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by *Barry Kent MacKay*

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Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 2004

William J. Crins

Introduction

The Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) evaluates documentation it receives of any record of a species or recognizable form that is on the Review List for Ontario (see www.ofo.ca/obrc). In addition, it reviews documentation relating to new species, new subspecies, and new breeding species for the province. This 23rd annual report deals with the results of the adjudication of 127 records reviewed by the OBRC during 2004, of which 77% were accepted. A total of 119 different observers submitted documentation for review by the 2004 committee. Reports were submitted by a wide range of birders, from experts to novices, and often were accompanied by photographs (prints or digital images), copies of field notes, sketches, and, in one case, a videotape.

As noted last year, there is an increasing trend toward the submission of photographic evidence only, often involving the posting of digital images on the OFO website, or the forwarding of digital images to the Committee directly, with little or no written documentation to support them. Information on the dates of observation, additional details describing the bird, and circumstances under which the observations were made are helpful in providing context for a record, as well as supplementing the features visible on the photographs (e.g., behaviour, comparisons with nearby birds, features hidden from view when the photograph was taken). Thus, we continue to urge observers to submit written reports to accompany the images submitted to OBRC or posted on the OFO website. For further information on the kinds of information that should be included in the written report, refer to the guidance available on the OBRC page on the OFO website (www.ofo.ca/obrc).

The members of the 2004 committee were Margaret J. C. Bain, William J. Crins (non-voting secretary), Robert Curry, David H. Elder, Christopher J. Escott, Kevin A. McLaughlin, Ronald G. Tozer (chair), and Alan Wormington (Figure 1). Mark K. Peck continued to serve in the role of the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) liaison (non-voting) to the OBRC in 2004. Kayo J. Roy re-joined the team in the role of Assistant to the Secretary during 2004.

The official Ontario bird checklist has increased by one species to

477 species, with the addition of Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*).

Listing of Records

The format for listing the number of accepted records for each species remains the same as that used last year (Crins 2004). A single number is used to indicate the total number of accepted records of a Review List species. In the past, trinomial or binomial systems were used in the annual reports, but these have been discontinued. Accepted records are arranged taxonomically by their English and scientific names following the Seventh Edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (American Ornithologists' Union 1998) and its 42nd supplement (American Ornithologists' Union 2000). Date(s) of occurrence, number of birds, sex, plumage, and location(s) are provided when known. Counties, districts, and regional municipalities are shown in italics. The plumage terminology used here follows that of Humphrey and Parkes (1959). For a detailed explanation of plumage and molt terminology, see Pittaway (2000). The names of all contributors of documentation are listed. Those contributors who are known to be the discoverers of the bird also are underlined. Others present when the bird was found who did not submit reports are listed when known.

The committee attempts to verify documented information prior to the acceptance and publication of a record, but it is inevitable that inaccuracies creep in from time to time. The committee welcomes written communication to the secretary from anyone with pertinent information that would correct or strengthen any record. There may be occasions where dates or other listed details in a record differ from those quoted in other published sources.

All records that were not accepted because of uncertain identification or origin are listed separately. Contributors of all "not accepted" reports receive a letter from the chairperson explaining the reasons for the decision, along with copies of the comments obtained from the voting members. These reports, as well as documentation for all accepted records, are kept on permanent file at the ROM. A "not accepted" report can be reconsidered by the OBRC if new evidence, in the form of additional documentation, is submitted to the committee for review. Researchers and other interested individuals are welcome to examine any of the filed reports at the ROM, but an appointment is necessary. Please write to Mark K. Peck, Department of Natural History, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C6 (e-mail: markp@rom.on.ca or telephone 416-586-5523).

Changes to the Review List

No changes to the Review List were made during 2004. Although not a component of the Review List *per se*, it should be noted that the first

confirmed breeding attempt by Black-necked Stilt was made in 2004, thus requiring the addition of an "*" beside this species on the Ontario Bird Checklist (Ontario Field Ornithologists 2004).

Acknowledgements

The OBRC would like to extend its appreciation to the many observers who took the time to submit documentation of their observations of rare birds for consideration by the 2004 committee. We thank the following people who assisted the committee in the acquisition of additional data and other material evidence that supplemented the information submitted directly by observers and committee members, or by providing expert opinions on material evidence submitted to the committee: Colin Bowen, Stephen R. Charbonneau, Tamara Chipperfield, Bruce M. Di Labio, Nicholas G. Escott, Christian Friis, Steve N. G. Howell, Jean Iron, Alvaro Jaramillo, Kevin Kavanagh, Paul E. Lehman, Nicholas A. Lethaby, Hugh McGuinness, Kevin A. McLaughlin, Stephen T. Pike, Ronald J. Pittaway, George W. Prieksaitis, Peter Pyle, Ron C. Ridout, Roy B. H. Smith, R. Terry Sprague, Mark A. Stackhouse, Jennifer Stucker, Paul W. Sykes, and Christopher W. Thompson.

The committee also is indebted to Mark H. Cranford for his continuing efforts in ensuring that ONTBIRDS (listserv of the Ontario Field Ornithologists) remains a useful source of information on rare birds appearing in Ontario. In addition, the photographic pages on the OFO website, maintained through 2004 by Sandra Eadie, provide an excellent source of documentation for rarities. These sources of information make the secretary's job of securing documentation much more efficient. Also, Kayo J. Roy's valuable assistance in tracking down documentation for reports has been immensely helpful to me. Finally, I wish to thank the members of the 2004 committee for their support and assistance during the year.

CORRIGENDUM

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The location of the Mute Swan north of the Attawapiskat River should be 82° 16' W, not 87° 16' W.

Figure 1: Ontario Bird Records Committee members for 2004. Left to right, standing: Bill Crins, Kevin McLaughlin, Bob Curry, Chris Escott, Alan Wormington; seated: Ron Tozer, Margaret Bain. Not in photo: Dave Elder, Mark Peck, Kayo Roy. Photo by *Mark K. Peck*.

Figure 2: Pacific Loon in definitive prebasic molt present at Fifty Point, *Hamilton/Niagara,* between 31 October and 5 November 2004. Photo by *Brandon R. Holden*.

Figure 3: Female Wilson's Plover in first alternate plumage present at Hamilton Harbour, *Hamilton*, from 15 to 19 May 2004. Photo by *Jean Iron*.

Figure 4: Black-necked Stilt (one member of a nesting pair) present at Jarvis sewage lagoons, *Haldimand*, between 18 May and 5 June 2004. Photo by *Brandon R. Holden*.

Figure 5: Wandering Tattler in definitive alternate plumage present at Windmill Point, *Niagara*, between 8 and 13 June 1977. Photo by *Alan Wormington*.

Figure 6: California Gull (left) in definitive basic plumage present at Niagara Falls, *Niagara*, between 18 December 2003 and 8 January 2004. Photo by *Willie D'Anna*.

Figure 7: Juvenal/first basic female Rufous Hummingbird present at Niagara Falls, *Niagara*, from 2 September to 18 December 2004. Photo by *Brandon R. Holden*.

Figure 8: Fork-tailed Flycatcher present at Slate River Valley, *Thunder Bay*, from early October until 19 November 2004. Photo by *Brian D. Ratcliff*.

Figure 9: Rock Wren present at Elk Lake, *Timiskaming*, between 4 and 7 May 2004. Photo by *Barry J. Kinch*.

Figure 10: Golden-crowned Sparrow in first basic plumage present at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham*, from 6 November to 11 December 2004. Photo by *William J. Edmunds*.

Figure 11: Male Lazuli Bunting in definitive alternate plumage present at Bells Corners, *Ottawa*, between 29 and 31 May 2004. Photo by *Lois I. Knaggs*.

Figure 12: Female Great-tailed Grackle in basic plumage present at Turkey Point, *Norfolk*, on 7 and 8 February 2004. Photo by *Ron C. Ridout*.

Accepted Records

Pacific Loon ***Gavia pacifica*** **South Only (28)**

2004 - one, definitive prebasic molt, 22 October, Wicklow Beach, *Northumberland* (Margaret J. C. Bain).
- one, definitive alternate, 31 October, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
- one, definitive prebasic molt, 31 October - 5 November, Fifty Point Conservation Area, *Hamilton/Niagara* (Brandon R. Holden, Cheryl E. Edgecombe) – photos on file.
- one, juvenal, 8-13 November, Toronto, *Toronto* (Winnie Poon, Christopher J. Escott).
- one, definitive prebasic molt, 10 November, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
- one, definitive basic, 30 November, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).

2003 - one, definitive alternate, 16 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Brett M. Ewald, Tony F. M. Beck).

The autumn of 2004 was excellent for viewing Pacific Loons in their southbound migration, as evidenced by the six accepted records from that period. Two of the birds remained in their locations for a few days, enabling many observers to see them. Careful observation is required in identifying this species when in molt or in juvenal and basic plumages. Both Pacific Loon and Common Loon (*G. immer*) can be in various stages of prebasic molt during fall migration (Palmer 1962).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel ***Oceanites oceanicus*** **(6)**

2003 - one, *O. o. oceanicus*, 23 September, John E. Pearce Provincial Park, *Elgin* (Donald Littlejohn, Jamie Littlejohn) – found dead (fresh); specimen (skin) in ROM (#93781).
- one, *O. o. oceanicus*, 27 September, Van Wagners Beach, *Hamilton* (John L. Olmsted, Robert W. Stamp, James E. Heslop, Jack R. Hanna) – found dead (badly decomposed); photos on file; specimen (skeleton) in ROM (#96676).

A summary of previous records of Wilson's Storm-Petrel was provided in last year's report (Crins 2004). At that time, the two specimens reported above were not yet available for examination. These birds also were associated with the passage of Hurricane Isabel.

Northern Gannet ***Morus bassanus*** **(29)**

2003 - one, juvenal, 6-15 December; 6-12 December, Niagara Falls, 15 December, Queenston, *Niagara* (Willie D'Anna, Peter S. Burke) – photos on file.

Great Cormorant ***Phalacrocorax carbo*** **(10)**

2004 - one, 20 May, Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (Margaret J. C. Bain, also found by David Okines, R. Andrew Cadman, Eric A. Machell).

