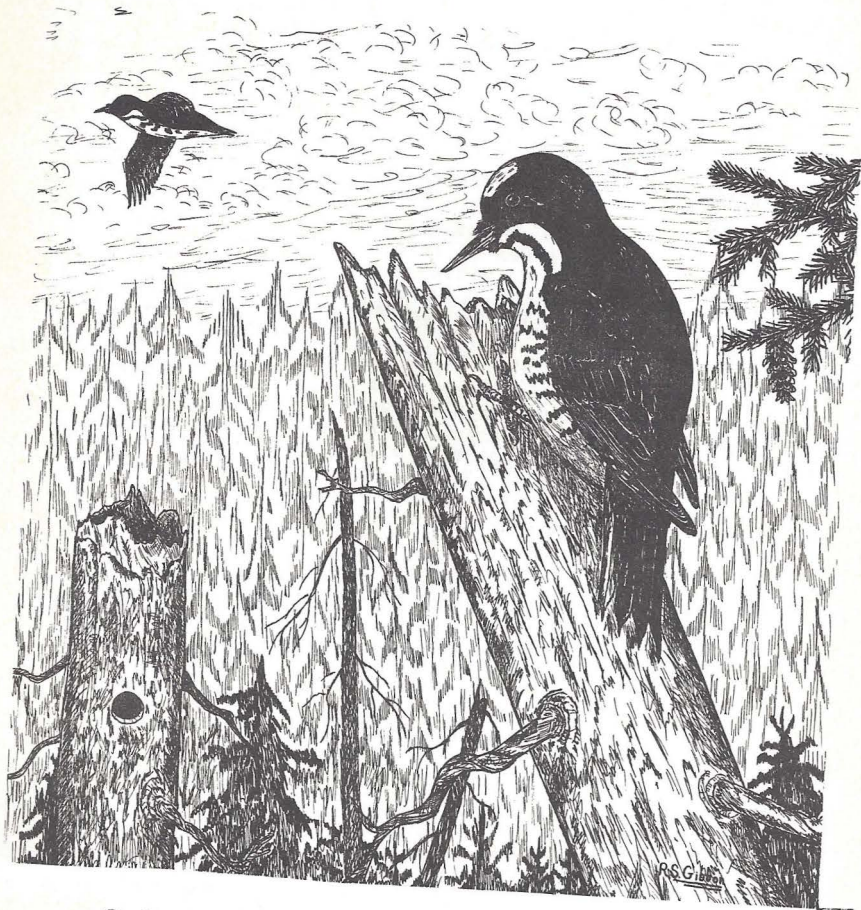


Nova Scotia Bird Society
Newsletter



November 1964

Vol. 6

No. 3

Cover - BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER
From an Original Drawing by
Robert Gibbon, Stewiacke N.S.

Nova Scotia Bird Society

Newsletter

November, 1964

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
Nova Scotia Museum of Science
Halifax, Nova Scotia

The Annual Meeting of the Nova Scotia Bird Society was held in Halifax on the night of Tuesday, October 20. There was a record attendance, including many members from out of town.

Following the President's address, next year's budget was discussed. It was decided that it would be necessary to increase the membership fee in order to pay for printing the Newsletter in its present form. A motion was passed that the fee should be \$2.00 for the year 1964-65.

Officers for the coming year are as follows:

President:	Dr. L.B. Macpherson
Vice-President:	Mrs. Victor Cardoza
Secretary-Treasurer	Miss Frances Cook
Editor:	Mrs. J.W. Dobson
Executive Members:	Mr. C.R.K. Allen
	Mr. Jack Brayley
	Mr. R.A. Kanigsberg

Mr. Kanigsberg was again appointed Honorary Solicitor, and Mr. F.A. Lane Auditor. The President appointed a Secretarial Committee consisting of Miss Ethel Crathorne, Mrs. Ward Hemmion, and Miss Sylvia Fullerton.

The meeting heard the following two notices of motion:

NOTICE OF MOTION to Amend the By-Laws of

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

WHEREAS necessary changes in the By-Laws of the Society may be delayed for a period of two years,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT No. 19 of the By-Laws of the Nova Scotia Bird Society be amended to read as follows:

No. 19. Amendments: An amendment to these By-Laws may be made upon a full detailed notice of the proposed amendment being given by the Secretary Treasurer to the members thirty days in advance of a General Meeting of the Society, and passed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at that General Meeting.

NOTICE OF MOTION
to Amend the By-Laws
of

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

WHEREAS the growth of the Nova Scotia Bird Society necessitates the appointment of a Membership Secretary,

BE IT RESOLVED that No. 4 and No. 5 of the By-Laws of Nova Scotia Bird Society be amended to read as follows:

No. 4. Officers: The Officers of the Society shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary Treasurer an Editor, and a Membership Secretary.

No. 5. Directors: There shall be eight Directors, or such other number as the Society at a General Meeting shall determine, consisting of the President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Editor, Membership Secretary, and three other members.

The President announced that due to illness, Mr. John Lunn was unable to speak at the meeting. Dr. Harrison Lewis then gave a short address on the Golden Plover, in particular concerning its irregular migratory habits, and speculating about its appearance in large flocks in the fall on Maritime Airports. Dr. Lewis is at present studying the problem of birds which present a serious hazard to aircraft during landings and take-offs.

Following Dr. Lewis's address, there was some informal discussion of unusual sightings of birds by the members present. Two very interesting films were shown; and at the end of the meeting refreshments were served.

To make reference more easy, the Newsletter will hereafter carry the Volume and Number on the cover of each issue. Since the first 'Editor's Newsletter', so designated, was mailed to members of the Society in 1959, that year represents Volume 1, making this year's issues Volume 6. The Newsletter is published three times a year, Spring, Summer, and Fall - Numbers 1, 2 and 3 respectively of the current Volume.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS 1964

There is an item on the agenda at this point indicating that the President is to give an address. Our former Presidents have done this very conscientiously and in an interesting and informative manner. I propose only to make a few general remarks on two subjects that must of necessity, concern a Society such as ours. These are hunting and its associate law enforcement and secondly, conservation.

However one may individually regard hunting, it has its roots deep in the history of the human race. If, as humans, we admit of instinct, the hunting instinct is a part of the race and, as well, hunting is recognized in law. This Society, too, must recognize that hunting is a legitimate pursuit, enjoyed by many.

However, unregulated and unrestricted hunting is an abomination. We have laws which, in general and if enforced, strike

a nice balance between the desire of the hunters to hunt and the conditions necessary for the plentiful survival of the hunted. If, however, these reasonable laws are not enforced, species are endangered and the whole concept of law is brought into contempt. In Nova Scotia our record in this regard is not good; in fact, in some areas it is terrible. The reasons are ignorance, contempt, traditional habits and little or no preventive and prior persuasion that the laws are justified, that they are for all and that they should be obeyed.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police is charged with the enforcement of the Migratory Bird Regulations and in my experience they do their best to investigate complaints and charges, on some occasions recently at considerable risk to their own lives. However, through lack of men, or possibly through indifference, they do little to prevent violations before they take place or to attempt to detect violations as they occur. A few spot checks of bird hunters' bags, or the occasional appearance of the police in locations where illegal shooting is known to take place would have a beneficial effect out of all proportion to the effort involved.

