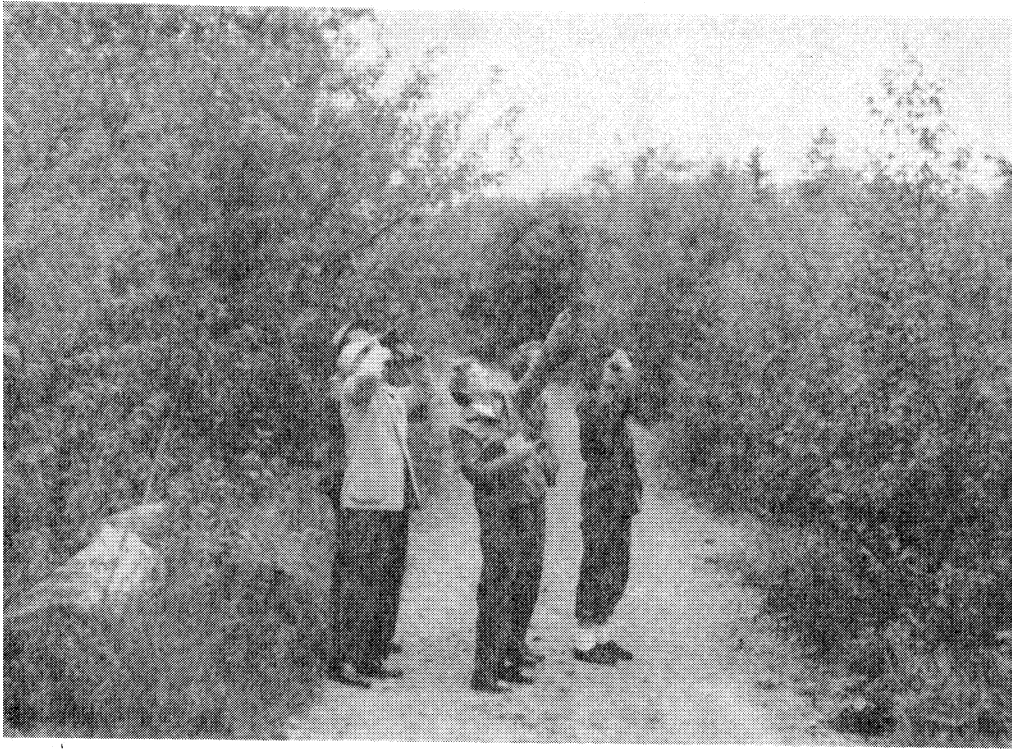




*Nova Scotia
Bird Society*



Newsletter

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Volume 9, Number 2

July, 1967

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NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

Editor: Phyllis R. Dobson

Volume 9, Number 2

July, 1967

THE SPRING MIGRATION

The weather report for the night of March 31 - April 1, 1967 reads as follows:

At 8 p.m. a ridge of high pressure lay NE - SW up the Bay of Fundy. Winds south of this were easterly and north of it were south-westerly. By midnight this ridge had moved down to where it just skirted the coast of Nova Scotia. Three hours later it was running through Yarmouth and Greenwood. At 5 a.m. it followed a line through Liverpool and Truro. On Friday the temperatures in Nova Scotia were generally in the 30's, but on Saturday (April 1) as this high moved through, with light SW winds, temperatures rose to the 40's and 50's throughout the area. This high passed through Sackville, New Brunswick, shortly after midnight.

With the warm air came flocks of spring-returning birds; Robins, Grackles, Redwinged and Rusty Blackbirds, Song Sparrows and Fox Sparrows. These birds appeared in numbers, quite suddenly over the whole of mainland Nova Scotia. Dr. Harrison Lewis wrote: "The main arrival of the Robin took place on April 1st. That date is given by eight of our observers scattered from the Roseway River to Sable River. Numbers varied from 50 to 75 birds....we saw not less than 18 on our lawn at Sable River.... Mrs. Evelyn Richardson states that Arthur Wickens of Bear Point found himself, on April 1st, while lobstering offshore, among a flock of about 200 Song Sparrows." (quoted from the Shelburne Coastguard.) Later on Dr. Lewis mentioned the Fox Sparrows, Grackles and other blackbirds, appearing on April 1st and 2nd. Similarly reports of Robins on the above dates came from Brier Island "full force" (Lent), Round Hill, "scores" (Whitehead), Kentville, 50+ (Norman Craig), Bedford, "many" (D. and N. Bird), Cole Harbor, 30+ (Crathorne, Topples), Halifax and vicinity (M. Anketell-Jones, Huxtable, Allen, MacDougall), and Amherst (Erskine, Lowerison). Robins appeared in greatest numbers, but Redwings and Fox Sparrows were close seconds. It was an exciting day, after our long cold month of March, and we were almost persuaded that winter was over.

Undoubtedly it was, and since then we have enjoyed, or endured, our typical Nova Scotia spring. To the time of writing, (late June), it is still cold and damp, but the trees are in leaf, the lawns green, and the rest of the spring migrants have returned.

The first GANNET of the spring was an unusually early one

seen at Cape Sable on March 31. The next report from this point was May 8, when they were seen going by in numbers (Smith). In the meantime, 6 were observed in the waters off Cape Breton on April 19 (Erskine).

Forty-one GREAT CORMORANTS were reported from the Cape Breton area on April 17 (Erskine) and 7 at Cape Sable on May 18. It is impossible to say whether these were migrants or birds which had wintered along the coast. DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS, however, can be counted on as spring arrivals and were first reported on April 15 when 3 were seen at Sable River (Harlow). Sixty-five were seen in the Cape Breton area April 17-21 (Erskine) and another 3 at Pictou, April 24 (Holdway).

GREAT BLUE HERONS arrived "in full force" at Brier Island April 1 (Lent) and showed up on the same date at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (Cooke). One was seen at Dartmouth on April 6, prowling forlornly through the dead reeds along the shore of a still-frozen lake, (Topple); other reports of "singles" or of several birds during the first week of April came from East Sable River (Robart), Wood's Harbor (Robertson) and near Halifax City (Neilly). They were still passing Cape Sable on April 26 (Smith).

Other members of this family made much of the big news this spring and sent excited bird watchers to their phones to spread rare bird alerts among their colleagues. The storm which blanketed most of the province with snow on April 28 may have blown these birds to us from their regular migratory courses. An adult LITTLE BLUE HERON was observed on May 21 near Porter's Lake (Allen) in company with two Snowy Egrets which were first seen on April 29 (see below), and another appeared at Hazel Hill on May 28 (Jarvis). A CATTLE EGRET was seen at Canso May 19 and picked up a few days later in dying condition (Armsworthy and Jarvis). The SNOWY EGRETS mentioned above were first seen near Porter's Lake on the 29th and remained in the area for about 3 weeks (Cooke, Forsythe, et al). A LOUISIANA HERON, the first sighting of this species for N.S., was reported by Capt. T.F.T. Morland at Crescent Beach on June 13. Capt. Morland writes: "-the bird was busy feeding around the base of a small island situated at the north of the beach and about half way along it. I watched it for some 30 minutes with binoculars and X60 telescope. All distinguishing marks were clearly seen, and the bird appeared to be in full breeding plumage with pinkish plume feathers on lower back, and white head plume. I am very familiar with this species during the winters in S.W. Florida and am positive as to the identification."

A NIGHT HERON in immature plumage was observed in flight near Tatamagouche on May 3 (Allen), but the species could not be determined. The AMERICAN BITTERN records for the spring are one at Wolfville on May 1 (J. Erskine) and one in Halifax Co. May 15 (Neilly).

At least 2 GLOSSY IBIS appeared in the territory just east of Dartmouth, frequented by Halifax birders on April 29, and were subsequently seen by a number of Society members until May 5 (Cooke, Crathorne, Forsythe, et al).

The April report of the Maine Audubon Society mentions an invasion of Glossy Ibis during the period April 23-30, with 38-50 birds at Cape Elizabeth and 20 at Ocean Park on the 20rd. It also reports a Cattle Egret at Bangor on April 30, a Common Egret at Scarborough on the 16th and Snowy Egrets at various points from the 16th to the 27th. Some of these dates do not seem to bear out our suggestion that the storm of the 28th brought heron stragglers to N.S., but it is still credible that it scooped up a few of the Maine birds and dropped them off on us.

The CANADA GOOSE is, of course, a wintering bird in parts of N.S. but several of the following notes indicate spring movements: at Cole Harbor the build-up began in late February when about 250 birds were observed; in mid-March these numbers had about doubled and by the end of that month there was a population which fluctuated between 1000 and 2000 birds as flocks arrived and left (Allen). Ronald Dicks has described this graphically as follows:

"On March 13/67 at 3.30 p.m. there were 35 Canada Geese at Cole Harbor Dyke. A large open area extended from the train tracks North and towards the west shore where I was observing the ducks and geese. At 3.55 p.m. it was overcast with a few snow flurries. Geese started flying in from out to sea in a south-westerly direction. They came in flocks of 6 to 300.

The first flock circled and took their time getting down, making sure it was safe. Then, as they came, one flock joined another in the sky over the dyke and they dropped and slid to the water's surface rapidly. All birds were very excited now and wasted no time in landing. Many birds tipped their wings to approximately a 40° slant and seemed to slide down. This is the first time I noticed geese dropping in this manner.

Birds were landing every 2 or 3 minutes. By 4.35 p.m. approximately 1400 were in the water and they were still coming. In 40 minutes at least 14 separate flocks had landed."

"Many flocks" were seen at Tusket on April 1 and 3 (H. Hurlburt); 60 birds were reported from Pictou on April 5 and 200+ on April 7 (Holdway). On April 19, 170 were seen in Cape Breton (Erskine).

On May 22 a pair was seen on the Upper Musquodoboit River, probably birds which have been released from the Wild Life Park in an attempt to establish a breeding population in the province.

The first BRANT report is from Cape Sable where one was seen on March 5, (Smiths); Erskine saw 20 at Wallace Harbor on April 21, and Neilly recorded 70 at Long Island, King's Co. on the 22nd. A few Brant elect to migrate along the Atlantic coast of N.S. and 14 of these were seen at Conrad's Beach on April 23. (Cooke). There were 47 at Pictou on April 24 (Holdway), and 225 in the channels of open water among the ice floes near Wallace on May 3 (Allen). A rear guard of 35 went by Cape Sable on May 24.

Two reports of MALLARDS are: 3 at Three-Fathom Harbor,

Mar. 26 (Cooke and White) and 1 at Spanish Ship Bay on April 17 (Erskine).

The BLACK DUCK build-up at Cole Harbor coincided roughly with that of the Canada Geese; there were about 500 there on Feb. 25 and by Mar. 11 the number had increased to well over 1000. AMERICAN WIDGEON were, as usual, scarce, with just one sighting of 3 near Porter's Lake (Cooke) but GREEN-WINGED TEAL appeared nearly on schedule with 8 at Wolfville on April 5 (Neilly) and a pair at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. on April 8 (Cooke), after which they became common in all their regular haunts. BLUE-WINGED TEAL are scarce if one can judge by reports; one was seen at Lawrence-town, Hfx. Co. on May 21 (Allen) and 2 at Cape Percé, C.B., on June 5-6 (Alward and How). WOOD DUCKS, never common, were also mentioned in just two reports: 1 at Hazel Hill, April 9 (Arms-worthy), and 2 at Kingston in late April (Balcom).

The earliest RING-NECKED DUCK reported was in Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth, on April 2 (Grathorne); one was at Melanson April 8 and 9 (Neilly), 1 at Guysborough April 18 (Erskine), 2 near Porter's Lake April 22 (F.E., and A. Dobson), 2 at Three-Fathom Harbor same date (Clayden & Comer), 2 at Chain Lakes near Halifax May 3 (Helleiner) and one at Pictou May 30 (Holdway).

GREATER SCAUP showed up at their usual late winter rendezvous in Three-Fathom Harbor on Feb. 16, 11 days later than in 1966 (Allen). The flock of 14 seen on this date increased to over 100 by mid-March, but never attained the size (400+) it did the previous year.

The only report on AMERICAN GOLDENEYE is of 320 seen by Erskine between April 17 and 21 in mainland Nova Scotia and in Cape Breton.

BUFFLEHEAD were common near Karsdale in late March, 125 being counted along a $3\frac{1}{2}$ mile stretch of shore on the 31st (Johnson). There were 22 at Guysborough on April 18 and 16 at Grand River on the 19th (Erskine). Late records are 6 at Hazel Hill on May 2 (Armsworthy) and five females at the mouth of Bear River on May 14 (Johnson).

A very late OLDSQUAW record is of 2 pairs in breeding plumage near Black Brook, Vict. Co., on June 6 (Neilly).

No great movement of COMMON EIDERS has been reported, but there was a flock flying north by Cape Sable on Mar. 15 (Smiths).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS appeared in reports only once, with 31 recorded from Pictou on June 6 (Holdway). The only sizeable flock of SURF SCOTERS was one of over 100 at Lawrencetown Beach on May 22 (Allen) while the earliest report for this species was of 9 somewhere in Lunenburg Co. on April 23 (Snyder). There were 35 COMMON SCOTERS in St. Margaret's Bay on May 3 (Helleiner), and 16 at Pictou on May 20 (Holdway).

Two pairs of HOODED MERGANSERS have been reported: one at Nelanson on April 9 (Neilly) and one near Porter's Lake on April 16 (Cooke).

COMMON and RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS "make the news" because of their abundance in certain areas; Erskine saw 197 of the former and 283 of the latter species on his trip to Cape Breton during April 17-21, and a flock of 212 of the second species were in River Philip estuary on May 3 (Allen).

The most interesting news concerning Accipiters this spring is a report of the finding of no less than three GOSHAWK nests in the New Glasgow area (Brennan per Fyfe); Buteos have not been able to produce anything nearly so newsworthy although 2 BROAD-WINGED HAWKS - apparently a pair - were seen at Newport on May 3 (Helleiner), and a single on the same date near Oxford (Allen). Erskine saw 12 BALD EAGLES during his April 17-21 trip - most or all of these no doubt in the Cape Breton area. This is said to be the last stand of this bird in eastern North America north of Florida and it is threatened, not by the pesticides which wiped out the other breeding areas, but by the irresponsible, trigger-happy "sportsman" who cannot resist a large and easy target.

