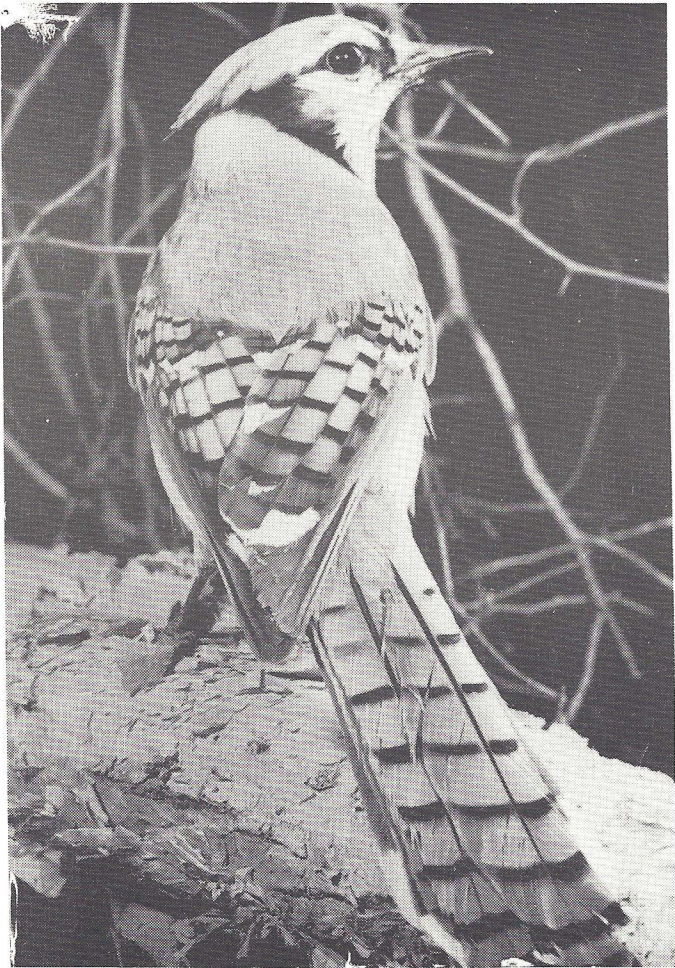


Nova Scotia Bird Society

Newsletter



April 1964

BLUE JAY COVER PHOTO BY:
JOHN H. GERARD
1130 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

Nova Scotia Bird Society **Newsletter**

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MR. C. R. K. ALLEN, EXECUTIVE MEMBER

MR. W. J. MILLS, EXECUTIVE MEMBER

MR. R. A. KANIGSBURG, HONOURARY SOLICITOR

MR. F. A. LANE, AUDITOR

Editorial

The NEWSLETTER is the most important project of the Nova Scotia Bird Society. Having as we do such a widely-scattered membership, the opportunities for getting together are limited to the annual meeting and to the occasional field day. The NEWSLETTER, on the other hand, reaches all members. The NEWSLETTER is the Society.

For this reason your Executive Committee has agreed that our publication deserves a more permanent and attractive format than the mimeographed pages distributed from time to time in the past. The issue you are now reading marks our first effort in this direction. We intend to improve in successive issues which will appear three times each year. The credit for the excellence of contents of this issue and of those of the past two years goes to our willing and capable Editor, Mrs. John W. Dobson.

Naturally this improved NEWSLETTER will cost the Society more. At the annual meeting last November some members questioned the wisdom of the Society in having an accumulation of more than a thousand dollars and wondered why it had not been spent. It was pointed out that some money must be available for the acquisition of desirable sanctuary areas in the future, for at least one of which there has been some commitment. While this situation has not changed the Executive has nonetheless decided to invest some of this money in the NEWSLETTER and to replenish our funds by the use of at least two methods.

First, believing that in the improved NEWSLETTER we now have something better to offer, we feel that the time has come to increase our membership - doubling it at once if possible - by asking each member to enroll at least one new member in the current year. This should not prove difficult as the Society has

never tried to enlist members. All of us probably know of some person outside of the Society who is interested in its recreational scientific and conservational role, and who would be glad to join if approached.

Second, a modest increase in dues will have to be planned. Many people have remarked on the absurdly low fee of one dollar now charged, in fact, a few have said it could hardly be a Society worth joining for that reason. Unfortunately that stated amount is a part of our constitution and, because of its restrictive nature, any increase in dues is not possible until the annual meeting in 1965. (Notice of any proposed amendment must be submitted at an annual meeting for consideration at the next annual meeting.) Your Executive Committee plans to propose an increase in dues this fall and hopes that the Society will approve of this in the following year.

In the meantime our increased membership should enable us to publish the NEWSLETTER in this improved form and, at the same time, to make it possible to maintain enough of a reserve to take care of any land acquisition that may be necessary before 1966.

Finally, all members are reminded that the NEWSLETTER, and incidentally your Society, cannot be successful unless the Editor receives information from the members. Send your observations regularly to the Editor, Nova Scotia Bird Society, Nova Scotia Museum of Science, Halifax. Remember that the absence or unusual abundance of common species is just as important as the occurrence of rare ones. Specify locations, dates and numbers of birds seen should be included in all records and corroborative details supplied with any unusual observations.

L.B.M.

PROVINCIAL FIELD DAY

ACCORDING TO PRESENT PLANS, THE PROVINCIAL FIELD DAY WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY, JULY 5TH, IN DIGBY COUNTY. MRS. VICTOR CARDOZA, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY, HAS OFFERED TO MAP A ROUTE FOR US, WHICH WILL INCLUDE BOTH SHORELINE AND WOODLAND. EXACT TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE JUNE NEWSLETTER.

THE WINTER SEASON AND THE CHRISTMAS COUNTS OF 63-64

The most noticeable aspect of the birds this winter has been their relative absence in January and February, accountable, no doubt, to the deep snow and unseasonable cold weather in December. This scarcity has been remarked not only in Nova Scotia but in the Northeastern United States as well. The situation has been aggravated by the failure of the cone crop and consequent absence of many of the seed-eating winter finches.

On the Christmas Counts at the end of December the bird population in species and numbers was somewhat lower than average, but still 90 species were identified in the Province. Disappointingly, the number of counts sent in was the fewest ever - only eleven - but they recorded some noteworthy observations; particularly, Pied-billed Grebe, King Eider and Dunlin, noted for the first time on Christmas Counts.

On selected counts which have been made regularly for some years, the Blue Jay was more than twice as abundant as in past records. Golden-crowned Kinglets were very scarce. As mentioned above, most winter finches, except Evening Grosbeaks, were practically absent. In the entire province the count reported 6 White-winged Crossbills, 1 Pine Siskin, 1 Pine Grosbeak and no Redpolls.

The details of the counts submitted are recorded below, more or less in a north to south order. Notable observations are underlined.

CATALONE, CAPE BRETON CO., December 21, 1963.

Common Loon, 5; Red-throated Loon, 2; Red-necked Grebe, 3; Horned Grebe, 4; Great Cormorant, 1; Canada Goose, 650; Mallard, 1; Black Duck, 12; Greater Scaup, 1; Common Goldeneye, 37; Bufflehead, 1; Oldsquaw, 101; Harlequin Duck, 2; King Eider, 2; Common Eider, 329; White-winged Scoter, 11; Surf Scoter, 1; Red-breasted Merganser, 34; Ruddy Turnstone, 10; Purple Sandpiper, 2; Sanderling, 2; Glaucous Gull, 1; Iceland Gull, 167; Great Black-backed Gull, 900; Herring Gull, 1600; Dovekie, 2; Black Guillemot, 9; Gray Jay, 2; Blue Jay, 3; Raven, 7; Common Crow, 61; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; Boreal Chickadee, 5; Starling, 20; House Sparrow, 56; Slate-colored Junco, 7; Song Sparrow 1.

TOTALS: 37 species, about 4035 individuals. (Also seen in count period: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Bald Eagle, Spruce Grouse, Thick-billed Murre, White-winged Crossbill.)

Carlton Lunn, Gwen Lunn, John Lunn (compiler), Simon Lunn

AMHERST AREA, CUMBERLAND CO., December 27, 1963.