Great Egret ***Ardea alba*** **North Only (11)**

2003 - one, 25 September, Eagle Lake, *Kenora* (Tom Wood) – photos on file.

Little Blue Heron ***Egretta caerulea*** **(52)**

2004 - one, definitive alternate, 11-14 May, south of Glen Morris, *Brant* (John R. Pomeroy, Robert Curry) – photo on file.

1968 - one, juvenal, 16 July, Port Colborne, *Niagara* (Richard Brownstein, found by Daniel R. Salisbury).

Tricolored Heron ***Egretta tricolor*** **(34)**

2004 - one, first alternate, 22 May, Rock Point Provincial Park, *Haldimand* (William W. Watson, also found by James M. Pawlicki).

2003 - one, definitive alternate, 5-10 May, Verschoyle, *Oxford* (David A. Martin, found by Nadine Bird).

1985 - one, definitive alternate, 18 May, Toronto, *Toronto* (Greg Sadowski) – photo on file.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron ***Nyctanassa violacea*** **(37)**

2004 - one, definitive alternate, 25-26 April, Sturgeon Creek, *Essex* (Michael F. Malone, found by Marianne Guyitt, Norm Guyitt) – photos on file.
- one, definitive alternate, 30 May, Toronto, *Toronto* (Seabrooke Leckie).
- one, definitive alternate, 31 May – 2 June; 31 May, Burlington, 2 June, Bronte, *Halton* (Gavin R. Edmondstone) – photos on file.

The *Halton* bird was observed in a garden in Burlington, initially. A few days later, what was likely the same bird was observed on the sixth floor terrace of an apartment building in Bronte, about 8 km east of the first sighting.

Ibis species ***Plegadis*** **sp. (37)**

2004 - one, basic, 10-11 October, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Ian M. Richards, Alan Wormington).

2002 - one, alternate, 26 April, Erieau, *Chatham-Kent* (Keith J. Burk) – photo on file.

Black Vulture ***Coragyps atratus*** **(49)**

2004 - one, 5 April, Grimsby, *Niagara* (Thomas Thomas, also found by David Sked, Keith Sealy).
- one, 19 April, Point Petre, *Prince Edward* (Lloyd Paul).

2003 - one, 30 September, Holiday Beach Conservation Area, *Essex* (George D. Bryant, also found by Sidney M. Daniels, Aarne Juhola).

2002 - one, 10 April, Elmbrook, *Prince Edward* (Joanne J. Dewey, also found by Sarah D. Dewey).

There has been a series of observations of this species throughout *Prince Edward* over the past couple of years. The frequency of these reports (eight sightings over a fourteen-month period from 9 September 2003 to 22 October 2004, represented above by the 19 April 2004 report) suggests that all observations pertain to a single bird that was "trapped" in the county (R. Terry Sprague, pers. comm.; Alan Wormington, pers. comm.). Black Vultures generally tend not to cross water bodies (Kaufman 1996), and since *Prince Edward* is almost entirely surrounded by water, this hypothesis is plausible.

Ross's Goose ***Chen rossii*** **South Only (44)**

2004 - one, white morph, 6 March, Amherstburg, *Essex* (Len Jones) – photo on file.

- one, white morph, 30 March – 8 April, Sucker Creek Landing, *Sudbury* (Angela Martin, Grant McKercher) – photo on file.
- one, white morph, 10-11 April, Pleasant Valley, *Manitoulin* (Nicole Belanger-Smith, found by Erwin Meissner) – photos on file.
- one, white morph, 26 September – early October; 26 September, Wheatley Harbour, 30 September, Sturgeon Creek, early October, Kingsville, *Essex* (Dean J. Ware, Alan Wormington) – photo on file.

2003 - one, white morph, 16-30 November, Erie Beach, *Chatham-Kent* (Keith J. Burk, also found by James T. Burk).
- one, juvenal, white morph, 23 November, Mohawk Bay to Lowbanks, *Haldimand* (Willie D'Anna, also found by Dean DiTommaso) – photos on file.

The bird observed from 26 September to early October 2004 was captured, clipped, and banded at the Jack Miner Sanctuary in Kingsville, *Essex*, where it still resides (Alan Wormington, pers. comm.).

Cinnamon Teal ***Anas cyanoptera*** **(13)**

2004 - two, alternate, male and female, 7 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Kevin A. McLaughlin, Martyn Hnatiuk, found by Michael Holden, Randy Fowler).

Tufted Duck ***Aythya fuligula*** **(27)**

2004 - one, definitive alternate, male, 24 January – 6 February, Port Weller, *Niagara* (Kayo J. Roy, Kenneth M. Newcombe) – photos on file.

Common Eider ***Somateria mollissima*** **South Only (20)**

2004 - one, female, 9 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Kevin A. McLaughlin, Tim G. Baerwald) – photos on file.

There is a suspicion that this was the same bird that was present at the same location in May 2003, and that was observed in the adjacent waters of Ohio and Michigan until July 2003 (Wormington 2003b, Crins 2004).

Harlequin Duck ***Histrionicus histrionicus*** **North Only (18)**

2004 - one, 4 September, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock) – photo on file.

This is the earliest fall migrant ever recorded in Ontario. The photograph indicates that the bird was either a female or a juvenile.

Mississippi Kite ***Ictinia mississippiensis*** **(33)**

2003 - one, first basic, 25 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Keith J. Burk, also found by Blake A. Mann, Stephen R. Charbonneau, James T. Burk).

The Mississippi Kite undergoes an unusual molt sequence relative to other diurnal raptors, which may make aging these birds difficult, prior to their definitive (adult) plumages. Molting appears to take place gradually during the winter, with renewal of flight feathers even further delayed until the following summer. Thus, juvenile wing and tail feathers are retained while head and body feathers have molted into first basic condition. The wings and tail are renewed as part of the second prebasic (definitive prebasic) molt (Palmer 1988).

Wilson's Plover ***Charadrius wilsonia*** **(2)**

2004 - one, first alternate, female, 15-19 May, Hamilton Harbour, *Hamilton* (Kenneth Williams, Gavin R. Edmondstone, Jean Iron) – photos on file.

This outstanding rarity, normally occurring no closer than the barrier beaches of Virginia, is only the second documented record for the province. McLaughlin (1990) provided a detailed account of the first record, on 26 May 1990, at a location quite close to that of the 2004 bird. Documentation for an earlier record, on 17-20 May 1966, at Hamilton Beach, *Hamilton*, discovered by George W. North and observed by several others, has gone missing, making that record unreviewable (McLaughlin 1990). A further undocumented record involved a bird seen by several observers on 8 May 1967, at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington, pers. comm.).

Piping Plover ***Charadrius melodus*** **(54)**

2004 - one, first alternate, 7 May, Burlington Beach, *Halton* (Ian M. Richards, also found by Sandra Bateman).
- one, first alternate, 8 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Kevin A. McLaughlin).
- one, definitive alternate, 11-17 May, Oshawa, *Durham* (Dan Kaczynski, David B. Worthington) – photo on file.
- one, 17 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Blake A. Mann, Sandy Dobbyn) – photo on file.
- one, 22-23 May, Oshawa, *Durham* (James Dixon).

2003 - one, definitive alternate, 31 May, Windy Point, *Rainy River* (Jean Iron, found by David H. Elder, Mary Elder, Ronald G. Tozer) – photos on file.

The Burlington bird was banded on the tarsus of the right leg, with a double coloured band (dark green above, orange below) above a standard aluminum band, indicating that this bird was banded as a nestling in one of two possible locations in the northern part of Michigan's Lower Peninsula in 2003 (Jennifer Stucker, pers. comm., to Ian M. Richards). The Rondeau bird also was banded as a chick in Michigan, perhaps at the same location. There is uncertainty about the year of banding, because of the difficulty in determining the composition of the silver band (aluminum or incoloy), but there is a chance that it also was banded in 2003 (Blake A. Mann, pers. comm.). These observations point out the value of recording even partial band information (leg, colour combinations, arrangements).

Black-necked Stilt ***Himantopus mexicanus*** **(13)**

2004 - two, definitive alternate, male and female, nest with three eggs, 18 May – 5 June, Townsend and Jarvis, *Haldimand* (Barry D. Jones, John G. Keenleyside, Barry S. Cherriere, Brandon R. Holden, Mark K. Peck, Glenn Coady, Kenneth M. Newcombe) – photos on file; specimen (egg) in ROM (#500585).
- one, basic, female, 10 November – 10 December, Ridgetown, *Chatham-Kent* (Stephen T. Pike, P. Allen Woodliffe, Claude Radley, found by Craig Anderson) – photos on file.

The Jarvis record above, in addition to being spectacular in its own right, con-

stitutes the first breeding record for Ontario! A nest with three eggs was discovered by Mark K. Peck on 28 May, with a further "dropped" egg found 10 m away from the nest on 31 May by Glenn Coady. Full details of this nesting attempt are provided by Peck et al. (2004, 2005). Along with a summary of previous reports of Black-necked Stilt in Ontario, they provide an excellent overview of recent extralimital breeding records and other occurrences of this species in nearby jurisdictions (Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio), which provides further context for this first breeding record for the province. Both reports during 2004 involved birds that remained for quite a long time at each location, providing good viewing opportunities for numerous observers.

Wandering Tattler ***Heteroscelus incanus*** **(3)**

1977 - one, definitive alternate, 8-13 June, Windmill Point, *Niagara* (David B. Freeland, Robert F. Andrle, Alan Wormington) – photos on file.

1960 - one, definitive alternate, 11-15 July, Windmill Point, *Niagara* (Robert Curry, Harold D. Mitchell).

1948 - one, definitive prebasic molt, 1 August, Sugar Loaf Point, *Niagara* (Harold D. Mitchell, also found by Harold H. Axtell et al.).

These three records constitute the full set of Wandering Tattler records for Ontario to date, comprising two spring migrants and one fall migrant. Mitchell (1950) published a note containing a description of the bird and the circumstances of the 1948 observation. The date of discovery of the bird from 1960 often has been cited incorrectly as 12 July, rather than 11 July (e.g., Beardslee and Mitchell 1965, Speirs 1985, James 1991). There are apparently only three additional records of Wandering Tattler in eastern North America: Massachusetts in 1968 (Veit and Petersen 1993); Manitoba in 1981 (Manitoba Avian Research Committee 2003, Jehl 2004); and Texas in 1992 (Lockwood and Freeman 2004).

