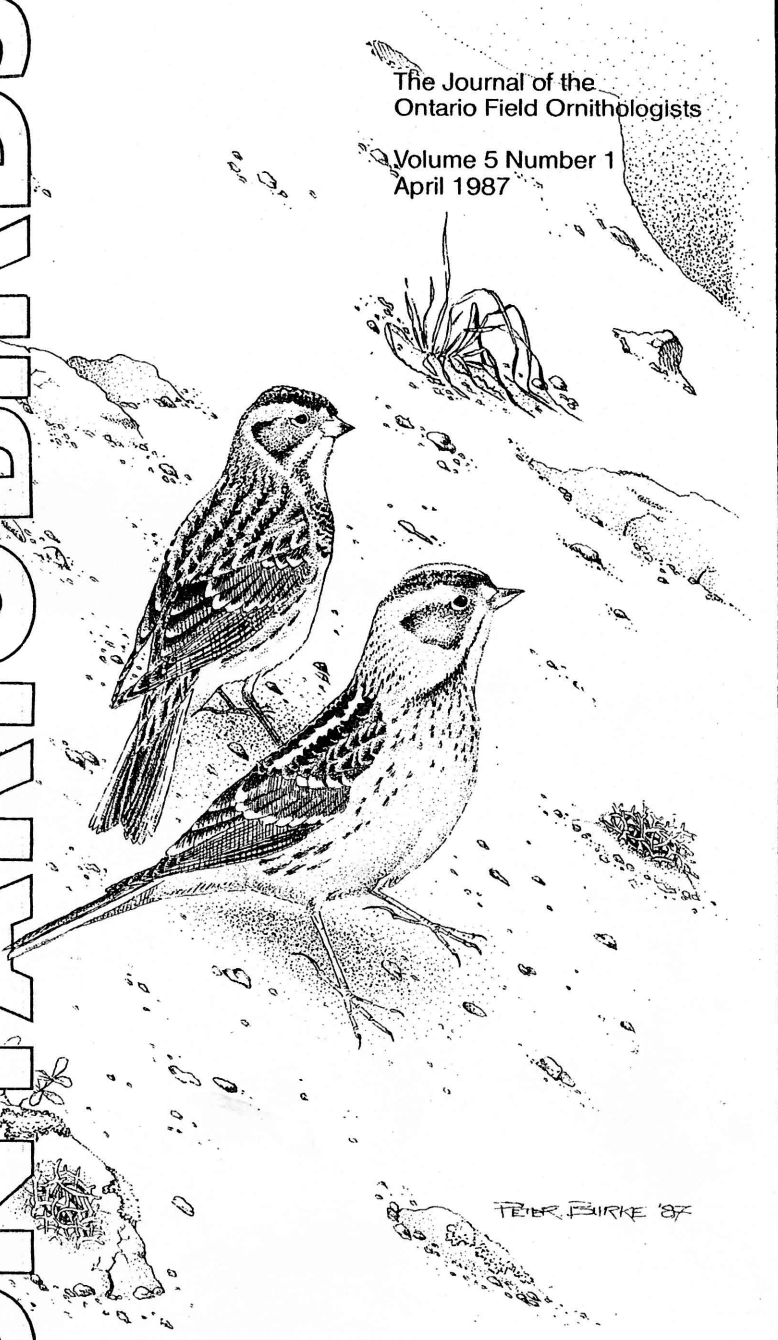
ONTARIO BIRDS

The Journal of the
Ontario Field Ornithologists

Volume 5 Number 1
April 1987



Ontario Birds

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Publication costs of *Ontario Birds* are partially offset by an annual grant from the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund. OFO gratefully acknowledges this generous support.

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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Letters to the Editor

More on *Birds of Ontario*

As an author of four books I can imagine the suppressed indignation of Dr. J. Murray Speirs on reading the reviews of his *Birds of Ontario* (*Ontario Birds* 4:73-79). His comments on these reviews, as expressed in the December, 1986 issue of *Ontario Birds* (Vol. 4:82-84) show great restraint.

However, while the geographical separation of author and printer was considerable, I consider that a small handicap. He should have received two sets of galleys, a "virginal" one followed by a corrected one. The two-volume set entitled *Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of the World* was the result of two authors, one stationed in the United States, the other in South Africa. The two books were printed in England, the result being an umblemished one.

Regarding Dr. Speirs' comments on blank pages rather than photographs, he should examine *Every Australian Bird Illustrated*, which is just that. The vast bulk of illustrations are things of beauty but where, apparently, a satisfactory photograph was unobtainable, coloured art was substituted. If readers are now invited to supply and insert photographs of their own choosing, considerable misunderstanding could have been avoided had the jacket of Dr. Speirs' book contained a slash boldly printed: "ILLUSTRATED. U-PICK."

William C. Mansell
Mississauga, Ontario

Killing of birds denounced

The note entitled "Solitary Sandpiper Breeding Records in Northwestern Ontario" (*Ontario Birds* 4:118-119) has left me with a vague sense of unease.

I am unable to reconcile the study of birds with the actual killing of the birds to be studied. Surely with modern technology, actual gonadal study should not be necessary? It is probably more time consuming to actually seek out nesting sites and determine actual breeding attempts by a clutch of eggs. The authors themselves admit to providing "some data to substantiate Peck and James' . . . assertion." Not a very scientific result to justify the killing of ten birds, especially of a species which is not the most plentiful of sandpipers at the best of times.

No laurels either to the Canadian Wildlife Service for issuing "permits" to foreign nationals to blast away in our Northland, as if we didn't suffer from enough hunting in the first place.

I understand the aim of *Ontario Birds* is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and knowledge and indeed you do. However, I question the need for our journal to promote the killing of Canadian avifauna for no discernible gain in knowledge.

Jim Coey
Mississauga, Ontario

Smith's Longspur: A Case of Neglect

by

Alan J. Ryff

On 29 September 1985 at Chippewa Park in Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay District, Mike Matheson and Alan Wormington flushed a peculiar looking longspur whose tail flashed with extra white. Wormington subsequently showed this bird to Nick Escott and me. It proved to be a Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*). We observed it for over an hour at distances of 1-6 m. Since the streaks on its breast were more conspicuous than the streaks of the Smith's Longspurs illustrated in the National Geographic Society (hereafter NGS) guide (1983), we believed that this bird was an immature. But were we correct? This became a difficult question to answer.

Frank M. Chapman had less available information than his counterparts of today. In 1911, he concluded that figure 6 of a Fuertes' painting originally published in *Bird-Lore* is a juvenile Smith's Longspur because the white on its lesser wing coverts is inconspicuous (Chapman 1979b). The longspur at Thunder Bay lacked white epaulets. However, Kenn Kaufman tells us that the presence of a white shoulder patch is certain only for adult males in breeding plumage (Farrand 1983).

In Bent's life histories (1968), Smith's is the only species of longspur to lack the descriptive subsection "*Plumages*." Just fragments of Oberholser's (1974) description match the field notes taken on the bird at Thunder Bay. Thus I had to seek information elsewhere. I studied the 62 specimens of Smith's Longspur at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor (hereafter UMMZ). Because four of the specimens are juveniles, I began to see the misleading aspects of certain field guides.

Each juvenile was collected at Churchill, Manitoba: #83995, a male, on 5 August 1936; #83996, a male, on 5 August 1936; #166586, a female, on 28 July 1938; and #217737, a female labelled 22 days old, on 24 July 1966.

In addition to specimens and publications, I used my field notes, which Escott, Matheson, and Wormington verified at the time of observation. Furthermore, I was dependent on three of Wormington's black-and-white photographs of the bird.

The Smith's Longspur did not flock with the 450 or so Lapland Longspurs (*C. lapponicus*) that were scattered about the landfill at Chippewa Park. Overall, it was slightly smaller than the Lapland Longspurs. Either it stood with its plumage puffed out for minutes at a time, or it slipped through the

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grass like a mouse. Upon finding grasshoppers (Arcididae), it stunned and dismembered them by pecking, before eating them piecemeal.

Description

The tarsi, bill, tail, and belly were the primary characteristics used in identifying the bird as a Smith's Longspur. Its tarsi were pale flesh pink, unlike the dark tarsi of Lapland Longspur described by Balch (1982). Its symmetrical bill was more slender than the bills of nearby Lapland Longspurs.

The bill profile of McCown's Longspur (*C. mccownii*), when compared to that of Smith's Longspur, is highly asymmetrical, for the lower mandible angles sharply upward, and the base of the bill is much wider (NGS 1983).

The upper mandible of the Thunder Bay bird was dusky, with a darker tip, and its lower mandible was pink. With the exception of the bill profile of McCown's Longspur, the fall and winter bill of Smith's Longspur is unique among longspurs because the black or plumbeous-brown upper mandible contrasts with the light lower mandible, which can be brownish white, ecru drab, orange or light yellow. The tip of the bill is darker (Oberholser 1974). The colours mentioned by Oberholser are illustrated in Ridgway (1912). This colour contrast of the mandibles is evident in the photographs on page 281 of *The Audubon Master Guide to Birding: Volume 3* (Farrand 1983).

In fall and winter, the bills of adult and immature Chestnut-collared Longspurs (*C. ornatus*) are grey (NGS 1983; Oberholser 1974). In every season, the upper and lower mandibles of Lapland Longspurs match each other in colour (Oberholser 1974).

The tail of the Smith's Longspur at Thunder Bay seemed shorter than the tails of the Lapland Longspurs. If it was indeed possible, I failed to see whether the rectrices were pointed, a diagnostic feature of first-winter longspurs (Balch 1982). In flight, the outer two pairs of rectrices of the Smith's Longspur were markedly white, whereas the white on the tails of the flying Laplands glinted weakly or did not show. This is because duskiness can dilute or obliterate the white on the outermost pair of a Lapland's rectrices (Roberts 1955). Furthermore, the next pair are dark, with just a terminal wedge of white (Roberts 1955). The striking tail patterns of McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs have various amounts of white on every rectrix, except the middle pair (Roberts 1955).

The Smith's Longspur at Thunder Bay had an incomplete white eye ring, light-brown lores, a pale-buff supercilium, a thin black whisker, a clear buff chin and throat that contrasted with the breast, and an auricular patch, palest in the middle and margined with the same shade of dusk as on the nape.

The scapulars and the feathers of the back varied from dusky to black. The margins of the feathers on the upper back were pale buff, while those on the lower back were grey (yellow grey?). Some scapular margins were grey and others were pale buff. The greater coverts terminated into a white wing bar.

Emerson Kemsies (Bent 1968: 1632) contends that female and immature Smith's Longspurs "... may be distinguished ... by their buffy abdomens, which are concolor with the breast, and not almost white as in Lapland".

The colour of the breast, sides, belly, flanks, and undertail coverts of the bird at Thunder Bay was uniformly soft like winter grass. Smithe (1975) labelled the colour as pale pinkish buff (colour 121 D). Juvenile specimen #83995 (UMMZ) has this colour on its belly.

