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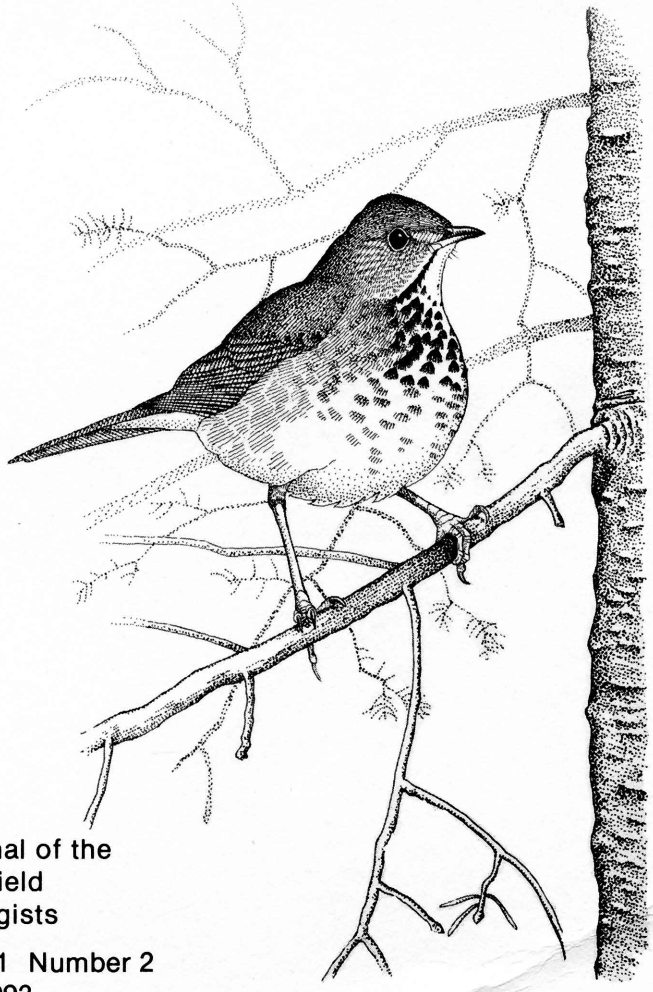

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Ornithologists

Volume 11 Number 2
August 1993

Ontario Field Ornithologists

Ontario Field Ornithologists is an organization dedicated to the study of birdlife in Ontario. It was formed to unify the ever-growing numbers of field ornithologists (birders/birdwatchers) across the province and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among its members. The Ontario Field Ornithologists officially oversees the activities of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC), publishes a newsletter and a journal, *Ontario Birds*, hosts field trips throughout Ontario and holds an Annual General Meeting 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 $20.00 (Annual) or $400.00 (Life Membership). All members receive *Ontario Birds*. Please send memberships to: **Ontario Field Ornithologists, Box 62014, Burlington Mall Postal Outlet, Burlington, Ontario L7R 4K2.**

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The aim of *Ontario Birds* is to provide a vehicle for documentation of the birds of Ontario. We encourage the submission of full length articles and short notes on the status, distribution, identification, and behaviour of birds in Ontario, as well as location guides to significant Ontario birdwatching areas, book reviews, and similar material of interest on Ontario birds.

If possible, material submitted for publication should be double-spaced and typewritten. All submissions are subject to review and editing. Please submit items for publication to the Editors at the address noted above.

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Articles

Bicknell's Thrush in Ontario

by
Henri Ouellet

Introduction

The Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*), a typical bird of the northern boreal forest, occurs during the breeding season from Newfoundland to Alaska but small populations have been recorded also in the northern New England states and in northeastern Siberia (A.O.U. 1983, Bent 1949, Stepanyan 1990, Godfrey 1986). Geographic variation was noticed and described by a few authors (Bicknell 1882, Ridgway 1882) mainly during the last century which led to the recognition of three subspecies (Wallace 1939, A.O.U. 1957). Of these, Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus minimus bicknelli*) was described by Robert Ridgway (1882) from specimens taken in the mountains of New England. He reported that the specimens he studied had a smaller size and that their plumage was more brownish on the back when compared with specimens taken farther north, in Canada and in Alaska (Ridgway 1882, 1907). Several years later, in an important work that was to become a classic biosystematic study, George Wallace (1939) published the results of his studies of the distribution, life history, and taxonomy of the New England states population with comparisons based primarily on morphological aspects with breeding birds taken in other parts of the range. He established that birds from Newfoundland belong to a different population from those of the mainland and that they should be recognized as a distinct subspecies and that mainland birds in the rest of the range belonged to another population.

Bicknell's Thrush has been recognized since by most authors as a subspecies of the Gray-cheeked Thrush. In addition to the marked morphological differences found in specimens from New England, Nova Scotia, and the Gaspé Peninsula (Quebec), the song of these birds was believed to be unlike that of other populations (Gillet 1935). Wallace (1939) confirmed the song differences but these were ignored by Stein (1956) and everybody else.

The winter distribution of Bicknell's Thrush remained relatively unknown and much confusion persisted about the wintering ranges of the three subspecies until Wallace (1939) reidentified the type and ascertained its origin. Following several periods of field observation, the examination of specimens in museum collections, and the comparison of song recordings from various parts of the range of the Gray-cheeked Thrush, in eastern Canada and the United States, I became aware of strong differences when birds of southern Quebec (*C. m. bicknelli*) were compared to birds

from Newfoundland, Labrador, and northern Quebec (*C. m. aliciae* and *minimus*). These peculiarities convinced me to undertake a detailed study of the southeastern population. I have examined breeding specimens of known sex in fresh or relatively fresh plumage from Labrador, Massachusetts, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, New Hampshire, New York, Nova Scotia, Québec, Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, and Vermont. I have studied also migratory and wintering specimens from Ontario, Quebec, the Maritime Provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, South Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin, Belize, Bermuda, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Swan Islands (U.S.A.), and Venezuela to determine the migration patterns and winter range of the southeastern populations.

Results

Several color classes were determined using the dominant coloration of the specimens. Each specimen was then assigned to one of the color classes. I found that specimens of *bicknelli* usually have the dorsal regions "olive brown", and that "olive" is dominant in the *minimus* group, whereas "olive gray" does not occur in breeding *bicknelli*. Strong differences were found in the coloration of the tail of *bicknelli* where it is consistently "chestnut", in contrast with the "olive" or "olive brown" tail of *minimus* and *aliciae* specimens. My data also indicate that males of *bicknelli* have more buffy throats than those of the other two groups and that the white of the under parts is duller in *bicknelli* than in the other samples, having a grayish tint or wash.

The color of the soft parts in *bicknelli* is different from that of the other two subspecies in being "bright pale yellow" at the base of the mandible, varying from "blackish brown" to "black" on the maxilla, and ranging from "light purpish flesh" to "purplish flesh" on the legs. The soles of the feet are pale and vary from "flesh" to "dull pale yellow" in *bicknelli* whereas they are brighter "yellow" in the other populations.

Series of measurements analyzed statistically show that *bicknelli* has the smallest measurements, and that specimens from northern Quebec, including northern Labrador, have the largest body dimensions, with the Newfoundland population being intermediate in size for most dimensions. Wing length is shortest in *bicknelli* (male: mean = 92.9mm; female: mean = 87.7mm) as well as tail length (male: mean = 68.7mm; female: mean = 65.6mm), tarsus length (male: mean = 29.2mm; female: mean = 28.9mm) and exposed culmen length (male: mean = 12.7mm; female: mean = 12.6mm).

Field recordings of songs by myself or provided by a colleague (J.T. Marshall) or obtained from the Cornell University Library of Natural Sounds were used in the analyses, comparisons of songs from different populations, and field experiments. The frequency of the *bicknelli* songs is consistently higher and does not fall towards the end of the song as in

minimus but remains constant or increases. This difference can be detected in the field by a careful listener and provides an accurate means of separating this population from the others. The high frequencies of the call notes are higher in *bicknelli* than in *minimus* but the low frequency is not different. Similarly, I found no difference in the duration of the call notes.

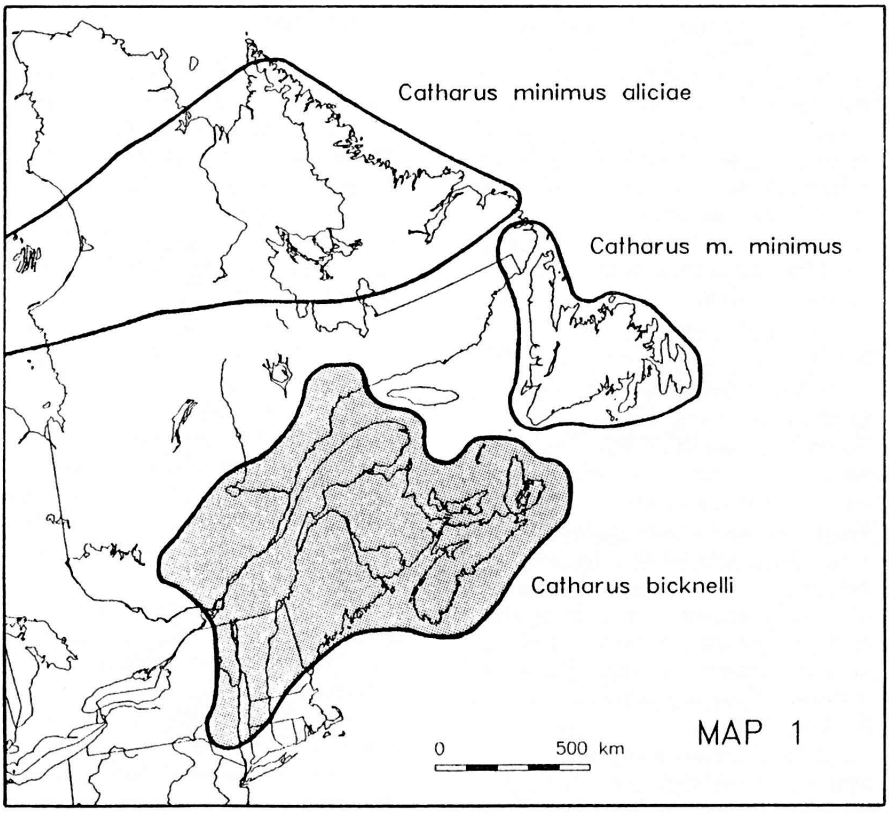
In a series of playback experiments, songs previously recorded in central and southern Quebec, including the Eastern Townships and the Gaspé Peninsula, were played back in various habitats and in areas where Gray-cheeked Thrushes had been recorded or which seemed suitable for this species. My results show that no reaction was obtained from the playbacks of *aliciae* or *minimus* songs in the range of *bicknelli*. However, songs of *bicknelli* drew reactions in over 45 per cent of the playbacks.

A biochemical analysis of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) revealed a strong differentiation between *Catharus minimus* and *C. m. bicknelli* and an important divergence between the two taxa. These results indicate that this divergence took place approximately 1 million years ago.

The Gray-cheeked Thrush occurs in the Boreal Forest Region (Rowe 1972) and is found primarily in mature coniferous stands and more rarely in tall shrubby growths in the taiga or above tree line (A.O.U. 1983; Godfrey 1986) in Labrador and northern Quebec. On the other hand, southern populations from southern Quebec, the Maritime Provinces, and the New England States have been reported in scrubby coniferous stands, mostly spruce, up to tree line (Palmer 1949; Wallace 1939), and more rarely in deciduous habitats. My observations in the Gaspé Peninsula and elsewhere in southern Quebec show that the birds of the southern population are not restricted to thick stands of stunted conifers on steep mountain slopes or near tree-line but that they were more numerous in second growth stands characterized by relatively young conifers of small size, such as Balsam Fir and White Spruce mixed with early second growth deciduous species. It appears that it is now more numerous in this habitat than in the habitat that had been considered until now to be the typical habitat of the taxon.

The known distribution of Bicknell's Thrush (Map 1) has been established on specimens in collections, on published data recorded south of the St. Lawrence River, and on fully documented observations obtained during several breeding seasons. The breeding range of Bicknell's Thrush may have been broader in the past, particularly along the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but there is little evidence to substantiate this hypothesis. It can be found in the highlands of New Brunswick (Squires 1976, *fide* A.J. Erskine), in Vermont (Laughlin and Kibbe 1985, Spear 1976, Perkins and Howe 1901), and in New York State (Bull 1974, Merriam 1884) and in northwestern Maine, northern New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and northern Vermont.

