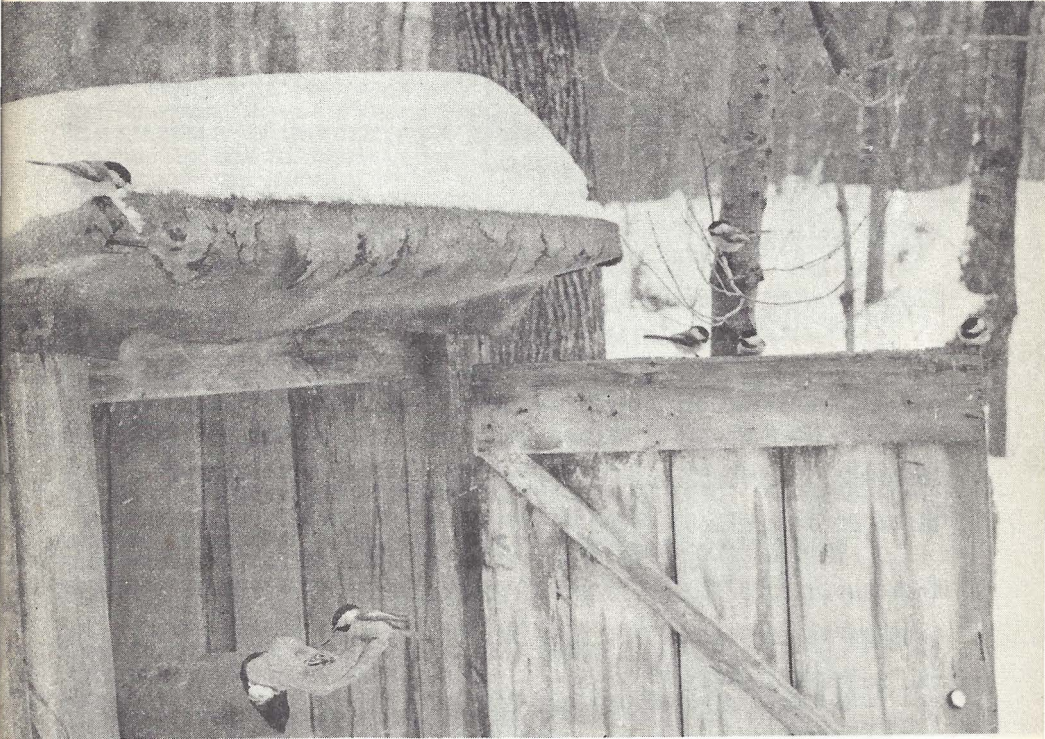




*Nova Scotia
Bird Society*



Newsletter

Volume 9, No. 1

April, 1967

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Volume 9, Number 1

April, 1967

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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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Spring Garden Road
Halifax, N. S., Canada

NEWSLETTER

Editor: Phyllis R. Dobson

Volume 9, Number 1

April, 1967

CHRISTMAS COUNTS - 1966

by L. B. Macpherson

Many will remember this as the year of the Killdeer and the Mourning Doves, strange birds to see in the winter. Perhaps the Killdeer is extending its range as during 1966 it was reported frequently and in some numbers in the Province and on these Christmas Counts the amazing total of 18 birds on 5 counts (Glace Bay, 1; Canso, 5; Halifax East, 2; Halifax West, 4; Brier Island, 6). The abundance of Mourning Doves may almost certainly be attributed to the very mild December weather which kept the ground bare. Many of us, in previous years, have had the experience of noting the location of a few birds of this species, even up to the middle of December, and of hoping that they would "stay put" until enumerated on the count day. Usually severe weather intervened and, except on rare occasions, the birds were not there when needed. This year a total of 107 Mourning Doves were seen on 5 counts (Glace Bay, 17; Wolfville, 75; Halifax East, 4; Halifax West, 4; Bridgewater, 2).

Twenty-five counts were received and a record 107 species noted. The previous high was 101 species in 1960. Undoubtedly the weather was the main factor contributing to this rather large number of species being available to be seen. I am sure that non-birders find it hard to believe that we sometimes have over a hundred species of birds in the Province in winter.

The total number of species seen on the N. S. Christmas Counts since I have been recording them (11 years) goes up to 142 with the addition of Eared Grebe, Killdeer and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. There have been a number of previous winter observations of the latter species but never one that coincided with the count period. The Eared Grebe is, however, a first for the province at any time of the year. C.R.K. Allen and his party of the Halifax West count spent a considerable part of the day following this bird and are sure of their identification, one of the party having seen the species in the West. In addition, they were well equipped with a telescope and binoculars, and in the middle of the day went home to consult their reference books on its identification features. A Chipping Sparrow, carefully observed and described, on the Wolfville count, was a notable observation, there having been only one previous Christmas Count record. In

our comments on rarities it is hardly news any more to mention Mockingbirds in winter in Nova Scotia - they are included on three of these counts - but the total of 7 on the Halifax West (City) count is quite remarkable. This number is a minimum one, much checking having been done to see that these were 7 separate birds, not counting twice. Sydney and Glace Bay continue to be the champion Iceland Gull places in North America, at least among those that record their birds.

Editing these counts incurs responsibility for the Editor and sometimes disappointment for an observer. One of the reasons for editing is that these reports are the basis of distribution data which may get permanently into the record books. Once perpetrated, an error is rarely subject to being corrected so we have to be very careful, even, at times, very conservative. A case in point this year is the report of a large flock of White-rumped Sandpipers. This species winters in Southern South America, there seem to be no winter records of winter stragglers in North America, and to one not reasonably familiar with the shore birds it might be confused with Sanderling, of fairly frequent occurrence in Nova Scotia in early winter. For these reasons the observation was not accepted. However, I rarely delete a species from a count without correspondence or without consultation with others with specialized local knowledge of both the birds and sometimes the observer.

The following species were seen on one count only: Mallard (12), Northern Shrike (1), Chipping Sparrow (1), Wolfville; Surf Scoter (7), St. Peter's; Peregrine Falcon (1), Eskasoni; Ruddy Turnstone (1), Dunlin (1), Black-bellied Plover (1), Kittiwake (1000+), Common Murre (2), Water Pipit (1), Brier Island; Thick-billed Murre (3), Karsdale; Cedar Waxwing (15), Annapolis; Eared Grebe (1), Cooper's Hawk (1), Sparrow Hawk (1), Yellowthroat (1), Halifax West; Ruby-crowned Kinglet (1), Yellow-breasted Chat (1), Rusty Blackbird (2), and Swamp Sparrow (1), Halifax East.

The commonest or most widespread species, according to the counts, were (in decreasing order of the number of counts on which they were reported) Crow, Starling, Black-capped Chickadee, Raven, House Sparrow, Herring Gull, Boreal Chickadee, Great Black-backed Gull, Blue Jay and Goldfinch. In spite of the inclusion of the latter species on this list (Goldfinches were reported on 17 counts) this has not been a noteworthy "Finch winter". The most abundant species appears to be the Herring Gull, about 9100 birds being noted on 19 counts, closely followed by the Starling at about 8800 individuals on 24 counts. However, as a result of the Brier Island count only, the Kittiwake may have topped these numbers. M. W. Anketell-Jones told me that, all day long, Kittiwakes were rounding the West Point of the Island, from the Bay of Fundy side and turning south into the Atlantic at a rate of not less than 25 a minute. At least they had no evidence of a large circular movement, so there may well have been 12,000 birds go by in the day. Whatever the numbers, it must have been a sight to remember. To add to the occasion, there was a large flight of Dovekies at the same time.

One final comment - it is just as important to count Herring Gulls, House Sparrows, Starlings and Crows as it is to find rarities. The omission of one or more of these species on some counts where they should occur leads me to believe that they are sometimes being neglected.

Summaries of the 25 counts submitted are recorded below, more or less in a north to south order. The species' names bracketed are those seen in the count period but not on the count day.

THE SYDNEYS, Cape Breton Co., 31 December 1966.

Common Loon, 1; Great Cormorant, 2; Greater Scaup, 9; Common Goldeneye, 3; Oldsquaw, 152; Common Scoter, 45; Red-breasted Merganser, 12; Unidentified Ducks, 20; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Bald Eagle, 4; Pigeon Hawk, 1; Ruffed Grouse, 2; Ring-necked Pheasant, 1; Glaucous Gull, 3; Iceland Gull, 165; Great Black-backed Gull, 764; Herring Gull, 1091; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Gray Jay, 2; Blue Jay, 6; Common Raven, 9; Common Crow, 151; Black-capped Chickadee, 16; Boreal Chickadee, 3; Robin, 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 11; Starling, 330; House Sparrow, 104; Common Grackle, 1; Brown-headed Cowbird, 5; Evening Grosbeak, 24; Pine Grosbeak, 4; Common Redpoll, 2; Pine Siskin, 1; American Goldfinch, 70; Savannah Sparrow, 1; Slate-colored Junco, 18; Tree Sparrow, 1.

Totals: 39 species, about 3040 individuals.

Observers: (17 party hours) Ford Alward (compiler), Mrs. E. Curtiss, Hedley Hopkins, Hedley Hopkins Jr., Mrs. Lewis MacDonald, Mrs. Archie MacLean, Robert McNeil, Andrew Raniseth, Miss Hilda Wright.

GLACE BAY, Cape Breton Co., 26 December 1966.

Great Blue Heron, 2; Canada Goose, 527; Black Duck, 385; Greater Scaup, 14; Common Goldeneye, 85; Bufflehead, 46; Oldsquaw, 58; Common Merganser, 2; Red-breasted Merganser, 8; Unidentified ducks, 20; Bald Eagle, 1; Killdeer, 1; Glaucous Gull, 2; Iceland Gull, 706; Great Black-backed Gull, 1145; Herring Gull, 1626; Black-headed Gull, 14; Dovekie, 1; Mourning Dove, 17; (Great Horned Owl); Downy Woodpecker, 2; Gray Jay, 10; Blue Jay, 2; Common Raven, 10; Common Crow, 245; Black-capped Chickadee, 10; Starling, 356; Myrtle Warbler, 11; House Sparrow, 116; (Common Grackle); (Evening Grosbeak); Savannah Sparrow, 3; Song Sparrow, 1.

Totals: 30 species, about 5427 individuals.

Observers: (18 party hours) Ford Alward (compiler), Mrs. Henry Cosnick, John Cummings, Allan MacCormack, Archie MacLean, Sarah MacLean, Donald MacDonald, Marge MacDonald, Edith MacLeod, John Mallory, Keith Nicoll, Fred Shepard.

BADDECK, Victoria Co., 29 December 1966.

Common Loon, 2; Horned Grebe, 1; Black Duck, 110; Common Goldeneye, 3; Common Merganser, 120; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Bald Eagle, 3; Ruffed Grouse, 7; Great Black-backed Gull, 5; Herring Gull, 15; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Gray Jay, 2; Blue Jay, 6; Common Raven, 8; Common Crow, 60; Black-capped Chickadee, 5; Boreal Chickadee, 5; (Robin); Starling, 200; House Sparrow, 40; Evening Grosbeak, 1; Purple Finch, 10; Pine Grosbeak, 40; American Goldfinch, 30; Slate-colored Junco, 1.

Totals: 24 species, about 676 individuals.

Observers: (5 party hours) G. Bartlett, G. MacRae, Clive MacDonald (compiler), S. MacDonald, W. Roberts, T. Stone.

SYDNEY RIVER, Cape Breton Co., 27 December 1966.

Barred Owl, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Gray Jay, 6; Blue Jay, 3; Common Raven, 7; Common Crow, 71; Black-capped Chickadee, 32; Boreal Chickadee, 15; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Starling, 225; American Goldfinch, 280.

Totals: 11 species, about 642 individuals.

Observers: (5 party hours) Mrs. James Goode, Hedley Hopkins, Mrs. Cecil Hussey (compiler).

ESKASONI, Cape Breton Co., 27 December 1966.

Black Duck, 27; Greater Scaup, 16; Common Goldeneye, 5; Bufflehead, 3; White-winged Scoter, 17; unidentified ducks, 5; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 2; Bald Eagle, 10; Peregrine Falcon, 1; unidentified hawk, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 5; Herring Gull, 18; Gray Jay, 7; Blue Jay, 1; Common Raven, 2; Common Crow, 44; Black-capped Chickadee, 22; Boreal Chickadee, 5; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Starling, 65; House Sparrow, 17; Common Redpoll, 24; American Goldfinch, 4; Song Sparrow, 1.

Totals: 24 species, about 306 individuals.

Observers: (11 party hours) Ford Alward, Allan MacCormack, Robert McNeil (compiler), Keith Nicoll.

ST. PETER'S, Richmond Co., 28 December 1966.

Common Loon, 1; Pied-billed Grebe, 2; Black Duck, 50; Bufflehead, 5; Oldsquaw, 40; Surf Scoter, 7; unidentified ducks, 50; Ring-necked Pheasant, 1; Sanderling, 150; Great Black-backed Gull, 16; Herring Gull, 38; Dovekie, 5; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Common Crow, 50; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; Boreal Chickadee, 1; Starling, 80; House Sparrow, 75; (Dickcissel); Evening Grosbeak, 3; American Goldfinch, 15; (Song Sparrow).

