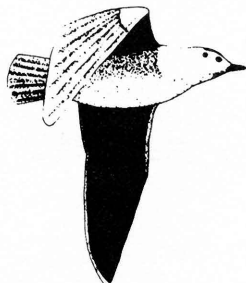


ONTARIO BIRDS

The Journal of the
Ontario Field Ornithologists

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Ontario Birds

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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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Cover Illustration: Saw-whet Owl by Ron Ridout. Copies of this original drawing will be given to anyone who sponsors an OFO Counter for at least 10¢ in the Baillie Birdathon. The original drawing will be raffled at our Spring Meeting at Point Pelee on 11 May 1985.

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors,
 After receiving my copy of *Ontario Birds* (December 1984) and reading it from cover to cover in record time, I felt compelled to write and pass on my compliments to you. Ian Jones' cover illustration of Ross' Gull is striking at the very least. Martin McNicholl's guest editorial "On Writing Observational Notes" provided me with impetus to contribute more in the future. I found "The Status and Distribution of the Prairie Warbler in Ontario" of particular interest to me in light of the breeding occurrence of this species near our summer cottage at Pointe au Baril.

I was also pleased to read Jim Richards' letter to the editors re: inclusion of the "Atlas Mystery Map" game/quiz and that it should not be included in *Ontario Birds* so as to not to emulate ABA's *Birding*. His letter showed true concern for the quality of *Ontario Birds*.

I was even more pleased to read the editors' rebuttal to Mr. Richards' letter and found it to be well presented and logical (and I even agreed with them).

But, the most fun of all – after all of that, was to read that the same Jim Richards, was the *only* one to correctly guess that Orchard Oriole was the bird depicted in the "Atlas Mystery Map". Well done, Jim!!

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely
 Reid Wilson
 Pickering, Ontario

Dear Editors:

As an Ontario birder, I find it disconcerting that I am currently using an (outdated?) supplement to *American Birds*—"On the Building of a Basic Ornithological Library" as a reference to build such a library.

I would like to suggest that OFO borrow this idea. A list of "X" number of books deemed requisite to a balanced Ontario birder's library would, I think, be a worthwhile addition to *Ontario Birds*.

Might not a half dozen or so of our more knowledgeable members be persuaded to submit their lists of indispensable reference works and favourite general works for compilation and publication of a Master List?

Keep up the good work!

Jim Heslop
 Brampton, Ontario

Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 1984

by
Alan Wormington

This is the third annual report of the Ontario Field Ornithologists' Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC). It contains a total of 190 records, of which 136 have been accepted. These figures represent an acceptance rate of about 72%.

This report officially adds Mongolian Plover and Swainson's Warbler to Ontario's Checklist of Birds, bringing the provincial total to 429 species. Additionally, changes to the North/South lists for Ontario (see *Ontario Birds* 2:13-23) are: (1) deletion of Prairie Warbler from the North, and (2) addition of American Swallow-tailed Kite to the North based on a previously accepted record (*Ontario Birds* 2:56), but mistakenly overlooked by OBRC as a northern Ontario occurrence.

The 1984 Committee consisted of Robert Curry (Chairman), Alan Wormington (Secretary), A. David Brewer, G. Thomas Hince, R.D. McRae, Ronald J. Pittaway and Dennis F. Rupert. The Committee acknowledges the fine support of all observers who have taken the time to submit their records, thus helping to document the status of rare birds in Ontario.

New reports should continue to be sent to the OBRC Secretary. We further encourage documentation of rare birds which are *not* on the Committee's official review list – these reports can also be forwarded to the OBRC Secretary or sent directly to the Royal Ontario Museum (Ornithology Dept.) where they will be permanently filed.

The documents and photographs forming the basis for records published by the OBRC, together with all Committee votes and comments, are permanently housed in the Ornithology Department of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. All photographic material received by the Committee is incorporated into the existing ROM photographic collection; the purposes of this collection have been outlined previously by James (1977). All interested parties are at liberty to examine the files of the OBRC by making an appointment with the curators of the ROM.

Historical Records

In addition to reviewing current records, it is the intention of the

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OBRC to eventually review all records of rarities in Ontario for which a written description, photograph and/or specimen exists. With the publication of this third annual report, just over 500 records (of an estimated total of 1100) have now been processed. Along these lines we urge all contributors to submit written descriptions or photographs of older records since such material may in fact pertain to records totally unknown to the Committee.

The current report includes all Mississippi Kite and Swainson's Hawk records available to the Committee: 65 Point Pelee records, and 19 Rondeau-area records (the latter assembled courtesy of P. Allen Woodliffe). Plans in 1985 include a review of all specimen records of the National Museum of Canada, Royal Ontario Museum and Buffalo Museum of Natural Sciences.

Research Sub-committee

In 1984 a Research Sub-committee of the OBRC was formed. The purposes of the Sub-committee are to support the operations of the OBRC by tackling a number of specific research projects, including (1) researching and gathering together documents/photographs pertaining to historical records; (2) locating specimens in university, small museum and private collections; and (3) arranging the preparation of status reports on species where the wild vs. captive origin could be controversial, example species being Greater Flamingo, Tufted

Duck, Baikal Teal and Painted Bunting to name a few. (The recent paper on the status of the Barnacle Goose in North America (Ryff 1984), where virtually all records are convincingly argued as pertaining to escapees, could serve as a model). Membership in the Sub-committee is 'open' and the OBRC invites anyone with an interest in assisting on any of the above projects to contact the OBRC Secretary.

Species Accounts

In the following accounts, all records pertain to single birds unless otherwise noted. If known, information on age/sex/plumage is included. The term 'alternate' refers to summer/breeding plumage, while the term 'basic' refers to winter/non-breeding plumage. Place names in italics refer to a County, Regional Municipality or District in Ontario. Credited contributors are those who have provided a written description, photograph or specimen. If the persons discovering a bird have submitted documentation, their names are given first and are separated from any others by a diagonal slash '/'. All records are sight records unless the bird is indicated as having been photographed or collected. I have attempted to determine the entire period when birds were present, obtaining this information from the observers themselves, seasonal summaries in *American Birds*, regional publications and other sources. Obtaining this information continues to be extremely time-consuming for the Committee;

contributors are asked to research occurrence dates *fully* before submitting a record. The comments following each species are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the OBRC. Corrections to any of

the information presented are welcome.

(Eds. Comment: We would greatly appreciate comments from our readers on the new format of the OBRC Report.)

ACCEPTED RECORDS

Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*)

- 1984—alternate adult, 23 April, Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (Ron D. Weir)
 —basic adult, 1 May, Whitby, *Durham* (Margaret Bain)
 —basic adult, 21-22 May, Whitby, *Durham* (Margaret Bain)

Few records exist for southern Ontario in spring, thus three in one year is exceptional. Perhaps related to these occurrences, Red-throated Loons were in above average numbers during Spring 1984 (also on Lake Ontario) with numerous individuals remaining throughout the summer.

Northern Gannet (*Sula bassanus*)

- 1983—adult, 13 May, Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (R.K.F. Edwards)
 1973—first-winter, 25 Nov., Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Jeffrey A. Greenhouse, Joseph P. Kleiman, James W. Wilson, Sr.)

Virtually all Great Lakes Gannets pertain to immature birds in fall-winter. Adults, when they occur, have been in spring, which suggests a Gulf of Mexico origin rather than 'leftovers' from fall. A recent adult in central Indiana on 18 April 1981 (*Am. Birds* 35:828) supports this hypothesis.

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)

- 1983—two, 28 Aug., Presqu'île Prov. Park, *Northumberland* (Joan Thomson, John Thomson)
 —imm., 18 Nov. - 8 Dec. (not only 18-27 Nov. as in *Am. Birds* 38:196), Port Dover/Nanticoke, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Terrie Woodrow)- photo on file.

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

- 1984—adult, 1 Feb., Squire's Beach, *Durham* (J. Murray Speirs)

Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*)

- 1984—juvenile, 21 Aug., Atikokan, *Rainy River* (David H. Elder) - photos on file.

One of very few records for northern Ontario, this unfortunate individual was captured downtown in front of a store; it was subsequently released in a cattail marsh.

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*)

- 1984—adult, 14 May, Presqu'île Prov. Park, *Northumberland* (R.D. McRae)
 1980—adult, 2-5 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Kevin McLaughlin)
 1964—adult, 12 May, Wheatley, *Kent* (Robert Curry)



Least Bittern, juvenile, 21 Aug. 1984, Atikokan, *Rainy River*. Photo by David H. Elder.

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)

- 1984—adult, 29 April, Smithville, *Niagara* (Roy E.C. Baker) – photos on file.
 —adult, 30 April, Wye Marsh, *Simcoe* (David J. Hawke) – photo on file.
 —adult, 13-17 May, Amherst Island, *Lennox and Addington* (Joel H. Ellis)
 —first summer, 28 May, Stoney Point, *Essex* (Alan J. Ryff)
 1981—adult, 25 April, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe)
 1959—adult, 1 May, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent* (R.D. Ussher)

For details of the 1959 Rondeau bird see Ussher (1961). Years ago numbers of Little Blue Heron in Ontario far exceeded those of Tricolored Heron; recently, however, the former species has seemingly been recorded less and less and the Tricolored more frequently, with the current result being about equal occurrences of both.

Green-backed Heron (*Butorides striatus*)

- 1984—27 May, Rainy River, *Rainy River* (William J. Crins)

There are very few records for northern Ontario, but the repeated observations at Rainy River indicates that the species probably breeds in this area.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax violaceus*)

- 1981—adult, 5 April, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Jeffrey Bennett)
 —adult, 10-21 May (not only 10-12 May as in *Am. Birds* 35:817), Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Thomas A. Murray, Terrie Smith/C. Towe).
 1977—adult, 5-14 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Michael J. Austin/Martin F. Whitehead, J. Robertson Graham) – photo on file.

