

Nova Scotia Birds

A Quarterly Publication of the Nova Scotia Bird Society



Summer 2003
(The Birds of Spring)



NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

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

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Reporting Deadlines

Winter 2004 issue: Dec. 7, 2003
Spring 2004 issue: Mar. 7, 2004

Summer 2004 issue: June 7, 2004
Fall 2003 issue: Aug. 7, 2003

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- North American Migration Counts
- Spring Seasonal Reports
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Cover Photo: [This GREAT BLUE HERON photo was an entry in the 1994 NSBS/PGNS Slide Competition. [Photo Dale Wilson]

NOVA SCOTIA BIRDS

SUMMER 2003

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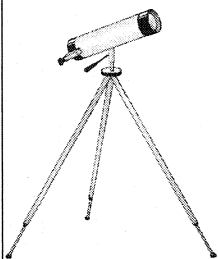
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Cost of the publication of this periodical is partially borne by the Nova Scotia Museum.

ISSN 0383-9537. Publications Mail Reg. No. 09838.

Published four times a year.

The Spotting Scope



I was not pleased when Randy Lauff announced he wished to step down as editor of "Nova Scotia Birds," and I, along with many of you, waited to learn who would be foolish enough to attempt to meet the quality he achieved. I finally agreed to undertake the risky assignment, but I forewarned the Society's executive that there would be a delay during the editorial switch, as I would be away for much of the period between May and September.

And so, this issue is late, very late, and was made even more so by the arrival of Hurricane Juan, which kept me off-line for two weeks, a stretch of time that is nearly purgatorial to one addicted to the wired world.

But here is the Summer Issue at last, and I've done it as Randy would have, except for the tardiness. I'm not contemplating changes at this time, as none seem needed, such was the thoroughness of Randy's editorial hand. This issue does mark the first report by the Atlantic Bird Observatory, and I hope that this increasingly important organisation will be able to provide twice-annual reports on their spring and autumn operations on Bon Portage and Seal Islands.

My thanks to Randy for his fine and dedicated work these past years, taking "Nova Scotia Birds" to a higher plane of existence, and making the ride worthwhile. Fortunately, he won't disappear entirely from these pages, as he's agreed to continue to coordinate book and product reviews.

A final reminder, with winter approaching you should put the following web address in your internet address book, so that you may keep track of winter birds and Christmas Bird Counts: <http://www3.ns.sympatico.ca/maybank/other/nswinter.htm>.



Slabs of thick winter ice still lay on the salt marsh at Chezzetcook Inlet, Hfx. Co, during early April, but enough marsh grass was exposed to attract grazing geese. [Photo Ian McLaren]

Nova Scotia Bird Society Annual General Meeting

Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, Summer St., Halifax
Thursday, 23 Oct 2003 at 7:30 p.m.

As usual, the AGM will include annual reports and the election of the Executive for 2004. The meeting will be followed by a wine and cheese reception, a great opportunity to meet and mingle.

Report of the Nominating Committee

By Gisele d'Entremont - Chair

The following have agreed to serve on the Executive for 2003-2004, if elected at the NSBS Annual General Meeting on Thursday, October 23, 2003:

President	Andy Horn
Vice President	Suzanne Borkowski
Past President	Gisele d'Entremont
Treasurer	Bernice Moores
Secretary	Jennifer Gerrits
Membership Secretary	Eileen and Bill Billington
Director	Joan Czapalay
Director	Barbara Hinds
Director	Libby Dean

The following have agreed to serve for 2003-2004, if appointed at the NSBS AGM :

Honorary Solicitor	Tony Robinson
Honorary Auditor	Harold Forsyth

The Editor in Chief of Nova Scotia Birds (appointed by the Executive) is a de facto member of the Executive.

Further nominations from the floor will be accepted at the AGM.



This spring, BROWN THRASHERS returned, apparently to nest again, on The Hawk, CSI, where one was photographed on its favourite lawn. [Photo Richard Stern]

Atlantic Bird Observatory Spring 2003 Summary.

By Trina Fitzgerald and Michael Peckford

Overall the 2003 spring season was comparatively slower than previous years. Our first notable arrival of migrants occurred on May 19 approximately one week later than normal, perhaps due to unusually cold and wet weather during early spring, or that movement occurring before the station opened. Peak movements occurred during the first period of warm days and clear nights (Figure 1), which probably contributed to our low banding totals because most migrants likely took advantage of the nice weather and did not stop on Bon Portage Island.

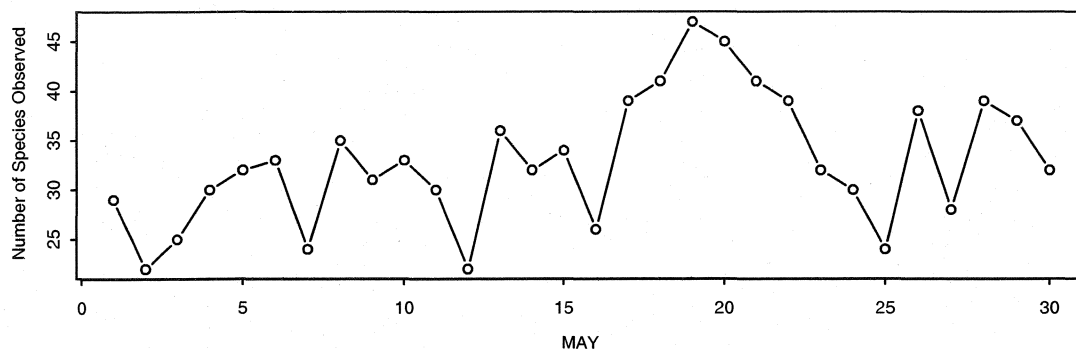


Figure 1

Through a combination of banding, standardized census, and casual observations, 82 species (including subspecies and hybrids) were observed at the Atlantic Bird Observatory (ABO) (Table 1). Overall, 184 individuals comprising 38 species (46.3% of total species observed) were banded during the spring season (Table 1), 174 individuals and 11 fewer species than banded in spring 2002. The top ten species banded during the spring season are listed in Table 2.

A total of 57 birds of 17 species were recaptured (i.e., these are birds previously banded), 66.6% of which were banded in previous years. The oldest recapture this spring was a female Yellow Warbler that hatched during the summer of 1995.

There were very few notable vagrants or rarities this spring, and all occurred during the first week of May: two Hooded Warblers (*Wilsonia citrina*) (one of which was banded); one Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*), which remained on the island for several days; one female Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*); and one Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*).

For more details concerning observations and bandings we invite you to visit our web site: <http://landscape.acadiau.ca/abo/>

Table 1: Summary of Results for ABO's Spring 2003 banding season. Total number of species and individuals detected though banding, census and casual observations.

Spring	Bon Portage
Period of Operation	May 1 - May 31
Birds (individuals) banded	184
Birds (individuals) re-trapped	57
Species banded	38
Species re-trapped	17
Species censused	61
Species casually observed	70
Seasonal Species Total	82

Table 2. Top ten species banded on Bon Portage Island during Spring 2003.

Species	Total # Banded
Yellow Warbler	23
Blackpoll Warbler	17
Magnolia Warbler	16
White-throated Sparrow	12
Gray Catbird	12
Black-and-white Warbler	9
Northern Parula	8
Myrtle Warbler	8
American Redstart	8
Common Yellowthroat	7

Spring Weather 2003

By Larry Bogan

The winter of 2002-3 had a continuous snow cover right into spring, which set the stage for the weather experienced in March and April. The highlights of the spring season were:

- (1) a large amount of snow on the ground through most of March;
- (2) flooding due to heavy rains and melting snow at the end of March;
- (3) over-all cooler than normal spring delaying the growing season by weeks; and
- (4) an unusually cloudy May.

Table of Monthly Weather Statistics from Atlantic Food and Horticulture Research Centre, Kentville, NS

Month	Mean Temp (C)	Precipitation Snow (cm)	Total (mm)	Bright Sunshine Hours
March (42 yr avg)	-1.9 (-0.9)	17 (46)	136 (108)	141 (133)
April (42 yr avg)	3.8 (4.5)	7 (14)	57 (82)	196 (151)
May (42 yr avg) [5 yr avg]	10.1 (10.6) [12.1]	0 (2) [0]	58 (79) [67]	137 (204) [233]
Season (42 yr avg)	4.0 (4.7)	24 (60)	251 (269)	474 (488)

Temperature

The whole spring season was 0.7° C cooler than the 42 year average, with March being a full 1° C cooler than expected. We may remember May as a cool month but it was only ½° C below average unless you compare it with the May's that we have had in the last five years. May 2003 was 2° C cooler than the last five Mays because we have been having warmer than normal weather lately. I have included the average monthly statistics for last five years for the month of May to show you how different the recent weather has been.

The graph of daily temperatures for the season shows the rapidly rising temperature throughout March, with a sudden drop of 15° C after the heavy rainfalls at the end of March. After that the temperature was up and down with the passing weather systems. The warmest period of the season occurred during the one sunny week we had in May.

Precipitation

As I mentioned in my winter weather report, the continued snow cover was due to cooler than average temperatures, not higher snowfall rates. That was also true for most of March. Although the deep snows stayed until late in the month, the month had below average snowfall. The total precipitation for March was large but that was due entirely to the large rainfall of 70 mm on the 30th and 31st. This occurred at the end of a warming spell that was melting the snow. One week earlier there had been a fall of 13 cm of snow raising the snow depth to 63 cm. The combination of the melting and rain caused the extensive flooding in the Valley area. On April 1 all the snow was gone.

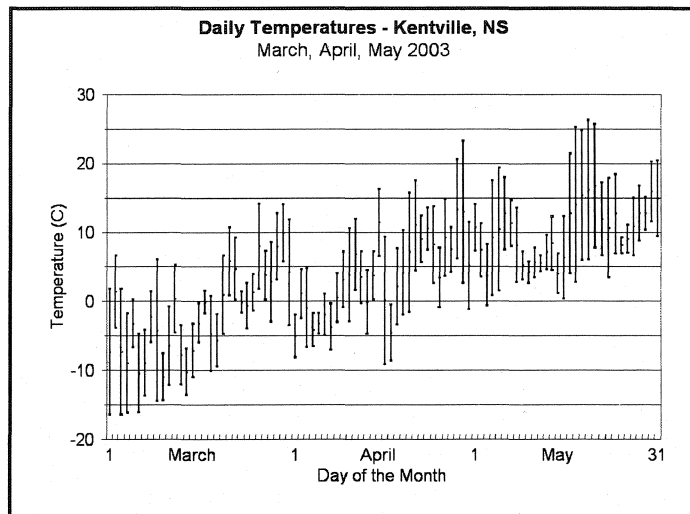
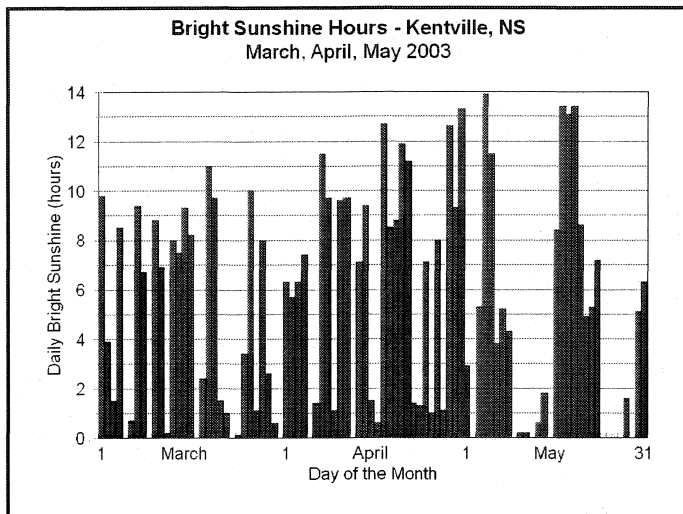
The season as a whole had nearly average precipitation because April and May saw only 70% of the normal long-term rainfall.

Sunshine

The most unusual aspect of May was not so much its slightly lower temperatures and rainfall, but the large amount of cloudiness. Comparing 2003 with the last five years, this May had less than 60% of the bright sunshine we've come to expect recently. I have included a chart of the bright sunshine hours for the spring and it shows the ups and downs that we've had in

sunshine. During the whole season the only full sunny week occurred in May during and after the Victoria Day holiday. The rest of the season was characterized by a day or two of sunshine then two or more days of cloudy weather. During this time the jet stream sat over Nova Scotia and channelled weather systems rapidly through our area producing very unsettled conditions.

March and especially April were sunnier than the long term averages and contrary to May, these months have been slightly cloudier over the last five years. ☒



Seasonal Reports

Loons through Grebes

By Jim Wolford

Please bear with me as another new editor gets "broken in," and thanks to Fred Dobson for doing such a great, detailed job on the loons, grebes, and waterfowl for such a long time.

There were only two April reports of RED-THROATED LOONS, of two each, off Pembroke (PRG) and Martinique Beach; the latter were BLM's "only sighting this spring." Twenty were off Brier Is. May 17-19 (FLL *et al.*). The NAMC May 10 had 13 (five of each in Anna. and Col. Counties).

COMMON LOONS were reported in their winter habitats along most coasts in March. Two sets of reports related freshwater sightings to the availability of ice-free rivers and lakes: Susann Myers at Mira

Gut had increasing numbers, to 22 on Apr 13, but then none Apr 25 (they had moved inland); and Patricia Chalmers heard one along Mooseland Road, HRM, late at night on Apr 18 (lakes still partly frozen then). PLC also reported three in transitional plumage off Point Pleasant Park on Apr 15. A single in winter plumage in the Habitant River in Canning Apr 7-10 was unusual (MAG, JCT). The NAMC had a near-record total of 305 (max. 321 in 2001); 69 were in C.B. Co., 39 and 40 in HRM and Lun. Co.

PIED-BILLED GREBES, besides showing a relatively low total of 18 on the NAMC (max. 54 in 2001), were reported in only two areas: one was in Frog Pond, HRM, for a few days starting Apr 21 (JEH,

PLC); and four were seen/heard at Goose Creek Marsh (ne. of Barrington) Apr 22 (PRG). Blake Maybank says four HORNED GREBES at Martinique Beach on Apr 26 were his latest sightings this spring. The NAMC had 11 of this species, all in C.B. County (the NAMC max. was 21 in 1999). Only five RED-NECKED GREBES were seen on NAMC (max. 13 in 1997 & 1998). Besides that, reports came only from Conrad's Beach (one) (PLC), Ferguson's Cove (4-5 birds) (PLC, JEH), and Lower Prospect (1)(BLM) in March, and one at Short Beach (n. of Yarmouth) on Apr 19 (PRG). ☒

Herons Through Vultures

By Ulli Höger



A handsome adult LITTLE BLUE HERON that frequented CSI last spring was photographed May 11. [Photo Elizabeth Doull]

This spring there were no shortage of AM. BITTERN reports. Two were reported April 19 from Dominion Beach, CB Co. (LEL) and a pair showed Apr. 20 in Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. (BBA). Further April reports were CSI Apr. 26 (MUN), APBS Apr. 27 (TEP), and a field trip to Kejimikujik N.P. Apr. 26 (NSN). On April 22 one was "singing" in Pembroke, Yar. Co. (PRG). In May MUN found three in Yarmouth on the third, and DAM, while golfing in Truro, May 20, noticed two watching him searching the rough. There were 21 on the NAMC. On May 31 a rare **LEAST BITTERN** was reported from Lower Clark's Harbour, CSI (*fide* MUN), but it didn't linger.

Few GREAT BLUE HERON overwintered in NS. KJM reported a bird returning to Big I., Pict. Co., Mar. 31. In April sightings of the big birds became more frequent, even though many of the lakes and ponds were still frozen. By the end of April, Great Blue Herons were again a common sight in the province. The NAMC total for this species was 341.

A GREAT EGRET was found May 4 by MUN at Port Latour, Yar. Co., and John Kearney was fortunate to find one May 7 at Captains Pond, Ant. Co.. A third observation came from Apple R., Cum. Co., May 23 (Harris Nuttall *fide* KFS). A SNOWY EGRET was spotted May 17 by RSD on Mud I., Yar. Co.. In early May at least one ad. LITTLE BLUE HERON was seen on CSI; JON found it May 6, and GRM noted what was likely the same bird May 12. The NAMC lists three individuals for this year, with observations from CSI (MUN *et al.*), Sydney R., CB Co. (Judy and Roger Mercer), and Inv. Co. by Frances Hart's group.

One of the highlights in metro Halifax this spring was a CATTLE EGRET in Point Pleasant Park, HRM. After JEH first reported it Apr. 14, many birders had close up views of the bird in full breeding plumage until Apr. 20. A Cattle Egret was also seen on Brier I., May 24 (Robbie Denton), and it

stayed around for three or four days (*fide* JUS).

Reports of BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS came frequently from CSI, and Donna Morrison found one Mar. 15 in Yarmouth. MUN reported one Apr. 17, and in May, sightings became more frequent in the CSI breeding area. For the NAMC the total was seven. On May 25 an odd looking, moulting YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON on CSI was reported by MUN. A GLOSSY IBIS visited Jones Harbour, Shel. Co., in mid-April (*fide* MUN).

TURKEY VULTURES are resident in the Brier I. area; this spring. FLL *et al.* counted more than 20 there during May 17-19. Reports of spring TVs came from other areas as well; RBS reported one from Digby, Apr. 25, and MUN sighted one in Yarmouth, May 3. The total number of seven for the province during the NAMC seems low given the frequent sightings in spring. ☿



A CATTLE EGRET lingering in mid-April on the Northwest arm shore of Point Pleasant Park, Halifax, was enjoyed by both birders and non-birders. It was nicely photo-documented by a visiting Ontario birder.

