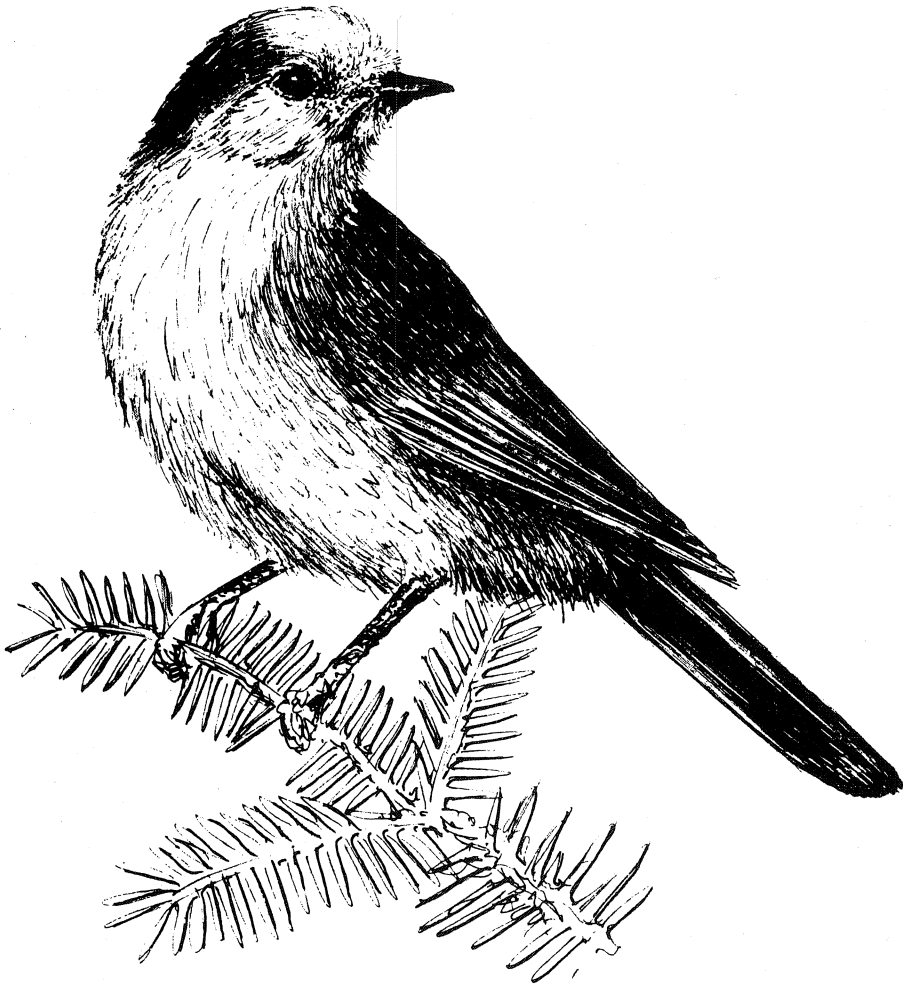


*Nova Scotia
Birds*



January 1990

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Happy New Year

FROM YOUR
1989-1990 EXECUTIVE



From the Left: Carin Somers, Vice-President; Don MacNeill, Treasurer; Richard Stern, Past President; Blake Maybank, Director; Joyce Purchase, President; Phyllis Bryson, Secretary; Shirley Cohrs, Editor; Clarence Stevens, Director; Carol MacNeill, Membership Secretary (absent, Jill McLean)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

At the end of my second term I would like to thank you all for the privilege of being President for the last two years. Once again, the Society has been active in a number of fields. As usual, regular meetings were held here in the Museum on the 4th Thursday of every month, except in the summer, and executive meetings were also held monthly. A number of field trips were held and there have been no major problems with pre-registration.

Negotiations with the Nova Scotia Public Archives have been completed, and they now have most of our old records, minutes, etc. This will be an ongoing relationship, and records can be available to anyone at any time through the Archives. Carin Somers has agreed to be our liaison with this organisation.

The Phone Line, as discussed at last year's A.G.M., has been set and is in full operation. The Society donated monies for the initial equipment and set-up, and ongoing costs are by donations from users. Blake Maybank is the organiser and rare or interesting sightings, unusual numbers of birds, etc., are reported. N.S.B.S. field trips and meetings are mentioned, and there is time on each call for subscribers to leave their own message. The number (852-CHAT) has been published in other sources of information, such as Birding.

As part of an effort to "decentralize" our meetings, a very successful meeting, combined with a field trip, was held in Yarmouth in June. Hubert Hall and Ted d'Eon gave excellent talks, and Eric Ruff led the trip the next day. Many thanks to Eric for organising this.

Ken Gregoire discovered that a potentially serious conflict has developed between mussel aquaculturalists and Eider and other sea ducks on the Eastern Shore. Further information is being collected to determine the extent of the problem and how the Society can best protect the birds without causing harm to the industry.

I felt that our lack of a Provincial Bird was worth bringing up with Government again, and I wrote to the Premier. He has referred it on to other Government departments, and we are currently awaiting developments!

We held our first annual Bird Fair in September. This was a bird extravaganza, with booths, demonstrations, optical equipment, competitions, etc., to introduce members of the general public who are becoming interested in birds and birding to our Society, and to help them enjoy the activity more. We felt it was a great success, and we have learned much, so that it can be even better next year. Thank you to Joan Waldron of the Museum staff for making it such a success!

The executive decided to award an honorary Life Membership to Mr. C.R.K. Allen of Tusket, for all the work he has done for us over the years. He was delighted and is sorry he cannot be here in person to accept it. I am sure the membership join me in wishing him well.

As usual, the executive performed a lot of "housekeeping" functions during the year. A lot of thought went into how the executive itself is voted in and constituted. One change agreed was that in future the nominating committee would be appointed in April and the names of the nominees printed in the Fall Flyer, to give the general membership more time to study them and make further nominations if necessary. We are also looking carefully at updating the by-laws, so that other possible ways of making improvements to the running of the Society can be explored. On a sad note, several prominent members passed away this year. One was Sarah MacLean, who personified the Society in Cape Breton, and who led many field trips and contributed many reports and articles to Nova Scotia Birds over the years. Another was Fred Kenney, from the New Glasgow area, who had been a member since the year after the Society's inception. Another was Sandra Myers, tragically killed in an accident this spring. She was Vice President at the time of her death, and had previously been Treasurer, Executive Member, and receiver of the Puffin-of-the-Year Award for all the

Award for all the work she had done for the Society. She is greatly missed by many, particularly by her family, who are all active members of the Society, and by myself as a close personal friend and as somebody who personified the joy and friendship of Birding.

On a happier note, I would like to present this year's Puffin. As in previous years, the choice is entirely that of the President, and I would like to award it to somebody who has, over his many years of membership, been a real "unsung hero" to the Society, and more importantly, to the birds themselves, sometimes at considerable personal expense, and when, for example, trying to prevent illegal hunting, personal danger. He was a charter member of the Society and has been active on both the executive and the SSTF's board ever since. He personally underwrote two Audubon slide lectures to the public, and has flown numerous biologists and wildlife people around the shores of the Province in his own plane, surveying bird populations and collecting valuable data. He personally reintroduced the Puffin to an island off the South Shore, where they had previously been exterminated, by digging burrows and appropriately managing the habitat. He has been unfailing in his monitoring of birds, educating the public, and making sure the law is enforced, in his local Mahone Bay, over the years--all of this done quietly, without fuss, and without general recognition by many. Ken Gregoire--Come and get your recognition!

Finally, as I will not be standing for re-election, I wish to thank the executive for all their help and hard work over the last two years, and I wish the new President the best of luck!

Respectfully submitted
Richard B. Stern



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Accuracy is of considerable importance to us, so when it was pointed out that there were several errors in our last "List of Contributors", I carried out a small investigation to see just how this could have happened.

There is always the possibility of some typographical errors and that was true for some in this case, but there were thirteen errors in the list. As I read the errors, I realized that several were the result of my own sad interpretation of difficult handwriting.

Most reporters have adequate penmanship but a few present a real challenge.

We can usually figure out bird species and place names because they are familiar but with people's names we have nothing to go on.

The problem is, we are ending up with inaccuracies which we would prefer not to have, I'm asking everyone who sends reports to try to ensure that they are legible.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Andrew Allen (AA), Michael Allen (MA), George Alliston (GA), Keith Alsebrook (KA), Marion Alsebrook (Mal), Pearl Bay (PVB), Sherman Bleakney (SB), Gordon Callon (GC), Leigh Carson (LC), Karen Casselman (KLC), Margaret Clarke (MAC), Pat and Joe Clifford (PJC), John Cohrs (JLC), Lisè Cohrs (LAC), Shirley Cohrs (JSC), Cyril Coldwell (CRC), Sheila Connell (SAC), Alan Covert (AC), Ethel Crathorne (EC), Donna Crosby (DC), George Crowell (GCr), David Currie (DAC), Mike Dadswell (MD), Delisle d'Entremont (DD), Lisette d'Entremont (LD), Raymont d'Entremont (RSD), Jerome D'Eon (JD), David Diller (DDi), Martha Dodge (MDo), Margaret Ellis (MEE), Tony Erskine (AJE), Kay Forbes (KF), George Forsyth (GF), Harold Forsyth (HF), Bernard Forsythe (BLF), Allison Foster (AF), Sylvia Fullerton (SJF), Jamie Gibson (JG), Merritt Gibson (MG), Helen Hall (HJH), Hubert Hall (HGH), Tim Hall (TH), Tom Herman (The), Maxine Hill (MH), Barbara Hinds (BH), J.P. Huang (JPH), Joan Jarvis (JVJ), Fulton Lavender (FLL), Andree Laviolette (AL), Lance Laviolette (LL), Pat Lawrence (PL), Richard Lawrence (RL), Ann MacDonald (AM), Clive MacDonald (CSM), Andrew MacFarlane (AMa), Beverly MacIntosh (BMac), Gordon MacLean (GM), Peter MacLeod (PM), Don MacNeill (DAM), Carol MacNeill (CDM), Roslyn MacPhee (RM), Bruce MacTavich (BMa), Bernice McLaren (BM), Ian McLaren (IAM), Blake Maybank (BLM), Eric Mills (ELM), Jean Morse (JM), Bill Morse (WM), Chris Naugler (CN), Gertrude Nickerson (GN), Mike Olson (MO), Linda & Peter Payzant (L&PP), Arthur Porter (AP), Mary Pratt (MP), Mark Pulsifer (MPu), Don Purchase (DP), Joyce Purchase (JP), Mike Rhymer (MR), Barbara Ruff (BR), Eric Ruff (ER), Bev. Sarty (BS), Francis Schwab (FSc), Marg Slatkin (MS), Peter Smith (PCS), Francis Spalding (FS), Richard Stern (RBS), Clarence Stevens (CSII), Ruby Stouffer (RS), Miriam Tams (MT), Jim Taylor (JWT), Brenda Thexton (BET), Bill Thexton (RGT), Linda Thompson (LT), Diane Thorpe (BDT), Jean Timpa (JT), Stuart Tingley (ST), Dan Toews (DTo), Gordon Tufts (GWT), Judy Tufts (JCT), Eva Urban (EU), Eleanor Waldron (EW), Jim Wolford (JWW), David Young (DHY).

Bob Dickie,
Records Editor

BIRD REPORTS

LOONS AND GREBES

RED-THROATED LOONS had picked up slightly from last winter's dismal showing, with a total of 21 birds in eight reports. IAM mentions seeing "more than usual" along the Eastern Shore in October and November.

Only a few observers reported COMMON LOONS. AA saw pairs in five lakes in the Sackville (NS) area.

PIED-BILLED GREBES were also skimpily reported. JCT saw 2 adults in Drain Lake in April, and there was one in the Port Williams sewage pond on Sept. 19 (GF **vide** JWW). The largest concentration of HORNED GREBES was reported from Green Bay and Crescent Beach, where the Cohrs saw 10-15 on October 27. There were four other reports of 8 birds. RED-NECKED GREBES were also elusive or ignored, with only three reports: 1 at Chebucto Head in February, 1 at Summerville Beach, Shel. Co., on June 18, and finally one at Green Bay on October 8.

The grebe of the year has to be DAM's CLARK'S GREBE, which he observed at Rainbow Haven on October 13. He watched it for an hour at a distance of about 500 yards through a 20X telescope. His description rules out any plausible alternative:

"Bird at first appeared to have all white head and neck (side-on) but looked at carefully could see dark, narrow stripe running from bill over top of head and down back of neck. When facing me, top of head looked striped (white, dark, white). White portions were bright white. Eye clearly discernible on face and surrounded by white. Back and wings dark, mottled. Back and wings dark mottled. Light sides above waterline. Bird was joined by a Red-throated Loon close by. Size was similar although I noted that the bird seemed slightly smaller than the loon. Bill was yellow and held straight out or down. Not upturned like a Red-throated Loon and thinner than loon's...

"I looked carefully and could not see a dark line from the eye to the bill and could see no vestigial crest at back of the head (thus ruling out Great Crested Grebe)...When I got home the picture of the Clark's Grebe in the **National Geographic** Field Guide was similar to this bird."

This is only the second "Western" Grebe report in Nova Scotia. Furthermore, it is the only report since the species was split into Western and Clark's, and so qualifies as the first Clark's for Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, Don was the only person to see it. A storm the following day made sea-watching impossible, and the bird had departed by the time the weather cleared.

LPMP, ed.

FULMAR TO FRIGATEBIRD

Our only NORTHERN FULMAR was the bird that Hubert Hall saw from **Bluenose** on May 28, sitting on the water about 10 miles west of Yarmouth. He also saw our first GREATER SHEARWATER on June 7, about 24 miles WNW of Yarmouth, and our first SOOTY SHEARWATERS too: a couple of birds near Cape Forchu on May 28. The Sooties arrived in force soon after that: David H. Young counted 113 on June 6, off Port Medway and Liverpool--75 of them in a single flock. The latest report was the Sooty which Peter MacLeod and Bev Sarty saw off Sandy Cove, Halifax County, on Sept. 15. Hubert Hall saw about 100 Greaters plus Sooties from **Bluenose** on June 11, evidently blown inshore by strong southeasterlies; there were very few the next day. He saw 40-50 Greaters on Oct. 12, about 10 miles west of Yarmouth: the

latest report of the season. Bruce Mactavish and Stu Tingley counted about 100 of the birds from **Bluenose** on Sept. 15. Raymond d'Entremont saw "hundreds" of Greaters on Brown's Bank on Sept. 18. He saw "the usual sprinkling of CORY'S SHEARWATERS on Georges Bank", but the only date he gives is for a singleton that he saw there on Aug. 20.

1989 has been quite a summer for MANX SHEARWATERS off southern Nova Scotia. I'll discuss Brier Island separately. Elsewhere, Hubert Hall saw a Manx from **Bluenose** on July 22, and a couple of them next day. There was a single bird on the same route on Sept. 15 (Bma, ST). Raymond d'Entremont saw 5 on Georges Bank on July 31: "from my personal observations it is my impression that this shearwater has increased somewhat in the past 5 years," he says. Peter MacLeod saw one off Sandy Cove, Halifax County, on Sept. 15.

I've kept the Brier Island records separate, to see if we can get a picture of the summer there as a whole. Carl Haycock, of BIOS, tells me that the humpbacks arrived early, and tuna, dolphins and harbour porpoises were all common. WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS were extremely common early in July. Ian McLaren took a whale-watching cruise on July 16, and estimated about 100 Sooty Shearwaters, and 20 each of Manx and Greaters. On July 29, Richard Stern saw "a fair number" of Greaters and Wilson's, and a single Sooty. I saw no shearwaters or storm-petrels at all on Aug. 27. On Sept. 10 there were 50-100 Sooties, 100-200 Greaters and 1-2 Manx off Brier, over Moore's Ledge (RBS). There were 2 Manx and 50 Greaters on Sept. 12 (Bma, ST). Finally, Richard Stern saw a single Manx on Oct. 1: "the only Shearwater Seen". I don't know what to make of these fluctuations, but it's useful to have them on record for future reference.

The first sighting of Wilson's Storm-petrels was, naturally, by Hubert Hall from **Bluenose**. He saw "several" in a small flock with some LEACH'S STORM-PETRELS, on May 29, about 30 miles WNW of Yarmouth. The Mactavish/Tingley team saw 15 Leach's and 3 Wilson's along this route on Sept. 15. Raymond d'Entremont saw "hundreds" on Georges Bank on June 9. He notes that they were still numerous there on August 15: "I saw a single bird on Brown's Bank on September 15, and none after that." However, the last Wilson's sighting was off Chebucto Head on Oct. 18 (PM). Our northernmost record was a singleton at Gooseberry Cove, Louisbourg, on Aug. 6 (GM).

Storm-petrels are notoriously vulnerable to strong winds--in our case, the remains of Hurricanes Gabrielle and Hugo, among others--which blow them inshore and, sometimes, ashore. A Wilson's was seen well inland, on Kejimikujik Lake, on Sept. 11. An oiled and sickly Leach's was picked up by some children at Aldershot on Sept. 25. Fred Bond cleaned and rehabilitated it, and later released it at night in the Leach's colony on Bon Portage Island (JWW). There was an unidentified storm-petrel in Pictou Harbour on Sept. 24 (Michael Olsen). This was probably brought in by the same blow, as were the 10 probable Leach's close inshore off Port George, also on Sept. 24 (MT, MDo). Bernard Forsythe saw "dozens" of Leach's off Point Prim, Digby Co., Oct. 10. The birds were still at Bon Portage as late as October 29; Cyril Coldwell has netted and banded 43 of them this fall. On Oct. 9, Shirley Brothers was startled to see a Leach's "come in from over the water...hover a bit over the meadow, then drop to the ground and disappear down a burrow"--at 11 a.m.! Sane storm-petrels simply don't do this in daylight; the gulls are far too hungry!

Ian McLaren says that an adult NORTHERN GANNET seen off Brier Island in July, might have been collecting nest material--or perhaps it was tangled in fish line. Nesting material is certainly possible. Gannets used to nest on Gannet Rock, near Yarmouth, until 1883, as well as on the other Gannet Rock on the New Brunswick side of Fundy. A pair of immatures tried but failed, 10 years ago, in the Grand Manan archipelago. Let's keep on hoping. I saw 2 subadults off Brier on Aug. 27, and there were at least 12 there--three of them immature--on Oct. 29 (ER,BR). Meanwhile, Richard Stern saw birds, mostly immature, off Brier on July 29, and "good flocks" there on Sept. 10 Sept. 10 and Oct. 1, in both cases feeding on herring along with the whales. He also saw 5-6 diving well inshore, off Grand Pré in Minas Basin on Aug. 7--"never seen them in that location before." Among the later sightings, Michael Olsen saw 39 off Crystal Cliffs and 11 off Pomquet Beach, on Oct. 3. The Cohrs saw at least 10, all adult, near Pollock Point on Oct. 22. There were 30 at Antigonish on Oct. 20, and 20 at Canso Causeway the next

day (FLL,MA). Tony Locke crossed the Causeway on the weekends of Oct. 27, and Nov. 3 and 10; each time he saw up to 70 gannets feeding off Port Hastings, on the Gulf of St. Lawrence side. A large pod of pilot whales was there on Nov. 3, so the attraction may have been squid--the whales' principal food.

The Halls saw 3 GREAT CORMORANTS off Bartlett Beach, Digby Co., Aug. 23; the only other report is of a singleton off Scatari Island on Sept. 4 (GM). George Crowell estimated the DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS on the islands off Baddeck at 300 birds, on July 22. Michael Olsen's counts from Pictou Harbour show the fall migration of the Double-crests: 1000+ on Aug. 6; 300-400 on Oct. 14; 150 on Oct. 18; 50-60 on Oct. 22; 20 on Oct. 26; and only 8 on Nov. 5. (Regular counting like this is very valuable. However, if you try it, don't forget to report the days when there weren't any birds at all!) The Halls saw several large flocks in the week of Aug. 15-22, migrating from Yarmouth to the Maine coast. The Cohrs saw many skeins of between 15-50+ birds--at least 800 in all--gathering and leaving the Crescent Beach area between Oct. 6-9. At least 500 passed Seal Island on Oct. 8 (IAM,BM,ELM,FLL). A flock of about 1200 flew west over Wolfville on Oct. 15 (HF), and Dan Toews saw 1500, in 4 large Vs, flying west past Kingsport on Oct. 18. There's no positive identification but, since Double-crests are our common cormorant, it's a reasonable assumption.

The grand prize for seabirds goes to the MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD that Bev Sarty saw off Chebucto Head. I'll let her speak for herself. "While observing the many gannets flying by this day, I noticed a bird slightly larger and much darker than the immature Gannets. The narrow wings appeared longer with a prominent crook at wrist. The head was small and the tail long and pointed. It was the white on breast and belly, crossed by a fairly dark prominent band which first drew my attention to the bird. After studying plumages of this species, I believe this bird was a subadult female." This sounds pretty good. The tail is actually forked, but it's long and thin, and looks pointed when it's folded. What strikes me most about a frigatebird is its skinny body compared to its big wings--but that's best seen from underneath. I suppose we have to quibble a little about its identification down to species--but the Magnificent Frigatebird breeds in the Caribbean, and is the one most likely to be brought up here by tropical storms. According to Tufts (3rd edition), this is the seventh record from Nova Scotia.

RGBB, ed.

