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Ontario Birds

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The aim of *Ontario Birds* is to provide a vehicle for documentation of the birds of Ontario. We encourage the submission of full length articles and short notes on the status, distribution, identification, and behaviour of birds in Ontario, as well as location guides to significant Ontario birdwatching areas, book reviews, and similar material of interest on Ontario birds.

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Articles

House Finch Population Trends in Ontario

Ron Tozer

Introduction

In a species account prepared for *Ornithology in Ontario*, Daniel Kozlovic (1994) presented a comprehensive overview of the House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) in the province. He documented "the incredible increase in the Ontario population" from 1980 to 1987. Ten years have now passed since his analysis was undertaken, and further dramatic changes have occurred. In this article, I update House Finch population trends in Ontario through 1996, and discuss factors which may have contributed to them.

Methods

Data from 50 Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) in southern Ontario from 1977 to 1987 were utilized by Kozlovic (1994) to document changes in the House Finch population. The data were obtained from *American Birds* 32-42 (CBC issues), 1978-1988. I calculated House Finch numbers from the same 50 CBCs for the period 1988 to 1996, from *American Birds* 43-47 (CBC issues), 1989-1992; and *National Audubon Society Field Notes* 48-51 (CBC issues), 1993-1997. House Finch population trends derived from these CBC data from 1980 to 1996 are presented in Figure 1. Data from additional Ontario CBCs were used to document the spread and increase of House Finches into other parts of Ontario after 1987. All data are expressed as numbers of birds per ten party-hours in an attempt to normalize variation in census effort, or party-hours, between different counts and years (see Raynor 1975).

Results

Kozlovic (1994) noted that "CBCs in southern Ontario revealed a consistent annual increase in House Finches during the period from 1980-1987" (see Figure 1). This rate of growth was "similar to the exponential increase of the eastern population reported by Bock and Lepthien (1976) from 1962-1971" (Kozlovic 1994). The Ontario population continued to increase, with some temporary declines, from 1988 to 1994. However, an apparently dramatic downward trend in the southern Ontario House Finch population was recorded in 1995 and 1996 (Figure 1).

The greatest House Finch abundance found by Kozlovic (1994) was on the Niagara Peninsula, where "more than 40 percent of all finches recorded on Ontario CBCs" had been tallied by 1987. In the 1987 count year, 27% of the House Finches counted on all Ontario CBCs (1,998 of 7,496) were

seen on five counts on the Niagara Peninsula (Buffalo, N.Y.-Ont.; Hamilton; Niagara Falls; Port Colborne; and St. Catharines). However, by the peak year of 1994, this figure had dropped to 13% (4,478 of 34,433 House Finches counted throughout Ontario). Obviously, the House Finch had increased and spread in other parts of Ontario from 1987 to 1994. House Finches on the Niagara Peninsula underwent the same post-1994 decline seen in the province as a whole (see Table 1).

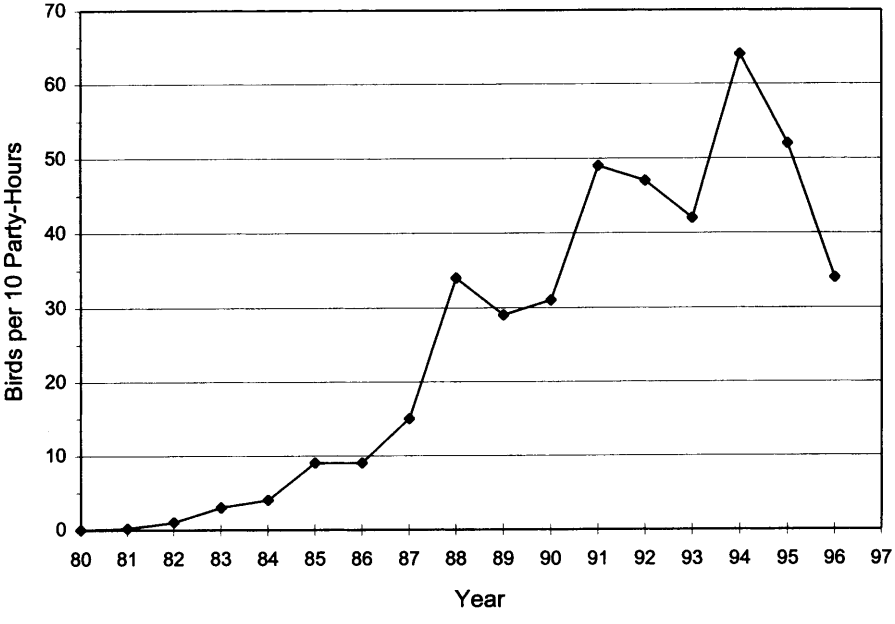

Figure 1: Trends in House Finch numbers from 50 Christmas Bird Counts in southern Ontario, 1980-1996.

Table 1: Number of House Finches observed per 10 party-hours on CBCs on the Niagara Peninsula, 1988-1996

Count Area	Year								
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
Buffalo, N.Y.-Ont.	35	22	38	41	23	26	47	35	22
Hamilton	75	106	98	86	59	41	58	57	20
Niagara Falls, Ont.-N.Y.	75	34	36	60	58	41	52	39	29
Port Colborne	50	24	68	50	29	32	118	119	27
St. Catharines	62	70	55	57	38	64	79	71	37
Total number of birds	3446	3354	4055	4125	3137	2811	4478	3148	1684

The House Finch was considered uncommon in the southern Georgian Bay region, and in the Ottawa River valley in 1987 (Kozlovic 1994). House Finch numbers have expanded in these areas since then (see Tables 2 and 3). However, the pattern of post-1994 decline in numbers is not apparent in these regions, which are north of the greatest House Finch abundance in Ontario.

Table 2: Number of House Finches observed per 10 party-hours on CBCs on Georgian Bay, 1988-1996

Count Area	Year								
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
Bruce Peninsula	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	<1
Manitoulin Island	0	0	0	1	3	3	1	0	3
Meaford	1	12	13	29	34	14	40	18	40
Mindemoya	0	0	0	0	2	0	7	0	28
Owen Sound	5	7	2	32	78	34	34	46	25
Wye Marsh	0	2	1	15	2	22	2	1	2
Total number of birds	46	114	85	554	1022	518	587	435	581

Table 3: Number of House Finches observed per 10 party-hours on CBCs in the Ottawa River valley, 1988-1996

Count Area	Year								
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
Deep River	0	0	0	0	0	0	<1	0	1
Dunrobin-Breckenridge, Ont.-P.Q.		<1	0	0	7	4	2	2	2
Ottawa-Hull, Ont.-P.Q.	3	8	13	22	21	34	40	67	40
Pakenham-Arnprior	4	2	6	4	6	8	30	4	9
Pembroke	2	2	4	1	<1	5	9	1	1
Renfrew	0	1	0	1	8	0	<1	<1	13
Total number of birds	201	350	615	932	1009	1404	1817	2289	1422

Kozlovic (1994) noted the absence of House Finches on the Canadian Shield up to 1987, perhaps due to "its large expanse of mixed forest and limited human residential development". However, the House Finch has since spread north into several communities on the Shield, and has been recorded on 13 CBCs there (see Table 4). As with the Georgian Bay and Ottawa River areas, the post-1994 decline is not shown in these data from the Shield. Wintering by House Finches in the north is critically linked to the provision of food at feeding stations (Sprenkle and Blem 1984). This

requirement is similar to that of the Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) and the Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) in Ontario, which also depend on feeders in the north during winter (Tozer 1994, Dow 1994).

Table 4: Number of House Finches observed per 10 party-hours on CBCs on the Canadian Shield, 1988-1996

Count Area	Year								
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
Algonquin Park	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
Burks Falls	0	0	0	0	<1	0	<1	0	1
Eganville						<1	3		2
Fort Frances									9
Gravenhurst-Bracebridge	0	0	0	0	3	<1	33	0	9
Huntsville							2	0	2
Killaloe									<1
Minden	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	<1
Nipigon-Red Rock							<1	0	0
North Bay	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2
Sault Ste. Marie	0	0	0	1	6	5	<1	14	3
Sharbot Lake					4	0	2	<1	6
Sudbury	0	0	0	0	+	0	3	0	0
Total number of birds	0	0	0	5	64	41	255	110	155

(+ = seen during count week; numbers not reported)

Discussion

As stated earlier, Christmas Bird Count data indicate that the House Finch population in Ontario increased rapidly from 1980 to 1994, and then underwent a dramatic decline through 1995 and 1996 (Figure 1). A somewhat similar pattern was detected in data from Project Feeder Watch (Deschamps 1997), showing that "after several years of population growth, House Finch numbers levelled off in winter 1991-92 and then declined markedly in winter 1996-97". The actual numbers reported at the project's participating feeders in 1996-97 were "at or below 1987-88 levels", and were 22% below the previous winter (Deschamps 1997). Clearly, there has been a significant reduction in the overall population levels of House Finches in Ontario. However, the decline has occurred primarily in the area of greatest House Finch abundance in southern Ontario.

Speculation has begun as to the possible cause(s) of this decline, with mortality due to eye conjunctivitis being the prime suspect (Deschamps 1997). In February 1994, House

Finches with swollen or crusty eyes and impaired vision were first observed at feeders in suburban Washington, D.C. (Fischer et al. 1997). The disease has now spread throughout the entire eastern population of House Finches in the United States and Canada, including Ontario.

The infection is a mycoplasmal conjunctivitis (*Mycoplasma gallisepticum*), a bacterial pathogen of poultry that had not been associated with disease in wild songbirds before the outbreak in House Finches (Fischer et al. 1997). During the winter of 1995-96, this conjunctivitis also spread to the American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*) in Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee (Fischer et al. 1997). Goldfinches exhibiting symptoms of the infection have now been reported in Ontario (e.g., September 1997, Toronto, R. Pittaway). Researchers believe the disease could become permanently established in House Finches, and possibly other species.

Although it is not known precisely how the conjunctivitis is transmitted, House Finch use of feeders may increase contact with infected individuals and contaminated surfaces. Feeders may also contribute to the spread of the disease by extending the lives of infectious, diseased House Finches that otherwise would not be able to feed (Fischer et al. 1997). The disease has not been reported in the western (native) population of the House Finch, which is sedentary (Hill 1993). However, the eastern House Finch population is partially migratory, with some birds moving several hundred kilometres (Belthoff and Gauthreaux 1991, Kozlovic 1994), and thus spreading the disease over a large area. Fischer et al. (1997) speculated that the limited gene pool from which the entire eastern House Finch population is descended may also have contributed to its apparently high susceptibility to this conjunctivitis. Eastern House Finches originated with birds released in New York City in 1940 (Elliott and Arbib 1953).