The migration pattern of Bicknell's Thrush is not well known but specimens in various collections



Map 1: Breeding distribution of Bicknell's Thrush in Eastern North America.

establish its presence in migration in Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Virginia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Bermuda, and the Bahama Islands. Bicknell's Thrush probably occurs more frequently in migration along the Atlantic coast from Quebec to Florida than what is revealed by the reports. In spite of the difficulty of identifying it in the field and the unpredictability of occurence in the interior, it probably occurs in the interior of the continent as well but in smaller numbers. For this reason, it is to be expected in Ontario, particularly during the fall migration, from mid-August to late September. A "rare migrant in the south" of Ontario (James 1991:62), I have identifed only one fall *bicknelli* specimen originating in the province.

In winter, the range of Bicknell's Thrush appears to be restricted to islands in the Caribbean region but more information is needed to map its winter distribution and estimate its population on the islands. All the collections that I have studied

revealed no specimen of Bicknell's Thrush taken anywhere in Central or South America.

The partial results presented here and in a forthcoming more elaborate report (Ouellet 1993) show clearly that the *bicknelli* population of the Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) is different from it and that it satisfies all the requirements necessary to consider it as a full species. I have therefore proposed that it be considered as a full species: Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*). Careful observations of migrating thrushes, particularly in the fall, and some luck, may reveal that this bird is a regular migrant in parts of Ontario, probably in the St. Lawrence River region.

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Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 1992

by
Margaret Bain

This is the eleventh annual report of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. A total of 172 records was reviewed by the Committee in 1992. Of these, 129 (75.0%) were accepted, five were deferred awaiting photographic evidence which was available but not yet received, and 38 were not accepted.

Five new species were added to the Ontario list: Slaty-backed Gull, Inca Dove, Violet-green Swallow, Black-throated Sparrow and Hooded Oriole, bringing the provincial total to 454. Two of these, Inca Dove and Hooded Oriole, were also firsts for Canada. No new provincial breeding species were added in 1992. Because of its increasingly precarious and poorly understood status, Henslow's Sparrow was added to the Review List.

Members of the OBRC in 1992 were Ronald J. Pittaway (Chairman), Margaret J.C. Bain (non-voting Secretary), Robert H. Curry, Nicholas G. Escott, Richard W. Knapton, Kevin A. McLaughlin, Michael W.P. Runtz and Ronald G. Tozer. Ross D. James acted as Royal Ontario Museum Liaison. The Committee held two meetings in 1992, as in 1991 - the November meeting to discuss Policy, and the March meeting to review records still requiring final decisions.

Almost 50 more reports were received in 1992 than in the previous year. The Committee found that most were of an excellent standard, thoroughly covering all salient points of the observation and often meticulously detailed. There were fewer reports with very brief or non-existent descriptions. It must be emphasized again that non-acceptance of a report does not imply disbelief, only that the details actually written on the piece of paper received by the Committee were not sufficient to identify the bird with certainty and eliminate all similar species. Yes, the Committee does accept some Bell's Vireo reports -when the documentation is sufficient to exclude all other similar species! Reports of species far out of range, for example the Red-naped Sapsucker at Sault Ste. Marie, are often circulated to several authorities outside the province for expert opinions which are then reviewed on a second circulation.

Fears that the Committee would be swamped by reports of the Recognizable Forms added to the Review List in 1992 proved to be unfounded. Only six such reports were received: one of "Black" Brant, one of "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal, two of Lawrence's Warbler and two of "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler. We hope that there will be increased interest in documenting the occurrence of rare recognizable forms across the province. For a full list, refer to *Ontario Birds* 9: 49-55.

At the November OBRC Policy meeting, after years of deliberation, the Committee finally agreed upon a definition of a Historical Record, which will now form a separate category in OBRC publications. A Historical Record is defined as an acceptable record occurring before 1981, which has been previously published, but which does not meet current documentation requirements (Curry 1993). Ross James will search all previous OBRC Annual Reports for non-accepted pre-1981 records for possible Historical designation; back issues of *American Birds* and its predecessor *Audubon Field Notes* will be searched for recorded rarities for which brief reports may still be obtainable from the original observers, and any of our readers who may be able to produce a suitable report for a hitherto undocumented sighting of a Review List species seen before 1981 are urged to do so.

Thanks go to all the observers who took the time to record and submit their observations of rare birds from across the province. All these submissions, whether accepted or not, are deposited in the Ornithology Department of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. The votes and remarks of committee members are attached to all the reports, and may be reviewed on request to Ross James at the ROM.

The format of this report follows that used in the OBRC Report for 1991 (Bain 1992). For each record, information on age, sex and plumage is included if it can be reliably ascertained. Place names in italics refer to counties, regional municipalities or districts in Ontario. All contributors who have provided written descriptions or photographs, videotapes or any other form of documentation have been credited. Contributors who discovered a bird and also submitted documentation have their names underlined, and finders of birds, where known, are also acknowledged, even if they have not contributed a report. After the name of each species, there is a summary number in three parts. This follows the system used in *British Birds* (Rogers 1988): the first number is the total of accepted records in Ontario before the first OBRC Report for 1981, the second is the total since 1981 excluding the current year, and the third is the number of records for the current year.

Every effort is made to verify dates, locations and observers' names, but our data are bound to include some inaccuracies, and we welcome corrections or updates to make records more complete. Where dates or other details in original reports differ from those quoted in other sources, for example the *American Birds* Seasonal Summaries, we have used the information which seems most accurate from our own documentation.

Accepted Records

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) South Only (3/10/1)

1992 — one summer adult, 13 June - 19 August, Tiny Marsh, *Simcoe* (Margaret Bain).

1991 — one winter adult, 1 December, Cook's Bay, Lake Simcoe, *York* (Rolph Davis, Theo Hofmann, Jim Macey, Sean Macey).

The bird at Tiny Marsh was presumably the same individual returning for its second summer in this unlikely location.

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) North Only (0/1/1)

1992 — two adults, 29 May, and eight adults, 5, 6 June, Rainy River Sewage Lagoons (S.L.), *Rainy River* (Dave Elder, Don Graham; found by Rob Parsons).

A most remarkable number of Eared Grebes for Ontario. Hopes that these birds might stay to breed were unfortunately dashed when the level of the lagoons was lowered drastically shortly after the second observation.

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) South Only (2/23/6)

1992 — one adult, 16, 17 April, Hamilton Harbour - *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Rob Z. Dobos)

— two, 15 May, Cook's Bay, Lake Simcoe, *York* (Theo Hofmann)

— six adults, 15 May - 2 June, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Jon McCracken).

— one adult, 21 May, Evansville, *Manitoulin* (Alan Wormington) - photo on file.

— one adult, 28 September, Hawk Cliff, *Elgin* (Barry Cherriere, Bruce Duncan, Marvin Smout).

— one juvenile, 2-15 October, Frenchman's Bay, *Durham* and 17 October, over Whitby, *Durham* (Ron Pittaway; found by Ariel Shamir).

1988 — one, 12 September, Seagrave, *Durham* (Carol Shepherd) - photos on file.

Sightings of this species in the south of the province continue to increase slowly.

Great Egret (*Casmerodius alba*) North Only (2/3/1)

1992 — one, 9-12 August, Finlayson Lake, *Rainy River* (Tom Nash, Dave Elder, Don Graham) - photos on file.

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) (1/8/4) (North Only until 1991)

1992 — one, 8 April, McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve, *Durham* (Jim Richards)

— two, first summer, 2 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Rob Z. Dobos).

— one adult, 6 May, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Paul N. Prior).

— one, 17 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Robert R. Taylor).

1991 — one juvenile, 2-11 August, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) (7/17/2)

1992 — one adult, 1 May, Normandale Fish Hatchery, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Rohan van Twest, Richard Knapton).

— one, second summer, 13 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) (2/14/1)

1992 — one adult, 4, 5 June, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Richard Mundy).

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) North Only (4/8/0)

1991 — one, 29 October, Whitefish Lake, *Thunder Bay* (Ted Armstrong, Jean Hall-Armstrong; found by Ray Drew) - photos on file.

This was another northerly stray from the Cattle Egret influx into Ontario in the fall of 1991. It was found by a trapper, and brought in to the Ministry of Natural Resources at Thunder Bay in a weak and emaciated state. It was taken to the Chippewa Zoo for rehabilitation, but it did not survive.

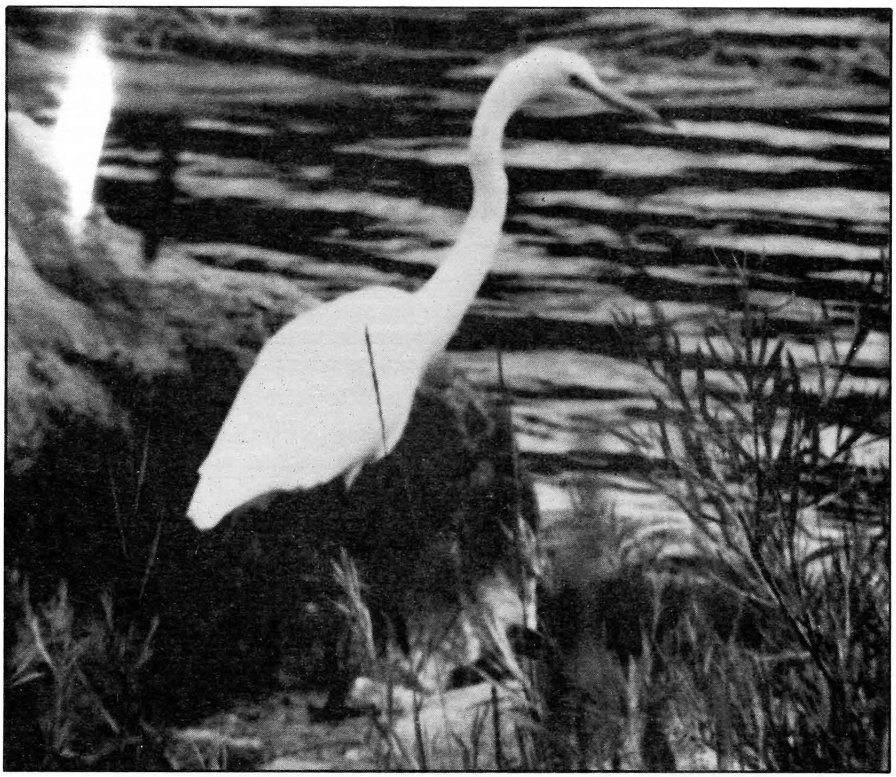

Figure 1: Great Egret at Finlayson Lake, *Rainy River* from 9-12 August 1992. Photo by *Tom Nash.*

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) (5/16/1)

1992 — one, 21-23 April, Sarnia, *Lambton* (John Haselmayer; found by Bob Killey) - photo on file.

A backyard spruce tree is not where one expects to find this species!

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) (2/14/2)

1992 — three, 2, 3 May, Leslie Street Spit, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Martin K. McNicholl).

— one adult, 7 May, Smithville S.L., *Niagara* (Rob Z. Dobos, Wilf Yusek; found by Jim Dowall) - photo on file.

Ibis (*Plegadis sp.*) (3/12/0)

1991 — one adult, 20 August, Holiday Beach, *Essex* (Will Weber).

The pressure is on Ontario birders to produce the first acceptable record of White-faced Ibis (*P. chihi*). This has already resulted in much more detailed documentation of most dark ibises in the province, but some individual birds will still be seen in poor light or at too great a distance for specific identification.

Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) South Only (2/23/1)

1992 — one adult, 25, 26 March, Strathroy, *Middlesex* (William G. Lindley; found by Ariel McLean).

Ross' Goose (*Chen rossii*) South Only (0/1/0)

1991 — one juvenile, 4-10 November, Port Rowan, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Peter Burke) - photos on file.

This record is the first accepted for southern Ontario as a wild bird. It arrived with and associated with the hundreds of migrant Tundra Swans (*Cygnus columbianus*) in the Long Point marshes. With the population of Ross' Geese in western Hudson's Bay increasing steadily, more observations in southern Ontario can be expected.

"Black" Brant (*Branta bernicla nigricans*) (*/*/1)

1992 — one adult, 22 September, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Peter Burke; found by Dave Shepherd) - photos on file.

The first documented record for the province. There are two previous sight records (*fide* R. Curry): two on 31 December 1948 at the east end of Hamilton Bay, seen by George Holland and recorded in George North's notes; one on 2 January 1970 on the upper Niagara River, found by Harold Axtell and seen by R. Curry and many others on the following day.

"Eurasian" Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca crecca*) (*/1/0)

1991 — one adult male, 30 March - 13 April, Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* (Matt Holder).

Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*) (0/7/1)

1992 — one adult male, 9-24 May, Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* (Margaret Bain, Brian Henshaw, Ron Pittaway, Rayfield Pye) - photos on file.