Cape Sable, as it so often does, led the MARSH HAWK reports with a sighting on March 15 (Smith); Brier Island mentioned here (in the plural, but no definite numbers) on April 5 (Lent). By April 8 they had penetrated the province at least as deeply as Port Williams and Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (Neilly & Cooke). After this reports of from 1 to 3 came from all over.

The first OSPREY recorded was in the Barrington area on April 8 (Johnson), followed by 2 on April 13 at Lawrencetown. By April 24 they had reached north-eastern N. S., where one was seen at Pictou (Holdway).

SPARROW HAWKS moved into the western half of the province in early April. One was at Round Hill on April 2 (Whitehead), 1 at Glenholme the following day (MacDougall), "a flight" arrived at Brier Island on the 4th (Lent) and singles were seen at Grand Pré and Port Williams on the 8th and 9th respectively (Neilly). In eastern N.S. 1 was recorded from south-west Mabou on the 21st (Erskine), and 1 at Pictou on the 24th (Holdway).

The only PIGEON HAWK report which is definitely of north-bound birds comes from Brier Island where Lent reports a flight on April 5. Several other reports are for early March and could well be wintering birds.

RUFFED GROUSE, which dwindled almost to the vanishing point over much of N.S. last October, apparently because of one of their epidemic diseases, staged a mysterious come-back in at least two places this spring. They were reported 'numerous' - at least 12 - at Lawrencetown and McNab's Island on the week-end of May 13 (Cooke) and 'numbers' on the same week-end in Shelburne Co. (Doane).

A SORA on April 29 at Lawrencetown (Hinds) is the only rail reported. A GALLINULE at Brass Hill was seen on April 14 and 15 (Johnson).

Three rather late records for SEMI-PALMATED PLOVER tell us nothing about its arrival dates for this year. One was at

Yarmouth May 13, and several at West Chezzetcook on May 21 and again on June 3 (Allen). Two PIPING PLOVER appeared at Lawrence-town, Hfx. Co., April 7 and at least 2 pair have been seen there regularly since that date (Hinds, Fullerton et al). By June 6 at least 2 pairs were brooding eggs in this locality.

KILLDEER reports continue to be plentiful for this once rare species; one was at Wolfville on April 1 (Neilly) and 5 were seen a little later in the same area (Coldwell). The winter Killdeer was still holding out at Three-Fathom Harbor on April 15, and by early June had found a mate and showed every sign of having a nest in the vicinity. Other reports for this species are: one at Cape Sable on April 16 (Johnson) and 1 at Kelley's Cove May 13 (Allen). A RUDDY TURNSTONE - a great rarity in spring - turned up at Cape Sable Light on April 9 (Smiths). AMERICAN WOODCOCK upheld the reputation accorded them by many bird watchers of being the earliest spring arrivals, by appearing at Granite Village on Mar. 5 (M. Allen) and at West Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co., on Mar. 30 (Anketell-Jones). The first report for eastern N. S. was of 1 at St. Peter's on April 9 (Digout).

COMMON SNIPES arrive as a rule nearly a month after the first Woodcock, although oddly enough, reports of Snipe wintering here are far more common than those for Woodcock. The first snipe report is of one in the Barrington area on April 14 (Johnson). One was at Crousetown on April 15 (Snyder) and another at Cape Sable Light on the 21st (Smiths). The first Cape Breton sighting reported was from St. Peter's where one was seen on April 26 (Digout).

UPLAND PLOVER were reported from 2 points in May: one at Chebogue Point on the 13th (Allen) and two at Brier Island the following day (Lent).

SPOTTED SANDPIPERS were overlooked by contributors to these notes, possibly because of their abundance, and we have no good arrival dates. Noisy, showy WILLETTS, however, are more apt to capture observer's attention, and this year 1 was reported on April 9 - about 3 weeks ahead of schedule - at Cape Sable Light (Smith). Other arrival dates reported are in the expected period of late April - early May (Hemeons, Johnson, Helleiner). GREATER YELLOW-LEGS appeared at their usual time in spite of the backward spring; there were 3 at Three-Fathom Harbor on April 23 (Cooke), and 12 at Lawrence-town, Hfx. Co., on the 29th. The first and only record for C. B. is one at Homeville on June 8 (Alward). A rather late record for this species is 1 at McNab's Island on June 23 (Fyfe).

A NORTHERN PHALAROPE was at Cape Sable Light on May 14 (Smith) and the movement of this species was evidently still in full swing on June 5 as 100+ were seen in the Pictou area on that date (Holdway).

ICELAND GULLS tarried late this year with 6 reported on May 5 at Glace Bay (Alward) and 5 at McNab's Island on the 14th (N.S.B.S. party). Nine RING-BILLED GULLS were still at Point Michaud on April 18 (Erskine) and 1 at Lawrence-town on June 3 (Allen). A mixed flock of BLACK-HEADED GULLS and BONAPARTI'S

GULLS was at Lawrencetown on April 16 (Allen) and 3 of the latter were seen at Pictou as late as June 6 (Holdway).

COMMON TERNS appeared at Pictou on May 22 when 2 were seen (Holdway); on June 8, 7 were at Homeville, C.B. (Alward). A colony of 75-100 nests, each containing 1-4 eggs, was reported at Dog Thrum, a small round island (70 feet in diameter) between Cape Sable and Hawk Point, on June 12 (Smith). A lone ARCTIC TERN report is of 5 near Barrington on May 12 (Johnson).

Reports of BLACK GUILLEMOTS are all from N.E. Nova Scotia; one was seen at Pt. Michaud on April 18 (Erskine), a pair at Glace Bay on May 6 (Alward), 2 at Pictou May 28 (Holdway) and a startling 136 at Cape Percé, C.B., on June 5 & 6 (Alward & How).

What sounds like a definite spring movement of MOURNING DOVES is the report of 27 at Brier Island on April 15 (Lent).

Only one Owl report is at hand, that of a SHORT-EARED OWL at Cole Harbor on April 15 (Cooke).

A new location for WHIP-POOR-WILLS is reported at Milton, Queens Co., where 1 was heard on May 22 (Wentzell) and one of the old haunts opened for the season when the first bird was heard on May 23 (Love). An unusually early date for the NIGHTHAWK is May 2 when 2 were seen at White Point (Doggett). Other arrival dates are: May 31, near Barrington (Johnson) and June 5, Halifax City (Ward).

Two CHIMNEY SWIFTS were at Barrington on May 17 (Johnson), 4 at Round Hill on the 20th (Whitehead), 1 at Pictou May 30 (Holdway) and 2 at Cape Percé, C.B., June 5-6 (Alward & How).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS have been one of the most heavily reported of any species this spring. All reports are for the month of May, beginning with 1 at Hazel Hill on May 6 (Armsworthy) followed by 1 at Halifax May 10 (Chute) and 1 May 17 at Crousetown (Snyder). All other reports are for the last 2 weeks of the month and are from widely scattered localities which show no pattern of migratory movement.

In spite of over-zealous "control" at the fish hatcheries, the BELTED KINGFISHER seems to be holding its own and has been included in the records of most reporters throughout April and May, from Cape Sable to Cape Percé. The YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER followed closely behind the early April wave of migrants, the earliest report being March 27 at Crousetown (Snyder), followed by "arrival" at Brier Island April 3 (Lent); at Round Hill April 5 (Whitehead); at Cape Sable April 13 (Harlow), at Barrington April 16 (Johnson); and abundant by April 22 in the Valley and Halifax County (Cooke), and at Pictou by May 6 (Holdway). No earlier report of the YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER has come in than the sighting of 3 on the Hants County NSBS field trip May 27. Holdway at Pictou saw one chopping out a nest hole June 1 and 2. Not a migrant, the BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER is nevertheless news because of its rarity. Three new reports of sightings are 1, May 10, Bicentennial Drive near Halifax (Cooke); 1, May 22,

Middle Musquodoboit area (Allen); and 1, June 10, Central Hants (Allen).

The first EASTERN KINGBIRD alighted on Cape Sable May 12 (Smiths) followed by 1, May 14, Milton (Wentzell); 1, May 18, Brier Island (Lents); 1, May 18, Barrington (Johnson); 1, May 19, White Point (Doggett); and 1, May 21, Cole Harbor (Allen). One very rare (in Nova Scotia) GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER showed up at Brier Island May 20 (Lents). The EASTERN PHOEBE, our earliest flycatcher, maintained its reputation by arriving at Brier Island April 1 (Lent). Reports of phoebes are never plentiful, only a few others have been mentioned, including one unexpected sighting June 5, in a Halifax garden (Helleiner). The YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER is reported first from Round Hill, 1 April 27 (Whitehead), followed by one late May sighting, Cole Harbor (Allen), and quite a number in June, by which time it had reached Cape Breton June 8 (Alward). The TRALL'S FLYCATCHER may have been here, but is not reported before June 4, Barrington (Johnson), and the LEAST FLYCATCHER, June 10, Hants Co. (Allen) and June 11, Pictou (Holdway). This latter bird has an earlier report from Cape Breton, June 5 (Alward), which is unusual. It does not appear to be plentiful this year, possibly having been discouraged by lack of flying insects during our cold late May and early June. The WOOD PEWEE, however, has been reported widely, starting with 1, April 1, Brier Island (Lents). The OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER is not reported until June; 1, June 3, Barrington (Johnson); 1, June 8, Homeville, C.B. (Alward); and 1, June 11, Pictou (Holdway). The HORNED LARK was still plentiful in May; 14, May 6, Glace Bay (Alward); and we have one very late, surprising sighting of one bird, feeding or picking up gravel in the road near Musquodoboit in early June (Allen).

The TREE SWALLOW was nearly ten days later arriving this year compared with last. The first report received of any number is 70, at Brier Island, April 14 (Lents). The main stream came even later, on April 26, when Lent reports 200 to 300 which "came in from the west" at 11 a.m., building up to several thousand by late afternoon. At Cape Sable, one bird arrived on April 7 (Smith) "appeared very weak"! then 4, April 16 and 4 April 25. They must have by-passed the island, for they were present in large numbers at Barrington, Tusket and Pleasant Lake, Yar. Co., April 20 to 30 (Allen, Hurlburt, Johnson). Thereafter the usual picture developed, "arrived" Round Hill April 15 (Whitehead), Crousetown April 18 (Snyder), Halifax County April 24 (Cooke), Liverpool May 3 (White), Amherst May 3 (Lowerison), Hazel Hill, Guys. Co. May 6 (Armsworthy), Pictou May 11 (Holdway), and Cape Percé, C.B. June 5 (Alward). The BANK SWALLOW was seen at Tusket April 29 (Allen), Pictou June 1 (Holdway) and Cape Percé June 5 (How, Alward). To complete the picture, the BARN SWALLOW is reported as follows: Cape Sable Light April 23 (Smith), Crousetown May 10 (Snyder), Round Hill May 14 (Whitehead), Pictou May 19 (Holdway), Hazel Hill May 21 (Armsworthy) and Cape Percé June 5 (How, Alward). There are no first arrival dates at hand for CLIFF SWALLOWS, but they do appear to be here in their usual numbers, according to our local observers. The story of the PURPLE MARTIN is discouraging. According to Evelyn Lowerison of Amherst in her letter of May 15:

"The Purple Martins arrived back on May 4th, I had one lone male that came to the Martin House, and I haven't seen him since. One was seen on East Victoria St., where Mr. Black used to have so many, and that is the total count so far here. It is a very sad thing, as last spring the same weather came, and I think I told you of finding a dead one below the nesting box, which had apparently starved to death, as no insects would be flying in that snow and rain. I do think the same thing has happened this year too, although the Tree Swallows were back at their boxes this a.m., as chipper as ever."

This appears to be the end of our one Martin colony. Unusually, 2 lone birds were reported elsewhere, 1 Martin at Brass Hill, Shel. Co. May 17 (Johnson) and 1 May 21 at Bass River (Hemeons).

Our Jays, Ravens and Crows, many of them faithful to us all winter, have occasioned no comment this spring, and appear to be around in their usual numbers. The same may be said for the Chickadees, Nuthatches and Brown Creepers. The WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, scanty in 1965-66, appeared at many feeders throughout the province in 1966-67, particularly in SW Nova Scotia and the Valley. One was seen at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. April 16 (F.E. & A. Dobson), and since that time this species has been regularly reported on field trips in Halifax and Hants Counties. The first report of the WINTER WREN is 1, May 4, Barrington (Johnson), since when it has been heard singing in its usual haunts through May and June. Wintering MOCKINGBIRDS were reported still around at Sydney (Hopkins); Halifax (Stanfield, Chute); Sable River (Lewis); Crowell's, Shel. Co. (Johnson); but Mrs. Doggett's at White Point, March 5, stayed only a month. At Brier Island 9 were counted on April 15 (Lent), and 1 each were seen at Cape Sable April 23 and 26 (Smiths). The same observers noted a CATBIRD on Cape Sable May 12, and another May 14. On May 20, Catbirds were seen at Tusket (Hurlburt), Crousetown (Snyder), and Round Hill (Whitehead). In Halifax, the first Catbird was seen May 21 (Stanfield) and in Cape Breton 2, June 9 (MacCormack). A BROWN THRASHER appeared at Cape Sable May 1 (Smiths) and another May 18. Another arrived in Halifax May 16, where it stayed in the Stanfield's garden and was heard singing. Mrs. Stanfield writes that unfortunately it was picked up dead on May 31. Brown Thrashers are also reported, 2, May 21, Brier Island (Lents), 1, May 28, Hazel Hill (Armsworthy), 1 at the same place June 4; and 1, June 4 at Shad Bay, Hfx. Co. (Helleiner).