Marsh Hawk, 1; Ring-necked Pheasant, 23; Herring Gull, 1; Rock Dove, 15; Downy Woodpecker, 3; Gray Jay, 1; Blue Jay, 40; Common Crow, 64; Black-capped Chickadee, 25; Starling, 64; House Sparrow, 76; Rusty Blackbird, 2; Brown-headed Cowbird, 1; Evening Grosbeak, 17; Snow Bunting, 2.

TOTALS: 15 species, about 333 individuals. (Also seen in count period: Rufous-sided Towhee.)

Mrs. Richard Airey, Mrs. Robert Chapman, Mrs. Edna Freeman, Mrs. Mary Harrison, Mrs. Barbara Hennigar, Miss Evelyn Lowerison (Compiler), Mrs. Morris Scovil.

PICTOU, PICTOU CO., December 31, 1963.

Great Black-backed Gull, 1; Herring Gull, 12; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 8; Common Crow, 34; Black-capped Chickadee, 10; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Robin, 1; Starling, 32; House Sparrow, 60; Brown-headed Cowbird, 5; Evening Grosbeak, 46; Slate-colored Junco, 12; Tree Sparrow, 1.

TOTALS: 15 species, about 226 individuals. (Also seen in count period: Song Sparrow.)

E. Holdway (compiler)

SPRINGVILLE, PICTOU CO., January 1, 1964.

Black Duck, 1; Bald Eagle, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 2; Herring Gull, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 72; Common Raven, 3; Common Crow, 60; Black-capped Chickadee, 27; Boreal Chickadee, 2; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Starling, 42; House Sparrow, 49; Evening Grosbeak, 17; White-winged Crossbill, 1.

TOTALS: 16 species, about 284 individuals. (Also seen in count period: Red-tailed Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Hairy Woodpecker.

Fred Kenney (compiler), Mrs. Fred Kenney, Cecily Tod.

WOLFVILLE, KINGS CO., December 28; 1963.

Black Duck, 50; Green-winged Teal, 9; Common Goldeneye, 57; Common Scoter, 2; Common Merganser, 17; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2; Red-tailed Hawk, 7; Rough-legged Hawk, 5; Bald Eagle, 6; Pigeon Hawk, 1; Ruffed Grouse, 1; Ring-necked Pheasant, 48; Gray Partridge, 12; Great Black-backed Gull, 121; Herring Gull, 203; Rock Dove, 263; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Horned Lark, 257; Blue Jay, 122; Common Raven, 64; Common Crow, 708; Black-capped Chickadee, 67; Boreal Chickadee, 4; White-breasted Nuthatch, 9; Robin, 11; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Starling, 809; House Sparrow, 1039; Brown-headed Cowbird, 22; Evening Grosbeak, 153; Pine Siskin, 1; American Goldfinch, 33; Savannah Sparrow, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 348; Tree Sparrow, 7; White-throated Sparrow, 2; Song Sparrow, 16; Lapland Longspur 3;

TOTALS: 39 species, about 4487 individuals.

S. Bleakney, C. Chipman, C. Coldwell, A. Erskine, J. M. Erskine, J. S. Erskine (compiler), R. Erskine, C. MacDonald, S. MacDonald, W. Neily, P. Smith, M. Townsend, R. Townsend, N. VanNostrand, R. Waseem.

Feeding Stations: R. Eagles, M. Forbes.

Additional observations were made in the Wolfville Area by Mrs. John D. McGray.

HALIFAX AREA (WEST) HALIFAX CO., Dec. 29, 1963.

Common Loon, 6; Red-necked Grebe, 14; Horned Grebe, 17; Great Cormorant, 28; Black Duck, 9; Common Goldeneye, 57; Oldsquaw, 8; Common Eider, 14; White-winged Scoter, 7; Surf Scoter, 11; Common Scoter, 7; Red-breasted Merganser, 13; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 2; Bald Eagle, 1; Iceland Gull, 12; Great Black-backed Gull, 270; Herring Gull, 1500; Ring-billed Gull, 1; Black-headed Gull, 3; Dovekie, 50; Rock Dove, 450; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 8; Gray Jay, 8; Blue Jay, 21; Common Raven, 11; Common Crow, 78; Black-capped Chickadee, 155; Boreal Chickadee, 40; White-breasted Nuthatch, 6; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 3; Brown Creeper, 1; Mockingbird, 1; Robin, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 8; Bohemian Waxwing, 16; Northern Shrike, 1; Starling, 4000; House Sparrow, 1500; Brown-headed Cowbird, 25; Evening Grosbeak, 90; American Goldfinch, 23; White-winged Crossbill, 4; Slate-colored Junco, 8; Tree Spar-

row, 4; Fox Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 5.

TOTALS: 48 species, about 8502 individuals, (Also seen in count period: Great Blue Heron, Pigeon Hawk, Snowy Owl.)

C.R.K. and Mrs. Allen, Mrs. C.T. Awalt, Mrs. E.A. Bell, Jack Brayley, Mrs. P.S. Christie, W.J. Chute, Miss Molly Clayden, Mrs. Arthur Coffill, John Comer, Miss Ethel Crathorne, B.K. Doane, Mrs. John W. Dobson, Miss Alice Falkenham, Mrs. Eric Grant, J.B. Hardie, Mrs. R.C. Hebb, Mrs. R.H. Helpard, S. Ward and Mrs. Hemeon, E. Jantzen, L.A. Macpherson, L.B. Macpherson (compiler), J.A. McCarter, W.J. Mills, H.P. Moffatt, Allen North, Mrs. C.C. Ward.

HALIFAX AREA (EAST) HALIFAX CO., Dec. 22, 1963.

Common Loon, 3; Red-throated Loon, 3; Red-necked Grebe, 3; Horned Grebe, 4; Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Great Cormorant, 1; Canada Goose, 1500; Black Duck, 1250; Common Goldeneye, 45; Bufflehead, 41; Oldsquaw, 27; Common Eider, 23; White-winged Scoter, 1; Common Scoter, 9; Common Merganser, 3; Red-breasted Merganser, 55; Goshawk, 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 1; Bald Eagle, 4; Ruffed Grouse, 1; Common Snipe, 1; Purple Sandpiper, 29; Dunlin, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 385; Herring Gull, 195; Ring-billed Gull, 35; Black-headed Gull, 8; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, 1; Horned Lark, 4; Gray Jay, 2; Blue Jay, 18; Common Raven, 26; Common Crow, 54; Black-capped Chickadee, 42; Boreal Chickadee, 6; Brown Creeper, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 3; Starling, 205; House Sparrow, 95; Brown-headed Cowbird, 4; Evening Grosbeak, 6; American Goldfinch, 11; White-winged Crossbill, 1; Savannah Sparrow, 16; Slate-colored Junco, 15; Tree Sparrow, 5; Fox Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 15; Snow Bunting, 8.

TOTALS: 52 species, about 4177 individuals.

C.R.K. Allen, W.J. Chute, Miss Molly Clayden, John Comer, Mrs. J.W. Dobson, Norman Doucette, Miss Sylvia Fullerton, I.A. Macpherson, L.B. Macpherson (compiler).

BRIDGETOWN, ANNAPOLIS CO., January 1, 1964.

Common Loon, 6; Common Goldeneye, 1; Oldsquaw, 6; Common Eider, 8; White-winged Scoter, 3; Common Scoter, 2; Common Merganser, 7; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Ruffed Grouse, 1; Ring-necked Pheasant, 4; Purple Sandpiper, 3; Great Black-backed Gull, 6; Herring Gull, 110; Rock Dove, 12; Saw-whet Owl, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Blue Jay, 73; Common Raven, 7; Common Crow, 145; Black-capped Chickadee, 11; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Robin, 1; Starling, 230; House Sparrow, 285; Meadow-lark, 1; Common Grackle, 1; Evening Grosbeak, 6.

TOTALS: 28 species, about 934 individuals.

Myrtle Fraser, Calder Fraser, (compiler), Walter Harlow, Mona Hicks, Wilfred Marshall, Roy Whitman, Stewart Whitman.

