

Nova Scotia Bird Society
Newsletter



July 1964

Cover - COMMON LOON
From Original Drawing by
Robert Gibbon, Steviacke, N.S.

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Halifax, Nova Scotia

Spring 1964

In spite of the dire predictions of several of our seasoned experts, early migrants among the birds arrived on schedule in 1964. As mentioned in the April Newsletter, the Brant even set a record, by appearing off Brier Island in late January.

Heavy snow continued up to the end of March, and the earlier robins and woodcock would have been well advised to listen to the experts and to delay their arrival for a few weeks. As it was, numbers of them congregated in dooryards, grateful for any food offered, very much as they did last year, under similar conditions.

The snow disappeared rapidly in April, particularly in the southwestern part of the province, and in a matter of a few weeks, drought conditions prevailed. During May, forest fires swept through many acres of woodland. This probably did no injury to adult birds, but must have destroyed nests containing the first clutch of eggs of a number of early arrivals. Such birds, favoring scrub and second growth woods for nesting purposes, would be Song Sparrows, White-throats and Juncos, the Palm and Myrtle Warblers, both of our Kinglets, Robins and Chickadees. Almost certainly these birds would undertake a second nesting.

Since the first of June we have had plenty of rain. The countryside and the forests are lush and damp and green; and humming with insects. In spite of early set-backs, it looks like a good summer season for birds and bird-watchers alike. (Just don't forget to bring along the mosquito lotion).

The Editor and Committee wish to thank the members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society who have written to express their approval of the recent streamlined edition of the Newsletter. It has been encouraging to hear from so many of you; and also of your support for the increase in annual dues necessary if we are to continue with the new format. We have made it book size for easy filing. Any comments, criticisms, and most particularly CONTRIBUTIONS, will be gratefully received.

Our warmest welcome is extended to all new members. For your convenience, names and addresses will be listed in the next Newsletter. Please send records of bird sightings, or other communications to: THE NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY, NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM OF SCIENCE, HALIFAX, N.S., which is our permanent mailing address

Chickadee Reports

The data in reports received on fluctuations in numbers of Black-capped Chickadees during the past winter and spring appear to indicate that while Chickadees were very scarce in the northeastern half of the Province, they were present in their usual numbers in the southwest.

There was no evidence of any spring migration of chickadees in the reports received. Since almost all of these, however, were reports on birds concentrated at feeders, new arrivals from farther south might not be noted, as their arrival could very well coincide with easier feeding conditions in their regular haunts or with the time when nesting territories are established.

A number of reporters did, in fact, note a **DECREASE** in the numbers of chickadees at feeders as winter abated, which seems to bear out this possibility.

In any case, many thanks for your interest and **cooperation**. We hope that some of our future assignments will be **more fruitful!**

Field Trips

In the Halifax area, the four projected field trips in May took place according to plan. From nine to eighteen people took part, from time to time. It was cold early in the morning, just one degree above freezing at 6 a.m. on May 6th, the first trip, and showery on May 27th, the last, but no one complained, much.

On May 6th we picked up 20 species, the Myrtle Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets being most numerous. On the 16th, the all-day trip, we identified 57 species, and for most of us the Wilson's warbler, singing lustily, was outstanding. On the 20th, down the old St. Margaret's Bay road, we identified 23 species in 2 hours, most of them warblers, and all in full song. It was difficult to distinguish one from another, in the mixed chorus, at times.

Our last trip was least productive, due to the weather, and we saw only 18 species. We did, however, once again hear the Lincoln's Sparrow, in his familiar habitat at the end of the Greenhead Road. Our thanks are due to Mr. C. R. K. Allen for conducting the trips again this year; and for his patience in assisting the many of us who are still novices at field identification.

Bird Migration Studies in Nova Scotia

by Harrison F. Lewis

Nova Scotia presents some very interesting problems in bird migration. The Bird Society and its members may obtain much satisfaction from investigating these intriguing subjects. This would be preferable to having them investigated for us by ardent savants from elsewhere.

Partly because of the shape and situation of the province, spring bird migrants have a choice of routes by which to enter it. Through past millenia, some species have chosen one route, some another. Some cross the Gulf of Maine by direct flight from southern New England, while others prefer an overland path that takes them around the upper waters of the Bay of Fundy. Still others have adopted an intermediate migration pattern. What is the chosen route of each of our principal migratory species? Answers are obtainable, but only by careful cooperative studies, extending over more than one year.

Some species are seen to vary their migration routes to some extent from year to year. Presumably these variations have physical causes. What, in each such case, are the conditions that bring about the observed variation?

Hitherto our investigations of bird migration have been largely concerned with movements of birds between Nova Scotia and New England. We have gathered much helpful information from the western rim of the province, extending from Cape Sable to Digby.

What about bird migrations, spring and fall, between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland? Surely they offer another fertile field for investigation. Data from Cape Sable and Brier Island should be matched by data of a like kind from St. Paul's Island and Scatari, yet such data are few or non-existent. Who will pioneer in this part of our Nova Scotia heritage?

Unsolved migration puzzles are to be found on every hand. The Willets that nest in numbers on our western coasts do not migrate by way of New England. What, then, is their annual route and what is their winter range? Nobody knows.

The principal migration path of the Brant passes through the Bay of Fundy, but in February and March substantial numbers of these birds appear on the coast of Shelburne County. By the first of June they have moved on. By what route did they leave? Did they fly eastward past Halifax or cross the province from south to north or turn back, by way of Yarmouth, to enter the Bay of Fundy at its mouth? Nobody knows.

There is little doubt that many interesting things about bird migration in our region could be learned by careful observations, at appropriate times of year, on lightships, especially the one on Lurcher Shoal, near Yarmouth, and at selected, offshore islands, such as Seal Island, Isle Haute and Pearly Island, but we are making little or no use of these opportunities.

Worthwhile studies of bird migration can be made only by strict observance of essential conditions. For the time, at least, the observer must be nearly stationary. He must not leave a limited area. The wandering bird-watcher can contribute little of value to this kind of research.

The student of bird migration should make his observations in likely places and at likely hours, day in and day out, rain or shine.

throughout the period that he undertakes to cover. It will not do to produce results that will make it appear that the birds migrate only on weekends!

In cooperative studies, involving a number of observers, it is particularly important that records of arrival be as accurate as possible. It takes only a few hit-and-miss records to render the entire effort useless. Those who undertake such high missions, intended to enlarge the borders of human knowledge, must be prepared to accept responsibility and keep themselves under Spartan discipline. They must also be very careful in their sight identifications and avoid all guesswork.