1974—juvenile, 22-24 Aug. (not only 24 Aug. as in *Am. Birds* 29:49), Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Robert Curry)

The April 5th bird represents the earliest spring date for Ontario.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

1984—adult, 14 May, Stoney Point, *Essex* (Margaret Wilson, Reid Wilson)

Ibis sp. (*Plegadis* sp.)

1984—adult, 14 May, Point Pelee N. Park, *Essex* (William A. Martin)

Recently the OBRC has decided that reports of *Plegadis* ibis must clearly differentiate between the two species. Glossy Ibis is the expected species in Ontario, but White-faced Ibis (*P. chihi*) has occurred in New York, Ohio, Michigan and Minnesota and is, therefore, a potential (probably overdue) addition to Ontario's avifauna. The future appearance of a *Plegadis* ibis in Ontario west of Lake Superior would almost certainly pertain to White-faced.

Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*)

1983—adult female, 22 Oct., Lower Rideau Lake, *Lanark* (Ted Curtis) – specimen in NMC: #75124.

Details of this record have been published by Di Labio and Blacquiere (1984).

Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

1979—adult, 20 March, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Gary Tetzlaff) – photos on file.

Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*)

1984—pair, 23 June-2 July, male to 21 July, Townsend sewage lagoons, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Robert Curry) – specimen (head) in ROM: #150121.

Unfortunately, the death of the female bird (cause unknown) put an end to the inevitable nesting of this pair. The record closely parallels the first recorded Ontario nesting in 1983 at Amherstburg, *Essex* (also at a sewage lagoon), some 1500 km east of the species' normal breeding range (see *Ontario Birds* 2:24-25).

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

1984—adult male, 14-21 Oct., Wolfe Island, *Frontenac* (James Mountjoy)

1983—first winter male, 15 Nov.-18 Dec. (not only 15 Nov.-2 Dec. as in *Am. Birds* 38:196), Niagara Falls, *Niagara* (Robert F. Andrie, Richard W. Knapton, Richard Byron)

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

1983/1984—first winter male, 26 Dec.-25 March, Hamilton, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Robert Curry)

1983—adult male, 15 Dec., Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe)

1981—adult male, 24 Jan.-8 March, Hamilton, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Kevin McLaughlin/Gordon Bellerby)

The 1981 bird is believed to be the same individual present at the same locality (and briefly at nearby Oakville, *Halton*) during the winter of 1982-83 (see *Ontario Birds* 2:56). It was apparently not present during the

winter of 1981-82. The 1983-84 first winter male is believed to be the adult male present during the winter of 1984-85 (record currently under review by the OBRC). The site tenacity of other wintering waterfowl in Ontario (e.g. Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye) is well-known.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*)

1964—female, 30 June, Rosspport, *Thunder Bay* (Gerry Bennett)

There are very few records for northern Ontario and this bird also represents one of four summering records for the province as a whole; the other three summer occurrences are in the south.

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)

1965—male, 28 June, Nipigon, *Thunder Bay* (Gerry Bennett)

This is one of few northern Ontario occurrences and the first summer record for the province as a whole. The only other summer record was at Ottawa, *Ottawa-Carleton*, on 1-2 July 1979 (*Am. Birds* 33:859). Like the Harlequin Duck, birds do not breed until two years old (Palmer 1976); therefore summering records of both species should be expected from time to time.

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

1984—16-17 Feb., Long Point Prov. Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (David Shepard, Terrie Woodrow/Mark Jennings) – photos on file.

—31 March, Point Pelee Nat. Park and Hillman Marsh, *Essex*, and Bothwell, *Kent* (Karl Overman/Sol Hanft) – photos on file.

The Long Point bird represents the first winter occurrence in Ontario. The other bird was first detected at Point Pelee's tip at sunrise, shortly thereafter over the park's East Beach, about noon at nearby Hillman Marsh and finally, late in the day, some 80 km to the northeast at Bothwell. Such examples of 'tracking' individual rarities in this manner are few indeed but always intriguing.

American Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)

1978—15 and 22 May, Sturgeon Creek (15th), Point Pelee Nat. Park (22nd), *Essex* (Douglas Jackson, Carl Urquhart, Alvin T. Shireman, Tony Smith/Doug Knuff, Barry Cherriere) – photo on file.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

1984—first summer, 19-26 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Ronnie Howard, Ray Berry, J. Robertson Graham) – photos on file.

—adult, 21 May, Strabane, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (James Marsh)

1979—first summer, 16-20 May (not only 16-17 May as in Goodwin [1980]; not 16 May as in Kelley [1983]), Hillman Marsh (16th), Point Pelee Nat. Park (16th to 20th), *Essex* (M.J. Bronskill, K.A. Quickert/Peter Maker, Donald R. Gunn, Alan Worrington) – photos on file.

1977—adult, 28 May, Long Beach, *Niagara* (Thomas W. Weir)

1971—adult, 21 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Anthony Parsons, Roger E. Coker, Robert H. Westmore)

1964—first summer, 17 May, Bradley's Marsh, *Kent* (Eric Tull, Ronald J. Pittaway)

These records bring the total occurrences in Ontario to seven. Remarkably, all have occurred during the 13-day period from May 16th to 28th inclusive.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

- 1984—light phase first summer, 14 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Bret Whitney)
 —light phase imm., 19-27 Sept., Rock Point Prov. Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Bruce Duncan)
- 1982—light phase adult, 25 May, Moose River mouth, *Cochrane* (Daniel F. Brunton)
- 1976—light phase adult, 19 Sept., Port Stanley, *Elgin* (Harold H. Axtell)
 —light phase imm., 3 Oct. (not 3-4 Oct. as in *Am. Birds* 31:170), Port Stanley, *Elgin* (Marshall Field, John Lemon)
- 1975—light phase imm., 13 Sept., Port Stanley, *Elgin* (Marshall Field, Gary Mulawka/Anne Ionson) – photos on file.
- 1933—light phase, 22 Oct., Burlington, *Halton* (George W. North)
- 1894—dark phase adult female, 22 May, Willowdale, *Metropolitan Toronto* (J.H. Fleming) specimen in ROM: #35982
- 1890—light phase imm. male, 5 Sept., Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (William Cross) – specimen in ROM: #35987

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

- 1984—intermediate, 18 March, Port Royal, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Rosemary Gaymer)
- 1983—intermediate, 10 April, Wolfe Island, *Frontenac* (John D. Reynolds, Sylfest Muldal)

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*)

- 1984—adult, 3 May-27 June, Stoney Point, *Essex* (Ronald J. Pittaway/J. Robertson Graham, Barry Cherriere) – photos on file.
- 1980—juvenile, 17 Oct., Kingston, *Frontenac* (Kit Chubb) – photo on file.



Purple Gallinule, 3 May – 27 June 1984, Stoney Point, *Essex*. Photo by Barry Cherriere.

Mongolian Plover (*Charadrius mongolus*)

1984—alternate, 4 May, Presqu'ile Prov. Park, *Northumberland* (R.D. McRae/James Mountjoy) – photos on file.

In his report to the OBRC, the discoverer of this bird states “. . . up the beach I saw another bird. For the first second or so it was facing directly away and looked similar to a Killdeer, but then it turned its head toward me and I just about died! Had I been 10 years older I would have been discovered as a tideline corpse – the victim of a massive heart attack . . . this bird was such a shock to me that [afterwards] I even saw the damn bird in my dreams!!!” Full details of this first Ontario (and Canadian) record are presented elsewhere in this issue.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

1984—26 April, Presqu'ile Prov. Park, *Northumberland* (R.D. McRae) – photo on file.

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*)

1984—alternate female, 19-16 May, Bright's Grove, *Lambton* (Rob Tymstra) – photo on file.

—alternate male, 23-26 May, Port McNicoll, *Simcoe* (David J. Hawke) – photo on file.

—basic male, 23 Sept.-2 Oct., Blenheim, *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe) – photo on file.

—basic female, 23 Oct., Hamilton, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (William Lamond).

1980—alternate male, 6-9 June, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Donald M. Fraser) –photos on file.

The Toronto June 9th occurrence is the latest involving an alternate-plumaged spring migrant in Ontario.

Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*)

1984—23 Sept., Middleboro Island, Moose River, *Cochrane* (R.D. McRae)

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

1984—imm., 30 Sept., Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Ron Ridout)

1975—second summer, 24 May, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent* (Robert Curry)

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*)

1984—juvenile, 3 Sept., Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe)

1973—adult summer, 3-5 May, Bronte, *Halton* (Mark Jennings) – photos on file.

—adult summer, 22 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Harold H. Axtell)

1969—juvenile, 18-19 Sept., Port Stanley, *Elgin* (Harold H. Axtell)

The above are four typical records. Most birds of this species occur in spring and are exclusively adult or near-adult birds; the majority appear in May and occasionally linger through June, rarely to early July. Fall-winter birds are almost exclusively in juvenile/first winter plumage.

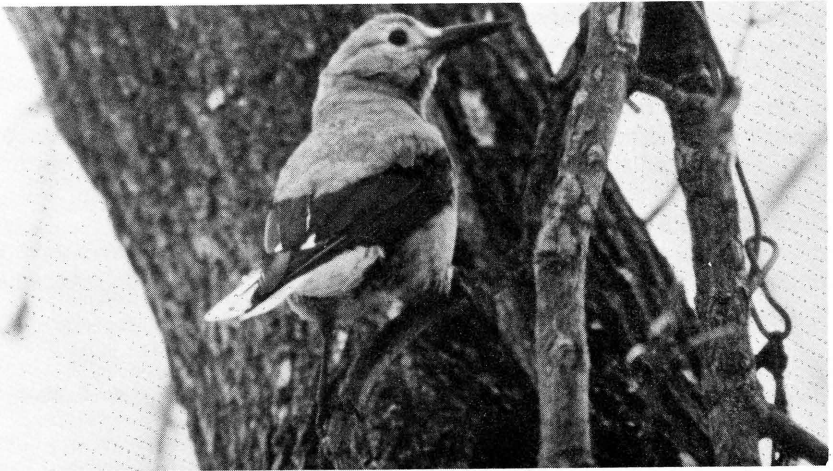
Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)

1979—adult, 30 Nov., Sarnia, *Lambton* (Dennis F. Rupert)

Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*)

1978—adult, 6 July (not 16 July as in Kelley [1983]), Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Mark Gawn, Simon Gawn, Jim Wilson Jr.)

