



Nova Scotia Birds

50th Anniversary Special Edition



NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

Executive 2004-2005

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Formed in 1955, the Nova Scotia Bird Society is a member of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists and the Canadian Nature Federation. The activities of the Society are centered on the observation and study of the bird life of this province and the preservation of habitat.

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Cover Photo: This SPOTTED SANDPIPER chick seems to be playing hide and seek with the photographer. [Photo Ann Clifford 1995 NSBS / PGNS Slide Competition]

NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS

SPECIAL EDITION

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Breeding bird surveys suggest that the PILEATED WOODPECKER is increasing in Nova Scotia. [Photo Randy Lauff]

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From the Boreal Forests of Cape Breton Island to the Atlantic Raised Bogs of our southern counties, from the supermarket parking lot to the local landfill, birds...and birders...are everywhere. And just as there are birds of many feathers, birders are similarly diversely adorned in unique plumages as well. The backyard birder, the twitcher, the digiscoper, the artist...

Birds of a feather, flock together.

Undoubtedly, the upcoming years will be full of adventure as we participate in the second atlassing project. In the last 50 years, we have witnessed the last nestings of Loggerhead Shrike and possibly others; in contrast, we have seen the first nestings of Three-toed Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher, American Oystercatcher among others. We have seen the Laughing Gull go and return... but will it stay? The upcoming atlassing project, as well as other surveys, will show us breeding records for new species, and despite Herculean efforts by some, declining ranges or extirpations of other species. Turkey Vulture, Ring-billed Gull, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse and Great-tailed Grackle are distinct possible as additions to our Provincial checklist. Will we see an end to the breeding of Black Tern, Piping Plover and Purple Martin?

Birders of many feathers also flock together.

How will we approach the next 50 years? How *should* we approach the next 50 years? The Nova Scotia Bird Society has never been more active in environmental issues; unfortunately, this may be because there has never been such a need. There are more than a dozen surveys in which Society members participate, and it is the data from these surveys that are so important in making management decisions. You will read about some of these surveys in this issue, and more of them in upcoming regular issues of *Nova Scotia Birds*. Have you participated in a Christmas Bird Count? How about trying something else as well next year?

The Nova Scotia Bird Society – a flock of birders for 50 years; as with any flock, the individual make up of the flock changes, but we have the same purpose as ever, to enjoy the birds, to foster an understanding of the birds and to help restrict the declines, conserve and enhance the recovery of those species in need.

Good Birding!

Randy

We wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program, toward our mailing costs.

A Word From The President

Happy 50th Anniversary Everyone!

Look how far we've come in the last 50 years, thanks to the volunteer efforts of our members – you! What started off as a bird watching society has developed into an organization that goes out and tracks down rarities, documents and records behaviour patterns, promotes skill development among its members and encourages new birders – all this while still protecting and conserving wild birds and their habitat; something we've been doing for half a century.

The biggest change in the last couple of decades has been the use of the Internet to aid birding objectives. Thanks to our Rare Bird Alert and to NatureNS, birders from Cape Sable Island to the Cape Breton Highlands are able to communicate their sightings instantly. This enables birders from other areas of the province to observe birds they might never have known were here!

Our magazine and our field trips remain the lifeblood of our society. The magazine is a privilege of membership, but the field trips are open to everyone and are an excellent way to familiarize yourself with birding hot spots around Nova Scotia.

What's coming up? The second Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas will be entering its field stage next spring. Training sessions will be provided for those wishing to get involved in this project. Other programs like the Atlantic Canada Nocturnal Owl Survey, Breeding Bird Surveys, Maritime Shorebird Surveys and, of course, annual Christmas Bird Counts are always looking for volunteers. Let us know what interests you and I'm sure we can point you in the right direction.

Birding is such a great hobby: fresh air, exercise, skill development, close encounters with nature – what more could you ask? The Nova Scotia Bird Society has it all!

Suzanne M. Borkowski

Highlights from Fifty Years of Nova Scotia Birding

By Gisèle d'Entremont

27 January 1955 Fifty-five people met at the Assembly Hall, Nova Scotia Technical College (which then housed the Nova Scotia Museum of Science), in Halifax and formed the Nova Scotia Bird Society (NSBS).

Those elected were:

Robie Tufts	President
C.R.K. Allen	Vice-president
W.J. Mills	Secretary-Treasurer
H.F. Lewis	Editor
F.A. Lane	Executive Committee
D.K. Crowdis	Executive Committee
J.R. Calder Fraser	Executive Committee
H.P. Moffatt	Auditor

Fee for an annual membership – \$1.00!

It was decided to leave the Charter Membership open until 31 March 1955 to allow the word to get around. By the end of this period, there were 341 members.

In the Society's first year, it sponsored two field trips, one at Mount Uniacke and the other at Evangeline Beach. In 1961, there were five field trips: May, Shelburne-Queens; June, King's County; July, Yarmouth County; July, Kejimikujik National Park; and September, Digby-Annapolis. In August 1963, the Society ran its first field trip to Seal Island. Field trips have become the Society's main activities, and have increased in number over these past fifty years. In 2004, there were about 40 field trips throughout the province.

1955 The first Christmas Bird Count designated as an NSBS count (Wolfville) was reported in *Audubon Field-Notes* in 1955. David Currie has been co-ordinating the counts for the Province since taking over from Ross and Mary Anderson in 1990.

Within the five first years, the Society adopted the Atlantic Puffin as our official emblem.

1957 The Society became incorporated under the Societies Act. This enabled us to buy Hertford Island, one of the Bird Islands, off Cape Breton, as a bird sanctuary.

25 March 1959 Number 1, Volume 1 of the *Nova Scotia Bird Society Newsletter* rolled off the duplicating machine. It was on two sides of one sheet of legal-sized paper, and included a summary of winter reports. Prior to this, our birding news was part of the N.S. Museum of Science's Newsletters, and collaboration with museum staff had produced several museum publications devoted chiefly to birds. From the beginning, the core of the Society's publication has been the seasonal reports of bird sightings. Because of this documentation of the Province's bird life, for many years, the Museum has supported our publication by providing an annual grant.

1960 The Maritimes Nest Records Scheme was established by Tony Erskine of the Canadian Wildlife Service, Sackville, NB. Since the beginning, members of the NSBS have contributed significantly to this data. Bernard Forsythe, one of our members, has submitted 2758 nest records since 1975, while George Ball runs a close second at 2119. No one else has even broken the 1000 mark!

7 November 1961 The first meeting of the Truro Branch of the NSBS, the Society's first branch.

1964. The April 1964 NSBS *Newsletter*, became formatted as a 6 X 9 magazine with a cover that became glossy, occasionally coloured, in later years.

1966 The North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) was set up in N.S. by Tony Erskine of the Canadian Wildlife Service, and 13 of our 32 routes were first surveyed in 1966. Many routes have continued to be surveyed by our members. Sylvia Fullerton has run routes for 36 years, including the Roman Valley route, which is the only route that has been surveyed every year since 1966 in our Province.

December 1966 The Cape Breton Branch of the Society (70 persons attended the first meeting) was established; with its own Constitution, its members were considered to have full rights in the parent organization, and a representative of the Branch was always a part of the parent Society's executive. The Cape Breton Branch ceased to be active in 1980, after 23 years.



NSBS group at East Side Village, Seal Island, May 1969. [Photo Eric Mills]

1968 *Where to Find the Birds in Nova* was published and went through four printings; a second edition then followed in 1984.

28 March 1969 The NSBS Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund (SSTF) was established as a charitable organization.

1970 Ian McLaren, President of the Society in 1968 and 1969 became the first provincial representative at Canadian Nature Federation (CNF) in 1970, and its President in 1974. The Society hosted the Federation's conference, held at Acadia University, in the summer of 1973. We continue our membership in CNF, now Nature Canada.

1972 The Puffin of the Year Award was instituted by then-President Eric Cooke; the award was to be presented annually to an individual in acknowledgment of their substantial contribution to the Society.

Early 1970's Regular monthly meetings of the Society were held at the Museum in Halifax on the fourth Thursday of each month. The Society has continued these meetings to the present day, as well as usually holding at least one meeting a year in another part of the province.

1974 Maritimes Shorebird Surveys, initiated by the Canadian Wildlife Service, have been carried out by NSBS members since the beginning. Notably Sylvia Fullerton, has monitored Cherry Hill Beach for 30 years. Other long-time surveyors include Sid and Betty June Smith and Shirley Cohrs, all of whom have been surveying for 25 years.

1978 The category of Life Membership was introduced as an option for the membership; the Society now boasts 17 Life Memberships.

1979 The Junior Field Trip was established by a donation given to the SSTF by Bob Kanisberg, in memory of his wife Margot. The first of these field trips took place on June 16, 1979, to McNab's Island, co-ordinated by Roger Pocklington.

5 July 1980 Special 25th Anniversary Puffin Award presented to Frank Robertson. He had a weekly column for the *Cape Breton Post* called "For The Birds"; Frank was also a regular contributor to a local morning radio program. A few years earlier, Frank had received the first Honorary Life Membership, presented by the Cape Breton Branch of the NSBS.

January 1981 NSBS magazine is given a new name and becomes *Nova Scotia Birds* (Volume 23, Number 1).

Early 80's The Society supported the Piping Plover Project, co-ordinated by Roland Chiasson and Stephen Fleming; members volunteered to monitor beaches and count parent birds and their young.

1982 The Raptor Rehabilitation Program, a province-wide scheme, was initiated; it was supported by veterinarians, especially Society members Ian MacKay and Jack Cameron. The Department of Lands and Forests (now the Department of Natural Resources) and the SSTF covered veterinarian and transportation expenses. By the end of the year there was a new Raptor Rehabilitation Centre in Masons Point, *Halifax*, operated by Elaine and Mike Kew.

28 June 1983 The Society was selected to receive the Certificate of Merit in the Environmental Awards presented by the N.S. Department of the Environment, on the basis of the Raptor Rehabilitation Project. Shirley Cohrs, the main NSBS organizer of this project in 1982, accepted the award at a ceremony in the Red Chamber, at Province House.

November, 1984 An award was given to Phyllis Dobson at the Annual General Meeting upon her retirement as Records Editor. She had started as Editor of the *Nova Scotia Bird Society Newsletter* from 1959 to 1976, continued as Records Editor until her retirement in 1984.

1985 Planning for the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas was informally begun in 1984 by Society members Linda and Peter Payzant, and the project was formally established in 1985, with much participation of NSBS members during the field seasons 1986-1990.

1985 Shirley Cohrs designed the Society's crest, using the Atlantic Puffin, our official emblem.

June 1985 NSBS was presented with a plaque from Environment Canada, in appreciation of the efforts of the Society towards a Management Plan for Kejimikujik National Park, and towards the Woods property.

