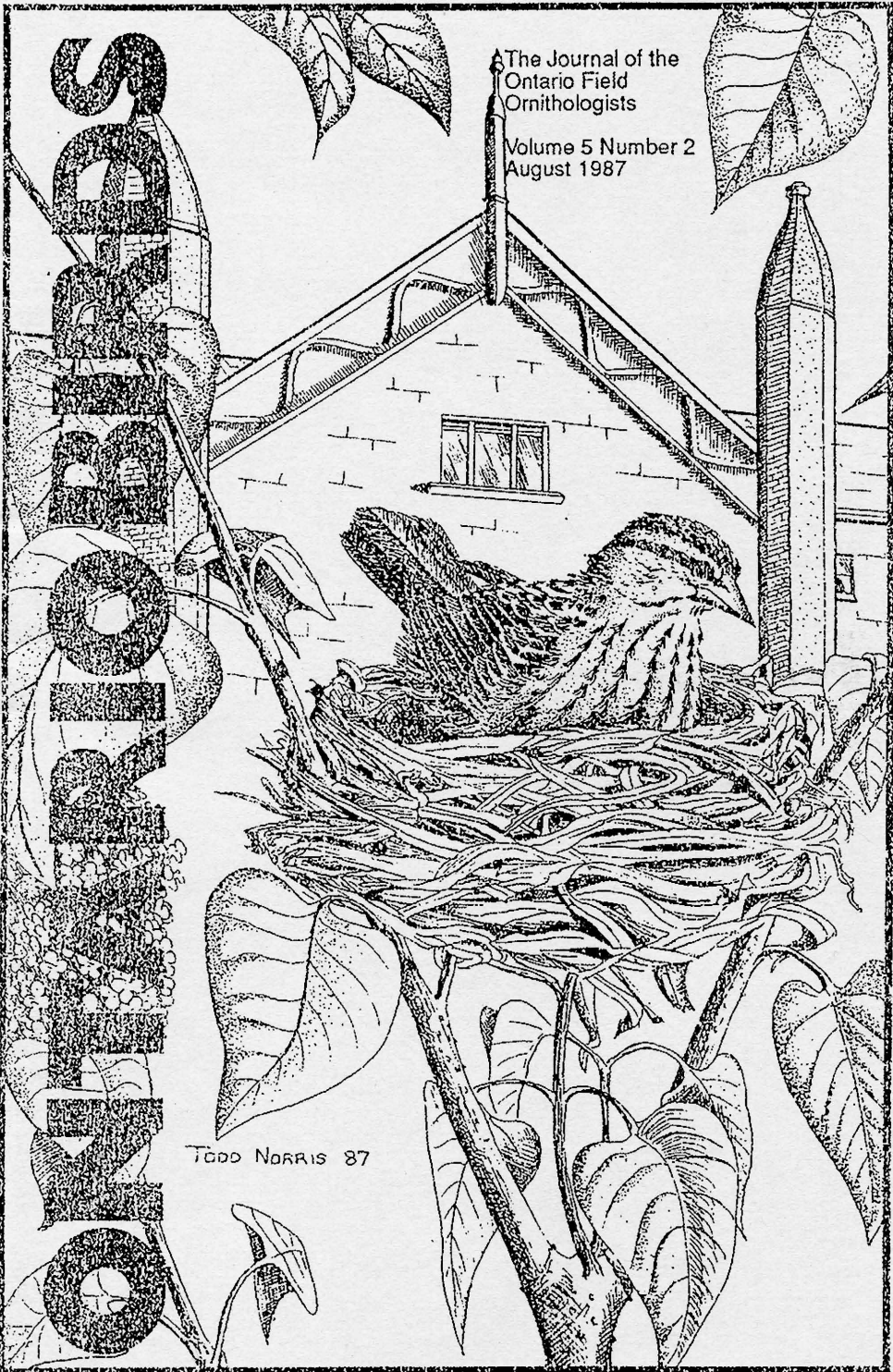


The Journal of the  
Ontario Field  
Ornithologists

Volume 5 Number 2  
August 1987



TODD NORRIS 87



Reports of rare birds (those for which the OBRC requires documentation — see *Ontario Birds* 2:13-23) should be sent to:

**Secretary, Ontario Bird Records Committee**  
c/o Ontario Field Ornithologists  
Box 1204, Station B  
Burlington, Ontario  
L7P 3S9

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## Ontario Birds

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## Editorial Policy

*Ontario Birds* is the journal of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Its aim is to provide a vehicle for the documentation of the birds of Ontario. We encourage the submission of full length articles or short notes on the status of bird species in Ontario, significant provincial or county distributional records, tips on bird identification, behavioural observations of birds in Ontario, location guides to significant birdwatching areas in Ontario, book reviews and similar material of

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

# Ontario Birds

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Cover Illustration: Female Red-winged Blackbird at nest in lilac bush (see p. 74)  
by *Todd Norris*

## Letter to the Editor

### Collection of sandpipers defended

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to reply to Jim Coey's criticisms of our work in Canada. We would like to make just a few comments.

We realize that some people cannot justify the scientific collecting of birds. However, carefully permitted collecting does not adversely affect bird populations. Admittedly, collecting does cause the demise of individual birds. But birds have been shown to have floating populations of nonbreeding individuals that replace lost breeders. It is by the destruction of habitat that bird species are threatened or lost. Furthermore, our collecting in Canada was limited to only ten specimens of a species that is plentiful in Canada (although not seen in huge flocks).

Mr. Coey does not seem to realize that the breeding data we obtained from Solitary Sandpipers were incidental to our study. We were studying the internal parasites of these birds to answer the question as to the effects of intercontinental avian migration on parasites. We also collected birds in the United States and Ecuador. The study encompassed several years of

work and was published in *The American Midland Naturalist*. In any event, the birds to be studied had to be killed. We did not throw these corpses away, but prepared them as scientific specimens and gave the skins to the National Museum of Canada. Because we carefully noted gonadal conditions, we were able to contribute our note for Canadian ornithology. We believe this was a discernible gain in knowledge that was, albeit, beyond the scope of our original study.

Finally, we would give laurels to the Canadian Wildlife Service for not being xenophobic or nationalistic but, instead, judging our application on its scientific merits. As we stated above, we were conscientious about the preservation of the specimens and the data that pertained to them, we did not "blast away" Canadian birds since we collected only a small number, and we left materials collected in Canada within the country. We trust that Canadian nationals are given the same respect, review, and courtesy that we received from the CWS.

Thank you,

Dan and Erika Tallman  
Aberdeen, South Dakota

## Wanted: Original Photographs and Artwork for *Ontario Birds*

Calling all artists and photographers! Have you ever looked at the illustrations in *Ontario Birds* and felt that you could produce something as good, if not better? Well, here's your chance. The Journal needs original artwork (preferably pen-and-ink although some pencil drawings will reproduce well) and photographs to use in upcoming issues. Photos should ideally be black-and-white prints (please don't send negatives) of identifiable birds and preferably taken in Ontario. We can convert good quality colour slides or prints to black-and-white prints and will then return the originals. Artwork will also be returned. Thanks for your help.

Donald M. Fraser, Editor, *Ontario Birds*

# Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 1986

by  
Alan Wormington

This is the fifth annual report of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. During 1986 a total of 182 records was assessed, of which the identification of 141 (about 77%) was found to be acceptable.

This report officially adds two new species to Ontario's Checklist of Birds — Long-billed Curlew and Sulphurbellied Flycatcher — bringing the provincial total to 434 species. Also accepted is the first breeding record of Snowy Egret in Ontario, raising the provincial total in this category to 284 species. This is the first addition to the Ontario breeding bird list since James (1984) summarized recent new additions. Added to the list of birds which have been recorded in northern Ontario are Burrowing Owl, White-eyed Vireo and Orchard Oriole.

The 1986 Committee members were Dennis F. Rupert (Chairman), Alan Wormington (Secretary), Robert Curry, Kevin A. McLaughlin, R.D. McRae, Ronald J. Pittaway and Michael W.P. Runtz. We very much appreciate the submissions the committee has received during 1986 — included in this report is material received from a total of 166 different contributors; without this excellent support the committee could not function.

**Changes in the Review Process**  
Beginning in 1987, membership of the

OBRC will be increased to eight members from the current seven. The eight members will consist of seven regular voting members plus a non-voting secretary. This change in the committee composition has been made to reduce the workload of the secretary.

**Changes in Review List Criteria**  
Recently, the OBRC has revised the criteria on which the review list for southern Ontario is based. In the future, species reviewed will be those occurring on average five or fewer times annually, and will be dropped from the review list when more than 25 accepted records accumulate for any 5-year period. Formerly (see *Ontario Birds* 2:13-23), the corresponding figures were four and 20 records respectively. These changes do not affect the existing review list and a recently-removed species — Laughing Gull — remains deleted.

## Historical Records

Examination of historical records of review list species continued during 1986. The OBRC has now reviewed all American Oystercatcher, Mew Gull, White-winged Dove, Common Ground-Dove, Rufous Hummingbird and Green-tailed Towhee records in Ontario (which were documented and available to the committee) and, similarly, all Great Egret, Ruff and Blue-winged Warbler records which pertain to northern Ontario.

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

### Species Accounts

In the following accounts, information on age/sex/plumage for each record is included, if known. Place names in italics refer to a county, regional municipality or district in Ontario. All contributors who have provided a written description, photograph or specimen have been credited; contributor's names have also been underlined if they were a discoverer of the bird(s). All records pertain to sight records unless it is indicated that the bird was photographed and/or collected.

An attempt has been made to determine the entire period when birds were present; this information has been obtained from the observers themselves, various regional publications, seasonal summaries in *American Birds* and other sources. (We again repeat here that much of the committee's time could be saved — and accuracy of records improved — if contributors could investigate the occurrence dates of a particular bird before submitting their documentation to the committee.) If previously published information on occurrence

dates, numbers, location, etc. is found to be incorrect for any particular record, then this is outlined along with the data the OBRC considers correct.

We recognize that there are several reasons why previously published information may be deemed incorrect. While blatant errors may exist, many others are simply the result of typographical errors, while still others are the result of authors who (unavoidably) are working with sets of data that are different (and often incomplete) in comparison to those which are eventually available to the OBRC. Since future researchers can only be served if indication is given that the OBRC has considered as much data as possible (when presenting information which is deemed correct), we will continue to provide these "corrections" in the annual reports. The OBRC itself is not infallible, and any reader with data which differ from those published in these pages is urged to contact the committee. Corrections/updates to the first four annual reports published by the OBRC (1982 to 1985 inclusive) are given at the end of this report.

## Accepted Records

### Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

1980 — one immature, 8-20 Nov., Burlington Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth/Halton* (Kevin A. McLaughlin, Barry Cherriere) - photos on file.

Although field identification of the two species of "Arctic" Loons is probably not possible in most instances, the OBRC intends to publish all records as the North American Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*), as the Arctic Loon (*G. arctica*) of Eurasia has yet to be recorded anywhere near Ontario.

### Western/Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophorus* sp.)

1984 — one, 11 May, Presqu'île Prov. Park, *Northumberland* (Audrey E. Wilson).