Bird banding is a special field that is often very helpful in studies of bird migration. When it is used, it should be directed toward specific objectives.

How much can we add, in the next decade, to what is known about Nova Scotian bird migration?



ROBIN - from a color slide

F. W. Dobson

For The Record

Reports and comments received from members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society since the publication of the last Newsletter have been mainly concerned with the arrival and departure of our migratory birds. Included as usual are references to strays and permanent residents, and to unusual observations of one kind or another. Migration records are available to members of the Society upon request. Due to space limitations we cannot mention all of the birds, nor all of the sightings. Items of unusual interest and/or information are listed below.

SOOTY SHEARWATER. Two were seen near Brier Island (Lents) at the unprecedentedly early date of April 26.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT. No very early records of this bird, but what appeared to be part of a migratory movement was observed on May 6 in Halifax County, when members of the Society on an early morning field trip saw 22 of these Cormorants, in three lots, flying over from west to east.

GREAT BLUE HERON. Earliest date received, one seen March 30 at Cape Sable (B. J. Smith). Generally present in numbers by April 11.

COMMON EGRET. One on Brier Island, April 12, (M. Lent). One arrived on Bartlett's Marsh, Yar. Co., May 24 (F. Higby). Mrs. Higby writes: "It is feeding on the same parts of the marsh and roosting in the same grove of spruce trees" (as last year). "The plumage . . . is very beautiful." Last year's Egret at Bartlett's Beach remained until November.

SNOWY EGRET. One, on Brier Island, (M. Lent). This bird has been collected and sent to the National Museum at Ottawa.

CANADA GOOSE. An unusually large flight of geese aroused general comment this spring. They are reported to have returned to the Wolfville area March 20 and 21 (W. E. Whitehead, J. S. Erskine); hundreds were off Pugwash April 12 (R. MacNeil). There were still some (6) at Barrington April 19 (B. K. Doane).

BRANT. 1 - Jan. 28, Brier Island (Lents). Earliest record yet.
4 - Feb. 6 " " "
49 - Feb. 10 " " "
700 - Feb. 28 " " "
180 - Mar. 25, Wolfville (W. P. Neily)
215 - Apr. 20, Linden (A. J. Erskine)
25 - May 31, River John (Kenneys)

AMERICAN WIDGEON. One female on lower Porter's Lake, Hfx. Co., was identified by C. R. K. Allen. This bird is a definite rarity at this season.

RING NECKED DUCK. 6 males, 3 females, May 3, at Calder's Lake, Pictou Co. (Kenneys). This is later than usual; the ice was late going out of the lake. These birds have been nesting here for some years.

SCOTERS. Rafts of Common Scoters appeared off Lawrence-town Beach, Halifax Co.; 60 on Mar. 29, 25 on Apr. 4 and 500 on April 12 (L. B. Macpherson).

MARSH HAWK. On April 3, 4, and 5, one each of these birds was seen at Chebogue, Yar. Co. (V. Sollows), Bon Portage Island (H. F. Lewis) and Wolfville (W. P. Neily).

KILLDEER. For 3 consecutive years Killdeer have nested in Annapolis County. In 1962, a nest was found in Hick's Millyard, Bridgetown (J. Orlando); in 1963 young birds were seen in a field belonging to Mr. Malcolm Troop, Upper Granville; and in 1964 the Killdeer arrived on April 18, and are obviously nesting again in the near vicinity. Mr. Stewart Whitman says he has not found the nest, the parent birds become so excited he has stopped his investigations, not wishing to drive them away.

GOLDEN PLOVER. Two of these birds were seen on May 10 (B. and S. Smith). According to Dr. H. F. Lewis this species is very rare in the spring on the coasts of Nova Scotia and New England.

It usually migrates from its South American wintering ground to its Arctic nesting ground by way of the Mississippi Valley.

BONAPARTE'S GULL. 2 seen at Lawrencetown, Halifax County, April 25, constitutes an unusually early observation of these little gulls. (L. B. Macpherson).

MOURNING DOVE. One, March 28, Cape Sable, (B. J. Smith). One, May 13, Halifax. (W. Chute). Still around. One, May 14, Jordan Falls, (Mrs. H. C. Holden). One, May 16, Cole Harbor, Halifax Co.. (Bird Society field trip).

WHIP-POOR-WILL. The Whip-poor-wills returned to Williams Lake (Halifax County) again this spring, and were first heard on May 16 (A. Chisholm) and May 17 (D. Ward). One other was reported at Sandy Point, Shelburne County, (M. Robertson).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD. First reported on May 9 (W. E. Whitehead). Mr. Whitehead has beaten his own record (May 10) as quoted by Tufts.

YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER. Although the first report of a Flicker this spring is April 5, in Digby (E. Cardoza), they appeared simultaneously in Annapolis County (S. Whitman) and Colchester County (R. Gibbon) on April 12. On April 19 on Brier Island 100 were counted (Lents).

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER. An unusual number of reports of these Sapsuckers has been received, the earliest being April 18, at Centreville, Shelburne Co. They appeared in Yarmouth on April 22 (E. Stubbert) and in Truro on April 23 (E. Lowerison). Robert Gibbon, Stewiacke, writes: "I have noticed a considerable increase in the abundance of Sapsuckers this spring in this area. During the week end of May 16, 17, 18 five were seen and several others heard. Also at Dollar Lake, Halifax County, on the weekend of May 23, 24 I observed once again 5 of these birds. These 5 were, however, seen on a single sugar maple tree."

EASTERN KINGBIRD. Twenty-five of these birds broke a record by arriving at Brier Island on May 8 (M. Lent).

EASTERN PHOEBE. Three records of Phoebes this spring, 1 at Cape Sable in late March (B. J. Smith), one at Sable River May 25 (H. F. Lewis), and a nesting pair again at the Dean's summer home in Carleton, Yarmouth Co.

TREE SWALLOW. Seen first simultaneously on April 13, at Sable River (H. F. Lewis), Round Hill (W. E. Whitehead) and Wilmot (Mrs. Hawkins).

CLIFF SWALLOW. May 2, at Stewiacke, 11 birds (R. Gibbon).

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH. This permanent resident was present in unusual numbers throughout the winter. A report of interest is that one pair attempted to nest in a Swallow house in Halifax (city), but were ousted by English Sparrows. They did, however, remain to nest in a tree nearby (W. Chute).