1986 The third edition of Robie W. Tufts', *Birds of Nova Scotia* was published with revisions by members of the NSBS co-ordinated by Ian McLaren.

1988 Establishment of the annual NSBS competition held by the Photographic Guild of NS, to improve the quality of the Society's slide collection and to develop a wider interest in birding and bird photography. The trophy for this competition is called "The Puffin Trophy," and 2005 will be the 17th year. The first competition was held in 1989, and won by Patrick Wall for his slide of a Common Tern; since then, Lorris Keizer has won the competition twelve times.

1989 A Bird Information Telephone Line was established by Blake Maybank, to report rare or interesting bird sightings and announce field trips and meetings. The Society also had a Rare Bird Alert Telephone fan-out network that existed until the late 90's.

1989 C.R.K. Allen was awarded with an Honorary Life Membership at the AGM, for his many contributions over the years.

1991 An annual photography competition, sponsored by Society's executive for NSBS members was established; the photographs had to be of wild birds. "The Chickadee Trophy" was awarded to winners up to 1994 when this competition ended.



Phyllis Dobson received a sandpiper carving in recognition of her work as Records Editor and Editor of NSBS Newsletter. November 01, 1984. [Photo Peter Payzant]

1991 The Society's *Birding Nova Scotia* was published and replaced the successful *Where to Find the Birds in Nova Scotia* with Shirley Cohrs as Editor.

Early 90's Shirley Cohrs was presented with an Honorary Life Membership for her many contributions.

29 October 1992 The *Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces* was launched at the Museum of Natural History in Halifax. Linda and Peter Payzant deserve tremendous credit for their commitment and leadership, resulting in the Atlas becoming a reality; Tony Erskine edited the book.

August 1994 The Osprey was proclaimed the Official Bird of the Province of N.S. at the Canadian Nature Federation conference held in Halifax.

July 1994 The NSBS lands on the World Wide Web via the Chebucto Community Net, resulting from the initiative of Peter Payzant.

13 May 1995 The first North American Migration Count (NAMC) in Nova Scotia was held. Judy Tufts acted as provincial co-ordinator since 1995, but 2005 will be her last year. Judy also coordinated two fall counts during this time.

1998 Shirley Cohrs retired as Editor in Chief of *Nova Scotia Birds* after 22 years. Marion Allsebrooke and Paul Quinn became Editors.

October 1, 1998 The Society was granted Registered Charity Status, resulting from the initiative of Bernice Moores, Treasurer.

Autumn 1998 The Society became members of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists.

Winter, 1999 *Nova Scotia Birds* (Volume 41, Issue 1) changed format and appearance after twenty-five years, to its present 8½ x 11 inches standard page size. Four issues per year were initiated with this volume – Winter, Spring, Summer, and Autumn, replacing the previous three issues and fall flyer.

2000 Randy Lauff became Editor of *Nova Scotia Birds*.

February, 2000 The Cape Breton Nocturnal Owl Survey was initiated and coordinated by Susann Myers, who continues to organize this event. This extensive survey was the first for nocturnal owls on Cape Breton Island since the Breeding Bird Atlas surveys of the late 1980's.

23 March 2000 An Honorary Life Membership was presented to Ian McLaren.

2001 The NSBS took on the responsibility for the new NS Piping Plover Guardian Program. The project was primarily funded by Environment Canada through the Canadian Wildlife Service. In January 2001, Anna McCarron was hired as the program co-ordinator. The Society's management of the administrative aspects of this project, which later became the N.S. Coastal Guardian Program, ended in 2004, though the Society remains supportive of it.

Early 2000's Working with Ted D'Eon, the Society secured a grant from the Important Bird Areas (IBA) Community Action Fund to raise awareness of the endangered Roseate Terns, nesting on the Brothers Islands, off southwestern Nova Scotia. The Society played a smaller supportive role with IBA project on Cape Sable Island.

Winter-Spring, 2001 The Society co-hosted, with the Museum of Natural History and the Canadian Wildlife Service, a seven-part series of illustrated talks. The series entitled, "Preserving Birds Here and There: The North American Conservation Initiative", presented the work of CWS biologists in monitoring and protecting various species that fall within the mandate of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. The Society has regularly participated in such series of talks in partnership with the Museum. Joan Waldron has organized many of these series on the Society's behalf.

2003 Blake Maybank became Editor of *Nova Scotia Birds*.

2004 The Cape Breton Branch of the NSBS was re-established.

2005 The NSBS's 50th Anniversary Year, with special events and activities planned. The launch was at the Member's Slide Night on 27 January 2005. The 50th Anniversary Special Lecture Series, entitled "50 Years of Watching, Recording, Studying, and Saving Birds" occurred in March and April. ▢



Ted D'Eon on Brothers Island, June 2000. [Photo Gisèle d'Entremont]

Changes in Bird Populations in Nova Scotia in the Last 50 Years

By Ian McLaren

Maybe I've been asked to write this 50th year review on the assumption that I've been around that long - I only came here in 1966. However, that is when we began to get better information on bird populations. Our first *Audubon* Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) was in 1954, and our Breeding Bird Surveys (BBSs) began in 1966. Major sources of these data are at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html> and <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/bbs.html>. But, even those of us who began birding here more recently have seen many changes. This is not the forum for preaching the obvious – that we all have some part in driving such changes through our use of habitats and resources. Here I merely sketch a few examples of familiar birds with some possible causes of increase or decrease. The statements here that a particular increase or decrease is “statistically significant” means that they have less than a 5% probability of being incorrect. In the graphs, the curves are fitted by standard statistical procedures, which assume that much of the “scatter” is from “random” vagaries of weather, effort, and other effects.

The offshore Scotian Shelf ecosystem has been transformed from one dominated by bottom animals, including larger ground fishes, to one in which smaller pelagic fishes like herring and mackerel consume most of the sun-driven production. We don't know yet what this might mean for our pelagic birds. Some fisherman friends have suggested that the fewer larger fishes less often drive “bait” (small and young fishes) to the surface to become prey for birds. The long-term CBC results may suggest that Herring Gull populations benefited from greater fishery discards and fish-plant waste following adoption of our “200-mile limit” in 1977, and now show some levelling off with the 1990s collapses of fisheries. The Ring-billed Gull, less dependent on fisheries, continues its spread from Central Canada, and increased more than 10-fold on Nova Scotia CBCs between the 1960s and late 1990s.

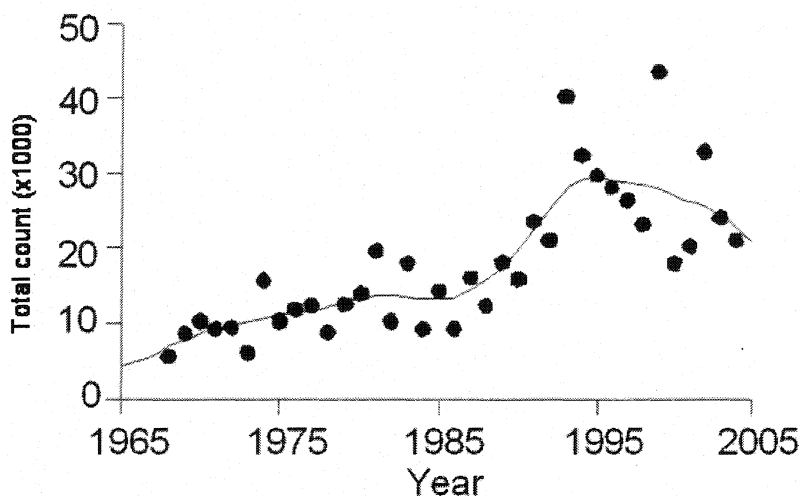


Figure 1. Herring Gulls on Nova Scotia CBCs . (Since gulls are largely found in long-established coastal CBCs, these are shown as total numbers rather than numbers per party-hour or party-mile.)

We know that decreases in terns have accompanied the increase of the large gulls, with the “threatened” (COSEWIC category) Roseate Tern of special concern. Its decline began earlier, as noted in the first edition of Tufts (1961). Nonetheless, known colonies in St. Margarets Bay, *Guysborough*, Sable I., and elsewhere have disappeared since then, except notably from admirable efforts of Ted D'Eon on the

Brothers I., off West Pubnico, and more recently by CWS and Dalhousie researchers on Country Island, *Guysborough*. Many of the wintering Herring Gulls in the above graph have probably come from elsewhere. Our BBSs between 1990 and 2003 show substantial declines in Great Black-backed Gulls (by about 50%, and statistically significant), less so for Herring Gulls (16%, and not significant). So there may be hope for our terns.

Major changes have also occurred among our waterfowl, mostly positive. For example, in Tufts' (1961) day, Mallards had not nested, but releases of imported birds had begun to take hold. No doubt, too, better hunting regulations and agriculture have facilitated the eastern spread of this and other ducks. The increase of Mallards relative to Blacks is clear in CBCs. Unfortunately the former has genetically "swamped" the latter in parts of eastern Canada. Alas, no one seems to have made long-term counts of hybrids, especially among the messy duck *mêlées* on CSI and in urban HRM and CBRM.

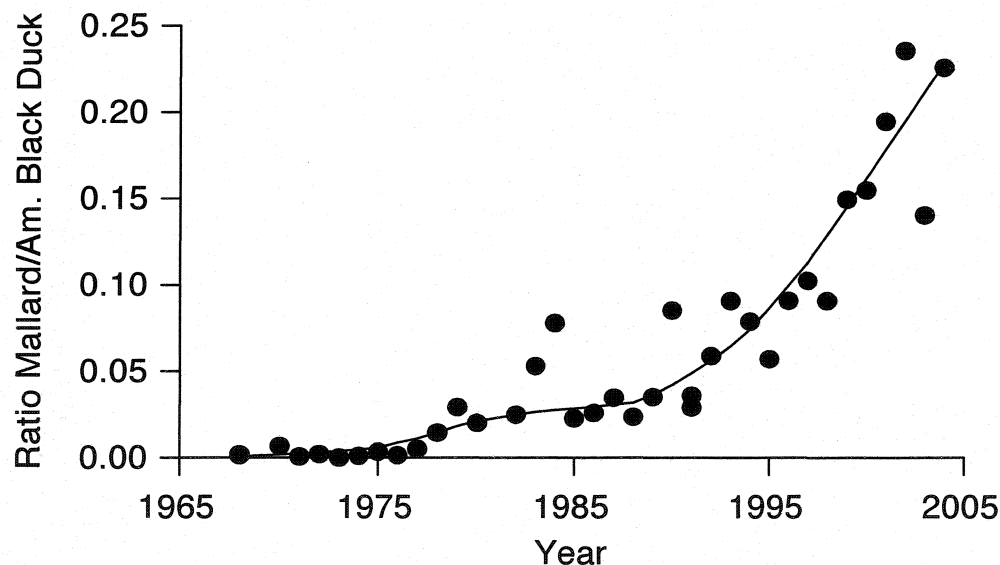


Figure 2. The relative abundance, expressed as a ratio, of Mallards and Black Ducks on Nova Scotia CBCs.