Totals: 20 species, about 594 individuals.

Observers: (7 party hours) Murdock H. Digout (compiler), William Digout, E. Digout and E.C. Twist.

AMHERST, Cumberland Co., 26 December 1966.

Horned Grebe, 1; unidentified hawks, 2; Ruffed Grouse, 3; Ring-necked Pheasant, 12; Great Black-backed Gull, 14; Herring Gull, 107; (Hairy Woodpecker); Gray Jay, 2; Blue Jay, 1; Common Raven, 1; Common Crow, 72; Black-capped Chickadee, 21; Boreal Chickadee, 8; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 4; Starling, 244; House Sparrow, 370; (Baltimore Oriole); American Goldfinch, 11; Slate-colored Junco, 1; Tree Sparrow, 8; White-throated Sparrow, 2; Song Sparrow, 1; Snow Bunting, 49.

Totals: 22 species, about 936 individuals.

Observers: (12 party hours) Mrs. R. Airey, Miss Evelyn Lowerison (compiler), Miss L. Myers, Mrs. D. Myers, W. McNutt, Mrs. M. Scovil, Miss R. Stevenson, Mrs. B. Vergie, B. Vergie.

NORTHPORT, Cumberland Co., 1 January 1967.

Common Loon, 2; Canada Goose, 29; Black Duck, 72; Oldsquaw, 60; unidentified ducks, 40; unidentified hawk, 1; Ring-necked Pheasant, 2; Herring Gull, 18; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Gray Jay, 1; Common Raven, 3; Common Crow, 26; Black-capped Chickadee, 6; Starling, 150; Tree Sparrow, 4.

Totals: 13 species, about 415 individuals.

Observers: (7 party hours) R.G. MacNeil (compiler), Robin MacNeil.

TRURO, Colchester Co., 28 December 1966.

(Spruce Grouse); Ruffed Grouse, 3; Gray Partridge, 7; Great Black-backed Gull, 5; Herring Gull, 58; (Dovekie); Downy Woodpecker, 3; (Gray Jay); Blue Jay, 8; Common Raven, 5; Common Crow, 35; Black-capped Chickadee, 2; (White-breasted Nuthatch); Golden-crowned Kinglet, 3; Starling, not estimated; House Sparrow, not estimated; Evening Grosbeak, 16; (White-winged Crossbill); (Snow Bunting).

Totals: 13 species, about 145 individuals.

Observers: (5 party hours) W.J. Bird, Arnold Brown, Mrs. H. Davidson, Jim Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Fulton G. Langille, Martin G. McNally (compiler), P. Taylor.

BASS RIVER, Colchester Co., 26 December 1966.

Common Loon, 1; Black Duck, 43; Common Goldeneye, 10; Common Merganser, 37; Red-breasted Merganser, 8; Ruffed Grouse, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 4; Herring Gull, 19; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Gray Jay, 1; Common Raven, 1; Common Crow, 41; (Black-capped Chickadee); (Boreal Chickadee); (Red-breasted Nuthatch); Robin, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 5; Starling, 30; House Sparrow, 42; (Brown-headed Cowbird); Evening Grosbeak, 5; American Goldfinch, 6.

Totals: 18 species, about 256 individuals.

Observers: (6 party hours) Phyllis Hemeon, Ward Hemeon (compiler).

BROOKFIELD, Colchester Co., 26 December 1966.

Herring Gull, 1; (Hairy Woodpecker); Common Raven, 3; Common Crow, 22; Black-capped Chickadee, 10; Boreal Chickadee, 2; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Starling, 55; House Sparrow, 46; Baltimore Oriole, 1; American Goldfinch, 40.

Totals: 10 species, about 181 individuals.

Observers: (5 party hours) Arthur Lindsay, Mrs. J.L. Lindsay, Robert Lindsay (compiler).

PICTOU, Pictou Co., 24 December 1966.

Oldsquaw, 7; Red-breasted Merganser, 40; Bald Eagle, 2; Purple Sandpiper, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 8; Herring Gull, 42; Blue Jay, 1; Common Crow, 21; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; (Brown Creeper); Starling, 70; House Sparrow, 80; American Goldfinch, 10; Tree Sparrow, 8.

Totals: 13 species, about 302 individuals.

Observer: (6 hours) Eric Holdway.

SPRINGVILLE, Pictou Co., 1 January 1967.

Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Bald Eagle, 1; Ruffed Grouse, 2; Great Black-backed Gull, 2; Herring Gull, 9; Pileated Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 5; Gray Jay, 5; Blue Jay, 20; Common Raven, 14; Common Crow, 95; Black-capped Chickadee, 105; Boreal Chickadee, 46; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 9; Brown Creeper, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 18; Starling, 88; House Sparrow, 48; Evening Grosbeak, 101; Purple Finch, 3; Pine Grosbeak, 25; American Goldfinch, 12; White-winged Crossbill, 8; Slate-colored Junco, 49.

Totals: 25 species, about 671 individuals.

Observers: (13 party hours) Anthony Brennan, Harry Brennan, Jean Brennan, Kevin Brennan, Shannon Brennan, Fred Kenney (compiler), Margaret Kenney, Neil Kenney.

CANSO, Guysborough Co., 1 January 1967.

Common Loon, 5; (Common Snipe); Killdeer, 5; Great Black-backed Gull, 5; Herring Gull, 36; Dovekie, 6; Common Raven, 1; Common Crow, 5; (Boreal Chickadee); Starling, 44; Palm Warbler, 2; House Sparrow, 14; (Meadowlark).

Totals: 10 species, about 123 individuals.

Observers: (5 party hours) Eileen Armsworthy, June N. Jarvis (compiler).

COUNTRY HARBOUR, Guysborough Co., 30 December 1966.

Common Loon, 5; Canada Goose, 1; Black Duck, 150; Common Goldeneye, 25; Red-breasted Merganser, 23; unidentified ducks, 200; Bald Eagle, 2; Spruce Grouse, 10; Ruffed Grouse, 10; Gray Jay, 5; Blue Jay, 5; Common Raven, 5; Common Crow, 28; Black-capped Chickadee, 10; Boreal Chickadee, 5; Robin, 1; Starling, 50; House Sparrow, 25; Common Redpoll, 100; Slate-colored Junco, 25; (Snow Bunting).

Totals: 20 species identified, about 710 individuals.

Observers: (8 party hours) H.B. Hallett, R. Burns Hodgson (compiler), Alma C. Hodgson.

KINGSTON, Kings Co., 2 January 1967.

Downy Woodpecker, 2; Blue Jay, 1; Common Raven, 1; House Sparrow, 40.

Totals: 4 species, about 44 individuals.

Observer: (feeding station) J.R. Ferguson.

WOLFVILLE, Kings Co., 27 December 1966.

Canada Goose, 74; Mallard (locally introduced?), 12; Black Duck, 146; Common Goldeneye, 11; Common Merganser, 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 5; Red-tailed Hawk, 5; Rough-legged Hawk, 4; Bald Eagle, 2; Ruffed Grouse, 11; Gray Partridge, 17; Ring-necked Pheasant, 20; Common Snipe, 3; Great Black-backed Gull, 46; Herring Gull, 1787; Mourning Dove, 75; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Horned Lark, 101; Blue Jay, 9; Common Raven, 84; Common Crow, 356; Black-capped Chickadee, 58; Boreal Chickadee, 13; Mockingbird, 1; Robin, 7; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 57; Northern Shrike, 1; Starling, 2405; House Sparrow, 1355; Brown-headed Cowbird, 9; Evening Grosbeak, 2; Pine Grosbeak, 3; Pine Siskin, 2; American Goldfinch, 107; Savannah Sparrow, 6; Slate-colored Junco, 69; Tree Sparrow, 47; Chipping Sparrow, 1; Fox Sparrow, 3; Song Sparrow, 23; Snow Bunting, 1.

Totals: 43 species, about 6945 individuals.

Observers: (29 party hours) P. Austen-Smith, S. Bleakney, C. Chipman, C. Coldwell, R. Eagles, J.S. Erskine (compiler), R. Erskine, M. Forbes, R. Green, W. Neily, P. Smith, A. Townsend, F.R. Townsend, M. Townsend, R.E. Tufts, R. Waseem.

SHUBENACADIE, Hants Co., 1 January 1967.

Downy Woodpecker, 3; Blue Jay, 1; Common Raven, 3; Common Crow, 21; Black-capped Chickadee, 85; Boreal Chickadee, 40; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 14; Brown Creeper, 5; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 29; Starling, 200; House Sparrow, 32; (Purple Finch); American Goldfinch, 12; Slate-colored Junco, 17.

Totals: 13 species, about 467 individuals.

Observers: (5 party hours) Mary Geddes, Roslyn MacPhee (compiler).

HALIFAX (EAST), Halifax Co., 26 December, 1966.

Common Loon, 9; Red-necked Grebe, 4; Horned Grebe, 6; Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Great Blue Heron, 1; Canada Goose, 400; Black Duck, 625; Common Goldeneye, 4; Bufflehead, 51; Oldsquaw, 75; Common Eider, 6; White-winged Scoter, 19; Common Scoter, 4; Common Merganser, 7; Red-breasted Merganser, 95; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Bald Eagle, 2; Ruffed Grouse, 6; Killdeer, 2; Common Snipe, 3; Sanderling, 10; Iceland Gull, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 165; Herring Gull, 570; Black-headed Gull, 15; Bonaparte's Gull, 3; Dovekie, 10; Black Guillemot, 2; Mourning Dove, 4; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Gray Jay, 3; Blue Jay, 3; Common Raven, 43; Common Crow, 140; Black-capped Chickadee, 85; Boreal Chickadee, 16; Mockingbird, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 59; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1; Starling, 330; Myrtle Warbler, 17; Palm Warbler, 8; Yellow-breasted Chat, 1; House Sparrow, 240; Eastern Meadowlark, 4; Red-winged Blackbird, 2; Baltimore Oriole, 1; Rusty Blackbird, 2; Brown-headed Cowbird, 24; American Goldfinch, 90; Rufous-sided Towhee, 1; Savannah Sparrow, 18; Slate-colored Junco, 30; Tree Sparrow, 19; White-throated Sparrow, 7; Fox Sparrow, 2; Swamp Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 18; Lapland Longspur, 1; Snow Bunting, 6.

Totals: 65 species, about 3310 individuals.

Observers: (35 party hours) C.R.K. Allen, M.W. Ankatell-Jones, Patrick Ankatell-Jones, Hazel Carmichael, Molly Clayden, John Comer, Ethel Crathorne, B.K. Doane, Phyllis Dobson, Barbara Hinds, John K. Lorimer, L.B. Macpherson (compiler), Willett J. Mills, Wayne Neily, Betty Topple, Wesley Topple and Ernest Van der Zyl.

HALIFAX (WEST), Halifax Co., 1 January 1967.

Common Loon, 1; Red-necked Grebe, 1; Horned Grebe, 13; Eared Grebe, 1; Great Cormorant, 27; Great Blue Heron, 1; Black Duck, 10; (Common Goldeneye); Bufflehead, 2; Oldsquaw, 7; White-winged Scoter, 3; Common Scoter, 150; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Pigeon Hawk, 1;

Sparrow Hawk, 3; Ruffed Grouse, 6; Killdeer, 4; Purple Sandpiper, 16; Iceland Gull, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 450; Herring Gull, 2500; King-billed Gull, 10; Black-headed Gull, 9; Bonaparte's Gull, 4; Dovekie, 5; Black Guillemot, 3; Mourning Dove, 4; Barred Owl, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 1; (Red-headed Woodpecker); Hairy Woodpecker, 4; Downy Woodpecker, 11; Gray Jay, 3; Blue Jay, 59; Common Raven, 14; Common Crow, 87; Black-capped Chickadee, 175; Boreal Chickadee, 89; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 4; Brown Creeper, 1; Mockingbird, 7; Robin, 70; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 20; Starling, 3500; Myrtle Warbler, 5; Palm Warbler, 5; Yellowthroat, 1; House Sparrow, 1200; Red-winged Blackbird, 1; Common Grackle, 31; Brown-headed Cowbird, 34; (Dickcissel); Evening Grosbeak, 10; Pine Grosbeak, 1; Common Redpoll, 2; American Goldfinch, 230; Rufous-sided Towhee, 1; Savannah Sparrow, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 110; Tree Sparrow, 38; White-throated Sparrow, 14; Song Sparrow, 34.

Totals: 60 species, about 8999 individuals.

Observers: (42 party hours) C.R.K. Allen, A. Ankatell-Jones, M.W. Ankatell-Jones, Jack Braley, Mrs. Ernest Bell, Hazel Carmichael, Mrs. P.S. Christie, Molly Clayden, John Comer, Eric Cooke, Ethel Crathorne, Walter J. Chute, Brian Billard, E.K. Doane, Phyllis Dobson, A. Doull, Elizabeth Doull, Miss Alice Falkenham, Sylvia Fullerton, Mrs. Eric Grant, Dr. J.B. Hardie, V.P. Harrison, Mrs. Ralph Hebb, Mrs. R.H. Helpard, Phyllis Hemeon, Ward Hemeon, Barbara Hinds, Mrs. R.G.H. Jansen, J.E. Joudrey, Ian McLaren, L.B. Macpherson (compiler), Willett J. Mills, Mrs. E.A. Murray, Drina Smith, Mrs. R.L. Stanfield, Mrs. C.L. Tory, Donna Unwin, Alfred Wehrmaker, Richard Ward, Ernest Van der Zyl.

