

*Nova Scotia
Bird Society*



Newsletter

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NOVEMBER, 1965

Cover photograph - Members of the Bird Society at Crescent Beach.
Annual Field Day

The Hemeons

N O V A S C O T I A B I R D S O C I E T Y

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NEWSLETTER

Editor: Phyllis R. Dobson

Volume 7, Number 3

November, 1965

SUMMER AND FALL, 1965

Like all seasons, the summer and early fall of 1965 had their own individuality in weather and the relative abundance of certain plants and animals. Following a cool laggard spring, the summer quickly developed into one of the driest in recent years. Temperatures in the inland regions were well above average, although along the coastal marshes and beaches temperatures were kept down to comfortable levels by a persistent fog bank which lay close off shore.

On the credit side of the season's ledger can be written the fantastic quantities of Common Mushrooms which appeared in August and lasted through October; also the scarcity, according to many reports, of aphids and many other garden pests.

On the debit side must be recorded the scanty crops of some wild seeds and fruits, and the complete failure of others. The conifers, after excelling themselves in seed production last year, are taking time out in 1965, and the outlook for Pine Grosbeaks, Crossbills and other finches, not to mention squirrels, is rather bleak. This condition is not confined to Nova Scotia for Aaron Bagg reports the same situation in northern New England.

Among the fruit-bearing trees the Mountain Ash (*Sorbus*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus*), both favourites of several species of birds, seem to have failed almost as completely as the conifers.

The sun-baked lawns and pastures must have provided slim pickings for the Robins this summer, and one wonders what substitute they found for earthworms. Whatever this was, it must have agreed with them, for most correspondents have mentioned the unusual abundance of Robins. During October, too, one got the impression that, especially in the western half of the province, there were several hundred Robins for every individual of the other species.

Other birds reported as commoner than usual this past summer were Cedar Waxwings, Goldfinches and Evening Grosbeaks, with several breeding reports of the last (see below).

Red-breasted Nuthatches and Golden-crowned Kinglets appear to have staged a comeback after several years of scarcity, and Black-capped Chickadees, reported as absent from a number of

areas during spring and summer, began to appear out of nowhere in early fall.

Warblers were unusually abundant in the central part of the province during the spring migration, possibly due to a damming up of their movement by cool weather to the northeast; but according to a number of observers, the returning flocks in August and September were few and small.

Aside from the above-mentioned species, the following list contains the outstanding reports for the season:

GANNETS	Oct. 15	"first fall flight"	the Smiths
		Cape Sable	
	Oct. 28	(14) Wallace Harbor,	A.J. Erskine
		inside, feeding	
		as Dr. Erskine says, "an	
		amazing sight"	
COMMON EGRET	(1)	Summer	Allen's Lake,
		1965	Yarmouth Co.
CATTLE EGRET	(1)	Early June	near Yarmouth
		1965	Leta Delaney
BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON	(1)	July 25	near Baddeck
			T.F.T. Morland
GLOSSY IBIS	(2)	June 9	Cape Sable
			the Smiths
CANADA GOOSE	(6)	Sept. 16	Summerville Beach,
			Queen's Co.
		(earliest report)	Shelburne
			Coastguard
HOODED MERGANSER	(1)	Sept. 10	Port Joli
		& 12	Seal Island
			Party
COOPER'S HAWK	(1)	Sept. 11	Seal Island
			Seal Island
			Party
BROAD-WINGED HAWK		Sept. 12 to	Brier Island
		Oct. 18	the Lents
		flocks, sometimes numbering	
		hundreds	
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK	(1)	Oct. 27	West Lawrencetown
			Beach, Hfx. Co.
			Earliest report.
OSPREY	(1)	Oct. 10	Cole Harbor,
			Halifax County
			John Lorrimer
DUCK HAWK	(1)	Sept. 27,	Brier Island
		Oct. 18	the Lents

KILLDEER	(3)	Aug. 14	Cape Sable	the Smiths
	(1)	Aug. 29	Brier Island	the Lents
RUDDY TURNSTONE	(1)	July 28	Cape Sable	the Smiths
			Earliest report.	
WHIMBRELL	(40)	July 22	Broad Cove Marsh & Margaree Is.	A.J.Erskine
			Earliest report.	
UPLAND PLOVER	(1)	June 6	Sable River	H. F. Lewis
	(1)	Aug. 25 to 29	Cape Sable	the Smiths
	(1)	Aug. 29	Brier Island	the Lents
SOLITARY SANDPIPER	(1)	Oct. 24	Bass River	the Hemeons
			Late record.	
LEAST SANDPIPER	(2)	July 11	Pinkney's Point, Yar. Co.	C.R.K. Allen
			Earliest report.	
DUNLIN	(1,br.pl.) Aug. 15		Medford, Cape Breton	A. J. Erskine
			Unusually early	
SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER	(25)	July 10	Lawrencetown, Halifax Co.	J. Comer and M. Claydon
			Earliest report.	
	(1)	Oct. 10	Amherst Point	A. J. Erskine
			Unusually late.	
SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPER	(50)	July 11	Pinckney's Pt.	C.R.K. Allen
			Earliest report.	

Mr. Allen visited the above locality and Cook's Beach on July 8 and 10 and saw no shore birds. On July 11, in the same locality he noted the above-mentioned birds plus 140 Dowitchers, 6 to 10 Semi-palmated Plover and 2 Greater Yellowlegs, thus witnessing the start of a fall migration among some of our shore bird species.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT	(6)	Aug. 30	Cape Sable	the Smiths
BLACK-HEADED GULL	(1)	Oct. 16	West Lawrence- town, Hfx.Co.	C.R.K. Allen
			Earliest report.	
KITTIWAKE		Oct. 15	Cape Sable	the Smiths
			"flocks going south"	

COMMON (?) TERN	(3)	Oct. 28	Port Philip	A. J. Erskine
	(2)	Oct. 28	Northport	A. J. Erskine
		Unusually late, as normally not seen after 1st. week of October.		
BLACK TERN	(2)	Mid-Aug.	Three-Fathom Harbour	D. Willis and C.R.K. Allen
		for some days		
COMMON MURRE	(1)	July 24	Bird Islands, Cape Breton	T.F.T. Morland
		First record here in recent years.		
MOURNING DOVE	(1)	Aug. 1	Round Hill	W.E. Whitehead
	(13)	Sept. 8 to Oct. 5	Shelburne Co., various places as reported in Shelburne Coastguard.	
	(1)	Sept. 16 & Sept. 27	Brier Island	the Lents
	(1)	Oct. 3,4	White Point, Queen's Co.	Mrs. Doggett
	(1)	Oct. 16	Hebron, Yar.Co.	the Hemeons
		"up to 4 around since Aug.30" G. Lunn		
YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO	(1)	Sept. 6	Centreville, Shelburne Co.	Shelburne Coastguard
	(1)	Sept. 26	Brier Island	the Lents
	(1)	Oct. 18	Cape Sable	the Smiths
		(dead)		
	(1)	Oct. 19	Cape Sable	the Smiths
SHORT-EARED OWL	(4)	Aug. 13	Louisbourg	the Lunn
	(1)	Sept. 3,5	Louisbourg	the Lunn
		In January and in April, 1965, a Short-eared Owl was also seen by Mr. and Mrs. Lunn, and according to Mr. Lunn it appears to be a new bird on the Cape Breton list.		
	(1)	Oct. 16	Conrad's Beach, Halifax Co.	C.R.K. Allen
WHIP-POOR-WILL	(1)	July 7 and after	Port Mouton area	Mrs. Doggett
NIGHTHAWK	(43)	Aug. 26	Round Hill	W.E. Whitehead

CHIMNEY SWIFT (2000) Aug. 24 Brier Island the Lents

YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER
 (100+) Sept. 10 Seal Island Seal Island
 to 12 Party

(50) Sept. 19 Brier Island the Lents

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER
 (1) Sept. 19 Brier Island the Lents
 and 27

WESTERN KINGBIRD (1) Oct. 19 Cape Sable the Smiths

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW
 (1) Aug. 30 Crescent Beach, Mr. & Mrs.
 Lun. Co. J.S.Erskine

(Aaron Bagg reports another Violet-Green Swallow
 in the east this summer, Sept. 15 at New Durham,
 New Hampshire.)

