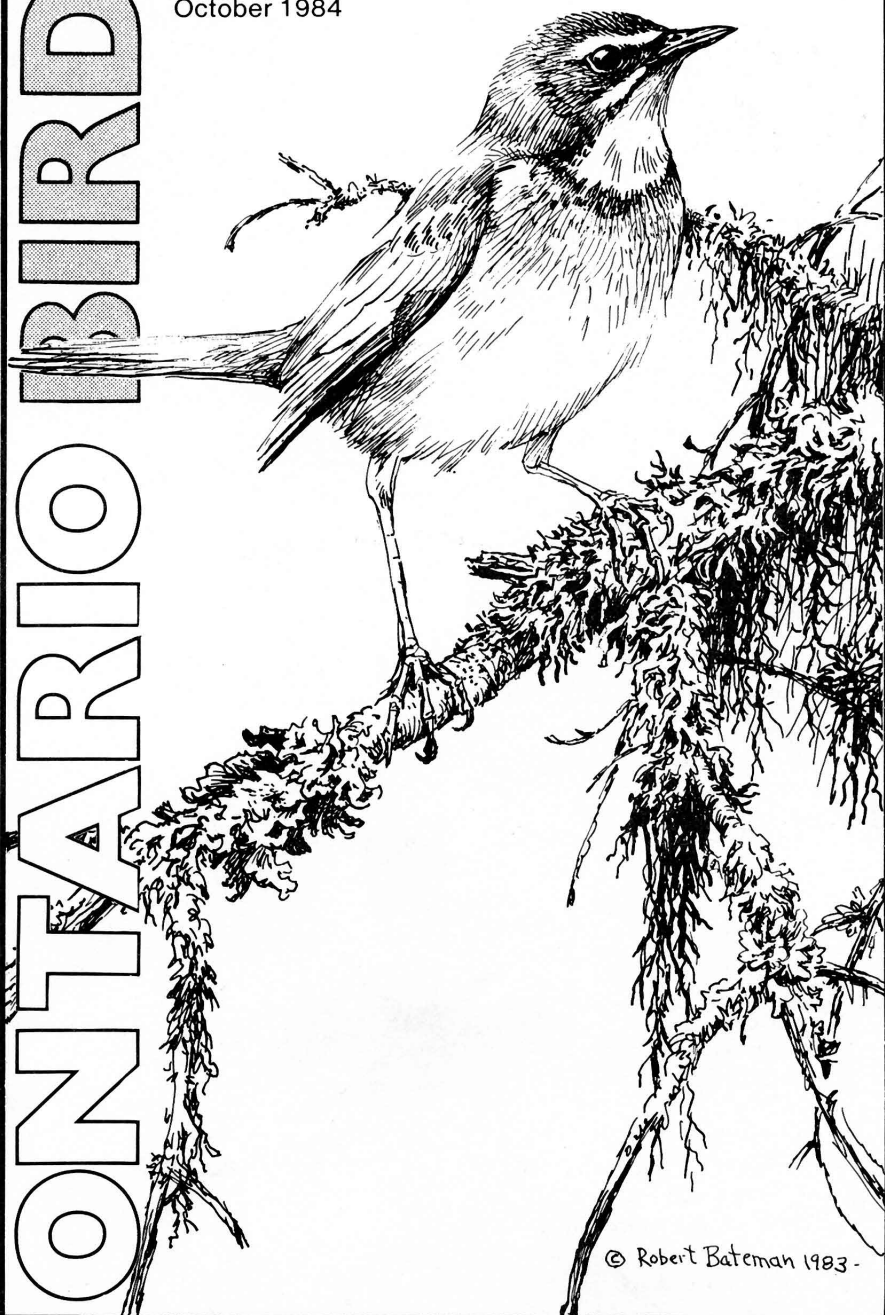


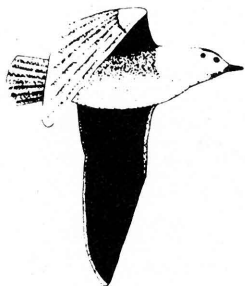
ONTARIO BIRDS

The Journal of the
Ontario Field Ornithologists

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Ontario Birds

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Reports of rare birds (those for which the OBRC requires documentation – see Ontario Birds Vol. 2, No. 1) should be sent to: Alan Wormington, Secretary, Ontario Bird Records Committee, R.R. #1, Leamington, Ontario N8H 3V4.

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Material should be double-spaced and type-written if possible.

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*.

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by Robert Bateman

Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 1983

by
Ross D. James

This report covers the activities of the OBRC during 1983 when 219 records were reviewed. A number of other reports were received, but were not considered. The committee would like to thank all those who submitted reports, whether reviewed or not, thus helping to document the status of our rarer species. We accepted 73% of the reports reviewed. The acceptance rate might well have been higher, but for the fact that many were from years prior to 1983.

The committee has decided that it will add a species to the provincial list on the basis of a single report (formerly two needed), but that we would have to be 110% convinced by all aspects of the report in order to do so. Other changes include the removal of Arctic Tern (south) and Ross' Goose (north) from the review list, and the addition of Piping Plover to the southern Ontario review list.

Reports of a number of species including Cinnamon Teal, Tufted Duck, White-winged Dove and Lazuli Bunting were accepted. Although there is a possibility that some of these might be escaped captives, we felt that at present they could be considered wild

birds in the given circumstances. If in future, however, evidence suggests a greater probability of escapees, then these reports will be reconsidered.

Evidence currently suggests that there is still a thriving trade in imported finches, and it is for this reason that the committee reviewed and decided to reject all previous records of Painted Buntings.

We have also accepted a report of a Rufous Hummingbird that does not clearly eliminate Allen's Hummingbird, but Allen's is not presently known to occur in northeastern North America. Should it ever be shown that they do wander regularly to eastern North America, this report will be reevaluated.

The committee for 1983 consisted of R. Curry (chairman), R. James (secretary), D. Brewer, T. Hince, P. Pratt, D. Sutherland and A. Wormington. In 1984, A. Wormington has assumed the role of secretary and all reports should be sent to him (R.R. #1, Leamington N8H 3V4).

In the following accounts the file number appears after the name of the person(s) submitting the report.

Ross D. James, Department of Ornithology, Royal Ontario Museum,
100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C6

The photorecord number is abbreviated to PR. The person submitting the photograph is the same as the reporter unless other-

wise indicated. Specimens are indicated with catalogue number (if available) and institution of deposition.

Accepted Records

ARCTIC LOON, *Gavia arctica*

- 1983** – 13 May, Point Pelee, Essex Co.; O. Lund, M. Benson (101)
– winter ad., 26 Dec., Point Pelee.; T. Hince (213)

EARED GREBE, *Podiceps nigricollis*

- 1982** – spring ad., 1 June, Rainy River, Rainy River Dist., R. Tozer (18)

WESTERN GREBE, *Aechmophorus occidentalis*

- 1983** – dark morph, 3–10 May, Hillman Marsh, Essex Co.; A. Wormington, H. Cohen (102)

NORTHERN GANNET, *Sula bassanus*

- 1978** – imm., 26 Nov., Toronto, Metro Toronto R.M.; W.G. Wilson (190)
1983 – 2 imm., 29 Oct.–9 Nov., west end Lake Ontario, Halton and Hamilton-Wentworth R.M's, K. McLaughlin, P.D. Smith (207)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

- 1983** – ad., 4 May, Long Point, Haldimand-Norfolk R.M.; O. Lund (73)
– 2 ad., 20 June, Long Point, R.B.H. Smith, A. Lambert (80)

GREAT CORMORANT, *Phalacrocorax carbo*

- 1978** – imm., 14 Jan.–27 Mar.,

Port Credit, Peel R.M.; A. Wormington (105)
(PR 1437)

LITTLE BLUE HERON, *Egretta caerulea*

- 1980** – imm., 3 Aug., Hillman Marsh; A. Wormington (106)
1981 – ad., 27 July, Point Pelee; A. Wormington (108)
1983 – ad., 2 May, Dundas, Hamilton-Wentworth R.M.; R. Finlayson (107)
– 1st yr., 10 April, Whitby, Durham R.M.; D. Scovell (188)

TRICOLORED HERON, *Egretta tricolor*



Glossy Ibis, 1-16 May 1976, Point Pelee National Park, Essex Co.

PHOTO: ALAN WORMINGTON



PHOTO: ALAN WORMINGTON

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, 16-18 April 1976, Wheatley, Kent Co.

1983 – 19 May, Marathon,
Thunder Bay Dist.; T.
Hince (215)

This is the first record for
Northern Ontario.

GREEN-BACKED HERON,
Butorides striatus

1983 – 27 May, Sable Island,
Rainy River Dist.; W.J.
Crins (109)

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-
HERON**, *Nycticorax violaceus*

1976 – ad., 16-18 April,
Wheatley, Kent Co.; A.
Wormington (110)
(PR 1434)

GLOSSY IBIS, *Plegadis
falcinellus*

1976 – 1-16 May, Point Pelee; A.
Wormington (111)
(PR 1438)

1982 – two, 8 May, Bright's
Grove, Lambton Co.;
D. Rupert (48)

– 16 May, Kingston,
Frontenac Co.;
A. McConnell (50)

**FULVOUS WHISTLING-
DUCK**, *Dendrocygna bicolor*

1979 – 3-10 May, Point Pelee;
A. Wormington., R.D.
McRae (112)

MUTE SWAN, *Cygnus olor*

1982 – 2-4 Sept., Lake Superior
Prov. Park, Algoma Dist.;
T. Cheskey (59)

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED
GOOSE**, *Anser albifrons*

1983 – 2 ad., 13-27 Nov.,
Kingsville, Essex Co.;
M. Oldham,
A. Wormington (205)

These were determined to be the
Greenland yellow-billed race
(*flavirostris*), which normally
winters in Europe.

CINNAMON TEAL, *Anas
cyanoptera*

1983 – ad. male and female, 28 May–9 July, Amherstburg, Essex Co.; A. Wormington (113) (egg – ROM 12854).

Formerly considered only as wanderers to Ontario, this pair, and a nest discovered 24 June, also provided the first evidence of nesting by this species in the province (see James 1984).

EURASIAN WIGEON, *Anas penelope*

1971 – male, 24 May, Hamilton, Hamilton-Wentworth R.M.; A. Wormington (114)

1982 – 2 males, 22 Apr., Port Hope, Northumberland Co.; B.C. Olson (31)

– male, 16 Oct., Sarnia, Lambton Co.; D. Rupert (49)

– male, 27 Nov., Sparrow Lake, Muskoka D.M.; B. Bowles (15)

1983 – male, 6–15 Mar., Pickering, Durham R.M.; J. Mountjoy (30)

– male, 24–26 Apr., Bright's Cove, Lambton Co.; D. Rupert (187) (PR 1442–43)

– male, 20 May, Marathon; T. Hince (216).