Tubenoses Through Cormorants

By Blake Maybank

Perhaps due to the late spring, but more likely a result of limited observer coverage, there were but two reports of tubenoses this spring, a GREATER SHEARWATER off Seal Island May 31 (RSD), and a SOOTY SHEARWATER off Victoria County on the NAMC. Several observers noted the arrival of NORTHERN GANNETS; SEM counted a modest passage past Louisbourg of 15 every five minutes March 28, followed by a more impressive count of 100 every five minutes April 20. More than 3700 were noted on the NAMC, with an impressive

1500 off Kings County (likely immatures?), 1000+ off HRM, and 250+ off Queens. Thereafter most sightings came from the Bay of Fundy, of non-breeding birds. The harsh winter might have made life difficult for overwintering DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS, but it made it easier to determine the timing of spring arrivals. SEM saw the first few in Cape Breton County April 25, while twenty-one arrived in the Apple River area May 10 (KFS). They were earlier further south, with PLC seeing her first in Halifax Harbour April 15, while JET &

JCT had their first in Kings County April 9. BLM had a mixed flock of 15 Double-crested with 20 Greats flying north past Martinique Beach April 26, and DMW described a "big return" of Double-crested in HRM May 1. A large group of 41 at the Windsor Causeway (50% immatures) was an impressive count for that shoreline (JCT), and these might be birds that breed at Cape Split. GREAT CORMORANTS arrived back at their Crystal Cliffs colony north of Ogdén's Pond March 30 (RFL). ☞

Geese, Swans and Ducks

By Jim Wolford

A single SNOW GOOSE was with Canada Geese along the river at Canning on Apr 18 (JCT). The largest migrant flocks of CANADA GEESE were 1400-1500 Mar 25 and 2000 Apr 7 from the Canard Valley to Canning (MAG, JCT). The next biggest groups were 850 at Morien Bar and 120 at Glace Bay Apr 13 (60 were still at Glace Bay Apr 25)(SEM). Other migrant flocks in March and April were at Advocate (100) and Apple River (100)(KFS), Conrad's Beach (100 & 112)(PLC, DMW), Middleton (60) (SLH), Boot Lake, Anna. Co. (40+) (MCN), and Pinckney's Point (30)(PRG, RSD). The NAMC had 791 Canada Geese, a record high; the previous max. was 654 in 2001.

A late winter report of CANADA GEESE on Mar 1 by Ruth Smith reminds us of the unusual build-up of shore ice along the Atlantic shores. Seventy of the geese were in the inner harbour at Port Mouton, rather than at their usual location at Port Joli, which was frozen. There were also media reports of numbers of starving geese near Port L'Hebert, where ice was preventing them from getting eelgrass (JWW). Nesting CANADA GEESE were reported as follows: at Ste.-Anne-du-Ruisseau, a family left the nest in

mid-May, and had six goslings (two other families seen Jun 4 at Chegoggin Dyke and Pembroke, of four and five goslings, respectively)(PRG); a nest was flooded at Saxon St. Pond, King's Co., between Apr 18 and May 10 (JCT, JWW); other pairs may have nested in King's Co. at Hennigar's Marsh (Sheffield Mills), Harris' Pond in Canning (tame pair?), and Palmetter's Woods ponds (Kentville). (Later it was learned that the area of Hennigar's Marsh eventually had three broods, *fide* Mike Brylinsky.)

The following numbers of BRANT at The Hawk, Cape Sable Island (CSI), came from Grant Milroy and Johnny Nickerson: 400 Mar 1, 8500 Mar 10, 2500 Mar 11, 2000 Apr 20, and 250 May 22. The NAMC had 270 Brant (compared to the max. of 961 in 1999); 250 were off Brier Is. and only 20 in Shel. Co. A male WOOD DUCK was still at Sullivan's Pond Mar 1 (PLC). Mingo Beck Lake, near Bell Neck (Yar. Co.), had one Apr 6 (PRG, RSD), and Fraser's Marsh, Antig. Co., had a male Apr 10 (RFL). At least one was at Morash Pond, Dartmouth, Apr 18-20 (RHL). Two were at Bridgetown Apr 24 (Bliss Fritz Randolph, Bill O'Neill), one at Margaretsville Apr 29 (SLH), and two at Palmetter's Woods (Kentville)

May 4 (JCT). Sydney Harbour had one May 12 (SEM). The NAMC had 38 (max. 61 in 2002), with 10 in C.B. Co. Bernard Forsythe reports a clutch of 12 Wood Duck eggs in a nest-box at Black River Lake May 19.

Besides the NAMC's seven GADWALLS, all in Cumb. Co., there were only three other reports: Apr 26 at Lawrencetown, HRM (RHL); and May 17 at Flat and Mud Islands (RSD) and Brier Is. (FLL et al.). A male AMERICAN WIGEON was still present at Sullivan's Pond Mar 1 (PLC). Up to six were at Conrad's Beach/Marsh Mar 22 to early Apr (PLC, RHL, DMW), and a pair there May 21 and 31 may have been nesting (DMW). Small numbers were in Canard Valley and at Canning Apr 8 and Apr 26 (JCT). The NAMC had a near-record high total of 95, of which 44 were in Cumb. Co. (10 at Apple River (KFS)). On May 11, three were at Glace Bay (SEM).

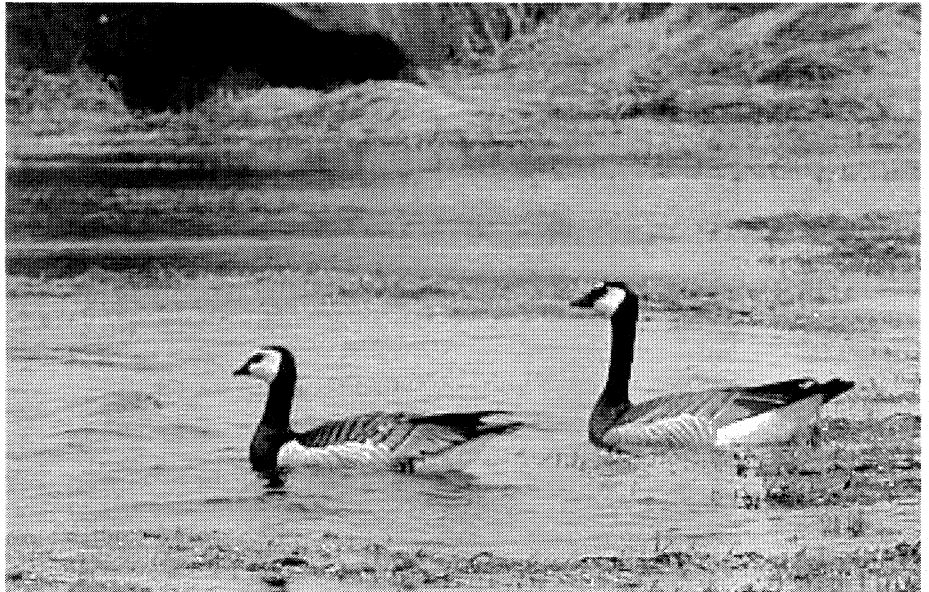
The largest number of AMERICAN BLACK DUCKS reported were 36 Mar 9 at Pinckney's Point (PRG, RSD), 70 Mar 9 & 16 at Albert Bridge, Mira River (SEM), 160 Mar 9 at Glace Bay (SEM), 150 Apr 13 at Morien Bar (SEM), 298 Apr 25 at Morien Bar, and 100 May 4 at Morien Bar (SEM). On

Mar 25 the lower Canard River had a stretch of open water that attracted several kinds of ducks, including 24 Blacks, plus Canada Geese for several days (JCT). Patricia Chalmers had two interesting reports of nesting Blacks: a pair at Long Pond behind Bedford (where they nest every year) on Apr 20, less than a week after ice left the pond; and two broods (of one and four, resp.) May 30 at Frog Pond, Fleming Park, Jollimore, HRM. The NAMC total was 1830 Black Ducks (max. was 2671 in 2000), 418 in HRM.

The only MALLARD X AM. BLACK DUCK "HYBRIDS" reported were four and one, on Mar 9 and 22, at Glace Bay and Albert Bridge, C.B.Co., resp. (SEM). The NAMC had a slight record of 71 (vs. 70 in 2000), with 35 and 20 in Yar. and Colch. Counties, resp.. MALLARD total numbers on the NAMCs show a steady, relentless increase from 32 in 1993, up to 329 through 1997, to a record of 721 in 2001. The 2003 NAMC total was 653, with 145 in Lun. Co. and 108-109 in C. B. and King's Counties. On Mar 9 there were two and 18 Mallards at Albert Bridge and Glace Bay, resp. (SEM). Other Mallard reports came from various locales in HRM in Mar through May, and Mar 25 in the Canard Valley. Only three reports of BLUE-WINGED TEAL came in, of two at Melbourne, Yar. Co., Apr 6 (PRG,RSD), two at Goose Creek Marsh, Shel. Co., Apr 19 (PRG), and one in Canning May 12 (JCT). The NAMC had 83 (max. total was 103 in 2001); 34 of the 83 were in Anna. Co..

NORTHERN SHOVELERS were reported just twice: a male Apr 26 in Canard Pond (JCT), and a pair Apr 29 at Pembroke, Yar. Co. (PRG). The NAMC had 12 (down from the 32 and 30 in 2001 and 2002); five were in Cumb. Co..

NORTHERN PINTAILS had 8 reports. A drake was at Pleasant Lake, Yar. Co., Mar 7 & 16 (PRG,RSD). Late March's open water held three at Belcher's Pond, Clayton Park West, HRM (PLC) and 16 in Canard River (JCT); three were still in Canard River Apr 8 (among 250+ other ducks there including Blacks,



This pair, one evidently a BARNACLE GOOSE and the other a hybrid with a Canada Goose (note, e.g., its white forehead), were photographed in July last year on a small island off Bear Pt., Shel. Co.. Apparently they tried unsuccessfully to raise a family. This curious arrangement may have begun in autumn 1990, when an apparently "wild" family of Barnacle Geese arrived on CSI and took up residence in a local waterfowl collection. They later flew to Cape Cod, stirring up much interest among birders. It later turned out that the adults had been released from a waterfowl collection on Grand Manan Island and, having nested there, decided to wander. They later returned from Cape Cod to CSI, and it time produced a number of hybrids with other geese in the local collection. This sort of thing makes ticking a "real" Barnacle Goose in North America even chancier. [Photo Grant Milroy]

Mallards, Am. Wigeon, and Green-winged Teal)(JCT). Susann Myers saw two at Glace Bay Apr 13 and four at Fuller's Bridge, Rich. Co., Apr 20. A pair was at Pinckney's Point, Yar. Co., Apr 27 (PRG,RSD). The NAMC had only 3 Pintails (max. was 36 in 2001).

The earliest sightings of GREEN-WINGED TEAL were, predictably, in the "Banana Belt" of Yarmouth County, on Mar 23 and 30, of two and one, resp., at Pinckney's Pt. and Abrams River (PRG, RSD). Then on Apr 8-9 there were 12 and five in Canard River and at Canning, resp. (JCT, JET). By mid-Apr, 11 were at Homeville marsh, C.B. Co. (SEM), and 30+ at Apple River, Cumb. Co. (KFS). Susann Myers saw 27 at Fuller's Bridge Apr 20 and another 27 May 4 at Homeville marsh. Other reports came from Cape North (FMC), Avonport (JCT), Cole Harbour (RHL, Rob Woods), Lawrencetown, HRM (RHL), Antigonish Landing (RFL), etc. The NAMC had 219, 59 in Lun. Co. -- the NAMC max. total was 465 in 2000.

Sightings of RING-NECKED DUCKS began Apr 3 at Lake Micmac, HRM

(RHL), followed closely by three on Apr 7 at Frog Pond, HRM (PLC) and eight on Apr 9 at Pembroke, Yar. Co. (PRG). As usual for Ring-necks and some other diving ducks, when the sexes were recorded, males greatly outnumbered females through Apr and May: of a total of 69 differentiated Ring-necks, 54 were males and 15 were females or immatures. Two mid-Apr reports had 12 males and two females at Frog Pond (PLC) and 13 males and one female at Pembroke, Yar. Co. (PRG). Other sightings were at Apple River, Three Fathom Harbour Pond, Red Bridge Pond and Russell Lake and Rocky Run (in HRM), Quinan (Yar. Co.), Goose Creek Marsh (Shel. Co.), and Paquets Lake in Cape Breton Highlands Nat. Park. The latter, of a single male on May 17, was the only report from Cape Breton (RFL). The NAMC had a near-record 676, with 158 in Cumb. Co. (the NAMC max. was 710 in 2001).

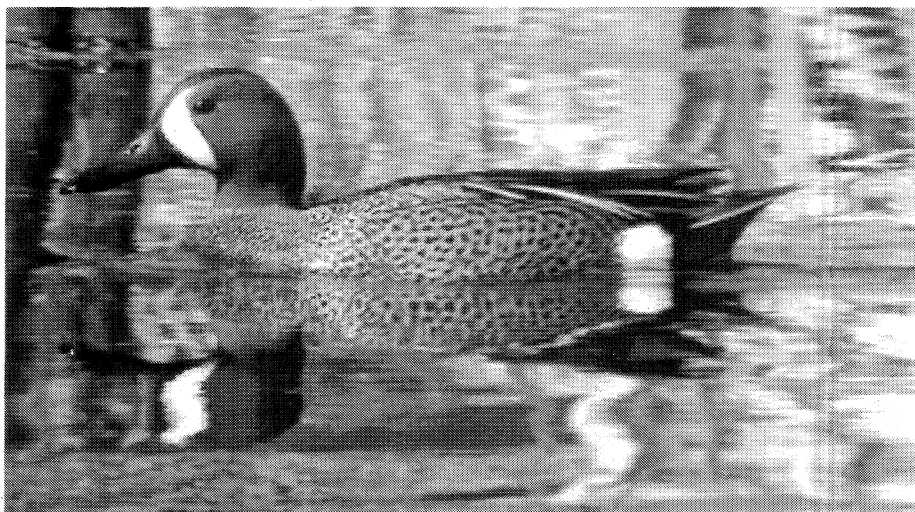
Reports of overwintering GREATER SCAUP from March through Apr 22 came from Pembroke (up to 12)(PRG), Cumberland Co. (50)(FLL, Richard

Hatch), Eastern Passage (30+)(RHL, PLC), Northwest Arm in HRM (20) (PLC), Albert's Bridge in Cape Breton Co. (40 on Apr 13)(SEM), and Glace Bay (360 on Mar 9)(SEM). No reports came in for May, but the NAMC had 176, of which 163 were in Cumb. Co. (NAMC max. was 398 in 2000).

LESSER SCAUPS were reported only for Apr 10, when four were seen at Northport (with 50 Greater) and 20 at Amherst Point, both locales in Cumb. Co. (FLL and Richard Hatch). The NAMC recorded 26 seen, all in Antigonish Co. (the NAMC previous max. was 13 in 2000). I have to be a bit skeptical about 26 having been seen together, but I have very little experience in areas where winter scaups are abundant; I just know that identification is often difficult, even at close range.

A single KING EIDER was reported, by FLL *et al.*, from Mar 1, an immature male, "*brown and black with square head and small bill with orange knob and tip.*" Susann Myers saw the following build-up of COMMON EIDER numbers at Louisbourg: 109 Mar 2, 260 Mar 8 (about 15 were adult males), 500 Mar 16, and 1700 Mar 22-23 (one-third adult males). The only number larger than 30 reported for HRM was 300-400 at Sheehan Cove, s. of Herring Cove (PLC, JEH); small numbers from early Mar to May 17 were at Conrad Beach, Cole Hbr., Terminal Beach, Sellar's Head (Seaforth), Eastern Passage, Cow Bay, and Point Pleasant Park. Margaretsville on the Fundy shore had 60+ Apr 29 (SLH), and 4 were at West Advocate May 10 (KFS). Pembroke had 150 May 20 (PRG). The NAMC had 3254, of which 999 were in Guys. Co. and 1146 in Shel. Co. (the NAMC max. was 4611 in 2000, and numbers suddenly enlarged after 1997). For HARLEQUIN DUCKS I have only two reports, both from Port George on the Fundy shore: Don and Elaine Hendricks saw five pairs on Apr 18; and Pat and Barb Giffin found five males May 5.

Blake Maybank sent in the only two reports of BLACK SCOTERS: 15 off Baccaro Point Mar 1, and six off



Male BLUE-WINGED TEALS, like this one photographed near Canning in May, are among the most handsome ducks in breeding plumage. [Photo Richard Stern]

Martinique Beach Apr 26 (along with 40 SURF SCOTERS and 30 WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS) -- these were his latest spring sightings of all three scoter species. The NAMC had a low total of 106 Black Scoters, of which 53 were in Shel. Co. (NAMC max. was a huge 1750 in 2000). Susann Myers sent six reports of four to 60 SURF SCOTERS from three locales of C.B. Co.; the 60 were at Morien Bay Apr 25. Other sightings had three at Chegoggin Point near Yarmouth Apr 19 (PRG) and 10+ off West Advocate May 10 (KFS). The NAMC had 1065, of which 520, 260, and 111 were in Pictou, Lun., and Anna. Counties, resp. (the NAMC max. was the huge 17,094! in 1996).

Two pairs of WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS were off Tribune Head Mar 8 (PLC, JEH). As for Surf Scoters, Susann Myers sent six reports of White-wings from Mar 1 to May 11; there were 340 at Main-a-Dieu Mar 16, 400 at Mira Bay Apr 25, and 1900 at Morien Bay Apr 25; SEM's sightings of White-wings were accompanied by four to 60 Surf Scoters. The NAMC had 729 White-winged Scoters, of which 562 were in C.B. Co., but Susann saw 900 of these at Morien Bay on the next day, May 11. The NAMC's max. total was 1760 in 2001.

Susann Myers counted 41 LONG-TAILED DUCKS from Louisbourg to Mira Bay Mar 16. On Mar 22, well inland along Mira River at Salmon River Road, Susann heard at least one

flying over, after dark. Other March reports, of small numbers up to six, were from Herring Cove Lookoff, Tribune Head (PLC, JEH), and Cow Bay (RHL). In mid-Apr four were at Pinckney's Pt. (PRG, RSD), and 15 were off Martinique Beach Apr 26 (BLM). Mira Bay still had 15 on Apr 25, and only two on May 17 (SEM). The NAMC had only 10, eight of them in Pict. Co. (the NAMC max. was 43 in 1997).

Reports of BUFFLEHEADS in March came from near Yarmouth (8)(PRG), Conrad's Beach (3)(PLC, RHL, DMW), and several coastal locations in Cape Breton County (up to 14 in Glace Bay Hbr.)(SEM). Through April there were up to 17 near Yarmouth (PRG), a single male in the Habitant River at Canning after the ice left at the end of March (MAG, JCT, JET), a male at Apple River (KFS), and two at Three Fathom Hbr. (BLM). May reports had eight at Pleasant Lake, Yar. Co. (PRG), 11 in Tower Rd. Settling Pond, C.B. Co. (SEM), and 139 on the NAMC (81 in C. B. Co., 43 in Anna. Co.)(the NAMC max. was 312 in 1999). SEM saw 45 COMMON GOLDENEYES Mar 16 from Louisbourg to Mira Bay; 26 of those were in Louisbourg Hbr. with several displaying males. Other March sightings were at Pinckney's Pt., Conrad's Beach, Lawrencetown River, Bedford Basin, and Rocky Run (PRG, PLC, RHL, DMW). On Apr 5 SEM found 75 in a limited area of open water

at Nyanza, Bras d'Or Lake (w. of Baddeck). On Apr 25 there were 36 + 60 at Morien Bar and Glace Bay, and 20 were still at Morien Bar May 11 (SEM). Randy Lauff found at least three on Paquets Lake in C.B. Highlands Nat. Park May 17.