Conclusion

In 1988, Kozlovic (1994) correctly predicted that the House Finch's "full potential as a colonizer in Ontario has yet to be realized". The species subsequently spread northward in Ontario, and increased dramatically in numbers. However, a major population decline in southern Ontario began after 1994, probably due to conjunctivitis-caused mortality. The full extent of this reduction in the province's House Finch numbers remains to be seen.

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Breeding Birds of Ontario: Nidiology and Distribution

Volume 2: Passerines (First Revision - Part A: Flycatchers to Gnatcatchers)

George K. Peck and Ross D. James

Another decade has elapsed since the publication of Volume 2 of *Breeding Birds of Ontario* (Peck and James 1987), and it has been four years since the revision of Volume 1 (Peck and James 1983) which appeared in three parts in *Ontario Birds* in 1993-4. During the decade, continuing changes in the breeding status and distribution of Ontario's passerine breeding species have made this present revision timely. Some species (eg. Acadian Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Wood Thrush, and Prothonotary Warbler) have continued to decrease, and Henslow's Sparrow has all but disappeared as a provincial breeding species. Conversely, the House Finch has rapidly expanded throughout southern Ontario and occurred in summer as far north as Nipissing and Rainy River Districts. Other changes include the confirmed 1987 nesting of Western Kingbird, local increases in breeding populations of Hooded Warbler and Orchard Oriole, and another sporadic nesting of Dickcissels in 1988. The latter species became the 87th host of the Brown-headed Cowbird in Ontario.

Our primary source of nidiological and distributional data, the Ontario Nest Records Scheme (ONRS), has expanded until it now contains more than 110,000 nest cards. In addition to the cards of current ONRS contributors, naturalists' field logs continue to be turned in to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), and we are continuing to extract provincial nesting and breeding records from these journals. These field logs include historical records of L. H. Beamer, G. Boyer, R. C. Brooman, G. Clouts, O. E. Devitt, P .Harrington, J. A. Morden, H. Morris, E. Nasmith, R. Pickering, W. E. Saunders, W. W. Smith, J. D. Soper, and F. Starr. All other published sources of Ontario breeding bird data such as the *National Audubon Society Field Notes* are included in this revision.

All known new provincial nesting and breeding records appear in this revision. A "nesting" record is an exact term involving the finding of an active nest, whereas a "breeding" record, a less exact designation, usually implies the observation of an adult with flightless (precocial species) or flying stub-tailed (altricial species) young, away from the nest. For colonial species, the record (nest card) numbers may indicate the number of cards of

colonies rather than nests. In non-colonial species, where more than one nest is listed on cards, the actual nest total is given in parentheses after the record (nest card) number. Brackets [ ] around a species' name indicate a hypothetical breeding species; brackets around a corresponding record [nest card] number indicate a nesting(s) lacking documentation. The egg numbers in bold print (e.g., **4E**) indicate known, complete clutch sizes. Despite the various regional groupings that have occurred, such as the combining of counties Leeds/Grenville/Dundas, we have continued to list the 52 provincial regions as mapped and described in both volumes of *Breeding Birds*..

Changes in nesting and breeding distribution, nest data, clutch sizes, cowbird parasitism, incubation periods, and new early and late egg dates, are given if they have been acquired. The four symbols used to qualify records on the breeding distribution maps of both volumes still apply, and it is understood that these revisional changes may add symbols, or alter existing symbols if documentation has been received with the record.

Recent supplements to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list (AOU 1989, 1995) have resulted in some English and scientific name changes affecting the Ontario breeding passerines list. The new English names are American Pipit replacing Water Pipit, Eastern Towhee replacing Rufous-sided Towhee, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow replacing Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and Baltimore Oriole replacing Northern Oriole. Currently, the forty-first and last supplement (AOU 1997) prior to the seventh edition of the AOU Check-list has made even more profound changes affecting one English name (Blue-headed Vireo replaces Solitary Vireo), other scientific names, and the listing order of passerine species, which will be reflected in these revisions. Most of these latter changes are based on DNA-DNA hybridization studies.

Breeding Bird Species

Olive-sided Flycatcher, *Contopus cooperi*
20 nests representing 13 provincial regions. A documented nest from Sudbury District (1987) was the only new regional nesting.

Eastern Wood-Pewee, *Contopus virens*
298 nests representing 38 provincial regions. Recently acquired nest records from former counties of Lincoln (1939), Welland (1944), and a 1983 nest from Niagara, have established Niagara RM as a nesting region. A 1984 nesting was recently submitted for Prince Edward County.
Cowbird parasitism 165 nests with 9 parasitized (5.5%).
EGG DATES An extremely early egg date of 15 May from Wellington (1894) by Allan Brooks would seem to be in error, possibly due to a misidentification.

Figure 1: Adult Olive-sided Flycatcher at nest high in a Black Spruce, 23 June 1987, Vrooman Twp., Sudbury District. Photo by *G. K. Peck*.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, *Empidonax flaviventris*
18 nests representing 10 provincial regions. A 1982 nest from Grey and a 1987 nest from Sudbury were the most recent additions. The Grey nest is the most southerly modern-day nesting record.
INCUBATION PERIOD 2 nests; 1 nest, at least 13 days; 1 nest of 15 days.
EGG DATES 13 nests, 8 June to 20 July (16 dates); 7 nests, 20 June to 27 June.

Acadian Flycatcher, *Empidonax virescens*
39 (42 nests) representing 7 provincial regions.
EGGS 23 nests with 1 to 4 eggs; **1E**(2N), **2E**(4N), **3E**(15N), **4E**(2N).
Average clutch range 3 eggs (15 nests).
Cowbird parasitism 25 nests with 3 parasitized (12%).
EGG DATES 20 nests, 10 June to 30 July (26 dates); 10 nests, 17 June to 6 July.

Alder Flycatcher, *Empidonax alnorum*
59 nests representing 17 provincial regions. A 1978 nest record has been added from Grey.
Cowbird parasitism 55 nests with 8 parasitized (14.6%).
EGG DATES 51 nests, 15 June to 28 July (64 dates); 26 nests, 23 June to 6 July.
Renestings were reported after failure of first nests, with second nests built in same territory.

Willow Flycatcher, *Empidonax traillii*
102 nests representing 22 provincial regions. New nest records have been received from Grey (1983), Niagara (1995), Simcoe (1978), and Wellington (1982).
A small nest from Hamilton-Wentworth had an outside diameter of 7.5 cm (3 inches), inside diameter 4.4 cm (1.7 inches), outside depth 6.4 cm (2.5 inches), and inside depth 5 cm (2 inches).
Cowbird parasitism 91 nests with 22 parasitized (24.2%).
INCUBATION PERIOD In a Durham nest there was a 6-day interval between the laying of the first and last egg in a 4-egg clutch. The incubation period in this nest was 14 days.
EGG DATES 68 nests, 13 June to 20 July (92 dates); 34 nests, 25 June to 6 July.

Least Flycatcher, *Empidonax minimus*
293 nests representing 36 provincial regions. Bruce (1985), Haldimand-Norfolk (1993), and Perth (1985), were the recent regional nestings.

In at least 7 provincial regions, nests in close proximity to each other have been reported, and as many as 7 or 8 nests have been noted in such proximity. These situations would seem to approximate a form of coloniality, as previously described (Davis 1959).
Cowbird parasitism 143 nests with 5 parasitized (3.5%).

Eastern Phoebe, *Sayornis phoebe*
1993 (2034 nests) representing 50 provincial regions.
A double-bowled nest with eggs in each bowl, was found in Bruce in 1993. One of the clutches was being incubated.
Cowbird parasitism 1498 nests with 179 parasitized (11.9%).
INCUBATION PERIOD 45 nests, 13 to 18 days, with 23 averaging 14 to 15 days.

Great Crested Flycatcher, *Myiarchus crinitus*
413 nests representing 45 provincial regions. A 1988 nest from Thunder Bay was reported, and is one of the few northern breeding records.
EGGS 164 nests, 1 to 7 eggs; **1E** (3N), **2E** (7N), **3E** (13N), **4E** (43N), **5E** (60N), **6E** (60N), **7E** (1N).
Average clutch range 5 to 6 eggs (120 nests).
Cowbird parasitism 227 nests with 6 parasitized (2.6%).
INCUBATION PERIOD 10 nests, 12 to 14 days, with 8 nests from 13 to 14 days.

Western Kingbird, *Tyrannus verticalis*
3 nests representing 1 provincial region. The 3 nests were reported in 1987, 1988, and 1991, all from western Rainy River District.

One nest was in a farm yard near buildings, and another was in a small town residential area. The nest trees were a willow sp., Manitoba Maple, and a Bur Oak, and nests were at respective heights of 3 m (9.8 ft), 6 m (19.7 ft), and 10 m (32.8 ft). Two of the nests were in large forks and the other on a lateral branch.

One nest was described as a grassy cup, and another as an untidy, elongated structure. Exteriors were formed of coarse grasses, weed stalks, fine twigs, string, and paper-like material.

On 7 June an adult was observed on one of the nests probably incubating eggs, and in another of the nests, 2 young near fledging were noted on 12 July.

A fourth nest in Kent County (1943) remains hypothetical due to unidentifiable documentation.

Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*
1801 (1806 nests) representing all 52 provincial regions.
Cowbird pararsitism 1066 nests with 12 parasitized (1.1%). Since the Eastern Kingbird is a known rejector species, the percentage parasitism is probably higher than indicated.

A late egg date of 6 August was reported from Peterborough. The nest contained young on 20 August.

Northern Shrike, *Lanius excubitor*
Another breeding record (1993) from Kenora District, near the mouth of the Severn River, has been received. As yet, no occupied Ontario nest of this species has been discovered.

Loggerhead Shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus*
274 nests representing 35 provincial regions. Early nest records from Elgin (1952) and Norfolk (1938) have been acquired recently. A possible 1984 nesting or breeding record from Stormont was reported (Weir 1984). The increase in nest card numbers is the result of recent, assiduous monitoring of this declining provincial breeding species.

In 1996, 16 nests from Lennox and Addington were in juniper (Eastern Redcedar).
EGGS 142 nests with 1 to 7 eggs.
Average clutch range 5 to 6 eggs (87 nests).

Several instances of renesting were noted, and a probable double brood was reported from Victoria in 1992 (Pittaway 1993).

White-eyed Vireo, *Vireo griseus*
11 nests representing 3 provincial regions. A possible 1991 breeding record for Elgin involved an adult feeding a flying young bird.

