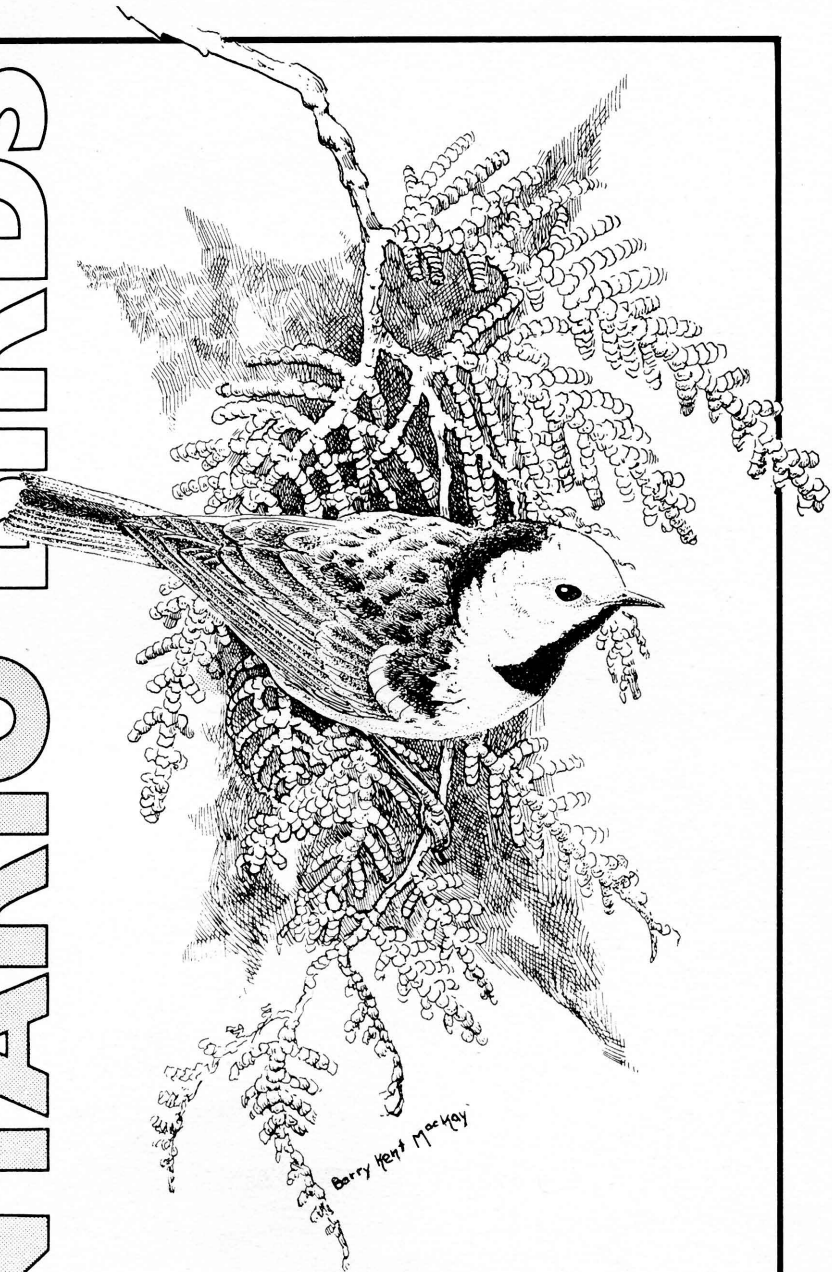
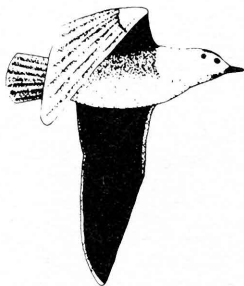


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Ontario Birds

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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*.

Table of Contents**Articles**

- In Memoriam: George Webster North (1910 – 1983) /
Robert Curry 1
- The Ornithological Club /
Jack Cranmer-Byng 4
- Ontario Bird Records Committee,
Checklist of the Birds of Ontario /
Alan Wormington and Ross D. James 13
- The Breeding Bird List for Ontario: Additions and Comments /
Ross D. James 24
- A Birding Site Guide to Amherst and Wolfe Islands /
Paul MacKenzie and Ron D. Weir 30
- Survey of a Major Swallow Roost in Pembroke /
R.K. Ross, W.R. Clark and J.M. Bouvier 34
- Brambling: New to Ontario /
David H. Elder 38

Notes

- Atlasing and the Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) /
Mike Cadman 40
- “English” Names and the New A.O.U. Check-list of
North American Birds: A Comment /
Richard W. Knapton 42
- Bird Names: A Further Comment /
Alex Mills 43
- Observations at a Major Crow Roost in St. Catharines, Ontario /
Richard W. Knapton and Susie Maturi 46

Book Reviews

- The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding, Vol. 1: Loons to
Sandpipers, Vol. 2: Gulls to Dippers, Vol. 3: Old World Warblers
to Sparrows. / National Geographic Society Field Guide to the
Birds of North America. /
reviewed by *Donald M. Fraser* 48

OFO Announcements

52

Cover Illustration: Hermit Warbler, a new bird for the Ontario checklist
by Barry Kent MacKay

In Memoriam: George Webster North (1910–1983)

by
Robert Curry

For most of this century the field ornithology of Hamilton, Ontario, has been dominated by George W. North. His death on 27 November 1983 represents a great loss to the Ontario birdwatching community.

Born in Hamilton on 13 January 1910, he was introduced to birds by his parents who gave him a copy of Taverner's, *Birds of Canada* on or about his eighth birthday. From that point on, birds dominated his life. As was fashionable at the time, the North family had a summer cottage at Van Wagner's Beach where he spent over 25 years and as he put it (North 1983b),

"Many a time in the old days before the engineers befouled and destroyed our beautiful marshes, I used to wake up in the middle of the night. . . . and listen to the songs of the Marsh Wrens and hear the calls of the Virginia Rails and Gallinules."

We were treated to such evocative writing only in the last few years of his life. George, ignoring the entreaties of his friends, chose to spend all his waking hours afield, rather than put pen to paper. It is tragic that his consummate skill at identifying

birds and unmatched knowledge could not have taken book form. Certainly it was not from a lack of scholarly ability; he earned a degree in Semitic languages from the University of Toronto (but the Depression Years prevented his putting it to use) and he eventually became an accountant/book-keeper in Hamilton.

In his prime, George's birding skills were legendary. Or, as he put it (North 1983a):

" if one has keen artistic eyesight, a good musical ear, and goes out watching birds morning, noon, evenings and week-ends for years and years in fair weather and foul, often cycling 60 or 80 miles a day. . . one is bound to have a rare experience from time to time."

His acute auditory perception was no accident; he was an accomplished clarinet player and for many years was a member of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry and other bands. He developed and honed his birding skills without benefit of the sophisticated field guides we have today and with very few contemporaries with whom to converse and compare observations. He had an incredible

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memory for the details of date, directions and past observations of not only his own but of any person who casually mentioned a sighting to him. Now, alas, much of that knowledge is lost.

George North was justly famous for being able to produce birds for others. Richard M. Saunders wrote of a 1946 experience (Saunders 1947: 72):

“Frequently some unusual avian straggler from the south or west finds its way to the head of the lake. When this happens some one of the Hamilton observers discovers it – usually the indefatigable George North – and the report reaches Toronto. Immediately an expedition is organized for the earliest possible occasion, and the services of Mr. North enlisted. Even though several days often elapse before the trip can be made, George rarely fails to produce the bird.”

President of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club in 1946 and 1947, George North was awarded an honorary life membership in 1974 for his many years of devoted service. He compiled the “Noteworthy Bird Records” for 10 issues of *The Wood Duck* every year from 1951 until the time of his death. This represents an invaluable record of the seasonal status of birds at the west end of Lake Ontario. He was compiler of the Hamilton Christmas Bird Count for 35 or more years. He was a member of the American Ornithologists' Union, Wilson Ornithological Society, Buffalo Ornithological Society and, we are honoured to say, a founding life member of the Ontario Field Ornithologists.



George Webster North

Although George did not publish a great deal, he co-authored with J. Murray Speirs and John A. Crosby, *Holboell's Grebe Nesting in Southern Ontario* (Speirs, et al 1944). The nestings at Burlington were unprecedented this far south and east. He spent two months in Labrador (28 July – 24 September 1950) and received an acknowledgement in Todd's *Birds of the Labrador Peninsula*. His observations are noted under many species in this volume.

But he was first and foremost a locality birder. Just a very few of the rare sightings he had at Hamilton were: Brown Pelican, Tufted Duck (March 1956), Black Vulture, Swainson's Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Willow Ptarmigan, Black Rail, Wilson's Plover, Mew Gull, Ivory Gull, Thick-billed Murre, Burrowing Owl, Bell's Vireo, and nesting Prothonotary Warbler. On

23 March 1958 he and the late Dr. Robert MacLaren found and identified in one flock four subspecies of Redpolls including the almost legendary *Carduelis h. hornemanni*.

However, George's greatest legacy is his tremendous influence on other birders, whether they spent just a few years in Hamilton or grew up there. Always willing to go out on weekends, he invariably would have two or three passengers. The teen-aged boys in his entourage always tripped along a respectful pace or two behind, hanging on every word, absorbing the master's technique and hoping just once to be able to point out and identify something before the great man. Those boys and other companions of earlier years are today spread all across the country

and continue to convey the love, enthusiasm and keen perception of birds and things natural to those whom they meet. In this way many benefit unknowingly from George although they will not miss him as do we, his friends and field companions. George is survived by his wife, Laurel Williams of Hamilton, whom he married in 1951.

Literature Cited

North, G.W. 1983a. Greenland Redpoll. *Wood Duck* 36: 118

North, G.W. 1983b. Unusual behaviour in birds. *Wood Duck* 36: 135.

Saunders, R.M. 1947. *Flashing Wings*. McClelland and Stewart. Toronto.



The Great Lakes Ornithological Club

The Origin and Early Years, 1905-1911

by
Jack Cranmer-Byng

The Great Lakes Ornithological Club (GLOC) played an important part in the development of ornithology in southern Ontario in the early years of this century. Although membership was restricted to a few enthusiasts, these men played an influential role in this development. This article deals with the beginnings of the Club, and the reasons for its importance.

Anyone with a serious interest in ornithology who resided near the western part of Lake Erie between 1894 and 1904 would have been in an excellent area to undertake field studies. Such studies, however, were confined to a few enthusiasts with rather locally focussed interests. Naturalists clubs already existed at Detroit, London, Guelph and Ottawa and had their own publications (see Table 1). The American Ornithologists' Union through its journal *The Auk* also printed articles and short reports of interest on the birds of this region. Very few bird books specifically related to the Great Lakes area existed (see Table 2). There were, however, a few networks of individuals active in the region at

this time which helped to compensate for the dearth of books. W.E. Saunders was collecting specimens and data around London and as far west as Point Pelee. P.A. Taverner and B.H. Swales were active in the vicinity of Detroit from 1904, and were in touch with Lynds Jones who was teaching at Oberlin College in Ohio. At Guelph, A.B. Klugh was the driving force in the Wellington Field Naturalist Club. Writing to Taverner early in 1904 he mentioned:

"In Detroit you will be among good ornithologists and will join the Michigan Ornithological Club. Their bulletin appears to me to be one of the best ornithological publications."¹

Also at this time J.H. Fleming in Toronto was in close touch with Saunders and Taverner by mail, exchanging all kinds of ornithological information. The necessary factors now existed for focussing the energies of these men more directly. This took place early in 1905.

W.E. Saunders invited Swales, Taverner and Klugh to a weekend meeting at his home in late

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February, 1905, to see his bird collection and to talk about ornithology in the London area. Luckily, information on this meeting was recorded by Taverner in his journal and in a letter to Fleming. The visitors learned that Saunders and J.E. Keays, whom they met, were preparing a list of

the birds of London. "Bird talk flew fast and furious," and the idea of organizing a group of men with similar interests was thoroughly discussed. In his journal for 27 February, Taverner wrote:

"This day we five laid the plans for a bird club embracing the Great Lakes region. We propose

Table 1. Naturalists' clubs and their journals in the vicinity of the Great Lakes (before 1905).

Name, Date of Founding and Location of Club	Name of Journal and Year of First Issue
Michigan Ornithological Club, c. 1890, Detroit/Ann Arbor	<i>Bulletin of the Michigan Ornithological Club</i> , 1897
Wilson Ornithological Club, 1888, journal edited from Oberlin College, Ohio	<i>The Wilson Bulletin</i> , 1888
McIlwraith Ornithological Club, 1890, London area	<i>The Cardinal</i> , 1940, no journal until then
Wellington Field Naturalist Club, 1900, Guelph area	<i>Ontario Natural Science Bulletin</i> , 1905
Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club, 1884, Ottawa	<i>The Ottawa Naturalist</i> , 1887

Table 2. Ornithological Publications Relating to Western Lake Erie Before 1905

McIlwraith, Thomas	<i>The Birds of Ontario</i>	Hamilton 1886, revised Toronto 1894
Cook, A.J.	<i>Birds of Michigan</i>	Michigan Agricultural Experimental Station, 1893
Jones, Lynds	<i>Birds of Ohio</i>	Ohio State Academy of Science, 1903
Dawson, William L.	<i>The Birds of Ohio</i> , with colored plates	Columbus, Ohio, 1903
Swales, Bradshaw H.	"A List of the Land Birds of Southeastern Michigan"	<i>Bulletin of the Michigan Ornithological Club</i> , 1903, 1904



Five members of the Great Lakes Ornithological Club in front of their shack on the main crossroad, Point Pelee, Ontario, 3 October 1909. Left to right: J.S. Wallace, B.H. Swales, W.E. Saunders, J.H. Fleming and P.A. Taverner (lower). Print from a photograph in the P.A. Taverner Manuscripts, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario. Photographer unknown.

starting modestly on a correspondence basis and made Saunders Secretary and the only officer so far. When it gets running well we propose to take in all the *good* men of our territory expecting a final membership of between 25 and 30. None but *good* men to be admitted and the standard of membership to be kept as high as possible that membership may be considered as an honor and something worth attaining. We were all resolved on this point. Our plans are too embryonic to discuss fully now but we hope in the end to issue an annual on the lines of the proceedings of the Michigan Club. We planned a field trip together to the Point Pelee district some time in May.”²

Taverner gave a more detailed account of the origin of the “Club” in a letter to Fleming, explaining that they had only decided to go to London at the last moment, otherwise they would have invited him to join them.