The spectacular arrival of the ROBIN on April 1 has been chronicled above. Robins were still passing through by April 16, reported as "unusually numerous", "swarms", etc. by observers in Halifax County. A large population settled in, and second nestings are now in order. The HERMIT THRUSH came nearly a month later, 1 Cape Sable April 19 (Smiths); 1 Conrad's Beach, Hfx. Co. April 22 (Cooke); 1 April 29 Karsdale (Johnson); 6 April 30 Round Hill (Whitehead); 1 Crousetown May 1 (Snyder); 1 Barrington May 2 (Johnson); and finally 1 in the Halifax Public Gardens May 6 (MacDougall). Once again, the first of this species in Pictou is noted: 2, June 2 (Holdway); and in Cape Breton, 2, June 5 (Alward). The SWAINSON'S THRUSH was also noted by the same two observers,

same place and date. We have a few reports of the VEERY, the first being 1 May 20, Karsdale (Johnson), and of the EASTERN BLUE-BIRD, 1 April 3 at Cape Sable Light (Smiths), 7 April 14, and 14 April 24 Brier Island (Lents), and 2 for several days early in June in Halifax. Margaret Torey saw them in her garden, investigating a birdhouse, and hoped they would inhabit it, but they moved on. The RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, our usual early bird, was on time this year, first seen, 2, April 23, Cape Sable (Smiths), 1, April 27, Round Hill (Whitehead), several, April 30, Dartmouth (Comer, Clayden), but fairly numerous by May 10, when they were heard in song by the NSBS members on an early morning field trip near Halifax. Holdway reports them "common" in the Pictou area May 25, and Alward, in Cape Breton June 5. So many CEDAR WAXWINGS stayed all winter they may not have been migrants, but Mrs. Gay of Halifax saw a flock of 13 to 14, May 10, in her Mountain Ash Tree, our earliest spring report.

Both the SOLITARY VIREO and the RED-EYED VIREO arrived on time this year, the Solitary as usual preceding the Red-eyed by about ten days, the latter part of May. This non-synchrony could give rise to a mistaken impression of distribution if one were not careful to make allowance for it. It is tempting to believe that Red-eyes greatly outnumber Solitaries, in June, when the song of the former predominates about ten to one. This may be so, but our reports give the reverse picture in May!

May is the month of WARBLERS, and insects or no insects, they arrived strictly on schedule this year. Twenty-five species are reported, which is three over our quota, and numbers are good. As usual, the MYRTLE and PALM came first, the only two April arrivals, April 27, Milton, Queen's Co. (Wentzell) for the Myrtle, April 16, McNab's Island, Hfx. Co. (NSBS party) for the Palm. The BLACK-AND-WHITE came next as usual; reported first from Karsdale, Annapolis Co., May 13 (Johnson). A PROTHONOTARY WARBLER, a real rarity, was seen at McNab's Island, May 14, by Eric Cooke and John Comer. It was a bright male, and quite unmistakable. Another warbler, almost as rare in Nova Scotia, the ORANGE-CROWNED was spotted in the Porter's Lake area, Hfx. Co., May 20 by Molly Clayden and John Comer. The PARULA, May 13, Crousetown (Snyder); the YELLOW, May 5, Hazel Hill (Armsworthy); and the MAGNOLIA, May 12, Cape Sable (Smiths) were earlier than the rest, most of which arrived during the week of May 18-26, first reports as follows: BLACK-THROATED BLUE, Middle Musquodoboit, May 22 (Allen); BLACK-THROATED GREEN, May 19, Barrington area (Johnson); also that date in Pictou (Holdway); the BLACK-BURNIAN, May 22, the CHESTNUT-SIDED, May 20, the BLACKPOLL, May 22, and the OVENBIRD, May 20, Bass River (Hemeons); the NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, May 27, Lunenburg Co. (MacDougall); the YELLOWTHROAT, May 18, Round Hill (Whitehead); the WILSON'S, May 20, Bass River (Hemeons); the CANADA, May 27, and the AMERICAN REDSTART May 20, Barrington area (Johnson). The NASHVILLE, first report is June 2, Milton, (Wentzell); the MOURNING June 5, Glace Bay (Alward); the BAY-BREASTED, June 2, Cape Sable (Smiths); and a YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT is reported June 3, Halifax (Stanfield). Only one report was received of the TENNESSEE, May 24, Barrington (Johnson); but this reporter says they were there in good numbers. They are genuinely scanty in the Halifax-Hants area where they

have been quite numerous the last few years (NSBS members).

Eight BOBOLINKS, all male, were seen near Cole Harbor, May 21 (Allen), and 4, all male, at Great Village, Col. Co., on the same date (Hemeons). They appeared at Round Hill May 22 (Whitehead), and in the Barrington area May 28 (Johnson). They were common in Pictou by June 1 (Holdway), and 1 was seen June 5 at Cape Percé, C.B. (Alward). Apparently Bobolinks came legally across the border, preferring the overland route. On April 15, at Brier Island, 24 MEADOWLARKS were seen (Lent), a definite movement, but whether coming or going is difficult to say. At Barrington, J. Johnson reports the winter flock down to 8, last seen on April 8. The REDWINGED BLACKBIRD, as mentioned above, arrived in numbers April 1 and 2, airborne, simultaneous sightings coming from the south shore, the Valley, and the Halifax area. The COMMON GRACKLE arrived at the same time in almost equal numbers, and both Grackles and Redwings reached St. Peter's in Cape Breton by April 10 (Digout). At least some of the RUSTY BLACKBIRD migration preceded this date, as upwards of 30 were counted at North East Harbor, Shel. Co., March 26 (Doane). The BALTIMORE ORIOLE has been seen erratically located, 1 since May 4, when one arrived at Cape Sable Light, followed by one there May 13, and one May 16 (Smiths). Members of the NSBS saw one at McNab's Island May 14; 2 were seen at Hazel Hill, 1 each on May 15 and May 21 (Armsworthy); 1 male was seen at Tuskent May 20 (Hurlburt) 3 males at Yarmouth May 22, (J.C. Higby); 1 at White Point May 22 (Doggett); a pair at Liverpool May 31 (White) - they may be nesting there; 1, June 2, Musquodoboit Harbor (Sutton); 1, at Glen Margaret, Hfx. Co., June 4 (Helleiner); and 1 in Halifax City, June 5 (Ward). The SCARLET Tanager has been seen this spring again in Nova Scotia, 1, May 23, Amherst (Lowerison); 1, May 30 - June 2, Sydney (Hopkins); and 1, June 11-17, Glace Bay (Crowell).

First sighting of the ROSE-BREADED GROSBREAK is 1, April 30 Three Fathom Harbor (Cooke); followed by a report of 1, May 16, Cape Sable (Smiths); 1, May 18-20, Halifax (Chute); 1, May 20, Brier Island (Lents); and 3, May 20, Karsdale (Johnson). A BLUE GROSBREAK returned to the Col. Suttons' at Musquodoboit Harbor for the second successive year on the same date, June 2, as reported to us by Ethel Crathorne. A DICKCISSEL was seen at Amherst April 12 (Lowerison); and another male was closely observed and well described by Harriet Moffatt, who saw it on May 5, near her house in Halifax (city). The Topples of Lake Loon Crescent, Dartmouth, had one of the few big flocks of EVENING GROSBREAKS last winter and reported them still around April 6, a few only left by April 24. Sizable flocks were still at Crousetown, 20, March 5 (Snyder); 20, Round Hill, March 29, (Whitehead), only 2 there May 15; 37, Glace Bay, April 4 (Alward); 25, Kingston, April 12 (Ferguson); and 10, Mabou, April 20 (Erskine). At least 2 have been seen and heard around in the woods during the spring, 1 seen on the NSBS field trip, Old St. Margaret's Bay Road, May 17; and 1 bright male seen in East Hants, June 10 (Allen). The PURPLE FINCH has reappeared in fantastic numbers, first reported March 25, Dartmouth (Topples); April 2 at Sydney (Hopkins); Bedford, (D. and N. Bird); Westphal, Hfx. Co. (Crathorne) and Round Hill (Whitehead). Since then flocks are reported by April 11 at St. Peter's (Digout); April 2, Halifax Co. (Jeffries); April 12-20, Shelburne County

(Shelburne Coastguard); May 5, Jollimore, Hfx. Co. (Huxtable); May 10, White Point (Doggett); and "up to 60" by May 18 at one Halifax city feeder (Chute). They are reported common in both the Barrington area and around Karsdale, by June 14 (Johnson). A flock of 6 PINE SISKIN, of doubtful migratory status, is reported as heard and seen in Central Hants, June 10 (Allen). Fourteen of these birds were also seen at Cape Percé, June 5 and 6 (How, Alward). The AMERICAN GOLDFINCH is first reported in spring plumage at Westphal April 5 (Crathorne and Topples) and is now widespread. Terry Wentzell wrote from Milton, Queen's Co.: "on May 3 there were myriads of Goldfinches in an evergreen grove near here. It was around 5 o'clock and the weather was rainy. They were chattering away, many on the ground, and many more in the trees. Their numbers and beauty left me utterly speechless. I have never seen so many birds in all my life." The RED CROSSBILL has been reported from Pictou, 8 on March 23-25 (Holdway); from Guysborough County, 2 on May 8 (Lowerison); and a female feeding young, Crousetown, June 4 (Snyder). Only one report of the WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL has been received, of 2 at Cameron Settlement, Guysborough Co., May 8 (Lowerison).

A RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE was seen at Cape Sable Light on May 5 and 2 on May 6 (Smiths). Another rarity, the LARK BUNTING, was seen on May 27, at Brier Island (Lents). On May 1, an IPSWICH SPARROW is reported from Cape Sable (Smiths). Two Ipswich Sparrows had already been seen at Conrad's Beach, Hfx. Co., April 2 (Cooke) but there have been no other reports this year. First SAVANNAH SPARROW migration report is April 24, when "several" were seen at Crousetown (Snyder). The SHARP-TAILED SPARROW, always much later, is reported first, 1, June 2, Barrington area (Johnson). Mrs. Snyder also saw a VESPER SPARROW at Crousetown, May 1, and 5 were seen at Cape Sable May 2 (Smiths). Earliest SLATE-COLORED JUNCO migrants are probably the 2, March 30, and 6, April 1, at Cape Sable (Smiths). Very late TREE SPARROW reports are 2, April 11, Pictou, Holdway; 1, May 13, Karsdale (Johnson); and 1, April 22, Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (F.E. & A. Dobson). Earliest CHIPPING SPARROW arrival reported is 3, May 2, Cape Sable (Smiths). The WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW was also seen on Cape Sable by the Smiths, 3 on May 12, 4 on May 18. The Lents at Brier Island report "100's" on May 14. The WHITE-THROATED SPARROW was first seen on Cape Sable on April 21, 1, and April 23, 6 birds. (There are earlier dates for the mainland and where the White-throat stays all winter, but the Cape Sable birds were certainly new to the vicinity.) This was followed by 100+ there on May 14 and 500+ on May 15. The FOX SPARROW had come and gone by this date, arriving in force the first of April, with the Robins, Redwings, etc., all over the province. Fox Sparrows were last seen April 30 in Halifax Co. (Jeffries, Comer, Clayden, Crathorne); in Sydney, Cape Breton, May 7, and as late as June 8 in Homeville, C.B. (Alward). Two reports only of the LINCOLN'S SPARROW have been received. One was heard singing in its accustomed spot at the end of the Greenhead Road, Hfx. Co. by members of the NSBS on the May 24 field trip; and 3 of them were seen at Cape Percé, C.B., on June 5 and 6 (Alward, How). SWAMP SPARROWS arrived on Cape Sable April 21, with more in May (Smiths). The SONG SPARROW was another of the big April 1st influx, being reported as numerous on and around that date simultaneously, not only at Cape Sable and Brier

Island, but throughout the province. A LAPLAND LONGSPUR, in full breeding plumage was seen, lingering here late, on April 16 at Lawrencetown, Hfx. Co. (Allen). To conclude, we may add that Cape Sable serves as take-off as well as landing stage, even in the spring, as it did on March 25, for 150 SNOW BUNTINGS.

SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

Thanks to Mr. D. D. Findlay and to Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Smith, we have the following directions for our last two Field Trips of the summer - at New Harbor, Guysborough Co., on Sept. 9, and The Hawk, Shelburne Co., on Sept. 30.

NEW HARBOUR

"For a rendezvous I suggest the service station at Goshen in square Q8 on the 1966-67 N.S. Highway map. Haligonians can reach it by two routes - No. 7 on the Eastern Shore to Sherbrooke, Melrose, Aspen, turning right on the paved highway into Goshen. I suggest avoiding the shortcut from Melrose Crossroads Country Harbour as it was rough, twisty and unpaved when last I used it. There is a good motel at Sherbrooke usually filled with salmon fishermen, but I doubt if they'll be there Sept. 9th. If the Eastern Shore is foggy, take Route 2 to Truro, New Glasgow and Antigonish and then South on No. 7 to Goshen. Or one can turn South on a good paved road at South River to Goshen. There are good motels in Antigonish and at South River (The Dingle). There is a lake near the Goshen service station where there are usually some ducks. The service station operator has a few mounted hawks and antique guns and clocks - an interesting place to browse around while waiting at the rendezvous.

The road South from Goshen goes through Country Harbour Crossroads, Stormont, Goldboro, etc. to New Harbour and is all paved. As a matter of fact, you can take the Shore road from New Harbour to Larry's River, Whitehead and North to Route 16 into Guysborough. Sixteen is the so-called Chedabucto Trail and scenic.

There should be good shore-birding at New Harbour, some of it from one's car, and a great flock of gulls at the fish plant. There is also a cosy spot for lunch nearby."

CAPE SABLE

"Members should meet first at North East Point, Cape Sable Island. This is the first part of the Island to be reached from the main highway (No. 3), by taking the Cape Sable Island causeway at Barrington Passage. The causeway is signed by the N. S. Highway and also by a local group, so this should be easy even for strangers who drive down. After assembling here, the party can follow someone who knows the road to the birding area at the Hawk Point. The road is good, but signs are sometimes misleading. This guided tour might prevent someone taking a wrong turn. If you like this idea, cars can turn left at the FIRST turn on leaving the causeway (mud road, not signed, immediately after causeway) and park away from traffic. At the Hawk Point, it might be best to drive down to the beach itself to park. On a fine day the beach is perfect for picnicking, but a fog breeze would cancel that idea and there are more sheltered places elsewhere on the Hawk if the weather should be cold. In any case, stopping here would put us in a good place to start our excursion."