Identification Problems

So much for the bird's description, let us go into the controversies. The throats and bellies of the four juvenile specimens in UMMZ are pale buff, but their upper breasts are a much darker buff. This contrast can cause confusion with juvenile and immature Lapland Longspurs, whose breasts are buffy and bellies are whitish (Bent 1968). Where does one draw the line between a pale-buff and an off-white belly?

In addition to noting the Lapland's white belly and undertail, the NGS guide instructs us to compare the wing patterns of Lapland and Smith's Longspurs. The guide focuses on the wing of the Lapland: "Note also, especially in winter plumages, the reddish tertials and greater coverts" (p. 410). This is what the Smith's Longspur is supposed to lack.

However, the NGS artist erroneously illustrated the "reddish" wings of the immature female and juvenile Laplands by depicting them as colour 140, or Pratt's rufous (Smithe 1975). Other than in the yellow or red light of a low sun, this colour is too vivid.The tertials and greater coverts of the UMMZ specimens of Lapland Longspur are duller, and can best be described as colour 136, or raw sienna (Smithe 1975).

Kaufman is cautious concerning the wing colour of Lapland Longspur: "Many winter birds of both sexes have extensive rufous in the wings on the edges of the greater coverts, tertials, and secondaries". Then Kaufman gives an absolute: "Smith's Longspur ... never has ... obvious rufous on ... wings" (Farrand 1983:278).

Red combines in different amounts with yellow, black, and white to form the hues, shades, and tints of brown, cinnamon, and rufous. Since some eyes are more sensitive to perceiving red than others, the recognition of obvious rufous or cinnamon is relative, especially when the two colours are in a combination.

The tertials and greater coverts of the Smith's Longspur at Thunder Bay were the same colour as those of the four juvenile specimens at UMMZ. Thin rufous, like a watercolour wash, overlays the cinnamon tertials and greater coverts of these specimens, giving their wings an eye-catching quality, which is precisely what the dull yellow-brown wings of the adult specimens lack. The colour of the wings, therefore, is a means of recognizing juvenile and, hence, immature Smith's Longspurs.

A longspur leaves the nest in juvenile plumage and goes through postjuvenile moult to attain immature, or first-winter, plumage.

This is a partial moult; the bird sheds its body plumage and, at least, its lesser wing coverts, but keeps its rectrices, remiges, and greater coverts (Dwight 1975).

Janet Hinshaw of the UMMZ staff helped me classify the colour on the outer webs of the tertials and greater coverts of the four juvenile specimens. Smithe (1975) labelled the colour tawny (colour 38), with highlights of clay (colour 123 B). Ridgway (1912) called it cinnamon rufous (plate XIV), with highlights of ochraceous tawny (plate XV). Villalobos-Dominguez (1947) placed the colour on his chart at "Hue OOS," ranging from 9° to 11°, with the highlights of 12°.

I described this colour as rusty in my field notes. At the time I was ignorant of Ridgway's (1912) and Smithe's (1975) subtle vocabulary. I still maintain that some observers would call the colour rufous. Therefore, I prefer Ridgway's name of cinnamon rufous.

The tertials and greater coverts of the winter male Smith's Longspur illustrated on page 411 of the NGS guide (1983) are those of an immature. Their colour resembles the juvenile specimens at UMMZ. The wing of the female Smith's Longspur illustrated on the same page matches the wings of the adult specimens of both sexes in summer and winter plumages.

Figure 1: Immature Smith's Longspur at Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay District, 29 September 1985. Photo by *Alan Wormington.*

Determining whether a longspur possesses or lacks reddish wings does not clinch its identification as either a Lapland or a Smith's Longspur. To complicate things, the tertials and greater coverts of some Laplands are the same colour as those of immature Smith's Longspur. An example is UMMZ specimen #58794, an immature female Lapland with pointed rectrices, collected 5 November 1927 at Fish Point, Tuscola County, Michigan. To make matters worse, the tertials and greater coverts of some Laplands are drabber than those of immature Smith's Longspur. UMMZ specimen #58797 is an adult male Lapland with rounded rectrices, collected 6 November 1927 at Fish Point, Michigan. Its wings are raw sienna, or colour 136 (Smithe 1975). Moreover, a Lapland painted by Fuertes and labelled figure 5 (Chapman 1979a) shows how drab a Lapland's wings can be.

One must expect people to work only with what they have. Imagine a birder inexperienced with autumn longspurs spotting an immature Smith's—with its cinnamon-rufous tertials and greater coverts—among a flock of drab winged Laplands. Being unaware that the immature is indeed a Smith's Longspur, the birder compares it with the Laplands illustrated on page 411 of the NGS guide and makes an identification based on the juvenile depicted at the bottom of the page, for its wings have the richest hue.

The date of the observation of the Thunder Bay bird, 29 September, is not necessarily too late for a longspur to be in juvenile plumage. For example, as late as 12 October, Roberts (1955) observed a Chestnut-collared Longspur in juvenile plumage. He did not state whether this bird was a resident or a migrant. It was collected in Lac qui Parle County, Minnesota, which is at the eastern edge of the species' breeding range. However, Lapland Longspurs, which nest on the tundra like Smith's Longspurs, can begin to undergo postjuvenile moult in late July (Chapman 1979a).

Certain features on the breast, back, hindneck, crown, and upper-tail coverts of the Thunder Bay bird raise the question of whether it was in juvenile plumage or protracted postjuvenile moult.

The body feathers of juvenile passerines have an obvious texture. Dwight (1975:106) describes them as being "less distinctly pennaceous than those of the adults". The feather texture of the four juvenile specimens of Smith's Longspur appears obviously softer than those of the adult specimens. As a result of this softness, the dark streaks across the upper breasts of the juveniles are significantly wider and more diffuse than the streaks of the adult specimens.

Wormington's photographs (Figures 1 and 2) show that the Smith's Longspur at Thunder Bay did not have the breast streaks of a juvenile. Yet, they were more numerous and coalescent than those of most adult specimens at UMMZ. Specimen #68714 is a female collected on 17 February 1917 in Franklin County, Kansas. Her breast streaks match those of the photographed bird. Her

rectrices are too worn to determine whether they are pointed or rounded, but her wings are dull yellow brown, the colour of an adult.

My field notes omit what two of the photographs (Figures 2 and 3) show—two prominent white mantle stripes. Juvenile specimen #83995 has two whitish stripes on the back, which are questionably prominent if the plumage is rearranged in a lifelike position. No other UMMZ specimen of Smith's Longspur has two whitish mantle stripes.

Each of the four juvenile specimens has whitish highlighting that follows the rear edge of the hindneck, frames the auricular patch, and continues as a thin line along the base of the throat. All three photographs show part of this highlighting, although the whitish line along the base of the throat is absent.

The median stripe on the crown of the Thunder Bay bird was white, with fine dark streaks. Specimen #83995, the one with the questionably prominent mantle stripes, is the only UMMZ specimen of Smith's Longspur to have scattered whitish feathers on the median stripe of its crown. Are these the emerging feathers of first-winter plumage? The median stripes of the other three juvenile specimens, as well as those of the adult specimens, are buffy.

Figure 2: Immature Smith's Longspur at Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay District, 29 September 1985. Photo by *Alan Wormington.*

The upper-tail coverts of the bird at Thunder Bay were redder, or rustier, than its cinnamon-rufous tertials and greater coverts. Oberholser (1974) states that the upper-tail coverts of the juvenile can approach russet, a colour defined as being more reddish than orange brown. Yet, no UMMZ specimen has russet on the upper-tail coverts.

Several features of the Smith's Longspur at Thunder Bay merit review. The cinnamon-rufous tertials and greater coverts determined that it was not an adult. The pattern of fine streaks across its upper breast showed that it was not in juvenile plumage, at least not completely. If the two whitish mantle stripes and the whitish highlighting at the base of the head were isolated tracts of juvenile plumage, the bird was in protracted juvenile moult. More likely however, these two features, as well as the white median stripe on the crown, the russet upper-tail coverts, and the conspicuous pattern of the breast streaks, are variables of fresh first-winter plumage. Yet, some adults in winter plumage may also have whitish mantle stripes and whitish highlighting on the head. To determine the range of these features will take more than just the 62 specimens at UMMZ.

Figure 3: Immature Smith's Longspur at Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay District, 29 September 1985. Photo by *Alan Wormington.*

Breeding Range

Compared with the immensity of North America, the breeding range of Smith's Longspur is just a strip along the outside edge of the arctic tree line. The birds nest from Anaktuvuk Pass in Alaska's Brooks Range to Hudson Bay in Ontario (Gabrielson and Lincoln 1959) and in the highlands of southern Alaska, southern Yukon Territory, and adjoining British Columbia (AOU 1983; Godfrey 1986).

The farthest south and east that Smith's Longspurs nest is the region of Cape Henrietta Maria (Godfrey 1986), which projects into Hudson Bay at 55° 09′ north latitude and 82° 20′ west longitude

(Figure 4). This headland is the most arctic portion of Ontario. In summer, the south coast of Hudson Bay is exposed to the Arctic air stream and has a mean July temperature of 12° Celsius or less (Fahlgren and Matthews 1985). Windswept tundra and permafrost are continuous along the coast. Just inland, however, tamarack (*Larix laricina*), black spruce (*Picea mariana*), and white spruce (*P. glauca*) form a patchwork of forest and tundra (Fahlgren and Matthews 1985). Consequently, Ontario's nesting Smith's Longspurs are limited to the seaboard.

Ontario Records

Northern Ontario records of Smith's Longspur, away from its breeding range, include several from the north shore of Lake Superior in Thunder Bay District. An immature female which was collected (specimen #57194, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto) by George E. Atkinson in September 1892 at Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay) constitutes the first Ontario record (Fleming 1913). Tom Hince observed a male at Marathon on 24 April 1983 (Weir 1983) and what may have been a different male (although considered likely the same bird by the observer) 10 km away at Heron Bay on the same day (A. Wormington, pers. comm., 1986). There are two spring records for eastern Lake Superior: a female observed on 9 May 1981 at Caribou Island, Thunder Bay District, by J. Robert Nisbet (Baxter 1985; Wormington *et al.* 1986) and two males observed on the lawn of the Red Rock Lake headquarters of Lake Superior Provincial Park, Algoma District, on 19 May 1979 by K. Whillans and M.R. Browning (Baxter 1985).

Joseph A. Hagar (unpublished ms.) saw a few and collected one individual (not preserved) during the period 24-27 August 1955 at Big Piskwamish Point (James Bay), Cochrane District (A. Wormington, pers. comm., 1986). This is the only Moosonee area record, but not totally convincing, as the call notes were described as "churr . . . churr", which corresponds rather well to Chestnut-collared Longspur, but not Smith's.

To date, the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) has rejected one record and accepted two for southern Ontario, now defined as the area south of the annual isotherm of 4° C (Wormington and James 1984). The rejected record is for Amherstview, Lennox and Addington County, on 24 September 1973 (Wormington 1985). The accepted records are of single birds for Long Point, Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk, on 20 April 1980 and from 31 October-2 November 1984 (Wormington 1986).