With the recent A.O.U. decision that the two "colour morphs" of the Western Grebe actually pertain to different species—Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) and Clark's Grebe (*A. clarkii*)—the OBRC requires that reports clearly indicate



Immature Pacific Loon, 8-20 Nov. 1980, at Burlington Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth/Halton*. Photo by *Barry Cherriere*.

which species is under observation. It is presumed that most—if not all—birds occurring in Ontario are Western Grebes, but Clark's Grebe is clearly plausible, especially since it has already been recorded as close to Ontario as Manitoba and Minnesota, including Duluth (on Lake Superior) during the spring of 1987 (R.P. Russell, pers. comm., 1987).

**Northern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*)**

- 1985 — two, 19 Oct., East Point, *Cochrane* (R.D. McRae).  
 — one, 21 Oct., East Point, *Cochrane* (R.D. McRae).

**American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)**

- 1985 — one, 17 July, Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Beverly Collier).

A White Pelican that was observed five days later, on 22 July 1985 at Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (*Ontario Birds* 4:4), was quite possibly the same individual.

**Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*)**

- 1986 — one, 11-19 May, Manitouwadge, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington) - photos on file.  
 1985 — one, 8-12 Oct., Pass Lake (not Sibley as in *American Birds* 40:104), *Thunder Bay* (Ruth Hansen, Thomas Dyke) - photo on file.  
 1978 — one, 22 Aug.-14 Sept. (not to 15 Sept. as in *American Birds* 33:172), Fort Frances, *Rainy River* (Alan W. Lowe, Al McRae) - photos on file.  
 1956 — one, 29 or 30 June, Kapuskasing, *Cochrane* (L.G. Neve).

These are the only records of Great Egret known for northern Ontario, with the exception of an undocumented sighting on 9 May 1974 at Lulu Lake (49° 46' N. Lat., 94° 42' W. Long.), *Kenora*, by George Warner and Wayne Stack. The refer-

ence to the occurrence of Great Egret at Winisk, *Kenora* (James *et al.* 1976:10), is in error (R.D. James, pers. comm., 1987).

#### Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)

1986 — breeding pair, nest and fledged young, Hamilton Bay, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Robert Curry, George D. Bryant, D. Vaughn Weseloh) - photos on file.

An account of this breeding record, the first for Ontario and Canada, appears elsewhere in this issue of *Ontario Birds* (Curry and Bryant 1987).

#### Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*)

1986 — one adult, 5-20 May, Hillman Marsh and Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Beatrice Lazar).

1985 — one adult, 4 May, Pelee Island, *Essex* (Ronald R. Tasker).

— one adult, 13 May, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Kathy Pickard).

— one juvenile, 4-7 Sept., Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Peter Whelan, Kathleen J. Sleight) - photos on file.

#### Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)

1985 — one adult, 17 May, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (George E. Wallace).

— one, 29 July-1 Aug., Big Creek Nat. Wildlife Area (29th to 31st) and Long Point Flats (1st), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Daniel A. Cristol).

1981 — one first summer, 25 May, Bright's Grove, *Lambton* (Dennis F. Rupert).

#### Green-backed Heron (*Butorides striatus*)

1986 — two juveniles, 30 Aug., one to 5 Sept., Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott, Barry Atkinson) - photo on file.

These birds were suspected by the observers to pertain to fledged young of a local nesting; the undocumented observation of an adult Green-backed Heron on 21 June 1986 at the same location was the sole basis for this supposition.

#### Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

1984 — one adult, 27 June (not 1 July as in *American Birds* 38:1014), Wolverine Lake (49° 50' N. Lat., 83° 46' W. Long.), *Cochrane* (Norm Hissa).

There are but few records of this species in northern Ontario, with the



Great Egret, 22 Aug.-14 Sept. 1978, at Fort Frances, *Rainy River*. Photo by Al McRae, courtesy of the Fort Frances Times.



above bird one of the most northerly recorded to date.

### Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

(*Nycticorax violaceus*)

- 1986 — one adult, 15 May (not 15-16 May as in *American Birds* 40:463), Hillman Marsh, Essex (Peter WheJan).
- 1985 — one adult, 11 May, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Lyla R. Messick).

### Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

- 1986 — one adult, 3 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park and Hillman Marsh, Essex (Michael D. Fitzpatrick).

### dark ibis sp. (*Plegadis* sp.)

- 1986 — one adult, 24 May, Strathroy, *Middlesex* (Stephen J. Birch) - photo on file.

### Greater White-fronted Goose

(*Anser albifrons*)

- 1986 — one *frontalis* adult, 21 March, Walsingham, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (David Beadle).
- one immature, 2 April, Wheatley Harbour, *Kent/Essex* (Alan Wormington).
- 1985 — three adults (not six as in *American Birds* 39:292), 17-19 March (not 18-20 March as in Shepherd 1985; *American Birds* *ibid.*), Port Rowan, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Martin K. McNicholl).
- three (adult, immature & unknown), 7-13 April, Carlsbad Springs, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Mark Gawn).
- one adult, 17 Nov., Taquanyah Cons. Area, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Bruce W. Duncan).
- 1982 — one *flavirostris* adult, 25 April, Carlsbad Springs, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Paul Davidson) - photo on file.

### Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

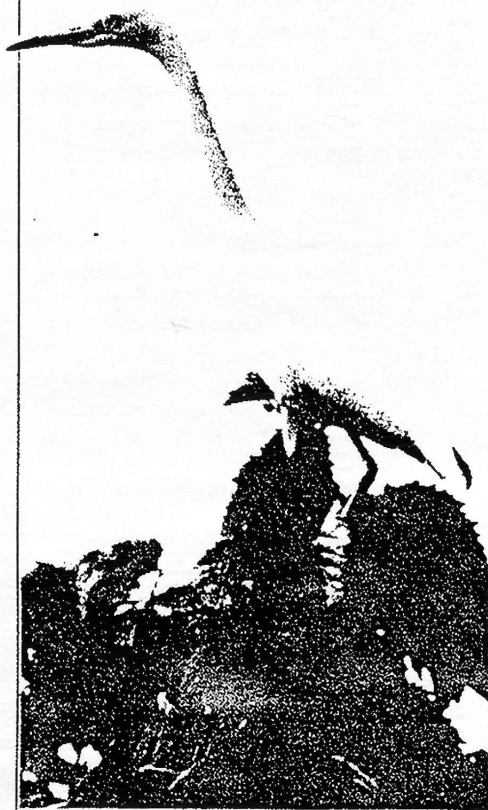
- 1986 — one male, 26 March-16 April (not to only 14 April as in *American Birds* 40:463), Hillman Marsh, Essex (Alan Wormington).
- 1985 — one male, 21-23 April, Kanata, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Roy D. John).

### Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

- 1986 — one, 2-3 July, Walsingham (2nd to 3rd) and Turkey Point (3rd) (not Long Point as in *American Birds* 40:1198), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Alan Wormington).

### Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

- 1978 — one intermediate phase immature, 22 Jan.-30 March, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Gordon



Bellerby, Alan Wormington) - photo on file; specimen (skin) in private collection of Barry K. MacKay.

- 1971 — one dark phase, 26 Nov. (not 27 Oct. as in *American Birds* 26:56; Kelley 1978:26; Speirs 1985:198), Kettle Point, Lambton (Alan J. Ryff).

**Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*)**

- 1974 — one adult, 22-27 April (see below), Cobourg, Northumberland (Alan Wormington, James M. Richards) - photos on file.

- 1967 — one juvenile, 7-14 Oct., Dundas Marsh, Hamilton-Wentworth (George W. North).

The Cobourg bird, after its capture on 27 April (not 22 April as in *American Birds* 28:796; not 28 April as in Speirs 1985:230), was banded and released at nearby Willow Beach (J.E. Mason, pers. comm., 1987), where it was last seen on 28 April (E.R. McDonald, pers. comm., 1987).

**Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)**

- 1986 — one adult, 1-2 June, Hamilton Bay, Hamilton-Wentworth (Kayo J. Roy) - photo on file.

- 1985 — one adult, 4 May, Blenheim, Kent (P. Allen Woodliffe).

- one adult, 29-30 July, Rondeau Prov. Park, Kent (P. Allen Woodliffe) - photo on file.



American Oystercatcher which frequented several Ontario localities in 1960. Photographed (29 May) at Presqu'île Prov. Park, Northumberland by Donald R. Gunn.

- two juveniles, 9-18 Aug., Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Barry R. Scampion).
- one adult, 19-21 Sept., Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Ted Cheskey).
- one, 3 Nov., Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Daniel A. Cristol).

1981 — two adults (territorial pair), 27 June, Wasaga Beach Prov. Park, *Simcoe* (Alvaro Jaramillo).

#### American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*)

- 1985 — one adult, 2 Nov., Hamilton Bay and Fifty Point Cons. Area, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Dennis R. Gardiner, Roy E.C. Baker) - photo on file.
- 1960 — one adult, 22 May (not 24-29 May as in Parker 1983:29), Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto*; 23 May-4 June, Presqu'île Prov. Park, *Northumberland*; and 2-21 July (not only 21 July as in James *et al.* 1976:21), Thunder Bay/Windmill Point area, *Niagara* (Donald R. Gunn, George Letchworth, Harold D. Mitchell, Robert F. Andrie, Ario Gatti) - photos on file; specimen (skin) in ROM: #90937.

It is generally assumed that the multiple sightings in 1960 refer to the same bird, although there is no way to positively determine this. For a full account of this individual, see Lunn (1961). Amazingly, yet another American Oystercatcher (or the 1985 individual on a return visit?) has recently appeared on the Great Lakes: one was present at Barcelona Harbor (Lake Erie), New York, from 22-24 May 1986 (*American Birds* 40:468). These three occurrences of American Oystercatcher are the only records known for the entire Great Lakes.

#### American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*)

- 1962 — two adults, 15-16 Sept. (not 23 Sept. as in Goodwin 1962), Scarborough, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Jeff Harrison).

#### Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*)

- 1986 — one, 14 May, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott, Alan Wormington) - photos on file.
- one juvenile, 22-28 Sept., Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

#### Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)

- 1959 — one immature, 15 or 16 Oct.-17 Oct., Ajax, *Durham* (Gerald C. Norris) - photos on file.

This bird represents the first record of Long-billed Curlew in Ontario. Details of the sighting have been detailed by a number of authors, including Baillie (1964). Prior to OBRC review, the photographs of this bird—well known to be of poor quality—were sent to several experts on curlew identification; collectively they concurred that all other world curlew species could be satisfactorily eliminated.

#### Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

- 1985 — one (not an adult male), 7 July, Nettichi River mouth, *Cochrane* (Duncan S. Evered).
- 1981 — one female, 30 May, North Point, *Cochrane* (R.I.G. Morrison) - specimen (skin) in NMC: #71583.
- 1955 — one adult summer male, 9 June, Fort Severn, *Kenora* (unknown collector) - specimen (skin) in ROM: #72530.

These birds are the only records for northern Ontario and probably represent one fall and two spring migrants, respectively. Circumstances of the Fort Severn bird were briefly outlined by Lumsden (1955).

#### Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

- 1986 — one immature, 1-2 Jan., Fort Erie, *Niagara* (Robert F. Andrie).
- 1985 — one immature, 9 Nov., East Point, *Cochrane* (R.D. McRae).

1960 — one juvenile, 30 Oct., Rock Point Prov. Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Harold H. Axtell, Rachel C. Axtell) - specimen (skin) in BSNS: #4547.