GRAY JAY (5) Oct. 10 Bunker Island, C.R.K. Allen
 Yarmouth

(7) Oct. 10 Chebogue Point, C.R.K. Allen
 Yarmouth

(6) Oct. 13 Cape Sable the Smiths

Concentrations of this order of the Gray Jay
 in such unusual habitat (treeless coastal
 pasture) at this time of year suggest a
 migratory movement.

Dr. A.J. Erskine remarks that Gray Jays seem
 numerous this fall.

MOCKINGBIRD (1) Sept. 16 Cape Sable the Smiths
 & 17

(1) Oct. 11 Centreville, (Shelburne
 Shel. Co. Coastguard)

(1) Oct. 13, 14 Halifax (city) Mrs. R.L.
 Stanfield and
 Mrs. Helpard

(1) Oct. 16 Yarmouth Co. L. Delaney
 & after

(2) Oct. 20 Centreville (Shelburne
 Coastguard)

(1) Oct. 29 Lr. Sackville, C. Murray
 Halifax Co.

BROWN THRASHER	(1)	Sept. 11	Seal Island	Seal Island Party
	(1)	Sept. 24	Cape Sable	B. F. Smith
	(1)	Sept. 26	Louisbourg	the Lunn
	(1)	Sept. 27	Brier Island	the Lents
	(1)	Sept. 30	Lr. Ohio, Shel. Co.	(Shelburne Coastguard)
	(1)	Sept. 30	White Point, Queen's Co.	Mrs. Doggett
	(1)	Oct. 13	Cape Sable	the Smiths
	(1)	Oct. 13, 14	Halifax (city)	Mrs. R. L. Stanfield and Mrs. Helpard
	(1)	Oct. 1 to 15	Centreville	(Shelburne Coastguard)
	(1)	Oct. 16	Yarmouth	L. Delaney
	(1)	Oct. 19	Cape Sable	the Smiths
HERMIT THRUSH			Sufficient birds noted this summer in Cape Breton by Dr. Erskine to indicate recovery from the "disaster" of 1958.	
GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH	(2)	July 15	near Dartmouth	J. Lorrimer
	(1)	Oct.	Digby	L. Daley
EASTERN BLUEBIRD	(5)	Sept. 18	Elmsdale, Halifax Co.	J. Lorrimer & P. Ankatell-Jones
	(1)	Oct. 16	Bear River, Digby Co.	C. R. K. Allen
WATER PIPET		Sept. 23	Lawrencetown Beach, Hfx. Co.	C. R. K. Allen
	(35)	Oct. 7	(Earliest report.) Cape Sable	the Smiths
LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE	(1)	Sept. 11	Brier Island	the Lents
	(1)	Oct. 9-11	Chebogue Pt., Yar. Co.	C. R. K. Allen
PHILADELPHIA VIREO	(1)	May 31	Gaspereau River area	J. S. Erskine
	(1)	Oct. 14	Louisbourg	G. Lunn

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT

(1)	Aug. 30	Cape Sable	the Smiths
(1)	Sept. 7	Brier Island	the Lents
(1)	Sept.22	Glace Bay	S. MacLean
(1)	Oct. 4	Cape Sable	the Smiths
(1)	Oct. 16	Yarmouth	L. Delaney
(1)	Oct. 19	Cape Sable	the Smiths
(1)	Oct.30,31 & Nov.2	Halifax (city)	the Hemeons

HOODED WARBLER

(1 f.)	Aug.20	Cape Sable	the Smiths
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BOBOLINK

(300)	Sept. 1	Stewiacke	C.R.K. Allen
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EASTERN MEADOWLARK

(1)	Oct. 15	Cape Sable	the Smiths
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BALTIMORE ORIOLE

(1 f)	June 9	Bedford	A. Chisholm
(1 m)	July 14	Halifax feeding young	D. Ward
(1 m)	Aug. 23	Dartmouth	J. Lorrimer
(1)	Aug.23-30	Cape Sable	the Smiths
(1)	Aug. 28	Dartmouth (piggery)	J. Lorrimer
	Aug. 31	Louisbourg	the Lunns
(9)	"fall"/65	Digby	L. Daley
(50)	Sept. 10 to 12	Seal Island	Seal Island Party
(2 m f)	Sept. 12	Digby	E. Cardoza
(3)	Sept. 14	Louisbourg	the Lunns
(20)	Sept. 15	Brier Island	the Lents
(1)	Sept. 18	Dartmouth	J. Lorrimer
(3)	Sept. 23	Louisbourg	the Lunns

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD

	Oct. 17		the Hemeons
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Flocks of 1,000 and more, mixed with a few Grackles and Redwinged Blackbirds, in widely scattered localities between Beaver River, Yar. Co. and Mavillette, Digby Co.

SCARLET TANAGER	(1)	July 27	Ponhook Lake, Queen's Co.	Mrs. Doggett
DICKCISSEL	(1)	Aug. 22	Crescent Beach, Lun. Co.	Members of the Bird Society (Field Trip)
	(15)	Sept. 15	Brier Island	the Lents

EVENING GROSBEAK

Since July 1st., records are too numerous to itemize. They include 5 pairs of birds, some feeding young, in the Margaree Valley (G.G. Akers), Annapolis Valley (W. E. Whitehead), and Queen's Co. (Vera Joudrey); and throughout October large flocks, some numbering up to one hundred birds, which have appeared in Shelburne, Yarmouth and Digby counties.

COMMON REDPOLL	(1)	Sept. 8	Cape Sable Earliest report	B. F. Smith
PINE SISKIN "hundreds"		Sept. 18	Hants County	J. Lorrimer
"hundreds"		Oct. 21	Brier Island	the Lents
RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE	(1)	Oct. 4	Cape Sable	B. F. Smith
	(2)	Oct. 14	Cape Sable	the Smiths
	(2)	Oct. 18	Brier Island	the Lents

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW

(1 imm.)	Sept. 28	Louisbourg	the Lunns
(3)	Oct. 9-11	Chebogue Pt. Yar. Co.	C.R.K. Allen
(3)	Oct. 14	Cape Sable	the Smiths
(1 imm.)	Oct. 14	Louisbourg	the Lunns
(3 imm. lm.)	Oct. 16	Dartmouth (Piggery)	P.R. Dobson
(1)	Oct. 18	Brier Island	the Lents

Dr. A. J. Erskine says there has been a real invasion of White-crowned Sparrows in New Brunswick this fall - up to 25 in a few minutes at Edmunston Sept. 26; and regularly 3's and 4's in several parts of Fredericton in early October. He saw 2 at Amherst Point on Oct. 10, for his first records in this general area, both immatures.

FOX SPARROW

Although these birds apparently by-passed Nova Scotia in the spring, fall migration seems to be proceeding normally, according to reports received.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR

Oct. 24 Wolfville J. S. Erskine
Earliest report.

SNOW BUNTING

(1) Oct. 17 Brier Island the Lents
(1) Oct. 24 Brier Island the Lents

These are the earliest reports this fall.

The following reports from our Maritime area are reproduced here because of the extreme rarity of the birds observed:

AVOCET

(1) Sept. 2 Sackville, N.B.
to 23
(1) Sept. 19 Red Head Marsh,
St. John Co., N.B.

