five reports of **CLAY-COLOURED SPARROWS**, is just below the average for the past five years. The first arrived in Canso, in late September (Tom Kavanaugh, Clyde MacKenzie), most were on S islands, BPI and Seal the first few days of October (Alex Lees, ABO), and the latest was an imm., Oct. 22 near



LAPLAND LONGSPUR at Conrads Beach October 1, 1976. [Photo R. D. Connor - NSBS Library]

Lockeport (IAM, BLM). There were three reports of FIELD SPARROWS, the earliest on BPI the third week of October and the latest in nearby Pubnico Pt. a month later (Alex Lees, RSD).

Four VESPER SPARROWS were reported, two on BPI at the end of August (JCZ), another at Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. in mid-October (DOU) and then the latest, one that lingered on CSI for a few days in late October (MUN, JON). This last one was part of a larger movement of several species of sparrows through the area. Two early LARK SPARROWS were on Seal and BPI the first few days of September (FLL, DOM, JCZ), another at Portuguese Cove, HRM (HAT) and then a week later there was one at Schooner Pond, CB Co. (DBM). Late in November, feeders at either end of the eastern mainland hosted this species, one at a feeder in Clarks Hbr., CSI (MUN) and another in Canso (Tom Kavanaugh).

SAVANNAH SPARROWS were common in grasslands and in dune grass in the late summer and early fall. Even by late November there were still sightings of hardy individuals on beaches on CBI (Weldon MacPhail). Earlier, a significant southern migration was seen Sept. 29 at Hartlen Pt. (IAM,

Mary McLaren). By the first week of September there were Ipswich Sparrows on beaches from Hartlen Pt. to BPI. Numbers of this sub-species increased as expected in early October and the highest count reported was 10 at Hartlen Pt., Oct. 19 (IAM). By late November stragglers were still on beaches from Halifax south to CSI.

One of the extreme rarities of the fall was a GRASSHOPPER SPARROW in W Pubnico during the third week of November (RSD). A month earlier a HENSLOW'S SPARROW was reported from CSI (CLS *fide* JON). The ABO banded another extreme rarity for NS, LECONTE'S SPARROW, Sept. 13 on BPI. Photographs show several of the key identification characters, such as the white fringing on the tertials, the breast streaking, an indistinct version of the face pattern and the streaked crown. Identification of sparrows in this group can be very challenging. Reports with either a clear description of characters used in the identification or photographs are especially valuable. NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW, the common nesting species in this group of sparrows, was still singing in nesting habitat, coastal salt marshes, late in August in N CB (AAM). A sizeable concentration of 20 was at Rainbow Haven Beach, Sept. 28. Later, in November, lingering birds were flushed

near Halifax and at the famous sparrow spot, where several wintered last year on CSI.

FOX SPARROWS lingered in areas where they nested into early September, for example on BPI (DBM, JCZ). In late September early migrants were noticed in the Halifax area (HAT, R. H. Lindsay, JCZ). SONG SPARROWS are widespread and common and reports from across the province corroborate this. It is not unusual for a few to try singing in the fall. Intriguing were two reports of singing birds, both Oct. 13, one in a parking lot on the Halifax waterfront and the other along the shores of Morien Bay (PLC, SEM). LINCOLN'S SPARROWS were well reported from nesting areas in CB in August and September and then migrants on the mainland, especially the HRM, from late September into mid-November.

SWAMP SPARROWS were widespread, but not really abundant anywhere. A few hardy individuals were still in S NS late in November. The situation was similar for WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS, with many lingering at feeders, including 16 at one in Westphal, HRM in late November (EBB). There were many reports of WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS this fall and as expected mostly in October. The first of the fall was in the deep south, in Newellton, CSI, Sept. 30 (MUN) and the latest reports were also from CSI, in late November (JON). In between there were numerous sightings across the province, with a peak count of 10 at Hartlen Pt., Oct. 19 (IAM). In this group was at least one of the western *gambelii* race. A real rarity at any time is the GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW. During the third week of October one spent three days at the feeder of DHY in Little Hbr., Shel. Co., where he was able to carefully observe it, describe it and compare it to both White-throated and White-crowned. Distinguishing imm. White-crowned from Golden-crowned is often more difficult than the books make it out to be.

DARK-EYED JUNCOS were widespread and common from August

right through November. The first arrival of fall on Sable I., where they do not nest, was Sept. 28 (ZOL). More evidence of southerly migration were many flocks on roadsides between Pictou and Sober I., Oct. 20 (KJM), and flocks of several dozen in late November at Sandhills PP, Shel. Co., Nov. 30 (ROL) and in Kings Co. (BLF).

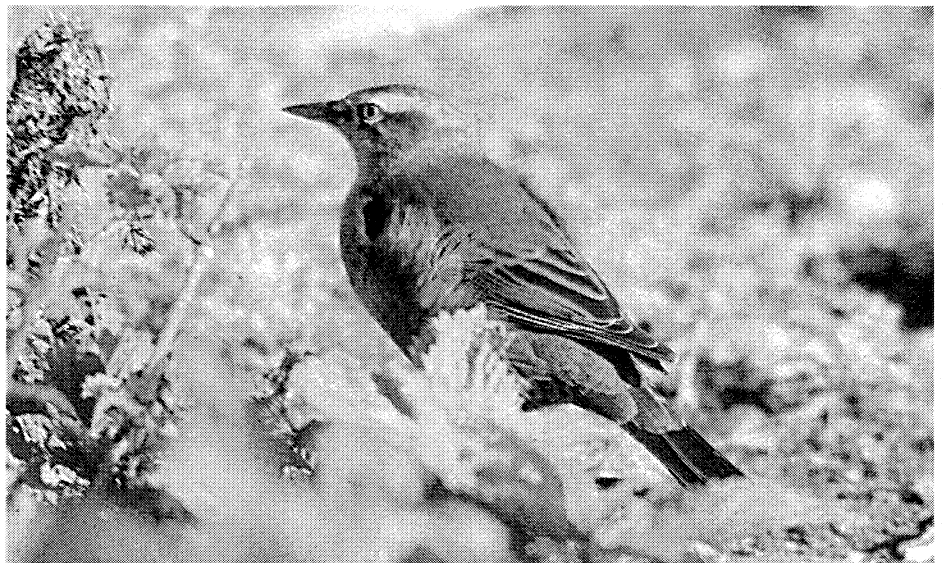
According to Tufts' *Birds Of Nova Scotia*, LAPLAND LONGSPURS usually arrive from the north in late September or early October. This year the first was Sept. 26 at Pennant Peninsula, HRM (HAT). This is the fifth year in a row that the first report comes from the last half of September. Later in the fall there were more reports than usual with a distinct peak in late October and early November. From Oct. 20 to mid-November flocks of up to 20 were reported from Shel. Co., HRM, Brier I. and Morien Bar in CB Co. SNOW BUNTINGS usually arrive in mid-October, as they did this year, with the first report Oct. 13 at Conrad Beach, HRM (R. H. Lindsay). Larger flocks were found the last week of October, with the largest concentrations on CSI and Sable I (BJS *et al.*, ZOL). In mid-November significant flocks were noted in a traditional wintering area, Grand Pré, Kings Co. and on Brier I. (RBS, AAM, ELM, AHM).

