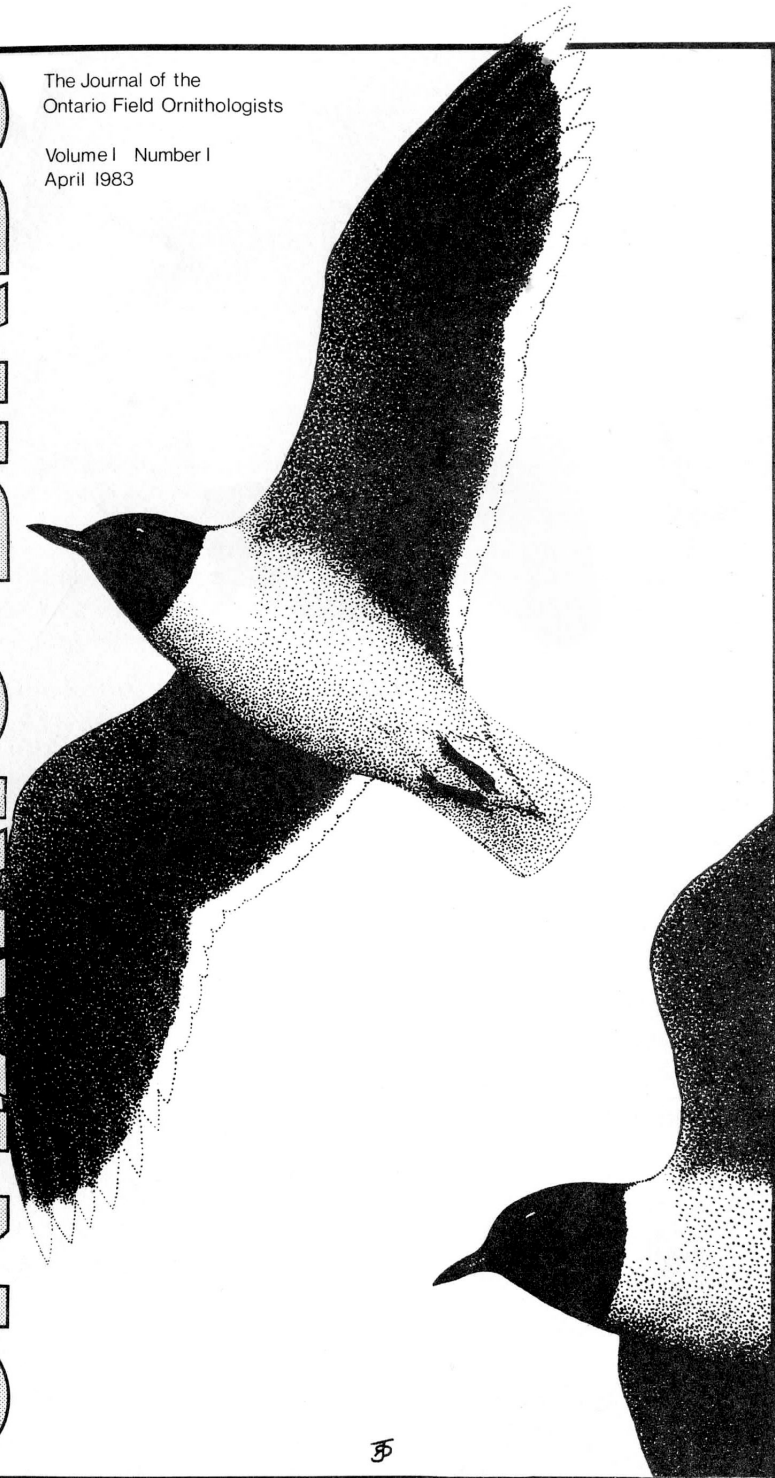


ONTARIO BIRDS

The Journal of the
Ontario Field Ornithologists

Volume I Number I
April 1983



Ontario Field Ornithologists

The Ontario Field Ornithologists is an organization dedicated to the study of birdlife in Ontario. It was formed to unify the ever growing numbers of field ornithologists (birders/birdwatchers) across the province and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among its members. The Ontario Field Ornithologists officially oversees the activities of the *Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC)*, publishes a newsletter and a journal, *Ontario Birds*, hosts field trips throughout Ontario and holds an Annual General Meeting.

All persons interested in bird study, regardless of their level of expertise, are invited to become members of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Membership dues are \$10.00 Annual Member or \$200.00 Life Member. All members receive *Ontario Birds*, the official publication of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Please send memberships to: Ontario Field Ornithologists, P.O. Box 1204, Station B, Burlington, Ontario L7P 3S9.

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Ontario Birds

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We wish to acknowledge the financial assistance of the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund for Bird Research and Preservation for the publication of this issue of *Ontario Birds*.

From the President ...

Slightly less than one year ago, a small group of birders from around the province sat down one night at Pt. Pelee to discuss the possibilities of an organization dedicated to the study of the birdlife of Ontario. The various pros and cons of such a group were volleyed back and forth, along with possible aims and purposes, late into the evening. Even in that early period of gestation, I was impressed with the enthusiasm everyone there expressed for the project. And to this day, with the publication of *Ontario Birds*, that enthusiasm has not wavered but has grown several times over.

From our inaugural meeting in November 1982, the Ontario Field Ornithologists has evolved into a functioning organization based upon the belief that the birders of this province were keen to share their knowledge with others of a like mind. That is really the essence of it all. A desire, that we all have, to share the excitement we experience when we are out in the field. Some might purport to be beyond this in the sense of a purist pursuing his craft but it is my belief that none of us would continue if we did not derive some

measure of pleasure from our studies.

It is a fine line that we have chosen. The pursuit of knowledge and pleasure in the proportion best suited for everyone is not an easy task but if it is done properly the rewards are that much greater. It is much like the wildlife artist who has the choice of painting popular subjects for the masses or more obscure species for himself. Ideally, he paints a popular subject in a new and challenging way, so that both he and his audience are satisfied. It is not easy but far more rewarding.

So that is the road we have chosen. We would like to serve as many needs as possible. But we can not do it without your participation. We want to solicit your viewpoint with this editorial. If you have any ideas about directions you would like the OFO to take, let us know. If there is a field trip you would like to take, make the suggestion. Every idea is open to consideration.

We have started the ball rolling and with your help we are going to maintain the momentum in the years to come. As an organization we can indeed be more than the sum of our parts.

Ron Ridout

From the Editors ...

On behalf of the Ontario Field Ornithologists and the contributors to *Ontario Birds*, we are pleased to present the first issue of *Ontario Birds*. In compiling *Ontario Birds*, the OFO executive envisioned a journal similar in quality, style, appearance and appeal to *Blue Jay* of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society but devoted entirely to birds. We hope to avoid competition with the many natural history or scientific publications in Ontario, none of which we feel is directed solely toward the amateur field ornithologist. As Jim Richards points out in this issue, Jim Baillie himself often lamented the fact that there was no outlet for contributions by knowledgeable amateur field ornithologists (i.e. those who do not earn a living from field ornithology) in Ontario. More than anything else, we hope *Ontario Birds* will fill that void.

In compiling the first issue of *Ontario Birds*, our goal was to try to include at least one example of each type of article we thought appropriate. Appropriate both in what we, as editors, felt should be included and what you, our readers and members would expect. We have probably not done a perfect job but we are excited at the contents of this issue. Unfortunately, due to space constraints, some articles originally slated for this issue have had to be delayed. If you have suggestions for improving *Ontario Birds*, please contact us.

We encourage all OFO members to be aware of significant research, field observations or literature that would be appropriate for *Ontario Birds*. We are happy to offer suggestions to any author(s) who would like assistance in writing for *Ontario Birds*. Finally, we are now accepting submissions for the next issue of *Ontario Birds*. Deadline for receipt of material is 1 August; anticipated publication is October 1983.

Chip and Linda Weseloh

A GUEST EDITORIAL

“Once upon a time . . .”

by

James M. Richards

It was 22 August 1968. In the old birdroom at the ROM, checking the nest and egg collection files for needed specimens, I was conducting research for a book, *Birds of the Oshawa-Lake Scugog Region, Ontario*, (Tozer & Richards, 1974). Not unlike most days at the ROM, the birdroom paid host to several researchers and bird enthusiasts, of whom many were present this day — Dr. Savage, Don Baldwin, Dr. Peck, Ott Devitt, the Rev. Chas. Long, and naturally, Jim Baillie (a permanent fixture).

During one of my many breaks (the fumes from the collection cabinets always gave me a headache), I found myself in a familiar position — across a well-used, journal-strewn desk from Jim. He always welcomed a break and, being a keen backer of the spoken word, we commenced to discuss some of the events and happenings of the past spring and summer. Between frequent incoming telephone calls (he had a great network) and numerous interruptions by students and researchers asking questions (he always had the answers), I related to him the circumstances of

finding the nests of Brewer's Black-birds at Oshawa that spring. As this represented a major range extension, he suggested, in what had become a familiar phrase from him, that “you should write that up”. I agreed and we talked about where it should go. This is when an idea was born, perhaps not original, but the earliest of recollection. Surely the idea of a provincial journal must have crossed the minds and lips of Taverner, Saunders and Fleming in the early 1900s and, undoubtedly, it was thought of by the likes of Snyder half a century later.

Jim seldom displayed any emotions other than those associated with joy, pleasure, happiness and concern but, at this moment, he did in fact show signs of frustration — frustration because amateurs like myself really had no local or regular outlet for publishing serious (short) papers. Soon into the conversation, he suggested we carry on over lunch and a cold beer. We were in Jim's favorite tavern, the King Cole Room, enjoying both lunch and conversation and, contrary to popular belief, it was only after we had consumed a few

cold ones that the conversation took on real meaning.