GRAY KINGBIRD

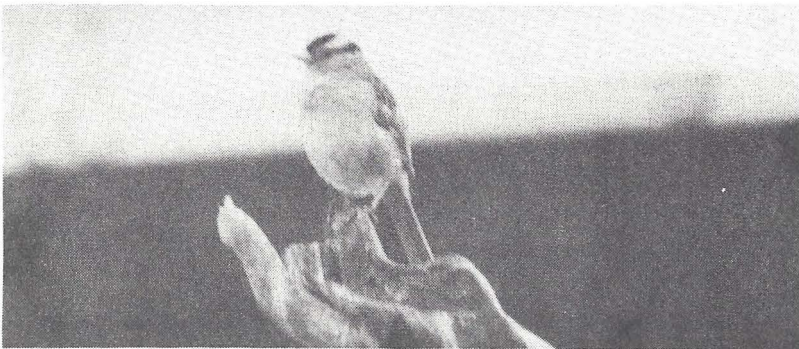
(1) Sept. 26 Rothesay, N.B.

All reported by David Christie

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR

(1) June 7-8 Ramea, Nfld. Mrs. Reid

These reports have come to us courtesy of Aaron Bagg, Editor for the northeastern region, Audubon Field Notes.



White-Crowned Sparrow

F. Dobson

PROBABLY A "FIRST" FOR NORTH AMERICA

In recent decades the practice of constructing nest sites for birds has become increasingly popular all over North America. With us the most popular type is one that is suitable for the Tree Swallow, but other species too, can thus be attracted to our garden premises. But how many birdlovers have ever tried to construct a nest site for the Great Horned Owl? Not too many, if even one.

In this connection the honours probably go to Cyril Coldwell, a prosperous young farmer, of Gaspereau, Kings County. In the first place this owl does not build a nest of its own. For domestic quarters it usurps an old nest of crow, raven, hawk, or even that of an eagle. Because Great Horns are the earliest nesters among our regular breeding birds (crossbills nest earlier but are erratic) they are in possession of these acquired nests by the time the rightful owners return to them in the spring, and few among them when finding the owls have taken over dare question the ethics involved.

On Gaspereau Mountain in Mr. Coldwell's own woodlot a pair of Great Horns have nested for many years. They have been using an old nest of the Goshawk. When taken over originally (perhaps 10 years ago) this nest of sticks was in a good state of repair. But with the passing of the seasons it gradually became flimsier until one day in September 1964 he noticed that not a shred of the rotted 'timbers' remained. The gales of the preceding winter had accounted for the last vestige of them.

Fearing that the owls might not find suitable quarters in his woods, hence seek greener pastures, Mr. Coldwell decided to take a bold step. Equipped with extension ladder, hammer, saw, nails, and a section of chicken-coop wire, all of which he loaded on his tractor, he set out to build his friends a new homesite. Among many possibilities examined, one was finally chosen in an ancient hemlock which was standing in the general locality of the old hawk's nest. Across two horizontal branches, some 30 feet above ground, the chicken wire was firmly secured and then pressed downward in the middle so as to form a sort of basket contraption which was given support on the outer edge by a cross-bar appropriately nailed to the respective branches. Realizing that even if they did find it they would not bring in nesting material, our enterprising birdman gathered trash of sorts which was to their liking and moulded it roughly into the shape of a nest. During this operation there were, of course, no owls in sight.

It was not until the following March that the nest was again visited. On this occasion snow lay deep throughout the woods and the general outlook was decidedly unfavourable for nesting. But despite these inhospitable surroundings, our enthusiast was rewarded for his efforts by the sight of two big feathery 'horns' protruding above the snow-covered nest exterior.

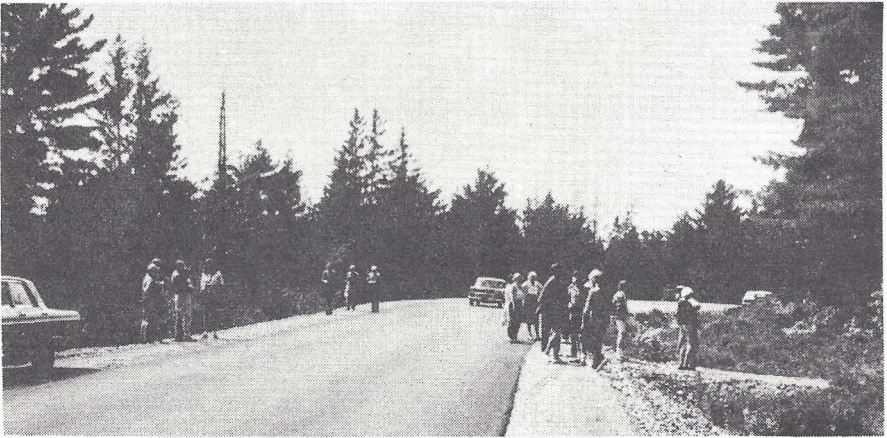
I was privileged to visit this nest with Mr. Coldwell on April 25. Both birds were on hand and protesting vigorously in

their efforts to drive us from their nest which held two downy white owlets about robin size.

The secret of the location of this nest was carefully guarded and only those persons who are amicably disposed toward owls in particular, and birds of prey in general, were permitted to enter the 'inner circle'. Both young were successfully raised and it is highly probable that this novel nesting site will be used by Great Horned Owls for many years to come.

- R. W. Tufts.

FIELD TRIPS



Italy Cross Road

Annual Field Day

On Sunday morning, at 9.30, August 22, some forty people assembled at Crescent Beach, Lunenburg County, for the annual field day of the Nova Scotia Bird Society. Crescent Beach forms a bridge between the LaHave Islands and the outskirts of the village of Petite Riviere. The beach, a perfect crescent of hard packed sand, faces Green Bay and the Atlantic. It is backed by tall dunes, and behind the dunes, at low tide, extensive mud flats stretch out into Dublin Bay. In August, many shorebirds congregate on the flats to feed, preen and rest, before continuing southwestward to the tip of Nova Scotia.

The party divided into two roughly equal groups, one proceeding to the eastern end of the beach then working its way back towards the starting point, while the other began at the western end and moved eastward to rendezvous with the other group somewhere between the starting points.

Visibility was good, and at this time of day there was little interference from Sunday picnickers; but waders and waterfowl were not abundant. When the parties met and compared notes, they had together "logged" just eleven species of shorebirds, eight other marsh and water birds, and seventeen other species. Among the last was one Dickcissel, the best bird of the day, and a "lifer" for most of the party.

After a beach picnic, the members turned inland and explored several woodland trails along the Italy Cross road. Mid-afternoon of a day in late August is not the ideal time for woodland birding, but fifteen additional species were added to the list.

Here the party broke up except for a core of die-hards who returned to Petite Riviere and combed the pastures along the western shore of the estuary, producing seven more species to round out this day's list. Fifty-eight kinds of birds seen during eight hours on a fine August day cannot be called an outstanding performance, but many members had their first sight of Knots, White-rumped Sandpipers, Olive-sided Flycatchers and Blackpoll Warblers, to say nothing of the Dickcissel, and to everyone the opportunity to get together and talk birds as well as watch them, was a happy experience.

Our early morning field trips in May got off to a slow start. Only eight rugged characters showed up on the 5th, a cold morning, at 6 a.m. (35°), and the sun not yet over the horizon. We spotted 20 species. But by the 29th, the temperature had risen to 50° and the turnout to 16 people. That day we saw a grand total of 73 species, but it was, of course, an all day trip.

