

Breeding Birds of Ontario: Nidology and Distribution

Volume 2: Passerines

(First Revision – Part C: Tanagers to Old World Sparrows)

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In this, the final part of the current revision of Volume 2 of *Breeding Birds of Ontario* (Peck and James 1987), we are following the arrangement as proposed in the seventh edition (AOU 1998) of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list. In this part of the present revision, the Northern Cardinal and its allies (Family Cardinalidae) have been moved to follow Snow Bunting (Family Emberizidae), and precede Bobolink (Family Icteridae). The only other sequential change is the insertion of Harris's Sparrow

between White-throated Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow. Fifty breeding species are included in this part of the revision, 47 species with confirmed breeding status, and three (Snow Bunting, Pine Grosbeak, and Hoary Redpoll) still unconfirmed, as indicated by the use of brackets [] around their names in the species accounts.

Again, our primary data source is the Ontario Nest Records Scheme (ONRS), but all additional known published and unpublished data have been considered.

Breeding Bird Species

Scarlet Tanager, *Piranga olivacea*

84 nests representing 30 provincial regions. Nests from Haldimand-Norfolk (1997), Haliburton (1996), Lincoln (1936), and Sudbury (1988) were new regional additions. A nest photograph submitted from Manitoulin (1988) provided nesting documentation for that district.

Deciduous trees and saplings (12 spp., 43 nests) were favoured over coniferous (5 spp., 25 nests). One nest was in a grape vine tangle. The trees chosen most often were maple spp. (15 nests), hemlock (13 nests), beech spp. (10 nests), birch spp. (4 nests), elm spp. (4 nests), oak spp. (4 nests), pine spp. (4 nests), and spruce spp. (4 nests). Heights of 69 nests ranged from 1.8 to 20 m (6 to 66 ft), with 34 averaging 4.3 to 9.8 m (14 to 32 ft).

EGGS 35 nests with 1 to 4 eggs; 1E (3N), 2E (5N), 3E (6N), 4E (21N).

Average clutch range 4 eggs (21 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 44 nests with 7 parasitized (15.9%).

EGG DATES 33 nests, 24 May to 13 July (37 dates); 17 nests, 5 June to 12 June.

Eastern Towhee, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*

165 nests representing 31 provincial regions. Elgin (1996) and Manitoulin (1986) were recent regional nesting additions, from the southern and northern limits of the species' provincial breeding range, respectively.

Outside diameters of 10 nests ranged from 7 to 17 cm (2.8 to 6.7 inches); inside diameters of 10 nests ranged from 4 to 9 cm (1.6 to 3.5 inches); outside depths of 5 nests ranged from 5 to 14 cm (2 to 5.5 inches); and inside depths of 8 nests ranged from 4.5 to 7.5 cm (1.8 to 3 inches).
EGGS 107 nests with 1 to 6 eggs; 1E (6N), 2E (9N), 3E (29N), 4E (53N), 5E (6N), 6E (4N).
Average clutch range 3 to 4 eggs (82 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 164 nests with 30 parasitized (18.3%).

American Tree Sparrow, *Spizella arborea*

13 nests representing 1 provincial region. Five nests were reported in 1990 a few kilometres east of the mouth of the Little Shagamu River, 1.5 to 2 km (.9 to 1.2 mi) from the Hudson Bay shoreline, on old beach ridges covered with lichen, herbs and small shrubs. The new data are added and the following is presented.

Twelve nests were on the ground, usually under dwarf willow or stunted spruce; and one nest was on the lowest bough of a Black Spruce at a height of 30.5 cm (1 ft). In all instances where nest linings were described they contained feathers.

EGGS 10 nests with 1 to 6 eggs; 1E(1N), 4E(1N), 5E(6N), 6E (2N).

Average clutch range 5 eggs (6 nests).

EGG DATES 9 nests, 21 June to 9 July (10 dates); 5 nests, 24 June to 1 July.



Figure 1: Nest of Eastern Towhee containing 3 towhee eggs and 4 smaller eggs of Brown-headed Cowbird, 15 May 1969, Nassagaweya Twp., Halton County. (Photo by G.K. Peck).

Chipping Sparrow, *Spizella passerina*

1893 (1896 nests) representing 48 provincial regions.

Cowbird parasitism 1600 nests with 484 parasitized (30.3%). During the last decade only 33 of 188 nests with known contents were parasitized (17.6%), thus slightly lowering the overall percentage parasitism. In a 1995 Haldimand-Norfolk nest, a cowbird egg was covered over by the host (Peck 1996).

INCUBATION PERIOD Incubation often began with the penultimate egg, and ambient air temperatures were also probably responsible for those incubation periods of less than 10 days, listed in Volume 2 (Peck and James 1987).