KINSAC, Halifax Co., 31 December 1966.

Ruffed Grouse, 2; Blue Jay, 1; (Common Raven); Common Crow, 7; Black-capped Chickadee, 22; Boreal Chickadee, 10; (Red-breasted Nuthatch); Golden-crowned Kinglet, 3; Starling, 35; (Pine Siskin); American Goldfinch, 3.

Totals: 8 species, about 83 individuals.

Observers: (7 party hours) Hazel Carmichael, Ethel Crathorne (compiler).

ANNAPOLIS ROYAL, Annapolis Co., 2 January 1967.

Ring-necked Pheasant, 6; Great Black-backed Gull, 85; Herring Gull, 64; Black-headed Gull, 41; Blue Jay, 1; Common Crow, 19; Black-capped Chickadee, 5; White-breasted Nuthatch, 4; Robin, 30; Cedar Waxwing, 15; Starling, 94; House Sparrow, 176; Common Grackle, 1; Brown-headed Cowbird, 3; Dickcissel, 1; American Goldfinch, 12; Slate-colored Junco, 3.

Totals: 17 species, about 617 individuals.

Observers: (6 feeder stations) Mr. and Mrs. E.C. Atkinson, Mrs. J.B. Gilliat, Mr. and Mrs. J.B.D. MacFarlane, Clair MacKenna, Mary MacKenna, Mrs. Allison Thomson, Joe B. Ternan (compiler), Mrs. Ternan, Mr. and Mrs. W.D. Wetmore.

BRIDGEWATER, Lunenburg Co., 28 December 1966.

Common Goldeneye, 6; Bufflehead, 1; unidentified ducks, 195; Ruffed Grouse, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 38; Herring Gull, 112; Ring-billed Gull, 10; Mourning Dove, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Common Crow, 6; Boreal Chickadee, 4; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 4; Starling, 19; House Sparrow, 75; Slate-colored Junco, 5.

Totals: 16 species, about 482 individuals.

Observer: (6 hours) Lawrent Buschman (compiler).

BRIER ISLAND, Digby Co., 31 December 1966.

Common Loon, 14; Red-necked Grebe, 3; Horned Grebe, 6; Great Cormorant, 125; Black Duck, 57; Common Goldeneye, 11; Oldsquaw, 60; Common Eider, 245; Common Merganser, 3; Red-breasted Merganser, 16; Rough-legged Hawk, 1; Killdeer, 6; Black-bellied Plover, 1; Ruddy Turnstone, 1; Dunlin, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 250; Herring Gull, 1000; Ring-billed Gull, 1; Black-headed Gull, 1; Bonaparte's Gull, 1; Black-legged Kittiwake, 1000 plus; Common Murre, 2; Dovekie, 500; Black Guillemot, 18; Horned Lark, 20; Common Raven, 15; Common Crow, 80; Boreal Chickadee, 2; Water Pipit, 1; Starling, 200; Lapland Longspur, 3; Snow Bunting, 22.

Totals: 32 species, about 4,315 individuals.

Observers: (33 party hours) M.W. Ankatell-Jones, Patrick Ankatell-Jones, C. Colwell, D. Wickerson Lent (compiler), John Lorimer.

KARSDALE, Annapolis Co., 31 December 1966.

(Common Loon); Horned Grebe, 1; Black Duck, 170; Bufflehead, 60; Red-breasted Merganser, 5; Great Black-backed Gull, 4; Herring Gull, 60; Thick-billed Murre, 3; (Great Horned Owl); (Barred Owl); Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 1; Common Raven, 1; Common Crow, 80; Black-capped Chickadee, 21; Boreal Chickadee, 13; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Brown Creeper, 1; Robin, 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 4; Starling, 75; House Sparrow, 70; (Pine Grosbeak); American Goldfinch, 4; unidentified small finches, 15; Slate-colored Junco, 2; (Tree Sparrow); (Song Sparrow).

Totals: 22 species, about 596 individuals.

Observer: (8 hours) Joseph W. Johnson. (compiler)

Owing to an unfortunate set of circumstances, several of the Summer Bird Counts were omitted from the last Newsletter (November 1966). With sincere apologies to those concerned, we herewith repair the omission.

KARSDALE, Annapolis Co., 5 June, 1966.

Ruffed Grouse, 6; Common Snipe, 1; Spotted Sandpiper, 1; Willet, 11; Great Black-backed Gull, 40; Herring Gull, 250; Black-billed Cuckoo, 1; Barred Owl, 2; Chimney Swift, 7; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 12; Pileated Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Traill's Flycatcher, 28; Eastern Wood Pewee, 6; Olive-sided Flycatcher, 2; Tree Swallow, 6; Bank Swallow, 1; Barn Swallow, 18; Cliff Swallow, 1; Blue Jay, 4; Common Raven, 1; Common Crow, 32; Black-capped Chickadee, 13; Boreal Chickadee, 9; Winter Wren, 1; Catbird, 7; Robin, 106; Swainson's Thrush, 4; Veery, 20; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 9; Cedar Waxwing, 2; Starling, 39; Solitary Vireo, 1; Red-eyed Vireo, 22; Black and White Warbler, 9; Nashville Warbler, 4; Parula Warbler, 6; Yellow Warbler, 23; Magnolia Warbler, 32; Myrtle Warbler, 1; Black-throated Green Warbler, 16; Chestnut-sided Warbler, 19; Ovenbird, 20; Yellowthroat, 20; Canada Warbler, 3; American Redstart, 19; House Sparrow, 8; Bobolink, 8; Common Grackle, 10; Brown-headed Cowbird, 3; Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 3; Purple Finch, 7; Pine Grosbeak, 2; American Goldfinch, 44; Savannah Sparrow, 3; Slate-colored Junco, 6; White-throated Sparrow, 14; Swamp Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 32.

Totals: 59 species, about 980 individuals.

Observer: Joseph Johnson (compiler)
(9½ hours)

CAPE PERCE, Cape Breton Co., 5 & 9 June, 1966.

Great Cormorant, 47; Marsh Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Common Snipe, 2; Spotted Sandpiper, 4; Great Black-backed Gull, 25; Herring Gull, 11; Black Guillemot, 21; Razor-billed Auk, 1; Kingfisher, 1; Flicker, 3; Alder Flycatcher, 1; Least Flycatcher, 3; Olive-sided Flycatcher, 1; Tree Swallow, 1; Bank Swallow, 6; Barn Swallow, 11; Gray Jay, 1; Blue Jay, 3; Common Raven, 1; Common Crow, 17; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; Brown Thrasher, 1; Robin, 5; Swainson's Thrush, 2; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 8; Starling, 13; Nashville Warbler, 1; Yellow Warbler, 4; Magnolia Warbler, 13; Myrtle Warbler, 2; Black-throated Green Warbler, 1; Yellowthroat, 5; Redstart, 4; Red-winged Blackbird, 14; Common Grackle, 12; Cowbird, 1; Purple Finch, 1; Pine Siskin, 3; Goldfinch, 1; Savannah Sparrow, 5; Slate-colored Junco, 13; White-throated Sparrow, 6; Swamp Sparrow, 3; Song Sparrow, 7.

Totals: 45 species, 289 individuals.

Observer: (5 hours) Ford Alward (compiler).

CAPE MORIEN, Cape Breton Co., 12 June, 1966.

Great Cormorant, 100; Marsh Hawk, 1; Ruffed Grouse, 1; Great Black-backed Gull, 22; Herring Gull, 15; Black Guillemot, 19; Bank Swallow, 12; Common Raven, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 2; Robin, 12; Swainson's Thrush, 1; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 5; Starling, 7; Nashville Warbler, 1; Yellow Warbler, 1; Magnolia Warbler, 6; Myrtle Warbler, 2; Redstart, 5; Pine Siskin, 1; Savannah Sparrow, 3; Slate-colored Junco, 7; White-throated Sparrow, 4; Lincoln Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 1.

Totals: 28 species, 228 individuals.

Observers: ($3\frac{1}{2}$ hours) Ford Alward (compiler), Roy Shephard.

HOMEVILLE, Cape Breton Co., 10 June, 1966.

Great Cormorant, 1; Great Blue Heron, 9; Green-winged Teal, 10; Red-breasted Merganser, 19; Spotted Sandpiper, 9; Willet, 8; Great Black-backed Gull, 21; Herring Gull, 76; Common Tern, 8; Kingfisher, 2; Flicker, 3; Alder Flycatcher, 2; Least Flycatcher, 3; Olive-sided Flycatcher, 4; Peewee, 1; Tree Swallow, 2; Bank Swallow, 17; Barn Swallow, 8; Blue Jay, 1; Common Raven, 2; Common Crow, 13; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; Robin, 4; Swainson's Thrush, 3; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 7; Red-eyed Vireo, 1; Nashville Warbler, 1; Yellow Warbler, 4; Magnolia Warbler, 8; Myrtle Warbler, 3; Black-throated Green Warbler, 2; Mourning Warbler, 1; Yellowthroat, 9; Redstart, 5; Bobolink, 3; Red-winged Blackbird, 12; Rusty Blackbird, 2; Common Grackle, 1; Purple Finch, 1; Goldfinch, 1; Savannah Sparrow, 4; Slate-colored Junco, 11; White-throated Sparrow, 9; Lincoln Sparrow, 2; Swamp Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 8.

Totals: 46 species, 323 individuals.

Observers: ($5\frac{1}{2}$ hours) Ford Alward (compiler), James Howe.

Again, through a misunderstanding, the Digby Field Trip report was omitted from the last Newsletter. This was held in Annapolis, with headquarters at the Joseph Ternans', where the entire group gathered for supper and to exchange reports. Thirty-five people took part, and 48 different species of shore and land birds were recorded. Included was a Yellow-breasted Chat, a most unusual summer bird in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Cardoza wrote that Miss Louise Daley and Mrs. Cardoza had recently released their bird boarders, which included a Mockingbird, 2 male Baltimore Orioles, a Yellow-breasted Chat, 10 Fox Sparrows and 4 White-throated Sparrows. The Orioles and Fox Sparrows have remained in the vicinity of their winter refuge and the Orioles have found mates. It would appear that the Orioles will be nesting in Digby.

Wickerson Lent of Westport on Brier Island reported that he had seen 2 Indigo Buntings, 3 Caspian Terns, 4 Snowy Egrets and an adult Red-headed Woodpecker.

NEWS FROM CAPE BRETON

Nearly a year and a half ago a group of enthusiastic birders got together for their first meeting in Sydney and made plans for Christmas Counts, field trips and future meetings. Since this first meeting on December 10, 1965, the activities of this group have figured largely in our publication, and association between it and the N.S.B.S. has grown to the point where it has been considered unofficially as the "Cape Breton Branch".

On January 30 of this year at a meeting in Sydney this union was legalized when the Cape Breton group voted to become an official Branch of our Society.

Members of the Executive of the Cape Breton Branch are:

President: Mr. Hedley Hopkins, 43 Central St., Sydney
Vice-President: Mr. Bob McNeil, 82 Martell St., Westmount
Secretary-Treasurer: Miss Mary Hay, 35 Pond Rd., Sydney Mines
Records Secretary: Rev. Ford Alward, 8 York St., Glace Bay
5 Additional Executive Members: John Lunn, Louisbourg
Murdoch Digout, St. Peters
Richard Gibbons, RR1, Marion Bridge
Mrs. Archie MacLean, 52 Catherine
St., Glace Bay
Miss Hilda Wright, 8 Dominion St.,
Glace Bay

The formation of local branches such as this are of tremendous value in furthering the aims of the Society as well as increasing the opportunities for members to take part in organized activities.

Let's hope that other parts of the province will follow this example.

The two mid-winter meetings announced in the Executive Committee's letter were held at the National Film Board Auditorium in Halifax, one at the end of January and one at the end of February. At the January meeting the films shown were: "Waterfowl, a Reserve in Danger", "Life in a Woodlot" and "Life in the High Arctic". In February, members saw a magnificent film from the library of the National Film Board entitled "The Valley of the Swans" and one hundred slides of native birds and mammals from the National Collection of Nature Photographs, with a commentary by Dr. Ian MacIaren.

At both meetings during intermission members had the opportunity to swap experiences, ask questions, make suggestions concerning feeders and field trips, and to report unusual sightings.

FIELD TRIP PROGRAMME SUMMER OF 1967

1. EASTERN SHORE BIRD SANCTUARY - JUNE 17.

MEETING PLACE: BELMONT INN, NECUM TEUCH, HALIFAX COUNTY

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

EQUIPMENT: LUNCH, WATER-PROOF CLOTHING, MONEY FOR
BOAT (\$3.00 - \$5.00).