TUFTED DUCK, *Aythya fuligula*

1983 – ad. male, 23 Jan.–9 Feb., Oakville, Halton R.M.; 27 Feb.–24 Apr., Hamilton; D. Gardiner, A. Wormington, K. McLaughlin (11) (PR 1371 D.R. Gunn)

HARLEQUIN DUCK, *Histrionicus histrionicus*

1979 – imm. or female, 11–12 Oct., Caribou Island, Thunder Bay Dist.; A. Wormington (115)

1981 – imm., 17 Oct., Netitishi Point, Cochrane Dist.; R.D. McRae (41)

1983 – 26 Sept., near Sutton River Mouth, Kenora Dist.; P.O. Steele (202)

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE, *Bucephala islandica*

1983 – ad. male, 2–9 May, Heron Bay, Thunder Bay Dist.; T. Hince (218)

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE, *Elanoides forficatus*

1983 – ad., 17 July, Wakami Lake Prov. Pk., Sudbury Dist.; G. Hanna (82)

SWAINSON'S HAWK, *Buteo swainsoni*

1980 – light phase ad., 15 Sept., Port Stanley, Elgin Co.; A. Wormington (118)

1983 – light phase, 19 May, Rainy River; R.D. McRae (100)
– light phase ad., 27 Oct., Rainy River; T. Hince (214)

GYRFALCON, *Falco rusticolus*

1981 – dark phase, 1–24 Feb., Whitby; M. Bain (54)
– gray phase, 22 Feb., Point Pelee; A. Wormington (119)

AMERICAN AVOCET, *Recurvirostra americana*

1981 – summer ad., 9 July, Hillman Marsh; A. Wormington (121)

1982 – ad., 11 May, Harrow, Essex Co.; A. Rider (123)
– 2–6 Nov., Holiday Beach Prov. Pk., Essex Co.; E. Cusick, A.S. Weir (58)

1983 – 10 summer ads., 1 May, Wheatley Harbour W., Essex Co.; A. McTavish (122)
– 7, 2 May, Fifty Point,

- Hamilton-Wentworth R.
M.; R. Curry (98)
-9 Sept., Whitby;
J. Mountjoy (94)
-3, 16-21 Sept., Kingsville;
M. Oldham (93)
-11 Dec., Hamilton; D.
Fogle (219)

WILLET, *Catoptrophorus semi-
palmatus*

- 1978** - basic plumage, 18 June,
Sable Island;
A. Wormington (124)
1983 - 22 Aug., Winisk, Kenora
Dist.; L. Fazio (194)

PURPLE SANDPIPER, *Calidris
maritima*

- 1982** - 15 Oct., North Point,
Cochrane Dist.;
C. Rimmer (126)

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER,
Limnodromus scolopaceus

- 1979** - 29 Sept., Caribou Island;
A. Wormington (127)

LONG-TAILED JAEGER,
Stercorarius longicaudus

- 1976** - adult, 6 Sept., Hamilton;
A. Wormington (128)
1983 - juvenile, 30 Aug., Point
Pelee; A. Wormington
(129)

LAUGHING GULL,
Larus atricilla

- 1972** - ad., 16 May, Point Pelee;
A. Wormington,
R. Pittaway (130)
1975 - ad., 24 Apr., Long Point;
A. Wormington (134)
1978 - ad., 5-6 May, Point Pelee;
A. Wormington (135)
1979 - 2nd summer, 5-11 May,
Point Pelee;
A. Wormington (132)
1981 - 1st winter, 6-7 March,
Wheatley; A. Wormington
(131)
1982 - ad., 2 June, Whitby;

- M. McEvoy (136)
- ad., 27 June, Fifty Point;
K. McLaughlin (47)

- 1983** - ad., 7 May, Point Pelee;
B. Whitney (137)
- ad., 11 May, Long Point;
D. Shepherd (71)
- ad., 20 May, Point Pelee;
P. Whelan, F. Bodsworth
(133)
- ad., 20 May, Long Point;
K. Lambert (72)
- ad., 26 May, Whitby;
M. Bain (66)
- ad., 29 May, Long Point;
D. Agro (79)
- ad., 31 May, Hillman
Marsh; M. Runtz (140)
- ad., 8 June-27 Sept.,
Moosonee, Cochrane Dist.;
D. Shepherd,
A. Wormington (87)
- ad., 25 June, Hillman
Marsh; M. Runtz (139)
- 2nd summer, 1 July,
Amherstburg; M. Gawn
(138)
- 1st winter, 24 Sept.,
Oshawa, Durham R.M.;
J. Mountjoy (96)

MEW GULL, *Larus canus*

- 1983** - ad., 29 Apr.-1 May,
Hillman Marsh;
A. Wormington (141)

CALIFORNIA GULL,
Larus californicus

- 1982** - 20 Dec., Courtright,
Lambton Co.; D. Rupert
(21) (PR 1480-1485)

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED
GULL**, *Larus fuscus*

- 1981** - 2nd winter, 19 Nov.,
Netitishi Point;
A. Wormington (142)

This is the first record of this
species in Northern Ontario.

ROSS' GULL, *Thodostethia*

rosea

1983 – ad., 14–23 May, Moosonee; K.F. Abraham, A. McTavish, (83) (PR 1418–1426 K.F. Abraham, 1493–1496 A. Wormington)

This is the first record for the province.

ROYAL TERN, *Sterna maxima*

1974 – ad., 22 Aug., Cedar Beach, Essex Co.; A. Wormington (10)

This is the first report of this species in Ontario.

ARCTIC TERN, *Sterna paradisaea*

1971 – 1st summer, 14–15 July, Toronto; A. Wormington (145)

1978 – ad., 9–20 June, Bronte, Halton R.M.; G. Bellerby, W.H. Lewis (34) (PR 1410 M. Jennings)

SOOTY TERN, *Sterna fuscata*

1955 – 14 Aug., Brockville, Leeds Co.; D. Hurrie (36)

This record, the first for Ontario, followed the passage of Hurricane "Connie."

BLACK SKIMMER, *Rynchops niger*

1982 – Late Aug., Clearwater Bay, Lake-of-the-Woods, Kenora Dist.; R. Crowley (20)

This is the first record for Northern Ontario and the most northerly on the continent.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE, *Zenaida asiatica*

1975 – 14–19 Dec., Belleville, Hastings Co.; B. Barrett (37) (PR 565 R.S. Morphy)

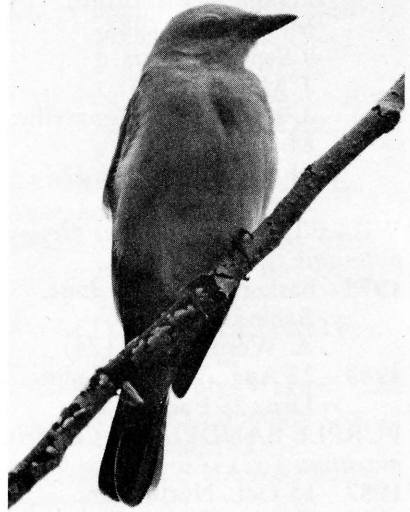
GROOVE-BILLED ANI, *Crotophaga sulcirostris*

PHOTO: ALAN WORMINGTON

Western Kingbird, imm., 18 Aug. 1978, Rainy River, Rainy River Dist.

1983 – 1 Nov., Thunder Bay (Rosslyn), Thunder Bay Dist., S. Dubois (221). (Lakehead University #100).

This is the second specimen from Ontario.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD, *Selasphorus rufus*

1983 – 14–17 Sept., Sapawe, Rainy River Dist.; D.H. Elder (199) (PR 1465–1472)

RED-BELLIED WOOD-PECKER, *Melanerpes carolinus*

1983 – male, 15 Oct., Moosonee; K. Abraham (223)

This is the first record for Northern Ontario.

WESTERN KINGBIRD, *Tyrannus verticalis*

1978 – imm., 18 Aug., Rainy River; A. Wormington (151) (PR 1436)

1980 – 6 Aug., Emsdale, Parry Sound Dist.; A. Mills (22)

1981 – 26 May, Rainy River; W.J. Crins (152)
– 10–11 June, Hillman Marsh; A. Wormington (150)

1983 – 21 May, Point Pelee; H.H. Axtell, K.J. Burk (149)
– 30 Aug., Long Point; D. Shepherd (210)
– imm., 27–30 Aug., East Point, James Bay, Cochrane Dist.; R. Stitt (209) (PR 1452–55)

GRAY KINGBIRD, *Tyrannus dominicensis*

1982 – 31 Oct., Ottawa, Ottawa-Carleton R.M.; B.M. Di Labio (25) (PR 1408)

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER, *Tyrannus forficatus*

1982 – 28 Oct.–3 Nov., Rolphton, Renfrew Co.; W.H. Walker (198) (PR 1451; 1488–1489 M. Jennings)

1983 – 18 May, Port Dover, Haldimand-Norfolk R.M.; M. Nemenski, W. Ramp (70)
– 25 May, Point Pelee; M.L. Denton (153)
– 2 July, Dyer Bay, Bruce Co.; T. Cheskey (81) (PR 1414–17)

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE, *Pica pica*

1981 – 25 Dec.–4 Jan. 1982, Toronto; J.A. Kelley (154)

FISH CROW, *Corvus ossifragus*

1983 – 20 May, Point Pelee; S.B. Terrill (156)

CAROLINA CHICKADEE, *Parus carolinensis*

1983 – 18 May, Long Point;

D. Shepherd (69) (ROM 28494)

This is the first record for the province. The specimen is the southern subspecies *impiger*.
BEWICK'S WREN, *Thryomanes bewickii*

1982 – 9–12 May, Point Pelee; R.R. Tasker (55)

BLUE-GRAY GNAT-CATCHER, *Polioptila caerulea*

1979 – 1–3 Oct., Caribou Island; A. Wormington (160)

1980 – 13 July, Rainy River; A. McTavish, K.J. Burk (88)

1981 – 16 Oct., Netitishi Point; A. Wormington (159)

These are the first records for Northern Ontario.

SIBERIAN RUBYTHROAT, *Luscinia calliope*

1983 – ad. male, 26 Dec., Hornby, Halton R.M.; M. Lane (222) (ROM 148368)

This species has been added to the provincial list on the basis of this specimen, found dead. It is the only North American record outside of western Alaska.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR, *Oenanthe oenanthe*

1972 – imm., 6 Oct., Fraserdale, Cochrane Dist.; A. Wormington, M. Jennings (161) (PR 1393)

1976 – imm., 1 Oct., Moosonee; A. Wormington (161)

1978 – ad., 14–15 Oct., Deep River, Renfrew Co.; A. Wormington (165) (PR 1435)

1980 – imm., 26 Sept., Moosonee; A. Wormington (162)
– imm., 11–12 Oct., Jack-

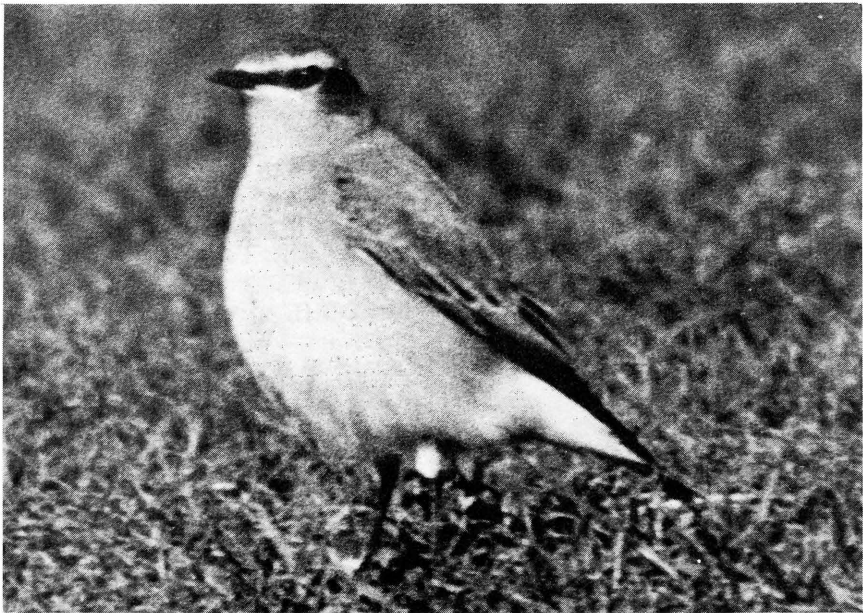


PHOTO: ALAN WORMINGTON

Northern Wheatear, ad., 14-15 Oct. 1978, Deep River, Renfrew Co.