The only other report of a field trip in the province this summer has come from Digby-Annapolis. Eighteen people took part, and 33 species were noted, including a Horned Owl. The day was hazy, with a southeast wind. Those attending were Mary Robert, Marion Sutcliffe, Victor Cardoza, Beth Atkinson, Clair MacKenna, Ernest Atkinson, Louise Daley, Percy Weir, Eileen Cardoza, Elizabeth Cardoza, Owen Taylor, Marjorie Tupper, Alison Tomson, Curtis Chipman, E. Ternan, J. B. Ternan, W. E. Whitehead, and Joanne Ternan.

THE ANNUAL MEETING

About forty members of the Society attending the Annual Meeting on October 26 heard an interesting and informative talk by Dr. A.J. Erskine, principal speaker of the evening, on the history and work of the Canadian Wildlife Service. In his talk, Dr. Erskine stressed the need for data on nesting populations, migration and similar information which could be provided by amateur observers and which could eventually add so much to our knowledge of the birds of the province.

During the business session discussion of the future disposition of Martinique and Conrad's beaches took place, and it was agreed that the Society should keep in close touch with this situation.

Miss E. Crathorne, Membership Secretary, reported that despite the increase in annual dues from \$1.00 to \$2.00, the membership had remained substantially the same.

A motion to amend the by-laws numbers 4 and 5, to include the Membership Secretary among the officers, and thus increase the number of directors to eight, was passed unanimously.

Another motion to amend number 19 of the by-laws, whereby future amendments to the by-laws may be made upon notice of motion given thirty days (instead of one year) in advance of any general meeting, was also passed unanimously.

The officers and directors elected for 1966 are:

PRESIDENT	Dr. H. F. Lewis
VICE-PRESIDENT	Mr. C. R. K. Allen
SECRETARY-TREASURER	Mr. F. A. Lane
EDITOR	Mrs. P. R. Dobson
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Miss E. Crathorne
HONORARY SOLICITOR	Mr. R. A. Kanigsberg
HONORARY AUDITOR	Dr. H. P. Moffatt
DIRECTORS	Cmdr. R. V. P. Bowditch
	Dr. C. W. Helleiner
	Mr. S. Ward Hemeon



ON VISITING A GREAT BLUE HERON COLONY
AT BRACKLEY BEACH, P. E. I. (AUG. 16/65).

Evelyn E. Lowerison

The nesting site consists of weather-beaten fir from 25-30 feet high, is bounded on the north by world famed beaches and on the south by the highway which runs through the P.E.I. National Park. The birds fly over the road in order to reach their feeding grounds on the salt water flats a very short distance away.

We walked across the highway and entered by means of a wire fence, topped by barbed wire. The undergrowth consists mainly of raspberry bushes, and even these are whitened by the droppings of the Herons. The whole area is very foul smelling from this; the dead young Herons and the eggshells which litter the forest floor. The eggshell is not unlike the Robin's in colour and is about the size of a Goose egg.

Mrs. Dora Myers and I counted approximately 50 nests. Some of the adults and young were still coming back to the nests after feeding. The mortality rate must have been very high, for in the area we counted sixteen dead young in various stages of growth. It was difficult for an amateur to judge the age of the dead young and how long they had been dead. However, all were fully feathered.

Upon inquiry, we learned from Mr. D. W. McAuley, Superintendent of the P.E.I. National Park, that this Great Blue Heron colony predates the establishment of the P.E.I. National Park, in 1937, and is one of the reasons why Rustico Island is included within the Park. Actually, there are approximately 180 nests.

The area has been fenced in since 1963, and is under regular surveillance of the Park Warden.

As to the reason for the high mortality among nestlings, observation indicates that in fighting for food they fall out, and being quite helpless, starve to death.

DIARY OF A BIRDWATCHER 1965

Mrs. George (Nellie) Snyder

My diary begins much later than the arrival of the first birds. I noted the early arrivals without recording them this year, it seems.

April 26 - Saw a pair of Ruby-crowned Kinglets in the lilacs near the house. These kept appearing all spring and if I was near I got notice that I was trespassing. I think that they say "Jo-jo jo jo". Later I found the reason for their presence here. They were gathering black feathers (only) for their nests.

In the same day's entry I noted that I saw a Kingfisher the day before. We have a pair here every year and these patrol both the river and brook for a considerable distance. Also noted that for so early there were more Ospreys than usual around. A Sparrow Hawk seized a Robin on the lawn. The evening was cold and misty, with a few snowflakes mixed with the mist. In spite of this cold a Robin was gathering old grass and sticks for a nest in the pine windbreak beside the woodhouse. This was the beginning of an interesting spring, sometimes sad and often fraught with worry.

April 27 - Robin still busy making her nest which now must need shaping as her bright red breast is all muddled.

May 1 - Saw the Red Crossbills, male orangy and female olive-yellow with decided yellow rump. The crossed bills were plainly discernable. This was a first for me. They seemed to enjoy the asparagus berries. Perhaps I had seen them before and called them Grosbeak or Purple Finch.

May 7 - Noted a grey sparrow-sized bird with black legs and beak and pale wing bars - a Phoebe? If so, my first. I have not seen it since then. So many Purple Finches and they are doing so much damage to the Poplar buds.

May 8 - Red-winged Blackbirds are feeding on the newly sown oats piece. These are the first of this species that I have seen in the immediate area. They did not stay to nest.

May 9 - Saw a Myrtle Warbler gathering string bits in the cold wind. To help the birds and to help me to know their nesting places, I fastened yarn and string (cut in short lengths), cotton and wool on limbs with clothespins. When I had no more of the latter, I substituted dog's combings (long haired dog with woollyundercoat). This became a general favourite, especially with the Fringillidae and waxwings. Burlap bag strips provided bits when certain species preferred to pull their own.

May 10 - Lovely morning, actually warm. The Evening Grosbeaks are also feeding on Poplar buds. Myrtle Warbler gathering string still and taking it to the top of one of the young 20' Jack Pine. There it formed a nest between the needles on the top set of branches and it was so small that even with binoculars it was al-

most impossible to see. The cold weather delayed this project.

May 11 - Flock of Evening Grosbeak (4) still around. Their metallic chirps keeping up a constant chatter. Noticed the Starlings carrying large quantities of sticks and feathers for over a week. Finally decided to trace them. I found a broken woodhouse window and inside a huge pile of sticks, grass and feathers upon a beam. There were three blue eggs which I destroyed, tossed out the mess and repaired the window. These birds destroy too many other birds' nests for me to allow them to multiply.

May 12 - Saw a pair of Cedar Waxwings. I thought this wonderful at the time because they only passed through this area rarely. It has turned out, however, that they were in large flocks all over the Province this year. A Robin near the garden is gathering hay and sticks but appears undecided where to put them. Unidentified bird: small with yellow breast, white around leg area and dark grey on top. (Yellow-throated Vireo?) Purple Finch still doing a lot of bud damage. Robin near woodhouse, setting. Tree Swallows are in the three nest boxes and more are required. Of course each spring there has to be a constant watch to prevent the sparrows and starlings from taking over these houses. We now have 1-1/2" openings in these houses and this appears to deter them somewhat. The Barn Swallows are looking for a nesting place. 11.30 a.m. Dull and foggy. Identified a Black-throated Green Warbler, couldn't miss its yellow cheeks. Another first for me. A Cowbird was chased by the male Robin as it fed on the lawn near the Robin's nest. Another female Robin was gathering nest material and going into the Pines near the garden. Saw a new Flicker's hole in a dead hardwood near the brook. It appears finished as a Flicker was inside and one looking in. This notation was the beginning of an interesting story of perseverance ending in tragedy.

May 13 - Robin's nest near garden appears finished. Myrtle warbler still tugging at string.

May 14 - Another Flicker's nest in lower orchard with a large quantity of chips outside. Saw a chickadee peep into a bird's house down by the brook. This had too small an opening hole for swallows and before I had time to take it down and remedy this the chickadees were interested so it remained intact. The Purple Finch were pulling wool and appear to be flying some distance away - never did find one of their nests.