2. CENTRAL LUNENBURG - JULY 15.

MEETING PLACE: CNR STATION, BRIDGEWATER

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

EQUIPMENT: LUNCH, FLY DOPE.

3. ANNAPOLIS ROYAL - AUGUST 12.

MEETING PLACE: FORT ANNE

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

EQUIPMENT: LUNCH.

4. NEW HARBOUR, GUYSBOROUGH COUNTY - SEPTEMBER 9.

5. THE HAWK, SHELBURNE COUNTY - SEPTEMBER 30.

DETAILS ON THE LAST TWO TRIPS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE
JUNE NEWSLETTER.

PLAN NOW FOR THE SUMMER COUNT

POST-BREEDING SHORE BIRD MIGRATION

by C. R. K. Allen

I do not think the data given below will tempt anyone to draw any conclusions as to the migratory paths of shore-birds through Nova Scotia. There were very few localities where observers were able to visit their areas regularly from the beginning to the end of the migratory period and our first picture is therefore rather a foggy one. However, we have made a beginning and we hope with succeeding seasons to bring it into sharper focus and eventually get a clear panorama of the flow of the plover, sandpipers and their kin, through the province from mid-summer to late fall.

Completed forms were received from ten observers and these, together with observations culled from letters to the Editor, form the basis of this report.

The localities from which observations were received are:

Head of Bay of Fundy

Dorchester Cape, N.B., Tantramar Dam (outskirts of Sackville, N.B.), Amherst Pt., Cumb. Co., Little Bass River, Col. Co., Evangeline Beach, Kings Co.

Northumberland Strait

Tidnish, Cumb. Co., Smiths Point, Cumb. Co., Bay Head, Col. Co., Pictou-Caribou, Pictou Co., Merigomish Big Island, Pictou Co., Lower South River, Antigonish Co.

South-eastern Cape Breton

Baddeck and Englishtown in Victoria Co., Lingan Beach, Glace Bay Sanctuary, Morien Beach and Louisbourg, all in Cape Breton Co., and Point Michaud, Richmond Co.

Atlantic Coast of N. S.

New Harbour, Guysborough Co., Necum Teuch, Martinique Beach, Lawrencetown, all in Halifax Co., Bayswater Beach, Hirtle's Beach, Gaff Point, all in Lunenburg Co., Cape Sable, Shelburne Co., Cook's Beach and Sunday Point, in Yarmouth Co.

The dates given are all for the season just past except for Pictou-Caribou (hereinafter to be known as just "Pictou"), and Martinique. The reports on these areas covered a 10-year period in the case of Pictou (Capt. Holdway) and a seven-year period for Martinique Beach (Capt. Morland).

Our sincere thanks to the following who sent in the completed forms from which this report is largely compiled: Rev. Ford Alward, Dr. A. J. Erskine, D. D. Findley, Marion Hilton, Barbara Hinds, Capt. Eric Holdway, Joseph Johnson, Capt. T.F.T. Morland, Wayne Neily, Dr. R.W. Tufts, and to all those who

through letters to the Editor supplied valuable information in this field.

Holdway states that the usual order of shore-bird arrival in the Pictou region, during the 10-year period 1957-66, is: Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Least Sandpiper, Semi-palmated Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Semi-palmated Sandpiper, arriving in July; and Black-bellied Plover and Sanderling showing up in August. Interesting omissions from this list are the White-rumped Sandpiper and Dowitcher, both of which figure largely in reports from other areas but which occurred too seldom in this locality to be included.

Morland's observations at Martinique Beach were necessarily sparser than those from the Pictou area and the order of arrival is therefore not so clear cut. He lists as earliest arrivals (July 27): Whimbrel, Semi-palmated Plover, Sanderling and Greater Yellowlegs. Next in order (Aug. 1): Ruddy Turnstone, Least Sandpiper, Semi-palmated Sandpiper and Black-bellied Plover. Again White-rumped Sandpiper were scarce, with only two observations during the 7-year period, and Dowitchers were completely absent.

In the summaries which follow, a number of species have been omitted as reports on these were too scanty to have any significance.

Semi-palmated Plover

Earliest reports were from the extreme ends of the Atlantic Coast of N.S.: July 12 at Pt. Michaud and July 19 at Sunday Pt. They had appeared at the head of the Bay of Fundy by July 22 when 400 were at Evangeline Beach. No shore-birds of any species were seen there on July 14.

Most, according to this year's observations, had departed by mid-October, the latest sightings being October 24 and 29 from eastern Cape Breton.

Golden Plover

Reported between August 8 and October 27, both these extremes being at Cape Sable. Other reports were from Gaff Pt. on August 20, head of the Bay of Fundy and Yarmouth Co. in early September, and from Louisbourg October 15.

Black-bellied Plover

Earliest reports were again from opposite ends of the province: Glace Bay Sanctuary on July 25 and Sunday Pt. July 27. Mid-November seemed to be the time of departure this year for all localities, although there were stragglers at Cape Sable in January, and at least one bird wintered at Three-Fathom Harbour until early March.

Ruddy Turnstone

Turnstones were seen at Sunday Pt. on July 27 and at Englishtown on the 28th. They were common at Evangeline Beach on the 31st. Apparently most had passed through by the end of September as there was only one record for October (Glance Bay) and one for November (Lawrencetown). The Lunn's, however, report a wintering flock at Louisbourg for the past three years.

Greater Yellowlegs

These showed up at Baddeck on July 12, Necum Teuch July 13, and Sunday Pt. July 19. Nearly all other localities reported earliest sightings during the latter half of July.

All areas give late October as departure time except Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., where they lingered at least to Nov. 6.

Lesser Yellowlegs

Early dates for these are July 10 at Glance Bay and July 12 at Pt. Michaud. The only sightings after Aug. 21 are at Morien on Sept. 19 and a very late one at Lawrencetown on Nov. 6.

Knot

First reports are from Evangeline Beach and Bay Head on July 31, Martinique Beach Aug. 1 and Dorchester Cape Aug. 13. Seen at Louisbourg and Pt. Michaud Oct. 2 and 13 respectively. Late stragglers were at Cape Sable on Jan. 14 and 23. No observer reported more than 2 or 3 at a time except Erskine who, during Aug., saw 10 at Dorchester Cape and 6 at Tidnish.

White-rumped Sandpiper

Appeared at the head of the Bay of Fundy and East. C.B. in early July: Dorchester Cape July 9, Pt. Michaud July 12, and Tantramar Dam July 13. Sunday Pt. was not far behind with a first sighting on July 19. It is interesting how often the extreme south-western end of the province reports first occurrences, almost or quite as early as the central and north-eastern areas. There are few reports after Sept. but Erskine observed a late movement in Eastern C.B. on Oct. 14 including 110 birds at Pt. Michaud and a very late bird was at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. on Nov. 13.

Least Sandpiper

Appeared in early July, first report being from Dorchester Cape on the 9th, next from Pt. Michaud on the 12th, and from Tantramar Dam on the 13th. Sunday Pt. was as usual a close runner up with birds appearing first on July 19. All areas reporting are unanimous in giving late Sept. as departure time for this species.

Dunlin

Reports are scattered and scanty but all fall between Sept. 12 and Nov. 5. Erskine states the main movement at Dorchester Cape was about Oct. 3.

Dowitcher

Earliest date is July 6 at Tantramar Dam followed by July 12 at Pt. Michaud and July 13 at Necum Teuch. In other years they have been seen as early as July 10 near Sunday Pt. The last reported sighting for this year was at Tantramar Dam on Sept. 20. The Smiths reported a Dowitcher at Cape Sable on June 24, but whether this was a late spring migrant or an early south-bound bird is anybody's guess.

Semi-palmated Sandpiper

This is one bird whose arrival at a particular spot is pin-pointed. Neily reports none on July 14 at Evangeline Beach while Tufts saw 10-12 there on July 15. They were already at Sunday Pt. on July 19 and appeared on reports from Little Bass River, Glace Bay Sanctuary, Bayswater, and Smith Point, at dates later in July, although they may have been at these points earlier. There were over 1000 at Evangeline Beach by July 22 and over 50,000 the next day. On Aug. 13 there were still 30,000 farther up the bay at Dorchester Cape. Neily says regarding the southward course of this species: "The route seems fairly well defined and must handle a large portion of the northern breeders which move down along the N.B. coast, cross the peninsula north of Baie Verte, cut across to Cumberland Basin, follow along the Chignecto coast to Advocate Peninsula, and possible Cap d'Or, whence they cross the Minas Channel and continue along the Bay of Fundy coast of Kings, Annapolis and Digby, and presumably depart via Brier Island."

There are large concentrations of semi-palmated sandpipers on the flats in Yarmouth Harbour and as far south as Pinckneys Pt., but whether these birds dip south-west from Digby Neck or come down along the Atlantic coast of N. S. is not yet known. We do not know either what portion of this great movement follows the north shore of the Bay of Fundy and can only hope for help from birders in the New Brunswick counties bordering the Bay on this point.

According to records for this year, this species had left north-eastern and central N. S. by Oct. 25, but we have no records of departure dates for the western districts.

Sanderling

These are relative laggards in the southward movement according to reports received. There were early stragglers at Bayswater on July 28 and at Little Bass River and Lawrencetown on July 30 and 31, but the main movement seems to have been in late August and early September. Erskine reports 65 at Dorchester Cape on Oct. 3, 90 at Pt. Michaud and 105 at Glace Bay Sanctuary

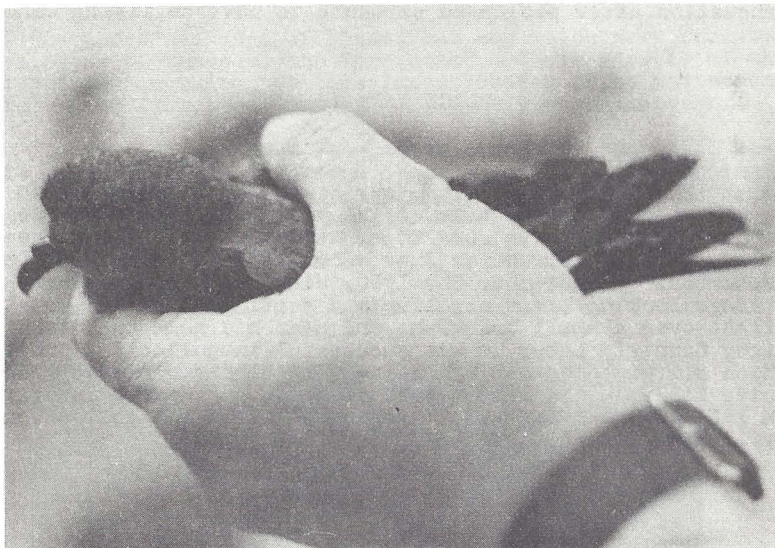
on Oct. 14. On Oct. 22 the Smiths report 2000 at Cape Sable. Sightings fall off sharply after this date, the latest being Nov. 27 at Lawrencetown, although a few of this species do pass the winter in N. S. (See Birds of N.S. Winter 1966-67, in this issue.)

The foregoing summaries barely begin to present a picture of the shore-bird movement in the province. What we need, badly, is observers who can visit a particular area at least once a week, from the first of July to about the end of November.

If such a programme is too much of a bite for one person to chew, it could be made a group effort, involving two or more birders, so that at least one of the team could make the scheduled visit each week during the season.

We need systematic reports of this kind from all the coastal areas - Northumberland St., both shores of Cape Breton, and the Bay of Fundy and Atlantic coasts if we are going to produce anything like a coherent picture of this migratory movement.

Forms will be sent during the summer to members living in these areas, and we hope that you will co-operate in this survey if at all possible.



Petrel

Can Anyone Identify This Petrel?

R. M. McMullin

THE WHISTLING SWAN

by R. W. Tufts

The Whistling Swan, the largest of North American water-fowl which occurs along the Atlantic coast is rarely seen in Nova Scotia in spite of the fact that numbers of them regularly, during migration, pass high overhead well beyond the range of human vision. The few available records, chiefly fall ones, are of small flocks the size of which suggest family groups. This may well be true for the young-of-the-year are known to stay with the parents for a year or longer.

According to my personal records, 1944 was the most recent occurrence of a Whistling Swan in Nova Scotia and during the past 100 years or more I have recorded the species here less than a dozen times.

On November 9, 1966, four were seen under favourable conditions by Wickerson Lent on a small fresh-water pond near Westport, Digby County. They are said to have lingered thereabout for several days.

Because Nova Scotia is not on their itinerary as a stopping-off place during migration, the most tenable theory by way of explaining why these large birds in their striking white plumage do occur here irregularly is that they have been forced down from exhaustion after prolonged exposure to adverse flying conditions.

BLACK TERN IN WINTER

by R. W. Tufts

The Black Tern, C. n. surinamensis, is an uncommon visitor to Nova Scotia at any time of the year. Of the seven records of occurrence which have come to my attention prior to the date of this writing, one was for June, four for August and two for September. On December 28, 1966, Wickerson Lent observed two strange looking birds circling and darting in highly erratic flight over a small brackish pond near his home on Brier Island, Digby County. Later he was successful in collecting one of them which proved to be a Black Tern. The bird's winter plumage, much white below, was a factor which tended to make its identification in life more confusing. The specimen is in the collection of Cyril Coldwell at Gaspereau, Kings Co.