Back in the 60s, not unlike today, there were very few choices when it came to a published report. If you had a lengthy or scientific paper, you could publish in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. If it was shorter or not too technical, it could be published in the *Ontario Field Biologist*. Notes of sightings, migration dates, etc., **could** be published in the *Ontario Naturalist*. Other than these, your choices were limited. Reports of almost continental importance could be sent to the *Auk*, the *Wilson Bulletin* and other journals but they were the 'big league' and no place for a rookie like myself. Most reports and notes subsequently ended up in local naturalists' club newsletters, of no real benefit to birders or researchers outside the general club area.

It was then, on the 22 August 1968, in the King Cole Room in downtown Toronto, that Jim and I decided it was time the birding community in Ontario should have their own journal; a publication that would come out at least on a quarterly basis, a publication that would offer space to both amateur and professional, and would carry articles dealing with all aspects of ornithology, regardless of length. This publication would not take away from the existing journals, but would complement them. Most important though, it would serve not only as an outlet for a treasure of works that would normally go unpublished, but it would join together the birdwatcher and the ornithologist, the scientist and the naturalist, and all those possessing an interest in our avifauna.

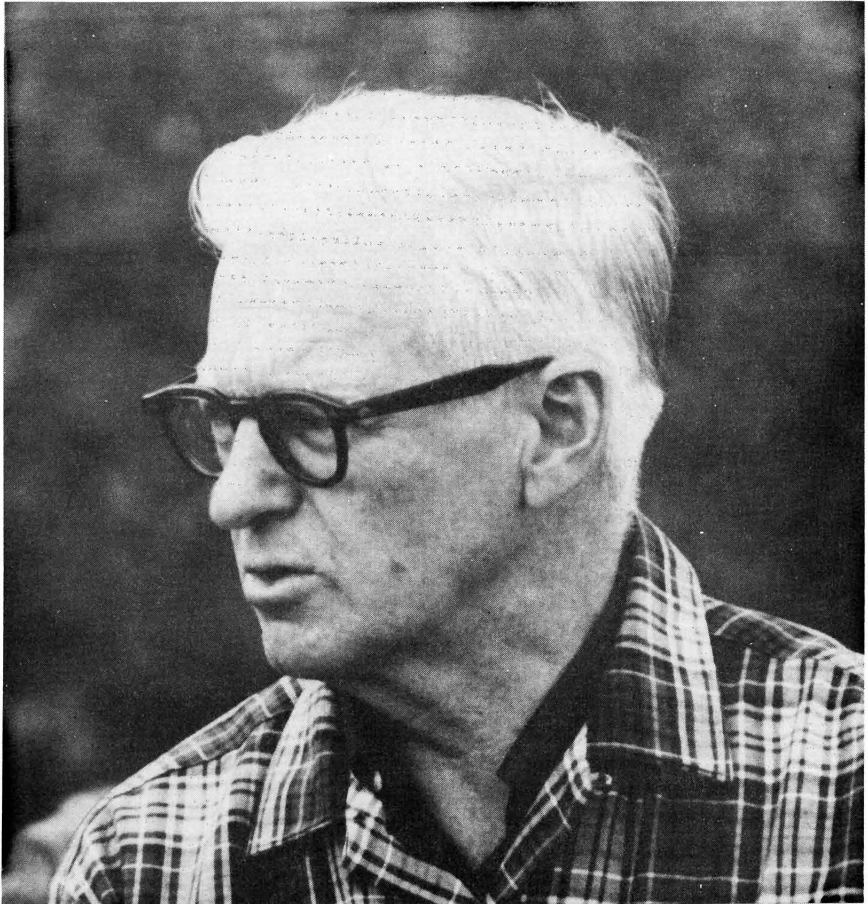
Jim suggested we should begin immediately to initiate just such a

journal (then dubbed 'Ontario Birds') and to generate an interest and to raise the necessary funds, we should create a new organization, the 'Ontario Ornithological Society'. When I left the ROM that day, my head was swimming with enthusiasm; ideas were percolating, thoughts were mixing with adrenalin; I was on a 'natural high'. Over the next few weeks, I took every opportunity to mention the idea to others. I discussed it with a young man named Barry MacKay; a Park Naturalist at Presqu'ile Provincial Park. Both he and a co-worker, a young lad named Martin Parker, were enthused. I mentioned it to a naturalist at Algonquin, a chap named Russ Rutter, whom I respected very much. He too thought it was long overdue. Student naturalists at the park (youngsters at the time) like Ron Tozer, Ron Pittaway, Dan Brunton and others all seemed to be keen on the prospects. However, it was left for me to do something. Needless to say, I was caught up in many endeavors of my own — writing a book, fighting environmental issues, and trying to find time to enjoy a bit of wilderness. Ever so slowly time passed and with it, we lost some of the early backers of the scheme, people like Jim Baillie and Russ Rutter. The idea, which may have been before its time, was lost too.

Not unlike most stories which start off on the theme "once upon a time", this story too has a happy ending. In 1982 the idea was reborn, only this time to a new and energetic breed of Ontario ornithologists. A group not willing to just talk about the idea, but wanting to make it a reality, and a reality it is. Initial planning started in January '82 and

an inaugural meeting was held in November at Burlington, Ontario. An enthusiastic group of about 125 people endorsed in principle the formation of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. The group was formed. In the months that passed between then and the spring of 1983, the same few movers and shakers who initiated the formative meeting have put together the first official publication of OFO. It can only get better.

We in Ontario, who have an interest in birds and birders, have reason to be proud of this new organization, and we take pride in our own (finally!) journal. I'm sure all of you will join with me in thanking the dedicated few who have made this all possible. In retrospect, I can only lament the fact that we did not do it in 1968, but I am proud to be associated with those who did in 1982. Thank you Chip, Ron, Bill and Doug and all the others.



Jim Baillie. (Photograph taken in the 1960's)

Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 1982

by
Ross D. James

In January of 1982 a meeting was held at the Federation of Ontario Naturalists headquarters to consider a restructuring of the provincial records committee. From that meeting a new Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) emerged, with a plan of operation similar to those in various other parts of the world. The members of the previous Ontario Ornithological Records Committee (OORC) were representatives of specific functions such as *American Birds*, the *Ontario Field Biologist* or the Royal Ontario Museum, rather than being drawn from the field ornithologists at large, many of whom are as well or more qualified to serve on a records committee.

The membership of the initial OBRC was selected from those assembled in January 1982 and they were charged with drawing up a constitution for the committee, of designating a subcommittee to form the Ontario Field Ornithologists group (OFO), and of adjudicating the reports received during the year. The present OBRC consists of six members plus a secretary. Two members will retire each year and be replaced from among the members of OFO.

The secretary is elected annually. Further details of the operating guidelines of the OBRC will be presented at a later date or are available from the secretary.

The present OBRC membership includes R. Curry (Chairman), R. James (secretary), A.D. Brewer, T. Hince, P.D. Pratt, D.A. Sutherland, and A. Wormington. All reports of unusual species should be sent to the secretary.

The committee wishes to thank all those who have submitted reports during the previous year. Without the support of these people we would not be able to continue to document species which rarely occur in Ontario. The committee would like to apologize to those whose records may have been considered, but who did not receive notification of the committee decision, or to those who took the trouble to submit reports that were not formally reviewed by the committee. During the initial year of operation the OBRC has been beset by numerous problems and a larger volume of work than expected. We have had to limit the species that we can consider to those which occur on the review list. Details of which

species will be accepted for review by the OBRC are indicated on the inserts with this issue of *Ontario Birds*. Reports of other rarities are encouraged and will be kept on file at the ROM, but will not form part of our reports.

The following report lists all the accounts of species on the review lists, submitted to the OBRC during the 1982 calendar year. We have accepted 75 per cent of the accounts listed. We believe that in future, with improved reporting, a higher percentage could be accepted. We are not attempting to judge the credibility of an observer, but whether or not the submitted report was sufficiently detailed to convince the committee that the bird described actually was the species named in the report. In many instances we felt that the observer had seen the bird reported but we were not convinced that the report eliminated any other species.

In the following accounts, the file number assigned to each report is

given and all these reports are on file in the ROM where they are available for examination by interested persons. Following each file number the initials of the person or persons who submitted it are given in the order in which they appear on the report(s). If a report was written on behalf of someone else, the initials of the author are given, followed by 'per' and the initials of the observer. The ROM photorecord number assigned to submitted photographs is abbreviated to PR. The inclusion of photographs with a report greatly enhances the submission and we encourage it. Photographs can be copied and the originals returned following committee deliberations if you wish. The initials of the photographer follow each PR number. At present two or more acceptable reports (of the same or different individuals) are necessary for a species to be added to the Ontario Checklist unless a specimen or photograph is available.

Accepted Records

YELLOW-BILLED LOON (*Gavia adamsii*).

1967 — 4 May, Grimsby, Niagara R.M. (82-106 RC).

Since this is the second accepted report for Ontario, this species has now been added to the Ontario list. The first report was at Ottawa, 19 May 1980.

NORTHERN FULMAR (*Fulmarus glacialis*).

1981 — five, 27 Oct., Netitishi Point, James Bay, Cochrane Dist. (82-2 AW); fourteen, 6 Nov., Netitishi Point (82-2 AW); one, 19 Nov., Netitishi Point (82-2 AW).

There have been very few previous Ontario records for this species but nobody has previously reported from the southern James Bay area at this time of year. These observations followed successive gales with strong north winds.

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma furcata*).

1981 — 8 Oct., Attawapiskat, Kenora Dist. (82-5 AW).

This represents the first record from the north and only the third in Ontario.

NORTHERN GANNET (*Sula bassanus*).

1981 — immature, 29 Oct., Netititishi

Point, James Bay (82-1 AW, RDM).

This represents the first record from northern Ontario.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*).

1982 — three adults, 6 to 12 July, Kettle Point, Lambton Co. (AR) (PR 1308 AR).

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*).

1982 — adult, 22 May, Amherst Island, Lennox and Addington Co. (82-65 MHE, RDW).

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*).

1982 — immature, 22 Aug. to 2 Sept., Rondeau Prov. Park, Kent Co. (82-112 PAW) (PR 1354-1355 PAW).