HERONS AND ALLIES

AM. BITTERNS were well reported, with some 8 breeding-season birds from Gabarus to the Pubnicos and 10 scattered migrants, including one on Sable Island on Sept. 25 (Ama). The latest was on Oct. 14. Some early-summer concentrations of GREAT BLUE HERONS (var. ob.) included 38 at Big Is., Merigomish, on July 17, 31 at Glace Bay Sanc. on July 26, and 110 between Wallace and New Glasgow on July 30. Ten on Brier Island on July 28-31 (RBS) were presumably on the move and one seen from **M.V. Bluenose** was westward bound on Aug. 18 (HH). There were 45+ on Cape Sable Island on Sept. 1 (G&JT). Later counts from the Eastern Shore included 99 on Oct. 1 and 43 Oct. 11 between Grand Desert and Conrad's Beach (P&RL), to which can be added 20 at Cole Hbr. on 19 Oct. (MA). Fully 11 were still at Glace Bay Sanc. on Nov. 13 (GM). A GREAT EGRET was at L. W. Pubnico between July 10-14 (sev. obs.). Another was on Bon Portage I. On Sept. 2 (NSBS trip). There were at least 2 SNOWY EGRETS on Cape Sable through summer (sev. ob.), and 5 there on Sept. 25 (DHY). Up to 6 were still on Bon Portage I. on Sept 9 (H&HH). There were also 1 on July 7 and 7 on Aug. 12 around the Pubnicos (RD). LITTLE BLUE HERONS sightings involved 1 at Marie Joseph, Guys. Co., on May 30-31 (MPu), and ad. and imm. at Little Hbr., Shel. Co., on June 20 (DHY), and individuals at L. W. Pubnico on Aug. 12 (DD,RD) and Bon Portage I. on Sept. 2-3 (NSBS). A CATTLE EGRET in breeding plumage was at Grand Pré on June 25 (BLF). Another was the third "southern" heron for NSBS field trippers on Bon Portage I. on Sept 2-3. A late one wandered to the Stubbs farm at W. Lawrencetown on Oct. 24 (JWT).

A GREEN-BACKED HERON at Greenwich, Kings. Co., on Aug. 21 (HF) attracted other admirers during the next few days. Was this really the only one of this regular stray seen this year? The belated report of an ad. BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON on March 17 at L. W. Pubnico (RBS) is worth recording as our earliest spring arrival on

record. They were reported to be in their usual one and two through summer on Cape Sable I. and the Pubnicos, and one was still on Bon Portage I. on Sept 2-3 (NSBS). Three imm. at the John Lusby Marsh on Sept. 16 (GF) were presumably not local. More exciting was the ad. YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON at N. Stonehurst, Lun. Co., on July 22-23 (PM,BS et al.).

IAM, ed.

GEESE AND DUCKS

SNOW GEESE were relatively abundant this year, with up to **eight** individuals reported. A single bird at Lusby Marsh on September 16, was joined by a second a day later (GF **vide** JWW); an immature bird was at the Kingsport Sanctuary on October 4 (JWW), and another was reported from Fort Lawrence on the 8th (DAC). BLM had two adults and an immature on Seal Island on October 9, and a blue phase Snow Goose, first reported at Medford Beach on October 14, was later shot ("legally" - JWW) by a hunter near Kingsport on October 23 (JWW).

A single late report of Brant mentions 30 at Brier Island on March 26 (MA,KA).

Having earlier disposed of the "grebe of the year", we now come to the "goose of the year": a BARNACLE GOOSE appeared on November 18 at Medford Beach, near Kingsport. Birding cynics at first dismissed the bird as a probable escape, but its behaviour ("surfing", staying with wild Canadas), and the fact that it was apparently not banded and that none were missing from the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park collection at last convinced most that this was indeed, a countable Barnacle. Many birders were able to add this species to their life lists before it departed around November 21. (Reports from EU, RBS, JCT,GWT, **et al.**)

The Medford Beach area near Kingsport had more than the usual numbers of CANADA GEESE, reaching around 700 by November 9 (DTo **vide** JWW). There were no reports from many of the usual areas, but JD mentioned a spectacular 10,000+ at the Port Joli game sanctuary on October 22. The Glace Bay sanctuary harboured around 200 individuals in early November (BS,GCr).

Three WOOD DUCKS were at Bass River on August 23 (FS), and four females (of questionable status) could be seen at the Halifax Public Gardens on October 13 (PL, RL). There were no reports from the Annapolis Valley, the South Shore or the Eastern Shore, which are usually reliable areas.

There were 300-400 GREEN-WINGED TEAL at Glenwood Dyke on September 25 (LD). Six other reports mentioned 10 or fewer birds. In spite of the scarcity of reports, CSM felt that "This duck seemed to be in slightly better supply this year".

Nine reports of BLACK DUCK mention a peak of about 200 birds at the Glace Bay Sanctuary on October 18 (GCr,GM), and 300 or so at the Port Joli Game Sanctuary on October 22 (JD). Populations at the customary locations in the Halifax area seemed to be about as usual.

CSM reports seeing 6 hybrid male MALLARD x female Black Duck this spring. To their eternal shame, some female Blacks seem to prefer the gaudier Mallard drakes to those of their own species, and this has led to speculation that there is a danger of the Black Duck being genetically swamped by Mallards. If you are concerned, I suggest that you keep an eye peeled for any signs of inter-specific dalliance and be prepared to interfere at the crucial moment, if possible. Reports of pure Mallards included 5 males at the Port Williams sewage pond on June 9 (RGT,BET), and 64 birds at Crescent Beach on September 4 (Cohrs).

NORTHERN PINTAILS must have been about as usual, but the small number of reports makes it difficult to be certain. As usual, groups of ten or so started appearing around the end of September, and these could be encountered regularly at the usual duck ponds around the province right up to early November.

No concentrations of BLUE-WINGED TEAL were reported...only about a dozen birds in five reports were mentioned. In previous years, reports of tens and occasionally hundreds in a single location were usual. However, no one complained of low numbers, so perhaps the species was merely under-reported or under-observed.

Two NORTHERN SHOVELLERS were at New Waterford on July 6 (CSM). There were seven reports of GADWALS totalling 16 birds, the majority of which were at APBS in October (DAC et. al). Nobody saw large numbers of AMERICAN WIGEON, but there were 15-25 at Harris' Pond in Canning during the last two weeks of October, and around 20 at APBS on October 30 (FLL,PM,BS).

Forty-three RING-NECKED DUCKS at Drain Lake in April (JCT) had dispersed by June 5, when AA saw only "several". IAM saw around 40 in the Annapolis Royal duck pond on November 10. Our only reports of GREATER SCAUP come from Pictou Harbour, where MO had 3 on September 24 (a few days after Hurrigan Hugo started blowing things around), and about 200 on November 5. Five LESSER SCAUP were at Sheffield Mills on September 30, and there were 3-5 at the Pictou Causeway on Nov. 1.

No one reported large numbers of COMMON EIDER this time. BLM had 140 at Cape Sable on August 18.

One immature male HARLEQUIN DUCK turned up at the Canso Causeway on October 21 (FLL,MA). Perhaps by the time you read this, we shall have seen more on the Christmas counts.

FLL reports 95 OLDSQUAW at Point Aconi on October 21. There were two other reports totalling two more birds.

The Cohrs had the only biggish numbers of SCOTER Sp., with a mixed flock of around 250 on October 27 at Green Bay. Otherwise, Scoter reports were down considerably from previous years, with flocks in the 30 to 50 size range most commonly reported. Where were the groups of 50-150 that we have seen in previous years?

A late male COMMON GOLDENEYE in breeding plumage turned up at Green Bay on June 12 (Cohrs). The only other summer report is of a single female at River Bennet on August 24. In November, there were ones and twos around, and a spectacular 450 at West River in Pictou County, on November 5 (MO). A single BARROW'S GOLDENEYE was present the same day at the Pictou Causeway (MO).

Small numbers of BUFFLEHEAD were reported at varying locations in late October and early November. The Annapolis Royal duck pond yielded a bonanza for IAM when he saw about 200 there on November 10.

HOODED MERGANSERS began appearing in groups by October 1, when GCr had 7 at the Glace Bay sanctuary. Several other observers reported groups of 8 or fewer birds. This species seems to inspire comments like those of H&HH, who wrote "These adult males were brilliant with their female companion paddling in the calm lake", referring to a group of three in Midway Lake, Digby Co. on October 23.

The Pictou area "scored big" again, with the 150 or so COMMON MERGANSERS reported from the West River on November 11 by MO. The Black River held 41 near the Lumsden Dam and 8 at White Rock on October 8. The White Rock group had grown to 43 by October 23 (GWT,JCT). RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS were very poorly reported, with only four reports totalling 25 individuals.

There were two places where you could see RUDDY DUCKS last year: on May 31, there were two "subadult males" at Port L'Hebert Sanctuary (R. Chivers ~~file~~ IAM), and from November 7 to at least the 12th, there were two more at Cow Bay (MA,BS,PM,JWT).

Before leaving the ducks and geese, readers should be reminded that, without reports from you, we can't say much about the birding scene in Nova Scotia. The number of reports reaching this editor was the smallest he has seen in four years of

working for **Nova Scotia Birds**. Please, let us know what you have seen, and especially let us know if you think that numbers are significantly changed from what you are used to seeing.

LPMP,ed.

DIURNAL RAPTORS

Another "extralimital" **TURKEY VULTURE** was near Canning on May 21 (**vide** JWW). They were as usual, regular on Brier Island, where 10 were seen on occasions between Oct. 23 and Nov. 13 (var. ob.). Presumably the 3 seen from time to time up Digby Neck were part of this group. Singletons were seen around Yarmouth, during summer, and there were 4 in a field at Chegoggin on Sept. 21 (HH).

Summer **OSPREYS** were little reported. Although, according to JWW, "they are not often reported anywhere in our area (i.e., turbid Minas Basin) in summer or even on migration", one was regular at Blomidon Park during early August. A migrant flew over **M.V. Bluenose** 29 n. mi out of Yarmouth on Sept. 4 (HH). A number of late sightings from around the province between Oct. 6-18, were outmatched by 2 on Sable Island on Oct. 27 (AMa).

As usual, Cape Breton Island, takes the **BALD EAGLE** prize in summer. Thirteen ad. and 2 imm. were counted during a 50 km canoe trip on the Mira, July 10-11 (CSM). Nests on the mainland included one being visited by House Sparrows and Chickadees near Scotch Village (SAC), another near St. Croix, Hants Co., with young on May 17 (Bev Shanks). Noodling immatures included one on Brier Is., from mid-July through mid-Aug. Probably migrants reached Durham, Pic. Co., Oct. 4 (MO) and 2 ad. were over Greenwich, Kings Co., by Oct. 15 (RBS). In early Oct. a young bird reached Sable Island, where there are only a couple of previous records (**vide** AMa).

A few summer N. **HARRIERS** were reported from Yar. Co. to Glace Bay. A rather paltry migration is evident in the following (sev. ob.): 6+ on Bon Portage Island on Sept. 2-4, 4-5 between Sept. 7-10 and 7 on Sept. 13 and Brier Is., 4 at Fuller's Bridge, Rich. Co., on Sept. 17, and none on Seal Is., Oct. 7-9. One reached Sable Is. on Oct. 7.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK migration seemed slow to start, with only 2 on Bon Portage Is. on Sept. 2-4 (NSBS) and 2 on Brier Is. on Sept. 7 (MAC). However, by Oct. 1 they were "abundant" on Brier Is. (RBS) and there were "lots everywhere" around Wolfville (MG). There were up to 25 on Seal Is., Oct. 9. Five were moving along Conrad's Beach on Oct. 14. One had the temerity to chase a Pileated Woodpecker near St. Croix on Sept. 18 (MAC). No details were submitted for a **COOPER'S HAWK** seen over Melbourne, Yar. Co., Sept. 8 (H&HH). Five N. **GOSHAWKS** seen between Sept. 6 and Oct. 28 do not constitute much of a show.

Single **RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS** at Gunning Cove, Shel. Co., on May 28 (DHY) and South Ohio, Yar. Co., on July 25 (HH), hint at breeding in the region. A well described ad. on Brier Is. on Sept. 6 (MAC,MS,EC) was presumably an off-course migrant. Four **BROAD-WINGED HAWKS** riding the thermals alongside gliders over Stanley Airport, Hants Co., on Aug. 19 (SAC) could have been a local family. We had good coverage of migration at Brier Is. (sev. ob.). Migration had hardly begun with 3 birds on Sept. 7-8, but there were kettles of 50 on Sept. 10 and 140 on Sept. 12, and about 400 altogether on Oct. 1 (RBS). Three reached Seal Is., Oct. 10 (SJF et al.). The latest was an imm. at Hartlen's Pt, Oct. 14 (FLL,MA). We had only a few reports for summer and fall of **RED-TAILED HAWKS**, with no indication of larger movements or buildups. An early **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** was at Boularderie, Vic. Co., Aug. 31 (EW). Six timely birds appeared at points from APBS to Cape Forchu between Oct. 20 and Nov. 5.

A few summering AM. **KESTRELS** were reported, including up to 3 pairs nesting on large cut over areas in Shel. Co. Some of the 8 on Brier Is. on Sept. 7 (MAC) could have been local, and there are no reports on later migrants there. Ten on Seal Is., on Oct. 9 will have to serve as our season's peak. Atlasing shows that breeding **MERLINS** were more common and widespread than previously supposed. An agitated ad.m. near Bridgewater on July 24 (JT) was probably nesting. However, others, like 1 in Yarmouth on June 24 (HH) and another harassing pigeons in Wolfville on Aug. 8 (JWW), were

presumably non-breeders. Eleven migration-season reports were all of ones or twos, except for a peak of 15 on Oct. 9 on Seal Is. PEREGRINE FALCONS were more widely reported including locally raised birds around Blomidon in late summer.

An impressive estimate of 10 (4 *tundrius* and 6 *anatum*) was made on Seal Is. on Oct. 7 (sev. ob.), and there were ca. 5 on Sable Is. on the same date (AMa). In addition, there were fully 20 reports of some 27 birds of passage (4 identified as *tundrius*) in localities from Cape Breton Is. to Sable and Brier Islands

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

There were coveys of 10 GRAY PARTRIDGES at Lower Canard on Oct. 2 (DT) and 20 near Canning on Oct. 4 (MG). Two roadkills were found at the same time at Kingsport (RGT). Most unexpected was one on Brier Is. on Sept. 8 (MAC); introduced or vagrant? Reports of RING-NECKED PHEASANTS included a "green pheasant" (per **National Geographic Society Field Guide**) near Digby on Oct. 29(RBS). Broods of 10 and 12 were reported from near Wolfville (BE &RGT). Among scattered fall reports from outside this "core" area, the dozen or more on Seal Is. are mildly disheartening.

SPRUCE GROUSE broods were noted at Black River L. on June 15 (MG), near Green Hill, Pic. Co. (MO), and inland Shel. Co. (IAM). There were 7 widely scattered autumn birds. RUFFED GROUSE are said by hunters to be plentiful on Cape Breton Is. this year (CSM). There are only 4 reports from elsewhere, but AA saw 8 near N. Beaverbank on Oct. 26, suggesting that they may be common on the mainland too. "A male with tail fanned and ruff erect stalking a female" at Overton on Oct. 18 (HH) was unlikely to have met with much success.

RALLIDS

The YELLOW RAIL reported in the last issue as seen and heard at APBS on May 21 was actually found on May 28 (BFF,JPH). An unusually obliging imm. bird, put up by IAM from the central sedge meadows on Seal Is., Oct. 8, flushed twice more, giving a N.S. "lifer" to other observers (FLL, BMELM). A SORA was calling all night in mid-June at Mosherville, Hants Co. (SAC), and an ad. at the Canard Pond in late Aug. (sev. obs.) might have bred locally. The only reported migrant was at Hartlen's Pt. on Oct. 14 (FLL,MA). An imm. PURPLE GALLINULE hung around the margin of a commercial property in Waverley between Oct. 20-27. Birders were only notified a few days after it first was seen by employees, a few were able to "tick it". Single COMMON MOORHENS were APBS on Oct. 30 (FLL) and on Sable Is. on Nov. 7 (AMa). There were 10 AM. COOTS at APBS on Oct. 30 (FLL **et al.**), 1 at Three Fathom Harbour on Nov. 5 (BM), and 1-2 on Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth, from early November.

I heard rumours of a SANDHILL CRANE this autumn, but none was reported. Can anybody oblige for the record?

IAM, ed.



FALL SHOREBIRDS

As noted below the shorebird report contains more than its share of this fall's remarkable records. Among our regular migrants BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS were at Cherry Hill, July 23 (J>); by Aug. 18-20 there were 100 at Porter's Pt. (RBS), 200 at Cape Sable (BM) and 800 at Grand Pré (RBS&G&JT). The largest number thereafter was 150 at Port Morien, Sept. 9 (CSM); 3 were still at Lingan, Nov. 8 (CSM). LESSER GOLDEN PLOVER were well reported; the earliest, 10 at Cheggogin Pt., Aug. 26 (H&TH), were followed by similar numbers in the Valley through early Sept. (G&JT), when there was a "big arrival" on Seal (AM), followed by 75 at Yarmouth Airport Sept. 15 (BMacT, SIT). Numbers declined thereafter, but there were still 15 near Amherst, Oct. 28 (AM), 1 at Cherry Hill, Nov. 5 (JSC).

A COMMON RINGED PLOVER was carefully observed, Oct. 8 on Sable Island by Ian McLaren and companions. Even the absence of webbing between inner and middle toes was noted. IAM promises a full report with photos for next April's issue. There are two Nfld. records (1980-81) and a sighting at Cherry Hill, Nov. 2, 1985 (NSB Vol. 28 (1), 1986). The species, a close relative of the Semi palmed Plover, breeds in the high arctic of eastern Canada and Eurasia; some winter in Europe, most in Africa.

Four very early SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS were at Cook's Beach, July 4 (H&HH), 2 at Blanche (SJF). By Aug. 17-18 there were 300 at Hartlen's Pt. (FLL,MA), 600 at Cape Sable (BM), and by month's end 160 along the Northumberland shore (BM), several hundred on Brier (RBS). At Grand Pré, 365 on Aug. 19 was the peak number; by Sept. 9, it was down to 150 (G&JT). A few were reported in Oct. from many places, the last 10 at Glace Bay, Nov. 5 (GC). A total of 21 PIPING PLOVERS was reported, of which 8 were chicks: 1 at Lingan (CSM), 4 at Glace Bay (CSM,GC,GM), 3 at Cherry Hill (SJF,J>). The largest number of KILLDEER noted was 23 at Cheggogin on the early date of July 21 (fide ER). Last was 1 at Kentville, Nov. 5 (JWW).

An AMERICAN AVOCET was at Cape Sable Sept. 1 (PM,BS et al.)

A very early GREATER YELLOWLEGS was at Canard, July 13 (RBS), 98 were at Canning, Aug. 18 (JT), c. 25 there Oct. 8 and 21 (JT,JWW). There were three early Nov. sightings, the latest of 5 at L. W. Pubnico, Nov. 5 (JKD'E). The first LESSER YELLOWLEGS were also early, with 2 at Cherry Hill, July 6 (SJF) and 1 at Canard, July 8 (RBS). The largest counts were 100+ from Chezzetcook to Lawrencetown, Aug. 17 and 50 at Hartlen's Pt., Aug. 17 (FLL et al.). A few lingered through Sept., Oct., with 1 still at Sheffield, Nov. 2 (JT). Four SOLITARY SANDPIPERS were at Canard, July 8 (RBS). About 35 were reported from mid-Aug. to early Sept. with later sightings at W. Green Harbour, Sept. 18 (EW,DHY) and Broad Cove, Sept. 22 (JSC). IAM comments on the WILLET'S habit of departing early in fall, suggesting that most adults leave during the latter half of July. Besides his own record of 36 on Brier Is., July 15, there were 40-50 at Cherry Hill, July 23 (BM,JT) and an "obvious migration" from Brier Is., July 28-31 (RBS). Immatures and some adults are not in such a hurry: there were 10 at Fuller's Bridge, Sept. 17 (GM) and 2 still at Canning, Oct. 14 (JT). Willets of the western race were noted Aug. 11 at Cape Sable - "early but on schedule for New England" - and at Hartlen's Pt., Aug. 22 (IAM, BM et al.). There are only three fall reports of the SPOTTED SANDPIPER: Sept. 1 on Cape Sable Is. (G&JT), Sept. 7 on Brier Is. (MAC) and at Mader's Cove "until Oct. 10" (J&WM). Summer reports included 25 on a 12-mile stretch of the SW Margaree (CSM) and newly hatched chicks July 4 at Belleneck, Yar. Co. (RSD'E). Two UPLAND SANDPIPERS were at L.W. Pubnico throughout June (DJd'E) another at Grand Pré, July 19-20 (BLF f. BM). A dozen observers reported WHIMBRELS, the first 20 at Hemeon's Hd., July 22 (DHY) and 1 at Rainbow Haven, July 25 (MA). There were 46 at Chebogue Pt. Aug. 12 (NSBS), 60 at Lingan, Sept. 8 (CSM) and 21 at Round Bay, Sept. 21 (DHY), with only a few thereafter, the last at Conrad's Beach, Oct. 14 (FLL,MA).

Nova Scotia's first 20th century record of a LONG-BILLED CURLEW occurred when Peter MacLeod and Bev Sarty found one on the Cole Hbr. dykes on Aug. 23. It, or just possibly another was sighted by John and Shirley Cohrs at Pond Cove, Brier on Aug. 28. It could not be found there two days later (SIT,FS). Convincing details support their sighting of a bird unmistakable in any case when viewed under good conditions. The last previous record dates from Sept., 1870, and even then it had, because of over-hunting, become a great rarity in the east.

Fourteen reports of HUDSONIAN GODWITS are almost all of one to four birds, dating from a single at Matthews Lake, July 20 (DHY) to 2 near APBS, Oct. 28 (IAM). The only larger groups were at Cape Sable, 15 on Aug. 18 and 7, Sept. 1 (BM).