This spectacular bird, in full breeding plumage, was enjoyed by many viewers from the Cranberry Marsh boardwalks. Possibly the same individual had been reported near Orillia, *Simcoe* from 26 April - 1 May (*fide* Bob Bowles).

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) (3/45/9)

1992 — one adult male, 8 March, Dundas Marsh, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Norman Murr).
— one adult male, 27 March, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
— one female, 28 March - 4 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
— one adult male, 29 March, Aylmer W.M.A., *Elgin* (Anthony H. Lee, Ron Ridout).
— one adult male, 5 April, Taquanyah C.A., *Haldimand-Norfolk* (George E. and Shirley Pond).
— one adult male, 16-22 April, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
— one adult male, 2-4 May, Chippewa Landfill, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott).
— one adult male, 10 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Dennis Lewington).
— one adult male, 21, 22 May, Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* (Margaret Bain; found by J. Murray Speirs).
1991 — one adult male, 11-16 April, Sturgeon Creek, *Essex* (Alan Wormington) - photos on file.
1986 — one adult male, 27 September, Humber Bay, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Martin K. McNicholl).

Perhaps the next species to be dropped from the Review List? The female at Hillman Marsh, however, was only the second documented for the province.

Common Eider (*Somateria molissima*) South Only (0/1/2)

1992 — three females, 26 March, Burlington, *Halton* (Rob Z. Dobos).
— one female, 13 July - 23 August, Darlington P.P., *Durham* (Margaret Bain, Brian Henshaw) - photos on file.

The three females off Burlington were among the huge flock of scoters feasting on zebra mussels there. This will obviously be the prime site to detect this species in southern Ontario if the zebra mussels continue to attract diving ducks in future winters. However, the sheer number of waterfowl present will make this an exercise in lengthy, patient and careful observation.

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) (2/9/2)

1992 — one, 4 April, Beamer C.A., *Niagara* (John J. Barker, Kevin McLaughlin, George Naylor, Terry Osborne).

— one, 14 April, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (David Shepherd).

1991 — one, 25, 26 April, Point Pelee, *Essex* (James N. Flynn, Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

— one, 31 October, Holiday Beach, *Essex* (Ray M. Seng).

Another species which seems to be very slowly spreading into Ontario. The first record for the province was only in 1947, but there were at least eight records in the eighties (James 1991), so the nineties look like continuing this trend.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) (5/7/1)

1992 — one, first summer, 13-16 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* and Wheatley P.P., *Kent* (Barry Cherriere, Phil Roberts, Dennis Rupert, Alan Wormington, David and Mary Beth Worthington) - photos on file.

This is the earliest of the 15 Ontario records, all of which have occurred in a narrow 16-day period during May (Wormington 1993).

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) (8/12/2)

1992 — one adult, light morph, 25 April, Fanshawe Lake, *Middlesex* (William and Colleen Lindley).

— one adult, dark morph, 22 August, Little Grassy River, *Rainy River* (Dave Elder, Don Graham).

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

1992 — one immature, 13 April, Beamer C.A., *Niagara* (Dave Copeland, Barry Cherriere).

The second provincial record for this western *buteo*.

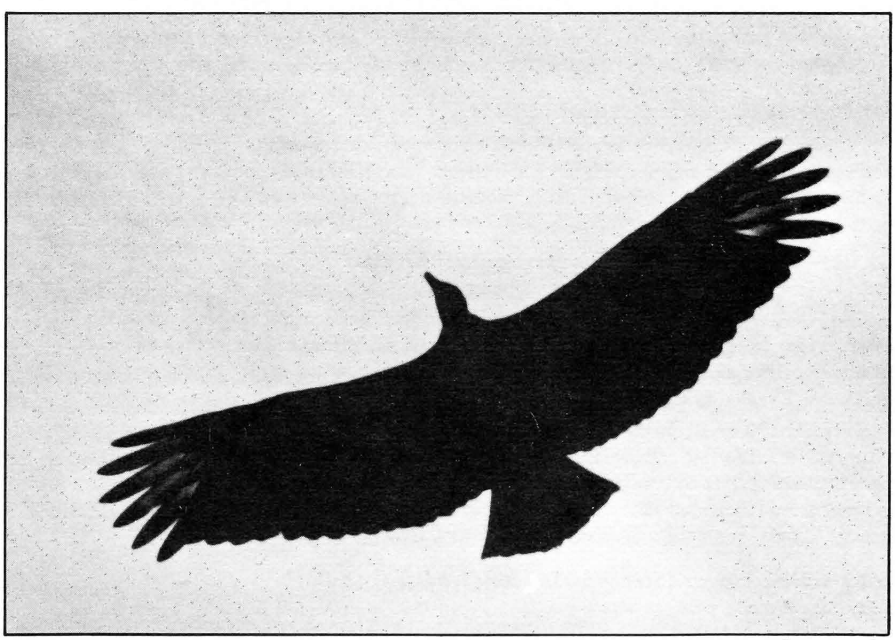

Figure 2: Black Vulture at Point Pelee, *Essex* 25 and 26 April 1991. Photo by *James N. Flynn.*

Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*) South Only (4/17/3)

1992 — one immature, 29 January, Ferndale, *Bruce* (Paul D. Pratt) - photos on file.
— one, 1-8 March, Big Creek Marsh, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Doug McRae).
— one, 24 October, Fifty Road, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Rob Z. Dobos).
1991 — one, 1 December - 15 March 1992 (approx.), Sault Ste. Marie, *Algoma* (Tony Walker).

Gyrfalcon is not a Review List species for Northern Ontario. However, "near-northern" communities such as Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and Manitoulin, where Gyrfalcons winter regularly, are south of the 47th parallel and are therefore requested to document occurrences - a situation which will be discussed at the next OBRC Policy Meeting. We would welcome the views of readers from all areas of the province as to whether Gyrfalcon should be removed from the Review List for these areas.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) South Only (*/25/2)

1992 — one summer adult, 16 May, Pelee Island, *Essex* (James E. McAllister).
— one summer adult male, 5 June - 15 July, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Jon McCracken).
1989 — one, 6 May, Pelee Island, *Essex* (Glen Barrett) - photos on file.

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

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) (7/27/1)

1992 — two adults, 27 April - 5 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Phil Roberts).

By no means all these spectacular shorebirds are documented each year because their identity seems so obvious, but it remains important to know their rate of occurrence in the province. The Committee therefore encourages reporting of all American Avocets, even by observers who are not necessarily the original finders.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*) (1/0/1)

1992 — one summer adult, 25 July, Casselman S.L., *Russell* (Bruce Di Labio, Mark Gawn) - photo on file.

This was only the second record for Ontario, the first having been a bird collected in James Bay in 1979. Unfortunately for the many birders arriving the next day, the bird had flown.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) (0/10/1)

1992 — one molting adult, 30, 31 August, Avondale Dairy S.L., *Niagara* (Alan J. Smith, Kayo J. Roy, Rob Wilson, William C. D'Anna) - photos on file.

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) (3/20/1)

1992 — one, 2 September, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Paul N. Prior).
1991 — one juvenile, 28 October, Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (George Naylor).
— two juveniles, 20 November, Wheatley Harbour, *Kent/Essex* (Alan Wormington, Paul E. Lehman).

This species has the reputation of being difficult to "get past" the Committee, so the number of reports submitted is considerably less than the sightings one hears about. However, with more intense lake-watching occurring and increased awareness of important fieldmarks, observer confidence should improve.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) (3/9/1)

1992 — one juvenile, dead, 14 September, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Peter W. Jones; found by Jerry M. Lewis).

This specimen was in such poor condition that it was not preserved.

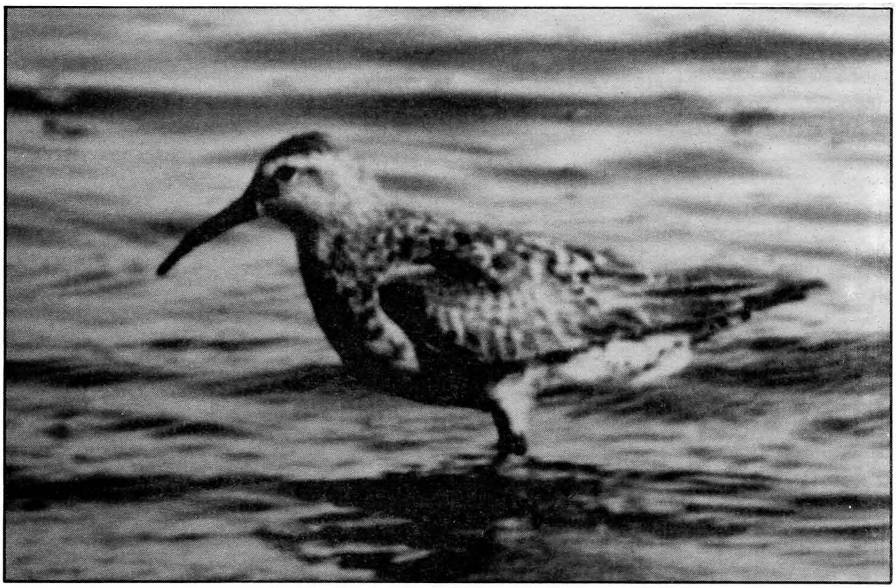

Figure 3: Curlew Sandpiper at the Avondale Dairy Sewage Ponds, *Niagara* 30 August 1992. Photo by *Rob Wilson.*

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) (14/55/8)

1992 — one, first winter, 3 January and 25 January - 6 February, Frenchman's Bay, *Durham* (Mike King, Matt Holder, Phill Holder, Margaret Bain, Brian Henshaw) - photo on file.
— one summer adult, 20 April, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
— one summer adult, 29 April Sturgeon Creek, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
— one adult, 6 May, Wawanosh Wetlands, *Lambton* (M.P. McAlpine).
— one, second summer, 15-19 May, Beaverton S.L., *Durham* (Ron Pittaway; found by Ron Tozer and Doug Tozer).
— one summer adult, 23-30 May, Turkey Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Barry Jones).
— one summer adult, 26 May, Sarnia, *Lambton* (Dennis Rupert).
— one juvenile, 8 September, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).

An impressive series of spring records this year. This gull's fortune does fluctuate in Ontario! There was a major incursion into the province in 1985, so the species was removed from the Review List, only to be reinstated in 1989 after a few lean years.

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*) (3/7/2)

1992 — one summer adult, 8 August, Millhaven, *Lennox and Addington* (Ron D. Weir).
— one winter adult, *L. c. brachyrhynchus,* 25 November - 4 December, Niagara River, *Niagara* (Rod Planck, Alan Wormington).

California Gull (*Larus californicus*) (0/8/3)

1992 — one summer adult, 22 March, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Ron Ridout).
— one summer adult, 23 March, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
— one winter adult, 29 November - 14 February 1993, Niagara River, *Niagara* (Rod Planck, Gordon

Bellerby, William C. D'Anna, Tony Leukering, Alan Wormington) - photos on file.
1991 — one winter adult, 14 December, Westminster Landfill, *Middlesex* (Dave Martin).

It is hard to say whether this species, first recorded in Ontario in 1981, is in fact becoming more regular here, or whether closer scrutiny of large gull congregations and improved identification skills are resulting in more observations.

Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*) (0/1/0)

1991 — one winter adult, 24 November - 29 December, Niagara River, *Niagara* (Rod Planck, Robert W. Brock, Rob and Nancy French, Tony Leukering) - photo on file.

This provincial first was the star of a memorable Niagara gull season. Wind-driven snow filled many a 'scope field as dedicated gull-watchers sought a glimpse of this rarity. Amazingly, a second Slaty-backed Gull, a third-winter bird, was at Eastlake near Cleveland, Ohio on 28 and 29th December (*fide* Larry Rosche).

Ross' Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) (0/2/1)

1992 — one adult, 21 February, Sarnia, *Lambton* (Dennis Rupert, John Haselmayer) - photo on file.

This pink-breasted winter adult, the third record for the province, was seen on pack ice near the freighter docks on the St. Clair River for only one afternoon.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) South Only (*/0/1)

1992 — one juvenile, 5 October, Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Rob Z. Dobos).

The first accepted fall sighting for this species which usually migrates south from its Arctic breeding grounds across the Atlantic Ocean.