There have been notable changes in some wintering diving ducks. The White-winged Scoter declined markedly in the 1990s, perhaps deflected by invasion of destructive Zebra Mussels in the Great Lakes, but has "bounced" in the latest CBCs. Lesser Scaup have increased from near zero on CBCs until the 1990s, to about 80 in 2002 and 2003. How much is due to sharper identification? The Harlequin Duck has been of greatest concern. It was quite regular here prior to the 1990s, and then became hard to find. It is therefore gratifying to see the large increase in Atlantic Canada CBCs (this wider area being more revealing) of this beautiful duck since the closure of hunting. But what is the meaning of the 1980 peak?

Everyone knows the situation with our charismatic Piping Plover. Atlantic Canada's population declined 17% between 1991 (509 birds) and 1996 (422). From Anna McCarron's reports, the number of pairs in Nova Scotia declined from 51 in 2001 to 39 in 2004, although production of fledglings increased slightly from 72 to 77. We don't seem to be winning the struggle. Birders are less aware of changes among our migrant shorebirds. Maritimes Shorebird Surveys, carried out by a few dedicated birders, indicate that between 1974 and 1991 all but two of 14 common species declined – statistically significant at about 7-8% per year in the seemingly abundant Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitcher. Causes are as yet unclear, and it would be good to see an update.

Some familiar landbirds, once rare here, have shown dramatic range expansions from New England. Although global warming has been implicated, winter bird feeding has surely played a role. Tufts (1962) rated the Mourning Dove as a "rare summer resident and uncommon fall visitant." Then birds began to winter, as attested by CBCs (best expressed as numbers per hour in this widespread bird), and now it is

everywhere all year long, although with a hint of recent levelling off (see account by David Currie). Among other recent invaders, the Northern Cardinal has shown the most dramatic increase.

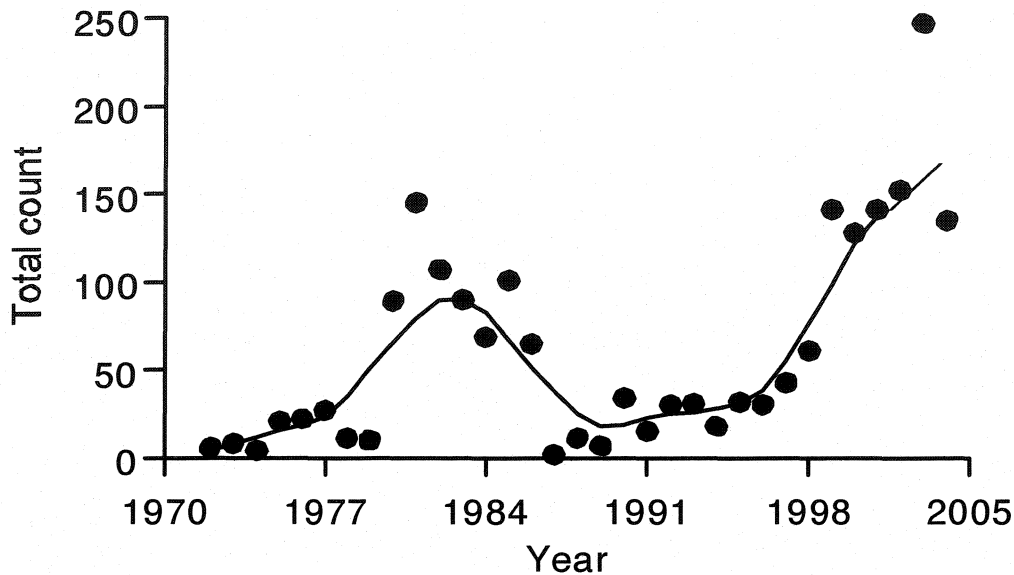


Figure 3. Harlequin Ducks on combined CBCs from Atlantic Canada. (Since these are largely found in long-established coastal CBCs, they are shown as total numbers rather than numbers per party-hour or party-mile.)

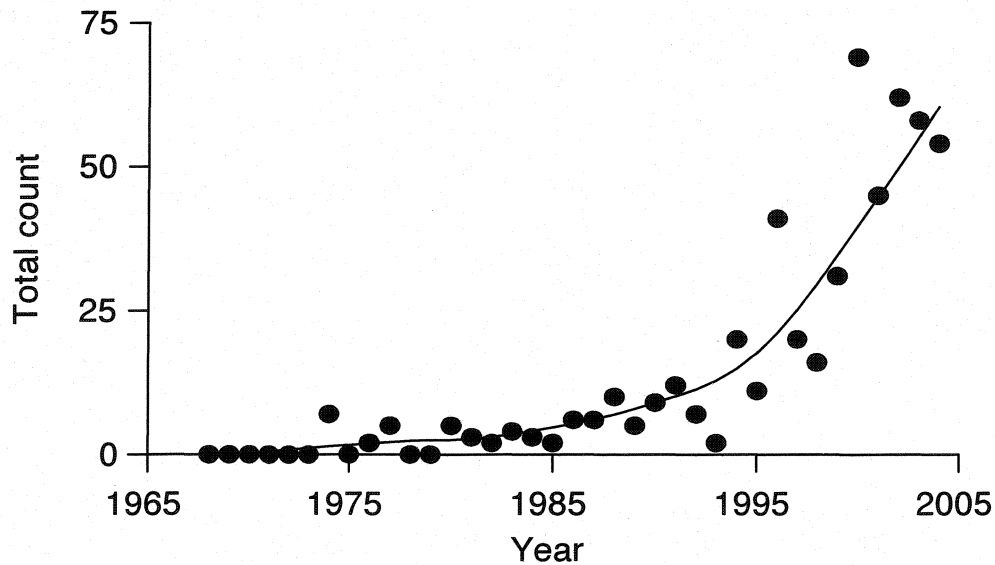


Figure 4. The increase of Northern Cardinals on CBCs in Atlantic Canada. (Because these occur largely at feeders, numbers are expressed as total counts, rather than as numbers per party-hour or party-mile.)

Cardinals continue to increase, although CBC counts of House Finches may have begun to level off in recent years, perhaps related to disease in their New England “core” range. We all sense that Red-bellied Woodpeckers are about to follow this pattern, and Tufted Titmouse (now more regular in NB) may soon begin to do so.

Finally, there are the extensive BBS data on our breeding landbirds. Active birders readily sense some of the changes revealed by BBSs. Two examples that might not occur to everyone are changes in the Cedar Waxwing and Chestnut-sided Warbler.

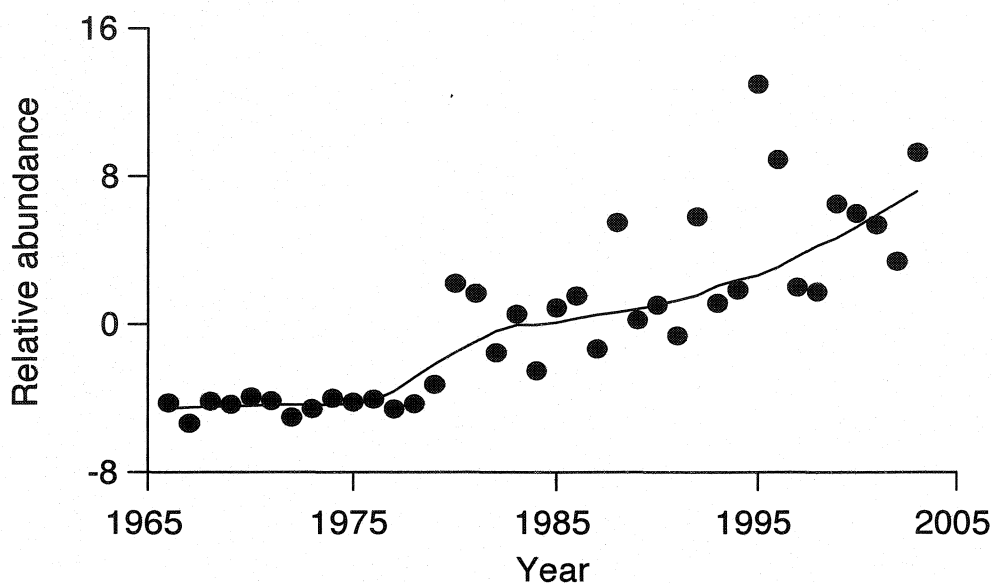


Figure 5. Increase of the Cedar Waxwing on BBSs in Nova Scotia. (Relative abundance is expressed as the combined average deviations from the long-term mean counts on each BBS route, to eliminate differences in the usual abundances among localities.)

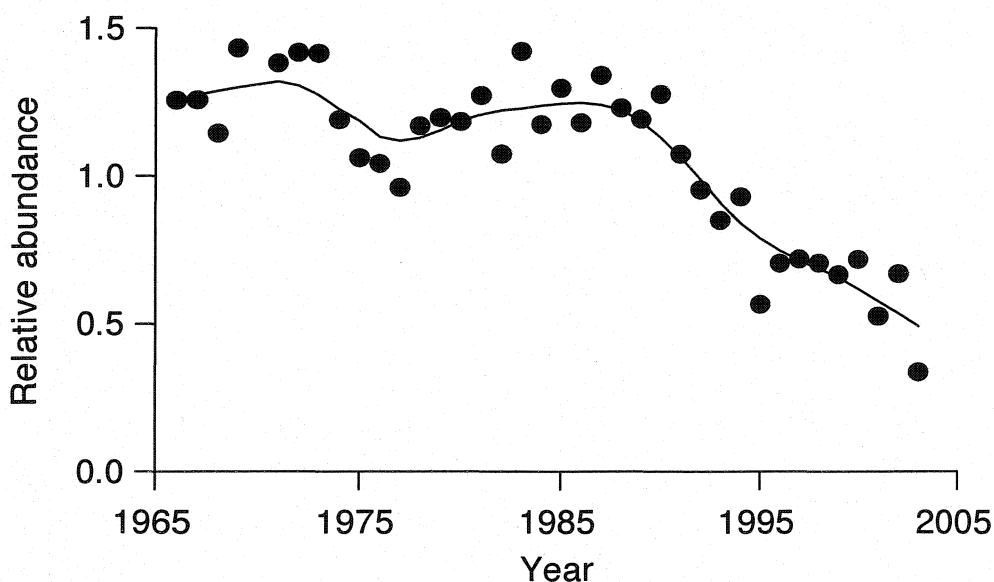


Figure 6. Decline of the Chestnut-sided Warbler on BBSs in Nova Scotia. (Relative abundance is expressed as the combined average deviations from the long-term mean counts on each BBS route, to eliminate variation in the usual abundances among localities.)