MOCKINGBIRD. There is only one new record of a Mockingbird so far this spring. One was seen at Brier Island June 18 (M. Lent). Mrs. Sollows wrote from Yarmouth that her Mockingbird had left, after spending the winter, and becoming quite tame. Mrs. Sollows wrote: "He did not seem to be in distress at any time during the winter, despite all the snow, and would tackle even the Canada Jays. He didn't bother the little birds, except for English Sparrows. He would get his head down, puff out his feathers, spread

his wings and drive out half-a-dozen jays, one after another. I regret to say he left without giving us a song. The Brown Thrasher which wintered here a couple of years ago serenaded us beautifully for 2 weeks before he left."

BROWN THRASHER. Nine of these birds have been seen this spring, 5 of them on Brier Island April 17, 18 and 20 (Lents) and all but one in the southern end of the Province. One was seen in Bridgetown June 1 (J. Orlando).

ROBIN. Quite rightly, our classic early bird got most frequent mention in spring reports, and it adds up to his arrival in numbers between March 23 and 31, generally, all over the Province.

VEERY. Arrived Amherst April 19 and 20. Unusual in Cumberland County. (E. Lowerison).

EASTERN BLUEBIRD. One, March 30, Mount Pleasant, Digby County (Mr. and Mrs. E. Van Tassel); one, April 2, Digby (town, (E. Cardoza); 4, May 23, Brier Island (Lents).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET. A very early Kinglet was recorded at Cape Sable, March 28 (B. J. Smith). Next to the Robin and Song Sparrow, this little Kinglet with the big voice represents spring to many of us. He was first reported singing on April 19, in Barrington (B. K. Doane) and by May 1 was well distributed through the counties.

CEDAR WAXWING. Six reports from May 11, when a pair appeared in Rockingham, Halifax (B. Coffill) to June 5 when 2 were seen at Kentville (W. P. Neily) represent altogether about 40 of these birds. Two sizable flocks appeared in Halifax (city) on May 27 (W. J. Mills) and June 1 (D. Ward).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO. Dr. H. F. Lewis writes: "In Sable River I heard at noon (June 8) a distant bird song that sounded to me like the song of a Yellow-throated Vireo. I obtained my binoculars (x6) and went in search of the singer. Soon I had an excellent view of him as he moved slowly from one bare twig of a wild black cherry tree to another at a distance of about 30 feet from me and a height of about 15 feet above the ground. This species prefers Elm trees, but there are no Elms in Sable River. The bright yellow throat and breast and the white wing bars were clearly seen and the bird repeatedly uttered its characteristic song while I watched it. It was unquestionably a Yellow-throated Vireo. I had not seen or heard this species for nearly 14 years."

WOOD WARBLERS. As usual, the Palm and Myrtle Warblers were first upon the scene, with the Yellow Warbler close upon their heels. This was around April 18-19 (B. K. Doane, P. Dobson). Early in May they were joined by the American Redstart (W. E. Whitehead), the Chestnut-sided Warbler (W. P. Neily) and the Black-throated Green Warbler (B. Hinds); and by May 17 most of the others were on the scene in numbers. Reports from Yarmouth (Mrs. Saunders), Colchester (R. Gibbon) and Kings Counties (W. P. Neily), all dated May 17, record Black-and-white, Nashville, Parula Wilson's (this is early), Bay-breasted, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian Warblers, the Yellowthroat and the Ovenbird. These were all seen and heard in Halifax County, on the field trip held by members of the Bird Society, on May 16. Tennessee and Canada Warblers were reported May 31 in Halifax County (C. R. K. Allen). Tennessee Warblers are abundant this year in Halifax, Hants and Colchester Counties. Has this been observed elsewhere?

BOBOLINK. The first Bobolink to be spotted this spring was on Bon Portage Island, on May 8, by Mrs. Evelyn Richardson. This was followed by a report of one at Stewiacke May 9 (R. Gibbon), 2 at White Point, Queens County May 12 (Mrs. Doggett) and one May 13 at Jordan Falls, Shelburne County (Mrs. Holden); one May 16 at Yarmouth (Mrs. Saunders). The presence of Bobolinks in the south-western part of the province is unusual. Mrs. Doggett mentioned them nesting nearby, and Dr. Lewis reported a pair, the male singing, June 7, probably preparatory to nesting. Mr. Gibbon wrote: "This species appears to be relatively abundant this spring. On May 24 along the 15 miles from Dollar Lake to Shubenacadie I observed 8 males." Mr. Allen reported "an inundation of Bobolinks in Hants and Colchester counties" (June 14).

REDWING. Other than single birds, the first report of Redwings in any number comes from Aylesford, when Mrs. Foster saw 8 birds on March 29. This is early. They were common at Pugwash April 12 (R. MacNeil), near Amherst by April 15 (E. Lowerison) and in Queens County by April 18 (Mrs. Doggett).

BALTIMORE OROIOLE. Thirteen reports of Baltimore Orioles have come in, since May 10, when one was seen on Bon Portage Island (E. Richardson) and one in Yarmouth (E. Stubbert). May 12, one was seen on Cape Sable (Smiths) and one in Point Pleasant Park, Halifax (B. Hinds). May 13, a male was seen in Middle Ohio, Shelburne County (Mrs. MacKay), May 14, 2 at Prince's Lodge, Halifax County (W. Chute) and 2 at Liverpool (S. Fullerton); May 15 a female was seen at Middle Ohio (Mrs. MacKay); May 17, one at Musquodoboit Harbor (Mrs. V. L. Miller); May 19-20, a singing male in Sable River (Mrs. Robart); May 22, a pair, nesting in a POPLAR tree (H. Vye, Mrs. Hawkins). May 25, 2 birds at Kentville (W. P. Neily), and May 31, a pair (seen previously by others) at Milford, probably nesting (F. Cook).

SCARLET TANAGER. Two of these brilliant strangers seem to have strayed our way this spring. One struck a window May 19 and was picked up by Mrs. S. R. Kennedy, Halifax, and taken to W. J. Mills for identification. The other report also comes from Mr. Mills, of a bird seen May 30, and unmistakably described, by Mr. Hugh Spencer, of Whynacht's Point, Halifax County.

SUMMER TANAGER. W. J. Mills also vouches for a Summer Tanager, which was first seen by Mrs. Coffill, of Rockingham, Halifax County, June 21, in her garden.

INDIGO BUNTING. A "regular" stray, the Indigo Bunting has been reported from Brier Island, 3 on April 12, 7 on May 21 (Lents); from Bon Portage Island, one May 10 (E. Richardson); one in Halifax (city) May 18, and still around in Mid-June, (W. Chute); and one at Purcell's Cove, Halifax County, at Mrs. John Huxtable's feeder, May 27-8 (W. J. Mills).