You know we have a legal open season on the Common (or Wilson's) Snipe. This is a bird which is quite capable of taking care of himself as a matter of species survival. He is hard to shoot and doesn't fly in flocks. He confines himself almost exclusively to fresh or brackish bogs. But when the snipe season is open there seems to be free shooting of any kind of shore bird or wader that moves. The gunners range the dunes, the mud flats and the beaches, where no self-respecting snipe would be seen, and shoot what they choose to call mud snipe, grass snipe, long-legged snipe, convenient names for many of the completely protected shore birds and waders that cannot, because of their habits or the habitat they choose, stand shooting.

The special off shore duck season along the Atlantic shore in effect, in most places, means that the season is open anywhere and for any kind of waterbird.

Individuals, of course, can lay complaints in appropriate cases and they are investigated but it is preventive protection by more wardens and police that is needed. Public opinion if aroused, can right this situation by encouraging the establishment of a much improved warden system in this province and a strengthened R.C.M.P. force. I suggest that the Bird Society, collectively and individually should promote this ideal by informing the governments concerned of our belief and, what many of you may not agree with, we should actively collaborate with, never oppose, the local and provincial Fish and Game Associations.

Turning to conservation, the salient fact is that if the habitat of the birds that mean so much to us is destroyed, polluted or otherwise made uninhabitable, then we shall have no birds to watch and study. We happen still to be well off in our Province in this regard but let no one think, 'It can't happen here', and happen fast too near the more populous places. Recreational uses of land are sometimes a threat, but recreational uses are legitimate needs and with proper regulation are controllable. In exceptional cases it may be necessary to press for sanctuary status for certain limited areas but more and more it must be combined use that we support. The Lawrencetown area that we talked of earlier is a prime example of the sort of area that can support picnicking and camping in the summer and still have available in it, in abundance, all sorts of birds for us to see, particularly in the fall, winter and spring. But such an area cannot survive without constant control and if that area does not survive, a unique bit of our inheritance is gone forever. Lawrencetown is only one example.

The increasing use of insecticides is having a profound effect on the survival of birds. Fortunately nature is fairly resilient and, if the harmful cause is removed, most species can recover their former levels. But they cannot do this too often and in the most serious cases the widespread exposure of birds to insecticides is not being prevented. I refer to some of the birds of prey, ospreys and bald eagles particularly. I would like to quote from the 1963 Report of the highly qualified Committee on Bird Protection of the American Ornithologists Union. "We think that the most urgent single, contemporary problem in bird protection is that posed by the high susceptibility of hawks and eagles to modern insecticides. We consider the late Rachel Carson's statement of the poisonous character of these substances, and the dangers inherent in their persistence in the soil and accumulation in animal tissue, is not exaggerated".

"There is evidence that hawks and eagles are highly susceptible and less resistant than most other species. At the same time we are confronted with alarming declines in the numbers of raptors simultaneously in various parts of the world. It is the belief of your committee that much evidence indicates that certain, if not all, raptors are faced with a menace that could bring about their extermination."

Those are strong words and they point the need for drastic action. All of us here tonight get immeasurable pleasure from birds and a world without them, which is now possible, would be an unimaginable wasteland.

Maybe some of us get too much selfish pleasure from birds, certainly others get emotionally involved with individual birds, but all of us must certainly become emotionally involved in conservation with aggressiveness and vigilance. From a practical point of view each of us can protest loudly when we see land being misused or pesticides being used without purpose or plan, protest in public and with calm reason to our elected representatives, who tend to listen to reasonable protests. As a Society we have a responsibility to cooperate with other organizations that have as their aim proper and regulated use of land for recreation and pleasure. Particularly I have in mind a Province-wide organization with these aims which is now being formed.

Possibly, for some of you, I have been unexpectedly serious and I do not want to leave you with the impression that you should be ashamed of enjoying birds. I take second place to none in that field and intend to continue to enjoy them. Your Executive, through the NEWSLETTER has every intention of sharing with you all the pleasure and information on Nova Scotia birds that we can possibly collect. For this it is, of course, necessary for you to tell the Editor what you know is going on. In this regard, in the July NEWSLETTER, Dr. Lewis rightly points out the necessity of accurate identification and the avoidance of all guesswork. Field work by the amateur, and that is what most of us are, is based almost entirely on identification and to contribute to our knowledge of Nova Scotian birds accurate identification is a first necessity, in fact, the pleasures of birding increase as the kinds of birds you can quickly and accurately identify increases.

Although we have serious work to do, I will never be one to underemphasize the pleasure to be obtained from birding, bird-watching, call it what you will or underemphasize the part that pleasure plays in holding us together as an organized society.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the other members of the Executive who have done all of the work this past year, particularly I wish to draw attention to the work of Mrs. Dobson, the Editor, Miss Fullerton, the Secretary-Treasurer and to our Membership Secretary, Miss Crathorne.

L. B. Macpherson

STUDIES AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER NEAR STÉWIACKE

by

ROBERT S. GIBBON

Introduction

The following account of studies and observations of Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers (*Picoides arcticus*) is the result of periodic observations and notes taken from a small section of coniferous woods along Route 2 about two miles north of Stéwiacke, Nova Scotia.

Although perhaps very little valuable scientific data have been accumulated, some relatively interesting notes in regards to habits, particularly in respect to nesting, are mentioned. Also, the fact that the distribution of these birds in this area appears to be confined to a small territory is somewhat worthy of note and could indicate the desirability of a detailed study of habitat distribution.

Thanks are extended to the Editor of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, Mrs. J.W. Dobson, who kindly requested that I write these results of my observations for publication in the NEWS-LETTER; to John Wentworth for his greatly appreciated assistance on covering the area for distribution data; and to anyone who has willingly given me information in regard to these birds.

My experience with the Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker began on October 26, 1958 while strolling through some heavy softwood timber about a mile from home. Though this first sighting was little more than a glimpse, there was no doubt as to the bird's identity. No more was seen until January 11, 1959, when I saw a female feeding upon a dead uprooted tree.

On March 3 of the same year, I saw four of these birds on a dead stub, a very unusual observation. While I watched they kept making squeaky, rattling cries and crept spirally up the tree, flapping their wings vigorously.

Perhaps one of the most important observations of this species in Nova Scotia occurred on May 10, 1959 when the first definite nesting record for the province was established. Shortly after noon on that date I saw a female near the right-of-way cut through by the Nova Scotia Light and Power Company. Approximately one hour later a male flew from where he had been feeding, to a small cavity which Red-breasted Nuthatches had been seen excavating about two days previously. The excavation was approximately twelve feet from the ground in the trunk of a living Red Spruce (*Picea rubens*) at the edge of the 100 foot right-of-way clearing. He entered the hole, which had been made considerably larger, and began to throw out bits of wood from within.

On May 13, about five o'clock in the evening, I saw the female entering the cavity. Soon afterwards the drumming of a male became audible. He was discovered some 200 ft. away, performing near the top of a partially dead White Pine (*Pinus strobus*). A few minutes later the female flew to the above tree, giving a repetitive, high-pitched call. I returned at once to the nesting site, since they both flew in that direction, and found two females near the nesting tree and the male poking his head from the entrance. One female proceeded to drive her intruder away, but the male took no part in the combat.

On the afternoon of May 19, Mr. R.W. Tufts arrived at my home wishing to observe the nest. (I had written him about the May 10 observation.) Upon our arrival at the nesting tree the male flew from the entrance. We then carefully removed a section of the trunk below the entrance to view the contents of the nest. Two white eggs were observed within. The pieces of trunk were then fitted tightly together and tied with coarse string.

