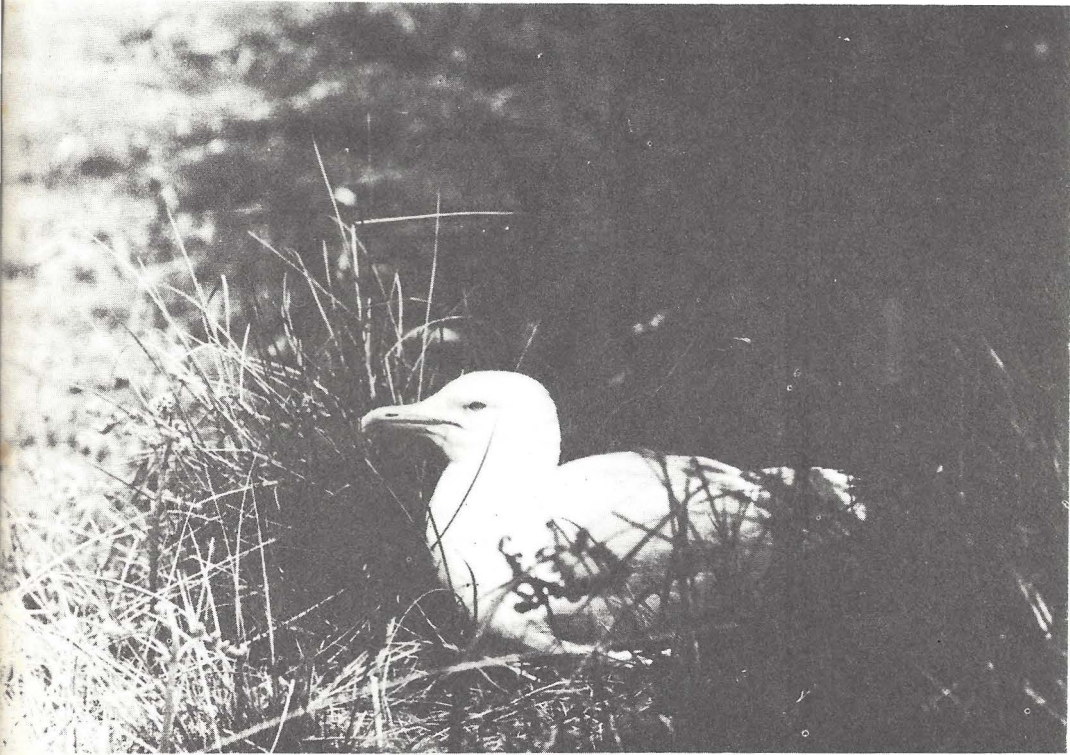


*Nova Scotia  
Bird Society*



*Newsletter*

Volume 8, No. 2

July, 1966

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER

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NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

Editor: Phyllis R. Dobson

Volume 8, Number 2

July, 1966

THE SPRING MIGRATION

Following a relatively mild winter, March treated us gently this year, but April and May gave us very little warmth. The daffodils were in bloom just in time to be covered up to their necks with one of the biggest snowstorms of the combined seasons. However, the snow soon melted, and we did avoid severe drought conditions; and, in fact, still are, as may be gathered from reading the accounts of our May and June field trips. The trees were in leaf promptly on the twenty-fourth of May, and the birds arrived on schedule. Robins were rather behindhand, but finally came in good numbers. A hurricane passed us by, very early in June, and may have been responsible for the appearance of three rarities in Nova Scotia, two Green Herons and a Lark Sparrow.

To the time of writing, reports of over a hundred of our native species of birds have come in, mostly spring migrants, plus a few of our regular strays and the rarities mentioned above. In the summary following, the names of birds in the last two groups are underlined.

The first appearances of the COMMON LOON were 7, March 12, off Villagedale (Richardson); 1, April 24, in spring plumage, off Halifax (Crathorne); and 1, April 27, off St. Peter's (Digout). An ARCTIC LOON was seen off Silver Sands, Halifax County, April 3, and watched for 20 minutes at 15 yards in company with Red-throated and Common Loons for comparison (Comer, Clayden). The RED-NECKED GREBE was noted to be increasing in numbers March 30 to April 2, in the waters off Halifax County (Allen, Dicks).

PETRELS (Sp.) were seen April 20, in the beams from the lighthouse at Cape Sable (Smiths), and 2 GANNETS (eastbound) were seen March 27 at Cape Sable by the same observers. On May 7, Mrs. Smith wrote: "At least 200 Gannets were diving on the 'Horseshoe', the fishing shoal that extends seaward from our southern beach. This was an impressive sight as the water was choppy under a fresh easterly breeze, and the morning sun was reflected from the huge birds and from the geysers formed by their reckless dives."

The first date for the DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT is April 24, at Lawrencetown, Halifax County (Allen), and numbers were noted



by May 7, at Coot Cove (Mrs. Norman and her Girl Guide company), and at Three-Fathom Harbour (members of the N.S.B.S.).

One GREAT BLUE HERON was seen from Cape Sable April 4 (Smiths), 2, April 6, at Halifax County (Dicks, Willis), 1, April 7, at Bras d'Or (Burchell), and they were generally present in numbers by April 23. A GREEN HERON was reported May 26 at Cape Sable (Smiths), and again on June 2. What must have been a second Green Heron (unless the first one made a very quick trip) was seen May 31, in the Glace Bay area (Alward). Another rarity in this group, the LEAST BITTERN was identified June 12, at Three-Fathom Harbour (Comer, Clayden).

According to our reports, the CANADA GOOSE started moving Feb. 28, when 50 were noted off Cape Sable (Smiths); built up to numbers as follows: 1500+ at Barrington Bay March 12 (Richardson), 2000+ at Cole Harbor Dyke March 19 (Dicks), 20+ at Wolfville March 20, which became 400 March 21 (Parker), and then were practically gone by April 23, when 4 were seen (last sighting, rather late) at Cole Harbor (Allen). BRANT gave few and scanty sightings: 47, Feb. 18 at Brier Island (Lents), first sighting; 9, March 17 at Cape Sable (Smiths); number not mentioned, April 3 at Kingsport (Bleakney), very early for that locality. A pair of BLACK DUCK, March 23, at Middle Ohio, Shel. Co., (Hamilton, Shelburne Coastguard) is the earliest date for this species. Nearly 100, March 28 and nearly 200, March 29, at Cole Harbor (Eatons), followed by 50, Glace Bay Sanctuary (Alward, Gardiner, Cuyler) gives an idea of the build-up, and by May 7, at Brier Island (Lents) there was already a brood hatched. On March 23, GREEN-WINGED TEAL were seen at Grand Pré (MacRae). On March 30, 2 males first appeared at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (Allen), and on April 2, 20+ were there (Dicks). A EUROPEAN WIDGEON caused a lot of excitement by appearing on May 15 in the Lawrencetown-Cole Harbor area. It was a bright male, and was identified by Sylvia Fullerton and party. In this same area, we have the first record of RING-NECKED DUCK, April 7 and 10 (Allen, Fullerton, Hinds). Our first record for this species in Cape Breton, at the Glace Bay Sanctuary is of 3, April 16, and 9, April 29 (Alward). The same communication mentioned COMMON GOLDENEYE paired by April 8, at the same place, Glace Bay Sanctuary. By April 29, however, they were nearly all gone. As mentioned in the previous Newsletter, COMMON EIDER, Feb. 28, flew past Brier Island by the thousands (Lents). A flock of 60 was noted on April 8, flying NE past Louisbourg (Lunn). Three WHITE-WINGED SCOTER were seen at Mira Bay April 22 (Alward), and 100-200 COMMON SCOTER, March 30, at Three Fathom Harbor (Allen). The earliest report of COMMON MERGANSER is of 14, March 19, at Cole Harbor Dyke (Dicks). RED-BREASTED MERGANSER, scarce all winter, showed a spring build-up, according to C.R.K. Allen, who noted 35, April 23, in the Lawrencetown-Chezzetcook area.

A BROAD-WINGED HAWK was seen May 22, in central Hants Co. (Allen). Early dates for the MARSH HAWK are April 8, Glace Bay (Alward), and April 10, Lawrencetown (Hinds, Fullerton); and for the OSPREY, 1, April 4, Pictou (Holdway), 4, April 16, Musquodoboit Harbor (Dicks), and 1, April 22, Bras d'Or (Burchell). The first SPARROW HAWK is reported March 14 at Cape Sable (Smith), followed by 1, April 8, at Chebogue Point, Yar. Co. (Allen), who also saw



other singles in that area April 9, 10 and 11, and 3 between Yarmouth and Liverpool April 12. By April 16 they were generally distributed (Donkin, Alward, Dicks, Hinds, Fullerton, McNeil), and Thelma Hawkins of Wilmot, Kings Co., had a nest with 4 hatchlings by June 10.

RUFFED GROUSE started activity in late April. One was heard "drumming" April 22 at Cole Harbor (Eaton), and a nest containing 5 eggs was discovered April 24, at Kinsac, Hfx. Co. (Crathorne).

We have 3 reports of PIPING PLOVER, 2, April 16, Cape Sable (Smiths), 1, April 17, Lawrencetown Beach (Hinds, Fullerton) and 2, June 6, Glace Bay Sanctuary (Alward). There are 4 reports of KILLDEER, 1, March 6, Cape Sable (Smith), 2, March 17, Cape Sable (Smith), 1, April 4, Brier Island (Lents), and 2, May 4, just outside of Dartmouth (Dobson). BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER were sighted May 23 at Lawrencetown (Fullerton, Hinds), and 4, May 26, at Cape Sable (Smith). A RUDDY TURNSTONE was seen at Lawrencetown May 14 (Fullerton, Hinds). Early dates for AMERICAN WOODCOCK are March 20 at Round Hill, Anna. Co. (Whitehead) and the same date at Granite Village, Shel. Co. (Allen, Shelburne Coastguard). COMMON SNIPE, scanty throughout the winter, may have begun to build up April 16-19, when they were reported simultaneously at Cape Sable (Smiths), Musquodoboit Harbor (Dicks) and Marion Bridge, Cape Breton (Cuyler). The first one heard "winnowing" was April 24, at Kinsac, Hfx. Co. (Crathorne).