PURPLE FINCH. After practically disappearing from the Province during the winter, Purple Finches returned in exceptional numbers this spring, according to reports from Pictou County (Kenneds), Yarmouth (E. Stubbert), Halifax, Town and county (Chute, Mills, and members of the Society taking part in the May field trip). W. J. Mills was interested to find birds returning to his garden which had been banded there in May, 1960, and June, 1962.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW. This is the outstanding bird this spring. Twelve reports of 25 birds (altogether) have been received as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1, May 3, Round Hill | W. E. Whitehead (in his garden) |
| 1, May 3, Yarmouth | C. Higby |
| 8, May 8, Brier Island | Mrs. Lent ("everywhere") |
| 2, May 10, Bon Portage Island | Mrs. Richardson |
| 2, May 10, Cape Sable | Mr. and Mrs. S. Smith |
| 2, May 10-12, Port Mouton | Dr. Tufts (at feeders) |
| 3, May 11, Chebogue, Yar. Co. | Mrs. Sollows |
| 1, May 11, Middle Ohio, Shel. Co. | Mrs. E. MacKay |
| 1, May 12-17, Annapolis Royal | Mrs. W. Thexton |
| 2, May 14, White Point, Queens Co. | Mrs. Doggett |
| 1, May 22-23, Round Hill | W. E. Whitehead |

These birds were all carefully observed and well described. Dr. H. F. Lewis says in the Shelburne Coastguard that White-crowned Sparrows are "elegantly marked and of aristocratic bearing . . . From wintering places near the Gulf of Mexico birds of this species migrating to Labrador tend to follow the St. Lawrence River, but this year some appear to have detoured through the Maritime Provinces."

FOX SPARROW. Fox Sparrows started to appear May 25 and 26, in 2's and 4's, in Annapolis County (H. Baker, W. E. Whitehead, S. Whitman), in Yarmouth County (V. Sollows), Queens County (Mrs. Doggett), Shelburne County (H. F. Lewis); April 1 in Halifax County (W. Chute, Mrs. Monies), and in Digby and Kings Counties April 2 (Prof. Gray, W. P. Neily). They arrived in Louisbourg April 7 (J. Lunn). Mr. Lunn wrote: "they built up in fantastic fashion on the 12th-13th and on the 20th-21st, when hundreds were in and around the gardens of Louisbourg. We had 45 at our feeder . . .". Captain Holdway wrote that on April 12, 30 arrived at Pictou, and 100 on April 13 - ". . . the main migrants arrived." Miss Lowerison wrote "the Fox Sparrows arrived at Amherst April 10, and were common on April 11." They were abundantly present in Halifax city (J. Awalt, P. Dobson) and County (C. R. K. Allen) April 11-12, singing everywhere.

SONG SPARROW. Although a few earlier birds were recorded, it is interesting that we have reports of Song Sparrows, mostly of more than one bird, all on March 25, from Annapolis, Yarmouth, Queens and Shelburne Counties. Mrs. Doggett at White Point, Queens County, had 1 Song Sparrow on March 25, 6 or 8 on March 27.

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR. A male Chestnut-collared Longspur was collected on Cape Sable and sent to Dr. H. F. Lewis at Sable River. It has been mailed to the National Museum of Canada, Ottawa. This is the first specimen of this species to be taken in Nova Scotia, but Dr. Lewis reminds us that on May 29, 1962, a male Chestnut collared Longspur was observed by Mrs. Evelyn Richardson on Bon Portage Island, where it remained for several days. She frequently observed this individual of this clearly marked species at distances of only a few feet, and fully identified it.

Wanted: Observations on the Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker

Mr. Robert Gibbon of R.R. 2, Stewiacke, N. S., has requested any information our members may have on sightings, habitat, nesting habits, etc., of this comparatively little-known woodpecker.

Like his larger relative, the Pileated, the Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker lives in forested tracts and may therefore be much commoner than most birders' field lists would indicate.

Since 1957 correspondents have reported a total of seventeen sightings. Halifax County led with a total of seven, possibly because of a greater concentration of bird-watchers in this area. Colchester stood second with four, but these consisted of a family of one adult and three young observed by Mr. Gibbon himself at Stewiacke in June, 1961. Single sightings were also reported from Annapolis, Digby, Lunenburg, Pictou and Inverness Counties, thus indicating (if such scanty evidence means anything) a general distribution of this species throughout the Province.

Reports of other sightings during the past several years plus any additional information will be welcomed by Mr. Gibbon and the Editor,

Mr. Bruce C. Johnson, 105 Chipman House, Acadia University, Wolfville, N. S. is doing research work on the Hungarian or Gray Partridge and has written to say he would appreciate any records or comments from other members of the Bird Society.



PHOEBE ON NEST

Bob Brooks

This photograph by Bob Brooks was taken at the summer home of Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot Dean, Yarmouth, N. S. Last summer, 1963. Mrs. Dean reported Phoebes nesting in the sunporch of her cottage at Carleton, Yarmouth County. This was the first fully authenticated Phoebe nest in Nova Scotia. This summer the Phoebes returned, and this picture was taken, with considerable difficulty, of the 1964 nest, very near the site of the original one. The picture is reproduced here, courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Dean.

The Maritimes Nest Records Scheme

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT - 1963 SEASON

All mail and cards to be sent to:

Maritimes Nest Records Scheme
c/o Canadian Wildlife Service
P. O. Box 180, Sackville, New Brunswick

PURPOSES OF THE NEST RECORDS SCHEME

The Nest Records Scheme is set up to assemble data upon nests, particularly those found by persons who might not otherwise publish those records. Data in the Scheme are available for study by any persons interested in birds.

No one observer, even if working full-time, can find 500 nests of a non-colonial species in one summer, nor can he locate nests in many areas in the same season. The combined efforts of a group of nest recorders reporting to a Scheme such as ours may provide those data as well as giving enjoyment to the nest finders. Thus, every nest is of value, and every observation too.

Each nest record card also serves as a published breeding record, and for that reason the identification of the bird **must** be correct. Provincial museums, biology departments of universities, and individual bird students, are interested in data upon birds of certain species or in certain areas. The Maritimes Nest Records Scheme is the only organization which covers all three Maritime Provinces, and the only one which collects quantitative data on all wild birds, and especially upon the common species. Filling in a nest record card does not prevent you from publishing a particular breeding record in

a club bulletin or bird journal. Should you wish to do so, check our files first: we may have other information of value to you. **The Nest Records Scheme should be a clearing-house for information on nesting birds as well as a safe repository for breeding data.**

WELCOME TO NEW PARTICIPANTS

We hope that this report will explain to you the purpose of the Nest Records Scheme, how newcomers may help with the Scheme, and progress made in the past year. The only qualification for taking part in the Scheme is that people be able to correctly identify the bird whose nest they are reporting. Nest record cards are provided free of charge, as outlined below. Every single nest is worth reporting, even if it is visited once only. Many of our most valued contributors can only send in three or four cards each year. Careful observation is even more important than large numbers of cards.