Two additional southern Ontario records for Simcoe County (Devitt 1967) are cited in Speirs (1985) but have yet to be reviewed by the OBRC.

Long Point, at 80° 15′ west, may have the easternmost acceptable sightings of Smith's Longspur for Canada. If so, they are only 2° 5′ east of the species' nesting range. Farther east, the records are of "accidentals" in the United States: Connecticut (AOU 1983), New

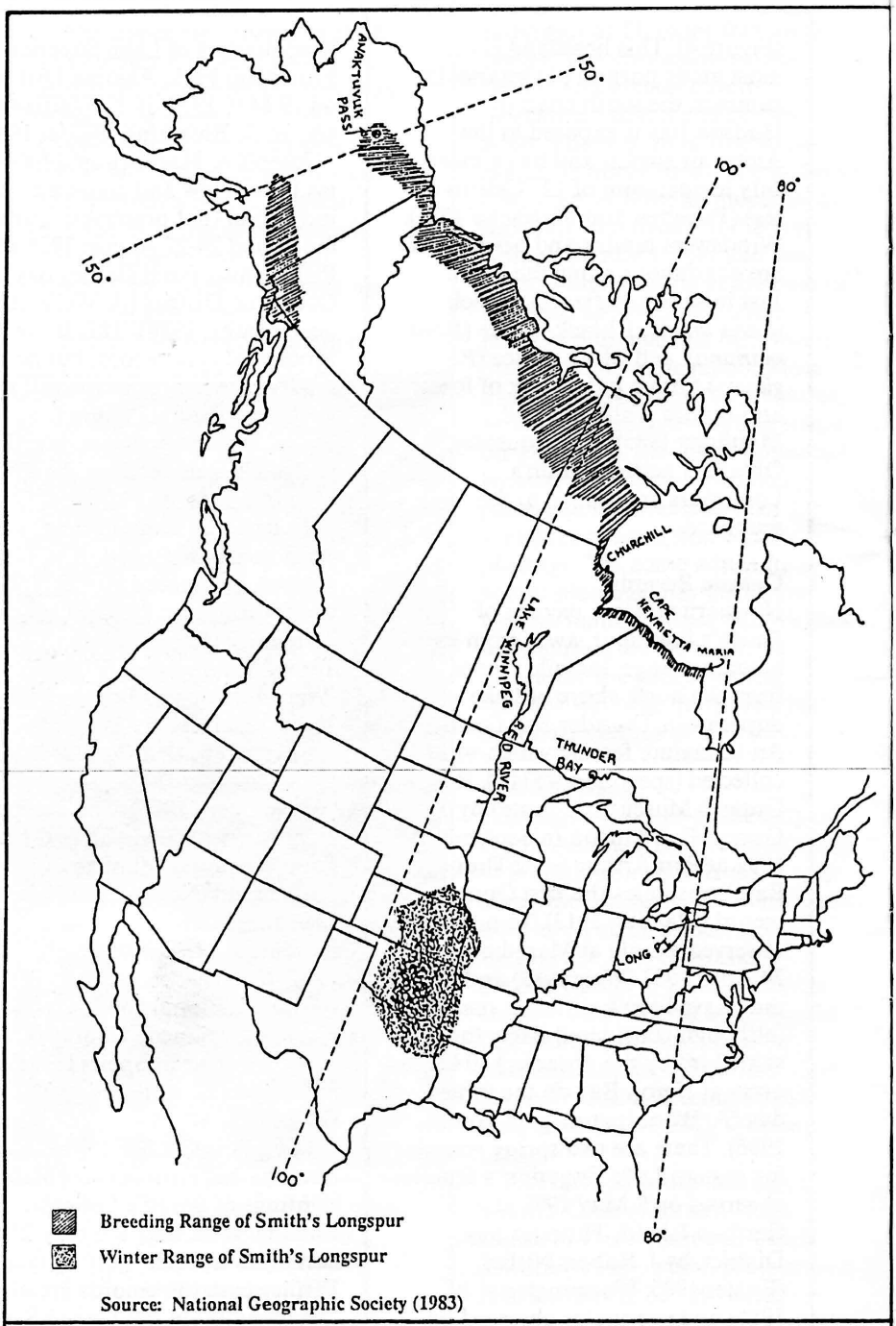

Figure 4: Breeding range and winter range of Smith's Longspur.

York (AOU 1983), Pennsylvania (Poole 1964), Maryland (Wilds 1983), and North Carolina (Potter, *et al.* 1980). There are two 19th-century specimens from Chester, South Carolina (Sprunt and Chamberlain 1970), which, at 81° 14′ west, is farther west than Long Point.

Fall Migration Patterns

How does a September record of a Smith's Longspur on Lake Superior's north shore compare with the species' continental status as an autumn migrant?

Southbound longspurs migrating from Hudson Bay via 88° west longitude have to cross 780 km of forest before arriving at the top of Lake Superior. Fearing the lake's sealike vastness (82,414 km²), the longspurs gather along its shoreline in open areas, as the 450 or so Lapland Longspurs did at the landfill in Thunder Bay's Chippewa Park on 29 September 1985. From the top of Lake Superior the shoreline guides the migrants either to the southeast or to the southwest.

For the period 1979–1985, *American Birds* gives three fall records of single Smith's Longspurs for Duluth, Minnesota, located at the west end of Lake Superior. The dates of these observations span 9–26 September (Tessen 1980, 1981, 1983). For the period 1978–1985, *American Birds* gives for the "Western Great Lakes Region," three fall records which are south of Lake Superior, but east of Duluth. Curiously, each of the three records is at or near 89° west longitude. Thunder Bay is situated at 89° 19′ west. The distance from Thunder Bay is given for each record: 174 km south, one bird in Ontonagon County, Michigan on 20 October 1981 (Tessen 1982); 470 km south, several just west of Weyauwega, Wisconsin, on 22 October 1983 (Tessen 1984); and 546 km south, one in Columbia County, Wisconsin, on 29 September 1978 (Tessen 1979). Perhaps these birds found themselves at dawn out over the middle of Lake Superior on a north wind and had no choice but to continue south.

Is the autumn migration to the plains a direct flight from wherever each bird's nesting territory happens to be? Probably not. Let us consider possible reasons why.

Because Smith's Longspurs are birds of the tundra, they probably delay their southward crossing of the taiga. If weather permits, they remain within the narrow breeding range and follow the tree line southeastward across the District of Mackenzie and continue into the District of Keewatin. Near 95° west longitude, the west coast of Hudson Bay stops them. Thus, their numbers build up in Keewatin.

To the west of Keewatin, the literature may describe the species' migratory status accurately. Smith's Longspurs are considered casual in British Columbia and Montana (AOU 1983) and rare in Alberta and Saskatchewan (Salt and Salt 1976).

That most of the population may migrate due south from Keewatin alone is no coincidence. At the tree line, southern Keewatin spans the area from 95° to 102° west. These degrees of longitude probably

define the species' traditional flyway on the Great Plains. The key factor influencing this flyway was probably the presence of bluestem grass (*Andropogon gerardi*). As tall-grass prairie, this species once grew along 97° west longitude for 1,200 km, spanning the area from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to Lincoln County, Oklahoma (Godfrey 1966; Johnsgard 1979; Figure 5). In winter, tall-grass prairie was more likely to protrude through the snow than short-grass prairie which, for the most part, grew to the west of the 100th meridian (Johnsgard 1979)—where Smith's Longspurs are not typically reported in winter.

Before October arrives—the month when snow covers the entire Northwest Territories (Energy, Mines and Resources Canada 1974)—the birds must cross the great zone of boreal forest, regardless of where they happen to be on the arctic tree line.

The eastern shoreline of Lake Winnipeg is relatively straight and extends southward for about 300 km, conveniently guiding south-bound longspurs across the boreal forest of Manitoba. Flowing approximately along 97° west longitude, the Red River leads upstream (south) from Lake Winnipeg into the open plains of North Dakota and Minnesota.

By 15 September, some Smith's Longspurs are on the edge of the Great Plains at Oak Lake, Manitoba (Bent 1968), which is 1,300 km south of the tundra and 70 km north of the United States/ Canada border. In western Minnesota this species is a regular (but rare) migrant, with dates ranging from 9 September–17 November (Green and Janssen 1975). It is an uncommon migrant in South Dakota, chiefly in the eastern half of the state, where the normal period of migration is "possibly" during late September and October (Whitney *et al.* 1978:269). In Nebraska it is an uncommon migrant in October (Bruner *et al.* 1903).

From 1977–1985, *American Birds* gives only three locations on the northern plains where Smith's Longspurs are reported somewhat consistently. All are between 96° and 98° west longitude. Deuel County in South Dakota is situated about 60 km south of the southernmost headwaters of the Red River (Serr 1979; Lamberth 1985, 1986). Daily counts of 25 birds are usual in Deuel County in fall (Serr 1979). The other two locations are Grand Forks in North Dakota (Serr 1979, 1980) and Rothsay Wildlife Management Area (Tessen 1978, 1979), a remnant of virgin prairie in Wilkins County, Minnesota. Both are within the drainage system of the Red River. The high counts were at Rothsay WMA, with 200 plus birds on 15 October 1977 and 61 on 21 October 1978 (Tessen 1978, 1979). The records for these three areas collectively occurred from 12 October to 4 November during the period 1977–1985.

Smith's Longspur is "normally unreported during autumn" in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, and Kentucky (Peterjohn 1983a:189).

Mumford and Keller (1984:326) write in *Birds of Indiana* that the

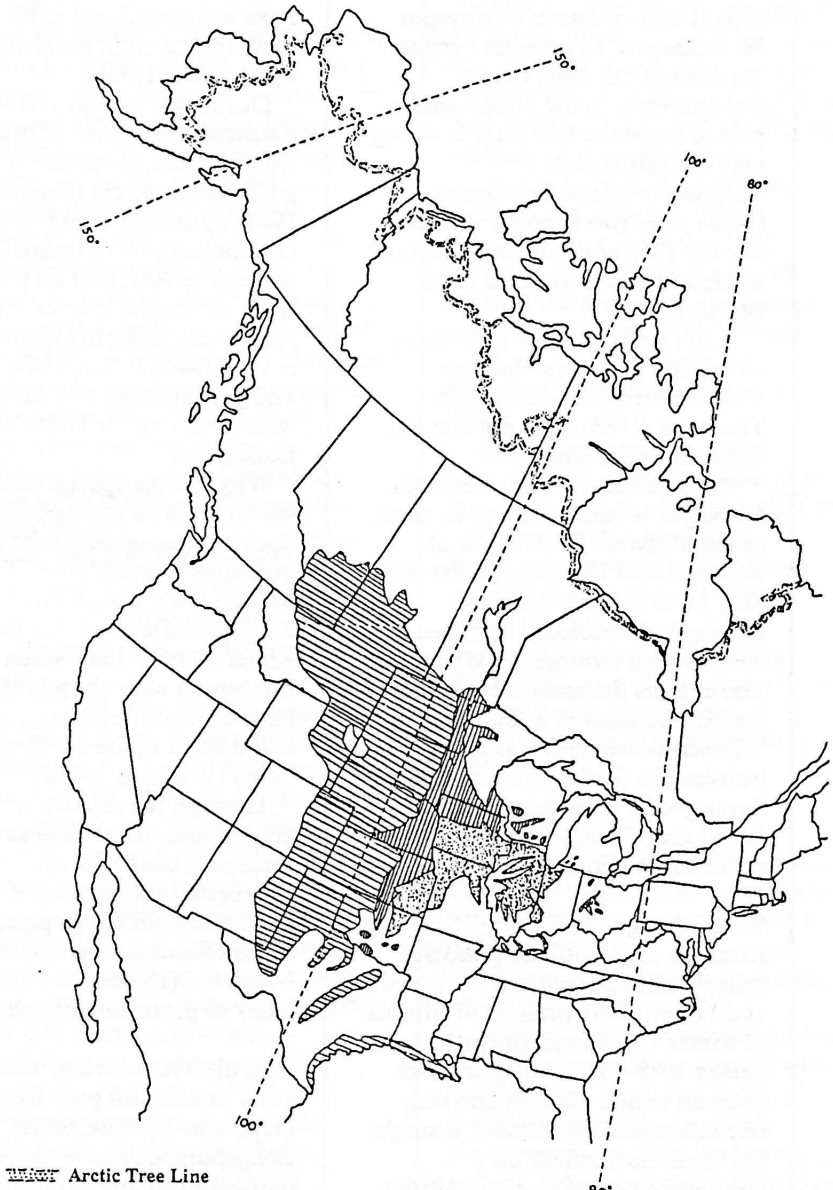

Figure 5: Extent of prairie habitat in North America.