Fulton Lavender and Richard Hatch found 150 Common Goldeneyes and 7 BARROW'S GOLDENEYES (2 males, 5 females) at Northport on the Cumb. Co. Northumberland shore on Apr 10. The NAMC had 55 Common Goldeneyes (21 in Vict. Co. + 14 in C. B. Co.); the NAMC max. was 121 in 2000.

Not many HOODED MERGANSERS were reported: 15 east of Yarmouth Mar 9 (PRG, RSD); a m/f pair at the Salmon River, Westphal, HRM on Mar 22 (PLC); and single males in the river at Canning Apr 7 (MAG, JCT) and at Margaretsville Apr 29 (SLH). But Bernard Forsythe provided the following details from his nest-box at Mud Lake Bog near Black River Lake, King's Co.: 11 eggs (incomplete clutch) on Apr 26; female with 16 eggs May 10; ducklings audible inside hatching eggs May 31; and one remaining infertile egg June 1. The NAMC had 28

Hoodies, including 12 in Pictou Co. (the NAMC maxima of 33 & 34 occurred in 1998 & 2002).

Four pairs of COMMON MERGANSERS in Lockeport's back harbour surprised DJC; she hadn't seen Commons there before in spring. Other reports in March: coastal locations in Cape Breton Co. (9-15 birds per date) (SEM); 27 (13m, 14f) at Conrad's Beach Mar 1 (PLC) and 51 there (all females or imm. except one male) on Mar 26 (DMW); one male in Salmon River at Westphal, HRM Mar 22 (PLC); 48 at Ogden's Pond, Antig. Co. Mar 30 (RFL); seven east of Yarmouth Mar 9 (PRG, RSD). In April reports came from Bear River (two)(MCN); six near Yarmouth (PRG); Grand Desert (RHL); Canning (up to six birds)(JCT); two at Frog Pond, HRM (unusual there) (PLC); and one at Apple River (KFS). On Apr 20, Bernard Forsythe's nest-box at White Rock Pond, King's Co., held an incomplete set of four eggs, but by May 8 the nest had been robbed, probably by a raccoon.

The only May reports of Common Mergansers were two at Argyle Head May 4 (PRG, RSD) and some at Cole Harbour's salt-marsh trail May 10

(RHL). The NAMC had a respectable N.S. total of 248 (54 in Pict. Co., 52 in Vict. Co., 38 in HRM); the NAMC max. was 263 in 2000. March sightings of RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS included two at Port Mouton (RES); 48 off Cape Breton Co. Mar 9 (SEM); 24 at Conrad Marsh, Lawrencetown, HRM, Mar 26 (DMW); 13 from Ferguson's Cove to Chebucto Head Mar 8 (PLC, JEH); nine at Canso Mar 15 (RFL); and 54 + a few hundreds offshore at Ogden's Pond, Antig. Co., Mar 30 (RFL). Six were at Port Mouton Apr 21 (RES); 40 at Morien Bar Apr 25 (SEM); six were off Point Pleasant Park Apr 14 (PLC); a pair was in the river at Canning Apr 7 (MAG, JCT) and then single males were at Canning, New Minas, and Starr's Point Apr 9 to 26 (JCT). Other April reports came from Conrad's Beach, Rainbow Haven, Three Fathom Hbr., and Eastern Passage (to Apr 22)(RHL). Two Red-breasteds were at Apple River May 10 (KFS); 30 and 10 were at Morien Bar May 11 and 31, resp. (SEM); a male was at Crosby Is., Bedford Basin, May 10 (PLC); a female was at Publicover Lake, Lun. Co., May 31 (PLC); and a pair was at Conrad's Beach May 17 (RHL). The NAMC had 876, of which 611 were in Pictou Co.; the NAMC max. was 1224 in 2000. ▢

Diurnal Raptors, Galliformes, Rail and Cranes

By Ulli Höger

Spring kept us waiting this year. However, the first OSPREYS made it back by mid-April. On Apr. 15 there were simultaneous arrivals from Roberts I., Yar. Co. (PRG) and Mahone Bay, Lun. Co. (JAH). Towards the end of the month sightings and reports became more frequent. In early May Ospreys were again a common sight in the province. The NAMC totalled 144 for the province.

A pair of BALD EAGLES was seen mating Mar. 7 near Canning, Kings Co. (Avril & John Harwood). The first incubating fem. was reported Mar. 13 (JWW) from the nesting site in Greenwich, Kings Co. By Apr. 17 an ad. bird was carrying nesting material at Apple River, Cum. Co. (KFS). Throughout early spring, ad. and subad.

individuals were frequently reported feeding on carrion such as seal and bird carcasses. The participants of the NAMC counted 284 birds.

April was also a month with numerous reports of N. HARRIERS. KFS reported individuals of both sexes from Apple River, Cum. Co. in the first half of the month. It's noteworthy that males were more frequently reported during the spring months than in other periods of the year. PLC and JEH encountered one Mar. 16 in the Belleisle Marsh area, Anna. Co., while PRG reported one Apr. 5 from Argyle Hd., Yar. Co.. Three males were reported from Amherst Pt., Cum. Co., Apr. 10 (FLL and Richard Hatch). For this species the NAMC listed 58.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS were, as usual, frequently visiting feeders. RFL & MZG witnessed the loss of a goldfinch and five Blue Jays from their feeder during the period. FLL *et al.* counted 10 individuals during a May 17-19 field trip on Brier I. TEP provided a good description of A COOPER'S HAWK over Brier Island May 22; the province still lacks either photographic or specimen evidence for this annually-reported (and over-reported) species. On April 19 a male N. GOSHAWK defending its nest struck BLF several times, and he reports that "the females red eyes glared over the nest edge but she sat tight." On May 10 a Blue Jay's alarm note revealed the presence of a goshawk to PLC in the woods behind Bedford. Days later, May 21, the local male swooped on HAT a

couple of times when he got too close to their nesting site in Portuguese Cove, HRM.. The NAMC totalled 38 "Sharpies" and 10 N. Goshawks for NS.

Several BROAD-WING HAWKS were reported in May. One was circling and calling over West Springhill, Anna. Co., May 8 (MCN). During the May 17 - 19 weekend FLL *et al.* counted 12 over Brier I.. Reports for Lun. Co. came from JAH, who spotted single individuals May 20 at Mahone Bay and May 31 at Conquerall Mill. A total of six were counted during this year's NAMC.

RED-TAILED HAWKS are a common sight in NS year-round. On Mar. 16 one was an unusual feeder bird at JWW's feeder in Wolfville, taking a rat in bright daylight. Also in Wolfville birders eagerly await the annual return of the traditional breeding pair to Acadia University. JCT observed a female hanging out at the nesting site above the entrance to University hall for the first time Mar. 25. By Apr. 15 JWW was sure that the "Acadia" Redtails were indeed incubating. The grand total for this year's NAMC for this species was 66.

Two ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were reported Mar. 17 from Belleisle Marsh, Anna. Co. (Mike Russell). BLM observed one April 1 on CSI, and on Apr. 10 FLL and Richard Hatch reported a light phase individual from Amherst Pt., Cum. Co.. There were three on the NAMC.

Several AM. KESTRELS were seen in Cum. Co.. KFS reported them from Advocate and New Salem Apr. 2 and Apple River Apr. 24-25. BLF saw one Apr. 15, in Black River, Kings Co., while on May 15 RHL found one at Browns Lake, Elderbank, HRM. A total of 53 were counted during the NAMC. There was no shortage of MERLIN sightings this spring. In May they were regular visitors at swift roosts in the province. In Middleton on May 18 one was perched on the swift's roosting chimney anticipating the return of the swifts at sunset (Mike Russell). A similar "supper time" situation faced the swifts in Wolfville, not surprising considering there are two suspected breeding Merlin pairs in town (JCT and JET). Other reports came from Spryfield, HRM, May 8, and Brier I.,

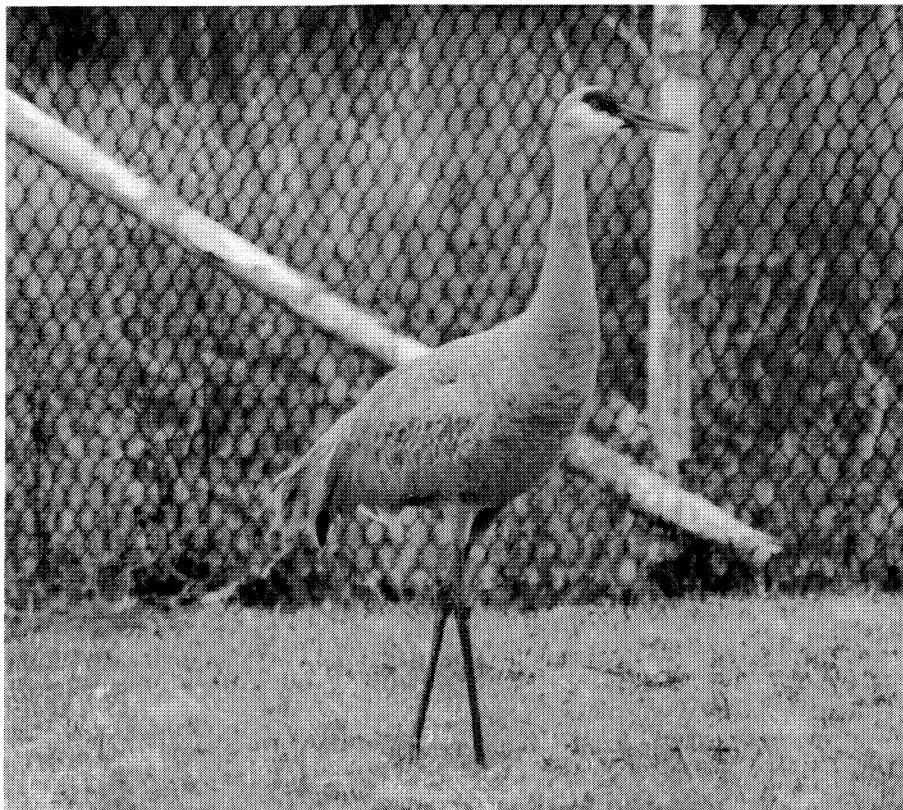
May 17-19 (both FLL). On NAMC day, 30 were seen by the birders out doing the count. FLL reported a PEREGRINE FALCON from Brier I. the May 17-19 weekend. On May 19 three Peregrine Falcons were successfully pack-hunting yellowlegs in John Lusby Marsh at Amherst Pt., Cum. Co. (TEP). The NAMC lists only a single report for this species.

The only report of GRAY PARTRIDGE came via the NAMC, when a single bird was seen in the Truro area (Marilyn McWha). RING-NECKED PHEASANTS were regular visitors throughout spring at SLH's feeder in Williamston, Anna. Co.; he counted up to three males and several females. On April 3 PLC reported up to three from Chebucto Hd., HRM. The 345 counted during the NAMC indicates how common this species really is.

Spring is also the time when our grouse become more noticeable. Reports of RUFFED GROUSE came from Apple River and Joggins, Cum. Co. in Mar. and Apr. (KFS). In the same time period PLC found them in the woods behind Bedford, Mooseland Rd., and Caldwell Rd. in HRM. More reports came from RFL: Fairmont, Ant. Co. (Mar. - Apr.), Bonnet Barrrens, Guys. Co. (May 13), and CBHNP (May 30). A family of SPRUCE GROUSE was seen in East Jordan, Shel. Co., Mar. 12 (JCZ), and KFS reported them from Apple River, Cum. Co., Apr. 10 and May 8. The NAMC totalled 206 Ruffed Grouse and 35 Spruce Grouse, the latter total including one at Ingonish, Vic. Co. (Gord McLean).

The NAMC resulted in the sighting of a VIRGINIA RAIL in Pict. Co. (STV). SORA were heard at Rocky Run, HRM, May 17 (RHL), and May 28 at Amherst Pt., Cum. Co. During the NAMC 11 were counted in the province.

Two SANDHILL CRANES were reported, one in Canso, Guys. Co., May 5-28 (STB), the other at Schooner Pond, C.B. Co., May 25 (JUM). ☞



This striking SANDHILL CRANE spent most of the month of May at Canso, where it was photographed May 15. [Photo Elizabeth Doull]

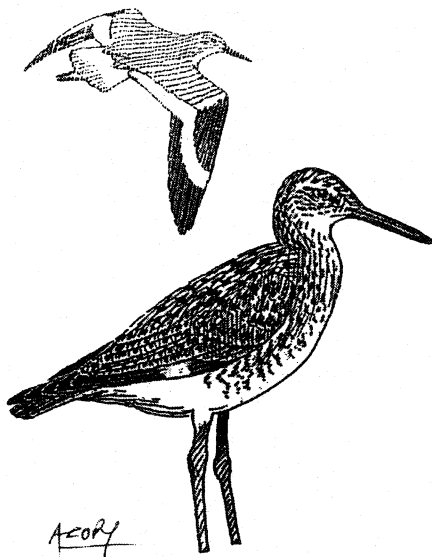
The Shorebirds

By Sylvia Fullerton

Up to 500 shorebirds survived the winter, almost exclusively confined to CSI. Migrants, in respectable numbers, joined this group in early May, but elsewhere birds were scarce. Overall it was a lacklustre season and even observer coverage seemed low, perhaps because the weather offered little encouragement to be afield.

The harsh winter did not deter 50+ BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS from successfully over-wintering on CSI (JON, SAN, BJS, SIS), but there were no survivors at other beaches. The NAMC produced 97, of which 90 were tallied at CSI (JON), probably a mix of hangers-on and newly arrived migrants. The remaining were in HRM (6) and Rich. Co. (1). Mid to late May peaks were unusually low: 12, half in alternate plumage, Cherry Hill Beach, Lun. Co., May 16; a total of seven on Brier I. and Long I., May 17 (FLL *et al.*); one, alt. plumage, Morien Bar, CB Co., May 17. As usual, CSI provided the exception with a build-up of 137 by May 27 (MUN).

A faithful pair of SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS returned not only to The Cape, CSI, but to the same nesting site as in previous years; they were first spotted May 18 (BJS, SIS, MUN). The



first PIPING PLOVERS reported were at Daniels Hd., CSI, Mar. 26, and from then on they were found on their traditional beaches through April and May. DJC has been closely monitoring the progress of a pair (and a third unattached bird) at Lockeport's Crescent Beach, one of which is believed to be the same bird which raised a late chick last season. Also encouraging was the return of our northernmost breeding pair to Cabot Landing, Vic. Co. (FMC, DAA). The full report on Piping Plover activity from Anna McCarron, Co-ordinator of the NS Piping Plover Guardian Program, will appear in the next issue.

The earliest KILLDEER reported were on schedule on Mar. 23: two, Pinkney's Pt., Yar. Co. (PRG, RSD) and one at the long-term site on Ridge Rd., Wolfville (JCT). Unfortunately, the latter had to relocate due to continual harassment by crows, a repeat of last year's forced abandonment of nesting attempts. Birds became widespread from then on. However, the NAMC total (61) was half of the average of the last ten years, and may have been due to the cool and windy day, affecting both birds and observers. In spite of that, Hants Co., as usual, took the honours with a respectable tally of 23. Dennis Jones described his pleasure in watching a family of two ads. and three young at Oakfield PP, HRM, May 24. The young made frequent forays for food but returned rapidly to be safely tucked under their mother's wing.

The first AM. OYSTERCATCHER returned to CSI, Apr. 14, and by May 5 a pair had settled in at the same nesting site as last year (JON, BJS, SIS). It appears that MUN might have to wait a little longer to see another pair in residence.

The first GREATER YELLOWLEGS set down at The Hawk, CSI, Apr. 17 (MUN). From Apr. 26 on they were either heard or seen in all suitable habitat. As SEM observed, there was a more gradual and dispersed movement

of small numbers throughout May instead of one large peak at prime locations, unlike last year. A record-high was tallied on the NAMC (577), with HRM (151) and CB (215) holding the highest numbers. It will be interesting if this results in expanded breeding effort. RFL noted a pair at Jim Campbells Barren, Inv. Co., May 30, with one bird displaying. SEM heard a bird calling from a bog along Clarks Rd., Louisbourg, May 31, where she had heard them "well into summer last year, suggesting possibility of breeding". If confirmed, this would establish a new nesting site for the Province. Few LESSER YELLOWLEGS were seen this spring. On schedule, the first was at one of the Chegoggin, Yar. Co., Apr. 29 (PRG). JON counted three at CSI, May 1. The NAMC produced a very low total of nine; last year's total (61) was exceptionally high and may have been an anomaly. A single was on Brier Is., May 18 (FLL *et al.*). It is not every spring SOLITARY SANDPIPERS come our way. One was a treat for the NSBS field trip, Bon Portage, May 19 (KJM). Another was calling at Sandy Bottom L., Anna. Co., May 31 (MCN).

An early WILLET reached CSI, Apr. 2 (JON), followed somewhat later by three, Ste. Anne du Ruisseau, Apr. 21 (PRG). Reports from then on indicate a widespread and healthy breeding population. Noisy and conspicuous, these birds provide a bright spot in a time of dwindling populations of some other species. The NAMC delivered 646, another record-breaker. As expected, counties with highest totals were: HRM (151), Lun. (76), and Shel. (225). The peak seasonal count for Morien Bar, CB Co. was an average 78 (SEM).

The only early reports of SPOTTED SANDPIPERS were of a pair, Second L., HRM, May 2 (TEP) and one at The Hawk, CSI, May 8 (CST). Most sightings occurred mid-month or later: one, Brier I., May 18 (FLL); two, Apple R., Cum. Co., May 19 (KFS); four,

Tremont, Kings Co., May 19 (SLH). Most of CB's birds arrived at the end of the month, but one appeared early for the NAMC (SEM). WHIMBREL, uncommon in spring, passed through in unusually high numbers. Twenty were tallied from Barrington, Shel. Co. to Daniels Hd., CSI, Apr. 26; three stayed to May 1 (MUN, JON). Another visited Port La Tour, Shel. Co., May 6 and lingered for a few days (Bev Goulden).