This represents the second of four records now known for Ontario.



Clark's Nutcracker, 14 Nov. 1972 – 19 June 1973, Oxdrift, Kenora. Photo by Alan Wormington.

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

1984—female, 18 Oct., Silver Islet, Thunder Bay (Alan Wormington)

The second record for northern Ontario. The first was found on the shores of James Bay near Moosonee almost exactly one year earlier.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

1984—imm., 29 Aug., Rainy River, Rainy River (Michael W. P. Runtz)

1983—three adults, 3-8 July (not only 3-6 July as in *Am. Birds* 37:984) Rainy River, Rainy River (Barry Jones, Luc Fazio)

There are now a number of summer (non-migrant) records for western Rainy River Dist.; it seems probable that the species will eventually be found nesting in this area.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*)

1984—19 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, Essex (John W. Chardine, Joan M. Burley)

1983—imm., 17 Sept.-8 Oct., St. Thomas, Elgin (George E. Pond, Luc Fazio) – photos on file.

1969—25 June, Deep River, Renfrew (William H. Walker)

1961—3 June, Point Pelee Nat. Park, Essex (Robert E. Mara)

Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*)

1972/1973—two, 14 Nov.-19 June (not 9 Nov.-19 June as in James *et al.* [1976]; not only 14-24 Nov. as in *Am. Birds* 27:54; not 18 April as in James [1976] and *Ontario Birds* 1:12), Oxdrift, Kenora (Alan Wormington) – photos on file.

This first Ontario record (a second occurred on 9 May 1981, at Caribou Island, Thunder Bay) was part of an unprecedented irruption of this species in all directions away from its normal montane range during the fall of 1972 (Able 1973). The invasion resulted in numerous birds being recorded as far east as Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Missouri.

Fisher and Myres (1980) incorrectly list and map three Ontario occurrences. Dryden (=Oxdrift) is mapped correctly, but of the other records one is of a known misidentification (see *Am. Birds* 27:610), and the other – Aubrey Township (in which Oxdrift is located) – is erroneously considered an additional record and is, furthermore, placed incorrectly on their map.

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

1980—8-14 Sept., Arnprior (not Ottawa as in *Am. Birds* 35:178), Renfrew (Michael W.P. Runtz) – photo on file.

Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)

1983—male, 30 Oct., Ipperwash Prov. Park, Lambton (Dennis F. Rupert) – photo on file.
1967—male, 19-20 May, Kawene, Rainy River (Shirley Peruniak)

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

1967—8 Jan., Rockcliffe Park, Ottawa-Carleton (H.N. MacKenzie)

Details of this first of three Ontario records to date have been published (MacKenzie 1968). The repeated occurrences of this species in eastern North America (now about a dozen records) suggest that at least a portion of the small population breeding in southern Greenland (naturally established in 1937) is wintering regularly in the New World.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*)

1984—female, early Jan., Beeton, Simcoe (David Milsom)
—female, 14 Jan.-29 Feb. (but not observed between these dates), Cedar Springs, Kent (David Kinzie)
—male, 31 Jan.-14 May, Whitby, Durham (Alan Wormington)
1980/1981—male, 6 Dec.-early Feb., Horseshoe Valley, Simcoe (David J. Hawke) – photo on file.
1979/1980—female, 13 Dec.-30 Jan., Cedar Springs, Kent (W.J. Kerr/Keith J. Burk)
1965—female, 26 Sept., Atikokan, Rainy River (Shirley Peruniak)



Sage Thrasher, 27 April – 16 May 1981, Rondeau Prov. Park, Kent. Photo by Dennis F. Rupert.

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)

1981—27 April-16 May, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe/Keith J. Burk, Dennis F. Rupert) – photos on file.

This is the most recent of the three Ontario occurrences to date; the others were in 1965 and 1966.

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*)

1984—11 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington/Michael W.P. Runtz, Bruce D. Mactavish)

Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*)

1984—female, 11 May, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe)

Hermit Warbler (*Dendroica occidentalis*)

1984—male, 30 April, Etobicoke, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Trevor Johns, Robert Yukich, Hugh Currie, William J. Crins, Luc Fazio)

With three Ontario occurrences to date, it is of interest to note that the species remains unrecorded in the majority of states and provinces east of its Pacific coast breeding range.

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*)

1984—28 April, Long Point Prov. Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Robert Curry)

—28 April-10 May, Long Point Prov. Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Robert Curry/Kevin Lord)

—2 May, Bronte, *Halton* (Mark Jennings) – photos on file

—22 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Kevin McLaughlin)

1983—22 May, Kettle Point, *Lambton* (Alf Rider)

1982—29 Nov.-11 Dec., Cornwall, *Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry* (Les Harris) – photo on file.

1981—25 April, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe)

—12 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Jonathan Grant)

1980—18-19 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Carole Johnston)

1979—28-29 April, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Peter Boyd/John Lamey, Joseph P. Kleiman, Dennis F. Rupert) – photo on file.

—9-17 May (not only 10-17 May as in *Am. Birds* 33:767), Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Kay Doris)

1977—11 April, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (David Martin) – photo on file.

—27-29 April, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (J.R. Taylor)

1974—3 May (not 2 May as in James *et al.* [1976]), Dundas Marsh, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Robert Finlayson) – photo on file.

Where subspecific determination was possible (eight records) all were the expected *D. d. albiflora*, the "Sycamore" Warbler of the interior. The 11 April 1977 Pelee bird is the earliest spring migrant to be recorded in Ontario. This species continues to appear annually, principally as a spring overshoot; to date there is no evidence to suggest nesting in the province.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*)

1979—male, 14-19 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (not Ontario County as in Walkinshaw [1983]) (R. Smith/A. Parker, Roger E. Coker, Peter Carlton, Joseph P. Kleiman)

1974—16 May, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (John A. Kelley)

1958—territorial male, 8-30 June, McVicar, *Bruce* (James L. Baillie, Jr.)

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*)

1975—22 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (N. Bruce Broadbooks)

The first record for Ontario. The seemingly late date of this early spring migrant is consistent with other records of the species north of its normal range (e.g. in New York, Ohio). The OBRC is unable to locate documentation on another bird reported as this species 7-9 May 1968, also at Point Pelee. Readers with any existing written description of this individual are encouraged to contact the committee.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

1984—adult male, 30 May, Windy Point, Lake-of-the-Woods, *Rainy River* (William J. Crins)



Blue Grosbeak, female, 9 May 1979, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*. Photo by Robert Finlayson.

Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*)

1983—female, 8 May, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent* (R.D. Mooi, Diane Lepage, Paul Davidson)

1981—imm. male, 11-13 May (not 11 May as in *Am. Birds* 35:820; not 11-16 May as in Kelley [1983]), Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (John A. Kelley)

—female, 16-17 May (not only 16 May as in *Am. Birds* 35:820; not 11-16 May as in Kelley [1983]), Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Jim Flynn, Mike Brown) – photos on file.

1980—imm. male, 10 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Tom Hanrahan)

1979—adult male, 7 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Andrew Goodwin, P.A. Flint, Elizabeth Cleland)

—female, 8-9 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (L. Verne Evans)

—female, 9 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Robert Finlayson) – photo on file.

—imm. male, 11-17 May, (not only 13 May as in Kelley [1983]), Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Jeanne M. Pratt/Allen E. Valente, Donald R. Gunn) – photo on file.

—imm. male, 17 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (P. Allen Woodliffe) – photos on file.

1972—female, 7-11 May (not 7-19 May as in *Am. Birds* 26:758; not 7-20 May as in Kelley [1978]), Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Jeffrey A. Greenhouse/Brian Morin) – photo on file.

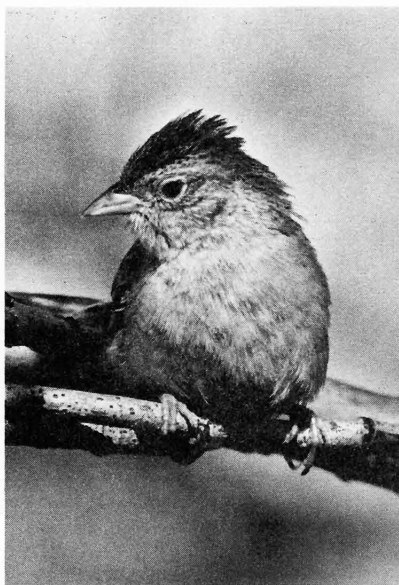
The five 1979 birds (plus another undocumented) are unprecedented in a single year. This species occurs in Ontario exclusively as a spring overshoot; to date there is no accepted fall record.

Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassinii*)

1984—male, 19-23 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Gerry Shemilt/Alan Wormington, G. Thomas Hince, Michael W.P. Runtz) – photos on file.

1967—13 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (John G. Keenleyside, Robert F. Andrie, Victor Crich) – photos on file.

Details of the 1967 bird have been published by Long (1968). An additional 1984 bird in Indiana brings the total of eastern North American occurrences to seven, three of which pertain to Ontario.



Cassin's Sparrow, 19-23 May 1984, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*. Photos by Alan Wormington.

Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*)

1984—18 Oct., Silver Islet, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington)

—21 Oct., Marathon, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington)

—21 Oct., Marathon (different bird), *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington)

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

1984—28 April, Long Point (tip), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (George E. Wallace)

1966—21 May, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (Shirley Peruniak)

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)

1983—imm. female, 31 Aug.-1 Sept., *Presqu'ile Prov. Park, Northumberland* (Linda Weseloh/Joan Thomson, John Thomson) – photos on file.