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*).

1982 — 24 June, Point Pelee Nat. Park, Essex Co. (82-53 AW); 1 July, Whitby, Durham R.M. (81-113 MB).

Considered accidental in the province until recently, this species now occurs annually.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*).

1982 — 23 Oct., Dorion, Thunder Bay Dist. (82-90 AW per WB, ET).

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*).

1982 — 5 to 9 May, near Mount Healy, Haldimand-Norfolk R.M. (82-58 BWD); 13 July, Oshawa, Durham R.M. (82-114 MM).

This species was reported much more frequently in the early 1970s than in recent years.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*).

1982 — 9 to 10 April, Whitby (82-54 DVW).



Black Vulture, 17 August 1981, Point Pelee National Park

PHOTO/ DONALD A. WILKES

EURASIAN WIGEON (*Anas penelope*).

1982 — 28 Apr., Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-97 AW), 4 to 8 May, Whitby (82-56 GB).

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*).

1979 — 20 Sept. near Kingsville, Essex Co. (82-45 RG).

1981 — 17 Aug., Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-14 AW) (PR 1345 DW).

1982 — 29 July, Hwy 402, eastern Lambton Co. (82-68 ALP).

Summer appearances in Ontario have become regular in recent years.

AMERICAN SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (*Elanoides forficatus*).

1982 — 14 to 24 June, Buckhorn, Peterborough Co. (82-111 AGC) (PR 1353 AGC).

This superb bird was seen by many

on 19 June as it perched in a tree next to the liquor store in Buckhorn.

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*).

1982 — 20 to 21 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-104 MF, FvM, NT).

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*).

1981 — adult, light phase, 15 Sept., Holiday Beach, Essex Co. (82-15 EC).

GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*).

1981 — white phase, 28 Dec., Hamilton, Hamilton-Wentworth R.M. (82-32 KM).

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*).

1981 — two, 7 June, Sable Island, Lake-of-the-Woods, Rainy River Dist. (82-8 EJT, MBT).

This is the third record for Ontario.

SPOTTED REDSHANK (*Tringa erythropus*).

1981 — summer adult, 7 to 8 May, Lakefield, Peterborough Co. (82-7 AGC) (PR 1342 TB).

There is only one previously accepted record of this species at St. Davids, Niagara R.M., 25 July 1976 (Axtell, et al. 1977). This species has now been added to the provincial list on the basis of these reports.

SLENDER-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius tenuirostris*).

About **1925** — autumn, Crescent Beach, Niagara R.M. (82-75) (BSNS 2092).

A detailed account of the history of this bird is presented by Beardslee and Mitchell (1965: 212-213). This

specimen in the Buffalo Museum constitutes the only record for Ontario. As a result of the OBRC acceptance of this record, the species has been added to the Ontario list.

CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris ferruginea*).

1982 — summer adult, 14 to 17 May, Essex, Essex Co. (82-110 RC) (PR 1298-1299 DRG, PDP).

Seen by numerous Point Pelee visitors on this May weekend.

POMARINE JAEGER (*Stercorarius pomarinus*).

1982 — 9 Nov., near Mallorytown Landing, Leeds Co. (82-84 DAS).

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (*Stercorarius longicaudus*).

1981 — adult, 6 Aug., Long Point, Haldimand-Norfolk R.M. (82-17 CL, KK, TJ); adult, 10 Aug., Long Point (82-25 CL, AJ, TJ, DA).

1982 — adult, 6 July, Whitby (82-115 JF).

The Long Point records may have been of the same bird but were considered as separate occurrences.

LAUGHING GULL (*Larus atricilla*).

1981 — first year immature, 7 June, Kettle Point (82-20 AR); second winter plumage, 25 Oct., Cobourg, Northumberland Co. (82-19 ERM) (PR 1304-1305 ERM).

1982 — adult, 21 May 1982, Point Pelee Nat. Park, (82-103 JAB).

CALIFORNIA GULL (*Larus californicus*).

1981 — adult female, 14 to 29 May, Toronto, (82-86 HB).

1982 — adult female, 19 May to 2 June, Toronto, (82-86 HB, RC) (PR 1346-1349 JEM, AW).



PHOTO/ ALAN WORMINGTON

Curlew Sandpiper, 17 May 1982, Essex, Essex Co.

These constitute the first records of the species in the province. The same bird may have been involved on each occasion. It was sitting upon a clutch of two eggs in 1981 and on a single egg in 1982.

IVORY GULL (*Pagophila eburnea*).
1981 — adult, 13 Nov., Netitishi Point, James Bay (82-3 RDM).

BLACK SKIMMER (*Rynchops niger*).
1981 — adult, 11 to 15 Sept., Erieau, Kent Co. (82-23 GB) (PR 1286 MCEM).

This is the third provincial record since 1977. Two birds also appeared in Michigan shortly before this date.

RAZORBILL (*Alca torda*).
1982 — 27 Nov., Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara R.M. (82-105 BWD, KM).

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Columba fasciata*).

1981 — adult, 20 Aug., Long Point (82-21 JS, PH, JT).

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*).

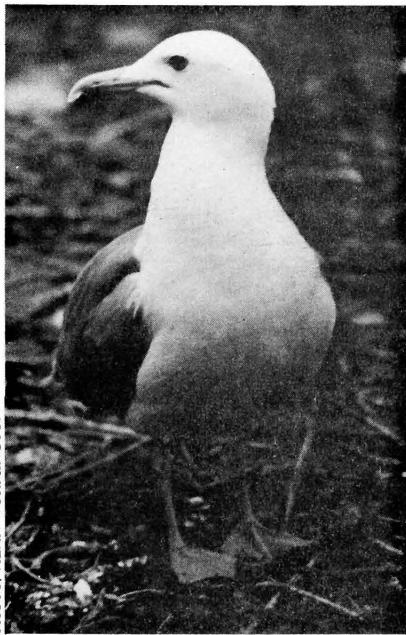
1982 — 7 to 8 May, near Kleinberg, York R.M. (82-59 GB).

The Owl Rehabilitation Foundation revealed that there were two escapes the previous year but that there was essentially no chance that this bird was one of those.

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalacroptilus nuttallii*).

1982 — adult female, 4 June, North Point, James Bay, Cochrane Dist. (CR) (Specimen in NMC).

This is the first record of this species in Ontario and it has now been added to the provincial list.



PHOTO/ ALAN WORMINGTON

California Gull, 29 May 1982,
Toronto

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER
(*Myiarchus cinerascens*).

1962 — 24 to 25 Nov., Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-89 WBo).

1982 — 27 to 29 Oct., Whitby (82-85 JM, RDM) (PR 1356-1360 RDM); 7 Nov., Prince Edward Point, Prince Edward Co. (82-81 RDW).

These are the first accepted records for the province; the species has been added to the Ontario list as a result of committee acceptance of them. These late fall occurrences fit the pattern of records elsewhere in north-eastern North America.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*).

1982 — 21 May, Whitby (82-77 DC); 24 June, Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-98 TSP); 2 Oct., north of Toronto (82-76 AW).

GRAY KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus dominicensis*).

1970 — immature, 29 Oct., Hay Bay, Lennox and Addington Co. (82-95 MCE, BH).

The two reports (of the same bird) considered for the above record are the first accepted for this species in Ontario and result in the addition of the species to the provincial list.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER
(*Tyrannus forficata*).

1982 — adult, 7 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-100 BJ, JRH, RHC, SNGH, MG, DR).

CLARK'S NUTCRACKER (*Nucifraga columbiana*).

1981 — 9 May, Caribou Island, Lake Superior, Thunder Bay Dist. (82-46 RN).

This is the second accepted report of this species in Ontario. The first was 18 April 1973, near Dryden, Kenora District.

FISH CROW (*Corvus ossifragus*).

1978 — 15 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-83 RR, TH, AW).

1982 — 21 Apr., Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-81 DAS).

These are the first accepted records of this species in Ontario. The species has now been added to the Ontario list on the basis of these reports.

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*).

1982 — adult, 25 to 29 April, Long Point (82-92 DS) (PR 1352 DS).

NORTHERN WHEATEAR
(*Oenanthe oenanthe*).

1981 — immature, late Sept., Trenton, Northumberland Co. (specimen in coll. of ADB).

VARIED THRUSH (*Ixoreus naevius*).

1981 — 28 to 30 Dec., between Paris and Woodstock, Oxford Co. (82-93 GP).

1982 — 6 to 8 Feb., Dundas, Hamilton-Wentworth R.M. (82-107 RC).

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*).

1982 — 6 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-67 CEG).

BREWSTER'S WARBLER (*Vermivora chrysoptera x pinus*).

1981 — 20 May, Caribou Island, Lake Superior (82-47 RN).

HERMIT WARBLER (*Dendroica occidentalis*).

1981 — adult male, 2 to 7 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-10 TH, GAC, LF, RR, CEG) (PR 1344 JF1).

This is the first accepted record for Ontario and adds this species to the provincial list.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (*Dendroica dominica*).

1982 — male, 24 Apr., Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-102 TJO, AW); 17 May, Long Point (82-78 DP); 20 May, Prince Edward Point (82-64 RDW); 14 Oct. to 13 Nov., Moosonee, Cochrane Dist. (82-88 RDM).

This species, formerly considered accidental in Ontario, is being reported with increasing frequency. The Moosonee record is the first for northern Ontario and involved the nominate race *D. d. dominica*.

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER (*Dendroica kirtlandii*).

1982 — male, 14 May, Rondeau Prov. Park (82-71 NT, FvM).

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*).

1982 — male, 1 May, Amherstburg, Essex Co. (82-44 AW per N & MR); male, 3 Aug., Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-99 PW).

DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*).

1981 — 10 Oct., Fort Albany, Cochrane Dist. (82-87 AW) (PR 1350-1351 AW).

CASSIN'S SPARROW (*Aimophila cassinii*).