A Haldimand-Norfolk nest had an outside diameter of 6 cm (2.4 inches), inside diameter of 5 cm (2 inches), outside depth of 6 cm (2.4 inches), and inside depth of 4 cm (1.6 inches).
EGGS **3E** (1N), **4E** (1N).
Cowbird parasitism 7 nests with 4 parasitized (57%).
INCUBATION PERIOD 1 nest, 11 to 12 days.
EGG DATES 4 nests, 15 May to 14 June (6 dates).

Figure 2: Nest and eggs of Loggerhead Shrike in hawthorn hedgerow, 9 May 1967, Halton County. Photo by *G.K. Peck*.

Figure 3: Blue-headed Vireo with food for young in pendant nest, Garvey Twp., Sudbury District. Photo by *G. K. Peck*.

Blue-headed Vireo (Solitary Vireo), *Vireo solitarius*
71 nests representing 20 provincial regions. Elgin (1991) and Middlesex (1988) are new nesting regions.
EGGS 41 nests, 2 to 5 eggs.
Average clutch range 4 eggs (33 nests).
Cowbird parasitism 50 nests with 4 parasitized (8%).

Yellow-throated Vireo, *Vireo flavifrons*
94 (95 nests) representing 23 provincial regions. Added nesting regions are Haldimand-Norfolk (1987), Oxford (1988), Niagara (1993), and Sudbury (1996). The Sudbury nest is the most northerly to date. Two occupied nests were noted within 15 m (50 ft) of each other in Oxford in 1988.
Cowbird parasitism 48 nests with 23 parasitized (47.9%).
An unusually short incubation period of 10 days for one of three eggs in a clutch was reported from Elgin. In this same nest, there was a delay of at least 5 days between the first and third egg.

Warbling Vireo, *Vireo gilvus*
179 (180) nests representing 37 provincial regions. Recent nesting regions are Muskoka (1983), Perth (1985), Prince Edward (1995), and Sudbury (1989).
EGGS 54 nests with 1 to 4 eggs; **1E**(2N), **2E** (9N), **3E** (18N), **4E** (25N).
Average clutch range 3 to 4 eggs (43 nests).
The unusual incubation of a single, infertile egg was reported, in a nest which contained feathers in its exterior as well as its lining (James 1996).
Cowbird parasitism 62 nests with 7 parasitized (11.3%). The eastern form of this vireo is now known to be a rejector of cowbird eggs (Sealy 1996); thus, the percentage parasitism may be higher than shown.

Philadelphia Vireo, *Vireo philadelphicus*
41 nests representing 8 provincial regions.
Cowbird parasitism 14 nests with 2 parasitized (14.3%). A parasitized nest in the collection of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, CA, purported to be of this species, was collected on 15 June 1915 on the Humber River (York County?) (Friedmann et al. 1977). This record has been disregarded due to a lack of data, its southern location, and the possibility of a misidentification.

Figure 4: Seven eggs of Black-billed Magpie in typical, bulky nest with mud in its interior. In Ontario, a dozen nests have been found, all in western Rainy River District. Photo by *G.K. Peck*.

Red-eyed Vireo, *Vireo olivaceus*
568 nests representing 44 provincial regions
Cowbird parasitism 387 nests with 154 parasitized (40%). A study in Waterloo in 1996 reported 13 Red-eyed Vireo nests with 10 parasitized (76.9%), an extremely high rate.

Gray Jay, *Perisoreus canadensis*
82 nests representing 9 provincial regions. Muskoka (1994) and Timiskaming (1996) are recently added nesting regions. A probable southern breeding record has been reported from Peterborough (Ridout 1996).

Blue Jay, *Cyanocitta cristata*
472 nests representing 43 provincial regions. An historical nest record (1912) from Hastings has been acquired.

The number of coniferous nest trees as stated in Volume 2, should have been 7 spp. and not 76. Blue Spruce and Lilac are newly reported nest trees.

Renestings and double broods have both been noted.

Black-billed Magpie, *Pica pica*
12 nests representing 1 provincial region. More nests continue to be reported from Curran and Worthington townships in western Rainy River District, thus far the species' only provincial nesting area.

A nest on the roof beams of an open hay shed, at a height of 5 m (16.4 ft), was occupied in 1986, 1987, and 1989. Four other recent nests were in willows at heights ranging from 2 to 3.5 m (6.6 to 10.7 ft).

One nest had an outside diameter of 50 cm (19.7 inches), inside diameter of 25 cm (9.8 inches), outside depth of 50 cm (19.7 inches), and inside depth of 15 cm (5.9 inches). Two other nests had outside depths of 30 and 80 cm (11.8 and 31.5 inches).

One nest contained at least 4 young on 9 June, and adults were seen at the 6 other new nests between 29 March and 9 June.

American Crow, *Corvus brachyrhynchos*
882 nests representing 45 provincial regions. A 1986 nest record from Haliburton has been added.

Common Raven, *Corvus corax*
252 (253 nests) representing 19 provincial regions. The three most recent nesting regions are Bruce (1993), Grey (1995), and Toronto (1987). These records emphasize the southern expansion of the breeding range of this species, and the Toronto record is the most southerly to date (Jefferson 1989). The most northerly provincial nest record was submitted in 1990 from Kenora, near the mouth of the Shagamu River at Hudson Bay. Although breeding was previously indicated for Leeds County (Peck and James 1987), a specific record has yet to be documented in the ONRS.

Outside diameters of 15 nests ranged from 40 to 152 cm (16 to 60 inches)., with 8 averaging 60 to 91 cm (24 to 36 inches); inside diameter of 2 nests were 15 and 25 cm (6 to 10 inches); outside depths of 11 nests ranged from 20 to 75 cm (8 to 30 inches), with 6 averaging 30 to 45 cm (12 to 18 inches); inside depth of 3 nests were 10, 15, and 20 cm (4, 6, and 8 inches).
EGGS 35 nests with 2 to 7 eggs; 2E (1N), **3E** (7N), **4E** (14N), **5E** (10N), **6E** (1N), **7E** (2N).
Average clutch range 4 to 5 eggs (24 nests).
EGG DATES 20 nests, 10 March to 16 May (27 dates); 10 nests, 27 March to 16 April.
Renesting was reported at a Timiskaming site after the first nest was abandoned. The second nest was 183 m (600 ft) distant from the first nest.

Figure 5: Ground nest of Horned Lark containing four eggs, 10 June 1997, St. Vincent Twp., Grey County. Photo by *G. K. Peck*.

Horned Lark, *Eremophila alpestris*
187 (189 nests) representing 39 provincial regions. Nest records from Grey (1992) and Prince Edward (1986) are the new additions.

A 1941 nest record from York was recently received and was the second nest described in the middle of railway tracks, in use at least twice daily.

Eight nests had outside diameters ranging from 7.5 to 11 cm (3 to 4.3 inches), inside diameters from 5 to 7.5 cm (2 to 3 inches), outside depths from 4 to 6 cm (1.6 to 2.4 inches), and inside depths from 2.5 to 4.5 cm (1 to 1.8 inches).
EGGS 175 nests with 1 to 6 eggs; 1E (2N), **2E** (19N), **3E** (70N), **4E** (73N), **5E** (10N), **6E** (1N).
Average clutch range 3 to 4 eggs (143 nests).
Cowbird parasitism 185 nests with 4 parasitized (2.2%).
EGG DATES 156 nests, 23 March to 20 July (186 dates); 78 nests, 17 April to 29 May.

Purple Martin, *Progne subis*
870 (640 colonies, 50 single nestings, ca 5470 nests) representing 50 provincial regions.
EGGS 279 nests with 1 to 7 eggs; 1E (7N), **2E** (13N), **3E** (24N), **4E** (79N), **5E** (101N), **6E** (53N), 7E (2N).
Average clutch range 4 to 5 eggs (180 nests).

Tree Swallow, *Tachycineta bicolor*
6153 (ca 6485 nests) representing all 52 provincial regions.
Cowbird parasitism 4585 nests with 1 parasitized (0.02%).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*
456 (313 isolated nestings, 68 colonies, ca. 572 nests) representing 42 provincial regions.

Bank Swallow, *Riparia riparia*
1497 (200 colonies, 48 isolated nestings, ca. 9648 nests) representing all 52 provincial regions.

Later egg dates than 17 July are likely since adults were reported feeding young in burrows on 13 August, in Grey.

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*
4118 (ca. 4830 nests) representing all 52 provincial regions.
Cowbird parasitism 3351 nests with 4 parasitized (0.03%).

Cliff Swallow, *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*
985 (488 colonies, 109 single nestings, ca. 7639 nests) representing all 52 provincial regions. Niagara (1991) was the final nesting region to be reported.

After completion, most nests had downward-sloping spouts.

Earlier and later egg dates than those given in Volume 2 (22 May to 2 August) were strongly suggested by birds on nests on 4 May (Simcoe), and the feeding of young in nests on 24 August (Haldimand-Norfolk).

Black-capped Chickadee, *Poecile atricapillus*
651 (658 nests) representing 46 provincial regions. Bruce (1993) and Prescott (1993) were the latest nesting regions to be added.
EGGS 176 nests with 1 to 11 eggs; 1E (2N), 2E (3N), **3E** (6N), **4E** (16N), **5E** (20N), **6E** (58N), **7E** (42N), **8E** (22N), **9E** (5N), **10E** (1N), **11E** (1N).
Average clutch range 6 to 7 eggs (100 nests).
Two more double broods were reported.
Cowbird parasitism 247 nests with 6 parasitized (2.4%).
INCUBATION PERIOD 12 nests, 11 to 17 days; 10 nests, 12 to 13 days.

A late egg date of 20 July was submitted from Waterloo (1996).

Boreal Chickadee, *Poecile hudsonicus*
69 nests representing 7 provincial regions. Kenora (1985) was the most recently added nesting region.

The large increase in numbers of nest records is largely due to a study project in Sudbury with nest boxes (39 nests), which this species uses readily.
EGGS 41 nests with 1 to 8 eggs; 1E (1N), 2E (2N), **4E** (4N), **5E** (5N), **6E** (17N), **7E** (11N), **8E** (1N).
Average clutch range 6 to 7 eggs (28 nests).
INCUBATION PERIOD 9 nests, 11 to 14 days.
EGG DATES 44 nests, 22 May to 5 July (66 dates); 22 nests, 29 May to 4 June.

Tufted Titmouse, *Baeolophus bicolor*
11 nests representing 6 provincial regions. A nest from Haldimand-Norfolk (1996) was reported, and an unsuccessful nest in a bird box was found in 1997 in Manitoulin. The Manitoulin nesting in Howland Township (45° 57'N, 81° 56'W) was considerably north of all other provincial nests of this Carolinian Zone species.