SAW WHET OWL

by Ben Doane

On the night of December 18th., '66, at approximately 8.00 p.m., while driving through a wooded area just to the east of Jordan Falls, Shelburne County, I caught a glimpse of a bird in the headlights of the car just before the bird flew into the side of the car with a thud. I had only seen enough to be sure that the bird was an owl, and turned the car around a little way down the road and drove slowly back, watching in the headlight beam for what I expected would be a dying or dead specimen. On the contrary, I soon came upon a very much alive Saw Whet Owl sitting upright in the middle of the white line on the road. Taking the flashlight, I got out and approached the bird, and was able to pick it up with no protest. It showed no visible marks of injury, although by its behaviour one could judge that it was a bit stunned. Being pressed for time in getting back to Halifax, and still doubting whether the owl would recover, I took it in the car with me to see what it would do, shining my flashlight upon it periodically to observe it. It remained quiet on the back seat for only a few minutes, staring back in typical "owl-eyed" fashion each time I shone the light upon it. Very quickly it regained its vitality, at which point I had a very lively Saw Whet owl flying around in the car. After it tried to get through the rear window, it flew up front with me and went in under the dashboard. Clearly it was time to let it out; so, having actually driven only a short distance away from the point where I had picked it up, I stopped and let it out. It flew down to the ground close to the car and stood there for a moment, apparently sizing up both the car and me, then flew off into a spruce thicket and was gone.

Morning Trips in the Halifax Area

The Wednesday morning field trip series got away to its usual gray and chilly start on May 10th with a walk to Susie Lake off the Bicentennial Drive.

Back in 1956 or 1957 when this series had its enthusiastic beginning, we used to start on or around April 15th, but after several excursions through relatively snow-free but almost completely birdless woods (on one trip our total "bag" was one Flicker) we decided to limit the time to the Wednesdays in May. This year we became even more sophisticated - or comfort-loving - and planned the first trip late enough so that there would be a fair chance of a warm, sunny song-filled morning to encourage the neophytes and make the old-timers glad they had stayed with us for another year.

There is no need to elaborate on what the 1967 spring did to our hopes; suffice it to say that we were still back in late April despite what the calendar said.

Bird-watchers are a hardy breed, however, and there were no complaints, even at the short list of 16 species. Some beginners did have their first looks at Myrtle and Palm Warblers, a Pine Grosbeak and a Hermit Thrush, and nobody could possibly have returned from the excursion without having had the song of the White-throated Sparrow etched firmly in his memory. Belligerent males of this species must have numbered at least three to the acre, all singing their hearts out, trying to out-do the others within hearing range.

The only other excitement on this first trip was a Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, seen, unfortunately, by only one of the members.

On the trip of May 17 along the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road the weather had improved slightly and the list was increased to 22 species, including one more warbler - the Black and White - a Winter Wren, Chimney Swifts and Cliff Swallows.

The trip of May 24th was about what we had hoped that of May 10 would be - warm, sunny, and with more birds and bird song than one could properly cope with. The course was along the Greenhead Road, which remains barely passable for modern low-slung cars, and the birds, who have no such problems, were out in force. Two hours of listening and peering through field glasses netted 37 species, 11 of them warblers.

Two of our members, highly susceptible to the attentions of black-flies, wore prominently displayed S.P.P.E. buttons (Society to Promote the Propagation of the Empidonax) but soon had to resort to liberal applications of 6-12 in spite of the presence of a fair number of these flycatchers in the nearby woods.

On May 31st, on the trip to Cole Harbour, the tally of birds recorded was upped to 42, which included, of course, a number of shore and water birds not seen on the inland walks. The feature of this trip was, like that of May 10th, the predominance of one species - this time the Yellowthroats, who appeared to be singing from every second or third bush.

A number of members heard and saw the first time a Common Snipe give his winnowing courtship display high in the air, and many - some of them not so junior - had good looks at their first Wilson's Warbler.

The all-day trip which usually climaxes the series was held this year on May 27 and the usual course through central Hants County was followed. The weather was a close imitation of that experienced on last year's trip - fog, rain and cold wind. The clayey back roads between Brooklyn and Walton made tricky driving, and the Cogmagun and other interesting marshes had expanded into great gray lakes.

Most of the party stayed to the end, however, and a total of 65 species was seen - mostly through the car window.

Eastern Shore Bird Sanctuary Field Trip
June 17, 1967

Regrettably, this year's weather appeared to have an inhibiting effect on Society members. Two boats were hired for the trip, based on 1966 experience, but only one boatload of members turned up.

Nevertheless, the excursion was pleasant and satisfactory, and even the weather improved during the middle hours of the day when the sun shone quite brightly. The sea state, however, was not so kind and made a landing anywhere but on the Middle Halibut Island impossible. This was done under the expert supervision of Mr. Norman Smith and his companion.

The following birds were observed on Middle Halibut Island:

- a. Herring Gull - approximately 300, breeding, many nests, a few young, two eggs per nest.
- b. Great Black-backed Gulls - approximately 20, apparently breeding on the Inner Island only.
- c. Common Eider (not mentioned in the 1966 report) - approximately 200, breeding, numerous nests observed with four to six eggs, and a small number of young. Two families were observed in the water.
- d. Double-crested Cormorant - approximately 300, breeding, nests in both dead and live conifers. Nests contained eggs and young up to approximately one week old. Many non-breeding birds were noted in the area.
- e. Leach's Petrel - approximately 30 to 40 occupied burrows observed near the landing area meadow and on the north west headland. One presumed nesting pair removed from one burrow for photographing.
- f. Song Sparrow - about 10, breeding state not observed.
- g. Savannah Sparrow - about 10, breeding state not observed.
- h. Fox Sparrow - about 5, breeding state not observed.
- i. Myrtle Warbler - 2, breeding state not observed.
- j. Unidentified warbler - 1.

The Inner Halibut Island appeared to be occupied by breeding Great Black-backed Gulls and Double-crested Cormorants.

About $\frac{3}{2}$ hours were spent at the Middle Island, after which the return trip to shore was made via the tern colony situated amongst the islands nearer shore. A landing was not made; approximately 100 birds were observed of the Common, Arctic and Roseate species, mostly Arctic and Roseate.

On the small island known as Boson's Island at the entrance to Necum Teuch inlet, approximately twelve terns and three to four Bank Swallows were noted. Two immature European Cormorants were observed during the day.

Notes from Lower Wedgeport, N.S.

At the height of the migration in May, Dr. William H. Drury, Jr., Research Director of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, Lincoln, Mass., happened to be in Wedgeport. He had bought a Cape Island boat from Andrew Cottreau, to be used on the Maine Coast for visiting the nesting colonies of gulls and terns. Dr. Drury was the first to observe and identify the Cattle Egret (*bubulcus ibis*) on this continent while on a bird walk in April 1952. (A New Bird Immigrant Arrives, Roger Tory Peterson, August 1954 issue of The National Geographic.) The day Dr. Drury arrived I got a phone call from Mrs. Patricia LeBlanc saying that a strange bird was following her cow. From her description, it was a Cattle Egret. In late years quite a few have been seen in Nova Scotia, especially in Yarmouth County.

In the twelve days that Dr. Drury was here, we saw 240 Willets on a small area of mud flats in the Tusket River, and there were also some Black-bellied Plovers and a few Greater Yellowlegs. Dr. Drury said that he had never seen such a large concentration of Willets before. At one time the Willets were solely nesting in Southwestern Nova Scotia, mostly in Yarmouth County, but in late years they have extended their range. Other birds seen were two Baltimore Orioles (Black and Orange), Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Brown Creeper, Tree, Cliff and Barn Swallows, American Goldfinch, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Redwinged Blackbirds, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Myrtle Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Great Blue Heron, Marsh Hawk.

Dr. and Mrs. George K. Peck, Oakville, Ontario were at Wedgeport to photograph Roseate, Common and Arctic Terns while nesting, and also Semi-palmated and Piping Plovers. Dr. Peck has been photographing birds for the past 15 years.

Mr. Donald Pothier took them to West Bar Island and Strawberry Island where about 50 pairs of Common and Arctic Terns were nesting. On West Bar Island Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls were nesting also.

All the five Bald Tusket Islands and other islands in the Tusket group are now literally covered with nesting Common and Arctic Terns. Leach's Petrels nest in the bank of the Outer Bald, and also Bank Swallows. At the Mud Islands and Seal Island thousand of gulls nest along with some Eider Ducks. Among the land birds which nest there are the Blackpoll Warbler and the Gray-cheeked Thrush.

J.I. Pothier

In this vicinity Black Duck are definitely down, geese on the increase, and also Brant, during Spring migration. Bird protection is improving, thanks to the Department of Lands and Forests Rangers. There are still a few sore spots in Yarmouth County, but in this area Arthur Sweeney is doing a fine job, as is the newly appointed R.C.M.P.

J.I. Pothier

BIRDING ON SABLE ISLAND

by Ian McLaren

Early this summer I began what I hope will be a long-term study of the Ipswich Sparrow on Sable Island. The study might be taken as a somewhat self-indulgent Centennial Project, since this unassuming relative of the mainland Savannah Sparrow is the only bird species nesting uniquely in Canada (try and think of another, remembering that Whooping Cranes have bred in southwest U.S.A.).

As readers doubtless know, Sable Island is a 20-mile long sand bank, about 100 miles off the nearest mainland, famous for shipwrecks, wild horses, and, of course, the Ipswich Sparrows. The central part of the island is consolidated by beach grass, and some areas are carpeted with juniper, crowberry, wild rose and, in wet places, cranberry. There are no trees, in spite of early attempts at forestation. The tips of the island are shifting sand, and many large "blowouts" and dunes of bare sand are witness to a history of mistreatment of the binding vegetation and soil by man and his livestock. The west end of the island has a small community of employees of the Federal Department of Transport. At the east end and elsewhere abandoned buildings remain from more active times. This year an oil company has begun drilling on the island. Parenthetically, for those who have expressed concern for the island and its wildlife, it may be noted that the drilling operations occupy a sterile stretch of sand in the middle of the island, and that care is being taken not to drive vehicles needlessly over the consolidated ground. One Ipswich Sparrow successfully brought off her brood 100 feet from the cookhouse door. Perhaps the seals are being scared off the beaches a bit more than usual - as they once were by daily shipwreck patrols - but otherwise the advent of industry on Sable Island does not appear to have disturbed the wildlife or to have posed conservation problems at present.

I spent the period of May 31 - June 13 on the island. Ken MacKay, a graduate student at Dalhousie, was my companion for the first week. Dr. Joe Harvey of Dalhousie's Biology Department and Dr. and Mrs. Don Gunn of Toronto were with me in the second week. In addition to helping with my program, Dr. Harvey botanized and Dr. Gunn used a marvelous array of equipment to photograph birds and record their songs. (The Ipswich Sparrow has now, for the first time, been skillfully photographed and recorded.). The Gunns stayed on after Dr. Harvey and I left, as guests of the lighthouse keeper, Mr. Norman Bell and Mrs. Bell. All we visitors noted birds, as did Mrs. Bell and Mrs. Fred Androschuk, wife of the C.I.C. of the meteorological station.

The birds of Sable Island, in fact, received considerable attention around the turn of the century by visiting naturalists, chief among whom was Jonathan Dwight, whose three week visit in 1894 led to the discovery of the nesting place of the Ipswich Sparrow and a delightful monograph of the species. James Bouteiller, a resident of the island, sent annual lists of birds

to the "Ottawa Naturalist" between 1904 and 1907. Although his identifications were not always complete and some of his records questionable (no "Peterson" then), he showed that a remarkable variety of birds could be seen. Like other famous lighthouse islands and points in Nova Scotia, Sable Island proved to be a birdwatcher's paradise during our stay there, with over 100 species seen this year. Rather than simply listing these, I will attempt to organize our observations and describe highlights.

Some birds nest on Sable Island, and have presumably solved the navigational problems involved. Others are waterbirds or shorebirds which may safely use the island as a traditional stopping-off place. It seems best to consider these "regular" species first.

I'm not going to say anything further about the most interesting species, the Ipswich Sparrow, except to note that our censuses showed it to be gratifyingly common on all parts of the island. Although other landbirds have not been noted as nesting in earlier accounts, a few do today. Starlings are established in abandoned buildings and a thriving colony of House Sparrows consumes, according to Mr. Bell, several bags of chicken feed each year. Pheasants were a direct introduction a few years ago and some still survive. A pair of crows nesting in the old barn at the unmanned East Light were uncommonly neurotic and abandoned their five eggs when we moved into the house, 200 feet away. Barn Swallows are quite common and said to nest, as might the few Bank Swallows seen. A few other open-country birds like Bobolinks (including a singing male) might at least potentially nest there. Both Black Ducks and Red-breasted Mergansers nest on the island, and we found several nests of the former. Single drakes or Pintail and Green-winged Teal and two drake Mallards were doubtless strays. Terns were everywhere noisily in evidence, and a problem for recording bird song. Although Common Terns were said in an early account to outnumber the Arctic Terns by two or three to one, the reverse seems true today. Picking out the scarce Roseate Terns was good practice for ear and eye. Herring Gulls nest mostly on the sand cliffs and hillocks, and Black-backs on the flats. The latter were hatching out, ahead of the Herring Gulls as usual, in the second week of June. A few Kittiwakes and a late Iceland Gull on June 2 were noteworthy. Apart from one oiled Thick-billed Murre, no alcids were present, but mummified remains of Dovekies, Razorbills, and Murres were found inland, and presumably date from winter. A few migrant shorebirds, including Willets, were seen, and more appear on earlier lists. Resident (nesting?) Spotted Sandpipers and nesting semi-palmated Plovers were quite common, but no Piping Plovers were seen in June (one noted by the Bells in April), although they are reported by earlier visitors. Much the most interesting shorebirds are the Least Sandpipers, which arrived and began nesting in numbers in early June, and delighted us with their tremulous flight songs and tame ways. Although this sub-Arctic breeder has been recorded nesting somewhat further south in Nova Scotia, it is a truly common bird on Sable Island.

It was the landbird migration that offered the most unexpected pleasures. Where these migrants come from and where they end up are open questions. Do they leave Cape Cod and fly north, or

do they strike out from the mainland coast anywhere along its length? What birds come by the isthmus route into Nova Scotia, and what birds via the south end? It seems likely that Sable Island is a brief refuge for many of them before they continue their suicidal flights out to sea. Don Gunn, a psychiatrist, epitomized them as "mental misfits of the bird world", although he would probably disclaim professional judgment here. What is certain is that many of them perish on the island. Some are trapped in buildings; we almost had to "sanitize" the old house at East Light of dead Starlings, Whitethroats, Magnolia Warblers, Barn Swallows, Tree Sparrows, and others unidentified when we moved in on June 1. Other corpses were found even on open ground. During early June the weather was clear and warm, but residents tell us that cold spells kill many. Perhaps the most interesting species found freshly dead was a female Whip-poor-will on June 1. But the pleasures of watching the many species we saw - lively, unobscured, and often tame - tended to overcome any misgivings about their probable fate.