May 15 - The Cliff Swallows arrived but from out of nowhere appeared the English Sparrows and took possession of the site. I tried to build a sparrow proof Cliff Swallow apartment house but was only successful in preventing any birds nesting. On June 8 a pair returned and by shooting the bothersome male English Sparrow this pair were able to nest and three fine babies left the nest on June 27, but returned nights for about another week. At this site it is the male English Sparrows that give us trouble. In past years they often came after there were eggs or even young hatched and they destroyed these and carried a few bits of sticks or grass into the nest and disappeared like the "Dog in the manger".

May 18 - Rainy. The Evening Grosbeaks are doing some damage

to the Chestnut buds. Still two pair around.

May 19 - Saw my first Yellow Warbler of the year. Still raining. Evening grosbeaks still around. Hummingbirds - 1 pair arrived at 5.00 p.m. in the garden. I immediately put out a sugar syrup in a red container but as usual no success in feeding them. These birds seem to appear each year in the rain. Saw two strange brown birds with reddish tails that moved slowly up and down. Got out my Peterson's and identified them as Hermit Thrush. They fed all evening around the garden.

May 20 - Very cold wet weather, temp. 39°. Hermit Thrush still around. Chickadees are busy carrying moss into the birdhouse beside the brook. 11.30 a.m., weather clearing. Hermit Thrushes still around. Found another Robin's nest in the Pines near the road. With the establishment of this nest and the other two nests (Robin's) a very interesting spring ensued. Each pair had its territory and even I could distinguish the boundaries. All three were visible to each other and the complete territory included a front lawn, flower and vegetable garden, and back lawn. When the young started to feed they were not chased from their neighbors territory. After the first hatch, however, they did not appear as aggressive regarding territory. With our protection the three pair of Robins all raised their first clutch but the whole three lost their second clutch to the squirrels. The young squirrels were big enough to hunt and they seemed to prefer bird's eggs or young.

Female Hummingbird in the garden chased away by a male - minus a tail. This bird stayed close to the ground in my flower garden and had difficulty navigating when the wind blew. I was able to trace this bird's accident and it is hard to believe. My friend lives about 1/4 mile from here and one day she saw her cat seize something. She made the cat drop it and a very ruffled Hummingbird flew away with difficulty. This was the bird in my garden and it seemed to survive its capture. It either grew new tail feathers fast or disappeared for I did not see it after about a week. Last year we had a Hummingbird's nest near by, but not this year. My friend had a pair near her all summer in spite of the cats.

May 22 - Drove down to Green Bay (4 miles) and on a hike around the shore saw the Yellow Throat and Canada Warbler, also the Brown Capped Chickadee, a pair of Yellow-Legs and a Plover. Saw a White-throated Sparrow at home.

May 23 - Hummingbirds rowing in the garden. Picked up a dead Jvenbird under the sunporch window. Chickadees still going into the lower birdhouse. Vireos are around and many kinds of warblers. Heard the Chimney Swifts for the first time this year. Robins feeding their young in the first nest in the pines.

May 24 - Flickers chased from the brookside nest and Starlings in their place. The Flicker's eggs found in the brook under the tree. Found the kinglet's nest under construction that was being lined with feathers from our hens (likely the pair that I had seen earlier). Hummingbirds still fighting in the flower

garden.

May 25 - Checked the Ruby-crowned Kinglet's nest again. This is a very deep mossy nest woven into three low intermingling spruce (very unusual). If I had not seen a bird go into this bunch of low scrubby trees, I certainly wouldn't have found the nest. Chickadees still carrying string into brookside birdhouse. Tugged hard at the burlap ravellings. Found a Junco's nest under some lumber. The Myrtle Warbler is still weaving her nest in the top needles of the pine; so many trips and such little progress.

May 28 - Noted a pair of Redstarts, Black and White Warbler and a pair of Golden-crowned Kinglets. These kinglets were very tame. Kept hearing a strange song and tried to find the singer, but to no avail. Saw a Bay-breasted Warbler and couldn't mistake its mahogany head, then right after it appeared a Chestnut-sided Warbler with a yellow head and some yellow on its back and fainter chestnut on its sides. Had to identify these with the help of my Peterson's which I had beside me at the time - first sighting. What a lovely parade of birds to observe this spring. My friend and I both have commented that never have we seen so many strange birds. We were kept busy, she with her Tuft's and me with my Peterson's bird book.

May 29 - 8.00 a.m. Ten Cedar Waxwings in the Weeping Willow tree. Identified the Red-eyed Vireo which stayed all summer but I could not find its nest. I enjoy its cheery robin-like song. Heard a harsh monotonous song 'che-bek' repeated many times, finally found the singer - a Least Flycatcher. Myrtle Warbler back at her nest building after an absence likely due to the cold wet weather. Blackbirds or Starlings in the Flicker's nest near the river. With the continued tameness of the Golden-crowned Kinglets I found their nest woven into a limb high in a White Spruce (with the aid of my binoculars). Found a Song Sparrow's nest right beside the road. Robin's are hatched in nest near the garden. The Parula Warbler is back on its last year's singing perch. Never found its nest in spite of much watching even to seeing them carrying food for the young. This afternoon on a hike identified the Yellow-Throat, Blackburnian, Black-throated Green and Black and White Warblers; also the White-throated Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, a lovely Barred Owl with its big brown eyes and a male Marsh Hawk, which was very angry. Searched for its nest without success.

May 30 - Saw a new Junco's nest with 4 young in it.

May 31 - Saw a silent Kingbird. These are usually quite plentiful, but this was the only sighting of this bird until the middle of August. First Catbird of the year. Very cold and foggy - swallows have been forced to feed on the ground in my garden. Found a Song Sparrow's nest with 5 newly hatched young in it.

June 1 - Red Crossbills - 1 pair looking around for a nest site. Yellow Warblers gathering nesting material. Robins in our first nest out in the trees. These are very young, but have been bothered by Starlings. Found my first baby Cowbird. It was in a

Junco's nest. I was attracted by the loud squeaking and noticed this pair of Junco's constantly feeding this bird. On investigation I found a big baby with pinfeathers, one egg in the nest and one pushed over the bank. On removal of the Cowbird the nest became abandoned. Checked the Crows nest which I had been watching from a distance. Five young Crows left the nest on the 29th. Found a Robin's nest under an old mill, on a beam, with 4 cold eggs in it. The female must have been killed. Cliff Swallows building inside of mill. Yellow Warbler's nest in a rose bush near a friend's house made of dust mop offals and lined with their yellow cat's fur. A deep well-lined nest with three eggs, two of which hatched and flew away in spite of 4 cats.

June 2 - Red Crossbills still around. Never found their nest but saw young birds of this species in August. Male Myrtle Warbler flew into a window. I picked him up and held him in my hand. The heart was still beating but I held him about 10 minutes before he revived somewhat. He seemed perfectly content in my hand. Eventually I placed him on a limb where he sat for a long time before flying away. I believe it was the mate to the female now incubating not ten feet away in the tree top.

June 3 - Saw my first Blue-headed Vireo with its white bib. Redstarts nesting back of the garage. Never did find the nest but in late July they and their young were flitting through our ornamentals. One of the few nests that the squirrels didn't get. Canada Warblers seen in the lilacs.

June 5 - Saw a Hummingbird gathering dog's wool - a rare sight.

June 6 - Saw our first nesting Robins starting a new nest while still feeding the first hatch. It is interesting to note here that they started another nest about 15' from the old one and still in the pines. However, they only worked on this one day and then changed to a Chestnut tree still in the immediate area. There they made only a crude nest of sticks with very little mud. Often the male would chase the first brood away from bothering the setting female. When these were just about ready to hatch, they were destroyed by a squirrel. The adults disappeared into the open woodland nearby and I felt as if I had lost very good friends.