Clay-colored Sparrow, *Spizella pallida*

42 nests representing 21 provincial regions. New regional nestings were Lanark (1985), Nipissing (1989), and Rainy River (1994).

EGGS 29 nests with 2 to 5 eggs; **2E** (2N), **3E** (8N), **4E** (18N), **5E** (1N).

Average clutch range 4 eggs (18 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 35 nests with 11 parasitized (31.4%).

EGG DATES 27 nests, 19 May to 20 July (36 dates); 14 nests, 10 June to 26 June.

Field Sparrow, *Spizella pusilla*

392 nests representing 34 provincial regions.

Outside diameters of 16 nests ranged from 4 to 11.4 cm (1.6 to 4.5 inches), with 8 averaging 6.3 to 9 cm (2.5 to 3.5 inches); inside diameters of 15 nests ranged from 3.5 to 7 cm (1.4 to 2.8 inches), with 8 averaging 4.5 to 5.6 cm (1.8 to 2.2 inches); outside depths of 14 nests ranged from 3 to 10 cm (1.2 to 3.9 inches), with 7 averaging 5 to 7.3 cm (2 to 2.9 inches); and inside depths of 13 nests ranged from 2.5 to 5 cm (1 to 2 inches), with 7 averaging 3.3 to 4.5 cm (1.3 to 1.8 inches).

Cowbird parasitism 378 nests with 63 parasitized (16.7%).

Vesper Sparrow, *Poocetes gramineus*

528 (529 nests) representing 44 provincial regions. Kent (1967) was an added nesting region.

With the inclusion of measurements from 2 more nests, the outside diameter of 7 nests ranged from 7.6 to 10 cm (3 to 4 inches), inside diameters of 4 nests from 4 to 6.4 cm (1.6 to 2.5 inches), outside depths of 2 nests were 2 and 5 cm (0.8 and 2 inches), and inside depths of 2 nests were 1 and 5 cm (0.4 and 2 inches).

Cowbird parasitism 494 nests with 52 parasitized (10.5%).

Lark Sparrow, *Chondestes grammacus*

9 nests representing 4 provincial regions. No additional information.

Savannah Sparrow, *Passerculus sandwichensis*

662 (664 nests) representing 45 provincial regions. Hastings (1985) was a new nesting region.

Eggs were laid daily.

Cowbird parasitism 607 nests with 44 parasitized (7.2 %).

INCUBATION PERIOD Another 9-day period from a nest in Kenora near Hudson Bay, again suggested that true incubation begins before the clutch is complete, particularly in colder regions.

Grasshopper Sparrow, *Ammodramus savannarum*

86 nests representing 25 provincial regions. Niagara RM (1986) and Waterloo (1968) were the last nesting regions added.

Outside diameters of 6 nests ranged from 8 to 10 cm (3.1 to 3.9 inches), inside diameters ranged from 5 to 7 cm (2 to 2.8 inches), outside depths ranged from 4 to 8 cm (1.6 to 3.1 inch-



Figure 2: Nest and eggs of Savannah Sparrow, 4 June 1970, near Mer Bleue bog, Carleton County. (Photo by G.K. Peck).

es), and inside depths ranged from 3 to 5 cm (1.2 to 2 inches).

EGGS 66 nests with 1 to 5 eggs; 1E (1N), 2E (4N), 3E (6N), 4E (25N), 5E (30N).

Average clutch range 4 to 5 eggs (55 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 83 nests with 7 parasitized (8.4%).

Henslow's Sparrow, *Ammodramus henslowii*

13 nests representing 11 provincial regions. No evidence of nesting in the last decade has been noted, and other than the occasional sighting of territorial males, e.g., Prince Edward County in 1996, it is feared that the species may be all but extirpated from the province as a breeding species. It is listed as endangered by COSEWIC (Austen and Cadman 1993).

Le Conte's Sparrow, *Ammodramus leconteii*

8 nests representing 3 provincial regions. Cochrane (1983) was an added nesting region. A 1987 breeding record was reported from Dundas County (Weir 1987b). In 1988, males and females in breeding condition were collected in Kenora near Attawapiskat, and also in 1998 in Cochrane near Moosonee (J.D. Rising, pers. comm.).

Two new nest records have been received, the Cochrane District nest in a 'graminoid-dominated super-tidal marsh', and a Rainy River District nest in a wet meadow bordering a lake. The Cochrane nest was situated beneath a flattened *Juncus* sp. clump at a height of ca 17 cm (6.7 inches); the Rainy River nest was placed in stems of Canada Blue-joint, *Calamagrostis canadensis*, and its exterior was formed of coarse grasses with a lining of fine grasses. The Rainy River nest had an outside diameter of 10 cm (3.9 inches), and an outside depth of 6 cm (2.4 inches).