arrival date of Smith's Longspur "is unknown" in autumn because the earliest fall date, being 7 November, is in the southwestern part of the state. But what is wrong with the fall reports for northwestern Indiana? Brock (1986) gives two October records, one for 1957 and one for 1983, both at the Indiana Dunes on Lake Michigan.

Bent (1968) gives 27 November as the late departure date for southwestern Ohio, although Thomson (1983) does not cite any fall records for Ohio.

The historical status of Smith's Longspur is contradictory in parts of the Midwest. Consider that Kumlien and Hollister (1903) write that, prior to 1852, Smith's Longspurs reportedly migrated in considerable numbers in Wisconsin. The authors themselves encountered Smith's Longspurs a few times in Wisconsin, where it was a fall transient in the southern counties. Seventy-one years later, Gromme (1974) gives it only accidental status for Wisconsin.

Winter Range

Kumlien and Hollister (1903:95) state: "Smith's Longspur . . . is not at all rare on the prairies of Illinois in winter". However, during the period 1980–1985, *American Birds* gives no winter records and only one fall record for Illinois: a single bird near Springfield on 5 November 1985 (Peterjohn 1986a). For the same period, adjacent Missouri has five November records and one December record (Kleen 1981; Peterjohn 1983a, 1983b, 1985a). Records in the latter half of February for Missouri and Iowa are considered to be those of early spring migrants (Peterjohn 1984, 1985b, 1986b).

During the period 1980–1985, *American Birds* gives only one winter record for Iowa—a bird on a Christmas count (Peterjohn 1984). Although Bent (1968), Oberholser (1974), Imhof (1976), and the AOU (1983) all place Iowa within the species' winter range, according to Dinsmore *et al.* (1984:301) "Iowa lies north of, and perhaps formerly in, the wintering area for Smith's Longspur".

Why did the species perhaps winter in Iowa and apparently now does not? Longspurs take extra measures to avoid snow, the "white death" of the plains. For instance, on nights of heavy snowfall in the winter of 1982–1983, when Lapland Longspurs were abundant in Pawnee County, Kansas, Seltman heard them flying overhead at all hours (Williams 1983).

Through the centuries, the tall-grass prairie must have saved longspurs caught in the unexpected snowstorms of autumn and spring, for the impressive seed stems of bluestem grass, standing 1–2 m tall (Hitchcock 1971), are likely to protrude through the snow.

In the 19th century, when tall-grass prairie still grew from South Dakota to Indiana, Smith's Longspurs may have wintered in parts of Iowa and Illinois. But all things come to an end. The steel plough broke the prairie's back and in a few decades the tall grass was gone. Fewer birds returned each winter, for too many had starved in the aftermath of the

preceding winter's storms. Weakened by hunger, where would they go if they could? To the south there was no longspur habitat, just the wooded uplift of the Ozark Mountains and the wet bottomlands of the Mississippi River.

The progenitors of today's Smith's Longspurs did not turn eastward to winter in Iowa and Illinois. Instead, they continued due south via the safety of the 97th meridian—the way of the bluestem grass. Though the prairie is gone, the flyway remains. En route, the birds are sometimes reported in Kansas; for example, during the period 20 October–30 November 1984, Smith's Longspurs "invaded" Lyon, Morris, and Chase Counties (Williams 1985: 74). No numbers were given, but these three counties lie between 96° and 97° west.

Smith's Longspurs are common winter residents in Oklahoma (Wood and Schnell 1984), and with good reason. Here, at 35° north, the annual snowfall can be less than 2.5 cm, and the daily normal temperature can remain above freezing all winter (Visher 1954). Such mild conditions spell success for longspurs, even though crops and grazing cattle have transformed the Oklahoma grasslands.

Farther south, most records occur in east Texas, with the greatest concentration near the Oklahoma border (Oberholser 1974). Smith's Longspurs are casual in west Texas (Oberholser 1974) and perhaps casual in northeastern New Mexico (Bent 1968) and Arizona (AOU 1983).

Expanding agriculture and the building of airports have given Smith's Longspurs the opportunity to expand their winter range into the formerly wooded sections of eastern Texas, northern Louisiana, and Arkansas. The old Municipal Airport of Shreveport had consistently been the Louisiana wintering site for Smith's Longspurs until at least 1971 (Lowery 1974). Farther east, 10 were at the airport of Stuttgart in east Arkansas on 17 November 1984, about 70 km from the Mississippi River (Purrington 1985).

East of the Mississippi, the winter status of Smith's Longspur is nebulous in the South. Imhof (1976) states that it winters irregularly in western Tennessee and central Alabama. However, the AOU (1983) treats it as a transient for central Alabama. Bent (1968) and Oberholser (1974) list northwest Mississippi as a part of the winter range, but the AOU (1983) does not.

Spring Migration

In spring, tropical air often arrives in the United States as a southwest wind. Over the southern plains it collides with the polar air mass and forms violent cyclonic fronts, which may move quickly, sometimes pushing migrating birds to the northeast. This may be why Smith's Longspurs appear in spring to the northeast of the plains—in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and even Ohio—places where they are generally unreported in fall.

In March, migrant Smith's Longspurs can be easy to locate in the area of Springfield, Illinois, with the help of local birders (personal experience). They are

regular in March and April in the western third of Indiana (Mumford and Keller 1984). On 7 April 1982, a cold front with snow grounded an estimated 1,500 Smith's Longspurs in Parke County, Indiana (Peterjohn 1982). Most records for central and southwestern Ohio are in March and April (Thomson 1983). Thus far, there are no reports of flocks to the north in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, just a single record of a male for Midland on 25 April 1971 (Soulen 1971). Excluding the fact that Michigan is underbirded, where do the northbound birds of Indiana and Ohio go? Seemingly they are not regular in Wisconsin. Nor do they probably outpace the receding snow line in the upper Great Lakes.

The birders of Ontario should consider the following: Iowa has but nine Smith's Longspurs reports for 1900–1930 and only three for 1930–1981 (Dinsmore *et al.* 1984). However, an organized search in the spring of 1982 produced nine sightings for six counties during 21 March–18 April. Dinsmore *et al.* (1984:301) state that Smith's Longspur is probably regular in Iowa, but overlooked on account of its rarity and uneven distribution in migration. Furthermore, "the species prefers grassy fields, where it is not likely to be encountered by birdwatchers. . . . Spring flocks may contain breeding plumage males, which are easy to identify. Females and winter plumage birds are more difficult to separate from other longspurs".

Summary

All that follows is speculation. The majority of Smith's Longspurs in autumn migration follow the breeding range southeastward via the tree line to southern Keewatin. From there, they cross the boreal forest to the Great Plains. The flyway then follows the former belt of tall-grass prairie, approximating the 97th meridian, from Manitoba to the main winter range in Oklahoma.

The immature Smith's Longspur that was observed at Thunder Bay, Ontario, on 29 September 1985 may belong to the nesting population of Ontario, which uses the north shore of Lake Superior as a flyway toward the plains. If this is not the case, then the bird at Thunder Bay was a mere stray, southbound from Keewatin or Manitoba.

Since the wings of adult Smith's Longspurs are a dull yellow brown, the bird at Thunder Bay was an immature on account of its cinnamon-rufous tertials and greater coverts. Furthermore, its conspicuous pattern of breast streaks, two whitish mantle stripes, whitish highlighting at the base of the head, white median stripe on the crown, and russet upper-tail coverts may be variables of fresh first-winter plumage.

Acknowledgements

I thank Alan Wormington for showing me the Smith's Longspur at Thunder Bay, for providing me with three of his black-and-white photographs of the bird, and for providing data on northern Ontario observations. Janet Hinshaw of the University of

Michigan Museum of Zoology assisted in my examination of Smith's Longspur specimens.

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A Birding Site Guide to Prince Edward County

by

Terry Sprague

Location and Access

Prince Edward County lies just off the north shore of eastern lake Ontario between Brighton, Northumberland County and Napanee, Lennox and Addington County. Prior to the construction of the Murray Canal in 1889, which severed the northwest corner of the county to connect the Bay of Quinte to Presqu'ile Bay, Prince Edward County was a peninsula. It has a total area of 100,000 hectares or 1,000 square kilometres. The population of Prince Edward County is about 22,000. The largest centre is the Town of Picton, with a population of 4,800. In the Town of Wellington and Village of Bloomfield, there are 1,000 and 750 inhabitants, respectively.

There are four main access points to the county, three of which are from Highway 401. To the west, follow Highway 33 via the Wooler Road exit to Carrying Place. At Belleville, take Highway 62 (formerly Highway 14) across the Norris Whitney Bridge into the county, or take the Marysville exit and follow Highway 49 near the east end of the county. Access is also possible from Highway 33 at Adolphustown via the Glenora Ferry if travelling from Kingston.

Habitat and Ornithological Significance

Much of Prince Edward County is composed of shallow soils which result in an extensive hectareage of untilled pasture fields, ranging from barren flats to those either sparsely or densely populated with red cedar. These conditions provide excellent habitat for nesting populations of Upland Sandpipers, Grasshopper Sparrows, Savannah Sparrows, and Field Sparrows, as well as Clay-colored Sparrows in specific areas.

Elsewhere there is a mixed variety of habitat, from cultivated fields, hardwood forests and extensive marshlands to scrub cover consisting of field invasions

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by hawthorn, apple, sumac, prickly ash, dogwood, alder and low-growing varieties of willow.

