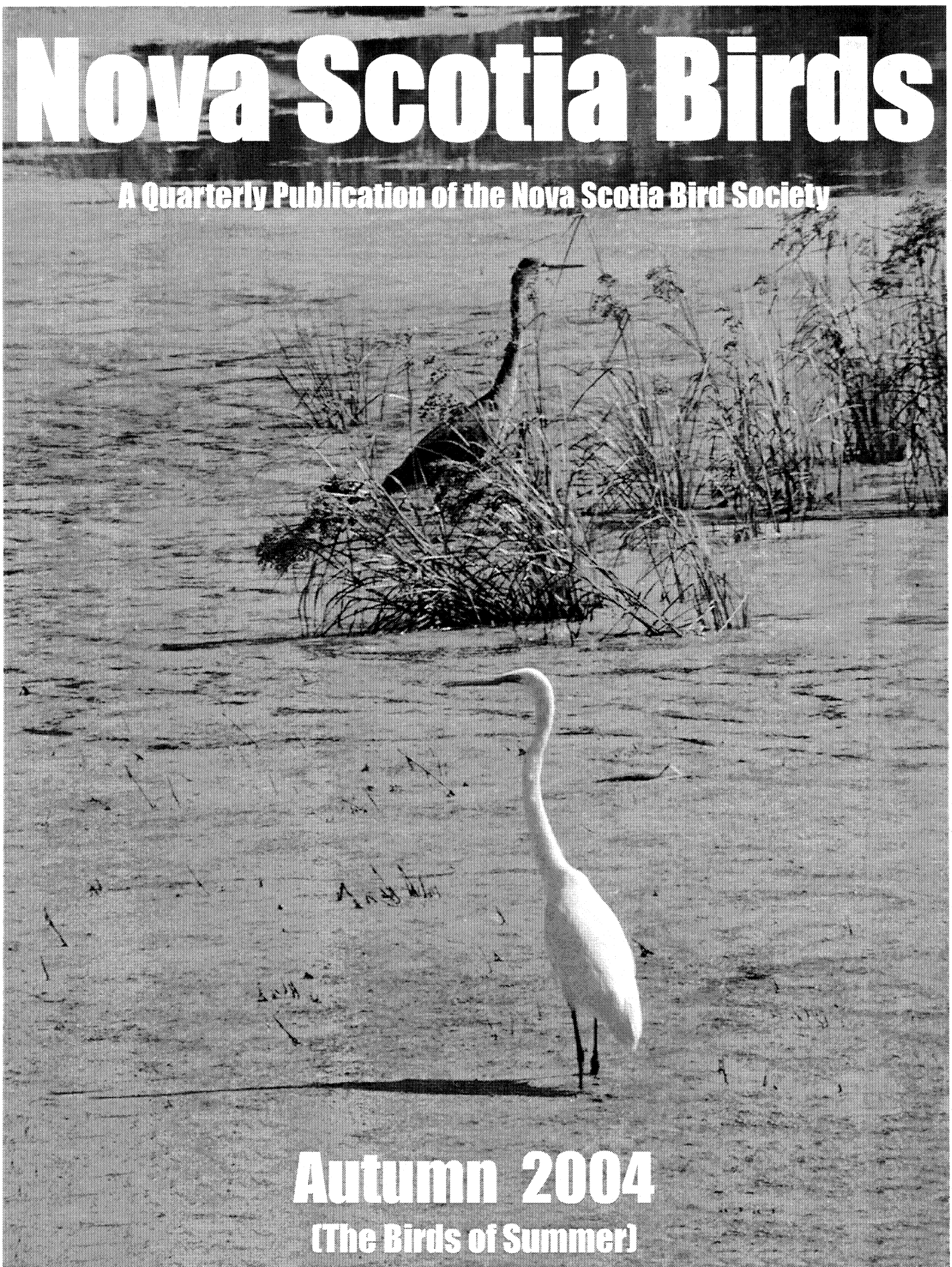


Nova Scotia Birds

A Quarterly Publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society



Autumn 2004
(The Birds of Summer)



NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

Executive 2003-2004

President	Andy Horn
Vice President	Suzanne Borkowski
Past President	Gisèle d'Entremont
Treasurer	Bernice Moores
Secretary	Jennifer Gerrits
Membership Secretary	Eileen and Bill Billington
Editor	Blake Maybank
Director	Joan Czapalay
Director	Libby Dean
Director	Barbara Hinds
Solicitor	Tony Robinson
Auditor	Harold Forsyth

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.

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

Rare Bird Alert: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NS-RBA/>
Email: ip-bird@chebucto.ns.ca
Web: <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc>

Reporting Deadlines

Winter 2005 issue: Dec. 7, 2004
 Spring 2005 issue: Mar. 7, 2005

Summer 2005 issue: June 7, 2005
 Fall 2005 issue: Aug. 7, 2005

Inside This Issue

Special points of interest:

- Boreal Owls breed in Nova Scotia
- Summer Seasonal Reports
- Rare Bird Reports
- Book Reviews
- Trip Reports

Fine Focus

- The Pursuit of an Owl 2

Summer Bird Reports 6

Weather & Other Reports

- Nova Scotia's First Shiny Cowbird 22
- Summer Weather 23
- Willow Flycatcher at Belleisle Marsh 24
- NS Coastal Guardian Program Report 26

Boor Reviews 26

Field Trip Reports 28

Coming Events Back Cover

Cover Photo: Blake Maybank photographed this odd couple at the new Annapolis Royal Marsh last summer. The Great Egert and Great Blue Heron weren't paired, of course, simply feeding close to each other.

NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS
AUTUMN 2004

Editor

Blake Maybank

Production Assistant

Sterling Levy

Records Editor

Lance Laviolette

Photo Editor

Ian McLaren

Events Editor

Suzanne Borkowski

Seasonal Bird Reports

Sylvia Fullerton

Ulli Höger

Andy Horn

Eric Mills

Ken McKenna

Ian McLaren

Terry Paquet

Joan Waldron

Banner Artist

Trevor Herriot

Other Help

Eileen Billington

Peter LeBlanc

Bird Reports to

Lance Laviolette

RR #1, Glen Robertson, ON

K0B1H0

lance.laviolette@lmco.com

Photo Submissions to

Ian A. McLaren

Photo Editor, NS Birds

Biology Department

Dalhousie University

Halifax, NS, B3H4J1

iamclar@ac.dal.ca

All Other Items to

Blake Maybank

Editor, NS Birds

144 Bayview Drive

White's Lake, NS. B3T 1Z1

maybank@ns.sympatico.ca

Use of any material from NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS requires written permission from the Editor.

Cost of the publication of this periodical is partially borne by the Nova Scotia Museum.

ISSN 0383-9537. Publications Mail Reg. No. 09838.

Published four times a year.

**GUEST EDITORIAL**

In 1955 the Nova Scotia Technical College housed what eventually became the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. On January 26 of that year, 55 persons gathered in the college's Assembly Hall to form what they named the "Nova Scotia Bird Society".

Fifty years later, under the same name, that society is still going strong. 2005 will certainly be a banner year that we'll celebrate in style. How better to celebrate 50 years of birds and birding than through our membership? This editorial is an invitation for all members, new and long-standing alike, to join in the celebration.

A planning committee consisting of myself, Margaret Clark, Joan Czapalay, Sterling Levy, Judy O'Brien, and Mary McLaren-Ashfaq has already been meeting since May, 2003 to line up special events throughout the year. Here are a few to whet your appetite:

- **Birthday Party** January 27 at Members Slide Night, with cake and "historic" photos
- **Commemorative Public Talks** organized by Joan Waldron, in March and April featuring some of our province's classic birds and birders
- **Special Regional Meeting** to celebrate our province-wide membership
- **Canadian Society of Ornithologists** meeting in Halifax in the fall, 2005; with field trips that highlight our province and our society
- **Historic Field Trip** in Hants County, our oldest field trip, led by Margaret Clark in late May. There will be also our ongoing field trips throughout the province offered by our knowledgeable volunteer leaders.
- **Anniversary Publication** featuring histories of birds and birding

If you can contribute to any of these events, or have other ideas, please contact any member of the planning committee or the executive. Right now we're especially interested in any images you might have of special dates, places, events, or people, although any help or ideas would be terrific.

The main thing, though, is to come along and join the celebration. So enjoy your Christmas Counts and other winter birding, and we'll see you for birthday cake on the 27th!

Gisèle d'Entremont

Chair, 50th Anniversary Committee

gdentremont@ns.sympatico.ca (902) 422-7739



The Pursuit of an Owl

By Randy Lauff

What started in 1996 as an enhancement to a camping trip turned into a nine year quest embellished with new friends, wonderful hiking, and a lot of new birds. Although the story as laid out here may appear to have a climax, in truth, I believe there are many more chapters to come, and some readers may in fact find the story's pinnacle in a later instalment.

The *Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces* (Erskine 1992) indicated no confirmed breeding records of the Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) anywhere in the Maritimes. During the atlassing years however, a few hardy, determined souls ventured into northern Cape Breton, lucked out with the weather (no small feat!), and heard courting males give their staccato call (Dalzell, 1989). Although not proof of breeding, these records were good enough to assign a ranking of *probable* for the areas near Bay St. Lawrence, Cape North, and Neils Harbour, Victoria Co. The only confirmed breeding records for the Boreal Owl in all the Maritimes was a series of seven nests found by Robie Tufts in the years spanning 1928 – 1933 (as recorded in the Maritimes Nest Record Scheme); all these nests were on Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick. Early regional ornithological publications made reference to the Boreal Owl, but with differing opinions as to the status of the species (though none referred to nesting). All of this history gave me the incentive to pursue the Boreal – though I honestly thought the pursuit would be somewhat easier than it turned out to be!

In 1996 several colleagues and I won a Nova Scotia Museum Research Grant to investigate the status of about 20 rarely-documented species; this list was very diverse, and included organisms from Arctic Shrew (*Sorex arcticus*) to dwarf birches (*Betula* sp.). We had ten birds on our list, including the Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*) and the Boreal Owl. Amazingly, we



The author returning a weighed and measured chick to its nest. [Photo Sean Mitchell]



When faced with apparent predation (the visiting researcher) most owls normally abandon the nest for their own safety; this female owl sat tight and had to be lifted off her eggs. [Photo by Author]



The adult female of the late nest watching the goings-on below her. [Photo Don MacLaughlin] The eldest chick from the early nest, close to fledging. [Photo Sean Mitchell]

found the Hawk Owl on our way to the base camp, but had to wait several days to find the first nest of that species for the Province. Shortly after arriving at base camp, a Boreal Owl flew in, to become a rather convenient lifer for several of us. Even though we saw it (or another one) several times during that trip, we never did confirm breeding. Over the next few years, I revisited that site a few times, never to relocate an owl.

I decided it was time to become more focused in the search, which meant a nest box program. Like all of North America's small owls, the Boreal is a secondary cavity nester and takes readily to appropriately-sized nest boxes. In Finland it is estimated that the vast majority of Boreals nest in boxes, since deforestation is so great there that the trees which do exist just aren't big enough to accommodate cavities anymore. One can't help but to be pessimistic as to the Boreal's future there...if the current providers of nest boxes stop doing so. As I was to find out, the Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada (CBHNP) does have an abundance of appropriate habitat for Boreal Owls, and therefore, many natural cavities. Would the Boreals use my boxes even though there were old woodpecker holes available? There is an apparent negative correlation in other studies between quality of habitat and use of nest boxes, i.e. if the habitat is good, nest boxes tend to be ignored. Fortunately, I didn't find out this information until my own study was well underway!

In 1999, I ordered nest box kits from our local CACL workshop, and the first 16 were assembled and erected in August and September of that year; therefore, they were to be available for the breeding season of 2000. Those initial boxes were distributed among Pollets Cove-Aspy Fault Wilderness Protected Area (WPA), Bonnet Lake Barrens WPA, CBHNP and a few on other lands.

In that first spring, two of those first boxes were occupied by Northern Flying Squirrels (*Glaucomys sabrinus*), which are still my only flying squirrels to date; one box was occupied by a Red Squirrel (I've been "blessed" with many of these over the years); and in the Pollets Cove-Aspy Fault WPA, one box housed a Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*). At that time, I was not interested in Saw-whets, so I did not monitor that box. I was, after all...imagine ethereal music...searching for *Boreals*. By my second field season I had 28 boxes available, but only four were occupied – all by Red Squirrels. Undaunted, I put up more boxes that year and in the 2002 field season 36 boxes were available. An American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) nested in one of my Park boxes and my second Saw-whet nest was in a box in Jim Campbells Barrens WPA. The interesting thing about funding agencies...if you don't get results, they tend not to fund you again. Understandably, I guess. Therefore, I didn't ignore this second Saw-whet nest...I needed data and I decided to expand my overall project into one that compared the ecologies of the two *Aegolius* owls. In reality, I should have had this as my goal from the start.

The year 2003 was a banner year for me, I was able to monitor two Saw-whet nests, including one in a natural cavity about a 10 minute walk from my house. The other was less than a one-hour drive into Guysborough County. Two chicks fledged from that box, while only one fledged from the natural cavity. Both nests were extremely late (being initiated in June, when most Saw-whets have fledged), suggesting second nests for the females. There are other interpretations as well, such as re-nestings and better prey availability...we'll likely never know the real answer. However, the Boreal still eluded me.

During these years, another approach to investigating owls in Atlantic Canada was initiated, the Nocturnal Owl Surveys. I was somewhat relieved to find that the number of Boreals being reported in Nova Scotia was very small, typically only one or two per year. Had significantly more been reported, I would have had serious doubts about my methods.



The adult female is also weighed, measured and a blood sample taken; she was in no hurry to fly away after being released. [Photo by Author]

By the 2004 field season, my volunteers and I had erected 59 nest boxes (minus one stolen, minus one logged = 57 boxes available). Normally, I check each nest box two or more times in each season, thereby ensuring I get both early and late nesters. By the end of May, I had checked almost all of my nest boxes once, but a snow drift prevented me from accessing the final eight boxes on the plateau of northern Cape Breton. Incredibly, on June 5th, my student and I ran into another drift, which still blocked us from those last eight boxes. Finally, by June 11th, we had access! The three road-side boxes were empty, which meant the only ones left to check were the five boxes in a two kilometre, back-country hike. My student and I loaded the gear into packs, including a 20 kg collapsible ladder, measuring equipment, camera and all the other routine backcountry necessities. The first of the five boxes was mounted on a Black Spruce with lots of Balsam Fir to one side, and semi-open woods with a lot of snags everywhere else. As the backpacks came off and we started getting the ladder ready... I saw a movement in the nest box hole from the corner of my eye. A squirrel? A Kestrel? Nope – in fact, it was even before I looked straight on at the box that I knew it was a Boreal. How? None of the other residents of my boxes, including Saw-whets, fill the entire hole when they perch there... and this bird really filled the hole! My student, who had never seen a wild owl before in his life, was grinning ear-to-ear...he had studied the field guides and he also knew that this was a Boreal. None the less, I stared at the bird as it stared at me, ticking off the field marks...spotty forehead, thin dark border to the facial disk, yellowish bill...they were all there.

To say I was excited would be a definitive understatement! Nine years of work and the prize was finally here! We unfolded the ladder, set it up, and I directed my student to get out the field book; I would be dictating to him the contents of the nest box. The female parent looked at me in bewilderment as I climbed the ladder, palms sweating so much I could barely hold the screwdriver. The adult flushed, and I unscrewed the door to the box, and cautiously opened it. I peeked in when the door was open a crack, and nothing was about to fall, so I opened the door wide. Two eggs and two chicks were present...the younger chick was so small that it could only have been one or two days old. But it was the larder that impressed me...four Woodland Jumping Mice (*Napaeozapus insignis*), four Red-backed Voles (*Clethrionomys gapperi*) and a bird. Remember now, nine years of work climaxed here, I was excited to the point of being giddy...I picked up the dead bird and sputtered out, "I think it's a sparrow...yes, a sparrow." I noted the yellow behind the eye, and in my scatter-brained state, was flipping through my mental field guide trying to figure out what this sparrow was! Now there are only three NS sparrows with yellow behind the eye, and only one lives in the forest, and it's abundant and easy to identify. But it took me probably ten seconds to blurt out, "White-throated Sparrow!" It was then that I realized I was much too giddy to be handling the chicks (to take measurements) so I put the sparrow back, closed the box and my student and I quickly packed up and moved on towards the next nest box.

I don't think my feet touched the ground for the 250 m required to get to the next box! A Red Squirrel greeted us at the next box, so we left it and started the 260m to the third of the five boxes. When we got there, I noticed a brief movement in the hole... another spotted forehead! I said with amazement, "We've got another Boreal!" But did we? Did I see only what I wanted to see? Could there really be two nests so close together? We set up the ladder, and up I went, screwdriver in my back pocket. When I opened the door, there sat another female Boreal Owl, snapping her beak at me. She flushed, and I counted three eggs...meaning that nest was started as early as five days ago, or as late as 27 days ago...with the next visits, I would be able to narrow down this range to eventually figure out the nest initiation date.

Two Boreal Owl nests in one day! Finally, I have the amazing piece of news that I've been wanting to deliver to my sponsors, the birding and ornithological communities, and of course, my wife who has endured (enjoyed?) my repeated absences every year. Although these first nest records are important, a lot of work remains. Will any of my banded owls be recaptured? How much time will it take to identify the bones found in the nests? Will I eventually find that Arctic Shrew that I sought nine years ago? Are all the chicks from one nest sired from the same father? The second nest that I discovered was depredated – but by what? Most likely, it was a Red Squirrel, but could it have been the endangered Pine Marten (*Martes americana*)? What else could it have been? Do the Boreal and Saw-whet compete for nest sites, or do certain aspects of their habitat preferences keep them away from each other? What other aspects of the owls' biology will I find?

Many people have helped me put up these boxes, and for the most part their labour was volunteered (only twice have I been able to hire students to help). These folks are listed on my website at <http://www.stfx.ca/people/rlauff/research/Owls.html>. Thank you all - I could not have done this work without the help.

The biggest issue with running a nest box program is the same issue facing researchers in every field – cost. Each box costs over \$20 to build; there are travel expenses, field equipment and all the incidentals to account for as well. Stora Enso stepped in twice over the years to help me alleviate these expenses. I have also received funding from the Department of Natural Resources (Habitat Conservation Fund), Human Resources and Development Canada and Bird Studies Canada (via funds generated by the Baillie Birdathon). This year, I received my second NS Museum Research Grant and our own Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund provided funds to support a student for about half the summer. I heartily thank all these agencies, and the individuals who support our Society and the Baillie Birdathon.