Among 95 Nova Scotia species that occurred on 14 or more BBS routes, 56 % decreased during 1966-2003, about the same (52 %) as in the wider BBS Region ("N Spruce-Hardwood Forest") of which we are a part. However, most of these trends are statistically non-significant. Here are the statistically significant trends Nova Scotian species, in order of their annual declines or increases (as % per year). Lest these changes seem trivial, note that an annual negative or positive change of 2.5 % translates respectively as a 70% loss or a three-fold increase over the 1966-2003 period.

Declining: Chimney Swift (-8.1%); Belted Kingfisher (-4.1%); Brown-headed Cowbird (-4.1%); Barn Swallow (-3.5%); Wilson's Snipe (-3.5%); Red-winged Blackbird (-3.0%); Nashville Warbler (-3.0%); Black-throated Green Warbler (-3.0 %); Chestnut-sided Warbler (-2.6%); House Sparrow (-2.6 %); White-throated Sparrow (-2.4 %); Purple Finch (-1.6%).

Increasing: American Crow (1.5%); Common Raven (1.7%); Blue Jay (2.0%); Hermit Thrush (2.1%); Red-eyed Vireo (2.5%); Blue-headed Vireo (2.5%); Downy Woodpecker (3.2%); Red-breasted Nuthatch (3.7%); Black-capped Chickadee (4.7%); Northern Waterthrush (4.8%); Pileated Woodpecker (5.2%); Cedar Waxwing (6.8%); Ring-necked Pheasant (7.2%); Mourning Dove (9.9%).

What can we make of all this? I've already noted the increase in Mourning Doves; might the Downy Woodpecker, nuthatch, and chickadee be responding to winter-feeding in the same way? Why, then, the declines in Purple Finch and House Sparrow? Decreases in blackbirds have been related by some to (lethal) crop protection and roost control in US wintering ranges. Might the corvid increase, not generally welcome, be checked by West Nile? Finally, although the above results seem to suggest that few of our woodland birds are in trouble, more of these have declined in the more extensively sampled Northern Spruce-Hardwood Region. We have no reason for complacency.

I hope the above encourages more of you to become involved in the above programs of monitoring our birds. The CBCs, BBSs, Shorebird Surveys, and now Nocturnal Owl Surveys, Beached Bird Surveys, and especially the forthcoming second Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas, are all worthy ways in which birders can contribute to our understanding of what is happening to our birds and what to do about it. □



Atlantic Bird Observatory banding operations provide close-up looks at rare or less frequently seen birds that pass through our area. (L) SWAINSONS WARBLER [Photo Mike Peckford] (R) YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT. [Photo Adrian George]

The History of the Christmas Bird Counts in Nova Scotia

By David Currie with Randy Lauff

A mere eight years from now we will reach the 100 year mark of Christmas Bird Counts in Nova Scotia. It was Dec 23, 1913 when Harrison F. Lewis and E. Chesley Allen saw 12 species of birds on the first ever Yarmouth Christmas Bird Count. Wolfville joined in shortly after that with the help of Robie Tufts' infectious enthusiasm for bird study.

From 1935 to 1945 counts seemed to flourish with an average of five counts submitting results to the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. After this though, counts dwindled until our own *Newsletter* began to be published in August of 1956. This new, provincially-written magazine prompted counts to spring up all over the province. We quickly grew to average 26 counts per year and have 35 regular counts to date (Fig. 1).

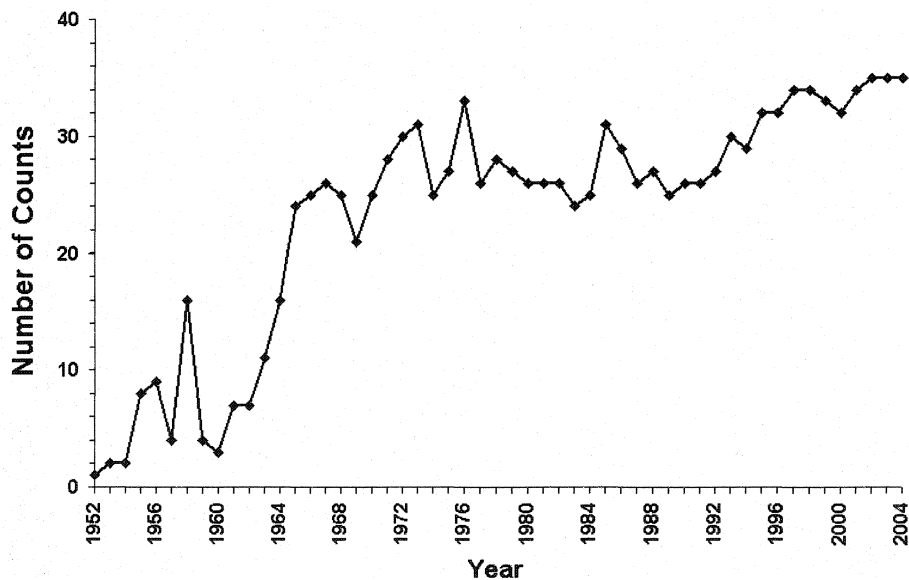


Figure 1. The number of Christmas Bird Counts run over the last five decades.

By 1960 we had reached the 100-species mark; it was a very slow process to get there (Fig. 2). Ross Anderson, in his 1978 article foretold of a time in the future where we may even break 150 species in a single year and possibly break the 200 species milestone because of the rising calibre of birders. He was right but could not have known that global warming and the explosion of interest in birds would have such an impact on our results.

In 1990, I (DC) helped Mary Anderson carry on the record-keeping which her husband had started. This one year apprenticeship was helpful but I soon realized I needed help from such experts as Fran Spalding and Shirley Cohrs to do the editing, proofing and summarizing of the results. This was also the time when the Nova Scotia Bird Society Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund granted enough money to buy a computer complete with a single 5 ¼ inch floppy disk and black and white monitor for me to transcribe Ross Anderson's data to computer spreadsheets. It all seems so primitive now but was practically "cutting edge" then.

The list of birds we have collectively found seems incredible. The number of species seen in a single year went from 12 in 1913 to a high of 175 in 2002. Amazingly, over the last 25 years, our species total has grown by 81 and now stands at 271! Of course we will break 300, and at the rate we are going it could easily happen on the 100th anniversary of Christmas Bird Counts in Nova Scotia.

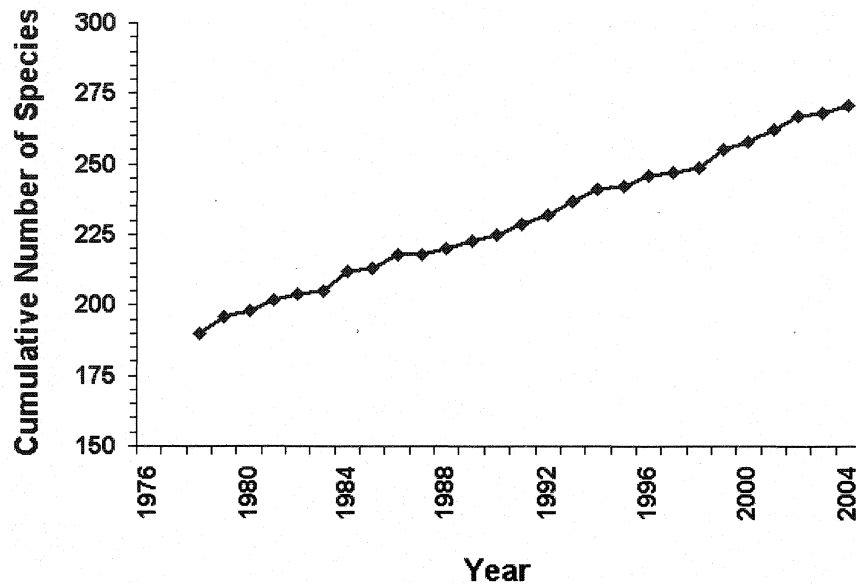


Figure 2. The total number of recorded species for Nova Scotia's Christmas Bird Counts has risen remarkably steadily for the past quarter century.

What are some of the changes over the years? Have we been generally seeing increases or declines in diversity or number of birds? The participation has grown from those two intrepid people in Yarmouth in 1913 to over 1300 observers in 2004. As Figure 3 shows, the amount of effort put into finding birds has, as one would expect, a significant effect on the number of species found. The graph shows *effort*, measured as the number of parties in the field, multiplied by the number of hours the parties were out in the field (party hours); this effort is plotted against the Annual Species Tally (number of species found). The significance of this is that when we talk about species increasing or decreasing in numbers, we clearly have to take into account *effort*; that's why the graphs that will be illustrating species abundance are reported in *Birds per Party-Hour*, not just *number of birds*.

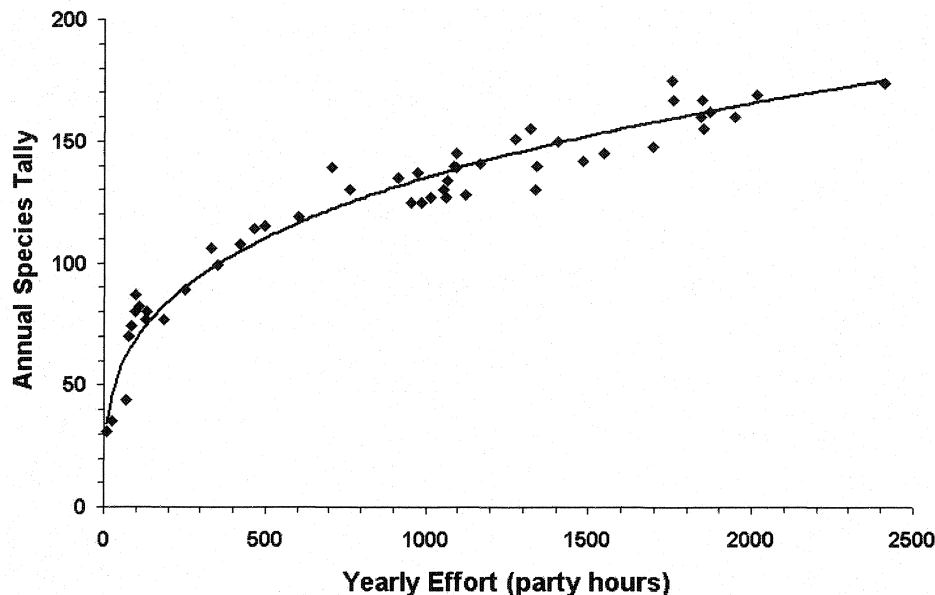


Figure 3. Party-hours (yearly effort) are plotted against the number of species found with that amount of effort; clearly, a positive relationship exists between effort and the number of species tallied in the Province.