- fish, Thunder Bay Dist.;
A. Wormington (166)
1981 – ad. female, 2 June, Winisk;
A. Wormington (167)
1982 – ad. female, 4 June, North
Point; C. Rimmer (163)
(PR 1439)

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD,
Sialia currucoides

- 1979** – female, 28 Nov.–6 Jan.
1980, Point Pelee;
A. Wormington (168)

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE,
Myadestes townsendi

- 1979** – 2 Oct., Caribou Island;
A. Wormington (6)
– 25–29 Oct., Marathon;
A. Wormington (7)
1981 – 14 Feb.–19 Apr., Shoal
Point Woods, Durham
R.M.; M. Bain (169)
(PR 1433 B. Pegg)
1983 – 29 Mar., Marathon;
T. Hince (46) (PR 1376)

- 6 Nov., Fonthill, Niagara
R.M.; R.W. Knapton
(208)

EURASIAN BLACKBIRD,
Turdus merula

- 1981** – 12 Apr., Erieau, Kent Co.;
K.J. Burk (38)

This is the first record for Ontario
and second for North America; the
first was near Montreal, Quebec
(McNeil 1971)

VARIED THRUSH,
Ixoreus naevius

- 1982** – male, 4 Jan.–7 Feb.,
Wallacetown, Elgin Co.;
D. Rupert (197)
(PR 1450)
– ad., male 18 Dec.–12 Mar.
1983, Oakville;
D.A. Sutherland (26)
1983 – female, 15 Jan.–25 Feb.,
Whitby; J. Mountjoy (1)
– male, 6–13 Feb. Darling-
ton Twp., Durham R.M.;

J.M. Richards (74)
 (PR 1411 B. Kern)
 - male, 26 Dec.-1 April
 1984, Puslinch Twp.,
 Wellington Co.; D. Brewer
 (212)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE,
Lanius ludovicianus

1983 - 25 Apr., Heron Bay;
 T. Hince (220)

BELL'S VIREO, *Vireo bellii*
1974 - 13 May, Long Point;
 A. Wormington (171)

**BLACK-THROATED GRAY
 WARBLER, *Dendroica*
*nigrescens***

1983 - 8 May, Toronto; A. Nash
 (61)

**YELLOW-THROATED
 WARBLER, *Dendroica dominica***

1976 - 2-9 May, Point Pelee;
 A. Wormington (174)
 (PR 1432)

1982 - 23 Nov., Kingston;

D.O. Spettigue (51)
 - 12-19 Dec., Niagara
 Falls, Niagara R.M.;
 H.H. Axtell (52)

1983 - 28-29 Apr., Point Pelee;
 A. Wormington (175)
 - 2-4 May, Point Pelee;
 R. Fleming (176)

All these records are of the
albilora race with a white eyeline.

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER,
Dendroica kirtlandii

1945 - 2 adults and at least 1
 recently fledged young,
 8-13 Aug., Barrie, Simcoe
 Co.; D.H. and J.M. Speirs
 (97)

This report also provided evidence
 for breeding by this species in
 Ontario (see James 1984).

PRAIRIE WARBLER,
Dendroica discolor

1982 - male, 1 June, Makwa Lake
 (Gogama area), Sudbury



PHOTO: ALAN WORMINGTON

Yellow-throated Warbler, 2-9 May 1976, Point Pelee National Park

Dist.; S.V. and A.D. Nash
(42)

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER,
Protonotaria citrea

1976 - 27 Apr.-3 May, French
Lake, Quetico Prov. Park,
Rainy River Dist.; D.H.
Elder (14)

This is the only record for
Northern Ontario.

HOODED WARBLER,
Wilsonia citrina

1976 - ad. male, 27 Sept., Ship-
sands Island, Cochrane
Dist.; A. Wormington (5)

This is the only record for Northern
Ontario.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT,
Icteria virens

1979 - 25 Sept., Caribou Island;
A. Wormington (178)

1982 - 4-6 Oct., North Point,
James Bay; C. Rimmer

(177) (PR 1440)

The Caribou Island record is the
first for Northern Ontario.

SUMMER Tanager, *Piranga*
rubra

1979 - 21 Oct., Neys Prov. Pk.,
Thunder Bay Dist.;
A. Wormington (8)

1982 - 12-14 May, Atikokan;
D.H. Elder (13)
(PR 1404-1407 A. Van
Rooyen)

WESTERN Tanager,
Piranga ludoviciana

1983 - 13-22 Nov., Point Pelee;
M.J. Oldham (206) (PR
1456 J.R. Graham, 1490-
1491 A. Wormington,
1492 J. Flynn)

NORTHERN CARDINAL,
Cardinalis cardinalis

1981 - male, 6 Nov., Atikokan;
D.H. Elder (12)



PHOTO: ALAN WORMINGTON

Western Tanager, imm. male, 13-22 Nov. 1983,
Point Pelee National Park

1982 – male, 18 May, Silver Islet,
Thunder Bay Dist.;
R.D. McRae (40)

BLUE GROSBEAK, *Guiraca
caerulea*

1983 – male, 9 May, Rutherglen,
Nipissing Dist.; Mr. &
Mrs. La France (78)
(PR 1412–1413)

– male, 18 May, Long Point;
D. Agro (68)

– male, 21 May, Point Pelee;
M. Fitzpatrick (179)

LAZULI BUNTING, *Passerina
amoena*

1982 – female, 23 May, Point
Pelee; S.B. Terrill (182)

This is the first record for
Southern Ontario and second for
the province.

RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE,
Pipilo erythrophthalmus

1983 – male, 28 Apr., Marathon;
T. Hince (217)

FIELD SPARROW,
Spizella pusilla

1983 – 7 Apr., Marathon;
T. Hince (45)

LARK SPARROW, *Chondestes
grammacus*

1982 – two, 9 June, McTavish
Twp., Thunder Bay Dist.;
S. and C. Wood (203)

1983 – 11–12 May, Sturgeon
Creek, Essex Co.; B.
McCord, A. Wormington
(184)

– 28 May, Toronto Islands,
T. Stevens (192)

– 18 June, Moosonee;
D. Shepherd (86) (PR
1486–1487 K. Abraham)

LARK BUNTING, *Calamospiza
melanocorys*

1982 – imm., 24–29 Sept., North
Point; C. Rimmer (186)
(PR 1441)

HARRIS' SPARROW,
Zonotrichia querula

1982 – imm., 22 Dec.–25 Feb.

1983, Harwood, Nor-
thumberland Co.; D.A.
Sutherland, H. Bird (27)
(PR 1409 M. Mulcahy)

– imm., late Dec.–17 Jan.
1983, Brighton, Northum-
berland Co.; D.A. Suther-
land (27)

BRAMBLING, *Fringilla
montifringilla*

1983 – 23–26 Oct., Atikokan; D.
Elder (200) (PR 1457–
1464)

This is the first record of this
species in Ontario (Elder 1984)

Unaccepted Records, Identifi- cation Uncertain

1934 – ROSS' GULL, Aug.,
Toronto (201)

1949 – MAGNIFICENT
FRIGATEBIRD, 16 Oct.,
Port Rowan, Haldimand-
Norfolk R.M. (39)

1957 – ROSS' GULL, 24 May,
Point Pelee (9)

1962 – PRAIRIE WARBLER, 27
May, Dorion, Thunder
Bay Dist. (56)

1963 – ROSS' GULL, 20 May,
Toronto (19)

1965 – ORCHARD ORIOLE, 30
May, Dorion (33)

1974 – PAINTED BUNTING,
22 Oct., Port Hope (4)

1980 – YELLOW-BILLED LOON,
19 May, Ottawa (23)

1981 – LEAST TERN, 20 Sept.,
Toronto (23)

1982 – GREAT CORMORANT,
21 Aug., Point Pelee (104)
GREATER WHITE-
FRONTED GOOSE, 19

- Dec., Kingston (32)
 SWAINSON'S HAWK,
 9 Sept., Point Pelee (117)
 GREATER PRAIRIE-
 CHICKEN, 27 Dec.,
 Blind River, Algoma Dist.
 (29)
 WILSON'S PLOVER, 3
 Oct., Long Point (28)
 WILSON'S PLOVER, 22
 May, Dorion (57)
 LONG-BILLED
 DOWITCHER, 1 June,
 Rainy River (17)
 ROYAL TERN, 18 Sept.,
 Kingsville (143)
 BLACK-BILLED
 MAGPIE, January,
 Keene, Peterborough Co.
 (53)
 NORTHERN
 WHEATEAR, 16 Oct.,
 Niagara Falls (24)
 BELL'S VIREO, 28 May,
 Whitby (191)
 WESTERN TANAGER,
 26 Aug., Stoney Lake,
 Peterborough Co. (3)
- 1983** - ARCTIC LOON, 7 Nov.,
 Fifty Point (196)
 ARCTIC LOON, 6 Nov.,
 Kettle Point, Lambton Co.
 (211)
 YELLOW-BILLED
 LOON, 12 May,
 Presqu'île Prov. Pk.,
 Northumberland Co. (64)
 WESTERN GREBE, 6
 June, Caliper Lake, Rainy
 River Dist. (189)
 NORTHERN GANNET,
 9 May, Point Pelee (103)
 BLACK-CROWNED
 NIGHT-HERON, 24
 June, Fort Severn, Kenora
 Dist. (85)
 GYRFALCON, 17 Apr.,
 Barrie Island, Manitoulin
 Dist. (60)
 BLACK RAIL, 18 May,
 Point Pelee (120)
 RUFOUS-NECKED
 SANDPIPER, 20 May,
 Point Pelee (125)
 SHARP-TAILED
 SANDPIPER, Aug.,
 Ottawa (99)
 LONG-BILLED
 CURLEW, 24 July, Kettle
 Point (75)
 POMARINE JAEGER, 1
 Nov., Hamilton (204)
 CALIFORNIA GULL, 3
 Apr., Port Rowan (67)
 ROSEATE TERN, 10
 May, Hillman Marsh
 (146)
 ARCTIC TERN, 30 July,
 Kettle Point (84)
 ARCTIC TERN, 19 Aug.,
 Duffins Creek, Durham
 R.M. (95)
 ARCTIC TERN, 7 May,
 Sturgeon Creek, Essex Co.
 (144)
 BLACK SWIFT, 26 May,
 Dundas (147)
 RUFOUS HUMMING-
 BIRD, 2 June, Brantford,
 Brant Co. (77)
 ASH-THROATED FLY-
 CATCHER, 25 May,
 Point Pelee (148)
 ASH-THROATED FLY-
 CATCHER, 6 June, Fort
 Erie, Niagara R.M. (76)
 ASH-THROATED FLY-
 CATCHER, 2 Oct., Point
 Pelee (195)
 BLACK-BILLED
 MAGPIE, 6 June,
 Blytheswood, Essex Co.
 (155)
 FISH CROW, 8 May,

Point Pelee (157)
BEWICK'S WREN, 15
 May, Point Pelee (158)
SPRAGUE'S PIPIT, 18
 May, Kingsville (170)
BELL'S VIREO, 4 May,
 Point Pelee (172)
BELL'S VIREO, 7 May,
 Point Pelee (173)
WESTERN Tanager,
 14 May, Point Pelee (65)
WESTERN Tanager,
 14 Aug., Miller Creek
 Cons. Area, Peterborough
 Co. (92)
BLUE GROSBEAK, 10
 May, Sturgeon Creek
 (180)
BLUE GROSBEAK, 17
 May, Point Pelee (181)
LAZULI BUNTING, 21
 May, Point Pelee (183)
BAIRD'S SPARROW, 18
 Aug., Vaughan Twp., York
 R.M. (89)

Unaccepted Records, Origin Uncertain

- 1880** – **SNOWY PLOVER**, May,
 [Toronto?] (16) (Seton
 1885)
1896 – **SNOWY PLOVER**,
 6 July, [Toronto?] (16)
 (Fleming 1906)
1979 – **PAINTED BUNTING**,
 21–23 May, Long Point
 (43)
PAINTED BUNTING,
 Dec., Toronto (44)
1983 – **EUROPEAN GOLD-
 FINCH**, 20–21 May,
 Sioux Lookout, Kenora
 Dist. (63)

Summary

As a result of decisions from reports considered in 1983, Tufted Duck, Ross' Gull, Royal Tern, Sooty Tern, Carolina Chickadee, Siberian Rubythroat, Eurasian Blackbird, and Brambling were added to the Ontario list. Two species were deleted from the provincial list—Snowy Plover and Painted Bunting. Following the change in procedures mentioned earlier, Lesser Goldfinch was also added to the list (see Wormington and James 1984). For details concerning breeding birds see James (1984).