KARSDALE, ANNAPOLIS CO., December 29, 1963.

Black Duck, 36; Unidentified ducks, 15; Rough-legged Hawk, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 6; Herring Gull, 48; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Horned Lark, 2; Blue Jay, 9; Common Raven, 9; Common Crow, 35; Black-capped Chickadee, 8; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Robin, 1; Starling, 10; House Sparrow, 15; American Goldfinch, 1; Unidentified small finches, 4.

TOTALS: 15 species, about 202 individuals, (Also seen in count period: Ring-necked Pheasant, Golden-crowned Kinglet,

Pine Grosbeak.)

Joseph Johnson, (compiler)

CHESTER, LUNENBURG CO., December 25; 1963.

Great Cormorant, 6; Oldsquaw, 16; Blue Jay, 3; Black-capped Chickadee, 2; Evening Grosbeak, 24; Song Sparrow, 8.

TOTALS: 6 species, about 59 individuals.

Mrs. Gerald Dwyer, Mrs. C. S. Unwin..

CHEBOGUE AREA, YARMOUTH CO., December 29, 1963.

Black Duck, 10; Common Goldeneye, 50; Greater Scaup, 25; Common Merganser, 12; Red-breasted Merganser, 1; Unidentified Hawk 1; Gray Jay, 3; Blue Jay, 10; Common Raven, 1; Common Crow, 6; Black-capped Chickadee, 50; Boreal Chickadee, 1; Mockingbird, 1; Starling, 4; Myrtle Warbler, 5; House Sparrow, 15; Evening Grosbeak, 16; Slate-colored Junco, 18; Tree Sparrow, 4.

TOTALS: 19 species, about 230 individuals.

Miss Marjorie Kenny, Marsden Kenny, Mrs. E.G. Sollows (compiler).

BOHEMIAN WAXWING

This winter, 1963-64, has again seen an invasion of Bohemian Waxwings in the Atlantic Provinces and Northeastern United States. The first authentic report on this species for Nova Scotia was exactly a century ago, when a flock was seen near Halifax. These wanderers from the far northwest occurred sporadically until 1921 (Tufts) after which none was observed until 1958.

Since then sightings have been reported almost every winter, and during the present season your editor has received twelve records of individual birds, or of flocks numbering up to 31, from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Maine and New Hampshire. Five of these reports are from Nova Scotia and are listed in the noteworthy Observation section below.

It is interesting to note that several observers have also reported Cedar Waxwings during January and February, and while in some cases these might have been confused with their larger western relatives, there are several certain records including one very recent one of two Cedar Waxwings seen feeding with Robins on hawthorn berries in Halifax (city) on February 27.

DOVEKIES

"On December 1, an estimated 45,000 Dovekies were observed at Rockport, Massachusetts, on Cape Ann, near Gloucester. The birds apparently were passing along shore, and were not being driven inland. November 29 and 30 were marked by strong easterly and southeasterly gales, but on December 1 the winds were westerly and the weather was fair."

The above is a quotation from a letter received from one of our members, Mr. Aaron Bagg, who wrote asking for Nova Scotia records of Dovekies seen on that date. Only four were forthcoming. One bird was rescued near Minudie in an exhausted condition, and another was similarly rescued from the back of Lawrencetown beach. (Dovekies are quite helpless on land.) Mrs. Raymond of Smith's Cove reported a 'great number' present in the Annapolis Basin on December 1, and Wickerson Lent of Brier Island wrote: "We saw our first (Dovekies) for the season on Nov. 14, about



Dovekie

ALLEN D. CRUICKSHANK
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

150. From then on until Jan. 7 we would see hundreds every day, and some days they would number in the thousands, most all flying by the Island the heaviest concentration was around December 1".

Further reports mention hundreds of Dovekies present in Passamaquoddy Bay and in the bays on either side of Pemaquid Point, Lincoln County, Maine, at about this time. Mr. Bagg goes on to say:

"Looking in Palmer's 'Maine Birds' and 'The Birds of Massachusetts' by Griscom and Snyder, one finds that the great influxes of Dovekies are largely limited to November and early December. Yet we certainly can get severe easterly gales all winter long. This suggests that the Dovekies get into trouble when they are in the process of deliberate movement in late fall. Palmer states: 'Migration continues into December'. It has been suggested that the Dovekies, at sea, have to move when Atlantic storms drive the plankton down. Also, there was the suggestion, in the 1932 influx, that Dovekies from the European side of the N. Atlantic had swarmed like lemmings in our direction. These suggestions are doubtless correct. But I still think that the preponderance of November and early December influxes indicates a relation to deliberate fall movements which approximates migration.'

TOWHEES

Since September we have received 22 reports of occurrences of the Rufous-sided Towhee. Ten of these were from Nova Scotia, the rest from New Brunswick and Maine. For the most part, single birds were seen, widely scattered and not associated with any special weather conditions. To quote Mr. Aaron Bagg again (to whom we are indebted for our Maine and New Brunswick records), "it is interesting that several of the records can be

related to periods of air flow from the southwest The air flow during Oct. 24-26 suggests that the birds simply wander north-eastward in relatively fair weather, as the high pressure area moves eastward, and the winds shift gradually from NW to W to SW. In such cases the birds would not be driven (for stormy weather is not involved) ... Hurricane 'Ginny' which brought birds of various kinds to Nova Scotia, seems not to have brought Towhees. ('Ginny' passed over Nova Scotia on Oct. 29.) Circumstantially, this again suggests fair-weather, northeastward wandering by the towhees!"

OTHER NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS DURING THE LATE FALL AND WINTER, 1963 - 64.

COMMON EGRET

1 OCT. 31-Nov. 6/63 CAPE SABLE ISLAND H. F. LEWIS

SNOWY EGRET

1 OCT. 29-Nov. 17/63 VILLAGEDALE, (SHELBURNE COUNTY) REPORTED TO H.F. LEWIS (SHELBURNE COASTGUARD)

1 NOV.. 3, 6/63 CAPE SABLE ISLAND H. F. LEWIS
1 JAN. 6/63 BON PORTAGE ISLAND E. RICHARDSON

LITTLE BLUE HERON

1 NOV. 17/63 NEAR PINCKNEY'S POINT, YAR. CO. C.R.K. ALLEN

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE

1 (A)DEC. 31/63 BON PORTAGE ISLAND E. RICHARDSON TO H.F. LEWIS (COASTGUARD)

KILDEER

5 NOV. 1/63 CLARK'S HARBOUR H. F. LEWIS
1 NOV.. 1//63 OSBORNE H.. F. LEWIS
1 NOV.. 2/63 COLE HARBOUR T. MORLAND
7 NOV. 5/63 CHEZZETCOOK L.B. MACPHERSON..D. DICKSON
4 NOV.. 6&7/63 BON PORTAGE ISLAND H.F. LEWIS
1 DEC. 1/63 CAPE SABLE H. F. LEWIS
3 CAPE SABLE B.J.. SMITH
1 DEC. 18/63 CAPE SABLE B.J. SMITH DEC. 10/63

GLAUCOUS GULL

1 (A)FEB..2/63 GREENWICH, KINGS CO. REPORTED BY R.W. TUFTS, WHO NOTES THIS A 'FIRST' FOR KINGS CO.