1974—definitive alternate male, 16-17 May (not only 17 May as in *Am. Birds* 28:797; not 17-18 May as in Kelley [1978]), Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Stafford O. Kratz/Brian Morin) – photo on file.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)

1983—imm., 9 Nov., Toronto Island, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Robert Yukich)

The second record for Ontario, this occurrence follows closely the first: 3-20 Jan. 1982 at Gosport, *Northumberland* (see Harris[1983])

Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*)

1980—female, 20 April, Long Point Prov. Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (T. Ronald Scovell).

Although one would expect this species to occur regularly in southern Ontario, the present record is, nonetheless, unique to the region.

Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte arctoa*)

1984/1985—3 Nov.-7 Jan., Dryden, *Kenora* (Harold J. Gibbard) – photos on file.

This bird was the race *tephrocotis*, the “Gray-crowned” Rosy Finch.

UNACCEPTED RECORDS, Identification uncertain

In the majority of records listed below, an insufficient or imprecise description was presented in the reports to establish with certainty the identity of the species claimed; in only a few cases was the Committee actually convinced that an *incorrect* identification was made.

1984—Arctic Loon, 29 April, Cobourg, *Northumberland*

—Arctic Loon, 3 June, Whitby, *Durham*

—Great Cormorant, 29 April, Hillman Marsh, *Essex*

—Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, 20 May, North Watcher Island, *Muskoka*

—Swainson's Hawk, 17 July, Rainy River, *Rainy River*

—California Gull, 26 May, Windy Point, Lake-of-the-Woods, *Rainy River*

—Rufous Hummingbird, 15 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*

—Gray Kingbird, 29 July, Wakimi Prov. Park, *Sudbury*

—Fish Crow, 21 April, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*

—Bell's Vireo, 7 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*

—Townsend's Warbler, 9 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*

—Kirtland's Warbler, 15 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*

—Western Tanager, 11-12 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*

—Western Tanager, 14 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*

—Western Tanager, 20 May, Britannia, *Ottawa-Carleton*

—Western Tanager, 21 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*

—Lazuli Bunting, 24 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*

—Harris' Sparrow, 20 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*

—McCown's Longspur, 26 May, Cobourg, *Northumberland*

—McKay's Bunting, 13 April, Blenheim, *Kent*

1983—Swainson's Hawk, 13 May, Kingston, *Frontenac*

—Blue Grosbeak, 5 Oct., Port Hope, *Northumberland*

—Rosy Finch, 12-16 Aug., Nolalu, *Thunder Bay*

1982—Pomarine Jaeger, 16 Nov., Deep River, *Renfrew*

—Pomarine Jaeger, 22 Nov., Deep River, *Renfrew*

—Prairie Warbler, 1 June, Makwa Lake, *Sudbury*

Previously accepted (*Ontario Birds* 2:61-62), the record was re-evaluated by OBRC on the basis of new evidence submitted.

- 1981—**Long-tailed Jaeger**, 21 Aug., Erieau, *Kent*
 —**Laughing Gull**, 9 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
 —**Western Kingbird**, 7 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
 —**Western Tanager**, 11 May, Pinery Prov. Park, *Lambton*
- 1980—**Mississippi Kite**, 19 April, Mississagi Light, *Manitoulin*
 —**Mississippi Kite**, 3 May, Speyside, *Halton*
 —**Yellow-throated Warbler**, 19 April, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
- 1979—**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**, 30-31 Aug., Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
 —**Lesser Nighthawk**, 18 May, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent*
 —**Blue Grosbeak**, 13 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
- 1978—**Laughing Gull**, 16 April (not 15 April as in Wormington [1978]), Hillman Marsh, *Essex*
 —**Sage Thrasher**, 22 Oct., Great Duck Island, *Manitoulin*
 —**Swainson's Warbler**, 20 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
- 1977—**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**, 30 April, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
 —**Mississippi Kite**, 11 Sept., Morpeth, *Kent*
 —**Swainson's Hawk**, 11 Sept., Mississagi Light, *Manitoulin*
- 1976—**Swainson's Hawk**, 19 May, Burpee Twp., *Manitoulin*
 —**Kirtland's Warbler**, 16 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
 —**Swainson's Warbler**, 24 May, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent*
- 1974—**Arctic Loon**, 13 Dec. (not 17 Dec. as in Kelley [1978]), Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
 —**Swainson's Hawk**, 5 Oct., Barrie Island, *Manitoulin*
 —**Common Cuckoo**, 4 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
 —**Say's Phoebe**, 14 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
- 1973—**Smith's Longspur**, 24 Sept., Amherstview, *Lennox and Addington*
- 1971—**Corn Crane**, 11 Sept., Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent*
 —**Roseate Tern**, 17 June, Rondeau Bay, *Kent*
- 1969—**Western Tanager**, 18 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*
- 1960—**Carolina Chickadee**, 3 July, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent*
 Details of this record (based on song only) have been published (Jarvis 1965)

Acknowledgements

Ron Ridout provided assistance by converting a number of colour photographs into black-and-white prints. The Committee extends its gratitude to Dr. Ross James, Royal Ontario Museum, for hosting meetings and providing a permanent home for the OBRC files. We also thank Jon Dunn and Paul Lehman of the California Bird Records Committee for providing comments on a number of difficult reports. I thank the other six members of the Committee for their valuable comments in preparing this report.

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Ontario Birds in 1985

In 1985 there will be three issues of *Ontario Birds*: April, September and December. The deadline for material for the September issue is 1 July and the deadline for the December issue is 1 October. Your cooperation in meeting these deadlines will help insure the issues come out on time.

Mongolian Plover: New to Canada

by
R.D. McRae

What will likely remain as one of the rarest birds to be seen in Ontario in recent years was the Mongolian Plover (*Charadrius mongolus*) at Presqu'île Provincial Park, Northumberland County on 4 May 1984. This occurrence establishes the first Canadian record for this species (Weir 1984; Wormington 1985; Earl W. Godfrey, pers. comm.).

From the evening of 3 May until the afternoon of 4 May the weather was unsettled, with constant drizzle and occasional heavy rain, north winds at 15 kmph and a high temperature of only 12°C. Since this kind of weather frequently 'grounds' shorebirds, I checked the beach at Presqu'île for new arrivals. When I got there at 1400h there were thousands of gulls, mostly Ring-billed (*Larus delawarensis*) and Bonaparte's (*L. philadelphia*) but shorebirds were scarce.

The first rare shorebirds seen were two Willets (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*) (three more were found later), which by plumage characteristics and larger size I identified as belonging to the western race *C.s. inornatus*. At 1420h I set up my scope to get a better view of a small flock of Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*)

about 150m away. I didn't notice the Mongolian Plover standing nearby, as it was facing directly away from me, but as soon as it turned around, the immaculate white throat and brilliant rusty-red breast were extremely obvious.

I watched the bird for about two minutes, then went to get my camera and contact other birders. I met John and Joan Thomson of Aurora in the parking area, and alerted them to the bird's presence. When I returned 30 minutes later, the Thomsons had been unable to find the bird but ten minutes later we located it about 200 m from the earlier site. For the next hour, John and I took photographs in which the bird, although distant, is quite identifiable (Figures 1 and 2). I left again to get film and phone more people; then remained on the beach until dusk at 2020h, when the bird went to sleep.

About 40 people saw the plover that afternoon but it was not present at dawn the next morning when about 150 people were waiting. It probably left during the night, as many of the other shorebirds, including the five Willets and a Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*)— all new arrivals on 4 May — were also gone.

R.D. McRae, Box 98, Brighton, Ontario K0K 1H0



*Figure 1. Mongolian Plover, Presqu'ile P.P., 4 May 1984.
Note the long legs, wavy faint line on side of breast and the long bill.
Photo by R.D. McRae.*



*Figure 2. Mongolian Plover, Presqu'ile P.P., 4 May 1984.
Note the fine black line bisecting the white forehead patch, shape of black
mask and forehead bar, crisply defined white throat and long legs. Photo
by R.D. McRae.*

Description

The following description of the Presqu'ile bird includes some aspects of the plumage which differ from information presented in several field guides.

In size and shape the bird was most similar to a Semipalmated Plover (*Calidris semipalmatus*) except that the legs were about 15% longer and the bill was noticeably longer – perhaps by 50%. The crown, back and upper surface of the wings were grey-brown and unmarked. The belly, undertail coverts and wing linings were white. The tail was not seen well but appeared to be similar in pattern to that of a Semipalmated Plover but not as brightly coloured. The legs were dull grey, just slightly darker than those of the Willets with which it occasionally associated. Four small grey-brown bars were present on the sides of the breast near the “wrist”. By far the most striking features of the bird were the bold face and breast patterns. The throat was pure white bordered by a fine black line. The entire breast and nape were bright rusty-red and obvious from any distance. The supercilium was also rusty but this did not stand out well. The forehead was white and was vertically bisected by a fine black line. The unmottled black mask extended from the base of the bill to the auricular area and was thickest from the eye to the ear. A thin black bar going up from each eye bisected the white forehead patch and the grey-brown crown. The eye was dark and difficult to see against the black mask. No white eye-crescents were present as is often illustrated. (Peterson 1980, Farrand 1983, Scott 1983) The rusty colour shown in several guides below the black mask was absent. A feature which may have been unique to

the Presqu'ile bird was a fine, wavy light line on the sides of the breast which is not mentioned in any of the books I consulted. This feature could have been a result of an incompletely developed breeding plumage, an aberration, or an overlooked feature of the breeding plumage.

The Mongolian Plover is an Asian shorebird (for a complete description of breeding and winter ranges, see Cramp & Simmons [1983]) with four recognized subspecies. In the field, birds can be separated into groups – *C.m. pamirensis* and *C.m. atrifrons*, which have a small white forehead patch and no black border to the throat, and *C.m. stegmanni* and *C.m. mongolus*, which have larger forehead patches vertically bisected by a fine black line and a black border around the throat (Prater *et al.* 1977). Based on field notes and photographs, the Presqu'ile bird clearly belongs to the second group.

Behaviour

As stray birds are often under great stress, their behaviour in coping with an unfamiliar environment can be of special interest.