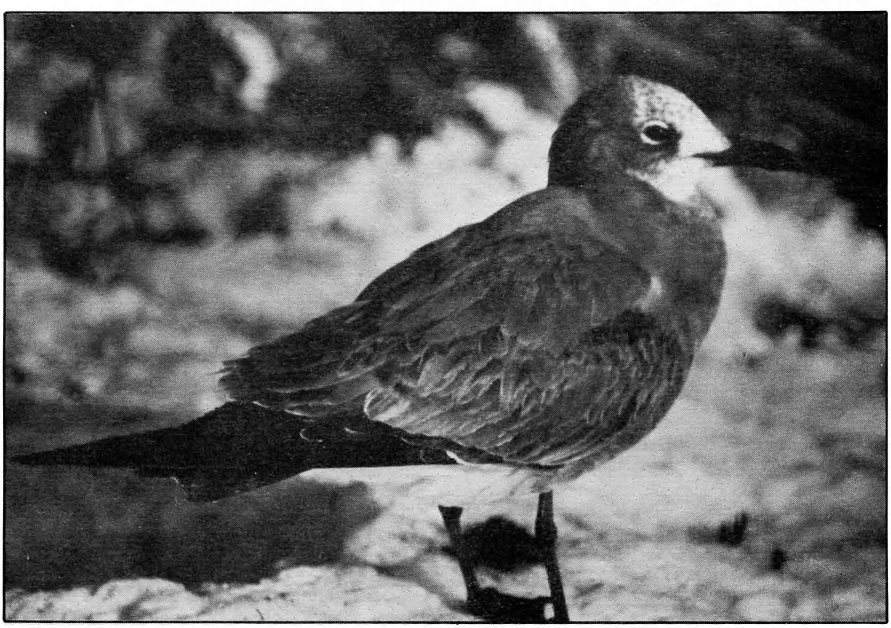

Figure 4: First winter Laughing Gull at Frenchman's Bay, *Durham* from 25 January to 6 February 1992. Photo by *Brian Henshaw.*

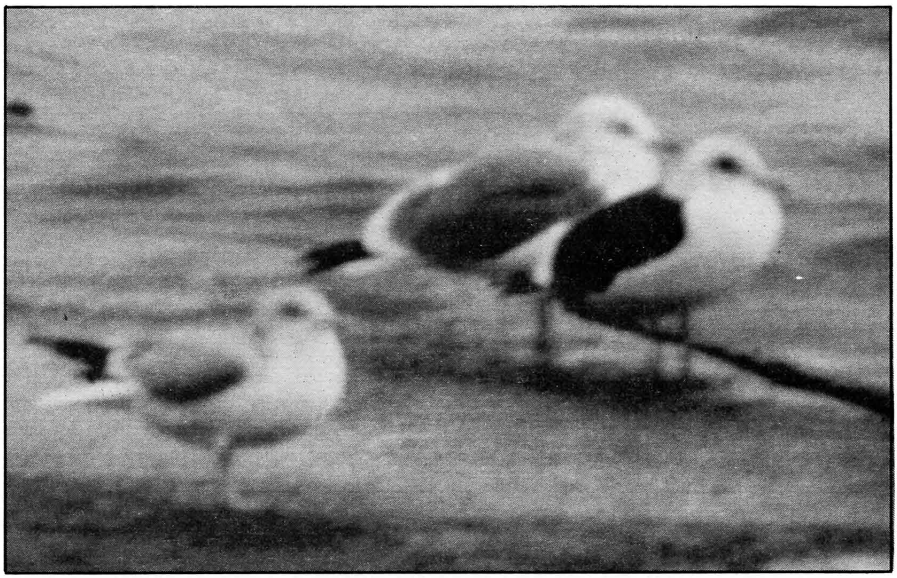

Figure 5: The Slaty-backed Gull (right) on the Niagara River, *Niagara* from 24 November to 29 December 1992. Photo by *Robert W. Brock.*

White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) (0/1/1)

1992 — one summer adult, 8 May, Sombra and Port Lambton S.L., *Lambton* (Dennis Rupert, John Haselmeyer; found by Willard Smith) - photo on file.

The second Ontario record, this may well have been the same individual which arrived at this location on exactly the same date in 1991 - unfortunately this year its visit was much briefer.

Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) (1/1/1)

1991 — one juvenile, 10 December, Detour Lake, *Cochrane* (Charles Hendry; found by Palma Perrier) - photos on file.

There was CBC Television coverage when Air Canada flew this young bird to Halifax for release in the Atlantic. It was found in the middle of the night on the headframe of a gold mine west of Cochrane. The third record for Ontario.

Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) (0/0/1)

1992 — one, 7-13 October, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (Don Graham, Dave Elder, Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

A spectacular first to Canada - surprising until you see a map of the vagrancy pattern for this small dove (Graham and Wormington 1993).

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) (2/6/1)

1992 — one summer adult male, 28 and 29 August, Flamborough, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Anna-Marie Galan, Lyn Hanna-Folkes).

Two excellent independent reports of sightings on consecutive days within 15 km of each other.

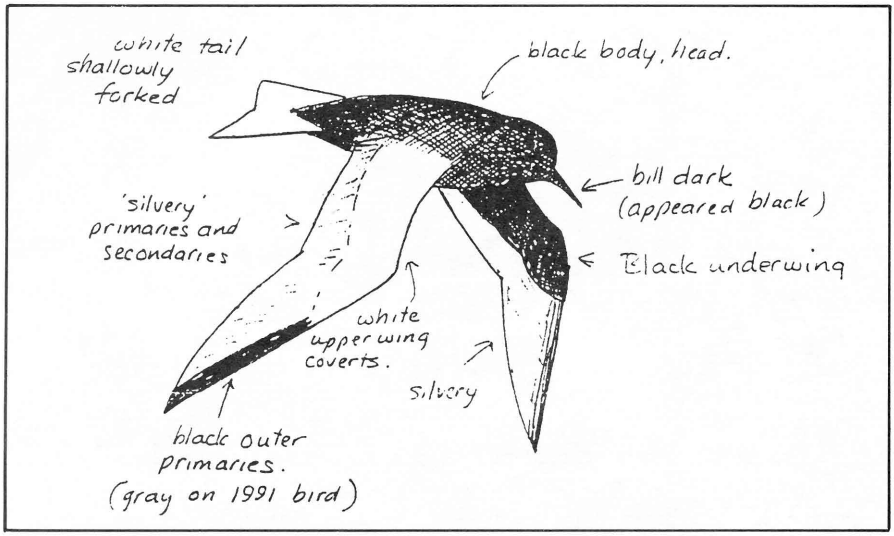

Figure 6: White-winged Tern at Port Lambton Sewage Ponds, *Lambton* on 8 May 1992. Drawing by *Dennis Rupert*.

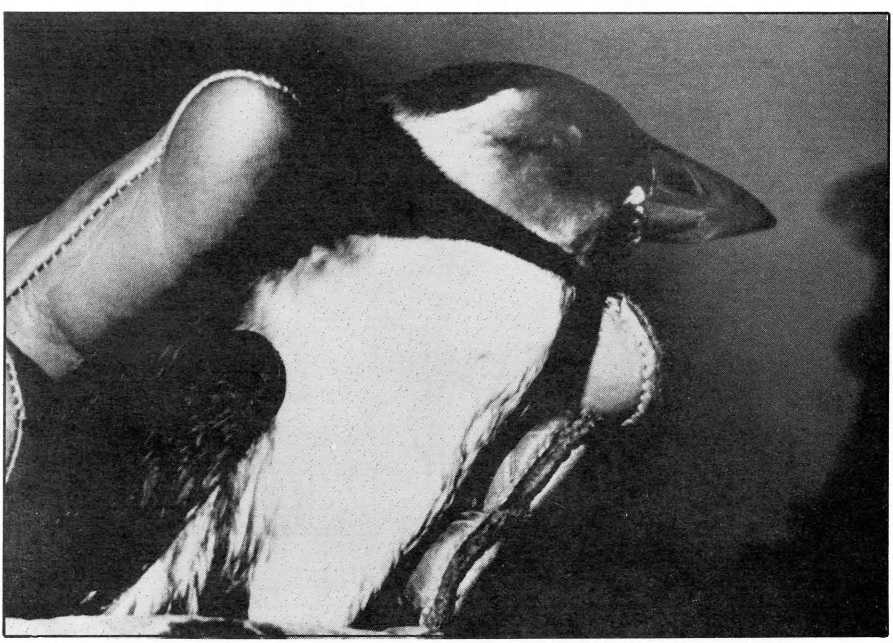

Figure 7: "Headframe", the Atlantic Puffin found at Detour Lake, *Cochrane* on 10 December 1991. Photo by *Charles Hendry*.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) (8/37/2)

1992 — one adult, 24 August, Tobermory Airport, *Bruce* (Rohan van Twest) - photo on file.
— one adult, 4-5 and 7 September, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Robert G. Finlayson, Jon McCracken; refound on 7th by Rohan van Twest) - photos on file.
— one, 7 September, Burlington, *Halton* (Rob Z. Dobos, Kevin A. McLaughlin).

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

1992 — one, 26 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Dave Shepherd).

This bird was in flight along the shore at Thunder Cape, and although it appeared to be a Western Kingbird, the diagnostic white outer tail feathers could not be seen.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) (3/19/2)

1992 — two, 8 June, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Harold D. Buckley) - photo on file.
— one, 12 June, Englehart, *Timiskaming* (Hugh C. Reynolds) - photos on file.

Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*) (0/0/1)

1992 — one immature male, 28, 29 October, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Peter Burke, Nicholas G. Escott).

One of the most beautifully illustrated reports ever submitted to the OBRC was the basis for this first documented record for the province (Burke 1993).

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) (0/8/2)

1992 — one adult, 23 April, Rondeau P.P., *Kent* (M.P. McAlpine).
— one, 18 May, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Regan Goodyear).

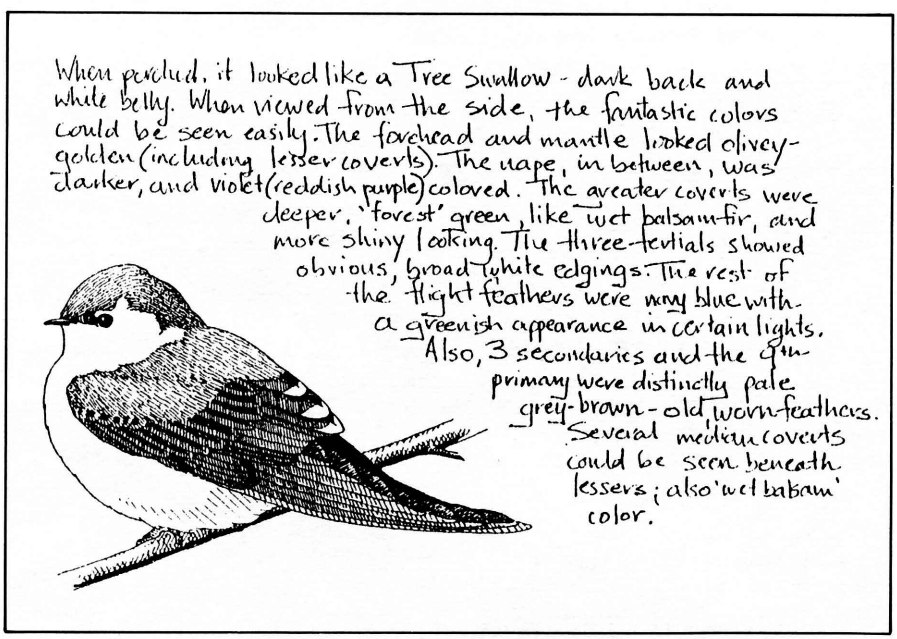

Figure 8: One of the fine illustrations from the report of the Violet-green Swallow at Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* on 28 and 29 October 1992. Drawing by *Peter Burke*.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) (4/15/2)

1992 — one, 3 January - 16 March, Wheatley P.P., *Kent* (Donald G. Cecile, Alan Wormington) - photo on file.
— one, 31 October, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Dawn Brenner).
1991 — one, 10 February, Nephton Ridge, *Peterborough* (Alvaro Jaramillo; found by Claudia Schaefer) - photos on file.
— one, 27 December - 2 January 1992, Rockton, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Bruce Duncan).

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) (5/40/1)

1992 — one male, early December - 5 April 1993, Bolsover, *Victoria* (Ron Pittaway; found by Joan and Arthur Smith).
1991 — one male, 9-17 November, Wheatley, *Kent* (Ron P. Neily, James N. Flynn) - photo on file.

There are still a lot fewer Varied Thrushes reported to the OBRC than we read about in the *American Birds* Seasonal Summaries - perhaps if we all made the effort, there would be more than five reports a year, and this species would be off the Review List!

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) North Only (0/4/1)

1992 — one, 4 May, Sawmill Bay, *Rainy River* (Don Graham, Dave Elder).