Because of its location in Lake Ontario, Prince Edward County is a natural "catch basin" for migratory birds during both spring and fall migrations. Much ornithological work has been done in the area, from small private studies on individual species or families to more concerted efforts such as the 1930 faunal survey conducted by staff members of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (Snyder 1941). In more recent years, two publications, Sprague (1969) and the revised edition of the same name (Sprague and Weir 1984) have been made available to enlighten birders of the status of each of the 318 species that has occurred in the county.

Where to Bird

The description of some of the choice birding spots in the area is presented in the form of a tour, commencing on Highway 33 in the northwest portion of the county and exiting the county via Highway 62 at Belleville (Figure 1). The tour is given in a hypothetical sense only, as it would require several days of birding to cover all of the areas described. One must also be conscious of the fact that beyond the major centres of Wellington, Picton and Bloomfield, service stations may be few and far between. Motel accommodations are available in several locations including Lake-on-the-Mountain, West Lake, Bloomfield, Wellington and Picton. In addition, there are numerous private campgrounds and "Bed and Breakfast" establishments. Sandbanks Provincial Park offers the only provincial park camping facilities in the county.

Consecon

Commencing at the northwest corner, proceed south on Highway 33 to the Village of Consecon. Take County Road 29 for 6 km around the Stinson Block. The south and west roads are particularly productive during the winter months, as they not only follow the Lake Ontario shoreline where winter ducks may be found, but pass through a dense hardwood forest with an intermixing of mature white cedar. Good birding can be had right from the roadside, but by exploring the interior, wintering populations of Yellow-rumped Warblers, American Robins and White-throated Sparrows can often be found in the tangles. Great Horned Owls, numerous woodpeckers, including Pileated, and other typical winter birds also frequent this woodlot. An open silage pit nestled amongst white cedars often harbour Dark-eyed Juncos, American Tree Sparrows and Mourning Doves.

Before crossing the fence, however, one must seek permission from the owner, McRae Danford, whose farm house, barns and silos are conspicuously located on a sideroad just south of the woods. The road past the Danford home eventually ends at the Lake Ontario shoreline and the extreme north end of North Beach Provincial Park. This road is not ploughed in the winter, but if it is a mild winter, both dabbler and diving ducks can often be found in adjacent North Bay. Scoters,

Oldsquaws, Common Goldeneyes, Common Loons and Double-creasted Cormorants can be found on the lake, depending on the season. The latter species nests on Scotch Bonnet Island, which appears only as a small lighthouse on the distant horizon.

Wellington

Returning to Consecon, continue south on Highway 33 to the Town of Wellington, turn right at the L.C.B.O. building and stop at the wharf. Here, West Lake empties into Lake Ontario and during early winter much of the water near the wharf remains open. This provides good viewing for ducks. It is even more spectacular in spring when the open water will be covered with migrant ducks. All three merganser species can be depended on, as well as Canada Geese, both diving and dabbling ducks, and Tundra Swans.

This is also the extreme northwest end of Sandbanks Provincial Park, the largest fresh-water sand dune bar system in the world. The sand pit is 8 km in length and a walk down the beach will yield shorebirds in season, especially Ruddy Turnstones. Bank Swallows nest in the adjacent sand dunes.

Because of its length, it would be wise to arrange for a vehicle to be waiting in the parking lot at the far end. Although there is an inlet

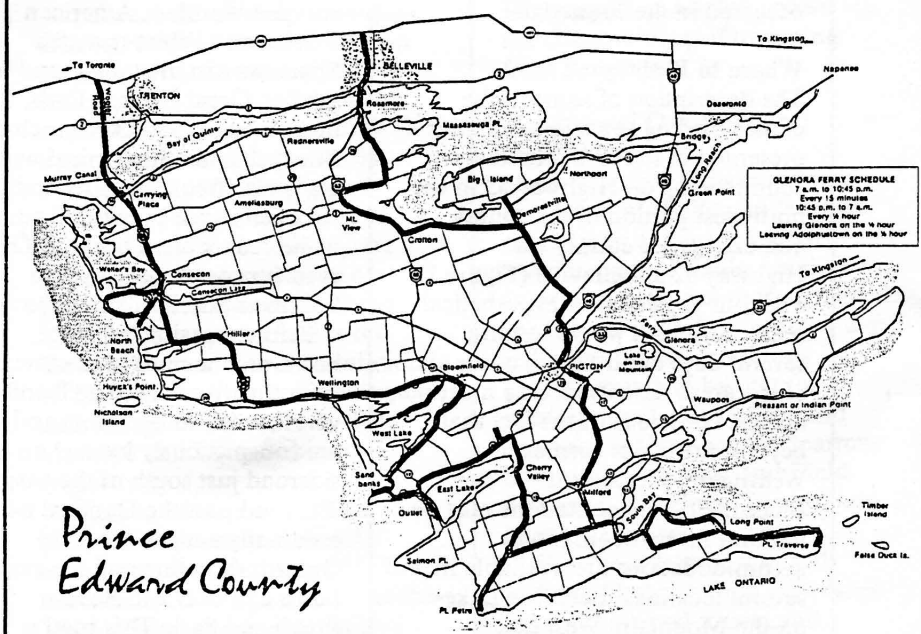


Figure 1: Map of Prince Edward County. The described route is indicated with a bold line. Map courtesy of *County Magazine.*

separating the sand spit from the mainland at Wellington, the channel is narrow and can easily be crossed by either swimming or using a canoe.

Proceed east out of Wellington on Highway 33 to the Village of Bloomfield. Just a hundred metres or so past the Bloomfield sign there is a well marked sideroad to the south leading to Wesley Acres Church Camp. This dead end road passes through an area of marsh in West Lake where bitterns, rails, American Coots, Common Moorhens and Great Blue Herons can often be seen from the road. Dabbling ducks are common during migration and the usual smaller marsh birds can also be found.

Returning to Bloomfield, turn right at the Becker's Store and follow Highway 62-33 a short distance and turn right again at the sign pointing toward Sandbanks Provincial Park. Follow County Road 12 for 8 km and turn right at the Isaiah Tubbs Resort (one of several overnight accommodations in the county). This road leads to Sheba's Island (Tubbs Island on some maps). The causeway leading to the island passes over a marshland similar to the sideroad at Bloomfield and where the same species of birds may be found.

Sandbanks Provincial Park

Returning to County Road 12, follow it to the West Lake Sector of Sandbanks Provincial Park. Do not turn on County Road 18 at the second Sandbanks sign,as this directs summer traffic to the Administration Office and main campgrounds at Sandbank's East Lake Sector, an area which we will visit later. Instead, follow County Road 12 to the first sharp corner just beyond the last private campground on the right, and turn into the small parking lot. Follow the gravel path (actually an old access road) at the base of the dune for a short walking distance until it leads to an open area. This section of the dunes was mined more than a decade ago by the Lake Ontario Cement Company near Picton. The removal of sand left behind a flooded panne which attracts numerous shorebird species during spring and fall migrations. Dowitchers, yellowlegs and Spotted Sandpipers are common. When water levels are sufficiently high Mallards and Blue-winged Teal may be seen. Scan the distant dunes, as Bank Swallows nest in the area.

Follow County Road 12 through the wooded area of the park to the four-way stop. Turn right and enter the Main Gate of the West Lake Sector. The abundance of pines makes this an excellent area in which to find chickadees and kinglets. In fact, it was here that Prince Edward County's first nesting record of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet was obtained in 1976. The parking lot is situated adjacent to an extensive panne area where ducks, shorebirds and other waterbirds may be observed in season. As the water recedes in late spring, the moist area supports a nesting population of Mallards, Blue-winged Teal, Common Snipe, Savannah and Field Sparrows.

Leaving the West Lake Sector, turn right again at the four-way stop and follow the dead end road to West Point, a distance of 1.5 km. At the burned ruins of the former Lakeshore Lodge one has a

panoramic view of the 8 km sandspit running toward Wellington. In season, numerous species of shorebirds may be found along the beach as well as large aggregations of Ring-billed Gulls, which also mill about in neighbouring fields. Continuing toward West Point the road deteriorates rapidly. The low bushes and trees which flank the road are excellent for warblers and other songbirds during migration. At West Point the road ends and from this vantage point diving ducks and Common Loons may be found during migration. A large luxury hotel and resort complex is planned for the entire West Point peninsula, so the area may be closed to traffic in future while construction takes place. At the moment, however, the plans have been put on hold until some legal problems have been worked out. Until construction takes place, the point is open to the public.

Returning to the four-way stop, turn right again and continue along County Road 12, which follows the lakeshore, and look for ducks, gulls and waterbirds along the way. Red-throated Loons sometimes occur along this stretch of water.

Approaching County Road 18, turn right at the stop sign and follow into Sandbanks Provincial Park's East Lake Sector (formerly Outlet Park). If one is expecting to camp here it is best to reserve ahead, as this is Ontario's second busiest park. There are, however, numerous private campgrounds adjacent to the park and a visit to the park's Information Centre, located just inside the Main Gate, can offer current information on available accommodation. Park naturalists are also on hand at the Information Centre from May until October to provide visitors with an update on the birds in the park. The mixed habitat appeals to a wide variety of birds. Mourning Doves, Northern Cardinals, Northern Orioles, Great Crested Flycatchers, House Wrens, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos can be depended on in the park. The mouth of the Outlet River is very favourable in the autumn, with yellowlegs, dowitchers, Sanderlings, and Semipalmated Sandpipers the most common shorebirds that appear. It is also a favourite loafing area in the fall for gulls and terns.

Beaver Meadow Wildlife Management Area

Leaving Sandbanks Provincial Park, go west on County Road 18, past the County Road 12 junction which we came out on earlier, and turn right on County Road 11, just past the Parkside Place Convenience Store and gas bar. Follow this road for about 8 km and watch for the Beaver Meadow Wildlife Management Area on the left. Take the access road past the first parking lot and park at the second lot near the trail sign. The walking trail goes through a wooded swamp which in more recent years has been flooded by beaver. The dead trees provide excellent habitat for Northern Flickers, Red-headed Woodpeckers and Great Crested Flycatchers. Tree Swallows, which nest in the hollow tree limbs, may be seen coursing to and fro over the open areas. Wood Ducks nest in the many nest boxes that have been erected for this species, and other species of dabbling

ducks may be found here during migration. At the end of the trail scan the trees to the left for a heronry used by Great Blue Herons. This is but one of six active heronries in the county.

Point Petre

Leaving Beaver Meadow, follow County Road 11 to the stop sign and turn right on County Road 10, which leads to Cherry Valley. Watch carefully for the intersection of 10 & 18, where 10 curves sharply to the left and up a small grade. Follow County Road 10 for about 2 km to County Road 24. This road leads to Point Petre. Entering the Point Petre Recreational Area there is a woodlot and picnic area which overlooks Soup Harbour. This area provides good viewing for waterfowl. Large concentrations of hawks and Turkey Vultures have been noted in the fall at Point Petre, as well as Bald Eagles on occasion. This area still needs more coverage, but the potential of the area is being recognized by such groups as the Quinte Field Naturalists, whose members are just now starting to explore this peninsula.