“We take it for granted that you are one of us.”

The only item decided at this first meeting was the name of the organization – The Great Lakes Ornithological Club.

“We decided to start it at present and let it develop along the lines that seem most expedient.”³

A provisional constitution was



Aviation Inn, Point Pelee National Park, circa 1959–1960. The gabled portion of the building on the left, bearing the electrical wire entrance is the incorporated shack of the Great Lakes Ornithological Club. The building was demolished in 1961 after purchase by the National Park Service. Print from a photograph supplied by Mrs. Helen Wolfe, last proprietress of the Inn.

subsequently drafted by Klugh in seven articles and sent to the six members in the form of a circulating bulletin. Article 2 stated that the object of the club “shall be the advancement of ornithology in the Great Lakes region of North America.”⁴ No regular meetings were proposed, but field trips to Point Pelee would be held from time to time. Members would keep in touch with each other by means of the Bulletin which would contain Papers, Notes and Queries.

The first field trip took place from 13–14 May when Saunders, Swales and Taverner met at Leamington Station, and hired a buggy to take their camping and collecting equipment and themselves to the Point. In his bird journal for 1905 Taverner captures something of the excitement of their first experience of Point Pelee. They were listening to various bird calls when a sudden loud whistle made them halt the

buggy. As they listened a Yellow-breasted Chat appeared in the thicket. They all jumped out and played hide-and-seek with the chat in their efforts to collect it. At the same time they found a Bobwhite and a Whip-poor-will. It was a good start to exploring a challenging new area. They camped that night in the red cedars on the west side of the point opposite Tilden’s Woods. But first, they explored the eastern shoreline where they counted about 25 Piping Plovers.⁵ In their checklist of “The Birds of Point Pelee” Taverner and Swales state: “It is a common summer resident and regular breeder on the east beach. We have found them there on each May visit and usually discovered nests and eggs.”⁶ Among other birds recorded on that visit were a male Hudsonian Godwit in breeding plumage, numerous Orchard Orioles, Cardinals, a Connecticut Warbler, and a Bald Eagle with two young. The

threesome tramped back to Leamington on the second evening in the dark, arrived at a hotel by 2130 h, had a cold bath and slept soundly.

The next club trip to Pelee was scheduled for the fall of 1905, and lasted from 4-17 September. Klugh and Taverner pitched camp in the same place as in May, and were later joined by Swales. The name "Camp Coues" was given to the location where members of the GLOC had first camped in 1905. Taverner's entry in his "Journal of Bird Observations" for 4 September 1905 is headed "At Camp Coues, Point Pelee, Essex Co." The camp was named after Elliot Coues (1842-1899) author of *Key to North American Birds*. They found themselves in the middle of a wave of migrating birds and during the next 12 days were able to explore the area more thoroughly. Klugh, who was a botanist as well as a birder, made notes on the plant life of Point Pelee as it related to the bird life they found.⁷ From Taverner's detailed account of the camp they did a great deal of rewarding bird study and saw among other birds a King Rail, a Prairie Warbler, juvenile Carolina Wrens, Red Knots, Black-bellied and Lesser Golden-Plovers, and a constant procession of hawks.

The GLOC had now taken root and its members, though few, were experienced and enthusiastic. The studies that they carried out from 1905 through 1911, although closely linked to visits to Pelee, were also geared to a wider perspective. Lynds Jones had begun to bring members of his

ornithology classes on field trips to Sandusky Marsh, on the Ohio side of Lake Erie due south of Point Pelee, and to several offshore islands. He was camped on the islands early in September 1905 and co-operated with Taverner and Swales by observing the actions of diurnal migrants as they passed over the lake.⁸ As a result of this co-operation, Jones was invited to become a member of the newly organized club. In writing to thank the members for "the privilege of joining with you in this very effective way of keeping in touch with other bird lovers", he expanded on the value of an organization that was centred on the Great Lakes region. "My studies of the birds and plants of the islands makes it clear that the lake is a great climatic, levelling factor upon the portions of land bordering it. Therefore, in cooperating with you in the study of bird life I shall be but filling out the southern part of a remarkably homogeneous region."⁹

From their experience with the September migration of 1905, Jones and Saunders concluded that Point Pelee served as a migration funnel in the fall for the much wider hinterland at its base. In the spring, it again acted as a funnel for a concentrated mass of birds which then spread throughout the much wider area to the north. This idea of Point Pelee acting as a funnel for diurnal bird migration had not previously been recognized. It now needed stating with evidence to support it.¹⁰ To Swales and Taverner this concept presented an exciting challenge, one which would have to be

studied closely over several years.

Field studies of bird populations, distribution and migration was one of the major concerns of the GLOC. A second main function was to exchange bird information and ideas for discussion among the club's members. Distances made it difficult to attend meetings and return home the same day in spite of a good train service. It was agreed that the best method of communication would be by means of a manuscript bulletin circulating among the members. The first issue appeared in late March (1905) and contained a draft constitution in seven articles for comment. The article which caused most controversy related to the Bulletin where it stated that when the author of an article, or note had read the comments of the other members he should add his own and return it to the secretary to keep on behalf of the club. Saunders argued strongly that each item would be a joint one involving several members. "You must bear in mind that we are working for mutual and self improvement in our study. We are not writing for publication and no one has the right to publish except by vote of the club."¹¹ Fleming argued that if the secretary retained members' contributions indefinitely this would inhibit them from expressing their true feeling as the Bulletin circulated. In a 4-3 vote it was finally decided that members could retain their own contributions. As a result there exists no complete collection of contributions to the Bulletin, only bits and pieces.¹²

In contrast to the disagreement

over the Bulletin, the regulations for membership of the club did not cause a problem. Taverner, writing to Fleming with news of the original meeting, explained that the scope of the club was "the Great Lakes and tributary country." The intention was to include only 'reliable men' by which he appears to have meant serious ornithologists who could be relied on to report only sightings about which they were certain. He suggested excluding mere egg collectors. The quality of the members, not their quantity, was the credo they espoused in order to "command attention and respect from others."¹³ Lynds Jones became a member in the fall of 1905, Dr. William Brodie in 1906, and James S. Wallace in 1907. As no further members were recruited the total stood at nine.

Why was the membership so small? One reason is that it never developed into a 'club' in the usual sense of the word. It started with the enthusiasm and vision of William E. Saunders and was carried forward by the energy and dedication of Jones, Taverner, Swales, Klugh and Wallace. Brodie was an ill man and died in 1909. Keays was not very active, while Fleming made comparatively few visits to Pelee although he contributed regularly to the Bulletin. The problem was to find other enthusiasts living in the region who were knowledgeable and active ornithologists. Such men were not easy to find at that time. There existed professional collectors of birds and their eggs, and there were also naturalists with a special interest in plants or



Interior of Great Lakes Ornithological Club shack, Point Pelee, Ontario, looking toward front door. Bryant Walker and P.A. Taverner (right). Print from a photograph in the P.A. Taverner Manuscripts, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario. Photograph by Detroit News Tribune, now Detroit News, 31 May 1909 and published by them on 27 June 1909.

insects. But the object of the members who started the group was to link up those who shared a common interest in birds and were congenial to each other.

We may well wonder what the GLOC achieved during its short existence. The heyday of the club only lasted from 1905 through 1909. Klugh had already moved to Kingston in 1906. Swales joined the Smithsonian Institute in

Washington in 1910, while Taverner became Head of Ornithology at the newly created Victoria Memorial Museum at Ottawa in 1911. In that year the Bulletin ceased publication. From then onwards Saunders and Wallace were the main visitors to Point Pelee. However, a permanent campsite with a wooden cabin had been established in 1908 and continued to be used

until the 1920s by members and visitors. Referred to as the Shack, it was built by members of the Club with the expert help of Taverner who was then an architectural draftsman in Detroit. In his Journal for 16 October 1908 he recorded that the Club now had a little house at Camp Coues with screened doors and windows, which was very comfortable. The club made Point Pelee known to a wider group of ornithologists by their published studies. "The Birds of Point Pelee" by Taverner and Swales, which appeared in the *Wilson Bulletin* between June 1907 and September 1908, contained a list of 209 birds recorded together with considerable annotation. It still reads well today. Through their observations several new birds were added to the Ontario list, for instance Chuck-will's-widow (May, 1906). The chief value of the work of the members of the Great Lakes Ornithological Club lay in their contribution to a better understanding of the migration routes, and the seasonal variations in the numbers and species of birds in the Great Lakes region. When compared with what was known before the club was founded, this represented a quantum leap in knowledge.

Material relating to the Great Lakes Ornithological Club, selected and xeroxed by George M. Stirrett, has been deposited in the Royal Ontario Museum as the "Stirrett Collection". This material was copied mainly from the correspondence of Fleming, Saunders, Swales and Taverner, and the record books of the Club.

It also includes copies of photographs taken between 1909 and 1911.

A Partial Listing of Ornithological Publications Concerning the Great Lakes Region Stimulated by the Activities of the GLOC, 1905-1912.

(In addition to Taverner and Swales "The Birds of Point Pelee")

Fleming, J.H. 1906-1914. Birds of Toronto, Ontario. *Auk* 23: 437-453; 24:71-89; 30:225-228.

_____.1906. The Chuck-will's widow and Mocking Bird in Ontario. *Auk* 23:343-344.

Jones, L. 1909-1910. The birds of Cedar Point and vicinity. *Wilson Bulletin* 21:55-76; 115-131; 187-204; 22:25-41; 97-115; 172-182.

Saunders, W.E. 1906. Birds new to Ontario. *Ottawa Naturalist* 19:205-207.

_____.1907. The Carolina Wren, an established resident of Ontario. *Ontario Natural Science Bulletin* 3:28-30.

_____.1907. A migration disaster in western Ontario. *Auk* 24:108-110.

_____.1907. Ring-billed Gull. *Wilson Bulletin* 19:73-74.

_____.1908. The Sharp-shinned Hawk in migration. *Ontario Natural Science Bulletin* 4: 5-7.

_____.1908. The Worm-eating Warbler in Ontario. *Auk* 25:319.

_____. 1909. Summer Birds of the southern edge of western Ontario. *Wilson Bulletin* 21:152-155.

_____. 1909. The Sharp-shinned Hawk in migration. *Ottawa Naturalist* 23:156-160.

_____. 1909. Rare birds at Point Pelee. *Ottawa Naturalist* 23:160-162.

_____. 1910. Winter birds at Point Pelee. *Ottawa Naturalist* 24:35-36.

_____. 1912. The Yellow-breasted Chat and Carolina Wren in Ontario. *Ottawa Naturalist* 25:152-153.

Swales, H.B. and P.A. Taverner. 1907. Recent ornithological developments in southeastern Michigan. *Auk* 24:135-148.

Taverner, P.A. 1905. A hyperlaken migration route. *Bulletin of the Michigan Ornithological Club* 6:3-7.

_____. 1911. Some raptorial migrations in southern Ontario. *Ottawa Naturalist* 25:77-81.

Wood N.A. 1910. Bird migration at Point Pelee, Ontario, in the fall of 1909. *Wilson Bulletin* 22:63-78.

End Notes

1. Letter from A.B. Klugh to P.A. Taverner, 31 March 1904, quoted in part in Taverner's "Journal of Bird Observations, 1903-1904". Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Taverner Papers.
2. P.A. Taverner "Journal of Bird Observations, 1903-1904". p. 67.
3. Letter from P.A. Taverner to J.H. Fleming, 28 February 1905. ROM, Fleming Papers.
4. Great Lakes Ornithological Club - Circulating Bulletin No. 1. March 1905. ROM, Taverner Papers.
5. P.A. Taverner "Journal of Bird Observations 1904-1905", 13 May 1905. ROM, Taverner Papers.
6. Taverner, P.A. and B.H. Swales. 1907. The Birds of Point Pelee. *Wilson Bulletin*, 19: 89-90.
7. *ibid*, 19: 40-45.
8. *ibid*, 19:45-48. See also sketch map in 20:106, 1908.
9. Letter from L. Jones to "The Members of the Great Lakes Ornithological Club", 16 Dec. 1905. ROM, Taverner Papers - GLOC Bulletin.
10. Taverner, P.A. and B.H. Swales. 1908. The Birds of Point Pelee. *Wilson Bulletin* 20:117-129. The authors give a summary of their conclusions to the study.
11. Memo by W.E. Saunders in Circulating Bulletin, dated 31 August 1906. ROM, Taverner Paper, GLOC Bulletin.
12. The late George M. Stirrett, formerly Chief Parks Naturalist Ottawa and author of *The Spring Birds of Point Pelee National Park, Ontario* (1960), compiled a typescript index to the Bulletin. However, quite a number of the contributions were removed; presumably by the authors. The contents of each issue rarely coincide fully with the lists which have survived.
13. Letter from P.A. Taverner to J.H. Fleming, 28 February 1905. ROM, Fleming Papers.

Ontario Bird Records Committee, Checklist of the Birds of Ontario

by
Alan Wormington and Ross D. James

The last checklist of the birds of Ontario (in card form) was published in 1980 by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists in co-operation with the Ontario Ornithological Records Committee (hereinafter OORC). It listed a total of 406 species.

Early in 1982 the Ontario Bird Records Committee (hereinafter OBRC) was formed, replacing the OORC, to review records of rare birds in the Province. For the purposes of this checklist we have tentatively adopted the decisions of the former OORC, with the exception of several records recently re-assessed by the new committee. Furthermore, continual changes to the checklist are possibly forthcoming as the OBRC reviews the status of every species in Ontario. Deliberations will be presented in future issues of *Ontario Birds* in the form of committee Annual Reports.

Since the publication of the last checklist several additional species have been accepted by the OORC and OBRC and two species have been deleted - Snowy Plover and Painted Bunting (see OBRC 1984 Annual Report, in prep.). There

are no additions or deletions as a result of taxonomic revisions. The following 23 species have been added to the Ontario list: Yellow-billed Loon, Tufted Duck, Black-necked Stilt, Slender-billed Curlew, Little Stint, California Gull, Ross' Gull, Royal Tern, Sooty Tern, Common Poorwill, Gray Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Gray Kingbird, Fish Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Siberian Rubythroat, Eurasian Blackbird, Sprague's Pipit, Hermit Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Brambling and Lesser Goldfinch. Taking into account the additions and deletions the Ontario checklist now stands at 427 species.