NORTHERN CARDINALS continue to thrive in Halifax-Dartmouth and in towns along the coast S to CSI and around into Anna. Co. They are less visible in the summer and early fall, but cold snaps and a little snow made them more obvious at feeders in November. Interestingly, all reports this fall come from areas where they are established. No reports came from further north, east or west in the province. A visiting birder from England found a good concentration of ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAKS, at least 10, feeding on fruit at Dingwall, Vic. Co. (Mike Wilson). The two latest sightings were both from Sable I., two fems., Oct. 8 and a young male, Oct. 18 (ZOL). As with the past few falls there was no fallout of BLUE GROSBEAKS, just stray individuals, four reports in total, with the two latest in HRM, Nov. 2 (Ben Bannister) and a fem. in Louisbourg, Nov. 10 (SEM).

As expected there were more than a dozen reports of INDIGO BUNTINGS, with most in the middle ten days of October on CSI, Seal I. and BPI. The earliest was at Basil's Water Hole, CSI, Sept. 13 (*fide* MUN). Late sightings include a fem. in Gardiner Mines, CB Co., Nov. 3, two fems. in Louisbourg, Nov. 10 (SEM) and the latest report, a fem. lingering at a feeder in Canso, in the last week of November (Tom Kavanaugh). Notice that all the late sightings are from N locations. A spectacular male PAINTED BUNTING graced the feeders of Allison and Winnie Atkinson in Clarks Hbr., CSI for a few days, last seen Nov. 25. Many birders made the trek and were not disappointed, either with the sighting or the hospitality of the Atkinson's and the CSI birders, despite suffering through some nasty windy weather. This is about the ninth record for NS, with most being in the past ten years. The last few have either been winter or spring records, rather than in the fall.

The first DICKCISSEL of the fall was late, not until the last week of September on Seal I. (TMF, Alex Lees), then the next week there was another in Portuguese Cove, HRM (HAT). There were far fewer reports than any of the past five autumns. The hotspot was in Canso, where at least three were lingering at feeders the last week of November, just as they did through the winter last year (Tom Kavanaugh, Steve Bushell).

Reports of BOBOLINKS were sparse this fall and therefore it is not surprising that the latest sighting, Oct. 5 at Hartlen Pt, HRM, is about ten days early than the average latest fall sighting. RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS were reported from many places in ones, twos and small flocks. The largest flock this fall was of more than 100 at Grand Pré, Nov. 3 (BLF). By late November more of the sightings were from feeders, especially in the south end of the province. The lone report of YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD this fall was from Seal I. the first weekend of September (DOM). Sightings of RUSTY BLACKBIRDS were also sparse, as we have come to expect. Two were part of a major migratory movement through Brier I., Sept. 18 (Mike Wilson). Late in November individuals were at feeders in Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS) and CSI (JCZ, Aileen Smith). In stark contrast, COM. GRACKLES were both abundant and widespread. Flocks of more than 100, in many cases several hundred, were noted from HRM to Whycocomagh, Inv. Co., to Shel. Co., to Grand Pré in late August through into early October. Flock size diminished after that, but they were still widespread, including at feeders in River Bourgeois, Rich. Co. (GED, SDI), Tremont (SLH) and Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS) well into November. Most reports of BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS come from Shel. Co. On BPI, JCZ watched as three juvs. sequentially provided meals for a Merlin the last



RUSTY BLACKBIRD. [Photo Ian McLaren]

week of August. The only two reports from outside of Shel. Co. were from Grand Pré, Aug. 27 (JWW) and Clementsvalle, Anna. Co., Nov. 16 (JET).

The earliest BALTIMORE ORIOLE was on Brier I., Aug. 16 (George Garon *vide* JUS). As expected, many more were found starting the end of the second week of September. A few notable concentrations included seven, Sept. 22 at Schooner Pond, CB Co. (SEM, GEM), a total of seven on Sable I. through the fall (ZOL), and six in Dartmouth in late November (TEP). Overall there were fewer reports than in any of the past five years and fewer large concentrations. Two possibilities include that birders are getting used to seeing them and therefore do not report them, or there were fewer orioles this fall.

Winter finch numbers were way down this fall. Last year saw Pine Grosbeaks and Com. Redpolls in significant numbers and moderate populations of White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins. This year sightings of all of these are down dramatically or nonexistent. Last October there was an invasion of PINE GROSBEAKS. Then early in 2002 they became scarce and have remained so. After the dozens of sightings, including flocks of up to 20, last fall, there are only two reports this fall, from Quinan, Yar. Co. in August (MUN) and three near Apple R., Cum. Co., Nov. 15 (KFS). There were some PURPLE FINCHES around, with

reports from most counties, usually one or a few at a time. Numbers were not great, with a high count of 12 at Kingston, Sept. 7 (John Belbin). Late in November a few were hanging around feeders in places such as River Bourgeois, Rich. Co. (GED, SDI) and Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS). HOUSE FINCHES continue to survive in two locations, Halifax and Yarmouth. In fact they may be thriving in both places. A mid-November tour of Yarmouth found them at seven different feeders (MUN) and in Halifax a sighting in Flinn Park in late October was north of their stronghold on the peninsula (IAM). Earlier, in mid-August, just after the heat wave broke, singing House Finches provided welcome relief at Conrose Field, Halifax (PLC).