Late April and early May saw the arrival of the shore birds generally, as follows: SPOTTED SANDPIPER, 1, May 10, Cape Sable (Smiths), and 3, May 14, Meander River, Hants Co. (Allen); WILLET, 1, April 28, 5, May 1, 2, May 22, Cape Sable (Smiths), 2, May 2, Cole Harbor Dyke (Dicks), and 12, May 14 and 15, Lawrencetown area, Hfx. Co., (Fullerton and party). As of June 6, there are 8 at Glace Bay Sanctuary, plus a nest with eggs. A GREATER YELLOWLEGS was seen April 23 at Conrad's Beach, Hfx. Co. (Hinds, Fullerton), 1, April 26, at Cape Sable (Smiths), and over 20, in the Cole Harbor-Chezetcook area by May 7 (N.S.B.S. Members). In the Pictou area, the first report is of 2 seen on May 4 (Holdway). One LESSER YELLOWLEGS was seen May 23, at MacNab's Island (N.S.B.S. Members). Four KNOTS in bright plumage were seen May 14, at Conrad's Beach (Crathorne, Hinds, Fullerton), and 4 DOWITCHER, May 22, in the same area (Comer). Also in the same area, May 14, SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER were first reported (Hinds, Fullerton). Six NORTHERN PHALAROPE, May 31, were seen at Pictou (Holdway).

The ICELAND GULL, plentiful at Christmas, was down to only 1, in sight April 7-8, in the Glace Bay area (Alward). One RING-BILLED GULL was present April 23, at Lawrencetown Lake, Hfx. Co. (Allen), these gulls have been unusually scarce this winter and spring. A flock of 31 BONAPARTE'S GULLS was seen March 30, at West Lawrencetown (Allen). The first COMMON TERN was sighted off Lawrencetown May 20 (Hinds, Fullerton), followed by a report of 1, heard, May 21, and 1, seen, May 22, at Cape Sable (Smith). The first Cape Breton sighting was of 3, May 25, in the Glace Bay area (Alward), and 3 more were seen June 3, off Queensland, Lunenburg Co. (Allen). Seventy-five were at Glace Bay Sanctuary by June 6,

and 15 nests (Alward). Two RAZORBILLS were seen May 13 at Cape Sable (Smiths), and 2, May 23, at Cape Percé near Morien, Cape Breton, with a possibility that they may be nesting on the cliffs there (Alward).

The MOURNING DOVE was reported April 4, 1, at Cape Sable (Smiths), 2, April 6, at Bedford, Hfx. Co. (MacDougall), 1, April 16-17, Hfx. Co. (Norman), 1, May 23, MacNab's Island (N.S.B.S. party), and 1, June 21, Rockingham (Coffill). The BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO arrived 1, May 23, at MacNab's Island (N.S.B.S.), and 1, May 29, in the Pictou area (Holdway). Word has come that by March 25, the GREAT HORNED OWL already had 2 eggs in its newly constructed nest at Gaspereau (Coldwell). A SHORT-EARED OWL appeared on Cape Sable March 14 (Smiths). The first report of the WHIP-POOR-WILL comes for June 1, in the Port Mouton area this time (Doggett). Earliest record for the COMMON NIGHTHAWK is May 30, Lawrencetown (Fullerton, Hinds), followed by 3 seen June 4 in central Hants Co. (Allen), and 1 seen June 6 at Cape Sable (Smith). Similarly, 1 CHIMNEY SWIFT was seen at Lawrencetown, May 21 (Hinds, Fullerton), and 1, May 22, at Cape Sable (Smiths). The RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD was sighted first on May 2, at Brier Island (Lents), and was common by May 28.

The YELLOW-SHAFED FLICKER appeared early in April at widely scattered points: 1, April 1, Halifax city (Bell); 1, April 4, White Point Beach, Queen's Co. (Doggett); 1, "wicking", April 7, Wolfville (Neily); 1, April 8, Carleton, Yar. Co. (Allen); 1, April 11, Glace Bay (Alward); 1, April 15, Cape Sable (Smith). By April 23, Flickers were numerous and generally distributed. A very early date for the YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER is April 3, Bras d'Or (Burchell). The next date for this species is April 23, Conrad's Beach, Hfx. Co. (Allen), and about this time or shortly thereafter the birds became generally distributed. The EASTERN KINGBIRD was noted simultaneously 1, May 21, Cape Sable (Smith), and 1, May 21, Three Fathom Harbor (Allen). One was reported May 23 at Glace Bay (Alward). TRAILL'S FLYCATCHER seems more abundant than usual this year. The first sighting was 3, June 4, central Hants Co. (Allen). First sighting of the LEAST FLYCATCHER was May 18, at Susie Lake Road, Hfx. Co. (N.S.B.S.); of the EASTERN WOOD PEWEE, May 29, Lawrencetown (Hinds, Fullerton); of the OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER, May 23, Glace Bay (Alward). HORNED LARK arrived at the same farm in Pictou Co. at the same time as every year, where 5 appeared (on time) March 17 (Brennans). One was seen May 14, Hants Co. (Allen), a very late date.

Owing to a fortunate series of reports, the progress of the TREE SWALLOW can be followed this year as it progressed around the province, thus: "arrived" at Brier Island April 4 (Lents); 10+, April 10, at Pleasant Lake, Yar. Co.; 1, April 13, Bon Portage Island (Banks); several groups, May 3, Cape Sable (Smiths); 1, April 23 and 2, April 30, Lawrencetown area, Hfx. Co. (Dicks), Allen, Hinds, Fullerton); 6, April 24, Kinsac, Hfx. Co. (Crathorne); and 1, April 24, Marion Bridge, Cape Breton (MacLean). It would be very interesting to discover if this route is followed year after year. Reporting was not so good on the BARN SWALLOW, the best we can do is 3, April 23, Cape Sable (Smith); and 1, April 24, Marion Bridge (MacLean). By May 7, distribution was general.



Once again, PURPLE MARTINS arrived at Cape Sable, 6 on May 5, and Mrs. Smith writes: "...they perched on a line above a Martin house we built some years ago and seemed to give more than passing consideration to the idea of occupying it. They made a number of trips down to the door, and flew around the post several times, chattering. The chattering died down, all sat in silence a few moments, and then with a shake and resolute chirp they dropped one by one into the wind and flew away, northward. We were disappointed, but not surprised."

Another note of great interest comes from the Smiths at Cape Sable, concerning the BLUE JAY, 5 of which arrived there on May 25. According to Mrs. Smith "they sailed about with great freedom but didn't know where to light - no trees!.... I had never seen or heard of them here before, or Gray Jays until about 1959 (Gray) and 1961 (Blue), singles each. But last fall 6 returned, and this spring the 5, in a group."

On May 27, a nest with 4 eggs, of the COMMON RAVEN, was discovered at Wolfville Ridge (Neily). A rare bird, not previously mentioned, the FLSH CROW, was identified last Feb. 23, at Cape Sable, by the Smiths, whose attention was first attracted by its curious and characteristic call. It is also a smaller bird than the Common Crow.

The RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, present all winter, either became very vocal, or had a spring build-up, by May 14, when 5 or 6 were heard in one area in central Hants Co. (Allen). First date for the WINTER WREN, spring arrival, is April 20, Cape Sable (Smiths). A CATBIRD was seen May 21 at Lawrencetown (Hinds, Fullerton), and 1 each May 23 and June 2 at Cape Sable (Smiths). On June 10, at Cole Harbor, there was a nest with 4 eggs, 3 nestlings hatched June 19, and 1, (the 4th) June 20 (Eaton). Reports of the BROWN THRASHER are as follows: 1, May 4, 1, May 22, 2, May 24, Cape Sable (Smiths); 1, May 5, Yarmouth (Kirk), and 1, June 5, Cape Perce, Cape Breton (Alward). It is always difficult to pinpoint the arrival of spring ROBINS, because so many winter here. Most probable true migrants arrived, or were seen, as follows: 5 (bright plumage), March 22, Villagedale, Shel. Co. (Richardson); 7, March 24, Brier Island (Lents); "several" March 26, Wolfville (van der Zill, Neily); 6, March 27, Hazel Hill, Guys. Co. (Armstrong); 8-10, April 1, White Point Beach, Queen's Co. (Doggett); 5, April 2, Hants Co. (Allen); 8, April 2, Cole Harbor (Dicks); thereafter increasing numbers generally, to what is described as a "tremendous migration wave" April 27 and still going through by May 14, in Hants Co. (Allen). By April 8, 9, and 10, there were "large flocks" reported in Cape Breton (Alward, Burchell). On May 16, the first nest report came in, a nest with 4 eggs, at Rockingham (Billard).

The HERMIT THRUSH arrived simultaneously on April 20 at Brier Island (Lents) and Cape Sable (Smiths). On May 8, 1 was seen at Rockingham, Hfx. Co. (Billard), and by May 11-12, the bird was common. Early dates for the SWAINSON'S THRUSH are 1, May 8, Rockingham (Billard) and 2, May 22, Glace Bay (Alward). Four GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH are reported at the Pictou area May 17 (Holdway). One EASTERN BLUEBIRD was identified May 28, at Ashdale, Hants Co. (N.S.B.S.).



The RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET was heard singing (1), April 28, Halifax Co. (Moffatt). The next records are 1, May 7, Coot Cove, Hfx. Co. (Mrs. Norman and the Girl Guide Company), 1, May 7, Cole Harbor (Eaton), and 4, May 7, Lawrencetown area (Fullerton, Hinds), indicating the beginning of general distribution. The birds were numerous by May 11-14, and still singing by June 12. Undoubtedly the CEDAR WAXWING arrived earlier, but our only report so far is 1, June 18, at MacNab's Island, Hfx. Co. (N.S.B.S.). A NORTHERN SHRIKE was seen April 2, Hants Co. (Allen) and a LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (migrant) May 7, Cole Harbor (Comer, Clayden). Earliest reports of the Vireos are: SOLITARY VIREO, 1, May 12; and RED-EYED VIREO, 1, May 18, Lawrencetown area (Fullerton, Hinds).

Between April 23 and May 28, 20 out of a possible 22 of our Wood Warblers were spotted. Many of the first sightings came from members of the N.S.B.S. on the early morning field trips in May, but others came from the Smiths at Cape Sable, Mrs. Norman and her Guide Troop at Coot Cove, Hfx. Co., the Eatons at Cole Harbor, also R. Dicks in that area, C.R.K. Allen in Hants-Colchester counties. The order of appearance (rather than check-list order) was: PALM, April 23; YELLOWTHROAT, April 27; MYRTLE, April 30; MAGNOLIA, May 2; NASHVILLE, May 7; FARULA, May 13; CHESTNUT-SIDED, May 14; BLACK-AND-WHITE, BLACK-THROATED GREEN, AMERICAN REDSTART, OVENBIRD, May 18; YELLOW, BLACK-THROATED BLUE, and WILSON'S, May 22; BLACKPOLL, May 23; NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, MOURNING, CANADA, BLACKBURNIAN and TENNESSEE, May 28. Consistently, reports of warblers in Cape Breton are 1 to 2 weeks later than for mainland Nova Scotia (Alward). Of the 20 species mentioned above, 6 only were reported from Cape Sable, where the Smiths keep daily records: Palm, Yellowthroat, Magnolia, Redstart, Black-and-White, and Blackburnian. The Editor would be glad to receive reports of any of the warblers earlier than those quoted above, in any locality, but particularly Yarmouth and Digby Counties. Also, has anyone seen the Cape May or the Bay-breasted?

BOBOLINKS appeared on the scene suddenly and in numbers, May 22 in the Brooklyn, Hants Co. area (Allen); May 23 at Cole Harbor (Eatons) and 7, May 23-24 at Cape Sable (Smiths). An unusual sighting was an EASTERN MEADOWLARK, April 2, at Lawrence-town Beach (Dicks). The REDWINGED BLACKBIRD made its first appearances: 1, March 23, Middle Ohio, Shel. Co. (MacKay, Shelburne Coastguard); 2, March 27, Bedford, Hfx. Co. (Chisholm, Kerr); a small flock also on March 27, suburban Dartmouth (Fullerton, Hinds); 1, March 29, Tusket, Yar. Co. (Hurlburt); 16 in a flock, March 29, Kingston (Brown); and by April 2-4 were generally distributed (Alward, Allen, Doggett), although Captain Holdway reported the main migratory flock did not arrive until April 23 in the Pictou area. It is interesting that Redwinged Blackbirds first showed at Cape Sable May 10, and very few. The RUSTY BLACKBIRD was seen, 5, April 2, in Hfx. Co. (Dicks), and 1, the same date, Hants Co. (Allen). The first date for the Rusty on Cape Sable is April 5. An unusual winter report of the Rusty Blackbird is of 2 seen Dec. 15, 1965, at Hazel Hill, Guys. Co. (Armsworthy). These birds remained in the vicinity all winter, were there at the time of the report, March 31, 1966. The COMMON GRACKLE is back in force again this year. In the van were 2, March 27, at Bedford, Hfx. Co. (Kerr), and 1, March 30, at Marion Bridge, Cape Breton (Cuyler).

On April 2, 21 "first migrants" appeared at Wolfville (Neily), and Grackles were first seen in numbers, April 3, at Louisbourg (Lunns); April 4, at White Point Beach, Queen's Co. (Doggett), April 16, at Musquodoboit Harbor (Dicks); April 22 at Cole Harbor (Watons), and a "wave" April 24, at Kinsac, Hfx. Co. (Crathorne). As with the other blackbirds, the Cape Sable record is later, 1, April 26 (Smiths). There are 4 records of one of our regular strays, the SCARLET TANAGER: 1, May 23, Cape Sable (Smiths); 1, June 2, Liverpool, (White); a male and female together, June 13, Karsdale, Anna. Co. (Johnson); and 1, June 19, Granville Center, on the North Mountain (Atkinson). Very unusual are 2 records of the SUMMER TANAGER: 1 male, May 8, Sable River (Freeman) and 1 female May 9, Cape Sable (Smiths).

First date for the ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK is May 22, 1 each at Cole Harbor (Comer) and Scotch Village, Hants Co. (Allen). Two BLUE GROSBEAKS were seen May 26, at Musquodoboit Harbor by Col. Bob Sutton, and later by Ethel Crathorne and party. (See letter following.) An INDIGO BUNTING was seen May 22, at Indian Harbor, Hfx. Co. (Wetmore), and another was found dead, June 3, at Rockingham, Hfx. Co. by Brian Billard. The EVENING GROSBEAK deserted feeders during April and May, diminishing flocks were reported at Glace Bay (Alward), Dartmouth (Topples), Armdale, Hfx. Co. (Norman), and at Pictou, Captain Holdway reported his last sighting May 29 (previous latest date May 1). The PURPLE FINCH, absent all winter, was slow to return, but happily is again abundant. The earliest report is of 2 (singing) April 18, Glace Bay (Alward). This is followed by one singing April 23, Lake Annis, Yar. Co. (Kirk); 1, April 30, Cape Sable (Smith); and then the numbers start appearing: May 13, 30, Metropolitan Halifax (Mills), 1, Armdale (Norman); pair, White Point Beach, numerous by May 23 (Doggett); 14, May 14, Hants Co. (Allen). The COMMON REDPOLL stayed late this spring. Unusual reports are: 10+, flock, March 19, Canso (Jarvis); 75, flock, April 3, Seabright, Hfx. Co. (Chisholm); 20-30, flock, April 7, Granite Village, Shel. Co. (Allen, Shelburne Coastguard); and 17, flock, April 11, in the Fortress area at Louisbourg (Lunns). This is the first time Redpolls have been seen in Louisbourg by the Lunns. A flock of 20+ PINE SISKIN, first noted early in April at Three Fathom Harbor, was still around in that vicinity May 7 (when reported), and was seen first by Sylvia Fullerton and party, subsequently by many members of the N.S.B.S. The AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, absent during the winter except at a few feeders, appeared suddenly in small numbers May 20, at Pictou (Holdway) and at White Point Beach (Doggett). It is now abundant, but did not become so until June 12 and thereafter. One RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE was seen May 4 on Cape Sable, and again (or another) May 7 and 8 (Smiths).

The first date for the SAVANNAH SPARROW is April 23, in the Halifax-Hants area, where it became numerous by May 14 (Allen). We have a very fine rarity, a LARK SPARROW, seen June 13, at Wilmot by Thelma Hawkins (see letter following). The SLATE-COLORED JUNCO arrived first at Brier Island, March 18 (Lents) and next at Cape Sable, March 22 (Smiths). By April 16 they were numerous and well distributed in mainland Nova Scotia, according to reports received, but did not become so in Cape Breton until April 22-29 (Alward). The WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, another regular stray, was seen by 3



lucky people: 1, April 30, and 1, May 12 and 13, Cape Sable (Smiths); 1, May 17, Wilmot (Hawkins); and 1, May 24, Glace Bay (Alward). First date for our own WHITE-THROATED SPARROW is for 1, singing, April 23, Lake Annis, Yar. Co. (Kirk). On May 2, over 100 arrived at Cape Sable, and by May 4 they were numerous and generally distributed, although not mentioned from Cape Breton until May 12. Spring arrivals of FOX SPARROWS are difficult to be sure of, but the date March 29 stands out this year, numbers being seen simultaneously in Shelburne Co., Guys. Co., Hfx. Co., and Queens Co. (Allen, Armsworthy, Chisholm, Doggett). The Eatons at Cole Harbor wrote that Fox Sparrows "arrived in force" April 6; in Cape Breton a "large flock" was seen April 8 (Cosnick); and the same day 100+ were at the Sanctuary (Alward). The Lunn, Louisbourg, put the height of the invasion at April 9-14. A very late one was at the Glace Bay Sanctuary still, May 30 (Alward). A LINCOLN'S SPARROW was seen on May 25, Hfx. Co., by members of the N.S.B.S. and a SWAMP SPARROW at Lawrencetown, May 21 (Hinds, Fullerton). True migrants among the SONG SPARROWS are also (like the Fox Sparrow) difficult to distinguish, but seem to have begun arriving late in March. First arrivals were on March 20, at Brier Island (Lents); next reported from Shel. Co. March 22-25 (Richardson, Allen); and from Round Hill, Anna. Co. March 22 (Whitehead). On March 27, migration was well established, the birds were singing in numbers, at Wolfville (Neily), and on March 28, at White Point (Doggett). The first Cape Breton dates are March 25 (Burchell) and March 27 (Cuyler); the first at Canso, March 31 (Jarvis). Song Sparrows were ubiquitous in Mainland Nova Scotia by April 2, in Cape Breton by April 16 (Allen, Alward).

Since the above was written, additional reports have come in from Guysborough, Lunenburg, Annapolis, Yarmouth, and Shelburne counties. These do not substantially alter the picture of the spring migration above, but rather confirm it in most respects. However, there are a few comments which should be added, and we have collected a few more strays and other interesting birds.

A CATTLE EGRET was sighted on May 19 near Coffinscroft, in Shelburne Co., and reported in Dr. Harrison Lewis's column in the Shelburne Coastguard.