1981 — 28 Sept., Marathon, Thunder Bay Dist. (82-4 AW).

This represents the first record for northern Ontario and the second for Ontario.

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*).

1982 — immature, 3 to 20 Jan., Gosport, Northumberland Co. (82-6 CGH, AGC) (PR 1330-1341 AGC, AJ).

This is the first record of this species in Ontario and the acceptance places the species on the provincial list.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis psaltria*).

1982 — adult female, 10 Aug., Toronto (82-73 DMF).

This is the first accepted report of this species in Ontario and one of only a few in eastern North America. Another acceptable report is needed to add this species to the Ontario list.

Unaccepted Records, Identification uncertain

1974 — GRAY KINGBIRD, 25 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-96).



American Swallow-tailed Kite,
18 June 1982, Buckhorn,
Peterborough Co.

1976 — RUFIOUS-NECKED STINT
(*Calidris ruficollis*), 11 July, Toronto
(82-74).

The reports documenting this bird were accepted previously by the OORC (James 1982). However, in reviewing these reports the OBRC has judged them unacceptable. Since this was the only sighting of this species in Ontario, the species has been removed from the Ontario list.

1981

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT
HERON, 11 Nov., Hamilton (82-13),
COMMON EIDER, 13 Dec., Kettle
Point (82-30),
BLACK VULTURE, 17 June, near
Simcoe, Haldimand-Norfolk R.M.
(82-29),
REDSHANK, 2 May, Toronto
(82-9),
ARCTIC TERN, 14 May, Point Pelee
Nat. Park (82-18),
GRAY KINGBIRD, 25 Aug., Peter-
borough, Peterborough Co. (82-27),
BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK, 20
May, Caribou Island, Lake Superior
(82-48),

BAIRD'S SPARROW, 9 May,
Caribou Island, Lake Superior (82-49).

1982

ARCTIC LOON, 20 Oct., Kettle
Point (82-12),
GREAT CORMORANT, 11 Sept.,
Presqu'ile Bay, Northumberland Co.
(82-82),
LITTLE BLUE HERON, 22 May,
Point Pelee Nat. Park (82-101),
AMERICAN SWALLOW-TAILED
KITE, 18 Jan., Oil Springs, Lambton
Co. (82-28),
SWAINSON'S HAWK, 17 May,
Kingston, Frontenac Co. (82-63),
SWAINSON'S HAWK, 15 Sept.,
Trent River Village, Northumberland
Co. (82-94),
LAUGHING GULL, 20 June,
Rondeau Prov. Park (82-72),
CALIFORNIA GULL, 12 April,
Erieau, Kent Co. (82-69),
HERMIT WARBLER, 2 May, Long
Point (82-80),
GRACE'S WARBLER, 19 Aug.,
Quarry Bay, Manitoulin Dist.
(82-70),
MAGNOLIA x CANADA
WARBLER, 15 May, Rondeau Prov.
Park (82-62),
BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK,
9 May, Long Point (82-79).

Unaccepted Records, Origin uncertain (identification accepted).

1979

BARNACLE GOOSE, Oct., Garden
Hill, Northumberland Co. (82-11).

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Summary

As a result of decisions reached during the year by the OBRC, the following changes were made in the Checklist of Ontario birds:

— Yellow-billed Loon, Spotted Red-

shank, Slender-billed Curlew, California Gull, Common Poorwill, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Gray Kingbird, Fish Crow, Hermit Warbler and Golden-crowned Sparrow have been added to the Checklist.

- Rufous-necked Stint has been deleted from the Checklist.
- Since there is only a single previous report of a Least Tern in Ontario, this species has been dropped from the Checklist, pending the acceptance of another record.

In addition, the following should be noted:

- We have accepted a report of Lesser Goldfinch but because we have only a single record, the species will not be added to the Checklist until an additional report has been accepted.

Acknowledgements

This report is presented on behalf of, and with the assistance of the Ontario Bird Records Committee.

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A Record of the Yellow-throated Warbler from Moosonee

by
R.D. McRae
and W.A. Hutchison

During the fall of 1982, a Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) was sighted twice in the town-site of Moosonee, Ontario (51° 17' N, 80° 39' W). Not only are these the first sightings for northern Ontario (James *et al.* 1976) they also represent the northernmost record of the species in Canada (W.E. Godfrey, *pers. comm.*).

The first sighting occurred on 14 October at 1130 h when McRae observed the bird sitting on a clothes-line just north of the Ministry of Natural Resources office. Others were contacted and within 10 minutes, Diana and Ken Abraham, Pat Brown, Jim Danyluck and John Thompson also had seen the bird which, by then, had moved to a brush patch adjacent to the M.N.R. office. It was here that Ken Abraham took photographs, copies of which have been deposited in the National Museum of Canada. One hour after the initial sighting, the bird vanished and, despite a careful search that afternoon and on subsequent days, was not relocated. During the observation period, the skies were over-

cast, the temperature was 6°C, there was a gentle southwest wind and light drizzle was falling. The second observation, presumably of the same individual, was 13 November at 1400 h when Hutchison saw the warbler at his bird feeding station just south of the M.N.R. office. It was also seen at the feeder later that day by Ginger Vincent. The bird remained until 1645 h but was never seen again. The weather at the time was clear and windy with a temperature of about 20°C. There were 20 cm of snow on the ground.

Perhaps the most interesting fact about this record concerns the subspecific identity. The Moosonee bird had bright yellow lores indicating that it belongs to the subspecies *D. d. dominica*. This feature can be seen well in the photographs and has been confirmed by W.E. Godfrey (*pers. comm.*). To determine the significance of this, we checked with several observers from other regions of Ontario, asking them to supply data regarding the subspecific identity of their records. A total of 27 records were researched. Of these,

only 16 had been identified to subspecies and all were of the white-colored race, *D. d. albilora*. In addition, the only Ontario specimen, collected at Long Point in 1970, is also *D. d. albilora* (Strauch 1974). The Moosonee individual probably represents the first record of *D. d. dominica* in Ontario.

During the first observation the warbler was actively feeding throughout the period. All foraging was done within two metres of the ground and was largely restricted to hammering on rotten wood where larvae, approximately one cm in length, were being extracted. The bird repeated a harsh "chip" note constantly for the first 15 minutes but became quiet afterwards. It responded immediately to "spishing" the first time it was attempted but not again. The circumstances of the November sighting indicate that the warbler, by this time, was in "dire straits." When first seen, it was feeding on stale bread at the feeder.

Hutchison immediately went to the feeder with fresh bread and the warbler flew to his hand and began feeding as soon as the bread was placed on the feeder. Later in the afternoon, a Northern Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) appeared in the yard and the warbler took refuge under a parked car. No vocalizations were heard during the observation period.

Although there is a well established pattern of southern birds showing up in the Moosonee area in the fall, little is known about their ability to survive. Circumstances of this sighting suggest that between predators, severe cold and food shortages, their survival rate is very low or nil.

We would like to thank Bruce M. Di Labio, Ron Weir and Alan Worthington for providing us with data

on Yellow-throated Warbler sightings from Ottawa-Cornwall, Kingston and Point Pelee National Park, respectively. Dr. W.E. Godfrey, Curator Emeritus, National Museum of Canada, kindly confirmed the subspecific identification from the photographs and supplied us with background information on the species in Canada. Dr. Ross James, Royal Ontario Museum, provided additional information. Finally, we would like to thank Ken Abraham for reading and making comments on the manuscript.

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Wanted...

**good quality
black and white photographs
of birds occurring in Ontario
for use in future issues of
Ontario Birds.**

**Send photographs or
availability list to the Editors.**

Field Identification of Shrikes

by
R.D. James

Although there are about 65 species of shrikes in the world, only two are found in Canada, the Northern Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) and the Loggerhead Shrike (*L. ludovicianus*). Both are grayish-colored birds with black and white wings and tails. The only Ontario birds of similar size and color likely to be confused with them is the Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), which also has white outer-tail feathers and a white patch on the wings that flashes prominently in flight. But the shrikes have proportionately shorter tails, shorter, stouter and strongly hooked bills and prominent black masks that instantly distinguish them from other birds. They may also be identified by their behaviour. They fly with an undulating flight, swoop upward to a perch when landing, tend to perch at the tops of trees in exposed situations, and hold their bodies in a rather horizontal position when perched.

While the shrikes are easy to distinguish from other birds, they are sufficiently similar to each other that specific identification is not always

easy. The Northern Shrike is a summer inhabitant of muskeg or open woodlands near treeline across Canada. Formerly it was not considered to breed in Ontario, but a few summer records during the previous decade indicate that it also breeds sparingly, probably all along the northern edge of the province, and along James Bay as far south as the Moose River.

The Loggerhead Shrike, on the other hand, is a summer resident in the southern fringes of the country from the western prairies to the Maritimes, where open country with scattered trees and shrubs or brushy fencerows and hedgerows provide nesting cover. In Ontario, they are usually found only as far north as the Rainy River area and Thunder Bay in the west, or Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury in the east. A shrike found in the southern portions of Ontario in summer then, can reasonably be assumed to be a Loggerhead Shrike. Any shrike seen north of Moosonee in summer probably could be considered a Northern Shrike. [Eds. Note. Loggerhead Shrikes have bred once at Churchill, Manitoba.]