RED CROSSBILLS do not fluctuate in numbers as dramatically as many of the other finches. This fall they were found at Quinan, Yar. Co., Aug. 4 (MUN), frequenting a feeder in Port Hilford, Guys. Co. in late August (RIB) and on Hermans I., Mahone Bay, Sept. 11 (Mike Wilson). During the last three weeks of August flocks of 10-50 WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS were on Brier I. and coastal eastern NS from HRM to N CB. After that, despite a reasonably good cone crop in N NS, numbers dwindled. Reports were received from only three locations, Gooseberry Cove, CB Co., Louisbourg, and Apple R., Cum. Co. during October and November, with a maximum of six at any one place. No redpolls were found, maintaining the pattern of

influxes every second year that we have seen since 1990. On Christmas counts this year Com. Redpolls will deserve a rare bird report. Most reports of PINE SISKINS this fall come from feeders in August, such as those in St. Peters, Rich. Co. (Murdoch Digout), Port Hilford, Guys. Co. (RIB), and East Gore, Hants Co. (PLC). Like other finches, numbers were very low. Through October and November the only reports were of seven in South Haven, Vic. Co. (BSK) and three in Greenwich, Kings Co. (BLF). One of the few finches around in numbers was AM. GOLDFINCH. Nesting continued through August into September and sightings at feeders, along the coast and roadsides were reported from across the province through the fall. In August and September most sightings of EVENING GROSBEAKS were at feeders, including a few at East Gore, Hants Co. (PLC) and Port Hilford, Guys. Co. (RIB). The largest group was only 10 in Tremont in early September (SLH). Later in the fall a few were found in Apple R. (KFS), South Haven, Vic. Co. (BSK) and the largest flock, 20, in late November in Clementsvalle, Anna. Co. (JET). This suggests it will be another winter with few Evening Grosbeaks in much of NS.

HOUSE SPARROWS continue to be among the most common birds at feeders in many places, from small towns in CB, such as St. Peters and River Bourgeois (Murdoch Digout, GED, SDI) to the large urban centres such as Dartmouth (DHH). ☞



This Cattle Egret made the wrong, and ultimately fatal decision by staying in Canso instead of migrating south. [Photo Steve Bushell]

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Thanks to all of our contributors, including:

Sorted by Initials

| | | | | |
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| Mills, Anne | AHM | Simpson, James | JSI | Comeau, Bob |
| Dean, Andy | AND | Swift, June | JUS | Cook, Cliff |
| Hinds, Barbara | BAH | Wolford, Jim | JWW | Crowell, Beverly |
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| Smith, Betty June | BJS | McKenna, Ken J. | KJM | Digout, Murdoch |
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| McCorquodale, Dave | DBM | Gould, Paul | PRG | Inkster, Chip & Rob |
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| Czapalay, Joan | JCZ | Aucoin, Gwen | | Woods, Robert |
| Brennan, Jean | JEB | Borkowski, Suzanne | | |

Birding Tip

By Barbara Hinds

Never dismiss a host of House Sparrows as House Sparrows, nor a murmuration of Starlings as Starlings. The former may include a desirable Dickcissel, the latter may include Brown-headed Cowbirds or the more welcome Red-winged Blackbirds.

Book Review

The FeederWatcher's Guide to Bird Feeding

By Margaret A. Barker and Jack Griggs; HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

ISBN 0-06273744-9

Being an avid feeder watcher, this book was a natural choice for me, and I must say I wasn't disappointed. Printed on 8" by 11" glossy paper with full colour photographs on every page, it provides valuable tips on attracting finches, discouraging starlings and dealing with squirrels and raccoons.

It is, in fact, a compilation of data submitted by Project FeederWatch participants from all over North America. It addresses landscaping – what natural food you can plant to attract birds; feeders which can be built at home or purchased; and food choices including some home recipes for bird pies and puddings. There's a whole section on coping with raiders and predators with tips on protecting your birds from hawks and shrikes. There are charts for identifying birds and excellent pointers on distinguishing between confusing look-alikes, such as Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks.

The largest section of the book, taking up almost half of it, gives detailed accounts of the fifty most common feeder birds. Each account provides a history of the species, notes on behaviour, identification and, of course, food preferences. Some less common birds are combined with relatives and presented in group discussions at the end of this section.

Although many of the birds are more common in the United States and Western Canada, and some of the tips on feeders and food are inappropriate for our climate, the book remains invaluable simply because it provides an answer to the question of what to feed that rare, exciting visitor which accidentally lands in your yard!

Suzanne M. Borkowski
Halifax, NS

NSBS Executive - 2003



NSBS Executive: (Front) David Currie, Bill Billington, Eileen Billington, Gisèle d'Entremont; (Back) Andy Horn, Suzanne Borkowski, Joan Czapalay, Mary McLaren, Bernice Moores. (Absent) Barbara Hinds, Randy Lauff. [Photo S. Levy]

2002 President's Report

By Andy Horn

I've divided this report (kind of arbitrarily) into three sections: conservation, connections beyond the Society, and, well, birding.

Conservation

Certainly the biggest item on our budget and one of our most important ongoing projects is the Nova Scotia Piping Plover Guardianship Program. Our industrious and well-organized Program Coordinator, Anna McCarron, with help from CWS and others, landed extra funding from a federal Habitat Stewardship Program and from the World Wildlife Fund, that helped her to hire more guardians and to continue to offer educational presentations and coordinate volunteers across the province. Once again this year, David Currie was the executive's liaison to the program, and Bernice Moores deftly handled its increasingly complex finances.

Our collaboration with two Important Bird Area (IBA) programs, done under Gisèle's leadership, also bore fruit this past year. Ted d'Eon unveiled the tern interpretive panel overlooking the Brothers Islands that he and his collaborators produced with the help of the society and the IBA Community Action Fund, and Grant Milroy and his team continued to improve the signage and interpretive center at the IBA at Cape Sable Island, in which we played a smaller supporting role.