On May 21, I once again went to observe the nest; upon my arrival and to my disappointment the string was cut and the nest totally void of life. It was probably the work of Red Squirrels.

During the following summer and autumn the woodpeckers were seen a total of seven times (June 7, July 21, Aug. 9, Aug. 26, Sept. 13 and Oct. 31) in the same general locale as the May 10 nesting site. On Sept. 13 I saw a male feeding on a dead Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*). I watched him carefully for about one half hour, during which time he located and ate seven large bark-boring beetle larvae and several ants.

No records were made during the winter of 1959-60, but on April 30, 1960 both a male and female were observed feeding about eight o'clock in the morning about 200 yards from the 1959 nesting site. Approximately one hour later the male flew to a spot 14 ft. up on a partially decayed Larch (*Larix laricina*) where he proceeded to excavate a cavity. The female, in the meantime, sat preening herself on a stump a short distance away. That evening I noticed that a considerable amount of excavation had been accomplished during the day. However, the birds did not return to the cavity and it remained unfinished.

The only observation for the winter 1960-61 was on December 23, when a male was seen drumming about 20 feet up on a dead spruce. This antic appeared to me to be unusual for the winter season.

The rest of the winter and early spring passed with no further observations. However, in the early evening of May 15, 1961 I heard a woodpecker and a female was soon located feeding on a dead spruce. She did not remain on one tree for long but moved from tree to tree, pecking for a few moments at one, looking from side to side, appearing to stare for a few moments in the exact direction in which she was going to fly, then moving to the next one.

Twenty-five minutes later I noticed a male Hairy Woodpecker feeding near the edge of the power line clearing. The Black-backed crossed the clearing and proceeded to peck on a small Larch. Soon she spotted the Hairy feeding on the other side and immediately she darted across and began to drive the other away by making short flights just below him. After several attempts she succeeded, and he gave up his quiet feeding and flew across the clearing and into the woods on the other side.

She then continued to feed in the same manner as mentioned above, by moving down the power line, crossing an old road and into the woods where I temporarily lost sight of her. After several minutes, however, I heard her again and managed to locate her nearly 200 yards away. She then remained quiet for some time. Suddenly she gave a few excited 'crucks' and flew to a nearby tree. A low, rapid drumming became audible from a dead stub no great distance away. The female immediately flew to this place and when I arrived I observed a male located about 15 ft. up on the stub. A few minutes later the same unique drumming sound could be heard about 100 ft. away. Both birds then flew and while doing so they produced their repetitive, high-pitched, rattling cry. Investigation proved the new drummer to be another Black-backed Woodpecker, the sex of which was not determined. Once again it was the female who proceeded to drive the apparent intruder away, while the male sat quietly on a dead stub. Though no nest was discovered at the above time, the observations seemed to indicate that one was probably located in the immediate vicinity. These observations also seem to indicate that the female is by far the more aggressive of the species.

Due to high school studies at this time I was able to do very little birding until after final examinations. However, on June 24, in very close proximity to the May 15 observation, the high-pitched feeding cries of young woodpeckers were heard. Upon investigation of the sound, it proved to be young Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers. The nest was located in a dead Red Spruce stub about 14 ft. from the ground and about three feet from where the top had been broken off, probably by wind. One young was poking its head from the entrance. It appeared to be nearly ready to fledge since it was almost completely feathered. Its coloration was in general the same as that of the adult male, except that its feathers were duller and appeared to be somewhat fuzzy. The conspicuous yellow forehead patch, characteristic of all the young of this species, was about one-quarter of an inch in diameter and elliptical in shape.

While I was watching the nest, the female alighted on the right side of the tree about a foot below the entrance and moved spirally in a counterclockwise direction toward the nest (This event has been described in a note by Dr. A. J. Erskine in the CANADIAN FIELD NATURALIST 73:205.) Before the female actually fed the young, however, she spotted me, dropped the food and began to make crucking sounds. Flying to a nearby tree she continued these utterances, nor did she appear to become greatly excited because of my presence.

The nest was again observed that afternoon and periodically watched for three-quarters of an hour. During this time the female was observed bringing food three times; twice she approached the nest in the same general manner as mentioned above; the third time she flew directly to the entrance. When she fed the young she would turn her head sideways and allow them to remove the food from her bill.

Several struggles between individuals in the nest were noted. This was probably a combat to gain the position of the entrance, since only one at a time could occupy the space. These struggles were in the form of rather loud, excited, metallic, high-pitched chippings, a withdrawal of all young from sight and the sound of vigorous wing flappings from within. Shortly afterwards, however, a face would appear once again at the entrance.

A third nest was found on May 26, 1962. This one was nearly a mile from the 1961 location at the edge of the driveway to the old vacant farm. The nest itself was located about eight feet from the ground in a dead White Spruce (*Picea glauca*). Upon my arrival the female was poking her head from the entrance, but immediately flew.

Another visit was made on June 2, when a section from the back of the tree was removed to reveal the contents of the nest and to study the effect that disturbing the nest would have on the birds. At this time the nest contained five eggs. I left the section removed for a while and moved back to observe the actions of the adult birds. Shortly the male returned and took particular notice of the new entrance and investigated it carefully by removing a few loose chips. He then moved around to the correct entrance and peered through to the other side, gave a few 'crucks' and flew to a nearby stub and sat preening himself.

The section was then replaced and secured with nails. Within three minutes the male again returned directly to the back of the tree and discovered the hole no longer there. He then moved to the standard entrance, entered it and remained inside, apparently convinced that all was normal again.

When the nest was visited again on June 16, the high-pitched feeding cries of young could be heard. I climbed the tree and once more removed the section from the back. Strangely enough there were only two young in the nest. There was no sign of what might have happened to the other three eggs. Perhaps Red Squirrels once again had a feast.

Both the male and female were present as I removed the noisy young. Several times the male flew to a stump only two feet from the nest, looking quite unconcerned, as I removed and handled his progeny. After replacing the young and fastening the section, I observed the male who sat on a dead tree about one hundred feet away, quietly preening himself.

On June 20, I set up a blind about twenty feet from the nest tree where I could easily observe the entrance. On that date the nest was observed between the hours of 11:15 and 12:30 and again between the hours of 8:05 and 9:20 p.m. During the former period of time the young were fed a total of 16 times, nine by the male and seven by the female. This means that they were fed about every 4.59 minutes. The female was also observed removing feces from the nest once, which she carried away and dropped some distance from the nest. During the latter period of time the young were fed only twice, once by the female and once by the male. Since the male fed the young and left the nest at about 8:50 p.m. they were fed only once about every 23 minutes. Feces were removed twice, both times by the female. After the male left the young chattered for about fifteen minutes, then became quiet. It was becoming relatively dark by this time but neither one of the parents was observed coming to stay at the nest for the night.

I returned again the following evening to collect more data. Sometime during the previous night or day the nest had been destroyed and it lacked all signs of life except for a few feathers in the nest and on the ground at the base of the tree. This time I believe the work to be that of a Raccoon.

I have been away from home a good deal since 1962 and thus have not had adequate time at my disposal for birding in this vicinity. However, several additional observations of these birds have been made, though none of them is particularly significant.

Perhaps one of the most noteworthy aspects of my observations of Black-backed Woodpeckers in this area is that all records, except one, were taken from a relatively small area, probably not more than 1000 acres, though I have done considerable birding in areas outside this territory. I did feel, however, that the reason for this was that the majority of my birding is actually done within this territory. No feeding signs or anything indicating the presence of the birds has been noted outside of this area. It was felt that due to these data something within the 1000 acre area must be significantly different from that of the surrounding area, such as tree species, height of and density of trees and/or insect species favoured by these woodpeckers.