Red-breasted Nuthatch, *Sitta canadensis*
99 (100 nests) representing 27 provincial regions. The 6 added regions since Volume 2 are Elgin (1989), Grey (1994), Hamilton-Wentworth (1991), Manitoulin (1990), Victoria (1990), and Waterloo (1989).
EGGS 16 nests with 1 to 7 eggs.
Average clutch range 5 to 6 eggs (9 nests).

A second brood in the same nest was reported from Nipissing.
EGG DATES 16 nests, 5 May to 13 June (18 dates); 8 nests, 21 May to 4 June.

White-breasted Nuthatch, *Sitta carolinensis*
117 nests representing 35 provincial regions. A 1952 nest from Waterloo was recently added.

A fourth nest in a bird box was reported from Durham.
Cowbird parasitism 26 nests with 1 parasitized (3.8%).

Brown Creeper, ***Certhia americana***
103 nests representing 32 provincial regions. Bruce (1987), Elgin (1992), Haldimand-Norfolk (1981), and Waterloo (1986) were added nesting regions. A possible 1985 nesting in Prince Edward was reported (Weir 1985).

A large Elgin nest had an outside diameter of 15 cm (5.9 inches), inside diameter of 7 cm (2.8 inches), outside depth of 25 cm (9.8 inches), and inside depth of 5 cm (2 inches).
EGGS 41 nests with 1 to 8 eggs; 1E (2N), 3E (3N), **4E** (11N), **5E** (11N), **6E** (11N), **7E** (2N), **8E** (1N).
Average clutch range 4 to 6 eggs (33 nests).
EGG DATES 32 nests, 23 April to 13 July (39 dates); 16 nests, 26 May to 11 June. Young birds still in a nest on 9 August (Nipissing) suggest a later egg date than that shown.

Carolina Wren, ***Thryothorus ludovicianus***
38 (39 nests) representing 11 provincial regions. A nest record from Elgin (1992), a probable breeding record from Bruce (1993), and an undocumented 1989 breeding in Oxford (Weir 1989) were reported.

Two recently submitted nest records were in hanging flower baskets, another was in a bird box, another under eaves of a building, and a fifth was situated in duck-trap gear in a marsh.

Heights of 21 nests ranged from 0.5 to 4.5 m (1.7 to 14.8 ft), with 11 averaging 1.2 to 2.2 m (4 to 7 ft).

Eight nests had outside diameters ranging from 9 to 20 cm (3.5 to 7.9 inches), inside diameters from 6 to 9.5 cm (2.4 to 3.7 inches), outside depths from 8 to 14 cm (3.1 to 5.5 inches), and inside depths from 3 to 10 cm (1.2 to 3.9 inches). One nest was described as globe-shaped.
EGGS 22 nests with 3 to 9 eggs; **3E** (3N), **4E** (4N), **5E** (14N), **9E** (1N).
Average clutch range 5 eggs (14 nests).
INCUBATION PERIOD 4 nests: 2 of 14 days, 1 of at least 14 days, 1 of 15 days.
EGG DATES 15 nests, 5 April to 8 August (22 dates); 8 nests, 10 May to 29 May. Three young in an Essex nest on 29 August suggest a later egg date than the one shown.

Bewick's Wren, ***Thryomanes bewickii***
5 nests representing 1 provincial region. No new breeding data has been received since 1957.

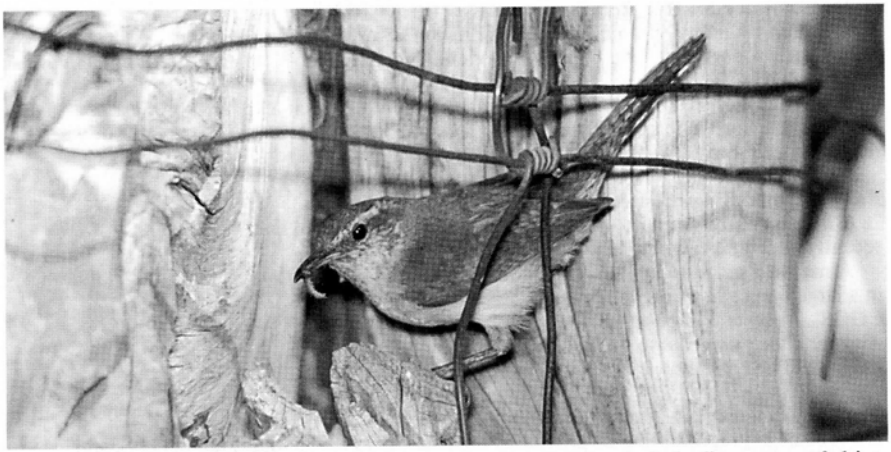

Figure 6: Bewick's Wren near its cavity nest in fence post. Only five nests of this southern and mostly western wren have been found in Ontario, all in Essex County. Photo by *G.K. Peck*.

House Wren, ***Troglodytes aedon***
1863 (ca 1938 nests) representing 50 provincial regions. Nest records were received from Glengarry (1994) and Timiskaming (1988).
Cowbird parasitism 1213 nests with 4 parasitized (0.3%).
An early egg date of 7 April was reported from Niagara in 1987.

Winter Wren, ***Troglodytes troglodytes***
35 nests representing 19 provincial regions. Nest records were received from Haldimand-Norfolk (1988), Haliburton (1990), and Waterloo (1995). A possible breeding in 1986 in Elgin was noted (Weir 1986).
New nest locations were: a nest built upon an old Eastern Phoebe nest, a nest on a woodshed beam, and a nest on a beam under a cottage eave. Five nests had outside diameters ranging from 8.5 to 15 cm (3.3 to 5.9 inches), inside diameters from 4 to 6 cm (1.6 to 2.4 inches), outside depths from 5.5 to 8 cm (2.2 to 3.1 inches), and inside depths from 3 to 5.5 cm (1.2 to 2.2 inches).
EGGS 11 nests with 1 to 6 eggs; 1E (1N), **4E** (3N), **5E** (4N), **6E** (3N).
Average clutch range 5 to 6 eggs (7 nests).
EGG DATES 8 nests, 31 May to 12 July; 4 nests, 2 June to 17 June.

Sedge Wren, ***Cistothorus platensis***
58 (67 nests) representing 21 provincial regions. An early nest record from Norfolk (1907) has been added.
EGGS 45 nests with 3 to 8 eggs; 3E (3N), **4E** (6N), **5E** (10N), **6E** (9N), **7E** (14N), **8E** (3N).
Average clutch range 5 to 7 eggs (33 nests).
INCUBATION PERIOD 1 nest, 12 days.
EGG DATES 40 nests, 5 June to 22 July (43 dates); 20 nests, 12 June to 1 July.

Marsh Wren, ***Cistothorus palustris***
499 (536 nests) representing 33 provincial regions. New nesting regions were Thunder Bay (1996), and Waterloo (1974).
A large, occupied nest in Niagara had an outside diameter of 14 cm (5.5 inches), outside depth of 25 cm (9.8 inches), and inner diameter of 11 cm (4.3 inches).

Golden-crowned Kinglet, ***Regulus satrapa***
12 nests representing 9 provincial regions. Prince Edward (1996) and Sudbury (1988) were the recently reported nesting regions. A possible breeding record was reported for Elgin in 1986 (Weir 1986).
Nine of 11 nests were positioned in spruce spp., and 1 was in a hemlock. A nest in a 20 m (66 ft) White Spruce was in a lower branch fork at a height of 6 m (20 ft). Heights of 9 nests ranged from 2.4 to 13 m (8 to 43 ft), with 5 averaging 2.4 to 10.7 m (8 to 35 ft).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet, ***Regulus calendula***
26 (32 nests) representing 14 provincial regions. Algoma (1908) and Victoria (1986) were recently added nesting regions.
A nest in a pine sapling in Victoria was only 0.4 m (1.3 ft) above ground, and another nest in a large spruce in Cochrane was at a height of 15 m (50 ft).
EGGS 24 nests, 3 to 10 eggs; **5E** (2N), **6E** (3N), **7E** (3N), **8E** (7N), **9E** (7N), **10E** (2N).
Average clutch range 8 to 9 eggs (14 nests).
EGG DATES 21 nests, 2 June to 23 June (26 dates); 10 nests, 10 June to 14 June.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, ***Polioptila caerulea***
156 (160 nests) representing 27 provincial regions. Grey (1985), Manitoulin (1994), and Ottawa-Carleton (1986) were recently reported nesting regions.
Initial nest observations in 68 records (43%) were of nests under construction, apparently the time when nesting activities are most easily observed.

Three instances were reported of second nests being built using materials taken from first nests, abandoned nearby.

A Middlesex nest had an outside diameter of 5.5 cm (2.2 inches), an inside diameter of 3.3 cm (1.3 inches), an outside depth of 6 cm (2.4 inches), and an inside depth of 3.5 cm (1.4 inches).

EGGS 30 nests with 3 to 5 eggs; **3E** (8N), **4E** (11N), **5E** (11N).

Average clutch range 4 to 5 eggs (22 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 33 nests with 4 parasitized (12.1%).

INCUBATION PERIOD 2 nests: 1 of 12 days, 1 of 15 days.

EGG DATES 45 nests, 6 May to 1 July (53 dates); 23 nests, 25 May to 9 June.

Renestings were noted after failure of first nest.

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Bird Observations from Some Southeastern James Bay Islands, N.W.T.

Y. Robert Tymstra

Introduction

Ninety-three bird species were observed during a survey of fourteen islands and 'rocks' in southeastern James Bay from 14 to 26 June 1995. The expedition was undertaken as part of the James Bay Islands Avifaunal Survey, a long-term series of investigations designed to discover more about the breeding distribution and migratory movements of birds in and around the islands of James Bay. (Editors' Note: these islands are closely associated geographically and ornithologically with nearby mainland Ontario, and hence are of particular interest to the province's birders.)

Several species new to the James Bay island region were found, including Horned Grebe, Wood Duck, Yellow Rail, Great Black-backed Gull, Mourning Dove, and American Goldfinch. The Wood Duck sighting constituted the first confirmed record for the Northwest Territories. Several Common Eider colonies on islets north of Strutton Island were surveyed and a Double-crested Cormorant colony was discovered on McNab Rock in Rupert Bay.