Literature Cited

- Dalzell, B. 1989. More Boreal Owls! Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas Newsletter 17: 1
- Erskine, A.J. 1992. Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces. Nimbus Publishing Company and the Nova Scotia Museum. Halifax. 270 pp.



This rarely photographed LINCOLN'S SPARROW was in nesting habitat near River Bourgeois, *Richmond*, 24 July. It is recognizable its finely streaked breast with a smaller "stickpin" than a Song Sparrow's and, in the colour original, by the buff wash on sides, breast and malar stripe. [Photo Bernard Burke]



Loons through Grebes

By Terry Paquet

The paucity of reported sightings through the summer period makes it difficult to make any assessment of the breeding success of our only breeding loon and grebe, respectively Common and Pied-billed. Through personal observations and discussions with other birders though, breeding appears to have gone ahead about as usual. A gathering of forty COMMON LOONS in Scott's Bay, *Kings*, July 25 was a notable post-breeding group, although the percentage of juveniles was not noted. ☐

Common Loon				July 25	Scott's Bay, <i>Kings</i>	40(!)	JCT, GWT, BLF, Sandra Forsythe
June 2	Black River Lake, <i>Kings</i>	pair	BLF				
June 15	Seal I. Bridge, <i>Vic.</i>	6	BSK		Pied-billed Grebe		
June 24	Bedford, <i>HRM</i>	1	LOC	July 4	Tiddville Marsh, <i>Digby</i>	5	PLC
July 8	Old Mineville Road, <i>HRM</i>	1	RHL	July 7	Schooner Pond, <i>CBRM</i>	6	BSK
July 25	St. Ann's Bay, <i>Vic.</i>	15	BSK			☐☐☐	

Tubenoses Through Cormorants

By Eric Mills

Although the first SOOTY SHEARWATER moved northeast past West Hd., Lockeport, *Shelburne*, June 20, records of all the tubenoses were few in June and July, despite anecdotal accounts of their abundance in offshore waters, especially the outer Bay of Fundy. A lone WILSON'S STORM-PETREL was unusually far up the bay at Margaretsville, *Kings*, July 17.

Summering NORTHERN GANNETS persisted through the summer in N Cape Breton and in the outer Bay of Fundy, but five imms. along Sable Island's S beach the last of the reporting period noted there according to ZOL ☐

Greater Shearwater				June 10	S beach, Sable I.	5 imms.	ZOL
July 13	Off Brier I.	"Lots"	CAH	June 21	Margaretsville, <i>Kings</i>	4	JOB
Sooty Shearwater				July 7	Louisbourg	10 adults	SEM
June 20	West Head, Lockeport, <i>Shel.</i>	1	ELM	July 13	Off Brier I.	"hundreds"	CAH
July 4	E spit, Sable I.	3	ZOL	Double-crested Cormorant			
July 23	Louisbourg	2	SEM	June-Jul.	Conrads Beach, <i>HRM</i>	1-3	DMW
Manx Shearwater				June 19	Green I., Louisbourg, <i>CBRM</i>	90+ nests	SEM
July 12	Off Brier I.	1	CAH	July 24-29	<i>HRM</i> east of Halifax	Widespread	RHL
Wilson's Storm-Petrel				July 26	Antigonish sewage plant, <i>Ant.</i>	15+	RLF
July 11	Off CSI, <i>Shel.</i>	2	MUN	Great Cormorant			
July 17	Margaretsville Light, <i>Anna.</i>	1	PBG	May 2	E spit Sable I.	1 ad.	ZOL
July 23	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	1	SEM	June-Jul.	Bird Islands, <i>Vic.</i>	Breeding	BSK
Northern Gannet				June 19	Green I., Louisbourg, <i>CBRM</i>	50+ nests	SEM
June-July	Off Inverness	Regular	BSK			☐☐☐	

Hérons Through Vultures

By Ulli Höger

Heron and egret sightings were widespread through the province. GREAT BLUE HERONS were abundant in suitable habitat in usual numbers and there were also sightings of more uncommon species. A LITTLE EGRET, feeding side by side with a SNOWY EGRET, was reported from CSI in early July. Given the similarity of the two species the chance for a live side-by-side comparison is a definite benefit for a proper identification. The bird was described by MUN as follows: "the little egret was feeding with a snowy which gave us a good identification. The little egret is more slender overall, the legs are mostly black, the breast plumes are stringy, and the little egret does not feed like the snowy. This is the second one we had on CSI, the other a few years ago stayed two weeks." An ad. YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON was reported from Sable Island by ZOL.

The summer highlight in this group was a **WHITE IBIS**, reported from Brier Island on June 26. Birders who missed seeing this imm. bird on Brier, had a second chance in early August when it, presumably the same individual, showed up near Tantallon, *HRM* (details in the next issue). In addition to the **GLOSSY IBIS** sighting from Dominion, *CBRM* June 5, *JCT* asked that a report of this species, initially overlooked, be added from the *NAMC* on May 8. Barry Bowman and company had reported one from Strathlorne, *Inv.*▣

American Bittern

June 2	Apple River, <i>Cum.</i>	2	KFS
June 4	Belle Isle Marsh, <i>Anna.</i>	1	RBS
July 7	Conrad Marsh, <i>HRM.</i>	1	DMW

Great Egret

June-July	Annapolis Royal Marsh, <i>Anna.</i>	2	AAM <i>et al.</i>
June 1	CSI, <i>Shel.</i>	1	MUN
June 11-12	Cow Bay, <i>HRM</i>	1	HEK, SHU
June 29	Country Hbr. Mines, <i>Guys.</i>	1	HAB, JEB

Little Egret

June 7-10	CSI, <i>Shel.</i>	1	MUN
-----------	-------------------	---	-----

Snowy Egret

June 7-11	CSI, <i>Shel.</i>	1	MUN, JAH
-----------	-------------------	---	----------

Little Blue Heron

June 11-22	Cow Bay, <i>HRM.</i>	1 imm.	SHU, PMC
------------	----------------------	--------	----------

Green Heron

June 1	Hartlen Pt., <i>HRM</i>	1	IAM
--------	-------------------------	---	-----

Black-crowned Night-Heron

June-July	CSI, <i>Shel.</i>	>5	MUN
-----------	-------------------	----	-----

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

July 30	Sable I.	1	ZOL
---------	----------	---	-----

White Ibis

July 26-29	Brier I., <i>Digby</i>	1 imm.	Virgina Tudor <i>fide</i> CAH, ph.
------------	------------------------	--------	---------------------------------------

Glossy Ibis

June 5	Dominion, <i>CBRM.</i>	1	BES, GEC
--------	------------------------	---	----------

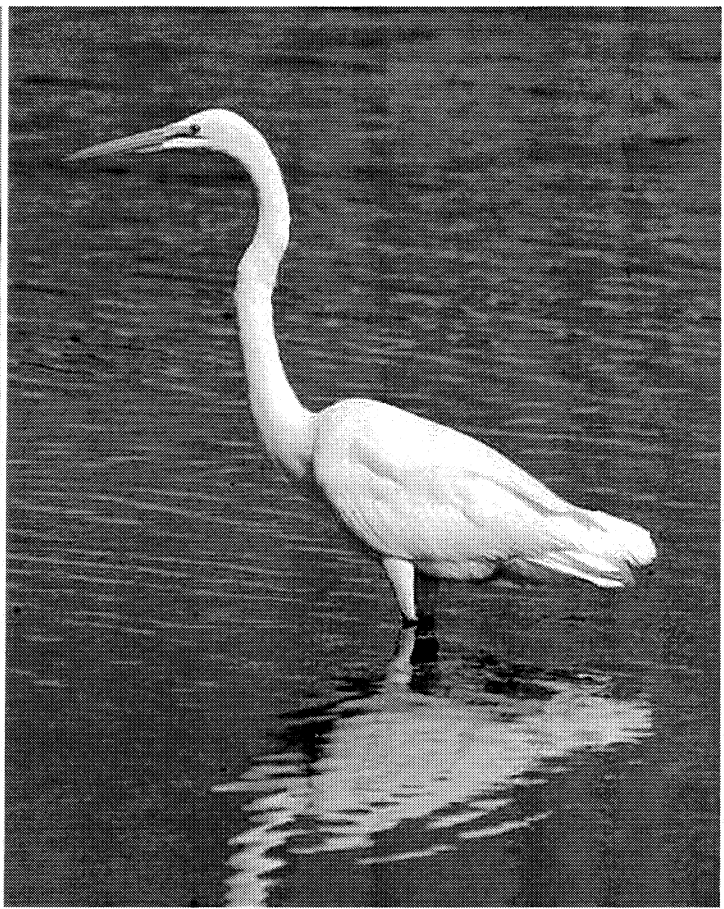
Turkey Vulture

June 14	Tusket area, <i>Yar.</i>	3	PRG
---------	--------------------------	---	-----

July 11	Yarmouth, <i>Yar.</i>	5	MUN
---------	-----------------------	---	-----

July 13	Melbourne, <i>Yar.</i>	1	PRG
---------	------------------------	---	-----

July 29	Digby Neck, <i>Digby</i>	3	LOC
---------	--------------------------	---	-----



This stunning **WHITE IBIS**, only the eighth ever recorded in the province, appeared briefly in late July on Brier Island (where it was photographed July 26). What was almost certainly the same bird then turned up at Tantallon, *HRM*, in early August, giving more birders the opportunity to add it to their lists. [Photo Richard Stern]

Among several **GREAT EGRETS** this summer, were two in the marsh at Annapolis Royal in late June, one of which was photographed on the 25th. [Photo Richard Stern]

Geese, Swans and Ducks

By Terry Paquet

Sightings through the summer period were most unremarkable. Many common species were reported only once or not at all. Surely, this is an indication of low observer effort and not large scale population declines. Certainly our breeding COMMON EIDERS seem to have done well, as many young were encountered in creches from Hartlens Point to Martinique Beach to Taylor Hd., *HRM*. Ring-necked Ducks with young were also easily found in appropriate habitat during the early part of the season. An out of season Long-tailed Duck found July 25 in Riverport, *Lun*. was likely a non-breeding straggler. A fem. HOODED MERGANSER with seven young was a nice find in Margaretsville, *Anna*. The male KING EIDER reported in the Spring issue at BPI was last reported June 10. ☐

Canada Goose

June 10	Sable Island	1	ZOL
June 9-23	Sable Island	9	ZOL
July 29	Highway 101, <i>HRM & Hants</i>	12	LOC

Wood Duck

June 16	Margaretsville D.U. Pond, <i>Anna</i> .	1 fem., 10 young	AAM
July 26	Antigonish Sewage Plant	1	RFL
July 31	Lilydale Lake, <i>Lun</i> .	1	JAH

American Wigeon

July 7	Conrads Beach, <i>HRM</i>	2	DMW
--------	---------------------------	---	-----

American Black Duck

June 5	Conrads Beach, <i>HRM</i>	8	DMW
June 6	Bedford, <i>HRM</i>	3	LOC
June 26	Bissett Lake, <i>HRM</i>	1, 8 young	RHL, VJH, Steve Gleich

July 7	Conrad's Beach, <i>HRM</i>	9	DMW
July 8	Old Mineville Road, <i>HRM</i>	1, 7 young	RHL
July 11	Bedford, <i>HRM</i>	10	LOC

Mallard

June 6	Bedford, <i>HRM</i>	10	DCO
June 15	New Minas, <i>Kings</i>	260 (!)	RBS

Northern Shoveler

June 15	New Minas, <i>Kings</i>	1	RBS
---------	-------------------------	---	-----

Blue-winged Teal

July 7	Conrads Beach, <i>HRM</i>	6	DMW
--------	---------------------------	---	-----

Green-winged Teal

July 25	Goose Creek Marsh, <i>Yar</i> .	22	PRG
---------	---------------------------------	----	-----

Ring-necked Duck

June 16	Margaretsville, <i>Anna</i> .	1 fem., 5 young	AAM
July 24	Grand Desert, <i>HRM</i>	10, 6 males, 4 fems.	RHL

Common Eider

June 1	Conrads Beach, <i>HRM</i>	25	RHL
July 7	Conrads Beach, <i>HRM</i>	14	DMW
July 15	Silver Sands Beach, <i>HRM</i>	35	RHL
July 24	Rainbow Haven Beach, <i>HRM</i>	50	RHL
July 28	Lawrencetown Lake, <i>HRM</i>	7	RHL

King Eider

June 10	BPI	1 male	var. obs.
---------	-----	--------	-----------

White-winged Scoter

July 25	Petit D'Etang, <i>Inv</i> .	46	BSK
---------	-----------------------------	----	-----

Long-tailed Duck

July 25	Riverport, <i>Lun</i> .	1	JAH, David Walmark
---------	-------------------------	---	--------------------

Hooded Merganser

June 16	Margaretsville, <i>Anna</i> .	1 fem., 7 young	AAM
---------	-------------------------------	-----------------	-----

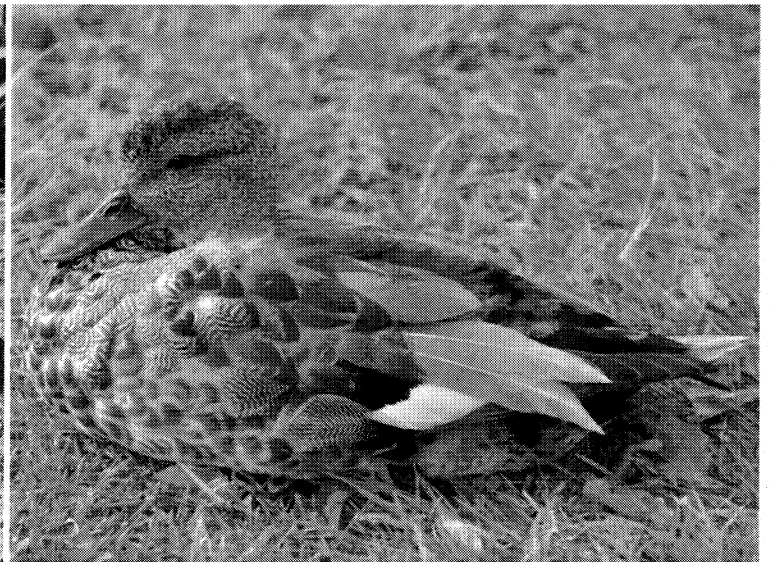
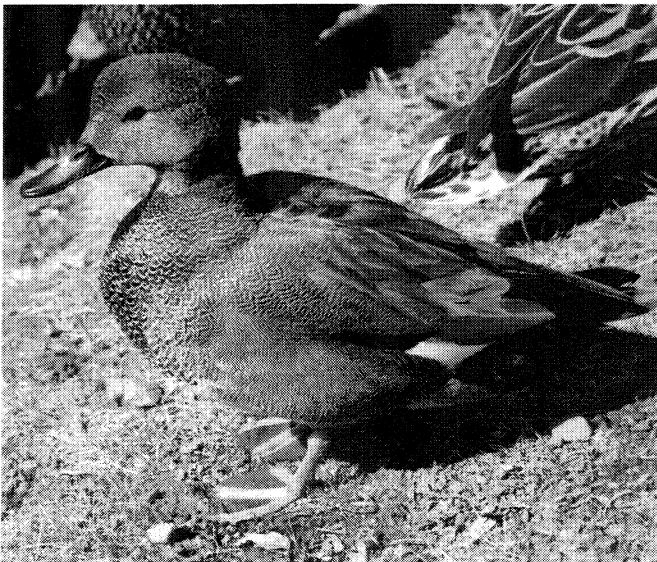
Common Merganser

July 20	St. Anns Bay, <i>Vic</i> .	1 fem., 18 young	BSK
July 25	St. Anns Bay, <i>Vic</i> .	2	BSK

Red-breasted Merganser

June 23	St. Anns Bay, <i>Vic</i> .	2 juvs.	BSK
---------	----------------------------	---------	-----

□□□



Photographs of the drake GADWALL at Sullivans Pond, Dartmouth, last winter (left) and again on June 21 (right) show the dramatic change in appearance with moult into the summer ("eclipse") plumage, when only the give-away white wing patch may quickly serve to identify the species. [Photos, left, Elizabeth Doull; right, Bernard Burke]

Diurnal Raptors through Cranes

By Ulli Höger

OSPREY and BALD EAGLE are both common species in our Summer season. With both species being abundant and forced to nest in close proximity to each other competition is sometimes unavoidable. JAH reported a situation from near Bridgewater in mid June, where Osprey chicks from two nests likely became part of a Bald Eagle chick's diet. The eagle nest was later raided by Ospreys, and presumably one of the eaglets got killed. JAH was surprised to find a pair of Northern Flicker nesting unharmed and successfully in the base of the eagle nest, while nearby crow nests were raided by the eagles to feed their young.