Curlew Sandpiper ***Calidris ferruginea*** **(24)**

2004 - one, definitive alternate, 16 August, Rock Point Provincial Park, *Haldimand* (Thomas Thomas, also found by David Sked).

Long-tailed Jaeger ***Stercorarius longicaudus*** **South Only (32)**

2004 - one, juvenal, intermediate morph, 16 September, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).

Mew Gull ***Larus canus*** **(18)**

2003 - one, definitive basic, *L. c. brachyrhynchus*, 6-18 December; 6 December, Niagara Falls, 13, 16, 18 December, Queenston, *Niagara* (Colin D. Jones, Peter S. Burke, Willie D'Anna, J. Burke Korol) – photos on file.

California Gull ***Larus californicus*** **(41)**

2004 - one, definitive basic, *L. c. albertaensis*, 15-17 October, Wheatley Harbour, *Chatham-Kent/Essex* (Dean J. Ware, Alan Wormington).

2003/2004 - one, definitive basic, 9 November – 18 January, Queenston, *Niagara* (Willie D'Anna, found by Jean Iron) – photos on file.
- one, definitive basic, 18 December – 8 January, Niagara Falls, *Niagara* (Jean Iron, Willie D'Anna, also found by Kevin A. McLaughlin) – photos on file.

It has been suggested that the same definitive basic bird has been appearing along the Niagara River for several years now, but it is difficult to state unequivocally whether the same or different birds are involved. The fact that multiple birds have appeared there over the past few years makes the contention even more difficult to assess.

Arctic Tern ***Sterna paradisaea*** **South Only After 1990 (10)**

2004 - four, definitive alternate, 21 May, Embrun, *Prescott & Russell* (Robert A. Bracken, Christina Lewis, also found by Paul Mirsky).

1990 - one, definitive alternate, 17 August, Waverly Beach, *Niagara* (Alec Humann).

Band-tailed Pigeon ***Patagioenas fasciata*** **(11)**

2003 - one, 27 November – 7 December, London, *Middlesex* (Alfred L. Adamo, Scott Fairbairn, Curtis A. Marantz, Peter S. Burke, found by Gerry Meacham) – photos on file.

On 7 December 2003, while being chased by a Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), this bird collided with the siding of a house a few doors away from the feeder it was frequenting (pers. obs.; Hugh Casbourn, pers. comm.). It was nursed back to health and released on 21 December in the same area, where it was seen until 10 April 2004.

Eurasian Collared-Dove ***Streptopelia decaocto*** **(7)**

2003 - one, 11 July, Staples, *Essex* (Marianne B. Reid).

White-winged Dove ***Zenaida asiatica*** **(18)**

2004 - one, 26 April, Kagawong, *Manitoulin* (Nicole Belanger-Smith, also found by John C. Smith) – photos on file.
- one, 8-9 May, Tobermory, *Bruce* (Douglas C. Sheepway, found by Don Wilkes, Margie Wilkes) – photo on file.
- one, 15 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Martin Blagdurn, also found by Rosann Kovalcik).
- one, 15 September, Bronte, *Halton* (Cheryl E. Edgecombe, Thomas A. Crooks, Peter Booker, David R. Don, also found by Joyce Lechasseur).

Barn Owl ***Tyto alba*** **(2)**

2003 - one, 5 December, Pickering, *Durham* (Andrew Davis).

Chuck-will's-widow ***Caprimulgus carolinensis*** **(16)**

2003 - one, male, 15 May, La Salle, *Essex* (Paul D. Pratt, also found by Patricia Broad).

Rufous Hummingbird ***Selasphorus rufus*** **(16)**

2004 - one, juvenal/first basic, female, 2 September - 18 December, Niagara Falls, *Niagara* (Janice M. Haines, William W. Watson, Brandon R. Holden, Willie D'Anna, Cindy

E. Cartwright, Allen T. Chartier, also found by Arthur L. Haines) – photos on file; specimen (skin) in ROM (#96755).

Janice Haines (2005) has written an engaging account of the occurrence of this bird at her home. It was captured, banded, and released on 2 December. Measurements, detailed observations, and photographs of the central and outer tail feathers were taken while the bird was being banded, and these were compared to the diagnostic features outlined by Stiles (1972). Tail feather width, tail length, and wing length measurements all supported the identification of this bird as a Rufous Hummingbird (Allen T. Chartier, ONTBIRDS posting, 3 December 2004). In that posting, Chartier also indicated that there were at least 10 other *Selasphorus* hummingbirds in adjacent states during the fall of 2004.

Lewis's Woodpecker ***Melanerpes lewis*** **(8)**

2004 - one, 12-17 May, 19 km north of Stratton, *Rainy River* (David H. Elder, found by Moie Neilson, Marj Neilson).

Red-bellied Woodpecker ***Melanerpes carolinus*** **North Only (15)**

2004 - one, male, 8-18 May, Devlin, *Rainy River* (Arlene Rea) – photo on file.
- one, first basic, female, 19-20 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Kyle Wright, John M. Woodcock, also found by Nick Bartok) – photo on file.

2002 - one, female, 13-16 May, Eagle River, *Kenora* (Carolle Eady, found by Gavin Eady).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher ***Tyrannus forficatus*** **(45)**

2004 - one, definitive alternate, 6 August, Wesleyville, *Northumberland* (John McGuirk, Margaret J. C. Bain).

Fork-tailed Flycatcher ***Tyrannus savana*** **(6)**

2004 - one, 26 April, Stouffville, *York* (Alan K. Johnston, also found by Bruce W. Humphries) – photo on file.
- one, early October – 19 November, Slate River Valley, *Thunder Bay* (Brian D. Ratcliff, found by Gerald Breukelman) – photos on file.
- one, definitive, female, *T. s. savana*, 5-6 December, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Michael A. Savino, Debra K. Savino) – photos on file; specimen (skin) in ROM (#99431).

The occurrence of three Fork-tailed Flycatchers in Ontario in a single year has happened once before. In 1996, three birds were reported, although documentation was received for only two of them (Dobos 1997). James (1991) reports an earlier record from northern Ontario, at Dorion, *Thunder Bay*, on 28-30 October 1977, but this record has not yet been reviewed by the OBRC. The bird in Stouffville provides a first spring record for this species in Ontario, and is the earliest record so far recorded from north-central and northeastern North America (Lockwood 1999). All other records involve fall wanderers. The Slate River Valley bird stayed for well over a month, an unusually long duration, given the species' propensity "... to disappear shortly after being found..." (Lockwood 1999). The Hillman Marsh bird constitutes the latest occurrence of

this species in the province. This latter specimen has been identified as the nominate race, which breeds in central and southeastern South America, and undergoes northward migrations following the austral breeding season. There are now well over 100 documented records of this species scattered across North America, most of which are believed to involve the nominate race, but there are very few specimen records (Lockwood 1999).

White-eyed Vireo ***Vireo griseus*** **North Only (3)**

2004 - one, definitive basic, 21 October, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock) – photo on file.

This record constitutes only the third documented occurrence of White-eyed Vireo in northern Ontario. All three have been autumn records, with the first at Marathon, *Thunder Bay,* on 13 October 1986 (Wormington 1987), and the second at Rossport, *Thunder Bay,* on 29 September 1994 (Dobos 1996).

Rock Wren ***Salpinctes obsoletus*** **(4)**

2004 - one, 4-7 May, Elk Lake, *Timiskaming* (Stanley V. Phippen, Barry J. Kinch) – photos on file.

Four Rock Wren reports have been accepted from Ontario. The others occurred on 6-7 December 1964 at Port Weller, *Niagara* (Roy 2001), 12 February – 5 March 1989 at Etobicoke, *Toronto* (Wormington and Curry 1990), and 1-6 May 1993 at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Pittaway 1995). A few additional reports have yet to be reviewed by the Committee.

Sage Thrasher ***Oreoscoptes montanus*** **(11)**

2004 - one, 21 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Kyle Wright, John M. Woodcock) – photo on file.

Kirtland's Warbler ***Dendroica kirtlandii*** **(33)**

2004 - one, definitive alternate, male, 11 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Rick Ortlieb, also found by Jeanne Ortlieb) – video on file.

- one, first alternate, male, 17-19 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alfred L. Adamo, Blake A. Mann, Barry S. Cherriere, Brandon R. Holden) – photos on file.

Swainson's Warbler ***Limnothlypis swainsonii*** **(6)**

2004 - one, 11 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (James W. Barrett, Sheila Turple).

This is the first record for this species in Ontario since 1995, when one was found at Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Dobos 1996).

Yellow-breasted Chat ***Icteria virens*** **North Only (6)**

2003 - one, 7-22 November, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Bert Harding).

All but one of the six accepted records for northern Ontario have involved autumn migrants between the dates of 13 September and 26 November.

Summer Tanager ***Piranga rubra*** **North Only (12)**

2004 - one, female, 4 May, Silver Islet, *Thunder Bay* (William Climie) – photo on file.

Henslow's Sparrow ***Ammodramus henslowii*** **(9)**

2004 - one, 11-12 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Barry S. Cherriere) – photo on file.

Golden-crowned Sparrow ***Zonotrichia atricapilla*** **(10)**

2004 - one, first basic, 6 November- 11 December, Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* (Joachim W. Floegel, Michael J. McEvoy, Latafat Correa, William W. Watson, William J. Edmunds) – photos on file.

This sparrow was present for over a month, and was exceedingly well chronicled on nearly a daily basis by J. Douglas Lockrey and others on OFO's ONTBIRDS listserv. Hundreds of observers saw this obliging and extremely rare bird.

Blue Grosbeak ***Guiraca caerulea*** **(59)**

2004 - one, alternate, female, 6-8 May, Long Point (Tip), *Norfolk* (Sophie Barker, Michael Burrell, Christian Friis) – photos on file.

2002 - one, female, 26 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Keith J. Burk, also found by James T. Burk).

1923 - one, definitive alternate, male, 18 May, Eberts, *Chatham-Kent* (E. H. Dorey).