LAUGHING GULL

3 DEC.. 20-29/63 BON PORTAGE ISLAND E. RICHARDSON TO H.F. LEWIS, (COASTGUARD)

IVORY GULL

1 JAN.. 15 (STILL AROUND) CAPE SABLE B.J. SMITH

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

1 (J) NOV.. 1963 SHERBROOKE J.C. HINGLEY
(THROUGHOUT)

BROWN THRASHER

1 DEC. 6/63 HALIFAX COUNTY MR. MONIES

MOCKINGBIRD

1 NOV. 5/63 & AFTER HALIFAX COUNTY MRS. HELPARD AND OTHERS
1 NOV. 11/63 COLE HBR., HFX., CO. E. CRATHORNE
1 NOV. 11/63 COUNTY HOME, DART. W.J. MILLS

* WOOD THRUSH

1 OCT.. 30/63 WEST MIDDLE SABLE H.F. LEWIS (SEE NOTE BELOW)

BOHEMIAN WAXWING

2 NOV. 14/63 AMHERST M.M. SCOVIL
1 DEC.. 4/63 BEDFORD B. COFFILL (THIS BIRD (OR ANOTHER) HAS RETURNED FROM TIME TO TIME)
16 DEC.. 26/63 CAMPERDOWN, HFX. CO. CHRISTMAS COUNT
18 FEB. 10/64 HEBRON, YAR. CO. MRS.. G. SAUNDERS
13 FEB. 10/64 HALIFAX D. KRANTZ

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE

1 NOV. 10/63 *THE PIGGERY* DART. C.R.K. ALLEN, L.B. MACPHERSON

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER			
1	SEPT. 10/63	CAPE SABLE (AT THE LIGHTHOUSE)	MR. B. SMITH
YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT			
1	NOV. 25/63	DUNCAN'S COVE (EATING RED HAWTHORN BERRIES)	J.C. MORROW
1	DEC. 10/63	PORT MOUTON (KILLED BY A CAT)	H.F. TUFTS
1	DEC. 14/63	SHELBURNE	H.F. LEWIS (COASTGUARD)
* HOODED WARBLER			
1(M)	NOV. 28/63	SABLE RIVER	H.F. LEWIS (SEE NOTE BELOW)
MEADOW LARK			
1	NOV. 1/63	CAPE SABLE	B.J. SMITH
2	NOV. 2/63	COLE HARBOR - CHEZZETCOOK	L.B. MACPHERSON, T. MORLAND D. DICKSON.
4	NOV. 6/63	CAPE SABLE	B.J. SMITH
1	DEC. 22/63	TRURO	REPORTED TO P. HEMION
YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD			
1	DEC. 20/63	LIVERPOOL	V.D. RYAN
		FOLLOWING AN ALL-DAY N.E. WIND AND SNOW, SEEN FEEDING WITH STARLINGS AND COWBIRDS.	10 ⁰ . FIELD MARKS WELL DESCRIBED,
DICKCISSEL			
1(M)	NOV. 1/63	SHELBURNE	H.F. LEWIS (COASTGUARD)
RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE			
1	OCT. 22/63	SABLE RIVER	H.F. LEWIS (COASTGUARD)
1	OCT. 26/63	LOWER OHIO	H.F. LEWIS (COASTGUARD)
1	NOV. 30/63	HALIFAX (CITY)	C.W. HELLEINER
1	NOV. 24/63	DARTMOUTH (PIGGERY)	M. CLAYDEN
1	DEC. 1/63	(SEVERAL WEEKS) AMHERST	E. LOWERISON
FIELD SPARROW			
2	NOV. 5/63	BON PORTAGE ISLAND	H.F. LEWIS
1	NOV. 7/63	CAPE SABLE	H.F. LEWIS

Two most extraordinary reports have come to us from Mr. Aaron Bagg: BURROWING OWL was found dead in Newport, R.I. on Nov. 13, 1963. FULVOUS TREE DUCKS, 13-18 (of which 4 were shot) in Merrymeeting Bay Maine, on Nov. 22, 1963.

*These two notes by Dr. H. F. Lewis are copied from the 'Shelburne Coastguard'.

*THE WOOD THRUSH

After stalling and hesitating over the Atlantic for several days, hurricane 'Ginny' struck Nova Scotia on October 29. The next morning Mr. and Mrs. Foster Lisk, of West Middle Sable noticed that their cat was carrying a dead bird. The victim, freshly killed and still warm with body heat, was taken from the cat and examined. Since it proved to be unfamiliar, it was turned over to Mr. and Mrs. Foster Lisk, Jr., to be kept frozen in an electric refrigerator until your columnist could identify it.

When the bird was produced we were astonished to see that it was a Wood Thrush, a kind of songbird that has been seen in Nova Scotia two or three times but of which no specimen taken in Nova Scotia was known.

Since then this Wood Thrush has been deposited in the National Museum of Canada, where in the form of a study skin, it

will be preserved as evidence of the occurrence of this species in our province. The museum reports that, in dissection, the specimen proved to be a male less than a year old. The excellent course of action taken by the Lisks with respect to it has paid off!

The regular breeding range of the Wood Thrush extends northeast to southern Maine, but there are two nesting records from extreme southwestern New Brunswick. This bird prefers to live in damp, shady forests.

*THE HOODED WARBLER

In Sable River, November 28 was calm, sunny and cool. As your columnist left Sable River Post Office, late in the morning of that day, he noticed on the ground the shadow of a small bird flitting among the bare twigs of an apple tree. On looking intently into the tree-top, he was unable to see any bird until suddenly a small one with bright yellow underparts darted from the tree and crossed the road and the neighbouring field to a maple grove. Prompt pursuit was undertaken.

On arrival of the observer at the maple grove, the only small birds in evidence were a couple of Black-capped Chickadees and one or two Golden-crowned Kinglets. Since it seemed probable that a stray small bird might prefer to remain in the vicinity of these natives, the area was kept under close observation. After about ten minutes, the stranger appeared and was clearly and repeatedly observed, through a X6 binocular, at a distance of about 15 feet, as it sought food on mossy prostrate logs. It was a male hooded warbler, a bird that nests in swampy thickets of the eastern United States from Connecticut southward. What a prize!!

Subsequent investigation revealed that the latest fall date for the hooded warbler in the United States is November 19, nine days earlier than this Nova Scotian record.

AT A RECENT EXECUTIVE MEETING OF THE N.S.B.S. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT THE SOCIETY MAKE A COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC TRANSPARENCIES FOR A POSSIBLE FUTURE EXHIBITION. ANYONE WILLING TO DO SO IS ASKED TO SEND A SLIDE, OR DUPLICATE OF A SLIDE, DEPICTING SOME BIRD OR BIRD BEHAVIOUR WHICH WOULD BE INTERESTING TO THE SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. THIS SHOULD BE MAILED TO THE NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY, NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM OF SCIENCE, HALIFAX, N.S.

THE EXECUTIVE IS NOW IN POSSESSION OF A SUPPLY OF BOOKLETS PUT OUT BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF WATERFOWL. THESE ARE EXCELLENT GUIDES, BOTH DESCRIPTIVE AND PICTORIAL, AND ARE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS AT 30¢ EACH. APPLY TO THE SECRETARY, NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY, NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM OF SCIENCE, HALIFAX, N.S.

ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS SEEN AT WOOD ISLAND, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND FROM MAY TO NOVEMBER 1956 to 1963.

Captain E. Holdway

AREA COVERED; one mile radius the ferry dock at Wood Island, P.E.I. This area provides good feeding ground for waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, swallows and sparrows. On the northern boundary there are small areas of weedy fields, alder thickets and mixed woods, suitable for warblers, flycatchers, and other woodland birds.

PHYSIOGRAPHY AND VEGETATION: on the west side of the causeway leading to the ferry terminal the land is low, rising from sea level to ten feet. This area consists of about six acres of neglected fields growing up with woods and small tamarack trees. These fields are contained on the north side by small mixed woods (spruce, tamarack, pin cherry), on the east and west by dense alder thickets growing down into broad salt marsh edges and mud flats. On the higher ground at the edge of the woods are tangles of wild rose, bayberry, some witherod and a few hawthorn bushes. Cranberry and blueberry in small patches are present in season.

To the east of the causeway lies a long white sand beach backed by sand dunes covered by coarse grass and large patches of wild pea. This beach partly encloses a shallow bay where tide recedes for three quarters of a mile, leaving exposed many sandbars and shallow pools with a depth of less than twelve inches. Some pools are thick with seaweed and small beds of mussels are growing on gravel bars bare at low water spring tides. Small clams from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches are also numerous.

Outside the harbour to the south and facing the Northumberland Strait are perpendicular red sandstone cliffs varying in height from three to thirty feet.

These cliffs extend in an east-west direction for about one mile, exposing a narrow rocky foreshore at low tide with two widely separated reefs running to seaward. Periwinkles are numerous on the rocks and in many places the cliffs are honeycombed with the nest holes of Bank Swallows. There are about twenty acres of grassland behind the cliffs on the east side, but only a narrow strip of sand dunes on the west side.