Our expedition began in Waskaganish (formerly Fort Rupert), Quebec, where we hired a 7 m open freighter canoe with guides for transport among the islands. Participating in the project were Russell Bright, Darrell Parsons, and Robert Tymstra, with assistance by Cree boatmen: Bernard Diamond and Richard Small of Waskaganish. On the afternoon of 14 June, we departed for a camp on the Quebec shore of James Bay, stopping briefly at Barboteau Rock in Rupert Bay. The following morning, we moved to Strutton Island where we set up a base camp for five days and made forays to four islets to the north. On 20 June, we moved camp to Charlton Island and explored nearby Danby and Carey Islands, as well as Wolf Islet and Cormorant Rock. The final base camp was established on Tent Island from 22 to 26 June. McNab Rock and Stag Rock were investigated briefly on the return to Waskaganish. Records are also presented from a short visit to Charlton Island, 11-14 June 1992, by Paul Tymstra and the author.

Weather was mostly sunny throughout the period with occasional fog or high winds; temperatures ranged from 3-27°C. James Bay was mostly ice-free south of the Strutton Islands but still had extensive ice cover north of the islands making navigation difficult.

Descriptions of Islands Visited

The larger islands visited are essentially low-lying drifts of sand, typically ringed with White Spruce (*Picea glauca*), with interiors rising to open plateaus thinly scattered with spruce. Other habitats include

willow thickets, poplar stands, grassy marsh, tussock tundra, sand dunes, gravel ridges, and small ponds and lakes. Offshore, tidal mudflats and rocky shoals abound. The islets north of the Strutton Islands are typically long, treeless bars of unconsolidated sand and gravel with scattered boulders and piles of driftwood; on higher ground, grasses sheltered numerous eider nests. Islands visited are listed below, followed by location, survey dates, km walked (where applicable), and duration of observation.

Barboteau Rock (51°41'N, 78°60'W) 14 June: 5 minutes observation. A small bare rock near the mouth of Rupert Bay. It supported a small Ring-billed Gull colony.

East and West Strutton Islands (Camp on West Strutton by channel: 52°06'N, 78°60'W). 15-19 June: 85 km/54 h. Wooded islands with small ponds. These islands are treated as a single island 12 km long by 2-3 km wide, bisected by a narrow channel.

Scoter Island (52°10'N, 78°57'W) 16 June: 30 minutes & 17 June: 2 h 30 min. A low, sandy, treeless island 2.5 km long with numerous shoals and exposed boulders offshore.

Islet I: (52°06'N, 78°53'W) 17 June: 45 min. A 700 m long treeless, narrow drift of sand northeast of Strutton Is. that contained many Common Eider nests.

Islet II: (52°09'N, 79°01'W) 17 June: 45 min. An 800 m long treeless, sandy, narrow drift with lots of driftwood, situated 4 km north of Strutton Island. The islet had many Common Eider nests in the higher grass as well as a probable colony of Black Guillemots nesting under boulders.

Islet III: (52°09'N, 79°07'W) 17 June:1 h 45 min. A wide crescent-shaped isle of sand, gravel and low lying shrubs with many Common Eider nests. It is about 1.6 km long, 4 km north of Strutton Isand.

Charlton Island (Camp at Charlton Depot: 51°57'N, 79°20'W) 20-22 June 1995: 28 km/13 h, and 11-14 June 1992: 41 km/31 h. James Bay's second biggest island, ca. 30 km in length, a large sandy, wooded island rising to 45 m. Only the coastal areas close to camp were surveyed.

Carey Island: (52°00'N, 79°13'W) 21 June:12 km/12 h. Wooded island about 5 km long, with some small ponds.

Danby Island (51°57'N, 79°16'W) 22 June: 19 km/12 h. A low sandy, wooded island 8 km long with a small area of saltmarsh at east end where Yellow Rail and Leconte's Sparrow were found.

Wolf Islet (52°07'N, 79°14'W) 21 June: 30 min. A grassy sand ridge about 500 m long, and 4 km off NE shore of Charlton Island.

Tent Island (51°49'N, 79°06'W) 22-26 June: 57 km/26 h. A squarish island about 3 km in diameter, with a variety of habitats: marshes, tidal flats, spruce forest, sandy beaches, open grassy areas, and small ponds.

Cormorant Rock (51°52'N, 79°03'W) 22 June: 5 min. A small bare rock formerly supporting a Double-crested Cormorant colony.

McNab Rocks (51°44'N, 79°06'W) 26 June: 10 min. A few small bare rocks in the mouth of Rupert Bay, 7 km south of Tent Island, one of which supported a thriving Double-crested Cormorant colony. Due to time constraints and to avoid undue disturbance, we limited our visit to ten minutes.

Stag Rock (51°35'N, 78°57'W) 26 June: 30 min. A small rocky island about 100 m in diameter in Rupert Bay ca. 15 km N of the mouth of the Rupert River, with some spruce and shrubby vegetation.

Survey Methods

Direct counting was the main survey method employed, with some 400 m line transects completed where habitat allowed. Kilometres walked and party hours spent in observation were recorded. We walked the circumferences of West and East Strutton, Carey, Danby, and Tent Islands; several inland forays were made as well. Sightings made during boat passages were included with the nearest island. On long and narrow Islets I and II, we were able to make complete eider nest counts by walking five men abreast and flushing females from their nests.

Species List

Ninety-three species from the 1995 expedition along with an additional eleven species from the 1992 Charlton Island visit are presented in Tables 3 and 4, with the order and common names following the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list (1983) and its supplements. Breeding status is based on criteria described for the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of the Northwest Territories* (Cadman 1988). Nineteen species were "Confirmed" as breeders (*), twenty species were found to be "Probable" breeders (+), and forty-one more were "Possible" breeders (#). Highest daily counts are given along with numbers of nests (n) and young (y) where applicable. All observational dates presented without the year indicated are from the 1995 survey.

Noteworthy Observations

Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*)**:** A total of five birds was seen on small ponds on Carey Island 21 June for a first documented James Bay island record (Sirois and McRae 1994).

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)**:** Todd (1963) described a colony of 34 nests of sticks and seaweed on Cormorant Rock (formerly Way Rock) in July 1912. Lewis and Peters (1941) found 65 old nests in September 1940. In June 1942, Todd revisited the Rock and counted 200 nests (190 with eggs). Todd believed this to be the only nesting colony on Hudson or James Bay. When we visited Cormorant Rock on 22 June 1995, we found no sign whatsoever of cormorant activity; however, our boatmen told us of another colony on one of the McNab Rocks about 13 km to the south. We visited the McNab Rocks on 26 June. On one of the bare rocks, we counted 42 active nests, made of sticks and seaweed and laid on the bare stone in two terraced levels. On the upper level, there were 25 nests, and 17 more on the lower level. As seen in Table 1, upper level nests contained significantly more eggs and/or young per nest as well as more eggs hatched. We found individual adults ranging as far away as Charlton and Strutton Islands during our survey. The local Crees we talked to knew of no other cormorant colonies on James Bay.

Table 1: Cormorant Nest Data

	Total Nests	1e/y*	2e/y	3e/y	4e/y	5e/y	%eggs hatched	average#e/y
Upper Level	25	2	0	8	14	1	58.6	3.5
Lower Level	17	1	6	8	2	0	2.2	2.6
Total	42	3	6	16	16	1		3.1

*e/y=#nests with eggs and/or young

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)**:** A male in breeding plumage was seen at close range on a small pond near our camp on West Strutton Island on 15 June 1995. This is the first confirmed record for the N.W.T.; there is an unconfirmed report from Fort Providence, May 1885 (Sirois and McRae 1994).

Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)**:** Many nests with eggs were found on the islets north of the Strutton Islands, typically sheltered by grass on higher ground. Islets I and II and Wolf Islet were completely surveyed; we missed many of the nests on Islet III (150 males were counted).

Table 2: Common Eider Nest Data

Location	Total # nests	3 eggs	4 eggs	5 eggs	6 eggs	7 eggs	Average#eggs
Islet I	24	2	8	9	3	2	4.8
Islet II	38	3	1	21	13		5.2
Islet III	70*	5	19	34	12		4.8
Wolf Islet	4	1	1	1	1		4.5
Totals:	136	11	29	65	29	2	4.8

*not all nests counted

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*)**:** An individual was heard calling in a grassy marsh on the east side of Danby Island, 22 June at 1000 h. First documented James Bay island record (Sirois and McRae 1994), but not unexpected as they are common on the mainland (Wilson and McRae 1993).

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)**:** Islet I:12 nests (fresh but empty nests: 9, one-egg nests:1, two-egg nests: 1, three-egg nests:1). Islet II: 1 nest with 3 eggs. Wolf Islet:7 nests (1 nest with 1 egg, 6 empty freshly-made nests). Cormorant Rock:1 nest with 3 eggs. Stag Rock: 9 nests (3 nests with 1 egg or young, 4 nests with 2 eggs or young, 2 nests with 2 young and 1 egg each).

Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*)**:** About 60 adults were counted in the vicinity of Barboteau Rock. Twelve nests were found (4 empty, 2 nests with 1 egg, 5 nests with 2 eggs, 1 nest with 3 eggs).

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)**:** An individual was observed in the Strutton Islands channel on 15 June for the first documented James Bay Islands record (Sirois and McRae 1994). An agitated adult was found on Scoter Island, 17 June.

Table 3: Observations from larger islands

Date Location	Jn 15-19 Strutton	Jn 16-17 Scoter	Jn 20-22 Charlton	Jn 21 Carey	Jn 22 Danby	Jn 22-26 Tent	Jn 11-14/92 Charlton
Red-throated Loon	(37	2	6	2	1		
Common Loon	8+	9	25#	3	2	4+	8+
Horned Grebe				5#			
Double-c. Cormorant	1		3	1		7	
American Bittern			1#		1#		1#
Snow Goose		1					2
Brant						5	260
Canada Goose	505#	282*	50	154	117	80*	500#
Green-winged Teal	28+	2	1	8+10y*	40	32*	2#
American Black Duck	183#	29	15#	82	45	65#	90#
Mallard	33+	1	25#	11+	39	30#	15#
Northern Pintail	20+			5	20+19y*	8*	6#
Northern Shoveler							1#
American Wigeon			2+	2+	4+	2	2#
Wood Duck	1						
Greater Scaup	2						2+
Lesser Scaup	29#	3	10#	8#	7#		
Common Eider	14+	22*	90		4		
Black Scoter	100	80	207	45	35	200	400
Surf Scoter	23		11		11	1	3
White-w. Scoter	8	15	30	200		20	20
Common Goldeneye	150	60	13	198	72	35	40
Bufflehead	3#						
Hooded Merganser						1	1#
Common Merganser	15+	1		11	14	40	2#
Red-b. Merganser	14+	3		6	6	8+	8+
Osprey	1*		2#		1		1*
Northern Harrier	1#	1	1#	2+	2+		1#
American Kestrel							1#
Merlin	1#				1#		
Spruce Grouse	1#						
Yellow Rail					2#		
Black-bellied Plover							1
Semipalmated Plover	1+	10+					
Killdeer	25*	2#	8*	3#	14#	9#	6*
Greater Yellowlegs	4	2	2		3	8	
Lesser Yellowlegs	1				2		
Solitary Sandpiper	1						
Spotted Sandpiper	6#	10+	20#	12+	8+		6+
Whimbrel	1					1	
Hudsonian Godwit						1	
Ruddy Turnstone		4					25
Red Knot							3
Semipalmated Sand.						2	
White-rumped Sand.						3	
Dunlin						1	
Common Snipe	12#		2#	4#	16#	10#	4#
Bonaparte's Gull							16
Ring-billed Gull	10	2+			2	2	6
Herring Gull	16	4+	5	7	10	25	8
Great Black-b. Gull	1	1+					
Arctic Tern	60	40	20		20	90	35