Our responses to two conservation issues raised by members seem to have had the desired effect. Last year's AGM resolution against the introduction of wild turkeys to Nova Scotia helped to get DNR to reject the National Wild Turkey Federation's proposal, at least for now. On a smaller scale, the executive's letter against wholesale filling in of Moirs Pond in Bedford helped to get Sobey's to revise their plan in ways that may actually improve the habitat there.

In all our conservation efforts, we continue to benefit from the guidance of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund: Ken Gregoire, David Currie, Shirley Cohrs, and Peter Bell. Our Vice President, David Currie, has been an invaluable liaison between SSTF and the Executive, and we're all pleased he's agreed to do this for another year.

Connections beyond the Society

Certainly this year's highlight was our hosting of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists' AGM, masterminded by Joan Czapalay, the Federation's president, and her hard-working committee: Gisèle d'Entremont, Sterling Levy, our Federation representative, Wendy McDonald, Shirley McIntyre, Linda Payzant, Peter Payzant, and Doug Roy. Well over 90 participants came, and the meeting was an outstanding success, with excellent talks and field trips, terrific food, and booths from various natural history groups throughout the province, including ours.

One of our most important connections within and beyond the society is our publication. For yet another year, Randy Lauff enthusiastically furthered the high quality of *Nova Scotia Birds*. I won't go on and on about what a great job he and his team have done – four times a year you've seen it for yourselves. That makes me all the more sorry to report that Randy has decided to step down as Editor. Fortunately, he has given us plenty of notice and I'm sure we'll keep up the magazine's schedule and quality, uninterrupted. Sterling Levy has done a great job representing Randy at Executive meetings again this year.

For many years, the Nova Scotia Museum has supported our society in many ways, including a grant of \$2000 that is essential for the publication of *Nova Scotia Birds*. In recent years, we have been warned that the museum may not be able to provide this grant, so in future we may have to consider options such as a substantial increase in

membership fees. I am therefore pleased to report that, again this year, the museum has found the funds to support the publication, so we're all especially grateful this year, for our continued partnership with the museum in promoting the knowledge and conservation of birds within the province.

This past year, as usual, society members continued to speak and lead events at schools, naturalists' groups, manning booths at various events, and so on. Their efforts are too numerous to list, but are much appreciated. I should make particular note of two contributions to these efforts, though: Sterling Levy's newly produced brochure, which describes the society and how to join, is an invaluable aid for recruiting new members at such events, and so is Dennis Jones' new portable booth of bird photos.

This coming year, the executive is putting together a public series here at the museum in late March and April, built around bird diets. It will include a series of talks and a drop-in workshop much like our *Getting Ready for the Birds* event a few years back, so stay tuned for more news on this.

Finally under this category, for yet another year in a row, Lorris Keizer took first place in the bird photography competition run by the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia. Once again, you'll see the slides from that competition at our Members' Slide Night in January. Alan Covert, our representative for many years on the guild's selection panel, has decided to step down, so we'd like to hear from any of you interested in judging future competitions.

Birding

Field trips are the heart and soul of any bird society, and I'm glad to report that ours continue to thrive, thanks to our many trip leaders and to Peter Richard,

our (now retired) Field Trip Coordinator. We again had over 30 field trips throughout the province, including old favorites and several new additions. Suzanne Borkowski has already taken up Peter's torch with enthusiasm.

The field trips to beat all field trips are the Christmas Bird Counts, coordinated by David Currie, and the North American Migration Count, coordinated by Judy Tufts. Together with our magazine, these events continue to be our strongest contribution to what people are starting to call the "citizen science" of birding, and are among our most effective tools in engaging people with birds.

The Bird Society is a province-wide group, and to emphasize this we try to have out of town meetings at least every year. Last year's meetings were offered by Randy Lauff at Antigonish in November and by Al Smith in Amherst in May. Both offered inspiring talks on birding contributions to science and had excellent field trips, so the low attendance at both meetings was surprising, and certainly something we will have to pay particular attention to in planning any future out of town meetings.

With the explosion of instant communication on email groups like NatureNS, our telephone reporting system, the Chat Line, could not be updated nearly frequently enough and

was cancelled. With many people not yet "wired" and modes of communication still changing so rapidly, we will have to continuously evaluate and update how we communicate sightings and news to members and others. We are very lucky that, this year, an original mastermind behind the Chat Line, Blake Maybank, stepped in to meet this challenge, with his Rare Bird Alert listserve.

Our website, redesigned in 2001 by Sandra Staples with help from Peter Payzant, is now one of our main lines of communication, especially for visitors to the Province. Peter continues to keep it useful, interesting, and current, and Peter Ackerman fielded requests from visitors and local non-members that are redirected from that site and from the museum.

Summary

In conservation, outside connections, and birding, we've had a great year. The executive would like to do even better in coming years, so we're forming subcommittees on five key areas, which anyone is welcome to join:

1. Internal member services: are we doing enough for members?
2. External activities and connections: are we taking full advantage of our relations to other naturalist groups?

3. Fundraising, membership, and recruitment: how do we increase and enrich our membership?
4. Future directions: what should be our role in issues like conservation? What other, new areas, do we want to explore?
5. Our 50th anniversary. It's coming up fast, and we need to set time and effort aside each year, starting now, to do this event justice

In conclusion, some further important acknowledgments:

Without Harold Forsyth, who serves as our Auditor, and Tony Robinson, our Honorary Solicitor, we could not function as a society. Mary McLaren has been maintaining our membership lists and labels for our mailings, which Peter LeBlanc sends out. Chris Field has facilitated our meetings, Barbara Hinds has been advertising them, Ralph MacLean once again carved the Puffin of the Year Award, Sterling Levy continues to organize and digitize our slide collection, Inez Roberts and her crew provide refreshments at the meetings, and Doug Roy, Eileen and Bill Billington, and their gang once again organized tonight's Wine and Cheese.