To attempt to solve this or at least to throw some light upon it, I requested the assistance of a keen high school biology student, John Wentworth.

By mapping out a two square mile territory (including the 1000 acre area) it was our intention to cover the area by taking S.E. and N.W. compass courses about every 1000 feet across the area by marking points every 1000 feet or so along these courses. For simplicity these points were termed 'data points'. At these points we were to take data which included: the chief species of trees, their approximate size, land conditions, i.e. swamp, etc., and to take specimens of insects at random from beneath the bark of trees.

On the weekend of May 16, 17 and 18 last, we proceeded to carry out the plan. Due to lack of time the complete area was not covered, though probably a sufficient amount was covered to indicate the reason for the birds being located in a relatively small territory.

From the data which were collected at thirty points the most significant conclusion reached was that on almost all areas, except the 1000 acre section, the tree types varied considerably. Within the 1000 acre area the trees are relatively mature Red Spruce mixed occasionally with Larch, Red Maple, Sugar Maple, Balsam Fir and White Pine. Because of the fact that these are relatively mature stands, the branches are almost totally absent from the lower regions of the trunks and small dense second-growth Fir, etc., is lacking, thus leaving large areas of uninterrupted trunk bark which allows for easy foraging for these woodpeckers. Again, since the timber is relatively mature, some localized lumbering is carried on, leaving considerable open or thinned patches. As a result the remaining tall spindly trees are frequently broken by storms, resulting in their death and allowing favorable conditions for bark-boring beetles.

The territory surrounding is primarily extremely dense covering of second-growth Balsam Fir, approximately twenty feet high and from three to five inches in diameter. Several small areas are covered with swamp, where only dwarfed Black Spruce (*Picea mariana*) is tolerant. One section is predominantly covered with deciduous trees, mixed with a few Red Spruce and White Pine.

The conclusion reached with regard to localized distribution is that the birds have been funneled into a small territory of about 1000 acres, since it appears that this is the area of most suitable habitat.

It may well be mentioned that there is no section of the forest in the immediate Stewiacke area which has been recently burned, so there is little danger of such favorable territory affecting the population of these woodpeckers in this particular vicinity.

What is the total population of Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers in this area? How much and how far do they move from place to place during the course of a year? What are the actual preferences of tree species and insect species? These and several other questions I cannot answer at present. However, I would greatly appreciate any information which might throw light on these questions, or on the general distribution of these birds throughout the province of Nova Scotia.



ANNUAL FIELD DAY

Hemeon

PROVINCIAL FIELD DAY

The Provincial Field Trip was held in Digby County on July 5, 1964. Arrangements were in the capable hands of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Cardoza.

Seventy-five people attended and were divided into four groups led by Dr. L.B. Macpherson, Mr. W.J. Mills, Captain T.F.T. Morland and Mr. C.R.K. Allen. Open country, beaches and woods were explored, starting at Smith's Cove, on the shores of Annapolis Basin. In spite of fog and light rain fifty species of birds were noted, none of which was unusual for the locality or the time of year. Those of us from the northeastern part of the province enjoyed listening to the Veery's singing.

We are indebted to the Digby Fish and Game Association for lending us shelter, at lunchtime, in the club house.

At the end of the trip, we were privileged to visit the Professor Grays and Miss Louise Daley at home, where we were royally entertained with tea and cakes, etc.; to sustain us

upon our journey. Miss Daley showed us her bird hospital, which has been her hobby for many years. Upon request, she has written for us the following account of how it came into being:

MISS DALEY'S BIRD HOSTEL

December 31, 1934 was a red letter day at 'Bird Haven' when my first Baltimore Oriole was discovered eating frozen grapes on the old grape vine. The next morning Dad built a yawl and placed it on top of the arbour with a bunch of fresh grapes hanging from the top. The bird arrived around nine o'clock and stepped inside for his breakfast. All that was needed was to pull the string which had been attached to the yawl and led to the house. This was done and we had our bird. It was later verified by Mr. Tufts as a male in first year plumage. However, this bird was very thin and in a weakened condition and lived but a short time.

Since then nearly every year we have had from two to six as winter boarders.

This year in the early fall ten hung around the grape vine but finally took off before the cold weather. But by the middle of November four more arrived (three males and one female) and stayed; so were finally enticed into a canary cage and brought into the house where they live in a cage 36" x 36" x 24".

Their chief food is a soft-billed bird food obtainable at pet shops, grapes, oranges, lettuce, scrambled egg and bread.

They are let out several times a week while their cage is cleaned and all return through a small gate themselves.

They take one or two baths a day and now are in full plumage and singing and will be released about the middle of May.

During the 29 years that I have been caring for them, I have had about sixty orioles and only one casualty. Last year one drowned in the goldfish tank.

Along with the orioles is a white-throated sparrow which came into the porch during a blizzard and settled down for the night in a small spruce tree, and a junco. These two will be released. Others in the cage are cripples and will remain as permanent boarders. These are a goldfinch, a purple finch, two juncos, one of which has been with me for six years and has a broken leg.

All bird lovers are cordially invited to 'Bird Haven' for a visit with our feathered friends at any time.

AN EXOTIC HUMMINGBIRD

Aaron Bagg, of Audubon Field Notes, has forwarded to us the following report, from Michael Gochfield:

"On May 30, 1964 .. my wife and I had been camping at Salt Springs along Route 4, about 6 miles west of Antigonish, N.S. In the morning of 5/30/64 I had awakened early and had been observing birds for perhaps 1 and ½ hours, when I spied a hummingbird, which I presumed to be a rubythroat, sitting on a utility wire, in the front yard of a farm house.

"This hummingbird was a male, and I approached to about 20' at which time I had an excellent view of the bird through ex binoculars. I observed the gorget to be entirely black,

which was not entirely unexpected as the bird was offering a side-view. Subsequently I moved around to obtain a head-on view. I was able to note that the gorget remained entirely black, except for an area at the base of the gorget in the centre, which appeared definitely and consistently purple. I moved for several feet in several directions, and even got more of a head-on view, and the phenomenon remained. At no time did I observe the characteristic red or 'ruby' color of our common ruby-throat ... the underparts were a dark greyish color, without a particular brown or olive tinge, but this area was separated from the gorget by a pale and somewhat whitish band on the chest ... I obtained a rear-view from which I concluded that the colors of the back of the head, back, wings and tail were identical to that of the ruby-throat. The gorget did not have feathers extending around the side of the neck. The bill was of moderate length and straight...

'I observed the bird thus for between 1½-2 minutes until a slamming door frightened it off, at which time it flew around the house ... and was lost to view. Fifteen minutes of diligent search failed to relocate it.

'In 1962 I travelled to Texas and Mexico and had the opportunity to study and observe skins and live individuals before, during and after the trip. I had not observed *C. alexandri*, but had seen a number of individuals of *Lucifer* hummingbirds and fewer buff-bellied, white-eared, broad-billed and rufous. I had not seen Costa's hummer but was familiar with the unique features of the male. Consequently, I was fairly well versed in United States hummingbirds when I made the present observation. In addition, I have seen about 9 species of Greater Antillean hummingbirds and was familiar with specimens of some other West Indian species.