EARLY RETURN TO NEST SITE

by R. W. Tufts

It will be remembered by some of our members that late in 1964, Cyril Coldwell constructed an ingenious basket-type nest in a large hemlock in the hope of attracting a pair of Great Horned

Owls, B. v. virginianus, to his woodlot on Gaspereau Mountain, Kings County. His success in this unique venture was reported in the November 1965 issue of the NEWSLETTER. During the night of January 23-24, 1967, several inches of snow fell in Kings County. On the 24th., our enthusiast, while working in his woodlot in the vicinity of the nest, went to the tree to investigate. To his surprise he found that one or both of the owls had been in the nest within a few hours. This was evidenced by the disturbed surface of the newly-fallen snow in the nest as well as by the droppings which he noted in the snow at the base of the tree. This is strong indication that the pair has adopted this site for the coming nesting season, though it is quite likely that no eggs will be laid before the last of February or early in March.

Cyril Coldwell, mentioned in the above article, is not only a specialist in Great Horned Owls but also in Ravens. During the past two years he has caught in a trap of his own devising, banded and released approximately 700 individuals of this species. (See illustration.)

According to Mr. Coldwell, the experience of being trapped and banded had no lasting effect on the birds for many were recaptured shortly after banding, some re-entering the trap as often as three times within a week.

No record was kept of these, but any which were recaptured after a lapse of three months were noted. There were 14 of these "re-trappings" in which the time lapse between first and second capture varied from three months to slightly over one year.

In addition to these recaptured birds, Mr. Coldwell has had reports on 9 other birds through the banding office in Wadlington, D.C. An interesting feature of these is that all returns came from within a 60-mile radius of the trap in Gaspereau, although some were reported as late as a year and four months after the banding date and thus allowed ample time for the birds to travel to much more distant parts. This, together with the fact that these returns were made in all seasons, may indicate that our Ravens are quite local in their habits.



Raven Banding Trap

C. Coldwell

BIRDS IN NOVA SCOTIA - WINTER 1966-67.

COMMON LOONS appeared less frequently than usual in reports this winter but RED-THROATED LOONS, RED-NECKED and HORNED GREBES were in normal numbers. A late report of a FIED-BILLED GREBE was one seen at Louisbourg on Nov. 5 (Lunns). A sightrecord of an RARED GREBE, the first such record for Nova Scotia, was made at Sambro, Hfx. Co., on Jan. 1 during the Halifax West Christmas Count. This bird was studied at close range but was not collected so that it will never be known whether it was one of the European or Western North American sub-species (N.S.B.S. party).

As usual, reports on oceanic birds are scanty: 4 FULMAR were seen on Sambro Banks on March 7 and 8, and a lone GANNET 150 miles south-east of Halifax on March 3 (Brown).

CATTLE EGRETS were reported from two localities in western Nova Scotia on consecutive days, perhaps carried here by the same storm. One was at Yarmouth on Nov. 10 (Higby) and one in Shelburne Co. Nov. 11 (Johnson). GREAT BLUE HERONS lingered at Cole Harbor, Bras d'Or and Hillaton, Kings Co. until December (Burchell, Eaton, Neily), and at Barrington until early January (Johnson). Another report of a REDDISH EGRET comes from the Eastern Shore (vide April '66 Newsletter), this time of an immature in white plumage at Hazel Hill, Guys. Co. (Armsworthy and Jarvis). The observers mentioned the flesh colored base of bill and the birds drunken shuffle when feeding. Ten BRANT were seen at Margaretsville on Mar. 11 (Neily) and appeared in "100's" at Brier Island on Mar. 16 (Lent).

A flock of MALLARD from Blandford was released locally, and at least 9 of these have survived the winter. They have now become reasonably wild and have abandoned their habit of quacking loudly and swimming over to inspect passers-by. One female, not necessarily of this batch, turned up at a bird-feeder in Sheffield Mills, where, at fifteen below zero, it was eating the grain that had fallen onto the snow. BLACK DUCK are reported from many areas but in small numbers compared with other years. A lone PINTAIL record is from Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. Feb. 12 (Cooke). GREATER SCAUP began their spring build-up at Three-Fathom Harbor, Hfx. Co. in mid-February, a week later than in 1966 (Allen). A BARROWS GOLDENEYE was observed at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. on Feb. 25 (Cooke) and large flocks of BUFFLEHEAD were seen at Guysborough Intervale on Jan. 1, Smith's Cove Feb. 12, and Chezsetcook late Feb. (Allen, Armsworthy, Raymond).

Neily reports that large numbers of moderately to badly oiled ducks were seen in the Bay of Fundy during March. Chiefly affected were OLDSQUAWS, COMMON EIDERS, the three species of SCOTER and RED-BREADED MERGANSERS. WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS were seen most often in this condition and being the commonest duck according to Neily, in the King's Co. area of the Bay, were probably the hardest hit. A number of oiled birds were captured and cleaned and a few of these recovered.

Three RUDDY DUCKS were seen by a N.S.B.S. field party at McNab's Island, Hfx. Co., on Nov. 11, and another on Nov. 20; a lone male was at Port Morien on Nov. 12 (Alward). Neily also reports seeing one of this species at Upper Canard on Nov. 6 and two at the same locality on Nov. 8. Ruddy Ducks, normally rare in Nova Scotia, have appeared in fair numbers several times since observers began to report their sightings about 10 years ago.

GOSHAWKS, never common, were reported from three localities: Maitland, Hants Co., Nov. 5; Baddeck in Feb.; and Wilmot Feb. 8 (Macpherson, MacDonald, Hawkins). The Baddeck bird was found in a rabbit snare. RED-TAILED HAWKS reported as scarce last winter, seemed commoner than usual, with 5 sightings in Colchester and Kings Counties (Neily), 1 in Halifax City throughout the winter (Doull), 1 in Yarmouth Jan. 1 (Nickerson) and 1 in Cole Harbor - Chezzetcook in Feb. and March. (Cooke and Hinds). ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS which were reported as plentiful on Brier Island in the winter of '66 produced only one (questionable) sighting there this winter (Lents). They were, however, commoner than usual in Kings Co. (Neily), and 'singles' were also seen at Carroll's Corner, Seabright, and McNab's Island (Neily, Allen, N.S.B.S. party). BALD EAGLE sightings were numerous and widely distributed from Barrington to Bras d'Or. Neily reports that the 3 Kings Co. eagles have now been reduced to 2 by Sunday duck hunters. There was a MARSH HAWK at McNab's Island on Nov. 20 (N.S.B.S. party), and another may have wintered near Sable Island as one was seen there on four occasions during Jan. and Feb. (Smith and Cunningham). PIGEON HAWKS as usual moved into the villages and towns for the winter and were reported in normal numbers from Yarmouth to Inverness Counties. Not a single SPARROW HAWK has been reported this winter except for those on the Christmas Counts.

RUFFED GROUSE were very scarce, at least in central N. S. during the winter, having been decimated by an epidemic in early autumn. J. S. Erskine reports from Wolfville that "GREY PARTRIDGES" survived the winter in almost undiminished coveys. As food must have been difficult to find, this suggests that predation is their principal problem, now that PHEASANTS have disappeared as competitors. Neily reports a pair of Grey Partridge at Shubenacadie on Mar. 8 and remarks that this is an unusually early date for pairing in this species. Ring-necked pheasant reports were scanty and mostly of ones or twos, although 13 were seen at Brooklyn, Hants Co. on Jan. 14 (Dobson).

A YELLOW RAIL caught by a cat at Guysborough Intervale Dec. 7 was carefully examined and positively identified (Armsworthy and Jarvis).

This could well be called the winter of the KILLDEER, for these usually rare plover have been turning up in numbers at many places, and holding their own in spite of severe weather. Sightings of singles, twos and threes were made at Cape Sable, Brier Island, Glen Margaret, McNab's Island, Three-Fathom Harbor, Bass River, Lingan and Louisbourg. The greatest number (25) was at Brier Island on Dec. 26, and the latest report was from Glen Margaret, Hfx. Co., Feb. 11 (Allen, Alward, Cooke, Hemeon, Hinds, Lent, Lunn, Smith). Two BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER were seen at Three-

Fathom Harbor Jan. 21, and 1 was still there Feb. 12 (Cooks). Eight of this species were observed at Cape Sable on Jan. 14 and again on Jan. 23 (Smiths). RUDDY TURNSTONES are apparently wintering at Louisbourg for at least the third consecutive year, as 13 were seen Jan. 8 and 17 on Jan. 15 (Lunns).

A WOODCOCK was still alive at Cape Sable Island on Jan. 19 (Johnson) and there were the usual reports of COMMON SNIBE wintering at warm springs and open drains. A very late SOLITARY SAND-PIPER was still at Cole Harbor on Nov. 8, and a rather late GREATER YELLOWLEGS at the same place on Nov. 3 (Eaton). Three KNOT were seen at Cape Sable on Jan. 10 and Jan. 14 (Cunningham) while 2 DUNLIN at Glace Bay Sanctuary on Feb. 3 is perhaps the most unusually late shore bird record for the year.

A few SANDERLINGS normally pass the winter in N. S. and 2 were seen this year at Eastern Passage, Hfx. Co. on Jan. 27 (Doull and Unwin) and again on Feb. 12 (Carmichael and Neily); 6 were also at Louisbourg on Jan. 8 (Lunns).

A GLAUCOUS GULL is reported from Hartlen's Point, Hfx. Co. Jan. 27 (Doulls and Unwin) and 2 at Louisbourg on Jan. 8 (Lunns). The other "white-winged gulls" were reported frequently but not in as great numbers as last year. BLACK-HEADED GULLS were at their usual wintering places in Halifax Harbor and Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., and 32 were seen in Glace Bay Sanctuary Dec. 2 (Alward). Four were also at Louisbourg on Jan. 8 (Lunns). Three BONAPARTE'S GULLS were reported from Louisbourg Dec. 15, and 1, Jan. 14 (Lunns).

COMMON MURRES, very rare in inshore waters, appeared at Port George, Anna. Co., Feb. 28, at Morden and Harborville, Kings Co. on March 5 and 8, single birds in all cases. The Port George bird was dead from oil and the Harborville bird, a first record for Kings Co. was also badly oiled. This bird and a THICK-BILLED MURRE in the same condition were cleaned and are now being cared for by Eric and Jocelyn Mullen (Neily and Van Nostrand). An immature RAZORBILL was found dead at Hall's Harbor, so badly oiled that it could not be identified until some oil was removed from head and beak.

On the Atlantic coast of N. S. Thick-billed Murres have been commoner than usual during the winter, and DOVEKIES more plentiful than for many years; 40 plus were reported from Louisbourg Dec. 26 and 20 on Jan. 14 (Lunns); 10 were at Sand Cove, Hfx. Co., Jan. 2 (Doane) and the Lents reported "100's" at Brier Island on Dec. 26.

MOURNING DOVES which have been increasing in recent years reached a new high this early winter. Erskine reported them as abundant in the Wolfville region and daily counts of over a dozen were commonplace in many areas. Most of these disappeared by January but reports of several late survivors are: 1 near Kelly Lake Airport Jan. 15 (MacCallum), a flock at Port Maitland Feb. 1 (Delaney), 2 at Armdale Mar. 18 (C.A. Legg). Harold Murch of Halifax is keeping a Mourning Dove alive at his feeder as his personal Centennial Project. At last report the bird was doing well.

SNOWY OWLS were generally absent this winter but 2 were seen in the Grand Pré area, one in Nov. and the other on Mar. 12 (Neily) 1 at Cape Sable Dec. 16 (Smiths) and 1 at Bass River Mar. 5 (Hemeons). A SHORT-EARED OWL was at Lawrencetown Feb. 12 (Fullerton) and a SAW-WHET OWL was struck by a car at Bras d'Or Nov. 20 (Burchell).

There are numerous reports of wintering BELTED KINGFISHERS, from both ends and the centre of the province. The latest of these are: 1 at Baddeck Jan. 20 (MacDonald), 1 at Villagedale, Shel. Co., also Jan. 20 (Richardson), 1 at French Village Mar. 5 (Hinds) and 1 which spent the winter in Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., last seen Mar. 19 (Cooke).

Several observers in widely separated areas mention the scarcity of DOWNY and HAIRY WOODPECKERS during the winter (Holdway, Mingo, H.F. Tufts, Whitehead, Lewis), and this is borne out by the small number of reports received: 3 only for Downy Woodpeckers at Dartmouth, Kingston and Smith's Cove (McMullen, Ferguson and Raymond) and no reports at all for Hairys. One BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER was seen at South Milford, Anna. Co. (no date) by Granville Nickerson, the only report of this species for the winter.

Six or seven WESTERN KINGBIRDS were identified, and watched Oct. 23 - Nov. 3, at Canso (Jarvis) and these or others seen as follows: 3, Nov. 13, Point Pleasant Park, Halifax (MacLaren), 1, Nov. 13, Clam Point, Shel. Co. (Johnson), 1, Nov. 29, Hazel Hill (Armsworthy) and 1, Nov. 20, at Porter's Lake, Hfx. Co. (Hemeons). A GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER was seen Nov. 9, also at Hazel Hill (Armsworthy). The HORNEED LARK has been reported to be present in its usual habitat in good numbers, although Erskine writes that they were not numerous in the Wolfville area until after the February blizzards.

