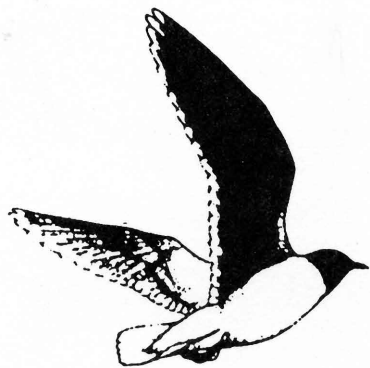


ONTARIO BIRDS



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Ontario Field
Ornithologists

Volume 9 Number 2
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Reports of rare birds (those for which the OBRC requires documentation — see supplement to *Ontario Birds* 5 (3)) 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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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". 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 Editors

Adjudication and publication of records of unusual subspecies

It is about time that *Ontario Birds* joined the twentieth century and followed the example of California (among others) Records Committees and journals; that is, the documentation of unusual subspecies and races of birds not normally found in Ontario.

At present, there is no forum to properly analyse and document records of unusual subspecies. *Ontario Birds* has already stated its reluctance towards receiving such records and, I believe, this is a mistake. If such records are considered valueless by Ontario's only true ornithological records committee, then observers will be lax in their note-taking when discovering a wayward subspecies. This, in turn, muddles the picture concerning the status of said subspecies, especially if this subspecies is, one day, elevated to full species status. There will be no catalogue of data to study, no details concerning historical sightings, no possible way to properly ascertain such a bird's provincial status.

American Birds, which should serve as an alternate repository for such records, provides basically useless information. The Ontario regional editor constantly expresses his reluctance to print records of subspecies and, while this may be wise for difficult to identify subspecies, it is retrograde thinking from a historical point of view. It is a fact that a great many subspecies are field-identifiable, and a vagrant subspecies of some locally common

bird is arguably as rare as a full species far from its normal range. Some would argue that such records constitute excessive minutia, but this is the route that birding is headed, and *Ontario Birds* should get its collective head out of the sand, looking ahead, not behind.

I present a case study: the "Yellow" Palm Warbler (*D. p. hypochrysea*) appears to be a rare but regular fall vagrant in S.W. Ontario based on personal observations. I have three recent fall records: Oct. 5/85 (1), Oct. 6/86 (1), Oct. 13/87 (2), all at Pittock Lake, Oxford Co. There appears to be a tight "window" of perhaps regular occurrence based on the above records, but who really knows? Looking back through years of *American Birds* fall reports reveals extremely few records (the above records failed to pass the editor's axe and did not appear in print), and no such records appear in *Ontario Birds*. (Is it) A true vagrant or perhaps a regularly occurring fall migrant? With the cursory amount of information available, no conclusion can be drawn. This is true of virtually every non-regularly occurring subspecies in Ontario.

This brings to light another issue: a total lack of continuity concerning records printed in *American Birds* and those found in *Ontario Birds*. Numerous time, I have seen Ontario records of vagrants appear in *American Birds* with such comments as "Ontario's first", only for the record to be summarily rejected by the OBRC. There should be some rapport between the Ontario regional

editor of *American Birds* and the OBRC, so that such incongruities don't continue. Considering the much larger readership of *American Birds* (now in its new, hideous, and glamorized version), one must ask which organ represents the final say considering Ontario bird records? Surely, it is the OBRC, but the readers of *American Birds* hear not of the OBRC's decisions concerning records in *AB*. A union of sorts between these two journals would prevent such major discrepancies and give North American birders an authoritative view of Ontario bird records.

James Holdsworth
Woodstock, Ontario

Editors' Note: The Ontario Bird Records Committee, not *Ontario Birds*, adjudicates rare bird records in Ontario and determines which birds are to be reported. Consequently, Mr. Holdsworth's suggestions for changes in reporting policy are more appropriately directed to the OBRC. However, the Editors recognize a growing interest in "recognizable forms" among Ontario birders, and as a result, have instituted a new feature on this subject. See page 49 in this issue for a checklist.

Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 1990

by
Robert Curry

This is the ninth annual report of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Published herein are the records that were received and reviewed by the Committee during 1990. In total, 187 records were assessed, the identification of which 165 (about 88%) were found to be acceptable. Observers are to be commended for their increasing levels of skill in both observing and describing rare birds.

A review of North American bird records committees in *Birding* by

Roberson (1990) indicated that we are following the same procedures as similar groups across North America and elsewhere. Unfortunately, there remain certain portions of the province from which very few submissions are received despite requests for existing reports of review list species. We estimate about 30 records annually are not reported and are missing from the central archives maintained at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). The OBRC encourages readers of this report to please submit reports for all review

list species, regardless of whether or not they were the discoverers, and to promote submissions of reports from other observers across the province. We especially encourage submissions from anywhere in eastern Ontario to help make these reports as complete as possible.

In the introduction to the Eleventh Report of the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC), Bevier (1990) explained the purpose and procedures of that Committee. Much of what he wrote is appropriate to repeat here since it states clearly the shared objectives of bird records committees such as the CBRC and OBRC. The OBRC cannot, nor does it intend to verify or invalidate personal records. Observers whose reports are not accepted by the Committee

should not infer that we believe the bird or birds were misidentified, or that the observer's ability is being questioned. The judgements relate solely to the acceptability of reports for the permanent historical record, and to this end, the accuracy and completeness of reports are scrutinized as objectively as possible. Furthermore, it is important to realize that all non-accepted reports are stored in the appropriate species file in the OBRC archives at the Royal Ontario Museum. New evidence at a later date can result in decisions being reconsidered and possibly reversed.

In the writing and submitting of reports several points deserve emphasis. Careful field notes, sketches, photographs, and sound



Figure 1: Ontario Bird Records Committee studying Western and Cassin's Kingbirds in the Bird Room at the Royal Ontario Museum, 16 March 1991.

Left to right: Ron Tozer, Dennis Rupert, George Wallace, Bob Curry, Ross James, Margaret Bain, Kevin McLaughlin, Doug McRae, and Mike Runtz. Photo by *T. Ron Scovell*.

recordings provide the evidence necessary for a record of lasting value. A neatly printed or typed report is necessary, but more critical are notes and sketches done in the field. Certainly, in the follow-up report, usually completed at home, it is important for the observer to document the presence of characters that exclude other species. Finally, the descriptions should be completed, as much as possible, without reference to guides. When they are used, this must be noted and explained.

Among the most difficult problems faced annually by the Committee are those pertaining to the natural occurrence of a bird. It is virtually impossible to prove that a bird did not escape from some form of captivity. Where wild status is at issue, the degree of certainty for a record to be accepted has been, in practice, slightly lower than that for acceptance of identification. Nevertheless, we encourage reporters to supply the Committee with information on the captive status and likelihood of vagrancy just as they would provide evidence in support of the identification.

Members of the OBRC in 1990 were Ronald G. Tozer (Chairman), Robert Curry (non-voting Secretary), Ross D. James, Kevin A. McLaughlin, R. Douglas McRae, Michael W.P. Runtz, Dennis F. Rupert, and George E. Wallace (Fig. 1). They have reviewed, revised and endorsed this report.

Additions to the provincial list

Five species new to the province — Ferruginous Hawk, Black Rail, Wilson's Plover, Black-chinned Hummingbird and Cassin's Finch —

are presented, bringing the provincial total to 445 species. Added to the list for northern Ontario are California Gull and Blue Grosbeak while southern Ontario finally recorded its first Ross' Gull. Two new species — Bohemian Waxwing and Snow Bunting — are added to the list of birds known to breed in Ontario, bringing that total to 287.

Changes to the review list

The records for Fall 1990 indicate that Long-billed Dowitcher is a regular migrant in northern Ontario, generally in areas not visited by observers. Hence, it will be dropped from the Northern Ontario Review List effective 1 January 1991. The Committee still invites reports of this species from northern Ontario from previous years.

Effective 1 January 1991, Snowy Egret, Arctic Tern and Barn Owl are added to the Southern Ontario Review List.

Format

The organization and style of this report are similar to those used in the Report for 1989 (Wormington and Curry 1990). For each record presented, information on age, sex, and plumage is included if it was available and the determination was certain. Place names in italics refer to counties, regional municipalities, or districts in Ontario. All contributors who have provided a written description, photograph, audiotape or specimen have been credited. Contributors who discovered a bird and submitted documentation have their names underlined. In a departure from previous reports, if the discoverer is known but did not submit documentation, this person is

also acknowledged, it being an important part of the record. Readers must understand, however, that this information is incomplete and may, occasionally, be in error as we have no written material on file from these people. This can be corrected in future if discoverers are encouraged by friends to submit reports to the OBRC. Records presented all pertain to sight records unless other evidence is indicated.

A concerted effort has been made to determine the correct occurrence dates, number and location of each record. The seasonal reports in *American Birds* and personal correspondence from Ron D. Weir have been most useful in this regard. However, with a much longer time period to accumulate information and with original documents at our disposal we have been, in some cases, able to present more accurate information. Consequently, dates or other information which are different from that appearing in other publications are italicized. The revised information and all other dates listed are considered correct by the Committee.

An additional feature has been added to the summary numbers in brackets next to the species name which first appeared in last year's report. Following the system used in *British Birds* (see Rogers 1988), the three numbers refer respectively to the total number of accepted records before 1981 (first OBRC report), total number for the period since the formation of the OBRC, but excluding the number of records for the current year, which is the last number shown. An individual in the same locality in a subsequent year judged as the same, or probably the same, as recorded previously, is not counted in the total of accepted records, whereas an individual considered not the same, or possibly the same, is added to the total. We hope this will give the reader a greater appreciation of the status of each species in Ontario. Clearly for many species this is not a totally accurate status as there are many records which occurred before 1981 (and some since) which we have yet to review. We hope that this will encourage readers to submit any documentation on these older records which are a vital part of the historical record.

Accepted Records

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) (0/3/1)

1990 — two (pair), 9-12 June, Rainy River mouth, *Rainy River* (Rohan A. vanTwest, Philip Walker, Wilf Yusek) - photo on file.

It is possible that this pair is the same one seen in 1989 but here it is considered a separate record.

Northern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) (3/4/0)

1989 — one adult male light phase, 15 January, Presqu'île Prov. Park, *Northumberland* (Brian Henshaw), Specimen (skin) in ROM: #0154524.

1988 — one light phase, 14 December, New Liskeard, *Timiskaming* (Susan Weilandt, Gerry VanLeeuwen).

The New Liskeard bird was found along the highway unable to fly. It was fed, transported south and released by Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources personnel

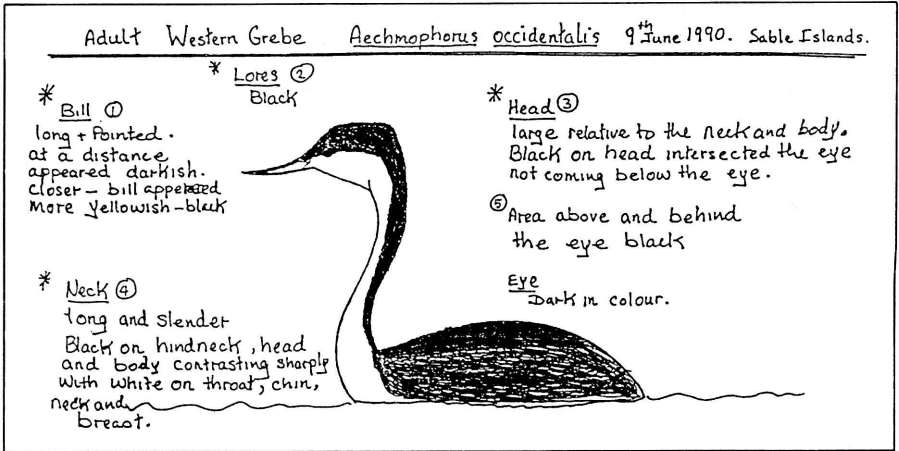


Figure 2: Western Grebe (one of a pair) at Sable Islands, Rainy River, 9-12 June 1990.
Drawing by Rohan vanTwest.

on Lake Erie near the mouth of the Welland Canal at Port Colborne (Niagara) on 23 December (Gerry VanLeeuwen pers. comm.). The Presqu'île bird found on shore ice was freshly dead it had not stiffened or frozen. We consider it unlikely that the same bird was involved. More likely is the probability that as James Bay freezes, a small number of Northern Fulmars are trapped from time to time and fly southwards mostly to perish in the boreal forest. Support for this hypothesis is one found near Manitouwadge (Thunder Bay) on 11 December 1970 and another near Moosonee (Cochrane) on 8 December 1974 (James et al 1976), and the numerous late fall dates for James Bay itself...

Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*) (2/6/3)

1990 — one first winter, 21 November - 8 December, Niagara-on-the-Lake to Queenston, *Niagara* (Rod and Marlene Planck, Gordon Bellerby, William C. D'Anna).

— one first winter, 23 November, Presqu'île Prov. Park, *Northumberland* (Matt Holder, Phill Holder, George E. Wallace).

— one adult, 24 November, Moore Point, *Durham* (Brian Henshaw).

1988 — one first winter, 5 November, Van Wagner's Beach, and 3 December, Fifty Point, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Alvaro Jaramillo, David A. Martin) - photos on file.

1987 — one first winter female, 29 November, Ferguson Falls, *Lanark* (Ronald Dickinson). Specimen (skin) in Canadian Museum of Nature: #89753.

As in similar past situations (Wormington and Curry 1990), the 1988 reports are, conservatively, considered to refer to the same individual as this is a large mobile species. It is interesting that for an apparently hardy species there are few provincial records after the first week of December. The Moore Point bird is the first adult accepted by OBRC.

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) South Only (2/15/5)

1990 — one, 28 April, Bobcaygeon, *Victoria/Peterborough* (Peter S. Burke) - photos on file.

— one, 9-12 June, Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* (Margaret J. Bain, Brian Henshaw) - photo on file.

— two adults, 9 August, Presqu'île Prov. Park, *Northumberland* and 10-15 August, Camden Lake, *Lennox and Addington* (Alan F. and Shirley J. Tregenza) - photos on file.

- two, 21-23 August, Kincardine, Bruce (William and Marlene Pace, Thomas R. Murray, Martin and Kathy Parker).
- one adult, 3-7 September, Pittock Lake, *Oxford* (James M. Holdsworth).

A banner year for the species which may reflect a general expansion eastward in the nesting range i.e. to Lake Nipigon in 1991. (A. Wormington pers. comm.). The Tregenzas did an incredible piece of sleuthing to refind the two pelicans at Camden Lake approximately 80 km by air north-east of Presqu'île the day after initially finding them at Presqu'île. To quote from their report, "After reading Ron Weir's *Birds of the Kingston Region* that they (Am. White Pelicans) had been seen there in 1986 we jumped in the car and headed to Camden Lake even though it was late in the day".

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) (7/15/2)

- 1990 — one first summer, 8 and 13 May, Point Pelee Natinal Park, *Essex* and 13 May, Wheatley, *Kent* (William J. Clark, Moss Taylor, Mitchell Temkin, Wilf Yusek) - photo on file.
- one immature, 21-22 August, Nonquon, *Durham* (Ronald G. Tozer; also found by Douglas C. Tozer).

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) North Only (4/5/1)

- 1990 — one, 24 October - 3 November, Mackenzie, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott, Thomas Dyke; found by Ruby Owen) photo on file.
- 1989 — nine, 28 October, Cloud Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Allen and Doraleen Gosling) - photos on file.
- 1986 — one, 27 October and two 28 October, Swastika, *Timiskaming* (Kenneth Dolmage) - photos on file.
- 1982 — one, 24 October, Lillabelle Lake, *Cochrane* (fide Lloyd Taman; shot by hunter) - photo on file.

Remarkably, all ten Cattle Egret records accepted by OBRC fall between 20 October and 8 November. The 1989 Cloud Bay birds were photographed standing in a bare tree!

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) (5/14/1)

- 1990 — one adult, 11-18 May, Rondeau Prov. Park, *Kent*, (P. Allen Woodliffe, James N. Flynn, Wilf Yusek) - photos on file.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) (2/12/2)

- 1990 — one adult, 21-22 September, Wildwood Lake, *Oxford* (James M. Holdsworth, William G. Lindley) - photos on file.
- one winter adult, 6 October, Dundas Marsh, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Luc S. Fazio, Jerry Guild).

Dark Ibis sp. (*Plegadis* sp.) (3/7/2)

- 1990 — one, 3 May, Oshawa, *Durham* (J. Brian Hobbs).
- one, 12-17 October, Turkey Point Marsh, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (R. Douglas McRae).
- 1989 — one, 14 October, Dundas Marsh, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Kathleen MacNamara).

When conditions permit, observers are urged to carefully examine *Plegadis ibis* as there is a distinct possibility that White-faced Ibis (*P. chihi*) will occur in Ontario.

Great White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) South only (2/18/2)

- 1990 — five *frontalis* (three adults and two immatures), 2-11 March, Port Royal, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Robert Curry, James M. Holdsworth, Ronald C. Ridout; found by William F. Smith).
- one adult, 30 September, Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* (Ronald J. Pittaway).

Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*) (0/6/1)

- 1990 — one male, 9 May, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington, Donald G. Cecile) - photo on file.

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) (3/35/3)

- 1990 — one male, 23-25 April, Oshawa, *Durham* Margaret J. Bain; found by David D. Calvert).
- one male, 16 May, Hurkett, *Thunder Bay* (Donald G. Cecile, Nicholas G. Escott).
- one male, 12-14 June, Ekwan Point, *Kenora* (Donald G. Cecile, Alan Wormington).

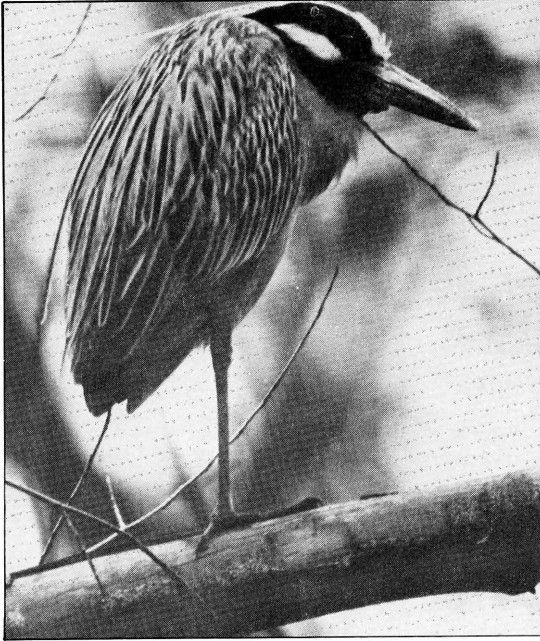


Figure 3: Adult Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Rondeau Prov. Park, Kent, 11-18 May 1990. Photo by Alan Wormington.

The Ekwam Point bird is the first record for the Hudson Bay Lowland. A single record for southern Ontario is considerably below average.

Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) South Only (0/0/1)

1990/91 — one female, 24 November - 6 January, Amherst Island and Millhaven, *Lennox and Addington* (Terry Osborne).

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) (8/11/1)

1990 — one immature, 27 September - 3 October, Nanticoke, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (H. Michael Street, Margaret J. Bain, R. Douglas McRae).

The circumstances, habitat and behaviour of this bird were very similar to the bird at Rock Point Prov. Park 19-27 September 1984, just over 40 km east of this location (Wormington 1985).

Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*) (0/0/1)

1990 — one light phase adult, 17 March, St. Clair Nat. Wildlife Area, Kent (G. Tom Hince).

And participants thought this was a bus trip led by Tom Hince to see swans! A Ferruginous Hawk wintered in adjacent Michigan in 1989/90 and, presumably the same one again in 1990/91 (Powell 1991). Elsewhere there are vagrant records from most of the American Mid-Western states and "questionable" records from a few north and central eastern states (DeSante and Pyle 1986). An account of the observation of this first accepted record for the province will appear in a later edition of *Ontario Birds*.

Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) (0/1/0)

1987 — one, 14 June, Durham, Grey (Paul D. Pratt) - audiocassette on file.

This is the first confirmed record for the province. Godfrey (1986) lists as hypothetical several records from Canada, and James (1991) cites four undocumented sight records for Ontario between 1857 and 1959. It has been recorded in all those states contiguous with Ontario (DeSante and Pyle 1986). Pratt will write an account of the remarkable circumstances of this record in *Ontario Birds*.

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) North only (0/0/1)

1990 — four, 15 September, Hearst, Cochrane (Pamela H. Sinclair, Peter W. Jones).

Although no aging of these birds was attempted, Wormington (in litt.) suggests that this was almost certainly a family group which had bred at this site rather than a group of vagrants. If so, it would be the first breeding record for northern Ontario.

Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) (0/1/1)

1990 — one adult male, 9 May, Long Point Flats, Haldimand-Norfolk (Alan Hannington, Vince Parslow, Jeffrey Sykes, Ian Richards) - photo on file.

A *deja vu* of the first provincial record here 4-9 May 1987 (see Collier and Curson 1988), complete to being first discovered by a visiting British birdwatcher!

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) (0/0/1)

1990 — one female, 26 May - 2 June, Hamilton Harbour, Hamilton-Wentworth (Kevin A. McLaughlin).

An account of this first documented record for the province appeared in *Ontario Birds* 8:82 (McLaughlin 1990).

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) South Only (*/17/3)

1990 — one, 18 April, Hillman Marsh, Essex (James Lesser).

— one, 26 April, Turkey Point, Haldimand-Norfolk (R. Douglas McRae).

— one winter adult, 23 August, Crescent Beach, Niagara (Alec Humann).

1988 — one, 3 June, Darlington Prov. Park, Durham (Alan F. and Shirley J. Tregenza).

— one, 23 July, Crescent Beach, Niagara (Alec Humann).

Documentation is not required for pre 1981 records as this species formerly nested on the sandy beaches of Lakes Ontario, Huron and Erie.

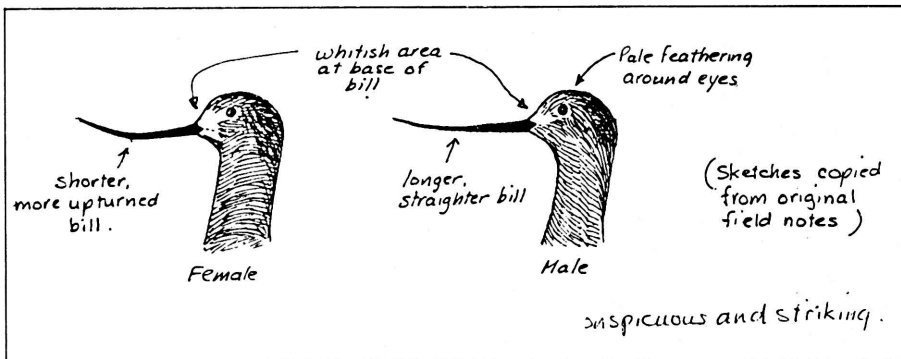


Figure 4: Adult male and female American Avocets at Wawanosh Wetlands, Sarnia, Lambton, present 24-27 May 1990. Drawings by Dennis F. Rupert.

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) (7/22/5)

1990 — one summer adult male, 25 April - 2 May, Taquanyah Cons. Area, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Alan J. Smith).

— three summer adults (one male, two females), 24-27 May, Wawanosh Wetlands Cons. Area, *Lambton* (Dennis F. Rupert).

— one summer adult male, 28 May, Hamilton Harbour, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Rob Z. Dobos).

— three summer adults, 4 June, Strathroy, *Middlesex* (Donald Graham).

— one summer adult female, 8-10 June, Port Perry, *Durham* (Michael King, Margaret J. Bain).

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*) (0/1/1)

1990 — one summer adult, 19-24 July, Casselman, *Prescott and Russell* (Rob Z. Dobos, Tim Sabo) - photo on file.

The first provincial record, as yet undocumented with OBRC, was also in late July.

Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*) North Only (2/5/1)

1990 — one, 21 May, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (John J. Barker).

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) (0/8/2)

1990 — one summer adult, 22-23 July, Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* (Brian Henshaw).