Due to its immense geographic size, the OBRC proposes a new system for presenting bird occurrences in Ontario by dividing the Province into North and South regions (Figure 1). We feel this new approach will indicate more clearly the significance of species found in each region from a North American viewpoint. The checklist, in effect, serves a dual purpose by indicating with an "N" those species which are recorded in the

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North (347) and, correspondingly, an "S" for species in the South (415). Due to the acute paucity of documented reports the North "checklist" has been compiled taking into account known specimens, photographs, published accounts, and other selected observations in addition to

accepted reports on file with the OORC and OBRC. We have not listed certain extreme rarities or difficult-to-identify species as occurring here until documented reports are received and accepted by the OBRC.

Species which are reviewed (i.e. requiring documentation) by the



Figure 1

Ontario showing North and South regions. The line A-B approximates the 4°C (39.2°F) mean daily temperature for the year isotherm, and is adopted here as representing the northern limit of southern Ontario. (from Chapman, L.J. and M.K. Thomas. 1968. *The Climate of Northern Ontario*. Climatological Studies No. 6, Department of Transport, Toronto). Note that the cities of Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and North Bay are in the South region of Ontario.

OBRC in the South region of Ontario are those birds averaging four or fewer records per year over five years ([S]). Species are dropped from the review list when more than 20 reports are accepted by the OBRC for any 5-year period. Using these criteria for the North region is not realistic, as even relatively common birds may go unrecorded annually due to the lack of observers. Therefore, the review list of species for the North ([N]) will be reviewed periodically at the discretion of the OBRC. All documented reports of rare birds in Ontario should be

sent to the OBRC Secretary. Species which have been accepted by the OBRC as breeding in Ontario (283) are marked with an asterisk; a status review of the Provincial breeding bird list is presented elsewhere in this issue.

Classification and nomenclature for the Ontario checklist follows the recent A.O.U. Check-List (A.O.U. 1983. *The Check List of North American Birds*, 6th Edition. Allen Press, Lawrence, Kansas.) On the following list the number of species occurring in Ontario is given in parentheses after the name of each family.

Checklist of the Birds of Ontario

Legend

-
- N - Species recorded in North; [N] indicates the OBRC requires documentation when the species is recorded in the Region.
 S - Species recorded in South; [S] indicates the OBRC requires documentation when the species is recorded in the Region
 * - Species recorded as breeding in Ontario
-

GAVIIDAE (4)

- * Red-throated Loon N/S
Gavia stellata
 * Arctic Loon N/[S]
Gavia arctica
 * Common Loon N/S
Gavia immer
 Yellow-billed Loon [S]
Gavia adamsii

PODICIPEDIDAE (5)

- * Pied-billed Grebe N/S
Podilymbus podiceps
 * Horned Grebe N/S
Podiceps auritus
 * Red-necked Grebe N/S
Podiceps grisegena
 Eared Grebe [N]/S
Podiceps nigricollis
 Western Grebe [N]/[S]
Aechmophorus occidentalis

PROCELLARIIDAE (3)

- Northern Fulmar [N]/[S]
Fulmarus glacialis
 Black-capped Petrel [S]
Pterodroma hasitata
 Audubon's Shearwater [S]
Puffinus lherminieri

HYDROBATIDAE (3)

- Wilson's Storm-Petrel [S]
Oceanites oceanicus
 Leach's Storm-Petrel [N]/[S]
Oceanodroma leucorhoa
 Band-rumped Storm-Petrel [S]
Oceanodroma castro

SULIDAE (1)

- Northern Gannet [N]/[S]
Sula bassanus

PELECANIDAE (2)

- * American White Pelican N/[S]
Pelecanus erythrorhynchos
 Brown Pelican [S]
Pelecanus occidentalis

PHALACROCORACIDAE (2)

- Great Cormorant [S]
Phalacrocorax carbo
 * Double-crested Cormorant N/S
Phalacrocorax auritus

ANHINGIDAE (1)

- Anhinga [S]
Anhinga anhinga

ARDEIDAE (11)

- * American Bittern N/S
Botaurus lentiginosus
- * Least Bittern [N]/S
Ixobrychus exilis
- * Great Blue Heron N/S
Ardea herodias
- * Great Egret [N]/S
Casmerodius albus
- Snowy Egret [N]/S
Egretta thula
- Little Blue Heron [N]/[S]
Egretta caerulea
- Tricolored Heron [N]/[S]
Egretta tricolor
- * Cattle Egret [N]/S
Bubulcus ibis
- * Green-backed Heron [N]/S
Butorides striatus
- * Black-crowned Night-Heron [N]/S
Nycticorax nycticorax
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron [S]
Nycticorax violaceus

THRESKIORNITHIDAE (2)

- White Ibis [S]
Eudocimus albus
- Glossy Ibis [S]
Plegadis falcinellus

CICONIIDAE (1)

- Wood Stork [S]
Mycteria americana

ANATIDAE (41)

- Fulvous Whistling-Duck [S]
Dendrocygna bicolor
- * Tundra Swan N/S
Cygnus columbianus
- Trumpeter Swan [S]
Cygnus buccinator
- * Mute Swan [N]/S
Cygnus olor
- Greater White-fronted Goose N/[S]
Anser albifrons
- * Snow Goose N/S
Chen caerulescens
- * Ross' Goose N
Chen rossii
- Brant N/S
Branta bernicla
- * Canada Goose N/S
Branta canadensis
- * Wood Duck N/S
Aix sponsa
- * Green-winged Teal N/S
Anas crecca
- * American Black Duck N/S
Anas rubripes
- * Mallard N/S
Anas platyrhynchos
- * Northern Pintail N/S
Anas acuta
- * Blue-winged Teal N/S
Anas discors
- * Cinnamon Teal [S]
Anas cyanoptera
- * Northern Shoveler N/S
Anas clypeata
- * Gadwall N/S
Anas strepera
- Eurasian Wigeon [N]/[S]
Anas penelope
- * American Wigeon N/S
Anas americana
- * Canvasback N/S
Aythya valisineria
- * Redhead N/S
Aythya americana
- * Ring-necked Duck N/S
Aythya collaris
- Tufted Duck [S]
Aythya fuligula
- * Greater Scaup N/S
Aythya marila
- * Lesser Scaup N/S
Aythya affinis
- * Common Eider N/[S]
Somateria mollissima
- * King Eider N/S
Somateria spectabilis
- Harlequin Duck [N]/S
Histrionicus histrionicus
- * Oldsquaw N/S
Clangula hyemalis
- Black Scoter N/S
Melanitta nigra
- * Surf Scoter N/S
Melanitta perspicillata
- * White-winged Scoter N/S
Melanitta fusca
- * Common Goldeneye N/S
Bucephala clangula
- Barrow's Goldeneye [N]/S
Bucephala islandica
- * Bufflehead N/S
Bucephala albeola
- Smew [S]
Mergellus albellus
- * Hooded Merganser N/S
Lophodytes cucullatus

- * Common Merganser N/S
Mergus merganser
- * Red-breasted Merganser N/S
Mergus serrator
- * Ruddy Duck N/S
Oxyura jamaicensis

CATHARTIDAE (2)

- Black Vulture [S]
Coragyps atratus
- * Turkey Vulture N/S
Cathartes aura

ACCIPITRIDAE (14)

- * Osprey N/S
Pandion haliaetus
American Swallow-tailed Kite [S]
Elanoides forficatus
- Mississippi Kite [S]
Ictinia mississippiensis
- * Bald Eagle N/S
Haliaeetus leucocephalus
- * Northern Harrier N/S
Circus cyaneus
- * Sharp-shinned Hawk N/S
Accipiter striatus
- * Cooper's Hawk N/S
Accipiter cooperii
- * Northern Goshawk N/S
Accipiter gentilis
- * Red-shouldered Hawk N/S
Buteo lineatus
- * Broad-winged Hawk N/S
Buteo platypterus
Swainson's Hawk [N]/[S]
Buteo swainsoni
- * Red-tailed Hawk N/S
Buteo jamaicensis
- * Rough-legged Hawk N/S
Buteo lagopus
- * Golden Eagle N/S
Aquila chrysaetos

FALCONIDAE (4)

- * American Kestrel N/S
Falco sparverius
- * Merlin N/S
Falco columbarius
- * Peregrine Falcon N/S
Falco peregrinus
Gyr Falcon N/[S]
Falco rusticolus

PHASIANIDAE (10)

- * Gray Partridge [N]/S
Perdix perdix
- * Ring-necked Pheasant [N]/S
Phasianus colchicus

- * Spruce Grouse N/S
Dendragapus canadensis
- * Willow Ptarmigan N/[S]
Lagopus lagopus
Rock Ptarmigan N
Lagopus mutus
- * Ruffed Grouse N/S
Bonasa umbellus
- * Greater Prairie-Chicken [S]
Tympanuchus cupido
- * Sharp-tailed Grouse N/S
Tympanuchus phasianellus
- * Wild Turkey S
Meleagris gallopavo
- * Northern Bobwhite S
Colinus virginianus

RALLIDAE (7)

- * Yellow Rail N/S
Coturnicops noveboracensis
- * King Rail S
Rallus elegans
- * Virginia Rail N/S
Rallus limicola
- * Sora N/S
Porzana carolina
Purple Gallinule [N]/[S]
Porphyrola martinica
- * Common Moorhen [N]/S
Gallinula chloropus
- * American Coot N/S
Fulica americana

GRUIDAE (2)

- * Sandhill Crane N/S
Grus canadensis
Whooping Crane [S]
Grus americana

CHARADRIIDAE (5)

- Black-bellied Plover N/S
Pluvialis squatarola
- * Lesser Golden-Plover N/S
Pluvialis dominica
- * Semipalmated Plover N/S
Charadrius semipalmatus
- * Piping Plover N/[S]
Charadrius melodus
- * Killdeer N/S
Charadrius vociferus

HAEMATOPODIDAE (1)

- American Oystercatcher [S]
Haematopus palliatus

RECURVIROSTRIDAE (2)

- Black-necked Stilt [N]/[S]
Himantopus mexicanus

- * American Avocet [N]/[S]
Recurvirostra americana

SCOLOPACIDAE (37)

- * Greater Yellowlegs N/S
Tringa melanoleuca
- * Lesser Yellowlegs N/S
Tringa flavipes
- Spotted Redshank [S]
Tringa erythropus
- * Solitary Sandpiper N/S
Tringa solitaria
- Willet [N]/S
Catoptrophorus semipalmatus
- Wandering Tattler [S]
Heteroscelus incanus
- * Spotted Sandpiper N/S
Actitis macularia
- * Upland Sandpiper N/S
Bartramia longicauda
- Eskimo Curlew [N]/[S]
Numenius borealis
- * Whimbrel N/S
Numenius phaeopus
- Slender-billed Curlew [S]
Numenius tenuirostris
- * Hudsonian Godwit N/S
Limosa haemastica
- * Marbled Godwit N/S
Limosa fedoa
- Ruddy Turnstone N/S
Arenaria interpres
- Red Knot N/S
Calidris canutus
- Sanderling N/S
Calidris alba
- * Semipalmated Sandpiper N/S
Calidris pusilla
- Western Sandpiper [N]/S
Calidris mauri
- Little Stint [N]
Calidris minuta
- * Least Sandpiper N/S
Calidris minutilla
- White-rumped Sandpiper N/S
Calidris fuscicollis
- Baird's Sandpiper N/S
Calidris bairdii
- * Pectoral Sandpiper N/S
Calidris melanotos
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [S]
Calidris acuminata
- Purple Sandpiper [N]/S
Calidris maritima
- * Dunlin N/S
Calidris alpina
- Curlew Sandpiper [N]/[S]
Calidris ferruginea

- * Stilt Sandpiper N/S
Calidris himantopus
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper N/S
Tryngites subruficollis
- Ruff [N]/S
Philomachus pugnax
- * Short-billed Dowitcher N/S
Limnodromus griseus
- Long-billed Dowitcher [N]/S
Limnodromus scolopaceus
- * Common Snipe N/S
Gallinago gallinago
- * American Woodcock N/S
Scolopax minor
- * Wilson's Phalarope N/S
Phalaropus tricolor
- * Red-necked Phalarope N/S
Phalaropus lobatus
- Red Phalarope N/S
Phalaropus fulicaria

LARIDAE (31)

- Pomarine Jaeger [N]/[S]
Stercorarius pomarinus
- * Parasitic Jaeger N/S
Stercorarius parasiticus
- Long-tailed Jaeger N/[S]
Stercorarius longicaudus
- Laughing Gull [N]/[S]
Larus atricilla
- Franklin's Gull N/S
Larus pipixcan
- * Little Gull N/S
Larus minutus
- Common Black-headed Gull [N]/S
Larus ridibundus
- * Bonaparte's Gull N/S
Larus philadelphia
- Mew Gull [S]
Larus canus
- * Ring-billed Gull N/S
Larus delawarensis
- * California Gull [S]
Larus californicus
- * Herring Gull N/S
Larus argentatus
- Thayer's Gull N/S
Larus thayeri
- Iceland Gull N/S
Larus glaucoides
- Lesser Black-backed Gull [N]/S
Larus fuscus
- Glaucous Gull N/S
Larus hyperboreus
- * Great Black-backed Gull N/S
Larus marinus
- Black-legged Kittiwake [N]/S
Rissa tridactyla

Ross' Gull [N]
Rhodostethia rosea
 Sabine's Gull N/S
Xema sabini
 Ivory Gull [N]/[S]
Pagophila eburnea
 * Caspian Tern N/S
Sterna caspia
 Royal Tern [S]
Sterna maxima
 Sandwich Tern [S]
Sterna sandvicensis
 * Common Tern N/S
Sterna hirundo
 * Arctic Tern N/S
Sterna paradisaea
 * Forster's Tern N/S
Sterna forsteri
 Least Tern [S]
Sterna antillarum
 Sooty Tern [S]
Sterna fuscata
 * Black Tern N/S
Chlidonias niger
 Black Skimmer [N]/[S]
Rynchops niger

ALCIDAE (5)
 Dovekie [S]
Alle alle
 Thick-billed Murre [S]
Uria lomvia
 Razorbill [S]
Alca torda
 * Black Guillemot N/[S]
Cepphus grylle
 Ancient Murrelet [S]
Synthliboramphus antiquus

COLUMBIDAE (6)
 * Rock Dove N/S
Columba livia
 Band-tailed Pigeon [N]/[S]
Columba fasciata
 White-winged Dove [N]/[S]
Zenaida asiatica
 * Mourning Dove N/S
Zenaida macroura
 * Passenger Pigeon – Extinct N/S
Ectopistes migratorius
 Common Ground-Dove [N]
Columbina passerina