A BARN SWALLOW was seen Nov. 9-12 at Wilmot, Anna. Co. (Hawkins). This very late record is of interest as Tufts says all previous November records are for the southwestern shore of the province.

The GRAY JAY was present in its usual haunts in undiminished numbers, but the BLUE JAY for some reason has been reported as very scarce in the southern end of the province. In Halifax - Haunts these Jays have been as numerous as usual, both at feeders and in the woods, invariably seen on field trips, up to 20 in a day (Allen). The COMMON RAVEN and the COMMON CROW both have received mention as being plentiful, "more Ravens this winter than any other", Canso (Jarvis), and "an unusually large roost of 500 - 1000 Crows on Bear Island, in the Annapolis Basin", the birds seen flying in, night after night from Smith's Cove (Raymond).

The BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE was plentiful at feeders and in the woods, according to reports received, and the BOREAL CHICKADEE appeared on more and more feeder reports. This probably does not indicate more of this species, just increasing boldness. Both the WHITE-BREASTED and RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH appeared at feeders,

but were scarce. The BROWN CREEPER and the WINTER WREN were seen in their usual, rather scanty numbers. A LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN was identified Nov. 19, at Seaforth, Hfx. Co. (Cooke).

The MOCKINGBIRD, another fruit eater, has done well in Nova Scotia throughout this bitter winter, being able to feed high above the snowbanks. Reports of one to four birds each come from Yarmouth Co. (Higby, Delaney), Shelburne Co. (Johnson, Quinlan and Robart in the Shelburne Coastguard), Queens Co. (Smith), Digby Co. (Raymond, Lents), Kings Co. (Lamoreux, Webster, Neily), Annapolis Co. (Bowlby, Slauenwhite), Halifax City and Co. (Hemeons, Crathorne, Coffill, Stanfield, Mills, Allen), and 1 each at Guysborough Co. (Armsworthy) and Cape Breton Co. (Lunns).

The ROBIN wintered here in unusually large numbers and general distribution. Although usually reported in two's or three's, there was a flock of 30+ at Annapolis (Atkinson, McFarlanes), a similar one at Clementsport (Ternan), and the big flock of 70 in Halifax County seen on the Christmas Count. Up to 20 of these (probably) have been seen from time to time in and around Halifax, into March. The only possible claimant to true spring arrival is 1, Mar. 12, at Cape Sable (Smiths), where none was seen since October.

Our regular winter species, the GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, started out well, but reports indicate that its numbers dwindled during February, even at feeders. The RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET was slow to leave last fall, being reported in November from Cape Sable (Smiths), "a large number" at Fall River, Hfx. Co. (Horohin); and one or two birds seen at McNab's Island in December by N.S.B.S. parties. Two very late WATER PIPITS were seen on Feb. 4, at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (Cooke). A pair of BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS spent the winter in the Gaspereau Valley "trying to live on Mountain Ash berries beside a farmhouse, in spite of the indignation of a pair of possessive robins" (J.S. Erskine). One of the unusual features of the season was the presence of several flocks of CEDAR WAXWINGS, 15, Nov. 24, Bridgewater (Lewis), 2, Jan. 26, Lawrencetown, Anna. Co. (Slauenwhite), 12, early Jan. into Feb., Annapolis Royal (Atkinsons, McFarlane), and 16, metropolitan Halifax, Mar. 23 (Dobson). Dr. Harrison Lewis has suggested that the exceptionally heavy crop of Mountain Ash berries has been responsible for the presence and survival of these birds. He adds that during his travels in the lower St. Lawrence region and Anticosti Island, he observed a similarly heavy crop of these berries, which may have been a reason for the delay in the arrival of Evening Grosbeaks. One NORTHERN SHRIKE only was seen, Mar. 5, at Peggy's Cove (Hinds), contrasting with our thirteen reports of last winter. The ubiquitous STARLING maintains its numbers, and takes its toll at every feeder. Starlings were still ranging the countryside as late as Dec. 28, when 300 were seen in an orchard in Kings Co. (Neily), but by Jan. and Feb. the same reporter notes that they had completely disappeared from the open spaces on McNab's Island. One very curious report was of around 10 birds, seen on Mar. 8, from a ship 150 miles off Nova Scotia (Brown). We can scarcely claim these birds, even if we wanted to, but the presence of Starlings this far out at sea leads one to the faint hope that they may be adopting the tactics of lemmings.

As usual, a few MYRTLE and PALM WARBLERS stayed the winter, the Myrtles in good numbers in Yarmouth and Shelburne Counties (Sollows, Johnson, Shelburne Coastguard), and Queen's Co. (Tufts). A few Myrtles were seen around the Cole Harbor - Lawrencetown area in December and January (Eaton, Anketell-Jones, Allen, Unwin, Doull). The Palms were fewer; 3, Nov. 26 and 1, Nov. 28, at Louisbourt (Lunn), 2, Jan. 29, Hazel Hill (Armstrong), 1, Dec. 3, 1, Dec. 7 and 1, Jan. 29, Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (Allen, Hinds). A very late OVENBIRD was caught and released from the engine room, at Cape Sable Light, Nov. 5 (Smiths). The YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT has been widely reported, one bird each seen in November and December at feeders in Yarmouth (Higby, Sollows), Liverpool (White), Cole Harbor (Neily), Bedford (Christie), Halifax (Mills, Dobson, Allen), and a very surprising report of a Chat picked up on Springvale Ave., Halifax, with an injured wing, but still alive, Feb. 1, (Hemeons). For the record we must include one very late WILSON'S WARBLER seen Nov. 27, at Brass Hill, Shel. Co. (Johnson).

The first MEADOWLARK was reported Oct. 22, at Fall River, Hfx. Co. (Horobin), followed by 3 on Oct. 24-26, Cape Sable, Shel. Co. Three were seen Nov. 5 at Hazel Hill, Guys. Co., Nov. 5 and 1 there Dec. 30, 1 at Jeddore, Hfx. Co. (Sutton), 20, Jan. 7, at Crowell's, Shel. Co. (Johnson), 1, Jan. 7, at Marion Bridge, Cape Breton Co. (Lunn), 12, Jan. 7, at Crowell's (Johnson), 1, Jan. 27, at Eastern Passage, Hfx. Co. (Doull, Unwin), 2, Feb. 12, Conrad's Beach, Hfx. Co., reported as there all winter (Coke), and 1, Mar. 12, at Glen Margaret, Hfx. Co., feeding on the rocky shore (Hinds). Very few REDWINGED BLACKBIRDS wintered here, only 5 reports were received, all from the southern part of the province, four of single birds, one of a small flock, at Gaspereau River, Kings Co. (Eagles, Erskine). Similarly, very few BALTIMORE ORIOLES seem to have lingered, 13 birds from seven reports of orioles, at feeders in November and December, none of which appeared later than Jan. 3. The COMMON GRACKLE, present 1000 strong in Yarmouth, Nov. 4 (Higby) dwindled to a "largish flock" in Dartmouth Dec. 6 (McMullen), to 80, Jan. 29, Barrington (Johnson), down to 1, Feb. 23, in Halifax Co. (Allen). The BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD "arrived in numbers" about Dec. 26 at Yarmouth (Higby), and has been plentiful all winter, particularly at feeders, with flocks counted there up to 50-75 birds, from places as far apart as Liverpool (White) and Halifax (Chute). They are reported to have disappeared from the Halifax area in March (Doulls, Unwin).

At least three DICKCISSELS stayed behind this fall, 1, Nov. 7-20, Glace Bay (Alward), 1, Jan. 7, Louisbourg (Lunn), and 1, Dec. to Jan. 27, Annapolis (Atkinson). EVENING GROSBEAKS appeared briefly in November (Topples, L. Cook) and then not until the middle of January, when they became generally distributed, although not in their usual numbers of recent years. Reports of scarcity came from Yarmouth (Stubbert, Higby), Annapolis (Hawkins, Whitehead) and Amherst (Erskine), but by February flocks of 30-100 had built up in Kentville (Lamoueau), Middleton (Bowlby), Halifax and Bedford (Robertson, Doull, Chute, Christie), and Pictou (Holdway). This was not a finch winter on the whole, which was unexpected, in view of the excellent cone crop. Only

one record of the PURPLE FINCH is at hand, of 1, Feb. 27, and 5, Feb. 28, at a feeder in Rockingham, Hfx. Co. (Robertson). Mrs. Robertson had quite a drain on her feeder, latterly, with 70 Evening Grosbeaks by day, and 3 flying squirrels by night, but felt she got her money's worth. PINE GROSBEEK were reported regular in Hants Co. (Macpherson), but scarce in Shelburne Co. (Johnson), Kings Co. (Neily) and Annapolis Co. (Whitehead), but a flock of 7 was near Milton, Queen's Co., Dec. 11 (Wentzell), and another of 18, Feb. 2, at Pictou (Holdway). In Halifax South one rather shy Pine Grosbeak ventured up to a feeder several times during the winter (Stanfield).

The COMMON REDPOLL was seen in small flocks of 5-10 in January at Brier Island (Lents), at Granite Village, Shel. Co. (Allen, "Coastguard"), and Kings Co., Feb. 15 (Neily). The PINE SISKIN was seen in small flocks (2-6) from Nov. to Mar. in Hants Co. (Allen), reported as "regular" in Wolfville (Mrs. Skine) and 4 were seen on Mar. 8, Col. Co. (Neily). The AMERICAN GOLDFINCH was here in good numbers, generally, the largest flocks mentioned being 40, McNab's Island, Hfx. Co. (N.S.B.S.) and 250 at Cole Harbor (Eaton). Only one report of the WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL has come in, of "a few" on Brier Island, during January (Lents).

Four RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE reports are as follows: 1, Nov. 10 Hfx. Co. (Huxtable, Mills), 1, Dec. 8, Hantsport (Neily), 1, Dec. 26, Dartmouth (Neily), and 1, Mar. 21, Dartmouth (Bishop). A SEASIDE SPARROW was identified, Jan. 29, at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., by Sylvia Fullerton and others of the N.S.B.S. This is only the second report of this bird for Nova Scotia, but it was closely observed for some time (30 min. at 3 yards) as it fed in snowy grass, and the field marks were unmistakable. Flocks of the SLATE-COLORED JUNCO have been commonly observed throughout the winter (not only at feeders), and were still in good numbers in February and March. The same can be said for the TREE SPARROW, reported from most counties in the province, from late November up to the time of writing. A CHIPPING SPARROW was seen at Hazel Hill, Guys. Co., Dec. 6 (Armsworthy) and another on the Wolfville Christmas Count (Tufts). Small numbers of the WHITE-THROATED SPARROW stayed the winter, as usual, mostly seen in twos and threes, at feeders. We received only four reports of the FOX SPARROW: 1, Jan. 14, Louisbourg (Lunns), 1, Feb. 23 and 24, Yarmouth (Nickerson), 1, throughout the winter, at a feeder, Hammond's Plains Road, Hfx. Co. (Allen), and 2 or 3 throughout the winter at a feeder in Halifax City (Stanfield). Most feeder reports mentioned the SONG SPARROW, 2 or 3, as usual, some making an attempt at song on sunny days in February. The LAPLAND LONGSPUR was seen in the Cole Harbor area, where a few seem to winter each year, 2 to 8 seen on different occasions in March (Hinds, Cooke, Fullerton). The most reported bird this winter has been, appropriately, the SNOW BUNTING. Distribution was general, and flocks sizable, e.g. 20, Yarmouth, (Crosby), 50-200, Digby (Raymond), 2-200+, Annapolis (Whitehead, Bowlby, Hawkins), 25-125, Kings (Lamoreau, Neily), 5-30, Pictou (Holdway, Otto), 20-30, Halifax (Carmichael, Cooke, Coffill, Neily), and 11 down at Cape Sable (Smiths, Johnson). Even the Buntings have been glad to patronize feeders this winter, and have rewarded their hosts recently by appearing in fresh spring plumage. To date (Easter), this is better than the rest of us have been able to do.