— one winter adult, 28 August - 1 September, Wawanosh Wetlands Cons. Area, *Lambton* (Malcolm P. McAlpine, Rob Z. Dobos).

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) North Only (1/3/5)

1990 — one winter adult, 30 August, Little Shagamu River mouth, *Kenora* (Alan Wormington).

— four juveniles, 5-6 September, Rainy River, *Rainy River* (Jeff Skevington).

— three winter adults (one 9-10 September; two 10 September only), Ekwan Point, *Kenora* (Alan Wormington).

— one, 12 September, Ekwan Point, *Kenora* (Alan Wormington).

As noted in the introduction, documentation will no longer be required for this species. Clearly, and hardly surprisingly, it probably occurs on the Ontario coasts of James and Hudson Bays with about the same frequency as it does in southern Ontario. Probably juveniles occur just a little later than the above Hudson Bay Lowland records indicate.

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) (3/13/2)

1990 — one juvenile, 15 September, Long Point (2 km west of), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (James M. Holdsworth).

— one juvenile, 10 December, Point Edward, *Lambton* (Dennis F. Rupert) - photos on file.

1988 — one juvenile, 30 October - 12 November, Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Roy E.C. Baker, Peter S. Burke, Kevin A. McLaughlin).

— six juveniles, 5-19 November, Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Kevin A. McLaughlin, Alvaro Jaramillo).

That 1988 was an incursion year seems beyond question; this brings the number of records accepted by the OBRC to five. The precise number of individuals sighted from Van Wagner's Beach at Hamilton was extremely difficult to determine. The single accommodating juvenile provided the best studies most Ontario birders have had of this usually frustrating species as it came in to shore to harass gulls gorged on french fries. Numerous observers also saw the six birds together and even saw them briefly joined by the "chip" bird.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) South Only (3/7/1)

1990 — one juvenile, 1 October, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Kevin A. McLaughlin; also by Malcolm P. McAlpine and Douglas Miller).

An extremely well documented record for this notoriously difficult species group.

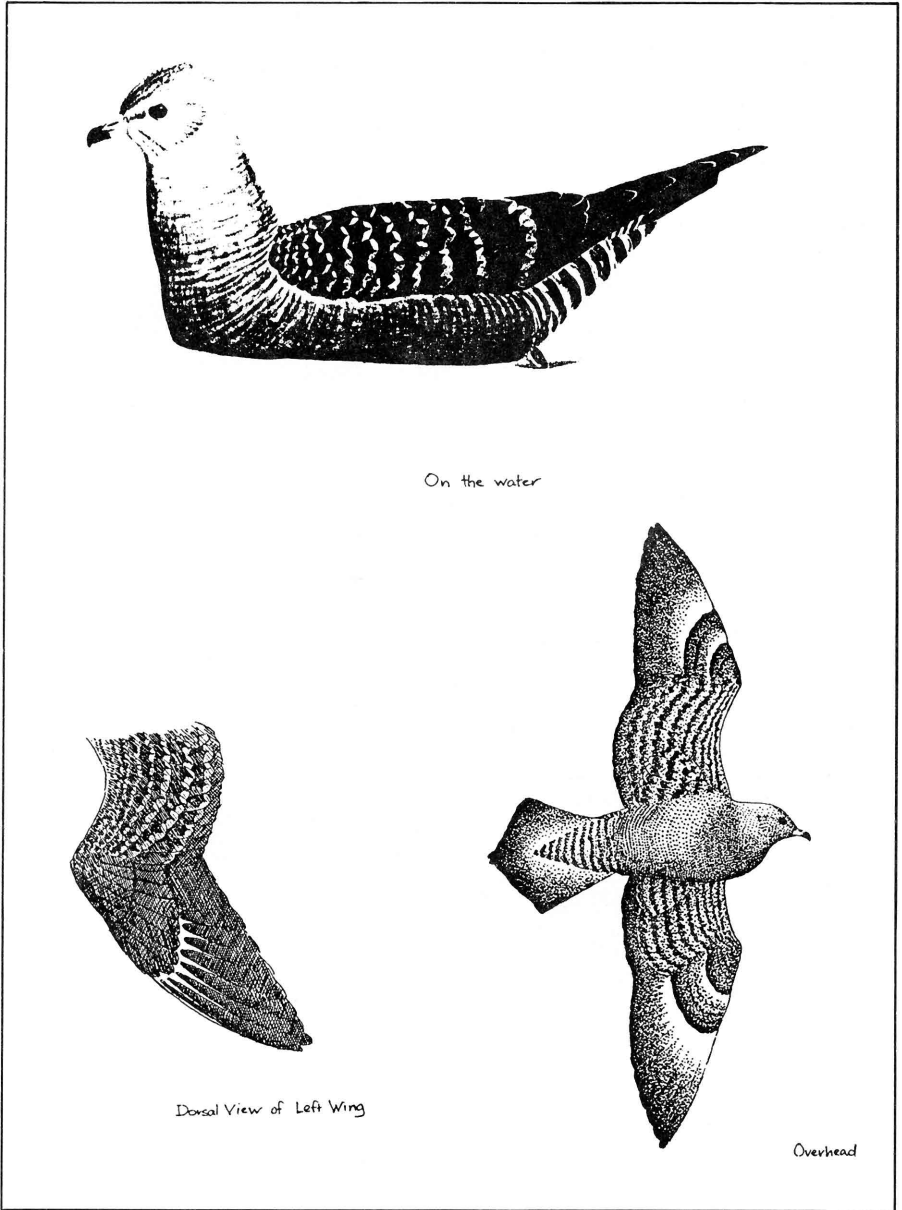


Figure 5: Juvenile Pomarine Jaeger at Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth*, present and seen by many 30 October - 12 November 1988. Drawings by *Peter J. Burke*.

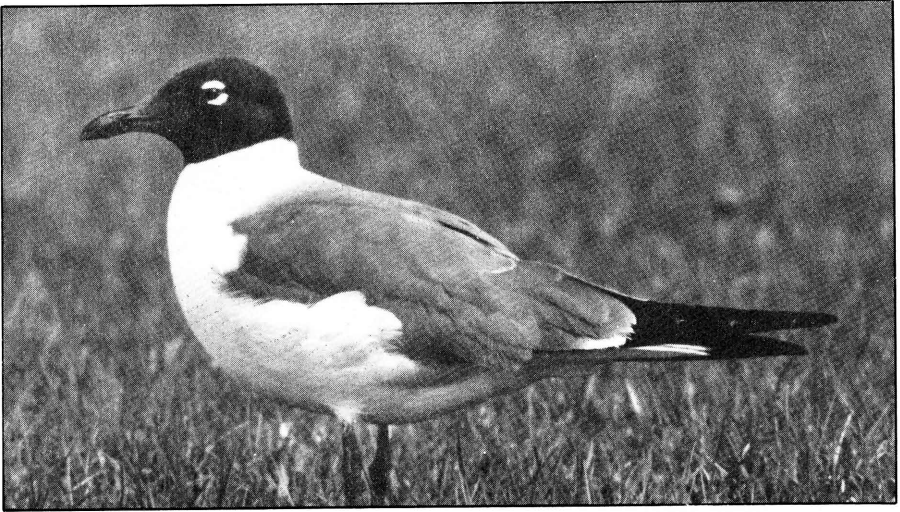


Figure 6: Adult Laughing Gull, 1-14 May 1989 at various localities on western Lake Ontario. Photo (3 May at Grimsby, *Niagara*) by Alan Wormington.

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) (14/47/5)

- 1990 — one summer adult, 11 May, Port Rowan, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Rohan A. vanTwest)
 — one summer adult, 17-18 May, Port Alma, *Kent* (John G. Keenleyside).
 — one summer adult, 9 June, Erieau, *Kent* (Rob Z. Dobos, P. Allen Woodliffe).
 — one first winter, 19 August, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Donald G. Cecile).
 — one adult, 18 September, Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Steve Dougill).
 1989 — one summer adult, 1-14 May (but not observed 4-13 May inclusive), Aldershot, *Halton* (1 May), Grimsby, *Niagara*, and Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (3 May), and Fifty Point Cons. Area, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (14 May) (Kevin A. McLaughlin, Alan Wormington) - photo on file.
 1987 — one juvenile, 22 August, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
 — one juvenile, 28 August, Burlington Beach, *Halton* (Robert Curry).
 1986 — one summer adult, 1-3 May, Wheatley Harbour (1 May), Marentette Beach (2 May) and Point Pelee Nat. Park (2-3 May), *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
 1971 — three adults, 27 May, Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Monica Connolly, A. Ralph Gibson, David J.T. Hussell et al).

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*) (3/5/2)

- 1990/91 — one *brachyrhynchus* winter adult, 14 December 1990 - 12 February 1991, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Robert Yukich, Gordon Bellerby, John R. Carley, James P. Coey, Robert Curry, Ronald J. Pittaway) - photo on file.
 1990 — one adult, 15 February, Bronte Harbour, *Halton* (Mark W. Jennings, Robert Curry, John Olmsted) - photos on file.

The Bronte bird found in a vicious storm with a flock of spring arrival Ring-billed Gulls had characteristics of the nominate *canus* subspecies but, unfortunately, the diagnostic primary pattern was not seen. The Toronto bird, while often difficult to find, was seen by many over the winter (the only winter record for Ontario) and superbly documented by multiple contributors.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*) (0/6/1)

1990 — one summer adult, 2 May, Moosonee, *Cochrane* (Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

Excellent photographs accompany this first for northern Ontario at the Moosonee dump the day after the fourth Lesser Black-backed Gull for the North!

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) North Only (0/3/1)

1990 — one summer adult, 1 May, Moosonee, *Cochrane* (Alan Wormington).

Ross' Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) (0/1/1)

1990 — one winter adult, 11 December, Turkey Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (R. Douglas McRae, William F. Smith) - photos on file

It only seems fitting that the custodian of the Churchill birds for several years should find the first for the South. Over one hundred birders were frustrated later in the day and the next morning when the bird failed to reappear. McRae (1991: 9-10) has written an article for *Ontario Birds* on this exciting find.

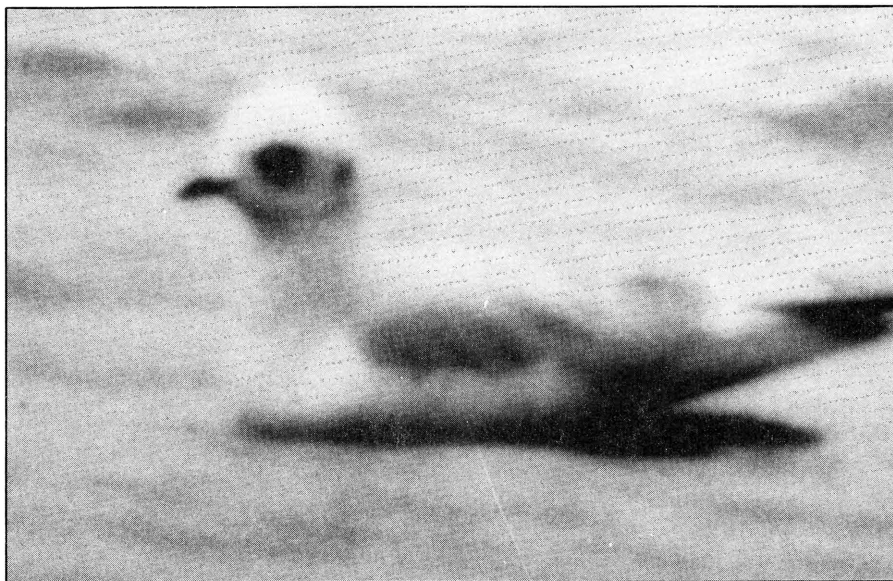


Figure 7: Winter adult Ross' Gull at Turkey Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk*, 11 December 1990. Photo by *William F. Smith*.

Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) (15/3/1)

1990 — one first winter, 22 November, Presqu'île Prov. Park, *Northumberland* (Donald Shanahan).

Dovekie (*Alle alle*) (0/1/0)

1988 — one adult female, 23 October, Port Weller Harbour, *Niagara* (J. Butler)
- specimen (skin) in ROM: #154509.

Razorbill (*Alca torda*) (0/4/0)

1984 — one, 29 November, Wolfe Island, *Frontenac* - photo on file of bird shot by unknown hunter.

Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*) (2/2/0)

1988 — one, 26 October - 5 November, Wabigoon, Kenora (Janette and Herman Johnson) - photo on file.

A small colour print taken with a non telephoto lens from inside a kitchen window provides part of the supporting evidence for this interesting record.

Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) (*/*/1)

1990 — one male, 26 April, Baldwin, York (James R. Macey; found by Paul Harpley).

This will serve as a reminder that the Committee now requests documentation on the species.

Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*) (0/0/1)

1990 — one adult male, 25-26 May, Rideau Ferry (Coutt's Bay), Lanark (Nora M. Mansfield, N. Ronald Beacock; found by Dr. and Mrs. A.A. Sterns).

Well documented. DeSante and Pyle (1986) indicate no Canadian records east of Saskatchewan and a vagrant record from Massachusetts.

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) (2/5/1)

1990 — one adult male, 19-25 August, Alton, Peel (Terry Osborne, Wilf Yusek) - photos on file.

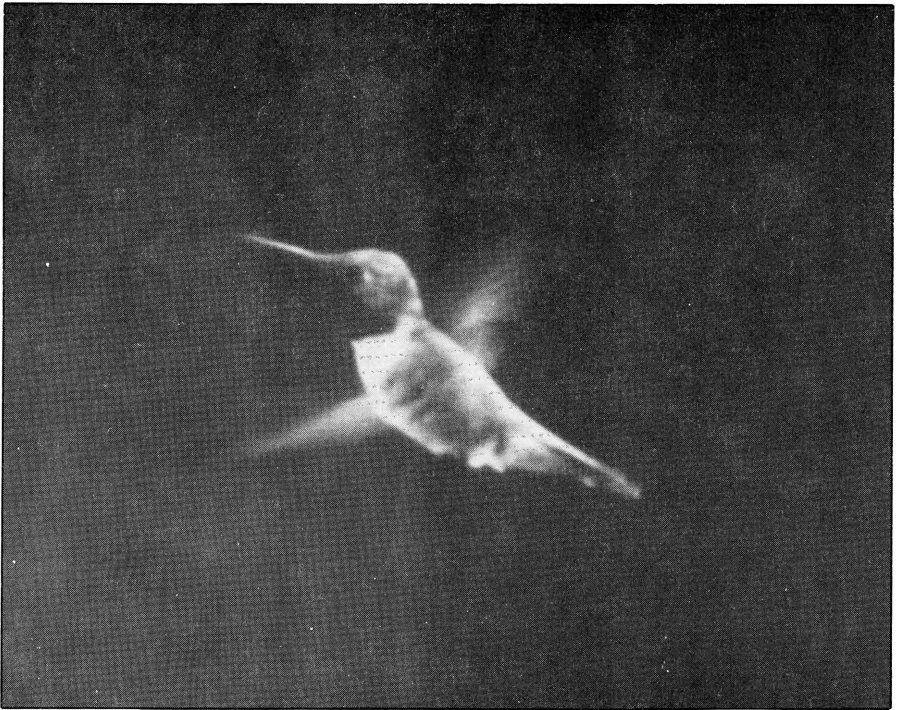


Figure 8: Adult male Rufous Hummingbird, Alton, Peel, present 19-25 August 1990.
Photo by Wilf Yusek.

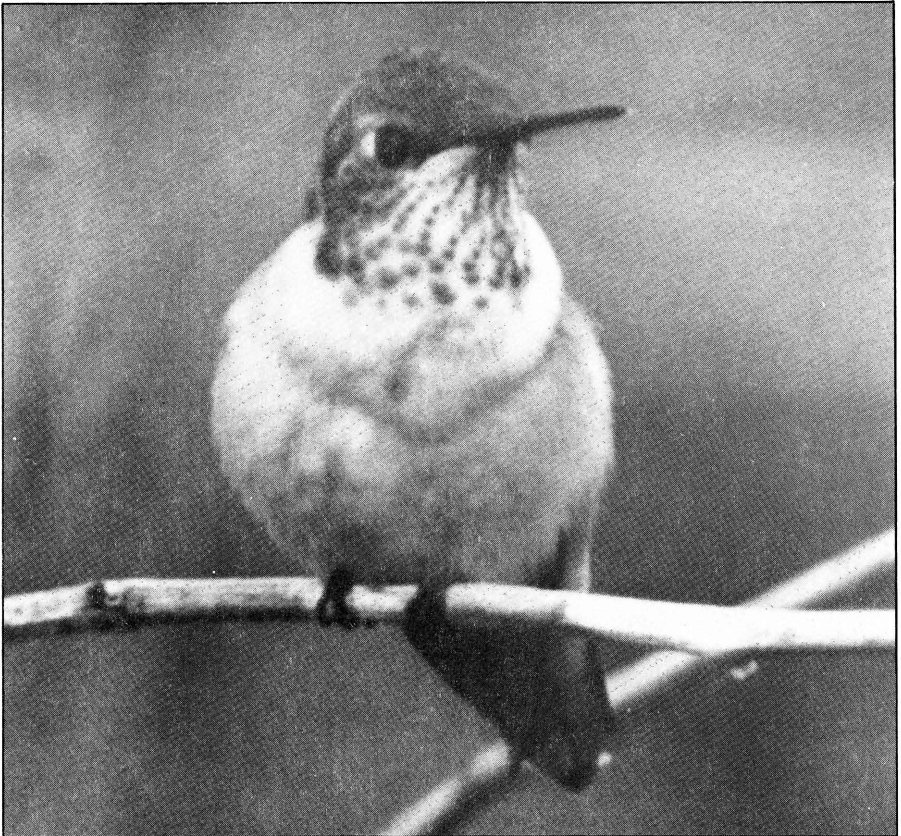


Figure 9: Immature male *Selasphorus sp.* hummingbird, Grimsby Beach, *Niagara*, present from about 1 October - 10 December 1990. Photo (1 December) by James N. Flynn.

Hummingbird sp. (*Selasphorus sp.*) (0/2/1)

1990 — one immature male, circa 1 October - 10 December, Grimsby Beach, *Niagara* (Robert Curry, George Naylor, James N. Flynn; found by Patricia Gilbert) - photos on file.

Patricia and Stephen Gilbert ministered to this bird which they discovered at their feeder and flowers. Moreover, they provided coffee and inspiration to the perhaps hundreds of visiting birders and fended off less than amused neighbours. Unfortunately, even Jim Flynn's excellent photos fail to reveal the diagnostic shape of rectrix number two. Amazingly, this is not the latest *Selasphorus* for Ontario as readers will remember the Battersea Rufous which lasted until captured on 19 December 1987 (Wormington and Curry 1990).

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) North Only (0/4/1)

1990/91 — one male, 4 November - 8 May, Paipoonge Township, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott; found by Alice Venrick) - photo on file.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) (8/30/5)

1990 — one, 4 June, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Arun K. Bose).

— one, 14 June, Marathon, *Thunder Bay* (Stanley V. Phippen).

— one, 28 August, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Roger Frost).

— one, 7 September, Oxtongue Lake, *Haliburton* (R. Dan Strickland).

— one, 8 September, Long Point (Courtright Ridge), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Steven Dougill, Nicholas Robinson).

1988 — one immature, 25 August, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Alvaro Jaramillo).

1984 — one, 9-10 June, Great Duck Island, *Manitoulin* (Ronald R. Tasker).

1981 — one, 26 June, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (David J.T. Hussell, M. Schade, Roy C. Smith).

Western/Cassin's Kingbird sp. (*Tyrannus verticalis/vociferans*) (0/1/0)

1988 — one, 24 August, Deep River, *Renfrew* (Philip Walker, William H. Walker).

This bird was well described and the observers particularly noted that no white outer retrices could be seen despite a concerted effort. This and other plumage characters meant that members could not, with certainty, eliminate the possibility of Cassin's Kingbird.

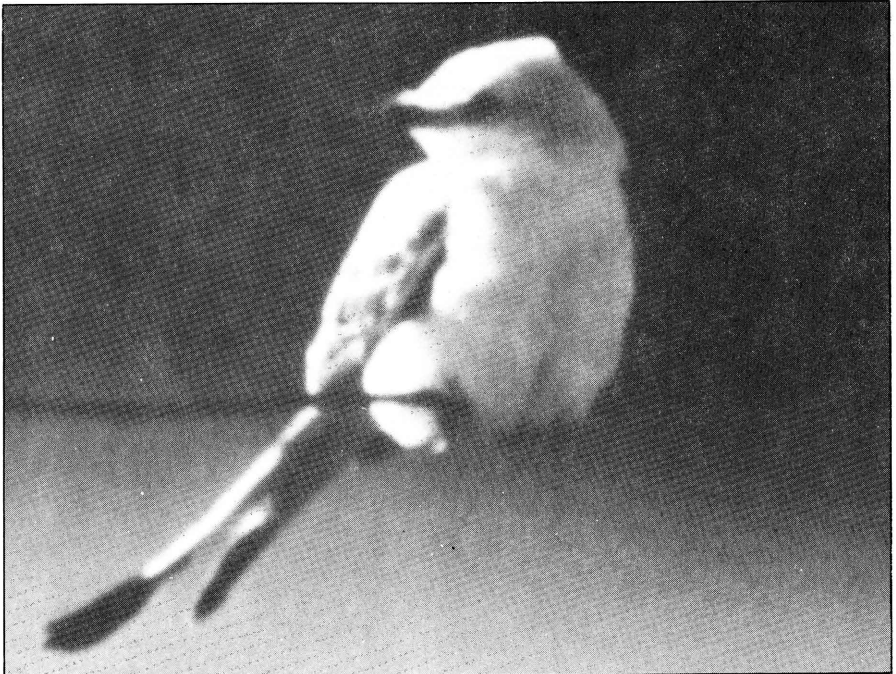


Figure 10: Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 13 June 1990 (Rainy River) where photographed by *Wilf Yusek* and 15 June 1990, Harris Hill, *Rainy River*.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) (3/14/2)

1990 — one, 20 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Donald G. Cecile, James N. Flynn; found by Marika Ainley, Kyra Emo and John Lightener) - photo on file.

— one, 13 June (Rainy River) and 15 June (Harris Hill), *Rainy River* (Philip Walker, Wilf Yusek; also found by Denys Gardiner) - photo on file.

Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) North Only (0/2/1)

1990 — one, 15 November - 23 December, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (Tom J. Nash) - photos on file.

1988/89 — one, 15 December - 15 February, New Liskeard, *Timiskaming* (Robert Beach) - photo on file.

With the first for the North in just 1988 (Wormington and Curry 1990: 20-22), this southern species is apparently attempting a beachhead.

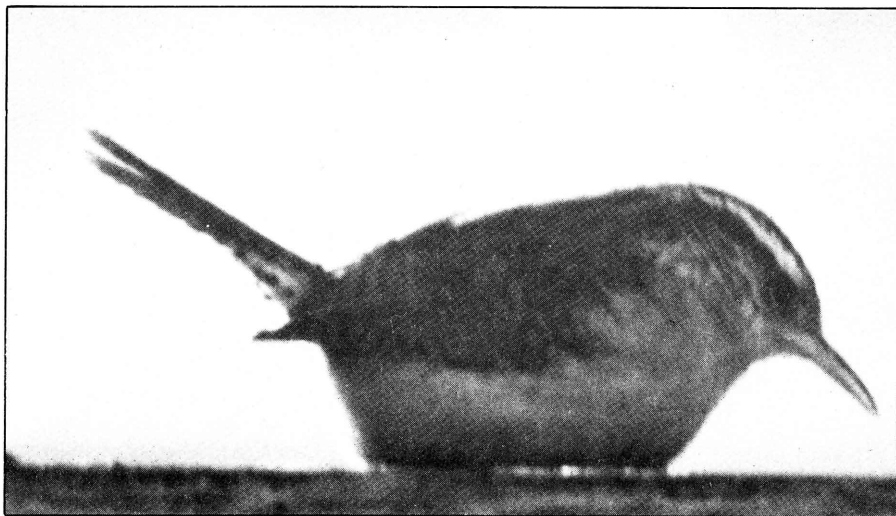


Figure 11: Carolina Wren, Atikokan, *Rainy River*, present 15 November - 23 December 1990. Photo by *Tom Nash*.