CUCULIDAE (3)
 * Black-billed Cuckoo N/S
Coccyzus erythrophthalmus
 * Yellow-billed Cuckoo N/S
Coccyzus americanus

Groove-billed Ani [N]/[S]
Crotophaga sulcirostris

TYTONIDAE (1)
 * Common Barn-Owl [N]/S
Tyto alba

STRIGIDAE (11)
 * Eastern Screech-Owl [N]/S
Otus asio
 * Great Horned Owl N/S
Bubo virginianus
 Snowy Owl N/S
Nyctea scandiaca
 * Northern Hawk-Owl N/S
Surnia ulula
 Burrowing Owl [S]
Athene cunicularia
 * Barred Owl N/S
Strix varia
 * Great Gray Owl N/S
Strix nebulosa
 * Long-eared Owl N/S
Asio otus
 * Short-eared Owl N/S
Asio flammeus
 * Boreal Owl N/S
Aegolius funereus
 * Northern Saw-whet Owl N/S
Aegolius acadicus

CAPRIMULGIDAE (5)
 Lesser Nighthawk [S]
Chordeiles acutipennis
 * Common Nighthawk N/S
Chordeiles minor
 Common Poorwill [N]
Phalaenoptilus nuttallii
 * Chuck-will's-widow S
Caprimulgus carolinensis
 * Whip-poor-will N/S
Caprimulgus vociferus

APODIDAE (1)
 * Chimney Swift N/S
Chaetura pelagica

TROCHILIDAE (2)
 * Ruby-throated Hummingbird N/S
Archilochus colubris
 Rufous Hummingbird [N]/[S]
Selasphorus rufus

ALCEDINIDAE (1)
 * Belted Kingfisher N/S
Ceryle alcyon

PICIDAE (10)

- Lewis' Woodpecker [S]
Melanerpes lewis
- * Red-headed Woodpecker N/S
Melanerpes erythrocephalus
- * Red-bellied Woodpecker [N]/S
Melanerpes carolinus
- * Yellow-bellied Sapsucker N/S
Sphyrapicus varius
- * Downy Woodpecker N/S
Picoides pubescens
- * Hairy Woodpecker N/S
Picoides villosus
- * Three-toed Woodpecker N/S
Picoides tridactylus
- * Black-backed Woodpecker N/S
Picoides arcticus
- * Northern Flicker N/S
Colaptes auratus
- * Pileated Woodpecker N/S
Dryocopus pileatus

TYRANNIDAE (19)

- * Olive-sided Flycatcher N/S
Contopus borealis
- * Eastern Wood-Pewee N/S
Contopus virens
- * Yellow-bellied Flycatcher N/S
Empidonax flaviventris
- * Acadian Flycatcher S
Empidonax virescens
- * Alder Flycatcher N/S
Empidonax alnorum
- * Willow Flycatcher [N]/S
Empidonax traillii
- * Least Flycatcher N/S
Empidonax minimus
Gray Flycatcher [S]
Empidonax wrightii
- * Eastern Phoebe N/S
Sayornis phoebe
Say's Phoebe [N]/[S]
Sayornis saya
- Vermilion Flycatcher [S]
Pyrocephalus rubinus
- Ash-throated Flycatcher [S]
Myiarchus cinerascens
- * Great Crested Flycatcher N/S
Myiarchus crinitus
Cassin's Kingbird [S]
Tyrannus vociferans
Western Kingbird [N]/[S]
Tyrannus verticalis
- * Eastern Kingbird N/S
Tyrannus tyrannus
Gray Kingbird [S]
Tyrannus dominicensis

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher [N]/[S]
Tyrannus forficatus
Fork-tailed Flycatcher [N]
Tyrannus savana

ALAUDIDAE (1)

- * Horned Lark N/S
Eremophila alpestris

HIRUNDINIDAE (6)

- * Purple Martin N/S
Progne subis
- * Tree Swallow N/S
Tachycineta bicolor
- * Northern Rough-winged Swallow N/S
Stelgidopteryx serripennis
- * Bank Swallow N/S
Riparia riparia
- * Cliff Swallow N/S
Hirundo pyrrhonota
- * Barn Swallow N/S
Hirundo rustica

CORVIDAE (7)

- * Gray Jay N/S
Perisoreus canadensis
- * Blue Jay N/S
Cyanocitta cristata
Clark's Nutcracker [N]
Nucifraga columbiana
- * Black-billed Magpie N/[S]
Pica pica
- * American Crow N/S
Corvus brachyrhynchos
Fish Crow [S]
Corvus ossifragus
- * Common Raven N/S
Corvus corax

PARIDAE (4)

- * Black-capped Chickadee N/S
Parus atricapillus
Carolina Chickadee [S]
Parus carolinensis
- * Boreal Chickadee N/S
Parus hudsonicus
- * Tufted Titmouse S
Parus bicolor

SITTIDAE (2)

- * Red-breasted Nuthatch N/S
Sitta canadensis
- * White-breasted Nuthatch N/S
Sitta carolinensis

CERTHIIDAE (1)

- * Brown Creeper N/S
Certhia americana

TROGLODYTIDAE (7)

- Rock Wren [N]/[S]
Salpinctes obsoletus
- * Carolina Wren S
Thryothorus ludovicianus
- * Bewick's Wren [S]
Thryomanes bewickii
- * House Wren N/S
Troglodytes aedon
- * Winter Wren N/S
Troglodytes troglodytes
- * Sedge Wren N/S
Cistothorus platensis
- * Marsh Wren N/S
Cistothorus palustris

MUSCICAPIDAE (17)

- * Golden-crowned Kinglet N/S
Regulus satrapa
- * Ruby-crowned Kinglet N/S
Regulus calendula
- * Blue-gray Gnatcatcher [N]/S
Poliophtila caerulea
- Siberian Rubythroat [S]
Luscinia calliope
- Northern Wheatear [N]/[S]
Oenanthe oenanthe
- * Eastern Bluebird N/S
Sialia sialis
- Mountain Bluebird [N]/[S]
Sialia currucoides
- Townsend's Solitaire [N]/[S]
Myadestes townsendi
- * Veery N/S
Catharus fuscescens
- * Gray-cheeked Thrush N/S
Catharus minimus
- * Swainson's Thrush N/S
Catharus ustulatus
- * Hermit Thrush N/S
Catharus guttatus
- * Wood Thrush N/S
Hylocichla mustelina
- Eurasian Blackbird [S]
Turdus merula
- Fieldfare [S]
Turdus pilaris
- * American Robin N/S
Turdus migratorius
- Varied Thrush [N]/[S]
Ixoreus naevius

MIMIDAE (4)

- * Gray Catbird N/S
Dumetella carolinensis
- * Northern Mockingbird N/S
Mimus polyglottos

Sage Thrasher [S]

- Oreoscoptes montanus*
- * Brown Thrasher N/S
Toxostoma rufum

MOTACILLIDAE (2)

- * Water Pipit N/S
Anthus spinoletta
- Sprague's Pipit [N]
Anthus spragueii

BOMBYCILLIDAE (2)

- Bohemian Waxwing N/S
Bombycilla garrulus
- * Cedar Waxwing N/S
Bombycilla cedrorum

PTILOGONATIDAE (1)

- Phainopepla [S]
Phainopepla nitens

LANIIDAE (2)

- * Northern Shrike N/S
Lanius excubitor
- * Loggerhead Shrike [N]/S
Lanius ludovicianus

STURNIDAE (1)

- * European Starling N/S
Sturnus vulgaris

VIREONIDAE (7)

- * White-eyed Vireo S
Vireo griseus
- Bell's Vireo [S]
Vireo bellii
- * Solitary Vireo N/S
Vireo solitarius
- * Yellow-throated Vireo N/S
Vireo flavifrons
- * Warbling Vireo N/S
Vireo gilvus
- * Philadelphia Vireo N/S
Vireo philadelphicus
- * Red-eyed Vireo N/S
Vireo olivaceus

EMBERIZIDAE (94)

- * Blue-winged Warbler [N]/S
Vermivora pinus
- * Golden-winged Warbler N/S
Vermivora chrysoptera
- * Tennessee Warbler N/S
Vermivora peregrina
- * Orange-crowned Warbler N/S
Vermivora celata
- * Nashville Warbler N/S
Vermivora ruficapilla

- Virginia's Warbler [S]
Vermivora virginiae
- * Northern Parula N/S
Parula americana
- * Yellow Warbler N/S
Dendroica petechia
- * Chestnut-sided Warbler N/S
Dendroica pensylvanica
- * Magnolia Warbler N/S
Dendroica magnolia
- * Cape May Warbler N/S
Dendroica tigrina
- * Black-throated Blue Warbler N/S
Dendroica caerulescens
- * Yellow-rumped Warbler N/S
Dendroica coronata
- Black-throated Gray Warbler [S]
Dendroica nigrescens
- Townsend's Warbler [S]
Dendroica townsendi
- Hermit Warbler [S]
Dendroica occidentalis
- * Black-throated Green Warbler N/S
Dendroica virens
- * Blackburnian Warbler N/S
Dendroica fusca
- Yellow-throated Warbler [N]/[S]
Dendroica dominica
- * Pine Warbler N/S
Dendroica pinus
- * Kirtland's Warbler [S]
Dendroica kirtlandii
- * Prairie Warbler [N]/S
Dendroica discolor
- * Palm Warbler N/S
Dendroica palmarum
- * Bay-breasted Warbler N/S
Dendroica castanea
- * Blackpoll Warbler N/S
Dendroica striata
- * Cerulean Warbler S
Dendroica cerulea
- * Black-and-white Warbler N/S
Mniotilta varia
- * American Redstart N/S
Setophaga ruticilla
- * Prothonotary Warbler [N]/S
Protonotaria citrea
- Worm-eating Warbler S
Helmitheros vermivorus
- * Ovenbird N/S
Seiurus aurocapillus
- * Northern Waterthrush N/S
Seiurus noveboracensis
- * Louisiana Waterthrush S
Seiurus motacilla
- Kentucky Warbler S
Oporornis formosus
- * Connecticut Warbler N/S
Oporornis agilis
- * Mourning Warbler N/S
Oporornis philadelphia
- MacGillivray's Warbler [S]
Oporornis tolmiei
- * Common Yellowthroat N/S
Geothlypis trichas
- * Hooded Warbler [N]/S
Wilsonia citrina
- * Wilson's Warbler N/S
Wilsonia pusilla
- * Canada Warbler N/S
Wilsonia canadensis
- Painted Redstart [S]
Myioborus pictus
- * Yellow-breasted Chat [N]/S
Icteria virens
- Summer Tanager [N]/S
Piranga rubra
- * Scarlet Tanager N/S
Piranga olivacea
- Western Tanager [N]/[S]
Piranga ludoviciana
- * Northern Cardinal [N]/S
Cardinalis cardinalis
- * Rose-breasted Grosbeak N/S
Pheucticus ludovicianus
- Black-headed Grosbeak [S]
Pheucticus melanocephalus
- Blue Grosbeak [S]
Guiraca caerulea
- Lazuli Bunting [N]/[S]
Passerina amoena
- * Indigo Bunting N/S
Passerina cyanea
- * Dickcissel [N]/S
Spiza americana
- Green-tailed Towhee [S]
Pipilo chlorurus
- * Rufous-sided Towhee [N]/S
Pipilo erythrophthalmus
- Bachman's Sparrow [S]
Aimophila aestivalis
- Cassin's Sparrow [N]/[S]
Aimophila cassinii
- * American Tree Sparrow N/S
Spizella arborea
- * Chipping Sparrow N/S
Spizella passerina
- * Clay-colored Sparrow N/S
Spizella pallida
- * Field Sparrow [N]/S
Spizella pusilla
- * Vesper Sparrow N/S
Pooecetes gramineus
- * Lark Sparrow [N]/[S]
Chondestes grammacus

- Lark Bunting [N]/[S]
Calamospiza melanocorys
- * Savannah Sparrow N/S
Passerculus sandwichensis
- * Grasshopper Sparrow [N]/S
Ammodramus savannarum
- * Henslow's Sparrow S
Ammodramus henslowii
- * Le Conte's Sparrow N/S
Ammodramus leconteii
- * Sharp-tailed Sparrow N/S
Ammodramus caudacutus
- * Fox Sparrow N/S
Passerella iliaca
- * Song Sparrow N/S
Melospiza melodia
- * Lincoln's Sparrow N/S
Melospiza lincolni
- * Swamp Sparrow N/S
Melospiza georgiana
- * White-throated Sparrow N/S
Zonotrichia albicollis
- Golden-crowned Sparrow [S]
Zonotrichia atricapilla
- * White-crowned Sparrow N/S
Zonotrichia leucophrys
- * Harris' Sparrow N/[S]
Zonotrichia querula
- * Dark-eyed Junco N/S
Junco hyemalis
- * Lapland Longspur N/S
Calcarius lapponicus
- * Smith's Longspur N/[S]
Calcarius pictus
- Chestnut-collared Longspur [N]/[S]
Calcarius ornatus
- Snow Bunting N/S
Plectrophenax nivalis
- * Bobolink N/S
Dolichonyx oryzivorus
- * Red-winged Blackbird N/S
Agelaius phoeniceus
- * Eastern Meadowlark N/S
Sturnella magna
- * Western Meadowlark N/S
Sturnella neglecta
- * Yellow-headed Blackbird N/S
Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus
- * Rusty Blackbird N/S
Euphagus carolinus
- * Brewer's Blackbird N/S
Euphagus cyanocephalus
- * Common Grackle N/S
Quiscalus quiscula
- * Brown-headed Cowbird N/S
Molothrus ater
- * Orchard Oriole S
Icterus spurius

- * Northern Oriole N/S
Icterus galbula
- Scott's Oriole [N]
Icterus parisorum

FRINGILLIDAE (13)

- Brambling [N]
Fringilla montifringilla
- Rosy Finch [N]
Leucosticte arctoa
- * Pine Grosbeak N/S
Pinicola enucleator
- * Purple Finch N/S
Carpodacus purpureus
- * House Finch [N]/S
Carpodacus mexicanus
- * Red Crossbill N/S
Loxia curvirostra
- * White-winged Crossbill N/S
Loxia leucoptera
- * Common Redpoll N/S
Carduelis flammea
- Hoary Redpoll N/S
Carduelis hornemanni
- * Pine Siskin N/S
Carduelis pinus
- Lesser Goldfinch [S]
Carduelis psaltria
- * American Goldfinch N/S
Carduelis tristis
- * Evening Grosbeak N/S
Coccothraustes vespertinus

PASSERIDAE (1)

- * House Sparrow N/S
Passer domesticus

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the other members of the OBRC for their assistance in preparing this checklist – A. David Brewer, Robert H. Curry, G. Thomas Hince, Paul D. Pratt and Donald A. Sutherland.