Another GREEN HERON was seen in May at Guysborough Intervale (Armsworthy) and in the same locality by the same observer, an AMERICAN BITTERN, May 28, 3 VIRGINIA RAILS, May 8, and 3 WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS, May 22/66.

WILLETS arrived at Chebogue, Yarmouth Co., April 19 (Sollows); earliest date given above was April 26 at Cape Sable.

Three other MOURNING DOVES have been reported: 1, May 24, Lower Ohio (Harris, Shel. Coastguard); 1, June 4, East River Point, Lun. Co. (Neily); 1, June 12, Annapolis (Whitehead).



WHIP-POOR-WILLS were heard singing in May at Hill Village (reported to L. Vogler).

Flycatchers seem to have appeared earlier in Annapolis Co. than elsewhere in the province - at any rate the EASTERN KINGBIRD, May 14, the EASTERN PHOENIX, April 30, and the LEAST FLYCATCHER, May 19, all at Round Hill (Whitehead).

The TREE SWALLOWS at Chebogue "started nesting May 2, but not in earnest till May 16, and young are appearing now, the wires are full - June 27" (Sollows). The first Tree Swallow sighted at Wolfville was on April 17, and they were common along Route 12 by May 2 (Neily).

There is a MOCKINGBIRD at Hazel Hill, Guys. Co. as of May 27 (Armsworthy) and another in Dartmouth, June 25 (Crathorne).

Robins first arrived on April 11 at Horton's Cove, near Canso, with a flock of 30 on April 17 (Jarvis).

Another LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was seen, in Yarmouth County this time, April 3 (Crosby). Mrs. Crosby writes: "A Loggerhead Shrike alighted on the fence in my yard, and rested there for about fifteen minutes. I had a good view of it, as it was only 10 or 12 feet from my viewing window. I watched it from the window, with and without binoculars, and consulted Peterson's "Field Guide", also Tufts' "Birds of N.S." while the bird was still there. It was smaller than a Robin, the black mask appeared to meet above the bill, and, as far as I could tell, the breast was plain and not barred, so I considered it must be Loggerhead rather than Northern. A very striking looking bird."

There was a BAY-BREASTED WARBLER seen on the May 28 field trip at Stillwater Siding Road, Halifax Co., we are reminded by Wayne Neily, who says the Black-and-White, Blackpoll, and Nashville warblers were late coming to Lunenburg Co., but on the other hand, the Yellow warbler was earlier, May 19, than ours previously recorded. (This is a week later than usual in the Valley). An earlier Yellow warbler record is of 2, May 16, at Round Hill, Annapolis Co. These were seen by W.E. Whitehead, who remarked that "in the Round Hill area, birds seem to have been fewer this spring both in numbers and variety. We have not had the variety of warblers passing through as in other years.....I have still to see a Redstart in 1966."

In Lunenburg Co. Mrs. Nellie Snyder had three first records: Myrtle Warbler, April 1; Black-Throated Green, May 17; and American Redstart, May 23, all at Crousetown.

BOBOLINKS (2) on May 7 followed by 2 on May 12 at Guysborough (Armsworthy) is surprising, putting them also a week earlier than our dates above. This should be watched for next year. Dr. Lewis, in the Shelburne Coastguard, reports 5 sightings of the Bobolink in May in Shelburne Co., where it was formerly a rarity. A MEADOWLARK was at Canso April 14 (Jarvis) and another SCARLET TANAGER, male, on May 24 at the same place by the same observer. RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS arrived in Yarmouth Co. Mar. 23 (Crosby) and were first seen in Guysborough Co. May 9, common there May 22 (Armsworthy). A BALTIMORE ORIOLE (male) was seen at Ohio, Yar. Co. May 8, and on May 16 a female arrived. (Date of arrival at Cape Sable was May 23) One was seen also at Crousetown, Lun. Co. May 21, the first ever seen there by Mrs. Nellie Snyder. A male Baltimore Oriole was in song, May 26, at Upper Mansford, one to four days later than Wolfville records (Neily). Another Baltimore Oriole was at Round Hill May 29 (Whitehead), and another at Chebogue, Yar. Co., May 30 (Sollows).

Wayne Neily makes some interesting comparisons between arrival times of migrants at Wolfville and in Lunenburg Co., based on averages of former years. His impression is that many of the birds are several days to a week later arriving on the Blandford peninsula than in the Valley, and he mentions particularly the Spotted Sandpiper, the Least and the Traill's Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Barn Swallow, Solitary Vireo and Bobolink. On the other hand, the Rose-breasted Grosbeak arrived earlier (May 19) at Upper Blandford than other records we have this year, and what is perhaps more interesting, a male was seen on May 16 at Hazel Hill, Guys. Co. which was joined by a female May 23 (Armsworthy).

Three more INDIGO BUNTINGS have been seen, all males, one at Jordan Falls, Shel. Co. May 26 (Hayden, to Dr. Lewis), one at Hazel Hill, Guys. Co. June 2, and another there June 18 (Jarvis, Armsworthy). A RUFUS-SIDED TOWHEE was seen May 12-19 at Villagedale, Shel. Co. (Richardson).

SAVANNAH SPARROWS arrived two days earlier (April 21) at Wolfville than our dates given above (Neily).

An early date for the CHIPPING SPARROW is April 1, at Crousetown (Snyder).

Two WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS May 8, at White Point Beach, Queen's Co. (Doggett) missed mention above. Another White-crowned Sparrow was at Hazel Hill, Guys. Co. on May 21, and the WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, April 1, at Crousetown (Snyder) is earlier than our Yarmouth report which previously held the record.

Mrs. Snyder gives us the following dates for the start of nest building:

April 4- Canada Jays  
22- Nuthatch  
May 5 - Robin  
14 - Junco  
18 - Myrtle Warbler, Ruby-Crowned Kinglet  
21 - Chickadee  
23 - Parula and Tree Swallows  
26 - Barn Swallows  
28 - Yellow Warbler  
29 - Redstart  
30 - Purple Finch and Goldfinch  
June 11 - Catbird  
12 - Hummingbird



Members of the N.S.B.S. planning to attend the August field trip on Brier Island are advised to write early for overnight accomodation, if desired. Mrs. Wickerson Lent has suggested that those wishing to stay on the Island itself should write to Mrs. L. Bailey, Westport, Digby County, N.S.

## AN ENGLISH GULL COLONY

by Dick Brown

I came to Halifax from Britain in September 1965, and at once I felt very much at home. I don't just mean the Nova Scotian hospitality either. The first bird I saw here was a Herring Gull, and I spent the last four summers doing research on these birds in England. Your birds - especially the juveniles - are a little darker around the head than ours, but not enough to make much difference.

The colony I was working at was on Walney Island, in NW Lancashire, near the port of Barrow-in-Furness. In fact, the north end of the island is a suburb of Barrow, but as you go south it gets more and more deserted, and at the south end there was no more than a lighthouse, a gravel company, some sheep, 18,000 pairs of gulls and me.

Of these gulls, about half were Herring Gulls; the rest were the very similar Lesser Blackbacks. I also had about six pairs of Greater Blackbacks. Of course, the gulls weren't the only birds. There's a large and very tame breeding colony of Eiders, plenty of Oystercatchers and Ringed Plover on the shore, and Shel-ducks waddling to and from their nests in enlarged rabbit burrows. There are also a few terns breeding, but the gulls seem to have driven most of them out to an island on the other side of the channel; four species nest there - Common, Arctic, Sandwich (Cabot's) and Little (Least), and I often saw them feeding off Walney. Since Walney is low, sandy and almost treeless, there weren't many breeding songbirds - Linnets, Reed Buntings, Skylarks, and Meadow Pipits were the commonest. But I made up for this by the variety of passage migrants. I lived in an old cottage, and in the garden I and the local bird watchers had fixed up a Heligoland trap over some specially planted bushes; in this way we could catch and band the migrants. Mostly we got Old World Blackbirds and Robins, and later in the spring, Willow Warblers and White-throats. These, and the resident Linnets, were the bread-and-butter of our observatory, and for that matter, of most other coastal observatories in Britain. But occasionally we'd catch something unusual. In June 1965 we had a series of strong westerly gales, and there in the trap was either the first or the second White-throated Sparrow ever found in Britain. It was certainly the first I'd seen anywhere, and I was pleased to recognize a familiar face when I saw my second one in Nova Scotia.

But let's get back to the gulls. I was interested in their behaviour - in the very slight differences between Herring Gulls and Lesser Blackbacks, and in the changes in the courtships of both as the season drew on. Once they'd laid, I followed their nesting success, and then went on to band the chicks. Put like that, it sounds like the ideal outdoor life. If I sound a little disillusioned, both with field work and with the gulls themselves, it's because I spent four months of every year in intimate contact both with the birds and what passes in Britain for a climate.

I'll begin at the beginning. The end of March is rather cold



in Britain, and nobody in his senses would call it "spring". Unfortunately, the gulls have already come back to the colony - which meant that I had to go back too. I sat for hours, huddled in an icy blind with my knees keeping my ears warm against the north-westerly gale moaning outside, while the gulls sat around and did absolutely nothing.

Then, suddenly, it was mid-April, and the colony came to life. All the birds started courting at once - and usually much too fast for me to keep track of them. I'm a scientist, and I'm not supposed to laugh at the animals I study, but I couldn't help smiling at the gawky way in which the gulls stalk about their business; and every now and then a troupe of strolling Jackdaws would fly in and seem to mock them, and were indignantly chased off.

This frantic courtship phase seems to go on forever, but in fact it doesn't last more than about three weeks. By the middle of May, almost all the gulls are sitting on their eggs, and both they and I are getting our breath back after the last few frantic weeks, and getting ready for the even more frantic chick period to come. This is the best time to see a gull colony. The gulls sit placidly in the May sunshine, doing very little - which makes for a lazy time if you're in the blind. If you want action, the first baby rabbits of the year are playing ring-a-ring-a-roses round the marram clumps and the sitting gulls. But most of the time the gulls are asleep, and it's hard not to follow them.