PROGRESS IN 1963

The fourth season of the Maritimes Nest Records Scheme was the most successful to date. Over 1200 cards were received, and over 60 people took part in the Scheme. The totals received in each year have been:

1960 - 129; 1961 - 364; 1962 - 523 1963 - 1267

That growth rate is most encouraging.

In 1963, we received cards from 15 out of 18 counties in Nova Scotia, 13 out of 15 counties in New Brunswick, and from all three counties in Prince Edward Island. However, only 7 counties in Nova Scotia and 6 in New Brunswick were represented by as many as 20 cards of all species combined.

More than 150 species have been shown to breed in the Maritimes at one time or other, and cards were received for 99 species in 1963. Among those were the first known breeding records of certain species in their respective provinces. It is clear that exploratory work is still needed, even while we gather quantitative data for research. We hope that everyone who has taken part in the Scheme thus far will try to interest others in reporting to it, particularly in areas unreported to date, and that they will continue to send in cards themselves.

PROCEDURE FOR CARDS

Cards for 1964 are sent out with this report. **Persons who have not previously taken part in the Scheme are urged to write in and request cards.** A number of birds, including Black Duck, Great Horned Owl, Horned Lark, and Gray Jay, begin nesting before the end of April. If you have cards ready when you find your first nest, you are not likely to forget it.

The best time to fill in the card is on the day you visit the nest, when all details are fresh in your mind. The cards are a convenient size for slipping into your pocket, if you wish to carry them in the field. Take care, however, not to lose cards which bear data from earlier visits. **Please use ink or indelible pencil for filling out cards; pencil fades rapidly.**

Every nest visited once is worth reporting, if you obtained proof or circumstantial evidence that the nest was used in 1964. A single visit can provide all necessary data on habitat, nest construction, and stage of nesting (laying, or incubation, or young) on a given

date. Additional visits help to determine the stage of nesting more accurately, and may also show the stage at which an unsuccessful nest failed. Use caution in visiting any nest; too frequent visits may attract nest-robbers, and flushing the adult from the nest may expose the eggs or young to chilling or predation.

Several nests of a species found in a single location, as (say) several Barn Swallow nests in a particular barn, may all be reported on a single card. Those data may later be transferred onto individual cards if additional visits are made. Please use the cards for data on colonies as well as for single nests. If necessary summarize the data, thus: 11 nests with 2 eggs, 21 nests with 3 eggs, 17 nests with 2 eggs and 1 young, etc.

Please be specific, if possible, in description of nests, and of habitats in which nests were found. A few people in 1963 confused "position of nest" and "habitat". The position of the nest may have been "in a spruce tree" or "in crotch of alder bush" or etc., but the habitat was "mixed woods" or "marsh along river-bank" or etc.

The hour at which a nest is visited may provide useful information on times of egg-laying, or frequency with which an incubating bird leaves the nest. One should note whether or not the parent bird was on the nest at the time of a visit, and, if possible, whether the eggs were warm. When young are reported, whether in a nest or as a flightless brood, an indication of the age of the young is most useful. Brief descriptions based on size, as "one-third grown", or degree of feathering, as "pin-feathered", are useful; more detail is still better.

The eggs of Cowbirds require a second card besides that for the host species. Each of those cards should bear a reference to the other species using the nest.

Please write in if you have any questions about the use of the cards, or anything connected with the Nest Records Scheme. Best of luck with nest-finding in 1964.

APOLOGIES FOR LATENESS

In 1963, most observers sent in their cards promptly at the end of the nesting season. The data were tabulated before the end of November, but other work and my absence on an extended field-trip made it impossible to prepare this report until February. I take the blame for the late report myself, and offer apologies to those who were punctual. Let us all try to send in our cards early next year, so we may get the report out promptly.

PERSONS TAKING PART IN THE SCHEME IN 1963

In 1963, 59 persons sent in cards to the Scheme, and several others shared in the observations reported. Cards were received from 32 people in New Brunswick. Twenty-six people sent in cards from Nova Scotia, and five from Prince Edward Island. Four persons sent in cards from more than one province. The total number of contributors is almost half again as many as in 1962, a most gratifying increase.

Members of the organized natural history groups, Moncton Naturalists' Club (MNC), Saint John Naturalists' Club (SJNC), and Fredericton Field-Naturalists' Club (FNFC), in New Brunswick, and the Nova Scotia Bird Society (NSBS) in that province, made major contributions. Biologists from the Northeastern Wildlife Station

(NEWS), Fredericton, New Brunswick, and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), Sackville, New Brunswick, contributed most of the cards for waterfowl and other game species.

CO-OPERATORS

New Brunswick	No. of cards
F. Alward (Petitcodiac, MNC)	156
H.H. Prince (NEWS) (often with Inch, Kitchen or Dilworth)	122
D. Christie (SJNC) (often with Miss Hazen)	67
L. Inch (NEWS) (often with Prince, Kitchen or Dilworth)	64
J. G. Wilson (Gondola Pt., SJNC)	55
D. Kitchen (NEWS) (often with Inch, Prince or Dilworth)	52
A. Madden (MNC)	42
G. Hope (MNC)	28
K. Rushton (MNC)	25
L. Carbyn (Port Elgin) (Mt. Allison Univ.)	20
F. W. Bone (MNC)	13
R. McLeod (Port Elgin) and Mrs. V. B. Watters (SJNC)	10 each
P. Candido (MNC) and B. S. Wright (NEWS)	8 each
A. J. Erskine (CWS) (see also N.S.)	6
Mrs. M. Hope (MNC)	5
R. Crossman (MNC), Mrs. M. C. Morehouse (Pennfield Ridge) and W. J. Quartermain (MNC)	4 each
P. LeBlanc (MNC, P. A. Pearce (FFNC) and E. A. Price (MNC)	3 each
A. Dean (FFNC), Miss E. J. Hazen (SJNC), J. P. Kelsall (CWS), F. J. Lloyd (MNC) C. McEwan (MNC, and Miss N. Moore (FFNC)	2 each
Mrs. A. J. Erskine (Sackville), P. Graves (Petitcodiac), and Mrs. M. King (Westfield)	1 each
Total	<hr/> 727
Prince Edward Island	
K. Pigot (Mt. Stewart)	34
Mr. and Mrs. M. L. H. Thomas (Tyne Valley)	29
S. Vass (Ellerslie)	22
B. Pigot (Mt. Stewart)	15
Miss E. Lowerison (Amherst, N.S. - see also N.S.)	2
Total	<hr/> 102
Nova Scotia (most are NSBS members)	
A. J. Erskine (CWS)	225
J. W. Johnson (Karsdale) (Acadia Univ.)	43
C. Coldwell (Gaspereau)	24
R. S. Gibbon (Stewiacke)	21
W. E. Whitehead (Round Hill)	18
W. Hemeon (Halifax)	16
Miss E. Lowerison (Amherst - see also P.E.I.)	12
R. W. Tufts (Wolfville)	11
J. S. Erskine (Wolfville) and D. Lawson (West Brook)	10 each
R. Dicks (Dartmouth) and T. F. T. Morland (Indian Pt.)	7 each
Miss E. Crathorne (Dartmouth)	6
Miss R. MacNeil (Northport) and N. vanNostrand (Port Williams)	4 each
R. S. MacLeod (Baddeck), S. B. MacLeod (Baddeck) W. J. Mills (Halifax) and Mrs. R. W. Topple (Halifax)	3 each
E. Holdway (Pictou)	2