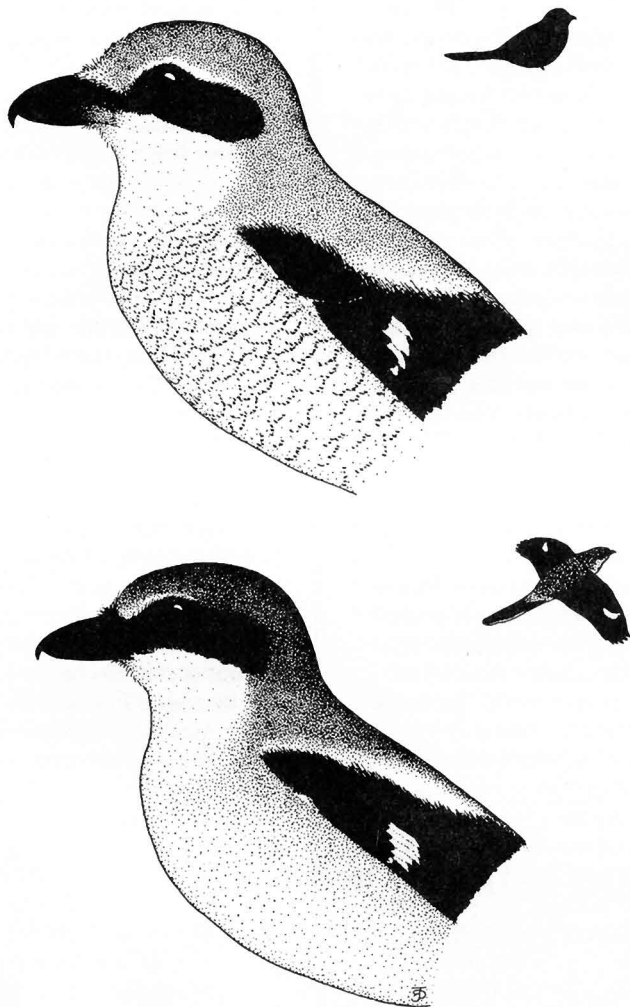


Fig. 1. Drawings of Northern (above) and Loggerhead (below) Shrikes showing identification features and size differences. The Northern Shrike is 23 to 36 cm long (wing 108-120 mm) and the Loggerhead Shrike is 20 to 23 cm long (wing 91-102 mm).

Both species of shrikes show seasonal movements. Loggerhead Shrikes usually have left the province for the south by mid-September but a few may linger even as late as December. Northern Shrikes ordinarily

would not arrive in the breeding range of Loggerhead Shrikes before late October but some may be earlier. Thus, during the autumn, both could be seen in southern Ontario. Likewise in March and April particularly,

Loggerhead Shrikes may return to the province before the other species has departed to the north. An ability to distinguish these two similar species will add greatly to anyone's confidence of field identification. Several features can be used to identify them but most of these must be used with caution.

The Northern Shrike is almost the size of a Robin while the Loggerhead Shrike is somewhat smaller. But they are sufficiently similar in size that unless the two are together, it is difficult to identify them on the basis of size alone (Fig. 1). The gray color of the back of the Loggerhead Shrike is darker than that of the Northern Shrike. This again would perhaps be useful only if the two were together. There is very little white above the black mask on the Loggerhead Shrike and it is largely confined to the area in front of the eye. Thus, the rear part of the mask shows little contrast to the crown color. In the Northern Shrike, however, most of the white over the mask is behind the eye, creating a strong contrast between the mask and the light gray head.

In front of the eye, the black mask of the Loggerhead Shrike covers more area, but again this is only a relative difference. The black also extends across the forehead over the bill; the forehead of the Northern Shrike should appear white as there is no black feathering over the bill. However, the Loggerhead Shrike's black bill and the minimum amount of black feathering on the forehead may be very small, making it difficult to distinguish between the feathers behind the bill and the bill itself. A further complication occurs because there are often a number of

white feathers above the narrow black forehead which make the forehead appear unusually light. Very careful observation is necessary if this feature is used.

Some field guides indicate that the head of the Loggerhead Shrike is noticeably darker than the back, but in Ontario this is not the case. The back is seldom lighter than the head. Adult Northern Shrikes, unlike the Loggerhead Shrike, may show some light edgings to the wing coverts. However, edgings may be worn and be so small that they are scarcely visible even at close range.

Two of the best features to distinguish these species are the bill (mandible) color and barring on the breast. Northern Shrikes have a pale-colored lower mandible near the base, whereas Loggerhead Shrikes have completely black bills. The ROM has several specimens of the Loggerhead Shrike with a similar pale base to the lower mandible, but all of these were taken in the south or western U.S.A. or in western Canada. These may be young of the year that have maintained the typical bill color of a juvenile while acquiring an adult plumage. In Ontario, I have not seen any Loggerhead Shrikes in adult plumage with a pale base to the lower mandible. I think you can be very certain that if the base of the bill is pale, the bird is a Northern Shrike.

The breast of the Loggerhead Shrike is basically an unbarred and very pale gray color. At very close range it might be possible to see some very faint, nearly straight, transverse gray bars on the sides of the upper breast of some individuals, but these bars are scarcely darker than the overall breast color. The

breast of the Northern Shrike is almost white, with numerous bars. These bars are dark (not gray), are wavy, and usually cover most of the breast and belly. You may have to be relatively close to the bird to see this barring as it is not very distinct. Also, I have seen adult Northern Shrikes with virtually no barring, but any shrike with dark bars will be a Northern Shrike.

The preceding characteristics require a relatively close look at the birds. There is one aspect of behaviour, however, that is visible at a long distance and seems to be a very useful identification feature. When perched, the Northern Shrike repeatedly flicks its tail up. The Loggerhead Shrike apparently never does this, but holds its tail stiff. Is this a rule with no exceptions?

One additional problem is distinguishing juvenile birds but this presents little difficulty. The young Loggerhead Shrikes molt from juvenal plumage by the end of the

summer and thus during the migration period look like adults. The young Northern Shrikes retain a juvenal plumage for most of the winter. In this plumage, they are patterned as an adult but appear to be more of a light brown rather than gray color. The barring on the breast is heavier and extends up over the throat to the bill. Any brownish-looking shrike seen outside the summer season is sure to be a Northern Shrike. If in doubt, check the throat, which is an unbarred white in the juvenile Loggerhead Shrike.

In summary, the key points used to distinguish Northern and Loggerhead Shrikes in the field include: the presence or absence of tail flicking, the presence or absence of barring on the breast, the color of the base of the lower mandible, the amount of black or white on the forehead over the bill, and the extent of white behind the eye over the mask.



**Plan now to take part
in all OFO activities this
spring/summer/autumn:**

14/15 May • Pelee Week-end
22-28 September • Moosonee Field Trip
1 October • Lake Ontario Pelagic Trip
22/23 October • Annual General Meeting
— London

See pp. 39-40 for details

A Birding Site Guide to Thickson's Woods, Whitby

by
Margaret Bain

Thickson's Woods is a small but very productive woodlot on the north shore of Lake Ontario in Whitby, some 50 km east of Toronto and 215 km west of Kingston. It is easily accessible from Hwy. 401. Exit south on Thickson Road — Interchange 68, Exit 412, and proceed south for 2 km to the lakeshore. To reach the area from the north, say from Ottawa, take Hwy. 7 west to its junction with Hwy. 12. Proceed south on Hwy. 12 to the start of Thickson Road, which branches off the highway on its east side, just south of the village of Myrtle and runs south to Lake Ontario.

The cottages on the lakeshore form a community known as Thickson's Point and are on a private road. While the cottagers are tolerant of birders, cars should be left on the main road and the area entered by walking east through the white gate. The cliff-top here gives good views over the bay. Early morning flights of Common Loons in May often achieve spectacular numbers and Red-throated Loons have been reported regularly between early April and the end of May. This is also a good place for

Brant in late May and early June when they can be seen flying eastward in the early morning or settling on the bay in conspicuous flocks. Evening flights of hundreds of White-winged Scoters occur in late May, with occasional Black and Surf Scoters among them. In summer, the sandy cliff is home to a large colony of Bank Swallows, and a few pairs of Northern Rough-winged Swallows.

The woods themselves are especially productive in spring, when the tall pines seem to provide a landmark for migrating passerines crossing Lake Ontario or moving east along the shoreline. Arrivals tend to be a few days earlier than in surrounding areas so this is a good spot for the "first" Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler or Scarlet Tanager. Several lanes and footpaths run through the woodlot, making it possible to see birds without encroaching on residents' backyards.

A good way to enter the woods is to take the first, or most westerly, lane between the cottages where from late April to late May the trees on both sides are usually alive with warblers. Common species peak in

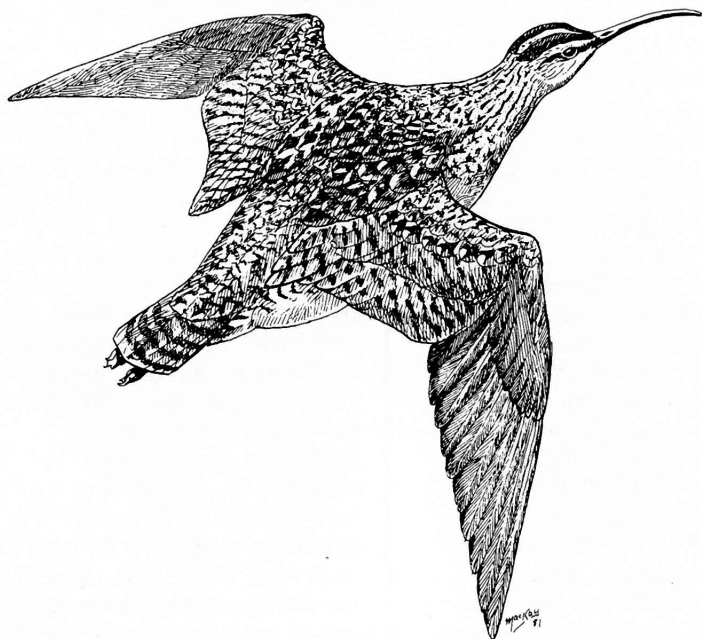
numbers about 20 May, but many of the rarer warblers such as Blue-winged, Prairie and Hooded are seen earlier in the month. One beautiful singing male Hooded appeared as early as 27 April in 1979. Orchard Oriole and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher can often be found here and a Brewer's Blackbird passed through in April recently.