Prince Edward Point

To reach Prince Edward Point, proceed back on County Road 24, turn right and drive east on the Royal Street sideroad. This sideroad comes out on County Road 9. At this point it might be a good idea to check your fuel gauge and turn left and follow County Road 9 north to Milford, as there are no service stations south beyond Milford. From Milford, follow County Road 9 south to the stop sign at the Mariner's Memorial Park and Lighthouse. Turn right and continue along County Road 9 toward Prince Edward Point for 3.6 km. At this point one can take an alternative route to Prince Edward Point by following Rose's Lane. Near the two sycamore trees on the right check the fields of low cedars. Clay-colored Sparrows are generally here in the summer. The road then crosses a creek and passes a wooded area (check for waterbirds and passerines) before turning left and heading back to County Road 9. Along the way check the neglected pastures for hawks and Grasshopper Sparrows, which are fairly common. Yellow Rails are fairly regular but a very rare spring visitor in the weedy areas along this road. Sharp-tailed Grouse are present but rarely seen.

Upon entering the Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area check the woods on either side for migrants. Prince Edward Point is a major staging area in spring and autumn for migrating birds. The geographical features of the point cause birds to concentrate in very large numbers. There is no other location on the Canadian side of Lake Ontario where the density and abundance of migrants are known to compare with those at Prince Edward Point.

Heading toward Point Traverse, the woods here often seethe with spring migrants such as warblers, flycatchers and vireos. Red-headed Woodpeckers and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers can usually be found along this stretch of road. The adjacent open fields host flocks of Bobolinks, Red-winged Blackbirds and swallows. The waters of Prince Edward Bay and Lake Ontario

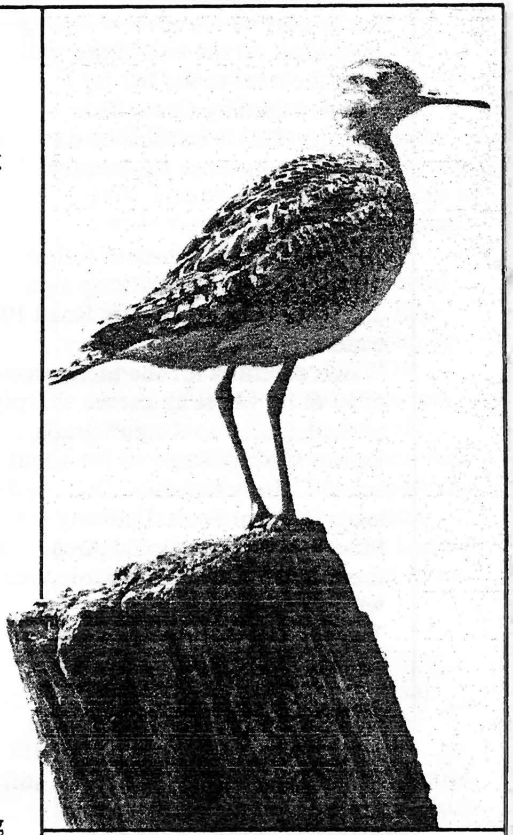
provide rich feeding areas for migrating waterfowl. During autumn migrations, scaup numbering 100,000+ will be common in October and November. These will be augmented by large numbers of Horned Grebes, goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Oldsquaws, Black, Surf, and White-winged Scoters, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, and loons.

The shorelines are not suitable for large concentrations of shorebirds, and there is a shortage of suitable habitat for migrant waders due to habitat succession; however, all common species can usually be found. The dry, grassy fields provide feeding areas for Upland Sandpipers, Black-bellied Plovers, Whimbrels and Buff-breasted Sandpipers.

The road curves at Point Traverse and heads towards the Long Point Harbour and Prince Edward Point proper. The small, swampy woodland on either side of the harbour is productive during periods of migration.

The prevailing WNW winds tend to sweep migrant raptors from the mainland areas of the county toward the east along the shoreline leading to Prince Edward Point. Hawk flights can be spectacular, as the raptors change direction to move west again to avoid being swept over Lake Ontario. Hawk numbers during fall often number a few thousand per day.

Night banding has shown that Prince Edward Point is a major point of concentration for migrating owls, particularly the Northern Saw-whet Owl. This point is unequalled in North America for numbers of this species. Over 4,000 Northern Saw-whet Owls have been banded since operations began in 1975. During this time, Screech and Long-eared Owls also move through.



Upland Sandpiper, Prince Edward Point, June 1980 / photo by *R.D. McRae*.

Milford

Leaving the Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area, proceed back along County Road 9 to the Village of Milford. At the T-junction in Milford turn right and drive across the bridge and then take the first left. This is the Old Milford Road, which winds its way through mixed habitat and comes out on County Road 8 leading into

Picton. Just past the first set of woods at the township dump (5 km) the road comes out into an open area. This is one of the more dependable areas in the county for nesting Upland Sandpipers. They can usually be found perching on the utility poles or seen in the open fields on either side of the road. Check the various swampy wooded areas that this road passes through, as both migrants and resident birds may be found.

Picton

At County Road 8, turn left and head into Picton. Just on the outskirts of Picton lies the Macaulay Mountain Conservation Area on the left. Of some interest is Bird House City, which flanks the entrance to the conservation area. The 90 or so detailed reproductions of historic buildings in the county have been erected to resemble a small city complete with streets and avenues There is even a McDonald's Restaurant, although it must be noted that it is the only McDonald's Restaurant to be found in the county! While the ambitious project has failed to meet its goal of attracting many Purple Martins, the detailed miniatures are worth a stop.

At the base of Macaulay Mountain is the start of several kilometres of interconnecting walking trails which lead through a mixed topography of lowlands, escarpment and plateau. The wide diversity of habitat will yield Pileated Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Ovenbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Northern Cardinal, Black-capped Chickadee and Red-eyed Vireo. The upper plateau area, which can be reached by taking any one of the trails up the escarpment, has been known to host a small number of Clay-colored Sparrows.

Big Island Marsh

Follow County Road 8 into Picton via Union Street and turn left on Bridge Street at the Tip of the Bay Motel.Turn right on Highway 49 at the top of the hill and proceed north out of Picton. Just past the railroad tracks turn left on County Road 6 and then right on County Road 5 and follow it for about 10 km to the Village of Demorestville. Turn right at the stop sign and follow County Road 5 down the steep hill for 1.5 km. Turn left and follow the causeway which leads to Big Island. The Big Island Marsh, which lies on either side of the causeway, is spectacular in the early spring for migrating marsh birds, as the air is filled with the songs of Common Snipe, Soras, Virginia Rails, American Bitterns, Marsh Wrens, and Swamp Sparrows. Tundra Swans are regular in spring in the more open areas of the marsh.

In 1986 a co-operative project among Ducks Unlimited, the Prince Edward Region Conservation Authority and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources was initiated to create a number of interconnecting channels in an effort to improve the habitat for nesting waterfowl. The east marsh is now completed and the west side is due for completion in 1987. The channels provide attractive canoe routes that can give an observer a close up view of some of the marsh's regular inhabitants.

Access to the marsh can be made right at the causeway. Historically, this was an area where the King Rail could be found in the 1930s. The species has since been seen here on only three occasions.

The Big Island Marsh is the major marshland in the county, extending from the eastern tip of Big Island to Huff's Island and through the eastern portion of Ameliasburgh Township,a total distance of 19 km, broken only by 2 km of open water at Muscote Bay. The Huff's Island Marsh is also very productive, with past records of Great Egret and Glossy Ibis. To reach it, follow County Road 5 back to Demorestville and turn right on County Road 14 at the top of the hill. Take this road for 10 km and turn right on Highway 62. Follow 62 for about 5 km and turn right on the Huff's Island Road.

This road crosses a small section of marsh where open conditions exist. The most profitable birding, however, is to be had on a seldom travelled road that crosses the major portion of the marsh from the island and heads north, eventually connecting up with the County Road 28 and Highway 62 near Rossmore. It must be cautioned, however, that this road is often flooded during periods of high water and great care must be exercised if a decision is made to take it.

Returning to Highway 62, which leads into Belleville, the birding tour as described is completed. Good birding can also be had on the many sideroads which interconnect throughout the county. The sideroads, county roads and highways are generally well marked for those who wish to explore further.

More details on these and other birding sites in the county, as well as information concerning available accommodation may be obtained by contacting the author.

Appeal for Submission of Records

Visitors birding Prince Edward County are urged to submit a list of their sightings, complete with dates and locations, for the files of the author. He may be contacted at the address provided or telephone (613) 476-5072.

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White-eyed Vireo: New to Northern Ontario

by
Alan Wormington

Knowing that the White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) is usually restricted to the extreme southern portions of Ontario, I was very surprised to locate an individual of this species on 13 October 1986 at Marathon, Thunder Bay District.

The bird was found at about 1200h beside the railway line running south of town along the shore of Lake Superior. The habitat here is mixed white spruce (*Picea glauca*), white birch (*Betula papyrifera*), poplar (*Populus* sp.), alder (*Alnus* sp.) and red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*); overall it is predominantly deciduous. On the day of observation, there was considerable snow on the ground in all inland areas and high ground but, near the lake, snow was absent and birds were numerous. During the observation it was overcast with little wind.

The bird was found when I stepped off the tracks to investigate a small band of American Tree Sparrows (*Spizella arborea*) and Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) feeding along the forest edge. When I "spished," a small, brightly-coloured bird popped up into a leafless alder bush about 6 m away. It proved to be a White-eyed Vireo. The bird fed in the open for a minute or so at (or below) eye level before proceeding to feed much higher in a leafless birch. Here I noticed it was feeding with a Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*). Both birds disappeared and I started to take field notes, but after a few minutes I wanted to see the bird again to check on some fine points of the bird's plumage. I entered the forest and again found the bird. This time it was foraging quietly in some mostly leafless red-osier Dogwood at a distance of about 7 m, often feeding close to the ground. After a few more minutes of observation, I left the area.

This White-eyed Vireo is the first to be recorded in northern Ontario. The species is not listed for the region by Wormington and James (1984), and subsequent annual reports of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (for the years 1983 to 1985 inclusive) do not report the species.

Description

For a vireo, the bird was somewhat smallish, probably not much larger than a Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*), with a proportionately shorter tail. Compared to the adjacent Ruby-crowned Kinglet, it was obviously larger, but not overly so. It was

Alan Wormington, R.R. #1, Leamington, Ontario N8H 3V4

small-headed in comparison to other vireos—such as Solitary Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*), one of which was seen about an hour earlier. The bird sometimes held its tail slightly cocked (horizontal with the ground) while at the same time holding its wings in a drooping fashion. When feeding high in a tree with the Ruby-crowned Kinglet it flitted about in kinglet fashion with some apparent wing-flicking.