The action starts again, with a bang, at the end of May when the first chicks hatch. Before that, my daily tour round the nests has been a gentlemanly and fairly quiet progress, but now the anxious parents are embarrassing in their attentions. At worst, they'll actually hit you. Luckily, they do it with lowered feet, rather than pecking with that murderous beak of theirs; but even so, two and a half pounds of diving gull is a force to be reckoned with. At best, they hang like screaming pendulums about your head, and that's just as frightening. Meanwhile, you're on your knees, squinting down alleys of bracken stalks in search of the chicks so you can record whether they're still alive or not, and all the time wondering if the screaming parent is going to hit you next time. (If you're in a gull or tern colony at the height of the breeding season, carry a stick over your shoulder; they dive at the top of the stick and not at your head.)

The climax comes at the end of June and in early July, when the chicks are nearly ready to fly, and big enough to band. For some reason, they always hide in the densest clumps of nettles. You pull them out, sink to your knees (on a large thistle), and thrust the chicks between your thighs (where they promptly start to bite). Suppressing a cry of agony, you reach for your bands and your banding pliers. These pliers are supposed to have a milled-edge grip, but somehow this is always worn down, so the band slips out and the jaws of the pliers embed themselves firmly in your finger. Meanwhile, the attentions of the parents are more embarrassing than ever; they have all bomb-doors open, and a surprising collection of objects finds its way into the collar of your shirt. You release the banded chicks, climb stiffly to your feet, and go to the next nettle clump...and so on. In an average

season, you repeat this process 1300 times. Scientifically, it's very valuable. You can find out a good deal about where the birds go in winter (the Lesser Blackbacks go to Spain or Portugal; the Herring Gulls stay in the Irish Sea), and also how long they live. But, of course, all the time you're counting the days until it's over, and you can get back again to civilization.

I always found that civilization was perfectly delightful. It was a pleasure to get back to city life, and University life (laboratories are blessedly quiet, compared with gull colonies). But after a while, I'd begin to wonder. Around February, like any migrant bird, I'd get restless and start to think about Walney again. I'd drum my fingers, with increasing impatience, and then at last in March I'd throw everything into the car and go north to the island again.

This March, I'm in Nova Scotia, and I'm not sure what I'll do instead.

Editor's Note: What Dr. Brown did was to go bucketing over the ocean as supercargo on an Oceanographic vessel, to see Greenland's Icy Mountains, and incidentally Kittiwakes, Petrels, Shearwaters, Murres, Auks and Dovekies, as well as his beloved gulls.



Great Black-backed Gull Chick

- Dick Brown

Annual Field Day  
June 11, 1966  
Vicinity of Antigonish

This annual field day was held under adverse weather conditions. The day, selected in advance for the event, was characterized by intermittent rain, continuous wet mist, relatively low temperatures and a chilly northeast breeze. Under such conditions, bird song was at a minimum and all vegetation was thoroughly wet.

Twenty-two persons participated in the field work of the day. Some came from places as far distant as Richmond, Halifax, Shelburne and Kings Counties. Fifty-one species of birds, which are listed hereunder, were recorded during the day.

Great Cormorant (nesting)	Starling
Osprey	Red-eyed Vireo
Sparrow Hawk	Yellow Warbler
Common Snipe	Magnolia Warbler
Great Black-backed Gull	Myrtle Warbler
Herring Gull	Black-throated Green Warbler
Common Tern	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Black Guillemot	Oven-bird
Chimney Swift	Northern Water Thrush
Belted Kingfisher	Mourning Warbler
Flicker	Yellow-throat
Eastern Kingbird	Canada Warbler
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Redstart
Traill's Flycatcher	House Sparrow
Least Flycatcher	Bobolink
Tree Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Bank Swallow	Common Grackle
Barn Swallow	Cowbird
Raven	Purple Finch
Crow	Goldfinch
Black-capped Chickadee	Junco
Robin	Chipping Sparrow
Hermit Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Swainson's Thrush	Lincoln's Sparrow
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Song Sparrow
Cedar Waxwing	

The field party visited Brown's Mountain in the morning and the shores of Bay St. George in the afternoon. The countryside, bedecked with lush verdure and an abundance of bloom, was seen at its very best.

Storm waves and ice of Bay St. George cause rapid erosion of the soft rocks of the shoreline in this part of Antigonish County. At Monk's Head the former nesting sites of the Great Cormorant have been destroyed by such erosion, with the result that the nesting colony of this species which formerly existed here is now represented only by a few stragglers.

The Society is greatly indebted to Dr. Leo P. Chiasson, Head of the Department of Biology of St. Francis Xavier University, who guided and advised the field party during the day.

Harrison F. Lewis, Leader



June 18 at Amherst Point Sanctuary

A special excursion by members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society to the Amherst Point Sanctuary was carried out on Saturday, June 18th with the following members present: Mr. and Mrs. Ward Hemeon, Jimmy Grue, Halifax, Mrs. Lee Gilbert, Bass River, Mr. and Mrs. Will Lamoreau, Kentville, Dr. and Mrs. A.J. Erskine, Sackville, Mrs. Dora Myers, Master William McNutt and Miss Evelyn Lowerison of Amherst. Thirty-three species of birds were found, and they include the following: Black Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Baldpate, Ring-necked Duck, Bobolink, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Common Crow, Common Snipe, Red-winged Blackbird, Robin, Kingbird, Downy Woodpecker, Yellow Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, Yellowthroat, Kingfisher, Bank Swallow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Boreal Chickadee, Olive-backed Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Wood Pewee, Traill's Flycatcher, American Redstart, Cedar Waxwing, and Common Grackle.

This was the second in a series of field trips constituting the Summer Program, with more of the Nova Scotia Bird Society excursions to take place in July and August throughout the province.

Evelyn Lowerison, Leader

Eastern Shore Sanctuary  
June 25, 1966

The Halibut Islands, lying off Necum Teuch, were the goal of the third summer field trip of the Nova Scotia Bird Society. This time the weather was favorable. A member of the expedition has sent in the following account:

"The three islands are about half an hour out from Necum Teuch; we landed on the middle one, but were able to get a good look at the inner one.

On the middle island we found:

Gulls: taking the middle and inner islands together, about 100 pairs each of Herring Gulls and Greater Blackbacks. The Greaters seemed commonest on the inner island, and on the rocky ends of the middle island. The Herrings were mainly concentrated in the meadow plus scrub running along the outside side of the middle island. The Greater chicks varied in age from about 10 days to about 4-5 weeks. Those of the Herrings varied from half-hatched to about 2-3 weeks.

Leach's Petrels: the meadow area of the middle island was honeycombed with their burrows; well, not honeycombed like a puffin slope, but at any rate you could see holes almost anywhere you cared to look for them. I dug out one bird, sitting on an egg.

Double-crested Cormorants: mainly on middle island; plenty of birds sitting around the inner island, but I could only see one or two nests. On middle island, they are beginning to spread out from the dead tree area into living conifers - but whether this is because the dead trees are now unsafe, or because the colony is expanding, I can't say. (There certainly seemed to be plenty of nests in the dead area.) Estimates varied between 280-300 nests - about three-quarters of these contained 3 young. Chick sizes varied from birds which cannot have been much more than a week old, to adult-sized birds which can't have been far off fledging.

Song Sparrow: several about. I found one nest, on the ground in fairly long grass on the side of a bank. There were 4 young, about 5 days old.

The second island is a low gravel bank with a little vegetation, inshore of #1, and a little north of Necum Teuch. This was plastered with terns. I estimated about 50 (more?) pairs of Arctic, 15 pairs of Commons, and 10-12 pairs of Roseates. The Arctics nested on the gravel, the other two in the vegetation. We didn't land, so I can't say how far advanced breeding was, but I saw one or two chicks perhaps a week old. Probably most birds had eggs - or I'd have seen more chicks.

The third island is a bare, grassy spot with sheep on it, at the entrance to the Necum Teuch inlet; an earth cliff on the seaward side, and a gravel bank on the inland side.

About 15 pairs of terns, not certainly identified. All with eggs. No sign of petrel burrows. A Bank Swallow colony in the seaward "cliff". A Ringed Plover nest with 2 eggs on the gravel bank.

A wonderful trip...."

Dick Brown for John Comer, Leader

#### Early Morning Field Trips

The annual May program of early morning field trips was carried out again this spring in the Halifax area with about thirty-five Society members and their guests taking part in one or more of the Wednesday morning excursions.

The series got off to a rather slow start on May 4 in Dartmouth and Cole Harbour. Dense fog, chilly temperatures and the Twin City's urban sprawl which had engulfed some of last year's choice spots combined to keep the bird list below average for this date. In spite of this, 25 species, including two Killdeer, fell to the binoculars of the nine bird-watchers who attended.

May 11 was bright, but cold and windy, and birds were still shy or scarce. The locale for this second trip was the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road from the Prospect Road to Big Indian Lake, and the twenty members who attended had hard work to assemble a list of 15 species.

On May 18, however, with warblers beginning to come in, things improved and the walk along the road to Susie Lake produced 25 species, most of which allowed themselves to be seen as well as heard. There were thirty of us that day.

The Green Head Road on May 25 was, as usual, the best bird-producer of the series. Weather was perfect and at last birds were so numerous that there were actually more than the eleven pairs of binoculars could cope with. Thirty-five species went down in the notebooks, stars of the show being a Lincoln's Sparrow, a male Parula Warbler and a pair of Pine Grosbeaks, all of which "showed off" at close range for the whole party. The only fly in the ointment was the Black Fly, but the old hands had brought their dope along and shared it freely, so that nobody suffered seriously.