When first seen, the plover was very active, making frequent short flights and moving constantly. The plover did not feed during the first two hours of observation. It met with hostility from other species, most notably Killdeer, with at least 15 aggressive encounters seen in the first two hours. Whenever the plover came within three metres of a Killdeer, regardless of which species approached, the Killdeer

would assume a horizontal stance with neck extended and run towards the plover. In response, the Mongolian would fly a short distance, land, then tilt its body rapidly in a bobbing motion for a few seconds, then run around erratically. On three occasions the plover was "swooped at" by sub-adult Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) when it approached to within 1 m.

By 1630h the sky had cleared and bird activity, in general, had decreased. By this time the plover had begun to favour an unoccupied area of "tide-line" debris about 4 m from the water's edge. There it began to feed in the plover pattern of run, stop, run, stop and pick, etc. The only food items that were visible were thin worms about 3 cm in length.

Status in North America

In recent years, Mongolian Plovers have been found annually in western Alaska, where they are known to breed. Outside Alaska the species is very rare. All records from the contiguous United States previous to the Presqu'ile bird are listed below:

1. 22 April 1975, one adult male, Grand Isle, Louisiana (Littlefield *et al.* 1977)
2. 11-17 September 1977, age and sex uncertain, Bayocean Spit, Tillamook Bay, Oregon (Mattocks *et al.* 1978)
3. 16-21 October 1979, "winter plumage" South Jetty, Columbia River, Oregon (Mattocks *et al.* 1980)
4. 15-19 September; 3 October 1980, juvenile, Moss Landing, California (Evans *et al.* 1981)

5. 7-13 August 1982; 26 July-2 August 1983, adult, Santa Clara River Mouth, Ventura Co., California (McCaskie 1983) These two records are thought to involve the same individual returning for a second year (J. Dunn, pers. comm.)

All North American records, outside Alaska, are from the west coast in fall, except the Louisiana and Presqu'ile, birds which were spring migrants.

Possible Origin

It is always interesting to speculate about the origin of stray birds, but it must be kept in mind that anything said is *only* speculation.

An Alaskan or Siberian nesting Mongolian Plover that survived the error of going down the "wrong" (i.e. east) side of the Pacific Ocean in the fall, could overwinter in Mexico and come north with other, North American, shorebirds in the spring. This could explain the Louisiana sighting, but perhaps not adequately explain how one could get as far east as Presqu'ile.

The presence of five Willets of the western race and a migrant Baird's Sandpiper in spring, on the same day as the plover, may be more than a coincidence. Those three species arrived on the same day and were gone the next morning. The other shorebird species showed no such change in composition. I had the impression the three species were travelling together.

Although wind is overstressed in explaining vagrancies, it provides a plausible explanation for the

Presqu'ile sightings. Steady 90 kmph winds with gusts up to 110 kmph were blowing from the west all day on 30 April. These strong winds changed the shape of several gravel spits in the park and blew away about 30% of the beach! This group of western shorebirds may have been displaced from a Great Plains route eastwardly by the wind, arriving at Presqu'ile several days later.

Alternatively, 1) the plover may have been travelling independently of any other shorebirds and arrived at Presqu'ile on a northward route from Mexico; or 2) it may have been travelling northwesterly with western Willets from their Atlantic coast wintering grounds and been slightly north of that main migration route on the southerly edge of the Great Lakes, or 3) any combination of the above.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to Alan Wormington, who developed the black and white film, and to Bob Finlayson who printed the photographs. Jon Dunn and Paul Lehman provided helpful advice regarding the species' status in Alaska and the west coast. Thanks are due also to the staff of Presqu'ile Provincial Park who so kindly put up with my hysteria during the day! And finally, I would like to express thanks to my good friend, John Reynolds, who provided me with invaluable advice while I informed him of the birds presence over the phone, namely "Doug, get a hold of yourself and take pictures!"

This observation was made

while employed by the Ministry of Natural Resources as the "Spring Birder" at Presqu'ile.

Eds. Comment: The second Ontario record set on 4 May was the 3 hr 45 min (approx. 550 km) car trip from the Visitor's Centre at Point Pelee National Park to Presqu'ile Park made by a keen Ontario birder to see the plover.

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Last Month's Breeding Bird Atlas Mystery Map: Mark Gawn and Virgil Martin correctly guessed Gray Jay as the species depicted by last month's Breeding Bird Atlas.

Christmas Bird Counts 1985/86
If you are thinking of organizing a new Christmas Bird Count for this year's Count period (18 December 1985 - 5 January 1986), the National Audubon Society has the following instructions (*American Birds* 38:847): Those contemplating the organization of a new count must submit their proposal to *American Birds* by October 15, 1985. The proposal should include a map clearly showing the proposed count circle, and the center of its 15-mile diameter, and should also include the locations of any nearby count circles. No overlap with a previously established count is allowed. The only counts that are not restricted to a circular area are

counts by boat or those taken from aircraft. We strongly prefer a minimum of ten field participants on every count, since a group smaller than this cannot adequately cover a circle of 15 miles in diameter. If you are considering establishing a new count, and cannot muster ten or more people, then it might be better to add your manpower to a neighboring count. With a proposal for a new count, we also need an indication of the experience and expertise of the participants. Application should be sent to:

Ms. Lorna Salzman
Christmas Bird Count Editor
National Audubon Society
950 Third Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10022

Archaeological Evidence of the Carolina Parakeet in Ontario

by
Rosemary Prevec

The identification of the bones of the Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) on the Calvert site (Borden Number AfHg-1), provides the first confirmed evidence of this species in Ontario (Prevec 1984). Its presence suggests ceremonial implications to the archaeologist and a possible range extension to the naturalist.

The Calvert site, a Glen Meyer Indian site dating about 1100 A.D., is located in southwestern Ontario near London, Middlesex County (Figure 1). The site is complex, with many overlapping houses and a large number of storage pits containing great quantities of deer bone (Fox 1982). Located on the western edge of the Dorchester swamp, an excellent yarding area for deer, the site provided ready access to the local deer population; Fox (1982) suggests that the final phase of occupation may have been strictly as a hunting camp.

During the faunal analysis of the site, it was discovered that one of the 350 excavated features contained three Carolina Parakeet

bones (Prevec 1984). These small bones from the head, wing and tail (premaxilla, proximal half of the left carpometacarpus, and pygostyle; Figures 2 and 3) were found in association with three artifacts – an unusual stone pipe bowl, a ground slate knife and an antler prong tool.

The Carolina Parakeet, extinct since the 1930s, was the only North American breeding parrot (Bent 1964). Flying in flocks, it was considered a pest by farmers. It was also hunted for food, sport, use as a cage bird and for its bright green, yellow and red plumage (Hasbrouck 1891).

In eastern North America the range of the Carolina Parakeet reached northward from Florida and the Gulf states to the Great Lakes and eastward from the Mississippi drainage system to the Atlantic coast (Bent 1964). It was plentiful in the south and along the Mississippi, Ohio and Illinois Rivers and their tributaries as far north as Lake Michigan. However, east of the Allegheny Mountains, it was seldom found north of

Rosemary Prevec, 944 LaSalle Park Road, Burlington, Ontario L7T 1M9.

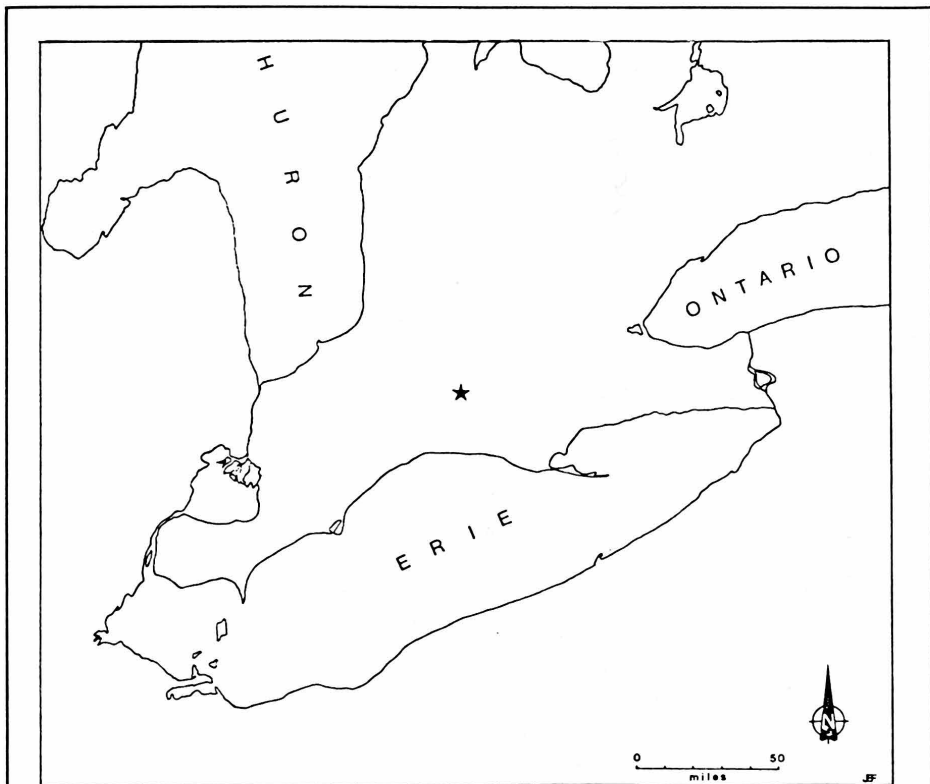


Figure 1: Location of the Calvert Village



Figure 2: 1. Internal view of carpometacarpus (proximal half); greatest breadth of proximal extremity - 7.55 mm*
 2. Left of premaxilla; length of nares - 4.15 mm; width of nares - 4.60 mm
 3. Right view of pygostyle; length - 12.80 mm; width at waist - 5.30 mm

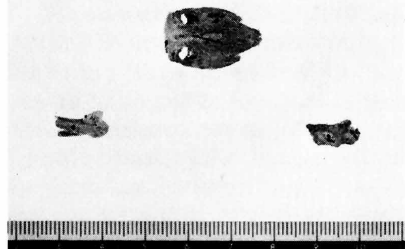


Figure 3: 1. External view of left carpometacarpus
 2. Dorsal view of premaxilla; width of septum
 3. Left view of pygostyle

*Guide to bone measurement taken from Von Den Driesch (1976)

Maryland (Wilson and Bonaparte 1878; Barton 1883; Greenway 1958; Bent 1964).