Table 3: Observations from larger islands (continued)

Date Location	Jn 15-19 Strutton	Jn 16-17 Scoter	Jn 20-22 Charlton	Jn 21 Carey	Jn 22 Danby	Jn 22-26 Tent	Jn 11-14/92 Charlton
Black Guillemot			19			1	
Mourning Dove			1				
Northern Hawk Owl							1#
Short-eared Owl							1#
Three-t. Woodpecker	2#						
Northern Flicker	11+		2#	3#	6#	2#	1#
Alder Flycatcher	6#		1#	3#	14#	3#	5#
Eastern Kingbird	1						
Horned Lark	2#	21#				8*	
Tree Swallow	2#		1#			1#	
Gray Jay	21*		7*	34#		2#	5*
American Crow	4+	1	4#	4#	5#	2#	6#
Common Raven	7*	2	2#		3#	2#	1#
Boreal Chickadee	4#			1#		1#	
Red-b. Nuthatch			1#				
Winter Wren	10#		1#	8#	2#	8#	2#
Golden-cr. Kinglet							2#
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	7#		6#	14#		5#	15+
Swainson's Thrush	3#		3#	6#	4#	1#	
Hermit Thrush	3#		6#	4#	2#	2#	5#
American Robin	6+		3#	16#	4#	2#	8#
American Pipit	1#						
Cedar Waxwing	44#	1	4#		6	120*	2#
Northern Shrike	1#						
European Starling							4
Tennessee Warbler	6+		1#	1#	11#	13#	
Orange-cr. Warbler	2#		2#		1#		2#
Yellow Warbler	8+	7*	4+	3#	31#	5#	4#
Magnolia Warbler							1#
Cape May Warbler	2+						
Yellow-r. Warbler	34+		5#	13#	2#	3#	10#
Palm Warbler			1#				1#
C. Yellowthroat	1#			4#	1#		1#
Wilson's Warbler	4#			2#	2#	2#	
Chipping Sparrow	1#						
Savannah Sparrow	35*	42*	2+	11#	80#	39#	16*
LeConte's Sparrow					3#		
Fox Sparrow	1#						4#
Song Sparrow	2#		6#	6#	3#	2#	
Lincoln's Sparrow	6#			4#	11#		
Swamp Sparrow	8#		8#	10#	14#	3#	4#
White-thr. Sparrow	35*	1	10#	41#	22#	10#	15*
White-cr. Sparrow		3#	4*	1			2#
Dark-eyed Junco	26+		24#	25#	19#	8#	10#
Red-winged Blackbird			2+			4+	4+
Rusty Blackbird							1#
Pine Grosbeak					2#	2	1
White-w. Crossbill	35#		12*	8#	11	148	
Common Redpoll	20+		2#	5#			4#
Pine Siskin	4#	1		8#		30#	
American Goldfinch	1						

Symbols: y = young; (x = offshore; * = confirmed breeding; + = probable breeding; # = possible breeding

Table 4: Observations from smaller islands and rocks

Date Location	Jn 14 Barboteau	Jn 17 Islet 1	Jn 17 Islet 11	Jn 17 Islet 111	Jn 21 Wolf Is.	Jn 22 Cormorant	Jn 26 McNab R.	Jn 26 Stag R.
Common Loon						(2		
Double-c. Cormorant							42n*	
Brant								(2
Canada Goose			1n*	(70	(200			
American Black Duck			1	2				
Mallard								1n*
Northern Pintail				2+				
Common Eider		24n*	38n*	150/70n*	4n*			
Oldsquaw					1			
Black Scoter		(150	(180		(450	(190		
Surf Scoter					(450			
White-w. Scoter					(125			
Common Goldeneye		30	50		(50			
Common Merganser				1				
Red-b. Merganser		4	6	2		(2		
Osprey					(1			
Semipalmated Plover				1				
Killdeer				2#				
Spotted Sandpiper				10#				1
Hudsonian Godwit					1			
Red-n. Phalarope				2+				
Ring-billed Gull	60/12n*							
Herring Gull		12n*			15/7n*	2/1n*		9n*
Arctic Tern		30#	70#	30#	25#			
Black Guillemot			11#	85#	(21			
Horned Lark		2#		4#				
Ruby-cr. Kinglet				1				
Cedar Waxwing								6
Yellow Warbler				1				
Savannah Sparrow			20#					
White-w. Crossbill								8
Common Redpoll				1				
Pine Siskin								10

Symbols: n = nests; (x = offshore; * = confirmed breeding; + = probable breeding; # = possible breeding

Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*)**:** This species was common in the vicinity of Islets II and III where numerous boulders provide suitable habitat for nests (Todd 1963).

Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*)**:** One was observed 1 km west of Charlton Depot on 20 June. This is the first documented James Bay island record (Sirois and McRae 1994).

Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)**:** An individual was found on 18 June on East Strutton Island. There is one previous record from North Twin Island on 3 July 1973 (Manning 1981).

European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)**:** Four were observed feeding on tidal mudflats on 13 June 1992 on Charlton Island. Sirois and McRae (1994) report this species as a regular migrant in the islands.

American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*)**:** One female was seen on West Strutton Island, 16 June. First documented record from the James Bay islands (Sirois and McRae 1994).

Acknowledgements

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Notes

Wing Flashing Behaviour in a Northern Mockingbird

George Fairfield and Jean Fairfield

On the morning of 30 June 1997, George Fairfield watched a Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) foraging in an open area of sparse grassland on the shore of Lake Ontario near the southwestern point of Humber Bay Park West, Toronto.

The bird hopped up thirty or forty centimetres above the ground, quickly opened and closed its wings, and simultaneously spread and closed its tail, and then darted ahead to catch insects that flushed from the grass. It repeated this performance several times, and then flew off and disappeared into a nearby caragana planting.

The white flashes on the wings and the white outer tail feathers of the mockingbird appeared to provide a useful hunting tool when used in this way. The explosive effect was quite impressive due to the comparatively long wings and tail, and the contrast between the rather plain appearance of the bird with wings and tail folded and the spectacular black and white pattern produced when they opened.

On the morning of 7 July 1997, Jean Fairfield saw a mockingbird at the same place catch a large earthworm, fly to the caragana planting, and feed a fully feathered young mockingbird.

Derrickson and Breitwisch (1992), in their contribution on the Northern Mockingbird in *The Birds of North America,* summarize the work of several writers on the subject of wing flashing as follows: "When walking or running on the ground, frequently raises wings ("wing flashes") half to fully open in a stereotyped manner, in several progressively higher jerky movements, exposing conspicuous white wing patch .... Function of this behavior unknown; speculations include startling insects or potential predators (especially nest predators) and as a component of territorial display". On the foraging behaviour, they note that: "Most arthropods taken by walking, running, or hopping along the ground. Typically, runs a short distance, stops, and lunges at prey on ground .... Also catches insects flying just above ground. Short grass preferred to long grass for such foraging."

The observations made on 30 June 1997 provide evidence that Northern Mockingbirds use wing flashing for startling insects while foraging.

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Remembering Dennis Rupert (1933-1996)

Sarah Rupert

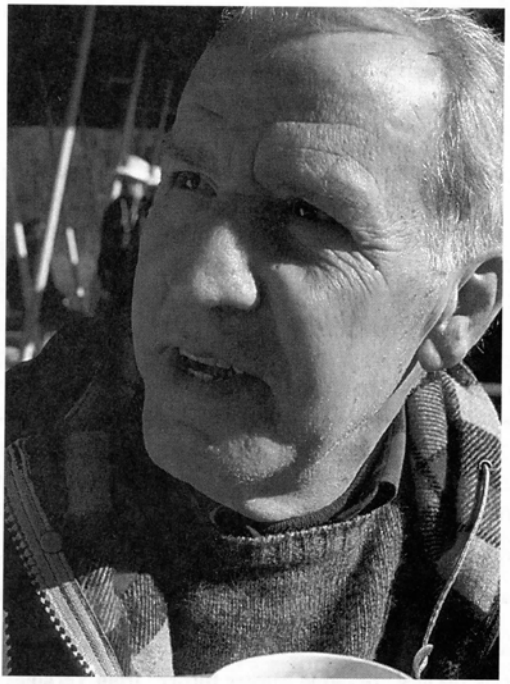

Figure 1: Dennis Rupert at Point Pelee in May 1988. Photo by *Jim Wilson.*

Though it has been more than a year since the passing on 8 August 1996 of my father, Dennis Rupert, I had little trouble finding people willing to help me put together this tribute. My father was an exceptional man, one of the best birders around and my very dear friend. Though he was an engineer by trade, his true passions lay in his hobbies: birdwatching and botany. He characterized himself as an "orchid chaser" and could be found looking to the ground as often as he was looking to the skies. In the months since his death, I have learned the impact that he had on so many lives; what better tribute could you have. I would like to turn you over to the words of my sister and give you a little more insight about the person Dennis Rupert was.

"Dennis Franklin Rupert was born in Leamington, Ontario on 15 December 1933. He went to the University of Toronto and obtained a degree in chemical engineering

which landed him a job at Polysar (now Bayer) Rubber Corporation where he stayed for 40 years, writing the financial programs for the company's computer system. Along with a passion for technology, my father was a brilliant naturalist. He knew bird plumages, songs and all the regional variations; he could identify thousands of wildflowers, hundreds of trees, dozens of mushrooms, lichens, mosses, butterflies, all by Latin genus and species. He was never trained in biology or botany; he simply learned it because he loved it.

In a similar way, my father learned to paint and sketch, mostly diagrams and illustrations of birds and plants he'd seen in the field. But every leaf of paper carried a startlingly realistic image. Years ago he even painted a copy of a Lawren Harris painting that hangs in the AGO. A few years ago I was wandering through the gallery and exclaimed to a friend, "Hey that painting's over my mantle." His reproduction was that close to the original.