Ten RUDDY TURNSTONES overwintered at CSI and stayed to be included for the NAMC (JON, SAN); four were present up to May 27 (MUN). An indeterminate number of RED KNOTS also lingered through spring on CSI; four were in alternate plumage, Apr. 30, up to 25 were on The Cape, May 2 and 20 tallied on the NAMC (MUN, JON). One presumes these were a mix of hangers-on and migrants. SANDERLING did not dally in such large numbers as usual. Up to 80 were still present, CSI, Apr. 22 (JON), but only 10 were registered on the NAMC. They were absent from all other beaches excepting a lone bird, Cherry Hill Beach, Apr. 8. For the second spring in a row SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS almost became a no-show, but one made the list, Brier I., May 17 (CLS). LEAST SANDPIPERS also were in short supply. One at CSI May 1 was on the early side (GRM). The NAMC produced only eight, from Ant. (1), HRM (4), Lun. (2), and Pict. (1). A few trickled in a little later on May 18: one, Brier I. (FLL *et al.*); and four, Daniels Hd., CSI (MUN). Four had reached Wild Cove, CB Co., May 31 (SEM).

PURPLE SANDPIPERS were not much in evidence in March and April, or perhaps the observers were not either. Intrepid BLM found a hardy flock of 12 at Baccaro Pt., Mar. 1. Only three at Louisbourg, Mar. 8 were attributed to the usual heavy build-up of ice along the shore, but by Mar. 24, 33 had returned to that locale. JUS found a diminished flock of 24 at Brier I., Apr. 21, with 50 there May 18 (FLL *et al.*). The NAMC totaled a paltry four, but then some years there have been none at all: one, Hampton, Anna. Co. (Mike Russell); three, Dingwall Beach, Vic.



PIPING PLOVERS returned this spring in the usual precarious numbers. This was one of six at Baccaro Pt, Shel. Co., Apr. 19. It was among a number that had been banded elsewhere in past years. [Photo Grant Milroy]

Co. (FMC, DAA, Adam Algar). One was still at Wild Cove, CB Co., May 31 (SEM).

The 250 overwintering DUNLIN must find CSI to their liking. This represented the second highest count on record and 235 of these were still in residence for the NAMC. Numbers dwindled to 35 by the end of the month (JON, MUN).

STILT SANDPIPERS usually return to their Arctic-tundra breeding grounds through the interior of the continent, hence spring sightings in Nova Scotia are rare. Although Tufts mentioned two in early May, in 1968 and 1979, and the NAMC recorded two in 1996 there have been no other reports as far as I know. Hence, the three which wandered to CSI, one in alternate plumage, May 1 were noteworthy sightings (JON, MUN). WILSON'S SNIPE were first noted: Apple R., Cum. Co., Apr. 14 (KFS); south of Greenwood, Apr. 15 (SLH); two, Goose Creek Marsh, Roberts I., Yar. Co., Apr. 22 (PRG). BSC Nocturnal Owl Surveys produced at least 12 in CB Co. and Rich. Co. (SEM *et al.*). The NAMC tallied a below average 62, the majority in Hants and Pict. Cos. (23 & 13 respectively). Palmeter's Woods, Kings Co., was a

busy spot where "several" were displaying, May 18 (JCT *et al.*).

The earliest AM. WOODCOCK reported, Louisbourg, Mar. 27, was "sitting on a narrow strip of snow-free gravel at the side of the road," perhaps waiting for conditions to improve (SEM). About this time a pair also arrived at Woods Hbr., Shel. Co. (DOC). A pair with four young, Shulie, Cum. Co., Apr. 1, obviously had had a much earlier start (KFS). NSN had the pleasure of seeing one on her property at Crousetown, Lun. Co., Apr. 21, sitting on four eggs. The BSC Nocturnal Owl Surveys produced good numbers: ten on three routes in CB Co. (SEM *et al.*); six on three routes in Ant. and Guys. Co. (RFL, MZG). One was seen at Mooseland Rd. HRM, Apr. 18 (PLC) and two at Carleton, Yar. Co., Apr. 18 (MUN). The NAMC delivered an average 85, highest counts held by HRM (11), Hants (30), and Pict. (16) Cos. From all accounts they are doing well. "Flocks" of phalaropes, sp. were on the water off Brier I., May 14 (Robbie Denton *fide* JUS). Four RED PHALAROPE were close ashore, May 18 (CLS). ☐

Gulls Through Alcids

By Blake Maybank

There were a handful of BLACK-HEADED GULLS seen through mid-April, with sightings from HRM, Lunenburg County, and Lower Eel Brook in Yarmouth (DMW, RHL, JAH, PRG). RHL kept track of a BONAPARTE'S GULL at Conrad's Beach through March. Only six were noted on the NAMC, none along the Northumberland Shore. More than 600 RING-BILLED GULLS were on the NAMC, similar to last year's high count. The only other sighting of note for this species was the flock of 85+ at West Apple River April 21 (KFS). Nearly 25,000 HERRING GULLS were on the NAMC, a record high total, helped by more than 10,000 found in Guysborough County alone. Only a small number of ICELAND GULLS were reported through March and April, though more were certainly present, but an impressive total of 149 was achieved on the NAMC, including 117 from Colchester County, an unlikely local, so I'd appreciate knowing more about where these birds were tallied. The only LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS were from the NAMC, with four individuals, one in Lunenburg County and three in Queens County, an unexpected location, and with no details provided. JAH reported the last GLAUCOUS GULL in Lunenburg County on April 2, but four were noted on the NAMC, including two in Colchester County, an atypical location.

The bad weather on NAMC count day did not suppress the number of Great Black-backed Gulls, as 6000 were found, with the largest counts in Lunenburg and Victoria Counties. SEM noted that Black-legged Kittiwakes arrived at their Green Island colony in Cape Breton on March 22-23, a couple of days after the sea ice broke up. They returned to their Kennington Cove colony March 29.

John Kearney spotted two CASPIAN TERNS in Antigonish Harbour April 25, and there were a few subsequent sightings of these birds in the area. Caspian Terns are expected annually

along the Northumberland Shore, but elsewhere in the province they are quite rare indeed, so RSD considered himself most fortunate to find a group of three in Lower West Pubnico May 2. The species is equally unexpected along the Atlantic coast; JAH had one at LaHave, Lunenburg County May 10, while RHL found one on Lake Micmac, HRM, May 8. There were individuals noted in Pictou and Queens Counties on the NAMC, but no details were provided. The first COMMON TERNS of the year were reported from Lower Eel Brook May 2 (PRG). A province-wide count of 260 from 10 counties on the NAMC shows that the species was back in force by then. The presence of four ARCTIC TERNS in Hants County on the early NAMC count date of May 10 seems rather unlikely, and such a sighting should have been documented.

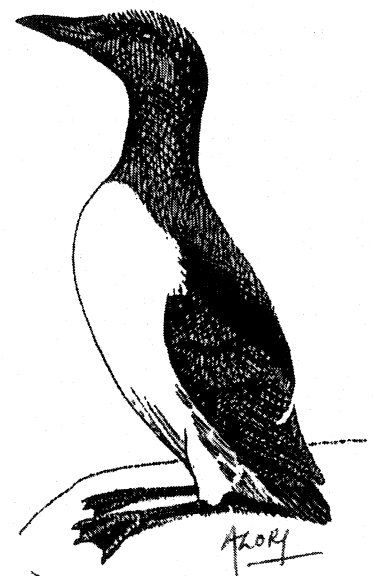
On May 29 FLL and DOU spotted a **WHITE-WINGED TERN** at Westhaver Beach, Lunenburg County, which unfortunately was not rediscovered by others. This is the first report this species in the province, though it's eventual arrival was anticipated, as there are two records for neighbouring New Brunswick, as well as one for Quebec. Given the importance of this sighting, the full report is repeated here.

"Observed from 6:05 p.m. - 7:21 p.m. through Bushnell Spacemaster Spotting Scope with 22x wide angle lens. Lighting was soft/overcast. Distance was approximately 500 meters. Description as follows:

"A chunky, smaller than Common Tern sized tern (about Black Tern sized with slightly more rounded looking wings. Wing beats were buoyant and choppy giving more direct flight than Black Tern. The tern fed by picking from the surface of the water. Plumage was extremely contrasting, both above and below: Head, back, neck, breast and belly solid black. Rump, undertail and tail appeared white. Tail was slightly duller than the rump. Upper wings

bicolored, bordered very dark to black on leading edge of primaries, pale gray on rest of primary. Feather coverts, brilliant white from lesser wing coverts to wrist, pale gray on secondary coverts with a darker area bordering trailing edge of flight feathers. Bill appeared shorter, I thought, than the bill of Black Terns I have seen. Bill was dark or black in color. Head appeared more round than the head of Black Terns I have seen. Underwings bicolored with flight feathers grayish white (almost white) and wing linings solid black."

On the NAMC there were four COMMON MURRES reported from Victoria County (no details) and a single RAZORBILL off Shelburne County (again no details). BLACK GUILLEMOT were seen in small numbers along the approaches to and within Halifax Harbour in March (PLC, JEH). RFL and MZG counted seven at Canso March 15. Off Louisbourg, where they breed, SEM reported that "these birds stayed along the coast in small numbers throughout the winter, despite the sea ice that drove many species of seabird further south for a few weeks." The only reports of ATLANTIC PUFFIN came from the Outer Tusket Islands May 17, when RSD counted 15 at Noddy Island and 15 at Round Island. ☐



Doves Through Woodpeckers

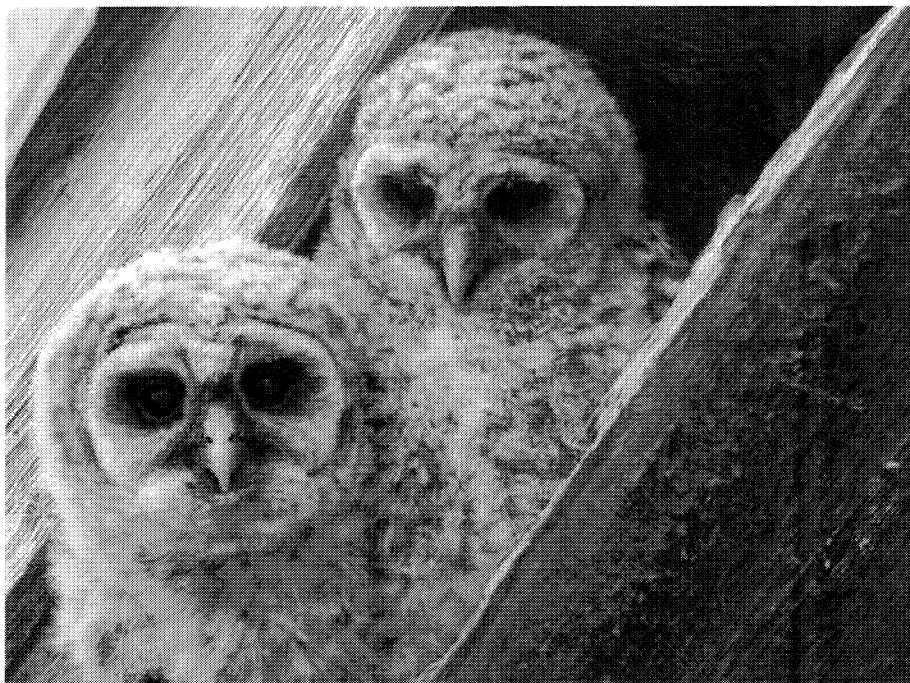
By Ian McLaren

Of our two regular cuckoos only the BLACK-BILLED nests, but is generally not reported until June; so it was this year. YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS are well-known “reverse migrants” in fall, but very rare in spring. One was well studied on CSI May 28 (JON, MUN).

ROCK DOVES seemed not to intrude on birder awareness, as there were no anecdotes this spring. MOURNING DOVES had evidently left some feeders in early March, but some observers reported flocks of 30+ into May. By mid-April, some doves were “cooing in the woods” (PLC), and they were about as usual for recent years on the May 10 NAMC.

The NAMC owl numbers were not impressive, possibly because of bad weather and reduced owling effort. The BSC Owl Survey results seemed more promising, although SEM warns us that the results are much weather-dependent. We’ll await a full report. The surveys on eight routes in Cape Breton, reported to or carried out by SEM, produced an average of 5.75 GREAT HORNED OWLS per route by mid-May, up from 3.64 last year. Mainland numbers did not average so high: seven Apr. 18 on the Tangier route, HRM (SUB); two on the Shel. Co. route Apr. 22 (JCZ); a single on the Ant. Co. route Apr. 21 (RFL); and none on routes in Lun. Co. Apr. 13 (JAH, SJF) or Kings Co. Apr. 22 (RBS).

There were reports of five more scattered hooters. In mid-May a pair near Bethany, Ant. Co., was supplying a large nestling with grownup fare “of Ruffed Grouse, Porcupine, Snowshoe Hare, Muskrat, Red Squirrel” (RFL). Another adult and two young were being mobbed by crows in the Kentville Ravine, May 19. It was not a peak winter for SNOWY OWLS, and few lingered. The latest were Mar. 10 near St. Peters, Rich. Co. (BID), until at least Mar. 12 on Cape Sable (MUN et al.), mid-March near Bakers Settlement, Lun. Co. (*fide* JAH), and Mar. 28 at Pinkneys Pt., Yar. Co. (PRG. RSD).



Two of the three BARRED OWL chicks reared in a barn at Woodside, Kings Co, pose a little nervously for their portrait in early June. [Photo Richard Stern]

BARRED OWL numbers were the lowest since 1997 on NAMCs. While numbers detected on three Cape Breton routes were “down this year, the numbers heard on other routes reported to date [late May] are generally up” (SEM). The mainland prize goes to the route in Lun. Co., which produced 13 on Apr. 18. (JAH). There were fewer on other mainland surveys, but the usual reports came in – nine in all – from scattered localities. Although RBS bemoaned the mere single BARRED OWL on his route in Kings Co. Apr. 22 (“more houses, more woods being cut down, more vehicles”), BLF found a total of 33 eggs in 11 of his nest boxes in that county. His (prey-augmented) backyard female laid the earliest egg on Mar. 16 (almost matching the earlier Mar. 14 record), and had fledged three young by May 23.

The single LONG-EARED OWL that appeared in late winter on CSI was regrettably found dead on Mar 1 (MUN). This species, the least common of our “regular” owls, was heard at two widely separated stops on SEM’s owl route on Salmon R. Road, CB Co., where they

have been consistent for several years. Another “possible” was on the Lun. Co. survey, May 6 (SJF). They once nested on BPI but this spring, as in other recent years, only Great Horned Owls were resident there (NSBS trip). According to MUN, the 13 SHORT-EARED OWLS wintering on CSI probably mostly met the same fate as their Long-eared cousin – too much snow and too little food. He found one dead in a lobster trap Mar. 7, although a couple remained on the Cape proper until at least Mar. 10 (JON et al.). The only other ones reported were four at the end of Long I., Kings Co., Mar. 1 (BLF). N. SAW-WHET OWLS seem to have rebounded from the catastrophic winter of 2000-2001. Numbers were up somewhat from last year in the NAMC, and were “calling in much greater numbers than in the past two years” on Cape Breton routes according to SEM, who quantified them as: 18 owls on 11 routes in 2000; six owls on 22 routes in 2001; seven on 18 routes in 2002, and 31 on 8 routes (as reported up to May 27) in 2003. Numbers were not so impressive on mainland routes. One was “possibly carrying food to a nest” at Nutby Mt., Col. Co., Apr. 18 (FLL).

JON was lucky enough to find a fem. WHIP-POOR-WILL flying around The Hawk, CSI, on May 12, and several others watched as it flew about at dusk. They are rarely seen on migration. Also unusually early was one calling May 10 on the NAMC at Springfield, Ann. Co., and said to have been around for about two weeks (Kim Huskins, per JCT). This would be a record-early date for the province. Another was calling May 20 near the Gold R. bridge on Hi'way 10, New Ross, Lun. Co. (Kim Huskins and friend). We certainly need to find more of these increasingly rare nesters. The first reported COM. NIGHTHAWK was over Kentville May 21 (RBS), and only a few more were noted before month's end. The low numbers on the NAMC may be attributable to bad weather.

Jim Wolford, as usual, encouraged and organized records of the comings and goings of CHIMNEY SWIFTS roosting in several chimneys around the province. This is very worth doing, as he noted that Breeding Bird Surveys show indicate a decline by 50% since the mid-1980s. The full picture, with timings and weather, will not be complete until late summer, but I summarize briefly the main trends and patterns during May. It should be understood that these massive gatherings at our provincial chimneys do not represent nesting birds, which are more widely scattered in pairs and small groups throughout the province in tree holes, crevices in cliffs, caves, and abandoned barns and other human constructions (and consequently are only occasionally found or reported - PEH notes that dead trees standing in flooded forest areas were once favoured, but are largely gone, along with many snags in logged areas.)

The earliest swift arrivals noted were two or three at the Temperance Street chimney in New Glasgow May 4 (KJM). Next evening 20 entered the Middleton High School chimney (John Belbin) and one was at the Robie Tufts Centre, Wolfville. The flocks remained relatively small until after mid-May, and an obvious migrant was over Brier I. May 19 (NSBS trip). ROH and Linda Hall reported from the N.S. Agricultural

College chimney at Truro, where there were none May 10, 11 on May 17, and 225 on May 24 (ROH, Linda Hall). The chimney of the N.S. Power Corp. at McGowan L. (staff are aware of the birds) attracted 37 swifts in evening 21 May (PEH). A new (?) site was a church at S. Brookfield, Lun. Co., where 24 entered in evening May 17 and 60-70 on May 20. The chimney at Kings College Univ., Halifax, continues to be used by a handful of birds (PAC). By later May as many as 180 were entering the Wolfville Chimney, culminating with 246 on May 31 (ROH, Linda Hall). Large counts of 206 and 216 were made at the Temperance St. chimney in New Glasgow on May 21 and May 23 respectively. The most massive group, 414 swifts, entered the Middleton chimney May 28. Merlins have been attacking the swifts at Wolfville and Middleton for some years, sometimes waiting for them atop the chimneys, and there were several reports of successful captures this spring.

The earliest RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD was a dead bird found in Lun. Co. Apr. 28, and reported to JAH as thought to been seen alive a few days earlier. The next were individuals May 3 in Bedford, HRM (PLC), and May 5 in Shelburne (DOE) and South Mountain, Ann. Co. (ULH), and thereafter there were widespread sightings. As usual, the first birds, when noted, were males, which were doing their territorial "pendulum flights" by late May. The first reported female was at Wolfville Ridge, May 18 (GWT). The drop in numbers on this year's NAMC is probably attributable to the miserable weather for foraging (and viewing).