Inside the harbour are wide areas of partly exposed mud flats and sand bars cut by narrow tidal channels thick with eel grass. One small grassy islet with a white sand ridge is above the level of the highest tides and provides a nesting site for common terns.

The absence of winter sea-bird records in the following list may be explained by the fact that Northumberland Strait is filled with drift ice during the winter months. (Ed.)

COMMON LOON. Spring and fall migrant, rare in summer. Peak months: May - October and November.

RED-THROATED LOON. Rare in spring, common in fall, Peak months: October and November.

RED-NECKED GREBE. Uncommon fall migrant. October and November,

HORNED GREBE. Uncommon fall migrant. Peak month November; seen occasionally in October.

PIED-BILLED GREBE. Rare. Seen occasionally on salt water. Probably nests up a small river that discharges into Wood

Island Harbour.

SOOTY SHEARWATER..One record for August.

LEACH'S PETREL. Uncommon transient July to November.

WILSON'S PETREL. One record for August, two for September.

GANNET. Common May to November. Peak month: October. Bird Rock sanctuary lies 130 miles to the northward..

GREAT CORMORANT. Uncommon May to November. A few birds regularly observed coming along to feed over offshore reefs..

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT. Uncommon May to Oct.

GREAT BLUE HERON. Common May to October. Stragglers in November. Peak month: August - when the young arrive to feed over eelgrass and mud flats. Nests at Murray Harbour, distance 16 miles across country.

CANADA GOOSE. Uncommon spring migrant, fairly common in the fall.

BRANT. Common spring migrant that feeds daily at Wood Is. until the first week in June. Rare in fall.

BLACK DUCK..Uncommon in spring, abundant on salt water while feeding over eelgrass from September to November and by hearsay until the harbour is frozen over in late December. Safe from hunters, being well out of range.

AMERICAN WIDGEON. One record for September ; 4 birds..

GREEN-WINGED TEAL.. Rare. Seen occasionally while resting on salt water at the opening of the hunting season in the fall.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL. Rare. As above.

COMMON GOLDENEYE. One fall record - 2 birds.

BUFFLEHEAD. Three fall records.

OLDSQUAW. Uncommon spring migrant, common in the fall.

HARLEQUIN DUCK..One fall record.

COMMON EIDER..Uncommon spring and fall migrant.

KING EIDER. One fall record..

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER. Common spring and fall
May to December.

SURF SCOTER. Uncommon in spring, fairly common in fall.

COMMON SCOTER. Uncommon in spring, fairly common
October and November.

COMMON MERGANSER. Uncommon in spring, fairly common
in the fall.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER. Common May to November..
Nests. One or two broods regularly. Flocks of around 50 birds are
common in October and November.

OSPREY. Uncommon summer visitant.:

PEREGRINE FALCON..Rare fall migrant. Three records for
September.

SPARROW HAWK. Two records for September.

PIPING PLOVER. Uncommon summer and fall migrant. July
to September.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER. Common July to October, strag-
glers in November.

GOLDEN PLOVER. Rare fall migrant.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER. Uncommon spring migrant, com-
mon August to October, stragglers in November.

RUDDY TURNSTONE. Fairly common July to September,
stragglers in October.

COMMON SNIBE. One record for May, one for October.

WHIMBREL. Uncommon southbound migrant July to September

SPOTTED SANDPIPER. Uncommon May to August. One pair
nests regularly.

WILLET..Accidental. One record for July.
GREATER YELLOWLEGS.. Uncommon in spring, common July to October, stragglers in November.
LESSER YELLOWLEGS. Fairly common July to September.
KNOT. Common July to August. Stragglers later..
PURPLE SANDPIPER. Uncommon late fall migrant.
PECTORAL SANDPIPER. One record for October.
WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER. Uncommon southbound migrant, August to October.
LEAST SANDPIPER. Fairly common July to September.
DUNLIN. Irregular fall migrant. September to November. Usually fairly common, rare to absent some years..
DOWITCHER.. Common July and August, stragglers in Sept..
SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER. Common fall migrant, July and August. Smaller numbers in September and October. Flocks of about 50 birds are usual, rarely exceeding 100 birds.
HUDSONION GODWIT. Irregular and uncommon southbound migrant, July to September.
SANDERLING.. Common August to November in small flocks..
RED PHALAROPE. One record for May, one for August.
NORTHERN PHALAROPE. Common migrant over the North-umberland Strait. May to October. Peak month is August - winter plumage.
POMARINE JAEGER. One record for September. One bird observed daily for thirteen days..
PARASITIC JAEGER. One record for October. Dark phase.
GLAUCOUS GULL. Uncommon fall transient, October and November.
ICELAND GULL. Fairly common Oct. to Nov..
Kumlien's Variety. Uncommon, October and November, always with Iceland Gulls.
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL. Common resident, May to November.
HERRING GULL. Common resident, May to November..
RING-BILLED GULL, One record for November.
BLACK-HEADED GULL.. Uncommon visitant November to May in 1962 and 1963.
LAUGHING GULL.. Two records, one for May, one for Oct..
BONAPARTE'S GULL. Uncommon May to July, abundant August to November. peak month: October..
KITTIWAKE.. Rare fall transient, mainly immature birds..
COMMON TERN. One nesting colony May to August, about 20 pairs. Stragglers to October.
ARCTIC TERN. Uncommon late summer visitant..
CASPIAN TERN. Rare summer visitant. Immature birds seen in August while being fed by adults.
RAZORBILL.. Uncommon offshore fall migrant, October and November.
COMMON MURRE.. One record for November.
THICK-BILLED MURRE. Two records. One for October, one for November.
DOVEKIE. Uncommon fall transient. November.
BLACK GUILLEMOT. One pair nests regularly - May to August. Uncommon fall migrant..
COMMON PUFFIN. Uncommon fall migrant in Dec. 1962 only.
SNOWY OWL.. One record for October.
CHIMNEY SWIFT. One record for May. One for June.
BELTED KINGFISHER. One pair nests regularly each year,

May to September.

YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER. Uncommon visitant, spring and summer.

PILEATED WOODPECKER.. One record for May.

HAIRY WOODPECKER.. One record for August.

DOWNY WOODPECKER.. One record for October.

EASTERN KINGBIRD.. Uncommon spring transient ; June.

TRAILL'S FLYCATCHER. Uncommon spring transient --June..

LEAST FLYCATCHER.. Uncommon spring transient - May and June.

NORTHERN HORNED LARK. Fairly common fall migrant in October, stragglers in November.

PRAIRIE HORNED LARK. Rare summer visitant, May to September.

TREE SWALLOW.. Uncommon summer visitant, May to August..

BANK SWALLOW. Common summer resident, May to August.

Two to four colonies nest in red sandstone cliffs.

BARN SWALLOW. Uncommon May to September. One pair nests regularly.

BLUE JAY.. Rare visitant..

COMMON RAVEN. Rare fall visitant..

COMMON CROW. Summer resident, May to November. Six to ten birds daily.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE. Uncommon resident.

BOREAL CHICKADEE. Rare visitant.

ROBIN. Fairly common May to September..

WATER PIPET. Uncommon but regular fall migrant. Late September to November.

STARLING. First record in 1959. Uncommon. One pair nests regularly.

RED-EYED VIREO. Spring transient --June.

NASHVILLE WARBLER. Spring transient --June.

PARULA WARBLER. Spring transient ; June..

YELLOW WARBLER. Common summer resident in alder. May to September.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER. Uncommon summer resident in spruce woods, May to September.

MYRTLE WARBLER. Fairly common in May, rare September to October.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER. Uncommon spring migrant May to June.

YELLOWTHROAT. Common summer resident in alder. May to September..

WILSON'S WARBLER. Two records for late May, one in June. 1959 and 1961.

REDSTART. Uncommon summer resident, May to August.

HOUSE SPARROW. Fairly common September to November.

REDWINGED BLACKBIRD. Uncommon May to July, females rare.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD.. Rare and irregular visitant.