'Because of the features described (green head, black gorget, relatively straight bill) it is obvious that this is neither Costa's nor *Lucifer*'s and moreover the description is exactly that of the black-chinned hummingbird. Subsequently I have had the opportunity to verify this identification by study of specimens at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. There I found a number of species of spring male black-chinned hummers which matched my bird very closely, particularly with respect to the description of purple in the gorget and the whitish chest band. Moreover, in examining many adult and immature male ruby-throats it was apparent that ALL had the distinct 'ruby' feathers. This was true even in immatures who had only one feather in the gorget. Moreover, no specimens had any black or purplish feathers.

'In the field I was naturally aware, that in poor light or at certain angles the feathers of any hummingbird gorget will appear black, but this bird was observed in good sunlight, with the sun over my shoulder, and at various angles so that the structural pigment color could easily have been observed if any ruby feathers had been present. This was verified in the museum, by rotating and observing with unidirectional sunlight coming through the window.'

The possibility of a hybrid between the two species crossed my mind, and when I returned home I reread the article by Banks and Johnston, 1961, A REVIEW OF NORTH AMERICAN HYBRID HUMMINGBIRDS. *Condor* 63:3-28. This article is of particular interest in that of nine hybrids studied and described, *Archilochus alexandri* was concluded to be involved in three (hybrids). The author did, however, feel that the black-chinned Costa's was unsatisfactorily described.

The hybrids both had gorgets somewhat similar to that of the black-chinned, with a more lavender than purple base in one, and with slight reddish tails in the other. Although it is not possible to absolutely rule out the possibility of an

hybrid in the present case the statistical probability is so much less likely than the occurrence of a 'pure' black-chinned that it must be dismissed. I do not know of any *colubris* X *A. alexandri* hybrid having been described, but that remains a possibility in the present case.

The occurrence of black-chinned hummingbirds in the eastern United States has not been widely publicized (for better or for worse), and by examining the literature and talking to a number of ornithologists, I have managed to compile the following information.

a) Fifth Edition of AOU Check-List (1955): 'accidental in Louisiana (Baton Rouge).

b) Hallman, R.C. 1963. BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD, A NEW BIRD FOR FLORIDA. Fla. Nat. 36:89. A sub-adult bird was collected on Jan. 6, 1941, representing the first specimen for Eastern U.S.

c) A bird was observed by Peter Islip near Old Lyme, Conn., in the late spring in the late 1950's. An attempt was made to collect the bird, but the specimen was not preservable. I do not think that this record was published.

d) John Bull of the American Museum of Nat. Hist. volunteered the following information. In late winter or early spring several years ago he investigated a report of several black-chinned hummers which had visited a floral hedge in Coral Gables, Miami, Florida. He observed about 4 or 5 birds including at least two males which were feeding in these hedges. The gorget was entirely black with neither purple or red, and the birds were otherwise similar to ruby-throats. He also examined the museum specimens and felt that these birds were likely to be black-chinned.

e) I have recently had an opportunity to talk with Mr. Arnold Small, an active ornithologist from Los Angeles. He has been in Florida this spring, and told me that several black-chinned hummers had been seen there this winter. He did not have more details. When I questioned him about this species, he said that very often, even under relatively good conditions the purple band at the base of the gorget could not be seen, but that the bird was still not mistakeable.

If I find any other reports of this species I will be glad to let you know. I am in the process of investigating the Florida reports, by corresponding with some friends and ornithologists there.

P.S. I was aware at the time of the observation that there were no reports for eastern Canada and northeastern United States.

Michael Gochfeld,
RFD 1
Lexington Ave.,
Mohegan Lake, New York

REPORTS OF RARETIES

CORY'S SHEARWATER

1, June 28, 30 miles off Yarmouth - B.A. Harrington and R.A. Forster

'In company with 5 Sooty's. We observed this bird about 6 p.m., the light conditions were not excellent, but good, and we were able to watch it for close to 2 minutes. We are both familiar with pelagics and are quite positive of our identification Cory's Shearwaters were seen off Nantucket Lightship in late June this year.'

SNOWY EGRET

1, Oct. 7, Halifax Public Gardens - George Power reported to W.J. Mills.

This Snowy Egret was attempting to eat goldfish in the Garden's pond, but the resident birds there - ducks, geese, and swans, harried it constantly. After a short visit, it took off and flew away.

1, Oct. 10, Brier Island - S. Fullerton and B. Hinds

1, Oct. 15, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons

LITTLE BLUE HERON

1, immature, Sept. 10, Cape Island - Mrs. W. Smith (H.F. Lewis in the Shelburne Coastguard) The bird was in white plumage.

GREEN HERON

1, June 28, 2 miles NE of Yarmouth Airport - B.A. Harrington and R.A. Foster.

1, Aug. 26, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

1, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson

1, Oct. 6 & 13, Villagedale, Shel. Co. - E. Richardson

TURKEY VULTURE

1, Aug. 30, N.E. Margaree - L.B. Macpherson

SORA

3, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party

PURPLE GALLINULE

1, Oct. 22, Belmont, Hants Co. - C.R.K. Allen

KILLDEER

2, July 31, Lawrencetown Beach, Hfx. Co. - J. Comer

1, Aug. 4, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. & B.J. Smith

3, Sept. 2, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smith and N. Cunningham

1 each, Oct. 22 and 27, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons

MARBLED GODWIT

1, Oct. 7, Cole Hbr., Hfx. Co. - C.R.K. Allen and L.B. Macpherson (See note under Late Sightings)

JAEGER SP.

1, Aug. 30, Bay of Fundy - S. Fullerton

BLACK SKIMMER

1, July 20, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smith and N. Cunningham
'After 17 days of continuous heavy fog ... flew westward over the yard, uttering its peculiar cry.'

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

1, Sept. 2, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons
1, Sept. 18 (dead) Middle Musquodoboit - M. Jones
1, Sept. 30, (before and after) N.W. Arm, Hfx. Co. - W. Chute
1, Oct. 3, Cape Sable - S. Smiths
3, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party
1, Oct. 7, Seabright - D. Bird
1, Oct. 10, Brier Island - S. Fullerton and B. Hinds
1, Oct. 11-13, Cole Hbr., Hfx. Co. - Mrs. Rose
1, Oct. 13 (dead) Halifax - Mrs. P.B. Smith
1, Oct. 17, Cole Hbr., Hfx. Co. - C.R.K. Allen and L.B. Macpherson
1, Oct. 18, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons
1, Oct. 19 (killed by a falcon) Shearwater, Hfx. Co. - H.F. Lewis
1, Oct. 20, Halifax, received by S.P.C., identified by W.J. Mills
1, Oct. 25, Seabright - N. and D. Bird
1, Oct. 27 (dead) Halifax - J. and N. Graham and C.R.K. Allen
Any other records of Yellow-billed Cuckoos would be of great interest. A further note will appear in a future issue of the NEWSLETTER.

SNOWY OWL

1, Aug. 1, Cabot Trail - reported by S. MacLean

1, Oct. 16, Amherst Shore - D. Myers

Mrs. Myers gave full details of her observation which was at 40 feet for 5 minutes. The big bird was sitting on a boulder on the beach.

1, Oct. 20, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

1, Oct. 2, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons

WESTERN KINGBIRD

1, Oct. 27, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons

1, Oct. 31, Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. - E. Crathorne

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN

1, Oct. 31, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons

BROWN THRASHER

- 1, Sept. 13, near Liverpool, Queens Co. - S. Fullerton
- 2, Sept. 25, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths
- 1, Sept. 25, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons
- 1, Oct. 4, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths
- 10, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party
- 1, Oct. 15, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons
- 1, Nov. 4, Halifax - C.R.K. Allen

WOOD THRUSH

- 1, Oct. 10, Villagedale, Shel. Co. - Mrs. E. Richardson (H.F. Lewis in the Shelburne Coastguard)

PHILADELPHIA VIREO

- 1, Oct. 7, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths and N. Cunningham
This bird was found dead and positively identified.