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) (0/8/0)

1981 — one, 7 April, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Christopher M. Lemieux, Peter Verburg).

This bird was banded. A tail feather was attached to the LPBO journal page for that day and a photocopy of it is in our files.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliioptila caerulea*) North Only (2/2/3)

1990 - one male, 29 April, Moosonee, *Cochrane* (Alan Wormington).

— one male, 2 June, Little Shagamu River mouth, *Kenora* (Alan Wormington, Nabil H. Khairallah).

— one male, 1-4 June, Rainy River mouth, *Rainy River* (Mark A. Kubisz).

At 55° 46' N lat on the shore of Hudson Bay, the Little Shagamu bird is the northernmost record for this species in North America.

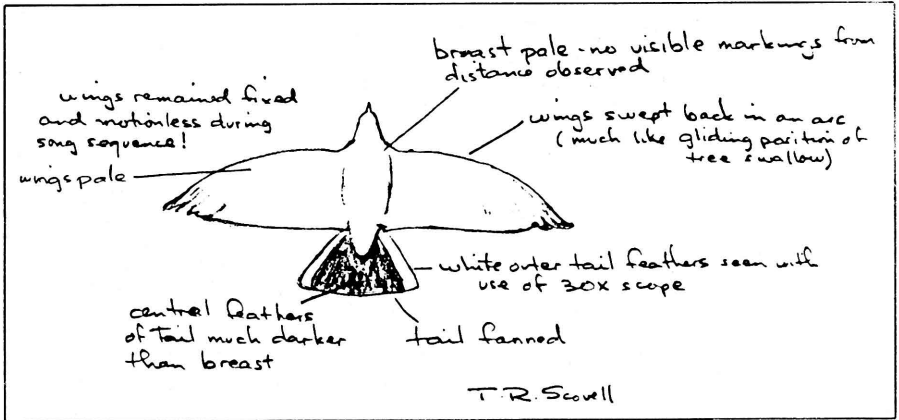


Figure 14: Sprague's Pipit at Rainy River, Rainy River, 2-12 June 1990.
Drawing by T. Ron Scovell.

Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*) (0/0/1)

1990 — one territorial male, 2-12 June, Rainy River, Rainy River (Mark A Kubisz, T. Ronald Scovell)
- audiotape on file.

This bird here in July 1980 was also a displaying male. It is possible that this species may occasionally breed at Rainy River.

Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*)

1984 — breeding pair and two fledged young, 18 July, Winisk River (54° 32' N on river), Kenora (George Fairfield) - photos on file.

Presumably this species breeds regularly in remote northwestern Ontario. The details of this record have been published by Cadman (1987).

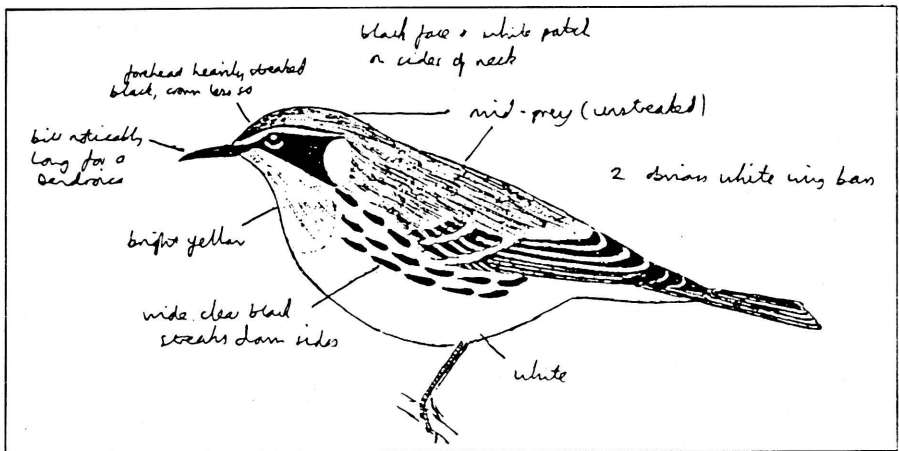


Figure 15: Male Yellow-throated Warbler *albiflora* at Tip of Long Point, Haldimand-Norfolk, 28 April 1990. Drawing by Jon Curson.

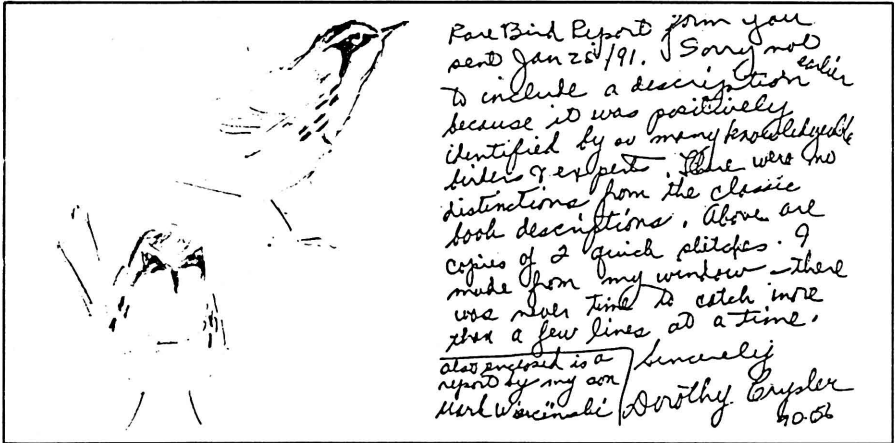


Figure 16: Male Yellow-throated Warbler at Heathcote, Grey, 26 October - 26 December 1990. Drawings by Dorothy Crysler.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) North Only (0/3/1)

1990 — one, 28 September, Moose River mouth, Cochrane (Alan Wormington, Kevin A. McLaughlin; also found by Barbara N. Charlton, Rob Z. Dobos and John L. Olmsted).

This is the northernmost Ontario bird to date and the first for the Hudson Bay Lowland.

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) (17/35/4)

1990 — one *albiflora* male, 28 April, Long Point Tip, Haldimand-Norfolk (Jon Curson).

— one male, 14-20 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, Essex (Onik Arian, William A. Martin).

— one male, 26 October - 26 December, Heathcote, Grey (Dorothy Crysler, Mark Wiercinski).

— one, 22 December, Leamington, Essex (Martin Blagdurn).

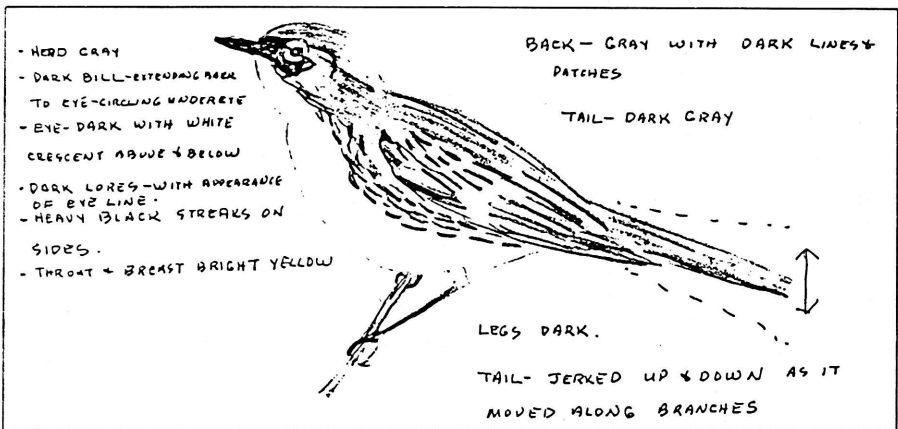


Figure 17: Male Kirtland's Warbler at Port Hope, Northumberland, 31 May 1990. Drawing by E.R. McDonald.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) (7/2/2)

1990 — one male, 26 May, Cabot Head, *Bruce* (Chris Michener; also found by Gordon B. Cameron, Audrey Heagy) - photo on file.

— one male, 31 May, Port Hope, *Northumberland* (Alice K. Sculthorpe, E.R. McDonald; also first found by C. Ian P. Tate) - photos on file.

1961 — one male, 17 June, Pointe au Baril, *Parry Sound* (collector unidentified); photos of spec. on file and specimen (skeleton) in ROM: #91663.

The 1990 birds are interestingly late in the spring migration. Were they wandering males looking for new colonization opportunities?

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) North Only (1/2/1)

1990 — one immature male, 28 April - 11 May, Red Rock, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington, Donald G. Cecile) - photos on file.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) (2/5/1)

1990 — one adult female or immature, 16 September, *Thunder Bay*, *Thunder Bay* (Jeffrey Skevington; also found by Angela Goering).



Figure 18: Immature male Summer Tanager, 28 April - 11 May 1990 at Red Rock, *Thunder Bay*. Photo (10 May) by Alan Wormington.

Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) North Only (1/10/3)

1990/91 — one female, 17 November - 8 January, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (David H. Elder; found by Jerry Zajac).

1990 — two males, 17 November, Boston Creek, *Timiskaming* (fide Lloyd Taman).

— one female, 17 November, Silver Islet, *Thunder Bay* (Jeffrey Skevington; found by Walter S. Zarowski).

1989 — one female, 17 October - 2 December, Swastika, *Timiskaming* (Ann and Ralph Gaston, Lloyd Taman) - videotape on file.

— two, male and female, 30 October - 6 November, Matachewan, *Timiskaming* (Lloyd Taman; found by Harold King).

The four fall 1990 birds all appeared on 17 November possibly indicating a widespread movement.

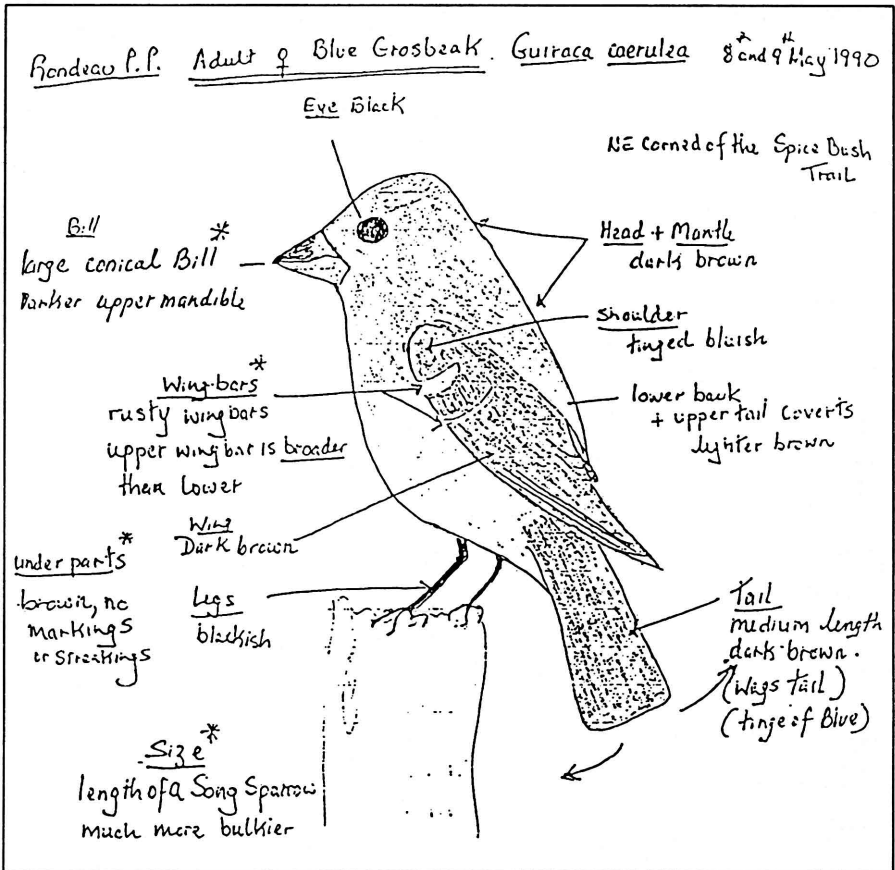


Figure 19: Adult female Blue Grosbeak at Rondeau Provincial Park, Kent, present 7-10 May 1990. Drawing by Rohan van Twest.

Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*) (7/12/2)

1990 — one female, 7-10 May, Rondeau Prov. Park, Kent (Rohan A. van Twest, P. Allen Woodliffe).

— one adult male, 27 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, Essex (Donna M. Kuchapsky).

1989 — one adult male, nominate *caerulea*, 21 May, Rosspport, Thunder Bay (Colleen Keaney).

Specimen (skin) in ROM: #156150.

The Rosspport bird, found dead on a porch, is the first for northern Ontario. It is the eastern *G. c. caerulea* by plumage (R.D. James pers. comm.)

Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) North Only (2/3/2)

1990 — one male, 22-24 October, Matachewan, Timiskaming (Lloyd and Olga Taman).

— one "western" female, 10-17 November, Silver Islet, Thunder Bay (Jeffrey Skevington).

The features of the Silver Islet bird suggest that, while it was of a western race, it was not positively, *arcticus*, the most likely subspecies.

Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassinii*) (1/4/2)

1990 — one singing male, 17 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Margaret J. Bain).

— one immature, 17 October, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington) - photo on file.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) (4/23/2)

1990 — one adult, 10 September, Bright's Grove, *Lambton* (Alfred H. Rider, Dennis F. Rupert) photos on file.

— one immature, 25 October - 1 November, Port Stanley, *Elgin* (Malcolm P. McAlpine, Kirk Zufelt).

1984 — one adult, 22-29 October, Matachewan, *Timiskaming* (Lloyd and Olga Taman).

1976 — one, 10 May, Woodstock, *Oxford* (James M. Holdsworth).



Figure 20: Adult male Lark Bunting at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*, 4 October 1990. Photo by *G. Tom Hince*.

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) (3/6/3)

1990 — one male, 13-14 June, Tilbury, *Essex* (P. Allen Woodliffe; found by Peter R. Satterly).

— one adult male, 4 October, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Johanne Ranger, G. Tom Hince) - photo on file.

— one female, 13-14 October, Winona, *Niagara* (Kevin A. McLaughlin, George Naylor, Robert Curry).

1977 — one male, 8 May, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Claire Button).

A banner year as indicated by only six over the past nine years and three in 1990.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) (0/5/0)

1988 — one immature, 20 October, Long Point Prov. Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (James M. Holdsworth, William G. Lindley) - photos on file.

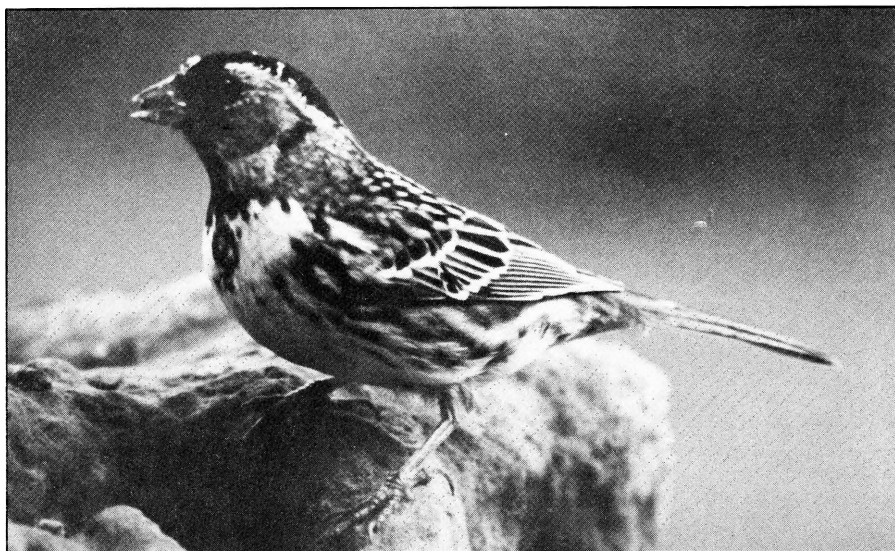


Figure 21: Harris' Sparrow at Wallaceburg, Kent, 14-16 May 1990.
Photo by James N. Flynn.

Harris' Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) South Only (3/11/0)

1990 — one adult, 14-16 May, Wallaceburg, Kent (James N. Flynn; at Tom Chatterton feeder) - photos on file.

1989/90 — one immature, 15 December - 25 March, Thornbury, Grey (George K. Peck).

1989 — one immature, 14 October, Corner Marsh, Durham (Mark A. Kubisz) - photos on file.

1983 — nest four eggs, 4 July and pair with fledged young, 25 July, Fort Severn, Kenora (Tim and Dorris Nowicki, Robert and Terri Thobaden).

An account of this first nest is found in Cadman (1987).

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)

1985 — two fledged young, 20 July, West Pen Island, Kenora (Gregory Poole).

Another first breeding record found as a result of atlasing (Cadman et al 1987). This is far south of the nearest nesting on the Hudson Bay coast as there are no Manitoba nestings (R. D. McRae pers. comm.).

Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte arctoa*) (0/0/1)

1990 — one *littoralis*, 8-13 December, Pine Bay, Thunder Bay, (Sharon and Robert Illingworth, Nicholas G. Escott) - photos on file.

Cassin's Finch (*Carpodacus cassinii*) (0/0/1)

1990 — one, 13 August, Long Point Tip, Haldimand-Norfolk (Steven Dougill).

Trapped and carefully measured; it had no pink coloration and was probably an immature male. The AOU Checklist (1983) describes the range as no farther east than southeastern Montana and casual or irregular east to western Kansas, and DeSante and Pyle (1986) records indicate that this is the easternmost record in North America. This is an outstanding first for the province and an intriguingly early date.



Figure 22: Rosy Finch (*L. l. littoralis*) at Pine Bay, Thunder Bay, 8-13 December 1990.
Photo by Nicholas G. Escott.

Unaccepted Records:

Identification accepted, origin questionable

Records in this category are those considered by the committee to be escaped or released from captivity. Species or individual records placed here could be accepted at a later date if circumstances come to light which bear on them or a pattern of occurrences suggests wild (rather than captive) origin.

Greater White-fronted Goose

1990 — one, 15-19 May, Harrow, Essex (Anne Barbour) - photos on file.

This bird joined a few clipped waterfowl in a farm pond. This, in combination with the late date which lies outside the recorded migration period in southern Ontario led to the present decision.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

1990 — one adult male, 2-5 January, Sombra (2-3 January), Corunna (4 January) and Sarnia (5 January), Lambton (P. Allen Woodliffe).

All other records of this species have been accepted as wild by the committee. However, correspondence from James Granlund, secretary of the Michigan Bird Records Committee, indicated that a Tufted Duck and a few other "exotic" waterfowl such as Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*) and Eurasian Wigeon spent part of the previous winter near this site. The prudent course of action, then, is to regard this individual as a probable escape.

Black-billed Magpie (*Pica pica*) South Only

1990 — one, 11 April, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Bev Collier, R. Douglas McRae)

This was (and is) a particularly difficult record to decide on. It was actively moving at a known migration "hotspot" in the correct season. However, as there does not seem to have been an irruption of the species in the previous winter the committee has taken this conservative decision.

Unaccepted Records: Identification uncertain

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

1990 — Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*), two, circa 15 June, Cormac, *Renfrew*.

— Eurasian Wigeon, one, 26 September, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay*.

— Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), one, 14 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.

— Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), one, 27 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.

— Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*), one, 16 October, Beachville, *Oxford*.

— Gyrfalcon, one, 19 October, Cranberry Marsh, *Durham*.

— Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), one, 7 October, Dog Lake, *Thunder Bay*.

— Townsend's Solitaire, one, 2 May, Patten River, *Cochrane*.

— Western Tanager, one, 17 May, Port Hope, *Northumberland*.

— Blue Grosbeak, one, 9 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.

— Blue Grosbeak, one, 11 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.

— Blue Grosbeak, one, 16 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.

— Blue Grosbeak, one, 17 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.

— Lark Bunting, one male, 17 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.

— Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*), one, 13 October, Etobicoke, *Metropolitan Toronto*.

1989 — Swainson's Hawk, one, 21 April, Beamer Cons. Area, *Niagara*.

— Bell's Vireo (*Vireo billii*), one, 14 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.

— Blue Grosbeak, one, 6 August, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.

1987 — Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax wrightii*), one, 12 August, Woodstock, *Oxford*.

1984 — House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), one, 1-4 May, Matachewan, *Timiskaming*.

1977 — Gyrfalcon, one, 2 September, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.

1970 — Laughing Gull, one, 15 June, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.

Corrections/Updates to Previous OBRC Reports

1989 Report (*Ontario Birds* 8:4-33):

— under Western Grebe (1989 at Rainy River mouth): add - "photo on file".

— under Razorbill (1989 at Lake Dore): add "Chris Michener" who discovered the bird and submitted a report.

Acknowledgements

The OBRC would like to thank all those observers who took the time and care to write and submit reports and, without whom, of course, this report could not exist. We especially thank those who submitted photographs and drawings. In addition to those which enhance this report, many excellent photos and drawings now reside in the archives at the ROM.

Among those who obtained reports which were not their own, provided information on records, or who provided expert opinion on difficult identifications are Margaret J. Bain, Gordon Bellerby, William C. D'Anna, Rob Z. Dobos, Nicholas G. Escott, James Granlund, Brian Henshaw, Harry Kerr, Stephen M. LaForest, Anthony Lang, Curtis A. Marantz, Terry Osborne, Ronald J. Pittaway, Gordon Pringle, Peter Pyle, J. Van Remsen Jr., Lynne Richardson, Roy C. Smith, Ross C. Snider,

Richard D. Tafel, Lloyd Taman, Rohan A. van Twest, P. Allen Woodliffe, and Brian K. Wyatt.

Ron D. Weir deserves thanks for providing, at the end of each *American Birds* reporting season, a list of all those observed species requiring OBRC documentation along with their finders.

In addition to their regular voting duties, Doug McRae and George Wallace were extremely helpful to this writer in obtaining records, suggesting species experts for consultation and providing status information on extreme rarities.

I thank the 1990 Committee members and Alan Wormington for their comments on an earlier draft of this report.

Once again we thank Robert G. Finlayson and James N. Flynn for their photographic services in making slides and colour prints printer-ready.

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Evidence of Pair Bonding Between Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) and American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)

by
Beth Jefferson

Since 1985, a single Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) has frequently been observed approximately 145 km south of its usual range, in Etobicoke, Metropolitan Toronto, Ontario (43° 36' N, 79° 30' W), in the area of the former Lake Shore Psychiatric Hospital, generally from September to June. It is believed that it is surviving by killing Rock Doves (*Columba livia*). Two nests were built by this bird during the spring of 1987. At that time there was no sign of a mate (Jefferson 1989).

Many observations during 1990 indicate that it has now paired with an American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). Because crows commonly chase ravens (Bent 1946), this unusual and rare occurrence is worth documenting.

On 5 April 1990, Mike DeLorey (pers. comm.) observed a raven circling with a crow in the Etobicoke Creek Valley, approximately 3-4 km ("as the crow flies") northwest of the hospital grounds. No harassment was involved. The raven would often return to a perch in a tree where it would sit for a while, then fly out and circle on the outside of the crow.

Cora McEvoy and I observed a raven on 8 May 1990, sitting on one of the nests illustrated in the above mentioned article — the one on the right (east). Only the tail of the raven was visible. The size of the nest (approximately 60 cm across and 45

cm high) has increased since the 1987 photograph, so that it is now larger than the one on the left.

Approximately ten minutes after the raven had been observed on the nest, it flew south to the edge of the lake, picked up a piece of what appeared to be white tissue (or plastic garbage), shredded it with its beak and flew back to the nest with it. The tail of the raven was observed sticking out of the nest when we left 40 minutes later.

On 9 May 1990, about 250 m northeast of these nests, a group consisting of C. McEvoy, J. Hooey, and B. Wilkinson, and the author, observed a raven fly into a Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*) beside a crow. In the raven's feet was what appeared to be a freshly killed animal, about the size of a Rock Dove. While on the branch the raven continued holding the carcass, tearing it apart with its beak and eating. The raven then moved a few centimetres closer to the crow (Figure 1), fed the crow and tried to mount it (observed by McEvoy, Hooey, and Wilkinson, while the author was attempting to photograph the pair). We were standing around the tree about 5 m away and the raven and crow were on a branch 2 m above the ground. The raven then quickly flew off to the east; the crow moved to its right to get the "left-overs" to eat, then flew off in the same direction as the raven.