Acknowledgements

This report is presented on behalf of and with the assistance of the OBRC. Mrs. M. Goldsmith typed the manuscript.

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Siberian Rubythroat: A Species New to Canada

by
David Brewer, Mia A.W. Lane and Martin L. Wernaart

On 26 December 1983, M.A.W.L. found a small bird dead in front of her farmhouse near Hornby, Halton Regional Municipality, Ontario. The bird was lying beside a car which had just arrived from Brampton, Ontario; it is possible that it had been struck by this vehicle at some location en route and had fallen off when the car pulled up in front of her house. The bird was unfamiliar to her but using the National Geographic Field Guide (Scott 1983), she tentatively identified it as a male Siberian Rubythroat (*Luscinia calliope*). On 27 December the bird was shown to D.B. and M.L.W., who confirmed the identification. The specimen was passed on to the Royal Ontario Museum (R.O.M.) (No. 148368), in which collection it is now permanently housed.

Description

The bird appeared to be an adult male, with a prominent white eye stripe, a white moustache stripe edged with black below and a brilliant shining ruby-red throat.



PHOTO: DAVID BREWER

Siberian Rubythroat, adult male

Since the specimen was in hand, a detailed description was not taken. The weight was 17.2 g.

On preparation, the bird was found to have a fully ossified skull, no fat and testes which measured 2 × 1 mm. The latter were in a poor state of preservation but possibly indicated a bird older than hatching year. The bird was missing some feathers from the lower back, consistent with the theory that it had been struck by a fast moving vehicle.

Distribution of the Species

The Siberian Rubythroat (also referred to variously and confusingly in the English-language

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literature as Eurasian Rubythroat, Rubythroat, Ruby-throated Warbler and Red-necked Nightingale), breeds primarily in Asiatic Russia, from about 55° E to the Pacific Ocean (Flint *et al.* 1966). It is largely a boreal species, ranging north to latitude 67° in eastern Siberia. Apart from an isolated population in western China, the most southerly breeding area is on the island of Hokkaido, Japan. There are three subspecies generally recognised; *Luscinia c.*

calliope, which occupies most of the Siberian range, including the island of Sakhalin, and Hokkaido; *L. c. camtschatkensis*, breeding in the Kamchatka Peninsula, the Kurile Islands and (closest to North America) the Kommandorskiy Islands; and *L. c. beicki* from western China (Dementiev *et al.* 1966) (Figure 1). Not all authorities accept the validity of these races (Peters 1964).

On the basis of wing length and the shade of the colour of the

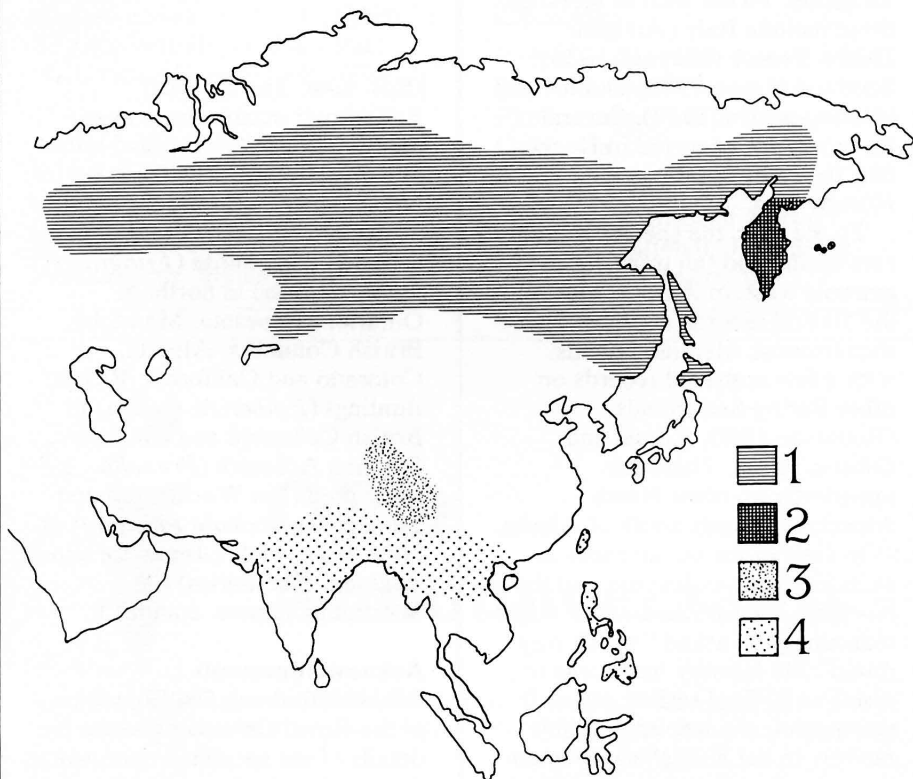


Figure 1. The breeding and wintering ranges of the subspecies of the Siberian Rubythroat. Breeding range of 1. *L. c. calliope*, 2. *L. c. camtschatkensis*, 3. *L. c. beicki* and 4. wintering range of all races.

upperparts, Dr. Ross James of the R.O.M. suggests (pers. comm.) that the Hornby specimen is most likely referable to the race *camtschatkensis*.

The Siberian Rubythroat winters in India, as far west as Gujarat, Burma, northern Thailand, Laos, North Viet-nam, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Philippines (King *et al.* 1975, Fleming *et al.* 1976).

As might be expected from such a long-distance migrant, the species has occurred as a vagrant in a number of extralimital locations. To the west of its range, these include Italy (Arrigoni 1929), France (Mayaud 1936), Scotland (Lowe 1979) and Iceland (Gudmundsson 1944). Several of these records occurred in December, the same month as the Hornby bird.

To the east, the species is a very rare spring and fall transient in extreme western Alaska. Most of the 50 odd records are from the westernmost Aleutian Islands, with a few scattered records on other Bering Sea islands (Roberson 1980, Kessel and Gibson 1978). There are apparently no other North American records south of Alaska.

In view of the occurrences in such locations as Iceland and the Northern Isles of Scotland it might reasonably be asked "which way round" the Hornby bird came to arrive at its final resting place. If the specimen is indeed referable racially to the Kamchatka population, clearly a Pacific route is indicated. However, if not, it seems almost equally feasible that the origin is transatlantic.

As with most extralimital

occurrences of birds, the question of a possible captive origin can be raised. Siberian Rubythroats are kept in captivity; however, due to more stringent regulations in the exporting countries, some years ago the exportation of the species dropped drastically (Inskipp 1981). The specimen was carefully examined before preparation for any indication of having been in captivity (excessive wear of flight feathers, abnormally long claws, or damage to the feathers at the base of the bill), but none was found.

[Eds. note: The Siberian Rubythroat occurrence was evidently part of a widespread influx of Eurasian landbirds recorded in North America during the autumn/winter of 1983. The "invasion" included Bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*) in northern Ontario, Minnesota, Manitoba, British Columbia, Alberta, Colorado and California; Rustic Buntings (*Emberiza rustica*) in British Columbia and California; Siberian Accentor (*Prunella montanella*) in Washington and Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*) in New Brunswick (*American Birds* Regional Summaries) (A. Wormington, pers. comm.)].

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Dr. Ross James of the Royal Ontario Museum for details of the specimen obtained during preparation and for his opinions regarding the subspecific identification. Alan Wormington made comments on an earlier version of the manuscript.

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OFO Announcements

Seasonal Summaries of Bird Sightings in Ontario: Please update the lists of sub-regional editors (*Ontario Birds* 1:73-75; 2:52) for *American Birds* as follows:

York: Mr. Bruce Parker, Townhouse 66, 109 Valleywoods Rd., Don Mills, Ontario M3A 2R8

Simcoe: Dr. W.E. Zufelt, 221 Belmoral Drive, Orillia, Ontario L3V 5R2

Peel: Mr. Bruce Parker, Townhouse 66, 109 Valleywoods Rd., Don Mills, Ontario M3A 2R8

The Henslow's Sparrow in Ontario: A Historical Perspective

by
Richard W. Knapton

Henslow's Sparrows (*Ammodramus henslowii*) were first reported in Ontario in 1898; W.E. Saunders reported seeing and hearing "several" Henslow's Sparrows at two locations—at Jeannette's Creek on the south shore of Lake St. Clair, near Sarnia, Lambton County. In the same year the Reverend C.J. Young reported a nest containing four eggs in a "wet springy place in a meadow under a tuft of grass" near Lansdowne, Leeds County (Macoun and Macoun 1909). McIlwraith (1894) makes no mention of the species in his survey of the birds of Ontario. Therefore I make the assumption (but see below) that the Henslow's Sparrow's first occurrence in the province was in the late 1890s, and in this account I trace changes in its distribution and abundance from the late 1890s to 1980 (see Knapton 1982).

Saunders (1908), writing on the nesting status of the Henslow's Sparrow in Ontario at the turn of the century, considered the species to be reasonably common in the extreme southwest part of the province, particularly at the mouth

of the Thames River where it flows into Lake St. Clair. In this area Swales (1905) had found a colony of ten pairs. This raises the possibility that the species may have occupied the natural tall grass prairies of Essex and Lambton Counties for many years prior to first sightings, and it was simply overlooked owing to its unobtrusive behaviour, particularly its inconspicuous song, a sentiment also expressed by Tozer and Richards (1974) and D.A. Sutherland (1981, pers. comm.).

After these initial reports from Lambton and Essex Counties, first records from other parts of the province indicate a gradual northward and/or eastward pattern of occurrence during the next few decades across southern Ontario. The first records for Middlesex and Elgin Counties were in 1918 (at London) and in 1919 (at Port Stanley), respectively (Dale 1921). Numbers of Henslow's Sparrows in these counties evidently increased over the next few years. Two nests were found at Copenhagen, Elgin County, in 1930 (Ontario Nest Records Scheme, R. James, pers. comm.),

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and numbers peaked in the 1930s, prompting W.E. Saunders to class the species as locally fairly common in the London area (letter to J.L. Baillie dated 13 August 1931; Saunders and Dale 1933).