At the end of July a rail in the Annapolis Royal marsh left AAM and BLF puzzled, since neither appearance nor calls matched the common local rallids. A **KING RAIL** was the closest acoustic match they could find on audio tapes. AAM returned the next day, but couldn't provoke the rail to a conclusive response by playing tape recordings. The sightings was certainly good enough to make a mental note to follow up on possible King Rails at this location earlier in the season next year. ☐

Northern Harrier

June 6	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	1 male	VJH
July 13-22	Melbourne, <i>Yar.</i>	1 imm.	PRG
July 30	Pinkneys Pt., <i>Yar.</i>	1 male	PRG

Sharp-shinned Hawk

July 31	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	1 imm.	VJM
July 31	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	1	SLH

Northern Goshawk

July 8	Wolfville Ridge, <i>Kings</i>	1	JCT
--------	-------------------------------	---	-----

Broad-winged Hawk

June 6	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	1	VJH
June 27	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>	1	LOC
June 28	Amherst Pt., <i>Cum.</i>	1	JAH
July 7	Hopewell, <i>Pict.</i>	1	LOC

Red-tailed Hawk

June 28	Amherst Pt., <i>Cum.</i>	1	JAH
July 7	Hopewell, <i>Pict.</i>	1	DCO
July 29	Windsor, <i>Hants</i>	1	LOC

American Kestrel

June 28	Amherst Pt., <i>Cum.</i>	1	JAH
July 23	Truro	2	RBS
June-July	St. Anns, <i>Vic.</i>	nesting, 2 fledged	BSK
June-July	Big Baddeck, <i>Vic.</i>	nesting, 2 fledged	BSK

Merlin

July 1	Kentville, <i>Kings</i>	1	RBS
July 14	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>	1	LOC
July 27	Belleisle Marsh, <i>Anna.</i>	1	AAM
July 31	Seabright, <i>Ant.</i>	3	RFL

Peregrine Falcon

June 9	Kentville, <i>Kings</i>	1	RBS
June 27	Amherst Pt., <i>Cum.</i>	1	JAH
July 28	Grand Pré, <i>Kings</i>	1	JWW

Ring-necked Pheasant

June 13	Shubenacadie, <i>Hants</i>	1	RCM
June-July	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	1	SLH

Ruffed Grouse

June 2	Apple River, <i>Cum.</i>	1	KFS
June 25	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	7	VJH
June-July	St. Anns & Baddeck, <i>Vic.</i>	several	BSK

Spruce Grouse

July 23	Bonnet Lake, <i>Guys.</i>	1	RFL
---------	---------------------------	---	-----

King Rail

July 27	Annapolis Royal Marsh, <i>Anna.</i>	?	AAM, BLF
---------	-------------------------------------	---	----------

Virginia Rail

June 19	CSI	1	MUN
June 28	Amherst Pt., <i>Cum.</i>	1	JAH

Sora

June 6	Amherst Pt., <i>Cum.</i>	3	Steve Gleich
June 19	CSI	several	MUN
June 28	Annapolis Royal Marsh, <i>Anna.</i>	several	HAT
June 28	Amherst Pt., <i>Cum.</i>	several	JAH
July 20	N Judique, <i>Inv.</i>	1	ELM

Sandhill Crane

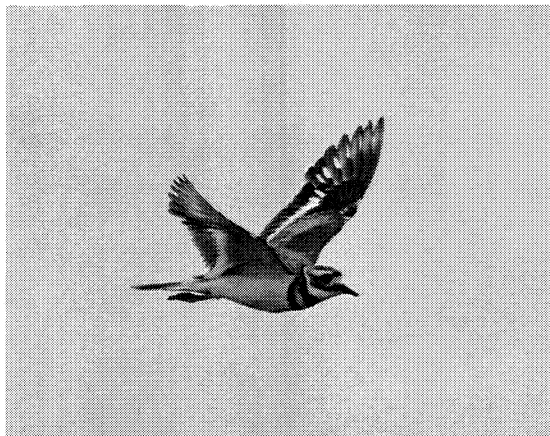
June 3	Round Hill, <i>Anna.</i>	1	JJN
June 11-12	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	1	R. Bellefontaine
June 11	Aspen, <i>Guys.</i>	1	RFL

The Shorebirds

By Sylvia Fullerton

Shorebirds seen in June and July offered the usual hodgepodge of late spring migrants, local breeders, returning fall migrants, non-breeding summering individuals and a few vagrants. Often it was difficult to separate one from another. BJS, SIS, MUN, and ZOL spoke for many shorebird aficionados in noting the difficulties of viewing birds due to fog and limitations imposed by summer tides. Returning migrants began arriving on schedule by mid-July and for the most part were in average numbers. An estimated 17,000 were at CSI, July 23 (MUN); 5,000 at Evangeline Beach, July 26 (Donald Sam); 11,000 at Falmouth, *Hants*, July 29 (JWW); the majority of these, of course, were Semipalmated Sandpipers. One must keep in mind that this report covers only the beginning of the fall migration and peaks usually occur in August or later. Peter Hicklin (CWS) noted that in the Bay of Fundy Semipalmated Sandpipers have been peaking later each year, last season on Aug. 10.

There have been reports from researchers working in N Canada and the Arctic that the cold, wet, and windy spring caused a significant breeding failure in a variety of shorebirds. How that will be reflected in the shorebirds which touch down here remains to be seen. However, if nesting failure had been widespread we would have expected to see an early return of adults and that was not apparent. As well, numbers of juveniles would be greatly diminished and only the weeks ahead will tell if this will be the case. So, polish your skills on aging birds and stay tuned for the Fall report!



A pair of KILLDEERS nested successfully this summer on the sand and cobble beach of Pond Cove, Brier I. With many human visitors to the beach, the adults, like this one "stopped" in flight July 26, were often seen needlessly dashing about in typical, highly vocal, displays. [Photo Richard Stern]

The alternate-plumaged AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER at Cherry Hill, Lun., July 26, was on the early side. One pair of SEMIPALMATED PLOVER was eventually found at the traditional nesting site on CSI, June 13, but there was no word on nesting success. For information on PIPING PLOVER nesting success see the summary in this issue by Anna McCarron, Co-ordinator of the NS Piping Plover Guardian Program. The late-nesting family of an adult and five downy young at Mahoneys Beach, Ant., July 17 was unusual. JOK believed the young were all the same clutch, keeping close together and never straying far from the adult. The 50+ KILLDEER tallied on Brier I., July 26-28, produced an exceptionally high count.

The pair of AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHERS on CSI produced three young which were flying by the end of the report period. An additional adult was spotted there, July 26, perhaps the third bird which was seen there in April, or even a scout.

BLACK-NECKED STILTS appear to have been extending their range and perhaps they are now investigating NS. This is the second spring in a row one has visited. A bright male appeared on Toby I. and nearby Cherry Hill, Lun., June 1, 6-8. Last year's tarried at Wolfville Hbr., June 21-July 1.

An exciting find for MZG, RFL, ELM, and AHM were two "boisterous" adult GREATER YELLOWLEGS near Pembroke L., Inv., July 21, followed shortly thereafter by the spotting of two juveniles by sharp-eyed MZG. This is S of the known breeding sites in the CBHNP and adds another "confirmed" site for NS.

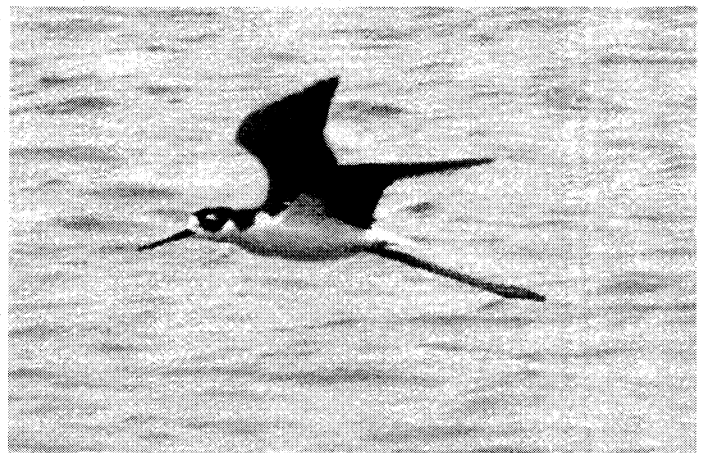
LESSER YELLOWLEGS, one of our earliest returning shorebirds, continued last year's trend and appeared in good numbers, "in marsh ponds everywhere," noted MUN.

A MARBLED GODWIT at the Glace Bay Sanctuary, July 14, was a highlight of the season. It has been about eight years since one has been reported in the summer period.

Two WESTERN SANDPIPERS, uncommon in summer, were on CSI, July 26. The "quite striking," alternate-plumaged WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER at Dunns Beach, Ant., June 1 was a very late migrant, seldom seen here in this plumage or this season (JOK). The BAIRD'S SANDPIPER at Beveridge Road, Melbourne, Yar., July 22-23 was unusually early, as was the DUNLIN at Morien Bar, CBRM, July 25. □

Black-bellied Plover		Summer		province-wide	38 nests, 77 fledglings	
June 1	Brier I.	16	JUS	Killdeer		
June 5	CSI	17	BJS, SIS	June 1	Brier I.	3 JUS
June 5	Morien Bar, CBRM	1 subad.	SEM	June 9	Shubenacadie, Hants	2 RCM
June 12	Cherry Hill, Lun.	2 alt., 2 basic	ELM, AHM	July 6	Oyster Cove, CBRM	2 ads., 4 young
June 19	Rainbow Haven, HRM	1 basic	IAM			Monique Vassalo, SEM
July 13	CSI	30	MUN	July 17	CSI	4 BJS, SIS
July 19	Conrad Beach, HRM	2	DMW	July 18	Ridge Rd., Hortonville, Kings	5 JCT
July 25	Morien Bar, CBRM	10	SEM	July 20-30	Pinkney Pt., Yar.	8 PRG
July 27	Windsor Sewage Ponds	48	JCT	July 26-28	Brier I.	50+ RBS
July 29	Crescent Beach, Lun.	3	JSC	American Oystercatcher		
July 30	Beveridge Rd., Melbourne, Yar.	4	PRG	June-July	CSI	2 ads., 3 young MUN
July 31	Pt. Michaud Beach, Rich.	9	WMA	July 26	CSI	3 ads., 3 young SIS
American Golden Plover				Black-necked Stilt		
July 26	Cherry Hill, Lun.	1 alt.	SJF	June 1	Toby I., Lun.	1 ad. Bill Freedman
Semipalmated Plover				June 6-8	Cherry Hill, Lun.	1 ad. SJF, var. obs.
June 1	CSI	15	MUN	Yellowlegs, sp.		
June 13	CSI	1 pr.		July 18	Windsor Sewage Ponds	13+ JCT
		B., E. & V. Goulden <i>vide</i> BJS		Greater Yellowlegs		
June 24	Cherry Hill, Lun.	1	SJF	June 5	Schooner Pond, CBRM	3 SEM
July 2	Goose Creek Marsh, Roberts I., Yar.	2	PRG	July 1 & 25	Morien Bar, CBRM	2 & 188 SEM
July 17 & 31	Cherry Hill, Lun.	9 & 85	SJF	July 11	Hartlen Pt., HRM	2 TEP
July 18 & 25	Morien Bar, CBRM	63 & 112	SEM	July 17	Grassy I., Canso, Guys.	2 TOK
July 21	Conrad Beach, HRM	9	DMW	July 20	Pinkneys Pt., Yar.	10 PRG
July 26	CSI	1120	BJS, SIS	July 21	near Pembroke L., Inv.	2 ads., 2 imm. MZG, RFL, ELM, AHM
July 30	Beveridge Rd., Melbourne, Yar.	200	PRG	Lesser Yellowlegs		
Piping Plover				July 1 & 25	Morien Bar, CBRM	4 & 119 SEM
July 17	Mahoneys Beach, Ant.	1 ad., 5 chicks	JOK	July 19	CSI	60 JON, MUN
July 23	Cherry Hill, Lun.	9	JAH			

July 22	Broad Cove, <i>Lun.</i>	36	SJF	July 26	CSI	3610	BJS, SIS
July 25	Beveridge Rd., Melbourne, <i>Yar.</i>	70	MUN	July 26	Cherry Hill, <i>Lun.</i>	216	SJF
July 25	Goose Creek Marsh, Roberts I., <i>Yar.</i>	35	PRG	July 30	Beveridge Rd., Melbourne, <i>Yar.</i>	500+	PRG
July 30	Rainbow Haven, <i>HRM</i>	100	IAM	Western Sandpiper			
July 31	Pt. Michaud, <i>Rich.</i>	40	WMA	July 26	Cape Sable, CSI	2	BJS, SIS
Willet							
June 5 & July 24	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	21 & 161	SEM	Least Sandpiper			
July 9	CSI	125	MUN	July 1	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	4	SEM
July 12	Crescent Beach, <i>Lun.</i>	45	JSC	July 13 & 26	Cherry Hill, <i>Lun.</i>	1 & 25	SJF, JAH
July 13 & 31	Cherry Hill, <i>Lun.</i>	21 & 68	SJF	July 25	Scotts Bay, <i>Kings</i>	2	GWT, JCT
July 27	Windsor Causeway	14	JCT	July 26	CSI	70	BJS, SIS
Spotted Sandpiper							
June-July	<i>CBRM</i>	8 ads.	SEM	White-rumped Sandpiper			
June 1	Sable I.	9 ads.	ZOL	June 1	Dunns Beach, <i>Ant.</i>	1 alt.	JOK
July 2	Warren L., CBHNP	2 ads., 4 eggs	RFL	June 17	Sable I.	1	ZOL
July 11	Hartlen Pt., <i>HRM</i>	5	TEP	July 22	Crescent Beach, <i>Lun.</i>	1	JSC
July 31	Pt. Michaud, <i>Rich.</i>	7	WMA	July 23	Beveridge Rd., Melbourne, <i>Yar.</i>	2	PRG
Whimbrel							
July 4	Boudreauville, <i>Rich.</i>	3	PRG, RSD, Junior Boudreau	July 31	Cherry Hill, <i>Lun.</i>	2	SJF
July 10	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	7	SEM	Baird's Sandpiper			
July 25	Scotts Bay, <i>Kings</i>	1	GWT, JCT	July 22 & 23	Beveridge Rd., Melbourne, <i>Yar.</i>	1	PRG, JON
July 25	CSI	100	MUN	Pectoral Sandpiper			
July 27	Canso, <i>Guys.</i>	25	TOK	July 31	Sable I.	2	ZOL
July 31	Pt. Michaud, <i>Rich.</i>	60-70	WMA	Dunlin			
Hudsonian Godwit							
July 7 & 25	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	1, 13	SEM	July 25	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	1 ad.	SEM
July 26	CSI	14	BJS, SIS	Stilt Sandpiper			
Marbled Godwit							
July 14	Glace Bay Sanctuary	1	JUM	July 20-28	CSI	2	JON, MUN, SIS
Ruddy Turnstone							
July 11	CSI	3	MUN	Short-billed Dowitcher			
July 25	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	1 ad.	SEM	June 1	CSI	4	MUN
July 26	CSI	14	BJS, SIS	June 27	Conrads Beach, <i>Lun.</i>	1	JAH
July 31	Pt. Michaud, <i>Rich.</i>	30	WMA	June 27	Lower Rose Bay, <i>Lun.</i>	1	JAH
Red Knot							
July 11	CSI	2	MUN	July 1 & 25	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	4 & 203	SEM
July 25	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	6 ads.	SEM	July 13	Cherry Hill, <i>Lun.</i>	48 alt.	SJF
July 26	Cooks Beach, <i>Yar.</i>	1	PRG	July 18	Windsor Sewage Ponds	21	JCT
Sanderling							
July 10 & 30	Sable I.	1, 250	ZOL	July 22-30	Beveridge Rd., Melbourne, <i>Yar.</i>	1500+	PRG
July 24	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	2 alt.	SEM	July 26	CSI	6085	BJS, SIS
July 26-28	Brier I.	10+, some alt.	RBS	July 26-28	Brier I.	200+ alt.	RBS
July 26	CSI	18	BJS, SIS	July 30	Rainbow Haven, <i>HRM</i>	180	IAM
July 26	Cherry Hill, <i>Lun.</i>	32 alt.	SJF	Wilson's Snipe			
Semipalmated Sandpiper							
June 11-12	Cherry Hill, <i>Lun.</i>	4	SJF, ELM, AHM	June 1-July 7	<i>CBRM, Inv., Vic. (Owl Surveys)</i>	13	var. obs.
July 11	Hartlen Pt., <i>HRM</i>	5	TEP	<i>vide SEM</i>			
July 23	CSI	11,000	MUN	July 31	Pt. Michaud, <i>Rich.</i>	2	WMA
July 25	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	70 ads.	SEM	American Woodcock			
				June 1-8	<i>CBRM, Inv., Vic. (Owl Surveys)</i>	15	var. obs. <i>vide SEM</i>
				June 9	Sable I.	1	ZOL
				July 2	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>	2	LOC
				Red-necked Phalarope			
				July 27	off Brier I.	500+	RBS
				Red Phalarope			
				July 27	off Brier I.	a few	RBS



This season's **BLACK-NECKED STILT** was found June 1 on quite inaccessible Toby I., *Queens*, but later favoured birders by moving to Cherry Hill Beach, *Lunenburg*. It was nicely photographed there June 7, despite dismal weather. [Photos Hans Toom]

Skuas through Alcids

By Eric Mills



This adult LAUGHING GULL, one of the now usual summer incursions of numbers of these birds in Nova Scotia, frequented the harbour at Canso from mid-June into July. [Photo Tom Kavanaugh]

Coincidentally, both reports of SOUTH POLAR SKUAS were close in time, but from opposite ends of the province. Neither included identification details, now becoming important as the likelihood of Brown Skua occurring in our waters becomes more probable.

Early-season LAUGHING GULLS were unusually frequent, the earliest a small group lingering near the meteorological station on Sable Island through much of June. An imm. LITTLE GULL near No. 3 Life Saving Station, Sable Island, was the only one of the season, rare in summer, and scarce at any time. BLACK-HEADED GULLS in Sydney Harbour in June and at Antigonish late in July were unusual. A few BONAPARTE'S GULLS summered in N Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, but those appearing at the end of July just east of Halifax probably represented the first of the usual late-summer arrivals from breeding areas far to the NW. A striking influx of (presumably) post-breeding New Brunswick RING-BILLED GULLS was evident beginning July 18 at Windsor, *Hants*, persisting elsewhere throughout the month. Occasional imm. ICELAND GULLS on Sable Island throughout the summer, and an imm. GLAUCOUS GULL there July 19, indicate that at least a few winter white gulls stay in our offshore waters into mid-summer. A few ad. BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES in tern colonies on Sable Island may merit some investigation.

At least five CASPIAN TERNS, continuing their pattern of increased abundance since last year, were seen at widely scattered locations throughout June and July.