CO-OPERATORS (continued)

No. of
cards

B. Bowlby (Sheffield Mills), Mrs. C. W. Dean (Yarmouth),
Mrs. A. J. Erskine (Sackville, N.B.), C. Fraser
(Bridgetown), C. Hart (N.E. Margaree) and
A. Madden (see also N.B.) (Moncton, N.B.)

1 each

Total

438

The total of all cards for 1963 is 1267. The median contribution in 1963 was seven cards, compared to five and six in the past two years. As usual, there were several long series, among which Ford Alward's contribution again stood out for the number of individual nests reported. Other large contributions drew on waterfowl broods and on colonial birds, which are easier to locate than are individual nests. The number of contributions of from 10 to 50 cards was surprising, as the greatest increase might have been expected to occur among contributions of one to five cards.

We shall probably see new names with the greatest numbers of nest cards submitted next year. Ford Alward writes that his parish business is likely to cut deeply into his nest-finding time then, and I will be absent from the Maritimes on field-work all summer.

CARDS ON FILE IN THE SCHEME

Cards received up to January 5, 1964, totalled 2,424 with 125 species represented. The file to date is given below. We plan to summarize the data on file by provinces in the next annual report.

Cards on file in Maritimes Nest Records Scheme
as of December 10, 1963

	1963 Cards			Total on file	
	N.B.	P.E.I.	N.S.	Cards	Nests or Broods
Common Loon	--	--	3	8	8
Pied-billed Grebe	2	--	--	10	12
Great Cormorant	--	4	13	56	450/
Double-crested Cormorant	2	1	2	9	525/
Great Blue Heron	1	2	2	6	350/
*American Bittern	1	--	2	3	3
*Least Bittern	1	--	--	1	1
Canada Goose	--	--	--	1	3
Mallard	1	--	--	3	3
Black Duck	35	4	22	163	195
Pintail	1	3	--	8	9
Green-winged Teal	10	--	4	37	41
Blue-winged Teal	25	1	13	108	151
American Widgeon	6	--	1	13	19
*Shoveler	1	--	--	1	1
Wood Duck	31	--	--	62	88
Ring-necked Duck	19	--	16	102	155
Common Goldeneye	18	--	5	71	88
Common Eider	--	--	--	3	25
Hooded Merganser	2	--	--	3	2
Common Merganser	2	--	11	89	107
Red-breasted Merganser	--	--	1	9	9
Goshawk	--	--	1	3	3

	1963 Cards			Total on file	
	N.B.	P.E.I.	N.S.	Cards	Nests or Broods
*Red-tailed Hawk	—	—	—	1	1
					(rec'd 1963)
*Broad winged Hawk	1	—	—	1	1
Bald Eagle	—	—	—	3	3
Osprey	—	2	1	6	5
					(2 cards refer to same nest)
*Sparrow Hawk	—	—	1	1	1
Spruce Grouse	1	—	—	2	2
Ruffed Grouse	5	—	3	23	23
Pheasant	—	—	2	3	3
Virginia Rail	—	—	—	1	1
Sora	—	—	—	6	7
Piping Plover	—	—	—	2	2
Killdeer	2	—	1	8	8
Woodcock	19	—	3	50	50
Snipe	7	—	—	19	22
Spotted Sandpiper	7	2	9	41	43
Willet	—	—	2	7	7
Least Sandpiper	—	—	—	1	1
Great Black-backed Gull	1	—	4	12	165/
Herring Gull	4	—	1	9	485/
Laughing Gull	—	—	—	2	2
Common Tern	1	—	8	12	600/
Arctic Tern	1	—	—	8	510/
Roseate Tern	—	—	—	1	75/
*Black Tern	1	—	—	1	1
*Razorbilled Auk	1	—	—	1	10/
Black Guillemot	—	2	1	4	27
*Rock Dove	9	—	1	11	11
					(1 other rec'd 1963)
Black-billed Cuckoo	—	—	—	2	2
Great Horned Owl	—	—	1	8	8
Nighthawk	—	—	1	2	2
Chimney Swift	—	—	2	4	4
*R-t. Hummingbird	1	—	—	1	1
*Kingfisher	—	—	—	1	1
					(rec'd 1963)
Flicker	4	—	9	25	25
Pileated Woodpecker	—	—	—	1	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4	—	1	6	6
Hairy Woodpecker	1	—	1	7	7
Downy Woodpecker	—	—	1	2	2
Bl.-backed 3-toed Woodpecker	1	—	—	5	5
Eastern Kingbird	11	—	5	22	22
*Crested Flycatcher	2	—	—	2	2
Eastern Phoebe	2	—	1	5	6
Least Flycatcher	3	—	—	6	6
*Traill's Flycatcher	—	—	1	1	1
Horned Lark	1	—	—	2	2
Tree Swallow	23	—	10	71	71
Bank Swallow	—	—	1	7	500/
Barn Swallow	38	4	23	97	99
Cliff Swallow	8	—	1	15	39
Purple Martin	4	—	2	8	24