Only seven observers took note of the familiar RUDDY TURNSTONE, for the most part reporting small numbers, from 1 at Glace Bay, July 26 (GC) to another at Cherry Hill, Oct. 19 (JSC). The exception was the flock of 400 at Cheverie, Aug. 8-9 (f. JWW, K>). RED KNOTS were better reported: 50 were at Wolfville, July 12, 200 at nearby Windsor on July 21 (J>). Fifty at W. Chezzetcook, July 26 were down to 15 by Aug. 6 (PM&BS). Many reports of smaller numbers thereafter end with 3 at Crescent Beach, Nov. 3-6 (JSC). First SANDERLINGS were 6 at Cherry Hill (JSC), but it was not until Sept. that large numbers appeared, with 250 at Crescent Beach, Sept. 4 (JSC), where there were 500+ from Sept. 19, to Oct. 22 (SJF), and 200-300 at Cherry Hill in the same period (JSC). Reports from Hartlen's Pt. tell the same story (FLL,HFN,MAC, et al., (G&JT). Large numbers lingered, 102 at Cherry Hill, Nov. 5 (JSC) and a flock of 150 leaving Economy, Nov. 15 (FS). Aug. 6-7 gave our highest counts of SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS with 850 at Cherry Hill ("high number for this beach"--SJF) and an estimated 100,000 at Grand Pré, where by month's end there were only a few hundred (RBS). Farther down the migration route there were still 2000 on Brier, Sept. 13 (BMac,SIT). One was still at Cherry Hill, Nov. 12 (SJF). JWW tells of a colour-banded bird at Evangeline Beach, Aug. 20, said by Peter Hicklin of CWS to have been banded in 1987 in Shepody Bay, and presumably readying itself for its third trip to South America. JWW adds, one hopes needlessly, that sightings of banded birds should be reported. Two WESTERN SANDPIPERS were at Hartlen's Pt., Aug. 16 (PM,BS). The status of 3 LEAST SANDPIPERS at L.W. Pubnico, June 30 is ambiguous. First migrants were 7 at Blanche, July 4 (SJF). Peak migration appears to have been Aug. 17-19, when there were 800 at Hartlen's Pt. (FLL) and 1500 at Cape Sable (BM); no similar reports come from Grand Pré, though there were the average 75 or so at Economy across the Bay. Elsewhere, only a handful were reported (under-reported?), with one last at Hartlen's Pt., Nov. 4 (FLL). WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS attracted more attention: on Brier Is., 1 was present July 31 (RBS), and 200 were already at Cape Sable, Aug. 18 (BM). At Cherry Hill, there were 125, Oct. 22 (SJF), where the last of several Nov. sightings, including 90 at Grand Pré, Nov. 2 (BLF,JCT), was of 9 on the 12th (SJF). Reports suggest at least 15 BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS were sighted this fall: dates range from Aug. 18 to Sept. 25 at Hartlen's Pt., where at least 4 were present (FLL,PM,JW,BM). A like number was on Brier, Aug. 25-Aug. 30 (RBS,SIT,FS), 3 on Bon Portage, Sept. 2-4 (J> et al.), 2 (max.) at Cherry Hill, Aug. 26-Sept. 2 (SJF,JSC). Singles were at Cape Sable and Digby Neck, Aug. 18-19 (BM,JSC) and Hemeon's Hd., Sept. 2 (DHY). An early PECTORAL SANDPIPER was at Canard (BM); by Aug. 9 there were 35 at Conrad's Beach (BM), 11 still there Sept. 25 (MAC). However, our chief attraction for this species remains the pond of Mr. and Mrs. Ells at Sheffield Mills: on Aug. 17, 100 were there (RBS), 71 on Oct. 14 (JT) and still 30+ on Oct. 21 (JWW). At Cherry Hill one remained until Nov. 5 (SJF).

Nova Scotia's first SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER was sighted Aug. 9 near Conrad's Beach by Peter MacLeod and Bev Sarty. Their detailed account, that might well serve as a model of its kind (see p. 30) should convince the most sceptical that a remarkable addition has been made to the Nova Scotia list. The species, a close relative of the Pectoral, nests in eastern Siberia and winters in Australia

and New Zealand. A few regularly visit the west coast; it has been suggested that the very few eastern records are individuals traveling (the wrong way) with Pectorals.

No PURPLE SANDPIPERS have been noted thus far, perhaps because of the mild fall. Two early DUNLIN were at Wolfville, July 12 with a maximum of 60 at nearby Grand Pré, present until Oct. 15 (J>). At Cherry Hill, the first were 8 on Sept. 19 (SJF), then 35 on Sept. 25 (FLL,JW) and 32 still present Nov. 12 (SJF). Only a few were noted elsewhere. Four or five STILT SANDPIPERS were present in the brief period July 22, at Matthews Lake (DHY), to Aug. 11 at Cole Hbr. (PM,BS). The others were all near Halifax, at W. Chezzetcook (FF,MA) and Conrad's Beach (BM,JT). Two or three BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS were at Cherry Hill, Aug. 26- Sept. 10 and Sept. 25 (FLL,JW,SJF). Elsewhere singles appeared at Hemeon's Head, Aug. 27 (DC,RS,KF) and Hartlen's Pt., Sept. 17-23 (BS,FLL), when 2 (4) were at Hemeon's Hd (DHY). "At least one" was on Brier, Oct. 9 (BLF, JWW). A RUFF (black-ruffed) was on Brier Is., July 16-17 (IAM); a female (Reeve) was at Cherry Hill, July 23 (BM), another in the Lawrencetown-Conrad's Beach area Aug. 7-10 (J>,RBS,PM et al.). These early dates suggest they may have summered not so far away. SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS passed through N.S. early and expeditiously. Three had already reached L.W. Pubnico, June 30 (DJD'E); by July 15, 190 were on Brier (IAM) rising to 300-400 by month's end (RBS), and 140 at Crescent Beach, July 23 (BM). 400 were at Cape Sable, Aug. 18 (BM), with only a few noted thereafter, the last at Cherry Hill, Oct. 7 (JSC). An adult LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER was at Cherry Hill, Oct. 10 (JSC), another near APBS, Oct. 28 (IA&BM).

Our aptly named COMMON SNIPE received 24 mentions, on a par with some less common species, but still a lot for this inconspicuous migrant; FLL's and MA's notes from the Halifax area account for two-thirds of them. The latest report comes from Cook's Beach, Oct. 30 (H&HH). The truly elusive AMERICAN WOODCOCK got only two mentions, one commenting on its absence from its usual haunts (CSM).

This sub-editor appreciates receiving data collected by participants in the Maritime Shorebird Survey. It would facilitate his task, however (and theirs), if the Summary Sheet were sent him instead of the individual Count Sheets.

F.S., ed.

PHALAROPES TO AUKS

Phalaropes are in something of a crisis in the Bay of Fundy. The enormous flocks of RED-NECKED PHALAROPES across the Bay in New Brunswick simply weren't there this year. This may have something to do with changes in Fundy itself, their fall migration stopover; or up on their breeding grounds in the Arctic; or in their winter quarters at sea - in which case we have a choice between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The mind boggles with possibilities.

Off Brier Island, the stopover for RED PHALAROPES, Richard Stern saw small flocks, still moulting out of breeding plumage on July 29. I saw about 675 birds in winter plumage there, species uncertain, on Aug. 27 Richard Stern "probably several thousand all together" on Sept. 10, and Bruce Mactavish and Stu Tingly estimated 5000+ Reds and 30 Red-necked on Sept. 12. Elsewhere, Hubert Hall saw 15 Reds in mixed moults from Bluenose about 40 miles WNW of Yarmouth, on June 23. This is an odd date to see phalaropes in Fundy: it's late for migrants on their way north, but early for returning breeders. He also saw large flocks of Reds, possibly with a few Red-necked among them - off Yarmouth on July 24. Bev Sarty reports a Red-necked off Hartlen Point on Sept. 17. Raymond d'Entremont saw another on Brown's Bank on Sept. 19, and comments: "I did not see very many phalaropes this fall." We only have four reports of WILSON'S PHALAROPE, the freshwater species: an immature female at Hartlen Point on Aug. 17 (FLL, MA), and singletons at West Lawrencetown Marsh and Lawrencetown Lake on Aug. 23 and 24 (PM, BS) and at Crescent Beach on Aug. 27 (Cohrs).

We have two records of **SOUTH POLAR SKUAS**, both from Fundy in mid-September. Richard Stern saw one off Brier on Sept. 10, chasing Red Phalaropes. It was too stout for a jaeger, with prominent white wing-flashes and pale underparts. Bruce Mactavish and Stu Tingley saw their bird from **Bluenose**, 20 miles west of Yarmouth, on Sept. 15, sitting among Greater Shearwaters and Herring Gulls. They say of the skua: "Head and neck uniform pale brown--lighter than on 1st winter Herring Gulls also present...underside of body, head, neck and extreme upper back where joined to neck, a uniform smooth unmarked pinkish brown contrasting with very dark brown, uniformly coloured without markings upper surface of wings and back..."

Raymond d'Entremont reports of a **GREAT SKUA** on Georges Bank on July 28, and "on September 20, there was the occasional Skua on Brown's Bank." I can't accept his identification down to species without more details, but the banding returns show that plenty of 2nd year Great Skuas from Scottish colonies come over here.

Mactavish and Tingley also saw our only jaegers: two **PARASITICS** off Brier on Sept. 12, and a **POMARINE** from **Bluenose** on Sept. 15.

I'll start off the gulls with a well-authenticated rumour of a subadult **IVORY GULL** at Conrad's Beach on Nov. 11, passed on to me by Ian McLaren, Stop Press. However, the details will have to wait until the next **Nova Scotia Birds**.

The Cohrs saw a **LAUGHING GULL** at Crescent Beach on Sept. 10, and Andrew MacFarlane saw single birds (the same one each time?) on Sable Island on Sept. 20-21, 26 and 29. Our **BLACK-HEADED GULLS**, in chronological order, were an adult and an immature at Lingan on June 11 (CSM); one at Dartmouth on July 30 (PM); 6, in non-breeding plumage, at Conrad's Beach on Sept. 14 (JP); a second-year at Broad Cove on Sept. 22 (Cohrs and Bill Caudle); and 9 at Point Aconi on Oct. 21 (FLL and MA). **BONAPARTE'S GULLS** normally stop over on migration in August on the New Brunswick side of Fundy but, like the Red-necked Phalaropes, they just weren't there this year. They seem to have come to Nova Scotia instead--though in relatively small numbers. Michael Olsen saw the first birds: 10 immatures at Loch Broom, Pictou Co., on June 29, followed by 15-20 of assorted ages at Caribou on Aug. 6. He saw 44 1st-years from Pictou Causeway on Oct. 14, and 63 on Oct. 22; there were other flocks in the vicinity. Ian McLaren saw a subadult at Brier Island on July 16-17: he notes that there were "good numbers in September this year." Richard Stern saw an immature in Westport on July 26 and a winter-plumage bird at Pond Cove on July 28-31, and there were 110 Boneys on the Northumberland Shore on July 30 (BMA). There were 20 at Hartlen's Point on Sept. 25, 50 at Antigonish on Oct. 20, and 50 at Canso Causeway on Oct. 21 (FLL,MA,PM, John Wright). The latest report comes from Barbara Hinds and Sylvia Fullerton: 12 birds, in mixed plumages, at Crescent Beach on Nov. 13.

Clive MacDonald reports 65 adult **RING-BILLED GULLS** at Lingan on June 11. Richard Stern says that most of the gulls around Wellington Dyke on Sept. 4 were Ring-bills: "a higher proportion to Herring Gulls than in previous years" The Cohrs saw 43 immatures and an adult at Broad Cove on Sept. 22, and Jim Wolford saw 25 juveniles, behind a plough at Sheffield Mills, on Sept. 30.

HERRING and **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS** receive their usual brief acknowledgment from me, but a species ratio is worth putting on record. Bruce Mactavish and Stu Tingley estimated 6000 Herrings and 2000 Great Blackbacks along the French Shore of St. Mary's Bay, on Sept. 14. They also saw an adult **LESSER BLACKBACK**, pale race, at Yarmouth the next day. We have some early reports of **ICELAND GULLS**: 2 at Eastern Passage on Oct. 12, 2 at Canso Causeway on Nov. 3, and 3 at Eastern Passage on Nov. 12 (FLL,PM,BS). **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES** are the real ocean gulls. Richard Stern saw a few off Brier Island on Sept. 10, and several hundred feeding there on Oct. 1. Hubert Hall reports a couple from **Bluenose** on Sept. 19.

The interesting tern was the GULL-BILLED TERN that Shirley Cohrs saw off Crescent Beach on July 15. COMMON and ARCTIC TERNS were regularly reported, though Sylvia Fullerton thought that Commons were very scarce this summer in the Broad Cove area. On the other hand, Gordon MacLean saw a flock of 30 Commons at Glace Bay Sanctuary on Aug. 19, and thought it "an unusually large group for this location." Ian McLaren reports good movements of Commons along the Shel. Co. shore, on Aug. 26-28. Richard Stern saw plenty of adult and immature Commons and Arctics around Brier Island on July 28-31, but none were left on Aug. 6. I saw a couple of "Comics" there on Aug. 27. The Morses found that the Arctics in their part of Mahone Bay disappeared soon after Sept. 6. Raymond d'Entremont, out on Georges Bank on Sept. 1, saw "many" terns on Sept. 1. He won't swear to all the identifications, but believes that most of them were Arctics. The latest reports, all of Commons, are of a juvenile in Halifax Harbour on Oct. 14 (IAM), 5 birds at Antigonish on Oct. 20 (FLL,MA), and Michael Olsen's bird, in a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls, at Pictou Causeway on Oct. 22.

Finally, there is the possible SANDWICH TERN that Shirley Cohrs saw at Cherry Hill Beach on July 12. It had a long, slender, black bill, but with no yellow visible. The tail was very short. She doesn't want to press the sighting too far, since she only had a brief view of the bird, but she's seen the species in Florida, and the "jizz" was right. The sighting was at about the same time as her Gull-billed Tern. The two could have been brought north by the same storm.

Hubert Hall sends in a very early report of a DOVEKIE, seen from **Bluenose** on Sept. 18. According to Carl Haycock, BLACK GUILLEMOTS were abundant off Brier Island this summer. The birds breed all round the province, and were widely reported, sometimes in numbers; Gordon MacLean, for example, saw 25-30 in Gooseberry Cove, near Louisbourg, on Aug. 6. Hubert Hall saw 3 ATLANTIC PUFFINS from **Bluenose**, off Yarmouth, on June 27, and 2 on July 24. Eleanor Waldron saw one at Cheticamp on Sept. 3. I didn't see any off Brier Island on Aug. 27, but there were a few on Sept. 10 (RBS), and about 15 there on Sept. 12 (BMA,ST).

RGBB, ed.

DOVES, CUCKOOS

A large ROCK DOVE nestling was found freshly dead on the Acadia campus on Oct. 4 (JWW); serves it right! Four fledgling MOURNING DOVES were at the Thexton feeder in Wolfville on July 6. Indications of their migration come from Sable Island, where they were present, generally in ones and twos (5 on Oct. 10), between Sept. 27 and Nov. 7 (AMA), and from Seal Is., where there were 40 on Oct. 9.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS were calling during late July at Mosherville, Hants Co. (SAC), and at Old Barns, Col. Co. (Dorothy Whipple). Migrant individuals were on Bon Portage Is., Sept. 2-4 (2 birds, NSBS) and Oct. 5 (JWT), and at Cadden Beach on Oct. 4 (DHY). Our only YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS were at Hartlen's Pt. on Oct. 16 (JWT) and in south end Halifax on Oct. 19 (PM,BS).

OWLS

Summer GREAT HORNED OWLS are clearly under-reported. Up to 9 imm. (food-begging calls) and 4 ad. were around Pt. Aconi, C.B. Co., on Sept. 16 (FLL,MA). Clearly migrating were 2 on Bon Portage Is. on Sept. 1 (NSBS) and at least 4 seen in the Dartmouth-Halifax area during November (var. ob). The only SNOWY OWL (1 bird?) so far was seen on Sable Is. on Oct. 1 and 15-16 Oct. (**vide** AMA). We have no reports on nesting BARRED OWLS. Three appeared in the Halifax-Dartmouth area during November. One LONG-EARED OWL was mist-netted and banded on Bon Portage Is. on Oct. 6 (CRC). Another came aboard the fisheries patrol vessel **Louisbourg**, ca. 85 n. mi south of Cape Sable, around noon on Oct. 15, and was well photographed by Hector Smith. This suggests that owls migrating across the Gulf of Maine don't necessarily complete their journey during nighttime. Another interesting owl story comes via BED from Kim Aaboe,

who reported a probably Long-eared Owl (from its size and unearthly screeching) attempting to seize teal decoys (much splashing) at Goose L., Hfx. Co., on the dark night of Oct. 12. Our only report of SHORT-EARED OWL also comes from Bon Portage Is. (JWW). An errant BOREAL OWL blundered into Janos Kovac's mist net set for migrants at Hartlen's Pt. on Oct. 1; as he didn't have suitable band at hand, it was promptly released. (CSII writes that he heard, not 1 as previously reported, but 2 Boreals and saw 1 at North Hbr., Vic. Co., last Apr. 30). The Acadia team on Bon Portage Is. banded 8 SAW-WHET OWLS on Sept. 29-Oct. 1, and a further 6 on Oct. 6 and 11 on Oct. 27-29 (CRC,CN).

GOATSUCKER, SWIFT, HUMMINGBIRD, KINGFISHER

COMMON NIGHTHAWKS are quite common in summer over the regenerating clearcuts of Shel. and Yar. Co., is this true elsewhere? Migrating flocks usually appear in late July; thus a "feeding frenzy" of 100+ near Liverpool on July 2 was puzzling. They were "totally oblivious to oncoming traffic" and 15+ were dead on the road (SJF). Some later large counts were : 30 in Queen's Co. on July 22, 20 at Mosherville, Hants Co., on July 23, 40-50 near Liverpool on July 25, several groups of 5-12 round Sydney in late July-early Aug., 40-50 at Tusket on July 30, 25 near Mahone Bay on Aug. 18, and 40+ at Green Bay on Aug. 21. Three scattered late birds on Sept. 3 were upstaged by a very late one in Dartmouth on Oct. 28 (L&PP).

About 150 CHIMNEY SWIFTS "chimneyed" in the Temperance St. School in New Glasgow during May-June, and 50 appeared there by Aug. 24 (MO). A new record guesstimate of 880 entered the Front St. chimney in Wolfville for the night on July 20; there were still 47 on Aug. 31, but only 1 (our latest) on Sept. 13 (JWW). A flock of 15+ was outbound 10 km W of Yarmouth on Aug. 22 (HH). I saw many swifts inland in Shel. Co. this summer, including flying young.

There were few reports of RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS, including about 10 coming to the Payzant's feeders in Waverley during August. Most were gone by late August; the latest reported was at Waverley on Sept. 5 (L&PP). Yet another vagrant RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD has come to light, this time on an Atlas card. I telephoned for details, and am fully satisfied with the identification. It was a male, observed for several minutes on Aug. 29 by Rob Inskter as it perched in a hawthorne 3-4 m outside his window in Sandy Cove, Digby Co. He was able to note, not only its bright rufous back and dark throat (light angle did not reveal its irridescence), but also the red-based, rounded, white-tipped tail. The Inksters had feeders on their property, but the bird did not stay. A hummingbird puzzler was reported to Bob McDonald--one with bright yellowish underparts visiting a feeder in Tatamagouche from late July to mid-August. Rather small, fuzzy pictures show the bright (buffy?) underparts, but little else. There are several tropical species with such underparts, but the bird might also have been a xanthochroic Ruby-throated or, perhaps, a sap-stained bird (see comments on yellow Downy Woodpeckers, below).

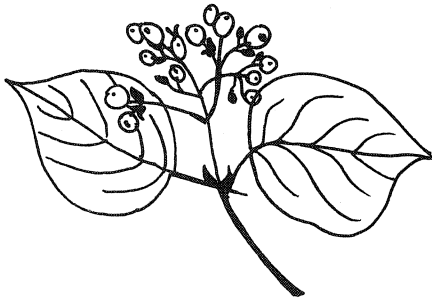
After a "real dearth" of BELTED KINGFISHERS around Petite Riviere this summer, many apparent migrants appeared between Aug. 19-23 (JSC). Breeding-season reports from elsewhere were generally of ones and twos, but they were "in good supply" in C. B. Co. this summer (CSM). Are these real trends?

WOODPECKERS

Nesting YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS were reported from Sackville and Shel. Co. There were 4 reports of migrants in early October, the latest being 5 on Seal Is., Oct. 10. Juveniles of both DOWNY and HAIRY WOODPECKERS were coming to suet feeders,

with or without parents, by early July (sev. rep.). In the last issue I mentioned Downy Woodpeckers in which the white was replaced by yellow. A similar phenomenon noted in a recent issue of the *Guillemot*, a natural history journal from Maine, was thought to result from using cavities in certain sappy trees. There were 4 reports of BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS. Several observers rated N. FLICKERS as common. Good counts were 50 on Brier Is., Sept. 13 (BMT,SIT) and 60 on Seal Is. on Oct. 9. The latest reported was in Wolfville on Nov. 3, but some will winter as usual. We have 19 reports of ca. 23 PILEATED WOODPECKERS, some in urban areas.

IAM, ed.



FLYCATCHERS TO JAYS

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS were noted from scattered locations during summer and early fall. One on Sable Island on Sept. 4 was presumably a migrant (AMa). EASTERN WOOD-PEWEES were also reported from a variety of areas, and were still calling at least up to mid-Sept. (JCT). A bird at Hartlen's Pt. on Oct. 22 (JWT) was on schedule for a late migrant of this species.

Only 3 reports were received of YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER, all from the Southern half of the province (JD,JSC,MAC). In contrast, all 2 (!) reports of ALDER FLYCATCHER were from Cape Breton (EW), and the same number of LEAST'S were from King's County (JCT,RBS). Surely there were more than 7 Empidonax Flycatchers in Nova Scotia this fall. Is the reference in *Birds of Nova Scotia* by Tufts to "conspicuous movements in fall" no longer true, or is this just an aberration of under-reporting?

EASTERN PHOEBE'S were more numerous this year (?better reported), with several reports of migration through the more southerly edges and islands of our province (SJF,JWT,BLM,DHY). The latest was on Brier Island, Oct. 23 (HJH,HGH).

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHERS, as last year, were well reported, from Overton (HJH,HGH), Halifax (MAC), Pictou Co. (MO), and, by September, Bon Portage Island (DAC,BLM). A small population of this attractive species now seems well established in the province.

WESTERN KINGBIRDS remain a scarce but predictable vagrant. This year one was on Bon Portage Island, Oct. 1 (JWT) and one hung around Cook's Brook, Halifax Co. for several days in late October (AM et al.) Roger Foxall saw one near Chezzetcook on Nov., and there was also a report of one on Digby Neck, seen by BLF. The EASTERN KINGBIRD migration could be well followed this year, as MO reported small flocks on the move throughout Pictou Co. during the end of July and the first 2 weeks of Aug., and then more were seen farther S. and W., in the Annapolis Valley (RBS) and Yar. Co., some 2-3 weeks later. 16 were seen at Atwood's Brook on Sept. 1 by BLM.

However, the "Flycatcher of the Season" was the FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER seen at Apple River East on Oct. 30 by several observers, but only reported (and without details) by BLM.