The late 1920s and the decade of the 1930s were banner periods for Henslow's Sparrows elsewhere in southern Ontario. The Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk recorded its first birds in 1930, when Speirs (1933) found four males at Lowbanks and six males there the following year. At Long Point, a colony existed in 1927 between Courtright and Squire's Ridges, and a second colony was present just north of the Provincial Park in the 1930s. (McCracken *et al.* 1980). The regional municipalities of Hamilton-Wentworth, York and Peel also recorded Henslow's Sparrows for the first time in the 1930s, for example, a colony in the Parkdale Avenue area of Hamilton (G. North 1981, pers. comm.; J. Dowall 1981, pers. comm.), a nest found at Cooksville in 1932 (Richardson 1933), and a nest found at Toronto in 1937 (ONRS). The Holland River marsh, Simcoe County, also turned up Henslow's Sparrows in 1937, with at least five males present in late July (Ussher, 1939). Baillie and Harrington (1937), reviewing the status of the species up to the mid-1930s, concluded that Sarnia and Bradford appeared to mark the northern limit of the species in the province at that time (Figure 1).

Since the 1930s, the species has been found considerably north of Baillie and Harrington's limit. Two

singing males were reported from a meadow near Goderich, Huron County, on 4 June 1943 (Clarke 1944). The species was recorded in summer in Simcoe County at Big Cedar Point in 1942, near Barrie in 1945, near Angus and Oro Station in 1949, near Tiny Marsh in 1955, and near Holly in 1960 (Devitt 1967). The species has been found as far north as Manitoulin Island, one in June 1952 (Nicholson 1972). However, because the Henslow's Sparrow is an easily overlooked species, it is possible that such records were due to increasing observer familiarity with the species rather than a northward extension of its breeding range.

In the east, colonies were reported in the 1950s for the first time in Durham (Speirs 1973) and Northumberland (McDonald and John 1974) Counties, in the Kingston area (Quilliam 1973), and in the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (Lloyd 1951; H. Ouellet 1981, pers. comm.; B. DiLabio 1981, pers. comm.). The first record in Wellington County was at Luther Marsh in 1962, a colony that persisted for ten years reaching a maximum of eight males (Brewer 1977; 1981, pers. comm.). The species was recorded in far eastern Ontario in 1976, with three in summer near Prescott in Leeds and Grenville Counties (Goodwin 1976).

Thus, the pattern of occurrence of the Henslow's Sparrow in Ontario is a gradual north and east one since the turn of the century (the nest record at Lansdowne, Leeds County, in 1898 appears to be somewhat of

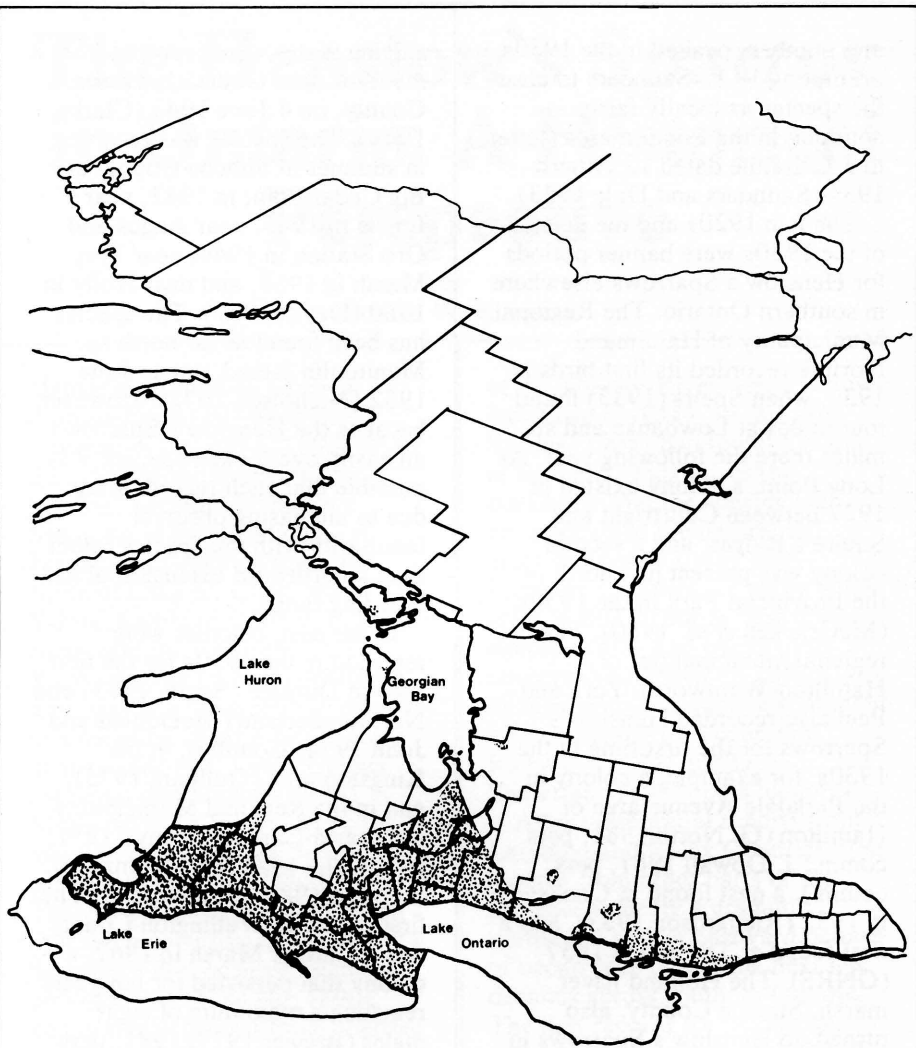


Figure 1. Breeding distribution of the Henslow's Sparrow in Ontario, late 1800's to 1980.

an anomaly, particularly since the next eastern Ontario record, at Kingston, was in 1950). This range expansion has resulted in the species occurring as far north as

Ottawa, Lake Simcoe, Georgian Bay and Manitoulin Island (James *et al.* 1976). However, it has never been recorded as occupying all areas in this region at any one

time. It now appears to be absent or very rare in large areas of Ontario: for example, the intensively cultivated southwest, a region which certainly had far more suitable habitat (e.g. abandoned grassy farmland left undisturbed for many years) earlier this century. There are no colonies greater than ten males currently known in Ontario, although some fairly large colonies have occurred in the last ten years or so, for example at Tiny Marsh (C.J. MacFayden 1981, pers. comm.) and at Barrie (C.G. Harris 1981, pers. comm.). Superficially suitable habitat still occurs across southern Ontario but is evidently unoccupied at present; for example, Henslow's Sparrows were found at only two of 155 survey stops in areas of suitable habitat in southern Ontario during the breeding season of 1983 (Risley 1983). Furthermore, the Henslow's Sparrow is now of sporadic occurrence in areas in which it was formerly classed as "locally fairly common" (e.g. Middlesex County, Haldimand-Norfolk R.M.), or "uncommon, very local summer resident" (e.g. York and Peel R.M.s, Goodwin 1979). The whys and wherefores of population fluctuations, or perhaps more accurately the long term gradual but consistent population decline in the Henslow's Sparrow throughout its range, are very poorly understood, and the species remains somewhat of an enigma among our provincial avifauna.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following

people who replied to my requests for information, who suggested references on Henslow's Sparrows, and who offered opinions on the historical and present status of Henslow's Sparrows in their areas (apologies for omissions): Dave Brewer, Mike Cadman, Craig Campbell, Geoff Carpentier, Bob Curry, Arn Dawe, Bruce DiLabio, Jim Dowall, Dave Fidler, Clive Goodwin, Chris Harris, Dave Hussell, Ross James, Bill Jarman, Harry Kerr, Cliff MacFayden, Doug McRae, George North, Mike Oldham, Henri Ouellet, Martin Parker, Peter Peach, Paul Pratt, Bill Pratt, Helen Quilliam, Alf Rider, Chris Risley, Doug Sadler, Ron Scovell, Roy Smith, Murray Speirs, Terry Sprague, Don Sutherland, Ron Tozer, Wayne Weber, Ron Weir, Chip and Linda Weseloh, Peter Whelan, Paul Wiper. Their help is gratefully acknowledged. Alan Wormington and Chris Risley made helpful comments on earlier drafts. Part of this work was completed under the supervision of the Wildlife Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, with a special thanks to Irene Bowman, Nongame Program Coordinator.

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RARE BIRD DOCUMENTATION: A Guideline

by
G. Tom Hince

The common goal and general wish of most Ontario birders who see a rare bird is to have their sighting/discovery included in the Provincial record. In order to do this, the details of their sighting must be accepted by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC). Documentation of these sightings can be accomplished by any one of three methods—photograph and/or tape recording, a specimen or a written account of a sight record. This report will discuss briefly the first two methods and deal at length with the last, most widely used method.

Specimen: Very few birders will ever need to be concerned with this form of documentation. If you do secure a specimen (e.g. a roadkill) there are some specific steps that should be taken to document the record.

Unless professional facilities for the preparation of a study skin are available, the specimen should be frozen as quickly as possible. It should be double-wrapped in freezer bags with as much air as possible evacuated from the bags. Two complete sets of data should be made, one attached directly to

the specimen and the other as a label outside. The data should include the following: the date the specimen was found; the exact location; the collector; the colour of fleshy parts (e.g. legs); any relevant comments (e.g. window kill). Arrangements should then be made to transport the specimen to either the Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto) or the National Museum of Canada (Ottawa).

Photograph/Recording: With the coming of affordable Single Lens Reflex cameras (SLRs) and compact tape recorders many more sightings are being documented with high quality photographs and tape recorded song. The ROM maintains a photo/tape duplicate file of rare bird records for Ontario. The OBRC welcomes mechanically recorded evidence of rare birds and will, if requested, duplicate and return material supplied. A "Rare Bird Report" outlining all relevant details of the sighting should accompany the material evidence.

When photographing rare birds a few points should be kept in mind. Ideally, the photograph

G. Tom Hince, R.R. 1, Leamington, Ontario N8H 3V4

should, without any doubt, clearly identify the bird. While distant, slightly blurry shots are often adequate for very distinctive species (e.g. Clark's Nutcracker), extremely crisp, full-frame shots may be needed for others (e.g. Long-billed Dowitcher). A series of photographs may be necessary for some species and may also yield additional information, such as subspecific identity. The presence of other birds in the photograph is often useful as it can help to determine the relative size and external factors such as lighting. A bonus is to identify the location of the sighting by a distinctive geographic feature in the background. Always retain a copy of at least one identifiable photograph in case of loss or damage in the transportation or duplication process.

Sight Records: This type of documentation is of interest to most observers. But what exactly is the purpose of a sight record? It should be *an historic account of an observation which will continue to stand as valid material evidence* in the future. Documentation of a sight record must therefore, be as complete and precise as possible. For example, even if an OBRC member has seen a rarity but does not feel the submitted documentation is complete, then that member should not accept the record. This may seem perplexing but it is the only way to utilize sight records in a valid scientific record.

As a member of the OBRC, I find it extremely difficult to reject any record. In a pastime where we

all share a common goal such decisions are a loss not only to the reporter(s) but to the historical record. At present the OBRC rejects about 25% of submitted records. I am sure I speak for all members of the committee in saying our goal is 100% acceptance of submitted records.

What are the reasons for these rejected records? Usually they are not complex. Often they are simple yet critical omissions or generally incomplete descriptions. For example, a common problem is that while the 'field marks' may be described, the actual shape, size and proportions of the bird are neglected! Finally, it simply has never been stated what is considered adequate documentation for a sight record.

Therefore it seems appropriate to present a basic interpretation of how to document a sight record with some examples. This is not intended as a rigid format but as a guideline which can be adapted.

The logical place to start is with the "Rare Bird Report" or verification form. About 20 different forms with a variety of formats are circulating throughout the province. I would recommend that all submissions to the OBRC be done on the new standard report form available from the Secretary, OBRC (see back cover). Much of the information requested may seem tedious but it is all necessary.

There are four basic parts to any report form: miscellaneous details; circumstances of the observation; complete description; discussion. Each section will be discussed separately with examples.

Miscellaneous Details: This is usually a straightforward series of fill in the blank type questions. The most necessary ones are listed below.