EGGS 8 nests with 4 to 5 eggs; 4E (6N), 5E (2N).

EGG DATES 7 nests, 3 June to 18 June (8 dates).

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, *Ammodramus nelsoni*

3 nests representing 1 provincial region. Only one nest, the third, has been reported since the publication of Volume 2 (Peck and James 1987). This nest was found on 5 July 1983 at North Point, 27 km NNE of Moosonee, Cochrane District, but details of the find have only recently been received. In addition, males and females in breeding condition were collected in 1988 in Kenora near Attawapiskat, and also in 1998 in Cochrane near Moosonee (J.D. Rising, pers. comm.).

The 1983 nest was near James Bay as were also the two previously discovered nests of this secretive and seldom encountered provincial breeding species. It was located in a 0.3 to 0.4 m (1 to 1.3 ft) tall, dry, 'grass-sedge-forb' area. The nest was formed entirely of grasses and sedge stems and contained 4 eggs.

Fox Sparrow, *Passerella iliaca*

5 nests representing 2 provincial regions. No new information for this northern-breeding sparrow has been received.

Song Sparrow, *Melospiza melodia*

2128 (2132 nests) representing all 52 provincial regions.

A small Haliburton nest had an outside diameter of 7.8 cm (3.1 inches), inside diameter of 4.9 cm (1.9 inches), outside depth of 5 cm (2 inches), and an inside depth of 3.2 cm (1.3 inches). *Cowbird parasitism* 2032 nests with 457 parasitized (22.5%). During the last decade only 37 of 220 nests with known contents were parasitized (16.8%), thus slightly lowering the overall percentage parasitism.

INCUBATION PERIOD 18 nests, 11 to 15 days, with 9 averaging 11 to 12 days.

A triple brood was reported in Haldimand-Norfolk in 1994, with the second and third broods in the same nest and both nests in the same small tree; the total observed nesting period ranged from 20 May to 7 August.

Lincoln's Sparrow, *Melospiza lincolni*

29 nests representing 8 provincial regions.

EGGS 26 nests with 3 to 5 eggs; 3E (2N), 4E (20N), 5E (4N).

Average clutch range 4 eggs (20 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 28 nests with 1 parasitized (3.6%).

Swamp Sparrow, *Melospiza georgiana*

269 nests representing 41 provincial regions. Nest records from Haliburton (1981) and Waterloo (1972) were added.

With the inclusion of measurements from 4 more nests, 10 nests had outside diameters ranging from 7 to 15 cm (2.8 to 6 inches), inside diameters from 5 to 8 cm (2 to 3.1 inches), outside depths from 7 to 11.4 cm (2.8 to 4.5 inches), and inside depths from 4 to 7.6 cm (1.6 to 3 inches).

Cowbird parasitism 257 nests with 34 parasitized (13.2%).

White-throated Sparrow, *Zonotrichia albicollis*

512 (514) nests representing 33 provincial regions.

Cowbird parasitism 449 nests with 24 parasitized (5.3%).

Harris's Sparrow, *Zonotrichia querula*

1 nest representing 1 provincial region. No new information for this northern breeder.



Figure 3: Lincoln's Sparrow during spring migration. It is a widespread breeding bird, primarily in northern Ontario. (Photo by G.K. Peck).



Figure 4: Nest and eggs of Swamp Sparrow in marsh, 19 May 1968, Dover Twp., Kent County. (Photo by G.K. Peck).



Figure 5: White-throated Sparrow feeding young in nest, 20 June 1987, Benneweis Twp., Sudbury District. (Photo by G.K. Peck).

White-crowned Sparrow, *Zonotrichia leucophrys*

22 nests representing 2 provincial regions, and an adjacent island in James Bay (Akimiski Island, NWT). Five new nest records have been received and the following data includes the addition of the new records.

Three 1990 Kenora nests near Hudson Bay and 1 to 2 km (0.6 to 1.2 miles) east of Little Shagamu River were on raised tundra ridges covered with lichens, herbaceous plants, and scattered shrubs and small spruce. The 1995 Akimiski Island nest was also on a vegetated coastal ridge.

EGGS 20 nests with 3 to 5 eggs; **3E** (1N), **4E** (8N), **5E** (11N).

Average clutch range 5 eggs (11 nests).

EGG DATES 19 nests, 8 June to 24 July (28 dates); 10 nests, 23 June to 30 June.

Dark-eyed Junco, *Junco hyemalis*

186 nests representing 25 provincial regions. A nest record from Manitoulin (1990) was added, and a 1986 breeding record from Haldimand-Norfolk was noted well south of the species' present breeding range (Weir 1986).