The bill was slate grey, unmarked, and typically vireo-shaped with a blunt-tipped look. The eyes were black or dark and stood out against the brightness of the surrounding spectacles. The eye rings were bright yellow and were the brightest part of the bird; the upper portions continued to the base of the bill to complete each of the spectacles. The rest of the head (above the eyes) was an unmarked, smooth-looking light drab grey; the head colour was unlike the dark blue-grey of a Solitary Vireo. There was no appearance of a cap or frontal plate. The back was a bright grassy-green and was otherwise unmarked. Wings were greenish like the back, but were darker due to dark (grey) feather edging; each wing feather was tipped (edged) with pale yellow to create a pattern along the top of the folded wing. On each wing were two wingbars, both very narrow but very bright white with a yellow tinge. The tail above was dark greenish, with the feathers (apparently the tips) edged in dark grey. The throat was pale grey (whitest in the middle and overall lighter than the head), with the sides slightly yellowish. The belly of the bird was bright lemon yellow, lighter (and largely whitish) running down the centre; the colour was unlike the dark, "streaky" yellow typical of Solitary Vireo. The undertail coverts were whitish with a slight yellowish tint.

The bird was clearly a young-of-the-year, based on the dark-coloured eyes easily observed at close range.

Status North of the Breeding Range

The White-eyed Vireo is a southern species, nesting north to southern Masssachusetts, southern New York, extreme southern Ontario, southern Michigan, central Wisconsin, central Iowa and eastern Nebraska (A.O.U. 1983:589-590).

A quick analysis of extralimital records (north of the breeding range) disclose distinctive patterns. In spring, the species is a regular, often numerous, "over-shooting" migrant to areas just beyond the normal breeding range, particularly those immediately bordering the southern Great Lakes. For example, an exceptional 150 or more birds were recorded during the spring of 1982 at Point Pelee, Essex Co., Ontario (Wormington 1982), where only a few pairs regularly nest. Fall records, however, are far fewer overall (in comparison to spring) but birds are as likely—or more likely—to be found well away from the breeding range. Finally, there are several "summer" records north of the breeding range, which perhaps refer to non-breeding birds.

In the general area of the Great Lakes the most extralimital records

include three spring and two fall records for the Ottawa area (Bruce M. Di Labio, pers. comm., 1986); a 22 September 1978 observation on Great Duck Island, Manitoulin District (Nicholson 1981:156); and two northern Michigan records, one on 11 May 1979 at North Manitou Island, Leelanau Co., and the other on 10–11 May 1979 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (Payne 1983:45).

In Minnesota, where the species is very rare, all eight to ten records are for the southern half of the state; most of these were recorded in spring or early summer (Kim R. Eckert, pers. comm., 1986), with the only fall record on 21 October 1980 (Christman 1981). Of six records located for Nova Scotia (Tufts 1962:356; Godfrey 1986:454), five were in fall, while only one pertained to spring. Another occurrence of note, representing the only Manitoba record, concerns a bird observed on 3–4 July 1981 at Winnipeg by G. Holland *et al.* (Koes 1985).

In summary, the Marathon individual occurred at a time of year (*i.e.*, during fall migration) when birds well away from the breeding range are typically recorded. Furthermore, it provides yet another example of a southern species which has occurred in northern Ontario only as a fall migrant, and on a comparatively late date for the species generally. (Details of a similar record in northern Ontario involving an Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) are presented elsewhere in this issue of *Ontario Birds*.)

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Orchard Oriole: New to Northern Ontario

by
Alan Wormington and William Lamond

On 25 September 1986 the authors located an immature Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) at Terrace Bay, Thunder Bay District, while observing birds in the company of Mark W. Jennings. The bird was found at the town's sewage pond, which is located just south of town at the base of a steep embankment; further to the south the Lake Superior shoreline is less than 1 km away. This very shallow sewage pond is surrounded by mostly deciduous forest, with extensive patches of various weeds (mostly *Bidens* sp.) in and around the water.

The Orchard Oriole was first seen by Lamond, who saw it flying twice over the pond. On the first encounter it was suspected of being a tanager (*Piranga* sp.), but after the second observation was considered more likely to be an Orchard Oriole. Some time later we relocated the bird and were able to keep it under almost continuous observation for about 20 minutes. With binoculars, at distances ranging from 10 to 20 m, the bird was studied feeding on the ground in tall dead grass, in patches of dead fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*), in mountain ash (*Sorbus* sp.), in white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) and in some still-green elderberry (*Sambucus pubens*) bushes. We had no difficulty in identifying this exciting find as an Orchard Oriole, since the species was previously very familiar to all three of us.

This sighting represents the first record of Orchard Oriole in northern Ontario, the species having not been listed for the region by Wormington and James (1984), or subsequently by the Ontario Bird Records Committee in their annual reports (1983 to 1985 inclusive).

Description

The following is a synopsis of the description we were able to obtain: in size the bird was small for an oriole, being hardly larger than a large sparrow (*e.g.*, White-crowned Sparrow, *Zonotrichia leucophrys*), but with a more slender build. In flight the bird flew in a somewhat jerky style with its long, well-rounded tail held down.

At a distance or in flight the bird simply appeared entirely olive-green in colour, but was noticeably lighter below. The head, back, rump and tail were mostly a uniform shade of olive-green, except that the head was slightly darker on the crown and forehead, the back showed very slight grey

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"marbling", and the rump (contrasting with the tail and back) was slightly lighter. No markings (*e.g.*, tail-spotting) were present in the tail. The wings were slightly darker and greyer than the back, with two distinct but dull, dirty white wingbars; the smaller fore wingbar (median wing coverts) was thicker and probably slightly yellowish. The entire underparts of the bird were lighter than the upperparts. The lower portions were light greenish-yellow, while the throat was a distinct, clear lemon yellow with some duskiness at the edges. The eye was black or dark; there was an indistinct dark eyeline extending from the bill base to a point just behind the eye. The bill was moderately thick-based but tapered to a sharp point; it was either straight or perhaps very slightly down-curved. In colour it was mostly dark-dusky with some pale colouring at the base.

The only vocalization made by the bird (heard once by Lamond) was a double-noted, blackbird-like chatter, recognized as typical of the species.

We considered the bird to be an immature (young-of-the-year), mainly due to the bright underparts, and in particular the bright yellow throat. Oberholser (1974:814) describes this feature as a distinction between immatures and the similar adult female at this time of year.

Status and Range of the Species

In eastern North America the Orchard Oriole regularly breeds north to Massachusetts, extreme southern Ontario, southern Michigan, central Wisconsin and southern Minnesota, and westward to include extreme southern Manitoba and southeast Saskatchewan (A.O.U. 1983:734).

Records north and east of the above range in the vicinity of the Great Lakes pertain almost exclusively to birds in spring or early summer, unlike the fall occurrence at Terrace Bay. The most extralimital of these include the following: five spring and early summer records north to the Ottawa area (Bruce M. Di Labio, pers. comm., 1986); nine spring records for Manitoulin District (Nicholson 1981:177–178); several spring appearances at Whitefish Point, Michigan (Payne 1983:58); and an adult male observed by Marjorie Carr *et al.* on 21 May 1979 at Stony Point, Lake Superior, the only northern Minnesota record away from the Red River Valley along the west edge of the state (Kim R. Eckert, pers. comm., 1986). More distant occurrences in the east include numerous records for Nova Scotia and a single record for Newfoundland (Godfrey 1986:557).

Also unusual about the Terrace Bay bird is that it occurred on a very late date for the species. Only one later record is known for Ontario, that being an adult male observed 18–20 November 1962 at Oakville, Halton Regional Municipality, by Barry D. Jones (pers. comm., 1986) and others. This remarkable record was apparently unknown to James *et al.* (1976:48), who list the latest Ontario date as 21 September, a record which presumably refers to the Orchard Oriole seen on that

date in 1952 at Point Pelee, Essex County, by Robert E. Mara (O'Reilly *et al.* 1953:48).

In summary, the present record represents an unusually late fall record of the species well north of its breeding range, presumably the result of disoriented reverse migration. Despite this uniqueness, however, the record fits a developing pattern in northern Ontario—and Lake Superior in particular—where southern species have most often been recorded during fall migration, and often on dates considerably later than their normal migration periods.

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Editor's Note: Up until now, the Annual Report of the Ontario Bird Records Committee has always appeared in the first number of each volume of *Ontario Birds* (April issue). However, due to the fact that the OBRC holds its annual meeting in March, it is impossible to include the committee's report without delaying the publication of the journal. Commencing this year, therefore, the OBRC Annual Report will regularly appear in the second (August) issue of *Ontario Birds*. This will not only allow us to better maintain our production schedule, but will also provide ample time for the OBRC to review records and compile them into a first-class report.

D.M. Fraser

Note

Use of Garbage Dump and Possible Migration Route of Caspian Tern in Central Ontario

On 16 June 1985, Doug McRae, Mike Runtz and I observed a Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) flying over the Lindsay sewage lagoons, Victoria County. At the time, we remarked to one another that both the date and location seemed unusual because most Caspian Terns should be on their breeding grounds in mid-June.

On 23 July 1985, I observed eight adult Caspian Terns loafing with approximately 200 Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) at the Lindsay garbage dump. The dump is located adjacent to the sewage ponds and is about 1.5 km east of the south end of Sturgeon Lake, Victoria County. The location of the dump and lagoons is described by Goodwin (1982).

At 1600h on 8 August 1985, four adult Caspian Terns were observed resting at the dump with several hundred Ring-billed Gulls and a small number of Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*). The day was sunny and hot. The terns had their bills open and were panting. As with the previous observation, the terns formed a loose group among the gulls.

At 1545h on 16 August 1985, one adult Caspian was sitting at the dump among approximately 1000 gulls (mostly Ring-billed) when another adult tern flew in from the direction of Sturgeon Lake and landed near the first.

I was not able to check the dump as frequently in 1986. However, on 31 July I observed 13 Caspian Terns, including one in juvenal plumage, resting with the gulls at the dump.

I believe these observations are significant for two reasons. First, the terns were using a garbage dump as a loafing site and second, the numbers observed (eight on 23 July 1985 and 13 on 31 July 1986) are high for a location away from the Great Lakes, possibly indicating a migration route between Georgian Bay and Lake Ontario.

The Caspian Tern is decidedly rare in most of central Ontario away from the Great Lakes. I recorded just one in Haliburton County during the period from 1980 to 1986. Sadler (1983) cites only 14 sightings for adjoining Peterborough County and he considers it "a rare wanderer . . . from small nesting colonies on the Great Lakes". In a few areas, however, the Caspian Tern appears to be locally common. Calvert (1925) reports that the Caspian Tern was a "frequent fall migrant on Sturgeon Lake", but he lists no numbers or dates. Tozer and Richards (1974) consider it to be "a fairly common transient . . . and post-breeding summer resident" in the Oshawa—Lake Scugog region. The origin of some of these terns is suggested by a juvenal found dead on 10 August 1968 at Lake Scugog which had been banded earlier in the summer as a chick near

Halfmoon Island (Parry Sound District), Georgian Bay. The evidence presented here suggests a post-breeding migration route from nesting colonies on Georgian Bay to Lake Ontario via Sturgeon Lake and Lake Scugog.