We have had a great Executive this year, and I thank them all. They've been a fine group, full of good ideas and fun to work with. Thanks! α



This N. MOCKINGBIRD sat for a fine portrait mid-November in Kentville. [Photo Richard Stern]

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET

As at September 30, 2002

(With comparative figures as at September 30, 2001)

| | <u>2001/02</u> | <u>2000/01</u> |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| ASSETS | | |
| Current assets | | |
| Bank accounts | 21,159 | 9,377 |
| Term deposits | <u>16,816</u> | <u>26,044</u> |
| Total cash | 37,975 | 35,421 |
| Accounts receivable | 1,590 | 1,280 |
| Accumulated interest | 17 | 85 |
| Prepaid expense | <u>324</u> | <u>362</u> |
| | 1,931 | 1,727 |
| Total current assets | 39,906 | 37,148 |
| Fixed assets | | |
| Office equipment | <u>-</u> | <u>142</u> |
| Total assets | 39,906 | 37,290 |
| LIABILITIES & EQUITY | | |
| Current liabilities | | |
| Accounts payable | 9,492 | 4,895 |
| Beach Guardian Programme | 51 | 1,897 |
| CNF-IBA - Brother's Islands interpretive panel | <u>-</u> | <u>2,413</u> |
| Total liabilities | 9,543 | 9,205 |
| Reserve | 5,100 | 4,100 |
| Members' equity | | |
| Opening balance | 23,985 | 21,113 |
| Excess revenue over expense | <u>1,278</u> | <u>2,872</u> |
| Total members' equity | <u>25,263</u> | <u>23,985</u> |
| Liabilities and equity | 39,906 | 37,290 |

A. G. Horn, President

B. Moores, Treasurer

H. Forsyth, Auditor

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

INCOME STATEMENT

For the year ended September 30, 2002

(With comparative figures for the year ended September 30, 2001)

| | <u>2001/02</u> | <u>2000/01</u> |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Revenue | | |
| Memberships | 5,618 | 7,041 |
| Sale of publications, etc. | 541 | 949 |
| Nova Scotia Museum grant | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Donations | 369 | - |
| Interest | 711 | 1,154 |
| Foreign exchange | 175 | 140 |
| | <u>9,414</u> | <u>11,284</u> |
| FNSN-AGM income (est.) | 475 | |
| Habitat stewardship programme | <u>62,695</u> | <u>49,690</u> |
| Total revenue | <u>72,584</u> | <u>60,974</u> |
| Expense | | |
| Cost of items for sale | 535 | 584 |
| Nova Scotia Birds | 5,310 | 4,628 |
| Committees | 817 | 1,358 |
| Printing and stationery | - | 124 |
| Promotion | 1,007 | 1,201 |
| Insurance | 275 | 250 |
| Amortization | 142 | 144 |
| Miscellaneous expense | 85 | 123 |
| | <u>8,171</u> | <u>8,412</u> |
| CNF-IBA - Brothers Islands interpretive panel | 440 | |
| Habitat stewardship programme | <u>62,695</u> | <u>49,690</u> |
| Total expense | <u>71,306</u> | <u>58,102</u> |
| Excess revenue over expense | 1,278 | 2,872 |

Book Review

A Field Guide to Feeder Birds of Eastern North America How to Identify and Feed Backyard Birds

**by Roger Tory Peterson. Maps by Virginia Marie Peterson. Hardcover - 106 pages (2000)
Houghton Mifflin Company ISBN 0-618-05944-X**

This field guide is not a book to slip in your pocket when going on a day's birding trip. It is designed for specific use indoors and should be kept handy to a window overlooking your bird feeders. That's where the action should be and where you will need this book.

As is expected of any guide illustrated by Roger Tory Peterson, the artwork is a delight to the eye; drawings and contributed photographs are brilliant and all the essential field marks for quick identification are clearly presented. Knowing what to look for is half the battle when birding – size, colour, wing bars or not, head stripes or not and bill shape are some of the essential features to note in Peterson's recognition system illustrated here.

The paintings are larger than those in Peterson's pocket field guides, making plumage patterns and relevant physical details easy to examine. Each illustration is accompanied by a basic text in clear print. There are notes on bird songs, food preferences and other notable features plus a map of each species' range – all the better to tell if you have an exotic stray in the garden.

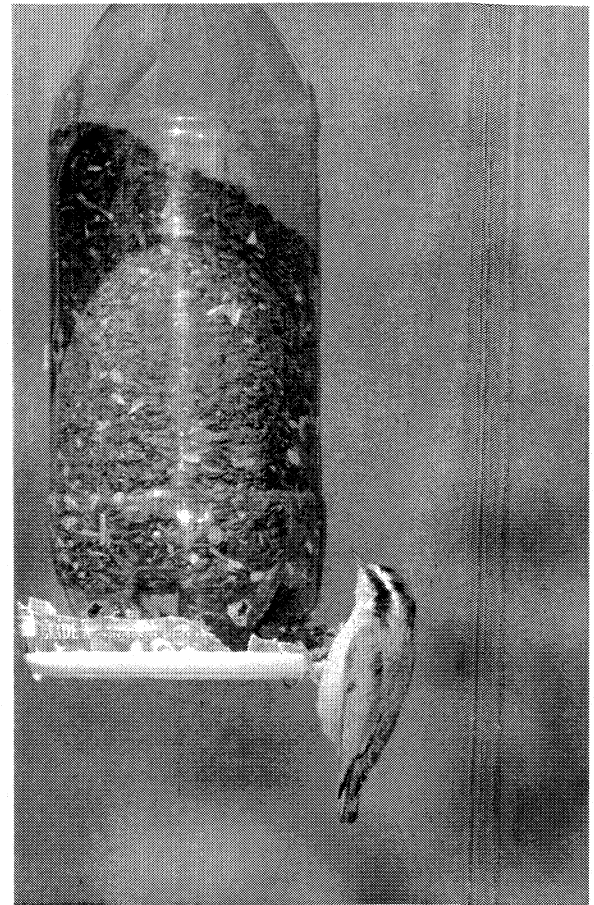
This identification guide will be a great aid to a rookie bird watcher of any age who wants to know what sort of feeders to put up and which seeds to provide when establishing a bird feeding station. Bird recognition should be easy with this book, and, without a doubt, knowing the name of a species eating the millet or fat or sunflower seeds at your feeders, adds greatly to the joy of bird watching through a window.