1. Species? Sex? Plumage? Number? (e.g. Red Phalarope, sex unknown, fall adult)
2. Locality? (e.g. Essex Co., Leamington, Leamington Pier at end of Erie St.)
3. Date and time of observation? (e.g. 4 October 1981, 12:41-12:53 p.m.)
4. Optical equipment used? (e.g. 9X36 Bushnell Custom Binoculars)
5. Weather? Lighting conditions? (e.g. no wind or precipitation, overcast)
6. Date and time of writing report? (e.g. 4 October 1981, 6:00-6:30 p.m.)
7. Name? Address? Signature (e.g. John Doe, RR 3, Leamington, Ont. N1T 3V6)

Circumstances of the observation: This section should include the following details: how you came upon the bird; initial impressions of the bird; who you were with; when you identified the bird; conditions for viewing the bird; distance over which the observation was made as well as information which helps to clarify the observational circumstances. For example, "As Jane Doe and myself drove up to the base of Leamington Dock we noticed a greyish-white robin-sized bird sitting in the water about 30m up the south side of the pier. We stopped and viewed it through the open car window and immediately identified the bird as a fall adult

Red Phalarope. We slowly approached the bird to within about 10m in completely unobstructed view for two minutes. Viewing conditions were excellent. When we left after about 10 minutes the bird was still in the same location."

Complete Description: This is by far the most important section of the report. Where possible *original field notes or sketches should be attached* or photocopied. The OBRC realizes that not everyone is artistically inclined (myself included) but by all means use simple, rudimentary diagrams. These sketches are extremely helpful when well labelled and clearly presented and are almost essential for complex feathering patterns. A description can be broken into five parts: plumage; fleshy parts; size and shape; behavior; vocalizations.

1. Plumage—In this section the entire plumage of the bird should be described. Try to be as specific as possible. If, for example, you are describing wing-bars, say whether they were broad or narrow, which coverts they were on, what colour they were, etc. All field guides have a basic outline of the topography of a bird indicating all the feather details. These outlines can be very helpful in indicating specific areas of the individual. If you are using comparatives such as "sand-coloured" remember that the comparative itself is often variable. In this case, sand can vary from black to red to white! Figure 1 gives an example of a simply diagrammed, yet completely

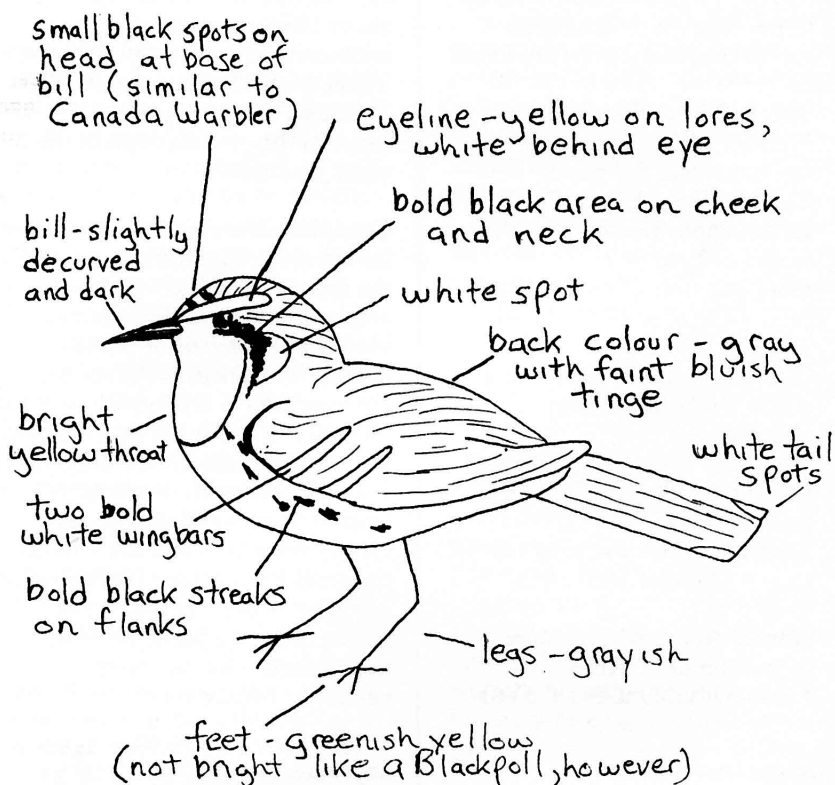


Figure 1. A simply diagrammed, yet completely diagnostic plumage description of a Yellow-throated Warbler. Other notes on the page give further details of sighting.

diagnostic plumage description even to subspecies.

2. **Fleshy Parts**—This includes the legs, bill, eyes, occasionally facial skin (e.g. Black Vulture), and eye-ring, if fleshy as in gulls. Special attention should be placed on colour as this is a crucial factor in some groups. Bill shape, proportions and leg length are

important considerations as well. Figure 1 provides adequate documentation, for the species described, in respect of this section of the description.

3. **Size and Shape**—What type of bird was it? (e.g. a grebe? a heron?) More importantly, how large was it? The best measure of comparison is another nearby

species. Remember that these species must be correctly identified to make the comparison valid. Differentiate between tallness and bulk. Many short-legged shore-birds are as large and bulky as long-legged species but are "shorter". If there is no yardstick for comparison, say so. Describe the shape using the same method.

4. Behaviour—Describe what the bird did. Was it sitting? flying? resting? preening? If it was feeding, was it probing in the mud, flycatching or drilling holes? If it flew, describe the flight pattern. Was it undulating or direct, weak or powerful? If it was swimming, how high was it in the water? Did it dive? How often? How did it take off? Did it pump or flick its tail or wings?

5. Vocalizations—Vocalizations are important, even the smallest chip-note. Try to be as precise as possible, although admittedly describing a call or song is very difficult. Avoid saying "It was the call of the Swainson's Warbler, with which I am totally familiar." This is not considered valid evidence. Was the song long or short, loud or soft, clear and liquid or harsh and chattery? Was it jumbled, continuous or crescendo? Use phonetics if you are familiar with them. However, I have rarely heard two people describe the same song with the same phonetics!

Discussion: In this section you should explain why you believe it to be the stated species. *Explain your reasoning and consideration of all similar species.* This can

include marks you checked for but did not see. Describe your experience, and that of other observers (if any), with the reported species, similar species, in similar plumage, other plumage. Include any reference material you have consulted during or after the observation and how it affected your decision, if at all. If you know of any observers who saw the bird but disagree with your identification or were not completely convinced list their names or persuade them to either submit their own written report or append and identify their comments to your report. The first and last dates of observation should be included, where possible.

To many experienced birders, the foregoing may seem insultingly obvious. Unfortunately some individuals continue to submit incomplete reports. To all observers, experienced to novice, I hope this guideline is of use. To summarize sight records again, the following are crucial. 1) Be as complete and precise as possible. 2) Do not assume anything. 3) Field notes, sketches and diagrams should be used, if possible.

A final selfish plea! Judging your peers records is already cause for much agonizing and soul-searching. Complete, well-written reports would make the job of future OBRC members much easier.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dave Brewer whose thoughts were extremely helpful in preparing this report. Also OBRC members, particularly Bob Curry for critical comments.

The First Breeding Record of Kirtland's Warbler in Ontario

by
Doris Huestis Speirs

The Kirtland's Warbler, *Dendroica kirtlandi*, is one of the rarest of our warblers. According to published records, in all of North America it has nested only in 13 counties of Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula, and only in Jack pines (*Pinus banksiana*) which are at least five or six years old and 0.3–1.8 m tall. It winters in scattered islands of the Bahamas (Walkinshaw 1983). The first specimen of the species was collected near Cleveland in 1851 and named after a distinguished Cleveland ornithologist, Dr. Jared Kirtland. The first Ontario specimen, a male, was collected at Toronto Island on 16 May 1900, by J. Hughes Samuel (Samuel 1900) and is in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (specimen #2241160).

In May 1916, Dr. Paul Harrington and Dr. Frederick Starr were training for artillery service at Petawawa Military Camp, Renfrew County, on the Ottawa River. To their great surprise they found Kirtland's Warbler to be fairly common on the Jack pine plains there. According to James L. Baillie Jr., of the Royal Ontario Museum, they "heard them singing their loud, clear, high-pitched and

somewhat ventriloquistic song, noticed their tail-wagging habit and determined that these rather large and tame warblers were distributed over a fairly large area and in the camp grounds" (Baillie 1952).

The species was not reported again at Petawawa until Dr. Harrington searched the Jack pine stands in the same camp area in June of 1939. On 5 June he saw a male Kirtland's Warbler at close range (Harrington 1939). Unfortunately at neither time was nesting confirmed.

In this note, I report the occurrence of a pair of adult Kirtland's Warblers near Midhurst, Ontario, in association with at least one, apparently still dependent, juvenile. I conclude that the pair nested in the local vicinity, thereby providing the first breeding record for this species in Ontario and the first breeding record from outside the state of Michigan. The Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) has accepted this record as the first breeding record for the province.

In 1945 my husband, J. Murray Speirs, was stationed at Barrie, Ontario, in connection with his appointment as a Meteorological Officer at Camp Borden. As many Jack pines had been planted in the

vicinity of the Camp, we searched them carefully in the hopes of locating Kirtland's Warblers. Also, as six acres had been planted in Jack pines at the Government Forestry Station, Midhurst, the Station Manager assisted us in searching their plantation thoroughly, but no Kirtland's Warblers were found.

We lived in a stone bungalow 10 kms northeast of Camp Borden, 23-26 kms from Midhurst in Oro Township, Simcoe County, Ontario, on the northwest shore of Kempenfeldt Bay, Lake Simcoe (44° 24' N, 79° 39' W and 230 m above sea level). The nearby vegetation included a huge oak tree which overshadowed our swinging outdoor couch and a woodland of smaller oaks (*Quercus* sp.) maples (*Acer* sp.), white birches (*Betula papyrifera*) and staghorn sumacs (*Rhus typhina*), with an understory of maple-leaved viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), golden-rod (*Solidago* sp.), bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), and poison ivy (*Rhus radicans*). There were also many large stones and stone outcroppings. There were no Jack pines in the immediate vicinity but a number of scattered red (*Pinus resinosa*) and white (*P. strobus*) pines.

On the morning of 8 August 1945, I saw a strange warbler with an indication of a wing-bar, white over the eye, yellowish-green breast, darkish back and very quick actions. I put it down as a "Kirtland's Warbler?". But how could a Kirtland's Warbler be here? A fall migrant on its way to the Bahamas?

The next day, 9 August, my notes read:

"3:30 p.m.— Warbler with bright yellow breast and streaks on the sides, brownish back, said 'tip-tip-tip' constantly and jerked tail. Made as much noise as a chipmunk and started one scolding and so both were talking at once. The warbler's 'tip' a little higher in tone than the chipmunk's. Moved about quickly in the trees atop the bluff and then flew chipping into the woods."

On 10 August, I recorded the following:

"The warbler with bright yellow breast and streaks on the sides is back here today at 3:05 p.m. Noted white undertail coverts, black on cheeks as though the stripes were continued into the face. He had wing-bars; secondaries appeared black edged with grey; throat yellow. The tail-wagging suggests a Palm Warbler. I went to Peterson's Field Guide immediately (Peterson 1934), . . . *Kirtland's Warbler*. The bird flew with characteristic zip and energy into one of the oaks which edge the east side of the garden. My binoculars picked up a fledgling in the shadow of the leaves. It was perched on a branch facing eastward. I noticed its short tail, rather fluffy plumage, brownish upperparts and indication of wing-bars. It stretched out one wing as I glanced at it. The bill was quite stout for a warbler's. I wondered whose child it was, but was so intent in trying to follow the movements of the adult bird the fledgling was given little attention by me. That it was given definite attention by the adult, only occurred to me in the night."