WARBLING VIREO

- 1, June 15, Tusket, Yar. Co. - H. Hurlburt
Observed for 3 min. at 5 feet, the bird was accurately and fully described.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT

- 1, Aug. 22, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths
- 1, Aug. 25, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths
- 1, Aug. 28, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons
Also 1 seen subsequently on each of the following dates; Sept. 1, Sept. 26, Oct. 13, and Oct. 26.
- 1, Oct. 3 and 4, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths
- 1, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party
- 1, Oct. 10, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths

HOODED WARBLER

- 1, (male) Oct. 19, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths and N. Cunningham (in engine room of lighthouse.) This is the third visit of Hooded Warblers on Cape Sable.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK

- 3, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party
- 1, Oct. 21, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths
- 2, Oct. 22, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths
- 17, Oct. 22, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons
- 3, Oct. 31, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD

- 1, Oct. 23 & 24, Halifax - J. Awalt
Immature or female. Larger than a robin, brownish-black bird, with vivid orange-yellow in the throat and collar. Eating corn and suet.

SCARLET Tanager

- 1, (juvenile) Oct. 9, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths

INDIGO BUNTING

- 2, Oct. 23, Halifax - W.J. Mills
- 1, Oct. 24, Halifax - N. Graham, reported to C.R.K. Allen

DICKCISSEL

- 1, Aug. 27, Tusket (at feeder) . H. Hurlburt
- 1, Sept. 13, Lower Ohio, Shel. Co. - Mrs. B. Harris
- 1, Sept. 21, Seabright, Hfx. Co. - N. Birds
- 2, Sept. 27, Seabright, Hfx. Co. - N. Birds
(one still around October 29)
- 1, Oct. 25, Seabright, Hfx. Co. - F. Thrasher
- 1, Oct. 22, Halifax (at feeder) - W. and P. Hemeon

RUFOS-SIDED TOWHEE

- 2, (m. and f.) Sept. 25, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons
(also 3, Oct. 12; 2, Oct. 13; and 3, Oct. 26)
- 1, Sept. 30, Yar. Co. - E. Stubbert
- 15, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party
- 1, Oct. 10, Brier Island - S. Fullerton and B. Hinds

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW

- 1, Oct. 4 and 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party
A 'first' for Nova Scotia. Collected for the National Museum

LARK SPARROW

- 5, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party

FIELD SPARROW

- 4, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party
- 2, Oct. 15, Centerville, Cape Island - Mrs. W. Smith (H.F. Lewis in the Shelburne Coastguard)

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW

- 2, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party
- 1, Oct. 15, Wilnot - T. Hawkins
- 1, Oct. 20, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths



THRUSH ON NEST

F. Brown

FURTHER NOTES OF INTEREST

William Smith, New Jersey, wrote on July 24, 1964: 'Almost exactly an hour out of Digby, 10-15 miles off the N.S. coast (Bay of Fundy) the boat bore down on a small SHEARWATER, which took wing immediately ahead of it. It was notably smaller than a Sooty, and was solid black on top and solid white beneath. The cap, back, wings and tail were all uniformly black, its flight was rapid and direct but this may have been due to fright. I have no doubt that this was one of the small Shearwaters, (Manx, Audubon's, Allied) with the Manx the most likely, since it has been seen in the past few weeks off Cape Cod, and is recorded annually there'

Has anyone seen a CATTLE EGRET? In 1962 we received 6 sight reports; in 1963, 3 reports; this year none, of this bird.

Mr. Israel Pothier tells us that the COMMON EGRET seen at Bartlett's Beach early this summer is still there, in the same territory.

From their summer home at Little Bass River the Hemeons have recorded SURF SCOTERS present in Cobequid Bay all summer, in flocks varying from 7 on June 27 to 17 on July 30. At least half of them were mature males.

A few PEREGRINE FALCONS have been sighted. One Aug. 31, at Pictou, reported by Captain Eric Holdway as being 'mobbed by 60 Redwings'. Dr. Macpherson and his party also saw a Peregrine, at Seal Island, on Oct. 5.

Wickerson Lent and his sons Chester, Harry and Brian, also sighted a Peregrine on Oct. 4, 2 on Oct. 15, and 3 on Oct. 16, at Brier Island this fall.

GOLDEN PLOVER have aroused unusual interest this fall, From August through October these birds, which winter in Argentina, are seen returning through the Maritime Provinces, feeding in open fields and pastures, in flocks up to 200 or 300 birds. Evelyn Lowerison has written that her neighbour, Mr. Black, reports the Golden Plover as more numerous than usual, in his pasture near Amherst, where he sees them every year. In his address at the recent Annual Meeting of the Bird Society, Dr. Harrison Lewis mentioned that the Golden Plover have taken to feeding around airports. He has seen them at Charlottetown, P.E.I. and at Chatham, N.B., in numbers. At Shearwater, flocks up to 30 birds have been present almost every day through October.

On Cape Sable, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Smith report a flock of 69 Golden Plover Aug. 24, which had dwindled to 40 by Aug. 26 and which continued to diminish in numbers till early September.

Since July, 1964, we have received 11 reports of **MOURNING DOVES**, totalling 28 birds, 10 of which were seen on the Seal Island trip. These reports all came from SW Nova Scotia, with the exception of one from Eric Holdway, in Pictou, Aug. 31, of 2 birds seen there.

Two people have been lucky enough to get a good look at a **PILEATED WOODPECKER** this fall. On Sept. 19, 1964, Mrs. George Snyder was out on Route 14 on the way to Windsor, collecting mosquito larvae for her tropical fish, when a **PILEATED Woodpecker** landed in a tree nearby, giving her time for a good long look. She says this road is good for birds, especially hawks and owls.

Miss M.A. Christie of Bedford saw a **Pileated Woodpecker** land on a dead spruce, near her gate, at noon on Friday, Oct. 16. It stayed a short time, then flew across the street into a hawthorne tree, where it pulled at the haws for a while. It then returned to Miss Christie's yard, and explored an old Ash tree, finally flying away to the woods. Miss Christie thought it might have been frightened out of the woods by hunters after partridge.

Robert Gibbon of Stewiacke reports two nests of the **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** this summer, near Stewiacke. Both were located in quaking aspen trees, one seen on June 27, the other on June 28 both containing live young at that time,

Mrs. A.N. Jones of Cross Roads, Parrsboro, says that up to 1962 they had large numbers of **CLIFF SWALLOWS** nesting all around the barns. In 1963 the sparrows pulled the newly made nests out. This year, 1964, fewer swallows returned and built, but the sparrows again destroyed the nests.

The **BLUE JAY** population seems to have fallen below normal in 1964. C.R.K. Allen reports that in areas where he saw up to 30 birds last year, he could seldom find more than 3, this fall.

This spring, we reported only one **MOCKINGBIRD** in the newsletter, but we subsequently heard from D.D. Findlay of Guysboro that he had a Mockingbird in his garden June 27, 28 and 29, 1964.