With the inclusion of measurements of 8 more nests, the outside diameters of 10 nests ranged from 6.8 to 16.5 cm (2.7 to 6.5 inches), inside diameters of 19 nests from 4 to 12 cm (1.6 to 4.7 inches), outside depths of 4 nests from 3.2 to 8.9 cm (1.3 to 3.5 inches), and inside depths of 18 nests from 2 to 6.5 cm (0.8 to 2.6 inches).

Cowbird parasitism 177 nests with 7 parasitized (4%).

Lapland Longspur, *Calcarius lapponicus*

14 nests representing 1 provincial region.

EGGS 13 nests with 3 to 6 eggs; **3E** (3N), **4E** (3N), **5E** (5N), **6E** (2N).

Average clutch range 4 to 5 eggs (8 nests).

EGG DATES 10 nests, 17 June to 21 July (14 dates); 5 nests, 27 June to 30 June.



Figure 6: Nest and eggs of White-crowned Sparrow near James Bay coast, 1 July 1970, in Polar Bear Provincial Park, Kenora District. (Photo by G.K. Peck).

Smith's Longspur, *Calcarius pictus*

16 nests representing 1 provincial region.

EGGS 14 nests with 3 to 5 eggs; 3E (1N), **4E** (8N), **5E** (5N).

Average clutch range 4 eggs (8 nests).

EGG DATES 9 nests, 22 June to 14 July (13 dates); 5 nests, 29 June to 2 July

[Snow Bunting], *Plectrophenax nivalis*

No further information on this possible but unconfirmed breeder has been received (Peck and James 1987, Cadman et al. 1987).

Northern Cardinal, *Cardinalis cardinalis*

432 (434 nests) representing 29 provincial regions. Prince Edward (1993) was a recently added nesting region.

One nest was 8 m (26 ft) from an active nest of a Cedar Waxwing. A very unusually high nest was reported at a height of 22 m (72 ft) in a 27 m (89 ft) White Pine in Haldimand-Norfolk (A. Sandilands, pers. comm.).

EGGS 308 nests with 1 to 8 eggs; 1E (20N), **2E** (75N) - 24.4%, **3E** (148N) - 48.1%, **4E** (52N) - 16.9%, **5E** (11N) - 3.6%, 6E (1N), 8E (1N).

Average clutch range 2 to 3 eggs (223 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 358 nests with 72 parasitized (20.1%).

Several double broods were reported.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, *Pheucticus ludovicianus*

527 (530 nests) representing 43 provincial regions. A nest record was submitted in 1995 from Prince Edward.



Figure 7: Male Rose-breasted Grosbeak feeding young in nest, 18 June 1965, Nassagaweya Twp., Halton County. (Photo by G.K. Peck).

A large nest from Haldimand-Norfolk had an outside diameter of 20 cm (7.9 inches), inside diameter of 15 cm (5.9 inches), outside depth of 12 cm (4.7 inches), and inside depth of 9 cm (3.5 inches).

Cowbird parasitism 367 nests with 28 parasitized (7.6%).

INCUBATION PERIOD 12 nests, 11 to 14 days: 2 of 11 days, 1 of no more than 11 days, 3 of at least 11 days, 2 of no more than 12 days, 2 of at least 12 days, 1 of ca. 13 days, 1 of at least 14 days.

Indigo Bunting, *Passerina cyanea*

212 nests representing 36 provincial regions. Victoria (1986) was an added nesting region, and a breeding record for Dufferin (1996) was reported.

EGGS 144 nests with 1 to 6 eggs; 1E (4N), 2E (13N), 3E (72N), 4E (53N), 6E (1N).

Average clutch range 3 eggs (72 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 193 nests with 51 parasitized (26.4%).

EGG DATES A late egg date of 20 August was recorded at a 1937 nest from Lincoln County, and a nestling in pinfeathers was noted on 4 September in a 1987 nest from Bruce County, indicating an even later egg date.

Dickcissel, *Spiza americana*

30 (33 nests) representing 7 provincial regions. Kent, Lambton, Niagara, and York were all new nesting regions in 1988, the result of a sporadic breeding invasion into southern Ontario that year. Also in 1988, nests were reported from Essex (mainland) and Pelee Island, and were the first for the county since 1884.

New and mostly well detailed data from 29 nests were received following the 1988 invasion and are herein summarized.

The availability of suitable breeding habitat rather than a colonial formation would appear

to explain the often relatively close proximity of nesting pairs during the 1988 breeding season.

Most nests were situated in old or abandoned fields of grasses, other herbaceous plants, and various shrubs. One nest was in a hay field. Nests at low elevations (23 nests) greatly outnumbered those on the ground (2 nests). Elevated nests were placed in herbaceous plants (5 species), and also in deciduous shrubs and saplings (6 species). One ground nest was at the base of a plant and another was concealed in stalks of timothy. Heights of 20 nests ranged from 0.08 to 1 m (0.3 to 3.3 ft), with 10 averaging 0.3 to 0.6 m (1 to 2 ft).