A Pomarine Jaeger observed 18-29 January 1986 at nearby Buffalo, New York (*American Birds* 40:278), was presumably the Fort Erie individual.

#### Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

1985 — one juvenile, 1-5 Oct. (but not observed between these dates), Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Barry R. Scampion, C. Ann Griffin, Ted Cheskey) - photos on file.

— one juvenile, 4 Oct., Southeast Shoal, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).

1965 — one adult summer, 15-18 June, Algonquin Prov. Park (Lake of Two Rivers), *Nipissing* (Russell J. Rutter, Ronald G. Tozer) - photo on file.

#### Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*)

1985 — one adult summer, 20-24 July (not only 20 July as in *American Birds* 39:907), Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Beverly Collier).

— one juvenile, 8-14 Aug., Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Barry R. Scampion).

— one juvenile, 5-8 Sept., Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Daniel A. Cristol).

— one adult winter, 7 Sept., Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Barry R. Scampion).

— one juvenile, 16 Sept., Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Andrew Whittaker).

— one adult winter, 24 Sept., Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Ted Cheskey).

— one second winter, 11-18 Oct., Niagara-on-the-Lake, *Niagara* (Gordon Belcherby).

— one juvenile, 15 Oct., Ottawa-Carleton (Michael W. P. Runtz).

1937 — one juvenile, 18 Sept., Fort Erie, *Niagara* (Roy W. Sheppard).

The above 1985 records were part of the unprecedented fall influx of this species into the lower Great Lakes as outlined in last year's OBRC report (*Ontario Bird* 4:9-11). A description of the 1937 bird at Fort Erie was published by Sheppard (1938).

#### Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)

1986 — one *brachyrhynchus* adult, 4-5 Oct., Cornwall, *Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry* (Ian L. Jones).

— one *brachyrhynchus* juvenile, 27 Aug., Grand Bend, *Lambton* (Alvaro Jaramillo) - photos on file.

1967 — one *brachyrhynchus* adult, 24 Oct., Port Weller, *Niagara* (Robert F. Andrie) - specimen (skin) in BSNS: #5102.

— one *brachyrhynchus* first winter, 28-30 Nov. (not collected 28 Nov. as in Baillie 1968; James *et al.* 1976:26), St. Catharines, *Niagara* (Daniel R. Salisbury, Robert F. Andrie) - specimen (skin) in BSNS: #5103.

For details on the 1967 Niagara specimens, see Andrie and Axtell (1969). The Grand Bend record on 27 August 1986 is a remarkably early fall migration date for a juvenile Mew Gull in North America any distance south of the species' breeding range.

#### Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

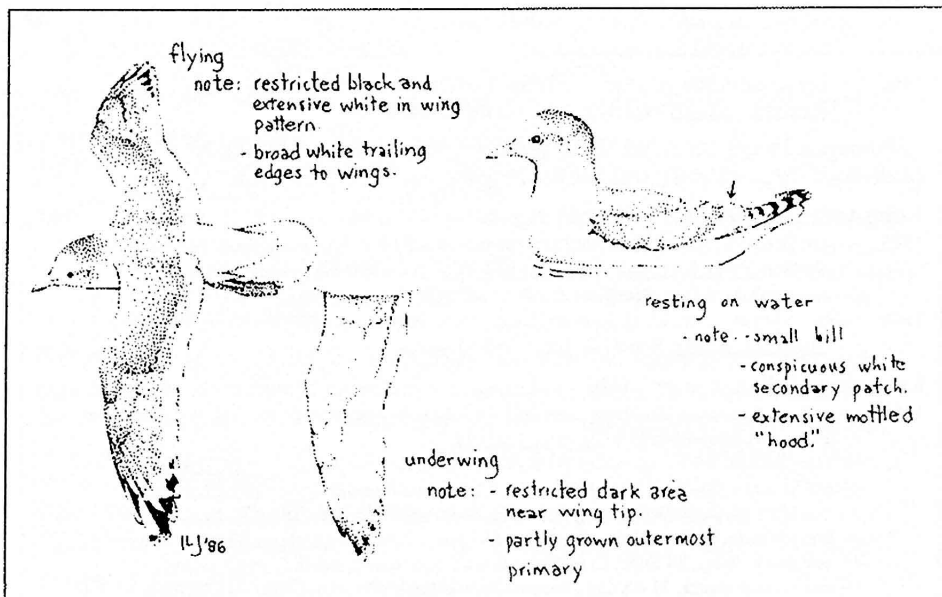
1986 — one adult summer, 10 May, Moosonee, *Cochrane* (Sylfest Muldal).

1985 — one third winter, 11 Nov., East Point, *Cochrane* (R.D. McRae).

#### Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*)

1985 — one first winter, desiccated remains found 5 July, West Pen Island, *Kenora* (David Shepherd) - photo on file.

Although the remains of this bird were found in summer, undoubtedly the bird died much earlier, almost certainly when winter-like conditions were present (*i.e.*, some-



Adult Mew Gull, 4-5 Oct. 1986, at Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry. Sketches (4 Oct.) by Ian L. Jones. Note the white "divide" between gray and black of the third through fifth primaries; this indicates the North American *brachyrhynchus* subspecies.

time during the prior period of November to May, inclusive).

#### Razorbill (*Alca torda*)

1985 — one adult, 2 Jan., Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara (Harold H. Axtell).

#### White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)

1986 — one, 26-27 April, Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay (Isabella Kendall, Roderick Kendall).

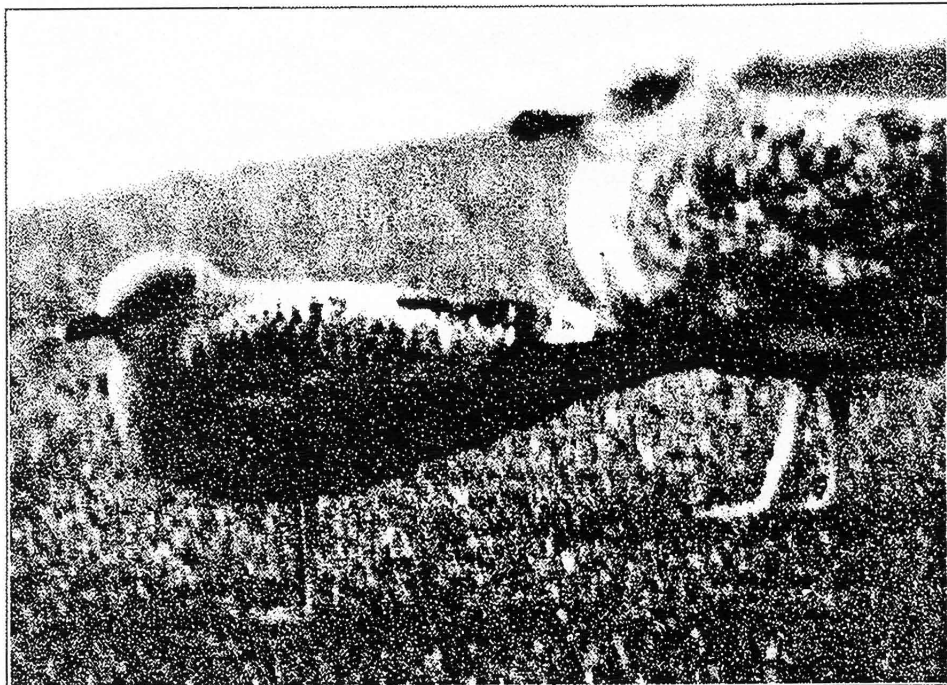
1942 — one *mearnsi* male, 17 June, Fort Albany, *Cochrane* (unknown collector) - specimen (skin) in ROM: #67776.

These birds represent the first and third of a total of three Ontario records to date; the second was present 14-19 December 1975 at Belleville, *Hastings* (*Ontario Birds* 2:58). Details of the bird collected at Fort Albany were published by Shortt and Hope (1943).

During the spring of 1986 two other White-winged Doves occurred in eastern North America (excluding the Gulf Coast): on 10 May one was at Whitefish Point, Michigan, and on 12 May another was near Charleston, South Carolina (*American Birds* 40:474 and 458). It is interesting that the timing of the three records progresses from west to east.

#### Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*)

1968 — one nominate *passerina* immature male, 29 Oct. (not 27 Oct. as in *Audubon Field Notes* 23:474; and James *et al.* 1976:29), Red Rock, Thunder Bay (Doris Freeman) - specimen (skin) in ROM: #103396.



Juvenile Mew Gull of the *brachyrhynchus* subspecies, 27 Aug. 1986, at Grand Bend, Lambton. Photo by Alvaro Jaramillo.

This record is not only unique for Ontario, but is also the most northerly occurrence of this species in North America by a considerable distance. For full details of this intriguing record, see both Freeman (1969) and Dick and James (1969).

#### Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

1986 — one, 4 Oct., Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay (Nicholas G. Escott).

This occurrence adds Burrowing Owl to the list of birds that have been recorded in northern Ontario.

#### Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

1986 — one adult male, 30 July-3 Aug. (not to 4 Aug. as in *American Birds* 40:1199), Algonquin Prov. Park (East Gate), Nipissing (Michael W.P. Runtz, D. James Mountjoy, Mark W. Jennings, Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

1985 — one female, 31 Oct.-10 Nov. (not beginning 21 Oct. as in *American Birds* 40:276), Parry Sound, Parry Sound (Norma Curry) - specimen (skin) in ROM: #151880.

1966 — one immature male, 8 Sept., Winisk, Kenora (Daniel Kostachin) - specimen (spirit) in ROM: #99044.

The above represent the first, fifth and sixth of a total of six *Selasphorus* hummingbirds recorded in Ontario, four of which can be identified specifically as Rufous Hummingbird. Details of the bird at Winisk were published by Barlow (1967). The Parry Sound bird, after its capture on 10 November, was placed inside



Adult male Rufous Hummingbird, 30 July-3 August 1986, at the East Gate of Algonquin Prov. Park, Nipissing. Photo by Alan Wormington.

a local greenhouse where it survived until found dead on 11 March 1986.

Recently, the OBRC has decided that reports of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds in Ontario must be sufficiently detailed to determine which species was under observation. Therefore, the previously published record of the 1983 Rufous Hummingbird at Sapawe, *Rainy River (Ontario Birds 2:58)*, should be relegated to read "*Selasphorus* sp." as the documentation available does not allow a specific identification to be made.

#### Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)

1986 — one immature, 21 Sept., Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Jon Curson).

1985 — one, 24 Sept., Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Daniel A. Cristo).

#### Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*)

1986 — one, 28 Sept.-1 Oct., Presqu'île Prov. Park, *Northumberland* (Tony F.M. Beck, Mark Gawn, Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

An account of this remarkable first occurrence for Ontario and Canada has been outlined by Gawn (1987).

#### Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

1986 — one, 13 Aug., Algonquin Prov. Park (Mangotasi/Hombeam Lakes), *Nipissing* (Peter D.

**Middleton).**

— one, 1 Sept. (not 11 Sept. as in *American Birds* 41:83), Point Pelee Nat. Park, Essex (Kevin A. McLaughlin).

1985 — one, 24 Aug., Beamsville, Niagara (David B. Freeland).