Despite the hard winter some BELTED KINGFISHERS undoubtedly survived, but no March sightings were reported. The first probable migrant was on Apr. 7 at Roberts I., Yar. Co. (PRG), and they were not next noted until Apr. 18 (PLC) in HRM and Apr. 19 at Pembroke, Yar. Co. (PRG). After this, they occurred widely and seemed to be in the usual numbers (they're impervious to weather) on the NAMC.



Its largish bill, yet somewhat baby-faced mien, and the evident yellow crown on the original colour version show this to be a near-fledgling young HAIRY WOODPECKER. It was one of a noisy brood taking its turn to peer out of a nest hole during late May at Whites Lake, HRM. [Digiscope photo Blake Maybank]

A single fem. **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** arrived May 20 at a feeder on the Ohio Rd., Shelburne, attracted by sunflower seeds (DOE). Surely these vagrants will nest here in the near future. The first **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** appeared Mar. 23 at Doctors Cove, Shel. Co. (TEC et al.), a record-early arrival. Had it wintered locally? Good numbers did not appear until 15-20 Apr. (sev. obs.), and one was drumming on territory at Paradise, Anna. Co., by 25 Apr. (Mike Russell). Distinctly fewer were spotted on this year's NAMC than in any year since 1997. PEH described one that came to a hummingbird feeder May 19, reversing the usual situation of hummingbirds feeding at sapsucker drillings. What can one say about our regular **DOWNY** and **HAIRY WOODPECKERS**? Their contact calls and drummings were "becoming more frequent in our backyard" by Mar. 22 (JCT), and a few nestings were noted. Both were in about usual numbers on the NAMCs.

The uncommon **BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER** is probably more-or-less completely reported, and the single NAMC bird (several in recent years), and the mere

half-dozen other reports, may signal a decline. A nest photographed at Cole Hbr., Guys. Co. (RFL), and a pair found near the Western Light Road, Brier I., during the NSBS trip (FLL), were of special interest. The latter report from Brier represents a first probable breeding on that well-birded island. N. FLICKERS made it through

winter in good numbers, but one foraging on newly exposed grass Mar. 4 (Paul McDonald) must have been much relieved. A probable migrant was calling Mar. 22 at an HRM site where "none had been seen in winter" (Lois Codling). Numbers of reports increased beginning early April, but they were down somewhat on the NAMC. A

strangely piebald individual was observed May 3 by JAH at Chester Basin, Lun. Co.. It had an all-white head, back, and chest, and a large red V on the back of its head. Finally, our most charismatic woodpecker, the PILEATED, was reported in the usual numbers in the usual places, and held its own on the NAMC. ☐

Flycatchers Through Thrushes

By Andy Horn

Both OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS and E. WOOD PEWEES were first reported in Kings Co. on the NAMC, well before other reports started. Most first arrivals of the former species were trickling in just after deadline; most reports for the latter species started May 18, on Brier I. (NSBS), and spread more widely by end of month. YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHERS, as is typical of this latest *Empidonax*, were first reported May 18, this year at APBS (BLF). ALDER FLYCATCHERS, by contrast, were seen on the NAMC in Shel. Co., although the bulk of sightings started with the NSBS trip to Brier I., May 19. The LEAST FLYCATCHER total of three on the NAMC was pathetic compared to the 33 seen last year and the

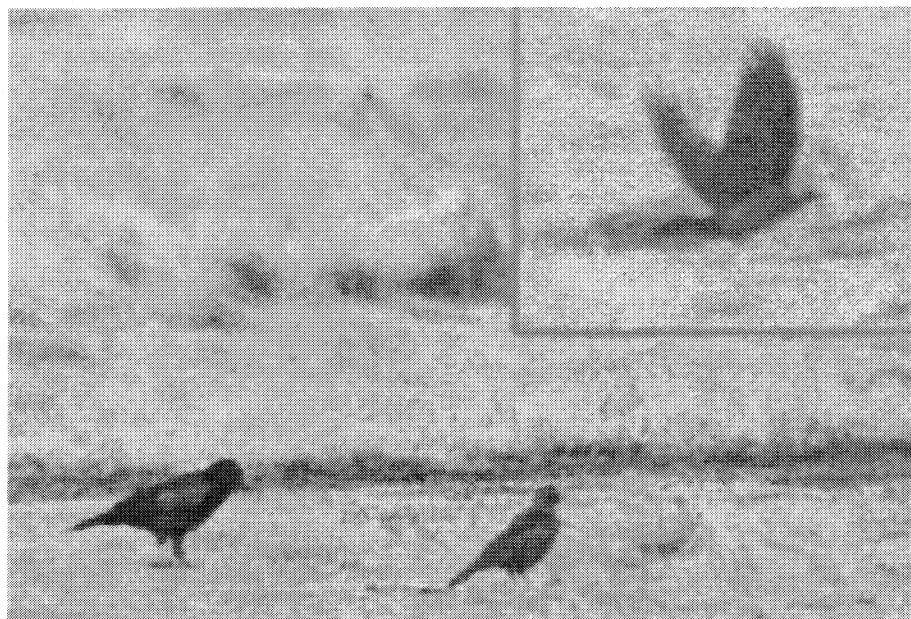
90 seen in 2001. The decline may indicate poor weather as much as a late arrival; a strong movement was apparent May 18 and 19, when birds were seen all at once from Brier I. to APBS (var. obs.). More than 15 were in Maitland, Lun. Co. on May 19 (SJF, JSC), eight of which were in some old growth forest, "active and vocal, perhaps newly arrived." They were "almost as thick as the blackflies" at Kejimikujik NP by May 23 (TEP). Almost.

EASTERN PHOEBES also appeared almost simultaneously: Apr. 18 in Hebron, Yar. Co., W Pubnico, Yar. Co. and CSI (MUN); Apr. 19 at MacLellans Brook, Pict. Co., (KJM); Apr. 20 at White Rock Bridge, Kings Co., where two were

singing (BLF); Apr. 26 at Coldbrook, Kings Co. (HAF), and Apr. 27 at Wentworth PP, when one was nest-building (TEP). More were reported thereafter at scattered locations, mostly in the Annapolis Valley as usual. AAM's GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER returned for the fifth consecutive year to Coldbrook, Kings Co., May 16. EASTERN KINGBIRDS showed up in the nick of time for the NAMC: May 8 at Canso (TOK) and May 9 at Cow Bay, HRM (Henk Kwindt). No particularly large movements of these, or indeed any flycatchers, were reported.

A N. SHRIKE was still at W Pubnico Apr. 12, the very morning the Tree Swallows arrived in Yar. Co. (*fide* MUN). Another persisted at Apple R., Cum. Co., as late as Apr. 6 (KFS), and one was at Argyle Hd., Apr. 3 (PRG).

A YELLOW-THROATED VIREO on BPI, May 1-4 (Atlantic Bird Observatory) was perhaps just the fifth spring provincial record, and was followed quickly by another on Brier I., May 18 (NSBS). The first BLUE-HEADED VIREOS were seen in early May: May 4, at Quinan, Yar. Co. (PRG, RSD); May 5 at three locations in Kings Co. (BLF); May 6, when seven were at Fitch Rd. and Dagley Rd., Lun. Co. (JAH); and May 8, at Apple River, Cum. Co. (KFS), Whites L., HRM (BLM) and HRM (RHL). A healthy yield of WARBLING VIREO reports included individuals at CSI May 13 (JON), Brier I. May 21 (MUN), APBS May 24 (Becky Whittam, Sean Blaney), and Hartlen Pt. May 24 (AGH, Jeff Hutchings). RED-EYED VIREOS came a touch later, as is their wont, with most sightings clumped around May 18-19



Two hasty, long-range photos were obtained of the first EUR. JACKDAW to be thus confirmed in Nova Scotia in many years. It was obviously smaller alongside an Am. Crow, and its gray nape and underparts are marginally evident in the flight-shot insert. It was discovered Apr. 19 by Fulton Lavender and Ian McLaren in the middle of the West Chezzetcook saltmarshes, and within a minute or so departed across the inlet. A lucky few were able to re-find it on following days. [Photos Ian McLaren]

and May 30-31, early exceptions being May 8 at Plymouth (PRG), and May 11 in Blockhouse, Lun. Co. (JAH).

Corvid totals on the NAMC were all about average. BLUE JAYS were noticeably on the move Mar. 26, when 42 were counted between Blockhouse and Bridgewater, including one flying flock of 20 (JRH). A **EUR. JACKDAW** is surely the highlight of this report. It was first reported as possibly a large grackle from a feeder at Lower E Chezzetcook, but was definitely identified and photographed as one of the "western" race of this species Apr. 19 (IAM, FLL), and was seen again the following day (SUB, Bob McDonald). HORNE LARKS were noted May 4 at S Hbr. Beach, Vic. Co. (FMC, DAA), but were absent both from other reports and from the NAMC.

PURPLE MARTINS were well reported this year. They appeared at CSI Apr. 30 (MUN), at Oxford, Cum. Co., May 12 (KBL *fide* JCT), Fergusons Cove, Halifax, May 17 (FCG *fide* JOW), a fem. at Brier I., May 17 (NSBS), and at Amherst, May 18 (DOU). The only extant colonies in the province are at Oxford and Amherst. TREE SWALLOWS showed up at Roberts I., Yar. Co., Apr. 12 (seven individuals; MUN) and E Dalhousie, Kings Co., Apr. 13 (Donna Crossland *fide* JCT). By Apr. 18 they had built up flocks, 82 on the French shore (MUN) and about 200 Apr. 22 at Goose Creek Marsh (PRG), and reached Port Williams by Apr. 20 (George Forsythe *fide* JWW). A count of 3794 on the NAMC was the highest ever, so perhaps they aren't in as sharp a decline as some fear after all, at least locally. **NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOWS** were highlights of the Brier I. trip, May 17 (NSBS). They were described as "two dull brown swallows larger than Bank Swallows with non contrasting throat and facial parts and slightly paler foreheads." BANK SWALLOWS were first reported May 17 on Brier I. (NSBS), and appeared at least three nesting locales with suitable nesting habitat May 19-21 (KFS, RHL, PRG). The 128 on the NAMC was the highest ever.

CLIFF SWALLOWS first appeared in a mixed flock with Tree and Barn Swallows May 5 at APBS (NSBS). A lone member

of the latter species appeared at our local answer to Capistrano, the Halifax International Airport, May 9. By May 18 there were 60 individuals there and they were appearing throughout the province. Alas, shortly thereafter, airport authorities continued their eradication efforts (DHH). Better news is that the 344 seen on the NAMC beat the previous record, set in 2000, by a clean 145. The BARN SWALLOW total of 661 on the NAMC was about average. Other reports start Apr. 18 along the Lighthouse Route (Rob Woods), Apr. 26 at Hartlen Pt. (RBS), Apr. 27 at Abrams R., Yar. Co. (PRG, RSD), Apr. 30 in Blockhouse, Lun. Co. (Joyce Allen), and May 5 at APBS (NSBS). Spectacular mixed species flocks of swallows were seen on the NAMC: over 900 (500 Tree, 300 Cliff, 100 Barn) at Belleisle Marsh (Sharon Hawboldt), and 500 (450 Tree, 50 Barn) at the New Minas sewage ponds, Kings Co. (JOW).

The NAMC total of 3131 BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES was about average. After noting six BOREAL CHICKADEES at three stops along the Old Annapolis Rd. May 15, one observer asked "are they really declining in NS?" (BLM). Another noted them as "totally absent" from winter to May in W Springhill, Anna. Co. (MCN). The NAMC total of 144 does not bear out these impressions; it's within half a dozen of the average (since 1992) of 139.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES, also thought by some to be on the decline, totaled 228, near the average of 288, and WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were slightly above the average of 35, at 49. BROWN CREEPERS, too, were seen in average numbers. Movements of these birds are hard to discern, since they're both secretive and around all year, so an obvious movement on CSI, Apr. 18 (MUN), is worth noting.

WINTER WRENS, poorly reported in the last couple of years, showed up in force in this year's singing season, the time of year when they're most in evidence. Of the well over a dozen separate reports, two singers put on a special show on FWD's warbler walk on Prospect Rd., HRM, May 21, "singing at the top of their tiny lungs."

Paradoxically, the 43 seen on the NAMC was only half the mean of the last 10 years. GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS seemed scarce to PLC and BLM. The NAMC total of 113 suggests they're right; it's the fewest seen since 1997, and less than half the number seen in any of the intervening years. RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS, by contrast, were reported in abundance, beginning in late April, with most sightings in the second two weeks of May. Their NAMC total was low (430), but it's normal for their numbers to wobble widely across the years.

EASTERN BLUEBIRDS appeared for the first time at a feeder in late April in Baxter's Hbr., Kings Co. (Bill and June Main). A pair was at the same nest box as last year in White Rock Mt., Kings Co., May 4 (BLF). May 23-27 a male was in New Salem, Cum. Co. (KFS). Two were checking out a nest box on Brier I., May 26 (Jamie Swift *fide* JUS), and a pair was carrying nesting material May 30, on Economy Pt. (FLS).

A **BICKNELL'S THRUSH** in the Milford Recreation Area Trails in Truro, closely observed from several perspectives, is unusual enough to warrant quoting the full description: "Neither eye had an eye ring nor evidence of spectacles. And with the small amount of rust along the outer tail feathers and wings and the lightly speckled chest I determined it was not the Swainson's (Rob Woods)." SWAINSON'S THRUSHES made their first appearance May 5 in Paradise, Anna. Co. (Mike Russell), and on the NAMC, when a total of four were seen. By mid-May they were being sighted across the province. HERMIT THRUSHES trickled in, Apr. 7 in Cambridge (Linda Townsend *fide* JCT) and Apr. 9, in Wolfville, Kings Co. (GWT), and were reported widely by mid-April. The NAMC total of 190 was low, but lousy weather may be partly to blame. The largest flock of AM. ROBINS was 60 in an orchard in Sheffield Mills, Kings Co., Apr. 9 (JET, JCT). Their NAMC total of 4628 was the lowest since 1997, and down by over 20% from the past five years. Maybe it's not just the deep woods thrushes we should keep an eye on. ☿

Mimics Through Warblers

By Ken McKenna

No large groups of EUR. STARLINGS were noted for the spring report. Six GRAY CATBIRDS were found on the NAMC, lower than most years. In mid-May, three were seen on Brier I. (FLL et al). A N. MOCKINGBIRD was present at the feeder of CAH, Brier I. Apr. 17. Five of six Mockingbirds on the NAMC were from Kings Co.; typically 20-30 are seen on this count. BROWN THRASHERS were found scratching around leaves at the Brier I. yard of CAH on April 17, followed closely on April 19 by one under the Czapaly feeder at Ambercrest in Dartmouth (*fide* JCZ). For the third year in a row, a Brown Thrasher appeared in the yard of #38 Hawk, CSI (*fide* MUN), and for the fourth consecutive year a Brown Thrasher was found for the NAMC, this time at White Point, Vic. Co. by Lisa & Nelson Dixon (*fide* FMC). This bird was feeding with robins. There were two reports of May sightings of Thrashers, on the 7th at Kingsbury, Lun. Co., (*fide* JAH) and the 15th at Lockeport, Shel. Co., (DJC).

Near the most northerly point of CBI on the Cape St. Lawrence trail RFL found six AMERICAN PIPIT on May 18 near the lighthouse. A single CEDAR WAXWING at Churchville, Pict. Co. (CGB) likely over wintered, and there were a surprising 92 on the NAMC, the highest number in the last four years, and perhaps more overwintering birds. Only one was noted on Brier I. May 18, (FLL) but small flocks in the last days of May in Apple R., Cumb. Co. (KFS) and Crousetown. Lun. Co. (PAC) were likely spring migrants. I received no Bohemian Waxwing reports.

A fem. **BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** was dissected out of a big warbler arrival at the North light Brier I. May 18 (FLL, Bill & Eileen Billington). A single TENNESSEE WARBLER was discovered in HRM for the NAMC. Despite a good run of warblers on Brier I. May 18, FLL et al. saw only one Tennessee. The number of NASHVILLE WARBLERS (15) on the



Among the spring's returning warblers, the male CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER is especially handsome. [Photo Richard Stern]

NAMC was less than the last few years, but by May 18-19, about 100 seen by FLL et al. at Brier I. indicate a fresh arrival of spring recruits. PARULA WARBLER numbers were low by NAMC standards with the 25 this year substantively down from the 109 in 2002 and the 385 in 2001. About 100 were noted by FLL on Brier I. May 18-19, and I received about 20 reports of this warbler mostly from the last week of May indicating widespread return to breeding habitats. The relatively early date of this year's NAMC was a factor in the sighting of only 14 YELLOW WARBLERS on that day, six of which were from Kings Co.. A large number of post- NAMC reports were received with comments like DJC from Lockeport who noted they were "a little late arriving but lots nesting by the end of the month". FLL et al. had around 100 on Brier I. May 18-19.

This was the first spring count that did not tally a CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER although it is not numerous most years, being a later arriving warbler. On May 18-19 200 were estimated to be on Brier I. (FLL). After this date a few were noted on the mainland. An astonishing 23 of the 29

MAGNOLIA WARBLERS on the NAMC were spotted in Hants Co.; the 29 represent a third last year's total. By May 18-19 an estimated 250 were noted on Brier I. (FLL). Only a few sightings were reported after this and all from the mainland, but I suspect a lot more were present. FLL reported ten CAPE MAY WARBLERS from Brier I. May 18-19. None were observed on the NAMC and the only other report was a male at Cape North, Vic. Co. singing near the home of FMC. The single BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER on the NAMC was from Shel. Co. Another was noted at Quinan, Yar. Co. May 11 (PRG, RSD). By the long weekend of May 18-19 ten were reported from Brier I. (FLL) and a couple were noted on the NSBS field trip to Bon Portage I..