A COMMON MURRE seen during a whale cruise off Brier Island July 13 was unusual in both time and location. □

South Polar Skua				June-July <i>HRM</i> east of Halifax	Abundant	RHL
July 2	Off Brier I.	1	CAH	Black-legged Kittiwake		
July 3	Argentia-N. Sydney ferry	1	Chris Benesh	May-June Tern colony, Sable I.	3-4 ads.	ZOL
Laughing Gull				June-July Bird Islands, <i>Vic.</i>	Breeding	BSK
June 6-20	Near Met. Stn., Sable I.	1-3 ads.	ZOL	July 5	W spit Sable I.	1 imm.
June 28	Off Harbourville, <i>Kings</i>	1 ad.	PEH	June 19	Green I., Louisbourg, <i>CBRM</i>	67+ nests
July 2	Cow Bay, <i>HRM</i>	2 nd summer	IAM	July 13	Off Brier I.	"A few" imm.
July 3	Cherry Hill Beach, <i>Lun.</i>	1 1st year	JAH	Caspian Tern		
July 24	Scotts Bay, <i>Kings</i>	1	Ian McKay	June 27	Fishermans Hbr., <i>Guys.</i>	1
Little Gull				July 4	Port Morien, <i>CBRM</i>	2
June 1,12	No.3 LSS, Sable I.	1 imm.	ZOL	July 11	Wallace Bay NWA, <i>Cum.</i>	1
Black-headed Gull						<i>fide</i> KJM, ABM
June 28	Sydney Harbour	1?	BSK	July 23-24	Big (Merigomish) I., <i>Pictou</i>	1
July 26	Antigonish sewage plant	1	RFL	Common Tern		
Bonaparte's Gull				June 24-July 4	Bedford, <i>CBRM</i>	1-4
July 5	Pomquet Beach, <i>Ant.</i>	"Several" imm.	JWW	July 5	Pomquet Beach, <i>Ant.</i>	"Several"
July 7	Morien Bar, <i>CBRM</i>	1?	BSK	July 7, 21	Conrads Beach, <i>HRM</i>	1
July 11	Wallace Bay NWA, <i>Cum.</i>	1?	NSBS <i>fide</i> ABM	June 23-July 28	<i>HRM</i> east of Halifax	2-4
July 24-28	Lawrencetown Lake, <i>HRM</i>	2-6	RHL	July 30	Brier I.	4
Ring-billed Gull				Black Tern		
June-July	Jersey Cove, S Gut St Anns, <i>Vic.</i>	Regular	BSK	June 6	APBS, <i>Cum.</i>	4
July 2	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>	1	LOC	June 27	APBS, <i>Cum.</i>	4
July 18	Windsor sewage ponds, <i>Hants</i>	40+	JCT	Common Murre		
July 27	Windsor sewage ponds, <i>Hants</i>	80+	JCT	July 13	Off Brier I.	1
July 29	Cow Bay, <i>HRM</i>	60	RHL	Razorbill		
Herring Gull				June-July	Bird Is., <i>Vic.</i>	Breeding
June-July	Conrads Beach, <i>HRM</i>	Up to 9	DMW	July 13	Off Brier I.	1
June-July	<i>HRM</i> east of Halifax	Abundant	RHL	Black Guillemot		
Iceland Gull				June-July	Bird Is., <i>Vic.</i>	Breeding
May-July	Sable I.	Occasional	ZOL	July 7	Louisbourg	12 ads.
Glaucous Gull				Atlantic Puffin		
July 19	W spit, Sable I.	1 imm.	ZOL	June-July	Bird Is., <i>Vic.</i>	Breeding
Great Black-backed Gull				July 11	Off CSI	1
June-July	Conrads Beach, <i>HRM</i>	1-5	DMW			MUN

□□□

Doves Through Woodpeckers

By Ian McLaren

Summer is not an active time for birders, who as usual under-reported the old familiar birds. Only the CB Owl Surveyors, with SEM's encouragement, and the assiduous swift-counters, with JWW's prodding, provided copious material for tabulation.

A few submissions of sightings of ROCK PIGEONS and MOURNING DOVES revealed little. Yet another **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** attracted more attention. This one appeared at a feeder at the Liscomb Lodge, *Guysborough*, where birding-tour leader, Chris Benesh of Tuscon, AZ, photographed it June 6. It wasn't found by him next day, but lodge employees reported **two** there up to at least June 11 (*vide* HAT). A previously unreported sighting was of one of this species May 23-30 (ZOL). Then, as noted in the last issue, two turned up at the end of May in Glace Bay. Question: how many birds were involved in these events?

A **BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** was an unfortunate window-kill at Doctors Cove, *Shelburne* June 13 (TEC), possibly a late-spring arrival. Another on Sable I. July 10 (ZOL) was an unseasonable wanderer. A pair and one or perhaps two other individuals, all possibly breeding, were around Caledonia, *Queens*, from the first week of June (PEH). Others were heard June 17-18 at Shubenacadie, *Colchester* (RCM), and June 22 near Ayleford, *Kings* (AAM). Much more unusual were **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS** - one June 13 at Daniels Head, CSI, another June 20 near Barrington, *Shelburne* (both MUN), and a third on Sable I. July 8 (ZOL). We have almost no previous summer records of this stray.

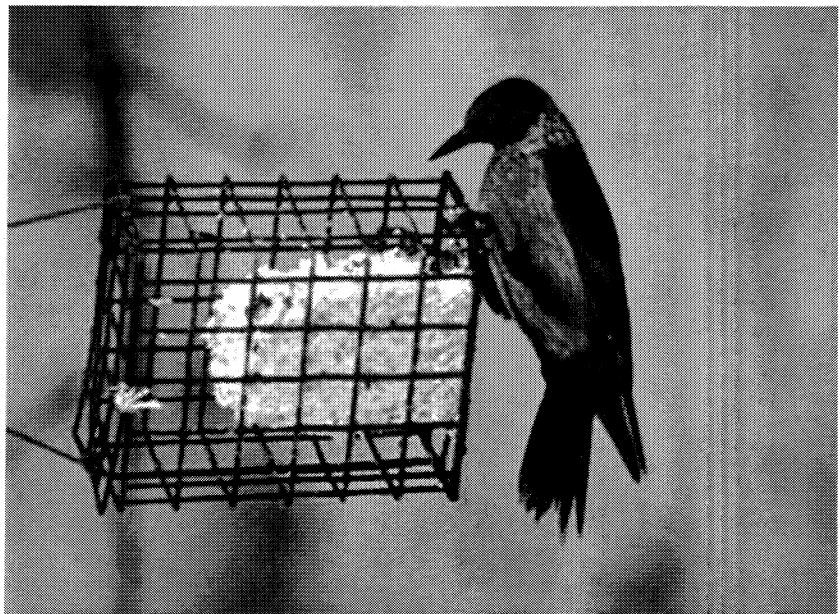
Few owl records were submitted other than the tabulated counts from CB. Three quite young **GREAT HORNED OWL** nestlings near Kingsburg, *Lunenburg*, were no larger than those that JAH had seen in late spring of other years. Our former editor, Marion Quinn, was privileged to have **BARRED OWLS** nesting (in a hemlock stub, courtesy of "Juan") on her property. A "branchling" was exercising its wings June 26. In early June, RFL found the province's first nesting **BOREAL OWLS**, as he documents in this issue. Whereas CB had numerous singing male **NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWLS** in early June ("even greater than in 2003" per SEM; see table), no survey summaries, or even casual sightings, were submitted for mainland counties.

Six **COMMON NIGHTHAWKS** June 2 at Apple River, *Cumberland* (KFS), were probably late migrants. The one on Sable I. June 10 (ZOL) certainly was. They still nest widely in our barrens and clearcuts, but there are only six scattered breeding-season reports, including one road-killed at Louisbourg June 16 (SEM). Outbound migration may have begun July 18 with two at Bear River, *Annapolis* (JET), and five over a road at Barrington, *Shelburne* (MUN) and a dozen July 23 along Highway 104 near Truro (RBS). JCT and GWT reported this season's only **WHIP-POOR-WILL**, singing in woods behind their garden on Wolfville Ridge June 28 to at least July 16. They were able to help others both hear and see this near-extirpated Nova Scotia breeder.

The tabulations of **CHIMNEY SWIFTS** entering their traditional chimneys seem to imply record numbers this year. The wide reporting probably needs cross-evaluation to assess possible movement among roosts. Observers noted that more entered on cool days and that they were quite often dissuaded from doing so by Merlins at the Middleton High School chimney and the Robie Tufts Centre chimney in Wolfville.

Our **RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS** are less often seen at feeders during summer, as males often defend flower patches and females use more insects to feed their young. Six observers noted them casually during the period. The few reports of **BELTED KINGFISHERS** were uninformative about trends or habits.

Our most astonishing woodpecker ever turned up July 1 at a suet feeder on the Elgin Rd., *Pictou*. It was reported as a strange bird on July 3 to HAB of nearby Hopewell and upon his seeing it, recognized it immediately as a **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER**. Unfortunately, it was last seen



This ad. **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER**, July 3 at a suet feeder on the Elgin Rd., *Pictou*, was by far the most unusual woodpecker ever to have strayed to the province. [Photo Ken McKenna]

in evening July 4, thwarting other birders, although not before KJM obtained a striking portrait. It is a wanderer from its Rocky Mt. range. Maps in the Sibley Guide show a scattering of records across the U.S. Midwest and S Ontario to the U.S. East Coast, and an even more astonishing one in SW Newfoundland, discovered some years ago by David Fidler, and photographed by our own BLM. A male **RED-HEADED WOODPECKER** June 11 at L. George, *Yarmouth* (GRM), was hardly so notable, but I've bolded it as one of our very rare summer records. Some day a pair will nest, probably in the oak-rich SW counties. Most other woodpeckers received no mention, but there were several reports of **BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS**, especially from the Mount Uniacke Estate Park, *Hants*. TEP found them there in three different locations June 26, including a female feeding noisy nestlings near Thompson L. ☐

Great Horned Owl

June 1	Owl Surv., Upper Grand Mira, CBRM	6	SEM <i>et al.</i>
June 2	Owl Surv., <i>Vict.</i>	1	DBM
June 4	Owl Surv., <i>Inv.</i>	2	B. & K. Lock
June 8	Owl Surv., L. Lomond, CBRM	2	B. Cunningham J. McInnes

Barred Owl

June 1	Owl Surv., Upper Grand Mira, CBRM	1 m.	SEM <i>et al.</i>
June 1	Owl Surv., <i>Vict.</i>	2	DBM
June 2	Owl Surv., <i>Vict.</i>	3	DBM
June 2	Owl Surv., Big Pond, CBRM	3	BCU, J. McInnes
June 4	Owl Surv., <i>Inv.</i>	2	B. & K. Lock
June 8	Owl Surv., L. Lomond, CBRM	3	BCU, J. McInnes

Long-eared Owl

June 5	Owl Surv., Salmon R. Rd, CBRM	2 m	SEM <i>et al.</i>
June 8	Owl Surv., L. Lomond, CBRM	1	BCU, J. McInnes

Northern Saw-whet Owl

June 1	Owl Surv., Upper Grand Mira, CBRM	10 m.	SEM <i>et al.</i>
June 2	Owl Surv., Big Pond, CBRM	8 m.	BCU, J. McInnes
June 2	Owl Surv., <i>Vict.</i>	1 m.	DBM
June 5	Owl Surv., Salmon R. Rd., CBRM	8 m.	SEM <i>et al.</i>
June 8	Owl Surv., L. Lomond, CBRM	6 m.	BCU, J. McInnes

Chimney Swift

June 1	Wolfville	480	JWW <i>et al.</i>
June 3	Wolfville	587	<i>fide</i> JWW
June 3	Middleton	1226+	JOB
June 5	Truro	545	ROH, Linda Hall
June 5	New Glasgow	920	KJM
June 6	McGowan L., <i>Queens</i>	295-300	PEH
June 6	Wolfville	~200	JWW
June 7	Middleton	890	CLD
June 8	Wolfville	195	JWW
June 9	Middleton	5(!)	JOB
June 10	McGowan L., <i>Queens</i>	337-342	PEH
June 11	Wolfville	170+	JWW <i>et al.</i>
June 13	New Glasgow.	329	KJM
June 13-18	Wolfville	23-51	JWW <i>et al.</i>
June 13	New Glasgow	329	KJM
June 20-23	Wolfville	90-145+	JWW <i>et al.</i>
June 22	Truro	182	ROH, Linda Hall
June 24	McGowan L., <i>Queens</i>	294	PEH
June 24-26	Bear River, <i>Anna</i> .	94-296	JET
June 24-July 20	Wolfville	29-83	JWW <i>et al.</i>
July 21-July 24	Wolfville	91-127	JWW <i>et al.</i>
July 2	New Glasgow	329	KJM
July 14	McGowan L., <i>Queens</i>	220	PEH
July 21	Truro	234	Linda Hall

☐☐☐



This male **BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER**, one of several found this summer in the Mount Uniacke Estate Park, was photographed there June 30, busily flaking bark off a spruce. You can plainly see its three toes. (If you look carefully at Plate 22 in the third edition of Tufts' "Birds of Nova Scotia" you'll see a not-quite successful printer's attempt to blacken-out an errant fourth toe painted by the late, great Roger Tory Peterson!) [Photo Hans Toom]

Flycatchers through Thrushes

By Andy Horn

With a few exceptions, only the high counts of flycatchers are listed below. On a BBS from New Ross to Falmouth, *Kings*, flycatcher numbers seemed similar to previous years (RBS). On another in Roman Valley, *Guys.*, flycatchers all "seemed to be thriving", especially **ALDER FLYCATCHERS**, whose total was over twice the 1966-1980 average of 26 (SJF). "A large wave of arrivals" in *Lun.* June 9 (JAH) was the only flycatcher report (other than those from Sable I.) that certainly involved migrants. A second-hand report of a "long-tailed" flycatcher at Second Peninsula, *Lun.*, sometime in August 2003, is late by one year, but

perhaps worth mentioning, since it had been keyed out with a bird guide as a Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*vide* JAH). Without further details, the record is too tentative to join the list of sightings, although confusing this species with any other would probably be a challenge.

The status of BANK and CLIFF SWALLOWS in the province is often debated among birders, so all reported colony counts are listed. The numbers, at least for Cliff Swallows, are ambivalent. They have been "very scarce" near Port Medway, *Queens* (SJF, BAH) and nests at Halifax International Airport, *HRM*, while not persecuted this year, still numbered about a tenth their recent all-time high of 120 (DHH). Then again, nests nearly doubled at Fortress of Louisbourg NHS from their total of 37 last year (SEM).

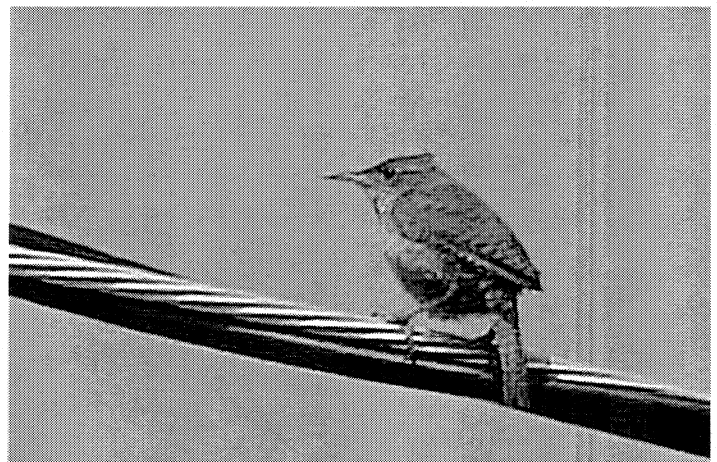
JAH and Jean McKiel's high count of RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES led them to wonder, quite reasonably, whether the birds were "migrants getting ready to go south or some just coming in with a food supply scarce to the north" although this species does concentrate at rich food sources late in the breeding season. Reports of WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES, probably breeding birds, were mostly from customary locations, except for one way up in *Victoria* (BSK).

Far and away the highlight of this section is the province's first breeding record for HOUSE WREN, at Cole Hbr., *HRM* (RHL, VJH, Steve Gleich). Apparently the same pair had successfully raised young there for the previous two seasons already (*vide* SMB). WINTER WRENS are of course more typical breeders here, so just the higher totals of this species are listed below. The high figure from Halifax (AGH) is thanks to Hurricane Juan's decimation of Point Pleasant Park, which created habitat for these birds in one fell swoop.

Kinglets are another source of speculation over trends, but only RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS elicited firm opinions from observers. VEERY reports were scant, but they always are, compared to reports of HERMIT and SWAINSON'S THRUSHES, which are usually too numerous to list. Numbers of thrushes generally seemed unchanged on a BBS from New Ross to Falmouth, *Kings* (RBS), but Swainson's Thrushes were "scarce this summer, in fact for a few years now" at other locations in *Kings* (AAM). Nonetheless, one WOOD THRUSH per summer is quite a respectable total; this year's bird, in Kentville, July 3, was photographed and well described (RBS). □

Eastern Wood Pewee			
June 6 Fitch Road, <i>Lun.</i>	3	JAH, Anne Hughes	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			
June 10 Sable I.	6	ZOL	
June 13 Louisbourg	6 m. in 2 km	SEM	
Alder Flycatcher			
June 9 <i>Lunenburg</i>	many	JAH	
June 14 Roman Valley, <i>Guys.</i>	55	SJF	
Great-crested Flycatcher			
June 6 BPI	1	<i>vide</i> MUN	
June 10 Brier I.	1	DAM, CRM	
Eastern Kingbird			
June 10 Sable I.	6	ZOL	
Philadelphia Vireo			
June 28-July 5 St. Anns, <i>Vic.</i>	1+	BSK	
June 17 CBHNP, <i>Vic.</i>	1+	BSK	
Purple Martin			
June 19 Amherst	8	<i>vide</i> JAH	
Bank Swallow			
June 7 Cherry Hill Beach, <i>Lun.</i>	50	JAH, CSS	
June 15 N Minas, <i>Kings</i>	~300 ?	RBS	
July 25 Scotts Bay, <i>Kings</i>	12	JCT	
Aug. 1 Grand Pre, <i>Kings</i>	100+	JCT	
Cliff Swallow			
June-July Halifax International Airport	25-30 nests	DHH	
June 7 Cherry Hill Beach, <i>Lun.</i>	2 nests	JAH, CSS	
June 14-July 31 Fortress of Louisbourg NHS	60 nests	SEM	
July 1 Second Peninsula, <i>Lun.</i>	4 pairs	JAH	
July 5 Port Medway, <i>Queens</i>	2 nests	SJF, BAH	
Red-breasted Nuthatch			
July 10 Kingsburg, <i>Lun.</i>	10	JAH, Jean McKiel	
White-breasted Nuthatch			
July Lower Sackville	1+	LOC	
June-July Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	2	SLH	
July Kentville	3-4 (family)	RBS	
July 28 Crowdis Mtn., <i>Vic.</i>	1	BSK	
June-July Halifax	2	AGH	

House Wren			
June 3-8 Tusket Falls, <i>Yarmouth</i>	1	CST, JON	
June-July Cole Hbr., <i>HRM</i>	2	<i>vide</i> MUN	
		RHL, VJH	
		Steve Gleich	
Winter Wren			
June-July Halifax	3 m.	AGH	
June 13 Shubenacadie, <i>HRM</i>	3 m.	RCM	
July 23 Bonnet Lake Barrens WPA, <i>Guys.</i>	2	RFL	
June 27 Fortress of Louisbourg NHS	2 m. in 2 km	SEM	



A singing male HOUSE WREN was found July 3 in a well-treed area off Bissett Rd., *HRM*. As events unfolded, it was discovered not only to be nesting in a nearby backyard bird box, but also to have raised broods there in the two previous summers. So, the photo helps document this first (or third) breeding record for the province. [Photo Bernard Burke]

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

June-July *Kings* scarce AAM
 June-July New Ross-Falmouth, *Kings* (BBS) decrease RBS

Eastern Bluebird

June 1 Advocate Hbr., *Cum.* 1 pair MSM *fide* JCZ
 June 1 Economy, *Col.* 1 pair FLS *fide* JCZ
 June 6 Earltown, *Col.* 1 BBU

Veery

June 26 Tremont, *Kings* 1 SLH
 June 19 Wentworth PP, *Cum.* 1 NSBS
 June 24 West River St. Mary's, *Guys* 1 singing BLM

July 5 Big Baddeck, *Vic.*

Swainson's Thrush

June-July *Kings* scarce AAM
 June 24 West River St. Mary's, *Guys* 36 singing BLM

Hermit Thrush

June 24 West River St. Mary's, *Guys* 29 singing BLM

Wood Thrush

July 3 Kentville 1 RBS

American Robin

June-July Maders Cove, *Lun.* "fewer than usual" JEM

○○○

Starlings Through Warblers

By Ken McKenna

A flock of 50 EUROPEAN STARLINGS in Kingston June 5 contained 30 very noisy fledglings (JOB). LOC sent a report that indicated Starlings visited her Lower Sackville, HRM, yard throughout the report period with the first imm. appearing June 6. The only mention of a large concentration was July 31 in Lunenburg (JAH).