Below are a series of graphs to illustrate some of what has been happening with our CBC results. Although numbers are corrected for effort (see above), we cannot correct for the increasing quality of birders nor the discovery of new hotspots. Also, it is recognized that weather can be an important factor, but the graphs do not reflect this. Gaps in the data represent the unfortunate years when effort was not recorded. A final caution should be noted – an increase or decrease in numbers does not necessarily reflect a change in the species' population, it may reflect a change in the species' location during the CBC period.

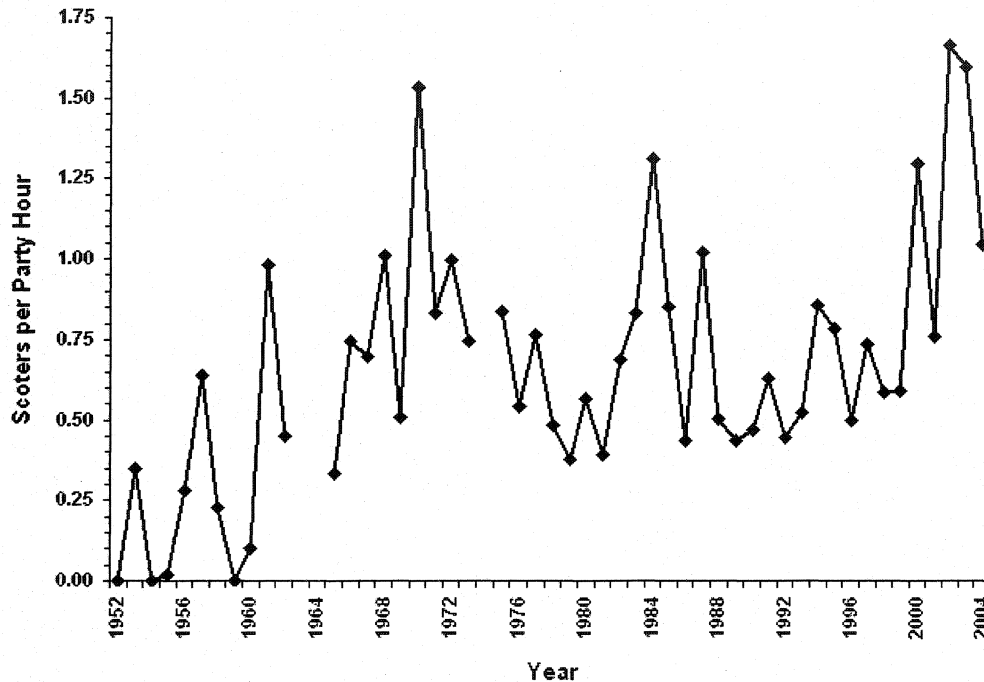


Figure 4. There is an erratic increase of the three Scoters (Black, White-winged and Surf) over the years.

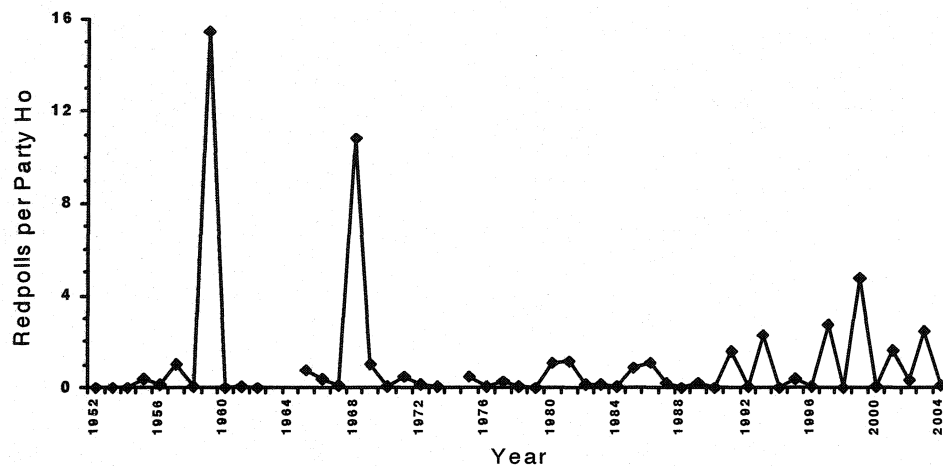


Figure 5. Common Redpolls are irruptive species thought to be on a regular, biannual cycle. Do you think our results reflect this?

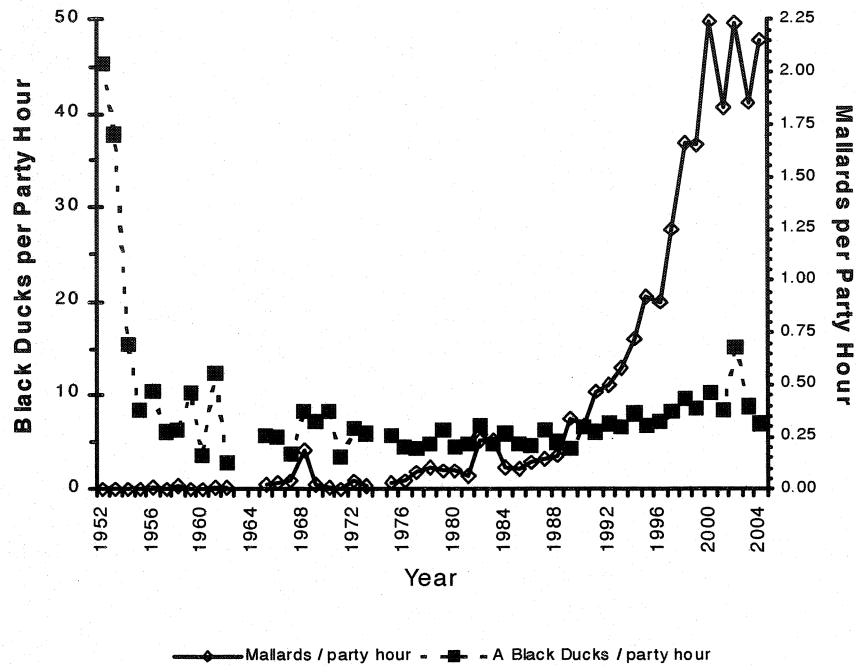


Figure 6. Will Mallards outnumber American Black Ducks in the near future? The former were almost unheard of on CBCs here until the mid 1970s, (with an interesting spike in 1968) and are now at almost 25% of Black Duck numbers.

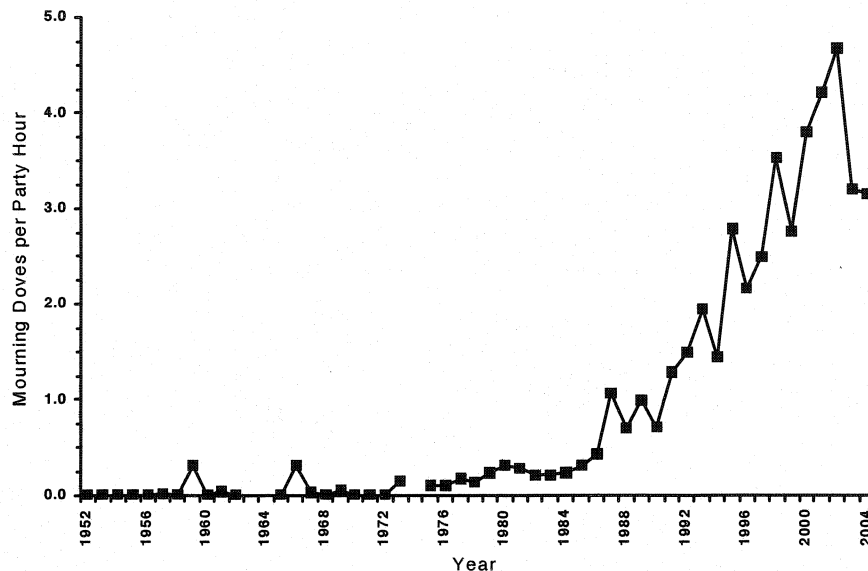


Figure 7. Mourning Doves are another recent immigrant...how many of you remember the days when this species wasn't around?

Appendix

The following list shows “the firsts” for the province during CBC’s over the last 25 years. It will no doubt be nostalgic to many and I hope, at least interesting to others. The birds indicated in bold letters are “one-time wonders”; they have only ever been recorded once on a CBC in Nova Scotia.

- 1979 **Arctic Loon (Pacific Loon), Snowy Egret**, Gadwall, Three-toed Woodpecker, Indigo Bunting, House Finch
- 1980 **Common Moorhen**, Long-eared Owl
- 1981 **Barn Swallow**, Yellow-headed Blackbird, **Harris’ Sparrow**, tern species
- 1982 Turkey Vulture, Osprey
- 1983 Common Tern, **Prairie Warbler** (list grew by one as Common Tern replaced tern species seen in 1981)
- 1984 **Forster’s Tern, Jackdaw, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Solitary Vireo, (Blue-headed Vireo), Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Wilson’s Warbler.**
- 1985 Lark Sparrow
- 1986 Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hoary Redpoll
- 1987 none new to list
- 1988 Northern Shoveler, Common Gull, **Blue Grosbeak**, Common Chaffinch
- 1989 Snow Goose, **Short-billed Dowitcher, Eurasian Redwing**
- 1990 Canvasback, Lesser Yellowlegs
- 1991 **Black-crowned Night Heron**, Redhead, Yellow-throated Warbler, Clay-coloured Sparrow
- 1992 **Great Skua**, Parasitic Jaeger, House Wren
- 1993 **Purple Gallinule, Hudsonian Godwit**, Pomarine Jaeger, White-eyed Vireo, **Townsend’s Warbler.**
- 1994 Tufted Duck, Carolina Wren, Nashville Warbler, **Hermit Warbler**
- 1995 Little Gull
- 1996 **Greater White-fronted Goose, Dusky Flycatcher, Ovenbird, Painted Bunting**
- 1997 **Tundra Swan**
- 1998 **Black-throated Blue Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler**
- 1999 **Storm Petrel species, Little Blue Heron, Golden Eagle, Eastern Phoebe, Townsend’s Solitaire, Golden-crowned Sparrow**
- 2000 Thayer’s Gull, **Northern Hawk Owl, Northern Wheatear**
- 2001 **Willet**, Swainson’s Thrush, **Blue-winged Warbler**, Blackpoll Warbler
- 2002 **Ruff, White-winged Dove, Mountain Bluebird**
- 2003 **Yellow-crowned Night Heron**
- 2004 **Great Egret, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green Warbler**



Wolfville Christmas Bird Count, December 18, 2004. CBC participants looking over the new maps that George Alliston had produced for the upcoming West Hants Christmas Bird Count. From left: George Alliston, Patrick Kelly, Eva Urban, Gail Davis (sitting), Sherman Williams, Barry Yoell. Sadly, Eva Urban passed away on January 3, 2005 at the age of 93. Photo by Walter Urban.