	1963 Cards			Total on file	
	N.B.	P.E.I.	N.S.	Cards	Nests or Broods
Gray Jay	—	—	—	1	1
Blue Jay	—	—	—	2	2
Raven	—	—	2	8	8
Crow	2	1	3	13	13
Black-capped Chickadee	—	—	3	5	5
Boreal Chickadee	—	—	—	2	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	—	—	—	1	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	—	—	2	2
Brown Creeper	—	—	—	1	1
Catbird	5	—	3	18	18
Robin	116	14	38	247	248
Hermit Thrush	5	—	3	12	12
Swainson's Thrush	1	—	—	6	6
Veery	3	—	—	5	5
*Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	—	—	1	1
Cedar Waxwing	7	—	2	19	19
Starling	22	3	32	75	77
Solitary Vireo	—	—	1	3	3
Red-eyed Vireo	1	—	—	5	5
Black-and-White Warbler	—	—	—	3	3
Tennessee Warbler	—	—	—	2	2
Yellow Warbler	10	—	7	33	33
Magnolia Warbler	3	—	1	8	8
Myrtle Warbler	2	—	—	3	3
Bl. Thr. Green Warbler	2	—	—	4	4
*Blackburnian Warbler	1	—	—	1	1
Chestnut-sided Warbler	2	—	1	5	5
Bay-breasted Warbler	—	—	—	2	2
Ovenbird	—	—	1	3	3
*Northern Waterthrush	3	—	—	3	3
Yellowthroat	2	1	—	8	8
Canada Warbler	—	—	—	1	1
Redstart	9	—	2	18	18
House Sparrow	15	2	4	31	32
*Bobolink	3	1	1	5	5
Red-winged Blackbird	64	16	18	117	130
Baltimore Oriole	—	—	—	1	1
Rusty Blackbird	—	—	—	1	1
Grackle	50	28	79	230	255
Cowbird	8	—	—	11	11
*Rose-breasted Grosbeak	4	—	—	4	4
*Purple Finch	1	—	—	1	1
Pine Siskin	—	—	—	1	1
Goldfinch	—	—	2	3	3
Savannah Sparrow	6	5	4	27	27
*Vesper Sparrow	1	—	2	3	3
Slate-coloured Junco	8	1	11	42	42
Chipping Sparrow	16	2	2	29	29
White-throated Sparrow	10	—	6	26	26
Swamp Sparrow	4	—	—	5	5
Song Sparrow	18	3	17	61	61
Totals	727	102	438	2,424	6,312

* new for Scheme in 1963.

The 1963 cards represented 99 species, a marked advance over the 71 reported last year. Seventy-nine were found breeding in New Brunswick, compared to 56 in 1962, and 66 in Nova Scotia, compared to 53 in 1962. Twenty-two species were reported in Prince Edward Island, a most welcome addition to the file for that province.

The list of species not previously reported to the Scheme is remarkably large this year, and includes several outstanding records.

American Bittern (Miss Crathorne - East Lake Ainslie, N.S.; A. J. Erskine - Malagash, N.S.; R. McLeod - Port Elgin, N.B.).

Least Bittern (D. Christie and J. Hazen - Red Head Marsh, N.B.).
Shoveler (H. H. Prince - Portobello Stream, N.B.).

Red-tailed Hawk (J. P. Kelsall - Lynch Lake, Annapolis Co., N.S.
Clutch collected in 1942 and reported to Scheme in 1963).

Broad-winged Hawk (P. Candido - Moncton, N.B.).

Sparrow Hawk (C. Coldwell - Gaspereau, N.S.; in nest-box).

Black Tern (D. Inch - Waterbury Pond, Queens Co., N.B.).

Rock Dove (L. Carbyn - Port Elgin, N.B. (2); D. Christie - Saint John, N.B.; K. Rushton - Moncton, N.B. (2); J. Wilson - Hammond River, N.B.; E. A. Price - Shediac, N.B.; Mrs. Hope - Chartersville, N.B.; P. LeBlanc - Moncton, N.B.; Miss Low erison - Amherst, N.S.; J. P. Kelsall - Kentville, N.S., 1943 nest reported 1963).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (P. LeBlanc - Moncton, N.B.).

Crested Flycatcher (D. Inch - Gilbert Island, N.B.; P. Pearce Oromocto, N.B.).

Traill's Flycatcher (R. S. Gibbon - Stewiacke, N.S.).

Razorbilled Auk (W. J. Quartermain - Machias Seal Island, N.B.).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (F. Alward - Petitcodiac, N.B.).

Blackburnian Warbler (D. Christie - Evandale, N.B.).

Northern Waterthrush (D. Inch - Half Moon Lake, Queens Co., N.B. (2); D. Christie - Westfield, N.B.).

Bobolink (F. Alward - Petitcodiac, N.B. (2); J. G. Wilson - Gondola Pt., N.B.; S. Vass - Bideford, P.E.I.; W. Hemeon - Upper Bass River, N.S.).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (A. Madden - Moncton, N.B.; J. Wilson - Gondola Pt., N.B. (3)).

Purple Finch (L. Carbyn - Port Elgin, N.B., fledgling).

Vesper Sparrow (F. Alward - Petitcodiac, N.B.; J. W. Johnson - Kentville, N.S.; J. S. Erskine - Debert, N.S.).

Last year we were pleased to report 1000 cards in the Scheme, with one species represented by 100 cards. In that year's report I looked forward to the time when "we will receive 1000 cards annually . . . with 100 each of some species." In 1963, the total of 1,267 cards included 168 for Robins, 98 for Red-winged Blackbirds, and 167 for Grackles. Black Duck, Barn Swallow, and Starling, were also represented by more than 50 cards each in 1963.

It is a little surprising that some very common species which nest near houses are reported so relatively seldom. We have on file only 13 nests of Crow, 33 of Yellow Warbler, 31 of House Sparrow, and 61 of Song Sparrow. Nest-finders enjoy searching out rarities and hard-to-find nests. In 1963 one card reported the first breeding record for Bobolink in Prince Edward Island. Another described what is apparently the first nesting record of Eastern Phoebe in Nova Scotia. The data on that card suggested that the nest was used for two consecutive nestings, an unusual event in that species. The Least Bittern card is the first breeding record of that species in New Brunswick since 1889, according to the New Brunswick Museum file. In 1963, we received reports on the only known Maritime colony of Black Terns, and one of the two colonies of Razor-billed Auks. We learned of two more colonies of Purple Martins near the limit of

their range, in Amherst, Nova Scotia. The nests of Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Traill's Flycatcher, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet, are among the more difficult "finds" reported.

Six of the twelve species whose absence I remarked upon in last year's report were reported in 1963. Persons in search of new species in 1964 might look for nests of Sharp-shinned Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Eastern Wood Pewee, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Parula Warbler, Palm Warbler, Eastern Meadowlark, White-winged Crossbill, Sharp-tailed Sparrow, or Lincoln's Sparrow. Those may well offer a real challenge.