COMMON GRACKLE. Uncommon May to August. One to three pairs nests regularly.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH. Common May to August.

SAVANNAH SPARROW. Common May to October. Nests.

SLATE-COLORED JUNCO.. Two fall records.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.. Uncommon summer resident, May to October.

LINCOLN SPARROW. Two records. One for August, one for October..

SWAMP SPARROW. One May record.
SONG SPARROW. Common summer resident, May to October, stragglers in November.
SNOW BUNTING. Fairly common fall migrant. October and November.

HYPOTHETICAL LIST

ARCTIC LOON. October 1962

LONG-BILLED CURLEW. July 1960.

LONGSPUR. *Species not determined.* 1963.. November.

* From my daily handwritten notes on adult and immature Caspian Terns seen at Wood Island, P.E.I. I find that there were ten observations from August 6th to September 14th, 1961, and three from July 20th to August 24th in 1962. None was seen in 1963.

These birds were studied carefully from as close as 30 feet and seldom more than 100 feet, using 8 x 30 binoculars and the following points were noted:

1961..

Aug. 6th. (1), Immature.. Much larger than Common Tern. Comparison was easy when a Common Tern dived repeatedly on the Caspian Tern which was standing at the edge of the water on a sand beach, picking at drift weed in the shallow water.

Forehead white with blackish streaks, dark grey wings, upper parts mottled with brown.

Large bills, blackish to very dark red at the base.

Legs coloured a dirty orange, not black.

Wings extended well beyond the tail.

Sept. 5th (2), adult and immature.

ADULT. Black cap and nape, forehead black, bright red heavy bill. Tail broad, slightly notched wings extending well beyond the tail when at rest. Legs orange. While standing the bend of the wings gives a broad appearance when viewed from the front.

IMMATURE. Bill very dark red, almost black with a conspicuous red gape.

A Common Tern brought a small fish to the adult and was repulsed. It looked like an invitation for a chase. About ten minutes later the fish was offered to the immature bird and was accepted, the transfer being made from bill to bill.

Sept 6th to 9th (2). Same birds as for Sept. 5th. Orange legs checked Immatures was fed with small fish by a Common Tern several times while under observation.

Sept. 10th to 12th. (4), two immature. Immatures do not seem able to fish for themselves, they remain on the sandbar poking about in driftweed, taking to the air for short flights no further than 300 feet occasionally. Adult birds were not seen bringing food or taking care of them in any way

Sept. 13th and 14th. (2), Immature. Seen diving from the wharf (6 ft) to catch minnows.

1962.

Observations in 1962 were similar only about three weeks earlier.. The Caspian Terns were always silent.

* * * *

FOR THE RECORD

'Land birds seem to be unusually scarce this winter, I walk for substantial distances and periods of time in the woods without seeing or hearing any bird except an occasional Raven' Dr. H.F. Lewis, SHELBURNE COUNTY.

'There are practically no finches here this winter, not even Juncos or Song Sparrows. The Christmas count was the poorest showing since 1957. Rev. Calder Fraser, ANNAPOLIS COUNTY.

'No Juncos or Chickadees all winter.' Mrs. Annie Raymond, DIGBY COUNTY.

'So few birds this winter'. Mrs. G. E. Sanders, YARMOUTH COUNTY.

'Numbers of birds have been as low as I remember in recent years'. Mr. J. S. Erskine, KINGS COUNTY.

'It's a poor winter for the birds around here this year. I've travelled for miles in the woods and fields on snowshoes without even raising a chickadee'. Captain E. Holdway, PICTOU COUNTY.

Not to labor the point, it's been a hard winter, and has doubtless taken its toll of our small land birds. Town and country feeding stations have been well attended, but the numbers of finches and sparrows reported even there are insignificant.

The weather remained mild until mid-December, and fall stragglers stayed unusually late. One such was an AMERICAN BITTERN seen flying over the salt marshes at Hawk Point, Shelburne County, on December 29.

Seabirds maintained a normal population, Six HOODED MERGANSERS seen off Louisburg, Nov. 2-10, is an exceptionally large number of these birds at such a late date. It is encouraging to hear that our usual first spring migrants, the BRANT, are building up both at Cape Sable and off Brier Island. Seven are reported at Brier Island and by the end of March there should be thousands there.

About 250 GREATER SCAUP appeared off Three Fathom Harbor, Halifax County, on March 8, and a flock of 75 was seen at Lennox passage Mar. 9. COMMON MERGANSERS made their first appearance in numbers since autumn at both these places, at the same time.

Although an unusual number of reports has been received of sightings of hawks this winter, there is no real indication of an increase in numbers of these birds. ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS are said to have been abundant over the Fort Lawrence - Sackville marshes (near Amherst) during January. Among the BALD EAGLE reports received, only two seem to indicate possible breeding sites, one at Louisburg, (see note above) and one (of 2 adults and 1 immature feeding in company), at Glencoe, Pictou County. MARSH HAWKS, rare in winter (Tufts) have been observed, one at Cape Sable, one on Bon Portage Island, in January. A very late fall date for an OSPREY is Nov. 27, at Round Hill, Annapolis County.

On Jan. 1 at Pictou, 6 GRAY PARTRIDGE were seen feeding on the snow in a weedy field. (See also Wolfville Christmas count).

A few shore birds remained for the winter, as strays or successful residents. A SEMPALMATED PLOVER was seen at Cape Sable on December 18. Five to ten RUDDY TURNSTONES stayed at Louisburg at the Fish Plant and are doing well. A WOODCOCK

is reported to have wintered on Brier Island, and another was seen on Cape Sable, Nov. 18. COMMON SNIPE also appeared on Cape Sable, one on Nov. 26, one on Dec. 2, and one on Dec. 5. Three SNIPE also turned up on a Marsh at Grand Pre on Jan. 19. Three DUNLIN were seen at Pictou County, Dec. 22 (see Christmas count). A few SANDERLINGS stayed at Louisbourg until Mid-January.

A POMARINE JAEGER, adult, in the light phase, was reported from Pictou on Oct. 5. There were also five sightings of PARASITIC JAEGERS in the same area during September and October. The status in Nova Scotia off shore waters of these little-known birds is still uncertain.

TERNs lingered very late on the north shore last fall (1963). Of the several records of the COMMON TERN received 2 birds on Nov. 11 at Pictou Landing is the latest. A ROSEATE TERN was seen at the same place on Oct. 28.

DOVEKIES appeared in unusual concentrations in early December, in the coast waters of the Maritimes and North-eastern States. A special note concerning them appears above.

A BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO was captured, identified and released at Lockeport on October 13. Latest date in Tufts, 'Birds of Nova Scotia', is October 7.

Late strays, possibly hurricane-borne, were a YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO on Nov. 4, at Cape Sable, and one at Louisbourg, Nov. 1 and 2.

SNOWY OWLS have been reported, one flying over Lawrence-town Beach, Halifax County, on Nov. 24, one at Cape Sable on Dec. 26, one near Louisbourg Jan. 2, and 3 at Brier Island in January. A BARRED OWL, usually found only in the deep woods, was picked up dead in a backyard in Halifax city, tangled in a radio aerial. Two reports have come in of LONG-EARED OWLS, one at Hawk Point, opposite Cape Sable, on Dec. 29; the other at Brier Island on Feb. 10. Several scattered reports of SAW-WHET OWLS have been received. These tiny owls frequently make their appearance in towns and villages during the winter months, and because of their size are mistaken by the inexperienced for the 'babies' of larger species.

A BELTED KINGFISHER at Cole Harbour Dyke, Halifax County on Feb. 15, was described as looking 'extremely lively and well-fed'.

A PILEATED WOODPECKER, rarely seen near human habitation, appeared in the grounds near a house feeder at Port Mouton Queen's County, Dec. 1.

At a feeding station in Halifax city, with a mixed flock of Starlings, English Sparrows and Cowbirds, 2 HORNED LARKS surprisingly turned up at noon, Wednesday, March 11.

BLUE JAYS, conspicuously abundant last summer and early fall, maintained their abundance throughout the early winter, according to reports from people who have feeding stations. (See also Christmas counts). Numbers have dwindled, the latter part of the winter on the mainland of Nova Scotia. The reverse seems to have occurred in Cape Breton.