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) (2/4/1)

1992 — one, 12, 13 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Terry Osborne, Denys Gardiner, Robert H. Pease).

Lawrence's Warbler (*Vermivora pinus x V. chrysoptera*) (*/*/2)

1992 — one, 10 May, Dundas Marsh, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Magne Osteras).
— one, 11 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Gary R. Haines).

"Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata memorabilis* group) (*/1/1)

1992 — one summer adult male, 25, 26 April, Whitby, *Durham* (Margaret Bain; found by Jim Fairchild).
1991 — one, 22 October, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Richard Mundy, Kevin Shepherd).

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) (17/46/3)

1992 — one male, *albilora*, 16, 17 May, Pelee Island, *Essex* (James E. McAllister) - photos on file.
— one, 17 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Andy Johnson).
— one, 21 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Jerry Walsh).
1991 — one male, *albilora*, 9 April, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
— one, 8 September, Whitby, *Durham* (Alvaro Jaramillo).

(The Committee awaits photographs taken of four birds banded at Long Point during the spring of 1992, as only banding measurements were supplied, with no accompanying descriptions.)
Although we have assumed that all birds of this species with white lores are necessarily of the *albilora* race, a recent report has cast some doubt on this (Jaramillo 1993).

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) North Only (1/3/2)

1992 — one adult male, 3-9 May, MacKenzie, *Thunder Bay* (Larry Anderson, Nicholas G. Escott) - photo on file.
— one adult male, 20-22 October, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (Dave Elder, Don Graham) - video on file.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) (2/6/1)

1992 — one summer adult male, 11 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Peter Hamel).

Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) North Only (1/13/1)

1992 — one female, 3 January - 3 March, Moosonee, *Cochrane* (Doug McRae; found by Lori Legge) - photo on file.

This is the first Northern Cardinal to reach Moosonee, and the most northerly record of the species for the province.

Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*) (7/14/4)

1992 — one male, 22 April, Point Pelee, *Essex* (James Lesser).
— one adult male, 12 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Victoria L. Carley).
— one immature male, 17 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Martin Blagdurn).
— one adult male, 17 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* (John Zoch, John E. O'Donnell).

Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*) North Only (0/9/1)

1992 — one, 21 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Colin Jones).

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) (4/28/1)

1992 — one immature, 30 November, 1 December, Corner Marsh, *Durham* (Margaret Bain, Brian Henshaw; found by J. Murray Speirs) - photo on file.

Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*) (0/0/1)

1992 — one, first winter, 2, 3 October, Silver Islet, *Thunder Bay* (Mark Dugdale, Nicholas G. Escott) - photos on file.

Yet another provincial first among the exciting finds by Thunder Bay Bird Observatory staff this year. A most photogenic bird, and one which serves the useful taxonomic function of separating Lark Sparrow and Lark Bunting on the Ontario List, at least until Sibley and Monroe (1990) takes over!

Figure 9: Ontario's first Black-throated Sparrow at Silver Islet, *Thunder Bay* on 2 and 3 October 1992. Photo by *Nicholas G. Escott.*

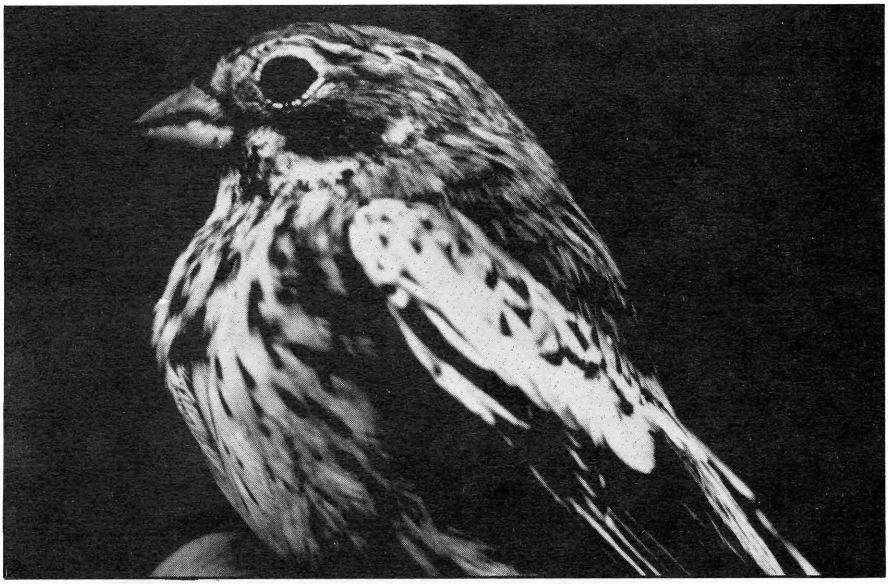

Figure 10: Female Lark Bunting at Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* on 7 September 1992. Photo by *Peter Jones.*

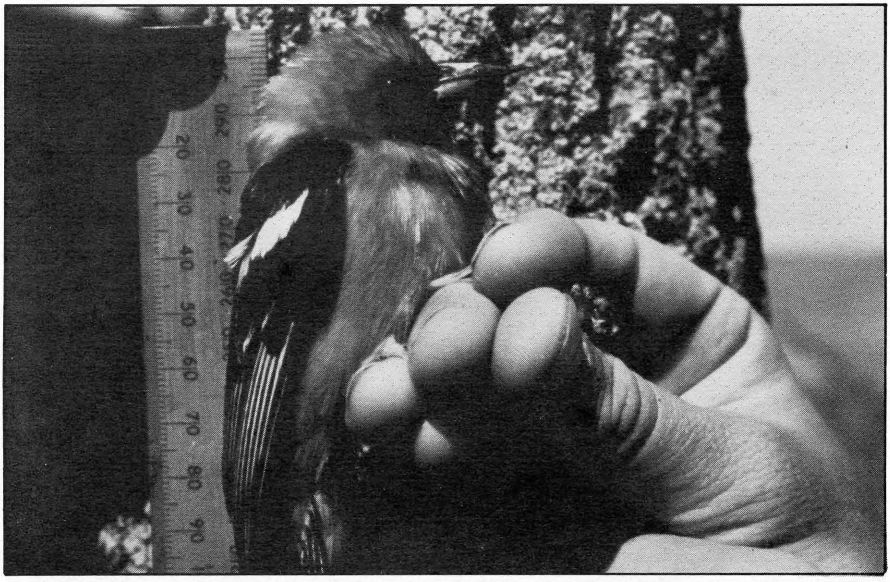

Figure 11: Canada's first Hooded Oriole at Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* on 19 and 20 May 1992. Photo by *Pam Hickman.*

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) (3/11/1)

1992 — one adult female, 7 September, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Peter Jones, Jon McCracken; found by Shannon Salter) - photos on file.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*))0/6/1)

1992 — one adult, 3-6 May, Belwood, *Wellington* (Marion Burnell-Grant) - photo on file.

Harris' Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) South Only (3/15/2)

1992 — one male, 15 February - 7 May, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Tarja Lahtinen, Roy B.H. Smith) - photos on file.

— one winter adult, 3, 4 October, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Karl Overman, Barry Cherriere, Jim P. Coey, James N. Flynn) - photos on file.

1991 — one first winter female, 11, 12 October, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Richard Mundy, Paul N. Prior; found by Kevin Shepherd) - photo on file.

Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*) (0/0/1)

1992 — one adult male, 19, 20 May, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Paul Stanbury, Pam Hickman) - photo on file.

Not only a provincial first, but a first for Canada too. Very thorough documentation was made after this bird was seen and mist-netted at the Breakwater station at Long Point Bird Observatory. It was part of a wave of vireos, warblers and Northern Orioles arriving on the 18th and 19th, and both location and date suggest a wild origin (Boardman 1992).

House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) North Only (0/2/0)

1991 — one female, 7 November, Matachewan, *Timiskaming* (Lloyd Taman).

Unaccepted Records

Identification accepted, origin questionable

Records in this category are those considered by the Committee to be almost certainly escaped birds or birds released from captivity. However, as with all submissions to the OBRC, such records may be reviewed again at any time should new information arise suggesting a wild origin.

European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

1991 — one adult, 14 December, Mindemoya, *Manitoulin* (H. Baines).

This finch's colourful appearance and pleasing song make it a common cagebird. A wild origin is considered extremely unlikely.

Unaccepted Records

Identification uncertain

In most of the records listed below, the written description supplied was found to be insufficient to establish with certainty the identity of the species claimed. In very few cases did the Committee consider that the identification was actually an error. Any of these reports may be resubmitted for further review if new supporting

evidence comes to light.

1992 — Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*), 19 November, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), 22 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Common Eider, 28 March, Burlington, *Halton.*
— Common Eider, 7 May, Georgian Bay Islands N.P., *Muskoka.*
— Black Vulture, 6 May, Essex, *Essex.*
— Black Vulture, 28 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Gyrfalcon, 9 January, Whitby, *Durham.*
— Pomarine Jaeger, 20 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Pomarine Jaeger, 26 October, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk.*
— Laughing Gull, 1 June, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk.*
— Laughing Gull, 20 August, Big Creek Marsh, *Haldimand-Norfolk.*
— Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*), 18 July, Holiday Beach, *Essex.*
— Least Tern, two, 18 October, Waupoos Marina, *Prince Edward.*
— Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) two, 17 May, Wheatley, *Kent.*
— White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*), 31 May, Leslie Street Spit, *Metropolitan Toronto.*
— Red-naped Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*), 25 April, Sault Ste. Marie, *Algoma.*
— Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax wrightii*), 12 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 23 August, Frenchman's Bay, *Durham.*
— Bewick's Wren, 15, 16 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Bell's Vireo, 9 May, Pelee Island, *Essex.*
— Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*), 17 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*), 22 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Yellow-throated Warbler, 25 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*), 12 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Blue Grosbeak, 12 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Blue Grosbeak, 12 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Blue Grosbeak, 14 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
— Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), 20 May, Point Pelee, *Essex.*
1991 — Little Blue Heron, 3 August, Hillman Marsh, *Essex.*
— Gyrfalcon, 14 December, Providence Bay, *Manitoulin.*
— Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), 12 September, Longridge Point, James Bay, *Cochrane.*
— Barn Owl, 21 December, Cayuga, *Haldimand-Norfolk.*
— Loggerhead Shrike, 14 December, Kenora, *Kenora.*
1988 — Eurasian Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*), two, 12 March, Etobicoke, *Metropolitan Toronto.*
1986 — Eurasian Wigeon, one female, 27 September, Leslie Street Spit, *Metropolitan Toronto.*

Corrections/Updates to Previous OBRC Reports

1991 Report (*Ontario Birds* 10: 43-63)

— under American White Pelican (1991) add: "two (pair), 16 June - 21 September, Luther Marsh, *Wellington* (Rob Z. Dobos)."
— under Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (1991 at Silver Lake) add "Drew Campbell" who also supplied a photograph.
— under "White-rumped" Whimbrel, the observation was in *Metropolitan Toronto* not *Peel.*
— under Pomarine Jaeger (1991 at Van Wagner's Beach) add "Barbara Charlton" as co-finder.

Acknowledgements

The OBRC would like to thank the many observers who took the time to compile and submit reports and photographs in 1992. We are especially grateful to those who provided assistance with obtaining reports that were not their own, or information on dates of occurrence, or gave expert opinions in cases of difficult identification problems; they include Gordon Bellerby, Bob Bowles, Allen Chartier, Rob Dobos, Jon Dunn, Dave Elder, Nick Escott, Brian Henshaw, Jim Heslop, Ross James, Alvaro Jaramillo, Steve LaForest, John Lemon, Jon McCracken, Doug McRae, Ron Ridout, Larry Rosche, Kayo Roy, Dennis Rupert and Alan Wormington.

Many thanks to Ron Ridout for continuing to forward the relevant extracts from the *American Birds* Seasonal Summaries, which greatly help in gathering reports. Once again, Bob Curry was a source of advice and encouragement as a previous author of this Report, and kindly assisted with preparing the summary numbers accompanying the records. I must also thank Ron Pittaway who as Committee chairman has put up with multitudes of phone calls and dealt with many thorny problems with great tact and patience. Thanks to all the members of the 1992 Committee for reviewing the first draft of this article, and yet again we thank Bob Finlayson for making printer-ready the slides and prints illustrating this Report.

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Margaret Bain, 210 Byron Street N., Whitby, Ontario L1N 4N1.

Recognizable Forms

Subspecies of the Great Horned Owl

by
Ron Pittaway

Introduction

The Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) is found throughout most of Ontario, north almost to Hudson Bay (James 1991). Its deep bass hooting, **Whoo, hoo-hoo, whooo, whooo** is a familiar night sound.