HORNED LARKS were widely reported after Oct. 15 (50 in C.B., CSM), e.g. 75+ at Cherry Hill (JLC,JSC), 50+ at Grand Pré, Oct. 29 (RGT,BET) etc. Two more interesting but earlier reports of this species were of 1 on July 29 in Coldbrook (HF)-? a local breeder; and a pale imm. bird seen (and much puzzled over) by RBS and June Graves at Pond Cove, Brier Is., Sept. 10.

JP and DP had TREE SWALLOWS nesting, and the young fledged successfully by July 16. The Cohrs watched 1000+ Tree, BARN and BANK SWALLOWS heading south over a 20 minute period on Brier Island on Aug. 28. There were no unusual numbers or late dates reported for any of these species of CLIFF SWALLOWS. There were no reports of PURPLE MARTINS.

GRAY JAYS were seen in Skir Dhu, C.B. in June and July (EW), and regularly all late summer and fall in the Sackville-Beaverbank area (AA), and along the New Ross to Wolfville Rd. all fall (M.Dadswell, **fide** JWW). BLUE JAYS seem to have had a good summer, with reports of good numbers from Cape Breton Co. (CSM) on S.W. JCT noted a good migration under way in the Wolfville area in early Oct., and they were becoming regular at feeders, at least in King's Co., from then on.

CORVIDS TO STARLING

AMERICAN CROWS seem to be holding their own ("far too many" says MAC), but nobody is bothering to report them. This makes future population trends, estimates of whether there really are "far too many" etc., impossible to accurately examine. Likewise is the case for COMMON RAVENS, although a group of 30+ was reported from the Baddeck dump in July (EM)--reports from C.B. are especially welcome, as this has recently tended to be an under reported area. The now annual EUROPEAN JACKDAW was reported by PM to have returned to its Romans Ave. (Hfx.) haunts on Nov. 2.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES seemed to continue to do well all summer, with reports of good numbers from Cape Breton Co. (CSM), Sackville (AA), Halifax (MAC), Wolfville Ridge (JCT, GWT), and W. Pubnico (LD)--i.e. from one end of the province to the other. BOREAL CHICKADEES were also widely reported, as last year, with some interesting sightings including 3 or 4 scratching in dead leaves on the ground along the Cape Split Trail, July 13 (HJH,HGH), 8 at Skir Dhu, July 22 (EW), adults feeding fledgelings on the Wolfville Ridge, Aug. 4 (GWT) and 20+ at Green Bay on Oct. 30 (Cohrs).

In contrast to the last 2 years, 1989 saw a good fall migration of RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES. 100+ pairs were observed by BLM during the June-July breeding season in the Cobequid region, and reports later, presumably of migrants, included 1 on Sable Island, Aug. 19 and 20 (AMa), large numbers all over Brier Island on Aug. 26 and 27 (RBS) and 120+ there on 27 to 29 (JLC,JSC), 1 that became a passenger on the **Bluenose** ferry some 20 miles W. of Yarmouth on Sept. 3 (HGH), and 35 on Seal Island, Oct. 8 (IAM). WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were also well represented, as last year, with reports of ones and twos from widely scattered locations within the province (JCT,GWT, JSC,AA, JWT, etc.) and an unusual sighting from Seal Island, Oct. 8&9 (IAM,BLM).

BROWN CREEPERS were widely reported, and in several cases in good numbers this fall. JWT saw 4 at Mansfield, Cumb. Co. on July 21 (? a family group at that date), IAM and BLM had up to 8 on Seal Island, Oct. 8-9, and Barbara Hinds and June Graves had 15+ in the same location the next day. Other singles in late fall were on Brier Island (BR,ER) and in Kemptville (JD).

The HOUSE WREN is normally a rare vagrant here, but this fall there were 2 at West Marsh, Sept. 25 (MAC), 2 or 3 on Seal Island daily from Oct. 8-10, but 8 there on the 9th (BLM). The WINTER WREN also seems to have thrived this year, with an extraordinary density of 200+ pairs per Atlas plot estimated by BLM in the Cobequid region in June and July, 15 on Seal Island on Oct. 9 (also BLM), and widely scattered individual birds (RSD,HJH,HGH, AA, GWT etc.) Only 1 SEDGE WREN, not surprisingly, was seen, by PM and BS on Bon Portage Island on Oct. 7, MARSH WRENS were in the same location (JWT,PM,BS) and on Seal Island a few days later (BLM).

It has been another bumper fall for GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS. Comments from observers included "very plentiful along the Cape Split Trail", July 13 (HJH,HGH), "very frequent as fall approached", Sackville (AA), "large flocks" at Blomidon Provincial Park, Aug. 31 and Kentville, Sept. 7 (RBS), and more obvious migrants included 250+ on Brier Island, Aug. 27-29 (JLC,JSC) and 400+ on Seal Island, Oct. 9 & 10 (SJF,IAM,BLM). RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS have also been well reported, with apparently higher numbers than last year, including 300+ on Seal on the same dates.

The BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER continues to be a regular vagrant, with 1 on Bon Portage on Sept. 3 (GWT,JCT) and 1 seen at Broad Cove, Sept. 16 (SFJ).

The EASTERN BLUEBIRD continues to maintain a precarious toehold here, with 2 pairs reported nesting this summer, in Urbanis (&PP,BLM) and South Branch, near Stewiacke (L&PP), and a family group seen in West Advocate in mid-July by BLM. A possible female MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD was at Hartlen's Point, Oct. 25 (PM&BS)--no details given.

Although there was a smattering of SWAINSON'S THRUSH reports during the breeding season (Skir Dhu--EW; Cobequid--BLM; Wolfville--JCT, who felt that perhaps an adult bird was teaching a young to sing etc.). However, the only migrants noted were 2 banded on Bon Portage in late Oct. (JWW). The HERMIT THRUSH migration was a little better documented, with 1 on Brier Island Sept. 8 (MAC), 1 in Sackville, Sept. 13 (AA), 2 in Pictou Co., Oct. 15 ("later than normal", MO), 1 the next day on Wolfville Ridge (JCT) and 4 banded on Bon Portage, Oct. 27-29 (JWW). There were no reports of GRAY-CHEEKED or VERRY migration, with the exception of 1 Gray-cheeked on Sable Island, Oct. 10 (AMa). One bright spot in the otherwise rather dismal Thrush story were 3 WOOD THRUSH reports, 1 of a singing pair in Loganville during June and July (Elizabeth Otter), and 2 of migrants (1, Petite Riviere, Sept. 17,--JSC; 1, Birch Cove, Dartmouth, Oct. 28 CSII).

A "stop press" sighting, unfortunately inaccessible to the majority of birders, was the province's first sighting of a EURASIAN REDWING, a relative of the AMERICAN ROBIN, on Sable Island on Nov. 25 by AMa. The latter species remained well reported, with many comments such as "lots and lots all summer" (MAC), and more specifically, 200+ at Ross Rd., Dartmouth, Oct. 1 (JAP), 5-600 around the high-bush blueberries at Upper Canard, Oct. 14 (RBS) and still several hundred around the orchards in the Kentville Research Station at the end of Oct. (RBS). Sable Island turned up trumps again, as the Robin flock there on Oct. 16 contained a VARIED THRUSH (AMa).

GRAY CATBIRDS were seen around the province all summer, and MO commented that the count of 8 pairs nesting beside Highway 376 at Durham, Pictou Co. was higher than last year. A migratory movement was documented in late Oct./early Nov., with birds being seen at Ambrose Head (IAM), Brier Island (BR,ER), Bon Portage (6 banded--JWW), and finally on Nov. 3 at L.W. Pubnico (DD). The NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD wins the prize in the present group of birds for being the most frequently reported of all! This may be because people think it is more unusual than it actually is, but surely

the absolute numbers must be increasing? Birds were reported at various times from Parrsboro (BLM), Advocate, Diligent River and Economy (FS), Glace Bay (GM), Ross Creek Rd. (JWW), Yarmouth (AP), Cow Bay and Halifax (PM,BS, etc.), from early summer to late Nov. All the BROWN THRASHER reports were from early to mid-Oct., e.g. Seal Island (IAM,BLM), Wolfville Ridge (JCT) and Conrose Park, Halifax (FLL)--about average numbers and dates.

A.O.U. has renamed our Water Pipit the AMERICAN PIPIT, and split it from the Eurasian Water Pipit, but I assume all the reports are of our native birds! Numbers were building by late Sept., with 20 at Hartlen's Pt., Sept. 23 (FLL,MAC,EC,MS), 10+ at Cherry Hill the previous day (JSC,JLC), and several reports in Oct., all from the usual coastal locations.

It looks all set to becoming a BOHEMIAN WAXWING winter. A flock of 45+ appeared in L.W. Pubnico on Oct. 15 (JD), and then 15 were in Parrsboro, Oct. 30 (BLM), a small flock in Canning at the same time (JWW), 13 in Digby, Nov. 10 (IAM) and 25 in Halifax, Nov. 14 (PM,BS). There were the usual reports of CEDAR WAXWINGS from around and about the province, but no really large flocks or unusual dates.

So far 4 NORTHERN SHRIKES have been reported, 1 from Pleasant Lake, Yar. Co., Sept. 10 (HJH,HGH), 1 from Sable Island, 19 Oct. (AMa), 1 from Scotts Bay, Oct. 22 (HG *vide* JWW), and 1 on Brier Island, Nov. 12 (RBS).

Only 1 person bothered to report EUROPEAN STARLINGS, CSM from New Waterford, who reported 1000+ in one field at Lingan--"More common than insects".

RBS, ed.



This year's American Avocet, a rare find, was photographed by Blake Maybank, Sept. 1, at Cape Sable

VIREOS AND WARBLERS

Generally speaking, it was a nice fall for birds and birding. There was province-wide coverage and presumably, no stone was left unturned. It was certainly a banner year for rare vireos, particularly the WHITE-EYED VIREO, with reports of 6 individuals. Taken in chronological order, one was seen on Bon Portage Island, Oct. 8 by many in the NSBS Field Trip party. Hartlen's Pt., that perennial hot spot, offered up 2 White-eyes, a juvenile observed Oct. 22-29 and an adult (white iris) seen Oct. 22-27 (BS, IAM et al.). Three were banded on Bon Portage, Oct. 27-29 (CRC). Seven reporters mentioned seeing the SOLITARY VIREO during migration, in ones and twos, from Great Pubnico Lake to Durham, Pictou Co. One seen in Dartmouth on Oct. 7, was eating mountain ash berries (JP). Two on Seal Is., Oct. 10, were the last reported (SJF). A well-publicized YELLOW-THROATED VIREO lingered at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 22-26 (JWT, BS). At least 2 WARBLING VIREOS were noted. One dropped in at Hartlen's Pt., Sept. 30 (IAM). One was reported on Seal Island, Oct. 8 (IAM et al.) and (possibly the same bird) again there on Oct. 10 (SJF). Five PHILADELPHIA VIREOS were observed. Firstly, JSC noted one singing "in the wilds of Ant. Co.", on her Breeding Bird Survey, June 30. Autumn birds listed were: one on Brier Is., Sept. 2-4 (A&LL), one on Cape Sable Is., Sept. 4 (BLM), one at Petite Riviere, Sept. 17 (JSC) and one on Seal, Oct. 8-10. A good number of reports were received of the RED-EYED VIREO during the breeding season. Ones and twos were observed during migration, from Pubnico Pt. to Hartlen's Pt. A bird at Hartlen's Pt. on Oct. 29 (JCT et al.) was the last one seen.

Though information was received on all of our native warblers, and a good sampling of rarities besides, numbers of some species did seem to be dwindling alarmingly. Of particular note are remarks in this regard made by JSC (alluded to by species), as she has kept careful records for over 20 years.

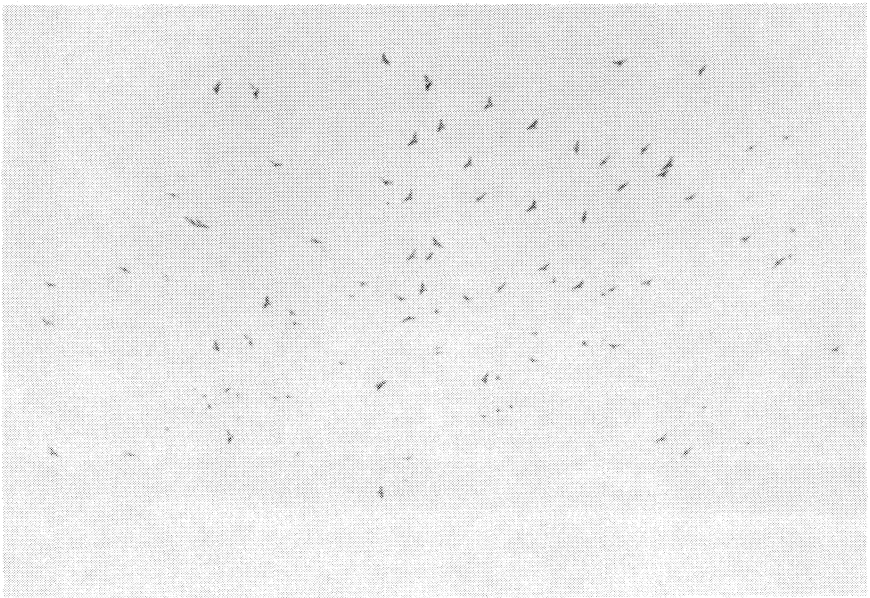
Scattered reports of single BLUE-WINGED WARBLERS were received: Sept. 3 on Bon Portage Is. (PM, BS), Sept. 17 at Petite Riviere (JSC), Sept. 24 (a male) at Chebucto Head (DAC) and Oct. 3 and 8 on Bon Portage (JWT, PM, BS). Pretty good coverage for a rare bird! A number of summer reports of the TENNESSEE WARBLER indicated good breeding numbers along the Eastern Shore, the Cobequid region (40+ per day--BLM) and around Skir Dhu, C.B. (EW). JSC found them not so abundant as in 1988, though, in the Halifax, South Shore and Ant. Co. areas. Fall sightings were few, with a Sept. 3 report of one on the Bluenose, 15 km west of Yarmouth (HGH), and 3 late Oct. reports--one, Oct. 25 at Hartlen's Pt., and one each on the 26 and 27 in the Yarmouth area (BLM, HGH). Nine reports of the ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER boil down to 6 individuals, a good showing. Single birds were observed at Point Aconi, Sept. 17 (FLL), Green Bay, Sept. 22 (JSC), Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 27-29 (sev. ob.), Seal Island, Oct. 8-10 (sev. ob.), Bon Portage Is. (banded), Oct. 27-29 (PCS) and finally at Fairview Cemetery, another Metro hot spot, on Nov. 15 (FLL).

The odd summer report of the NASHVILLE WARBLER came through, from Sackville (AA) and Skir Dhu (EW), but JSC found NONE on her BBS in Shel. or Ant. Cos., and very few elsewhere. In New Ross they were not singing in their usual spots, though listened for intently. A migration was observed however, with "good numbers" the last week of Aug. in Durham, Pictou Co. (MO) and 4 on Brier Is., Sept. 7-8 (MAC). The NORTHERN PARULA hardly fared better, but scattered observations of 2,3 or "a few" during Aug. and Sept. were made, from Brier Is. to Cape Breton.

The Yellow warbler was well covered--JSC felt it was a bonanza year. While an adult was still observed feeding a fledgling on Aug. 5 at Evangeline Beach (JCT), migration was already beginning. No action was reported in Sept., but later single migrants were observed at Hartlen's Pt., Oct. 27-29 and at Armdale, Nov. 11 (FLL, JWT, PM). Though the CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER was common in many of its usual breeding spots, fall coverage was slim. Groups of 5-7 were noted in Durham until Sept. 8 (MO), indicating an early exodus. One did linger at Pollock Pt., Lun. Co., Oct. 11 (Cohrs). A good breeding year province-wide for our lovely MAGNOLIA WARBLER

was indicated but autumn statistics were again wanting. Reports of "several" or "a few" in Aug. and early Sept., trickled in from Dartmouth, Wolfville Ridge and Brier Island. CAPE MAY WARBLERS were down. BLM reported only 2 singing males in the Cobequid region in June and July. MO's single sighting in Durham on Sept. 9, was the first he saw all season and the latest bird reported. From Skir Dhu, though, comes a welcome report of an adult and 3 fledglings on Aug. 10 (EW). Andrew Allen made the only mention of the BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER on the mainland--a male at Sackville on Aug. 26 and another there Sept. 16. However, at least 8 were observed on Seal Island, Oct. 7-8 (IAM *et al.*) and one was banded on Bon Portage, Oct. 27-29.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS generally held their own, indicated by reports from the Pubnicos to Gabarus and Skir Dhu. Numbers on Seal Is., reached 500+, Oct. 10. On the mainland, 12 were noted at Durham on that same date, and RSD reported a large wave at Pubnico Pt., Oct. 15. On Oct. 29, one was reported at Durham (late for there, says MO), 6+ at Hartlen's Pt. (Tufts) and 34 banded on Bon Portage (CRC). IAM reports that they were "common as usual" on Sable Is. through Oct. and into Nov. The BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER got mixed reviews. First of all, only 6 reporters mentioned this species, and JSC felt it was a very poor year along the South Shore and in Ant. Co. In The Valley, though, the Tufts noted a large migration during the latter half of Aug., and in Pictou Co., MO had "loads and loads" to Sept. 22, remarking they gave new meaning to the term "permanent wave", and that they were much more numerous than in 1988. AA frequently encountered them in twos and threes around Sackville until late Sept. There followed only one report of a late bird near Little Harbour, Shel. Co., on Nov. 1 (DHY). BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER numbers were up a bit over 1988. A report of at least one successful nesting came out of Skir Dhu (EW), with migratory movement noted in late Aug. around Sackville and the Valley. Two were seen offshore--one on Sable Is., Sept. 16 (AMa) and one on Bon Portage Is., Oct. 27-29.



A "kettle" of Broad-wings over Brier Island--a regular September phenomenon
Photo--Richard Stern.

A shy YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER made a brief appearance at Fairview Cemetery on Nov. 12. The PINE WARBLER made a respectable showing, though at 8 individuals was down considerably from 1988. One was on Sable Is., Sept. 30 and 2 were on Seal, Oct. 7-8 (both IAM). There was one at Green Bay, Oct. 14 (DAC). The other 4 were Metro area birds, including the latest one in Halifax on Nov. 14 (AA, PM,BS). PRAIRIE WARBLERS were down. The only mainland report was one at White's Lake, Hfx. Co., Aug. 11 (BLM). One was on Bon Portage, Sept. 4 (JWT *et al.*), while 2 were on Sable, Sept. 21 (AMa).

The PALM WARBLER was well reported. Small movements were noted, beginning Aug. 30 in Dartmouth, with numbers picking up somewhat through Sept. A few were found on Brier Is., Sept. 7-10. By the end of the first week in Oct., they were streaming through Seal Island at the rate of 25 or more per day, most of those appearing to be the "western" race (IAM *et al.*). Five November birds were reported, the last being a "western" at White's Lake on Nov. 14 (BLM). During the summer, a breeding pair of BAY-BREASTED WARBLERS was reported from Cape Breton (EW), while only 4 singing males were noted in June and July in the Cobequid region (BLM). Only one fall report was received of a singleton, Oct. 23 in Halifax (FLL). Judging from the number of reports, the BLACKPOLL WARBLER had an off year. JSC certainly thought so, with very few breeding or migrating Blackpolls in her stomping grounds; even in the LaHave Islands, normally an excellent spot. Only one was seen on Seal Island, Oct. 8 (DHY *et al.*)—down from 60 the same time in 1988. The BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER was also a concern to some, though numbers did seem to be up to scratch around Metro and in Pictou Co., with breeding confirmed in the Valley and Cape Breton. The Tufts noted a large migration on Wolfville Ridge the latter half of August. Sept. and Oct. records were scarce. The latest one was seen at Dartmouth on Oct. 29 (JWT). The AMERICAN REDSTART, though reported in the breeding season from W. Pubnico (LD) to Cape Breton (GM,EW), was observed only sporadically during migration in Aug. and early Sept. JSC believed numbers to be down by about 50 percent, and reports bear this out.

A well described PROTHONOTARY WARBLER appeared at Hartlen's Pt., Aug. 6-7 (DAC,RBS *et al.*). Though nesting reports of the OVENBIRD were received from Cape Split (Halls) and Skir Dhu, and they were frequently heard around Sackville during the summer, migration went unnoticed except for one on Sable Is., Oct. 5 (IAM). "Down" and "none" were the depressing words used by JSC to describe the status of the NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH in 1989. A report of 2 singing birds in Skir Dhu on June 1 prevented a shutout. A pleasant surprise was a rare LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH at Chebucto Head Rd., Sept. 24 (CSII). He carefully described the bird, using the Master Guide photo and a N.S. Museum specimen as references, noting in particular the pure white eyebrow which was much wider than the Northern's spotless and very white throat and flanks, which showed only a hint of buff. A Blue-winged Warbler was seen only 20 minutes earlier there. The remains of Hurricane Hugo passed to the north of the province Sept. 23, and it is likely that these rare birds were swept northward in the circulation around the storm.

Hartlen's Pt. entertained yet another rarity, a KENTUCKY WARBLER, ON Aug. 27 (DAC). A CONNECTICUT WARBLER was seen at North Pt., Brier Is., Sept 3 (LL), and a second Connecticut was added on Sept. 11 on Sandy Cove Rd., Hfx. Co. (BS). The MOURNING WARBLER was alive and well in the Cobequid region over the summer, where BLM could list 10 per day. Summer records also came in from Hants Co. and Cape Breton, but MO's Durham bird of Sept 9 was the only migrant. The COMMON



YELLOWTHROAT was anything but common, according to JSC, and indeed reports were well down from 1988. Yet most reporters did not comment on the status of this species, and MO thought them "much more numerous than last year" at Durham, listing the last 2 on Oct. 4.