Most of the landbirds, of course, nest among trees, and the island presents problems for these. Every building, fence, tower and junkpile was a surrogate forest. My field book notes casually that I saw 11 birds of 9 species at once on a 100 foot length of wire fence on the morning of June 8. Other solutions to the deficiencies of habitat were seen. For example, first thing in the mornings of June 8 and 9, I flushed an Ovenbird from under the wooden footscraper at the door of our residence. Do Ovenbirds sleep in like sites, perhaps under roots, on the forest floor? Yellowthroats and Canada Warblers were especially fond of "tangles" of boards and thickets of chickenwire and grass. For some such cryptic birds, the island just didn't seem good enough. I saw perhaps a half dozen or more Lincoln's Sparrows around the East Light in early June, where they substituted headlong flight for their usual furtive concealment. I am perhaps the only birdwatcher I know who could begin to feel confident about ticking off Lincoln Sparrows when small dark birds flushed from the grass at 100 yards. Some birds turned to unusual food. A flycatching Catbird was ludicrous; two Pine Siskins emulated some Goldfinches in picking at dandelion heads; a White-crowned Sparrow spent three days eating discarded boiled turnip outside our door at East Light, choosing it in preference to rice and bacon scraps.

Some migrant species like warblers (19 species), thrushes (all 4 on regular list), swallows (all regulars except the martin), and sparrows (the expected ones at the time) seemed relatively about as common as they would be during migration on the mainland. One group that seemed much over-represented was the flycatchers. Kingbirds, Wood Pewees, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, and other "empidonaxes" (both Traill's and Least heard) were among the most common and conspicuous birds. One wonders if this has some meaning. Why are Western Kingbirds such regular strays to Nova Scotia, as are Scissor-tailed and other flycatchers elsewhere? Is it because flycatchers can survive as strays to such barren regions, and therefore stand a higher chance of returning to their natural courses?

Finally we may turn to the few sightings of rare or unusual

species, in systematic order. Such birds are more often seen on islands and promontories, presumably because they tend to end up on the utmost limits of land in the directions of their disorientations. A Green Heron spent the morning of June 9 at a pond on the west end, but was not seen later. Mockingbirds are indeed becoming regular in Nova Scotia, but surely the individual that spent this spring on Sable Island was rather far out; I was the last to see it, on June 1. Two Brown Thrashers turned up first on June 11. The Bells believe they observed two species in late May that would be rated as quite extraordinary. The first answered the description of the male Audubon's Warbler. Mrs. Bell is familiar with the Myrtle and Magnolia Warblers, and was quite definite about the yellow throat and the otherwise Myrtle appearance. The second was a male Hooded Warbler, which has been recorded as a stray in Nova Scotia. Although personally convinced, the Bell's show commendable beginner's restraint and are quite satisfied to see these two observations relegated to the "hypothetical" list. Finally, we saw male and female Scarlet Tanagers, a male Indigo Bunting, and a female Towhee. These are all relatively scarce in Nova Scotia, but have turned up before, particularly around the lighthouses of the south end.

Anyone for an N.S.B.S. field trip to Sable Island next spring?

Postscript: Dr. and Mrs. Gunn returned from the island on June 30, with lots of new observations and impressions. The season's list now stands at an astonishing 116 species, including corpses. Among the interesting additions were a Golden Plover, an Osprey, a Mourning Dove, Nighthawks, a Winter Wren, and a Cape May Warbler. Outstanding observations were a Stilt Sandpiper seen well at close range on June 14, a Crested Flycatcher on the 18th, a Warbling Vireo which turned up in the Gunn's bedroom on the 13th, and an Orange Crowned and a Pine Warbler (the latter attracted to the old Christmas tree outside the Bell's door) on the 14th, both offering opportunities for close observation and identification. Eleven consecutive days of fog and foul weather failed to dampen their enthusiasm, nor did persistent interference from ponies when the Gunns were attempting remote-control photography of nests. Dr. Gunn, who is especially keen on photographing orchids, relates with pleasure that he was able to get shots of Habenaria viridis var. bracteata, one of the two out of 29 Ontario species that he had not yet been able to "catch" in Ontario.

All in all, their last two weeks confirmed our impression of Sable Island as a naturalist's paradise.

CAPE BRETON NEWS

Birdwatchers:

With the arrival of many spring species, you may find the following outings and studies of interest - we hope you will want to take part in some:

1. MORNING TRIPS will be taken, on days convenient to you, starting May 18:

Sydney/Northside people meet at the Ball Creek Bridge to follow the Grantmire Brook. If you are interested, contact Mary Hay, 736-6371 or Hedley Hopkins, 564-7405 for information on time (6 or 6:30 a.m.), transportation, and the best days.

Glace Bay area ones meet at the end of the Sand Lake Road, 7/10 mile beyond the Heavy Water plant at 6 a.m. Phone Mrs. Archie MacLean, 849-5362, or F. Alward, 849-7853, for details.
2. BIRD ISLANDS. We will arrange trips for Saturday, June 10 (17th. if 10th. is windy). If you are interested and want more information, phone one of the above soon so plans can be made. See NEWSLETTER, page 14, for trips on the Mainland which will prove interesting.
3. SUMMER COUNTS this year are scheduled for June 4-12. The area chosen is to be a circle with a 1 mile radius. Counts will be taken in the following areas (as well as in other areas you may choose): Leitches Creek; Glace Bay Sanctuary; Homeville; Cape Perce. Phone for details.
4. SPECIAL REQUEST FOR SPRING MIGRATION data from Halifax: What are the first arrival dates (and peak numbers) you have for the following: Song and Fox Sparrows; Robins, Redwings, Grackles, Cowbirds, Purple Finches? Send information to Mrs. Phyllis Dobson, 1444 Seymour Street, Halifax. Due date for remaining migration data is June 14. Your help will be appreciated as information on common species, as well as on the rarities is needed.
5. POST-BREEDING SHORE BIRD MIGRATION STUDY will be carried on again this year. Some shore birds start through on their way south by July 10! Those of us on Cape Breton can contribute much to this study if we will forward our records. See April NEWSLETTER, page 15.
6. NEST RECORDS are needed by the Canadian Wildlife Service, Maritime Nest Record Scheme. If you can contribute information, even for the most common species, contact one of us as above.
7. Mr. Ted Gittens, Dept. of Biology, Acadia University, Wolfville, is doing a provincial study of EAGLES. He would appreciate information on all sightings, and particularly on possible nesting sites.

8. MEMBERSHIP (which includes the NEWSLETTER) - If you have not yet joined your Cape Breton branch of the N.S.B.S., why not send in the \$2.00 now to the Membership Secretary, Miss Ethel Crathorne, 150 Ochterloney St., Dartmouth, N.S., or our branch secretary, Miss Mary Hay, Pond Rd., Sydney Mines, N.S.
9. Any information on migration through or nesting on SCATARIE ISLAND would be appreciated.
10. Don't forget to circle October 27 on your calendar as the date for our first fall meeting!

We hope that you can join in some of the above activities and that you will have a good spring and summer in the outdoors. Good birding!

- Hedley Hopkins, President

The above is a copy of the Cape Breton local Newsletter for Spring and Summer 1967.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

Newsletter, April, 1967

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. (b) Pied-billed Grebe | 11. (d) Flicker |
| 2. (c) Snowy Egret | 12. (c) Olive-sided Flycatcher |
| 3. (d) Surf Scoter | 13. (c) Olive-sided Flycatcher |
| 4. (c) Color of back | 14. (c) Tree Swallow |
| 5. (d) Eskimo Curlew | 15. (b) Spruce woods |
| 6. (c) Purple Sandpiper | 16. (b) Golden-crowned Kinglet |
| 7. (b) Hudsonian Godwit | 17. (c) Water Pipet |
| 8. (a) Flesh-colored | 18. (c) Ipswich Sparrow |
| 9. (b) Arctic Tern | 19. (b) Nashville and Tennessee |
| 10. (c) Kingfisher | 20. (b) 8 x 40 |

MARITIME NEST RECORDS SCHEME

Seventh Annual Report - 1966 Season

All mail and cards to be sent to:

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

Objectives: The objectives of the Maritimes Nest Records Scheme are to assemble data on nesting of all bird species, particularly of common species, and to make these data available to persons interested in studying nesting biology of birds.

Justification: Knowledge of breeding biology is necessary to provide a sound basis for management of any bird. Management is needed to provide more birds for hunting or bird-watching, to protect birds whose existence is threatened by alternative uses of their preferred habitats or by pollution, or to control birds which damage economically valuable crops. With increasing human populations, the need for management is constantly increasing.

Details of breeding biology of a particular bird species vary with geographic area, with habitat, with time of year, and with various factors in the environment, including climate, human disturbance, and biocides. A single observer can rarely assemble in one season sufficient data on a species adequately to evaluate effects of such factors over a wide area. Interested amateurs and professional biologists studying other subjects, by reporting data in standard form to a central clearing house, can provide the data needed for such critical studies. Such data kept permanently on file also provide records of breeding distribution.

Methods: Each spring, printed forms, about the size of a postcard, with spaces for various kinds of information about nests, are sent to interested persons. Details of nests in which eggs or young are seen, heard, or felt, or at which adults are seen bringing food or carrying away fecal material, are entered on cards. Nests under construction are not reported unless they are subsequently found to contain eggs or young. A card is filled out for each nest seen, whether visited once or many times. All nests in a colony visited only once may be entered on a single card, but cards should be filled out for each nest in a colony if individual nests are identified on more than one visit. All cards are sent in to the central clearing house (address above) as soon as possible after the end of the nesting season and in any case by 1 October.

Results: (a) In 1966, a total of 1488 cards was sent in by 58 observers or groups of observers. The number received and the number of co-operators in each province was:

New Brunswick - 509 cards, 29 observers

Nova Scotia - 584 cards, 30 observers

Prince Edward Island - 395 cards, 5 observers.

Six persons submitted cards in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The number of cards sent in by each co-operator is shown in Table I. Stanley Vass turned in the greatest number of cards submitted by one observer in 1966, 162 cards in all, and William McNutt's 72 card contribution was the largest by a newcomer to the Nest Records Scheme. Eighteen observers sent in more than 20 cards each.

(b) Cards of nestings in 1966 included 116 species of birds. Ninety-five species were represented in Nova Scotia, 75 in New Brunswick, and 45 in Prince Edward Island. Twenty-nine species were reported in all three provinces. The largest number for a single species was 204 cards of Robins, and the second was 144 of Common Grackles. Seven species were represented by more than 50 cards each, while 43 were reported on only one or two cards each. The number of cards for 1966 nesting records, and the total number of cards on file in each province, are on record.

(c) In addition to nests found in 1966, cards were also received for over 550 nests found in previous years and not previously reported to the Scheme. Most significant among these were records submitted by Robie Tufts of Wolfville, N. S., representing observations dating back to 1920 and including raw data for records which were summarized in his book, "The Birds of Nova Scotia" (Tufts, 1962). This is an extremely valuable contribution, as it includes long series of nests of boreal species such as Goshawk, Spruce Grouse, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Myrtle Warbler, Palm Warbler, and Rusty Blackbird. In all, 547 cards representing 126 species were included, among them the following not previously represented in our files: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Pigeon Hawk, Semipalmated Plover, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Boreal Owl, Whip-poor-will, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, and White-winged Crossbill.

Of these new species, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Pigeon Hawk, Semipalmated Plover, and Black-throated Blue Warbler were represented among the 1966 cards, while Nelson Hurry had also submitted a card for a Pigeon Hawk nest found in 1965. In addition, two further species were reported to the Maritimes Nest Records Scheme for the first time in 1966. Hilaire Chiasson reported on the colony of Ring-billed Gulls near Bathurst, N.B., which he first discovered in 1965, and Ward Hemeon watched an adult Cape May Warbler feeding a newly-fledged young one near Little Bass River, N.S. With these additions, the total file as of 23 January 1967 included 7118 cards representing 161 species. The nest reported for Red-shouldered Hawk in 1965 has been transferred to Broad-winged Hawk, since Dr. Eidt informed us that tail feathers from the adults had been identified by Earl Godfrey of the National Museum of Canada as being from the smaller species.

Discussion: (a) The number of cards received in 1966 is the largest for a single year, the previous record being 1358 cards

last year. The number of co-operators has remained essentially constant during the past four years. However, over one-third (25) of the persons co-operating in 1966 were newcomers to the Nest Records Scheme. Nineteen observers have sent in cards in each of the past four years, and these included 7 of the 11 who sent in over 50 cards in 1966. Such faithful co-operators form the backbone of a nest records scheme, but we wish to thank all observers who reported in 1966, whether they found one nest or fifty.

(b) With the cards received in 1966 and Mr. Tufts' excellent contribution, it is likely that few new species can be added to the files in future, although there are gaps in the lists for each province. For example, we have no records of nests or broods of Red-breasted Merganser in New Brunswick, where this species undoubtedly breeds, along the north and east shores. No one has yet reported on nesting in the colonies of Razorbilled Auk and Atlantic Puffin on the Bird Islands off Big Bras d'Or, N.S. None of the flycatchers, not even the Eastern Kingbird, are represented in the Prince Edward Island list. Some observers will doubtless seek to fill these gaps.

More important than the uncommon species added to the files is the growing number of cards for the common and widespread species. Since 1960, we have assembled 100 or more cards each for 16 species, which between them accounted for 4251 cards, or about 60 per cent of the total cards on hand. That these species are the ones for which we can best provide useful data is further shown by the fact that the same five species with most cards in the total file are the ones for which the largest number of cards were submitted in 1966. These are Robin (total 908 cards), Common Grackle (604), Barn Swallow (368), Red-winged Blackbird (299), and Starling (274). These species are all ones whose nests are easily located and inspected, and in addition all are both abundant and widespread (cf. 1966 report on Breeding Bird Survey). These five species alone accounted for 40 per cent of all cards turned in in 1966. It is most important that observers should continue to provide data for these common species, as only these can provide sufficient information to permit evaluation of trends in breeding success.