The finale of the series was an all-day trip through central Hants County on May 26. Thirty members and guests met at Mount Uniacke station under a lowering sky at 8.00 a.m. By nine o'clock it was raining steadily but the group was unanimously of the opinion that this was "just a clearing-up shower" and voted to carry on and hope for the best. Rain continued throughout the day and the bird-watchers, damp and dogged, sloshed over the slithery clay roads of the Hants County hinterland until after five, poking their binoculars through the car windows and logging in all, a very respectable total of 62 species.

C.R.K. Allen, Leader

## AROUND OUR SHORES

by Gwen Lunn

It is probably just the association of happy childhood seaside holidays, or the fact that we have never before actually lived next door to the sea, which causes me to feel that strong, shoreward pull each time I go outside. But I like to think that it is a special kind of magic.

It starts its encircling movement with a subtle seaweedy smell and completes its enveloping hold as soon as I set foot amongst the rocks and pebbles of the beach. Of course it was a great discovery to find that the stretch of shore with the most unattractive superficial appearance retains its hold, even though common sense dictates the wisdom of haunting more savoury stretches. The fact that the fish plant vomits waste and effluvia in generous doses on one small section cannot be ignored, but neither can the enormous flock of Herring and Great Blackbacked Gulls which delightedly patronize its vicinity, day in, day out, throughout the year. Here we can learn all the mysteries of their changing plumage from juvenility to full adulthood. Here we can watch them rise en masse to circle round and round in that heart-lifting, buoyant freedom and lose ourselves in mild ecstasy as they dwindle and disappear into the lofty blue. Here we can feel our emotions gently plucked by their haunting cries. And here we can experience the occasional rare moment of a visiting Ring-billed, Bonaparte or Blackheaded Gull, or the heartening winter invasion of Iceland's, accompanied by the odd Glaucous Gull. And once, seated on an old concrete mooring block, a single Kittiwake took us through the stages of early identification puzzlement, to the thrilling realization of acquaintance with its charming species.

The nauseating fishy offal which so delights the grey and blackbacked marauders has also provided me with one or two of the rarer shells in our collection. Identification of these can be very tricky and I am quite green on the subject, relying entirely on searching through books. But one day I read "and found quite commonly in the stomachs of fishes taken off the Grand Banks", and I just knew I'd found a ladder shell; it sounded so romantic! and fish are brought to the fish plant from just such a place.

And then, too, we have color and form. The form in the shape of the broken down old wharves. On a sunny day, their dark, dark wooden posts and beams make a fitting contrast to the blinding white underparts of the resting gulls - on a foggy day, their mysterious arches are a temptation to imagine the loons or guillemots or mergansers playing hide-and-seek amongst them, while the "cock-a-wee" of the invisible Oldsquaws sounds like "here-we-come".

The color is in the shale, rocks and pebbles which continue to surprise me with their rich shades; purples and greens predominating; and in their appreciation, the surrounding flotsam and jetsam fades from sight.



### Post-Breeding Shore-Bird Migration Study

All birders in Nova Scotia are familiar with the host of shore-birds which passes through the province on its southward flight, from early July to well into November, but none of us has anything like precise information as to when this flight begins, where it enters the province, its point, or points of departure, or in what order the various species pass through.

Here are some questions which could be answered, in part at least, through a cooperative study by observers along our shore-bird flyways:

1. When do the south-bound migrants first arrive in Nova Scotia?
2. Where is their point of entry into the province - Northern Inverness or Victoria Counties? The Sydney-Glace Bay area? Counties bordering Northumberland Strait? South Shore of the Bay of Fundy?
3. Does the point of entry differ for the various species?
4. Is there any order in which different species pass through? Most of us agree that Dowitchers, Whimbrel and Least Sandpipers are among the earliest, but what about the others?
5. What course does the "main stream" for each species follow - Atlantic Coast from Northern Cape Breton, Bay of Fundy from isthmus of Chignecto, - or what?
6. Do Atlantic Coast migrants all follow the shore to the south-west tip of the province, or do some turn out to sea east of there?

These are questions to which observers who live or have summer homes along the coast could provide at least partial answers. Many of us live close enough to beaches and marshes to keep almost daily records of shore-bird movements, while others who are limited to less frequent observations, could still contribute notes which in the aggregate, would be of great value.

A number of members of the N.S.B.S. will have received the above notice and its accompanying form. If you have not, and are able to contribute to this valuable study, kindly notify

The Editor,  
N.S. Bird Society,  
1444 Seymour Street  
Halifax,  
N.S.

and forms will be mailed to you.

This is at present a purely provincial project, but if it is successful this season we plan to write to societies in the neighboring provinces and states to collaborate, and eventually produce a picture of the shore bird migration along the whole Atlantic Coast.

Progress reports of this study will be published each year in the Newsletter.

## THE MARITIMES NEST RECORDS SCHEME

Sixth Annual Report - 1965 Season

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All mail and cards to be sent to:

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

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The sixth year of the Maritimes Nest Records Scheme showed progress comparable to the past two seasons. Over 1350 nest record cards were completed in 1965 by 61 observers or groups of observers. The number of cards submitted and the number of persons co-operating are the largest yet. The 116 species represented is the greatest number in a single year, and the 255 Robin cards is the largest number in one year for a single species. The total number of cards now on file is over 5000. Nine species not previously reported were found nesting in 1965.

The numbers of cards received and of persons participating has reached a fairly constant level after increasing in arithmetic progression for the first four years. We are unlikely to further increase either the number of persons reporting or the number of cards submitted without a great increase in effort, either by the compiler in searching for new co-operators or by the observers in searching for nests. Probably we can maintain the present scale of nest-recording, and we may now seek to improve the quality of observations recorded. Some co-operators, particularly Joe Johnson and (Mrs.) Nellie Snyder, have been meticulous in recording details of nest construction and location, presence and activities of parent birds, and have followed up nearly all nests visited to check on their ultimate success or failure. Such activity is highly commendable, provided that frequent visits neither disturb the parent birds into deserting nor attract predators to the nest. While we still urge co-operators to fill out and submit cards for every nest of which the contents are known, even if it is only visited once, we also urge that all reasonably accessible nests be re-checked so as to determine what proportion of nesting birds ultimately bring off young.

In 1965, only 503 cards (37 per cent) bore data adequate to determine the success or failure of the nest. Nearly 400 of these were sent in by seven people, whereas five other persons who also turned in 35 or more cards each only provided a total of 20 cards for which nest success or failure could be determined. This is one direction in which some nest-watchers can easily improve their contributions.

As our files increase they become more valuable to persons studying individual species. Mrs. Deborah Howard, research associate of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, has this year been making use of the Robin cards in the Scheme. Even before the 255 cards received for this species in 1965 were available, the 439

cards previously on file comprised more data on the nesting of this species in the Maritimes than had been assembled in one place. We may anticipate similar requests for data on other species for which our files contain large numbers of cards, e.g. Tree and Barn Swallows, Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, Grackle, Junco, and Song Sparrow. As an example of what might be expected from such data, I recently compared clutch sizes of Grackles in the Maritimes with reported in the literature (Peterson and Young, Auk, 1950,) as follows (sample-size in parentheses):

Area	Clutch based on number of eggs in nest	Clutch based on no. of yg. or of yg. & eggs	Source
N.S.	4.28 (82)	3.83 (72)	M. N. R. S.
P.E.I.	4.49 (37)	3.58 (12)	M. N. R. S.
N.B.	4.27 (57)	3.91 (54)	M. N. R. S.
Wisconsin	4.9 (55)		Peterson & Young (1950)
Ohio		4.9 (21)	Trautman (1940)

These data show the inadvisability of relying on small samples, and that clutch-sizes based on numbers of young or of young and eggs in a nest are probably not representative. They also suggest that clutch-sizes in the Maritimes may differ quite appreciably from those in other areas.

#### Participants in the Scheme in 1965

In 1965, 61 persons sent in cards for nests recorded in the Maritimes. Thirty-four sent in cards from New Brunswick, thirty from Nova Scotia, and seven from Prince Edward Island. Nine persons submitted cards for more than one province.

As usual, members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society contributed most of the cards from this province. Members of the Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton naturalists' clubs also made valuable contributions. Students from Acadia University, the University of New Brunswick, and the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, employed for the summer by the Canadian Wildlife Service or the Northeastern Wildlife Station, also contributed a considerable number of cards.

#### Co-operators and numbers of cards submitted by each

##### Prince Edward Island

M.L.H. Thomas (Tyne Valley) (see also N.B.)	74
B. Pigot (Mount Stewart) (see also N.S.)	56
S. Vass (Ellerslie & Charlottetown)	55



K. Pigot (Mount Stewart)	35
R. Anderson (Summerside RCAF)	16
W.P. Neily (Tremont, N.S.) (see also N.B. & N.S.)	3
Miss E. Lowerison (Amherst, N.S.) (see also N.S.)	1
Total	240

### New Brunswick

J.G. Wilson (Gondola Point)	130
W.P. Neily (Tremont, N.S.) (see also N.S. & P.E.I.)	47
D.J. Neave (N.E.W.S.)	36
G. Hope (Chartersville)	24
D. Christie (Fundy Nat. Park & Saint John) (several with P. Candido & one with R.E. Hunter)	20
A. Madden (Moncton)	12
Mrs. V.B. Watters (Lancaster)	10
A.J. Erskine (Sackville) (see also N.S.)	9
R.S. Gibbon (Stewiacke, N.S.) & G. Johnstone (Sackville)	8 each
K.H. Deichmann (Lancaster)	7
R.W. Fyfe (Sackville) (see also N.S.)	5
J.W. Johnson (Karsdale, N.S.) (see also N.S.) & K. Rushton (Moncton)	4 each
T. Lockhart (Moncton)	3
A.A. Dean (Fredericton), Mrs. M.C. Morehouse (Pennfield), M. Randall (Ripples), C.&J. Wilson & G.A. Strong (Gondola Pt. & Fairvale)	2 each
R. Beam (Cumberland Bay Pt.), G.F. Broome (Prince William), D. Dennis (Sackville) (see also N.S.), Mr. & Mrs. L. Dunphy (Fredericton), Dr. D.C. Eidt (Nashwaaksis), R.E. Hunter (Moncton), P. Iden (Downsview, Ont.), J.P. Kelsall (Sackville) (see also N.S.), P. Roy (Moncton), W.L. Sharpe (Fredericton), M.L.H. Thomas (Tyne Valley), (see also P.E.I.), A. Varty (Fredericton), Dr. I.W. Varty (Fredericton), R. Whitman (Riverview Hts.), B.S. Wright (Fredericton).	1 each
Total	350