QUIZ

- Which of these grebes is called "chicken-billed"?
(a) Horned (c) Red-necked
(b) Pied-billed (d) Western
- Which of our visiting white herons has black legs and yellow feet?
(a) Little Blue (c) Snowy Egret
(b) Common Egret (d) Cattle Egret
- The term "skunk head" is applied to the
(a) Oldsquaw (c) Bufflehead
(b) Eider (d) Surf Scoter
- The best way to distinguish a Pigeon Hawk from a Sparrow Hawk is
(a) size (c) color of back
(b) color of legs (d) habitat
- A shore bird which is close to extinction is the
(a) Buff-breasted Sandpiper (c) Golden Plover
(b) Whimbrel (d) Eskimo Curlew
- A sandpiper which winters regularly in N.S. is the
(a) Spotted Sandpiper (c) Purple Sandpiper
(b) Dowitcher (d) Knot
- A shore bird with an upturned bill is the
(a) Dowitcher (c) Hudsonian Curlew
(b) Hudsonian Godwit (d) Willet
- The legs of Herring Gulls are
(a) flesh colored (c) yellow
(b) black (d) red
- A tern which breeds in North America and winters in the Old World is the
(a) Roseate Tern (c) Common Tern
(b) Arctic Tern (d) Caspian Tern
- Which of the following birds nest in an underground burrow?
(a) Cliff Swallow (c) Kingfisher
(b) Ground Dove (d) Chimney Swift
- Which woodpecker can most accurately be termed a ground-feeding bird?
(a) Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (c) Downy Woodpecker
(b) Black-backed Three-toed (d) Flicker
Woodpecker
- The Kingbird is most closely related to the
(a) Northern Shrike (c) Olive-sided Flycatcher
(b) Catbird (d) Red-eyed Vireo
- "Quick, three beers" is a rough paraphrase of the song of the
(a) Black-capped Chickadee (c) Olive-sided Flycatcher
(b) Wood Pewee (d) Black-throated Green Warbler

14. Which of these swallows normally arrives first in the spring?
 (a) Barn (c) Tree
 (b) Bank (d) Cliff
15. The best place to look for Boreal Chickadees is
 (a) alder thickets (c) orchards
 (b) spruce woods (d) deciduous forest
16. Our second smallest bird (to the Hummingbird) is the
 (a) Winter Wren (c) Yellow-throat
 (b) Golden-crowned Kinglet (d) Red-breasted Nuthatch
17. A bird whose white outer tail feathers serve as a field mark is the
 (a) Kingbird (c) Water Pipit
 (b) Bobolink (d) Catbird
18. A bird whose only known breeding territory is in Nova Scotia is the
 (a) Boreal Chickadee (c) Ipswich Sparrow
 (b) Acadian Flycatcher (d) Puffin
19. Two birds whose songs resemble each other are
 (a) Hermit Thrush and Water Thrush (c) Fox Sparrow and Sharp-tailed Sparrow
 (b) Nashville and Tennessee Warbler (d) Swamp Sparrow and Song Sparrow
20. In choosing binoculars the best ocular-objective ratio is
 (a) 6 x 3 (c) 10 x 100
 (b) 8 x 40 (d) 7 x 14



Evening Grosbeaks

D. M. Bowlby

"BIRDS OF CANADA" AROUND THE WORLD

by Roger Pocklington

In the course of work as an oceanographer I have been able to watch birds on every continent, except South America and Antarctica, and over every ocean, except the South Pacific. Recent acquisition of "The Birds of Canada" by Earl Godfrey enabled me to compare my World List with the current Canadian List, and hence to compile this note. I shall confine my attention mainly to sea-birds as these are the species most familiar to me, though probably least known to land-based bird watchers.

The most truly oceanic of all the birds are the Tubenoses - Albatrosses, Shearwaters, Petrels and Storm Petrels - and it is only by accident that many of them appear on the Canadian list. To find the SHORT-TAILED ALBATROSS, now one of the rarest birds in the world (47 in 1962 confined to Torishima, a small island south of Japan) in Godfrey's book was quite a surprise to me, and it is doubtful whether there will ever be any addition to the late nineteenth century records from B. C. We saw a juvenile albatross south of Japan in August 1965 which may have been of this species but the only field mark distinguishing it from juveniles of the commoner BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS, the flesh-colored feet, could not be seen so I cannot claim that one. I can be much more definite about another rare North Pacific albatross. In early May 1962 an adult LAYSAN ALBATROSS was identified among the flock of BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS which surrounded our research vessel, the CNAV "Oshawa", as we were working more than 300 miles west of Cape Flattery. I guess this is a little too far out to qualify as a Canadian record even if the Continental Shelf is declared Federal property.

The only really common Canadian albatross is the BLACK-FOOTED which anyone that is anyone, with the stomach to venture out of Juan de Fuca Strait at that time, can see in good numbers from March through July. It is one of the smaller members of the Family and is uniformly dark except for white under-tail coverts in about 10% of specimens and white about the base of the dark bill, and as such is a bit of a disappointment to those with a mental image of the snowy-plumaged WANDERING ALBATROSS of sea story fame.

Another small albatross which appears as an accidental on the Caladian list (one each P.Q. and N.B.) is the YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS. We encountered this bird frequently on the voyage from Durban to Fremantle and from Fremantle to N.W. Cape in July 1965. The feature from which it takes its name - the yellow dorsal plate of the bill - is not the best field mark to distinguish this bird from the other small albatross of the Southern Ocean. The immature has in fact an all black bill. The best distinguishing feature is the amount of black feathering underwing. This is very extensive in the BLACK-BROWED, less so in the YELLOW-NOSED, and least in the WHITE-CAPPED (SHY) ALBATROSS which is completely white underwing except at the tips like its large

relative, the WANDERING ALBATROSS. So if you do happen to see an albatross off the Nova Scotia coast, you will know what to look for!

Of the Shearwaters, the SOOTY and GREATER, which are regular visitors to our coastal waters and in fact penetrate into the Bay of Fundy (Dick Brown, pers. comm.), I have seen in both North and South Atlantic diverging from their breeding stations in southernmost South America. The SOOTY SHEARWATER breeds also in New Zealand and sparingly along the east Australian coast and it is birds of this race which appear off the B.C. coast in summer. CORY'S SHEARWATER, recorded as an accidental in N.S., is probably much more frequent off this coast than present records indicate. It breeds as far west as the Azores where I have seen it as early as January, into the Mediterranean and down to the Canaries and Cape Verde Islands. Two other species, or races of the same species, according to some authorities, the PINK-FOOTED and the PALE-FOOTED SHEARWATERS, appear off B.C. in summer and I have seen the latter species in the Arabian Sea, which gives some idea of how widely these birds spread from their breeding stations in the Southern Ocean. The MANX SHEARWATER, which I know very well from a summer spent on Skokholm, an island off the coast of S. Wales, has been recorded from the Atlantic coast of Canada, and another race of this common shearwater, the BLACK-VENTED, is of casual occurrence off Vancouver Island. The LITTLE SHEARWATER, represented on the Canadian list by one taken on Sable Island in 1896, might be expected to occur again as it, like CORY'S mentioned above, breeds on the Azores, etc. I know this bird from the Southern Ocean where it is distributed almost continuously between 30° and 45° latitude with individuals tending to wander beyond the usual range. Corresponding behaviour in the N. Atlantic would bring it to our shores.

The Storm Petrels, smallest of the Tubenoses, are represented as breeders in Canada by the pale-colored FORK-TAILED PETREL of the west coast and LEACH'S PETREL, all black with a white rump and forked tail, of both coasts. I recall finding chicks of the latter species in breeding burrows on Daikokujima, one of the northernmost islands of Japan, in September 1965 and of seeing SWINHOE'S PETREL, the race of LEACH'S which is all dark lacking the white rump, off the coast of East Africa where it gave us no end of trouble as it was not then supposed to occur west of Ceylon. Just to complicate the picture, this bird insisted on flocking in company with a larger all-dark storm petrel, MATSUDAIRA'S PETREL, not previously known except from the Pacific, and a small uniformly dark gadfly petrel, BULWER'S PETREL, of which the westernmost Indian Ocean specimen at that time was from the Maldives. It took three of us (Roger Bailey on RRS "Discovery", Paul Willis on the RV "Anton Bruin" and myself on RV "Atlantic II") three years to sort that lot out, the results of which will appear in "Ibis". Compared to small dark petrels flitting over a stormy sea, Fall Warblers are a cinch!

Two other Storm Petrels, HARCOURT'S (MADEIRA) PETREL for which there is one Canadian record, and WILSON'S PETREL which is a common non-breeding summer visitor off N.S., occur in both North and South Atlantic and in the Pacific. I have also seen

the latter species in the Indian Ocean where it frequently collected astern to feed on garbage. They could be readily "chummed" close to the vessel by the sacrifice of a few tins of sardines, delighting in this oily food.

The Pelican family includes Tropicbirds, Cormorants, and Frigatebirds as well as the Pelicans themselves which are coastal and estuarine rather than pelagic. The WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD has occurred in N.S., its nearest breeding station is Bermuda where it was the most conspicuous, if not the most numerous, of the local birds. It is about the size of a domestic pigeon and rather tern-like in appearance and fishing habits; head and body white with a black eye-strip and a stripe of black on the upper wing, with two long white middle tail feathers as long again as the body - altogether a very handsome bird. We met with it in the western Indian Ocean up to 240 miles from land. Off N.W. Cape in W. Australia we saw individuals of the Christmas Island (Indian Ocean) race which are rich golden apricot color. This was a first record for Western Australian waters, the expected tropicbird being the RED-TAILED, a larger bird with much less black on the back and long slender red streamers in the tail.

The Gannets of the tropics are called Boobies for their real or imagined stupidity. One of these, the BROWN BOOBY, a chocolate-brown bird with a white belly, undertail coverts, and median underwing coverts, made the Canadian list by being found alive in Shelburne Co. in July 1941. This is the commonest of the boobies, pan-tropical in its distribution but, in my experience in the Indian Ocean, less far-ranging (180 miles) than the BLUE-FACED and RED-FOOTED (360 miles). One interesting feature of the pelagic distribution of boobies in the western Indian Ocean was the virtually complete absence of "overlap" in the ranges of related species. The same thing was true of the three Tropicbirds. Individuals of different species were seldom seen together or even in the same surface water region, which points to differing ecological "riches" at sea just as we have them, though more obvious to us, on land.

Another tropical stray to our coast is the MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (MAN-O'-WAR BIRD) from the Caribbean. This unmistakable black pirate makes its living by robbing other birds, notably Boobies, of their fish, but on one occasion it came off second-best. We were watching three adult male GREAT FRIGATEBIRDS which were preying upon a flock of SOOTY TERNS feeding over the Saha de Mahya Bank (I.O.) when a SKUA approached the group. It repeatedly menaced one of the frigates in mid-air causing the latter to drop a stolen fish which the skua caught. The moral of this story would seem to be "set a thief to catch a thief".

The last Order of birds that I shall consider is that of Shorebirds, Gulls and Auks. As we all know, the northern species of shorebirds are migratory but it is still something of a shock to meet Northern Hemisphere breeders in dowdy winter plumage under the blazing sun of a tropical island. The AMERICAN GOLDEN FLOWER I have seen among the exotics of Hawaii; the RUDDY TURNSTONE was common on the Cargados Carajos Shoals (a small group of islands N.E. of Mauritius); and the first CURLEY SANDPIPER that I

ever saw flew over the ship west of the Chagos Archipelago (Indian Ocean). The real sea-going shorebirds are the Phalaropes of which the **NORTHERN (RED-NECKED)** appeared in circular flocks bobbing up and down on the far from calm waters of the Arabian Sea in February and March 1965. In winter plumage this bird is hard to distinguish from the **RED PHALAROPUS** but luckily they were quite tame and approached closely enough when the ship was stationary to see the needle bill and white-striped dark grey back. When put up by the ship in motion they flew in tight packs wheeling together like sandpipers and settling abruptly back on the water where they formed circle again.

The **POMARINE JAEGER** breeds in Arctic Canada and passes our coast on its way down to the Caribbean where we saw it in fair numbers in December 1964. In the Arabian Sea in March there were parties of up to half a dozen of these birds. The **SKUA**, a non-breeding visitor to our offshore waters, I met with in both the northern and southern portions of the Indian Ocean, but whether these birds were of the northern or southern-breeding race I could not tell from field observation.

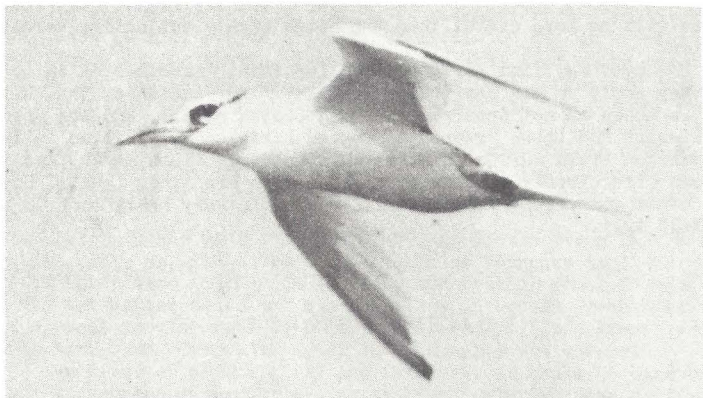
The Gulls, except for the **KITTIWAKE**, are not really oceanic birds. The majority of them remain within sight of land or at least over the Continental Shelf. Off Greenland Dick Brown and I spotted **GLAUCOUS** and **ICELAND GULLS** last April but as these can on occasion be seen in Halifax Harbor they hardly count as rarities. Much more exciting was our sighting of the **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** of Europe as far west as the longitude of Cape Farewell (45°W). This bird, about the size of the **HERRING GULL**, but with the coloring of the **GREAT BLACK-BACKED**, except for yellow legs, is not known from Canada but as it seems to be expanding its range and as the smaller, less marine, **BLACK-HEADED GULL** makes the trip across the Atlantic regularly each winter, a watch should be kept for it along our shores.