(c) Little progress was made in improving the quality of the cards submitted. Certain observers, notably Joe Johnson and Martin Thomas among those with large contributions, made considerable efforts to recheck nests to determine their ultimate success or failure. Some others neglected to revisit more than a very small proportion of the nests they reported, and their data are less valuable through that neglect. Three visits to a nest at suitable intervals can give virtually all the information necessary to determine success or failure, and even two visits is often sufficient. It is, of course, necessary to take care that one's visits to a nest do not affect its success. We would cheerfully accept a considerable reduction in the number of cards turned in if this were accompanied by a marked increase in the proportion for which success or failure could be determined.

(d) Requests to use data in the Nest Records Scheme were fewer in 1966 than in the two preceding years. Stanley

Teeple, of Canadian Wildlife Service (Pesticides Section), Ottawa, examined all cards for Robins in New Brunswick, to determine relative breeding success in areas sprayed against spruce budworm and in unsprayed areas. For studies such as this, cards from which success of individual nests can be determined are essential.

Summary: The Maritimes Nest Records Scheme completed its seventh season in 1967. A total of 1488 nest record cards representing 116 species of birds were completed in 1966. In addition, Mr. R.W. Tufts of Wolfville, N.S., filled in 547 cards covering nests which he had found before the Nest Records Scheme began in 1960. With these additions the file now contains 7118 cards for 161 species breeding in the three Maritime Provinces. Five species are represented by over 250 nest record cards each. This body of data is approaching the stage where it will be a useful source for major studies.

Acknowledgements: The persons listed in Table I contributed cards in 1966. We wish to thank them for their assistance and co-operation in making their observations available for study by others, and we hope that they will continue to work with us in future years.

References: Tufts, Robie W.
1962. The Birds of Nova Scotia. Halifax, N.S.
Nova Scotia Museum. 481 p.

Table I. Co-operators and numbers of cards submitted by each

Co-operators	Number of cards
<u>New Brunswick</u>	
J.G. Wilson (Condola Point)	126
A. Madden (Fredericton)	85
E. Ferguson (Fredericton) (some with Smith & Madden)	76
D. Christie (Fundy Nat. Park) (some with Candido, Majkas, Wilson)	70
D. Neave (Fredericton)	45
H. Chiasson (Lameque)	22
R.S. Gibbon (Stewiacke, N.S.) (see also N.S.)	14
R. Godin (Bathurst)	13
W. Skinner (Fredericton)	8
A.J. Erskine (Sackville) (see also N.S.)	6
F.J. Lloyd (Moncton) (one with Ruth Lloyd); W. McNutt (Amherst, N.S.) (see also N.S.); Mrs. A.G. Watters (Lancaster)	5 each
F. Alward (Glace Bay, N.S.) (see also N.S.); M. Smith (Atlanta, Ga.) (with E. Ferguson)	4 each
A.D. Smith (Sackville) (see also N.S.); L.E. Williams (Fredericton)	3 each
D.G. Dennis (Sackville) (see also N.S.); E. Howe (Oromocto); M. Randall (Ripples)	2 each
C.A. Barton (Chipman); R. Beam (Cumberland Bay Pt.); G.F. Broome (Prince William); Miss N. Moore (Fredericton); W. Sharpe (Fredericton); Mrs. H. Tracy (Sackville); Dr. I.W. Varty (Fredericton); H.A. West (Moncton); S.D. Whitman (Riverview)	1 each
TOTAL	509

Nova Scotia

J.W. Johnson (Karasdale)	142
W. McNutt (Amherst) (see also N.B.)	72
H. Erennan (New Glasgow)	59
Mrs. G. Snyder (Crousetown)	55
A.J. Erskine (Sackville, N. B.) (see also N.B.)	35
Rev. F. Alward (Glace Bay) (see also N.B.)	29
C. Coldwell (Caspereau)	28
S.W. Heneon (Halifax)	27
W. Neily (Blandford)	26
A.D. Smith (Sackville, N.B.) (see also N.B.)	
W.E. Whitehead (Round Hill)	14 each
J. Lorimer (Dartmouth)	11
J.S. Erskine (Wolfville); Miss E. Lowerison (Amherst)	9 each
Miss E. Crathorne (Dartmouth)	8
Dr. & Mrs. J.R. Gallagher (Barrington); R.W. Tufts (Wolfville)	7 each
Mr. & Mrs. R.W. Topple (Dartmouth)	6
Capt. E. Holdway (Pictou)	5
J. Comer (Halifax)	4
C.R.K. Allen (Halifax)	3
Dr. R.G.B. Brown (Halifax); D.G. Dennis & A.J. Doberstein (Sackville, N.B.) (see also N.B.); R.S. Gibbon (Stewiacke) (see also N.B.); Mrs. T.P. Hawkins (Wilmot); L. Neily (Tremont)	2 each
Mrs. R.M. Eaton (Dartmouth); Mrs. W.R. Foote (Marble Mountain); Mrs. A.J. Norman (Armdale); F. Shepard (Port Morien)	1 each
TOTAL	584

Prince Edward Island

S. Vass (Charlottetown)	162
M.L.H. Thomas (Tyne Valley) (26 with D.L. Waugh)	134
Bruce Pigot (Mt. Stewart)	95
N.G. Hurry (Charlottetown)	3
E.S. Gittens (Charlottetown)	1
TOTAL	395

- A. J. Erskine

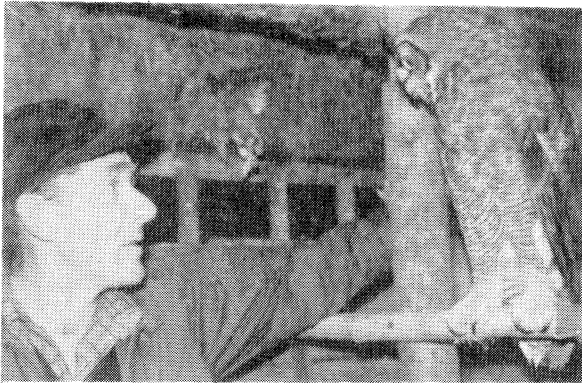
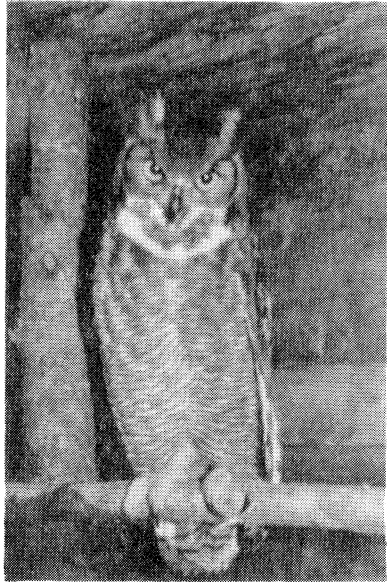
Birding in the Montreal Area

For Bird Watchers visiting EXPO 67 this year, the Province of Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds has compiled a leaflet Guide. A number of these are now available from the Nova Scotia Bird Society. The Guide incorporates maps of favorite areas, accompanied by a description of the area, and including the birds likely to be found there. Names and phone numbers of members of the Quebec society, who have volunteered to provide more detailed guidance on "how to get there" are given, and a Check List of the birds of the province included.

A TAMED HORNED OWL

These pictures of the Great Horned Owl were taken for Mr. Harry Brennan of New Glasgow. The owl lived in the barn all winter and became quite tame, on a diet of rabbits, caught for it by Mr. Brennan and his sons.

On the advice of Dr. Robie Tufts, it was left until April, this spring, and then released.



A BOOK FOR EVERYONE - A REVIEW

THE BIRDS OF CANADA. - W. Earl Godfrey. National Museum of Canada Bulletin No. 203. Ottawa, 1966. 428 Pages, 69 Colored Plates, 71 Line Drawings, Endpaper Maps. \$12.50. (Available from Queen's Printer, Ottawa and at local booksellers.)

We have waited a long time for this major volume. It is gratifying to be able to say that it is a worthy successor to the books of Godfrey's predecessors who set themselves much the same task, namely, to write in an authoritative and informative manner on the current state of knowledge of the birds of Canada. It may be parochial, but it is also gratifying to note that the author is a native Nova Scotian.

Many may not realize just how far back we can trace the lineage of this volume, but certainly the first major attempt to deal with the ornithology of what is now Canada was Fauna Borealis Americana by Swainson and Richardson in 1831. They noted 267 species known at that date north of the 48th parallel. (Godfrey deals with almost twice that number.) In the interim three important works dealing with the whole of Canada have appeared. They are A Catalogue of Canadian Birds with Notes on the Distribution of the Species by Montague Chamberlain of Saint John, New Brunswick (1887); Catalogue of Canadian Birds by John Macoun and James M. Macoun, (dating in parts from 1900 and published in one volume in 1909); and Birds of Canada by

P. A. Taverner (dating from 1919 and as one volume in 1934). Both the Macouns' and Taverner's books were published, strange though it may seem, by the old Geological Survey Branch of the Federal Department of Mines.

Godfrey's The Birds of Canada is lavishly produced, exceedingly clearly written, uses only a necessary minimum of technical terms, and is beautifully and usefully illustrated. In spite of this good opinion of it, I have some reservations to be dealt with later.

This latest treatise on Canada's birds includes a useful 8-page introduction, illustrations, a glossary of technical terms used, some selected references, and a good index in English and French, but the text is principally devoted to descriptive material about each of the 518 species, from Common Loon to Snow Bunting, known to have occurred in Canada up to January 1, 1964.

A narrative section introduces each order and family with, in the case of the latter, the number of species in North America and the number of these in Canada. Each species, when full treatment is accorded, is considered under these headings: description, measurements, field marks (including voice), habitat, nesting (usually with a description of eggs), range of the species, range in Canada (including breeding range maps for most species), subspecies and, too infrequently, remarks.

The handsomeness of the book owes much to the illustrator, John Crosby. The color representation is bright and true; there are no fancy distractions in the backgrounds except where such may suggest typical habitat. There are usually 10-15 birds to a plate representing perhaps 6-10 species. Those on the gulls, especially, are highly informative and not to be found elsewhere collected in one place. The level of detail which Crosby shows on his birds is intermediate between the frankly "field mark" style that R. T. Peterson (a bird artist of the first rank) deliberately uses in his guides and the meticulously detailed artistry displayed by Fenwick Landsdown in his bird paintings. Crosby's style is eminently suited to this volume, and he is a worthy successor to and peer of the late Allan Brooks, Canada's premier illustrator of birds in the past.

Unfortunately, the relationship between these fine pictures and the text is, at best, a tenuous one, for the color plates are numbered quite independently. Thus, in reading, when one wishes to turn to a picture, even though supplied with a plate number at the beginning of the species section, the plate is hard to find as it may be as many as 70 pages away from the descriptive material on the particular species. I suggest when looking for a picture while reading the text, that it is easiest for users to go from text to index and there find the page number opposite the plate in question.

* But the reverse, the complete lack of a reference from color plate back to text, is a major defect requiring one always to proceed to the text via the index. Probably ease of manufacture dictated the position of the plates (with mixed plates some birds' pictures will always be a few pages out of position) and one assumes the author not to be responsible, but there is no excuse for not cross-referencing them to the relevant text. To overcome these difficulties, I have already defaced my copy with hand-written page numbers in the appropriate places.

There are also 71 very finely executed expository line drawings by S. D. MacDonald. Neither these, nor the breeding range maps mentioned previously, present any reference problem as they are placed within the text of the species to which they refer.

Writing a book such as this poses many problems besides those involving knowledge, skill, and hard work. Thus, I bring up what must be a major problem - for whom is this book written?

Today the people interested in birds come in many guises: the family with a feeder station; the weekend birder; the serious part-time amateur who may be a bander; the practical biological fieldworker; and the professional ornithologist. For

each of these the book has great values, but it will disappoint, or at least not satisfy, any of them. I hasten to point out that this is inevitable, for two reasons. First, is the tremendous geographic area, an area that is no more uniform physically and climatically than are the views and aspirations of the people who live in it. Being so large and varied, Canada is not ornithologically uniform either. Second, it seems to me that too large a range of topics has been attempted for each species with the consequence that some of the topics do not get the treatment which they deserve or which many will expect to find. With the relatively large number of species to be considered, in a vast non-uniform area, Godfrey, however, has done it as well as it could be done in a one-volume work.

Thus, the book is not a "field guide"; it weighs four pounds and measures a bit larger than 8 X 11 inches. Yet, for each species there is a section on field marks, many of which are the best that I have seen, often better than the corresponding ones in "Peterson". Nonetheless, it should be bought by the family (it is a good value being a government publication and therefore subsidized) and treasured and displayed, but not before they own Peterson's "Field Guide", which can be carried to the bird, and a local bird book, if one exists, to supply the specialized local knowledge. In Nova Scotia we are fortunate in having Tuft's book. To some extent, Godfrey's will fill the gap in less fortunate provinces.

For the serious amateur, The Birds of Canada is, of course, a mandatory addition to a personal library. For him, the valuable sections on each species are those relating to habitat and range, particularly the latter. The maps for breeding ranges in Canada have not previously been available. For the bird bander, the descriptions and measurements which enable a bird in the hand to be identified will be of great value.

From a local point of view, much more delineation of range and particularly times of occurrence would have improved the usefulness of the book. It should be recorded that Godfrey was aware of this deficiency, noting in the introduction that it was not practicable in a one-volume book. But, granting the undoubted value of having delineated the breeding ranges of the shore birds, for instance, it is probable that 99 per cent of purchasers are never going to see shore birds on their nesting grounds. Yet, by the very nature of its attractive make-up, the book was clearly designed to have a large general sale to just such people. How much better, then, to have had a little more detail of shore bird migration routes through the parts of Canada where people live and especially the times of occurrence at various places on migration. To say of the dowitcher, ". . . the Maritimes . . . common in Autumn". - how much this conceals about one of the earliest southward migrants, quite plentiful in Nova Scotia

by July 10 and gone, except for stragglers, by the end of September.