The waxwings were carrying sticks around but seemed to have difficulty settling down to one place and one pair. They were still in groups. Saw the Golden-crowned Kinglets feeding their young. They would slip into the nest and appeared to ignore me completely. Tree Swallows in the three bird houses all incubating. There are 4 tiny greenish-white eggs in the low Ruby-crowned Kinglet's nest. A pair of Catbirds around. Never able to find their nest but saw one with a beakful of insects July 25.

June 10 - Finally identified the bird with the song of May 28. I thought that it said "she did she did she did". It was an Ovenbird and until we had found the dead one I never knew that they were in the area. Squirrels becoming a nuisance - from here to the end of the nesting season most of our birds had their

nests raided. This day we watched a squirrel seize and eat a baby Robin.

June 11 - First sighting of Brown-capped Chickadee so near home. Found their nest in a small stump. After these left the nest I opened the rotten cavity and brought the nest material home. The entire cavity was filled with lovely green rock moss and soft material like dust fuzzi, cat tails and rabbit hair. Identified my first Savannah Sparrow and its nest with black hair lining.

June 12 - Identified a pair of Grosbeaks - bigger than I expected. The male, young and not in full color, the female showing yellow. Saw my first Parula Warbler's nest cleverly placed in a bunch of lichen (old man's beard). The bird left the nest as I approached. I've visited this nest deep in the open woods three times since then but saw no activity so presume it abandoned. Found another Kinglet's (Ruby-crowned) nest nearby.

June 13 - Found another Yellow Warbler's nest near the river. Warbler's nests are very hard to find as the adults when disturbed slip so quietly away that one doesn't realize that one is handy to a nest.

June 14 - Cold and rainy. Tree Swallows feeding young in all three houses.

June 15 - Found a Ruby-crowned Kinglet's nest within sight of the Golden-crowned Kinglet's nest. (My third this year.) These birds are more aggressive and I was never able to watch the nest without a severe scandalizing. It again is a deep mossy nest and discernable only with binoculars (30" up). 7.00 p.m. - Walked upon three Great Horned Owls sitting on the ground in a chopped clearing. They weren't feeding. I think that it is rare to find Owls sitting on the ground. They did not leave on my approach and my last view of them was to see them awkwardly perched in young tree tops. Also found a Hermit Thrush's nest in another area.

June 16 - Golden-crowned Kinglets out of nest and being fed nearby. The Flickers beside the brook have made a new hole about 4' down from their first hole and are nesting.

June 17 - Found a Kingfisher's nest entrance in a bank beside the highway. This is right beside last year's hole. I put my arm in full length without finding the nest chamber. One white eggshell from a newly hatched bird lay in the gutter right under the hole.

June 18 - Two pair of Cedar Waxwings have been greedily accepting nest material. I added narrow strips of Kleenex to the supply. These were all woven into the nests. There were two pair building nests, one small and neat in the lilacs back of the house, the other sloppy and large, in a Chestnut tree in front of the house. This nest was already large; but, as the birds were still seeking, I tore up very narrow strips of white cotton and this seemed to be just the thing to finish their nest. To tell

all about these Cedar Waxwings would be a story by itself. But I must relate some of the most interesting things that we observed. These are the only birds in which I see the male help in the nest construction. They work as hard as the females. He helps gather and carry it to the nest where he politely hands it to his mate to put in place. There seem also to be building inspectors as all during nest building there is much visiting by as many as six birds at one time. In fact, these birds are so sociably busy that they only spend a few hours a day on nest construction. Consequently, it is late in the season before they settle down to raising a family. Never have so many of these birds been seen in this area. I only ever saw one nest in all the past years. They make so much twittering around their nest that their enemies must well be able to keep check on them. Having persuaded my friend (of Hummingbird fame) to also put out kleenex, she was enjoying the building of a nest within easy view but just on a level with her cat's favourite chair on the verandah. When she returned home after being away all afternoon, she found that the waxwings must have realized their danger and moved every twig, bit of kleenex, etc. to a new site so that not a particle remained. She never found the new nest, but it was nearby. These birds make a big ceremony of mating. There were about 4 pair in our treetops one particular evening. The males were catching insects and with much ceremony presenting them to the female who in turn put on a big show of wing fluttering and approval. This went on for over an hour. The neat nest in the lilacs was the first to suffer tragedy. On returning from a week-end away, we found it empty of its eggs and the adults had disappeared. The large sloppy nest in the Chestnut was directly over the highway and, in spite of the frequent barking of our dog, hatching time was approaching. One morning early I heard an agonized cheep and on checking I found a flock of 25-30 Blue Jays flitting around in this tree. I must have been too late to save them as they never came back to their nest again. Another friend has a nest beside her window and the young are very interesting to watch. They were homely and seemed too large for the nest. There only seemed to be three but there was another weaker one. First the three practised beating their wings by sitting on one side of the nest. They moved to a limb one morning. Then the weak one began practising. It also seemed to receive more food now. The day that this one left the nest, they seemed to disappear. On looking more closely, my friend found them all sitting in a row straight and still like Bitterns. They flew across the river the next day and out of sight. Another incident that I saw one morning is worth telling. I was watching a bird gathering material and it carefully gathered a large beakful of wool and started for its nest. Its view was obstructed by the large mouthful of wool so that it flew right into our sunporch window. I was watching it come. It was only stunned and managed to return to the take-off bush rather dazed and with only half its load still in its beak, which it eventually carried to its nest.

June 19 - Discovered an Ovenbird's nest because the female did the wounded wing act. This was a very interesting nest woven on the ground under a small evergreen. This and an old dead bracken fern were used to weave a canopy over it's nest. There were three brown speckled eggs. A check at a later date showed only one cold egg and this also disappeared; another feast for the

squirrels. They were plundering Robin's nests these days of eggs and young. It is a sad thing to see a squirrel grab a baby Robin and casually eat it on the edge of the nest with the parents flying helplessly around, crying in agony.

June 20 - Saw three young Woodcock this afternoon. I very nearly stepped on these, so cleverly did they blend with the dead leaves and so quiet did they stay. Goldfinch are carrying nest material, especially wool. However, I never did find their nests. There were more of these around than in other years.

June 22 - 9.30 a.m. Visited the brookside Flicker's nest. The ones who had made the second nest under the first. By the way, the Starlings never stayed in the top nest after they destroyed its first occupants. I had previously seen the Flickers feeding their young in the new nest. Well! This morning another chapter in their sad drama was starting. There were two Ravens busily tearing a perpendicular slit into the dead tree just below the entrance. The adult Flickers were flying around in panic. I chased these big Ravens away and some Crows hastened their exit. I checked at noon and the Flickers had resumed feeding their young in spite of the narrow slit in the nest cavity. At 3.00 p.m. I found Crows widening this slit and only one Flicker flying around. I erected a scarecrow but was apparently too late because when I checked at 5.00 p.m. I saw one sad Flicker looking out of the destroyed nest, and this bird was calling pitifully. At 8.00 p.m. it was still in the area searching for its mate, giving the mating call and drumming vigorously but to no avail. It stayed around for about a week and its out of season mating antics were sad to hear. Now when I see other Flicker's nests with slits into the nest cavity, I know a tragedy has happened here too. Two sad attempts for this Flicker at nesting.

June 23 - Found a Song Sparrows nest with four young, three of which grew to leave the nest. Nearly over this nest is a nest in a Birch tree. Unable to identify accurately the adult as it slipped into the bushes. I think it to be a Redstart. When I came back on the 29th, I found this nest destroyed and several days later found the nest completely dismantled. Several weeks later saw a squirrel's nest in a tree and on close inspection this appears to have the material of this and several other bird's nests in its make-up.