Although the Caspian Terns were not observed foraging for food at the dump, this behaviour might not be totally unexpected. Cunningham (1966) reports a Caspian Tern feeding upon carrion on a road in Florida. It appears that the Caspian Terns at Lindsay were using the dump for resting and loafing because of the proximity of the dump to Sturgeon Lake and this tern's strong inclination to associate with the Ring-billed Gull. Caspian Terns have also been observed sitting in fields with gulls (Tozer and Richards 1974; Geoff Carpentier, pers. comm., 1986). However, other than nesting on man-made peninsulas such as the Leslie Street Spit on Lake Ontario near Toronto, Regional Municipality of York, Caspian Terns rarely use man-made habitats. I am unaware of any reports in the literature of Caspian Terns using a garbage dump.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Ron Tozer for his valuable comments on the manuscript. My thanks also to Geoff Carpentier for his observation of Caspian Terns sitting in fields with gulls.

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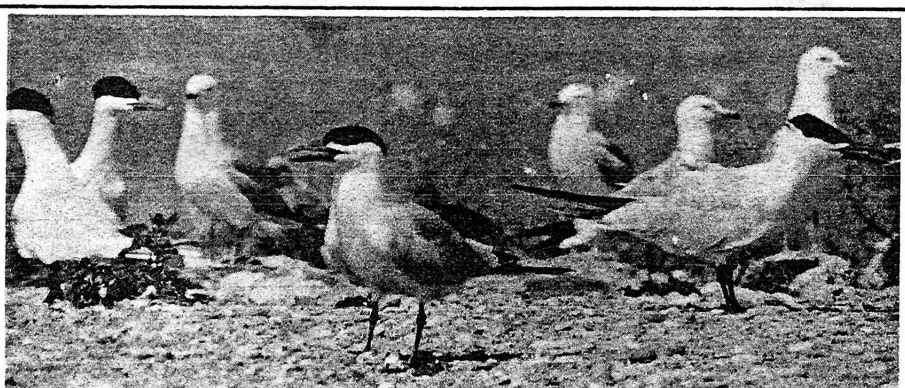

Caspian Terns and Ring-billed Gulls / photo by *D.M. Fraser.*

Book Reviews

Birds of the Cottage Country. 1985. By *William C. Mansell.* McBain Publications, Kitchener. 208 pp., $7.95 (paper).

As the author points out, the cottage country of central Ontario becomes the destination for tens of thousands of people every summer. Many of these people have a casual interest in birds but need a source of regional bird information to answer their questions. The author hopes that this book will be a reference for local birds that will "be a last recourse to those arguments around the dinner table", as well as an addendum to the four major field guides. The area encompassed by this book includes the Districts of Muskoka, Parry Sound and Haliburton, plus Algonquin Provincial Park. Unfortunately, the *Birds of the Cottage Country* does not meet either of these aims very well.

The book is made up of three sections. It begins with a brief five page introduction. Here, the purpose of the book is outlined, and an overview of the book's layout is given. Sadly missing from this introduction is any kind of map of the area in question. The final section is a useful chart of the 310 species known to occur in the region. Listed beside each species are spring arrival and departure dates and fall arrival and departure dates. The bulk of the book, nearly 200 pages, is comprised of the accounts of all 310 species and their respective families. The order of these families by and large follows the 6th edition of the AOU checklist (1983). However, on some occasions, birds are placed in odd combinations (for example, the placing of Horned Lark in the chapter with mimids, pipits, waxwings and starlings). After each family name, there is a brief list of that family's member species arranged by abundance. A drawback with this system is that I looked in vain for definitions of the abundance ratings. For instance, what is the difference between "rather uncommon" and "uncommon"? This lack of definition causes some confusion, or perhaps I disagree with the ratings; I am not sure which. For instance, according to my records, Red-breasted Nuthatch is not "uncommon", nor is Northern Oriole "rather rare" in the cottage country. Following this attempt at abundance ratings, the family of birds covered in that chapter is briefly described. Then follows a species by species account. The species name is bold-faced and numbered; the number corresponds to the arrival/departure chart at the back of the book.

The most recurrent flaw in this book is the repeated use of misleading language which, to a novice birdwatcher, will give a most incorrect impression of certain birds. The description of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet call sounding "as if the bird was pulling nails from wood" will not aid a budding birdwatcher in

identifying this bird. In the general discussion of swallows, Mansell declares that "all swallows are colonial in nesting habits". This is definitely not the case for the Tree Swallow, and rarely for the Barn or Rough-winged Swallow. Sometimes, important facts about birds are left out entirely. I can think of few other birds that so readily remind me of a spruce bog as the Olive-sided Flycatcher. However, Mansell makes no mention of them around bogs. And I have yet to see a Brown Creeper on a cow tail!

A major problem with Mansell's perspective on the birds of this region stems from the personal approach that the author takes. Most of his sense of the species' regional status appears to come from the birds he has seen at his cottages on Rebecca and Pen Lakes. I am not convinced that these observations apply across the region. Mansell's descriptions of Northern Pintail and Gadwall imply that they are rare visitors from the prairies. However, both species have nested in Parry Sound and Muskoka Districts as part of a major eastward range expansion. The narrowness of such a personal approach could have been avoided through the better use of existing literature and records. A look at the Ontario Nest Records Scheme or the results of the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas would have revealed that contrary to what Mansell believes, Brown-headed Cowbirds have indeed parasitized many nests in cottage country.

Clearly, the most interesting sections of the book are the numerous anecdotes the author recounts. There are some delightful descriptions of approaching herons in canoes, watching young loons learning to fish and finding a Scarlet Tanager in October. If the *Birds of the Cottage Country* had stuck to such a personal note it would have been a much more interesting read.

This book attempts to straddle the line between personal recollections on the one hand and an annotated checklist on the other. The result is that it does neither very well. Therefore, this book cannot be recommended as a guide to the birds of cottage country, either for the seasoned bird enthusiast or the beginner.

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Watching Birds: An Introduction to Ornithology. 1977. By *Roger F. Pasquier.* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston (published in Canada by Thomas Allen & Son Limited), 301 pp.; $13.95 Paperback.

Introductory texts on field ornithology that are both worthwhile and at the same time not overly technical are hard to find. Accordingly, it was with some apprehension that I approached Roger F. Pasquier's *Watching Birds: An Introduction to Ornithology*. Not another birdwatching "how-to" book! Therefore, it was with pleasant surprise that I discovered a useful, informative and mostly accurate book.

Pasquier wrote this book with two audiences in mind. As a teacher of ecology, he wanted to

place abstract ecological principles in the observable, real world. And the world of birds provides ample opportunity for the illustration of ecological concepts. The other people for whom this book is aimed are birdwatchers. Many birdwatchers are keen to move beyond merely identifying birds to understanding their roles in the ecosystem. In brief, this book is both a primer on birdwatching and a primer on ecology.

Watching Birds is an intimidating 301 pages; the text,however, is set in easy to read print and is liberally sprinkled with attractive black-and-white illustrations, capably done by Margaret LaFarge. The text is divided into 15 bite-sized chapters, each dealing with an important aspect of the study of birds. Topics covered range from why people study birds and a basic introduction to birding, through physiology and behaviour, to the current state of the field. Also included is a foreword by the dean of birdwatching, Roger Tory Peterson, and appendices on further reading and some major ornithological and conservation organizations.

Each of the chapters can be read as a separate unit and provides a wealth of information. Underpinning each is a concern with ecological principles and an emphasis on the adaptive significance of physiological features and behaviour. Pasquier supports these larger themes with numerous specific, mostly North American, examples. These are of interest to both amateurs and professionals. While some of the information verges on the trivial (how many feathers does a hummingbird have?), others strike to the heart of matters. Particularly interesting to this reviewer was the conservation dilemma posed by a pair of Spotted Owls. The timber value represented by the average territory of these birds is estimated at ten million dollars!

While mostly accurate, *Watching Birds* is marred by the occasional mistake, often caused by the author's tendency towards making absolute statements. Contrary to what is stated in the book, House Finches in eastern North America do compete with another species, albeit the much maligned House Sparrow (p. 229), Kirtland's Warbler does breed outside of Michigan (p. 238) and Yellow-breasted Chats will raise young Brown-headed Cowbirds (p. 187). Other inconsistencies are caused by the book's age; published in 1977 it is already somewhat out of date. For example, the superior National Geographic Society *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* is, obviously, not noted in the list of field guides. Furthermore, the taxonomy used has been superseded by revisions made by the AOU. More sadly, Pasquier's reference to 50 California Condors is no longer accurate, as only a handful remain. While these minor shortcomings are annoying, they do not effect the overall value of the book.

Watching Birds is a worthwhile addition to the bookshelves of anyone interested in birds and/or ecology. It is an ideal teaching tool, both for schools (senior secondary and junior college) and for independent study. In addition to answering many questions, Pasquier poses many many more; *Watching Birds* provides the inquiring mind

with dozens of questions yet to be answered. For birders, this book will allow them to better understand bird biology and the ecological roles played by birds.	Pasquier makes a powerful argument for conservation; hopefully this book will help to further this goal.

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OFO Announcements

Field Trips

23 May 1987, Saturday: TORONTO ISLAND. Spring migrants for beginner birders. Leader: Glenn Coady (416) 596-8109. Meet at 8:00 AM at Toronto Island Ferry Docks.

5-7 June 1987, Friday to Sunday: OFO ANNUAL SPRING MEETING—LONG POINT. Organizer: Jon McCracken (519) 428-0019. Orientation meeting on Friday, 5 June at 8:00 PM at the Group Campsite, Turkey Point Provincial Park (see last OFO Newsletter (No. 11) for more details).

4 July 1987, Saturday: BRUCE PENINSULA. Nesting Eastern Bluebirds, Brewer's Blackbirds, Sandhill Cranes. Leaders: Dave Fidler (519) 371-2919 and Tom Murray. Meet at Dave Fidler's house at 8:00 AM. From Owen Sound go west on Hwy. 21 to Jackson (8.0 km), north one concession (2.0 km), west 0.8 km, north 1.1 km (only house on left side of the road).

7-9 August 1987, Friday to Sunday: PEMBROKE SWALLOW ROOST. Details will appear in the next OFO Newsletter. For more information contact Chip Weseloh (416) 485-1464.

1 November 1987, Sunday: SARNIA JAEGERS. Leader: Dennis Rupert (519) 371-2919. Meet at 8:00 AM at the first stoplight at Point Edward parking lot behind the waterworks. If it is a good day (i.e., bad weather) Dennis will stay there most of the day. If it is a bad day (i.e., good weather) the trip will move on to Kettle Point and Ipperwash about 10:00 AM.

21 November 1987, Saturday: NIAGARA RIVER GULL OUTING. Leader: Glenn Coady (416) 596-8109. Meet at 8:00 AM at the parking lot at the mouth of the river, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

For the latest details regarding any of these events contact Margaret Bain, OFO Field Events Coordinator (416) 668-6452.

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 a Spring Field Meeting and an Annual General Meeting in the autumn.

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 $17.00 Annual Member or $340.00 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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