At the time I thought that the

adult warbler was a migrant en route to the Bahamas. That it had bred here never occurred to me at all. Twice as I followed the adult, my binoculars picked up the fledgling. Was it feeding it? For days the sound of baby birds being fed about the bungalow had been noted by both of us. Because of the presence of poison ivy, we had not studied the woodland east of the garden. Young Yellow-rumped Warblers (*Dendroica coronata*) and American Redstarts (*Setophaga ruticilla*) were being fed daily about the bungalow but we had neglected that east bush.

At 4:00 p.m. I discovered a second adult Kirtland's Warbler in the garden, apparently a female. It was busy preening, quite close to where I was observing. The yellow breast had two dark spots near the centre; the male's breast was clear yellow. The bird's behaviour was so different from the excited male's. It was absorbed in its preening and only gave an occasional 'tip' note as it wagged its tail. I observed that the tibia were yellow, the feet and upper mandible dark and there was a suggestion of white in the tail. So, we had a pair of Kirtland's Warblers.

The next morning, 11 August, I called on Dr. E. L. Brereton, a noted ornithologist from Barrie, and told him of our discoveries. He came out in the afternoon, but all was quiet. I had to leave by car to pick up Murray at the airport, but Dr. Brereton remained. On our way home we met him in Barrie. He was very excited; a new bird for his life list. He said he had left a note in the post office for us. It told how successful he had been in

observing the male firsthand for about 20 minutes. He wanted to collect this rare bird but had refrained as he knew I had been sure it was feeding young.

On 13 August I came upon a juvenile Kirtland's Warbler. That morning I had heard 'tip' note at 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. and had gone out to investigate in the east woodland, unsuccessfully. In the afternoon, at 3:55 p.m. exactly, the 'tip-tip-tip' notes were heard again. The sound was coming from a very large red oak (*Quercus rubra*). I leaned against the trunk of a tree near the big oak as I heard young birds being fed. Suddenly I saw an immature which flew to a dead twig on a nearby oak and remained there quietly for at least ten minutes. Undoubtedly it was a juvenile Kirtland's Warbler. The tail was not short, but there was some yellowish down near the bend of a wing. The bird remained very still, obviously conscious of being watched. I was able to make a page of careful notes on its plumage.

It is strange, but we had heard not one Kirtland song, just the many excited call-notes indicating the parents' concern for their young. That afternoon, before my discovery of the juvenile, I heard a sudden loud song from the Kirtland territory. It was an unfamiliar outburst, a new song to me. It commenced quietly but accelerated into a thrilling crescendo, all in the space of a few seconds. In the stillness of the afternoon woods, it was as surprising as seeing a meteor in the night sky. Four years later, on 8 May 1949, we each heard a

different male singing in the Kirtland's Warbler country, Kalkaska County, Michigan. We were startled by the sudden joyous, ringing song.

On 16-17 August, I went to the Royal Ontario Museum and studied the tray of Kirtland's Warblers in the Bird Room under James L. Baillie's kind direction. I had with me my detailed description of the young Kirtland's Warbler. A specimen in immature plumage on the tray closely resembled it. Baillie said that there was no doubt the juvenile I saw was a Kirtland's. Of the nine specimens I examined, only the adult male, which had been collected on Toronto Island in May, 1900, had an immaculate yellow breast like our male. Two females had several spots on their breasts while ours had only two. On my return to the stone bungalow the Kirtland's Warblers seemed to have left. There was neither sound nor sight of them. However, on 31 August at 8:30 a.m. I heard the 'tip' note several times. Hurrying out with binoculars, I espied several warblers dashing about in the treetops northeast of the bungalow. Then I saw a Kirtland's Warbler in a large oak above the incinerator. He jerked his tail from time to time as he ran along the branches after insects. He was very active and hard to follow with the glasses. At 8:45, as an Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) and Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) were singing, the male Kirtland's Warbler called out loudly again. Four Northern Flickers (*Colaptes auratus*) flew

into a tree near him and then he was gone, probably leaving the nesting grounds for good.

Dr. Lawrence H. Walkinshaw (Walkinshaw 1939) wrote prophetically in an article on *Dendroica kirtlandi*:

"It seems logical that it will eventually be found in Ontario breeding."

His prophecy has been confirmed.

[Eds. note: Excluding the Barrie records and those from the Petawawa area (during the years 1916, 1939, 1946 and 1977) there are about 25 additional records of the Kirtland's Warbler in Ontario which are generally considered valid. These comprise spring migrants (20 records), summer (apparently territorial) birds (3 records) and fall migrants (2 records). Few of these records, however, have been reviewed by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (A. Wormington, OBRC Secretary, pers. comm.)]

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Notes

A Winter Record of a Veery in Ontario

On 27 December 1983, we observed a single Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*) at Lakeside Park, Kitchener, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Ontario.

The 18 ha park contains a 1.5 ha kettle lake surrounded by a narrow fringe of aquatic emergents. The eastern side of the lake is dominated by an open, immature forest of poplar (*Populus tremuloides*), while the northern and western sides are shrubby in aspect. The remainder of the park is maintained lawn with occasional large trees, particularly black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), and Norway acer (*Acer platanoides*), and sugar maple (*A. saccharum*). The park is surrounded by residences on three sides and a busy street on the fourth. Habitats of Lakeside Park are described in more detail by Dance (1982).

The bird was first seen at 0845 h at a distance of approximately 7 m. It was facing us, perched 3 m

above the ground on a limb of a Norway maple. With the aid of 7 x 35 and 7 x 50 binoculars we could see the slender, dark bill and the faint brown spots on the upper portion of the white breast. A minute later, it flew into a tangle of wild grape (*Vitis riparia*) and then 10 m up into a sugar maple.

Although the weather was overcast and it was snowing lightly, the brownish back and tail were clearly visible. After approximately two minutes, it flew away and was temporarily lost from sight.

An hour later, it was observed again in a buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*). It was 2 m from the ground and was approached to within 3 m. From this distance, all necessary field marks could easily be distinguished: the uniformly coloured tawny reddish brown back and tail; the light brown spots on the upper portion of the breast; the brownish cheeks; and the absence of an eye-ring.

The Veery was observed in this location for three minutes, until we left without disturbing it further. While in the buckthorn, it had its feathers puffed up and appeared to be oblivious of our presence. This, plus the atypical behaviour of perching out in the open, suggested that the bird was under stress. It was not seen again on subsequent visits to the park.

The normal winter range of the Veery is South America from Colombia and Venezuela south to central Brazil (A.O.U. 1983). It has not previously been recorded in Canada in winter (Godfrey 1966) and the latest fall date reported previously for Ontario is 20 October (James *et al.* 1976).

In the southeastern United States, it is an early fall migrant, with the latest recorded dates for Alabama and Louisiana being 26 and 29 October, respectively (Imhof 1976, Lowery 1974). A sight record on 1 January 1877 in Texas was rejected by Bent (1949) because no specimen was secured.

A review of the Winter Season section of *American Birds* revealed that only eight winter Veery records were reported for North America in the past ten years. Two of these were injured or ill birds. The one present at Greenwich Point, Connecticut, 2-8 January 1980 had a damaged wing (Vickery 1980) while a Veery at Geneva, New York, on 28 December 1975 was obviously ill (Kibbe 1976). The other six records in the past decade are: one at Warren, Pennsylvania, on 21 December 1979 (Hall 1980); one at Aransas, Texas, on 8 January 1980 (Webster 1980); one at

Woodstock, Vermont, on 3 December 1976 (Kibbe 1977); one at Phelps, New York, on 16 January 1983 (Kibbe and Boise 1983); one at Little Creek, Virginia, on 27 December 1973 (Scott and Cutler 1974); and one which survived the winter of 1973-74 on Goose Island, Texas (Webster 1974). With the exception of the Texas area, the Veery seems unable to withstand North American winters.

December 1983 was harsher than average, so the presence of the Veery cannot be attributed to exceptionally warm weather. The weather station at the Kitchener-Waterloo airport reported an average temperature of -6°C , six degrees below normal. Two moderately severe snow storms occurred in December, and a total snowfall of 31.5 cm was experienced, more than the total snowfall for the previous winter.

From the literature examined, this appears to be the first winter record of a Veery for Ontario and Canada, and one of very few North American winter records.

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A Winter Record of the Gray-cheeked Thrush in Ontario

The autumn migration of the Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) through southern Ontario occurs primarily during September and October. Sightings of birds in December, presumably lingering migrants, are very rare. This note reports on the acquisition of the first "winter" specimen of the species for the province.

While birdwatching near the tip of Point Pelee National Park (Essex County) on 8 December 1981, I located a Gray-cheeked Thrush standing quietly under some vegetation. After viewing the bird for several minutes I went to the visitor centre to find others who might be interested in seeing it. Alan Wormington accompanied

me back to the area and we quickly relocated the bird. We were able to approach within four m when Wormington suggested that it might not be able to fly. Indeed, it could not and we captured the bird in order to photograph it. Unfortunately, it died shortly afterwards. The specimen, now in the National Museum of Canada (#75043), is a female and judging from the plumage condition and skull, it is likely an adult (Richard Poulin, pers. comm.). Although the bird showed no apparent injuries it weighed only 27.1 g. Bruce Di Labio of the N.M.C. provided weights of nine specimens taken in Ontario in the autumn and found they ranged from 25.0 g to 35.0 g (average = 30.6 g). This lighter than average weight and the fact that there was virtually no fat on the bird, suggests this individual may have been starving.

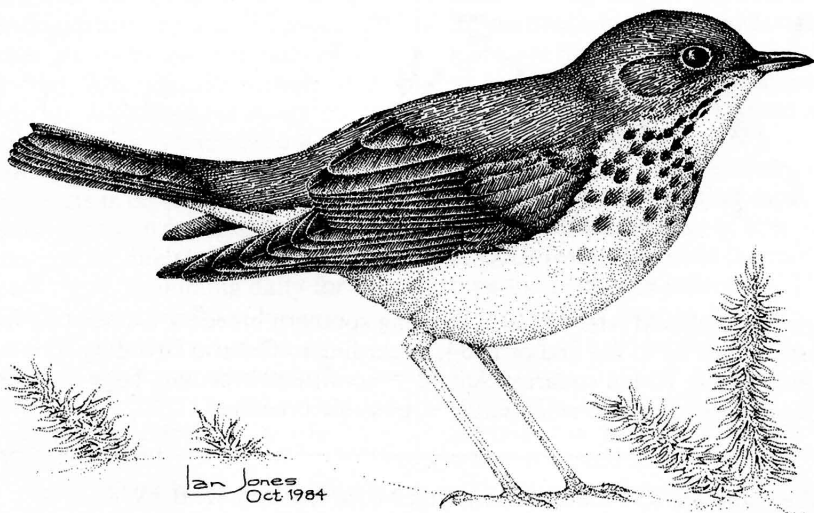
The wing chord was measured

to determine if this individual belonged to the smaller subspecies *C.m. bicknelli*. However at 98 mm, it was well above the 93 mm maximum of that race and represents the common subspecies in the province, *C.m. minimus*.

I have been able to locate only two other winter records of the Gray-cheeked Thrush for Ontario. The first was of a bird seen by W. Ellsworth at Hillier, (Prince Edward County) on 23 December 1969 (*Aud. Field Notes* 24:499) and the second, a bird seen near Kingston (Frontenac County) on 18 December 1977 by F. Avis and A. Hutchinson (*Amer. Birds* 32:461-462). In both cases good details were submitted (T. Sprague and R. Weir, pers. comm.).