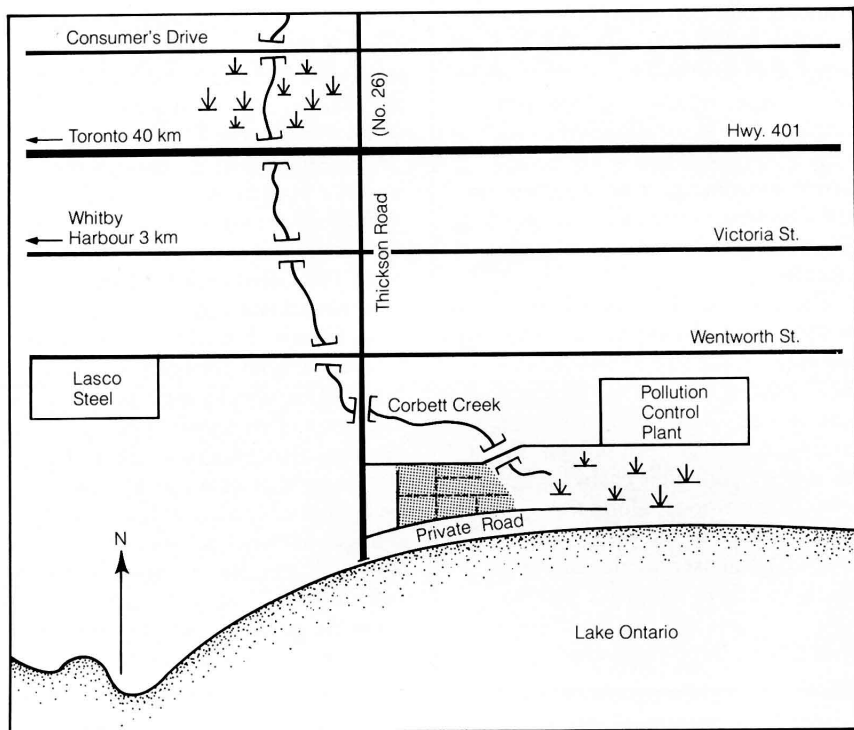
There are nearly always Pine Warblers to be found in the grove of red pines at the end of this lane — they arrive at the end of April and have stayed singing into June, though nesting has never been proven. From the pines a path goes eastward into a gully in the woods, along the southern edge of the white picket fence. The denser tangles of vegetation here have produced Yellow-breasted Chats and two Worm-eating Warblers — three years apart but

both on 9 May. Mourning Warblers are fairly easy to find here towards the end of the month, but a Connecticut Warbler may need more patience and perseverance.

Fox Sparrows pass through the woodlot in early April, a Tufted Titmouse — only the second record for the area — was found here in May, 1982. Red-breasted Nuthatches have nested and there is a resident pair of Great Horned Owls. Northern Orioles, Scarlet Tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are numerous in migration often resulting in the morning discovery of a "Pelee-tree" after a night of heavy migration. Well-stocked feeders at the nearby cottages have helped wintering Winter Wrens, Rufous-sided Towhees and a Brown Thrasher to survive.

On the north side of the woods a road runs east to the Corbett Creek





Pollution Control Plant. The bridge on this road gives a good view of the marsh which often has egrets in spring and sometimes good shorebirds if water levels are low — Willet and Marbled Godwit have been seen here in May and June. This is a good spot for Least Bittern and Sora and Virginia Rails, especially before the marsh vegetation grows too high. Birding along this road can often be surprisingly good later in the day, when the afternoon sun warms up the trees on the north side of the woodlot. The small treed valley running north from the bridge is also excellent for warblers in spring and in winter for lingering sparrows. Chipping, Field and Lincoln's Sparrows have all been found here in winter, with

Swamp and Song Sparrows occurring regularly every year.

On leaving this area, follow Thickson Road north, over the 401, to Consumer's Drive, the first road running west (see map). The "ponds" on the south side of Consumer's Drive are often excellent for shorebirds in spring, but the marshy field grows over too thickly to attract fall migrants. Wilson's Phalaropes have been found here in late May and White-rumped and Baird's Sandpipers often stay into June. The occasional Western Sandpiper has also been recorded — fortunately it is possible to walk along the edge of the field to within close range of the shorebirds to document the finer details of these less common species.

A Bibliography of Ornithology for Oxford County, Ontario

by
Bruce D. Parker

As books, journals and reports become more numerous and specialized, birders find it increasingly difficult to remain accurately informed on all aspects of ornithology even within the relatively small confines of a single province. Any researcher who wishes to compile a local list of birds, or to determine the status of a species within a region or throughout the province, must conduct time-consuming literature searches to produce a complete report. Making a list of relevant references is a fundamental step in research. Most public libraries have very little specific information on ornithology in Ontario. Universities, museums, and government ministries all have libraries with extensive ornithological literature collections. Regional bibliographies enable persons to identify and locate information relating to specific aspects of ornithology for a particular region. The following bibliography of ornithology for Oxford County presents an overview of the birding knowledge and activities associated with the county.

Little information is available concerning 19th and early 20th century bird life in Oxford County since references from that period are brief notes on individual species. Even W.E. Saunders, one of Ontario's most prolific ornithological writers, made very few references to the county even though he lived only 15 miles from its western border. Thomas Cottle, the author of one of Ontario's earliest bird lists, lived in Woodstock in the mid-1800s but only mentions three species in the county. No winter or breeding bird population studies have been conducted in Oxford County but Christmas Bird Counts have been held annually at Woodstock since 1934 and at Ingersoll since the late 1940s (not all of these have been published). Donald Bucknell's list of the '*Birds of Oxford County*' (1959) provides the only complete summary of the birds of the county. Since the two naturalists' clubs in the county (Ingersoll and Woodstock) do not have their own newsletters, their members occasionally publish infor-

mation in *The Cardinal*, the organ of the McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London. The *Stratford Field naturalists Newsletter* regularly reports bird records from the northwestern section of Oxford County. Except for records from Oxford County found in the seasonal accounts of *American Birds, Seasons*, and their predecessors, the following list presents as complete a bibliography of Oxford County Ornithology as I have been able to compile.

I wish to thank Ross James for his comments on an earlier version of this bibliography and the Bibliography of Ontario Ornithology Working Group, who, operating under the support of the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Jim Baillie Memorial Fund, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the Royal Ontario Museum and the Ministry of Natural Resources, presently are compiling an extensive Bibliography of Ontario Ornithology.

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Publications of the Ontario Field Ornithologists.

As things have evolved, OFO has two publications, *Ontario Birds* and the OFO Newsletter. In 1983, there will be two issues of *Ontario Birds*, April and October, and probably three issues of the OFO Newsletter, January, June/July and November/December. The deadline for submitting material for the October issue of *Ontario Birds* is 31 August.

Probable Nest Construction by Great Horned Owls

by
J. Robert Nisbet

Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) are not known to construct their own nests (Everett 1977, Clark *et al.* 1978). Under natural conditions, they usually nest in unoccupied hawk, eagle, crow or squirrel nests or in hollow trees, buildings, on rock crevices, on the ground or even in artificial nesting structures (Bent 1938, Byleveld 1974, Bohm 1977, Randall 1982). When using old nests they often modify them to meet their specific needs, but the complete construction of a nest by this bird is undocumented in the wild. In this note, I present field observations which document a probable nest construction by Great Horned Owls. The nesting site was located within Lot 1, Concession 2 of the Town of Ajax in the Regional Municipality of Durham, Ontario.

In late January 1980, in the early evening hours, Great Horned Owls were observed carrying what appeared to be "typical" nesting materials to a stand of Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa*) within a wooded garden on an active farm property. At dusk on 2 February a female owl was discovered sitting

on a nest approximately 10 m up in a Red Pine tree. A male was observed and heard calling from an adjacent stand of Blue Spruce (*Picea* sp.).

In the three month period prior to the discovery, the area had been thoroughly searched on numerous occasions, as recently as mid-January. No nest existed at this location then or at anytime during the previous 5 years! However, a pair of Great Horned Owls had been vocalizing at this site on a regular basis through the early part of January.

The nest proper was situated in a 50 year old Red Pine tree approximately 2 m out along a limb in a horizontal crotch. The dimensions of the structure were estimated to be about 70-75 cm in width and approximately 15 cm in external height. It was constructed entirely of large twigs and small branches. No live vegetation appeared to be used. The nest was poorly concealed from vantage points below and from the south (at the nest height), but appeared moderately difficult to locate from above and was well protected to the north, east and west.

The nesting site was located at the southern end of a large (75 m × 35 m) wooded garden which included some mature hardwoods but was predominantly pine, spruce and cedar. The garden was adjacent to several active farm buildings and a large windbreak of Blue Spruce; it was further surrounded by a grassed orchard, pasture, several small stands of spruce and pine and extensive tracts of fallow field.

Two other woodlots of similar size and structure were located upon the farm property approximately 1 km north and south of the nesting site. One contained a nest which had been used by crows in the previous breeding season. An additional seven such woodlots existed within a 5-7 km radius of the farmsite. Three of these contained nests which were judged suitable for use by horned owls. One of these nests was occupied during the study period by a second pair of horned owls.

The nest in the wooded garden was regularly observed from 2 February through a three and one-half month period during which time notes were kept regarding the daily routine of the birds at the nest and at roost locations of the male. Pellets were collected from all such locations on a regular basis.

The first evidence of young occurred on 23 March when one juvenile bird (approximately three weeks old) was observed on the nest. A total of three young were counted on 2 April. Examination of the site on the morning of 1 May showed the nest had disappeared! A search of the ground around the nest tree yielded a trace of materials that may have been used in the nest. Farm staff could provide no information regarding the disap-

pearance of the nest. Both adult owls and two of the young were observed near the nest site on this morning. One of the young was on the ground in an adjacent grassed paddock and the other was in a tree with the adult female. The third juvenile was located in the same paddock several days later. All three young were observed together high in a tree near the old nest site as late as 17 May. Both adults were in attendance.