Summer records of **EVENING GROSBEAKS** continue to increase. Six reports have come in for sightings in July of 13 birds, including 2 pairs, one on the Old Guysboro Road, near Kelly Lake Airport, from Dr. H.F. Lewis; one at Loon Lake, Westphal, Halifax Co. from Mrs. Elizabeth Topple. Two further reports came for August, 1964, from Mr. and Mrs. Cardoza's party, of

3 birds in Digby Co.; and one for Sept. 14, of a pair in the garden of Dr. Will Bird, Halifax.

Mr. C.R.K. Allen tells us that during the last three summers, on his travels through New Brunswick, he has seen the Evening Grosbeak become one of the commonest roadside birds. Evidently it has begun to extend its summer range into Nova Scotia.

Three RED CROSSBILLS were seen in company with a flock of White-winged Crossbills at Stillwater Siding, Hants Co., on Sept. 5, by C.R.K. Allen. Mr. Allen netted 42 species in the vicinity that day between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., including 6 species of Warblers. Both Song and White-throated Sparrows were present in large flocks. There appeared to be a big movement of birds afoot.

One other Red Crossbill was seen early in October in Seabright, by Mr. and Mrs. Forbes Thrasher.

Mark L. Libby, New Harbor, Lincoln Co., Maine, wrote to Aaron Bagg as follows:

'Did I tell you of the recovery of an immature WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL banded on July 26, 1963 here at Pemaquid Point (near New Harbor, Me.) and picked up on November 20, 1963 near Sable Island on a Russian ship (presumably a trawler)? Evidently the bird was moving toward Newfoundland.'

EARLY AND LATE SIGHTINGS AND MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS

SOOTY SHEARWATER

1, Oct. 5 (very late) Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party

GANNET

'many', Oct. 3 (westbound) Cape Sable Island - L.B. Macpherson and party

CORMORANTS

50, mixed, Aug. 26 (flying west) Cape Sable - S. Smiths

CANADA GOOSE

18, Aug. 23, flying from N.S. to P.E.I. - E. Holdway
'flock', Aug. 17, flying over Sable River - Mrs. L. Freeman, reported to H.F. Lewis

OSPREY

1, Oct. 5 (late) Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party

SPARROW HAWK

100, Aug. 5, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons

100, Sept. 17, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons
(Also many others, Rough-legged, Sharp-shinned, Pidgeon and Red-tails)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER

100 (flock) Aug. 25, Cook's Beach, Yar. Co. - Mrs. Donald Robertson (H.F. Lewis in the Shelburne Coastguard)

COMMON SNIPE

23, Oct. 31, Cole Hbr., Hfx. Co. - C.R.K. Allen

These birds rose in a flock from a marsh about an acre in area.

WHIMBREL

19, July 25, Pennant, Hfx. Co. - B. Hinds
 This seems to be a favorite point of departure for the Whimbrel. They are almost certain to be found here in numbers on and near this date. Barbara Hinds says they feed on the Crow berries abundant on the peninsula.

WILLET

40 (flock) Aug. 14, Cape Sable - S. Smith

PURPLE SANDPIPER

'some' (early) Oct. 10, Brier Island - S. Fullerton and B. Hinds
 2, Sept. 2, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. - S. Smiths

HUDSONIAN GODWIT

7, Oct. 17, Cole Hbr., Hfx. Co. - C.R.K. Allen and L.B. Macpherson

These birds were under observation for approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ hour, and during this time were joined by a lone Marbled Godwit which had been feeding nearby. S. Fullerton saw these birds on Oct. 24, still in the same area.

SANDERLING

1, July 11 (very early) Conrad's Beach, Hfx. Co. - C.R.K. Allen

NIGHTHAWK

100, Aug. 27, Round Hill, Anna. Co. - W.E. Whitehead
 1, Oct. 19 (very late) Cole Hbr., Hfx. Co. - Mrs. Rose

CHIMNEY SWIFT

2, Oct. 16 (late) Yar. Co., - I. Pothier
 2, Oct. 22 (late) Cape Sable - S. Smiths

FLICKER

100, Sept. 15, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons
 (Flying about everywhere)
 100, Oct. 5, Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party

EASTERN KINGBIRD

1, Oct. 10 (late) Cole Hbr., County Home - C.R.K. Allen
 1, Oct. 10 (late) Sable River, Shel. Co. - Mrs. W. Robart
 (H.F. Lewis in the Shelburne Coastguard)

EASTERN PHOEBE

1, Oct. 24 (late) Granville Ferry - J. Johnson

EASTERN WOOD PEWEE

6, Aug. 9, Brier Island - W. Lent and sons
 (killed at the light-house)

PURPLE MARTIN

All gone by Aug. 22, Amherst - E. Lowerison
 (Arrival date, See June Newsletter, April 29, 1964)

CATBIRD

1, Oct. 21 (late) Cape Sable - S. Smiths
 1, Oct. 26 (late) Cole Hbr. - Mrs. Rose

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH

1, Oct. 13 (late) Cape Sable - S. Smiths

WATER PIPIT

'began arriving' Aug. 15 (early) Cape Sable
Flock of 25, Oct. 19, appeared on Cape Sable - B.J. Smith

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER

1, Oct. 10 (late) Cape Sable - S. Smiths

OVENBIRD

1, Oct. 5 (late) Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party

NORTHERN WATER THRUSH

1, Oct. 5 (late) Seal Island - L.B. Macpherson and party

RUSTY BLACKBIRD

flocks up to 50, Oct. 10, Cole Hbr. district - C.R.K. Allen
(None seen in this region by Oct. 17) - C.R.K. Allen

COMMON GRACKLE

300, Sept 8, Halifax - L.B. Macpherson

PINE SISKIN

20, Aug. 8-14, Porter's Lake, Dig. Co. - Mrs. Cardoza and party

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

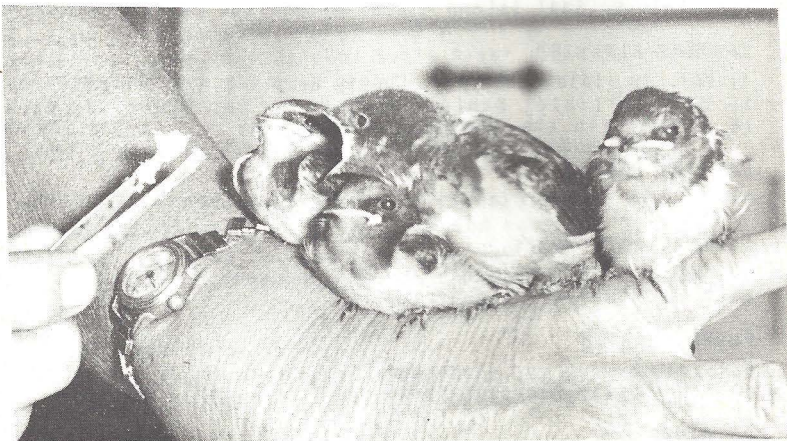
'large numbers', Oct. 17, Cole Hbr. area - L.B. Macpherson and
C.R.K. Allen (Very few present in this area on Oct. 10)

FOX SPARROW

6, Aug. 31 (very early) Pictou - E. Holdway

SWAMP SPARROW

large numbers present in the Cole Hbr. area on Oct. 17, none
seen there Oct. 10, 1964. - L.B. Macpherson and C.R.K. Allen



BABY SWALLOWS

Lunch at Miss Daley's

BIRD WATCHING

Aside from local and casual observation of birds in Nova Scotia, members of the Society and visitors undertook a number of exploratory field trips during the summer. In spite of the persistently cold, wet weather, results were good, judging from reports.