The species was of casual occurrence in New York and New Jersey. It was sighted in New York State on two occasions during the late 1700s and 1800s. In 1889, Bergtold (1927) received a report of 13 Carolina Parakeets observed years before on buildings in Buffalo. The same reporter also told him of many being captured in West Seneca, New York. The other sighting occurred 25 miles northwest of Albany when a large flock was seen in the middle of winter. The date is uncertain – January 1780 according to Barton (1883) and January 1795 according to DeKay (1844). It was suggested that they were blown into the area by a storm (De Kay 1844). An unconfirmed New Jersey sighting was made in East Orange, Essex County between 1850 and 1860 (Bent 1964). There is an unconfirmed report from London, Ontario (Saunders and Dale 1933). It was reported that in about 1877, Russell Burnett shot a Carolina Parakeet out of a tree at the head of Maitland Street, London. Since the specimen was not preserved, Saunders and Dale (1933) considered this a “hypothetical” sighting.

Wilson and Bonaparte (1878) and Greenway (1958) suggest that the parakeet preferred a habitat along river valleys and alluvial swamps, especially with groves of Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), Tupelos (*Nyssa sylvatica*) and Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*). It also used salines

(salt licks) regularly and showed a preference for certain seeds, particularly those of cockleburs (*Xanthium* spp.), thistles (*Cirsium* spp.), maples (*Acer* spp.), elms (*Ulmus* spp.), and pines (*Pinus* spp.) (Greenway 1958; Bent 1964). The latter author noted that the most dense populations occurred in areas that supplied these three requirements. The breeding range and nesting habits of the Carolina Parakeet are uncertain (Hasbrouck 1891; Greenway 1958; Bent 1964). Some say nesting occurred in tree hollows, while others claim the nests were in the forks of cypresses.

Because of predation by man, which coincided with the destruction of forests, the parakeets' numbers were reduced rapidly in the last half of the nineteenth century. The last specimen in the wild was taken in March 1913 on the north fork of the Sebastian River, Brevard County, Florida and in 1918, the last captive bird died in the Cincinnati Zoo (Greenway 1958). There were unconfirmed sightings in Florida in 1926 and in South Carolina in 1936 (A.O.U. 1983).

In analyzing the parakeet bones from the Calvert site, it was observed that they came from the extremity areas of the head, wing and tail. Since these bones are left in a skin if it is to resemble the living creature, it is probable that the identified bones formed part of a skin that had a ritualistic use. This view is strengthened by the fact that the bones were found in association with unusually fine

artifacts in a small feature that was not a food midden. The burial of the skin, pipe, blade and antler may have served a ceremonial function for a hunting community.

There is some indication that Ontario Indians were familiar with the parrot motif. A clay pipe with a parrot effigy was recovered in a burial at the c. 1640 A.D. Neutral Grimsby site (Kenyon 1982).

There is the possibility that the parakeet identified at the Calvert site did not fly into the area but was received in trade from Indians in the south. In Illinois, where the bird was common, it is rarely found in archaeological middens. One coracoid bone was found at the Late Woodland Irving site (525-1025 A.D.) near Chambersburg, Illinois (McGregor 1958) and twelve elements consisting of nine upper bills, two ulnae and a tarsometatarsus were recovered from the Cahokia site (Middle Mississippi 900-1500 A.D.) by Parmalee (1957), who suggested a decorative use.

The recovered bones from the Calvert site were identified by the author using reference skeletons at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian has seven of the 16 known skeletons of the Carolina Parakeet in the world (Hahn 1963). A similarity was noticed between most of the parakeet bones and those of the Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*). While the large beaked head and short wide tarsometatarsus of the Carolina Parakeet have distinctive forms that make them easily identifiable as Psittaciformes, other elements bear a resemblance

to small Passenger Pigeon bones. In southern Ontario, it would be advisable to examine mature archaeological bird bone which is slightly smaller than Passenger Pigeon for morphological differences. Although there are no Carolina Parakeet skeletons for reference in Canada, other parakeets having similar characteristics are available at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Those that match most closely are the Green Parrot (*Aratinga holochora brevipes*), Crimson-fronted Parakeet (*Aratinga finischi*) and Blue-headed Parrot (*Pionus menstruus rubrigularis*).

While the original source of the Calvert Carolina Parakeet bones can never be determined, their discovery will hopefully encourage faunal analysts in southern Ontario to closely check their medium-sized bird bones. Because of their colourful feathers, the parakeets may have been a desirable trade item of native Indian cultures. However, if more identifications are made, it could mean that the Carolina Parakeet wandered farther north than was previously known.

Acknowledgements

Tracking down the identification of the Carolina Parakeet bones has been an adventure beginning with the bones and skins at the ROM and ending with the bones at the Smithsonian. Jim Dick of the Ornithology Section of the Royal Ontario Museum and Dr. Richard Zusi of the Ornithology Department of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., graciously assisted in confirming

my Carolina Parakeet identification. Guidance in a literature search was provided by William A. Fox of the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, Dr. James Pringle of the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington and Dr. Howard Savage of the University of Toronto.

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A Birding Site Guide to Petroglyphs Provincial Park, Peterborough County

by
A. Geoffrey Carpentier

This picturesque Provincial Park, classified as an Historical Park, is located approximately 56 km northeast of the city of Peterborough. It has gained acclaim and its name from the Indian rock carvings found there, dating back to the prehistoric life of the Algonkian Indians. These petroglyphs represent one of the largest single concentrations of their type in North America.

The outstanding feature of the Park, as far as naturalists are concerned, is the almost unlimited wildlife viewing opportunities of the area. It is a particularly interesting area in winter.

Bird life is varied and of interest. Breeding warblers include Yellow-rumped, Pine, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, and Black-throated Blue Warblers, Northern Parula and Northern Waterthrush. Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Purple Finches, Hooded and Common Mergansers, Broad-winged Hawks, some puddle ducks, Yellow-throated and Red-eyed Vireos, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and White-throated

Sparrows also breed. In addition, evidence (e.g., consecutive sightings in suitable habitat, nest building, fledged young or aggressive behaviour) suggests that Sedge Wrens, Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, both crossbills, Northern Ravens, Gray Jays and Black-backed Woodpeckers may also breed in the area.

Winter birding can be excellent. This is perhaps the best time of year to search for "northern specialties" and unusual species. Since the Park is situated on the southern edge of the Shield, it is perhaps one of the most southerly areas in the Province where one can expect to find northern birds on a regular basis. Both crossbills, Common Redpolls, both three-toed woodpeckers, Northern Ravens, Gray Jays, Pine Siskins, both eagles and an occasional Barred Owl may be expected.

For the last several years, eagles have been an outstanding reality for perseverant birders. Up to seven Balds and three Golden have regularly spent the winter in and near the Park. The large deer

A. Geoffrey Carpentier, 42 Wallis Drive, Peterborough, Ont. K9J 6B7.

herds easily support this population. A surprising number of summer sightings, particularly of Bald Eagles, suggest local breeding.

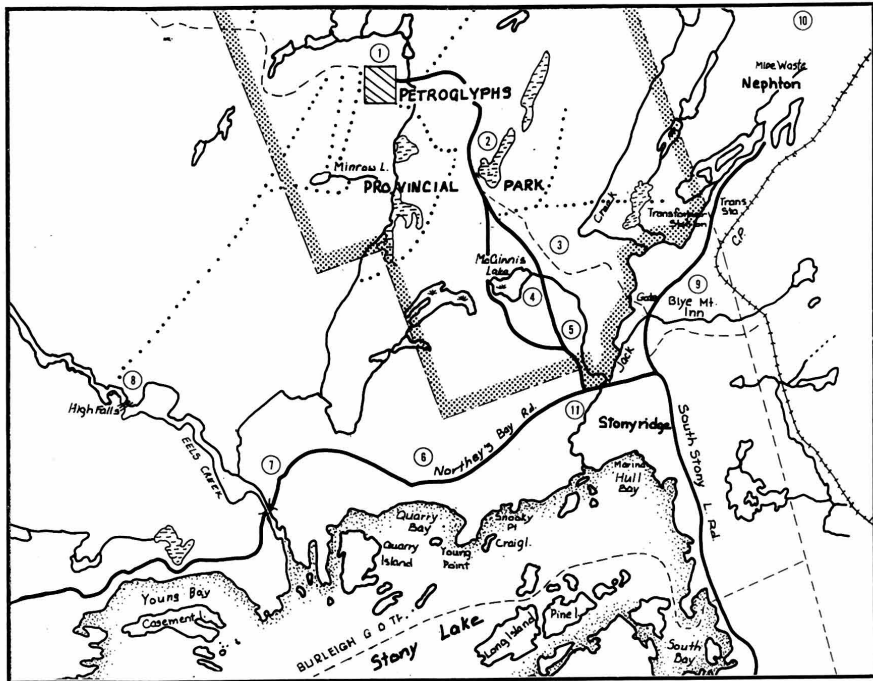
The only realistic way to explore Petroglyphs, in winter, is on foot. Snowfall in the area tends to be substantial. It is recommended that if the birder intends to go to the Park and leave the snowmobile trails, he/she bring cross-country skis or snowshoes.