Hants County Field Trip

28th May, 2005, Leader: Margaret A Clark

Considered the longest running field trip of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, 13 birders met at the Uniacke railway crossing to continue celebrating NSBS's 50th year. Because of clear cutting, new developments, and closed roads due to spring rains, changes in the route were necessary. Beginning at the Uniacke Estate, continuing on to South Rawdon, Hillsville and Brooklyn areas of Hants County, we drove on, walked through heavy rains, light showers, fog and then clearing to be able to eat lunch, as usual, in Smileys Park.

Previous arrangements were made, with Natural Resources, to have access to the Park with promises to put the padlock on the gate when leaving. After lunch, the count totalled 51 with noticeable gaps in hawks, warblers and sparrows. But as we were leaving the Park the sounds of Evening Grosbeaks drew our attention to the many feeders at the house across from the park entrance. We were rewarded with sightings of Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Baltimore Orioles, two pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and a Sharp-shinned Hawk, which quickly left the feeders and trees empty of bird activity.

A total of 59 species brought a rewarding finale to this special field trip.

Here I would like to include some interesting information from my personal records covering a period of 25 years leading the Hants County Field Trips.

They began in the late 50's or early 60's by Charlie Allen and Phyllis Dobson. In 1975, after Charlie settled in Yarmouth County, he felt a Hants County native should take over the area, hence my involvement for 25 years.

Some statistics:

	number	year
Fewest species	43	1973
Most species	83	1980
Fewest birders	4	1983
Most birders	46	1990

A Puffin Puppet acted as mascot for many of those years and although showing his age, he appeared this year also.

It was in 1980 when I was privileged to be president of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, that a loyal participant and supporter on those Hants County Field Trips, Eric Cooke composed the following:

The Puffin

My name is Puffy President,
I am a wee bit hesitant
To walk this dry and dreadful land
When on the rocks I'd rather stand.

This Hants Field trip is not for me,
The real, true birds are out to sea.
But land birds have their place, I guess,
Have we 82 species? More or less?

I'm glad you came, 'tis lovely weather
And always fun to get together,
Take out your check lists, one and all
Let me hear your answer as I call.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret A. Clark

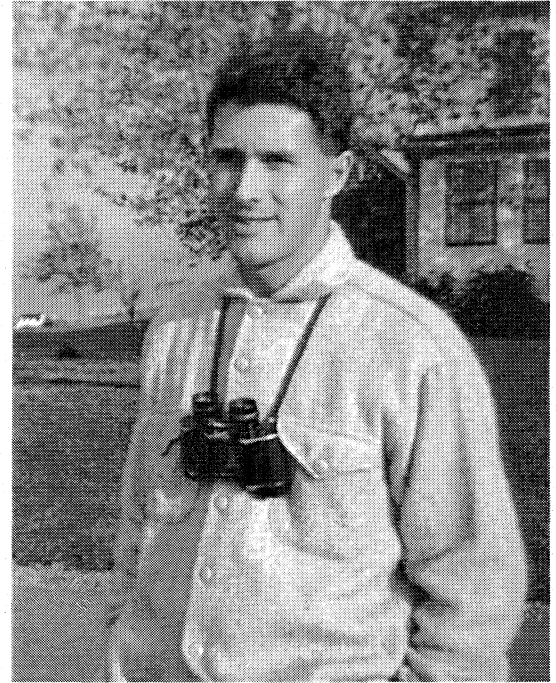
Forty years of Breeding Bird Surveys in Nova Scotia!

By **Connie Downes**
Canadian Wildlife Service
National Wildlife Research Centre

This year, birders in Nova Scotia and throughout North America will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). The BBS is a continent-wide survey, run by volunteers, that monitors changes in the status and trends in landbird populations throughout North America.

Monitoring animal populations is an essential part of conservation. Data from monitoring are used in all stages of conservation planning: to determine which species or areas are high priority for conservation action, to get initial clues of causes of population change, to direct further research into causes and solutions and finally, to determine whether or not conservation actions have been effective. The BBS plays a vital role in landbird conservation by providing the only long-term data available on the status and trends of North American landbird populations over wide geographic scales.

Recognition of the importance of BBS increases as the years go by and the database grows. BBS data have been used in hundreds of scientific papers. The results have served as an early-warning signal for declines in neotropical migrants, grassland and scrubland birds and of individual species. The awareness of these declines and media attention they have generated has helped direct research into the causes of declines and has helped encourage wildlife managers and politicians to support conservation action to alleviate them and, not least, has raised public awareness of the state of landbird populations and their conservation.



Tony Erskine

The BBS began in 1966 with a scattering of routes in the eastern United States as well as in the Maritime Provinces and Ontario. During the next few years it spread to include routes in all states, provinces and territories. Today, there are about 3,000 routes run in North America each year, including over 400 in Canada.

Tony Erskine, the "father" of the BBS in Canada, conducted the first BBS route in Canada and then recruited others across the country. Nova Scotia was among the original provinces to participate in the BBS with 14 routes run in 1966. Since then, a small group of dedicated and skilled Nova Scotian birders have run 32 different routes over the BBS's 40-year history for a total of 698 route-years in Nova Scotia as of 2004. Two of those original participants from the 1960s and early 1970s are still active: Sylvia Fullerton has run the Roman Valley route since 1969 and picked up a second route, Larry's River, in 1995; James Elliot has logged 33 years on the Sheet Harbour route and is still counting! Shirley Cohrs, who ran the Shelburne route with her husband John, finally decided to retire in 1999 after 21 years. Other long-timers include Barbara Hinds (29 years), Roslyn MacPhee (27 years), Bernard Forsythe (25 years), Christopher Helleiner (22 years), Albert Dean (17 years), and Benjamin Doane (15 years).

A retrospective of the BBS in the Maritimes would not be complete without mentioning David Currie. David served as the provincial coordinator for the BBS in the Maritimes for many years and ran routes in Nova Scotia for 15 years. The Lunn family takes the prize for having three generations participate on the Cape North route at the tip of Cape Breton Island. Gwen and John Lunn started on the route in the 1960s and their son Simon ran it for several years in the 1970s. In 1995 Simon's brother, Gerry, took over the route. He is now often assisted by his son Christian. Gerry also runs three other routes in Nova Scotia while Simon now runs two Ontario routes.

For more information on the BBS and for access to data and trends visit the U.S. and Canadian BBS Websites:

U.S. Patuxent Wildlife Research Center site: <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/>

Canadian Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Research Center site: http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/nwrc-cnrf/migb/bbs_e.cfm

Participation in Nova Scotia has fluctuated over the years with a peak of 29 participants in 1999). However, despite the dedication of our current observers, participation has decreased slightly in the last few years. Maintaining and increasing the pool of skilled volunteers is essential to the existence and growth of BBS. Currently, 76% of the Canadian volunteers are over 45 while 16% are 65 or older. Observers retire because of age, loss of hearing and other commitments. We are always looking for new volunteers! If you have the skills (see below) and can contribute one day of your time each year to landbird conservation please consider running one of the available BBS routes in Nova Scotia or elsewhere. The data you contribute will help determine the population status of Nova Scotia's birds today. But those data will also be used by future generations in the years to come to assess future status of landbirds and determine whether our conservation programs have been successful.

We encourage current BBS observers to spread the message to their birding friends. We also suggest you consider taking on an apprentice who can learn the skills and methods of the BBS and might be encouraged to take on a route themselves.

Finally, on behalf of the birds, we extend heartfelt thanks and congratulations to those current and past BBS participants in Nova Scotia who have helped make the BBS the success that it is.

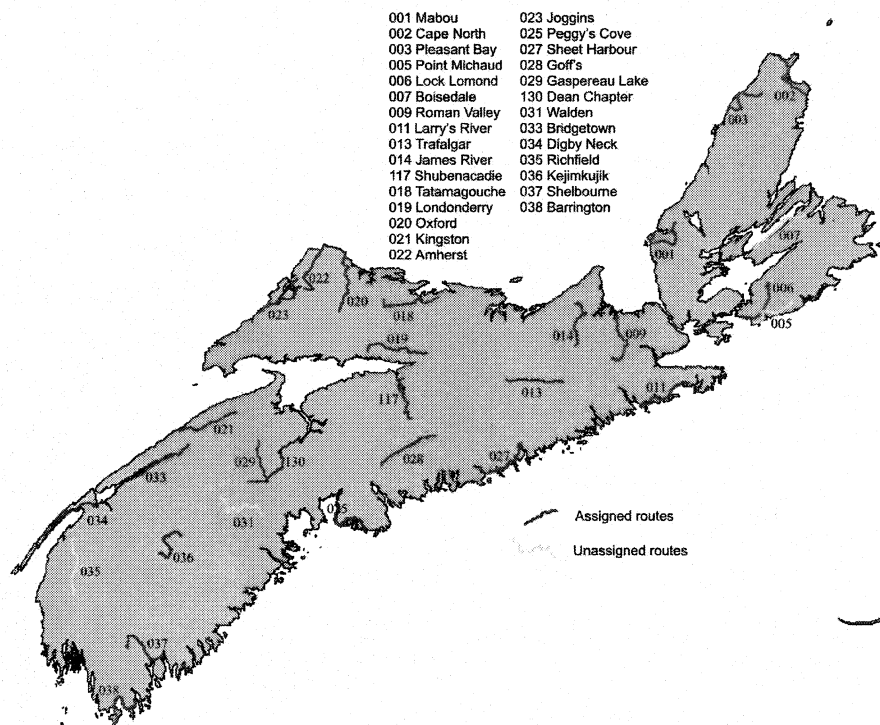
How to Participate

The requirements for participating in the BBS are:

- a. Ability to quickly and accurately identify all birds in the area by sight and by sound
- b. Good hearing and eyesight
- c. Access to suitable transportation
- d. An intention to participate in the survey for several years

If you meet these criteria and are interested in participating, please contact the Maritimes coordinator: Dan Busby, Canadian Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 6227, Sackville, NB, E4L 1G6, (Telephone: 506-364-5037), Dan.Busby@ec.gc.ca or the BBS National Coordinator: Connie Downes, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, K1A 0H3, (Telephone 613-998-0490), Connie.Downes@ec.gc.ca. □

Nova Scotia BBS Routes



My Years with South West Nova Birders

By Joan Czapalay

A lot of the history of birding in Nova Scotia arose from the very bird rich, and people rich area of the southwest of our province. From my own perspective, here is some of that story.