No evidence relating to the destruction of the nest was confirmed. However, it is likely that the structure simply fell to the ground due to a combination of physical strain from the five owls and poor (inexperienced) nest construction. The lack of debris on the ground could be accounted for if one of the farm personnel had inadvertently cleaned it up without knowing what it was — therein answering negatively when queried by myself. Not an unlikely possibility in this case given that grounds keepers were in the process of “tidying up” the area at that time.

Horned owls have occupied the above territory every year since 1980, however, no similar nesting attempt has been observed by me or reported by farm staff.

I wish to thank Chip & Linda Weseloh for their helpful suggestions in the preparation of this manuscript.

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Notes

Observations of Boreal Owls Feeding on Flying Squirrels

The Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*), a small owl (25 cm) of the northern coniferous forest, feeds mainly on small rodents and occasionally small birds, according to sources quoted in Bent (1938). The small rodents consist of mice and voles; nowhere is there any mention of squirrel species being taken. In this note I report three instances of a Boreal Owl feeding on a flying squirrel (*Glaucomys* sp.).

On 15 January 1973, at Clarke Lake, Airy Township (Algonquin Park), Ontario, Ron Tozer observed a Boreal Owl at 08:00 hrs being harassed by Gray Jays (*Perisoreus canadensis*) Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*), Black-capped Chickadees (*Parus atricapillus*), Boreal Chickadees (*P. hudsonicus*) and a Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*) as it roosted unconcernedly in a large White Spruce (*Picea glauca*). Howard Coneybear observed the same owl at 10:30 hrs and noted that it was feeding on the carcass of a flying squirrel. The Boreal Owl was

on exactly the same perch as when discovered earlier (when the squirrel carcass was not visible). The owl had apparently been "settled down" on the squirrel carcass in its talons, making the carcass not visible to Mr. Tozer in the early morning light. The owl may have been exhibiting the "prey thawing" behaviour described by Bondrup-Nielsen (1977) for the species in captivity. At 1700 hrs, the Boreal Owl was captured by hand by Dan Brunton (and subsequently photographed). A pellet and the flying squirrel carcass were collected. That material was confirmed as Northern Flying Squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) by Dr. Donald A. Smith, Carleton University, Ottawa.

A second instance of a Boreal Owl feeding on a flying squirrel also occurred in Algonquin Park. On 25 January 1974, near the Park Museum (Peck Township), Howard Coneybear discovered a roosting Boreal Owl being mobbed by Black-capped

Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta canadensis*), Gray Jays and Blue Jays. That owl was later shown to Dan Brunton, Ron Pittaway, Dan Strickland and Ron Tozer, and was seen to be holding part of a Northern Flying Squirrel in its talons, which it carried off when flushed.

Just after dusk, on 2 January 1978, in North Elmsley Township, near Smiths Falls, Ontario, I observed a Boreal Owl on the ground feeding on a flying squirrel, in an area illuminated by an outdoor floodlight. The squirrel had been noticed, dead, at

noon of that day beneath a parked automobile, in the exact spot where I later saw the owl feeding on it. The squirrel had not been there the previous evening, when the automobile was parked. It is possible that the squirrel had been attacked and injured by the owl during the night, but had escaped beneath the automobile, where it died. Flying squirrels were occasional nocturnal visitors to the bird feeding station maintained at that location by G. and L. Johnston.

When I approached to within three metres of the feeding owl, it



PHOTO: AL. WORMINGTON

The Boreal Owl usually feeds on mice, voles and small birds.

attempted to fly off with the squirrel carcass, but was unable to do so, since the carcass was frozen to the snow. When I approached about one metre, it abandoned the carcass and flew to a nearby White Pine (*Pinus strobus*).

Within 15 minutes the owl had returned to resume feeding on the carcass. Then it sat over the carcass, eyes closed, or nearly so ("prey thawing"?), for about 30 minutes before continuing to feed. Later, the owl tugged the carcass loose from the snow and flew off with it.

Flying squirrels would appear to constitute the only mammalian prey species other than mice and voles normally available to a small northern

nocturnal raptor such as the Boreal owl. The Varying Hare would be too large to be taken.

Acknowledgements

I thank R. Tozer for the Algonquin Park observation data, and D.V. Weseloh for his critical comments on the manuscript.

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The First Substantiated Record of the Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) in Ontario

The Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) is resident in Texas and its bordering states, as well as along a thin strip of the east coast from Florida to North Carolina. It is accidental in New England (Peterson 1980). Before enactment of the Migratory Bird Treaty in 1916 many sightings of Painted Buntings in the northern states were assumed to be of birds which had escaped from captivity (Bull 1974). In recent years three Painted Buntings have been observed at feeders in western New York — a pair in May 1967 in Delaware County and a male

in May 1970 in Erie County. Bull (1974) questioned the validity of the pair seen in Delaware County as being possible escapees.

There are four previous Canadian records, three of these are from Ontario (Beardslee and Mitchell 1965, Goodwin 1975 and Kelly 1978). None of these records have been accepted for the Ontario Checklist. In 1978 a Painted Bunting was seen on the Toronto Islands in winter. This report was not accepted by the former Ontario Ornithological Records Committee (Goodwin 1980).

On 21 May 1979 I sighted a single male Painted Bunting on Long Point, Ontario, five km east of the Long Point Provincial Park Boundary. The bird was perched on a twig one metre above the ground on the edge of a clearing in a cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) grove. I immediately wrote in my field notebook a detailed description which included reference to a lime green streak on the flank. The streak contrasted sharply with the brilliant red breast. Otherwise the bird had all the plumage characteristics indicated in Robbins *et al.* (1966), *Birds of North America*, of a male Painted Bunting. The bird's feathers were very fresh, with no apparent wear.

Warren Russell and I returned to the site one hour later and relocated the bird. At that time the bunting had moved to an adjacent meadow where it was perched on the ground. We flushed the bird several times and Russell was able to get three good photographs. These have been deposited in the Royal Ontario Museum, Department of Ornithology as photo specimens, numbers 1118 to 1120.

On 23 May 1979, Russell and Harold Richards relocated the bird on Courtright Ridge, two km north of the Long Point Bird Observatory cabin. The bird was observed 'fly-catching' from a dead branch for about one-half hour. W. Russell, H. Richards, Peter Lockhart and I unsuccessfully attempted mist-netting it, at which time it flew high into the canopy of the trees and was not observed again. This sighting consti-

tutes the first substantiated record for this species in Ontario.

I thank the Long Point Bird Observatory for permission to use the cabin on Long Point for my research.

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A Hummingbird Migration, 3 September 1982

Weather conditions appeared favourable, a cold front with its associated showers moved through southwestern Ontario late in the afternoon of 2 September 1982, and the weather forecast for 3 September promised lower temperatures, clear skies in the morning with clouds and moderate winds developing by noon. August had been exceptionally cool. Conditions were favourable for an early hawk flight at Hawk Cliff, Elgin County.

At 7:45 A.M. on 3 September the sky at Hawk Cliff was cloudless, the temperature only 9°C and the wind was about 19 km per hour. Unfortunately the wind was from the west and southwest directly opposite to the flight path of any birds migrating along the lakeshore. By noon the sky was almost completely covered by darkening clouds and the wind (still from the west and southwest) had increased noticeably.

Swallows were the most conspicuous migrants of the day and moved on a broad front inland from the lakeshore. The outstanding migrant of the day was the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*). These birds had a slow start in the morning with an average of one and one-half hummingbirds passing the cliff every fifteen minutes from 7:45 to 9:45. Between 10:00 and 10:30 they averaged five every fifteen minutes. From 10:30 to 10:45 an average of one hummingbird every minute moved through Hawk Cliff. This movement continued at least



until 1:00 (when I had to leave) with peaks of 50 (12:30 to 12:45) and 40 (12:00 to 12:15) hummingbirds in a fifteen minute period. The total count for the day was 255 hummingbirds (243 of these were in three hours).

The migration was concentrated in a very narrow lane along the lakeshore, with many of the hummingbirds moving along the cliff face below the top of the cliff. The birds regularly passed by in pairs and frequently in threes.

A similar hummingbird migration at Hawk Cliff was reported by W.E. Saunders in *The Auk*, Vol. 59, pages 587-589 in 1942.

An Addition to the Breeding Birds of Prince Edward County, Ontario

The Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) is listed by Sprague (*Birds of Prince Edward County*. Prince Edward County Conservation Authority, Picton. 1969:149) as a common spring and fall migrant and while suggesting that the breeding range of this species falls in an area somewhat north of Prince Edward County, Ontario, the author fails to provide or suggest records of summer occurrence there. The purpose of this note is to record and establish this species as a breeding bird for the county.

On 25 July 1976, the writer observed a male and female of this species frequenting a particular grove of spruce (*Picea* spp.) trees in a camping area of Sandbanks Provin-

cial Park. Further observations of both adults (both carrying food) disclosed a nest, located in a spruce tree at a height approximately 11.5 m above the ground. The somewhat pensive nest, a globular affair of fine twigs and mosses, was situated about 2.5 m from the trunk, near the end of a horizontal limb. Both adults were observed feeding the young at this time. Close inspection of the nest revealed the presence of five well-feathered young, which showed no sign of fledging at this point.

This would appear to be the first recorded breeding of Ruby-crowned Kinglet for Prince Edward County, Ontario.

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Crepuscular Fall Flight of American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*)

The spring courtship flights of the American Woodcock are all too familiar with naturalists to attempt to describe this behaviour in detail here. However I would like to record and note briefly the occurrence of this almost ritualistic (in spring) phenomenon as it occurred on 22 October 1982, at approximately 1800 hrs. with the temperature at about 4°C near Orono, Ontario. (R.M. Durham).

The bird was observed to rise from a grain (stubble) field and ascend to

great height, accompanied by the usual familiar "twittering" calls. Then, the bird began a normal descent complete with the usual spiralling flight and musical notes which accompany the spring courtship flights. Upon landing, the expected nasal "peent" was not heard or was inaudible. I moved closer to the bird and after about four minutes, the entire pattern was repeated. Again, I could not detect the low "peent" call which normally follows the spring flights. The bird

ceased this activity after I witnessed two full flights.