The 1923 report from Eberts constitutes the earliest documented record for Ontario (Wormington 2003a). This observation was thoroughly outlined by Dorey (1933).

Lazuli Bunting ***Passerina amoena*** **(7)**

2004 - one, definitive alternate, male, 29-31 May, Bells Corners, *Ottawa* (Ian P. Clark, Lois I. Knaggs, Paul Lagasi, found by Derek Hasler) – photos on file.

Painted Bunting ***Passerina ciris*** **(19)**

2004 - one, definitive alternate, male, 12 May, Cherry Valley, *Prince Edward* (Brian Durell, found by Suzanne White) – photo on file.

- one, definitive alternate, male, 5-9 August, Normandale, *Norfolk* (Ron C. Ridout, William W. Watson, Brandon R. Holden, found by Linda Whiting, Jim Whiting) – photos on file.

Dickcissel ***Spiza americana*** **North Only (14)**

2004 - one, alternate, male, 1 June, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (David H. Elder, found by Ralph Brown).

Great-tailed Grackle ***Quiscalus mexicanus*** **(3)**

2004 - one, basic, female, 7-8 February, Turkey Point, *Norfolk* (Ron C. Ridout, found by Gregor Beck, Kevin Kavanagh) – photos on file.

There are two previous records of this species in Ontario. These include a bird at Atikokan, *Rainy River*, on 7-25 October 1987 (Elder 1988) and one at Port Rowan/Port Royal, *Norfolk*, from 19 November 1988 to 6 January

1989 (Wormington and Curry 1990). An additional record of a bird in this species group (Great-tailed/Boat-tailed Grackle, *Q. mexicanus/major*) is from Honey Harbour, *Muskoka*, on 29 August 1999 (Roy 2000).

House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus* Before 1978, South Before 1995, North (12)

1977 - one, basic, male, 21 March, Barriefield, *Frontenac* (Gwen L. Woods).

1976 - one, female, 8-17 April, Rose Hill, *Niagara* (Harold H. Axtell, George K. Peck) – photos on file.
- one, female, 16 April, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Jeffrey A. Greenhouse, John G. Keenleyside).
- one, female, 10-12 May, Marathon, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott) – photos on file.
- one, female, 22 May, Presqu'ile Provincial Park, *Northumberland* (Clive E. Goodwin).

1972 - one, female, 27 August, Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (Helen R. Quilliam, Ron D. Weir).
- one, female, 15 October, Dundas Marsh, *Hamilton* (Alan Wormington, also found by Daniel S. Bastaja).

The two records from 1972 constitute the first two occurrences in Ontario.

Not Accepted Records

Origin Uncertain

Birds in this category are considered by the Committee to be correctly identified, but their origin is suspect. These birds may have escaped or may have been released from captivity. However, if new evidence suggesting wild origin becomes available, such reports may be reconsidered by the Committee.

2004 - Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), one, 4 May, Silver Islet, *Thunder Bay* (William Climie) – photo on file.
- European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*), one, male, 2 June, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock) – photo on file.

2003 - Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), one, 27 October, Long Point (Tip), *Norfolk* (Christian Friis, Robert Henri).
- European Goldfinch, one, 10 June, Sutton West, *York* (Douglas Brown, also found by Lenora Brown).

The number of reports of Eurasian finches and other songbirds has increased over the past few years, both here in Ontario, and in adjacent states. European Goldfinch is the most frequently reported species, but, as can be seen above, other species are appearing, as well. It is assumed, at this point in time, that these involve escaped birds, and indeed, rumours have surfaced of bird dealers losing or releasing these species. Often, observers of these European birds do not document their sightings. However, it is worth-

while to do so for two reasons. Firstly, the documentation helps to confirm the extent of the occurrences and the species involved. Secondly, evidence may be forthcoming at some time in the future of a true pattern of vagrancy for some of these species, and the documented reports may be valuable in testing such a pattern. Other species involved in adjacent jurisdictions include Eurasian Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*), European Greenfinch (*C. chloris*), and Linnet (*C. cannabina*).

Not Accepted Records

Identification Uncertain

The documentation received for the following reports generally was found not to be detailed enough to eliminate similar species unequivocally. In a great many cases, Committee members felt that the species being described probably was correctly identified, but that the details provided in the report, perhaps due to the circumstances of the observation conditions, were insufficient. It should be noted that any of these reports may be re-submitted if additional documentation becomes available.

2004
- Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), one, 2 August, Moon's Bay, *Simcoe*.
- Frigatebird sp. (*Fregata* sp.), one, 2 August, Sandbanks Provincial Park, *Prince Edward*.
- Great "White" Heron (*Ardea herodias*), one, 17 August, Cambridge, *Waterloo*.
- Little Blue Heron, two, spring/summer, Pelham, *Niagara*.
- Black Vulture, one, 7 May, Elmdale, *Essex*.
- Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*), one, 14 May, Tilbury, *Essex*.
- Ross's Goose, one, 6 April, Mountsberg Conservation Area, *Hamilton*.
- Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*), three, 13 May, Minnitaki, *Kenora*.
- Eurasian Collared-Dove, one, 9 July, Mississauga, *Peel*.
- Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), one, 24 August, Bancroft, *Hastings*.
- Kirtland's Warbler, one, 13 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Swainson's Warbler, one, 20 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*), one, 1 June, Kagawong, *Manitoulin*.
- Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), six, 4 April, Four Mile Lake, *Nipissing*.
- Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*), one, 29 June, West Pen Peninsula, *Kenora*.

2003
- Little Blue Heron, two, spring/summer, Pelham, *Niagara*.
- White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), three, 15 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Mississippi Kite, one, 19 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Mississippi Kite, one, 19 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent*.
- Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*), one, 12-27 November, Alice Township, *Renfrew*.

This well documented bird generated a great deal of discussion among gull experts inside and outside the province, but unfortunately, there is no consensus on its identity, or even its age (both first basic and second basic plumages having been proposed by different experts).

- Mew Gull, one, 18 August, Unionville, *York*.
- Gull-billed Tern (*Sterna nilotica*), two, 25 September, north of Bewdley, *Northumberland*.
- Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*), 23 May, Loughborough Lake, *Frontenac*.
- Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*), one, 26 April, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.
- Chuck-will's-widow, one, 30 April, Newbury, *Middlesex*.
- Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*), one, 17 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*.

Corrections/Updates to Previous OBRC Reports

2003 Report (Ontario Birds 22: 54–74)

- under Eared Grebe, change "29-30 May" to "29-31 May".
- under Black-capped Petrel, 27 September, add "also found by Innis Miline, Eric Holden" after "Brandon R. Holden".
- under Cattle Egret, mid October, change "Blake Township" to "Jarvis River".
- under Ross's Goose, 2003, change "Pendleton" to "Bourget".
- under Common Eider, 10 and 19 May, add "first alternate, female" after "one".
- under California Gull, 2002, third basic, amend the dates to "19 November – 8 December" and change finders to "found by Daniel R. Salisbury, John G. Keenleyside".
- under California Gull, 2002, definitive basic, amend the dates to "23 November – 29 December".
- under Eurasian Collared-Dove, Marysville, change "5-24 May" to "5-31 May".
- under Chuck-will's-widow, change "28-29 May" to "28 May – 10 June".
- under Hermit Warbler, Cabot Head, add "first basic" before "female".
- under Kirtland's Warbler, 17 May, add "definitive alternate" before "male".
- under Spotted Towhee, 1993, amend the dates to "1992/93 – 27 December - early March".
- under Blue Grosbeak, add "Stuart A. Mackenzie" after "J. Burke Korol", and add "photos on file".

2002 Report (Ontario Birds 21: 54–76)

- under Northern Gannet, change "one" to "two".
- under White-winged Dove, 19 October 2001, add "photos on file".
- under Lark Sparrow, 15 August 2001, add "(Tip)" after "Long Point", and add "photos on file".

2001 Report (Ontario Birds 20: 54-74)

- under Black Vulture, 8-10 May, add "John Reaume" before "Ron Tozer", and add "also found by Scott Fairbairn" after "R. Doug McRae".

1989 Report (Ontario Birds 8: 4–33)

- under Rufous Hummingbird, 1987, add "found by Mr. and Mrs. R. Bennett" after "Kathy Nihei".

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Breeding Status and Nest Site Selection of Common Raven in Ontario

George K. Peck

The Common Raven (*Corvus corax*), a widespread, holarctic species, is the world's largest passerine, if we exclude the lighter-bodied but long-tailed lyrebirds (Menuridae) and some birds-of-paradise (Paradisaeidae). The raven is also, arguably, the avian world's most intelligent bird. It is a non-migratory, year-round resident in most areas, inhabiting a wide range of habitats (Boarman and Heinrich 1999).

In Ontario, the Common Raven (*C. c. principalis*) is currently expanding its breeding range, similar to the northward expansion of the Turkey Vulture (Peck 2003), but in the opposite direction. With the exception of the southern portions of the prairie provinces and, until recently, southeastern Ontario, the Common Raven breeds throughout Canada and as far north as the high-arctic islands (Godfrey 1986).

Undoubtedly, the recent southward expansion of the Common Raven is due, at least in part, to land clearing and urbanization with its resultant increase in roads and road kills, landfill garbage, and nest site availability on buildings, towers, and other human structures.

Early reports of Common Ravens suggested that they were more common in southern Ontario prior to extensive land clearing. Wilson (1814) reported that they were numerous at Niagara Falls in 1804, and that they were seen daily along the shores of lakes Erie and Ontario. Saunders and Dale (1933) quoted J.A. Morden who had heard a raven in the fall of 1882 in Hyde Park, Middlesex County, and had often seen ravens in Lambton County at that time. By contrast, Farley (1891) considered it "a very rare migrant" in Elgin County, and Macoun (1903) described it as "rare in the cultivated parts of Ontario". Beardslee and Mitchell (1965) listed it as "Occasional very rare V(isitant)" in the Niagara Frontier region, and further stated that with the gradual settling of the region, the ravens disappeared and that there were only nine records in the century between 1861 and 1962. Speirs (1985) referred to ravens as "prevalent in the north but very rare in the south".