Deadline for material for the next issue of *Ontario Birds* is 31 May.

The Breeding Bird List for Ontario: Additions and Comments

by
Ross D. James

Elsewhere in this issue is a checklist of the birds of Ontario prepared by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC). That list also includes an indication of those that breed (or have bred) in the province. However, some comments are necessary to explain why the OBRC has included several species as breeding birds.

Since the publication of the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Ontario* (James *et al.* 1976) 13 species have been added to the breeding bird list, based on material evidence received, including: Cinnamon Teal (refer to Checklist for scientific names), Canvasback, Rough-legged Hawk, American Avocet, Greater Yellowlegs, California Gull, Great Gray Owl, Chuck-will's-widow, Black-billed Magpie, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Shrike, Harris' Sparrow and House Finch. In a few instances, details of these additions have not been published and I include comments below. For those already published only brief details with a reference are given.

The Pine Grosbeak was

included as a breeding bird by James *et al.* (1976) but further comments are necessary to clarify its inclusion. In addition, the OBRC reviewed the status of various species formerly considered as "hypothetical breeders," that is, species without some material evidence of nesting or breeding in the province. The OBRC felt that for four species (Canvasback, Short-billed Dowitcher, Kirtland's Warbler and Connecticut Warbler) plus the Pine Grosbeak, there was sufficient evidence of breeding that they should be added to the Ontario breeding bird list. A summary of the information leading to the decision to include them is also presented here. With these additions the breeding bird list now totals 283 species.

CINNAMON TEAL – This species has been a rare and occasional visitor to the province for many years, but always during the migration period. On 28 May 1983 a pair of birds was found at the Amherstburg sewage ponds, Essex County, approximately 1500 km from their normal

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breeding range in the prairies. They remained there only until 3 July. On 24 June 1983 A. Wormington flushed the female from a clutch of 8 eggs to provide the first nest for the province. A single egg from this apparently unsuccessful nesting is in the ROM (ROM 12854).

CANVASBACK – In the Lake St. Clair area breeding was reported in 1897, 1948, 1952, 1953 (Baillie 1962) and in 1983 (D. Brewer, pers. comm.). They were also reported nesting at Luther Marsh, Wellington and Dufferin counties, in 1965 (Brewer 1977) and 1982, but not until 1983 was a female with a brood of 8 photographed there, on 10 July, by L. Yerex (ROM PR 1473-1479) for the first material evidence of breeding.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK – A nest with 2 young was photographed by J.P. Prevett at site 416, Cape Henrietta Maria, Kenora District, 26 July 1976 (ROM PR 650-657) (Peck 1976). Also, at site 415, Cape Henrietta Maria, W. Creighton photographed young in a nest, 20 July 1977 (ROM PR 854-856).

AMERICAN AVOCET – Flightless young, photographed by W. Wilson at Sable Island, Lake-of-the-Woods, Rainy River District, 6 July 1980 (ROM PR 1154-1160), were about 250 km east of their normal breeding range (see Lamey 1981).

GREATER YELLOWLEGS – Flightless young (ROM 137159,

137165) and a clutch of eggs (ROM 12654) were collected in 1980 near Aquatuk Lake, Kenora District to provide the first positive breeding evidence in Ontario (see Nash and Dick 1981).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER

– The inclusion of this species rests largely on the account of the capture and banding of a young bird on 10 July 1963, at Winisk, Kenora District, as provided by Tuck (1968). Although this is the only report of young dowitchers in Ontario there is reason to believe this account. Tuck was a well respected ornithologist with many years of field experience to call upon, and a number of other observers have noted agitated behaviour of apparently breeding adults at several places along the Hudson Bay Coast.

CALIFORNIA GULL – A bird sitting on a nest with eggs was photographed by J.E. Mason at the Eastern Headland, Toronto, York R.M. on 31 May 1982 (ROM PR 1348-1349). This bird was about 1500 km east of the species' normal range in the central prairies (see also James 1983).

GREAT GRAY OWL – A nest with young was photographed at Pickle Lake, Kenora District on 6 June 1977 (ROM PR 810-821) and an eggshell was collected (ROM 12340) (James 1977). Additional records are listed in Peck and James (1983).

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW – An incubating male with two eggs was photographed by A. Wormington



R.D. McRAE

*Great Gray Owl, May 1980,
Main Duck Island.*

in Point Pelee National Park, Essex County, on 5 June 1977 (ROM PR 826-828) (see Goodwin 1977, Peck and James 1983). No additional nests have been found although the species still occurs regularly at Point Pelee, Rondeau Provincial Park and St. Williams, Haldimand-Norfolk R.M., indicating that it probably breeds annually.

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE – Two nests were photographed north of Rainy River, Rainy River District by W. Wilson, 6 July 1980 (ROM PR 1169-1170) (see Lamey 1981). Additional nests have been found in subsequent years, as the birds have become resident in that part of the province.

TUFTED TITMOUSE – In the early part of this century the Tufted Titmouse became a rare and local resident in the extreme south of Ontario. Although reports of breeding extend back to 1936

(Baillie 1960) not until 1977 were photographs obtained by the ROM (PR 1006-1011) documenting breeding by this species. These photographs were obtained in the summer of 1971, by D. Workman, at a nest in a pipe in his backyard at Port Colborne, Niagara R.M.

NORTHERN SHRIKE – A single immature (ROM 139897) from a family group was collected 12 July 1981 in the western end of the Sutton Ridges, Kenora District (James 1981). An additional record at Moosonee in 1975 is provided by Manning (1981). The species may be more widespread in the Hudson Bay Lowlands than present records suggest.

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER – Available information suggests that this species may have nested at a number of localities in Ontario. During 1916, Dr. P. Harrington and Dr. F.A.E. Starr were stationed at the Petawawa Military base, Renfrew County. Both were active birders and egg collectors and kept diaries of their observations. They noted Kirtland's Warblers singing over a "fairly large area" and considered them to be "not uncommon" on the sandy Jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) plains there. Although they never found a nest, they "felt sure" that the birds were breeding there (Harrington 1939).

From this account, it seems reasonable to assume that at one time this species, which presumably was once far more common than it is today, was breeding in Ontario (at about the same latitude as its present range

in Michigan and in typical Jack pine habitat that was as extensive here as in Michigan). But the population of these warblers became much reduced during the early part of this century. When Harrington returned to Petawawa during World War II, he saw only a single bird after a considerable search of the area.

As recently as 1977 a male Kirtland's Warbler was found at Petawawa, singing for several weeks as if prepared to nest if a mate were found. Males have also been observed singing over a period of weeks in 1954 near Barrie, Simcoe County and on the Bruce Peninsula. But the most convincing evidence accepted by the OBRC as evidence of breeding in Ontario was noted near Barrie in the summer of 1945. Twenty-eight pages of unpublished notes from the files of D.H. Speirs (copy in ROM) describe in considerable detail the presence of two adult birds with at least one immature still showing natal down in its plumage and apparently still being fed by the adults. These birds were present for at least 6 days (from 8 to 13 August) and begging calls of young birds that were heard prior to these dates suggest that this family group was present for a number of days prior to their being positively identified.

These warblers were observed on a number of occasions, and identified by D.H. Speirs, Dr. J.M. Speirs and Dr. E.L. Brereton. Since warblers do not migrate in family groups, it is highly unlikely that these birds had moved very far from the nest in which the young was raised. Extensive

stands of Jack pines were present in more than one area as close as 10 km away, but pines were also present at the site of observation.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER – On 15 August 1939 a juvenile Connecticut Warbler was collected at Lake Attawapiskat, Kenora District. However, this was a flying young. Although taken near the geographic centre of northern Ontario, suggesting that it was locally raised, at that time of year it could have travelled a considerable distance. In the ROM there are reports on file of adults feeding young out of nests from Algoma (1923), Cochrane (1949), Timiskaming (1959) and Thunder Bay (1978) districts. In 1971 young were flushed from a nest in Sibley Provincial Park, Thunder Bay District. The nest was reported to the Ontario Nest Record Scheme, but no documentation was secured. The above sightings might be viewed with suspicion since the identification of this species may be difficult. However, during late spring when males are singing on territory they are easily identified, and it is known to occur every summer in considerable numbers all across Ontario north to at least Sandy Lake and Fort Albany and south to Quetico and Lake Superior Provincial Parks and Cochrane. It seems improbable that Connecticut Warblers would occur annually in large numbers in Ontario without ever having nested.

HARRIS' SPARROW – During the summer of 1983, birds were

observed about Fort Severn, Kenora District, on several occasions. On 4 July a nest was found and photographed by Tim and Doris Nowicki (PR 1447-1449) to provide the first provincial nest record. On 25 July Bob and Terri Thobaben also observed two adults feeding one or two fledged young at Fort Severn.

PINE GROSBEAK – Pine

Grosbeaks have been observed at numerous locations in summer all across Ontario, from the Hudson Bay coast south to northern Hastings County. Nests were reported from Nipissing and Parry Sound Districts, both in 1940, but neither was documented. A female bird with an unshelled egg in the oviduct (not preserved) was collected in northeastern Ontario at Howley Lake, Kenora District, in 1958. A female of a nonmigratory species preparing to lay an egg in less than 24 hours would certainly seem to have been a locally-nesting bird. As a nonmigratory species, they must be breeding in Ontario or they also would have vanished long ago.

HOUSE FINCH – This species is expanding rapidly in Ontario. The first nesting was documented in 1978 at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara R.M., (James 1978) but they are now nesting regularly at least as far north as Kingston, Toronto and London.

There are a number of other species whose breeding has been reported (or suggested), but the OBRC felt that at present the evidence for including them was

not conclusive enough. These species will not be listed, but their inclusion will be considered if further information is obtained.

Information wanted: For a number of species already on the list of breeding birds additional information about their nesting is highly desirable. These are species for which no nest has been found; or breeding is based on a single nest or a very few breeding records; or the species has become (or is still) very rare in a part or all of the province.

If you find a nest, or evidence of breeding, for any of the species on the following list, or for any species not on the breeding bird list, please forward details and/or documentation to the author. For these records please provide a complete description and/or photograph of the adult birds, as the identification of the species relies mainly on this, rather than on the identification of eggs or young that are often much more difficult, if not impossible, to identify with certainty.

In northern Ontario (north of the 4°C isotherm): Red-throated Loon, Horned Grebe, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Ross' Goose, Greater Scaup, King Eider, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Cooper's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Gray Partridge, Piping Plover, American Avocet, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Pectoral Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Caspian Tern, Black Guillemot, Boreal Owl, Northern Shrike, Orange-crowned Warbler, Connecticut

Warbler, Lark Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak.

In southern Ontario: Horned Grebe, Cinnamon Teal, Canvasback, Peregrine Falcon, Greater Prairie-Chicken, Wild Turkey, Piping Plover, California Gull, Chuck-will's-widow, Bewick's Wren, Kirtland's Warbler, Dickcissel, Lark Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the other members of OBRC whose helpful comments and criticisms were essential in preparing this summary: R. Curry, A.D. Brewer, T. Hince, P.D. Pratt, D.A. Sutherland and A. Wormington, also to R.D. Weir and W.E. Godfrey for their comments.

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A Birding Site Guide to Amherst and Wolfe Islands

by

Paul MacKenzie and Ron D. Weir

Amherst and Wolfe Islands lie in the eastern end of Lake Ontario, near Kingston. Birding is good year-round, especially during the winter for hawks and owls, and during spring and fall for migration of waterfowl and shorebirds. Both islands consist of relatively flat farming country mixed with woodlots and surrounded by rocky shorelines, gravel beaches and cattail marshes. They are accessible by public ferry, but a motor vehicle is essential for birding the side roads as there is no public transport. Property is private and entry is by permission of the landowners, but much birding can be done from the side-roads and shorelines. Although it is possible to visit both islands in a day, there is plenty of scope for a full day's birding on either island.

Amherst Island

This island became renowned during the winter of 1978-79 when a build up of the meadow vole population attracted large numbers of owls, including 30+ Great Grays, as well as Northern Hawk-Owl, Boreal Owl and Snowy Owls. Once again, in 1984, the

vole population is high and, as of early winter, there have been large numbers of Rough-legged Hawks, harriers and at least two Boreal Owls, as well as Long-eared, Short-eared, Great Horned, Northern Saw-whet, Snowy and Northern Hawk-Owl.

From Highway 401, take Highway 133 south about 10 km to Highway 33 at Millhaven. Turn right and the ferry dock is about 0.3 km west along the Lake Ontario side of Highway 33. The ferry leaves the mainland hourly on the half hour, but the first one leaves at 0620 h, then 0730 h, etc. It costs \$1.50 for car and driver plus 25¢ per passenger and carries about 16 cars, so it is best to arrive early. The ferry returns hourly, leaving Amherst I. at Stella on the hour until late evening. It operates all winter. From the upper deck, loons and gulls may be seen when the water is open, and occasionally Snowy Owls sit on the ice in winter. In the last half of May, impressive flocks of Brant may be seen to the east of the ferry route.

For shorebirds and other waterfowl during migration, the most productive area is usually the

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sand bar at the east end of the island. From the ferry, turn left at the first road along the north shore and follow it to the east end of the island. At the northeast corner, stop just before the road turns south and scan the water for ducks in the bay. Drive to the southeast corner and park, watching along the way for Upland Sandpipers and hawks, or in winter for Snowy Owls. From the southeast corner allow at least one hour to walk to the bar and back, keeping within sight of shore. There is a marshy area at the east end of the island where Wilson's Phalaropes nest, and in late May, Brant may be resting along the shore. Oldsquaw are frequent offshore in spring and fall, and puddle ducks, waders and Black-crowned Night-Herons are often flushed from the marsh.