In almost 30 years of observation, I have never before noted this behaviour (courtship flight pattern) during

the fall months. An initial search of the literature failed to reveal anything to indicate the regularity of this occurrence.

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Book Reviews

A Bird-finding Guide to Ontario. 1982. By *Clive E. Goodwin*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto. viii + 248 pp. \$12.00.

If our membership numbers in the American Birding Association and interest in OFO are valid indicators, this sport of ours is growing by leaps and bounds. What has been needed for these new legions is an easy-to-use, precise guide not only to the best bird locations in Ontario but also to many out-of-the-way but, nonetheless, fruitful sites. Now we have it in this book, written by Clive Goodwin, whose more than 15 years of experience as Ontario Regional Editor for *American Birds* eminently qualifies him for the task. Long-time birders and neophytes alike will find much of interest in the book.

This is a book to be used, not left on the shelves of a bookcase. Just slightly larger than a standard field guide, it has an attractive soft cover highlighted by a Donald Gunn photograph of an Evening Grosbeak. Most copies will find their way to the rear window-ledge of birders' cars. The soft paper of the text is ideal for

jotting notes of route changes, habitat alteration, differences in the status of the species at particular locations and the like in the margins.

Goodwin follows a tried-and-true format: an overview of Ontario, six chapters each dealing with a separate region of the Province, a short chapter with special advice for the visitor and systematic lists of the birds at the end.

The second or overview chapter, after the obligatory "How To Use This Book" is in many ways my favourite. In "Ontario and Its Bird-life", Goodwin presents a succinct description of our natural and human landscapes which would do justice to any student of geography. Writing in a relaxed, breezy style, he transmits significant information, "Along the lower Great Lakes it is always rather a toss-up whether Christmas will be white or green. . .". An account of the changing seasons in Ontario would be of particular use to

the visiting birder. Lists of the commoner birds to be found in particular habitats and during the various seasons are provided. However, the author quite correctly points out that, at any time of year in this Province, at least some birds are on the move. One can always find a few points with which to disagree in a general account of bird status. I would not consider the Common Nighthawk to be commonly associated with farmland and surely the Eastern Screech Owl is not the easiest owl to find and see in southern Ontario. There are good hints for the beginner or visitor about how to look for birds in different conditions as well as cautions about out-of-habitat birds.

I examined chapter 3, "South-western Ontario and the Niagara Peninsula" as an example of the regional accounts. Again, Goodwin sketches a broad portrait of the landscape and lists notable species peculiar to this region. Within this large geographical area, the communities at or close to interesting birding spots are listed alphabetically. In this way, a road map can be used to get one to the starting point. Then the driver can follow the precise directions to the spot. A map is found at the beginning of each regional chapter. Numbers on the map give the locations of the communities referred to in the text. Sixty-one are given for this region. In addition, maps are provided for high potential and/or complicated sites such as Pelee, Luther Marsh and Halton Region Forest. Meccas such as Point Pelee and Niagara are awarded detailed accounts especially as to directions. A hint to birders interested in the waterfowl staging concentrations at Long Point and Lake St. Clair: unless

it is a colder than normal March the time to see the largest numbers, especially of Tundra Swans, is closer to the vernal equinox than the suggested end of March or early April. By then, they may be virtually all gone.

Sewage lagoons have changed the habitats of birds and birders in this Province over the last 20 years. Recognizing this, the author gives directions to more lagoons than most of us dreamed existed. He cautions that one is on private property and should behave responsibly when visiting them. Although, for me, the sewage lagoon directions alone are worth the price of the book, I still believe there is a need for a separate sewage lagoon guide. Only occasionally does Goodwin make a qualitative comment about particular lagoons, and surely many of those listed without comment are small or steep-sided or in other ways useless for birds. Nevertheless, it is fascinating, if chastening, to read directions to unnoticed lagoons in areas where I thought I knew every good bird spot.

It's a pity that Goodwin did not use the 34th Supplement to the A.O.U. Check-list (in effect the 6th Edition) for his bird names. It was available in July, presumably before this book went to press. Instead, he compares the older A.O.U. nomenclature which he uses to the current ABA names. Many of the official new names are not found on either of Goodwin's lists, which doubtless will confuse some beginning birders.

The most significant omission from the book is the lack of specific directions to "want" birds. True, the systematic list has abundance symbols, which are quite correctly used to aid the reader in determining the likelihood of seeing species rather than as

definitive status statements. And the index has numerous page references to most species. What I am referring to are not so much errors of omission but rather a case of format and emphasis. Goodwin might have emulated James Lane's famous bird-finding guides and devoted a chapter to those birds which occur regularly but are difficult to find in Ontario. Species such as Black-headed Gull, Little Gull, Red-throated Loon, Bar-

row's Goldeneye, Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Loggerhead Shrike would be given a bold-face heading under which precise locations and dates would help beginners and visitors to zero in on these desirables.

This gap notwithstanding, this book will soon be found almost universally in the possession of Ontario birders and will be an indispensable tool for visiting individuals and tour groups.

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OFO Announcements

The following are announcements of upcoming OFO activities. They have been arranged for *members* of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Because space may be limited at any of these functions, be prepared in some way to identify yourself as an OFO member. Reports on past OFO activities will appear in the newsletter.

14/15 May 1983 — Pelee Week-end Meeting.

With spring birds and birders converging on Pt. Pelee in May, there is an excellent opportunity for OFO members to meet, socialize and discuss the direction of their new organization and *Ontario Birds*. An evening program, with 2-3 speakers, including Paul Prevett speaking on "The Birdlife of Hudson's and James Bays," will be held in the Auditorium of the Interpretive Centre, 7:30-9:30 PM on Saturday. Field trips,

for novice and experienced birders, will be held both Saturday and Sunday. Meet at the NW corner of the large paved parking lot at the Interpretive Centre at 8:00 AM. Watch for "OFO Field Trip" signs. For further details call Chip or Linda Weseloh, 416-485-1464.

22-28 September 1983 — Moosonee Field Trip.

To appeal to those OFO members with a spirit of adventure, we have planned a field trip to Moosonee on James Bay. The trip will depart from Cochrane (via train) at 10:00 AM on Friday, 23 September. Saturday, Sunday and Monday will be spent birding the Moosonee and Moose Factory townsites and Shipsands island at the mouth of the Moose River on James Bay. We will depart Moosonee on Tuesday morning, 27 September, and arrive back in Coch-

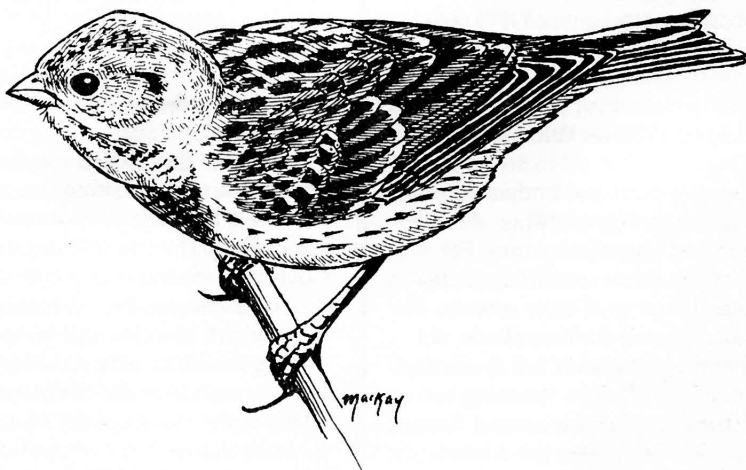
rane by mid-afternoon. Individuals who wish to stay in Moosonee longer are free to do so. The next scheduled train from Moosonee is on Thursday morning. Cochrane is approximately a nine hour drive from Toronto. Birds to be expected include all the boreal forest species and hundreds of Snow Geese (with the possibility of a Ross' Goose), Dunlin, Sanderling, yellow-legs and Golden Plover. At Shipsands, we can expect Peregrine Falcon, Merlin and large flocks of longspurs. Commercial accommodation is available in Moosonee at the Lily Pad Guest House (705-336-2353) or the Polar Bear Lodge (705-336-2345). Please make individual arrangements. Train fare between Cochrane and Moosonee is \$20.00 each way. Easy train connections are available directly from Toronto, phone Ontario Northland (416-965-4268) for details. For further details call Ron Ridout, 416-270-1349;

1 October 1983 — Pelagic Trip.

We have planned a pelagic birding trip into eastern Lake Ontario departing from Picton. This end of Lake Ontario has played host to as many as 200 jaegers in a single day as well as kittiwakes and Sabine's Gulls. Three 20-25 passenger fishing boats, with facilities for chumming, have been chartered for the day. The cost of the trip will be \$15.00 per person. Bring a lunch, Gravel and warm clothes! Preregistration will be necessary; to reserve your place, contact Hugh Currie (416-653-0176), Toronto.

22/23 October 1983 — Annual General Meeting.

OFO's 2nd Annual General Meeting will be held in London, Ontario. Plans probably will include field trips to Hawk Cliff, Kettle Point and Long Point. More details will be announced in the summer newsletter.





Ontario Birds

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Editorial Policy

Ontario Birds is the journal of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Its aim is to provide a vehicle for the documentation of the birds of Ontario.

We encourage the submission of full length articles or short notes on the status of bird species in Ontario, significant provincial or county distributional records, tips on bird identification, behavioural observations of birds in Ontario, location guides to significant birdwatching areas in Ontario, book reviews and

similar material of interest on Ontario birds. We do not accept submissions dealing with "listing" and we discourage Seasonal Reports of bird sightings as these are covered by *Bird Finding in Canada* and *American Birds*, respectively. Distributional records of species for which the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) requires documentation must be accepted by them before they can be published in *Ontario Birds*.