Due to habitat destruction, human persecution and the use of poison baits and trapping to reduce wolf populations, ravens became rare in the southern and settled parts of the province, until well into the twentieth century (Blomme 1987). Alberger (1890) suggested that ravens were common and bred in Sudbury. McIlwraith (1894) stat-

ed that they were seldom seen in southern Ontario, although they were said to be common in Muskoka. MacLulich (1938) said that they occurred rarely as permanent residents in Algonquin Park. And, Snyder (1951) indicated that they were nowhere really plentiful. These varying reports of their relative scarcity were borne out by Baillie and Harrington (1937) who reported that the only five known Ontario nesting/breeding records at the time of their writing were from Sudbury, Sudbury District in 1889; Port Arthur, Thunder Bay District in 1894; Temagami in Nipissing District in 1909; Moose Factory in Cochrane District in 1925; and from southern Kenora District in 1936.

Hofmann (2005) has presented in detail the reported breeding records of the Common Raven in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), which includes the regions of Halton, Peel, Toronto, York, and Durham. His account included nest records from York Region and also possible but unconfirmed breeding records from Durham and Halton regions. He noted the nesting attempt by a raven in 1987 and 1990 (Jefferson 1989, 1991), and the probable and extremely rare hybridization of a Common Raven with an American Crow (*C. brachyrhynchos)* in 1993 (Jefferson 1994), all of which occurred at Etobicoke, Toronto. This hybridization in 1993 involved a presumed female crow with a male raven, and their nest from which two young birds fledged.

Despite the paucity of early nest records, the Ontario Nest Records Scheme (ONRS) now contains a total of 432 raven nest records, representing 30 provincial regions (Figure 1). Peck and James (1997) reported nest records from 19 provincial regions. The new nesting regions since then, all from southern Ontario, are Dundas, Frontenac, Glengarry, Lanark, Leeds, Lennox & Addington, Northumberland, Prescott, Simcoe, Stormont, and York. Further undocumented reports of nesting or breeding in Dufferin, Durham, Halton, and Peel regions await confirmation. All of these recent records indicate the continuing southward breeding expansion of the raven.

The large areas of northern Ontario without nest records (Figure 1) almost certainly indicate the inaccessibility and consequent lack of coverage there, rather than a real lack of nest sites.

Of 423 raven nest sites, 169 nests (40%) were on cliffs, rocky ledges and in quarries; 159 nests (38%) were in trees; and 95 nests (22%) were in or on various buildings, towers and other human structures. Of 70 nest sites in southern Ontario since 1980, the site percentages show a somewhat different pattern, with 34 nests (49%) on cliffs and rock ledges (mainly on the Niagara Escarpment); 14 nests (20%) in trees; and 22 nests (31%) on human structures. The decrease in the use of trees for nests and the increased use of human structures in southern Ontario would appear

to be the direct result of their respective availability in cleared and agricultural land.

The use of human-structure nest sites by our race (*principalis*) of the raven is much more common in recent times than formerly, judging from the account by A. C. Bent (1946) who described only one such site in his life history of the species.

Nidiology

RECORDS 432 nests representing 30 provincial regions (Figure 1).
Breeds on ledges and crevices of natural cliffs, as well as in similar places in quarries, open-pit mines, and railway and highway rock cuts (Figure 3); in living deciduous (97 nests), and coniferous trees (61 nests), and in dead or partly dead trees (8 nests) (Figure 4); and in or on human structures like hydro/radar/navigational towers (33 nests), active or abandoned hospitals/barns/silos/grain elevators (28 nests), bridges/canal locks (14 nests), racetrack light platforms (11 nests), water towers (4 nests), and miscellaneous human-structure sites (5 nests) (Figures 5 and 6). One of these miscellaneous human-structure sites was on a moving power crane.

Several of the cliff nests were at abandoned Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) aeries, and old Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) tree nests also were used occasionally. Among 91 deciduous tree nests, 82 nests (90%) were in aspen/poplar trees, 4 nests (4%) were in willow spp., 3 nests (3%) in Yellow Birch, and 2 nests (2%) in maple spp.; among 60 coniferous tree nests, 33 nests (55%) were in pine spp., and 27 nests (45%) were in spruce spp.

Cliff nests were on ledges and in crevices, which usually were under overhangs, and nests often were supported by bushes and small trees. They most often were above water and heights ranged from near the tops of cliffs to as low as 3 m from the bottom. Tree nests ranged in height from 3 to 30 m; and nests on human structures ranged from near the top of high towers to as low as 2.4 m on the heating duct of an abandoned building. Nests were bulky structures of sticks and twigs, with deep cups lined variously with mammal hair, grasses, bark strips and other plant material (Peck and James 1987).

Outside diameters of 18 nests ranged from 41 to 150 cm (16 to 59 inches), with 9 averaging 61 to 91 cm (24 to 36 inches); inside diameters of 2 nests were 15 and 25 cm (6 and 10 inches); outside depths of 13 nests ranged from 20 to 76 cm (8 to 30 inches); inside depths of 3 nests were 10, 15, and 20 cm (4, 6, and 8 inches).

An instance of re-nesting after a nest failure was reported from Timiskaming District in 1994.

EGGS 80 nests with 3 to 7 eggs; **3E** (16N), **4E** (40N), **5E** (20N), **6E** (2N), **7E** (2N).
Average clutch range 4 eggs (40 nests).

INCUBATION PERIOD 4 nests, from 20 to 21 days; because incubation is reported usually to begin with the second egg (Steihl 1985), ONRS periods are based on that premise.

EGG DATES 105 nests, 2 March to 16 May (138 visit dates); 52 nests, 20 March to 2 April. An adult was observed sitting tightly and continuously on a Grey County nest on a silo from 23 February 2005, likely indicating an earlier egg date than above (M. O'Dell, pers. comm.).

Data from eight nests indicated fledging periods varying from more than four to six weeks. Asynchronous hatching prohibits exact estimations of the fledging period (Stiehl 1985).

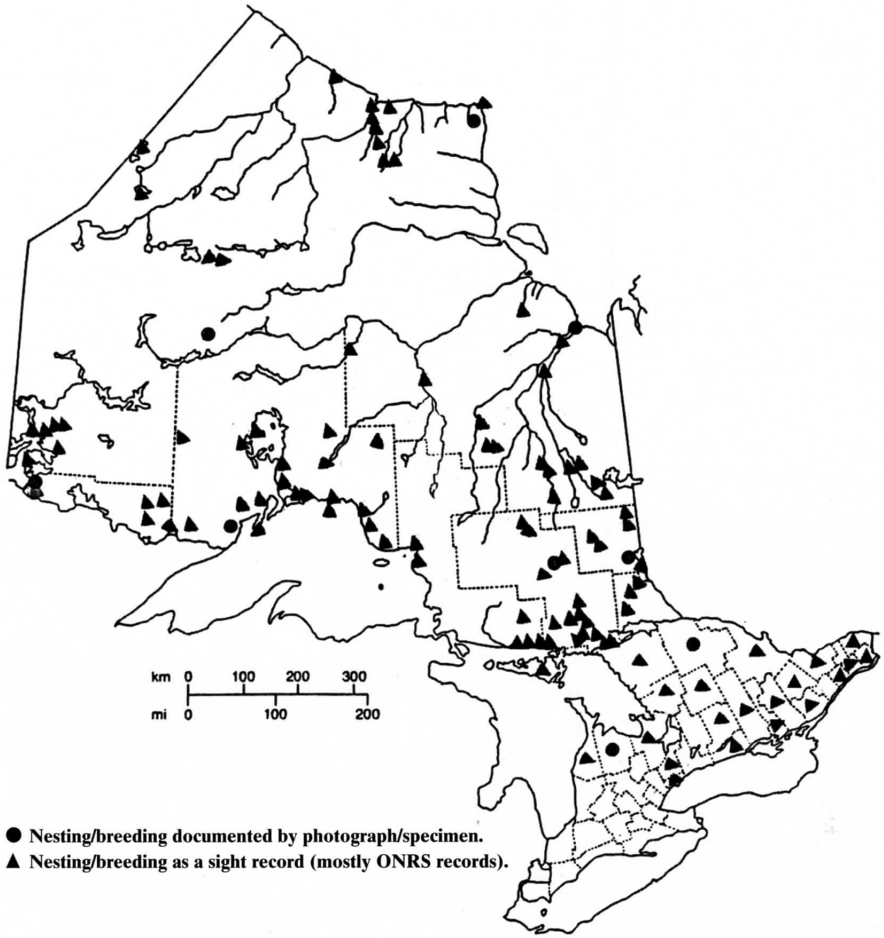

Figure 1: Distribution of Ontario breeding records for Common Raven.

Where nests are secure, undisturbed, and relatively successful, ravens demonstrate a pronounced tenacity in their annual, or sometimes intermittent, use of such nests for considerable periods. The Algonquin Park Visitor Centre Database indicated that one cliff nest site near Fisher Lake (Figure 7) in Algonquin Provincial Park, Nipissing District, had 20 years of known occupation from 1963 to 2000, and another Algonquin cliff site at Costello Lake (Figure 9) showed 21 years of use from 1970 to 1999 (R. Tozer, pers. comm.). A nest in Sudbury District, at Laurentian University was positioned on a light standard over a running track and was in annual use from 1991 to 2001 (10 records).

Figure 2: Adult Common Raven, 31 May 1999. Photo by *George K. Peck.*

Figure 3: Cliff nest site of Common Raven, Costello Lake, Algonquin Provincial Park, Nipissing District, Ontario, 20 May 1973. Photo by *George K. Peck.*

Figure 4: Active tree nest of Common Raven, Sarawak Township, Grey County, Ontario, 27 March 2004. Photo by *George K. Peck*.