RHL discovered a YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER Apr. 3 at Shubie Park, HRM. I would probably consider this an over-wintering bird but two April 18 at Apple R. Cumb. Co. spotted by KFS were likely new arrivals. Numerous reports were received into May and as usual, comprised the majority, at 1683, of the warblers seen on the NAMC. The number was the lowest of the last six years for this species. All counties

except Vic. Co. noted this warbler on the count. Yellow-rumps were still moving on Brier I. May 18-19 with an estimated 500 recorded by FLL *et al.*. The 99 BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS on the NAMC was about 1/3 last year's total and about 1/6 the 2001 tally. Most (23) of the sightings were in Shel. Co.. There were a good number of post-migration count reports and 300 on Brier for the Victoria holiday weekend indicated birds were still arriving in good numbers.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLERS seemed to be either low in numbers, or more likely under counted. The four on the migration count were all in King's Co. FLL *et al.* noted only three from Brier I. May 18&19. A window strike at the home of RFL and MSG only stunned a male Blackburnian May 25 and it made a successful get-away. PALM WARBLERS seem to have arrived around mid-April with CAH noting one on Brier I. on the 17th and RSD a single at Argyle Head, Yar. Co., the next day. The 216 recorded on the NAMC were just about average with 55 of these from Hfx. Co.. By mid-May Palm migration was petering out with 20 at Brier I., May 18-19 (FLL). A very early BAY-BREASTED WARBLER was at Lake Egmont, HRM, May 4, (RHL) as only two were noted on the NAMC from Digby and Kings Co. and only two were seen by FLL on the big warbler influx on Brier I. May 18-19. A single BLACKPOLL WARBLER was all that could be found for the NAMC and it was recorded from Hfx. Co.. Next reports were arrivals of 50 May 18-19 at Brier I. (FLL). KFS noted eight at Macan, Cumb. Co. May 24 and FMC had a dozen in a flock of warblers feasting on mosquito larvae on a bog in Cape North, Vic. Co., May 31.

At Cole Hbr. May 2 DHH reported a BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER. Only 81 were noted on the migration count and represented, as with Black-throated Green numbers, 1/3 of 2002 and 1/6 of 2001 totals. Anna. Co. participants found the highest number, 17. Certainly it appeared the migration of this warbler was in full force the weekend of May 18-19 with 250 at

Brier I. (FLL *et al.*). Only one AMERICAN REDSTART was seen on the NAMC but again there was a nice showing a week later on Brier I. with 150 noted by FLL. A PROTHONOTARY WARBLER was reported from the yard of EBB near Little Salmon Rd., Hfx. Co., April 14 (*fide* TEP). The NAMC usually has an average of 70 OVENBIRDS but only 13 were counted this year. There were surprisingly few reports of this woodsy warbler. Only three were noted from Brier I. Victoria holiday weekend (FLL). A NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH was heard from Palmetter's Woods, Kings Co. May 4, (JCT). The 19 on the NAMC were a little more than half the average of 33. Four were discovered on Brier I. May 18-19 (FLL). A very early MOURNING WARBLER was noted in Hants Co. for the NAMC, and the only other report for this spring period was a male heard singing in the North Mountain Area near Belleisle, Anna. Co. (FLL).

Seven COMMON YELLOWTHROATS (four from Kings Co.) were found on the NAMC. Most of the other reports received came from mid-May, and FLL had 30 from Brier I. May 18-19. There was a male

KENTUCKY WARBLER at the Port l'Hebert Pocket Wilderness, Queens Co., May 19 (TEP), perhaps the fifth spring record. A male HOODED WARBLER was seen by many observers April 18-30 at "The Hole" at The Hawk, CSI. It was described as having a "brilliant hood and bright yellow face" by MUN and was photographed by GRM. Two other male Hooded Warblers were on Bon Portage I. N the first week of May, with one being banded (Atlantic Bird Observatory). One WILSON'S WARBLER was recorded on the NAMC and that from Hfx. Co. A nice group of 20 were on Brier I. May 18-19, (FLL *et al.*). SLF noted two males in Tremont, Kings Co., May 24, and KFS three males at Macaan, Cumb. Co., May 24. On May 30 FMC heard singing two singing males at Cape North, Vic. Co.. Male Wilson's were also noted by KJM on territory in the Trafalgar area just inside the Pictou Co. border on May 31. The lone CANADA WARBLER from the NAMC was from Kings Co.. Others were reported from Cole Hbr. Hfx. Co. May 28 (DHH) and North Mountain near Belleisle May 24 (FLL). KJM noted seven singing males on a loop drive from Lorne-Trafalgar-Maple Lake in Pict. Co. May 31. ☐



A sprightly sign of spring was this adult male YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER near Amherst 17 May. [Photo Elizabeth Doull]

Tanagers Through House Sparrows

By David McCorquodale

A **SUMMER TANAGER** spent May 8 and 9 at Mona MacLeod's in Catalone, CB Co.. She did not recognize the bird so asked Bill and Diane Bussey to stop by to see if they could identify it. They did and this allowed a few other birders to see it, but several others tried unsuccessfully. A week later most of the flight feathers and all of the tail feathers were found on the lawn (SEM). There was also one reported on the NAMC in Halifax, without details. There were a few more **SCARLET TANAGERS**, the earliest in late April on CSI (JON), and an orange variant male in Voglers Cove, Lun. Co., May 14, which stayed for several days (JAH). Last year a pair nested on Wolfville Ridge. This year there was a male calling in nearby Coldbrook in late May (FLL, Bill & Eileen Billington).

An **E. TOWHEE** overwintered in Falmouth, staying until at least the third week of March, and another was in Digby Co. early in the month (Elizabeth Gidney *fide* JUS). Spring arrivals included a male at the famous House 38, The Hawk, CSI, for about four days from Apr. 30 (MUN), including on the NSBS trip May 3. The latest this spring was on Brier I., May 17 (FLL, Bill & Eileen Billington).

From March through April **AM. TREE SPARROWS** were at several feeders on the mainland. More than 30 spent the middle of March in Apple River, Cum. Co. and then numbers dwindled through April and into the first days of May (KFS). Many were foraging on snowy roadsides in Pict. Co. (KJM) and on beach wrack in Lun. Co., Apr. 6 (Paul MacDonald), indicating a major movement north. Normally the last migrants are seen the beginning of the second week of May, so the NAMC caught the end of the migration this year. There were more **Am. Tree Sparrows**, 181, on the NAMC than ever before, primarily due to more than 100 in Inv. Co; the rest were scattered through nine other counties. Only one was reported after the NAMC, at a feeder in Paradise, Anna. Co. (Jocelyn

Verreault), where **CHIPPING SPARROWS** had already arrived. A few Chipping Sparrows overwintered and lingered to at least mid-April around feeders in Barrington (RMC, MUN) and Halifax (CSS, FLL, JAH). The first migrants may have been Apr. 14 on Brier I. (JUS) or Apr. 17 on CSI (MUN), assuming they had not overwintered nearby. Sightings around the end of April, such as Apr. 28 in Hammonds Plains (ROG) and the next day in Fairmont, Ant. Co. (RFL) and Paradise, Anna. Co. (Mike Russell), were certainly newly arrived migrants from the south. By NAMC day on May 10 most were on territory and more than 200 were counted, with Pict. and Kings Cos. having the most.

Three **FIELD SPARROWS** were found, all at the southern end of the province. The earliest was May 14 at Stoney I., Shel. Co. by Oliver Stone, who has had Field Sparrows at his feeder in previous springs. A couple of days later there was one at The Hawk, CSI (MUN, KJM) and then a couple of days later still another was on Brier I. (Bill & Eileen Billington, FLL). There were also three reports of **VESPER SPARROWS**; the earliest and latest

were two or three individuals in blueberry fields where they nest, May 4 in Pict. Co. (KJM, CGB) and May 24 near Rodney, Cum. Co. (Sean Blaney, Becky Whitham). The other was one on the NAMC in Kings Co.

A few hardy **SAVANNAH SPARROWS** usually overwinter and the first migrant "Ipswich" arrive on southern and eastern beaches in late March. Sightings of one or two on Brier I., Pinkney's Pt., Yar. Co., Conrad's Beach, HRM and in Kings Co. from late March through Apr. 6 are likely lingering wintering birds. The first "Ipswich" Sparrows were reported the last few days of March on CSI (GRM) and at Taylor Hd. PP, HRM (TEP). There were a few on beaches in HRM and Lun. Co. through April and into May. On the NAMC only two were found, one in HRM and the other further north and east and closer to Sable I. in Guys. Co.. The mainland breeding Savannah Sparrows started to arrive in mid-April as expected, such as one Apr. 16 and three the next day in Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS). A week later, Apr. 24, the first was noted in nesting habitat at Dominion Beach, CB Co. (LEL). Numbers built up later in the



Scrubby White Spruces on dune beaches, like this one on CSI, are favoured as perches by **SAVANNAH SPARROWS**. [Photo Richard Stern]

month and by mid-May they were found in 17 counties for the NAMC. In eastern CB Co. a major flight arrived in early May, many lingered at feeders for a week or more, not moving to nesting areas until the second week of May (SEM). A few FOX SPARROWS that overwintered on CSI were still coming to feeders in March (MUN, JON). The first migrants arrived as expected the end of the month, Mar. 26 in Bedford (Joyce Chalmers). The first big wave, Mar. 29, brought first sightings everywhere from River Bourgeois, Isle Madame, Rich. Co., and Louisbourg on CBI (KJM, CGB, Charlene Birches *et al.*) to Hammond Plains and Apple R., Cum. Co. (ROG, KFS). The next couple of days brought another wave of migrants to CSI (MUN) and the first sightings of the spring for many other places. By mid-May most had moved through. Many do stay to nest in coastal Shel., HRM, eastern CB, and in the CB Highlands. Some must get down to nesting shortly after they arrive as shown by a recently fledged young on BPI, May 17 (KJM, NSBS).

Despite the harsh winter, SONG SPARROWS overwintered in many places including Louisbourg, Sydney, Glace Bay, CSI, Kentville, and Halifax. A few in Halifax even sang early in March on nice days, and by the middle of the month in Glace Bay and Louisbourg (PLC, LEL, SEM). In contrast KJM was unable to find any, by sight or sound, in Pict. Co., Mar. 22, even where there had been some in January. Then the next day the floodgates opened and new arrivals were in Apple River, Cum. Co. (KFS), Halifax (PLC), Mader's Cove, Lun. Co. (JEM) and Stellarton (KJM). Within a week another wave had arrived and most locations had the first of spring before the end of March. No LINCOLN'S SPARROWS were detected on the NAMC and only two reports were received, the first from Fairmont, Ant. Co., May 20 (RFL) and a singing male near Cape North, Vic. Co., May 30 (FMC). Despite the lack of reports there was no shortage of singing males in good habitat in many CB locations early in June. A SWAMP SPARROW, Apr. 14 on CSI (JON), was just when expected if it was the



A WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW was among the May visitors to the Tuft's bird-friendly Garden on Wolfville Ridge. [Photo Judy Tufts]

first migrant. However since there had been a few that overwintered in the area, CSI birders were not sure if it was. Within a week there were new arrivals at Upper Ohio, Shel. Co. (JCZ) and then a dozen at Amherst Pt., Apr. 25 (TEP). Singing males were heard in various places from HRM to Wolfville (BLM, JCT) by the end of the month. In mid-May, Hants and Pict. Cos. had the highest counts on the NAMC.

The first migrant WHITE-THROATED SPARROW were not obvious amongst the large number of overwintering birds from Halifax south. It was not until the third week of April that reports from other locations started to come in. A WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW overwintered at a feeder in Wolfville and was last seen in early May (JWW), just after the first two migrants from the south arrived. The earliest migrant was May 1 in Cape North (FMC) and a couple of days later one was at the opposite end of the province, Stoney I., CSI (Oliver Ross *fide* MUN). By the end of the first week of May a few more were around and the NAMC the next week turned up more than 40 in 13 counties across the province. As expected reports dwindled later in May, with only one from Louisbourg (SEM) during the last week. There were DARK-EYED JUNCOS at feeders in many locations in March. By the middle

of the month some of these were singing on territory. The last couple of days of March brought the first really noticeable movement of migrants and there was another the end of the first week of April.

For the past six years spring sightings of LAPLAND LONGSPUR have been sparse, at most a handful, and some years none. This spring there was only one report, a male at Pennant Pt., HRM, May 23 (HAT). Despite the paucity of sightings this is later than any others in the past six years and two days later than the latest spring sighting in Tufts. Similarly, there were few SNOW BUNTING reports. Ten buntings were reported at Catalone, CB Co., Mar. 1 (SEM), a few spent a week in early March at a feeder in Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS), and a couple were on Brier I. in early March (JUS). The largest concentration was along the edge of the Cabot Trail, in several small flocks in mid-April (RFL). The latest this spring were half a dozen on South Harbour Beach, Vic. Co., May 4 (FMC).

Counts of N. CARDINAL on the NAMC were down from last year with only 19 in five counties, perhaps because they are secretive while nesting. Through the spring they were well reported from Wolfville south to Annapolis Royal, Brier I., Yarmouth,

several locations in Shel. Co., Mahone Bay, and from various locations in metro Halifax. Away from this coastal strip where they have nested consistently and successfully in the past half dozen years there were three reports. A male was in Spencers I., Cum. Co. in March (KFS), one was in Windsor and Avonport, Hants Co., in late April (Angela Slaunwhite, Sherman Williams), and one was seen in Canso, Guys. Co., Apr. 29 (STB *fide* RFL). The earliest ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAKS were a couple Apr. 24 in Louisbourg and a fem. at The Hawk, CSI, Apr. 27 (MUN). The next day there was a male in Canso, Guys. Co. (TOK) and a couple of others on CSI. By the NAMC they were more widespread, with 20 in nine counties. However this is the lowest total since the singleton in 1999, when the count was a couple of days earlier. After mid-May more migrants arrived and several places where they nest, such as Palmeters Woods and Coldbrook, Kings Co. (PBG, AAM), Blockhouse, Lun. Co. (JAH) and Bear R., Anna. Co. (JET) harboured a few to half a dozen singing males.

A very early fem. BLUE GROSBEAK arrived on Brier I., Apr. 4 and obligingly lingered until almost the end of the month (JUS). There were four other reports this spring, with three males in Shag Hbr., Shel. Co. (Carlene Adams, GRM, MUN) the largest group, and a fem. at Long I., Digby Co., May 31 (Loretta Crocker *fide* JUS), the latest. Two INDIGO BUNTINGS were found in mid-April and lingered until late in the month. The first was seen Apr. 12 at Lower Clark's Hbr., CSI (JON) and another was in Port Mouton, Queens Co. (JAH, RSC). The last couple of days of April brought a few more, such as a fem. in Hammonds Plains (ROG), and then there was an influx in Canso, Guys. Co., May 1 (TOK, STB). Ten days later six were tallied on the NAMC, one that spent a week in Louisbourg, one in Abercrombie, Pict. Co. that stayed for a few days (Don Bent), and a couple each in Yar. and Digby Cos. In very late May there were still three stragglers, one on Brier I. (JUS), another in Deep Brook, Anna. Co. (GII Prowls), and one near

Upper Cornwall, Lun. Co. (Daphne and Ian Rokeby).

It is not every year that BOBOLINKS arrive in April, but this year two males were found Apr. 29 at Milford, Hants Co. (DOM). Numbers on the NAMC were down. However, it is interesting to look at the totals through the years. When the count is early, such as May 8, there are very few and when it is late, such as May 13, there are sometimes more than 100. This suggests that they arrive within a few days of May 10 and probably this year a day or two later. Many people have commented on how few there are compared to past years. However they are widespread with sightings of half a dozen males in Cape North, Vic. Co. (FMC), another half dozen on Wolfville Ridge (JCT), lots at Belleisle Marsh (JAH), a few in a couple of different places in Cum. Co. (KFS), plus ones and twos from another half dozen locations.

The first returning male RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS were a couple at Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS), Mar. 20. Ten days later the same feeder hosted the earliest fems. by far. In between, males returned to many places on the mainland, Truro, metro Halifax, and Hantsport, Mar. 22 (Robert Woods, Marian Fulton, PLC, Win Kettleson), Canning, Kings Co., Mar. 25 (JWW, JCT), Kingston the next day (John Belbin), and Fairmont, Ant. Co. another day later (RFL). The first on CBI was at St. Peters, Mar. 30 (BID). As in the recent past there were few sightings of RUSTY BLACKBIRDS. The earliest was a male at a feeder at St. Peters, Rich. Co., Apr. 9 (BID). Late in April another male was along the Mines Rd., Eastern Shore, HRM (BLM), and another at a feeder in Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS). Compared to these few sightings the 27 on the NAMC seems like a good total. However, it's less than half the total of the past two years and the lowest since 1995, when there were fewer observers. Certainly they were far less common in NS in the 1990's than they were in the 1970's, and the decline appears to be continuing.

In direct contrast COM. GRACKLES seem to be everywhere, almost 6,000

tallied through the province on the NAMC. Earlier an overwintering male was singing in Halifax, Mar. 8 (AGH) and a wintering flock of 100 lingered in Barrington until mid-month. March 22–23 brought the first wave of migrants from the south with the first arrivals at Pictou (KJM) to Hantsport (Marian Fulton) to Wolfville (JET) to Greenwood (SLH) to Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS) to River Bourgeois, Rich. Co. (GED, SDI) and metro Halifax (PLC, David Hughes). By the end of the month another wave arrived. A fledgling was noted in Barrington late in May (RMC). A few BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS overwintered in the extreme south, being seen at feeders into mid-March at Barrington (RMC). The first few migrants arrived with the other blackbirds, Mar. 25 at Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS) and the next day in Cole Hbr., HRM (DHH). It was not until about ten days later that they were widespread. Most sightings were from the Halifax area and south. However on the NAMC, Pict. and Vic. Cos. reported the highest totals, almost half of the provincial total of 127.

Three BALTIMORE ORIOLES braved the cool of late April, a couple on CSI and another on Brier I. (MUN, CAH). The first of the spring for Canso, Guys. Co. arrived May 6 (TOK). A few days later on the NAMC only two were counted, one in Canso and another on Brier I.. By mid-May more arrived and there were several sightings from Col. and Hants Cos., HRM, and points south and west. An early ORCHARD ORIOLE, an imm. male, was on Brier I., May 2 (CAH). Two others, both fems. were seen, May 11 and staying for several days on CSI (JON, MUN), and May 20 at Portuguese Cove, HRM (HAT, Laura Elliott).