Serious birding started for me with an Ovenbird. The little brown and yellow bird was lying dead at the end of a lane in Villagedale, just south of Barrington. I stopped on the way to school and picked up the small bundle of feathers, wrapped it in tissue and took it with me for the morning nature lesson with grade six. On my way home that evening I visited Evelyn Richardson who lived nearby. Ovenbird it was, but Evelyn got out a number of field guides and bird books, and we checked and compared field marks. While learning the name of the bird, I learned also the names of Percy Taverner, Earl Godfrey and Harrison Lewis. I had a copy (1960) of my only bird book, *Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds of North America (Eastern)*. Evelyn gave me a copy of Living Island, and recommended that I contact Robie Tufts for *The Birds of Nova Scotia*. I did. I also purchased several books for the Port La Tour school library and launched a project at school to learn all we could about birds. In the late 1970's our class joined the NS Bird Society and I met Phyllis Dobson and Charlie Allen who became my mentors.

Meantime, on Newellton, Cape Sable Island, Murray Newell had been looking at birds ever since he was a young boy. John E. Nickerson, who lived at South Side also enjoyed watching the birds throughout the year. Lillian Perry in Barrington had an interest in birds as a naturalist and an artist. During the summers she learned about the local birds from Drs. Connie and Rozwell Gallagher, well known birders and NSBS members. Wilfred "Skipper" Atwood Jr. at North East Point had also been interested in birds for a number of years. These people were to be a major influence on my birding life, and formed the core of the South West Nova Birders. By the 1980's I had met Ted D'Eon, Jerome D'Eon and DeLisle and Raymond d'Entremont, all good birders. Thanks to Ted, I visited the Brothers Islands and other islands off Pubnico to count the terns and see other birds and their habitats. I went on a trip led by C.R.K. (Charlie) Allen to Big Tusket Island, and was invited to join him and Phyllis Dobson to do a "Christmas Count" the following winter. I knew a bit about the Christmas Bird Count, for my husband in 1972 had participated in an Audubon Count in Clyde River/ Barrington organized by Jim Force, an American birder. During all these years Sid and Betty June Smith had been conducting a Christmas Bird Count for the NSBS on the Cape, where Sid was lightkeeper. Betty June (Evelyn's younger daughter) wrote a bird column for the local newspaper, "The Coast Guard" which helped us a great deal in knowing what birds we might expect to find, and when and where.



Planning the 1993-94 Christmas Count. (L to R) Wilfred (Skipper) Atwood, John E. Nickerson, Murray Newell, Sandra Nickerson. [Photo Joan Czapalay]

I took part in the Breeding Bird Atlas with Ted D'Eon as Regional Coordinator. A highlight of the survey was finding the nest of a Broad winged Hawk with young in Barrington, and seeing Ted shinny up a skinny maple tree to take a picture of the young for confirmation (fortunately the adults were not overly aggressive). During this period I decided to revive the Audubon Count for CSI and Barrington. It was so cold and stormy that first year that only Robin Rhymer, a NSBS member from Tusket, arrived to help. We saw a total of 26 species in the snow and freezing cold wind. The next year was a different story! By then Murray had started trying to see how many birds he could see in a year. He and Skipper had had a fall-out on Little Flat Island. Indigo Buntings were a highlight, and they were hooked. We would meet each other by the ponds and marshes and beaches on Cape Sable Island. We held "conferences" from our car windows when we met on the road. We met at Johnny and Sandra's house to plan our first official South West Nova Birders' Christmas Count. Ted D'Eon helped us with the map, and we were off and running. Soon we were joined by Clyde Stoddard, Ethelda Murphy and others interested in birds. It led to a May Day Field trip at The Hawk (which has become an annual event), the NSBS out of metro meeting in 1996 and again in 2004, and annual Christmas Counts where a few of us, often assisted by our "honorary" SW Birders from Halifax and other areas, see around 100 species and many individual birds each December. And we continue to have our SW Nova Birders' Club, which has no officers, no fees, no regular meetings, no annual general meeting, and no stress. We have made good friendships and have had good fun and the joy of finding, seeing and sharing the wonderful birds that visit our province. □

Presidents and Vice Presidents of the Nova Scotia Bird Society from 1955 – 2005

We have been very fortunate to have been guided through the past 50 years by people with dedication, spirit and fortunately, leadership abilities. As you peruse this list you will likely see names familiar to you (maybe even your own!). No one has yet beat the record of our first vice president, Charlie Allen who spent ten years (including the Society's first seven) as president or vice president. Suzanne...y'listening?

Presidents	Vice Presidents	Presidents	Vice Presidents
1955 Robie Tufts	C.R.K. Allen	1980 Margaret Clark	Keith Keddy
1956 Robie Tufts	C.R.K. Allen	1981 Shirley Cohrs	Richard Stern
1957 C.R.K. Allen	Harrison Lewis	1982 Shirley Cohrs	Frank Himsl
1958 C.R.K. Allen	Harrison Lewis	1983 Frank Hennessey	Bill Caudle
1959 Harrison Lewis	C.R.K. Allen	1984 Bill Caudle	Joyce Purchase
1960 Harrison Lewis	C.R.K. Allen	1985 Bill Caudle	Bob Dickie
1961 Harrison Lewis	C.R.K. Allen	1986 Bill Caudle	Bob Dickie
1962 Harrison Lewis	C.R.K. Allen	1987 Bob Dickie	Richard Stern
1963 J.R. Calder Fraser	L.B. MacPherson	1988 Richard Stern	Sandra Myers
1964 L.B. MacPherson	Mrs. Victor Cardoza	1989 Richard Stern	Sandra Myers
1965 L.B. MacPherson	Mrs. Victor Cardoza	1990 Joyce Purchase	Carin Somers
1966 Harrison Lewis	C.R.K. Allen	1991 Bob Dickie	Joyce Purchase
1967 C.R.K. Allen	Ford Alward	1992 Bob Dickie	Carol MacNeill
1968 Ian McLaren	B.K. Doane	1993 Carol MacNeill	Lou Coutinho
1969 Ian McLaren	B.K. Doane	1994 Bob Dickie	Lise Cohrs
1970 Eric Mills	B.K. Doane	1995 Lise Cohrs	Chris Field
1971 Eric Mills	B.K. Doane	1996 Lise Cohrs	Chris Field
1972 Eric Cooke	Roger Pocklington	1997 Lise (Cohrs) Bell	Gisèle d'Entremont
1973 Roger Pocklington	Jim Elliott	1998 Gisèle d'Entremont	Chris Field
1974 Roger Pocklington	Robert Lamberton	1999 Gisèle d'Entremont	Chris Field
1975 Robert Lamberton	Tony Locke	2000 Gisèle d'Entremont	Andy Horn
1976 Fred Dobson	Ross Anderson	2001 Gisèle d'Entremont	David Currie
1977 Fred Dobson	Ross Anderson	2002 Andy Horn	David Currie
1978 Margaret Clark	Eric Cooke	2003 Andy Horn	David Currie
1979 Margaret Clark	Eric Cooke	2004 Andy Horn	Suzanne Borkowski
		2005 Suzanne Borkowski	Bill Billington

Puffin of the Year Award

This award was instituted by Eric Cooke in 1972, that year's President, to be presented annually to an individual in acknowledgment of their substantial contribution to the betterment of our society. The first Puffin of the Year Award was presented to Phyllis Dobson at the Peajack Cemetery on Brier Island, Labour Day weekend, 1972.

1972	Phyllis Dobson	Editor of the magazine
1973	Harding Moffatt	Founding member, first Auditor in 1955, Organizer of the 1972 Canadian Nature Federation Conference in Wolfville
1974	Willett Mills	Founding member, Director of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund (SSTF), contributed in many ways over the years
1975	Lloyd MacPherson	Founding member, President, Director of the SSTF who started the magazine and collated the Christmas Counts
1976	Ethel Crathorne	Founding member, long-time Membership Secretary
1977	Bob Kanigsberg	Solicitor for the Society, generous contributor to the SSTF
1978	Charlie Allen	Founding member, President, many times on the executive, Chair of the SSTF, many activities over the years
1979	Ian McLaren	President of NSBS and Canadian Nature Federation, many conservation related activities
1980	Eric Cooke	President, initiated this award, served many times on the executive, organized monthly programs, led many field trips, supported Society's activities throughout the province
1981	Joyce and Don Purchase	Field trip coordinators, led and participated on many field trips, executive positions
1982	Sandra Myers	Treasurer for five years, dealt with numerous enquiries from out-of-province birders
1983	Shirley Cohrs	Many years Editor of <i>Nova Scotia Birds</i> , Rare Bird Alert, Raptor Rehabilitation Programme, many activities over the years
1984	John Cohrs	Involvement with SSTF, Junior Field Trips, Piping Plover project, and our Puffin carver for many years