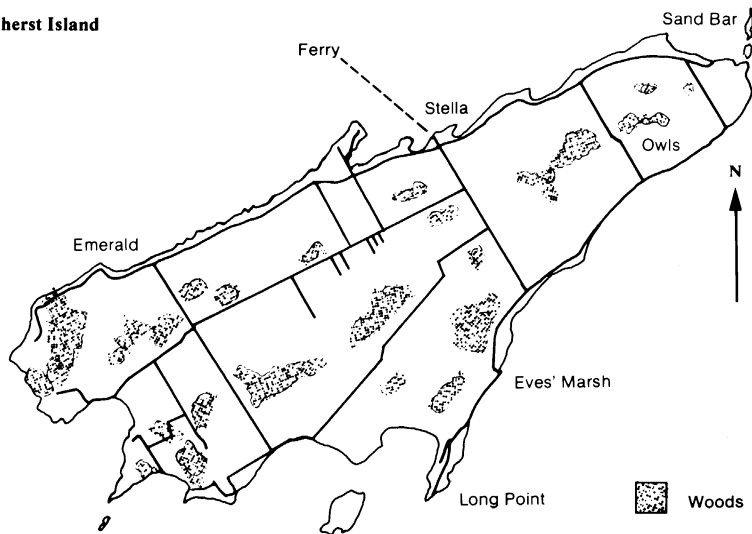
The bar itself may be exposed depending on water levels, and is a usual loafing site for gulls, terns, cormorants and shorebirds in season. In late May, Whimbrel

and Red Knot are possible. A number of uncommon birds have appeared here including: Snowy, Cattle and Great Egrets, Franklin's Gull, Little Gull, Piping Plover, Baird's Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit, Buff-breasted Sandpiper (August), Purple Sandpiper (November), Eurasian Wigeon, Harlequin Duck and Barrow's Goldeneye.

The most likely location for Northern Saw-whet, Long-eared and rarely Boreal Owls is a small woods in the east half of the island (see map).

From the ferry, turn left along the north shore for about 3 km watching for a road on the right. It is not ploughed in winter. This road, illustrated on the map, has a small jog in it about *midway across*. If the road is open, park just north of this jog and enter the woods on the east side of the road. If the road is impassable by car, the 1 km walk from the main road takes 10-15 minutes. (In spring

Amherst Island



and summer listen along this road and the road at the east end for singing Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows, best heard at dawn and dusk).

Proceed east through the middle of the woods to find a track or path which leads by a few single junipers and, further east, by several clumps of cedars. Each evergreen tree requires careful inspection to locate the small owls, if they are present.

Long-eared, Barred or Great Horned Owls may be flushed along the way. The open fields adjacent to the woods may have Short-eared (best seen in late afternoon) or Snowy Owls.

The other woodlots on the island are also worth exploring for owls if the vole population is high as evidenced by multiple tunnels in grass and snow.

The south shore road follows the lake closely from the southeast corner to Long Point. Loons, scoters, ducks and shorebirds may be seen from the road. There is a productive marsh (Eves' marsh) about 2 km west of the north-south road from Stella, on the way to Long Point, and another marsh at the base of Long Point itself. The overgrown area beside the marsh at the base of Long Point may be good for warblers in migration. Sora and Virginia Rails nest in these marshes in season.

The north-south side road through Emerald passes through a variety of habitats. Starting from Emerald, there is a field overgrown with junipers on the west, and further south, a small marshy area on the east. After the "4 corners" the road slopes down into open

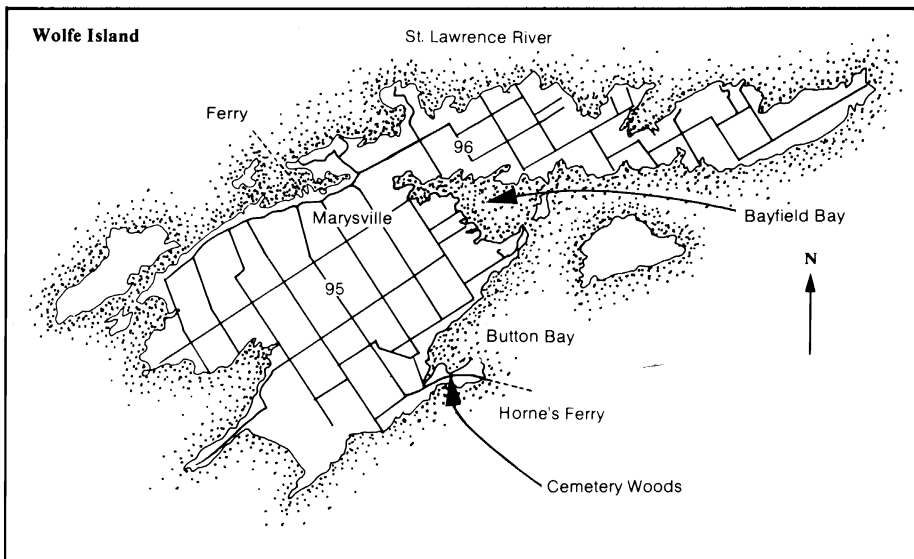
fields which are favourites for Rough-legged Hawks in winter, and sometimes have plovers in season. Further south, there is a wet wooded area which attracts spring and fall migrants, and sometimes Rusty Blackbirds.

Wolfe Island

Wolfe Island is probably the most reliable place in southern Ontario, perhaps anywhere, to see Snowy Owls in winter. Numbers may vary depending on food supply. It is a haven for wintering Rough-legged Hawks, Snow Buntings and some Lapland Longspurs. There are several local coveys of Gray Partridge. In spring and fall, large numbers of waterfowl are seen in migration, with thousands of Greater Scaup in the bays and Canada Geese in the corn fields. Much of the land is posted and most birding is done by driving the side roads. The roads in the west half of the island (west of Bayfield Bay) are the most productive.

From Highway 401, exit Highway 15 south to Highway 2 (5 km) then turn west (right) across the Cataraqui River bridge into Kingston (1 km). The Wolfe Island ferry leaves from the dock in downtown Kingston one block east of the foot of Princess Street, opposite the police headquarters. The ferry is free and has a large capacity for cars but in summer the queue may be long so it is best to arrive early. From the bow or upper deck scan the water for loons, bay ducks, and gulls, and in winter for Snowy Owls on the ice.

Take Highway 95, the paved highway south across the island, stopping periodically to scan the



open fields. About 6 km south of Marysville the road crosses a marshy area which often has teal, pintail and shoveler in spring. At about 9 km this road curves east and provides a view on the left over a marsh and the end of Button Bay. Stop and scan Button Bay for waterfowl. The road then enters a woodlot, called the Cemetery Woods, which harbours Eastern Screech and Great Horned Owls, and migrant passerines in season.

Highway 95 ends (about 12 km from Marysville) at Horne's Ferry, a good place from which to scan for ducks and gulls along the Great Lakes shipping channel.

Returning from Horne's Ferry, go straight ahead onto the south shore sideroad which begins where Highway 95 turns north to Marysville. The fields here are good for ducks and geese. Take the next sideroad north, working around to Reed's Bay for ducks and shorebirds. Continue driving the sideroads along the northwest corner of the island where open

fields are frequented by Snowy Owls, hawks, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings. Return to Marysville along the north shore road looking for waterfowl.

The sideroads leading east off Highway 95 to the 7th, 8th and 9th concessions to Bayfield Bay and Button Bay are worth checking in winter for Snowy Owls and hawks.

There is no single location where Gray Partridge can always be found. Sightings are most frequently made along the roads north of the Reed Bay Road on both sides of Highway 95 and north of Highway 96 from Brown's Bay to Dawson Pt.

APPEAL FOR SUBMISSION OF RECORDS

Visitors birding Amherst I., Wolfe I. and the Kingston area are requested to submit their list of sightings for the files of the Kingston Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 831, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 4X6.

Survey of a Major Swallow Roost in Pembroke

by

R.K. Ross, W.R. Clark and J.M. Bouvier

After the breeding period, many species of swallows typically congregate each night in communal roosts. These gatherings may be very large in size and contain several species. Such roosting aggregations can occur on the wintering grounds; a single roost of over one million swallows was noted on a reed marsh in the Transvaal (Ingram 1974). Roosts are also found along migration routes and Bent (1942) has documented sizeable flocks of most North American swallows, particularly the Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*), Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) and Purple Martin (*Progne subis*). A major roost for migrants is located at the confluence of the Muskrat and Ottawa Rivers in the City of Pembroke. Much concern has been raised over the conservation of this site (Hackman 1983; Clark 1984). Information on swallow roosts is sparse, so we are providing some details of the Pembroke roost with emphasis on results from a survey to determine the number of swallows present during the period

of peak usage in August. This was a joint effort of the Canadian Wildlife Service and local naturalists.

The roosting site is on a point which becomes a small island during high water, extending off the north shore of the Muskrat River mouth (Fig. 1). It has a sandy substrate which supports a stand of Black Willow (*Salix nigra*) that is about 10 to 15 m in height and 0.5 ha in area; the birds roost in the canopy. Many of the trees bear scars from ice scouring and there is relatively little understorey. The roosting swallows can be best observed from the marina breakwater on the opposite bank of the river (Fig. 1).

Local residents remember swallows nesting in former boat houses along the Pembroke waterfront since the early 1960s. The present roost was occupied within the last 15 years (J. Murphy, pers. comm.) and numbers of birds have apparently never been larger than in 1983. Each year the swallows start arriving in early July and the flock

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is thought to peak in size during the second week of August. Numbers decline thereafter, dropping with the passage of each successive weather front until the roost is abandoned in early September.

Our survey was carried out during the evening roosting period of 10 August 1983. The method used was 1) to determine the various flight corridors followed by the birds in either approaching or departing from the roost; 2) to take timed counts of the birds crossing visual transects across these corridors; and 3) to extrapolate from these samples to get an

overall estimate of the number of birds using the roost. Viewing transects were established perpendicular to the flight directions (Fig. 1). During the observation period, counts were made for one minute every five minutes. The number of birds using each route was calculated by averaging results from each successive pair of counts, multiplying by the number of minutes separating the two, and summing over the entire period of the survey. In some cases, the 1-minute counts were made more often than every 5 minutes. The evening flight was counted using five teams of two people (transects

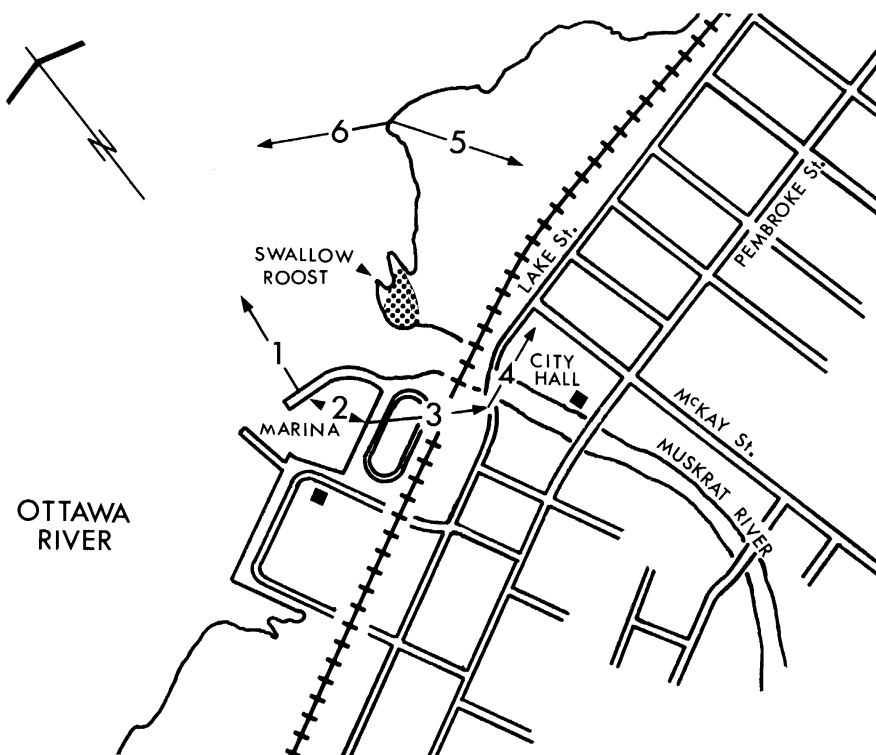


Figure 1. Map of Pembroke Showing Location of Swallow Roost and Viewing Transects



W. R. CLARK

Swallows returning to roost, Pembroke, Ontario.

1, 2, 3, 5, 6) and a single observer (transect 4) covering all known flight routes. The observations were made from 2000 to 2100 h although a few birds had arrived before 2000 h. Viewing conditions were good as weather was partially overcast, mild (20°C), and calm. The following morning, a similar survey was made of the departing birds. This count, however, was not considered accurate as many birds were seen leaving the roost and crossing one transect, only to reverse their directions and move downstream past another transect where they were counted again. It was also hoped to quantify the proportion of the various swallow species using the roost. This proved impossible as different species flew to the roost at different altitudes; a representative sample could not be obtained under these conditions.

During the evening flight, swallows approached the roost primarily along the Ottawa River, with the highest numbers coming from the east (69%); few birds came overland. Approximately 115,000 swallows were observed entering the roost. This total was more than double our casual estimate of the flock and points to the difficulties of estimating numbers of small birds that pass by steadily. There are apparently no published records of accurately censused swallow roosts of this size in Canada, although there are several undocumented reports. C. Goodwin (pers. comm.) noted that an estimated 250,000 Tree Swallows (mostly) were recorded in Matchedash Bay in Georgian Bay and that smaller flocks of approximately 20,000 individuals were noted on Lake Chemung near Peterborough and in Holland

Marsh. G. Bennett (pers. comm.) was also aware of a record of more than 100,000 swallows in the Chignecto National Wildlife area near Amherst, Nova Scotia.

Behaviour of the birds around the roost differed between the evening and early morning periods. In the evening, the birds arrived at the roost over a period in excess of one hour, with the highest rate of arrival occurring 10 to 20 minutes after sunset (2019 h). The incoming birds formed a large dense swarm over the roost and restricted their movements to the area around the roost delineated by the viewing transects. The birds flew about excitedly, often chasing each other and constantly vocalizing; feeding activity was relatively rarely observed. Just after sunset as the rate of incoming birds reached its peak, the flock gradually started to settle in the roosting trees. For a while, birds were constantly landing in and taking off from the roost. Only with approaching darkness did the flock descend rapidly into the trees. In the morning, the birds initially left the roost in small groups to forage over the water just as the day began to brighten. As the sun rose (0557 h) the swallows moved off the roost in spectacular large waves. The exodus from the roost was mostly completed over a half-hour period (0545 to 0615 h).