Nests were described as neat cups, although one was flimsy and poorly constructed. Nest exteriors were of coarse grasses and herbaceous stalks. Linings were composed of fine grasses, leaves and fine rootlets. Outside diameters of 16 nests ranged from 6 to 12.1 cm (2.4 to 4.8 inches), with 8 averaging 8.9 to 11.2 cm (3.5 to 4.4 inches); inside diameters ranged from 5 to 7 cm (2 to 2.8 inches), with 8 averaging 5.7 to 6.4 cm (2.3 to 2.5 inches); outside depths ranged from 5 to 10.2 cm (2 to 4 inches), with 8 averaging 7 to 8.6 cm (2.8 to 3.4 inches); and inside depths ranged from 4 to 6.6 cm (1.6 to 2.6 inches), with 8 averaging 4.4 to 5.6 cm (1.8 to 2.2 inches). EGG S 24 nests with 2 to 5 eggs; 2E (1N), 3E (6N), 4E (15N), 5E (2N).

Average clutch range 4 eggs (15 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 25 nests with 1 parasitized (4%).

INCUBATION PERIOD 4 nests: 2 of 9 days, 1 of 9 or 10 days, 1 of 10 days. These periods are shorter than usually stated (Baicich and Harrison 1997), and probably indicate that incubation commences before the clutch is complete.

EGG DATES 17 nests, 6 June to 27 July (27 dates); 9 nests, 12 July to 17 July.

Baboblink, *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*

156 (157 nests) representing 37 provincial regions. Haliburton (1988) was the only added nesting region.

EGG S 108 nests with 1 to 7 eggs; 1E (2N), 2E (3N), 3E (4N), 4E (21N), 5E (55N), 6E (22N), 7E (1N).

Average clutch range 5 eggs (55 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 149 nests with 8 parasitized (5.4%).

EGG DATES 109 nests, 19 May to 16 July (115 dates); 55 nests, 2 June to 12 June.

Red-winged Blackbird, *Agelaius phoeniceus*

7831 (ca 12 296 nests) representing all 52 provincial regions. The average size of 124 colonies was 18 nests.

A tree nest of this species was located on the same branch as an active nest of Mourning Dove, and at a distance of 1 m (3.3 ft).

In Kent County, a nest with 1 egg was found on 23 June. A single young was noted on 25 June and was banded on 1 July. This record suggests that 1 egg may occasionally be a complete clutch.

Cowbird parasitism 6554 nests with 170 parasitized (2.6%).

Eastern Meadowlark, *Sturnella magna*

423 nests representing 38 provincial regions.

Cowbird parasitism 390 nests with 11 parasitized (2.8%).

Western Meadowlark, *Sturnella neglecta*

9 nests representing 9 provincial regions. No new nesting information has been received. While the northwestern Ontario population appears stable, occurrences of the Western Meadowlark have decreased in southern Ontario since the 1970s (Austen et al. 1994).

Yellow-headed Blackbird, *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*

42 (15 colonies, 55 nests) representing 4 provincial regions. A nest record was received from Thunder Bay in 1988, and a breeding record in 1996 was noted from Simcoe. At the Thunder

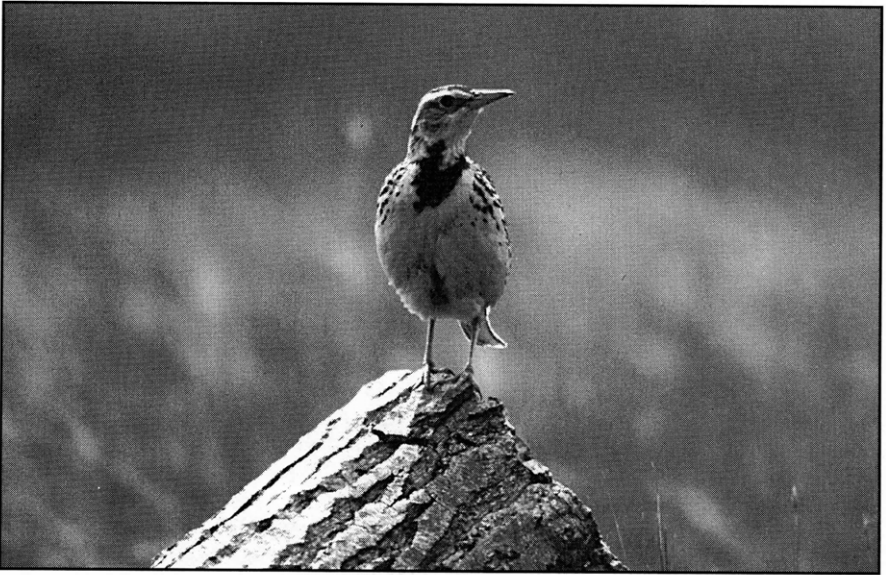


Figure 8: Western Meadowlark near its nest. Identification problems as well as a small provincial population are the main reasons for the few known Ontario nests. (Photo by G.K. Peck).