Figure 1: Common Raven (left) and Common Crow (right) at former Lake Shore Psychiatric Hospital, Toronto on 9 May 1990. Photo by *Beth Jefferson*.

Don McClement and I observed a raven and crow fly into a tree on Fifth Street, just north of Lake Shore Blvd., approximately 1.25 km northeast of the nest site, on 19 June 1990. They remained there for more than ten minutes. Foliage and private property prevented accurate observation of behaviour.

On 25 June 1990, D. McClement (pers. comm.) watched a raven and a crow engaging in mutual or allopreening, at the hospital grounds, for a considerable period of time, slowly moving their bills along the top and sides of each other's heads and down the necks.

On 3 August 1990, Helen Smith observed a raven and crow on the grass in the Old Mill area, approximately 9 km northeast of the forementioned nests.

During the OFO Outing, Sunday,

21 October 1990, lead by Ron Scovell and Alvaro Jaramillo, a number of members, including the author, watched a flock of 8-10 crows and the raven flying west along the shoreline of the former Lake Shore Psychiatric Hospital grounds. The raven peeled off from the flock, alternately flying, wheeling and gliding with wings tucked in, to the northeast where it was then observed for several minutes sitting on a T.V. antennae beside a crow, doing its crow call. This could have been a flight display from the raven.

At approximately 1600 h, on 10 November 1990, hoarse cawing drew my attention to a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) and the raven that had landed in the top of a bare eastern cottonwood tree (*Populus deltoides*) outside my apartment windows in Etobicoke, approximately

30 metres from the Lake. The owl remained and the raven flew out of my sight. A couple of minutes later the owl flew, closely followed by both the raven and a crow to another tree, a silver maple (*Acer succharinum*) which had more foliage remaining, on the southwest side of the building. The owl landed about a metre below the crown of the tree and the raven 30 cm above it, calling occasionally. The raven proceeded to break off several small twigs with leaves and drop them on the owl. Its aim was poor and often these twigs missed the target. At this point I could not see the crow. A few minutes later the owl moved farther west, followed by the raven that was virtually landing on its back in its pursuit. My visibility was quickly obstructed by trees, however, so that the position of the crow could not be ascertained. Although using twigs as tools to attack is an unusual form of corvid behaviour to me, Kilham (1989) cites a number of incidents of ravens dropping objects like stones on intruders near their nests.

Again on 26 January 1991, I saw the raven and crow together on the new landfill adjacent to the hospital grounds, Col. Samuel Bois Smith Park, then flying west along the shoreline, the crow following the raven.

An additional sighting of pairing behaviour between the raven and crow was observed 7 March 1991, but this time two crows were involved, following the raven. They were circling around together, back and forth to and from the trees, for at least five minutes, in the vicinity of the previously described nest at the Lake Shore Psychiatric Hospital grounds (D. McClement, pers.

comm.). More recently — April and May 1991 — the raven has been observed carrying branches north across Lake Shore Blvd. at Twentieth St. (B. Wilkinson, D. McClement, pers. comms.). The raven has been seen south of this without the crow on the hospital grounds and the new lakefill several times since then, but not using the old nests, in which Rock Doves have taken up domicile. On 17 May 1991, close to the buildings, M. DeLorey and the author closely watched the raven eating what on later inspection turned out to be a nestling, and then fly off, being chased by Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) after it had consumed all but the head, wings and intestines of said nestling. At this time, we were able to admire close at hand, the silvery grey cast to the raven's black wing feathers, both on the top and bottom, giving it a two-tone colour similar to that of a Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*).

Both sexes of crow take an active part in nest building. Both sexes of ravens also contribute to the building of the nest, but in any particular pair either the male or female may do more work at some or all stages than the other. Both sexes of crow may help incubate (Bent 1946; Goodwin 1976). If a crow had been sitting on the particular nest described above, in the spring of 1990, it would have been impossible to have seen it. With ravens, the male is not reported to incubate but only covers the eggs when the female leaves the nest. In corvids, the male feeds the female during incubation and the female sometimes leaves the nest to be fed by the male nearby (Bent 1946; Goodwin 1976). The raven was seen offering food to the crow and trying

to mount the crow, so that it is likely to be a male (or a very oddly behaving female raven).

In Britian, three reports of hybridization of *C. corax* X *C. corone* (Carrion Crow) are cited in Gray (1958). Is it possible for hybridization to occur from the interspecies pairing of *C. brachyrhynchos* and *C. corvus*? If so what characteristics would be passed on to the next generation?

Acknowledgements

I greatly appreciate the many helpful comments of Clive E. Goodwin in reviewing this paper, who added the following interesting sideline: "On 7 January 1979, Arnold Dawe and I saw a raven being chased by a flock of crows in Coronation Park, Oakville!". Dr. James R. Rising, University of Toronto, Dept. of Zoology has been most helpful in the research of this article. Alvaro Jaramillo also reviewed this paper,

speculating on possible reasons for the unusual behaviour observed: "I don't know how these species pair, i.e. what displays or behaviour do they need to do to attract a mate. Something that may be significant is vocalization, and that this raven mimics the call of crows. Could this have led to its acceptance by the crow?"

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Recognizable Forms

Checklist of Recognizable Ontario Bird Forms

by
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The purpose of this checklist is to stimulate interest among field ornithologists in the large number of recognizable bird forms in Ontario. The term "recognizable form" is used here to include subspecies (races), intergrades, morphs (phases), variants, and well-known hybrids which are potentially identifiable in the field. Most birders do not report or document these forms because they are not full species, and therefore they go largely unnoticed despite the fact that they are distinct morphological entities. In Britain and California, birders consider rare subspecies and morphs as significant records. As identification skills increase, birders look for more challenges, and what better way than looking for subtle and often not so subtle variations in plumage, soft part colour, and structure. This aspect of birding is also a lot of fun, and adds to our knowledge of birds. Most of the forms in the checklist can be found in Godfrey (1986), James (1991), and the National Geographic Society Guide (Scott 1987). In future issues of *Ontario Birds*, I will be discussing the identification, nomenclature, and taxonomy of the forms on the checklist. In the meantime, please contact me for more information on any of the forms listed here.

Researching and compiling the checklist was a very rewarding

experience. I struggled with various concepts, what to include, how to name the forms, and the format to use. There were few rules to guide me. I had the help of the many people listed in the Acknowledgements. In the end, I had to make some difficult choices or else the checklist would never have been published. I hope the checklist is welcomed by birders. Be sure to let me know what you think of it; I encourage your comments and suggestions for revisions and improvements.

The following definitions will serve to explain the terminology of the checklist:

Names: The order and English species names, and the scientific names of subspecies follow Godfrey (1986) and James (1991), with minor exceptions. The English names of subspecies, morphs, variants and hybrids came from many sources. Where a good name was apparently lacking, I attempted to provide a descriptive one.

Subspecies or Race: Subspecies is the formal name for geographical race. The terms are interchangeable. Subspecies are recognized taxonomic units, and have formal, Latin scientific names, whereas morphs and variants do not. For example, the Inland race of the Short-billed Dowitcher is *Limnodromus griseus hendersoni*. The third part of the

is given an English name followed by its scientific name in italics. In the few cases where a form consists of two or more very similar races, the form is given a group name of one of the races. For example, Slate-coloured races of the Dark-eyed Junco are in the *hyemalis* group. If a race has more than one morph, the name of the morph is listed ahead of the subspecific name. An astrisk (*) beside a subspecies name means the race, or morph of that race, has not been reported in Ontario to my knowledge, but is listed because it may occur and should be looked for.

Intergrade: This term is used to describe the crosses and intermediate populations produced by the interbreeding between subspecies. In the checklist, intergrades are identified by an "X" sign between the races. For example, Eastern X Inland intergrade is used for the intermediates between the two races of the Short-billed Dowitcher found in Ontario. Well-marked intergrades are often recognizable in the field, but consider that many are not. In short, intergrades are crosses between subspecies, whereas hybrids are crosses between species.

Hybrid: When two species cross, the offspring are called hybrids. Only rarely do hybrids cross with similar hybrids, or backcross with either of the parent species. The offspring of these crosses are also termed hybrids. For example, "Lawrence's Warbler" can result from the crossing of two "Brewster's Warblers", or from a "Brewster's" backcrossing with either a Golden-winged Warbler or a Blue-winged Warbler. In the checklist, hybrids are identified by an "X" sign between two species. For example, White-throated Sparrow X

Dark-eyed Junco indicates a hybrid. Only well-marked, regularly occurring hybrids are included in the checklist. More could have been included, but hybrids are a separate topic in themselves. A complete checklist of hybrids is planned for a future issue of *Ontario Birds*.

Morph: The term morph has the same general meaning as "colour phase". Morph has been gradually replacing the term phase in the birding literature because phase suggests the birds go through different phases or colour changes over time. It is a common belief that individuals of a species are identical in their morphology, physiology and behaviour. Even single genes vary considerably among individuals in a population. This genetic variation is called polymorphism. Where there is continuous variation between morphs, the plural "intermediate morphs" is used to cover the variation. In most species, morphs can be easily assigned to one of the categories. Some species like the Ruff are highly variable, so the categories chosen are somewhat arbitrary. Crosses between discrete morphs which produce distinct intermediates are identified by an "X" sign. An example is the White X Blue morph of the Snow Goose. Where a recognizable race has more than one morph, the morphs are listed first, followed by the English and scientific names of the subspecies.

Variant: Many variants could also correctly be called morphs. I prefer to use the term to describe forms which are extremes in natural variation from the typical or normal bird. It is also used for forms which are due to diet, or have different soft part colours.

Taxonomy: The status of a few of the recognizable forms on this checklist is not fully understood or agreed upon by all authorities. For example, is the "Thayer's Gull" a full species, or a subspecies of the Iceland Gull? Are the American Black Duck and the "Harlan's Hawk" species, subspecies or morphs? "Bicknell's Thrush" will likely soon be elevated to a full species! Most authorities now consider the two races of the Lesser Golden-Plover as separate species. Currently, most ornithologists follow the Biological Species Concept (BSC) which means that populations that freely interbreed, or if separated, could

potentially freely interbreed with one another, are one and the same species. Recently, a new species concept called the Phylogenetic Species Concept (PSC) has been gaining wider acceptance. The PSC recognizes as separate species those populations and subspecies which have distinctive traits and are evolving along separate evolutionary lines. Under the PSC, many of the forms on this checklist would be considered species!

An asterisk (*) after a form means that form has not been reported in Ontario to my knowledge, but is listed because it may occur.