### Nova Scotia

J.W. Johnson (Karsdale) (see also N.B.)	264
C. Coldwell (Gaspereau)	93
Mrs. G. Snyder (Crousetown)	77
H. Brennan (New Glasgow)	59
A.J. Erskine (Sackville, N.B.) (see also N.B.)	58
W.P. Neily (Tremont) (see also N.B. & P.E.I.)	30
P. Anketell-Jones (Dartmouth)	25
S.W. Hemeon (Halifax & Bass River)	21
W.E. Whitehead (Round Hill)	20
Capt. T.F.T. Morland (Indian Point)	17
Miss E. Crathorne (Dartmouth)	15
J.S. Erskine (Wolfville) & J. Lorimer (Dartmouth)	14 each
Mrs. T. Hawkins (Wilmot)	13
C.H. Chipman (Wolfville)	10

Miss E. Lowerison (Amherst) (see also P.E.I.)	9
Mrs. R.W. Toppie (Dartmouth)	5
F. Alward (Glance Bay), Dr. & Mrs. R. Gallagher (Sharon, Mass., & Barrington), & Capt. E. Holdway (Pictou)	4 each
J.P. Kelsall (Sackville, N.B. (see also N.B.))	3
Mrs. H. Myers (Amherst) & B. Pigot (Mt. Stewart, P.E.I.) (see also P.E.I.)	2 each
R. Campbell (Baddeck), Miss M. Christie (Bedford), D.G. Dennis (Sackville, N.B.) (see also N.B.), R.W. Fyfe (Sackville, N.B.) (see also N.B.), F.M. Rudolf (Lunenburg), R. Watts (N.E. Margaree), S.D. Whitman (Riverview Hts., N.B.)	1 each
Total	768

In all, 1358 cards were received in 1965, 89 more than in the previous record year (1963). Persons who greatly increased their contributions included Joe Johnson, Nellie Snyder, and Harry Brennan in Nova Scotia, Jim Wilson in New Brunswick, and Martin Thomas in Prince Edward Island. The largest contribution by a newcomer to the Scheme was by Wayne Neily, who submitted 80 cards from all three provinces in the course of his summer's work with the Canadian Wildlife Service. We hope that our co-operators will continue to spread word of the Scheme to persons who might be interested in submitting records, as we can never have too many participants. The number of people sending in cards has been quite stable for the past three years, but only because of new people appearing to take the place of those who left the area or lost interest. Over one-third of the people who turn in cards in any one year do not do so in the following year. We must acknowledge our debt to our many faithful co-operators; nearly half (11) of the 23 people who turned in cards in 1961 were still submitting records in 1965, and 37 people have submitted cards in three or more years.

\* \* \* \* \*

Again in 1965, special studies brought in valuable series of data on certain species. David Neave, a graduate student at the University of New Brunswick, by paying rewards to nest-finders located and reported on 31 Ruffed Grouse nests. Bruce Pigot started a survey of tern colonies on Prince Edward Island, and Tom Horland turned in a good series on tern colonies in Mahone Bay, N. S. Some other well-represented species were believed to have nested in unusually large numbers in the Maritimes in 1965, notably Cedar Waxwing and Junco. No less than 13 people reported nests of Cedar Waxwings, and Joe Johnson reported 39 Junco nests in Annapolis County, N.S.

Nine new species were added to the Nest Records Scheme file in 1965, as follows:

Leach's Petrel - four nests (one card) at Middle Halibut Island, Halifax Co., N.S.; John Lorimer.

- Red-shouldered Hawk - a nest at So. Tweedside, York Co., N.B.; Dr. D.C. Eidt (first recent record in N.B. - confirmation desirable, as only two observers identified adults).
- Marsh Hawk - a nest near Jolicure, Westmorland Co., N.B.; R.W. Fyfe.
- Saw-whet Owl - recently - fledged young at Irish Mountain, Pictou Co., N.S.; Harry Brennan.
- Northern 3-toed Woodpecker - a nest near Boiestown, in York Co., N.B.; Bob Gibbon, Peter Pearce, and Malcolm Jackson (first nesting established in Maritimes - to be published elsewhere by Gibbon).
- Eastern Bluebird - a nest (in nest-box) near Alma, Albert Co., N.B.; David Christie & Hoy Hunter.
- Golden-crowned Kinglet - a nest near Crousetown, Lunenburg Co., N.S.; Nellie Snyder.
- Sharp-tailed Sparrow - a nest near Port Royal, Annapolis Co., N.S.; Joe Johnson.
- Lincoln's Sparrow - a nest near Whycocomagh, Inverness Co., N.S.; Doug. Whitman (first nest found in N.S.).

These include three of the species especially noted last year as then lacking in our files. The most obvious species still unrecorded are Sharp-shinned Hawk, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Palm and Wilson's Warblers, Pine Grosbeak, and White-winged Crossbill. The absence of nest records for many common species in Prince Edward Island surely reflects the small number of observers there more than it does the distribution of these species. Godfrey ("Birds of Prince Edward Island", Nat. Mus. Bull., 1952) listed as breeding 66 species not yet in our P.E.I. file, and cited details for 20 of these.

Once again, we would repeat the criteria suggested for documenting unusual records (Maryland Nesting Study, 1963):

1. Specimen of adult, young, or eggs (only licensed collectors may collect specimens).
2. Photograph of the adult associated with the eggs or young.
3. Three or more reliable sight records, preferably involving two or more observers, of adult at nest or associated with young. (This is the easiest way, since a nesting bird remains in one locality for a considerable time.)

A picture of a nest with eggs or young is seldom identifiable to species if the adult is not present, although it may provide useful corroborative evidence. Even common species nesting in unusual places or at unusual times could to advantage be documented in these ways.



In closing, we reiterate the purposes of the Maritimes Nest Records Scheme:

to assemble data upon the nesting of all bird species, and particularly of common species;

to make these data available to persons interested in studying nesting biology of birds.

No single observer can assemble for a study the quantity of data that may be provided by an enthusiastic body of observers reporting to a nest record program. Each year more bird students are turning to data in nest record files to supplement their own observations. If you know of other persons who may be interested in reporting nests, please let us know of them. There can never be too many observers, and even now most of our co-operators are concentrated in a few areas.

We thank all persons who have sent in nest cards or otherwise shown their interest in this project. We hope that you will continue to support the Maritimes Nest Records Scheme in the future. Good luck with nest-watching.

A. J. Erskine



#### COMMON NAMES OF SEA BIRDS

by Norman Cunningham

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Willet            | - spot rump  |
| Spotted Sandpiper | - quiver wing  |
| Purple Sandpiper  | - winter ox-eye. "ox-eye" is frequently used locally. An old dictionary gives the name to the Greater Titmouse. Chapman's <u>Birds of North East America</u> , pub. 1895, gives "meadow ox-eye" (Least Sandpiper) and "sand ox-eye" (Semi-palmated Sandpiper). |

Sanderling	- white ox-eye
Least Sandpiper	- red Injun
Phalarope	- whale bird
Pectoral Sandpiper	- turrips (imitative in origin?)
Dowitcher	- gray back
Blackbellied Plover	- toad head ("Birds of North America" gives this.)
Piping Plover	- pea-blow (Do the sweet pipings sound like "Pea"?)
Ruddy Turnstones	- seaweed birds
Bittern	- scout (I like this picture of an Indian scout sneaking through the swamp.)
Puffin	- parakeet
Guillemot	- widgeon
Auks	- noddies
Common Murre	- scribe (Perhaps the rather unusual bill resembles the "Scribe" by which boatbuilders mark their wood.)
Dovekies	- pine-knots (toughness)
Shearwater	- hag or haglet
Grebe	- wag-toe
Surf Scoter	- patch poll
American Scoter	- butter-nose
Kittiwake	- fall gull

The foregoing common names for sea birds were contributed by Evelyn Richardson, who obtained them from Norman Cunningham, of the Hawk, Cape Sable Island.

## BIRD CALLING - A NEW TECHNIQUE

by C.R.K. Allen

The art of the bird caller is probably as ancient as that of the hunter. Birds are more often than not wary but gullible, and it was frequently easier to lure the game within range than to perform an elaborate stalk.

Unlike many of the skills of our primitive forbears, bird-calling is far from being a lost art today. Latterly, however, binoculars and camera have tended to replace the scatter gun, and the caller's efforts are now directed at a much larger and more varied avian audience than those of the pot hunter.

Whereas these latter were mostly "instrumentalists", buying their duck, goose, turkey or crow calls from a sporting goods store, the bird-watcher may be classed as a vocalist, and for the most part relies on lips and tongue to produce the squeaks and clicks which he hopes will excite the curiosity of the skulkers in the undergrowth.

Alas, however, his efforts are at best only mildly successful. Sometimes, when young are in the nest, one can bring two or three pairs of anxious parents within close range by making a high squealing noise with the lips against the back of the hand, and I know of one or two virtuosos who, because of God-given talent or peculiarity of dentition, can imitate the song of some particular species so exactly that they can bring a raging territory-conscious male of that species almost within inches of the sound's source.

Most of us, however, have had to confine ourselves until recently to the methods already mentioned, which produce results barely often enough to make them worth trying.