— one, 1 Sept., Long Point Tip, Haldimand-Norfolk (Daniel A. Cristol).

**Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*)**

1986 — one immature, 26 July, Point Pelee Nat. Park, Essex (Alan Wormington).

This bird represents Ontario's third record. The two prior records for the province were 29 October 1970 at Hay Bay, *Lennox & Addington* (Hughes 1971), and 31 October 1982 at Britannia, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Di Labio and Blacquiere 1983).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*)**

1985 — one, 5 June, Long Point Tip, Haldimand-Norfolk (W.R. Biddle).

**Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*)**

1986 — one, 9-12 April, Rondeau Prov. Park, Kent (P. Allen Woodliffe).

**Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)**

1986 — one male, 12 May, Nepean, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Roy D. John, Bruce M. Di Labio) - photo on file.

1985 — one male, 2 July, Cape Henrietta Maria, *Kenora* (David J.T. Russell).

The bird at Cape Henrietta Maria was considered by the observers involved to be in suitable habitat for breeding; the nearest known breeding localities are extreme northern Quebec and Coats Island, Northwest Territories (Godfrey 1986:420), both sites approximately 870 km to the north. The bird could also have been a late spring migrant, however, as several early June records have previously been recorded in Ontario, and the cool environment of arctic-like Cape Henrietta Maria probably delays the spring migration of various species on a regular basis. Furthermore, the extension of spring migration to as late as early July in Ontario is already known for a few other species.

**Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*)**

1986 — one female, 2 Nov., Shirley's Bay, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Mark Gawn).

1985/1986 — one male, 12 Dec.-25 March, Marvelville, *Prescott & Russell* (Gordon Pringle, Bruce M. Di Labio) - photo on file.

1985 — one female, 26 Feb.-2 March, Pinery Prov. Park, *Lambton* (Terry J. Crabe, Dennis F. Rupert) - photo on file.

— one female, 11 June, Port Hope, *Northumberland* (Margaret Howard).

— one female, 23 Dec., Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Paul D. Pratt).

The bird on 11 June 1985 at Port Hope is the latest spring migrant to be recorded in Ontario, assuming it did not remain to summer.

**White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*)**

1986 — one immature, 13 Oct., Marathon, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington).

For details and description of this first White-eyed Vireo to be recorded in northern Ontario, see Wormington (1987).

**Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*)**

1979 — one, 8 Oct., Marathon, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott).

This is the first northern Ontario record to be accepted by the OBRC. Only one





Immature male Blue Grosbeak, 19 May 1985, at the Long Point Breakwater, *Haldimand-Norfolk*. Photo by *Andre w Whittaker*.

other Blue-winged Warbler record (which is undocumented) exists for northern Ontario: one was observed 2 October 1979 (just six days prior to the bird at Marathon) at Moosonce, *Cochrane*, by Mark W. Jennings.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler**  
(*Dendroica nigrescens*)

1986 — one male, 16-17 June, Whitby, *Durham* (Margaret J. Bain).

Presumably this bird was a very late spring migrant, but a male Black-throated Gray Warbler was present 6-29 July 1979 at Exeter, Rhode Island (*American Birds* 33:846), indicating that a true summer record in Ontario may also be a possibility.

**Yellow-throated Warbler**  
(*Dendroica dominica*)

- 1986 — one, 30 April, Long Point Breakwater, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (David Beadle).  
— one, 1 May, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Martin J. Taylor).  
1985 — one male, 21 April, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (G. Tom Ilince).  
— one, 22 April, Long Point Breakwater, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Duncan S. Evered).  
1970 — one *albiflora* female, 25 May, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Joseph G. Strauch, Jr.) - specimen (skin) in UMMZ: #216,627.

An account of the Long Point specimen was published by Strauch (1974).

**Kirtland's Warbler** (*Dendroica kirtlandii*)

1959 — one male, 24 May, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Barry Harrison).

**Swainson's Warbler** (*Limnithlypis swainsonii*)

1986 — one, 10-14 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (David L. Lindsay, Onik Arian, Robert H. Westmore,

David B. Stirling).

This is the second Swainson's Warbler to be accepted by the OBRC for Ontario; the first also occurred at Point Pelee, on 22 May 1975 (*Ontario Birds* 3:13).

**Blue Grosbeak** (*Guiraca caerulea*)

1985 — one immature male, 26 April, Long Point Breakwater, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Duncan S. Evered) - photo on file.

— one immature male, 19 May, Long Point Breakwater, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Andrew Whittaker) - photo on file.

**Green-tailed Towhee** (*Pipilo chlorurus*)

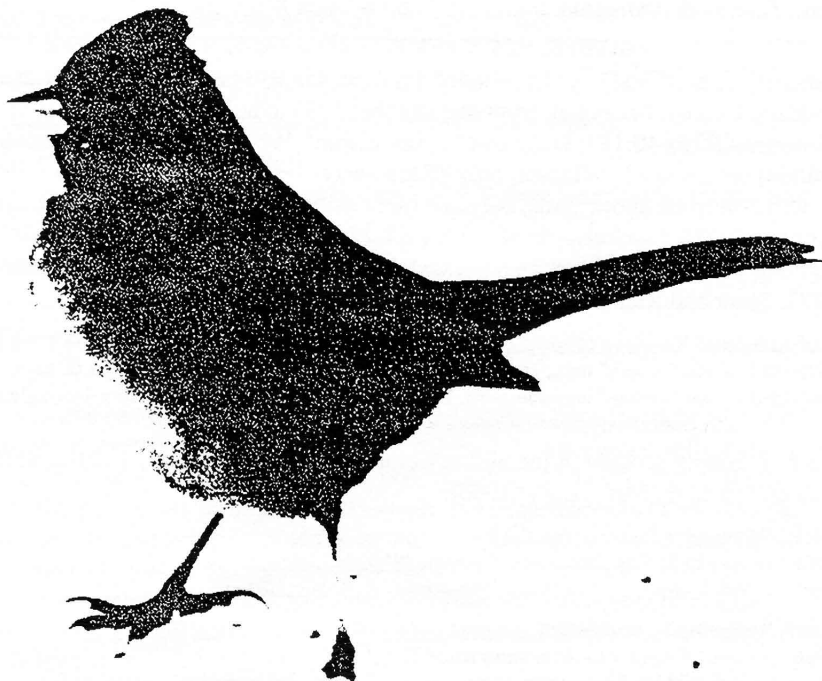
1985/1986 — one, late Oct.-24 April, Windsor, *Essex* (Jack Lossing, Grace Lossing, R.D. McRae, Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

1956 — one, 24 Nov. (not 25 Nov. as in Parker 1983:30), Terra Cotta, *Peel* (Robert F. Gunn) - photo on file.

1954 — one, late March-18 April (not beginning 8 April as in Beardslee and Mitchell 1965:429; Sheppard 1970:80), Welland, *Niagara* (Gertrude Selby).

— one, 30 March-1 April (not only 30 March as in *Audubon Field Notes* 8:250; Baillie 1957; James *et al.* 1976:51; Speirs 1985:807), London, *Middlesex* (G.W.A. Aitken, William G. Girling) - photos on file.

An account of the bird at Welland (which includes a brief description) was pub-



Green-tailed Towhee, late Oct. 1985-24 April 1986, at Windsor, *Essex*. Photo (15 Jan.) by Alan Wormington.



Ontario's first wintering Lark Sparrow, 30 Nov. 1985-22 March 1986, at Camden East, *Lennox & Addington*. Photo (15 Feb.) by Alan Wormington.

lished by Selby (1954). A Green-tailed Towhee was also present at Sylvan Lake, Oakland County, Michigan, from late October 1985 to at least early April 1986 (*American Birds* 40:117; D.J. Powell, pers. comm., 1987), paralleling the above Ontario occurrence at Windsor, only 45 km away.

Other than the above birds, only one other record of Green-tailed Towhee exists for Ontario. This concerns an individual 11-12 October 1970 at Whitby, *Durham*, a sighting which is undocumented but widely cited in the literature (e.g., Speirs 1973; Tozer and Richards 1974:288; Speirs 1985:807).

#### Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)

1979/1980 — one "eastern" male, 16 Dec.-15 March, Marathon, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott).

1962/1963 — one "eastern" immature male, 15 Nov.-21 Feb., Geraldton, *Thunder Bay* (Doris Henry, L.W. Henry) - specimen (skeleton) in ROM: #93321.

An entertaining account of the bird at Geraldton (which apparently froze to death) was published by Mrs. Henry (1963).

#### Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*)

1986 — one, 20-21 Sept., Moosonee, *Cochrane* (William Lamond).

1984 — one, 24 May, Caribou Island, *Thunder Bay* (J. Robert Nisbet).

#### Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

1986 — one, 16 April, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (David H. Elder).

— one, 20 May, Leamington, *Essex* (Patricia Watson, James Watson) - photos on file.

— one immature, 18-19 Sept., Moose Factory, *Cochrane* (Mark W. Jennings, Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

- 1985/1986 — one, 30 Nov.-22 March, Camden East, *Lennox & Addington* (Peter J. Good, Alan Wormington, Mark W. Jennings, Bruce M. Di Labio, V. Paul MacKenzie) - photos on file.
- 1985 — one, 11 May, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Duncan S. Evered) - photo on file.
- one immature, 21-22 Sept., Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Herb Elliott, Luc Fazio) - photos on file.
- one, 13 Oct., Algonquin Prov. Park (Lake of Two Rivers), *Nipissing* (Michael W.P. Runtz) - photo on file.

The Camden East individual, which survived at a bird feeder, is the first winter record for Ontario.

#### Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)

- 1985 — one adult male, 8 April (not 5 April as in *American Birds* 39:296), Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (David Shepherd).

This Lark Bunting is the earliest-ever spring migrant to be recorded in Ontario.

#### Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)

- 1986 — one, 29 April-4 May, Etobicoke, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Daniel O. Bong, Glenn Coady) - photos on file.

This is the third Golden-crowned Sparrow to be recorded in Ontario, but is the first to appear as a spring migrant; the previous two birds were a winter visitor and a fall migrant, respectively.

#### Harris' Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*)

- 1986 — one immature, 1 Nov., Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe).
- 1985 — one, 10-26 April (not to only 21 April as in *American Birds* 39:296), Mississauga, *Peel* (Alvaro Jaramillo, Tim Sabo).
- one, 1-2 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Mary Lou Chomyshyn).

#### Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*)

- 1986 — one immature, 25 Sept., Terrace Bay, *Thunder Bay* (William Lamond, Alan Wormington).

The details and a description of this bird, the first to be recorded in northern Ontario, have been published by Wormington and Lamond (1987).

## Deferred Records: *Identification accepted, wild status deferred*

Species in this category are those where the wild status is currently debatable, and a decision on the records has therefore been deferred until definitive information can be assembled — this includes (but is not limited to) the known status of the species in captivity, the prior pattern of extralimital occurrences in North America in both seasonal and geographic terms, as well as other factors (e.g., distances the species normally travels during migration, etc.).

After compilation and analysis of this information, the species will then be placed in either the full acceptance category above or the "origin questionable" category below.

#### Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

- 1986 — one adult male, 29 April-1 May, Arva, *Middlesex* (Alan W. McTavish).