Another bird was with us in greater than usual numbers this winter, the WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH. Small flocks (6 to 8) were seen in Halifax city in November and December; and almost without exception, province-wide reports from feeding stations mention the regular presence of one or more of these birds throughout the winter.

A very late date for a CATBIRD is Dec. 11. This bird was seen steadily from Nov. 19 till the above date, at a feeder in Halifax City..

WINTER ROBINS were seen in about their usual numbers throughout the winter season.

A RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, Nov. 26, Halifax city, is another exceptionally late date for a bird of this species.

CEDAR WAXWINGS, rarely seen in winter, have been observed in Lawrencetown, Annapolis County, in Parrsboro, Amherst and in Halifax city, in small groups (2 or 3) in November, January and February.

A NORTHERN SHRIKE on Feb. 2 was seen at Chezzetcook, Halifax County.

Warblers stayed late in several cases, a MAGNOLIA WARBLER being seen at Louisbourg Nov. 5. A most extraordinary observation was of a BLACK-and-WHITE WARBLER on Jan. 28 at a feeder in Yarmouth. It was reported to be 'feeding hungrily at the window feeder'. The feed included some fine suet and mink feed. Nov. 5 on Bon Portage Island 22 BLACKPOLL WARBLERS were noted also one YELLOWTHROAT and one AMERICAN RED-START.

REDWINGS were seen feeding with Cowbirds and Grackles in Shelburne town on Dec. 15, following a snowfall. A male and a female Redwing were present at a feeder in Yarmouth from mid-January till early March.

'Each fall scattered BALTIMORE ORIOLES, apparently reluctant to attempt to fly across the bay of Fundy, try to winter in western Nova Scotia, but even with the help of feeding stations, they cannot maintain themselves out-of-doors through periods of severe cold'. (H.F. Lewis, from the Shelburne Coast-guard). Such orioles have been reported as being in Pictou 'very aggressive at feeder ... did not appear to eat seeds but went for meaty bones' Dec. 8 and 14; one in Amherst on these same dates, where 'it consumed large quantities of suet and raisin bread', but disappeared after the heavy snow, Dec. 15. Another report comes from Sable River of one or two birds Dec. 12 to 16; and one other report, from Yarmouth, of one male Baltimore Oriole all day, Dec. 23.

RUSTY BLACKBIRDS, late stragglers, are reported, one on Dec. 12 and 3 on Dec. 15, at Lawrencetown, Annapolis County.

Like Robins, COMMON GRACKLES winter regularly in small numbers, particularly in western Nova Scotia. Reports have been received of numbers varying from singles up to 'a good-sized flock', throughout the winter.

There is some indication that COWBIRDS, present in large numbers at feeding stations in past winters, are fewer this year. However, among several reports received is one of a flock, at a Halifax city feeder, which grew from 10 birds in late December to 80 in early March.

EVENING GROSBEAKS, which appeared very late at feeders last winter (1962) arrived by mid-October in 1963. The earliest report we have is of 6 birds of this species at Sable River, Oct. 9, and again 12 birds on Oct. 10. Since that time the birds (Evening Grosbeaks) have been present in usual numbers along the Southwestern shore and in Halifax, but are reported to be very scarce in the Valley.

The COMMON GOLDFINCH has been reported in two's and three's at feeders throughout the Province, but on February 10

approximately 100 were seen at Round Hill, Annapolis County, and on February 18, about 150 at the same place..

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS, present in spectacular numbers last winter, are few and far between this year. This scarcity may be due to the scanty cone crop. The few birds observed have been seen feeding in alders (Digby County) or searching on the ground among last year's fallen cones (Three-Fathom Harbor).. The largest numbers seen were 12 at Brier Island Feb. 10, and 14 at Smith's Cove Feb. 1, both in Digby County.

Two late Sparrow records are: one VESPER SPARROW, Nov. 1 and 2; and a SWAMP SPARROW from the middle to the end of December, both at Louisbourg.

SNOW BUNTINGS were reported as scarce or absent during early winter. Since Feb. 1 however, reports of relatively large flocks (from 40 to 400) have come in from Chezzetcook, Lockeport Beach and Brier Island.. This may indicate a northward movement of this species. One Snow Bunting turned up at a feeder in Bedford, Halifax County, after the snowfall, Feb. 29.

The last two years, REDPOLLS have been scarce, and only one sighting has been reported this winter, of 7 birds at Brier Island, on Feb. 10.

The above account has been compiled from the records received from the following members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, C.R.K. Allen, Jeanne Awalt,, H.O'C. Baker, G.A. Barss, Dora Bird, David Burchell, Margaret Burchell, Alice Chisholm, Molly Clayden, Mrs. A. Coffill, John Comer, Norman Doucette, A.J. Erskine, J.S. Erskine, Phyllis Hemeon, Clark Higby, Eric Holdway, Helen Hurlburt, Mrs.. A.N. Jones, Fred and Margaret Kenney, Dorothy Kirk, David Krantz, Wickerson and Madeline Lent, H.F. Lewis, Mrs. S.E. Lewis, Evelyn Lowerison, John and Gwen Lunn, J.A. MacCarter, May MacDougall, Lloyd Macpherson, Willett Mills, Dora Myers, Granville Nickerson, Annie Raymond, Mrs. A.M. Ryan, M.M. Scovil, Sidney and Betty June Smith, Elizabeth Stubbert, H.F. Tufts, R.W. Tufts, W.E. Whitehead.

EAGLES FISHING

Gwen Lunn, Louisbourg, N.S.

During January and February at Louisbourg, two adult Bald Eagles and on one occasion an immature have been seen quartering the harbour, sometimes together but more often individually. Their altitude varies, but on the many occasions on which we see them high in the sky, they are often in company with a great multitude. of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls.

On two occasions I have watched one of the adults catching fish, and since I understand that this operation has rarely been described in detail, I thought a note on these sightings might be of interest. On both occasions the eagle had been circling at a very considerable height with a large flock of gulls, when it peeled off and came planing down on a straight course - gliding with scarcely a flap of its wings. On neither occasion had it spotted its prey from almost directly above, as an osprey seems to do, but had begun its direct planing glide several hundred feet up and about a mile from the point at which it took its fish.

The technique used to take the fish was also of interest. When just a few inches above the water it stretched its legs

straight down, until its talons went just below the water's surface to make its catch. Gradually rising with slowly beating wings, the eagle drew its legs close up to its body until the fish was virtually invisible - exactly reminiscent of an aeroplane taking in its undercarriage. This manner of carrying off its prey is in direct opposition to that of ospreys I have seen fishing, for they carry their fish in full view with legs still held fully extended.

On the second occasion the fish gave a good wriggle before the eagle took a fresh grip on it without perceptibly letting go. This I have also seen an osprey do.

Each time the eagle flew inland to the forest with its prey, on the first occasion alighting on the top of a spruce to start feeding before flying on.



Eagle approaching nest

MISS BARBARA BLACK,
Truro

BALD EAGLE SURVEY

Members are reminded that the Bald Eagle Survey begun three years ago is still a very live project.

If during this spring and summer, you have anything to report on the nesting of this threatened species, please write for one of CANADIAN AUDUBON SOCIETY'S EAGLE NESTING SURVEY FORMS, to

C.R.K. ALLEN,
HALIFAX SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND,
HALIFAX, N. S.

FIRST SEASIDE SPARROW FOR CANADA

The following account of the sighting and identification of an all-Canada first, reported in March, 1962 Newsletter, has been contributed, kindness of C.R.K. Allen and L.B. Macpherson at the request of the Editor..

February 21st 1962, turned out to be a 'sparrow day' in the Cole Harbour-Chezzetcook area. The weather was mild - well above freezing - after nearly a week of temperatures in the 10 to 5 degree range, the ground was nearly free of snow and small land birds were rather more numerous than usual for this time of year.