Three HOODED WARBLERS were reported, all on Sable Is.--on Aug. 22, Oct. 7 and 22 (AMa). A WILSON'S WARBLER was heard singing near Halifax Airport several times in June (KA). Fall records numbered two--one in Canning, Sept. 9 (MG) and one at Little Harbour, Shel. Co., Oct. 1 (DHY). A smattering of summer reports of the CANADA WARBLER came in--from Mosherville and Sackville. Very few were heard all summer by JSC along the South Shore. Five or 6 were seen during the migration period, the last one at Kentville on Sept. 7 (RBS). To end on a positive note, YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT numbers seemed healthy, with at least 8 individuals reported in total on the islands of Bon Portage and Seal, Sept. 2-Oct. 29. In addition, a bird was dug up at Fairview Cemetery on Nov. 5 (JWT).

KNK, ed.

TANAGERS TO TOWHEE

Very few SCARLET TANAGERS were reported during this period. A male singing in Halifax on June 1 was the only bird found during the summer months (JSC). The only other find was on Seal Island from Oct. 7 through to Oct. 10, where two birds were seen by many during the Thanksgiving field trip. A male NORTHERN CARDINAL was observed along the road in Cape Negro, Shel. Co. by Richard Swain and his father on July 11. This date lends credence that there may be the occasional breeding pair in the souther parts of the province. Other reports were from Hubert and Helen Hall who discovered a female near Cape Forchu on May 26 and a brilliant male at a feeder in Westport on Oct. 23.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS began their southerly passage through Nova Scotia by mid-October. A second year male was seen at Broad Cove on Oct. 14 (SJF); up to four were visiting a feeder in Little Harbour, Shel. Co. from Oct. 16 to 21; and other reports of single birds were from Sackville, Hartlen's Point, and New Waterford. (AA,BLM,CSM). Spring and summer records came from Eleanor Waldron in Skir Dhu, Cape Breton, who saw two there on June 8. An immature was found entangled in netting in a weakened condition near Wolfville on Aug. 15 (RGT,BET). Three BLUE GROSBEAKS were discovered in the fall. The first was likely a young male seen at Hartlen's Point on Oct. 14 (IAM). A female was discovered at Little Harbour on Oct. 21 (DHY) and the last was one at Cow Bay on Nov. 4 (PM,DAM). INDIGO BUNTINGS were extremely well reported with over twenty observers sending in reports of single birds and groups of up to twelve from many parts of the province. From late May to early June, there was a male singing in the Kentville area which may indicate that our area is becoming more attractive to these birds as a breeding territory. There were up to twelve birds on Seal Island during the Thanksgiving excursion from Oct. 8 to 10. Many Halifax observers saw up to 7 birds at Hartlen's Point from Oct. 21 to 27 and there were many records of one or two birds found from the Pubnico's to Halifax Co.

DICKCISSELS were almost common as there were 21 birds found during Sept., Oct., and Nov. The first of the many was one seen on Brier Island on Sept. 2-4 (AL,LL). The month of October accounted for many reports from Lr. Argyle, W. Pubnico, Little Harbour, Sable Island, Hartlen's Point and the largest group of 8 birds seen on Seal Island on Oct. 10 (BLM). During November, there were two reports of laggards, one at Dartmouth from Nov.3-8 (JP), and one at Hartlen's Point on Nov. 11 (CSII). RUFOUS-SIDED TOWEES were as usual hard to find. There were only two fall reports, the first being one seen at Cherry Hill on Sept. 30 (SJF), and the second was a male seen on Brier Island on Oct. 23 (HGH,HJH).

SPARROWS

The first AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS to arrive this fall were reported by Jerome D'Eon who had over forty on Oct. 15 at L.W. Pubnico. There were five at Bass River on Oct. 23 (FS); three at Hartlen's Point on Oct. 26 (FLL,ELM), four at Wolfville on Nov. 4 (SB) and three were found at Russel Lake on Nov. 13 (JWT). CHIPPING SPARROWS were not well reported this fall, with just a single record of three found at Sandy Lake, Bedford on Sept. 30 (BS). Summer records came from Skir Dhu, Cape Breton on June 1 (EW), and one from Cape Split on July 13 (HGH,HJH). CLAY-COLOURED SPARROWS were three in number with one coming aboard ship on Georges Bank on Sept. 1 (RSD). Ian McLaren saw one at Seal Island Oct. 7-8 and then he had another at Armbrae Academy on Oct. 29. FIELD SPARROWS arrived in numbers but in only three areas. Three were found on Bon Portage Island on Oct. 6 (JWT); one at Hartlen's Point on Oct. 26 (FLL,ELM) and up to six were found on Seal Island, Oct. 8 and 9 (IAM,BLM,BH et al.). Blake Maybank gives us information on eight different areas in the Cobequid region of the province where he has located VESPER SPARROWS. These sightings were part of his work with the Breeding Bird Atlas and were during June and July.

LARK SPARROWS were reported from Seal Island, where three were found on Oct. 8-9. (IAM,SJF,DHY,BLM). The only other record was one seen at a feeder at Fort Lawrence on Oct. 6-8 by Carol Currie. Bev Sarty and Peter MacLeod were fortunate to find a LARK BUNTING along the shoreline grasses of Hartlen's Point on Oct. 25. This rare prairie wanderer has occurred less than a dozen times in Nova Scotia. There were over fifty SAVANNAH SPARROWS at Hartlen's Point on Sept. 25 and it seems that this was the only large group reported. There were 3 at Skir Dhu on Sept. 9, and one found at Brier Island on Oct. 23 (FLL,EW,BR,ER). SAVANNAH (IPSWICH) SPARROWS were notable in their numbers this fall in several areas. There were 10 at Hartlen's Point on Oct. 14 and 22 (IAM,ELM); and one was found at Pubnico Point on Oct. 23 (RSD). Three GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS were chanced upon this fall, two of which were found on Bon Portage Island during the NSBS field trip there on Oct. 6-9. The other was one on Seal Island, Oct. 8-9 (BS,PM,JWT,IAM,BLM).

SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS were found in several areas throughout the summer. Blake Maybank found them in seven different locations in estuaries along the North Shore and Minas Basin during June and July. They were near Melbourne, Yar. Co., Brier Island, Conrad's Beach, Cherry Hill and Fort Lawrence throughout the summer. On Oct. 20, there were still eight or more at Cherry Hill which, according to Cohrs' records, is an unusual number for that date. Francis Spalding wrote in about a SEASIDE SPARROW which he found at Economy on Sept. 19. The southerly movement of FOX SPARROWS took place in mid-October. Marg Clark had two to four from Oct. 13 to Oct. 19 at her back yard feeders in Halifax. They were reported on Sable Island on Oct. 19, and throughout the Valley areas of Kentville and Wolfville. Other reports were of one at Hartlen's Point and one at Sandy Lake, Bedford on Oct. 22-25 (BS,PM).

Although few people sent reports on SONG SPARROWS, those that did noticed that these birds were abundant or very common in their areas. With the unusually warm days during October and November there were many areas in which these birds were singing as if it were spring. LINCOLN'S SPARROW is one species that continues to draw the attention of birders and is well reported. Reports came from many areas of the province during the summer months including the Valley and Cape Breton areas. There were 25 seen by Blake Maybank on Seal Island on Oct. 9; at least three on Brier on Sept. 7 and two were discovered at Point Aconi (MC,FLL,MA). SWAMP SPARROWS were found near rivers and lakes in many areas during the summer. During the fall the largest number found was of up to 75 on Seal Island between Oct. 8-10 (SJF,BLM).

WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS were sparsely reported through the summer but were widely distributed. During September it was common to find groups of 4 or 5 and by mid-October larger flocks were found as they moved south. Andrew Allen reports that

these birds were quite numerous during this period in the Sackville area. There were 35 or more on Wolfville Ridge on Oct. 16 (JCT). This was definitely a fall for WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS. There were at least 60 birds counted in total and from virtually all areas of the province. They were found from Cape Breton to Fort Lawrence and from Halifax to Yarmouth. Thirty were found Oct. 8 on Seal Island (IAM et al.). Most records, however, were for October, Eleanor Waldron had three immatures at Skir Dhu on Sept. 19. The latest record so far was one on Sable Island as of Nov. 1 (**vide** IAM).

DARK-EYED JUNCOS were well recorded especially in the northern and central areas of the province during summer. Blake Maybank counted up to 100 in one day in the Cobequid region during June and July. Early September brought larger congregations moving through roadside thickets and backyard hedgerows. There were 30 at Durham Pictou Co. on Sept. 9 and RBS wrote of about 40 in his Kentville yard during the last week of October. An odd junco was found at Ambrae Academy on Oct. 24 by Peter MacLeod and Bev Sarty. The bird they found had two prominent white wing bars which fit the description of the "White-winged" junco.

LAPLAND LONGSPURS were found in numbers at Cherry Hill Beach on Oct. 13, where SJF counted 22 and at Hartlen's Point where there were 35 seen on Oct. 25 (PM,BS,FLL). Other reports were of one to two at L.W. Pubnico on Oct. 18 and 22 (RSD,DJD); one at Saulnierville and three at Pond Cove on Oct. 23 (HGH,HJH); two at Hemeon's Head, Oct. 27 (DJY); and 12 at Conrad's Beach on Nov. 5 (BLM). SNOW BUNTINGS were commonly found throughout the province in open areas and along beaches by the third week of October. A nearly record came from Andrew MacFarlane, who observed a single bird on Sable Island on Sept. 19. Typical reports during late October include 50-75 at Pond Cove on Oct. 23 (HGH,HJH); 50 at Hartlen's Point on Oct. 24; about 80 at Crescent Beach on Oct. 29 and a large flock of over 300 at Brier Island on Oct. 29 (BR,ER).

ICTERIDS

BOBOLINKS were not well reported although there seemed to be large numbers migrating during late August and early September. There were two late records, one on Oct. 22 at Cole Harbour and one seen at L.W. Pubnico on Oct. 25 (IAM,ELM,DJD). RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS were found during migration in mixed flocks of blackbirds in several areas but usually in small numbers. An exception was a flock of 200-250 mostly male birds at Mantua, Hants Co. on Oct. 8, seen by Andrew Allen. Three reports of YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD were submitted. The first was seen at Cow Bay by Sonya Russel on August 29; a second at Sable Island, Sept. 1-3 (AMa); and the third, of a male reported to IAM by Anna Parker at Conrad's Beach on Sept. 14.

There was a single report of RUSTY BLACKBIRD: one at a W. Pubnico feeder on Oct. 19 (LD). COMMON GRACKLES began moving through in large numbers by early August and continued to until late September. Typical were sightings such as "hundreds flocking in Waverley on Aug. 5" (L&PP); and about 400 at Durham on Sept. 15-28 (MO). BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS seem to mysteriously disappear during summer to become quite common in large flocks as winter approaches. There were 10 at Brier Island on Sept. 6-8 and several were found with Red-wings at Mantua on Oct. 8 (MAC,AA).

Michael Olsen reports two NORTHERN ORIOLES in the Westville area and notes that there were several of these birds in the Durham, Westville and Sylvester areas during the summer. Fall sightings were of at least six on Bon Portage Island on Sept. 2-4 (GWT,JCT); six seen on Brier Is., Sept. 13 (BMA,ST). There was a single bird at a feeder in L.W. Pubnico on Oct. 17 (RSD) and 2 at a feeder in Dartmouth on Nov. 5 (JWT).

FINCHES

After the non-existence of PINE GROSBEAKS in the winter of '88-89, it is nice to see the many reports of these birds during the fall. They were reported in all areas generally in twos or threes and were most visible during mid to late October. PURPLE FINCHES were regular visitors to backyard feeders all summer but generally in small groups of two to four. During October they were still being seen at feeders in these small groups however, much less so than during the summer. HOUSE FINCHES continue their slide into Nova Scotia. There were seven separate sightings of these birds in the Valley areas of Avonport, Port Williams, Wolfville and Wolfville Ridge during the months of May, June and July. These reports add up to eight individual birds and included three pairs (RGT,BET,BLF,JWW,BMac,LT,MP,GA). Apart from the Valley, there were three sighted on Brier Island on Sept. 7 (MAC).

RED CROSSBILLS were only recorded once in this period, that being at Delaps Cove on July 16 (BLF,RBS). Although not nearly in the numbers of the previous two years, WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS were well reported throughout the entire province. Fifty to one hundred were seen in one day in the Cobequid area during June and July. (BLM). During October they were found from Pubnico to the Valley in groups from 12-100.

Six COMMON REDPOLLS arrived at a feeder in Halifax on October 23 (FLL) and a single bird appeared at the Payzants feeder in Waverley on November 5. Hopefully this is the start of a trend that will last through the winter. There seemed to be a minor incursion of PINE SISKINS during early August as many records were for that time. Other reports were of at least 200 at White's Lake during the summer (BLM) and RBS noticed a flock of fifty over Brier Island on Oct. 1. AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES were not found in the hundreds during migration this year, although from all reports, in all areas, there were excellent numbers throughout summer and fall.

EVENING GROSBEAKS began seeking out feeding stations by early October in small groups of three or four. The largest flock was one of 19 birds which arrived at the Purchase's feeders in Dartmouth on Oct. 26. In November there were six at Glace Bay on Nov. 11 and 13 (GM) and 6 at Mader's Cove on Nov. 6 (JM,WM).

It may just be my imagination but HOUSE SPARROWS seemed to have done well in 1989. The hedges and park areas where they were absent before had rather untidy small flocks, a surprisingly welcomed sight. Arthur Porter of Yarmouth noted that after two years of complete absence these birds are beginning to return to his feeder. Clive MacDonald writes that after trying so hard to rid his yard of these birds years ago and succeeding, this year he built nest boxes for them and has recovered a small flock of seven.

DAC, ed.

Editorial note:

Although we had as many reporters writing in as usual, the number of reports on several species were very low or absent altogether. To me this means, not that correspondants were lax, but that there were fewer birds to report. Please put in notes on low counts and scarcities. Rarities are interesting, but the status of our normal seasonal bird populations is of much greater importance.

Readers are urged to obtain a copy of **Harrowsmith**, Nov./Dec. 1989, No. 88, and read the article entitled "Nowhere to hide: Canadian Songbirds in the Shrinking Rain Forest". Too long to reproduce here, it is a most enlightening (and frightening) piece of responsible reporting,

Shirley Cohrs, Editor.

Many of the birding areas in Nova Scotia "crop up" regularly in the reports. To prevent repetition of the locations of these areas in the body of the text, we include this list of references:

Yarmouth Co. (Yar. Co.)	Arcadia, Pinkney's Point, Tusket, Cranberry Head, Eel Brook, Chegoggin, Melbourne, Overton, all the Pubnicos, Glenwood, Dayton, Quinan
Shelburne Co. (Shel. Co.)	Cape Sable Is., Cape Sable, Matthews Lake, Lower Ohio, The Hawk, Seal Is., Sand Hills
Queen's Co.	Port Joli, Port Hebert, Little Harbour
Lunenburg Co. (Lun. Co.)	Cherry Hill, Broad Cove, Petite Riviere, Green Bay, Crousetown, Crescent Beach
Halifax Co. (Hfx. Co.)	Three Fathom Hbr., Conrad's Beach, Lawrencetown Cole Hbr., Martinique Beach, Hartlen's Point, Oakfield Park, Laurie Park, Powder Mill Park, Chezzetcook
Colchester Co. (Col. Co.)	Economy, Glenholme
Annapolis Co. (Anna. Co.)	Wilmot, Round Hill, Paradise, Sandy Bottom Lake, Annapolis Royal, Clementsport, Eleven Mile Lake
Kings Co.	Wolfville, Greenfield, Canard, Black River Lake, Gaspereau, Grand Pre, White Rock, Starr's Pt., Lumsden Reservoir
Cumberland Co. (Cumb. Co.)	Lusby Marsh, APBS*, Lorneville, Lindon, Port Howe
Hants Co.	Shubenacadie, Noel Shore
Digby Co.	Brier Island
Guysborough Co. (Guys. Co.)	Hazel Hill
Cape Breton (C.B.)	Big Pond, C.B. Highland National Park (C.B.H.N.P.)

*APBS-Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary
CBC - Christmas Bird Count



SIGHT RECORD OF A SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER IN NOVA SCOTIA

At about 1:30 p.m. on August 9, 1989, we were observing the shorebirds on the flats extending from the west end of Conrad's Beach, Halifax County into the West Lawrencetwon inlet. The tide was near high, but water in the lagoon was continuing to rise somewhat, and birds were concentrated at the north end on grassy areas and on the few exposed mud flats. We had seen all the usual species, including some 40 Pectoral Sandpipers alternating between the mudflats and grassy areas. One of us (PM) then came across a striking sandpiper standing quietly on the mud at the edge of one of the many shallow channels, about 2 metres from the marshgrass. He brought it to the attention of BS, and both were able to observe it with binoculars at ranges as close as 5 metres for 4-5 minutes. It was at the small end of the size range of the Pectoral Sandpipers, substantially larger than nearby Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers. The bird was very quiet, standing in a slightly crouched position, as though either exhausted or perhaps frightened by the passage through the area of a N. Harrier a few minutes earlier. We were immediately struck by its overall brightness, especially the back with strong rufous feather edgings and white along the scapulars. The following further features were noted prior to any consultation of field guides or other works.

The bird had yellowish-green legs which seemed somewhat shorter than those of the more upright-standing Pectorals we had seen. Its blackish bill was like that of a Pectoral, slightly drooped at the tip, but perhaps shorter. The base of the bill did not seem to be lighter. The bird had a strongly rufous cap and a distinctive whitish eyeline that expanded behind the eye. The breast was bright buffy (seemed almost rosy buff to BS), and largely unstreaked except narrowly on the upper sides and faintly (noted only by PM) just below the whitish throat. There were absolutely no streaks on the middle and lower breast. From belly to undertail coverts was white.

When BS attempted to take a portrait photo of the bird, it flew very low into an area with dense marshgrass, some 50 m away. While flying away, it showed no white rump and to PM, did not seem to have the blunt-appearing tail of a Pectoral. As it flew it gave several call notes that reminded both of us somewhat of those of a Semipalmated Plover, not at all like the grating calls that we heard from many Pectoral Sandpipers that afternoon. We did not put it up, but left quickly to report our sighting. Unfortunately, the bird was not found by others late in the day or by us and others next day, when there was much change in the shorebirds present.

Without field guides we were completely convinced that the bird was not a Pectoral Sandpiper and favoured Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. From descriptions and illustrations consulted subsequently we are certain that our bird was juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and find no other species that resembles what we saw. WE realize that this is an extraordinarily early date for a vagrant juvenile. Perhaps its tameness indicates that it had come a long way, and its quick departure suggests that it was still on the move.

Peter MacLeod & Bev Sarty

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF REPORTS

for

the APRIL issue

FEBRUARY 28, 1990

Bird Reports to the RECORDS EDITOR

Mr. Bob Dickie,
43 Deepwood Crescent,
Halifax, N.S. B3M 2Y5

Articles, sketches and letters to the EDITOR

Mrs. Shirley Cohrs,
8 Rosemount Ave.,
Halifax, N.S. B3N 1X8

Photographs to

Dr. I.A. McLaren,
1755 Cambridge Street,
Halifax, N.S. B3H 4A8



A Huckster at the Bird Fair

TALE OF A RUFFED GROUSE

Francis Spalding

I find most nests by chance, to the surprise of their owners as well as my own. Several times I had heedlessly passed a Ruffed Grouse as she sat her eggs at the edge of a wood's road. One morning a woodpecker's tapping stopped me nearby. As I moved from one vantage point to another, pausing often in vain attempts to pinpoint the sound, I came within a few yards of her. Although the width of the road separated us the tension must have been unbearable. She could stand creatures passing purposefully on errands of their own within a few feet of her, but not this milling delay in the middle distance. At last she ran hunched and calling piteously across the road in front of me.

The nest was in the shelter of small spruce sapling on the low bank thrown up when they made the road years ago. In it were eight buffy, narrowly oval eggs paritally covered with dry leaves. Later, on my way home, I could see her easily enough as she peered from her hiding place, though of course I pretended not to. Two days later I returned with camera and tripod, which she suffered patiently enough for a time but at last repeated her forlorn departure. There were now ten eggs in the nest, a full complement. I took advantage of her absence to clip an offending twig or two and on a subsequent visit got satisfactory photos without disturbing her. According to the books she then had ten days still to sit; when they were up I returned in hopes of getting a family portrait.

It was bright and clear after the shower of the previous night, a fine day for a hatching. She was not on the nest, but the eggs were still there, all too visible if one knew where to look. I left to await her return, suppressing a suspicion that things were not as they should be. When she was still not there ten minutes later, I felt the eggs. They were cool--not cold, but certainly not at hatching temperature. Perhaps she had come to grief away from the nest, I speculated, but what would she have been doing away from the nest on so crucial a day? Only then I noticed the downy breast feathers scattered a few feet away, some still hanging from twigs, delicate and dry. No blood, no real feathers, she was gone all but a handful of fluff, and she had made it virtually to the end of her lonely vigil.





Thinking about it on the way home, I wondered if the slight noises and stirrings incident to the approach of even second hand births might have attracted the attention of a passing fox or coyote. After all, they walk down paths too, and have sharper eyes and ears than I do. The end, given the condition of the feathers, had followed the last night's rain. The circumstance allowed me to render a not guilty verdict to the charge (I raised it myself) that my visits to her hiding place had contributed to the disaster. The statute of limitations in such cases must surely be less than ten days. Still, for "the self-appointed inspector", in this case of hedgerows, there are times when he feels like lodging, though he knows that is not his department, a protest at the way things are and must be.

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FORTHCOMING FIELD TRIPS

REMINDER: Please be sure to continue phoning the field trip leader or contact person ahead of time to register for the trip. In this way no trip is oversubscribed and you can be contacted in case of cancellation. All trips have names and phone numbers listed for your convenience.