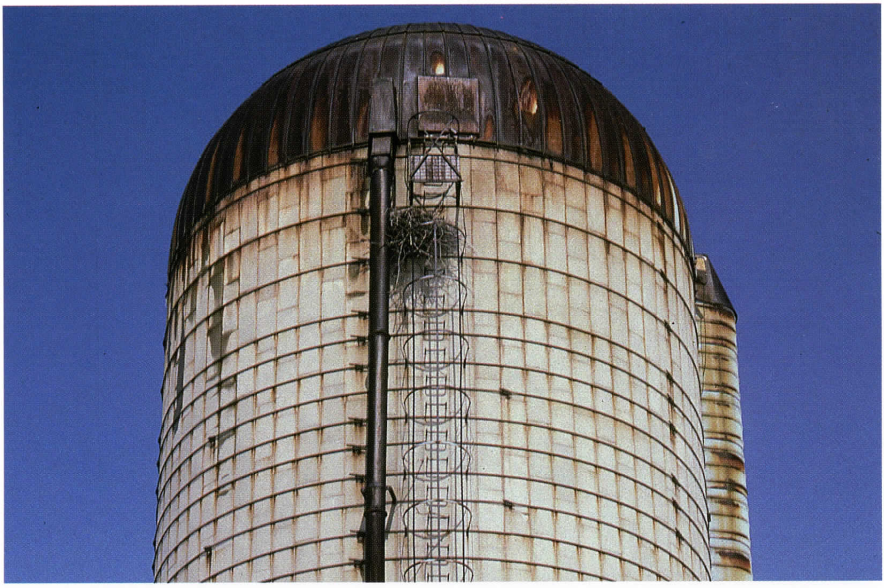

Figure 5: Active nest site of Common Raven on silo at a height of 21.3 m, Ravenna, Grey County, Ontario, 6 April 2003. Photo by *George K. Peck*.

Figure 6: Active Common Raven nest site in unused barn, Sullivan Township, Grey County, Ontario, 6 April 2000. Photo by *George K. Peck*.

Figure 7: Nest and eggs of Common Raven, Fisher Lake, Algonquin Provincial Park, Nipissing District, Ontario, 4 April 1970. Photo by *George K. Peck*.

Figure 8: Nest and three young Common Ravens, Polar Bear Provincial Park, Kenora District, Ontario, 24 June 1970. Photo by *George K. Peck*.

Figure 9: Adult Common Raven feeding whole thrush (Turdidae) eggs to nestlings, Costello Lake, Algonquin Provincial Park, Nipissing District, Ontario, 21 May 1973. Photo by *George K. Peck*.

A number of records were received by the ONRS where ravens typically used another nearby nest on alternate or subsequent years, in cliff, tree and human-structure sites.

In the ONRS database, of 102 nests with known outcome, 78 nests (76%) successfully fledged young. This successful percentage nest rate is unusually high when compared with the rates of most other passerine species. The 24 unsuccessful nests (24%) were deserted because of nest damage, or because of human interference, death of adult birds, or for other unknown reasons. Ravens appear to be much more vulnerable to human persecution than are some other Corvidae (Goodwin 1976).

Although no specific population figures were found for the province, it would appear that the numbers of Common Ravens are currently increasing, at least in southern Ontario.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Dennis Barry, Clive Goodwin, Theo Hofmann, Rayfield Pye, and Ron Tozer for information on the distribution and breeding of the Common Raven in Ontario. Mark Peck supplied valuable technical help in the preparation of this paper. I am indebted to Ross James for his constructive criticisms of the article. I am grateful to M. O'Dell, Ravenna, Ontario, for supplying many observations of an active Common Raven nest near his home.

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Distinguished Ornithologist Award

The Distinguished Ornithologist Award is granted by the Ontario Field Ornithologists to individuals who have made outstanding and authoritative contributions to the scientific study of birds in Ontario and Canada, who have been a resource to OFO and the Ontario birding community, and whose research on birds has resulted in numerous publications and a significant increase in new ornithological knowledge. Recipients to date have been: Earl Godfrey (1997), Ross James (1998), Murray Speirs (2000), George Peck (2001), Bruce Falls (2002), Bob Curry (2003), and Jim Rising (2004). The editors of *Ontario Birds* (Bill Crins, Ron Pittaway and Ron Tozer) form a committee responsible for proposing candidates for this award to the OFO Board of Directors.

Note

The Birds of Quetico Provincial Park and the Atikokan Area: An Update

David H. Elder

It has been just over 10 years since *The Birds of Quetico Provincial Park and the Atikokan Area* was published (Elder 1994). The area covered by my book was the former Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' Atikokan District, which extended from the boundary of Rainy River and Thunder Bay Districts, west to the Seine River, and from the Canada-United States boundary, north to the Turtle River and Pekagoning Lake, and included Quetico Provincial Park and Atikokan.

Since 1994, a number of new species have been recorded in the area. In addition, several species have experienced noteworthy changes in status. The following is an update and brings currency to the original publication. I have not included changes to the earliest and latest dates as they are too numerous, but have included two unusual records of species that over-wintered successfully.

New Species

The book presented accounts for 252 species. An additional 11 species are annotated here, bringing the species total for the area to 263.

Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)
A flock of four associated with Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) that stopped during migration from 15 to 18 March 1995 on an open grassy area in the middle of Atikokan was the first record for the area.

Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*)
The American Ornithologists' Union has recently recognized the Cackling Goose (Banks et al. 2004, Rising 2004) as a full species comprising four former small subspecies of the Canada Goose, including Richardson's Canada Goose (*B. canadensis hutchinsii*). A few of these small "Canada Geese" are usually seen in the area each year during spring and fall migration. On 9 October 2004, a flock of six Cackling Geese joined a large flock of Canada Geese on the Atikokan golf course. They stayed until late October, when a snowfall forced all the geese to move on.

Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*)
A hunter shot one immature bird from a flock of six on Mercutio Lake, northeast of Atikokan, on 15 September 1999. This is the first and only record for the area.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)
On 9 October 2004, a hunter shot a single immature on a marsh near Atikokan. It was a lone bird and was the first record for the area.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
On 7 May 1993, D. Graham observed a single light morph adult Swainson's Hawk over Atikokan (Bain 1994). It remains the only record of this western hawk here.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)
The first area record was made on 31 October 1993 when a juvenile appeared in the writer's Atikokan backyard, attracted by the rib cage of a moose carcass (Figure 1). The gull stayed for two days, feeding constantly and keeping all other birds away, including Common Ravens (*Corvus corax*). It was undoubtedly a starving migrant. A second Glaucous Gull, also a juvenile, was found on 26 October 1996 in a small flock of loafing Ring-billed (*L. delawarensis*) and Herring (*L. argentatus*) Gulls in Atikokan.

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*)
The first area record for this southern woodpecker occurred on 15 December 2003. A male frequented a feeder in Atikokan from then until it was last seen in late March 2004 (rather than mid March as previously reported; Crins 2004). It would take a single dog kibble, put out for Gray Jays (*Perisoreus canadensis*), wedge it in a crevice in the bark of a tree, and then peck off pieces to eat.

Figure 1: Juvenile Glaucous Gull feeding on a moose rib cage in a backyard in Atikokan, Ontario, 31 October 1993. Photo by *David H. Elder*.

Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*)
A singing male found on 27 May 1998 by D. Graham at the mouth of the Atikokan River on Lower Steep Rock Lake, just west of Atikokan,, remains the only record for the area (Dobos 1999).

Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*)
A molting male on 10 May 2001 and a full-plumaged male on 1 June 2004 (Crins 2005), both at feeders in Atikokan, are the only area occurrences. The 2001 record has yet to be reviewed by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC).

Spotted Towhee (*Piplio maculatus*)
The American Ornithologists' Union (AOU 1995) split the Rufous-sided Towhee (*P. erythrophthalmus*) into two species in 1995: Spotted Towhee (*P. maculatus*) and Eastern Towhee (*P. erythrophthalmus*). A single record of a distinctively marked Spotted Towhee visiting an Atikokan feeder for some time, beginning on 27 October 1984, remains unique in the area. Three other towhee occurrences reported in my book (Elder 1994) involved the Eastern Towhee. All of these towhee records have yet to be reviewed by OBRC.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*)
One of these beautiful mountain-dwelling finches found its way to a feeder at Sapawe, 30 km east of Atikokan (Figure 2). It was first seen on 22 January 1995, and remained to early March (rather than mid March as previously reported; Dobos 1996).

Figure 2: Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch at Sapawe, Ontario, 19 February 1995. Photo by *David H. Elder.*

New Introduced Species

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)
This swan has been recorded several times from the area just west of Quetico Provincial Park. A pair with two young frequented a large beaver pond south of the Namakan River in 2001. A single adult Trumpeter Swan was found by Ralph Brown on a marshy pond system near Atikokan on 12 May 2005. On 10 June 2005, I found three adult-plumaged Trumpeter Swans at the same site. These are the most easterly records for the area. It is likely that all Trumpeter Swans recorded here originate from reintroduction programs in the midwestern United States, particularly Minnesota. All swans must now be carefully observed to ensure correct identification. Ontario's introduced Trumpeter Swan population is currently considered not established by the OBRC since these swans are not yet self-sustaining (Burke 2003).

Changed Status

Since the original publication in 1994, several species have undergone significant changes in status, with some increasing in numbers and others decreasing or disappearing entirely.

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)
Cormorants are now recorded annually in increasing numbers and may be breeding in gull colonies on the larger lakes of the park and area.

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
Bald Eagle numbers in Quetico and the Atikokan area certainly equal or exceed historical levels. This is due to a reduction of pesticides in the food chain, public awareness, and an increased food supply provided by anglers and hunters, municipal landfills and road kills. The availability of a territory with large trees suitable for nesting may be the only population-limiting factor. An unusual ground nest was reported on a rocky island in Pickerel Lake in Quetico during 2004 (Martin 2005). Since 1990, Bald Eagles have wintered annually in varying numbers at the Atikokan landfill site.

Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*)
Prior to 1995, this gull was very uncommon, with most records being of non-adults during late summer and early fall, and no evidence of nesting here. Since then, numbers have increased dramatically and there are now several breeding colonies on the larger lakes north of Atikokan. It is now a common area bird, often seen feeding or loafing on large, open, grassy areas in Atikokan.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)
Formerly a fairly common migrant and breeding tern in the marshes near Atikokan, it has not been recorded since 1997.

Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*)
Now rarely observed, Common Nighthawks formerly nested on the flat gravel roofs of Atikokan stores and in area burns and cutovers. In late August, large south-moving flocks, sometimes containing over 100 birds, were expected. They no longer occur.

Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*)
A few pairs of swifts formerly nested each year in some of the large chimneys in the downtown section of Atikokan. None has been recorded since 2001.

Purple Martin (*Progne subis*)
Formerly a frequent breeder southwest of Quetico, most colonies are now gone. There is no obvious reason for the disappearance; the martin houses placed along lakeshores by cottagers are still there.

Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
Cardinals are now recorded annually at almost any time of the year, and have included a pair and a singing male in July. Most have been found visiting feeders. This increase seems to be part of a northward advance of the species across northwestern Ontario.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)
This impressive species no longer nests in the marshes near Atikokan, but is recorded annually during spring migration in mixed blackbird flocks.

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)
There were formerly several nesting colonies in and around the Atikokan area. Each colony slowly declined in numbers and then ceased to exist. None has been recorded since 1997. The reason for the decline is unknown, but similar disappearances have occurred in the Thunder Bay area.

House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*)
First recorded in Atikokan in 1991, this species (Figure 3) slowly increased during the mid 1990s and then abruptly disappeared. None has been recorded since 1998.

Figure 3: Male House Finch (left) and male Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*) at Atikokan, Ontario, 17 April 1995. Photo by *David H. Elder*.

Unusual in Winter

Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*)
An individual spent the winter of 1990-91 at the writer's feeder in Atikokan.

Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*)
One wintered successfully at my feeder in Atikokan in 2003-04.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Ron Tozer for helpful comments on an earlier draft.

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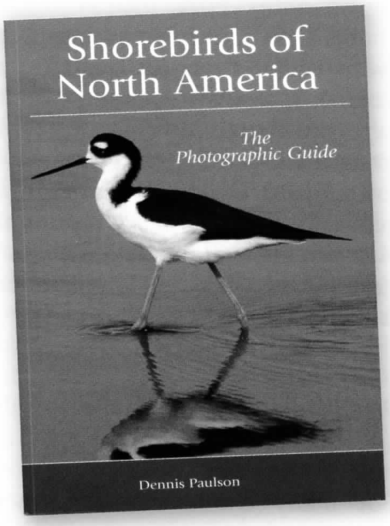
Reviews



Shorebirds of North America - The Photographic Guide. 2005. By *Dennis Paulson*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. Softcover, 608 pages, 534 colour photographs, 17 x 24.5 cm. $41.95 Canadian. ISBN 0-691-12107-9.

Dennis Paulson firmly established himself as a shorebird specialist in 1993 with the publication of his handbook on the *Shorebirds of the Pacific Northwest*. Now Paulson has done it again with a superb photographic guide to the *Shorebirds of North America*.

Shorebirds in North America comprise the following families: thick-knees, plovers, oystercatchers, stilts and avocets, jacanas, sandpipers (includes curlews, godwits, dowitchers, phalaropes, etc.), pratincoles and coursers. North Americans call these birds shorebirds and Europeans call them waders.

Paulson's new guide treats all 94 species of shorebirds recorded in North America, including the nearly extinct Slender-billed Curlew whose only North American occurrence is from Ontario. This is the first guide to show every North American shorebird using colour photos, making it a tremendous resource. There is a handy quick index on the folded front cover.

I recommend a thorough reading of the 19-page introduction covering the fundamentals of shorebird identification. It includes detailed shorebird anatomy using photos of standing and flying birds, plumage variation, seasonal variation, gender variation, age variation, geographic variation, individual variation, feather wear and fading, unusual plumages, photos of hybrids, molt, identification, behaviour, vocalizations, distribution, conservation, and Canadian Wildlife Service population estimates for 26 species.

The 534 colour photographs alone are worth the price of the guide. It includes photos by photographers from Ontario such as Mark Peck, Jim Richards, Tadao Shimba and Harold Stiver. Each photo has a caption loaded with information, including the month the photo was taken. The guide's text is packed with concise information and facts on each species. Of all the modern field

guides and handbooks, this book's strangest omission is the absence of range maps. However, breeding ranges, migration routes and wintering areas are well described.

I have only minor criticisms of this fine book. For example, it lacks a good photo of an adult Stilt Sandpiper in full breeding plumage. Also, the distinctive fresh juvenile plumage in August of the *cinnamonea* subspecies (race) of the Solitary Sandpiper is not shown. Instead, there is a photo of an older juvenile in October whose bright buff spotting above has faded and considerably worn away.

This excellent guide has three big strengths. First, its 534 colour photos show most plumages with an average of 5-6 photos per species. Second, it was written by a world's expert on shorebirds. Third, it is compact, so easily taken into the field. I recommend Dennis Paulson's new guide to the *Shorebirds of North America*. It will make identifying shorebirds much easier for all birders from beginner to expert.

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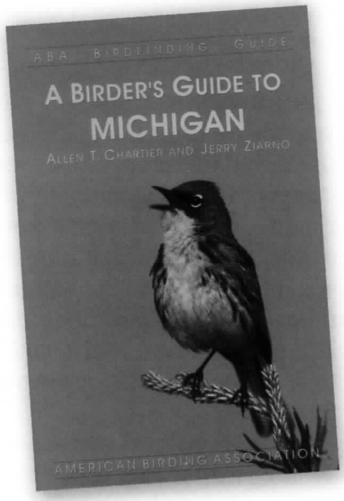

A Birder's Guide to Michigan. 2004. By *Allen T. Chartier and Jerry Ziarno* (editors). American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Softcover, 660 pages, 253 route maps, 6 photographs, 14 drawings, 14 x 21.5 cm. $28.95 U.S. ISBN 1-878788-13-2.

For many Ontario birders, their knowledge of Michigan may be limited to driving I-75 through the southeastern corner of the state on trips to southern birding locales, or perhaps a visit to the Kirtland's Warbler breeding grounds. However, this spectacular new birdfinding guide shows that the state has much more to offer. As noted on the book's cover, Michigan has 3,000 miles of shoreline on the four Great Lakes which surround it, 11,000 interior lakes, 36,000 miles of rivers and streams, and the largest state forest system in the U.S., all of which contribute to its rich diversity of birdlife (421 species on the official state list as of 2003). The guide describes over 200 birding sites in the state, with information on each site's birds, the best seasons to visit, and driving directions, accompanied by very clear

and detailed maps. Many local experts from throughout the state contributed material for these site descriptions, and some were authored by them.

The Introduction explains that in recognition of the ecological diversity of this large state, the book is organized into three regions (Upper Peninsula, Northern Lower Peninsula and Southern Lower Peninsula), with a further division of these into east and west sections. Other introductory material covers topography, vegetation, bird habitats, climate, a brief history of Michigan ornithology, the Michigan birding year (a summary of birds by month), hazards, and information resources for birders.

Following the site descriptions, which form the main part of the guide, there are some additional sections which will be of great interest and value to birders. For example, a chapter on "Michigan Specialties" provides status and occurrence information for a number of birds that "Michigan birders make a special effort to find", and ...."that out of state birders most often have as target species". These include Spruce Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Gyrfalcon, Yellow Rail, Black-backed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, and Kirtland's Warbler. Bar graphs for 303 regularly occurring species show seasonal occurrence and abundance, with each species having three separate bars to denote the major regions of the state noted above. Following the bar graphs, there is an annotated list of all casual, accidental, extirpated and extinct species. Finally, there are lists of Michigan mammals, amphibians and reptiles, butterflies, damselflies and dragonflies, and orchids. Six pages of references include literature cited in the guide, plus some additional titles that "persons interested in more details of the natural history of Michigan might find useful".

I recommend this excellent birdfinding guide. I wish it had been available when I lived in Ann Arbor during my graduate school days at the University of Michigan. Its extremely detailed information and maps will be a tremendous asset to everyone birding in Michigan, both residents and visitors.

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Hummingbirds of North America. 2004. The Advanced Birding Video Series with *Jon L. Dunn*. Peregrine Video Productions, 7583 Estate Circle, Niwot, Colorado 80503. VHS ($34.95 US) and DVD ($39.95 US); 180 minutes.

This newest offering from Peregrine Video is the third in their Advanced Birding Video Series, following two successful videos, *The Large Gulls of North America* and *The Small Gulls of North America*, and is the first to be available in DVD format. This review was done based on the DVD version (2 DVD set) of the video, which is stated to be identical in content to the VHS video tape, but has additional advantages of the DVD format. Few of us are such hopeless hummingbird fanatics that we will watch this 4-hour production in its entirety from beginning to end! The menu structure and an ability to instantly cue to any species or species group is a distinct advantage of this format.

As with the previous gull videos, there is a short introduction covering aspects of hummingbird identification, including hummingbird topography and some specialized terms used in describing their field characters, and even covering some false ID marks, such as the presence of pollen on hummingbirds' heads. A handy insert is provided with a hummingbird topography diagram drawn by Shawneen Finnegan, who also created the artwork included throughout the video. Recognized bird identification guru Jon Dunn narrates throughout, and the script was written by hummingbird expert Sheri Williamson, author of *Hummingbirds of North America* in the Peterson Field Guide series. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001). Editors have included other well-known hummingbird authorities such as Steve Bouricius, Bob Sargent, and others. The maps, many animated and in 3D showing relief, were produced by Larry Rosche, many based on the maps in Williamson's book.

All 24 species that have been recorded in North America, north of Mexico, are covered, and one additional species, Azure-crowned Hummingbird, is briefly covered as it is a potential vagrant to North America from Mexico. The arrangement of species is not taxonomic, but rather species are grouped based on general size and appearance. Thus, we have the Rufous-Green group, the Sheartail group, the Gray-Green group, the Small Tropical Hummingbirds, and the Large Hummingbirds. The insert lists which species are included in each group for the times you may forget, and the Species Locator in

the on-screen menu is very handy. One minor complaint I have with the arrangement of the DVD is that it might have been nice to have the groupings so that the Gray-Green group was not spread across the two separate DVD disks.

It may be that my personal bias in favour of hummingbirds, and my relatively reduced enthusiasm for gulls, causes me to state that the video images in this production are superior to the gull videos, truly spectacular, and just plain fun to watch. Salient field marks are discussed throughout, with occasional freeze-frames and slow motion to allow viewers to see points that the narrator is discussing on these fast-moving birds, and well done side-by-side comparisons with similar species. All too often, however, a number of interesting characters are described and shown that seem to zoom by all too quickly. The viewers of this video will make frequent use of the rewind and pause features of their DVD or VCR just to soak it all in. Captions indicating the flower species on which the birds are feeding are a nice added touch.