Sparrows are notoriously difficult to sort out and all birders will find the section on sparrows especially helpful, but, a word of warning to newcomers to birding. Not *all* birds in winter remain as bright as the guide's illustrations, so be prepared to find some finches, Northern Cardinals and Orioles (if you're lucky) in drab basic plumage.

The guide includes a feeder checklist, which will encourage keen-spirited watchers to keep feeders in use all year round to increase the number of species seen in the backyard. Listing birds can be as competitive as tennis, without the exertion.

Feeder Birds of Eastern North America is modestly priced at \$9.95 US, and is value for money.

**Barbara Hinds
Halifax, NS**



RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH This photo was an entry in the 2002 PGNS / NSBS slide competition. [Photo Jacynthe Caissie]

Book Review

Crows and Jays

By Steve Madge and Hilary Burn

Christopher Helm (Publishers) Ltd. 2001

216 pp. Paper, \$24.95 ISBN: 0-691-08883-7



GRAY JAY photographed in 1976 at Fundy National Park. [Photo uncredited - NSBS Library]

I have always been fascinated by the corvids, so when the opportunity arose to review "Crows and Jays", I jumped at the chance. The book is a guide to the corvids and includes every species known to science. Of course, the two most important features of any guide are the plates and the distribution maps. I thought the plates were quite beautiful and well done. The birds are shown in two positions, standing and flying, and the position is consistent for each species, which is excellent for comparisons. For a more objective examination of the plates, I compared some of them to plates in *The Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania* (Zimmerman *et al.*, 1996). There were a few discrepancies for a couple of species. For instance, in the Kenya book, the Priapiac is shown with a larger tail and the Cape Rook or Black Crow has a much browner head. Unfortunately, I'm not sure which book is more accurate, but clearly there are inconsistencies, which are perhaps the result of variation in the artists' models.

The distribution maps range from decent to bad. The chief problems with the maps are the scale and the use of landmarks. The scale for some species is much too large. For example, the distribution map for the Hawaiian Crow shows all of North and Central America even though this crow is only found on the Big Island of Hawaii. As a result, the coloured range area is too small to see for this, and several other species. In other maps, it is hard to tell where in the world you are because the only landmarks are the rivers. This is particularly troublesome for species in the middle of Asia such as Biddulph's and Pander's Ground Jays. The only way I could tell where these species occurred was by reading the text.

The text for each species includes sections on identification, description, sex/age differences, measurements, geographical variation, voice, habits, breeding, habitat, distribution, status, and references. Very comprehensive. The "habits" section is particularly enjoyable because it describes the behaviour of the species and has all kinds of interesting tidbits. Unfortunately, the text in the bibliography and the index is minute, so it is difficult to read and look things up.

When I first picked up this book, I wondered what you would use it for, if you weren't a taxonomist or museum curator. It's not practical as a field guide, since you'd be more likely to want a guide showing all the birds from a particular area – so, why get it? My main interest was to see how many kinds of crows and jays there were. Interestingly, jays, magpies, and treepies are quite variable in shape and colour. In contrast, crows and ravens look pretty much the same everywhere – there are a lot of American Crow/Northern Raven – type birds around the world (luckily they don't all occur here – ID would be miserable). It was also neat to see the distribution of some birds, especially in Central America where there are many endemic jay species in small adjacent areas. Overall, this is a bit of a specialty guide. You'd have to be interested in this group to want it, but if you are, it is very nice. ☺

Sabrina Taylor

Field Trip Reports

Mahone Bay

04 August 2002, Leader: James R. Hirtle

On a field trip that usually provides 70-75 species, I was only able to get 59 this year. We started at Mahone Bay, where we usually see at least one Roseate, Arctic and Common Tern. This year only Common showed and at Corkums Island where I would have bid money on being able to show an Arctic or Roseate Tern, I struck out as well. Two days before 80 terns had been there.

Warblers were not in groups yet as in other years. My best spot usually at Long Hill was dead as was Station Road. We did locate an active Black-capped Chickadee nest and a honey bee nest in a tree at Long Hill, which added a little life to the lack of birds. Some also saw a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

We were able to observe an Alder Flycatcher with an extreme amount of yellow at Station Road. On the outer limits of Mahone Bay, near Fauxburg, the old train trail proved a little more exciting where we found a nice group of 10 species of warblers, a few Downy Woodpeckers and a Gray Catbird. Some in the group were able to see a Canada Warbler and most saw a Blackburnian Warbler feeding a young one.

The Northern Cardinal at Princess Inlet Drive was not co-operative although it had been seen in the morning. We stopped at Second Peninsula for lunch and saw a few porpoises breaching. A farm at the end of Second Peninsula allowed those present, decent looks at Cliff Swallows. This year Back Oler Farm Marsh was quiet; Crescent Beach and Cherry Hill were bypassed as few shorebirds were around. ☞

Eastern Shore

28 September 2002, Leader: Peter Richard

A small group of fanatics met Saturday morning at the seaward end of Lower East Chezzetcook. Despite the occasionally heavy showers and wind, we went ahead with the field trip, with a total of around 35 species of bird.

At the end of Storeys Head Rd where we met the high point was a handful of American Pipits. Off Miseners Point was a flock of around 40 Northern Gannets diving within 100 m of shore, putting on quite a show. There were also a half-dozen seals, which I believe were Grey Seals – one large bull had a nose that put us in mind of an Elephant Seal, obviously quite rubbery.

Off Conrads Beach on Petpeswick Inlet we spotted a Surf Scoter and a Merlin. At the recreation center in East Chezzetcook we spotted a pair of falcons chasing shorebirds – from the size and the choice of prey, I suspect that they were both Peregrine Falcons. At Dyke Road in Grand Desert we found a flock of around 20 Common Mergansers. Smelly Cove didn't have much in the way of shorebirds, but we did find Blackpoll, Black and White, and Nashville Warblers.