During the day, it often roosts in a secluded, thick evergreen and most of the time would go undetected but for the keen eyesight of its tormentor, the American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). A flock of crows, cawing loudly, often betrays the presence of a roosting Great Horned Owl.

Getting a good look at resident birds in southern Ontario is generally difficult because they are usually wary of humans. However, the northern forms of the Great Horned Owl which wander to southern Ontario in winter, are often less wary and more easily observed. Speirs (1985) noted that the periodic movements of northern Great Horned Owls into southern Ontario are associated with population fluctuations in the Snowshoe Hare (*Lepus americanus*). However, some (particularly young) may move south every winter (Houston 1978).

In this note, I discuss the occurrence and identification of the recognizable forms of the Great Horned Owl in Ontario. In addition, this is the first time that a description and photograph appear in the birding literature of the distinctive northern Ontario subspecies *B. v. scalariventris* (Snyder 1961). See Figure 1.

Taxonomy

Geographical variation is pronounced in the Great Horned Owl. Here I follow the treatment of James (1991) who lists four subspecies (races) in Ontario: the rufous nominate race *B. v. virginianus* of southern Ontario; the grayish race *B. v. scalariventris* of most of northern Ontario; the whitish race *B. v. subarcticus* of extreme Western Ontario; and the blackish Labrador race *B. v. heterocnemis* which wanders to Ontario in winter.

James (1991) follows Snyder (1961) in treating *B. v. scalariventris* as a valid subspecies, distinct from *B. v. subarcticus*. In April 1993, I examined the large series of *scalariventris* in the Royal Ontario Museum. I believe that *scalariventris* would be widely accepted as a valid subspecies today if Snyder (1961) had published his description in the more widely available *Auk*, and perhaps if the American Ornithologists' Union had updated the 1957 list of subspecies (now urgently in need of revision).

In the Fifth Edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list (1957), *B. v. subarcticus* is listed as *B. v. wapacuthu*. However, the original description of *wapacuthu* is confusing and cannot with

certainty be associated with either the Great Horned Owl or the Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) so the name *wapacuthu* is invalid and should be discarded "into the waste bin of synonyms" (Manning 1952, Todd 1963, Browning and Banks 1990, Dickerman (1991a). Most authors now use *subarcticus* instead of *wapacuthu*.

In addition, Godfrey (1966, 1986) noted that the large series of pale Great Horned Owls in the Canadian Museum of Nature from the southern parts of the prairie provinces referred to *B. v. occidentalis* in the A.O.U. Check-list (1957) "is not separable from *subarcticus* from farther north". Dickerman (1991b) also concluded that *occidentalis* was not a valid subspecies and that it should become synonymous with *subarcticus*.

See the comments on subspecies on page 310 in Godfrey (1986) and pages 48, 91 and 92 in James (1991).

Plumages

The sexes of the Great Horned Owl are similar in appearance, except that females on the average are larger than males. First year birds and adults are also similar in colouration. "The downy young moult directly into the colors of the adults" (Taverner 1942).

"Nominate" Great Horned Owl
(*B. v. virginianus*)

The widespread nominate subspecies is the breeding form in southern Ontario (James 1991). It is usually a permanent resident being less prone to wandering than the northern forms.

It is distinguished from the other Ontario subspecies by its "medium dark coloration with distinctive amount of redness in the plumage" (Godfrey 1986). As well, the black-rimmed facial discs are usually a clear rusty colour (Taverner 1942). For a typical example of this southern race, see John Crosby's illustration on Plate 42 in *The Birds of Canada* (Godfrey 1986).

"Snyder's" Great Horned Owl
(*B. v. scalariventris*)

L.L. Snyder (1961) of the Royal Ontario Museum described the population of pale Great Horned Owls breeding in most of northern Ontario (except the extreme western parts) as distinct from *B. v. subarcticus*, and named it *B. v. scalariventris*. See Figure 1. Taverner (1942) was aware of this form, stating that it was "too dark for *subarcticus*, too white for any other race ...with little or no red of *virginianus*". He regarded it as an intergrade population of *subarcticus x heterocnemis*. However, the large and uniform series of *scalariventris* in the Royal Ontario Museum from across 800 kilometres of northern Ontario strongly supports its recognition as a valid subspecies (Snyder 1961). Consequently, James (1991) also accepted *scalariventris* as a valid race.

Snyder's race breeds in northern Ontario from near the Manitoba border eastward to the Quebec border (and probably beyond), south to approximately Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and North Bay, where it intergrades with nominate *virginianus* (Snyder 1961, James 1991). In winter it wanders to southern Ontario. Most reports of pale (gray) Great Horned Owls in southern Ontario are referable to *scalariventris*.

Classic individuals of *scalariventris* are easily distinguished from nominate *virginianus* by their distinctive gray colouration and general absence of rufous in the plumage. The facial discs are usually a pale gray, sometimes with a tinge of rufous. From the much more whitish *subarcticus*, Snyder's race is distinguished by its darker colouration and "broader, more regular and darker bars ventrally". In broad terms, *scalariventris* is "more coldly grey with bolder bars below" (Snyder 1961). See Figure 1.

"Arctic" Great Horned Owl
(*B. v. subarcticus*)

The Arctic race breeds east of the Rocky Mountains, across the boreal forest and prairies to northern Ontario (Godfrey 1986). However, Snyder (1961) considered most of the northern Ontario population to be distinct from *subarcticus* and designated it as a separate subspecies, *scalariventris*. (See Figure 1 and previous account of this race.) James (1991) stated that *subarcticus* breeds along the western fringe of the province where it intergrades with *scalariventris*. The Arctic race wanders elsewhere in the province, especially in winter; for example, Taverner (1942) listed specimens from Algonquin Park and Toronto, but it is much rarer in southern Ontario than Snyder's race.

Classic examples of *subarcticus* are much more extensively white than *scalariventris*, "with more vague and sparse dark markings below" (Snyder 1961). The facial discs are "white to light ashy, rarely with a tinge of rufous" (Taverner 1942). Illustrations of the Arctic race appear on page 239 of the *National Geographic Guide* (Scott 1987), on Plate 32 in *Birds of Canada* (Taverner 1937), and on page 173 of *A Field Guide to the Birds* (Peterson 1980). Also see Figure 1.

Occasionally a very whitish Great Horned Owl (almost as white as a dark Snowy Owl) is sighted. These typical birds are probably safely called *subarcticus*. However, keep in mind that most pale (gray) birds seen in southern Ontario are referable to Snyder's race, *scalariventris*.

"Labrador" Great Horned Owl
(*B. v. heterocnemis*)

The dark Labrador race breeds in Newfoundland and Labrador south to central Quebec (Godfrey 1986). In winter *heterocnemis* wanders to southern Ontario (James 1991). Taverner (1942) listed specimens from Ottawa, Peterborough County, Peel Region, Toronto and St. Thomas.

I saw a "Labrador" Great Horned Owl at Aylmer, Quebec, near Ottawa one winter when I was a teenager. It was tame (unlike most of the local birds) and allowed me to observe it closely. I identified it from the description in the subspecies section of the old Peterson's Field Guide (Peterson 1947) which is still a useful reference on subspecies!

The Labrador race differs from the nominate race by its much darker (sootier) colouration and heavier barring below. On classic individuals, "the barring often obliterates the white markings, giving a black-breasted appearance" (Peterson 1947). In addition, the facial discs are usually a dark brownish-gray instead of a clear rusty as in the nominate race.

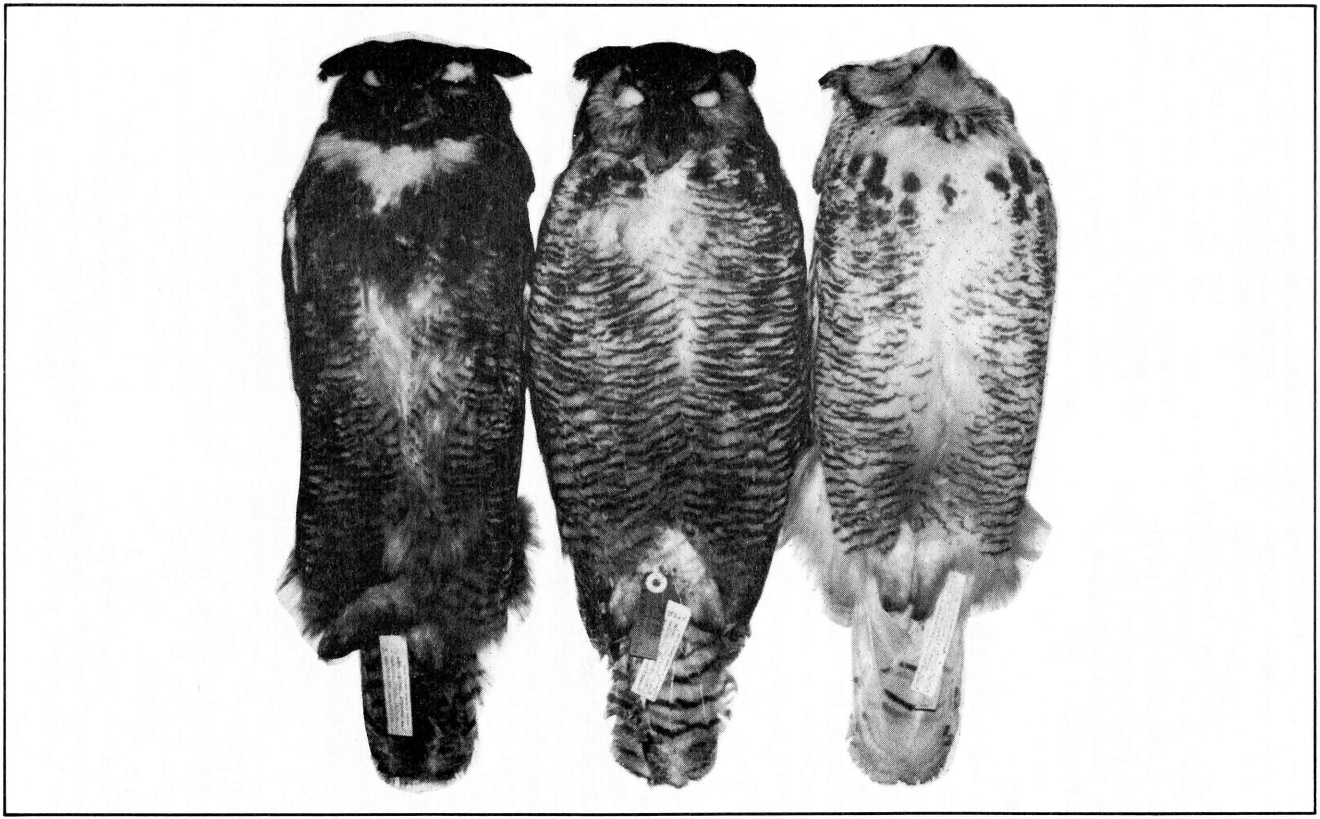

Figure 1: Three subspecies of the Great Horned Owl: (left to right) *Bubo viginianus virginianus, B. v. scalariventris,* and *B. v. subarcticus.* Photo by *Ross James* (Royal Ontario Museum).

An illustration by Roger Tory Peterson of a "Labrador" Great Horned Owl can be found on Plate 18 in *The Birds of Newfoundland* (Peters and Burleigh 1951). The same illustration, but not labelled as the Labrador race, is found on Plate 21 of the more widely available *Birds of Nova Scotia* (Tufts 1986).

Summary

Four well-marked forms of the Great Horned Owl are found in Ontario. Although intergrades occur, typical individuals of these forms are distinctive and recognizable in the field. One form, the "Snyder's" race *B. v. scalariventris*, is described here in the birding literature for the first time. This gray race accounts for most of the reports of "Arctic" Great Horned Owls in southern Ontario.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

Double-brooding in Ontario Loggerhead Shrikes

by
Ron Pittaway

Introduction

The **Loggerhead Shrike** (*Lanius ludovicianus*) is well-known to be double-brooded, and even triple-brooded in the southern part of its range (Bent 1950). Double-brooding is defined as the laying of a second clutch of eggs after the fledging of the first brood (Campbell and Lack 1985). Peck and James (1987) reported that in Ontario "the protracted breeding season indicated the probability of double broods, although none were reported". In this note, I report the first evidence of double-brooding by the Loggerhead Shrike for the province.

Observations

On 8 May 1992, I observed a Loggerhead Shrike on a nest in a hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.) in Carden Township, Victoria County. When checked the next day, the nest was found to hold six eggs (Isabelle Bisson, pers. comm.). The young left the nest sometime before 11 June 1992, and at least three fledged young were observed being fed by the adults near the nest site for several weeks afterwards.