Others may wish to report on areas as yet unrepresented in the Scheme. We have no cards for the famous sea-bird colony on the Bird Islands off Big Bras D'Or, Nova Scotia, nor for the Puffins of Machias Seal Island. Last year we were most embarrassed to admit, in response to an enquiry, that we knew of no colonies of any gull species in Prince Edward Island (nor did anyone else, we may add!). We have never received a nest record card from Queens County in Nova Scotia, nor from Madawaska County in New Brunswick.

More important than any search for rarities is our contribution to knowledge of the common species. Having achieved 100 cards in a year for three species, let us maintain or improve upon that level for those species. It should be easily possible to find at least 100 nests each year for many of the commoner land-birds. Samples of that size or larger are essential for studies of year-to-year variations in nesting success or in timing of the breeding season. The question of the number of broods or nesting attempts made each year cannot be answered without large numbers of nest cards.

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER NEST RECORDS SCHEMES

Copies of this report are being sent to organizers of other nest records schemes in North America, and to the British Nest Records Scheme from which many of those in Canada got their start. We hope that we in turn may receive copies of reports from other organizations. New reports were received in 1963 from the Alaska, and Pacific (i.e. British Columbia and western States) Schemes and from the Nest Records Scheme in Great Britain, for which we are most grateful. We hope that organizers of other schemes will call the attention of bird students in their areas to data available for study in the files of the various nest records organizations. We also hope that persons visiting the Maritimes in summer will report to the Maritimes Nest Records Scheme any nests that they may find.

A. J. Erskine

for Maritimes Nest Records Scheme

Sackville, New Brunswick
March 13, 1964

Unusual Coloration In Birds

"Now this bit of news is very old but it was one of the things I did want you to know. During the 'election' storms of April 8 and 9th of 1963 I had an **Albino Junco** visit me among a flock of juncos that stayed with me to feed on the scratch feed I put out for them. I know I had at least 100 juncos, along with all the other birds who were stranded during that period, and I was fortunate enough to have

a colour film in the movie camera and get quite a bit of film of the albino. The lighting was poor because of the dull weather, but he can be seen just the same.

I also took the time to write down a complete description of him and also the times of day he appeared. He was extremely nervous and stayed as much to himself as possible, but I did have him a few times and he disappeared with the rest of the flock when the snow melted. Thank heaven for the film, for I know some people would say I imagined it all, but there is no doubt that it was very much so.
... quoted from a letter from Mrs.
Hawkins of Wilmot, N.S.

On the May 16 field trip, members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society came upon an albino Song Sparrow, in company with another of this species. As is universally reported, the bird seemed very shy, keeping well ahead of the group, but finally Mr. John Comer tracked it down, and watched it at close range, bathing with another normally feathered Song Sparrow, in a secluded pool. He said it was not truly white, but a very beautiful mixture of tawny and cream color, a sight well worth seeing.

Mrs. Smith of Cape Sable saw among a group of Starlings, March 28, one bird, undoubtedly a Starling, with white wing-bars.

Reverend Calder Fraser of Bridgetown adds one further to the list, a Grackle with khaki-coloured back, wings and tail, April 25, Bridgetown.

Unusual Behaviour In Birds

In reference to Mr. C. R. K. Allen's article on Gray Jays, Mr. Granville B. Nickerson has written: "My feeding tray is 12 feet from my front steps and Gray Jays are my regular customers. On May 27 one of my Jays picked up a piece of suet with its 'talons' and flew off with it. A repeat performance would simply be a matter of cutting the suet to a definite size plus the appetite of the Gray Jay at that particular moment."

From Mr. R. H. Leighton, of Nanaimo, B.C. has come further confirmation of this irregular Passerine behavior. Mr. Leighton wrote: "While eating in the woods, as I do every day, the Gray Jays are ever present. They wait for lunch pails to be opened and are close at hand. They sit regularly on the rear view mirror of my truck and are very tame. I have seen them (while in flight) transfer bread crusts from bill to feet by just reaching up for them. It is common to see them drop the crusts from their bills and catch them with their feet."

Watching Still Fun For Birds' Expert

The nesting place of Roger Tory Peterson, unofficial commander-in-chief of American bird watchers, is a home in the woods by the Connecticut River.

Here he does the writing and painting for bird identification books that are used by schoolboys, prime ministers, housewives and other "birders" in dozens of countries.

Birds play on the terrace outside the glass wall of his living room, and when he takes a break from the 12-hour working days he imposes on himself he likes to stroll in and look at them.

"This is what I'd enjoy most," he said in a recent interview. "just looking at them and not doing anything about it."

Peterson is a man who knows his way around the globe and wherever people watch birds, which is just about everywhere, Peterson's books are known and so is he.

In his own community, though, he is seen mostly by his wife, his two teen-age sons and those birds that come to eat at his feeders. He stays close to the house, often working straight through the night and sleeping by day.

Although he always has several books in preparation, the one that really made his name has been in the hands of bird watchers for nearly three decades.

This is "A Field Guide to the Birds", a picture-packed book that describes the birds of the Eastern United States. It first came out in 1934, when Peterson was in his mid-20's, and has turned out to be a quiet little best seller of great staying power.

Last year 60,000 copies were sold - better than in any previous year.

By now, Peterson is 54 and the book he put out in his youth is nearing a million in sales. There are Peterson guides for other areas, including one for birds of the Western United States and one for Europe that is printed in 10 languages. Peterson currently is working on a guide for Mexico. Also coming up are a flower book using the same identification techniques as the bird guides and two volumes on the lives and biology of birds.

One of the reasons Peterson drives himself so hard at home is that he likes to chuck everything for a few months of the year and travel.

He still has some major goals that keep getting put off.

"There are two things I would like to do," he said. "One is to really do some proper bird painting that would give some scope to my ability to paint. The other is to have a first-rate national television show on wildlife - birds particularly."

Peterson is impatient with the persons who advise him the potential audience is too small.

"Absolute nonsense," he said. "There's an enormous market because of the interest in this sort of thing."

Peterson's wife, Barbara, an ace birder in her own right, is able to handle by herself most of the letters that come from persons who see a bird that isn't in the book.

One that popped up recently came from a woman in Flushing, N. Y. The visitor at her backyard feeder turned out to be a Brazilian Cardinal, apparently a pet that escaped from its cage.

Peterson feels that the world is a better place because of the woman in Flushing and all the other persons who look at birds.

. . . . copied from the Newark Evening News.