- Sat
Jan. 27 Riverside Eagles. Leader: Ross Hall (893-9665). Meet at Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet Exit 11 Hwy. 102 Stewiacke at 9:00 a.m.
- Sun.
Feb. 25 Sewer Stroll II Leader: Bill Caudle (465-3977). This all day trip begins at Herring Cove from whence we will work our way into the city of Hfx. around Bedford Basin, making several stops in Dartmouth before ending at Hartlen's Pt. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Spryfield Town Ctr. parking lot at Zellers

- Sun.
Mar. 11 President's Field Trip -- Leader: Joyce Purchase (434-5199). Dartmouth, Conrad's Beach, Grand Desert, etc. Meet at Scotia Bank, Bridge Plaza, MacDonald Bridge, Dartmouth at 8:30 a.m. Bring a lunch.
- Sat.
Mar. 24 New Members' Day, Cape Breton -- Meet at the Museum (Sydney) in the Lyceum building on George St. at 2:30 p.m. Bird Fair--refreshments will be served. For more details call Andrew Gingell (564-8298)
- Sun.
Apr. 1 Halifax Hot Spots -- Leader: Barbara Hinds (422-9407). Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Museum parking lot on Summer St.
- Sat.
Apr. 8 Eastern Shore, Martinique Beach -- Leader: Ian McLaren (429-7024). Meet at 8:00 a.m., Scotia Bank parking lot, Bridge Plaza, MacDonald Bridge, Bring a lunch.
- Fri.
Apr. 27 Owl Prowl--New/Chester area--Register with Leader Brian Dalzell (429-7024). Dusk to midnight (longer if you wish). It will be held the next night if it is rainy or windy. Limit 10 persons. Dress warmly with suitable footwear.
- Sat.
Apr. 28 Point Aconi, Cape Breton -- Leader: Andrew Gingell (564-8298) Early spring arrivals. Meet at Sydney River Shopping Center, Woolco at 8:00 a.m.
- Sun.
Apr. 29 Wolfville Area -- Leader: Jim Wolford. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Acadia Gym parking lot (542-7650)
- Sun.
May 6 Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary -- Leader: Alan Smith (H) 506-536-0164 (W) 506-536-3025. Meet at APBS parking lot at 9:30 a.m. (take exit 3 from TCH at the Wandlyn Inn and proceed a few km. toward Nappan, the entrance is on the left) Bring a lunch and wear appropriate footwear for wet conditions enjoy a day of observing waterfowl, shorebirds and early migrants.
- Wed.
May 16 Halifax County Warbler Walk -- Leader: Fred Dobson (852-3042) meet in the parking lot at the junction of Prospect Rd (Rt. 333) and the St. Margaret's Bay Rd at 6:00 a.m., 2 to 2.5 hours duration

- May 18 -21 Bon Portage Island --Leader: Peter MacLeod (477-4539). Passage and accommodations are limited and fee will be charged. Committed reserv- only 18 should make the trip. Sail at 7:00 p.m., Friday evening
- Sun. Hopewell Area (Pictou County) -- Leader: Harry Brennan (923-2780)
May 20 Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Saint Columba's Churchyard, about 1 mile south of Hopewell. Nesting owls and migrants, a great trip for beginners.
- Wed Kearny Lake Early Morning Warbler Walk -- Leader: Dave Currie 876-8745)
May 23 Meet at the Hammond's Plains and Kearny Lake Road intersection at 6:00 a.m. Duration 2-3 hours.
- Sat. Warbler Walk (Cape Breton) -- Leader: Joy Gates (849-9800. Meet at
May 26 Sydney River Shopping Center at 8:00 a.m.
- Sat. Hants County Day --Leader: Marg. Clarke (443-3993). Meet at the rail-
May 26 way crossing in Mt. Uniacke at 8:00 a.m. Observe abundant birdlife in a variety of habitats. This trip extends well into the afternoon so bring a lunch.
- Sun. Shubenacadie Area -- Leader: Roslyn MacPhee (758-3265). Meet at 6:00
May 27 a.m. in front of Scott's Restaurant in Shubenacadie
- Sun. Yarmouth and Carleton Area Warbler Walk -- Leader: Hubert Hall (742-446)
May 27 Meet at Carleton School (Highway 340) at 8:30 a.m. Bring a lunch and fly dope.

Any questions or suggestions should be directed to the Field Trip Co-ordinator Jim Taylor 434-8516, 69 Woodlawn Rd., Dartmouth, N.S. B2W 2S2. Leaders are reminded to send a Field Trip Report to the Editor of NSB (Museum address).



N.S.B.S. field trippers, Bon Portage Island,
Labour Day weekend. Photo--Carol MacNeil

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

June 11 - President's Field Trip - Kentville Area

Luckily the weather held out for the second President's Field Trip in the Kentville area. Some dozen people turned out, all of whom, except Jim Taylor, were complete newcomers to me, and in most cases were beginner birders too. This made the trip very rewarding, as people took great delight in seeing and being taught to recognise relatively common birds such as Catbirds, N. Orioles and some of the common warblers. Some of the more obscure points, such as separating Alder from Least Flycatchers (by song and habitat) were also well taken.

We had a leisurely stroll through some woodland habitats in and around Kentville, and had a picnic lunch accompanied by an adult and two immature-plumaged Broad-winged Hawks circling overhead. Afterwards, a trip round the local ponds revealed several of the more common ducks as well as Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and other birds of open woods.

Other highlights included good looks at a Great Crested Flycatcher and a visiting birder from Ontario, who joined the trip, got a Parula Warbler for his life list. Everyone had a good chance to practice their identification by sound.

Richard Stern

June 16 - Yarmouth Meeting and Field Trip

On June 16, 1989, approximately forty interested people gathered for a meeting of the N.S.B.S. at the Yarmouth County Museum. While most were local birders, there were a number of new faces as well as some visitors from other areas. President Richard Stern presided over the informal order of business. Everyone had been invited to wear their favourite T-shirt or sweatshirt with a bird motif. (There were no prizes--maybe next time?)

The short program consisted of two parts. First, Captain Hubert Hall spoke about "Birding from the Bluenose" (the ferry, not the schooner), giving hints on the best locations for viewing and birds seen at different times of year. He also regaled us with tales of some fascinating sightings. Secondly, Ted D'Eon showed us some of his own excellent slides of visits to seabird and heron nesting colonies on some of our local offshore islands.

A social hour followed, with opportunities for old and new, local and visiting birders to mingle and share experiences.

The next morning, what was meant to be a casual field trip, turned into a goal-oriented occasion because of a "hot tip" from the Pubnico group. Two Upland Sandpipers had been sighted in Lower West Pubnico, so all vehicles made a beeline for the spot. The birds showed up on cue and obliged us very well by making themselves visible on a lawn and in an adjacent garden. Further guided by our Pubnico friends, we were treated to an excellent view of a Black-crowned Night Heron perched on a rock close to the road. Other birds for our morning's expedition included Olive-sided Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, Catbird, all four common swallows, Osprey, Common and Arctic Terns and a good selection of other common species. By 1:00 p.m. our total was 46 species seen, plus six other heard but not seen, including Sharp-tailed Sparrows. We had hoped to add a House Wren to our list, but alas, the little bird did not appear for us.

Thanks to the N.S.B.S. for holding an event outside the Metro area; though we at this end of the province are often in Halifax on weekends, we are rarely there on just the right Thursday to attend regular meetings. We enjoyed the opportunity to get together with other members under the Society's auspices. Please do it again!

Barbara Ruff

June 24 - Summer birds at Groves Point, C.B.

Before setting off for Groves Point on June 24, we drove along the Westmount Road by the side of Sydney Harbour, and then around its North-West Arm, where a string of bird-watching cars can easily and safely make frequent stops. Almost continuous rain, described by local forecasters as "isolated showers", meant that everyone was on their mettle to see and record everything we possibly could.

We made a stop at the new Provincial Picnic Park next to the Coastguard College, Petersfield Park. It is clear that this place will have to be regularly included in Cape Breton field trips, for it contains a wealth of trees in great variety, large old orchards and plants that are the survivors of the kitchen and flower gardens originally established by the family of Senator J.S. MacLennan, which were abandoned during World War Two, when the property was expropriated. We could hear a variety of songbirds, but we could not see them clearly, and recognition proved difficult in the rain. We probably need a pre-trip meeting to listen to recordings of warbler songs before going out into the field.

At the foot of Rudderham Road, we found two families of Black Ducks. Beyond, in the harbour, Common Terns were successfully fishing among the usual complement of gulls and cormorants. Nothing rare or unusual, but very reassuring. In the same way, we were glad to see our other regulars in such habitats, such as kingfisher and Great Blue Heron, though the latter were not as numerous as we expected in the particular locations where we stopped.

We then drove by way of 305 and 125 to Johnson road, and so down to Bras d'Or and the bridge to Boularderie Island and Groves Point on the South Side. A variety of species were collected as we went, including a female A. Kestrel and an unusual pale-coloured Common Loon. No one was quite sure how to identify it. At Groves Point, also an excellent bird-spotting Provincial Picnic Park, the rain let up long enough for us to walk among the trees, mostly conifers, and add Chipping Sparrows, Song Sparrows, American Goldfinches, Pine Siskins, Purple Finches, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Flickers, Juncos and Blue Jays to our list. A group of Cedar Waxwings delighted us by foraging openly at eye level.

The last part of our trip took us across Boularderie by way of St. James Road, and into a third Picnic Park, Dalem Lake. Again, a most pleasant place, where Groves Point gave us conifers, and Dalem Lake set in mixed woods of maple and beech and large old hemlocks. Much of the ground was carpeted with twinflowers, clintonia and bunchberries. We heard Spotted Sandpipers and saw Tree Swallows wheeling over the lake, which is accessed by numerous woodland paths. This park was new to several of us--another interesting habitat for birders in this part of the province.

We had a good day. Hedley Hopkins acted as recorder and we almost forgot about the rain. The total species count was 26.

Nancy More

July 22 - C.B. Field Day

Saturday, July 22, was a beautiful day for a Field Trip. For some reason some of our regulars couldn't attend. When we met at the Sydney River Woolco parking lot at 8:00 a.m., nine members answered the call.

Led by Hedley Hopkins, we followed the shore until we turned on route 125. There seem to be lots of Ospreys this summer, also Cedar Waxwings and American Goldfinches. We saw Common Terns, kingfishers and D.C. Cormorants at Point Edward.

We had our lunch in a beautiful provincial park near St. Anne's. We came back on the Englishtown Ferry and didn't mind having to wait for the ferry on such a busy afternoon. There were lots of D.C. Cormorants at Englishtown. We had a good day with good company and added a Catbird to our list. We saw 30 species in all.

B. Hopkins

July 29 - Crescent Beach and Cherry Hill

The weather on July 28 was horrible--rain, thunder and fog. The forecast for the 29th was for more of the same. However, the 29th dawned clear, no fog, and gradually became a halcyon summer day--all sun and sea and shorebirds. (In twelve years the weather has NEVER failed on this trip!)

There were seventeen people and two well-behaved dogs. Over sixty species were seen, although we concentrated mainly on shorebirds most of the time. The tides arranged themselves to permit close viewing at both Crescent Beach in the a.m. and Cherry Hill in the p.m.

All the expected waders were there--dowitchers, Willets, Black-bellied and Semi-palmated Plovers, etc., etc., including a few Red Knot.

The highlight was the sighting of two groups of Piping Plover at Cherry Hill totalling four adults and five young.

The trip ended around 3:30 p.m., with weary legs and sunburned faces and an undiminished enthusiasm for the windbirds.

Shirley Cohrs

August 12 - Fuller's Bridge and Gabarus Areas.

The Cape Breton members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society met at Marion Bridge on the morning of August 12, to view shorebirds at Fuller's Bridge and Gabarus. It was a lovely hot summer's day, as so many were during the summer of 1989. Marion Bridge crosses the lovely Mira River and is a beauty spot, especially on a fine summer morning. A pair of Black Ducks were seen in flight.

We travelled to Canoe Lake, where there is usually something to see. We were not disappointed as a Broad-winged Hawk was soon sighted in flight. While flying, the hawk was voicing a shrill cry which few had heard before. A kingfisher was spotted in the trees at the edge of the lake. Other birds observed here were Cedar Waxwings, Goldfinch, chickadees and a Junco. Water lilies were blooming in one corner of the lake which attracted the photographers in the group as they made a pretty picture.

At Gabarus, there are good areas for shorebirds as the water is in many creeks and inlets with sandy shallows. A flock of Semi-palmated Plovers were feeding here as well as Greater Yellowlegs, Herring and Black-backed Gulls. Tree Swallows were diving and swooping in the air, feeding on the abundant flies. A bird seen swimming on the ocean was a pupzle for a while, as it was rather far from shore and not easy to identify. It was eventually identified as a loon in a rather strange location.

The group left for Fuller's Bridge in order to catch the low tide when many shorebirds can usually be seen there. On the way at Forchu, a Great Blue Heron was seen. As usual, Fuller's Bridge was very productive and considerable time was spent there as so many birds were coming and going. A number of people dig clams at this spot and this day was no exception, as many were there enjoying the warm day. However, the birds were still there and more Semi-palmated Plovers and Greater Yellowlegs were counted. A good number of Black-bellied Plovers and Ruddy Turnstones were also enjoying the good feeding area, as were Least Sandpipers. The graceful Common Terns were flitting around all the time and six Whimbrels were seen in flight.

Some members of the group who had other commitments, left at this point but several carried on to the Belfry Beach area, a very attractive place with water, sand dunes and rocks. A Willet was seen here and a group of Ruddy Turnstones were watched for some time as they fed on seaweed which was being washed by the surf. Unfortunately, the peace and enjoyment of nature at its best was rather marred by the appearance of all terrain vehicles being ridden over the dunes and rocks. This annoyed the birders as we know that this activity is destroying the environment for wild life and is quite unnecessary. One vehicle was being ridden by a small boy which appeared to be very dangerous. This is a rather irresponsible group of people which exists to other people's enjoyment of our lovely island.

Our group left for home after a very enjoyable and profitable day as far as bird sightings went. Added to this list observed on the field trip were hummingbirds seen at a home seeder before leaving that morning.

Joy Gates.

August 12 - Yarmouth County Shorebird Trip

Twenty-five people from several areas of Nova Scotia gathered on the morning of August 12, for the annual Yarmouth County Shorebird Trip. The weather was co-operative--overcast, warm, humid and breezy--no fog and no bugs!

Led by Eric Ruff, we visited the usual haunts in search of shorebirds--Cook's Beach, Pinkney's Point Marsh, Sunday Point, Sand Beach and Chebogue Point. Our timing was a bit off to see the concentration of peeps at Cook's Beach at high tide, but we had an unexpected treat at Chebogue Point--a flock of at least 46 Whimbrel in the fields and in the same area, three Pectoral Sandpipers.

We had fifteen shorebird species for the day: Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Common Snipe, the 46 Whimbrel, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Willet, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, the three Pectoral Sandpipers, Least Sandpiper, Dowitcher, and Semipalmated Sandpiper. Nothing terribly unusual, but a very satisfying selection of resident and migrating shorebirds.

In total for the day, the party saw 41 species, and heard two more--one of which was the elusive but reliable Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Sunday Point. Given the limitations of our seaside environments, we departed in late afternoon, quite pleased with ourselves.

It was a pleasure too, to meet some old and new acquaintances from other parts of the province

Barbara Ruff

September 1-4 - Bon Portage Island

Anticipation filled the air as 19 people gathered at the Bon Portage Fisheries wharf in Shag Harbour on September 1. Some had set out early enough that day to allow time for a stop at Cape Sable Island and were rewarded with a close-up view of an American Avocet in a pond at roadside. Gear was loaded onto the boat and we set out for Bon Portage with great expectations.

We were not to be disappointed. Although actual numbers of birds were not high, the variety was, with a species tally of 131 for the weekend. Included in our count were the following:

--seven species of herons: American Bittern, Great Blue, Little Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons, and Cattle, Great and Snowy Egrets;
 --20 species of sandpipers including Solitary, Pectoral and Baird's Sandpipers as well as Red Knots, Sanderlings and Hudsonian Godwits;
 --22 species of warblers including Cape May, Blackburnian, Prairie and Blue-winged Warblers as well as Yellow-breasted Chat.

Some of the other species seen were: Great Horned Owl, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Black-billed Cuckoo, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, House and Winter Wrens, Northern Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Yellow-headed Blackbird and, of course, Leach's Storm Petrel, the breeding population of which is estimated at 50,000 pairs on Bon Portage. These amazing little birds make a nighttime walk a must-not-miss experience for all who visit the Island.

Another noteworthy sighting, although not avian, was whales. What a thrill to watch as many as four humpback whales as they spouted and breached off the southern tip of the Island. Fin whales were also spotted by some of the group.

So it was that a tired but happy group of birders assembled at the slip on Monday afternoon for the return trip to the mainland. Special thanks go to P.C. Smith and Acadia University for making our trip possible. Before our departure, P.C. asked if there were any complaints or suggestions regarding the set-up on the Island. What do you think, gang? Should we ask him to behead that old, wind-swept spruce with the crown that so resembles a long-eared owl? Perhaps it's better left to exercise its trickery on some unknowing group of future birders--may they share the laughter as we did.

Peter MacLeod
Bev Sarty

September 16 - Louisbourg and Kennington Cove, C.B.

It was a warm sunny September morning. We gathered at the corner of Morrison Road and the Louisbourg highway, our leader for the day was Andrew Gingell.

The first stop of the day was at Albert Bridge. There, fluttering among the spruce trees we spotted American Goldfinches, a Nashville Warbler, an imm. Magnolia Warbler, Song Sparrows and flying overhead many Blue Jays.

From there we detoured off the Louisbourg highway, down the New Boston Road. On the way we saw a male Northern Harrier, many Robins, a Cedar Waxwing, Ravens and Gray Jays.

From there we proceeded to Louisbourg, through to Kennington Cove. We did not reach Kennington Cove because heavy rains from the night before had made the road impassable. However, the rest of the drive proved fruitful with many Common Yellow Shafted Flickers, Juncos, Chickadees, Yellow-rumped Warblers, a Belted Kingfisher, a Great Blue Heron and many Double-crested Cormorants.

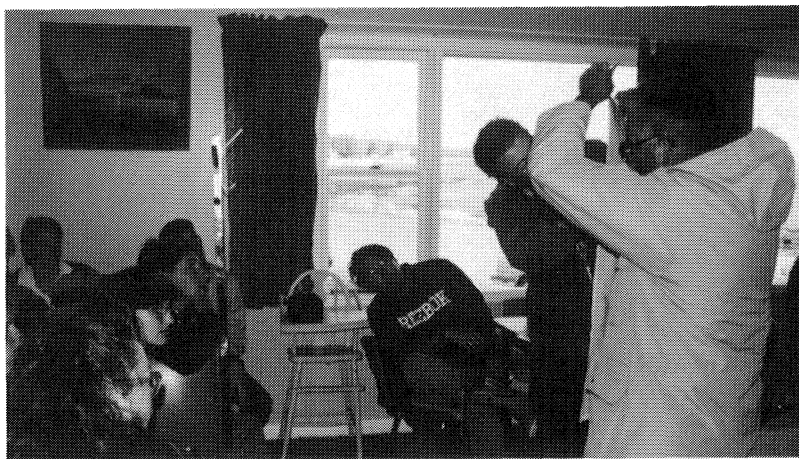
The final leg of our journey took us to Lighthouse Point, which overlooks the Fortress of Louisbourg. There we spotted Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Plovers (winter plumage), Spotted Sandpipers and Greater Black-backed and Herring Gulls. Have a Happy Christmas and New Year from the Cape Breton Chapter of the NSBS

Andrew Gingell

September 27 - Bob Kanigsberg Youth Trip

Bob Kanigsberg, a charter member of the N.S.B.S. and Honorary Solicitor for many years, left a sum of money, the interest from which was to be used to "bring birds to young people".

On Wednesday, September 27, the annual Bob Kanigsberg Young People's Birding Trip took place at Crescent Beach, Lunenburg County. Planning started in late May, when I contacted the Principal of Park View Education Centre in Bridgewater. Preliminary arrangements were made before the end of the school year with Mr. John MacKay, head of the Science Department and who teaches a Grade XII honours biology class, for participation of the students of this class.



In early September, arrangements for the trip were finalized with John MacKay, and with Miriam MacIntosh for lunch at the Green Bay Canteen. On September 22, John Cohrs and Bill Caudle spoke to the students in the school and on September 27, the leaders from the NSBS, students and a teacher who specializes in ecology subjects, arrived at Crescent Beach at 9:30 a.m. The leaders were John Cohrs, Bill Caudle and Eric Cook. Also present from the NSBS were Norma Gregg, Ruth Ballem and myself.

The day was sunny but cold and very windy. As a consequence, the number and species of birds seen was somewhat disappointing. Nevertheless, the students were obviously keen, and the teacher was enthusiastic as to the value of such a project.

Everyone was in good spirits during lunch at the Green Bay Canteen. Eric Cook took advantage of the warm room, and being out of the wind to talk to the students about the migratory routes of the birds seen, and showed them an interesting map on which these routes were plotted. Bill Caudle took many photographs during the day. The group dispersed at about 1:30 p.m.

Milton Gregg

October 6-9 - Bon Portage Island

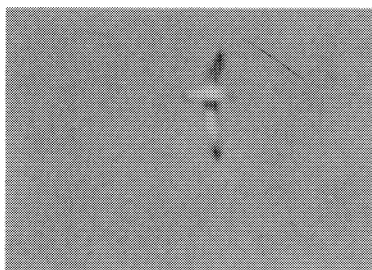
After a few last minute cancellations, we numbered only 12 as we set sail for Bon Portage Island on Friday evening. However, this being the first trip to the Island for the majority of the group, we made up for in enthusiasm what we lacked in numbers. The passage was a bit rougher than usual and by the time we reached the south end of the Island and settled into our lodgings, both darkness and rain had enveloped the Island. Fortunately, the rain was short-lived. So, spirits undampened, we set out for the banding lanes for an orientation walk by flashlight. We had hopes of finding owls since four species had been reported through the week prior to our arrival. The paths were "alive"--but with only Leach's Storm Petrels. The secretive owls eluded us for the entire weekend. However, who can complain about missing a few owls with so many other delightful birds sharing the Island with us! Some of the highlights were:

--four species of wrens: House, Winter, Marsh & Sedge;
 --thirteen species of sparrows including Grasshoppers, Lark, Clay-coloured, Field, White-crowned and Lincoln's, as well as a few of the resident Fox Sparrows still singing their sweet song'
 --sixteen species of warblers including Blue-winged and Orange-crowned along with Yellow-breasted Chats.

Some of the other species sighted were: Red-throated Loon, Black-crowned Night Heron, Snow Geese, numerous Sharp-shinned Hawks and Merlins, at least eight Peregrine Falcons, 11 species of sandpipers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Eastern Phoebe, White-eyed and Philadelphia Vireos, Eastern Meadowlark, Scarlet Tanager, House Finch and Indigo Buntings. Total species count for the weekend was a pleasing 108.