Bay location, 10 pairs were reported in 1989 (Weir 1989).

EGGS 33 nests with 1 to 5 eggs; 1E (3N), 3E (10N), 4E (18N), 5E (2N).

Average clutch range 4 eggs (18 nests).

EGG DATES 31 nests, 30 May to 9 July (40 dates); 16 nests, 7 June to 19 June.

Rusty Blackbird, *Euphagus carolinus*

38 nests representing 14 provincial regions. No new nesting or breeding information has been received in the past decade.

Brewer's Blackbird, *Euphagus cyanocephalus*

209 (56 colonies, 14 isolated nestings, ca 264 nests) representing 15 provincial regions. The average size of 56 colonies was 4 to 5 nests.

A compact nest from Bruce had an outside diameter of 12 cm (4.7 inches), inside diameter of 9 cm (3.5 inches), outside depth of 7 cm (2.8 inches), and inside depth of 5 cm (2 inches).

Cowbird parasitism 206 nests with 1 parasitized (0.5 %).

EGG DATES 130 nests, 6 May to 4 July (157 dates); 65 nests, 27 May to 1 June. The data continue to indicate a fairly short breeding season during which only one brood is raised, and especially show a narrow height of the season.

BREEDING DISTRIBUTION

New colony sites were reported in 1991 in Bruce and Parry Sound (Weir 1991b), and on 21 May 1993 more than 100 pairs were noted in the southern half of Bruce County (Ridout 1993a).

Common Grackle, *Quiscalus quiscula*

2817 (2441 isolated nestings, ca 310 colonies, ca 5029 nests) representing all 52 provincial

regions. The average size of 310 estimated colonies totalling 2588 nests was 8 nests.

A small colony of grackles was found nesting near nesting House Finches. Two Common Grackle nests in a marsh contained buried eggs of Red-winged Blackbirds, indicating that the grackles had built on occupied nests of that species.

A nest from Prince Edward contained 5 grackle eggs which hatched and 1 egg of American Robin which did not.

Cowbird parasitism 2245 nests with 4 parasitized (0.2%).

Brown-headed Cowbird, *Molothrus ater*

RECORDS Eggs or young in 3508 hosts' nests, representing 50 provincial regions. With the addition in 1988 of the Dickcissel, the Brown-headed Cowbird has parasitized a total of 87 species in Ontario.

The eastern race of the Warbling Vireo, *Vireo g. gilvus*, is now known to be a rejecter of cowbird eggs, and the smallest of the 7 species which employ this strategy (Sealy 1996).

Orchard Oriole, *Icterus spurius*

75 nests representing 15 provincial regions. A nest record was received for York RM in 1990.

Outside diameters of 17 nests ranged from 7 to 10 cm (2.8 to 3.9 inches), inside diameters from 5 to 8 cm (2 to 3.1 inches), outside depths from 5 to 10 cm (2 to 3.9 inches), and inside depths from 3.5 to 7.7 cm (1.4 to 3 inches).

EGGS 24 nests with 1 to 5 eggs; **1E** (3N), **2E** (2N), **3E** (2N), **4E** (13N), **5E** (4N).

Average clutch range 4 eggs (13 nests). Eggs were laid at daily intervals.

Cowbird parasitism 32 nests with 10 parasitized (31.3%).

EGG DATES 21 nests, 24 May to 12 July (26 dates); 11 nests, 3 June to 19 June.

Baltimore Oriole, *Icterus galbula*

844 (848 nests) representing 44 provincial regions.

EGGS 130 nests with 1 to 6 eggs; **1E** (3N), **2E** (3N), **3E** (17N), **4E** (37N), **5E** (46N), **6E** (24N).

Average clutch range 4 to 5 eggs (83 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 181 nests with 10 parasitized (5.5%).

INCUBATION PERIOD 1 nest, of ca. 14 days.

EGG DATES 128 nests, 18 May to 24 June (134 dates); 64 nests, 3 June to 11 June.

Only one brood is raised in the short breeding season.

[Pine Grosbeak], *Pinicola enucleator*

No new information on the status of this hypothetical breeding species has been received.

Purple Finch, *Carpodacus purpureus*

129 nests representing 30 provincial regions. Nestings apparently occurred in Oxford in 1990 (Weir 1990b) and 1993 (Ridout 1993b). A probable breeding was reported from Haldimand-Norfolk in 1997 (A. Davidson, pers. comm.).