A difference of opinion one must express concerns the accipiters. On page 88 we find this:

The Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks, as well as the Goshawk, feed largely on other birds and are among the few hawks that deserve the blame that unfortunately has been heaped on hawks in general. People should learn to distinguish these three species and avoid shooting by mistake the other beneficial kinds of hawks.

Granted, they eat other birds, but the clear inference of this paragraph is that accipiters should be shot. This is quite at variance with enlightened modern thought that any bird has a right to make a living in his time-honored way and at variance with the legislation in some states, and I think, some provinces.

In preparing to review any book, one naturally makes a sport of trying to spot errors. In this case, it proved to be tediously difficult. Two old subspecific common names have slipped in. "Northern" Mockingbird in text, plate and index; "Sooty" instead of Blue Grouse on the plate. Some other differences in common names from the A.O.U. check-list are deliberate and the author is to be commended for using them. American Robin is noted as well as the inclusion of Blue Goose in the species Snow Goose. Not an error, but rather baffling, is the fact of having illustrated the White-Faced Ibis rather

than the commoner (but still casual in Canada) Glossy Ibis. There are errors in the index, either omissions or wrong page numbers, concerning Wood Duck, Snowy Egret, Broad-Winged Hawk, Common Puffin and Winter Wren.

I was pleased to see Godfrey come out solidly in favor of capitalizing the initial letters of the common names of birds. What species did this birdwatcher see? - "I saw some yellow warblers and a solitary vireo." Such pedantic nonsense (even though they are not proper names) is most annoying in some publications and should not be allowed to get in the way of distinguishing between a duck that is black and a Black Duck.

FINALLY, FOR YEARS TO COME, GODFREY'S BOOK WILL BE
THE STANDARD REFERENCE ON THE BIRDS OF CANADA. BUT I
HOPE, SOMETIME IN THE SECOND CENTURY OF OUR COUNTRY, THAT
A NUMBER OF BOOKS ABOUT OUR BIRDS CAN BE PREPARED AND
WRITTEN, BOOKS WHICH WOULD GREATLY EXPAND WHAT HE HAS DONE
THE BETTER TO SERVE LOCAL AND INDIVIDUAL NEEDS. I WOULD
ENVISAGE A SERIES OF REGIONAL (NOT PROVINCIAL) BOOKS
WHICH WOULD GIVE THE USER MUCH MORE ON HABITS AND LOCAL
OCCURRENCE. THERE MIGHT BE SIX OF THESE, ON THE BIRDS OF
ATLANTIC CANADA, ST. LAWRENCE VALLEY AND THE LAKES,
NORTHERN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC, PRAIRIE PROVINCES, PACIFIC
CANADA AND ARCTIC CANADA. AS WELL, WE COULD DO WITH A
CANADIAN "FIELD GUIDE"; THE EIGHTH IN THE SERIES SHOULD
BE A TECHNICAL MANUAL. WE WOULD REALLY SERVE EVERYONE'S
NEEDS WITH THESE.

L.B. MACPHERSON

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

What a cold welcome our birds have had this spring! However, it is certainly warming up now.

Geese started going over us on April 1st. During that day and the next two we saw a dozen or more flocks, some from 20 to 30 birds, some 60 or more.

I hear the Willets near the shore now, and catch the occasional glimpse of one. Willets seem to me to be among the best parents of any of the birds. They nest somewhere near here, and I have never seen a nest, but every year we watch them coaxing the young ones down to the river. Sometimes it takes them two or three days to coax them down to the shore, but one year when someone fired a shotgun (possibly meaning only to frighten them) they ignored it completely and kept their place, still calling to the young ones.

They will also accept our help. I have rescued the young once or twice from boys or cats, and the parents will wait at the shore until the little ones are released, then rapidly shepherd them off along the marsh.

There seem to be quite a few chickadees around, although they seldom come to the feeder in warm weather. I have read of male birds offering food to the females at mating time, and never saw it before, but watched a chickadee offering choice tid-bits to his mate early in May. I am sure that both were adults.

MRS. HELEN HURLBURT

Tusket, Yarmouth Co., N.S.
June 14, 1967

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

Winter is still with us and it is going to be a late spring. Fortunately the deep snow is soaking into the ground with practically no run-off. A few bare patches are appearing in the fields but only a few Robins have appeared, preceded by small flocks of Grackles, Cowbirds and a few Red-winged Blackbirds.

Three men came to the house Sunday night with a bird for identification. It was in a sack and they all had gashes on the back of their hands from handling it. It was a Caneet they had picked up on the roadside. The bird appeared quite active but it was a long way "off course" by coming here as there is very little open water at sea and not likely any fish. It will be released in the morning to take its chance of surviving.

Canada Geese have arrived but there is nowhere for them to feed although they can rest in small areas of open water. Usually they go on to Orwell Bay, P.E.I., but I am told that there is no place for them there at present due to the heavy ice and cold nights, so I suppose they return to feeding grounds further south.

ERIC HOLDWAY

Pictou, N.S.
April 9, 1967

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

Greetings from Florida -- Mr. Akers and I have enjoyed your Newsletter very much. We plan to be in the Margaree Valley area for the summer. The "birding" there is wonderful and we even had the pleasure of pointing out a Cooper's Hawk nest with one young to the head of the British Ornithological Society, Admiral Sir Nigel Henderson, when he and Lady Henderson visited us. We also aided Dr. Laidlaw Williams regarding his paper on the Brown-capped Chickadee for the Smithsonian Institute. You may remember that we participated in the Summer Count, June 10, at Baddeck last year. If we are there (Margaree) in time do you want us to participate again and start a "count" near the Normaway Inn, where we know the country? We had hoped to stop in Halifax last fall as we wanted to report the useless killing of the Kingfishers at the Hatchery there. We saw them being shot and the head man boasted that he shot about fifty a week. We will stop en route sometime in June as Mr. Akers and I would like advice regarding these matters.

GERRY G. AKERS

Palm Beach, Florida
March, 1967

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

The only unusual record this year was of a Warbling Vireo which sang for several minutes in the top of our elms on the morning of 23rd June. I did not get a good view of the bird, which kept being shifted along by policing robins, starlings and sparrows with territories in the neighbourhood, but he looked and acted like a vireo and had a song like an impoverished and repetitive Purple Finch with no imagination. Hitherto I had only once had reason to believe that I had seen one here, though I had known them in the Pacific states. This was singing in some bushes near Gorsbrook in 1948, and I had a good look at the vireo at a distance of a few feet. At that time I had not realized its rarity.

Last night we heard a Sawhet Owl singing for hours; to my mind it sounded like tapping on a cracked cow-bell. I wonder how long bird books will continue to repeat the story that the bird got its English name from its rasping note, though the French name of chouette seems sufficient. This morning we saw a Mourning Warbler near Jordan Falls, an unexpected bird for that district.

J.S. ERSKINE

Wolfville, N.S.
June 28, 1967

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

I have in my back yard a berry bush which I cannot identify. The red berries stay on it all winter, and in the last two years the Cedar Waxwings have arrived on May 29 and in a matter of two days have stripped it of all dead berries.

Following are the occurrences of Waxwings I have noted in the last year - May 29, small flock; Sept. 9 through Sept. 13 about 25; Oct. 1 to Oct. 7 about 200, half of which were young; Jan 26, 2; Feb 23, 3; April 29, 12.

I would like to report also that the Mockingbird has survived the winter and has become very tame, coming as close as a foot. I feed him peanut butter 3 times a day, and he comes when whistled for. It might be of interest that he has eaten about 6 lbs. since Jan. 3. I first noticed it in the yard on Nov. 7, but could not get it to come to the feeder until the 3rd of January.

I am watching closely, for on May 20, 1966, the Baltimore Orioles arrived, and I will let you know if or when they arrive this year.

PAUL SLAUENWHITE

Lawrencetown, Anna. Co., N.S.
April 30, 1967

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

Since the Myrtle Warblers were first seen on May 3 a pair have been feeding daily on suet and continue to do so (June 12). The feeding station has been most interesting during this time. In addition to the Myrtle Warblers, other regular visitors have been, and are, Black-capped Chickadees, a pair of Boreal Chickadees, a pair of Catbirds (the female is now incubating), at least two Song Sparrows, a pair of Downy Woodpeckers and a male Hairy Woodpecker. Even a Yellow Warbler has occasionally had a taste of suet.

One wonders whether this apparently unusual situation has been due to a scarcity of natural food, brought about by the cold, backward spring.

I have noted that many of the eggs of the Orchard Tent Caterpillar (quite numerous this year) hatched at about the usual time. The buds of the host trees did not burst until some time later and many of the insects starved to death. Possibly other species of insects have been affected in the same way.

W.E. WHITEHEAD

Annapolis Royal, N.S.
June 12, 1967

Editor
NSBS Newsletter

Spring certainly came with a rush on May 1. Up until then I wasn't a bit sure that it was going to come at all. That evening while working outdoors I was able to hear almost at the same time the songs of Tree Swallow, Robin, Purple Finch, Flicker, Kingfisher, Vesper Sparrow and White Throat. It was a glorious sound indeed. I wonder how many stopped to listen. The first bumble bee also buzzed by. The frogs sang for the first time that night.

Since then the cold and rain were certainly very discouraging. The Robins behaved so peculiarly, even to building nests in leafless trees and on the ground. Of course they were destroyed, as were nearly all the Robin nests that I found this year. I only know of three that have raised any young as yet and none of those were home here.

On June 4th at 11 am I watched a female Red Crossbill feeding a well-feathered young. Female was greenish yellow with no stripes and the young one was brown with dark clear stripes. She appeared to regurgitate food into the young bird's mouth after feeding on pine cone seeds. I saw her do this twice and the young one kept up a chatter that sounded like a Song Sparrow when the nest is disturbed. There were about 12 Red Crossbills around here feeding for days and to me their cheeping sounded like the first note of a Robin's warning call. It was so interesting to see them hanging upside down extracting the seeds from the opening cones. Other grosbeak were around, too.

On April 26 Don Bowlby of Middleton phoned and told me there was an Albino Robin staying around a certain home in Torbrook and he had seen it feeding on the ground with the other robins. My husband and I went up that evening after supper, and after sitting in the yard for a few minutes he said, "There it is." Sure enough, it perched on the top of a very high evergreen and even sang for us! There wasn't another robin in sight. We were looking up under the bird and from the side, and I would say that it appeared to be mostly white except for the tail and wing feather and possibly some black at the back of the neck. However, one might have gotten a different impression from a different angle.

NELLIE SNYDER

Crousetown, N.S.
June 8, 1967

TWO TRUE STORIES

by Terrance Hyson
(aged 12)

The Hawk and the Sparrow

In Mrs. Nickerson's back yard there stands one apple tree about three to five yards from the house. On January the twenty-eighth, I spied something moving in this apple tree. At first I thought it was a cat, then it looked too big for a cat. With the use of my binoculars, which are very poor, I noticed that the object was a hawk. I rushed to the phone and called Mrs. Nickerson who looked out and saw it. From my house I could not see what the hawk was doing, but Mrs. Nickerson told me later that it was eating a House Sparrow. Now I will give you the account of what Mrs. Nickerson saw in her own words.

She rushed to the window to spy a beautiful hawk, which stayed there long enough for her to get a good look at it. The hawk was there about fifteen minutes eating a House Sparrow which

he had grasped in his claws to the branch of the tree. It was quite a bloody, gorey sight. By the time he had completely devoured the little sparrow, the hawk's beak and feet were covered with blood and he would stop to wipe his bill off once in a while. This hawk seemed to eat claws, skin, feathers, bones and all. Then it settled back, contented and very proud. It relaxed there until a salesman scared it and it zoomed away. The hawk was there half an hour. Mrs. Nickerson and I looked it up in all our bird books. This hawk's tail was squared off so we found it to be a Pigeon Hawk. It looked just like its description in the books.

Later, after the hawk was gone, the sparrows and starlings came back. They were very nervous and could not sit still. Boy, were they nervous! The next day a flock of House Sparrows settled down outside my bedroom window. They were still nervous, but extremely sleepy. They spent half the day sleeping.

Then on March the fifteenth, Mrs. Nickerson told me a true bird yarn which included the Hawk. This is what she told me.

The Hawk and the Jay

This morning, March 15th., Mr. Nickerson called his wife out to see a beautiful sight. When she arrived on the spot, she saw not one, not three, not six, but eight Blue Jays in her apple tree. To keep them around, she hurried to put seeds out for them. They began feeding happily.

While doing some other work in the house, she heard a blood-curdling screech from outside. Not knowing what it was, it sounded like a very loud warning screech, she rushed to the window and, looking out, she saw the Pigeon Hawk sitting up in the top of the tree and every bird was gone except one Blue Jay and one House Sparrow which very soon left. The jay attacked the hawk by flying at him and making loud noises. The hawk pushed his head back and ruffled his wings a couple of times as if he was being pushed off the branch, but he didn't do much of this. The jay looked kind of savage. He was beating his wings, making his mouth go and making loud noises. The jay was fluffed up and his tail was spread and he was jumping up and down at the hawk. He was a foot and a half from the hawk. The hawk only sat about two or three minutes and away he went over the house. This left the jay as the victor.