Hummingbirds exhibit many interesting behaviours, which include spectacular courtship displays in many species. Animated graphics show the characteristic displays of each species. Vocalizations are often unremarkable in hummingbirds, but many calls can assist with identification. Supplementing the presentation of these call notes are animated sonograms that provide greater detail of the characteristics of these often brief and sharp notes.

In reviewing for accuracy of details, I found very little of concern, but a few minor inaccuracies did escape the editors. The introduction makes a broad statement that hummingbirds molt once a year, but that may not be true for all species, as adults of our own Ruby-throated Hummingbird molt prior to fall migration (body feathers), then once again on their wintering grounds (flight feathers). Rufous Hummingbird molt suggests a suspended molt during fall migration. Another statement that by late summer most immature male Ruby-throats will show some iridescent feathers on the throat is inconsistent with my personal experience; a small number will show this. And, buff fringing on the crown is correctly stated to be fresh feathers, but is incorrectly claimed to be characteristic of immatures since fresh adult females, and even worn females, often show buff fringing there. A couple of the range maps contain inaccuracies, which are surely carry-overs from the source field guide. For example, the map for Broad-tailed Hummingbird shows a record for central Indiana, where there is no such record, and another questionable record on the border of southern Indiana and Kentucky. The location of one of Michigan's two records of Broad-billed Hummingbird is incorrectly located, and there is a record of Black-chinned Hummingbird shown for Ontario on the north shore of Lake Superior rather than in eastern Ontario at Rideau Ferry, Lanark County, where it actually occurred. The description and graphic display of the diagnostic

"narrower inner primaries" of the genus *Archilochus*, which includes Ruby-throated and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, is a bit confusing and unclear. Dunn's consistent mispronunciation of the genus *Amazilia* is probably of little consequence.

Technically, this video is very well done, but the DVD did exhibit a couple of glitches that probably could have been cleaned up in the editing process. The Introduction has a tendency to repeat or false start, and there are a couple of other places with abrupt, but brief jumps. The music in the background of the opening menu is a bit jerky, and at the end of the introduction segment, there is a cut to an inexplicable 1-2 seconds of Jon Dunn simply sitting in a chair, after his narration has finished.

This video will be very useful. It has very few errors or problems, and is a feast for the eyes whether you are a hummingbird enthusiast or not. Although the number of hummingbird species to be seen in Ontario is limited, this video could help prepare you for the next rarity to show up, and I highly recommend it for anyone planning a trip to the southern and western U.S.

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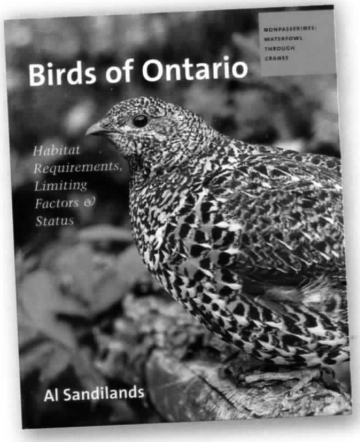

Birds of Ontario: Habitat Requirements, Limiting Factors, and Status – Nonpasserines: Waterfowl Through Cranes. 2005. By *Al Sandilands*. UBC Press, Vancouver, British Columbia. Hardcover, 365 pages, 89 drawings, 86 maps, 21 x 26 cm. $95 Canadian. ISBN 0-7748-1066-1 (v. 1).

This is the first of four volumes on the life history of Ontario's breeding birds (with shorebirds through woodpeckers, flycatchers through waxwings, and wood-warblers through Old World sparrows yet to come). The series is intended to be "an essential reference for wildlife biologists, environmental consultants, and planners preparing or reviewing environmental impact statements and environmental assessments". However, serious birders will find these books to be of great interest as well, since they present "so many interesting aspects of the ecology of Ontario birds".

The objective of these books is to summarize the life history requirements of the regular breeding birds of Ontario, and to provide current information concerning factors that limit their populations. The material presented is derived primarily from published data. The main body of the text is devoted to species accounts. Information in each species account is organized under three biological seasons: breeding, migration, and winter. For each of these three seasons, there is a discussion of habitat requirements, limiting factors, and status in Ontario.

In the Breeding Season section, Habitat Requirements includes nesting habitat, nest description and territory size. Under Limiting Factors, information is provided on the timing of key events in the nesting period, annual reproductive effort, mating systems and diet. Additional discussion may include topics such as habitat loss and fragmentation, human disturbance, environmental contaminants, effects of water-level fluctuations, logging impacts, nest parasitism, water and air quality, and nest site availability, when such information is relevant and available. Under Status, an estimate of breeding season abundance is presented. A historical perspective of changes from the late 19th century to the present is given for some species, and the future status of species is sometimes predicted (e.g., Snow Goose, American Black Duck, Double-crested Cormorant).

The Migration section includes data on migration routes, approximate dates of migration, habitat

requirements (where relevant), habitat loss, and abundance estimates. Migration route and staging area information is most pertinent to some species of waterfowl, diurnal raptors, and shorebirds.

Winter is the final section in each account, and it is relatively brief for most species. However, some birds have particular habitat preferences and limiting factors in that season. Information is presented on these subjects when available, and Ontario winter status is defined numerically.

All the species accounts have range maps, except (inexplicably) for Pacific Loon and Common Loon. These maps show breeding range, marginal breeding range, wintering areas, marginal wintering areas, and major migration routes and staging areas (when they exist and are known) for Ontario. The maps appear to be well done, and provide detailed information on ranges and occurrence.

Each account includes a black and white drawing of the species by Ross James, often depicting the head and shoulders of the bird with typical habitat in the background. These drawings are a very attractive feature of the book.

A strength of this book is that publication citations are provided in the text so that the reader is aware of the source for most statements in the species accounts, and can access the original material if desired. The emphasis on Ontario-based references distinguishes this book from other life history compilations. Sandilands has done a very thorough job of researching information, with 60 pages of literature cited.

At $95, the price of this initial hardcover edition is expensive, apparently due to the limited print run that books of this type often have. However, the publisher hopes to produce a softcover version in the $40-$50 price range next year.

UBC Press asked me to undertake a peer review of the species accounts for this book prior to publication, and so I have had the opportunity to study them in detail. I think *Birds of Ontario* will be a very useful reference for environmental consultants and planners, but also an interesting read and a valuable information source for Ontario birders. A tremendous amount of material is summarized in the species accounts, and it is presented in a well written style. I strongly recommend this book and future volumes in the series.

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Nikon

Photo Quiz

Sponsored by Nikon Canada

August 2005 Quiz

Glenn Coady

Our quiz bird this time around is a slender passerine with a short, stout, and rather blunt-tipped bill. It is a choice most befitting the final season of our Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, as no doubt many atlassers have come across this identification conundrum themselves quite early on in the atlas.

Our bird's bill structure and its general proportions allow us to quickly eliminate most of the bird families on the checklist from consideration. It lacks the stiff, pointed tail and sharp, chisel-like bill of our woodpeckers. Its long-legged, upright posture, in combination with its stippled crown (not to mention ground-based foraging), is inconsistent with any of our tyrant flycatchers. It lacks the hook-tipped bill of our shrikes or vireos. It is too petite and slender to be any of the corvids. It lacks the very tiny bill and very long wings of the aerial-foraging swifts and swallows. It is too slender and has too long a bill for our chickadees or titmouse, and it lacks the short tail and upturned bill of the nuthatches. It lacks the decurved bill and pointed, stiff tail of the Brown Creeper. It doesn't demonstrate the very short and rounded wings of any of the wrens. It has too stout a bill and is not compact enough to be one of the kinglets. It is clearly not proportionately long-tailed enough for the gnatcatchers, catbirds, mockingbirds or thrashers. It lacks the strongly pointed, thorn-like bill of the European Starling. It also lacks the pointed crest of the waxwings. The wood-warblers and icterids all have more sharply pointed bills than this bird. Conversely, the tanagers, emberizids, cardinals, grosbeaks, buntings, finches and Old World sparrows all have conical bills, unlike this bird.

In short order we have, therefore, ruled out all but the pipits, larks and thrushes as reasonable possibilities. A close look at our bird reveals that it has a finely and intricately stippled crown and back, as well as bright, crisp and even edges to the greater and median coverts, all indicators of a bird in fresh plumage. Combined with the fact that this bird is not a good match for either sex of our larks, pipits or thrushes in adult plumage, most observers would intuitively recognize that we are thus dealing with a fresh juvenile bird (hopefully before they have gone racing for their foreign field guides!).

All of our juvenile thrushes are distinctly spotted or scalloped on the breast, unlike our quiz bird, and so they can be eliminated easily as well. Likewise, both juvenile American Pipit and juvenile Sprague's Pipit have streaked breasts, unlike the plain breast with

simply a darker wash across the upper chest, as seen in this quiz bird. Juvenile Sprague's Pipit also has a plain, pale, buffy head colour that contrasts starkly with the dark iris to present a definite "blank stare" appearance. This is quite unlike the quiz bird, for which the iris appears much better concealed in a partial dark "mask". Juvenile American Pipit tends to have a longer and more pointed bill, as well as a more uniformly patterned head and crown than this bird. Although juvenile longspurs are quite often mistaken for this bird, as previously noted they are easily eliminated by their much more conical bill.

By process of elimination, it is evident that our quiz bird is a juvenile **Horned Lark**. Note that even this early in its development, we see evidence of the dark mask and breast band that it consistently shows in all plumages. In the field we might also have picked up on the shuffling walking gait so characteristic of Horned Larks as well, but beware that within the first month of fledging many juvenile Horned Larks are actually more prone to hopping than their typical walking. It has been suggested that the developmental acquisition of walking might be explained on the basis that hopping is the more ancient phylogenetic form of locomotion. I photographed this juvenile Horned Lark in Churchill, Manitoba on 2 July 1991.

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Point Pelee National Park
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Ontario Field Ornithologists

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