Once again all three mimics-thrushes were reported summering in the province. GRAY CATBIRD and NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD reports were about normal. In Louisbourg, SEM felt a male catbird singing above a brushy tangle in her yard almost daily from June 26 to July 7 and again July 28 was part of a nesting pair. AAM noted that mockingbird numbers have dropped in his area of Kings making them difficult to find both summer and winter. BROWN THRASHERS have nested in the province for a second time. On June 14, PLC heard and saw a single thrasher from a hardwood-alder thicket along route 221 in the western end of Kings County near North Kingston. At that same location two days later, RBS saw and secured photos of a pair of thrashers. On June 16 PEH, visited the area alone and discovered a thrasher nest with two ads. calling nearby; the nest held four well-developed young. This species fledges young very quickly and visits on June 25 & 28 by Stern and Hope yielded no birds. The nest was intact and it appeared the young had fledged successfully. This is believed to be the first nest found for this species in NS. In the summer of 2001, thrashers with fledged young were observed by JON & SAN on CSI but the nest was not found at that time. For the record, two Brown Thrashers were also seen on Sable I. May 5-6, ZOL.

A single AMERICAN PIPIT was noted from Sable I. June 2 indicating that the bulk of this species had migrated north earlier. As was expected, CEDAR WAXINGS were quite widespread. JAH reports small groups everywhere in *Lunenburg*. From the 40 reports received, it can be observed that the larger groups were noted in early June giving way to smaller flocks late into the report period. JOB passes on an interesting observation on June 5 of a group of 10 which spent considerable time around an occupied bat-box.



This BROWN THRASHER, one of a pair in N. Kingston, Kings, was photographed June 16. These and others reported this summer seemed to signal a significant range expansion of this hitherto rare breeding bird. [Photo Richard Stern]

Late migrating warblers faced severe weather conditions in the Bay of Fundy area in the dying days of May with frequent rain, fog and cool temperatures in the range of 5C overnight. BRD reports that many fishing boats had exhausted and hypothermic warblers landing aboard and most did not survive the trip back to shore due to lack of a food supply on the boats. Birds finding their way to offshore islands in the bay at least were able to feed on kelp flies. It will be interesting to see if BBS data might reflect this mortality. RBS noted his BBS route in *Kings* tallied average numbers of warblers. In addition to reports received for all the 22 regular breeding warblers, there were three reports of warblers that do not breed here. July 13 was a lucky day for STH when he viewed a fem. GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER in the open from two meters in Cleveland near Mahone Bay. One, probably the same bird, was subsequently seen at this location in early Aug. On a field trip June 19 sponsored by the St. Mary's River Association, a car ride with an open window between Stillwater and Sonora,

Guysborough produced >12 singing TENNESSEE WARBLERS (KJM). RFL added NASHVILLE WARBLER to his yard list when a pair of ads. were found feeding a young bird green caterpillars in Fairmount, *Antigonish*, July 3. PARULA WARBLERS seemed to be in lower than normal numbers this summer in the Coldbrook, *Kings* area.



CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER. [[Photo Grant Milroy]

Breeding YELLOW WARBLERS were noted by several observers, but observations of 14 on Sable I. July 31 when an observation of only one the previous day might be an indication of an early migration. Seven reports of CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER were all from the mainland. The MAGNOLIA WARBLER is probably one of our most common breeding warblers, but not many reports were received. Two observations were provided for CAPE MAY WARBLER from extreme ends of the province; Big Baddeck, *Victoria*, June 7 and APBS June 19, while two others sightings were from the mainland. This warbler appears to be in a low ebb breeding in NS. There were no concentrations of YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS from the few reports received, but RFL heard several BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS singing along the Bonnet L. Barren trail, *Guysborough*, July 23. PINE WARBLERS were not detected during breeding season despite a couple of promising reports of singing spring birds. In St. Ann's, *Victoria*, BSK reported a pair of CERULEAN WARBLERS June 10, but no details were provided.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS were reported on Sable I. in early June and again July 31 (ZOL). There were not many comments on AMERICAN REDSTART but BSK noted them throughout the report period in Big Baddeck, *Victoria*.

OVENBIRDS were heard almost daily in the yard of LOC in Lower Sackville, HRM. A singing male NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH was heard at Middle Musquodoboit, HRM, June 6 & 18. Others were found on the early June field trip to Lewis L. PP, HRM. There were more than average reports of MOURNING WARBLERS. A male was found singing from a thicket near Margaretsville, *Annapolis*, an area not noted in the Breeding Bird Atlas of NS. There were about a dozen reports of COMMON YELLOWTHROAT from both the mainland and from Cape Breton. YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS are seldom found in the province in mid-summer with Tuft's Birds of Nova Scotia (3rd edition) listing only one in early July 1965 at Lower Ohio. The sighting of one in the latter part of July this year was an interesting observation by SAN at The HAWK, *Shelburne*. ▣

Gray Catbird			June 5	Lower Sackville, HRM	25	LOC	
June 1	Sable I.	2	ZOL	June 6	Conquerall Mills, Lun.	22	JAH
June 1	Paradise, Anna.			June 6-July 31	widespread	many	var. obs.
June	Tremont, Kings		SLH	Golden-winged Warbler			
June 12	James R. BBS	2	KJM	July 13	Cleveland, Lun.	1 fem.	STH fide JAH
June 13	Tatamagouche BBS	4	KJM	Tennessee Warbler			
June 26- July 28	Louisbourg, CBRM	1	SEM	June 2	Lewis Lake P. P, HRM	1 heard	SMB
July 7-9	Mader's Cove, Lun.	1	JEM	June 12-17	Sable I.	1-2	ZOL
June 1- end July	Shubenacadie, Col.	pair	RCM	June 19	Stillwater-Sonora, Guys.	12	KJM et al.
June-July 23	Albion Trail, Stellarton	2 pair	KJM	June 21	St. Ann's, Vic.	1	BSK
Northern Mockingbird			June 7	Shubenacadie, Col.	1	singing	RCM
June 1	Lower Sackville, HRM	1	LOC	July 25	Goose Creek Marsh, Shel.	1	PRG
June 5	Broad Cove, Lun.	1	SJF, BAH	Nashville Warbler			
June 10	The Hawk, CSI	1	fide MUN	June 3	Lewis Lake PP	1	LOC
June 18	Bedford, HRM	1	fide BLM	June 8	Old Guysborough Rd., HRM	1	RHL
July 9	Indian Pt., Lun.	1	JAH, Brian Delaney	June 13	Tatamagouche BBS	4	KJM
July 8	Port Williams, Kings	2	GFO	July 3	Fairmont, Ant	3	RFL
Brown Thrasher			Northern Parula				
June 2	Sable I.	2	ZOL	June 1-28	Lower Sackville	1 male	LOC
June 7	Joe Howe Dr., HRM	1	DHU	June 3	Lewis Lake PP, HRM	3	LOC
June 12	Rose Bay, Lun.	1	AHM,	June 12	Cole Harbour, HRM	1	RHL et al.
ELM				June 26	Bisset Lake Park, HRM	1	RHL et al.
June 12	The Hawk, CSI	1	MUN	June 26	Lawlor's Pt., HRM	1	RHL et al.
June 14	Lower West Pubnico, Yar.	1	RSD	July 17	Lake Charles Trail, HRM	1	RHL
June 14	North Kingston, Kings	1	PLC	July 23	Black Rock, Kings	1	RHL
June 16	North Kingston, Kings	pair	RBS	July 25	Goose Creek Marsh, Shel.	1 ad., 1 imm.	PRG
June 16	North Kingston, Kings	pair + 4 imm.	PEH	July 31	Mahone Bay, Lun.	2	JAH
July 20	The Hawk, CSI	1	fide MUN	June-July	St. Ann's, South Haven	a few	BSK
American Pipit			June-July	Big Baddeck,	a few	BSK	
June 2	Sable I.	1	ZOL	Yellow Warbler			
Cedar Waxwing			June 1	Sunrise Valley	1	FMC	
June 1-3	Apple River, Cum.	12+	KFS	June 1-11	Sable I.	3	ZOL
June 1-21	Sable I. up to	17	ZOL	June 30	Sable I.	1	ZOL
June 5	Kingston, Kings	14	JOB	June 31	Sable I.	14	ZOL

Magnolia Warbler				June 19	Port Bickerton, <i>Guys.</i>	several	ABM, KJM
June 24	West River St. Mary's, <i>Guys</i>	29 singing	BLM	July 31	Pt. Michaud, <i>Rich.</i>	1	WMA
Cape May Warbler				July 31	Clearland, <i>Lun.</i>	1	JAH
June 7	Big Baddeck, <i>Vic.</i>	1	BSK	July 31	Fauxburg, <i>Lun.</i>	1	JAH
June 19	APBS	a couple	NSBS	Cerulean Warbler			
June 22	Holman Marsh Lake, <i>HRM</i>	1 singing	BLM	June 10	St. Ann's, <i>Vic.</i>	pair	BSK
June 24	West River St. Mary's, <i>Guys</i>	1 singing	BLM, IAM	Mourning Warbler			
Black-throated Blue Warbler				June 2	Sable I. station	1 male	ZOL
June 1	Lewis L. PP, <i>HRM</i>	1	HAT	June 7&9	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	singing male	VJH
June 6	Old Guysborough Rd., <i>HRM</i>	1	RHL	June 12	James River BBS	1	KJM
June 12	Bisset Rd., <i>HRM</i>	1	RHL	June 14	Roman Valley BBS	1	SJF
June 19	Folly Mt.	1	JAH	June 15	Margaretsville, <i>Anna.</i>	1 singing	PLC
June-July	Big Baddeck, <i>Vic.</i>		BSK	June 24	West River St. Mary's, <i>Guys</i>	2 singing	BLM
Black-throated Green Warbler				June 27	Shubenacadie, <i>Col.</i>	2	RCM
June 22	Holman Marsh Lake, <i>HRM</i>	12 singing	BLM	July 1	Maple L., <i>Pict.</i>	1	KJM, CGB
Blackburnian Warbler				July 2	Londonderry, <i>Col.</i>	1	BLM
June 2	Apple R., <i>Cum.</i>	1 male	KFS	July 4	Baxter's Hbr., <i>Kings</i>	2-3	RBS
June 5	Coldbrook, <i>Kings</i>	some	AAM	July 4-5	CBHNP	several	KJM, RFL
June 19	Folly Mt., <i>Col.</i>	1	JAH	July 18	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	2	VJH
Early June	Kentville Research Station	pair	RBS	Common Yellowthroat			
July 5	Fairmont, <i>Ant.</i>		MZG, RFL	June 2	Sable I.	1 male, 2 fems.	ZOL
June-July	Big Baddeck, <i>Vic.</i>		BSK	June 6	Sable I.	1 male	ZOL
Palm Warbler				Wilson's Warbler			
June 3	Lewis L. PP, <i>HRM</i>	2	LOC	June 1	Irish Mt. <i>Pict.</i>	1	RFL
July 7-8	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	2 fledglings	VJH	June 1	Sunrise Valley, <i>Vic.</i>	1	FMC
July 18	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	several fledglings	VJH	June 3	Sable I.	1 male	ZOL
Bay-breasted Warbler				June 4	Sable I.	2 male	ZOL
June 5	Coldbrook, <i>Kings</i>	2	AAM	June 7-July 30	South Haven & St. Ann's, <i>Vic.</i>		BSK
June 15	Porter's L., <i>HRM</i>	1	RHL	June 19	Sherbrooke, <i>Guys.</i>	1 singing	KJM, ABM
June 24	West River St. Marys, <i>Guys</i>	3	BLM	Canada Warbler			
July 23	Bonnet L. WPA, <i>Guys.</i>	1 male	RFL	June 1	Lewis L. PP, <i>HRM</i>	1	HAT
American Redstart				Yellow-breasted Chat			
June 24	West River St. Marys, <i>Guys</i>	24 singing	BLM	July 22	The Hawk, <i>CSI</i>	1	SAN fide MUN
Blackpoll Warbler							
June 1-21	W Light-Station, Sable I.	males & fems.	ZOL				

Grant Milroy Photos

This summer, Grant Milroy left us for missionary work in far-off Nepal. Nova Scotia birders and conservationists will miss him, and will remember his amazing contributions during his few years here. He was a primary influence in creating and sustaining the Cape Sable Island Important Bird Area (CSI-IBA), which will continue to have a huge impact in publicizing and protecting one of Nova Scotia's most important shorebird and waterfowl habitats. To honour him, we are printing a few of the many beautiful photographs from his collection in the CSI-IBA website. You can see them all in living colour at <http://users.auracom.com/csiba/>



AMERICAN REDSTART



MAGNOLIA WARBLER

Tanagers Through House Sparrows

By Ian McLaren and Joan Waldron

Several SUMMER TANAGERS had been noted during May, but only TOK's feeder in Canso held one female up to June 4. Then two yearling males appeared June 6: in Canso (TOK) and on Brier I. (CAH). One female SCARLET TANAGER lingered at FMC's feeder at Sunrise Valley, Vic. to June 2, a pair was found on Folly Mt. during the NSBS field trip to *Cumberland* June 19, and JET observed an alarm-calling male in Bear R., *Anna.*, June 26.

Our regular sparrows were reported sparsely or not at all, with nothing to reveal patterns. An AMERICAN TREE SPARROW reported June 6 near the Old Guysborough Rd., HRM (RFL), was extraordinary, but was undocumented. In early June, some concern was expressed about the apparent absence of NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS. This bird is listed as a species of concern by U.S. authorities, but is assumed to be more common here in its restricted habitat. None were found at Conrad Beach, HRM, June 9 (IAM) or in the New Glasgow salt marshes June 10 (KJM), and only one at the Oler Farm marsh, *Lun.*, June 9 (JAH). By June 13-15, however, they were reported in the usual places from CSI to Glace Bay. JAH reported that there were "no VESPER SPARROWS at usual locations" in *Cumberland* June 27. Did anyone check the regular breeding sites in cultivated blueberry fields and in sandy terrain along Highway 103 in *Annapolis*? A report of two vagrant SEASIDE SPARROWS June 13 "in the alder patch at Daniels Head," CSI (MUN), was not detailed. We have no previous summer records, but these could have been overshooting migrants with the Nelson's Sharp-taileds.



These four young NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS were huddled on the shoulder of the road in the Glace Bay Sanctuary. They were "grasslings" (i.e., they had left the nest, but were not fledged, and were still being fed by parents). Although we cannot show the beautiful, rich-buff tones of their juvenal plumage, they are a most unusual and picturesque find. [Photo Cathy Murrant]

Summering ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS were doubtless seen more widely, but were reported only from several localities in CB (BSK), in *Lunenburg* (JAH), and on the NSBS field trip to *Cumberland* June 19. Late INDIGO BUNTINGS arrived at Canso June 4 (a fem., TOK) and on CSI June 9-10 (a male, MUN).

Our regular blackbirds were also taken for granted by most observers, although some deserved more attention. BSK found some BOBOLINKS through the season at Big Baddeck, Vic., and there were casual references on natureNS. We need more information, on presence or absence of RUSTY BLACKBIRDS, which are known to have greatly declined in their more southern nesting range; none were reported. Vying with last winter's Slaty-backed Gull as "bird of the year" was surely the SHINY COWBIRD at Canso June 13-14, substantially documented by TOK and Terri Crane elsewhere in this issue. A late-arriving fem. BALTIMORE ORIOLE appeared June 1 at Sunrise Valley, Vic. (FMC).