CHECKLIST OF RECOGNIZABLE ONTARIO BIRD FORMS

Northern Fulmar:

- Light morph
- Intermediate morphs *
- Dark morph *

Least Bittern:

- Light morph
- Dark morph (Cory's Least Bittern)

Double-crested Cormorant:

- Dark-crested race (*auritus*)
- White-crested races (*albociliatus* group)

Tundra Swan:

- Whistling race (*columbianus*)
- Bewick's race (*bewickii*)

Mute Swan:

- Gray morph
- White or "Polish" morph

Greater White-fronted Goose:

- Tundra race (*frontalis*)
- Greenland race (*flavirostris*)

Snow Goose:

- White morph, Lesser race (*caerulescens*)
- Blue morph, Lesser race (*caerulescens*)
- White x Blue morph, Lesser race (*caerulescens*)
- White morph, Greater race (*atlanticus*)
- Blue morph, Greater race (*atlanticus*)*
- White x Blue morph, Greater race (*atlanticus*)*

Ross's Goose:

- White morph
- Blue morph *

Snow Goose x Ross's Goose:

- Hybrid

Brant:

- ___ Atlantic race (*horta*)
- ___ Pacific race (*nigricans*)*
- ___ Atlantic x Pacific intergrade *

Canada Goose:

- ___ Giant race (*maxima*)
- ___ Todd's race (*interior*)
- ___ Lesser race (*parvipes*)
- ___ Richardson's race (*hutchinsii*)

Green-winged Teal:

- ___ American race (*carolinensis*)
- ___ Eurasian race (*crecca*)
- ___ American x Eurasian intergrade

American Black Duck x Mallard:

- ___ Hybrid

Mallard x Northern Pintail:

- ___ Hybrid

Mallard x Gadwall:

- ___ Brewer's Duck (hybrid)

Eurasian Wigeon:

- ___ Rufous morph female
- ___ Gray morph female *

Common Eider:

- ___ Hudson Bay race (*sedentaria*)
- ___ South Atlantic race (*dresseri*)

Barrow's Goldeneye:

- ___ Orange-billed female
- ___ Yellow-tip-billed female *

Common Goldeneye x Barrow's Goldeneye:

- ___ Hybrid

Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser:

- ___ Hybrid

Broad-winged Hawk:

- ___ Light morph
- ___ Dark morph

Swainson's Hawk:

- ___ Light morph
- ___ Rufous morph *
- ___ Dark morph

Red-tailed Hawk:

- ___ Light morph, Eastern race (*borealis*)
- ___ Light morph, Krider's race (*kriderii*)
- ___ Light morph, Western race (*calurus*)
- ___ Rufous morph, Western race (*calurus*)
- ___ Dark morph, Western race (*calurus*)
- ___ Dark morph, Harlan's race (*harlani*)
- ___ Light morph, Harlan's race (*harlani*) *

Ferruginous Hawk:

- ___ Light morph
- ___ Dark morph *

Rough-legged Hawk:

- ___ Light morph
- ___ Intermediate morphs
- ___ Dark morph

Merlin:

- ___ Eastern race (*columbarius*)
- ___ Richardson's race (*richardsonii*)
- ___ Bendire's race (*bendirei*)

Peregrine Falcon:

- ___ Continental race (*anatum* & released mixed races)
- ___ Tundra race (*tundrius*)

Gyrfalcon:

- ___ White morph
- ___ Intermediate morphs
- ___ Dark morph

Spruce Grouse:

- ___ Gray morph female
- ___ Red morph female

Ruffed Grouse:

- ___ Gray morph
- ___ Red morph

American Coot:

- ___ Typical morph
- ___ White-shielded or "Caribbean-type" variant

Lesser Golden-Plover:

- ___ American race (*dominica*)
- ___ Pacific race (*fulva*) *

Willet:

- ___ Inland race (*inornatus*)
- ___ Coastal race (*semipalmatus*)

Whimbrel:

- ___ American race (*hudsonicus*)
- ___ White-rumped races (*phaeopus* group)

Baird's Sandpiper:

- ___ Typical or buff morph
- ___ Gray morph

Dunlin:

- ___ Hudson Bay race (*hudsonia*)
- ___ Short-billed races (*schinzii* group) *

Ruff:

- ___ White morph
- ___ Rufous morph
- ___ Black morph
- ___ Intermediate morphs
- ___ Typical juvenile
- ___ Variant juvenile *

Short-billed Dowitcher:

- ___ Eastern race (*griseus*)
- ___ Inland race (*hendersoni*)
- ___ Eastern x Inland intergrade

Wilson's Phalarope:

- ___ Dull morph male
- ___ Pied morph male

Pomarine Jaeger:

- ___ Light morph
- ___ Intermediate morphs
- ___ Dark morph

Parasitic Jaeger:

- ___ Light morph
- ___ Intermediate morphs
- ___ Dark morph

Long-tailed Jaeger:

- ___ Light morph
- ___ Dark morph *

Bonaparte's Gull:

- ___ Typical immature
- ___ Dark variant immature

Mew Gull:

- ___ American race (*brachyrhynchus*)
- ___ European race (*canus*) *

Iceland Gull:

- ___ Greenland race (*glaucoides*)
- ___ Kumlien's race (*kumlieni*)
- ___ Thayer's race (*thayeri*)

Lesser Black-backed Gull:

- ___ British race (*graellsii*)
- ___ Intermediate race (*intermedius*)
- ___ Scandinavian race (*fuscus*)

Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull:

- ___ Nelson's Gull (hybrid)

Herring Gull x Great Black-backed Gull:

- ___ Hybrid

Black-legged Kittiwake:

- ___ Typical morph
- ___ Pink-legged variant

Eastern Screech-Owl:

- ___ Gray morph
- ___ Brown morph
- ___ Red morph

Great Horned Owl:

- ___ Southern race (*virginianus*)
- ___ Northern Ontario race (*scalariventris*)
- ___ Arctic race (*subarcticus*)
- ___ Labrador race (*heterocnemis*)

Northern Flicker:

- ___ Yellow-shafted races (*luteus* group)
- ___ Red-shafted races (*collaris* group)
- ___ Yellow-shafted x Red-shafted intergrade

Horned Lark:

- ___ Prairie race (*praticola*)
- ___ Northern race (*alpestris*)
- ___ Hoyt's race (*hoyti*)

Cave Swallow:

- ___ Greater Antilles race (*fulva*) *
- ___ Mexican race (*pallida*) *

Veery:

- ___ Eastern race (*fuscescens*)
- ___ Western race (*salicicola*)

Gray-cheeked Thrush:

- ___ Northern race (*aliciae*)
- ___ Bicknell's race (*bicknelli*)

American Robin:

- Northern race (*migratorius*)
- Black-backed race (*nigrideus*) *

Cedar Waxwing:

- Typical morph
- Orange-banded variant

Blue-winged Warbler x Golden-winged Warbler:

- Brewster's Warbler (hybrid)
- Lawrence's Warbler (hybrid)

Black-throated Blue Warbler:

- Northern race (*caerulescens*)
- Appalachian race (*cairnsi*)

Yellow-rumped Warbler:

- Myrtle races (*coronata* group)
- Audubon's races (*memorabilis* group)

Yellow-throated Warbler:

- Yellow-lored race (*dominica*)
- White-lored or "Sycamore" race (*albilora*)

Palm Warbler:

- Eastern race (*hypochrysea*)
- Western race (*palmarum*)

Scarlet Tanager:

- Typical male
- Orange variant male

Rufous-sided Towhee:

- Eastern race (*erythrophthalmus*)
- Spotted races (*arcticus* group)

Savannah Sparrow:

- Southern Ontario race (*mediogriseus*)
- Northern Ontario race (*oblitus*)

Sharp-tailed Sparrow:

- James Bay race (*alterus*)
- Nelson's race (*nelsoni*)

White-throated Sparrow:

- White-striped morph
- Tan-striped morph

White-crowned Sparrow:

- Eastern race (*leucophrys*)
- Gambel's race (*gambelii*)
- Eastern x Gambel's intergrade

Dark-eyed Junco:

- Slate-colored races (*hyemalis* group)
- Oregon races (*montanus* group)
- Pink-sided race (*mearnsi*)
- Gray-headed race (*caniceps*)

White-throated Sparrow x Dark-eyed Junco:

- Hybrid

Brewer's Blackbird:

- Typical fall male
- Variant fall male

Common Grackle:

- Bronzed race (*versicolor*)
- Purple race (*stonei*) *

Northern Oriole:

- Baltimore race (*galbula*)
- Bullock's race (*bullockii*)
- Baltimore x Bullock's intergrade

Rosy Finch:

- Gray-crowned race (*tephrocotis*)
- Hepburn's race (*littoralis*)

Pine Grosbeak:

- Typical morph
- Russet variant

House Finch:

- Typical male
- Orange variant male
- Yellow variant male

Red Crossbill:

- Small-billed race (*sitkensis*)
- Resident race (*minor*)
- Newfoundland race (*pusilla*)
- Bendire's race (*bendirei*)
- Bent's race (*benti*)

Common Redpoll:

- Southern race (*flammea*)
- Greater race (*rostrata*)

Hoary Redpoll:

- Southern race (*exilipes*)
- Hornemann's race (*hornemanni*)

Pine Siskin:

- Typical morph
- Green variant

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Photo Quiz

by
Doug McRae

One thing that always drives me crazy about quiz shots is that they won't tell you what the bird is right away. You have to read through the entire account to "find the answer". To have people madly skimming through the "instructional" part of the quiz looking for the answer never struck me as particularly instructional! So here is the answer: it's a female **Brewer's Blackbird**.

Now why? Well, it is a blackbird. The bill is not conical enough for any sparrow or finch and the plumage is generally uniform. Due to the lack of gloss on any part of the plumage, and the fact that it is a June photograph, thereby ruling out a young bird, we can assume it's a female blackbird.

Some of our choices can be eliminated quickly. The bill is too fine and the tail is not long enough for a female grackle of any species.

The dark eye also helps rule out Great-tailed and Common Grackle. Yellow-headed Blackbird can also be ruled out by the uniformity of the plumage colour, particularly on the sides of the breast, and the lack of a small area of white near the base of the primaries. Brown-headed Cowbird is ruled out by the fine bill and longer tail alone. Red-winged Blackbird can also be eliminated by the lack of streaking on the under surface and the lack of an eyeline.

This leaves us with two choices: Rusty and Brewer's. The female Rusty can be eliminated by eye colour alone at this time of year. All Rusty Blackbirds should have pale yellow eyes in June whereas all female Brewer's should have dark eyes, as this bird does. Young Rusty Blackbirds have dark eyes in the first few weeks after fledging, but are also

well marked with buff and rusty crescents on much of their body feathering, unlike Brewer's.

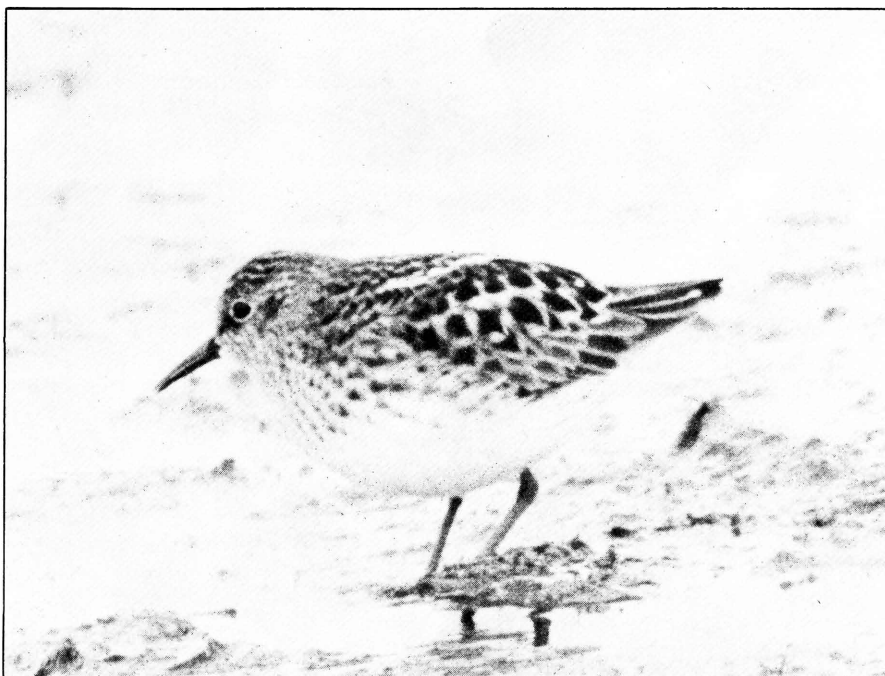
While I don't see many Brewer's Blackbirds in Ontario, outside their normal areas of occurrence, one thing has always struck me that helps them stand out, and that is their flight style. Brewer's often seem to "float" when they fly. The wings appear more rounded, fuller, and longer than do the wings of Rusty Blackbirds. When Brewer's fly up off a roadside to a power line or fence, they appear very buoyant, almost as if they were not in complete control, while Rusty Blackbirds, like other blackbirds, are more purposeful in their flight style.

The legs of Brewer's also strike me as being longer, though this is not borne out by measurements, but I have found it to be a useful "impression" none-the-less.

Finally, photos can play tricks on you. This bird appears to have a very pale head. While there was a slight contrast noted in the field between the head and body colour, it was nowhere near as obvious as this photo makes it appear. This particular female was photographed at Churchill, Manitoba, where it is a rare vagrant.

Here is the next photograph to consider, a peep — truly a birder's dream!

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