The two previously reviewed "identification accepted" records of Painted Bunting in Ontario—21-23 May 1978 at Long Point Breakwater, *Haldimand-Norfolk*, and 4 December 1978-1 January 1979 at Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto (Ontario Birds 2:65)*—are now placed in this temporary "holding" category.

## Unaccepted Records: *Identification accepted, origin questionable*

The following species are those considered almost certainly to be escaped or released from captivity, even if wild occurrence is a remote possibility for some species/records. Species placed here could be put into one of the above categories if future records were to clearly demonstrate a pattern of occurrence that suggested a wild (rather than captive) origin.

### Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

1986 — one *frontalis* adult, 18 Jan.-8 March, Guelph, *Wellington* (Rohan A. van Twest).

Although occurrences of this species in Ontario are considered wild, the circumstances of the above record, however, strongly suggest that this particular bird was an escapee.

### Falcatad Teal (*Anas falcata*)

1986 — one male, 28-29 March (not 27-29 March as in Hince 1986), Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).

Although this species occurs naturally in Alaska, and a very remote chance of natural occurrence to Ontario may exist, the species (especially males) is also common in captivity; therefore, captive origin is the most likely source of the bird at Hillman Marsh.

### Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*)

1985 — one female, 26 June, Kingsville, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).

### Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*)

1984 — one, 13-15 May and 21 June (not observed between these dates), Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Michael Royce, Alan Wormington) - photo on file.

This bird might be a stray from introduced populations in the eastern United States, or could simply be someone's escaped pet.

### Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*)

1986/1987 — one, 14 Sept.-late March, Milton, *Halton* (John Goulding).

1986 — one, 4 May, Creighton Heights, *Northumberland* (Bud Gehan) - photos on file.

1985/1986 — one, early Aug.-mid March, Milton, *Halton* (Catherine Clark, Martin Wernaart) - photos on file.

The records during two different winters at Milton do, of course, pertain to the same individual, but how these occurrences relate to the bird at Creighton Heights (about 160 km away) is unknown. Photographs from both sites clearly show that the Florida subspecies—n nominate *coerulescens*—was involved (G.E. Woolfenden, pers. comm.), a very unlikely candidate for natural occurrence to Ontario, regard-

less of any scenario that may be postulated for the appearances of this bird (or birds.).

**Serin (*Serinus serinus*)**

1985/1986 — one male, 22 Dec.-30 March, Pickering, *Durham* (Derrick Marven, Anne Macdonald, Hugh G. Currie).

**European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)**

1985/1986 — one male, late Oct.-26 Feb., Burlington, *Halton* (Jan Robertson, Eileen Robertson) - photo on file.

**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.

- 1986 — Western Grebes (two), 15 May, Awenda Prov. Park, *Simcoe*.  
 — Little Blue Heron, 10 July, Wheatley Prov. Park, *Kent*.  
 — Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, 16 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Mississippi Kite, 25 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex*.  
 — Rufous-necked Stint, 17 May, Erieau, *Kent* - photo on file.  
 — Bewick's Wren, 17 May, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent*.  
 — Bell's Vireo, 9 May, Long Point Breakwater, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.  
 — Kirland's Warbler, 16 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Blue Grosbeak, 12 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Blue Grosbeak, 14 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Blue Grosbeaks (two), 14 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Blue Grosbeak, 18 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Lark Sparrow, 22 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
- 1985 — Little Blue Heron, 7 Aug., Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Tricolored Heron, 12 May, Sturgeon Creek, *Essex*.  
 — Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, 12-14 May, Sturgeon Creek, *Essex*.  
 — Gyrfalcon, 31 Dec., Eden Mills, *Halton*.  
 — Curlew Sandpipers (two), 13 Oct., Presqu'ile Prov. Park, *Northumberland*.  
 — California Gull, 4 Sept., Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.  
 — Gull-billed Tern, 22 May, Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.  
 — Least Tern, 24 Sept., Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.  
 — Common Murre, 18 May, Presqu'ile Prov. Park, *Northumberland*.  
 — Western Kingbird, 22 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Bell's Vireo, 7 Oct., Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent*.  
 — Yellow-throated Warbler, 22 April, Long Point Breakwater, *Haldimand-Norfolk*; this record refers to a different bird than the individual which is in the accepted category above.  
 — Kirland's Warbler, 14 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Western Tanager, 10 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Western Tanager, 4 Aug., Sandy Lake, *Peterborough*.  
 — Blue Grosbeak, 1 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.  
 — Blue Grosbeak, 13 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.

- Blue Grosbeak, 14 May, Maidstone, *Essex*.
- Blue Grosbeak, 16 Aug., Long Point Prov. Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.
- Bachman's Sparrow, 4 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
- 1984 — Bell's Vireo, 1 Sept., Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
- Black-throated Gray Warbler, 10 Nov., Fanshawe Cons. Area, *Middlesex*.
- Golden-crowned Sparrow, mid Nov.-mid Dec., Campbellville, *Halton*.
- 1983 — Mississippi Kite, 25 June, Scarborough, *Metropolitan Toronto*.
- 1968 — Mew Gull, 27 Jan.-early March, Queenston, *Niagara*.
- 1964 — Bell's Vireo, 23 May, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto*.
- 1958 — Ancient Murrelet, 26 Dec., Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto*.
- 1950 — Swainson's Warbler, 15 May, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto*.

## Corrections/Updates to Previous OBRC Reports

### 1985 Report (*Ontario Birds* 4:3-18):

- under Little Blue Heron (1977 at Rattray's Marsh), change "18-25 Aug." to "18 Aug.-10 Sept." (records of the Toronto Ornithological Club indicate the bird was present later than originally published).
- under Purple Sandpiper (at Caribou Island), change "1981" to "1984" (the submitted document contained a typographical error).

### 1984 Report (*Ontario Birds* 3:2-17):

- under Black Vulture (1984 at Long Point), change "Shepard" to "Shepherd."
- under American Avocet (1984 at Bright's Grove), change "19-16 May" to "9-16 May."

### 1983 Report (*Ontario Birds* 2:53-65):

- under Green-backed Heron (at Sable Island), change "1983" to "1981".
- under Eurasian Wigeon (1982 at Port Hope), change "22 April" to "19 April".
- under American Avocet (1983 at Whitby), change "Whitby" to "Ajax/Whitby/Oshawa"; change "9 Sept." to "7-19 Sept." (information recently received gives more specific information on the bird's occurrence).
- under Groove-billed Ani (1983 at Thunder Bay), change "Lakehead University #100" to "specimen (skin) in ROM: #151473" (this specimen has recently been deposited in the Royal Ontario Museum).
- under Rufous Hummingbird (1983 at Sapawe), change "Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus*" to "Hummingbird sp., *Selasphorus* sp." (the documentation available does not allow a specific identification to be made).
- under Unaccepted Records, Identification Uncertain (1983 Ash-throated Flycatcher at Point Pelee), change "25 May" to "15 May".
- under Unaccepted Records, Identification Uncertain (1983), add "LARK BUNTING, 14 May, Point Pelee (185)".
- under Unaccepted Records, Origin Uncertain (Painted Bunting records), change "1979" to "1978" for the record at Long Point; for the record at Toronto, add "1978/1979" and change "Dec." to "4 December-1 January" (information recently received gives precise dates for the bird's occurrence).

### 1982 Report (*Ontario Birds* 1:7-15):

- under Little Blue Heron (1982 at Rondeau Prov. Park), change "22 Aug.-2 Sept." to "22 Aug.-1 Sept."
- under Curlew Sandpiper (1982 at Essex), change "14-17 May" to "13-17 May."
- under Pomarine Jaeger (1982 at Mallorytown Landing), change "9 Nov." to "9-10 Nov."
- under Long-tailed Jaeger (1981 at Long Point), merge the two records to read "6-10 Aug." (information recently received from one of the observers indicates that both sightings almost certainly

pertain to the same individual).

- under California Gull (at Toronto), change "14-29 May" to "8 May-1 June" for 1981; change "19 May-2 June" to "2 May-6 June" for 1982 (records of the Canadian Wildlife Service and Toronto Ornithological Club give more precise dates of the bird's occurrence than originally published).
- under Band-tailed Pigeon (1981 at Long Point), change "20 Aug." to "30 Aug."
- under Common Poorwill (at North Point), change "1892" to "1982."
- under Western Kingbird (1982), change "north of Toronto" to "Concord, York R.M."; change "2 Oct." to "30 Sept.-6 Oct." (records of the Toronto Ornithological Club give specific dates for the bird's occurrence).
- under Unaccepted Records, Identification uncertain (1976 Rufous-necked Stint at Toronto), change "11 July" to "25 July".
- under Unaccepted Records, Identification uncertain, the record of Arctic (= Pacific) Loon at Kettle Point is for 1981, not 1982 as listed.
- under Unaccepted Records, Origin uncertain (Barnacle Goose at Garden Hill), change "1979" to "1978"; change "Oct." to "15 Oct.-11 Nov." (information recently received gives more precise dates for the bird's occurrence).

### Acknowledgements

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We are most thankful to Robert Finlayson, who carried out numerous photographic tasks, and Ross James, who again hosted the OBRC annual meeting at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

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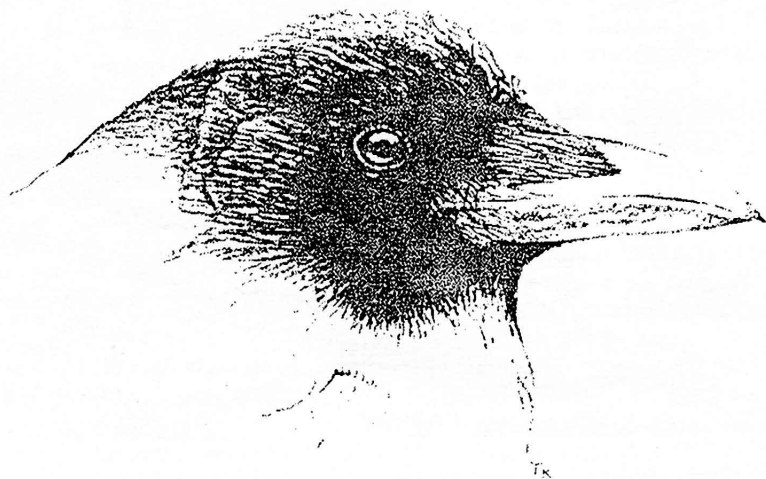
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*Table 1:* Occurrences accepted by the OBRC of review list species (18) averaging one or more records annually in *southern* Ontario (1981 to 1986 inclusive). Numbers refer to the year in which the bird(s) occurred, not the year the record was reviewed. Recent totals (particularly 1986) may be artificially low for some species due to reports yet to be received and/or reviewed.