The only reported of PINE GROSBEAK were one near Louisbourg July 18 (SEM) and a pair through the period in Vic. (BSK). SEM reported 30-40 PURPLE FINCHES at her feeders daily through the period at Louisbourg, whereas RHL reported a cluster of sightings in late June. MUN noted them as "back at my feeders" on CSI July 21. HOUSE FINCHES were noted in their usual numbers in south-end Halifax (var. obs.) and Yarmouth (MUN), but JAH marked as unusual a pair during mid-June at his Lunenburg feeder. No RED CROSSBILLS were reported, although doubtless some were present in South Shore areas. SEM found WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS almost absent in *CBRM*, except for four near Louisbourg July 27, "particularly given a good cone crop forming." Some (numbers?) were at St. Anns, Vic., July 15 and 21 (BSK). Our other regular finches were scarcely mentioned by observers, and HOUSE SPARROWS almost completely ignored. □

Summer Tanager				July1	Halls Hbr.	2 pairs carrying food	RBS
June 4	Canso	at feeders	TOK		Red-winged Blackbird		
June 6	Canso	1 male, basic plumage	<i>fide</i> TOK	July 1,20,	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>	1-2	LOC
Scarlet Tanager				July 31	Middle Musquodoboit	fledged young at feeder	VJH
June	Sunrise Valley, <i>CBRM</i>	fem. daily visitor	FMC	June 13	Shubanacadie	6 in marsh	RCM
Chipping sparrow				June-July	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	occasionally	SLH
July	Tremont Kings Co.	4 adults	SLH	June 5, 23	Conrad marsh, <i>HRM</i>	1 imm.	DMW
Savannah Sparrow				July 7	Conrad marsh, <i>HRM</i>	1 imm.	DMW
June 1-June27	Lower Sackville		LOC	Common Grackle			
June 13	Shubanacadie	4 males	RCM	June-July	Lower Sackville and area, <i>HRM</i>		LOC
June&July	Conrad Marsh	6-12	DMW	July 7	Old Sackville Rd.	30	LOC
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow				June-July	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	1 bird seen occasionally	SLH
July 2	Martinique PP		VJH	July	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	8 ads. and imms.	SLH
June 12		12+ singing males	ELM, AHM	June 6	Conrad Marsh	nesting nearby	DMW
June-July	Conrad Marsh		DMW	Brown-headed Cowbird			
Fox Sparrow				July31	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	only second seen at feeder	VJH
June-July	<i>HRM</i>	resident for past 14 months	HAT	Baltimore Oriole			
Song Sparrow				June	Maders Cove	male	<i>fide</i> JEM
June-July	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>		LOC	Pine Grosbeak			
July 30	Brier I.		LOC	June 21	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>		VJH
June-July	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	at feeders	VJH	Purple Finch			
June-July	Tremont <i>Kings</i>	1 at feeders	SLH	June-July	Old Sackville Rd., <i>HRM</i>	3 males and two females	LOC
June-July	Conrad Rd., <i>HRM</i>	12 and lots of young	DMW	June-July	Middle Musquodoboit	present at feeders	VJH
June-July	Maders Cove, <i>Lun.</i>	Many with young	JEM	June-July	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	present at feeders	SLH
White-throated Sparrow				June 5-July 21	Conrad Rd., <i>HRM</i>		DMW
June 2-7	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>	1-2	LOC	White-winged Crossbill			
July25	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>	1-2	LOC	June 24	West River St. Mary's, <i>Guys</i>	4	BLM
June 3	Lewis Lake, <i>HRM</i>	2	LOC	Red Crossbill			
June 16	near Mount Uniacke		LOC	June-mid July	Maders Cove, <i>Lun.</i>	7 adults with young	JEM
July 20	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	fledges young seen	VJH	Pine Siskin			
June 24	West River St. Mary's, <i>Guys</i>	35 singing	BLM	June 2	Apple R.	1 at feeder	KFS
June occ.	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	1 male	SLH	June 1 & 2	Old Sackville Rd., <i>HRM</i>		LOC
Dark-eyed Junco				July 7	Hopewell, <i>Pict.</i>	3 seen	LOC
June 2	Apple River, <i>Cum.</i>	nest with 3 eggs	KFS	June-July	Middle Musquodoboit	fledged young July 13	VJH
June-July	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>		LOC	June-July	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	1-2 birds at feeder	SLH
July 7	Hopewell		LOC	June-July	Maders Cove, <i>Lun.</i>	40 birds at feeder	JEM
July11, 18, Bedford			LOC	American Goldfinch			
June 26	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	Fledged young seen	VJH	June-July	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>	3 males 2 females	LOC
July20	Middle Musquodoboit, <i>HRM</i>	Fledged young seen	VJH	July 30	Brier I.	1 male	LOC
June 5	Inverness	1 female 4 eggs on nest	RFL	June-July	Middle Musquodoboit	at feeders	VJH
Northern Cardinal				June-July,	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	3-4 birds daily	SLH
July	Maders Cove, <i>Lun.</i>	1 heard	JEM	June 30	Conrad Rd., <i>HRM</i>	few at sunflower feeder	DMW
Rose-breasted Grosbeak				July 3,9,17	Conrad Rd., <i>HRM</i>	few at sunflower feeder	DMW
June-July	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	1-2 males 1 female	SLH	June-July	Maders Cove, <i>Lun.</i>	12+	JEM
July 12	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	1 female	SLH	Evening Grosbeak			
July12	Maders Cove, <i>Lun.</i>	1 female	JEM	July 7,	Hopewell, <i>Pict.</i>	1m, 1f	LOC
Indigo Bunting				June 21	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>	2 birds	LOC
June 5	Canso		TOK	June- July	Middle Musquodoboit	at feeders daily	VJH
Bobolink				June-July	Tremont, <i>Kings</i>	2-4 birds daily	SLH
June 1-27	Lower Sackville		LOC	House Sparrow			
July 5	Hopewell	2 males 1 fem.	LOC	June-July	Lower Sackville, <i>HRM</i>	1-3 daily at feeders	LOC
June- July	Middle Musquodoboit	fledged successfully	VJH	July 5	Lower Sackville Farm, <i>HRM</i>	1 harassing male	LOC
June 13	Shubanacadie	several males singing	RCM				



These RING-NECKED DUCK fluffies are hard pressed to keep up with their mother, eyeing the photographer warily over her "shoulder." [Photo Mary McCauley]

List of Contributors

Thanks to all of our contributors.

Sorted by Initials

MacLean, Angus	AAM	Toom, Hans	HAT	Hughes, Shirley	SHU
Moores, Bernice	ABM	Kwindt, Henk	HEK	Smith, Sid	SIS
Horn, Andy	AGH	Van Donick, Helene	HVD	Fullerton, Sylvia	SJF
Mills, Anne	AHM	McLaren, Ian	IAM	Hulford, Sheila	SLH
Hinds, Barbara	BAH	Hirtle, James	JAH	Borkowski, Suzanne	SMB
Breeding Bird Survey	BBS	Tufts, Judy	JCT	Hiltz, Stephen	STH
Cunningham, Barc	BCU	Brennan, Jean	JEB	Paquet, Terry	TEP
Sarty, Bev	BES	Morse, Jean	JEM	Kavanagh, Tom	TOK
Burke, Bernard	BBU	Timpa, Jean	JET	Higgins, Verna J.	VJH
Smith, Betty June	BJS	Nocera, Joe	JJN	MacPhail, Weldon	WMA
Forsythe, Bernard	BLF	Belbin, John	JOB	Lucas, Zoe	ZOL
Maybank, Blake	BLM	Kearney, John	JOK		
Dalzell, Brian	BRD	Nickerson, Johnnie	JON	Bellefontaine, R.	
Kent, Bethsheila	BSK	Metcalfe, Hugh "Junior"	JUM	Benesh, Chris	
Haycock, Carl	CAH	Swift, June	JUS	Boudreau, Junior	
Brennan, Calvin	CGB	Wolford, Jim	JWW	Bowman, Barry	
Diggins, Claire	CLD	Spicer, Kathleen	KFS	Crane, Terri	
MacNeill, Carol	CRM	McKenna, Ken J.	KJM	Delaney, Brian	
Stevens, Clarence Sr.	CSS	Codling, Lois	LOC	DeLorys, Harry and Rose-Ann	
Stoddard, Clyde	CST	Mills, Maureen	MSM	Forsythe, Sandra	
MacNeill, Don	DAM	Newell, Murray	MUN	Freedman, Bill	
McCorquodale, Dave	DBM	Goring, May	MZG	Gleich, Steve	
Codling, Don	DCO	NS Bird Society Field Trip	NSBS	Goulden, E.	
Hipperr, Dennis	DHH	Giffin, Barbara & Patrick	PBG	Goulden, V.	
Hughes, David	DHU	Hope, Peter	PEH	Hall, Linda	
Young, David	DHY	Chalmers, Patricia L.	PLC	Hayden, Hilary	
Welch, Dottie M. K.	DMW	McKay, Pat	PMC	Hughes, Anne	
Doull, Elizabeth	DOU	Gould, Paul	PRG	Lock, B. & K.	
Mills, Eric L.	ELM	Stern, Richard	RBS	McInnis, J.	
Spalding, Francis	FLS	MacPhee, Roslyn C.	RCM	McKay, Ian	
McEvoy, Fritz	FMC	Lauff, Randy F.	RFL	McKiel, Jean	
Crowell, George	GEC	Lindsay, Robert H.	RHL	Sam, Donald	
Forsythe, George	GFO	Hall, Ross	ROH	Tudor, Virginia	
Milroy, Grant	GRM	d'Entremont, Raymond	RSD	Vassalb, Monique	
Tufts, Gordon	GWT	Nickerson, Sandra	SAN	Walmark, David	
Brennan, Harry	HAB	Myers, Susann	SEM		

Doa



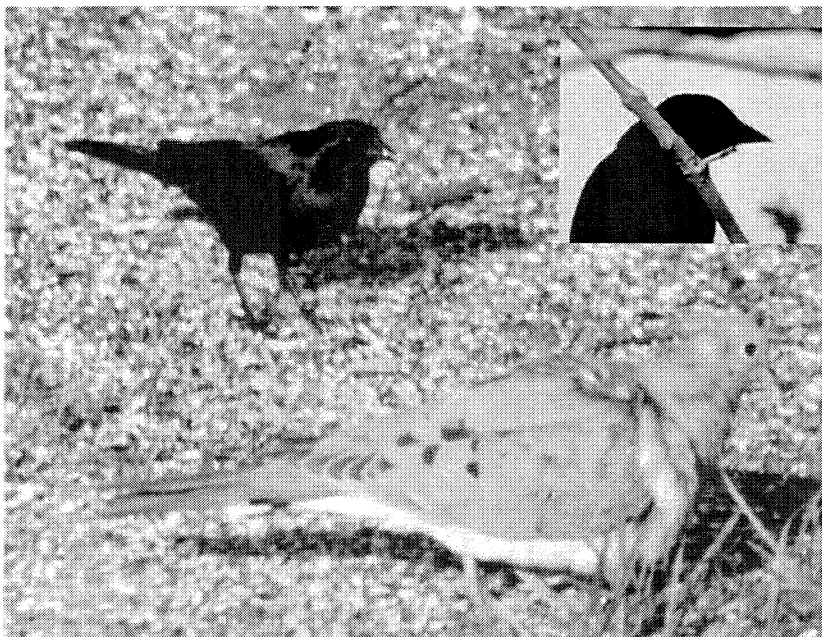
A GREAT BLUE HERON in flight is even more impressive than one in standing in stately pose. [Photo Bernard Burke]



Rare Bird Report

Nova Scotia's First and Canada's Second Shiny Cowbird

By Tom Kavanaugh and Terri Crane



Its size relative to the Mourning Dove, highly glossy plumage, and the almost straight culmen on its short, sharp beak (insert), are diagnostic of the **SHINY COWBIRD**. [Photos Tom Kavanaugh]

Tom called Steve Bushell, and he arrived and came to the same conclusion independently. This bird remained at the feeders until about 8:45 p.m., giving us ample opportunity for study. We later searched the Web, finding many almost exact matches to our bird, and felt fully confident in our identification. The photographs show the unmistakable characteristics of this species.

While retrieving the morning paper on June 14 Tom encountered a remarkably loud and shrill bird call from trees across the street. Terri and Tom listened to this very distinct and new call for about 10-15 min. before 6-8 female and imm. male Red-winged Blackbirds arrived in response to this new call. Bird guides do indicate that the species has bubbling warbles, and loud, harsh, piercing whistled notes. The bird was present at our feeders on and off on June 14. Alas, the bird failed to appear when Blake Maybank, Ian McLaren, and Eric Mills appeared in the afternoon of that day, and it was not again seen at our feeders. Tom thinks, though, that he glimpsed it briefly on the 17th in trees a block away from our house in the company of 6-8 Red-winged Blackbirds.

We have learned since that this species only invaded Florida from the Caribbean in the late 1980s, and has since shown a tendency for straying long distances in eastern North America. The "Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America" maps regular occurrences up to North Carolina, with single occurrences in Virginia, Maine, and New Brunswick. The last, a first for Canada, was photographed in Lamèque, where it spent a brief time at a feeder in August 1993. So, our bird was a very rare one indeed! □

At suppertime June 13, Tom glanced out the kitchen window of our home in Canso, Guysborough County, and saw a small blackbird behind our feeders. He asked Terri if it was just another Brown-headed Cowbird and, after not hearing a confirmation Tom asked: "Well, what is it?" To this, the response was: "I'm not sure."

It was clearly a small blackbird with a strong blue gloss around head, back and upper breast (somewhat like a Common Grackle). Tom first thought it might be a Brewer's Blackbird, but it had a black eye. It also had black legs with long toes and a short, sharp beak; only a slight forehead was noted, quite unlike those of either Brown-headed Cowbird or Brewer's Blackbird. With Tom studying the bird and calling off features for field marks, Terri checked our Eastern Peterson's Field Guide, and we quickly concluded that nothing fit. Tom immediately ran for his camera and then to the shed, which can be accessed with out disturbing the birds, and acts as a blind overlooking the feeders. Then Terri found in the Dorey-Kindersley guide to birds of Canada that the most likely match was **SHINY COWBIRD!**

Weather for the Summer of 2004

(Valley of Nova Scotia with Halifax comments)

By Larry Bogan

Overall it has been a humid summer. Although there are no average humidity statistics for Kentville, when considering the distribution and size of rainfalls and general cloudiness, I think it is a safe assumption. The humidity (and fog) is available on an hourly basis for many sites in Nova Scotia. If you would like to look at it, go to the Environment Canada Climate Archives at http://www.climate.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca/climateData/menu_e.html

Kentville, N.S. Weather Statistics Atlantic Food and Horticulture Centre

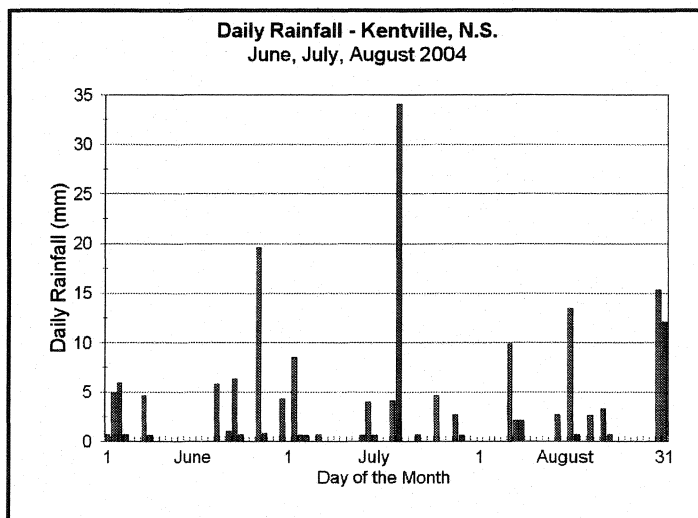
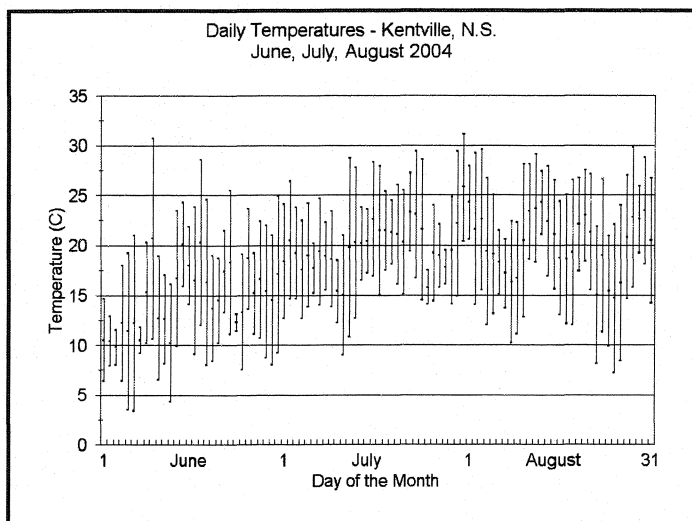
	Mean Temper. (C)	Rain (mm)	Bright Sunshine Hours	Degree Days above 10 C	
June (43yr avg)	14.8 (16.1)	56 (67)	220 (220)	143 (184)	212
July (43yr avg)	19.8 (19.4)	62 (69)	176 (233)	305 (289)	307
August (43yr avg)	20.1 (18.7)	65 (90)	164 (217)	314 (271)	308

Temperature:

We have had a very normal summer in terms of temperature. The mean maximum, minimum and average temperatures for the season are all close to those over the last 43 years. I have included the temperature graph to show the rather uninteresting spread in temperatures for the season. If you count the number of days with maximum temperatures above 25 C you will see that 36 of the 92 days were that warm. Only three days reached 30 C or above.

Rain:

The graph of rainfall throughout the season shows good distribution throughout the summer but this was still below the long-term season averages (80% of the normal). In the rainfall chart you will notice that there are only three rain days with over 1 cm of rain. Most of the rain days had less than 5 mm per day.



Sunshine:

June had average sunshine hours for the month but July and August were excessively cloudy (without rain) which reduce the sunshine hours to only 75% of the usual for those months.

Summer is the growing season and we have been having good warmth for growing plants these last few years. As you would expect by looking at the temperatures, the growing degree days above 10 C was only a little above the long term average this year. If you look at the last five years you will see that June, July and August averaged respectively 212, 307 and 308 degree days. This adds to 827 for the season and is 11% above the 43 year average which means that this summer was below the average for the previous five years.

Halifax Contrasts:

The information above is for the inland site of Kentville. How different was the Atlantic Coast? I have compared the monthly temperatures and rainfalls for Shearwater Airport (Halifax/Dartmouth) with those from Kentville in the table below. Unfortunately there is no daily measurements of bright sunshine hours or fog for Halifax.

	Mean T (C)		Rain (mm)	
	Kentville	Halifax	Kentville	Halifax
June	14.8	13.6	55.9	56.4
(43 yr avg)		(15.0)		(108)
July	19.8	17.8	62.4	74.1
(43 yr avg)		(18.6)		(106)
August	20.1	19.0	64.9	125
(43 yr avg)		(18.9)		(98)
Season	18.3	16.8	183.2	255.5
(43 yr avg)	(18.1)	(17.5)	(226)	(312)

In contrast to Kentville, Halifax was cooler this summer than average. Although Halifax is usually cooler than the Valley, this year it was 1.5 C instead of the usual 0.6 C cooler. The lower temperatures were undoubtedly due to more frequency low pressure areas passing up the Atlantic coast this summer. Their associated southerly winds bring in the Atlantic fog and the lower temperature.

Both areas had deficits in rainfall for the season of about 80% of the normals. Despite that Halifax had 40% more rain than the Valley and almost all of that was in August. ☐

Rare Bird Report

Sonograms confirm Willow Flycatchers at Belleisle Marsh

By Joe Nocera, Cheyenne Lawrie, and Michael Peckford

While performing daily observations for a research project at the Belleisle Marsh WMA (Annapolis County) on 18 June 2004, one of us (CL) first heard what sounded very much like the "fitz-pew" song of the Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax trailii*). The bird was in a shrubby fallow field near the impoundment at the marsh's southeastern end. After listening for several minutes, it was decided that more ears should hear the song before any positive identification be made.