The remnants of the group were the two birders Ian McLaren spotted on the rail-trail at West Lawrencetown. I believe that his count of American Widgeon was reasonably accurate, but from our perspective we also found a drake Eurasian Widgeon, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, and American Black Ducks. ☞

For Sale

Zeiss 10x40 BT* binoculars. \$400.

Linda Payzant (902) 861-1607

lpayzant@chebucto.ca

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY Membership Application/Renewal Form

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

Individual: \$15/year, for _____ years \$ _____
 Family: \$18/year, for _____ years \$ _____
 Institutional: \$25/year, for _____ years \$ _____
 Life: \$375 \$ _____
 Additional for Foreign Addresses:
 \$3/year, for _____ years \$ _____

Fed. of NS Naturalists:
 \$5/year, for _____ years \$ _____

Membership Total: \$ _____

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

Number of Gift Memberships: _____

Gift Memberships Total: \$ _____

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

Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund Donation: \$ _____

NSBS Supplies
 The following items are available to members:

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

Supplies Total: \$ _____

Total Enclosed: (Make cheque payable to Nova Scotia Bird Society) \$ _____

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

Renewal

Additional Name(s): _____

Address: _____

 _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

- I WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP WITH:
- Hospitality
 - Magazine
 - Publicity
 - Leading Bird Walks
 - Conservation
 - 2005 Committee
 - Other _____
 - Leading School Group

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

Mail to:

Signature: _____

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

Sun 18 May 2003 – Taylor Head Provincial Park

Leader: Karl Tay (902) 772-2287

email: swallowhollow2972@hotmail.com

Meet at the main entrance to Taylor Head Provincial Park off #7 hwy, Eastern Shore, Marine Drive at 8:45 a.m. Taylor Head PP has over 17 km of hiking trails of which we will cover approximately 3 or 4. Expect to see breeding Osprey, Common Eider, Cormorants and hopefully many others. It's sandy, rocky and wooded terrain, so hiking boots and a hearty lunch are recommended.

Mon 19 May 2003 – Kejimikujik Seaside Adjunct

Leaders: Gary C. Hartlen (902) 354-7250 and Peter Davies

email: garych@eastlink.ca

This will be a joint field trip with the Halifax Field Naturalists. Take Hwy #103 to Exit #22 (unmarked) to the Keji Park Seaside Adjunct, approximately 6 km down the St. Catherines River Road. We will meet at the parking lot of the Park at 8:30 a.m. There are washroom facilities on site and coffee is available at the Port Joli General Store, one km past the exit to the Park. We will be walking from the parking lot to the ocean where Piping Plover will be nesting. This beach is closed to the public. Expect many warbler species in full breeding plumage and nesting shorebirds on the trail to the headland. Wear waterproof footwear and bring a lunch. Be aware that wood ticks abound at this time of year. If the weather is good it will be a great day of birding. Upland birds and shorebirds at the same spot! No rain date.

Wed 21 May 2003 – Halifax County Early Morning Warbler Walk

Leader: Fred Dobson 852-3042 email: aseas@hfx.eastlink.ca

Pre-Registration is necessary!

Meet at 6:00 a.m. in the parking lot at the junction of Prospect Road, Rte.#333, and St. Margarets Bay Road (closest to Halifax). Duration: two to three hours. Waterproof footwear and fly repellent are recommended.

Thu 22 May 2003 – Skills Workshop – 7:15 p.m.

NSMNH, Summer Street, Halifax, 7:00 p.m. (members only)

"Empids – Feathered Chameleons" Presenter: Fulton Lavender

Regular Meeting – 7:45 p.m.

"Parental Care and Paternity in Eastern Bluebirds" Guest speaker: Sue Meek.

Sat 24 May 2003 – The Mountain and the Marsh: Annapolis Royal/Belleisle

Leader: Sharon Hawboldt (902) 758-3265.

email: s.hawboldt@ns.sympatico.ca

Meet at the home of Sharon and Stephen Hawboldt, 6601 Hwy #1 (between Bridgetown and Annapolis Royal) in Belleisle at 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch, fly repellent, and wear comfortable footwear. We'll hike the woods road on the North Mountain in the morning and Belleisle Marsh in the afternoon. No rain date.

Sun 25 May 2003 – Shubenacadie Area

Leader: Roslyn McPhee (902) 758-3265.

Meet at Miller's Restaurant in Shubenacadie at 7:00 a.m. Bring a lunch and insect repellent. Warblers and woodpeckers are common on this trip. No rain date.

Sat 31 May 2003 – Pennant Point

Leader: Hans Toom 868-1862 email: htoom@hfx.eastlink.ca

Meet at the southern parking lot at Crystal Crescent Beach at 8:00 a.m. This twelve kilometre birding hike traverses coastal barrens, spruce forests and bogs. We follow the western side to Duck Cove Head and return. We should be back by 2:00 p.m. subject to the birds. Come equipped for a day hike. Rain date: Sun 1 June.

Sat 31 May 2003 – Victoria County, Cape Breton

Leader: Bethsheila Kent (902) 295-1749

email: floyd@ns.sympatico.ca

Meet at the Gaelic College parking lot at St. Anns at 7:00 a.m. We will explore a regenerating woodlot, the picnic park at North Gut St. Ann's (always a great vireo spot!), as well as the riverbank at North River (Wood Duck!) on our way to our final destination – the Bar at Jersey Cove. This is a great time of year to check out this part of Victoria County as many species overlap at this time. See warbler, thrush, flycatcher, an assortment of sparrows and other small songbirds, ducks galore, as well as an exciting assortment of shorebirds! No rain date.

Sat 7 June 2003 – Warbler Walk Cape Breton

Leader: David McCorquodale (902) 563-1260

email: david_mccorquodale@ucceb.ca

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Ben Eoin Provincial Park Picnic Area. Spend the morning in a variety of good habitats for warblers, from hardwoods, to bogs, to dense Black Spruce between Ben Eoin and Big Pond. Besides warblers we should see a variety of flycatchers (yes, bring insect repellent), thrushes, woodpeckers and have a chance to see Spruce Grouse.