Although the proportion of the various species could not be determined, it was evident that Tree Swallows vastly predominated; Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*), Purple Martins and the occasional Bank Swallow were also noted. This contrasts to a

previous visit (20 July 1983) when Barn Swallows and Bank Swallows were the most common species. Clearly, usage of the roost shifts with time according to the migrational phenologies of the various species. Moreover, all individuals of a given species are likely not present at one time and the total number using this site each summer is probably much larger than the peak numbers recorded on any given day. The size and diversity of species of the Pembroke flock make it unique among recorded swallow roosts and provides one of the major spectacles of swallow migration in Canada.

We are very grateful for the assistance of the following people in the survey: H. Boyd, J. & M. Bryant, C. Clark, S. Gray, J. Kearney, A. Keith, M. Kirk, I. Price and G. Tessier. S. Tinker prepared the map.

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Brambling: New to Ontario

by
David H. Elder

In the afternoon of 23 October 1983, I flushed a small white-rumped bird that had been feeding on millet placed in a flower bed in the backyard of my residence in Atikokan, Rainy River District. The bird flew into a White birch (*Betula papyrifera*) tree in a neighbouring yard and remained there until I was able to get my binoculars to study it further. Unfortunately it was directly in line with the afternoon sun and, except for some odd-appearing head markings, I could see little else in the way of distinguishing features. The bird then flew back into my yard and landed, giving me a slightly better view. The bird flew again, this time to a tree in front of my house and I noted that it flew very swiftly and directly. I scattered some more millet in the flower bed and went inside to tell my wife Mary that I thought we had a 'good' bird and hoped it would return. I went to get a camera and sat by a window that overlooked the flower bed about 4 m away. The bird immediately returned to feed and I quickly took about 20 colour photographs which have since been placed on

file with the Ontario Bird Records Committee.

In preparation for a trip to Germany in 1982, I had studied a number of European field guides in depth and, as I watched the bird, I thought it might be a Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*). I then gathered up several guides and after comparing the bird to the various illustrations, Mary and I came to the conclusion that the bird was indeed a Brambling, an adult male in winter plumage.

During the four-day period that the bird was present (23-26 October) it seldom was away from the flower bed for long; it arrived each morning just at daybreak at 0715 h and left in the evening about 1730 h. Others who observed the Brambling, including Tom Nash, Al McTavish, Norm Chesterfield, David Mark and Tom Hince, concurred with my identification. On the morning of 27 October the Brambling failed to appear and many of the other birds with which it had been feeding had likewise departed.

The Brambling fed in the company of Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*), Purple Finches

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(*Carpodacus purpureus*), White-throated Sparrows (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), Fox Sparrows (*Passerella iliaca*) and House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). The most obvious features of the bird, which was slightly larger than a House Sparrow, were the bright orange breast and shoulders, and the black-and-light wing pattern. The sides of the head were an unmarked 'mouse' grey colour, becoming brownish on the crown, nape and back. When alarmed the bird displayed a distinct crest. The bill, finch-like but quite pointed, was light horn-coloured with a black tip. In flight the brilliant white rump and lower back were most obvious. The best illustration of the species was found on Plate 15 of the *Pocket Guide to British Birds* (Fitter and Richardson 1966).

The Brambling is a widespread Eurasian species that breeds from northern Europe to eastern Russia. It is found most abundantly near the limits of tree growth, either at high latitudes or high altitudes. In winter, the Brambling is found throughout the remainder of Europe and most of Asia. At this season it is highly nomadic and flocks numbering in the thousands (occasionally millions) congregate in areas where beechmast (its preferred winter food) is abundant (Newton 1973).

In North America the Brambling occurs regularly only in the western Aleutian Islands of Alaska, where it is found annually during spring and fall, usually in small numbers. Elsewhere in the state individuals have been recorded widely (Kessel & Gibson 1978; Roberson 1980).

Truly extralimital Bramblings have occurred in coastal British Columbia (twice), Oregon, Nevada, Montana, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, coastal New York and Massachusetts (A.O.U. 1983) and Nova Scotia (Nikula 1983). All records pertain to late fall/winter occurrences with the exception of the Nova Scotia bird, which occurred in spring. The Atikokan Brambling, although the first to be recorded in Ontario, fits the species' pattern of occurrence in North America as a whole.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation to Alan Wormington for his assistance in preparing this paper.

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Notes

Atlassing and the Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

In 1984 the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas entered its fourth of five years. With three years of data collection complete, a large data base has been established—already the most comprehensive source of information on breeding bird distribution in Ontario. Much of southern Ontario south of the Canadian Shield has been well covered, though there remain significant gaps in coverage in extreme southwestern Ontario, in the Cornwall to Brockville area and in the Algonquin Park-North Bay region. These gaps in coverage will be the major focus of attention in the remaining two years of the project.

Because atlassing ensures systematic coverage of the province, it has resulted in the discovery of new breeding locations for some uncommon species. Also, by showing the number of squares in which species were observed during their breeding seasons, the atlas permits an easy assessment of the relative abundance of common and rare species alike. This information will be useful for determining priorities for conservation efforts.

The distribution of the

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) in southern Ontario, according to the data collected during the first three years of the project, is shown in Figure 1. To date Loggerhead Shrikes have been reported in the breeding season in a total of 70 ten km squares. North of Sector 1, single birds were noted near Sault Ste. Marie and Manitouwadge. In total, breeding has been confirmed in 26 squares, and probable and possible levels of breeding evidence have been recorded in 14 and 30 squares, respectively. These numbers are higher than might have been predicted before the atlas project began, reflecting the value of systematic coverage.

The Loggerhead's preference for open country, its frequent use of roadsides along back roads, and its habit of perching conspicuously on wires and on the tops of trees and shrubs when hunting, make it relatively easy to find for such an uncommon breeding species. Therefore, although atlas fieldwork is far from complete, some trends in Loggerhead numbers and distribution are already apparent. The Loggerhead is clearly a rare breeding bird in southwestern

Ontario and may no longer breed south of London. The species' stronghold appears to be near to the southern edge of the Canadian Shield; presumably where its preferred habitat of old fields, hedgerows and hawthorns is most prevalent.

Two more years of atlassing will provide further insight into the distribution and abundance of the

Loggerhead Shrike in Ontario. Readers knowing of other recent Loggerhead breeding locations, or finding new locations during 1984 or '85, are requested to report them to the author at the Atlas Office, Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 355 Lesmill Rd., Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2W8, phone 416-449-2554.

SECTOR 1

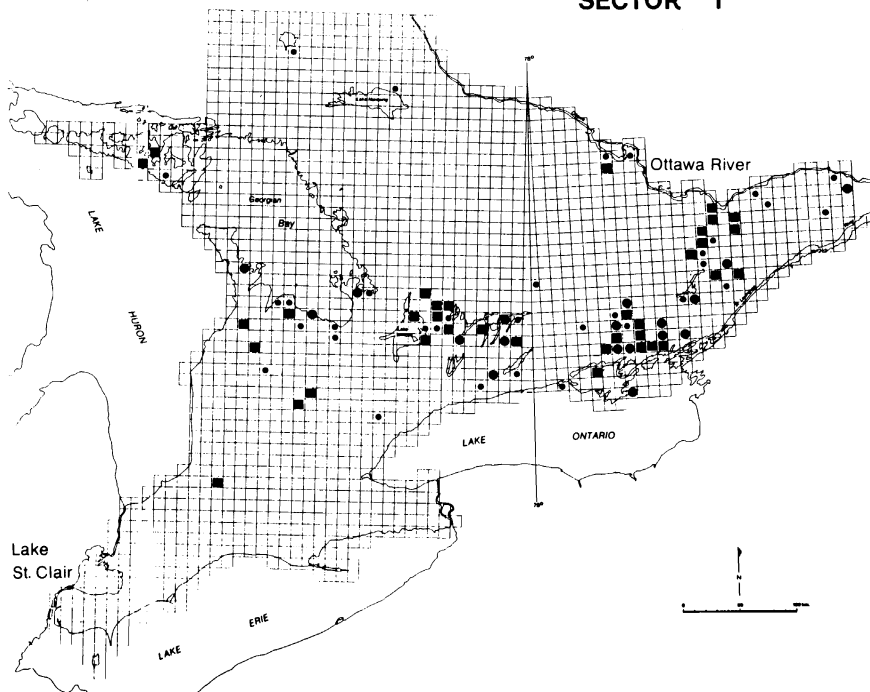


Figure 1. Southern breeding locations for the Loggerhead Shrike up to the end of 1983, according to the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. Within 10 km squares: Square = confirmed breeding, large circle = probable breeding, small circle = possible breeding.

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“English” Names and the New A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds: A Comment

The sixth, and latest, edition of the A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds* has just appeared and is, without doubt, a magnificent, admirable piece of work. However, on the issue of changes in the “English” (more accurately, vernacular names of some North American species, I have some serious misgivings. Some changes are fine, or, more appropriately, inoffensive. On the other hand, others are unnecessary, some new names are inappropriate, and, most irksome of all, several changes are based on a desire for global uniformity in bird names among English-speaking nations, a laudable premise which is quite simply not going to happen.

I would like to take one example, Common Moorhen (new name) from Common Gallinule (old name), to illustrate the above three points. The change is unnecessary, and if anything is a regressive step. It removes an immediate piece of information, the word “gallinule” which indicates a close relationship with another North American rail, the Purple Gallinule, and replaces it with a meaningless and totally inappropriate noun, “moorhen”, which brings me to my second point. Historically, the name “moorhen” is derived from “hen”, because the bird was thought to be taxonomically related to galli-

forms, actually farmyard chickens, and “mere” which is a reedy body of water – hence, merehen. This was corrupted over the centuries to moorhen, totally inappropriate as the bird does not live on moors anywhere in its range. However, the British, as phlegmatic as ever, accept the name as just one of those things that is not going to change – and anyway the “English” name is trivial, as long as the systematic relationships of the bird are known and shown in its scientific name. What has the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the A.O.U. done? Taken a perfectly good and unambiguous name, gallinule, and put us back into the bind that the British find themselves!

Why? This brings me to the third point. The change from gallinule to moorhen was made on the premise of global uniformity of “English” name, and, as the British have historical precedence, the North American population of this bird takes the British name. This is theoretically laudable, if naive, because in reality global uniformity will simply not happen. The British are quite content with the vernacular names of birds occurring in the British Isles, even though some are inappropriate (Moorhen, for example – note, not Common Moorhen, the word “Common” being an American affectation), some species have

group names (Wren, Swift, Redshank, to name a few), and some have actual subspecific names, such as Red Grouse and Hooded Crow. The whole point is that the vernacular names are indeed trivial – in Britain, one talks freely of Hooded Crows and Carrion Crows without assuming that they are different species. Are the British likely to change some vernacular names for the sake of global conformity? Not likely! This brings us to a dilemma that the Committee finds itself in; having decided to go for worldwide

uniformity (but in actual fact it is acting alone) it should change all names of birds that occur in Britain and have a different name (assuming historical precedence). Hence, Willow Ptarmigan should be Red Grouse, Lapland Longspur should be Lapland Bunting, and Winter Wren should be just Wren! The premise could be carried to absurd extremes! As it now stands, the North American name is far more preferable to the British in many cases – and none more so than one which has just been changed, Common Gallinule!

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Bird Names: A Further Comment

I can well remember in my early birding days correcting my father's use of archaic terms like Olive-backed Thrush and Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker. He'd listen, but never heed my remonstrations, and actually, I didn't mind too much. I don't think he used the old names as a matter of principle, but merely because he was used to them and because they meant more to him than their progressive counterparts.

His names arose out of the 1931 edition of the A.O.U. checklist. The ones I and my contemporaries have become used to arose out of the 1957 edition, and the birders of the eighties are finding

themselves getting used to the nomenclature of the 1983 edition.

The A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds* is the official list for species names – scientific and vernacular – and the various ranks (families, genera, etc.) to which they belong. It also establishes the official order, a scheme presumably reflecting evolutionary events.

In looking through the new list, alterations of several types are apparent. Latin name changes, vernacular name changes, sequence changes, and family rearrangements are frequent.

The 1957 edition began with Common Loon and ended with Snow Bunting. Others may

remember the 1931 scheme, and real old-timers may remember even earlier ones, such as the list that ended with the Red-breasted Bluebird. Europeans may feel more comfortable with a list reflecting the Old World belief that crows and their relatives are the most advanced and so should terminate the list. The 1983 list obviously will not be the final one.

The list no longer begins with the Common Loon; it now begins with the Red-throated Loon, a not too major alteration. At the other end, however, the change is more pronounced. Snow Bunting can no longer be expected on the last page of bird books. Now, perhaps a contradiction of the old adage "last but not least," House Sparrow terminates the list.

One of the most confusing changes for birders is the rearrangement of certain bird families, especially among the songbirds. The old list ended (for native birds) with the following four families: warblers, blackbirds, tanagers, and finches. Now, member species from all four have been reorganized into a remarkable mosaic in two families. The first incorporates all warblers, blackbirds, and tanagers, plus some of the finches. The latter includes the rest of the finches. For laymen birders, this seems hard to believe. It indicates, for instance, that the Rose-breasted Grosbeak is more closely related to the Pine Warbler, say, than it is to the Evening Grosbeak. Morphology certainly suggests otherwise! But, external morphology has less to do than it used to with modern philosophies of classification.

It remains to be seen whether field guides will follow these new arrangements. For purposes of identification, it would make sense to group birds according to apparent similarity rather than evolutionary similarity. Some contemporary guides follow such a recommendation for the cranes and herons, for instance, so presumably future guides will do the same for other natural groupings.

In a surprising number of cases, the arrangement of species within families has been altered, often reversed. No longer is Purple Martin the "last" swallow; it's now the "first." Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine, Gyrfalcon is the new order for Ontario falcons, mirroring the old order. The black-headed gulls now precede their larger relatives, and it seems odd to have kingbirds at the end of the flycatchers. Black-and-white Warbler and American Redstart, once the advance and rear guards of the warblers, are now adjacent in the middle!

Though these changes may be hard to get used to, it must be assumed that they reflect the current state of the art in evolutionary ornithology. As such, birders probably cannot be critical. However, the rulings on common names, as indicated in the new list, are really an intervention characterized by an annoying mixture of principles.

In cases where species have been merged, such as Whistling Swan and its European counterpart, obviously a new common name is required (in this case, Tundra Swan). In other cases, the

new name chosen is conceded to be superior to the old one. For example, Sedge Wren seems to be a suitable replacement for the unwieldy, unappealing, and inappropriate Short-billed Marsh Wren.