EGGS 91 nests with 1 to 6 eggs; **1E** (12N), **2E** (10N), **3E** (28N), **4E** (27N), **5E** (13N), **6E** (1N).

Average clutch range 3 to 4 eggs (55 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 99 nests with 37 parasitized (37.4%).

EGG DATES 88 nests, 11 May to 5 August (115 dates); 44 nests, 8 June to 29 June.

BREEDING DISTRIBUTION

Purple Finches are decreasing as a breeding species in Ontario, particularly in the agricultural south. A 50% decline in breeding populations has been noted in the northeastern U.S. and southern Canada (Wootton 1996). Fewer provincial nest records have been received in the past decade and most of those were earlier or even historical records. It has been suggested that this decline is due, at least in part, to the huge increase of House Finches in southern Ontario, and the resulting interspecific competition (Wootton 1987, Shedd 1990).



Figure 9: Pendant nest containing 3 eggs of Orchard Oriole. This species breeds mainly in the Deciduous Forest region, in southern Ontario. (Photo by G.K. Peck).



Figure 10: Male Baltimore Oriole at nest, removing fecal sac from young, 6 June 1990, Medonte Twp., Simcoe County. (Photo by G.K. Peck).

House Finch, *Carpodacus mexicanus*

276 (280 nests) representing 26 provincial regions. Since the publication of Volume 2 (Peck and James 1987), many new nest records have been submitted for this rapidly expanding species. The following 19 regions have reported nest records: Brant (1986), Bruce (1988), Dufferin (1995), Essex (1989), Frontenac (1987), Grey (1988), Haldimand-Norfolk (1986), Halton (1993), Hamilton-Wentworth (1996), Middlesex (1988), Muskoka (1995), Oxford (1990), Peterborough (1986), Prince Edward (1993), Simcoe (1992), Victoria (1994), Waterloo (1991), Wellington (1986), and York (1990).

Although the majority of nests were near or on residences and buildings in both urban and rural areas, three nests were in conifer plantations, three in park woodlands, three in cemeteries, two in abandoned pastures, and one in a hawthorn meadow.

Many nests were in hanging flower pots. One unusual site was a space between bricks on a building and was used for two successive years. Another nest was located in a factory fan duct. Nests were also reported in old nests of Mourning Dove, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, and House Sparrow. A nest was observed 1.5 m (4.9 ft) distant from an active nest of Chipping Sparrow, and another 1 m (3.3 ft) distant from an active nest of House Sparrow.

EGGS 128 nests with 1 to 6 eggs; 1E (1N), 2E (5N), 3E (10N), 4E (49N), 5E (57N), 6E (6N).

Average clutch range 4 to 5 eggs (106 nests). Eggs were laid daily.

Cowbird parasitism 182 nests with 50 parasitized (27.5%). Since 1987, 23 of 95 nests were parasitized (24.2%). These substantial decreases in percentage parasitism from the 42.2% reported in Volume 2 (Peck and James 1987) may already be significant in light of the 100% mortality of cowbird nestlings in nests of this granivorous host (D. Koslovic, pers. comm.), and an indication of an adaptation by the brood parasite.

EGG DATES 159 nests, 22 March to 6 August (257 dates); 80 nests, 27 May to 19 June.

Re-nestings and second broods were frequently reported in both the same and in different nests. A triple brood was reported from Waterloo, and a third nesting attempt was noted in different but nearby nests in York. Nestlings fledged 16 days after hatching in a Northumberland nest.

BREEDING DISTRIBUTION

Nests were reported as far north as Bruce, and Muskoka. Spring and summering individuals in Nipissing, Rainy River, and Thunder Bay (Weir 1991a, Ridout 1994) further indicate the continuing northern expansion of the species.

Red Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra*

8 nests representing 4 provincial regions. No new information has been received.

White-winged Crossbill, *Loxia leucoptera*

7 (9 nests) representing 6 provincial regions. New nesting regions were Haldimand-Norfolk (1993), Oxford (1989), and Sudbury (1992). Four more nest records of this sporadically occurring fringillid have been submitted and their incorporated data are presented.

Two of the 9 nests were in coniferous forests (Nipissing), one was in a conifer plantation (Oxford), three were in a mixed second-growth forest (Sudbury), and another was in a mixed Carolinian Zone woods (Haldimand-Norfolk).

All 9 nests were in conifers: Black Spruce (2 nests), White Spruce (2 nests), Norway Spruce (1 nest), spruce sp. (1 nest), Balsam Fir (1 nest), Jack Pine (1 nest), and cedar sp. (1 nest). Nests were variously situated at the trunk (2 nests), and up to 2 m (6.6 ft) away from the trunk (3 nests). Heights of 8 nests ranged from 2.4 to 12.5 m (8 to 41 ft), with 4 averaging 5 to 10 m (16.4 to 32.8 ft).