June 24 - Found a Spotted Sandpiper's nest on a knoll beside the lake almost in the open grass. Four light brown eggs spotted with dark brown. At a later date this was found empty; predators unknown but the eggshells were left like Racoons leave turtle eggs.

June 26 - Another Robin's nest plundered - one egg taken by squirrels, two remaining. This nest was abandoned and the other two eggs disappeared.

June 27 - Visited a large farm on Second Peninsula, Lun. Co. We visited this progressive farm about seven years ago and made a special trip just to see again the colony of Swallows there. I counted 201 Cliff Swallow nests all on two buildings. Most of

these had wide-mouthed young hungrily peeping out, while a few late comers were still hatching. The sky was literally filled with adults seeking insects. I came back here a month later and found several more nests. Most of the young were on the wing but the new nests were still feeding their young. I noticed on this visit that the Swallows had narrowed up their nest openings so that some actually had tunnels for openings. This was done after the young started to get active in the nest. This colony is protected from the ravages of English Sparrows by the farm owner who, I am sure, is well repaid for his trouble. It must take a large number of insects to feed the young of over two hundred pairs of Cliff Swallows. We should have more farmers interested in protecting this bird as it becomes scarcer every year.

June 28 - The young Myrtle Warblers have finally left the nest today. The squirrels were so plentiful that I was worried for their safety. They seemed impossible to find. The adults never went directly to their nest but landed in a different place each time and casually fed while approaching their nest. They usually left it by a more direct route. These young birds (3) were in the area for several days. I felt a close friendship with these, having rescued the father and supplied nesting material for the mother, besides chasing the Grackles, Starlings and squirrels away. My vigil was now over, but habit made me glance often at this wee, now deserted, nest in the tree top. In the evening I visited a sawmill nearby. In this were Barn Swallows and Cliff Swallows nests as well as a Junco's nest behind a beam not two feet away from a Barn Swallow's nest. This was made of binder twine and contained four eggs. These and the Barn Swallow's eggs were stolen, apparently by squirrels seen in the area. One Barn Swallow's nest was directly over the big saw. There was a small shelf placed there several years ago to help a swallow who was trying to build there. There has been a nest here each year. It is about 6' over this fierce saw which is very scary to men. Perhaps they feel safer here. In an adjoining shed a Barn Swallow's nest had 6 eggs in it. In the woods some distance below this mill was another Crow's nest and 5 young crows were noisily being fed.

June 30 - Saw a Downy Woodpecker. These have been scarce this summer and I was unable to find any Woodpecker's nests although I saw many evidences of old and new nests in the hollow trees throughout the countryside.

July 2 - Found another Hermit Thrush's nest in the open woodland under a small 1' Spruce tree standing in a grassy plot. There were 3 blue eggs in it. Next visit found this empty too.

July 3 - First Swallows left birdhouse. One found dead inside. Checked the other two birdhouses; in one found two unhatched eggs, the young left this morning. In the other, much to my amazement, were six well-feathered young swallows. This pair of birds seemed to be taking things so casually that I often wondered if they had a small brood. These grew well and flew away about a week later.

July 8 - Discovered our last nest. In a clump of grass in our truck and car parking area. When a friend parked his truck

not a foot away from the nest, I knew that I must do something to protect these. A sign which I knew the squirrels couldn't read told of a bird's nest here. This nest survived the mowing machine which again came up back of the sign almost to the nest. On July 28, they started to leave the nest, much to our relief. It was a pleasure to see a brood grow and fly safely away. This was not the case with most of the nests observed.

This was the end of a wonderful survey. Altogether I noted 73 bird's nests, not counting the colony of Cliff Swallows. There were 27 of these that were destroyed. I opened the birdhouse (frequented in May by the chickadee and last seen June 8) in July and found about 2 quarts of material and three skeletons hidden in the back and well down in the moss. I cannot explain what happened but these birds had certainly worked. The reason that I had time to do all this field work this spring was because of badly torn tendons in my left hand, necessitating an arm sling and excuse from working.



We deeply regret Mrs. Snyder's accident, but are grateful indeed to her for letting us share the benefits of her enforced "idleness".

AN ENGLISH GARDEN BIRD SANCTUARY

At the request of the Editor, Miss Molly Clayden has written the following description of her Family's garden and bird sanctuary, after a visit home this summer.

"The area of garden and paddock is approximately three acres, mature trees on the garden boundary consist of Poplar, Beech, Lime, Firs, Larch, Cedar and Elm. There is also Horse Chestnut and Silver Birch, and one forty-year-old Wytch Elm. (The seed from this old tree attracts Goldfinches, Bullfinches, Linnets and Greenfinches.

Lawns cover about three-fifths of the garden, the rest consists of herbaceous borders, rockeries, a vegetable garden and orchard. The paddock is left wild and there is a brook on its western boundary. Oaks form the northern boundary. The brook known as the Lem is the county border between Worcestershire and Shropshire. To the northeast and west is forest.

For the past eight years the garden has been managed as a sanctuary for birds. Carrion crows and Magpies are discouraged. Both nested in the garden at one time. Vermin is vigorously kept down, and the result is a wonderful variety of regular visitors, both resident and migrant, to our several bird tables. Many pairs nest in the garden and a number of nesting boxes are occupied yearly.

A list of birds seen in and over the garden is as follows:

Nesting in garden or paddock

Greater Spotted Woodpecker
Nuthatch
Trecreeper
Robin
Accentor
Chaffinch
Misselthrush
Songthrush
Blackbird
Spotted Flycatcher
Goldcrest
Willow Warbler
White Throat
Chiffchaff
Goldfinch
Bullfinch
Tree Sparrow
House Sparrow
Stockdoves
House Martins
Wrens
Great Tits

Seen in garden or on bird-tables

Green Woodpeckers
Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers
Barn Owls
Tawney Owls
Little Owls
Redstart
Linnets
Yellowhammer
Woodcock
Snipe
Coletit
Willowtit
Long-tailed Tit
Buzzard
Sparrowhawk
Rook
Jays
Magpie
Carrion Crow
Jackdaw

Nesting in garden or paddock - cont'd.

Blue Tits
Starling
Turtle Dove
Dipper

Food used on the bird tables includes stale bread, fat (uncooked), mashed potatoes, sunflower seed, hempseed, and kitchen scrap.

We keep a flock of rare variety pigeons, and these come to feed on the lawn, with Wood duck, Mallard duck, some Chinese geese, several Golden Pheasants and some old English game bantams. Our aviaries house Hahn's Macaws, Bourkes parrakeets, Superb Spero Starlings, Cackatiels, Diamond Doves, Barbary doves (fawn and white), and a young Senegal parrot. An Indian Hill Mynah causes amusement with its whistles and sayings.

Adders and grass snakes are frequently found in the garden; also voles, Long-tailed mice, shrews and the rather rare pygmy shrew.

We have lost a few birds by fox, but considering the area our losses are very few."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"My husband observed 3 Golden-crowned Kinglets on our back yard clothesline as they made ready to settle down for the night. It is lit in part by our kitchen window, and he saw them snuggle down as closely as possible, a most appealing sight. But it was a cold night, and just as feathers were nicely fluffed, one end man would flip down over the line and bob up in the cosy middle berth! At once the other end bird would try the same trick, and for some seconds birds were whirling and dipping and clinging for dear life to the chosen spot. Then all would huddle together for a space, until the chill crept in again, I suppose, and the trapeze act would start anew. Sid laughed as quietly as he could, crouched under the line, and a sparrow (looking for a warm bed too) lit on his cap briefly. He called me out to watch and we marvelled at the tiny things whirling over the line, by one foot, or no foot at all, (much fluttering here) giving mean jabs with

beak or wing. When last seen, all were sulking and shaking their heads as they slumped, far apart and comfortless, here and there along the line."