Academic biologists usually stress that the only legitimate names for species are their Latin names; common names often don't indicate any evolutionary philosophy or relationship and so aren't suited for scientific use.

Feeling that both vernacular and scientific names "are replete with absurdities, inaccuracies and false taxonomic implications," Ludlow Griscom in the September 1947 issue of the *Auk* formally proposed that the names in the 1931 edition be conserved. He also felt that birders – like amateur botanists and entomologists, for example – should use scientific names and could use scientific names with no more difficulty than that encountered with common names.

Obviously, as our knowledge of relationships among birds changes, so too must the scientific names and their arrangements change. However, it is questionable whether or not the A.O.U. should be dogmatic about common names.

In most cases, the 1983 changes are annoying and unnecessary. Presumably, our yellow-capped woodpeckers are now called Three-toed and Black-backed so that the former agrees with the European name. (There is only one species in Europe). If we want agreement in this case, it would make more sense for the Europeans to change their Three-toed to Northern Three-toed, since

there are, after all, two three-toed species.

By the same reasoning, Common Gallinule is now Common Moorhen, even though the name Purple Gallinule is unchanged. Incidentally, only the former is in the genus *Gallinula*.

If the policy were consistent, these changes could perhaps be logically argued on the basis of standardizing European and North American names. Many common to both continents, however, still hold different names. Why didn't Oldsquaw become Long-tailed Duck, and why are the longspurs still longspurs and not buntings? It would be a shame if we eventually surrender these and other North American names like Bohemian Waxwing, kinglet, loon, and jaeger for their European equivalents.

So, although it is admitted that the A.O.U. is the proper body to establish scientific names and evolutionary relationships, the body responsible for English names should be some other. Perhaps a group representing the "collective birding conscience" and working in conjunction with the Latin changes formalized by the A.O.U. should be responsible and should concern itself with the conservation of long-established English names. Since lay people are the ones who most often use common names, a culturally-determined set of popular names is superior to a scientifically-determined imposed set.

In the October 1909 issue of *Auk*, Spencer Trotter considered the history of vernacular names: "A respectable antiquity attaches itself to the vernacular. Long

before the scientific mind had invaded the field of natural history, the folk had given voice to its ideas . . .”

As a matter of fact, many natural or colloquial names exhibit much more imagination than the less natural A.O.U. names. I'd much rather call a Great Black-backed Gull a Coffin-bearer or a Gray Jay a Whiskeyjack. Throat-cut for Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bogsucker for American Woodcock, Burgomaster for Glaucous

Gull, Gump for Black-bellied Plover, and Stub-winged Bullet Hawk for Sharp-shinned Hawk are all superior to their legitimate more artificial names. Perhaps Demoiselle-of-the-marshes for Louisiana Heron (1957) or Tricoloured Heron (1983) and Saffron-headed Maizo-bird for Yellow-headed Blackbird are a little ridiculous, but we don't want to see a future day that requires us to use dry names or worse still, A.O.U. numbers.

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Observations at a Major Crow Roost in St. Catharines, Ontario

A notable feature in late afternoon in winter along the Niagara Escarpment just south of St. Catharines is the regular procession of loose flocks of American Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) flying into the city, mainly from the southwest. The growing interest in American Crow roosts in southern Ontario in winter (Lamoureux and Lamoureux 1980, Weseloh 1983) prompted us to look more closely at some aspects of the American Crows in this area, especially since the number of crows reported (1366 birds) on the 1982 St. Catharines Christmas Bird Count was the second highest in Ontario. We decided to collect information on the size and location of the roost and, where possible, the pre-roost gathering sites, and on the direction of flight lines.

Counts were made at about four day intervals from 12 October to 12 November 1983 and on five days in January and February 1984. The crows arrived at the pre-roost sites and the roost itself along relatively narrow flight pathways, mainly from the southwest, with a few flocks arriving from the west. This allowed an observer standing at a suitable spot on top of the escarpment to count or estimate the number of crows flying toward the roost or pre-roost site. Counts in January were also made at pre-roost sites, which were found by following flocks of crows to where they were gathering.

Counts of crows were much higher in mid-winter than in the late fall. During October and November, the numbers flying into the roost were between 2000 and

3000 (average 2689), ranging from a high of 4859 on 20 October to a low of 1581 on 5 November. The high counts during the third week of October may have been due to the resident population being augmented by migrant birds. Counts in winter were much higher, averaging between 6000 and 7000 birds (for example, 6800 on 25 January, 6500 on 26 January, and 6500 on 2 February). This concentration of crows is therefore one of the largest reported in Canada, ranking second behind the huge roost in Essex County (Weseloh 1983).

The roost itself was located in October in a willow, aspen and maple woodlot along the north facing slope of the escarpment near the corner of Glendale Avenue and Mountain Street within the St. Catharines city boundary. This site was used consistently during the winter, although the same part of the woodlot was not necessarily used every night. In fact, the roost shifted about 0.5 km to the east between early October and early November, and had shifted 0.75 km to the west by late January. The location of pre-roost sites often varied; for example, 5200 crows collected in a field 1 km south of the roost on 25 January, whereas the next day 6500 perched atop mature trees on the wooded escarpment close to Brock University.

We obtained temperature readings from the Niagara District Airport, and took light intensity readings with a Gossen Luna-6 Light Meter, to see if the crows'

arrival at the roost was influenced by temperature or light intensity. No obvious trends emerged. In fact, arrival patterns were predictable in the fall, whatever the immediate weather conditions were; as a rule, groups of up to 30 birds began arriving at the roost about 30-40 minutes before sunset, flying in from the west and southwest. The majority of birds arrived at the roost, again from the southwest, during a 20 minute period around sunset, ten minutes before, ten minutes after, and then arrivals would abruptly stop.

In January, the situation was somewhat different. The roost at Glendale and Mountain was not occupied until well after sunset. For example, on 26 January, the birds stayed at the pre-roost gathering near Brock University, calling noisily and moving back and forth along the tree tops, from 1645 to 1755h, 44 minutes after official sunset, and then left in flocks up to 1000 eastwards toward the roost.

The strong tendency of birds to arrive from the southwest is probably because they are foraging during the day in the numerous corn fields in the regional municipalities of Pelham, Welland and Thorold. Very little suitable land for foraging occurs north and east of the roost, which means in effect that fairly accurate numbers can be determined by counting along two flightlines (southwest and west). As a final comment, the present roost site is in a location potentially vulnerable to development; an area of the escarpment adjacent to the roost is scheduled for a housing/industrial devel-

opment, which could cause considerable future disturbance to the crow roost.

Acknowledgements

We thank Dan Kozlovic and Nini Tun for assistance in counting the crows.

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Richard W. Knapton and Susie Maturi

Book Reviews

The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding, Vol. 1: Loons to Sandpipers, Vol. 2: Gulls to Dippers, Vol. 3: Old World Warblers to Sparrows. 1983. *John Farrand* (editor), Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1244 pp., \$18.50 each, paperbound.

National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America. 1983. *Shirley L. Scott* (editor). Kingsport Press: Tennessee, 464 pp., \$20.00 paperbound. (In Ontario available only from "Friends of Point Pelee", c/o Point Pelee National Park, R.R. #1, Leamington, Ontario N8H 3V4.)

If one were to ask a typical birder for advice concerning the purchase of a North American field guide, chances are that the reply would be either "*Peterson's*" or "*The Golden Guide*". Most, in fact, would probably recommend obtaining both. The past year, however, has seen the emergence of no less than three "new" field guides, all of which purport to provide the most thorough and up-to-date treatment of North

American birds. The choice is no longer that straightforward; suddenly birders are faced with a new and perplexing dilemma. Do these new guides truly live up to their claims? Which one is the best suited to my level of expertise? Do they represent an improvement over what is currently available? Given the high price of books, which one provides the best value for the money?

The three-volume *Audubon*

Society Master Guide to Birding, (hereafter *ASMG*) is largely a photographic guide. Unlike its two predecessors, *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds (Eastern Region)* and (*Western Region*), a concerted attempt has been made to include photographs of all resident North American species as well as many vagrants. Not only is the coverage of species vastly expanded, but birds are shown in a variety of different plumages. Where diagnostic, good quality photographs are unavailable, paintings have been substituted.

Species accounts are placed on the opposite page to the photograph. The authors of these accounts have been selected on the basis of particular expertise with the species in question, or the geographic region in which it typically occurs. This approach is based on the very valid assumption that no one individual is qualified to deal with the entire avifauna of continental North America.

Less emphasis is given to range maps than in the other guides reviewed here. Rather than employing several colours, differences between breeding and winter distributions are indicated by means of crosshatching. This system makes interpretation of the maps virtually impossible without close scrutiny.

Nomenclature and sequence of species are in strict accordance with the most recent classification adopted by the A.O.U. in 1983. The overall treatment is quite comprehensive. Pictures and accounts are provided for 835 species and a further 116

accidental and casual species are discussed in an appendix.

My greatest criticisms of the *ASMG* do not concern its content as much as its approach. The one major failing of any photographic guide which strives for comprehensiveness is that editors are forced to rely on what is available rather than what is ideally required. This constraint is perhaps best exemplified in the guide's treatment of waterbirds. For many species, particularly waterfowl and shorebirds, dorsal and ventral views of birds in flight are altogether lacking. An obvious attempt at standardizing format has resulted in too many frame filling close-ups which, while photographically pleasing, often ignore more salient field marks such as flight patterns and posture. After randomly thumbing through the guide one also gets the distinct impression that all North American birds, whether in flight or at rest, are incapable of facing right.

The title suggests that these guides are directed at the expert. Collectively they are intended "to satisfy the demands of advanced birders". Laying claim to the title "master guide" strikes me as a bit too pretentious and may lead some misguided birders to believe that merely having these books in one's possession will imply the attainment of a certain level of expertise. Their value as field guides is negated by overall size and weight; three volumes are simply too unwieldy to carry around. Personally, I feel that they are most useful as photographic reference books, to be consulted in

conjunction with other guides. While the expert birders may be dissuaded from purchasing the *ASMG* because of its inevitable deficiencies, the novice may be put off by its somewhat arrogant title. Unfortunately, anyone else is likely to balk at the price; at \$18.50 per volume, they can hardly be considered a bargain.

Inspecting the *National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America* (hereafter *NGS*) for the first time was, for me, a revelation. This is a book that truly deserves consideration as the most advanced and sophisticated North American field guide produced to date. The acknowledgements read like a "who's who" of the northern hemisphere's top field birders; the collective knowledge of these individuals has obviously been drawn upon considerably by the project's chief consultants, Jon L. Dunn and Eirik A.T. Blom.

The *NGS* guide is comprised of 220 plates illustrating over 800 species. Thirteen well known bird artists were commissioned to produce what is undoubtedly the most comprehensive treatment of recognizable species, subspecies, plumages, hybrids, colour phases and intergrade populations contained in a single volume. The inclusion of many established exotics, pelagic wanderers and tropical and Eurasian vagrants never before pictured in a North American guide, reflects our recent fascination with such frontier areas as the Aleutian Islands.

Birds are arranged phylogenetically in conformance with the taxonomic sequence of the 1983

A.O.U. checklist. The only major departures from this sequence involve placing the Falconiformes after waterbirds and the inclusion of cranes with herons, ibises and storks. These changes were made to group families which share like habitats or display obvious morphological similarities, regardless of evolutionary relationship.

The value of any field guide is ultimately determined by the quality of its artwork. By employing a team of artists, more extensive coverage was achieved. However, inherent in this approach is the tendency for inconsistencies of style and accuracy to arise. The artistic renderings given to eastern rails (p. 99), accipiters (p. 191), Old World cuckoos (p. 235), swallows (p. 297-299) and chickadees (p. 311-313) are, to my mind, lacking in verisimilitude. The accipiters pictured in flight are particularly misshapen, with disproportionately small heads attached to bulbous bodies. Other plates suffer from an overly stylized approach, specifically phalaropes (p. 121), owls (p. 239-247) and large crested woodpeckers (p. 275). An injudicious use of space has occasionally resulted in situations where birds appear lost in a sea of white.

In general, however, the illustrations are highly informative and refreshingly lifelike. Typically, no more than four species are pictured on each plate. An entire page is devoted to pairs of species for which identification has traditionally been problematic. These include Short and Long-billed Dowitchers, Ring-billed and

Mew Gulls, Herring and California Gulls and Great and South Polar Skuas.

The range maps have been compiled on the basis of contemporary information and through the use of three colours, are considerably easier to interpret than those in the *ASMG*. The inclusion of provincial and state boundaries is a unique feature which substantially increases the maps' applicability at a regional level. One notable error of omission is that the breeding distribution given for Little Gull fails to identify any Ontario localities. Given that the first documented North American nesting of this species occurred in Oshawa's Second Marsh, it seems peculiar that such an oversight was ever made.

Species accounts are primarily concerned with descriptions of the birds. Upgrading our knowledge of field identification is obviously the first priority of this guide; less emphasis is given to ecological and behavioural aspects of the birds' life histories.

Despite the many advantages of this guide, there are, I believe, two flaws which bear some mention. An eastern birder will soon recognize that a distinct California bias pervades large sections. This is not surprising in light of Jon Dunn's vast experience with the bird life of the west coast. However, there are several examples where the subspecies typically found in the eastern

portion of the continent are neither illustrated nor mentioned. Of the six subspecies of Horned Lark pictured, only two, nominate *alpestris* and *enthymia*, are referable to Ontario races. By contrast, *hoyti*, the Arctic breeder which winters in small numbers in the southern part of the province, and *praticola*, the common breeding subspecies, are ignored. To a lesser extent this western bias is also reflected in the accounts for Gray Jay, Song Sparrow and Savannah Sparrow.

A less serious flaw also involves the guide's constant preoccupation with subspecific variation. For the novice birder, such attempts at comprehensiveness, while well intentioned, may give rise to confusion. Exposing a neophyte to too much information could conceivably compound what are already complex problems in identification.

On balance, however, this volume is worthy of the endorsement of all serious birders, whether beginner or expert. I feel quite certain that it will soon be regarded as the "bible" among field guides and the one against which all others will inevitably be judged. Like "*Peterson's*" and "*The Golden Guide*", the *NGS* guide is destined to spawn a new and enlightened generation of field ornithologists.

(Ed. Note. The recently released 2nd Edition of the *Golden Guide* will be reviewed in the next issue of *Ontario Birds*).