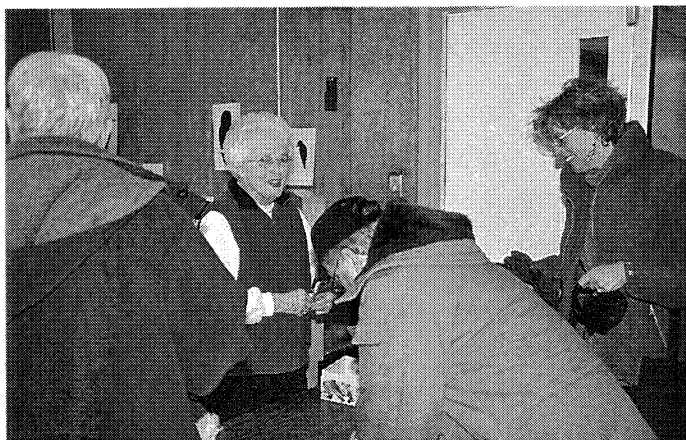


1978 Puffin of the Year presented to C. R. K Allen ("Charlie and Bunnie") [Photo Don Purchase]

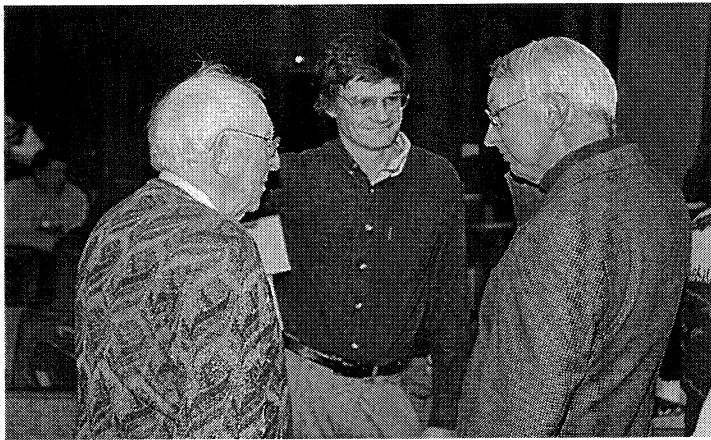
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|------|----------------------------|---|
| 1985 | Linda and Peter Payzant | For their tremendous efforts towards organizing the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas |
| 1986 | Ian McKay and Jack Cameron | Veterinarians, also Society members, who from beginning of Raptor Rehabilitation Program in 1982, cared for injured hawks and owls |
| 1987 | Elaine and Mike Kew | Established and ran the Raptor Rehabilitation Programme for birds of prey on Masons Point, Head of St. Margarets Bay, N.S. |
| 1988 | Ross Anderson | Led many field trips, particularly on Brier Island, enthusiastic bird bander, compiled (posthumously) statistics for the Christmas Bird Counts for all of Canada. |
| 1989 | Ken Gregoire | Founding member, active on executive and SSTF, surveying and monitoring bird populations, educating the public |
| 1990 | Bob Dickie | Executive positions, including President and Secretary; SSTF; Records Editor for number of years; and donated his artwork to <i>Nova Scotia Birds</i> |
| 1991 | David Currie | Served as Treasurer of the SSTF , organized field trips, looked after Society's mailings, organized Christmas Bird Counts and co-ordinated these counts for N.S. |
| 1992 | Carol and Don MacNeill | Executive positions; Carol - President, Membership Secretary. Don - Secretary, Treasurer for number of years |
| 1993 | Nellie Snyder | Charter member, participated in various counts and surveys, birding talks to school groups and clubs, column <i>Birding Notes</i> for local papers |
| 1994 | Ken Gregoire | Leadership, outstanding dedication and efforts in bird conservation |
| 1995 | Bill Caudle | President; numerous executive positions, including Secretary and Treasurer; started the winter Sewer Stroll field trips; many birding educational roles |
| 1996 | Ted D'Eon | Instrumental in the recovery of the tern colonies, particularly the endangered Roseate Terns, on the Brother's Islands, off south western N.S. |
| 1997 | Harry Brennan | Conservation efforts with nesting hawks and owls, numerous talks to groups showing his superb slides of birds, wild flowers, as well as all of nature |
| 1998 | Fulton Lavender | Led many field trips; generous in sharing of his knowledge and time, particularly with beginning birders; involved in Christmas counts as participant, organizer, and compiler |
| 1999 | Bernard Forsythe | Since mid 70's, has been putting up artificial nest sites for owls with great success; participates yearly in Maritime Nest Records Scheme; as well as other counts and surveys |
| 2000 | Azor Vienneau | Staff artist at the N.S. Museum who contributed many drawings of birds for Society's publication and the Atlas project; participant in many birding counts and surveys |
| 2001 | Bernice Moores | Treasurer; whose initiative enabled Society to be granted Registered Charity status in 1998; managed finances of Society initiatives; ie Piping Plover Program, Brothers Islands Important Bird Areas (IBA) |
| 2002 | Gisèle d'Entremont | President, new directions such as supported introduction of IBA to N.S., membership in the Federation of N.S. Naturalists (FNSN), and other Society activities |
| 2003 | Blake Maybank | Seasonal Editor and then Editor of <i>Nova Scotia Birds</i> , conceived and ran the Chat Line for years, led field trips, promoted N.S. birding both within and outside the Province |
| 2004 | Joan Czapalay | Membership Secretary, enthusiastically encouraged and educated birders through talks and field trips, President of the FNSN. □ |

NSBS 50th Anniversary Launch

By Judy O'Brien



Former NSBS President Margaret Clarke greets new and long-time members.



(L-R) Doug Roy and Andy Horn chat with founding member Ken Gregoire. [Photos Sterling Levy]

On January 27, 2005, eighty-five enthusiastic birders crowded into the auditorium of the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History to kick off the 50th Anniversary of the Nova Scotia Bird Society. This was, in fact, 30 more than the original 55 who attended the first meeting on January 28, 1955. Founding

After opening remarks by Gisèle d'Entremont, Chair of the 50th Anniversary Committee, and Suzanne Borkowski, President of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, those in attendance were treated to Members' Slide Night, a mixture of slides and digital images presented by local birders. Richard Stern, Cindy Creighton, Ulli Höger, Blake Maybank, Peter Payzant, Bernard Forsythe and Oliver Thunken presented a mixture of the exotic and the common and we were impressed by the clarity and composition of the images on the screen. Evening of members' presentations are always a favourite.

Between presentations there were a number of draws for prizes donated by local businesses and friends of the Society. Thanks go to The Trail Shop, Halifax Seed Company Inc., For The Birds Nature Shop (Mahone Bay), Stefan Czapalay, Robbie Smith, and Pat Melanson for their generous donation of prizes. Also thanks to Tim Horton's on Young Street for the donation of coffee.

Before and after the meeting members and guests enjoyed a visual walk through the last 50 years of birding in Nova Scotia. On display were photographs of birding trips compiled by Sterling Levy and mounted by Marg Clark, and lists of past presidents, founding members, and Puffin of the Year award recipients. For those feeling up to a challenge, a number of Azor Vienneau's bird silhouettes to be identified.

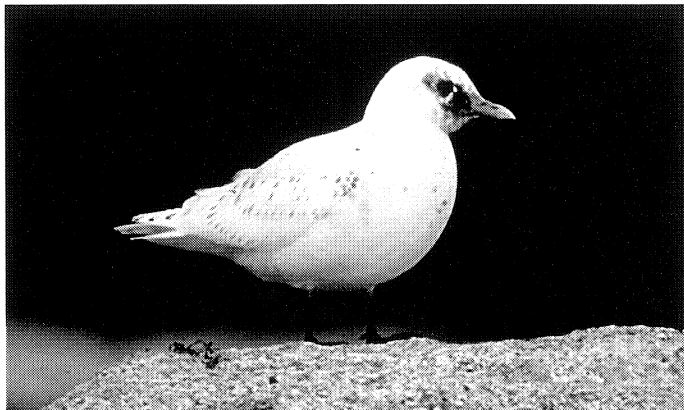
The cake with the 50th Anniversary logo was cut and we were launched into our 50th year! α



After the slide presentations members and guests enjoyed coffee and cake and the opportunity to renew old friendships. [Photos Sterling Levy]

Photo Album

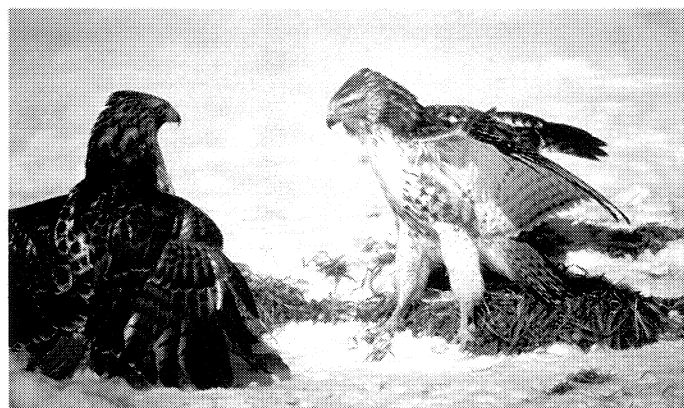
PGNS - Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia



IVORY GULL Feb. 8, 1979, Sambro, NS. [Photo Ian McLaren]



YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON. [Photo Bev Sarty]



RED-TAILED HAWKS. [Photo Fred Greene - PGNS 1990]



Juvenile AMERICAN ROBIN. [Photo George Ghiz - PGNS 1991]



HERRING GULL chick. [Photo Fred Joyce - PGNS 1990]



NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD. [Photo Larry Colwell - PGNS 1990]



EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE. [Photo NSBS Library - uncredited]



SWAINSON'S THRUSH. [Photo S. Lenn - NSBS Library]

Photo Album

PGNS - Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia



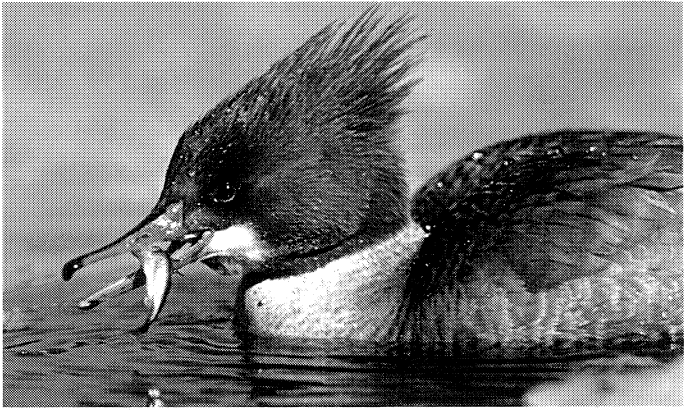
YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO. [Photo Adrian George]



WORM-EATING WARBLER [Photo ABO Staff]



BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER. [Photo Lance Laviolette]



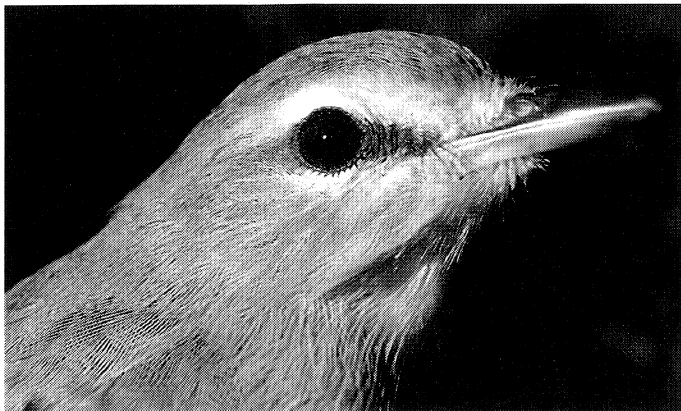
COMMON MERGANSER. [Photo Trina Fitzgerald]



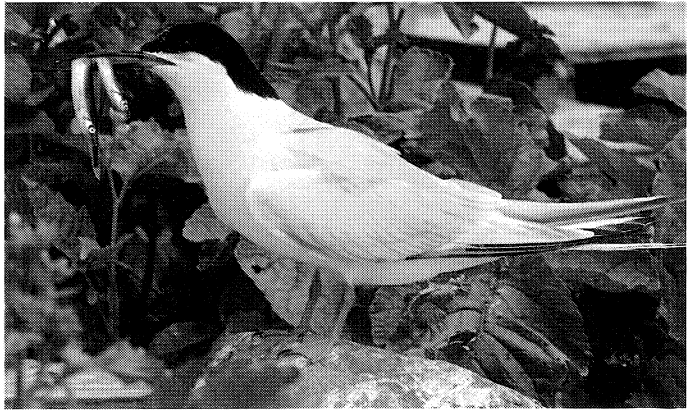
WOOD DUCK. 1990 PGNS Competition. [Photo Tunis Obdam]



MAGNOLIA WARBLERS 2003 PGNS Competition. [Photo Lorris Keiser]



PHILADELPHIA VIREO. [Photo Lance Laviolette]



ROSEATE TERN, July 2005. [Photo Ted D'Eon]