| SPECIES                                  | YEAR OF OCCURRENCE |      |      |      |      |          | TOTALS |
|--|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|--------|
|  | 1981               | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986     |        |
| Laughing Gull .....                      | 3                  | 3    | 10   | 1    | 24   | DELISTED | 41+    |
| Varied Thrush .....                      | 2                  | 2    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 2        | 21     |
| Yellow-throated Warbler.....             | 2                  | 6    | 4    | 4    | 2    | 2        | 20     |
| Eurasian Wigeon .....                    | 0                  | 5    | 3    | 2    | 4    | 1        | 15     |
| Greater White-fronted Goose.....         | 0                  | 2    | 1    | 0    | 8    | 2        | 13     |
| American Avocet .....                    | 2                  | 2    | 5    | 4    | 0    | 0        | 13     |
| Western Kingbird .....                   | 1                  | 3    | 2    | 1    | 4    | 2        | 13     |
| Little Blue Heron .....                  | 1                  | 1    | 3    | 1    | 3    | 1        | 10     |
| Tricolored Heron .....                   | 2                  | 2    | 0    | 3    | 2    | 0        | 9      |
| <i>Plegadis</i> ibis (incl. Glossy)..... | 0                  | 4    | 0    | 2    | 1    | 2        | 9      |
| Piping Plover .....                      | 1                  | 0    | 0    | 2    | 5    | 1        | 9      |
| Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.....           | 0                  | 2    | 4    | 1    | 2    | 0        | 9      |
| Lark Sparrow .....                       | 0                  | 0    | 2    | 1    | 4    | 2        | 9      |
| American White Pelican.....              | 0                  | 1    | 4    | 0    | 3    | 0        | 8      |
| Blue Grosbeak.....                       | 2                  | 0    | 4    | 0    | 2    | 0        | 8      |
| Yellow-crowned Night-Heron.....          | 2                  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 4    | 1        | 7      |



Portrait of an American Crow / Drawing by Tom Reaume

# Snowy Egret: A New Breeding Species for Ontario and Canada

by  
Robert Curry and George D. Bryant

James *et al.* (1976) described the Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) as an occasional rare visitor to southern Ontario. The first for Hamilton, Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, was found by John B. Miles on 20 May 1957 in the Dundas Marsh (North 1957). In recent years the Snowy Egret has become a regular visitor to the province, with 2-18 birds recorded annually (Weir 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1985). Prior to 1986 the largest single group reported in Ontario was seven, by John Miles *et al.* in the Dundas Marsh on 6 June 1965 (North 1965). Six Snowy Egrets spent most of August 1980 in Hamilton Harbour (North 1980). The species has been gradually expanding its nesting range, perhaps still recovering from plume hunting, although Terres (1980) points out that it now breeds farther north than before its persecution. In 1985 Snowy Egrets nested in Maine (Tingley 1985) and Wisconsin (Tessen 1985) at latitudes slightly to the north of Hamilton. The closest nesting site to Ontario is at West Sister Island National Wildlife Refuge, Ohio where the first breeding record for the state was of two nests found in the summer of 1982 (Shieldcastle 1984). West Sister Island is situated in the southwest corner of



Figure 1: Three young Snowy Egrets (about eight days old) in the nest, Hamilton Harbour, Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, 6 July 1986. Photo by Robert Curry.

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Lake Erie approximately 35 km west of Pelee Island, Essex County, Ontario and approximately 325 km WSW of Hamilton.

On 24 May 1986 Kevin McLaughlin observed a pair of Snowy Egrets in nuptial display at Hamilton Harbour. The next day he saw a single bird carrying sticks into a grove of Carolina poplar (*Populus X canadensis* Moench) on the shore of an enclosed man-made pond, known locally as the Toll Gate Ponds, where Black-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and Double-

crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) were nesting. The egrets were seen regularly by several observers during June, although often only one bird could be seen around the pond, leading observers to speculate that the mate was on a nest.

From the west service road of the Queen Elizabeth Highway, about 400 m distant, the egrets were seen to habituate one particular section of the heronry. Consequently, when we entered the heronry on 6 July we examined all nests in the frequented area. The egret nest was discovered



Figure 2: Young Snowy Egret (about 16 days old) in the nest tree, Hamilton Harbour, Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, 14 July 1986. Photo by D.V. Chip Weseloh.

when Bryant spotted some white feathers protruding just above the rim of a stick nest about 3 m high in a poplar sapling. Curry climbed an adjacent tree and found three young birds lying together in the nest. They had patches of white down on their crowns and flanks and several pure white feathers on the scapulars and possibly also the inner wing coverts. As photography was attempted from a neighbouring swaying tree, one of the egrets, probably the oldest, stood up at the edge of the nest and the others raised their heads and necks (Figure 1). The standing bird already displayed the slender proportions and serpentine neck characteristic of this species. Their bills were pale pink with dark tips and the legs of the standing bird were greenish-yellow.

Based on the observation of unsheathed scapulars, we estimated that the young egrets ranged in age from about seven to nine days old. The incubation period of the Snowy Egret is estimated at approximately 22 days; this is not proven but see Palmer (1962) for a discussion of the incubation period of this and other small Ardeidae. This would place the laying of the first egg at about 5 June, a date which is consistent with the earlier observations of the adult egrets. Many young night-herons in the colony were much older (some had fledged) and the adult night-herons had undoubtedly started laying about the time the egrets were first observed.

On 14 July D.V. Weseloh and Curry returned to the nest. At this time all three young were standing and, upon our arrival, clambered nervously about the branches of the nest tree. They then settled and stood quietly while we took photographs. At this

stage their feet were slightly brighter greenish-yellow than their legs, their bills had grown longer and their ceres had turned yellowish. Their rectrices were just beginning to appear and their remiges extended almost to the tip of the tail. Their bodies were completely feathered but their heads still had just white down (Figure 2).

On 23 July Curry could find only one young, which stood about 6 m up in the nest tree. Presumably the other young had climbed into different trees but were hidden by dense foliage. At this time the height of the nest was measured and the top determined to be 3.2 m from the ground.

The fledged young were first seen flying and feeding along the edge of the pond on 1 August by Alan Wormington and Brian Wylie (pers. comm.). Curry again visited the area on 11 August and found six Snowy Egrets. The three fledged birds chased their parents, begged for food and also hunted on their own along the shore. At one point a young egret and a young night-heron squared off and threatened one another by puffing up their necks and thrusting their bills forward. The sixth egret appeared to be a second calendar-year bird, as it had reduced crown feathering and yellow extending up the back of the legs. The last Snowy Egret to be recorded at the site (a juvenile) was reported by McLaughlin on 5 October (Jennings 1986).

Observers should be aware that recently-fledged Snowy Egrets can appear strikingly like immature Little Blue Herons (*Egretta caerulea*). The egrets had two-toned bills, with the basal half pinkish and the distal half dark, legs that appeared greenish-yellow, and feet that seemed no brighter than the legs.

This observation represents the first nesting record for Snowy Egret in Ontario and Canada. It is possible that the six young Snowy Egrets seen at the Toll Gate Ponds in August 1980 were raised at this heronry. Snowy Egrets may in the future nest at any Black-crowned Night-Heron colony in Ontario. Similarly they should be watched for in heronries in southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan and in New Brunswick.

#### Acknowledgements

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# Notes

## Breeding Bird Survey – Ontario Summary for 1986

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) was initiated in 1965 in the United States. In Ontario, the first year with a good route coverage was 1968. The survey involves travelling a randomly selected route, starting exactly one half hour before local sunrise, stopping at half mile (0.8 km) intervals for exactly three minutes over a 50-stop route (24.5 miles or 39.2 km) and recording all birds identified by sight or song only at the stops along the route. The intent is to survey at least one route in each degree square, usually two in southern Ontario. Maps showing the average values for each species during the first ten years of the survey were published in Speirs (1985). Robbins *et al.* (1986) published a 15-year summary covering the United States and Canada, with maps showing relative densities for some of the species and tables summarizing results for all species. This note summarizes some of the highlights of the Ontario survey in 1986.

In overall abundance the European Starling again ranked first, followed in decreasing order of abundance by Red-winged Blackbird, American Robin, American Crow, Ring-billed Gull, Barn Swallow, White-throated Sparrow, Bobolink, Red-eyed Vireo, and Song Sparrow. All ten of these species occurred in all six main regions of Ontario in 1986.

The three most abundant species encountered in each of the various regions were as follows: in southwest-

ern Ontario they were the European Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle. In the southeastern region the order was Red-winged Blackbird, European Starling, and American Crow. In west-central Ontario the Ring-billed Gull ranked first, followed by European Starling and White-throated Sparrow. In east-central Ontario the European Starling again ranked first, with Red-winged Blackbird and Bobolink next. In northwestern Ontario the Red-eyed Vireo was most abundant, followed by American Robin and White-throated Sparrow. The White-throated Sparrow was by far the most numerous bird in northeastern Ontario, with Swainson's Thrush and Red-eyed Vireo next in abundance.

Species found only on southwestern Ontario routes were: Double-crested Cormorant (four on the Dunnville route and four on the Port Dover route); Great Egret and Black-crowned Night-Heron (single birds on the Kingsville route); Orchard Oriole (also on the Kingsville route); and Yellow-breasted Chat (one on the Port Dover route).

Unique species on southeastern routes were: Least Bittern (one on the Wilfrid route); Northern Goshawk, Sora, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (single birds on the Roblin route); Northern Bobwhite (one on the Streetsville route); and Blue-winged Warbler (one on the Mount Julian route).

Three duck species were encountered only on the Sudbury route (six Green-winged Teal, one Northern Shoveler, and four American Wigeon). Other unique species were the two Ospreys on the Manitowaning route and the six Red Crossbills on the Massey route.

In east-central Ontario the unique species were: Northern Pintail (two on the Eganville route), Marsh Wren (four on the Mayhew route), Cerulean Warbler (one on the Port Carling route); and Henslow's Sparrow (one on the Bourget route).

Eight species were found only on northwestern Ontario routes: Ring-necked Duck (four on the Atikokan and seven on the Kenora routes); Hooded Merganser (single birds on the above two routes); Bald Eagle (single birds on the Eagle River and Kenora routes); Palm Warbler (single birds on the Suomi and Stratton routes); Connecticut Warbler (two on the Atikokan, six on the Kenora, and seven on the Stratton routes); and finally, two LeConte's Sparrows on the

Thunder Bay route.

Two unique species were reported from northeastern Ontario in 1986: single Rusty Blackbirds on the Larder Lake and Chapleau routes and two White-winged Crossbills on the Chapleau route.

Of the 13 species of warblers that occurred on more than ten routes, seven showed increases (four significant) and six showed decreases (two significant). The four with significant increases were Magnolia and Mourning Warblers, American Redstart, and Ovenbird. The two with significant decreases were Black-throated Green and Canada Warblers.

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## Monitoring an Urban Population of Aerial-foraging Insectivorous Birds

Populations of Common Nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor*) and Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*), species which to a significant degree utilize urban environments for breeding and foraging, are likely not well censused by traditional breeding bird surveys which rely on roadside transects in rural areas or repeated counts in relative, small survey areas. For this reason, and the possibility of using birds as indicators of environmental change, a study of aerial-foraging

insectivorous birds in an urban setting was established in 1971. The study involved counts of Common Nighthawks, Chimney Swifts and other aerial-foraging birds along a 3.33 km (2.07 mile) walking route in downtown Kitchener, Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Ontario. The surveys began approximately one-half hour before sunset and concluded approximately one-half hour after sunset. Results of surveys in 1971 and 1976 were published by



Francis (1977). The survey was repeated in the summer of 1981 by Francis, and again in the summer of 1986 by Weller and Francis. The results of all four surveys are summarized in Table 1.