Already listed in our day books were: 4 Savannah Sparrows; 3 Vesper Sparrows, 21 Juncos, 6 Tree Sparrows, 15 White-throats, 3 Fox Sparrows, 2 Swamp Sparrows, 16 Song Sparrows, and we had just topped this with a surprising Sharp-tail in the Lawrencetown marsh when, a few minutes later, on a nearby grassy slope, we spotted what appeared to be a larger, darker member of this same species..

A second and closer look revealed however, that this was a bird neither of us had ever seen before. The field guide was called into consultation and for once our bird sat reasonably still while we went through a process of elimination and came up with the startling conclusion that here was a Seaside Sparrow (*Amospiza maritima*) - a first for us and, as it turned out, a first for Canada..

This called for a hurried trip to the city to pick up the seldom used collecting gun. Luck was with us, for on our return we found our bird had obligingly stayed 'put' and we were soon able to confirm our earlier identification.

This specimen was prepared as a study skin and forwarded to the National Museum at Ottawa where it was positively identified as a Seaside Sparrow and placed in their collection as the first record of this species for Canada.

Our experience was a perfect example of the value of what Peterson calls the 'second look'. Had it not been for this 'second look' our Seaside Sparrow would have gone down in the daily list, simply as Sharp-tail Number 2.

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NOTE FROM WICKERSON LENT, BRIER ISLAND, N.S.

'We have had a lot of trouble with oil on the birds this winter. There have been hundreds of Dovekies, Auks, Murres, Eiders, Old Squaw, Mergansers and Gulls that I have seen all saturated with oil. Most of them have died right here on the shore. Right now on the shore most every piece of drift wood or lobster buoy that comes ashore is plastered with it. In fact, only today, in collecting some lobster buoys for the fishermen, I ruined a pair of mittens with the stuff.'

'RAPTORIAL' WHISKEY JACKS

C.R.K. Allen

Six or seven years ago, while driving along the highway, I noticed a Grey Jay which flew across the road perhaps a hundred feet ahead of the car, and which appeared to be carrying a whitish object several inches in diameter in its 'talons'.

When I mentioned this to a professional ornithologist, he expressed considerable surprise and suggested that the jay's feet had become entangled in cottow wool or something similar, as this behaviour would hardly be expected in Passerines or in fact any species other than the hawks, owls and their relatives.

There the matter rested. Some time later I was able to observe another case of the same behaviour, on this occasion under much more favourable conditions.

This time the jay had been feeding on a scrap-pile, and flew across the road just a few feet in front of the car. Clutched in its claws was the heel of a loaf of bread, and every detail could be seen easily.

If this behaviour is as rare as my ornithological friend has stated, it is odd that one observer should have encountered it twice within a few years.

FIELD TRIPS

HALIFAX AREA FOR THE MONTH OF MAY

MAY 16TH, COLE HARBOUR-CHEZZETCOOK, ALL DAY

MAY 20TH, OLD ST. MARGARET'S BAY ROAD, 6 A.M.-8 A.M.

MAY 27TH, GREEN HEAD ROAD, 6 A.M. - 8 A.M.

Assembly Point for Morning Trips:

N.S. MUSEUM OF SCIENCE, SPRING GARDEN ROAD.

Assembly Point for All-Day Trips:

DARTMOUTH END OF A.L. MACDONALD BRIDGE AT 8 A.M.
BRING PLENTY OF LUNCH AND SUITABLE CLOTHING
AND FOOTWEAR.

OILED AND FEATHERED

By Evelyn Dobson, Vancouver, (Member of the N.S. Bird Society)

While a bright clear winter afternoon finds the average person out for a pleasant drive, it usually finds us headed for the Sewage Disposal Plant. In fact we spend most of our free time there. What accounts for our weird taste? We're Birdwatchers.

And so Saturday, January 25 found us passing Vancouver International Airport and travelling out onto Iona Island where the open sea of Georgia Strait pounds in across muddy flats, which abound in wild fowl at all times of the year. Because of its proximity to the strait, the small jut of land with its protected ponds attracts birds often difficult to find in other areas.

The tide was coming in over the flats carrying a dirty brown mud which didn't look like water - just rolling land. Sitting on and bobbing near a large water-logged stump were Mallards, Scaup, Canvasback, Widgeon and Pintail, and of course the ever-present Coot, paddling along in his archaic manner. These are not rare in the Lower Mainland area, and are frequently found very close to shore near the City - we have even seen them feeding from the hand in Victoria's 'Beacon Hill Park'.

Every Scaup must be carefully checked, as someone reported sighting a Tufted Duck with a flock of Scaup, and so with Fred every Scaup is potential fame until proven 'just a Scaup'. So he rooted under the eight foot high barbed top fence to get into one of the settling pools and found on his trip a great flock of Dunlin which are common here all year round - but no Tufted Duck.

And then I spotted on the far shore a gorgeous male with cinnamon head, vertical stripe down the shoulder and buffy tail - a Greer-winged Teal-with an entourage of four females.. No wonder he commanded such popularity; a truly magnificent bird.

The next pond, separated from the first by about fifty feet of sand, was being fanned by about 500 Mew Gulls. They dipped and soared, chattering constantly among themselves while dining on tid-bits from the pond below.

Out near the middle, clustered together, were 25 Ruddy Ducks. They kept to themselves as we have often seen them do. They try to find sheltered water of an inland pond or lake, and suffice themselves with the friendship of their kind.

As we trudged along we watched a smaller bird dive, strangely unlike most ducks. As we looked for it to rise, three small birds were startled from the shore and flew in front of us. As Fred followed them, our duck appeared and the instant I squealed 'Old-squaw!' he took his glasses from the little birds, and they were lost. We couldn't find them and we didn't know where they were. So we began tramping over logs and weed and through swampy marsh. Finally, as we neared some more fence, from high above came a strange spiral note.. If a single note could twist itself like a piece of steel wire, here it was, and coming from about ten Snow Buntings. They sat on the barbed wire and watched us as we watched them, and showed no fear as we came within ten feet of where they sat. Beautiful white birds, with a caramel beige wash over their heads which almost glowed in the bright sun.

Of course our camera remained in the car and as we went for it, they flew off further up the beach.. When we finally got the camera, and headed off up the beach, we were surrounded by crowds of children and dogs, all enjoying the brisk afternoon. We

carefully picked our way through the logs and seaweed of the shore, and suddenly spied a beautiful white head, resplendent with blood-red eyes and a three-inch stiletto yellow bill. We recognized it immediately as a Western Grebe, but what it was doing on the beach, a nearly unheard of place to rest, and how had eluded the children and dogs, immediately replaced our concern from finding the Snow Buntings.

We paused a moment to collect our wits, and both suddenly realized the opportunity of collecting a good photo of this species. As Fred set up his camera I watched the bird for any signs of it becoming active, but it obviously was more fully aware of its plight than we were. It sat motionless with eyes glaring, as if it were consciously willing us to vanish. Fred moved to take a second shot and the eyes followed, but it was still clearly aware of my position. As Fred took the second picture he realized that the bird was badly oiled; in fact, as we got closer we could see that the feathers of its whole body were matted firmly together, and that it would soon die.

Because we couldn't bear to leave it, we decided to try to catch it, but hadn't the vaguest idea how. I had on a scarf, and thought perhaps it could be caught in this. Fred agreed, took the scarf and slowly approached the bird, which by now was twitching all over. It stood and ran down a slight incline of the beach toward the water, screaming in a piercing tone. Of course since its wings were useless, it quickly became unbalanced and fell headlong on the beach. But spirit it had lots of, as it showed when Fred played matador with the scarf.

Finally the bird was wound in the scarf, and we started off toward the car carrying a strange bundle with a bill sticking straight through the scarf, and two long legs, each ending in three black lobes, dangling under Fred's arm.

In the car it was sometimes quiet and sometimes screeching as it mustered together enough strength to scold us. We drove to the university and found an acquaintance in Ornithology who is studying internal parasites. He assured us that nothing could be done for the bird, and I know how true this was, every time I look at my well-laundered, ruined, scarf. It is still covered with oil, and has been impossible to clean.

What waste of water fowl there must be every year from this man-made hazard! It seems someone else's problem until a bird appears before you and you see the agony of dying that is in its eyes. Then it becomes your problem too.