Following a detailed verification by crewmember Francois Rousseu, all of us subsequently heard the song and acknowledged it sounded exceptionally Willow-like and not reminiscent of the congeneric Alder Flycatcher (*E. alnorum*). However, we wanted to be absolutely sure that this uncommon song was from a Willow. Although some claim to be able to separate the two species in the field without the benefit of song, this process lacks rigour and has many sceptics. Therefore, we felt the only way to be sure was to record the song and analyse it.

We used a portable pyramidal plexiglass sound reflector measuring ~ 80cm across and ~40cm deep. A microphone at the base was connected via coaxial cable to a laptop computer. We used the software Microsoft ® Sound Recorder (• 22,050 Hz) to create and save the recordings.

Equipped with this set-up, we unsuccessfully attempted to record the song over several days. On 29 June, we finally were able to get within 25m of the singing bird and record over five minutes of song. Despite the background cacophony of Red-winged

Blackbirds, Common Yellowthroats and Song Sparrows, many of these recordings were very clear. Using the software *Sound Analysis Pro*, we created a sonogram from the files. Another sonogram of both the Willow and Alder song was created from a commercial CD (Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs: Eastern Region; Time-Warner Audio, 1997).

A comparison of the sonograms shows that the song was 85% concordant with Willow Flycatcher (Figure 1; Sonograms B and C). Although the field recording is slightly fuzzier, Figure 1 shows the similarities between the Stokes Guide Willow Flycatcher (sonogram B) and the recording from Belleisle (sonogram C): the “bent-paper-clip” shape of the introductory notes, the three vertical syllables introducing the main body of the song, and the downward trailing “pew” that resembles a trilobite. There are few similarities between the Belleisle recording and sonogram A (Alder Flycatcher).

Unfortunately, we were not able to find a nest or note any solid evidence of breeding. However, we are certain that there were two Willow Flycatchers present at the site. The second individual became less secretive by early July, interacting solely with the male who was now singing infrequently. This pattern could indicate a failed nesting attempt where a member of the pair remained secretive for some weeks, and suddenly became very observable but not concurrently seen carrying food or fecal sacs. It will be interesting to see if this “pair” returns next year.

Although our diligence in identifying these flycatchers may seem excessive, it was warranted. Willow Flycatchers are seldom-documented records for the province, and this is only the second set of reported sonograms (Ian McLaren presented sonograms of a Willow in Avonport in 1994, *Nova Scotia Birds* 36(2): 42-43.).

The species is considered rare here, but its breeding range does come as close as southern New Brunswick (see the *Breeding Bird Atlas*; Erskine 1992) and must certainly occur here more often than is documented. However, because the two species can only be reliably differentiated by sound, a majority of Willow Flycatchers in the province are likely being “unheard” given the dominance of the Alder Flycatcher’s song in this region. Indeed, the two species are so difficult to tell apart by in-hand measurements, that banders who capture these species must classify the birds as the composite “Traill’s Flycatcher”.

Because Willow Flycatchers are likely more common in Nova Scotia, we predict that some birders in the region who keep an “ear out” for the species during the breeding season will be rewarded. Although we are not suggesting that birders digitally record every Willow they may hear, we do want to close by advocating a certain degree of diligent and cautious optimism when searching for the species in Nova Scotia. □

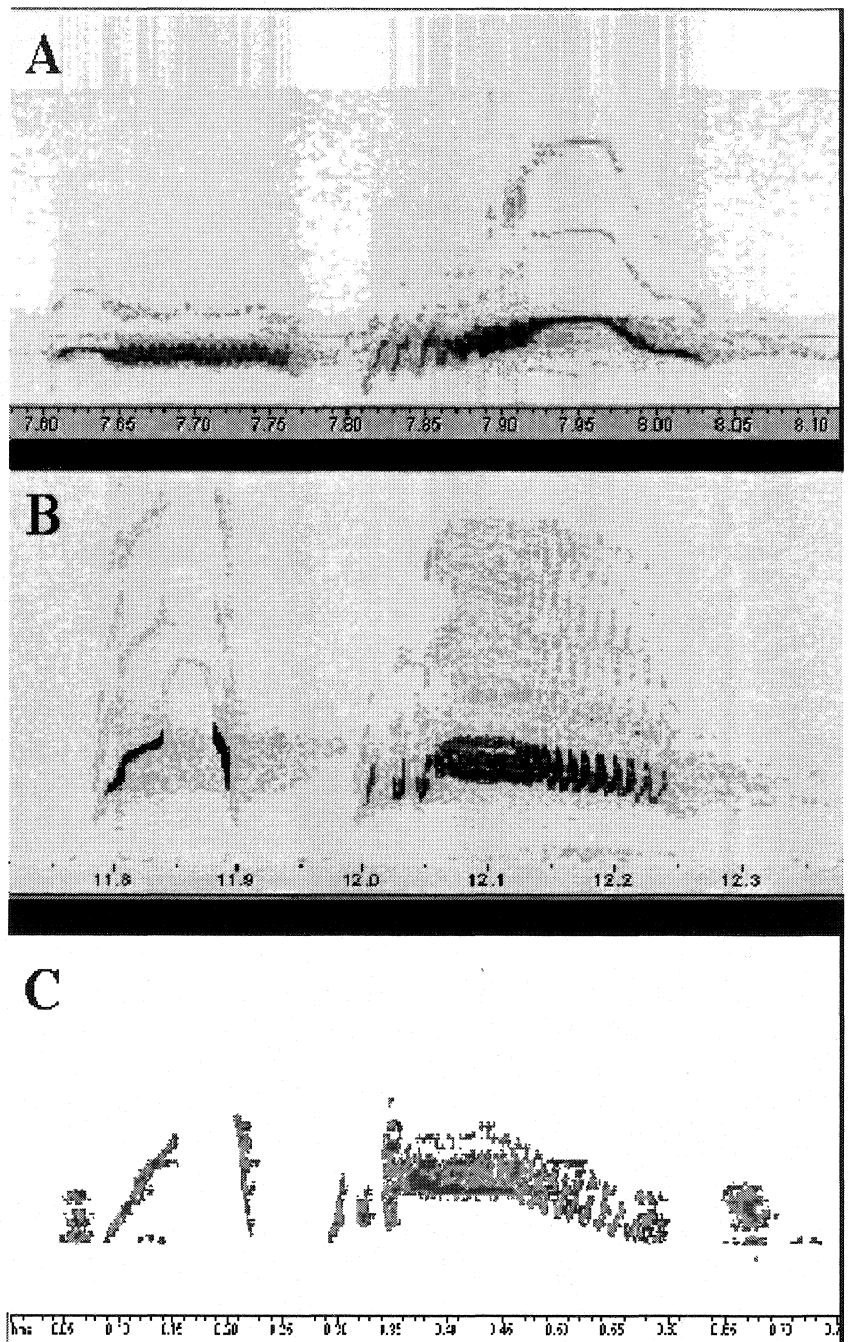
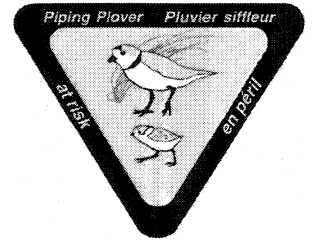


Figure 1. Three sonograms for comparison. Sonogram A is of the Alder Flycatcher, and sonogram B is of the Willow Flycatcher, both created from the Stokes Audio Field Guide. Sonogram C is from the Willow Flycatcher recording made at Belleisle Marsh WMA on 29 June 2004. The y-axis of each plot represents frequency. Note that the scales of the x-axes are different, but presented at similar size for comparative purposes.

News from the Nova Scotia Coastal Guardian Program - Summer 2004 Summary



By Anna McCarron
Program Co-ordinator

2004 Counties (# beaches with territorial PIPLs): West to East	Pairs	Singles	Total Adults	Pairs Monitored	Nests	# Hatched	# Fledged	Fledglings / Pair
Shelburne County (13)	21	0	42	21	25	34	19	0.90
Queens County (1)	4	0	8	4	4	16	12	3.00
Lunenburg County (1)	2	1	5	2	2	8	8	4.00
Halifax County (1)	3	2	8	3	3	10+	9	3.33
Pictou County (1)	1	0	2	1	1	4	4	4.00
Antigonish County (3)	5	2	12	5	7+	16	14	2.80
Victoria County (1)	1	1	3	1	1	4	4	4.00
Inverness County (2)	2	0	4	2	2	7+	7	3.50
Totals	39	6	84	39	38	82	77	1.97



***The Big Year*, by: Mark Obmascik**
Free Press (a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.) ISBN 0-7432-4545-8

The Big Year is a book about people, obsessed with birds and finding them. The rare and the common species were all important ticks on the way to a 700+ big year.

This is no textbook, scientific journal or identification guide, just a rollicking, roller coaster ride of emotions in the lives of these obsessive personalities. The participants found themselves crisscrossing the entire continent many times in a frantic search for more species, in all conditions, facing daily adversity and triumph. The book is written with a flow and style which maintains the interest of the reader while keeping them caught up in the whirlwind of this ultimate birding competition.

Along the way the book does throw in some information about birds, their identification, physiology, migration and location. Most of the hotspots depicted are well known to birders; the Dry Tortugas and Everglades National Park in Florida, Bentsen State Park, Big Bend National Park and High Island in Texas and the ultimate spot for Asian rarities, the island of Attu, just to name but a few.

Then there are the birds. Xantus's Hummingbird, Siberian Accentor, White-throated Robin, Nutting's Flycatcher, Terek Sandpiper plus all of those seabirds from their many pelagic trips. It's enough to make many envious.

In the author's acknowledgements, he admits not having personally observed any of the big year competition but states that it was thoroughly researched and much was rendered from the notes of and discussions with the participants and many independent sources.

If you don't have the funds, the time, or the desire it takes to attempt a big year, you can live vicariously through those who have succeeded in accomplishing this long, grueling adventure.

The book is a well-bound hard cover, 268 pages in length. The handsome cover jacket features an embossed Royal Tern and a pair of binoculars. It contains a useful index, for later reference of species and places. I recommend this book very highly and believe it is destined to become a classic among birders.

Terry Paquet

***Pipits & Wagtails* by Per Alström and Krister Mild
Princeton University Press, 2003**

The identification of wagtails is mostly straight forward, and even most subspecies show clearly distinguishable field marks. On the other hand many of the Pipits species look very much alike. Their identification is a challenge, and the measurement of body proportions while holding a bird in the hand is often the only way to obtain a conclusive identification.

There are 18 species of Pipits and nine species of Wagtails, with a total of over 90 subspecies, listed in this comprehensive identification guide to the Motacillidae of America, Europe, and Asia. The Americas are not a stronghold of diversity for this bird family. Sibley lists three species each for North America, of which one wagtail species is currently considered a subspecies of one of the other two, and all are mainly found in the far western arctic, i.e. as close to the "Old World" as you can get. That leaves the Pipits, of which only the American Pipit is common in the eastern part of the New World. So we don't have to worry too much about pipits or even wagtails on our home turf.

In Europe and Asia this is a different story. This handbook gives a lot of space and attention to illustrations to ease the problem of identifying very similar looking species and sub-species. The 27 species with all their subspecies are illustrated on 30 colour plates (all artwork by Per Alström and Bill Zetterström, both are renowned European bird illustrators) and 240 colour photographs, outlining in detail the variations found between different species and sub-species. Many of the additional line drawings found embedded in the text are different from what we know from field guides. To make use of them, handling of the bird or parts of it is required. Sketches of feather patterns and proportions are accompanied by tables giving statistics of body part measurements (wings, tails, legs, bills...). Over 200 sonograms (graphical illustrations of bird calls and songs, valuable information to those knowing how to read them) offer more insight into the world of look alike brown birds.

In many aspects this book resembles a scientific publication, as a matter of fact it is one. The typical birder (even over in Europe) is not the intended user of this publication, it is aimed at the ornithologist or bander with a particular interest in this bird family. However, of general interest are the introductory chapters. Here the authors describe the methods used to gather and analyse the presented data and give instructions on how to age and sex the birds. All this is required to be able to identify specimens down to the sub-species level. For us birders this offers insight into how scientific ornithology/taxonomy works. Very interesting is the discussion of the species concepts the authors use to draw lines between species and sub-species. The definition of what qualifies as a species greatly determines where lines between species and sub-species are drawn, and the definitions depends on the concept. There is more than one valid concept, and we all know as a result of this that species lines are redrawn now and then, which is better known as splitting and lumping. On a few pages the authors give an overview over "biological" and phylogenetic" species concepts, and how they are used to define species and develop family trees. Good reading for everybody who wants a crash course in this topic. Currently and in the future, the use of genetic criteria will further complicate matters, since there will be species with no visible or audible differences.

The very specialized character of the book is also reflected by its price tag. It is a great book for those who need and use it, the illustrations are excellent, the information contents is very high. Most birders, especially here in North America, will have little use for it. As a reference book its worth to keep its existence in mind, just in case questions on advanced pipit or wagtail identification should ever arise. In that case take good notes in the field while watching the bird and you are welcome to borrow my copy to sort things out.

Ulli Höger

***A Place between the Tides; A Naturalist's Reflections on the Salt Marsh*
by Harry Thurston, Greystone Books 2004, ISBN: 1553650352**

Most books the Nova Scotia Bird Society receives for reviewing are – in one way or the other – very bird related. *A Place between the Tides* is different, as it describes the annual seasonal cycle of life in a habitat we are all familiar with. Our very own Nova Scotia salt marshes are the *Place between the Tides*. This book is fun to read since it reflects the author's connection with the land, a bond many of us have in common with him. We quickly understand why our salt marshes are in need of protection

and conservation. They are a very complex eco-system, important in many ways, and after all, determine a lot of Nova Scotia's very unique appearance.

Harry Thurston grew up on a farm in coastal Southern Nova Scotia, where he spent countless hours in his childhood days exploring, discovering, and experiencing the salt marsh and its inhabitants. Decades later, after spending many years out West away from home and the Atlantic, he returned to his native Nova Scotia and rediscovered the salt marshes. Now as an adult he looks at his childhood roaming grounds with the trained eyes of a biologist and naturalist, understanding and answering many of the mysteries and questions he encountered here as a boy. He feels home again.

The chapters of his book follow the turn of the year. Month for month they describe the seasonal changes in the salt marsh and the resulting consequences for its permanent and vagrant inhabitants. The seasons of the year are marked by the appearance or presence of particular species of fauna and flora. Birds, as we all know, are a vital part of the salt marsh environment. Just think about the calls of Willets and Red-winged Blackbirds claiming territory and announcing the arrival of spring, and the increasing numbers of ducks in fall as harbingers of winter to come. Birds play important roles in many of Harry's stories, but so do other, much less obvious inhabitants of the marsh above and below the water's surface. Each chapter is a vivid collection of Harry's childhood reflections and memories, and more recent observations and thoughts by Harry the biologist.

A native Nova Scotian writing about one of Nova Scotia's trademark landscapes, a once abundant and now pressured habitat with tremendous environmental value, should be a good reason for Nova Scotia's naturalists to have a closer look at "A Place between the Tides". Reading the book felt like going on virtual seasonal field trips into the marsh. I like going birding into marsh land. Now I will see new things and many other with different eyes.

Ulli Höger



B.L.T. Trail (Brookfield, Lakeside, Timberlea Trail)

02 June 2004, Leader: Suzanne Borkowski

The BLT Trail was loaded with warblers on the morning of our hike. We tallied 14 species on the first part of the trail between Lake of the Woods subdivision and Glengarry Estates, and one more at the Lakeside end of the trail: (H) denotes heard only - Tennessee H), Nashville, Northern Parula, Yellow H), Chestnut-sided (H), Magnolia, Black-throated Blue (H), Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Palm, Black-and-white, American Redstart, Ovenbird (H), Northern Waterthrush (H), Common Yellowthroat, Canada (H).

Also noteworthy was an Alder Flycatcher, calling and darting at flies; both vireos, (seen), a Swamp Sparrow, a Flicker (seen) and singing Hermit Thrushes.

Chebucto Peninsula Bird Tour

06 June 2004, Leader: Hans Toom

The weather was gorgeous for this NSBS outing, and the warblers were willing to be seen for a change. Highlights included my first sighting, ever, of a Tennessee Warbler in this park and there were loads of Fox Sparrows!

No rarities were spotted this year but one interesting observation was that Ospreys have constructed a nest on one of the towers at the Coast Guard's remote transmitter site just outside the park.

Mersey Connector and Kaiser Meadow

16 May 2004, Leaders: Chris Field, Bill & Eileen Billington

About 15 individuals met on an overcast morning to look for warblers and other spring migrants. We started on the Mersey Connector Road headed for Officers Camp Lake. On the road in, a Great Horned Owl flew in front of the lead car. We were able to subsequently locate the owl perched at some distance. Near the lake, we found eight Blackburnian Warblers, 10 Bay-breasted Warblers, a Black-throated Blue Warbler plus a nice mix of other warblers and some Blue-headed Vireos. Our count increased as we made our way back towards the #3 highway, but an increasing wind kept the birds low.

After a lunch break the weather deteriorated, but a group of eight birders walked part of the railroad trail from East River towards Chester. Highlights included a pair of Eastern Kingbirds who put on quite a show, three Chestnut-sided Warblers and a Pileated Woodpecker dancing around a power pole on the highway. In total, we had 59 species including 13 species of warblers.

List of species:

Common Loon	Pileated Woodpecker	Magnolia Warbler
D.C. Cormorant	Eastern Kingbirds	Black-throated Blue Warbler
American Black Duck	Blue-headed Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Mallard	Blue Jay	Black-throated Green Warbler
Osprey	American Crow	Blackburnian Warbler - 8
Bald Eagle	Common Raven	Palm Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Tree Swallow	Bay-breasted Warbler - 10
Red-tailed Hawk	Barn Swallow	Black and White Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Black-capped Chickadee	Common Yellowthroat
Willet	Boreal Chickadee	Chipping Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Song Sparrow
Herring Gull	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Swamp Sparrow
Great Black-backed Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	White-throated Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Hermit Thrush	Dark-eyed Junco
Great Horned Owl	American Robin	Red-winged Blackbird
Belted Kingfisher	European Starling	Common Grackle
Downy Woodpecker	Nashville Warbler	Pine Grosbeak
Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Parula	Purple Finch
Northern Flicker	Yellow Warbler	Pine Siskin
	Chestnut-sided Warbler - 3 of them on the trail	American Goldfinch

Dawn Chorus on the Saltmarsh Trail

12 June 2004, Leader: Cindy Staicer

It was still dark when we began our 5 kilometer hike westward along this old railway trail from Bissett Road to Caldwell Road. Even at that early hour, birds were twittering sleepily providing participants an opportunity to learn how to identify birds by sound. They all rose to the challenge and by the time the sun came up they were able to match songs to sightings.