My father also played the piano by ear. He excelled with Scott Joplin rags; they are not easy! I envied his ability when I worked at my grade ten Royal Conservatory of Music exam, knowing he had only attained a grade one level and that was in the 1940s. In the fifties, my dad played saxophone in dance hall bands. He always backed away from dancing with me at family weddings because he "was always moving his fingers and blowing his horn" rather than cutting a rug." *Lucy (Martha) Rupert*

Dad started the Sarnia Nature Club (now known as Lambton Wildlife Incorporated) in 1966, with my mother and five other local naturalists. One of his pet projects within the Club was to take some of the younger people under his wings and take them out to experience nature. Ross Snider of Ingersoll and Dave Martin of Aylmer were two of these youngsters and have offered these memories:

"My association with Dennis began in 1966, when I was 13 years old. It was the first meeting of the Sarnia Nature Club and it ended with the taking of a phone number to call with any future bird sightings. Just a "rookie", I found a Snowy Owl the next week and reached home to phone the number. It was Dennis Rupert. That call changed my life forever. I was invited to go the following Saturday with Dennis to the Sarnia Waterfront to look for waterbirds; thus began 30 years of tutelage and friendship with a very extraordinary man. Many outings followed over the years to Pelee, Rondeau, Kettle Point and even week-long trips (missing school!) banding raptors at Point Pelee and Whitefish Point. Dennis and his wife Sue were wonderful; how fortunate I was." *Ross Snider*

"Dennis was my mentor and

inspiration. It's as simple as that. Although I spent some time birding with other proteges of Dennis, it was during the 10 years between the time I was 18 and 28 that I honed my birding skills and note keeping habits by spending countless hours with Dennis. Dennis preferred to explore birding spots close to home in Lambton County but we made occasional trips to hotspots such as Rondeau and Pelee.

I remember a remarkable trip in the aftermath of one Kettle Point Christmas Bird Count when Hoary Redpoll and Boreal Owl had been reported. We returned the next day to relocate these two species which would have been lifers for me. At the Boreal location Dennis persuaded me to check the interior of a dense cedar grove while he patrolled the perimeter. At one point the foliage was so thick that I had to crawl on my hands and knees. I can still picture the scene vividly because at one point I looked up and was staring face-to-face with a Long-eared Owl, an acceptable alternative lifer to the Boreal Owl that we never found. On the same trip I remember walking through an abandoned, weedy gravel pit with huge snowflakes floating slowly groundward and, all of a sudden, finding ourselves in the midst of a huge flock of 200 or so redpolls. Curiously, despite the fact that we were in an almost white-out, we immediately spotted the Hoary which stood out like a sore thumb with its brilliant frosty appearance in comparison to the browner Commons." *Dave Martin*

My father took such joy in teaching others about nature. I was taken on many evening frog hunts and encouraged to rear Monarch caterpillars in the back bathroom. One of the most vivid of my memories as a youngster was the fall of 1973. I was three years old and had the great privilege of spending the night in the banding trailer at Point Pelee National Park. Dad had to check the nets frequently through the night for owls and to my great wonder, brought owls into the trailer to show me. I was awakened with an owl shoved in my face, and that was just about when I became hooked on birdwatching. He helped many others along the way and always strove to have every person see the bird in question.

"My first encounter with Dennis was on a cold December day at Kettle Point in 1969. He had found a Glaucous Gull sitting on a rocky offshore island, but when I looked the bird was hidden behind a group of Herring Gulls. I was anxious to see the bird but the island was far enough offshore that a few people along the shoreline or traffic along the road weren't going to flush the flock. Dennis just reached out with both arms and flapped a few times. It looked pretty odd but all the birds immediately flew up in the air for a moment and then set-

tled back onto the island. We had a nice view of the Glaucous Gull and I was greatly impressed, both with this trick and Dennis's assistance that day.

I never learned how he picked up that bit of magic but I like to think that it was Dennis who discovered gull reaction to waving arms. For the next 27 years I was always happy to partake of his encouragement, friendship and great birding skills." *Paul Pratt*

Dad's sense of humour was legendary. You could see the twinkle in his eyes and knew that he was up to something. Ross Snider was one of his early victims. They had come across a Black-crowned Night-Heron nesting colony and Dad convinced Ross to climb up and look into one of the nests, knowing full well that the young would regurgitate their food over the side at the sound of an intruder. Ross learned a valuable lesson about heron behaviour that day and after cleaning off even managed to forgive my Dad. I can remember another occasion while looking for a Harris's Sparrow when my birding companion had the unfortunate luck to dunk one leg in liquid pig manure. The sight gave both of us a good laugh and Dad turned to me and said "I don't know what you're laughing for — he's riding home in your car". He loved to tease and joke around, but he would only poke fun at those he liked. It really was a show of affection on his part.

Dennis loved to learn about his local area, and rarely strayed too far from home. He was not a "chaser", actually much the opposite when it came to rare birds. He would often scoff at those youngsters who would drive hundreds of kilometres for the life bird. Dad was patient; he figured that most things he wanted to see would end up in Sarnia eventually. Luckily for him, he was right. Before his death he did see two of the gulls that he often told me "would show up; it's just a matter of time". I would like to share the story of the Ross's Gull with you. I was home from university for reading week and was relaxing when I received a cryptic phone call. It was Dad and he was out of breath. The first thing that entered my head was that he was having another heart attack and for some reason was calling me instead of an ambulance. Then the words sunk in: "Ross's Gull, government docks, get camera, call people, click". I raced around in a panic and got the camera and managed to see the bird in the fading daylight. Boy, was Dad ever happy!

Botany was another of his lesser-known passions. Dad would trek yearly to the Bruce Peninsula for orchids and was an accomplished photographer. He tried to learn a new group of plants yearly and could often be found evenings in summer pouring over Britton and Brown. He volunteered his time to vegetative studies in local parks and

we would debate identification, though he was most often correct. He rescued many plants from bulldozers; I have the wildflower garden to prove it. He cared deeply for the environment and was so supportive when I decided to pursue Environmental Studies at university. In January of 1996, we started our own business and became partners. He was finally going to pursue a field of work relating to his true passions and this made me so happy. It was just unfortunate that he wasn't able to work at this for longer.

Dennis Rupert was truly a great man and parent. His support of both me and my sister was unrelenting. He was a patron and great fan of my sister's dancing and would go to great lengths to make sure that he didn't miss a performance. He spent a summer mucking around a forest with the highest mosquito population in the area, helping me update a plant list for the management plan that I was working on. Dad and I spent countless hours birdwatching and botanizing over the years and forged a great friendship. I have so many other memories that I could share with you, but there is just not room for them here. If you knew Dennis, I hope that this tribute has brought back some fond memories. For those of you who did not have the great pleasure of knowing him, I hope that you will take part of his spirit with you and enjoy all the aspects of nature and share them with others. This is the greatest tribute that I could ever hope for, and it would make Dad smile.

Sarah Rupert, 1472 Lee Court, Sarnia, Ontario N7S 3L6

Distinguished Ornithologist Award

Jean Iron

Figure 1: Bruce Di Labio (left) presenting the Distinguished Ornithologist Award to Earl Godfrey at his home in Ottawa, 20 October 1997. Photo by *Daniel F. Brunton*

The Board of Directors of the Ontario Field Ornithologists created the Distinguished Ornithologist Award at its meeting of 23 April 1997. The idea for the award came from Ron Pittaway. This award will be granted from time to time to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the scientific study of birds in Ontario and Canada. The award recognizes a person whose research on birds has led to many publications and a significant increase in new knowledge of birds. Award winners will be ornithologists whose work is acknowledged as authoritative and who have been a resource to OFO and the Ontario birding community. The award will be granted at the Annual General Meeting held in October. The recipient of the award receives a beautifully engraved plaque and an Honourary Life Membership in OFO.

The first Distinguished Ornithologist Award was granted to W. Earl Godfrey, author of *The*

Birds of Canada, and dean of Canadian ornithologists. The award was presented to Earl Godfrey on 18 October 1997 at the OFO Annual General Meeting held in Burlington. Bruce Di Labio accepted the award on behalf of Earl Godfrey, who was unable to attend. Bruce and Dan Brunton presented the award to Earl on 20 October at his home in Ottawa.

Jean Iron, OFO President, 9 Lichen Place, Don Mills, Ontario M3A 1X3

W. Earl Godfrey: Distinguished Ornithologist

Bruce M. Di Labio and Daniel F. Brunton

With the publication of *The Birds of Canada* in 1966, the name W. Earl Godfrey became synonymous with a new standard of excellence in the study of Canadian birds. Up to that point, birders had only Percy Taverner's much earlier description of Canadian birds to go by. That earlier treatment was a remarkable study in its own right (Cranmer-Byng 1996). It reflected its period, however, and thus relied heavily on the relatively limited specimen-based ornithological data available in the 1930s. Godfrey's later volume, illustrated by John Crosby's beautiful and perceptive illustrations and Stewart MacDonald's precise pen and ink sketches, incorporated the additions and advances in that traditional data base and also reflected the rich contribution now possible from observation-based field ornithology. This was an historic achievement and blended some of the best elements of ornithological treatise and birder's field guide. The publication of Godfrey's *The Birds of Canada* can fairly be seen as marking the point where observation-based field ornithology came into its own in Canada.

Our original copies are now somewhat yellowed and have been tattered and torn from years of heavy use. The excitement of finding our own *The Birds of Canada* under the Christmas tree, however, remains a vivid memory, as it does for so many birders of that generation. This book opened up a whole new dimension to our understanding of Canadian birds, their field identification and their distribution... and it was devoured from cover to cover.

The Birds of Canada was an immediate success and quickly became the best selling publication of the National Museum. It was a hit with more than Canadian birders, of course. In his review of the book, field guide author Roger Tory

Peterson correctly identified it as both an inspiration to field ornithologists and an historic benchmark for modern Canadian distributional and taxonomic studies (Peterson 1967).

The success of *The Birds of Canada* was the result of what, even to that point, had been a full career of scientific achievement. Earl Godfrey's achievements are founded on first-rate scholarship built upon a firm foundation of first-rate field-based knowledge. The value of that realistic foundation is seen time and again in Godfrey's work and in the advice and assistance he gives to others. What an important example in this age of molecularly-driven taxonomic investigation!