I would like to thank B.M. Di Labio, Dr. Ross James, R. Poulin, T. Sprague and R. Weir for their assistance in locating information for this note.

R.D. McRae, 623 Homewood Ave., Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 4V4



Atlas Mystery Map

The breeding distribution of the Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), as determined by the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, was illustrated in the last issue of *Ontario Birds* (2:40-41). In this issue the distribution of a mystery

bird is portrayed. Can you identify the species? Send your answers to the Editors before 15 November 1984; names of those who identified the species correctly will appear in the December issue of *Ontario Birds*.

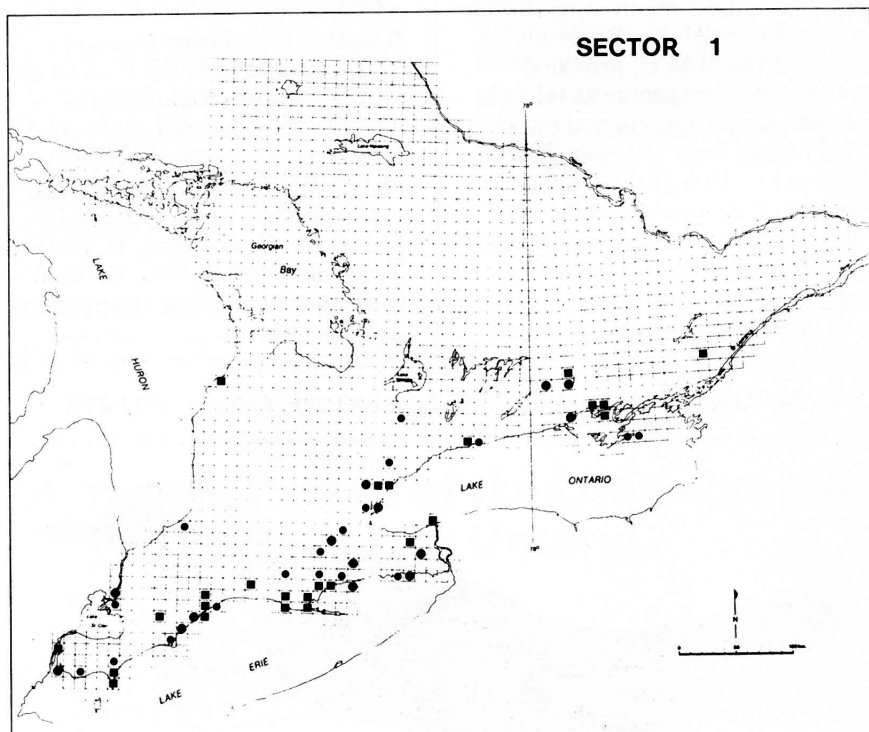


Figure 1. Atlas Mystery Map 1 showing southern breeding distribution for mystery bird up to the end of 1984, according to Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. Within 10 km squares: Square = confirmed breeding, large circle = probable breeding and small circle = possible breeding.

Mike Cadman, 355 Lesmill Rd., Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2W8

Book Reviews

Two in the Bush. 1982. By Rosemary Gaymer. Amethyst, Oakville. 104 pp. \$7.95 from author at Box 152, Oakville, Ont. L6J 4Z5.

This slim volume is a collection of essays on encounters between Gaymer and various denizens of nature in North America. The setting ranges through much of Canada, U.S.A. and the French islands of St. Pierre-et-Miquelon, but most are in Ontario. Subjects of the 2-7 page accounts range from crickets to chipmunks, with a predominance of birds.

Two in the Bush is not written as a book of facts or hot "birding" sites, but like most contributions of its genre contains numerous tidbits of biology (hummingbirds bathing by swinging aerially through a sprinkler) and identification tips (only waxwings have yellow terminal tail bands; ducks can be distinguished at great distances from grebes by their manner of diving). Although the author delights in such out-of-range sightings as a White-tailed Kite sailing over Mt. St. Helen's, her emphasis is on learning more about common species. In fact, she changes her life style at times to learn more, swimming daily for awhile with a family of loons or sandwiching the rest of the day between pre-dawn alarms and river-bank suppers to follow the daily movements of a Canada Goose brood.

Gaymer's enthusiastic writing

style is bound to kindle interest in any budding naturalist as she portrays vultures rising on thermals, unsuccessful attempts by a duckweed-draped turtle to climb on to a log, chipmunk-woodpecker altercations, and aerial chases of Mourning Cloak butterflies. Seasoned naturalists will alternate between reminders of familiar incidents and fascination at new behaviours of old friends. Gaymer avoids the over generalization of much nature writing partly by concentrating on specific incidents and partly by carefully qualifying her few general statements.

The only error I found in the book was the use of "particular" for particularly (p. 50), although there are inconsistencies in British vs. American spelling (behaviour p. 25; behavior p. 27). I found no errors of fact, but Gaymer's comment on the conspecificity of North American and European creepers is unfortunate in light of A.O.U. revisions about the same time the book was published. The photograph of the pan-handling nuthatch and pleasant sketches of E.B. "Bev" Sanders adequately complement the writing. My only complaint is the lack of an index, which is bound to frustrate me while I search for some tidbit

relevant to some future behavioural note that I wish to write. The title mystifies me, as most of the observations are by Gaymer alone, and the same title was used earlier in another book of the same genre by Gerald Durrell.

Evaluation of nature writing, like nature art, depends somewhat on taste. For me, the test is whether the author can transform me back to some of my own encounters. Gaymer passed my

test with glowing colours as she evoked memories of watching grebes with wet feet, hummingbirds singling me out as the food provider, and a beach that *had* to host Piping Plovers, through her descriptions of grebe behaviour, her personalized nuthatch and her own Piping Plover story. Naturalists who enjoy the writings of Hugh Halliday, Louise de Kiriline Lawrence or Bob Symons will cherish *Two in the Bush*.

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Birds of North America: A Guide to Field Identification. Second Edition, 1983. *Chandler S. Robbins, Bertel Bruun, and Herbert S. Zim.* Illustrated by Arthur Singer. Golden Press: New York. 360 pp., \$9.95 paperbound.

When I was first introduced to birdwatching in the early 1970s, I was weaned almost entirely on the first edition of the *Golden Guide* (1966). Despite Roger Tory Peterson's reputation as the father of the modern field guide, his illustrations seemed too small, too simplistic, too lifeless. By contrast, Arthur Singer's renderings were exactly as the birds appeared in the field. The text was concise yet enlightening; the multi-coloured range maps so much more informative than the written description provided in *Peterson's*.

Seventeen years later, Golden Press has released "an expanded,

revised" second edition of its famous guide. Unlike its predecessor, this book is a major disappointment.

It has been "expanded" (more birds, more pages, more illustrations) and it has been "revised" (new text, new range maps, new names) but in my opinion it has not been "improved" in any way. There has been no attempt to keep abreast of recent advancements in field identification.

Few field guides live up to their billing and this one is certainly no exception. Several grandiose claims are made which bear closer scrutiny.

1. "Art revisions range from small

color improvements and helpful additional details . . . to entirely new plates and many more paintings of individual birds.”

Eleven new plates have been included in the second edition, illustrating vagrant shearwaters, godwits, curlews, Eurasian peeps, immature terns (2), parrots, vagrant thrushes, wagtails, Eurasian pipits, and vagrant finches. With the exception of the parrots, all the plates appear blurred and washed out.

Many of the original plates have been retained from the first edition. For some inexplicable reason, however, others have been entirely repainted. While the content is unchanged, the quality has been compromised. Less attention is given to detail, a tendency that is most apparent in dark-mantled gulls (p. 142), western *Empidonax* flycatchers (p. 214) and fall warblers (pp. 294-5).

2. “Special emphasis is given to the different plumages of each species.”

Despite the inclusion of many species previously not pictured, the illustrations are replete with omissions and/or errors, e.g.

- The distinctive “Clark’s” race of the Western Grebe is not pictured.
- Unlike other members of the genus *Pluvialis*, Black-bellied Plovers possess a hind toe (hallux). This morphological characteristic now has been omitted in both editions. While admittedly an insignificant field mark, the new *National Geographic Society Guide* has seen fit to illustrate it correctly.
- With their complex sequence of season- and age-related plum-

ages, gulls are probably the most challenging of all birds to illustrate accurately. However, the gull plates in this guide are fraught with mistakes, e.g. the adult Thayer’s Gull pictured in flight on page 145. Anyone who identifies a Thayer’s Gull on the basis of this illustration has almost certainly seen either a Herring Gull or a *Larus* new to science. Although the bird pictured resembles a gull, it displays none of the marks which would even remotely suggest Thayer’s.

- As Paul Lehman pointed out in a recent issue of *Birding* (Vol. 15: 228-30), the head patterns depicted in the winter plumage of Royal and Elegant Terns (p. 155) have been reversed. This error has also survived both editions.
- Two of the most important field marks used to distinguish Lesser from Common Night-hawk in flight (p. 183), the shorter, outermost primary and the wider band of white in the tail, are neither indicated nor mentioned.
- No less than 18 different individuals representing seven species of woodpeckers are crowded onto page 199. The new Red-breasted Sapsucker is given particularly cursory treatment; less than two lines of text, a shared range map and a relabelled illustration showing only the upper half of the bird.
- The picture of Traill’s Flycatcher used in the 1966 edition has been relabelled as *both* Willow and Alder (p. 213). Rather than recognizing subtle, yet important morpho-

logical differences between the two, emphasis is given solely to differences in vocalizations.

- The new plate illustrating Asian pipits (p. 257) is flawed by the inclusion of a series of black and white tail patterns on the opposite page. Based on this illustration, the tails of Asian pipits appear virtually identical!
- 3. "The text has been extensively revised throughout to incorporate new knowledge."

In actual fact, there are few revisions, of which most involve minor changes such as the addition and/or deletion of several words. If you possess both editions, select several pages at random and compare them.

The Little Gull is still described as a "European straggler and rare breeder". This species is now clearly established in the east. It is ridiculous to suppose that the majority of Great Lakes sightings involve birds that originated overseas.

- 4. "Special features of this guide that have been retained include Sonagrams."

I have always ignored Sonagrams, perhaps because of a high school aversion to any form of "written" music. Nevertheless, in the introduction of this guide, one is assured that "with a little practice, Sonagrams are handy for field use." To illustrate this, a description of the musical components of an American Robin's song is given: "Middle C has a frequency of 0.262 kHz. The frequency doubles with each

succeeding octave: C' is 0.523, C'' is 1.046, C''' is 2.093, and C'''' (top note on the piano) is 4.186 khz." Sure sounds like a Robin to me!

- 5. "The latest English names of the American Birding Association (A.B.A. checklist, 2nd ed., 1982) are used in this guide."

Although the scientific names used conform to the most recent A.O.U. checklist, the taxonomic sequence has not been revised to reflect the current phylogenetic order of North American birds.

- 6. "As most subspecies cannot be told in the field, very few are included in this guide."

This is clearly a cop-out statement, intended to obscure the lack of recognizable races and subspecies portrayed. It is also a further indication that this edition has failed to acknowledge recent advancements in the field identification of subspecies.

- 7. "A rare bird . . . is usually only found by an experienced observer."

This is a patently absurd statement. Not only is it an insult to the many novice birders who have experienced the thrill of discovering and identifying a rarity, it again exemplifies the archaic attitudes of the authors.

- 8. "The authority."

In its day, the *Golden Guide* was arguably the best North American guide available. The release of a revised *Peterson's* and the recent emergence of the heir apparent, the NGS guide, have combined to topple the *Golden Guide* from its once lofty perch.

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Ontario Field Ornithologists

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

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

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