The lovely **ROSEATE TERN** which breeds in small numbers in Nova Scotia is a far-ranging species. I found it breeding on a coral sand bank in the Cargaos Carajos Shoals (15°S) in November 1963. Young birds were running about but no eggs were found. Tracks in the sand indicated that the terns shared this site with sea-turtles. An accidental visitor to Canada from the tropics is the **SOOTY TERN**, black above and white below with a white forehead. This is the commonest tern of the Indian Ocean breeding in colonies of up to two million birds on islands in the Seychelles. They range very widely - on one occasion we encountered them 570 miles from land - which is somewhat surprising as they do not dive into the water to feed, apparently becoming water-logged very easily, and so cannot roost on the surface. A closely related species is the **BRIDLED (BROWN-WINGED) TERN** which is similar to the **SOOTY** but smaller with grey-brown upper-parts and a narrower white forehead band. It too is an accidental on the Canadian list. The **LEAST (LITTLE) TERN** is another N. S. accidental which extends to the tropics. We saw it in company with **CRESTED TERN** and **SOOTY GULL** around Zanzibar in September 1963.

Of the many auks of the B.C. coast I came to know the **FIGEOL GUILLEMOT** best of all. When I ran across my first **BLACK GUILLEMOT**

in Cape Breton last summer (Bird Islands Trip), my reaction was to take it for the west coast species, and in fact some authorities do consider the two to be races of the same species. A very similar bird is the BLACK-WINGED (SPECTACLED) GJILLEMOT which I saw in Japan. One of the biologists at the Akkeshi Marine Laboratory in Hokkaido was rearing young of this species in captivity.

To sum up: in all regions of the world that I have visited one can find birds of Canada.



Red-billed Tropic-bird

Roger Pocklington

BOOKS

BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA. A Guide to Field Identification, by Chandler Robbins, Bertel Bruun and Herbert S. Zim. (Golden Press, New York.)

This book is a near-masterpiece of condensation and convenience. It compresses into 340 pages all the information contained in the three Peterson Field Guides to the Birds of North America, plus a few extras. It introduces a sort of short-hand in the art of field identification and therefore requires the development of some skill in its use, but those who acquire such skill will probably reach for this book first when time is short and information is needed quickly. It will never, in our opinion, replace the Peterson Guides, because it suffers from its compression, but it will be a valuable supplement to any of these.

On the inside cover there is a quick guide to the pages where the major families appear in the text - a valuable aid to even a seasoned birder when he wants to find an illustration or description quickly. Another great time and patience saver is the arrangement of pictures so that these are on pages facing the written description of each species. These illustrations show all plumages - male, female, winter, immature - which are needed for identification.

When a family or group is illustrated, silhouettes of typical members are shown in black, with silhouettes of birds which might be confused with these, in blue. There are also a number of supplementary illustrations which show certain species in flight or in their normal habitat.

Accompanying the text for each species is a range map which by means of color, cross-hatching and dotted lines gives a wealth of information on summer and winter ranges, and time and course of migratory movements.

The most novel feature of the book, however, is the use of the sonagram or "sound picture" of the bird's voice, which is included for many species, along with a verbal description of the call or song. The authors admit that fluency in translating these sonagrams will need considerable practice with recorded calls or with actual field experience, but they feel that these will be more useful than the often highly subjective verbal description.

The user may find a few not too important inaccuracies in the range maps as they apply to his particular locality. For instance, the White-breasted Nuthatch is shown as not occurring in Nova Scotia at all, and the Golden-crowned Kinglet and Brown Creeper as summer birds only. It also falls short of the Peterson Field Guides in stressing important field marks, and in making comparisons with closely similar species. These are minor faults, however, and its many other convenient features will make it a very handy book to have along on any field trip.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

Several times I have seen mention of people's lack of success in feeding robins. Their basic food is earthworms, of course, but in my experience they will eat many other things, especially in poor seasons, like the spring and summer of 1965. The spring was cold and backward, and the summer very dry. My robins appreciated everything I put out for them, including bread, cooked cereal, cottage cheese, custard and bits of raw tomato.

I put the food on the ground, and the robins continued eating it all summer. They became very tame and came hopping and flying for bread while I was putting it out. They also liked milk as well as water to drink, and I should add that the Baltimore Orioles also drank milk eagerly.

Last spring four robins returned on March 18, but the weather then was quite springlike. These four robins, with their families, stayed around all summer and left in the fall. They nested in spruce trees a short distance away, and came every day for food and drink.

ADDIE M. CROSEY

Yarmouth, N.S.

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

A report from our field notes for the summer of 1966 may be of some interest to Nova Scotia birders in the light of a comment included in the

description of Common Terns appearing in Robie Tufts' excellent book, the Birds of Nova Scotia.

On page 220 of his book, Dr. Tufts notes: "Although elsewhere it (the Common Tern) is known to nest frequently at fresh-water lakes, there are no such records for Nova Scotia."

During the morning of August fifth, 1966, my husband and I were crossing Kejimikujik Lake, (in the new Kejimikujik Park, Queens and Annapolis Counties) when our attention was drawn to a pair of terns. They were behaving in a manner familiar to us from our experience at the tern breeding colonies in the Tusket Islands. While we watched, both birds dropped down on a small, bare island, stayed briefly, then flew up at our approach. They did not attack us, as nesting terns often do, but flew above the island or between us and the island, calling constantly. We landed and searched the island, found one cast egg shell and a single chick. The chick was identified as a Common Tern.

We saw a pair of adult terns over the same island when we returned the following day, but did not see other terns on the lake. This in itself was interesting to us in view of the usual colonial nesting habits of the Common Tern.

Later in the month, August 22-26, at Frozen Ocean Lake also in the Kejimikujik Park, we watched each day groups of terns up to 12 in number. The adult birds were fishing in the lake and feeding young fledged birds. There did not appear to be any nesting sites on Frozen Ocean Lake that would meet the usual requirements of Common Terns except for a stony reef that would probably have been covered by water in a normally wet summer.

As a matter of curiosity and interest, we would be pleased to learn of other occurrences of terns nesting at fresh water in Nova Scotia. It would also be interesting to receive reports should terns nest again at Kejimikujik during the next few years.

MARIE C. HENRY

Belmont, Massachusetts

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

I am one of the members of your club from the Digby County area. One of your members sent in my name. I am only twelve and am not quite as deeply interested in birds. I have not attended any of your field days.

In the last two years I have not payed my dues in hope you would take me off your list. Lately you have sent me all of your papers and even your members list. My name was not included. Now I would like to personally tell you I prefer to resign the club. I know little about your club so if there are any details I would like to know (details of resigning).

A FORMER MEMBER

Nova Scotia
(Not all of our letters are bouquets! - Ed.)

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

There is no ambiguity here if you know your plover. Some students use non-capital letters when writing the names of birds. They feel justified

in doing so because birds' names are not proper names. The following 'teaser' clearly illustrates the desirability of using capitals if utter confusion is to be avoided.

For example: I have occasionally seen the black bellied Golden feeding with the larger Black-bellies with white bellies in flocks. But not often does one see the Black-bellies with white bellies feeding with the Black-bellies with black bellies. Nor have I often seen the Golden with black bellies feeding with the Golden with white bellies. And rarely have I seen the white bellied Black-bellied consorting with the black bellied Golden. Furthermore, it is very unusual for one to see the Golden with white bellies feeding with the Black-bellies with black bellies, but quite often I have seen the white bellied Black-bellied feeding with the Golden with white bellies.

R.W. TUFTS

Wolfville, N.S.

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

I am writing a few lines about a yellow Warbler that came aboard our fish boat when we were returning from the fish grounds yesterday afternoon. We were about two miles from the nearest land when we saw a small bird flying along the stern of the boat. It landed on the boat and was pretty well tired out. It hopped up to me and sat on my knee for a while, then hopped down and went in the cuddy of the boat and sat along the stove where it was warm. Then after a while it came out again and I gave it some bread crumbs of which it ate a little. After we got about a quarter of a mile from land it took off and I hope it got to land o.k.

I enjoy your letters very much and would like to hear from you anytime.

ARTHUR B. CROWELL

Barrington Passage, N.S.

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

We are always very pleased to receive the Bird Society Notes and read them with great interest.

We have a lot of interesting birds here and were lucky enough to have a cardinal nest outside one window. After the young flew the parents brought them to our bird feeders and we were even able to get some pictures of them. This fall we had a Pileated Woodpecker one morning which caused quite a bit of excitement. Also had an Oriole nest which fell from its tree with three babies inside. We hung it up again with string and the parents returned and continued to rear the young!

The fall migration was marked this year by large numbers of thrushes, quite a few Fox Sparrows and an excessively large number of young White-crowned Sparrows.

With best wishes to all the members in 1967.

MRS. J.S. ROSE

Guildford, Connecticut.

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

I hope you will allow me space for a comment or two on Dick Brown's letter in the columns of the November Newsletter, concerning my note on bird calling.

I am pleased that his ready scepticism was dispersed by his first attempt at "swishing" - beginner's luck! - and I also find his description of himself as a depraved St. Francis, most convincing.

I was, however, astounded at the problem he encountered in keeping the birds far enough away so that he might view them in approved bird-watcher style through binoculars. True, one should never resort to such primitive methods of observation as using the naked eye, but the answer to this is so absurdly simple that I shrink from the chagrin I am about to cause.

The solution? Simply reverse your binoculars, my dear Dick, and you will find your little friends at a distance which will make identification once more a sporting proposition.

C.R.K. ALLEN

Halifax, N.S.

(C.R.K. Allen says that he makes no claim to have invented "swishing"; that, in fact, he learned it from Chris Helleiner; nevertheless, anyone who has heard him in action will admit that he has brought the art of bird calling to a pinnacle of perfection. - Ed.)

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

In the November '66 Newsletter I was interested in Dick Brown's letter about bird calling. I will second the motion to that. My first was with a Vireo on a fishing trip. It was getting a little dark and a Vireo piped up in a tree above me, so I started mocking it. It was right hostile and called up a whole family and they were not friendly. Now a Chickadee is very friendly along with Brown Creepers, often together. I have had them call up all their friends such as White-breasted Nuthatches, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Canada Jay and Blue Jays, and they will all come around.

Anyone who would like to see some Pileated Woodpeckers (which are quite rare) at any time, and who happens to be going through the Valley, give me a little advance notice, and I can find them most anytime as they have nested and live within three miles of my home. However, the forests where they live are all being devastated now.

L. ROY WHITMAN

Paradise, N.S.

REPORTS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE JUNE 15.

THE FOWLS OF THE AIR

Four years ago I was half apologetic about being a bird-watcher, probably because to non-bird-watchers we are a comical breed. What they don't know is that we are comical to ourselves and each other as well; and whether the professionals are funnier to the amateurs or vice versa is anybody's guess. However, I gradually lost my self-consciousness as my binoculars and field guide became companions second only to a fellow bird-watcher.

This hobby becomes progressively enjoyable. The more familiar each bird grows the more delightful it becomes to sight it. The more birds one adds to one's life list, the more thrilling it is to find a new one. Also we combine all the excitement of the chase with the deep joys of conservation.

This is a full-time hobby. As I work around the kitchen my binoculars are within easy reach on the window ledge in case a strange one arrives in the yard. When I go to the clothesline they go around my neck. From the line, and from the kitchen window I have seen for the first, and in some cases what might be the only time, a horned lark, a purple finch, a red-winged blackbird, an American bittern; and several others, including a mockingbird.

For me the most amazing thing about bird-watching is that all those birds that I see now when I go for a bird walk were always there before and I didn't see them. This summer I saw the brilliant beauty of the white-winged crossbill for the first time. How often I have walked among our tall conifers and heard crossbills in their tips, and didn't raise my eyes to their flaming color!

When you walk along a roadside and hear a bright voice calling "Wet-cher feet! You'll wet-cher feet!" (Or as my bird guide has it, "witchity-ta-witchity-ta") have you looked among the lowest branches to find the yellowthroat skipping about in his little bandit's mask? I have, and now I can "see" him whenever I hear his friendly warning. Many other fleeting notes bring pictures of my new friends too, now that I have really seen them.

There are too many side pleasures to this hobby forme to enumerate; and they are as varied as they are unexpected. A few days ago when I had to wait for someone outside our local hospital I checked the shrubbery while I waited. A nurse whom I know slightly was coming off duty, and took a second look at my binoculars. I was about to explain when she asked brightly, "Are you a bird-watcher?"

"Yes," I answered.

"I had a yellow-billed cuckoo out by my place yesterday. If he comes back I'll give you a ring."

The cuckoo didn't come back. If he had she would have been

sure to call, that's the way it is with bird-watchers.

My favourite fringe benefit, though, during this past season, came at a family gathering. Two nieces and I were discussing what is now our collective hobby; and one of my brothers walked in just in time to hear their exclamations after I had recounted an unusual sighting.

"What's all this about?" he wanted to know.

"I was just telling the girls I'm a word botcher now."

Nobody argued the point.

- June Jarvis