The eagles, when soaring, are easily spotted as they fly over the roadway or breaks in the trees. The only real exception to this is along the trail running from the gate along the west side of McGinnis Lake, where the canopy is very dense and overhangs the road. When on a kill, eagles are very skittish and flush readily and at a great distance. It is, therefore, important that you make as little noise as possible. The easiest way to locate the eagles, I have found, is to watch the ravens. When searching for food, the ravens emit their typical "croark" call and soar low over the trees. Bald Eagles regularly *follow* these ravens. Once the ravens have passed by, wait five to ten minutes, and you may very well be rewarded with an eagle. When on a kill, ravens produce a "chortle" that is most unlike a raven's expected call, and is, in fact, almost musical. Bald and Golden Eagles, if in the area, will not be far away. Bald Eagles often sit in the midst of the ravens, on the kill or in adjacent trees. Beware, though, the ravens post 'sentries' that are very observant. At the

slightest hint of danger, all of the birds disappear, perhaps for several hours. If you are lucky enough to find a fresh deer kill, conceal yourself (including from above) at least 100 meters from it and wait. You will probably see one or more eagles this way. Although Golden Eagles seem less willing to land on kills than Balds, they often fly over them. So keep checking the sky!

It can sometimes be difficult to identify eagles in flight, particularly if they are immatures. I recommend that you review the recent article on eagle identification (*American Birds*, Volume 37, No. 5, Sept.-Oct. 1983) in advance.

The accompanying map indicates, by numbered locations, the 'best' areas to explore. However, you will find your own favourite areas or 'hotspots' as you bird the area. Access to the Park is gained through the main gate (11). Travel northeast along the main road following the east fork towards McGinnis Lake. Watch for Gray Jays (5) and eagles (4). A roadway will intersect from the east, about 0.75 km north of the lake. This is the old roadway leading east to the former entrance. It is shown on the map as a dotted line leading to the Blue Mountain Inn. Leaving the Park using this route is hindered by Jack Creek, which stays open all year and, has no crossing bridge. Along this road watch for crossbills in the red pines (3) and Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers throughout. Near the east end of this road you will notice a relatively high



lookout that has been good for eagle watching in the past.

Back on the main road leading to the Petroglyphs site (1) you will come to an area where the center of the road has square wooden posts dividing it in two (2). The marshy lake on the north is one of the two most regular places to see eagles of either species. Gray Jays and eagles, particularly Bald, may be seen at the fenced in area (1) surrounding the Petroglyphs site, the other regular eagle spot.

Many trails crisscross the Park, and are shown as fine dotted lines. These generally lead to very interesting areas, including High Falls (8). The trail to these falls is poorly marked, and caution is advised when travelling to them along this route. Remember that

you are in truly wild bush. It is easy to get lost when you leave any of the trails, or when you lose the trail.

Egress from the Park may be gained in several ways: over entrance, the way you entered following the east shore of McGinnis Lake (recommended), or via High Falls and Eel's Creek out to Northey's Bay Road. This creek appears to be solidly frozen, but the ice is often of poor quality, so use the east shore if this is your chosen route. Conversely, High Falls may be visited by going up the creek from Northey's Bay Road. I'm sure you will find this spot, in particular, spectacular in winter and worth the effort. Other places of interest include Eel's Creek at Northey's Bay Road (7)

where deer abound and Black-backed Woodpeckers have been regular, the marshy areas west of the gate (6) where Bald Eagles sometimes sit in adjacent trees, and the high lookout (10) near the town of Nephton. Access to this road is restricted and permission should be sought from Security staff at the mine office.

To reach the Park, travel north from Hwy. 401 on Hwy. 115/35 and then follow 115 to the intersection of Hwy. 7. At this point, follow Hwy. 7 east towards Ottawa until you intersect Hwy. 134 (about 8 km), and travel north on 134 to Hwy. 28. Continue north again, through the village of Woodview (approximately 35 km). Once through this hamlet, take the first paved road east (Northey's Bay Road) for about 11 km to the Park entrance. The road and Park entrance are well-marked. Another enjoyable and scenic route may be used for the return trip. As you exit the Park, through the same entrance you used on the way in, turn east (left) and go a short distance to a stop sign. Turn south (right) and follow this paved road (South Stoney Lake Rd.) as it twists and turns, heading for Peterborough. You will emerge on Hwy. 28 just north of Lakefield and Hwy. 134. Turn south (left) on Hwy. 28 and you are on your

way home.

Stores are few and far between in the vicinity of the Park. Hot and cold snacks may be purchased at the Blue Mountain Inn, which is open all year and marked on the accompanying map (9). Other stores may be found south of here on the South Stoney Lake Road. Accommodation can be difficult to find north of the city of Peterborough. The Park charges a modest entrance fee in the summer and early fall, but not at other times of the year.

Although Petroglyphs seems to be the best area for wildlife viewing, explore the neighbouring lands, if you have time, as the habitat is continuous. You might want to obtain a copy of *Our Heritage of Birds: Peterborough in the Kawarthas* by Doug Sadler. This 192 page book describes all good birding areas in Peterborough County, and gives the dates and status of species found therein. It is available from the author for \$7.50. (see Book Review this issue)

Visitors are requested to supply local birders with information about their sightings in the Petroglyph area, particularly regarding eagles, crossbills, and Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers.

Good Birding!!

Corrections: In the Table of Contents in the December 1984 issue of Ontario birds, we inadvertently indicated Gerry Bennet's review of *A Bird-Finding Guide to Canada*. That review appears in the current issue (page 39). On page 103, credit for the photo of the Prairie Warbler should have gone to Ron Ridout instead of George Peck.

Notes

A Field-Tested Design for Camera Lens Cases

The problem of adequately protecting optical lenses is one that plagues all field enthusiasts. Optical lenses are inherently fragile; they are sensitive to knocks and vibrations, and are easily damaged by water, humidity, sand and dust. There are many designs of lens cases on the market, and many profess to be field resistant. However, they are usually expensive and the degree of protection is often less than acceptable. The advantages of the design described here are its low cost, easy availability of materials, ease of construction, and the fact that the resultant case is completely water and weather-proof and almost indestructible.

The example described and illustrated (Fig. 1) was made for a 100 mm focal length camera lens. The materials comprising the outside shell were purchased from retail dealers of plumbing supplies. These consisted of a short length of ABS plastic water pipe with a 7.6 cm (3") outside diameter, a plastic end cap of matching diameter, a plastic threaded collar with a screw-on cap, and a small quantity of ABS plastic cement. The end cap and threaded collar were cemented on to the section of pipe, and the end cap and cover were padded with styrofoam or high-density plastic foam. A thin

foam sheet can be used to line the sides. These packing materials are usually available at inexpensive prices. A small packet of silica gel was placed in the bottom of the case to keep the air inside the container dry.

The 7.6 cm diameter pipe is adequate for any lens with an outside diameter of up to 65 mm. For wider-diameter lenses or for spotting scopes, a plastic pipe with an outside diameter of 10 cm (4") can be used, along with ends and caps of corresponding diameter. In the example only a short length of pipe was used, enough to join the collar and end cap. For longer

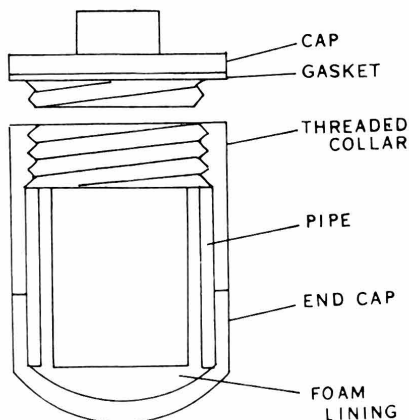


Figure 1: Components of the lens case.

telephoto or zoom lenses, a longer section of pipe is necessary. This type of plastic pipe is easily cut with an ordinary hand saw. This design has been extensively field tested by the author under a wide range of climatic conditions including tropical rain forests and arid deserts, as well as temperate climates. Under tropical conditions no fungal growth was observed, as

the seals were adequate against water and high humidity, and dry conditions were effectively maintained inside the cases. The same seal against water is also effective against sand and dust. The hard exterior with a foam lining provides a good protection against shocks, so the cases can be carried in any bag or pack.

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Present Address: The World Wildlife Fund, The Directorate General of Forest Protection And Nature Conservation, The Republic of Indonesia. Jalan Ir. H. Juanda 9, P.O. Box 133, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia.

Man-Made Materials in Nests of Gray Catbird

Breeding densities of 46/km² have been reported for the Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) from urban settings in southern Ontario (Dance 1982). In these locations birds often have access to a variety of man-made materials for use in nest construction.

In his brief account of this species, Harrison (1975) found it worth noting the variety of man-made materials which he observed in one Pennsylvania catbird nest. Bancroft (1981) describes the occurrence of plastic, Kleenex and paper in catbird nests found in Manitoba. In this note I report the presence of plastic, cellophane, tin foil and tissue paper in catbird nests found in urban park settings in southern Ontario (Table 1).

Seven Gray Catbird nests containing man-made materials were examined. Nests were

constructed during the 1982 or 1983 breeding seasons. Four nests were from Lakeside Park, Kitchener, Waterloo R.M., two were from the Mabel Davis Conservation Area, Newmarket, York R.M. and one was collected at the King Campus of Seneca College, northeast of King City, York R.M. Descriptions of habitat and bird populations at the first two locations are contained in Dance (1982) and Dance (1984), respectively.

All nests were lined with rootlets, a characteristic which separates catbird nests from those of the Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), with which they can be confused (Harrison 1975). The number of pieces of man-made materials in the six nests which were dissected ranged from three to 12. Man-

made materials were concentrated in the bases of four of the nests. Four nests contained no leaves, while two had leaves as a minor component. According to Harrison (1975), leaves are an important part of the Gray Catbird nest. It may be that plastic and other man-made materials replace leaves in the nests described here.

Acknowledgement

Don Fraser provided valuable comments on the draft manuscript.