- Betty June Smith

"We have some unusual Robins in Baddeck. After reading the article in the July Newsletter on "Unusual Coloration in Birds" (1964) telling of the albino Junco and albino Song Sparrow, I wonder if these "queer" Robins could also be termed "Albino"? I have seen one with a totally white head, another with only half of the head white. In both of these, white feathers were showing through the other feathers in spots. Some of my neighbors have seen them with grey heads and perfectly normal colored breasts."

- Gladys MacRae

(N.B. Since albinism is hereditary, it is possible that Mrs. MacRae's Robins were all of one brood.)

From the Criminal Code of Canada (1955)

- Sec. 88 (1) Delivering firearms to minors.
Every one who sells, barter, gives, lends, transfers or delivers a firearm, air gun, or air pistol, or ammunition therefor to a person under the age of fourteen years who does not have a valid permit in Form 45 is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.
- (2) Seizure.
Notwithstanding section 96, a peace officer who finds a person under the age of fourteen years in possession of a firearm, air gun, air pistol or ammunition therefor without a valid permit in Form 45 relating to that firearm, air gun, air pistol or ammunition may seize it, and upon seizure it is forfeited to Her Majesty and may be disposed of as the Attorney General may direct.

"I have found the above quotation, with no elaboration, to be the most generally satisfactory way to start the ball rolling, so to speak. What happens is this: A boy loses a gun, number 2 above. Father goes to police with blood in his eye. He is shown number 1 and leaves quietly. Word goes around and BB trouble grows less, and that is all that is wanted."

- Joe B. Ternan

PLAN NOW FOR THE CHRISTMAS COUNT

SPRING BIRDING

by

J. S. Erskine

Wolfville, N. S.

Birding walks need to be changed with the seasons. In winter actually more species are to be seen on our dykes than in the summer, perhaps because the unfrozen salt-marsh provides some food in a hungry season, perhaps because our winter visitors find in it a resemblance to the coastal tundra of their summer home. By contrast, in the winter the narrow valley of the Gaspereau River above White Rock offers at best a Ruffed Grouse or a pair of Black-capped Chickadees in the leafless second-growth. Then, with the first leafing-out of the trees, the situation changes.

The valley is young and V-shaped, with only occasional shoulders of glacial terrace, and the steep slopes are rough with outcrops and screes of loose stone shaded chiefly by hardwood trees. There is the usual scattering of evergreens, with hemlocks, more conspicuous on the northward-facing slopes, and tiny brooks trickle down moss-covered rocks even in the driest summer and vary the old woods road at the bottom with marshes and sludgy pools. In mid-April, when the Christmas ferns are unrolling their rusty croziers and the toothwort is flowering pink and white among damp rocks, the Myrtle Warblers arrive in force and sing their small welcome song in the leafless trees above the river. Soon they move on and can never again be counted among our commoner warblers.

The river itself provides few species to the summer. Spotted Sandpipers shout their insistent cry and flutter over the water on down-curved wings; Kingfishers rattle aggressively, and an occasional Osprey flaps white-breasted up the river on his way from lake to lake. During the run of the gaspereaux, Blackbacked and Herring Gulls sit hopefully on the boulders and yodel of spring, but soon both fish and gulls have gone. We used to be able to count on Mergansers, the duck leading her chestnut-and-white brood in hasty retreat, scuttering over or under the water with equal speed, but now these are rare.

The true glory of the valley lies with the insect-eating birds of the trees. On one still day in May I heard voices, so I sat on a log and squeaked persistently and was visited by eleven species, nine of them warblers, including the only Blackburnian that I have ever seen in the valley. Parulas buzz in the hardwood trees, Yellows whistle in open places, Chestnut-sideds among the alders, and from the hemlocks comes the thin squeaky song of the Black and White as he spirals nuthatch-like around the branches. Redstarts shrill their aggressive and uninspiring song everywhere. In Windsor I used to think that I could distinguish the songs of males from those of females, the female song being slightly burred and lacking a syllable, but here I find too great an overlap to permit assurance.

On wooded slopes Ovenbirds shout Tee-chah!, tee-chah!, and above the river their cousins, the Water-thrushes, shout as loudly in a different pattern: Tee-tee-tee-chah-chah-chah-chah! In most years Water-thrushes outnumber Ovenbirds by three to one, but for no known reason the situation was reversed this spring. So much in bird life depends upon so little. Once in September I was crossing the Caribbean during a southerly gale, and Magnolia Warblers were dropping on the deck in thousands, many to die of exhaustion. The others rested a minute and then set off again in the teeth of the south wind, looping low above the waves where the blast was least strong. They were still several hundred miles from land, so the coincidence of storm and migration must have left that species rare for a year or two.

Black-throated Greens buzz and Magnolias whistle in the spruces, Nashvilles and Tennessees chatter in the scrub, and once a Cape May wheezed its three unimpressive syllables and dropped down to display itself. But a great pleasure comes when rarities turn out not to be so rare after all. Here, and, indeed, by many wooded brooks nearby, Canada Warblers are as abundant as any, and their loud long phrase, Can't you see I'm a Canadian?, is almost unmistakable, although their longer song is rarely heard and therefore soon forgotten.

Before the leaves are properly out, the Solitary Vireo is wandering through the evergreens, uttering his deliberate phrases, but, when the leaves come, he is drowned out by the more numerous Red-eyed. Once, well up on a sparsely wooded scree, I heard an unfamiliar voice, as deliberate as a Solitary, as loud as a Red-eyed, but harsh and unmusical. Unhappily the bird was shy and moved up the slope from tree to tree faster than I could follow, so I can say only that it was a vireo and probably a Philadelphia.

In time with the main crop of warblers the valley is haunted by a loud chirp or a ripple of clear robin-like notes, and a squeak will bring down an enquiring Rose-breasted Grosbeak or his brown-and-white wife. I saw my first grosbeak in 1939 and not another until 1949 when at least four were singing around the Kentville school. Then in 1953 I found them in the White Rock valley, and yearly since they have been nesting there in numbers varying from one to six pairs. Now they seem to be frequent as far north as St. Ann's, a joyous addition to the summer.

By the end of May the warblers have settled down to nesting, their songs diminishing, and now the thrushes cease to be skulking shadows chirping warnings from the underbrush and begin to sing loudly. Commonest by day, the Swainson's Thrush jingles up an insignificant scale. At dusk the Hermit is most in evidence, and the sweetness of his tumbling notes is clearer against a silence varied only by the overhead twitter of a circling woodcock. Here, too, the Veery is abundant in most years, and I have heard the blurred spiral of his song seven times in a mile of valley.

The Winter Wren rolls out his long shrill melody from the slopes, the Catbird improvises above the marsh, Song Sparrows jingle and Whitethroats trill mournfully. But the heat of summer will still their voices, and we shall hear chiefly the calls of

the flycatchers, the plaintive stifled note of the Pewee, the aggressive chebec of the Least, the what-cheer! of Traill's, and, welcome again after years of rarity, the triumphant shout of the Olive-sided high on the ridge.

DEADLINES FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Deadlines for the Newsletter are October 31, March 31, and June 30, with one week's grace for the first two. Please send reports to the Editor, Nova Scotia Bird Society, 1444 Seymour Street, Halifax, or c/o the Nova Scotia Museum, Spring Garden Road, Halifax, before the above dates. The Editor wishes to thank the many contributors whose efforts serve to make the Newsletter interesting and valuable to all members of the Society, and to others concerned with the birds of our Maritime region.

Please remember that the more reporters in the Province, the better the coverage; and our primary interest is in our native birds, rather than rarities. These are rewarding for the finder, and we all like to hear about them, but of greater value, as a rule, are migration dates, observations of abnormally large (or abnormally small) concentrations of native birds, and breeding reports, especially in unaccustomed places.