There were lots of Canada Warblers and Boreal Chickadees to be seen and heard along this trail. Other treats included Veery, Swainson's Thrush, White-winged Crossbill, Gray Catbird, Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, Swamp Sparrow, Pileated Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher as well as 11 other species of warblers.

List of species as encountered, in order of appearance:

American Robin	Swainson's Thrush	Osprey
White-throated Sparrow	White-winged Crossbill	Swamp Sparrow
Hermit Thrush	American Goldfinch	Pileated Woodpecker
Alder Flycatcher	Brown-headed Cowbird	Ruffed Grouse
Veery	Ring-necked Pheasant	Gray Jay
Song Sparrow	American Crow	Hairy Woodpecker
Canada Warbler	Willet	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Black-throated Green Warbler	Gray Catbird	Merlin
Blackburnian Warbler	Great Blue Heron	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Boreal Chickadee	Winter Wren	American Redstart
Black-and-White Warbler	Blue-headed Vireo	Blue Jay
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Northern Parula	Yellow Warbler
Nashville Warbler	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Tree Swallow
Myrtle Warbler	Mourning Dove	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Magnolia Warbler	Common Grackle	Mallard
Common Yellowthroat	Northern Flicker	Black Duck
Purple Finch	Brown Creeper	Herring Gull
Bald Eagle	Double-crested Cormorant	Black-backed Gull

Cumberland County

19 June 2004 , Leader: Clarence Stevens, Sr.

Almost everyone seems too busy these days to stop and enjoy life, but may I suggest birding to help provide some balance? I was privileged to fill in for Fulton Lavender on the Cumberland County adventure. It's a wonderful experience to meet new and old friends who enjoy exploring the special places in Nova Scotia where our avian friends reside.

A total of 35 participants joined me for morning and afternoon safaris. Everyone in the morning group was thrilled by good views of a pair of Scarlet Tanagers in the Wentworth Valley area. Many of the afternoon group were delighted by looks at a Virginia Rail, a Cape May Warbler and Black terns at the Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary, and by great looks at Purple Martins in the town of Amherst. The whole group had an impressive tally of 78 species for the day.

Eastern Shore

27 June 2004, Leader: Bob Lindsay

There were just three participants, including myself, so we piled into my car and started right in Dartmouth at Bissett Lake Park, then proceeded eastward as far as Rocky Run/Terminal beach. Our total for the day was 40 species.

Highlights were as follows: at Bissett Lake Park the only waterfowl we saw were Mallards with young. There were numerous Red-winged Blackbirds protesting our presence, and one Swamp Sparrow.

At the next location, we made a very interesting discovery. Take Patrick Lane (first right off of Bissett Road). Turn left at the bottom of this street and look for a path between two houses on your right, leading down to Willow Run. I give these directions because you might want to check out what we were sure was a House Wren singing from the top of any of three or four trees. Just walk down this path until you reach the woods behind the houses. Look and listen to your left.

Back to what else we saw that day: at Rainbow Haven we tallied 14 species, including Gt. Blue Heron, Willet and Greater Yellowlegs, both Herring and GBB Gulls and one tern (sp) offshore. In the fields we saw Song, Savannah and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows, the latter giving their familiar hiss.

At the next stop, Lawlors Point, we again had 14 species. These included the following, seen or heard: Solitary Vireo, N. Parula, Common Yellowthroat, and Chestnut-sided Warbler. Also seen were Cedar Waxwings in the oak trees at the graveyard, Alder Flycatcher, and White-throated Sparrow. We also heard one Ring-necked Pheasant.

Rocky Run/Terminal Beach provided us with 9 species. Disappointingly, these did not include Blackpoll Warbler or the Soras in the marsh. The small fishing cove always features Common Eider. This time was no exception and, as a bonus, they had young. We heard Black-throated Green Warblers here, and also saw numerous Bank Swallows feeding above the cliffs on the west side of the point. Finally, one of us observed Great Black-backed Gulls with chicks probably less than a week old on the low island at Fisherman's Reserve.

Wallace Bay

11 JULY 2004, Leader: Paul MacDonald

While driving through mist and showers, many of the dozen participants on the field trip to Wallace Bay contemplated turning back. The weather, however, was not overly unpleasant. While waiting for the troops to arrive at the Wallace wharf, we were entertained by a flock of 20+ Bonaparte's Gulls in basic plumage as well as a number of Common Terns flying in the harbour. One of the participants had noted an adult Northern Gannet sitting in the water at the SW end of the Wallace Bay bridge prior to the meeting time. The caravan made this the first stop, but alas, the bird had flown the coop and with its long wingspan was nowhere in sight.

We continued on to the dyke where we spent the morning making the complete circuit including the woodland trail. We encountered many good-sized broods of Ring-necked Ducks, many with newly minted young in tow. This is, by far, the most numerous duck species in the reserve, but we also encountered broods of Green-winged Teal and Hooded Mergansers. An American Bittern flew from one side of the marsh to the other and we encountered many Yellow Warblers singing on the dyke walk. From the nearby woods, we heard Northern Parula, American Redstart and Red-eyed Vireo. Soras were heard in a number of locations and a few Pied-billed Grebes with young were also present. A Woodcock was flushed from the dyke and Wilson's Snipe and Spotted Sandpiper were other shorebirds seen on this part of the walk. A group of aerial swallows including Tree, Barn and Cliff were joined by a handful of Common Terns. As usual, in marshes, we were entertained by many Red-winged Blackbirds and Swamp Sparrows. Leader Paul MacDonald had seen Coots the previous day in the second impoundment, but we

were not successful today. The wet weather had encouraged the growth of many fungi including dog stinkhorns, which were very abundant on the dyke.

The significant wind made the trip in the wooded sections more of a wildflower walk, as there were plenty in splendid bloom as well as a good crop of dewberries. A Chestnut-sided Warbler was a lifer for a Californian visitor. Other birds on the woods walk included Common Yellow-throat, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Ovenbird. Near the end of this walk, a Virginia Rail was heard calling and we realized the marsh was close-by. One lingering hiker heard an Eastern Wood-peewee calling, our only flycatcher for the day!

Half the crew left after a late lunch and we decided to hike the dyke again but this time continuing straight past the observation blind toppled by Hurricane Juan and not turning left into the wooded section. Interestingly, although we covered much the same section, we encountered many different birds. We had broods of American Wigeon and Blue-winged Teal. Other new birds included Bald Eagle, Greater Yellowlegs, Northern Harrier, Mallard and Black Ducks. A treat was a young American Bittern perched on a limb of the birches on the dyke. As we turned back, a flying squawk turned out to be a CASPIAN TERN; a lifer for some and a nice way to end a day of hiking and observing nature in a fresh water marsh. Thanks to Paul MacDonald for leading the trip and to Jost's winery for the prize drawn to a participant who completed the day.

Ken McKenna



George Archibald, native of *Pictou* and long-time NSBS member, began a lifetime career by researching the world literature on cranes for his honours thesis at Dalhousie. He then went on to do his doctoral work at Cornell and to found, in 1973, the International Crane Foundation, in Baraboo, Wisconsin (<http://www.savingcranes.org/>). His great work has been fundamental in establishing protection legislation and reserves throughout the world for these magnificent, widely threatened birds. Each summer he returns to Nova Scotia, and is pictured here (with peak cap and raised binoculars) on a birding field trip organized by the St. Mary's River Association (of which he is an Honorary Director) along the St. Mary's R. to Wine Hbr., *Guysborough*. His companions included our former editor Randy Lauff (on his right), and NSNS Board Member Bernice Moores (behind him in white). [Photo Ken McKenna]

Pictou County

24 July 2004, Leader: Ken McKenna

Prayers were answered as the predicted forecast of rain proved to be incorrect and the dozen birders gathered for some Pictou County birding were treated to a nice day with many nesting species still evident, with a few fall migrants to add a little variety. En route to our first stop at the Churchville beaver dam, both Osprey and Bald Eagle soared over the East River. Recently harvested hayfields had concentrated a number of Bobolinks in the shrubbery downstream from the dam at Churchville. Cliff Swallows were once again nesting under the overhanging eaves of a nearby shed and good looks were had to distinguish them from the Tree Swallows as they flew low over the pond. A Pied-billed Grebe called a couple of times, but was not sighted. Two members of the heron family were in residence; a highly visible Great Blue and a well-camouflaged American Bittern seen only by a solo observer. A Merlin made a fast pass-over calling as it flew.

Along the Brook Road both Eastern Wood-pewee and Olive-sided Flycatcher provided nice, close views and both White-winged and Red Crossbills were heard flying overhead. Other finches included Evening Grosbeak, American Goldfinch, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin, all in good numbers. A Ruffed Grouse used a power-line as an observation post to keep a close eye on her young at the shoulder of the road and provided a nice pose for photographs. A lovely walk was taken into a beaver dam on the Willard Fraser property. Bird-life was a little quiet here, as Eastern Phoebes did not seem to nest under these bridges this year. A young-of-the-year Hooded Merganser took a low profile in the water making it look like a grebe, but all had a convincing look through the scope and saw the distinguishing features.

After a pit stop at Sutherland's River, we proceeded to the west end of Big Island for lunch with only a quick stop along the way to view Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Willet and Semipalmated Sandpipers at the exposed mud flat at the east approach to the causeway. At the sand spit on the West end of the island were a group of 20 Bonaparte's Gulls, a few Common Terns, Double-crested Cormorants and Short-billed Dowitchers. A young Spotted Sandpiper was being guarded by an agitated adult and Bank Swallows were busy feeding young in the nest holes on the headland to Merigomish Harbour. Heading back across the causeway, we stopped and threaded gently through the poison ivy to scope all three Scoter species, Common Eider and Common Loon. A handful of Sanderlings were busy at the water's edge and a lone Whimbrel flew quickly by at a distance. Nelson's Sharp-tailed and Savannah Sparrows were singing from the salt marsh. Just when spirits were starting to sag in the 30C heat, an adult CASPIAN TERN caused a halt to the caravan at the east end of the island and was seen well before it flew off.

At the ponds at Camp Geddie, five broods of young American Wigeon were observed. As we approached our last stop at Egerton, the predicted rain started and we called it a day and said our farewells. Special thanks to all who came along when the forecast was not great and especially to Jeannie McGee who kept us well supplied with fudge and cookies. About 95 species were noted for the day. □



These images of possibly the same LITTLE BLUE HERON at Cow Bay, HRM, on June 19 (left) and April 29 (right) illustrate transformation from basic I to near-adult alternate I plumage. [Photos Ulli Hoeger]

(Continued from back cover)

Thu 24 March 2005 – Regular Meeting

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

“Surveying for Owls” – Guest Speaker: Becky Whittam, Bird Studies Canada

Wed 30 March 2005 – 50th Anniversary Bird Lecture Series

NSMNH, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, 7:30 p.m.

“50 Years of Watching, Recording, Studying & Saving Birds”

Organizer: Joan Waldron

This series will look at notable birders in Nova Scotia and their contributions to conservation and research. Subsequent lectures will be given on Wed 6 April, Wed 13 April, and Wed 27 April. For more information on topics and speakers see the write-up elsewhere in this issue.

Sat 2 April 2005 – Baccaro and Blanche Peninsula

Leader: Donna Ensor (902) 875-4269

E-mail: smokeytow@yahoo.com

Early Spring birding with Donna. Rarities have shown up here quite often at this time of year. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at exit 28 off Hwy #103 (Port Clyde). Dress warmly and bring a lunch. Rain date: Sun 3 April.

Sat 9 April 2005 – Martinique Beach

Leader: Ian McLaren 429-7024 E-mail: iamclar@dal.ca

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

Sun 24 April 2005 – Wolfville Area

Leader: Jim Wolford (902) 542-9204 E-mail:

jww.triv@ns.sympatico.ca

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

Thu 28 April 2005 – Regular Meeting

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

To Be Announced

NSBS 50th Anniversary Special Lecture Series

50 years of Watching, Recording, Studying & Saving Birds.

During the past 50 years, Nova Scotia has seen significant changes in its bird populations. Taxonomic knowledge has progressed, research and conservation has evolved, birding has grown in popularity, and backyard feeding has increased. Throughout the years a number of notable contributors to our bird knowledge in Nova Scotia have made their mark. Robie Tufts and his prodigy Earl Godfrey are just two of a long list. This lecture series will introduce you to some of these people and their role in conservation, research and census programs.

Birding: The Organized Co-operative Approach. Wed, March 30, 7:30pm

Ian McLaren has been a member of the Bird Society for many years and has played an important role in recording data about birds. He has participated in numerous field trips and met many of the characters who made up Nova Scotia's birding community over the years. Tonight he will share his memories and note some of the contributions made by members.

Robie Tufts (1884-1982): Documenting Nova Scotia Birdlife. Wed, April 6, 7:30pm

Robie Tufts, author, Chief Migratory Bird Officer for the Maritime Provinces, educator to schools, service clubs and other societies, promoter of conservation, was a legend in Nova Scotia's bird world. Merritt Gibson helped put together the Robie Tufts archives and museum at Acadia University. He followed the career of this great character of a man and he shares some of Robie's life and work with us tonight.

Thousand of Shorebirds: More or Less ? Wed., April 13, 7:30pm

Peter Hicklin of the Canadian Wildlife Service, as well as his other research, has been banding shorebirds for 13 years and knows how important good data is. When he meets with other shorebird biologists from both from Canada and other countries to look at trends, good information from researchers and birders is invaluable. Tonight he will tell us about his work with shorebirds and comments on the data he has received from naturalists and birders in the Maritimes for many, many years.

Ducks and Geese- over the past 50 years. Wed., April 27, 7:30pm

Since 1955 waterfowl have become indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem health, not targets for hunters. Milestones in that shift include Canada Wildlife Act, Ramsar Convention, Wetlands for the Americas, North American Waterfowl Management Plan and other mechanism to save wetlands. Tony Erskine, scientist emeritus with CWS, has seen all those changes working and will share his long history in this important part of bird conservation with us tonight. □



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, directions or restrictions(e.g. dogs are not normally allowed on field trips). 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 as well as all field trip reports should be directed to the Events Editor, Suzanne Borkowski 445-2922. Email: sborkowski@hfx.eastlink.ca

Sat 13 Nov 2004 – Canso and Area

Leaders: Steve Bushell 366-2527 and Tom Kavanaugh
E-mail: terri.crane@ns.sympatico.ca

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Chapel Gully Trail parking lot. Come down Main Street, turn right onto Union, go past the Marina and take the next right onto Wilmot. The parking lot is at the top of the hill. Fall migration is in full swing on Canso at this time of year, so be prepared for almost anything! No rain date. Accommodations will be available just outside Canso and in Antigonish for those wanting to do Randy's trip the following day.

Sun 14 Nov 2004 – Antigonish Coastal Waters

Leader: Randy Lauff 867-2471 E-mail: rlauff@stfx.ca

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Uncle Ron's Coffee Shop on the TCH just east of exit 35 (Lower South River). This trip covers the waters of St. Georges Bay and the Antigonish Harbour. We'll end the day at Ogdens Pond which has hosted thousands of gulls, ducks and, in some years, inland gannets. No rain date.

Thu 25 Nov 2004 – Regular Meeting

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

"Sable Island Birds and Their Habitats" Guest Speaker: Zoe Lucas

Sat 04 Dec 2004 – Cape Sable Island

Leader: Murray Newell 745-3340 E-mail: dowitcher@eastlink.ca

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Tim Horton's in Barrington Passage. This is a good chance to get a start on your winter list. We'll hunt for rare birds, shorebirds, etc. Bring proper clothes, sturdy footwear and a lunch if you wish. No storm date.

Sun 05 Dec 2004 – Metro "Hot Spot" Birding

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

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Sullivans Pond and dress warmly. We will check local sites for rarities and unusual birds as a prelude to the Christmas Bird Count. Storm date: Saturday 11 Dec.

Tue Dec 14 2004 – Mon 3 Jan 2005 – Christmas Bird Counts

There are 35 different CBC's held annually in Nova Scotia. To obtain more info on a count near you, click on Blake Maybank's winter birding link on our Nova Scotia Bird Society's website (address on inside front cover), or type the following website address into your browser: <http://www3.ns.sympatico.ca/maybank/other/ns.cbc.htm>

Sat 08 Jan 2005 - Sewer Stroll 1 – Halifax/Dartmouth Area

Leader: Bob McDonald 443-5051

E-mail: bobathome@hfx.eastlink.ca

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot of McCormack's Beach Provincial Park, just past Boondocks Restaurant in Eastern Passage. We'll look for rare birds and regular winter visitors. Dress for cold weather and bring a lunch. Plan to carpool as much as possible. Storm date: Sun 9 Jan.

Thu 27 Jan 2005 - NSBS 50th Birthday Party and Members' Slide Night with cake and "historic" photos.

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

Join us at the launch of our year-long anniversary celebration! Bring along some of your favourite slides related to birds and birding. See you there!

Sat 29 Jan 2005 – HFN Sewer Stroll, Halifax/Dartmouth Area

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

E-mail: pce@accesswave.ca

Meet at 9:15 a.m. in the parking lot behind Boondocks Restaurant, Fisherman's Cove, Eastern Passage. Dress warmly and bring a lunch, binoculars, field guides and telescope (if you have one). Storm date: Sun 30 Jan.

Sat 19 Feb 2005 – Sewer Stroll 2 – Halifax/Dartmouth Area

Leader: Fulton Lavender 455-4966

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot of McCormack's Beach Provincial Park, just past Boondocks Restaurant in Eastern Passage. Dress warmly and bring a lunch. Storm date: Sun 20 Feb.

Thu 24 Feb 2005 – Regular Meeting

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

"Historic Rare Bird Sightings in Nova Scotia" Guest Speaker: Ian McLaren

Sun 20 March 2005 – Along the Fundy Shore

Leader: Jim Wolford (902) 542-9204

E-mail: jww.triv@ns.sympatico.ca

This will be a joint trip with the Blomidon Naturalists Society. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in Wolfville at the town wharf off the east end of Front Street. We'll be visiting various spots along the shore such as Annapolis Royal and Digby to the ferry terminal. Dress warmly and bring a lunch. No storm date.

(Continued on inside back cover)