There were scattered sightings of PINE GROSBEAKS this spring, from Taylor Hd. PP, HRM (TEP) in April, Ingonish, Apr. 19 (RFL), and a couple of small flocks, one in Scots Pine and another in Hemlock in Bear R., Anna. Co. in mid-May (JET). Almost 50 were found on the NAMC, with CB and Hants the only two of six counties with totals in double digits. There were a few PURPLE FINCHES around in early March, for

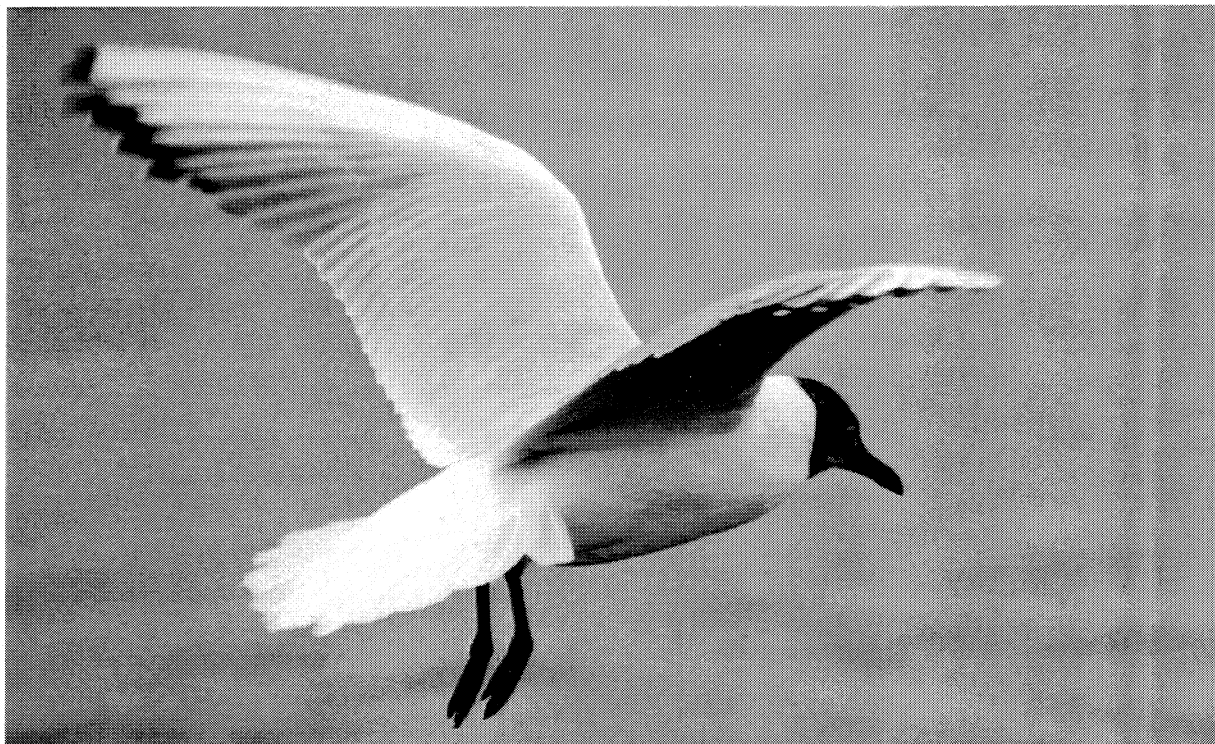
example at Louisbourg (SEM) and Sydney (LEL), and singing males were near Amherst (Sean Blaney) and Lower Sackville (Lois Codling). March 21 to 22 brought a major influx, from CSI (Donna Morrison) to metro Halifax (David Hughes) to Hantsport (Marian Fulton) to Wolfville Ridge (JCT), and to River Bourgeois (SDI, GED) and Georges R. (Gordon and Joan MacFadden) on CBI. Numbers on the NAMC were down from the past couple of years, but still more than 1700 were tallied, with some in all counties. The three highest totals were in Pict., CB and Lun. Cos., only partially reflecting where the most effort was made. Early in March HOUSE FINCHES were singing and then in April females were gathering nesting material in Halifax where they have nested for many years now (ROG, PLC, RJS). Late in May a male was eating the buds of an ornamental crab apple on Waegwoltic Ave., in Halifax (PLC). Outside of Halifax there were two reports, from Paradise, Anna. Co. (Mike Russell), near where there were a few as long ago as the late 1980's, and a short term visitor showed up at feeders in Apple R., Cum. Co., Mar. 30 (KFS).

There was only one report of RED CROSSBILLS in March, a pair that were around for a week at Maders Cove, Lun. Co., late in the month (JEM). Starting in late April there were many more sightings, of pairs and small flocks, especially in the southern counties. By mid-May for the NAMC they were found in four counties, two on the southern mainland, including a high of 14 in Lun. and in two counties on CBI. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS were very scarce this spring. The only locations with multiple sightings were in Cum. Co. (Sean Blaney, KFS) and near Louisbourg, CB Co. (SEM). On the NAMC only 13 were tallied, with a maximum of five in Hants. There were even fewer COM. REDPOLLS, quite a change from last spring. One sighting was received, two, Apr. 5 in South Ohio (Liz Gould, PRG) and there were two in Guys. Co. on the NAMC.

There were few PINE SISKINS around for March and most of April. However there were one or two at feeders around the province, for example in Apple R., Cum. Co. (KFS), Louisbourg and Gillis L., CB Co. (SEM, DAH) and an anomalous 30 that spent Mar. 31 at Wolfville Ridge and then disappeared

again (JCT). Through April and early May they were found in small numbers in many places. On the NAMC all except one county reported some, with two highest totals from Rich. and CB Cos. Later in May they started appearing in larger numbers and in places where they had not been, especially in the eastern parts of the province. AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES were found in every county on the NAMC, with three tallying more than 800, Hants, Kings, and CB. The total of more than 6,000 is slightly higher than two years ago, with a similar amount of effort. The NAMC shows that EVENING GROSBEAKS are also widespread, found in 17 of the 18 counties, not nearly as common as goldfinches, but almost twice as many as siskins. Three counties, Pict., Hants and Kings tallied more than 100.

The NAMC gives birders an opportunity to count birds they might otherwise ignore. HOUSE SPARROWS were found in all but one of the 18 counties, only Queens missed them, and just about 1,000 were counted. CB and HRM accounted for half of the total. ♀



BLACK-HEADED GULLS are most elegant in their alternate (summer) plumage, but this black-and-white image of one in Halifax Harbour cannot illustrate the lovely pink flush on under parts. [Photo Elizabeth Doull]

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North American Migration Count - 10 May 2003

Summary

By Judy Tufts, Coordinator

A hearty thank you to everyone who participated in the Spring 2003 North American Migration Count. There are so many wonderful dedicated birders in this province who give up much to make this count worthwhile. Unfortunately with another cold, wet spring upon us, spring migration may have been delayed by as much as two weeks. On Count day the weather was far from favourable, making birding often difficult as birds sought shelter, yet, although the number of species were down (195 vs. 205+) probably due to difficult weather conditions, we tallied more birds (121043) than ever before, and added a new species to the list - EASTERN MEADOWLARK - found on Cape Sable Island. Temperatures barely climbed more than a few degrees above freezing, with gusty, high winds (35-60 kph), and plenty of rain for the most part (except in the fortunate southwest). Hail, sleet or even snow was felt in some coastal areas through central N.S. Not ideal! Let us hope for better fortune next year.

It was with great concern I noticed how few thrushes, other than old faithful - the American Robin - were back. There is no doubt Veeries and Swainson's Thrushes are struggling to hold on in this province, but even the Hermit Thrush numbers were much lower. The cold spring affected migration of vireos, flycatchers and warblers too, which were sparse and hard to find. However, waterfowl and seabird numbers were up, possibly reluctant to leave too early for breeding grounds. Egrets and rarer herons are becoming regulars on this spring count. This year was no exception - with appearances of both at opposite ends of the province: a Great Egret and a Little Blue Heron on C.S.I., while a Snowy Egret and a Little Blue Heron hung around the Sydney area and yet another Little Blue Heron was found in Inverness County.

Each year a few Turkey Vultures like to wander and explore northwards in our province. One such strayed up to Inv. Co. that day, yet none were seen on Brier Is., and only six birds were tallied between Yarmouth and C.S.I. - an unusually low count. Possibly a small flock of Gray Partridge still manages to survive in the Truro area, as Marilyn McWha found a single bird. After a lapse of several years the Lesser Black-backed Gull has made it back to the count list but this time with a noticeable increase. Four were recorded; one on Grand Pre, with three more in Pictou Co. Two Caspian Terns made an appearance in Halifax Co. - Dartmouth and Pentz. A pair of Oystercatchers were welcome news once again on C.S.I.. Mike Crowell searching a wood pulp company road in Hants East, enjoyed a treat, discovering seven Saw-whet Owls on his patrol. Mike Russell participating in Anna Co., was thrilled to find all three falcons - Peregrine, Merlin and Kestrel - not an easy task on any day. Kim Huskins located a Whip-poor-will in Springfield, Anna Co., which had been heard calling for almost two weeks. She heard one two weeks later near New Ross - perhaps a new location for this species?

A Marsh Wren was heard in Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary, only the second time this species has been recorded on our provincial count. A Brown Thrasher was an unusual but exciting find for White Point counters in Victoria County. The arrival of very large mixed flocks of swallows in the Annapolis Valley put on spectacular shows for two participants - in the Belleisle Marsh, Sharon Hawboldt was thrilled to see over 900 swallows blanketing ponds and cattails in the afternoon, while Jim Wolford was similarly impressed by the sight of 500 swallows taking turns feeding over the New Minas Sewage Ponds, and another 300 over other ponds in eastern Kings Co..

Twenty-one warbler species were recorded this year, although several species were of single tallies, such as the Pine Warbler found on Bon Portage Is. by Acadia Univ. ornithological students. A male Summer Tanager found in Dartmouth brightened the day's outing for Clarence Stevens, Sr. and Frances Stevens. Only two Common Redpolls were recorded - in Stillwater, Guys. Co. - which was not too surprising as there were very few sightings of this bright little finch visitor this past winter. House Finch numbers were up, indicating their spread through the province from Inv. Co. to Yarmouth. Barrie Fraser had 13 at his feeder in East Lake Ainslie (Inv. Co), the City of Halifax registered nine, while the towns of Digby and Yarmouth each had four birds coming to feeders.

So it was a better than expected count, all things considered. Well done, everyone!

North American Migration Count - 10 May 2003

Nova Scotia Totals

By Judy Tufts, Coordinator

Species List

Single * denotes unidentified or sub-species

Red-thrtd Loon	13
Common Loon	305
Pied-B. Grebe	18
Horned Grebe	11
Red-Nk. Grebe	5
Sooty Shearwater	1
Northern Gannet	3705
Great Cormorant	140
D-C Cormorant	4010
Cormorant sp.*	140
Am.Bittern	21
Gt.Blue Heron	341
Great Egret	1
Snowy Egret	1
Little Blue Heron	3
Blk-Crwn Ngt Heron	5
Brant	270
Canada Goose	791
Wood Duck	38
Green-wing Teal	219
Am. Black Duck	1830
Mallard	653
Mallard x Blk D. hybrid *	71
Northern Pintail	3
Blue-Winged Teal	83
N. Shoveler	12
Gadwall	7
American Wigeon	96
Ring-necked Duck	676
Greater Scaup	176
Lesser Scaup	26
Common Eider	3254
Harlequin Duck	6
Long-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw)	10
Black Scoter	106
Surf Scoter	1065
Wht-Wing Scoter	729
Scoter sp.*	17
Common Goldeneye	55
Bufflehead	139
Hooded Merganser	28
Common Merganser	248
Red-br Merganser	876
Duck sp.*	5
Turkey Vulture	7
Osprey	144
Bald Eagle adult	189
Bald Eagle imm*	63
Bald Eagle age?*	32
Northern Harrier	58
Sharp-Shin. Hawk	38

Northern Goshawk	10
Broad-wing Hawk	6
Red-Tailed Hawk	66
Rough-Leg Hawk	3
Buteo sp*	8
Raptor sp*	4
American Kestrel	53
Merlin	30
Peregrine Falcon	1
Gray Partridge	1
Rng-nk Pheasant	345
Spruce Grouse	35
Ruffed Grouse	206
Virginia Rail	1
Sora	11
American Coot	2
Blk-Bel Plover	97
Piping Plover	16
Killdeer	61
Am. Oystercatcher	2
Great. Yellowlegs	577
Lessr. Yellowlegs	9
Solitary Sand.	1
Willet	646
Spotted Sand.	14
Ruddy Turnstone	1
Red Knot	20
Sanderling	10
Least Sandpiper	8
Purple Sandpiper	4
Dunlin	235
Peep sp*	29
Wilson's Snipe	62
Am. Woodcock	85
Bonaparte's Gull	6
Ring-Billed Gull	621
Herring Gull	24563
Iceland Gull	149
Lsr.Blk.-Bk.Gull	4
Glaucous Gull	4
Grt.Blk.-Bk.Gull	6001
Blk.Leg.Kittiwake	120
Gull sp.*	1193
Caspian Tern	2
Common Tern	260
Arctic Tern	4
Common Murre	4
Razorbill	1
Black Guillemot	171
Alcid sp.*	3
Rock Dove	1594
Mourning Dove	1903

Grt. Horned Owl	10	Blk.-thtd.Gr. Wr. b.	99
Barred Owl	60	Blackbrnian Warb	4
Short-eared Owl	2	Pine Warbler	1
N. Saw-whet Ow	117	Palm Warbler	216
Common Nighthwk	2	Mourning Warb.	1
Whip-poor-will	1	Comm. Yellowthrt	7
Chimney Swift	1	Wilson's Warbler	1
R.-t. Hummingbird	73	Canada Warbler	1
Belt. Kingfisher	242	Warbler sp.*	4
Yel-bell. Sapsucker	42	Summer Tanager	1
Downy Woodpeckr	427	N. Cardinal	19
Hairy Woodpecker	215	Ros-brstd Grsbk	20
Blk-back. Woodpkr	1	Indigo Bunting	6
Northern Flicker	628	Am. Tree Sparrow	181
Pileated Woodpkr	64	Chipping Sparrow	249
Olv-sid Flyctcher	2	Vesper Sparrow	1
East. Wood Pewee	1	Savannah Sparrow	454
Alder Flyctchr	3	Ipswich Sparrow *	2
Least Flyctchr	3	Nelson's Sharp-tail Sp.	1
Eastern Phoebe	4	Fox Sparrow	41
Eastern Kingbird	4	Song Sparrow	2277
Purple Martin	0	Swamp Sparrow	121
Tree Swallow	3794	Wht-throat Spar.	1279
Bank Swallow	128	Wht-crown Spar.	44
Cliff Swallow	344	Sparrow sp.*	54
Barn Swallow	661	Dark-eyed Junco	3355
Swallow sp.*	18	Bobolink	5
Gray Jay	72	Red-wing Blkbrd	2006
Blue Jay	1901	East. Meadowlrk	1
American Crow	6175	Rusty Blackbird	27
Common Raven	666	Common Grackle	6038
Blk-cap Chikadee	3131	Brn-head Cowbird	179
Boreal Chickadee	144	Blackbird sp*	12
Red-brstd Nthtch	228	N. (Baltimore) Oriole	2
Wht-brstd Nthtch	49	Pine Grosbeak	45
Brown Creeper	22	Purple Finch	1735
Winter Wren	43	House Finch	30
Marsh Wren	1	Red Crossbill	14
Gld-crwn Kinglet	113	Ww Crossbill	13
Rby-Crwn Kinglet	430	Common Redpoll	2
Veery	11	Pine Siskin	470
Swainsons Thrush	4	Am Goldfinch	6298
Hermit Thrush	190	Eve. Grosbeak	784
American Robin	4628	House Sparrow	998
Gray Catbird	6		
N. Mockingbird	8		
Brown Thrasher	1		
Cedar Waxwing	92		
Eur. Starling	7244	Total species on Count	195
(Solitary) Blue-hd. Vireo	133	Total birds counted	121043
Red-eyed Vireo	17		
Vireo sp.*	2	Number of Counties involved	18
Tennessee Warb.	1	Total Observers	718
Nashville Warb.	15	Time Start	0358
Northern Parula	25	Time Stop	2330
Yellow Warbler	14		
Magnolia Warbler	29		
Blk.-thtd.Blue Wr. b.	1		
(Myrtle) Yell-rump. Warb.	1683		

North American Migration Count Nova Scotia Highlights - May 10, 2003

Special or unusual sightings, names of observers where possible:

New species for list:

E. MEADOW LARK (1) Cape Sable Island, Shelb Co. Murray Newell's group

Other sightings:

Gt Egret	(1)	CSI, Shelb Co.	Murray Newell's group
Lt Blue Heron	(1)	CSI, Shelb Co.	Murray Newell's group
	(1)	Sydney River, Cape Breton Co.	Judy and Roger Mercer
	(1)	Inv. Co.	Frances Hart's group
Snowy Egret	(1)	'Northside' Sydney area-	Dave McCorquodale's group
Brant	(250)	Brier Is.	(Eric Mills group)
Bufflehead	(73)	Glace Bay, Cape Breton Co.	George Crowell's group
Turkey Vulture	(1)	Inv. Co.	Frances Hart's group
	(3)	CSI, Shelb Co.	Murray Newell's group
	(3)	Yar. Co.	Carol Jacquard (2) around Tusket, Raymond D'Entremont (1) in Argyle.
Short-eared Owl	(2)	Inv. Co.	Frances Hart's group
Saw-whet Owl	(7)	Hants East	Mike Crowell - Exploring a pulpwood company road.
Kestrel, Merlin and Peregrine Anna. Co.			Mike Russell
Caspian Tern	(1)	Pentz, Hfx Co.	Pat McLarty and James Hirtle
	(1)	Ridge Pond, Dartmouth	Clarence Stevens Snr.
Oystercatcher	(2)	CSI, Shelb Co.	Murray Newell's group
Gray Partridge	(1)	Truro area	Marilyn McWha
Virginia Rail	(1)	Pictou Co.	Ken McKenna's group
Lsr Blk-b Gull	(1)	Grand Pre, Kings Co	Roger Pocklington
	(3)	Pictou Co	Steve Vines (2), Ken McKenna (1)
Whip-poor-will	(1)	Springfield, Anna Co	Kim Huskins (this bird had been around for about two weeks. On May 20, a Whip-poor-will was heard calling over New Ross area by Kim and a friend as they stood on the Gold River bridge (Hwy 10).
C Nighthawk	(1)	Springfield, Anna Co	Kim Huskins
Blk-back Woodp	(1)	Victoria Co.	Fritz McEvoy's group
Marsh Wren	(1)	APBS	Jeff Ogden
Chimney Swift	(1)		Windsor, Hants Co.
Brown Thrasher	(1)	White Point, Vict Co.	Fritz McEvoy's group
Swallows	900+	Belleisle Marsh, Anna Co	Sharon Hawboldt ("a spectacular sight - 500 Tree, 300 Cliff, 100 Barn - blanketing ponds and cattails in afternoon")
Swallows	500	New Minas Sewage Ponds	Jim Wolford (450 Tree, 50 Barn). N.B. Jim noted over 800 swallows that day over the various ponds in eastern Kings Co. that day.
Pine Warbler	(1)	Bon Portage Island.	Acadia Univ ornith. students
Summer Tanager	(m)	Alderney Dr, Dartmouth	Clarence (Snr) and Frances Stevens.
C Redpolls	(2)	Stillwater, Guys Co.	N. Robert Anderson
House Finch	(13)	East Lake Ainslie, Inv Co.	Barry Fraser
	(9)	HRM - City of Halifax	Bob McDonald's group
	(4)	Digby, Digby Co.	Rebecca Ellis
	(4)	Yarmouth	Hubert and Helen Hall

Fran Stewart in Black Rock (Fundy Shore) Kings Co found a freshly dead Canada Warbler and Ruby-thr. Hummingbird on her porch during that day. Both had apparently collided with a window. There were very strong gusty winds that day.