Sat 7 June 2003 – Canso and Area

Leaders: Randy Lauff (902) 867-2471 email: rlauff@stfx.ca and Steve Bushell.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Chapel Gully Trail parking lot. Come down Main Street, turn right onto Union, pass the marina and take the next right onto Wilmot. The parking lot is at the top of the hill. We will be walking a number of habitats, from Jack Pine woods to the coastal barrens of Louse Harbour. Rain date: Sun 8 June.

Sat 21 June 2003 – Dawn Chorus at Porters Lake

Leader: Cindy Staicer 494-3533 email: cindy.staicer@dal.ca

Meet at 5:00 a.m. at the gate to Porters Lake PP. Take exit #19 from Highway #107 in Dartmouth. Travel approximately 4 km south, towards Lawrencetown. Gate is on the left. The dawn chorus of warblers will be intense at this time of year. The trip will last about 5 to 6 hours, ending before noon. Bring appropriate footwear and insect repellent. Rain date: Sun 22 June. ☐

Upcoming Events



Field trips are open to non-members as well as members. Feel free to phone or email the field trip leader or contact person ahead of time to obtain further information (e.g. directions). Field trips range from early morning warbler walks to all day outings, to overnight expeditions to offshore islands. The area code for N.S. is 902. NSMNH = The Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Halifax.

Ideas and suggestions for future trips are welcome. You do not need to be an expert to lead a field trip, and the trip does not need to last all day; you just need to share your favourite birding spots. Any questions, comments or suggestions should be directed to the Events Editor, Suzanne Borkowski 445-2922. Email: sborkowski@hfx.eastlink.ca

New for 2003! – Skills Workshops exclusively for members. These tutorials will be held at the Museum, immediately prior to the monthly meetings, and will provide tips and information on difficult areas of bird identification and on other birding topics. ☞

Thu 27 Feb 2003 – Skills Workshop – 7:15 p.m.

NSMNH, Summer Street, Halifax, 7:00 p.m. (members only)

“Little Brown Jobbies” Presenter: Ian McLaren.

Regular Meeting – 7:45 p.m.

“A Birder’s Guide to Field Recording” Guest Speaker: Bob Lindsay

Sun 16 Mar 2003 – Along the Fundy Shore

Leader: Richard Stern (902) 678-1975. email: rbstem@ns.sympatico.ca

Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot between the Acadian Lines Terminal (the old railway station building) and Hiltz’s Funeral Home in downtown Kentville. Bring a lunch. Dress for cold weather. This will be a most-of-the-day trip as far west as Annapolis Royal and back, calling at Black Rock, Margaretsville, Port George and Parkers Cove, mainly for sea ducks, etc. and to introduce birders to the area. No storm date.

Thu 27 Mar 2003 – Skills Workshop – 7:15 p.m.

NSMNH, Summer Street, Halifax, 7:00 p.m. (members only)

“Attracting owls” Presenter: Bernard Forsythe

Regular Meeting – 7:45 p.m.

“Avian Interactions with Wind Power Structures” Guest Speaker: Becky Whittam, Bird Studies Canada.

Sat 29 Mar 2003 – Baccaro and Blanche Peninsula

Leader: Donna Ensor (902) 875-4269. email: ensorg@auracom.com

Early spring birding with Donna. Rarities have shown up here quite often at this time of year. Dress warmly and bring a lunch. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at exit 28 off highway #103 (Port Clyde). Rain date: Sunday, 30 March.

Sat 12 Apr 2003 – Martinique Beach

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

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Scotia Bank parking lot, Bridge Plaza, Dartmouth. Look for early migrants as well as possible rarities. Bring a lunch. No rain date.

Thu 24 Apr 2003 – Skills Workshop – 7:15 p.m.

“Identifying warblers by sound” Presenter: Cindy Staicer

Regular Meeting – 7:45 p.m.

“Warblers and their Songs” Guest Speaker: Cindy Staicer, Dalhousie University.

Sun 27 Apr 2003 – Wolfville Area

Leader: Jim Wolford (902) 542-7650. email: jww@ns.sympatico.ca

Pond hopping for ducks and early migrants. Meet at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre, Front Street, Wolfville at 10:00 a.m. This will be a joint field trip with the Blomidon Naturalists Society. Bring a lunch.

Sat 3 May 2003 – Cape Sable Island

Leader: Murray Newell (902) 745-3340 email: murcar@klis.com

Meet at Tim Horton’s in Barrington Passage at 8:00 a.m. Murray will lead a field trip birding Cape Sable Island for migrants. Bring proper footwear and a lunch. No rain date.

Sun 4 May 2003 – Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary

Leader: Al Smith (506) 536-0164 email: alsmith@nbnet.nb.ca

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary parking lot. Bring a lunch. We will spend the morning in the Sanctuary, return to the parking lot for lunch and afterwards walk down to the edge of the John Lusby Salt Marsh and finish by 2:00 p.m.

Sat 10 May 2003 – North American Migration Count

Provincial Co-ordinator: Judy Tufts (902) 542-7800

email: tandove@ns.sympatico.ca

The twelfth annual North American Migration Count will take place this Spring on Saturday, 10 May. This event is always held on the second Saturday in May. Anyone wishing to participate should contact their local county co-ordinator, area representative, or Judy Tufts, for more information. All are welcome. No fee involved. A list of county co-ordinators and area reps. appears on page nine of this issue.

Fri 16 May to Mon 19 May 2003 – Bon Portage Island

Leader: Claire Diggings (902) 825-6152

email: claire_diggings@hotmail.com

Pre-registration is necessary!

Depart late afternoon or early evening on Friday from Prospect Point Wharf, Shelburne County. 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, plus a boat trip donation.

Sat 17 May 2003 – Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary

Leader: Terry Paquet 452-3622 email: terypaquet@hotmail.com

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the APBS parking lot. Take Exit #3 from the TCH 104 at the Wandlyn Inn and proceed a few km toward Nappan. The entrance is on the left. Wear appropriate footwear for wet conditions and bring a lunch. Rain date will be Sun 18 May 2003.

(Continued on inside back cover)