The data suggest that the Common Nighthawk population in downtown Kitchener has remained relatively stable since the original survey in 1971. The average count of nighthawks in 1986 was almost identical to what it was in 1971. Average counts in 1976 and 1981 were both above the 1971 average, although the average number seen declined in the most recent five-year period. These findings differ somewhat from those of *American Birds*, which has found Common Nighthawk populations in major areas of North America, including the northeast, dropping since at least the early 1970s. *American Birds*, therefore, continues to list the Common Nighthawk on the "Blue List of North American Birds" (Tate 1986). The average count of Chimney Swifts in 1986 was almost double what it was in 1971 (Table 1). An improvement in the air quality of the city (Elkin *et al.* 1986) and colonization of new nest sites may provide explanations for this increase. Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) have not been seen on the census route since 1971.

The results from one census route are only suggestive of larger popula-

tion trends. Similar censuses in other Ontario and North American cities would provide a clearer picture of the changes in populations of urban aerial-foraging insectivorous birds.

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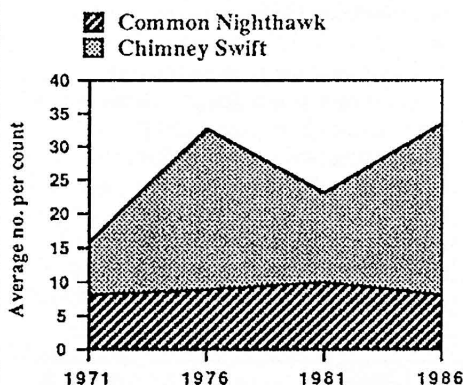


Figure 1: Average number of Common Nighthawks and Chimney Swifts recorded in downtown Kitchener, Regional Municipality of Waterloo, 1971-1986.

| DATE                 | # OF COUNTS | COMMON NIGHTHAWK | CHIMNEY SWIFT | PURPLE MARTIN |
|----------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1971 June 15-Aug 12  | 14          | 8.2 (4-11)       | 15.9 (4-30)   | 1.2 (0.7)     |
| 1976 June 14-Aug 16  | 9           | 8.9 (3-12)       | 32.6 (15-54)  | 0             |
| 1981 June 7-Aug 9    | 8           | 10 (8-12)        | 23 (16-29)    | 0             |
| 1986 June 23-July 28 | 8           | 8.1 (3-14)       | 33.3 (21-38)  | 0             |

Table 1: Average number and range (in parentheses) of aerial-foraging insectivorous birds, Kitchener, Regional Municipality of Waterloo, 1971-1986.

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## Selective Feeding by the American Crow

Several studies have revealed the omnivorous feeding habits of the American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). Kalmbach (1918) identified 656 different food items in crow's stomachs.

My observations of crows in Guelph, Wellington County, over the past few years indicate that large earthworms (Lumbricidae) are often fed upon by crows. On 7 March 1987, a day with temperatures reaching 15°C, large areas of lawn were quickly exposed and saturated from the melting snow. At 1630h a family of three crows were observed lawn feeding about 200 m from their nest site. I watched them with 7X binoculars from distances of only 5-30 m. Twice a crow pulled out an entire earthworm, stepped on it, and then tore off and ate 2-3 cm from the

worm's head. On both occasions the crow then resumed feeding, leaving the remainder of the worm (which I collected) on the surface of the lawn. No caching was attempted in either case. I was unable to determine if the same crow carried out this selective feeding or two different birds.

Since the "lean" winter period was easing and nest-building underway, this apparent wasting of protein is puzzling. In summer, I have watched a crow pull out a large earthworm from a pasture, drop it, then collect another and fly off with the latter to feed its young.

Selective feeding behaviour in crows is also mentioned by Aleksiuik (1977). He noted that in Manitoba when thousands of Red-sided Garter Snakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis*) emerge from their limestone sinks in May, nesting crows are attracted. The birds open a 4 cm long section of the snake's skin and eat only the liver.

The "wasteful" feeding behaviour observed in the Guelph crows raises a few questions. Does the head region of the earthworm at this time of the year contain certain nutrients which the crows need, or does it taste better? Is it the omnivorous diet of the crow which permits this style of feeding or does this represent the simple predatory act of a crow decapitating its prey?

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## An Observation of Scavenging Behaviour by a Northern Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*)

Although there is considerable known about the food eaten by shrikes, the information seems to come largely from an examination of stomach contents. The number of observations of foraging behaviour is not great, except perhaps for insect prey (Craig 1978). This is particularly true for the Northern Shrike, which spends most of its life in more remote areas.

The North American shrikes are widely characterized as predators and there is a general feeling that they are very opportunistic, taking almost any living creature that they can overpower (Miller 1931). However, there is little evidence that they might also take advantage of carrion. That they should do so seems reasonable, since they return to carcasses of animals they have killed and impaled.

However, we have been able to find only a couple of brief mentions of shrikes taking food from animals that they have not killed themselves. Bent (1950) cites a single example of scavenging behaviour for a Loggerhead Shrike (*L. ludovicianus*) which fed on a sheep carcass. He also includes a sentence from an observer that claimed to have seen a Northern Shrike tear meat from the carcass of a cow. We could find no mention of scavenging in Miller's (1931) mono-

graph on American shrikes and no mention in the literature of the congeneric Great Gray Shrike (*L. excubitor*) of Eurasia. The following incident then, is interesting in view of the paucity of observations of scavenging behaviour.

On 3 January 1987 we were driving along a gravel sideroad covered with hard packed snow about 3 km west of Norland in northern Victoria County. As we passed through a wooded section, an American red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) suddenly dashed across the road and was inadvertently killed under the wheels of our vehicle. To retrieve the squirrel, we slowed down and turned around about 100 m from it. As soon as we began driving back we noted a bird at the squirrel carcass, and as we approached, easily identified it as a Northern Shrike in adult plumage.

We were able to drive within a couple of metres of the squirrel, stop and watch for a minute, while the shrike pulled at the eyes and bits of bloody flesh on the crushed head of the squirrel. The shrike was not observed trying to hold the prey down with a foot. Only the weight of the squirrel held it while the shrike tried to pull bits loose. Several times it grasped a bit of the squirrel in its beak

and attempted to fly. The squirrel was too heavy to be moved more than a few centimetres, but this action may have pulled a bit of flesh loose for eating.

The fact that the shrike immediately pounced on the squirrel, within seconds of it being killed, suggests that these birds readily accept carrion if they can find it, even though this is not their usual method of hunting. The squirrel was very fresh, however, and perhaps was even seen when still alive, and the birds might be more reluctant to feed on something that had been dead for some time.

If Loggerhead Shrikes readily approach roads for dead, as well as for injured animals as suggested by the observations of Robertson (1930), then their present decline in North America (Cadman 1986) may be related, in part at least, to vehicle related mortality. This Northern Shrike, which would be expected to live most of the year where no roads are found, certainly did not hesitate to

take advantage of food on the road, and exhibited little fear of an approaching vehicle.

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## First Confirmed Record of Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus asio*) in Sudbury District

On 2 December 1985, an Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus asio*) was found at the CNR repair track at Capreol (46° 42' W 80° 56' N), Sudbury District. The bird, apparently in poor condition, was easily captured, and determined to be an adult grey phase female screech owl. Its initial weight was 174 g. Earhart and Johnson (1970) give the weight range of the

larger female screech owl from 126 g to 252 g. This bird reached 205.5 g (an 18% increase) after ten days of free feed. Food intake tapered off to a lesser frequency after this. The owl was subsequently rehabilitated and released.

This record appears to constitute the first confirmed record of the Eastern Screech-Owl in Sudbury District.

James *et al.* (1976) place the species in North Bay, Nipissing District, and Ottawa, Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. Speirs (1985) cites records at Lake Nipissing and North Bay and one record for Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma District, dating between 1938 and 1942. Nicholson (1974) does not mention the species as present in the Sudbury District. The recent completion of the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario recorded no confirmed screech owl sightings in the district (C. Bell, pers. comm.; H. Baines, pers. comm.). The adjacent Manitoulin District has four records over the past 16 years (Nicholson 1981).

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## Red-winged Blackbirds Nesting in Urban Downtown Toronto

Although seasoned naturalists learn to associate each species with specific habitats, birds sometimes show their adaptability through changes in habitat selection (Wardhaugh 1983:98).

In North America, the Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) is generally associated with marshes (Bent 1958; Orians 1980; Nero 1984). Bent (1958:123) referred to the presence or "at least proximity" of water as "essential" for nesting by this species, although he continued to describe a variety of nesting habitats including (p. 130) dry uplands "sometimes considerable distances from water." Nero (1984:33) noted nesting

in damp meadows often "a long way from water," and Miller (1968) compiled a wide variety of both marsh and dry upland sites. Campbell (1948) even found them to be the dominant passerine on a marshless island in Lake Erie. Nesting in upland, non-marsh habitats appears to be a relatively new adaptation (Case and Hewitt 1963), although one which is becoming increasingly more common (Orians 1980; McNicholl 1981). Comparative studies have shown that wetland areas are generally occupied first (Albers 1978) and more densely (Brown and Goertz 1978), and that nesting success tends to be higher in wetland sites (Case and Hewitt 1963),

although average reproductive success in upland sites is at times within the range of variation in marsh sites (Dolbeer 1976).

During the spring of 1984, I spent considerable time on the campus of the University of Toronto, Regional Municipality of York, and noticed that Red-winged Blackbirds were nesting there (McNicholl 1985). Evidence consisted of territorial songs by both males and females in early spring, and alarm notes near various shrubs later in the season. Most sites were in shrubs bordering lawns, especially near the Bio-medical Library and the Legislative Building, but one female was repeatedly seen leaving a tree in front of the Faculty of Management Studies on Bloor St. W. and Bedford Rd., about as urbanized a site as one can find. Time did not permit a search for nests then, or in 1985, when I noticed territorial birds in the same areas. On 6 May 1986, I observed agitated behaviour by a female in front of University College on King's Circle, and determined to search for a nest on my next visit. I was not able to return for a month, but on 6 June, my searching of a Carigana-Lilac complex in the vicinity of a singing male by Hart House quickly brought agitated behaviour by two males and three females, and at 0745h a full-sized fledgling flew with wobbly flight into a tree, closely followed by one of the females. My return at 1040h was greeted by considerable agitated behaviour, and I soon found a nest about 3.5 m up in a large lilac. Two smaller bob-tailed young left the nest, accompanied by a shrieking female. A search of a wide variety of bushes near Philosopher's Walk at Harbord St. and Queen's Park Circle brought agitated behaviour by another male,

but I was not able to find a nest or young there. Singing birds of both sexes were also heard in the park within the circle. These observations and those of the previous two years suggest that the species is well established as a nesting bird over much of the campus, and a male uttering alarm notes on Homewood Ave. near Carlton St. on 7 June suggests that nesting may be spread over a wider area in downtown Toronto.

Although situated in a highly urbanized area, much of the campus contains considerable shrubbery and well-watered lawns reminiscent of shrub-bordered wet meadows that were colonized by Red-winged Blackbirds when they began to occupy upland sites (see Miller 1968). Their urbanization can be regarded as a natural continuation of their well established adaptation to new habitats. This adaptability has no doubt contributed to the increase in this species (Case and Hewitt 1963), to the point where it may be the most abundant passerine on this continent (Nero 1984). Studies of its reproductive success in its newly occupied urban habitat, similar to those comparing wetland with upland situations as cited above, would be highly desirable.