On 24 June 1992, Stan Flemming and I found a newly built nest near the location of the first nest. Nearby we observed three juveniles from the first nest following and noisily begging for food from the adults. This observation followed three days of unusually cold, wet weather which had greatly reduced insect numbers.

On 2 July 1992, a female shrike flushed from the second nest. The nest contained three eggs. Nearby the male and three almost independent juveniles were observed hunting for insects. One of the juveniles was pecked hard several times by the adult male when it attempted to beg for food. This was an indication that the young from the first nest were nearly fully weaned.

On 8 July 1992, I noted that the female was incubating four eggs in the second-clutch nest while nearby the male still attended three young

from the first nest (Ridout 1992). Bent (1950) reported that "second nestings are begun while the adults are still feeding young from the first brood, but not all pairs undertake a second brood. One pair had a new nest with fresh eggs when the young of the first brood were 46 days old".

Unfortunately, the second nest was empty when checked on 11 July 1992, by Doug Tozer, Ron Tozer and the author. The cause of the nest failure was not apparent. However, previously it had been discovered that cattle regularly cause nest failures by rubbing and pushing against nest trees, causing the eggs to shake out of the nest (Pittaway 1991; Marie-Christine Paquin, pers. comm.). Five shrikes (two adults and three juveniles) were still present near the second nest on 15 July 1992.

When I next checked the area on 17 August 1992, I was astonished to find an adult tending a recently fledged young. I estimated that the young shrike had been out of the nest a few days at the most. This was based on its half-grown tail, bright yellow gape, dull black mask, and heavily barred woolly plumage. This juvenile exhibited concealment behaviour (Pittaway 1993). I concluded that the pair must have re-nested after their second nest failed. I noted that insect prey in the form of grasshoppers and moths was abundant. My last sighting of a Loggerhead Shrike in the area was on 22 August 1992.

Summary

The above observations constitute the first recorded evidence of double-brooding in Ontario of the Loggerhead Shrike. In 1992, Amy Chabot (pers. comm.) of McGill University also reported evidence of double-brooding in shrikes in the Napanee area. I believe that Loggerhead Shrikes are regularly double-brooded in Ontario.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Isabelle Bisson, Amy Chabot, Don Cuddy, and Marie-Christine Paquin for information on shrikes. Stan Flemming, Doug Tozer, Ron Tozer, and Dan Strickland assisted me from time to time in the field. I am grateful to Bill Crins, Ron Tozer, and Mike Turner for valuable comments during the preparation of this note.

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Winter Roosting Behaviour of the Three-toed Woodpecker

by
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At approximately 1415h on 9 December 1992, Sid Hadlington phoned to tell me that he and daughter, Elaine, had encountered a Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*) in Jobe's Woods, Presqu'ile Provincial Park, near Brighton, Ontario. Investigating an unfamiliar call at 1400h, the Hadlingtons had discovered a sawdust and woodchip-covered Three-toed Woodpecker beginning to excavate a hole in a dead tree (S. Hadlington, pers. comm.).

I raced to Jobe's Woods and found the Hadlingtons. The woodpecker, a female, was energetically digging a hole approximately 0.8 m from the top on the east side of a 7-8 m American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) snag. When I arrived at approximately 1430h the hole was just large enough to admit the woodpecker. The cavity was sufficient for the bird to crawl inside and toss out wood chips. The woodpecker regularly emerged from the hole to crawl about adjacent bark.

During this time, the Three-toed frequently gave a chirpy "peet" or "peek" call. This call was comparable to that of a Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) but was higher in pitch, livelier and more emphatic. The call also resembled the monosyllabic squeaks given by resident Red Squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*). At times, the Three-toed called in paired syllables emphasizing one of the two syllables.

During the Three-toed's digging, both a Downy Woodpecker and a White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*) landed in nearby trees and, in the case of the nuthatch, on the beech snag. Both birds eventually departed after being vigorously pursued by the calling Three-toed Woodpecker. After 20 minutes of observation, the woodpecker flew away to the north.

From the first sighting through to mid-March 1993, the most reliable way to see the Three-toed Woodpecker was to wait near the roost before dawn or dusk. For example, on 30 December 1992 at 1725h, I heard a short episode of tapping from the top of a dead Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) immediately southeast of the roosting snag. Moments later the Three-toed flew down to perch for a few seconds on a smaller hemlock. Seconds later, in waning light, the woodpecker flew to its hole and quickly entered the cavity. Almost immediately, the bird's head appeared at the opening. After peering out for 10 to 15 seconds, the bird disappeared. Except for tapping, the woodpecker had been silent.

Despite being the focus of much searching, the Three-toed Woodpecker was rarely reported in Jobe's Woods between 0745h and 1600h. Though Downy, Hairy (*Picoides villosus*) and Pileated (*Dryocopus pileatus*) Woodpeckers

were regularly seen in Jobe's Woods from December 1992 through to mid-March 1993, and a female Black-backed Woodpecker (*Piciodes arcticus*) was occasionally reported, it appeared that the Three-toed Woodpecker spent its days elsewhere. During one such absence, probably on 22 January, the north side of the roost snag was pitted by a Pileated Woodpecker.

I often wondered where the Three-toed went, presumably to feed, in the daytime. However, much searching during December and January proved fruitless. On 3 February 1993, following a discussion with Sid Hadlington, I searched a thick, coniferous plantation (*Picea, Pinus* and *Tsuga* spp.— approximately 2.5 hectares) adjacent to Jobe's Woods. About to check the final row, I spotted a dead spruce with small bark peelings lying below it on the snow. Entering a dense spruce-dominated area, I heard a faint tapping above me. Looking up, I saw the Three-toed Woodpecker about 3 m from the ground on a spruce trunk. I watched the bird for the next 45 minutes.

Subsequent checks of the same area on 4 and 5 February failed to reveal the Three-toed Woodpecker. However, on 5 February I counted 14 worked areas with fresh bark peelings. I located the Three-toed feeding in this plantation a second time on 9 February. On 19 February, a second spruce/pine plantation located approximately 0.8 km from the roost yielded the feeding Three-toed Woodpecker. I discovered the woodpecker feeding in a third spruce/pine plantation approximately 1.8 km from the roost on 28 February and 14 March.

Discussion

North American Three-toed Woodpeckers are infrequently seen in their boreal forest habitat (Bent 1939) and are considered non-migratory (Yunich 1985). Only occasionally do Three-toeds winter south of their summer range (Bent 1939) and usually as a result of "some forest malady" (Yunich 1985). Unseen by most southern Ontario observers prior to the advent of Dutch elm disease, Three-toeds were seen on blighted elms during 1956-7 and 1963-1966 (West and Speirs 1959). The Three-toed remains a notable sighting on Christmas Bird Counts in southern Ontario (McIlveen *in* Cadman et al. 1987).

While habitat requirements for resident Three-toed Woodpeckers are well documented (Cramp 1985, Bent 1939, Ehrlich et al. 1988), I found little reference to roost and food tree requirements of irruptive woodpeckers. For example, Yunich (1985) reported only six examples of food trees used by irruptive Three-toeds in New York (3 elm, 2 hemlock, 1 tamarack). With this in mind I thought it reasonable to describe Jobe's Woods and surrounding area giving particular attention to characteristics similar to those found in the Three-toed Woodpecker's breeding habitat.

Part of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence biome, Jobe's Woods is a mature but regenerating forest containing a deciduous/coniferous mixture of beech, maple (*Acer* spp.) and oak (*Quercus* spp.) with hemlock, pine (*Pinus* spp.) and areas of eastern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*). Snags as possible excavation sites are always present and will be more

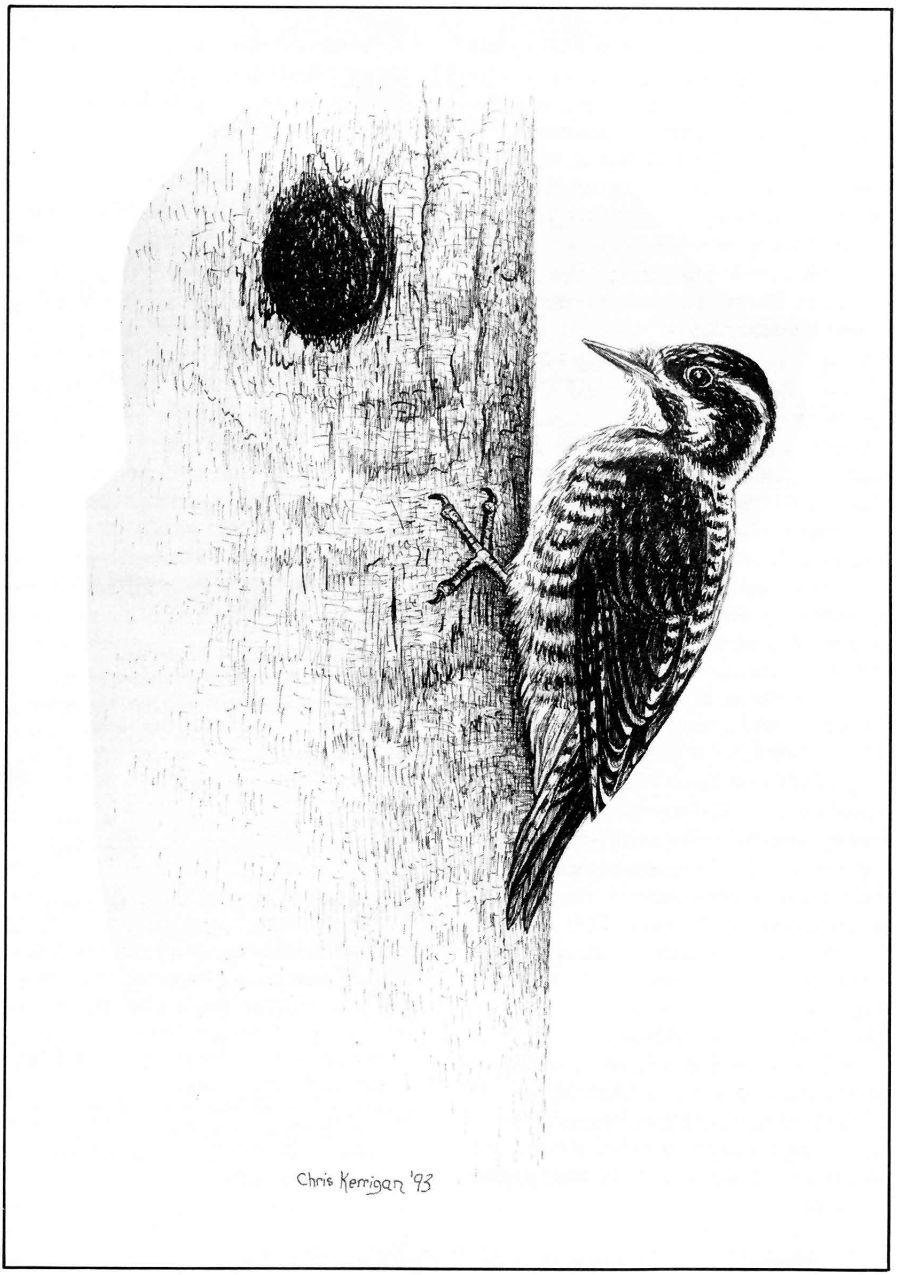

Figure 1: Three-toed Woodpecker. Drawing by *Christine Kerrigan.*

abundant in the future because of considerable storm damge during fall 1992.

Planted areas near Jobe's Woods contain heavier concentrations of spruce (*Picea* spp.), many of which are dead or damaged. Three such areas yielded me the feeding Three-toed. This is consistent in part with Yunich's (1985) statement that resident Three-toeds favor dense spruce-larch stands.

By mid-March 1993 the Jobe's Three-toed Woodpecker had doubled the 45.6 day average stay Yunich (1985) calculated for multiple-day sightings of irruptive Three-toeds in New York State. Yunich also states that because single-day sightings made up 63% of all sightings in his survey it could be inferred that out-of-territory Three-toeds are selective when assessing an area's resources. It follows that the 92-93 Three-toed Woodpecker evaluated Jobe's Woods and area and found it able to provide favourable food and shelter.

The Three-toed Woodpecker excavated its 92-93 winter roost cavity the day before the area was hit by a three-day blizzard considered to be the area's most severe in approximately 50 years. The imminent bad weather may have contributed to the haste with which the woodpecker dug its cavity. As observed by the Hadlingtons, the hole was started at approximately 1400h. By 1430h the agitated bird had excavated sufficiently to enter the cavity and disappear from sight. While not directly comparable, this interval compares with reported nest excavation time frames of "about 12 days" (Ehrlich et al. 1988) and, with both sexes working, 5 days and 12 days (Cramp 1985).