Godfrey's commitment to maintaining an expert and current knowledge of birds in the field likely goes back to the inspiration and guidance he received as a boy in Nova Scotia from that remarkable biologist and conservationist, Robie W. Tufts. The beginning of their relationship is best described by Earl himself:

" It was in April and there were birds in the bare branches of a Wolfville apple orchard. Another boy and I were taking practice shots at the birds with our homemade slingshots when suddenly an impressive figure dashed up, seemingly out of nowhere. He introduced himself as Robie Tufts, promptly confiscated our slingshots, and severely reprimanded us. Just when we were contemplating the prospect of a lengthy period in some reformatory, his voice softened and he instructed us to appear at his office at a later date. In that enchanted setting, the Robie Tufts enthusiasm and charm quickly converted two misguided boys into lifelong conservationists" (Godfrey 1984).

Earl obviously received even more than "a never-failing source of inspiration, guidance and freely-given help of all kinds" from Robie Tufts. Many birders and ornithologists alike, particularly those living in the Ottawa area, know first hand of Earl's willingness to listen to any question regarding birds. It is remarkable, really, to consider that anyone could simply walk in off the street to the wonderful old Victoria Museum Building or in later years, the Zoology Research Centre on Holly Lane, and he would always stop whatever he was doing and attend fully and patiently to the unannounced visitor. No matter how small an issue they might wish to discuss or how big a matter he had just put aside in order to deal with them, Earl always made time. For many of us, he instilled a strong sense that the pursuit of ornithological knowledge was a legitimate and important endeavour — and an exciting one to boot. Those of us fortunate enough to experience those remarkable gifts are forever in his debt.

Figure 1: Earl Godfrey examining specimens at the National Museum of Canada, May 1953. Photo courtesy of *Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa.*

Godfrey is currently Curator Emeritus of Ornithology at the Canadian Museum of Nature, a position he has held since retiring in 1977. He began his professional career close to home, however, undertaking a Master of Science degree at Acadia University in his native Wolfville, Nova Scotia. (He returned there in 1969 to receive an Honourary Doctorate for his contributions to Canadian science.) Following graduation, he took a position as a Research Assistant and then Assistant Curator of Birds in Ohio at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. He returned to Canada in 1947 to take up the position of Curator of Ornithology at the National Museum of Canada, later becoming Chief of the Division of Vertebrate Zoology.

In addition to substantial contributions to the scientific literature, Earl Godfrey conducted important field investigations in many areas of Canada. Much of his field work was conducted in western Canada; Ontario was being relatively well-covered by the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Maritimes, well... they had Robie Tufts and his associates! The success of these field efforts can be

immediately recognized in his major contribution to the Museum's extensive research collection and in the documentation of his first-hand analysis of bird populations in virtually all regions of Canada.

Godfrey's impact on the study of birds, particularly Canadian birds, has been far-reaching, with publications now extending back through 60 years. He published his first paper in the late 1930s, on the occurrence of Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Nova Scotia (Godfrey 1938). Fifty years later one could still hear the excitement in his voice when he talked of that first achievement ("I was really proud of that" — pers. comm., 1987). Since then he has produced more than 200 works. Of these, 75 were new research contributions on geographic variation, distribution, behaviour, plumages and molts. His work also encompasses over 100 reviews of major papers and books. His major popular and scientific publications include digests of regional field investigations, taxonomic revisions and chapters on selected aspects of birds in encyclopedias and handbooks. He also contributed to the publications and research of other ornithologists by serving on the A.O.U. Check-list Committee and as the ornithological editor for the *Canadian Field-Naturalist* for some 30 years.

In retirement, Earl Godfrey continues an active involvement in ornithological pursuits. He has recently published, for example, a book review in *The Auk* and is in the final stages of completing a major paper on the taxonomy of the Swamp Sparrow. And although he would never profess to be a lister, we have it on good authority that he recently added Barred Owl as the 144th species to his yard list!

At the end of the day, though, it all comes back to *The Birds of Canada*, the "bible" of Canadian ornithologists and birders for over 30 years now. The two editions of that book (Godfrey 1966; 1986) are enduring testaments to the skill and enthusiasm of Earl Godfrey and his associates and to the huge network of contacts he developed with field ornithologists from sea to sea to sea. His life-long passion for the study of Canadian bird life and his enthusiastic encouragement of others has also played a large role in launching the careers of numerous natural science specialists throughout Canada.

Earl Godfrey is indeed a most Distinguished Ornithologist. Robie Tufts would be proud!

Acknowledgements

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Product Review

Leica Trinovid 8x42

Ron Pittaway

The key elements to look for in top binoculars are: power, weight, close focus, field of view, depth of field and low light performance. This past August, I birded with a pair of Leica Trinovid 8x42 binoculars. I tested them on woodland birds in shady Haliburton forests and on shorebirds and hawks in open areas at Presqu'ile and Toronto's Leslie Street Spit. I reviewed eight power binoculars since many birders now prefer eight (and even seven) over ten power because they are more versatile, especially for woodland birding, yet they are also excellent for hawkwatching. I compared the Leicas to the 8x42 Bausch & Lomb Elite and the 7x42 Zeiss Dialyt, both used by many leading birders.

The 8x42 Leicas are a joy to use. They have an incredibly bright and sharp image. They focus easily and smoothly and hold their focus. As a wearer of eyeglasses, I have the same generous field of view with the eye cups down as a non-eyeglass wearer. Watching bears at dusk at the Minden dump, all three binoculars were equally bright in dim lighting.

The 8x42 Leicas close focus to about 5 metres which may deter some birders from buying them, particularly butterfly birders. The Elites close focus to an amazing 2 metres. However, a disadvantage of the new Elites is their shallow depth of field, requiring more time spent focusing, resulting in missed birds, especially when woodland birding. Both the Leicas and Zeiss have a generous depth of field, making them excellent for birding thickets and woodlands.

At 890 grams (31.4 oz.) they are a little heavier than the Elites and Zeiss but reasonable if you use a soft wide strap. For all but compact binoculars, I recommend replacing your strap with a wide OP/TECH strap made of neoprene for about $25. These straps are so comfortable they make your binoculars feel 50 percent lighter!

The Leicas are somewhat more expensive than the Elites and a bit more than the Zeiss. Keep in mind that the perfect birding binoculars have yet to be made. In the meantime, I highly recommend the new 8x42 Leica Trinovids. They are one of the best birding binoculars in the world today.

Comparison of Three Top Binoculars

Model	Leica 8x42	Elite 8x42	Zeiss 7x42
Weight	890 g	790g	800 g
Field of View	130 m	123 m	150 m
Close Focus	5.3 m	2 m	4.5 m
Depth of Field	deep	shallow	deep
Overall Rating	excellent	excellent	excellent

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Photo Quiz

Bob Curry

Our photo quiz bird is clearly a long-legged, long-billed shorebird of the sandpiper family. It is quite robust but not enough so to be a godwit of any species all of which, in addition, have a bill which is thicker at the base, slightly upturned and two-toned with a light basal half contrasting with a darker distal half. Willet is a taller, stouter bird with a shorter, stronger bill and has but a rudimentary light eyebrow stripe unlike the broad whitish supercilium in the subject bird. Greater Yellowlegs has a moderately long bill which usually appears slightly upturned. Moreover, the yellowlegs is quite slender, again lacks the bold supercilium and has a pattern of light speckling on the upperparts in all plumages. The much shorter-legged Common Snipe which occasionally occurs on open mudflats is a highly patterned bird with creamy stripes on the crown, face and back as well as bold barring on the sides of the breast and flanks. Stilt Sandpiper has a long bill but it is thinner than on our bird and it is slightly downcurved. The entire bird is also more finely proportioned and, as the name implies, has proportionately longer legs

Which brings us to the dowitchers. Both of the dowitcher species which occur in Ontario have long bills. The appellation Short-billed Dowitcher must seem particularly ridiculous to the birder seeing this species for the first time! So we should be especially cautious about using bill length as a method for distinguishing Long-billed from Short-billed Dowitcher. Nonetheless, bill length sometimes can be useful along with other characters in identifying the much less frequent and therefore more desirable Long-billed. Female shorebirds are larger than their male counterparts but there is considerable overlap between the sexes. Female Short-billed Dowitchers have bills as long as male Long-billed but female Long-billed may have bills which are twice the head length (from base of bill to back of head). Measuring the photo bird reveals a bill that is exactly twice the head length which suggests that we give the entire bird closer scrutiny.

In addition to bill proportions, there are a few even more subtle structural features which can be weighed into the argument, although species identification should never be determined by these alone. The Long-billed, a shorter-distance migrant, has proportionately shorter wings. The primary tips on some birds may fall just short of the tail tip whereas in Short-billed these same feathers may extend very slightly beyond the tail. On our bird, they just about reach the tail tip. Told you it wasn't much of a feature! On the other hand, the bird appears quite gangly which fits the situation for female Long-billed Dowitcher which has longer legs.

In shorebird identification, it is important to age the bird, as this can be very critical in determining the species. The overall lightness of underparts with a minimum of spotting and barring eliminates an alternate (breeding) plumage dowitcher. In full basic (winter) plumage, both dowitchers are plain grey and

unpatterned and consequently very difficult to identify to species unless the diagnostic calls are heard. Fortunately, this bird has a patterned dorsum created by light margins to the feathers of the back and scapulars and is a juvenile. Now we have something to work with.

Basic and juvenile Long-billed Dowitchers have a darker, more well-defined breast which contrasts with the lighter belly. This cowled appearance can be the very first indication of a potential Long-billed when the bird is seen at a distance. Actually, on close examination, this bird has rather more, albeit faint, spotting on the lower breast than one expects in Long-billed so we are still not sure what we've got. However, at this close approach, the key feather tracts can be examined. Note the four rows of scapulars lying between the back and the wing coverts. These are extensively dark-centred with fairly narrow light margins. Except at their very base, these feathers do not have internal light markings. This is consistent with Long-billed and unlike Short-billed, which has an overall brighter appearance created by internal yellow-gold markings on the scapulars. Even easier to study are the three or four long tertials which lie atop the tail and the three or four secondary coverts which droop down across the base of the tertials. All these feathers are plain and dark with very narrow light margins. This clinches the identification as **Long-billed Dowitcher**. Short-billed Dowitcher has extensive squiggly gold markings across and in the middle of these feathers. Indeed, they are often described as tiger-striped feathers.

Look very closely at the tail. A couple or three tail feathers are just visible below the tertials and folded primary tips. On these, the black barring is at least as wide as the white bars. On Short-billed, the tail appears lighter as the white bars are broader than the dark.

Although some of these features are subjective and could be misconstrued, the scapulars and tertials of juvenile dowitchers are absolutely diagnostic and, in the photo bird, the other characteristics are consistent with the identification of a juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher. The photographs were taken at Ottawa Beach by Michael Runtz on 2 October 1985.

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