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Table 1: Nest Materials in Six Gray Catbird Nests

Nest No.	Natural Materials	Man-Made Materials (number of pieces in brackets)	Location Collected
1	twigs, bark, a few leaves, rootlets	cellophane (4), unidentified plasticized paper (1)	Seneca College, King Campus
2	twigs, grapevine bark, rootlets	thin plastic and cellophane (9)	Lakeside Park, Kitchener
3	grass, grapevine bark, rootlets.	thin plastic and cellophane (3)	Lakeside Park, Kitchener
4	grass, twigs, rootlets	plastic and cellophane (4)	Lakeside Park, Kitchener
5	leaves, grass, rootlets	cellophane, plastic, tissue paper (7)	Mabel Davis Conservation Area, Newmarket
6	twigs, grapevine bark, rootlets	plastic (1), tinfoil (1)	Mabel Davis Conservation Area, Newmarket

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Topic of Note

Notes Regarding the Architectural Impact of Downy Woodpeckers (*Picoides pubescens*)

In October, 1979, when I first approached a new client's residence (situated on the 9th line, Douro Township, Peterborough County) to plan an addition, I realized the existing wood siding had been subject to considerable damage. On the facades of the house (built c. 1972), there were extensive horizontal rows of holes penetrating the siding (Figure 1). In places, the holes were so closely spaced that the wood surface appeared "caved in".

In my conversation with the owners, they said that the damage was caused by woodpeckers. On a subsequent site visit, I observed a Downy Woodpecker adding insult to injury as it drilled into the siding at the second storey level of the east facade. The owners noted that all attempts to scare the woodpeckers away had failed.

The siding in question was "channel siding", a B.C. fir/redwood plywood product shipped in 4 ft. x 8 ft. x $\frac{3}{4}$ " sheets (the siding had been stained by the owners after installation). This plywood was 5 ply, scored vertically with $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide channels, $\frac{5}{16}$ " + deep at $5\frac{1}{4}$ " intervals. This particular shipment of plywood was defective — some substrate veneers were not fully joined at

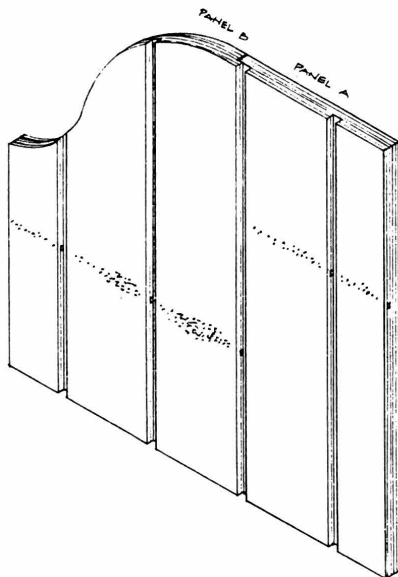


Figure 1: Typical channel siding woodpecker damage.

their seams. Where these imperfect joints had been scored by the channels, a series of horizontal gaps were opened to the exterior. I assume that insects had entered these gaps, and that the Downy Woodpeckers were "pursuing" these insects across the plywood, hence the horizontal appearance of the woodpecker damage.

A vertical 1 x 6 cedar ship lap siding (individual boards) was chosen for the addition. To date,

there has been no woodpecker damage.

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Eds. Comment: The Topic of Note is a bird related subject intended to help focus members' attention in writing Notes for Ontario Birds. The April Topic is Unusual Nesting Holes, Behaviour and/or Damage Caused by Woodpeckers and that for the September issue is Interactions Between Snakes and Birds. The December Topic will be announced in the next issue. If you miss the deadline for any given Topic, submit it anyway and we will consider it for the next issue. Of course, we still welcome Notes on all other topics as well. See Ontario Birds Vol. 2: 123-124 for further details.

Book Review

Our Heritage of Birds: Peterborough County in the Kawarthas. 1983. By Doug Sadler. Orchid Press, Peterborough, 190 pp. \$7.50. Available from the author, R.R. #4, Peterborough, Ont. K9J 6X5.

In recent years a growing list of books dealing with the bird life of various counties or regions within the Province of Ontario has become available. Doug Sadler's *Our Heritage of Birds: Peterborough County in the Kawarthas* is a welcome addition to the group if for no other reason than the region it covers is a popular resortland. This book provides the visiting birder with some idea of what might be seen within the county at various times of the year.

However, this book is more than just a list of birds in the area, and I commend the author for the unique local flavour of the 33 introductory pages. These begin with a

geographical overview of the county, and continue through archaeological records, historical changes in habitats and birdlife, where to find birds in the county, bird names and recent changes including a quiz (which is quite amusing), to tips for novices. I found the tips to be very thoughtful and something that other authors of similar books should take a cue from.

The bulk of the book is devoted to the list of species, their arrival and departure dates, and the localities in which they have been seen. I enjoyed the author's easy writing style and found such anecdotes as the Barred Owl that liked to ride on curling stones and

the White-fronted Goose that walked into the Peterborough Post Office to be very amusing and a wonderful touch.

However, on a number of points, I found the book to be somewhat lacking. The system of listing the arrival and departure dates is made confusing by the combination of week numbers (e.g. 4 Apr. means the 4th week of April) and exact dates. Other authors' treatments of dates have used a mean date with earliest and latest dates in parentheses, a system which is more accurate as well as easier to understand.

Although many of the terms used in the book such as abundant, rare, casual, etc., are defined at the beginning of the species accounts, the term accidental is nowhere defined and yet is used a number of times. In the case of the term "hypothetical", popular thought by many rare bird committees and authors tends to rule out its use. Either a record is to be believed or it should be rejected. Use of the word only serves to indicate a degree of indecision on the author's behalf.

Upon examination of the species accounts themselves, I found reason to doubt some of the records. The Western Tanager record, which is listed as accidental on page 144, should be viewed with caution. This record was submitted to the Ontario Bird Records Committee and, subsequent to the publication of this book, was rejected. Perhaps the

author should not have published the record until it had been adjudicated.

I have to agree with the incredibility of the February Scarlet Tanager. However, I must add that contrary to what the author states, this record was never voted on by the Ontario Bird Records Committee. Seasonally rare records are not within the OBRC's mandate. This may seem a minor point but statements of this sort can reflect upon the credibility of the present committee.

While no work of this nature can be perfect, discrepancies of the sort I have pointed out can only serve to lower the overall credibility of the author's work. Great care must be taken to research the material thoroughly and if any records are in doubt, then it is best to leave them out.

All this is not intended to give the impression that the book has not made a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge of the region's birdlife. On the contrary, I believe it has, although I would suggest that it be read with care and any doubts about certain species accounts should be double-checked with other sources.

As I have mentioned, there are many tips for the novice birder and the overall impression I was left with is that the book was written with that level of ability in mind. At \$7.50, I recommend the book for anyone's library.

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A Bird-Finding Guide to Canada. 1984. Edited by *J.C. Finlay*. Hurtig Publishers Ltd., Edmonton. 387 pp. \$18.95.

To identify and describe where birds can best be found throughout Canada is more than a challenge. It is a project with infinite – virtually unmanageable – dimensions. Canada is far too large to be covered in total depth by one book.

The best approach to such a task is to allot a section to each province and territory, identify the most popular and productive spots in each and designate contributing authors to handle each segment.

This is how J.C. (Cam) Finlay has designed the text of *A Bird-Finding Guide to Canada*. And he has done it well.

The narrative and descriptive text is set out in 12 chapters – one for each province, one for the Yukon and one for the Northwest Territories. Each chapter has been assembled by knowledgeable observers familiar with the sector. They, in turn, have wisely entrusted descriptions of specific locations to experts who actively observe in the area. Black and white illustrations by Terry Thormin dress up the volume, punctuating the “wall-to-wall” prose that is a necessity in such a work.

Personally, I like the book. It

fills a need. It contains a fine balance of selectivity of areas versus unduly lengthy chapters. One can appreciate a fine sense of editing throughout. I have spot-checked several of the area write-ups by making personal visits and found that the directions, descriptions and distances quoted are quite accurate.

With Finlay's publication now available, no birding vacation trip to a Canadian point should be planned without it. And, if one wishes to tour Canada from an armchair, much vicarious pleasure can be enjoyed by the careful and methodical reading of this book — one chapter to an evening!

The book contains interesting supplementary material. For example, there is one chapter with suggestions on planning trips. I especially appreciated a suffix showing the status of species in each of the twelve areas – a veritable composite cross-country checklist.

Suggested retail price is \$18.95. A recent check of several bookstores revealed that this was indeed the cost in effect, as of November 1984. The Nature Canada Bookshop's 1984-85 catalogue lists it at \$17.05.

Gerry Bennett, Box 519, Kleinberg, Ontario L0J 1C0

New Titles

Vascular Plants and Vertebrates of Luther Marsh, Ontario. 1984. Allan P. Sandilands. Ontario Field Biologist Special Publication No. 2. 134 pp., \$6.50, available from the author, P.O. Box 147, Plattsville, Ontario N0J 1S0.

This publication provides a comprehensive inventory of the biota of this extensive and interesting wetland on the Dufferin-Wellington County line. The history of establishment of the area, physical features, habitat maps and descriptions, and annotated lists of a variety of groups of organisms, including birds, are contained within this

book. A total of 242 species of birds has been recorded in the area. This list represents the results of 14 years of personal field work, as well as historical records dating back to the establishment of the area in 1952. Some of the interesting birds known from this area include Red-necked Grebe, Wilson's Phalarope, Sedge Wren, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

W.J.C.

Date Guide to the Birds of the Hamilton Area. 1985. Denys Gardiner, Mark Jennings, and Kevin McLaughlin. Hamilton Naturalists' Club. 9 pp., \$1.00, P.O. Box 5182, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4L3.

This publication was produced to serve as a guide to the dates of occurrence of all of the species of birds occurring in the Hamilton birding circle (25-mile radius centred on Dundurn Castle). Its purpose is to inform birders whether the record is unusual. It is *not* a series of bar graphs, but rather, limited dates are given for each species, within which any sighting requires documentation.

For example, the dates listed for Red-throated Loon are Jan. 15 - Apr. 25 and Jun. 15 - Sep. 30. Any sighting within these dates should be reported to the Hamilton Bird Records Committee. Sightings outside of these dates do not require documentation. Of course, any species which are listed on the Ontario Birds Records Committee review list should be reported directly to it.

W.J.C.

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 \$13.00 Annual Member or \$260.00 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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