Nests were described as cups (one flimsy), with exteriors of small spruce twigs. They were variously lined with grasses, feathers, plant down, animal hair, rootlets, plant fibres, moss, *Usnea* lichen, and pine needles. One nest had an outside diameter of 9.5 cm (3.7 inches), inside diameter of 6 cm (2.4 inches), outside depth of 5 cm (2 inches), and inside depth of 3.5 cm (1.4 inches).

One nest contained 3 eggs, one contained 3 young, another contained an unspecified number of eggs, and a fourth contained an unspecified number of young.

The recorded dates for 4 occupied nests were 3 April, 19, 20, and 22 August.

Common Redpoll, *Carduelis flammea*

20 nests representing 2 provincial regions. Only one new record has been submitted describing a nest under construction just east of the Little Shagamu River, near Hudson Bay, Kenora District (1990). The nest was located in an open Black Spruce forest, and was situated in a Black Spruce at an unusually high height of 4 m (13.1 ft).

[Hoary Redpoll], *Carduelis hornemanni*

This species was listed as a probable breeder in 1985 in extreme northwestern Kenora District (Cadman et al. 1987). Until documented evidence of breeding is obtained its status must remain hypothetical.

Pine Siskin, *Carduelis pinus*

40 (43 nests) representing 24 provincial regions. New nesting regions were Elgin (1988), Haldimand-Norfolk (1986), Haliburton (1995), Middlesex (1988), and Niagara (1996). Probable breeding records were reported in 1987 from Frontenac, Ottawa-Carleton, and Waterloo (Weir 1987a, 1987b); and in 1990 from Oxford (Weir 1990a).

EGGS 21 nests with 1 to 5 eggs; 1E (1N), 2E (6N), 3E (3N), 4E (8N), 5E (3N).

Average clutch range 3 to 5 eggs (14 nests).

Cowbird parasitism 20 nests with 3 parasitized (15%).

EGG DATES 19 nests, March to 23 July (24 dates); 10 nests, 26 April to 14 May.

BREEDING DISTRIBUTION

As is typical of the appearances and nestings of some other fringillids, Pine Siskins are sporadic in the timing and distribution of their nestings. However, it is notable that almost all recent nestings and breeding records have been reported from southern Ontario, with a peak year occurring in 1987.

American Goldfinch, *Carduelis tristis*

1456 nests representing 44 provincial regions. Glengarry (1995) was a new nesting region.

Cowbird parasitism 1221 nests with 101 parasitized (8.3%). The relatively low rate of parasitism is due in part to the lateness of the host's breeding season, and additionally may be influenced by an adaptation by the brood parasite to the almost 100% mortality suffered by its offspring in nests of this highly granivorous host (Middleton 1993).

An early egg date of 28 May was submitted from a nest in Wellington County in 1991. In addition, nests under construction on 21 May 1994 and 26 May 1962 were reported from Durham RM and Ontario County, respectively.

Evening Grosbeak, *Coccothraustes vespertinus*

12 nests representing 8 provincial regions. A nesting in Durham (1983), and an apparent nest in 1991 in Leeds were added reports.

The Durham nest contained four young, and three young fledged from the Leeds nesting.

House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*

1528 (1658 nests) representing all 52 provincial regions.

EGGS 260 nests with 1 to 7 eggs; 1E (6N), 2E (13N), 3E (25N), 4E (75N), 5E (102N), 6E (35N), 7E (4N).

Average clutch range 4 to 5 eggs (177 nests).

Cowbird parasitism Brood parasitism of this species is only occasionally reported (Friedmann

et al. 1977), and has never been reported in Ontario. This lack of noted parasitism could possibly be explained by a superficial resemblance of the eggs of the host to those of the parasite causing their presence to be overlooked.

EGG DATES Nests under construction on 3 February, 4 March, and 9 March in York; and on 29 March in Grey, indicate probable earlier egg dates than were recorded in Volume 2 (Peck and James 1987). Adults feeding young in the nest on 3 November in York definitely imply a much later egg date than was previously reported.

On 8 December 1988, in York, at least two pairs were observed adding nest material to a site, but were possibly reacting to a mild spell of weather.

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1999 OFO Annual General Meeting

Please mark your calendars now for the 1999 Ontario Field Ornithologists' AGM to be held at Point Pelee National Park on Saturday and Sunday, 2 and 3 October 1999. Enjoy a weekend of great fall birding in one of Ontario's finest areas. Experienced leaders will take small groups and focus on bird identification in the field. Join Paul Pratt, Alan Wormington and others to explore the park and nearby areas.

We will come together in Leamington on Saturday evening for a banquet and special presentation by Tom Hince on the "Birds of Point Pelee".

More details will follow in the coming months. *Jean Iron*