Acknowledgements

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Common Nighthawks foraging in large flocks on migration

by
Peter J. Ewins

Observations

On 23 and 24 August 1992, a flock of at least 110 Common Nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor*) foraged over an area of houses and streets lined with mature deciduous trees (mostly maples) in the west of Toronto, near Keele Street, about 1 km northeast of High Park. From up to two hours before sunset, the first birds appeared, hawking for insects, usually 50-150 m above tree level. Numbers increased until around sunset, and foraging appeared to be maintained until it was too dark to see the birds.

The birds were covering an area of approximately one km^2, flying in a loose group in a remarkably systematic fashion. The flock would quarter the area in one direction, then turn around and proceed back over the area. This sequence was repeated many times. Some birds appeared to drift away from the edges of this foraging area, but some others were seen arriving. The total number of birds in the foraging group remained at just over 100 during most of the observation period. There was relatively little calling, most individuals seemed to be busy searching for and often catching, insects on the wing. The distance between adjacent foraging birds in the flock was estimated to be mostly about 20 m. The weather was generally fine, calm and warm during both evenings. No raptors were seen in the neighbourhood on either evening, so it did not appear that the nighthawks were flocking in direct response to predation pressure. I was unable to identify the insects upon which the birds were feeding, but most were too small to be seen with binoculars at 50-150 m. Winged ants were present in the area at the time of the observations.

Within a week of these observations I also saw smaller flocks of nighthawks foraging at dusk in the general vicinity (e.g., four areas within 2-3 km of High Park, as well as the park itself). These foraging flocks usually comprised 10-50 birds, and the pattern of regular quartering backwards and forwards over a restricted area of mature deciduous trees and houses appeared to be adopted in these areas too, although not as markedly as seen in the Keele Street flock. I suspect that in excess of 500 nighhawks foraged within 2-3 km of High Park in late August 1992.

Discussion

Common Nighthawks occur regularly on fall migration, often in considerable numbers, in the lower Great Lakes basin and adjacent states, mostly between mid-August and mid-September (Weir 1984, Bull 1985, James 1991). Large movements, mostly in a southerly or southwesterly direction, and along river valleys or lakeshores, have been noted in many parts of Ontario, usually in the late afternoon or evening. Although feeding behaviour

was normally not noted specifically, some groups may have been actively searching for prey as they migrated. Groups were reported to comprise up to 550 nighthawks; these records are summarized in the following accounts: Mills 1981, Parker 1983, Weir 1984, Bennett 1987a,b,c. The most concentrated passage recorded in the Toronto area appears to be 706 flying over McMaster Avenue in 45 minutes on 31 August 1944 (Parker 1983).

Elsewhere, flocks of up to 1000 have been noted in Manitoba and Vancouver Island (de Graff 1978, M.K. McNicholl pers. comm.), Michigan (Brewer et al. 1991), Wisconsin (Tessen 1987); Texas (Bent 1940), Arizona (Bryant and Bryant 1945), and New York State - 1000 birds between 1800h and 2000h one day (Bull 1985). The highest count known to me is 16,496 passing over a backyard in Duluth, Minnesota, on 16 August 1986 (Tessen 1987). However, care should be taken when interpreting these totals, since my detailed observations of flock foraging behaviour indicate that repeat counting of the same individual nighthawks would be quite possible, particularly if birds adopted a more circular foraging route over an area.

Surprisingly, published accounts of flock foraging during fall migration are scarce. In the Kingston area, Quilliam (1973) mentioned a record of a flock of 40-50 birds hawking flies in the late afternoon of 26 August 1957, the birds moving in a circular motion. In Saint John, New Brunswick, up to 300 circled around, evidently feeding on flying ants, from 1900h until sunset on 20, 21 and 22 August 1980, and again on 19 August 1983 (Bennett 1983c). Elsewhere, Bent (1940) provided two accounts of flock foraging in fall: one being a flock of several hundred feeding on grasshoppers low over a meadow in August, the other group (unstated size) in low pursuit of insects over a clover field. However, the only detailed accounts of flock foraging behaviour were from other times of year, involving "hundreds of nighthawks" preying upon small beetles around a camp fire (Dr. Mearns, quoted by Bent 1940), and "hundreds" flying high, then back again at much lower altitude in the opposite direction, presumably feeding on insects at different altitudes (A.J. van Rossen, quoted by Bent 1940). Foraging over towns and cities is well known (Bent 1940, Godfrey 1986).

I suspect that the nighthawk flock I observed was feeding on flying ants as well as other insects. More than 50 different types of insect prey have been recorded from Common Nighthawk guts; one stomach contained a staggering 2175 ants, another 500 mosquitoes (Terres 1980). Presumably there was an abundance of insects available in the air above the trees and houses near Keele Street on the evening of my observations, making it profitable for the nighthawks to beat back and forth repeatedly over the same area. I think it unlikely that the birds were aggregating as a defence from predators. However, on 1 September 1986, a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) stooped unsuccessfully amongst a flock of up to 60 Common Nighthawks migrating westward near High Park, Toronto (Bennett 1987a).

Although nighthawks have nested readily on tar and gravel rooves since since the late 1880's in North America (Bull 1985, Andrle and Carroll 1988), including Ontario (Mills *in* Cadman et al. 1987), breeding numbers have been declining in urban, suburban and rural areas throughout much of the continental range (Mills *in* Cadman et al. 1987, Andrle and Carroll 1988, Brewer et al. 1991). The flocks seen feeding over Toronto in late August are almost certainly migrants from farther north, since much smaller numbers are seen around the city during the breeding season. Weather conditions and the abundance of flying ants and other insects probably account for unusually large flocks of nighthawks seen over Toronto during the fall migration period.

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Martin McNicholl provided details of some published and unpublished observations, and along with Chip Wéseloh and Donna Stewart kindly improved the manuscript.

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Photo Quiz

by
Doug McRae

Answer to Photo Quiz in *Ontario Birds* 11 (1): **Little Gull.**

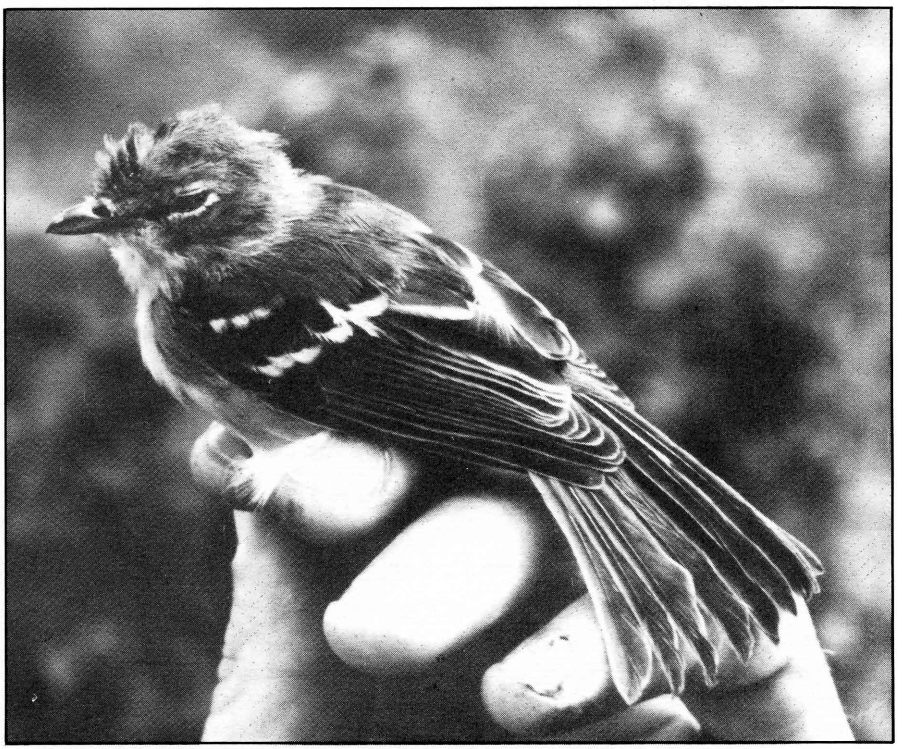
When I wrote the first quiz in this series I promised to identify the bird right away, rather than have you wade through an explanation. Well this time I break with tradition so that first-off, I can tell you that I didn't write "avoid gullibility"! No, that honour belongs to none other than the witty co-editor of *Ontario Birds* — Ron Tozer. Nice one Ron!

Now that I have dispensed with credit where credit is due, the quiz bird is a one year old **Little Gull**. Gulls have traditionally been the bane of many birders, mostly because guides didn't treat them accurately. With better books, particularly Peter Grant's *Gulls: a Guide to Identification*, the task has become much easier. Also, the small gulls such as Little are really not too tricky at all, whereas large gulls can truly be difficult to identify in some cases as they show greater variability in plumage and tend to hybridize with other species on occasion - something that is almost unheard of in the small gulls.

Several features are visible on this bird that really help to identify it. Little Gulls are the smallest gull — in fact they are really not bigger than Black Terns, they are just more robust. Adults in flight are easy to pick out with their blackish underwings, but immatures are less obvious to the untrained eye. Following are features visible on this photo that identify this bird as a Little. The bill is very fine and spike-like — much finer than a Bonaparte's. While most immature dark-headed gulls have eye smudges and ear spots, only the Little consistently shows a fairly solid dark cap as this bird displays. While some Bonaparte's may display a dusky area on the crown, rarely does it look as neat and uniform as on Little Gulls. You can also see that there is a strong, solid black "bar" running from the shoulder to the end of the secondary coverts (partially obscured by the grey mantle feathers). When in flight this appears as a black "W", much like on a Black-legged Kittiwake. This dark "W" would never appear black or solid on an immature Bonaparte's or Black-headed Gull. The primaries appear mainly black but have a crisp white "zig-zag" pattern on the top edge — something that is particularly obvious on Little Gulls. The last feature to point out is the leg length. Little's have decidedly shorter legs than a Bonaparte's, and this is clear in this photo. This can be a very useful feature for finding Little Gulls of any age, when mixed in a roosting flock of Bonies. Instead of scanning heads, scan the flock's legs. If you can see a gull's belly in the middle of all the Bonie legs, you have likely found a Little Gull! Also, overall the Little Gull appears more foreshortened and "pot-bellied" than a Bonaparte's.

While most Little Gull sightings in Ontario refer to adults, first-summer birds (i.e., one year old birds) are fairly frequently located in flocks of similarly-aged Bonaparte's Gulls during the summer months along the shores of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. This bird was photographed at Turkey Point, Lake Erie in mid-June 1992.

Our next bird will test that old adage about a bird in the hand. It was taken in southern Ontario in fall.



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Publication Notices

Ontario Nest Records Scheme: Twenty-fourth Report (1956-1992). 1993. By *George K. Peck*. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C6. No charge.

This report summarizes nest record card data submitted during the previous year (1992), and tabulates the number of nesting records for each species in the database. Highlights, such as newly confirmed breeding species for counties/districts/regional municipalities, and breeding range extensions, are also provided.

Birds of Presqu'ile Provincial Park. 1993. By *Steve M. LaForest* (compiler). The Friends of Presqu'ile Provincial Park, and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. (Softcover) 435 pp. $21.95. Available from The Friends of Presqu'ile Provincial Park, Box 1442, Brighton, Ontario K0K 1H0.

This long awaited annotated list includes accounts describing the abundance, seasonal status, and history of 312 species of birds known to have occurred in the park, and a guide to Presqu'ile's major habitats and birding areas. It features 28 bird photographs and line drawings, plus a map of the park.

This book will be reviewed by Clive Goodwin in the December issue of *Ontario Birds*.

A Bird Finding Guide to the Cochrane Area. 1993. By *Dan Paleczny*. The Cochrane Naturalists Club and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Greenwater Provincial Park). 21 pp. Available from Dan Paleczny, R.R. 1, Cochrane, Ontario P0L 1C0. Donations to offset postage and future printing costs will be gratefully accepted for the Cochrane Naturalists Club.

This publication describes birding locations in the Cochrane area, outlining how to bird the sites and which species to expect. Three maps show access to these areas. It also includes a checklist, described as "preliminary", which covers 204 species recorded for the Cochrane area. The list denotes breeding status, seasonal occurrence, relative abundance (where available), and earliest and latest dates for each species. The author welcomes contributions of observations by visitors in order to expand knowledge of the area's birds.