Thank you to P.C. Smith for allowing us the use of the Island and the wonderful facilities once again. Very special and heartfelt thanks to P.C. and all who helped with arranging and actual preparation of our Thanksgiving dinner. On Saturday evening 31 people sat down by candlelight to a turkey dinner complete with all the traditional trimmings in rooms decorated by bouquets of wildflowers and berries found in the woodlands and along the shores of Bon Portage. It was a very special evening for a wonderful group of friends, old and new alike. Surely everyone present felt that we truly had much to be thankful for.

Peter MacLeod
 Bev Sarty



Last spring's Black-browed Albatross is barely recognizable in this photo, with the bird more than 500 m away. It is flying to the right. You may get an impression of its gray head and short, dark tail. The narrow black margins on the underwings are an important field mark
 Photo--Ian McLaren, May 30, 1989

BOOK REVIEW

Title: **Classic Architectural Birdhouses and Feeders**

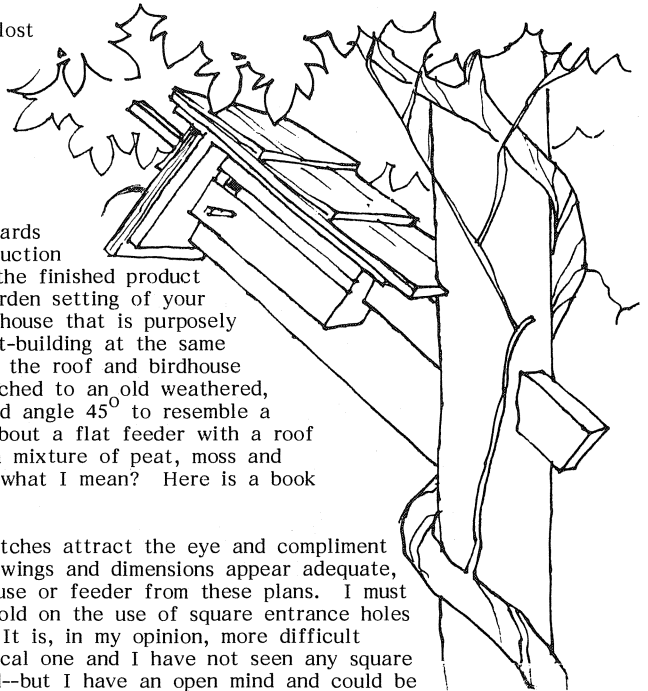
Author: Malcolm Wells

Publisher: Malcolm Wells

Price: \$11.00 U.S.

Obtainable from: Malcolm Wells
673 Satucket Rd.
Brewster, MA 02631
U.S.A.

No outdoor activity has engendered as much participation these past twenty years as bird watching. A visit to any bookstore will produce numerous titles on bird identification and the art of attracting them to the back yard and garden. The majority are extremely well presented and make interesting reading but unfortunately, there is a similarity to most of them. Malcolm Wells' is decidedly different. He is an architect by profession and his training shows. He says that we have lost the "capacity to design, by instinct, perfect natural houses" and that our design of bird feeders and houses has followed similar trends. He uses natural material such as grasses, peat blocks, dead tree trunks and branches, mud and weathered old barn boards shingles and posts as his construction materials and suggests placing the finished product where it will blend into the garden setting of your property. For example, a bird-house that is purposely elongated is mounted on an out-building at the same angle as the roof slope so that the roof and birdhouse appear as one; another is attached to an old weathered, gnarled fence post at an upward angle 45° to resemble a branch of a dead tree. How about a flat feeder with a roof made of grass growing out of a mixture of peat, moss and manure to shed the rain. See what I mean? Here is a book with a different approach.



The line drawings and sketches attract the eye and compliment the text. The construction drawings and dimensions appear adequate, although I have not made a house or feeder from these plans. I must say that I am not completely sold on the use of square entrance holes on several of his bird houses. It is, in my opinion, more difficult to make than a round or elliptical one and I have not seen any square holes made by birds in the wild--but I have an open mind and could be convinced. Also, and I don't intend to be excessively critical, a slightly better than average familiarity with the use of hammer, saw, chisel and carpenter's square is needed to master the compound angles required in some of the designs.

I recommend the book as a decided addition to the birding enthusiast's home library.

D.W. Purchase



Patrick Wall, the 1989 winner of the Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund Annual Photographic Competition with his Puffin Trophy

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor, Nova Scotia Birds:

When I was seven years of age, I took an idea from somewhere to capture House Sparrows, Starlings and the occasional unwary Grackle by using a cardboard box, a stick, a long piece of string and bread crumbs. It was with wonder that I could hold these small frightened creatures in my hand for a few seconds after their capture and then watch them fly out of sight after I released them.

Over the years I have had the opportunity to see various methods of trapping or netting birds and met very dedicated and careful banders. However, there is nothing, apart from maybe my box trap at age seven, that is as pointless as indiscriminate mist netting and banding of small passerines or any other birds for that matter.

Beside the fact that the recovery of banded passerines is practically one in a million, there is the much greater mortality at the hands of the bander that is always evident. The banders I know that use mist nets are extremely careful with their victims and any deaths at the nets are unfortunate but inevitable.

The problem I have with this is why are we still bothering to use indiscriminate banding and justifying it by calling it research? If we reason that with all the environmental factors that are stacking up against our passerines, we need to continue—I think not. The upsurge of interested amateur birders, the many publications and census' must be far more useful and informative than the one banded Yellow Warbler that was caught 120 miles from where it was originally netted.

Maybe you can reason that if we didn't use mist nets we wouldn't have known that that Boreal Owl happened to be at Hartlen's Point in October. I suppose if that is important to you, it must certainly be worth the undue stress and harm shown to the creature.

I wish to make it clear that mist netting is far from ideal as any bander will agree, but until something better is invented, it still has its place to do specific studies. I can see the importance of trapping of Semipalmated Sandpipers along the Fundy shores if it means preserving the species as the globe warms and the waters rise. What really bugs me is to almost walk into a set mist net while enjoying my hobby, to see birds struggling and screaming, inverted and tangled and seeing no clear reason other than another man's hobby.

David Currie

Readers' views are invited—Ed.

Editor, Nova Scotia Birds:

Exerpt from a letter to Joyce Purchase, our then Membership Secretary, received Oct. 17, 1989.

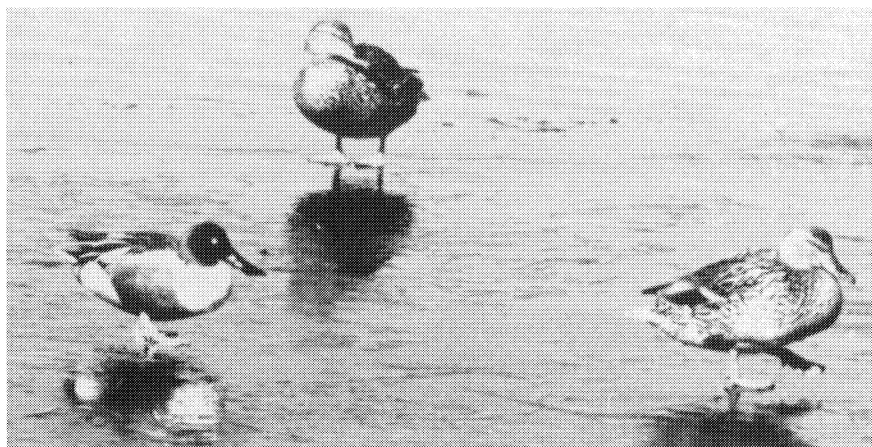
Bird watching is very popular here (in Spain) and all over Europe. Being a member of the Spanish Ornitologie Society teaches me a lot of information and what is being done.

The birds here are VERY colourful—bright yellow, blue, orange. One of my favorite birds is the "Flamenco". There are also many National Parks and reserved for birds. I usually spend my vacation visiting them. If you decide to visit Spain I would be pleased to help you plan your trips so it would be more exciting. I am also organizing a trip to Greenland for 1991. If there are any of your members interested they may contact me.

Marco Pierre Landry Gallant
Apdo. de Correos 621
37001 Salamanca, Espana



This Long-eared Owl arrived on the **F.P.V. Louisbourg**, 85 miles south of Cape Sable, around noon on Oct. 15, stayed an hour and then flew--who know where?
Photo--Hector Smith



Will last winter's drake N. Shoveler, here consorting with some local mallards, turn up again in Yarmouth this winter? Photo--Blake Maybank

BIRDING HARTLEN'S POINT

Part II
Fulton Lavender

At Eastern Passage and Hartlen's Pt., the last of December through mid-March is reserved for winter. It is now that the mud flats at the Passage play host to hundreds of screaming gulls. The species list includes: Greater Black-backed Gull, Black-headed Gull, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull and sometimes Mew Gull. The nearby dune-covered sandspit and beach support only the most hardy of residents. Horned Larks, Tree Sparrows, Juncos, Redpolls and the occasional late Savannah Sparrow, scratch a meager living from frozen weeds and grasses.

Across from the sandspit Lawlor Island lies dormant, her Osprey and Heron's nest vacant save for snow and ice. Facing the beach her northeast field and cove echo the raucous cries of crows and ravens. A Red-tailed Hawk sometimes claims this stage watching calmly from a lordly perch among frosted boughs, undetected by the corvid eye.

Along the Passage channel, Common Loons, Red-breasted Mergansers, Red-necked Grebes, Guillemots, Goldeneye and Oldsquaw dive amid bone-chilling waters.

To the southeast of the Passage, the ocean forms an adjoining bay and backdrop for Hartlen's pounding surf. More mergansers, Goldeneye, Oldsquaw, scoters, loons, grebes and alcids wrest a living from these food-rich shoals and tidal surf.

In the waters framing Hartlen's Pt. and Devil's Island, Common Eiders make their winter home. Sharing this hostile environment with the eiders are Common Loons, Great Cormorants, White-winged Scoters, Oldsquaws, Red-necked Grebes and sometimes Horned Grebes or Red-throated Loons. However, the greatest number of divers are to be found to the northeast of Hartlen's Pt., in the waters of Cow Bay. Here, during February and March, large rafts of Common Loons and Red-necked Grebes form with an occasional Red-throated Loon and Horned Grebe among them. Joining the loons and grebes in Cow Bay are Black Guillemots, Common Goldeneyes, Red-breasted Mergansers, Common Eiders and Oldsquaws, the latter being the most common species. Adding just a touch of spice to this typical diet of waterbirds are smaller assemblies of Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, Harlequin Ducks and Surf Scoters, bent on a collective exploration of Hartlen's southwest shallows.

Gulls too are ever present winter residents at Cow Bay and Hartlen's Pt. Herring Gulls, Greater Black-backed Gulls, Iceland Gulls, Ring-billed Gulls and Glaucous Gulls pass the season here. Following strong onshore gales murrees, dovebies, razorbills and puffins become storm driven fodder for this roving guard of *Laridae*.

From January to April, the land birding at Hartlen's Pt. is rather fixed in composition. Raptors are the most preferred distractions.

One or two Snowy Owls often stake their claim to winter fame at the point or on nearby Devil's Island. Short-eared Owls occasionally grace the alder thickets beyond the helicopter pad. Rough-legged Hawks pay timely visits to the fairways behind the cape, or set up shop upon a rooftop on windswept Devil's Island. Even Northern Harriers with their slender wings angled in rock-a-bye flight find time during fine days to course the thickets and barrens in search of fat furry voles. Finally, just to complete a rich winter scene, teetering high atop the powerline overlooking Hartlen's Cove, a Northern Shrike watches for unwary chickadees and sparrows.

The winter passerine population of Hartlen's Pt. is a restricted one at best. The frozen kelp bed on the south side beach attracts a few starlings, Horned Larks, Snow Buntings and sometimes a Meadowlark.

The golf course with its tree fringed trails, supports Black-capped Chickadee, Boreal Chickadee, Blue Jay, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Brown Creeper, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Ruffed Grouse, Spruce Grouse

and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

The thickets bordering the stripped zone, the helicopter pad and Hartlen's Cove give food and cover to juncos, Song Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, redpolls, goldfinches and Ring-necked Pheasants.

The Hartlen's Cove marsh itself may contain a hardy Swamp Sparrow or a foolish Common Snipe. A special visit from a Gray Jay or a Black-backed Woodpecker may occur when inland winter food supplies begin to dwindle. Thus, the winter season runs its course.

SPRING

By mid-March, the spring waterfowl movement is in full swing. Off the south side of Devil's Island, a huge raft of Common Eider has formed. By mid-April, there should be thousands there. Also present enmasse along the southern shoals of Hartlen's Pt. are hundreds of Oldsquaw and Red-breasted Mergansers.

It is at this time that the beach and marsh reveal the scars of winter's wrath. Between the patches of snow only stubble, chaff and sodden earth remain. The birds are few. Just a tiny flock of Snow Buntings to brighten cold gray beachrock and a solitary shriek to crest a shaggy spruce, searching for the little Tree Sparrow-Junco band of yesterday. A pair of Black-capped Chickadees flit through twisted alder boughs. A Pine Grosbeak whistles overhead and a Northern Raven barrel-rolls his joy for all the world to see. Golden-crowned Kinglets and Boreal Chickadees fuss and fume over what to do and where to be while a gang of crows look for someone or something to pick on. A bouncy goldfinch and a saucy redpoll make fitting company for a flock of Pine Siskins around a small pool of melt water. In the distance a male pheasant stops to admire himself in a mudpuddle, before crossing the road.

The open ocean too displays the first signs of spring. Porcelain white against ice-blue sea, rising and falling unison, gannets head for their breeding colonies in the north Atlantic. By the end of March, thousands will pass in a single day. Joined in part on their pilgrimage by both Great and Double-crested Cormorants alike. Then just on April's Eve, before March is fully fled, the woodcock flights appear, in keen anticipation of the quickening days ahead.

As April gathers strength, a rising tide of spring songbirds washes gently over the mainland bringing with it the season's first Robins, Fox Sparrows, grackles, Rusty Blackbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds and Song Sparrows.

The surge of mid-April marks the stately passage of Canada Geese along Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore. Most of them pass at night, filling the moonlit sky with their wild clarion cries, as if heralding a start to a better time. By day, a few scattered flocks may grace Hartlen's coastline. Not many stop there; but those who do leave us with the lasting memory of something wild and special.

Grant Geese too lend their charm and elegance to Hartlen's rocky shoals. Just a handful per spring, but none the less an encouraging sign of their growing numbers.

With the cries of geese still fresh on April winds, Hartlen's south side beach greets ghostly guests from far away. Tiny whiffs, seemingly too small to fight the strong east winds arrive exhausted, to gorge themselves amid piles of rotting kelp. The Ipswich Sparrow, almost home to Sable Island horses, stops to renew its strength before the last leg home.

With the passage of these hardy little birds, spring migrations slips into second gear. For the next two weeks gannets peak at tens of thousands daily and robins come ashore by the hundreds. Accompanying the robins to the land are newly arrived waves of Red-winged Blackbirds, juncos and Common Grackles as well as the spring's first Hermit Thrushes, Northern Flickers and Savannah Sparrows. Also answering the monthly roll call, Great-blue heron, Killdeer, Common Snipe and Greater Yellowlegs and colour and spirit to sombre marsh. While framed by deep blue sky and gentle cloud, American

Kestrels, Northern Harriers, Ospreys, Merlins and Sharp-shinned Hawks welcome the familiar sight of home.

As the end of April passes by, a gentler May exhibits a spring full and rich on all fronts. From winter laggard to spring pioneer the arriving cast is an allstar lineup of nature's very best. Heading up the front line of migrants is a phalanx of Northern Flickers, Hermit Thrushes, American Robins, Winter Wrens, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Palm Warblers, Solitary vireos Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, White-throated Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, Savannah Sparrows, American Goldfinches, Purple Finches, Belted Kingfishers, Willets, Spotted Sandpipers and Common Terns. Forming a strong supporting cast for this mainstream movement are smaller numbers of Red-throated Loons, Red-necked Grebes, Horned Grebes, Red-breasted Mergansers, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, Purple Sandpipers, Black-headed Gulls, Bonaparte's Gulls, Rough-legged Hawks, Snowy Owls, Short-eared Owls, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Horned Larks, Eastern Phoebe's, Pine Siskins, Snow Buntings, Evening Grosbeaks, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Northern Orioles.

Discretely placed within these flights of seasonal mix are hidden treasures of a vagrant sort. Pine Warblers, Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings are prime examples of these southern strays caught up in the northward surge of our native birds.

As spring's warm embrace softens Hartlen's mid-May landscape, scattered waves of tiny birds arrive, echoing summer's distant voice. A new vanguard of warblers in vivid spring attire, disperse amid a patchwork of fresh green foliage. Leading the hasty search for food are Redstarts, Yellows, Black and Whites, Parulas, Chestnut-sided's, Magnolias, Black-throated Greens, Blackpolls and Yellowrumps. Also present but less in number are Black-throated Blues, Northern Waterthrushes, Ovenbirds, Tennessees, Wilson's, Canadas and Cape Mays.

As these woodland spirits complete their journey other kindred follow suit. Chimney Swifts, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Common Nighthawks, Bank Swallows, Cliff Swallows, Swainson's Thrushes, Veerys, Catbirds, Eastern Kingbirds, Alder Flycatchers, Least Flycatchers, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Red-eyed Vireos, Solitary Vireos, Lincoln's Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Evening Grosbeaks, Scarlet Tanagers, Northern Orioles and Bobolinks all find food and rest on Hartlen's fertile cape.

From now until the end of May, like the random dripping of a leaky tap, a migratory trickle rules the day. The birds arrive in dribs and drabs with terns, plovers, sandpipers, nighthawks, flycatchers, waxwings, thrushes, vireos and warblers topping the high count list. Just a few of each species remind us that, of all the birds that make the long and arduous spring trek, only those too weary to finish the last leg nonstop, pause here. Rarities as well are at a premium now. Most of them consist of a small number of borderline breeders. The most notable species in this group is the Willow Flycatcher.

With the end of May rapidly approaching, the remaining remnant of spring holdouts put in their much anticipated appearances. Species such as Eastern Wood Peewee, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Mourning Warbler and Sharp-tailed Sparrow complete the long checklist of seasonal migrants.

As the final curtain comes down on May, June's opening scene begins. The setting for their avian act is one of lush green hills and shady woods. Between the end of May and mid-June Spring's concluding statement comes. It takes the form of more of late May's birds, as if to say "Well, here's the rest, now let's get on with summer."

CECROPIA

by Hubert Hall

Word recently reached us of a pair of Barred Owls in Digby County that came out to hunt moths every night after dark. This sparked our interest, so late in the evening of June 29, we (Hubert and Helen Hall, Eric and Barbara Ruff and Arthur Porter) set out for a little owling.

We were rewarded far beyond our expectations. First, along highway 101, between Hebron and Port Maitland, we spotted a Great Horned Owl perched in a tree top. It obligingly stared at us and revolved its head a few times so that we all had a good look at it.

We arrived at the house where the Barred Owls tend just as darkness was setting in. The lady of the house took us into the den which overlooked their backyard, which was surrounded by mature hardwood and softwood trees. The yard was well-lit by a floodlight. In the center of the yard was a black light bug killer. This is the kind that causes loud snaps when mosquitos or small insects fly into the "zapper". Also attracted by the black light were large moths--both lunas and cecropia; which in turn attracted the Barred Owls, which have been feeding on the moths for about two weeks.

Around 10 p.m., as we stood on the deck at the rear of the house, the first owl appeared out of the darkness. No moths were around just then, but in a few minutes a cecropia fluttered into the floodlit area. The owl's attention immediately focused on the moth, its head turning as the moth criss-crossed the yard. The owl did not attempt to catch the moth on the wing, but as soon as the moth lit on the ground the Barred Owl silently swooped down, picked up the moth and returned to its perch. It made short work of eating the moth.

This was repeated several times while we all stood talking on the deck; the owl seemingly unafraid of its audience. A couple of times the owl lit on the ground about ten feet from us on the deck and stared at us with its liquid black eyes. We were impressed with the small size of the owl from a close-up view. It appeared much larger when flying or perched in the trees.

At one point, one of the owls (we only saw one at a time), flew off into the woods and shortly after we heard squeaking as from a trapped mouse. Then a larger owl appeared and watched us, between catching a few more moths. There were no luna moths that night. This was a very interesting experience as it is not a common occurrence to witness owls catching and eating their prey at such close range.

DOCTOR DOVEKIE'S TIPS FROM THE FIELD:
 increasing your powers of observation

(Reprinted from The Bullbird, 1988)

Nine years ago in early May at L'Anse-aux-Meadows, an unidentified shorebird landed in a meadow. Its flight had been caught by the searching eye of a birdwatcher who happened to be sitting outside at the time. Grabbing his binoculars, he set out, keeping low, to where the shorebird went down. On his belly, peering over the last rise he was startled to see a Godwit. Not only was it the first Godwit he had seen in breeding plumage but considering the circumstances, the likelihood of it being a very rare species were overwhelming.

He knew the classic field marks of the three species of orange breasted Godwits shown in the field guide, but these were only of use on a bird in flight. To be on the safe side, just in case something happened that prevented him from seeing the important field marks when it flew, he decided to try to identify the bird on the ground first. Being unfamiliar with the differences, he started to memorize it. Surely the three species were different enough that they could be separated in this position.

After a half hour of carefully going over the details of the beautiful high breeding plumaged Godwit, it flew. Of its own will it took to wing, and calling, flew directly toward the partially hidden birdwatcher showing him flashy, clean white, underwing linings; a broad, white wing stripe above and a white tail with a broad black tailband as it went overhead to the west and out of sight in the distance. It was a Black-tailed Godwit.

As it turned out, the careful study of the bird before it flew would have been enough to clinch the correct identification after consultation with the bird guides. The point of this true story is that nine years later, without looking at his field notes, he can still remember the rich, smooth, uniform, salmon-orange neck, head and basal half of bill, how the orange breast faded into white beyond the legs, the heavy blackish barring on the flanks and the way the orange and black feathers in the back reminded him of a dowitcher.

Several years later it is mid-January and he is standing among the rocks out of the wind by the St. Anthony lighthouse. Dozens of Dovekies dot the slushy surface of the water. Scattered Glaucous Gulls fly through the vapour over distant strings of ice. For the last hour he has been scanning far off headlands and the horizon, waiting for a Gyrfalcon. At last he spots one. What he first took to be a gull is in fact a Cyr, a white phase. It is more than a kilometre away out over the water, but it is following a line of ice that leads directly into the point. There is no doubt that he is going to have a good look at a white Gyrfalcon. There is time to relax and get ready.