But now the situation has improved, with the advent of a new technique which in effectiveness far outstrips the older methods. This technique is hereinafter to be known in this article as "swishing" because this describes it as well as any word can. The sound is the same, and produced in exactly the same way as that which music lovers use at a concert, to quell some restive character who shuffles his feet and clears his throat at the wrong moment. There is, however, a difference: Whereas the concert-goer's admonition is merely a long drawn-out "sh-h-h-h!", the avant-garde bird-watcher moulds this with his lips into a series of syllables like this: "Pish-wish-wish-wish---", and so on in rapid succession for from five to ten seconds, or until his breath gives out.

Admittedly this sound bears no close resemblance to the call of any bird native to these parts; but then, neither do some of the most killing trout flies imitate any denizen of the lakes and streams. There is, however, in this sound, when produced with force, and vigor, something intrinsically "birdy" in quality, and apparently the birds think so too. Here are several examples of audience reaction.



Time and location: Mid-November by a roadside in central Hants County; not a bird of any kind could be seen or heard. After a minute or two of calling, purely "on spec", the husky note of a Boreal Chickadee replied, followed quickly by the sharper "dee-dee-dee" of several Black-caps. Next, four or five Purple Finches approached through the leafless tops of the roadside trees, and a Grey Jay appeared briefly at the top of a nearby spruce.

Time and location: Mid-March on a grassy tract back of Lawrencetown Beach near Halifax. A flock of 60-75 Redpolls were feeding and flitting restlessly. At the first few "swishes", the whole flock took wing and flew directly at the caller's car, and swooped and swirled about it as long as the calling continued.

These examples give some indication of the variety of birds who will respond to "swishing", but the list is much longer. Sharp-shinned and Pigeon Hawks will occasionally show brief interest; Woodpeckers are, surprisingly, almost as responsive as Chickadees, Kinglets, Nuthatches and Warblers; Thrushes seem unpredictable - consumed with curiosity today, completely indifferent tomorrow. Finches and Sparrows respond as readily as Warblers; Swallows are immune.

The reaction of the Blackbirds and their kin - the Cowbirds and Bobolinks, is interesting because it is so uniform. At almost the first "swish" they drop whatever they are doing and "take off" in the opposite direction. That, at least, is the writer's experience.

And now, lest the convert to "swishing" thinks he will become a sort of avian Pied Piper over night, we must be honest and admit that this technique is not one hundred percent effective. There are times when for no apparent reason the birds will refuse to interrupt the pursuit of their affairs to investigate this exciting sound, no matter how seductively produced. This may happen at any time of year, but most often it seems during April and May. Perhaps the new arrivals are preoccupied with the selection of a territory or a mate, or perhaps depleted of energy after their long northward flight, are interested only in food and rest. Whatever the reason, this is the nadir of the bird-callers year, be he a squeaker, whistler or swisher.

To sum up then: This new "swishing" technique will bring the birds from greater distances, bring them closer to the observer, and, best of all, will attract a much wider variety than any of the other methods.

It has one other feature, too, of dubious value: Unless one is circumspect in its use, it is a quick and easy way of getting acquainted with the local human population. One day, for instance, I was aiming my swishes at a dense clump of bushes in a pasture when interrupted by a voice from behind. I whirled around to face a young man whose face was an expression of mixed curiosity and sympathy.

"What's the matter? Lose your cat?"

Surprised into the truth, I stammered, "No, just calling birds."

Wariness replaced curiosity on his face and with a nod he moved rather quickly off. It then dawned on me that, of all places to be caught at my "swishing", I had chosen the grounds of the Halifax County Mental Hospital!



The Author, searching for results

- Gordon Larkin

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor  
NSBS Newsletter

I've had a lucky break again and had a rare visitor come to my back yard to feed around 7 p.m. this evening - a Lark Sparrow. I was hurrying to leave for an appointment when something about that particular sparrow caught my attention. Fortunately, I reached for the glasses and what a surprise I got when I saw the markings on his face and head! I had looked at the picture in Peterson's Guide so many times and thought, "Oh, I'll never see one of those", and here he has come right to me, as so many others have. That grain I throw out for all my other flock has certainly been worth it in all the lovely surprises it has brought us.

Perhaps there have been others reported but, according to R. Tufts' book, they have all been Fall visitors. I remember Stewart Whitman telling me about the one that was seen and collected down in Granville, near here.

My husband got the movie camera but even though it was only 6 or 7 yards beyond the window, I told him it was useless to take any film as it was overcast at the time and I couldn't see any colouring on his face without the binoculars. He may have just been one of many "off course" because of "Alma" approaching this vicinity. Who knows?

THELMA HAWKINS

Wilmot, N.S.

Editor  
NSBS Newsletter

When I was in at a fishing camp on Burnt Lake, five to seven miles inland from Chezzetcook, Halifax County on May 22, I came to the conclusion that spring migration must be at its height. The woods were full of birds. Our camp is on an island of not more than a half-acre; I stepped out of the door to identify a warbler and in minutes without moving saw a Black-and-White, Myrtle, Palm, Black-throated Green and a Nashville warbler.

On Friday the 20th I saw my first Black-throated Blue Warbler and the previous day a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, attracted to observing him by the plaintive whistle.

Pileated Woodpeckers have been in that country but I have never seen one. I frequently pass one live pine tree where they have made holes nine inches high by three wide by three or more deep, but this year I found another tree, live as well, where the excavations were even larger.

One aspect of bird watching that is of interest to me is to see how many varieties I can identify on my own property in a given period - an hour or an afternoon - and also how many nests. So far this year I have three robins now nesting, one earlier one destroyed, two yellow warblers - one grackle (now destroyed) and one English Sparrow removed from Swallow house.

CURTIS CHIPMAN

Wolfville, N.S.



Editor  
NSFS Newsletter

Behind the beach road which cars have cut at Lawrencetown (turn left at the very end of Conrod Road) a Piping Plover has laid four eggs. I've seen a pair of Piping Plovers there for about six weeks. The eggs lie in a sand depression, surrounded by broken white shells - buff-grey with brown splotches on them, denser at the broad end of the shell. With luck, they'll hatch at mid-week and give the fledglings a chance to take off before the Sunday jaunters with their dogs destroy them.

I didn't see more than two Canada Warblers last year. This year, I've seen half a dozen. The Wilson's Warbler was a glorious surprise in a muddy thicket, and I thought at first sight (against the sun, as usual at that moment) that it was an old Palm Warbler. Further flitting in and out of the bushes and use of the famous wsh, wsh, wsh, produced this splendid surprise. I watched him for a long while - 15 minutes, I should think.

Sunday last, I watched a pair of resourceful Canada warblers alight on a fly-spattered spider's web. They ate up every fly, breaking the web as they did so, but economising on effort with a ready-made dinner.

The waves of warbler migrants on the list were wonderful to watch - mainly at Broad Cove, the other side of Petite Riviere.

BARBARA HINDS

Halifax, N.S.

Editor  
NSFS Newsletter

Yesterday, May 26, 1966, Col. Sutton phoned long distance to say that there was a pair of Blue Grosbeaks on the lawn of Riverside Lodge, Musquodoboit Harbour. I reported this at once to Charlie Allen.

After work, Phyllis and Ward Hemeon and I went to Musquodoboit Harbour and were able to see the male at close range for about ten minutes (the female did not appear); it was picking in the fine gravel in the parking lot. Both birds had first been seen the previous evening by Mrs. Sutton.

There was no doubt about the identification as it was a clear evening, we were only a few feet away, and the fine brown lines showed up well on the beautiful blue; the beak was the usual heavy one of the Grosbeak.

The Suttons will keep a check on this pair to see whether they nest in the vicinity.

Incidentally, I have seen the Blue Grosbeak on two other occasions -

Dec. 12, 1954 - Windsor Junction, Hfx. Co.  
Aug. 11, 1957 - Ragged Island Inn, Allendale, Shelburne Co.

ETHEL CRATHORNE

Dartmouth, N.S.

Editor  
NSBS Newsletter

Surely bird enthusiasts are born. Sometimes one sees the light a little late in years, but it is there, waiting to be found. Favorable circumstances, environment or opportunity can trigger the dormant potential and rouse the sleeper to his new world of beauty and delight.

Wildfowl in the swamps, bobolinks singing on the wing above the marshland, warblers and finches among the evergreens and hardwoods, people who enjoy the same delights - these things and more await those who set out with binocular, camera and bird book.

My own particular interest awoke when a school teacher formed of us an Audubon Society. That little stick-pin, showing a male red-winged blackbird, sparked an awareness which has widened and deepened with the years. It was shortly after this that a notice appeared in the local paper to the effect that Robie W. Tufts, Migratory Bird Officer, would address a gathering at the local school-house. My delight at attending to hear Mr. Tufts speak on bird life, and to view his slides, was really a big event in my life. To top it off, as I was returning to Truro on the two-mile jaunt, a coupé car stopped to pick me up. My benefactor was none other than Robie W. Tufts himself!

The Nova Scotia Bird Society was formed. A gathering at Uniacke House for a tour, and then a meeting held by the members at the Museum of Science, re-kindled the warm embers.

The picture has changed, or the viewer perhaps. Another type of hunter has appeared on the scene. The outdoorsmen, equipped with camera or binocular, are far outnumbering the hunters of past years. Their prizes may be shared with others and still remain alive for the observer who will follow.

Then there are practical considerations. The future is not too bright for the waterfowl. Progress must take a toll of our wetlands. With construction, expansion, increase of population, more cars and better roads, conservation can play a prominent part in protection of the species. Perhaps we can do something about that.

A love of nature is born in us. Generations taking to the woods will delve into her secrets, with a twelve-month changing panorama to observe. And just now Red Wings are plentiful on the marshy cattails, White-throats and Hermit Thrushes sing from practically every woodlot, while Robins greet each dawn with their cheery carol.

MARTIN G. McNALLY

Truro, N.S.