Gray Jay Portraits



This GRAY JAY is nicely portrayed, away from its usual sprucey surroundings, on a newly leafed alder. [Photo Joyce Allen]



This characteristically tame GRAY JAY actually fed from the photographer's hand at Taylor Head Provincial Park, May 30. [Photo Elizabeth Doull]

Field Trip Reports

Early Spring Birds in Kings County

27 April 2003, Leader: Jim Wolford

This N.S. Bird Society trip was a joint trip with the Blomidon Naturalists Society, and most of the 20 participants on this drizzly day were from The Valley. Weather conditions improved after the first couple of hours.

At Starr's Point we saw the occupied bald eagle nest, plus a nearby empty one used in previous years; both were in hardwood trees, unusual for King's County. Later we also saw the eagle nest just west of Muskrat Farm Marsh, near Canard. We next walked around Van Nostrand's Pond at Starr's Point. Tree Swallows were present, as was a lingering male red-breasted merganser. A snipe flushed twice, swamp sparrows were seen well, pheasants crowded, willows and alders were in bloom, and spring peepers and leopard frogs were calling.

Canard Pond offered a male shoveler, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Ducks, and Common Goldeneye. The water level was low at our next stop, the Saxon St. Pond, where we saw killdeer, a yellowlegs (probably Greater), and a Canada goose "hiding" on a nest with its neck straight out along the ground.

The highlight at Canning Aboiteau was an all-black Red Fox with a nearly naked skinny tail. The fox appeared to be healthy, and was foraging, presumably for small mammals (there were lots of tunnels and chewings from them in the fields after the copious snow melted this spring).

At the Habitant River in Canning we got very lucky and spotted the lingering single Snow Goose with about 100 Canada geese in a bend of the river. We also saw Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, and two Bald Eagles. A conspicuous, occupied raven nest was over Canning's Main Street, and another was seen at the top of a grain elevator at Starr's point. At Harris' Pond in Canning two apparent pair of Canada geese on the west shore turned out to be two decoys near two live geese. There were also American Wigeons, two Blue-winged Teal, a female Common Merganser, but no warblers, despite this being a good spot early yellow-rumps.

Bernard Forsythe again this year generously volunteered to show us his Wolfville Ridge yard with its backyard nesting Barred Owls. We first spotted the perched male in a coniferous tree, and on Bernard's approach of the next box the female left. Bernard showed us the oldest of the three young owlets (about three days-old, helpless, whitish), and he described the food contents currently in the nest-box; four short-tailed shrews, a barn rat, and two dead baby chickens (one of which Bernard provides daily to the nesting pair).

Thanks to all who came out on this successful trip.

Cape Sable Island

03 May 2003, Leader: Murray Newell

The weather did not look too good before daylight and some people who came from far away had a hard time driving in the rain, but it turned out fine as the morning went on.

Some species we had: Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Red Knot, Black-bellied Plover, Willet, Fox Sparrow, American Oystercatcher and two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. We had about 50 species for the day. Thanks to all.

Bon Portage Island

17 - 19 May 2003, Trip planner: Claire Diggins

On the long weekend in May 12 participants got together on Prospect Point Wharf in Shag Harbour for the trip to Bon Portage Island. Two boatmen delivered them with their baggage in time to do some exploring before dark. Birds were scarce on Friday night, perhaps due to a cold, late season. On Saturday and Sunday the weather was cool and clear, but gradually it warmed up and a few birds moved in.

By Monday morning some migration movement was apparent on the island. Numbers of kinglets, Yellow Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Black-throated Green Warblers were increasing. Chestnut-sided Warblers, Magnolia Warblers, Blackpoll Warblers and American Redstarts were present. Two pairs of Great-horned Owls could be heard calling at night and one owl was spotted on two occasions. Other usual species were present including thousands of courting Leach's Storm Petrels.

Spirits were high and the living good on the tiny island this weekend.

Halifax County Early Morning Warbler Walk I

Prospect Road, 21 May 2003, Leader: Fred Dobson

Weather: clear (a beautiful sunrise), cool. Participants: Fred Dobson (leader) + nine others.

We met as usual at the Route #333 Park & Ride and, as usual, an Ovenbird sang there. We drove to the Goodwood United Church, parked our cars, then skipped through the heavy morning traffic to the old N.S. Power Commission land adjoining Big Indian Lake. The ground was dry for the most part.

There were no swallows at our entry to the road, which was unusual, but soon we began to see and hear the White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos. The most common warbler this year was the Magnolia, easily outnumbering Yellow-rumpeds three to one. Black-throated Green Warblers were also quite common, and sang lustily from the top of many Spruce trees. The wonderful tinkling Winter Wren's song was missing from the beginning of the walk - but more on that to come. Next on the list were Black-capped Chickadees and Blue-headed Vireos.

Things didn't really get into gear until we reached the "T" at the end of our woods road and turned towards Big Indian Lake. At the same time the blackflies began to pick on us in earnest; so we subsequently viewed everything through a swirl of little kamikazes, that peppered our necks and faces as they tried to overcome the film of fly dope we had applied. We swallowed many, and they got in our eyes, but we quickly forgot them when we began to hear thin, high calls in the trees above us. We chased these calls for quite a while, searching through Black-throated Green Warblers, Purple Finches, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Pine Siskins, American Goldfinches and Black-capped and Boreal Chickadees. Our elusive quarry finally came out and sat in the sun for us: first one, then three red-golden Blackburnian Warblers (two males and a female), and soon after a male Bay-breasted Warbler. We all had excellent looks, and memorized the songs for next time.

The Common Loon was in the still waters of the lake, but didn't call. We heard (or assumed we heard) Pileated Woodpeckers, and saw both a Hairy and a Downy Woodpecker.

We proceeded up to the bog, where we found Palm Warbler and Common Yellowthroat, as advertised. We also heard Hermit Thrushes, a Savannah Sparrow, and (perhaps) a Lincoln's Sparrow.

Then we began the walk back; it was a long one, as there were many distractions. We stopped three times for Winter Wrens, all singing at the top of their tiny lungs from towering Spruce trees. We actually saw two of the singers, but only for the briefest time. They seemed bent on trying out every tree and some bushes as well, so we constantly lost track of them. But to our delight they were there to be seen and presumably, every spring, they will be there. Wonder of wonders!

When we finally got back to the Prospect Road there were two Tree Swallows to greet us, assisted by a Ruby-throated Hummingbird and a family of Goldfinches at a nearby feeder.

It was a good walk. For me it was the last one I'll lead and I would like to thank all those brave souls who accompanied me over the last 20 years or so. It's been a joy and a delight to have you all to walk with, and I'll treasure the memories.

Best wishes to the NSBS and Good Fortune in all you do! ☺



Most unusual this spring was a group of up to five CASPIAN TERNS hanging around Red Bridge Pond, Dartmouth. This one was videotaped May 7 as it flew past playground structures along the east side of the pond. [Photo Bernard Burke]

Sat 10 Jan 2004 – Sewer Stroll I, Halifax/Dartmouth Area
Leader: Bob McDonald 443-5051 E-mail: bobathome@hfx.eastlink.ca

Meet in the parking lot for McCormack's Beach Provincial Park, next to the Boondocks Restaurant in Eastern Passage at 8:00 a.m. to look for rare birds and regular winter visitors. Dress for cold weather and bring a lunch. Plan to carpool as much as possible. Storm date: Sun 11 Jan.

Thu 22 Jan 2004 – Skills Workshop & Members' Slide Night
NSMNH, Summer Street, Halifax, 7:30 p.m.
"Recognizing Eagles & Large Raptors" – Jim Wolford
Bring along 10 – 15 of your favourite slides related to birding. We'll be enjoying them right after Jim's workshop.

Sat 24 Jan 2004 – HFN Sewer Stroll, Halifax/Dartmouth Area
Leaders: Linda & Peter Payzant 861-1607 (evenings)
E-mail: aa095@chebucto.ns.ca
Dress warmly and bring a lunch, binoculars, field guides and telescope (if you have one).
Meet at 9:15 a.m. in the parking lot behind the Boondocks Restaurant, Fisherman's Cove, Eastern Passage.
Storm date: Sun 25 Jan.

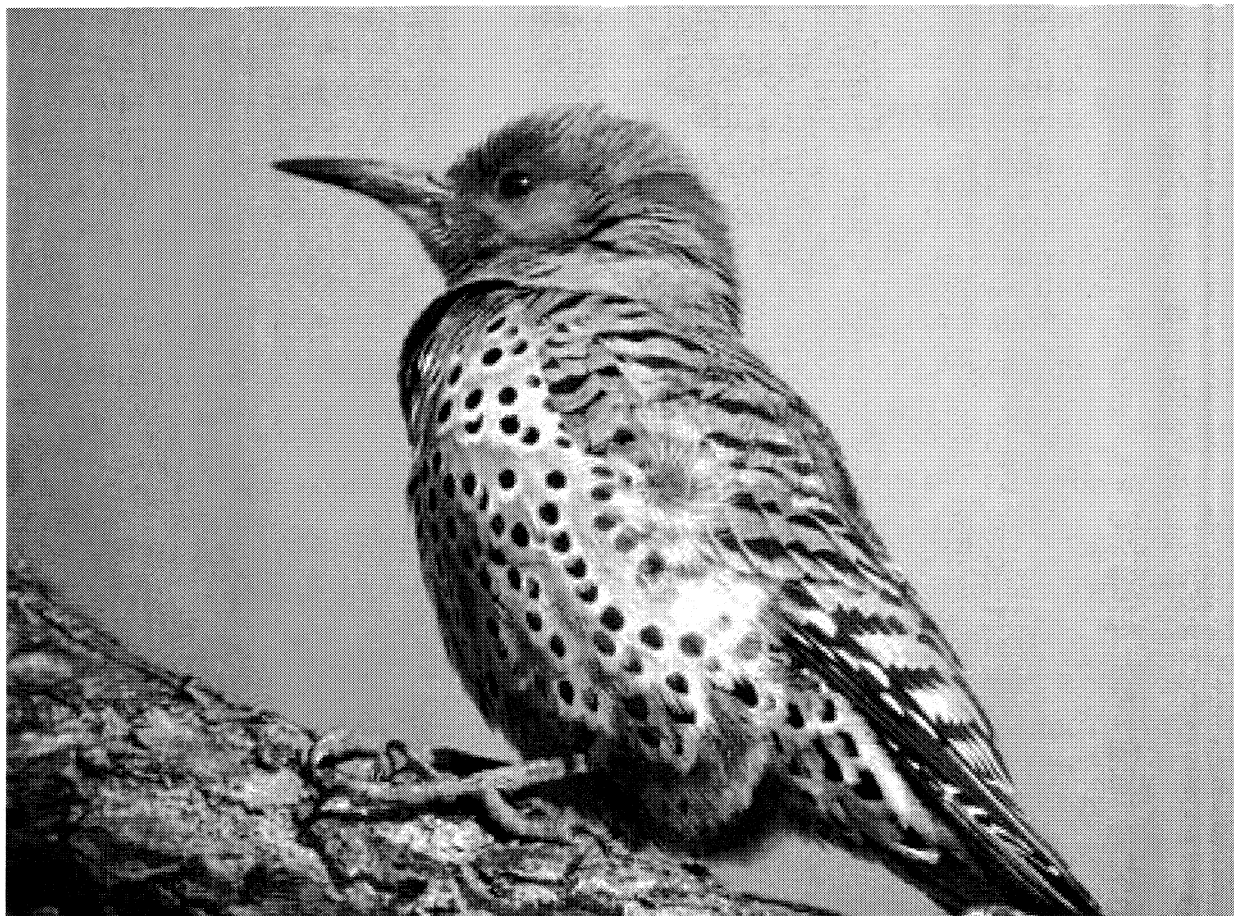
Sat 14 Feb 2004 – Sewer Stroll II, Halifax/Dartmouth Area
Leader: Fulton Lavender 455-4966

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot for McCormack's Beach Provincial Park, just past the Boondocks Restaurant in Eastern Passage. Dress warmly and bring a lunch.
Storm dates: Sun 15 Feb, Sat 21 Feb, and Sun 22 Feb.

Thu 26 Feb 2004 – Regular Meeting
NSMNH, Summer Street, Halifax, 7:30 p.m.
To Be Announced

Sat 28 Feb 2004 – Beginning Birders Field Trip & Orientation
Leader: Suzanne Borkowski 445-2922
E-mail: sborkowski@hfx.eastlink.ca

Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the Dartmouth Shopping Centre (Wyse Rd. & Nantucket Ave., on the Dartmouth side of the old bridge) Bring binoculars, a field guide and wear warm clothing. We'll spend a couple of hours identifying birds in and around Sullivans Pond and in the shrubbery across the street. Storm date: Sun 29 Feb. ☼



The telescope allows birds, like this N. FLICKER in Kentville this spring, to be studied and photographed in great detail.
[Digiscope photo Richard Stern]

Upcoming Events



Field trips are open to non-members as well as members. Feel free to phone or email the field trip leader or contact person ahead of time to obtain further information (e.g. directions). The area code for N.S. is 902. NSMNH = The Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Halifax.

Ideas and suggestions for future trips are welcome. You do not need to be an expert to lead a field trip, and the trip does not need to last all day; you just need to share your favourite birding spots. Any questions, comments or suggestions should be directed to the Events Editor, Suzanne Borkowski 445-2922. Email: sborkowski@hfx.eastlink.ca

Sat 13 Sep 2003 – Hartlen Point

Leader: Bob Lindsay 434-3438 E-mail: hlindsay@accesswave.ca

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Hartlen Point. We'll spend several hours exploring the back cove, the marshes and the shoreline looking for fall migrants. Unusual vagrants have been spotted here at this time of year. Bring rubber boots. Rain date: Sun 14 Sep.

Sat 20 Sep 2003 – Wallace Bay

Leader: Paul MacDonald 627-2568 E-mail: rita.paul@ns.sympatico.ca

Meet at the Wallace Wharf at 8:30 a.m. Primary points of interest are the impoundments at the Wallace Bay National Wildlife Area. The morning will be a three-hour walk along a woodland trail; so come prepared with sturdy footwear, water and a lunch. No rain date.

Thu 25 Sep 2003 – Meeting & Skills Workshop

NSMNH, Summer Street, Halifax, 7:30 p.m.

"Shoring up on Shorebirds" – Fulton Lavender

Sat 27 Sep 2003 – Eastern Shore

Leader: Peter Richard 463-5612 E-mail: Prichard@ns.sympatico.ca

Meet at Lower East Chezzetcook at the end of Storey's Head Road at 8:00 a.m. (Keep going on the East Chezzetcook Road until the pavement ends, then turn right at the next intersection.) This trip will cover the common birding hot spots from Lower East Chezzetcook towards Dartmouth. Please plan to carpool as much as possible since many of the stops have a limited parking area. No rain date.

Fri 10 Oct to Mon 13 Oct 2003 – Brier Island Extravaganza!

Contact for info: Suzanne Borkowski 445-2922

E-mail: sborkowski@hfx.eastlink.ca

Join us for the entire weekend or any part thereof:

Fri (dusk) Owling – James Hirtle

Sat (am) Birding – Terry Paquet

Sat (pm) Whales & Seabirds – Mariner Cruises* – Carl Haycock

Sun (am) Birding Long Island – Peter Richard

Sun (pm) Wildflowers, Butterflies, Dragonflies & Birds – June Swift & Jeff Ogden

Mon (am) Birding – Fulton Lavender

* There is a charge of \$35.00 + tax for this cruise. (\$31.50 for seniors) With 10 or more participants a discount will apply.

Thu 23 Oct 2003 – NSBS Annual General Meeting

NSMNH, Summer Street, Halifax, 7:30 p.m.

As usual, the AGM will be followed by a wine and cheese reception, a great opportunity to meet and mingle.

Sat 25 Oct 2003 – Sandy Lake, Tantallon

Leaders: Suzanne Borkowski 445-2922 E-mail:

sborkowski@hfx.eastlink.ca and Jonathan Kierstead –

Environmental Supervisor, Bowater Mersey.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Tim Hortons in the Tantallon Shopping Plaza, exit 5, Hwy #103. We'll be entering the Bowater Mersey lands and driving up the left fork past the Bank Swallow nesting site, stopping along the way to watch & listen for birds. We'll explore part of the Old Annapolis Hiking Trail on foot and after lunch continue driving up into some old growth forest, then return. Bring a lunch and sturdy footwear.

Rain date: Sun 26 Oct.

Sat 22 Nov 2003 – Antigonish Coastal Waters

Leader: Randy Lauff 867-2471 E-mail: rlauff@stfx.ca

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Uncle Ron's Coffee Shop on the TCH just east of Exit 35 (Lower South River). This trip covers the waters of St. Georges Bay and the Antigonish Harbour. We'll end the day at Ogdens Pond which has hosted thousands of gulls, ducks and, in some years, "inland" gannets. Rain date: Sun 23 Nov.

Thu 27 Nov 2003 – Meeting & Skills Workshop

NSMNH, Summer Street, Halifax, 7:30 p.m.

"Identifying Gulls – Part II" – Richard Stern

Sat 6 Dec 2003 – Metro "Hot Spot" Birding

Leader: Terry Paquet 452-3622 E-mail: terrypaquet@hotmail.com

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Sullivans Pond and dress warmly. We will check local sites for rarities and unusual birds as a prelude to the Christmas Bird Count. Rain date: Sun 7 Dec.

Sat 6 Dec to Sun 7 Dec 2003 – CSI & Shelburne Area

Leader: Joan Czapalay, E-mail: joancz@ns.sympatico.ca

Meet at Tim Hortons in Barrington Passage at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday to bird Cape Sable Island and Barrington area. Meet at Tim Hortons in Shelburne (Hwy 103, Exit 26) at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday to bird the Shelburne area. Come for both days or just one. Plan to carpool as much as possible. No rain date.

(Continued on inside back cover)