Reaching the point, it dips below the rocks momentarily out of sight. Then it comes up at eye level. Breathtakingly close, it floats by. Time stands still. Catching an updraft on a neighbouring cliff, it rises to the top and hangs there motionless before wheeling back over the hill and out of sight.

A couple of hours later, when he sat down to write an account

of the event, the excitement of the moment was easy to relive but memories of the appearance of the bird itself were almost a blank. He knew it was a white phase Gyrfalcon but he didn't know if it had streaks on the side, barring in the tail, a yellow or blue cere or an unmarked white head. A golden opportunity to learn more about white Gyrs was missed. He had a good look but didn't see it well.

It is unfortunate that we do not all have photographic minds or even a camera at all the right moments. We are forced to try to remember visions of birds, be they rare or common. We have reasonably clear images in our minds of birds that we see often and well, such as American Robin, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Herring Gull and Evening Grosbeak. Even with these species we are unsure of some details, for example: how would you draw that white around the eye of a Robin? What is the leg colour of an Evening Grosbeak?

It is worthwhile to get to know all birds including the common ones as well as possible. Birds are natural, perfect pieces of art that deserve as much scrutiny as the Mona Lisa painting. The more you know about a bird, the easier it is to identify. Birds do not always stand out in the open in ideal profile and ideal light as they do in field guides. You may be faced with trying to identify a bird from the bits and pieces of it seen through dense vegetation. Knowing all parts of the common birds intimately well could mean the difference between an insignificant sighting and a rarity. You can never know a common bird too well! There is no such thing as an unmistakable bird!

Observing Birds

You might as well be looking at a bird when you are out birdwatching. Often we do not look at a bird any longer than it takes to identify it; therefore we miss the fine detail. A few extra seconds and a little effort in concentration can turn a routine sighting into a learning experience.

Take advantage of ANY bird that affords you a good look. Like people, our impressions about their character are best remembered from what we see in their face. If possible, start looking at a bird by seeing the eye because the rest of it radiates from there. The area around the eye and the entire head are often the most complicatedly marked part of a bird. On passerines in particular, this is an important area to get to know.

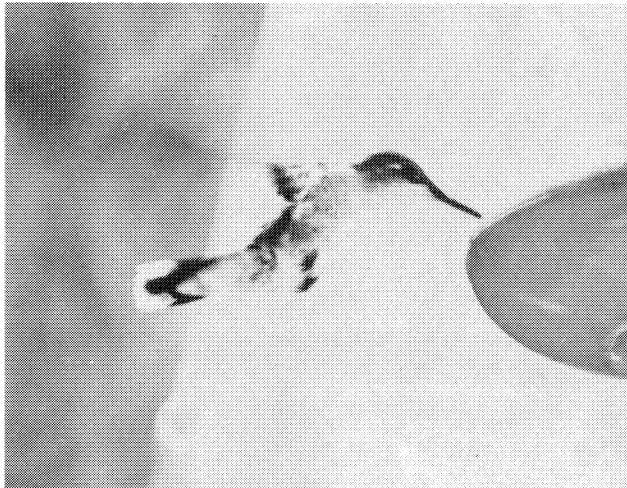
See what the eye ring is like. If it is indistinct, pale yellow and complete, say that to yourself. See what the area between the eye and the bill (the lores) shows. If it is dark brown, or grayish-white or lime-green say that; if it continues on behind the eye forming a line "through the eye", say it. If you see a thin yellowish-white, broad buffy or no line over the eye, say that to yourself. If you see a buffy stripe, lightly flecked with brown in the center of the crown bordered by two uniform dark brown stripes of equal width or if the head is uniform gray, know it for a fact and say it to yourself.

Look at the nape and SEE what is there, not what is supposed to be there. See what is in the back, the rows of wing coverts, the rump, the tail, the breast, sides, belly, under tail coverts; bill and legs. Whatever you can get a view of, see the fine detail, know what you see and say it to yourself. No part of a bird is too insignificant to look at. Note also the relative size and shape of the bird and its various parts.

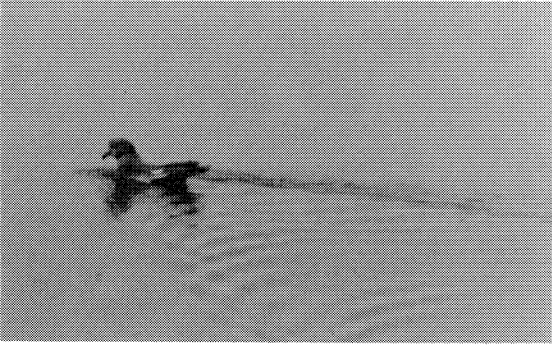
Looking at birds in this way will help you remember and learn more. It may seem like a tedious and painful method until you try it. You will be surprised at how much you can see in 10 or 15 seconds; a full minute is almost over indulgence. If the bird is a very familiar one, you may just want to spend a few seconds to study the wing and the sides or the head or a couple of back feathers. See exactly what the fine detail looks like and say it to yourself. It may seem too obvious and trivial at the time, but when the bird is gone you will be pleasantly surprised to have retained a fairly sharp picture of at least part of the bird. From this center it is often easier to form a mental picture of the whole bird. Repeatedly doing this to common birds even if it is just part by part, will build up more concrete and accurate images in your mental files. This will make the unusual birds stand out more quickly.

Doing the whole bird when it comes to rarities is important. It makes writing a rare bird report easy. Keep looking even after you've seen the basic field marks and are sure of correct identification. See the fine details, know what you see and say it to yourself. There is not a trivial feather on a rare bird. It can change a report from sounding like an excerpt from a field guide to description of the real thing.

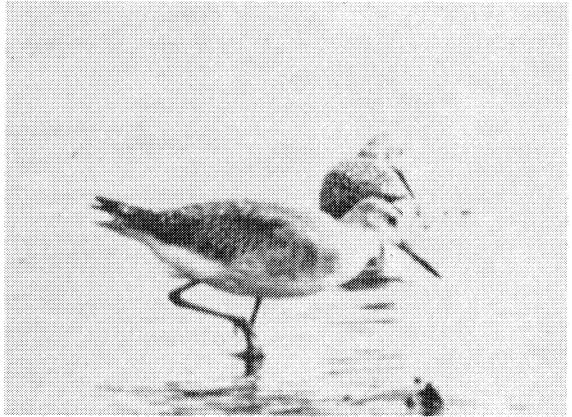
Start off easy, do it to a few birds per outing. If you remember just the details of a couple of back feathers five minutes after the bird has gone, you will be on your way to accomplishing something. Soon it will become natural and you'll know when to turn on the scrutinizer without thinking about it. You will develop a greater appreciation for the fine art that birds are. New birds will look even better. Satisfaction is guaranteed. Remember, you are not birdwatching unless you are looking at a bird.



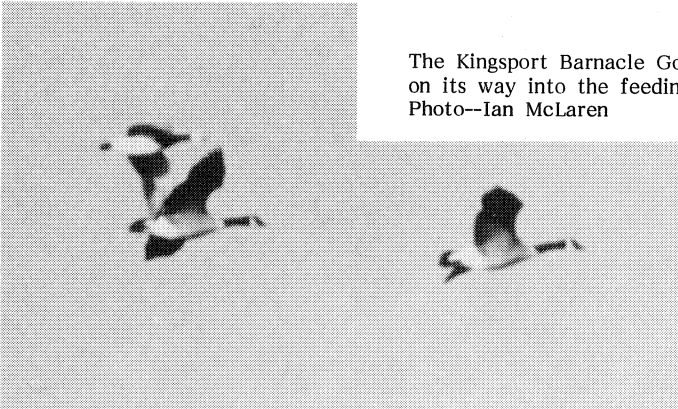
Richard Stern almost "stopped" this Ruby-throated Hummingbird at his feeder in August.



Jim Wolford's encounter with inland petrels



There seemed to be more "western" Willets around this year. Note the pale plumage and long bill and legs. Normally they reach the east coast somewhat to our south. Photo--Ian McLaren, Aug. 22, 1989.



The Kingsport Barnacle Goose with Canada Geese, on its way into the feeding field on Nov. 19
Photo--Ian McLaren

1989 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

The 1989 A.G.M. of the Nova Scotia Bird Society was held on October 26, at 8:00 p.m., in the auditorium of the Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, N.S. The President Dr. Richard Stern chaired the meeting and 65 members attended.

Copies of the 1988 minutes, published in the January, 1989 issue of Nova Scotia Birds, were distributed at the meeting. Margaret Clark moved and Karl Tay seconded that the minutes be accepted as distributed. Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes.

None

Financial Report

Don MacNeill tabled his report for 1989. The membership dues are down over the last year. Sale of publications increased. The grant from the Museum of \$4000.00 was for last year as well as this. The interest earned on the Guaranteed Investment Certificate was down this year as the residual of a Life Membership in the sum of \$330.00 was given to the Scholarship and Trust Fund. Total receipts were \$15,257.29. Disbursements \$11,056.92. Excess receipts over disbursements \$4,200.37.

It was moved by Don MacNeill and seconded by Jim Taylor that the report be accepted. Carried.

Membership Report

Joyce Purchase presented the Membership Report. The membership is down from 1988.

A. G. M.: year ending September 30, 1989

Year	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Single	420	171	19	8	5	4
Family	207	75	9	1		
Institutional	16	3				
Life	13	13	13	13	13	13
Exchange	(5 - not incl. in total) (2 free to Museum)					
	656	262	41	22	18	17

Total individuals: 998

It was moved by Joyce Purchase and seconded by John Cohrs that the report be accepted. Carried.

Shirley Cohrs reported on the Scholarship and Trust Fund.

REPORT OF THE SANCTUARY AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND 1989Signs

At the beginning of the year we investigated the possibility of erecting a sign on Brier Island, pointing out our Tern Sanctuary on Peter Island. We envisaged a stone cairn with brass plate similar to the Slocum Memorial in place there, but after enquiries, found that the cost (over \$2500) was not justified. We decided to have an indoor sign which, thanks to Carl Haycock, is hung inside the office of his whale-watching enterprise.

Bird Photography

To encourage interest in bird photography a trophy was donated to the Photographic Guild, to be awarded each year for the best bird photograph. One of our directors is to be a judge and this year this was undertaken by Peter Payzant.

Property Taxes

Our honorary solicitor, Leonard Kitz was most helpful in attempting to have the taxes on our properties forgiven by the appropriate counties. Shelburne and Lunenburg counties declined, Digby County has yet to be heard from but Yarmouth County gave us an exemption and refunded our taxes for this year.

Ross Anderson Memorial

When Ross died in 1988, he left meticulous data on the Christmas Counts for the whole of Canada from their inception in 1914 to 1987. The Nova Scotia Archives were delighted to have this invaluable material and it is housed there and available to all. It will be known as the Ross Anderson Collection. In addition to this, we felt that the Nova Scotia data deserved special attention and a grant was made to David Currie to enable him to place it in a computer so that the information can be retrieved in many ways in the future.

Raptor Rehabilitation Programme

The R.R.P. has continued to function well with birds being treated and returned to the wild. Many thanks must go to veterinarians Ian McKay and Jack Cameron and custodians at Mason's Point Center, Mike and Elaine Kew. The quiet recovery room at the Dartmouth Veterinarians has now been completed.

Video Tapes

With the cooperation of the Museum, we made two video tapes Introduction to Garden and Feeder Birds and Introduction to Shorebirds. These are aimed at beginners and are thus suitable for members to use when asked to talk about birds to outside groups. They are available to all members at no cost.

Youth Field Trip

The Youth Field Trip took place in September, with the honours biology class from Park View School near Bridgewater participating. John Cohrs and Bill Caudle lectured to the class a week before the event and the leaders on the day were John Cohrs, Bill Caudle, Milton Gregg and Eric Cooke. A report on this event is included in Field Trip Reports.

Eiders

It had been reported to the committee that the population of Common Eider on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia has been decimated in the last three years. The committee has been looking into this matter and has had meetings with the N.S. Department of Fisheries, Lands and Forests, the Aquaculture Association and the Canadian Wildlife Service. In addition we are currently carrying out our own aerial surveys, both of post breeding populations and, in the next few months, of winter populations.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all those who have donated to the fund. We could not operate without you. I also wish to thank my fellow directors who have been most supportive throughout the year: Don Purchase, Secretary; David Currie, Treasurer; Bob Dickie, Director; Milton Gregg, Director; Peter Payzant, Director.

Shirley Cohrs moved the adoption of the report. Seconded by Richard Stern. Carried.

David Currie presented the Financial Report of the Scholarship and Trust Fund. (appended),

David Currie moved the adoption of the report, seconded by Bill Caudle. Carried.

Nominating Committee

Peter Payzant reported that Len Kitz, Honourary Solicitor and James Morrow, Honourary Auditor, had agreed to serve for another year. The following slate of officers for 1989-1990 were presented.

Shirley Cohrs - Editor
 Carol MacNeill - Membership
 Don MacNeill - Treasurer
 Phyllis Bryson - Secretary
 Carin Somers - Vice President
 Joyce Purchase - President

After three calls for further nominations, none being received, the above were elected.

Nominations for Directors were called for and the following nominations were received:

	<u>Mover</u>	<u>Seconder</u>
Clarence Stevens	Janos Kovacs	Chris Field
Blake Maybank	Jim Taylor	Brian Dalzell
Jill MacLean	Elizabeth Stern	Shirley Cohrs

No further nominations were received. The above were declared elected.

The President's Report and Puffin-of-the-Year Award to Ken Gregoire appears on page one.

Joyce Purchase - took over the chair and thanked Richard Stern for his hard work during his Presidency and years on the executive.

Bernice Moores and Liz Townshend were thanked for arranging the wine and cheese party. Millie Rogers who has taken responsibility for coffee after the monthly meetings for the last two years was given a Vote of Thanks.

New Business

Joyce Purchase reminded the membership that should there be a bad snow storm on the night of our monthly meeting it will be cancelled if the Continuing Education classes are stopped.

Tony Locke from the Canadian Wildlife Service spoke to the members about a study being done regarding terns. All government departments concerned with wild life management and many interested amateurs have joined to form the Atlantic Tern Working Group. There will be a meeting at the Maritime Museum on Wednesday, December 13, 9:00-5:00 p.m. to map out the main strategy for this region. Members are welcome. Bill Downy from the National Audubon Society will be the speaker. Tony Locke can be contacted at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography.

Wendy MacDonald suggested the Bird Society might have lapel pins made to sell. "Nice to have when one is visiting other parts of the world". This has been considered and rejected before but will be reconsidered by the new executive.

Fulton Lavender announced the date for the Halifax East Count. Saturday, December 16-17, in case of bad weather. Those wishing to participate can call Fulton 477-8984 or Jim Taylor 434-8516. Jim Taylor is the new compiler.

Richard Stern gave the dates for the Brier Island Count. December 19, or the 20th if the weather bad on the 19th. Eric Mills will be the compiler. Let him know if

planning to take part. P. C. Smith is in charge of Wolfville--date December 16. Sherman Boates is in charge of Yarmouth and Peter MacLeod for Halifax West.

Richard Stern read a letter received from Charlene Vickers of Englishtown, Cape Breton, who was appealing for help from the Society regarding a Quarry at Cape Dauphinee. Ships will come within five miles of Hereford and Ciboux Islands (Breeding Bird Colonies) to load granite. The Quarry will operate 24 hours a day seven days a week and is situated in prime Bald Eagle habitata. Polluted water brought as ballast will be discharged in the Bay where the birds feed. A list of government departments and ministers were included for those interested in writing to express their concern.

Barbara Hinds reported receiving a letter from a Mr. Penny who has a collection of stuffed birds in which he though we might be interested. It was unclear whether he was giving or selling.

Shirley Cohrs suggested if he donated them to the Scholarship and Trust Fund, they could be passed on to the Museum and he could receive a tax receipt for the value of the birds.

There being no further business it was moved by Joyce Purchase and seconded by John Cohrs that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Phyllis Bryson, Secretary.



Killdeer. Photo by Patrick Wall

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY
(Incorporated 1957)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended September 30, 1989

(With comparative figures for the year ended September 30, 1988)

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS =====	1989	1988
Receipts		
Membership dues	\$8,477.00	\$8,811.50
Sale of publications, etc.	1,614.50	1,465.75
Nova Scotia Museum grant	4,000.00	
Federal government grant	500.00	500.00
Interest - savings account	356.12	294.60
- G.I.C.	188.17	101.23
Donations	7.00	27.20
Mailing list cost recovery	50.00	50.00
Miscellaneous	64.50	123.78
	-----	-----
Total Receipts	15,257.29	11,374.08
	-----	-----
Disbursements		
"Nova Scotia Birds" and Fall Flyer	8,418.88	7,468.66
Editor's expenses	302.90	382.11
Field trip coordinator's expenses	58.45	51.83
Printing and stationery	928.62	1,400.62
Postage	423.73	421.04
Typing		100.00
Monthly meeting expenses	62.80	35.66
A.G.M. expenses	268.13	225.29
Guaranteed investment certificate	(116.60)	459.69
Donation to SSTF for life member	330.77	
Subscriptions	111.33	95.37
Bank charges	11.33	72.32
Telephone answering machine	208.99	
Computer repairs		56.65
Miscellaneous	47.59	153.80
	-----	-----
Total Disbursements	11,056.92	10,923.04
	-----	-----
Excess of receipts over disbursements	4,200.37	451.04
Opening bank balance	5,950.10	5,499.06
	-----	-----
Closing bank balance	\$10,150.47	\$5,950.10
	=====	=====

BALANCE SHEET

=====

Assets

Electric typewriter (cost \$296.45)	\$1.00	\$1.00
Steel filing cabinet (cost \$99.96)	1.00	1.00
Steel filing cabinet (cost \$98.99)	11.00	16.00
Computer and printer (cost \$1,572.77)	377.00	539.00
Guaranteed investment certificate	3,307.74	3,424.34
Bank balance	10,150.47	5,950.10
	-----	-----
Total assets and members' equity	\$13,848.21	\$9,931.44
	=====	=====

STATEMENT OF MEMBERS' EQUITY

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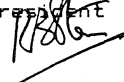
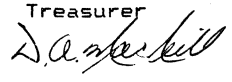
Opening balance	\$9,931.44	\$9,258.71
Excess of receipts over disbursements	4,200.37	451.04
G.I.C. purchases	(116.60)	459.69
Less: depreciation	(167.00)	(238.00)
	-----	-----
Closing balance	\$13,848.21	\$9,931.44
	=====	=====

Audited and found correct
according to the books

J. Morrow
Auditor

R. Stern
President

D. MacNeill
Treasurer


N. S. BIRD SOCIETY SANCTUARY AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUNDFinancial Statements
to Sept. 30, 1989

(With comparison for the 12 months ended Sept. 30, 1988)

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements

	1989	1988
Receipts		
Contributions	4,862.89	1,720.91
G.I.C. Interest	1,748.36	2,066.06
Bank Interest	352.20	150.92
Kanigsberg Fund	-	3,000.00
Cash in of G.I.C.	-	3,107.01
Tax Recovery	35.20	-
Total Receipts	6,998.65	10,044.90
Disbursements		
Bank Charges	54.20	81.33
Taxes	452.97	422.27
Raptor Rehab. Project	225.00	709.85
Christmas Count Project	3,000.00	-
Youth Field Trip	220.00	-
Donation for Brier Is.	-	4,000.00
Purchase of G.I.C.	-	3,000.00
File Cabinet	-	65.99
Indian Island Sign	-	431.20
Peter Island Sign	202.76	-
Photo Guild Trophy	41.31	107.80
Bird Video Project	64.66	-
Eider Project	91.94	-
Miscellaneous Expenses	316.28	110.14
Total Disbursements	4,669.12	8,928.58
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements	2,329.53	1,116.32
Opening Bank Balance	3,378.78	2,262.46
Closing Bank Balance	5,708.31	3,378.78

Balance Sheet

Assets

Guaranteed Investment Cert.	18,900.00	18,900.00
Outer, Middle, Little Half and Mossy Bald Islands	1,000.00	1,000.00
Hertford Island	160.00	160.00
Indian Island	12,000.00	12,000.00
North Kemptville Property	1,500.00	1,500.00
Peter Island	20,000.00	20,000.00
Kelsey Property, Port Joli	13,000.00	13,000.00
Bank Balance	5,708.31	3,378.78
Total Assets	72,268.31	69,938.78

Statement of Surplus

Opening Balance	69,938.78	68,929.47
Excess of receipts over Dis.	2,329.53	1,115.32
Less reduction of G.I.C.	-	-107.01
Closing Balance	72,268.31	69,938.78

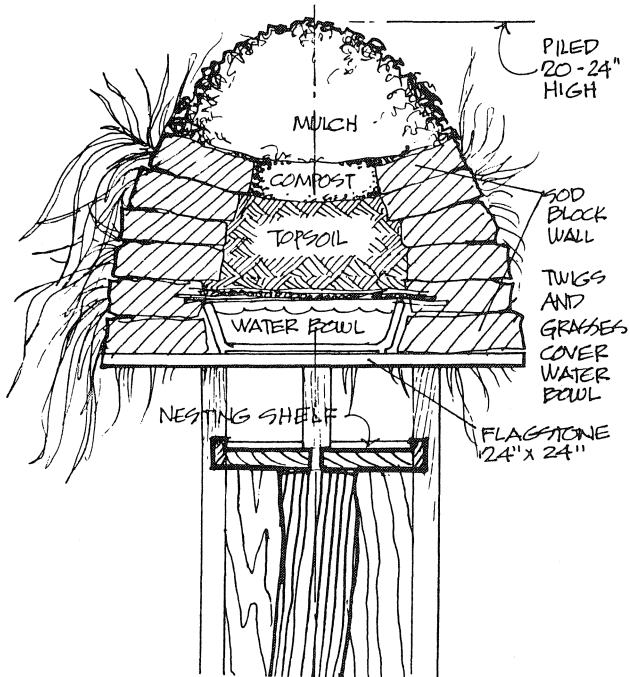


Illustration of an unusual "nest box"
 from
Classic Architectural Birdhouses
 reviewed on page 43

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