SPRING COMES TO COLE HARBOR

From the Diary of Rosemary Eaton

- 20/3/67 Zero at 6 a.m. About 3000 Canada Geese flying out of Cole Harbor in very straggling formation.
- 23/3/67 First mergansers - too far to identify.
- 24/3/67 (Good Friday) Snowing and blowing from N.E. Front doorstep alive with birds, and some sheltering from storm inside garage. I counted 8 Black-capped Chickadees, 12 Juncos, 1 Blue Jay, 3 Downy Woodpeckers(m), 7 House Sparrows, 4 Tree Sparrows, 2 Song Sparrows, 1 Goldfinch, 3 Starlings - and 3 squirrels!
- 1/4/67 About 25 Black Duck in newly-opened water off islands in Cole Harbor opposite our house. 1 Hairy Woodpecker, male, the first for months, and 2 Woodcock in the woods, probing for worms.
- 2/4/67 Flocks of newly-arrived Fox Sparrows and Song Sparrows - the latter had much glossier and more colorful markings than the ones that stayed all winter. That day in the woods there seemed to be Fox and Song Sparrows under every bush. By the afternoon the Fox Sparrows were joining the "regulars" on the front step. 80 Canada Geese and a Horned Lark.
- 4/4/67 2 Robins, 1 Red-winged Blackbird, 2 Brown-headed Cowbirds(m), 16 Fox Sparrows (and there must have been hundreds in the bush, 75 Black Duck near Islands.
- 6/4/67 Heard familiar raucous croak of a Great Blue Heron and later saw it.
- 7/4/67 3 male and 1 female Purple Finch sat outside our front door on Aspen Poplar and "cased the joint", watching the other birds feeding. Soon they joined in - shining raspberry-colored heads were startling! 20 Fox Sparrows on front lawn. I noticed a male Purple Finch flying and singing in flight. A House Sparrow collecting small twigs, so presumably nesting. Pine Grosbeaks nipping buds off the trees.
- 8/4/67 25⁺ Fox Sparrows on lawn today - I lost count. They were singing all through the woods. Loon calling.
- 9/4/67 8 Heron fishing in harbor. 25⁺ Fox Sparrows on lawn plus Purple Finches (which came every day in increasing numbers and sang beautifully just outside). The birds seem to have got used to the idea that so long as we are behind glass we are safe, and it is fascinating to watch the colorful finches and the other birds from 3-4 feet, too close for field glasses! Many Black Duck and unidentified mergansers seen at a distance in harbor, 6 Robins, 2 Cowbirds.
- 10/4/67 Many Robins, 3 Red-winged Blackbirds. Snow fell, so there were quantities of Fox, Song, House Sparrows, Purple Finches, etc.

around house. 20 Black Duck.

- 11/4/67 Robin day. Around 9 am the garden was suddenly full of them. There was one sheltered place under the trees where about 30 of them were gathered in a tight bunch - at a glance it looked as though some exotic orange flowers had sprung up in the night - they looked so cheerful against the drab brown of the grass. I think they must have just arrived, and were resting. After a while they dispersed and started hunting for food. 30⁺ Fox Sparrows, 15⁺ Starlings (only about 5 all winter), 28 Black Duck. 2 Black Duck explored an open lead in the ice - they had to keep climbing onto ice in places.
- 12/4/67 The Fox Sparrows are digging holes in the lawn - you wouldn't think their feet were so strong. 60 Black Duck.
- 13/4/67 Female Goldeneye was sunning itself on a rock. The male was kept very busy driving off a most persistent rival who wouldn't take no for an answer. I watched them for half an hour.
- 14/4/67 Ice in cove breaking up - about 80 Black Duck. 300 Canada Geese flying over. Ruffed Grouse - had been feeding on fallen frozen apples. (Ruffed Grouse seen almost daily.)
- 15/4/67 10 Heron fishing in Cole Harbor. Common Loon heard.
- 16/4/67 3 males and 1 female Red-breasted Merganser diving in our cove. At a distance one male merganser with six females - I think American Mergansers, but too far to be certain. 60 Black Duck dabbling in the cove. Fox Sparrows still around. About 300 Canada Geese flying into Cole Harbor. The grass is still frozen, so the Robins are looking for food along the shore.
- 17/4/67 A pair of Red-breasted Mergansers swimming near islands. The male was putting on a show, stretching his head up at a strange angle and then bowing. The female went on diving unconcernedly. A Herring Gull hovered like an osprey over the water, then dropped right in and submerged. It came up with something edible and repeated the performance several times. I was watching the gull when a Marsh Hawk sailed across my field of vision showing prominent white back patch. Black Duck all over the cove. An Owl hooting at night, a low, soft "hoo h'hoo" (pause) "hoo hooo" (accentuated). Great Horned Owl, perhaps? Was leaning out of the window concentrating on the owl calls when the Woodcock went over.
- 18/4/67 19° and there was a very thin layer of ice on the cove - just strong enough to support 3 idiotic Black Duck, which saw a Herring Gull splashing in open water. Instead of flying over they walked laboriously right across our cove. They were slipping badly and often sat down on their tails, but waddled on with great determination till they reached the water.
- 20/4/67 Myrtle Warbler. Red-breasted Mergansers put on a display - 2 males, 3 females. The males kept displaying at each other (definitely not at the females - these were some distance away).

First the male would rear up its head so that its neck looked very long and the trailing head feathers fell back invisible - beak pointed at an angle to the sky. For the fraction of a second the neck remained outstretched, then the bird bobbed its head down (beak open, perhaps calling, but I couldn't hear) and the tail rose from the water. Usually one bird performed at a time, but sometimes they did it simultaneously, once every minute or so. At times the males faced each other, at times they swam in the same direction. It looked as though each male was warning the other off its females. The latter kept contact, but kept diving, though of course they may have been watching the males with great interest in between dives. Also noted a pair of American Mergansers and a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers passing each other quite close - but without any visible reaction.

22/4/67

Rusty hinge voice of Grackle. A Grouse - I suppose Ruffed - in the garden. It glided along as though on wheels, very, very slowly. With all bird books open I still could not be certain that it wasn't a female Spruce Grouse - due to unfamiliarity with both birds on the ground. 3 prs. Red-breasted Mergansers, Kingfisher.

23/4/67

2 female Cowbirds. Kingfisher diving from tree at bottom of garden.

26/4/67

Beautiful spring(?) morning - 27^o and bird bath frozen solid. Fox Sparrows singing and Purple Finches and the first White-throated Sparrow of the year, which was hopping about among the crocuses. 2 pairs of Red-breasted Mergansers in cove. 1 male Cowbird. 2 Goldfinches eating silver buds of Aspen Poplar. 1 Rusty Blackbird (m) sunning itself on the top of a tree. For about 4 days I have been seeing swallows but though I presume they are Tree Swallows they go too fast for me to get field glasses on them. A red-winged Blackbird came to the front steps and fed beside the other birds. He was nervous and would grab some food, then hop down out of sight to eat it, shooting up a black periscope of head above the step every few seconds. He flew off showing gorgeous red patches.

27/4/67

2 Bronzed Grackles. 2 Tree Swallows posed obligingly on wire so that I could identify them! The Grackle joined other birds on steps; magnificent blue-green head, copper on breast and gold on wings. 14 Purple Finches on the front doorstep, male and female. As my husband remarked, "One almost has to ask permission to walk out of the door."

29/4/67

5-6 inches of soggy, wet snow and crowds of birds waiting for food. 8 Juncos, 4 male Purple Finches, 10 female, 2 Blue Jays, 3 Song Sparrows, 4 Black-capped Chickadees, 3 House Sparrows, 1 Robin, 1 Fox Sparrow, 1 Tree Sparrow, 1 Savannah Sparrow, 1 Cowbird, 1 Downy Woodpecker (m), 3 White-throated Sparrows (one of them very aggressive). In the cove, 3 mergansers (too far to identify) and several Black Duck.

30/4/67

First female Cowbird, with 2 males. 1 Osprey hovering over Cole

Harbor. Male Myrtle Warbler in gorgeous breeding plumage. 2 Ospreys seen in the afternoon. My husband saw one perched on a stump at about 100 yds. with a fish in its talons. The bird watched him warily and finally flew off very close, so close that the diamond pattern of the flat fish could be seen. The fish was carried head forward and upright. Incidentally, I had been hearing the Osprey's cry for about a week, but couldn't remember who the familiar call belonged to.

- 1/5/67 Fox and Savannah Sparrows still with us.
- 2/5/67 Heard Hermit Thrush and Flickers for the first time. Willets. "Hooping" owl heard again previous night. Same Grouse on front lawn, later it flew into Aspen Poplar tree and started eating long tassels. Feet not feathered and slightly crested head when startled so presume it is Ruffed Grouse. It continued to visit us - sometimes there were two of them.
- 3/5/67 Pair of Pine Grosbeaks first on a spruce tree, and then on an alder bush eating last year's seeds.
- 4/5/67 3 Flickers chasing each other.
- 5/5/67 An American Bittern fishing at the bottom of the garden.
- 7/5/67 Goldfinches twittering and swooping overhead. Ruffed Grouse "drumming".
- 10/5/67 A pair of Willets were standing on a rock in the cove, facing in the same direction. The male started making an unfamiliar call; to me it sounded like "chuck a chuck a chuck a chuck a chuck". Then he raised and spread his beautiful black and white wings as high as they would go, fluttering them, and calling all the time. He did this three times, then, wings still fluttering, walked towards the female and mated with her - perhaps for 3 seconds - wings fluttering all the time, and then flew off. The female remained alone on her stone.
- 11/5/67 4 Crackles, 3 Red-winged Blackbirds (m), one female. Starlings building nest and Barn Swallows looking for sites.
- 13/5/67 A pair of Yellowlegs seen very close in our cove - one had brilliantly colored legs, brighter than the other's and more orange than yellow - feeding along edge of shore.
- 15/5/67 Savannah Sparrow still coming for hand-outs.
- 21/5/67 Terns - too far to identify.
- 22/5/67 Catbird (heard), Crows nesting.
- 23/5/67 Barn Swallows hovering under eaves of house - Starlings building nest.
- 24/5/67 Crows nesting.
- 29/5/67 Yellow Warbler. Black Duck flushed from nest - 4 eggs.

- 30/5/67 A perfect morning. Goldfinches everywhere - skimming Barn Swallows. Bobolink (m). 2 Gray Jays, scolding (I prefer Whiskey Jack!) Robin's nest with 4 eggs. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird hovered at our narcissus flowers. Nashville Warbler. A pair of American Mergansers in cove.
- 31/5/67 A Chestnut-sided Warbler picking at frayed rope. Myrtle and Parula Warblers. Barn Swallows putting little dabs of mud above our upstairs window. (Our plumber said that if swallows build on your house it will never burn down. Later the swallows changed their minds, so I am a little apprehensive!) American Bittern was fishing again at bottom of garden. Ruby-throated Hummingbird was around again at narcissi. More Yellow Warblers.
- 1/6/67 Ruffed Grouse "drumming". Humming bird. Osprey hovering very close. 15 Herons in cove. Numerous Parula and Yellow Warblers.
- 2/6/67 Female Purple Finch had a beakful of our Husky's fluff. 2 male Purple Finches "making passes" at her, erected their head feathers into a crest, spreading their wings and approaching her - with wings spread, the rose-red rumps of the males showed very well. Myrtle and Chestnut-sided Warblers in numbers.
- 3/6/67 Black-throated Green Warbler heard. Starlings feeding young. The male Purple Finches often soar and sing, like an English Lark.
- 4/6/67 Nashville Warbler singing outside back door and eating buds. The woods are alive with fluttering warblers. Redstart (m), Black-throated Green Warbler, Parula, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia Warbler, Yellowthroat (heard), Boreal Chickadee, Catbird.
- 5/6/67 Young Starling fell out of nest.
- 6/6/67 A Black-throated Green Warbler tugged impatiently at some old bits of string which had been used for tying old bones to poplar. The bird looked frustrated, so I put some bits out. A Song Sparrow was carrying a green caterpillar in its beak, so presumably the eggs have hatched. The bird watched me carefully from a bush, frequently singing with its beak full. Terns flying above islands (too far to identify).
- 7/6/67 It pays off to feed hungry Purple Finches! One or two males come and sing and sing every evening on the tree outside the front door. About 7 pairs come regularly, morning and evening. Male Goldfinches among the flowering dandelions are a gorgeous sight. Female Purple Finch with a beakful of grass. A large Black Duck family afloat. I think it must have been launching day, as the ducklings were so minute, with their yellow heads showing up. They were skittering in all directions like water beetles on a pond. The mother was following sedately in the rear while her brood zipped in all directions. I counted 13.
- 9/6/67 Willets calling all over the place. I was amused to find a pair dabbling in our cove - I had passed them without seeing them. Obviously they saw me and my dog but did not appear alarmed.

- 10/6/67 Black Duck with 11 very small ducklings. (Probably the family I saw before.)
- 12/6/67 Female Redstart - very dark general coloring, but yellow tail patches. Black Duck with 4 ducklings (from nest seen 29/5/67?) Also the large Black Duck family of 11. Unfortunately I disturbed them and it was fascinating to see the discipline of these very young birds - previously dashing wildly in all directions. They collected in a tight bunch behind the female and went as hard as they could go across the cove. One got left behind, and I hope was able to catch up later. A Crow and a Willet were exchanging angry remarks.
- 13/6/67 Two Catbirds looking in at me through the window at about 3 feet! Black Duck family of 11 plus parent. Tern fishing off point - hovering, diving, circling. Too far to identify. (Heard a bird whistling across the railway tracks, but unfortunately could not see it. It sounded exactly like the urgent double whistle of a Cardinal! It was in conifers - "weep ur weep ur weep us weep ur weep ur weep ur weep" - very rapid. I wonder what other bird has a similar call.)



Nesting Cormorants Ward Hemeon
Eastern Shore Bird Sanctuary

NEW BIRDS FOR THE LIST

For the benefit of those bird-watchers like myself, i.e., honest amateurs with not all that much time to spare, I offer the following list of species, not included in the American Ornithological Union (AOU) Checklist. Put these down on your Field Card when you get tired of hearing the experts argue, and go on to greener pastures.

1. The Spigeon Hawk: One of the smaller hawks, always seen during an overcast, perched at some distance away.
2. The Comic Tern: This is the species of tern most frequently seen around our bays and inlets, and is also well known in the U.K., where it is described as "usual".
3. The Fuzzy Woodpecker: Appears to be intermediate in size between the Hairy and Downy Woodpecker, always stays at the back of the tree.
4. The Craven: A large black bird, call unknown, always seen flying away from you.
5. Chicklets: Small brownish birds glimpsed in the thickest tops of evergreens, keeping up an incessant high, thin chatter. This species appears to be widespread, as I first heard it so-called from two distinguished members of the Vancouver Bird Society.
6. The Blue-eyed Vireo: Definitely a vireo (or possibly a robin?) never seen, only heard faintly in the distance.
7. The Baypoll Warbler: Only seen in the fall, a small pale warbler, breast faintly striped, suggestion of wing-bars, feet hidden behind the foliage.
8. The Female Dicksparrow: Appears at feeders in the fall, usually on rainy days when you can't keep your glasses clear.

(Just one warning, please don't include these on reports to the Newsletter - the Committee is apt to get irritated. They go by the book.)

- The Editor -

DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS OCTOBER 15th