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## Book Reviews

*Charles Broley, an Extraordinary Naturalist.* By *Jon Gerrard*. 1983. White Horse Plains Publishers, Headingley, Manitoba. iv + 60 pp. illus. \$4.00 Paper.

Jon Gerrard produced this little biography for "Bald Eagle Days," held at Winnipeg on 19-21 August 1983. No one could be better suited for the task, since Jon has been the key figure in maintaining a Bald Eagle research study area on Besnard Lake, Saskatchewan, since 1968.

As Jon's forward begins, "To take the full measure of Charles Broley, and to understand how a 58-year-old banker could suddenly start climbing trees and banding eagles with the energy and grace of an 18-year-old, it was necessary for me to search out his origins." Search he did. The book begins in 1793 and 1802 with Abel

Stevens and Roswell Matthews, when they moved their families from Vermont to Canada.

Broley, a descendant of Matthews, became manager of the bank at Delta, Ontario in 1905 and that summer noted his first Bald Eagle nest on nearby Lower Beverly Lake, where Broley later built a summer cottage. Broley's first wife, Ruby Stevens, a great granddaughter of Abel's, died of tuberculosis in 1921. Meanwhile, the Broleys had moved to Winnipeg in 1918.

In 1923, Broley began regular contributions to A.G. Lawrence's "Chickadee Notes" in the *Winnipeg*

*Free Press*, and that year married Myrtle McCarthy, who was to be his companion on many birding expeditions. In 1926, Broley became chairman of the ornithological section of the Manitoba Natural History Society and attended the first Canadian meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in Ottawa. In 1928, Broley gave a job in his bank to Terry Shortt, who shared Broley's interest in birds. Shortt later said that his "instruction was maybe two-thirds banking and one-third ornithology." Broley bought a cottage at Delta, on the south shore of Lake Manitoba about 1934 (he had an affinity for Deltas in two provinces), and then in 1938 he retired.

Broley was en route to winter in Florida when, at the A.O.U. meeting in Washington, D.C., Richard Pough of the National Audubon Society asked him to check on the Bald Eagles there. Broley that winter taught himself to climb tall trees and banded 44 eaglets. Thus began the continent's foremost eagle banding program, with over 1200 nestling eaglets banded. The Broleys returned each summer to Beverly Lake, Ontario where, beginning in 1940,

Charles banded a few eagles still nesting there.

It is fortunate that Broley was monitoring Bald Eagles so carefully. He was the first to note their declining production of nestlings after 1946. His wife, Myrtle, documented this decline in her excellent book, *Eagle Man: Charles L. Broley's Field Adventures with American Eagles*, in 1952. After another six years of observation, Broley published, in *Audubon* magazine, his conviction that 80 percent of the Florida Bald Eagles were sterile, and that DDT was the probable cause. This set the stage for Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, published four years later in 1962.

Broley died in May 1959, while fighting a fire near his cabin at Beverly Lake. He is buried on a hill just outside Delta, Ontario. Gerrard concludes his book with three pages of Myrtle Broley's verse, a bibliography of Broley's writings, and a selected list of a few of Myrtle's extensive writings. Gerrard's is not yet the definitive biography, but it provides much interesting information about an amateur ornithologist from Ontario whose influence is still being felt today.

C. Stuart Houston, 863 University Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0J8

*The Joy of Birding. A Guide to Better Birdwatching.* 1984. by Chuck Bernstein. Capra Press, Santa Barbara, California. 201 pp., \$12.95 (paper).

*The Joy of Birding* is a book by a birder for birders. Chuck Bernstein is an enthusiastic and unabashed birder, and this book is an earnest attempt to convey his enthusiasm for birdwatching to the reader. The book contains a series of essays describing the author's birding trips, interspersed with chapters intended to encourage birdwatchers to delve into their hobby beyond

listing, involving areas of study such as behaviour, identification and distribution.

The chapters that describe specific birding trips are followed by a listing of bird names (common and scientific), including all birds seen by the author, in chronological order for each date or location described in the text. No attempt is made to compile the list



systematically, such as in A.O.U. taxonomic sequence. These lists, while personally valuable to the recorder, are of little or no value to the reader, and add 17 pages of text to the book.

The book has an obvious western bias, concentrating on the author's experiences in California and elsewhere in the western U.S. Some eastern trips are highlighted but the area descriptions and information on birding hotspots will be of most value to western birders or those planning a trip to the western U.S. The western influence must be considered when reading the text; for example, warbler migrations are mentioned as being primarily March phenomena—not the typical Ontario situation. The author also has a particular complaint, perhaps justified, about most existing field guides. The fact that they are published in the east, and rely on eastern subspecies and eastern plumage characteristics, can apparently lead to confusion and even species misidentification in the west.

The book contains a number of dispersed birding hints, but it is generally geared towards the experienced birdwatcher rather than the novice. The fine points of identifying particular species, subspecies and immatures are addressed, often in excessive detail. This coverage tends to be sporadic, concentrating on those species which the author finds particularly interesting, difficult to distinguish, or encountered on a particular trip. These tips are not organized along any lines, but are described as encountered in the text. If the reader is not familiar with the bird(s) under discussion (which in my case occurred frequently because of my lack of birding experience in the west), he must either consult a field guide or ignore the reference. The

excessive details in some areas may intimidate or deter the novice birder. As an example, discussions on Song Sparrow and thrush subspecies, detailing colouration, size and range, take up approximately one and a half pages of text each. Similarly, a chapter on bird songs and their recognition correctly emphasizes that one must properly learn bird songs by experience, but then lapses into excessive discussions of verbal interpretations of bird songs that are of little value but perhaps of some humour. Did you realize that the Rufous-sided Towhee's familiar "drink-your-tea" song may sound like "scratch-a-flea" to a pet shop owner?

This book's greatest entertainment value lies in its emphasis on the fun of birding and bird study; one is caught up in the author's obvious enthusiasm for everything related to birds and birding. He shares the joys of observing a new species, the camaraderie of birding with like-minded souls in all kinds of situations, the disappointment of missing that once-in-a-lifetime chance for sought-after species, the fun of rediscovering the same, possibly common, species, in a new location or a new area. Birders are also encouraged to contribute to the scientific accumulation of knowledge, such as through participation in the Christmas Bird Count. Several chapters stimulate birders to extend birding beyond mere listing, to ask and attempt to answer basic biological questions such as the complexities of species distribution, song, subspecies identification, migration patterns, and so on, thereby expanding their horizons.

The book, however, lacks an overall organization and purpose—it is not a field guide but it delves into details of field marks and species

identification; it is not an introduction to birdwatching but it does provide hints for novice birders; it is not an ornithology text but it does discuss some detailed biological concepts. The book would appeal most to the select group of serious birders who

wish to expand their hobby from mere observation to more investigative birdwatching, and who are looking for some direction or avenues to pursue. Again, the book is also more appropriate to birders with interests or experience in western birdwatching.

Ted (E.R.) Armstrong, P.O. Box 1652, Wawa, Ontario P0L 1C0

*A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. 1986. By Steven L. Hilty and William L. Brown. Illustrated by Guy Tudor and others. Princeton University Press, 836 pp.

Frustration, for a birdwatcher (at least for this one) is to be in a patch of tropical forest, surrounded by beautiful and varied birds, and not to be able to identify them because no book exists for the area. Ironically, until recently, it was South America, far and away the richest continent faunistically, and the one most accessible to North Americans, which was the least well-served by workable field guides. Little by little, this lack is being remedied, and a major gap has now been plugged by the publication of *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*.

Since a multi-volume field guide is, by definition, a contradiction in terms, the authors (and illustrators) faced a severe challenge in dealing with the 1700-odd Colombian species adequately in the space available. In my judgement they have succeeded in meeting this challenge very well indeed. Not that this guide could in any way be described as a "slim volume"; it has over 800 pages, including an index of more than 40, as well as 56 colour and 13 half-tone plates, and weighs three pounds.

The book starts with short but useful articles on items such as the Topography, Climate, Vegetation and National Parks of Colombia, and there is a ten-page appendix (which might usefully be expanded) entitled "Find-

ing Birds in Colombia". However, the bulk of the book is given over to species accounts and to the plates.

The species accounts consist of sections on Identification, Similar Species (especially useful in a field guide), Voice, Behaviour, Status and Habitat, Range and, where relevant, Notes. The format is, of necessity, condensed and laconic, but there is an enormous amount of information compressed into the available space. Given the fact that the authors are both consummate field ornithologists, the species accounts emphasize points that are important to field identification—a welcome contrast with some of the previously published books for this region.

A field guide will, however, be judged mainly on the quality of its illustrations. Here, given the constraints of space and time, two hard but I think sensible decisions were made. Firstly, North American migrant species are largely omitted; secondly, since there is so much overlap with Venezuela, it clearly was not sensible to repaint a large number of species. Instead, many plates are almost identical to the corresponding plates contained in deSchauensee and Phelps' *A Guide to the Birds of Venezuela*, with appropriate substitutions of species or races. However, because of

the richer fauna of Colombia, a number of entirely new plates have been added (to a total of 69 versus 53 in the Venezuelan guide). This does, on occasion, result in similar species being distributed among different plates—the tapaculos for example—but this is a relatively minor inconvenience. The majority of the plates—as in the Venezuelan guide—are by Guy Tudor, arguably the best field guide illustrator in the world today. As examples of especially superb draughtsmanship, I personally would pick out plates 36 (small flycatchers) and 50 (mountain tanagers).

The quality of plates in the Venezuelan guide was somewhat variable, with some artists of much lesser talent than Tudor. Some of the more inferior plates of that book have been repainted for the Colombian guide, but it is still

a major disappointment with the present work that there remain a number of, if not poor, certainly not good, plates. It is instructive to compare Tudor's *Atlapetes* finches (plate 54) with other members of the same genus on plate 55, by another artist. Other problems with the illustrations lie in the absence of many female plumages, and in the fact that a significant number of species are not illustrated at all.

Nevertheless, despite these criticisms, it has to be said that *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia* is an excellent book which represents a major leap forward in the coverage of this richest of continents. It will be essential to any visitor, not merely to Colombia, but also to Ecuador, Peru and much of Brazil. The price (over \$60 Canadian after exchange) is steep, but the book is worth it.

David Brewer, R.R. #1, Puslinch, Ontario

## OFO Announcements

### Field Trips

**1 November 1987, Sunday: SARNIA JAEGERS.** Leader: Dennis Rupert (519) 371-2919. Meet at 8:00 AM at the parking lot behind the Waterworks at Point Edward. Exit Hwy. 402 in Sarnia at Front St., the last exit before the bridge. Turn left (west) on Michigan Ave. and proceed to the last street before the river, turn north across Victoria St. to Fort St., which ends at the Waterworks. If it is a good day (*i.e.*, bad weather) the group 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.

**6 February 1988, Saturday: EAGLES AT PETROGLYPHS PARK.** Leader: Geoff Carpentier (705) 743-8594. Meet at the Park gate at 9:30 AM. From Peterborough take Hwy. 28 north 50 km to Woodview. Turn right on Northey's Bay Rd. and go 11 km to Park gate. For additional details see site guide in *Ontario Birds* 3(1):29-32.

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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