Dr. L.B. Macpherson and his party, which this year consisted of Drs. J.A. McCarter, C.W. Helleiner, David Dickson, and Mr. C.R.K. Allen, visited Seal Island Oct. 4 and 5. Owing to gale force winds, the visit was shortened to two days only, but 78 species were identified, many present in great numbers. Dr. Macpherson plans a trip next year, in September, in order to compare the bird population on the island for the months of August, September and October. The Newsletter hopes to be able to publish the comparative lists. This year's outstanding sightings are reported above.

At least three parties visited the Cape Breton Bird Islands sanctuary.

Mrs. J.R. Gallagher, of Sharon, Massachusetts, wrote of her trip:

'Dr. Gallagher and I arrived in Nova Scotia June 28th and headed straight for Captain Ahle's Mountain View Lodge at Big Bras d'Or! The Bird Islands are magnificent and we are so glad that the Nova Scotia Bird Society is in control of at least one of them. We estimated from 800 to 1000 Puffins, 1000 Guillemots, and 200 to 300 Razor-billed Auks on July 3rd.'

Dr. and Mrs. Gallagher spent the rest of their vacation in Shelburne County, as they have done for some years, keeping full records of all birds seen. Mrs. Gallagher wrote further:

'We usually count on from 100 to 115 species during our canoe trips or walks for the 8 weeks we are in Barrington and about Shelburne County. This year our total species count was 114 (not counting the Rock Dove). Highlights were the Mourning Dove, White-winged Crossbill, Winter Wren, Pileated Woodpecker Peregrine Falcon and Goshawk.'

Brian Harrington and Richard Forster, wildlife tour guides with the Massachusetts Audubon Society, also visited the Bird Islands during the summer. And in the latter part of August, Miss Frances Cook and party, of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, skirted the islands by boat, but were unable to land, due to the rugged shoreline and rough sea. Nevertheless, they were able to observe the abundant bird life on the cliffs quite adequately, and particularly enjoyed the Puffins.

Miss Barbara Hinds of Halifax has kindly sent us a description of her trip to our Eastern Shore sanctuary:

'A party of two Halifax County bird watchers - Sylvia Fullerton and Barbara Hinds - found optimism justified and suffering rewarded on a three-day tenting foray into the bird sanctuary islands on the Eastern Shore during late Spring..

By dint of scouring almost every bush, tree and field en route and in situ on Bird Islands, they scored 82 different species sighted, three of which were admitted doubtful.

Eastern Shore Bird Sanctuary was the main objective. The two islets, which lie half an hour's boat journey off shore from Harrigan Cove, proved densely populated by Common Eider, Black-backed Gulls and Black Guillemot. The actual terrain of turf was riddled with burrows of Leach's Petrel.

Regrettably, late May was too early for the petrel burrows to be occupied. Hopeful hands were thrust into a dozen burrows, but they were all empty.

Late May also proved extremely cold. Although prepared to tent on the islands, the idea was abandoned, as there was no tree or bush to shelter from the wind and no water supply. Also, no eggs were hatched.

Mr. Snow, a lobster fisherman of Harrigan Cove, provided transport to the islands for a reasonable fee - \$5.00. Direct route would probably take visitors to the islands in about half an hour. Via Mr. Snow's many lobster traps at 6 o'clock in the morning, the trip seems much longer.

Camping on the fringes of the woods in late May proved well worth breaking ice on the water pail in the morning. Breakfast was boiled outdoors to the pleasant song of Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

The three full days along the Eastern Shore in woodlands and meadows produced Ruddy Turnstones, Willets, Blackpoll Warbler, Roseate Tern, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Eastern Kingbird, and among a wide variety of warblers, were two unmistakable chestnut-cheeked Cape May warblers. (The latter were seen at Liscomb Game Sanctuary.)

Anyone contemplating a trip to the Bird Islands next Spring would be advised to go perhaps two weeks later in the spring - say, mid-June. The temperature would be more comfortable and gull and eider eggs would be hatching.

(As can be seen from their numerous contributions to our list of birds, Sylvia Fullerton and Barbara Hinds had another profitable trip, to Brier Island, early in October.)

Mr. and Mrs. Victor Cardoza, Elizabeth Cardoza, Owen Taylor, George Cardoza and Arthur Crowe spent a week, Aug. 8 to 14 at Porter's Lake, Digby Co.. During this time 35 species were identified, most of them present in considerable numbers. It was notable that finch species predominated, seven different kinds being seen, including the Evening Grosbeaks mentioned in Bird Notes above.

August 17-20 Mr. W.J. Mills visited Brier Island, on a bird-banding expedition. Mr. Mills tells us he banded 53 birds, of 17 species, as follows: Cape May Warbler 9, Myrtle Warbler 2, Northern Waterthrush 3, Magnolia Warbler 4, Ovenbird 1, Bay-breasted Warbler 5, Chestnut-sided Warbler 3, Blackpoll 2, Yellow Warbler 5, Tennessee Warbler 1, Redstart 4, Junco 6, Robin 2, White-throated Sparrow 2, Savannah Sparrow 1, Hermit Thrush 1, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher 3. On August 20, on Mr. Mill's advice, Chester Lent collected an Upland Plover for the Museum. Mr. Wickerson Lent says that up to 1938, at this time of year, flocks of Upland Plover came to Brier Island, to feed on the ripening blueberries. They have dwindled since that time to an occasional one flying over.

Miss Evelyn Lowerison of Amherst spent some time in the Wentworth Valley, and she has written:

'The first week in September I saw many warblers, Hummingbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds and many, many Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. In fact, this is the only place in Cumberland County I have ever seen the Rose-breasted Dr. Erskine phoned to say there was an Avocet feeding in the Tantramar River. Mrs. Myers and I went over and saw it very clearly. Too bad it would not fly the 5 miles and be a first for Nova Scotia!'

Speaking of Avocets, your Editor went further afield this summer. The trip was not specifically to study birds, but as it happened, an opportunity arose to visit a famous Wildlife Sanctuary, the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, on Great Salt Lake, Utah. This is an ideal place to observe birds, as the road borders a reedy canal, marsh, and lake, and the place has been a refuge so long (since 1932) that the birds are undisturbed by observers.

The Avocets, above-mentioned, were everywhere, with fluffy young in tow, as were Black-necked Stilts, Western Grebes, White Pelicans, Snowy Egrets, and others too numerous to mention. The only shy bird was a Long-billed Marsh Wren, who had to be talked out from behind a cattail, but he finally obliged. To anyone heading west, and interested in birds, I recommend this place highly. The whole northwest country has a wealth of bird life, due undoubtedly to bountiful food supply. It was amazing to see Mourning Doves sitting on telephone wires in rows, as Swallows do here, and a Kestrel or a Red-tailed Hawk on every fence-post. Lark Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows and Yellow-headed Blackbirds, our rareties, were abundant, while on the other hand, my western friends were delighted to see a Willet at the Refuge, a 'first' for them. To me, it was really wonderful to see an Oyster Catcher catching an oyster, three Turkey Vultures actually eating a dead sheep, to see that the Long-billed Curlew's bill really IS that long, to see that the Violet-green Swallow is TRULY violet-green, the Mountain Bluebird is blue, and finally, to meet those delightful awkward clowns of the bird world, the Magpies, and the Clark's Nutcracker.

It was wet and cold out west, too!

..... DON'T FORGET THE CHRISTMAS COUNT